

Caravaggio's contributions to the development of the baroque style essay example

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



Introduction

Caravaggio, also known as Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio lived between the 1571 and 1610. He is recognized as the paramount and the most prominent artist of the Baroque style. Despite of being connected to controversies of scandalous lifestyle, Caravaggio was a genius of artistic work that has won his position in not only history of art but also in the contemporary imagination. It is due to this that his contributions were forgotten until 20th century that his contribution to the development of Baroque style among other Western art (Cable, p. 55).

Baroque is an Italian style that was developed in the Mannerist era and Caravaggio is considered as the pioneer of this style. Though Italian Baroque and Italian Renaissance painting were almost similar, Italian Baroque had richer and darker color palette and its religion theme was more popular. During the late 16th century, Caravaggio was lucky to work in the Counter Reformation era, when the Rome city was under construction. During this time, the Catholic Church carried out the renovation of the old churches and construction of the new ones with attempt to attract back the Protestant converts. All this renovations and constructions created a room for excessive extents of decoration, and the artists were ready to this potential opportunity (Dempsey, p. 45).

The church aimed to address the parishioners openly, especially the needy, and focus on the personal relationship with God. In order to fit in this category, Caravaggio decided to embrace the personal struggle concept, and his results were impressing. Using the models he collected on the street, he painted them exactly how they appeared; barefoot, dirty and dressed in

rag. However, he was criticized of having no imagination, and he did not idealize his saints into perfection; they looked like the real people (Dempsey, p. 64). This made his artistic work to be more gritty naturalism than any other artist. Caravaggio painted the saints at their most susceptible moments, showing doubt and fear. The poor and needy people were able to relate to the Caravaggio's interpretations, and it is due to this reason that he became a candidate for the beneficial church commissions.

Caravaggio was able to depict his subjects in identifiable locales such as taverns and street corners, or rather, he unrestrained settings altogether and deferred them in a limbo of darkness scraped by hard shafts of light to depict salvation and inner turmoil. He panted his holy family and saints with brutal death and dirty feet and they were recognized as honest but not generally acclaimed. He gathered a few powerful collectors and cardinals, who supported him and frequently sprang him from jail. Other artists, including the one he hated, accepted his visionary talent and started to compete with him (Cable, p. 77).

The lighting technique, which was used by Caravaggio, is known as Tenebrism, which means "murky" or "gloomy". He was able to recount climatic moments in his paintings while strongly suggesting the events that come first and follow them. He made dramatic lighting effects on his paintings by letting natural light from a high window, or from highly placed lamp illuminate down on his subjects. If the artist places his models in appropriate manner, this technique called cellar lighting produces dramatic effects.

For instance, on the Calling of Saint Mathew artistic work, there is a cellar

light gashes across the back wall and brightens some faces of the men congested around a wooden table while Mathew counts his money. The picture below is the artistic work portraying The Calling of Saint Matthew. Another key role of Caravaggio on the Baroque style of art was that he influenced several artists Spanish and Spanish-controlled Flanders during his time. One of the most influenced artists was Diego Velasquez. However, in his work, Velasquez's works were not able to attain the dramatic movement used by Caravaggio (Caravaggio, Michelangelo, & Rosa Giorgi, p. 68). As a result, the status of artist on the western art significantly changed since the medieval age, this is the time that artists were commonly laborer. With other Spanish artists, Velasquez lead to the development of Spanish art. In other worlds, the artistic work of Caravaggio inspired young, up-and-coming artists of Rome who later became to be known as Caravaggisti who were found in most parts of Europe.

Conclusion

As revealed, Caravaggio's fundamental contributions to the art arena were the application of light in an impressive new way and his creative skill of representing storyteller in the picture. Caravaggio believed that nature was his guidance and his only teacher, but he perceptibly studied and integrated the style of High Renaissance masters, like that of Michelangelo. During his century, no doubt that Caravaggio's artistic work was considerable. He was meant to turn a large part of Western art away from the ultimate thought of Renaissance to the idea that simple realism was of principal importance. His

followers, Caravaggisti, also contributed to the spread and development of the Baroque style through the Caravaggio's stylistic work.

Works Cited

Cable, Carole. *The Baroque Style in Architecture: A Bibliography of Journal Articles Published between 1973-1983*. Monticello, Ill: Vance

Bibliographies, 1984. Print.

Caravaggio, Michelangelo M, and Rosa Giorgi. *Caravaggio*. London: D.

Kindersley, 1999. Print.

Dempsey, Charles. *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*.

Glückstadt: Augustin, 1977. Print.