Chapter 24 - Baroque
17th Century - Italy & Spain
The term “Baroque” means irregularly shaped” or “odd,” a negative work that evolved in the 18th century to describe the Baroque’s departure from the Italian Renaissance.

The Counter-Reformation, which symbolized the Catholic resurgence, finds an artistic parallel in Baroque art.

Baroque artist experiment with different art forms, such as genre paintings, landscapes, and still-life paintings. They bring them artistically to the same level as traditional subjects.

Baroque architecture is associated with the majestic royal courts of Europe.
Vocabulary

- **Quadro riportato & Di sotto in su**: both are types of ceiling painting.
  - **Quadro riportato** is a wall mural that is executed on a curved ceiling. To view the work, one must stand in a particular spot in order for it to appear right side up. The Sistine Chapel is an example.
  - **Di sotto in su** (from the bottom up) works are ceiling paintings in which the figures seem to be hovering above viewers, often looking down at us.

- **Tenebroso/Tenebrism**: a dramatic dark and light contrast in a painting
St. Peter’s Plan Comparison

Bramante, 1505

Michelangelo 1546

Maderno 1606-12
24.-3: Carlo Maderno, Facade of Saint Peters 1607-1612, Rome
Bernini’s, Colonnade of Saint Peter

- Huge plaza that can hold half a million people
- Bernini wanted a surprising transition between the crowded streets of Rome and the giant vista of St. Peter’s
- Colonnade acts as a dramatic gesture of embracing arms, symbolically brings the faithful into the building
- Shaped like a keyhole; St. Peter holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven
Gianlorenzo Bernini, Baldacchino, 1624-1633, bronze, Saint Peter's, Vatican City, Rome

- Over the main altar of St. Peter’s, four twisting corkscrew columns that spiral upward
- Acts as a shrine and canopy over the grave of Saint Peter, buried under the basilica
- Bees and suns appear prominently on top corners; symbols of the patrons, Barberini family
- Symbol of the Counter-Reformation spirit
- Feat of bronze casting

Baldacchino – a canopy placed over an altar or a shrine
In mid-action, swinging the slingshot, a shepherd's weapon, at Goliath – the most dramatic moment.

Harp at David’s feet symbolizes his role as a musician that he had to give up when he fought.

Bernini’s idealized self-portrait in the face of David; intensive gaze.

Meant to be seen from multiple views.

Its unrestrained action demands space around it.

Use of negative space animates sculpture and surroundings.

24-6: Gianlorenzo Bernini, David, 1623, marble, 5’7”
Bernini, David

Compare Diskobolos

• Intense concentration on David’s face
Donatello’s David
Verrocchio’s David
Michelangelo’s David
Bernini’s David
A sculptural interpretation of Saint Theresa’s diary in which tells of her visions of God, many involving an angel descending with an arrow and plunging it into her

- Natural light redirected onto the sculpture from a window hidden above the work
- Marble handled in a tactile way to reveal textures; skin is high gloss, feathers of angel are rougher, drapery is animated and fluid, clouds are roughly cut
- Figures seem to float in their space, with the rays of God’s light symbolically illuminating the scene from behind

24-7: Bernini, Ecstasy of Saint Teresa, 1645-1652, marble, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, 11’6”
- Saint Theresa’s pose suggests exhaustion, a feeling that is consistent with her description of spiritual ecstasy described in her diary entries.
- Passionate drama
- Stagelike setting with the patrons, members of the Cornaro family, sitting in theatre boxes looking on and commenting – theater for production of this mystical drama.
- He used full capabilities of architecture, sculpture, and painting to charge the entire chapel with tension.
24-9: Francesco Borromini, San Carlo alle Quattro, 1638-1641, Rome

- It is on the square with the four fountains
- Alternating convex and concave patterns and undulating volumes in ground plan and façade
- Façade higher than the rest of the building
- Interior side chapels merge into central space
- Walls treated sculpturally
- Borromini worked in shades of white, avoided colors used in many Baroque buildings

Dome
- Interior dome oval shaped and coffered
Undulating Façade/motion – creating a dynamic counterpoint of concave and convex elements on two levels. He enhanced the three-dimensional effect with deeply recessed niches.
Chapel of Saint Ivo
Barrel vaulted ceiling combines “quadro ripportato” (framed paintings) and “di sotto in su” painting – resembling easel paintings on a wall.

- Idealized bodies in a variety of poses
- Commissioned to celebrate the wedding of the cardinal’s brother.
- Vigorous movements
- Rich color
- Figures overlap the painted and stucco frames, sitting on them, putting their hands over them
- Rich colors inspired by the Venetians

Quadro ripportato
24-17: CARAVAGGIO
Calling of St. Matthew
Ca. 1597-1601
Oil on canvas

Chiaroscuro = light

Conversion of Saint Paul

Tenebrism = violent contrasts of light and dark. Chiaroscuro is part of it.
• Light comes in from two sources of light, creating a tenebroso effect on figures
• Diagonal shaft of light points directly to Saint Matthew, who points to himself as if unsure that Christ would select a tax collector, depicting a moment in time.
• Christ’s hand gesture is similar to Adam’s on the Sistine Chapel ceiling
• The moment in which Christ inspires him to follow him.
• Dressed in latest Baroque fashion
• Narrow stage for figures to sit and stand
• Only slight suggestion of halo on Christ’s head indicates sanctity of the scene
• Sensual figures, everyday characteristics
• Naturalist approach to Baroque
• Christ’s body placed in a grave; painting placed over an altar so Christ is symbolically being placed on the altar
• Figures pushed forward toward the picture place
• Stone slab seems to come forward into our space
• Nicodemus (figure looking at us) said to be Caravaggio

Caravaggio

*Entombment*

Chapel of Pietro Vittrice, Santa Maria in Vallicella
Rome, Italy

ca. 1603, oil on canvas
9 ft. 10 1/8 in. x 6 ft. 15/16 in.
• Influence of Caravaggio in the tenebrism and gory details
• Dramatic lighting, emotional pathos
• Face of Judith a self-portrait, the artist identified with Old Testament heroines;
• She was raped by a male teacher—an event that went to trial
• She specialized in painting images of women triumphing over men
Reni, Aurora ceiling in the Casino Rospigliosi

• Classicist trend in painting
• Quadro riportato
• Influenced by Raphael
• Soft modeling, sweet airy vision

• Aurora leads Apollo's chariot, Cupid and the Seasons dance about the heavenly car

Ceiling fresco in Gran Salone, Palazzo Barberini, Rome

• Naturalist trend in painting
• Symbols of the Barberini family include the bees and laurel wreaths
• Figures move easily in an open space unified by extensive use of light and color
• Ceiling subdivided by a painted architectural framework that figures spill over
• Divine Providence appears in a halo of light directing immortality, holding a crown of stars, to bestow eternal life on the family of Pope Urban VIII
Fra Andrea Pozzo, *Glorification of Saint Ignatius*
Spain
Diego Velazquez,
*Water Carrier of Seville*, 1619, oil on canvas

- Early work of Velazquez shows intense interest in Caravaggio tenebrism
- Deceptively simple genre scene has a sacred quality about the expressions, the handling over of the glass, clarity of the water
- Rounded volumes of the foreground figures, the water jug
- Water is sweetened by the fresh fig placed for flavor
Diego Velazquez, *Surrender of Breda*

- Imaginary landscape of Breda tenderly rendered in the background; a cross is formed in a distant lake-symbolic of Catholic domination over Protestant forces.
- Soldiers’ mutual respect in honoring the valor of the other side
- Open space in center of painting emphasizes the keys and the symbolism of a city resigned
- Velazquez never met the Dutch, nor had he been to Breda

- Depicts the 1625 episode in which the Dutch were forced to yield the town of Breda to the Spanish
- Stresses the graciousness of the Spanish victors, militarily dignified, a uniform fight force, magnanimous in victory
- Dutch on left: more scattered, less organized, youthful
- Spanish weapons arrayed to symbolize military might of victors; Dutch weapons appear less organized and inconsequential
24-30: Diego Velazquez, *Las Meninas* 1656, oil on canvas, 10’5” X 9’

- Group portrait of the artist in his studio at work; he steps back from the canvas and looks at the viewer
- Velazquez wears the cross of the Royal Order of Santiago, elevating him to knighthood
- Painting hung in Philip IV’s study
King and queen appear in a mirror. But what is the mirror reflecting; Velazquez’s canvas? They have turn around or is it a reflection?

- Alternating darks and lights draw us deeper into the canvas; the mirror simultaneously reflects out into our space.
- Dappled effect of light on shimmering surfaces.
- Cunning contrast of real, mirrored, and picture space, to elevate both himself and the profession of painting in the eyes of Philip IV.
Summary

- The Baroque has always symbolized the grand, the majestic, the colorful, and the sumptuous in European art.
- It is characterized by a sense of ceaseless movement.
- Caravaggio and Gentileschi, use dramatic contrast of light and dark to highlight the movement of the figures.
- The Baroque achieves a splendor through an energetic interaction reminiscent of Hellenistic Greek art, which serves as its original role model.