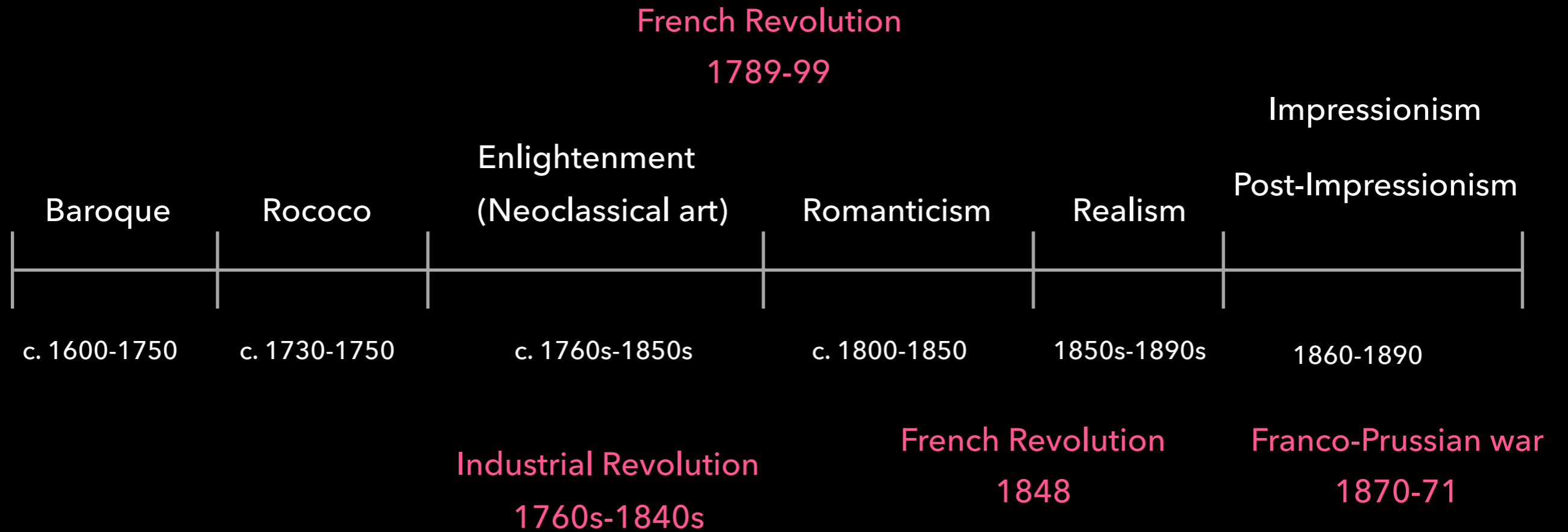# EUROPEAN ART THROUGH THE AGES (II)

BAROQUE TO POST-IMPRESSIONISM

Key Concepts

‣ Influence of urban growth and industrialisation on art

‣ Art as a reflection of contemporary society

‣ Changes in the visual language of art through the ages

TIMELINE

French Revolution
1789-99

Impressionism

Enlightenment
(Neoclassical art)

Post-Impressionism

Baroque   Rococo   Romanticism   Realism

c. 1600-1750   c. 1730-1750   c. 1760s-1850s   c. 1800-1850   1850s-1890s   1860-1890

Industrial Revolution
1760s-1840s

French Revolution
1848

Franco-Prussian war
1870-71

BAROQUE (C. 1600–1750)

- Artistic style that started around 1600 in Italy and spread to other parts of Europe

- Linked to the **Catholic Church**: religious themes and direct emotional involvement

- Images of the wealthy ruling class combined with mythology

Peter Paul Rubens
The Meeting of Marie de Médicis and Henri IV at Lyon
c. 1623.

Exaggerated motion

Drama + grandeur

bright colors

extreme light and shadow

busy narrative compositions

Peter Paul Rubens
The Meeting of Marie de Médicis and Henri IV at Lyon
c. 1623.

ROCOCO (C. 1730–1770)

- Prominent in 18th century Europe, evolves as a **reaction to the rigidity** of the Baroque style

- Art that is **frivolous**, light hearted and playful

- Used for interior decoration and decorative arts

- Paintings include themes of **romance, beauty, mythology**

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

The Secret Meeting

From the series The Progress of Love, 1771-3

Curved, sinuous lines

fantastical settings

subjects of romance, playfullness, beauty

excessive ornamentation/decoration

soft, pastel colours

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

The Secret Meeting

From the series The Progress of Love, 1771-3

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT (C. 1760S–1850S)

*peaked 1780s-1790s but last till 1850s

- A philosophical movement in 17th and 18th century Europe; emphasized **rationalism, reason and progress**

- **Scientific thought** replaced religious authority

- Art during this time favoured logic, clarity and order

Neoclassicism: movement that drew inspiration from the "classical" art and culture of Ancient Greece or Ancient Rome. Believed art should be cerebral, not sensual or emotional.

Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of Horatii*, 1784

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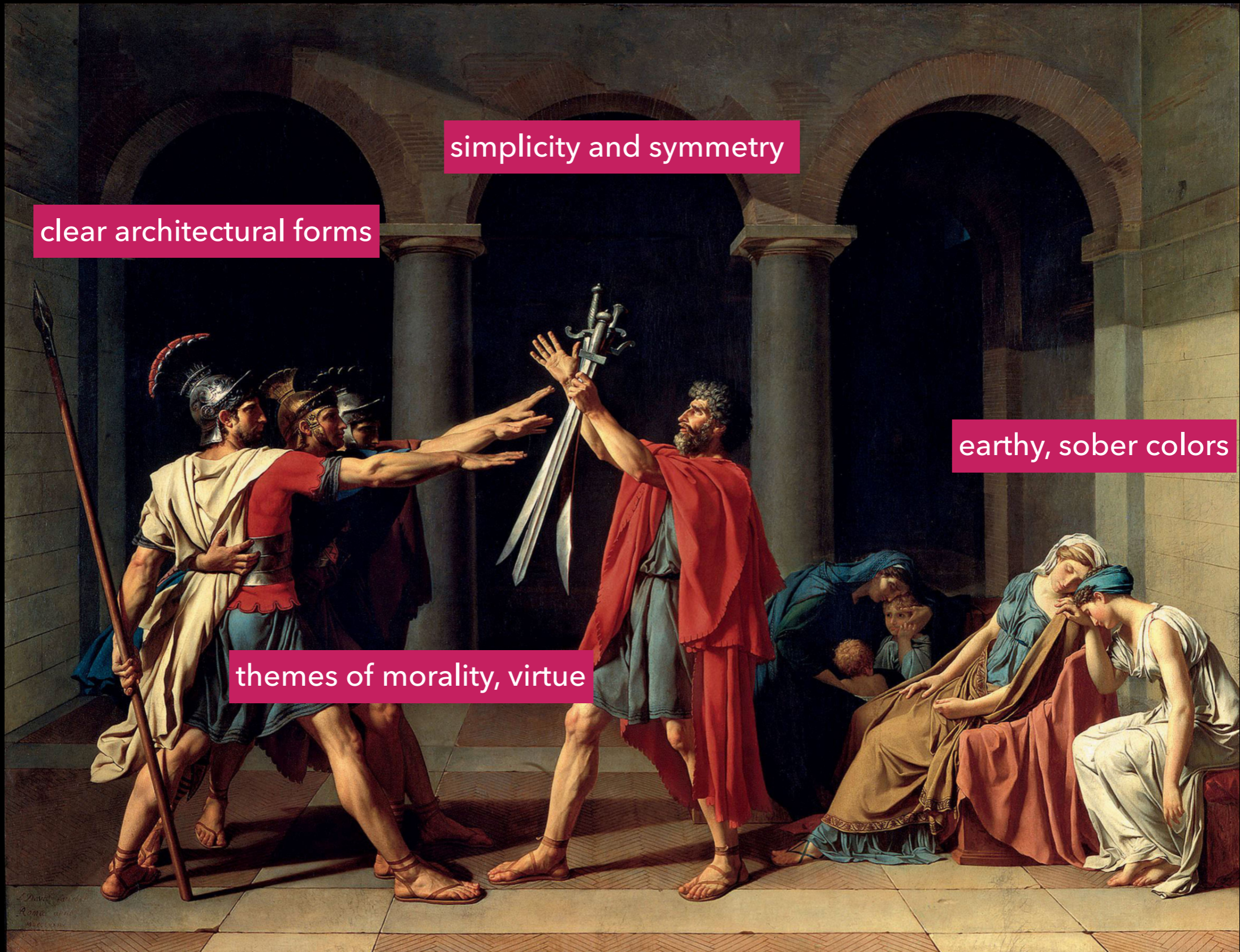
simplicity and symmetry

clear architectural forms

earthy, sober colors

themes of morality, virtue

Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of Horatii,* 1784

Industrial Revolution: a change in the economy from an agrarian/handmade one to dominated by industry and machines

Joseph Wright of Derby

A Philosopher Giving A Lecture at the Orrery

c. 1765

oil on canvas (Derby Museum)

ROMANTICISM (1800–1850)

- Reaction to the scientific rationalism and classicism of the Age of Enlightenment

- Emphasised **emotion, freedom and individual imagination**

- Influenced by **Industrial Revolution**: wanted to escape the modern realities of population growth, industrialism, urbanism etc.

- The Enlightenment had encouraged criticism of the corruption of Louis XVI and the aristocracy in France, leading to the beginning of the **French Revolution** (1789-99)

- Subjects included the natural world, **narratives from history** and contemporary politics.

Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830

Allegory: when the subject of the artwork, or the various elements that form the composition, is used to symbolize a deeper moral or spiritual meaning such as life, death, love, virtue, justice etc.

Ideas of nationalism

Symbolism

Strong expressions/emotions
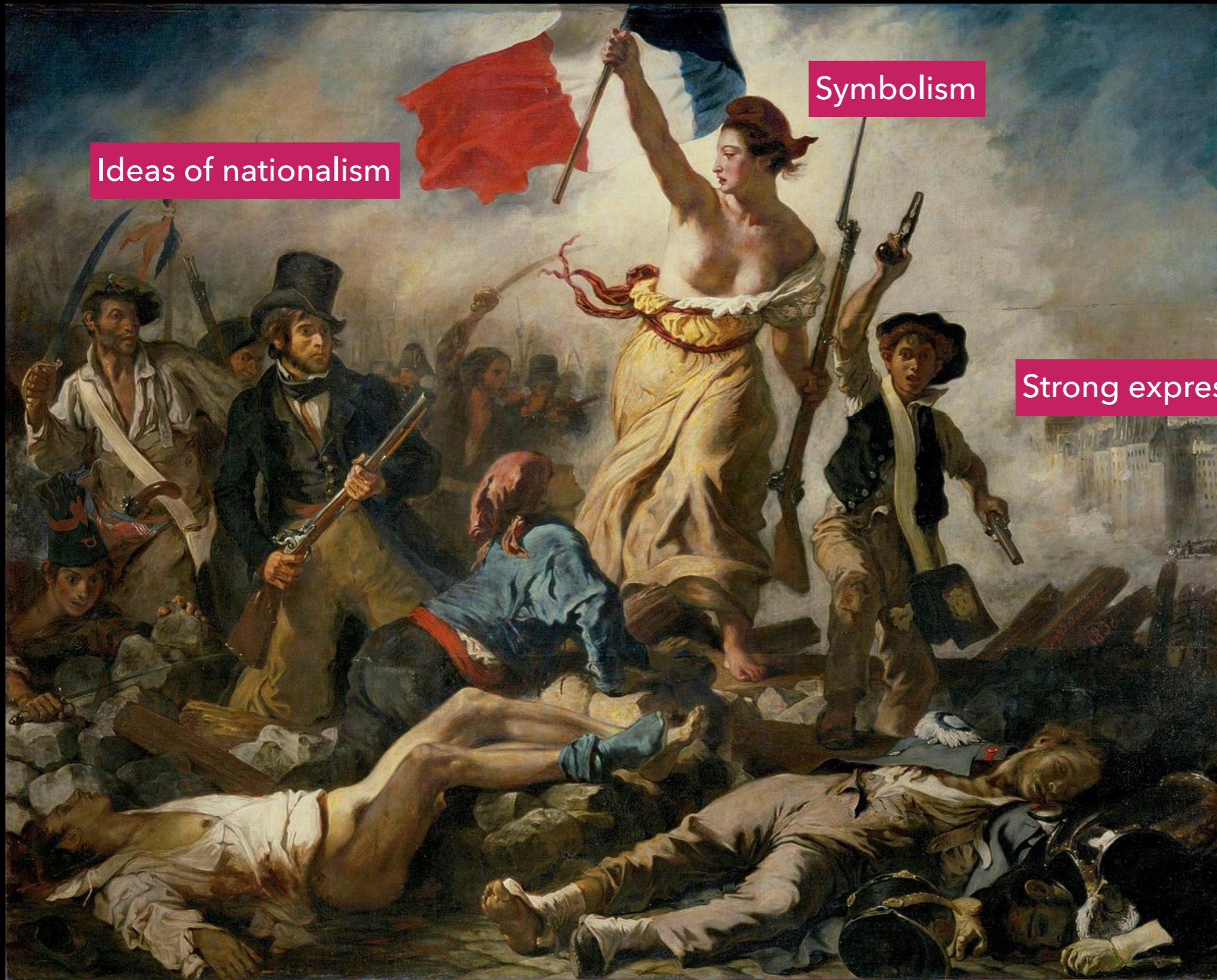
Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830

REALISM (1850S–1890S)

- Artistic movement that began in France in the 1850s, rejected Romanticism

- Inspired by 1848 French Revolution

- Sought to portray **contemporary subjects** and situations with truth and accuracy

- **Rejected** the extreme **emotionalism** and exoticism of Romanticism (no allegories) to depict contemporary issues

- Wanted to depicted **real people**, including unpleasant aspects of life

Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier
Memory of Civil War or Barricade in the Rue de la Mortellaire, June 1848
1848

Simple compositions

Gritty style: textured, rough brushwork

Subtle, muted colors

Unpleasant, difficult but "real" subject matter

Jean-Francois Millet, *Gleaners*, 1857

IMPRESSIONISM (C. 1860S–1890)

- 19th century movement started in Paris- turn towards modernism

- Painted scenes from **modern life** and society- subjects like urban scenes, theaters, cafes

- Partly a reaction to the invention of photography (no longer need to create realistic images)- instead use painting as a **form of expression**

- Wanted to capture the "impression" of a subject- a quick **snapshot** of a moment

The Haussmannization of Paris

- Franco-Prussian war (1870-71) caused destruction in Paris– required reconstruction of several parts

- New urbanisation and industrialisation gave rise to a new urban life and society

- French official, Baron Haussman given responsibility of renovating the city. Tore down old buildings to create more open spaces, broad avenues

- New railway lines that allowed Parisians to go to the countryside every weekend (leisure becomes important)

Louis Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple*, Paris, 1838

Camille Pissarro, *The Boulevard Montmartre on a Winter Morning,* 1897, Oil on canvas. (Met Museum)

Salons and Art Academies

- The Salon was Paris's premier art exhibition at the time, led by a jury who would decide what works are worth showing

- Annual event that could make or break an artist's career – impacted what kind of artworks they made (predominantly history paintings, large scale, traditional subject matter

- To protest the Salon, in 1874, 30 artists organised their own exhibition

How did the Impressionists get their name?

"There's impression, or I don't know what it means. Only be so good as to tell me what those innumerable black tongue-lickings in the lower part of the picture represent?" –Joseph Vincent critiquing Monet's painting in *Le Charivari*
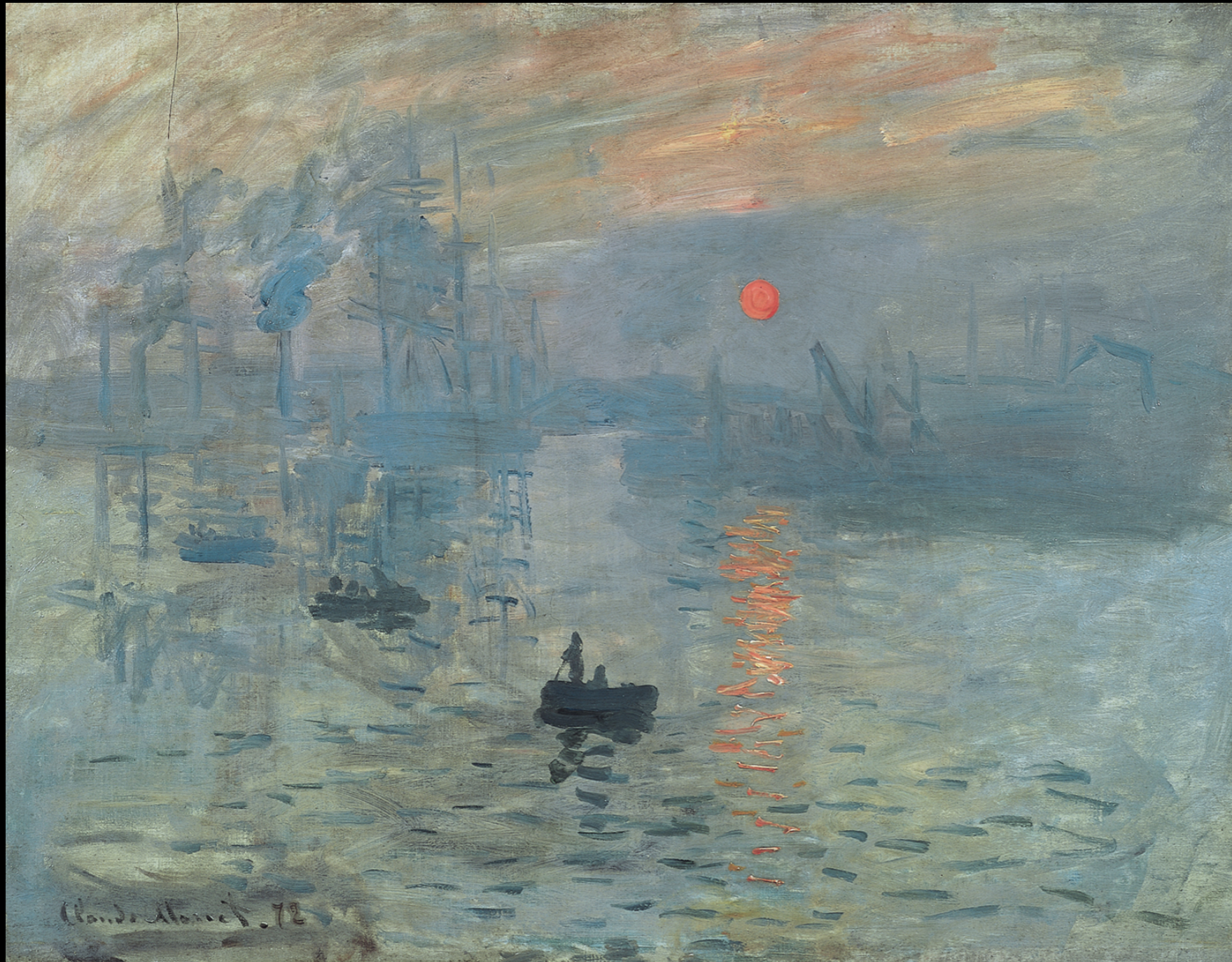
En plein air: The act of painting outdoors, as opposed to within a studio; typical feature of Impressionist landscapes

Claude Monet
Impression Sunrise
1872

Class, Labor and Leisure

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Moulin de la Galette*, 1876

Class, Labor and Leisure

Busy composition with lot of motion: snapshot/impression of a moment

very little mixing of colors

Strong emphasis on light and shadow plays

quick rough brushstrokes to give effect of effortlessness

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Moulin de la Galette*, 1876

The Gendered Gaze

Flâneur: French term meaning 'stroller' or 'loafer'. Carries a number of associations as a man of leisure, urban explorer, observer of the streets
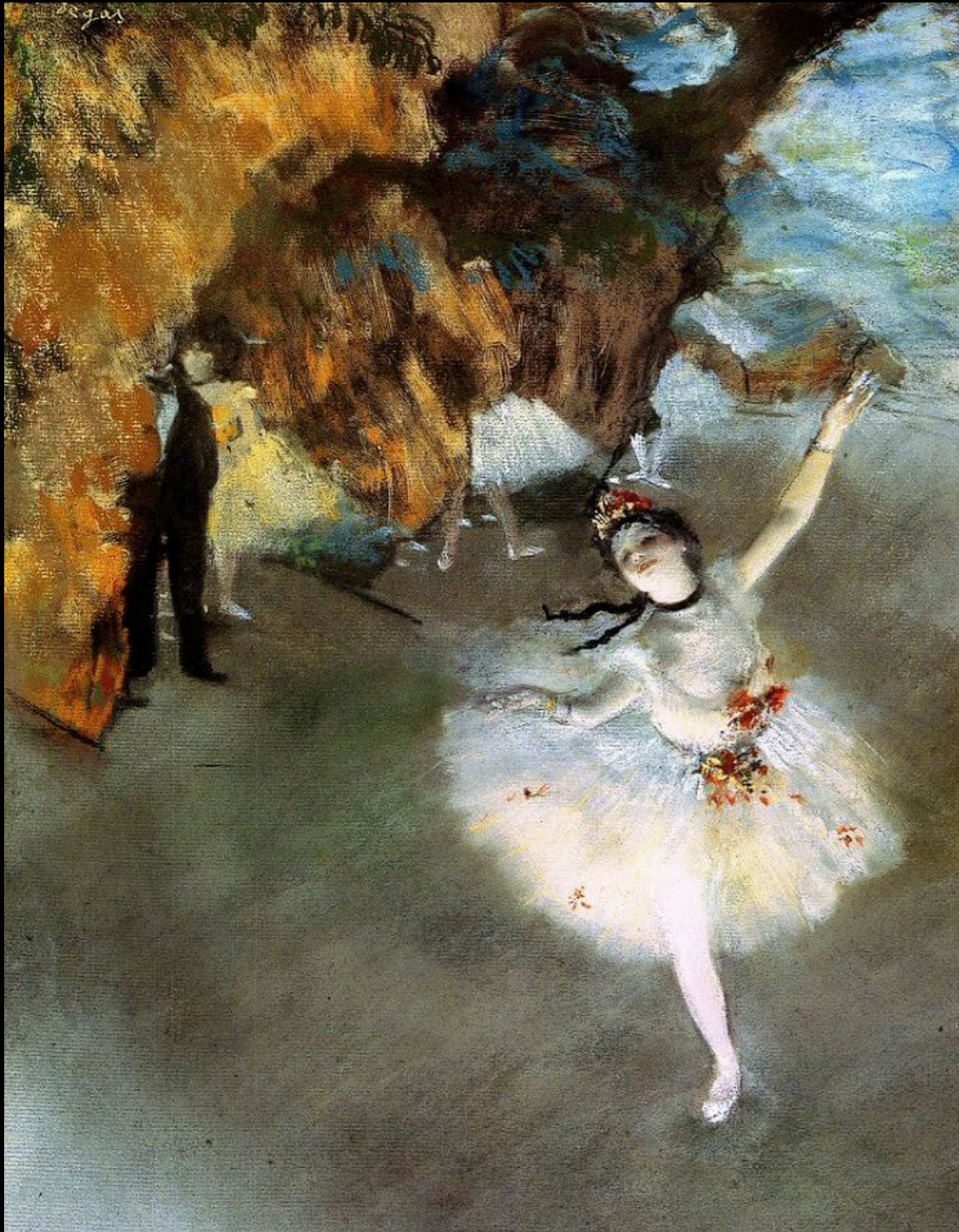
Edgar Degas, *L'Étoile*, 1878

Edgar Degas, *Dancers, Pink and Green*, c. 1890

August Renoir, La Loge, 1874

Mary Cassatt, Woman at the Loge (At the Opera), 1879

POST-IMPRESSIONISM

▸ Rather than the ***impression*** of the spectacle of the external world, a focus of the Impressionists, the Post-Impressionist artists turned toward the ***expression*** of the internal psychology of the individual

▸ Wanted to push Impressionism's experiments further

▸ Wanted to move beyond the passive rendering of visual experience to express their **ideas and emotions**

▸ Did not view themselves as a separate collective (don't have much in common other than that they came after the Impressionists)

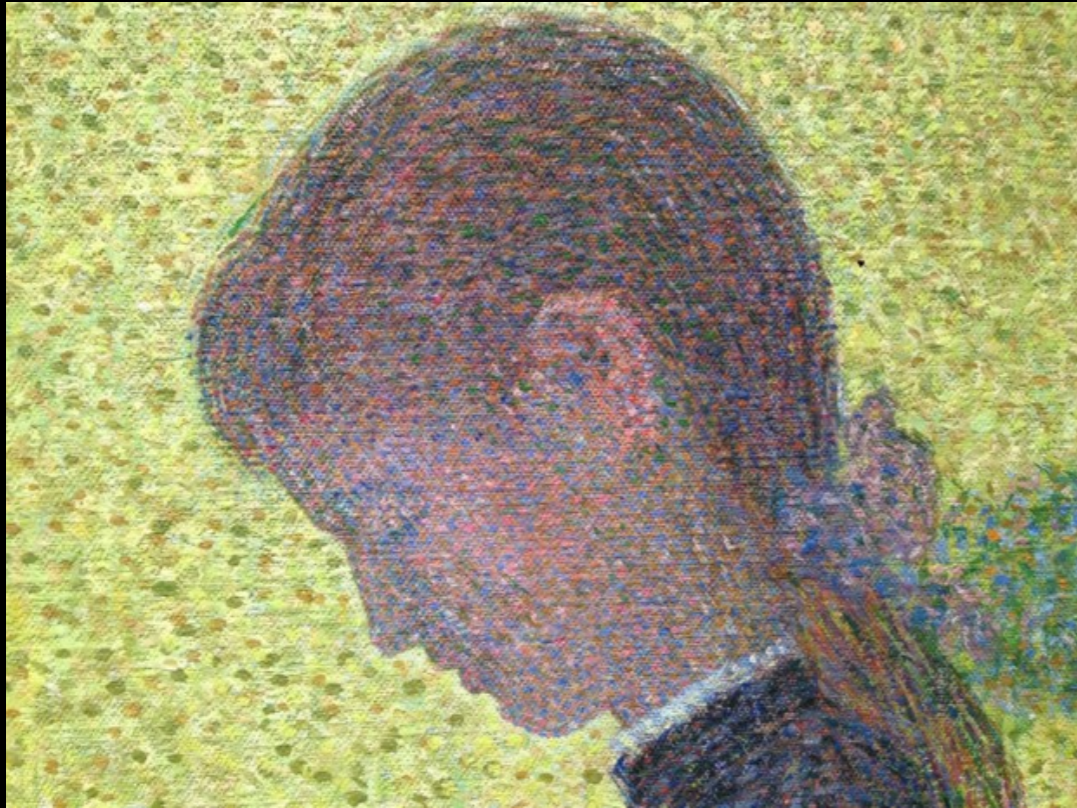Georges Seurat, *Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, 1884-86

Stillness/coldness: perhaps reflection of societal context

bold expressive color

abstract but distinctive forms

Experiments with colour theory

Georges Seurat, *Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, 1884-86

Pointillism: Painting technique in which paint is applied in small, distinct dots of different colours in a pattern to form an image

Impasto: A technique of laying paint in thick layers such that the stroke of the brush or painting knife is visible. When dry, impasto provides texture and the paint appears to be coming out of the canvas.

Vincent Van Gogh
Starry Night
1889

Discussion

‣ How did the subject matter change from the Baroque period through the Post-Impressionists?

‣ What contributed to those changes?

‣ How did the formal approaches differ?

GLOSSARY

- **Industrial Revolution**:

- **Haussmanization**:

- **En plein air**: The act of painting outdoors, as opposed to within a studio; typical feature of Impressionist landscapes

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