

*International conference*  
*Centre de recherches IRHIS - UMR CNRS 8529*  
*Université de Lille 3 (France)*  
*May 2008*

## **The Artistic Exchanges between the Low Countries and France, 1482-1814**

Call for papers

Until now, the study of the artistic exchanges between the European countries during the modern period always focused on the relationships with Italy, considered as the source and the origin of the Renaissance. For several years now, because of the geographical proximity of these two cultural traditions, the art historians of Lille 3 University have been studying the links between France and the Low Countries – *i.e.* the Seven Provinces, but also Flanders – in order to study other aspects of Western art of that period. Following three former meetings<sup>1</sup>, the topic suggested for the next conference, planned for 2008, is:

*“The Artistic Exchanges  
Between the Low Countries and France, 1482-1814”*

The very title of this conference calls for two explanations. The first relates to the concept of “artistic exchanges”. It would have been more convenient to speak, as is usual for such similar problems, of “influences” on and between the artistic traditions and researches in these two parts of modern Europe. We didn’t make that choice. In our view, this concept of “influence” does not seem suitable to describe the complexity of these relations. In a certain way, this conference aims at reconstructing and exploring this very notion of “artistic exchange(s)” by showing, through precise and varied examples, the range of the various “meetings” between French, Flemish and Dutch artists from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The second explanation concerns the choice of the chronological span: 1482-1814. The first limit corresponds to the end of the Burgundian period for the Netherlands, which led to the integration of Burgundy into the kingdom of France. The second corresponds to the date of the Vienna Congress,

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<sup>1</sup> - Heck M.-C., Lemerle F. et Pauwels Y. (éd.), *Théorie des arts et création artistique dans l'Europe du Nord du XVIe au début du XVIIIe siècle*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2002 [actes du colloque de l'université de Lille 3, 14-16 décembre 2000].

- Raux S. (éd.), *Collectionner dans les Flandres et la France du Nord au XVIIIe siècle*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2005 [actes du colloque de l'université de Lille 3, 13-14 mars 2003].

- Heck M.-C. (éd.), *Le rubénisme en Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Turnhout, éd. Brepols, 2005 [actes du colloque organisé par l'université de Lille 3 au palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille et au musée des Beaux-Arts d'Arras, 1-2 avril 2004].

during which the kingdom of Belgium was merged to the Netherlands and entrusted to Guillaume the First.

Thus, we will consider a very broad chronology – more than three centuries – and try to take into account the historical realities of these various countries, in order to evaluate the nature of their artistic exchanges while not focusing on some aspects and issues which have been treated previously. The art market, connoisseurship or the survey of collections, which have all been often studied in the past, with recent conferences, will not be evoked. Nevertheless, the following themes will be privileged:

### **1. The books**

By nature, the books are a privileged support for the exchange of competences and artistic crafts, but also constitute a source of knowledge between the major figures of social and intellectual life. Their study covers two principal aspects. One could concentrate on the texts themselves, as well as their material and concrete dimensions or contents. It is also possible to analyze the libraries, be they actual ones (such as inventories, etc.) or “virtual” ones (i.e. the reconstruction of an artist’s readings). In order to study these documents, various perspectives can be envisaged:

a. The study of texts would make it possible to estimate the French authors’ knowledge of Dutch and Flemish theoretical or historical writings - that is to say the French reception of Philip Angels, Samuel van Hoogstraten, Gerard de Lairesse, Arnold Houbraken, and the likes so as to define which topics are selected, what the major theoretical orientations appear to be or which positive and negative criteria may be involved in the reception of foreign traditions.

A reciprocal analysis concerning the French writings (Roger de Piles, André Félibien, Dezallier d’Argenville, Descamps, etc.) which circulated in the Netherlands and Flanders would bring complementary elements.

The translations or the adaptations of other books – by Roger de Piles, Charles-Alphonse Dufresnoy in the Netherlands and Carel van Mander, Gerard de Lairesse or Arnold Houbraken in France – and the books of models would also compose a relevant approach.

b. The study of private libraries would enable us to evaluate the reception of foreign works – French art books read in the Netherlands and Dutch books available in France. An analysis and a reconstitution of the different modes of reading and the book culture of new key-figures, such as collectors, amateurs, theoreticians and artists, would be paramount to an accurate study of what Dutch, Flemish or French readers would have found arguable or praiseworthy in the artistic cultures of their neighbours, the owners’ personalities thus constituting a major aspect of the research.

c. Lastly, press and newspapers remain a very important source in order to consider the circulation of information and the feedback given to some artistic events. The recent electronic edition of a periodical like the *Gazette d’Amsterdam* should greatly facilitate researches. Many French newspapers (*Journal encyclopédique*, *Mercure de France*) have also been published as *fac-similés*, which render possible the carrying out of valuable evaluations.

## **2. The artists**

a. Travels constitute an essential part of the artistic training, and such travels did not always lead to Italy. The presence of French artists in the Netherlands and of Northern artists in France has been attested since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. And it sometimes resulted in the final installation of some of them in their adoptive country. Numerous questions spring to mind, among which: Who were these French artists in the Netherlands and these Dutch or Flemish artists in France? Did they transcribe their travelling experience through drawing and/or writing? Who were the artists who settled in their countries of adoption (Bernard Picart in the Netherlands, or Karel van Falens in France, for example)? What type of motivations urged them to do so (*i.e.* religious, economic, artistic ones)? Would they try to impose their own traditions on the new host country or would they rather assimilate the local practices?

b. In order to judge the circulation of artists in the North of Europe, the issue of relationships and networks – *via* the study of artists and scholars' letters, documents and files, etc. – also proves crucial and must be viewed in connection with artistic exchanges of that time.

c. The particular case of “mediators”, *i.e.* foreign artists having worked in the two studied geographical areas, finally proves an extremely rewarding study (*e.g.* Giorgio Ghisi), insofar as it would allow a distinction between the proper specificities of each visual and artistic tradition, and the different strategies used by these artists in order to integrate it into their own art.

## **3. The art works**

a. The taste for Dutch and Flemish art in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France has been highlighted since the publishing of Horst Gerson's *Ausbreitung und Nachwirkung der holländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Haarlem, 1942). But many interrogations do remain concerning the repercussions of this vogue among French artists (visual culture, personal production, etc), on artistic theory and criticism, then in full bloom, and on the activities and the conferences of the Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in Paris. It remains to be seen which foremost Dutch and Flemish models were used and studied by French painters and how they got transmitted, what the key-events were and whether they had any impact on the Académie royale and its teachings or within the framework of the artistic production of the Court and, last but not least, what critical reactions were aired.

A symmetrical study could be developed and for example, more intensive research of the French models in the ancient Netherlands' architecture and decorative arts would be useful. Such research could address the following questions : were the Dutch and Flemish artists receptive to the French influence and why? Who were the most appreciated French artists?...

## **4. The prints**

As light supports, of a multiple nature and moderate cost, prints circulated most easily from one country to another. For this reason, engraving played a crucial part in

the cultural and artistic exchanges, and as a source of knowledge or a way of diffusing the models for the visual and decorative arts. These various functions can be analysed in many ways and particularly through the transfers of important workshops from Paris to Amsterdam (Bernard Picart) or from the Flanders to France (Gerard Edelynck).

### **5. The institutions**

The development of institutions such as the academies, the art schools, the salons or the exhibition places in each country could also be explored in terms of exchanges and reciprocal trade, because they sometimes encouraged the movement of the young artists in search of a training, and the “travelling” of art works. In Paris, the influent Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture and the Académie royale d’Architecture were successively created in 1648 and in 1671 and regular Salons were held at the Louvre from 1737 onwards. We may wonder to which extent the creation and development of these institutions determined the artistic life of the Flemish and Dutch artists, on which model these academies and their teachings were based and if they attract artists from abroad. Finally, where and how were the art exhibitions produced and presented, and were foreign artists invited?

### **6. The “border zones”**

A last problem will regard what one could call the “intermediary zones” or “border-zones”, that is to say the geographical areas located between, or close to, the countries which will be studied in the course of our conference. Four such “reaches” quite naturally spring to mind: namely Liège, the Alsace region, the Lorraine one and the North of France.

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These research possibilities around the artistic exchanges between France and the Low Countries are, as one can easily see, quite numerous, and one hopes they will provide a profitable and essential confrontation involving Belgian, Dutch and French scholars, but also, in a general way, all those interested in these themes and issues.

### **Date and location**

The conference will be held at the University of Lille 3 in May 2008 (probably 28-29-30 May 2008).

Languages: French or English.

The acts of the conference will be published.

### **Paper submit**

**If you wish to propose a contribution corresponding to one of the evoked themes, please forward an e-mail to Gaëtane Maes (e-mail : [gaetane.maes@univ-lille3.fr](mailto:gaetane.maes@univ-lille3.fr)) and Jan Blanc (e-mail : [jan.blanc@unil.ch](mailto:jan.blanc@unil.ch)) before April 30<sup>th</sup> 2007**

including:

- the name of your institution;
- the title of your contribution;
- a precise summary (400 words);
- a short curriculum vitae, including a selection of your previous publications.

All the proposals will be examined and selected by the members of the scientific committee.

#### **Scientific committee**

Marion Boudon-Machuel (Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris)

Peter Fuhring (Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen)

Christophe Loir (Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique – Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Christian Michel (Université de Lausanne)

Patrick Michel (Université de Lille 3)

Myriam Serck-Dewaide (Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique - Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium, Bruxelles)

Maria van Berge-Gerbaud (Fondation Custodia, Paris)

Kathlijne Van der Stighelen (Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven)

#### **Organizing committee**

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#### **For more information, please contact the organizers of the conference:**

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