



Speaker: In Buddhism, there is a teaching that states that the only thing permanent and persistent is change. Certainly, in the 19th century, change started becoming more rapid, and the arts reflected a faster pace of evolution in society. We also know that Newton's Law of Physics states that for every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction. This holds true in the arts as well.

Neoclassicism still persisted into the beginning of the 19th century. However, as a reaction against the linear style of Neoclassicism, with its penchant for history paintings and moral symbolism, a new style emerged, which was later termed The Romantic Style. Now, please do not limit the term Romantic to that of love. Think of it more as idealism in connection with Romanticism, and you get a clear picture of how the terms apply and what the art style was all about.

Then, midway through the century, there's a reaction against the Romantic style of art, and as a counter-tendency to Romanticism came Realism. Again, please don't confuse terms. Just because the style is called Realism, does not imply that the subject-matter is any more or less real, in terms of the depiction of three-dimensional space or details in the subject matter. Instead, Realism applies to more real-life situations.

Instead of an idealized world of the Romantics, or the penchant of the Neoclassical style to represent events from the past, the Realists focused on events that were ordinary, and also focused on ordinary people that were experiencing those ordinary events. Another way to state it is that the Romantics were more theatrical and emotional, whereas, the Realists were more generalistic, like the gumshoe detective that says, "Just the facts, ma'am."

In the latter quarter of the 19th century, a new and astounding style developed. Impressionism. Soundly criticized and attacked for just being a lack of good technique, the style won over converts quite quickly. As it attempted to express in painting, more than just subject matter but rather a transitory impression of a moment. Wait, there's more. Just as Impressionism was gaining favor, artists again reacted against the movement.

In the last 10 years of the 19th century, Post-Impressionistic style was created. Post-Impressionism was much more confined, controlled, formalized and organized, and it was a radically different style than any art that preceded it. Post-Impressionism ended the century pointing the way to even more radical styles which would follow in the 20th century.

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