# ART 20 ART HISTORY I Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Neoclassicism

***Romanticism***

***Romantic Naturalism (Landscape)***

***Realism***

***PreRaphaelite Brotherhood***

***Impressionism***

1. **The Beginning of the “Modern” World: The 18th Century.**
   1. Two Major 18th Century Movements
      1. *Industrial Revolution – invention of steam engine (James Watt); machines begin replacing human labour.*

* + 1. Political Revolution – American (1770s) and French (1789).

*Humans asserting right to freedom from monarchy, right to be citizens instead of subjects.*

* 1. Characteristics of the Age

a)

b) Age of “Enlightenment” – so-called because humans finally

able to see “truth” based on his own reason.

c)

d) No longer a unity of purpose amongst artists -

individualism. Artist vs. society instead of supported

by it.

e)

1. **The Late 18th Century – *NEOCLASSICISM***
   1. Historical Context

Neo=

Classicism=

-emerged in Rome in 1760s, due in part to the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum (towns covered by lava from Mt. Vesuvius in AD79) in 1745.

-*in* ***art*** *– classical subjects, pure line*

*-in* ***society*** *– exalted virtues associated with Republican Rome,*

*such as moral incorruptibility, patriotism, and courage.*

-*in* ***France****, associated with the French Revolution through*

*J-L David. Violence of the revolution due in part to increased*

*Romantic sensibility combined with renewed interest in patriotic/*

*heroic death.*

1. General Characteristics

-usually expresses an intellectual idea (eg. patriotism)

-“severe” – no embellishments, simple

-

-

-horiz/vert compositions

-**Linear** –

* 1. The Artists

a) Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825)

“The genius of the arts must have no other guide than the

torch of reason.”

Chief painter of the Revolution; 5 years in Rome had made him a confirmed Classicist; *The Oath of Horatii* took 11 months to paint (David repainted left foot of central figure 20X); from play called “Horace”; ptg. a big success in Rome and Paris; propaganda, but painted for Louis XVI.

*-painting shows Neoclassicism at its purest – Roman virtue of putting service to state above personal life; clash between public duty and private feeling.*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*Composition – action runs parallel to the picture plane,*

*which gives a theatrical, carefully posed look as well as*

*stability, and keeps the focus, emphasized by the arcade*

*behind, on the front figures. The men taking the oath*

*consist of strong straight lines, whereas the women at*

*right form soft curves, emphasizing the courage and*

*implacability of the former and the fear of loss to the*

*family of the other. Style – David’s very carefully,*

*classically modeled forms, and severe background.*

***Lifesize.***

b) Jean Auguste Ingres (1780-1867)

“Draughtsmanship [ie. drawing] is the probity of art…Line is drawing, it is everything.”

“An object well drawn is always well enough painted.”

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*Ingres – pupil of David, not involved in revolution; carried David’s*

*emphasis on linear quality even farther, so much so that David himself*

*condemned Ingres’ ptg. of Mlle Riviere as “bizarre, revolutionary”*

*because of the independent beauty of the line.*

*- though this ptg. is the most like a snapshot of any of Ingres’*

*portraits, a comparison with the drawing shows that even here*

*he has idealized his subject, elongating the face and giving*

*M. Bertin a dignity he clearly lacks in real life. Ingres catches*

*his restlessness, and “the sudden attitude … is frozen and*

*M. Bertin argues with us forever”.*

## ROMANTICISM

1. General Characteristics

“Each Romantic artist found his home wherever he found himself emotionally involved.”

-

-

-

- Romantic artists searched for the “exotic” in the Orient, Middle Ages, storm and

mountain, nightmare, and strange mythologies.

1. The Artists
   1. Theodore Gericault (1791-1824) French

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*The Medusa carrying officers to Senegal shipwrecked;*

*350 died, 15 survived. Gericault’s ptg. is an accusation against*

*the government of France; Gericault heard about hunger and*

*thirst, madness and murder, directly from survivors. Ptg. is one*

*frantic thrust of movement from front left to back right, carried*

*along by exaggerated poses and gestures and facial expressions,*

*balanced by the diagonals of the sail leaning to the left.*

*Classically modeled figures, but they melt into the shadows.*

*Very dramatic and emotional, especially as* ***lifesize*** *ptg.*

4

* 1. Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863) French

“The contour should come last.” Delacroix considered the close rendering of objective reality as “only laborious perfection in the art of boring.”

*On July 28, 1830, there was a 3-day attempt to restore the republic (Charles X), but instead brought in the parliamentary monarchy of Louis-Philippe. In this ptg. we have the allegorical figure of Liberty storming the barricades, in one great rush of emotion, over dead and dying bodies. Liberty explodes into violent and unreasoned action, freedom at any cost. Painterly – colour, light blurs into shadow, movement surges toward picture plane.*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

c) Francisco Goya (1746-1828) Spanish

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*In many works, Goya represents the horrors of war; this,*

*however, is a simple portrait of two artful, lower class girls,*

*dressed in showy fashions. They sparkle like jewels, but the*

*background, with the two hooded black figures, adds a*

*sinister, almost irrational, fear to the ptg. (typical of*

*many of Goya’s works in which he deals with terror*

*and death).*

1. William Blake (1757-1827) English

Blake was a painter, a poet, and a mystic, and his drawings, etchings, and watercolours stand alone stylistically. This is an illustration of Nebuchadnezzar from Daniel 4:33, in which the Babylonian king is sent into the wilderness to live like an animal for 7 years, as a judgment for his excessive pride.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*To Blake, Nebuchadnezzar was a symbol of materialist man, who in this*

*misguided state falls to the level of a beast; or he sees him as Urizen,*

*“reason losing his reason”, ie. Blake believed that by relying only on*

*reason (and not faith) man is dehumanized, and ends by losing even*

*his reason.*

*This is a coloured etching, and hence has very linear qualities.*

1. Henry Fuseli (1741-1825) Swiss

“One of the most unexplored regions of art is dreams.”

Dreams represent the opposite of reason because we have no conscious control over them and they are usually irrational.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*Though the composition is Neoclassical, ie. the pyramid structure,*

*the action parallel to the picture plane, the subject is purely*

*Romantic in its irrationality and terror: the blank eyes and skeletal*

*head of the horse; the sinister, leering half-cat/half human, a figure*

*from Medieval folklore, sitting on the figure’s chest; and the*

*lurid lighting.*

*In pictures like this one, Fuseli shows himself to be a precursor*

*of* ***SURREALISM*** *in his exploration of the subconscious.*

## ROMANTIC NATURALISM 7

#### Picturesque –

*Sublime –*

1. The Artists

a) John Constable (1776-1837) English

“When I sit down to make a sketch from nature, the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture.”

“Painting with me is but another word for feeling.”

“The sound of water escaping from milldams, willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts and brickwork, I love such things. As long as I do paint I shall never cease to paint such places.”

*Constable infused nature with subjective feeling, and studied the sky with a meteorologist’s precision.* **Weymouth Bay** *is a study made on the spot, which later Constable worked up into a full composition in his studio. The stormy SKY charges the painting with drama, was Constable’s “chief organ of sentiment”; the sky controlled the lights and shadows, the “chiaroscuro of nature”. Here it gives emotion to the landscape, conveying an immediate, spontaneous sense of wind, sunlight, and clouds. Much of this freshness is lost in the finished work.*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*In* Dedham Lock and Mill *Constable shows his intense*

*interest in the simple things around him, and here*

*the PICTURESQUE is displayed. But even here, the*

*sky is dramatic in its lights and darks, and the rest*

*of the picture sparkles with vibrant colour.*

1. John Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) English

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*Unlike Constable, Turner sought the SUBLIME in landscape.*

*Venice is a scene of boats on the Venice lagoon, but the subject is*

*swallowed up in misty, humid atmosphere: the edges are blurred,*

*the colours merged, the Doge’s palace and San Marco melt away in*

*the background. Turner is clearly not interested in form, but in*

*LIGHT and ATMOSPHERE. Turner’s later works were attacked as*

*“pictures of nothing, and very like”, but Constable called them*

*“airy visions, painted with tinted steam.”*

**III THE MID-19TH CENTURY**

***REALISM***

1. General Information

The Romantic movement was doomed because of its growing detachment from contemporary life; it had, until this time, found its escape in history(including recent history), literature, and mythology. In 1846, the French Poet and art critic, Baudelaire, called for paintings that expressed “the heroism of modern life”, that is, the here and now. And Gustave Courbet, one of the leaders of the new movement, said, “the art of painting can consist only in the representation of objects visible and tangible to the painter…I hold that artists of one century are fundamentally incompetent to represent the things of the past or future century…”

1. Characteristics of Realism

a)

b)

c)

d)

1. The Artists
   1. Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) French

“I cannot paint an angel because I have never seen one.”

*The painting is on an “****heroic****” scale, ie. very large, with life-size figures, but it is of a funeral of a peasant instead of a grand, important person.*

*Forty people of Ornans (name of village) spread across the canvas, most of them awkward, clumsy, and distracted, ie.* ***UNIDEALIZED****. The open grave lies directly at the viewers’ feet, inviting us to become a part of the group of mourners.*

*This was severely criticized because it made something unimportant monumental.*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

b) Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875) French

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Millet lived among the peasants in a village in northern France. His subjects are similar to Daumier’s, but rural instead of urban. He tends to sentimentalize peasant life, ie. make it seem more pleasant than it was. How does he do this?

*Here we have Millet’s “hero of the soil”, a huge, strapping figure*

*striding boldly across the field, casting the seed with a swinging arm.*

*The subject’s connection to the parable of the seeds (note the birds*

*in the background), and the fact that there are no indications of*

*“modern” French agricultural technology in the scene, show Millet’s*

*concern with the timeless, enduring quality of this way of life,*

*a nostalgia for the past. Millet shows too his interest in representatives*

*(rather than specific people) of the peasant class by painting the*

*sower’s face in shadow and placing him in a hazy atmosphere.*

1. Honore Daumier (1808-1879)

Although Daumier’s subject matter is realist, his themes have a romantic tendency. Daumier was a political cartoonist for years before he ever painted; how does this show in his paintings?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*Affected by the political events of his time, as an art student Daumier*

*began making anti-monarchist and pro-republican caricatures for leftist*

*journals; his sentiments drew him to his interest and even affection for*

*the urban poor. Paintings such as* Third Class Carriage *and this one*

*show this affection; here the artist shows a washerwoman with a young*

*boy hurrying home with a load of wash on her back – we sympathize,*

*but do not pity her, since, though she strains and leans under the load,*

*she is strong and capable of her task. The thin paint and unfinished*

*look is indicative of Daumier’s cartoon background.*

Daumier also made satires of the bougeoisie and academic art, one humorous example being “Venuses again…Always Venuses!”, from La Charivari, May 10, 1864, contrasting the Salon’s ideal of female beauty with a couple of real-life specimens. (cartoon on p.994, Stokstad)

##### PRERAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD

1. General Information

In 1848, a group of young British painters established the PreRaphaelite Brotherhood as a reaction against the unimaginative, anecdotal (story-telling) painting of the Royal Academy, which was the “official” art society in London at that time, just as was the French “Salon” in Paris.

The three painters involved in its beginnings were Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, all of whom were Royal Academy members who were dissatisfied with the way the Academy idolized the classicism of Raphael and forced its members into that mould. The resulting art was to their view lifeless, lacking the “directness” they thought characterized the art before the High Renaissance. Hence the name came about; though their knowledge of Italian art in the 14th and 15th centuries was limited, these men were inspired by art before Raphael, ie. Medieval and Early Renaissance. Their subject matter was moral and religious, chosen mostly from literature of the Medieval, Renaissance and Romantic periods, celebrating the values and quality of life of the past.

When the group was ‘discovered” in 1850, it received much criticism because of its disregard for the accepted ideals of beauty and its apparent irreverence in religious themes.

1. General Characteristics

a)

b)

c)

d)

1. The Artists
   1. John Everett Millais (1824-1896) English

Millais was a child prodigy, entering the Royal Academy schools at age 11; he came from a wealthy family, and had a solemn and morose personality.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*In this painting Millais wanted to be as true to life as possible, and therefore made studies of a real carpenter’s shop, and real carpenter’s arms and hands, sheep’s heads and wood shavings.*

*Jesus has cut his hand while in his father’s shop, and Mary consoles him, foreshadowing fairly obviously the crucifixion. A young John the Baptist carries a bowl of water (for Mary to use?), foreshadowing his role as baptizer. The painting is full of symbols and references to biblical events. It is “serious”, with the timeless feeling that characterized the paintings of the Early Renaissance.*

* 1. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) English

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Rossetti was raised in England as the son of Italian ex-patriots; his father, a political exile, was a professor at King’s College. He, along with his brother, William, and sister, Christina, was an artist and poet.

The Girlhood of Mary Virgin *was Rossetti’s first painting, for which both*

*his mother and sister posed. It is full of Christian/biblical symbolism,*

*eg. haloes, the lily (purity), the reeds (whip), the dove (Holy Spirit),*

*red weaving (blood), and a cross-shaped trellis. The atmosphere is,*

*like the Millais, very solemn, foreshadowing Mary’s future suffering:*

*Luke 2:34,35 “…and a sword will pierce even your own soul –“*

From Rossetti’s poem, “Ecce Ancilla Domini”, inscribed around the frame of *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, and inspiring this painting:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

“…Till, one dawn at home

she woke in her white bed and had no fear

at all – yet wept till sunshine and felt awed:

Because the fullness of her time was near.

…She soon shall have achieved her perfect

purity; yea, God the Lord shall soon vouch-

safe His son to be her son.

*This painting, along with Millais’ Christ in the House of His Parents and other PRB works, were exhibited in different locations in London in 1850, and all were* ***abused and derided****. The Annunciation actually shows a move away from PRB ideas, is instead a “hauntingly unreal rendering of a mood, a vision” (Roy Hartnell). Christina is again the model; she shrinks into the corner of the confined space, with its Flemish-like foreshortening of Mary’s bed, increasing the sense that Mary is not only fearful but feeling trapped. The painting contains the lily of purity, but not much more symbolism, and is characterized by a repressed eroticism, which increased in Rossetti’s work and influenced others.*

**III THE LATE 19TH CENTURY**

## IMPRESSIONISM

1. General Information

**Manet** is a crucial figure in the understanding of the development of Impressionism, and we refer to him as its “forerunner”. Manet painted in the same vein as Courbet , creating works of classical subjects in a starkly modern way and hence shocking the public. However, whereas the Realist painter was generally making a comment about society, Manet cared little for the message his subjects conveyed. He believed the world of painting had “natural laws” distinct from familiar reality. Manet was devoted to “pure painting”, to the belief that brush strokes and colour patches themselves, not what they stand for, are the artist’s primary reality. Manet’s followers began calling themselves “Impressionists”, a term used by a critic in

12

a derogatory manner to describe their work; but Manet refused the term for himself. One critic claimed, “The impression which the Impressionists achieve is that of…a monkey who might have got hold of a box of paints.” What most people think of today as Impressionist paintings are those of his younger friends Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Cassatt, and to some extent, Degas.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. The Artists
   1. Edouard Manet (1832-1883) French

*Note here how the composition and subject matter is similar to Goya’s painting* Majas on a Balcony*, but without the Romantic overtones. Instead here the people form a sort of still life – there is no story, no emotion shown; in fact, the figures do not look at or speak to each other, and hence there is a strange, unreal look. What are they doing there?*

*Manet’s use of black and white (a favourite colour scheme of his, the influence of Spanish art) with no middle tones tends the composition toward flatness, as well at the balustrade parallel to the picture plane, the shutter, the black background, and the unmodelled faces. Over all, Manet has “neglected” traditional standards of beauty.*

*In 1863 Manet had shocked the public with his* Le Dejeuner sur L’Herbe*, in which two clothed men and one nude woman sit on the grass with some scattered clothes and fruit and bread, with a second, clothed, woman in the background doing something in a pond. All Manet had done was take a well-known composition from the Renaissance, and make it modern. The Salon, naturally, refused it, but it was shown in the Salon Refusees that year.*

b) Edgar Degas (1834-1917) French

“No art was ever less spontaneous than mine…of inspiration, spontaneity, temperament, I know nothing.”

Degas was interested in human nature, and in inanimate objects as they relate to humans. Specifically, his interest was in humans at work, eg. dancers, bakers, and hairdressers, and he paints them as if they’ve been “glimpsed through a keyhole” of a door.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*In* The Ballet Rehearsal*. the dancers are merely objects in his studies of*

*space and form, light and colour. Degas was attracted to their trained,*

*precise, deliberate movement. Note how the light from behind models*

*the dancers.The composition is not structured in a traditional way, but is*

*rather more like a candid photograph, with the stairs cut off at the left*

*and the dancers at the right.The seated dancers at right attract our*

*attention first, and lead our eye back to the dancers in movement in the*

*back middle.*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

L’Absinthe *shows a woman sitting lone in a café with a very strong*

*alcoholic drink in front of her; but like the dancers, she is a*

*“thing seen”, not a human being one is supposed to pity or*

*condemn. It was criticized a vulgar and repulsive; the truth*

*was too shocking to be looked at, and certainly not worth painting!*

*Note how the zigzag composition draws attention to what’s*

*happening outside the picture, just like the spiral stairs in*

*The Ballet Rehearsal; Degas’ designs are “complete in themselves,*

*but surrounded, as it were, with open doors”.*

* 1. Claude Monet (1840-1926) French

“When you go out to paint, try to forget what objects you have before you – a tree, a house, a field, or whatever. Merely think, here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it as it looks to you..”

Monet and Renoir tried to paint what was in front of their eyes, considering not so much what it was but what colours formed it. They painted out of doors, ie. full paintings, often quickly, in one day, the technology of the time offering them the advantage of paint in tubes which made painting outdoors much more convenient, and hence allowing them to achieve very accurate effects of sunlight and shadow on colour. Their interest was what was “retinally” real.

*This painting in one in a series of pictures of Rouen Cathedral, in which Monet investigated the textural surface of the stone façade in different kinds of light and atmosphere, at different times of day and year. He uses thick, impasto paint in short strokes, to catch the light before it changes, and the light as a result appears to flicker over the surface.*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Waterlilies *is one of many paintings of Monet’s waterlily pond at Giverny. As Monet aged, his eyesight weakened, but he continued to paint his beloved pond, getting closer and closer to it, until the last paintings appear almost nonobjective, since the colours blend more and more. Here is achieves his goal of painting only colours without focus on the object (ironically, he wished he’d been born blind, then suddenly received his sight).*

d) Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) French

|  |
| --- |
|  |

“The Louvre is the only place to learn, really. And while I was at

Gleyre’s [an artist’s studio], the Louvre for me meant Delacroix.”

*Renoir, as a young man, painted outdoors with Monet. This is a later work,*

*showing Renoir moving away from Impressionism, striving for something*

*more solid and real again. Renoir paints a glowing flesh in smaller less*

*visible strokes, but retains the loose stroke, at this point long and feathery,*

*for the rest of the picture. His later work also shows a move toward*

*more pastel colours, ie. bright colours mixed with white.*

e) Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) American

|  |
| --- |
|  |

*Mary Cassatt was an ex-patriot from Pennsylvania, who, like her*

*friend Degas, did not accept the Impressionist label for herself,*

*but did exhibit with the group in their fourth Impressionist*

*exhibition in 1879. Her paintings are of subject matter to which*

*she had access, ie. the domestic and social lives of well-off women.*

*Many such pictures as this were produced, showing the tenderness*

*between mother and child, in the long tradition of the theme,*

*beginning with Medieval paintings of the Madonna and Child.*

*Although her scenes are anything but “slice-of-life”, fleeting*

*impressions, her loose brush stroke and sensitivity to natural*

*light are surely the influences of her Impressionist friends.*