

Timeline for Art/Western Cultural History

History and context are important for understanding art. Knowing what was going on gives meaning to the art of the time. This timeline will give some history and background to what was going on when various art pieces were made. This goes along with *Marvelous to Behold* and *How Should We Then Live*. This is not a comprehensive list, but more covers major events, turning points, and various time periods/art styles.

Roman Republic (509-27 B.C.)

- Rome was a republic ruled by two consuls of the noble patrician class. The Republic began to crumble when Julius Caesar was titled Dictator for Life and then the Republic finally fell when Augustus rose to power and restructured Rome as an empire.
- **Julius Caesar** (100-44 B.C.) – ruled from 49-44 B.C. and was given title “Dictator for Life” – and then assassinated in 44 B.C. by Roman senators in hopes to revive the Republic. But this caused a Roman civil war.

Roman Empire (27 B.C. – 476 A.D.)

- The Roman Empire began when Augustus became the first emperor in 27 B.C.
- **Octavian/Caesar Augustus** (63 B.C. – 14 A.D.; reigned from 27 B.C. – 14 A.D.)
 - o Augustus became emperor in 27 B.C. and greatly expanded the Roman empire over his 45 year reign and helped create an era of peace and prosperity in the Roman Empire (Pax Romana). The Altar of Peace (Ara Pacis) is a large monument and altar dedicated to this era of peace. He was worshiped as a god.
- Life of **Jesus**: c. 4 B.C. – 30 A.D.
- Gospel spreads throughout the empire, Christians are persecuted (30-313 A.D.)
 - o This was the **Period of Persecution** (c. 100-313 A.D.). Christians gathered secretly in homes or inside the catacombs – secret underground burial places for Christians. During the Period of Persecution, much of the early Christian art was found in the catacombs.
- Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D. (This was the second temple. The first temple was Solomon’s Temple), a million Jews were killed, Titus took the spoils (or treasures) from the temple back to Rome.
- Trajan (reigned 98-117)
- **Marcus Aurelius** (reigned 161-180) – continued to era of peace in Rome and improved the conditions for poor people in the empire. He also gave the Roman Senate more power and gave many rights back to the people that previous emperors had taken away.
- **Diocletian** (285-305) – In 286 A.D. he *split the Roman empire* into the Western Roman Empire (Latin speaking), including Italy, and the Eastern Roman Empire (Greek speaking) including Asia Minor and Egypt. He continued to rule the Eastern Empire. Four men made up a tetrarchy and ruled this divided empire: Diocletian, Maximian (ran Western Empire), Galerius, and Constantius. The Empire weakened under this new plan. The Eastern Empire flourished and the Western Empire weakened under attacks from the barbarians. This splitting greatly weakened the empire and started the decline of the empire.
- **Constantine** (reigned 306-337) – ruled the Eastern Empire. He attempted to reunite the empire but was unsuccessful.
- **Constantine legalizes Christianity: 313 A.D. with the Edict of Milan**
 - o The time after this is known as the Period of Recognition. Art changed after this.

- **Constantinople** founded in 324 A.D. by Constantine. He renamed the already-existing city of Byzantium to Constantinople and made it the new capital of the Roman Empire. Today this is Istanbul, Turkey. This was the heart of the Byzantine Empire and Byzantine art (see below).
 - o Constantinople was important for the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottoman Turks took the city, it was a symbol of the rise of Islam and the fall of the center of Christianity, making the Ottoman Empire the most powerful in all of South Eastern Europe and marking the end of the Eastern Roman Empire.
- Visigoths Sack Rome – 410 A.D. – This was the final blow and Rome never recovered.
- Rome falls – 476 A.D. to Barbarian invasions. This ended the Western Roman Empire, and all that was left of the Roman Empire was the Byzantine Empire. This began the Middle Ages or Medieval period.

Byzantine Empire and Byzantine art style (395 – 1453; roughly from the split of the Roman Empire until the fall to the Turks) – centered in Constantinople

- (This is part of the Middle Ages of Medieval Period)
- Early Byzantine period: 313 A.D. (Edict of Milan) to 726 A.D. (beginning of **iconoclasm**)
- Most Early Byzantine art falls between 527 (emperor Justinian) to 726 due to the onset of **iconoclasm** (destruction of images used in religious worship by those who opposed religious images, calling it blasphemy; 726-843)
- Justinian (reigned 527-565) – he partly restored the Western Roman Empire. He was one of the most important Byzantine emperors. He commissioned the *Hagia Sophia* church, a great work of Byzantine architecture and mosaics.
- Middle/High Byzantine period: 843-1204 (restoration of icons to the fall of Constantinople)
- Late Byzantine period: 1204-1453 (Byzantine recaptures Constantinople in 1261; but then loses it again in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks. Many churches were converted to mosques. (Western European and Byzantine styles merge)
- Much of the Byzantine aesthetic is still maintained in eastern Orthodox cultures (Russia, Greece, Bulgaria, etc.)

Middle Ages/Dark Ages/Medieval Period (c. 476-1400)

- During the Middle Ages:
 - o **Monasticism** flourished (after Benedict founded a monastery in 529 near Rome... then monasteries were built all across Europe over the next 600 years)
 - o **Feudalism** was established in Europe
 - o The Catholic church gained power
 - o many cathedrals were built
 - o Muhammad founded Islam, 610 A.D. Islam spread and the Holy Land became the focus of religious power between Muslims and Christians leading to the **Crusades** (1095-1204).
- *Early Middle Ages* (476-1000 A.D.)
 - o This period is called the **Dark Ages** because after the fall of Rome, Europe fell into chaos and the plagues wiped out a third of the population.
 - o Vikings Raided many European towns (793 – 1066)
 - o **Plagues** (540s & 1340s)
 - o **Iconoclasm**, 726-843 A.D. (726 A.D. Emperor Leo III banned icons)

- **Charlemagne** crowned Emperor of Europe by Pope Leo III – 800 A.D. (reigned until 814) & the Carolingian Period
 - Period of advancements in copying manuscripts, sculpting, building cathedrals, roads, and bridges
- **Byzantine Emperor Basil II** (ruled 976-1025)
 - Constantinople was still the capital city
 - After his death, the following and weaker emperors couldn't stand up to the rising power of the Muslim Turks.
- *High Middle Ages* (1000-1250)
 - A period of great religious movements. Besides the Crusades and monastic reforms, people sought to participate in new forms of religious life
 - Revived art/sculpture
 - **Romanesque period** of art and architecture – **1050-1200 A.D.**
 - Churches had rounded arches, heavy, thick walls, dark interior/small windows
 - Illuminated manuscripts
- *Late Middle Ages* (1250-1500)
 - **Gothic Period** of art and architecture – **1200-1400 A.D.**
 - Architectural features: rib vault, rose window, stained glass, flying buttress, pointed arch
 - Saint Denis
 - Durham Cathedral
 - Chartres Cathedral
 - Notre Dame, Paris
 - Reims Cathedral
 - Decline in feudalism, religious instability, collapse from the Black Death, social chaos
 - **Hundred Years' War** (1337-1453; France and England)
 - **Black Death** (1347-1351) – this plague killed 1/3 of Europe's population
The deaths from the plague caused the feudal system to collapse. Small city-states emerged and the structure of Europe changed.
- *Maniera greca* (A term coined by Giorgio Vasari) or **Italo-Byzantine style**: 1200s & 1300s
 - Italo-Byzantine style: Medieval paintings in Italy influenced by the Byzantine style
 - Flattened space, golden backgrounds, elongated, stylized figures with little to no emotion
- **Berlinghiero** (1175-1235)
- After the fall of Constantinople (1453), many scholars moved to Italy, bringing books and Greek and Roman classics with them. They exchanged ideas freely and called for a return to the classics, looking to Greek and Latin culture. This “rebirth” and new ways of thinking spread across Europe, creating the Renaissance.

Renaissance: 1400-1600

- Renaissance art was calm, balanced, and stable. The paintings and sculptures had symmetrical compositions.
- Era of discovery (science, literature, huge growth and developments in the arts)
- Early Renaissance: 1400-1500
 - Van Eyck
 - Oil painting
 - Gutenberg printing press and moveable type, 1450
 - Albrecht Dürer

- Gutenberg Bible, 1454
- Columbus to Caribbean, 1492
- High Renaissance: 1495-1520
 - Michelangelo
 - Leonardo Da Vinci
 - Raphael
 - Reformation, 1517 (Martin Luther)
 - John Calvin and the Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1536
- Late Renaissance: 1520-1600
 - Counter Reformation, 1545 (Council of Trent)
 - Mannerism in art

Baroque: 1600-1750

- The Baroque period was decorative, grand, and dramatic. Art had asymmetrical compositions, intense lighting and contrast, and high emotions and drama.
 - Caravaggio
 - Bernini
- Music was also passionate, exuberant, serious, and grand. Multiple melodic lines weaved together to form harmonies. Musical compositions often had sudden dynamic contrasts and had frequent use of trills and other musical ornamentation. (Bach, Handel)
- Johann Sebastian Bach- composer. Bach's death in 1750 marks an end to Baroque music and the beginning of the more calm and reserved Classical Period.

Enlightenment (1650-1800)

- New ideas centered around human reason; man was elevated above God
- People questioned conventional truths and the church's authority and looked for universal laws to explain the natural world
- Philosophers (Voltaire and Kant), scientists (Newton and Boyle)
- Big time in education and expanding knowledge
- Locke and Rousseau – political philosophers whose ideas were central to American and French Revolutions against tyranny

Classical Era: 1750-1825

- Classical music was light and elegant with more emphasis on melody and accompaniment
 - Mozart
 - Beethoven
- In art, Neoclassicism emerged with a renewed interest in Greek and Roman models of art
- Neoclassical art: 1770-1810

Emphasis on form, restraint of emotion and color; appealed to the intellect

 - Jacques-Louis David
 - Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres
- Rococo: 1700-1770: Art style in Europe (appealed to the upper-class, decorative, organic, light and pastel colors)

Revolutions:

- Industrial Revolution (1760-1850)
- American Revolution (1775-1783)
- French Revolution (1789-1799)
 - o Napoleon crowned emperor of France (1803)

Romanticism: 1800-1900

- Romantic music (1825-1900) reflected emotions and moods and music became much more expressive; compositions were more rhythmically and harmonically complex
 - o Brahms
 - o Tchaikovsky
 - o Chopin
 - o Debussy
- Romantic art: appealed to the emotions of the viewer; it was dramatic and imaginative
Romanticism emerged as a response to the disillusionment with the Enlightenment values of reason and order in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789. It was also a style developed in opposition to Neoclassicism.
 - o Henry Fuseli
 - o Théodore Géricault
 - o Eugène Delacroix
 - o Francisco Goya

Realism: 1840-1875 in France

- Landscapes: John Constable & Joseph Mallord William Turner
- In Europe: Gustave Courbet, Jean-Francois Millet, Honoré Daumier, Rosa Bonheur, Edouard Manet
- In America: Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper
- Hudson River School artists in America: Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Edwin Church

Photography: 1834

- William Henry Fox Talbot
- Daguerreotype
- Eadweard Muybridge

Civil War in America, 1861

Modern Era (1860-1975)

- **Impressionism:** 1870-1886 in Paris
 - o Claude Monet
 - o Berthe Morisot
 - o Edgar Degas
 - o Mary Cassatt
 - o Renoir

- [Post-Impressionism](#): 1886-1905 in France and Europe
 - o Georges Seurat
 - o Paul Cézanne
 - o Paul Gauguin
 - o Vincent van Gogh
- [Fauvism](#): 1905-1910 in France
 - o Henri Matisse
- [Expressionism](#): 1905-1920
 - o Edvard Munch
 - o Wassily Kandinsky
- [World War I](#) (1914–1918)
Disillusionment after World War I
- [Cubism](#): 1907-1920s in Paris
 - o Pablo Picasso
 - o Georges Braque
- [Futurism](#): 1909-1914 in Italy
 - o Giacomo Balla
 - o Umberto Boccioni
- [Surrealism](#): 1910s & 1920s in Paris
 - o Salvador Dali
 - o René Magritte
- [Dada](#): 1916-1924 in Europe
 - o Marcel Duchamp
- [The Great Depression](#) (1929–1938) in America
- [World War II](#) (1939–1945) and Nazi horrors; atomic bombs dropped on Japan (1945)

Art after WWII

- [Abstract Expressionism](#) (1940s & 1950s)
 - o Jackson Pollock
- [Pop Art](#) (1950s & 1960s)
 - o Andy Warhol
 - o Roy Lichtenstein

[Cold War](#), 1945-1991, United States and Soviet Union

[Civil Rights Movement in America](#), 1954-1968

[Vietnam War](#), 1955-1975, U.S. enters in 1965

[Feminist art](#), 1960s & 1970s, America

[Minimalism](#), 1960s & 1970s, America

[Postmodernism](#): 1970-1990

Cold War fizzles out, 1991

Communism collapses in Eastern Europe and U.S.S.R. (1989–1991)

Art pieces from Challenge II

Music:

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Water Music Suite No. 2: Alla Hornpipe, 1717

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2: Prelude and Fugue in C Major, Book 2: 1742 (Book 1: 1722)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-Flat, Third Movement, 1785

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Symphony No. 5, First Movement, 1808

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Symphony No. 4, Third Movement, 1885

Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)

Serenade for Strings, Fourth Movement, 1875

Peter Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Symphony No. 6, Fourth Movement, 1893

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

La Mer: Dialogue de Vent et de la Mer, 1905

Igor Stravinsky

The Rite of Spring: Opening to the End of Jeu de Rapt, 1913

Artworks:

Berlinghiero, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1230

Tempera on wood

Italo-Byzantine, Middle Ages, Byzantine, Gothic

Jan van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434

Oil painting on panel

Early Renaissance (Northern Europe)

Michelangelo, *Pieta*, 1498-1499

Marble sculpture, subtractive

High Renaissance

St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome, Italy

Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, c. 1506

Oil painting on wood

High Renaissance

Leonardo da Vinci, *Last Supper*, c. 1495-1498

Fresco painting (experimental technique)

Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, Italy

Albrecht Dürer, *St. Jerome in His Study*, 1514
Northern Renaissance
Engraving on paper (printmaking)

Johannes Vermeer, *The Milkmaid*, c. 1657-1658
Oil painting on canvas
Baroque

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Return of the Prodigal Son*, c. 1668
Oil on canvas
Baroque

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Conversion of St. Paul*, c. 1600-1601
Oil on canvas
Baroque

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Night Watch*, 1642
Oil on canvas
Baroque

Charles Willson Peale, *The Staircase Group*, 1795
Oil on canvas
American Neoclassicism

Thomas Cole, *The Oxbow*, 1836
Oil on canvas
American Romanticism

Winslow Homer, *The Gulf Stream*, 1899
Oil on canvas
Realism

Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872
Oil on canvas
Impressionism
France