

## Louis XV style

This is probably the most original period in the history of the French arts.

The Louis XV style evolved from the Regence style pushing further the movement of freedom of form. The rich townhouses focused on practicality; the private apartments were smaller in size.

Steering clearly away from the classical and antique references, the Louis XV style invented a new ornamental repertoire: the Rococo. Delicate and playful, the style is based on undulating lines and S curves, natural patterns and asymmetrical designs, focusing on interior design and furniture more than architecture with large white ceilings and central rosette plasterwork, pastel colours, high mirrors and a taste for the Chinese. Boucher is the painter of a period in which gallantry prevailed over the grandiose.

From 1730 to 1735 Rococo or «rocaille» flourished in the Parisian interiors and was abandoned as early as 1745-1750. Rococo used curves systematically, overindulged in ornaments and asymmetrical designs distorting motifs taken from nature.

Voltaire and his followers condemned Rococo ridiculing its jumble of shells, dragons, reeds, palm trees and plants. Starting in 1740, Rococo became symmetrical: the same general shapes and ornaments are placed symmetrically and less profusely. The idea of furniture had evolved from 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. Furniture was also freestanding, instead of being anchored by the wall, to accentuate the light-hearted atmosphere and versatility of each piece.

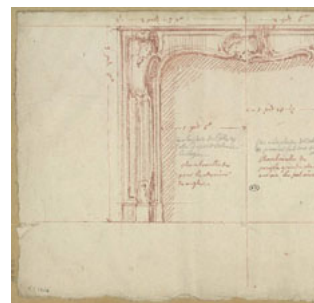
The beginning of Neoclassicism was felt in the 1750's with the travels of the Marquis of Marigny, Soufflot and Cochin to Italy (1748-1750), the excavation of Pompeii (1748), and the famous Supplique aux Orfèvres by Cochin in 1754, when he pleaded cabinet makers and artists to reduce the excesses of Rococo and allow for straight lines. A new equilibrium arose between Rococo and Antique Classicism, using neoclassical ornaments: bows and ribbons, vases of flowers, festoons in strong symmetry.



CHAMBRE  
In Perspective, with various Minutiae of the Room, painted by Louis  
Boucher in the presence of the King. Engraved by Cochin.  
Paris, 1754.



LOUIS XV. CHAIR, 1754 - FATHON.  
Engraved with the artist's name. Taken from La France's Edition.



**Galerie Marc Maison**

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