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Paris Salon Catalogs Explored in National Gallery of Art Exhibition



Explication des peintures, sculptures et gravures, de messieurs de l'Académie royale, Paris, 1765 and 1767, National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Washington, DC—Documenting the history of the Paris Salon from its emergence in the late 17th century through its decline during the early 20th century, ***In the Library: Growth and Development of the Salon Livret*** presents over 60 examples of literature related to the Paris Salon drawn from nearly 250 years of exhibitions. It is on view from June 20 to September 16, 2016, in the East Building Study Center.

About the Installation

The exhibition includes a variety of publications that document the rise and fall of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture and its exhibition, which came to be known as the Salon. Beginning as a checklist for the works on view, the *livret* (“little book” or catalog) was first published for the Salon of 1673. Appearing then as little more than a pamphlet in decorative wrappers, the *livret* developed over time into a full catalog. During the latter half of the 19th century the *livrets* included not only additional entries but also supplemental information about the juries, the artists, and the rules of the organization. And throughout the 19th century, new printing technologies, from lithography to photography, allowed for the inclusion of increasingly more faithful reproductions of exhibited works in the *livrets*.

Developments beyond the academy can also be seen in the growing amount of literature surrounding Salon exhibitions. Art criticism, a new type of writing in the 18th century, evolved alongside the official exhibition *livrets* as authors began writing commentaries about the Salon. Later, the political upheavals of and following the French Revolution affected the administration of the Salon, whose own controversies, such as the dissatisfaction of member artists, persisted through the 19th century. By the early 20th century, independent exhibitions, each with its own published catalog, had become more frequent and contributed to the declining influence and importance of the official Salon.

Coinciding with the exhibition, the National Gallery of Art Library will publish ***Documenting the Salon: Paris Salon Catalogs, 1673–1945***, compiled and edited by librarian John Hagood. As a bibliography, it lists the publications in the library by and about the organizations that hosted Salons in Paris. Two essays analyze the form and function of Paris Salons and Salon publishing in the ancien régime and in the 19th century. Written by Yuriko Jackall, assistant curator, department of French paintings, and Kimberly A. Jones, associate curator, department of French paintings, they reveal the history and taste of collecting as well as how the Paris Salon grew from a forum for elite, privileged artists and viewers into a more inclusive event. ***Documenting the Salon*** is made possible by a grant from The Florence Gould Foundation and will be distributed to museums, libraries, and art research organizations in the US around the world.

Organized by the National Gallery of Art and curated by Yuri Long, rare book librarian, this exhibition is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Library and Rare Books Collection

The National Gallery of Art Library contains more than 400,000 books and periodicals, including more than 15,000 volumes in the rare book collection, with an emphasis on Western art from the Middle Ages to the present. The National Gallery of Art Library was founded in 1941, the year the Gallery opened to the public. In 1979, with the move to a seven-story facility in the Gallery's new East Building and the establishment of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA), the library broadened its purpose and the scope of its collection. Its goal has been to establish a major national art research center, serving the Gallery's curatorial, educational, and conservation staff, CASVA members, interns, visiting scholars, and researchers in the Washington art community. Call (202) 842-6511 or refdesk@nga.gov for more information.

Department of Image Collections

The library's department of image collections is a study and research center for images of Western art and architecture and is one of the largest of its kind, numbering over 14 million photographs, slides, negatives, microforms, and digital images. The department serves the Gallery's staff, CASVA members, visiting scholars, and qualified researchers. Access to the library is by appointment only, from Monday through Friday. Call (202) 842-6026 or image-collections@nga.gov for more information.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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