

103. The Oath of the Horatii. Jacques-Louis David. 1784 C.E. Oil on canvas.

Form: NEOCLASSICAL

Function:

Simplistic and Symbolic

Shows 3 sons taking an oath to their father

Rejection of Rococo

Revolutionary thinking? 5 years before French Revolution and Jacques-Louis was a revolutionary. Idea of swearing and oath to the Republic that will require dedication and sacrifice.

Organized and structured

Male Figures = constructed with geometric shapes

Female Figure = organic/realistic shapes

Vanishing point on the swords

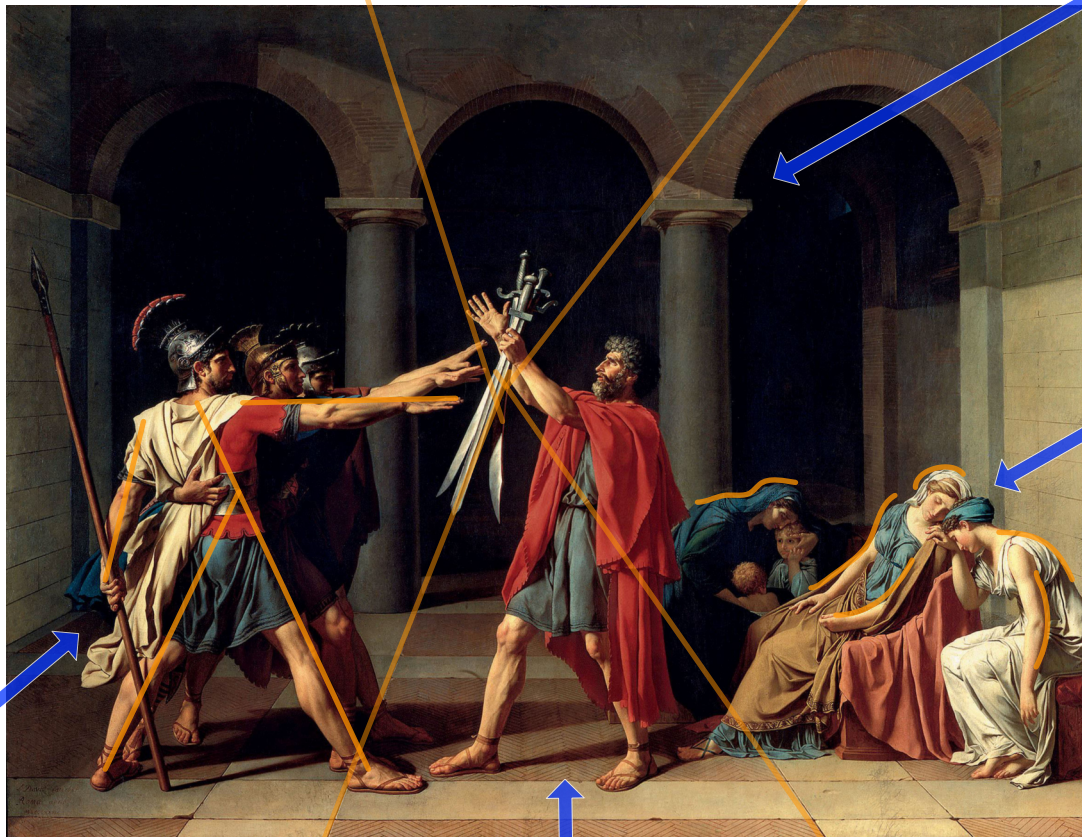
Roman arches and Tuscan columns = a Neoclassical setting

Men are rigid and angular, showing strength and determination

Horatii brothers: note the attention to detail in the musculature = Neoclassical ideals

Women and children: some are the sisters of the Horatii, who are married to the Curatii. Some are Curatii married to the Horatii brothers. Either way it will end in tragedy

women are curvilinear - showing softness and weakness as well as a lack of agency



Father

Compare with other Neoclassical works and Classical (Greek and Roman) works

Context:

Legend of Horatii

Conflict between Rome and city of Alba Longa

Instead of declaring war, they sent 3 representatives to settle dispute

3 brothers of the Horatii (Roman) vs. 3 brothers of the Curatii (Alban)

Typical for battles to be won as men remain standing

Held moral value in Roman culture. Sacrifice for the defense of your city is a noble case

Time of Painting

France was on the verge of its Revolution and the end of the monarchy

David picked up on the independent ideas resurfacing all over the world (revolutionary thinking)