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Ivanne Rialland

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## A Museum of Wonders: Children's Books as Attachment Objects Linked to the Museum Space. The Case of the *Editions du musée du Louvre*

by Ivanne RIALLAND

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## Abstract

Between 2016 and 2020, a collection of picture books published by the Louvre deconstructed the institution's intimidating and austere reputation, by showing young readers a made-over image of the museum. In these books, young protagonists develop intimate relationships with the artwork and undergo character development in a museum that appears to be a place of wonders.

By fostering art preferences based on lucky happenstance in turn facilitated by belonging to a milieu of insiders, some of these books tend to disqualify the ordinary museum visiting experience.

**Keywords:**

Louvre; art books; young readers; comics; museum; ethos

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# A Museum of Wonders: Children's Books as Attachment Objects Linked to the Museum Space. The Case of the *Éditions du musée du Louvre*

by Ivonne RIALLAUD

In a time marked by an “economy of the immaterial” (Lévy & Jouyet, 122 sq), museums have become “cultural brands” forced to develop their market within an internationally competitive context with shrinking public funding. The Louvre Museum registered its brand name as early as 1987, assuming an initially defensive position (Regourd, 8), and so monetized its “immaterial assets” (image and expertise), as seen for instance during the opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi in 2007 (Maroun). As the most visited Western museum in the world, the Louvre has in fact proven extremely attractive—it counted 10 million visitors in 2018, a 25% increase from 2017, with 75% of its visitors coming from abroad.<sup>1</sup>

Yet this this influx of visitors has rendered museum visits less comfortable for groups of families, and under the aegis of Jean-Luc Martinez (2013–2021<sup>2</sup>), the museum has strived to win back the local public<sup>3</sup>: by constructing a new reception area for families,

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1 <https://presse.louvre.fr/96-millions-de-visiteurs-br-au-louvre-en-2019/> François Mairesse lists several reasons for this success: increased tourism, the Louvre's central location in France, and the extreme inequality between museums due to brand popularity in a “star system” business model (“Comment expliquer le succès du Louvre?” *La Question du jour*, France culture, broadcast on 04/01/2019, <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/la-question-du-jour/comment-expliquer-le-succes-du-louvre>).

2 Laurence des Cars succeeded him in 2021.

3 Nathalie Steffen, head of the department running workshops and visiting lectures since 2014, reports that public outreach work targeting families and locals (rather than simply children) goes back even further—she dates it to around 2006–2008—though with the arrival of Jean-Luc Martinez, increased efforts were made to reach the Ile-de-France public (interviewed on 14/10/2020). At the time of his nomination in 2013, and again in 2021 when running for a third term, Jean-Luc Martinez voiced particular concern about the Louvre's level of public reception—his track record, and this article's point of view, however, show otherwise. See Philippe Dagen, Guillaume Fraissard, Claire Guillot and Cédric Pietralunga, “Au Louvre, la campagne de réélection contrariée de Jean-Luc Martinez, président-directeur au bilan controversé,” *Le Monde*, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, [https://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2021/04/11/polemiques-modele-economique-acquisitions-contestees-au-louvre-la-campagne-contrariee-de-jean-luc-martinez\\_6076338\\_3246.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2021/04/11/polemiques-modele-economique-acquisitions-contestees-au-louvre-la-campagne-contrariee-de-jean-luc-martinez_6076338_3246.html)

introducing Night Visits for accommodating families in 2019,<sup>4</sup> and opening The Studio in September 2021, which offers an activity area called the Forum, a reading corner, and workshops.

These efforts have coincided with the publication of a series of children's books that reshape the *ethos* of the Louvre. This rhetoric term, which brings to mind an image of an orator launching into discourse (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 429), is used by Ruth Amossy when analyzing Dominique Maingueneau's discourse and Erving Goffman's work on social interactions, to show how a speaker can strive to act through his or her public speaking through images of themselves that circulate beforehand in the social discourse (Amossy, 2000, 60-73). In 2014, the researcher described this conception of ethos in research on the corporate image and identity issues of brand names (Amossy, 2014, § 12-16), emphasizing how an ethos can be collective. Compared to the concept of *image*, the concept of ethos has the added benefit of incorporating the museum publisher into the multitude of voices expressed in the books, alongside authors and illustrators, and of focusing on the scene of enunciation<sup>5</sup>: a generic setting (the fictional picture book, rather than nonfiction) as well as the scenography of a school or family museum visit invoked by these fictions.

Family and school visits to the Louvre are in fact a widely shared French experience: in 2019, the museum reported that it had received 500,000 schoolchildren. The *Louvre Éditions* supports these visits by providing tools to teachers—this was, historically, the publishing department's primary purpose—and to parents, who need tools to plan their visit, answer children's questions, and sustain their children's interest when confronting such an immense museum with its diverse collections and culturally coded works. Many of these Louvre publications explain, decipher, decode, and guide the reader from a didactic perspective which should help readers access the artwork and their meanings, yet which tends to reinforce a somewhat austere, academic, and intimidating image of the museum. Alongside the nonfiction books providing clues to understanding the museum and its collections, as well as picture books, and fictional comic books featuring reproduced artwork, there is also a series of books whose primary function (in terms of mediating art) seems to involve improving the ethos of the museum, in order to desacralize it, make it more informal, and even create an emotional attachment:

Gutman, Anne et Georg Hallensleben. *Pénélope au Louvre*. Paris : Gallimard jeunesse, Louvre éditions, 2007.

Supiot, Olivier. *Le Cheval qui ne voulait plus être une œuvre d'art*. Paris : Delcourt ; Éditions du Louvre, coll. Delcourt-Le Louvre, 2016.

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4 The Louvre has offered evening visits to the public since 1936 (Verne). Floriane Germain demonstrates in a survey conducted in 2011-2012 that these evening visits are primarily attended by Parisians (Germain, 384), though families with children are absent from this public (Germain, 380), justifying the need for evening visits which specifically target them.

5 In Dominique Maingueneau's opinion, all discourse belongs to different scenes—the all-encompassing scene (a type of discourse), the generic scene—and sets up a scenography, or scenographies—the communication system that the speaker strives to establish (Maingueneau, § 1-22). If the museum visit can be viewed as a scene of speech, it is also a setting of experience (Goffman) which the enunciation scene can rework, for example by adding in the fantasy genre.

Dethan, Isabelle. *Gaspard et la malédiction du prince-fantôme*, Paris : Delcourt ; Éditions du Louvre, coll. Delcourt-Le Louvre, 2017.

Chamblain, Joris & Sandrine Goalec. *Les Souris du Louvre. 1. Milo et le monde caché*. Paris : Delcourt ; Éditions du Louvre, coll. Delcourt-Le Louvre, 2018.

Massonau, Emmanuelle & Mélanie Combes. *Timoté visite le Louvre*. Paris : Gründ ; Louvre éditions, 2018. Version anglaise, 2018.

Dytar, Jean. *Les Tableaux de l'ombre*. Paris : Delcourt ; Éditions du Louvre, coll. Delcourt-Le Louvre, 2019.

Chamblain, Joris, Goalec Sandrine. *Les Souris du Louvre. 2. Le Damier de Babel*. Paris : Delcourt ; Éditions du Louvre, coll. Delcourt-Le Louvre, 2019.

Floirat, Cloë. *Génération Pyramide !* Paris : Éditions Marabout ; Musée du Louvre, coll. Marabulles, 2019.

Elschner, Géraldine, Anja Klauss. *Petit Noun et les signes secrets (Louvre)*. Paris : Louvre éditions ; Saint-Pierre-des-Corps, L'élan vert, 2020.

With the exception of *Penelope at the Louvre*, all were published between 2016 and 2020,<sup>6</sup> and all share the same museum setting, presenting it in an attractive way to young readers, who are most sensitive to “elements of an emotional nature” (Lagier, de Barnier, Ayadi<sup>7</sup>).

Two of them are part of series already well-known among children: the pop-up book *Penelope at the Louvre* and *Timoté visits the Louvre. Petit Noun et les signes secrets* (“Little Noun and the Secret Signs”) is the sequel to the successful picture book *Petit Noun: L'Hippopotame bleu des bords du Nil* (“Little Noun: The Blue Hippopotamus on the Banks of the Nile”) by Géraldine Elschner and Anja Klauss, published in the “Pont des arts” collection by L'élan vert and Réseau Canopé. Three genres are included here: the three publications made for early readers belong to either the pop-up book or picture book genre, while the comic book is also included for older children, and is rare among children's art books.<sup>8</sup> The content generally plays on the contrast between conventional setting (the family or school visit to the Louvre) and tone, as with *Génération Pyramides*, or on a museum exploration inserted into a fictional story.

*Timoté visits the Louvre* is an exception. The book depicts a family visit to the Louvre, following the typical path<sup>9</sup>: entering through the Pyramid, discovering masterpieces—*Winged Victory of Samothrace*, *The Mona Lisa*, Arcimboldo's *The Four Seasons*—and buying

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6 Since this article was written, several books have been published using the same approach, including the third volume of *Souris du Louvre*, *Martine au Louvre*, and *Barbapapa au Louvre* in 2021. There are, as well, other works not co-published by the Louvre, such as the “Strom” series by Emmanuelle and Benoît de Saint-Chamas. It should also be noted that the books cited in this article contain other pleasures and interests alongside didactic elements.

7 Regarding this subject, the authors quotes Brée (1993) and Derbaix (1982).

8 To my knowledge, only two other children's comic book series pick art as its theme: “Musnet” by Kickli, published by Dargaud (4 volumes, 2016-2017) and “L'histoire de l'art en BD” by Marion Augustin and Martin Heitz, published by Casterman (6 volumes, 2016-2020).

9 In *Pénélope au Louvre*, the interaction between the koala Pénélope and the artwork does not reflect the real conditions of a museum visit.

a souvenir in the gift shop. While the book is not a guide—this particular route being impossible to carry out with children, due to the artwork’s dispersed locales in the museum—it can help make the museum more familiar to children and parents. When *Timoté visits the Louvre* was published, the series had already released 21 books on everyday activities (riding a bike, dressing up, riding the train, visiting the fire station), and the subsequent Louvre visit fit in nicely. The fact that the characters are already well-known allows the Louvre to meld easily with the child’s world, while the context of purchasing the book also plays a part in its success with a young readership. Not only is the book a top seller in the Louvre bookstore, but it is also sold in supermarkets and advertised in the catalogue *France loisirs*, attracting a readership that has not visited the Louvre.

## A secret visit to the Louvre

Rather than grounding the visit in the child’s daily routine, other books try to depict the visit as a special occasion, infusing it with mystery, fantasy, and magic. All the picture books, whether it be *Petit Noun et les signes secrets* or the Delcourt series, set the principal part of the plot at moments when the museum is closed, notably at night. Géraldine Elschner and Anja Klaus’s picture book is steeped in this nocturnal atmosphere: the little turquoise hippopotamus stands out against a dark blue starry background, while “mysterious signs,” or hieroglyphs, float around him, as pale blue as the Egyptian landscape he dreams of.

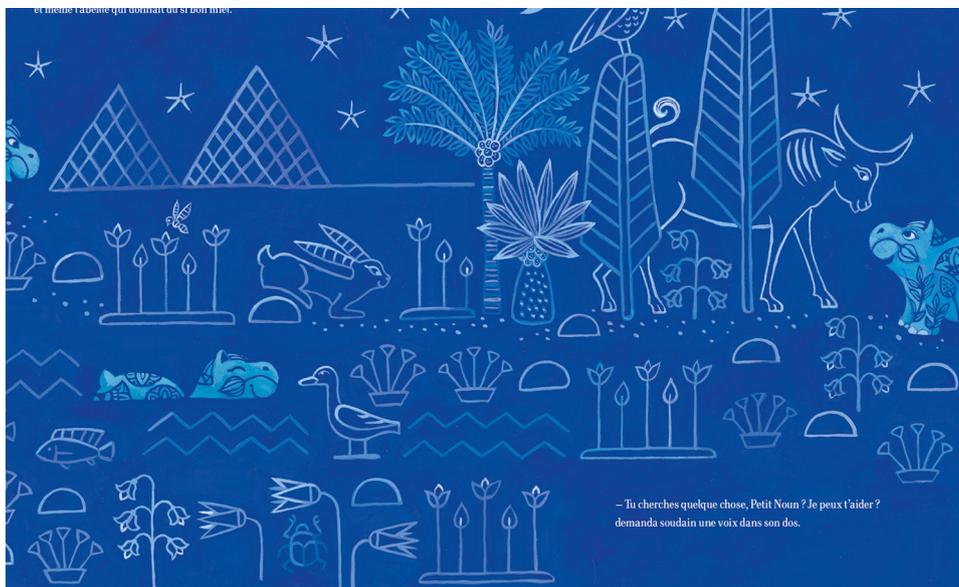


Fig 1. Géraldine Elschner, Anja Klaus. *Petit Noun et les signes secrets (Louvre)*. Paris : Louvre éditions ; Saint-Pierre-des-Corps, L'élan vert, 2020. © *Petit Noun et les signes secrets (Louvre)*. L'Élan vert, 2020.

The picture book presents views of the Nile in these shades of blue with bright pops of ochre, along with glimpses of the blue *Petit Noun*, of whom the title of this sequel refers, a title which continues the quest, while reversing it: in *Petit Noun: L'Hippopotame bleu du Nil*, the character Petit Noun reunites with his ancestors in the glass pyramid of the Louvre at the end of a long journey through space and time.

In the sequel, the hippopotamus leaves its display case to find, with the help of hieroglyphs, the memory of his disappeared universe. This symmetry is accompanied by a displacement. “Pont des arts,” a series of educational picture books, explicitly mentions each book’s theme directly in their titles. While the first volume dealt with “Ancient Egypt,” the second (co-published by L’Élan vert and the Éditions du Louvre), is about the museum, as indicated on the cover. As with the comic book *Gaspard et la malédiction du prince fantôme*, fiction attempts to make the past (via the museum, history’s repository) alive and engaging for young readers. Heuristic fiction aligns with the museum in the picture book by Géraldine Elschner and Anja Klauss, through the label on the display case which protects the Egyptian faience hippopotamus statuette, where readers find the inscription “Petit Noun.” The character Noun undergoes museumification, while the Egyptian figure gets fictionalized, a melding which invites the reader to experience the museum visit by exploring an imaginary space, charged with emotions, rather than visiting a repository of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> The use of hieroglyphs in *Petit Noun et les signes secrets* is proof of this approach: though the seated scribe has mastered the signs, he is mute. He does not translate the hieroglyphs for the hippopotamus, but rather writes them, tracing a lost universe that unfolds visually across the page, stimulating an emotional memory for the character—as well as for the children who have read the original picture book in the series. The possibility that a child will feel attached to the character Noun is further reinforced with a stuffed animal created by L’Élan vert, who also publishes a series of small-format picture books about this hero for young children.

These books, whose primary focus is the museum space rather than the artwork found inside, establish a link with young audiences by representing them in the context of a visit. The five comic books published by Delcourt show children maneuvering around in the museum. In *Le Cheval qui ne voulait plus être une œuvre d’art*, as well as in *Les Tableaux de l’ombre*, this scene is rather brief: one page in the first comic book (42), nine (out of 66) in the second.

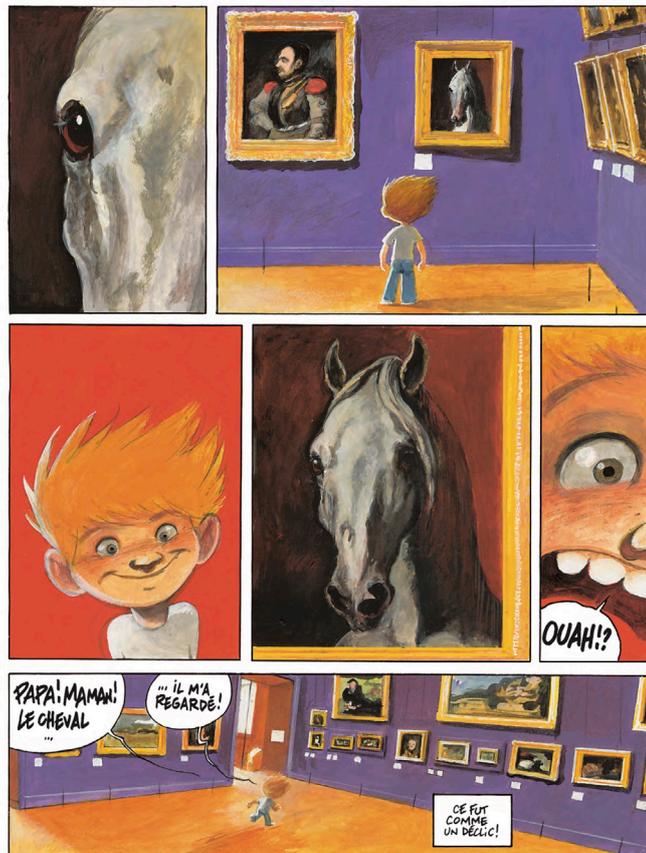
Both books turn characters from Louvre paintings into the stories’ protagonists, and in doing so, question the value of the artwork.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the child is there as a viewer of art. In *Les Souris du Louvre* and *Gaspard et la malédiction du prince-fantôme*, the heroes are two little boys, one accompanied by a mouse called Aesop, and the other by the ghost of Ankhti, the little Egyptian girl. Both have family ties to Louvre staff (Milo, in *Les Souris du Louvre*, is the son of a curator, while Gaspard is the nephew of a guard), which

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10 As with every book in the “Pont des arts” collection, *Petit Noun et les signes secrets* provides an unusually long factual appendix at the end of the volume, consisting of two double pages rather than one.

11 For more on this subject, see Virginie Duchêne-Alliot’s interview of Jean Dytar in *Actuabd* (<https://www.actuabd.com/Jean-Dytar-Les-Tableaux-de-l-ombre-Ed-Delcourt-l-Art-l-air-de-rien>).

allows them to wander around the Louvre at times when it is closed, and in spaces that are off-limits to the public, thus setting up the parameters of a fantasy often exploited by fiction and documentary films<sup>12</sup> which use the Louvre as background decor. These picture books give access to a secret Louvre, like the bridge to an imaginary world—one of ghosts, living artwork, and a mouse kingdom—adding to the museum’s aura, and in this way giving children the desire to visit. Unlike with *Timoté*, these books are not about suggesting proper museum behavior, since even the youngest readers know they will not see the ghost of Ankhti or Géricault’s horse come to life—even if they do wonder about the presence of mice in the Louvre; rather, these books are about transforming one’s imagination when it comes to making a museum visit, by providing a different scenography.



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Fig. 2 : Olivier Supiot. *Le Cheval qui ne voulait plus être une œuvre d'art*. Musée du Louvre Éditions / éditions Delcourt, 2016, p. 42. © Musée du Louvre Éditions / éditions Delcourt / Olivier Supiot.

12 For documentary films, see for example *Louvre la nuit* (2018) by Sarah Chaumette, and *Une nuit, le Louvre* (2017), directed by Valérie Amarou and Jean-Pierre Devillers for France 5, featuring Lambert Wilson. For other museum stories, see Galard.

## A friendly familiarity with the artwork

A child usually discovers a museum through two distinct experiences (Goffman): the school visit and the family visit, both of which are in fact represented. In *Le Cheval qui ne voulait plus être une œuvre d'art*, the little boy who admires Géricault's horse comes with his parents ("Dad! Mom!" 42); *Les Tableaux de l'ombre* opens with a school visit, one the future cartoonist of the comic is partaking in as his child self; the first pages of *Les Souris du Louvre* show Milo giving a presentation on the museum, the first volume also features his class visit, while at the beginning of *Gaspard et la malédiction du prince fantôme*, Gaspard warns his uncle that he will have to give a presentation on hieroglyphics to justify not coming to the Greek wing. But these parameters exist only to be transgressed or subverted. In *Les Tableaux de l'ombre*, a little boy encounters the artwork because he loses his group and finds himself alone with paintings by Palamedes. The boy in *Le Cheval qui ne voulait plus être une œuvre d'art* also contemplates the painting alone, whereas on the previous page, the painting was surrounded—perhaps smothered?—by stereotypical comments emanating from an out-of-focus crowd.

From the outset, Milo and Gaspard have privileged access to the artwork because of their family connections, which allow them to wander around the museum alone. Milo's presentation at the beginning of the picture book demonstrates his unusual perspective: he does not photograph the artwork, but the visitors. And it is not just Milo who sees the artwork and the museum differently than adults, but all the children in these picture books.<sup>13</sup> In *Gaspard et la malédiction du prince-fantôme*, the children visiting the Louvre all see Ankhiti, while the adults are unable to. When confronting the allegory of hearing in Palamedes's painting *L'Ouïe*, and Géricault's *The Head of White Horse*, the respective children in Jean Dytar's and Olivier Supiot's picture books exchange glances with the paintings, with the panels alternating between closeup shots of the child and the painted subject. This play between shot and counter-shot demonstrates the artwork's fictional coming-to-life, but also constructs a gaze that does away with temporal distance and other conventions of the pictorial medium, creating a living, dynamic rapport with the artwork. This living rapport, one of friendship, is established completely outside of any knowledge about the artwork, even if certain books, as with *Petit Noun*, provide informational pages at the end.

It is important to note that *Le Cheval qui ne voulait plus être une œuvre d'art*, and *Les Tableaux de l'ombre*, whose themes return to the question of artwork's value, rid their plots entirely of this traditional understanding of the child-viewer and painting relationship, in order to establish a new standard, a sort of elected affinity, symbolized by a reciprocal gaze. As an adult, the illustrator character in *Tableaux de l'ombre* does not explain to his children

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13 This unusual perspective is emphasized on the back cover of *Gaspard ou la malédiction du prince-fantôme* ("The Louvre's department of Egyptian Antiquities holds an infinite number of wonders; Gaspard, whose uncle works in the museum, would tell you it's a place of amazing, even terrifying adventures [...].") and the back cover of *Tableaux de l'ombre* ("When a little boy deigns to give him a genuine look, the musician has no idea that his destiny and those of his friends are about to change"), while the back cover of *Souris du Louvre* points out Milo's knowledge of the museum and stages the shift in his gaze: he is depicted photographing his friend Victoire in front of the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*.

the symbolism behind Palamedes' allegories, nor even utter the painter's name. He shows his affection for the paintings and evokes their emotional power, providing further proof of the intimate, friendly approach on which the artistic relationship is established: "I got the impression that they understood me. Suddenly, I was no longer alone. That comforted me..." (Dytar, 65); "I want a share a memory with my favorite little paintings!" (Dytar, 67). What the adult passes on here is not his taste—his kids actually find the paintings "all small, all ugly"—rather, he demonstrates the freedom of walking around the museum and finding a favorite work of art of their own choosing: the "silly" ice skaters that his daughter looks at (Dytar, 66) for example, or the "broom closet" (*View of an Interior*) where their mother "stops to stare" (Dytar, 67).

Other picture books depict adult figures who possess a certain knowledge about the artwork. For example, Gaspard asks his uncle about the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* (Dethan, 34). Conversely, Christophe Barbotin, chief curator of the Egyptian Antiquities Department (playing himself) solicits Gaspard's knowledge (Dethan, 29): the child's sensory experience of seeing Ankhti is valued in comparison to the curator's knowledge, which does not impact the plot. Ankhti gives the necessary information to Gaspard or the reader, through the incarnated Egyptian gods Bastet and Thoth, and through page notes, with the exception of page 66, when the curator explains who the little girl was. Milo's mother's status as curator only serves to give Milo access to the museum: his knowledge comes from Henryk, a storytelling guard who has secrets of the Louvre, and passes on the most important one to Milo due to his unique perspective: "I liked him right away, this kid. He looked at things differently," Henryk explains at the beginning of the second volume, to Phémis, the lyric-singing mouse (Chamblain, Goalec, 2019b, 3). Here again, a certain way of looking takes precedence over knowing. Milo's schoolteacher does not deliver any knowledge on the artwork. In the Cour Marly, she simply encourages the children to "let the emotion rise" (Chamblain, Goalec, 2019a, 24) before instructing them to draw a work of art.

## Chosen Affinities

By shifting away from both the nonfiction genre and the school excursion setting, these picture books seem to suggest that solitude—being far away from the school group, the family, and the crowd of visitors—is *the* prerequisite to forming a rapport with artwork. The avant-gardes' idea of a kinship between child and artist is just as active here as the Malrucian conception of an intuitive relationship to art: they share the same intense gaze, with the artist attempting to consciously regain a spontaneous relationship with the art.<sup>14</sup> Knowledge, in this case, only comes later, and to a certain extent must be overcome. At the same time, the supposed naturalness of this affinity between child and art is undermined by the social context depicted. Milo and Gaspard are regulars at the museum,

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14 This idea is frequently made explicit in children's books, particularly when the authors are artists with fine arts backgrounds: such is the case with Sophie Curtil (53), and less recently with sculptor Noor-Zadé Brener (6). Jocelyne Beguery showed how the link between child and artist as a trend found a whole slew of children's art books, which she demonstrated in particular through Sophie Curtil's collection "Art in game" at the Center Georges Pompidou (Beguery).

able to break free from the institutionalized museum visit framework. In *Le Cheval qui ne voulait plus être une œuvre d'art* and *Les Tableaux de l'ombre*, encounters with paintings occur when the time is ripe, resulting from lucky happenstance, which both the family and school excursion, respectively, make possible: a necessary opportunity in a moment of grace that cannot be forced. However, *Les Tableaux de l'ombre* ultimately depicts a family transmission by choice. Whereas the other schoolchildren come to feed on inauthentic notoriety,<sup>15</sup> the illustrator, as artist, passes on to his children the means to developing an intimate relationship with art in an effective, implicit way. School, for its part, only seems able to succeed through its failure: as a child, the illustrator got lost in the museum and did not participate in the planned visit. Milo's teacher's misguided emotional approach ends up encouraging a student to smear charcoal on a statue. This incident becomes an important narrative point, as it prompts Aesop the mouse to reveal himself, as he moves to protect the art. In terms of demonstrating a good relationship between children and art, this is a failure on the school's part, unless perhaps an ironic success, by expressing a negative relationship, if direct and authentic, to a work of art.

The school visit is consistently used as an anti-model in books representing museum visits, where the pleasure of an alternative teaching method proposed here is contrasted with forced school education (see Ducos). But what these museum-published comic books also paradoxically let us see is that the real-life conditions of children's museum visits might be inadequate when discovering art. Unlike *Timoté visits the Louvre*, these comics present counter-models, not models for school visits, and call for a shift in practices, disqualifying institutional art mediation. The only valid mediation here would be that of a passionate adult, and would be exceptionally voluntary and undemocratic. At the same time, the modernity and seduction inherent in the comic book genre, along with the lack of a didactic dimension, reveal a possibly conservative aspect in these books' depicted relationship between child and art, a relationship which seems reserved for privileged amateurs who are graced in large part by adhering to a world of art insiders.

As Daniel Jacobi has shown, the museum visit is as much a means of discovering the art on display as it is a means of establishing a visit habitus. Many books focus on this habitus, whether or not they are published by museums or are about a specific museum, as much to convey its norms as to deconstruct them, on the assumption—apparently a fairly widely shared one—that museum visits are not very alluring to children, especially art museums, and especially if the art consists of paintings.<sup>16</sup> In reality, this depends more on children's familiarity with the museum space and on the family relationships maintained during the experience, according to one research project headed Anne Jonchery, and another led by Joëlle Lagier, Virginie de Barnier, and Kafia Ayadi.

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15 Dytar imagines his comic book being reviewed by the YouTuber Cyprien, thereby attracting young fans to flock around the "shadow paintings." However, this flattering fame is later deemed worthless by the subjects in the paintings: "It's rubbish! That's not real love," Tobias declares (Dytar, 63).

16 This is the premise described on the back cover of multiple picture books featuring fictional museum visits, such as *L'Ange disparu*, by Max Ducos: "Today, Éloi and his class must visit the city's fine arts museum. A mandatory field trip that the boy finds totally boring... that is until a painting starts speaking to him, entrusting him with a confidential mission!" (Ducos)



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Fig. 3 : Jean Dytar. *Les Tableaux de l'ombre*. Musée du Louvre Éditions / éditions Delcourt, 2019, p. 63. © Musée du Louvre Éditions / éditions Delcourt / Jean Dytar.

Here the Louvre is not just any publisher, since it plays a role inside the story, within the enunciation. Though it is admittedly difficult to differentiate between the authors' and publisher's intentions, it is up to the latter to choose the generic scene: fictional picture books and comic books are enticing genres to children, promising entertainment and emotion. Furthermore, Delcourt's young adult version of the comic book collection co-published with Futuropolis (29 publications, 2005-), consistently uses the museum as the story setting. In order to come up with an original fiction, the authors are thus compelled to structure what we might call a counterpoint scenography, distinguishing their work in contrast to previous Louvre ethos that attempt to refute it, even though it is not clear if it is deterring the young audience. Furthermore, we should note that publications targeting the widest possible readership, such as *Timoté Visits the Louvre* and, more re-

cently, *Martine au Louvre*,<sup>17</sup> depict family and school visits as a positive experience with important codes to impart. Comic books, conversely, seem to correspond to the type of readers who take an interest in familial museum events—workshops, storytelling hour, and evening visits—thereby offering children a more sensory, emotional approach to discovering the museum; these fictions don't reshape this approach, but rather reinforce it.

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**Ivanne Rialland** is assistant professor at Centre d'Histoire Culturelle des Sociétés contemporaines (CHCSC), at Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines University (UVSQ, Université Paris-Saclay), France.

**Email** : ivanne.rialland@free.fr