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## 'I was born in this palace': Emotional Bonds in the Artistic Community of the Louvre (1750–1800)

*Emmanuelle Philippe and Séverine Sofio*

What is so difficult to understand is that most of the artists at that time, their wives, their daughters, and the rich amateurs who visited them in their studios, all well-bred people distinguished for their tastes and habits, used to live there without ever complaining about the horror that the disgusting darkness of the Louvre's inner parts should naturally have inspired in them.

E. J. Delécluze (1855)<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Louvre, which the royal family had vacated for the palace of Versailles 150 years earlier, was in a deplorable state. The maze of rooms and hallways was largely occupied by lodgings granted by the king to artists, craftsmen, soldiers and a few impoverished courtiers.<sup>2</sup> The artists were by far the most numerous at that time, and it is this population that forms the centre of our study. From the poor painter whose family was crowded into one dark and tiny room where he would work and live, to the prosperous sculptor, member of the Royal Academy, whose apartments and studios extended over several floors, every social position and artistic speciality was represented. Each artist lived there with his/her direct family, perhaps other relatives, adopted children or close friends, several apprentices and sometimes domestic servants, depending on his economic status and the size of the apartment.<sup>3</sup>

The 'household' here must hence be understood as a group of people, whatever links (kinship, employment, apprenticeship) tied them, living under the same roof and under the authority of the artist who had been

nominally granted his lodging by the Crown. It was not unusual to find two generations of artists living as neighbours in the Louvre, such as when an artist's son achieved recognition in his own right in the art world and so obtained his own lodgings in the palace. The borders between familial and professional life were even thinner given that most of the heads and members of each household were artists. Strong professional ties, often doubled with matrimonial ones, linked one household to another. Therefore, the closed world of the Louvre could easily be considered as a 'vast household' itself placed under the king's tutelage, a neighbour being at the same time a relative, an apprentice's kin, a friend and a colleague at the Academy.

Three sources have been used to make up for the lack of personal writings by the protagonists themselves about their emotional links. The administrative archives, mostly composed of official letters to and from the Direction des Bâtiments du Roi offer indirect clues on the subject of affective relationships in the households that composed the community of the Louvre.<sup>4</sup> Notarial acts tell us a lot more about the artists' lifestyles through their post-mortem inventories, or can be a concrete expression of emotional bonds through the choice of godparents for a baptism or witnesses for a wedding.<sup>5</sup> Artists' biographies are also an essential source for analysing lived emotions since they allow us to reconstitute sociability networks, affinities and daily life. Yet they have disadvantages too, since they typically focus on the 'artist-hero' figure, and often gloss over his environment and acquaintances.

### **Living in the Louvre: a privilege**

The many memoirs addressed to the royal administration in the second half of the eighteenth century provide us with vivid images of the kind of nuisances the inhabitants of the Louvre were putting up with in a dilapidated and overcrowded palace. Within the building, the impact of the lodgings' insalubrity and narrowness were added to extreme proximity. It was common for the artists to have a few domestic rooms in one part of the palace and a studio elsewhere, often in the upper, sunnier floors, which gave rise to a lot of coming and going as well as noise from sunrise to sunset. In addition, the Louvre's many courtyards had been taken over by cabins, small gardens and improvised sheds illegally put up by craftsmen and shopkeepers, the smell of whose outdoor latrines and kitchens pervaded the whole palace.<sup>6</sup>

It is therefore something of a paradox to discover that the royal administrative archives were filled with hundreds of letters from artists

asking, some desperately, some regularly, for lodgings in the palace. The abundance of demands show that living in the palace was seen as a real privilege. Many criteria had to be met – renown, reputation, royal favour, and so on – and each candidate had to be unofficially ‘patronised’ by an inhabitant of the Louvre, which enhanced an already obvious co-opting phenomenon.

Residing there allowed artists to increase and consolidate three types of capital on which social and professional achievement was founded, according to Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>7</sup> The first was *symbolic capital* since the concession of an apartment in the Louvre was considered the ultimate display of royal recognition and legitimisation among the artistic community, particularly if it was accompanied by admittance to the Academy, though this was not systematic. The second was *social capital*, for living in the palace, through daily contact with prestigious colleagues, aristocrats or government officials, allowed residents to be part of Paris’s cultural elite and obtain lucrative commissions from wealthy patrons. Finally, the third was *economic capital*, because as well as having free accommodation, academicians were usually paid a sizeable pension, which, added to their commissions and apprentices’ fees, allowed most of them to earn a very handsome living. This triple achievement was undoubtedly considered more than compensation for enduring the Louvre’s various nuisances.

### **A social microcosm**

Artists from various social backgrounds and with different degrees of achievement and success in the art world lived in the Louvre, a situation likely to create discord and envy among the co-residents. The administrative archives reveal examples of such conflicts. Most of the king’s art collection was stored in the Louvre and the Direction des Bâtiments was very concerned about fire or flood hazards. So, to complain about their neighbours’ inappropriate behaviour, some artists, obviously aware that royal administrators could (or would) not act on personal matters, disguised their grievances as security issues. In 1783, for instance, the sculptor Caffiéri, who was known to be a rather tight-fisted niggler, was living next door to the famous pastellist Maurice Quentin de la Tour and asked administrators to brick up one of his neighbour’s chimneys which was used as a stove for La Tour’s ‘days of great reception’, since it filled his apartment with smoke, making it smell like ‘a caterer’s shop’.<sup>8</sup>

But, in spite of these petty squabbles between neighbours, inevitable in such a confined world, the artists of the Louvre formed a real community, in David Garrioch's sense: 'as networks of individuals, not closed and mutually exclusive, but bound together more closely than they are linked to outsiders'. Membership of the community involved accepting tacit rules, which fashioned its members' collective identity.<sup>9</sup> Transgressing these implicit rules could, especially in such a small community as the domestic Louvre, disrupt the collective harmony, and consequently the social cost of these transgressions had to be sufficiently threatening to prevent such behaviour taking place. In the Louvre, the ultimate sanction was to appeal to an exterior and supreme authority: the king himself, represented by the *Directeur des Bâtiments*.

One of these implicit rules was the delimitation of 'private' spheres where neighbours' interference was considered illegitimate.<sup>10</sup> Considering the extreme spatial as well as emotional proximity that existed among the artists residing in the Louvre, regulatory interventions between neighbours were tolerated, and even sought, in the 'common' or 'semi-public' zones (thresholds, hallways, staircases, courtyards, terraces) of the building. However, where conflict arose between two residents of the same lodgings (wife/husband, parent/child, master/domestic or apprentice), neighbours usually did not interfere, whatever their relations to the protagonists. However, these specific conflicts had to take place within the lodging, the household's private space, with the door closed. This rule is illustrated by the example of painter Jean-Baptiste Greuze and his wife, who used to 'export' violent personal arguments into the Louvre's common spaces – something that was frowned on by all the residents. In addition, it was rumoured that Mme Greuze had affairs with several of her neighbours, including her husband's 17-year-old pupil, a scandalous transgression due both to the lovers' age difference (Mme Greuze was about 50) and to the affair's oedipal character, considering the quasi-filial nature of the master–apprentice relation.<sup>11</sup> The Greuzes' incessant quarrels seriously troubled the community's harmony, especially since no one could interfere to stop them. Social pressure was thus exerted in various forms, Greuze being excluded from joint events, such as the community's many petitions to the king to improve their environment.<sup>12</sup> Although it has never been highlighted by historians who have studied Greuze's career (and this may illustrate the importance of studying emotional bonds in revising our knowledge of some historical events), it is likely that the painter's bad reputation among his neighbours, who were also his

colleagues at the Academy, was undoubtedly linked – as a cause or as a consequence – to his failure to be officially recognised as a History painter in 1767.<sup>13</sup>

Courtesy and collective regulatory interventions were thus necessary to maintain harmonious interactions among community members. However, these rules could be problematic, as artists sought to define themselves as equal, in terms of respectability, to their patrons – the grand bourgeois and aristocrats. Artists sought to distinguish themselves from the lower professional categories with whom they had to mix in the Louvre, especially the domestics and soldiers, by violent, contemptuous behaviour towards them, to the point that it sometimes challenged the tacit rules of respectful relations among households. For instance, the painter Antoine Renou wrote to Capitaine Barthouil, chief of the ‘Suisses’ in charge of the Louvre’s security, about a quarrel between their domestics:

I understand that your domestics accuse my servant of having pissed against your caretaker’s door . . . if she was caught red-handed, I would immediately sack her. I don’t want anything I own to incommode my neighbours, just as I don’t want to be incommoded by them nor theirs.

Here Renou clearly considered his servant as a possession and could not tolerate harm to his reputation. He continued:

Your caretaker . . . told me that you summon me; she forgets that I am not the kind of man whom one summons. I come and go as I please, and besides I have been given this lodging by the king, I am in the Louvre under a superior tutelage . . . I mistrust butlers’ words for they are almost always insolent and untruthful.<sup>14</sup>

To Renou, Barthouil, although also appointed by the king to reside in the palace, did not rank among his social class, for the soldier was in the Louvre precisely to ensure the artists’ well-being. It was not royal protection, but their profession that made the difference between them. One week later, the Directeur des Bâtiments, the Comte d’Angiviller himself, replied to the painter, sharply calling him to order and reminding him that such language was not to be used with either the *capitaine* or the servants, indicating that treating fellow residents in that way remained highly reprehensible.

### **Extended families**

If they were given enough room, the artists could welcome an extended family into their household. Jean-Honoré Fragonard, who, in 1769, married his pupil, Marie-Anne Gérard, like himself born in Provence, provided his wife's 14-year-old sister Marguerite with a home soon afterwards in order for her to assist Mme Fragonard in the household. There she learnt to paint with her brother-in-law, whom she called in her letters 'my dear friend' or 'my dear little daddy'.<sup>15</sup> During the Revolution, Fragonard's paintings became old-fashioned, but Marguerite had become a successful painter whose sentimental scenes allowed her to earn enough to support the whole Fragonard family for several decades. She even paid her brother-in-law's debts and, after he died, became the official head of the household, seeing to the artistic education of her youngest nephew, Alexandre-Evariste, before he was sent to their neighbour David's studio. Likewise, the sculptor Louis-Simon Boizot, father of three children, took into his household at the Louvre his step-brother's two daughters after their father's death. Feeding his large family was a significant problem and Boizot was known to be a great borrower in the Louvre.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1790s, the painter Adélaïde Labille-Guiard and her former pupil, Gabrielle Capet, a domestic servant's daughter born in Lyon, settled with Labille-Guiard's old friend and former master François-André Vincent in his Louvre apartment where he was living with one of his apprentices, Veyrenc. They formed a household with different 'professional generations', from Vincent who taught Labille-Guiard, to Veyrenc and Capet who were respectively taught by Vincent and Labille-Guiard.<sup>17</sup> When Labille-Guiard and Vincent married in 1801 (when they were both in their fifties), Capet was still living with them, and when her teacher died soon afterwards, Capet stayed with Vincent until his death in 1816. She in turn was assisted by Vincent's apprentices.<sup>18</sup> Relations formed in the master's household could be sustained for life, professional ties being even stronger, in some cases, than biological ones. This 'affective family' was founded on the importance of the master-pupil relation, each member taking care of the other.

### **Professional families**

In the artists' small apartments in the Louvre, the largest and sunniest room was devoted to professional activities: art was as central in space as the residents' lives and interactions. For instance, the artists'

wives – often artists themselves – were closely involved in running the studio, particularly by supervising their husbands' female students who worked separately from their male counterparts. Like Mme David or Mme Suvée, Mme Vien (one of the four female members of the Academy at that time) was very involved at the organisational level, undertaking the direction of the French Academy in Rome during her husband's illness in 1780.<sup>19</sup> Apprentices were also active participants in household life, some even living under their masters' roof. Pierre Lacour, Vien's pupil, was also a great friend of his master's son and affectionately remembered his time in Vien's studio:

Every Sunday and festive day, we all had breakfast together with coffee with milk, sometimes with hot chocolate. It was luxury at that time for the Viens, once well-off, now had to submit to the greatest parsimony. Monsieur Vien... was a good father who spoiled his family and wanted to treat them at home.<sup>20</sup>

David, another of Vien's apprentices who remained close to his former master, opened a studio for his students in his Louvre apartment in 1781, when he returned from Rome (where he had been with the Viens).<sup>21</sup> His first and most promising apprentice was Germain Drouais, whose unexpected premature death deeply moved David. He took all the letters written by his dearest pupil and 'built up, in the garden of his Louvre apartment... a little memorial under which he put those gloomy relics'.<sup>22</sup> Delécluze described his counterparts' congeniality at the time he used to work under David's direction in the master's studio:

From time to time, the young men of David's school clubbed together to treat their master to a humble meal. The master and thirty or forty young men walked from Paris to Saint-Cloud or Vincennes, to an innkeeper's who was waiting for them and cooked for this troupe a meal for less than forty sous each. They wanted to organise one of these little – one could say familial – celebrations.<sup>23</sup>

To understand the importance of this studio tradition of providing a meal for the master, one can calculate the sacrifice that paying 40 sous represented for some students, to which they had to add to the 12 francs a month for the master's fees 'without the extra charge of the models' fees and the heating. On the number of the registered students... only half of them, at best, could pay David's retribution; the other ones were taught for free'.<sup>24</sup> David even lent money to the poorest of his

apprentices and hosted some of them at the Louvre, such as the Franque brothers, two artists from the south of France who themselves 'often accommodated Broc, Maurice [Quay] and those of their friends who asked'.<sup>25</sup>

A letter to the Directeur des Bâtiments describes the flimsy rooms that apprentices built above their master's studio, on mezzanines:

[T]hese lodgings, formed by simple partitions, and topped with paper-cloth, have so narrow proportions that there is just enough space to put a very small bed and a table on which each inhabitant puts a burning candle that probably only lights his sleep... so that the danger of a fire is imminent and, once one starts in one of these little dumps, nobody will be able to escape...<sup>26</sup>

A master's death illustrates the deep affection his students had for him. For Greuze's funeral, the young painter Constance Mayer, dressed in black, put on his coffin a little bouquet bearing the note: 'Those flowers, offered by the most grateful of his students, are the emblem of his glory.'<sup>27</sup> Boizot's favourite apprentice, Sébastien Caldelari, assisted him on his deathbed, signed his master's death certificate in March 1809 and led his studio's inventory.<sup>28</sup>

The students themselves developed intense emotional bonds, like Albertine Clément-Hémery and her female colleagues at Suvée's studio who 'gathered there, for seven or eight hours every day, completely on their own'.<sup>29</sup> Over the course of many years, they formed a group on several levels: professional (all intended to become professional artists); aesthetic (their collective identity could be so strong that, like David's students, they considered themselves an actual 'school' in the artistic sense of the word); and personal (they were about the same age – 14–25 generally – and, for the boys particularly, they could be on their own in Paris, in search of a substitute for the family they had just left). Games were played, and sometimes cruel initiation ceremonies for the newcomers. As soon as their time in the studio was over, they would fool around in the maze of the Louvre's hallways and courtyards. As Delécluze remembered, 'Coming to or from the studio, Etienne found his acquaintances and new friends in the great dark corridors of the Louvre, where they all joined for some evening games'.<sup>30</sup> The archives confirm the playing of those 'games': in 1773 the Academy Director requested the Directeur des Bâtiments to 'give orders to force each resident... to forbid him and his students to go on the roofs'.<sup>31</sup>

### **Endogamy**

In the Louvre, professional activities and affective life were intertwined because of the confined space, which also caused a considerable degree of endogamy among the artists.<sup>32</sup> Lodgings in the palace were a highly sought honour, and those having obtained it tried by any means to pass it on to their heirs, against the many decrees on that point promulgated by royal administration. It seems that the artists of the Louvre considered themselves, and were considered, an 'elite'. Therefore, the possibility (enhanced by proximity and emotional bonds) of matrimonial alliances between these families appeared natural. David, for instance, married Charlotte Pécoul in 1782, whose brother, also a painter, he befriended whilst in Rome, and whose father, a royal architect residing in the Louvre, had helped him obtain his lodging in the palace.<sup>33</sup> But, before his wedding and during his training as a painter, David, who was living in the Louvre apartment of playwright Michel-Jean Sedaine, a friend and protégé of his uncle, got to know the family of the painter Joseph Vernet and even courted Vernet's daughter, Emilie, for a time.<sup>34</sup> Carle, Joseph Vernet's son, married the daughter of the painter and engraver Charles Moreau, an alliance about which it was said, 'Art could not but benefit from the merging of these two equally noble and prolific races', in accordance with the widespread idea that endogamy was not only advisable, but actually essential to artistic progress.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, the increasing number of female students in eighteenth-century studios provided more opportunities for artists of both sexes to meet. Although boys and girls did not work in the same room, David's male students undoubtedly knew their female counterparts since we know, for example, that in the 1780s, François Gérard courted Mlle Laville-Leroulx,<sup>36</sup> and after the Revolution, the young Ingres was engaged to Mlle Forestier.<sup>37</sup> Likewise Jeanne Bernard, one of Mme Labille-Guiard's apprentices, married Laurent Dabos, pupil of Vincent. Affection – or at least marriage – could clearly link students whose masters were close friends.<sup>38</sup>

### **Solidarity in the Louvre**

Because of the blurring borders between 'private' and 'public' life at the Louvre, and the emotional bonds between the artists, the whole population living there resembled a true community, a vast household in its own right. Proximity made collective actions necessary and the archives attest to neighbourly solidarity. The numerous petitions addressed to

the king are an illustration of the inhabitants' consciousness of being stronger as a group to obtain improvements to their daily life. A 1769 petition mentioned the necessity to 'keep the lanterns' on in the little gallery which led in the apartments' and originated in the residents' frequent visits to their neighbours in the evenings. The artists also clubbed together to employ their own concierge, building without permission a small cabin for her to receive their mail and welcome visitors.<sup>39</sup>

Likewise, the common spaces of the halls, stairways and porches were cleaned and washed either by each female resident in turn or by someone who received a modest wage from the community. Just before the Revolution, Anne-Gabrielle Robert, wife of painter Hubert Robert, was in charge of the lanterns and the surveillance of the galleries for an annual fee of 6 pounds, to which each household contributed.<sup>40</sup> Those who tried to avoid this constraint gained a bad reputation among the neighbours and the Louvre officials, such as Barthouil who deplored the poor education of the painter Taraval's students, of the architect De Machy and of their colleague Clérisseau who 'keep on soiling not only the latrines, but also the corridors and the stairways everyday' and had the regrettable habit of throwing refuse out of the window.<sup>41</sup>

### **Sociability in the Louvre**

The artists of the Louvre visited each other regularly for dinners and parties. The painter Isabey, for instance, was famous for his lavish receptions where he used to entertain 'a very important and brilliant society': 'officers with the highest ranks, gentlemen with the greatest titles, ladies of the noblest extractions, distinguished foreigners, rich financiers, prestigious artists followed one another in his studio and crowded round his salon'.<sup>42</sup> Sociability was such an essential element of life in the Louvre that propensity to be a cheerful guest or a generous host actually defined the reputation of the artists within the community and was even more important than social or professional differences. The geographer Blache de la Neuville was a loner and his neighbours in the palace 'didn't seek his company; his face, made terribly ugly by an infirmity, used to terrorise the little girls and boys of the galleries'.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, Hubert Robert was the most popular artist of the Louvre thanks to his jovial temperament, and 'every day, so to speak, he was invited to several places at the same time'.<sup>44</sup> This intense local sociability was also a way to 'share' one's acquaintances and clientele with a friend or a kin starting

out on an artistic career, for instance, assisting each other in the search for patrons and commissions.

The sociability that linked every household in the Louvre was especially evident on occasions such as births, baptisms, weddings or funerals, those 'rites of passage' that traditionally brought relatives and close friends together. Notarial acts are extremely useful in this respect because they record a child's godparents, and often note the parents' neighbours and colleagues. When Joseph-Marie Vien's daughter was born in 1758, her baptism was celebrated in the Louvre's parish church (Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois) in the presence of many neighbours, her godfather being the royal architect Pierre Coustou.<sup>45</sup> In 1761, the wife of miniaturist François-Elie Vincent stood as godmother to Vien's son, and a few years later, Vincent placed his two sons (one of whom was François-André, Mme Labille-Guiard's future husband) in Vien's studio for their apprenticeship. Likewise, weddings confirm the deep friendship that linked the artists of the Louvre. When Catherine-Flore Pajou, the sculptor's daughter, married the sculptor Clodion, their witnesses were the painter Pierre and the architect Moreau.<sup>46</sup> Even before their weddings, the artists of the Louvre could be of great service to one another. When Vien began to court a young miniaturist, Marie-Thérèse Reboul, who became his wife in 1757, he was chaperoned by his neighbour and colleague at the Academy, the Swedish portraitist Alexandre Roslin. In return, Vien chaperoned Roslin whenever he visited his own fiancée, the painter Marie-Suzanne Giroust.<sup>47</sup>

Sadder circumstances also united the artistic community of the Louvre. Joseph Vernet's wife was subject to deep depressions and the residents were deployed to visit her in turn to cheer her up. However, her crises became more violent, and Vernet was supported by his neighbours when he had to confine her in the 'house in Monceaux', near Paris.<sup>48</sup> This collective solidarity continued after the artist's death, since the sculptor Boizot, closest friend of the Vernet family, signed an act in 1789 certifying that Mme Vernet's mental illness prevented her from administering the familial patrimony.<sup>49</sup>

Children naturally spent much of their time together and were raised as a group in the Louvre. They had their own teacher in the palace and, after classes, their noisy games disturbed some residents, as an anonymous memoir addressed to the king indicates:

[M]aster Levimain [?] teaches in the Louvre; each time the pupils go to school or come back from it, they cause great disorder and confusion with their playing and throwing stones.<sup>50</sup>

Nineteenth-century biographers, so fond of 'sentiment', emphasised the deep affective relations linking artists who were raised together:

some were close relatives; several, born in the galleries, never parted since the lovely times of their childhood and youth; in every case, they all knew each other, and if they didn't like one another equally, at least most of them were intimate friends, sharing joys and sorrows, work and pleasure.<sup>51</sup>

Artists often took on their colleagues' sons as apprentices as soon as the boys could hold a pencil or a brush. The children would leave their parents' apartment to live with their master. Robin, the clockmaker, placed one of his two sons as an apprentice at David's and the other at Regnault's studio. The sculptor Pajou chose Vincent to teach his son the rudiments of drawing, and the marine painter Jean-François Hue placed all his sons in his neighbour's care.<sup>52</sup> When a young boy lost his father, he was placed under the 'artistic tutelage' of several masters. After his father was killed in dramatic circumstances, Ferdinand-Nicolas Godefroid began his studies in painting with Lépicié, Vien and David.<sup>53</sup> Should an artist's daughter demonstrate talent for art, unlike sons, she would be trained at home, either by her father, a brother (as was the case with the painter Marie-Eléonore, Godefroid's younger sister<sup>54</sup>) or a relative living under the same roof (as was the painter Marguerite Gérard, taught by her brother-in-law, Fragonard).

Since an apprentice worked all day with his fellow apprentices and master, he spent more time with this new 'family' than with his own parents, even if they lived in the same building. The eleven-year-old Carle Vernet, student at Lépicié's studio, described his training programme to his father:

My dearest dad, I write this letter to tell you about the arrangement we made, Gounod and me. We will go to bed at eight in the evening; in the morning, we will get up at five, to be at Monsieur Lépicié's at five thirty. We will work from the model until eight... There will be six of us: Messieurs Lépicié [junior], Métivier, Godefroid, Colmart, Gounod and me.<sup>55</sup>

### **Royal reaction**

Confronted by the artists' morals which he considered dissipated, and with the necessity to 'regenerate' French art to counter enlightened

circles' criticism of royal cultural politics, the Comte d'Angiviller, appointed head of the Direction des Bâtiments in 1774, decided to re-establish order and discipline in the Louvre.<sup>56</sup> To him, and to Pierre, the Director of the Academy, the renewal of art depended on artists' virtue, morality and loyalty to the king. Since he considered the many parties and receptions given by the inhabitants to be inappropriate in a place theoretically dedicated to art, in 1786 he ordered the palace to close at 10 in the evening from April to October, and at 9 pm during the winter.<sup>57</sup> Many artists, such as the painter Renou, complained about this restrictive and humiliating measure:

Does the woman Ancelet [the wife of the Swiss guard, who was in charge of guarding the palace's entry] have the right to refuse to open the door for my servant, or my friends, at ten in the evening... [?] As for me, I would also ask whether this is a woman or a Suisse who should open the doors of the Louvre, and whether one must depend on a perpetually drunk and insolent woman. Has the king ordered that those whom he honoured with a lodging, should be daily insulted by the wives of some Suisses?<sup>58</sup>

Women were the main victims of the reinforcement of authority: successive measures and personal admonishments clearly suggested that they were no more than *tolerated* in the Louvre. In 1784, the Lépicié family was struck down by illness: the painter Nicolas Lépicié, his wife, who was an engraver, and two of their children died within a few months, leaving one daughter, who benefited from her neighbours' support in the Louvre. She wrote to D'Angiviller requesting to keep her parents' lodging. Pierre advised him to refuse since,

Mlle Lépicié would constantly have to go past the spiral staircase and the main room of the Academy, which is always crowded with young men, to reach the door of the room she asks for... We could tolerate that when she was living with her mother, then her brother. But now she is alone, aged 32 or 34, quite fresh, her staying here would be indecent. Should we banish the heedless? the insolent? Would they be wrong to laugh if one exposes oneself?<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, when Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, newly elected to the Academy, asked for the apartment of her former master (the pastellist Maurice Quentin de la Tour, who had just died), she was refused, in the name of decency.

I couldn't conceal to His Majesty the inconvenience that could result from the fact that you have a studio for women, while most of the artists who would have been your neighbours have young men in theirs.<sup>60</sup>

A few years later, in 1787, every female student was officially expelled from the Louvre's studios to preserve not so much their own modesty as their male counterparts' ability to focus on their work. David and Suvée, neighbours and age-long rivals, who had both opened a studio for young girls under the supervision of their wives, wrote indignant letters to the Directeur des Bâtiments, insisting that their pupils' morality was as solid as the door separating boys and girls in their studios.<sup>61</sup> Artists were not the only ones to complain: a Suisse's wife was paid by David's female students to prepare lunch for them everyday.<sup>62</sup> Several families lived indirectly off artists' activity, making the Louvre a small business where the positions of many depended on the others.

However D'Angiviller's role came to a brutal end in 1789. In October, the royal family, brought back to the capital, was hastily settled in the Tuileries,<sup>63</sup> making the Louvre once again the centre of French political life. Economic difficulties of the 1790s underlined more clearly than ever the enduring solidarity and collective identity of the Louvre residents. The elderly Fragonard left his apartment and studio in David's care, a necessary measure in those days, for the Louvre was regularly invaded, especially by David's young and turbulent students, fighting for the Academy's abolition and periodically occupying the institution's rooms.<sup>64</sup>

We know only a little of the artists' political views during the Revolution. David, Regnault, Houdon, Fragonard and Greuze attended political clubs. Vernet organised 'democrat' meetings in his apartment.<sup>65</sup> However, these artists were in an ambiguous situation: how could they express publicly hostility towards the monarchy, when their lodgings, commissions and privileges came from it? It is hardly surprising, therefore, that until 1792 most of the residents of the Louvre supported a moderate Revolution and a constitutional monarchy. Even during the Terror, one may doubt their Republican zeal as David, member of the *Comité de salut public* and Robespierre's close friend, was still living among them.<sup>66</sup>

However, as early as September 1789, a group of eleven women, artists' wives and daughters of the Louvre, many artists themselves, went to the National Assembly to offer their jewels to the nation as a contribution to the public debt, inspired by the ancient example of Roman

women giving their finest possessions to the Senate.<sup>67</sup> This was the first and only public appearance of the female Louvre residents as a group: the collective consciousness of being a community was implicit in their action and made it truly coherent and meaningful. More practical examples of gendered activities took place in a starving Paris, from 1792 to 1795: revolutionary times were particularly difficult for artists, who could no longer count on their traditional patrons – royalty, aristocracy and the Church. In the Louvre, women organised a collective food supply: the more robust of them would queue in turn in shops and markets and those with a little garden or a country-house, like Mme Robert whose husband, the once joyous painter Hubert Robert, was in jail, grew vegetables for the community.<sup>68</sup>

The Revolution levelled artists' social and professional status, particularly after the Academy was abolished in August 1793. Consequently, emotional bonds were renewed and enhanced among the community of the Louvre. The day-to-day material problems and the abolition of the monarchy that had ruled over them with heavy-handed authority, seemed to eradicate neighbourhood quarrels and urged every member of this vast household to develop links of affection and interdependence stronger than ever.

Far from being a simple professional arrangement or a royal reward, living in the Louvre had become for eighteenth-century French artists emblematic of their belonging to an elite and an emotional community – a true household in itself. The threat of being evicted from one's apartment, as shabby as it might be, drove some artists close to despair:

When he died, my father Claude Francin, who taught in the Academy, only left me his love for sculpture, great desire to succeed, and two arms to achieve it... Monsieur Flamen, my father-in-law, helped me by letting me stay in his studio in the Louvre. I was born in this palace, I have always lived and worked there... I beg you, My Lord, to let me keep using this studio which, today, with a hard-working temperament, is my only resource and my only wealth. Besides, this studio, situated under the Colonnade, has no chimney, no cellar, no lavatory, and, consequently, could not be useful or suitable for anyone but a miserable man who, like me, keeps himself occupied from morning to night with his work.<sup>69</sup>

The revolutionary years were nevertheless the last of this unique system of professional and emotional solidarity. As early as 1793, the new political leaders wanted to make the Louvre a great museum

reflecting national glory. The first official evictions took place in 1801, but it would take five years to dislodge the last artists, who certainly knew they were losing more than just their accommodation.

## Notes

1. E.-J. Delécluze, *David, son école et son temps* (1855) (Paris: Macula, 1983), pp. 16–17. All translations are our own, unless otherwise indicated.
2. Henri IV first allowed artists to live in the Louvre with their family and work for the monarchy in 1608, free from the guilds' constraining regulations. See C. Aulanier, *Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre*, 10 volumes (Paris: Ed. des Musées nationaux, 1948–58) ; or P. Quoniam and L. Guinamard, *Le Palais du Louvre* (Paris: Nathan, 1988).
3. No official tally was ever made of the Louvre's residents. Nevertheless a careful examination of the archives allows us to estimate that a little under than 100 people had been granted a lodging in the palace between 1750 and 1800: thus the inhabitants of the Louvre might amount to approximately 400–500 at that time.
4. Séries O<sup>1</sup>1669, O<sup>1</sup>1673, O<sup>1</sup>1674, O<sup>1</sup>1675 at the Archives Nationales [A.N.] and the Séries T<sup>1</sup> et T<sup>16</sup> at the Archives des Musées nationaux [A.M.N.].
5. A.N., Minutier Central des Notaires and Archives départementales de Paris.
6. A.N., O<sup>1</sup> 1673, letter from Cochin to the marquis de Marigny, 26 March 1765.
7. P. Bourdieu, *Choses dites* (Paris: Minuit, 1987), pp. 152, 160.
8. A.N., O<sup>1</sup> 1674, letter from the royal architect Brébion to the comte d'Angiviller, 18 June 1783 and O<sup>1</sup> 1673, letter from the marquis de Marigny to Marchais, governor of the Louvre, 9 October 1769.
9. D. Garrioch *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740–1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 4–6.
10. On this notion, see R. Phillips, 'Women, Neighborhood, and Family in the Late Eighteenth Century', *French Historical Studies* 18, 1 (1993), pp. 1–12.
11. L. Hautecoeur, *Greuze* (Paris: Alcan, 1912), p. 93.
12. For instance, the 1769 petition signed by Lemoyne, Chardin, Vien, Pigalle, Cochin, Vernet among others (A.N. O<sup>1</sup> 1673).
13. On this crucial event, see T. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 165–8. The Greuzes eventually left in 1780. Once divorced, Greuze returned to the Louvre in 1793 (when he was 68) and lived there with his two daughters until his death in 1805. Y. Singer-Lecocq, *Quand les artistes logeaient au Louvre* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), p. 373.
14. A.N., O<sup>1</sup>1674, letter from Renou to Barthouil, 13 April 1786.
15. J. Doin, 'Marguerite Gérard', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 4<sup>e</sup> période, VIII (1912), pp. 440–8. These letters, and the fact that Marguerite never married, caused many historians to surmise that she and Fragonard were lovers. Their age difference (30 years), their familial link, their residence under the same roof as Fragonard's family, lead us to think the contrary. But there is no evidentiary proof for either opinion.
16. T. Picquenard, *Louis-Simon Boizot (1743–1809)* (Paris: Somogy, 2001), pp. 25–64.

17. J. de Cayeux, *Hubert Robert* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), p. 211.
18. Capet's death certificate was probably signed by one of Vincent's students. M. Oppenheimer, 'Women Artists in Paris 1791–1814' (PhD dissertation, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, 1996), pp. 131–2.
19. T. Gaehtgens and J. Lugand, *Joseph-Marie Vien* (Paris: Arthéna, 1988), p. 42. On Mme Suvée, see A. Clément-Hemery, *Souvenirs de 1793–1794* (Cambrai: Presses de Lesne-Daloin, 1832), p. 4.
20. Gaehtgens and Lugand, *Vien*, p. 45.
21. On David's very intense relations with his (male) students, see T. Crow, *L'Atelier de David. Emulation et Révolution* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).
22. J.-L.-J. David, *Le peintre Louis David 1748–1825. Souvenirs et documents inédits*, (Paris: Havard, 1880), p. 53.
23. Delécluze, *David*, pp. 31–2.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 67–8.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
26. A.N. O<sup>1</sup> 1673, Letter from the Directeur de l'Académie to the Directeur des Bâtiments, February 1773.
27. L. Leroy, *La Vie familière et anecdotique des artistes français* (Paris: Gallimard, 1941), p. 99.
28. T. Picquenard, *Boizot*, pp. 25–64.
29. Clément-Hémery, *Souvenirs*, pp. 4–5.
30. Delécluze, *David*, pp. 31–2.
31. A.N. O<sup>1</sup> 1673, Letter from the Directeur de l'Académie to the Directeur des Bâtiments, February 1773.
32. Despite the lack of statistics, we think that artistic endogamy in the Louvre was proportionally greater than that characteristic of contemporary artistic milieux. See A. Schnapper, *Le Métier de peintre au Grand siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004); or J. Châtelus, *Peindre à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Nîmes: J.Chambon, 1991), pp. 88–102.
33. David, *Louis David*, p. 22.
34. Emilie Vernet married the architect Chalgrin (the Arc de Triomphe's creator). In the 1790s, Mme Chalgrin was arrested as a Royalist; Carle Vernet begged his friend David, a former lover, to save her, which he eventually agreed to do, but by then she had already been guillotined. See Ch. Blanc, *Une famille d'artistes. Les trois Vernet: Joseph, Carle, Horace* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1907), pp. 45, 57–8.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 52. Indeed, Carle Vernet's son, Horace, became a famous painter in the first half of the nineteenth century.
36. M.-J. Ballot, *Une élève de David: la comtesse Benois* (Paris: Plon, 1914), p. 82.
37. H. Lapauze, *Le Roman d'amour de M. Ingres* (Paris: P. Lafitte, 1910).
38. S. Sofio, 'Sociologie des artistes femmes actives à Paris 1789–1848' (PhD dissertation, EHESS, Paris, in progress).
39. A.N., O<sup>1</sup> 1674, letter from Barhouil to the comte d'Angiviller, 25 September 1781.
40. O. Merson, 'Les logements d'artistes au Louvre à la fin du XVIIIe et au commencement du XIXe siècle', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* XXIV (1881), p. 282.
41. A.N., O<sup>1</sup> 1673, letter from Barhouil to the comte d'Angiviller, 11 December 1777.
42. Merson, 'Les logements d'artistes', p. 281.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
45. Gaehtgens and Lugand, *Vien*, p. 48.
46. H. Stein, *Augustin Pajou* (Paris: Emile Levy, 1912).
47. Gaehtgens and Lugand, *Vien*, p. 32.
48. Blanc, *Les trois Vernet*, p. 41.
49. Picquenard, *Boizot*, pp. 25–64.
50. A.N., O<sup>1</sup> 1675, 'Mémoire sur divers abus qu'on a laissé s'introduire dans le Louvre' (n.d., probably written in the 1780s).
51. Merson, 'Les logements d'artistes', p. 285.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
53. Godefroid's father, a painter and restorer in charge of the king's art collection, was killed in a duel by a professional rival (Châtelus, *Peindre à Paris*, p. 202).
54. L. Arbaud, 'Mademoiselle Godefroid', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2<sup>e</sup> période (1869), vol. I, pp. 38–52, 512–22.
55. Blanc, *Les trois Vernet*, p. 44. Gounod (François-Louis) was the son of the king's furbisher who resided in the Louvre. He became a painter and the famous composer's father.
56. See J.-S. de Sacy, *Le comte d'Angiviller* (Paris: Plon, 1953).
57. Singer-Lecocq, *Quand les artistes*, pp. 306–7.
58. A.N., O<sup>1</sup> 1674, letter from Renou to Barthouil, 13 April 1786.
59. A.N. O<sup>1</sup> 1674, letter from Pierre to the Comte d'Angiviller, 1784.
60. Singer-Lecocq, *Quand les artistes*, p. 302.
61. J. Guiffrey, 'Ecoles de demoiselles dans les ateliers de David et de Suvée au Louvre', *Nouvelles Archives de l'art français*, III (1874–5), pp. 394–402.
62. Singer-Lecocq, *Quand les artistes*, p. 303.
63. The Tuileries were a part of the vast palatial ensemble of the Louvre, which burnt down in 1871.
64. Singer-Lecocq, *Quand les artistes*, p. 352.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
66. For instance, the male artists of the Louvre were all members of the 12<sup>th</sup> Company of the National Guards, led by Joseph-Marie Vien's son (P. Rosenberg and U. van de Sandt, *Pierre Peyro* (Paris: Arthéna, 1983), p. 47 and A.N. F<sup>7</sup> 4801, fol.49, no. 1340), and during winter 1793, the female residents of the palace formed civic sewing groups for the army (Merson, 'Les logements d'artistes', p. 285).
67. J.-F. Heim, C. Béraud and P. Heim, *Les Salons de peinture de la Révolution française, 1789–1799* (Paris: Centre d'Art Contemporain, 1989), p. 27. Among these women were Marguerite Gérard and Mmes Vien, Moitte, Suvée, Duvivier, Fragonard, Vestier, Peyron, David, Vernet, Vigée-Lebrun.
68. Singer-Lecocq, *Quand les artistes*, pp. 402–9.
69. A.N. O<sup>1</sup> 1674, letter from Francin, sculptor, 28 August 1783.