

Bernini in france



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Bernini in France Bernini's work in Paris: Bernini was the famous Italian sculptor and artist who lived during 1598-1680. He was called to Paris in 1665 to take part in the rebuilding of the Louvre by the intermediary and minister of Louis XIV, Colbert. Louis XIV designated Chantelou to welcome Bernini and accompany the artist during his stay in the capital of France. Chantelou kept an up-to-date record of Bernini's affairs in Paris from his arrival to his departure. All the events were recorded in the journal without any leftovers (Harrison, Wood & Gaiger).

This journal reveals the personality of the artist as well as his conception of the art he pursues. It also reveals the confrontation between the king and the artist of Italian origin. He was in Paris for a few months and presented some designs for the east front of the Louvre. But his designs were rejected by the French court. His only notable work was a bust of Louis XIV which was regarded as a standard in royal portraiture during the era. Bernini's projects in France were turned down by the court in favour of the stern and classic proposals of French architect Claude Perrault (Harrison, Wood & Gaiger).

It is an irony of history that Bernini's plans were never realised. All his plans failed to please the king's powerful minister, Colbert. Moreover, he encountered considerable opposition from local sculptors because of pure jealousy (Harrison, Wood & Gaiger).

Bernini did not have much regard for French culture and French artists. During his short stay in Paris, he had many disagreements with them. He did not waste a single opportunity in degrading them too. The journal by Chantelou depicts that Bernini often had a prejudice against French culture and society. He regarded French artists as inferior to their Italian counterparts. He often had heated discussions with French artists, namely

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Charles Perrault, Jean Warin and Louis Le Vau who was Colbert's chief architect (Wolfe).

Bernini's work at the Saint Peter's Basilica:

During his childhood days, the young Bernini visited Saint Peter's. He wished to build a mighty throne for the apostle. In 1626, he received patronage from the Pope Urban VIII and worked for the basilica for 50 years.

Bernini's work at the basilica includes the baldacchino, the chapel of the sacrament, the plan of the niches, loggias in the piers of the dome of the basilica and the chair of Saint Peter (Lavin).

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The first work baldacchino was a bronze masterpiece. It was thirty meters tall and claimed to be the largest bronze piece of art in the world. Bernini also built new structures and made modifications and extensions to existing ones without losing the sanctity of the place. The Saint Peter's square on the eastern side of the basilica is the construction made by Bernini based on his Baroque inspirations (Lavin).

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During his tenure at the Saint Peter's Basilica, Bernini transformed the place into a true masterpiece. No other city in the world can claim such a widespread approach to its cathedral church. It is also sure that no other architect could have conceived a design having better notability. His works at Saint Peter's is the greatest of all atriums before the greatest of all churches of Christianity (Lavin).

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