

Topic Page: [Mengs, Anton \(1728 - 1779\)](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mengs_anton_1728_1779)

Summary Article: **Mengs, Anton Raffael**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

German painter, who worked in Germany, Spain and Italy. A friend of the art historian Winckelmann, he was a leading figure in neoclassicism, painting both portraits and frescoes on mythological themes, such as his *Parnassus* 1761 (Villa Albani, Rome).

He was taken to Rome at an early age and, quickly establishing a reputation with pastel portraits, rivalled Batoni as a portraitist. He was appointed court painter in Dresden 1745. Between 1761 and 1777 he spent many years working for Charles III in Spain, painting portraits and decorating royal palaces, and worked in the Vatican 1772–73, his neoclassicism gradually eclipsing the exuberant rococo of Tiepolo.

Born in Aussig in Bohemia, Mengs was the son of Ismael Mengs (died 1764), court painter at Dresden. His friendship with Winckelmann and the ideas he expressed in writing give him an importance in the development of neoclassicism, though his *Parnassus* (Villa Albani) has been generally considered a poor piece of eclecticism, and his style was severely criticized by Goethe. His own views on art were expressed in *Considerations on Beauty and Taste in Painting* 1762.

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