

# Neoclassical Art

## Jacques-Louis David



**Jacques-Louis David, Self portrait, 1794.**

Born to a wealthy Parisian family, Jacques-Louis David was aged 7 when his father was shot dead in a pistol duel. Brought up by his uncles, his desire was to paint and he was eventually sent to his mother's cousin, Francois Boucher, the most successful painter in France at the time.

Painting became an important means of communication for David since his face was slashed during a sword fight and his speech became impeded by a benign tumour that developed from the wound, leading him to stammer. He was interested in painting in a new classical style that departed from the frivolity of the Rococo period and reflected the moral and austere climate before the French Revolution.

David was the leader of the Neoclassical movement. He became closely aligned with the republican government and his work was increasingly used as propaganda with the Death of Marat proving his most controversial work.



### Simon Schama on David

If there's ever a picture that would make you want to die for a cause, it is Jacques-Louis David's Death of Marat. That's what makes it so dangerous - hidden away from view for so many years.

"I'm not sure how I feel about this painting, except deeply conflicted. You can't doubt that it's a solid gold masterpiece, but that's to separate it from the appalling moment of its creation, the French Revolution. This is Jean-Paul Marat, the most paranoid of the Revolution's fanatics, exhaling his very last breath. He's been assassinated in his bath. But for David, Marat isn't a monster, he's a saint. This is martyrdom, David's manifesto of revolutionary virtue."



**Jacques-Louis David, Death of Marat 1793.**

## Identifying Neoclassical Art

Notable **stylistic similarities** found in most **Neoclassical art** include a **sense of order, stability and calmness.**

**Make a Sketch of Jacques Louis David's Oath of the Horatii**

Use Line, Proportion and Detail throughout your drawing.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Jacques Louis David: Oath of the Horatii, France, 1784.



Jacques Louis David: Oath of the Horatii, France, 1784.

How does David use the Architecture in **Oath of the Horatii** to link the figures?

K/U

Use of Line, Proportion  
& Detail: