

From the baroque period through the romantic age

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The social, political and economic conditions alter the meaning and of art and this ment can be further strengthened by citing the changes in art styles namely baroque, rococo, neoclassicism and romanticism throughout the changing political structure and leaders as well as the evolving religious beliefs and the rise of the aristocrats.

Closely following the Renaissance was the great religious upheaval called Reformation that shook the whole of Europe out of its complacency.

Religious leaders demanded religious reforms to put a stop to the abuses of the clergy, such as selling indulgences and religious titles. They soon acquired a large following and they eventually broke away from the Catholic Church in order to establish various sects of the Protestant church. From then on Christendom was split into many factions.

The Catholic Church had the difficult task of salvaging its good name and reassuring its members. Towards the end, the Council of Trent was convened from 1545 to 1563 to set church policies on various subjects including art. While Protestantism generally turned away from artistic representations of religious subjects, the Catholic Church encouraged artists to assume the task of stimulating religious fervor through art that appealed to the senses and emotions. This highly sensual and dynamic style that emerged from this period of crisis was the baroques style.

The self-indulgent administration of French kings Louis V and Louis VI created a pleasure-seeking technique identified as rococo. The etymological meaning of rococo is the French word *rocaille*, denoting a shell or a conch, which was the principal theme of rococo art. Rococo was, in general, an upper-class art, with the focus comprised of gentlemen and ladies of

relaxation spending their time in chivalrous gratification. It is considered to be mischievously erotic.

It was at some point in the era of neoclassicism, during the governance of Louis XIV, that the French Academy was established. This built the foundations of classicism - with its reverence of olden days and its ceremonial discipline - as the authorized approach of the administration. Painters and sculptors who wish the official support labored in this technique until it was condensed to dry procedure and turned out to be spiritless and intellectual. Whereas the descendants of Louis XIV, there was a reduced amount of firm centralization of state supremacy, and classicism in France surrendered to the rococo style. With the period of influence of Napoleon, classicism, with its prominence on proper regulation and its renewal of olden days, once more materialized as the authorized technique. A response in opposition to rococo ornateness, also served the goals of the latest government by acclaiming the civic and nationalistic qualities of the early Romans for the personification of the public.

Romanticism as an artistic style followed the French Revolution.

Romanticism stressed individual freedom of the artist and his subjective reaction to the world around him - to nature, people and events. The world became seen not as an exterior object in itself but as transformed by the emotions and personal sensibility of the artist. The ideal of freedom, which was one of the catchwords of the movement, encouraged spontaneity. The painter worked quickly, his freer and looser brush strokes giving evidence of the process of artistic creation.

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