

Neoclassical

Neoclassicism is the name given to Western movements in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theatre, music, and architecture that draw inspiration from the "classical" art and culture of classical antiquity.

Neoclassicism literally means 'new classicism' or a revival of classical values. The word is used as a style label and is applied to aspects of the arts of the later 18th and early 19th centuries. At that period there was a conscious revival and appropriation of classical models of art and architecture. The word classical is used in this context to imply both ancient works of art, especially architecture and sculpture, and those by painters of the 16th and 17th centuries such as Raphael and Poussin who were inspired by antique precedents, and in turn established ideals in their work which came to be regarded as "classic".

Following the discovery of the Roman ruins of Pompeii and also the publication in 1764 of a highly influential history of ancient art by German scholar Winckelmann, there was an intense flourishing of classicism in art, architecture and design in the eighteenth century.

Classical

The terms classic or classical came into use in the seventeenth century to describe the arts and culture of the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome. The following of the principles of these ancient civilisations in art, architecture and literature is referred to as classicism.

From the Renaissance on, classicism dominated Western art, with classical mythology – consisting of the various myths and legends of the ancient Greek and Roman gods and heroes – becoming a major source of subject matter for history painting.

The word is also widely used to describe something which is an exemplar of quality. In an art-historical context it is often employed to describe the culture and artefacts of Greco-Roman antiquity (as well as a specific period of Greek art). In many contexts these two general applications are combined, the implication being that the art of those epochs provides a model of perfection.

John Gibson

John Gibson (1790–1866) was the most successful British sculptor of his generation. Born in Conwy, Wales, he moved to Italy in 1817 and settled in Rome where he studied with the famous neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova before setting up his own studio in the city. By the time he made his first return visit to the UK in 1844, 'Gibson of Rome' was a famous artist and soon became one of Prince Albert's favourite sculptors, producing several portraits of Queen Victoria. Despite the status and fame that Gibson enjoyed during his lifetime, his reputation faded during the 20th century.