CHAPTER 25
BAROQUE

Flanders, Dutch Republic, France, & England
Flanders

- After Martin Luther’s Reformation the region of Flanders was divided.
  - The Northern half became the Dutch Republic, present day Holland
  - The southern half became Flanders, Belgium
- The Dutch Republic became Protestant and Flanders became Catholic
- The Dutch painted genre scenes and Flanders artists painted religious and mythological scenes
Europe in the 17th Century

- 30 Years War (1618 – 1648) began as Catholics fighting Protestants, but shifted to secular, dynastic, and nationalistic concerns.
- Idea of united Christian Empire was abandoned for secular nation-states.

- Philip II’s (r. 1556 – 1598) repressive measures against Protestants led northern provinces to break from Spain and set up Dutch Republic.
- Southern Provinces remained under Spanish control and retained Catholicism as official religion. Political distinction between Holland and Belgium reflect this original separation – religious and artistic differences.
25-2: Peter Paul Rubens, *Elevation of the Cross, 1610-1611, oil on canvas, 15 X 11. each wing 15 X 5* 

- Most sought after artist of his time - Ambassador, diplomat, and court painter.
- Painting style
  - Sculptural qualities in figures
  - Dramatic chiaroscuro
  - Color and texture like the Venetians
  - Theatrical presentation like the Italian Baroque
  - Dynamic energy and unleashed passion of the Baroque

- Triptych acts as one continuous space across the three panels.
- Rubens studied Renaissance and Baroque works; made charcoal drawings of Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel and the Laocoon and his 2 sons.
- Shortly after returning home, commissioned by Saint Walburga in Antwerp to paint altarpiece – Flemish churches affirmed their allegiance to Catholicism and Spanish Hapsburg role after Protestant iconoclasm in region.
Subject provided opportunity to depict muscular men in unusual poses straining to lift heavy cross – similar to Michelangelo’s twisting figures.

Prowess in painting foreshortened anatomy.

Contortions of violent action as well as expressions on faces shows emotional tension.

Body of Christ on cross cuts dynamically across canvas.

Spontaneity of expression, Intensely religious, yet possessing exuberance and passion

Highlights/deep shadows inspired by Caravaggio’s tenebrism.

Later developed more subtle coloristic style, human body in action remained the focus of his paintings.
25-3: Peter Paul Rubens  *Arrival of Marie de’ Medici at Marseilles*
1622-1625, oil on canvas, 12’11” X 9’7”

- Splendor of Baroque imagery reinforced right to rule
- Marie arrives in France after a sea voyage
- Heroic gestures, demonstrative spiraling figures
- Intensity of color, inspired by Titian and Caravaggio
- Sumptuous full-fleshed women
- 21 huge historical paintings allegorically retelling the life of Marie de’ Medici, Queen of France, wife of Henry IV, 4 years to complete
- Splendid costumes suggest opulent theatrical production
- Allegories assist in telling the story and mix freely with historical people
- Personification of France bows with fleu-de-liris on cloak, Neptune and Nereids (nymphs) salute her, allegorical figure of Fame/Victory overhead
- Only immobile figure is commander under Medici coat of arms.
In a 1638 letter, Rubens explained the meaning of each figure in this allegorical painting.

The fluid articulation of human forms in this work and energy emanating from the chaotic scene are hallmarks of Ruben's mature style.

Allegory of the Outbreak of War

Peter Paul Rubens
Rubens’ most famous pupil, Van Dyck, left Antwerp not to be overshadowed, ended up in London – court portraitist to Charles I.

• Courtly manner of great elegance – influenced English portraiture into 19th century.
• Regal poise and air of absolute authority – Charles’ Parliament resented and would soon rise against him.
• Charles I of England walking before his bowing horse
• Image of royalty at east in a natural setting, Thames river in background
• Engages the viewer with a direct look, he is of short, but looks down on the observer.
• Charles’ s shortness minimized by his relationship to the figures around him

25-5: Anthony Van Dyck, Charles I Dismounted, c. 1635, oil on canvas
Still life with Flowers
“Baroque” in 17th century
Dutch Republic

- 17th century – changes in financial systems, lifestyles, trading patterns, along with expanding colonialism created worldwide marketplace.
- Founded Bank of Amsterdam in 1609 which became center of European transfer banking.
- Upper class – ship owners, rich businesspeople, high-ranking officers, directors of large companies as well as traders, craftspeople, bureaucrats, and soldiers had more disposable income to buy art.
- Subjects consistent with Calvinist disdain for ostentation – small low-key works including portraits (most expensive), still lifes, landscapes, and genre scenes.
- While prints were cheapest; size of work, quality of frame, and reputation of artist determined price of artworks.
- Artwork produced for anonymous market, specialization common; work sold during studio visits, art dealers, exhibitions, fairs, auctions, and even lotteries. Often used to paid off debts . . . to tavern owners, who became art dealers, like Vermeer and his father.
Gerrit van Honthorst, *Supper Party*

**Genre painting** – painting in which scenes of everyday life are depicted
Frans Hals

- Specialist in single, marriage, and group portraits
- Achieved fame by painting complex groupings of Dutch fraternal organization
- Impasto technique – pigment is applied thickly or in heavy lumps
- Lively, quick, and amiable expression on figures

The Women Regents

Jester with a Lute, c.1623
Two distinct groups showing a split in the political and social structure of the company; group on the right more relaxed; group on left surrounds Colonel Loo, who is authoritarian and commanding.

Shows Hals’s ability to assess personalities and characters.

Celebrations (often included sitting for a group portrait) could last a week, before an ordinance was passed and limited them to 3 – 4 days.

- Portrait artists for Dutch middle-class, (Calvinists who shunned ostentation and wore subdued, dark clothing) could not use established conventions for painting nobles – specific poses, settings, attire, and furnishings to convey a sense of the sitter.

- Hals’ brush was spontaneous and light as the momentary expressions he captured.

- This commemorated the participation of Dutch (middle class) in civic organizations – a militia group that claimed credit for liberating the Dutch Republic from Spain.

- Depicted members of troop with uniformity of attire creating a lively rhythm energizing the portrait as well as individuals – movements and moods vary markedly.
• A student of Hals, impasto brushwork reminiscent of Hals
• Detailed, precise, accurate, but also spontaneous as her master’s work,
• Self-Portrait shows a self-consciously secure artist at work at her craft, quick smile and relaxed pose.
• Turns around to chat, while engage in her work
• Genre scenes like comic figure on canvas, painting a fiddle who also turns and smiles at us
• Image of the successful capable artist
• Not wearing traditional artist’s smock – elegant attire marks her as member of well-to-do family.

25-11: Judith Leyster, Self-Portrait, c. 1633, Oil on canvas
Return of the Prodigal Son

REMBRANDT VAN RIJN

• Hals’ younger contemporary, leading Dutch painter – versatile, master of light and shadow

• Trained as history painter in Leiden, moved to Amsterdam around 1631 – more extensive clientele, became a portrait painter.

• He lived beyond his means, buying art, prints (often used in his paintings), and rarities. Rembrandt avoided bankruptcy in 1656, by selling most of his paintings and antiquities. The sale list included Old Master paintings, drawings as well as busts of Roman Emperors, many Asian objects including Japanese armor, and collections of minerals. Later, he was forced to sell his house and printing-press. He was buried in an unmarked grave.
25-12: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp, 1632, oil on canvas*

- Rembrandt’s first group portrait, – Painted at age 26, beginning of career.
- Specific anatomy lesson of January 1632, public anatomy lessons lasted 4 to 5 days
- Dr. Tulp is seating in a place of honor; wears a rimmed hat that is an academic badge of a chairman; his hands are prominently displayed
- Compares the corpse with the drawing in a great book on the right, and the positioning of his own arm
- Influence by Caravaggio and tenebros
- Each “student” is portrayed specifically with poses and expressions reflecting their interest in the demonstration.

Hals used horizontal orientation of typical traditional portraiture, Rembrandt clustered subjects on left side of painting, diagonally placed and foreshortened the corpse.
Rembrandt van Rijn

25-13: Night Watch, 1642, oil on canvas

• 18 men portrayed in the commission, represented according to how much each paid; individual sitters knew beforehand whether they would be partially or full represented
• Militia marching out on patrol or on parade
• Captain Cocq holds a baton and wears a red sash; speaking as he comes forward; Lt. Ruytenburgh holds a partisan, is dressed in yellow
• Emphasis on the glove, a challenge or a victory, highlighted by the gold background
• Allegorical figure of girl in gold carrying a large white chicken dangling form her waist; girl is a kind of mascot; the claws of the chicken symbolize the militia

• Central group comes forward, subordinate lateral groups move behind
• A misnomer, not a night scene, but the result of varnish used.
• Civic-guard group commissioned portrait and paid fee. City officials trimmed painting when moved to town hall in 1710.
• Depicted loading, firing, and readying the musket for reloading
• Rembrandt did many self-portraits revealing great psychological tension
• They capture his various states of mind: suffering, dignified, weariness, satisfaction
• Penetrating gazes
• Soft chiaroscuro lighting

25-15: Rembrandt, Self-Portrait
Oil on canvas, c. 1659-1660
Jesus feels the pain of the infirm and the handicapped, touching and preaching (Matthew 19); intense and emotional rendering of poignant scene in the New Testament.

Great contrast of dark recession on right with lightly sketched left side, 2nd source of light creates shadow of praying man on Christ’s tunic.

So-called the 100 Guilder Print, because of the high price the print earned when sold. Not the celestial triumph of Catholic Church, but humanity and humility of Jesus preaching and blessing the blind, lame and young.

Young man in elegant garments, head in hand lamenting Christ’s insistence that wealthy needed to give up possessions to poor to gain entrance to heaven.
Jacob van Ruisdael,
View of Haarlem
From the Dunes
At Overveen
- Painter of interior scenes for middle-class patrons
- Except for two landscapes, his works portray intimate scenes in the interior of Dutch homes
- Completed only 32 paintings, income from innkeeper and art dealer in Delft.
- Orthogonals lead to hand with balance for weighing gold.
- Vermeer was a Catholic convert - lead a temperate, self-aware life balanced with virtuous behavior.
- Mirror on wall symbolized self knowledge or vanity (jewelry)
- Last Judgment on back wall (Christ as weigher of souls)
- Used mirrors & camera obscura, but reworked compositions – quadrilateral shapes

**JAN VERMEER, Woman Holding a Balance, ca. 1664. Oil on canvas, 1’ 4” X 1’ 2”**
Artist using a camera obscura, ca. 1870
Viewer looks into a private world in which seemingly small gestures take on a significance greater than what first appears.

Figures seem unaware of our presence.

Artist himself appears in the painting, with his back to us and dressed in “historical” clothing.

Model wearing a laurel wreath and holding a trumpet.

Map on the back wall – another reference to history.

The viewer is outside the space of action, looking through the drawn curtain, which separates the artist in his studio from the rest of the house.

The light radiating from an unseen window on the left, illuminating both the model and the canvas being painted, alludes to the light of artistic inspiration.

Allegory of the Art of Painting
1670-1675, oil on canvas
- Searching shoes for gifts
- Boy in tears because he only received a birch rod.
- Festive atmosphere contrasts to Vermeer’s decorum.
- Allegorical dimension and moral tone – children's activities as satirical comments on foolish adult behaviors.
- Allusion to selfishness, pettiness and jealousy – also seen in other paintings.

Morality and humility central to Calvinist faith – reminded viewer of life’s transience with references to death: skull, timepiece, tipped glass, and cracked walnut – passage of time, something or someone that was here and is gone.
To reflect prosperity and Dutch maritime trade – Indian floral carpet and Chinese jar to store ginger (luxury item)
- Venetian and Dutch glassware and silver dish
- Watch, Mediterranean peach, peeled lemon suggests work is a vanitas painting, consistent with Calvinist values.
France
France was Europe’s largest and most powerful nation in the 17th c.

Louis XIV is every inch the Baroque absolute rule in a Baroque setting wearing Baroque costuming; he is 63 yet appears in his coronation robes. Louis XIV sought to determine the direction of French society and culture – greatest French art patron.

Because of Divine right (king’s absolute power is God’s will), “the Sun King’s” power was incontestable.

With his advisor, Jean-Baptise Colbert, art and architecture served the state – propaganda/ cultivated a public persona.

Workshop of specialized artists, many portraits were a group effort (not Rigaud’s).

Ballet dancer in youth and proud of legs, exposes them for us to admire, Looks down on viewer even though he was only 5’ 4” & invented the shoes

Hung over throne when away, courtiers not permitted to turn backs on it.

Elaborate velvet robes, scepter in hand, crown at his side, sword noticeably place as a military weapon and a phallic symbol
25-26: Palace at Versailles
Versailles, France, begun 1669

Mansart and
Charles Le Brun
- Converted royal hunting lodge into great palace, ¼ mile long, managed by Charles le Brun
- Greatest architectural project of the age – symbol of Louis XIV’s power & ambition
- Satellite city housed government officials kept under king’s close supervision – 3 radial avenues, axes in king’s bedroom/official audience chamber.
- Vast park, designed by André le Notre, transformed entire forest into a park – one of world’s greatest artwork in size and concept.

Palace of Versailles, outside Paris, France, begun 1669.
- Temporal artwork, changing with time, weather, and position of observer
- Light/shadow, formal/informal, dense growth/open meadows play against each other.
- Formal gardens near palace – rational transition from architectural forms to natural living ones.
- Focal points in forms of sculptures groups, a pavilion, a reflecting pool, or a fountain.
Overlooks park from 2nd floor, width most of central block.

Hundreds of mirrors set opposite windows, alleviate hall’s tunnel-like quality and illusionistically extend width of room.

Mirror was favorite element of Baroque interior design.

**JULES HARDOUIN-MANSART and CHARLES LE BRUN, Galerie des Glaces (Hall of Mirrors), palace of Louis XIV, Versailles, France, ca. 1680.**
Royal Chapel
25-31: Nicolas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia, c. 1655, oil on canvas*

• Poussin of Normandy spent most of life in Rome, producing paintings modeled on Titian and Raphael
• Even light, thoughtful, reserved mood.
• Youth with foot on boulder from Roman statues of Neptune, leaning on trident; female from countless draped statues surviving in Italy from Roman times.

• Poussin believed painting should edify, show moral meaning
• Inscription on memorial, “I too am in Arcadia”
• ill-educated shepherds, who live an idyllic life, find it difficult to read the inscription on the tombstone – female may be spirit of death, found even in Arcadia.
• Allegorical female figure of Arcadia gently places her hand on the back of one of the shepherds
• Shepherd reading inscription has a shadow that forms the figure of the Grim Reaper
• Background suggest youthful trees, mature trees, and dead trunks
• This expresses the grave dignity of a peasant family made stoic by hardship. It reflects 17th century French social theory, which celebrates the natural virtue of those who worked the soil.
• Because of the Thirty Years’ War, life was hard and never easy.
• This shows the anguish and frustration of the peasantry.

25-34: Louis Le Nain, *Family of Country People* ca. 1640, Oil on canvas
Inspired by Palladio, introduced the Palladian style to England
Built for James I of England to replace a hall destroyed by fire
Modest emphasis on the center of the façade
Central bay of six windows framed by engaged columns
Flat pilasters recessed around window
Rusticated basement level
Two stories of window disguise one large room on the interior

Balustraded roof - a row of repeating balusters - small posts that support the upper rail of a railing. Staircases and porches often have balustrades.
25-38: Sir Christopher Wren, Saint Paul’s Cathedral
London, England, 1675-1710
SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN
ew Saint Paul’s Cathedral

- Mathematical genius and skilled engineer
- Charles II asked Wren to prepare a plan to restore old Gothic church of Saint Paul.
- Then Great Fire of London destroyed old structure and many churches in the city in 1666, which Wren subsequently designed
- Travels in France at the time of the Louvre design – superimposed paired columnar porticos; harmonized Palladian, French, and Italian Baroque features.
- Legacy significant and long-lasting in England and Colonial America

Borromini’s Chapel of Saint Ivo, 1642 (Baroque)

Palladio’s Villa Rotonda, ca. 1550-1570 (Renaissance)