

MASTER MUSEUM DISCUSSION NOTES

Museum Discussion Notes

NORTHERN RENAISSANCE & FLEMISH BAROQUE



Hieronymus Bosch – Saint Christopher Carrying the Christ Child Through a Sinful World (c. 1490–1500)

Northern Renaissance

- Transforms the legend of St. Christopher into a symbolic moral landscape filled with temptation, violence, and human folly.
- Reflects Late Medieval Catholic worldviews while encouraging contemplation on spiritual salvation.
- Combines careful observation of nature with symbolic meaning, laying foundations for Northern Realism.



Joachim Wtewael – Annunciation to the Shepherds (c. 1595–1599)

Northern Mannerism

- Exemplifies Northern Mannerism through elongated figures, brilliant color, and dramatic movement.
- Created for educated private collectors who appreciated technical virtuosity and composition over simple religious illustration.



Jan Brueghel the Elder – Diana and Actaeon (c. 1605–1610)

Flemish Baroque

- Combines Ovidian classical mythology with meticulous observation of the natural world.
- Elevates landscape painting from a background element to a primary subject using delicate brushwork.



Sir Anthony van Dyck – Portrait of Bishop Antoine Triest (c. 1627)

Flemish Baroque

- Portrays the bishop with elegance, dignity, and psychological depth during the Counter-Reformation.
- Reinforces Church authority while presenting the subject with human intelligence and naturalistic refinement.

BAROQUE ART & CARAVAGGISTS



Orazio Gentileschi – Stigmatization of St. Francis (1601)

Baroque

- Directly influenced by Caravaggio in Rome before later moving to England to paint for the court of Charles I.
- Utilizes diagonal composition and extreme light/dark contrast to reinforce Counter-Reformation doctrine.



Hendrick ter Brugghen – Supper at Emmaus (1616)

Utrecht Caravaggism

- Founding member of the Utrecht Caravaggists who studied in Rome near Caravaggio.
- Influenced major Dutch and Flemish masters including Rembrandt, Rubens, and Hals.
- Employs single-light-source chiaroscuro to create dramatic value contrast and immediacy.



Simon Vouet – St. Sebastian (1625)

French Baroque

- French painter who spent years in Rome in the early 17th century, deeply influenced by Caravaggio.
- Returned to France to become court painter for Louis XIII, playing a lead role in bringing Baroque influences to France.
- Demonstrates the dramatic Caravaggist light and dynamic composition.

19TH CENTURY ACADEMIC & REALIST PORTRAITURE



François Pascal Simon Gérard – Portrait of Louise-Antoinette-Scholastique Guéheneuc, Madame la Maréchale Lannes, Duchess de Montebello, with her Children (1814)

French Neoclassicism / Academic Portraiture

- **History:** Memorial portrait of the widow (aged 27) of Jean Lannes, one of Napoleon's favorite generals who died in battle in 1809. Completed in 1814 during Napoleon's exile; shows her deceased husband as a statue acting as guardian of the family. Serene depiction functioning quietly as an image of an empire coming to an end.
- **Technique:** Standing over 8 feet tall with an almost perfectly pyramidal composition with the mother at the apex. Gerard avoids repetitive rhythms by placing every child at a different height, influenced by classical sculpture contrapposto. Uses red and white shawls to draw the viewer's eye upward toward the face.



Franz Xaver Winterhalter – Empress Eugénie (1854)

19th Century Court Portraiture

- **History:** Winterhalter was the most sought-after portrait artist in the mid-19th century. Empress Eugénie (aged ~28 here) was an international fashion icon; her styles and jewelry were widely copied across Europe and the US.
- **Technique:** Values in flesh are restrained with a distinct "halo" effect around her head. Keeps her face as the focal point despite high chroma background colors. Employs economical brushwork for lace details and lavender/violet wraps to unify flesh tones and shadows.



William-Adolphe Bouguereau – The Elder Sister (1869)

French Academic Realism

- **History:** Bouguereau used his own children, Henriette and Paul, as models. Sits at the crossroads of Renaissance idealism, Victorian sentimentality, and French Academic Realism. Features serious expressions giving children dignity and maturity.
- **Technique:** Classic smooth flesh tones with non-perceptible brush strokes. The children's arms form a circular design within an upright stable pose. Soft, warm flesh tones in the baby contrast with the elder sister, while dark background masses and white clothing create central focal contrast.

AMERICAN REALISM & ASHCAN SCHOOL



Everett Shinn – A Theatre Scene (1903)

Ashcan School

- Shinn was a newspaper illustrator who studied in Paris and loved theater.
- Fought the National Academy, returning when Abstract Expressionism took over.
- Favored authenticity over academic technique, using hasty newspaper sketches as foundations for oil paintings.



John Sloan – Movie 5 cents (1907)

Ashcan School

- Depicts mass entertainment and everyday urban leisure.
- Sloan was a newspaper illustrator; reflects genuinely experienced events with a detached view.
- Prioritizes authenticity over polished technique.



Robert Henri – Calero (1908)

Ashcan School

- Features bold brushwork capturing human dignity.
- Demonstrates the shift towards raw, real everyday life over academic polish.



Edward Hopper – Moonlight Interior (1921)

American Realism

- Earliest Hopper nudes; his wife Jo was not the model.
- Conveys a sense of light, solitude, voyeurism, and distance from the person.
- Painted during his free hours in Washington Square while holding a full-time job as a commercial illustrator.



Robert Henri – Pink Ribbon (1927)

Ashcan School

- Pushed students away from academic polish and towards painting the raw, real everyday life around them.



Edward Hopper – The Girlie Show (1941)

American Realism

- His wife Jo is the model, aged 58 at the time, though she was made to look younger to prevent Edward from using younger models.
- Explores themes of voyeurism; a recurring subject for Hopper.
- Painted three years after burlesque was banned in NYC.
- Madonna named her 1994 "Girlie Show" tour after this painting, using it as a visual foundation.