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► **To cite this version:**

Michela Passini. A Microhistory of Heritage Creation Processes: the Impressionists exhibited at the Orangerie (1930-1937). *Oxford Art Journal*, 2023, 46 (2), pp.241-259. 10.1093/oxartj/kcad023 . hal-04337497

HAL Id: hal-04337497

<https://hal.science/hal-04337497>

Submitted on 13 Dec 2023

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**A Microhistory of Heritage
Creation Processes: The
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After isolated examples at the end of the nineteenth century, the art-historical exhibition asserted itself at the dawn of the twentieth century as a canonical apparatus of the museum, a pillar of museums' profitability, and a tool of the early politics of the public sphere.¹ The genesis and wide development of art-historical exhibitions led to profound transformations of the museum as an institution, of its reputation amongst the museum's varied audiences (professional and not), and of the professions traditionally associated with it. While the rise of exhibitions – paid events requiring a wide deployment of advertising resources – introduces a new logic of profitability in establishments which had previously tended to be freely accessible to the public, it also induces a structural evolution of the museum's functions. As art history was being founded as a discipline in Europe and the USA, the art-historical exhibition permitted the serialised collection and comparison of usually dispersed works of art. It configured an ephemeral form of historical narrative, an alternative to exclusively printed commentaries based on a close interaction between the written word, the visual, and the materiality of objects. Throughout the first part of the twentieth century, particularly significant exhibitions from the point of view of historical construction accelerated the process of affirming museums as producers of a *history* of art.

Since exhibitions tended to draw a broad public beyond just specialists, art-historical exhibitions also mark in a particularly visible and sometimes spectacular way the canonisation of figures, eras, or currents in the history of art. These events begin to usher objects into a national heritage, inscribing them within a larger set of highly symbolic goods. By gathering together ideally complete bodies of work, these events powerfully contributed to anchoring the oeuvre of an individual or the production of a movement within a shared experience and a shared conception of heritage and the history of art. These events turned objects into milestones in the construction of aesthetic identities on a local, national, or global scale. Through the attractive force of these events as both cultural and social manifestations, the museum's role in the designation and confirmation of artists and objects became more powerful.

With Impressionism, which in the interwar period was still understood as a relatively contemporary art, the role of exhibitions in the process of heritage creation is particularly important. The organisation of a retrospective initiates a first phase of historicising through procedures of attribution, dating, serialisation, and the establishment of catalogues. All these inseparably material and

Translation by Christopher Jon Delogu

This paper was originally published in the *Revue de l'art* (191, 2016) and was translated in English thanks to a grant from the Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (CNRS-ENS, Paris, France).

1. On the origin of these exhibitions, see the classic study by Frances Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum: Old Master Painting and the Rise of the Art Exhibition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

2. Laura Iamurri, 'Géométries variables. Impressionnisme, modernité et tradition nationale', in Neil McWilliam and Michela Passini (eds), *Faire l'histoire de l'art en France '1890–1950*. Pratiques, écritures, enjeux, Paris and Strasbourg, INHA and Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2023, pp. 329–343.
3. Catalogues: *Centenaire de la naissance de Camille Pissarro. Musée de l'Orangerie, February–March 1930* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1930); *Claude Monet. Exposition rétrospective. Musée de l'Orangerie, 1931* (Paris, 1931); *Degas portraitiste sculpteur. Musée de l'Orangerie* (Paris, 1931); *Exposition Manet (1832–1883), Musée de l'Orangerie, 1932* (Paris, 1932); *Exposition Renoir, 1841–1919, Musée de l'Orangerie* (Paris, 1933); *Cézanne, Musée de l'Orangerie, 1936* (Paris, 1936); *Exposition Degas, Musée de l'Orangerie* (Paris, 1937).
4. Henri Focillon, *La peinture aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles*, 2 vols (Paris: Flammarion, 1927–8); Louis Dimier, *Histoire de la peinture française au XIX^e siècle (1793–1890). Deuxième édition revue et augmentée, avec un épilogue allant jusqu'à nos jours* (éd. or. 1914) (Paris: Delagrave, 1926).
5. Paul Jamot and Georges Wildenstein, with the collaboration of Marie-Louise Bataille, *Manet, Catalogue Critique*, 2 vols (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1932); Lionello Venturi, *Cézanne, son art, son œuvre*, 2 vols (Paris: P. Rosenberg, 1936). See also the first argued catalogue of Van Gogh's work which served as a model for a wide series of catalogues of contemporary painters: Jacob Baart de la Faille, *L'œuvre de Vincent van Gogh, catalogue raisonné*, 4 vols (Paris and Brussels: G. Van Oest, 1928). Pierre Francastel, *L'impressionnisme. Les origines de la peinture moderne de Monet à Gauguin* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1937).
6. Agnès Callu, *La Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1870–1940. Genèse et fonctionnement* (Paris: Ecole des chartes, 1994). On the exhibitions organised by the RMN at the Orangerie, see especially pp. 363–71 and 427–38.
7. The RMN scrupulously quantifies the success of its exhibitions: the minutes of the advisory committee report, at each meeting, show the number of admissions and the revenues of exhibitions in progress. Archives of the Musées nationaux, series consulted: 1 BB 41, 1 BB 42, and 1 BB 43. On the revenue, Callu (*La Réunion*, p. 430) gives the following figures: Manet, 751,000 francs; Renoir, 575,827 francs; Corot, 564,527 francs; Cézanne, 460,589 francs; Degas 298,850 francs.

intellectual operations determine the passage of recent works from being first objects of critical debate to a higher status as objects within a history that completes their inscription in the long-term arc of an artistic tradition and heritage. The exhibitions thus constitute an ideal observatory to study the most concrete dimensions of tradition and heritage creation. Working on texts alone, however, risks limiting access to only the discursive and conceptual dimensions of the process; whereas studying the construction of a major retrospective means focusing on decision-making procedures, on the development of exhibition techniques, on the construction of the value of works through the exchange of individual pieces, and on the many operations of comparison and relationship-making that the objects enter into.

Between 1930 and 1937, the Réunion des musées nationaux (RMN) organised in the rooms of the Orangerie seven monographic exhibitions devoted to painters linked for at least part of their careers to the Impressionist movement:² Pissarro (1930), Monet (1931), Manet (1932), Renoir (1933), Cézanne (1936), and Degas (1931 and 1937) (Fig. 1).³ These retrospectives were widely discussed in specialised art reviews and periodicals as part of an intellectual context that constitutes the beginning of the historicisation of Impressionism. The publication of histories of contemporary painting that attempt to situate Impressionism in a French and European pictorial tradition,⁴ the establishment of the first systematic inventories or 'catalogues raisonnés' of artists who belonged to the movement, the publication of Pierre Francastel's synthesis on Impressionism (1937) which proposed a first historical assessment – all these events mark the stages of a process in which the RMN figures as both a symptom and a driving force.⁵ Reconstructing the assembly of the Orangerie monographic exhibitions on a micro-historical scale means shifting our historiographical and museological questions to concentrate on how contemporary art comes to be translated into national heritage. Both the material and intellectual dimensions of that induction will be examined here. In this perspective, studying the practical modalities of the constitution of a given corpus, including both the gathering of works in Paris and the operations of comparison and expert examination that preside over the establishment of catalogues, will allow for an understanding of how, concretely, these different procedures for the classification and accreditation of objects determine the construction of their value, their inscription in an art history, and their positioning in an international hierarchy of heritage prestige. It will not be so much a question of reproducing through the prism of the exhibitions the 'critical fortune' of the Impressionists or the evolution of a 'taste' for Impressionism during the 1930s, but rather an exploration of the 'museum machine' whose functioning we will try to understand along with the effects on the assessment of objects.

Decision-making and Corpus Construction

Starting in October 1927, the four rooms of the Orangerie not devoted to the permanent exhibition of Monet's *Water Lilies* were given over to temporary exhibitions of the RMN. French painting of the nineteenth century was the main focus of these retrospectives.⁶ Public favour, the interest of specialists, and the desire to involve the institution in certain commemorations such as the centenary of Romanticism or the centenary of the birth of Pissarro or Manet were certainly determining factors in the choice of the themes of these events, but the source materials do not always allow for a precise reconstruction of decision-making processes.⁷ With some exhibitions, the minutes of the RMN advisory committee clearly show that the initiative came from a curator;



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 1. L'Exposition Manet au Musée de l'Orangerie in 'Une Rétrospective d'Édouard Manet a Été Inaugurée Hier au Musée de l'Orangerie', *L'Excelsior*, 19 June 1932. (Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France.)

however, the origin of the retrospectives on the Impressionists does not have such a clear or clean record. These documents bear witness to a situation where, on the one hand, the practice of temporary exhibitions was not yet seen to be authored by a single person, a curator, and where, on the other hand, the programming of the museum's activities is only beginning to be organised continuously throughout the year.⁸ Thus, in the case of *Monet* we learn that on 5 March 1931, Jean Guiffrey 'presents (...) to the committee the project of the exhibition'.⁹ However, holding a retrospective on Renoir seems to have been considered in the RMN curatorial and professional circles only six months before it opened as a substitute for a failed Goya exhibition that had been previously planned.¹⁰

In the case of other Impressionist exhibitions, there is hardly any more precise information about origins. It is therefore difficult to define exactly the

8. Nathalie Heinich and Michael Pollack, 'Du conservateur de musée à l'auteur d'expositions: L'invention d'une position singulière' [From museum Curator to Exhibition Author: The Invention of a Singular Position], *Sociologie du travail*, no. 1, 1989, pp. 29–49.

9. Archives des musées nationaux, 1 BB 41, 'Musées nationaux, Procès verbaux du comité consultatif', meeting of 5 March 1931, f. 280.

10. 'We are planning a Goya exhibition for the summer. The Prado has only agreed to lend a few drawings, so the question is whether this exhibition is possible without the help of the Prado, a question currently under study. If the Goya exhibition cannot proceed, it can be replaced by a Renoir exhibition'. Archives des musées nationaux, 1 BB 42, 'Musées nationaux, Procès verbaux du comité consultatif', meeting of 22 December 1932, f. 113.

11. René Huyghe (ed.), *Histoire de l'art contemporain: La peinture. Documentation réunie par Germain Bazin, avec une préface de Jean Mistler, Introduction par Henri Focillon* (Paris: Alcan, 1934). The chapters of the book had appeared separately in the *Love of Art* magazine between January 1933 and December 1934. On *L'Amour de l'art*, see: C. Fraix, 'L'Amour de l'art. Une revue "ni droite ni gauche" au début des années 30', in R. Froissart and Y. Chevretils Desbiolles (ed.), *Les revues d'art: Formes, stratégies et réseaux au XX^e siècle* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), pp. 255–79.

12. Note also that the organisation of these exhibitions was attributed to him in a report that Georges Salles, then director of the National Museums, wrote in 1945 to support the proposal to award Huyghe the Medal of the Resistance. Huyghe is described as the 'organiser of the famous exhibitions held at the Orangerie, until 1939, that were devoted to the great masters of impressionist art', Archives des Musées nationaux, O-30-358, 'Huyghe René'.

13. René Huyghe, 'Conclusions à l'exposition Renoir', *L'Amour de l'art*, no. XIV, 1933, p. 1.

14. The catalogue raisonné of Manet's work by Paul Jamot and Georges Wildenstein (1932) included 546 entries.

15. In 1930, Elie Faure castigated the museology of the exhibitions devoted to Delacroix (Louvre, 1930), Courbet (Petit Palais, 1929), and Pissarro (Orangerie, 1930): Elie Faure, 'Réflexions sur l'accrochage: Delacroix, Courbet, Pissarro' [1930], in A. Desvallées (éd.), *Vagues: Une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie* (Paris: MNES, 1992), pp. 289–93.

contribution of each actor. Among the staff of the Louvre's painting department which contributed most of the exhibited works that belong to French public collections, the chief curator, Jean Guiffrey, was a recognised specialist of the eighteenth century. In 1927, his deputy, René Huyghe, was put in charge of overseeing the Moreau-Nélaton documentation, which resulted in an acquisition by the Louvre; and working with co-editor Germain Bazin, Huyghe set about writing a history of twentieth-century art for the magazine *L'Amour de l'art*.¹¹ Huyghe also asserted himself at the start of the 1930s as one of the RMN leaders for exhibition planning by organising two important and sensitive retrospectives: *Delacroix* (Louvre, 1930) and the *Exhibition of French Art 1200–1900* which opened at the Royal Academy in London in 1932. The studies on Impressionist painters that Huyghe published in his journal on the occasion of the exhibitions at the Orangerie suggest that his participation in their creation and execution was significant.¹² Paul Jamot also played a significant role by writing what would become the introductions to the exhibition catalogues. Unlike Guiffrey and Huyghe, though, Jamot did not sit on the RMN advisory committee charged with debating and approving exhibition projects. Charles Sterling, then *attaché-chargé de mission* in the department of paintings, was also an essential, although less visible, actor in this first phase of the historiography of Impressionism, because he produced most of the catalogues of these exhibitions. We can also mention Henry Verne, director of the RMN, who personally managed the relationships with lenders and was therefore at the heart of the construction process of each exhibition.

Apart from the first of the two *Degas* exhibitions (1931) devoted to the artist's work as a portraitist and sculptor, the other six clearly testify to the organisers' ambition to render an overall assessment of the career of each painter by bringing together a large number of works representative of each phase of the artist's career. More 'revisions' than 'consecrations', in Huyghe's words, these exhibitions were intended to be above all comprehensive.¹³ Thus, for the Manet exhibition 156 works were visible which represented more than a quarter of the artist's known production.¹⁴ This desire to build the most coherent and complete sets of work possible became an argument in the correspondence with lenders. However, this approach was criticised by those who, like Elie Faure, defended a conception of the exhibition as an argued choice privileging a few masterpieces, each of which, highlighted by a spacious hanging, must fit into an arrangement governed first by aesthetic principles over historical or thematic considerations.¹⁵

The ambition of the organisers to build monographic exhibitions that would be as complete as possible must be understood in the light of the degree to which Impressionist works of art had been dispersed to private collections inside and outside France and to public collections abroad. Of the 156 works by Manet exhibited between June and October 1932, sixty-three belonged to French public collections. It should be noted, however, that taken on its own this figure tends to inflate the holdings of French museums in the international system of valuing modern art collections, because it includes thirty-six prints loaned by the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), pieces considered of a lower ranking than paintings. The number of Manet's paintings from French institutions amounted to twenty-seven. The *Renoir* exhibition included only eleven works from French public collections out of 144 exhibited pieces, while the *Cézanne* exhibition had five out of 195, and the retrospective on *Degas* presented fifty-eight works from French public collections out of a total of 245. But as with the *Manet* exhibition, we must take into account the high number of *Degas* prints loaned by the

BNF. Although the majority of the paintings on display came from French private collections, an analysis of the distribution of the art nevertheless confirms the importance of both public and private foreign collections to mounting these exhibitions – especially due to the large number of works coming from the USA and Germany. Such a situation powerfully influenced the modes of historicisation and heritage creation when it comes to Impressionism, since the staging in Paris required that many works be moved. The widely dispersed locations of the objects therefore led to negotiations between potential lenders and organisers of the exhibition out of which the heritage value of these pieces would be built.

Tools and Procedures for the Historicisation of Contemporary Art: The Rise of Connoisseurship

By bringing together these far-flung works of art, the exhibitions at the Orangerie offered art historians the opportunity to study and compare works of art that were otherwise inaccessible. And though ephemeral, these retrospectives nevertheless produced documents destined to last, namely catalogues which represent a memorial trace of the exhibition while also being the main tool of its implementation. It is around the establishment of the catalogue that the collection of material and historical data concerning each piece and the elaboration of the narrative presiding over the exhibition were organised. The catalogues were the result of extensive bibliographic and iconographic research and were designed to provide specialists with a full accounting of critical information. Therefore, they would become obligatory reference works, especially in the case of artists whose work had not yet been the subject of a catalogue raisonné. In his account of the history of Impressionism (1937), Francastel would praise the catalogues of the exhibitions of the Orangerie as irreplaceable instruments for specialists of the movement.¹⁶

The catalogues of the Orangerie exhibitions all respect the same typographical and formal principles.¹⁷ In the case of retrospectives on the Impressionists, with the exception of *Pissarro*, these catalogues were small-format, paperback publications totaling about 100 to 150 pages as the main text and accompanied by thirty to forty black-and-white plates.¹⁸ Printed by either Frazier-Soye or Georges Lang, there were 2,500 copies for the first edition, with always a second and sometimes a third corrected edition. Far from anecdotal, these details reveal fundamental questions about the production of a *history* of Impressionism.

These exhibition catalogues were produced either in the absence of a ‘catalogue raisonné’ for the artist, as in the case of the *Renoir* exhibition, or in conjunction with the establishment of the first such authoritative works: those of Manet prepared by Paul Jamot, Georges Wildenstein, and Marie-Louise Bataille (1932); of Cézanne by Lionello Venturi (1936); and of Degas by Paul-André Lemoisne (in preparation since the mid-1930s but published only in 1954). Prior to making Impressionism into national heritage, the catalogues thus constituted a first attempt to establish the execution dates and conditions of works, their diffusion through reproductions, and their critical reception – in sum, these publications established the ‘career’ of a work of art in cases where existing accounts were often lacking or incomplete. For example, in the case of Manet, there already existed a first summary catalogue prepared by Théodore Duret, as well as the documentary works by Adolphe Tabarant and Etienne Moreau-Nélaton. As for Georges Wildenstein, when asked, he granted access to a preliminary version of his catalogue in progress.¹⁹ However, in the case of Renoir, no preliminary investigation that precisely encompassed the history of all his works

16. Francastel, *L'impressionnisme*, reprinted 1974, p. 205, n. 4.

17. Cecilia Hurley and Claire Barbillon eds., *Le catalogue dans tous ses états*, (Paris, école du Louvre, 2015).

18. The exhibition catalogue for *Renoir* is an exception, with sixty-four plates, while that of the exhibition *Degas portraitiste et sculpteur* has sixteen.

19. Théodore Duret, *Histoire d'Edouard Manet et de son œuvre, avec un catalogue de peintures et de pastels* (Paris, 1902). The catalogue compiled by Duret included 440 works. See also: Adolphe Tabarant, *Manet, histoire catalogographique* (Paris, 1931); E. Moreau-Nélaton, *Catalogue général manuscrit de l'œuvre d'Edouard Manet*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie, Z-89-4 (this catalogue, comprising 427 items, was already accessible in 1932: Wildenstein and Jamot had been able to consult it during the preparation of their own catalogue of Manet's work; see: Jamot and Wildenstein, *Manet, Catalogue Critique*, vol. I, p. IV). In addition, a catalogue highly appreciated at the time for its accuracy was the one produced by the Berlin gallery Matthiesen on the occasion of a Manet exhibition held in 1928: *Cat. Exp., Ausstellung Edouard Manet. Gemälde, Pastel, Watercolour Zeichnungen, 6 Februar bis 18 März 1928* (Berlin, 1928); review of the exhibition by F. Fosca, *L'Amour de l'art*, no. 9, 1928, p. 149: ‘Congratulations also to the Matthiesen Gallery for taking advantage of the exhibition to publish a very beautiful catalogue. It contains not only excellent reproductions, but also the most accurate information about the works on display’. Georges Wildenstein, letter to Henri Verne, dated 21 April 1932: ‘I will gladly make available to these committees the information that I have gathered thanks to a long familiarity with Manet and the preparation, in collaboration with M. Jamot and Miss Bataille, of a complete catalogue which will appear at about the time when the exhibition opens’, Archives des Musées nationaux, X exhibitions 9, ‘Comité d'organisation’.

20. Jamot and Wildenstein, *Manet, Catalogue Critique*, vol. II, 'Avertissement'.

21. 'Le procès de l'exposition d'art français à Londres. Réquisitoire de Julius Meier-Graefe. Plaidoirie de René Huyghe', *Formes*, no. XXIII, March 1932, pp. 230–2. Similarly, Margaret Scolari-Barr, the wife of Alfred Barr, highlighted the spread of this type of museology in France, in the years between the two wars, contrasting it with practices then current in the USA: quoted by M. A. Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), p. 62.

was available. The catalogue of the *Renoir* exhibition went through three editions, each containing numerous and significant modifications compared to the previous one, particularly with regard to the dating of the artworks.

These catalogues engage in a set of analytical practices that can be considered as the first deployment of connoisseurship regarding modern painting. The catalogue itself filled gaps in knowledge, while allowing for the development of critical tools and offering hypotheses about dating. These works thus participated in a broader evolution of the exhibition catalogue as a genre that, in the interwar period, evolved from a mere list of works to being a locus of specialised study and scholarly debate about works of art.

In addition to a work's title, date, size, medium, and location, the notices include a list of works in which it has been the focus of a bibliography as well as information about available reproductions. The order of the notices was strictly chronological. This type of organisation, which may seem self-evident, calls for at least two remarks. First, by arranging the works chronologically, the catalogue adopts a different logic from that which governs their hanging. The photographs of the rooms that have been preserved, and this is particularly the case for the *Renoir* exhibition where the photographs document the paintings to have been arranged by theme and aesthetic principles such as format and size, chronology was not so much a concern. This exhibition technique was dominant in French museums until the early 1950s. Its influence was not limited to the hanging alone but seems to be related to more widespread perceptual habits and organisational practices. Thus, in the catalogue raisonné of Manet's work by Jamot and Wildenstein prepared at the same time as the exhibition at the Orangerie (1932), the notices take a chronological order, while the illustrations were grouped, as was noted, 'so as to compose pages as pleasing as possible to the eye'. Therefore, one was not to 'look in their arrangement for a strictly methodical or chronological order'.²⁰

This aesthetic organisation becomes all the more striking given that the Wildenstein catalogues dedicated to eighteenth-century artists embraced chronology. Given the absence of in-depth studies on the history of catalogue compilation and writing, it is difficult to say with certainty that this is a practice specific to the historiography of contemporary art. And yet, some testimonies of the time seem to suggest that symmetrical hanging was a French museological tradition. Thus, for example, in 1932, Julius Meier-Graefe sharply criticised the museological choices that presided over the hanging of nineteenth-century works, during the exhibition of masterpieces of French art organised by René Huyghe at the Royal Academy in London:

They were more concerned about the symmetry of formats than what was inside the frames. The result is especially felt in the nineteenth century rooms where the mixture is unbearable. Corot's mostly small format paintings are scattered in three different rooms.

It is interesting to note that in his reply to Meier-Graefe published by the journal *Formes*, Huyghe defended his own museological choices as being inspired by 'French methods' of a distinct intellectual tradition and endowed with a strong national specificity.²¹

The chronological order of the records in the Orangerie catalogues warrants further remark. In the case of works by Renoir or Cézanne, whose dating was subject to debate at the time, the notices underwent considerable revisions over the exhibition's duration and with each reprinting of the booklets. The possibility of seeing the work of these painters gathered in one place allowed for advanced stylistic analyses which led to revisions about the dating of certain paintings, and therefore to modifications in the order of the notices. The second edition



Fig. 2. Claude Monet, *Camille (The Woman in the Green Dress)*, 1866, oil on canvas, 231 × 151 cm. Kunsthalle, Bremen. (Photo: © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY.)

of the *Renoir* catalogue thus included thirty-six modified and moved notices (out of 144) compared to the first. In the third edition, three more notices were modified and moved. Between the two editions of the *Cézanne* catalogue (1936), the changes to dates were so numerous that the editors decided not to modify the original ordering; and, therefore, in the second edition the notices do not appear in chronological order.

Also, these catalogues do not simply state ‘facts’ but also put forward hypotheses, which had not previously been the function of such publications. The case

22. In the third and final edition of the *Renoir* catalogue, the *English Pear Tree* appears as number 6a, p. 3, whereas in the second corrected edition this painting appeared as number 26.

23. In the first edition of the catalogue, the work appears as number 106; in the second corrected edition it becomes number 122a, p. 45; in the third, definitive edition (pp. 51–2), the date is again modified: ‘Painted around 1913. The style and craftsmanship of this work are similar to those of the artist’s Last style of painting’.

24. Jamot and Wildenstein, *Manet, Catalogue Critique*, vol. I, p. VI.



Fig. 3. Édouard Manet, *Angelina or A Woman at the Window*, 1865, oil on canvas, 92 × 73 cm. RF3664. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. (Photo: Hervé Lewandowski. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.)

of Renoir especially launched this practice of the catalogue’s opening discussion being a debate amongst experts. The *Poirier d’Angleterre* (*English Pear Tree*), dated 1875 in the first edition of the catalogue, appears in the second as ‘painted around 1869’. The revised date would be validated through stylistic comparisons with similar works: ‘This date is suggested by the form of the signature and by the execution of the backgrounds in the “Lise” at the Essen Museum and the “Ménage Sisley” exhibited under No. 4’.²² The notice of the *Laveuses* (*The Washers*) passed from being number 106 of the first edition to 122a in the second. This change remained up for debate, however, as indicated by the use of a question mark indexing authorial uncertainty: ‘Painted around 1902 (?). The style and craftsmanship of this painting are similar to those of the artist’s last style from around 1913, but Renoir made several paintings around 1902–05 that indicate the date proposed here is plausible’.²³

With these choices, the catalogue functions as a sort of laboratory for displaying and therefore debating the operations that lead to the dating of works of art, and is part of a set of catalographic practices that can also be found in other publications of the time. In 1932, the Manet catalogue raisonné included paintings whose authenticity was not unanimously recognised by critics. This decision, taken by Wildenstein over the objections of Jamot,²⁴ made it possible to set up

procedures of recognition and authentication via comparison in the very space of the catalogue. The catalogue thereby became the place of an expert debate about the objects. But though the practice of including and discussing unauthenticated works had been customary in catalogues dedicated to early modern and even older periods of art, it was much less common in the case of the 'moderns'. The Van Gogh catalogue raisonné, published in 1928 by Jacob Baart de la Faille and considered a model of the genre, mentioned only those works considered by the editor to be authentic.

By making the process of expertise visible, the Orangerie exhibition catalogues highlight the interpretive work that engages the responsibility of the author. The result is a new form of recognition for the cataloguer. In the first three catalogues of the series (*Pissarro*, *Monet*, and *Manet*), the notices were not signed, whereas the prefaces and introductory texts were attributed to Jamot. It was starting with the Renoir catalogue, which required considerable research and verification of the data concerning each painting, that we see the mention that 'this catalogue was written by Mr Charles Sterling, attaché-chargé de mission in the Department of Paintings at the Louvre Museum'. The exhibition catalogue thus attained the status of a scientific work, an exercise of connoisseurship on contemporary art, and the temporary exhibition became one of the privileged places of its expression.

Exchanging Works of Art and Building Value

Because of their ambition to be exhaustive, these retrospectives depended on loans of artworks from other institutions and private collectors. The rise of art-history exhibitions at the dawn of the twentieth century led to the emergence of an international system of museums based on the complex circulation of artworks. For a museum, sending art from its collections to outside exhibitions started to become a crucial means for securing, in turn, the loans that would allow it to later mount its own temporary exhibitions. Also, lending works to important and especially foreign institutions permitted the curator to make their own collection more internationally visible. Where, what, and how frequently works from a museum's permanent collection were exhibited as part of this international system of loans and, in turn, what works of art from other institutions were loaned to that museum: these were now the fundamental criteria for positioning museums in an international hierarchy of heritage prestige. Thus, tracing the rise of temporary exhibitions in the twentieth century implies taking into account the geohistory and more importantly the geopolitics of museums.

This highly competitive international exhibition system has its margins and its centres which are naturally relative, mobile, and temporary. It is nevertheless possible to measure the force of attraction by analysing the choices of the actors involved in these exchanges. Museum officials, curators, and directors found themselves having to manage two competing concerns: on the one hand, the need to ensure the visibility of their collection in events of international scope in order to entice both a local and global public; on the other hand, the risks that repeated travel poses to precious, sometimes fragile works whose absence from the museum may lead public interest and attendance to fall. While the organisers implicitly asserted the preeminence of Paris on the world museum scene, potential lenders highlighted, from their perspective, the quality of the work requested, its value and rank within an economy of prestige and scarcity, and the exceptional nature of the loan being granted. These were strong arguments which local actors used to obtain better conditions for their home institution. Thus, in exchange for the objects they agreed to lend, some curators requested

25. On the construction of the value of works of art, see: N. Heinrich, *L'art contemporain exposé aux rejets: Études de cas* (Nîmes, 1998), in particular Chapter VII, 'En guise de synthèse. L'art contemporain exposé aux rejets, pour une sociologie des valeurs', pp. 195–213; N. Heinrich and R. Schapiro (eds), *De l'artification: Enquêtes sur le passage à l'art* (Paris, 2012), especially the chapter by Heinrich and Schapiro, 'Quand y a-t-il artification?', pp. 267–99; and Ch. Bessy, *Experts et faussaires. Pour une sociologie de la perception* (Paris, 1995), in particular the chapter 'Querelles d'attribution', pp. 136–72.

26. Henri Verne, letter to Emil Waldmann, 4 May 1931, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 7, 'Prêteurs', 'Brême'. We list all the exhibited works with the titles attributed to them at the time, as they appear in the catalogues of the exhibitions at the Orangerie and in correspondence between the organisers.

27. Emil Waldmann, letter to Henri Verne, 6 May 1931, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 7, 'Prêteurs', 'Brême'.

28. Henri Verne, letter to Emil Waldmann, 12 May 1931, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 7, 'Prêteurs', 'Brême'.

29. G. Swarzenski, letter to Henri Verne, 12 May 1931, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 7, 'Prêteurs', 'Frankfurt-a-M Städtisches Kunstinstitut'.

30. G. Swarzenski, letter to Henri Verne, 15 May 1931, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 7, 'Prêteurs', 'Frankfurt-a-M Städtisches Kunstinstitut'.

31. G. Swarzenski, telegram to Henri Verne, 19 May 1931, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 7, 'Prêteurs', 'Frankfurt-a-M Städtisches Kunstinstitut'.

the deposit of a certain number of artworks deemed of 'equivalent' quality to then adorn the walls of their museum for the duration of the exhibition. This approach gave rise to complex transactions, the challenge of which is precisely the possibility of comparing and measuring the 'quality' of works of art. It is during these exchanges that the value of works is negotiated – a symbolic, 'heritage value' distinct from the market value and one which requires specific expertise.²⁵

The correspondence with German institutions during the organisation of the *Monet* exhibition (June–September 1931) sheds light on some of the issues involved in the exchange of objects, both for lenders and for organisers. On 4 May, the director of France's *Musées nationaux*, Henri Verne, contacted the director of the *Kunsthalle Bremen*, Emil Waldmann, to request the loan of *Monet's Portrait de Camille* (Fig. 2).²⁶ The discussion revolved around the audience strategies put in place by the *Kunsthalle* and focused on the value to the museum of *Monet's* painting. Following a first negative response from Waldmann who explained that such a loan would deprive his museum of its 'strongest point of attraction',²⁷ Verne persisted and proposed exchanging works, according to the practice that was then beginning to spread among the curators of major European museums. To replace the void left by the *Portrait de Camille*, the RMN agreed to lend the *Angelina* by Manet (Fig. 3). Though Verne failed to succeed, it is interesting to consider the arguments he used to highlight the interest of *Manet's* painting: 'For many of your fellow citizens and many visitors to your galleries', he argued, this painting 'would have the attraction of being a never-seen-before work since of all the leading paintings by the creator of the *Olympia*, it is the most recent to enter the Louvre'.²⁸ The novelty and rarity of the aesthetic experience made possible by the presence of the work in Bremen were factors, in the context of this exchange proposal, of the work's status. But Waldmann preferred to bet on (his estimated) certain value, namely a steady flow of museum-goers, both local and international, attracted to the *Kunsthalle* by the *Portrait de Camille*.

Nevertheless, other players in the world of German museums were more sensitive to the 'attraction of the unseen' offered by the *Angelina* and the possibility of ensuring that the works in their collections could be seen in Paris' museums. At the beginning of May, Verne asked the *Städtische Galerie* in Frankfurt (the branch of the *Städtisches Kunstinstitut* for modern art collections) for *Monet's Le Déjeuner* (Fig. 4). The *Städtische Galerie's* director, Georg Swarzenski, was initially forced to refuse the loan, since he had already promised this painting to the exhibition *Vom Abbild zum Sinnbild*, organised at the *Städtisches Kunstinstitut* by its director, Fritz Wichert, and scheduled for June.²⁹ Swarzenski's letters testify to his eagerness to give greater visibility to a collection of modern art that he had greatly contributed to creating while acknowledging the challenge of sending one of the works to a major Paris exhibition. 'I would like very much', he told Verne on 15 May, 'to have this painting seen in your *Monet* exhibition'.³⁰ Swarzenski intervened with Wichert and asked Verne to lend him 'an important painting by Manet' which would replace *Monet's Le Déjeuner* at the Frankfurt exhibition. On 19 May, the talks resulted in the offer of *Angelina* which the director of the *Kunsthalle* in Bremen had definitively refused two days earlier. Immediately accepted by Swarzenski and Wichert, it was in fact exchanged for *Le Déjeuner*, which appeared at the Paris *Monet* exhibition.³¹

These two episodes illustrate the conflict which became recurrent with the spread of the temporary exhibition as a curatorial practice: on the one hand, there were public policies tending to erect one or more works as flagship objects of the museum without which it would be deprived of its main 'attractions'; and



Fig. 4. Claude Monet, *The Luncheon (Le Déjeuner)*, 1868–9, oil on canvas, 231.5 × 151.5 cm. Inv. SG170. Städtisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt am Main. (Photo: HIP / Art Resource, NY.)

on the other hand, there were institutions' strategies to enhance visibility and legitimacy by having objects on a prime, central stage. In the case of Monet's *Le Déjeuner*, Swarzenski decided that the painting's presence in Paris would heighten its visibility more than its continued display in Frankfurt. The passage through major capital cities of works from peripheral museums would indeed give rise to new requests for loans.

One of the factors that structured the international exhibition system was the competition between museum institutions to be represented on the most central stages. The challenge was not only the visibility of the collections but also the

32. A. François-Poncet, letter to H. Verne, 23 April 1932, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Berlin National Gallery'.

33. A. François-Poncet, telegram to Henri Verne, 8 June 1932, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Berlin National Gallery'; Henri Verne, Attestation concernant l'assurance des trois œuvres, 11 June 1932, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Berlin National Gallery'.

34. A. François-Poncet, letter to Henri Verne, 23 April 1932, Archives of the National Museums, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Berlin National Gallery'.

35. Henri Verne, letter to J. Bourguignon, 2 June 1932, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Tournai'.

36. Léonce Pion, letter to Henri Verne, 13 May 1932, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Tournai'.

37. Léonce Pion and I. Pion-Leblanc, *Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tournai. Catalogue des peintures et des sculptures* (Tournai: Casterman, 1971).

38. P. Lambotte, letter to Henri Verne, 18 May 1932, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Tournai': 'pour Tournai' is underlined in the text of the letter.

integration of the museum into networks of world-renowned institutions. The talks initiated at the *Manet* exhibition exemplified this. The RMN was seeking to obtain from the Nationalgalerie in Berlin three pieces by Manet: *Dans la serre*, *La Maison de campagne à Rueil*, and *Les Lilas*. The importance of the loans requested led to an entreaty to André François-Poncet, then France's ambassador in Berlin, who served as an intermediary between the two institutions. The director of the Nationalgalerie, Ludwig Justi, would rely on official expertise (the first work, *In the Greenhouse*, had been appraised at 10 million francs); he also insisted on the cost, symbolic and financial, of the absence of the three Manet paintings 'during the summer months'.³² On the strength of these arguments, he asked for three works considered incredibly important to the history of nineteenth-century art: David's *Portrait de l'artiste*, Géricault's *Officier des grenadiers*, and Corot's *Le Beffroi de Douai (The Belfry of Douai)*. He also demanded that the three Manet pieces be insured for 5 million francs.³³ Faced with Justi's arguments, the RMN necessarily resorted to exploiting the symbolic prestige that came from participating in an exhibition uniting some of the world's most important museums. Anticipating these difficulties, André François-Poncet supplied a particularly lucid analysis of the situation, writing to Verne on 23 April:

I have the impression that, if I can give him [Justi] the guarantee that collectors and museums in the United States and England, for example, will be particularly generous with their loans, he will give you more easily complete satisfaction.³⁴

But how exactly does arriving at an equivalence between different works of art happen in practice? What kind of considerations go into establishing criteria for quality? In truth, what emerges from such correspondence is the low level of explicitness regarding these criteria which are formulated, argued for, and debated only when transactions become difficult due to strong disagreements between the principal actors. The talks between the RMN and the Tournai Museum offer an example of this, and it is all the more interesting because, in this case, the exchange was organised between works of Manet and older paintings. The heterogeneity of the objects on each side of the bargain and the difficulty of the negotiations ultimately called for more explicitness about the equivalency criteria.

On this occasion, the RMN asked the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tournai for the loan of *Argenteuil* and *Chez le père Lathuille* (Fig. 7). The two paintings had already been exhibited a few months before at an exhibition of French art at the Royal Academy in London (January–March 1932). They occupied an absolutely central position in Manet's oeuvre and in the canon of modern painting as it took shape in the 1930s. In the eyes of the organisers, the presence of these paintings was essential to the success of the exhibition.³⁵ Contacted by Verne on 10 May, the curator of the Tournai museum, Léonce Pion, expresses his reservations while also evoking 'the new luster that would shine forth on [Tournai's] collections' were his museum to participate in this way in the Orangerie's Manet retrospective.³⁶ The Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tournai was then a relatively new institution in the field of modern art, having reopened its rooms in 1928 after the acquisitions of the collections of contemporary painting from Henri Van Cutsem, including the two Manets requested by the RMN.³⁷ On 13 May, Verne decided to call on a particularly influential mediator, Paul Lambotte, who was a former director of the Tournai fine art museum and the Belgian government's exhibitions commissioner. Lambotte was very much in favour of Belgium's participation in a cultural event of this magnitude. In his correspondence with Verne, he insisted on 'the interest for Tournai to include the two Manet paintings in the exhibition of the centenary of the master'.³⁸ In this instance,



Fig. 5. Rogier van der Weyden, *Braque Family Triptych*, 1400–1500, oil on panel, 41 × 68 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Photo: © 2017 RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Tony Querrec.)



Fig. 6. Rogier van der Weyden, *Annunciation* (central panel of a triptych), 1399–1464, oil on panel, 86 × 93 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.)

Pion and the members of the college of aldermen - or non-specialist members of a board appointed by city councils who were tasked with deciding on loans of works of art - agreed to send the works by Manet to Paris. In this instance, Pion and the members of the college of aldermen were to decide on the loan agreed to send the works by Manet to Paris, provided that the Parisian museums temporarily loaned works to Tournai. In the course of the ensuing negotiations, the question of the equivalence of objects was explicitly raised.

A first proposal for an exchange evokes two key Flemish fifteenth-century paintings preserved in the Louvre and the Petit Palais, respectively. The first is

39. In reality, Edward Tuck, who had bequeathed the work to the Petit Palais, refused to authorise its transfer: Henri Verne, telegram to Léonce Pion, 8 June 1932, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Tournai'.

40. L. Pion, letter to Henri Verne, 30 May 1932, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Tournai'.

41. The work is attributed to the school of Robert Campin, known as the Maître de Flémalle, in the most recent catalogue of the Louvre available at the time: L. Demonts and L. Huteau, *Musée du Louvre. Catalogue général des peintures (tableaux et peintures décoratives)* (Paris: Braun, 1923), no. 2202, p. 136.



Fig. 7. Édouard Manet, *Chez le Père Lathuille*, 1879, oil on canvas, 93.5 × 112.5 cm. Inv. 1974/n° 439. Van Custem 1904 Legacy, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tournai.

the Braque Triptych by Rogier Van der Weyden (who in these exchanges appears most often under the name of Roger de la Pasture) (Fig. 5); the second is the *Presentation at the Temple* by Jacques Daret, bequeathed to the City of Paris by Edward Tuck. Pion also asked that the two Manets of the Tournai museum be insured for a value of 3 million francs. In a letter dated 27 May, Verne announced that the Petit Palais has agreed to lend the Jacques Daret.³⁹ However, the Braque Triptych could not be moved due to its fragile state. For this reason, Verne instead proposed the *Salutation angélique* from the Louvre, attributed, as he adroitly pointed out, to Van der Weyden (Fig. 6). Pion replied on 30 May: the members of the college of aldermen were 'completely disappointed'. 'The two Manets in question', he wrote:

are the leading pieces of our provincial museum and they attract a large public of amateur enthusiasts. The Roger de la Pasture is of great interest to our city because of its intrinsic qualities and its origins that you know as well as we do.⁴⁰

Two types of reasoning came into play here, allowing for claims of an equivalency between the Braque Triptych and the Manets requested by the RMN. The first concerns the 'intrinsic qualities', both material and aesthetic, of the object: the Braque Triptych was complete whereas the *Salutation angélique* in the Louvre, considered non-equivalent to the Manet by Pion and the Tournai college of aldermen, was only the central panel of a triptych whose two side panels were in Turin. In addition, the Braque Triptych was recognised as a work of Van der Weyden, while, in the case of the *Salutation angélique*, art historians at the time vacillated between this reputed artist and an alternative attribution to the 'school of the Maître de Flémalle'.⁴¹ The second line of reasoning relates to the 'origins' of the work. Having been painted for Jehan Braque de Tournai and his wife Catherine de Brabant, the altarpiece is of 'powerful interest for [the] city';

therefore, its temporary stay in Tournai would contribute to the celebration of the city's identity.

Eventually, concerns about conservation won out, leaving the Tournai museum to do without both the Braque Triptych and the Jacques Daret from the Tuck collection. It instead received the *Salutation angélique* from the Louvre and the *Triptych of the Resurrection* by Hans Memling. The implicit quality criteria that lay behind claims of two artworks' equivalency become more apparent with objects that were deemed comparable, in that their status was explicitly verbalised by the negotiators. Quality criteria were not explicitly detailed when the exchange proposal concerned works that RMN representatives determined to be clearly far apart in their aesthetic, historical, and commercial value. This turned out to be the case for a proposal from the Art Institute of Chicago. In exchange for the loan of Manet's *Races at Longchamp* and *Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers*, the museum's director asked to borrow the *Mona Lisa*. Their request was promptly and summarily refused.⁴²

A final example of a transaction between the RMN and a German museum sheds light on one of the factors which determine the value creation of works of art and therefore their possible equivalency for the purposes of these art exchanges. For the *Renoir* exhibition, the organisers asked the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne to loan the *Ménage Sisley*. The director, Otto Förster, accepted in principle but specified by telegram: 'We desire a good Manet or good Corot *really equivalent* to the Renoir'.⁴³ The question of equivalence criteria arose in all its magnitude when the RMN proposed to lend to Cologne the *Moulin Saint-Nicolas-les-Arras* by Corot, then held by the Louvre. Förster's reaction was mixed; and it is interesting to note what arguments he used in his response. 'As for the *Moulin Saint-Nicolas* (painted in 1874) that you have kindly offered us', he wrote, 'I am very sad not to remember exactly this painting, nor to have seen a reproduction of it'.⁴⁴ In other words, the existence of reproductions, implying the degree of media coverage of the work, becomes an essential factor in the construction of heritage value. In the case of nineteenth-century art whose status fifty years later was not yet fully crystallised, the specialised press was a powerful device for designation and confirmation. Thus, Förster included with his letter a list of eleven paintings from the *Musées nationaux* that could be exchanged for Renoir's *Ménage Sisley*. For each painting, the list precisely records the books or magazines that have published a reproduction of it.

Towards Making Impressionism Part of a National Heritage

What was negotiated during these exchanges is the national heritage value of the objects. This value was far from being their simple market value. It was instead built out of complex interactions at the crossroads of different strategies and the expectations of two or more parties. For the representatives of the RMN, on every occasion there was the question of establishing how much ought to be yielded in terms of works loaned out as compensation, and the extent of the financial guarantees (in the form of insurance), in order to temporarily obtain pieces that increasingly seemed essential to the restitution of a key phase in the history of French art. In the eyes of foreign partners, the steps taken by Parisian curators, especially their relentless negotiations, reinforce the perception of the prestige of their own (highly desired) collection. This prestige literally manifests itself through the visibility of their works on the stage of the Paris museum world that the foreign museum's collaboration in these retrospectives makes possible.

The circulation of objects and the interactions between different interested parties determine not only the heritage value of the works but, at a more general

42. Georges Wildenstein, letter to Henri Verne, 2 June 1932, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 9, 'Prêteurs', 'Wildenstein'.

43. 'Wallrafmuseum', telegram to Henri Verne, 9 June 1933, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 14, 'Prêteurs', 'Cologne'. Emphasis mine.

44. O. Förster, Letter to J. Dupont, 13 June 1933, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Expositions 14, 'Prêteurs', 'Cologne'.

45. R. Rey, 'Musée de l'Orangerie: L'exhibition Manet', *Bulletin des musées de France*, 4th Year, no. 7, July 1932, pp. 110–13. Emphasis mine.

46. See: Ségolène Le Men, *Monet* (Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 2010), p. 378–87; M. Hoog, *Les nymphéas de Claude Monet au musée de l'Orangerie* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1984); and M. Hoog, *Les Nymphéas avant et après*, cat. exp. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992); Georges Clemenceau, *Claude Monet, les Nymphéas* (Paris: Bertillat, 1928) (reissued 2010, preface by D. Dupuis-Labbé).

47. Marie-Claude Genet-Delacroix, 'La reconnaissance officielle des impressionnistes (1865–1925): Art français ou art moderne?', in F. Cousinié (ed.), *L'Impressionnisme: Du plein air au territoire* (Rouen: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2013), p. 55–66. See also: Michael Orwicz, 'La vie posthume d'Édouard Manet: L'art national et la biographie artistique au début de la III^{ème} République', *Romantisme*, vol. 26, no. 93, 1996, pp. 51–63.

48. Laura Iamurri, *Lionello Venturi e la modernità dell'impressionismo* (Rome: Quodlibet, 2011), especially the first part, 'A Parigi: L'impressionismo, la pittura moderna, la crisi', pp. 23–104.

49. See the thesis of M. Leglise on the reception of Manet and also the article by Laura Piccioni, 'Les enjeux politiques de la réception de l'Impressionnisme dans l'Italie fasciste', *Revue de l'Art*, vol. 179, 2013, pp. 35–40.

50. D. Jacquot, 'Paul Jamot (1863–1939) et l'histoire "nationale" de l'art', *Histoire de l'art*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2000, pp. 29–38.

51. Henri Verne, letter to A. Dayot, 1 September 1933, Archives des Musées Nationaux, X Expositions 14, 'catalogue'.

52. J. Heinen, 'Un mécénat juif pour l'art moderne français? Etude de cas de la Galerie nationale de Berlin sous l'ère wilhelmiennne (1882–1911)' (doctoral dissertation, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales / Freie Universität Berlin, 2011).

level, the heritage value of the complete oeuvre of each artist and more generally of the entire category of 'impressionist painting'. According to Robert Rey, the Manet exhibition presented a 'gathering of work which the most important and distant museums of the world with the most beautiful collections collaborated on at great expense and which we will probably never see again'.⁴⁵ As exceptional and ephemeral events bringing together for a few months bodies of work that were destined to be quickly redistributed across the national territory and, more importantly, abroad, temporary exhibitions such as those at the Orangerie fostered this sense of the rarity and even the uniqueness of the aesthetic experience offered to the museum-goer. Not only does the symbolic value of the singular objects made visible under such special conditions become significantly enhanced, but their collective value as an integrated whole is also amplified.

Compared to the exhibition of Old Masters for whom the corpus of works was, with a few rare exceptions, already clearly established by the twentieth century, retrospectives on the art of the late nineteenth century, such as those mounted by the Orangerie, powerfully participated in the construction of the oeuvre and therefore in the creation of each artist's image – in every sense of the term. First the gathering and spatial distribution of objects, and then the different procedures of serial sequencing, attributing, and dating that go into the writing of the catalogue, contributed to anchoring the work of these masters in a shared narrative of art history. All these indissociably material and intellectual operations nourish a historiographical practice that constitutes the condition of possibility of all heritage creation. The retrospectives at the Orangerie strongly contributed to the historicisation of Impressionism in both a technical sense (via its constitution as an object of historical discourse) and a hierarchical sense (via its integration into a pictorial tradition, its canonisation). Organised as they were in a prestigious place that was central in terms of both the Parisian geography of fine arts and the international system of museums, these exhibitions performed the inscription of Impressionist painters and their oeuvres within a set of symbolic goods with a strong identarian connotation: the history of French art.

Granted, this process was neither uniform nor exactly a matter of consensus. One need only recall the reception given to Monet's *Water Lilies*, whose permanent exhibition at the Orangerie was decided on in 1927 thanks in part to Clemenceau's campaign in defence of the painter, to see that the affirmation of an institutional 'taste' for Impressionism has always been a stratified and contested story.⁴⁶ One of the essential devices for the official recognition of the Impressionists, as the studies of Marie-Claude Genet-Delacroix have clearly shown, was the nationalisation of their art.⁴⁷ Other recent or ongoing research, notably the work of Laura Iamurri,⁴⁸ reconstructs the ideological dimension of the erection of Impressionism into a national art.⁴⁹ The exhibitions at the Orangerie participated in this process of nationalisation, and the introductions to the catalogues signed by Paul Jamot clearly contributed to it.⁵⁰

However, these events are both an effect and a leading cause of public museums internationalising their collections. While professing to be a 'glorification of national art',⁵¹ these events testify to the situation of collecting and the market for French painting of the nineteenth century wherein France had lost its central position. An analysis of the provenance of the exhibited works shows the importance of the participation of foreign museums and collectors, a fact confirmed by studies of the location of Impressionists' works in the first decades of the twentieth century.⁵² But if the quantitative study underscores the overall magnitude of the phenomenon, one cannot neglect the specific weight of certain works nor the

symbolic significance of their presence outside France. In 1928, the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* published an article by the Austrian art historian Hans Tietze entitled 'Les peintres français du XIX^e siècle dans les musées allemands'. In this piece, probably commissioned by the editors, Tietze was particularly insistent about the value of Impressionist paintings preserved across the Rhine, including some which were among the most publicly visible works of the movement. 'Manet, for example', Tietze claimed, 'is so well represented by works characteristic of all his periods that one can get a fairly accurate idea of this great artist based solely on Germany's public collections'.⁵³ Readers of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* were treated to reproductions of some fundamental pieces, such as Manet's *Le Déjeuner* and Renoir's *L'Après-midi des enfants à Vargemont*, which the RMN acquired permission to exhibit a few years later following lengthy negotiations.

During the 1930s, the process of making Impressionism part of a national heritage was the result of a complex movement between the nationalisation of the image of these painters and the internationalisation of collections, and between the circulation of works of art and the stabilisation of a corpus through the gathering of these works and, in turn, their reproduction and dissemination via catalogues. Public events such as the major retrospectives at the Orangerie embodied this national/international dialectic in a particularly striking way.⁵⁴ To take just one example, the *Manet* exhibition of 1932 represents how an artist could become a national symbol. More than the introductory essay to the catalogue, a text signed by Paul Jamot that exalts the 'Frenchness' of Manet's work, the official poster helped to anchor in the public's imagination the 'national' character of his painting. By choosing to have printed in blue (though actually painted black) the jacket of the fife player, and thus making it stand out vividly against the white of the strap and spats and the red of the trousers, the organisers turned this painting into a patriotic icon.⁵⁵ Manet's work was nevertheless one of the most internationalised when one considers the number of different museums where it could be seen; and the exhibition at the Orangerie was a stark reminder, with forty-one paintings loaned by public or private foreign collections as compared with forty-four paintings gathered from French collections.

While we tend to associate the construction of a national heritage solely with processes of nationalisation, these exhibitions allow us to measure the impact of the internationalisation of artworks and their wide circulation on the processes of value creation, historicisation, and the inscription of objects within the set of symbolic goods that will constitute a national heritage, called by the French their *patrimoine*. Thinking about these interwoven and somewhat paradoxical aspects of the national and the international requires adopting a material and micro-historical approach to the dynamics of heritage creation that, in turn, allow the transformation of a work of art into heritage. It is a history of heritage reasoning 'at ground level',⁵⁶ on the factory floor so to speak, which, by being located at the microscopic scale of exhibition catalogue notices or the transactions presiding over the transfer of a particular object, allows the construction of heritage to be considered as resulting from the interaction between intellectual practices and strategic interests that are distinct and often in conflict.

53. Hans Tietze, 'Les peintres français du XIX^e siècle dans les musées allemands', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. I, 1928, pp. 105–18, here p. 112.

54. On the nationalisation/internationalisation of Impressionism at the end of the nineteenth century, see: Béatrix Joyeux-Prunel, *Nul n'est prophète en son pays ? [No one Is a Prophet in Their Own Land?] L'internationalisation de la peinture des avant-gardes parisiennes 1855–1914* (Paris: N. Chaudun, 2009), pp. 38–55.

55. *Manet* Exhibition, Orangerie des Tuileries, poster, Archives des Musées nationaux, X Exhibitions 10.

56. J. Revel, 'L'histoire au ras du sol', preface to G. Levi, *Le Pouvoir au village: Histoire d'un exorciste dans le Piémont du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989).