Baroque: the Ornate Age

- Baroque Art succeeded in marrying the advanced techniques and grand scale of the High Renaissance to the intensity and emotion of Mannerism
  - Baroque Artist built upon past discoveries in painting and developed many different personalities such as Italian Realism or French Flamboyance but always had one common element sensitivity to and absolute mastery of light to achieve the maximum emotional impact
Origins

• Baroque began in Rome around 1600 when Catholic Popes financed magnificent new cathedrals and grand works to display the faiths triumphant Counter Reformation
  – It was meant to attract new worshippers by overwhelming them with the theatrical
  – Baroque then spread to France where absolute monarchs like Louis XIII and Louis XIV spend vast sums of money to glorify themselves and impress visitors to their palaces.
Italian Baroque

• Italian Artist pioneered the Baroque style before it spread to the rest of Europe
  – Italian Baroque Art had an emphasis on emotion rather than rationality and dynamism
  – Three artist one a painter {Caravaggio}, a sculptor {Bernini}, and an architect {Borromini} represent the best of Italian Baroque
Caravaggio

- Lived from 1571 to 1610
- Injected new life into Italian Painting
- Took realism to a new point, paining bodies in a realistic down and dirty style, unlike the pale Mannerist phantoms
- He secularized religious art, making saints and miracles seem like ordinary people and everyday life.
Caravaggio: The Sacrifice of Isaac (1598-99)

Caravaggio use of perspective brings the viewer into the actions and engages the viewers emotions while intensifying the scene through the use of dramatic light and dark contrast.

Using theatrical light from a single source on the subject he concentrates the viewers attention on the power of the event and the subjects response.

Caravaggio favored dark backgrounds.
Caravaggio: The Calling of St. Matthew (1599)

Caravaggio painted from nature, often from the real life immoral sub-culture found in the slums.

In the painting (right) he takes a biblical story about the calling of Matthew to be an apostle and recreates it where the apostle to be sits in a dark public house surrounded by dandies counting money, when Christ orders him “Follow me”. A strong diagonal beam of light illuminates the thunderstruck tax collector’s expression of astonishment.
Bernini

• Lived 1598 – 1610

• Greatest sculptor of the Italian Baroque Period
  – Also
    • Architect
    • Painter
    • Playwright
    • Composer
Bernini’s Masterpiece “the Ecstasy of St. Theresa”

The sculptor represents the Saint swooning on a cloud, her heart having been pierced by an angel’s dart that infused her with divine love.

Since the Counter-Reformation stressed the value of church members reliving Christ’s passion.

Bernini is able to, by use of theatrical stage craft, induce an intense religious experience in worshippers by creating not only the statue but the chapel and all the decorations that surround it.

By his skill Bernini made the marble flesh seem to quiver with life, emotion, drama, and passion.
Bernini’s Piazza of St. Peter’s (1656-57)

The Plaza was designed to imitate two arms reaching out from St. Peters to embrace the pilgrims visiting the Vatican.
Bernini: Coronaro Chapel (1645-52)
Borromini

• In Architecture he is the equal of Caravaggio
  – Created undulating walls that created a sense of being strobe-lit
  – He combined never before linked shapes in a startling fashion
French Baroque

- France was the most powerful country in Europe from 1600 to 1700.
- Kings like Louis XIV tapped the finest artist to glorify his monarchy
French Flamboyance

• Baroque spread to France where absolute monarchs like Louis XIII and Louis XIV spend vast sums of money to glorify themselves and impress visitors to their palaces.
  – Louis XIV’s Versailles and its gardens are an example of the Baroque Architecture and landscape design.
  – French Baroque art was not religiously themed but rather derived from Greek and Roman influences
    • Often the paintings were populated by pagan deities (Gods)
Versailles
La Tour

- Born in Northwestern France
- His style is unique in its depiction of common subject matter.
  - His work is mostly Genre (Daily Life) or religious scenes
- He was a follower of Caravaggio
- His paintings can be identified by his use of lighting in his nocturnal scenes the paintings are lighted by candles or torches which are hidden behind another object or the subjects hand
La Tour: Christ in the Carpenter Shop (1645)

La Tour was interested in nocturnal scenes.

The attention to the mood is found in the minute observation of the effects of light such as the translucency of the child’s hand silhouetted against the candle.

This painting could be a simple genre painting because it lacks any sense that it is religious in nature outside of the title.

La Tour has achieved a striking realism portraying Joseph with faithful detail.

The mood of the painting is tender and soft as one would expect between a father and his son.
La Tour: The Repentant Magdalen (1633-37)
Magdalen (detail)
The Flemish Baroque

- The Southern Netherlands {Flanders} or what we call Belgium today remained Catholic, while the Northern portion of the Netherlands {Holland} became a Protestant region.

- The Flemish Baroque Period is the story of one man Peter Paul Rubins (1577 – 1640)
Rubins

- A rare creative genius
- He spoke six languages
- Energy was the secret to his art
  - He completed more than 2,000 paintings
  - One painting symbolizes his style in religious painting and established Rubins as Europe’s best religious painter
The Decent from the Cross
(Rubins 1612)

The painting has all the traits of a mature Baroque style.

Theatrical lighting contrasted with a ominous black sky and glaringly spot lit Christ is designed to get a powerful emotional response.
Rubens: The Lamentation (1609-11)
Rubens: The Arrival of Marie de Medici (1621-25)

Rubens painted the arrival of the new French Queen Marie De’ Medici as a sensory extravaganza spilling with color and opulence.
Van Dyck

- Established as a painter at age 16
- Worked with Rubins for a few years
- People found his arrogant and snobbish
- His specialty was portraits
  - He was able to turn official images of royalty into real human beings
  - His style of posing royals in settings of classical columns and bucolic countryside's appeared to stop the action rather than look like a posed painting and gave a sense of humanity to the work
Van Dyke: Portrait of Charles I (1630)

This 1635 painting is a good example of the flattering official portraits of royals.
Van Dyke: The Assumption of the Virgin (1621)

This painting allows the observer to see the 1 to 7 ratio of head to body that Rubins used in his paintings.
Spanish Baroque

• Spain’s major contribution to the world of art was Diego Velazquez
  – He was a master painter by age 18
  – He painted Royal Portraits that were masterpieces of visual realism
    • He depicted the world as it appeared to his eye
  – He once painted Pope Innocent X, who exclaimed that the picture was too truthful and lifelike
Velázquez: Venus at her Mirror
1644-48)
Velazquez: The Maids of Honor
(1656-57)

In 1985 Velazquez’s painting “The maids of honor” was voted the worlds greatest painting.

The painting done in 1656 creates forms through color and light rather than through lines, achieving realistic images of the human figure.
The Maids of Honor (detail)
Dutch Baroque

• Holland {Northern Netherlands} was an independent, democratic, Protestant country
  – The strict Calvinist Protestant Churches forbade religious art in the church buildings
  – All the usual people who purchased art, churches, monarchs, and nobility; seemed to be absent in this region.
  – Artist were left at the mercy of the market place to earn a living
    • Fortunately there was a wealthy middle class of merchants who had a mania for art.
Vermeer

- Considered second only to Rembrandt among Dutch artist
- He is masterful in his use of light and color
  - His paintings had a sense of stability and calm
- He painted neat spare rooms, and simple domestic scenes
In this painting Vermeer’s subject is light and its effect on color and form.

The painting also is full of details such as the nail holes and marks on the white washed wall.
Ver Meer: The Love Letter (1669-70)
Rembrandt

- The best known painter in the western world
- He had to style periods
  - Early
    - Mostly portraits with a few religious scenes
    - The Bible scenes were intricately detailed and lit dramatically
  - Late
    - Gave up portraits and worked on more biblical and psychological subjects
    - Used more browns and reds
    - Had a theme of loneliness
    - Graduations of light to convey mood, character, and emotion
Rembrandt: The Blinding of Samson (1636)
Rembrandt: The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp
(1632)
Rembrandt: The Night Watch (1642)

An example of early style
Rembrandt painted over 100 self portraits.

This portrait portrays the dewey eyed youth. The intent was to use light and dark to find his inner being.
Rembrandt older, successful but showing the physical decay of age.

Once again he seeks the inner being by using Caravaggio chiaroscuro (light and dark) style.
Other Examples of the Baroque
Gentilischi: Judith and her servant
Slaying Holofernes (1612-21)
Tiepolo: The Apotheosis of the Spanish Monarchy (1762-66)
Residenzhall, Wurzburg
Residenzhall, Wurzburg
interior
Residenzhall, Wurzburg, ceiling