

# BACHELOR PROGRAM OF CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART

**COVA 2220: 16<sup>TH</sup> -19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY VISUAL ARTS**

# WHAT IS ROMANTICISM?

- Romanticism is a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement originating in the 18th century, characterized chiefly by a reaction against classicism and an emphasis on the imagination and emotions, and marked especially in English literature by sensibility and the use of autobiographical material, an exaltation of the primitive and the common man, an appreciation of external nature, an interest in the remote.
- Can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality that typified Classicism. It was also to some extent a reaction against 18<sup>th</sup> century rationalism and physical materialism in general.
- Spanned from around 1790 to 1880

# CHARACTERISTICS

- **Sublime:** danger and beauty defined nature's sublime aesthetic.
- **Infinite longing:** portrayal of bold, intense emotions.
- **Supernatural:** the background played as big of a role as the subject in elevating emotional intensity
- **Color as energy:** colors had their own energy and ability to inspire different mental and emotional states (bright colors and energetic brushstrokes)
- **Art for people:** return art to the public domain (Romantic paintings were frequently taken on tours through cities and villages so they were always in the public view)

# WHAT DID THEY PORTRAY?

- A deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature
- A general exaltation of emotion over reason and of the senses over intellect
- A heightened examination of human personality and its moods and mental potentialities
- A preoccupation with the hero, and the exceptional figure in general and a focus on his or her passions and inner struggles
- A new view of the artist as a supremely individual creator, whose creative spirit is more important than strict adherence to formal rules and traditional procedures
- An emphasis upon imagination as a gateway to experience and spiritual truth
- An obsessive interest in folk culture, national and ethnic cultural origins, and the [medieval](#) era
- A preference for the exotic, the remote, the mysterious, the weird, the occult, the monstrous, the diseased, and even the satanic.

# BY WHAT IT WAS STIMULATED?

- In part spurred by the idealism of the French Revolution, Romanticism **embraced the struggles** for freedom and equality and the promotion of justice.
- Romanticism **embraced individuality and subjectivity** to counteract the excessive insistence on logical thought. Artists began exploring various emotional and psychological states as well as moods. As the French poet [Charles Baudelaire](#) described it, "Romanticism is precisely situated neither in choice of subject nor in exact truth, but in a way of feeling."
- In many countries, Romantic **painters turned their attention to nature** and *plein air* painting, or painting out of doors.
- Romanticism was closely bound up with the emergence of **newly found nationalism** that swept many countries after the American Revolution. Emphasizing local folklore, traditions, and landscapes, Romanticists provided the visual imagery that further spurred national identity and pride.

# ARTIST: HENRY FUSELI (GERMAN)

Although the woman is enveloped in bright light, Fuseli suggests that the light cannot pierce the nightmarish realm of the human mind. The relationship between the woman, the incubus, and the mare is not explicit and therefore remains suggestive, emphasizing the frightening possibilities.  
**(sexuality, horror, and death)**



*The Nightmare* (1781)

# ARTIST: HENRY FUSELI (GERMAN)

This painting illustrates a scene from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Oberon casts a spell on Queen Titania causing her to fall in love with Bottom whose own head has been turned into the head of an ass.



*Titania and Bottom (1790)*

# ARTIST: J. M. W. TURNER (ENGLAND)

Turner was an exceptionally influential 19<sup>th</sup>-century landscape painter. Turner expressed the notion of the “sublime” in his paintings



*Upper Fall of the Reichenbach: Rainbow (1810)*



# ARTIST: J. M. W. TURNER (ENGLAND)

A small ship desperately attempting to stay afloat as it receives an extraordinary barrage of rough seas. The crew look terrified, some of whom are on the verge of falling into the water, with little chance of being rescued.



*Dutch Boats in a Gale (1801)*

# ARTIST: FRANCISCO GOYA (SPAIN)

Created vivid and enigmatic artworks that reflected and commented on Spain's contemporary historical turbulence.

It depicts Napoleonic troops publicly executing Spaniards as retribution for the previous day's uprising against the French.



*The Third of May (1808)*

# ARTIST: FRANCISCO GOYA (SPAIN)

A street battle which took place between Napoleon's squadron and Spaniards during the riots in Madrid in 1808.



*The Second of May (1808)*

# ARTIST: CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH (GERMAN)

Friedrich's artwork depicts an explorer, a young man, from behind perched on a rugged outcrop as he looks beyond to a dense sea of fog.

It portrays an emotional state, one that depicts ideas of roaming and infinity, of the imperfection of emotions and the soul.

Demonstrating his diminished power in the vast magnitude of life.



*Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (c. 1818)*

# ARTIST: CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH (GERMAN)

Rather than illustrate a scene, Friedrich has created an opportunity for the viewer to experience a range of emotions, only suggested by the artist.



*The Monk by the Sea (1808-10)*

# ARTIST: THÉODORE GÉRICAUT (FRENCH)

Géricault fused reality and art to deliberately portray an artistically and politically confrontational piece.

*The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819)



# ARTIST: THÉODORE GÉRICAUT (FRENCH)

Géricault's *Evening* is a pastoral landscape painting of an idealized Italianate setting. Two solitary figures appear in the foreground of a central opening, from which the composition guides the eye down the river, then up to the medieval village and finally across the viaduct and towards the sunset on the left.

*Evening (1818)*



# ARTIST: JOHN CONSTABLE (ENGLAND)

It depicts a simple scene of English farmers tending to their work.

In this painting, man does not simply observe nature from afar; Constable portrays him as an intricate part of nature, just as the birds and the trees are – not separate from it.



*The Hay Wain (1821)*



# ARTIST: MARIE-ADÉLAÏDE KINDT (BELGIUM)

Portrayal of the Belgian Revolution



*Episode des Journées de Septembre (1830)*

# ARTIST: EUGÈNE DELACROIX (FRENCH)

Commemorates a scene from the July Revolution in 1830 where the abdicated King Charles X was overthrown.

Delacroix's triumph represents freedom, revolution, and the people's victory.

Delacroix's painted an allegory of the revolution rather than depicting an actual scene.



*Liberty Leading the People (1830)*

# ARTIST: *IVAN AIVAZOVSKY (RUSSIAN)*

*Specialized in marine art.*

*The painting depicts massive waves sweeping across a volatile ocean.*

*The wreckage floats in the painting's foreground.*

*The palette of the painting utilizes warm tones, diminishing the ferocity of the sea and conveying a sense of hope and a chance for survival. He masterfully demonstrates the beauty and devastation of nature.*



*The Ninth Wave (1850)*

# ARTIST: *FRANCESCO HAYEZ (ITALIAN)*

*The Kiss showcases Hayez's incredible skill as he executed his painting with such fine detail. Hayez fused scenes of exceptional beauty with political accounts. The underlying message Hayez imparts on the viewer is that of a national union as the painting was representative of Risorgimento, the "Italian Unification".*



*The Kiss (1859)*