


<p><b>Angelica Kauffmann.</b>  <b><i>Portrait of Johann Joachim Winckelmann,</i></b>  1764, oil on canvas,  97 x 71 cm (38 x 28')</p>	Initial analysis	Kauffman painted the portrait when in Rome, where Winckelmann had been working on his major study of Greek and Roman art.
<p>Male figure dressed in a green gown with yellow trimmings over a delicate white shirt of which the cuffs and collar are visible. He holds a quill pen over an open book which rests on a block of wood on a red cloth on the corner of a table. On the wooden block is just discernible the faint image of the 'Three Graces'. His left hand is closed and rests on the open book. There is a ring with a red gem stone on the little finger of his right hand. The background is a contrasting brown wall with various darker areas to the left and right.</p> <p>The figure is strongly lit from the left onto his right side, putting the left side of his face in shadow.</p> <p>The face has strong features and shows a receding hairline. His brown eyes look out towards the right as if in thought.</p>	 <p>The painting is in the Kunsthhaus, Zürich.</p>	<p>The composition has diagonal design from the left to the right accentuated by the quill pen, the top edge of the book and the wooden block.</p> <p>The sitter's shoulders are nearly parallel with the picture plane and contrast the head which is turned towards the right.</p> <p>This feature coupled to the diagonal design gives life to the portrait.</p> <p>The look has the attentive seriousness we can anticipate in the sitter, the German art historian, archaeologist and author of <i>A History of Ancient Art</i>, 1756-61. The artist does not convey the identity of the distinguished sitter, there are no obvious attributes in the painting. The image on the wooden block relates directly to Winckelmann's ideas of beauty. (See below.)</p>

Winckelmann was one of the founders of scientific archaeology and first applied the categories of style on a large, systematic basis to the history of art. He is the decisive influence on the rise of the neoclassical movement with its ideal of 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur'. Early in his life he followed the lectures of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who coined the term 'aesthetics'. In 1755, he published his *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* and in 1763 the 'Essay on the Beautiful in Art'. Henry Fuseli's translated *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* in 1765 (reprinted with corrections in 1767). Winckelmann arrived in Rome in November 1755. His first task there was to describe the statues in the Cortile del Belvedere—the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoön, the so-called Antinous, and the Belvedere Torso—which represented to him the 'utmost perfection of ancient sculpture'. He remained in Rome until 1768. In that year, then aged 50, he journeyed north to Munich and Vienna, where he was received with honour by Maria Theresa. On his way back, he was murdered in Trieste for medals that Maria Theresa had given him.

The basis of Winckelmann's artistic theories is that the goal of art is beauty, and that this goal can be attained only when individual and characteristic features are strictly subordinated to an artist's general scheme. The true artist, selecting from nature the phenomena suited to artistic purpose and combining them through the exercise of imagination, creates an ideal type in which normal proportions are maintained, and particular parts, such as muscles and veins, are not permitted to break the harmony of the general outlines.