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## *The Paris Salon des Médecins (1909-1939): Amateur Art and Professional Culture*

### **Résumé :**

Le présent article livre les premiers résultats d'un projet de recherche sur l'histoire des médecins-artistes au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, à la croisée de l'histoire de l'art amateur et de celle de la profession médicale. En 1909, la création du Salon des médecins de Paris s'inscrit dans le sillage d'autres expositions artistiques amateurs dites « corporatives ». Son activité participe également des débats qui entourent l'identité professionnelle du médecin, et qui touchent en particulier au rôle des humanités, et des arts, dans la formation et la pratique médicale. Dès lors, l'article retrace l'histoire du Salon des médecins de Paris, de ses origines jusqu'à la vogue de l'« humanisme médical » dans la France des années 1930. Après avoir précisé le contexte de sa fondation, l'article analyse, dans un premier temps, le groupe social des exposants : d'une part, sa représentativité au sein du champ des professionnels de santé ; d'autre part, ses représentations du médecin-artiste, comme nouveau visage du médecin humaniste. Dans un second temps, à l'échelle individuelle de Raimond Sabouraud, il s'attache à préciser les modalités de la performance d'un tel idéal, et ses marges de manœuvre.

### **Mots-clefs :**

Profession médicale – Sociabilités professionnelles – Art amateur – Médecin-artiste – Humanisme médical – Sabouraud

### **Abstract :**

This article presents the initial results of a research project on the history of physician-artists in the twentieth century, at the intersection between the history of amateur art and the history of the medical profession. In 1909, the Paris “Salon des médecins” (Physicians’ Salon) was created, following in the footsteps of other so-called “corporative” amateur art exhibitions dedicated to particular professional groups. The Salon’s activities also played a role in debates about the physician’s professional identity, especially regarding the role of the humanities and the arts in medical training and practice. This article retraces the history of the Salon des médecins, from its inception through to the rise of “medical humanism” in 1930s France. After outlining the context in which the Salon was founded, the article firstly analyses the social group constituted by the exhibitors, examining, on the one hand, its representativeness within the field of health professionals, and on the other, its representations of the physician-artist as the new face of the humanist doctor. Secondly, the article looks at the individual case

of Raimond Sabouraud, examining the ways in which he performed the ideal of the physician-artist and the room for manoeuvre that this ideal allowed.

**Keywords:**

Medical profession – professional sociability – amateur art – physician-artist – medical humanism – Sabouraud

**Figure captions:**

Figure 1. Henri Wagner, “Les Vocations” [The Vocations] special issue of *L’Assiette au beurre*, 262 (7 April 1906), 857 (cover). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, RES G-Z-337.

Source gallica.bnf.fr / BnF.

Figure 2. Paul Colin, Poster for the Salon des médecins, 1911. Engraving on wood. 60 x 41 cm. Private collection.

Photograph taken by the author.

Figure 3. Honoré Broutelle, Apollo teaching Aesculapius to paint. Engraving on wood, reproduced on the cover of the exhibition catalogue of the Salon des médecins of 1925. Private collection.

Photograph taken by the author.

Figure 4. Henri Le Clerc, Apollo teaching Aesculapius to paint. Engraving on wood, reproduced on the cover of the exhibition catalogue of the Salon des médecins of 1929. Private collection.

Photograph taken by the author.

Figure 5. Raimond Sabouraud, War Memorial Monument, 1918. Reproduced in Raimond Sabouraud, *sculpteur* (Paris, 1929), xliii.

Photograph taken by the author.

In 1909, Raimond Sabouraud (1864-1938), a famous dermatologist specializing in scalp conditions who was also a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur, moved into what would be his final abode: a private mansion at 62 rue de Miromesnil in Paris. Visitors were welcomed with a pivoting sign which read, on the one side, "The Father is downstairs", indicating that Sabouraud was receiving clients in his office on the ground floor, and, on the other, "The Father is upstairs", indicating that he was to be found on the top floor, in his sculpture studio.<sup>1</sup> This spatial arrangement provided a physical reflection of Sabouraud's two occupations in the latter part of his life, when he pursued a dual career as a professional physician and an amateur artist. In that same year of 1909, the first ever Salon des médecins (Physicians' Salon) opened its doors in Paris. It inaugurated a long series of events that, each year, assembled the art works produced by members of the medical profession, but also by pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians.<sup>2</sup> Sabouraud contributed to the Salon from its second iteration in 1911 until his death in 1938, and was then honoured by the institution the following year with a retrospective of his work.

The Salon des médecins was created in the wake of various other so-called "corporative" associations, which were founded from the beginning of the century for amateur artists drawn from a single profession. Reacting to the announcement of the new medical society of amateur artists, the journalist Jean Mitron remarked in 1908: "All professions allow for leisure time. However, industrious minds rest from their professional

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This article presents initial results from a broader project devoted to the history of physicians' arts associations in the twentieth century. I welcome contact from anyone with an interest in this topic, whether researchers, medical doctors, or owners of archives or works of art by physician-artists, whether in France or abroad.

<sup>1</sup> A photograph of this sign is preserved in the Raimond Sabouraud Collection. Paris, Institut Pasteur, Pôle Archives du Centre de ressources en information scientifique (CeRIS), SAB.1.

<sup>2</sup> The Salon des médecins was held from 1911 to 1912, from 1924 to 1931, from 1933 to 1939, and finally from 1948 to 1975.

work by undertaking amateur work. [...] The new fashion is for Salons organized by profession.”<sup>3</sup> Far from being viewed as a pointless dissipation, pluriactivity of this kind was considered to be a form of voluntary, continuous subjection to the value of work and serious leisure, extending from the professional sphere to that of *otium*.<sup>4</sup> The rise of corporative arts associations at the turn of the century also pointed to the emergence of careerism among amateur artists.<sup>5</sup> These career amateurs represented the most ambitious of non-professionals, those who strove to obtain public recognition for their talents and who, in order to do so, displayed their work publicly, often in associations that imitated the traditional bodies offering recognition to professional artists (Salon de la Société des artistes français, Salon de la Société nationale des beaux-arts, Salon de la Société des artistes indépendants, Salon d’Automne) without enjoying the same legitimacy. The early twentieth-century amateur salons, including the Salon des médecins, contributed to establishing alternative or pseudo-professional art worlds. However, unlike the Société artistique des amateurs (Society of Amateur Artists), founded in 1896, which gave the aristocracy and leisured upper middle classes the respectability of a pseudo-profession, corporative amateur associations conferred a second pseudo-professional identity upon participants who already belonged to a profession or company.<sup>6</sup> This form of pluriactivity is therefore only very distantly similar to that of professional artists who, according to the model put forward by the sociologist Eliot Freidson, use an often educational “host” activity to secure the monetary resources necessary for

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<sup>3</sup> Jean Mitron, “Échos du Jour,” *La Petite République* (1 February 1908), 1.

<sup>4</sup> On the notion of serious leisure, see Robert Stebbins, *Amateurs, Professionals and Serious Leisure* (Montreal, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> On this topic, see Hadrien Viraben, “La Société artistique des amateurs (1896-1914): le grand monde au travail,” *Revue d’histoire moderne contemporaine*, 68–1 (2021), 99–126.

<sup>6</sup> On the Société artistique des amateurs, see *ibid.*

sustaining a genuinely creative “parasite” activity.<sup>7</sup> In the case of professionals pursuing an amateur art career, and particularly in the case of physician-artists, their aim was not so much to fuel their creative work as to draw from it the symbolic resources to consolidate the cultural identity, and thus the unity, of their profession.

The Paris Salon des médecins lies at the intersection between, on the one hand, my prior research on the history of career amateur artists, approached as an alternative history of artistic work, and, on the other hand, a new direction of inquiry, focusing on physician-artists and contributing to the history of both the medical profession and the medical humanities. Analysis of the Salon sheds light on the symbolic resources that the medical profession drew from amateur artistic practice. The chronological limits chosen for the purposes of this article allow the mechanism to be examined from the Salon’s inception through to the rise of “medical humanism” in 1930s France, a movement which Raimond Sabouraud championed within the Salon association. The physician-artist was one facet of the “humanist physician” among others, such as the physician-poet or the physician-collector, which have recently been brought to light by work on the social and cultural history of the medical profession.<sup>8</sup> Less well-known than their literary counterparts of the interwar period, physician-artists began to band together at the turn of the twentieth century by establishing, through their Salon, a place where they could meet in person, socialize, encounter refinement, and unite as a profession.

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<sup>7</sup> Eliot Freidson, “Les professions artistiques comme défi à l’analyse sociologique,” *Revue française de sociologie*, 27–3 (1986), 431–443. Freidson draws a parallel between the informal pluriactivity of artistic professions with the institutional pluriactivity of academic professions combining teaching and research.

<sup>8</sup> On the physician-poet, see the results of the project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and led by Alexandre Wenger: “La figure du poète-médecin (20<sup>e</sup>-21<sup>e</sup> s.): une reconfiguration des savoirs” especially Alexandre Wenger, Julien Knebusch, Martina Díaz and Thomas Augais, eds., *La figure du poète-médecin: xx<sup>e</sup>-xx<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Chêne-Bourg, 2018). On the physician-collector, see Gilles Monney, Camille Noverraz and Vincent Barras, *Pierre Decker: médecin et collectionneur* (Chêne-Bourg, 2021).

Their exhibitions form part of the history of the medical profession's sociability outside the conventional spaces and times of work. Alongside the institutional history of medical professionalization and the debates about plans for a national professional association of physicians (Ordre des médecins) in the first half of the twentieth century, the Salon des médecins became a space for shared leisure time, as a direct extension of its members' principal activity. In this respect, it duplicated the virtual connections created at the same period by new cultural journals also specifically addressing the medical profession.<sup>9</sup>

This article presents some initial results from a broader project focusing on the history of physicians' arts associations in the twentieth century. Among other sources, it draws on an almost complete series of catalogues from the Paris Salon des médecins between 1909 and 1939, from which only the 1934 catalogue is missing.<sup>10</sup> The article begins by returning to the Salon's origins, at the intersection of the history of corporative amateur artists' associations

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<sup>9</sup> For an insight into the history of these journals since the nineteenth century, see Bruno Bonnemain, "Les périodiques médicaux financés par l'industrie du médicament: une histoire de plus d'un siècle," *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie*, 96-364 (2009), 399-416. On their rapid expansion in the inter-war period, see Martina Díaz, "Panorama des revues médico-littéraires à l'Entre-deux-guerres," in *Réseaux médico-littéraire dans l'Entre-deux-guerres: Revues, institutions, lieux, figures*, ed. Julien Knebusch and Alexandre Wenger (Besançon, 2018), 15-45; idem, "Soigner les marottes médicales: Le financement pharmaceutique des revues médico-littéraires à l'entre-deux-guerres," in *Marketing et stratégies éditoriales aux XX<sup>e</sup> et XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. Brigitte Diaz and Marie-Hélène Boblet (Caen, 2018), 141-162.

<sup>10</sup> Despite no catalogue being found for the year 1934, the quantitative data collected remains sufficiently reliable, as it is based on the analysis of eighteen catalogues between 1909 and 1939. This series includes publications from: the Institut national d'histoire de l'art (Paris); the Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris; the Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de Santé Médecine (Paris); the Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (Saint-Germain-la-Blanche-Herbe); the Frick Art Reference Library (New York); and my own personal collection. Transcriptions of the catalogues, in spreadsheet format, can be downloaded in open access at the following link: [Harvard Dataverse].

and the history of the medical profession. It considers the Salon's inception in the context of the call to unite the "great medical family" and of reflections about the medical vocation. Second, the social history of the community brought together by this association is examined through to 1939 by analysing socio-professional characteristics that reveal an expansive conception of the "medical family". In light of this analysis of the Salon's representativeness, the article then moves on to focus on the representation and image of the physician-artists created by the Salon. In particular, the latter is envisaged as one of the matrices for the humanist values upheld by the profession from the turn of the century onwards. This connection between the Salon des médecins and 1930s French medical humanism is further consolidated through the figure of Raimond Sabouraud. Shifting focus to the individual level of his specific case, the article ends by considering how the ideal of the physician-artist was applied in practice and what room for manoeuvre it allowed, examining its concrete performance in Sabouraud's life and work.

### **1. Coming together in the name of a vocation**

In 1909, the first Salon des médecins appeared as the medical profession's reaction to the increasing number of corporative arts associations. It followed the creation of other annual exhibitions dedicated to: railway workers (1901); postal, telephone, and telegraph workers (1903); officers of the army and navy (1907); and state employees of the Préfecture de la Seine (1908). By renting out the Cercle de la librairie for the physicians' inaugural exhibition, the organizers placed it on the same footing as, in particular, the "Palais-Salon" for professionals of the judiciary and the courts, whose work had hung on those same walls since 1906. A month after the second Palais-Salon in 1907, the press mentioned plans for a "Bistouri-Salon" (literally, Lancet Salon) put forward by the young dental surgeon and



engraver François Ferrand (1877-1953).<sup>11</sup> Recognizing that his initial name for the event was perhaps unfortunate, on 8 December 1908 he registered the statutes for an “association of artists belonging to the medical profession” under the title “Apollon” (Apollo), the ancient patron of the arts and of medicine. The association’s stated aim was to organize “artistic and humanitarian events”.<sup>12</sup> Only a few short months later, the name “Esculape” (Asclepius) was eventually retained by the new medical arts association for its first public exhibition in 1909. The more common “Salon des médecins” became established usage from 1911 onwards. During these denominational fluctuations, Ferrand’s role progressively receded behind that of Paul Rabier (1864-1932) who, until his death, remained the Salon’s general secretary, recognized founder, and principal organizer.

While the plan for a “Bistouri-Salon” appeared as a response to the Palais-Salon and is therefore part of the broader history of corporative amateur arts associations, it also emerged within the specific context of the medical profession at the time, several members of which had already acquired a certain reputation in professional art salons. Shortly after Paul Richer was inducted into the French Academy of Fine Arts on 22 July 1905, several of his fellow physicians decided to meet regularly over informal dinners. These were first of all referred to as the “*hors cadre*” dinners (a pun on the literal meaning, “outside the frame”, and another sense of the term referring to professional secondment). They were then renamed the hermaphrodites’ dinners and finally the “*dîners des bicéphales*” (literally, the dinners of the two-headed). From the start of 1906 onwards, the *bicéphales* dinners became an elite circle

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<sup>11</sup> On Ferrand, see Rémi Hébert, “François Ferrand (1877-1953): un demi-siècle de passion pour Pierrefonds,” *Annales historiques compiégnoises*, 139-140 (2015), 49-54; Pierre Baron, “François Ferrand (1877-1953), chirurgien-dentiste, entrepreneur, collectionneur et mécène,” *Actes de la Société française d’histoire de l’art dentaire*, 21 (2016), 43-48.

<sup>12</sup> “Les Salons professionnels: Apollon dieu des arts et de la médecine,” *La Presse* (4 March 1908), 2; “Annonces,” *Journal officiel de la République française. Lois et décrets*, 16 (17 January 1909), 579-580.

made up of a few professionals enjoying recognition in two fields: “One is only accepted among the Bicéphales if one composes music and it is played; if one paints or sculpts and these works are exhibited in one of the Salons; if one writes verse and that poetry is published; if one is a playwright and those plays have been staged.”<sup>13</sup> The term “*bicéphales*” became established in the press to refer to any physician who also engaged in a parallel creative activity.<sup>14</sup> Three years later, the first Salon des médecins considerably extended the scope of the *bicéphales*’ dual career. It recruited its exhibitors from the entire medical profession by offering its members an alternative, pseudo-professional form of recognition beyond the Salons held by professional artists, not unlike self-publishing or publishing at the author’s expense.

The founding of the Salon des médecins also addressed concerns about the medical profession becoming disunited and its values disintegrating. Paul Rabier, who quickly became the Salon’s central figure even though he never exhibited any works there, was a particularly prolific chronicler of this crisis. Far from being an event on the margins of the history of the medical profession, the Salon des médecins was closely linked, through its organizer, to the profession’s circumstances in the early twentieth century. In 1904, Rabier’s thesis, *Du rôle social du médecin* (On the physician’s social role) had been based on the advent of the technocratic reign of the physician in modern society, replacing the rule of lawyers which had preceded it.<sup>15</sup> In order to become this “state within the state”, Rabier called upon his

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<sup>13</sup> Louis Schneider, “Chez les Bicéphales,” *Gil Blas* (5 March 1908), 2.

<sup>14</sup> As well as being used in the accounts published of the Salon des médecins, the term was also employed in the medical-literary press of the interwar period. See Martina Díaz Cornide and Alexandre Wenger, “Henri Mondor et la revue *Art et Médecine*: construction de l’idéal du ‘médecin littéraire’ dans les années 1930,” in *Médecins-écrivains français et francophones: Imaginaires, poétiques, perspectives interculturelles et transdisciplinaires*, ed. Julia Pröll, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Henning Madry (Wurtzbourg, 2018), 107-110.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Rabier, “Du rôle social du médecin” (PhD thesis, Faculté de médecine de Paris, 1904).

colleagues to rebuild “the great medical family” in order to fight the threats facing their freedom, income, and authority. Among the authors to whom Rabier deferentially referred, he drew in particular on the code of ethics recently professed by Paul Le Gendre and Gabriel Lepage, aimed at regulating relationships within the profession with a view to perfecting a corporative alliance soon to become a reality.<sup>16</sup> After his thesis, in the many articles he wrote for the medical press, Rabier continued to construct a prescriptive model for the physician’s identity – one that could unite all his colleagues. One of the key components in that identity was the notion of vocation, to which he devoted two articles in 1910 in the journal *La Médecine moderne*. These were excerpts from a longer manuscript entitled *Grandeurs et misères médicales* (Medical Splendours and Miseries) which was never published.<sup>17</sup>

Significantly, four years earlier, the trans-professional topos of vocation had also been chosen by Henri Wagner (1897-1960), who would go on to be one of the leading lights of the Salon des médecins between 1911 and 1930. He dedicated a series of lithographs to this topic, which were published in April 1906 in a special issue of *L’Assiette au beurre* (figure 1). Wagner, who was the son of a physician, pursued several careers in the 1900s: he was an engraver, novel illustrator, and press caricaturist, who exhibited in the Salon d’Automne; he was a poet in his private leisure time;<sup>18</sup> and he was also a physician in training.<sup>19</sup> In 1906, his series of lithographs included, among other things, several representations of figures engaged

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Le Gendre and Gabriel Lepage, *Le Médecin dans la société contemporaine, conférences de déontologie* (Paris, 1902).

<sup>17</sup> Paul Rabier, “Chronique: Apprentissage et vocation,” *La Médecine moderne*, 14 (2 April 1910), cv-cvi; idem, “Chronique: Apprentissage et vocation (suite),” *La Médecine moderne*, 15 (9 April 1910), cxiii-cxiv.

<sup>18</sup> Several of Wagner’s first poetic writings are collected together in his monumental work *La Misérable aventure*, held at the engravings department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (classification mark: TA-173 (A)-FOL and TA-173-4).

<sup>19</sup> After the war, Wagner abandoned medical practice in favour of becoming a medical illustrator.

in intellectual work (judges, authors, doctors, priests, soldiers) in which vocation and careerism were shown to be at odds with one another. On the cover of the issue in question, the head of a young man being prevented from pursuing his vocation, and whose mouth is gagged, is held in the firm grip of a man dressed as an academician, while another figure works on his brain in order to extract all its moral qualities (“intellectual sentiments”, “benevolence”, “humanity”, “cheerfulness”, “hope”, and “love”) and replace them with arriviste qualities (“senility”, “hypocrisy”, “cruelty”, “pride”, “selfishness”, “platitude”, and “banality”). This choice of theme is not surprising coming from Wagner, who multiplied vocation-based endeavours, for he felt that vocation was threatened by the notion of career understood as the pursuit of monetary and symbolic rewards.

One of the issues at stake in Rabier’s 1910 text was precisely how to reconcile the morality of vocation with the desire for differentiated recognition and remuneration. This was a central argument in the construction of the physician’s professional identity and one of the reasons for the progressive distance taken from the religious model from the late nineteenth century onwards.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, aside from the question of vocation, artistic activities converged with medical practice in another area, namely the fact of working independently. Both fall under the French “*professions libérales*”. For Rabier, the appeal to vocation in 1910 was a moral guarantee against arrivisme and he argued that vocation should be tested regularly throughout medical studies. In line with Republican principles, vocation also justified incorporating into the medical professional a chosen few, potentially drawn from the lower social classes (like Rabier himself), to whom nature had given a “gift” that could

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<sup>20</sup> See in particular the statements made by Félix Delfau in 1868, quoted in Hervé Guillemain, “Devenir médecin au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Vocation et sacerdoce au sein d’une profession laïque,” *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l’Ouest*, 116-3 (2009), 109-123, at 118.

compensate for their lacking the natural heritage of physicians' sons.<sup>21</sup> Rabier drew on the parallel between physicians and artists to express the role that vocation played in the medical profession, which ultimately remained the sign of higher birth into a profession deemed to be innate. Beyond that, Rabier argued, the parallel between art and medicine also justified the unequal income of private practice: "But [since medicine] is an art, and some who excel in it make profit from it, it is perfectly moral for them once again to owe their fortune to their superiority. Do we not see wealth being acquired in all the other arts by those who master them?"<sup>22</sup> The potentially sizeable earnings of private medical practice were based on the unequal distribution of talent and of innate gifts that were then cultivated to varying degrees during medical training, thus establishing a hierarchy among practitioners. Beyond simply calling upon the arts or humanities in order to reassert the intellectual value of medicine by counterbalancing exclusively scientific views of it, in Rabier's discourse, artistic work also appeared as a professional model able to rival the more traditional model of the religious calling, which presupposed renouncing worldly goods. The intersection of medical and artistic identities proved capable of providing the medical profession with the discursive resources – the notions of having a gift, being a genius, or possessing talent – with which to reconcile the contradictory values it championed in the early twentieth century: a vocation that was open to everyone but that was nevertheless innate, and a disinterestedness compatible with independent and free market working conditions.

## **2. The representativeness of the Salon des médecins**

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<sup>21</sup> Rabier, "Apprentissage et vocation," cvi. Rabier was the son of a salaried worker, who died a few years after he was born.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

As a corporative association, the Salon des médecins had to be representative of the “great medical family” that Rabier wished to rebuild from 1904 onwards.<sup>23</sup> The expression “medical family”, which was relatively common at the time, is reminiscent of trade union language, which the medical profession adopted in the twentieth century to describe its own union as a “great family”, dubbing its disciplinary body the “family council”.<sup>24</sup> The expression was repeated every year in the advertisements published in the specialist press to encourage participation in the Salon des médecins. In 1926, Rabier is reported to have once again mentioned the “medical family” brought together by the Salon – a family he wished to strengthen further still by setting up a “medical arts centre” and an “artistic and literary journal written solely by us”.<sup>25</sup> In the meantime, though, the boundaries he ascribed to this family had shifted and the Salon’s representativeness had extended beyond the medical profession in its strictest sense.

The Salon’s longevity was a key issue in this question of representativeness and warrants examination. Throughout the first half of the century, quite remarkably, the annual exhibition managed to maintain or even to increase the number of its participants. At the first three pre-war Salons, between 1909 and 1912, the average number of exhibitors per year was 52 and the average number of works 256. After the First World War, in the seven Salons that took place between 1924 and 1929, the average number of exhibitors per year almost doubled, reaching 139, with the average number of works climbing to 433. These figures stabilized according to the eight catalogues available for the following decade, between 1930 and 1939, with an average of 141 exhibitors and 444 works each year.

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<sup>23</sup> Rabier, “Du rôle social du médecin,” 66.

<sup>24</sup> Audric Capella, *L’encadrement des professions médicales en France: la création des ordres professionnels, XIXe - XXe siècles* (Limoges, 2019), 77-78.

<sup>25</sup> Léon-Gabriel Toraude, “Les pharmaciens au VIe Salon des médecins,” *Bulletin des sciences pharmacologiques*, 4 (April 1926), 73-76, at 76.

This development is not solely explained by the association attracting increasing numbers of doctors in medicine. From its very inception, the exhibition presented itself as a “Salon of physicians, dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians”. It was not, however, necessarily self-evident to group together this larger family of health professionals whilst continuing to exclude several categories of auxiliary professionals. When the Salon began, the identity of the person behind the plan for a “Bistouri-Salon”, the dental surgeon François Ferrand, had already prompted irritation in the journal *La Revue médicale*, which expressed the concern that uniting physicians and dental surgeons, “mixed together in a skilful and congenial fraternity” would sow confusion in the minds of the public.<sup>26</sup> The intention was to avoid encouraging dentists to follow in the footsteps of pharmacists and claim the right to the title “doctor”, over which the medical profession wished to keep their monopoly. The plan for the Salon only partially managed to mask the insistent quarrel between physicians and all those they considered to be usurping their title – first and foremost pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians.<sup>27</sup> The opening up of the Salon des médecins remained relatively cautious in 1909, to the extent that Claudien Ferrier, an art correspondent for *La Liberté* criticized the limitations of the health professionals’ “family Salon” compared to the Palais-Salon which encompassed the diverse judicial professions far more broadly:

A dentist, Mr François Ferrand, was very lucky to manage to sneak in among the exhibitors [...] and he was only able to enjoy such a privilege because he was the one who first had the idea of this medical Salon. The doors of the “Esculape” may have been held ajar for a

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<sup>26</sup> “Revue générale: France: Le salon des médecins,” *La Revue médicale*, 720 (29 April 1908), n.p.

<sup>27</sup> Julie Fette, *Exclusions: Practicing Prejudice in French Law and Medicine, 1920-1945* (Ithaca, NY, 2012), 79-81.

dentist, but they remained hermetically sealed to pharmacists, health officers [*officiers de santé*, i.e. medical practitioners who did not have a medical degree], midwives, truss makers, herbalists, and bonesetters.<sup>28</sup>

In reality, as well as a dental surgeon, the first salon of 1909 did also include a pharmacist (Raymond Bouty) and an *officier de santé* (Clément Chaussegros). The association even went on actively to recruit pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians, targeting them directly through their specialist press. However, the union formed by these different professional groups seems to have been fragile. In 1933, the veterinarians temporarily left the association's ranks to organize their own Salon during the Veterinary Congress (Journées vétérinaires) held between 9 and 11 June. They reiterated the experience during the Journées vétérinaires of 1935, although this time they also attended the Salon des médecins. That same year, in November 1935, it was the pharmacists who held an entirely separate art exhibition under the aegis of the Paris Pharmaceutical Congress (Journées pharmaceutiques). In reaction, Pierre-Bernard Malet (1911-1999), Rabier's successor at the head of the Salon des médecins, published a call to order in the *Bulletin des sciences pharmacologiques*, in which he lamented the "dispersal of the initiative" and the jeopardizing of the exhibition's funding – the cost of renting rooms and installing the works was indeed particularly high.<sup>29</sup> The Salon's inclusiveness, which always ran the risk of losing sight of the specific interests of the medical profession, was therefore also a way of meeting a practical need, that is to say of reaching a sufficient number of participants to cover the event's expenses and enhance its visibility and impact.

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<sup>28</sup> Claudien Ferrier, "L'Esculape," *La Liberté*, (27 November 1909), 1.

<sup>29</sup> Pierre-Bernard Malet, "Le XVIe Salon des Médecins," *Bulletin des sciences pharmacologiques*, 5 (May 1936), 125-128.



In 1924, when the Salon des médecins was reconstituted after the war, it was announced in the press that it would open up its galleries further still, this time allowing the wives and children of health professionals to participate. The “great medical family” henceforth extended to exhibitors’ relatives who were assumed to be professionally inactive. This extension was significant on several levels. First of all, because it went hand-in-hand with the Salon’s increasing feminization: the percentage of women exhibitors rose from 1.8% before the war (with only one in 1912) to 11.3% in 1924, the year in which the Salon opened its doors to relatives, and even 22.6% the following year. It then stabilized at an average of 34.8% female exhibitors between 1928 and 1939. This is all the more remarkable given that corporative amateur exhibitions generally presented the particularity of being overwhelmingly male, in striking contrast with the usual conflation of amateur art with feminine art.<sup>30</sup> The arrival of women and children not only rendered the composition of the Salon des médecins more conventional in terms of what might have been expected from an amateur art exhibition, it also reinforced the extension of the identity and culture of the medical profession into the realm not only of *otium* but also of domesticity. This was a matter of applying in practice a phenomenon that had been developing since the start of the century, when the medico-cultural press was already referring to the “medical home” as an organic whole, taking its tone from the professional identity of the head of the household.<sup>31</sup> Although this second expansion of the “medical family” again met the pragmatic need to obtain a critical mass of exhibitors, it also, and more profoundly, subscribed to an ideological imperative.

More broadly still, the Salon des médecins embedded its exhibitors’ works within a professional visual culture, with extra sections devoted on occasion to physicians’ collections,

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<sup>30</sup> Viraben, “La Société artistique des amateurs (1896-1914),” 114-115.

<sup>31</sup> See for example the cover of the first issue of the journal *Le Home médical*, a “Journal of the physician’s family interests”, published in July 1911.

medical art journals, medical publicity, caricaturists, and invited artists. In the very first exhibition of 1909, a retrospective of the work of decorator Henri Ballery-Desfontaines (1867-1909) showed once again an extension of the medical profession's cultural identity, this time to interior design. All these efforts, the reality of which called into question the idea of a Salon of professional physicians-amateur artists, were nonetheless necessary in order to extend the exhibition's quantitative and qualitative impact. In this regard, in 1935 Raimond Sabouraud reported a remark he had made to Rabier when the latter came to present him with his plan for an exhibition:

So I said to him: "Either this Salon will only involve physicians, without their close relations in the paramedical professions, and it will be both very narrow and very disparate. You could not hope to find a Ruysdaël among us, and if there were one, there would not be two. Or this Salon will be open to physicians, to their families, to their close relations, to the paramedical professions. It will be more composite still and some professionals will necessarily enter, who will not compete with us on equal terms. It will become a Salon like so many others."<sup>32</sup>

If the Salon des médecins had remained strictly limited to doctors in medicine, its chances of shining by discovering accomplished masters in the two arts would have been objectively very small. By extending its remit, it lost its specificity and diluted its ideal, but gained in both longevity and conventionality, finding a lasting place in the Parisian art calendar.

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<sup>32</sup> Raimond Sabouraud, "Le Salon des médecins, une consultation prénatale," in *XVème Salon des médecins, dentistes, pharmaciens, vétérinaires* (Paris, 1935), 13-14, at 14.

Alongside these measures extending its remit in various ways, the Salon also managed to replenish its ranks by attracting medical students.<sup>33</sup> Pierre-Bernard Malet, who, upon Rabier's death in 1933, took over from him as the Salon's secretary and principal organizer, set the example. Like his predecessor, Malet was not a natural heir to medicine, but also came from the middle classes. Malet was the son of a sculptor and set himself apart from Rabier by exhibiting in the Salon des médecins from 1931 onwards. Following on from Rabier, Malet's commitment to running the event, while he was still a student, corresponded more generally to his commitment to defending the interests and distinct identity of the medical profession. In 1936, Malet was elected president of the Parisian association of medical students (Association des étudiants en médecine de Paris), an alternative to the Parisian corporative association of medical students (Association corporative des étudiants en médecine de Paris), sharing with the latter the common objectives of fighting foreign invasion and excessive specialization, as well as supporting the plan to create an Ordre des médecins.<sup>34</sup>

Thanks to these various strategies for expansion, the Salon des médecins saw a particularly substantial turnover between 1909 and 1939. Of the 944 exhibitors identified over this period, half of them only presented their work once. The boundary of the highest decile (made up of the 10% most regular exhibitors) is relatively low (five exhibitions out of the eighteen scrutinized). This core is made up of 125 exhibitors, who together were the most invested in the Salon, and its composition offers at least a partial indication of the exhibition's

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<sup>33</sup> In the data collected thus far, the average age of physician, dentist, pharmacist, and veterinarian exhibitors remains steady in the 40-50 year age bracket suggesting that, for the period in question, the Salon continuously opened itself up to younger participants to compensate for the progressive ageing of its exhibitors.

<sup>34</sup> Pierre-Bernard Malet, "Enquête sur l'organisation de la profession médicale," *AEMP*, 5 (December 1936), 4. In 1937, Malet was also elected president of the new Parisian Federation of Students (Fédération des étudiants de Paris).

representativeness in the long term.<sup>35</sup> A quick prosopographic overview of this group (table 1) reveals that it remained very largely composed of doctors in medicine (54% of the total). It also confirms that it was mainly by inviting the relatives of professionals to participate that the Salon became feminized: the wives, daughters, and very occasionally sisters of physicians and pharmacists represent 21.6% of the most regular exhibitors and 81.8% of all the women identified in the top decile.

Profession	Medicine		Pharmacy		Dentistry		Invited professional artists (of which women)	Unidentified (of which women)
	Physicians (of which women)	Relatives (of which women)	Pharmacists (of which women)	Relatives (of which women)	Dentists (of which women)	Relatives (of which women)		
Number	73 (1)	27 (25)	9 (0)	2 (2)	7 (1)	0 (0)	1 (0)	6 (4)

**Table 1: Professional distribution of the exhibitors in the top decile (n = 125)**

Opening up the Salon to relatives of health professionals also lowered the average age of its exhibitors (table 2).

Decade of birth	1841-1850	1851-1860	1861-1870	1871-1880	1881-1890	1891-1900	1901-1910	1911-1920	Data unavailable
Number (of which relatives)	1 (0)	10 (1)	24 (2)	39 (4)	16 (4)	18 (11)	9 (7)	3 (2)	5 (4)

**Table 2: Distribution of the exhibitors in the top decile according to decade of birth (n = 125)**

Taking inspiration from George Weisz's work, it seems relevant to engage in an initial inquiry into the social backgrounds of the health professionals belonging to this core of the most regular exhibitors (table 3).<sup>36</sup> The results show some divergence with the data collected

<sup>35</sup> These are the initial results of a larger prosopographic survey, reduced to the top decile of exhibitors for the purposes of this article.

<sup>36</sup> The methodology employed here takes up that proposed by George Weisz, *The Medical Mandarins: the French Academy of Medicine in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford, 1995), 259.

by Weisz about the members of the French Academy of Medicine, considered as the elite of the medical profession, for the years 1901 and 1935: a lower percentage of exhibitors were the children of judges, engineers, and the propertied, but also, and above all, a lower percentage were children of health professionals.<sup>37</sup> Looking at physicians alone does not change the figures substantially and in particular, the percentage of physicians exhibiting who were the sons of physicians themselves remains lower than the results of Claudine Herzlich et al's survey of a sample of the medical profession as a whole.<sup>38</sup>

Father's occupation	Whole group (n = 89)	Physicians only (n = 74)
<i>Propriétaires, rentiers</i> , magistrates, state engineering corps	8 (9.0%)	8 (10.8%)
Physicians, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, medical professors	13 (14.6%)	11 (14.9%)
Legal professions, secondary school and higher education teachers, artistic and intellectual professions, intermediate state employees	24 (27.0%)	22 (29.7%)
Tradesmen and shopkeepers	15 (16.9%)	12 (16.2%)
Craftsmen, salaried workers, primary school teachers, low-level state employees, farmers	22 (24.7%)	16 (21.6%)
Data unavailable	7 (7.9%)	5 (6.8%)

**Table 3: Father's occupation for the physicians, pharmacists, and dentists identified in the top decile (n = 89)**

The data suggest that rather than offering a space of recognition for the hereditary elite of medicine, the Salon des médecins was open to health professionals from other social horizons, reflecting the backgrounds of both its first secretary-organiser, Paul Rabier, and his successor Pierre-Bernard Malet. This recruitment can be related back, once again, to the position adopted by Rabier in 1910, championing middle-class physicians such as himself

<sup>37</sup> Weisz's figures for these two categories in 1901 and 1935 are respectively between 16% and 14% and between 28% and 22%. Ibid., 260.

<sup>38</sup> Claudine Herzlich, Martine Bungener, Geneviève Paicheler, Philippe Roussin and Marie-Christine Zuber, *Cinquante ans d'exercice de la médecine en France: carrières et pratiques des médecins français: 1930-1980* (Paris, 1993), 32.

alongside the sons of physicians, and his opposition to the former dean Georges Debove's plan to exclude them from medical training.<sup>39</sup> In this sense, the Salon des médecins allowed its most committed exhibitors to reaffirm the legitimacy of their inclusion in the medical profession, insofar as being associated with it testified to their substantial cultural capital and conferred upon them the ideal image of the highly cultivated physician-artist.

### 3. Representations of the physician-artist

Although the Salon des médecins – to use its most common abbreviation – in fact represented a very large “medical family” bringing together several different health professionals and extending to their relatives, in the eyes of the public it remained associated with a single representation: that of the physician-artist. All the Salon's textual and visual discourse was devoted to that figure, accentuating the gap between the representativeness and the representations of its participants. As stated in the introduction, the figure of the physician-artist became a new facet of a polymorphous professional identity. This figure was sometimes described as “*bicéphale*” (two-headed) but also as an “*honnête homme*” or a “*médecin humaniste*” (humanist physician), terminology that was also used at the time to refer to the physician-writer.<sup>40</sup> This constructed identity served as a prescriptive model throughout the first half of the twentieth century, since it was at the heart of the processes professionalizing

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<sup>39</sup> Rabier, “Apprentissage et vocation,” cvi.

<sup>40</sup> The figure of the “*honnête homme*” (literally, honest man) became established from seventeenth century in France, as an ideal model of social behaviour, which valued extensive knowledge of the liberal arts and the necessary qualities for engaging in courtly life and polite society. Martina Díaz, “Esthétiser la médecine: la revue *Art et médecine* (1929-1939),” *Cahiers internationaux de symbolisme*, 146-147-148 (2017), 75-92; Díaz, “Panorama des revues médico-littéraires à l'entre-deux-guerres”; Díaz, Cornide and Wenger, “Henri Mondor et la revue *Art et Médecine*”.

the medical field, especially in terms of its moral self-regulation. The progress made in medical ethics at the turn of the century, in which Rabier was particularly interested, focused above all on manufacturing the persona of the physician and on regulating medical sociability, thus relegating the physician-client relationship to a secondary position. In 1929, the first article of a National Code of Ethics drawn up by the Confederation of French Physicians' Unions (Confédération des syndicats médicaux français) stated that: "Whether in public or in private life, the physician must, as a very function of his profession, be the perfect *honnête homme*; he must, through his conduct, his words, his way of living, impose respect for his honour and his dignity, as well as the honour and dignity of the medical profession."<sup>41</sup> Far from putting up any resistance, the Salon des médecins consensually espoused these initial principles of medical ethics: that there was a continuum between the two lives of the physician, professional and private; that the physician should be self-disciplined in his way of living according to the principles of *honnêteté*, understood here in its traditional meaning of social and cultural distinction, thanks to the emphasis created by placing the adjective "*honnête*" before the noun "*homme*".

Paul Rabier defended the model of the *honnête homme* in his 1920s writings at the periphery of the Salon. The genealogy he drew up of that figure created singular links with the rise, in the nineteenth century, of learned societies and provincial associations of erudite amateurs, whose classical culture and scientific curiosity he seemed to appreciate far more than the irreligion and attitude of revolt that characterized the Enlightenment salons.<sup>42</sup> He then applied this same quality of *honnêteté* to the Salon's leading exhibitors, such as Charles Villandre, Honoré Broutelle, and Jean Hallé, whom he gave as examples in monographic

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<sup>41</sup> On this topic, see Capella, *L'encadrement des professions médicales en France*, 75-77. For an insight into the history of French medical ethics as professional etiquette, see for example Robert Nye, "Médecins, éthique médicale et État en France 1789-1947," *Le Mouvement social*, 214 (2006), 19-36.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Rabier, "Le Médecin et la vie: L'Honnête homme," *Paris médical*, 46-40 (7 October 1922), 213-214.

articles.<sup>43</sup> Malet also took up the expression, including in the circular announcing the exhibition.<sup>44</sup>

In general, the physician-artist as an *honnête homme* has much in common with the description that John Warner gives of the “gentleman-physician” in his work on medicine in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century and on the rise of the history of medicine and of medical bibliophilia.<sup>45</sup> As part of a genealogy of medical humanism and of the meaning ascribed to the humanities in medicine, Warner refers to a phenomenon that was inextricably linked to the advent of biomedicine in physicians’ training and practice.

According to Warner, medical humanism emerged at the turn of the twentieth century in response to concerns about the cultural decline of the profession produced by the increasing importance of experimental science and laboratories. The classical humanities were seen as an antidote to excessive reductionism, specialization, and mercenary attitudes. They completed the authority of modern science by appealing to the traditional “art of medicine” capable of transcending divisions within the profession in the name of shared and timeless values and culture.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the French counterpart of the United States’ gentleman-physician was translated into an image on the occasion of the 1911 Salon des médecins. Paul Colin, who had become a professional engraver after initially training in

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<sup>43</sup> Idem, “Nos Médecins artistes: Charles Villandre: Dessinateur, peintre, sculpteur,” *L’Art médical*, 65 (15 Novembre 1928), 22-25; idem, “Honoré Broutelle”, *L’Art médical*, 70 (31 January 1929), 2-3; Paul Rabier, “Arts et lettres: Le Docteur Jean Hallé: Médecin des Hôpitaux de Paris: Peintre et Aquarelliste,” *L’Art médical*, 75 (15 April 1929), 27-29.

<sup>44</sup> See for example “Dernières nouvelles,” *Le Concours médical*, 48 (27 November 1938), 3000.

<sup>45</sup> John Warner, “The Humanizing Power of Medical History: Responses to Biomedicine in the 20th Century United States,” *Medical Humanities*, 37-2 (2011), 91-96; idem, “The Aesthetic Grounding of Modern Medicine,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 88-1 (2014), 1-47.



medicine, was chosen that year to illustrate the poster for the exhibition (Figure 2). The proofs were then used by the journal *Æsculape*, which distributed them as a bonus to its subscribers.<sup>46</sup> The image took up one of the topoi of the contemporary iconography of the artist, namely the figure of the plein air painter, most especially associated with amateur artistic production since the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> The medical appropriation of the iconography of the plein air painter continued that same year in a second engraving by Colin, representing a physician fighting against inclement weather.<sup>48</sup> From its inception and throughout the whole period, reviews of the Salon des médecins noted the considerable number of landscape paintings hanging on its walls, in marked contrast with the almost total absence of medical subjects. The physician-artists' predilection for plein air landscapes, which is a feature shared by all amateur exhibitions, was interpreted in such a way as to be framed as specific to physician-artists. The plein air painter was conflated with another major archetype in medical mythology of the time, namely the *médecin de campagne* or country doctor, the guardian of rural and human private practice, in the face of mainly urban, hospital (or even bureaucratized) medicine increasingly based on expertise in the indoor space of the laboratory.<sup>49</sup> At the heart of Paris, the 1911 Salon des médecins celebrated the figure of a country doctor nonetheless positioned at a good distance from a peasant couple reprising

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<sup>46</sup> See *Æsculape*, 4 (April 1911), iii; *Æsculape*, 5 (May 1911), iv.

<sup>47</sup> Hadrien Viraben, "Autour d'un tableau de Jules Denneulin (1894): peindre 'en amateur' et peindre 'en plein air', une image du travail artistique," *Romantisme*, 190 (2020), 40-51. On the iconography of the plein air painter, see also Bruno Weber, "Die Figur des Zeichners in der Landschaft," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, 34-1 (1977), 44-82; Anna Grosskopf, *Die Arbeit des Künstlers in der Karikatur: eine Diskursgeschichte künstlerischer Techniken in der Moderne* (Bielefeld, 2016), 175-247.

<sup>48</sup> *Æsculape*, 3 (March 1911), 54.

<sup>49</sup> Colin's image was directly echoed in the use made of Luke Fildes' painting *The Doctor* in campaigns in the United States from the 1930s onwards. Warner, "The Aesthetic Grounding of Modern Medicine," 32-45.

Millet's *Angelus* and from whom the physician was further set apart by his bourgeois clothing.

In France at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Salon des médecins followed the same specific trajectory as the broader issue of *honnêteté* in medicine. The debate about the humanities in medicine was rooted in opposition to the 1902 reform that opened the doors of the country's medical and legal faculties to holders of the *baccalauréat* with no training in Latin and Greek, indispensable until then. Rabier alluded to this context in 1910, when he asserted that the literary *baccalauréat* was better suited to preparing students for medical studies than its scientific counterpart, associating the literary curriculum with the timeless figure of the "physician philosopher" better able to sway patients and to consider in the round phenomena that analytical minds dissect in minute detail.<sup>50</sup> This defence of the humanities once again revived a conception of medicine in which the clinical encounter was paramount and which was contrasted in increasingly schematic terms with laboratory medicine. In 1912, in the journal *Æsculape*, Maxime Laignel-Lavastine (1875-1953) summarized the arguments of proponents of the classical humanities and of what he called "medical humanism", whose ranks had progressively swollen since the 1902 reform.<sup>51</sup> These arguments were part of a discourse that would tirelessly be repeated and according to which these disciplines were said to provide: training in the intellectual and moral qualities of order and hierarchy, the ramifications of which often extended beyond medical practice alone, encompassing a conservative vision of social organization and its values; the means for regulating the number of students, excluding those most lacking in cultural capital, thus maintaining the physician's charisma, or symbolic authority, in the face of the rest of society; and finally the consolidation

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<sup>50</sup> Rabier, "Apprentissage et Vocation," cvi.

<sup>51</sup> Maxime Laignel-Lavastine, "L'utilité des études classiques pour la carrière médicale," *Æsculape*, 1 (January 1912), 21-24 ; idem, "L'utilité des études classiques pour la carrière médicale (Fin)," *Æsculape*, 2 (February 1912), 25-29.

of a “univocal culture” necessary for “good fraternity” amongst physicians.<sup>52</sup> A few months earlier, in the same journal, one of the reviews of the first Salon des médecins had already included an affirmation of the medical profession’s classical culture, describing the arts as “the most fertile ground for developing good fraternity between colleagues”.<sup>53</sup> In 1924, Rabier painted yet another portrait of the physician as an *honnête homme*, which he took further still this time praising the classical humanities as serving “to create a mentality, a shared way of thinking, a common ideal, and thereby to provide common ground for certain men”.<sup>54</sup> Between 1925 and 1928, Laignel-Lavastine himself became a member of the Salon’s honorary committee and exhibited his watercolour landscapes twice at the event. In 1932, he gave an interview to Rabier in which he defended his personal predilection for the history of medicine, among the humanities, but also more broadly the physician’s duty to pursue an artistic hobby.<sup>55</sup>

From this point on, the history of the Salon des médecins mirrored that of the consensus in favour of the classical humanities, which was reactivated after the First World War by various attempts to reinstate the requirement for a Greek-Latin *baccalauréat* in order to study medicine.<sup>56</sup> These debates were revived with the Bérard reform in 1922 and then, above all, in the context of the Armbruster bill against the proliferation of medical professionals and the invasion of foreign physicians, with the proposed amendment by Senator Charles Debierre in 1930 aiming to reinstate the requirement for a *baccalauréat* in classical languages. Although ultimately the amendment was not retained in the 1933 law, those favouring the classical

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>53</sup> Quercus, “Le premier Salon des médecins,” *Æsculape*, 3 (March 1911), 69.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Rabier, “Le Médecin et la vie: Les humanités en réforme,” *Paris médical*, 54-41 (11 October 1924), 292-294, at 292.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Rabier, “Le Professeur Laignel-Lavastine,” *L’Orientation médicale*, 6 (July 1932), 21-22.

<sup>56</sup> On this topic see in particular Fette, *Exclusions*, 73-77.

humanities still appeared to be in the majority among the French medical profession. Its teachers were massively persuaded of the need for Latin, slightly less so for Greek.<sup>57</sup> The majority of students themselves came from the literary stream, whose social prestige remained higher than that of the scientific stream until the 1950s.<sup>58</sup> It was in this context that the expression “medical humanism” came into vogue in France, uniting a variety of authors against biomedicine and reductionism. Alongside Catholic medical humanism, Laignel-Lavastine in particular, through his journal *Hippocrate* founded in 1933, embodied a classical medical humanism.<sup>59</sup> Two years later, the humanist terminology was adopted at the Salon des Médecins by Raimond Sabouraud, who wrote the preface to the exhibition catalogue in 1935: “the physician is nourished by ancient culture through classical studies which have turned him into an unintentional humanist”.<sup>60</sup>

The image of the physician-artist publicized by the Salon was itself gradually transformed from the 1920s. In place of the country doctor in modern dress, the catalogues substituted an apparently classical but entirely imaginary iconography, namely that of a young

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<sup>57</sup> Paul Cibrie and Charles Hilaire, “Notre enquête auprès des Facultés et Écoles de médecine au sujet des Études médicales,” *Le Médecin de France*, 17 (September 1932), 697-750.

<sup>58</sup> Herzlich et al., *Cinquante ans d'exercice de la médecine en France*, 46-48; Bénédicte Vergez-Chaignon, *Le monde des médecins au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Brussels, 1996), 28-31.

<sup>59</sup> For a contextualization of Laignel-Lavastine’s “medical humanism” in the interwar period, especially its links with “holism” and “neo-hippocratism”, see George Weisz, “A Moment of Synthesis: Medical Holism in France between the Wars,” in *Greater than the Parts: Holism in Biomedicine, 1920-1950*, ed. Christopher Lawrence and George Weisz (Oxford, 1998), 68-93; idem, “Hippocrates, Holism and Humanism in Interwar France,” in *Reinventing Hippocrates*, ed. David Cantor (Aldershot, 2002), 257-279; Léo Bernard, “La médecine néo-hippocratique des années 1930: le temps d’une rencontre,” *Histoire, médecine et santé*, 14 (2018), 63-81. On the Catholic medical humanism of the same period, see in particular Jean-Victor Élie, “‘Former une élite médicale chrétienne’: La Conférence Laënnec à Paris dans les années 1930,” *Émulations*, 38 (2021), 35-48.

<sup>60</sup> Sabouraud, “Le Salon des médecins, une consultation prénatale,” 13.

Aesculapius practising drawing under the guidance of Apollo. In 1925, a new image, by a Salon celebrity, the physician-artist Honoré Broutelle (1866-1929), was chosen to adorn the catalogue cover, where it remained until 1929 (Figure 3). Once again, it was borrowed from the traditional imaginary of the field of art, and more specifically from a famous episode in Vasari's *Lives*, which had been widely illustrated since the nineteenth century: the moment when Giotto, at the time a young shepherd drawing one of his animals, met Cimabue, who would go on to be his master.<sup>61</sup> In this new appropriation of the episode, Broutelle entirely fabricated the figure of Aesculapius as an artist, ascribing to him the central theme of the original myth, which was that of the innocent eye.<sup>62</sup> The notion of the innocent eye, occasionally used by amateurs, argues that an untrained artist's view of nature produces originality.<sup>63</sup> In the medical context, the value thereby ascribed to visual acuity no doubt also evoked a gift for diagnosis. However, unlike the images that showcase the master Cimabue's astonished admiration upon seeing his future disciple's innate talent, in Broutelle's work, the innocent eye of the physician-artist requires the guidance of Apollo, the tutelary authority of the humanities in medicine. His posture in this piece is reminiscent of his posture in Nicolas Poussin's canonical work *The Inspiration of the Poet* (ca. 1629, Louvre), or more broadly of that of the angel guiding Saint Matthew in the writing of his Gospel.

In 1929, a new definitive choice of publicity image was made by the Salon des médecins, after having first been used once in 1924. It was another engraving, this time by

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<sup>61</sup> The symbolic importance of this anecdote in the mythology of art, has continued to be emphasized ever since Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz's pioneering *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven, 1979), 22-26.

<sup>62</sup> On the topic of the innocent eye and its role in the imagery of the old masters, see in particular Francis Haskell, *Past and Present in Art and Taste: Selected Essays* (New Haven, 1987), 90-116.

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, the statements made by the "bicéphale" Pierre Delbet, a physician and ceramicist, reported in Sonia, "Les 'Hors cadre'".

Henri Le Clerc (1894-1970), who exhibited at the Salon in his capacity as a physician's son (Figure 4). This second iconography of Aesculapius receiving training in drawing from Apollo marked the Salon's definitive abandonment of the reference to the country doctor in favour of a timeless ancient culture. The reference was even more literal in the new engraving. In the place of the goat that Aesculapius was drawing in Broutelle's piece, we find a Venus, derived from the canonical models of the *Medici Venus* and Praxiteles' *Aphrodite of Knidos*. Facing her, Apollo's posture is in turn more explicitly in the tradition of the *Apollo Belvedere*. These quotations of the Graeco-Latin tradition work alongside a deliberately archaic effect by means of a composition on a metope, within which the figures are represented strictly in profile or facing forward, have finer contours and less pronounced modelling than those of Broutelle. From the 1920s onwards, the Salon des médecins thus presented itself as the breeding ground for a horizon of Graeco-Latin expectations that had been growing since the beginning of the century, and whose watchword, "medical humanism", would progressively become clearer especially from the 1930s onwards.

#### **4. Embodying the ideal of the humanist physician**

In 1935, the preface to the Salon's catalogue written by Sabouraud, a newly appointed member of the organizing committee, marked the convergence between the interests of physician-artists and those of the new French medical humanism, around a single culture of Graeco-Latin persuasion.<sup>64</sup> The text, which was widely praised and quoted by the press, was republished on the occasion of the 1939 Salon just after its author's death, alongside a retrospective of his work. Sabouraud wrote this preface during a period of unprecedented focus on essay writing. In 1933, he had published an initial collection of reflections under the

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<sup>64</sup> Sabouraud, "Le Salon des médecins, une consultation prénatale."

title *Pêle-mêle* (Miscellanea), then, the following year, an offprint entitled *Le Médecin hors de la médecine* (The physician outside medicine), resulting from two articles written for the journal *La Presse médicale*, and finally, in 1937, he authored a book that was explicitly humanist in spirit entitled *Sur les pas de Montaigne* (In Montaigne's footsteps).<sup>65</sup> Through his writings, Sabouraud defended the requirement for Latin and Greek, aligning himself in particular with the positions held by Antoine Marfan, who was one of the authoritative voice of the Association corporative des étudiants en médecine de Paris's political activities.<sup>66</sup> In Sabouraud's case, this stance was accompanied by an extremely hierarchical vision of the social order, at the top of which stood an upper class divided between saints, artists, and scholars. In his view, the physician fell into all three categories.<sup>67</sup> In developing his own conception of the humanist physician, Sabouraud, more originally, associated the value of the "amateur" with that figure. This conflation between the humanist and the amateur, repeated in particular in his 1935 preface, takes advantage of the ambiguity of the second term by referring via one of its original meanings to a patron of professional modern art, on the model of the princes of the Renaissance, and in the image of Sabouraud, himself a collector of works produced by the school of Paris.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Maxime Laignel-Lavastine, in particular, published a review of the book: "Humanisme médical," *Hippocrate*, 1 (January 1938), 61-64.

<sup>66</sup> Maurice Mordagne, "L'Enseignement secondaire jugé par un pédiatre: L'Opinion du Professeur Marfan," *La Presse médicale*, 51 (25 June 1932), 1009-1010; Antoine-Bernard Marfan, "Les Humanités gréco-latines et les Études médicales," *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (16 August 1932), 4-5; Antoine-Bernard Marfan, "Les Humanités gréco-latines et les Études médicales (À propos d'un article de M. Prosper Merklen)," *La Presse médicale*, 88 (2 November 1932), 1647-1648.

<sup>67</sup> Raimond Sabouraud, *Le Médecin hors de la médecine* (Paris, 1934), 1-7, 26-27.

<sup>68</sup> Sabouraud bought Modigliani's *Standing Nude (Elvira)* (1918, Kunstmuseum Bern) which, after his death, entered the collection of Walter Hadorn, the president of the Salon of Swiss Physicians.

Sabouraud's Graeco-Latin erudition was widely apparent in his sculptural work from the beginning of the century onwards. In his second submission to the Salon des médecins in 1912, his *Léda et le cygne* (Leda and the Swan) bore a long Greek epigraph on its plinth, borrowed from an obscure erotic epigram by Antiphilus of Byzantium.<sup>69</sup> This hermetic approach continued after the war in one of his versions of *Le Rut* (The Rut) with the plinth this time sporting lines from Lucretius' *De natura rerum*, which Sabouraud no doubt took from Montaigne's *Essays*.<sup>70</sup> In an amateur Salon largely dominated by landscapes, Sabouraud's work stood out for its interest in both the human figure and in classical culture, which were also signs of his ambition. His commitment to his artistic career, in a medium considered difficult, flourished after the war as he took part in several traditional Salons, in a context in which professional sculpture saw a sharp rise in war memorials.<sup>71</sup> At the 1924 Salon des médecins, Sabouraud presented one of his attempts in the genre of commemorative public statuary with *Debout les morts* (Arise, ye dead).<sup>72</sup> However, it was in the privacy of his studio that he made a model planning his most ambitious work, a *Monument mémorial de la guerre* (War Memorial Monument) (Figure 5).<sup>73</sup> The project's scenography was in line with the tradition of turn-of-the-century republican public monuments, with their sculptural overlay on the architecture.

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<sup>69</sup> The work is reproduced in Alphonse Lepaitre, "Le troisième Salon des médecins," *Æsculape*, 4 (April 1912), 93-96, at 94, URL: [www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/histmed/medica/page?111512x1912&p=208](http://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/histmed/medica/page?111512x1912&p=208).

<sup>70</sup> Raimond Sabouraud, *sculpteur* (Paris, 1929), xvi.

<sup>71</sup> Sabouraud exhibited in particular at the Autumn Salon in 1912 and then from 1921 to 1937. Philippe Rivé, ed., *Monuments de mémoire: les monuments aux morts de la Première Guerre mondiale* (Paris, 1991); Claire Maingon, *L'âge critique des salons, 1914-1925: l'école française, la tradition et l'art moderne* (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2014), 164-180.

<sup>72</sup> Raimond Sabouraud, xxxvii.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, xliii.



Sabouraud's work tried to compete with professional statuary and proved to be informed by certain issues in the contemporary art world, as well as by a form of classicism that was more complex than a simple neo-Hellenistic reaction. In 1924, Élie Faure, a physician who was better known for his work as an art critic, and who was a staunch supporter of modernity without exactly being avant-garde, published an analysis of Sabouraud's work in a special issue of *Æsculape* about the Salon des médecins. The article framed the critic and the sculptor as at odds with some of the expectations of the medical public.<sup>74</sup> The first lines commented ironically on health professionals' tastes, stating that "high artistic culture is rare among physicians" and even declaring that dentists were more likely to show good intuition in this domain. According to Faure, the reason for this lay in physicians' anatomical knowledge, a commonplace in traditional praise of physician-artists. Faure, who was well-versed in the new rules of twentieth-century art, saw Sabouraud's work as standing in opposition to a form of academicism strictly limited to Greece and the Renaissance, as well as having a pronounced taste for Michelangelo's muscular hypertrophy, for Gothic sculpture, and for exotic primitive art – in other words, a set of references shared by the "true" contemporary professional sculpture of Maillol and Despiau.<sup>75</sup> Sabouraud himself agreed with this eclecticism, which he knew was part of the new canon of modern classicism. In an essay on art that he published the same year, in 1924, he in turn also praised Indian and medieval sculpture, the Italian Primitives, Braque and Picasso, and above all the work of Le Douanier Rousseau, an exemplary figure of naive art who had managed to preserve a "childlike" simplicity that brought him closer to the "sublime infelicities" of

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<sup>74</sup> Élie Faure, "Le Docteur Sabouraud, sculpteur," *Æsculape*, 5 (May 1924), 108-111. This text is partly reprinted in *Raimond Sabouraud*, 1-7.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

Roman sculpture.<sup>76</sup> In this regard, Sabouraud's sculptural work reflected a range of influences through to the inter-war period: the mark of Rodinian neo-romanticism with contorted figures; small female statuary with smooth round volumes that bring Maillol's work to mind; and, after the war, Greek figures drawing on an extended archaistic canon, just as reminiscent of Roman art as of Bourdelle's work.<sup>77</sup> From the 1930s onwards, however, Sabouraud's assertion of Greece's unrivalled superiority was not only a sign of him rallying to the rising values of medical humanism, it also determined his submissions to the Salon des médecins. His most noted works, such as *Sapho à Leucade* (Sappho in Leucadia) in 1935 and *Diane au chien* (Diana and her Dog) in 1938, still testified to a classicism with clean lines, but also this time to a naturalistic anatomical canon that was closer to the so-called academic tradition than to the models of Roman art.<sup>78</sup>

Sabouraud's commitment to his career as an amateur artist therefore led him not only to demonstrate ambition in the field of monuments, but also to align himself with a particular – conservative – segment of the contemporary art world. His work served as a concrete performance of what was expected of the physician-artist and the humanist physician, and remained in line with Rabier and Malet's virulent statements against what they saw as the

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<sup>76</sup> Raimond Sabouraud, "Œuvres d'Art et Critiques d'Art," *La Grande Revue*, 9 (September 1924), 387-405. The article cites Faure's text published a few months earlier.

<sup>77</sup> See for example *Raimond Sabouraud*, xx, xxvii, xlv. The figure bending over the central recumbent of *Monument mémorial de la guerre* is also reminiscent of the figure of the tragic Muse in Rodin's *Monument à Victor Hugo* (1909).

<sup>78</sup> Reproductions of the two works cited can be found in the Salon des médecins' exhibition catalogues. See also: Georges Turpin, "Art et médecine: Le XVe Salon des médecins," *Paris médical*, 96-9 (2 March 1935), 207-217, at 213, URL: <https://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/histmed/medica/page?111502x1935x96&p=331>; idem, "Art et médecine: Le XVIIIe Salon des médecins," *Paris médical*, 108-19 (7 May 1938), 304-312, at 310, URL: <https://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/histmed/medica/page?111502x1938x108&p=480>.

decline of contemporary art caused by the avant-gardists.<sup>79</sup> It did not, however, embody a form of amateurism that was either reactionary or unaware of the new rules of art. Rather, it offered variations on modern classicism, which, in the 1920s and 1930s, produced its own apologia for the ancient tradition and for humanism.<sup>80</sup> In this sense, Sabouraud's work left him constantly caught between the expectations of the professional art world and those of the specific group of amateur artists to which he belonged and to whom his work was primarily addressed, namely the physician-artists.

In his medical life, Sabouraud also positioned himself at the limits of what might be expected of the ideal humanist doctor. His reference to the stances adopted by Marfan is especially understandable in this regard since the latter, while giving primacy to the clinic, had nevertheless stressed the benefits of Latin and Greek for scientific research. This link between scientific creativity and classical culture was illustrated in one of Sabouraud's more erudite works, *Quaerite quos agitat mundi labor*.<sup>81</sup> The sculpture depicts a group consisting of three thinkers with pronounced muscles: two recumbent figures, one young and one old, flank a third figure in the centre that cites the *Seated Scribe*, the pride of the Louvre's Egyptian department. Sabouraud probably read the title of the work, "Seek, you who are preoccupied by the activity of the world", in Montaigne, once again, this time in a chapter

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<sup>79</sup> See for example Paul Rabier, "La Médecine et l'art: Le Salon d'Automne," *Paris médical*, 42-48 (26 November 1921), 290-294; Pierre-Bernard Malet, "À propos du Salon des médecins," *AEMP*, 7 (February 1937), 7-8.

<sup>80</sup> On appeals to modern classicism in French art of the first half of the twentieth century, see, among other references: Kenneth Silver, *Esprit de Corps: the Art of the Parisian Avant-garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton, NJ, 1989); Christopher Green, *Art in France: 1900-1940* (New Haven, CT, 2000), 185-230; Neil McWilliam, *The Aesthetics of Reaction: Tradition, Faith, Identity, and the Visual Arts in France, 1900-1914* (Turnhout, 2021). See also the call for a new "humanism" in art issued by the critic Waldemar-George, "Le Néo-humanisme," *L'Amour de l'art*, 4 (April 1934), n.p.

<sup>81</sup> *Raimond Sabouraud*, xxxix.

about self-knowledge, but also probably in Lucan's original text, which exhorts the reader to search for the mechanisms that govern the natural order. In fact, Sabouraud was neither a country doctor in private practice, nor primarily a clinician with a gift for diagnosis. His personal history as a physician, as set out in his memoirs, gravitated around the laboratory as a primordial work space which held great fascination for him.<sup>82</sup> In accounts of Sabouraud's life, two anecdotes regarding his vocation complement each other. In his memoirs, he recounts his artistic vocation as deriving from a visit, in 1889, to the Trocadero Museum of Comparative Sculpture, whose scenography placed ancient Greek statuary and Roman architectural sculpture on an equal footing. His colleagues, however, recall a different anecdote about his vocation, more scientific than medical, in which, as a child, he apparently already conducted *in vitro* observations with his favourite toy, which was an aquarium.<sup>83</sup> Sabouraud kept this aquarium, or a similar one, in his Paris art studio until his death.

The conflation between the artist and the physician thus occurred in an original fashion in Sabouraud's case, through the conflation between the studio and the laboratory, between creative artistic work and scientific work. In a letter written in 1913 to his patient and friend, the painter Odilon Redon, Sabouraud drew his own parallel between the work of an artist and that of a physician. He presented Redon's creative activity as a parasitic occupation, feeding off a host activity that was more focused on dividends and that Sabouraud feared would take over too much of his interlocutor's time. He then referred to his personal experience, adding:

For I too engage both in pure science, which is a *work of art*, and in my practice. And it is practice that permits me to lead my animal life.

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<sup>82</sup> Raimond Sabouraud, *Mes Hôpitaux* (April 1936). Paris, Institut Pasteur, Pôle Archives du Centre de ressources en information scientifique (CeRIS), SAB.1.

<sup>83</sup> See, for example, Clément Simon, "Souvenirs sur Sabouraud," *Le Bulletin médical*, 25 (18 June 1938), 445-448.

But pure science is nevertheless of a higher order of interest, for it nourishes my thought. Nevertheless, I have already taken up my chains again for I have no choice, I have four children. But I have also stocked up on thoughts and studies for the laboratory. So I hope that my inner life will prove fruitful for I need not worry too much about my other life.<sup>84</sup>

What Sabouraud presents here is not an instrumental conception of the humanities as a moralizing tool for medical practice and particularly for the clinical encounter, but rather two parallel professions, artistic and medical, each experienced in a binary fashion. On the one hand, there is artistic life and work, which sometimes pays the bills and sometimes remains purely disinterested. On the other hand, there is medical life, itself divided between practice, the burdensome but profitable part of the profession, and the true disinterested vocation, devoid of any explicit utilitarian aim, that practice enables: the creative work of scientific research.

## **Conclusion**

Far from representing a secondary phenomenon, the social and visual history of the Salon des médecins lies at the intersection between an alternative history of artistic work and the history of the medical profession and the humanities in medicine. In particular, it reveals the symbolic resources afforded by amateur artistic production, mobilized to consolidate the

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<sup>84</sup> Letter from Raimond Sabouraud to Odilon Redon, 29 September 1913, in *Lettres de Gauguin, Gide, Huysmans, Jammes, Mallarmé, Verhaeren... à Odilon Redon*, ed. Roseline Bacou (Paris, 1960), 294-296.

Emphasis in the original text.

creation of a specific professional medical identity and culture. At the same time, looking to Sabouraud, who was a linchpin of this construct, and examining his life on the ground allows us to consider the performance of this identity, as well various stances adopted, which evolved over time and were sometimes out of step with the original horizon of expectations.

The history of physicians-artists has largely yet to be written. On 11 June 1950, the “Premier Salon international des médecins, dentistes, pharmaciens et vétérinaires” (First International Salon of Physicians, Dentists, Pharmacists, and Veterinarians) brought together in Paris 588 works by 280 artists from nine different countries: Argentina, Belgium, Cuba, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The event pointed to the transnational dimensions of the figure of the physician-artist, whilst at the same time announced its perpetuation despite historical events and the changes to both the world and to medical humanism following the Second World War. The present article is therefore the first stone laid for a larger project that aims to produce a history of the physician-artist over time and space. In this respect, it already points to some of the methodological stakes of such a fundamentally interdisciplinary approach: first, the need to combine macro- and micro-historical scales to consider the social and cultural context of the phenomenon, but also individual accounts of the room for manoeuvre that it allowed; and second, the role of visual studies in achieving an understanding not only of how representations of the physician-artist were created, but also how physicians’ creative work manifested itself as a practical performance.