

# Abstracts

## Partie I – L'expérience sensorielle dans les œuvres

### **Viewing Blindness at the Paris Salon**

*Emma Barker*

Several paintings depicting blind men were exhibited at the Salon between the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The aim of this essay is to explore the ways in which these paintings served to encourage Salon visitors to consider the relationship of vision to the other senses and to reflect on their own sensory engagement with works of art and the world around them. To this end, it considers such paintings in relation to Enlightenment debates about sensory perception, as well as to the familiar figure of the blind beggar who Salon visitors would have encountered in the streets of Paris. The discussion focusses on Jean-Siméon Chardin, *Un Aveugle* (Salon of 1753) and Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *L'Aveugle Trompé* (Salon of 1755).

**Keywords:** blindness ; Salon ; beggar ; Chardin ; Greuze

### **Les saisons en exposition :**

### **l'expérience des sensations à travers les sculptures de Jean-Antoine Houdon**

*Friederike Vosskamp*

*Summer* and *Winter* (*The Shivering Girl*) by Jean-Antoine Houdon is characterised by a particular sensual conception, and this was reflected in the perception of the two sculptures by the public and art critics alike. Rather than being classical allegories of the seasons, the two statues appear as figurations of physical sensations, such as cold and warmth. This paper aims to explore the expressive potential of the sculptural body and viewers' reactions to these sensory qualities in the context of the turbulent exhibition as well as the reception history of both figures, against the backdrop of the new eighteenth century interest in sensory experience, as evidenced in the writings of Abbé Du Bos, Condillac and Diderot.

**Keywords:** Jean-Antoine Houdon; *L'Été* and *L'Hiver* (*The Shivering Girl*); physical expression; perception of the viewer; allegory

### **Exhibitions of Automata in Ireland in the Age of Enlightenment**

*Alison FitzGerald*

This article considers exhibitions of automata in Ireland during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It examines how, in a period associated with the commercialisation of leisure, exhibitors played on the sensory spectacle of these artificial but lifelike exhibits, highlighting their verisimilitude in rhetoric intended to stimulate curiosity and commerce. It argues for the merits of a more sustained analysis of Dublin's commercial exhibitions in this period, as an integral, but overlooked, aspect of urban life in Ireland's capital city.

**Keywords:** automata; Dublin; spectacle

## Partie II – L'expérience sensible dans les œuvres

### **Depicting Identity or Emotion?**

#### **Clairon vs. Dumesnil at the Salon of the Louvre**

*Gaëtane Maës*

At the 1755 and 1759 Louvre Salons, portraits of two rival actresses were exhibited: that of Marie-Françoise Dumesnil as Agrippina by Donat Nonnotte, followed by that of Hippolyte Clairon as Medea by Carle Van Loo. Through these two paintings, the study shows how the two painters chose to immortalise the theatrical expressiveness of their respective models. Using testimonies and criticisms of the time, the article then compares the sensory experience of the spectators according to whether they observed the actors in an audiovisual production in a theatre or whether they discovered the painted representation of these same actors at the Louvre Salon. Finally, the author demonstrates that the two paintings relate to each other over a time interval of four years, illustrating the competition that existed between the two actresses as well as between the two painters.

**Keywords:** exhibition, actress, expressiveness; sensoriality; Carle Van Loo; Donat Nonnotte; Hippolyte Clairon; Marie-Françoise Dumesnil

### **Ducreux's Yawning : Attention, Sensation and the Ambiguity of Affect**

*Lisa Hecht*

In 1783, Joseph Ducreux exhibited an extraordinary self-portrait at the Salon de la Correspondance that showed the artist yawning extensively. The article strives to show that the painter did not simply dare to make a funny allusion to the tedious aspects of the official and unofficial salon with this work, but also intended to reflect the complex discourses of late eighteenth-century art theory. At the same time, the painting challenges the norms of established art genres as well as theories on the expression of passions. Furthermore, the research draws on contemporary discourses on sensory perception to provide an in-depth analysis of the work and reveal its ambiguities.

**Keywords:** yawning; sensationism; expression of the passions; attention; wit

### **Les plaisirs du public : L'érotisation du regard dans les expositions de la Royal Academy au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle**

*Jan Blanc*

A significant number of the works presented in eighteenth-century London exhibitions have an erotic dimension, whether explicit (Matthew William Peters's *Lydia* [1777]) or more implicit (Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Cimon and Iphigenia* [1775–1789]). This article investigates the place of this erotic imagination in eighteenth-century British art by making it a symptom of the way in which the public is encouraged to perceive artworks. Contemplating a painting in the competitive context of public exhibitions is no longer a matter of simple aesthetic delight, but of a relationship of desire that paintings must excite in viewers to catch their eye.

**Keywords:** painting; exhibition; eroticism; Peters; Reynolds

### **The Minds and Bodies of Women in the Salon Views of Gabriel de Saint-Aubin : a "peintre de la vie moderne" in the Age of Enlightenment**

*Kim de Beaumont*

The paper explores the presence of women in Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's celebrated views of the Salons of the Académie royale. Whether as spectators or objects on view, the women in Saint-Aubin's works play an active and varied role, conveying a range of physical, emotional, and intellectual responses to the exhibition experience. Their agency and awareness highlight the larger issue of emerging modernity in Saint-Aubin's art, both through his subtle characterisations of individuals caught up in fleeting historic moments and his own professional engagement with changing ideas of

women's education and cultural participation in the Age of Enlightenment.

**Keywords:** women; education; modernity; Gabriel de Saint-Aubin; Salon views

## Partie III – L'expérience spatiale de la visite

### **Une surface au service de l'expérience sensorielle : le mur des espaces d'exposition au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle**

*Valérie Kobi*

The reflections related to the reception of artworks by the spectator gain significantly in importance during the eighteenth century, mainly thanks to the work of the abbot Jean-Baptiste Dubos. His ideas shifted, for the first time, the theoretical focus from the artwork to the experience of the viewer. This reversal had the effect of generating a new interest in the external conditions that facilitated the processes of observation. As the modalities of display stimulated discussion, the gallery wall became a central element of museographic practices. It is this phenomenon that the article aims to reconstruct while weaving links to the cultural and scientific contexts of the time.

**Keywords:** exhibition; gallery; wall; spectator

### **Le conditionnement de l'expérience du sensible**

*Isabelle Pichet*

The establishment in 1781 of a new staircase giving access to the Salon Carré du Louvre, where the exhibition of works by the members of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture of Paris was held, transformed the habits of the public. By reconstructing the route that each visitor took to access the Salon Carré – from the Place du Louvre to the discovery of the exhibition space – it becomes possible to reveal the rising tensions to which the public was exposed throughout this experience. It is also possible to examine and compare the various effects caused by the use of a small staircase before 1781 and the new one afterwards. In other words, the different consequences of this spatial transformation on the experience of the visitor, and on the conditioning of the sensory body, become apparent from the analysis of Salon criticism.

**Keywords:** public; sensory body; strolling; space; experience

### **L'émerveillement « rationalisé » des visiteurs des *country houses* dans la Grande-Bretagne du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle**

*Sophie Soccard*

By relying on the public's visual experience, private collections in eighteenth-century Britain were intended to generate not so much astonishment as knowledge. At the foundation of this 'rationalised' wonder lay the sensory experience that was the legacy of empiricism. With the unveiling of their opulent collections to the general public, country houses participated, somewhat unwillingly, in a process of re-identification of the subjects of the monarchy who had become active citizens of a nation under construction. It is the junction between these new approaches to the work of art and the particular constitution of a form of social sensibility that this study seeks to establish.

**Keywords:** country houses; taste; collections; elite; public

## Partie IV – L'expérience de la critique

### **"I'm dying up here!": Disappointing History Painting**

*Mark Ledbury*

This essay explores the consistent and visceral feelings of disappointment – and associated criticism – that the genre of history painting seemed to provoke at the Salon exhibitions. Powerful recent accounts of the fate of history painting have tended to explore the political and social forces that explain such discontent. This paper argues that we should also explore the complexities and constraints of the genre itself, as it was practiced and understood, in addition to the physical and haptic conditions of its exhibitions, in order to seek reasons as to why it so often 'fails' in the public exhibition context. It focuses on questions of time and timeliness, as well as the pressures of exemplarity, in examples drawn from before and after the Revolution.

**Keywords:** history painting; public exhibitions; disappointment; criticism; temporality; history; exemplarity

### **L'aveugle dans les Salons de Denis Diderot**

*Yougyeong Lee*

This article aims to deal with Diderot's wilful blindness in his comments on works of art at the Salons. In spite of the necessary condition of the paintings to be recognised by specta-

tors, it is a question of observing the ways in which certain works of art excite the diversion of the spectator's eyes, including Diderot's. The reasons for blindness are diverse: a viewer blinds himself to the evocation of the feeling of dread by the cruel scene of a religious painting and averts their gaze from the excess of eroticism in a mythological painting. After looking at these two main factors for blindness, we aim to notice the rhetorical aspect of Diderot's writings which paradoxically arouses the desire to look at the paintings.

**Keywords:** Denis Diderot; salons; art critic; the sense of sight; blindness

**L'identité de la critique d'art allemande :  
un glissement du visuel/descriptif vers l'auditif/narratif**

*Dorit Kluge*

In this article, we explore the question of how critics experience visiting art exhibitions through their senses and how they process these experiences in their texts of art criticism. We use a corpus of journalistic art criticism for the investigation, which refers to the Dresden art exhibitions in the second half of the eighteenth century. The results show an increasing complexity of narrative levels, which is accompanied by a large network of relationships between the critics and various target groups. Within the writing, a critic creates a work that is detached from the reality of the existing exhibition in terms of content and form, in which the sense of hearing and kinaesthesia are increasingly emphasised while visual elements tend to recede into the background.

**Keywords:** German art criticism; Saxony; art exhibition; narrativity; senses

**Le langage du corps face à l'art :  
entre affection, discussion et contemplation**

*Markus A. Castor*

The article takes as its starting point the way in which German critics have often described the French way of contemplating art in its social context as 'affected'. Referring to the example of the illustrated catalogue of the collection of Baron Crozat de Thiers to highlight a typically Parisian spatial structure for an art collection, the significance for the viewer and the sociability of the discourse can be shown. A series of engravings by the Berlin artist Daniel Chodowiecki, contrasting French and German stereotypes of observing works of art, however, counters the supposedly aristocratic and decadent principle of a conversation about art systematically transposed into words and bodily expression. It turns out that German critics are ignoring a French debate that is already well-developed, in which the spectator's body is discussed as a political body and its socially and historically determined beforehand.

**Keywords:** German art criticism; body language; decadence; aesthetics of reception