



WOMEN PAINTERS

1780 – 1830

THE BIRTH OF A BATTLE

MUSÉE DU LUXEMBOURG

FROM 19 MAY TO 4 JULY 2021

Extension until 25 July 2021

#WomenPainters

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FROM 19 MAY TO 4 JULY 2021

AT THE MUSÉE DU LUXEMBOURG, 19 RUE VAUGIRARD, 75006, PARIS

OPEN EVERY DAY FROM 10:30 AM TO 7 PM

LATE-NIGHT OPENING ON MONDAYS UNTIL 10 PM FROM 14 JUNE

Open on all public holidays

Due to the current health situation, all admissions must be booked in advance.

Places aux jeunes !

Free admission for young people under the age of 26 from Monday to Friday.

Online booking required, limited number of places.

This exhibition is organised with the support of La Vallée Village.

LA VALLÉE VILLAGE

Our partners



Les Glorieuses



Discover the new Mademoiselle ANGELINA tearoom concept which will present exclusive patisserie and salad creations for each exhibition.

The «Panache» patisserie, in the shape of a headgear, is a direct reference to the development of women's fashion between 1780 and 1830.

Opening hours: enjoy the opening of the terrace every day, at the same times as the museum, following the current government instructions.

Mademoiselle
ANGELINA

THE EXHIBITION

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A fight. The fight of women painters between the end of the Enlightenment and the dawn of the July Monarchy.

Some of their names are known. The majority are not.

But this was not always the case. Despite being “held back” in the name of their gender, many of them enjoyed a level of recognition at the time that contradicts the invisibility with which art history’s dominant narrative has saddled them until recently.

As such, this fight is also, and above all, our own.

Let us break from the circular reasoning around the “female” that continues to detract from the history of art and the collective memory of the artists and artworks of the so-called “minor” genders. Let us resist the rhetorical and political concept of “greatness”.

Let us channel our curiosity into something other than the exception they may have represented. Just for once, let us not have to specify “women painters”.

Let us once again hear the voice of controversy, of the multiplicity, singularity, diversity of perspectives and investments.

Let us learn about their environment, their social circle, their training, their career strategy, their clientele, their reception among the press and public, their role in the changes that art underwent between 1780 and 1830.

Tastes, fashions, ideas, social conventions, clichés, imaginations: how did they go about using this information, conscious and unconscious, to create paintings?

What did being a painter entail for them?

Let us contemplate their work.

1. The right to be painters: anti-academism and the feminisation of the fine arts

Around 1780, controversies and rivalries were stoked both outside and inside the French Royal Academy of Painting. Its hierarchy, privileges and pedagogy stirred a sense of discontentment that is never far away from fermenting socio-political crisis.

At the same time, on the margins of the official Salon, the Salon du Colisée, Exposition de la Jeunesse and Salon de la Correspondance were arousing a great deal of interest.

Young, talented women painters were discovered.
The press began to talk about them.

The admission of Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun and Adélaïde Labille-Guiard - already celebrated artists - into the Academy in May 1783 caused quite a stir. The subject ignited debate and sparked contention. The number of female academicians was limited to four. There was a fear that the pre-eminence of history painting, which spearheaded the programme to restore the greatness of the national school, was under threat from the increasing number of women in the fine arts.

Studying the nude, an essential prerequisite for the great genre, was in principle forbidden to the “weaker sex” as it was deemed immoral. The same applied for co-education, which promoted increased access to teaching studios for young ladies. The debate raged on, turning political.

Revolution broke out. The first free Salon opened in 1791; the French Royal Academy of Painting was abolished in 1793. That same year, the Popular and Republican Society of the Arts, weighing domestic vocation against artistic vocation, banned women from joining until 1794. But from then on,

nothing stopped them from painting professionally or exhibiting. From around thirty in the revolutionary salons, their number had grown to two hundred by the mid-1820s.

2. Learning : amateurs and professionals

From the 1780s, the upwardly mobile bourgeoisie appropriated the signs of prestige among the privileged classes: the mastery of drawing, artistic scholarship and visits to exhibitions became increasingly fashionable. Many young ladies, born outside the realm of the fine arts, began to train in painting and the graphic arts and take classes in “picturesque anatomy”, encouraged by their families who saw it first as source of symbolic and matrimonial capital and then, following the crisis of the Revolution, as a lucrative profession. Substituting for the old model of family transmission, Greuze, David, Suvée, Regnault, et al. opened their renowned studios to these ladies. Their ban by the Academy, decreed in 1787 in the name of propriety, had little effect. Jeanne-Élisabeth Chaudet, Césarine Davin-Mirvault, Hortense Haudebourt-Lescot, Louise Hersent and more

followed in the footsteps of the 1780s' pioneers to train students themselves. From 1800, private lessons began to take off and high-profile master painters opened female sections, often supervised by their wife or a former student. Their training was comparable to that of their male counterparts, including the nude and history painting in the case of certain studios. The master's reputation and the social circle that formed in his studio were decisive for the young painter's career, their candidacy for the Salon, the creation of their future clientele and their legitimacy. The amateur remained a woman, while the professional became an artist.

3. The Salon : an important and changing space

At the turn of the 19th century, the Salon became the major cultural event (with over 22,000 visitors in 1804) and the only space to exhibit and recognise living artists. Following the revolutionary reorganisation of the fine arts system, which became a single administrative authority in 1802, the Department of Museums managed the recently-founded Museum and encouraged living art to be exhibited at the

Salon, which would close with the awarding of medals, commissions and acquisitions by the French state.

The 300 exhibitors during the Revolution rose to 700 at the start of the Empire and 1,200 by the end of the 1840s. The exponential increase in paintings, hung in several rows and simply numbered, and the success of the biennial exhibition explain the determining role of the nascent art criticism on both the public's taste and the artist's career.

Female exhibitors, representing 9% in the 1790s and 15% in the mid-1820s, were initially from the affluent classes for the most part, while during the final years of the Empire and under the Restoration, girls from the lower middle classes and daughters of the trade were more common fixtures.

Their path was similar to that of men, if impacted by a greater level of rejection from the jury. Nevertheless, they played an essential role in the Salon's evolution into an art market where public taste superseded previous didactic ambitions. This transformation was linked to the genre scenes, portraits and small paintings - painted more commonly by women than men - that flooded the Salon.



Extracts from the obituary of Hortense Haudebout-Lescot, published in *L'Illustration*, 8 January 1845.

"The indisputable influence that she seems [...] to have exerted on the direction and form of art in a certain era, an influence that may not yet have been fully noticed, the study of which may in fact be of interest, like a historical memory of a time that is still very close to ours, but which we have almost forgotten, as if it were already very distant."

"Until that moment, and under David's direction, all concerns focused on large paintings, history painting and monumental portraits. The path that Mademoiselle Lescot followed was very different and very new.

The charm found in these graceful little pieces, sparkling with colour and spirit, drew crowds, which deserted the great and mythological pages inaccessible to mediocre fortunes and shrinking salons, and which were no longer in keeping with a new society. [...] It was alone at the start: now what has become of heroic painting? And what a fortune has been made of so-called genre painting, which seemed to have died with Greuze, but which Madame Haudeboud-Lescot so successfully revived and which now reigns almost absolutely?"

4. I am a painter

“Before women reigned, the Revolution deposed them.” Rather than joining Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun in mourning the hand dealt to women by the century that began in 1789, should we not instead appreciate the scope of possibilities that it opened?

Under the Ancien Régime, this power was only enjoyed by a few “exceptional” women artists, much like the privilege enjoyed by the kings and their closest circle. And this, to the exclusion of all others. With the long and difficult birth of the Republican era, the terms “extraordinary woman” and “miracle of nature”, which did a disservice both to their sex and to the mainstream community of artists, began to clash with the founding principles of universality and the equality of all.

In the aftermath of 1789, women were indeed excluded from the political realm and bound to the domestic sphere. But it is precisely because the focus had then shifted to the place and role of all women, and not just a few, that it was deemed necessary to guard against their now-conceivable emancipation.

The erasure of the natural and divine principle before the legal and rational principle, and the growing connection between politics and economics, created an unprecedented opportunity for them to debate, talk, think, create and work as a subject of law. To learn to paint and exhibit, because they had a right to do so. Opinion may have ridiculed, discredited, frightened and dissuaded them - and it would continue to for a long time yet - but society post-1789 and its principles, perhaps inadvertently, opened up a space where it was legally possible for a woman to say: "I am a painter". The birth of a fight.

A photograph dated 2011. A living artist. Between this work by Sabine Meier, *Métamorphose 4*, and *Artist Painting a Portrait of a Musician* by Marguerite Gérard, "so many days have slipped past".

But neither the canvas nor the photograph is very far from each other in illustrating, on the one hand a beginning, and on the other the - albeit provisional - achievements of progress that has been under way for two centuries.

The studio. A woman painter and her model. Between them, a vast painting whereby the "real" has undergone several

transformations. Its format is unlike those to which Marguerite Gérard had always been accustomed.

Back in the studio. Under the vaulted ceiling, a set is being built. It looks like this. A man - the model - times three and the artist times two. Three depths incompatible with one another and with the studio. At the centre of the perspective, at its vanishing point, the lens of the camera and, behind it, its operator. Visible in what, despite its appearance and the laws of perspective, cannot be a mirror. Of which their faces cannot therefore be its reflections.

This painting and this photograph are the studio much more than it is their subject. "They" are Marguerite Gérard and Sabine Meier, "occupying so considerable a place, compared with the restricted place which is reserved for them in space, a place on the contrary prolonged past measure, for simultaneously, *like giants plunged into the years, they touch the distant epochs through which they have lived, between which so many days have come to range themselves - in Time.*" (Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*)

Curators

Martine Lacas, Doctor of art history and theory,
author, independent researcher

Exhibition design

Loretta Gaïtis and Irène Charrat

Graphic design

Savannah Lemonnier

Lighting

Léopold Mauger

Audiovisual

Audiovisual and multimedia department of the Réunion
des Musées Nationaux - Grand Palais

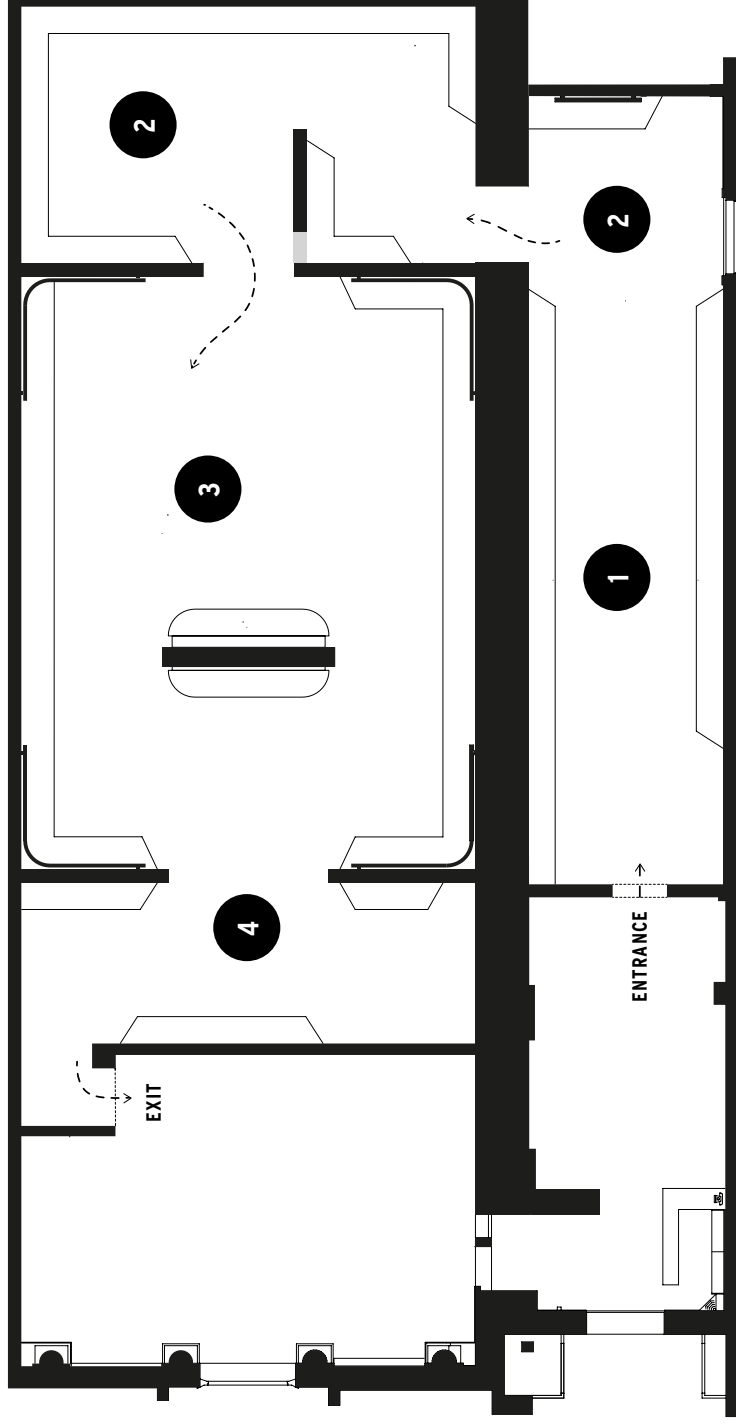
Music

Nicolas Lebrun

This exhibition is organised by Réunion des Musées
Nationaux - Grand Palais and presented at the Musée
du Luxembourg from 19 May to 4 July 2021.

Map of the exhibition

↑ RETURN TO SUMMARY



AROUND THE EXHIBITION

Cultural programme

MUSEUM LECTURES

at the Les 3 Luxembourg cinema

67, rue Monsieur Le Prince 75006 Paris

booking required on museeduluxembourg.fr, free admission

PRESENTATION LECTURE

Thursday 27 May at 6.30 pm

with Martine Lacas, Doctor of art history and curator of the exhibition, and Loretta Gaitis and Irène Charrat, exhibition designers

How can we restore visibility to artists that have long been kept private? How can we understand their work ? In a conversation with the exhibition designer, the curator explains the scientific and militant approach that governed preparations for this exhibition.

CONVERSATION: SABINE MEIER AND REGIS COTENTIN

Thursday 24 June at 6.30 pm

with Sabine Meier, Photographer, and Régis Cotentin, Curator and Manager of the contemporary art section at the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille.

The exhibition at the Musée du Luxembourg ends with a contemporary photograph by Sabine Meier. Conceived as a dialog, this lecture will shine a light on the photographer's work and reveal its deep connections with the struggle of women painters in the late 18th century.

EVENTS AND EVENINGS

booking required on museeduluxembourg.fr

"AT THE SALON WITH WOMEN PAINTERS" DRAMATISED TOURS

Friday 28 May, Saturday 12 June, Friday 25 June at 6.15 pm,
end at 7.30 pm

with Claire Penalver, actress, and Alexandre Laval, writer and stage director
guided tour admission price

Along with the *Compagnie du Chapeau de Paille* and its actors in costume, enter the Salon, the key event of the Paris arts scene at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, and be among the lucky few to witness conversations between a talented woman painter and an art critic.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT DAY

Saturday 5 June from 11 am

Posted in front of their “favourite” works, students of Université Paris-Dauphine will share their knowledge and perspective with you. They’re waiting for you, so feel free to ask them questions!

« EXCEPTIONNELLES » EVENING

Saturday 3 July from 8 pm to 1 am - last entrance at 12.30 am
free admission upon reservation

The « Exceptionnelles » evening is conceived by Emmanuelle Delanoë and co-organized by La Vallée Village and the Musée du Luxembourg

On the occasion of the European night of museums, the Musée du Luxembourg will offer an immersive experience in the exhibition through a unique magic and live music atmosphere, lasting long into the night. A cheering programme especially created for the event, has been conceived as a journey paying tribute to the works of women of different nationalities and periods, from Clara Schumann to Björk. This evening initiates a dialogue between the masterpieces of these women who have managed to succeeded in asserting themselves as fully fledged artists.

During the afternoon, exhibition visitors may enjoy the opportunity to discover an avant-première of the programme at three different times on

Saturday 3 July at 3.30 pm, 4.30 pm and 5.30 pm in the Tivoli Salon (accessible from the exhibition rooms)

conception: Les Muses and Emmanuelle Delanoë
musical arrangements, electronic, electric guitar:
Giani Caserotto

piano: Sarah Ristorcelli

lead vocalist: Linda Oláh

musicians: Le Balcon orchestra

Guided tours

booking required on museeduluxembourg.fr

GENERAL GUIDED TOUR

for ages 13 and above; duration: 1 hour 15 minutes

at 10.30 am Tuesday to Thursday, from 1 June

at 12.15 pm Tuesday to Sunday, from 9 June

at 2.30 pm Monday to Saturday (except from Tuesday to Thursday in May)

at 10 am on Mondays

For some fifty years, as France went through a series of political and social upheavals, a host of women artists finally achieved recognition for their work. Through the analysis of a selection of famous works and others, largely forgotten, brought together for the exhibition, explore a particularly fruitful period in the history of art.

FAMILY TOUR

for ages 6 and above; duration: 1 hour

at 2.30 pm on Sundays

in English at 2.30 pm on 22 May and 26 June

With a tour guide from the museum, meet the women intent on being recognised for their talent as painters! Discover where they learnt their trade, what kind of lives they led and how they fought to stand out in a world that had no room for them.

“MARMOUSETS” STORY TOUR

for ages 3-5, duration: 30 minutes

Saturday 12 June at 9.30 am

How did women painters in the late 18th century live? What did they paint? Visit Adélaïde, Elisabeth and Marie-Victoire in their studios or on their travels, their families and loved ones, through the magic of a story designed specially for little ones.

SCHOOL VISIT

From kindergarten to high school; duration: from 45 minutes to 1h15 depending on the class

At 10.30 am on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and at 2.30 pm from Monday to Saturday

With a guide from the Museum, classes discover, through the artworks, the way women painters asserted themselves on the artistic scene of their time. Talented and strategist, hard-working and creative, they have a lot to pass on to the young generation!

VIRTUAL VISIT WITH AN AUDIO-GUIDE (AUTONOMOUS)

book your visit on museeduluxembourg.fr

Visit the exhibition online, whenever you want, as much as you want for 7 days, following the date of your reservation. This virtual autonomous visit with an audio-guide will allow you to

discover the exhibition at your own pace, going from room to room. During your visit, you'll have the possibility to observe 36 of the exhibited pieces in high definition and to zoom in to see their details. You'll also benefit from additional content for 25 of the artworks (texts or audio commentaries).

AUTONOMOUS VISIT AND VIDEO-CONFERENCE PACK

Video-conference at 10.30 am on Wenesday 19 and 26 May and at 6 pm on Thursday 18 and 27 May

book your visit on museeduluxembourg.fr

The video-conference will allow you to discover the exhibition through the selection of some of the most exceptional presented pieces. The conferences are live, held by one of the Museum's guide and are one-hour long. Thanks to this pack, you can complete the video-conference with an autonomous visit, as mentioned above.

RESOURCES

AUDIO-GUIDE

French, English and children's version in French

Enjoy commentary on some twenty major works from the exhibition.

price: €5, Sésame Stops price: €4

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY BOOKLET

To help your children aged 7 and over to explore the exhibition, ask for the activity booklet, which is available for free from the museum reception, or download it on museeduluxembourg.fr

Multimedia



THE MUSEE DU LUXEMBOURG MOBILE APP

The Musée du Luxembourg has created a mobile app, available for free on Google Play and the AppStore (FR, UK, USA).

An essential tool for keeping up-to-date with the latest news, planning your visit and making the most of the museum's exhibitions and events.

The app allows you to keep a souvenir of your favourite works, finest photographs and high points of the visit, as well as keeping in touch. Access some of the exhibition content for free: images, rooms texts and a Portrait and self-portrait discovery tour.

Audioguides in French and English to download as in-app purchases on Google Play and the Appstore, price: €3.49 <https://tinyurl.com/luxappli>

THE EXHIBITION SOUNDSCAPE

To enhance your tour of the exhibition, an original soundscape has been composed by the electro musician Daniela Huerta and her guests.

Download the exhibition soundscape for free on museeduluxembourg.fr or from the mobile App.

AT THE MUSEUM

NEW! Discover the interactive Super Zoom

A digital installation is now available within each exhibition at the museum. This interactive programme is accessible via a touch table and is interconnected to a large high-definition video screen. It offers different approaches through which to explore a selection of works from the current exhibition.

Discover 14 women painters, as well as their social circles, and navigate among these artists to find out more about their friendships, family ties, companions, teachers and pupils. The portraits of these figures (over 150) will be displayed in HD on the video screen.

SOCIAL MEDIA

ON INSTAGRAM : @museeduluxembourg

Use the stickers designed by the illustrator @marieboiseau on your stories and discover the portrait of four women painters, on video, with @MargauxBrugvin.

Share your visit #WomenPainters



*Find us at museeduluxembourg.fr,
grandpalais.fr and panoramadelart.com*

Subscribe to our Le Mag newsletter at grandpalais.fr

MOOC

Follow the *Women painters through times* MOOC and discover dozens of women painters whose masterpieces have gone down in history. Each sequence presents a genre in which these painters excelled, as well as several inescapable artists.

Subscribe for free here

Publications

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE,

Women Painters, 1780 - 1830. Birth of a Battle.

18 x 28 cm, 208 pages, 150 images, €40.00

EXHIBITION SKETCHBOOK,

Women Painters, 1780 - 1830. Birth of a Battle.

17 x 12 cm, 48 pages, 40 images, €9.50

EXHIBITION JOURNAL,

Women Painters, 1780 - 1830. Birth of a Battle.

28 x 43 cm, 24 pages, 40 images, €6.00

SUMMER 2021

GRANDE HALLE DE LA VILLETTE

NAPOLEON

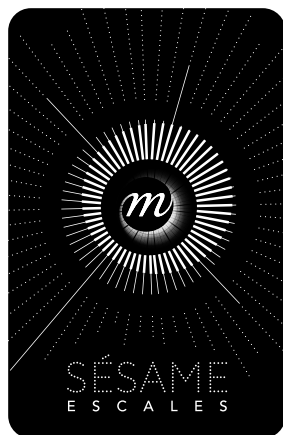
From 28 May to 19 September 2021

Admired and controversial in equal measure, Napoleon Bonaparte was a complex figure whose life oscillated between heroism and tragedy, victory and defeat, modern progress and regressive measures. To mark the bicentenary of his death, the Rmn - Grand Palais, La Villette and Re Re / Adonis are organising a stunning exhibition, offering an accurate portrait of a fascinating man who shaped modern-day France.

Over 150 original pieces, brought together for the first time, follow on from one another in this chronological and educational exhibition. Giant reconstructions and a host of digital devices immerse visitors in these decisive moments for the history of France.

SÉSAME STOPS PASS

SÉSAME
E S C A L E S



THE ART OF SURPRISE

The Sésame pass is changing

and opening up new doors!

For one year, get special and unlimited admission to *Women Painters, 1780 - 1830*.

The Birth of a Battle and *Vivian Maier*

at the Musée du Luxembourg, as well as *Napoleon*

at La Villette and the collections of fifteen national museums throughout France.

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