

Worlds of ROMANTICISM

Contents

Exhibition facts

Press release

Wall texts

Selected Quotes and Poems

Exhibition facts

Press conference	12 November 2015 10 am
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Curators	Dr Christof Metzger – Albertina, Dr Cornelia Reiter (†) – Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Wien
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Worlds of Romanticism

13 November 2015 – 21 February 2016

Romanticism, a sentiment expressed in fine art, literature, and music, has lost nothing of its original fascination. And in Vienna, one of this artistic movement's birthplaces, the Albertina is cooperating with the Academy of Fine Arts' Graphic Collection to put on an exhibition of around 170 works by the movement's most important representatives. These are joined by important loan works from international collections in order to repeatedly take the European context into account via works by artists ranging from Caspar David Friedrich to Francisco de Goya.

Two thematic emphases stand front and centre: the starkly contrasting spirituality, narrative forms, motifs, and pictorial languages of romanticism's Nordic/Protestant and Catholic manifestations, made clear by frequently pointed juxtapositions, and the contribution made by Vienna and by Austria at large. At Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts, students' increasingly vehement rejection of the institution's academic teaching ultimately led to the formation of the Catholic-romantic Brotherhood of St. Luke, whose members soon moved to Rome and made waves there as the *Nazarenes*.

The romantic era also saw artists' discovery of the landscapes in and around Vienna, in Salzburg, and in the Salzkammergut region as motivic material, and the influence of this development on Austria's artistic output was to last throughout the entire 19th century. Together, the two featured Viennese collections contain the most outstanding treasures from this broad field of romantic landscape art. One of the roles played by landscape was that of an existential metaphor: for Caspar David Friedrich, nature held deep human riddles, and ravines, horizons, and storms at sea along with shipwrecks became dark metaphors of personal and civilisational alienation. Such brooding works by Friedrich are juxtaposed with the sometimes lyrical, sometimes dramatic narrative interpretation of the same motifs in Viennese romanticism, with eloquent examples by Führich, Schnorr, and Schwind. Important key works make clear the highly varied meanings of light with all of its nuances from morning to evening, from dawn fog to night. The cosmic and existential twilight of the North is thus confronted by the clear, down-to-earth daylight of the Nazarenes.

Further sections of the exhibition are devoted to the glorification of the past with a special focus on the Catholic-romantic invention of the Habsburg myth, to the romantic *Freundschaftsbild* [friendship portrait], and also to the dark side of romanticism with Füssli and Goya as inscrutable forerunners of a persistent quest for the transcendental in man and nature. And finally, important works will demonstrate the romantic manifesto that entailed the renewal of art's Nordic and Southern conceptions, both of which had previously been viewed as consummate in the outputs of Dürer and Raphael.

Curators: Dr Christof Metzger, Albertina, Vienna and Dr Cornelia Reiter (†), Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Wall Texts

The Demon is Inside Ourselves

Henry Fuseli and Francisco de Goya set out to explore the dark sides of human existence. They venture deep into previously concealed areas of the human soul to show that the weird and eerie is native to the human itself. Goya's demons whip up the artist's fantasy or eventually turn into gruesome reality in his drastic depictions of war or abnormal situations of human existence. What Goya had in mind specifically were the atrocities committed by the Napoleonic soldiers in squashing the resistance of the Spanish population rising up against the French occupation, but his etchings have come to epitomize the fate of all of Europe, torn and destroyed by twenty years of armed conflict. It is against this real-history background that Romanticism emerges. Reason has abdicated. Its sleep produces monsters.

The Vienna Academy

Around 1800, the Vienna Academy was an art school of international repute; its training program focused on drawing from plaster casts of ancient sculpture and athletic Michelangelesque nudes. Informed by classicist ideals as it was, the program called forth a counter movement. In a public act of self-assertion, a number of students, among them Friedrich Overbeck and Franz Pforr, left the Academy and joined together to found the *Lukasbund* (Brotherhood of St. Luke) in the Vienna of 1809. It was the first Secession movement in art history.

The programmatic name that the group chose for themselves is a reference to Luke the Evangelist, the patron saint of Christian painting, which is already indicative of the recourse they took to medieval and early Renaissance art. The Brothers of St. Luke glorified that epoch as a time in which art, religion, and life were still in unity. Art was supposed to serve religion and to arouse religious sentiments in people. The only way to achieve this was to follow in the path of venerable medieval painting. As modern Christian artists, they did not see themselves as imitators, but as genuine successors of the most important painters of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, above all of Dürer and the young Raphael.

The Chaste Nude

Traditional academic teaching was based on antiquity-inspired studies from the nude which were imparted to students in three steps, first using etchings, then plaster casts of ancient statues, and finally live models. The classicist coldness, Michelangesque pathos, and Baroque postures of nude and antique studies pursued by Academy professors Heinrich Friedrich Füger and Franz Caucig were emphatically rejected by the Brotherhood of St. Luke. They aspired to the “truth of nature,” also in nudes, which could only be attained by the true-to-life portrayal of the human in its natural sentient attitude and gestural as well as body language.

The Brotherhood of St. Luke preferred younger male models of slender physique over the Academy’s athletic models. For religious reasons, the first generation of Nazarenes disapproved of the study of the nude female. Only the Protestant circle around Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, who left Vienna for Rome in 1817 following his conversion to Catholicism, was first to hold, from 1819, regular evening classes of drawing from live nude models, male and female.

The Lukasbund (Brotherhood of St. Luke)

With the founding of the *Lukasbund* (Brotherhood of St. Luke), Vienna became the starting point of a movement for the renewal of religious painting. From this congregation of artists emerged a more moderate group of religious-romantic painters in Austria, including, aside from the founding members Friedrich Overbeck und Franz Pforr, Johann Evangelist Scheffer von Leonhardshoff, Leopold Kupelwieser, and Josef Führich. The Brotherhood of St. Luke set up camp in the abandoned monastery of San Isidoro on Monte Pincio in the north of Rome as a place to live and work. Their distinctive characteristic was their hair which the Brothers all wore to their shoulders, *alla nazarena*. So the Romans—borrowing from the common historical picture of Jesus of Nazareth—nicknamed them Nazarenes.

The Brotherhood aspired to bring about a renewal of religious art so as to engage viewers’ feelings quite in keeping with Romantic ideas and arouse pious sentiments in them. The Nazarenes found their models in the Christian art of the medieval and early Renaissance periods. They also took their inspiration from the writings of German Romantic writers and poets like Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, or Friedrich Schlegel, of whom the latter in particular held that the very calling of art was “to glorify religion and reveal its mysteries even more beautifully and clearly.”

Italia and Germania. The Nazarene Ideal of Art

The two co-founders and leaders of the Brotherhood of St. Luke, Franz Pforr and Friedrich Overbeck, cultivated a close personal friendship. To express the bond between them, each of the artists made a painting dedicated to the other one. The subject they chose was an encounter of Sulamith (the female character in the Song of Solomon from the Old Testament) and the Virgin Mary. Both paintings are programmatic in that they epitomize the Nazarene ideal of art serving religion: while Pforr conceived his composition as a small diptych in the style of an old-German *Andachtsbild* (devotional picture) centering on the godly lives of Sulamith and Mary, Overbeck invoked, through the tender affection between the two women, the union of the Italian with the German character.

Overbeck's allegoric picture illustrates a number of important theoretical positions maintained by the Nazarenes: graced with a laurel wreath, the female figure on the left, portrayed in the style of young Raphael, embodies Italia, with Germania, shown in a dress from the time of Dürer, turning toward her and taking her hand. The landscapes in the background underscore where the figures come from: an ideal Italian landscape unfolds behind Italia, and tall up on a hill behind Germania is the distant silhouette of a medieval, old Franconian town. Italia and Germania embody the idea of a close bond between the North and the South, a wishful dream cherished by Overbeck, a German who spent his life in Rome, and his artist friends.

The “Characteristic” in the Portrait

For the artists in the circle of the Nazarenes, the task of portraiture was to explore the special and unmistakably unique in the individual. The artist was supposed to bring to view the moral and ethical integrity of the person portrayed. This is what the philosopher Friedrich Schlegel calls the “characteristic” of the portrait. For Schlegel, a portrait is not just a depiction of outward shape and physiognomy, but an artistic reflection of the soul. It therefore has to give visibility to a person's innermost being. This is what lends it its value as art. Romanticism puts the “characteristic” even above representational likeness. A portrait could even be unlike, as long as it was “characteristic.”

The ideal of Romanticism is the portrait drawing that focuses solely on the face. The Lukasbund artists developed expressive devices of portraiture, which let nothing come in the way of viewing the person represented: no frame, no background to distract from the subject, heads freely placed on the paper. Neck and shoulders mostly remain vague, arms and hands are often left away altogether, while the precise delineation of facial features serves the spiritual concentration and psychological analysis of the person depicted. You have to know who you portray in order to avoid the formulaic character of the Baroque portrait. And so Nazarene portrait art comes to culmination in marvelous representations of close friends.

The Roman Portrait Book

Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld's *Roman Portrait Book* documents the circle of German artists, scholars, art patrons, politicians, and poets who gathered together in Vienna and Rome between 1816 and 1824. The people portrayed all had close personal relationships with the artist as well as among one another. Schnorr's portrait art keeps the memory of those personalities alive, but also addresses the subject of friendship itself.

The cycle of pictures is illustrative of central art-theoretical tenets of the *Lukasbund*: the artist presents his likenesses as tightly cropped bust portraits that follow certain variants of the Renaissance portrait. The precise drawing style is reminiscent of etched portraits from the time of Dürer. The seriousness of approach and the cool detachment vis-à-vis the viewer give the portraits an air of unaffected pathos which almost programmatically follows in the tracks of revered Renaissance models.

Back to the Middle Ages. New and Old Myths

Against the reality of the early nineteenth century, Romanticism kept celebrating the mythical world of religion and thus saw in the Middle Ages the ideal epoch in history when people had still been united in the Christian faith. The backward orientation to the Middle Ages and the discovery of the world of chivalry were demonstrated by Moritz von Schwind or Joseph von Führich in scenes of knights and courtly love, which were often conceived as designs for larger schemes of historicizing interior decoration. These medieval fantasies also spoke of the bond between man and nature. In former times, man had been one with nature. This was the state to strive back to. The Romanticists thus sought to find in the past what the present could not afford them.

National self-contemplation also inspired the rediscovery of patriotic themes in the world of medieval myths and legends. Peter Cornelius' illustrations of the *Nibelung* saga of 1817 marked a milestone in a development in which the great epics of classical antiquity were gradually superseded as subjects of illustration by medieval epics and even works of what was called folk poetry. Pious legends like the popular ballad of *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg* (Tannhäuser and the Minstrel Contest at Wartburg Castle) made their way into painting and gave Romantic art much of its wondrous charm.

Rudolf of Habsburg's Pietàs. The Middle Ages and the Nation-State

The proclamation of the Austrian Empire in 1804, the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, and Napoleon Bonaparte's subsequent seizure of power fueled the search for heroes of the past. In contrast to the pictures of the Protestant north informed by the struggle for freedom, the Nazarenes dreamt of a revival of the old empire. Franz Pforr's painting *King Rudolf von Habsburg's Entry into Basel in 1273* provided a highly symbolic picture for this understanding of history. Pforr chose an event during which the devout Count Rudolf learns that he has been elected King of Germany while he besieges Basel. He forgives the disloyal people of Basel and enters their city in triumph. The so-called *legend of the priest* is seen as further evidence of Rudolf's virtuousness: according to it, Rudolf offered his horse to a priest who could thus continue on his way to visit a dying person.

Emperor Maximilian I offers another ideal of a good ruler. Moritz von Schwind describes the emperor's rescue from danger up in the mountains during a hunting trip. Maximilian's prayers in front of a host raised down in the distance is an example of the *Pietas Austriaca*, of Austrian piety, which was a cornerstone of the Habsburgs' self-conception.

Carl Blechen. Architecture and Nature

Following his training which he had started at the Berlin Academy of Arts in 1822, Carl Blechen first got a job as a decorative painter at the *Königsstädtisches Theater* in Berlin. Dating from that time, his watercolor *View of a Gothic Castle Courtyard* lets the gaze roam, like across a stage, from under a high reticulated vault into a courtyard, which seems to extend through yet another passageway into an almost infinite depth. Blechen speaks of the sublimity and quietude of Gothic building, which, like with Schinkel, is not supposed to be a documentation of real architecture, but a Romantic vision of ideal Gothicism.

Deliberate recourse to the medieval period is characteristic even of Blechen's landscapes. His views of tree trunks and woods take up a theme which, informed by the tradition of the threatening, impenetrable forest, can be traced as far back as Albrecht Altdorfer. With their narrow perspectives, Blechen's forestscapes are indeed reminiscent of Altdorfer's fantasticality. The trees, all by themselves, with no sign of human civilization whatsoever, make the forest appear as a dark, eerie and demon-haunted place whose emotional charge is even heightened by Blechen's unconventional and unrestrained style of drawing.

Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Of German Architecture

The art of Gothic building came increasingly into the focus of attention in the wake of the publication of Goethe's pamphlet *Of German Architecture* (1773). The stupendous interiors of that era's cathedrals overwhelm the viewer with a hardly graspable feeling of dignity and infinity. Two watercolors by Norbert Bittner, who worked as a stage designer and architectural draftsman in Vienna after 1800, tell of this sublimity of the Gothic style in their depiction of motifs of Malbork Castle, located in what was then the Province of West Prussia. In the early nineteenth century, enlightened contemporaries did their best to see the Teutonic Order's old headquarters from the fourteenth century—which had deteriorated to a quarry—rebuilt. In the years to come, the Gothic period became the epitome of the German national style.

Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Director of the Prussian Office of Public Works, finally elevated the Gothic cathedral to a symbol of national architecture. Schinkel's visionary paintings showing Gothic cathedrals soaring high into the sky on high rocks in a religiously supernatural light are symbols of the unfulfilled hope for national unification and present themselves as monuments to national emancipation against the background of the Wars of Liberation.

Ferdinand Olivier. The Discovery of the Austrian Landscape

Ferdinand Olivier's visits to Salzburg in 1815 and 1817 mark the beginning of an era in which artists discovered the Salzkammergut area as their subject, but were also of crucial importance for the further development of landscape painting in the rest of Austria. Though Olivier's views of *Seven Places around Salzburg and Berchtesgaden* render real views, they are not aimed at giving their truthful picture. The austere, stylizing manner of the artist's draftsmanship and his statuesque and still staffage figures elevate the landscape picture to a higher level of Christian symbolism. Olivier does not present any sights; he disregards the Baroque monuments so important for the cultural landscape of Salzburg. He focuses on the representation of Gothic churches like St. Mary's Chapel on St. Peter's Cemetery instead; the artist's choice of subjects already reveals his national-medieval attitude.

Each of Olivier's pictures of nature is also a symbol of inner contemplation and seclusion. Even a waterfall motif can become a place of higher spiritual reflection for him. It is not by accident that the silvery gleam of his soft pencil awakens memories of the faraway precious materiality of late medieval silverpoint drawings, which makes the sheet an object for devout contemplation. Olivier would eventually transfer these transcendental thoughts into his views from Vienna's environs.

Philipp Otto Runge

In the beginning was failure. When Philipp Otto Runge submitted a drawing on a subject of Greek mythology to Goethe's *Weimarer Preisaufgaben*, the third competition of its kind organized by the author, in 1801, his contribution was rejected, which Runge responded to with the famous statement: "We are no longer Greeks, we can no longer quite feel that wholeness when we see their perfect works of art, even less produce such works." Runge's break with classical antiquity marks the end of his history paintings and the beginning of his work as a Romanticist: "everything aspires to the landscape; something determined is being sought in this indeterminacy." Runge replaced the great historical events with landscapes which he understood as metaphors of the divine in the world.

From 1802, Runge worked on the cycle *The Four Times of Day*. The copperplate engravings published between 1805 and 1807 were meant to be an intermediary step preparing the realization of the subject in large-format, wall-spanning paintings in a chapel-like building. Runge's main work as a painter remained a fragment, though, which is why his art reveals itself in its purest form in his graphic work in which he abandons all late Baroque elements of style. His characteristic means of expression is the abstracting outline.

Caspar David Friedrich. The Silence of the Pictures

When Caspar David Friedrich presented his first visionary works to the public, they sparked off a passionate dispute: they were not aimed at presenting beautiful landscape views but at irritating or even unsettling the viewer.

Friedrich's landscapes are imaginary constructions of nature which do not include the viewer but keep him at a distance. His pictures capture moods, they do not tell a story. Their persons are united in an oppressive and disconcerting silence. Gorges, amorphous fog, hazy moonlight, cemeteries, open graves, deserted paths, stranded ships, and lonely woods provide symbolic figures of death, of an all-comprehensive stillness. Yet Friedrich's landscapes also relate to something divine. His landscapes present motifs of devotion.

The viewer will hardly be able to evade the deeply moving impact of his paintings. The immeasurableness of man's loneliness in the face of the endless sea or impenetrable fog exceeds the limits of one's imagination. The individual is lost in nothingness.

Pictures in Bright Blood

In the summer of 1798 Caspar David Friedrich made his home in Dresden, a center of the arts. Adrian Zingg was one of those who exercised a decisive influence on Friedrich's development as an artist at the city's Academy. Zingg and other teachers at the Art Academy awakened Friedrich's interest in the study of nature and made him familiar with sepia painting. Working with the reddish-brown sepia ink allowed the painter to achieve subtle nuances and delicate transitions. The technique was particularly suited to render phenomena of light in nature in a very effective way.

Friedrich achieved great mastery in his sepia works quite early on. From 1800, the artist made a living with large-format sheets. Most of the buyers were residents of Dresden and Pomerania. In 1805 Friedrich presented two sepia works at the exhibition of the *Weimarer Kunstfreunde*, which earned him an award, the public's applause, and even Goethe's respect.

With his largest and most important drawing showing a view of Cape Arkona on the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea, Friedrich gave proof of his special talent for sensitive descriptions of nature and of his brilliant use of the sepia technique. As a symbol of utter forlornness, which is nevertheless full of the deepest human feeling, the drawing became an icon of early Romanticism before long and was acquired by the founder of the Albertina, Prince Albert Casimir, Duke of Saxe-Teschen.

Bridges and Gorges

Views into narrow, often gloomy enchanted mountain gorges boding both menace and hope rank among the Romantics' most impressive motifs. Blechen's interpretation of the building of the Devil's Bridge removes the everyday scene from reality. The world of things has turned enigmatic and mysterious in both his and Caspar David Friedrich's works. Their pictorial worlds are metaphysically charged: through a light ensuring sharp contours in the case of Blechen, through clifftops rising from the impenetrable fog that dematerializes everything in Friedrich's case.

In contrast to Peter Birmann, who reveals himself as being a late representative of the sublime in his representation of the loudly roaring magnificent spectacle of nature in the Schöllenen Gorge, silence prevails in Blechen's painting. Mostly asleep, his laborers are all isolated from each other. Suggestive motifs such as the gallows trigger thoughts of death and disaster. Gorges change into metaphors of the uncanny.

Night of the Moon

Everybody knows the moon; some are even struck by her. The moon is the epitome of the Romantic motif. Poets, painters, and musicians have always been inspired by the moon and her nights.

Isn't night a time of danger? It loses its horror in the Romantic artists' paintings. A veritable "moon boom" holds sway between 1750 and 1850. The Romantics escape into a nature that cannot be found in the cities any longer. They lift their gaze to the night sky. The moon unfolds her power as a projection screen for reveries as it last did in Ancient Greek poetry. Not only Caspar David Friedrich returned to painting moonlit landscapes again and again. The Romantics develop a new symbolic language in which the rising moon stands for Christ rising from the dead. Yet not all of them adopt this symbolism, many admire nature itself in the moon—as an object of desire beyond their reach.

"The mists, like phantoms seeming, from meadows magically rise"

The mists rising from the meadows in Matthias Claudius' *Evening Song* segue from day into the quiet, yet likewise threatening night that transforms the visible world into a mysterious realm of dreams. Mist dims all light, muffles all sounds, reduces the sense of direction and may cause its complete loss. The familiar becomes invisible like in Moritz von Schwind's *Erlkönig* in which the son's hallucinations thicken to a deadly figure in the face of the mysterious mist.

In Caspar David Friedrich's works, the natural phenomenon of mist provides a metaphor blurring the boundaries between landscape and sky, between space and time. What separates the two pictures is the difference between Friedrich's Protestant mysticism of nature and Schwind's fairytale-like allegorical personification.

The Aesthetic of Silence

Henry Fuseli's figure of silence, doubled over and caught up in dream and delusion, is wrapped in an impenetrable gloom, into which the path in Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Early Snow* leads. Friedrich translates the oppressive silence of Fuseli's allegorical figure, which augurs only little hope, into a symbol of nature, lonely and still. In his pictorial language, the path running into the sinisterly closed, impervious thicket stands for the path through life that evokes the darkness of death and holds hope of deliverance. The path is cold; frosty the silence dominating both paintings.

“To be all German.” Peter Cornelius’ *Faust* Illustrations

Already in 1810, only two years after the publication of the first part of Goethe’s *Faust*, Peter Cornelius started working on illustrations of this tragedy. He wanted the first work with which he appeared before the public “to be all German” and therefore chose *Faust* as a work of literature of purely “German origin.” Stylistically, the delicate and richly detailed drawings are reminiscent of etchings from the time of Dürer. Cornelius’ *Faust* illustrations definitely rank among the high points of Nazarene illustration art.

In the title page, the artist created a type of illustration that came to be widely used throughout the nineteenth century. Figural scenes and ornaments are loosely interlaced in an arabesque, providing the frame for the central part which takes up the printed text. The sculpturally elaborated scenes in Cornelius’ drawings are distinguished by unusually austere characterization and a forceful demonic and dramatic strength that even late interpreters like Franz Krammer found hard to resist.

“Neo-German-Religious-Patriotic Art”

Romanticist pictorial practice in the years prior to the downfall of Napoleon in 1815 placed the emphasis on patriotic and religious themes. Falling back on medieval pictorial traditions was the answer to the French threat and the Wars of Liberation. Goethe repudiated this “neo-German-religious-patriotic art” of the Romantic era as a “false pretense of piety.” His own model of an art practice based on universal laws made classical antiquity the sole model.

By contrast, the Nazarenes brought back the religious devotional painting which had its roots in the *devotio*, the ardent religiousness, of the Middle Ages. Friedrich Wilhelm Schlegel’s contention that painters ought to “go on inventing” in the spirit of Raphael, Leonardo, or Perugino was taken up by the Nazarenes and their successors with their emphatic turn toward Christian art and the “reinvention” of old techniques and pictorial types. Quite in the spirit of the early Renaissance, they took to making altar and devotional paintings again. In so doing, they preferred local colors, applied as flatly as possible, and neglected the laws of perspective. A painting was, in Schlegel’s words, supposed to be “plain and naïve” and to be characterized by “austere shapes in sharp contours.”

Joseph Führich: Stations of the Cross in Vienna

The monumental frescoes of the Stations of the Cross in Vienna's Church of St. John of Nepomuk, created between 1844 and 1846 by the most important painter of Austrian Late Romanticism, Joseph Führich, count without doubt among the main works of religious monumental painting in Vienna. The entire cycle is still on view today in the side naves of the church built by Karl Rösner in Vienna's second district, which, in the interplay of architecture and interior design, represents an early *gesamtkunstwerk* of Romantic Historicism.

The large-size cartoons are preparatory works on a 1:1 scale. Being valid artworks in their own right, they claim to already embody the artistic idea in full. Even the first generation of Nazarenes considered cartoons to be "final" works of art, which, being easily transportable, were presented in exhibitions so as to showcase the monumental art of the movement outside its permanent locations. These works were mainly disseminated through prints, which in turn were increasingly superseded by reproduction photographs in the second half of the century. Mass-reproduced and omnipresent, the Romanticist-Nazarene ideals of art survived throughout several generations and have continued to inform our view of nineteenth-century religious art up until the present day.

Selected Quotes and Poems

Waking from a bad dream you can see what makings of a hell the mind holds in store.
Jean Paul

We dream more often of what we fear; more seldom, of what we hope for.
Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow

I call the classic healthy, the romantic sickly. Most modern productions are romantic, not because they are new, but because they are weak, morbid, and sickly; and the antique is classic, not because it is old, but because it is strong, fresh, joyous, and healthy. If we distinguish "classic" and "romantic" by these qualities, it will be easy to see our way clearly.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1829

Art must not deviate from its original purpose to glorify religion and reveal its mysteries even more beautifully and clearly than can be done in words.
Friedrich Schlegel, 1803

I've now had so enough of the story of the Good Lord Jesus that I would not want to hear it from anyone except himself.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Religion is what keeps the poor from murdering the rich.
Napoleon I. Bonaparte

Those were beautiful, magnificent times, when Europe was a Christian land, when one common interest joined the most distant provinces of this vast spiritual empire.
Novalis

*Night shrouds the shore.
Arkona is gone.
The sunset's glow has died away
The ocean rumbling on.
And fiery red comes rolling forth
The full moon from the somber floods.*
Ludwig Gotthard Kosegarten, 1800

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A picture must not be thought out, but felt.
Caspar David Friedrich

A painter shall paint not only what he sees before himself, but also what he sees inside himself. And if he sees nothing inside himself he better refrain from painting what he sees before himself.
Caspar David Friedrich

*You call me a misanthropist because I shun company.
You are wrong
I love people.
But not to hate the human race
I need to give myself some space.*
Caspar David Friedrich

Does a work of art not originate only the very moment I hear a resonance with the universe? Can I not capture the fleeting moon as well as I can a fleeting figure? Do they both not evoke a thought in me? And will that picture not be as much of an artwork as this one?
Phillip Otto Runge, 1802

Architecture is in Man's work what landscape is in God's work.
Karl Friedrich Schinkel

Architecture is the continuation of nature in its constructive capacity.
Karl Friedrich Schinkel

Night of the Moon
Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff, 1837

*It was like heaven's glimmer
caressing the earth's skin,
that in her blossoms' shimmer
she had to dream of him.*

*The breeze was gently walking
through wheat fields near and far;
the woods were softly talking
so bright shone every star.*

*And, oh, my soul extended
its wings through skies to roam:
o'er quiet lands suspended,
my soul was flying home.*

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Winter Night

Joseph von Eichendorff

*The world lies covered all in snow
To give me joy, there's nothing left
The tree stands lonely in the field,
Of all its leaves long bereft.*

Wanderer's Nightsong

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1780

*Over all hilltops
There's peace,
In all the treetops
You sense
Barely a breath;
The birds are asleep in the trees.
Wait, soon like these
You too shall rest.*