

# Love using specific artistic examples define neoclassicism

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Neoclassicism Neoclassicism was a prevalent and a powerful movement in painting and other visual arts that set its base in the 1760s, got to its peak between 1780s and 1790s, and remained in existence until the late 1840s and early 1850s. In efforts to depict classical themes and subjects matters, it took the form of austere linear design and used archaeological settings and costumes. Authors document that neoclassical was initiated partly by the sensuous and frivolous decorative Rococo style reactions that had governed European art from the 1720s (Palmer 12). It is argued that the new archaeological discoveries gave neoclassicism a significant impetus more specifically the buried Roman cities.

To a certain extent, the assertion that neoclassicism was a representation of a reaction against optimistic, energetic, and passionate renaissance view could be true. This view perceived man as a being fundamentally good, with an infinite potential for both spiritual and intellectual growth. However, theorists of neoclassical view considered man as imperfect and inherently sinful, with a limited potential. The renaissance view gave facts from imagination, invention, and experimenting, but was replaced by neoclassical view. This view gave emphasis on order and reason, on common sense, on restraint, and on religious, economic, philosophical, and political conservatism. A famous neoclassical painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, who lived from 1780 to 1867 made outstanding paintings (154). One of his paintings, The Apotheosis of Homer, which symbolizes the belief of Ingres in a hierarchy of timeless, is a good example since it based its work on classical precedent. Baron Pierre-Narcisse Guerin is also a famous French artist of the neoclassical period who made a painting known as Aurora and Cephalus and

appears as shown below.

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Another example is “A River”, a Jean-Jacques Caffieri’s sculpture, which he made in 1759. The sculpture appears as shown in the figure below.

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In essence, neoclassicism concentrated on the fact that man was the most accurate subject of art, perceiving art as fundamentally pragmatic. In addition, to the theorists, art was valuable since it was useful, and properly intellectual, but not emotional (198). The main aim of neoclassical was to substitute overall design with the new ideas of symmetry, proportion and the like. In literary forms, they gave emphasis on essays, letters, satire, and such. Though neoclassicism seemed replaced later, it is worth noting that artistic movements do not really die. This is evident because aesthetics of neoclassicism reappeared later in the 20th century.

#### Work Cited

Palmer, Allison Lee. *Historical Dictionary of Neoclassical Art and Architecture*. New York: Scarecrow press, 2011.