

## Descriptive Analysis 101

- **Basic physical features**
- **The Act of seeing:** What first catches your eye when you first look at it? Where does your eye then "naturally" go? When and where do your eyes come to rest within or upon the object?
- **Form:** Can the object be easily broken down into shapes? Are these shapes large or small, rigidly linear or loose and globular? Do lines dominate over colors or vice versa? Do individual shapes feel "complete" unto themselves or are they subservient to the totality of the artifact?
- **Content:** Does the object seem to tell a story? Who is the protagonist (and how do you know)? What kind of space (if any) is depicted within the work? What kinds of figures populate this space? Do they group closely together or stand far apart? Are their bodies shown in full? Do they face outward toward the beholder, inward toward the picture or both? Are all the figures the same size?
- **Affective Responses:** How does engaging with the object make you feel? What kinds of associations does it generate?

## Painter's subject, Beauty

### **Subject must be worthy of elevation:**

- Poussin (1594-1665)
  - disdain for Caravaggio, who used street walkers/prostitutes to model for paintings such as "The Death of the Virgin" (seen as sacrilegious)
    - G.P. Bellori, *Life of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio: Once the majesty of art had been subjugated ... by Caravaggio, everyone assumed license, and the result was contempt for beautiful things, and the antique and Raphael were deprived of all authority.*
  - worthiness of subject
    - Poussin in letter to Roland Fréart de Chambray, 1647: *The subject must be noble and not have taken on any common quality so that the painter may show his spirit and industry. It must be chosen so as to be capable of taking on the most excellent form.*

### **What is beauty**

- Poussin's letter to Chambray (1647): painting is "*an idea of incorporeal things*" as it seeks to represent the order (interval of parts), mode (quantity), species/form (lines and colours) of things
- William Hogarth (1697-1764); "Self-Portrait with Pug"; 1745: line of beauty on the painter's palette is featured, implying this is what a painter needs, more important than material paint
  - Hogarth, "Analysis of Beauty" (1753): *For the greatest grace and life that a picture can have, is, that it expresse Motion. ... The serpentine line, by its waving and winding at the same time different ways, leads the eye in a pleasing manner along the continuity of its variety, if I may be allowed the expression; and which by its twisting so many different ways may be said to inclose (tho' but a single line) varied contents.*
  - beauty in art arises from the study (imitation) of nature, not academic authority
  - idea that there can be some objective scale for beauty
- beautiful art should stir the emotions
  - Winckelmann, "The History of Ancient Art" (1764): *On the one hand, the ancient works of art have been regarded as beauties which one can never hope fully to enjoy, and which on this account easily warm some imaginations, but do not touch the heart, or absolutely none at all, to the understanding.*
  - John Ruskin, "Modern Painters" (1856): *Observe how the higher condition of art (for I suppose the reader will feel, with me, that Turner's is the highest) depends upon largeness of sympathy. It is mainly because one painter has communion of heart with*

*his subject, and the other only casts his eyes upon it feelinglessly, that the work of the one is greater than that of the other. ... [This is ultimately] the difference between the lower picturesque and the higher.*

- the sublime/picturesque
  - Edmund Burke, "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1757): *Whatever is fitted to excite the ideas of pain and danger or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. ... Danger or pain ... at certain distances and with certain modifications can be delightful.*
  - JMW Turner; "The Shipwreck"; 1805:
    - demonstrated the primal force of the elements. Turner defines the essence of such an experience through overwhelming impressions of realism and horror. The dark tonality, characteristic of Turner's early paintings, provides a foil to the white crests and swirls of the waves

### **How should painters paint?**

#### **Disegno:**

- involving both the ability to make the drawing and the intellectual capacity to invent the design

#### **Rationalization of sight:**

- the role of the painter (and skill) is to practice discretion ("*judgment*") to choose a subject; aspect vs prospect
  - Poussin in letter to François Sublet de Noyer: *Thus it can be said that mere aspect is a natural operation, and that what I call Prospect is an office of reason which depends on three things: the discriminating eye, the visual ray, and the distance from the eye to the object.*
- scientific approach to drawing
  - Le Brun; "Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander the Great (The Tent of Darius)"; 1661: line, rationality, boundaries clearly seen here: tent drapes create a frame, boundaries of figure emphasises clarity
- very orderly, the beholder is directed to the focus of the painting

#### **Freedom:**

- disorderliness in nature is beautiful, art should not try to create restraints (natural uninhibited beauty (as celebrated in Oriental art) vs rule, order (in European art))
  - Joseph Addison, "On the pleasure of imagination" (1712): *Writers who have given us an account of China, tells us the inhabitants of that country laugh at the plantations of our Europeans, which are laid out by rule and line; because, they say, any person may place trees in equal rows and uniform figures. They choose rather to shew a genius in works of this nature, and therefore always conceal the art by which they direct themselves.*
- freedom is pleasing: Joseph Addison, "On the pleasure of imagination" (1712): *The mind of man naturally hates everything that looks like a restraint upon it, "in the wide fields of nature, the sight wanders up and down without confinement"*
  - freedom of subjects is pleasing to the eye too: *"find our thoughts a little agitated and relieved at the sight of such objects as are ever in motion"*

- Peter Paul Rubens; "The Garden of Love" (1632-34): sensuality, *"messiness that encourages the oscillation of the eye"*
- Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721)'s "fete gallante": amorous couplings before a mysterious dreamlike backdrop
  - apprenticed under a decorative painter, drew inspiration in his work from lighter and brighter Oriental arts, decorative motifs copied from Eastern porcelain pieces
  - Watteau; "The Perspective" (1714-15):
    - driven by a nostalgia for a noble class in the countryside, before the end of feudalism and urban life
- Hogarth; Design for Frontispiece to Joshua Kirby, "Dr. Brooke Taylor's Method of Perspective Made Easy"; 1754:
  - intentionally confusing perspectives, different pictorial fields intruding into each other, perspectives that do not logically make sense

### **Interplay of objects, tout-ensemble:**

- in contrast to the rigid style of the 17th century, where the painting conveyed a clear message to the beholder that they had no choice but to accept
- Roger de Piles' (1635-1709) tout-ensemble: a *"poetical whole"* where *"the merit of each part is founded on a mutual dependence"* (vs Félibien's ordered approach)
  - purpose of art: pleasure, *the essential effect of which is to surprise, and deceive the eye*
- spectator not necessarily forced to focus on a particular subject in a painting
- ebb and flow of attention that moves across the composition, ephemeralises our engagement with the painting
  - Watteau; "Gersaint's Sign Shop" (1721):
    - art for the masses: shop has no walls, idealized mingling between urban space and art
    - close, intimate pleasure of art that the beholder is not privy to
    - putting away the portrait of Louis XIV, signifying a new era in art
- Chardin's "The Ray" -- Diderot
- Gainsborough's portraits eg "The Blue Boy" (1779), "Baroness Petre" (1788), garments are eye-catching and shiny (optical shimmer):
  - Reynolds, "Discourse XIV" (1788): *all those odd scratches and marks, which, on a close examination, are so observable in Gainsborough's pictures, and which even to experienced painters appear rather the effect of accident than design; this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance, by a kind of **magick**, at a certain distance assumes form, and all the parts seem to drop into their proper places*

### **Contemporary life, painting from life**

- French Revolution:
  - Maximilien Robespierre, 1793 after the beginning of the Terror: Paint in a noble and energetic manner all that has happened in the last four days
- Benjamin West; "Death of General Wolfe"; 1770: history painting meant to be timeless, represent the figures outside of the modern affects of fashion, yet West chose to depict them in their fashion of the time

- West: Reynolds *concluded with urging me earnestly to adopt the classic costume of antiquity, as much more becoming the inherent greatness of my subject than the modern garb of war. ... I began by remarking that the event intended to be commemorated took place on the 13th of September, 1758, in a region of the world unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and at a period of time when no such nations, nor heroes in their costume, any longer existence. The subject I have to represent is ... a topic that history will proudly record, and the same truth that guides the pen of the historian should govern the pencil [i.e. brush] of the artist*
- duty of the artist to report factually
- West sees the role of an artist to be a watchman
  - "Discourse to the Students of the Royal Academy" (1793): *who observes the great incidents of his time, and rescues them from oblivion*
- Benjamin West; "Death of William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham"; 1781
  - portraits of all members of the House of Lords, depicting the scene of William Pitt collapsing in the House
  - single picture paying exhibition, a departure from the Salon style, where an artist's painting is one among many

#### **Consciousness of the audience;** works that travel

- Claude Lorrain's Liber Veritatis (1635-82): drawings of his works in chronological order w/ patron, date, etc. written on back in response to fakes and other artists posing as him
  - an acute understanding that his paintings travelled across the world, not fixed like a church fresco
- John Singleton Copley; "Boy with a Squirrel (Henry Pelham)"; 1765
  - grew up in Boston, a maritime hub: Copley's life and livelihood depended, in virtually every particular, on the profitable transportation of objects, persons, and information across and around the Atlantic
  - flying squirrel: unfurls itself to travel; parallels the painting being rolled up to be transported, then being unfurled once it reaches its destination
  - a desire for recognition from the British Academy, pining for imperial metropolitan audience
- Rosalba Carriera: pastel
  - did a lot of commissions for patrons in other countries, needed a medium that can be portable

#### **Inwardness**

##### **Watteau:**

- paintings where the characters are in their own world, observing something in the pictorial plane with their backs to the beholder
  - "The Perspective", "Gathering in the Park (1716-17)"
  - Aaron Wile, "Watteau, Reverie, and Selfhood" (2014): *By inviting his contemporaries to dream, Watteau marked out his achievement as a painter of modern interiority; for the first time in French painting, looking became a means of establishing the autonomy of the self.*

##### **Chardin:**

- subjects in a state of concentration, they do not look at the beholder, but are slightly turned away, looking at objects/facing inward to the pictorial field

- subversion the expectation that art should appeal to (and thus play to the desires of) the public
  - in contrast to Boucher -- Diderot on Boucher, "Salon of 1763": *corrupted by praise and ... convinced of his own talent ... . This man is the ruination of all young apprentice painters.*
- "The House of Cards" (1737)
  - Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality* (1980): *There is even a sense in which the contrast between the two cards—one facing the beholder, the other blankly turned away from him—may be seen as an epitome of the contrast between the surface of the painting, which of course faces the beholder, and the absorption of the youth in his delicate undertaking, a state of mind that is essentially inward, concentrated, closed.*
- "Young Student Drawing" (1738)

### **Enlightenment:**

#### **Enlightenment:**

- Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment" (1784): *"have the courage to use your own reason": break free from tutelage, ie the "inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another"*
  - freedom in thought
  - Kant pits religion as the greatest obstacle to enlightenment
  - science and empirical fact as the new basis of society rather than class or religion

#### **Political franchise:**

- nation > individual:
  - Rousseau, "The Social Contract" (1762): *Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will. ... At once,...., this act of association creates a moral and collective body*
  - Thomas Paine, "Rights of Man" (1791-2): *Sovereignty, as a matter of right, appertains to the Nation only, and not to any individual*
  - idea of sacrificing personal interests for that of the nation; public duty overcoming private feeling
    - David; "Oath of the Horatii"; 1784: overlapping ranks of profile figures - brothers swearing an oath (saluting) to give up their lives to defend Rome against the rival tribe; sister crying as she is married to a man from that tribe, she realises that she will lose someone she loves either way
      - contrast: men show no emotion, while the crumpled bodies of the women convey their sadness; background de-emphasized relative to the characters
    - David; "The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons"; 1789: Brutus brooding as the bodies of his sons, whose executions for treason he had ordered, are returned home
  - individual sacrifice for the sake of principle
    - David; "The Death of Socrates"; 1787: Socrates convicted of corrupting the youth of Athens and has been sentenced to die by drinking poison hemlock.

Socrates uses his death as a final lesson for his pupils rather than fleeing when the opportunity arises, and faces it calmly.

### **Insurance**

- Turner purchased fire insurance for his gallery, paintings
- François Ewald, "Insurance and Risk" (1991): *Insurance individualizes, it defines each person as a risk, but the individuality it confers no longer correlates with an abstract, invariant norm such as that of the responsible juridical subject: it is an individuality relative to that of other members of the insured population, an average sociological individuality.*

### **Optimism about the future**

- a potentially infinite future where virtue eventually prevails, no 'final judgment'
- Condorcet, "The Future Progress of the Human Mind": *How consoling ... is this view of the human race, emancipated from its shackles, released from the empire of fate and from that of the enemies of its progress, advancing with a firm and sure step along the path of truth, virtue, and happiness! ... Such contemplation is for him an asylum ... there he lives with his peers in an Elysium created by reason and graced by the purest pleasures known to the love of mankind.*
- contrast to James Barry; "Elysium and Tartarus, or the State of Final Retribution"; 1777-84:
  - Elysium is accompanied by Tartarus; there is a dark side to this 'enlightened' paradise, where there will be judgment and punishment

### **Science**

#### **Royal Society**

- 1660: founding of the Royal Society, a group of natural philosophers (scientists) that would discuss science and run experiments
- Robert Hooke (1635-1702): supervised experiments and becomes keeper of the Royal Society's museum

#### **Lunar Society**

- an informal society of prominent industrialists, scientists and intellectuals eg Josiah Wedgwood, Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Priestly, James Watt
  - James Watt: held a patent to the improved steam engine, developed a portable copying press that chemically transfers and prints ink
- Joseph Wright of Derby connected to them too, a painter of science

#### **As a result of religious iconoclasm:**

- scientific art in a new, restricted era (Restoration)
- Robert Hooke; Magnified Flea from Hooke's Micrographia (1664): although it is a scientific drawing, not devoid of artistic elements -- shading creates a sense of dimension

#### **Chemistry:**

- Joshua Reynolds: fond of chemistry, made most of his own paints and colours

- experimentation with pigments and colours, kept documentation of this and of recipes for his paints
- see more in medium section
- Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797); "The Alchemist, in Search of the Philosophers Stone, Discovers Phosphorus, and Prays for the Successful Conclusion of his Operation, as was the Custom of the Ancient Chymical Astrologers"; 1771
  - chemical experiment literally illuminates a dark room; scientific enlightenment
    - chiaroscuro: the use of strong contrasts between light and dark, usually bold contrasts affecting a whole composition, the use of contrasts of light to achieve a sense of volume in modelling three-dimensional objects and figures; candle-lit chiaroscuro
  - a differing view of alchemy, traditionally seems as a pursuit of greed
- Josiah Wedgwood: industrial experimentation of paint chemicals to see what glazes work best for items meant for sale
  - numbered sequence of trials, tokens of porcelain/other materials that have been painted
  - Factory of Josiah Wedgwood; Coffee Pot; 1759

#### Science for all:

- Joseph Priestley (famous for discovering oxygen): wanted to decentralize knowledge, expand the Baconian model of science (use tools to overcome our constraints on our minds)
  - Priestley, "The Organization of Scientific Research" (1767): *Let every member have a right to appoint the trial of experiments in some proportion to the sum he subscribes, and let a periodical account be published of the result of them all, successful or unsuccessful. In this manner, the powers of all the members would be united and increased*
- Joseph Wright of Derby; "An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump"; 1768:
  - emptiness of the air pump, a vacuum is the center of focus in the room (attention is directed in different ways, vs concentration - Chardin)
  - symbol of the moon through the window, a contrast against the artificial light in the foreground
  - Hooke's air pump: a replay of historical science experiments, of which results are already known → democratic science, not taking science as a given

#### Observation

##### Use of tools:

- Francis Bacon, "The New Science" (1620): *Neither the naked hand nor the understanding left to itself can effect much. It is by instruments and helps that the work is done, which are as much wanted for the understanding as for the hand. And as the instruments of the hand either give motion or guide it, so the instruments of the mind supply either suggestions for the understanding or cautions.*
  - need to use tools to see beyond the true nature of things, enhance scientific learning and challenge our own perspective
  - knowledge gleaned from manipulating nature, rather than observing it as it comes
- camera obscura
  - Hooke: Robert Hooke's Design for the use of a camera obscura (1726)

- another way of seeing the world, illuminating the mind as a box (according to Hooke, senses are collectors for the mind)
  - aperture in a darkened space will reverse and project an image; wall of darkness reveals rich colour in the foreground, creating a rather shallow depth of perception
- Jan Vermeer; "View of Delft" (1660-61) painted with the help of a camera obscura
  - Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* -- on camera obscura in 17th century Dutch art: a "dead eye" and "deanthropomorphizes vision"
- Joshua Reynolds' folding book camera obscura: loaned to Mary Linwood to facilitate her reproduction of his works into tapestry form
  -
- Thomas Gainsborough; *Showbox and Painted Slides* (1781-82)
  - similar to camera obscura in the sense that you are looking into a box to see an image, however the image is a hand-painted one to be viewed by candlelight

### Mind as a collection:

- man inherently has a fixed perspective
  - Francis Bacon, "The New Science" (1620): *There are four classes of Idols which beset men's minds. To these for distinction's sake I have assigned names—calling the first class Idols of the Tribe (man as measure of all things); the second, Idols of the Cave (own experiences); the third, Idols of the Market (education); the fourth, Idols of the Theater (philosophies)...*
- the mind is a collection of experiences that are stored away for future use:
  - Hooke, "Lectures of Light: Section VII": *The Senses ... are as it were the Collectors or Carriers of the Impressions made by Objects from without, delivering them unto the Repository or Storehouse where they are to be used.*
    - Hooke's own role as a museum curator for the Royal Society
  - Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1690): *Methinks the Understanding, is not much unlike a Closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible Resemblances, or Ideas of things without.*

### Mind warps and embellishes sight:

- Joseph Addison, "On the pleasure of imagination" (1712): *we have the power of retaining, altering, compounding those images which we have once received"*
  - not crude ownership, a contrast to Hooke's possessive view of the world: mind is likened to a cabinet, a dark space where experiences are collected and stored
  - ownership: *It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in everything he sees, and makes the most rude and uncultivated parts of nature administer to his pleasures: so that he looks upon the world, as if it were in another light, and discovers in it a multitude of charms, that conceal themselves from the generality of mankind.*
- Paul Sandby; *Satire with Hogarth as a magic lantern projecting a parody of his "Paul before Felix"; 1753:*
  - satirizing Hogarth's observations of the world, his mind is projecting a perverted sight of the world, a scene is made dark and grotesque through his mind's eye

### Molyneux's Problem:



- "Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a Cube, and a Sphere ... [is] made to see. Question: by his sight, before he touch'd them, could he distinguish, and tell, which is the Globe, which the Cube?"
  - Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1690) -- No: *He has not yet attained the Experience, that what affects his touch so or so, must affect his sight so or so*
- paintings are 2-dimensional, but seek to represent a 3-dimensional, tactile world
- Chardin; "A Lady Taking Tea" (1735), "Soap Bubbles" (1733-34):
  - a discrepancy between what the eye can see but the hand cannot touch
  - Michael Baxandall, "Patterns of Intention" (1985): *Chardin represents "not substance—not figures fighting or embracing or gesticulating—but a story of perceptual experience masquerading lightly as a moment or two of sensation: sometimes he jokes about this fiction with momentary substances like spinning tops or frozen steam from a tea-cup*
- John Singleton Copley; "Boy with a Squirrel (Henry Pelham)"; 1765
  - the reflective surface of the table relays information, creating a third dimension
- stereoscope (kinda like 3D glasses with an image fixed to it): All pictures in which perspective and light and shade a properly managed, have more or less of the effect of solidity; but by this instrument that effect is so heightened as to produce an appearance of reality which cheats the senses of its seeming truth.
  - *"Form is henceforth divorced from matter"*

## Theater

- Edward Francis Burney; "A View of Philip James de Loutherboug's Eidophusikon"; 1782:
  - Eidophusikon was a "small mechanical theater" that created an illusion of moving nature through pulleys and lighting effects
  - Rousseau, "On Theater and Morals" (1758): *People imagine themselves to be in company at the theater, but it is there that everybody is alone. people retreat into their own thoughts amidst the darkness of the room, interpret the sights for their own understanding (Addison's ownership)*
  - inspires Gainsborough's showbox
- Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre; "The Effect of Fog and Snow Seen through a Ruined Gothic Colonnade"; 1826
  - Diorama paintings - a life-sized optical viewing box
  - an environment which appears to be changing, special effects: The paintings were lit from above by skylights and from behind by large windows. A system of pulleys allowed Daguerre to interpose colored screens between the skylights and the painting in order to modify the color and intensity of reflected light
  - Gainsborough's Showbox but way better
- ET Paris; "The Geometrical Ascent to the Galleries in the Colosseum, Regent's Park"; 1829
  - Colosseum was a vast circular exhibition hall, used for exhibitions and super panoramas
  - panorama paintings as the trend of the time-- Constable to John Dunthorne, May 23, 1803: *[In this variety of painting] great principles are neither expected nor looked for ... [the panorama painter] views Nature minutely and cunningly, but with no greatness or breadth*

## **Hierarchy of Art**

André **Felibien**, "Preface" to *Seven Conferences* (1740):

- hierarchy of paintings: landscape > fruits, flowers; life > still-life; painting humans is very excellent, the imitation of God's work; history paintings at the top of the hierarchy

## **Story-telling**

- Felibien: a "*Fable is not in its perfection if it has not a Beginning, a Middle, and an End*"
- history painting tells a story, it is the capacity of the painter to tell this story (eg through selecting the right mode) that is the criteria of excellence
- Poussin; "The Israelites Gathering Manna in the Desert"; 1637-39:
  - Biblical story
  - time -- narrative told through the sections in the painting that depict different scenes in time
- Hogarth; "The Harlot's Progress: Plate I, A Scene Outside the Bell Inn"; 1732:
  - a story of some contemporary scene, set in the city, a modern subject
  - time -- tumbling of plates in the left corner; place -- Bell Inn, a closed in composition restricts our sense of space

## **Watteau's "fete gallantes":**

- While the creation of the new category acknowledged Watteau as the originator of the genre, it also prevented him being recognised as history painter, the highest class of painter, and the only one from which the academy's professors were drawn. Charles-Antoine Coypel, the son of its then director, later said: "The charming paintings of this gracious painter would be a bad guide for whoever wished to paint the Acts of the Apostles."

## **Chardin's still life:**

- according to the hierarchy, Chardin's still life paintings were at the lowest tier
- Chardin seems to be simplifying Dutch artistic traditions in his work: Pieter de Ring, "Still Life with Parrot" (1645-1660) and "The Buffet" (1728); Caspar Netscher, "The Lace Maker" (1662) and "The Scullery Maid" (1738)
- goes on to paint people

## **Industrial painter Angelica Kauffman:**

- "The Sorrow of Telemachus" (1783): history painting, highest on the hierarchy

## **Gainsborough's landscape:**

- Gainsborough (1727-88): not an idealization, but an observation of nature and human cohabitation with it, painted real places
  - follows the Dutch tradition: value given to the detail or specificity, depiction of particulars
  - the manipulation of landscape by human use eg "Holywells Park, Ipswich" (1748-50) -- depicting the unusual configuration of man-made pools constructed to bring water to a nearby brewery for industrial use, "Mr. and Mrs. Andrews" (1750) -- a portrait of the land-owning class, reflecting the trend of enclosure (see industrialization)

### The Picturesque:

- used to be low in the classical hierarchy, but then emerges as an important and popular pictorial genre
- Gainsborough → John Constable: Dutch landscape tradition that does not seek to beautify, idealize, but to be realistic
  - Constable paints the landscape of his childhood: "Golding Constable's Kitchen Garden"; 1815 (shows the boundaries of private property)
- picturesque: experience the sight of poverty as one of aesthetic enjoyment
  - JT Smith: *graceful decay*
  - eg Gainsborough; "The Cottage Door"
- Thomas Cole
- Frederic Edwin Church

### Thomas Cole's picturesque:

- Thomas Cole: born in Britain in Lancashire - center of textile industry, then family relocates to Ohio, US
  - a change in scenery (features unknown to Europe), art has been centered around European sights (that ground which has been the great theater of human events), Grand Tour
- Cole; "The Clove, Catskills"; 1826:
  - although a number of leather tanneries were operating in the Catskills, and improved transportation was bringing large numbers of tourists to the region, Cole ignored these realities and focused instead on the virgin wilderness. The bare branches at the lower right and the storm clouds overhead are traditionally sublime elements, associated with the power of nature over human civilization. Nostalgia for a pre-industrial state inspired many American industrialists to purchase Cole's landscape paintings.

### Frederic Edwin Church's picturesque:

- Thomas Cole → Frederic Edwin Church
  - take notes for sketches in a similar way: general outline sketch, with a numbered legend that describes the scene
  - an element of idealization, imagination rather than a factual description of sights
- "Niagara Falls"; 1857:
  - Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Visit to Niagara" (1835): *My enjoyment became the more rapturous, because no poet shared it, nor wretch, devoid of poetry, profaned it: but the spot, so famous through the world, was all my own!*
    - Addison: imagination's ownership
  - Church likewise conferred a novelty on Niagara through this painting
    - In the 1850s, Niagara was the subject of millions of stereographs, and its image could be found on wallpaper, china, and lamp shades, among other consumer items
    - Church presented his fellow-men with the "soul" and "spirit" of Niagara, this "most suggestive" of nature's spectacles: this archetype of the universe.
    - the composition leads the eye laterally. The vantage point was dramatic and unique, leaving behind the "canonical banality" of many other paintings before

it,[6] the merely picturesque, and immersing the viewer directly in the scene, as if airborne or even in the water

- "The Heart of the Andes"; 1859:
  - single picture paying exhibition, painting framed by an elaborate wooden frame that was made to look like a window, banners and bunting, in a darkened room with tropical plants around it
    - window: John Constable's *Golding Constable* series
    - made a lot of money from the exhibition, such exhibitions remove the role of cultural brokers (papacy, patrons, Academy)
  - accompanying literature, textual guide to the image

### Imitation, Emulation

- emulation = draw upon art from the past, but don't copy directly
  - contemplation and creation
- imitation = direct replication
  - seeing and depicting

### **Imitation is bad:**

- Poussin; "The Death of Echo and Narcissus"; 1657: corpses of Echo and Narcissus serve as warnings of the perils of imitation
- Reynolds, "Discourse IV" (1774): *he who professes only to follow... must necessarily be behind*
- Charles Baudelaire: challenges the idea that Art = Nature
  - "Salon of 1859": *the present-day Credo of the sophisticated is this: "I believe that Art is, and cannot be other than, the exact reproduction of Nature (a timid and dissident sect would wish to exclude the more repellent objects of nature, such as skeletons and chamber-pots)"*

### **Protection against imitation/forgery:**

- Claude Lorrain's *Liber Veritatis* (1635-82): drawings of his works in chronological order w/ patron, date, etc. written on back in response to fakes and other artists posing as him
  - an acute understanding that his paintings travelled across the world, not fixed like a church fresco
  - J.M.W Turner's own *Liber Studiorum*
- Hogarth's Copyright Act (1735): 14 years duration for artist's original work (specifically of engravers and etchers, thereby creating a distinction between artist and craftsman) to be protected, beginning of intellectual property laws

### **Disegno:**

- involving both the ability to make the drawing and the intellectual capacity to invent the design
- From the Renaissance this ability to invent, or create, put the artist on a footing with God, the ultimate Creator, and was a means of raising the status of painting from craft to art.
- In Renaissance Italy a dispute arose between the partisans of Michelangelo and those of Titian as to whether *disegno* (Michelangelo) or *colorito* (Titian) was superior
  - 16th-century Venetian painting in which colour is employed in a dominant manner, for sensual expressive purposes and as an important compositional element
- Giorgio Vasari, Preface to Part Three, *The Lives of the Artists* (1550): *Design [Disegno] is the imitation of the most beautiful things in Nature in all forms, both in sculpture and in painting,*

*and this quality depends upon having the hand and the skill to transfer with great accuracy and precision everything the eye sees to a plan or drawing or to a sheet of paper ... And the most beautiful style comes from constantly copying the most beautiful hands, heads, bodies, or legs together to create from all these beautiful qualities the most perfect figure.*

#### **Role of tools:**

- Francis Bacon, "The New Science" (1620): *"it is idle to expect any great advancement in science from the super-inducing and engrafting of new things upon old. We must begin anew from the very foundations"*

#### **Allegorical emulation:**

- Poussin; "The Infant Bacchus Entrusted to the Nymphs of Nysa"; 1657: allegorically emulating Titian's "Bacchanal of the Andrians" (1523-1526)
- Reynolds emulating classic art
  - "Apollo Belvedere" (140-130 BC: the pose of the figure is present in some works eg "Augustus Keppel" (1753), "Elizabeth Gunning", "Jane Fleming")
  - "Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse" (1783-84): pose mirrors Michelangelo's "Prophet Isaiah"
- Horace Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting in England" (1771): *When a single posture is imitated from an historic picture and applied to a portrait in a different dress and with new attributes, This is not plagiarism, but quotation: and a quotation from a great author, with a novel application of the sense, has always been allowed to be an instance of parts and taste; and may have more merit than the original.*

#### **Emulation as artistic competition**

- Reynolds: challenges artists to compete with the originals and improve on paintings they are copying so that it isn't just servile imitation
  - Reynolds, "Discourse IV" (1774): *"borrowing of a thought, action, attitude or figure, and transplanting it into your own work"*; Reynolds acknowledges this could be seen as *"plagiarism"*, but Reynolds says artists should seek to compete with the original to improve it
    - imitation is even necessary for art: *"genius is the child of imitation"*: can't create something from nothing, *"he who has the most materials has the greatest means of invention"*
  - Nathaniel Hone; "Sketch for "The Conjuror""; 1775: satirizes this idea
    - Reynolds is portrayed as some sort of wizard - a reference to his work as a chemist, alchemy viewed as magic, mystical rather than a true scientific discipline
    - Reynolds, through his magic, conjures up new art from classical works

#### **Novelty**

- Poussin: *Novelty in painting does not depend on choosing a subject that has never been seen before but upon a good and novel arrangement and expression, thanks to which the subject, though in itself ordinary and worn, becomes new and singular.*

#### **As-if life:**

- Felibien: art should not just represent, but create *"images so admirable that it makes us believe we see the things themselves"*
- Chardin's work's realism:
  - "The Ray" (1725-6): Chardin's reception piece for the Academie, confusion/deception:

- emotive 'face' of the ray
- "Still Life with Jar of Olives" (1760)
- Denis Diderot, "Salon of 1763" (1763): *In order to look at other people's pictures, I feel as though I need different eyes; but to look at Chardin's, I need only keep the ones nature gave me and use them properly.*
  - "O Chardin, it's not white, red, or black pigment that you grind on your palette, but rather the very substance of objects"
    - Reynolds, "Discourse IV" (1774): if you have not observed the "gradation by which art is acquired", it can be easily concluded that it's magic
  - tout-ensemble: "close up, everything blurs, goes flat, and disappears. From a distance, everything comes back to life and reappears"
- Gainsborough, "Art in Theory" (1772): *... there must be variety of lively touches and surprizing Effects to make the Heart dance, or else they had better be in a Church—so in Portrait Painting there must be a Lustre and finishing to bring it up to individual Life*
  - in response to Reynolds' discourse, Gainsborough is saying that history paintings no longer have a time and place, while painting in the past used to be for the pope, church (some grand place), art now needs to appeal to and excite people
- photography changes the game

#### **Emulation is like sexual reproduction:**

- Seneca, "On Gathering Ideas" (4BCE-65CE) : *I would have you resemble him as a child resembles his father, and not as a picture resembles its original; for a picture is a lifeless thing.*
  - According to this metaphor, which holds that resemblance between imitated and imitator is akin to that of father and son, *parentage is subtly perceptible because similarity and difference mingle in the offspring.*
  - Élisabeth Vigée-Le Brun; "Self-Portrait with Her Daughter, Julie" (1786)

#### **Imitation in industrialization:**

- goal of industrialized production was to make as many of the same thing as possible, uniformity and reproducibility valued
  - Josiah Wedgwood: wanted his customers to be able to purchase the exact same model of product that they see in a store
- Pollaplasiasmos: a technique developed by Joseph Booth of replicating oil pictures en masse faithfully
  - eg Philippe de Loutherbourg, "Winter"; 1776 → Joseph Booth; "Polygraph" print after Philippe de Loutherbourg's Winter (mechanical oil painting on canvas, 1780-90)

#### **Art as an intellectual act**

##### Comparison to **literature**:

- In his letter to de Chantelou (1647): a poet chooses words that match what he is trying to convey, as if to "*set before our eyes with the sound of the words the things he is describing*"
- Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocöon" (1940): *Painting and sculpture ... become nothing more than ghosts or 'stooges' of literature. ... Everything contributes to the denial of the medium, as if there artist were ashamed to admit he had actually painted his picture instead of dreaming it forth.*

##### Comparison to **science**:

- John Constable, "Lecture IV" (1836): *Painting is a science and should be pursued as an*

*inquiry into the laws of nature. Why, then, may not landscape be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but experiments?*

- reflects an increasing gulf between art, industry and technology

#### The **Learned Painter**:

- Poussin; "Self-Portrait"; 1650:
  - solemn, serious; eyes averted from the beholder
  - textual inscription (evoking ancient text) on a canvas partially obscuring a painting, Poussin's hand is illuminated but he is not holding a paintbrush
  - painter as a scholar: forehead is illuminated, symbolizing wisdom

#### Role of **Academie**:

- transformative shift
- provided a framework, mode of thinking about art, and language to describe art, standards for what constitutes 'good' art
- weaponization of tedium against the guild when they were forced to merge
- transmission of skill, development and constructive challenging

#### Politicization of art

##### **Cultural power:**

- Claude Lorrain's paintings for the Duke de Bouillon
  - "Seaport with Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba"; 1648
  - "Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca ("The Mill")"; 1648
  - innocuous landscape painting reflecting political power assertion: a tower features prominently in both scenes, a connection to the Duke's family heritage (House of La Tour d'Auvergne)
- Marie Antoinette as depicted by Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun
  - "Marie-Antoinette en Chemise"; 1783: seen as scandalous, too much exposure of the royal body, a lot of backlash to the image
  - "Marie-Antoinette and Her Children"; 1787: a proper, regal presentation of Marie Antoinette as a mother caring for the Royal family

##### **Psychological warfare:**

- Alfred Gell, "The Enchantment of Technology and the Technology of Enchantment," in *The Art of Anthropology: Essays and Diagrams: The work of art is inherently social in a way in which the merely beautiful or mysterious object is not: it is a physical entity which mediates between two beings, and therefore creates a social relation between them, which in turn provides a channel for further social relations and influences. This is so when, for instance, the court sculptor, by means of his magical power over marble, provides a physical analogue for the less easily realized power wielded by the king, and thereby enhances the king's authority.*
- works of art to discredit the ruling regime
  - satirical caricatures, comics
    - "Les deux ne font qu'un"; 1791: satirizes Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette as a double-ended beast (context: following 1791 royals' flight to Varenne after the French Revolution)

- Isaac Cruikshank; "The doctor indulged with his favorite scene"; 1790: Dr. Richard Price, kneeling on a crown with a demon on his back, peering into the royal bedroom at Versailles, watching ruffians destroy the Queen's bed and bedroom in search of her; Queen Marie Antoinette is seen fleeing down a staircase.
  - 'scandalous' depictions of the royals
    - Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun; "Marie-Antoinette en Chemise"; 1783
    - François Hubert Drouais' portraits of Countess du Barry, initially a mistress and then promoted to a member of the nobility by Louis XV

### Religious iconoclasm:

- religious images were destroyed, as they were deemed idolatrous
- History
  - 1527-47: Protestant Reformation under Henry VIII began as a political shift away from Rome
  - 1547-53: under Edward VI, iconoclasm became more radical, "Injunctions for Religious Reforms"
  - 1642-52: English Civil War, reigniting of religious iconoclasm by the Puritans; hostility to the arts eg 1644 "Ordinance for the further demolishing of Monuments of Idolatry and Superstition"
- Martin Luther: *I wish to God that I could persuade the powerful and rich to paint the whole Bible word for word on houses for everyone's eyes. I know for certain that it is God's wish for his works to be heard and seen, especially the suffering of Christ. ... The only idolatrous images are those in which one puts one's trust.*
- Marcus Gheeraerts I; "Allegory of Iconoclasm" (1560-70): represents the Protestant destruction/cracking down of religious imagery for fear of idolatry → power of art
- (see history section) Winckelmann -- the flourishing of art is tied to the level of political freedom experienced: *Art, which received its life, as it were, from freedom, must necessarily decline and fall with the loss of freedom in the place where it had particularly flourished.*

### French Revolution (1789-99):

- overthrew the monarchy, established a republic, catalyzed violent periods of political turmoil, and finally culminated in a dictatorship under Napoleon
- 1789: storming of Bastille, Declaration of the Rights of Man
- a great change to life in all aspects
  - Philibert Louis Debucourt; Revolutionary Calendar; 1794-5: previously time was punctuated by church and royal events, revolution undid all of these and created a new system
- 1794: slavery abolished in France, although 1802 Napoleon tried to reinstate it and invaded Saint-Domingue
  - Anne-Louis Girodet; "Citizen Jean-Baptiste Belley, Ex-Representative of the Colonies"; 1797: enslaved as a child and brought to Saint Domingue, becomes an accomplished poet after he is freed and is the representative of St-Domingue
    - bust of Guillaume-Thomas Raynal in the background, an abolitionist philosopher



- the prominence given in Girodet's portrait to displaying what is clearly a large penis in the sitter's breeches is a direct reinforcement and perpetuation of the Classical and since long-held notional correlation of savagery, animalistic tendencies and barbarity
  - juxtaposition of elegant Western clothing on the body (and by corollary, the mind and spirit) of an individual from a race of people commonly viewed by native population of the time as uncivilised; dark skin against white marble stone
- Maximilien Robespierre, 1793 after the beginning of the Terror: *Paint in a noble and energetic manner all that has happened in the last four days*
  - David; "Death of Marat"; 1793: shows the murdered French revolutionary leader Jean-Paul Marat, painted in the months after his murder to be shown alongside Marat's embalmed body
- responses to the French Revolution from the British:
  - Joseph Priestley (1733-1804): supported the revolution openly
  - fear that revolutionary sentiment would spread to Britain, ridiculing of British figures who supported it

### **Napoleon**

- David sells out: was a revolutionary, but then becomes a court painter to Napoleon -- "Coronation of Napoleon" (1807)

### **Industrialization**

#### **Consumerism:**

- Nicolas Barbon, *An Apology for the Builder* (1685): *men are better distinguished by what they want, than by what they enjoy*
- Mandeville's "The Fable of the Bees"
- Marshall Sahlins, "The Sadness of Sweetness": *Originally condemned as the author of sin, self-pleasing man turned out to be a good thing and in the end the best thing, since the greatest total good would come of each person's total self-concern. Slavery was thus transformed into liberty, and the human lust that once foretold eternal perdition became the premise of temporal salvation.*
- in response: Cole sees nature as medicine for such an attitude
  - Thomas Cole, *Essay on American Scenery* (1835): *and turning men from love of simplicity and beauty, to a senseless idolatry of their own follies—to lead them gently into the pleasant paths of Taste would be an object worthy of the highest efforts of genius and benevolence. ... The pleasures of the imagination, among which the love of scenery holds a conspicuous place, will alone temper the harshness of such a state*

#### **Modernization creates ideological space for opposition:**

- Steve Pincus, "1688: The First Modern Revolution" (2009): *In order to explain and justify state expansion, state transformation, and the necessary intrusions in everyday life, modernizing states have to proclaim and explain their new direction. In so doing, they ... concede the need for radical change. Would-be revolutionaries are no longer obliged to*

*explain ... why change is necessary, they have the far less imposing task of explaining why the state's chosen modernization path is doomed to failure.*

### **Enclosure (1760-1890):**

- civic humanism: landed class are best suited to make governance decisions on behalf of everyone else
- Inclosure Acts: laws that allowed nobles to claim previously common land as private
  - landlords utilised innovations in methods of crop production, increasing profits and supporting the Agricultural Revolution; the higher productivity also enabled landowners to justify higher rents for the people working the land
  - tenants displaced by the process often left the countryside to work in the towns → industrial revolution – at the very moment new technological advances required large numbers of workers, a concentration of large numbers of people in need of work had emerged; the former country tenants and their descendants became workers in industrial factories within cities
- Thomas Gainsborough; “Mr. and Mrs. Andrews”; 1750
  - contrasts with Addison's idea of imagination creating a sense of property and ownership
  - landscape that has been set into order, claimed (fences across the field) as agricultural property, Mr Andrews holding a gun and looking on guard, as if protecting his property
- Thomas Gainsborough; “The Cottage Door”; 1778
  - an image of the rural poor, with access to common land denied, could no longer farm to support themselves
  - rural poverty → urban growth

### **Machinery, Factories, Manufacturing:**

- industrial boom in the 18th century contributed to British economic power, relative to French agricultural inefficiency, toll of the Seven Years' War (1756-63)
- aristocrats financed major industrial projects
  - Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater: built a system of water canals that connected his industrial sites to ports; project to connect Manchester and Liverpool by waterways
  - Sir Joseph Banks: president of the Royal Society, botanist who advised King George III on the construction of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew
    - "jardin anglais": emulating a pre-enclosed landscape, different from the highly geometrical, ordered gardening as found in Versailles (nature + art)
      - brings to mind how Addison describes Oriental gardens
- Joseph Wright of Derby; "Arkwright's Cotton Mills by Night"; 1782-3:
  - Arkwright's innovation of water powered frames to spin cotton (spinning mills)
- replaceability of individual workers:
  - production line automated tasks, far more productive than workers physically producing something
    - Luddite rebellion 1811-16: destroyed textile machinery as a form of protest. The group was protesting the use of machinery in a "fraudulent and deceitful manner" to get around standard labour practices.

- John Constable; "The White Horse"; 1819: Constable shows men laboring in a system they neither control nor see to its end
- slaves viewed as property
  - J.M.W Turner; "Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)"; 1840: depicts an incident in 1781, where the captain of the slave ship had ordered 133 slaves to be thrown overboard so that insurance payments could be collected
    - interactions of various colours, few defined brush strokes and borders in the painting
- steam engines
  - JMW Turner; "Rain, Steam and Speed"; 1844: train rushing towards the pictorial beholder

### Use of art:

- Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807): commissioned by industrialists for decorative designs, used in the interior of coaches, furniture, doors
  - mass-production (imitation) of designs by Michael Boulton and James Watts' factory
- influence/emulation of **antiquity**:
  - "Portland Vase", c.1-20AD → Factory of Josiah Wedgwood, Portland Vase Replica, 1790
    - typical of the eighteenth-century approach to novelty that when Wedgwood sought to advertise his technical abilities as a ceramist, he set himself the task of reproducing the Portland Vase
  - Josiah Wedgwood and Bentley; "First Day Vase from the Etruria Manufactory"; 1769
    - design in the style of Roman pottery
    - technological advancement concealed by a classical-presenting item, reassure the leisured class that new industrial techniques are not destabilizing the established order
  - driven by a nostalgia for more stable times amidst the great changes of the industrial revolution:
    - Unease about progress and a compulsive interest in the past were connected phenomena. ... To the leisured classes of the eighteenth century, much of the pleasure of studying ancient Rome and collecting relics from it was the contact it gave them with a civilization that had seemingly been stable.
    - Benjamin West; "British Manufactory: A Sketch"; 1791

### Fashion:

- clothing, textiles reflect class status; industrialization for mass-production made products emulating the tastes of the elite at an affordable price for the masses
- Boucher; "Portrait of Madame de Pompadour"; 1756: fashion of the upper class, extravagant and shimmery fabrics
- Sample of cotton printed with flowers left with a girl at the Foundling Hospital; 1759:
  - Foundling Hospital: a hospital/orphanage for children given up by their mothers as they are too poor to raise them; mother cuts a piece of their garment and leaves it as a token with the child
  - a glimpse into the clothing of the London poor

- printed cotton, aspirational emulation of the fineries of the clothing of the upper class

### **Influence of the past**

#### **Ancients, antiquity:**

- Poussin takes the idea of Mode from the ancient Greeks; "The Seven Sacraments (2nd Series): Eucharist"; 1647 is painted in the Dorian mode
- Reynolds - "Apollo Belvedere" (140-130BC): pose of the figure is seen in Reynold's portraits, eg "Augustus Keppel", "Elizabeth Gunning", "Jane Fleming"
- Zoffany; "Charles Townley in his Sculpture Gallery"; 1782: depicts Charles Francis Greville, Pierre-Francois Hugues (Baron d'Hancarville), Charles Townley surrounded by an imaginary arrangement of his major sculptures
  - leading figures in the 'cult of antiquity'
- Johan Zoffany (1733-1810): lover of classical antiquity
  - "Self Portrait in a Friar's Habit"; 1779: a cheeky self portrait - contrasts of the friar's clothings with the condoms, mingling of the sacred and profane, a recreation of Titian's "Venus of Urbino" off to the side

#### **Rome as an artistic Mecca:**

- center of patronage
  - Nicolas Poussin works in Rome in the 1620s, this is where he expands his patronage network and gains an international reputation. Returns to Paris to work as a court painter 1640-42, but eventually makes his way back to Rome
- greater celebration of classical art than Paris, where painting/sculpture seen as a technical trade, not held in high esteem
- Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) goes with Augustus Keppel to Italy, where he is exposed to Renaissance and classical works, inspiration is apparent in his own work (see emulation section)
- Grand Tour: a traditional trip of Europe undertaken by upper-class young European men of sufficient means and rank; a post-Oxbridge trek through France and Italy in search of art, culture and the roots of Western civilization.
  - David Allan; "Sir William Hamilton"; 1775: British ambassador to Naples, Mt Vesuvius seen from the window; Hamilton led tours to Mt Vesuvius
    - Vesuvius freezes Pompeii, plaster casts allowed people to study life, eg Baron d'Hancarville catalogued the antiquities uncovered

#### **Previous generation of artists:**

- Reynolds deeply inspired by the works of the classic masters:
  - Rembrandt: especially in his 1775 self-portrait, an element of competition as he sees himself as a rival to as well as an heir to Rembrandt
    - paints over Rembrandt's "Susana and the Elders" (1647)
  - Poussin: In a letter to Charles Manners, 4th Duke of Rutland, Reynolds declared: "Poussin certainly ranks amongst the [...] first rank of Painters, and to have such a set of Pictures of such an Artist will really & truly enrich the nation."

- Rococo inheritance
  - dubbed the final expression of the Baroque movement, a reaction against the more formal and geometric style that was predominant
  - was criticized as superficial → Rococo passed out of fashion and was replaced by the order and seriousness of Neoclassical artists like Jacques Louis David
  - Watteau → François Boucher → Jacques Louis David
    - Boucher; "Portrait of Madame de Pompadour"; 1756: Mdme de Pompadour was a patron of Boucher
      - fashion: extravagance, elegance, refinement and decoration
    - David is apprenticed to Boucher, goes on the Grand Tour and comes away inspired by classical art
      - David; "Oath of the Horatii"; 1784: focus on clear, hard details and the lack of use of the more wispy brushstrokes preferred by Rococo art; neat organization of the image into 3 sections; frozen quality of the painting is also intended to emphasize rationality

### **Claude-glass, Claude's Legacy:**

- Claude Lorrain (1600-82):
  - works from Rome, establishes himself as a leading landscape artist
  - paints scenes suffused with a golden glow that mingles past (Ancient Rome) and present (Britain)
- Claude-glass: mirror device that people used to achieve the glowy ambience in Lorraine's art
- J.M.W Turner; "Dido Building Carthage"; 1815; oil on canvas: emulating "Embarkation" directly, Turner sees himself in competition with Lorrain
  - puts it in his will that his works are to be displayed alongside Lorrain's
- Gainsborough; "A Man Sketching with a Claude Glass"; 1750-55
  - can see the influence of the glowy look in some of Gainsborough's landscape paintings
  - 'optical shimmer' in his portrait work: necessary to have something exciting to the eye to bring the image to life

### **Mingling of past and present:**

- Claude Lorrain; "Seaport with Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba"; 1648: historic scene of Queen Sheba leaving for Jerusalem and entourage with 15th century ships and structures

### **Time is cyclical:**

- Johann Joachim Winckelmann, "The History of Ancient Art" (1764): a cycle of bud, bloom, maturation, decay in history of art
  - the flourishing of art is tied to the level of political freedom experienced: *Art, which received its life, as it were, from freedom, must necessarily decline and fall with the loss of freedom in the place where it had particularly flourished*

### **Time is gradual:**

- Adam Smith, "The Four-Stage Theory of Development" (1762): *There are four distinct stages which mankind passes through. First, the age of Hunters; second, the age of Shepherds; third, the age of Agriculture; fourth, the age of Commerce.*

- Thomas Cole: "The Course of Empire" (1836) series
  - "The Course of Empire": a wild landscape, elements of the sublime
  - "The Arcadian State": a child drawing, origin of art, Barry: "Orpheus Instructing the Savage Greeks"
  - "The Consummation": identifying feature of landscape obscured, commerce = wealth
  - "Destruction": man ends man
  - "Desolation": grim reminder of nature's persistence > human aspiration and achievement
    - Winckelmann: set up for the cycle to begin again?

### **Time is a cup:**

- Thomas Wedgwood:
  - Tom Wedgwood to James Mackintosh, April 1801: *Time has no parts, is a comprehensive nidus containing all our other perceptions.*

### **"No one has ever been modern"**

- - Bruno Latour, "We have Never Been Modern" (1991/1993)
- development of "new" painting techniques: not really new, as they are all for the same purpose -- faster, more efficient
- Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," (1863): *In short, for any 'modernity' to be worthy of one day taking its place as 'antiquity,' it is necessary for the mysterious beauty which human life accidentally puts into it to be distilled from it*

### **Medium**

#### **Transient nature of material:**

- Watteau; "The Embarkation for Cythera" (1717): Watteau's reception piece to the Academie has cracks on the surface of the painting

#### **Pastel:**

- a vulnerable, malleable medium, optically light while also being technically light
- Chardin, "Self-Portrait Wearing an Eyeshade" (1775)
  - drawn in pastel rather than Chardin's familiar medium of oil, because of his sensitivity in later years to the chemicals of paint
  - eyes covered in the painting, reflecting his own eye's vulnerability
- Rosalba Carriera works with a lot of pastel -- "Self Portrait" (1746), "Antoin Watteau" (1721)

#### **Scientific development of new painting techniques:**

- Reynolds: encaustic painting (using wax and paint pigments)
  - an internal tension as he models his subjects on ancient art (pointing to the immortality of his subjects), yet works with volatile and unstable materials
    - obsessed with the "Venetian secret" (Titian's technique), would hazard the durability of his own works rather than give up the opportunity to discover the truth of the secret
  - "A Girl with a Baby" (1782): an experiment in colour gone awry, blackened and cracked image

- James Gillray; "Titianus redivivus; -or- the seven-wise-men consulting the new Venetian oracle, -a Scene in ye Academic Grove. No 1"; 1797
  - context: manuscript allegedly describing Titian's painting technique found, later turns out to be a hoax but fools many prominent artists
  - Benjamin West; "Cicero Discovering the Tomb of Archimedes"; 1797: depicting discovery of ancient knowledge
    - in the satire, West is portrayed as fleeing with his paints and a bag of money

### **Aquatint:**

- developed by Peter Perez Burdett; brushed acid direct on to an aquatint ground, only using varnish to stop-off large areas of a single tone

**wet/dry:** separation between seeing the image and the actual creation of it

- camera obscura as a method of seeing + chemistry in the paintwork
- light sensitivity of silver nitrate, phosphorus is discovered → Thomas Wedgwood further develops this method to copy paintings

### **Lithography:**

- an image drawn with oil onto the surface of a smooth limestone plate. The stone was treated with an acid solution, etching the portions of the stone that were not protected by the grease-based image. When the stone was subsequently moistened, these etched areas retained water; an oil-based ink could then be applied and would be repelled by the water, sticking only to the original drawing. The ink would finally be transferred to a blank paper sheet, producing a printed page
- a drawing could be printed multiple times
- eg Theodore Maurisset; "Daguerreotypemania"; 1839

### **Early development of photography**

- Nicéphore Niépce and Claude Niépce; Patent Specification Drawing for the Pyrèolophore; 1807: an internal combustion engine, powered a boat upstream
- Nicéphore: heliography (glass/metal-based), around 1822
  - used Bitumen of Judea, a naturally occurring asphalt, as a coating on glass or metal. It hardened in proportion to its exposure to light. When the plate was washed with oil of lavender, only the hardened areas remained
  - eg Nicéphore Niépce; "Point of View Taken from a Window of Le Gras in Saint-Loup-de-Varennes"; 1826
- Daguerre: daguerreotype (metal-based)
  - polished a sheet of copper, washed the plate in a solution of nitric acid and distilled water. Then he heated it slightly by passing it above the flame of a lamp, with the copper surface towards the flame, and washed it in a second bath of nitric acid. The plate could then receive its coating of silver iodide, applied as a vapour. Finally, the plate would be placed in the interior of the camera obscura, which was fitted with a suitable lens, and exposed. placed over mercury vapours, which would cause an image to appear
- William Henry Fox Talbot: calotype (paper-based)

- using paper sensitised with silver chloride, which darkened in proportion to its exposure to light, chemically processed to develop a full image
- William Henry Fox Talbot; "York Minster Cathedral From Lod Lane, 1844"; 1844: slow exposure time, so the streets look deserted as it cannot capture the image of people walking around quickly

### Response to photography

- positive
  - Theodore Maurisset; "Daguerreotypemania"; 1839:
  - like nature!
    - The New-Yorker, Vol 8, No. 13 (14 December 1839): *The Daguerreotype is only another method of causing Nature herself to multiply her own works,—and although yet in its infancy the productions effected by means of it bear the impress of a perfection never before attained by human ingenuity.*
    - Oliver Wendell Holmes: ancient philosophers theorized about perceptual propagation, where individuals and objects project an image of themselves outwards
      - daguerreotype has captured this projection: *The photograph [i.e. Talbot's technique] has completed the triumph, by making a sheet of paper reflect images like a mirror and hold them as a picture.*
    - Edgar Allan Poe, "The Daguerreotype" (1840): *For, in truth, the Daguerreotyped plate is infinitely (we use the term advisedly) is infinitely more accurate in its representation than any painting by human hands*
    - but photography is still limited, it distorts the actual scene it is reporting on, as the exposure cannot capture movement
  - for painting: beneficial, can be a motivation to painters to make their art more true and more animated in order to escape
- negative
  - "From today, painting is dead"
    - Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, "Boulevard du Temple, Paris" (Daguerreotype, 1839) captured the image of a man getting his shoes polished
  - Etienne Carjat; "Charles Baudelaire"; 1863: sees photography as an encroachment on the arts
    - *idolatrous mob* → "Daguerreotypemania" comes to mind
    - *I am convinced that the ill-applied developments of photography, like all other purely material developments of progress, have contributed much to the impoverishment of French artistic genius, which is already so scarce.*

### Choice of medium:

- Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," (1863): *the technical means that is the most expeditious and the least costly will obviously be the best. ... there is a rapidity of movement which calls for an equal speed of execution from the artist.*
  - pastel, etching, aquatint, lithography



## **Academies of art**

### **French -- Academie Royale**

- founded in 1648, same year the Fronde breaks out
  - brainchild of Charles Le Brun, an alternative institution from the guild (more industrial, commercial focus of painting) for the royal/court painters ('brevetaires') → meant to elevate art, painting to high intellectual status like literature
  - introduced a transformative shift in art in France, art as something with a higher purpose than a commercial good
    - Donald Posner, "Concerning the 'Mechanical' Parts of Painting and the Artistic Culture of Seventeenth-Century France": *Traditionally, painters and sculptors in Paris had been ranked in the third of five categories of the city's arts et métiers, along with pork butchers, millers, and clockmakers, beneath barbers, hatmakers and dyers, and just above brewers, herring vendors, soap makers, and engravers of iron and copper. ... Most upper-class householders of the time, including the King of France, for whom attractive pictorial decorations and visual records or evocations of people, places and things were necessities, but who were not impressed by the pretensions, intellectual or otherwise of social inferiors.*
- 1651: merged with the Guild
  - Academie was very much stifled during the Fronde years, as they had lost their royal supporters
  - Conférences organised by the Academie: open to all in theory but excluded the uneducated guildsmen ("weaponizing of tedium")
  - discourses: intellectual approach to art rather than just the act of it; language developed to judge art, standards of what is good/bad art
  - Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (1985):
    - transmission of artistic skill: established a figure painting school, training of young artists
    - Academie as an institutional wedge between artist and patron that maintained a set of standards
- 1653: end of the Fronde, royals come back to Paris
  - Le Brun able to revive the Academie, as during years of the Fronde they were overrun by the guild (which enjoyed support of the anti-royalists)
  - Le Brun's career peaks as his paintings are turned into tapestries
  - absolutism of the political regime mirrored by the absolutism in art
- 1667: Salon organized
  - yearly exhibitions of art to showcase its member's paintings, encourage public access to the arts
  - antithetical to guild's approach, where art was strictly commercial, a craft
  - Gabriel de Saint Aubin; "View of the Salon of 1765" (1765): hierarchy of paintings reflected in their arrangement in the hall

### **Britain -- Royal Academy**

- founded in 1768, Joshua Reynolds is the president, conducts experiments on chemicals/wax to find other methods of painting (eg encaustic painting)
  - deregulated artistic world in England allows for such freedom in experimentation
- organized exhibitions of the Academicians' works
  - Gainsborough chose not to exhibit with the Academy as the positions of the painting

were determined; his paintings required good lighting to have the full visual experience, if they were crowded by other paintings then effect is lost

### **Britain -- Royal Society of Arts**

- founded in 1754 as the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce
  - industry and arts going hand in hand, offered monetary prizes for discoveries of paint compositions that could be used on sheep's wool, on ship's bottoms etc
    - James Barry; "The Distribution of Premiums at the Society of Arts"; 1777-1784
  - organised annual spring exhibitions that attracted more and more exhibiting artists
- A.C. Pugin, Thomas Rowlandson, and J. Bluck; "The Great Room of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce"; 1809
  - we can see James Barry's work hung up on the walls of the room, among others
    - "Orpheus Instructing the Savage Greeks in the Arts of Theology and Social Life" (1777-1784)
    -
- 1760: First exhibition of art by contemporary artists

### **Public, Accessibility of art**

#### **Exclusivity of art:**

- In 17th century, patronage of art came from papacy (Pope Urban VIII), the church
  - artists like Bernini, Poussin and Lorrain benefited from this system
  - artists experienced lavish patronage from papal circles, commissions for cathedrals, monuments
  - = art for the elite/nobility/royals
- creeping into the public sphere, accessible to more people
  - execution of King Charles I in 1649 led to the dissemination and dispersion of art pieces in Europe
    - Charles I was a passionate collector and patron of the arts; appreciated old masters like Titian, Raphael, Mantegnas
    - with his death, great sale of his paintings → dispersal of art to the masses; unfortunately, a trade off as there was lack of institutional support for the arts
  - as seen in Watteau's "Gersaint's Sign Shop" (1721)

#### **Visions of the public:**

- **experimentalist:** grouped around the space of the coffee house, a space in which men can freely discourse and engage in interaction across classes, art went on auction in coffee houses
  - Christopher Wren, Robert Hooke: eg after Great Fire of London in 1666, Hooke and Wren designed the Fire Monument: fluted Doric column with an ascending staircase leading to a lookout point; urban spaces: a function of architecture in governance (experimentalist view of public)
    - Wren, "Tract 1" (1675): *Architecture has its political Use; publick Buildings being the Ornament of a Country; it establishes a Nation, draws People and Commerce; makes the People love their native Country, which Passion is the Original of all great Actions in a Commonwealth.*
- **civic humanist:** only men of title (nobility, land-owning class etc) had the autonomy to achieve full rationality, so they knew best how to govern themselves as well as those 'below' them

- Maurice Ashley-Cooper, Anthony Ashley-Cooper (3rd Earl of Shaftsbury)
- **laissez-faire:** Nicolas Barbon - the city is a *heart*, Trade and Commodities are like its *blood*; public is motivated by desire for wealth
  - Mandeville's Fable of the Bees (1705): vices are important for society to function, negative traits like greed, deceitfulness, are actually productive for society; "*The Worst of all the Multitude/Did something for the Common Good.*"
  - Hogarth's satires critique this view, he is in favor of regulating and managing rather than reckless consumption and indulgence
    - "The Harlot's Progress" series
    - "Gin Lane"; 1751: chaos and depravity occur when people blindly follow their desires

### Women in art:

- as subjects: eg Sarah Siddons → Joshua Reynolds; "Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse"; 1784
- as patrons: eg François Boucher; "Portrait of Madame de Pompadour"; 1759, Marie Antoinette
- as artists (less common)
  - Rosalba Carriera; "Self-Portrait as Winter"; 1731: Carriera painted highly eroticized depictions of women rendered through a sensuous medium (pastel or oil), but in this image of herself she presents masculinely: chilliness, hair is covered, strong jawline with chin jutting out
  - Élisabeth Vigée-Le Brun
    - enjoyed close patronage of Marie Antoinette, it was through Marie Antoinette's influence that she could enter the Academie
  - Angelica Kauffman: industrial use of paintings
- French Revolution: misogynistic male gaze?
  - portrayals of Marie Antoinette in political satires
  - David's "Oath of the Horatii", "Brutus": women are portrayed as distraught, emotionally overcome; cannot maintain the stoic commitment to the nation that the men do

### Women's rights:

- women don't have rights in 18th century Britain
  - Catherine Sawbridge Macaulay Graham, "Women's Education" (1790): *With a total and absolute exclusion of every political right to the [female] sex in general, married women ... have hardly a civil right to save them from the grossest injuries; and though the gallantry of some of the European societies have necessarily produced indulgence, yet in others the faults of women are treated with a severity and rancor which militates against every principle of religion and common sense.*
- women's rights would allow women to become better citizens
  - Mary Wollstonecraft, "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792): *Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers—in a word, better citizens*

## **Slavery:**

- abolished during French Revolution in 1794, only abolished in 1833 in Britain
- see French Rev section
- see Industrialization section

## **Restraint/Sensuality**

Poussin -- from sensuality to restraint:

- works like "Venus, Faun and Putti" and "The Nurture of Jupiter" from early 1630s showed a lot of sensuality, eroticism
- "The Seven Sacraments (2nd Series): Eucharist"; 1647
  - stoic columns, darkness; stripped back colour, very different from the vibrancy of Poussin's earlier works and Titian voluptuousness
  - Poussin's letter to Paul Fréart de Chantelou, 1647: *Mode ..., the ratio or the measure and the form that we employ to do anything, which compels us not to go beyond it, making us work in all things with a certain middle course or moderation.*
  - *They called the Dorian the Mode that was firm, grave and severe, and they applied it to matters that were grave, severe and full of wisdom.*
  - decorum: different subjects require different representations and treatment; insufficient to judge a painting by the senses it evokes, but have to apply rational analysis to it
- "The Adoration of the Golden Calf"; 1633-34
  - sensuality as a trap, rich warm colours but the painting carries a sense of foreboding
  - conveys the debauchery and idol worship of the scene

## **Priapus**

- a pagan god of fertility
- Wax Anatomical Votives from Isernia, near Naples; 1780
- Richard Payne Knight: An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus (1786)
  - *the worship of Priapus; which appeared not only contrary to the gravity and sanctity of religion, but subversive of the first principles of decency and good order in society*
  - *The great characteristic attribute [of the Infinite Being] was represented by the Organ of Generation in that state of tension and rigidity which is necessary to the due performance of its functions.*