

# Neoclassicism

1765 - 1830

# Style Influences

- A burst in **archeological discoveries** in the 18th century led to new insights & attitudes towards ancient history.



- Rome, the European art centre, was the breeding ground for Neoclassicism.





- Achievements in science encouraged the belief that social, intellectual, and moral reforms could be effected through the acquisition of knowledge and the application of reason.

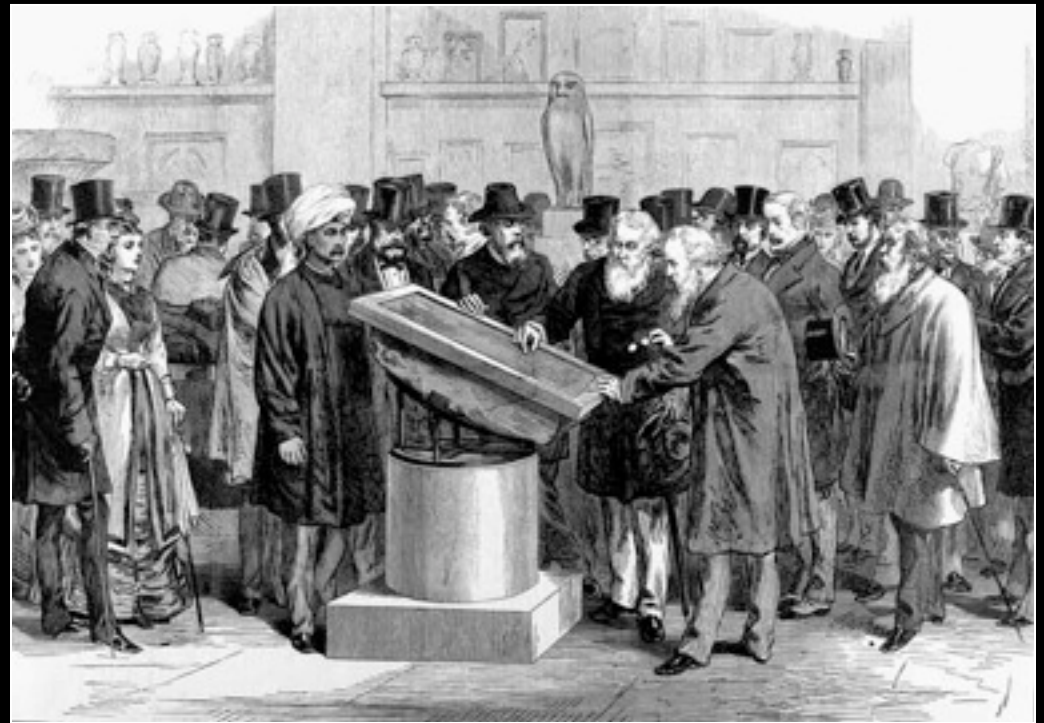


- Rise of Art Academies to improve the intellectual training of artists and architects and to ensure that the objectives of these "academics" were aligned with those of the state.



- Publicly displayed art

- From the private collections of the rich, PUBLIC MUSEUMS & GALLERIES began opening.



The Rosetta Stone on display in the British Museum in 1874

# Neoclassicism

- Neoclassicism began after 1765, as a reaction against both the surviving Baroque and Rococo styles, and as a desire to return to the perceived "purity" of the arts of Rome, and the "ideals" of Ancient Greek arts.
- It was a revival of ancient classical styles.

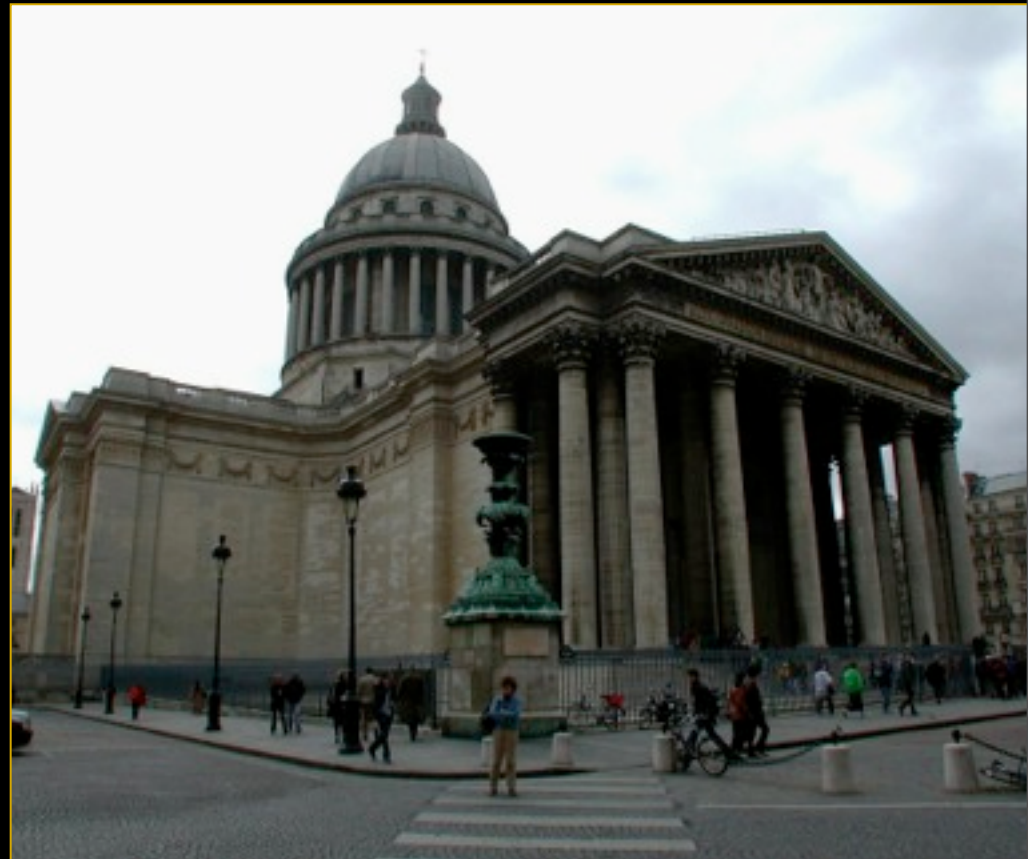


San Carlino alle Quattro Fontane,  
1638-41 Italian Baroque by Borromini



## Architectural differences?

Panthéon (Paris), 1755-1792, Neoclassical  
church



## Rococo

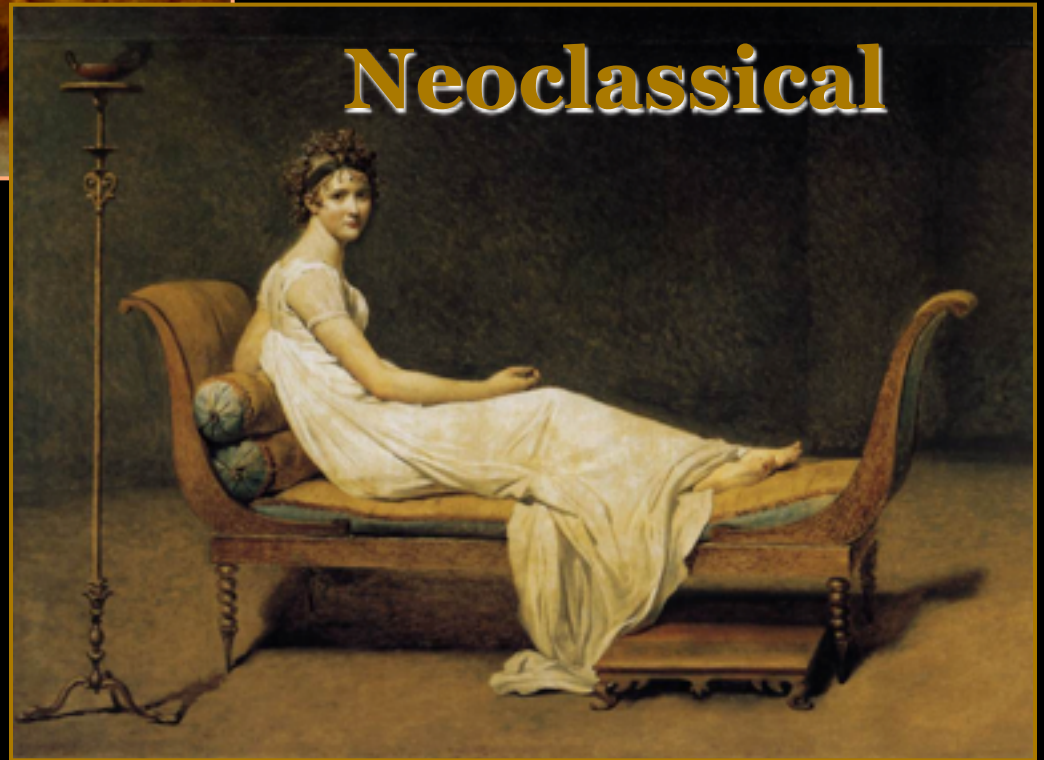


Compare these two depictions of women:

What differences can you perceive in design of the composition and the décor?

What about differences in subject matter or the message of each?

## Neoclassical



# Themes

Moral virtue

Civic dedication

Heroism

Self-sacrifice

Patriotism

# Painting Style Characteristics

**VALUES:** Order, seriousness, noble gestures such as courage, sacrifice & love of country

**TONE /MOOD:** Calm, rational, rejecting the flamboyant & sensual art of the Baroque & Rococo eras. Unemotional rather than expressive

**SUBJECT MATTER:** Greek & Roman history

**PAINTING STYLE FEATURES &TECHNIQUES:**

- a. Severe, precisely drawn figures, with hard, crisp edges that often seem frozen in action.
- b. Backgrounds simple, uncluttered to avoid the Rococo melodrama and generally included Roman touches like arches or columns.
- c. Compositions were ...



# Leading French Artist: Jacques Louis David

- 3 brothers swear to defeat their enemies or die for Rome.

Political propaganda  
Dutiful patriotism



*Oath of the Horatii, 1784*

- David set the standard characteristics of the style: invisible brush strokes, hard edges, symmetry, “staged”-like compositions, heroism, Roman touches



## David, *The Death of*

Represents a scene of the death of Greek philosopher Socrates, condemned to die by drinking hemlock, for the expression of his ideas against those of Athens' and corrupting the minds of youth.



The painting also depicts Plato sitting remorsefully at the edge of the bed. Socrates had the choice to go into exile (and hence give up his philosophic vocation) or be sentenced to death by drinking hemlock. Socrates heroically chose death. In this painting, a red-robed disciple hands a confident Socrates the goblet of hemlock. Socrates' hand pointing to the heavens indicating his respect of the gods and fearless attitude to his death (and is probably influenced by the central scene of the *The School of Athens* by Raphael).



## *Death of Marat*, **David**, 1793

Depicts a radical journalist lying dead in his bath after his murder. (Marat had a skin condition and would often seek comfort of a cold bath)

Marat was a French Revolutionary and was stabbed to death by a member of an aristocratic family.

David was a good friend of Marat, which is probably why this painting is idealized. David painted this to commemorate a martyred hero.

**Ingres** became the leader of the Neoclassical painters after David's death in 1825. Ingres's style was more flat and linear than David, and he focused on contour. His drawings and paintings duplicate nature. His technique as a painter was academically flawless.



Famous for  
portraiture



# Neoclassical Architecture

Neoclassical, or "new" classical, architecture describes buildings that are inspired by the classical architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. A Neoclassical building is likely to have some or all of these features:



US Capital Building in Washington

# Neoclassical Sculpture

- Profoundly influenced by ancient art since the Renaissance.
- Neo-Classical sculptors avoided the dramatic twisting poses characteristic of late Baroque and Rococo sculpture.
- They preferred:



**Canova, Apollo  
Crowning Himself, 1781**



# Neoclassical Style in Summary

- Neoclassicism emphasized order and reason, restraint, common sense, and religious, political, economic and philosophical moderation.
- Their emphasis was on proper subject matter and artists eliminated unnecessary details to focus on the overall design.
- They employed concepts like symmetry, proportion, unity, harmony, and grace.
- As in the Renaissance, the human was the most appropriate subject of art, and art itself as something that was properly...