

The differences between romanticism and neoclassicism

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Romanticism in art was mainly inclined on attaining freedom in expressing personal sentiments and emotions rather than arriving at religious enlightenment or fighting for their political and social principles (Nelson, Shiff 289). The Romantic painters explored more with their brushstrokes by allowing their feelings control their brushes. Some of the major characteristics of Romanticism are preference in expressing feelings; exhibiting the passionate aspect of man; the human nature and matters concerning Nature; dynamism; originality; uniqueness and individualism. On the contrary, Neoclassicism in the arts, as the name indicates, is inclined on reverting to Hellenistic art styles characterized by symmetry; calmness and stillness; importance of social and political concerns; discipline and control; conformity and rationality. This art movement was the result of the renewed interest and the sense of giving importance to classical art (Cunningham, Reich 228). These characteristics and the definition of Romanticism and Neoclassicism classify the major differences between the two art movements. These differences substantiate that these art movements are conflicting during the time these two art styles emerged in the art scene. Neoclassicism imposes restraint and conformity while Romanticism breaks free from the constraints of tradition and promoted freedom in conveying personal views and emotions. Moreover, Neoclassicism was rearing towards the society and its concerns such as politics while Romanticism favors idiosyncrasy.

The differences of Romanticism and Neoclassicism is evident in the works of Romantic painter Eugene Delacroix and Neoclassical painter Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres particularly their portrait of violinist Niccolò Paganini.

Ingres' depiction of Paganini shows the violinist in a very formal and stiff pose, which is very much opposite to Delacroix's portrayal of the violinist showing Paganini while playing the violin. The striking contrasts between Ingres' Paganini and Delacroix's version clearly differentiates the two art styles and best represents the artworks of the two art movements. These opposing two art movements resulted from the events during that period and compelled by some prominent figures in the society and discoveries in well-known places at that time. Influences manifest in the works of artists belonging to Romanticism and Neoclassicism. Artworks of Romantic painters Eugène Delacroix and Joseph Mallord William Turner would best exemplify the influences of the people, places and events during that period. On the other hand, Jean-Louis David, Angelica Kauffmann, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot would best represent the works of Neoclassicism in art as influenced by the circumstances during that era. An example of the influence of a prominent figure on a painter was George Gordon Byron or Lord Byron, an important personality during the Romantic era, compelled Romantic painter Eugene Delacroix's artwork "Death of Sardanapalus." The painting was greatly inspired by Lord Byron's literary work "Sardanapalus." While as, Joseph Mallord William Turner's painting, "The Slave Ship" was compelled unmistakably by an occurrence involving the massacre of African slaves exhibiting the influence of an event on the Romantic painter J. M. W. Turner. Neoclassical painters were also driven by events, people and places in creating their artworks. Jean-Louis David's "Death of Marat" was the result of the assassination of the artist's friend and political ally Jean-Paul Marat. This painting is an example of how a

Neoclassical painter can be at the same time influenced by a significant person in the society and an event to create a powerful oeuvre. While as Angelica Kauffmann's "Venus Convinces Helen to go with Paris" and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' "Jupiter and Thetis" shows the influence of Rome on both Neoclassical painters because they visited and resided in Rome for some time thus the place and its culture had manifested in their artworks.

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