

# [Comparison of baroque and rococo styles essay](https://assignbuster.com/comparison-of-baroque-and-rococo-styles-essay/)

There have been different artistic peaks throughout the history of humanity influenced by specific social, political or religious situations of the time. Those peaks shaped by certain styles had an important impact on art as we know it today. One of the most recognized styles of art of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe were Baroque and Rococo styles. Although these styles have a lot in common and sometimes it isn’t easy to tell where one of them begins and the other ends, they have also differentiate one from another.

It is important to take a closer look at time atmosphere that each of those styles coming from to be able to compare and contrast the Baroque and Rococo styles. Baroque style emerges between late sixteenth and early seventeenth century in Italy as an attempt to replace the complex and formal Mannerism style of art. At that time the Counter-Reformation was formed as an answer to devastation that Reformation was causing among the Roman Catholic religion. Rome was then a strong influential force and the most important center of patronage in Italy. One of the strongest tools of Counter-Reformation in church’s hands was art.

Realizing the beauty, and dynamics of Baroque and its power, religious leaders encouraged and patronized this emerging new style. The idea of changing art and making it as realistic as possible was welcomed. Church patrons required that sculpture and paintings which were created for religious institutions would be easily understood by the uneducated common people. That change should have served an purpose of drawing people back to Church. Many of the changes were designed to make the Church more engaging to the common people not only on a psychological level but also in a visual way as well.

In other words they wanted to make the Churches a place where people would want to visit and feel connected with their faith while they were there. The name “ Baroque”, that will be given to this style of art many years later, originally comes from Portuguese language and translates as an ‘ irregular shaped pearl’. The Baroque style didn’t seam to fit the measure of the classical Renaissance therefore was compared to irregular shaped pearl or in another words as being different and unique but still beautiful. The Baroque was also the age where the oval shape replaced the circle as the center of a composition.

That could be another reason why it was called ‘ irregular shaped pearl’. Baroque style compositions became more symmetrical and colorful and painterly effects become prominent. The Baroque artist’s with their technical brilliance brought together the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture in remarkable harmony. These artists created new spatial relationships, both real and illusionary with amazing visual effects. Colors were rich and vibrant, foliage was larger, dense, and profuse, scrolls were based on circles and would cross over one another.

The total look was rich, complex and very ornate. This art style is characterized by great drama, intense deep color, and dynamic light and dark shadows. The style was also identified with great sense of energy and movement of forms. Baroque art was meant to engage the viewer, physically and emotionally. Artists as never before became concern with the dramatic use of light. Landscape paintings became also very popular. In an effort to show the beauty of life, many artists painted traditional compositions such as seascapes and countrysides.

One of the greatest artists of that time that have influenced the Baroque school of painting was Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. His paintings combine a realistic observation of the human state, both physical and emotional, with a dramatic use of lighting. Caravaggio was probably the most revolutionary artist of his time. He abandoned the rules that had guided a century of artists. Although he had some inspiration from the Carracci, Caravaggio can be recognized as an artist who had almost created the Baroque style himself.

Caravaggio’s most known piece of work that I took as an example of Baroque style called Amor Victorious (Profane Love). Although the subject of this painting was a common one for the age, Caravaggio’s way of showing it was remarkable for the realism of the Cupid. His Cupid is quite different from the way it was painted by any artist’s before. The dramatic chiaroscuro lighting and the photographic clarity, is the mix of the allegorical and the real. This gives a sense of child who is having a thoroughly good time dressing up in stage wings with a bunch of arrows and having his picture painted.

Caravaggio Amor Victorious The Rococo style of art was developed in France in the early 18th century approximately in the year 1710 as a continuation of the Baroque style. In contrast to the heavier themes and darker colors of the Baroque, the Rococo was characterized by grace, playfulness, and lightness. The word Rococo is a combination of the French rocaille, or shell, and the barocco, or Baroque style. Rococo is a love of shell curves and focus on decorative arts. Since the mid 19th century the term has been accepted by art historians.

While there is still some debate about the art historical significance of the style, rococo is now widely recognized as a major period in the development of European art. After Louis XIV died in the year 1715 the social situation in France somewhat change. Political life and private morals relaxes as five years old Louis XV comes to throne. Many aristocrats move from the court of Versailles to Paris. Reaction against the formal style centered at Louis XIV Versailles provide basis for a new style to develop.

Baroque designs that were in style before, gave way to lighter elements with more natural patterns. Rococo reflected the new taste for more delicate decoration for smaller, more comfortable interiors of town houses in Paris. First as interior decoration and design Rococo style would later expand and influence the other parts of art. It also spread around the Europe but its acceptance was tied to religion and class. First, Rococo style appears in interior decoration and design. It took pleasure in asymmetry by leaving elements unbalanced.

Design elements as ornaments, leaves, flowers and curving lines were used to decorate the walls and ceilings and would made them look like fleeting illusions. That taste was new to European style. Though Rococo originated in the decorative arts, the style showed clearly in painting. Painters used delicate colors and curving forms, decorating their works with myths of love. The soft colors and elegant forms, provided a perfect accompaniment to the Rococo interiors for which they were intended. The asymmetrical compositions, pastoral landscapes and aristocracy in early Rococo painters works had influence on Francois Boucher.

Romantic beauty and dreamy eroticism style transforms into open sexuality and nude in his paintings. Francois Boucher was a French painter whose favorite theme was love. Venus (the roman goddess of love) is depicted in many of his paintings. He painted in the ornate Rococo style and was considered as one of the fathers of Rococo. His most important patron was Madame de Pompadour, mistress of King Louis XV. Boucher painted many beautiful portraits of her. He also painted for the queen of France and was named First painter to the King.

Reflecting inspiration gained from the artists Watteau and Rubens, Boucher’s early work celebrates the idyllic and tranquil, portraying nature and landscape. However, his art was typically farther then traditional rural innocence to portray scenes with a style of eroticism. And his mythological scenes are passionate and amorous rather than traditionally epic. In his best known painting Nude on a Sofa that I picked as an example of Rococo style he puts one of Louis XV’s mistresses in suggestive pose using delicate shades designed to charm and seduce.

Boucher Nude on a Sofa By portraying his subject without any justification except eroticism, Boucher embodied a new artistic sensibility, one that was especially admired by the rather frivolous French nobles of his time. The difference between Baroque and Rococo styles essentially boils down to few things as the amount of frivolousness and subject matter. The Baroque is highly ornate and focuses on emotion whether Rococo, is different than the Baroque in that it takes realistic style and makes it over-real. It almost becomes stylized. The Rococo focused on the pleasures and pastimes of the rich.

The trees and bushes are stylized swirls, the colors are bright pastels, everything is exaggerated and stylized. In terms of the evolution of shape (dynamics, rhythm, and the ratio of parts of art piece), Rococo genetically related to Baroque. However, a powerful spatial dynamics and impressive contrast of the Baroque style has changed in Rococo. Rococo playing on the walls and ceiling of interior fancy symphony of weave patterns, reaching peaks in virtuosity, sophistication and brilliance, but ultimately loses the characteristic of the Baroque strength.