THE PANTHEON

Chapter 6 Etruscan and Roman Art
AP Art History
Works in Context?

- What does “context” refer to when discussing art?
  - For whom or for what was the work created?
  - Why was a work created?
  - What religious beliefs or economic realities are portrayed?
  - Why was this particular subject chosen?

- Why is it important to discuss works of art in context?
  - Political and social context fluctuate from piece to piece.
  - Every discussion of art should consider **HOW** the work functions within the culture.
  - Every discussion of art should consider **HOW** the artwork reflects the culture surrounding the work!

- As an APAH student, you should ALWAYS consider a work and its functions within its contextual framework…it is never just a
  - Painting, Sculpture, or Architectural monument
The Pantheon

- Knowing CONTEXT is part of the process of art historical analysis!
  - You learn how works of art are linked to history
- What do we KNOW about the Pantheon?
  - Influenced by 2\textsuperscript{nd} Century Roman Imperial ________________
    - Political power
    - Religious beliefs
    - Social forces
    - Technical knowledge
    - Cultural taste
  - The Pantheon is THE architectural example that represents Roman Imperial ambition…
- What \textit{don't} we know about the Pantheon?
  - Who designed the work?
  - Why did Hadrian leave the bronze lettering placed on the portico acknowledging Agrippa as the builder of an earlier temple?
  - What sculptural works filled the 7 niches?
  - What was the \textbf{ACTUAL} function?
Original Design
Connection to the past...

- The Pantheon is the culmination of earlier Roman building traditions!
- Centralized plans
  - Temple of Vesta
  - Nero’s Golden House
  - The Great Baths
- The Pantheon represents the height of Roman building technology
  - Illustrates Roman concrete building methods
  - Vast, uninterrupted interior space was unprecedented in previous Roman construction
Contextual changes to the Pantheon

- For a civilization that kept such extensive historical records, how did the absence of information about the Pantheon develop?

- Did this building experience change over time?

- YES! Architecture is the single most changing art… what emerges in one context, changes within the ever-shifting later contexts…
  - We know that the Pantheon did transition at one point from a pagan temple to a Christian church
    - In AD (CE) 609 this building was renamed Santa Maria della Rotonda
    - The survival of the Pantheon literally depended on this transformation
    - The sculptural elements of the building were replaced with the new faith
    - Could you compare the Pantheon, in this context, to the Parthenon or Hagia Sophia? YES!
  - In 2,000 years, buildings can be completely demolished, renovated, or historically maintained.
Physical changes to the Pantheon

- Brick facing of the rotunda has lost its marble revetments
- The outer metal sheathing of the dome is gone
- The coffer decorations were melted down
- It is no longer elevated
- The original classical buildings surrounding this structure have all been replaced
- What was meant to AWE us is sometimes overlooked today...even though it is a BIG structure.
In Transition...

Interior of the Pantheon (mid-1700s) by Giovanni Paolo Panini

Antoine Desgodetz elevation of the Pantheon
Architectural Influence

- The Pantheon influenced many great builders in history...
  - Michelangelo
  - Palladio
  - Serlio
  - Bernini
  - Lord Burlington
  - Thomas Jefferson

- This is only cultural interpretation...this does not help us understand the context of the Pantheon!
Terms to know…

- Porch (Portico): a colonnaded entrance
- Revetment: a facing or veneer of a wall
- Coffer: a decoration recession in a ceiling or vault
- Oculus: a round opening in a dome or window
- Groin Vault: a vault created by the intersection of two barrel vaults
- Rotunda: a round building
- Buttress: to counteract the outer thrust of a dome or vault
- Aedicule: a richly framed niche
- Fenestration: types or arrangements of windows
- Orientation: how a building is sited in terms of direction
Questions to answer...

- For every discussion on buildings, you should answer the following questions...
  - What is the *function*?
  - What type of *plan* is this?
  - What is the *structure* or engineering system?
  - What is the *aesthetic* (ornamentation, style, vocabulary)?
  - How is the building *sited*?
  - How did one *enter* the building?
  - Describe the *interior* space (levels, lighting, aesthetics).
  - How does one *move* through the building?