

# 18<sup>th</sup>-century Art: Rococo in France

## The Pursuit of Pleasure and Reward

### Key Ideas:

- Arts are used in service of the nobility to glorify the gallantry and personal accomplishments of aristocratic life.
- Emerging members of the bourgeoisie, opportunists, and adventurers have joined the ranks of the wealthy, and are looking for works of art that reflect their own surroundings and circumstances.
- Age of Enlightenment: reason and common sense can be used to cure societies' ills. Religion, myth, and tradition superseded by spirit of inquiry, belief in progress, and human control over nature.
- Age of political reform: germination of ideas that lead to revolution and overthrow of monarchies; belief in divine right of kings abolished.
- Age of contradiction: faith in rationality alongside art forms full of marvelous excesses. The pendulum swings between images of decadence and morality.

### People and Places:

Madame du Barry

Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1756

Denis Diderot

Gobelins and Beauvais tapestries

Horatio/Horatii

Philippe d'Orléans (Duc d'Orléans)

Madame de Pompadour, Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson

Jean-Baptiste Pigalle

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Johann Winkelmann, *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Art in Painting and Sculpture*, 1755

### Terms:

capriccio	An extravagantly conceived scene in which actual but unrelated elements are combined (for example, the Louvre and the Vatican seen in the same cityscape).
chinoiserie	A style reflecting Chinese qualities or motifs.
fête gallante or fête champêtre	A fanciful scene of elegant people enjoying themselves in an outdoor setting.
haute bourgeoisie	upper middle class
Poussinistes	Academy members who, following the doctrine of Poussin, stress drawing and form as the most important elements of painting.
rocaille/coquille	French words for pebble and shell; used to decorate the interior of artificial grottoes. Principal motifs of the French rococo style.
Rubénistes	Academy members who, following the doctrine of Rubens, stressed color as the most important element of painting.
staffage	Small figures which are treated as secondary to nature in a landscape painting.