From Neo-Classicism to Realism

Neo classicism to Depictions of a real world

What type of Art did the Neo Classicists create?

- The Neo-classicists strove to maintain or conserve the historical classical and academic tradition. (conservative)
- They are called the Neo Classicists as they rejected the overly ornamentation of the Rococo period around the 1760’s and returned to the classical traditions of Roman and Greek civilisations and the High Renaissance artists
- Neo Classical artists were advised to strive for "noble simplicity and calm grandeur"

Neo-classicism 1760’s – 1850’s

- Neoclassicism is a breakaway from the Baroque and Rococo periods of Art.
- Neo-classicism looks back at the formal classical style of the Renaissance

- Themes: Patriotism, Courage, Sacrifice, Honour, Human Rights also
- Classical mythological themes in ‘contemporary’ settings
- Neo-classicism shuns sensuality in favour of Symmetry, proportion and simplicity.

- Large formal composition, accurate detail often at the expense of light and atmosphere

Jacques-Louis David: Oath of the Horatii



- Jacques-Louis David's Oath of the Horatii is probably the most famous Neo Classical work
- It enjoyed huge success at the Academy de Beaux Arts Salon in 1785
- The painting looks very much like it could have been painted by Raphael 200 years earlier in the High Renaissance. It can be viewed in the Louvre in Paris.
- Crucially David became the controller of French government patronage for art so his Neoclassical taste were actively promoted through Government patronage
- David would become a hugely influential political character in the Napoleonic Era (1804-1815)

Raphael – The School of Athens 1509-1511
(Fresco)





Smarthistory – David The Oath of Horatii

- https://youtu.be/qfAga9DAuU4

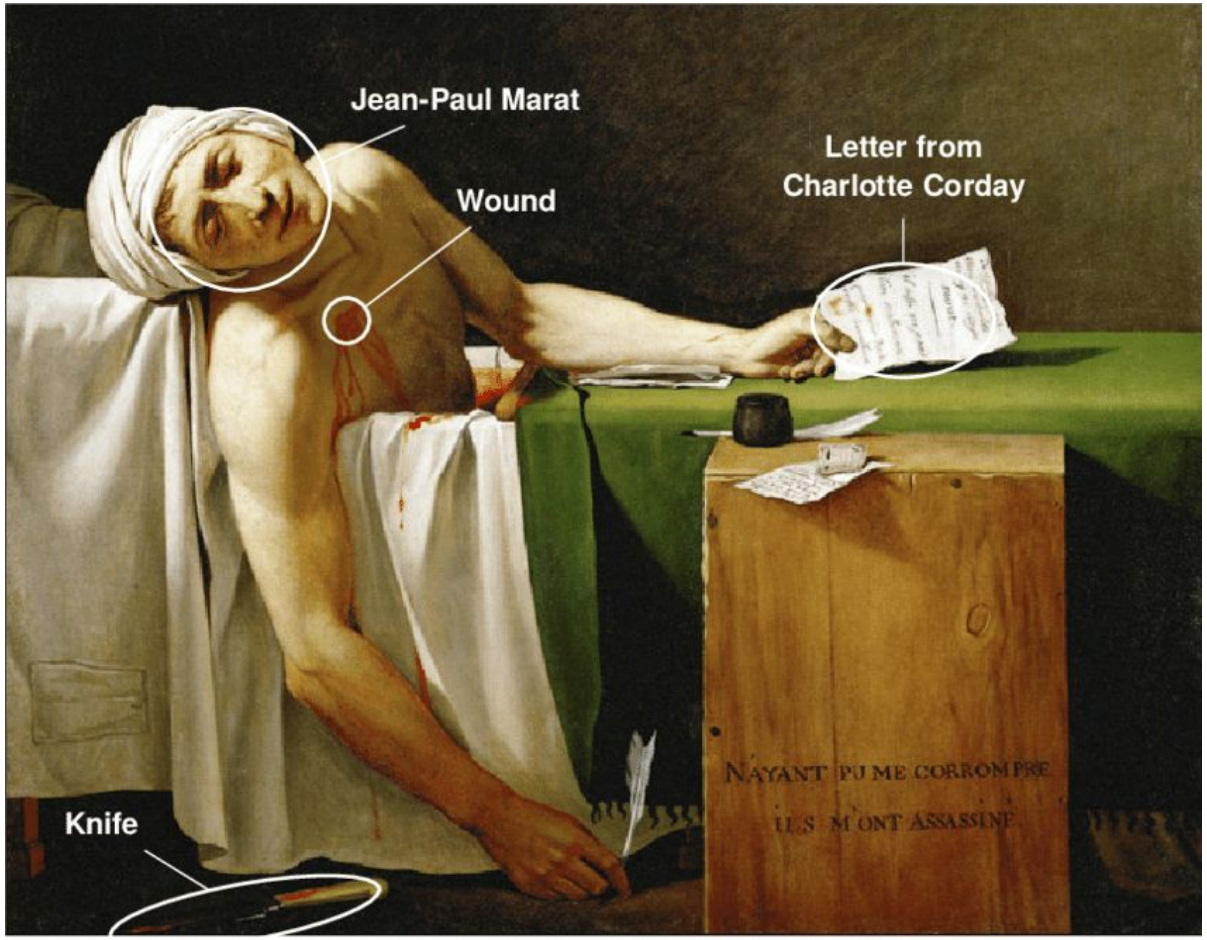
The Coronation of Empress Josephine, 1805-1807 (exhibited in 1808) Jacques Louis David 10m x 6m





Death of Marat, 1793 Jacques-Louis David





Neoclassical, Ingres 1780-1867



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was a Neo Classicist painter and the longevity of his career demonstrates the popularity of the Neoclassical Academic tradition. He was a student of David.

He rallied against the emerging Romantic Style in the early 19th Century

In his latter years his work overlapped with the emerging young Impressionist artists. The strong contrast of styles and subject matter must have been a huge shock for the ageing artist. As his beloved neoclassical style was dismissed by the Impressionists.

The Vow of Louis XIII 1824 421 x 262 cm Montauban Cathedral
depicts a vow to the Virgin Mary by the newly crowned Louis XIII (1638)of France. The painting combines two of the main patrons of European Art, Royalty and the Catholic Church.

Napolean on his Imperial Throne, 1806

- https://smarthistory.org/ingres-napoleon-on-his-imperial-throne/



The Valpincon Bather, 1808



The Turkish Bath, Ingres,1862



Ingres

- Madame Moitessier
  Jean Auguste Dominges Ingres, 1844

- Liz, 1995 Richard Billingham





What is Realism?

- Realism was an Art Movement that emerged in France around the 1848 Revolution.
- Writers and artists began to reject the ideals portrayed by Romanticism and Neoclassical artists and writers
- Romanticism was seen as overly emotional, dramatic and exotic
- Neoclassical was seen as a classical style which hadn't really changed since the High Renaissance 200 years earlier (c.1550)
- Most importantly both failed to depict a very unequal French Society
- "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" the rallying call of the 1848 Revolution began to permeate the Realist works and writings

The Realists reacted against the Neo Classicists, any other art movements?

Yes, the concurrent movement of Romanticism (C.1800-1890) was a dominant factor in early to late 19th century art

What was Romanticism?

Romanticism is associated with

- Emotional works depicting a range of emotions
- Asymmetrical compositions
- Rich, vivid and warm colours combined with the use of broad brushstrokes
- Depicting stories from mythology and exotic places

There were numerous Romantic artists but we will briefly explore Gericault and Delacroix

19th century Timeline of Art

Neo Classical
1780-1860

Jacques
David
1748-1825

Ingres
1780-1867

Romanticism
1800-1890

Delacroix
1793-1863

Gericault
1791-1824

Romanticism



Exemplified by *Death of Sardanapalus 1828* by Delacroix 392 cm × 496 cm, Louvre

Sardanapalus, was a king who destroyed all of his possessions, including people and his luxurious goods, upon his death. This painting depicts the gory and horrific event

Delacroix's painting is a rich tapestry of murder, wealth and the depravity of one man's actions



Romanticism

Gericault The Raft of Medusa 1819
491x716cm, Louvre Paris

Once again we can see the use of Romanticism is a word that has changed over time as again this colossal painting is about suffering, cannibalism and in the end hope

An asymmetric pyramid of human flesh contorted in various stages of death, resignation and hope

Just take another look at the measurements again, 7 metres!!

These really are amazing paintings, so why did the realists react against them?

Neo Classical 1780-1860

Jacques David 1748-1825

Ingres 1780-1867

Realism 1848

Romanticism 1800-1890

Gericault 1791-1824

Delacroix 1793-1863

Realism: Jean Francois Millet



Barbizon School of Landscape Art. (Musee d'Orsay)

The Gleaners **Jean-François Millet** 1857 84x114 cm

- This painting is famous for one reason, what do you think that reason is…?

It's subject matter, but why is that?

- Gleaning was considered to be the lowest of the work carried out by French peasants on the farm
- Here it is being elevated to the importance of an oil painting, of equal importance as a royal portrait, religious, historical or mythological painting
- The size of this painting was traditionally reserved for historical/mythological painting
- Real life people..real life situation ..Millet is commenting on the inequality in society. The painting was hated by the upper classes and

Realism: Jean Francois Millet



The Gleaners **Jean-François Millet** 1857 84x114 cm

- Painted outdoors (plein air see next slide) and finished later in a studio.
- This work demonstrates oppressive rural poverty in a manner which differs from previous depictions of farm work being honourable and close to biblical piety
- The contrast of the gleaners in the foreground with the rich bounty of the harvest in the background is notable
- The gleaners are separated from the other farm labourers in the background by a use of colour and lighting with the labourers wearing white and working in the sunlit distance
- Gleaning was regarded as a right to unwanted leftovers

Banksy’s Gleaners,2009



Plein air painting in the 19th century

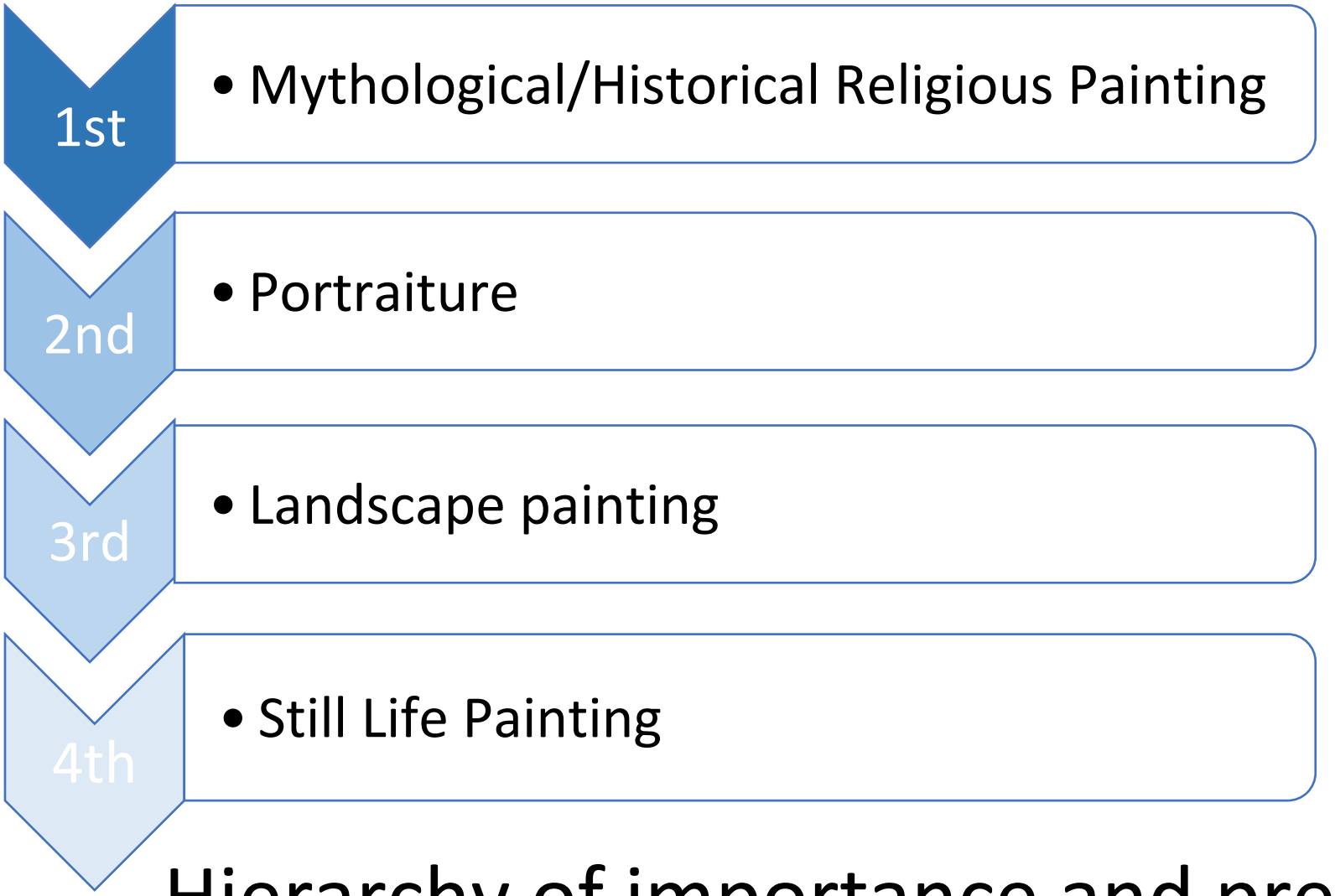


The Haywain John Constable 1821, National Gallery London



View of Fontainebleu Camille Corot 1830, Met NY

Both paintings were started outdoors and finished in the artist's studio. Both paintings observed the changes in landscape and nature, landscape painting was seen as a low style of art with historical/mythological paintings as most prestigious



Hierarchy of importance and prestige of Art Genres at the start of the 19th century

Realism: Gustave Courbet

The Burial at Ornans 1849-50 314x663 cm Why is this painting famous ? how does it differ from contemporary works?



Realism: Gustave Courbet



The Burial at Ornans 1849-50 314x663 cm Musee d'Orsay, Paris

It is famous for its content. Courbet said "the artist's own experience" was the only source of inspiration

This huge painting depicts his grand uncle's funeral and all the characters are real life people who had attended the burial

It is divided into 3 groupings Clergy, Townspeople and Mourning Women.

It is a snapshot of a moment in time in rural France. Courbet said the painting symbolised the burial of Romanticism as an art form



The Burial at Ornans 1849-50 314x663 cm

Traditionally models were used to depict the historical /mythological paintings however, Courbet has depicted the numerous characters in the clergy in their robes, the grieving family and the ladies looking away in the background in glorious realism. The graveside depicts the gravedigger in a noble stance, there is a skull and bones from a previous occupant of the grave on the earth and a hunting dog has wandered in to the composition.

So it is unique in promoting rural and normal people to high art of Paris in such an ambitious project

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/realism/v/courbet-a-burial-at-ornans for excellent video

Realism: Gustave Courbet



Gustave Courbet 1855 The Artist's Studio (allegory) Musee d'Orsay, Paris

Courbet really was an interesting man With an utter rejection of authority and Romanticism coupled with his anarchical, revolutionary and communist beliefs he posed a huge threat to the conservative society of mid 19th century France.

It is the content of his art rather than the style which makes him stand out as a hugely important artist in the move towards impressionism

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/realism/v/courbet-the-artist-s-studio-1854-55 for an excellent resource

It was this rebelling against the Academy and Society that influenced the younger Impressionists rather his artistic style



Realism versus Romanticism

- Three French female peasants pick the remnants of the harvest from the field
- Gleaning was back breaking work and it was a political statement to paint this subject matter
- Compare this depiction of women to the romantic mythological painting by Cabanel from 1863 “The Birth of Venus” (Musee d’Orsay) which was purchased by Napoleon III
- There is a huge contrast in styles and subject matter

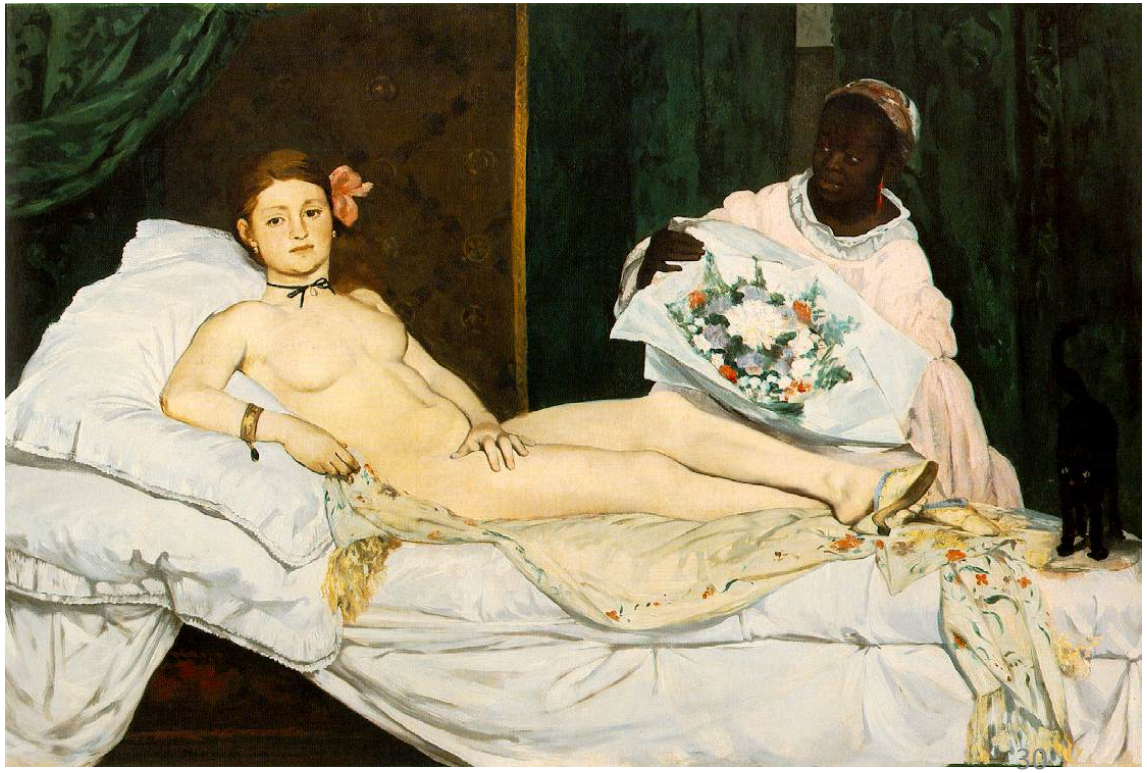


When looking at Cabanel’s depictions of cherubs we might recall Courbet the Realist famously saying **“show me an angel and I’ll paint it”** there in lies the meaning of Realism

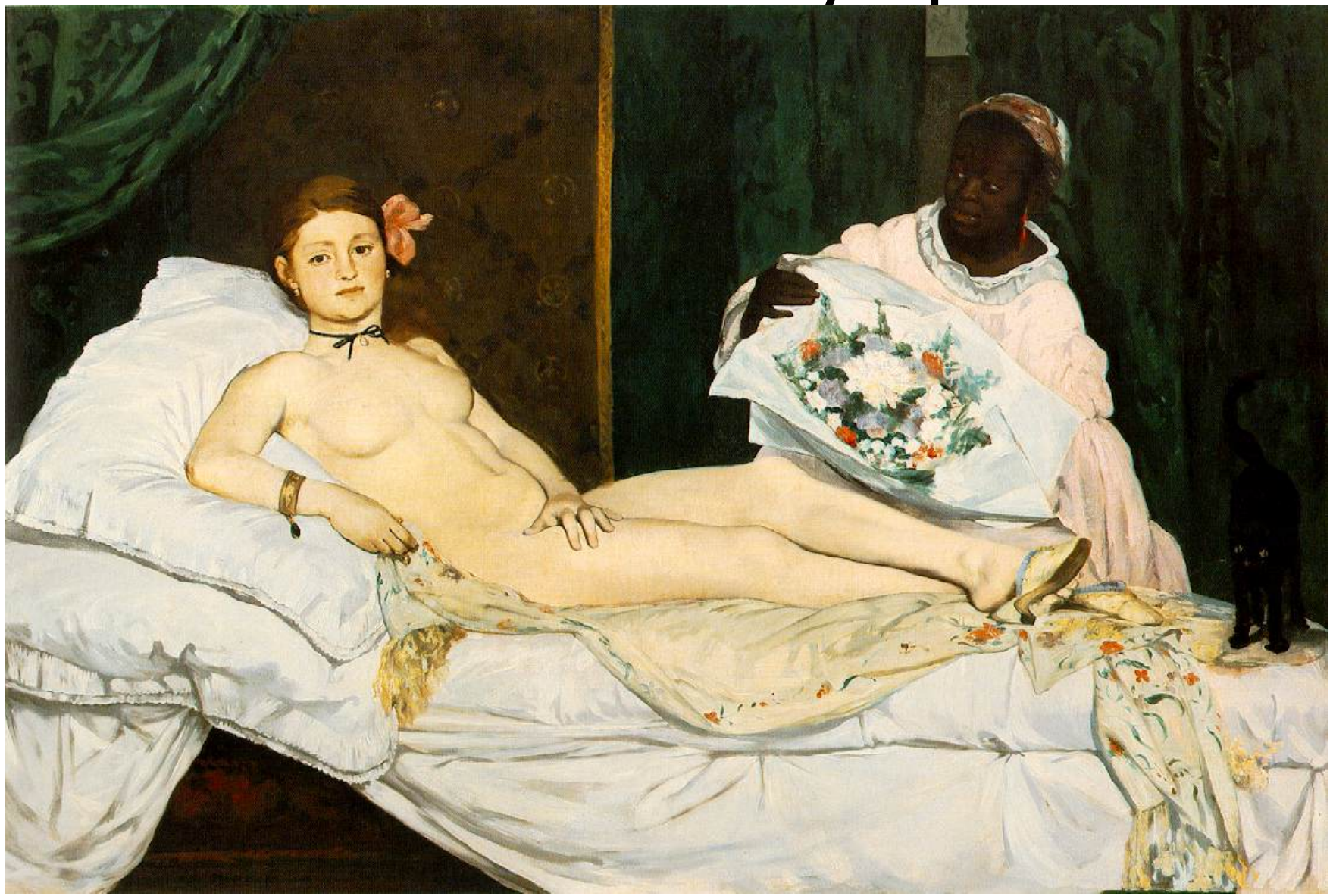


Realism versus Neoclassical

- The Turkish Bath 1862 by Ingres (left) Louvre, Paris
- This was painted is 1862 but yet it is accepted by the academy and critics whereas Manet's Olympia (below) of 1863 is ridiculed.. Why is that?

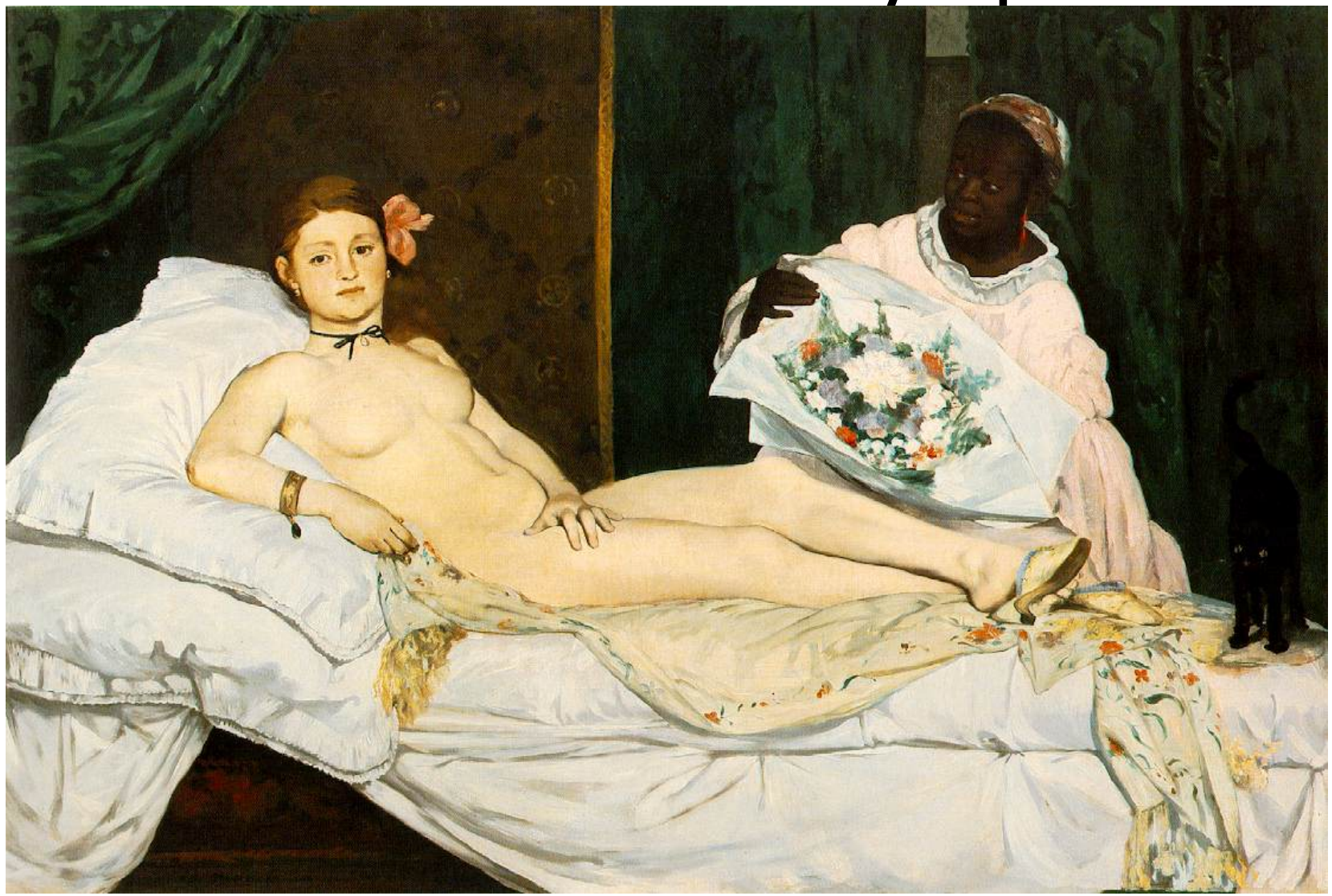


Manet L'Olympia 1863 Musee d'Orsay)



- Manet was an artist who bridged the gap between Realism and Impressionism. Manet considered himself to be a Realist artist
- Highly controversial painting
- Depicts prostitute in stark reclining pose
- Her stare confronts the viewer
- The frontal lighting eliminates shadow and adds to her starkness

Manet L'Olympia 1863 Musee d'Orsay)



- He was re-inventing Titian's Venus et Urbino, however this lady was no Goddess in the eyes of the French Art critics, even if she was called Olympia.
- Manet did not see this as controversial, he was simply making a contemporary French adaptation of a very traditional form of Art i.e. the female nude.
- To Manet he was doing nothing different than the revered French Artist Ingres e.g. The Turkish Bath. But the French public and critics could not accept Olympia as she was contemporary and was not in a far off country but in their beloved France.

Realism. What was it's legacy

- Realism through Courbet began the process of breaking the power of the Academy de Beaux Arts
- Realism promoted painting outside(plein air) through the Barbizon School including Millet and Corot
- Realism promoted painting of social, political and actual events which happened in contemporary society.