

A History of Western Art

Third Edition

Laurie Schneider Adams



A History of Western Art

THIRD EDITION

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A HISTORY OF WESTERN ART

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To John, Alexa, Caroline, and Arnie

Preface to the Third Edition

In today's world, images are everywhere. We tend to assume that we understand the meaning of the pictures we see, but this is often not the case. A paradoxical fact of human development is that although children can read the image of a face before they know that the letters f-a-c-e spell *face*, a picture is actually more complex than a word. Hence the proverbial "A picture is worth a thousand words." *A History of Western Art* introduces readers to the complexity of images while surveying the major works of Western art.

We tend to think of written texts as our primary historical documents. But works of art, as well as archaeological artifacts, are also historical documents. They can be more difficult to "read" because of their nonverbal nature, and because we are out of contact with past or distant cultures. *A History of Western Art* encourages students to experience the history of art as a dynamic narrative, creating a "dialogue" between modern viewers and their past.

The Third Edition, like the first two editions, focuses in more depth on fewer works than other art surveys. This, too, is intended to elucidate the complexity of images and to allow readers to become more thoroughly acquainted with works and their contexts. It also keeps the text to a size that is manageable as a one-semester history of art.

Organization of the Text

Context and Style

One aim of *A History of Western Art* is to consider the context of works of art—that is, the time and place in which they were made. Additional considerations include the makers of the works—the artists and those who commission the works—the patrons. The issue of style is a central focus of this text, for the history of art is essentially a history of style. Reflecting the cultural contexts of works are the titles of the early chapters, such as Ancient Near East, Egypt, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, and so forth. Later chapters tend to emphasize stylistic categories—for example, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassical, Romantic, and in the twentieth century, Expressionism, Cubism, Pop Art, Minimalism, and so forth.

Illustrations

The relatively large format of the illustrations in the First and Second Editions continues in the Third

Edition of *A History of Western Art*. Because students may have difficulty reasoning from a two-dimensional reproduction to a three-dimensional work, a number of sculptures are shown from more than one viewpoint. The additional difficulty of imagining a building from a flat photograph is addressed in a number of ways—by illustrating plans, axonometric diagrams, and interior as well as exterior views.

Boxes

Within chapters, readers will find boxed asides containing background information useful for the study of art. These explain the media and techniques of creating art—such as fresco, tempera, bronze-casting—as well as certain philosophies of art—those of Plato and Marx, for example. Significant works of literature, especially the epics, are often relevant to the cultural context of a period. Thus *Gilgamesh* appears in the Ancient Near East chapter, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* in the Greek chapter, *The Aeneid* in the Roman chapter, and *Beowulf* in the Early Middle Ages chapter. Since nineteenth-century Romanticism was as much a literary as an artistic movement, boxed excerpts of Romantic poetry are included. Certain social and political phenomena such as feudalism, the medieval guilds, and the pilgrimage roads also appear in boxes. The mythological and religious background of many historical periods—notably the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman gods, and Christianity and Islam—require some awareness of the beliefs that provide underlying texts on which the iconography of images may be based. These, too, are presented in boxes.

Picture Captions

The main purpose of a caption is to identify the artist's name, title, date, medium, dimensions, and location of a work. In this text, extended captions provide additional information about the image, as well as biographical information on the artist. Sometimes quotes by critics and artists are also included.

Etymology

Because words, as well as objects, have a history, the etymology of many art historical terms is provided. This reinforces the meanings of words, revealing their continuity through time and their etymological logic. In the chapter on ancient Greece (Chapter 7),

terms and proper names are given according to Greek spelling. Certain exceptions, however, bow to convention and retain the “c” instead of the Greek “k.” These are “Acropolis,” “Euclid,” “Socrates,” and “Laocoön.” In the Roman chapter (Chapter 9) the spellings follow the Latin transcription, and words that end in “os” in Greek generally end in “us” in Latin.

Maps, Timelines, Glossary, and Bibliography

Maps are integrated in the chapters to reinforce the sense of geographic location, as well as historical time. Places mentioned in the text are included in the maps. Timelines appear at the end of each chapter. Words that are **bold** in the text are listed and defined in the glossary at the end of the book. A bibliography is provided for further reading and research. These pedagogical tools are intended to emphasize the context of works of art, as well as to familiarize students with the range of art historical texts.

New to the Third Edition

Methodology

Because of their complexity, the visual arts have become the subject of different methodological approaches. These include Formalism, Iconography, Feminism, Marxism, Semiotics, Biography, Autobiography, and Psychoanalysis. In order to engage students with the multifaceted character of imagery, the introductory chapter to the Third Edition surveys the methodologies of art.

Archaeology

Since the study of the arts is so dependent on archaeological discoveries, the introduction also has a new section on archaeology. It is important for students of art history to recognize the contributions of archaeological research to the field, especially to the arts and cultures of antiquity. Furthermore, with each new discovery, history is revised, and this influences the reading of modern, as well as of ancient, history.

More Color

The number of color illustrations has been increased from 53 percent in the Second Edition to 70 percent in the Third. Virtually all the paintings, mosaics, and stained glass windows, as well as many of the sculptures and buildings, are reproduced in color.

More Women Artists

With a view to expanding the traditional canon of art history, several additional women artists appear in the Third Edition. Among these are Sofonisba Anguissola, Marie-Guillemine Benoist, Rosa Bonheur, Julia Cameron, Berthe Morisot, Eva Hesse, Kiki Smith, and Jenny Holzer.

New Boxes

New boxes have also been added, especially where they expand the context of works. In the Ancient Near East chapter, for example, the hymn to Innana is quoted in connection with the rituals devoted to her and the vase on which they are illustrated. Other new boxes include Julius Caesar, Vasari on Women Artists, and the Myth of the Mad Artist.

Beyond the West

At certain points of cross-cultural interchange, or thematic parallels, boxes entitled “Beyond the West” have been introduced. They contain brief discussions of non-Western art, but do not alter the Western focus of the text. An Australian cave painting, for example, is compared with Lascaux. A Mughal miniature of the seventeenth century illustrates the presence of Western ambassadors at the court of India. The influence of Japanese woodblock prints on Impressionism and Post-Impressionism is also treated in a box, as are Gauguin’s fascination with Oceania and African art and the European avant-garde. These boxes provide a sense of the range of world art, and remind readers that Western art is only one of many historical narratives.

Timelines

In the Third Edition, timelines continue to pair works with contemporary cultural developments in other fields. However, a complete chronological list of all the works now appears at the end of every chapter. This is a good way to review the works and reinforces the sequence in the context of a particular period.

Support for Instructors

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- McGraw-Hill offers a **slide package** to all instructors who adopt *A History of Western Art* for their courses; additional slide sets are available to qualifying adopters based on enrollment. Please contact your local McGraw-Hill sales representative for information.
- An **Instructor's Manual** includes an overview of the illustration lists, glossary terms, Websites for further research, and multiple choice and essay questions
- **Testing software** is available in both MAC and Windows.
- The Online Learning Center to accompany *A History of Western Art*, www.mhhe.com/adams, is an Internet-based resource for students and faculty alike. The Instructor's Resources are password-protected and offer the complete text of the Instructor's Manual in addition to other teaching and research resources. An Online Image Bank provides Web links to 80 percent of the illustrations found in the text and is accessible via either the Student or Instructor Resource areas.
- As an adopter, you may also be eligible to use our **PageOut** service to get you and your course up and running online in a matter of hours—at no cost to you and without knowing HTML. To find out more, contact your local McGraw-

Hill representative or visit www.mhhe.com/solutions.

Student Resources

- The **Student Study Guide/Workbook** encourages a close reading of the text with labeling, mapping, and fill-in-the-blank exercises. The pages are perforated so that students can easily turn in assignments from the book as part of take-home or in-class study.
- The McGraw-Hill **Museum Goer's Guide** (0-07-038731-1) helps students with their museum writing assignments by guiding them in what to look for and how to take notes. The Guide lists museums in North America as well as relevant websites and offers 35 exercises to make a trip to the museum even more educational.
- The **McGraw-Hill Guide to Electronic Research in Art** (0-07-232956-4) assists students in locating online resources, evaluating what they find and documenting them correctly; information on the fair use area of copyright law is also presented.
- Web resources for students with Internet access is extensive. The Online Learning center for *A History of Western Art* can be found at www.mhhe.com/adams. Of particular use is the audio pronunciation guide, which has recorded names of artists, glossary terms, and titles of works. The online image bank produces images of 80 percent of the illustrations in the book, which can be used for review. Chapter quizzes comprise a number of multiple choice and essay questions that students can use for practice and that instructors can assign as tests. In addition, the site hosts links that encourage students to become involved in the art world and to conduct research on the Web.

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A History of Western Art

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Contents

Preface xviii

1



Why Do We Study the History of Art? 1

The Artistic Impulse 1

Chronology 1

The Values of Art 2

Material Value 2 Intrinsic Value 2

Brancusi's Bird: Manufactured Metal or a Work of Art? 3

Religious Value 3 Nationalistic Value 3

Psychological Value 4

Art and Illusion 4

Images and Words 5

Traditions Equating Artists with Gods 5

Reflections and Shadows: Legends of How Art Began 5

Image Magic 6

Architecture 6

Archaeology and Art History 8

Methodologies of Art History 9

Formalism 9 Iconography and Iconology 9

Marxism 9 Feminism 9

Biography and Autobiography 10 Semiology 10

Deconstruction 11 Psychoanalysis 11

2



The Language of Art 12

Composition 12

Plane 12

Balance 12

Line 12

Expressive Qualities of Line 12 Lines Used for Modeling 14

Depth 14

The Illusion of Depth 14 Perspective 14

Space 15

Shape 15

Types of Shapes 15 Expressive Qualities of Shape 15

Light and Color 16

Physical Properties of Color 16 Expressive Qualities of Color 17



Texture 18

Stylistic Terminology 19

3

Prehistoric Western Europe 21

The Stone Age 21

Paleolithic 21

Sculpture 22 Carving 22

Modeling 22 Categories of Sculpture 23

Pigment 23 Painting 23

Beyond the West:

Rock Paintings of Australia 28

Mesolithic 27

Neolithic 27

Menhirs 27 Dolmens 28 Cromlechs 28

Post-and-Lintel Construction 29

4

The Ancient Near East 33

The Neolithic Era 33

Jericho 32 Çatal Hüyük 32

Mesopotamia 33

The Uruk Period 33 Inanna 33

Ziggurats 34 Mesopotamian Gods 34 Cylinder Seals 35

From Pictures to Words 35 Gilgamesh 35

Sumer: Early Dynastic Period 36 Akkad 37

Sargon of Akkad 38 Neo-Sumerian 39

Babylon 40

The Law Code of Hammurabi 40

Anatolia: The Hittites 40

Assyria 41 The Neo-Babylonian Empire 42

Glazing 42 Round Arches 42

Iran 43

Destroying the Archaeological Record 44 The Scythians 44

Persian (Achaemenid) Empire 44 Columns 45

5

Ancient Egypt 47

The Gift of the Nile 47

The Pharaohs 47

The Egyptian Concept of Kingship 47

Chronology of Egyptian Kings 47

The Palette of Narmer 48

Religion and Egyptian Gods 50

The Old Kingdom 50

Pyramids 50 Mummification 52 Sculpture 53

The Egyptian Canon of Proportion 54

The Middle Kingdom 55

The New Kingdom 55

Temples 55 Egyptian Column Types 56

Painting 59 The Amarna Period 60

Tutankhamon's Tomb 62

Egypt and Nubia 63

Tomb of Huy and Ramses II 63 Meroë 63

6

The Aegean 67

Cycladic Civilization 67

Minoan Civilization 68

The Palace of Knossos 68 Minoan Fresco 69

Religion 71 Minoan Scripts 71 Pottery 71

Discoveries at Thera 72

The Frescoes 72

Mycenaean Civilization 74

The Legend of Agamemnon 75

7

The Art of Ancient Greece 81

Cultural Identity 82

Government and Philosophy 82

Plato on Artists 82 Women in Ancient Greece 83

Literature and Drama 83

"Man Is the Measure of Things" 83

Greek Gods and Their Roman Counterparts 84

Painting and Pottery 85

Geometric Style 85 Orientalizing Style 85

Archaic Style 86 Greek Vases: Media and Shapes 86

Late Archaic to Classical Style 87

Classical to Hellenistic Style 87

Sculpture 88

Archaic Style 88 Encaustic: Luminous Painting 90

Early Classical Style 90 The Lost-Wax Process 92

Classical Style 93



Classical Architecture: The Athenian Acropolis 94The Parthenon 95 *Plan of the Parthenon* 97*The Orders of Greek Architecture* 98*Medusa* 103 The Temple of Athena Nike 103 The Erechtheum 104**Late Classical Style 106**The Greek Theater 106 *Greek Theater* 106Sculpture 107 *The "Hermes of Praxiteles"* 108**Hellenistic Period 110**

Sculpture 110

The Trojan Horse 112

8

The Art of the Etruscans 115**Architecture 116****Pottery and Sculpture 116****Women in Etruscan Art 117****Funerary Art 118**

Cinerary Containers 118 Sarcophagi 120 Tomb Paintings 121

9

Ancient Rome 123*Virgil's Aeneid* 124 *Chronology of Roman Periods* 124**Architectural Types 125***Arches, Domes, and Vaults* 125 Domestic Architecture 126Public Buildings 128 *Julius Caesar* 128

Roman Building Materials 131 Religious Architecture 133

Commemorative Architecture 137 *Josephus and the Jewish Wars* 141**Sculptural Types 142**Sarcophagi 142 Portraits 143 *Women in Ancient Rome* 143*Marcus Aurelius: Emperor and Philosopher* 145**Mural Painting 146**

10

Early Christian and Byzantine Art 150**A New Religion 150****Constantine and Christianity 150****The Divergence of East and West 150***Christianity and the Scriptures* 151**Early Christian Art 151**Sarcophagi 151 *Christian Symbolism* 151 *The Catacombs* 152Basilicas 153 *St. Peter* 154 Centrally Planned Churches 155



Justinian and the Byzantine Style 155

San Vitale 155 *Mosaic Technique* 159 Hagia Sophia 161

The Codex 164

Parchment 164 *The Vienna Genesis* 164

Later Byzantine Developments 164

11

The Early Middle Ages 167

Islamic Art 167

Islam 167

The Great Mosque, Córdoba 168

Northern European Art 171

Anglo-Saxon Metalwork 171 *Beowulf* 171

Hiberno-Saxon Art 172 *Manuscript Illumination* 172

Carolingian Period 175 *Manuscripts* 175

Revelation and the Four Symbols of the Evangelists 175

Monasteries 176

Monasticism: Chastity, Obedience, and Poverty 177

Ottonian Period 178

12

Romanesque Art 181

Economic and Political Development 181

Feudalism 181

Pilgrimage Roads 182

The Stavelot Reliquary Triptych 183

Architecture 184

Sainte-Foy at Conques 184 *Developments at Autun* 187

Manuscripts 189

Mural Painting 191

The Bayeux "Tapestry" 192

13

Gothic Art 195

Origins of the Gothic Style in France 195

Early Gothic Architecture: Saint-Denis 196

The Life of St. Denis 196

Elements of Gothic Architecture 197

Rib Vaults 197 *Piers* 198 *Flying Buttresses* 198

Pointed Arches 198 The Skeleton 198
 Guilds 199 Stained-Glass Windows 199

Romanesque Precursors of Gothic 200

The Age of Cathedrals 201

Chartres 203

Exterior Architecture of Chartres 203
 Exterior Sculpture of Chartres 205
 Interior of Chartres 209

Later Developments of the French Gothic Style 211

Reims 211
 Paris: Reliquary Chapel of Sainte-Chapelle 214

English Gothic 215

Salisbury Cathedral 215
 King's College Chapel, Cambridge 216

14

Precursors of the Renaissance 218

Thirteenth-Century Italy 218

Nicola Pisano 218 Cimabue 218

Fourteenth-Century Italy 219

Giotto 219 *Dante: Poet of Heaven and Hell* 220
Tempera 222 *Altarpieces* 222
 The Arena Chapel 222
Fresco 224 *Virtues and Vices* 224
 Duccio's *Maestà* 228 *The Kiss of Judas* 228
 Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the *Effects of Good Government* 230
Training in the Master's Workshop 231
The Black Death 232

The International Gothic Style 233

Claus Sluter 233 The Limbourg Brothers 234

15

The Early Renaissance 237

Italy in the Fifteenth Century 237

Renaissance Humanism 237 *Humanism* 237
Soldiers of Fortune 238
 The Competition for the Florence Baptistery Doors 238
 Brunelleschi and Architecture 239
Vasari's Lives 239 *Lines of Vision* 242
 Ghiberti's East Baptistery Doors 243

Early Fifteenth-Century Painting 244

Masaccio 244 *A Distant Haze* 247
 International Style: Gentile da Fabriano 247



Early Fifteenth-Century Sculpture: Donatello's *David* 249

Second-Generation Developments 250

Leon Battista Alberti 251 The Theme of David and Goliath 251

The Equestrian Portrait 252 State Portraits 254

Oil Painting 254

Monumentality versus Spirituality in Fifteenth-Century Painting 255

Filippo Lippi 257

Andrea Mantegna's Illusionism 258

Isabella d'Este 260

Botticelli and Mythological Subject Matter 260

The Platonic Academy 261

Fifteenth-Century Painting in the Netherlands 261

Campin's *Mérode Altarpiece* 262 Jan van Eyck 263

Rogier van der Weyden 267 Later Developments 270

16

The High Renaissance in Italy 274

Architecture 274

The Ideal of the Circle and Centrally Planned Churches 274

St. Peter's and the Central Plan 277

Julius II: Humanist Pope 278

Painting and Sculpture 279

Leonardo da Vinci 279 *Sfumato* 282

Michelangelo Buonarroti 283

The Restoration Controversy 288 Raphael 290

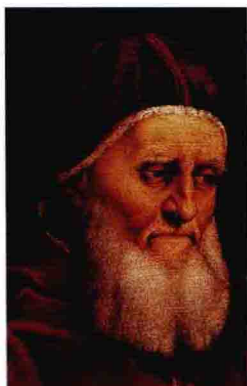
Developments in Venice 293

Gentile Bellini 293

Giovanni Bellini and the *Sacra Conversazione* 294

Painting versus Sculpture 295

Giorgione 296 Titian 298



17

Mannerism and the Later Sixteenth Century in Italy 302

The Reformation 302

Mannerism 303

Mannerist Painting 303 *The Counter-Reformation* 306

Mannerist Sculpture 307 *Vasari on Women Artists* 307

Benvenuto Cellini: A Mannerist Lifestyle 308

Counter-Reformation Painting 309

Tintoretto 309 *The Painter's Daughter* 309

El Greco 310

Architecture: Andrea Palladio 311

The Four Books of Architecture 312





18

Sixteenth-Century Painting in Northern Europe 314

The Netherlands 314

Hieronymus Bosch 314 Luther 315 Pieter Bruegel the Elder 318
W. H. Auden's Icarus 319

Germany 320

Albrecht Dürer 320
The Development of Printmaking 321
The Myth of the Mad Artist 322
Erasmus 323
Matthias Grünewald 324 Lucas Cranach 326
Hans Holbein the Younger 326

19

The Baroque Style in Western Europe 328

Baroque Style 328

Architecture 329

Italy 329 France 334
The French Academy 334
England 336

Sculpture: Gianlorenzo Bernini 338

Italian Baroque Painting 340

Caravaggio 340 Artemisia Gentileschi 342
Women as Artists 342 Giovanni Battista Gaulli 343

Baroque Painting in Northern Europe 344

Peter Paul Rubens 344

Beyond the West:

Mughal Art and the Baroque 346

Rembrandt van Rijn 347
Etching 348 Frans Hals 350
Judith Leyster 350 Jan Vermeer 351
Jacob van Ruisdael 353 Harmen Steenwyck 354

Spanish Baroque Painting: Diego Velázquez 354

French Baroque Painting: Nicolas Poussin 356

20

Rococo and the Eighteenth Century 358

Beyond the West:

The Pagoda 359