

Introducing Modern Western Art : Movements and Artists
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Lecture - 04
Beginning(s) of Modern Art - 1 (Romanticism & Realism)

Welcome viewers. Welcome you to MOOCs online course on Introduction to Modern Western Art.

Today is the fourth module of the first week this module and the 4th coming module that is a last module of this week 5th module. In both these modules we will be looking at the beginnings of modern art, hence this module is titled as beginnings of modern art 1 followed by the 5th module will be titled as beginnings of modern art 2 and we have already discuss that why we call or we use the phrase beginnings of modern art not beginning as there are several beginnings of modern art not one.

So, one of those beginnings have been identified in mid 19th century around two very significant art movements called romanticism and realism.

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A Spanish painter Francisco Goya painted this painting as in 1814. Titled “3rd of May 1808”, this painting is painted as an immediate reaction to the horrific incident that took place in Madrid on 2nd & 3rd of May, 1808. Hundreds of Spanish freedom fighters were massacred by the French army. Goya in this painting not only depicted the incident but expressed the brutality. This painting is considered by many as the first modern painting in the world art history.

Now before we discuss the characteristic feature of romanticism or realism let us begin by looking at one particular painting here. This is a painting painted by as very famous

Spanish painter called Francisco Goya he painted this work in 1814 and look at the titled of this work called 3rd of May 1808.

Now, this is very interesting he is painting this work in 1814 and the titled suggests some events something that at happened this few years back that is in 1808 now what was that event and what this painting is all about. Obviously, this painting is painted as an immediate reaction to the horrific incident that took place in Madrid on second and third of 1808, of May in 1808 and when hundreds of Spanish freedom fighters were brutally killed massacred by the French army. And Goya in this painting is not exactly depicting the incident the way a history painter would be doing it he is basically evoking certain emotion he is expressing his anguish his anger and he is obviously, sympathizing with the freedom fighters.

Painting on this kind is something very new in the history of western art and therefore, this painting has been considered by many as the first modern painting in the world art history.

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Eugène Delacroix -- a French painter -- in 1830 creates this painting titled "Liberty Leading the People". Liberty Leading the People was made in response to the political upheaval that would result in the overthrow of the reigning monarch, Charles X. Clearly, this work too is based on contemporary reality with direct reference to an event.

Now, let us look at another painting by another painter a French painter this time called the Delacroix, a painting that he painted in eighteen thirty having a titled called liberty leading the people. Once again the title immediately suggests or refers to the French revolution and this painting was made in response to the political upheaval that would result in the overthrow of the reigning monarch of Charles 10th. Like the previous

work by Goya this work by the Delacroix two is based on contemporary reality with direct reference to an event which is very close to their time in fact which happened during that time.

Now this kind of approach to paint or a work of art where the subject matter is not something that you have borrowed from the past or legend or mythology or religion a subject matter which is also not very personal or individual a social subject matter a political subject matter, a political incident or event shared by many people and here you find to painters painting works based on not only these events, but also based on their response to these events then that mix these paintings very unique.

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So, both these paintings indicate in that sense a very clear break from the tradition and historically they have been connected to the movement called romanticism. In fact, in a letter written by the Delacroix he writes that I have under taken a modern subject a barricade so that if I did not win for my country I will at least be painting for it.

So, you say for the first time an artist is using the term modern to describe the nature of his subject matter of work, but then; what is romanticism and what were the objectives of this art movement which took place in mid 19th century.

Now, generally speaking romanticism kind of unfolded itself at the dawn of the nineteenth century when the struggle to impose a new democratic political and social

order pass in the process people grew anxious in response to ongoing political turmoil and uncertainty. So, clearly there was a political context, the social context.

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Romanticism

- ▣ characterized by
 - Imagination was emphasized over “reason.” This was a backlash against the rationalism characterized by the Neoclassical period.
 - Intuition - feeling and instincts are more important than reason - art tried to evoke emotion.
 - Inspiration - The Romantic artist was an “inspired creator” rather than a “technical master.” What this means is “going with the moment” or being spontaneous, rather than “getting it precise.”

Now, if you look at the art produced under the cytology called romanticism mostly paintings, the same to be characterized by this following points - number one imagination, most of the romantic painters emphasized imagination over reason and in that sense this over emphasis on the element of imagination seems to be a backlash against the rationalism characterized by the preceding period called neoclassical period.

Secondly intuition, art not only try to evoke emotion, but the painters also followed their own intuitive feeling intuitive drive very sincerely. A thirdly inspiration the romantic artist was an inspired creator rather than a technical master.

So, following this logic this is very clear get from romanticism art movement on words most of the painters are clearly giving more in fasces and more importance to this inspiration emotion rather than the mere technical skill. For what this means is going with the moment or being spontaneous rather than getting it precise. So, if you go back to that is painting by Goya in spite of the fact that Goya was a very skilled painter academically trained painter.

In this painting he is not so much bothered about the accuracy of the form or the clarity of the colour or neatness of the composition because in this painting and many other

paintings done by him he was more concerned with the evocative power of the painting, he was more interested to achieve the expression through his painting rather than accuracy of anatomy, proportion, perspective and all these things.

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- Individuality - Romantics celebrated the individual. Governments and movements should not sacrifice the individual but raise him/her.



And of course, romanticism gives birth to once again after renaissance period individuality.

So, romanticism is an idea that was certainly shared by many artists some painters of that time, but at the same time it celebrated the individual in fact, governments and movements should not sacrifice individual, but it should raise him or her that was the idea shared by many of these people, artists, painters, poets.

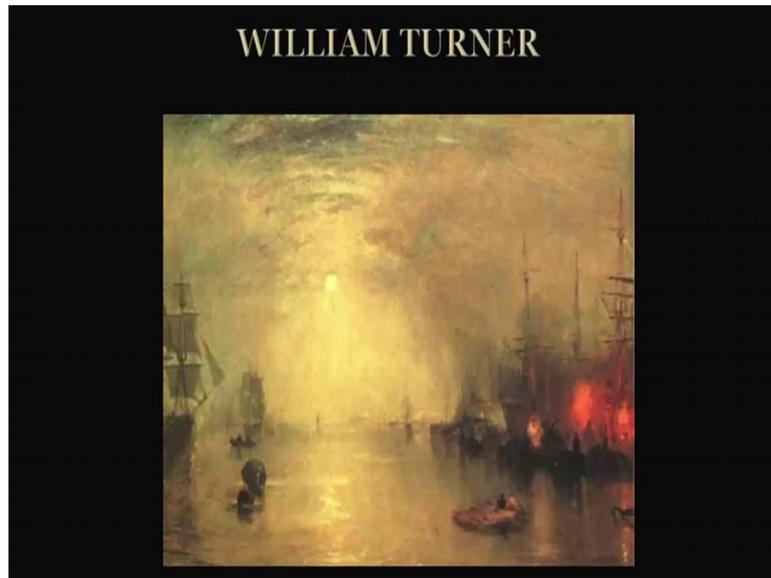
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- Turner emerged as England's most dramatic Romantic painter.
- For him, the depiction of light and atmosphere was the most important part of a painting.
- He portrayed nature at its most violent.
- Instead of using precise detail, he suggests this violence by using loose brushwork to apply bright color and light values in swirling patterns.

Now, one of the very very important painters from this romantic movement was turner and certainly turner emerged as not only England's most dramatic romantic painter, but of the entire euro. For him the depiction of light and atmosphere was the most important part of the painting. He portrayed nature at its most violent situation this is interesting because in the preceding era, in the previous period we have seen that painters mostly looked at nature as something through which they could show the serene quality of nature the peaceful quality of nature the tranquility of nature, but when you look at turners paintings it is something absolutely different.

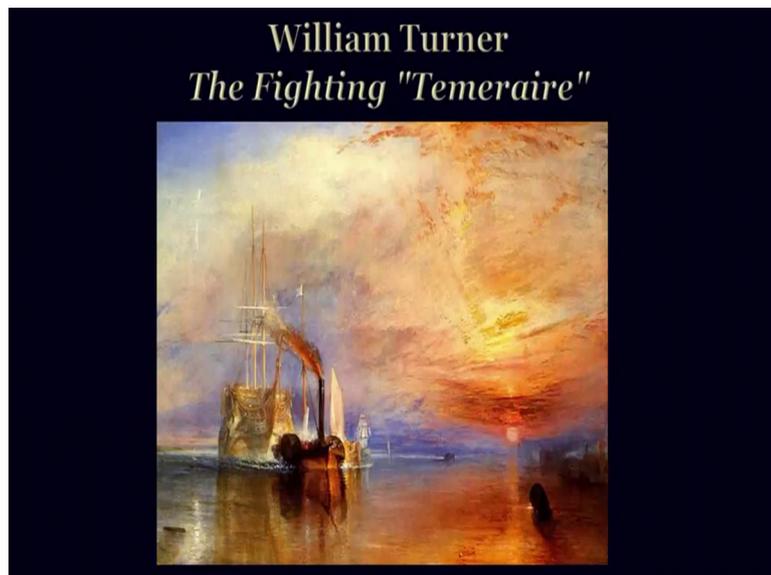
There is hardly incertainty forget about peaceful quality in his paintings and in order to achieve that he is kind of giving up any approach to any attitude to going for the size detail, but he is rather using very loose and violent brushworks applying bright colors and also he is not bothered about sharp on two lines in all that.

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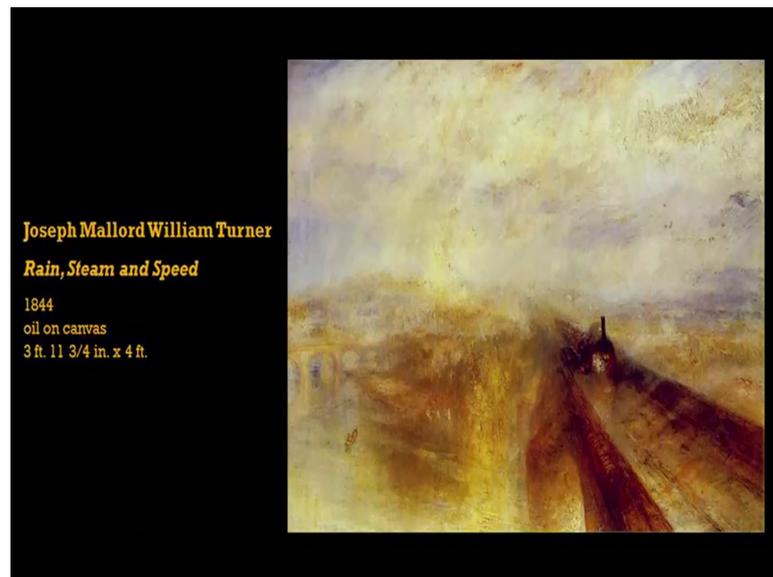
Hence, when you look at his paintings for example, this one what you say is a painting or a image which is to use a more contemporary term out of focus. This is because he is not bothered about precise control lines he is more interested in the overall visual effect of the scene that he is depicting.

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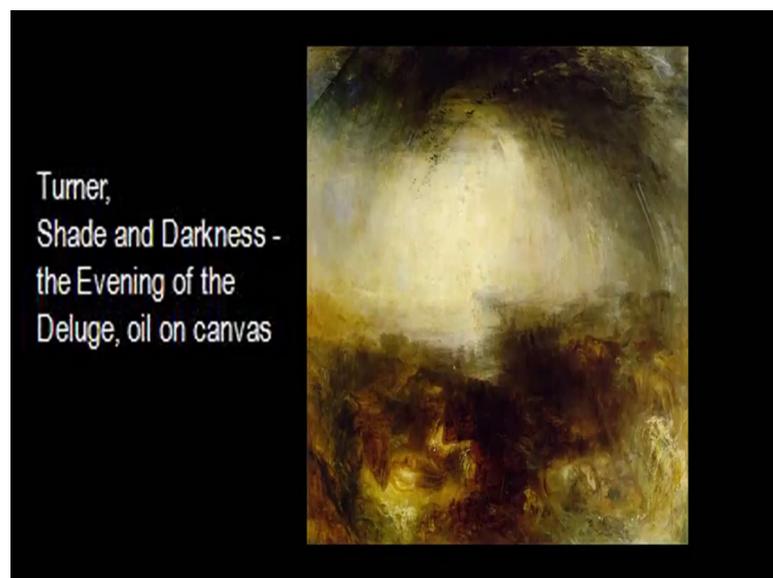
Look at this one this particular painting called the fighting temeraire is also about a situation where you see fire you see a violent and a restless sky and you see ships you see elements which are not static at all.

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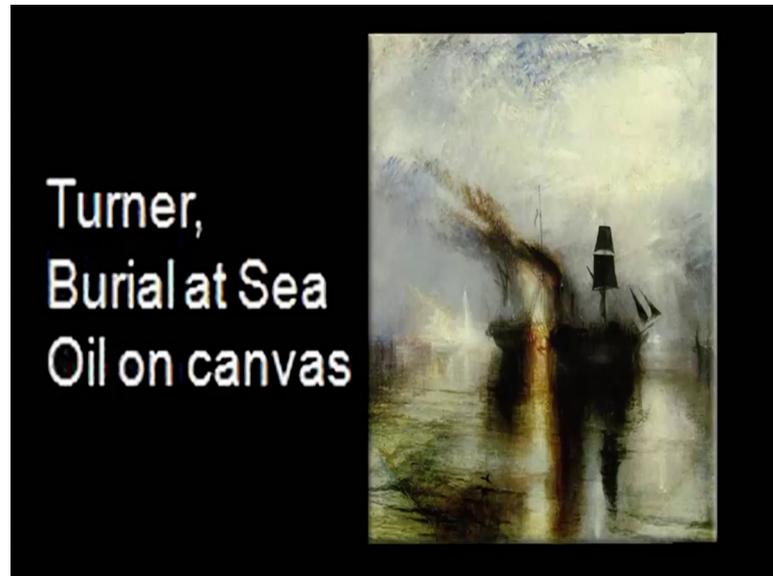
In fact, this particular painting very famous painting painted in 1844 and called rain steam and speed is a classic example of turners art what turners truth for, in fact, a classical painter of the preceding period in the western art is steam would have out rightly rejected this kind of painting. But in this case for us it is an absolutely fantastic work because they so called visual ambiguity this visual confusion if I may use this term is what we enjoy what we admire instead of going for precision turner is going for visual effect.

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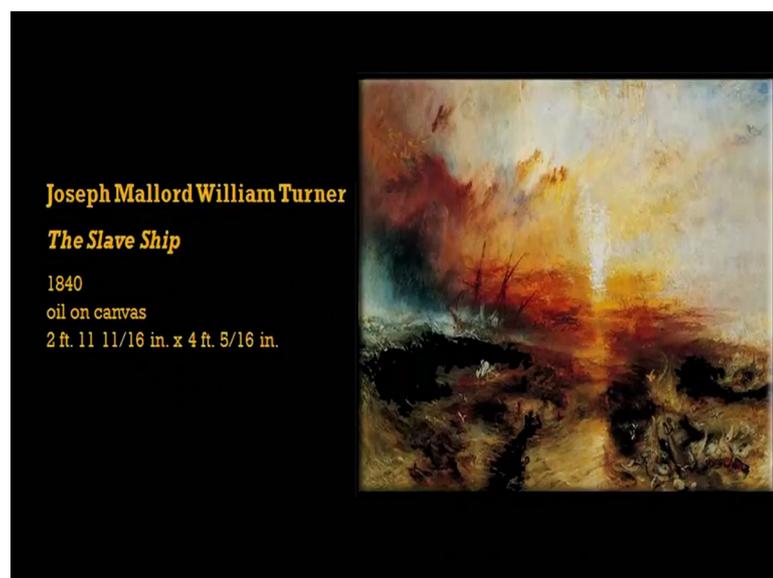
And in order to achieve that Turner is using absolutely unique kind of brushwork technical application which was either to unseen nobody had done that before. Hence Turner happens to be an (Refer Time: 12:29) in the history of modern art.

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He is a kind of pioneer in liberate in the painterly skills from the conventional rules and regulations. In fact, he is also painting subject matters which are also not very peaceful, not very calm he is deliberately and selectively going for subject matters which violent.

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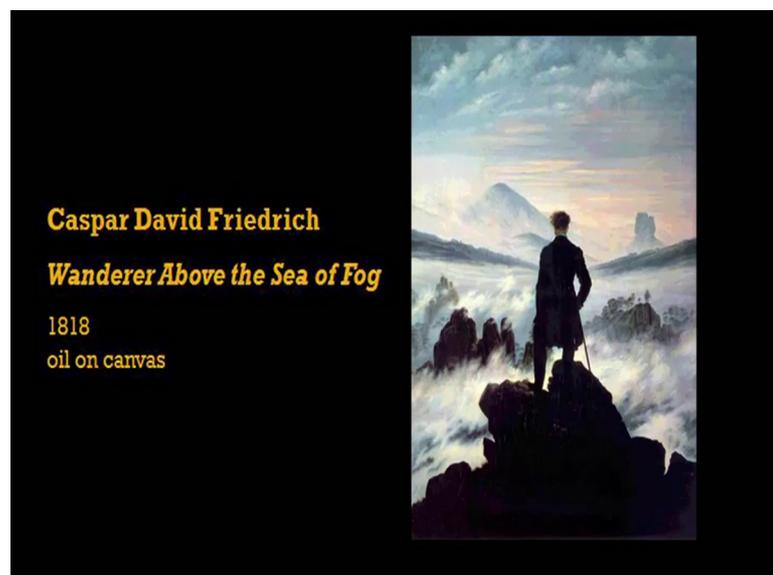
So, this also goes to show how his mind must have been working in terms of not only painting or painting technique, but also in terms of subject matters that he is choosing.

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Now, look at this comparison between one neoclassical painting by David and romantic painting by Turner, clearly the neoclassical painting reviews all kinds of concerns with precision, accuracy and a clarity of forms distance prospective, caresco, light in shade whereas, look at turners paintings he simply rejects all this classical and academic norms and innovates a new method of painting and new approach to painting all together.

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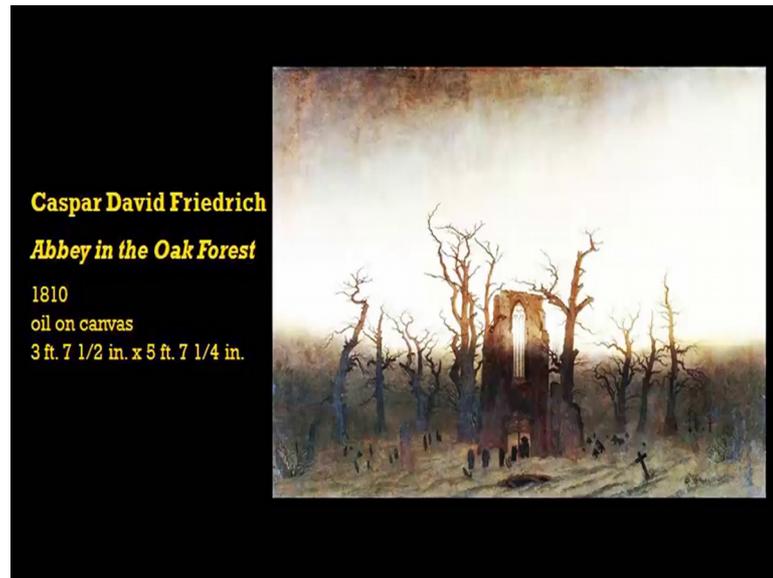
Now, Caspar David Friedrich should be considered as another very important painter from the romantic movement though he was not from England he was from Germany and he contributed a lot to the development of the romantic art movement in Caspar Davids Friedrich's painting you may not find the kind of violent brush strokes and surface treatment you see in Turners paintings may be comparatively.

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Caspar David Friedrich's paintings have a lot of clarity yet, if you look at his paintings very carefully you will feel sense of loss, sense of history and also repeatedly throughout his career Caspar David in his paintings try to express the formidable presence of nature and how a human being feels absolutely insignificant power less and helpless in front of that formidable nature.

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So, nature not necessarily in terms of its violent character, but nature as it is may also appear to be something that is immense the powerful and therefore, formidable for human being to negotiate. So, this is what Caspar David Friedrich as a romantic painter continuously has been exploring in his paintings.

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Common Romantic Elements

- No hint of idealization in depicting the different attributes of nature.
- Individualistic approach, Personal interpretation in execution and thought process.
- Spontaneous expressions
- Rebellion against existing conventions
- An excitement that they felt from the different scenes of the countryside and the various phenomenon of the nature had consistently been the inspiring element and that formed the chief subject for painting in the landscapes of these painters.

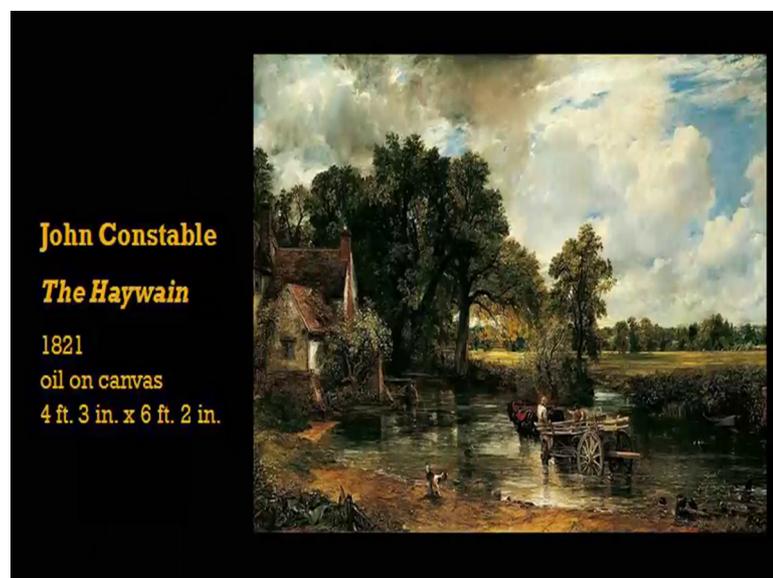
So, the common romantic elements would be no hint of idealization in depicting the different attributes of nature, individualistic approach personal interpretation in execution and thought process of course, spontaneous expressions then rebellion against the

existing conventions. They made it very clear most of the romantic painters that they were not going to follow the conventional rules rather they would create their own rules, in that sense these romantic painters were very very innovative. And an excitement that they felt from the different scenes of the country side and the various phenomenon of the nature had constantly been the inspiring element and that formed the chief subject for painting in the landscapes of these painters.

So, it was not necessary for the romantic painters to look for a subject that has to be something grand something, something that already have some mythological historical behaving they could choose any subject matter for that matter any piece of nature, any corner of nature and can work on that to create a sensation that they might have felt.

So, to focus on subjects and scenes which are apparently very common place, but once they get painted by very innovative painters even a very common place subject matter can achieve or assume dignity that was either to unknown this is what romantic or the art works can during the romantic movement show and this is what we shall find happening in the following art movement that is realism.

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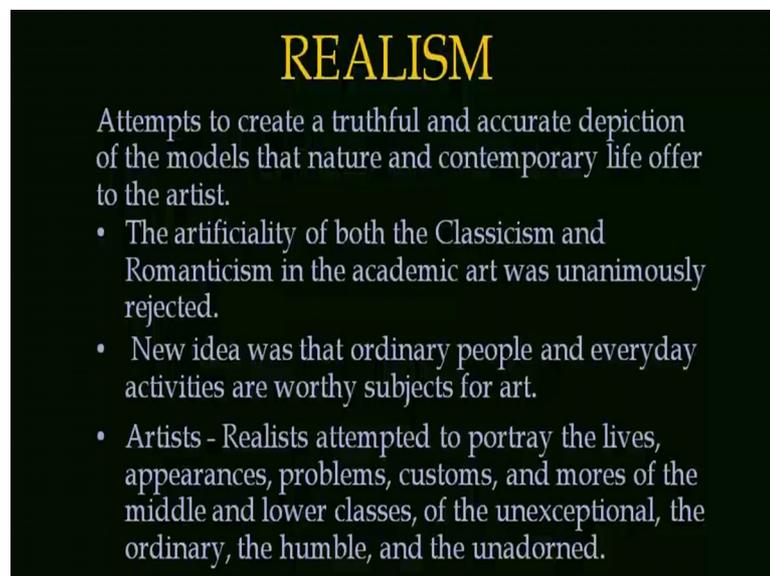


So, same thing will be happening over there true. Another very well known painter from the Romantic Movement who held from England was John Constable the John Constable's paintings are relatively calm compare to turner or even Caspar David Friedrich. There is a quality of serenity, but his contribution to the (Refer Time: 18:28) of

landscape painting was to or rather not to wait for some grand event to happen in nature anything from nature in his landscape around the village he lived could be a subject matter.

Now, romanticism was followed by the next significant art movement called realism. Realism attempts to create a truthful and accurate depiction of the models that nature and contemporary life offer to the artists. So, there this element of reality there, but unlike the previous classical reality which was based all a preconceived model in this art movement of mid 19 century called realism artists are looking at how a particular figure or object appears right now.

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So, the artificiality of both the classicism and romanticism in the academic art was unanimously rejected by the realist painters. New idea was that ordinary people and everybody everyday activities are worthy subjects for art this is also very interesting anything anybody any common person, any ordinary person could be a subject matter for your art.

Artists, the realists attempted to portray the lives appearances the problems the customs the social situation and most of the middle and lower classes of the unexceptional unassuming the ordinary the humble the unadorned and this is what you will see happening, in the paintings done by very famous painters from the realist movement or realism movement called Gustave Courbet or the lay and others.

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Gustave Courbet *The Stone Breakers*, 1849, oil on canvas
5 ft. 3 in. x 8 ft. 6 in.

For example look at this painting by Courbet calls the stone breakers who are these two people? They are hardworking people and they do not have any social dignity in the traditional and classical hierarchy of the society, yet for Courbet they are the ideal subject matters for a painting. In a sense by doing some paintings based on the life of the people coming from the hardworking the society where they are in a sense exploited to a great extent he is Courbet is defiantly glorify not the way the leave, but their self dignity.

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Jean-François Millet

The Gleaners, 1857
oil on canvas, 2 ft. 9 in. x 3 ft. 8 in.

Millet, look at this painting by Millet call the gleaners three woman gleaning crops after the harvest. This is such a common place an ordinary subject matter that throughout the history of art until Millet painted this kind of subject matters have always been overlooked, but Millet does not, he does not overlook will pick it up and makes it makes it fantastic painting out of the subject matter.

Again in this case this particular painting by Millet or if you look at the previous painting by Courbet both this paintings the individual figures remain rather anonymous because perhaps here individual persons are not what Millet or Courbet we are concerned about they were perhaps more concerned with the social identity, the class identity of this people. Another painter from the same time and belonging to the same movement call Daumier was also doing paintings like this the third class carriage.

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Honoré Daumier

The Third-Class Carriage, ca. 1862
oil on canvas, 2 ft. 1 3/4 in. x 2 ft. 11 1/2 in.

The third class carriage were people the travelers they come from the lowest class of the society and they are the most hardworking and economically deprived class and they become the subject matters for these artists like Daumier.

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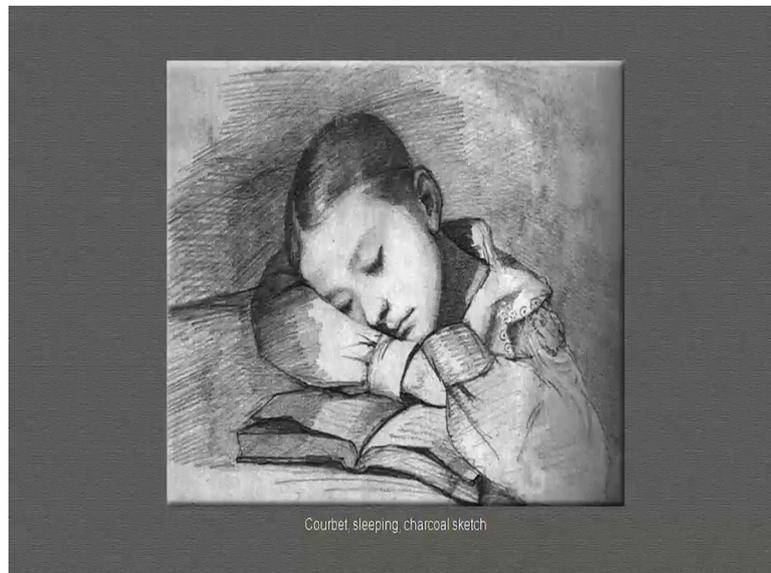
Honoré Daumier

Rue Transnonian, 1834
lithograph, 12 x 17 1/2 in.



In fact, Daumier goes to the extent of doing of is a drawing in lithograph about a person who is not only poor or deprived, but completely they will it could be a drunk could be somebody who does not have any place any dignity any respect in the society and this kind of people become the subject matters for them.

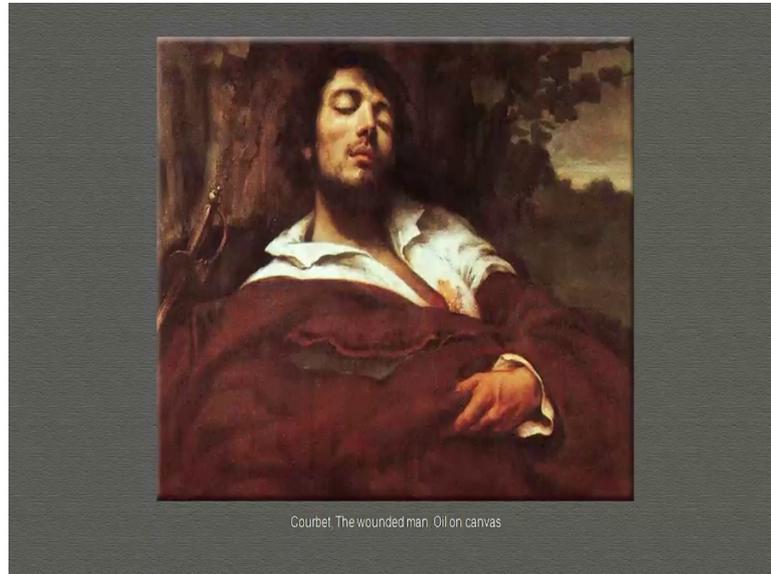
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In fact, look at this wonderful sketch by Courbet where he draws young like in sleeping posture, I mean apart from the fact that this is a very accurate and perfect drawing what one feels an can respond by looking at this work is the empathy. The feeling, how

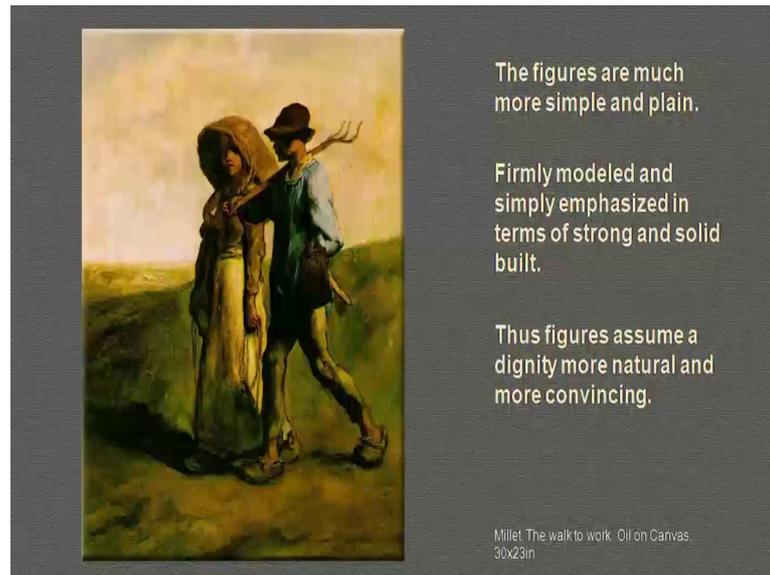
Courbet is able to not only see the structural form of the boy, but how Courbet is also able to feel the existence of the boy feel that movement of that boy when he is sleeping with his hands kept on opening book a very interesting drawing.

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And then again Courbet does this wonderful oil on canvas and at the subject is again very strain if you look at it from the point of view of the classical art or the traditional western art it is a the title is a wounded man and the subject of the painting is exactly that a man who is lying and he is wounded he can also see a blood spot on his chest. Not that he was somebody very famous or a very well known soldier or somebody like that Courbet a very ordinary person, but right know he is wounded and Courbet feels empathy towards seem any makes a painting.

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So, in other words when you look at the various examples of paintings done by Millet or Courbet or Daumier or anybody else from romantic move and realism movement you see the that that like what you see here once again that individual facial features is something that is a absent here you do not get to actually very clearly see how this people look like. But you can very clearly see and feel and get some information about the social class this people belong to. So, this is very interesting that repeatedly in spite of their ability the painters ability to depict all the details accurately the painters are making certain selections that as per as Courbet and millet are concerned in most of their paintings they are not showing the faces of these people very clearly, but they showing the identity of this people without any ambiguity.

So, the figures in terms of the drawing the colour and the tonality they appear very simple and plain the figures are firmly modeled with some dignity and their simply emphasized in terms of a strong and solid built and the figures assume a dignity more natural and more convincing, because if you look at their gesture posture the way they are walking talking or sitting or working like the one that you had seen in the first image where Courbet does a painting on the stone breakers there.

So, engaged with their work they engage with their life that these characters in the painting are heartily aware of the presence of the painter. These are not post figures or

figures with very specific postures they are there in their own life and here is the painter who is painting there.

Thank you.