

# Baroque Art

1600-1750 A.D.

# BAROQUE AND ROCOCO

‘Baroque’ is the name given to the dramatic, emotional style of art which emerged across Europe in the 17th century. The term probably began as an insult derived from the Portuguese *barocco*, meaning ‘misshapen pearl.’ Sometimes, it is used to refer to the period during which this style flourished, as well as the style itself. It was followed, in the 18th century, by an elegant, decorative style known as Rococo, from the French *rocaille*, meaning ‘shells.’

Detail from *The Vision Of St. Joseph* (about 1638), by Baroque artist Philippe de Champaigne. You can see the whole picture on page 58.

# Baroque Art- WHY...

- If it isn't "broke" why fix it?
- The High Renaissance artists were so exceptional that artists after them created art very different– the Mannerist style.
- Mannerism distorted art ...the Baroque artists returned to the beauty of natural proportions but with a new twist..
- New... more movement and emotion. DC



# *LIGHT ACTION DRAMA*

*Triumph of the Barberini*  
by Pietro da Cortona  
1633-39 AD  
ceiling fresco  
Palazzo Barberini, Rome

## BAROQUE: THE ORNATE AGE

Baroque art (1600–1750) succeeded in marrying the advanced techniques and grand scale of the Renaissance to the emotion, intensity, and drama of Mannerism, thus making the Baroque era the most sumptuous and ornate in the history of art. While the term “baroque” is often used negatively to mean overwrought and ostentatious, the seventeenth century not only produced such exceptional artistic geniuses as Rembrandt and Velázquez but expanded the role of art into everyday life.

Artists now termed as Baroque came to Rome from all of Europe to study the masterpieces of Classical antiquity and the High Renaissance then returned to their homes to give what they learned their own particular cultural spin. Just as seventeenth-century colonists followed the sixteenth-century explorers, so too did these artists build upon past discoveries. While styles ranged from Italian realism to French flamboyance, the most common element throughout was a sensitivity to and

absolute mastery of light to achieve maximum emotional impact.

The Baroque era began in Rome around 1600 with Catholic popes financing magnificent cathedrals and grand works to display their faith's triumph after the Counter Reformation and to attract new worshipers by overwhelming them with theatrical, “must-see” architecture. It spread from there to France, where absolute monarchs ruled by divine right and spent sums comparable to the pharaohs to glorify themselves. Palaces became enchanted environments designed to impress visitors with the power and grandeur of the king. Wealth flowing in from the colonies funded the elaborate furnishings, gardens, and art of showplaces like Louis XIV's Versailles. Though just as

opulent as religious art, French paintings had nonreligious themes derived from Greek and Roman models, such as Poussin's calm landscapes populated by pagan deities.

In Catholic countries like Flanders, religious art flourished, while in the Protestant lands of northern Europe, such as England and Holland, religious imagery was forbidden. As a result, paintings tended to be still lifes, portraits, landscapes, and scenes from daily life. Patrons of art were not only prosperous merchants eager to show off their affluence but middle-class burghers buying pictures for their homes as well. From Rembrandt's “Nightwatch,” characteristic of Northern Baroque art to Rubens's sensuous, highly colored panoramas typical of Catholic Baroque, art of the period had a theatrical, stage-lit exuberance and drama.

**Caravaggio, “The Conversion of St. Paul,”** c. 1601, Santo Maria del Popolo, Rome. Although criticized for portraying holy figures as common people, Caravaggio's radical style of sharp light and dark contrasts changed European art.



**Tiepolo, “Apollo Conducts the Bride, Beatrice, to Babarossa of Burgundy,”** 1751–52, Residenz Palace, Würzburg, Germany. Tiepolo's ceiling fresco of gods and heroes floating heavenward showed the vigorous movement and vivid colors of Baroque art.

# Baroque

- Rome center for Baroque art
- Catholic church financed magnificent cathedrals & grand works to
- \* display faith's triumph after the Counter Reformation
- \* attract new worshipers – by overwhelming them with theatrical “must see” architecture
- (Then spread to France)



ITALY, FLANDERS AND SPAIN: AD1600 to AD1700

## Baroque Painting

In the 17th century a style of art known as Baroque developed. It was especially well suited to large scale pictures—the kind of painting you would expect to find in a church or palace. There was most demand for works like this in Roman Catholic countries such as Italy, Flanders and Spain.



Painted ceilings were very fashionable at this time. The artists painted stone structures so cleverly, that from the ground they look real. The figures are also painted as though seen from below and appear to be floating through the air. This effect is known as "illusionism".



The paintings of Caravaggio influenced painters all over Europe. He used strong contrasts of light and shadow to make his paintings more exciting. He often made the people and objects in his pictures seem to

burst out of the frame. In the one above, Jesus (in the middle) has just surprised his companions. The hand of one and the elbow of another seem to come out of the picture at you.



Two French artists, Claude Lorraine and Nicolas Poussin, spent most of their working lives in Rome. Many of their paintings show the hills and plains around Rome. This type of

painting is known as a "classical landscape". The figures are tiny, Roman ruins are often included, and the colours are soft greens, blues and browns.

### Studying ruins in Rome



The centre of Baroque art was Rome. Artists from all over Europe came to find out about the latest styles and fashions, and to study the great works of Ancient Rome and the High Renaissance. Many, like Caravaggio, Carracci, Claude and Poussin, made their homes there.



## A busy studio master



The Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens, worked in Italy as a young man. He learnt a great deal there. When he returned to Flanders his work was in such demand that he

employed other artists to work in his studio and had teams of pupils and assistants. Often he did very little of a painting himself, but supervised each stage of the work.



Many of Rubens' paintings are on big canvases and are full of life. He developed a very dramatic, free way

of painting, using big, energetic figures. This painting is called "The Battle of the Amazons".

## Famous artists

### Italy

AD1560/1609 Annibale Carracci  
AD1573/1619 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

### France

AD1594/1665 Nicolas Poussin  
AD1600/1685 Claude Lorraine

### Flanders

AD1577/1640 Peter Paul Rubens  
AD1598/1641 Anthony van Dyck

### Spain

AD1599/1660 Diego Velazquez  
AD1617/1682 Bartolomé Estebán Murillo



Rubens was often used as a diplomat by his patrons, who included the rulers of France, Spain, England and Flanders. Here he presents Charles I of England with a painting from the King of Spain, who wanted peace with England.

## At the Spanish court



In Spain, the most famous painter of this time was Diego Velazquez. He worked at court and painted many portraits of the king and his family. This one is of the young princess Margarita and Velazquez in his studio.

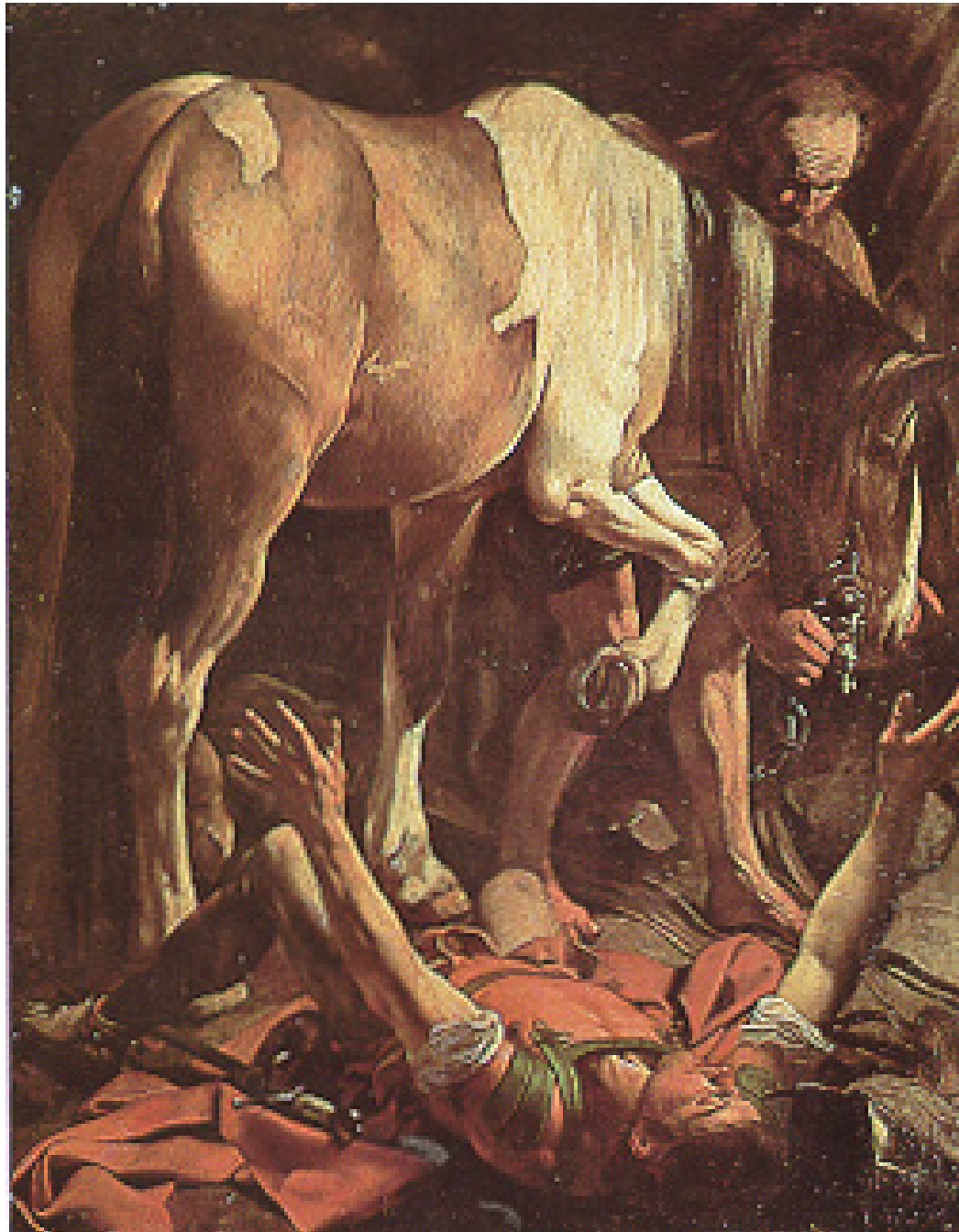
# Italian Baroque artists

- Painter- Caravaggio
- Sculptor- Bernini
- Architect- Bernini

# Caravaggio

- Decent from the Cross (multiple light sources)
- Conversion of Saint Paul (thrown from horse)
- Radical style of sharp light and dark contrasts
- Chiaroscuro- (light to dark, shading)
- Tenebrism- “in a dark manner” ( followers called “I tenebrosi or the Caravaggisti)





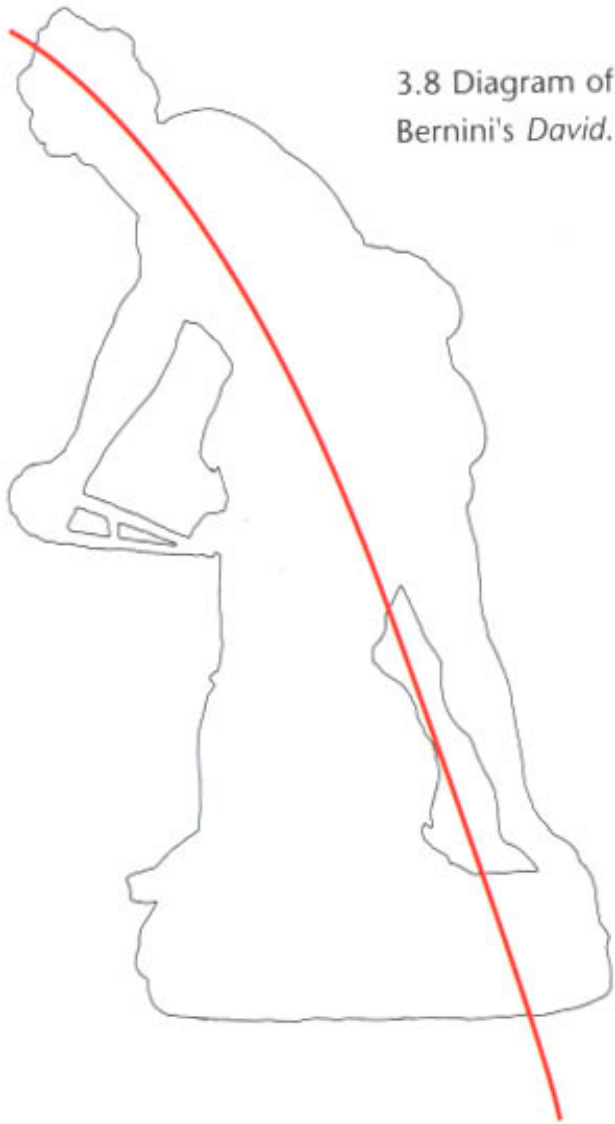
# Bernini

- Sculptor- David in moment of action
- Sculptor- “The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa”
- Architect- Cornaro Chapel, (St. T above alter)
- Architect- bronze alter inside “Baldachin” in St Peter’s Cathedral; outside Piazza- embracing arms, welcoming pilgrims.

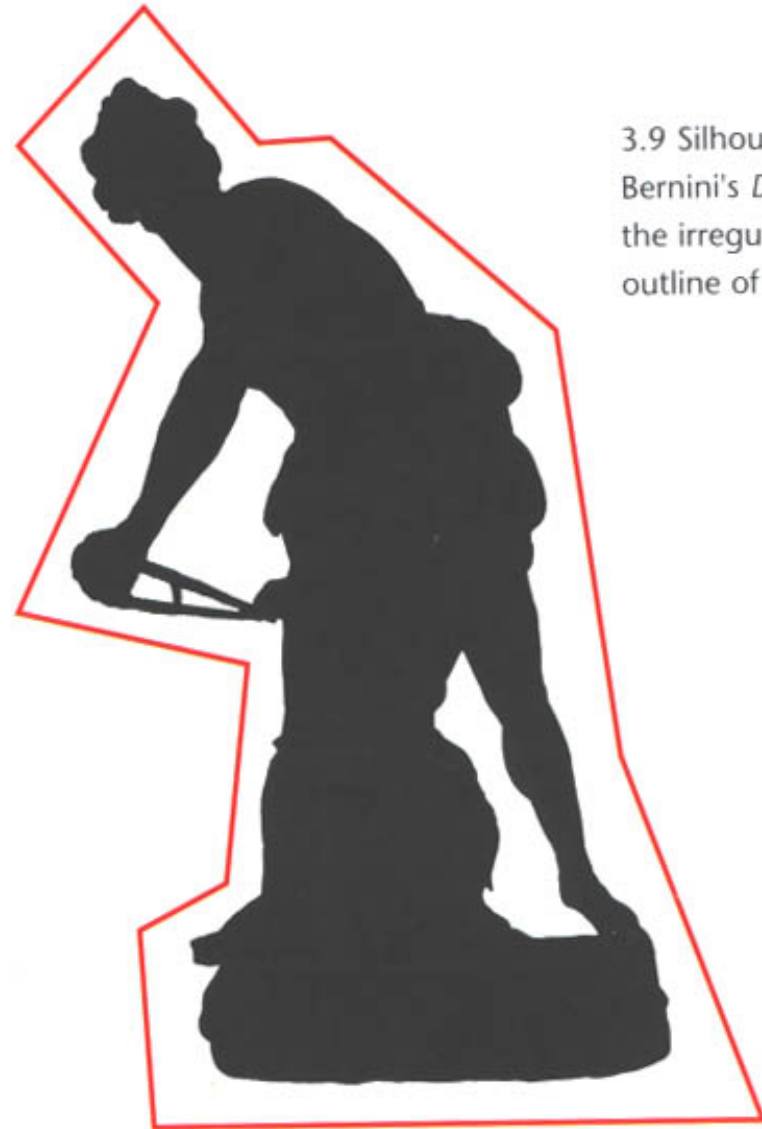








3.8 Diagram of Bernini's *David*.



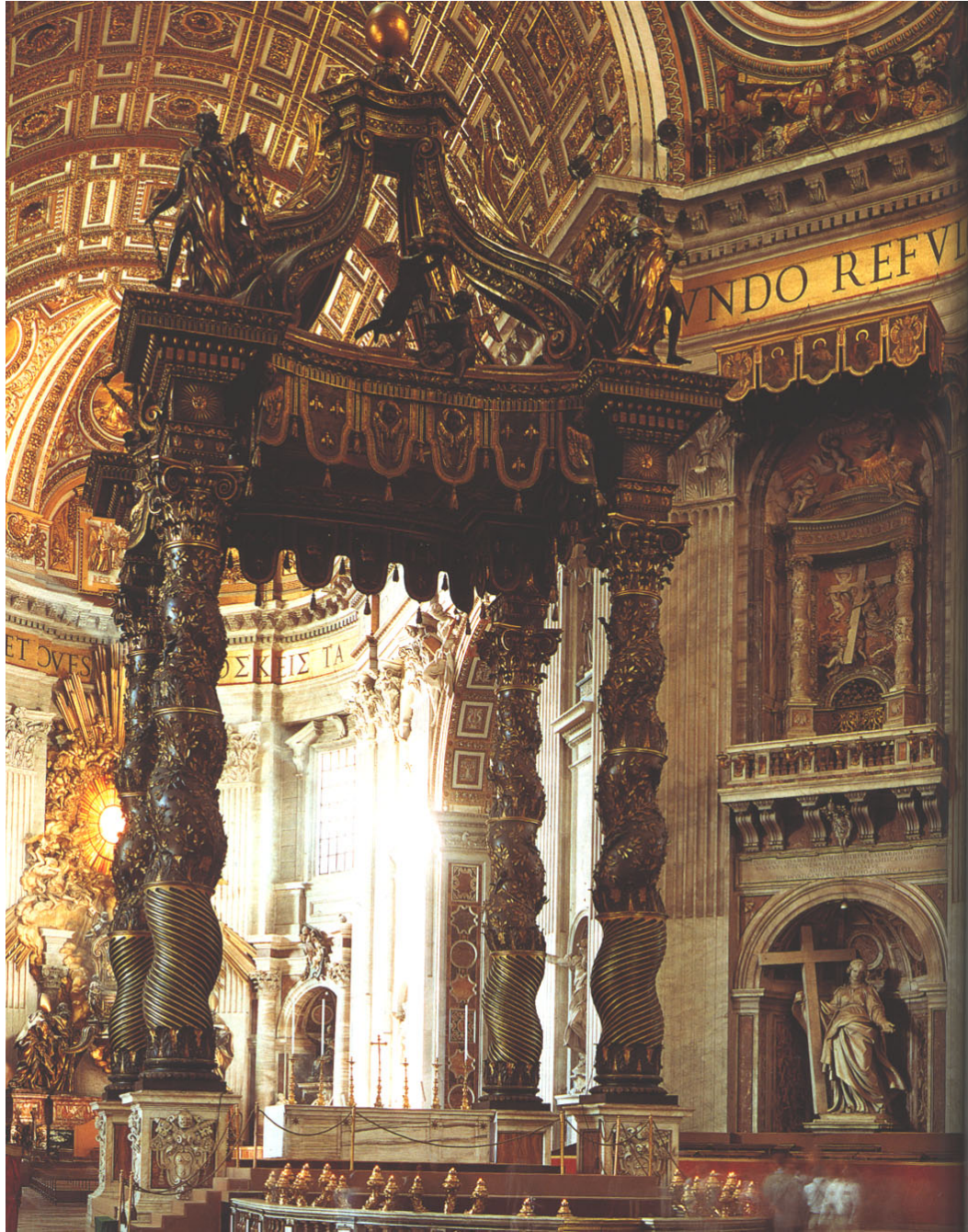
3.9 Silhouette of Bernini's *David* showing the irregular conceptual outline of the figure.





6.4 Gianlorenzo Bernini, Cornaro Chapel, 1640s,  
Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome.





**Aerial view of the piazza, St. Peter's Cathedral, Rome.**

