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# Set off to discover modern history



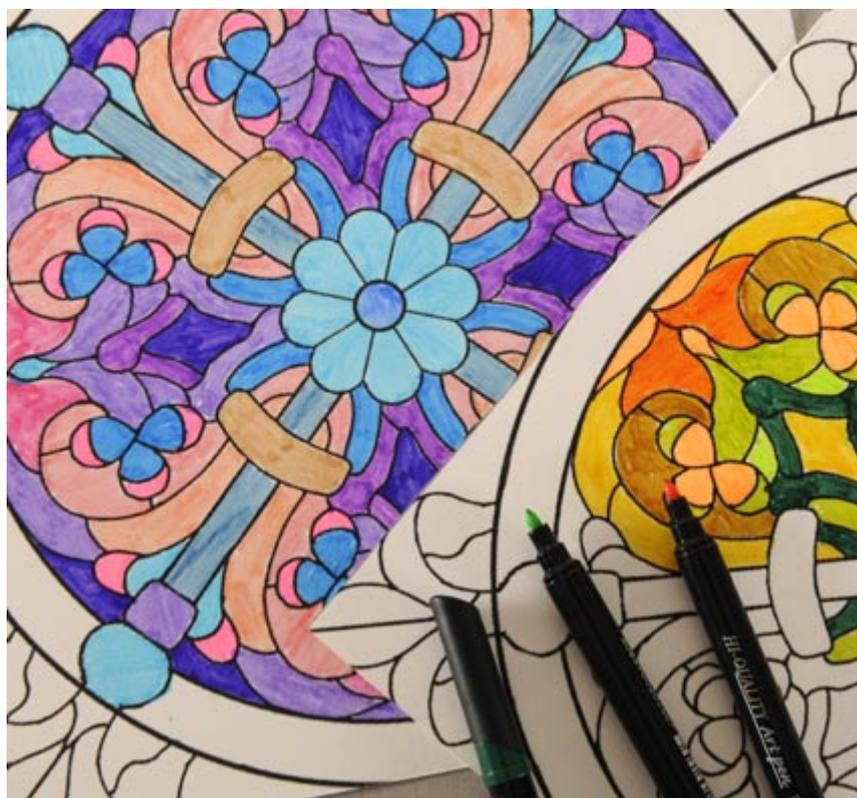
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History of art [5]

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This sheet will take you to discover modern history, from around 1450 to 1800 A.D.

Rich in events and innovations of all kinds, this period of history includes several artistic movements that either succeeded each other or happened at the same time.

Here we'll only talk about the movements that had the greatest impact during this time.

## **Next stop, the Renaissance**

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 sounded the death knell of the Middle Ages to then give life to the Renaissance, which would end with the death of Henry IV in 1610. Printing, painting, architecture... Throughout the Renaissance, innovation flourished, and techniques evolved to offer a new world and a new vision of Man.

Castles isolated from the world with draw-bridges, moats, watchtowers and arrow slits gave way to aesthetic castles, open to the world, with vast gardens in the French style which better reflected the opulence of their owners.

### **In terms of art...**

Numerous movements existed in the Renaissance period without necessarily encountering each other as each country found its own influences and techniques.

Nevertheless, in each country painting asserted itself as a major art form and became the simplest way to express the artists' personal inspiration. Donatello, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Titian, Veronese, Clouet, Rubens and Rembrandt. Each of these giants invented the art that translated their most intimate perfection.

Gone are the times when painters depicted Biblic scenes! The artists of the Renaissance demonstrated in their work a very personal way of seeing the world around them.

Little by little, canvas replaced paintings on wood in churches; oil paints made an appearance with the Flemish and the use of perspective almost became the norm.

But that which prevailed in painting, and in Renaissance art more generally, was the presence of Man, truly at the centre of the universe. Portraits, body sculptures, nudes... The reference to Antiquity is palpable.

## **The advent of Baroque**

Rome, Mantua, Florence, Venice... The origins of Baroque are in the Italian peninsula between the 16th and 17th centuries. Having an effect on literature, theatre, philosophy, architecture and music, it was characterised by exaggerated movement, an abundance of

decoration, true exuberance and sometimes true contrasts.

### **In terms of painting...**

Baroque painting began in Italy in the 17th century.

What was special about it? Very detailed bodies, like those visible in Michelangelo's "Archangel".

Of course perspective is used, just like light and shadow.

### **The main characteristics of Baroque painting:**

- Warm and vibrant colours
- Contrasting light Impressions of movement
- Very expressive people exchanging glances

Some famous Baroque painters:

**Michel-Ange - Rembrandt - Johannes Vermeer - Francisco Zurbarán - Diego Velásquez - Peter Paul Rubens - Antoine Van Dyck - Trophime Bigot - Le Caravage?**

## **Focus on Classicism**

Between 1660 and 1715, artistic codes changed in France as they did in the rest of Europe. This was a real return to values, the search for perfection, the influence of Ancient Greece and Rome. Unlike Baroque, Classicism campaigned for the search of the right balance between passion and reason.

### **In terms of painting...**

Classical painting was inspired by Raphael, the undisputed master of the subject, who always depicted beautiful characters, nobles, straight from Antiquity or Greco-Latin mythology.

In "classical" paintings, composition took precedence over colour, meaning there were strict and precise rules on how to depict nature.

Some famous Classical painters:

**Nicolas Poussin - Claude Lorrain - Charles Le Brun - Louis Le Nain?**

# What is Rococo?

It is also known as 'rocaille', a method of decoration using pebbles and shells.

Born in the 18th century, this movement had its largest effect on architecture, but also painting and decorative art in Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Like the Baroque movement, it placed grandiloquence at the centre of its works and was characterised by a style that was as busy as it was ostentatious and exuberant.

## In terms of painting...

Pastel colours, shapes with generous curves, cherubs and depictions of love, some risqué scenes and aristocratic couples on walks are just a few examples.

Rococo painting was light and full of roundness and grace.

Who was the most iconic Rococo artist? Jean-Antoine Watteau (Pilgrimage to Cythera, La Coquette) who particularly inspired François Boucher (Diana Bathing) and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (The Bolt, The Adoration of the Shepherds).

Some famous Rococo artists:

**Jean-Antoine Watteau - François Boucher - Giovanni Battista Tiepolo - Jean-Honoré Fragonard?**

# Neoclassicism: truly a new art?

From roughly 1750 to 1830, this artistic movement, which appeared mostly in France, rejected colour to concentrate on the perfection of lines.

After Baroque and the lightness of the Rococo style, Neoclassicism relied on virtue and simplicity, like the works of Ancient Greece or Republican Rome.

Neoclassicism was searching above all therefore for excellence in art and aesthetic 'canons'.

## In terms of painting...

Here are the main characteristics of Neoclassicism:

- Paintings with straight angles
- Themes from Ancient Greece or Rome

- Form taking precedence over colour
- A composition often split into two
- A return to simplicity
- Rejection of the Rococo style

Some famous Neoclassical painters:

**Jacques-Louis David - François-Pascal-Simon Gérard?**

## Now for Romanticism

Appearing in the 18th century in Great Britain, then in Germany, the beginning of the 19th century needed to arrive before the Romantic movement reached the shores of France, Italy and Spain.

Like Rococo in its era, Romanticism wanted a clean break from the Classical movements that preceded it.

On the contrary, Romanticism was present in all art forms to express the ecstasy and torment of hearts and souls. It championed mystery, fantasy, escape, nature and delight in dreams, the sublime and the past. These feelings were resolutely opposed to reason.

### In terms of painting...

As proof of this fierce opposition, Romanticism was born when the Neoclassical movement was already well-established. Did Neoclassicism praise the ideal beauty, virtue, the line and Antiquity? Romanticism only swore by the heart, passion, the irrational, disorder and the worship of the Middle Ages and Northern European mythology.

The Romantic artists were largely inspired by the historical events they were experiencing, starting with the wars that tore Europe apart.

The main characteristics of Romantic painting:

- Worship of the Middle Ages, the climate of the North and exotic civilisations
- Individualism, sentimentalism and mysticism
- Violence
- Politically revolutionary ideas
- Neo-baroque spirit
- The omnipresence of nature

Some famous Romantic painters:

**William Turner - Johann Heinrich Füssli - Francisco Goya - Eugène Delacroix ?  
Théodore Géricault?**

## Tip :

- You can use a roller for quick inking in one colour. Press hard during the first dry to get the ink in.
- Wipe the edges of your plate well after the wiping phase with a cloth very lightly soaked with white spirit to avoid finding black marks around your engraving.
- Don't wait to put your print to dry between two blotters and under weights, so that your print is flat.

## See also

### Set out to discover the XIXth century



This work sheet will take you on a discovery of the XIXth century. A major turning point in history, the XIXth century (from 1815 to 1914 approximately) was above all THE century of Europe and the second industrial revolution.

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