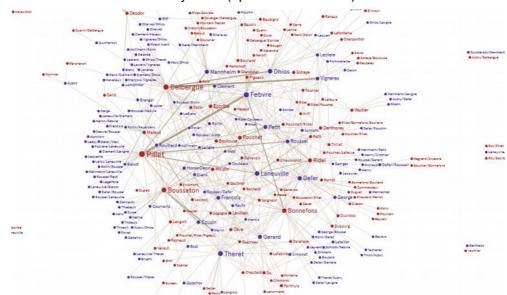# Experts and Auctioneers in Paris Art Auctions 1852-1862

The first decade of art auctions at the Hôtel Drouot

Network visualization by Lukas Fuchsgruber on Graph Commons

May 2017 (updated June 2017)

Link to the interactive visualization (updated):

https://graphcommons.com/graphs/427fc483-f4bd-401b-8c07-98265e8ecf02

Description:

From 1852 the Hôtel Drouot was the space where the French auctioneers (Commissaires-Priseurs) - who held a stately sanctioned monopoly - organized their auctions. By processing data from the art auction catalogue repertory by Frits Lugt and the extended version Art Sales Catalogues Online, it is possible to map the networks of art marketing at the early Hôtel Drouot. The used information is the names of experts and auctioneers as they appear on the cover of the catalogues. In the first ten years after the creation of the Hôtel Drouot around 100 auctioneers cooperated with around 100 experts in over 2000 auctions, sometimes in duos or trios of experts or auctioneers. Approximately 50% of all Parisian auctioneers of that time, 30-40 per year, show up in the art auctions in these repertories. One fifth of all auctions in the sample are organized by Charles Pillet (1824-1889), since 1855 the major auctioneer for art auctions. The visualization also provides insight into the less dominant actors. Different approaches to this market become visible. There were very active partnerships between individual auctioneers and experts. In the online version individual actors can be singled out for analysis by the viewer. Also the whole visualization can be clustered and filtered.

Technical description:

Network analysis of 2432 auction catalogues (tidied data of all Lugt/ASCO entries from 1852 to 1862 without those that had empty fields for expert or auctioneer). Auctioneers marked red, experts blue. Lines represent auctions held together. Line weight visualizes the number of auctions. Size of the names visualizes the number of connections (centrality). The occasional teams of experts or auctioneers are entered as one entity with a slash between them.