

chapter 53: the baroque art of europe

- the baroque style was created by catholic patrons who wanted to further show the significance of the church.

baroque images

- divine classical figures could be depicted as people in everyday settings
 - sex
 - violence
 - messy human affairs
- artists began building questions of illusionism into their works
- the calling of saint matthew, michelangelo merisi da caravaggio
 - baroque naturalism
 - dark
 - dramatic
 - vividly realistic
 - shows the moment where matthew gets called by jesus to follow him
 - depicted humbly
 - it is not entirely obvious which person in the painting is supposed to be matthew
 - this was probably on purpose
 - caravaggio enjoyed visual ambiguity
 - christ and his apostle peter are dressed as humble travelers
- david with the head of goliath, caravaggio
 - goliath's face is a self portrait of caravaggio
 - casting himself as an aggressor and a victim
 - david's expression is satisfied and mournful at the same time
 - david's sword says "humility slays pride"
- the elevation of the cross, peter paul rubens
 - shows people lifting the cross with jesus on it
 - triptych (3 panel altarpiece)
 - the three panels show different parts of the story
 - the three panels also share the same horizon line

looking more closely: iconography in the felicity of the regency

- the felicity of the regency is part of the medici cycle
- they were hung in the luxembourg palace
- this painting symbolically represented the queen's political ambitions
 - the current queen (marie de' medici) was very controversial
 - depicted marie de' medici as the embodiment of new political concepts
- shows marie holding a scale, which is a symbol of justice
- she is also wearing a crown, a symbol of monarchical rule
 - both of these are meant to show that while being a monarch, she is a just ruler.
- two figures to the left of the queen

- a man holding a sickle and a vegetal wreath
 - representing the cycle of life
- a woman holding an ouroboros (a snake eating it's own tail)
 - representing eternity
- a few putti surrounding the queen
 - one of them yanks on the hair of Envy, and stomps on the head of ignorance
 - ignorance is reaching for the books and instruments just out of her reach

baroque objects and spaces

- the baroque style is also obvious in sculpture and architecture of the time
- cornaro chapel, gian lorenzo bernini
 - higher ups in the catholic church wanted to communicate their ideals with art
 - bernini created some of the most expressive sculpture within this group
- san carlo alle quattro, francesco borromini
 - a church
 - borromini did the interior and the exterior
 - the inside was one of his first independent architectural commissions
 - he used some existing elements of the church when he redid the interior, especially the fountain
 - at the top of the dome there is a lantern, which is meant to be like the holy spirit
 - a dove inside a triangle on the lantern represents the holy spirit
- altar of the kings, jeronimo de balbas
 - considered to be ultra-baroque
 - it is a retablo
 - combines architecture, painting, and sculpture
 - has four estipite columns
 - includes twelve wooden polychrome figures, six male and below them six female saints
 - figures are between the columns
 - the altar of kings was almost just a display of wealth
 - wealth coming from the rich gold and silver mines of south america
 - conveys great political power
- versailles, hall of mirrors
 - designed by jules hardouin-mansart
 - the space was used as a reception hall and waiting room
 - 357 mirrored panes, and even more window panes
 - 17 arches
 - venetian glass makers were recruited to build a french glass factory
 - because the finest glass at the time was made in venice
 - glass thin enough for the windows was nearly impossible to transport
 - the hall was originally decorated with furniture made from solid silver
 - the furniture was melted down to fund a war that france was fighting in.

terms

- ouroboros - a snake eating it's own tail
- putti - a representation of a naked child, especially a cherub or a cupid in Renaissance art.

- ultra-baroque - the integration of painting, sculpture, and architecture
- retablo - a decorated vertical structure behind an altar, painting, sculpture, elaborate frame work
- estipite - a column or pillar in the shape of an inverted cone or pyramid