



DATE
OBOLUM
BELISARIO.

Introduction

Dorit Kluge, Gaëtane Maës, Isabelle Pichet

Translated from French by Nicole Charley

Le jugement, la réflexion, les désirs, les passions, &c. ne sont que la sensation même qui se transforme différemment. C'est pourquoi il nous a paru inutile de supposer que l'âme tient immédiatement de la nature toutes les facultés dont elle est douée. La nature nous donne des organes, pour nous avertir par le plaisir de ce que nous avons à rechercher, & par la douleur de ce que nous devons fuir. Mais elle s'arrête là; & elle laisse à l'expérience le soin de nous faire contracter des habitudes, & d'achever l'ouvrage qu'elle a commencé.¹

The above passage from Condillac's *Treatise on Sensations* is a quintessential expression of the growing eighteenth-century preoccupation with sensory experiences. In fact, Condillac was building on the *Réflexions* of a predecessor, the Abbé Du Bos, who, in 1719, proposed that the viewer's sensory experience should be primordial to the scholarly discourse of artists and connoisseurs.² In 2018, this notion – that the viewer was as keen and apt a judge of art as a specialist – became the inspiration for a research project entitled, *Le corps sensoriel dans les expositions d'art au XVIII^e siècle*,³ led by Isabelle Pichet, Dorit Kluge, and Gaëtane Maës, the editors of the present volume. The project focuses on the ways in which temporary art exhibitions fashioned and engaged visitors' senses and perceptions in the long eighteenth century (1665–1815). In 2021, it led to a symposium on the topic, *The Sensory Experience in 18th Century Art Exhibitions*,⁴ divided into two sessions held at the Louvre-Lens Museum and the Louvre Museum, respectively. Our initial focus was the sensory experience of viewers and critics in Enlightenment-era art

1 Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Traité des sensations*, 2 vol., vol. 1, London, 1754, pp. 7–8.

2 Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture*, 3 vol., Paris, 1719. See also Daniel Dauvois (ed.), *Vers l'esthétique: penser avec les "Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture" (1719) de Jean-Baptiste Du Bos*, Paris, 2015.

3 This project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Development Grant (2018–2024) and Connections Grant (2021–2023).

4 We would like to thank the Université de Lille Direction générale déléguée au numérique for recording the symposium sessions. Access the sessions at URL: webtv.univ-lille.fr/grp/553/experience-sensorielle-dans-les-expositions-art-au-XVIIIe-siecle/ (accessed 27.01.2024)

exhibitions. The symposium provided an opportunity to extend the scope of our project to include the sensory experience expressed by individual works of art and sketch the beginnings of a sensory history of art shows.

The fledgling art of the exhibition that emerged in the 1730s enriched contemporary cultural practices, and the new sphere of public experiences of sociability in Europe. The act of visiting art collections gave attendees an often singular and unprecedented experience, inviting them to contend with a set of stimuli that could put them in a highly reactive state.⁵ This straightforward experience has oriented our study on senses and sensations, in which lies the constitution of the concept of the sensory body.

The body is inevitably affected by environment, reacting to external factors with which it enters into relation, provoking feelings, sensations, and emotions that become a part of both the visitor's body and mind. Grasping and defining taste, smell, touch, hearing, and sight throughout history may seem a daunting task,⁶ but certain viewer accounts and documents about the practices of cultural activities provide sufficient brush and paint to form a portrait of the sensory body.⁷ The eighteenth-century sensory, or aesthetic, experience of art, and the multitude of emotions, judgements, and (un)pleasures⁸ formed during encounters with art, come to us mainly through critical texts or via the artist's brush. Writings draw back the curtain on the empirical characteristics of what Gernot Böhme refers to as *aisthesis*, the aesthetics of atmospheres, which emerge through contact with artworks, exhibitions, and other visitors.⁹ By calling upon passions as they are experienced, the senses influence our perceptions, whilst the intensity of the emotional experience, much like the author's sensitivity, accentuates the push and pull between sensory pleasure and aesthetic appreciation. These tensions create an imprint on the minds and bodies of viewers and critics, which are then distilled into words that, in turn, recreate the sensory body.

-
- 5 Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire du corps*, 3 vol., Paris, 2005–2006; Georges Vigarello, *Le sentiment de soi. Histoire de la perception du corps*, Paris, 2014; Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine, and Georges Vigarello (eds.), *Histoire des émotions*, 3 vol., Paris, 2016–2017.
 - 6 Michel Serres, *Les cinq sens. Philosophie des corps mêlés*, vol. 1, Paris, 1985; Constance Classen, "Foundation for an Anthropology of the Senses", in *International Social Science Journal* 153, September 1997, pp. 401–412; David Howes (ed.), "Les 'cinq sens'", special issue, *Anthropologie et sociétés* 14/2, 1990; Constance Classen, "Senses", in Peter Stearns (ed.), *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350–2000*, vol. 4, New York, 2001, pp. 355–364; Constance Classen (ed.), *A Cultural History of Senses*, 6 vol., London, 2014; David Howes (ed.), *Senses and Sensation: Critical and Primary Sources*, 4 vol., London and New York, 2018.
 - 7 See Helen Rees Leahy's and Constance Classen's seminal studies on the relationship between art exhibitions and the body. Helen Rees Leahy, *Museum Bodies. The Politics and Practices of Visiting and Viewing*, Ashgate, 2012; Constance Classen, *The Museum of the Senses: Experiencing Art and Collections*, London and New York, 2017. For more on the relationship between exhibitions and emotions, see the special issue, "L'émotion dans les expositions", in *Cultures & Musées* 36, 2020, URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/culturemusees/5352> (accessed 27.01.2024)
 - 8 Sigmund Freud, *Au-delà du principe de plaisir* (1920), Paris, 2010.
 - 9 Gernot Böhme, *Aïsthétique. Pour une esthétique de l'expérience du sensible* (2001), Dijon, 2020.

In *Lettres philosophiques*, Voltaire develops the idea that “Je suis corps et je pense”,¹⁰ highlighting that the notion of the sensory body was partially taking shape in some eighteenth-century writing.¹¹ For Voltaire, the structure of the relationship between the somatic and the centre of reason is such that when subject to external *stimuli*, the body causes the mind to produce a corresponding mental construction of these perceptions. The notion of the sensory body as we perceive it, differs from Voltaire’s in that the thought process is given more weight, meaning emotions themselves can also arise from our thoughts, imaginations, and memories, and produce an involuntary bodily reaction. It seems therefore to be more accurate to speak of complementarity between the two, rather than a duality. One might even consider them an indivisible whole, with perceptions, emotions, and somatic reactions coexisting with our thoughts, both codependent and interconnected. Consequently, we reach “un équilibre de liaisons, un amalgame des différents états psychiques et physiologiques où s’inscrivent les notions de sensibilité, d’émotions et d’identité(s) [individuelles]”.¹²

Yet, to make sense of the random, unpredictable nature of the sensory body, we must look to René Descartes. Descartes wrote that the mind and the soul must be perceived as a whole; the various sensations we experience “ne sont autre chose que de certaines façons confuses de penser, qui proviennent et dépendent de l’union et comme du mélange de l’esprit avec le corps”.¹³ In this state where experiment and experience are embodied, the idea that one sense may be superior to any other in expressing sensations cannot be sustained.¹⁴ This interweaving of the body and reason reveals an interrelation-

10 We would like to thank Marc André Bernier for bringing the passage to our attention in the afterword of our publication: Isabelle Pichet and Dorit Kluge (eds.), *Le corps sensoriel au sein des loisirs et des divertissements*, Paris, 2023; Voltaire, “Sur Locke”, in *Lettres philosophiques ou Lettres anglaises avec le texte complet des remarques sur les Pensées de Pascal*, Raymond Naves (ed.), Paris, 1988, p. 66 (Letter XIII).

11 The description of the concept is largely taken from the introduction: Isabelle Pichet, *Le corps sensoriel: sensibilité, émotions et identité(s)*, Isabelle Pichet and URAV (eds.), postprints, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, 2019, Trois-Rivières, 2021, pp. 4–6.

12 Pichet, 2021 (note 11), p. 5.

13 René Descartes, *Méditations métaphysiques* (1641), in *Œuvres et lettres*, Paris, 1953, p. 326 (Sixth Meditation); François Azouvi, “Le rôle du corps chez Descartes”, in *Revue de Métaphysique et de morale* 1, January–March 1978, pp. 1–23.

14 In the 1990s, scholars began to question the principle, established in the Middle Ages, of a hierarchy of senses, favouring instead a more global, egalitarian sensory approach. Jan-Friedrich Missfelder, “Quand l’histoire passe par le corps. Sens, signification et sensorialité au service d’une anthropologie historique”, in *Trivium* 27, 2017, URL: <https://doi.org/10.4000/trivium.5617> (accessed 27.01.2024). See also Lucien Febvre, “La sensibilité et l’histoire”, in *Annales d’histoire sociale* 3/1–2, 1941, pp. 5–20; Robert Mandrou, “Pour une histoire des sensibilités”, in *Annales ECS* 14/3, 1959, pp. 581–588; Alain Corbin, “Anthropologie et histoire des sens”, in *Le Temps, le désir et l’horreur: essais sur le XIX^e siècle*, Paris, 1990, pp. 228–241; Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense. Exploring the Senses in History Across Cultures*, London, 1993.

ship and intersensoriality¹⁵ where the sensory body is constituted as a singular entity whose essence is revealed *through* its senses, its reasoning, and its corporeal substance. Descartes' vision therefore fits more accurately into our own understanding of the sensory body and is, at least in part, consistent with the idea that the eighteenth-century sensory experience of art exhibitions is one of the central pillars in aesthetic, philosophical, and historical studies.¹⁶

The Salon du Louvre was the point of departure for our inquiry,¹⁷ yet it became quickly apparent that the Salon was not the only sociable space where art collections were exposed to public gaze,¹⁸ contributing to defining the new perceptions that flourished during the Enlightenment. Over the course of the eighteenth century, as private collections became available to the public, and museums and temporary exhibitions multiplied, a new *habitus* formed: entirely new individual and collective social practices emerged.¹⁹ On several levels, this nascent cultural socialisation marked the beginnings of an unprecedented and recurring sensory experience, for example, in the development of art criticism, and in the regularisation of Salons de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture de Paris.

15 For more on the question of interrelationships, see Missfelder, 2017 (note 14), p. 6. For more on intersensoriality, see Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past, Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History*, Berkeley, 2007.

16 In many fields of research, including anthropology, the decline of poststructuralism led to reevaluating the notion of corporeality and, consequently, a new focus on human sensory perceptions. The work published from the 1980s onward by scholars such as Georges Vigarello, Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtines, David Howes, and Constance Classen have been welcome additions to humanities and social sciences scholarship. For the eighteenth century in particular, see the following studies: Martial Guédron, "Physiologie du bon goût: la hiérarchie des sens dans les discours sur l'art au XVIII^e siècle", in Ralph Dekoninck et al. (eds.), *Aux limites de l'imitation. L'Ut pictura poesis à l'épreuve de la matière (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles)*, Amsterdam, 2009, pp. 39-49; Clothilde Thouret and Lise Wajeman (eds.), *Corps et interprétation (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles)*, Amsterdam, 2012; Anne Lafont, "Les formes du XVIII^e siècle, ou la connaissance par la vue et le toucher", in *Publications du musée des Confluences* 10, 2013, pp. 17-25; Aurélia Gaillard, "Approches croisées des disciplines (art, science, littérature, philosophie): la question du toucher des Lumières", in *Dix-huitième siècle* 46/1, 2014, pp. 309-322; Anne C. Vila (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Enlightenment*, London, 2014; Nahema Hanafi, *Le frisson et le baume: expériences féminines du corps au Siècle des Lumières*, Rennes, 2017; Laetitia Simonetta, *La connaissance par le sentiment au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 2018.

17 See Isabelle Pichet, "Le plaisir des sens au Salon", in Laurent Turcot and Élisabeth Belmas (eds.), *Jeux, sports et loisirs en France à l'époque moderne (16^e-19^e siècles)*, Rennes, 2017, pp. 386-403; Anja-Isabelle Weisenseel, *Bildbetrachtung in Bewegung: Der Rezipient in Texten und Bildern zur Pariser Salonausstellung des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 2017.

18 See for example Peter De Bolla, *The Education of the Eye: Painting, Landscape, and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Stanford, 2003; Gerrit Walczak, "Unter freiem Himmel: Die Pariser Kunstausstellungen auf der Place Dauphine", in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 74/1, 2011, pp. 77-98; Sarah Salomon, *Die Kunst der Außenseiter: Adaptation, Konkurrenz, Opposition. Ausstellungen und Künstlerkarrieren im absolutistischen Paris jenseits der Akademie*, Göttingen, 2021.

19 Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, Frankfurt am Main, 1962; Pierre Bourdieu, "Sociologie de la perception esthétique", in *Les sciences humaines et l'œuvre d'art*, Bruxelles, 1969, pp. 161-176.

The Salons quickly became one of the most popular events in the French capital, attracting spectators from all walks of life, and exciting curiosity and envy in the provinces²⁰ and other nations, who were quick to create art salons of their own.²¹ The exhibitions came to embody the very height of Parisian social life and, by extension, the epitome of sensory pleasure for the European elite. Eighteenth-century Salons, and art exhibitions in general, were events that spurred on the dual desire to be entertained and educated, experiences wherein physical and psychological sensations were both engaged and aroused. The “sensory body” is therefore naturally a part of this perspective. Sight was not the only sense that enters into the visitor experience – hearing, touch, smell, and taste are also participants. Viewed through this angle, Alexander Baumgarten’s notion of an interweaving of body and soul, combined with sensible judgement, comes into full meaning.²²

In examining the sensory and bodily experiences in the specific context of the exhibition space, we become more cognisant of constituent parts – the artworks themselves, the viewers, the spatiality and layout of exhibitions, their location – and of their role in shaping those spaces. In this phase of the project, it meant studying the way in which artists expressed their own sensory perceptions and experiences, identifying which theoretical and practical criteria they used to interpret and project the emotional spectrum, and analysing how they represented the human figure and structured their compositions to communicate sensory perception. One thinks notably of the rules governing the representation of passions, such as “*ut pictura poesis*”, but especially of eighteenth-century

20 See for example: Robert Mesuret, *Les expositions de l'Académie royale de Toulouse de 1751 à 1791*, Toulouse, 1972; Pierre Sanchez, *Les Salons de Dijon, 1771-1950*, Dijon, 2002; Gaëtane Maës, *Les Salons de Lille de l'Ancien régime à la Restauration (1773-1820)*, Dijon, 2004; Serge Fernandez and Pierre Sanchez, *Salons et expositions à Bordeaux (1771-1950)*, 3 vol., Dijon, 2017; Michel Hilaire and Pierre Stépanoff (eds.), *Le musée avant le musée: la Société des beaux-arts de Montpellier, 1779-1787*, Gand, 2017. See also Gaëtane Maës' review, “Le Salon de Paris: un modèle pour la France et pour les Français au XVIII^e siècle”, in Isabelle Pichet (ed.), *Le Salon de l'Académie royale de peinture et sculpture: archéologie d'une institution*, Paris, 2014, pp. 33-56.

21 For exhibitions in England, see David H. Solkin, *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, New Haven, 2001; Mark Hallet, Sarah Victoria Turner, and Jessica Feather, *The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition*, London, 2018. For Ireland, see David Fleming, Ruth Kenny and William Laffan (eds.), *Exhibiting Art in Georgian Ireland: The Society of Artists Exhibitions Recreated*, Dublin, 2018. For exhibitions in the German-speaking regions, see Dorit Kluge, “Frankreich als Inspirationsquelle oder längst überholtes Modell? Die Berichterstattung zu den Dresdner Kunstausstellungen 1764-1806”, in Roland Kanz and Johannes Süßmann (eds.), *Aufklärung und Hofkultur in Dresden, in Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert 37/2*, Göttingen, 2013, pp. 262-270; Dorit Kluge, “Inspiration française et/ou création autonome? Le réseau des ‘Salons allemands’ dans la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle”, in Pichet, 2014 (note 20), pp. 57-78; Bénédicte Savoy (ed.), *Tempel der Kunst: Die Geburt des öffentlichen Museums in Deutschland 1701-1815*, Cologne, 2015.

22 Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *L'invention de l'esthétique: Méditations philosophiques sur quelques sujets se rapportant au poème* (1735), Nanterre, 2017, § 92. See Syliane Malinowski-Charles' article, “Goût et jugement des sens chez Baumgarten”, in *Esthétiques de l'Aufklärung 4*, 2006, pp. 59-72.

attempts to renew such prescriptions.²³ Our objective was not only to revisit the interplay between theatrical staging and pictorial composition,²⁴ but also explore all the components of *mimesis* common to the fine and performing arts, such as expression, gestures, costume, décor, and colour effects, that were used to enhance the sensory and emotional enjoyment of art.

A second objective was to understand the variables that factored into viewing an art collection or particular artworks – in essence, to analyse how the viewer’s senses “sensed” – perceived, digested, savoured, *experienced* – each encounter with art. Reflecting on the way in which the sensory experience guided viewers to a particular reaction, whether emotional, sensory or physical, made it possible to approach the impact art had on individual viewers. Throughout the eighteenth century, scholarly interest in perception and cognition resulted in a plethora of philosophical publications on the senses, physiology, and physiognomy.²⁵ The sensual experience and consequent interrelationships between the senses led us to propose a global portrait of the sensations and feelings provoked by artworks – particularly those representing feelings, emotions, or allusions to the senses.

The next theme we wished to explore was the public’s sensory experience when visiting an exhibition, whether of a collection, a museum, or a temporary exhibition. The focus here was on exhibition locales, spatial environments, and time spent visiting, along with the geographic spaces visitors moved through and encountered with their senses. Aspects such as lighting, spatial dimensions, exhibition scenography, how visitors move through the spaces and encountered each artwork, and the symbolic aspects of the space, all played a role in the visitor’s sensory experience, eliciting intense sensations and specific cognitive processes.²⁶ Consequently, in paying particular attention to

23 Notably, in connection with the writings of Roger de Piles and Gotthold Éphraïm Lessing, and their theories on the limits and autonomy of painting as spatial presentations.

24 Pierre Frantz, *L'esthétique du tableau dans le théâtre du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1998; *Le théâtre des passions (1697-1759). Cléopâtre, Médée, Iphigénie*, Adeline Collange-Perugi and Juliette Trey (eds.), exh. cat., Nantes, 2011; *Le Tableau et la Scène. Peinture et mise en scène du répertoire héroïque dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle. Autour des figures des Coypel*, Adeline Collange-Perugi and Jean-Noël Laurenti (eds.), postprints, Nantes, 2011, in *Annales de l'Association pour un Centre de Recherche sur les Arts du Spectacle aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* 5, 2014.

25 For example, in Du Bos and Bonnot de Condillac (notes 1 and 2), but also in the writings of Claude-Nicolas Le Cat, Johann Kaspar Lavater, and Petrus Camper. Several recent studies address this topic: Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment*, Chicago, 2002; Françoise Waquet, *Une histoire émotionnelle du savoir: XVII^e-XXI^e siècle*, Paris, 2019; *Éloge du sentiment et de la sensibilité: peintures françaises du XVIII^e siècle des collections de Bretagne*, Guillaume Kazerouni and Adeline Collange-Perugi (eds.), exh. cat. Nantes and Rennes, Ghent, 2019.

26 In addition to the texts previously mentioned, see Leahy, 2012 (note 7); Classen, 2017 (note 7); John Murdoch, “Architecture and Experience: The Visitor and the Spaces of Somerset House, 1780-1796”, in Solkin, 2001 (note 21), pp. 9-22; John Sunderland, “Staging the Spectacle”, in Solkin, 2001 (note 21), pp. 23-37; Alice Barnaby, “Lighting Practices in Art Galleries and Exhibition Spaces, 1750-1850”, in Sharon Macdonald and Helen Rees Leahy (eds.), *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*, vol. 3, New York, 2015, pp. 191-213.

the various affects and effects the experience catalyses for the senses, sensations, and emotions inhabiting the viewer during, and after, the visit, made it possible to identify other characteristics of the sensory body.

Finally, eighteenth-century art exhibitions in Europe contributed to shaping urban identity, and similarly, to defining “public” identity, that of the viewer, and of an entirely new player, the art critic. It was important to take a closer look at the public, identify the individuals or groups of individuals who visited exhibitions²⁷ in order to understand the various strategies engaged in the activity, and to decipher the emotional, sensory, and bodily responses experienced throughout the visit. A key factor in the experience was the presence of other visitors – the often-disparate crowd bustling in a perpetual close-quartered melee – as much as viewing the exhibition itself. Within this public, art writers began to chronicle, distil, and theorise the experience; in addition to being a precious source of information, the art critic has become a focus of research in and of itself.²⁸

Each of the themes from our symposium was then considered and structured around four main themes. The first centres on the sensory experience depicted in the artworks on display. Articles written by Emma Barker and Friederike Vosskamp demonstrate how eighteenth-century artists – in this case, painters Jean-Siméon Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Greuze, and sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon – successfully renewed ages-old iconographic themes such as the figure of the beggar and the seasons, shifting the focus to forms of sensory communication. Yet despite this common development, each artist used distinct

27 For studies on “the public”, see for example: Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth Century Paris*, New Haven and London, 1985; Eva Kernbauer, *Der Platz des Publikums: Modelle für Kunstöffentlichkeit im 18. Jahrhundert*, Cologne, 2011; Gerrit Walczak, *Bürgerkünstler: Künstler, Staat und Öffentlichkeit im Paris der Aufklärung und Revolution*, Berlin, 2015.

28 In recent decades, general scholarship on art criticism has mostly been produced by literary scholars and art historians. See Richard Wrigley, *The Origins of French Art Criticism: From the Ancien Régime to the Restoration*, Oxford, 1993; René Démoris and Florence Ferran, *La peinture en procès: L'invention de la critique d'art au siècle des Lumières*, Paris, 2001; Pierre-Henry Frangne and Jean-Marc Poinot (eds.), *L'invention de la critique d'art*, Rennes, 2002; Hubertus Kohle and Stefan Germer, *Spontaneität und Rekonstruktion: Zur Rolle, Organisationsform und Leistung der Kunstkritik im Spannungsfeld von Kunsttheorie und Kunstgeschichte*, Heidelberg, 2006; Dorit Kluge, *Kritik als Spiegel der Kunst: Die Kunstreflexionen des La Font de Saint-Yenne im Kontext der Entstehung der Kunstkritik im 18. Jahrhundert*, Weimar, 2009; Isabelle Pichet, *Le tapissier et les dispositifs discursifs au Salon (1750-1789)*, Paris, 2012; Élise Pavy-Guilbert, *L'image et la langue. Diderot à l'épreuve du langage dans les Salons*, Paris, 2014. Another focus of research has been on specific aspects of art criticism, such as transcultural and intercultural issues, and the interaction between art critics and the public. See Isabelle Pichet, “Le Salon de l'Académie, un foyer du développement du discours de l'opinion”, in Laurent Turcot and Thierry Belleguic (eds.), *Les histoires de Paris XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 2012; Kluge, 2013 (note 21); Maës, 2014 (note 20); Gaëtane Maës, “Le public des expositions au XVIII^e siècle: du plaisir sensoriel et sensible à la connaissance de la peinture”, in Pichet and Kluge, 2023 (note 10), pp. 121–138; Dorit Kluge, “‘Un air embrasé dans un beau couchant d'été dont le seul aspect échauffe les regards.’ Perception et transposition sensorielles et émotionnelles dans la critique d'art”, in Pichet and Kluge, 2023 (note 10), pp. 99–122; Isabelle Pichet, “Le Plaisir des sens au Salon de 1759”, in Pichet and Kluge, 2023 (note 10), pp. 79–97.

means and methods to achieve their ends. As Barker argues, Chardin and Greuze used placement to invite the viewer to reflect on the senses: installing the painting of the blind beggar in the Salon carré of the Louvre forced viewers to come face to face with blindness and become cognisant of the handicap it represented. Vosskamp contends that Houdon's innovation was to replace the traditional allegories of the seasons with young women, whose hyper-sensuality he offset by accentuating their sensory reactions to cold and heat. In her study of late-eighteenth-century exhibitions of automata in Ireland, Alison FitzGerald demonstrates that the rising interest in the senses – whether out of a desire to express them more accurately or to provoke them in the viewer – is neither specific to France, nor exclusive to official exhibition spaces. FitzGerald highlights two aspects neglected in recent scholarship: that there was an undeniable commercial component to the singular spectacles, and that they are integral to our understanding of urban life at the dawn of the industrial era.

The second section focuses on the emotional experience. It may often be difficult to distinguish the sensorial from the emotional, but the latter nevertheless offers an interesting focal point for studying representations of emotions and the expressive potential of physical or sensual bodies in art. This concern has long been the exclusive province of history painting. Over the course of the eighteenth century, however, it became a genre in its own right and was featured in certain types of portraits and scenes of everyday life. Exemplifying this trend, Gaëtane Maës argues, are the actress portraits that set off the tangle of intersecting rivalries between painters and their muses, playing out in public spaces such as theatres and the Salon du Louvre. Carle Van Loo pushed the limits of the genre in his painting of Hippolyte Clairon, depicting her in a dynamic, dramatic pose. In contrast, Donat Nonotte opted for a static portrait to immortalise Marie-Françoise Dumesnil. In the 1780s, the interest in theatrical performance was interwoven with theories on physiognomy. Inspired, Joseph Ducreux created a self-portrait in which we see him stretching and yawning. The painting was exhibited at the Salon de la Correspondance. Lisa Hecht argues that in depicting himself in such a provocative pose, Ducreux is not simply alluding to the boredom inherent in certain social practices, he is thoroughly revisiting the theories on emotional expression.

In public exhibitions, the fact that the viewer could directly interface with the subject matter also stoked rivalry between artists, who increasingly sought to attract the public's eye. Jan Blanc offers the open-submission Summer Exhibitions in London as an example of the artistic approach consequently turning away from purely aesthetic considerations to scenes of purported historical pretext, even of everyday life, featuring the sexualised female body, meant to lure the viewer's gaze. Yet as Kim de Beaumont's keen analysis shows, Gabriel de Saint-Aubin was one artist who moved beyond the purely sensual dimension: the women in his artwork occupy public space in other ways. Foreshadowing the nineteenth-century movement for similar representations, Saint-Aubin reverses the traditional roles attributed to women, demonstrating instead that they were an integral part of public life as well as attentive spectators.

Part three focuses on the visit itself, and how moving through an exhibition is an intrinsically spatiotemporal experience. Valérie Kobi looks at the various sources that, as early as the 1730s, led to rationalising the importance of the gallery wall in picture-hanging strategies. For example, Isaac Newton's discoveries on the light spectrum paved the way for multiple theories on the physiology of vision, colour, and the most appropriate gallery wall colour palette for encouraging contemplation – the emerging consensus being that golden frames and green walls were the most favourable combination. Isabelle Pichet explores the viewer's sensory experience of the Salon du Louvre. Starting at the Place du Louvre, Pichet walks us through each step that led the viewer through to the Salon carré, focusing particularly on the ascent of the grand staircase, and the impact of its relocation in 1781. Thus, the public's senses were preconditioned for the sensory experience to come. Sophie Soccard takes us on another sensory journey entirely, that of visiting private collections in British country houses. Until the British School finally came again into its own, country-house collections had housed mainly continental art. Even so, both art collectors and visitors quickly began to consider those collections monuments to British heritage. Travellers enthusiastically recounted their visits, extolling pleasant and informative atmospheres, yet pointing nonetheless to having mixed feelings about the experience.

Art writers are prime sources for understanding the physical and psychological reactions of eighteenth-century art viewers and, accordingly, the final section focuses on their writings. Mark Ledbury explores examples of how specific paintings were received, clearly demonstrating that the critics' recurring disillusionment with history painting was already present in the second half of the eighteenth century, long before the temporal rupture the Revolution supposedly introduced. Ledbury advances that extending our time frame back through the Ancien Régime would provide a more nuanced view of the grand genre, as well as a better understanding of the public's perceptions of art. To that end, Yougyeong Lee takes a look at Diderot's writing, centring on his notion of gaze that sees or turns away from seeing certain art. Diderot creates an entirely novel writing style in his efforts to formulate arguments for his passion or distaste for certain paintings, and his reasoning gives us a clearer picture of the sensory experience of eighteenth-century spectators. The final two papers shift the geographic focus to German perceptions of art. Dorit Kluge considers the advent of the Dresden exhibitions. Inaugurated in 1764, the exhibitions first inspired a criticism structured around multiple narrative levels, but rapidly evolved towards a change in sensory priorities. German art writing, soon to become the literary equivalent of French art criticism, innovated by incorporating auditory and kinaesthetic details into the sensory narrative that eventually superseded visual considerations. Markus A. Castor delves further into French and German sensory experiences. His comparative study opens with the preconception that the French had been naturally predisposed to contemplating and commenting on works of art, examining several sources that, as early as the 1770s, dismantle this prejudice. He shows that discourses about art and bodily expression was within reach of the wider society, ceasing to be the prerogative of the aristocracy.

Acknowledgements

To conclude our introduction, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the people and institutions who were instrumental in making our project a reality. This publication, the symposium, and the project itself, *Le corps sensoriel dans les expositions d'art au XVIII^e siècle*, would not have been possible without the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC – Insight Development/Connection Grants). We would also like to thank the three institutions underpinning our international partnership: Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (Canada), Université de Lille (France), and the VICTORIA Internationale Hochschule of Berlin (Germany). We are especially indebted to the partner institutions that were instrumental to the success of our two symposium sessions, and who share our concerns for the issues we have been discussing: the Musée du Louvre-Lens, the Centre Vivant-Denon of the Louvre Museum, the Centre de conservation du Louvre in Liévin, and the Centre allemand d'histoire de l'art de Paris. We are honoured that the Centre allemand has undertaken to publish the proceedings of the symposium in their collection entitled “Passages Online”. We are particularly grateful to Thomas Kirchner, Peter Geimer, and Markus A. Castor.

For their efforts in organising the two sessions of the symposium, we owe a great deal to the Institut de recherches Historiques du Septentrion (CNRS UMR 8529) of the Université de Lille, and more particularly to Charles Mériaux, Christine Aubry, and their team. We would like to extend a special thanks to Françoise Mardrus and Françoise Dalex from the Louvre, for their generosity and efficiency. In addition, we would like to thank doctoral students Lucie Rochard (Université de Lille) and Jacinthe de Montigny (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières) for their enthusiastic help and professionalism.

We would also be remiss in neglecting to underscore the contributions of each of the speakers and authors who helped to paint a portrait of the sensory body. Special thanks go to David Howes and Constance Classen for their plenary lecture at the Louvre. Finally, we'd like to pay tribute to all the eighteenth-century artists and authors who left their marks throughout time, for us to trace with care.

Image p. 26 : Jacques-Louis David, *Bélisaire demandant l'aumône*, 1781, oil on canvas, 288 × 312 cm. Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille (détail de la fig. 3 [Barker], p. 51)