

Baroque architecture characteristics



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Introduction

The Baroque period took the humanist Roman view of Renaissance architecture and showed it in a new rhetorical, theatrical and sculptural fashion they expressed the triumph of absolutist church and state. The main view of Baroque architecture was more concerned about color, light and shade, sculptural values and intensity which could be seen in its characteristics. Baroque is defined periods in literature as well as music; however critics perceived it to be unstructured, over ornamented, theatrical and grotesque. Although many things influenced the Baroque period it was also influenced by religion as well as the countries politics. Architects were interested in the space of the unfolding universe as well as the workings of the mind and attempted to portray passions of the soul through facial expressions.

Features

The features of the baroque era showed long, narrow naves that were replaced by a broader, or occasionally with circular forms. It displayed dramatic use of light that could be either strong light-and-shade contrast (known as *chiaroscuro*) effects; or they used uniform lighting by means of several windows. Another feature was opulent use of ornaments (puttos made of wood (often gilded), plaster or stucco, marble or faux finishing), they used large-scale ceiling frescoes and Baroques external façade is often characterized by a dramatic central projection, however the interior is often no more than a shell for painting and sculpture which was seen in the late Baroque period. Baroque features also include illusory effects like trompe l'oeil and the blending of painting and architecture and in other countries

such as Bavaria, Czech, Polish, and Ukrainian the Baroque style contained, pear domes that were are ubiquitous.

Characteristics

The main characteristics for the Baroque era were energy, great amounts of tension and a sense of movement from the buildings. Its painting, sculpture and architecture evolved from mannerism and broke away from the rules of contemporary architecture, they demanded freedom to plan, design and decorate their buildings with what they wanted. Columns had twisted shafts which were placed in front of pilasters surrounded by cornices and covered with curved and broken pediments. They contained “over the top” and often unsuitable details with carved decoration. Interiors had gilded sculptures often in awkward poses; the architecture was noted for its curved lines. Many of Baroque's additions were finished in bronze, marble, gold and silver. Baroque had a dynamic look and feel to its design; it was a useful classification for isolating the tendencies and products of stylistic change. It was seen as spacious, brilliant, theatrical, passionate, sensual, ecstatic, opulent, extravagant, versatile and virtuoso. It was an age of expansion following on an age of discovery, its expansion led to still further discovery about architectural design and decoration.

Section A: Interiors

S. Maria Della Salute (1631-1682)

The interior of S. Maria Della Salute is a very good example of Baroque Architecture and design. It displays the Baroque essence in a way but is not completely over ornamented nor does it contain any unsuitable details.

Marble is mainly used in the columns and the base appears to be gilded in bronze. Sculptures are carved from marble and stand high in the round of the dome. An altar can be seen and one might assume it is also gilded in bronze. It is an artwork in a way but it is not “over the top” in any way which can be seen from this view point.

S. Pietro (1656 – 1667)

The S. Pietro is another great example of Baroque architecture and design. In this photo we can see the bronze altar that stands just in front of the apse, we can see paintings that are decorated with gold borders, marble columns and high walls, the domes contain gold ceilings. Walls are decorated with sculptures in free standing positions in the walls also made of marble. Light is given through high standing windows and the main dome from above through a sky light.

Versailles (1660 – 1685)

The Palace of Versailles is the most well known piece of Baroque Architecture and design known to date. It defines what the baroque period was about. It was extravagant, sensual, dynamic, passionate (paintings), versatile and opulent. Decorations were not silver but pure gold. Soft fabrics, bright colours and beautiful sculptures decorated the interiors of the Palace. In the Hall of Mirrors as seen in figure 8 sculptures themselves were cast in gold high windows offered light and glass chandeliers hung from a ceiling decorated in painting and gilded gold borders. In the Queens Chambers as seen in figure 7 one can tell that not even the bedrooms were kept simple. Gold was also used and to an extent it was overly used. The focus of ones

eye is led to the gold decoration and not the architectural values of the building. The exterior as seen in figure 6 one can see that the balcony railings were gilded in gold decoration as the sun makes this easy to see. Marble is also used on the façade of the building but it is mainly decorated in gold. Rich vibrant colours can be seen throughout the palace as seen in figure 7 of the Queens Chambers.

Section B: Interior Design

Although the Baroque era contributed to the great buildings we see today, one cannot forget about the interiors. Although lavishly decorated the interiors are very well designed to accommodate certain aspects. Architects need to think like that in order to obtain a good sense of what works and what does not. I believe interior design does actually hint about it along the lines. We design what we think the client would like and then get an idea if the client likes it or not, if not we simply make a few changes to get a better feel and a better view of what they want. It is the same now as it is then. Interior designers design the space in which the client will be in every day. It requires a great deal of insight and a knowledge about a person, one might consider reading your client by talking to them, when you do that you can get better ideas. Simple designs often make better designs in these days however in the past if it was big, spacious and contained lavish decorations it was classified as good.

Conclusion

So from looking at the baroque architecture one can say that it played a great role in the design of buildings today. Many people who obtain an over

and above salary sometimes have one or two rooms that give remembrance to the baroque style. It was certainly lavish, dynamic and “over the top” decorations were definitely a bit much for today’s modern society.

Bibliography

- Tansey, R. G & Kleiner, F. S. 1954. Chapter 24. *Gardener’s Art Through The Ages: tenth edition* . United States of America: Ted Buchhloz. Pages 816 – 904.
- Gardener, L. Chapter 10. *Gardener’s Art Through The Ages: fourth edition*. United States of America: G. Bell and Son Ltd, London. Page 397 onwards.
- Honour, H & Fleming, J. 1982. Part 3: Chapter 13. *A World History of Art*. United Kingdom: RB Macmillion. Page 426 onwards.
- Wikipedia. 2008. *Baroque*. [online].[Accessed August 20, 2008]. Available from world wide web:< <http://www.wikipedia.org>>
- *Versailles*. [online]. [Accessed August 20, 2008]. Available from world wide web:
- *History of Baroque Architecture*. [online]. [Accessed August 20, 2008]. Available from world wide web:
- *Baroque Age*. [online]. [Accessed August 20, 2008]. Available from world wide web: