

# National Identity

## in the Arts



## 1. History from a Helicopter

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# History from a Helicopter

THE TERM **NATIONAL IDENTITY** BEGS MANY QUESTIONS. What is a nation at any given place and time? What is identity, as applied to the arts: style, subject-matter, or something else? There is one area, however, in which these questions are both relevant and meaningful: the **Romantic Nationalism** of the later 19th century. We shall start there, and then jump forward on our helicopter tour to consider the arts of the United States, and how they alter the picture on *both* sides of the Atlantic.

In earlier centuries, the arts dance more unpredictably between regional traditions, the visions of some extraordinary genius, and the unifying forces of church, commerce, and court. We shall try to get an overview of the possibilities by calling at the **Museo del Prado** in Madrid, which is both one of the great repositories of renaissance and baroque art from all of Europe *and* the world's finest collection of specifically Spanish art of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. This contrast is the theme of the course. *rb.*

## A. Europe Astir

The nationalist sentiment of the 19th century—sometimes referred to as *Romantic Nationalism*—led to two almost opposite results: the amalgamation of smaller principalities into the large nations of Germany and Italy, and the efforts of linguistic groups in the East and North of Europe to assert their cultural identity.

**Tidemand & Gude:** *Bridal Procession on the Hardangerfjord* (1848)

♫ **Smetana:** *The Bartered Bride* (1981 film), opening chorus

## B. Atlantic Crossings

Twentieth-century American artists inspired by new experiments in Europe, and European artists responding to American innovations; the trans-Atlantic traffic flowed in both directions.

**Stella:** *Battle of Lights, Coney Island* (1913–14, Yale)  
**Boccioni:** *The Noise of the Street Enters the House* (1911, Hanover)  
**Davis:** *Bleecker Street and Ebb Tide, Provincetown* (both 1913)  
**Davis:** *Report from Rockport* (1940, NY Met)

## C. The Hudson, looking West

We look back of the equivalent of Romantic Nationalism in nineteenth-century America: the Hudson River School, Westward expansion, and the search for an authentic American mythology and voice.

**Cole:** *The Course of Empire* (1836, NY Historical Society)  
**Cole:** *The Oxbow* (1836, NY Met)  
**Bierstadt:** *Emigrants Crossing the Plains* (1869, Youngtown)  
**Bierstadt:** *Indians Spear Fishing* (1862, Houston MFA)  
♫ **Dvorak:** *Symphony #9 (From the New World)*, excerpts

## D. Prado Perspectives

Confining ourselves to works in the Prado Museum, we explore some of the differences between Italian art of the 15th and 16th centuries and that produced in the Low Countries during the same period.

**Robert Campin** (attributed): *Annunciation* (c.1425, Madrid Prado)  
**Fra Angelico:** *Annunciation* (c.1425, Madrid Prado)  
**Rogier van der Weyden:** *Deposition from the Cross* (c.1435, Prado)  
**Joos van Cleve,** after Rogier: *Deposition* (1518, Philadelphia)  
**Antonello da Messina:** *The Dead Christ* (1475, Madrid Prado)  
**Titian:** *The Entombment of Christ* (1559, Madrid Prado)  
♫ **Victoria:** *Regina Caeli Laetari* (1576), Voces 8

## E. Questions of Provenance

Finally, we look at twelve works in the Prado spanning five centuries, half from other countries and half by Spanish artists, to sample the many different routes by which they entered the Royal Collection.

**Jan Brueghel I et al:** *Allegory of Sight and Smell* (c.1620, Prado)

**Bosch:** *Garden of Earthly Delights* (c.1495)  
**Dürer:** *Adam and Eve* (1507)  
**Titian:** *Equestrian Portrait of Charles V* (1548)  
**El Greco:** *Holy Trinity* (1577)  
**Rubens:** *Adoration of the Magi* (1609/1629)  
**Ribera:** *Saint Peter* (1630)  
**Velázquez:** *The Surrender of Breda* (1635)  
**Velázquez:** *Las meninas* (1657)  
**Murillo:** *Immaculate Conception* (1678)  
**Goya:** *Maja desnuda* and *Maja vestida* (c.1800)  
**Goya:** *The Third of May, 1808* (1814)  
♫ **Granados:** *La Maja de Goya*  
Marina Tomei (Guitar) & Guadalupe Paz (mezzosoprano)

Fra **Angelico** (1395–1455, Italian painter), **Antonello** da Messina (1430–79, Italian painter), Albert **Bierstadt** (1830–1902, American painter), Umberto **Boccioni** (1882–1916, Italian painter), Heironymus **Bosch** (1450–1516, Netherlandish painter), Jan **Brueghel** the Elder (1568–1625, Flemish painter), Harry T. **Burleigh** (1866–1949, American composer), Robert **Campin** (1375–1444, Netherlandish painter), Joos van **Cleve** (1485–1540, Netherlandish painter), Thomas **Cole** (1801–48, American painter), James Fenimore **Cooper** (1789–1951, American author), Stuart **Davis** (1892–1964, American painter), Albrecht **Dürer** (1471–1528, German painter), Antonin **Dvorak** (1841–1904, Czech composer), Francisco **Goya** (1746–1828, Spanish painter), Enrique **Granados** (1867–1916, Spanish composer), **El Greco** (Domenikos Theotokopoulos, 1541–1614, Greek painter), Brothers **Grimm** (Jacob 1785–1863, Wilhelm 1786–1859, German authors), Hans **Gude** (1825–1903, Norwegian painter), Henry Wadsworth **Longfellow** (1807–82, American poet), Fernand **Léger** (1881–1955, French painter), Alessandro **Manzoni** (1785–1873, Italian author), Darius **Milhaud** (1892–1974, French composer), Bartolomé Esteban **Murillo** (1617–82, Spanish painter), Jusepe **Ribera** (1591–1652, Spanish painter), Peter Paul **Rubens** (1577–1640, Flemish painter), Bedrich **Smetana** (1824–84, Czech composer), Joseph **Stella** (1877–1946, American painter), Adolph **Tidemand** (1814–76, Norwegian painter), **Titian** (Tiziano Vecellio, c.1485–1576, Venetian painter), Diego **Velázquez** (1599–1660, Spanish painter), Tomás Luis de **Victoria** (c.1548–1611, Spanish composer), Rogier van der **Weyden** (1399–1464, Netherlandish painter)

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