Foreign artists versus French critics

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Publication date
2017

Document Version
Final published version

License
Other

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
van Dijk, M. E. (2017). *Foreign artists versus French critics: Exhibition strategies and critical reception at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris (1884-1914)*.

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by Maite van Dijk
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2017

Foreign Artists versus French Critics: Exhibition Strategies and Critical Reception at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris (1884-1914)

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor

aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam

op gezag van de Rector Magnificus

prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex

ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie,

in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit

op vrijdag 24 november 2017, te 13:00 uur

door Maite Eva van Dijk

geboren te Utrecht

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Externe financiering:
Het archiefonderzoek dat ik in Parijs heb uitgevoerd voor dit proefschrift is mede mogelijk gemaakt door een reisbeurs van het Amsterdams Universiteitsfonds, beursnummer 11/5006, 2011.

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PREFACE

The Querelle des Indépendants

In 1923, the committee of the Société des Artistes Indépendants, under the responsibility of its long-time president Paul Signac (1863-1935), decided to organize the installation of the next year's exhibition in national schools. This led to a large and intense debate, reported in detail in the press, which came to be known as the 'Querelle des Indépendants'. It was started by an open letter of the artist Fernand Léger (1881-1955) in the magazine *Montparnasse*, published on 1 December 1923. Léger was one of the fiercest opponents of the decision to introduce a nation-based installation, and decided to leave the committee.[1] Another French painter, André Lhote (1885-1962), also disagreed with the decision, but published his choice to retain his place on the committee, as he believed he could achieve more for his comrades if he stayed on.[2] The *Bulletin de la vie artistique* decided to devote a questionnaire to the affair, asking artists to give their opinion on the committee's decision. In a total of four different issues, released in January and February 1924, a large selection of these responses by artists was published. First the reactions of artists of the committee were printed, followed by letters of foreign artists and concluded by the opinions of French artists.

The *Bulletin de la vie artistique* opened the discussion on December 15, 1923 by publishing an account of the reasons behind the committee's decision. The author Guillaume Jeanneau defended the decision and wrote: 'Jusqu'à présent, sur les mêmes cimaises, nos hôtes voisinaient avec nous. Mais nos hôtes se sont multipliés; ils nous submergent quasiment et le mélange est si confus des formules diverses que la leçon générale du salon s'en trouve dénaturée. Le comité des Indépendants veut changer tout cela. Il a pris la décision qui s'imposait: le placement par nationalité. La majorité des artistes, les étrangers comme les Français, n'y virent point malice.'[3] His argument raises several issues concerning national art, cultural *métissage* ('le mélange est si confus des formules diverses'), degeneration ('dénaturée'), the perception of the other (framed by Jeanneau as 'nos hôtes') and foreign domination. Jeanneau clearly invokes a divide and opposition between the French ('nous') and foreign ('ils') artists, accusing the Other of active 'invasion'. He also reflected on the nature and constitution of the Salon des Indépendants, and stated that it was flooded by foreign art ('ils nous submergent'). This 'flooding' of the Salon des Indépendants was a recurring concern in the responses, and art criticism in general, and not only explained in

[1] Maingon 2014: 310.
[2] *Bulletin de la vie artistique,* 1 January 1924: 13.
[3] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 15 December 1923: 517.

xenophobic terms. Artists and critics complained that the Salon des Indépendants had turned into a bazaar full of mediocrity, just like the official Salons were attacked during the nineteenth century.

The connection of the Salon to a bazaar carried commercial implications, and invoked the growing concerns over the commodification of art. Several artists accused the committee of commercial interests that had inspired their decision. The French artist Yves Alexis wrote: 'Les motifs commerciaux qu'on invoque pour justifier cette mesure (attraction, intérêt nouveau) ne me paraissent guère solides (…) il ne faut point oublier que nous ne sommes pas entreprise commerciale, comme le voudraient certains, mais avant tout société d'artistes et de camarades.'[4] Ossip Zadkine warned that 'ce geste du Comité sera très, très mal interprété par les collectionneurs étrangers.'[5] Another foreign artist, the Dutch painter Kees van Dongen, concealed his critique on the concept of art as a commodity and decoration in irony: '(…) nous sommes tout à fait de l'avis du Comité Directeur et de Messieurs les Actionnaires des *Grands Magasins des Indépendants* au sujet du mode de placement des *articles étrangers*. Par la même occasion, nous prenons la liberté de vous dire que nous avons actuellement dans nos magasins un stock de très jolis sujets (garantis fabrication française) pour salons, salles à manger, cuisines, offices, écuries, etc. qui constituent des cadeaux utiles à des prix défiant toute concurrence.' His closing was full of mockery: 'Espérant être favorisés par vos ordres, nous vous prions, Monsieur, d'agréer nos salutations tellement distinguées que nous en sommes nous-mêmes étonnés. VAN DONGEN, Registre du Commerce Seine n°000.000.'[6] This 'registre du commerce' was established in 1919, and registered French and foreign commercial enterprises and individuals. By referring to this register, which in reality did not record artists, Van Dongen embroidered on his implications that artists were positioned as merchants selling their articles made to order. The minimal number of his invented registration seems to imply that Van Dongen presented himself as a nonentity, as he was of foreign origin, bringing the nationalistic issue back into play. He also referred to a general belief in a truly French artistic identity ('garantis fabrication française').

Indeed, many letters by French artists in response to the questionnaire revealed a rather fundamentalist and superior concept of Frenchness. The French artist Gaspard-Maillol replied: 'Il apparaît jusqu'à présent que dans l'art moderne, ce sont les étrangers qui ont subi l'influence des Français, depuis les impressionnistes jusqu'à nos peintres actuels (…) En retour, quel a donc été l'apport étranger? Bien peu important, me semble-t-il.'[7] Another reply was even more explicit: 'il conserve très nettement, depuis Delacroix jusqu'à Matisse, la suprématie dans celui de la peinture

[4] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 January 1924: 11-12.
[5] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 15 January 1924: 31.
[6] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 15 January 1924: 38.
[7] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 February 1924: 60.

pure.’[8] Most French artists agreed on the installation in national schools, as it would facilitate a deeper understanding of the artistic developments in other countries, in relation to the French achievements. The majority of the artists did not at all question the legitimacy of the concept of national schools. Only a few artists questioned the validity of this categorisation in the *Bulletin de la vie artistique*. Gaston Ballade, for example, wrote: ‘A présent, je dis: « L’Art n’a point de patrie. » (…) L’art international est un langage universel avec des intonations différentes.’[9] The artist Jean Lurçat elaborated by stating: ‘L’interprétation des arts « nationaux » est si complexe que mieux vaut parler en parabole (…) Classer les différentes formes d’art qui truffent l’art universel selon un mode national correspondrait au geste de l’amateur qui classerait ses exotiques selon la forme des râbles. Les nations ont une singulière propension à des classifications qui, dans la plupart des cas, sont plus administratives, carbonifères ou bancaires qu'ethniques.’[10]

The idea of a geographically determined art versus a universalist ideology frequently recurred in this debate. The universalist stance was taken by a few artists, among whom Louis Valtat (1869-1952): ‘Ils est évident que pour les œuvres anciennes, on ne pense pas un instant à la nationalité de ceux qui les ont faites. Il doit en être de même pour les œuvres modernes si elles sont belles ou intéressantes, et il est impossible que ces échanges de visions et de connaissances ne profitent pas à tous.’[11] Suzanne Valadon interestingly noted that she was not against a national division by principle, but that it was against the autonomous essence and identity of the Salon des Indépendants: ‘Pour le Salon des Indépendants ce projet est complètement absurde. Exclure les étrangers ou les mettre dans des salles à part, c’est ne plus être indépendant.’[12]

The arguments put forward by the foreign artists were also not so much concerned with a fundamental objection against the belief in a national art. Most artists were merely outraged by the fact that they were excluded; it wounded their sense of belonging. These feelings of exclusion are poignantly described by several artists. The Swiss artist Widhopff, who was introduced by the French editor of the *Bulletin de la vie artistique* as ‘il est des nôtres’, wrote: ‘On me dit: “Tu es étranger, avec toi pas de voisinage!”’.[13] Ossip Zadkine was even more emotional in his response, confirming that the decision was ‘blessante envers nous, artistes étrangers’ and referring to the special sections for foreigners as ‘camps de concentration’, a word readily picked-up by others.[14]

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[8] Jacquemot in *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 January 1924: 11.
[9] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 February 1924: 54.
[10] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 February 1924: 63.
[11] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 February 1924: 88.
[12] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 February 1924: 88.
[13] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 15 January 1924: 30.
[14] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 15 January 1924: 31.

The fierce and emotional reactions by numerous artists demonstrate that the decision to install the works at the Salon des Indépendants in national schools was met with outrage and shock. Reading through the responses, one wonders what brought all this on. The importance and intensity of the 'Querelle des Indépendants' asks for further research into the cultural debates on the nature of French art and the contribution of foreign artists to its contemporary practice in the previous decades (1884-1914).

The 'Querelle des Indépendants' was the culmination point of a process of decades in which the influx of foreign artists increased in a cultural field that was marked by social, artistic and political forces. I would like to examine and map this process by means of the Salon des Indépendants. This Salon was the most open exhibition in Paris as it did not have a jury, and it was precisely its independent and liberal identity that was central in the discussion of the position of foreign artists as put forward in the 'querelle'. As we have seen in the above cited responses, several major themes were raised in the debate: the changed exhibition field, the universalist and national ideals, identity, artistic strategies and the reception of foreign art. To understand the notions and the beliefs that were at stake in the 'Querelle des Indépendants', I will look into the history and position of the Salon des Indépendants, the critical debates around it and how foreign artists navigated and operated within this climate.

Ill. 1 The committee of the Salon des Indépendants during installation (left to right):
André Léveillé, Paul Signac, and Charles Igounet de Villers.
Source: *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 15 February 1924: 79.

Introduction

> *In France, foreign artists were certainly subject to different pressures than the French. Especially of a hostile xenophobic kind, and they were fitted only slowly and at first awkwardly into the French picture of independent art in France. But what is striking is the degree to which they and their communities found the space in which to thrive in Paris (…).*[15]
> Christopher Green, *Art in France: 1900-1940*, 2000.

> *When I look around in Paris and see the number of foreigners everywhere, and consider the degeneracy of every moral and artistic standard, I realize I no longer know my own city. This is why we lost in '70 – the nation is no longer pure.*[16]
> Robert Harris, *An Officer and a Spy*, 2014.

The observation in the historic novel *An Officer and a Spy* by Robert Harris illustrates how the first decades of the French Third Republic are often characterized, and not only in the realm of fiction. The years after the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1) are broadly considered to be defined by nationalist and conservative feelings, in which it was very difficult for foreign artists to build their careers. This cliché is, however, only partly true.

The notion of degeneration – the idea that 'the nation is no longer pure' as Harris puts it – was indeed an important theme at the end of the nineteenth century. Even if it was a period of peace, cultural bloom and industrial prosperity – it was called the 'Belle Epoque' (1870-1914) – it was also marked by political uproar, economic recession, population decline, the fear of foreign invasion and immigration, the scandalous Dreyfus-affair, and a general concern to loose France's supremacy on a military, political, economic, intellectual, cultural and moral level. The French concept of the nation, its identity and destiny were discussed and defended by a wide variety of politicians, writers, critics and artists.

These patriotic and conservative currents were not unambiguous. The nature and conceptions of nationalist thought varied greatly, and could for example also include tenets of regionalism or socialism.[17] Furthermore, there were radically different voices to be heard in this period. Several politicians, intellectuals, critics and artists proclaimed a universalist or cosmopolitan outlook. They defended international art and cultural exchange. Some of these opinions were

[15] Green 2000: 64.
[16] Harris 2014: 46.
[17] See for this subject: Brustein 1988; Wright 2003; Thomson 2005; and Wright 2012.

inspired by the aim to protect the French artistic hegemony; others denounced the nationalistic outlook completely. The Belle Epoque must thus be regarded as a multi-vocal climate, influenced by a broad collection of convictions and doctrines. It was a highly differentiated and versatile period of time, full of conflicts and contradictions. Apparently paradoxal beliefs existed parallel to eachother, or were even intertwined.

In this dissertation I will take a fresh look at the critical climate of the first decades of the Third Republic, as the purely monolithic nationalistic perspective has blinded our view. I belief that is precisely because of the multifaceted nature of the critical climate, that it was possible for foreign artists to build their reputations in Paris. There were many little cracks in the nationalistic climate, which these artists used to succeed. Christopher Green stated that it was 'striking' how foreign artists 'found the space in which to thrive in Paris'. I aim to argue that it was not 'striking' at all, as it was a deliberate and strategic achievement of these foreign artists to *create*, and not *find*, spaces to thrive. My main objective is to explore the mechanisms behind the success of foreign artists in Paris.

Scope

In recent decades international exchange and issues of nationality have become a central focus in art historical scholarship. Many publications have been devoted to art and nationalism in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These studies focused primarily on the relation between nationalism and French visual culture or on the reception of specific groups of foreign artists, such as the German, Spanish and American painters in Paris.[18] The critical response to international art at large has, nevertheless, received less attention. An important exception to this is the work by the French scholar Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, in which a geopolitical approach to artistic production around 1900 is explored. Her studies have focused on the internationalisation of the modern art world, and her research is marked by quantitative methods. She has collected a wealth of data on the movements of artists and their art works and the cross-national connections that they established. Her dissertation *« Nul n'est prophète en son pays »? L'internationalisation de la peinture avant-gardiste parisienne (1855-1914)* is a highly original and relevant contribution to the field, as she explores the social and spatial relations of the French avant-garde in an international framework.[19] Joyeux-Prunel adopts a French dispositif in her dissertation and most of her other work, studying the art and lives of *French* artists in a *global* or *foreign* perspective. My objective, on

[18] See for example: González & Martí 1989; Esner 1994; Shaw 2002; Hargrove & McWilliam 2005; Adler (et al.) 2006; and Burns 2012.
[19] Joyeux-Prunel 2002, 2007 and 2009. The research by Laurent Cazes on foreign artists at the Salon is also relevant, see Cazes 2012.

the other hand, is to examine how *foreign* artists were operating and received in the *French* climate.[20]

I have chosen to focus on the foreign artists exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants, as the 'Querelle des Indépendants' originated around this exhibition venue. In the responses of the questionnaire many artists referred to the nature and identity of this Salon as a central element in their objections against a classification in national schools. Adolph Feder wrote: 'Le classement par nations ne répond pas à l'esprit des Indépendants.'[21] This was further clarified by René Francillon: 'La formation de sections étrangères aux Indépendants, si elle peut s'expliquer par le souci de mettre quelque clarté dans la confusion qui caractérisait les deux derniers salons, me semble cependant une erreur : 1° parce que trahissant les principes d'égalité entre tous les sociétaires, principes — statutairement — en honneur aux Indépendants.'[22] The artist Séverin Rappa declared: 'Mais ce qui fait le charme du Salon des Indépendants, c'est qu'on puisse — sous la seule condition qu'on ait payé sa place — y exposer n'importe quoi, sans solennité, sans la crainte de déshonorer sa patrie, sans souci d'ethnologie: pour le plaisir.'[23] The independent nature made the Salon des Indépendants different from other venues, and it was precisely this character that was at stake in the 'Querelle des Indépendants'. The responses indicate that many artists believed that foreign participants should be treated equally and fraternally, as the Salon des Indépendants was 'avant tout société d'artistes et de camarades' as Yves Alexis remarked in 1924.[24] It was exactly its independent constitution that set the Salon des Indépendants apart from other Salons in Paris.

The Salon des Indépendants was founded in 1884 by a group of a hundred artists who were rejected by the jury of the Société des Artistes Français, the society that controlled the most important yearly Salon since 1881. The Salon des Indépendants was a radically new contribution to the exhibition field at the time, as the jury system was completely abolished. It was open to every artist: established and emerging, French and foreign. Despite its liberal policies, which also allowed barely skilled amateurs to participate, the Salon des Indépendants remained serious enough to be worth showing in. It became one of the leading cultural events in Paris and the main exhibition venue for the latest developments in the arts. Over the years it would accommodate all major movements in modern art. The Salon des Indépendants was founded and reared by the Neo-Impressionist circle, including artists as Paul Signac, Georges Seurat (1859-1891) and Albert

[20] In this dissertation I have chosen to use the term 'foreign' to describe artists of non-French nationality. I will further elaborate on the terminology used to define the other in the first chapter of part 2.
[21] *Bulletin de la vie artistique,* 15 January 1924: 32.
[22] *Bulletin de la vie artistique,* 15 January 1924: 36.
[23] *Bulletin de la vie artistique,* 15 January 1924: 37-38.
[24] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 January 1924: 12.

Dubois-Pillet (1846-1890). In the late 1880s and 1890s the public was confronted with the work of artists such as Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Edvard Munch (1863-1944), Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) and Felix Vallotton (1865-1925). It also became the home of the Nabis painters, including Maurice Denis (1870-1943) and Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947). The success and fame of the Salon des Indépendants declined briefly at the end of the nineteenth century, but by 1902 it had reclaimed its position as the most important venue to discover the latest artistic tendencies. The Salon des Indépendants of 1905 was dominated by the scandalous success of the Fauves painters, such as André Derain (1880-1954) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954); and 1910 was the year of the Cubists. The number of participating artists climbed over the years. In the 1880s and 1890s the amount of exhibitors remained in the hundreds, but by 1907 the total number of participating artists was propelled into the thousand. These numbers also included many foreign artists, who came to Paris to establish their careers. The Salon des Indépendants was a sound choice, not only because it was open to all artists, but also because it was considered as the most important international and independent venue.

Even if the doors of the Salon des Indépendants were open to foreign artists, they were still confronted with French opinion. The absence of a jury exposed the artist completely to the views of the critics and the public. My contention and thesis is that it was crucial for any artist to employ specific exhibition strategies in order to be noted and appreciated in this plenitude of art works. Foreign artists had yet further special challenges, as they were faced with growing nationalistic and patriotic sentiments. Of course, artists were also guided by aesthetic, intellectual or artistic ambitions and not only by career strategies or commercial considerations.[25] I am, however, mainly concerned with the works that artists selected for their exhibitions and how they presented themselves. In this dissertation I will, therefore, focus on the exhibition strategies that foreign artists employed at the Salon des Indépendants and consider the effects of their methods in order to find out how they *created* the space in which to thrive in Paris.[26]

The Institutional Framework

Before analyzing the exhibitions politics of foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants, I will map out the field in which they were operating. This framework should not be seen as a simple

[25] Neil McWilliam has made this point in his review of Joyeux-Prunel's book (2011), when he stated: 'une étude qui risqué de réduire toute carrière d'artiste à une campagne de marketing plus ou moins réussie' (see McWilliam 2011: 88). The careers and reception of artists were of course formed by many different factors and actors: political, philosophical, aesthetical, formal, intellectual, commercial. I have decided to focus on one of these aspects, but that does not imply that I believe this was the only or most important factor.
[26] To paraphrase Green again (Green 2000: 64).

background, as the cultural and intellectual frames informed the artistic and exhibition practice of these artists. The nineteenth century was defined by institutional changes that had essentially altered the status and role of the artist in relation to his public and his critics.[27] The first part of this thesis is, therefore, devoted to the institutional frameworks, such as the art press and the exhibition system in Paris at the time.

I will start with a chronicle of the Salon des Indépendants, with special attention to the placement of foreign artists in this history. I will discuss this Salon in the context of the fundamental changes that took place in the French exhibition system in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Studies on the history, position, operation and identity of the Société des Artistes Indépendants and its annual salon are, compared to the exhibition literature, remarkably limited. The society, which still exists, has published some books on its institutional history, but they lack scholarly anchoring and objective reflection.[28] Dominique Lobstein has published a resourceful dictionary of all the artists that exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants, listing their exhibits per year and supplemented with an excellent introduction on the society and its Salons.[29] A comprehensive scholarly study has, nevertheless, not yet been published. This can in part be explained by the fact that the archives of the Société des Artistes Indépendants appear to have been lost. As most societies of the time, the Société des Artistes Indépendants probably did not keep a tidy administration.[30] Their offices also moved various times, most probably dispersing the archival material in the process. As a result there are few archival sources on the society and its Salons, impeding profound studies. Yet, with the help of the yearly exhibition catalogues and the annual reports that were published in these catalogues, contemporary accounts and reviews and the aforementioned literature, it has been possible to chronicle the history, functions, regulations, nature and status of the Salon des Indépendants.

The second chapter is devoted to the critical climate of the Belle Époque. It will give a selective overview of the nature, mechanisms and effects of the art press at the time (the 'reign of criticism' as Neil McWilliam dubbed the period[31]), with reference to elements pertinent to my topic. Since the rise of printed media in the eighteenth century, the press had become a political force, capable of changing the public opinion. As the French state withdrew itself further as the custodian of national culture over the course of the nineteenth century, art criticism increasingly flourished.

[27] I am indebted to the work of Moriarty for this approach, see Moriarty 1994.
[28] See for example Monneret 2000. Other publications on the Salon des Indépendants are: Huyghe 1984, Coquiot 1920 and Angrand 1965.
[29] Lobstein 2003.
[30] Vaisse 1979: 144.
[31] Hargrove & McWilliam 2005: 49.

Between the 1880s and 1900s, there was a remarkable growth in the number, circulation and diversity of newspapers, journals and periodicals. The press coverage of the Salon des Indépendants started somewhat slowly, but it picked up quickly after the turn of the century. All major periodicals began to include reviews on the Salon des Indépendants in their pages. Some newspapers even devoted their front pages to the opening of the exhibition, and many published lengthy considerations on the quality of the Salon and the exposed art works, including alphabetical summaries of participating artists of interest.

I have made a selection of 30 periodicals for my research, consisting of the most relevant sources for the study of the critical reception of the Salon des Indépendants, varying from the largest daily newspapers to the more specialized art magazines.[32] I have focused on the Parisian periodicals, as the Salon des Indépendants took place in the capital and the press coverage was mostly limited to Paris. I have based this selection on a primary inventory of the art press in Paris between 1884 and 1914, reading through dozens of printed papers (manually at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France; or digitally, thanks to the overwhelmingly rich and ever growing French database Gallica). The study of this source material has been complemented with the help of several scholarly publications on French art criticism at the turn of the century by Fawcett and Phillpot, Bouillon, Gamboni, Gee, Wrigley and Orwicz.[33] I applied four different selection criteria, in order to provide a meaningful and diverse set of selected material. The periodicals have been selected based on their perceptiveness to contemporary art in general and specifically the Salon des Indépendants; their position and scope (quantified by readership for example); the contributions of influential critics; and their socio-political outlook. The selection includes, therefore, newspapers from the political right, such as *Le Matin* and *Le Journal*, but also anarchist papers such *Gil Blas* and *Paris-Journal*. It contains specialist art magazines, including *Art et décoration, Gazette des beaux-arts* and *La Revue blanche*. The set ranges from ephemeral publications as *Montjoie!* to long-standing institutions such as *Le Figaro*.[34] The reading of these periodicals shapes a telling and instructive picture of the cultural politics over the span of thirty years (1884-1914). It directs us to the most powerful voices of art criticism, including Louis Vauxcelles, Arsène Alexandre, Gustave Kahn, Camille Mauclair, Thiébault-Sisson, André Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire. I will consider the personal relations between the artists and these critics in order to examine the various strategies and mechanisms in play.

[32] See appendix 1.
[33] Fawcett & Phillpot 1976; Bouillon 1987; *Romantisme* 1991; Gee 1993; Wrigley 1993 and Orwicz 1994.
[34] The reasoning behind this selection is further explained on pages 51-52.

This group of critics cannot be considered as homogeneous, as they operated in very different circles, with some contributing to ephemeral literary periodicals and others to widely-read daily newspapers. These writers had also very different backgrounds and occupations, and their professional field of activity must of course have influenced their writings, and also the effects of their writings. Moreover, they had diverging aesthetical and political beliefs, reflecting the hybrid and versatile critical climate of the time. Yet their language does show some consistent threads that I will explore. I am not so much concerned with a meta-critical reading of specific texts by these critics, or with their isolated dialogues, but rather with the study of a general rhetoric, the whole language of discourse.[35] My main interest is how these critics reflected and shaped the climate of opinion.

This dissertation is thus not conceived as a conventional reception study, as defined by Hans Robert Jauss in his lecture on the concept of reception in 1967.[36] In Jauss' model critical reception is oriented around the artwork and understood in purely aesthetic terms. This denies the fact that critical discourses were also informed by conditions and notions outside of the cultural field, and not exclusively concerned with artistic judgments. I prefer to follow Bourdieu's theoretical framework. He has argued that social structures are embedded in the systems of classification and that it is 'one of the major difficulties of the social history of philosophy, art or literature (…) to reconstruct these spaces of original possibilities which, because they were part of the self-evident givens of the situation, remained unremarked and are, therefore, unlikely to be mentioned in contemporary accounts, chronicles or memoirs.'[37] The critical debates and the language of discourse are therefore a seminal part of my research. This also follows Michael Orwicz, who has pointed out in his publication *Art Criticism and its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century France* (1994) that critical discourses cannot be isolated from the historical context in which they were produced.[38]

The majority of critics - even the most liberal and cosmopolitan writers, and even critics of foreign nationality who operated in the French field - seemed to be concerned with the conservation of French artistic supremacy. Camille Mauclair, for example, was on the far right, manifesting himself as a xenophobic and anti-Semitic critic. He was extremely concerned with the supremacy of the French school, and in particular Impressionist painting, writing articles on 'le nationalisme pictural'.[39] Louis Vauxcelles, on the other hand, was a critic from the liberal Republican centre, who

[35] This approach of my material has been stimulated mostly by the examples of Martha Ward and Carol Zemel in their important publications on Camille Pissarro and Vincent van Gogh: Ward 1996 and Zemel 1980.
[36] Inaugural lecture at the University Konstanz 1967, discussed by Langfeld 2015: 13.
[37] Bourdieu 1993: 31.
[38] Orwicz 1994: 4. Anne Larue calls this a sociological approach to art criticism, see 'Delacroix and his critics: the stakes and strategies', in Orwicz 1994: 64.
[39] Camille Mauclair, 'De Fragonard à Renoir, une leçon de nationalisme pictural', in *La Revue bleue*, 9 July 1904: 45-49.

kept his distance from extremism. Nonetheless, he argued in *Gil Blas*, a newspaper of the democratic left, that the abstraction of Cubism was an anti-French pictorial expression, as the engagement with nature was central and indispensable to French painting.[40] At the other end of the spectrum stood the poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire, himself of Polish-Italian ancestry, and a regular champion of progressive and foreign artists. But notions on Frenchness, tradition and supremacy pervaded even Apollinaire's criticism. Drawing up the balance in 1913, he wrote in *Montjoie!*: 'Depuis 25 ans, c'est au Salon des Indépendants que se révèlent les tendances et les personnalités nouvelles de la peinture française, la seule peinture qui compte aujourd'hui et qui poursuive à la face de l'univers la logique des grandes traditions.'[41] Apollinaire strove for a universal art – rooted in tradition! – but paradoxically he considered the French school to be the most qualified to promote this global pictorial language. There appears to have been a general intellectual notion that the national character and French culture had to be promoted and protected. However, this notion was full of contradictions and conflicts as will be discussed.

Critics were not the only ones to reflect on art in national terms, several French artists were also very involved in this patriotic project, whether explicitly or unintentionally. Various French artists searched for new forms of representation that could incorporate and visualize the French national character. This quest led to a rediscovery of the past and a re-evaluation of traditional values. A shared history was crucial in fostering nationalistic feelings, as Ernest Renan already noted in 1882.[42] This shared cultural past did not only instill solidarity, it also served as a claim to continuity, and even eternity. In France it came beyond dispute that aspects of 'tradition' had to be an element in art, otherwise the artwork could not be considered as an expression of true French 'genius'. This concept of tradition was nonetheless not fixed, it shifted for example between the Latin and Celtic heritages, resulting in many different definitions of French art. Its meaning was continually recreated by artists and adapted to actual concerns and needs in shaping a national identity and idiom. As Geeta Kapur indicated in her study on contemporary Indian culture, the term tradition is often represented as a fundamental and real option, while it is in fact essentially a pragmatic feature of nation building.[43] There were many different ways to place oneself in the chain of France's glorious past. Consequently, all sorts of aesthetic production were considered to embody the French spirit and identity.[44]

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[40] Green 2000: 198. Unfortunately, no reference to the original citation is given in this publication.
[41] Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Salons des Artistes Indépendants', in *Montjoie!* 18 March 1913.
[42] Renan 1882: 27.
[43] Kapur 1990: 49. This imagined capacity of tradition is fully explored by Hobsbawm & Ranger 1992. See also page 65 of this dissertation.
[44] Christopher Green has for example convincingly analysed how the Cubist painters used their subject matter to declare a relationship with the past. See Green 1987. Of course, not only French artists and critics were operating within a national

The cultural politics revolved around the central oppositions of tradition and modernity, cosmopolitanism and patriotism, as Romy Golan demonstrated in her excellent and provocative study *Modernity and Nostalgia.*[45] Golan argued that these oppositional stances were provoked by the First World War and came to dominate the critical debates on foreign art between 1914 and 1940. I would like to argue that these dilemmas were already central to the cultural discourse far before the war. The call for classicism in French culture and society during the Third Republic confronted the French with a Catch-22, as modern art was essentially incompatible with tradition. As Shigemi Inaga also argued persuasively, avant-garde and tradition are considered to be opposite stances in Western culture (whereas this distinction is non-existent in the so-called Third World Culture).[46] Hence, a national, traditional art automatically excludes an avant-garde. Yet, if France wished to protect its leading position in the cultural field it needed to reconcile these opposite stances in order to safeguard the possibility of a national, modern art. To paraphrase Inaga: they needed to cut the Gordian knot. This knot was intricately related to the critical debates on national, universal and foreign art, as will be argued in this dissertation.

The Part of 'The Other'

In his inspiring study on the geography of art (2004) Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann pointed out that the theme of the beholder has been introduced in art history through the growing interest in reception studies. The position of the interpreter has been foregrounded in recent years, and considered as an important aspect of the experience and interpretation of the artwork.[47] The first part of my dissertation follows this model, studying the French critical discourse and the role of the 'beholder's share', a term used by Da Costa Kaufmann. In the second part I will shift the focus to the *other's* share, and consider the position, identity and experience of the foreign artist in Paris. This change of perspective brings out a crucial difference in the perception of identity. In the eyes of the beholder, the national identity of non-French artists was considered unitary. It was seen as a 'social totality (…) expressive of unitary collective experience', as the highly influential and original, yet controversial, scholar Homi K. Bhabha argued.[48] The French treated *the many as one* (italicization by Bhabha). In other words, national identity was generalized and the place of origin was considered to be the dominant element. As will be explored in this part, artists and their artworks were 'naturally'

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paradigm. French Modernism in the hands of a German Jewish artist like Max Liebermann, for example, was also a political position after the Franco-Prussian War of course. See for literature on Liebermann's career in an international context Deshmukh, Forster-Hahn & Gaehtgens 2011 and Deshmukh 2015.

[45] Golan 1995. See on this subject also Silver 1989.

[46] Inaga 1993: 69-70.

[47] Da Costa Kaufmann 2004: 6.

[48] Bhabha 1990: 204.

related to the place of origin. Da Costa Kaufmann calls this a geographical consideration, a dominant approach in art history since the nineteenth century. Art was bestowed with an identity by relating it to a specific location, culture, region or most commonly, a nation. The belief that art was affected by climate and soil, and the prevalent model of organizing art works by schools resulted both from the idea of art as the expression of a nation.[49] This uncomplicated, unitary perception of national identity, however, is reserved to the beholder. For the other – the foreign artist in our case – nationality was a plural and individual experience.[50] They were concerned with identity in general, and not so much with nationality as such. Foreign artists used their national identity when needed, but they could also make use of their 'Frenchness' where that helped, as we will see in the case-studies. Nowadays, we are acutely conscious of the fact that identity is a problematic construction, fluid or even a myth or illusion.[51] This understanding is indeed relatively recent. The concept of identity was first theorized in the psychological field in the United States in the 1950s, and from then on introduced in cultural, historical and sociological studies.[52] But even if identity was not yet debated as a theoretical issue in the nineteenth century, this does not mean that there was no awareness of the complex and multifaceted nature of identity. On the contrary, foreign artists were very conscious of their multiple identities and deliberately explored the ways in which they could construct and promote their artistic personae. Foreign artists were also aware of the fact that it was imperative not to be seen as part of *the many as one*, and that they had to detach themselves from this amalgam in order to be noted by the French.[53]

In the second part of my dissertation I will look at the various notions and definitions of identity and alterity. The use of idiom is especially important, as the prejudices and sympathies on foreigners often remained concealed in language. Specific attention will thus be given to the used idiom and connotation of certain words in contemporary criticism. The introduction of new words in the critical discourse will also be explored, such as the usage of the word 'métèque', which became a hold all term for foreigners but contained strong xenophobic undertones.[54] Pierre Bourdieu described, as already mentioned above, that the ideas and issues raised in art criticism were part of self-evident givens of the political and intellectual context and, therefore, often hiding in the folds of critical discourse.[55] Bourdieu alerts us that this mechanism is one of the major

[49] Da Costa Kaufmann 2004: 44.
[50] Bhabha 1990: 204.
[51] See Bauman & Vecchi 2004 for the concept of a liquid, fluid identity.
[52] See Gleason, 'Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,' in: *Journal of American History* 69 (1983).
[53] This mechanism is described by Georg Simmel in his essay 'The Stranger' (see Simmel 1971) and further discussed on pages 71-73.
[54] Green 2000: 197.
[55] See Bourdieu 1993 and 1996.

difficulties of the socio-historical study of art. The first chapters are devoted to understanding the different types of foreigner and the patterns of migration, considered in both a historical and a contemporary perspective. An important distinction must be made between the visiting and settling foreigner, carrying two distinct sets of implications. A settling foreigner, or immigrant (who can be either an 'expatriate' or 'exile') questioned the notion of nationality, identity and the other with far more problematic and fundamental ramifications than the visiting foreigner (whether itinerating or sojourning). This distinction was also at play in the critical reception of foreign artists, as will be explored in the case-studies.

Several critics and intellectuals believed that France was endangered by foreign invasion, and they denounced the 'influx' of foreign artists in Paris. Georges Rivière, for example, spoke sharp words on the Salon des Indépendants in *Le Journal des arts* of April 6, 1912: 'Je crois qu'il n'est pas inutile de redire les raisons qui affaiblissent de jour en jour des belles et nobles idées, pour lesquelles cependant luttent encore de nombreux artistes sincères et véritablement Indépendants. La principale de ces causes, que j'avais déjà signalée l'an dernier dans ce journal, est l'envahissement progressif d'étrangers, qui viennent par bandes formidables implanter à Paris leurs mœurs et leur visions souvent barbares.' His outcry was not an isolated case. That same year the newspaper *Le Temps* devoted a feuilleton to the crisis in French painting, and on December 3, 1912 the French Chambre des Députés discussed the problematic 'flood' of foreign artists in Paris, provoking the representative Jules-Louis Breton to declare that the Parisian exhibitions were of 'caractère anti-artistique et antinational'.[56] He hinted at a foreign conspiracy ('bandes formidables'), and warned that the barbaric culture would destroy the 'belles et nobles idées', the essence of French spirit. In his eyes, national tradition and identity were corrupted by these foreign influences. Fortunately, there were still 'artistes sincères' – not by accident Rivière used here one of the most prominent adjectives of nineteenth-century art criticism – fighting against this artistic 'degeneration'. His statement that the participation of foreign artists was ever growing ('l'envahissement progressif d'étrangers') was common belief at the time. With the help of statistical data I will verify this notion, and also reconstruct the diversification of nationalities at the Salon des Indépendants. As explained above, no archives of the Salon des Indépendants survived and this data research had, therefore, to be based on other primary sources such as exhibition catalogues and contemporary reviews, supplemented by the few studies that have been published on the history of the Salon des Indépendants.

[56] As cited in Fabre, Silver & Green 2000: 32, with no reference to the original citation.

The exhibition catalogues have proven to be most instructive to chronicle the foreign participation, as the place of birth was indicated for each artist. It was, therefore, possible to make a list of all foreign exhibiting artists between 1884 and 1914. There were some difficulties in compiling this list. The most prominent issue after the defeat at Sedan in 1871 was of course the disputable nationality of artists born in the Alsace-Lorraine. The national identity of artists from the 'territoires outre-mer' was also ambiguous. Sometimes it was explicitly noted that an artist was born abroad, but of French nationality; or vice versa – born in Paris but from foreign parents. As I am not so much concerned with all individual cases, but rather with a general picture of the foreign demography at the Salon des Indépendants, I have decided to exclude all these artists with dual or ambiguous nationalities.[57] While collecting and processing these data, I became very aware of the various interpretations that could be made on the basis of these apparent 'facts'. The analysis was not straightforward, but defined by rather personal choices and questions, such as the determination of nationality as described above, and also including the rather subjective selection and highlighting of certain data. This subjective selection and ordering of data is, nevertheless, inevitable, as Lévi-Strauss pointed out in *The Savage Mind*.[58] He stated that the historian is confronted with chaos of 'facts', and that he must 'choose, sever and carve them up' for narrative purposes.[59] Hayden White theorized this problem in his publication *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (1973), describing all historical work as a verbal structure that presents certain amounts of 'data' in a narrative form to explain this set of events, including 'an irreducible and inexpugnably element of interpretation'.[60] In his study *Tropics of Discourse* (1978), White elaborates on this concept by stating that 'our discourse always tends to slip away from our data towards the structures of consciousness with which we are trying to grasp them; or, what amounts to the same thing, the data always resist the coherency of the image which we are trying to fashion of them'.[61] In addition, White argues that the 'historical record is both too full and too sparse'.[62]

I experienced this problematic nature of collecting data during my research. I had 'to choose, sever and carve them up' in order to be able to interpret and explain the statistics, as the record of critical reviews on foreign art was of course too full. It is simply impossible to collect and study all the published critiques on all foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884 and 1914. The resulting collection is thus inevitably a selection, and no matter how large this record is, it is

[57] These problematic issues will be further discussed and explored on pages 76-77.
[58] Lévi-Strauss 1966.
[59] Lévi-Strauss 1966: 257. Also cited in White 1978: 55.
[60] White 1973: ix and citation from White 1978: 51.
[61] White 1978: 1.
[62] White 1978: 51.

always too sparse, as it will never give us a full picture of the critical reception of foreign artists at the time. I also realized that based on various chauvinistic and xenophobic critiques from the time, I expected that the data would invalidate the claim of Georges Rivière and many other French critics. Yet, the number of foreign participants at the Salon des Indépendants did indeed increase substantially with the years, and especially the percentage of artists from Russia and Poland amplified after 1900.[63] This was already signaled by French critics at the time, who repeatedly remarked upon the strong representation of Eastern European artists, and to whom Rivière implicitly referred by speaking of 'mœurs et visions souvent barbares'.[64]

Exhibition strategies

As the Salon des Indépendants grew out to be a vast and hybrid exhibition venue for contemporary art, also attracting many foreign artists, it became increasingly important to stand out as an artist.[65] That artists were acutely aware of this, and also acted upon it, will be demonstrated with some cases in point in the third part of my dissertation. I will demonstrate that artists used specific strategies and carefully constructed artistic identities in order to attain public and critical attention.

Especially for foreign artists, who tended to be considered as an amalgam per nationality, it was imperative to develop specific exhibition strategies to become an individual again in order to be singled out by the French critics.[66] My principal interest in this dissertation is to study how foreign artists were able to carve out a name for themselves in the highly competitive exhibition field in Paris. In order to study the tactics that proved to be successful, I have made a list of prominent foreign artists exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants. For the purpose of this research, the success of the artist is understood in terms of critical response.[67] This has been measured by counting the references to a specific artist or his or her works in the selected periodicals.[68] Artistic success is thus analysed quantitatively, and does not reflect the critical assessment. Being noticed by the critics was an achievement in itself and can, therefore, be considered as the first step to success. This approach has been inspired by the work of Galenson and Jensen, who compiled a table of artists exhibiting at the first Impressionist exhibition and ranking them by the number of reviews

[63] See page 79 and figure 4.
[64] 'Barbarian' was a frequently used term to describe a person from Eastern Europe at the time, and became almost a synonym.
[65] This was also true for French artists since the demise of patronage and the rise of the free market. See Moriarty 1994 and Bätschmann 1997.
[66] I will discuss this in more detail on page 86.
[67] Of course there are other criteria to measure success by, such as sales, solo exhibitions etc. But these are beyond the scope of my research and require other research methods. Naturally, it would be extremely interesting to compare the outcome of such studies to my findings.
[68] I mostly refer to artists (and critics) as males, although there were of course also several professional female artists. But as the women were in the minority, I have chosen to use the masculine form for convenience.

specifically discussing their work.[69] I have made a comparable chart, although the ranking was somewhat more problematic, as I have studied the critical response at multiple exhibitions over a span of thirty years. Some artists exhibited almost annually, others participated only a few times. The number of reviews in the 1880s and 1890s is also much lower than for the years after 1900, as the press coverage of the Salon des Indépendants was initially rather small, as demonstrated in the first part. Nevertheless, the resulting overview provided insight in the rate of success of artists at the yearly Salons and made it possible to establish a ranking of the most prominent foreign artists exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants between 1880 and 1914 (see appendix 2).

The ranking of foreign artists on the basis of critical attention resulted in an interesting set of artists, greatly varying both in terms of nationality as with regards to their artistic programs. It includes the Neo-Impressionist painters Georges Lemmen (1865-1916) and Théodore van Rysselberghe (1862-1926) from Belgium, who had close ties to the Société des Artistes Indépendants through their involvement with the Belgian artist society Les XX, bold and colourful painters as Vincent van Gogh and Kees van Dongen (1877-1968) from The Netherlands, the nowadays forgotten Spaniard Darío de Regoyos (1857-1913), the radical Edvard Munch from Norway and Eastern European artists such as the Polish Eugène Zak (1884-1926) and the Russian Nicholas Tarkhoff (1871-1930).[70] The period of my research covers 30 years of the Salon des Indépendants. Some of the artists in the chart also exhibited for many years during this period. Therefore, the total amount of reviews per artists is not the only indication for their quantitative success. This number should also be considered in relation to the amount of exhibitions that they participated in. For example, Van Gogh only exhibited 4 times at the Salon des Indépendants (his retrospective in 1905 is not counted in this list, as this exhibition was separate from the regular Salon des Indépendants and also treated as such in the art press). His participations were mentioned in a total of 28 reviews, which leads to an average of 7 reviews per exhibition. Van Rysselberghe, on the other hand, who seems to be the most successful artist in the chart with 71 reviews, was a longstanding participator of the Salon des Indépendants. His 71 reviews are spread over 11 exhibitions, resulting in average of 6.45. Van Gogh is not only credited with a higher average, he also received the highest number of reviews in one year: 12 in 1890. No other foreign artist was mentioned that often in the French art press.

Some of these artists lived permanently in Paris, others had brief sojourns or only travelled periodically to this city, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.1 and the case-studies. This

[69] Galenson & Jensen 2007: 150.

[70] See for these various artists: Bertrand 2006; Hoozee & Lauwaert 1992; Feltkamp 2003; Cavanaugh 2000; Loiseau 2002; Leismann 1999; The 'Nabi étranger' Felix Vallotton is not included in the list, although he was very succesful at the Salon des Indépendants, as he was naturalized in 1900, although he was originally from Switzerland (see also page 76).

collection reveals that the group of most successful foreign painters at the time is not identical to the selection of artists that are nowadays considered as the most prominent figures of that era. The quantitative ranking of artists has brought forward unexpected (and even largely forgotten) names as Regoyos, Zak and Tarkhoff, who were at the time amongst the most successful foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants. On the other hand, it excludes nowadays very renowned artists such as Piet Mondriaan (1872-1944), Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) and Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944).

This methodology has produced a more nuanced picture of the dominant artistic tendencies at the time, going against the modernist narrative that has been preoccupied with the avant-garde. In the modernist notion the avant-garde came to be considered as oppositional, as a splinter grouping that was only later embraced.[71] The Salon des Indépendants is retrospectively often represented as the cradle of avant-garde art and acclaimed for its visionary and liberal outlook that welcomed progressive artists who were only later accepted and appraised by others. It is true that radical (foreign) artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch exhibited there. As can be seen in the chart these artists had quite some success at the time, contrary to what the avant-garde myth has made us believe.[72] This myth has forged an oversimplified understanding of the art world. In this perspective there was a field of conventional artists, exhibiting at established Salons and reviewed by reactionary critics. Next to it was the field of the avant-garde art, consisting of a confined network of artists rebelling against the establishment in liberal salons and only noticed and understood by a few visionary critics. The reality was much more hybrid and complex, full of interaction and with artists and critics continuously crossing the borders of these supposed fields. Several of the young and progressive artists also exhibited at the other, more conventional salons of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts or the Société des Artistes Français. It is also not true that the Salon des Indépendants only presented progressive artists, the artistic population was very diverse and dispersed. Moreover, several artists also produced works 'integrating academic conventions with tokens of avant-garde innovation', in the words of Paul Wood.[73] As John House maintained in his study on Impressionist politics, different value systems existed side by side, enabling very diverse artists to thrive. House suggested that we must engage in a critical re-examination of the value systems of those days, instead of imposing our current values retrospectively.[74]

[71] See House 2004: 30-32 for a very lucid and straightforward account of the notion and definitions of the avant-garde.
[72] This myth has been the subject of dispute in many publications; see for example Nochlin 1968: 3; and Sfeir-Semler 1992: 526-29.
[73] Wood 1999: 30. Wood gives the example of Jules Bastien-Lepage.
[74] House 2004: 209. This would of course also depend on the purpose of the study.

By quantitatively indexing the success of foreign artists, I aim to avoid imposing our twentieth-first century canon in examining and selecting the material. The inventory of artists is based instead on the values systems of the time. It is not my objective to discover wrongfully forgotten artists or to trace individual successes of specific foreign artists. The aim is to sketch a picture of the types of foreign artists that were likely to find response with the French critics. This list of most successful artists allows me to forego a classification based on nationality, which initially seemed a logical approach. Such a categorization would, however, take national identity as an unproblematic and unitary given, instead of a construction or myth. It would also imply a prevalence of the position of the beholder. Therefore, I have chosen to adopt Joep Leerssen's approach in his study on nationalism, which he described as a 'multinational whole [which needs] to be analyzed from a supranational point of view'.[75]

While studying the participation and reception of this set of foreign artists closer, a leitmotiv suggested itself. I came to ask myself why critical success was not connected to a specific category of aesthetic production or to national background. Instead, French critics seemed to respond to certain artistic identities and strategies employed by foreign artists. As my contention is that it was essential for any artist, and especially foreign artists, to operate strategically in the vast French exhibition field, I realized that these most successful foreign artists of the Salon des Indépendants must have employed specific and maybe even similar strategies to create a space for themselves in the French art world. In order to investigate the validity of this hypothesis, I decided to look into the cases of three of the most prominent artists of different nationalities listed in the chart: Darìo de Regoyos, Edvard Munch and Vincent van Gogh.[76] Although their artistic production and artistic identities were radically opposed, they shared considerable success at the Salon des Indépendants. They also share the fact that their image and reputations have been distorted by notions that took shape only later. Regoyos has been written out of the art historical canon, while he had an international career during his lifetime. The French reception of Munch's work has been marginalized – wrongfully as we will see – in several publications and exhibitions; and the myth of Van Gogh as a misunderstood artist is still persistent, although he experienced critical acclaim as of his first exhibition in Paris. My thesis hopes to make the necessary differentiations in the art historical framing of these artists. It can be read as a plea to reconsider art works and artists' careers in their original contexts by studying the choices and strategies of the artists and the initial critical responses. This will lead to a more nuanced conception of art historical processes – such as

[75] Leerssen 2006: 19. Thiesse 1999 is also a very instructive and inspiring example for this approach.
[76] The choice of these artists was made based on their critical attention, but also on the fact that there are catalogue raisonnées available for these artists, which is not the case for many other artists in the chart. These catalogues were pivotal in reconstructing the artistic contributions to the various Salons des Indépendants.

reception and canonization – and the ways and means in which these are affected by agents and actors from other socio-cultural and political fields.

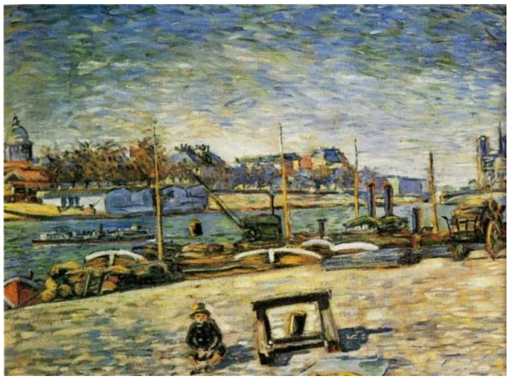
Note to the reader

I have chosen to cite French reviews in their original language. There is one exception to this rule: if I have not been able to trace the original text, I have used the English translation given in secondary literature. References to these reviews are given in full in the footnotes, as I believe it is convenient and efficient to have the authors, periodicals and dates at hand. I have, therefore, chosen to give full references to these primary sources twice, contrary to the other literature, which is only listed in full in the bibliography at the end. Artworks are listed by the French titles that were printed in the catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants, as these titles can give much information about the ambitions and strategies of the artist. Only if there are no French titles, when discussing an artwork not exhibited at the Salon des Indépedants for example, I have listed the most commonly used title in English. Letters by Edvard Munch are given in English translation, and mostly taken from the letters website (not yet completed): www.emunch.no, and referred to by inventory number. Letters by Van Gogh are cited in French, or in English translation if it concerns a letter from the Dutch period. The citations are taken from the letters website www.vangoghletters.org, and referred to by the letter numbers in this edition.

PART 1 THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

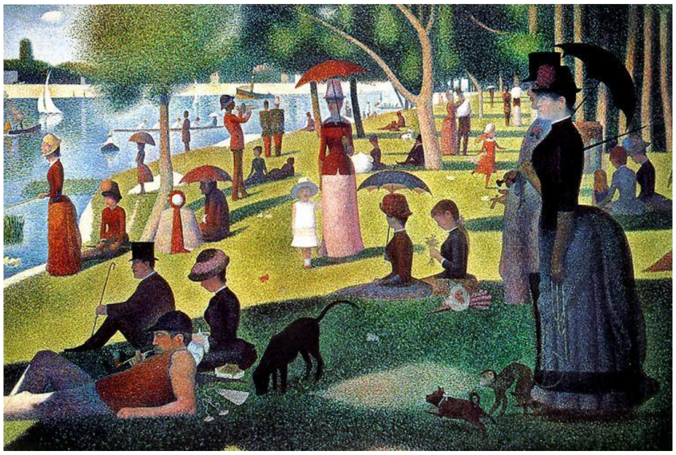
1.1. The French Exhibition System and the Salon des Indépendants

Images for chapter 1.1



Ill. 2 Paul Signac, *Du soleil au port d'Austerlitz*, 1884. Tokyo, Kakinuma Collection

Ill. 3 *Salon des Artistes Indépendants, Pavillon de la Ville de Paris*, 1905. Documentation du Musée d'Orsay, Paris



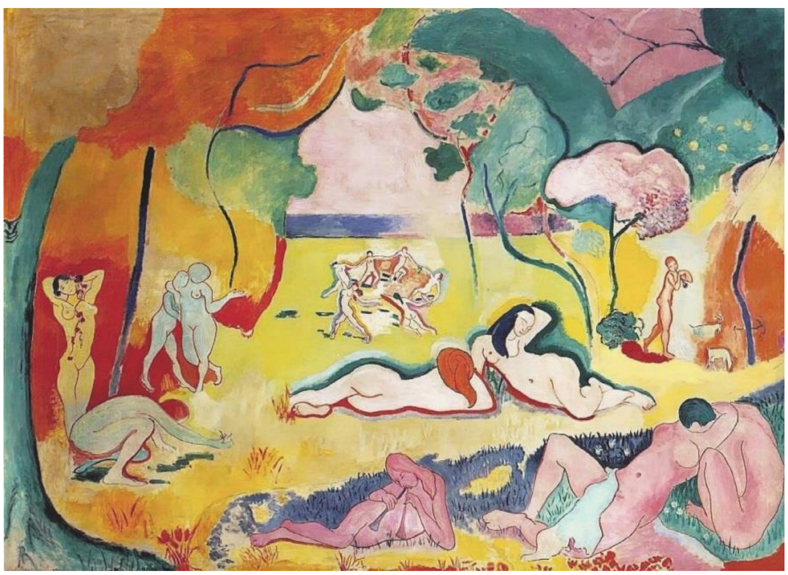
Ill. 4 Georges Seurat, *Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte*, 1884-1886. Art Institute of Chicago

Ill. 5 *Accrochage des Salon des Indépendants*, s.d. Archives de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Ill. 6 Roger-Viollet, *Installation of the Salon des Indépendants*, 1914. Parisienne de Photographie

Ill. 7 Neurdein Frères, *Grandes Serres, Exposition Universelle 1900*, 1900. Parisienne de Photographie

Ill. 8 Léon et Lévy, *Porte du Palais des Arts Liberaux, Exposition Universelle 1900*, 1900. Parisienne de Photographie



Ill. 9 Henri Matisse, *Le Bonheur de Vivre*, 1906. Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia

1.1.The French Exhibition System and the Salon des Indépendants

Avant tout société d'artistes et de camarades (Yves Alexis, 1924)

From Salon to Salons

Many artists reflected in the 'Querelle des Indépendants' on the nature and identity of the Salon des Indépendants, foregrounding it as a key argument in their responses to the question of foreign art. The specific constitution of the Salon des Indépendants was stressed by several artists as we have seen, including Yves Alexis: 'il ne faut point oublier que nous ne sommes pas entreprise commerciale, comme le voudraient certains, mais avant tout société d'artistes et de camarades.'[77] Alexis' remark is highly relevant, as it touches on the essence of the Salon des Indépendants in relation to the more general discussions on the radically changed exhibition field, as will be argued in this chapter. To understand why the Salon des Indépendants was considered to be different from other Salons, it is necessary to give a brief chronicle as there is only limited literature on this exhibition venue, and its origins, development, position and functioning are highly relevant in understanding the strategies and reception of foreign artists exhibiting there.

Until 1850 the French exhibition practice was dominated by the yearly Salon, organized and juried by the Académie des Beaux-Arts and sponsored by the French state. The Académie's dominance became however increasingly problematic for many artists, and they started to criticize this system and especially the jury's unpredictable opinions.[78] In response to the artists' criticism various efforts were taken to reform the exhibition system, also from within the Académie des Beaux-Arts.[79] One of these attempts was the proposal for a double rhythm of official exhibitions. One show, the Salon, would be held annually for all artists, while the other was to be staged at longer intervals, varying from three to ten years and open only to members of the Académie. Another attempt by the Académie to concede to the call for a different exhibition system, and especially to reform the academic jury that had been in place since 1748, was the 'Salon libre' of 1848. This was

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77 *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 January 1924.

78 The history of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the rise and fall of the annual Salon have been the subject of many scholarly publications; see especially Boime 1971 and Mainardi 1993.

79 After the French revolution of 1789, the Académie des Beaux-Arts had decided to open the annual Salon for independent artists and non-commissioned works as well. From then on, not only members of the academy could exhibit their works at these yearly events, but any artist who was admitted by the jury. This meant a dramatic change in the profession of an artist and the purpose of art. Since the Renaissance the professional artist had been working for specific patrons, and now he had to re-orientate his trade towards an anonymous, bourgeois public that started to visit the Salon. Success at this exhibition became quintessential for an artist's career. The independent artist became dependent on the new bourgeoisie, and this radically changed the production, distribution and consumption of art. Artists became exhibition artists, who produced exhibition pieces for the yearly Salons, which had turned into the main art market. Art was seen to have lost its elevated educational status, and converted into decoration piece for the bourgeois home. This development provoked hefty debates on the Academic Salon. Critics claimed that the Salon had degenerated into a bazaar or picture shop, and the jury was often attacked for its decisions. See Mainardi 1993.

the first Salon organized by the Académie without a jury. It consisted of more than 5000 works by artists as Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and Théodore Rousseau (1812-1867). Yet, this exhibition was unsuccessful. The quality of the Salon suffered from the superfluous amount of works, and the installation was so dense that it was difficult to evaluate individual art works.[80]

The various efforts by independent artists and societies to create exhibition possibilities outside the Academic Salon have become illustrious events. The first exhibition of the Impressionists in 1874 has attained an almost mythical status in art history as the first radical opposition to the official exhibition system of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. But in fact there had already been many different counter exhibitions in the previous decades, resulting in a myriad of privately organized exhibition venues every year. One of the most famous was the one organized by Gustave Courbet, who had been rejected by the Salon's jury many times. He staged a one-man show in the Pavilion of Realism during the Universal Exposition in 1855.[81] Courbet presented himself with 40 paintings, showing a retrospective of his work to date, with the sensational *L'Atelier du peintre. Allégorie réelle déterminant une phase de sept années de ma vie artistique et morale* (1854-1855) as central piece. Courbet's exhibition was exceptional in the sense that he had operated all by himself. Most private art exhibitions in the mid-nineteenth century were organized by artists' societies.[82] The flowering of these associations was stimulated by the liberal politics of the Third Republic, which encouraged artists to form groups and stage exhibitions together by liberalizing the laws of association.[83]

The alternative exhibitions were not just a simple matter of opposition against the Academic Salon. The developments in the exhibition system were much more complex and fragmented than history has made us believe. First of all the societies did not consist only of rebellious artists. They represented all forms of aesthetic production in the nineteenth century, including academic art. The Academic Salon on the other hand, remained an important venue for all artists, conservative and progressive alike. It is well known, for example, that the major Impressionist painters continuously

[80] For a discussion of these various attempts by the Académie des Beaux-Arts to reform the exhibition system, see: Davis 1989 and Mainardi 1989.
[81] See for more information on this exhibition Mainardi 1991.
[82] An excellent survey of these private societies is offered by Jean-Pierre Bouillon, see Bouillon 1986. See also Vaisse 1979 and Ward 1991. Bouillon rightly pointed out that more research into this 'temps des sociétés', as he calls the period, is imperative. Art history has been very selective in studying the exhibition system, focusing on a few major events such as the first Impressionist exhibition of 1874 and the Academic Salons. Recently, a very thorough study on nineteenth-century literary and artistic circles has been published: Glinoer & Laisney 2013.
[83] Ward 1991: 599.

sought acceptance at the Salon alongside their privately organized exhibitions.[84] The various attempts to reform the Academic Salon did eventually result in the end of this Salon and state-sponsored exhibitions.[85] At the end of the nineteenth century it was replaced by a wide variety of possibilities to exhibit one's work in public in Paris, ranging from various large Salons to group or solo exhibitions at art galleries. There were of course important differences between the various Parisian Salons, despite the fact that there was a good deal of overlapping participation, as most artists showed wherever and whenever they could.

The annual Salon organized by the Société des Artistes Français was the principal exhibition venue and art market until the end of the nineteenth century. It was called 'le grand Salon', as it was the largest exhibition venue. The quantity of works was overwhelming, even if the number of works per artist was limited to two. The jury was also responsible for the hanging, and sometimes they had to oversee the installation of more than 200 paintings a day.[86] The results were often confused and unbalanced, and the Salon was criticized for resembling a 'bazaar', and for being swamped by a 'flood of mediocrity'.[87] The Academic Salon had suffered from the same critique, which illustrates that the Salon des Artistes Français had not radically dealt with the grievances against the Salon. Another exhibition possibility was offered by the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, which attracted many artists, French and foreign, from established figures to newcomers. This was a deliberate change from the policy of the Société des Artistes Français, where membership was limited to French artists, although they had to admit foreign works for exhibition as per the National Assembly's fiat of 1791, stipulating the Salon to be open to *all* artists.[88] By actively inviting foreigners, the Nationale wished to distinguish themselves from the Artistes Français. The new exhibition structure also provided a locus for foreign artists, as they found new opportunities to enter the Parisian art world. By the end of the nineteenth century the city had become one of the

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[84] See for the exhibition strategies of the Impressionists Berson 1996; House 2004; and Galenson & Jensen 2007. The literature on the aesthetic variety at the various salons is expanding, yielding a more nuanced and multi-perspectival picture of the character and nature of the Parisians exhibition system. See for example Lobstein 2006; Brauer 2013; Maingon 2014; Joyeux-Prunel 2016; and Weisberg (et al.) 2017.

[85] The French government decided in 1881 to transfer the control and organization of the annual Salon from the academy to the newly formed Société des Artistes Français. It was not so much an act of governmental withdrawal, but rather another attempt to reconcile with the new developments in the exhibition system and the continuous critique on the Salon. The government intended to replace the academic Salon with a new series of long-interval exhibitions. This was a revitalization of the century-long ambition to organize a prestigious counterweight to the Salon, such as the earlier Décennale exhibition, where the true spirit and quality of French art would reign. The first Exposition Triennale was organized in 1883, from 15 September to 31 October. Yet ironically, it turned out to be the last state-sponsored exhibition in France. The government would eventually lose its control over the exhibitions. See for the full history of the end of the salon: Mainardi 1993.

[86] Aquilino 1989: 83, footnote 12.

[87] These judgements were given by the French artist Ernest Meissonier, as recorded in Gréard 1897: 164. See for Meissonier's critique on the Salon des Artistes Français: Hungerford 1989.

[88] Aquilino 1989: 79. The Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts was a secession from the Salon des Artistes Français, founded in 1890. See Hungerford 1989 for an excellent overview of these events and consequences.

largest artistic centers in the world, and it attracted artists from Europe, America and even Asia.[89] Many of these foreign artists came to Paris to make a name for themselves by exhibiting at one of the many Salons or private exhibitions. Besides the Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts, where artists had to be accepted by a jury, the Salon des Indépendants (founded in 1884) was another annual Salon that welcomed foreign artists. This exhibition was actually completely open to all artists, as it had abolished the jury system. Even though it started out as a very French society, with only a few foreign artists participating in the first years of the society's existence, it quickly became to be seen as an international and independent exhibition. It turned into the main venue for contemporary art in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century. It is, therefore, that I will focus on this exhibition venue to explore how foreign artists operated in the French exhibition system.

The Salon des Indépendants: A Turbulent Start

Before studying the participation of foreign artists at this Salon in detail, I will first give a brief overview of the foundation and functioning of this society and its Salon as the literature on the Société des Artistes Indépendants is very limited. Like other private societies, the Société des Artistes Indépendants did not have to keep a tidy administration.[90] Their offices also moved various times, most probably dispersing any documentation in the process. As a result there are no archival sources on the society and its Salons, complicating profound studies. The following account is based on the yearly exhibition catalogues, contemporary reviews and the few studies that have been published on the society and its exhibitions.[91] With this reconstruction of the history of the Salon des Indépendants I also aim to contribute to Jean-Paul Bouillon's appeal to do more research into the 'temps des sociétés'[92] and to closely examine one of the counter Salons that has unjustly attracted less scholarly attention than other exhibition venues at the time.

Although the State had passed its control over the Salon to the Société des Artistes Français in 1881, the jury system did not change. The critique on the apparently arbitrary judgments, perceived as conservative and oppressive by numerous artists, continued and even increased. In 1884 a large group of artists was so frustrated by yet another rejection of the jury, that they decided to organize a private exhibition. One of these artists, Charles Angrand (1854-1926), described this event: 'Encore refusé. Ils sont constants dans leur exclusivisme. Peut-être exposerai-je

[89] See for example the book by Lois Marie Fink on American artists at the Parisian Salons (Fink 1990). There were of course also options outside of Paris, in the French province and other European capitals (such as the Secession groups founded in Munich in 1892, Vienna in 1897 or Berlin in 1898).
[90] Vaisse 1979: 144.
[91] Especially Lobstein 2003 and 2008.
[92] See footnote 84.

néanmoins…Un groupe d'artistes indépendants s'est réuni pour décider une exposition privée (…) Ce groupe d'indépendants n'a rien de commun avec les impressionistes'.[93] Even if Angrand stressed that this group had nothing to do with the Impressionists, they did borrow their exhibition title from the earlier Impressionist exhibitions: Groupe des Artistes Indépendants.[94] The most important and most radical decision of this group was to abolish the jury and reward system of the Salon des Artistes Français. Artists would be truly free to expose their art works for the valuation of the public. They basically accomplished the call that Paul Alexis had published ten years earlier in the periodical *L'Avenir national,* on May 5, 1873: 'Au lieu de criér contre lui [the jury], - ce qui ne sert à rien, - soyez pratiques: supprimez-le. Mais comment se passer du jury? Faudrait-il se passer aussi de l'Etat et de sa protection? Nous, artistes, pourrions-nous prétendre jamais nous exposer nous-mêmes? Pourquoi pas? Associez-vous.'[95]

The first exhibition organized by this new group took place from May 15 to June 1, 1884. This salon was dominated by the Neo-Impressionist painters such as Georges Seurat, Paul Signac, Albert Dubois-Pillet and Henri Cross (1856-1910). The art displayed was very different from what was to be seen at the concurrently Salon des Artistes Français, which had opened the first of May. The French state was the main supporter of the Salon des Artistes Français, providing location and acting as the principal buyer, but as they wished to present a neutral position in aesthetic matters, several representatives of the Republican administration, including President Jules Grevy, attended the opening of the Salon des Indépendants.[96] The city of Paris had actively supported the Groupe des Indépendants by providing its buildings in the Tuileries as exhibition venue, as a sign of their support for equality, independence and progress. The President of the Paris Municipal Council, Lucien Boué, was thus also present at the opening.[97]

Despite all good intentions, the exhibition failed to succeed. The critics were rather negative and the visitor numbers were low. The exhibition ended in a financial fiasco, resulting in a negative balance of 2300 francs. The group organized a sale of the works at the auction house Hôtel Drouot after the exhibition to make up some of the debt, but these results were also quite disappointing.[98] The greatest problems, however, arose between the artists themselves. Several of them were upset by the unfortunate installation. Signac recalled in a letter to Gustave Coquiot: 'Nous, Odilon Redon,

[93] Monneret 2000: 66.
[94] See for more details on the name of the Impressionists exhibitions the essay by Stephen F. Eisenman, 'The Intransigent Artist or How the Impressionists Got Their Name' in Berson 1996: 51-60.
[95] Paul Alexis, 'Paris qui travaille. Aux peintres et aux sculpteurs.' In: *L'Avenir national*, 5 May 1873. See also Lobstein 2003: 15.
[96] Mainairdi 1993: 122. Eventually, the state would take on various roles of sponsorship, by providing venues and purchasing works at all major Salons and exhibitions. See Garb 1989: 64.
[97] Mainairdi 1993: 122.
[98] Monneret 2000: 23.

Seurat avec la significative *Baignade,* Cross avec un tableau sombre, Angrand, Dubois-Pillet, moi-même, nous fûmes très mal placés. Au vernissage, ma toile *Quai d'Austerlitz* (ill. 2) n'était pas accrochée. Je soudoyai un des garçons du buffet, et j'obtins de placer ma toile au-dessus des cafetières fumantes.'[99] More importantly, the exhibition commission had been exposed with fraud of payments and fees. There were many quarrels, even violent ones so that the police had to intervene in the galleries. Just two weeks after the opening of the Salon des Indépendants, a group of artists – presided by Odilon Redon (1840-1916) – gathered on May 31, 1884 in the Salle Montesquieu to form a countermovement. A few days later they reassembled and founded the Société des Artistes Indépendants, as a secession of the Groupe des Artistes Indépendants. The society's statutes were registered with notary Coursault in Montmorency. With the election of the 'assemblé nationale' consisting of eleven members and with Alfred André Guinard as its first president, the society had attained its legal status.[100]

The intentions of the Société des Artistes Indépendants were published in *Affiches parisiennes* on June 14, 1884: 'Faciliter aux artistes les moyens de présenter librement et directement leurs œuvres au jugement du public dans des expositions organisées par eux-mêmes et faire le nécessaire pour en opérer la vente, tel est le but de la Société des Artistes Indépendants.'[101] This declaration explicitly connected the freedom of exhibition with public appraisal and the sale of works. Not all works in the exhibition appeared to be for sale. Only the objects marked with an asterisk in the catalogue were available for purchase. This was, nonetheless, the majority of exhibited pieces. Interested buyers could contact the secretary of the society to obtain further information such as prices and contact details of the artists. Five different categories were listed in the statutes: Painting (1); Sculpture (2); Architecture (3); Etching & Lithography (4); Drawings, Cartons, Watercolours, Pastels, Miniatures, Stained Glass, Enamel, Porcelain and Earthenware (5). Artists could participate in several categories simultaneously, as long as they submitted a maximum of two works per genre.

Most importantly, the statutes stipulated in its first article that the exhibition was based 'sur la suppression des Jurys d'admission'.[102] All artworks would be accepted; only copies and paintings without frames would be refused. The statutes also explicitly stated that it was a goal to take 'admissions nouvelles' so as to reveal new artistic talent and to create equal opportunities for everyone. This was in contrast to other privately organized societies, as they showcased mostly established artists. Until 1884, the 'Grand Salon' was basically the only opportunity for new artists

[99] Lobstein 2003: 21.
[100] Monneret 2000: 69.
[101] Bouillon 1986: 111, note 69.
[102] Lobstein 2003: 57.

to exhibit, and they had to be accepted by the jury. According to Huyghe's publication, the Indépendants had a certain quota for each age group. Half of the exhibitors had to be between 21 and 25 years old, 25% between 26 and 35 and the remaining 25% was reserved for artists over 36 years. It was not permitted to discriminate on grounds of gender, but the percentage of foreigners was capped at 33% of the total number of participants.[103] According to Huyghe, the Minister of Interior Affairs imposed this clause.[104] I have not found any source validating this regulation, yet the total percentage of foreigners was indeed never exceeded. The highest percentage was 33% in 1913 (see figure 3). Foreign artists were thus also invited to exhibit at the Indépendants, paying only a small entry fee just like the French.

The First Exhibition of the Société des Artistes Indépendants

The split-off society opened its first exhibition on December 10, 1884, in the Pavillon de la Ville de Paris on the Champs-Elysées (ill. 3), a location again provided for free by the city of Paris. As a gesture of gratitude, the Société offered to donate possible income to the victims of the recent cholera epidemic. The public met this act of charity with certain distrust, and questioned the respectable intentions of the society.[105] Of course, it was probably not a purely altruistic act, but also a way of demonstrating its civil and patriotic intentions and generating attention. The Société des Artistes Indépendants for example also honoured the city's support by adopting the Parisian colours for the society and its annual banquets 'Rouge et Bleu', that were hold in 'Chez Philippe' near the Palais Royal.[106] Despite its independent and revolutionary foundations, the society clearly strove to position itself within the civic municipality.

The number of participants of this first Salon was relatively low: 104 different artists exhibited around three hundred objects. All these artists had also participated at the spring event organized by the Groupe des Artistes Indépendants. The press commented mostly – both in a positive and negative sense – on the contributions by Redon, Seurat, Signac, and Armand Guillaumin (1841-1927). The installation was praised for its calm and balanced atmosphere, where all artworks were in good view. The newspaper *Le Télégraphe* wrote about rooms 'meublées avec des divans, des causeuses et des tournedos couverts de damas violet à fleurs bleues', indicating a rich and elegant

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[103] Huyghe 1984: 230.
[104] Huyghe 1984: 230, note 18.
[105] G. Geffroy, *La Justice*, 1 December 1884: 'Ce Salon d'hiver a été organisé au profit des victimes du choléra. L'intention est louable et nous nous reprocherions de nuire en rien à la bonne oeuvre. Mais il serait trop commode d'exposer de la mauvaise peinture sous couleur de charité. Allez donc, vous qui me lisez, déposer votre offrande à la porte, et entrez, si vous voulez.' Cited in Lobstein 2003 (vol. 1): 23.
[106] Ward 1991: 619.

setting.[107] This so-called Salon d'Hiver lasted 31 days, and was visited by 7000 people, of which 3600 had to pay entrance fees.[108] The financial results were negative, so the cholera victims did not benefit at all from this Salon.[109]

The other circle, the Groupe des Artistes Indépendants, led by Monsieur V. Sardey, did not capitulate to the new society, but rather took up the weapons. In 1885 the Groupe opened its Salon on the first of May, while there was no Salon by the Société des Artistes Indépendants as they couldn't find a suitable location. Yet, the two groups continued to cross swords in words that season, as is evident from the many virulent articles in the press. In 1886 they held parallel, rival exhibitions. The two Salons were held simultaneously at the barracks of the Tuileries, which were split in two sections for the occasion. One part was reserved for Sardey's group, the other building, Batîment B, was occupied by the Société des Artistes Indépendants. The two societies had to share the same entrance, causing much confusion for the visitors. The Salon of the Société figured only 94 artists, including Angrand, Cross, Dubois-Pillet, Seurat (who had submitted his *Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte* (1884-1886, ill. 4), Signac and Henri 'le Douannier' Rousseau. The Neo-Impressionist painters, a term coined by the critic Félix Fénéon[110], were installed together in the last gallery and they received the most attention.

The competition between the two rival associations was eventually settled by the press and by the city of Paris, as both took sides with the Société des Artistes Indépendants. By 1887 the group of Sardey was definitely off-stage, and the Société would henceforth open the doors of the one and only Salon des Indépendants every spring, lasting from five to eight weeks.[111]

Early Successes

The hidden force behind the Indépendants was the artist Dubois-Pillet. He was one of the founders, and continued to play a key role in its administration. Through his freemasonic connections with city officials he was able to secure favourable exhibition venues and conditions.[112] From 1887 until 1893 – with the exception of 1889 – the Salon des Indépendants was held in the Pavillon de la Ville de Paris on the Champs Elysées, a convenient location (it was replaced by the still existing Petit Palais for the 1900 Universal Exhibition) and a good space. At the beginning, critics were rather negative about the Indépendants, with the exception of the newsletter *Journal des artistes* always

[107] Lobstein 2003: 24.
[108] Lobstein 2003: 25.
[109] Sutter 1970: 213.
[110] Fénéon coined this term in 'Les Impressionistes en 1886', published in *La Vogue*, 1886.
[111] Lobstein 2003: 29.
[112] Clement & Houzé 1999: 360.

strongly supporting progressive art and an important periodical for the expanding networks of exhibitors and collectors in Paris in the 1880s.[113] But quickly other periodicals became willing to review the shows as well; in 1887, some 40 reviews were devoted to the exhibition. The Neo-Impressionist group of Angrand, Cross, Dubois-Pillet, Seurat and Signac again dominated the Salon. It was the beginning of a sequence of flourishing Salons, where young and promising artists could be discovered. The critic Desclozeaux wrote in *La Cravache* of 1888: 'Petite hier, grande aujourd'hui, immense demain, leur Société est destinée à tuer l'art officiel, à lui substituer l'art libre. Dans un peu d'années peut-être elle sera Tout.'[114] In 1888 it was indeed already a much-anticipated cultural event, attracting many visitors and critics. The Salon was completely open to all artists, including barely skilled amateurs. This was a major difference with other societies or circles, which were more exclusive and for artists of established reputations. The Indépendants gave a podium to upcoming artists. The results were often confusing and not always of the highest standard, but it was serious enough to be worth showing in.[115]

The number of participating artists increased every year, with the exception of 1889 when there was a small decline. This seemed to be directly connected to that year's venue and timing, and the overpowering Universal Exhibition. The Société des Artistes Indépendants had much difficulty in obtaining a suitable location for their annual Salon, and they were forced to postpone the exhibition until September when the Salle de la Société d'Horticulture was available. In 1890 the Indépendants were back at the Pavillon de la Ville de Paris, and the number of exhibitors rose again. According to Ernest Hoschedé's account in 1890, the Salon des Indépendants had become one of the major events in Paris, attracting the public 'en foule'.[116] The Neo-Impressionist painters continued to exhibit, provoking certain critics to call the Indépendants the Salon for 'confetti art'.[117] But the last decade of the nineteenth century also gave rise to a new group of young artists: the Nabis. Artists as Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940), Pierre Bonnard and Maurice Denis started to submit works to the Indépendants.

The Salon of 1891 was marked by sorrow. The Indépendants commemorated the death of one of its most principal members, Dubois-Pillet, with a retrospective of 64 of his paintings. Another memorial exhibition was devoted to a lesser-known *sociétaire*, Vincent van Gogh, who had been

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[113] Ward 1996: 55.
[114] Desclozeaux, 'Les Artistes indépendants', in *La Cravache*, 9 June 1888. Cited in Ward 1996: 55.
[115] Gee 1981: 13 and Dunlop 1972: 90.
[116] Ernest Hoschedé, *Brelan de Salons*, Paris: B. Tignol, 1890: 1. See for a full account of Hoschedé's text: Lobstein 2008.
[117] The term 'Confetti Salon' was introduced in the: 'Bulletin: Indépendants' in *Le Constitutionnel* of 15 April 1897. The word confetti was used by several other critics to describe neo-impressionist painting. Armand Doyot spoke of 'confettisme' in 'La Vie Artistique : Le Salon des Indépendants' in the *Gil Blas* of 20 March 1903 and Henri Chervet used the term to characterize the paintings by Siedlecki in the Salon des Indépendants of 1907 : 'une pluie multicolore de confettis' ('Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Nouvelle revue*, 1 April 1907).

exhibiting with the Indépendants since 1888. Tragically, when Seurat was installing Van Gogh's paintings in the extremely cold galleries of the Pavillon, he was infected with an angina causing his death three days later. Seurat was only 31 years old. Despite these losses, it turned out to be a great year. In the *Bulletin du Sociétés des Artistes Indépendants* printed in the exhibition catalogue of 1892, which gives a report of the previous Salon, it can be read that the society was in an 'époque de luxe et le confortable'.[118] Due to the increasing number of participants and visitors, the income of the society was steadily growing. The society was not only aesthetically but also financially a success. The foundation of the Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1890 did not form a threat of competition to the Indépendants, nor did other privately organized exhibitions such as the Salon de la Rose + Croix. Many artists exhibited at several of these venues concurrently.

A large part of the Indépendants' growing revenues was reserved for publicity: the advertisements in periodicals such as *Le Figaro* and *Omnibus* were the highest expenses.[119] The Société des Indépendants started to employ modern marketing and communication techniques to attract attention and visitors. The society also spent a lot of money on design, another feature of modern exhibition organization. In 1892, as we can read in the *Bulletin du Sociétés des Artistes Indépendants*, the entrance gate was artistically decorated and a beautiful wooden floor was installed. The galleries were decorated with wall panelling, tapestries and comfortable chairs. The colouring of the curtains in a rich red, 'Andrinople rouge', was an expensive luxury that the Indépendants could afford as well. They were not the first to experiment with lush decorations and coloured walls. Not only the privately organized exhibitions by societies and dealers, but also the state-sponsored Salon des Artistes Français had made modest innovations in décor and arrangements.[120]

The installation of the works at the Salon des Indépendants was especially crucial, as there was no selection by a jury. A special hanging committee was elected by the society. It was presided by the secretary of the society and consisted of several participating artists.[121] Over the years these included now famous artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), Odilon Redon, Georges Seurat, Henri Rousseau, Paul Signac, Paul Cézanne, Georges Braque and Henri Matisse. Together these artists determined the installation of the rooms. Although the aim was a more spacious and individual installation than at the official Salon, the Indépendants expanded so quickly

[118] Copies of the annual exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants are kept in the Documentation of the Musée d'Orsay. Thomas Reff has reprinted the catalogues of the exhibitions between 1884 and 1900, see Reff 1981.
[119] As noted in the *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants* printed in the exhibition catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants of 1892: 3-5.
[120] Ward 1991: 615.
[121] Altshuler 1998: 26-7.

that the art works were forced to be stacked above each other (ill. 5), provoking complaints from the artists: 'Beaucoup d'artistes se plaignent, dans les locaux où la place est limitée, que leurs œuvres sont placées trop en l'air, et tous voudraient figurer à la cimaise.'[122] Participants could, nonetheless, specify their wishes regarding the installation of their submissions. They were invited to visit the galleries the evening before the start of the installation (ill. 6).[123] The hanging committee also sought to place artists within compatible groups, instead of ordering them alphabetically as was the custom at the Salon des Artistes Français. The Neo-Impressionist painters, for example, appeared year after year together in the final room of the exhibition.[124]

Transitional period

After the first ten successful years, a period of change and uncertainty started. In 1894, the Société des Indépendants had to look for a new location as the Pavillon de la Ville de Paris was to be demolished for the Universal Exhibition of 1900 (ill. 7). The massive preparations for this grand event turned the centre of Paris into a building pit. The Indépendants found temporary accommodation in the Palais des Art Libéraux on the Champs de Mars (ill. 8). This venue was located on the other side of the Seine, which was not as vibrant as the Rive Droite in those days. The main attraction on the Champs de Mars was the newly build Tour d'Eiffel, constructed a few years earlier for the Universal Exhibition of 1889. This out-of-the-way location did not immediately affect the total of participants or visitors, but the numbers started to decline. While the Salon of 1895 was still successful – with 10.410 visitors and increasing the society's capital to 14.303 francs – in 1896 the first debts were starting. Not only the Salon des Indépendants encountered difficulties, also the Salon des Artistes Français was suffering from the preparations for the Universal Exhibition and the competition of other exhibitions (such as the Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts) and the popularity of sportive manifestations like cycling and horse-riding.[125] According to the report of the Comité sur l'Exposition in the *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants* of 1896, the bad weather conditions in April were also part of the problem.

But the report also raised a more existential question: 'Est-ce à dire que les Expositions sont destinées à disparaitre dans un temps plus ou moins rapproché?'[126] The committee preferred to see this period as a transitional situation, in which a new balance had to be found. This turned out to be

[122] 'L'exposition des artistes indépendants', in *Le Journal des Arts. Chronique de l'Hotel Drouot*, 7 April 1897.
[123] As specified in the 'Règlement' printed in the first exhibition catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants in 1884, see Reff 1981: 4.
[124] Ward 1991: 619.
[125] Monneret 2000: 30.
[126] 'Rapport du Comité Sur l'Exposition de 1896,' in *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants*, exhibition catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants, 1896.

a rather prophetic answer, but first the society had to go through deeper valleys. By 1900, the year of the Universal Exhibition, the Indépendants were forced to move again, this time to a warehouse on the rue de Colisée (near the Champs-Elysées) and the number of artists reached an absolute low of 55. Most artists had decided to try their luck at other Salons, with more suitable locations, or had exhibited at the Universal Exhibition. The society was in serious debt, and many critics questioned in their reviews if this was to be the end of the Salon des Indépendants.

A Revival

The *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants* of 1902 reported that there was new force and life in the society, after three years of sickness. Since 1898 the number of artists and visitors had dropped dramatically, the venues were unsuitable for art exhibitions and the financial losses were serious. But in 1901 the society found a new accommodation in the Grandes Serres de l'Alma on the Cours la Reine, which had been constructed for the Universal Exhibition. It was a large space, and a significant improvement from previous locations, especially as they could exhibit there annually until 1909. The exhibition of 1901 displayed several strong paintings by artists as Paul Cézanne, Albert Marquet (1875-1947) and Henri Matisse. It was the first time that Matisse publically exhibited since his participation at the Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1899. The Salon des Indépendants had turned into the most logical place to show among modern artists, especially as the Nationale had become far more conservative in approach since the death of its liberal president Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898) in 1898.[127] The Société des Artistes Indépendants had initiated a series of lectures, by important critics such as Roger Marx, André Mellerio and André Gide, which not only attracted more visitors but also gave more 'éclat' to the exhibition and the society.[128] The financial problems were also solved. Not only by the increased number of visitors, but especially by a large donation of the sociétaire Comte Le Marcis. In exchange for his gift of 2000 francs, he was honoured with seven rooms devoted to his art in the exhibition.[129]

The new century had clearly brought new energy and a dramatic revitalization to the Indépendants. The success of their Salons was growing by the year, and the organisation was full of confidence. In 1904 they wrote in the bulletin: 'Après vingt ans de lutte nous ne sommes pas loin de la victoire, le succès toujours croissant de nos dernières expositions le prouve: que l'on n'en doute point: les Salons officiels, leurs jurys ridicules et leurs récompenses enfantines, disparaitront avec tous les injustes privilèges des temps anciens, et seule, la Société des Artistes Indépendants, basée

[127] Clement 1994: xviii.
[128] *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants*, exhibition catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants, 1902: 4.
[129] Lobtstein 2003: 31.

sur la Justice et la Vérité subsistera.'[130] History has proved them partly right, as the Société des Artistes Indépendants still exists, although their impact on the art scene nowadays is marginal, while all the other Salons have not survived. But where the official Salons, with their juries and rewards, indeed lost their strength and position, a new adversary was founded in 1903. A group of painters, supported by several influential critics, decided to start a new Salon, to fill the gap between the so-called 'anarchistic' and 'incoherent' Indépendants, as Maurice Denis described them in 1908[131], and the increasingly strict and conservative Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts.[132] This new Salon was to be held in the fall and named: Salon d'Automne. The first exhibition was an immediate success, forming a new platform for young and vanguard artists. It was not a real threat for the Indépendants, however, as many artists decided to exhibit at both venues and double their annual artistic presence and impact. They could exhibit first at the Indépendants in the spring, and show their latest summer works in the Salon d'Automne in the fall. The Salons received equal coverage in the press, and both attracted large numbers of visitors.[133]

The revival of the Salon des Indépendants also caused a considerable increase in the numbers of participants. In 1903 they received so many *sociétaires* (394 artists), that the organisation decided to limit the exhibits to a maximum of 8 art works per person.[134] The hanging committee, presided that year by Signac and assisted by Matisse, had a difficult time to install all the works in a pleasant and spacious manner. Over the years the numbers would rise even more, to thousands of artists per exhibition, causing strong debates about the balance between quantity and quality. Several critics accused the Indépendants of turning into a bazaar full of mediocrity.[135] The organization did limit the amount of works per artists further, but they could not refuse artists from participating, because that would imply installing a jury system.

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[130] *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants*, exhibition catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants, 1904.

[131] Denis wrote: 'la Société des Indépendants (…) systématise les tendances anarchistes, la lassitude et l'incohérence de notre art'. See Maurice Denis, 'Sur l'Exposition des Indépendants', in *La Grande revue*: 545-53. Louis Vauxcelles also described the Salon des Indépendants as dominated by 'anarchie et surenchère', in *Gil Blas* 19 March 1912.

[132] Dunlop 1972: 90.

[133] Gee 1981: 13.

[134] The maximum of two works per genre remained in place.

[135] The amount of works at the Salon des Indépendants was a recurrent topic in the press. In *La Phalange* of March 1910 Leon Werth wrote: 'Une promenade dans une foire un soir de migraine. On reste stupidement hypnotisé devant le manège qui tourne. Et ces tableaux qui se présentent comme des soldats alignés et prêts pour la revue, ces tableaux qui cachent tout le mur, ce mur en tableaux !' Louis Vauxcelles also complained about the abudance of art. On the front page of the *Gil Blas* of Friday 18 March 1910 he exlaimed: 'La surenchère, l'imitation forcenée et menteuse, telles sont les tarent qui gâtent cette exposition des Indépendants, la plus attachante pourtant, je le répète, de toutes celle qui s'offrent a nos rétines lassées.' He concluded however that this exhibition was different, as it showed dare and ambition: 'Ce qui fait que cet affreux salon des Indépendants – qui m'est si cher – nous passionne tout en nous irritant, c'est qu'ici *on ose*. Dans les salons officiels, les exposants craignent de se tromper (…) Ici, nos jeunes gens peignent pour eux, pour se satisfaire, ils s'enivrent des jeux délicieux de la palette.' Two years later Vauxcelles was not so positive anymore, and wrote: 'L'ensemble est mediocre.' ('Au Salon des Indépendants', *Gil Blas*, 19 March 1912).

The twentieth anniversary of the Société des Artistes Indépendants in 1904 was celebrated with a special exhibition on Cézanne, showing 30 of his paintings. It was also the first time that Matisse, Marquet, Henri Manguin (1874-1949), Charles Camoin (1879-1965), Louis Valtat (1869-1952), Jean Puy (1876-1960) and Van Dongen all showed at the Indépendants. A year later, they were presented as a group, complemented with works by André Derain and Maurice de Vlaminck, as Matisse presided the hanging committee. It was the debut of the Fauve group, as the critic Louis Vauxcelles called them at the occasion of the Salon d'Automne some months later.[136] The Fauves received much critical attention, and their group exhibition at the Indépendants was also a financial success: many of their paintings were sold.[137]

The 1905 exhibition was overall a grand sensation. The public had to queue outside as the galleries were packed, and the French government purchased art works for more than 81.000 francs.[138] The Salon did not only show the latest developments in the arts, it also staged two retrospectives: on Vincent van Gogh and Georges Seurat. By doing so, the organization consciously looked back as well, celebrating its institutional history and claiming or confirming its important role in art history. In 1905 the Société des Artistes Indépendants introduced a 'compte rendue' as a companion to the exhibition. This pocketsize booklet functioned as a sort of exhibition catalogue, informing the visitor on the installation and the highlights of that year's Salon. In his first 'compte rendue' Louis Chassevent explicitly referred to the 'glorious' past of the Salon des Indépendants: 'On a plus ri des Artistes Indépendants qu'on rira. Le temps a, pour eux comme pour tant d'autres, accompli son œuvre. Les blagueurs commencent à se taire devant plus de vingt années d'existence et de lutte. Puis, de hauts fonctionnaires inaugurent une Exposition qui attire, le lendemain, une foule considérable, ils y achètent au nom de l'Etat. Les toiles des Artistes Indépendants reçoivent l'estampille officielle. Alors, les philistins, surpris, de se regarder et de se dire : Il y en a donc qui ont du talent parmi ces farceurs et ces fous ? Mais, avant de saluer le présent il semble juste, on pourrait même ajouter comme a l'office, équitable et salutaire, de glorifier le passé. Le passé est représenté chez les Artistes Indépendants par Vincent Van Gogh, mort en 1890 et Georges Seurat, mort en 1891. Ces artistes méconnus de leur vivant par le *grand public* furent heureusement estimés par

[136] See Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon d'automne', in *Gil Blas*, 17 Octobre 1905: 'Salle N°VII MM. Henri Matisse, Marquet, Manguin, Camoin, Girieud, Derain, Ramon Pichot. Salle archi-claire, des oseurs, des outranciers, de qui il faut déchiffrer les intentions, en laissant aux malins et aux sots le droit de rire, critique trop aisée. [...] Au centre de la salle, un torse d'enfant et un petit buste en marbre, d'Albert Marque, un modèle avec une science délicate. La candeur de ces bustes surprend au milieu de l'orgie des tons purs: c'est Donatello chez les fauves.'
[137] Clement 1994: 8.
[138] *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants*, exhibition catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants, 1905/6.

quelques amateurs éclairés qui recueillirent leurs œuvres. C'est grâce à ces vrais connaisseurs que Van Gogh et Seurat trouvent aujourd'hui des admirateurs.'[139]

The next year the Fauve group continued to dominate the Indépendants. In 1906, the monumental painting *Le Bonheur de Vivre* (ill. 9) by Matisse was the highlight of the exhibition. In his review of the 1907 exhibition, Vauxcelles now counted 25 artists who he considered to be Fauvist. He gave interesting specifications: Matisse was the 'fauve-in-chief', Derain the 'fauve deputy', Pierre Girieud (1876-1948) was an 'irresolute, eminent, Italianate fauve', but the foreign Béla Czóbel (1883-1976) was an 'uncultivated, Hungarian or Polish fauve'.[140] The nationalistic inspired characteristics given by Vauxcelles are highly relevant reflections of the critical climate at the time. He rooted Girieud in the Franco-Latin tradition by describing him as an Italianate fauve, while he dismissed Czóbel as an uncultivated foreigner. I will return to these classifications in the following chapter on art criticism at the time (1.2). Next to the Fauves, other new developments were on display, such as the work by Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) who exhibited for the second time with the Indépendants. That year proved to be very successful, the society made a profit of 90.000 francs through art sales. Especially Braque was popular; all his paintings sold at the Salon des Indépendants of 1907.[141] Yet, the sales were not the most important economic function of the exhibition.[142] It was more effective to attract publicity, so that collectors were drawn to the artist's studio, where most of the actual sales were effectuated.[143] Many artists used the Indépendants to provoke the interest of art dealers, who would subsequently offer them exclusive contracts to exhibit and sell through their galleries.[144] This was also the case with Braque, who was contracted by Kahnweiler in 1908. Apparently this practice was under critique, as Fernand Léger defended this process in purely artistic terms: 'D'autres personnes ont trouvé critiquable que des peintres d'avant-garde d'hier abandonnent aujourd'hui ce Salon et n'y exposent plus leurs tableaux. On croit à des calculs plus ou moins intéressés, ce qui est parfaitement faux. Juger ainsi, c'est avoir oublié que le Salon est avant tout un Salon de manifestation artistique. C'est le plus grand du monde entier (et je n'exagère rien en employant de pareils qualificatifs) (…) Le Salon des Indépendants est un Salon d'amateurs. Lorsque ces peintres possèdent leurs moyens d'expression, qui' ils se professionnalisent, ils n'ont plus rien à y faire.'[145]

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[139] Louis Chassevent (Louis de Lutèce). *Les Artistes Indépendants. 21e Exposition, 1905*. Issoire: Impremerie Boucheron & Vessely, 1905.
[140] Louix Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Gil Blas*, 20 March 1907.
[141] Monneret 2000: 35.
[142] Gee 1981: 22.
[143] Gee 1981: 21.
[144] Vaisse 1979: 150.
[145] Léger 1911: 27-8.

Paul Signac, who had been one of the founders and participants of years of the Indépendants took up presidency in 1909, and would remain in charge for 35 years. His reputation as an artist and sociétaire armed him with a strong position, necessary in the tumultuous and critical years that followed. Many artists and critics complained on the large number of mediocre paintings that were presented yearly at the Indépendants, and the poor location of the exhibition. As the Grandes Serres de la Ville de Paris were demolished by 1909, the Indépendants were forced to search yet again for an alternative space. Until 1914, they had to exhibit in unsuitable barracks that were either overheated or icy cold. Signac kept defending the Salon by declaring: 'Je n'ai pas à insister sur le succès artistique et social de notre Exposition. Tout le monde le constate ou est forcé de le constater. D'année en année l'importance, la nécessité de la Société des Artistes Indépendants, s'imposent davantage, tout l'art contemporain, tant en France qu'à l'étranger, profite de sa magnifique floraison, de son puissant enseignement.'[146]

Signac's authority was challenged by a group of young painters in 1911 that decided to elect their own hanging committee. They printed a list of alternative candidates and their posters denounced the old order of Signac and the other officers.[147] Le Fauconnier became president of this new hanging committee, and he managed to exhibit the works of his comrades in room 41 of the exhibition. In this gallery, the public was confronted with paintings by Jean Metzinger (1883-1956), Albert Gleizes (1881-1953), Laurencin, Léger, Robert Delaunay (1885-1941) and Henri Le Fauconnier (1881-1946). The opening day turned out to be a wild event, because of all the preceding articles in the press on this 'coup'. Gleizes recounted what he experienced at the opening: 'People were packed in into our room, shouting, laughing, raging, protesting, giving vent to their feelings in all sorts of ways; there was a jostling at the doors to force a way in, there were arguments going on between those who supported our position and those who condemned it.'[148] The artists of room 41 came to be known as the Cubists, again a term that Vauxcelles had introduced.[149]

Interestingly, the artists in this room 41 were French only. The foreign cubist artists, such as Archipenko, Czaky, Gris, Lipchitz, Marcoussis, Mondrian, and Rivera had been placed in other galleries. This installation was a reflection, as much as a catalyst, of the nationalistic and aesthetical debates that surrounded this new movement. When the Spanish artist Juan Gris (1887-1927) exhibited in 1912, his works were, along with those of František Kupka (1871-1957), put off as

[146] *Bulletin du Société des Artistes Indépendants*, exhibition catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants, 1914.
[147] Altshuler 1998: 27.
[148] Altshuler 1998: 27.
[149] Louis Vauxcelles wrote about the 'cubes' in Braque's paintings in his review 'Exposition Braque', in *Gil Blas,* 14 November 1908. The poet and critic Charles Morice was the first to use the term 'cubism' in his critique on the Salon des Indépendants of 1909 in the *Mercure de France,* April 1909.

'post-Cubist fantasies' and 'cubisme barbare'.[150] Several Italian painters challenged the French Cubists by presenting an alternative, more aggressive ideology – Futurism – and by promoting this actively in Paris. Gleizes and Metzinger defended Cubism as being quintessentially French.[151] Like Gleizes, many other artists – such as Matisse – were preoccupied with the Frenchness of their art, as will be addressed further on.

The First World War paralyzed the art world for several years. The Indépendants opened its doors again in 1920, and they continued to have large numbers of participants far into the twentieth century. Until today, the society organizes annual Salons that take place in the Grand Palais. Yet, soon after the First World War they lost their position as a platform for the latest developments in modern art. Artists decided to exhibit their art elsewhere, mostly at private galleries in Paris and abroad.

This history of the Salon des Indépendants illuminates how this exhibition developed into one of the most important venues of contemporary art between 1884 and 1914. The artist Fernand Léger (1881-1955) would later write in an ardent defense: 'Le Salon des Indépendants, qui comme tous les ans a tenu sa place prépondérante dans la manifestation mondiale de peinture, est avant tout un Salon de peintres et pour les peintres. Par conséquent, toutes les personnes qui viennent là pour chercher des œuvres parfaitement réalisées n'ont rien à y faire (…) Tout ce qui compte en art moderne a passé là, tous ceux qui cherchent et travaillent aspirent à y exposer.'[152] By abolishing the jury system the Salon des Indépendants had opened its doors to all artists. These liberal policies allowed foreign artists to exhibit freely at these Salons, and the Salon des Indépendants came to be considered as one of the most international venues for art. The independent nature of the Société des Artistes Indépendants and its exhibitions was also considered in radical political terms by several contemporary critics and later art historians. The independence that the society had claimed was an artistic autonomy from the Académie and its Salons, but it was also seen as an opposition to bourgeois culture at large. Louis Chassevent, for example, ended his 'compte rendue' of 1905 by referring to the credo of the Société des Artistes Indépendants, 'no jury', and by stating: 'Que jamais ces principes ne soient méconnus afin que tous les sincères, qu'elle que soit leur formule, puissent produire leurs conceptions d'art. Les ignorants, les niais, les farceurs, moins nombreux que le prétendent les bourgeois, disparaitront d'eux-mêmes.'[153] As such it has been considered in the

[150] Louis Vauxcelles in *Gil Blas*, 19 March 1912.
[151] See Gleizes, Albert, and Jean Metzinger. *Du 'Cubisme'.* Paris: E. Figuière, 1912. The strategies and politics of French cubists are explored at length in: Debray & Lucbert 2000 and Cottington 1998.
[152] Léger 1911: 27 and 29.
[153] Chassevent 1905: 40.

socialist tradition in which art had to be critical of bourgeois society and its cultural conventions.[154] The Société des Artistes Indépendants and its members, especially the Neo-Impressionist circle, were regularly associated with Saint-Simonian socialism and anarchism, as Martha Ward explored in her publication on Pissarro and Neo-Impressionism.[155] Paul Signac's contribution to the Salon des Indépendants of 1895 for example, the very large painting *Au Temps d'harmonie. L'âge d'or n'est pas dans le passé: il est dans l'avenir,* was immediately understood in radical left-wing idealistic terms, as Anne Dymond argued in her article on the political connotations of this work.[156] This socialism was also connected to a growing internationalist thinking among the working classes and artists at the time.[157] Several artists were indeed involved in this international socialist movement, such as the already named Pissarro and Signac, and the radically socialist illustrator Théophile Steinlen (1859-1923). Yet, at the same time they were also involved in the patriotic project of preserving and promoting French artistic identity. Many artists, and also critics, reunited these seemingly contradictory positions. The fact that artistic strategies and identities were not static, but fluctuating in time, and also sometimes quite paradoxical, is key in understanding the complex perspectives on national identity and alterity. These mechanisms will be discussed in more detail in the next chapters, as I will explore how foreign artists related to the multi-vocal French opinion.

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[154] This definition of avant-garde art was first put forward by Saint-Simon, as will be discussed on page 55, and reconsidered by the German theorist Peter Bürger who argued that the term avant-garde should be reserved for art movements that criticized bourgeois society and advocated societal change, instead of applying it to all adventurous manifestations of modern art. See Bürger 1974 and Wood 1999: 227.
[155] Ward 1996.
[156] Dymond 2007: 364-5. See also page 64.
[157] See for socialism and the arts McWilliam, Méneux & Ramos 2014.

1.2. The Critical Climate

Images for chapter 1.2

Ill. 10 Paul Signac, *Au Temps d'harmonie. L'âge d'or n'est pas dans le passé: il est dans l'avenir,* 1893-95. Mairie de Montreuil

Ill. 11 Henri Matisse, *Luxe, Calme et Volupté*, 1904. Musée d'Orsay, Paris

1.2. The Critical Climate

L'interprétation des arts 'nationaux' est si complexe que mieux vaut parler en parabole (Jean Lurçat, 1924)

Art Criticism at the time of the Salon des Indépendants

Contemporary sources helped to reconstruct the origins, position, functioning and identity of the Salon des Indépendants, as established in the previous chapter. These primary sources are also indispensable in examining how foreign artists were perceived and in understanding the larger critical context in which they functioned. Before looking at specific texts on the contribution of foreign artists, I would like to consider the critical climate in Paris at the time as to better understand and place the language and opinions by various critics. The critical field was hybrid and very much in flux, consisting of many different types of writers. The professional and socio-political backgrounds of the critics varied, which influenced the nature and impact of their writings. The art press was also very diversified, ranging from ephemeral literary periodicals to popular daily newspapers. The reading of these periodicals does show some consistent threads and shapes a instructive picture of the cultural politics over the span of thirty years. I will explore this general rhetoric, the whole language of discourse, to understand how art critics reflected and shaped the climate of opinion. Their discourses were also informed by conditions and notions outside of the cultural field, and not exclusively concerned with artistic judgments. In this chapter I will study these concepts, focusing on an issue that is key in understanding the reception of foreign artists: the debate on national versus universalist ideals and art. This was a continuous and very complex debate in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. As Jean Lurçat remarked in his response to the 'Querelle des Indépendants': 'L'interprétation des arts 'nationaux' est si complexe que mieux vaut parler en parabole.'[158] I will avoid parabolas, and instead examine and specify these ideas that were at the heart of socio-political and cultural debates.

The foundation of the Salon des Indépendants in 1884 coincided with important changes in the French press. In July 1881 the Republican government of Jules Ferry introduced a new law, guaranteeing a true and total freedom of press. On paper this had already been the case since the French revolution and the declaration of the freedom of the press in 1789, but the 1881 law finally abolished all political censorship. For the first time the reader became the sole judge of the contents of the newspapers and periodicals, just as the viewer became the sole judge of the exhibits at the Salon des Indépendants. The liberalization of the press laws caused some major, interlinked

[158] *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 1 February 1924: 63.

changes in the field. Many new small reviews were founded as the deposits required to start a new paper were greatly diminished, resulting in a panoply of dozens of daily newspapers and thousands of specialized journals. The last two decades of the nineteenth century were thus marked by an even greater intensification of a practice that was already considered as a major industry throughout the century. At this time, the public became deeply involved with the daily spread of information, as René de Livois remarked in his rich survey of the history of the French press: 'L'information est à la mode, le journal est devenue un besoin et, partant, un élément très important de la vie courante auquel le public s'attache parfois avec passion.'[159]

Another important development at the end of the nineteenth century was the specialisation of the periodicals and, consequently, the professionalization of its contributors. Especially the literary and art magazines were flourishing at the end of the nineteenth century, giving rise to specialized art critics. The more general literary criticism of the men of letters in the tradition of Charles Baudelaire, Théophile Thoré and Emile Zola was complemented by in-depth and first-hand knowledge provided by art connoisseurs.[160] The flourishing of art periodicals and the rising profession of the art critic was further supported by technological developments, such as the photomechanical reproduction of images. Illustrated art magazines proliferated after the 1880s, and affected the nature of art criticism. A new style of writing developed, which paid closer attention to the art objects themselves instead of the earlier rhetorical and anecdotal treatment of art. At the same time, however, art criticism risked corrosion due to the proliferation and professionalization of the art press.[161] As the exhibition field also bloomed, art criticism almost became an industry, forcing critics to deliver quick reviews on a multitude of events. Exhibition reviews were usually not much more than a short assessment of the salon as a whole, followed by a cursory overview of the most interesting artists – according to the critic –, presented with a school label and a few incidental comments on the art works.[162] After 1900 the reproduction and print techniques were further developed and refined, exploited by all types of new, richly illustrated magazines, such as the monthly periodical *Les Arts* (founded in 1901) reporting on museums, exhibitions and collections. Developments in rotary printing made it possible for newspapers to expand their usual format from four to eight or even sixteen pages. This did not only permit a greater diversity of subjects in the papers, but also meant that the layout was rearranged, allowing content to be spread out over several pages.[163] This gave rise to lengthier reviews or even series and feuilletons devoted to the

[159] De Livois 1965, vol. II: 339, also quoted in Genova 2002: 39, footnote 17.
[160] Brill 1976: 27.
[161] Not only art criticism was professionalizing at the time, art history also developed into a professional field.
[162] Bouillon 1987: 195 and Ward 1994: 163.
[163] Ward 1994: 169.

arts. The general interest in art events increased accordingly, pushing reviews to the front pages of the daily newspapers. The number of periodicals with art coverage around the end of the nineteenth century has recently been estimated at more than thousand different journals.[164] Or as the editorial of the first issue of the literary paper *La Plume* quipped in 1889: 'Il se publie actuellement à Paris 1748 journaux (…) Eh bien, il s'en publie 1747 de trop.'[165]

Given this massive number and the wide variety of art writing, it has been necessary to make a selection of periodicals to research the critical reception of foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants. Yet, this 'historical record' is 'both too full and too sparse', to use Hayden White's words again.[166] As the set of data is overwhelmingly vast ('too full'), the (art) historian is forced to reduce it to a limited collection, producing an inevitably selective image that can never be a complete and comprehensive reflection of the past ('too sparse'). With this unsolvable dilemma in mind, I have aimed to make a careful and considered selection of art periodicals for my research, based on various authoritative studies on art criticism during the Third Republic.[167] The selection represents – albeit inevitably scattered – the wide array of 'art literature', a term coined by Darío Gamboni to indicate the vast body of art critical writing, published between 1884 and 1914. According to Gamboni, three directions in art criticism can be discerned: a scholarly, objective study of the arts to be found in serious periodicals such *Revue des deux mondes* and *La Gazette des beaux-arts* (1); a literary, synthetic mode in the poetical tradition of Baudelaire, disseminated in small, self-financed periodicals (2) and a journalistic branch, as developed in the daily press (3).[168] This third category became dominant towards the end of the nineteenth century, caused by the professionalization of the newspapers and the specialisation in various expertises of the reporters. The scholarly approach became more the domain of the rising discipline of art history, while the literary style was set aside as pure literature. I have studied these three categories, and also another type of publication: general magazines devoted to a broad spectrum of interests, such as the *Encyclopédie contemporaine illustrée.* Exhibition reviews figured in all these disciplines, and the selection of published materials for this research is, therefore, made from all four types of art press. Certain important periodicals are, nevertheless, lacking in the selection, as these papers did not or hardly report on the Salon des Indépendants. For this reason established magazines such as the long-running *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1829-1930) and the highly popular *L'Illustration* have not

[164] Waller & Carter 2015: 11.
[165] La Diréction, 'Notre programme', in *La Plume*, 15 April 1889.
[166] White 1978: 51. See also the introduction, page 20.
[167] The publications I used: Fawcett and Phillpot 1976; Bouillon 1987; *Romantisme* 1991; Gee 1993; Wrigley 1993; Bode 1994; Orwicz 1994; and Hargrove & McWilliam 2005.
[168] *Romantisme* 1991: 10.

been selected for a systematic search on reviews of foreign artists exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants. As has been explained in the previous chapter, press coverage of these exhibitions was not as widespread as the reviews of the salons of the Société des Artistes Français or the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, especially not before 1900.

A full, reasoned list of the 30 selected periodicals which were used to systematically search for reviews on foreign art at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884 and 1914 can be found in appendix 1.[169] It includes scholarly journals such as the erudite *La Gazette des beaux-arts* and its Saturday supplement *Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* that served as the cultural guide and agenda of Paris, the lavishly illustrated *Arts et les artistes* and *Art et décoration*; literary journals as *La Revue blanche, La Phalange, La Plume* and the *Mercure de France*; and daily newspapers including *L'Aurore,* the republican *Le Figaro,* the monarchist *Le Gaulois,* the cultural *Gil Blas*, and immensely popular *Le Petit Parisien* (with a readership of 1.400.000).[170] Critics writing for these various periodicals over the span of the years include Gustave Geffroy, Arsène Alexandre, Camille Mauclair, Elie Faure, Julien Leclercq, Roger Marx, Maurice Denis, André Salmon, Guillaume Apollinaire, Charles Morice, Gustave Kahn, Thadée Natanson, Albert Aurier and Thiébault-Sisson – to name the most famous ones.[171] Quite often these critics contributed to several of these periodicals simultaneously.

The coverage of certain artists appeared to be not so much connected to the political or ideological outlook of the magazine, but rather to the personal and aesthetic preferences of the critic. As Martha Ward noted, this led to a rather idiosyncratic treatment of developments and events in the art world, primarily based on the critic's values or connections with specific artists.[172] The artist's network was thus extremely important in securing critical attention in the Parisian press. As will be demonstrated in the various case-studies, the ties between artists and critics commenting on their works were usually quite close and strong. Artists were actively seeking contacts with critics, as will be demonstrated in the case of Vincent van Gogh for example.[173] This networking strategy was a crosscutting habit, employed by all types of artists.

Reviews were not only important in describing, explaining and valuating art to the periodical's subscribers and followers. The articles also circled in artistic networks of critics,

[169] The majority of reviews cited and analysed in this dissertation have been found by systematic searching through this selection of primary sources. Yet, pieces of criticism published in other periodicals and found through citations in secondary literature have been included in this study if they were relevant in understanding and analysing the critical reception and exhibition tactics of foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants.
[170] See for this number Riottot El-Habib & Gille 1993: 31.
[171] I have consulted several publications on these critics, see: Halperin 1970; Buckley 1981; Gersh-Nešić 1991; Riottot El-Habib & Gille 1993; Aurier & De Gourmont 1995; Bohn 1997; Adelaar 1999; Gispert 2003; Valenti 2003; Gersh-Nešić 2005.
[172] Ward 1994: 171.
[173] See pages 149-50 for Van Gogh's relation to Albert Aurier.

dealers, artists and collectors providing publicity and creating a climate of interest.[174] Especially the smaller, radical journals that flourished in the 1880s and 1890s, such as *La Revue indépendante, La Plume* and *La Critique*, had an important role through this intricate network in supporting and advancing progressive artists. Even if this type of influence of the art critic is rather impossible to document, it has been of crucial importance in establishing the reputations of artists. This will be further explored in the case-studies. The number of readership is, therefore, not always paramount in assessing the circle of influence of a periodical. The selection of papers contains for that reason journals with minimal circulations as well as daily newspapers read by millions. Altogether, the selection covers the wide variety of art periodicals published between 1884 and 1914 – from short-lived to long-lasting publications, from erudite art studies to cursory weeklies, from anarchist journals to monarchist papers – thus representing a diversity of political, ideological, aesthetic and cultural colours.

The miscellaneous nature of the art press in this period also reflected the multi-vocal climate of opinion. Analyzing this field and its mechanisms gives body to the complexity of the system and sheds light on some ideas that circulated in art criticism at the time, influencing the artists' reception that I will later discuss. The Third Republic was governed by liberal and international cultural politics. Paris was a cosmopolitan and open city, where international exchange and cultural variety thrived. At the same time, this period was marked by the rise of conservative and traditional ideals, strong nationalistic sentiments, and the call for a return to classic values.[175] These various discourses and movements were not antagonistic; they existed side by side and were often even closely interlinked concepts. Universalist ideals resonated in national arguments, while chauvinism was often at play in international contexts. The Third Republic is often seen as a period reigned by nationalistic and xenophobic sentiments. While it is true that these sentiments permeated much of the French writing at the time, it was certainly not the only or even dominant line of thought. The critical climate must be characterized as a subtle and intricate nexus of universalist and nationalist ideals, as will be explored below.[176] There were various ways of thinking and writing about French –

[174] Brill 1976: 26.

[175] Numerous historians, sociologists, anthropologists and philosophers have published their thoughts on the origins, essence and dissemination of nationalism. For my understanding of nineteenth-century national thought in France, I have used a variety of publications: Kohn 1944; Weber 1959; Kedourie 1960 (rev. ed. 1993); François 1972; Gellner 1983; Girardet 1983; Anderson 1983 (rev.ed. 2006); Nora 1984-6 (rev.ed. 1997); Hobsbawm 1990; Pomian 1990; Greenfeld 1992; Leerssen 1993; Smith 1993; Smith 1998; Cameron 1999; and Leerssen 2014. I would like to note that I give preference to the term 'national thought' or 'sentiment' rather than 'nationalism', following the example of Joep Leerssen (2006). Nationalism is a rather strict term, referring to a political ideology or doctrine (Leerssen 2006: 14-5), while in this dissertation I am concerned with the climate of opinion and cultural politics at large.

[176] My thinking on this subject has been influenced by the work and advice of my supervisor Rachel Esner, and in particular by her research on the reception of German art at the Parisian Salon (see Esner 1994 and Esner 2008). I am also

and respectively foreign – art, and it was precisely because of this hybrid and pluriform climate, that foreign artists could create space for themselves, which will be demonstrated in the case-studies.

Universalist and National Ideals

When Paris staged its first Universal Exhibition in 1855, the Republican critic Théophile Thoré announced the birth of an international art: 'Quand les arts de tous pays, avec leurs qualités indigènes, se seront ainsi rapprochés souvent, quand ils auront pris l'habitude d'échanges réciproques, le caractère de l' art y gagnera partout une incalculable étendue, sans que le génie particulière à chaque peuple en soit altéré. Il se formera de la sorte une école européenne d'abord, au lien des sectes nationales qui divisent encore la grande famille artiste selon la topographie des frontières; puis, une école universelle, familiarisée avec le monde, et a laquelle rien d'humain ne sera étranger.'[177] Thoré was convinced that a new, modern art would speak 'une langue usuelle à la portée de tous'.[178] Ten years later he reiterated this universalist stance in one of his Salon critiques: 'Il n'y à plus d'étrangers. Nous sommes tous compatriotes. Pour moi, je me sens du même peuple que le peuple parisien – que mes amis de Bruxelles, de Genève et de Berlin, de Londres et de New-York. N'y a-t-il pas plus d'affinité entre Français, Allemands, Hollandais, Belges, Suisses, Anglais, Américains, ayant les mêmes tendances vers la liberté, la justice et la vérité, qu'entre deux hommes d'une même nation, s'ils divergent par leurs inspirations et leurs idées. La patrie, c'est l'idée.'[179] Thoré's conviction was shared by Léonce Bénedite, director of the Musée du Luxembourg, who declared at the occasion of the Universal Exhibiton in 1900: 'Il y n'a plus, à vrai dire, de nations diverses parlant un langage different, mais tout au plus des provinces voisines qu l'on devine à certain accent de clocher.'[180] The universalist ideal had not changed much over fifty years. The belief in an art without frontiers, to use the words of the French novelist and historian Jules Claretie who wrote 'en art (…) je ne reconnais pas de frontières'[181], permeated the cultural climate throughout the century.

This universalism is also reflected in the utopian socialist thinking of Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon, the leading figure of the newly emergent socialist ideology at the

much indebted to the thought-provoking introduction by Geyer & Paulmann in their book *Mechanics of Internationalism*, 2008: 1-25.

177 T.Thoré, 'Des tendances de l'art au XIXe siècle', in *Revue universelle des arts*, 1 (1855): 83. For a discussion of this review see Esner 2008: 360.

178 Thoré 1855: 83; also cited in Joyeux-Prunel 2002: 187.

179 In Thoré 1870 (vol. 1): 413. Cited in Cazes 2012: 4.

180 Leonce Benédite, 'Les arts à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900: exposition décennale: peinture etrangère', in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (September 1900): 179 (see also Esner 2008: 360).

181 This was Claretie's reaction to the question if French literature was influenced by foreign writers in the 'Enquête sur l'influence des lettres scandinaves', in *La Revue blanche*, 15 February 1897: 156.

beginning of the nineteenth century. Saint-Simon advocated a universal brotherhood, which would reign between all men and all nations and even strove for a united European society.[182] Saint-Simon's socialist politics were of course concerned with a desire to change society, and he attributed artists a leading role in its transformation as he considered art as most effective in getting ideas across. Saint-Simon used the term avant-garde in this context, envisioning a 'vanguard of artists (…) who would lead humankind out of the alienated oppression presided over by the modern bourgeois state.'[183] Saint-Simon thus coined the notion of artistic avant-garde in the milieu of international Utopian socialism. The Belgian socialist critic Emile Verhaeren endorsed this universalist stance when he stated in 1897: 'Depuis un siècle l'Europe devient une. Il n'est plus possible aujourd'hui d'être soit un pur Français, soit un pur Allemand, soit un pur Scandinave. Une race continentale, une race composite s'est élaborée, d'accord plus encore avec l'avenir qu'avec le présent (…) pour ne parler que d'art, mille expositions, mille revues, mille journaux nous renseignent, heure par heure, les uns sur les autres.'[184] Verhaeren believed in one European culture, in which the different nationalities were blended into one art language, creating a modern, artistic Esperanto that could flow freely without borders. He thus refuted the notion of a national art – as it was impossible to be 'purely' French, German or Scandinavian – in the favor of artistic *métissage*. Verhaeren's art world was indeed very cosmopolitan and internationally connected. He himself was a prime representative of an extensive transnational network of artists, critics, dealers and buyers that functioned across Europe. The Belgian critic was in close contact with several artists from various nationalities – as we will see in the case-study on Dario de Regoyos –, and wrote extensively on international art. Verhaeren was part of a cultural generation that became increasingly internationally oriented.[185]

This international outlook was, however, also challenged by nationalistic sentiments. One might actually argue that the very emphasis so many critics placed on a continuing universalism was a response to a threat of the nationalist discourse. So even though nationalist tendencies never got the upper hand and remained the opposite of official policy, it was not marginal but rather a determining factor in the cultural debates. Republicans and many French intellectuals felt that they needed to defend their universalist ideals in the face of nationalistic currents. In the aftermath of the

182 See the last chapter of his 1825 book *Opinions littéraires, Philosophiques et Industrielles*: 332-344. In 1814 Saint-Simon had published a brochure together with his pupil August Thierry, in which they sketched a model for possible European collaboration through a European parlement. See Fennema 1995: 90.

183 Wood 1999: 40. See for an elaborate study on Saint-Simon and social art: McWilliam 1993.

184 *La Revue blanche*, vol. XII (1897): 165. Verhaeren sympathized with socialist thinking, which is reflected in his criticism.

185 Artists exhibited all over Europe in the search of new markets, in part because the French art market soon became saturated with Impressionist pictures, and art critics travelled to view and cover these exhibitions in their newspapers and magazines or invited foreign writers to review these events for the Parisian public. See Joyeux-Prunel 2002: 192.

Franco-Prussian War of 1870, national thought under the Third Republic became charged with xenophobic feelings. The *Ligue des patriotes* was founded in 1882, calling for 'revanche' on Germany and offering pre-military courses with this in view. Its spiritual leader, Georges Ernest Boulanger epitomized this new and popular nationalistic, rightist, monarchist movement in France. The rise of 'Boulangism' between 1886 and 1889 was one of the more profound symptoms of the nationalistic wind that was blowing through France, embraced by republicans and monarchists alike. This mood was fostered by feelings of dissatisfaction, tension and protest, motivated by economic stagnation, demographic deficit, ongoing urbanization and mass immigration.[186] Cultural politics concentrated on the protection of the nation and French national identity, especially in the fields of education, cultural manifestations and language.[187] The former arts minister Edmond Turquet propagated for example in 1894 that the salons of the Société des Artistes Français and the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts both needed to stay 'bien Français, et tous deux ils doivent défendre l'art national contre l'envahissement de l'art étranger (…) Il faut que dans nos expositions comme ailleurs on applique votre belle devise : 'La France aux Français!'[188]

A few influential French writers fostered the cultural debates with extremely rigid and xenophobic nationalistic positions. One of the principal voices was that of Maurice Barrès, who wrote for example in his *L'Appel au soldat* (1900): 'Tout étranger installé sur notre territoire, alors même qu'il croit nous chérir, hait naturellement la France éternelle, notre tradition, qu'il ne possède pas, qu'il ne peut comprendre et qui constitue précisément la nationalité.'[189] The fears of foreign peril also resonated in the art press, as illustrated by one of many examples: 'Cette invasion sans cesse grandissante de métèques, pour la plupart sans talent, qui viennent, non plus comme autrefois pour le clair génie de notre race, mais pour nous imposer les brumes ou les extravagances du leur, est un véritable péril nationale (…) [ils] contaminent notre jeunesse française.'[190] The insistence on

[186] Tombs 1991: xiii. The characterization of the nationalistic mood is taken from Girardet 1983: 276.
[187] Wessels & Bosch 2012: 312. Jules Ferry, the minister of Education, presented a new patriotic curriculum in the primary schools for example. Part of this project was the introduction of a standard map of France for classroom use in which the lost provinces Alsace and Lorraine were clearly separated from Germany. Another sign of patriotic politics was the initiation of the national holiday 'Quatorze Juillet' in 1881, commemorating the storming of the Bastille in 1789. See Jay 1979: 106.
[188] Edmond Turquet, 'Lettres sur l'art : le Champ-de-Mars', in *La Libre Parole*, 26 april 1894: 2. Cited in Hargrove & McWilliam 2005: 9.
[189] Maurice Barrès, *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* (1902), Paris: Plon, 1925 (vol. 1): 61. Cited in Fabre, Silver & Green 2000: 87.
[190] Jean-José Frappa 'Salon d'Automne. Il faut défendre l'art français' in *Le Monde illustré*, 12 October 1912: 235. The word 'race' is frequently used in French criticism at the time, but must interpreted with caution. In present times, race is usually understood in ethnic or biological terms. In the French nineteenth century, however, it had multiple meanings. It could refer to an 'ensemble des personnes appartenant à une même lignée, à une même famille' or siginifie 'origine noble; élégance, distinction naturelle' (see http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/race). In art criticism the expression 'peintre de race' was for example frequently used, referring to a noble, serious painter. Towards the end of the century, when the nationalistic discourses intensified, as we will see, 'race' was more and more applied in its ethnic denotation and

cultural dominancy was inextricably connected to the fear of artistic *métissage*. This mixing of nationalities and cultures, provoked by the 'foreign invasion', was considered by some critics as a major threat to French national culture and identity, and seen as the main root for 'degeneration': 'Maints artistes, en effet, se laissent influencer par un art étranger au point de transformer leur vision et de perdre les qualités particulières à leur propre race.'[191] This blame on the foreigners was sometimes made very explicit, as already cited in the introduction : 'Je crois qu'il n'est pas inutile de redire les raisons qui affaiblissent de jour en jour des belles et nobles idées, pour lesquelles cependant luttent encore de nombreux artistes sincères et véritablement Indépendants. La principale de ces causes, que j'avais déjà signalée l'an dernier dans ce journal, est l'envahissement progressif d'étrangers, qui viennent par bandes formidables implanter à Paris leurs mœurs et leur visions souvent barbares'.[192] This xenophobic position was far from unique at the time. The polemics had turned virulent, and not only in the rightist, nationalistic press. Georges Lecomte, one of the first champions of Impressionism, wrote for example about 'La crise de la peinture française' in the studious magazine *Art et les artistes*: 'A l'étranger cette école du moindre effort nous est préjudiciable. Elle risque de discréditer bien vite l'art français. En tous cas elle le calomnie (…) Beaucoup d'entre eux manquent de ce goût, de cet esprit logique, de ce juste sens de l'harmonie et des proportions qui caractérisent la race latine. L'outrance et la déformation leur plaisent.'[193]

Considering the above remarks by French critics it might seem as if the critical climate was dominated by xenophobic and nationalistic sentiments only. Yet at the same time many critics considered the presence of foreign artists as a sign of France's cultural hegemony.[194] These French writers were convinced by their country's artistic superiority and did, therefore, not fear foreign presence. Quite the opposite, they welcomed it. The art critic Albert Wolff, for example, wrote: 'C'est à chaque Salon le même refrain qu'on répète: 'Avez-vous les étrangers? Ils sont bien forts!" Oui, ils tiennent beaucoup de place, c'est vrai. Pourquoi nier l'évidence. Mais plus cette place est grande, plus l' Ecole française peut s'en enorgueillir, car ils marchent à sa suite et non à sa tête. Allemands, Hollandais ou Américains, peu importe leur origine; puisque en eux triomphe toujours l'art français, auquel ils ont demande le développement de leurs aptitudes.'[195] He considered Paris as the capital

considered as a proper and plausible alternative to 'nationality'. The belief in racial inequality was fostered by the publication of Comte Joseph de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, in 1853-54.

[191] Alphonse Germain, 'Du caractère de race dans l'art français', in *L'Ermitage,* February 1897: 7.

[192] Georges Rivière, 'Exposition de la Société des Artistes Indépendants', in *Le Journal des Arts*, 6 April 1912.

[193] Georges Lecomte, 'La crise de la peinture française', in *Art et les artistes*, 1910.

[194] Rachel Esner has convincingly presented this viewpoint in her case-study on the reception of German artists at the Salons in Paris, and her arguments can be exported to a larger discussion on the reception of foreign art in Paris. See Esner 2008.

[195] Albert Wolff, *Le Figaro Salon* (Paris 1886): 36-7. See also: Esner 2001: 363

of the arts, and devoted a book to this, stating in the preface: 'dans l'histoire d'aucun peuple de notre temps, l'art ne tient une place aussi belle qu'en France'.[196]

The 'France first' policy might have been advocated strongly under the Third Republic. Yet in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war universalist ideals kept flourishing alongside nationalistic sentiments. The cosmopolitan stance was in fact a form of nationalism or perhaps better patriotism, as Esner has argued.[197] It was another way of defending France's national identity, an alternative to the protectionist and conservative politics. Instead of excluding and denouncing foreign artists, these writers incorporated them into their definition of French artistic identity. Foreign presence was a confirmation and celebration of France's true character: open, liberal, and eclectic. After all, it is only in an international context that national achievements can be measured.[198] This demonstrates particularly well that internationalism and nationalism were not antagonistic concepts, but that they were rather interlinked and even thrived on each other.[199]

This interconnectedness is also evident in Thoré's writing. He advocated a universal art yet at the same accorded artistic primacy to the French school: 'Par nature et par générosité, elle [la France] s'élève toujours à des vues d'ensemble qui dominent les rivalités nationales.'[200] This mechanism was frequently put into force by nineteenth-century French thinkers to solve the paradoxical conflict between an international, universalist ideology and the prevailing belief that art was determined by national character.[201] As Tom Verschaffel expertly argued, only the non-French art was considered in national terms; French art was universal.[202] This powerful mechanism was also at the heart of Guillaume Apollinaire's exaltation of modern French art in his review of the Salon des Indépendants of 1914: 'Le Salon des Indépendants joue depuis sa fondation un rôle prépondérant dans l'évolution de l'art moderne et tour à tour il nous révèle les tendances et les personnalités qui depuis trente ans font corps et âme avec l'histoire de la peinture française, la seule qui compte en Europe et qui poursuit à la face de l'univers la logique des grandes traditions et qui

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[196] This preface was published on the front page of *Le Figaro* on 5 May 1886. See also Albert Wolff, *La capitale de l'art*. Paris: Victor Havard, 1886 and Genet-Delacroix 1985: 188.
[197] Esner 2001: 373.
[198] Somsen 2008: 366. I thank Wessel Krul for sending me this article on nationalism and universalism in the scientific field, describing various concepts and developments that are close to the ones that I explore here.
[199] Geyer and Paulmann 2001: 7 and Esner 2001: 373.
[200] Théophile Thoré. *Salon des 1844, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848. Avec une préface par W. Bürger*. Paris, 1868: 332.
[201] The Universal Exhibitions that were staged in 1878, 1889 and 1900 are often considered as the most international and cosmopolitan phenomena of the Third Republic, yet at the same time they were explicit showcases of France's claim to cultural dominion. They were showcases of France's hegemony in the industrial and cultural field, and reinforced Paris' status as the leading transnational artistic centre. Foreign artists were welcomed as they enforced the international character of the exhibitions and they functioned as a mirror: it was through foreign art that France could confirm its own power and prestige in the fine arts. Many publications have been devoted to this well-trodden subject. See for the most recent studies: Charle & Roche 2002; Wilson & De Chassey 2002; Chaudonneret 2007; Joyeux-Prunel 2009 and Waller & Carter 2015.
[202] Verschaffel 2004: 124-5.

manifeste encore une grande intensité de vie.'[203] This universalizing principle, that fostered national pride by exalting the civilizing role of France in the world, remained a powerful ideology even if nationalistic sentiment and patriotic politics increased.[204]

The Paradigm of National Schools

Paradoxically, the advancement of an international or universal field of art concurrently enforced the idea of a national art, as its opposite pole.[205] This resulted in a set of contradictions. While Thoré spoke of a universal art language at the occasion of the Universal Exhibition in 1855, it was precisely this event that brought about the idea that art speaks the language of the country in which it was produced. Théophile Thoré was a strong promotor of the ideal of universal art as we have seen, yet he also remarked: 'si cosmopolite qu'on soit, il faut reconnaître que les nationalités en fait d'art sont toujours très-évidemment marquées.'[206] The Universal Exhibition confronted for the first time French critics with foreign art in such large numbers, that the writers needed to develop a specific language and classification system to describe these objects.[207] Critics reviewed and compared art works in national terms, turning the art production into an object of competition between nations.[208]

The concept of national characteristics became a dominant principle in art criticism, especially after Hippolyte Taine systematized this notion in his classes on aesthetics at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts between 1865 and 1869.[209] Taine had coined the famous scheme 'race, milieu, moment' as the determining influences on art.[210] This concept was readily adopted in the art criticism; Castagnary proclaimed for example that 'l'art tient du sol, du climat et de la race, – ou il est sans

[203] Guillaume Apollinaire, 'La vie artistique. Le Salon des Indépendants. Avant-Vernissage', *Intransigeant,* 28 February 1914. See also the citation in the Introduction on page 16 from 1913, in which Apollinaire also celebrated the hegemony of French art.
[204] Cottington 1998: 54. The defence of international art in the face of rising nationalist feelings is for example evident in the review 'L'Art etranger en France', in *La Revue des Beaux-Arts*, 29 March 1908 by the author X: 'L'Exposition des Artistes indépendants nous montre cette année un accroissement considérable d'œuvres étrangères, et –ce qui est piquant – elles se signalent pour la plupart à l'attention du visiteur. Faut-il s'émouvoir de cette invasion ? (…) nous croyons que l'exposition internationale est la meilleure épreuve a laquelle on puisse soumettre la vitalité d'une nation.'
[205] This paradox was also true for other fields at the time. Jules Verne's *Round the World in Eighty Days* (1872-3) was a beautiful fictional account of the increasingly close connections between the different parts of the world. Yet as Geyer and Paulmann argue: 'this gave rise not to a heightened awaress of universalism, but an ever stronger sense of particularity and individuality.' See Geyer and Paulmann 2001: 19.
[206] Thoré 1870, vol. 1: 59. See Cazes 2012: 2.
[207] Prunel 2009: 16. See also Patricia Mainardi's important publication *Art and Politics of the Second Empire: The Universal Expositions of 1855 and 1867* (1987) and a recent book by Marta Filipová, *Cultures of International Exhibitions, 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins* (2015).
[208] Cazes 2012: 1.
[209] Joyeux-Prunel 2002: 194.
[210] See the Introduction in Hippolyte Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise.* Paris: L. Hachette, 1866: 23-34.

caractère'.[211] Taine had been influenced by the ideas of Madame de Staël, who was one of the most successful authors in the current temporal and spatial context to consider the subject of national character of the arts in France. Madame de Staël, who herself was of Swiss descent, argued for an examination of literature based on its cultural roots in the country of origin. In her widely read *De la littérature* from 1800 she described the literature from the south as profoundly different from northern literature.[212] De Staël declared melancholy as 'esprit national' of the northern countries, and connected this mood to their native soil. The dark and gloomy climate of the north permeated them with a pensive and somber mood, according to De Staël. The geographical situation also infused the northern creativity: 'L'imagination des hommes du nord s'élance au-delà de cette terre dont ils habitent les confines; elle s'élance à travers les nuages qui bordent leur horizon, et semblent représenter l'obscur passage de la vie à l'éternité.'[213] Following Staël's model, several publications on the relations between art and the effects of nature began to appear in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century. One of the first was the monumental multivolume history of medieval art by Seroux d'Agincourt, published in 1823. His *Histoire de l'art par les monumens, depuis sa décadence au IVe siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVIe* emphasized the importance of climate as a basis for style.[214]

The climatological distinction grew out to be an influential model in the nineteenth century. The axis north-south became a system, ascribing the (apparent) differences between Nordic and Latin people to their surroundings.[215] The characteristics attributed to northern and southern people differed sometimes per author, but there were quite a few common factors. The cold and wet north, with wild seas and dark forests, would provoke melancholic and violent feelings. The inhabitants were considered to be rough, honest, tasteless, melancholic and humble. The Mediterranean people, surrounded by the most beautiful scenery and serene seas, were supposed to be very social and full of life and described as refined, sophisticated, analytical, haughty and vain.[216] The believed relationship between climate and identity was further enforced by the scientific publications of Charles Darwin in the 1850s arguing that the nature of the human and animal

[211] Castagnary 1892 (vol. 1): 404.
[212] This distinction was repeated in several of Madame de Staël's publications, most notably in *Corinne* of 1807. The differences between the nationalities (in this book: French, Italian, British and German) are again explained by the factor of climate, but also religion and government.
[213] Staël 1800: 181.
[214] Da Costa Kaufmann 2004: 44.
[215] This perceived opposition is a recurring pattern, and not unique to the nineteenth century, as we will be discussed in the next chapter on identity (2.1).
[216] The origins of these opinions go back to Tacitus, who – in the first century – described the Germanic tribes as very little affected by a mixture with other races, and he believed that their inhospitable climate made them loyal, brave, impatient and lazy people. See: Facos 1998: 61. Important philosophers, such as Kant and Montesquieu, endorsed Tacitus' opinions in the eighteenth century. Montesquieu argued in his famous *Esprit de lois* (1748) that a nation or cultura has a distinctive spirit (see Da Costa Kaufmann 2004: 47). Montesquieu was Madame de Staël's teacher.

kingdom was determined by their environment. This positivist approach further provoked the categorisation of artists by nationality in museum displays, periodicals, books and curricula. The long-standing notion about the effects of climate on art became related to the idea of art as the expression of a nation.[217]

The idea that national identity is geographically determined – or at least influenced – was also already contested in the nineteenth century. Ernest Renan turned against this dominant principle, and argued quite the opposite. He refuted that geography could be decisive in creating a national identity. In his lecture 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation', Renan argued that national character was a result of 'complications profondes de l'histoire'.[218] The moral consciousness, created by this shared history – especially the darker history that needs to be forgotten or that is kept untold – forms the common factor in a nation, according to Renan. Later scholars, such as Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm, reflected Renan's ideas on the essence of a nation. They also believed in a shared past or imagined tradition as binding factors for a nation.[219]

Ernest Chesneau, one of the first champions of Edouard Manet and secretary of the Fine Arts administrator Comte de Nieuwerkerke, published *Les nations rivales dans l'art* in 1868. In this book he described the visual arts in different nations, indicating specific national characteristics, such as a predilection for genre painting or a spectacular use of colour. Throughout the century the art critics repeated commonplaces and clichés that became generally accepted by the public. The American artists were cold and coarse and so was their work; the Nordic people were humble and gentle which was reflected in their art; the Russians used brutal colours and were grotesque; the Spanish could be defined as 'brûlant' and 'rugueux'; the Italians were decadent; the Swiss rigid; and the English bleak and 'sec'.[220] French culture was the most gracious, refined and harmonious, as already noted by Madame de Staël.[221] These national characteristics did not only influence the writings on art, artists themselves were also working within this paradigm. Fernand Léger wrote in his *Fonctions de la Peinture* (1911): 'les artistes nordiques chercheront plutôt leurs moyens dynamiques en développant la couleur, les peintres méridionaux donneront probablement plus

[217] Da Costa Kaufmann 2004: 44. Chapter 2 of this publication offers an excellent overview and study of eighteenth and nineteenth-century thought (exploring the writings of Hegel, Goethe, Ruskin, Reynolds, Michelet, Taine etc.) on the relations between art and national identity in Europe. I have only used some of this highly relevant material to create a necessary, but brief context for the situation in France.
[218] Renan 1882: 25.
[219] Anderson 1983 (rev. ed. 2006) and Hobsbawm 1990. Leerssen argues that Renan's lecture formulated the idea that nationality is not a question of identity, but of identification. Nationality is a state of mind, a choice of a people to identify and relate to eachother. See Leerssen 2006: 230.
[220] These examples are extracted from the many reviews on the Salon des Indépendants that have been studied for this research.
[221] Staël 1800: 262.

d'importance aux formes et aux lignes.'[222] And the Swedish artist Richard Berg attested: 'Authentic Nordic art must differ as much from authentic Mediterranean art as a fir tree from a pine. The general character of a country's nature must also be visible in its art.'[223]

In his book Chesneau tried to unite the idea of national schools with the universalist ideology of his time, thus navigating between the two currents. He predicted a different future, in which the art field was not ruled by cosmopolitan nor national frameworks, but by great individuals: 'La période d'émoussement, de cosmopolitisme dans laquelle nous entrons sera plus ou moins longue, mais j'ai la ferme assurance qu'elle ne peut être qu'une période de transition. Peut-être n'y aura-t-il plus de grandes écoles locales, nationales ; mais toujours il y aura de grandes individualités qui, pour n'être point spécialisées, enfermées dans les lisières d'une tradition d'école, n'en auront qu'une action plus large et plus énergique sur l'humanité. Au lieu d'être les représentants de la Flandre, de la Hollande, de l'Allemagne, de Rome, de Florence ou de Venise, ils seront les représentants de l'humanité tout entière.'[224] Chesneau sustained his prophecy by arguing that truly great artists are not influenced by their environment, 'le génie se produit en dehors des conditions de race, milieu et de moment', but that they are men of genius by birth who 'n'acceptent aucune formule toute fait'.[225] Between the national and international artist, the artist *hors catégorie* was born: the universal genius.

Despite the different attempts to negate or nuance the national paradigm in the art field, the idea of the national school turned into a dogma.[226] Richard Brettell, for example, applied this old paradigm in his reader on modern art when concluding – in spite of the strong currents of universalism and cosmopolitanism – that 'the history of modern art remains a sequence of largely national histories written in national languages by historians who view art as the embodiment of national values'.[227] This is reflected by the classification and interpretation of art in criticism, museums, scholarly publications, academic practice and exhibitions. Until today in many museums and art historical handbooks the works of art are grouped by country and the artists are identified by their names and nationalities, although Tate Modern has broken with this practice which has had significant impact on art historical and curatorial approaches.

[222] Léger 1911: 16.
[223] Richard Berg as cited in Facos 1998: 47.
[224] Chesneau 1868: 462-3.
[225] Chesneau 1868: 465.
[226] See: Peltre & Lorentz 2007 and Da Costa Kaufmann 2004.
[227] Brettell 1999: 199.

In Search of French Art

Within this paradigm of national schools many French critics and artists became also concerned with the character of the French artistic identity. Both universalist and nationalistic ideals were at the heart of these debates, and again they were often interlinked. The patriotic defense of France's cultural values was a major and shared concern, allying progressive and reactionary circles and integrating universalist and nationalistic ideals. In forging this collective, national identity, the past became a key ingredient, turning the search for 'roots' into a widespread cultural and political phenomenon.[228] This mechanism was not only identified in retrospect, Camille Mauclair already spoke in 1905 of an obsessive search for 'origins' in both politics and art in his article 'La Réaction Nationaliste en art et l'importance de l'homme de lettres': 'On parle chaque jour davantage tout récemment d'une certaine tradition mystérieuse qu'on aurait perdue et qu'il faudrait à tout prix retrouver pour sauver l'art français d'une imminente décadence.'[229] Tradition and classicism were widely heralded as the carriers of the true French 'genius', and the promotion of the classical ideal took a major presence in French culture. But as Richard Thomson pointed out, it is difficult to define this ideal, as it took on such diverse forms.[230]

Arsène Alexandre, art critic and chief inspector of the Musées nationaux, summarized the hegemony of French art as an 'alliance de la simplicité, de la clarté et du sens de la mesure.'[231] These hallmarks of France's national art were repeated over and over again in art criticism, alternated by a wide variety of related terms such as 'justesse', 'equilibre', 'élégance', 'grâce', and 'harmonie'.[232] The artistic values centring on rationality, clarity and harmony were generally traced back to the Greek and Roman antiquity, and extended through Poussin to Ingres and Corot, forming a great French classical tradition. The historical landscapes of Lorrain and Poussin were praised by many critics for their clarity and frankness, and treasured as representations of the true French genius.[233] The French landscape became the locus of national ideals. The critic Castagnary declared on the occasion of the Salon of 1867: 'Par le paysage, l'art devient national [...] il prend possession de la France, du sol, de l'air, du ciel, du paysage français. Cette terre qui nous a portés, cette atmosphère que nous respirons, tout cet ensemble harmonieux et doux qui constitue comme le visage de la mère patrie,

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[228] Cottington 1998: 61; Gee 191: 153 and Hazareesingh 2015: 285.
[229] Camille Mauclair, 'Réaction Nationaliste en art et l'importance de l'homme de lettres', in *Revue mondiale*, 15 January 1905: 163.
[230] Thomson & Clarke 1994: 77.
[231] Fabre, Silver & Green 2000: 32, with no reference to the original source unfortunately.
[232] See for example the review of the Salon des Indépendants by Georges Riat in the *Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, 5 April 1902, where he writes about: 'les qualités françaises de clarté, de grâce, d'elegance et d'harmonie'.
[233] See Shiff 1984.

nous le portons dans notre âme.'[234] The Mediterranean in particular was discovered by a variety of artists and critics as a truly French, harmonious site, anchored in an assumed Latin tradition. Within this notion of Latinity, the southern part of France was widely represented and acknowledged as the most Latin and thus most truly French region within the nation.[235]

Several artists travelled from Paris to the south in the 1880s and 1890s: Paul Signac was one of these Parisian painters who found inspiration in the Midi.[236] He grafted several of his major works of the 1890s on the pastoral landscape tradition, structuring harmonious and idealised 'paysages composés' of the Mediterranean coast. Especially his immense *Au Temps d'harmonie. L'âge d'or n'est pas dans le passé: il est dans l'avenir* (ill. 10, 297 x 326cm), exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants of 1895, was a commanding manifesto in which Signac collided the Latin heritage and classical landscape tradition with radical left-wing idealism.[237] The painting enacted a grand reconciliation between classicism and modern art, between tradition and innovation. The Mediterranean continued to attract painters in the twentieth century. In 1904, Matisse worked alongside Signac on the French Riviera and painted his own version of an idealised and harmonious landscape: *Luxe, Calme et Volupté* (ill. 11). While clearly reflecting on the content and style of Signac's *Au Temps d'harmonie*, Matisse went further in his use of colour by applying pure pigments and outlining the figures in blue. The size and ambition of the painting indicate that Matisse intended it as a position picture, destined for the Salon des Indépendants of 1905. With this painting Matisse strategically placed himself in the French *grande tradition.*

For some, nonetheless, these positions remained irreconcilable. Camille Mauclair, an ardent defender of Impressionism – he had published the first comprehensive study of Impressionism in 1904 – and staunch Republican, fully rejected the Latin heritage as the basis of the French classical ideal: 'Le nationalisme, ou le classicisme, pour les artistes français, c'est l'art anti-romain, c'est la lutte contre Rome.'[238] It is interesting to note that Mauclair naturally conflated nationalism with classicism. Maurice Barrès, one of the most important voices of the nationalistic mood in the cultural field, argued along the same lines: 'Nationalism is a form of classicism; it is in every field the incarnation of French continuity.'[239] Mauclair proposed another French classicism rooted in everyday reality, springing from life. This classicism was not based on the academic models of

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[234] Castagnary, 'Salon de 1867', in *Salons (1857-1892),* Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1892: 235. See also Cachin 1997: 990.
[235] Dymond 2007: 357.
[236] To name a few other famous artists who travelled southward: Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, and Auguste Renoir. Cézanne was born in Aix-en-Provence and pursued his artistic career while based in the Provence.
[237] See for the political connotations of this painting Dymond 2007: 364-5.
[238] Camille Mauclair, 'La Réaction nationaliste en art et l'ignorance de l'homme de lettres', in *La Revue*, 15 January 1905: 162. Cited in Herbert 1992: 127.
[239] Maurice Barrès, Action française, 1910: 77; translation cited in Cottington 1998: 59.

Antiquity and corrupted by the Italian (foreign!) Renaissance but was to be found in indigenous French sources.[240] Resistance to the Latin classical model also resonated in Cubist circles. Fernand Léger, for example, wrote in his memories that the Italian Renaissance artists were decadent, as they just copied reality instead of inventing new forms. He looked to the Middle Ages as a source of inspiration.[241] This fascination for medieval art increased in the 1890s. The Symbolists' search for a higher meaning in art, in reaction to the realism that had dominated French art for so long, had led to a rediscovery of religious, Gothic art.[242] Another Cubist painter, Albert Gleizes, also rooted the 'pure' French classical tradition in medieval period, exposing the Renaissance as a foreign import, and celebrating France's 'ancient Celtic origins' instead.[243] The Cubists' insistence on these French national roots was very important, as they had come under attack as anti-national.[244] In defence of their Frenchness, the critic Guillaume Apollinaire insisted that 'l'art français d'aujourd'hui [meaning: Cubism] est né spontanément sur le sol français. Et cela prouve la vitalité de la nation française et qu'elle est loin de la décadence.'[245] He continued by tracing back modern art to Gothic times, and denying all possible foreign influences on French modern art. The French cubists, such as Metzinger, Gleizes and Léger succeeded in connecting Cubism to French – Gothic – tradition.[246] This act of reconciling modern art with tradition was sealed in 1912 with a new series of exhibitions by these Cubist artists, strategically called Section d'Or, referring to the French *grande tradition*.[247]

The Graeco-Roman lineage was thus challenged by the Gallic or Gothic heritages, resulting in competing definitions of classical and truly French art.[248] These contrasting definitions of classicism expose the fantastic character of traditions, a mechanism identified by Hobsbawm and Ranger as the 'invention of tradition'.[249] But even if there existed different definitions of the roots and nature of Frenchness, there was a general consensus that all true, French art had to look back to the past.

[240] Fulcher 1991: 114.
[241] Léger 1911: 181.
[242] The need for a more emotional and spiritual charge resonated with the Catholic revival at the time. See Marlais 1992: 52.
[243] Cottington 1998: 65.
[244] Fabre, Silver & Green 2000: 32. There was a heated debate in the Chambre des députés in 1912, where the delegate Jules-Louis Breton declared that the national palaces were staging 'des expositions de caractère anti-artistique et anti-national', referring to Cubist art (see also the Introduction, page 19). The Fine Arts minister Léon Bérard reacted by assuring the chamber that it was against liberal policy to intervene in artistic matters. Privately, however, he put pressure on the president of the Salon d'Automne to include fewer foreigners and cubists in the exhibitions. See Cottington 1998: 1.
[245] Guillaume Apollinaire, 'La peinture nouvelle. Notes d'art', in *Les Soirées de Paris*, May 1912. Cited in Debray & Lucbert 2000: 51.
[246] This form of Cubism became known as Salon-Cubism, as it was exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne. The Cubist paintings by Picasso and Braque were referred to as Gallery-Cubism, as these were exclusively exhibited at the gallery of the art dealer Kahnweiler.
[247] Debray & Lucbert 2000: 46.
[248] The critic Roger Marx commented on this wide variety of 'sources': 'A côté de l'art gréco latin, dont l'autorité, prédominait exclusive jusqu'à hier, l'art médiéval, l'art oriental y offrent maintenant des sources d'information, d'enseignement, vivifiantes et neuves', in: *La Chronique de l'art et de la curiosité,* 22 April 1911.
[249] Hobsbawm & Ranger 1992.

Even the most modern and innovative artists incorporated tradition as a cardinal point of reference in their artistic practice. Within these often inconsistent and conflated debates on the genesis or nature of French art, one artist was pushed forward by several critics and artists as a truly French, modern painter.[250] According to them, aspects of the varying views on tradition, classicism and Frenchness could be traced in the art of Paul Cézanne. His fame started to rise after the solo exhibitions with Galerie Vollard in 1895, 1896, 1899; increased through his inclusion in the Centennale of 1900 (where the great French painters were celebrated) and his participations at the Salon des Indépendants in 1899, 1901, 1902; and culminated after his death in 1906. Critics and artists with very diverse beliefs discovered his art as a fertile soil of projections of national and classical values, yet also universalist ideals.

Within the national currents, Cézanne's painting was configured as a form of reconciliation between the Latin and Gothic traditions. The artist was believed to have found a fine balance between the realism and reason of the classical ideal rooted in the Graeco-Roman heritage; and the spontaneity and emphasis on personal perception infused by the Gothic heritage (and revived by the Rococo in the eighteenth century).[251] Cézanne was celebrated for painting a synthesis between tradition and nature. He fused the academic, classical practice of the *paysage composé* with a modern and Impressionist approach to nature. Cézanne classicism was not *made* in imitation of old masters, but *found* in personal sensation, in his direct experience of nature. Cézanne became classic by nature, to use Richard Shiff's persuasive descriptions.[252] For the pursuers of the classical, academic ideal, Cézanne was the great inheritor of Poussin's legacy. The critic Leon Werth, for example, referred to Cézanne as a model when he criticized the lack of historical notion in the art at the Salon des Indépendants: 'La tendance néo-classique a peu d'adeptes aux Indépendants. Le retour à l'antique, via Poussin et via Cézanne, n'a séduit qu'un petit nombre de peintres.'[253]Like the seventeenth century artist, Cézanne painted Mediterranean visions of landscape that connected modern Frenchness to its Latin roots. For the defenders of the Gothic tradition, Cézanne's strange and awkward style represented his genuine and spontaneous primitiveness and originality. His

[250] The critics writing on Cézanne had greatly diverging political and aesthetical opinions, illustrating how wide the acclaim for Cézanne's art as a model of French art was. It included the writer and poet Charles Morice, who was part of the symbolist circles and contributed regularly to the progressive periodical *Mercure de France*. He praised Cézanne's art for its aesthetic, formalistic qualities (see for his comments on Cézanne the reviews of the Salon des Indépendants in the *Mercure de France* of April 1907, 1908 and 1910). The art critic Thiébault-Sisson wrote about Cézanne in his series on the crisis in French art, in which nationalistic sentiments prevailed: 'Cézanne, les deux traits essentiels qui le caractérisent et que tant de gens, aujourd'hui encore, s'obstinent a ne point voir; la simplicité ordonnée dans la composition, le gout des belles matières colorées, savamment et harmonieusement disposes.' (see: 'La Vie Artistique. A propos des Indépendants. La crise de la peinture française', in *Le Temps*, 24 March 1912).
[251] Green 2000: 199.
[252] Shiff 1984: 125 and Shiff 1993: 66.
[253] Leon Werth, 'Le mois du peintre: Le Salon des Indépendants', in *La Phalange*, March 1910.

classicism was founded in his personal, yet idealized perception of the *belle nature*, and depicted in a reasoned 'logic of organized *sensations*'.[254] This reconciliation of classical practices – both Latin and Gothic – made Cézanne the perfect representative of French modern art. Especially in the writing of Emile Bernard and Maurice Denis, Cézanne became the 'classic' model for all great 'modern' and 'original' art.[255]

The possibility of a universal art was also reinvoked with Cézanne, as the artist Paul Serusier stated in 1905: 'Il a montré clairement que (…) le but unique est (…) a créer, enfin, par des moyens purement plastiques un langage, ou plutôt encore à retrouver le langage universel. (…) Sa pensée est si claire dans son esprit! (…) Qu'une tradition naisse à notre époque, -ce que j'ose espérer,- c'est de Cézanne qu'elle naîtra.'[256] The concept of universalism is here linked with tradition. Adolph Basler, an art critic and dealer who was of Polish-Jewish descent and based in Paris since 1898, also considered Cézanne art to be universal and connected this to tradition as well. Cézanne was to him one of the great spiritual artists, and placed him in the Gothic lineage: 'Ce n'est qu'après avoir compris davantage l'art de Cézanne, que la nouvelle génération des peintres français a commencé ses recherches d'un style plus universel, dans lequel les lois de la nature et les éléments de la vie pourraient trouver une expression profonde authentique et conforme à l'esprit du temps (…) *Matisse, Picasso, Derain* ont après Cézanne, Van Gogh, Seurat contribué le plus à l'éclosion de cet art spiritualiste qui n'est plus défendu seulement par les jeunes peintres français, mais semble de plus en plus s'universaliser. Et on peut affirmer dès maintenant que c'est là la tendance vers le « style universel » de l'art européen. Jamais, *depuis les temps dits gothiques* on n'a vu un mouvement aussi unanime vers la spiritualisation des formes sensibles de l'art. Nous assistons à la naissance d'un style aussi universel que le gothique, qui, né lui aussi en France, pénètre les autres pays de l'Europe pour s'y différencier selon les aspirations des diverses races.[257] The case of Cézanne demonstrates how conflated the various notions of French art were, bringing together seemingly paradoxal concepts of national versus universal art, and tradition versus modernity. There was not one uniform concept of French art, let alone that there was a consistent and univocal understanding of foreign art. It is essential to recognize the complexity, fluidity and fragility of the critical climate as it illuminates certain ideas and opinions that informed the artists' reception and strategies that I will later discuss.

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[254] These analyses have been taken from the proceedings of the groundbraking symposium on the relations between Poussin and Cézanne (Kendall 1993), following the exhibition *Cezanne and Poussin: The Classical Vision of Landscape* (1990). See House 1993: 148 and Shiff 1993: 58.
[255] Shiff 1984: xvi.
[256] Paul Serusier in: Charles Morice, 'Enquête sur les tendances acutelles des arts plastiques', in *Mercure de France* 15 August 1905: 544.
[257] Adolphe Basler, 'Art Français. Art Européen', in *Montjoie!*, 29 March 1913.

PART 2 FOREIGN IDENTITY AND EXHIBITION STRATEGIES

2.1. Identity and Alterity

Tu es étranger, avec toi pas de voisinage! (D.-O. Widhopff, 1924)

Formation and Perceptions of Identity

The concepts of Frenchness, nationality and alterity were recurring issues in the critical debates of the nineteenth and early twentieth century in France, as we have seen above.[258] Notions of identity were also at the heart of the 'Querelle des Indépendants': the debate centered on the question if the distinction between French and foreign was legitimate and productive. Universalist and nationalistic ideals resonated in the artists' responses. Most foreign artists were offended and hurt by the classification by nationality. These foreigners argued that they were excluded and isolated ('Tu es étranger, avec toi pas de voisinage!')[259], while they believed that they belonged to the same artistic context as the French artists. When studying the reception and strategies of foreign artists in France, it is crucial to examine the concept of identity and above all to understand how artists utilized their identities. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the perception of Frenchness and alterity were subject to versatile processes of identity formation. They were not fixed and permanent notions, yet constantly changing per person and moment or place. Cultural and national identities are also not natural givens, but products of disposition and attitude. It implies a willingness to connect to a collectivity, to be bound to a group.[260] Identity formation is a process of inclusion as exclusion; national identity is based on a perceived distinction between compatriots and foreigners. Joep Leerssen formulated this important aspect of identity as a distinction between *feelings* of alterity instead of *being* different from others.[261] These feelings are relative, instead of forming a static reality, and fluctuate over time and space. Identities are formed and perceived by political, economic and cultural forces in dynamic ways. Furthermore, identities are also relative of social spaces, as individuals are connected to a variety of groups (family, professional circles, community or nation). Since the many theoretical studies on identity formation in the late twentieth century, it is now generally believed that identities are multiple, fluid and open construction.[262] Rosaura Sánches has made a critical point in her work on identity politics, when arguing that not all

[258] For more literature on this subject, see especially Smith 1993; Cameron 1999; and Thiesse 1999.
[259] D-O. Widhopff in *Bulletin de la vie artistique*, 15 January 1924.
[260] Sánches 2015: 41.
[261] Leerssen 1993: p. 11.
[262] See for relevant studies on identity as a philosophical and sociological concept: Gleason 1983; Butler 1989; Giddens 1991; Hirsch 1992; Bauman & Vecchi 2004; Nicholson 2008; Alcoff (ed.) 2015; and Izenberg 2016.

identities can be foregrounded at the same time, yet that there is 'a tactical value to be gained in foregrounding – or backgrounding – particular identities at given times, precisely because identity equips one discursively to relate to the world, to make sense of one's social positioning, or to further a given agenda at a particular moment.'[263] This notion is crucial to understand how foreign artists negotiated in the Parisian exhibition field, and how they foregrounded and backgrounded particular identities at given times in order to create space for themselves within the French artistic context. Even if identity was thought to be a static, natural given in the nineteenth century, artists were strategically positioning themselves. To use the words of Sánches again: 'Identity, then, is a discourse that serves to mediate between the individual and the world.'[264]

For my research it is important to consider how artists identified themselves, but it is even more significant to examine how they were identified by others, in casu the French critics. Although I have just argued that identity and alterity were flexible notions, some patterns can be discerned. For example, artists from the same country were often described with similar national characteristics. These commonplaces were not unique to the art criticism of the Third Republic, but were part of longer patterns. The application of these stereotypes has been studied in the interdisciplinary field of imagology.[265] A general and widespread cliché is the perceived contrast between the rugged and rational north versus the sensual yet unreasonable south, as we have also seen in above examples. Another dualism is the stereotype of the backward periphery versus the developed and intellectual center.[266] These oppositions (north-south and periphery-center) have been applied in various times and cultures, yielding in a large set of commonplaces that colour the perception, notion and valuation of the other *a priori*. The French critics were not deliberately applying these prejudices to the foreign artists they reviewed, although there are of course examples of a purposeful use of stereotyping.[267] The perception of national characteristics was an inherent element of their assessment of art works.[268] Yet whether concealed or not, these notions of identity and alterity played a relevant and concrete role in the art criticism of the time. In turn it influenced how foreign artists positioned themselves in this critical climate and it influenced their

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[263] Sánches 2015: 41-2.
[264] Sánches 2015: 42.
[265] The already mentioned essay by Joep Leerssen is a good introduction to the field of imagology, for further literature see: Dyserinck & Syndram 1988; Beller & Leerssen 2008; Leerssen 2011; and Dukić 2012.
[266] See for a discussion of these stereotypes and oppositions: Leerssen 1993: 12.
[267] To give one of many examples: 'Du côté allemand, Faber du Faur exhibe (et c'est le propre de tout l'art allemand actuel) des dons d'application studieuse et très informée plutôt que d'originalité, des étalages de force, de roideur surtout, jusque-là brutalité, et peu de solidité au fond avec peu d'énergie.' Félicien Fagus, 'Les Indépendants', in *La Revue blanche*, 1 April 1903: 542-3.
[268] Leerssen 1993: 11.

identity and exhibition politics. I will, therefore, look at the French notions of alterity, before discussing the construction of identities and exhibition strategies by foreign artists.

Defining 'The Other'

The *Declaration des droits de l'homme* (1789) was a fundamental document of the French revolution. It introduced protecting and empowering laws for citizens – first for a very select group of wealthy males, but gradually extended to all citizens – and had a major impact on the development of universal rights, freedom and democracy in Europe. Despite this admirable result, and its honorable intentions, the declaration paradoxically excluded a category of human beings from its universal program: by distinguishing the 'rights of man' from the 'rights of citizen', the existence of the foreigner became inevitable. The declaration created and defined the foreigner in political and legal terms. It created a fundamental line of demarcation between the citizen and the foreigner. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had already pointed to this problematic position of a foreigner in his book *Emile ou De L'éducation,* published in 1762: 'il faut opter entre faire un homme et faire un citoyen, car on ne peut faire à la fois l'un et l'autre (…) Tout patriote est dur aux étrangers; ils ne sont qu'hommes, ils ne sont rien à ses yeux.'[269]

After the French Revolution, many French politicians and intellectuals believed their nation to be a truly universal republic, but to become part of that entity one had to be a French citizen. Whereas under the monarchy of the Ancien Regime (from the mid-fifteenth century to 1789) a foreigner could, for example, occupy high public posts and even lead armies; after the French revolution only French citizens had access to the public and political sector.[270] The distinction between the universal man and the citizen pushed the foreigner outside of French society. Julia Kristeva poetically described this mechanism in her philosophical study *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991): 'between the man and the citizen there is a scar: the foreigner'.[271]

The notion of the foreigner as non-citizen has become deeply engrained in Western culture. It is even so deeply interiorized that the contradiction between natives and foreigners is hardly ever questioned in Western society. As Kristeva has pointed out, the foreigner is the logic result of a general belief in being naturally citizens, products of a nation-state.[272] This conviction is supported by legislation. In legal terms, the foreigner or 'alien' is 'simply' a person who is not a citizen of the

[269] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile ou De L'éducation*, 1762. In: *Oeuvres complète*s, Paris: Gallimard, 1959-1969 (vol. 1): 248-49. See for a broader discussions of this text Noiriel 1997: 2438.
[270] See Noiriel 1997: 2439. The first few years after the French Revolution foreigners still occupied high positions, but this changed after 1793 according to Noiriel. See for the subject of nationalism and cosmopolitism during the Revolution: Mathiez 1928.
[271] Kristeva 1991: 98.
[272] Kristeva 1991: 41.

country in which he or she resides. Moreover, it is with respect to these laws that the foreigner *exists* in the first place. It consequently has become common acceptance that the foreigner is deprived of the rights that the citizen enjoys. Even though over time the foreigner and the citizen in France have become closer with respect to their personal or civil rights, there remains a clear distinction in political rights up to today. This is particularly the case with regard to the right to vote. The denial of these rights reduces the foreigner into a passive object, as he or she is excluded from any political or legal decision that might be taken with respect to him or her.[273] This negation is hardly ever questioned; it is generally accepted that the one who does not have the same nationality naturally does not have the same rights. Nationality – understood as the identity of citizens of a nation-state – thus became paramount in the notion of the foreigner.

There are many words to describe a foreigner, all with different connotations. I use the term 'foreigner' when addressing artists working and exhibiting in France, while not being subjects of this nation-state. It signifies an artist who is not part of the group of French artists, a group that is united not only by citizenship, but also by a shared cultural heritage. Culture and language have always been very prominent factors in forging a national identity in France. Mastery of the French language plays an important role in the naturalization process, and foreigners who bring in 'distinguished talent' are entitled to French citizenship within a year.[274] The term 'foreigner' also reflects the practice of the official French censuses in the nineteenth century, which dichotomized the population in French and foreigners.[275] The French government held its first census in 1851, as they became increasingly aware of the growing numbers of immigrants. The foreigners were tabulated by their nationality, although there had been some discussion about birthplace as denominator.[276]

The foreigner can only be defined in negative fashion, as he or she plays the part of the other in relation to ourselves. The meaning is imbedded in the word 'foreign' itself, as it is derived from the Latin *forās*: outside.[277] The foreigner is outside of a particular group: the tribe, the clan, the community, the family, the *polis*, the kingdom or the nation. His or her otherness is defined in economic, political, social, racial, national or religious terms. But at the same time the other is an element of the group, as Georg Simmel argued in his essay on 'The Stranger'.[278] He or she is the 'inner enemy', being outside and confronting the group at the same time. The stranger, according to

[273] Lochak 1985: 215.
[274] Hoerder 1985: 149.
[275] Foreigner being the translation of étranger.
[276] Horowitz & Noiriel 1992: 116.
[277] As is the French word 'étrange', which derives from *extraneus*, meaning outside as well.
[278] Simmel 1971: 143-9.

Simmel, thus embodies a synthesis of nearness and distance. Simmel also reasons that in the case of the non-citizen, the stranger to a country, his or her otherness is based on origin, which is a common element to many foreigners. The non-citizen is by consequence not conceived as an individual, but as a stranger of a particular type. This notion is reflected in the critical reception of foreign artists. Most of these artists were reviewed as part of a group, such as 'les étrangers', 'la pléiade des slaves', or more derogatory 'cohorte' or 'bandes (…) barbares'.[279] It was of crucial importance for a foreign artist to detach himself from this amalgam, and to be considered as an individual again, as will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Visiting and Settling Foreigners

The foreigners can be distinguished as visiting or settling foreigners. As early as the twelfth century there was a legal distinction between the *peregrini* – visiting foreigners – and a*dvanae*, the domiciled resident. This distinction is still very relevant in nineteenth-century France, as is evident from the language employed by French critics in identifying foreign artists. Although the idiom sometimes becomes conflated, the use of certain words must be read and understood within their specific semantic connotations. The word 'métèque', for example, was frequently used in art criticism as a synonym for any foreign artist. Charles Maurras gave the word a specific vicious connotation at the time of the Dreyfus Affair.[280] The etymology of the word, nonetheless, indicates a more limited interpretation. The word is derived from 'metoikos', a domiciled resident, as we have seen earlier, thus identifying a settling foreigner. This category of foreigners is often considered with more suspicion by the local community, as it implies a lasting and irreversible migration to France and thus raising issues of assimilation, integration and even naturalization. The notion of a permanent foreigner – the immigrant – puts strain on the sharp dichotomization of identity, as one can either be French or foreign, but nothing in between.[281] When following the French revolutionary thought to an extreme, the position of the immigrant is problematic, or even impossible. The immigrant, or permanent foreigner, created a major dilemma to the French concept of identity.

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[279] See for a few examples the following reviews: Joseph Guérin, 'Les Arts. Exposition des Indépendants', in *L'Ermitage* 1904: 233 ('Les étrangers s'y trouvent en grand nombre'); Andrée Myra, 'Salon des Indépendants', in *La Critique*, 5-20 April 1909 ('Quant à la peinture, nous avons toute la pléiade des slaves); François Monod, 'Indépendants', in *Art en Décoration*, May 1910 ('Le contigent étranger'); 'Indépendants', in *Art et Decoration*, May 1911('La jeune et nombreuse cohorte de la colonie étrangère'); Georges Rivière, 'Exposition de la Société des Artistes Indépendants', in *Le Journal des Arts*, 6 April 1912 (l'envahissement progressif d'étrangers, qui viennent par bandes formidables implanter à Paris leurs mœurs et leur visions souvent barbares); 'A travers les Expositions: 28e Salon de la Société des Artistes Indépendants', *Art Décoratif*, 5 May 1912 ('d'une cohue cosmopolite grandissante'); Thiébault-Sisson, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Le Temps*, 1 March 1913 ('dans le rayon des étrangers, en effet, qu'on rencontre surtout des imageries barbares').

[280] Romy Golan, 'From Fin de Siècle to Vichy: The Cultural Hygienics of Camille (Faust) Mauclair', in: Nochlin & Garb 1996: 163.

[281] This is in contrast with the United States, where one can be for example Italian-American. See: Horowitz & Noiriel 1992: 7.

The French notion of national identity was rooted in the French revolution and further shaped by the work of the influential Republican historian Jules Michelet. He presented the history of the French people as a process of a fusion of the people of the Gaul, which came to an end with the French revolution. The revolutionary year 1789 was the alleged victory of the Gauls over the aristocratic Franks, who had been ruling France since Medieval Times.[282] The new Republican state was thus not considered a beginning, but rather a culmination. It was then that the true France was consolidated and established for eternity: *la France éternelle*. This conception of the French people was coupled with a strong attachment to territory and the preservation of fixed frontiers. The theme of the hexagon is paramount to the French nation and its identity. The Battle of Valmy in 1792 marked the first victory of the new French Republic on the Prussian armies and bolstered the French national pride and its connection to the hexagonal state. It infused many Frenchmen with a vigorous belief in the distinction between 'them', from the other side of the frontiers, and 'us'. The founding myth of the French nation is central in understanding the position and perception of immigrants in France. As the national identity was considered firmly established, newcomers had no role in redefining it.[283] In French national memory, immigration thus plays no role in the birth of the Republic and the make-up of society. And as the French people were considered in this founding myth to be a 'fixed, static entity for eternity', immigration was seen as problematic.[284] Either the waves of immigrants would not assimilate, but rather cluster in national minorities putting the political unity of France at risk. Or the immigrants would integrate themselves into French society, but by doing so, they would dilute the French identity.

Different Types of Foreign Artists

To better understand the implications of the vocabulary used by French critics and how they perceived the alterity of certain artists – as well as how the artists perceived and constructed their own identities –, it is essential to identify the different types of foreign artists and their patterns of migration. Waller and Carter offer a useful terminology in their excellent introduction of *Strangers in Paradise. Foreign Artists and Communities in Modern Paris, 1870-1914* (2015).[285] Waller and Carter state that most foreign artists in Paris between 1870 and 1914 were immigrants, as they moved into France permanently. In George Simmel's words: they are strangers who come today and

[282] See for an analysis of the mythical conflict between the Gauls and the Franks the essay by Eugen Weber, 'Gauls versus Franks: conflict and nationalism', in Tombs 1991: 8-21.
[283] This is opposite to the American situation, where the Revolution was considered as a beginning and immigrants form an important part in the construction of an American identity. See: Horowitz and Noiriel 1992: 9.
[284] Horowitz and Noiriel 1992: 75.
[285] Waller & Carter 2015: 13-15.

stay tomorrow.[286] This group of immigrant artists, the permanent foreigners, can be further divided into 'expatriates' and 'exiles', or voluntary and involuntary migrants. Many of them fell under the first category of 'expatriates', as they came to Paris by choice and for professional reasons, like Vincent van Gogh in 1886. Contrary to what is often thought, especially regarding Eastern European Jewish artists, only a few artists left their home countries under duress and found exile in Paris. One example of an exiled artist is the Belarusian painter Michel Kikoine (1892-1968), a friend of Chaim Soutine (1893-1943), who had to terminate his studies in Poland because of a local pogrom.[287] The expatriates had a loose attachment to their home nations, in contrast to the exiled artists who remained committed to an ideal and unattainable homeland, however distant or imaginary.

Of course, there were also artists who came and went. These nineteenth-century visiting artists were either itinerants or sojourners. The Spanish painter Darío de Regoyos belonged to the first category of itinerating artists. He frequently visited Paris, and was very active in the Parisian exhibition field – contributing almost annually to the Salon des Indépendants between 1890-1911 and staging multiple exhibitions in Parisian galleries – but he never stayed long in the French capital. The 'sojourning' artist did not settle permanently, but spent extended periods of time in Paris. As typified by Waller and Carter, the sojourner was an artist who travelled to Paris to accomplish a job or responsibility – like further training or exhibiting at one of the salons – without giving up his close ties to the homeland to which he or she planned to return. Contacts with the French host culture were usually limited, as the compatriot network was more useful and relevant.[288] Edvard Munch and Marc Chagall are examples of the sojourning artist. Chagall himself used another term to describe his migratory experience. He spoke of 'transplantation', invoking the metaphor of the artist as a plant that would flourish once growing his new roots in French soil.[289]

Statistics on Foreign Artists

Nineteenth-century Paris is generally considered to have been the artistic capital of the world, attracting artists from all over the world, who came to develop their skills at the academy or one of the private studios and to gain recognition by exhibiting, so that their reputations would precede them back home.[290] To validate the claim that Paris was indeed one of the most important destinations for foreign artists in the nineteenth century it is useful to look at some statistics.

[286] Simmel 1971: 143-9.
[287] Tucker 1986: 140.
[288] Waller & Carter 2015: 15.
[289] Anderson 2009: 604.
[290] As described in chapter one, this recognition was to be obtained at the state-sponsored salons until about 1880. Between 1884 and 1914 the arena of artistic acclaim was widened by the secessionist system of several yearly exhibitions, of which the Salon des Indépendants became one of the most important.

Many studies have been devoted to immigration to France in general.[291] This research has demonstrated that the nineteenth century was the era of mass migration currents, with France as the immigration country par excellence. France had reached the world's highest rate of immigration by 1930. Migration was of course not a new phenomenon, but the currents had never been so global and massive. The shifting of borders between the four European empires and the formation of nation-states mobilized large groups of people. The industrialization and corresponding urbanization uprooted masses all around Europe, their ways paved with new infrastructures and railroads. Large-scale movements from the countryside to the cities really took a flight in the second half of the century.[292] But the precise number of foreign artists in Paris is difficult to measure, as the census – introduced in 1851 – did not list professions. The census of 1891 was an exception as it provided useful information on foreigners in the artistic field. It reported that there were 7232 artists working in Paris, of which 1289 were of foreign origin (17,8%). This percentage was remarkably higher than the total proportion of immigrants in Paris. In 1891, the percentage of immigrants in France was 2.8% of the total population. Even if it is taken into account that the concentration of foreigners was the highest in Paris, tripling the total percentage in France on average, the artist immigrants were by and far overrepresented in the foreign professional population at the end of the century.[293] The economists John O'Hagan and Christiane Hellmanzik have collected figures on foreign artists in France, and according to them one third of the prominent artists born between 1850 and 1899 came to Paris.[294] The term 'prominent' is of course somewhat problematic, as this is a rather subjective classification and it does not render the full picture of foreign presence.

The nationalities listed in the census reveal that most nineteenth-century migrants came from the neighboring countries of the hexagon, and particularly from Spain, Belgium and Italy. Immigrants from other European countries were less numerous. This trend changed at the end of the century, as the decline of the Ottoman Empire in 1878 ignited many migratory movements in the eastern parts of Europe. The Russian Revolution of 1905 and the two Balkan wars in 1911 and 1912 sent many refugees into exile. Unfortunately there are no comparable statistics on the foreign artistic population in Paris, but the data that have been collected on the Salon des Indépendants for the purpose of this study reflect similar patterns, as we will see. Before going into a detailed analysis of these figures, it is necessary to reflect on some problematic aspects of this source material.

[291] This has been the subject of many studies, see for relevant publications: Hoerder 1985; Horowitz & Noiriel 1992; Anderson 2009.
[292] Horowitz & Noiriel 1992: 67.
[293] See for these figures: Waller & Carter 2015: 4-5 and Hoerder 1985: 23.
[294] Waller & Carter 2015: 3.

The annual exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants are a rich source for social and geographical studies on the artists who exhibited at the salons. These catalogues were on sale at the salon and functioned as a guide to the art works and their makers. The names of the artists were listed alphabetically, and the works were numbered consecutively. In addition, the birthplace of the artists was given, as well as an address, usually in Paris.[295] The works were described by their title, and the addition of an asterisk indicated that the work was for sale. For the purpose of this research, the listing of birthplaces is of course the most relevant, as already pointed out in the introduction. A list of the nationalities of participating artists between 1884 and 1914 has been made based on this type of information listed in the catalogues. This might appear as rather straightforward gathering of information, but it immediately raised all types of questions. If it is reported that the artist has been naturalized, is he or she then considered truly French? And what about female artists of foreign origin who married a Frenchman? Or artists of French parents born on foreign soil? Or vice versa, artists of immigrants born on French soil? And was this category perceived differently after the introduction of the *ius soli* in 1889? How to view the nationality of artists from the French colonies? Or artists born in the departments of the Alsace or Lorraine– are they considered French or German? Maybe it was because of these complexities, admitting more than one interpretation, that the French state had decided to use 'nationality' instead of 'birthplace' as classifying term in their census. The Salon d'Automne opted for another solution: their exhibition catalogues listed not only the birthplace but also the nationality of the artist, thus answering above-mentioned questions for us. Félix Vallotton, for example, was born in Lausanne but listed as of French nationality at the Salon d'Automne, as he was naturalized in 1900.[296] In the catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants – where Vallotton exhibited before and after his naturalization in 1900 – his place of birth was the only information given. As the purpose of collecting these statistics was to study the percentage, diversity and segmentation of the foreign presence at the Indépendants, and not to trace specific cases, it has been decided to leave out all the unclear nationalities to avoid clouding the picture.

Another complicating factor was that the frontiers were changing quite regularly in nineteenth century Europe, especially in the eastern parts. For example, after the Russo-Turkish War, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro declared their independence in the Congress of Berlin in 1878. For the sculptor Constantin Brancusi, who was born on Ottoman soil in 1876, this

[295] The listing of birthplace was not a new phenomenon; it had become practice at the salons in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was introduced in 1852, as Louis Clément de Ris noted in his Salon review: 'Une heureuse modification a été apportée à la rédaction du livret. L'indication du lieu de naissance des artistes, de leurs maîtres, les renseignements servant l'introduction, sont autant de matérieaux pour l'histoire à venir de l'art en France, et qui manquaient jusqu'à ce jour.' Louis Clément de Ris, 'Le Salon', *L'Artiste*, 13 April 1852: 81.

[296] This did not mean automatically that the French public and critics also considered him to be of French nationality, it purely reflected his legal status in France.

meant that he became officially of Romanian nationality at the age of two. Another confounding matter is that some artists did not report their city of birth, but the country of birth. Several artists specified they were from 'Pologne Prusse' or simply 'Pologne'. Yet, an artist born on the territory of present-day Poland was not of Polish nationality in the nineteenth century. Poland as a country had been erased from the European map in the late eighteenth century and divided between the Russian, German and Austrian Empires. But as these artists deliberately manifested themselves as of Polish identity – something they could do more easily far away from home -, they are granted their own category within this research, even if this does not reflect the political and legal situation at the end of the nineteenth century.[297] At the same time there were also artists who were considered to be Polish, while they had listed Russia as their birthplace, such as Jean Peské (1870-1949). He was listed in the catalogue of 1906 as 'né en Russie', which was technically correct. Peské was born in Golta, which is located in present day Ukraine, but was indeed Russian territory in 1906. Yet, he was the son of Polish nobility, completed his artistic training in Cracow and Kiev, and was strongly connected to the Polish community in Paris. Political boundaries appear to have been more flexible than national consciousness, as the history of various European people has proven.

I have chosen to follow the lead of the artists – how they staged their national identity in France and as a result, how their nationality was perceived by the French – resulting in several national classifications that did not politically exist at that time, such as already mentioned Poland, and also Finland, which was part of the Russian Empire. With these considerations taken into account, the tabulating of foreign presence at the Salon des Indépendants has revealed that in total 46 different nationalities exhibited at the annual salons between 1884 and 1914.[298] In the two graphs below – illustrating the absolute and relative numbers of foreign artists at the Indépendants – it becomes clear that there was a steady progression of foreign presence over the years, with percentages balancing around 11% before 1900 and around 23% in the first decade of the twentieth century (fig. 2 and 3). The peak was in 1913, with a foreign representation of 33%.[299] The increase in the number of foreign artists exhibiting at the Indépendants after 1900 might be explained by the rising popularity and status of the Salon des Indépendants as one of the most important annual art

[297] Of course, it is impossible to be certain that all the artists who listed their place of birth simply as for example 'Cracow', without the addition of 'Pologne', indeed felt Polish, or if some might have perceived themselves as of Austrian nationality. But as the Polish national feelings were so strong in the nineteenth century, it is safe to assume that the majority considered themselves as Polish, and were also perceived as such by the French public.

[298] See for a complete chart of the foreign presence and its segmentation at Salon des Indépendants between 1884-1914, appendix 3. All of the figures used in the following analyses are derived from this 'master chart'.

[299] The significant dip in 1909 – both in the total number of exhibitors as in the number of foreign artists – might be explained by the demolition of the Grandes Serres de la Ville de Paris that year. The search for an alternative space might have deterred artists to participate that year. The Salon des Indépendants was held in the Grandes Serres de l'Orangerie in 1909, which turned out to be a one-off location.

venues in Paris. The first graph shows that the foreign attendance more or less follows the trend of the overall numbers. Another factor could be that around 1900 more and more artists came to Paris to stay, instead of sojourning or itinerating. It was even more important for these immigrant artists to establish their reputations at one of the major Parisian salons.

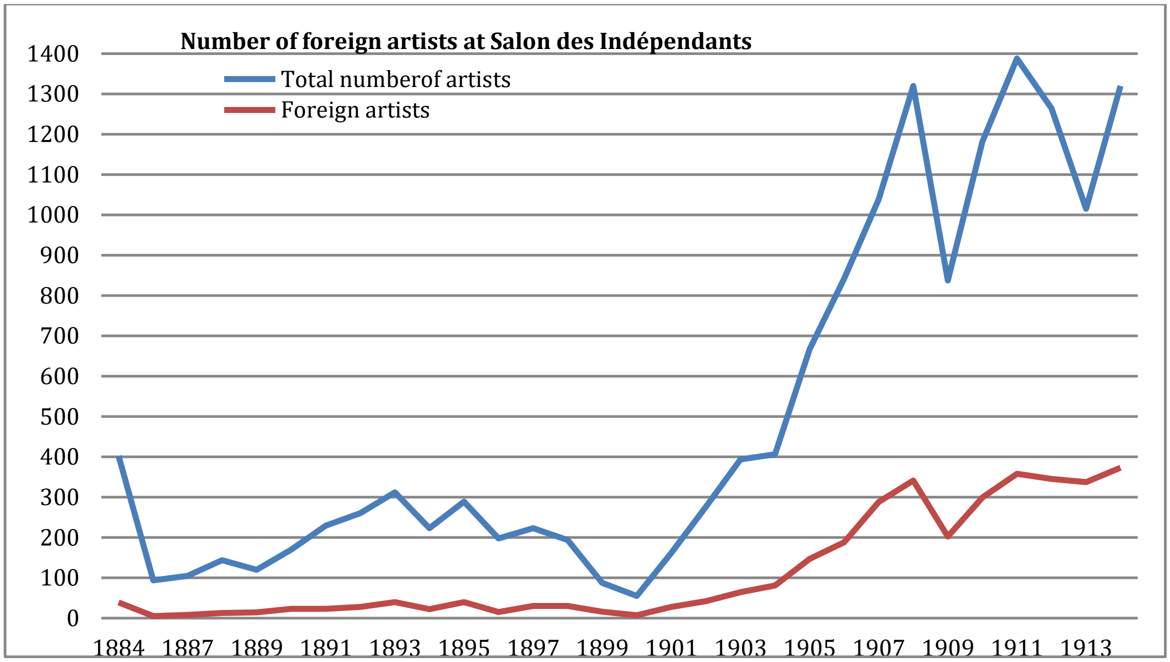

Fig. 2. Absolute number of foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884-1914.
Source: Exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants.

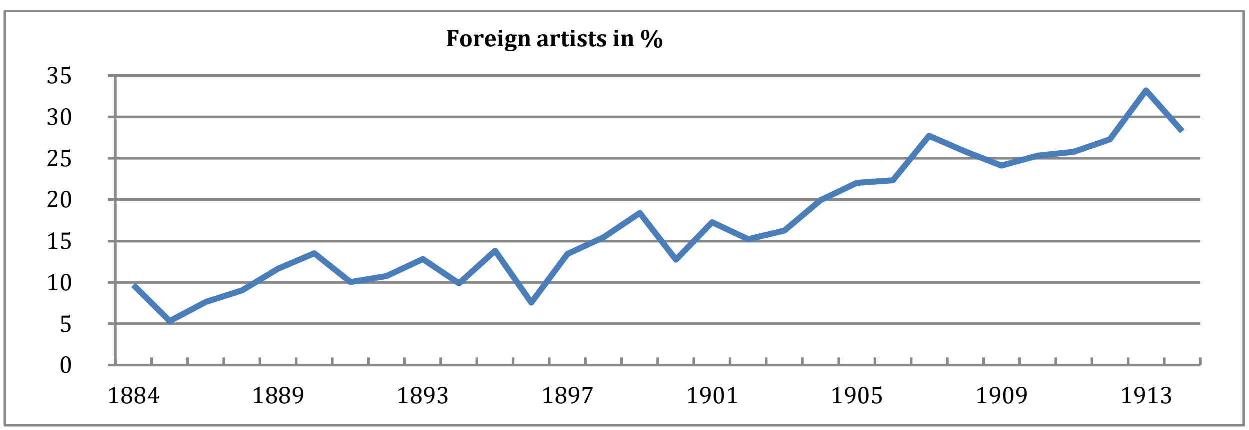

Fig. 3. Relative number of foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884-1914.
Source: Exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants.

The foreigners came from all over the world: mostly from European countries, but also from North and South-America, India, Australia, Japan and even Timbuktu (one artist in 1913). This demographic diversity only really came about after 1900. Until the end of the nineteenth century most artists came from France's neighboring countries: Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and England. If we look at the foreign participation in 1895 - the year with the highest number (absolute and relative) of foreigners before the turn of the century – it appears that more than half of the foreign artists came from the other side of the French frontier (fig. 4) There was an especially large representation of Spanish artists that year: they accounted for a quarter of the total foreign manifestation.[300]

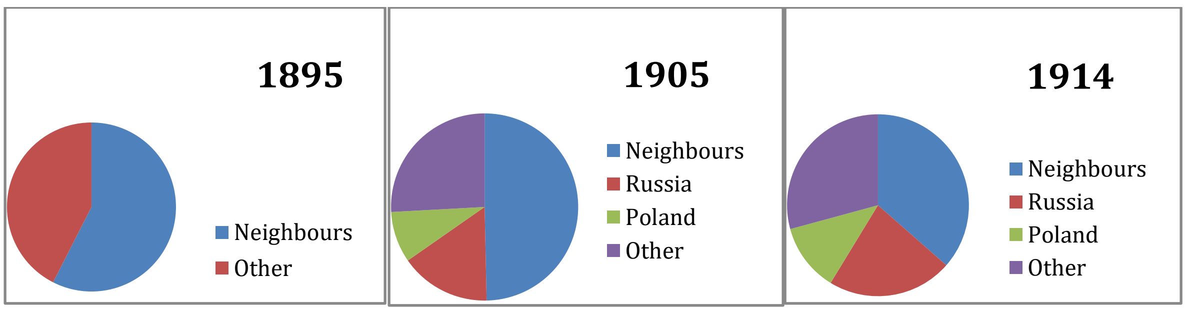

Fig. 4. Absolute number of foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884-1914.
Source: Exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants 1895, 1905 and 1914.

In ten years' time the demographic make-up of the Salon des Indépendants changed quite a bit. In 1905, France's neighboring countries were still in the majority, but the representation from Russia and Eastern Europe, especially from Poland, had increased.[301] In 1914, when the foreign participation at the Salon des Indépendants reached its peak in absolute numbers, the national division had again shifted. The neighboring countries had lost their predominance, while the number of artists from Russia and Poland had further increased.

A graphic mapping of the numbers of Russian and Polish artists versus the more established and constant participation of, for example, Spaniards, demonstrates the stark increase of Russians and Poles at the Indépendants after 1900 in more detail (fig. 5). The graph shows that the Russian

[300] This might be connected to the Spanish 'boom': Parisians were crazy about everything Spanish in the last decade of the nineteenth century, as will be further examined in the chapter on Darío de Regoyos (see pages 98-101).
[301] The Russian Empire covered vast territory: in addition to almost the entire territory of modern Russia, it also comprised the Baltic States, Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus. The Russian subjects all fall under the category of Russian nationality in this survey, only the artists from Russian Poland and Finland are tabulated separately, as explained above.

and Polish attendance really picked up after 1903, with a peak 1907 and 1908 and followed by significant decline in 1909.[302]

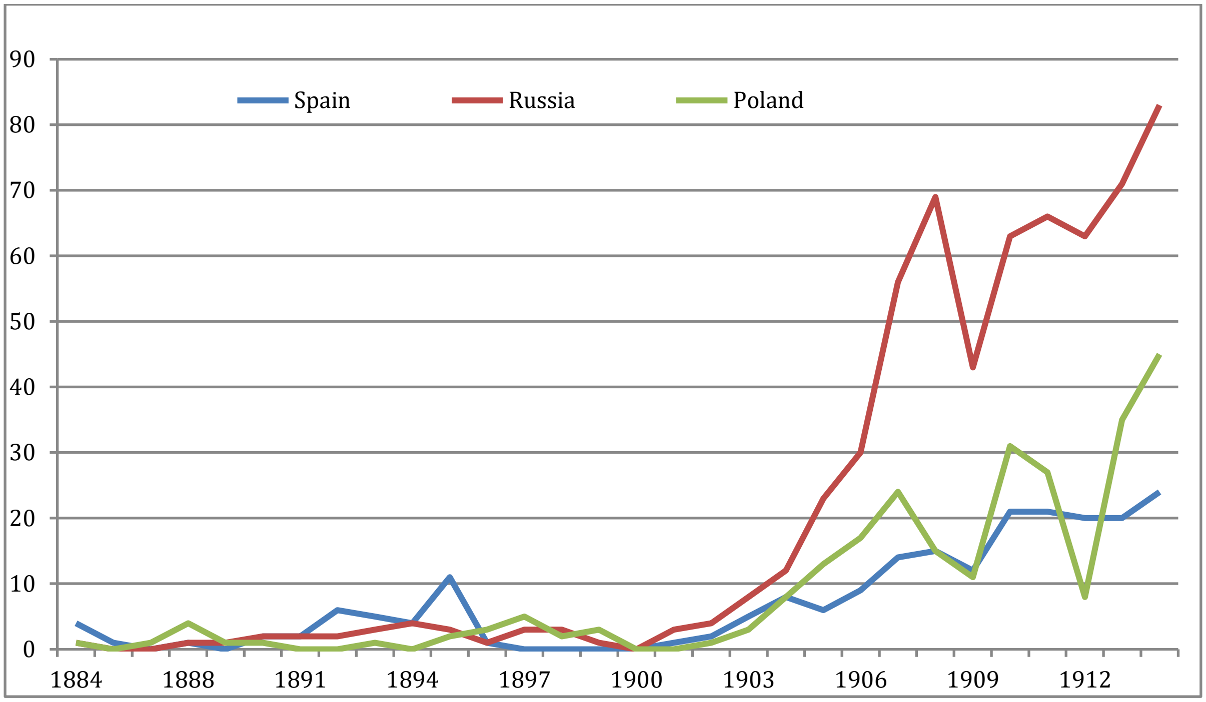

Fig. 5. Absolute number of artists from Spain, Russia and Poland at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884-1914. Source: Exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants

This trend repeats itself in 1910/1911 (peak) and 1912 (nadir). If we compare the demographic division of the Indépendants to the general immigration numbers in, for example 1911, there is striking difference (fig. 6). The Belgians and Italians were strongly represented in the overall numbers of immigrants, but not so much at the Indépendants. Quite the opposite is the case with Russians and English: there seemed to be many more natives of these countries active in the artistic field – or at least exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants – than one would suspect from the overall percentage of immigrants.[303]

Compared to the other major salons, the Indépendants appears less international. The percentage of foreign artists at the Indépendants surpassed the numbers at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1903, but the Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts and the Salon d'Automne had always more

[302] Not only the Russian and Polish attendance dipped in 1909, the overall number of artists was much lower that year. See note 275.

[303] Unfortunately it is not possible to give a total picture of the number of immigrants in relation to the Indépendants as the data are scattered and incomplete.

foreign artists at their exhibitions than the Indépendants (see fig. 1). After 1907, foreign artists almost made up for half of the Salon d'Automne, raising nationalistic outcries from the French critics. As both the Nationale and the Automne were juried – and not open to all artists like the Indépendants – this international representation was a deliberate choice and a desired effect.[304]

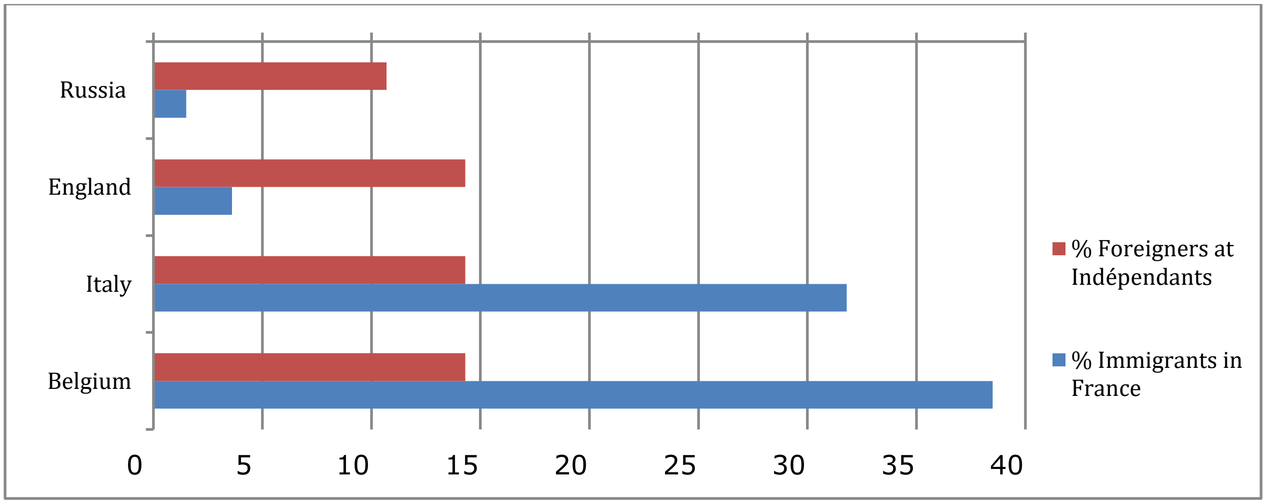

Fig. 6. Percentage of foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants compared to general immigrant percentage in France. Source: Catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants 1911 and Hoerder 1985: table 6.5, p. 150.

These analyses of the statistics reveal that the Salon des Indépendants attracted not only large numbers of exhibitors – especially after 1905 – and considerable quantities of foreign artists, but also that it was a very multinational and diversified venue. Foreign artists did not only have to compete with their French colleagues, but maybe even more importantly, with their own compatriots. How could an artist in such a hybrid field stand out and make a name for himself? Immigrant artists coming to Paris and exhibiting at the Indépendants were forced to think about how they would position themselves within this mass art industry, and how to construct their artistic and national identity. The choices of artistic strategies and the correlation to critical acclaim are the subject of the next chapter.

[304] As argued in the first chapter, the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts wished to distinguish itself from the Société des Artistes Français by actively inviting foreigners. The Salon d'Automne positioned itself from the start in 1903 as a truly modern and cosmopolitan art venue. See for the international outlook of the Salon d'Automne: Joyeux-Prunel 2007; for the salons of the Société Nationale: Simpson 1999.

2.2 Exhibition Strategies

Ceux qui, par leur travail et leur talent, finissent par 'percer' comme on dit, de leur génie national à l'art français (Démétrius Galanis, 1924)

The Myth of the Impulsive Artist

The foreign artist travelling to Paris under the Third Republic, entered a seemingly open, liberal and cosmopolitan culture, but was sure to be perceived and assessed in national terms, as argued above. Artists were confronted with their alterity, and in turn, had to consider how to utilize their national identity in carving out a name and reputation for themselves. The Salon des Indépendants was a vast, hybrid and multinational artistic field – especially after 1900, as the data sourced from the catalogues demonstrated – requiring artists to consider their exhibition strategies carefully. The tracing of these strategies resists the still popular romantic myth of the 'undeliberate artist'; to use the term coined by Sir Alan Bowness in his book *The condition of success* (1990).[305] The image of the artist as a genius, who managed to transcend daily pursuit or profane practicalities, was introduced in the late eighteenth century. The art world was transforming dramatically in that period, changing the career of a professional artist from commissions from the State, court or church to independent work for public exhibitions.[306] This greatly affected how artists presented themselves. The formation of an artistic identity was vital. Artists needed to develop and enforce marketing strategies that were grafted on their own personalities: to be successful the artist had to create an interesting image of himself as to attract the attention of the public and the press. Nineteenth-century critics played an important role in these new exhibition mechanics. The critic was assigned with a mediating role between the artist and the public. It was his task to separate artistic talent from the mass, and to articulate the intentions of these artists to the public. The critic thus functioned as a translator, 'providing a language with which to discuss new visions and values', as Lethbridge and Karnes argue in their profound study on artistic relations.[307]

The myth of the artist as a genius is still very powerful in present times and has obscured the study of the pragmatic, strategic and commercial aspects of artistic practice for a long time. In the last decades, however, more and more studies have been devoted to unravel this myth, exploring the artist's strategies in producing, exhibiting and selling their art, but it remains an understudied

[305] Bowness 1990.
[306] Bätschmann 1997: 9. The myth of the artist as a genius was also influenced by the Romantic movement, in which a supernatural condition of artists was proclaimed. This created an image of the artist as an outsider and a highly gifted person – different from the mean, the mediocre and the bourgeois – which contributed to the emergence of specific artistic identities, such as the bohemian, the dandy and the martyr. The artists carefully constructed professional, personal and social identities. See Sturgis 2006: 10.
[307] Collier & Lethbridge (ed.) 1994: 3.

area.[308] These choices were not only made *after* the creation of the artwork, but were often an intrinsic part of the artistic process. The relations between the production and consumption of art are explored in the pioneering work of Nicholas Green[309], but were also already recognized by contemporary critics such as Roger Marx. He commented on the artists' strategy of style in his review on the Salon des Indépendants of 1906: 'Les conditions de la production se trouvent de ce fait même [the absence of a jury] modifiées.'[310] Marx argued that artists submitted more studied and balanced works of serious dimensions to the established salons of the Société des Artistes Français and the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, aiming at the French State as potential buyer, while at the Indépendants one could find more spontaneous paintings of modest formats to fit in the homes of their collectors.[311] It was recognized that artists produced a specific type of work for the different salons, catering to different types of public, critics and collectors, adjusting their styles and strategies accordingly. Along the same line of thought, the Salon d'Automne was praised for its timing in the fall, so that artists could present their summer holiday pictures fresh from the easel.

Of course, artists were not always deliberately following a certain strategy; in many cases their politics were not fully well thought out or even unintentional. Yet artists were products of their time, and they needed to meet the demands of their critics and their clients.[312] They were part of the 'emergent entrepreneurial system of artistic production', as Michael Moriarty claimed[313], in which strategies were the name of the game. One only needs to consider the politics and strategies developed by prominent dealers at the time, such as Paul Durand-Ruel, Goupil & Cie and Theo van Gogh, to understand how important and advanced these mechanics were at the time.[314] Before analysing certain foreign exhibition strategies in-depth, I will exemplify the sort of calculated choices that artists made when exhibiting their works with the case of two of the most important and successful French artists participating at the Salon des Indépendants.

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[308] See for example: Green 1989; Sturgis 2006; Chu 2007; Clarke 2009.

[309] See Green 1989. He writes on page 30: 'circuits of production and consumption are conceived as *multidirectional,* with the recognition that points of distribution and consumption may be equally important as the moment of production in the projection of cultural meanings.' Or as Wrigley has phrased it in his study on art criticism: 'To study criticism is, in fact, to investigate a crucial element in the material and discursive matrix which defined the nature of art production. That is, criticism is not something secondary, or even discrete from art production, but is rather, integral to the complex of factors which determined the generic characteristics of individual works.' Wrigley 1993: 4.

[310] *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité,* 24 March 1906.

[311] Vauxcelles also referred to these tactics in his review of the Salon des Indépendants in the *Gil Blas* of 20 March 1906: 'Et leur [les exposants] calcul n'est point si mauvais d'ailleurs. On vends beaucoup aux Indépendants et c'est même le seul Salon ou les amateurs qui ont le flair viennent querier de quoi orner leur *home.*' The English term *home* was a recurrent word in the reviews of the year, referring to the increasing activity of American collectors on the Parisian exhibition market.

[312] Wessel Krul rightly made this point in his discussion of nationalistic aspects in the landscapes by Dutch nineteenth-century artists. See Krul 2016: 621-622.

[313] Moriarty 1994: 19.

[314] See for literature on these dealer's tactics: Stolwijk & Thomson 1999; Lafont-Couturier 2000; Serafini 2013; Patry (et al.) 2015.

French Exhibition Tactics

Paul Signac was one of the founders of the Salon des Indépendants, and its long-time president from 1909 until 1934. He was also the most frequent exhibitor at this salon, not passing over a single exposition between 1884 and 1914. The Salon des Indépendants was not the only annual art manifestation Signac participated in. He operated on several plans and in several countries, exhibiting for example regularly with the Société des XX in Brussels.[315] This exhibition venue was also founded in 1884, and there was a close collaboration between the two societies. Many artists participated in both events, sometimes consecutively displaying the same paintings in Brussels and Paris. Signac, for example, exhibited five paintings in February 1892 at Les XX in Brussels, which then travelled to Paris in March. The titles of the paintings were, however, significantly different. In Brussels these landscapes were exhibited under the titles of *Scherzo, Larghetto, Allegro maestoso, Adagio* and *Presto finale*. Signac clearly chose those musical titles in attunement with the public of Les XX, as the Belgian cultural climate was deeply involved with music at that time.[316] Upon their arrival in Paris, Signac changed the title of the five paintings to *Rentrée, Matin, Soir, Calme and Brise*, thus inserting them (and himself by consequence) seamlessly in the French classical landscape tradition.[317] The critical response in Belgium and Paris was considerable. Félix Fénéon wrote: 'Les heures et les saisons de la mer, Paul Signac les symbolise en une suite de cinq toiles, Barques.'[318]

Another example of a calculated strategy is Henri Matisse's exhibition practice. Around 1900 Matisse decided to pursue an independent career outside the more established Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts, and started to exhibit with the Indépendants in 1901 and the Salon d'Automne in 1903. He was actively involved in the organization of these salons, and by becoming a member of the 'commission de placement' he could secure prime spots for his paintings. At the Salon des Indépendants of 1905, Matisse decided to present himself with just one work to the public: a large and remarkable painting. This exclusive and focused strategy succeeded, his neo-impressionistic landscape *Luxe, calme et volupté* (title was taken from a well-known poem by Charles Baudelaire) was seen as the most important work of the exhibition that year and the critic Louis Vauxcelles considered him to be 'chef d'école'.[319] In 1906 and 1907, it becomes apparent that Matisse had anticipated and premeditated his next steps. Again he displayed just one painting a year, *Le Bonheur de vivre* in 1906, followed by *Tableau n° III* (later: *Nu bleu*) in 1907. Matisse had exhibited a triptych

[315] See for this society and its exhitions: Block 1984.

[316] Many Belgian artists also incorporated musical themes in their paintings, see for example Van Rysselberghe's portrait of Maria Sèthe in front of the piano, exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants of 1891 and Les XX in 1892.

[317] Joyeux-Prunel 2002: 193. See also Cachin 200: cat. 213, 215, 217, 219, 220.

[318] Félix Fénéon, 'Au pavillon de la Ville de Paris. Société des artistes indépendants', in *Le Chat noir*, 2 April 1892: 1932.

[319] Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', *Gil* Blas, 23 March 1905. Also cited in Barthélémy & Dupont 2012: 129.

within a time frame of three years, carefully creating a sequence – as the title of the third painting also indicates – and thus building up the critical attention and his reputation. All three paintings refer to the classical tradition of the *pastorale* in French painting, but the pictorial means and the rendering of the subject became gradually more modern and bolder over the years. Matisse had worked with a meta-artistic strategy, creating a self-referential body of work and placing it in the French pictorial tradition.[320] These two examples illustrate that is was of crucial importance for French artists to present themselves as part of a tradition, a shared art history that fostered the national spirit.[321] Signac and Matisse deliberately aligned themselves with the French pictorial tradition. As argued above, this tradition or history was understood in national terms, despite the universalist attitude of the nineteenth century.

Between the French and the Foreign

Foreign artists partaking and competing in the French art field were confronted with a major dilemma, aptly described by the French author and playwright Fernand Vandérem (of Belgian descent) in a questionnaire on Scandinavian literature: 'L'important seulement sera que cette influence ne conduise ni au pastiche ni à l'oubli des qualités de forme – clarté, rapidité, composition – qui sont le propre des lettres françaises.'[322] If a foreign artist assimilated too much, he was accused of banality or pastiche; but if an artist did not obey certain French principles he would be seen as an amateur, or worse, a barbarian.[323] The foreign artist had to constantly balance between adjustment and demarcation to get accepted in the Parisian field. This brings to mind the remark by Démétrius Galanis in his response to the 'Querelle des Indépendants': *Ceux qui, par leur travail et leur talent , finissent par 'percer' comme on dit, de leur génie national à l'art français finissent par 'percer' comme on dit, de leur génie national à l'art français*.[324] By their work and talent, including specific strategies, foreign artists could break through in Paris as we will see.

The foreign artist did not only have to come up with a strategy to stand out amongst his French competitors, but maybe even more importantly, it was crucial not to be seen as 'just one of the foreigners'.[325] The foreign artist had to reclaim his individuality and distinct himself from his compatriots or the greater amalgam of all foreigners as already pointed out in the introduction.[326] This is of course quite problematic, as shared features were essential to their origins and identity.

[320] Barthélémy & Dupont 2012: 130.
[321] This echoes of course Renan's notion of the nation.
[322] *La Revue blanche*, vol. XII (1897): 165.
[323] This was a recurring characterisation in the art criticism; see for one example *Journal des Arts*, 6 April 1912.
[324] *Bulletin de la vie artistique,* 1 February 1924: 59.
[325] Or to use Bhabha's expression again: 'the many as one' (Bhabha 1990: 204).
[326] Georg Simmel has discussed this mechanism in his essay 'The Stranger', already discussed in chapter 2.1.

Especially after 1900 the critics tended to refer to cohorts of foreign artists, not distinguishing between them, and referring to them just in passing. Many reviews in this first decade were written within the following structure: the overall quality of the Salon des Indépendants as an exhibition was discussed, and then several noteworthy artists and art works were singled out. Towards the end of the review, the critic would give a brief summary of other interesting (or bizarre) artists, usually by just mentioning their name. The foreigners were often grouped together at the end, sometimes under a special header, such as 'various foreign artists'. It was important not to fall into that category, but to be singled out as an artist and to transcend the foreign type. The reaction by the Dutch artist Kees van Dongen to one of Vauxcelles' critiques demonstrates that foreign artists were acutely aware of this. In 1906, Vauxcelles mentioned Van Dongen in the category of various foreign artists in his *Gil Blas* review of the Salon des Indépendants.[327] This infuriated Van Dongen, as evident from a letter he wrote to Vauxcelles: 'I am angry with you because in your last article about the Indépendants you treated me like a filthy foreigner.'[328] The sculptor Brancusi was also very aware of the risk of being grouped together with compatriots or other foreigners. The local network of Romanian artists and the Romanian mission helped him to settle in Paris, but he kept very much to himself and did not frequent any of the cafés. He constructed an identity of a simple peasant, who came by foot from Romania, and who continued to live a humble, archaic and honest life in the city. Brancusi created this image to distance himself from the 'horde barbare' in Montparnasse – although he was living in the middle of it – but without being excluded. It proved to be a very effective strategy: Brancusi was one of the founders of the Association Amical des Roumains de Paris in 1910, but he was never labeled as 'métèque' or 'barbare', the fate of the majority of artists from Eastern Europe.[329]

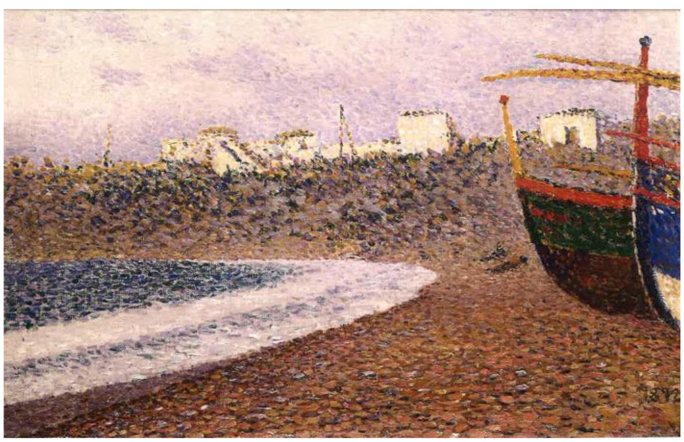
[327] Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Gil Blas*, 20 March 1906.
[328] Letter Van Dongen to 'Cher monsieur', June 1906, cited in translation in Wiedauer 2013: 308.
[329] The French reception of Brancusi has been carefully studied by Alexandra Parigoris, 'Brancusi: "En art il n'y a pas d'étranger'", in: Kaspi et Marès 1989: 213-220.

PART 3 : CASE-STUDIES

<u>3.1. Adaptation and Emulation: Darío de Regoyos</u>

Images for chapter 3.1

Ill. 12 Théo van Rysselberghe, *Darío de Regoyos*, 1882. Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels



Ill. 13 Darío de Regoyos*, Plage de la Méditerranée*, 1892. Municipal Museum, Ixelles

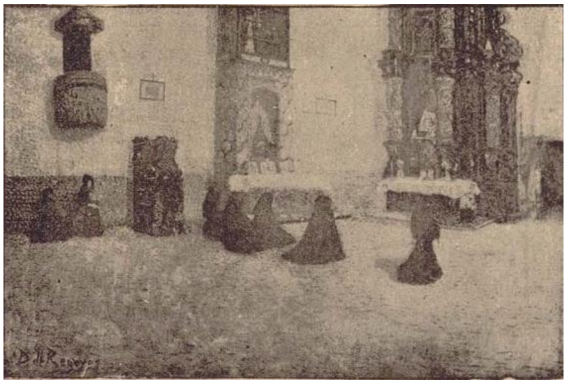
Ill. 14 Georges Seurat, *Trois dos*, 1884. Private collection

Ill. 15 Ramon Casas, *Self Portrait as a Flamenco Dancer*, 1883. Museo Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

Ill. 16 Claudio Castelucho, *Spanish Dancer*, c. 1905. Whereabouts unknown

Ill. 17 Darío de Regoyos, *Pour les morts*, c. 1894. Collection Pérez Simón, on loan to Museo de Bellas Artes, Oviedo

Ill. 18 Darío de Regoyos, *Fête Basque*, ca. 1890. Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, Barcelona



Ill. 19 Darío de Regoyos, *La Confession (Pays Basque)*, 1888. Whereabouts unknown

Ill. 20 Darío de Regoyos, *La nuit des morts en Espagne*, 1886. Canvas has been cut up and used for other paintings

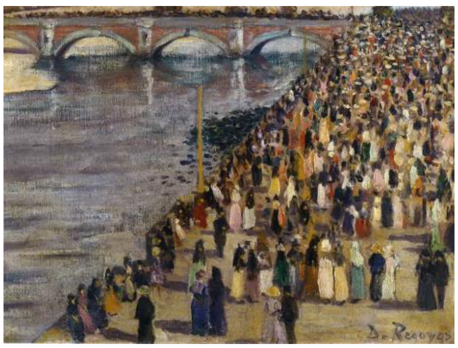
Ill. 21 Darío de Regoyos, *Filet de pêche*, 1893. Private collection

Ill. 22 Darío de Regoyos, *Marché à Compostela*, 1892. Private collection

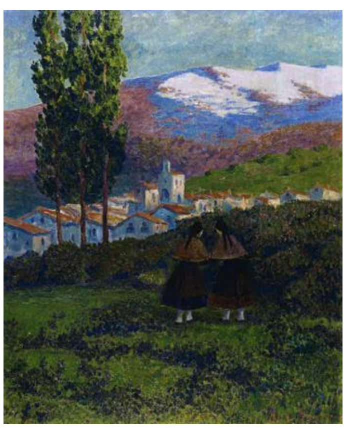
Ill. 23 Darío de Regoyos, *Paysage aux Pyrénées*, 1885. Meadows Museum Collection, Southern Methodist University, Dallas

Ill. 24 Darío de Regoyos, *Visite de condoléences*, 1886. Fundación María José Jove, A Coruña

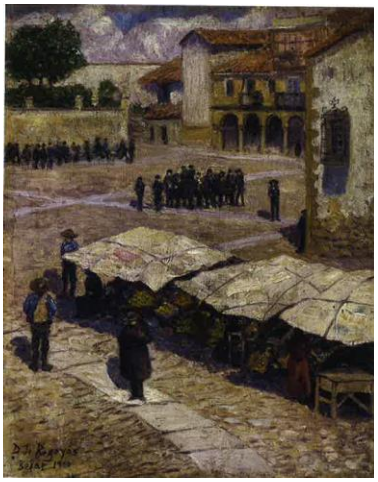
Ill. 25 Darío de Regoyos, *Côte basque, matin*, 1895. Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid



Ill. 26 Darío de Regoyos, *Allant aux course de taureaux*, c. 1890. Private collection

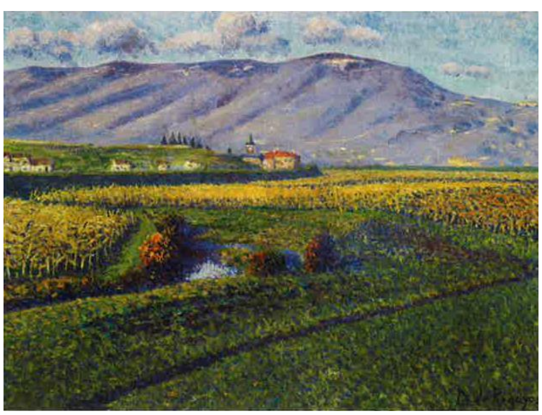


Ill. 27 Darío de Regoyos, *Village en Estrémadure*, 1900. Private collection



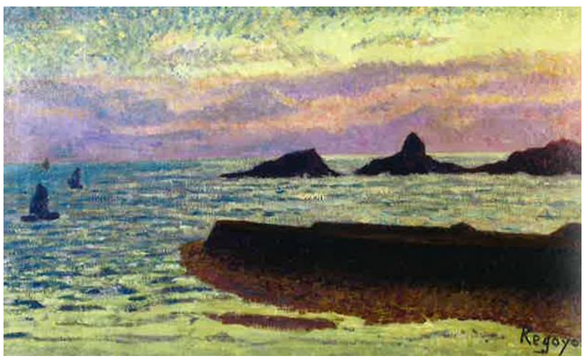
Ill. 28 Darío de Regoyos, *Les grèves (Estrémadure)*, 1900. Private collection

Ill. 29 Darío de Regoyos, *Village en Estrémadure, l'heure pâle*, 1900. Private collection

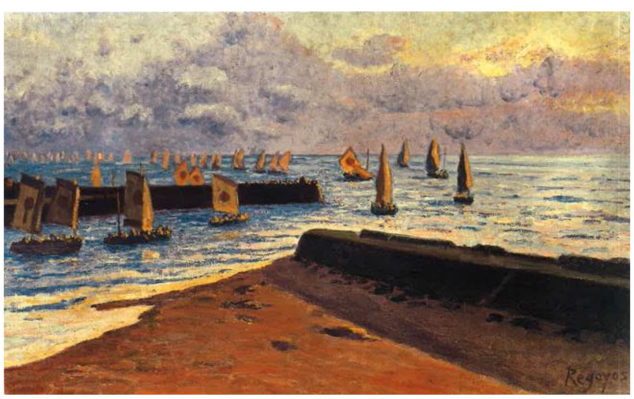


Ill. 30 Darío de Regoyos, *Le maïs-vent du Nord,* 1901. Private collection

Ill. 31 Darío de Regoyos, *Le Château d'Isabelle la Catholique à Medina del Campo (Castille*), 1909.
Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia

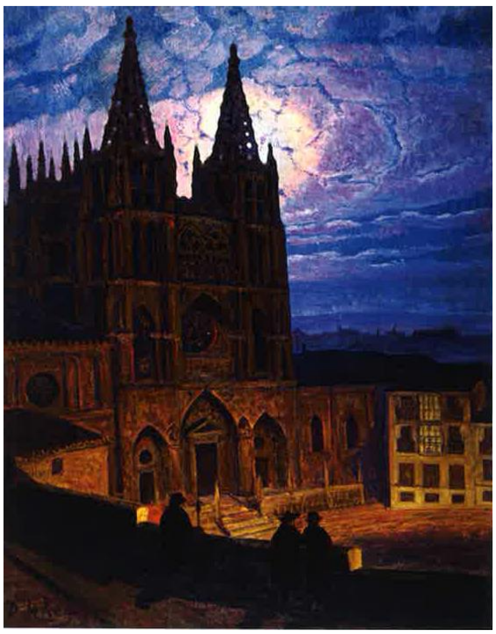


Ill. 32 Darío de Regoyos, *À l'aube, côte basque*, 1906. Private collection



Ill. 33 Darío de Regoyos, *Boats sailing out,* 1906. Patrimonio Artístico Kutxa

Ill. 34 Darío de Regoyos, *Effet de lune*, 1901. Private collection



Ill. 35 Darío de Regoyos, *Claire de lune Burgos*, 1901. Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia

3.1. Adaptation and Emulation: Darío de Regoyos

A Basque in Brussels

Darío de Regoyos was a Spanish painter, born in 1857 in Basque Country in the little coast town of Ribadesella. He spent his childhood in Madrid, where his father worked as an architect. His father had hopes that his only son would follow in his footsteps, but Regoyos preferred the fine arts. After his father's death in 1876, he was allowed by his mother to enroll the art academy in Madrid. Regoyos was trained by the Belgian painter Carlos de Haes (1829-1898), who probably encouraged him, and many other Spanish artists, to travel to Brussels. When his musician-friends Enrique Fernández Arbós and Isaac Albéniz moved to Brussels to enroll at the Royal Conservatory, Regoyos decided to visit them in the summer of 1879, and would alternate his residency between Spain and Belgium for the next eight years. He quickly made friends in his new hometown through his enrollment at the Academy of Fine Arts and his talent for music. Regoyos was a well-liked companion, as he was a great singer and guitar player. Octave Maus later remembered him as a 'petit homme noir, barbu, trapu, cachait sous les plis d'une *capa* fièrement drapée sur son torse une énorme guitare'.[330] There are several portraits of him made by artist friends, such as Van Rysselberghe, Constantin Meunier, James Ensor and James McNeill Whistler, all portraying him as a guitar player rather than as a painter (ill. 12).[331] In 1881 he joined the progressive artist's circle L'Essor, becoming the first and only foreign member.[332] He was the first Spanish artist to participate in the Belgian avant-garde circles, becoming even one of the founders of Les XX in 1883. This artists' society was formed by the lawyer and art critic Octave Maus and organised annual exhibitions from 1884 to 1893. Regoyos felt at home among Les XX artists, as they forged a close tie between art, music and literature.

The artists of Les XX initiated a lively exchange with the members of the Société des Artistes Indépendants in Paris. The Brussels' society invited several artists from the Indépendants to exhibit at Les XX, such Georges Seurat in 1887 (and 1889, 1891, 1892) and Vincent van Gogh in 1890 (and 1891). Apparently, Darío de Regoyos was actively involved in the organization of the exhibitions, as Van Gogh mentioned him as the person who had come to Paris on behalf of Les XX.[333] In turn, several *vingtistes* exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants, including Darío de Regoyos from 1890

[330] Octave Maus, 'Darío de Regoyos', in *L'Art moderne,* 1 March 1914: 65.

[331] There seems to be a tendency to depict Spanish artists as musicians, see for example the portrait of Paco Durrio (1868-1940) by Paul Gauguin from 1900 (private collection). This fits of course within the stereotype of the Spaniard as sensual, exotic, lyrical and lively, which will be explored further on in this chapter.

[332] Barón, Doñate and San Nicolás 2013: 8.

[333] Letter 605. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Monday, 7 May 1888. Van Gogh had not remembered his name correctly: 'Le coco qui est venu à Paris de la part des vingtistes, tu sais, Los Rios de Guadalquivir ou un nom encore plus sonore que ça.'

onwards. Through his involvement with Les XX, Regoyos became part of this Brussels-Paris artistic network. His circle of artist-friends expanded, as he came in contact with Camille Pissarro, Paul Signac, Maximilien Luce and Georges Seurat. His connections to these artists were close and enduring. Regoyos made several trips with both Pissarro and Signac: he sailed together with Van Rysselberghe on Signac's boat *Olympia* from Bordeaux to Saint-Tropez, cruising the Canal de Garonne. On this journey, Regoyos painted the *Plage de la Mediterranée* (ill. 13), a pointillist work inspired by Signac and Van Rysselberghe.[334] In 1895 he spent time with Camille Pissarro in Bretagne, developing a long-standing friendship. Pissarro even trusted Regoyos with the care of his son Georges, who was sent from London to San Sebastian in 1896 to recover from illness.[335] Regoyos' friendship with Seurat was short-lived, as the French artist died young and unexpectedly in 1891. Seurat's artistic estate was distributed among his friends and Regoyos was given a *croqueton* from 1884 (ill. 14).[336] Inspired by the artistic practice of these painters, Regoyos started to experiment with impressionist and pointillist styles and techniques. His immersion with pointillism was rather brief, however, as this laborious method was not very well suited for plein-air painting.

Even if Regoyos never lived in Paris – he frequently alternated residency, living between Spain, Brussels and southern France (Dax, close to the Spanish border) – he was able to build up and maintain a rather large network. Most of his French connections date from his Brussels period, as we have seen above, but he also came in contact with the poet Mallarmé and the artists Degas, Redon and Gauguin during the 1890s when he started to actively exhibit in Paris. Regoyos would travel to Paris for the installation and openings of exhibitions, as is clear from a letter from 5 January 1892 to the Belgian poet and critic Emile Verhaeren: 'J'irai aux XX vers le milieu de février (une quinzaine à Bruxelles), puis à Paris aux Indépendants en mars, une quinzaine (est-ce bien?). Après en Espagne par la Bretagne. Comment trouves-tu celà?'[337] Through correspondence and frequent short stays in Belgium and France, Regoyos was able to keep up his contacts in these artistic milieus, in contrast to most Spanish artists in Paris. He also functioned as an important liaison for the promotion of French and Belgian art in Spain: in 1901 he organised the II Exposición de Arte Moderno in Bilbao including works by Henri Rivière (1864-1951), Theo van Rysselberghe,

[334] San Nicolás 2014: 30.
[335] Barón, Doñate and San Nicolás 2013: 17.
[336] Herbert 1991: cat. 126. Regoyos kept this painting until 1908, and it was then transferred to Signac for unknown reasons.
[337] Warmoes 1985: 26.

Emile Bernard (1868-1941) and Georges Lemmen (1865-1916), and in 1911 he initiated a Gauguin retrospective in the same city.[338]

Regoyos also maintained close contact with his home country and his compatriots in Paris. Even though Regoyos was not officially part of the Catalan colony, as his roots were in Basque country, he was in regular contact with 'la bande catalane' of Santiago Rusiñol (1861-1931) and Ramon Casas (1866-1932).[339] Regoyos actively promoted Spanish art in Paris, using his French connections to find exhibition opportunities for his compatriots. In 1902 he organised an exhibition at the Galerie Silberberg in Paris with works by Isidre Nonell (1872-1911), Francisco Iturrino (1864-1924), Ricard Canals (1876-1931), and Manuel Losada (1865-1949).[340] That same year he also prepared an exhibition with Spanish artists at Berthe Weill's gallery in Paris. Darío de Regoyos decided to include work by the young and rather unknown Pablo Picasso, after receiving a recommendation letter from the Spanish ceramicist and smith Paco Durrio: 'Concernant Picasso, je crois que vous devriez lui écrire parce que c'est un garçon de grand talent et je suis certain qu'il va contribuer au succès de votre effort.'[341] Regoyos' network was of course also helpful in building his own reputation in Paris, as will be demonstrated next.

The Spanish Boom

In 1890, Darío de Regoyos exhibited for the first time in Paris, at the Salon des Indépendants. His friend Van Rysselberghe, who also made his debut in Paris that year, might have encouraged him. Paris was experiencing a sort of Spanish boom at that time: the French had developed a great taste for Spanish culture in the nineteenth century. The Spanish vogue was incited by the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808. Napoleon's armies brought back many art treasures, which came to be displayed in the Musée Espagnol in the Louvre. The marriage of Napoleon III with the Spanish countess Eugenia de Montijo in 1853 crowned it all, turning the Spanish fashion into a widespread phenomenon.[342] The notion of Spain was primarily based on literature and travel accounts, as the average Frenchmen did not cross the Pyrenees. Théophile Gautier's *Voyage en Espagne*, published in 1843, was a widely read picturesque account of Spain's landscape, customs and culture. Following in the footsteps of Gautier many writers travelled to Spain, reporting a highly romanticized image of Spain, revolving around exoticism, sensuality, passion, tradition, tragedy and ignorance. Colourful figures like Don Quixote, Don Juan, the Barber of Seville, Carmen, El Cid, and exotic types such as

[338] Vial 2011: 154.
[339] Hauptmann 2011 : 26.
[340] Vial 2011: 155.
[341] Landrot 2006: 23.
[342] Immenga 2000: 152.

flamenco dancers and bullfighters (over)populated French literature and operas in the nineteenth century and made their way into the public imagination. The appeal of Spanish culture to the French nineteenth-century mind was essentially escapist, as Alisa Luxenberg convincingly argued.[343] Spain formed France's alter ego: a more sensual and primitive land to which the French could escape from their imperialist drive and industrial competition. The Spanish character was stereotyped as irrational, mystic, backward, unenlightened and sensual. Although it shared a border, religion and Latin culture with France, Spain was conceived as very remote, cut off by the high peaks of the Pyrenees and estranged by Moorish rule: 'l'Afrique commence aux Pyrénées'.[344] This made the country at once alien and strangely familiar, a duality that also filtered through in art criticism: 'Les transpyrénéens, que de plusieurs années affluent à Paris, ne doivent guère plus s'y trouver dépaysés que déconcerter leurs hôtes: les qualités qui motivent le succès ici sont collatérales aux nôtres; tout se passe entre latins et cela tourne presque en alliance défensive (...) La nouvelle expansion hispanique tout picturale cette fois, ce qui est un signe, se manifeste d'imagination âpre, sombre, corrosive, magnifique parfois mais alors d'une magnificence volontiers lugubre, et surtout violemment autochtone.'[345]

Stereotypical Spanish motifs, based on these tropes, made their way into the French art. Painters such as Carolus-Duran (1837-1917) and Manet depicted gypsies, brigands, musicians, dancers, *toreros* and *manolas* (Spanish women in traditional dress), inspired by the masters of the Siglo de Oro and in particular by the paintings of Diego Velasquez (1599-1660). Remarkably, it was mostly because of this French interest that Spanish artists also reverted to their national artistic tradition. Ramon Casas, for example, was stimulated by his French teacher Carolus-Duran to study Velasquez.[346] His self-portrait as flamenco dancer, exhibited at the Salon of 1883, received wide critical acclaim (ill. 15). This reflection on their national artistic tradition brought the Spanish artists great success at the Universal Exhibition of 1889. As a result every Spanish artist working in Paris was acutely aware of the French interest in his national cultural heritage. It was almost impossible for these artists not to relate to their national identity. Many of them chose to exploit the Spanish fashion, and painted and exhibited a colourful variety of exotic motifs. One of them was Claudio Castelucho (1870-1929), who participated at the Salon des Indépendants between 1904 and 1914. His Spanish types (ill. 16) were very well received by the French critics, who reviewed his art works

[343] Luxenberg 1993: 28. Joep Leerssen also argued that such a pittoresque, exotic image usually concerns a weaker country, as powerful countries are generally perceived in a more reticent and negative way. The image of Spain in the sixteenth century, when it was a strong and dominant country, was very different from the nineteenth-century perception: it was perceived as crual and haughty. See Leerssen 1993: 13.
[344] Hauptmann 2011: 12.
[345] Félicien Fagus, 'L'Invasion espagnole: Picasso', in *La Revue blanche*, 15 July 1901.
[346] Immenga 2000: 147.

within this national paradigm: 'M. Castelucho, coloriste espagnol, digne cadet des Anglada, des Nonell, des Rusiñol et des Evelio Torent, nous présente une danseuse flamenca, dont le torse cambré gire voluptueusement, cependant que la gorge rauque crie: 'Ollé !' et que les doigts brunâtres claquètent.'[347] Art dealers were also very much involved in nurturing the Spanish vogue. The sale of the painting *La Vicarìa* (1870) by Mariano Fortuny (1838-1874) at Goupil's gallery in 1870 is the most famous case: it broke all price-records of the time and unleashed a flood of Spanish themes into the market.[348] Dealers maintained a lively market in Spanish motifs and even financing painting excursions to Spain. Paul Durand-Ruel, for example, sent the painter Ricard Canals to Andalusia to paint picturesque motives on site.[349] The French market was not interested in the modern, industrialized parts of Spain, and preferred to focus on the more primitive, rural and traditional regions such as Castile and Andalusia.

The young and cosmopolitan Pablo Picasso would also make use of his national identity. His friend Canals had informed him that the Parisian public had a great taste for Spanish folklore. The first paintings that Picasso sold on the Parisian art market, through the dealer Berthe Weill, were impressionistic bullfights. This was a rather opportunistic choice of subject by Picasso, influenced by Canals' advice, as he had just condemned the tradition of bullfights as backward and provincial in the Spanish magazine *Arte Joven* a few months before.[350] One of the few Spanish artists to drastically turn his back on his national heritage was Juan Gris (1887-1927). He came to Paris in 1906, in part to prevent being drafted for military service. This made him directly a permanent immigrant, as he could never return to his homeland. Gris was strongly connected to the French culture, as is also evident from his correspondence, and deliberately avoided Spanish motifs in his art. Even when he made a *Torero* in 1913 it was not to celebrate his national culture, but rather the opposite. His bullfighter was an almost grotesque caricature of Spain's greatest hero, by which Gris criticized the popularity of stereotypical images.[351]

The Parisian exhibition and art market was clearly favorable to Spanish artists, and their paintings were in great demand. At the same time, the field became rather saturated with Spanish pictures, especially since more than threehundred Spanish artists were working in Paris towards the end of the nineteenth century.[352] The downside of favoring native motifs was that the French critics tended to see the Spanish artists as an indissoluble group, reviewing their contributions at

[347] Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Gil Blas*, 23 March 1905.
[348] González & Martí 1989: 32.
[349] Waller & Carter 2015: 119.
[350] Immenga 2000: 146.
[351] Immenga 2000: 182.
[352] Hauptmann 2011: 23.

exhibitions together.[353] This perception of unity was further nourished by the fact that the Spanish colony also manifested itself as a group, closely connected and organised in various artists' societies such as the Sociedad de Artistas Españoles and the Circulo de la Union Artistica, both founded at the end of nineteenth century.[354] The challenge was thus to stand out amongst compatriots, while also balancing between the French preference for native motifs and the requirement of making an original artwork. Darío de Regoyos aimed to navigate this Parisian-Spanish maze with his depictions of a specific side of Spain: 'la España Negra'.

España Negra

In 1888 Regoyos invited his Belgian friend Emile Verhaeren, who had just lost his father, to join him in Spain and to travel the country together. Verhaeren published parts of his travel account in the Brussels periodical *L'art moderne* in 1888, under the title 'España Negra'. This was a term that Regoyos gave to a series of paitings, pastels, drawings and etchings that he had been making since 1886. In these works Regoyos explored a different Spain; he strayed from the flamboyant, frivolous and colourful stereotypical images of his native country so treasured by the Parisian public. Instead he focused on the more restrained, traditional side of Spain, full of religion, hard work and family life (ill. 17). As Verhaeren would later recall: 'Darío de Regoyos s'est évertué à nous peindre l'Espagne provinciale, silencieuse et sombre. Il aimait à la nommer España negra, c'est-à-dire l'Espagne noire. Toute sa vie, il fut comme hanté par elle.'[355] Regoyos was not the only Spanish painter to render a darker vision of Spain. Several artists – including Nonell and Ignacio Zuloaga (1870-1945) – challenged the popular mythification of their country by painting somber and tragic local motifs. The experience of tragedy was fueled by 'El Desastre' in 1898, which referred to the Spanish-American War and the loss of Cuba. The Spanish identity became split into this black side and an España Blanca, filled with festive passion and exotic beauty.[356] Darío de Regoyos published his book *España Negra* a year later, in 1899. The book was a combination of Verhaeren's travel account with illustrations of religious celebrations, traditional feasts, local customs and Spanish types by Regoyos. The text was, however, not an accurate copy of Verhaeren's original account. Regoyos had changed the perspective of narration from Verhaeren to himself, re-organised the structure and added passages. He wrote for example 'far from viewing [Spain] in a happy manner like most foreigners who see blue skies and the apparent joy of bullfights, [he] felt a Spain morally

[353] This tendency is for example noticeable in the two reviews by Fagus and Vauxcelles already mentioned above.
[354] Immenga 2000: 143.
[355] Emile Verhaeren in *L'Art moderne*, 17 May 1914 and Verhaeren & Aron 1997: 1000.
[356] Vial 2011: 19.

black.'[357] This was of course Regoyos' own point of view. The book fitted into the extremely popular production of illustrated books, embellished with vignettes, frontispieces and engravings. Yet, Regoyos sold only fifteen copies of his publication.[358] In a letter to Verhaeren, Regoyos commented light-heartedly on this disappointing result: 'Il faudra dire comme avec mes tableaux, quand ils ne plaisent pas en Espagne c'est bon signe, pourvu de plaire à Paris.'[359] This is a very interesting reference to his artistic practice and his personal experience of the differences in the critical climates of Spain and France. Nonetheless, it is doubtful that the books would have had a better reception in France. As noted, the French interest in Spanish culture was focused on colourful and stereotypical motifs and scenes. Regoyos' illustrations of religious and traditional feasts, local customs and Spanish types might have appealed to the French taste, the dark mood of these images stood in stark contrast with the image of Spain as colourful and flamboyant.

Exhibiting in Paris

Several of the *Vingtistes* started to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants, simultaneous with their exhibition practice in Brussels. Darío de Regoyos entered the French exhibition field in 1890, together with his friend Theo van Rysselberghe. As a *vingtiste* his choice for the Indépendants to stage his debut was a natural one. It was also a sensible decision from a nationalistic perspective. As described above, Regoyos aimed to distinguish himself from his Spanish colleagues by depicting a darker side of his homeland. His paintings had even a better chance of being noticed at the Salon des Indépendants as it was less joined by his compatriots than other salons, as the figure below demonstrates.

[357] '(…) lejos de verlo de una manera alegre como la mayor parte de los extranjeros que nos ven al través del cielo azul y de la alegría aparente de las corridas de toros, sintió una España moralmente negra.' Translation taken from Iker 2015.
[358] San Nicolás 2008: 10, footnote 9.
[359] Letter to Emile Verhaeren, 1 August 1901. Cited in: Warmoes 1985: 31.

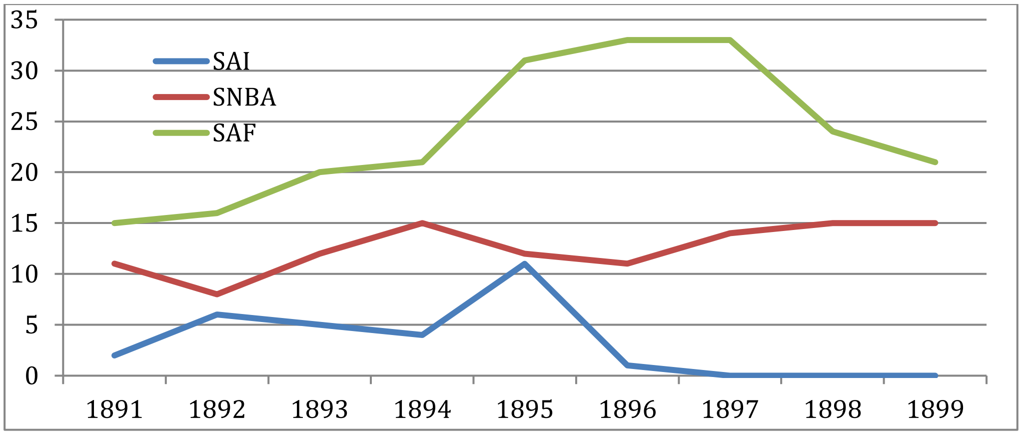


Fig. 7 Number of Spanish artists at the salons of the Société des Artistes Indépendants (SAI), the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts (SNBA) and the Société des Artistes Français (SAF) in the 1890s.
Sources: Exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants and Vial 2011: 35, note 16.

The Salon des Indépendants was a suitable venue for Regoyos to distinguish himself from the Spanish amalgam in order to be noticed by the French critics. He would exhibit there almost yearly, starting in 1890 and returning until 1911. Regoyos would exhibit a total of 72 works in thirteen different exhibitions of the Société des Artistes Indépendants. Concurrently, he exhibited at many other exhibitions, maintaining a very active exhibition practice. For example, when he debuted at the Indépendants in 1890, he also staged exhibitions in Madrid, Munich, San Sebastian and Brussels. These events involved complicated logistics of loans, extensive travelling and administration. In the next two decades he would expand his exhibition practice even further, showing in Italy, England, Argentina and Mexico. Within France, Regoyos did not only focus on the Salon des Indépendants, or Paris. He also exhibited at the 'Exposition des peintres impressionistes et symbolistes' at the Barc de Bouteville in 1895, the Salon d'Automne of 1905, and he tried to get accepted by the Société des Artistes Français in 1911, in which he did not succeed. He was also active in the rest of France, in cities such as Mâcon (1903), Lagny sur Marne (1900), Pau (1905, 1906, 1909) and Toulouse (1907). Even though Regoyos participated at various international exhibitions, he was most loyal to the Salon des Indépendants. His recurring participation was stimulated by a positive reception. Paris proved to be a hospitable milieu for Regoyos' painting, as we will see.

The first time that Regoyos exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants he submitted four paintings: *Ruines d'église, Fête Basque, La confession (Pays-Basque)* and *Rivière à sec (Méditerranée).* Only two of these paintings have been identified: *Fête Basque* (ill. 18)[360] and *La confession (Pays-Basque)* (ill. 19), although this last painting is only known from an etching that Regoyos had made

[360] This identification is somewhat uncertain, as a French critique refers to a pastel and couples dancing. See: Georges Lecomte, 'Beaux-Arts: L'Exposition des néo-impressionistes. Pavillon de la Ville de Paris. Champs-Elysées', in *Art et Critique*, 29 March 1890.

for his album *España Negra.* Both paintings – of large dimensions – belonged to this series of 'black' Spain. Regoyos had previously exhibited *La confession (Pays-Basque),* just *Ruines d'église* and *Rivière à sec (Méditerranée)*, at the Salon des XX in Brussels. His friend Verhaeren had published a favorable critique, emphasizing that Regoyos had painted another side of Spain. The critic wrote that Regoyos did not depict the usual 'exotisme de convention' but rather 'cette Espagne d'implacable soleil silencieux dont le terrain cuit et se crevasse'.[361] Compared to other depictions of the *España Negra* series, such as one of his first works of this project *La nuit des morts en Espagne* (ill. 20), his freshly painted *Fête Basque* (1890) is more lighthearted and colourful. French critics responded to this work in their reviews. Georges Lecomte wrote: 'Fête Basque exprime dûment le rythme paresseux d'une danse sur l'herbe après diner, la passivité de luronnes moites dans l'embrassement de sinistres voyous.'[362] Mario Varvara also wrote about this work and called it 'une bonne promesse'.[363] The *Ruines d'église* also seems to have been a colourful painting, as a review in *Art Français* refers to it as 'un *Intérieur d'église espagnole* gratiné, très chaud, avec des ors roux'.[364] These qualifications were frequently used in descriptions of Spanish art, but the critic even added 'espagnole' to the title to remove any doubts about the national origin of the painting.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to identify the seven paintings that Regoyos presented at the Salon des Indépendants the following year. The titles of his works indicate that he exhibited several figures or Spanish types, as the critics remarked: 'divers types espagnols (...) produisent une profonde impression' and 'une *Mater Dolorosa,* plus espagnole que peinte.'[365] In 1893, Darío de Regoyos took a bold step. Instead of exhibiting one of his *España Negra* paintings or other Spanish motifs, he submitted just one painting of fishing boys along the river in pointillist technique: *Filet de pêche* (ill. 21). Regoyos had been recently experimenting with this technique inspired by his friends Signac and Van Rysselberghe, with whom he had just sailed in southern France. Their pointillist paintings had been received with great acclaim by the French critics at previous salons of the Indépendants. Possibly Regoyos aimed to gain similar recognition, and abandoned his project of displaying the dark side of Spain in Paris. He painted *Filet de pêche* in 1893, so just before the opening of the Salon des Indépendants in March, arguably with this exhibition specifically in mind, as the painting has not been exhibited elsewhere until the 1950s.[366]

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[361] Emile Verhaeren, 'Aux XX', in *L'art moderne*, 17 February 1889: 50.
[362] Georges Lecomte, 'Beaux-Arts: L'Exposition des néo-impressionistes. Pavillon de la Ville de Paris. Champs-Elysées', in *Art et Critique*, 29 March 1890.
[363] Mario Varvara, 'Les Indépendants', in *Ecrits pour l'art*, 1890.
[364] *Art Français*, 12 October 1890.
[365] 'Les Indépendants', in *La Revue indépendante*, 1892: 46; and 'Les Premiers Salons. Indépendants', *Mercure de France*, May 1892: 62.
[366] San Nicolás 2014 : cat. 198.

It is the largest (60 x 73 cm) and most ambitious of his pointillist works. Although the site has been identified as the Pasajes harbour, the location is not recognizable as distinctly Spanish. Regoyos opted for a rather different approach then in the previous years, aligning himself with the French and Belgian pointillist painters who were having much success at the Indépendants. Yet, the critics seemed to have ignored his submission, with the exception of *La Plume* who mentioned his name in passing. There was a certain tiredness amongst critics regarding pointillistic technique, as the Indépendants welcomed dozens of pointillist paintings year after year. It was even dubbed the 'confetti salon', and the newspaper *Le Temps* concluded in 1893: 'Le pointillé a vécu'.[367] In any case, Regoyos' strategy seems to have failed. Ironically, it is this painting that features in art historical handbooks and exhibition catalogues that mention Regoyos, such as John Rewald's *Post-Impressionism* (1956) and *1893: Europe des Peintres* (1993).[368]

The following year, Regoyos reverted to exhibiting Spanish motifs. He displayed a diverse set of paintings, including a typically local theme of a market in Compostela, a mountain landscape and bathers. Most of these paintings were recently made, only the *Paysage aux Pyrénées* had been painted in 1885 already. The variety in styles and techniques was also quite large, ranging from colourful pointillism *(Marché à Compostela*, ill. 22) to subdued realism (*Paysage aux Pyrénées*, ill. 23). Regoyos had exhibited this very large painting of snow-covered rocks at Les XX in 1886, and decided to show it again in Paris eight years later. Possibly this was because of Camille Pissarro, who liked the painting much and became its first owner.[369] The Spanish angle proved to work a little better, Regoyos was mentioned again in *La Plume* as part of the group of Rusiñol: 'Intéressantes toiles de trois Espagnols'.[370] He continued this approach in 1895, contributing to the Salon des Indépendants with seven paintings, all part of his *España Negra* series. One of these works was from his earlier period, such as *Visite de condoléance* (1886, ill. 24), which belonged to the collection of an unknown person listed as M.Z. in the catalogue. The other paintings, mostly religious figures, were recent production. Unfortunately, all of these paintings have been lost. Apparently, Regoyos himself destroyed these works. As the critics – no reviews have been found on his participation in 1895 – and collectors showed little interest in his depictions of *España Negra*, Regoyos decided to abandon the project and destroy several of these large-scale paintings.[371] He did not exhibit again at the Salon

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[367] T.S. 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Le Temps*, 18 March 1893.
[368] Rewald 1956 and Musée d'Orsay 1993.
[369] San Nicolás 2014: cat. 105.
[370] Jules Christophe, 'Les Salons. Les artistes indépendants', in *La Plume*, 1 June 1894.
[371] See San Nicolás 2014, cat. 152a. Regoyos also exhibited that year his large pastel *Victimes de la fête* (1894) in Paris, at the Barc de Bouteville. This yielded one very favorable and understanding review on the frontpage of *La Justice*: 'Le paysage est triste, sévère, en harmonie avec cet enlévement macabre. Toute la puissance d'observation de l'artiste a été concentrée sur ces malheureux chevaux, victimes d'une coutume barbare (…) Cette œuvre dénote une rare conscience

des Indépendants until 1901, but this might be explained by other factors. As already noted in the chapter on the history and the figures of the Indépendants (see chapter 1.1) the numbers of participants at this salon declined towards the end of the nineteenth century. Many artists decided to exhibit elsewhere during this recession, as did Darío de Regoyos. His friend Pissarro had introduced him to the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, who contacted Regoyos in 1896: 'M. Pissarro, un de nos amis communs et grand admirateur de votre talent, m'a parlé de votre désir de faire connaître vos œuvres à Paris. Notre Galerie est le meilleur endroit pour obtenir ce résultat, car elle est le rendez-vous de tous ceux qui s'occupent d'art et surtout de l'art que vous aimez. Je vois donc vous informer que je suis à votre disposition pour recevoir les tableaux que vous voudrez bien m'envoyer, les exposer et les vendre pour votre compte.'[372] This was of course an exquisite opportunity for Regoyos, who accepted the invitation immediately. The following year he had his first monographic exhibition in Paris, displaying his work at Durand-Ruel's gallery from March 18 to April 3. It was the first time that Durand-Ruel staged a one-man show of a Spanish artist. Regoyos was represented with a few early works from his *España Negra* series, but mostly with Impressionist landscapes (such as *Côte basque, matin,* ill. 25 and *Côte basque, soir*) and stereotypical Spanish motifs *(Allant aux course de taureaux*, ill. 26)*.* Pissarro, who had been the one to advise Regoyos to concentrate on Impressionistic landscape painting was, however, not that pleased with the result: 'il [Durand-Ruel] me disait à propos de Darío que c'était triste et gris, que c'était plus difficile de faire du soleil, je t'en fiche! On voit bien qu'il n'à jamais mis la main à la pâte. Darío a mal choisi ses tableaux, l'orage, la rue de Londres, le coup de vent avec l'église, etc., sont des anciennes choses qui ne sont pas réussies au point de vue de l'air. C'est des tableaux faits à l'atelier qui manquent d'imprévu et d'intérêt, mais trois ou quatre récentes choses dénotent un tempérament de peintre, seulement, c'est vraiment trop peu.'[373] The inclusion of older work, including the *España Negra* ones such *Le Sirocco* ('le coup de vent avec l'église'), did not meet Pissarro's approval. He urged Regoyos to develop his recent plein-air painting further. Gustave Geffroy, the important Impressionists critic, wrote a positive review: 'M. Darío de Regoyos, lui non plus, n'adoucira pas, n'amendera pas la vision exacte qu'il a déjà des aspects et des gens de son pays. Ses tableaux et aquarelles (chez Durand-Ruel), ses promenades au bord de la mer, ses foules en marche vers les courses de taureaux, ses cirques divisés par la lumière, ses séries de mouvements, de gestes, d'expression, notés par un dessin âpre et une couleur acide, annoncent un artiste de temperament

artiste, scrupuleuse dans l'amour du vrai, dans la connaissance exacte de l'animal mort, se profilant en figures mixtilignes. Jusqu'à ce jour, l'œuvre de M. de Regoyos, un peu âpre (voir aux Indépendants) annonce un talent vigoureux qui finira par se faire connaître et aimer.' Désiré Louis, 'Impressionistes et symbolistes', in *La Justice*, 7 May 1895.

[372] Letter from Durand-Ruel to Regoyos, 20 November 1896. Cited in San Nicolás 2014: 33.

[373] Barón, Doñate and San Nicolás 2008: footnote 14.

irreductible, amoureux du vrai pittoresque.'[374] Regoyos' exhibition was also noted in the peridiocal *L'œuvre d'art* : 'M. Darío de Regoyos s'affirme avec des qualités de pâte lourde et de coloris comme un bon élève de Goya. *Le Sirocco, Marché basque, Concert à Bruxelles, Paysans allant aux courses de taureaux* sont de œuvres à retenir.'[375] The picturesque and colourful native aspect of Regoyos' paintings was clearly appreciated, as *Allant aux course de taureaux*, mentioned in both reviews, was sold by Durand-Ruel to Edmond Picard.[376] Durand-Ruel had kept his word – he exhibited and sold Regoyos' work – and their collaboration continued into the next century.

In 1901, Durand-Ruel again staged a solo exhibition with recent work by Regoyos. Displayed were his latest mid-sized (the largest being 54 x 65 cm) paintings of colourful Spanish landscapes in Impressionist style. Regoyos had abandoned his project of depicting the other, darker side of Spain through religious and traditional imagery, but he retained certain aspects of this quiet, traditional side in his Impressionistic landscapes. This combination of plein-air painting of Spanish landscapes, full of colour- and light effects, while retaining an atmosphere of solitude, quietness and harshness ('âpreté'), resonated well in Parisian circles. The exhibition was received well by the critic Thiébault-Sisson in the widely-read *Le Temps*: 'M. de Regoyos est né en Espagne et ses paysages, comme ses vues de villes et de villages, sont âpres, mais d'une âpreté qui rend à merveille la nature sauvage et triste qu'ils traduisent. Ils sont dessinés avec une conscience qui me ravit, et les plats y sont établis, les effets de perspective ménagés avec une sûreté qui dénote un tempérament non banal. Nous avons déjà vu de M. de Regoyos quelques essais de ce genre: ceux-ci sont de beaucoup supérieure, et la personnalité en est fière. On peut faire fond sur ce peintre.'[377] The qualifications used by Thiébault-Sisson would become characteristic for Regoyos' critical reception in France, as we will see next.

At the Salon des Indépendants of 1901, Regoyos decided to submit many of the same paintings that he had shown at Durand-Ruel. This was of course practical, as these works were already in Paris and as the exhibition at Durand-Ruel closed just before the opening of the Indépendants, it involved minimal logistics and transport. But it also emphasized the new direction that Regoyos had taken. He exhibited his paintings as a series, entitled 'Impressions d'Espagne' in the catalogue, underlining his Impressionist approach. The titles of these impressions referred to the Spanish landscapes and towns, mostly situated in his native region Basque country. Some of these places were located on the frontier with France, such as the coast town Hendaye and the river Bidassoa. In 1805 the French author Louis de Marcillac had described the bridge over Bidassoa in

[374] Gustave Geffroy, 'L'Art d'Aujourd'hui', in *Le Journal*, 27 March 1897.
[375] Jean Carel, 'Galerie Durand-Ruel', in *L'œuvre d'art*, 1 May 1897.
[376] Picard would organise an exhibition on Regoyos two years later, in 1899, in his gallery La Maison d'Art.
[377] Thiébault-Sisson, 'Choses d'Art', in *Le Temps*, 14 February 1901.

his *Nouveau voyage en Espagne*, declaring this six-minute passage by foot as a major change of atmosphere: once in Spain the air became fresher and more exotic.[378] The titles of two townscapes included a reference to the Extramadura (ill. 27 and 28), even if these paintings were actually conceived in the region of Castilia y Léon.[379] Maybe Regoyos decided to situate them in the Extremadura, as this region was better known in France and seen as one of the most remote and uncultivated parts of Spain. It is certain that Regoyos himself was responsible for the titles listed in the catalogue of the Indépendants, as he had written the French titles on the back of the canvas of most of his contributions. As Regoyos was used to send his works to international exhibitions without being present when they were mounted, he would title them on the verso and send along his installation wishes in writing.[380] In 1902, Regoyos again submitted landscapes of 'l'Espagne provincial'[381], painted in a bright palette and focusing on the light effects. He did not present them as a complete series, but he did include two complementary paintings of identical dimensions depicting the differences in light conditions during the day: *Village en Estramadure: l'heure pâle* (ill. 29) and *Village en Estramadure: l'heure rouge*.[382] In 1903 he exhibited again a series, this time *Impressions du soir, Espagne*, consisting of nocturnal townscapes.

Regoyos' new approach had begun to bear fruit. Following the line of Thiébault-Sisson review, French critics commented on his 'paysages âpres et brûlants (...) sous le soleil rude'[383], full of 'lumières étranges'[384] and his figures 'en costumes du pays'.[385] None of the critics ignored his nationality or the national character of his paintings. He was recognized for capturing the natural beauties of the Spanish landscape in an Impressionist style and technique, while infusing it with some of his culture's strangeness.[386] In the *Nouvelle revue* of 1903 appeared a lengthy description of Regoyos and his work by Gustave Kahn, appreciating this combination of otherness and adaptation. The review reflects so beautifully all the stereotypes on Spanish culture that it is worth citing it in full: 'Des étrangers envoient aux Indépendants. Un Espagnol, M. Darío de Regoyos qui a beaucoup de talent. Il apparut autrefois, quelques jours, à Paris. Il avait apporté quelques tableaux et une confortable guitare. On le campait au milieu d'un atelier amical, et il partait. Les yeux fermés, retourné chez lui, il commençait des habaneras inlassables, des tangos perpetuels, des malaguenas

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[378] Hauptmann 2011: 13.
[379] San Nicolás 2014: cat. 318 en 324. Regoyos had misspelt the French word as 'Extremadure' on the reverse of the canvas.
[380] San Nicolás 2014: 20.
[381] Emile Verhaeren, 'Les Salons', in *Mercure de France*, June 1901.
[382] Again, these townscapes were actually not situated in the Extramadura, as they were painted in Béjar, a town in Castilia y Léon.
[383] André Fontainas, 'Les artistes Indépendants', in *La Plume*, 15 May 1901.
[384] André Fontainas, 'Les Indépendants', in *Art Moderne*, 1902.
[385] 'Les Salon de 1902. Le Salon des Indépendants', in *La Plume*, 1 May 1902.
[386] Conzatti 2005: 44.

intarissables, il chantait en même temps, et cela avait une forte couleur d'exotisme, qui intéraissait fort les jeunes peintres alors tout occupés de peindre des gazomètres, des Asnières, des Montmartres, des fortifs, car l'influence naturaliste pesait sur eux. Et ces naturalistes aussi, partaient en rêve vers les cambrures violentes des Gitanes, vers l'Albaycin plein de soleil, vers un éclat d'or sur l'éclatement pourpre des grenades, ils filaient en esprit vers la couleur et vers le rêve; tant il est vrai que le réalisme n'est jamais ancré profondement dans l'âme de l'homme. Et quand Regoyos se réveillait de l'éclat des gouttes d'or de la musique de sa guitare, il contait avec un accent extraordinaire combiné, de celui du Cid et de celui de Polichinelle, des histoires espagnoles, d'où il ressortait manifestement qu'à la rapidité des trains d'Espagne un bon impressioniste, alerte et malin, pouvait terminer une étude à chaque station, et exécuter de bonnes boîtes à pouce, à l'allure du train en marche, en marche assez lente pour laisser poser le paysage.'[387] This review also hints at a certain degree of strategy and calculation of Regoyos, referring to him as 'alerte et malin'.

It is true that Regoyos had adopted a strategy that many foreign artists working in Paris successfully employed. Impressionism became the most popular style to adopt for foreign artists in Paris, recording the unique light conditions of their native countries in a French way. Their styles and techniques varied greatly, and Impressionism became a catchword for any painting with a loose paint application, a bright palette, a focus on light- and colour effects and a plein-air element.[388] After 1900, Regoyos' painting reflected these proven formulas, and also for him, this new strategy worked. He received critical acclaim, and sold several paintings through his exhibitions in Paris.[389] Durand-Ruel would continue to organise exhibitions with Regoyos' work until 1911, and even took him abroad to his gallery on Fifth Avenue in New York.[390] It is actually quite possible that Durand-Ruel had encouraged and maybe even coached Regoyos to concentrate on Impressionist painting. Durand-Ruel was of course the champion of French Impressionism in the 1870s, and continued to support and sell a wide-range of Impressionist paintings far into the twentieth century. It is interesting to note in this perspective that Regoyos started to use supports from the French manufacturer *Legrand & Cie* after 1900. The stretcher of the painting *Le maïs-vent du Nord* (ill. 30, 1901), which was exhibited at Durand-Ruel and the Salon des Indépendants in 1901, bears a stamp of this firm.[391] Alphonse Legrand was a former employee of Durand-Ruel who had set up his own

[387] PIP (pseudonyme Gustave Kahn), 'Le vernissage des indépendants', in *Nouvelle revue*, March 1903.
[388] Broude 1990: 71.
[389] Three paintings were sold to Durand-Ruel according to the catalogue of the Salon des Indépendants of 1901. Regoyos sold another painting at the Independants to Thomas Braun, a Brussels lawyer and friend of Verhaeren and Van Rysselberghe and the husband of Margarita Van Mons, who was portrayed several times by Van Rysselberghe. See San Nicolás 2014: cat. 373.
[390] See San Nicolás 2014: cats. 368, 382, 466, 498 and 609.
[391] See San Nicolás 2014: cat 337.

shop in 1876, two steps away from Durand-Ruel's gallery in the rue Laffitte. He is mostly known as a dealer, figuring in the correspondence of Pissarro and account books of Claude Monet, but like many merchants at that time he also sold art supplies. Legrand was, for example, the French representative of the special English cement 'McLean' used for decoration painting.[392] Maybe Regoyos had just walked by this shop and decided to buy some materials there. Or, Durand-Ruel had advised him to visit Legrand to buy (mid-sized) supports to bring back to Spain.

By 1904, Regoyos was so well known and celebrated as a Spanish Impressionist, that Camille Mauclair decided to list Darío de Regoyos, together with Zuloaga and Sorolla, as one of the representatives of the Impressionist movement in Spain in his overview of *L'Impressionisme*.[393] Years later, he would again be named as a Spanish impressionist par excellence: 'C'est de Regoyos que les paysagistes ont apris tout ce que l'impressionisme français ne leur a point montré, ce qui était nécessaire pour traduire le paysage basque aux tons si divisés.'[394] Regoyos also acknowledged this influence publically when responding to the questionnaire on recent artistic developments held by Charles Morice, strategically invoking both his Spanish and his French masters: 'Les maitres anciens dont j 'ai le plus aimé l'œuvre sont Sanchez Coello, Goya, Velasquez et El Greco. Ce sont, il est vrai, les peintres dont on voit le plus souvent l'œuvre en Espagne. Mais je me suis dérobé à leur exclusive influence, parce que j'aime mon temps et parce que je veux en être. J'adore donc aussi Corot, Manet, Monet, Renoir et les impressionnistes harmonistes.'[395] Regoyos continued to exhibit his Impressionistic landscapes to the Salon des Indépendants, with steady critical acclaim and annual reviews in the *Mercure de France, La Plume* and *Gil Blas*. The fact that he was a loyal and regular exhibitor at the Salon des Indépendants also stimulated his positive reception. Charles Morice called him a 'maître de lieu' in the *Mercure de France*.[396]

Regoyos' last participation was in 1911, two years before his death. His final contribution consisted of one major painting of large dimensions (90,5 x 120,5 cm) representing the castle of Queen Isabella in Medina del Campo (ill. 31). Regoyos had hoped to exhibit this historical subject with the Salon des Artistes Français, but the jury did not accept it. Instead, he displayed the work with Durand-Ruel and subsequently at the Salon des Indépendants.[397]

Despite this ultimate disappointment, Regoyos could have been pleased with his artistic career in Paris. After a challenging start in the 1890s, displaying his *España Negra* series – large,

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392 Distel 1989: 34.
393 Mauclair 1904: 210.
394 José Francès, 'A travers l'Espagne moderne. La renaissance artistique', in *Les Annales politiques et littéraires*, 4 April 1926: 383.
395 Charles Morice, 'Enquête sur les tendances actuelles des arts plastiques', in *Mercure de France*, 1 August 1905.
396 Charles Morice, 'Le XXIe Salon des Indépendants', in *Mercure de France,* 15 April 1905.
397 San Nicolás 2014: cat. 569.

somber paintings of traditional and religious motifs that did not catch the critics' attention – Regoyos decided to change his strategy. Instead of traditional and religious imagery, he started to paint rural landscapes. He made sure that the scenery could be recognized as Spanish, including the locations of the paintings in the titles. Regoyos painted his works en plein air, or at least made sure to render the impression that his canvases were fully executed outdoors, and focused on the specific effects of light and colour. His approach resulted in a type of painting that found the right balance between emulation and originality, as Charles Morice recognized in a long review in the *Mercure de France*: 'ses paysages … sont des observations studieuses de nature sans être, sans plus être ni de l'impressionisme pur, ni quelque chose d'absolument nouveau: je ne sais quoi de très intéressant (…).'[398] This fine balance was critical in establishing a reputation in Paris. Regoyos also mastered the challenge of standing out amongst compatriots. Whereas his *España Negra* series had been too different and bold, he managed to infuse his landscapes with just enough 'otherness' to distinguish himself from the Spanish amalgam. His landscapes revealed 'avec un vif sentiment du caractère une Espagne inconnue'[399] and was attributed a special place amongst his compatriots: 'Parmi les artistes qui exposent à Paris, M. Darío de Regoyos occupe une place des plus enviables.'[400] Not everyone was positive about Regoyos' alternative representations of Spanish culture, Louis Vauxcelles missed the typical southern temperament : **'**Parmi les artistes espagnols qui exposent à Paris (…) M. Darío de Regoyos occupe une place bien à part. Son coloris n'a rien d'espagnol, si je puis dire. (…) . Il manque … un peu de fougue méridionale.'[401]

Two other factors should be acknowledged as important in the establishment of Regoyos' career in Paris. After 1900, he hardly exhibited large-scale paintings at the Salon des Indépendants. Most of his works were mid-sized landscapes, which were more easily sold at Durand-Ruel, and quite often landscape studies instead of full-fledged paintings. The catalogue raisonné reveals that several of his contributions were actually smaller studies for major, elaborate paintings. In 1908, for example, Regoyos exhibited *A l'aube, côté basque* (ill. 32) which was a colourful small sketch for a full-fledged, larger version (ill. 33). Regoyos would exhibit this final version at Spanish exhibitions, but never at the Salon des Indépendants.[402] The same goes for his *Tourelles gothiques*, also displayed at the Indépendants in 1908, which was a study of the moonlight effect behind the cathedral's gothic towers. An effect that he had rendered in full in his large-scale *Clair de lune, Burgos* (see ill. 34 and

398 Charles Morice, 'Le XXe Salon des Indépendants', in *Mercure de France*, May 1904.
399 Charles Saunier, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *La Revue Universelle*, 1903.
400 Henri Grégoire, 'La Vie Artistique' in *La Presse,* 4 December 1906.
401 Louis Vauxcelles, 'Exposition Darío de Regoyos', in *Gil Blas*, 2 December 1906. This review appeared on the occasion of the exhibiton 'Darío de Regoyos: Impressions de Castille et du Pays Basque' at Galerie Druet.
402 See San Nicolás 2014: cat. 503.

35). Regoyos' preference of exhibiting mid-sized studies in the Salon des Indépendants recalls a remark by Roger Marx: 'Vous ne trouverez pas au Cours-la-Reine les vastes pages lentement conduites à terme qui s'étalent d'ordinaire aux cimaises du Grand Palais (…) son [de l'artiste] effort ne dépasse guère les limites qu'imposent à la peinture les dimensions coutumières de nos demeures (…) La sensation éprouvée au cours d'une promenade à travers les salles est celle d'une communion franche, d'un commerce direct tenu avec le peintre, chez lui, dans l'intimité, en face des études suspendues au mur de l'atelier.'[403] It was apparently a popular strategy to exhibit spontaneous paintings of modest formats to fit in the homes of the private collectors. It was also a successful strategy for Darío de Regoyos as we have seen, both in critical and commercial perspective.

At two posthumous exhibitions Regoyos was celebrated and remembered as an artist who had masterly combined French Impressionism with an original, personal yet national approach. The Belgian critic Octave Maus wrote in the preface of the exhibition 'Hommage à Darío de Regoyos', held at La Libre Esthétique in Brussels in 1914: 'A ces préoccupations, nées d'une vive admiration pour les maîtres de l'impressionnisme, Darío de Regoyos joignait le souci du caractère expressif (…) En cela surtout il accusa la personnalité foncière de son tempérament. Son pittoresque n'a rien de convenu : il résulte … des secrètes correspondances qui lient l'artiste à sa race … l'hérédité de Regoyos, agissant sur ses dons naturels, lui a révélé l'âme du pays.'[404] In Paris, Regoyos was remembered with an exhibition at Galerie Choiseul. His Belgian friend Emile Verhaeren was responsible for the introduction: 'Il est plusiers Espagnes. Certains peintres ont traduit en leur art l'Espagne empanachée et fringante; d'autres ont aimé l'Espagne pittoresque et loqueteuse; d'autres mêmes ont exalté l'Espagne tortionnaire et dévote. Darío de Regoyos s'est evertué à nous peindre l'Espagne provinciale, silencieuse et sombre (...) Même lorsque l'impressionnisme lumineux le sollicita et que le jeu mouvant des couleurs franches séduisit sa jeune sensibilité, il ne put se détacher entièrement de sa chère tristesse.'[405] Regoyos had been right in his letter to Emile Verhaeren in 1901, cited already above: his paintings were designed to please in Paris.[406]

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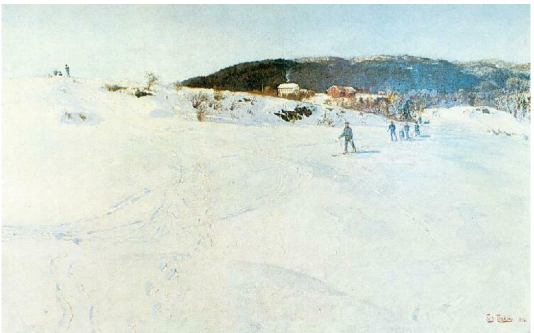
[403] Roger Marx in *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, 24 March 1906.
[404] Exhibition catalogue of La Libre Esthétique, *Hommage a Darío de Regoyos*, 7 March - 13 April 1914: 3-4.
[405] Emile Verhaeren's preface in the exhibition catalogue of the retrospective held at the Galerie Choiseul 2 May - 5 June, also published in *L'Art moderne*, 17 May 1914.
[406] Letter to Emile Verhaeren, 1 August 1901. Cited in Warmoes 1985: 31.

3.2. Alienation & Provocation: Edvard Munch

Images for chapter 3.2



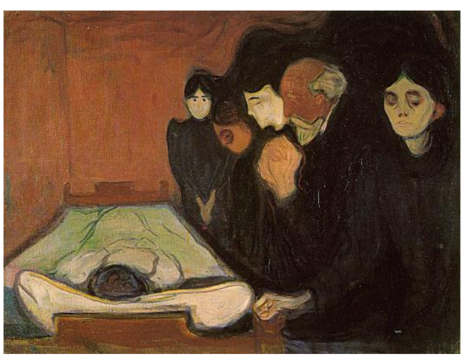
Ill. 36 Frits Thaulow, *Hiver en Norvège,* 1886. Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Ill. 37 Edvard Munch, *Matin*, 1884. KODE Bergen Kunstmuseum (Rasmus Meyers Samlinger), Bergen

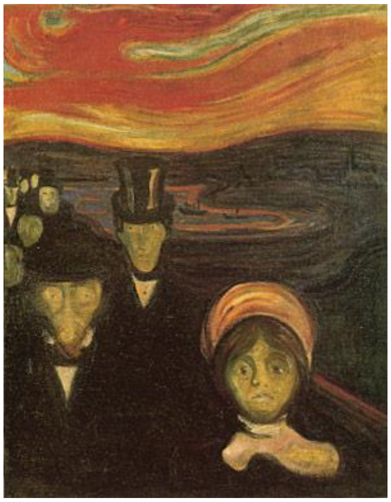
Ill. 38 Edvard Munch, *Rose et Amélie,* 1893. Stenersenmuseet, Oslo

Ill. 39 Edvard Munch, *L'homme jaloux*, 1895. KODE Bergen Kunstmuseum (Rasmus Meyers Samlinger), Bergen

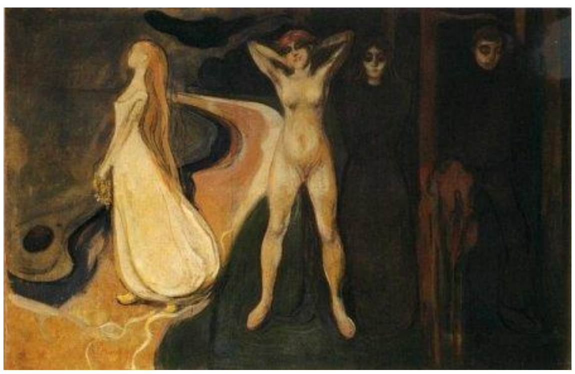
Ill. 40 Edvard Munch, *La mort*, 1893. The National Museum, Oslo



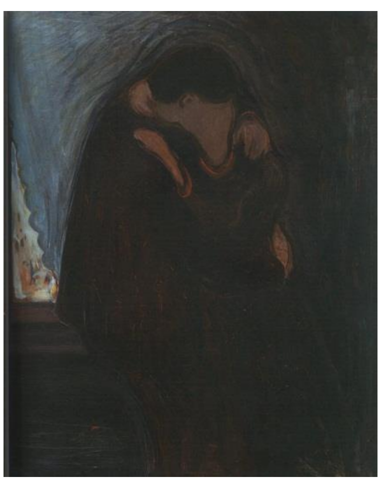
Ill. 41 Edvard Munch, *L'homme mourant*, 1895. KODE Bergen Kunstmuseum (Rasmus Meyer Samlinger), Bergen



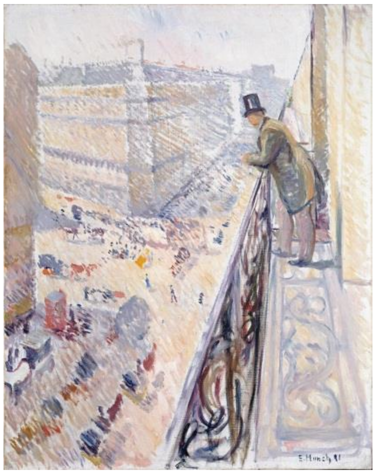
Ill. 42 Edvard Munch, *Angoisse*, 1894. The Munch Museum, Oslo



Ill. 43 Edvard Munch, *La femme,* 1894. KODE Bergen Kunstmuseum (Rasmus Meyers Samlinger), Bergen



Ill. 44 Edvard Munch, *Baiser*, 1895. The Munch Museum, Oslo



Ill. 45 Edvard Munch, *Rue Lafayette*, 1891. The National Museum, Oslo

Ill. 46 Edvard Munch, *La mère*, 1897-99. The Munch Museum, Oslo

Ill. 47 Edvard Munch, *Une nuit claire*, 1902. The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Ill. 48 Edvard Munch, *Une folle*, 1900-1901. The Munch Museum, Oslo

3.2. Alienation & Provocation: Edvard Munch

The Nordic Identity

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Paris became the preferred foreign destination of Scandinavian artists who wished to develop their artistic skills abroad. This was a shift in the international orientation of the Nordic artists, as their traditional training centers used to be situated closer to home, such as Dresden. The Scandinavians who came to study and work in Paris quickly formed an expatriate community. They studied in the same studios – mostly at Bonnat's[407] – and frequented the same cafés and restaurants. This solidarity and comradeship between the Scandinavians was unheard of in their native lands, and even discouraged by internal politics within Scandinavia.[408] The Nordic countries were very conscious about their individual frontiers. The expatriate community in Paris, nonetheless, cultivated a sense of a Nordism or Scandinavianism. Living abroad, their shared geographical background – set apart from the rest of Europe, on the periphery of the world – increased their feelings of mutual affinity. They were bound by a joint project to advance Scandinavian art. Most of the Scandinavian artists working in Paris opted for the strategy of emulation and adaptation. Their strategies were quite similar to those of Darío de Regoyos, as described in the previous case-study. They applied the techniques that they had diligently studied in the Parisian studios to authentic, stereotypical Scandinavian themes, such as icy landscapes or the Nordic summer night. This combination of national subjects with French style and pictorial skills – ease of technique, finesse and sophistication – stimulated a positive reception of the Scandinavian school in Paris.[409] Their art was recognizable and understandable to the French public, but still distinctively native. It proved to be a successful formula in both France and their homelands, as is evident from the reception of Fritz Thaulow (1847-1906) and Edvard Diriks (1855-1930) for example. These artists worked respectively in the tradition of Naturalism and Impressionism, the favored French styles by Scandinavian artists (and foreign artists in general), depicting untouched landscapes and rural scenes. They frequently exhibited at one of the salons in Paris and enjoyed wide international acclaim. Thaulow was even one of the founding members of the Salon Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1890. The French government purchased several works by

[407] See Challons-Lipton's excellent and groundbreaking publication *The Scandinavian Pupils of the Atelier Bonnat, 1867-1894* (2001).
[408] Varnedoe 1982: 15.
[409] For the French reception of Scandinavian artists see besides Challons-Lipton 2001: Emily Braun, 'Scandinavian artists and the French critics,' in: Varnedoe 1982: 67-76, and Röstorp 2013.

both artists, such as *Hiver en Norvège* that Thaulow exhibited at the Universal Exhibition in 1889 (ill. 36).[410]

The concept of the Scandinavian school was completely based on the idealization of nature and simplicity. The Nordic identity was determined by a new belief in the 'natural man', as an alternative to his civilized counterpart. This idealization of a natural and primitive life became a central feature in the construct of identity. The myth of simplicity and primitiveness resonated well in France at the end of the nineteenth century. Due to economic crises, political upheaval and social and cultural pessimism, many French started to lose their faith in modern progress through industrialization and urbanization. Antagonized by feelings of decadence, various French intellectuals embraced the idea of pure and primitive societies. In their eyes, the Northern lands became the locus of unspoiled nature and culture. This ignored the realities within Scandinavia, where the process of industrialization had started late – in the 1870s and 1880s – but then developed quickly, exploiting the natural landscape by consequence.[411] The majority of Scandinavian artists were making use of this myth, by only depicting the wild, natural beauties of their countries. The myth resonated powerfully in the Parisian press. From travel accounts to art reviews, French authors consistently reverted to cliché-ridden accounts of the North. A good example of this is a publication of letters from Scandinavia by the French author Marmier. In these fictive letters he described the Nordic countries and people that he had encountered on his travels, characterizing them as simple, traditional and calm. In his romantic view, their happiness was ensured by a primitive life close to nature. Despite the sense of a general Nordic identity, Marmier's account reveals that the French were also aware of the differences between the countries. His letters are written from various Scandinavian countries, describing national peculiarities. He found the Norwegians, for example, to be ignorant and naïve.[412]

These national varieties were also evident at the Universal Exhibitions in Paris, where the Scandinavian countries were represented individually. In 1889, the Norwegian pavilion constituted 250 exhibitors on 1300 square meters. It was described in the French press as 'certainement une des plus curieuses qui se puisse voir au Champ de Mars'.[413] The French considered the Norwegians to be primitive and distinctive Nordic. The Swedish, on the other hand, were regarded as more cosmopolitan and closer to the French. The Norwegians had begun to assert an independent pride in a separate national identity, focusing on their spectacular nature, peasant life and Viking history.

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[410] Scottez-De Wambrechies & Claustrat 2008: 124.
[411] Varnedoe 1988: 23.
[412] Marmier 1890: 242-3.
[413] See: Guide Bleu du Figaro et du Petit Journal 1889.
(http://www.worldfairs.info/expopavillondetails.php?expo_id=6&pavillon_id=979)

One of the Norwegian artists represented at the Universal Exhibition of 1889 was the young Edvard Munch. He exhibited his painting *Matin* from 1884 (ill. 37).[414] This picture can be considered as Munch's first accomplished work, which he painted four years after starting his artistic career. When the painting was exhibited for the first time in Kristiania (now Oslo) in 1884, it received much attention. Many critics considered it to be a bold and radical painting. Even though the subject matter of *Matin* was not a surprising one – it fitted nicely in the prevailing Naturalist tradition – Munch had painted the awakening girl with disturbing honesty. Her feet are dirty and her blouse is unbuttoned, but it was mostly his technique of bold brushstrokes and rough paint application that unsettled the Norwegian public. Despite several negative reviews, Munch's contribution was rewarded with a travel stipend to Paris, and five years later with a presence at the Norwegian pavilion of the Universal Exhibition. This was the first time that the young Munch exhibited in Paris, and he waited until 1896 to present his art again to the French public. But his modest entrée in the Parisian art field already demonstrated that Munch had decided to choose a different path and strategy than his compatriots.

As a young artist from Scandinavia, he must have been marked by the French as Nordic – simple and true to nature – especially since he was from Norway, which was seen as one of the most rural and traditional countries in Scandinavia. But contrary to other Scandinavian artists who worked and exhibited in Paris, he did not just capitalize on this presumption. Munch developed a highly personal artistic program and constructed an identity of his own. As we will see, Munch deliberately played with this notion of the Nordic identity and exploited the stereotypes. His *Matin* was on first sight a typical nineteenth-century motif painted in naturalist style, but Munch's radical technique revealed a modern and controversial strategy.

Munch's exhibition strategies in Paris and the French critical reception of his art have been researched and discussed before, most notably in the seminal exhibition *Munch et la France* in the Musée d'Orsay in 1992. In the catalogue it was argued, and it is still believed, that Munch was ill received by the French public.[415] But when we consider his critical reception in a broader context of the French attitude towards international art at the Salon des Indépendants in the 1890s, it

[414] There is some uncertainty about the identification of the painting at the World Fair, as *Matin* was also included in Munch's one-man show in Kristiania, which closed on 12 May, while the World Fair opened on 6 May 1889. Munch either presented a painting with the same title in Paris, or he withdrew the painting from his exhibition in Kristiania to be in time for the show in Paris. This seems more probable, as he would no doubt want to be represented in Paris with a key work. See also Van Dijk, Bruteig & Jansen 2015: 223, note 26.
[415] See for a recent example: Lampe & Chéroux 2011.

becomes apparent that the French were more receptive to Munch's art than believed until now.[416] This general perception fits neatly into the larger myth of the misunderstood genius that is strongly connected to Munch's artistic persona, and I will argue that Munch's first French critics and the artist himself were actively involved in constructing this mythical identity of an alienated artist.

Testing the Waters (1896)

The twelfth exhibition of the Société des Artistes Indépendants opened at the Palais des Arts Libéraux on the Champs de Mars in Paris on April 1, 1896. One of 198 participating artists was Edvard Munch, represented with several strong works such as *The Scream, Madonna* and the *Vampire* (versions unknown) – listed in the catalogue under the titles *Le Cri, Femme qui aime* and *Cheveux rouges* – which are today among his most popular and famous works. Munch had chosen to exhibit ten works of art (the maximum allowed) that showed a wide variety of motifs, styles and techniques. The painting *Rose et Amélie* (ill. 38), depicting two card-playing ladies with deep décolletages, in a style reminiscent of Emile Bernard's cloisonnist technique of flat, bold forms with stark contours, was a caricaturish depiction of Parisian nightlife. The public's attention to this work was remarked upon in the bi-weekly *Journal des artistes*: 'de M.Munch, je livre à la franche gaieté de la foule, les nichons plantureux des "Tireuses des cartes" je me réserve pour certaines lithographies et dessins où l'artiste excelle.'[417] In *La mort qui aime* Munch had applied a chalk primer to obtain a dry, pastel-like surface. He further included two portraits, slightly more traditional in style and technique, and *The Hands* – all of which were exhibited before in Germany and/or Norway. Munch also presented some of his latest paintings, such as a new version of *L'Enfant malade*.[418] Several critics singled out this painting for its powerful rendering of human suffering. The critic G. Ivan noted: 'Son tableau représente une enfant malade mi-debout sur son lit se détachant contre l'oreiller blanc, et, à droite, une femme qui s'incline; il synthétise un drame de la vie humaine avec une si profonde émotion, que l'on sent que la mort y assiste en personne spectrale, comme un troisième acteur, caché.'[419] Munch had portrayed the dying girl in a personal and direct style. He emphasized the materiality of the painting by giving it a sketchy and unfinished appearance, alternating thin brushstrokes dripping over the canvas with heavily impastoed and scraped areas.

[416] Part of this research has been published in my article 'International Artists at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris: The Case of Edvard Munch (1896 and 1897)', in Waller & Carter 2015: 43-52; and reworked into a lecture given at the symposium 'Munch & Modernity' at the National Gallery, Oslo, on 18 September 2012.
[417] 'Les Salons: Les Indépendants (Champ-de-Mars),' in : *Journal des artistes*, 12 April 1896 : 4.
[418] The identifications of Munch's contributions are taken from the catalogue raisonnée (Woll 2009), which are primarily based on the exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants.
[419] G. Ivan, 'Chronique des Beaux-Arts. Les Indépendants (Suite),' in *L'Encyclopédie contemporaine illustrée,* 10 May 1896: 95. This was the pseudonym of Ivan Aguéli (1869-1917), a Swedish painter.

Ivan was so impressed by Munch's powerful and colourful depiction of human emotions that he concluded his critique by writing: 'Une analyse des moyens serait un sacrilège'.

In short, it seems as though Munch had decided to test the waters of the Parisian art world with a portfolio of works presenting his diverse abilities. His approach provoked contrasting reactions and created controversy, according to *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, the Saturday edition of the eminent, authoritative and widely-read *Gazette des beaux-arts*: 'Les uns crièrent "folie !" et les autres "génie !"'[420] Several of the most influential critics praised Munch's contributions, including Arsène Alexandre, who – together with Felix Fénéon – had been the champion of Neo-Impressionism. Alexandre wrote for *Le Figaro*, one of the leading daily newspapers with a very high circulation of more than 80,000 copies. On the opening day of the Indépendants in 1896, Alexandre remarked: 'Mais on ne doit pas laisser inaperçu un Norvégien, M. Munch, qui dans un genre violent et visionnaire à la Strindberg, pourrait bien un jour faire parler de lui.'[421]

A quantative analysis of Munch's critical reception also reveals a positive picture. His name was mentioned in fifteen out of the 25 reviews that have been found on the Salon des Indépendants that year.[422] When interpreting these numbers, it is important to point out that the Indépendants, despite the fact that it was recognized as one of the most important venues for contemporary art and visited by great numbers of visitors, still received rather marginal press coverage in the 1890s. The Société des Artistes Français and the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts largely dominated the press attention. All daily newspapers, weekly magazines and specialized art chronicles – conservative and progressive publications alike – devoted columns, special editions and *feuilletons* to these two exhibitions. This was in stark contrast to the press coverage on the Salon des Indépendants; not even half of the daily newspapers reviewed this exhibition in 1896. In periodicals devoted to arts and literature the attention was even more deficient. Even if an article or column was devoted to the Indépendants it was usually listed as *petit Salon* or *Salonette*.[423] The Indépendants might have rivaled the two other salons in the quantity (and quality) of works it displayed, but it certainly did not match them in press coverage. Given this overall minimal press coverage of the Salon des Indépendants in the 1890s, it is remarkable that a relatively large number

[420] 'Petites Expositions', in *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité,* 11 April 1896: 135.
[421] Arsène Alexandre, 'La vie artistique: L'exposition des Indépendants,' in *Le Figaro*, 31 March 1896: 5. The reference to Strindberg is noteworthy, as the French interest for Scandinavian culture was initially aroused by literature, especially through the work of Strindberg but also Henrik Ibsen.
[422] Of the fifteen reviews mentioning Munch, three have not been previously cited in the literature on Munch's reception.
[423] *L'Encyclopédie contemporaine illustrée*, a periodical devoted to science and technique, but also to literature and arts, was an exception to this rule. The review of the Salon des Indépendants was published as one of the three Salons: 'Les Expositions en 1896. Paris: Les Trois Salons,' in *L'Encyclopédie contemporaine illustrée,* 20 April 1896: 8.

of art periodicals commented upon Munch's first participation in 1896. It was quite unusual for newcomers – French and foreign – to receive that much attention. Munch could thus be quite pleased with his début, especially as the majority of these critiques were encouraging.

A Mad Genius (1897)

The following year, in 1897, Munch participated again with ten works. His contributions included several depictions of existential emotions in human life, such as jealousy, grief and love: *L'homme jaloux* (1895, ill. 39), *La mort* (1893, ill. 40), and *L'homme mourant* (1895, ill. 41). Munch continued to paint and draw this series of the human condition, turning it into the most important and ambitious artistic program of his career: the *Frieze of Life.* He had further included several very strong and large paintings, such as *Angoisse* (1894, ill. 42) – of which a lithograph with the same motif was published in an album by the dealer Ambroise Vollard in 1896 – and *La femme* (1894, ill. 43). The dimensions of this painting (164 x 251 cm) raise questions about Munch's ambitions: all his art works at the Salon des Indépendants were for sale, according to the exhibition catalogue, but he exhibited several paintings that would hardly find a buyer (and actually did not find a buyer). They might help, however, to establish a reputation. In this sense, they functioned as a position piece, meant to be singled out by critics and the art world. This strategy proved to be successful, as the majority of the critiques were again positive, some of them even exultant. Only three were absolutely negative about his works, some more ambivalent. A quantitative analysis yields almost the exact same pattern as in 1896: Munch was mentioned in fourteen out of the 24 reviews on the Salon des Indépendants. The bi-monthly literary and artistic review *La Plume* even included an illustration of *La mort* in its spring issue.[424]

Many critics commented on Munch's forceful and personal depiction of the human condition and universal emotions, though it was by some considered too violent and agonized. In the words of André Fontainas: 'M.S. Munch (…) le seconde de manière trop, a mon gré, macabre.'[425] Arsène Alexandre reiterated his praise for Munch and predicted that he was the painter of the future: 'Il y a aussi les tableaux de M. Munch, un Norvégien exaspéré, qui certainement sera poussé demain (ou après-demain) au rang des hommes de génie.'[426] Alexandre not only framed Munch as a foreigner – a Norwegian – but also introduced the concept of Munch as an extremely intense artist. He then connected these two identities by referring to Munch's 'névrose septentrionale' in the same review in *Le Figaro*. The image of Munch as genius was repeated by Delphi Fabrice in his jubilant critique,

[424] *La Plume,* May 15, 1897: 311.
[425] André Fontainas, 'Les Indépendants' in *Mercure de France,* 1 May 1897: 412.
[426] Arsène Alexandre, 'La vie artistique: L'exposition des Indépendants,' in *Le Figaro*, 3 April 1897: 4.

published in the two daily newspapers *La Patrie* and *La Presse*: 'Je veux faire exception toutefois pour l'œuvre magistrale d'Edward Münch [sic], qui attira tellement les étonnements stupides et les quodlibets de cette foule "d'élite". Ce fut, devant ses dix toiles exposées, l'attroupement ricaneur et assidu, qui, pour tous les novateurs, est un indice de talent très haut et un gage assuré de gloire future.'[427] Fabrice thus added another layer to Munch's identity: he was a foreigner and an outsider, nervous and exasperated, and highly gifted but misunderstood by the public.[428]

The notion of the artist as an outsider with mythical capacities was firmly established in the nineteenth century, as we have seen. The idea of the artist as an irrational, isolated genius in conflict with society, focusing on difference and otherness, propelled the myth of the artist as a mad genius. Schopenhauer had declared that 'genius is nearer to madness than the average intelligence'.[429] The connection between genius and madness was already made in the Renaissance, where 'genio' was commonly described in terms of 'melancholia' and 'pazzia'. But then, a distinction was maintained between the sane melancholics who were capable of special accomplishments and those condemned to insanity.[430] Yet, in the nineteenth century the 'mad genius' was considered to be pathological. There were various explanations in vogue. Some maintained that an extraordinary endowment must be compensated with weakness, others spoke of degeneracy or a neurasthenic condition caused by overwork. There were also some scholars who believed in genius as healthy, the first book to proclaim this was published in 1886.[431] But the dominant opinion was that geniality was connected to illness and insanity.[432] Like many other nineteenth-century artists, especially the progressive ones, Munch was subjected to this stereotype. In turn, Munch actively exploited and manipulated this myth, in marketing his persona and art, as he realized that the construct of the mad genius could be a successful strategy.

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[427] Delphi Fabrice, 'Critique d'Art: Salon des Indépendants', in *La Patrie,* 18 April 1897: 3.

[428] This review also reveals Fabrice's elitist views on art. Clearly, only the iniate and sensivite art connaisseur – like Fabrice himself – could understand Munch's art.

[429] Schopenhauer discussed the relation between genius and talent in his *Die Welt als Wille und* Vorstellung, published in 1818. The English citation is taken from Becker 1987: 56.

[430] Becker 1987: 24.

[431] Becker 1987: 49.

[432] Griselda Pollock convincingly argues that the discourse on madness and art operated to sever art and artists from history and to render both unavailable to those without the specialised knowledge of its processes which art history claims for itself. See Pollock 1980: 65. This mechanism is also at play in the writings of nineteenth-century critics. The reviews of Alexandre and Fabrice both reveal the notion of the critic as a visionary who is able to discern real talent, while the ignorant public ridicules the artist of genius. The discovery of talent was an important trait in critical writings. Alcanter de Brahm, for example, remarked in *La Critique* of 20 April 1896 that Munch was ignored by the critics, with the exception of Thadée Natanson and himself (referring to Alcanter de Brahm, 'Un coté inconnu de l'art scandinave–Edward [sic] Munch', in *La Revue de l'Est,* 15 February 1895: 828–9). De Brahm aimed to establish himself as the discoverer and champion of this Norwegian artist, even if this was obviously not true, as Henri Albert had already published two different articles on Munch in 1893 and 1894, see Henri Albert, 'Choses d'Art', in *Mercure de France*, January 1893: 91–2; and Henri Albert, 'Journaux et revues', in *Mercure de France*, May 1894: 90–1.

The Outsider Identity

Instead of following the strategy of emulation, which would be to exhibit indigenous landscapes in an Impressionist or Naturalist style as most Scandinavian artist successfully did, Munch presented himself as an outsider. The art works he selected to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants in 1896 and 1897 showed deep human emotions in an unorthodox style with bold colours and a great emphasis on the materiality of the surface. The combination of radical techniques and provocative, fierce motifs resulted in such a personal and unusual pictorial language that it seemed impossible to classify Munch's style. The French public and his critics had difficulties placing Munch's art in an art historical context. His work did not fit in either the French or the Norwegian pictorial tradition, although some critics referred to a certain Scandinavian spirit or tried to connect him to other French artists. But overall, the French critics did not comment on specific northern characteristics in Munch's art and they did not relate him to his Norwegian contemporaries. Munch was labeled as an outsider, or an anomaly.[433]

In an attempt to grasp Munch's artistic program, the majority of the critics singled out certain aspects of his art, such as the powerful depiction of human emotions, for which he was praised. The materiality of his technique, on the other hand, was more harshly criticized. Munch experimented with an abundant variety of paints and pigments and with the application of his materials. He sprayed and splashed the paint on the canvas, scraped and scratched the paint layers, and exposed his works to extreme weather conditions, such as placing them outside in the snow. Many critics had difficulties with Munch's use of materials and technique. His apparent inability to achieve balanced compositions and clarity of colour and line – the most valued characteristics of the French school – led to objections. Some reviews, particularly those published in the more conservative periodicals, denounced his art as ridiculous and mediocre. Camille Mauclair spoke about 'des tableaux d'un dessin nul et d'une couleur barbare, d'une matière rebutante de lourdeur et de discordance (…) ce qu'on appelle en bon français le manque de talent.'[434] Even critics who endorsed Munch's art were brought to their wit's end by his experimental techniques and brushwork. Yvanhoé Rambosson objected to Munch's extremely direct and material approach of painting: 'un procédé trop direct, étant trop matérielle.'[435] Remarkably, even though Rambosson stated that Munch had developed a highly personal style full of temperament, he did not appreciate the artist's technique. He found his use of colour and line 'physically unpleasant'. Rambosson

[433] Clarke 2009: 18 and 108.

[434] *Mercure de France,* July 1896: 187. See Matthias Krüger's publication *Das Relief der Farbe: pastose Malerei in der französischen Kunstkritik 1850-1890* (2007) for an excellent examination of the meaning of materiality and impasto in French criticism.

[435] Yvanhoé Rambosson, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *La Plume*, 1 May 1897: 313.

considered Munch as a visionary, highly original artist and a genius of the future not *because* of his innovative technique, but rather *in spite* of this: 'Lorsque le talent manque, l'extravagance est ridicule, mais lorsqu'un artiste est réellement un intellectuel, il a le droit de se débarrasser de toutes les formes d'art reconnues par le passé et de produire hors de toute loi qui ne soit celle de son tempérament.' [436]

For Munch painterly form and style were never of interest in themselves. His experimental and radical technique was an intrinsic part of his strong emotional message.[437] The style, form, and means of an artwork, had their sole justification in their ability to communicate the content of the work to an audience. As Munch said himself: 'When seen as whole, art derives from a person's desire to communicate with another. All means are equally good.'[438] Munch searched for a form and image that could speak for all of human experience, and to this end, traditional techniques were sometimes not enough. To express his ideas, Munch pushed his use of pictorial means to an extreme and thus made the actual process of creation part of his work of art. Louis Radiguet, the founder of the magazine *L'Aube* understood this very well: 'Esprit inquiet et chercheur, il méconnait la joie de l'œuvre terminée. Il veut toujours plus qu'il ne peut. Le tableau qu'il conçoit ne peut être exécuté avec seulement le pinceau et les couleurs.'[439] Technique and meaning were bound up for Munch, but most critics had more difficulties in understanding this conjunction.

The difficulties in connecting motif and materiality in Munch's art do not stand out by themselves. It was actually quite characteristic of nineteenth-century art criticism. Motif and technique were usually not coupled in the evaluation of art works, and critics generally discussed these aspects separately. There was a long tradition in France in making this distinction. Within the arts, it was the seventeenth century painter Charles Le Brun who had an important role at the Académie Royale in establishing the separation between subject and technique. He formulated the doctrine of the platonic ideal, 'l'idéalisme': the belief that the arts could depict absolute beauty, whereas in everyday life we can only conceive a reflection of this. To succeed in depicting this *idéal,* certain academic conventions were established, such as clarity of line and a harmonic use of colour. A perfect execution was a requirement to depict the perfect ideal. Form followed function. Diderot coined the noun *l'idéal* as the opposite of *le faire. L'idéal* was the painter's conception of the subject – the effect he wanted to achieve – rather than just the subject of the painting.

[436] *La Plume*, May 15, 1897: 313.
[437] This recalls the words by Richard Shiff in his groundbreaking publication *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism* (1984), where he states that Monet's and Cézanne's 'techniques were largely determined by their concern for expressing such [human] values - living them out, experiencing them. Form or rather technique could both represent and embody content.' See Shiff 1984: xiv.
[438] Cited in McShine 2006: 24.
[439] Louis Radiguet, 'Echos', in *L'Aube,* 3 June 1896.

In the 1890s 'Ideas' became again the central focus, vitalized by the symbolist movement sprouted from the literary manifesto that the poet Jean Moréas had published in 1886.[440] After decades of Impressionism, in which each artist's personal handwriting was seen as the material expression of temperament and personality, the rhetoric became reversed. The painter's self-expression and originality had to prevail over technique. In the 1890s, it was not the artist anymore they sought, but the idea – as the critic Aurier theorized. The formal elements of a painting were just the means to communicate this 'idea'. The aversion to material expression was stimulated by a general dismissal of Impressionism around the fin de siècle. So even if Munch's motifs found familiar ground in the French symbolist circles of the 1890s, the bold insistence on materiality in his painting clashed with their predilection for 'ideas'. Distortions of form, colour, perspective and awkwardness in handling were common practice in the 1890s, but the materiality of Munch's art - such as his extreme use of colour, his seemingly incoherent execution, and the application of different media – pushed this practice to an extreme and surpassed the expression of the idea in the opinion of most critics.

An exception to this critical view was G. Ivan's description of Munch's *L'enfant malade*, exhibited in 1896, in which he combined the two elements: 'éléments plastiques, humains et dramatiques (nullement anecdotiques, s.v.p.) se mêlent aux émotions purement picturales.'[441] He understood that Munch did not express his idéal only in the picture, the motif; but in his picture making as well. He repeated his admiration for Munch's technical skills in 1897: ''Ed. Munch est un monsieur très savant et très raisonnable qui médite longtemps sur chaque coup de pinceau. Il regarde, certes, très attentivement la réalité, mais il l'écoute surtout.'[442] With this he defended Munch against the critics who dismissed him as a charlatan, who just played to the gallery with his exaggerated use of colour and distortions of reality. Ivan's reference to sound and music, is very instructive for his ability to connect *l'idéal* with le *faire*. In music, form and content are always perceived as united, and not considered as separate elements. As Marshall McLuhan, who coined the phrase 'the medium is the message', formulated it much later: 'People used to ask what a painting was *about.* Yet, they never thought to ask what a melody was about (…) In such matters, people retained some of the whole pattern, of form and function as a unity.'[443]

In the discussion of motif and materiality, Munch's own statement – published in a booklet that accompanied his exhibition at the Blomqvist gallery in Oslo in 1918 – that he was given a place of honor at the Salon des Indépendants and causing a stir comparable to Manet's first exhibition, is

[440] See for discussions of the beginnings and ideas of the symbolist movement in the 1890s: Shiff 1984: 39-52.
[441] G. Ivan, 'Chronique des Beaux-Arts', in *l'Encyclopédie contemporaine illustrée*, May 10, 1896: 7.
[442] G. Ivan, 'Chronique des Beaux-Arts', in *l'Encyclopédie contemporaine illustrée*, April 18, 1897: 62.
[443] Marshall McLuhan, 'The Medium is the Message', in Durham & Kellner 2001 : 111.

very significant.[444] Munch synchronized his own critical reception with the initial reception of Manet's *Olympia* at the Salon of 1865, when critics could not make sense of Manet's technique.[445] It was generally believed that Manet simply did not know how to draw or to paint. Alfred Sensier was the only one in 1865 who wrote anything much – or anything reasonable – about form and content in Manet's painting and the way one might possibly affect the other. Like Manet, Munch had employed a highly personal, innovative technique to convey his idéal. But as in the 1860s, only a few critics recognized this. In 1897 it was most notably Delphi Fabrice who followed in Sensier's footsteps, as he wrote in his long critique on *Baiser* (ill. 44): 'ce baiser qui fond en une seule ligne la courbe de deux visages pénétrés l'un et l'autre, comme si les âmes en étaient bues, aspirées, et de ce ton gris terrible évocateur de magiques au-delà (…)'. Fabrice concluded: 'Je crois que cette artiste nous révèlera bien des choses et que l'énergie de son exécution, jointe à la profondeur de sa pensée, s'imposera tôt ou tard à l'admiration des artistes et du public.'[446] Just like in the case of Manet, it was just a matter of time before Munch would be universally appreciated as a great modern master.

But even if Munch's artistic program was not fully understood (yet), his tactics had proved effective. His radically executed paintings of the human condition – worlds apart from the naturalistic or impressionistic Nordic landscapes of his compatriots – were remarked upon by a large public and by the most important critics in Paris, who discussed them in quite some detail. Some labelled him as a mad fraud, others considered him a brilliant pioneer. Provocative and alien he was to all.[447] It is interesting to note that Munch had employed a comparable outsider strategy in Berlin in 1892. In his solo exhibition at the Verein Berliner Künstler, which became a scandal and closed after a week, he included several paintings with Impressionist subject matter and technique, such as *Rue Lafayette* (1891, ill. 45). Munch thus presented himself with French-inspired motives and style, instead of trying to send works that were more compatible with the Germanic tradition. It seems that he adjusted his exhibition tactics per city or location, employing subject matter, style and technique as strategic devices in order to stand out and to thus attract the attention. Munch knew

[444]See text MM UT 23, p. 6 in *Edvard Munch's Writings: The English edition*, published by the Munch Museum. http://www.emunch.no/english.xhtml, consulted October 31, 2012. See also Rapetti & Eggum 1992: 212.
[445] This categorical distinction between form and content has until recently dominated Manet studies, as John House notes in his *Impressionism. Paintings and Politics* (2004): 28. T.J. Clark was one of the first to consider the relations between content and technique of Manet's *Olympia*. See Clark 1985.
[446] Delphi Fabrice, 'Critique d'Art', in *La Patrie*, 18 April 1897.
[447] Although some critics contested his originality, and referred to French influences on his art such as the work of Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Odilon Redon, Félicien Rops and Paul Gauguin. Camille Mauclair for example wrote: 'M. Munch étonnerait s'il ne venait pas après vingt autres.' Camille Mauclair, 'Art', in *Mercure de France*, July 1896: 187.

how to use press attention to his advantage, good and bad publicity alike. In retrospect, it becomes clear that this was Munch's lifelong strategy: to gain recognition by not conforming.[448]

The Artist Must Be Present

After Munch's first successes in the 1890s, he waited until 1903 before again exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants. His absence can be explained by several factors. Munch was travelling extensively through Europe, spending time in Florence, Rome, Germany and Norway and participating in exhibitions in Venice, Oslo, Munich and Dresden. Furthermore he was temporarily hospitalized in different sanatoriums, after a tumultuous ending of his relationship with Tulla Larsen, he moved to Berlin in 1901. Not only Munch was going through hard times, the Salon des Indépendants was also confronted with a difficult period. The reputation of the exhibition was declining, and it was even speculated that it would cease to exist. This led to a serious decrease numbers of participants, with an absolute low of 55 participants in 1900. This low-point might be explained by the staging of the Universal Exhibition that year, which demanded everyone's attention. Many artists decided against exhibiting in those years: Maurice Denis was absent between 1894 en 1901, Felix Vallotton between 1893 and 1901; and Darío de Regoyos between 1895 en 1901. Only the neo-impressionist group of Paul Signac remained loyal to the salon. In 1901 the numbers of participants started to increase again, and soon the Indépendants would be flooded by hundreds of artists.

In 1903, Munch exhibited eight paintings at the Salon des Indépendants. His choices were somewhat less radical, as he included several landscapes. But one painting was very provocative and extreme, and the critics focused on this work: *La Mère* (ill. 46). The large canvas shows a prostitute with a fetus, victim of the hereditary decease syphilis. Many critics judged this painting grotesque and distracting: 'La *Mère,* de Munch, aura été le clou de l'exposition; on s'est pressé devant cette commère informe qui tient un fœtus sur ses genoux, et dont la trogne rouge s'apatoie sur cette hideur. De quel grossier symbolisme germanique l'auteur a-t-il prétendu se réclamer? On n'a pas passé là-devant sans se tordre, mais bien peu de gens on détourne les yeux du monstre pour donner un regard aux belles et fortes études décoratives du même peintre.'[449] The reference to German influences is striking; the author clearly blamed Munch's transfer to Berlin for this aberration. Munch's artistic connections to Germany were harming his reputation in France. As we have seen in the first part, the relations between France and Germany were very tense after the

[448] For Munch's exhibition strategies, see Clarke 2009: 60–111; Ydstie & Guleng 2008: 211-230; Yarborough 1995; and Tina Yarborough, 'Public confrontations and shifting allegiances: Edvard Munch and the art of exhibition', in: McShine 2006: 64-77.

[449] Michel Puy in *Revue Provinciale*, May 1903.

Franco-Prussian War. The tensions were intensified by imperialist rivalries over European colonies and the growing fear of imminent conflict with the Germans. The ongoing hostilities between the two nations strongly affected the French attitude towards German art and culture. Despite these negative reviews, Munch had again captured the attention of the public and critics[450], and for the first time in Paris also of a collector. Munch made his first sale at the Indépendants to the Russian businessmen Ivan Morozov, who had just started to collect modern art, and acquired Munch's *Une nuit claire* in 1903 (ill. 47).[451]

In the following years it seemed that Munch became even less preoccupied with exhibiting in Paris. For the Salon des Indépendants in 1904 he did send some strong paintings, as *Une folle* (ill. 48), but in 1905 he only participated with prints. Munch was honored with a large solo-exhibition in Prague, in which all of his strong paintings were included. Lithography was an important aspect of Munch's artistic practice, but the crowded galleries of the Indépendants were not a suitable place to display them. As Gustave Geffroy remarked: 'Parmi la profusion des œuvres, il est très difficile d'apprécier les dessins, eaux-fortes et aquarelles qui se perdent dans la masse des peintures. Le comité devrait faire une salle a part, car, en général, la gravure est fort bien représentée.'[452] As a result, Munch received marginal press attention that year, although the *Mercure de France* decided to dedicate a long article to Munch's graphic work.[453] It was not the first time that Munch was awarded with more extensive critiques. Marius-Ary Leblond had published a critical examination of Munch's work in *La Grande France* of 1903, William Ritter followed with Munch's exhibition in Prague his 'Correspondance de Bohème' of 1 October 1905 in the *Mercure de France*. *Les Tendances nouvelles,* an important art periodical with contributions by Alcanter de Brahm and Julius Meier-Graefe, had plans to devote a special issue to Munch in the winter of 1908, but this was apparently never realized.[454]

Munch continued to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants until 1912, although not yearly. His critical reception in France was more and more influenced by the increasing xenophobic tendencies and heated debates on the crisis in French art. Critics would usually include him in the list of foreign artists, always referring to him as Norwegian, Scandinavian or simply 'un étranger'. As noted, Munch himself was less actively involved in the French art field. In the 1890s, Munch had had prolonged stays in Paris, and manifested himself rather as 'immigrant artist' than as the sporadic

[450] Although the amount of reviews that mentioned Munch that year was relatively small, I have found 9.
[451] See the letter of April 30, 1903 from the secretary of the Société des Artistes Indépendants A. Routier to Munch that the painting was sold to Morozov. Archive of the Munch Museum, Oslo.
[452] Preface in J.-C. Holl 'Les Salons du Printemps: Les Indépendants, La Nationale, Les Artistes français', in *Les Cahiers d'Art et Littérature* 1905.
[453] Vittorio Pica, 'Trois artistes d'exception', in *Mercure de France*, August 1905.
[454] See the press documentation in the archives of the Munch Museum, Oslo.

itinerant he became after 1900. In 1896 and 1897 he participated actively in the Parisian art circles. He frequented cafés and bars in the city, and connected to a wide variety of influential French and foreign artists, writers and critics such as Frederik Delius, Julius Meier-Graefe, August Strindberg, Stéphane Mallarmé (Munch was invited to his famous literary salon of the *Mardistes*), Thadée Natansson, Yvanhoé Rambosson, Julien Leclerq, Lugné-Poe, Marcel Réja and Alfred Jarry. After 1900, Munch was mainly based in Germany, travelling extensively between Weimar, Berlin, Lubeck and Hamburg, and spending time in a sanatorium in Copenhagen. The practicalities of exhibiting in Paris were taken care of by his good friend Frederick Delius, who lived in Grez, not far from the capital. Munch sent Delius instructions about framing and pricing his art works, informing him about titles, transport and other logistics. When Munch was in Prague for his exhibition of 1905, Delius reminded him of paying his contribution fee to the Indépendants: 'I have just received the information that if you are already a member of the Society you will have to pay 7.50 frcs for half a year's subscription and in addition an exhibition fee – which I can only pay for you when the pictures are handed in. The last sending-in days are 10th-11th March. The varnishing day 23rd March. (…) Shall we hand in your pictures as well? Do be sure to exhibit a couple of really good pictures – be a devil - !'[455] Munch replied a month later upon return in Weimar: 'I have sent off 3 paintings and 3 engravings – The paintings are called – Les buveurs – Paysages de Thuringerwald 2 pieces – Price for each picture 1000 Frcs – 3 Lithographs – Mr. K – Mr Henry van de Velde and Nietzsche – I leave it to you to reject the last one if you find it bad – The works have been sent by express goods and will be there soon. Your E M. The lithographs price 60 Marks each.'[456]

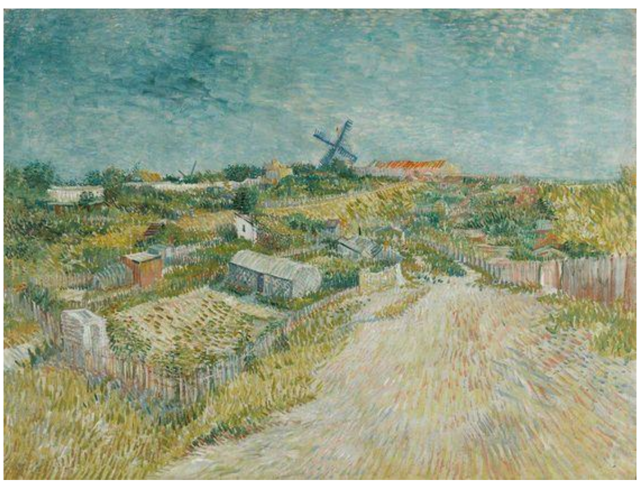
Their correspondence reveals a remarkable image of Munch as an effective businessman, who was carefully managing his international exhibition activities. But a smooth arrangement of his affairs was not sufficient to keep the fire going in Paris. An artist had to be connected to the French cultural field, in order to be noted and reviewed by the critics. Whatever strategy an artist decided to employ, it was crucial to create and maintain a local network of supporting artists and critics.[457] At the beginning of the twentieth century Munch only travelled sporadically to Paris, and this absence combined with his evident attachment to Germany – his addresses listed in the exhibition catalogues of the Indépendants between 1903 and 1912 are either hotels in Paris or domiciles in Germany and Norway – eventually harmed his reputation in France.

[455] Delius to Munch on February 3, 1905. Letter 18 D12, see Smith 1983.
[456] Munch to Delius on February 2, 1906, from Weimar. Letter 25 M9, see Smith 1983.
[457] The cases of Regoyos and Van Gogh both illustrate the importance of this network.

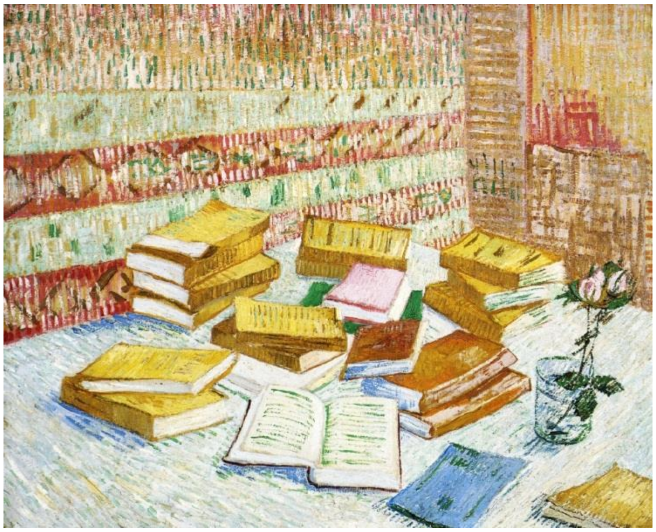
3.3. Acculturation: Vincent van Gogh

Images for chapter 3.3

Ill. 49 Vincent van Gogh, *Derrière le moulin de la Galette – Montmartre*, 1887. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

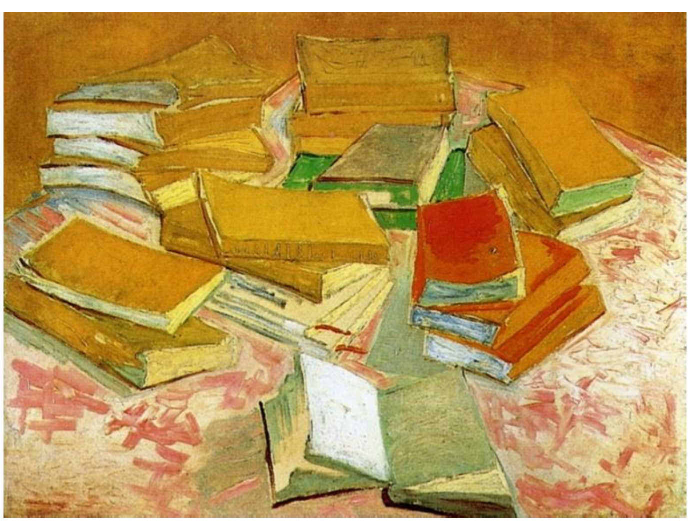


Ill. 50 Vincent van Gogh *La Butte Montmartre*, 1887. Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam



Ill. 51 Vincent van Gogh, *Romans parisiens*, 1887. Private collection

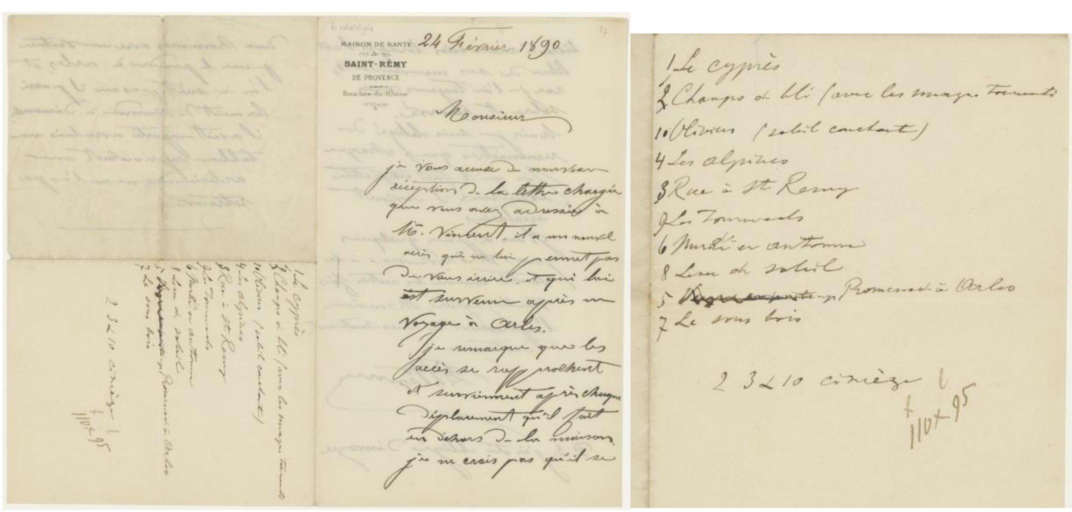
Ill. 52 Paul Signac, *Still Life with a Book*, 1883. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin



Ill. 53 Vincent van Gogh, *Piles of French Novels*, 1887. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Stichting)

Ill. 54 Vincent van Gogh, *Nuit étoilée*, 1888. Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Ill. 55 Vincent van Gogh, *Etude d'iris*, 1890. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



MAISON DE SANTÉ
de
SAINT-RÉMY
DE PROVENCE
Bouches-du-Rhône

24 Février 1890

Monsieur

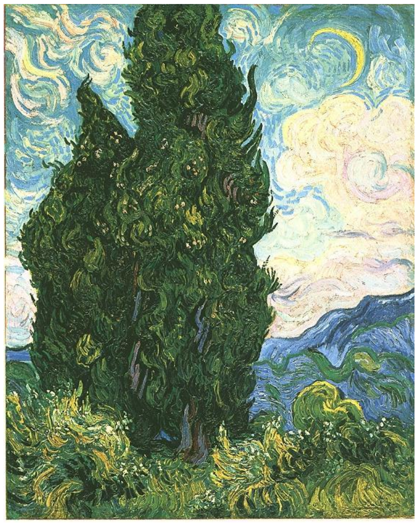
Je vous accuse de nouveau réception de la lettre chargée que vous avez adressée à Mr. Vincent. Il a un nouvel accès qui ne lui permet pas de vous écrire, et qui lui est survenu après un voyage à Arles.
Je remarque que les accès se rapprochent et surviennent après chaque déplacement qu'il fait en dehors de la maison. je ne crois pas qu'il se

1 Le cyprès
2 Champs de blé (avec les nuages tourmentés
10 Oliviers (soleil couchant)
4 Les alpines
3 Rue à St Remy
9 Les Tournesols
6 Mûriers en automne
8 Lever de soleil
5 ~~[illegible]~~ Promenade à Arles
7 Le sous bois

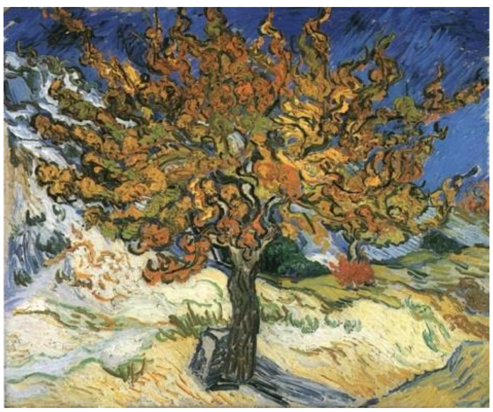
2 3 & 10 [illegible]

110+95

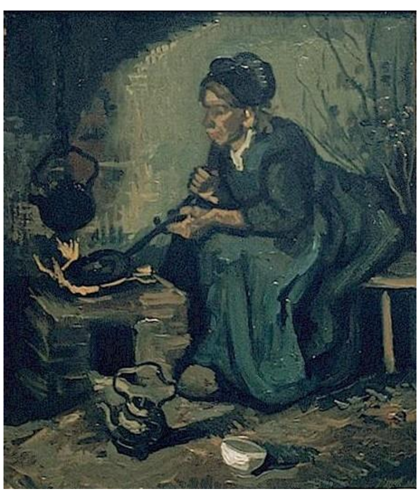
Ill. 56 Letter from Dr. Peyron to Theo van Gogh, 24 February 1890 (and detail). Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



Ill. 57 Vincent van Gogh, *Le Cypres*, 1889. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Ill. 58 Vincent van Gogh, *Mûrier en automne*, 1889. Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena



Ill. 59 Vincent van Gogh, *La Cuisinière hollandaise*, 1885. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

3.3. Acculturation: Vincent van Gogh

Myth of the Unsuccessful Artist

The belief that Vincent van Gogh was an unsuccessful and disregarded artist during his lifetime is very persistent. This powerful myth is not only embraced by the public, but has also influenced scholarship. It has been acknowledged that the recognition of Van Gogh's artistic talent came early, but generally it is still believed that it came after his death, with a few exceptional heralds during his life. Of course, the contrast between the millions of people who admire Van Gogh's work and life nowadays and his success during his lifetime is sharp. But if we compare Van Gogh's reception to the usual course of an artist's career, his case is far from being exceptional or deplorable. Quite the opposite: Van Gogh's first participation at an official exhibition, the Salon des Indépendants in 1888, was reviewed by Gustave Kahn and Jules Christophe, both important French critics and supporters of the neo-impressionist artists. Furthermore, one of his paintings was also mentioned on the front page of the Republican newspaper *La Justice*. This result might seem somewhat poor, but as discussed earlier, the press coverage of the Salon des Indépendants was overall quite limited in those years.[458] One of the most successful artists at the Salon des Indépendants in 1888 was Paul Signac: his contribution was mentioned in twelve different reviews.[459] Signac was one of the founders of the Société des Artistes Indépendants and had been exhibiting at this salon since the beginning. Van Gogh, on the other hand, made his debut in 1888, and it was not that usual for an artist to be remarked the first time around.[460] If we frame Van Gogh in the context of foreign artists, his reception appears even more positive. There were thirteen different foreign artists exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants in 1888, of which only two got mentioned in the French press: the Polish artist Vladislav Ciesielski (1845-1901) and Van Gogh.

The following year Van Gogh exhibited again at the Indépendants and the critical attention he received doubled to four reviews. According to *La Justice*, the public also appreciated his paintings: 'M. Van Gogh, dont les œuvres ont particulièrement attiré l'attention du public.'[461] Two other foreign artists were granted with a review in the French press: Roderick O'Conor (1860-1940) and Georges Lemmen, both received one citation each. In 1890 the number of foreign participants had risen to 23, and the French press appeared more receptive to their contributions. Van Gogh

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[458] See chapter 1.2 In total four reviews with a mention of Van Gogh have been found.
[459] This information is taken from the entry in the catalogue raisonné on Signac's *Collioure, Les Balancelles (Opus 167)* 'la plus belle des ces quatre toiles' (Rodolphe Darzens, 'L'Exposition des indépendants', in *La Revue moderne*, 10 May 1888 : 445).
[460] For example, Vallotton's first participation at the Salon des Indépendants in 1891 was left unnoticed. He received his first French critiques in 1893, at his second exhibition at the Salon des Indépendants.
[461] M.B., 'L'Exposition des artistes indépendants', in *La Justice*, 3 September 1889.

received by far the most attention: twelve articles can be found mentioning his name and art works, while most foreign artist had to content themselves with only half the attention.[462] Besides this relative quantitative success, several critics applauded Van Gogh's contribution: 'Il y a de Van Gogh aux Indépendants dix tableaux qui attestent un génie rare.'[463] These first successes during his lifetime were accelerated by Van Gogh's tragic death in 1890. His posthumous participation at the Salon des Indépendants in 1891 was received with wide acclaim. *L'Ermitage* even considered Van Gogh the most important artist at the salon: 'Enfin, la gloire de cette exposition est par les toiles de Vincent van Gogh (…) je ne lui connais pas de supérieurs parmi les contemporains.'[464]

This brief overview illustrates that Van Gogh was actually successfully making a career in the French art world. His case is thus a representative example of a foreign artist succeeding at the Salon des Indépendants. Van Gogh – in close collaboration with his brother Theo – achieved this by employing specific exhibition strategies. Because even if another myth makes us believe that Van Gogh was an impulsive and unmethodical artist – the stereotypical genius – his letters and actions attest of an opposite attitude. His correspondence reveals a side of Van Gogh as a calculating, strategic artist. When he was in Nuenen he discussed the making of saleable works in his letters to Theo. Van Gogh considered his series of the weavers as a new motif, as his niche, and hoped it would, therefore, have a commercial potential as well. In this period Van Gogh was hoping to become financially independent from Theo – which never happened – and aimed to achieve this by exhibiting and selling his art. This became a recurrent topic in the correspondence between the brothers.[465] Van Gogh continued his quest for a market when he moved to Antwerp in late 1885, placing his paintings with some unknown dealers.[466] Van Gogh's stay in Paris proved to be more successful in establishing relationships with art dealers in order to exhibit and sell paintings. During his Parisian sojourn, Van Gogh's paintings were on display at the shop of Julien 'Père' Tanguy, and at the galleries of the art dealers Pierre Firmin Martin, Georges Thomas and possibly Alphonse Portier. Van Gogh also sold at least one painting to Tanguy during his time in Paris.[467] Theo's position at Goupil of course facilitated his brother's networking activities in the Parisian art world, but it was a reciprocal benefit as appears from a later letter from Theo: 'Tu peux, si tu veux, faire quelque chose pour moi, c'est de continuer comme par le passé & nous créer un entourage d'artistes & d'amis, ce dont je suis absolument incapable à moi seul & ce que tu as cependant créé plus ou moins depuis

[462] In comparison, I have found six articles mentioning Van Rysselberghe, and four for Darío de Regoyos.
[463] Julien Leclercq, 'Aux Indépendants', in *Mercure de France*, May 1890.
[464] Adolph Retté, 'Septième Exposition des Artistes Indépendants', in *L'Ermitage,* 5 May 1891.
[465] See for example letters 468 and 534.
[466] Letter 546. To Theo van Gogh. Antwerp, on or about Sunday, 6 December 1885.
[467] See for Van Gogh's dealings with these dealers: letters 569, 572, 638, 718.

que tu es en France.'[468] During his two-year stay in Paris, Van Gogh became involved in a network of French artists with whom he collaborated and exhibited. The shop of colourman Père Tanguy did not only provide Van Gogh with a podium to exhibit and sell, but it was also a place to meet other artists. It was through Tanguy that Van Gogh first came in contact with Emile Bernard.[469] Van Gogh's artistic network would come to include many young and progressive French painters, such as Paul Gauguin, Louis Anquetin (1861-1932), Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Signac, Georges Seurat, Armand Guillaumin, and Camille and Lucien Pissarro (1863-1944).[470] Van Gogh would go on painting expeditions with Signac and Bernard; he visited the studios of Toulouse-Lautrec, Guillaumin and Seurat; and exhibited at the Théatre Libre d'Antoine with Seurat and Signac in December 1887 and with Bernard, Anquetin, the Dutch artist Arnold Koning and Toulouse-Lautrec at Le Grand Bouillon-Restaurant du Chalet on the Avenue de Clichy in the winter of 1888.[471]

Van Gogh manifested himself as an expatriate artist: he had come to Paris in February 1886 as a permanent immigrant by choice and only kept a loose attachment to his homeland. This was a typical feature of the expatriate artist, as we have seen in chapter 2.1.[472] These artists usually kept loose ties to their home nations, in contrast to the exiled artists. As Van Gogh came to stay, he invested in forming a French network that would be of great use, as we will see. He immersed himself in his new surroundings: first by exploring the city and its cultural manifestations, and then more actively connecting to the Parisian artistic circles. Van Gogh's integration was facilitated by his fluency in French, a language that he had learned at home and even preferred for his correspondence with his brother Theo after moving to France. Van Gogh was not trying to assimilate. He was not interested in adapting to the French identity, as civic nationality was not important to Van Gogh. He was not concerned with national identity, as he felt more connected to an artistic community than a country. Griselda Pollock aptly described Van Gogh as a cultural cosmopolitan, whose homeland was in the arts.[473] Van Gogh's artistic identity can be seen as supranational: he truly embraced the idea of universal art. This position is clearly reflected in Van Gogh's letters. His taste concerned art and literature from all regions, and he easily connected various types of art: high and low, old and new, national and foreign. Van Gogh's alignment with the French artists and artistic tradition must be viewed through this lens. He associated with French art

[468] Letter 713. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Saturday, 27 October 1888.
[469] See Louis van Tilborgh, 'Van Gogh. Een Nederlandse reiziger in Frankrijk', in Esner & Schavemaker 2010: 155-170.
[470] See Bakker & Van Dijk 2013. During his first period in Paris, Van Gogh had more foreign contacts, such as the Spaniard Fabio de Castro, the Australian John Russell and Charles Antoine who was born in Algeria. He had met these artists at Cormon's studio, where 'the foreigner was kept rather apart', as Hatrick later recalled. See Esner & Schavemaker 2010: 159.
[471] Blühm 1999: 66.
[472] See page 74 of this dissertation.
[473] See Pollock 1991.

not because of the national aspect, but because of its artistic values. Paris was the cultural capital of the world, and, therefore, Van Gogh's natural homeland. His integration was not so much a process of assimilation but rather acculturation: Van Gogh did not attempt to be more French than the French, but instead he internalised French culture and contributed to it with a highly personal and original artistic program.

First Time at the Salon des Indépendants

Although Van Gogh had staged a few exhibitions during his stay in Paris, his presence in the exhibition field was marginal. This started to change in 1888, when he first participated at the Salon des Indépendants. This salon was the most important platform for progressive art, and also the favoured exhibition venue of Van Gogh's artist-friends: Angrand, Anquetin, Lucien Pissarro, Seurat and Signac all exhibited there in 1888. His first participation in an official exhibition must have been quite an important moment for the artist, although his letters reveal a rather offhand attitude: 'Pour l'expositions des Indépendants fais comme bon te sembleras. Qu'en dirais-tu d'y exposer les deux grands paysages de la butte Montmartre. Pour moi cela m'est plus ou moins égal, je compte plutôt un peu sur le travail de cette année.'[474] Theo interpreted this reaction as a sign that Van Gogh did not really care about being represented at this exhibition: 'He himself doesn't attach much importance to this exhibition, but here, where there are so many painters, it's essential to make himself known and the exhibition is the best means of doing it'.[475] As Theo rightly claimed, the Salon des Indépendants was the best means for Van Gogh for making himself known, and despite his misleading remark, the same letter to Theo revealed that Van Gogh actually did care about this first presentation. His suggestion to exhibit the two landscapes of la 'butte Montmartre' is telling. These two paintings, *Derrière le moulin de la Galette - Montmartre* and *La Butte Montmartre* (ill. 49 and 51), are among the largest works in Van Gogh's entire oeuvre. They were painted on standard sized canvases of *toile de 40* (81 x 100 cm) and *toile de 60* (96 x 120 cm). As Van Tilborgh and Hendriks confirm in their extensive study on Van Gogh's Parisian period: 'Their unusual size suggests that the first two were intended to be the apotheosis of his attempts in the previous months to get 'sunlight' into his landscapes.'[476] The two versions were painted in late July and early August 1887 after a long period in which Van Gogh had experimented with neo-impressionist brushwork and Impressionist colour schemes. He had studied these styles and techniques closely in the previous months, at various exhibitions. Seurat had exhibited his *Un Dimanche à la Grande-Jatte - 1884* (see ill. 4) at the

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[474] Letter 582. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, on or about Friday, 2 March 1888.
[475] Letter FR b915, Theo to Willemien, 14 March 1888.
[476] Hendriks and Van Tilborgh 2011: 423.

Salon des Indépendants of 1887 to great effect, and Monet displayed his bright and luminous landscapes at George Petit's gallery earlier that spring. Van Gogh adopted Seurat's technique of colourful patterning in his rhythmic and graphic streaks and dots, and the light priming of the canvas to heighten the effect of luminosity reveals Monet's practice.[477] Not only the brushwork and colouration – that must have been even more powerful, harmonious and fresher as the colour effects have been damaged by discolouration[478] - but also the pictorial construction of space and perspective of these paintings are quite remarkable. The views on the Montmartre hill are up close and a broad vista in one. The paintings are convincing culminations of Van Gogh's experiments with French style and technique. But whereas the Impressionists preferred to depict urban motifs, Van Gogh focused on the suburbs, painting modern motifs with a rural feel.[479]

The size, technique and motif (and probably white frames)[480] of the two paintings of the Butte Montmartre were destined to create an effect on the Parisian public: they were impressive and modern representations of their city. That Van Gogh did not suggest these two works offhandedly but rather strategically is also evident from a letter from April 1888: 'Supposons que nous donnions au musée moderne de la Haye, puisque nous avons tant de souvenirs à la Haye, les 2 paysages Montmartre exposés aux Independants.'[481] Van Gogh apparently rated the two landscapes so highly that he intended them as a gift to the museum in The Hague that collected paintings by contemporary (mainly Hague) artists.[482] It appears from a rare letter from the Parisian period that Van Gogh already considered the public and commercial aspects of these two paintings while making them: 'j'en ai une grande en train. Je sais bien que ces grandes toiles longues sont de vente difficile mais plus tard on verra qu'il y a du plein air et de la bonne humeur. Maintenant le tout fera une decoration de salle à manger ou de maison de campagne.'[483] Van Gogh clearly conceived the two landscapes as an ensemble, pendants or counterparts, as part of a decoration program for an interior. The concept of series is fundamental for Van Gogh's artistic project. It is a recurring theme in his oeuvre, and runs from his Nuenen weavers to his last cycle of double-squared paintings in

[477] Vellekoop et. al. 2013: 71 and further.
[478] Hendriks and Van Tilborgh 2011: 426
[479] Reference Esner & Schavemaker 2010: 138. Carel Blotkamp suggested in his article 'Ruisdael in the Provence' that the paintings are reminiscent of Holland. He refers to the mill in the larger painting as quintessential Dutch (and a favored motif of Golden Age painters as Ruisdael), but as the mill is a rather minor detail in the composition and is furthermore a French mill that was a wellknown hallmark of the Butte Montmartre, I disagree with this suggestion. Blotkamp continues his train of thought by arguing that Van Gogh tried to carve out a name for himself at the Salon des Indépendants by exhibiting painting with an exotic – Dutch – touch. I clearly do not support this argument, as I believe and argue here that Van Gogh's intention was to present himself as a modern painter in the French tradition.
[480] Hendriks and Van Tilborgh 2011: 426.
[481] Letter 592. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, on or about Tuesday, 3 April 1888.
[482] The donation did not go ahead. See footnote 9 of letter 592.
[483] Letter 572. To Theo van Gogh. Paris, between about Saturday, 23 and about Monday, 25 July 1887. This is one of the few letters from Paris period, as Theo was in The Netherlands (and Van Gogh needed money).

Auvers.[484] Van Gogh considered his artistic output as an interlinked and cohesive body of works. Certain series were conceived from the outset; in other instances Van Gogh associated or paired single paintings after creation. The fact that Van Gogh immediately suggested a pair for the Indépendants underwrites the importance he attached to his serial concept. He could have opted to present himself for the first time with more diverse works, as to test the waters with a variety of motifs, styles and techniques, like a sample sale.[485] But Van Gogh deliberately chose to mark his debut with one striking ensemble. The wish to be represented by a series of works, rather than by single paintings, becomes a recurring theme in the correspondence. When discussing a possible exhibition at *La Revue indépendante*, Van Gogh writes: 'Alors l'année prochaine je leur donnerais à exposer la décoration de la maison lorsqu'il y aurait un ensemble.'[486]

Van Gogh was not only represented by the two Montmartre paintings at the Salon des Indépendants. The first painting in the exhibition catalogue was *Romans parisiens* (ill. 51). It appears from the letters that Theo had suggested to add this work to the selections: 'Je trouve très-bien que tu mettes les livres aussi aux Indépendants. faudra donner comme titre de cette étude: "Romans parisiens".'[487] The importance that Van Gogh attributed to the title is illustrative. *Romans parisiens* was a fairly common subtitle for the contemporary books that Van Gogh depicted.[488] His Parisian public would have recognized the books as modern novels by their yellow covers alone, but Van Gogh chose to spell out his motif also by the title. The choice of motif is possibly influenced by Signac, who made a still life with books that Van Gogh could have seen in his atelier (ill. 52). Van Gogh's painting was made in the winter of 1887 and is also on a rather large format (73,5 x 93 cm). It was preceded by a slightly smaller prepatory study (ill. 53). Both the format and the careful preparation disclose the significance of this painting. The still life has comparable qualities to the landscapes: the colour scheme is bright and strong; the paint is applied in graphic strikes and hatches; and the perspective of the table is titled and blocked off by walls, creating a rather compressed space. There are two perspective points - one formed by the corner of the table and the other by the junction of the walls – creating a distorting and confusing spatial effect. Van Gogh painted the background in decorative friezes, accentuating the patterns with hatchings and complementary colours. Again, Van Gogh fused a modern subject with new, experimental styles and techniques that he had adopted in Paris. His radical style and technique can be compared to that of

[484] Dorn 1990; Druick and Zegers 2001; and Van Dijk, Bruteig & Jansen 2015.
[485] This was a strategy that was often used by debutants; see the example of Munch as discussed in the previous case-study.
[486] Letter 677. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Sunday, 9 September 1888.
[487] Letter 584. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Saturday, 10 March 1888.
[488] Dumas 2010: 226.

Munch – in terms of paint application and use of colours for example – their choice of motifs was, however, very different. Contrary to Munch's distinctly alien subjects, focusing on human emotions, Van Gogh's subject matter (Parisian landscapes and a book still life) was grafted on the French tradition.

With his three contributions Van Gogh showed himself as a truly modern painter, claiming his part in the new movement in French art. It was important to Van Gogh to be presented as part of the group: 'je suis en somme bien content qu'ils les ont placés avec les autres impressionistes'.[489] In this letter he also urged Theo not to list him as 'Van Gogh' in the catalogue, but rather as 'Vincent': 'pour l'excellente raison que ce dernier nom ne saurait se prononcer ici.' This remark reveals that Van Gogh was hoping to be noted and spoken about. For many foreign artists their names proved to be hindrances in building their reputations. French critics misspelled their names frequently in their reviews, and several foreign artists decided to change their names into French alternatives.[490] Theo did apparently not obey Van Gogh's wishes, as in the following years the name 'Van Gogh' was printed in the exhibition catalogues.[491] As with all artists, Van Gogh's place of birth was mentioned in the catalogue. In 1888 it simply stated 'né en Hollande', and Theo's address at 54, rue Lepic was listed. Van Gogh's nationality was noted by two critics. The artist Signac wrote under his pseudonym Néo : 'Exposent aussi dans la salle impressioniste: M. van Gogh – un hollandais exubérant qui chante la gloire des colorations de *Montmartre* et des *Volumes Charpentier*.'[492] Jules Christophe reviewed Van Gogh's painting at more length in the *Journal des artistes* : 'trois tableaux de M. Vincent van Gogh, hollandais naturalisé Montmartrois, frère de marchand de tableaux chic; c'est deux vues de la 'Butte', auprès du moulin de la Galette, et une jonchée des volumes in-12, brochés, sur une table, devant une tapisserie multicolore, avec, auprès d'eux, un verre d'eau dans quoi respire une rose, et c'est peint avec esprit, sans recherche, sans souci de la vérité, tout zebré d'espèces de hachures roses et jaunes, semblables à des coups de griffe. Et beaucoup d'incertitude dans le procédé, d'inobservation partout. Dans les paysages, des ciels pas vus. Mais attractif et brillant.'[493] In both reviews Van Gogh is considered as part of the – French – group ('dans la salle impressioniste' and 'naturalisé Montmartrois') and not as an outsider. Although Christophe is critical about Van Gogh's

[489] Letter 589. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, on or about Sunday, 25 March 1888. Van Gogh's reference to the impressionists must not be understood in the strict sense, it also included the neo-impressionists and other young painters such as Anquetin. In letter 585 (To Theo van Gogh. Arles, on or about Friday, 16 March 1888) Van Gogh had already said he was pleased with his paintings being at the Salon des Indépendants.
[490] The Polish artist Ludwig Markus, for example, changed his name to Louis Marcoussis on the suggestion of the critic Apollinaire (who himself had changed his name from Wilhelm Albert Włodzimierz Apolinary Kostrowicki).
[491] A possible explanation is that there was also a French artist named (Georges) Vincent exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants, and it would have been confusing and not very strategic to have two Vincents in the same exhibition.
[492] Néo, 'Ive Exposition des Artistes Indépendants', in *Le Cri du Peuple*, 29 March 1888.
[493] Jules Christophe, 'Le Néo-Impressionnisme au Pavillon de Ville de Paris', in *Journal des artistes*, 6 May 1888.

observation and examination, he seems impressed by the 'esprit' of these paintings. 'Esprit' is a quintessential French value, embodying the hallmarks of French art such as harmony, elegance and reason. Many critics, especially after the turn of the century, believed 'esprit' to be a uniquely French – or Latin – characteristic. Georges Lecomte wrote for example: 'cet esprit logique, de ce juste sens de l'harmonie et des proportions qui caractérisent la race latine.'[494] The term 'esprit' was not only highly relevant in cultural discourse; it was also a central value on the political field. Again it was Maurice Barrès, the most powerful spokesman for the right wing as we have seen in chapter 1.3, who connected cultural and political agendas. He later summarized in one of his widely read *Cahiers*: 'Vieil esprit français de clarté et de bon sens'.[495]

The exuberance of Van Gogh's style and colouration, noted by Signac and Christophe, is also remarked upon by Gustave Kahn: 'Van Gogh brosse vigoureusement, sans un assez grand souci de la valeur et de l'exactitude de ses tons, de grands paysages. Vers une tapisserie s'oriente une multitude polychrome de livres; ce motif bon pour une étude, ne peut être un prétexte à tableau.'[496] Kahn's observations on colour and values provoked a reaction by Van Gogh: 'Je crois que ce que dit Kahn est très vrai, que je n'aie pas suffisament tenu compte des valeurs, mais ce sera encore bien autre chôse qu'ils diront plus tard – pas moins vrai. C'est pas possible de faire les valeurs et la couleur (…) On ne peut pas être en même temps au pôle et à l'équateur. Il faut en prendre son parti. Ce qu'aussi j'espère bien faire et ce sera probablement la couleur.'[497] This defense is very characteristic for Van Gogh. He was driven by an unconditional commitment to his own artistic program, and he had chosen colour above all as his contribution to modern painting. He did not let Kahn distract him from his path, and returned to the Salon des Indépendants the following year with even bolder and purer colours, as we will see.

Another important review, hardly ever mentioned in recent literature, was published on 11 April by Gustave Geffroy on the front page of the Republican newspaper *La Justice*.[498] Although this particular review is not mentioned in the correspondence, it is known from other letters that Theo and Vincent were regular readers of this newspaper.[499] Van Gogh's *Romans parisiens* were only briefly mentioned, but his name was printed in a prime spot, nevertheless. Geffroy was an influential critic who had championed Monet and the Impressionists. He was apparently intending to write a longer article on Van Gogh, as he wrote Theo on 29 May 1888 asking him to thank

[494] Georges Lecomte, 'La crise de la peinture française', in *Art et les artistes*, 1910.
[495] Barrès 1920-22, vol. 13: 168.
[496] Gustave Kahn in *La Revue indépendante*, April 1888: 163.
[497] Letter 594. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Monday, 9 April 1888.
[498] Gustave Gefrroy in *La Justice*, April 11, 1888. I have only found mention of it, in Dorn & Leeman 1990.
[499] See letters 629, 630, 650.

Bernard for the extracts of Van Gogh's letters. He also suggested Theo to visit Tanguy's shop together, as the collector Paul Gallimard was interested in purchasing two works by Van Gogh through Tanguy.[500] It seems as if Gallimard did not acquire any of Van Gogh's paintings in the end, but his interest is noteworthy. He had an important collection, with works by Rembrandt, Goya, Daumier, Corot, Renoir, Ingres, Delacroix, Fragonard, Millet, Manet, Monet and other Impressionists.

Exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants thus had an immediate effect on Van Gogh's career, which development fitted the common course of artist's careers in those days. The first step for an artist was to exhibit and to make sure the exhibition would be noted by critics, as collectors tended to take critical acclaim as their guidance. Most sales were not executed at the exhibition itself: potential buyers would rather visit the artist's studios or their galleries to view more work and negotiate directly with the artists or dealers. Van Gogh's first experience of exhibiting at an official Parisian venue followed this course exactly: a few influential critics noted his three paintings and their reviews attracted the interest of collectors.

Great Ambitions

His first experience at the Salon des Indépendants bolstered Van Gogh's exhibition plans, as he wrote to his sister Willemien on 30 March: 'By next year – when the Universal Exhibition will be held – I have to make a mass of things, because my friends will certainly also not fail to have a great many interesting things on hand. Not that I or any of the painters with whom I'm more especially friendly will exhibit with the others, but an open exhibition will probably be staged alongside the official one at that time.'[501] The Universal Exhibition was scheduled to open in May 1889 and would last until November. Many artists wanted to take advantage of the massive amounts of visitors that would come to Paris (more than 28 million people would visit the Universal Exhibition of 1889), and planned alternative exhibitions. Gauguin mounted an exhibition in the Café Volpini on the Champs de Mars for example. Maybe Van Gogh was referring to geffr plans, but by 'open exhibition' he probably meant the Salon des Indépendants. This salon was eventually postponed to the fall, and opened in September 1889, thus still coinciding with the Universal Exhibition. Van Gogh clearly did not want to stay behind if the other artists were going to display their best works, and felt the urge to secure his position within the art field: 'Je n'y peux rien, je me sens en lucidité et je veux autant que possible m'assurer d'assez de tableaux pour garder ma position lorsque les autres aussi feront pour l'année 89 un grand effort. Seurat a de quoi, avec 2 ou 3 de ses énormes toiles, de quoi exposer à lui seul, Signac qui est bon travailleur a de quoi aussi, Gauguin aussi et Guillaumin. Donc je

[500] Letter FR b1199. Gustave Geffroy to Theo van Gogh, 29 May 1888.
[501] Letter 590. To Willemien van Gogh. Arles, on or about Friday, 30 March 1888.

voudrais bien moi avoir pour cette époque – que nous l'exposions ou non – la serie d'études: Décoration. Comme cela nous serons absolument originaux car les autres ne pourront pas nous trouver prétentieux lorsque nous n'avons que cela. Mais sois en bien assuré que je cherche à y mettre un *style*.'[502] In this letter Van Gogh quite explicitly disclosed his exhibition strategy: he wanted to match the artistic production – either in number, size or effect of art works – of the French avant-garde; he wished to be presented with a series of works (his 'Decoration' program) as to be original but not pretentious; and he intended to paint these works in a personal, recognizable style. Van Gogh reiterated his plans in a letter to Theo from September: 'La seule espérance que j'ai c'est qu'en travaillant bien raide, au bout d'une année j'aurai assez de tableaux pour pouvoir me montrer – si je veux ou si toi tu le désires – à cette époque de l'exposition (…) Et dans le nombre des études il y en aura j'espère qui soient des tableaux (…) Pour le ciel étoilé j'espère toujours bien le peindre et peut être serai je un de ces soirs dans le même champ labouré si le ciel est bien étincelant.'[503] Van Gogh realized his hopes of painting a night scene in time, as he would exhibit his *Nuit étoilée* (ill. 54) at the Salon des Indépendants in 1889.

In January 1889, Theo asked his brother what he would like to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants that year. In the following months they discussed various possibilities. Van Gogh suggested several ambitious paintings that he made in the spring and summer of 1888.[504] He repeated several times to Theo that he did not really care about the selection, as long as it was of equal quality and as ambitious as the works by other artists.[505] By the end of May, Van Gogh suggested to exhibit 'la nuit étoilée', with another landscape with yellow leafage, as these two paintings would have complementary colour schemes.[506] The amount of works that artists could display at the Salon des Indépendants that year was limited to three, as the space of the Salle de la Société d'horticulture was much smaller than the usual location. Van Gogh could thus not exhibit several paintings from his decoration program, but he considered his *Nuit étoilée* as part of it. Even if Van Gogh was rather modest about his night scene in this letter to Theo, it was quite an important painting to him. He had written repeatedly about it to Theo and Emile Bernard and he had made sketches of it. Moreover, Signac had praised this starry night as a 'chef-d'oeuvre' when he visited Van Gogh in March 1889 in Arles.[507] Theo also highly rated the work, as he wrote in May 1889 after

[502] Letter 689. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Wednesday, 26 September 1888.
[503] Letter 687. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Tuesday, 25 September 1888.
[504] See letter 745. His suggestions included: *The Harvest* (F412), *The White Orchard* (F403), *La Mousmé* (F431), *Sower with Setting Sun* (F422).
[505] Letter 732. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Monday, 7 January 1889.
[506] Letter 777. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, between about Friday, 31 May and about Thursday, 6 June 1889.
[507] Musée d'Orsay 1996: 142.

receiving the painting by mail: 'Il y a quelques jours j'ai reçu ton envoi qui est très important, il y a des choses superbes.'[508] In response to Theo's letter, Vincent suggested to exhibit the night painting at the Indépendants.

The night scene would not be 'trop fou', and Van Gogh hoped that it might even inspire others 'de faire mieux que moi des effets de nuits'.[509] Nocturnes and night effects were popular motifs in the nineteenth-century. Van Gogh greatly admired Daubigny's evening and moon landscapes, and also mentioned several evening effects by modern painters such as Monet. At the Salon des Indépendants of 1887 he had seen Seurat's *Embouchure de la Seine,* which was an evening scene. Van Gogh painted this traditional subject in pure complementary colours. The night was filled with strong yellows and blues, applied with thick impasto and vibrant touches. The French critics, who discussed Van Gogh's radical paint application and strong colours, noted this remarkable style and technique. His bold insistence on the materiality of his paintings encountered opposition, comparable to Munch's case as has been argued in chapter 3.2. Paul de Katow wrote in *Gil Blas*: 'M. Van Gogh, né en Hollande, intitule son tableau: *Nuit étoilée.* Son procédé est sommaire, il couvre sa toile d'une couche de bleu de Prusse, avec le pouce, enduit d'ocre jaune, il fait des froncés, et le tour est joué.'[510] The art critic Félix Fénéon remarked: 'M. Van Gogh est un amusant coloriste même dans des extravagances comme sa *Nuit étoilée*: sur le ciel, quadrillé en grossière sparterie par la brosse plate, les tubes ont directement posé des cônes de blanc, de rose, de jaune, étoiles; des triangles d'orangé s'engloutissent dans le fleuve, et, près de bateaux amarrés, des êtres baroquement sinistres se hâtent.'[511]

Van Gogh was represented by two paintings at the Indépendants, the *Nuit étoilée* and *Etude d'iris* (ill. 55). This second entry was not discussed by the brothers in their letters, but as Van Gogh suffered a mental breakdown in the summer of 1889, Theo probably had to decide by himself what he would send to the Salon des Indépendants opening in September. Just before his attack around July 16, Vincent had sent a consignment with 11 paintings to Theo.[512] It included several of his latest works, such as the irises from May 1889. Theo praised it for its use of real subject matter, form and colour.[513] Before receiving the consignment, Theo had already expressed his preference for real motives, taken from life: 'Ne te donnes pas plus de mal qu'il ne le faut car si tu ne fais qu'un simple récit de ce que tu vois, il y a des qualités suffisantes pour que tes toiles restent. Penses au natures

[508] Letter 774. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Tuesday, 21 May 1889. Theo listed the starry night among the paintings he liked best from the consignment.
[509] Letter 732. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Monday, 7 January 1889.
[510] Paul de Katow in *Gil Blas*, September 5, 1889.
[511] Félix Fénéon in *La Vogue*, September 1889. Cited in Fénéon & Halperin 1970, vol. 1: 168.
[512] See letter 789. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Sunday, 14 or Monday, 15 July 1889.
[513] Letter 813. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Tuesday, 22 October 1889.

mortes & aux fleurs que faisait Delacroix quand il allait à la campagne chez G. Sand.'[514] Like evening effects, flowering gardens were a very popular motif in French nineteenth-century painting, both with the previous generations of artists as with the Impressionists. Van Gogh was thus represented at the Indépendants with two conventional motifs, but executed in very new and radical ways. The colours were bold and strong, almost violent as some critics remarked.[515] Van Gogh apparently had made a strong impression, as *La Justice* reported that his works had particularly attracted the public's attention, and Theo also informed his brother that 'les Iris ont été vu par beaucoup de personnes qui m'en parlent.'[516]

Painter of the Provence

Step-by-step Van Gogh was achieving success. His participation in the Salon des Indépendants of 1888 and 1889 had raised the interest of the Belgian equivalent of this exhibition: Les XX. Van Gogh was invited to exhibit in the seventh Salon des XX, organised from 8 January to 23 February 1890 in Brussels. Van Gogh displayed six *toile de 30* paintings at Les XX, including two versions of sunflowers. These paintings expressed the cycle of the seasons in colour and subject, summarizing Van Gogh's latest artistic program of painting 'impressions de la Provence'.[517] The critics noticed his entries and he made his first sale through an exhibition.[518] Theo was cheerful about the developments: 'Je crois que si nous pouvons attendre avec patience jusqu'à ce que le succès vient, tu le verras sûrement. Il faut se faire connaître sans vouloir s'imposer: cela viendra tout seul par tes beaux travaux.' The emphasis that Theo laid on presenting oneself without imposing is interesting. Vincent had said a similar thing in 1888, when he suggested exhibiting his Decoration at the Indépendants, as 'les autres ne pourront pas nous trouver prétentieux'.[519] This is not only modesty on the side of the Van Gogh brothers: it was a quintessential attitude to get accepted in French culture. This norm resonated strongly in a remark that Derain made on Van Dongen in a letter to Matisse: 'En un mot il n'est pas français (…) Je crois que c'est une folie de vouloir imposer sa

[514] Letter 781. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Sunday, 16 June 1889.
[515] 'Les *Iris* de celui-ci déchiquètent violemment leurs pans violets sur leurs feuilles en lattes.' See: Fénéon & Halperin 1970, vol. 1: 168.
[516] In *La Justice*, September 3, 1889 and letter 819 (Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Saturday, 16 November 1889). The *Irises* were apparently better placed and, therefore, making a stronger effect, as Theo reported in another letter: 'mais l'autre fait excessivement bien. Ils l'ont mis sur le côté étroit de la salle et il frappe de loin.' Letter 799. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Thursday, 5 September 1889.
[517] Dorn and Leeman 1990: 189.
[518] *The Red Vineyard* was sold to Anna Boch.
[519] Letter 689. To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Wednesday, 26 September 1888.

chanson pour sa chanson sans en controller rigoureusement l'air.'[520] The brothers Van Gogh were conscious of these social expectations and carefully navigated the French cultural field.

During the exhibition of Les XX the brothers Van Gogh were already discussing the selection for the Salon des Indépendants of 1890.[521] Van Gogh informed Theo that he was working on canvases that he intended to exhibit: 'J'espère pour l'exposition des impressionistes en Mars t'envoyer encore quelques toiles qui sèchent dans ce moment.'[522] It is not known which canvases Van Gogh had in mind. He had been working on translations of Millet paintings, but these were intended for his personal benefit. In early January Vincent had informed on some paintings he had done of the Provence, that were not dry yet: 'Pour donner une idée de la Provence il est indispensable de faire encore quelques toiles des cyprès et des montagnes. Le ravin et une autre toile des montagnes avec chemin sur l'avant plan en sont des types. Et surtout le ravin que j'ai encore ici parcequ'il n'est pas sec.'[523] Possibly Van Gogh had one these paintings in mind for the Indépendants. The written discussion about his contribution stopped, as Van Gogh had a mental breakdown on February 22 and did not write Theo until March 17 – two days before the opening of the Salon des Indépendants. Theo had been informed on his brother's collapse by a letter from Dr. Peyron of February 24. On the back of that letter, Theo wrote down a list of ten paintings.[524] He must have realized that Vincent was in no state to decide on his participation at the Indépendants, and that a consignment with his works intended for the exhibition would not arrive in time. It is impossible to make firm statements about the selection of paintings purely based on this list, but it does shed some light on Theo's considerations. The list enumerates ten different paintings (ill. 56), which were not listed in the right order from the outset, as Theo added numbers. These numbers correspond to the order of Van Gogh's entries in the exhibition catalogue of the Indépendants. The titles are also almost identical to the ones printed in the catalogue, with a few remarkable modifications. In the catalogue the word 'Provence' was added three times to titles.[525] This was probably added by Theo himself, as he must have handed in the list of titles for the catalogue. It is tempting to think that he might have added 'Provence' in order to present his brother as a modern painter of the Provence, as this would have been very much in line with the artistic identity that Van

[520] Hopmans 2010: 29, footnote 103.
[521] See letter 843. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Wednesday, 22 January 1890.
[522] Letter 854. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Wednesday, 12 February 1890.
[523] Letter 836. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Saturday, 4 January 1890.
[524] See letter FR 1062. Dr. Peyron to Theo van Gogh, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 24 February 1890. There is reference to the dimensions of the 'cimèse' [sic], probably referring to the wall space allocated to each artist. It seems as this was 10 metres, but it is unclear what Theo meant by the numbers preceding '& 10 cimèse'. It is also uncertain what the other dimensions on the sheet refer to: 110 x 95 (hauteur x largeur). It could be that this was the size of the paintings including frames. All works – except *Mûrier en automne* – were *toile 30* canvases: 92 x 73 cm. The frames would then have been about 10 cm wide.
[525] See exhibition catalogue of 1890, it concerns the numbers 833, 839 and 841.

Gogh envisioned for himself in that period as explicated in his letters. In the fall of 1889 Van Gogh had already expressed the wish that his work would 'formera une espèce d'ensemble "Impressions de la Provence"', and it was this program that he had carefully exhibited at Les XX.[526] In another letter, already cited above, Van Gogh had written about rendering an impression of the Provence by cypresses and mountains.[527] In any case, the majority of the selection that Theo made for the Indépendants consisted of Provence paintings that Vincent had made that previous year: *Les Alpines*, *Le Cypres* (ill. 57)*, Rue à Saint-Rémy, Lever de soleil en Provence, Paysage montagneux en Provence, Verger d'oliviers en Provence, Mûrier en automne* (ill. 58) and *Sous Bois.* Theo added two works from Arles: *Les Tournesols* and *Promenade à Arles.*

Just before his attack, Van Gogh had written to Theo that if his consignment did not arrive in time for the Indépendants, he would then have to choose from the works stored with père Tanguy.[528] Theo selected a few paintings from Tanguy's, three paintings were exhibited at Les XX and returned just in time for the Indépendants, and the last three (*Les Alpines, Verger d'Olivier, Rue à Saint-Rémy*) had been sent by Vincent with his last consignment in January. All the paintings were ambitious works, painted on *toile 30* canvases (with the exception of *Mûrier en automne*), Van Gogh's favored format for full-fledged works. Theo selected many of his personal favorites, such as *Sous Bois* and *Paysage montagneux*.[529] Vincent had declared *Mûrier en automne* the best of his autumn studies of 1889, full of colour just like a Monticelli.[530] The cypress was a likely choice as Vincent considered it a quintessential Provence subject, and it was also another version of a cypress painting that he had destined to give to the art critic Albert Aurier. This young French writer had published a long and jubilant article on Van Gogh's art after seeing the exhibition in Brussels.[531] Van Gogh was flattered but surprised by the review, and he passed the credits to other French artists such as Monticelli, Delacroix and Gauguin when he wrote Aurier to thank him. But even if Van Gogh was somewhat uncomfortable with Aurier's praise, he did recognize the marketing potential of it as he suggested to Theo to send copies of the article to art dealers.[532] He also expressed his gratitude to

[526] Letter 808. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Saturday, 5 October 1889.
[527] Letter 836. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Saturday, 4 January 1890.
[528] Letter 854. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Wednesday, 12 February 1890.
[529] Letters 793 and 807.
[530] Letter 824. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Saturday, 7 December 1889; and Letter 808. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Saturday, 5 October 1889.
[531] Albert Aurier, 'Les isolés: Vincent van Gogh', in *Mercure de France*, January 1890: 24-29. A shortened version of the article was published in the Belgian journal *L'Art Moderne. Revue Critique des Arts et de la Littérature*, 19 January 1890: 20-22.
[532] Letter 854. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Wednesday, 12 February 1890.

Aurier by offering him a painting of a cypress, as this motif was 'si caractéristique au paysage de Provence et vous le sentiez en disant: "même la couleur noire"'.[533]

The ensemble of the ten paintings at the Salon des Indépendants made a strong impression. Theo immediately wrote to his brother on the opening day: 'Tes tableaux sont bien placés & font très bien. Il y en a beaucoup qui sont venus pour me prier de te faire leurs compliments. Gauguin disait que tes tableaux sont le clou de l'exposition.'[534] Gauguin sent his compliments in person on the following day: 'C'est surtout à cette dernière place [Salon des Indépendants] qu'on peut bien juger ce que vous faites, soit à cause des choses à côté les unes des autres, soit à cause du voisinage.– Je vous fais mon sincère compliment, et pour beaucoup d'artistes vous êtes dans l'exposition le plus remarquable.'[535] He included a sketch of *Les Alpines,* Van Gogh's painting of a ravine that Gauguin admired most at the Salon des Indépendants and suggested to exchange it against one of his own works. Van Gogh must have been pleased that his paintings were presented as a cohesive ensemble, enforcing each other. He had a great success with the artist community, as also reported by Theo: 'Pissarro qui y allait tous les jours me dit que tu as un vrai succès parmi les artistes.'[536] Theo continued his letter by saying that many people came to see him regarding Van Gogh's paintings, but that the critics did not comment on the 'salle des impressionistes', which was actually not quite true. I have found ten different reviews on Van Gogh's participation.[537] Not all of them were positive[538], but Van Gogh was certainly noted, and by some critics applauded. They spoke of his extraordinarily powerful expression, his strong effects, his exuberant use of colour, and his tormented soul. Several critics also referred to him as painter of the Provence. Jules Christophe spoke about 'nos paysages de Provence furibonds' and Robert Bernier called the *Sous Bois* a depiction of the Paradou, which is paradise in Provencal dialect.[539] The *Mercure de France*, where Aurier had published his article in January, printed a jubilant review by Julien Leclerq in May, celebrating Van Gogh as 'une génie rare'.[540]

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[533] Letter 853. To Albert Aurier. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Sunday, 9 or Monday, 10 February 1890.
[534] Letter 858. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Wednesday, 19 March 1890.
[535] Letter 859. Paul Gauguin to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, on or about Thursday, 20 March 1890.
[536] Letter 860. Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh. Paris, Saturday, 29 March 1890. He repeated this in his next letter from April 23, 1890 (letter 862) also mentioning that Monet found Vincent's paintings the best of the exhibition.
[537] Robert Bernier, 'Aux Indépendants', in *La France Moderne*, 16 April 1889; Firmin Javel, 'Nouvelles artistiques', in *Gil Blas,* 30 March 1890; Jules Antoine in *La Plume*, 12 September 1890; Georges Lecomte in *Art et Critique*, 1890; Mario Varvara, 'Les Indépendants, Ecrits pour l'art' in *Art Français*, 12 October 1890; Julien Leclerq in *Mercure de France*, May 1890; Jules Christophe in *Journal des artistes*, 6 April 1890.
[538] 'Si M. Van Gogh voit la nature comme il la peint, nous lui plaignons. Il doit la trouver bien laide.' *La Lanterne*, 21 March 1890; and 'M. Van Gogh de même, qui peint ses paysages, et c'est la son excuse, dans une maison de santé.' *Le XIX siècle*, 21 March 1890.
[539] Jules Christophe in *Journal des artistes*, 6 April 1890; and Robert Bernier, 'Aux Indépendants', in *La France Moderne*, 16 April 1889.
[540] Julien Leclerq in *Mercure de France*, May 1890.

In the correspondence there is no mention of all these positive critiques. As cited above, Theo had written a few letters to Vincent in March and April referring to his success in Paris. But when Van Gogh finally replied to him by the end of April after a long silence due to his illness, he wrote: 'réellement je me sens trop abimé de chagrin pour pouvoir faire face à de la publicité. Faire des tableaux me distrait – mais si j'en entends parler cela me fait plus de peine qu'il ne le sait'.[541] After this letter, Theo did not refer to the exhibition at the Indépendants anymore.[542]

Posthumous

Van Gogh shot himself on 27 July 1890, and died two days later. The Société des Artistes Indépendants honored him on their next salon by hanging his paintings on a black cloth. The critics reviewed Van Gogh's posthumous contribution in lyrical terms: 'Enfin, la gloire de cette exposition est par les toiles de Vincent van Gogh (...) Van Gogh aura un jour la gloire universelle qu'il mérite: je ne lui connais pas de supérieurs parmi les contemporains.'[543] The most influential critics at the time commented on Van Gogh's work, including Julien Leclerq in the *Mercure de France* (2 May 1891) and Octave Mirbeau in the *Echo de Paris* (31 March 1891). A common trait in the reviews was the emphasis that the critics laid on the French influences on Van Gogh's art. Even if he was identified as a Dutchman, for example by Eugène Tardieu in *Le Magazine Français Illustré* (25 April 1891), Van Gogh's work was described as greatly indebted to French artists such as Delacroix, Monet, Monticelli and Millet: influences that Van Gogh himself had also pointed to in his letters. As the French critics started to fully discover the power and genius of Van Gogh's art, they had to consider him in French terms in order to claim one the most original modern artists as one of theirs. As we have seen, this appropriation had already started during Van Gogh's lifetime, but really took flight after his death – parallel to his rising fame. Van Gogh was framed by the French critics as an isolated and mad genius, yet an isolated and mad *French* genius. This appropriation was facilitated by Van Gogh's strategy of acculturation. He had presented himself at the Salon des Indépendants as a modern painter of Parisian subjects (at the Salon des Indépendants of 1888); subsequently as a painter of traditional French motives in a radically modern style and technique (Salon des Indépendants of 1889); and finally (Salon des Indépendants of 1890) as the painter of bright and boldly coloured Provencal landscapes – a region full of nationalistic and traditional connotations at the time, as we have seen in the first part of this dissertation. Van Gogh had placed himself in the – French – line of painters of the Midi, together with Signac and Cézanne.

[541] Letter 863. To Theo van Gogh. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Tuesday, 29 April 1890.
[542] Although he sent a copy of a review to Vincent in early July, see letter 896 (to Theo van Gogh and Jo van Gogh-Bonger. Auvers-sur-Oise, Wednesday, 2 July 1890).
[543] Adolph Retté, 'Septième Exposition des Artistes Indépendants', in *L'Ermitage*, 5 May 1891.

The appropriation of Van Gogh as a French artist culminated at the Salon des Indépendants in 1905. For the first time the Société des Artistes Indépendants had decided to include a retrospective section in the annual salon. This practice had been initiated by the Salon d'Automne in 1903, when their first salon comprised a retrospective of Gauguin's work.[544] By staging retrospective exhibitions the Société des Artistes Indépendants consciously looked back to its institutional history and claiming or confirming its important role in the developments of modern art, as has already been argued in chapter 1.2. It was also instrumental in averting the highly debated crisis in French modern art: by celebrating these two unrivalled artists of modern art the Société des Artistes des Indépendants did not only safeguard the hegemony of French art but also its own dominion in the art field. In 1905 the Salon des Indépendants staged two simultaneous retrospectives, devoted to two *sociétaires* from the very beginning (the 1880s): Georges Seurat and Vincent van Gogh. Of the 45 paintings and drawings by Van Gogh that were on view – all taken from French private collections – only two, a drawing and a painting, were from his Dutch period. Louis Vauxcelles commented on this painting *La cuisinière hollandaise* (1885, ill. 59): 'L'évolution de Van Gogh est significative. Sa première toile, noirâtre comme un Ribot est faite en Hollande. Puis Vincent arrive à Paris: la peinture claire lui ouvre les yeux.'[545]

Van Gogh's Dutch works were thus discounted as a mere prelude to his true artistic calling and potential, awakened in Paris and inspired by French art. This notion was so widespread and so potent that it still influences the reception of Van Gogh's art until today. In this act of appropriation Van Gogh was even equaled to Cézanne, the artist who was unanimously celebrated and embraced as a purely French 'genius', as he reconciled the classical tradition with modern art as argued in chapter 1.3. Charles Saunier compared Van Gogh's influence on the younger generations to Cézanne's: 'Vincent van Gogh l'artiste fou de couleur dont l'influence sur nombre de jeunes artistes fut peut-être égale à celle de Cézanne.'[546] The influential writings by Maurice Denis were also very much concerned with the apparent classicist aspects of Van Gogh's art: 'Pauvre Van Gogh! (…) et cependant il composait; ses tentatives de simplifications étaient au fond si ordonées … la fébrilité de Van Gogh ne fasse oublier que lui aussi fut, un constructeur, un artisan de la réaction synthetiste.'[547] Denis' insistence on Van Gogh's capacity to compose, construct and arrange his perceptions of nature are very similar to the conceptions of Cézanne's art at the time.

These artistic affinities between Cézanne and Van Gogh were actually already noted before the turn of the century. André Mellerio devoted one chapter to the two artists together in his *Le*

[544] Gauguin had died on 8 May 1903.
[545] Louis Vauxcelles in *Gil Blas*, 23 March 1905.
[546] Charles Saunier, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *La Plume* 1905.
[547] Maurice Denis, 'La Peinture', in *L'Ermitage* (first semester) 1905: 310-20.

Mouvement Idealiste en Peinture in 1896, describing them as pure painters as they translated their personal and direct interpretations of nature in brilliant colours and strong lines.[548] By connecting Van Gogh to Cézanne the French critics managed to firmly integrate the native Dutch artist into the texture of French modern art. They laid the foundation of the canon of Western modern art, which became institutionalized by the inaugural exhibition of the Museum of Modern Art in 1929 when Van Gogh, Cézanne, Seurat and Gauguin were presented as the four *French* pillars of modern art.

In retrospect the strategy of provocation and alienation might seem applicable to Van Gogh, as nowadays he is seen as a misunderstood and solitary talent. Yet, the idea of Van Gogh as an isolated and mad genius was an identity that was fabricated after his death. Van Gogh never wished to isolate himself, or to fashion an image of himself as an outsider. So even if the artistic identities of Munch and Van Gogh seem to be comparable nowadays – as they are both considered as prototypes of the misunderstood, mad and isolated artist – their strategies were fundamentally different. Munch exploited his foreign identity, positioning himself as a radical outsider by sending pictures to the Salon des Indépendants that were distinctly different and outlandish in both motif and technique. This strategy of alienation and provocation was quite effective in getting attention from the French critics and public. Even if the French did not really understand his art, Munch successfully made a name for himself in Paris. Another important difference between the identities of Munch and Van Gogh is that, even if they were connected posthumously, Van Gogh came to be considered an isolated and mad *French* genius, while Munch remained definitely foreign. Munch capitalized on the process of estrangement, while Van Gogh's tactics were concerned with inclusion.

As I have argued above, this process of inclusion or appropriation was the result of a specific artistic strategy, which I have called acculturation. Van Gogh considered himself to be rooted in the French cultural tradition, and presented himself as such. Van Gogh's models were great nineteenth-century French masters as Delacroix, Daubigny and Millet and his artistic network in Paris consisted of young French painters, including Gauguin, Bernard, Toulouse-Lautrec and Signac. It was within this context that Van Gogh produced and presented his art, and it was within this context that he wished to compete and to be understood. From his letters it is clear that he strove to be recognized as part of the new French movement in the arts. He was not interested in adapting to the French identity, as I have pointed out above. Van Gogh's artistic identity must be seen as supranational as he embraced

[548] Mellerio 1896: 26-28.

the idea of universal art. His approach has also been connected to socialist ideals, but in the French criticism at the time it doesn't seem to have been a particular point of interest.[549]

This ambition guided Van Gogh's contributions to the Salon des Indépendants, where he presented himself as a modern French painter. He submitted Parisian subjects and Provençal landscapes in a radically modern style and technique, which he shared with other progressive French artists. As he stated several times in his letters, he wanted to be considered as part of that group (of Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Bernard, Seurat, Signac).

The strategy employed by Darío de Regoyos is in that matter more comparable to Van Gogh's. He also positioned himself in the French artistic tradition by adopting an Impressionist style and painting technique. But contrary to Van Gogh, Regoyos chose to depict his native region. With his national subject matter he zeroed in on the Spanish boom that swayed Paris in those days. While Regoyos emulated established French styles and technique, he remained distinctively foreign through his motifs. His strategy made simultaneous use of the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, and this middle-of-the-road approach brought him considerable success. Unlike Van Gogh, he would never come to be considered as a French artist (nor did he strive to be so).

[549] See for Van Gogh's interest in working classes: Carol Zemel, 'The Spook in the Machine: Van Gogh's Pictures of Weavers in Brabant', in *The Art Bulletin* 67 (March 1, 1985).

Conclusion: Three Ways to Success

After studying the cases of these three foreign artists, I questioned if the other successful foreign artists exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884 and 1914 (as listed in appendix 2) made use of similar strategies. Therefore, I will briefly compare the conclusions of my case-studies with the French careers of a few of these foreign artists to explore if there are certain patterns to be discerned. I will thus test my contention and thesis that it was through specific exhibition strategies that foreign artists succeeded to be noted at the Salon des Indépendants.

As we have seen, one of the most successful artists working and exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants was the Spaniard Darío de Regoyos. He employed a strategy that I have called *emulation and adaptation*, as Regoyos did not only adapt or adjust to French styles and techniques – in the words of the Collins English Dictionary 'changed or modified to suit new conditions or needs'[550], but by doing so he also entered into competition with his French models. The term emulation is charged with this desire to equal or excel others. Regoyos did not, however, adopt typical French subject matter, and I believe that this was a decisive factor for his success. He succeeded in the Parisian art world by exhibiting Impressionist landscapes of his native region in Basque Country. His midsized depictions of this quiet and almost exotic land across the Pyrenees were met with critical acclaim and found their way to collectors through the help of the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel. It was through the depiction of native, local subjects that the Spanish artist found a safe compromise between adopting a French artistic practice and retaining his distinct, personal, foreign identity.

Other foreign artists also employed this strategy of keeping a fine balance between originality and adapting to the French idiom. One of them was Regoyos' compatriot Claudio Castelucho, as we have seen in the case-study on Regoyos. He participated at the Salon des Indépendants between 1904 and 1914, exhibiting paintings with subjects that were considered 'à l'Espagnole'. His bullfights, markets, guitar players and dancing women were very well received by the French critics. Castelucho's paintings were frequently described full of passion – 'extrêmement vive, forte, et sûre de soleil diapré et crépitant'[551]– characteristics that were considered quintessentially Spanish. He quickly gained an international reputation, exhibiting at various French and foreign venues (such as the Vienna Secession). He was one of the founders of the Académie

[550] Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 2012. Digital Edition on Dictionary.com
[551] François Monod, 'Les Indépendants', *Art et Décoration* (supplément), April 1913.

Stettler, gave courses at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and became president of the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière in 1909.[552] Castelucho was very well connected, and had a large international but also French network. As we have seen with the case of Regoyos, this was extremely important for artists in building their careers.

Another case in point is the Polish artist Eugène Zak, who arrived in Paris in 1902 to study with Gérôme at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and then with Albert Besnard at the Académie Colarossi[553] His exhibition debute was at the Salon d'Automne in 1904, of which he became a permanent member and he also took place in the jury of the drawings section. Zak started to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants in 1906, where various critics remarked him. Louis Vauxcelles wrote for example: 'des fleurs de Zak, un des rares Polonais dont il soit loisible de comprendre la peinture'.[554] Zak became friends with several of his critics, including Salmon, Apollinaire, Basler and Waldemar George. Not only his French network was solid, he was also in close contact with Polish artists in Paris and founded the Polish Artists Society in Paris in 1911.[555] Just like we have seen in the case of Regoyos, native and French networks were crucial in building reputations both in Paris and at home or internationally. Zak's career in Paris was developing fast: he was honored with a solo exhibition at Galerie Druet in 1911 and the Musée du Luxembourg acquired a work by him in 1912.[556] His international success was established with his participation in The Armory Show in New York in 1913. The Polish artist Tadeusz Makowski later recalled: 'It was always nice to think that he [Zak] was one of the few Polish painters who succeeded in making a name for themselves internationally, as his name was not foreign to art circles in France, Germany or America, and it is all too common knowledge how Paris can devour lesser talents in the flame of oblivion and how hard it is to gain the city's recognition.'[557] Several critics described Zak as an archaic, just like Brancusi and other Eastern European artists.[558] Zak combined elements of the Mediterranean and Far Eastern landscape in his paintings, simplifying form and colours. His compositions invoked a pastoral of primitiveness, shaping dreamlike worlds that were unknown to his French public. The combination of familiar style and technique, making use of the simplified and decorative language of the Nabis, with a mystical and foreign subject matter generated a positive reception in Paris.

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552 See for biographical information the essay Borràs 2002.
553 Tanikowski & Król 2003: 15.
554 Louis Vauxcelles, *Gil Blas*, 20 March 1906.
555 Tanikowski & Król 2003: 18.
556 This was a Woman's Head, see Tanikowski & Król 2003: 19.
557 Makowski recorded this in his diary in 1961, see Tanikowski & Król 2003: 33-4.
558 See p. 85 for Brancusi. Louix Vauxcelles described Zak as an archaïsant in his review in the *Gil Blas*, 20 March 1908, and the critic Abdul Hadi listed Zak under the category of 'Archaïsants' in his 'Chronique des Beaux-Arts: Le Salon des Indépendants', *Encyclopédie Contemporaine Illustrée*, 15 April 1910.

These examples illustrate that many foreign artists found a safe compromise between the dilemma of adjustment and demarcation through local subjects in a French style. The originality was embedded in the subject of their art works. The depictions of typical local customs, scenes or landscapes were immediately recognized by the French public as distinctively foreign, native and sometimes even exotic. The pictures were, nevertheless, executed in line with French pictorial values – such as harmony and grace – and thus celebrated France's hegemony in aesthetics. Dozens of artists painted local subjects 'à la française', as this came to be called, and with great success. The combination of French pictorial means with authentic, national subjects stimulated a positive reception in Paris. This type of painting did not only receive praise from the conservative critics, but they also found acclaim with the more progressive press. The works were highly in demand by the Parisian public, and some art dealers even sent painters homewards to produce 'art local' for the French market.[559]

The case of Edvard Munch showed another strategy that involved bolder and more risky politics of *provocation and alienation*. In the art works that Munch chose to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants he combined a radical technique with unusual imagery. Instead of repeating the established formulas of artistic assimilation of the Scandinavian school in Paris, Munch developed a highly personal project and presented himself the Salon des Indépendants as a radical outsider. Rather than indigenous landscapes in an Impressionist or Naturalist style, Munch submitted depictions of deep human emotions in bold colours and with great emphasis on the materiality of the surface. Resisting the frequently repeated claim that Munch was ignored or at best ill received by the Parisian critics, his case-study has demonstrated that Munch's critical reception in France was actually quite successful, even if he was not always fully understood.

This provocative strategy was also successfully used by other foreign artists at the time, such as Kees van Dongen. This Dutch artist made his début at the Salon des Indépendants of 1904 with quite ordinary motifs: typical Dutch landscapes and a few Parisian works. Van Dongen explicitly referred to his home country, by giving titles to his landscapes such as *Canal à Delfshaven (Hollande)*. The French painter Maximilien Luce (1858-1941) seemed to have assisted Van Dongen with the practicalities of his first contribution to the Indépendants – such as his inscription, payment and framing – and possibly also advising Van Dongen on choosing works and titles.[560] By including Dutch landscapes in tonal colour schemes and brighter Parisian works, Van Dongen strategically suggested that his prolonged stay in Paris had – positively – influenced his style. His

[559] Ricard Canals for example travelled back to Spain on the request of his dealer Durand-Ruel, see also page 100.
[560] Hopmans 2010: 20.

first participation at the Salon des Indépendants was noticed by several French critics, who alluded to his Dutchness: 'un hollandais robuste'[561]; 'C'est toute la Hollande, M. Kees van Dongen, avec tous les contrastes savoureux du génie néerlandais'[562] and 'La contribution des étrangers est très importante aux Indépendants (…) mais surtout (…) M. van Dongen, qui conduit le visiteur à Rotterdam, en des coins singulier dont il exprime avec force la caractère.'[563]

Van Dongen continued to exhibit annually at the Salon des Indépendants until 1914.[564] He had a remarkable success: the critics continued to review his works; he sold his art through the Indépendants[565] and was honored by several art dealers – such as Vollard, Druet, Bernheim-Jeune and Kahnweiler – with exhibitions and contracts. Although Van Dongen exhibited French popular subjects (urban nightlife, female portraits and nudes) and his style was visibly influenced by French pointillist paint application and Fauvist colouring, the Parisian critics would, nevertheless, focus on his otherness. The reviews were full of qualifications as 'étrange, exceptionnel, provocant' and 'furie assourdissante'.[566] This perceived otherness was provoked by Van Dongen's bold, daring style and technique. Many critics referred to his painting practice: 'caricatures (…) qui manquent de tout équilibre et de toute construction'[567] and 'La technique? (…) peu importe; tous les moyens sont bons pour arriver au but.'[568]

In his review in the *Gil Blas* Vauxcelles made a remarkable observation: 'Ce jeune Hollandais, très doué, ne se surveille pas assez'.[569] Van Dongen had apparently stepped over a line, he was perceived as too outspoken, and his blatant bravery was considered typically foreign. André Derain commented on this, as already cited: 'J'ai causé avec Van Dongen, il m'a paru très jeune, très buté et dissimulant mal un grand enthousiasme. En un mot il n'est pas français (…) Je crois que c'est une folie de vouloir imposer sa chanson pour sa chanson sans en contrôler rigoureusement l'air.'[570] Van Dongen had positioned himself as an audacious artist, who chose not to conform to the French values. When Marius-Ary Leblond wrote the introduction for the catalogue accompanying the exhibition at Bernheim-Jeune in 1908, Van Dongen sent him a letter writing: 'Mais à quel titre me

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561 PIP (pseudonyme Gustave Kahn), 'Carnet de Paris', in *Nouvelle revue*, March-April 1904.
562 Charles Morice, 'XXe Salon des Indépendants', in *Mercure de France*, May 1904.
563 Charles Saunier, 'Les Petites Expositions. Le Salon des Indépendants', in *La Revue universelle*, 1904.
564 With the exception of 1912, when he did not participate.
565 It 1905 Van Dongen sold three works that were exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants: his major piece *Le Boniment* was sold to the French critic Félix Fenéon, the Russian collector Morosov bought the pastel *Masques* and one of the Carrousel paintings was acquired by Georges Viau. See Wiedauer 2013: 305.
566 Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Gil Blas*, 23 March 1905; Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Gil Blas*, 20 March 1908; and Charles Morice, 'Le XXVe Salon des Indépendants', in *Mercure de France*, April 1909.
567 F. Robert Kemp, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Aurore*, 18 March 1910.
568 Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Gil Blas*, 20 March 1906.
569 Louis Vauxcelles, 'Le Salon des Indépendants', in *Gil Blas*, 20 March 1906.
570 Letter to Henri Matisse, 1 January 1907, cited in Hopmans 2010: 29, footnote 103.

presenter à vous. Comme un nègre blanc peut-être?'[571] He insisted on his primitive otherness, only true to himself and insensitive to others. Van Dongen publicly denoted his position in the *Mercure de France*, in response to the enquête by Charles Morice on the latest tendencies in the arts: 'Pour moi, je ne pense ni aux maîtres de jadis ni à ceux d'hier. Aujourd'hui, je pense à demain, - et je demande à la nature – comment il faut vivre.'[572] This statement powerfully invokes the myth of the alienated artist, impermeable to external influences.

The last case-study focused on the exhibition strategies and early reception of Vincent van Gogh. I have argued that, despite the common belief that Van Gogh was a misunderstood genius, who remained completely ignored during his lifetime, he actually experienced a rather promising entry into the Parisian exhibition field. The strategy that Van Gogh employed can be described as *acculturation,* which I understand as a process of acquiring the cultural and social habits of the dominant group. The term acculturation is closely related to 'assimilation',[573] but I believe that there is significant difference between the two words. I understand acculturation as a process of internalization. This is in line with the definition of acculturation given by *The American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*: 'Acculturation is also used to describe the results of contact between two or more different cultures; a new, composite culture emerges, in which some existing cultural features are combined, some are lost, and new features are generated.'[574] My understanding of the meaning of acculturation also comes close to the definition given by the *Webster Dictionary*: '1. Cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact; also: 2. The process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular society from infancy.' Especially the implication of merging and acquiring, instead of purely adopting is essential to my definition of acculturation.

Van Gogh's process of acculturation took place when he came to France as a permanent immigrant (he would never return to his homeland). Van Gogh's migratory pattern was thus different from Darío de Regoyos, who only travelled to Paris a regular visitor, or Edvard Munch, who sojourned in Paris for a few years. As a permanent immigrant, Van Gogh fully invested in his Parisian network, creating and maintaining friendship with French artists and a few dealers and

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[571] Letter from Van Dongen to Marius-Ary Leblond, November 1907, cited in Hopmans 2010: 32, footnote 128. It is also important that Van Dongen adopted the language by Leblond here. Marius-Ary Leblond is the pseudonym of the two cousins George Athénas and Aimé Merlo, who were born on the French colonial island Réunion. Their writings were concerned with colonial and racial issues, and especially with the black and white 'races'.
[572] Charles Morice, 'Enquête sur les tendances actuelles des arts plastiques', in *Mercure de France*, 1 August 1905: 352.
[573] The Oxford Dictionary states: 'Assimilate to a different culture, typically the dominant one', which I find a too limiting definition. See: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/acculturate?q=acculturation#acculturate__8
[574] *The American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, consulted on www.dictionary.com.

critics. He corresponded extensively – in almost fluent French! – with several of his artists-friends, and was very concerned with the development of French art. Van Gogh, however, did not associate with French art because of the national aspect, but because of its artistic values. As we known from his correspondence, Van Gogh considered the French pictorial practice – and especially its landscape tradition – as the high point in nineteenth-century painting, and took it as his guiding principle.[575]

Van Gogh exhibited only three times during his life at the Salon des Indépendants, from 1888 to 1890. Nevertheless, we can deduce his strategy from the selection of art works – discussed in his correspondence with his brother Theo – and his reaction to critical reviews. Van Gogh aimed to represent himself as a truly French modern artist at the Salon des Indépendants, displaying French subjects – especially landscapes – in experimental styles and techniques. He was quite successful in achieving this goal, as will be argued in the last case-study. Van Gogh's posthumous representations at the Salon des Indépendants in 1891 and 1905 consolidated this position. The retrospective in 1905 vigorously promoted Van Gogh as a French master of modern art. The Parisian critics aligned him with the French pictorial tradition by stressing his indebtedness to artists such as Eugène Delacroix and Jean-François Millet; by focusing on his Mediterranean production; and by emphasizing the formal qualities of his use of colour and paint application. This allowed the French critics to appropriate his artistic legacy as French and to integrate him successfully into the texture of French art.

Yet, Van Gogh had never attempted to be as French as he could be. Instead, he internalised French culture and contributed to it with a highly personal and original artistic project. He created a new, composite pictorial language. Van Gogh's integration into French culture must thus not be seen as a process of assimilation but of acculturation. This strategy is also evident in the case of Théodore van Rysselberghe, who exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants for almost two decades and received wide critical acclaim. Van Rysselberghe was very well connected to the French artistic circles, in particular to Paul Signac and the Neo-Impressionist painters and critics.[576] It was precisely because of his affiliation with the pointillist circle, that he was considered in artistic terms rather than national terms. Both Van Rysselberghe and Lemmen started to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants in the early years, where they were presented together with the French pointillists. The two Belgian artists were part of the artist society Les XX, which had close connections to the Société de Artistes Indépendants. This influenced their French reception from the start. Van

[575] See for example letters 246, 256, 369, 396, 403, 537, 777.
[576] As Ronald Feltkamp concluded in his book on Van Rysselberghe's reception, he was a 'Flamand francophone expatrié en France vers quarante ans, [qui] occupe une position integrate sur la scène artistique.' (Feltkamp 2003: 16).

Rysselberghe underlined their affinities to the French artists in a letter to Octave Maus in 1892 when he discussed his contribution to the Salon des Indépendants: 'Et *notre salle*, dont sortiront demain ceux qui succéderont aux Monet, Renoir, Degas, Pissarro – C'est certain.'[577] Van Rysselberghe considered himself within the French tradition of art., just like Van Gogh. In the French reception of Van Rysselberghe this affiliation is recognized and stressed over and over again. In 1891, Jules Antoine remarked: 'Parmi les néo-impressionistes deux belges ont pris une place considérable, ce sont M.M. Van Rysselberghe et Lemmen. Le premier expose plusieurs toiles d'un grand charme et d'une lumière remarquable ou le procédé arrive à n'être presque plus perceptible à distance.'[578] Antoine considered him and Lemmen as part of an artistic group, and discussed his contributions in that light. Most French critics reviewed Van Rysselberghe in this artistic context, and compared his contribution to the work of other neo-impressionist painters such Signac, Luce and Cross instead of discussing it in the context of foreign art.[579] Adolphe Dervaux even stated in 1903:'[Van Rysselberghe] est un classique. Son portrait souriant de petitefille, devant la clarté d'un estuaire ensoleillé, le place dans la grande tradition des coloristes heureux et doux.'[580]

I would like to conclude with a foreign artist whose strategy of acculturation shares characteristics with the tactics used by Van Gogh and Van Rysselberghe. The Russian-born Jean de Peské, who was strongly connected to the Polish community in Paris, figures in the chart of the most successful foreign artists, but is nowadays largely forgotten. Peské debuted at the Salon des Indépendants in 1893, and his career took a flight when the Revue Blanche staged a solo exhibition in 1901 on the advice of Octave Mirbeau. Felix Fénéon, with whom Peské had been in contact since his arrival in Paris, had introduced him to Mirbeau and other critics such a Gustave Kahn. These critics helped Peské to come into contact with art dealers in Paris, such as Bernheim-Jeune, Durand-Ruel and Georges Petit. Mirbeau had introduced him to Durand-Ruel, who immediately bought ten pastels for 50 francs and exhibited these works in his gallery.[581] Peské's French network expanded quickly, and included a wide-variety of critics, dealers and artists. The critic Gustave Kahn started to write positive reviews on Peské's exhibitions in 1901[582] and continued to follow his career. In October 1913 Kahn wrote the preface for the catalogue of Galerie Devambez, where Peské had an exhibition: 'La qualité premiere de l'art de Jean Peské, c'est sa profonde devotion à la nature et son humilité devant la parfaite beauté de la lumiere. La sincérité de cet amour recoit son prix, car nul ne

[577] Hooze 1993: 3.
[578] Jules Antoine, 'Exposition des artistes indépendants', in *La Plume*, April 1891.
[579] 'Le groupe des pointillistes est naturellement représenté par Signac, Luce, Rysselberghe et Cross.' Tristan Leclère, 'Les Indépendants', in *La Plume*, 1904: 348.
[580] Adolphe Dervaux, 'Les Salons de 1903. Le Salon des Indépendants', in *La Plume*, June 1903.
[581] Loiseau 2002: 43.
[582] La Plume, 15 May 1901.

donne mieux que Jean Peské une sensation de presence réelle de la lumiere.' The admiration for Peské's 'sincere' interest in nature and his rendering of light was a recurrent element in the French criticism of his work. Louis Vauxcelles wrote for example in 1909: 'un éclat énergique (…) un sentiment de la nature profond.'[583] That same year the critic A. de Chateaubriant remarked in *Le Radical*: 'les paysages (…) une belle gamme lumineuse et chaude (…) singulière force (…).'[584] Peské's 'gamme lumineuse et chaude' was inspired the Impressionist rendering of light and the Fauvist use of colour. The majority of Peské's artistic production consisted of French landscapes executed in a style and technique that he had studied in Paris. His subject matter, such as apple pickers and harvest scenes, is related to the work of the artist Camille Pissarro whom he knew personally. He had acculturated the French approach to landscape, both in subject matter and technique. Peské was recognized for his sincere and luminous depictions of nature, both charateristics that had been applied since the nineteenth century to 'truly French' art. Peské underlined his alignment with French art in his memoires by referring to the stereotypical hallmarks of the 'esprit français' as has been argued above.[585] He wrote: 'Depuis mon arrivée à Paris, j'ai vécu dans le milieu des Indépendants et du Salon d'Automne ou les pires audaces sont confondues avec le talent, l'art de demain. Par gout, j'aime la clarté, la simplicité, l'ordonnance; j'ai horreur de l'exagération.'[586]

By cross-examining the fifteen most successful foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants with an evaluation of their artistic contributions and the subsequent contemporary reviews, it becomes clear that there are indeed certain patterns to be discerned in the exhibitions tactics of these foreign artists. As we have seen, the exhibition tactics employed by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch were not that different from the Dutch painter Kees van Dongen, despite the great differences in their art and backgrounds. Darío de Regoyos, Claudio de Castelucho and Eugène Zak also shared similar strategies while operating in the French exhibition field. And the critical reception of two of the most successful artists of the Salon des Indépendants, Van Gogh and Van Rysselberghe, pointed to comparable artistic identities. If we look at the other foreign artists in the chart, it can be concluded that they also employed one these three strategies. The strategy of adaptation and emulation was the most frequently used: seven out of the fifteen artists operated along the lines of this strategy (Regoyos, Diriks, Tarkhoff, Nonell, Castelucho, Torent and Zak). As we have seen Van Dongen and Munch both made use of provocative tactics, and Van Gogh, Van Rysselberghe, Lemmen, Peské, O'Conor and Ranft shared strategies of acculturation.

583 Louis Vauxcelles, *Gil Blas*, 25 October 1909.
584 A. de Chateaubriand, *Le Radical*, 9 May 1909
585 See for examples pp. 60, 84 and 142.
586 Loiseau 2002: 123.

These results lead me to conclude that successful foreign artists employed one of these three strategies.[587] Does this imply that using one of these three strategies automatically resulted into success? It is not possible to answer this question for all foreign artists participating at the Salon des Indépendants, as the majority of these artists was not mentioned at all in the French art press. This does indicate, however, that whatever strategy they used, it was not a successful one. Because, as I argued, a crucial condition for success was to get the critics' attention. Artists could then build upon this reception, unrolling their strategy further and shaping their public identity. What we do know now, is that the most successful foreign artists of the Salon des Indépendants used one of the three strategies that I have discussed.

The results of my research refute the common opinion that foreign artists had limited chances of success in Paris. I argue instead that it was a matter of using the one of the three strategies and foregrounding a certain artistic identity, that these artists managed to create space for themselves by finding and filling the cracks in the French nationalistic and conservative climate of opinion. This contradicts the nationalistic myth, which makes us believe that most foreign artists were doomed to fail in this dominant chauvinistic mood. I have traced how these 'foreign artists were certainly subject to different pressures than the French', but that in spite of this 'they and their communities found the space in which to thrive in Paris', to return to the citation by Christopher Green in the introduction.[588] Contrary to Green, I argue that these foreign artists did not find the space, but rather actively and purposefully created these spaces for themselves. These successful artists were able to create space for themselves as they had a clear understanding of the mechanisms of exclusion and their counter-strategies.

My research also revealed the success of nowadays largely forgotten names such Darío de Regoyos (and Zak, Peské, Torent etcetera), and it showed that their strategies were productive at the time. In retrospect, however, one can conclude that the last two strategies have turned out to be the most successful in the long-run, as Munch and Van Gogh are amongst the most popular and celebrated artists in the world. The artists of the first category (Regoyos, Zak, Diriks and others) have instead disappeared in the folds of history. It is beyond the scope of my dissertation to analyze these canonization processes, but one might argue that Munch and Van Dongen have been so successful in creating identities as total alienated artists, that they evade any classification. They

[587] This classification partly recalls the remarks on strategies of Jewish artists that Paul Tucker offered in his article 'Montparnasse-A Promised Land?' of 1986 (see Tucker 1986). In his review of the exhibition 'The Circle of Montparnasse: Jewish Artists in Paris 1905-1945' Tucker identified three ways for Jewish immigrants to become professional visual artists in Paris: As it is an exhibition review, Tucker does not explain at length the nature and workings of these strategies, but just briefly explicates them with some examples of Jewish artists. Nonetheless, I have found Tucker's remarks useful for thinking about artistic strategies and identies.

[588] Green 2000: 64.

were not part of the French school, but also not part of a foreign field of art. They were actually not part of anything: they were pure individuals, true 'geniuses'. Van Gogh (and Van Rysselberghe) on the other hand was readily embraced and appropriated as a French artist, so that he could be incorporated in the great history of French art. This does, however, not explain why Peské has left the stage. It would be very interesting to research these questions of canonization and reception history further and to reconsider artists' careers in their original context. The model of strategies that I have proposed can be a point of departure and might allow us to re-examine these canonization processes. It would also be worthwhile to reflect more on the continuous debate on national or universal traits of art works. As described above, many artists and critics believed in art as a transnational phenomenon, speaking a universal language. However, up to today, national characteristics still play an important part in the evaluation of art. The negotiation process of national and international aspects that I have found at work in the art criticism and canonization processes are a complex issue that deserve more examination.

I believe that my dissertation gives some more directions for further research. It would be very interesting, for example, to look at the exhibition strategies that were used at juried Salons. There might have been other strategies at play at these venues. Our understanding of the strategies and reputations of foreign artists would also be enriched by relating them to the intellectual and/or esthetic ambitions of these artists. These are all important and valid areas for further research for which I believe my model of exhibition strategies can be valuable and productive. I hope my book contributes to the continuous evaluation of the methods we apply in art history and to the expanding area of research of transnational exchanges and perspectives in art history, offering fresh and richer perspectives on artistic strategies and identities, value systems and critical reception. In my dissertation I have also touched upon the tension between the art's interest in originality and invention as a criterion for success, and the nation's identity politics' of unity. This was at the heart of the debates at the time I have researched, and could be a rich area for further research.

This dissertation might read as a success story, with merely happy endings. Even though the foreign artists managed to thrive, this did not mean it was an easy or straightforward process, as the 'Querelle des Indépendants' forcefully illustrated. The artists were in continuous competition, striving for attention and critical acclaim in order to succeed. The topic of the sum of individual but concerted attempts by foreign artists to assert themselves and their views in nationalistic and reactionary environments is of even greater importance today than when I was beginning to undertake this research project. I believe that some positive and cautiously hopeful lessons on a more inclusive approach, and not only in retrospect, can be learned from my study.

APPENDIX 1. REASONED SELECTION OF PERIODICALS

Scholarly periodicals

***Art et les artistes* (1905-1939)**

Illustrated magazine devoted to the arts, critics included Arsène Alexandre, Gustave Geffroy, William Ritter, Louis Vauxcelles, André Mellerio, Raymond Bouyer and Camille Mauclair

***Art et décoration* (1897-1935)**

Illustrated magazine, with a special focus on decorative arts. As of 1905, François Monod yearly reviewed the Salon des Indépendants in the supplement.

***Gazette des beaux-arts* (1859-2002)**

Distinguished, erudite magazine devoted to the arts, founded by Charles Blanc. First review of the Salon des Indépendants not until 1907.

***Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* (1861-1922)**

Supplement of the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, published each Saturday morning with news from the (international) art world, reviews on exhibitions and announcements of cultural events. Julien Leclercq and Roger Marx reported on the Salon des Indépendants.

***Montjoie!* (1913-1914)**

Illustrated bi-monthly periodical, with reviews by Guillaume Apollinaire and André Salmon.

Literary journals

***Mercure de France* (1890-1935)**

Progressive periodical devoted to literature, poetry and fine arts. Critics included Henri Albert, André Fontainas, Charles Morice, William Ritter, Vittorio Pica and Gustave Kahn.

***La Critique* (1895-1910)**

Bi-monthly literary review, published on small, rectangular format. Exhibition reviews by Alcanter de Brahm, Emile Sedeyn and Andrée Myra.

***La Phalange* (1906-1939)**

Monthly journal dedicated to literature and poetry. Collaborators included Paul Adam, Gustave Kahn, André Gide, Maurice Barrès, Jean Moréas, Guillaume Apollinaire and Tristan Klingsor.

***La Plume* (1889-1914)**

Influential and progressive journals for literature and visual art, closely connected to symbolist movement. Critics were Yvanhoé Rambosson, André Deravaux, Tristan Leclère and Alphonse Germain.

***Revue des beaux-arts* (1906-1922)**

Illustrated review for fine arts and music. Published series of revies on the Salon des Indépendants on the front page.

***La Revue blanche* (1891-1903)**

Politically engaged and advanced review, with long articles on art, art theory, literature and philosophy, while including original prints. Founded by Thadée Natanson, who also reviewed exhibitions and the Salon des Indépendants together with Gustave Kahn and Felicien Fagus.

***La Revue indépendante* (1884-1895)**

Literary journal, which reviewed the Salon des Indépendants as of 1887. Gustave Kahn was one of its main critics.

***L'Ermitage* (1890-1906)**

Monthly review on literature, also covering the Salon des Indépendants. Maurice Denis is one of the main contributors.

***Les Tendances nouvelles* (1904-1914)**

Important magazine for modern art, with reviews by Gustave Geffroy, Alcanter de Brahm and Julius Meier-Graefe.

Daily press

***Le Temps* (…)**

Evening newspaper, carrying the date of the next day. Very politically orientated.
Critic: Thiébault-Sisson, series on crisis in French art in 1912.

***L'Aurore* (1897-1914)**

A cultural morning paper, famously known for the publication of 'J'accuse!' by Emile Zola on the front page. Reviews on the Salon des Indépendants as of 1898, first by Elie Faure, followed by Maurice LeBlond and finally F. Robert-Kemp.

***Gil Blas* (1879-1940)**

Daily newspaper with much attention to the arts. Louis Vauxcelles is the main art critic, producing extensive accounts of the annual salons.

***L'Intransigeant* (1880-1939)**

After 1905 long reviews and series of art criticism started to appear in this daily paper, often covering the Salon des Indépendants on the front page. Main art critics were André Salmon (1908-1909), followed by Guillaume Apollinaire (1910-1914). Relatively small circulation: 50.000

***Le Figaro* (1854-to present)**

Started as a satirical newspaper, rapidly became one of the most influential journals, with a moderate republican outlook. Reviews on the Salon des Indépendants appear as of 1893 on the front page. Arsène Alexandre is the regular art critic from 1896 to 1912.

***Paris-journal* (1908-1924?)**

Newspaper with great focus on the arts. Almost daily column ' Courrier des ateliers' by La Palette (pseudonym of André Salmon) with news and gossip from the art world. Large coverage devoted to Salon des Indépendants, reviewing the exhibition gallery by gallery. Circulation: 40.000

***Journal des débats* (1789-1944)**

Renowned intellectual and political newspaper, founded just after the French Revolution. Platform of fine writing, devoting pages to the words of Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo and Hippolyte Taine. Reviews of the Salon des Indépendants by the hand of Edouard Sarradin, appear as of 1895.

***Le Journal* (1892-1944)**

Daily newspaper founded by Fernand Xau in 1892, with a Republican outlook (developing into a nationalistic and conservative paper around 1910) and a very developed supplement on literature attracting a bourgeoisie readership. It was one of the largest dailies in Paris, with a circulation of 810.000.

***Le Matin* (1883-1944)**

Founded in 1883, based on the model of the British *The Morning Newspaper.* It started as a political platform, but quickly became a popular sensational paper with a circulation of 670.000.

***Le Petit Parisien* (1876-1944)**

The largest newspaper in France, with a massive circulation of 1.4000.000. It had an important literary supplement, publishing serials by popular writers as Guy de Maupassant. The paper was known for its radical, anti-clerical and Republican outlook.

***Le Gaulois* (1868-1929)**

A literary and political newspaper, anti-Republican and monarchist. When it was taken over by Arthur Meyer in 1879 it became very conservative, and anti-Dreyfusard in the 1890s. It was mostly read by the conservative nobility.

<u>General magazines</u>

***Encyclopédie contemporaine illustrée* (1887-1914)**

A rich and varied magazine, dedicated to science, discoveries, industry, theatre and arts. Reviews on the Salon des Indépendants appear as of 1896, discussed as one of the three main salons.

***Nouvelle revue* (1879-1935)**

Hefty periodical that appeared every two months, covering a wide range of subjects, including politics, travel, history, art and philosophy.

***Journal des artistes* (1882-1909)**

Bi-monthly paper devoted to the arts, with a bulletin of exhibitions and concours, a *petite gazette* listing all sorts of events and last page totally devoted to advertisements from the art business.

***Le Monde illustré* (1857-1940; 1945-1956)**

A beautifully illustrated bi-monthly periodical, with large sections on culture. Frequent reports on artistic events in France and abroad, and extensive reviews on the salons.

***La Vie parisienne* (1863-1970)**

A weekly magazine, published every Saturday. It was a light-footed, satirical journal, devoted to the 'wide world'.

Appendix 2. Chart of most successful foreign artists

	Van Gogh	Regoyos	Lemmen	O' Conor	Ryssel berghe	Ranft	Peské	Munch	Diriks	Tarkhoff	Nonell	Castelucho	Torent	Van Dongen	Zak
1884															
1885															
1886															
1887															
1888	2														
1889	4		1	1											
1890	12	4	2	4	6										
1891	10		2		6	2									
1892		2	7	1	5	2									
1893		1		3	6	2									
1894		1													
1895		0			3		1								
1896								6							
1897								6							
1898															
1899															
1900															
1901		4	4		6				2	2					
1902		5	3		9				3	1			0		
1903		6		3	9	3		4	5	3	5		2		
1904		6	3	3	9	3		5	9	3	4	2	5	5	
1905		3	4	4	7	6		2	6	3	2	8	5	6	
1906		2	4	1	5	1	2	2	5	1	2	3	2	3	2
1907				1		1	0		0	2	0	1	0		1
1908		2	3	2		2	1	1	4	3	2	4	2	3	3
1909							2		2	2	1	1	1	4	2
1910							2	1	4	2	3	4	2	5	3
1911		0							2	0		1	0	5	2
1912							4	2		2		3	2		4
1913							4						0	4	
1914							2			3		1		4	4
	28	**36**	**33**	**23**	**71**	**22**	**18**	**29**	**42**	**27**	**19**	**28**	**19**	**39**	**21**

Chart of the fifteen most mentioned foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants, 1884-1914, listed in chronological order of participation at the Salon des Indépendants.
Sources: Exhibition reviews from the selection of periodicals

Appendix 3. Figures of foreigners & nationalities

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER ARTISTS	NUMBER FOREIGN ARTISTS	IN %	IT	SP	UK	CH	BE	RU	USA	DE	NO	AU	PO	NL	IE	SE	HU
1884	402	39	9,7	7	4	7	6	6	1	2	1	1	1	1	1			
1886	94	5	5,32	2	1	1				1								
1887	105	8	7,62	2			1			1	1		1	1				
1888	144	13	9,03	2	1	1		1	1	1			1	4	1			
1889	120	14	11,67	1		1	1	2	1	1	1		1	1	1	1		
1890	170	23	13,53	1	2	1		6	2	1			3	1	2	1		
1891	229	23	10,04	1	2	1	5	6	2	1			2		2			
1892	260	28	10,77	2	6	2	4	4	2	1			2		3	1		
1893	312	40	12,82	2	5	1	9	4	3	4	1		2	1	2	1	1	
1894	223	22	9,86	1	4		4		4	3	1		1		1			
1895	289	40	13,84	2	11	3	3	3	3	5	1	1	2	2	2			
1896	198	15	7,57	1	1				1	4		1		3	2		1	
1897	223	30	13,45	5			2		3	3	1	1	1	5	3		1	1
1898	194	30	15,46	6		1	2	1	3	5	2		3	2	2		1	1
1899	87	16	18,39	2		2	1		1	1	2		1	3			3	
1900	55	7	12,73	1		2				1			1				1	
1901	162	28	17,28	4	1	4	3	4	3	2	3	1	1		1		1	
1902	276	42	15,22	4	2	4	6	4	4	1	3	4	2	1	1		4	1
1903	394	64	16,24	5	5	1	7	6	8	2	6	5	2	3	1	1	6	1
1904	406	81	19,95	6	8	5	5	7	12	2	9	6	2	8	3	2	2	
1905	667	147	22,04	8	6	13	18	7	23	6	21	4	2	13	4	2	7	1
1906	842	188	22,33	11	9	21	16	11	30	10	20	7	2	17	4	2	4	6
1907	1039	288	27,72	17	14	26	21	10	56	17	35	4	9	24	6	4	3	13
1908	1320	341	25,83	27	15	37	34	14	69	22	45	4	6	15	7	3	6	11
1909	837	202	24,13	16	12	22	3	8	43	10	24	1	4	11	3	2	4	3
1910	1182	299	25,3	24	21	25	25	10	63	16	33	3	9	31	6	3	5	7
1911	1388	358	25,79	23	21	34	29	5	66	27	44	5	9	27	11	5	8	7
1912	1264	345	27,29	17	20	37	33	15	63	27	29	4	7	8	12	5	8	13
1913	1015	337	33,2	20	20	10	31	21	71	21	25	4	6	35	10	3	6	15
1914	1320	373	28,26	21	24	28	18	20	83	24	25	2	11	45	17	5	5	11

Chart of the fifteen most represented nationalities at the Salon des Indépendants, 1884-1914.
Source: Exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants.

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SUMMARY

Foreign Artists versus French Critics: Exhibition Strategies and Critical Reception at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris (1884-1914)
By Maite van Dijk

This dissertation explores how foreign artists constructed their careers at the Salon des Indépendants during the Parisian Belle Époque. The focus is on the Salon des Indépendants, as this Salon (founded in 1884) was the most open exhibition in Paris due to the fact that it was unjuried. Despite its liberal policies, which also allowed barely skilled amateurs to participate, the Salon des Indépendants remained serious enough to be worth showing in. It became one of the leading cultural events in Paris and the main exhibition venue for the latest developments in the arts. It was a very accessible and attractive venue for foreign artists.

This research concentrates on the history and position of the Salon des Indépendants, the critical debates around it and how foreign artists navigated and operated in the French context. The French critical climate at the time has often been described as nationalistic and essentialist. Yet in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war universalist ideals kept flourishing alongside nationalistic sentiments. In fact, internationalism and nationalism were interlinked concepts and even thrived on each other. The nuances in the French nationalistic and conservative climate of opinion are explored in this book, and it will be argued that it was precisely because of the multifaceted nature of the critical climate that it was possible for foreign artists to build their reputations in Paris.

The examination of a vast amount of contemporary texts and archival material, making use of quantitative and qualitative analyses of critical reviews, has resulted in a list of the most successful foreign artists at the Salon des Indépendants between 1884 and 1914. The French careers of three of these artists – Darío de Regoyos, Edvard Munch and Vincent van Gogh – are further explored in case-studies, analyzing their strategies and artistic identities. The results of my research refute the common opinion that foreign artists had limited chances of success in Paris, and instead argue that is was matter of understanding the mechanisms that were at play and how to negotiate these. The book is a contribution to the expanding area of research of transnational exchanges in art history and the ways and means in which these were affected by agents and actors from other socio-cultural and political fields, offering new perspectives on artistic strategies and identities, value systems and critical reception.

SAMENVATTING

Buitenlandse kunstenaars versus Franse critici: tentoonstellingsstrategieën en kritische receptie op de Salon des Indépendants in Parijs (1884-1914)
door Maite van Dijk

In dit proefschrift wordt onderzocht hoe buitenlandse kunstenaars naam konden maken op de Salon des Indépendants tijdens de Parijse Belle Époque. De nadruk ligt op de Salon des Indépendants, aangezien deze Salon (opgericht in 1884) de meest toegankelijke tentoonstelling in Parijs was omdat het geen jurysysteem kende. Ondanks dit liberale beleid, waardoor ook amateurs konden exposeren, was de Salon des Indépendants een van de belangrijkste tentoonstellingen in Parijs voor eigentijdse kunst. Het was daarmee niet alleen een zeer open, maar ook een aantrekkelijke locatie voor buitenlandse kunstenaars.

Het onderzoek concentreert zich op de positie van buitenlandse kunstenaars in deze Franse context. Het Franse sociaal-politieke en culturele debat in die tijd (1884-1914) is vaak beschreven als nationalistisch en naar binnen gekeerd. In de nasleep van de Frans-Pruisische oorlog bleven universalistische idealen echter naast nationalistische gevoelens bestaan. In de praktijk waren internationalisme en nationalisme nauw verweven concepten, die elkaar voedden en niet zonder elkaar konden bestaan. In dit boek wordt een genuanceerder beeld van het klimaat in Frankrijk geschetst en uiteengezet hoe buitenlandse kunstenaars hun reputaties in deze context vestigden.

Op basis van onderzoek naar een groot aantal primaire bronnen en archiefmateriaal, waarbij gebruik is gemaakt van kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve analyses van recensies, is een lijst gemaakt van de meest succesvolle buitenlandse kunstenaars op de Salon des Indépendants tussen 1884 en 1914. De Franse carrières van drie van deze kunstenaars - Darío de Regoyos, Edvard Munch en Vincent van Gogh - worden verder onderzocht in case-studies, waarbij hun tentoonstellings-strategieën en artistieke identiteiten centraal staan. De resultaten van mijn onderzoek weerleggen het wijdverbreide idee dat buitenlandse kunstenaars beperkte kans op succes hadden in Parijs. In plaats daarvan wordt beargumenteerd dat het een kwestie was van een goed begrip van de onderliggende mechanismen van het veld en hoe daarbinnen te opereren. Het proefschrift is een bijdrage aan het groeiende onderzoeksgebied van transnationale uitwisseling in de kunstgeschiedenis en de manieren waarop deze beïnvloed werd door verscheidene spelers en actoren op sociaal-cultureel en politiek vlak. Hierbij worden nieuwe perspectieven geboden op artistieke strategieën en identiteit, waardesystemen en kritische receptie.

Acknowledgments

This book is the result of a research project that I started in 2010. It was Jan Teeuwisse who inspired me to write this dissertation. Over coffee in the Concertgebouwcafé – together with Lex Kater – he instructed me in his own characteristic way that I should 'just do it'. Jan has been very inspirational and important to me since our first meeting more than 15 years ago, and I am immensely grateful for his continuous support and advice. One of the breakthroughs in this research project took place in Jan's car, while we were in a traffic jam from The Hague to Amsterdam. Jan had deliberately driven into this traffic so that we would have more time to talk over some beers that he had brought for the occasion.

So Jan started this all, but it was not only because of him that I have worked on this PhD with so much pleasure, dedication and belief. Many colleagues, friends and relatives have been extremely helpful, supportive, patient and caring over the last few years. It is thanks to all of them that this project was such an inspirational, enriching and joyful experience. I would like to dedicate a few words of thanks to them.

I especially owe Rachel Esner, my first and favorite professor of the University of Amsterdam. She is not only one of the greatest experts in this field, but she is also a great supervisor and friend. Thank you Rachel, for your belief and trust in me, and for all your priceless advice and support. I am also very indebted to Christa-Maria Lerm-Hayes who took over supervision from Deborah Cherry in the last stages of my research. She has been very encouraging and adequate in guiding me through the final ripples of my dissertation. My third supervisor was Leo Jansen, the best of all men. Everything we do together is per definition a wonderful experience, and one of the best aspects of my dissertation work was the fact that I could do it together with Leo. Especially once you left the Van Gogh Museum, my dissertation was a good excuse to meet and to talk for hours about art and history and life.

It was not always an easy task to combine my Ph.D. work with a full-time job as a curator at the Van Gogh Museum, nor is it natural that an employer would support such an undertaking. However, everyone at the Van Gogh Museum has been exceptionally supportive from the beginning to the end. My director, Axel Rüger, has not only granted me the opportunity to work on my Ph.D., but was also a great moral support. It is also thanks to the ongoing encouragement of the subsequent heads of my department – Nikola Eltink, Chris Stolwijk and especially Marije Vellekoop – that I always found the energy and the time to combine my research with my curatorial duties.

One of the great advantages about working at the Van Gogh Museum is not the exceptional collection, but the people who work there. I have the great privilege of being surrounded by incredibly smart and sweet people, every day. Thanks to Renske Suijver I was able to write a large part of my dissertation while she took care of everything. Lisa Smit, Joost van der Hoeven, Fleur Roos Rosa de Carvalho, Nienke Bakker and Renske are the bastion of our curatorial team, and the mainstay of my working life. I am especially grateful to Nienke for being my 'paranymph', together with my dearest friend Brechje van Densen.

My colleagues from the library have been incredibly helpful in gathering my research material, and together with their effective and creative assistance, I have been able to process and study hundreds of books and articles – even the most obscure ones – in these last years. I would like to thank Zibi, Anita, Isolde and my former colleague Lucinda, for their patience and weight lifting all these years. Of course, the staff at other libraries was also indispensable during my research. I spent most of my hours during my first research leave in Paris in the underworld of the Bibliothèque National de France. The staff there provided me every day with enormous piles of nineteenth-century periodicals, making sure I would not see any daylight for three months. Alain Prévet helped me to navigate the maze of the Archives des Musées Nationaux and the librarian of the Munch Museum in Oslo, Lasse Jacobson, has been very helpful and resourceful for my research on Edvard Munch. During my second research leave in New York, I went daily to the Frick Library to study the exhibition catalogues of the Salon des Indépendants. Just being in that magical place was a great privilege and joy.

I would like to thank several individuals for contributing to this research and supporting me all along. Dominique Lobstein unknowingly planted the seeds of my research when he gave me his three volumes of the Dictionnaire des Indépendants years ago. Jennifer Tonkovich gave me smart and efficient advice on how to write a dissertation as a curator, and my dear friends Jennifer Field and Mayken Jonkman were inspirational examples and driving forces behind my research. Aukje Vergeest has corrected and improved my manuscript with great detail, while making me laugh with her hilarious little drawings in the margins.

I am further indebted to the advice, expertise and support of Jan Dirk Baetens, Tessel Bauduin, Magne Bruteig, Karen Carter, Ingeborg Casinius, Flavie Durand-Ruel, Terry van Druten, Monique Hageman, Reinhold Heller, Eloe Kingma, Wessel Krul, Joep Leerssen, Neil McWilliam, Hotze Mulder, Petra Pettersen, Joachim Pissarro, Janneke Ravenek, Jenny Reynaerts, Juan San Nicolás, Sarah Sprenger, Vérane Tasseau, Susan Waller.

This research project has brought me to beautiful places in Paris and abroad, and made me meet many interesting people, making it one of the most inspiring and enriching experiences of my life. It did also bring me closer to people who are already closest to me. Friends and family were incredibly caring and understanding in all those years, and without them, this project would not have been any fun at all. I had thought-provoking conversations with my parents about my research, while they also took care of my family and me. I spent part of my sabbatical in the paradise and comfort of their home in France, where the exhilarating sight of the snow-peaked mountains and the rolling hills with fresh crops definitely contributed to my thinking and writing. My father taught me to have an inquisitive mind, and to always question everything. My mom learned me that you can reach the skies by working hard, while never losing sight of what is really important in life: family and love. My big brother Pepijn is always there for me, and he is the best company to drink champagne to celebrate or to find solace. His maddening energy and incredible endurance constantly remind me that you can always do much more than you think.

While researching and writing this book, two beautiful babies were born. It is not despite, but thanks to the existence of Victor and Thirza that I have been able to complete this work. Their pure astonishment and enchantment in discovering the world is a daily inspiration to me. Their laughs and love put everything in perspective, and they helped me to be more efficient and dedicated, and especially to get my priorities right. I am deeply and utterly grateful to my husband Arthur, who has made every aspect of this adventure possible. Most importantly, he always encourages me to pursue my dreams, our dreams, and together we fulfill them.