

# A beginner's guide to Rococo art

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- the beginnings of rococo
  - in the early 1700s
  - shift away from classicism in art
  - palace of versailles was abandoned
  - a shift away from monarchy and towards aristocracy
- fragonard's the swing
  - depicts two lovers getting an older man to push the woman on a swing
    - and the man is hiding in the bushes looking up her dress
    - two cupid figures
    - pink pastel, bright colors
    - not a serious painting

## Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, Self-Portrait

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- a painting of a painter painting a painting (the english language never fails)
- elisabeth louise vigee le brun (one person) is known for:
  - portraits of marie antionette
  - portraits of other european monarchs and nobles
  - many self portraits
- painting of marie antoinette (queen of france)
  - wearing a big fancy dress
  - facing towards the viewer, but her head is turned to the left looking past the viewer
  - has a huge column in the background
  - along side a marble bust of her husband beheading a crown
  - it was for her sister. but the queen liked the painting so much that she had copies made for other people
- elisabeth louise became queen marie antoinette's court painter
- and therefore very wealthy
- she was very conservative and old fashioned
- her father wanted her to succeed but her mother didnt like her
- she fled france during the french revolution
- the self portrait itself
  - painted in rome
  - she is wearing a dark dress
  - and a white turban
    - a turban is a head covering
  - she has a big ruffled collar that is also white
  - she is painting a portrait
    - the subject of this portrait is probably marie antoinette
  - the self portrait shows that she is still going strong after being forced out of france

## Jean-Honoré Fragonard, The Swing

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- you can see the brushstrokes
  - the lush garden showing the sensuality of the artwork
  - slipper flying off the lady's foot
  - painted sometime from 1767 to 1768
  - a private commission from a probably aristocratic couple
  - was pretty small, meant for private viewing
  - prints were made of it in 1782
  - swinging was a common leisure activity for elites
    - in their gardens
      - gardens were considered to be less formal than being inside

## Neoclassicism, an introduction

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- neoclassicists preferred having no visible brushstrokes
- drawing is more important than painting
- clean sharp lines
- neoclassicism was a child of the enlightenment
  - connected classical traditions to enlightenment ideas
  - politically charged
- strong horizontal and vertical lines
- not vibrant colors
- jaques-louis david

## Jacques-Louis David, Oath of the Horatii

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- shows three brothers saluting three swords being held up by their father, with women grieving behind him.
- two families are going into battle because of a dispute
- the women of the families are upset
- the families are connected by marriage
- this story came out of a play called Les Horaces by Corneille
  - not an exact scene from the play, but probably inspired by it
- painting is somewhat political
  - to show people that their ideas will require sacrifice

## Jacques-Louis David, Napoleon Crossing the Alps

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- painting shows napoleon riding on a horse on a mountain range
  - happened in may 1800
  - napoleon led the troops across the alps
- commissioned by king charles IV of spain
- napoleon refused to pose and model for david while he was painting
- david had his son wear napoleons uniform and make the pose

- napoleon also did not actually lead his troops across the alps
- napoleons arm in this painting follows the slope of the mountain ridge
- he is also very calm and controlled, while his horse is not
- napoleon ordered three more copies of the painting
  - one in madrid
  - one in paris
  - one in milan
  - one also was made that stayed in davids studio