

Style Snapshot

A look at a frame, its characteristics, and history

Editor's Note: This month's frame appeared in "An Evolution of Frame Design," essay, which appeared in the July 2000 issue of PFM.

What time period is it from? This is a Spanish frame from the late 16th century, or early 17th century.

What style frame is this?

This is a Herrera frame of Spanish origin. The austere outlook of Philippe II of Spain was perfectly captured by the architectural work of Juan de Herrera, who developed a style of severe classicism. The frames that bear his name had little to do with him directly, and, in fact, do not show the pure classicism of his work.

Instead, his [decorative] style was adopted by frame and furniture makers who applied classical ornaments and shapes of heavy proportions, so that the frames still feature the bold carving and gilding found on Spanish frames of all periods and styles.

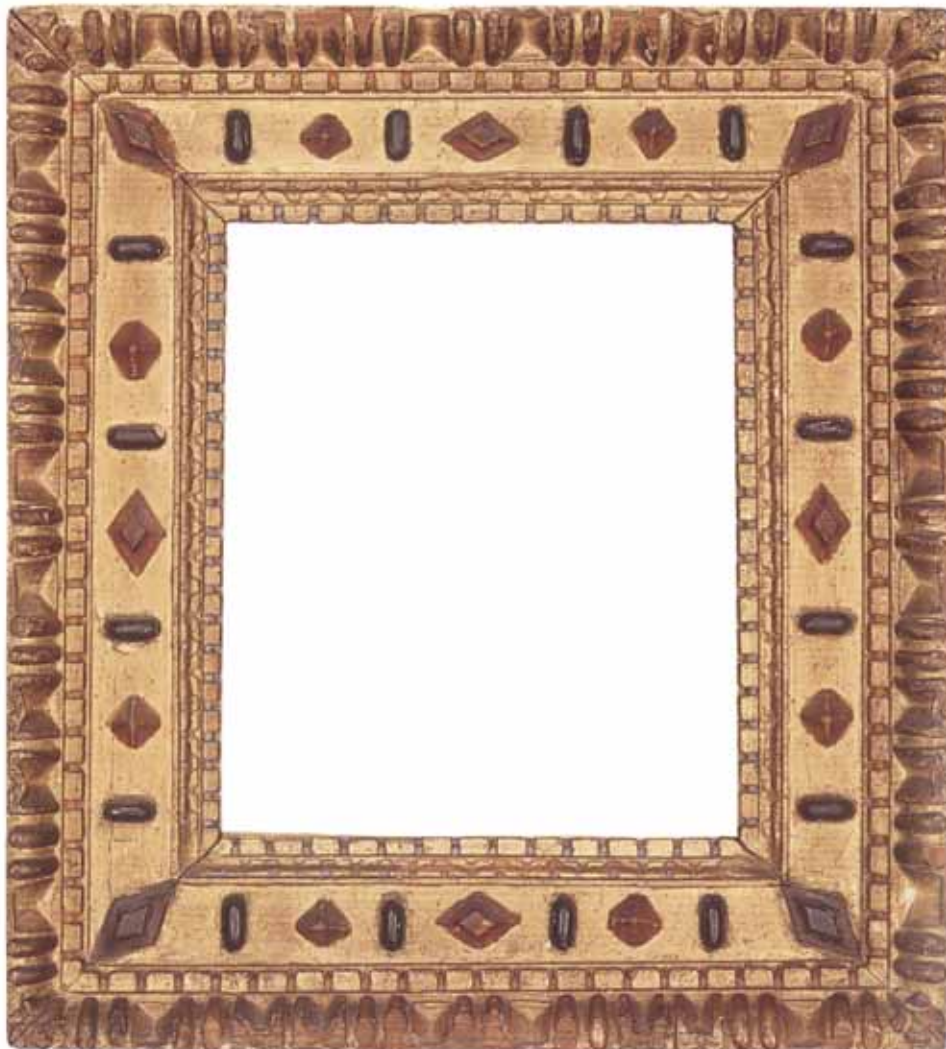


Image from "Frameworks," by Paul Mitchell and Lynne Roberts)

What are the defining/common characteristics of this style?

In most Herrera frames, classical ornament (with occasional Islamic influence) flows on either side of a flat, which may hold raised and painted geometrical shapes, or even cabochon gemstones. Later Herrera frames show an emphasis on corner ornamentation, often considered a transition toward the Baroque. ■

For more about the evolution of frame design, download the full-length essay and timeline at the PFM website—www.pictureframingmagazine.com