



Baroque Art & Architecture

Glossary

Chiaroscuro

Chiaroscuro is Italian for "light-dark" and describes the prominent contrast of light and shade in a painting, drawing or print.

Dynamism

It is a term used in fine art to suggest movement and energy. This is accomplished through artistic elements like drawing, colour and line that are modified to suggest compositional turbulence, agitation, or frenetic energy.

Chamfered

In architecture chamfered refers to an angled line or surface that cuts off a corner.

Pediment

It is an architectural element used specifically in Classical, Neoclassical and Baroque architecture. It is triangular in shape and placed above the horizontal structure of the entablature, typically supported by columns.



Pilaster

It is a Classical architecture element used to give the appearance of a supporting column with only an ornamental function.

Nave

It is the main body of the church and extends from the entry to the altar and may be flanked by lower side-aisles separated from the nave by an arcade.

Aisle

An aisle is a passage for walking in between rows of seats or with rows of seats on one side and a wall on the other. Aisles are a common feature in religious architecture and can be seen in buildings such as churches, cathedrals and synagogues.

Piazza

Piazza is Italian for “town square”, which is an open public space usually found in the centre of a town and is meant for community gatherings.

Colonnade

A colonnade stands for a long sequence of columns that are joined by a common entablature (superstructure consisting of the architrave, frieze and cornice that lies horizontally above a column).

Counter-Reformation



The Counter-Reformation or the Catholic Reformation was the period of Catholic resurgence which was initiated in response to the Protestant Reformation in almost all of Europe. It began with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and ended at the close of the Thirty Years' War in 1648.

Gilt-Bronze

Gilt means to be covered in gold. Gilt-Bronze is the term used to describe bronze objects which have been covered in finely ground, high-carat gold–mercury amalgam. Such finished objects are also known as Ormolu.

Trompe l'oeil

Trompe-l'œil is a French word that means to deceive the eye. This art technique employs realistic imagery creating an optical illusion that the painted object is in fact three dimensional and not two dimensional.

Fresco

Fresco is a technique of mural painting in which colour is applied on freshly-laid or wet lime plaster. Pigment is mixed with water and applied upon the wet surface. Once dry, the pigment sets into the plaster and the painting becomes an integral part of the wall.

Altar

Altars are usually found in religious structures like churches. It is any structure used typically for religious purposes like making offerings etc.



Pendentives

A pendentive is a construction mechanism that allows the placement of a circular dome over a square room.

Pendentives are the triangular segments of a sphere that taper at the bottom and spread at the top. The pendentives carry the weight of the dome.

Apse

A semi-circular recess that is covered with a hemispherical vault is known as an apse. It is a common feature of Romanesque, Byzantine and Gothic church architecture. At times, the recess can also be polygonal in shape and the roof may be flat, sloping, domed, or hemispherical.

Lantern

The tall construction above the junction of the four arms of a cruciform (cross-shaped) church is known as the lantern tower. It has openings through which light from outside can shine down to the crossing.

Quadro riportato

The Italian phrase *Quadri riportati* means "carried picture". In art, it is used to describe gold-framed easel paintings, painted into a fresco in a way that they are supposed to be viewed at a normal eye level.

Polychrome marble



Polychrome refers to the use of multiple colours in the decoration of architectural elements. Here, it specifically refers to decoration done using variedly coloured marble stones.