## Rococo Architecture

Rococo or "Late Baroque" is an 18th-century artistic movement and style, affecting many aspects of [the arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_arts" \o "The arts) including painting, sculpture, architecture, interior design, [decoration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decorative_arts" \o "Decorative arts), literature, music, and theatre. It developed in the early 18th century in Paris, France as a reaction against the grandeur, symmetry, and strict regulations of the [Baroque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque" \o "Baroque), especially of the [Palace of Versailles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles" \o "Palace of Versailles). Rococo artists and architects used a more jocular, florid, and graceful approach to the Baroque. Their style was ornate and used light colors, asymmetrical designs, curves, and gold. Unlike the political Baroque, the Rococo had playful and witty themes. The interior decoration of Rococo rooms was designed as a total work of art with elegant and ornate furniture, small sculptures, ornamental mirrors, and [tapestry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapestry" \o "Tapestry) complementing architecture, reliefs, and wall paintings. The Rococo was also important in theatre.

By the end of the 18th century, Rococo was largely replaced by the [neoclassic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoclassicism" \o "Neoclassicism) style. The word is seen as a combination of the French *rocaille* (stone) and *coquilles* (shell), due to reliance on these objects as decorative motifs.

**Rococo architecture** came about as a reflection of the times and was known for its feminine curves, intricate designs, and flamboyance. It was a much lighter style of architecture than the heavy Baroque style and emphasized by intricate details and very light colours. The style was meant to be a reflection of the times, meaning a time that was frivolous, happy and uneventful.

Rococo architecture became known as the French style and really did not do as well in other countries as it did in France. The Rococo architecture style took its creativity from nature, referring to clouds, flowers, shells, sea, coral, scrolls, spray, etc. Most of the colors that were used in the buildings of the times were pastels or very light colors.



## Rococo’s influence:

**The Rococo** movement **influenced** other arts including **painting, architecture and sculpture**. Its playful nature, delicate strokes and feminine style **influenced** greatly on **furniture, tapestry and interior design.**

The themes became very light-hearted and within the decorative arts most Rococo pieces were very intricate. That is why it worked best with small scaled items, which differed greatly to the large Baroque sculpture and architecture of previous eras. Rococo was best used indoors and was adapted to porcelain figures, frills, metal work, and furniture.

The architectural and interior design of the Rococo style was very common in the Marie Antoinette period. In her palace the rooms were done entirely in the Rococo style and are considered to be works of art themselves. Rococo furniture is known to be very ornate. Tapestries, mirrors, ornaments and paintings done in the same style were used to complement the Rococo architecture. As the period ended, much of the style was looked upon derogatively and considered to be too frivolous



**The rococo** period was the reflection of the new king Louis XV’s rise to the throne. The previous king had lived in an era where architecture and art were rich, elegant, and huge as the Baroque style deems. But with the new reign of a young vivacious King the style changed which led to the Rococo era.

**Rococo Architecture:**

Rococo is usually thought of as developing first in the decorative arts and interior design, its origins lie in the late Baroque architectural work of architect [Borromini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Borromini" \o "Francesco Borromini) mostly in Rome and in Italy but also in Prague and Paris. Italian architects of the late Baroque/early Rococo were wooed to Catholic Germany, [Bohemia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bohemia" \o "Bohemia) and Austria by local princes and bishops. Inspired by their example, regional families of Central European builders went further, creating churches and palaces that took the local German Baroque style to the greatest heights of Rococo elaboration and sensation.

An exotic but in some ways more formal type of Rococo appeared in France where [Louis XIV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV_of_France" \o "Louis XIV of France)'s succession brought a change in the court artists and general artistic fashion. By the end of the king's long reign, rich Baroque designs were giving way to lighter elements with more curves and natural patterns. The delicacy and playfulness of Rococo designs is often seen as perfectly in tune with the excesses of [Louis XV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XV_of_France" \o "Louis XV of France)'s reign. These elements are obvious in the architectural designs of [Nicolas Pineau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas_Pineau" \o "Nicolas Pineau). The artistic change became well established, first in the royal palace and then throughout French high society. Rococo still maintained the Baroque taste for complex forms and intricate patterns, but by this point, it had begun to integrate a variety of diverse characteristics, including a taste for Oriental designs and asymmetric compositions. The Rococo style was spread by French artists and engraved publications.

Rococo architecture was a lighter, more graceful, yet also more elaborate version of [Baroque architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque_architecture" \o "Baroque architecture), which was ornate and austere. Whilst the styles were similar, there are some notable differences between both Rococo and Baroque architecture, one of them being symmetry since Rococo emphasized the asymmetry of forms while Baroque was the opposite. The styles, despite both being richly decorated, also had different themes; the Baroque, for instance, was more serious, placing an emphasis on religion, and was often characterized by Christian themes[ (as a matter of fact, the Baroque began in Rome as a [response](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterreformation" \o "Counterreformation) to the [Protestant Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation" \o "Protestant Reformation)) Rococo architecture was an 18th-century, more secular, adaptation of the Baroque which was characterized by more light-hearted and jocular themes. Other elements belonging to the architectural style of Rococo include numerous curves and decorations, as well as the usage of pale colors.

There are numerous examples of Rococo buildings as well as architects. Amongst the most famous include the Catherine Palace, in Russia, the [Queluz National Palace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queluz_National_Palace" \o "Queluz National Palace) in Portugal, the [Augustus burg and Falkenlust Palaces, Brühl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustusburg_and_Falkenlust_Palaces,_Br%C3%BChl" \o "Augustusburg and Falkenlust Palaces, Brühl), the [Chinese House (Potsdam)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_House_(Potsdam)" \o "Chinese House (Potsdam)) the [Charlotte burg Palace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlottenburg_Palace" \o "Charlottenburg Palace) in Germany, as well as elements of the [Château de Versailles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles" \o "Palace of Versailles) in France. Architects who were renowned for their constructions using the style include [Francesco Bartolommeo Rastrelli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Bartolomeo_Rastrelli" \o "Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli), an Italian architect who worked in Russia and who was noted for his lavish and opulent works, [Philip de Lange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_de_Lange" \o "Philip de Lange), who worked in both Danish and Dutch Rococo architecture, or [Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matth%C3%A4us_Daniel_P%C3%B6ppelmann" \o "Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann), who worked in the late Baroque style and who contributed to the reconstruction of the city of [Dresden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dresden" \o "Dresden), in Germany.



Catherine Palace, in Russia

The Catherine Palace is named after Catherine I, the wife of Peter the Great. The resultant palace, completed in 1756, is nearly 1km in circumference, with elaborately decorated blue-and-white facades featuring gilded atlantes, caryatids and pilasters designed by German sculptor Johann Franz Dunker. it took over 100kg of gold to decorate the palace exteriors. The interiors of the Catherine Palace are no less spectacular. The so-called Golden Enfilade of state rooms. Entrance is via the State Staircase which, although it blends effortlessly with the rococo grandeur. With its ornate banisters and reclining marble cupids, it gives a taste of what is to come. The Great Hall, also known as the Hall of Light, measures nearly 1,000 square meters, and occupies the full width of the palace so that there are superb views on either side. The large arched windows provide enough light to relieve the vast quantity of gilded stucco decorating the walls, and the entire ceiling is covered by a monumental fresco entitled The Triumph of Russia. Using similar techniques but on a smaller scale, the White Dining Room is equally luxurious but, like many of the rooms in the palace, its grandeur is softened by the presence of a beautiful traditional blue-and-white tiled stone in the corner.







[Queluz National Palace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queluz_National_Palace" \o "Queluz National Palace) in Portugal





Rococo-style [House of the Good Shepherd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_the_Good_Shepherd" \o "House of the Good Shepherd) in [Bratislava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bratislava" \o "Bratislava) ([Slovakia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovakia" \o "Slovakia)) - an example of the 18th century [bourgeoisie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourgeoisie" \o "Bourgeoisie) house.

Rococo architecture also brought significant changes to the building of edifices, placing an emphasis on privacy rather than the grand public majesty of Baroque architecture, as well as improving the structure of buildings in order to create a healthier environment. Besides intricate designs and frivolous detail the Rococo architecture also brought many improvements to architecture; sanitation was improved, chimneys were made more efficient and rooms were better organized to offer more privacy.

Rococo interior of the simple Bavarian country church, the Wieskirche - Photo by Eurasia/Robert Harding World Imagery/Getty Images


The Wies Pilgrimage Church of the Scourged Saviour, 1754, is a masterpiece of Rococo interior design, although its exterior is elegantly simple.

The Wieskirche, or the Pilgrimage Church of the Scourged Saviour), is a late Baroque or [Rococo style](http://architecture.about.com/od/periodsstyles/ig/Historic-Styles/Rococo.htm) church built according to plans by German architect. In English, Wieskirche is often called Church in the Meadow, because it is literally located in a country meadow. In 1738, some faithful people in Wies noticed tears shedding from a wooden statue of Jesus. As word of the miracle spread, pilgrims from all over Europe came to see the Jesus statue. To accommodate the Christian faithful, the local Abbot asked German architect Dominikus Zimmerman to create an architecture that would shelter both the pilgrims and the miracle statue. The church was built where the miracle happened.

In Germany Rococo was favored by the princes, in particular by Frederic II of Prussia. It can be found in palaces or in pilgrimage churches in Germany, where it reached its limits.

**Interior Design And Furniture:**

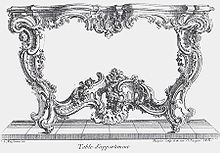


Rococo mirror and stuccowork reflect the style's characteristic anti-architectural integration of materials and forms.The lighthearted themes and intricate designs of Rococo presented themselves best at a more intimate scale than the imposing [Baroque architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque_architecture" \o "Baroque architecture) and sculpture. Metalwork, porcelain figures and especially furniture rose to new pre-eminence as the French upper classes sought to outfit their homes in the now fashionable style.

Rococo style took pleasure in asymmetry, a taste that was new to European style. This practice of leaving elements unbalanced for effect is called *contraste*.

During the Rococo period, furniture was lighthearted, physically and visually. The idea of furniture had evolved to a symbol of status and took on a role in comfort and versatility. Furniture could be easily moved around for gatherings, and many specialized forms came to be such as the fauteuil chair, the voyeuse chair, and the berger en gondola. Change in design of these chairs ranges from cushioned detached arms, lengthening of the cushioned back (also known as "hammerhead") and a loose seat cushion. Furniture was also freestanding, instead of being anchored by the wall, to accentuate the lighthearted atmosphere and versatility of each piece. Mahogany was widely used in furniture construction due to its strength, resulting in the absence of the stretcher as seen on many chairs of the time. Also, the use of mirrors hung above mantels became ever more popular in light of the development of unblemished glass.

In a full-blown Rococo design, like the *Table d'appartement* by French designer J. A. Meissonnier, the marble slab top is shaped. Apron, legs, stretcher have all been seamlessly integrated into a flow of opposed c-scrolls and "rocaille." The knot (*noeud*) of the stretcher shows the asymmetrical "contraste" that was a Rococo innovation.



Design for a table *ca* 1730

Most widely admired and displayed in the "minor" and decorative arts its detractors claimed that its tendency to depart from or obscure traditionally recognised forms and structures rendered it unsuitable for larger scale projects and disqualified it as a fully architectural style.



Abstract and asymmetrical Rococo decoration: ceiling stucco at the Neues Schloss, Tettnang

In [French furniture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_furniture" \o "French furniture) the style remained somewhat more reserved, since the ornaments were mostly of wood, or, after the fashion of wood-carving, less robust and naturalistic and less exuberant in the mixture of natural with artificial forms of all kinds (e.g. plant motives, stalactite representations, grotesques, masks, implements of various professions, badges, paintings, precious stones).



A Rococo interior in [Gatchina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatchina" \o "Gatchina).

In Rococo sportive, fantastic, and sculptured forms are expressed with abstract ornament using flaming, leafy or shell-like textures in asymmetrical sweeps and flourishes and broken curves; intimate Rococo interiors suppress [architectonic](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Special:Search/architectonic" \o "wikt:Special:Search/architectonic) divisions of architrave, frieze, and cornice for the picturesque, the curious, and the whimsical, expressed in plastic materials like carved wood and above all [stucco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stucco" \o "Stucco) .Walls, ceiling, [furniture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Furniture" \o "Furniture), and works of metal and [porcelain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porcelain" \o "Porcelain) present a unified ensemble. The Rococo palette is softer and paler than the rich primary colors and dark tonalities favored in Baroque tastes. In the Rococo style, walls, ceilings, and moldings were decorated with delicate interlacing of curves and counter curves based on the fundamental shapes of the “C” and the “S,” as well as with shell forms and other natural shapes. Asymmetrical design was the rule. Light pastels, ivory white, and gold were the predominant colors, and Rococo decorators frequently used mirrors to enhance the sense of open space. The Rococo style was manifested more in the decorative arts. Its asymmetrical forms and rocaille ornament were quickly adapted to silver and [porcelain](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470524/porcelain) and French [furniture](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/222627/furniture) of the period also displayed curving forms, naturalistic shell and floral ornament, and a more elaborate, playful use of gilt-bronze and porcelain ornamentation.



The entrance hall of the Rococo [Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palazzina_di_Caccia_di_Stupinigi" \o "Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi)

In France the Rococo style used delicate colors such as pink, white, yellow, azure blue and ivory mixed with cream and gold; Appliqué on clear colors was fashionable. Rugs often Oriental in design - rugs with small patterns and in Chinese designs on blue grounds were typical. In the Rococo period, the familiar themes of the Baroque reappeared but were treated with lightness and an asymmetrical freedom which rendered them suitable for the decoration of rooms and apartments conceived on a much less grand scale. The old division of the wall into panels was retained but the lines of the moldings lost their stiffness and were broken into curves, or garlanded with flowers or terminated in elaborate scrolls or shell-work. Mirrors were used lavishly, and stucco and tiles were sometimes applied instead of wood paneling. Colored marble or imitation marble was used for floors and chimneypieces.

**T**he essence of rococo interior decoration is twofold; first, the forms are almost flat instead of being, as in baroque schemes, in high relief; second, architectural and sculptural features are eliminated so that the designer is confronted with a smooth surface, interrupted only by the window recesses and the chimneypiece. In a typical rococo decorative scheme, series of tall wooden panels (including the doors), decorated with brilliantly inventive carved and gilded motifs in low relief, are arranged around the room. After 1720 the panels were usually painted ivory white and the motifs tended to be concentrated at the tops, bottoms, and centers with straight moldings down the sides. Further motifs appeared on the dadoes and along the coving, which replaced the cornice, at the tops of the walls. The forms were fine and were originally based on ribbons; later forms consisted mainly of elongated C- and S-shapes; plant tendrils, leaves, blossoms, and sometimes shells and small birds were also introduced. Mirrors were an important part of the ensemble, and paintings were sometimes set into the paneling over the doors. The overall effect is glittering and lively, a fitting background to 18th-century aristocratic social life, with its emphasis on privacy and its cult of human relationships.

Rococo Furniture in brief:

* Influence of French Rococo, Chinese and Gothic
* Mahogany main wood
* Carved cabriole legs
* Claw and ball feet
* Fretwork and Chinese motifs in backs of chairs
* Fabrics were brocade, leather, velour.



Integrated rococo carving, stucco and fresco at [Zwiefalten](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zwiefalten" \o "Zwiefalten)

In general, Rococo is an entirely interior style, because the wealthy and aristocratic moved back to Paris from Versailles. Paris was already built up and so rather than engaging in major architectural additions, they simply renovated the interiors of the existing buildings.

### Painting:

Though Rococo originated in the purely decorative arts, the style showed clearly in painting. These painters used delicate colors and curving forms, decorating their canvases with cherubs and myths of love. Portraiture was also popular among Rococo painters. Some works show a sort of naughtiness or impurity in the behavior of their subjects, showing the historical trend of departing away from the Baroque's church/state orientation. Landscapes were pastoral and often depicted the leisurely outings of aristocratic couples.



[Antoine Watteau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine_Watteau" \o "Antoine Watteau), *[Pilgrimage on the Isle of Cythera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embarkation_for_Cythera" \o "Embarkation for Cythera)* (1717, [Louvre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louvre_Museum" \o "Louvre Museum)) captures the frivolity and sensuousness of Rococo painting.

The Rococo movement began as an artistic controversy on the importance of drawing versus the importance of color. The Poussinistes (named after Nicolas Poussin) believed that drawing was more important, and the Rubenistes (named after Peter Paul Rubens) maintained that color was more important than drawing. The new Rococo style included works of art reflecting this controversy. With bright colors, exquisite detail, and ornamentation, it is easy to see how Rococo art appealed to the wealthy and powerful of France.   
  
[Jean-Antoine Watteau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Antoine_Watteau" \o "Jean-Antoine Watteau) (1684–1721) is generally considered the first great Rococo painter. He had a great influence on later painters, including [François Boucher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Boucher" \o "François Boucher) (1703–1770) and [Jean-Honoré Fragonard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Honor%C3%A9_Fragonard" \o "Jean-Honoré Fragonard) (1732–1806), two masters of the late period.

Francois Boucher (1703-1770) was a proponent of Rococo painting. In Hercules and Omphale, Boucher shows another aspect of the Rococo, erotic and sensual themes. In this painting, Hercules and Omphale are locked in a sensual embrace. Boucher shows his attention to detail, his use of classical elements (similar to the Renaissance) in portraying human figures, his superior depiction of human flesh, and overall balance in composition. The erotic nature of the piece does nothing to deter from its beauty.

  
Boucher’s fancy piece contrasts powerfully with The Artist and her Daughter (c. 1785) by Marie Louise Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun (1755-1842). This piece is described as plain and classical, but the observer sees that she uses the same attention to detail and vivid colors as Boucher. What is missing perhaps is the eroticism.   
  
Like many other forms of art, Rococo played out in different ways in other parts of Europe, including Germany and Italy. In France, the salons of hotels and private homes featured Rococo painting and interior work for the upper class taste, including gilt and mirrors. In Germany, the Rococo style survives in beautiful church architecture and dome paintings, including the beautiful pilgrimage church, The Weiskirche, in Bavaria.

During the Rococo era [Portraiture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait" \o "Portrait) was an important component of painting in all countries, but especially in Great Britain, where the leaders were [William Hogarth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Hogarth" \o "William Hogarth) (1697–1764), in a blunt realist style.

### Sculpture:

Sculpture was another area where the Rococo was widely adopted. [Étienne-Maurice Falconet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89tienne-Maurice_Falconet" \o "Étienne-Maurice Falconet) (1716–1791) is widely considered one of the best representatives of French Rococo. In general, this style was best expressed through delicate porcelain sculpture rather than imposing marble statues. Falconet himself was director of a famous porcelain factory at [Sèvres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%A8vres" \o "Sèvres). The themes of love and gaiety were reflected in sculpture, as were elements of nature, curving lines and asymmetry.



Tomb effigy of Amalia Mniszech in St. Mary Magdalene Church in [Dukla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dukla" \o "Dukla) by Jan Obrocki, 1773: only details of her beribboned costume are rococo

The sculptor [Edmé Bouchardon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edm%C3%A9_Bouchardon" \o "Edmé Bouchardon) represented [Cupid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cupid" \o "Cupid) engaged in carving his darts of love from the club of [Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hercules" \o "Hercules) this serves as an excellent symbol of the Rococo style—the demigod is transformed into the soft child, the bone-shattering club becomes the heart-scathing arrows, just as [marble](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble" \o "Marble) is so freely replaced by [stucco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stucco" \o "Stucco). The French sculptors includes [Jean-Louis Lemoyne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Louis_Lemoyne" \o "Jean-Louis Lemoyne), [Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Baptiste_Lemoyne" \o "Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne), [Robert Le Lorrain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Le_Lorrain" \o "Robert Le Lorrain), [Louis-Simon Boizot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis-Simon_Boizot" \o "Louis-Simon Boizot), [Michel Clodion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Clodion" \o "Michel Clodion).