



Narrator: Many of the characteristics of Rococo architecture can be found in the paintings of this era. Certainly, a fondness for pastel colors and curving shapes in form is prevalent in the Rococo style that started in France and then spread to other parts of Europe, particularly England. Rococo art was ornamental like Baroque art, but it was much lighter, more elegant and not nearly as heavy and dramatic.

The subject matter was also light, one might even say frivolous. Romanticized pastimes were frequently featured as subject matter and reflected the hedonism of the aristocratic patrons that promoted this style of art through their commissions. Fête galante paintings became a genre within Rococo art depicting an exquisite and lavish outdoor party frequently with amorous overtones and maybe even a flying cherub or two.

The most famous of these paintings is Watteau's *Pilgrimage to Cythera*. The patrons of this art were the noble classes. It is not surprising that romanticized portraits of these patrons were in vogue. Females and so to some degree men as well were depicted with an ethereal glow like fabulous porcelain dolls dressed in luxurious cloth and lace and fabulous hairstyles. Women were frequently featured with their cherub-like children and perhaps the family dog as well as an epitome of an ideal domestic life.

Some of the most famous portraits are of Marie Antoinette, the queen of France, and her children by the popular female portrait artist Madame Marie-Louise-Élisabeth Vigée-Le Brun. Now don't laugh the length of her name. Madame Le Brun is perhaps one of my favorite artists. The discovery of the ruins of Pompei in Herculaneum had an effect upon the visual arts and like the Renaissance, there was a renewed interest in classical mythology as a theme as well as depictions of clothing and hairstyle.

All in all, Rococo art is beautiful, feminine, light, and carefree. It is also highly romantic and idealized even to the point of being self-indulgent. It does not reflect real life in any way, shape, or form.

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