



Narrator: It is difficult to define an era when you're in the midst of it. You just can't see the forest for the trees, so it should come as no surprise that the Baroque era was named in retrospect. Originally, the term came from a Portuguese word "Barroco", which is a large, irregularly-shaped pearl. This label of Baroque was not intended to be a compliment.

In the arts of the Renaissance, balance and harmony were combined with naturalism and based upon the studies of classical antiquities. While the Baroque era was still based in the heritage of classical antiquities and still strived for a naturalistic effect, artists of the Baroque era through restraint out the door. Drama, theatricality, heightened realism, and fantastic illusions of motion characterize the Baroque arts.

The visual arts, music, and theater all became more emotionally intense. One of the main forces driving the change in the arts was the counter-reformation by the Catholic Church. This led to the creation of visual arts and music, which attempted to educate and inspire the faithful. The arts were seen as a tool to reinvigorate spiritual fervor.

In an era of growing economies and growing aristocracies, the wealthy patronized the arts as well and helped to create a style of lavishness and excitement. The middle class became more and more interested in the arts and expanded the demand for paintings and sculptures, theater, and music.

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