Differences between High Renaissance and Baroque

Early Renaissance Art
Classical Style
Humanism, glorification of the individual
Use of antiquity as model
  Classical, Greco-Roman models as precedents (Venus Pudica & contrapposto pose)
  Classical architecture
    Triumphal arch, barrel vault, pediment
    Orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian)
Classical lettering style
  Mythological themes, usually as metaphors
  Return to depicting everyday subjects and people (genre subjects)
Naturalism and realism  Strong, sometimes harsh
Lighting  More natural, no more striations
  Modeling, looks real
  Cast shadows
Figures  Heavy, Clearly weighted down, gravity apparent
  Contrapposto (weight shift)
  Use of gestures
Convincing use of space  aerial, linear perspective
  Single point perspective, vanishing points
  Geometry, use of proportions
Economical, uncluttered, simple
Narratives
An overall clarity, directness, economy or elements or objects, spiritual and physical gravity
Examples: Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Donatello, Masaccio, Brunelleschi, Verrocchio

Baroque
  · Strong perspective effects
  · Dramatic color
  · Dramatic light and dark (chiaroscuro and tenebrism)
  · Movement of figures (especially upwards)
  · Broken and agitated draperies
  · Loose brush strokes
  · Heavy impasto
  · Dense and detailed compositions for emotional impact on viewer

Examples: Bernini, Caravaggio, Gentileschi, el Greco, Velazquez, Rubens, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals

www.ruf.rice.edu/~fellows/hart206/baroque.htm
www.kfki.hu/~arthp/artist.html
Baroque unity - an attempt to lure back Reformation converts to the Counter Reformation. Baroque the Age of Expansion. Opening of trade routes between Europe and the world. European colonists moved into the East and the Americas. Began an expanded interest in science, knowledge, astronomy and physics. Increased interest in exploration of the universe and where mankind fits into this new universe.

Bernini the perfect example of the concept of the Baroque, style and flamboyance. His masterpiece the Ecstasy of St Theresa Visually and psychologically convincing qualities of his work through subject matter

**Characteristics of the Baroque:**
1. Interest in space - varying levels, twisting in space, foreshortening, 3-D figures move into flattened raise and flat window. Full figures in the round. Dimensional pile
3. Flamboyant baroque recession
4. Non planar, that is, arranged on diagonals that project and recede through several layers of space. Figures placed around varying levels of depth.
5. Dynamism and motion
6. Organic vitality
7. Heightened interest in passions of the soul. Expressions on the face.
   - Interest in capturing action and of emotions at the height of emotional intensity
8. Sense of transitory moments, precise moment in time.
9. Naturalistic approach to anatomy. Accurate musculature
10. Psychologically convincing, highly naturalistic
11. Dynamic energy:
   - Spatial involvement in activated space
   - Figures twisted in fully three dimensional actions
   - The whole figure is an expression captured in a split second of time.
   - Open forms: A suggestion of extensions of the statue beyond pictorial space into the surrounding space
   - Suggestion of spatial continuum
   - Breaks out of the marble block the figure once occupied
12. Baroque illusionism
13. Textural differentiation this that is use of media smooth vs. rough

**Classical Renaissance style:**
1. tends to show you everything you need to see within the shown space, the pictorial space. An axial orientation, the most important forms are in the center as focal point. Symmetrical arrangement around an axis. A closed form, lateral symmetry. Composition closes in on itself.
2. Every detail clearly articulated. You see all parts of the composition. Multiplicity of additive details that build up the composition
The Baroque (according to art historian Martin) was summarized as seven main salient points:
1. Preoccupation with space
2. Preoccupation with time
3. Preoccupation with light
4. Interest in naturalism - the world was being explored
5. Interest in human emotions or passions of the soul. Humankind's reaction to exploration of the universe and the world.
6. Different attitudes toward antiquity. A question of where we figure in terms of cultural evolution and biology
7. Symbolic content. People trying to explain the world around them

**Baroque:**
1. Open compositions, no real axial or center focus, forms asymmetrical but balanced compositions. Suggests extensions beyond the lateral boundaries of pictorial space. Things are cut off, no apparent that ago closing devices such as angels.
2. A sense of unity. You don't see every detail at once. Tend to focus on entire composition rather than parts. The overall composition unified, treated as a whole, a story caught in a brief moment. Relative clarity. No generalized even lighting. Strong areas of submerged details in atmospheric highlights and shadow. Ephemeral quality, greater sense of perceptual approach, things as we actually perceive them with our eyes through the intervening atmosphere from a distance as opposed to the expressiveness in the renaissance. Microscopic and telescopic clarity. Baroque has a suggested mass.

**Bernini's David vs Michaelangelo’s David**

**Michaelangelo's David,** 1501
- Retains the quality of the block from which it is carved.
- Self-contained, closed composition.
- Classical harmony and balance.
- Flawless perfection. Limbs turned in.
- Naturalistically observed but idealized perfection

**Bernini's David**
- Open form
- Spatial involvement in activated space
- Figure twisted in a fully 3D action
- A suggestion of extension of statue beyond pictorial space into surrounding space
- David's gaze implies the presence of Goliath, also through his stance
- Suggestion of spatial continuum
- Breaks out of the marble block the figure was occupied

**Comparison of two sculptures**

**Michaelangelo**  Tomb of Guiliano de Medici  1519-34
**Bernini**  Ecstasy of St Theresa
Michaelangelo  Central axial focus. Planar, framed, closed composition, mirror imaging

Bernini  open composition extends beyond pictorial boundaries of the picture frame. No central axis, asymmetrical plan/focus/arrangement of figures but balanced.

Michaelangelo  short recession and depth into space, almost horizontal, all forms arranged to picture plane. Linear definition of form, visible hard edges, traceable contours.

Bernini  diagonals break the layers of space and recede into space. Create overlapping of forms at various levels and depths. Layers of recession, layers of depth. Blurring of edges, softening of atmosphere, a painterly approach. Creative use of lighting effects.

Michaelangelo  All details are legible. All parts are equal, add up to the total composition. Multiplicity of details equaled the total. Generalized lighting - all parts equally visible. Absolute clarity.

Bernini  Clouds merge into drapery, etc.. Overall unity of composition, parts merge. Relative clarity- softened atmospheric lighting effects. Not everything is visible. Submerged shadows, obscure areas.

The Renaissance idealized everything.
The Baroque saw more realistic, humanized approach.

Boy with Fruit by Caravaggio.  Single most influential painter in the seventeenth century Baroque era. Impacted every other artist who followed him in Europe and Italy. His main contribution to painting was extreme naturalism, he characterized the baroque style. The most important figure in painting ever.

Angry - molested boys and women. Had a police record. Murdered a man over a tennis game. Fled to Rome, constantly on the move. Emotional and egocentric. Pope wanted him on his staff, pardoned him but he died of malaria en route to Rome at the age of 36.

Caravaggio had interest in certain figure types, especially lazy, sensuous, pretty, androgynous youths - 'Geisha girls'. Have closed, homoerotic quality, perilous, enticing gazes, suggestive poses, 'makeup'. Momentary quality with direct relationship with viewer. A motif of proferring / offering the fruit. Genre scene as an excuse for luscious sexual subjects. Fruit also sexually suggestive. Figure is up against picture plane. Breaks through pictorial space. No escape, must respond. Sensual indulgences. Background lighting focuses our attention on the boy.

Details of still life - almost edible fruit, wilted leaves, realistic flawed nature. Creates 3D volume, monumental forms. His penchant for life-sized scale, 1/2 length (of body, i.e, the top half for portraits)

Strong chiaroscuro lighting effects, modeling the figure in strong relief against neutral backgrounds. Deep shadows with strong highlights. A salient interest in space and light.
**Calling of St Matthew by Caravaggio.**

Caravaggio had the single greatest impact on art. Known for religious paintings. Appealed to the masses. Naturalistic style. Now a truly secular treatment, a humanization of religious themes / art for Counter Reformation masses being welcomed back.


Odd - this is an outdoor courtyard scene. Very dramatic, theatrical and illusionistic as if on an indoor stage.

Subject: narrative captured at height of dramatic scene. Christ points to Matthew who points to himself in reaction, is startled. A momentary quality. Passions of the soul captured at their height.

**Supper at Emmaus by Caravaggio. 1600 –01**

Preference for 1/2 close-up format. Monumental forms, solid figures, emphatically 3D. Strong chiaroscuro modeling. Areas of tenebris shadows, dramatic ‘cellar lighting’ or spotlight effect. Christ resurrected – has supper with his apostles at city of Emmaus. Wasn’t recognized until he broke bread. Most important moment in the drama, when they recognize him. A transitory moment captured at height of Baroque drama and theater. Explosive reactions. Dramatic gestures, postures and expressions. A real understanding of human psyche and passions of the soul.

Radical foreshortening. Breaks dramatically through the pictorial space.

The two outside figures draw the viewer into the circle created by their diagonals. Elbow on left side, hand on right side projects through picture plane into lower space.

No idealization. Very low and middle class subjects realistically portrayed. Naturalistic use of emphatic highlights and shadows. Real humanization, a direct appeal to the common people.

**Conversion of St. Paul. by Caravaggio 1601**

Saul converted by blinding light, clearly seen. Stopped persecuting Christians. Relates to the masses – to go back to the folds of the Church. Tactile historic, religious event. Falls from his horse in religious ecstasy, overwhelming intense experience of God’s light.


Saturated colors, bold diagonals break through layers of space, punctuate composition. Transitory moment captured, as well as his reactions.

His moment of conversion captured, typical of Caravaggio’s style – direct, realistic. Reality of features. All faces different, very human, real. Verity of the situation. Tangible and realistic, we can relate to it.
Repoussé device means “to push back”
Usually a silhouetted form placed at surface of picture frame or plane. Has three functions:
1. Establishes the picture plane and foreground
2. Sets the scale. Trades perspective system for composition
3. Makes transition from viewer’s actual space into pictorial space. You are transported in.
Elemental to the baroque description of space.

Juan de Pareja by Velazquez 1649-50, Spanish painter
Most expensive painting ever bought until then, $5.5 million in 1971 by NY Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Was studio assistant of Velazquez who was of Moorish descent. A free man not a slave. Also an artist.
Extraordinary handling of paint. Harmonious palette
Frontal 3/4 view. Solid proportions
Immediacy of figure due to neutral background. Same as Caravaggio’s style. Forces us to focus on subject with no distractions, no escape
Becomes monumental because he sits on the picture plane. Makes direct eye contact.
Draws us in, we must relate to him.
Asymmetrical open composition typical of baroque
Positive and negative spaces, suggestion of space beyond the frame, unseen light source creating shadows on the wall behind figure.

Rokeby Venus by Velazquez
First nude in Spanish painting, 1649, but adapted to cultural dictates
Classical elements: Same horizontal format
Interior setting but reversed viewpoint, makes nude appear more modest. More appropriate to the times, more acceptable
Less voluptuous proportions, thinner women than Northern Baroque.
Probably painted in Italy during his trip there.
Warm, golden tones / palette, rich reds. Everything defined through light and color.
Mirror reflection a play on space. She looks out at us, we enter the painting. Creates several layers of space, pulls the viewer into her reality

Los Borrachos – the Drinkers by Velazquez
Theme of Bacchus. Lower and middle class models, people could relate to them.
Naturalistic approach, similar to Caravaggio.
Use of tenebrism and chiaroscuro modeling for 3D volume of forms.
Motif of direct eye contact. Relates to the viewer, breaks through pictorial space into actual space.
Baroque diagonal accents. Radically foreshortened. Interest in space typical of baroque.
Sense of recession and projection into space.
Left figure = strong diagonal into axial focus through use of repoussé device