

Introduction

Abstract: This book investigates the way space affected the perception of art and visual culture in early nineteenth-century Paris. The rise of the museum and the abundance of artworks seized during the Napoleonic campaigns contributed to a rearrangement of the relationship between spectators and artworks, as well as images more generally. Relevant to the field of spatial studies, this analysis focuses on aspects of space that help to define the perception of artworks and images. Space is considered to be multifaceted here, encompassing architectural, intellectual, visual, and individual contexts. It provides the frame for multiple perceptions and patterns of consumption of images. The availability of such a frame triggers different experiences and contributes to creating a series of images that generate others and increase our understanding of the perception of images.

Keywords: spatial studies, continuity, multilayered perception, interactions, space of images

About the Brittle Relationship between Space and Objects

In the autumn of 1808, French newspapers reported several casualties arising from poisonous mushrooms. Shocked by the tragic deaths of a certain Mrs. Cezan and her two young children, who died after eating stewed mushrooms picked in the forest of Romainville, near Paris, the Parisian medical doctor Louis Fourreau de Beauregard (1774–1848) wrote a letter to the *Journal de l'Empire* that was published on October 16.¹ In order to prevent further tragedy, he carefully described the appearance and characteristics of the dangerous specimens. The main cause of the fatalities was the fact that many people could not identify edible mushrooms or distinguish them from poisonous ones.

A few weeks later, in December, the *Journal des Arts* announced that André-Pierre Pinson (1746–1828), a surgeon who also made wax models at the Paris School

¹ Louis Fourreau de Beauregard, "Au rédacteur: avis sur le danger des champignons," *Journal de l'Empire*, October 16, 1808, 3–4.

of Medicine, had produced a series of wax models of poisonous mushrooms for display.² His aim was erudite display as well as educational assistance. He himself had collected hundreds of wax models and had created what was considered the most famous collection of anatomical wax structures in Paris; these belonged to the Duke of Orléans and were housed in the Palais Royal.³ According to the *Journal de l'Empire*, the mushroom wax models were put on display at the Louvre, in the Salon Carré.

The decision to use a famous space, normally intended for large, annual exhibitions of contemporary art, to educate visitors about poisonous food highlights an important shift in attitudes towards art and science. Objects made to serve a more mundane need than is usually attributed to art – that is, to scientifically inform and educate the wider public about risk in food consumption – were now put on display in an art museum. But how did scientific objects come to be moved from spaces of limited access, rooms in university buildings and private houses, to a prestigious public setting like the Louvre? Why were these mushroom models now on display in the Salon?

Such questions revolve around a fundamental conception of space. The transferral of the wax mushrooms from one space to another allowed them and other, similar objects to acquire completely new functions and values. Study objects became visual documents of key importance to public health and botanical specimens were transformed into “must-see” items. These shifts testify to a fundamental change in the approach to art as well as to visual information outside any artistic context at the beginning of the nineteenth century. More importantly, space was a communicative conduit, linking different layers of knowledge, as well as individual and collective perception and experience. It was at the heart of a process of hybridisation, juxtaposition, and cohabitation of visual and scholarly categories that are both autonomous and collaborative. These categories allow us to differentiate and multiply the levels of analysis, and such investigations are at the core of this book.

Nineteenth-century Paris is a particularly useful case study for understanding these dynamics. The Louvre collection grew at an unprecedented rate during the first years of the century. The method of displaying the collections exemplified a new approach to using exhibition venues. Artworks from various foreign countries were systematically sought out and integrated into the museum's collection. Parisian cultural life also changed profoundly across the Napoleonic era, and,

2 *Journal des arts, des sciences, de la littérature et de politique*, December 2, 1808, 243–44. Pinson reproduced each mushroom at different stages of its life cycle, resulting in items possibly very similar to those found in the museum's collections today.

3 Michel Lemire, Anne-Marie Slezec, and Georges Boulinier, “Un anatomiste sculpteur sur cire à l'époque révolutionnaire: André-Pierre Pinson (1746–1828),” *Scientifiques et sociétés pendant la Révolution et l'Empire. Actes du 114e congrès national des sociétés savantes* (Paris: CTHS, 1990), 327.

correspondingly, changes in the organisation of collections and exhibitions as well as in the production of catalogues and books on art emerged. More generally, there were shifts too in the ways objects and images were understood.

Space as a setting and display context became a decisive factor in the formation of culture. This change affected artefacts and works of art, paintings, and sculptures. It also had an impact on objects of everyday use and common consumer goods, such as sugar confections and paper games, and on popular and commercial images, for instance caricatures, shop signs, and labels of tobacco and cordial. In short, the general approach to the visual was reorganised and restructured in this period.

The Multidimensionality of Space

Space is crucial in this context, as it constitutes the backdrop for the display and reception of images, and for the new functions they acquired. Research on space has intensified since the 1970s, following Henri Lefebvre's seminal *La production de l'espace* (1974). He distinguished three major categories of space: spatial practice, the representation of space, and the representational space. Lefebvre highlighted how a space's associations with interactions and relationships are more important than focusing on a (more or less) empty physical structure that has a specific purpose.⁴ This view is innovative because it underscores the diversity of spatial categories and includes the roles of individuals as actors. Creating, representing, and consuming now were considered the new parameters of space.

Lefebvre's study triggered an interest in spatial research and led to the so-called "spatial turn" in the humanities.⁵ The breadth of studies from the 1980s and 1990s testifies to the wide range of fields encompassed by spatial research.⁶ There was

4 On Lefebvre, see: Jenny Bauer and Robert Fischer, eds., *Perspectives on Henri Lefebvre: Theory, Practices and (Re)Readings* (Munich and Vienna: De Gruyter, 2019); Lukasz Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

5 Jörg Döring and Tristan Thielmann, eds., *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigma in der Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008); Joost van Loon, Daniel Romic, Thomas Hünefeldt, and Annika Schlitte, eds., *Philosophie des Ortes: Reflexionen zum Spatial Turn in der Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaft* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014); Stephan Günzel, *Raum: eine kulturwissenschaftliche Einführung* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017).

6 David Armitage, "Horizons of History: Space, Time and the Future of the Past," *History Australia* 12, no. 1 (April 2015): 207–25; Daniel S. Allemann, Anton Jäger, and Valentina Mann, "Introduction: Approaching Space in Intellectual History," *Global Intellectual History* 3, no. 2 (2018): 127–36; Beat Kümin and Cornelia Osborne, "At Home and in the Workplace: A Historical Introduction to the 'Spatial Turn,'" *History and Theory* 52 (2013): 305–18; Matthew Graves and Gilles Teulié, "Histories of Space, Spaces of History – Introduction." *E-rea: revue électronique d'études sur le monde anglophone* 14, no. 2 (2017): 1–5; Fiona Williamson, "The Spatial Turn of Social and Cultural History: A Review of the Current Field," *European History Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2014): 703–17.

particular interest in the geographical dimension of space, especially its definition and comparative analyses.⁷ Scholars drew attention to the impact of space as an agent of exchange and as a communicative tool.⁸ The conceptualisation of space was no longer confined to mere geographical arrangements, but now included private trade networks, displays, literary texts, agencies, and politics. More recent researchers such as Charles Rice have investigated these multiple aspects of space, insisting on the connection and interaction between the notion and the experience of interiority.⁹ The development of these connections and interactions is essential for the emergence of new concepts of space that would come to characterise modernity and would transform subjectivity into a dominant tool for experiential spatiality.

My book owes a great deal to this focus on the diverse aspects of space. A starting point for my reflection, it highlights different facets of the relationship between physical and intellectual contexts. This is evident for the early nineteenth century, which witnessed a broad array of visual material, art displays, artistic productions, and patterns of consumption that simultaneously referenced the past and modelled the future.

The temporal aspect of space is part of the investigation of its agency. Historians such as Reinhart Koselleck developed new perspectives by focusing on the relation between temporality and space.¹⁰ To address the question of memory, Koselleck reflected on the agency of space and on how the past and the future intersect when we deal with an event.¹¹ He considered experience and expectation to be crucial components of the historical categories defining space. The insertion of the question of time into spatial studies sparked the discussion of the diversity of spaces, their representation, the passage from one event to another, and the transition from one

7 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus & Spokesman Books, 1973).

8 For instance, the works of Denis Cosgrove are a pioneering step in this research because they highlight the importance of spatial practices as the expression of human knowledge: Denis Cosgrove, *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). A cultural geographer, Cosgrove opened up the field by linking spatial transformations (including geography, landscape transformations, and cultural and economic activities) to human productions. See: Bernd Belina and Boris Michel, eds., *Raumproduktionen: Beiträge der Radical Geography: eine Zwischenbilanz* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2007); Alan Baker, *Geography and History: Bridging the Divide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Indranil Acharya and Ujjwal Kumar Panda, *Geographical Imaginations: Literature and the "Spatial Turn"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

9 Charles Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity* (London: Routledge, 2007).

10 Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979).

11 The issue of place has interested scholars such as Pierre Nora. In his *Lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–92), Nora put forward the notion of “collective memory” as a common experience belonging to specific communities.

chronological and spatial element to another. Understanding of the multilayered nature and the diversity of space emerges from such considerations.¹²

A common thread of spatial studies is a strong focus on the multifaceted environment in which actions are taken. In his studies on “heterotopia,” intended as ‘the’ other and alternative spaces, Michel Foucault pointed out that these seemingly isolated spaces in fact rely on a dense and articulated network and that they are tightly intertwined.¹³ Foucault characterises the 1980s as an “epoch of simultaneity,” while he sees the nineteenth century as primarily focused on the past and on issues such as “development and suspension, crisis and cycle.”¹⁴ Because of the heterogeneous character of space – its multidimensional, multifunctional, and multisensorial nature – analysis of it requires a multidisciplinary approach.

This book seeks to explore different conceptions of space. My point of departure is an enquiry into the role of architecture as a frame for different forms of perception, be they intellectual, artistic, or literary. Discussing the relationship between private/public and physical/intellectual space in the Louvre, I seek to discuss key approaches for creating an ensemble of visual and erudite structures throughout the nineteenth century. The commemorative purpose of such a museum-like space reveals itself to be a self-reproducing consistency, which develops out of the past and into the future.

Secondly, I argue that although a specific space can serve multiple purposes, an experience linked to it at a particular point in time, such as an exhibition, remains associated with it even if the scope of the space’s purposes changes. It was this transferability of the possible purposes of a space that led to the 1808 exhibition of poisonous mushrooms being held at the Salon, for example. Correspondingly, the importance of the Salon shifted from a platform for contemporary art to a place of public use for the entire population. Furthermore, because of this transferable character of space, the early nineteenth century witnessed a new connection between exhibitions of contemporary art and political festivals, as well as a new link between exhibitions of industrial products and manifestations of military greatness.

Thirdly, I analyse the power of space to link visual references to the imagination. Alongside museums, recreational sites became a frequent place of interest for a wider

12 Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003); Eric Weiskott, “Futures Past: Prophecy, Periodization, and Reinhart Koselleck,” *New Literary History* 52, no. 1 (2021): 169–88; Juihan Hellerma, “Koselleck on Modernity, Historik, and Layers of Time,” *History and Theory* 59, no. 2 (2020): 188–209; Niklas Olsen, “Spatial Aspects on the Work of Reinhart Koselleck,” *History of European Ideas* 49, no. 1 (2023): 136–51.

13 Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias,” *Diacritics* 16 (1986): 22–27; Michael Foucault, *Le corps utopique, les hétérotopies* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Lignes, 2009).

14 Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 22.

public. The complex interrelationship among places, objects, ephemeral events, and spectators shows how a new notion of a “space of images” emerged, which I define as a multidimensional setting combining symbolic, physical, imaginative, artistic, and commercial imagery. Museums, recreational sites, and other similar spaces also appeared in discussions and reports in newspapers and journals.

Finally, I address literary spaces, which I consider in two ways. On the one hand, texts generated an intellectual space. On the other, writings on art created an imaginative experience and, consequently, facilitated the perception of art. Whether considering the visual and intellectual space created by texts on art, or the physical space through which we can access art and/or the discourse on art, the study of space in written texts allows us to capture the importance of the geographical setting, and above all the transitory nature of space and its capacity to transmit and circulate models and references.¹⁵

Connecting Objects and Space

The relationship between objects and space lies at the heart of this book. My focus is especially on the impact of spaces on the way images were used and understood in early nineteenth-century France. Whether considering paintings or sculptures produced by famous and coveted artists or examining popular prints, images, or ephemera, I seek to highlight the interaction between visual categories, the mechanisms that govern them, and the multiple contexts in which they developed. Particular attention is paid here to the way motifs circulated, were reproduced, and were transferred from one context to another in both high and low culture around 1800.

The first Napoleonic Empire offers a unique and particularly revealing framework for studying these questions. An unprecedented abundance of artworks led to new uses for them and a growing circulation of images that affected how people interacted with art. Rotating exhibitions of artworks appropriated from newly conquered countries were put on display in the Louvre and greatly expanded the public’s knowledge of classical art. The simultaneous, high expectations of the triumphs of imperial grandeur heightened the impact of these unprecedented experiences, which, in turn, established new reference points and triggered new comparisons between old masters and contemporary artists. While such knowledge changed viewers’ approach to art, it was the space where exhibitions were held that determined the public’s access to artworks and that facilitated the reception, if not the absorption, of the works into French popular culture.

15 Acharya and Panda, *Geographical Imaginations*; Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann, *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur: die Literaturwissenschaften und der Spatial Turn* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009).

More interestingly, this new framework for perceiving images itself is transferable. The way knowledge about a work of art is assembled can be transposed to the understanding of other events or other objects that feature the same image. Thus, the analysis, acquisition of knowledge, and approach a visitor developed during a visit to an exhibition of paintings in a specific space could further be applied to other displays, for example of industrial products, or even of alluring sugar-paste sculptures in the windows of pastry shops. In other words, while the image and motif remain the same, their tangible manifestation may change, and so does the beholder's idea of them. This process of transfer can occur for different contexts, needs, categories, and forms of consumption. One expects to find familiar images in an exhibition, or to recognise this or that motif in a shop sign. However, one may also find a sugar-paste model representing, for instance, an ancient temple seen in printed illustrations.

Is this transferability exclusive to the early nineteenth century? Did it occur only from 1800 onwards? Certainly not. Though not entirely new, this transferability of images and of the process of imagining connected to them took on a new quality around 1800. The development of an identifiable museum culture and a significant increase in the consumption of images recast such transfer. The emergence of museums from the late eighteenth century onward led to a growing familiarity with exhibitions and collections. Art became ever more accessible, and museum visits were likewise an increasingly common practice.¹⁶ At the same time, the flourishing visual culture signalled a turning point in the relationship between viewer and image. We are still far from both the mass consumption of images and the visual cultural expressions that intensified later in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ However, during the Napoleonic period, the visual approach increasingly developed through the dissemination of different media characterised by the same visual pattern. Works such as Raphael's *Madonna della Seggiola*, seized from Palazzo Pitti in Florence and brought to Paris in 1799, were not only reproduced in single sheet prints (even before 1800) and in illustrations across the museum's catalogues, but also appeared across paintings, ceramics, and velvet pictures.

The broad variety of types of reception in artistic and commercial reproduction called into question a series of established mechanisms linked to the construction of knowledge (i.e., comparison, quotation, appropriation). The early nineteenth century was crucial for the development of these dynamics of reception, which continue to play an important role in our culture today. This was not the result of intentional dissemination or focused propaganda, but should rather be seen as a

16 Dominique Poulot, "La visite au musée: un loisir édifiant au XIXe siècle," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 51 (May–June 1983): 187–96.

17 Margaret Cohen and Anne Higonnet, "Complex Culture," in *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (London: Routledge, 2004), 16.

pragmatic reaction to socio-cultural developments, such as the arrival of artworks from conquered regions and the depiction of Napoleonic grandeur through exhibitions, kermesses, and art festivals. In each case discussed in this book, space becomes the chief element in the process of visual contamination and the spread of knowledge across the viewing public. It connects the viewers and the artwork. It stages the act of seeing and determines the way objects are perceived. Space defines the parameters of seeing as both a performance and a cultural, social, and individual experience.

What motivated this nineteenth-century attention to space? How can an exhibition space, a shop, or an esplanade link and mediate different perceptions of images? Space is important because it allows for a multifaceted understanding of objects. First, it determines how the spectator contextualises an artefact, as he or she juggles the possible approaches of study, collection, contemplation, and consumption. Second, it makes possible the investigation of the ephemeral, fragile relationship between “high” and “low,” between works claiming an aesthetic value and responding to artistic or cultural demands (e.g. integration into a collection), and everyday, popular, or commercial objects that have an immediate and pragmatic role in daily life. Third, space facilitates the multiplication and dissemination of images and types of imagery, understood as a series, as a constellation of visual or visually-related information supporting the perception of a particular motif.

These roles of space evoke continuity with the pre-Napoleonic period, while demonstrating the new importance of space for museum-like purposes.¹⁸ For instance, this study will show that the Louvre’s director, Dominique-Vivant Denon (1747–1825), attempted to devote the palace’s spaces exclusively to exhibitions and so continued a project that goes back to the pre-revolutionary period.¹⁹ During the 1770s, Comte d’Angiviller (1730–1810) had promoted the Louvre as exclusively an exhibition space, even though it housed various institutions and artists’ studios, among other things. Across this volume, it becomes evident that such continuities should be seen as the result of an ongoing evolution, and that there is a point at which new qualities and characteristics constitutive of modern museums and museographic spaces emerge.²⁰

18 Art historical research has shown the continuity with the Revolutionary period. See: Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002); Jean-Claude Bonnet, ed., *L’empire des Muses : Napoléon, les arts et les lettres* (Paris: Belin, 2004); Régis Michel and Philippe Bordes, eds., *Aux armes et aux arts!: Les arts de la Révolution, 1789–1799* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988).

19 Exhibitions like the one on Dominique-Vivant Denon at the Louvre in 1999–2000 are seminal for studying public figures of vital importance, as Denon oversaw artistic policy at the Musée Napoléon from its foundation in 1802. Anne-Marie Dupuy, ed., *Vivant Denon: l’œil de Napoléon* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999).

20 Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Per Bjurström, ed., *The Genesis*

Institutions such as the Louvre offer an intellectual, visual, and erudite environment for art perception. The discussion here stresses the construction and acquisition of knowledge that happened in these institutions. Scholars have examined the knowledge associated with objects and the practice of seeing as the expression of a learning process. Pascal Griener demonstrated that compendia, illustrated albums, encyclopaedias, paper museums, and other similar sources developed alongside a growing demand for visual information, a need already characteristic of the eighteenth century.²¹ The proliferation of this kind of paper-based information further diversified the perception of knowledge, emphasising the display of the objects to be studied.²² It also led to an awareness of the primary role of the viewer, as Jonathan Crary has argued.²³ Throughout the nineteenth century, spectators experienced a profusion of shows and displays intended as performance. The focus increasingly became the individual experience generated by the act of seeing, rather than by the objects themselves.

Because of this growing, nineteenth-century awareness of the primary role that setting played in the display and circulation of art, scholars have turned to the study of venues and urban areas devoted to or used as exhibition spaces or recreational spots. An interest in space was important at the turn of the nineteenth century, as it was then possible to contextualise art production and consumption, artistic development, and the comprehension of art within a tangible environment. Paying close attention to the materiality of architectural entities such as the Louvre highlights the key significance of space for the analysis of art and visual culture.²⁴ This link between space and materiality, firmly rooted in the eighteenth century,

of the Art Museum in the 18th Century (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1993); Carole Paul, ed., *The First Modern Museums of Art: The Birth of an Institution in 18th- and Early 19th-Century Europe* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012).

21 Pascal Griener, *La république de l'œil: l'expérience de l'art au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010).

22 Pascal Griener, *Pour une histoire du regard: l'expérience du musée au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Hazan, 2017).

23 Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990). Crary has also investigated the importance of the various mechanisms of attention in the late nineteenth century: *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999 [2001]).

24 Several publications have addressed the building, its material aspects, and the impact of the policy directed by Napoleon in celebration of the nation and his glory. See: Iris Moon, *The Architecture of Percier and Fontaine and the Struggle for Sovereignty in Revolutionary France* (London: Routledge, 2016); Jean Tulard, *Napoléon et Paris: rêves d'une capitale* (Paris: Paris Musées, 2015); Jean-Michel Leniaud, *Napoléon et les arts* (Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 2012); Silvia Marzagalli, *Napoléon Ier ou la légende des arts, 1800–1815* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2015); Jean-Claude Daufresne, *Le Louvre et les Tuileries: architectures de fêtes et d'apparat: architectures éphémères* (Paris: Editions Mengès, 1994); Jean-Philippe Garric, *Percier et Fontaine: les architectes de Napoléon* (Paris: Béliin, 2014).

shows the impact of urban settings on the arts and on everyday objects (i.e., posters, advertisements, shop windows, labels).²⁵

Crucial to this mechanism is the precariousness, the ephemerality of a given space and its various aspects, which are often composed of dichotomies: interior/exterior, private/public, and material/immaterial. Scholars have particularly considered interiors and domestic space, aiming to explore the dynamics of these areas from socio-cultural, visual, and literary perspectives.²⁶ The critical issue here is the fragility of the interior, which is discussed as unstable, uncertain, and changeable. Scholars such as Dominique Bauer have argued that the fragility of the interior is an interaction of different spatial layers, categories, and functions.²⁷

This notion of fragility and the study of the interactions it involves, particularly in connection with exhibition areas, provide important reflections for this book.²⁸ More specifically, the impermanent character of space, which led people to reconsider the role and status of images and types of imagery, alongside their ability to change and adapt to different contexts, becomes evident. Such considerations highlight the multiple, brittle, temporary, and transient nature of space. Rather than focusing on a specific place, urban area, artist, or art-related topic, this study considers the capacity of these spaces to become links, their functions, and their potential for change. I aim to analyse and reconstruct how these spaces impacted the early

25 Michael Marrinan, *Romantic Paris: Histories of a Cultural Landscape, 1800–1850* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); H. Hazel Hahn, *Scenes of Parisian Modernity: Culture and Consumption in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2009). For the eighteenth century, see: Meredith Martin and Denise Amy Baxter, eds., *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Identities and Interiors* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Christina Smylitopoulos, ed., *Agents of Space: 18th Century Art, Architecture, and Visual Culture* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

26 Peter J. Schneemann, "Interieur: Kunst, Raumkonzepte und Performances," *Kunstbulletin* 5 (2013): 32–39; Peter Schneemann, Christine Göttler, Birgitt Borkopp-Restle et al., eds., *Reading Room: Re-Lektüren des Innenraums* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2019). Researchers have focused on France and the francophone world from the Ancien Régime to the nineteenth century, considering different contexts and objects. See: John Whitehead, *The French Interior in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Laurence King, 1992); Sarah Schleuning and Marianne Lamona, *Moderne: Fashioning the French Interior* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008); Anca I. Lasc, *Visualizing the Nineteenth-Century Home: Modern Art and the Decorative Impulse* (London: Routledge, 2016); Anca I. Lasc and Georgina Downey, eds., *Designing the French Interior: The Modern Home and Mass Media* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Claire Moran, ed., *Domestic Space in France and Belgium: Art, Literature and Design, 1850–1920* (New York: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2022).

27 Dominique Bauer, *Beyond the Frame: Case Studies* (Brussels: Academic and Scientific Publishers, 2016); Dominique Bauer, *Place – Text – Trace: The Fragility of the Spatial Image* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018); Dominique Bauer and Michael J. Kelly, eds., *The Imagery of Interior Spaces* (Goleta, CA: Punctum Books, 2019).

28 Dominique Bauer and Camilla Murgia, eds., *The Home, Nations and Empires, and Ephemeral Exhibition Spaces: 1750–1918* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021); Dominique Bauer and Camilla Murgia, eds., *Ephemeral Spectacles, Exhibition Spaces, and Museums: 1750–1918* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021).

nineteenth-century approach to visual culture and the visual arts, what practices they engendered, and how they affected the perception of images.

Space, conceived as a multifaceted environment composed of physical, architectural, scholarly, and erudite elements, must here be understood as a composite, polyvalent, and unstable framework that serves the ways in which images are approached, represented, made tangible, and understood. I am interested in the diversity of space and its connection with objects and the knowledge associated with them. Early nineteenth-century Paris is a pivotal stage on which these dynamics played out because of the abundance of works of art and because of their status as new arrivals, which prompted constant rearrangement of their display, understanding, and use.

The main argument of this book is that space in Napoleonic Paris functioned as a mediating environment for categories of scholarship, objects, and the knowledge and visual culture surrounding them. My aim, therefore, is not to compile an exhaustive list of venues used as exhibition areas, to provide a complete description of events, exhibitions, or to offer comprehensive documentation of art perception. Instead, I seek to identify and discuss a series of mechanisms and general patterns that provide evidence for the connecting and communicative power of space. I will show that impermanence, unsteadiness, and incoherence are, almost paradoxically, constant characteristics of versatility and flexibility through which the built environment shapes and affects the production and consumption of images. The questions of status, role, and practice in visual culture, consequently, appear frequently.

The Chapters

This book is divided into four chapters revolving around the interactions between objects and space in Napoleonic Paris. Each chapter addresses different aspects of space, such as its functionality or the question of transferability, through a corpus of objects. My analysis considers the constant dialogue between images and space, sometimes giving more importance to one or the other, but staying focused on the power of exchange and communication generated by images and space.

Chapter One opens with possibly the most significant site for the artistic development of its time: the Louvre. Well before the Napoleonic period, the palace hosted several events and exhibitions, in addition to fulfilling its primary function as a royal residence. The Salon, the official exposition of contemporary art, took place there. The 1789 Revolution significantly altered the relationship between private and public, as it sparked a debate about national heritage that questioned the royal collection as shared legacy and that put an end to the Louvre's multifunctionality as a royal palace. Special attention is given here to the shifting spatial categories that affected

the Louvre: private/public, physical/intellectual, and recreational/referential. It can be shown that the Louvre created different layers of knowledge, and that the unique influx of confiscated artworks helped readjust the approach to the arts.

The Louvre's shift from private to public space was not new. It was instead firmly rooted in the artistic policy of the Ancien Régime and, notably, in the efforts of Comte d'Angiviller to create a collection available to broader audiences. Due to the significant expansion of the collection through Napoleon's conquests, the space intended for temporary exhibitions had to accommodate a constant influx of confiscated artworks, which greatly diversified the scholarly dialogue about art and which challenged the established construction of knowledge that a visit to the museum entailed. These changes raise the questions of how space determines the perception of art and how it interferes (or not) with its consumption and dissemination. Rather than focusing on the many architectural changes to the Louvre in these years, or compiling a list of the events that took place in its different rooms, this chapter will address three main functions of the building: exhibiting, interacting, and disseminating. These three aspects intersect to shed light on the myriad initiatives the building hosted, including exhibitions and commercial activities, and the connection between the artists and the public.

The Louvre is likely the most representative example of the many transformations that physical and intellectual space underwent during this period. The early nineteenth century saw the rearrangement of many venues, events, and entities with varying recreational, scholarly, or social purposes. The space adapted to the diversity of functions these venues served. Chapter Two examines this diversity. It discusses the adaptability of space in relation to its interaction with objects. The purpose of this chapter is to question the flexibility of space, especially its potential for rearrangement, and to understand how such flexibility affects the perception of images. From a methodological point of view, the work of Reinhart Koselleck is central to this discussion. He identifies two historical categories, both of which rely on temporality and space: *Erfahrungsräume* ("spaces of experience") and *Erwartungshorizonte* ("horizons of expectation").²⁹ The first refers to a series of events that happened in the past (i. e., a series of real experiences that occurred within a specific timeframe and that are, therefore, chronological). Recently, Hagen Schulz-Forberg has explained that the spaces of experience are associated with acts of remembering and emulating, raising to the possibility of recreating a physical space to reproduce the individual experience it generated.³⁰ Both emulating

29 Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 354–55.

30 Hagen Schulz-Forber, "The Spatial and Temporal Layers of Global History: A Reflection on Global Conceptual History through Expanding Reinhart Koselleck's *Zeitschichten* into Global Space," *Historical Social Research* 38, no. 3 (2013): 40–58.

and remembering inevitably imply a projection into the future. To analyse this movement between past and future and connections between space and time to come, Koselleck introduced *Erwartungshorizonte*. Because an event has not yet happened, the horizon of expectation largely relies on the imagination and the materialisation of expectation.

While Koselleck applied these categories to historical events rather than visual objects, they are relevant here because they help us consider the complexity of relationships between space and the perception of art fostered by numerous events in early nineteenth-century Paris. The experience of what we have seen previously determines whether we are already partly familiar with a new event. Past experience can also spark the intention of emulating what we know to produce something new that is different and yet remains linked to our existing knowledge. From this perspective, space can become a catalyst for the nation's celebration and a stage on which visual models and patterns disseminate knowledge associated with an event or object.

Images are at the core of such processes of experience, expectation, and emulation. Chapter Three focuses on the individual experiences that images provoke. Particular attention is paid here to the power of images and the role they play in a recreational context, issues that have been highlighted by David Freedberg.³¹ The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the multiple mechanisms that allowed images to work as performances, and their relation to entertainment spaces and venues.

The post-revolutionary period saw the rise of several types of entertainment, social events, and cultural manifestations related to art consumption and dissemination. The urban space was reorganised, and new areas were developed. Places such as the Palais Royal, close to the Louvre, became fashionable and popular venues, hosting open-air events, shows, popular performances, and theatrical representations. This chapter contends that, when viewed through the prism of entertainment, images clearly rely on a multifaceted series of visual and scholarly references that are constantly being reshaped. More importantly, images and their references connect space and spectators, creating a hybrid, communicative dynamic.

The image as a spectacle involves not only the production of shows, but also the multiple spaces in which the shows were produced. The patterns evident in the diversity of these spaces form the core of this chapter. For instance, a caricature representing the window of a print shop goes far beyond lampooning collectors from a wealthy middle class. It is representative of the interior/exterior relationship epitomised by the inside and outside of the shop. Furthermore, it links the need to

31 David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

identify with a common social practice, the experience of looking in the window of a print shop, and the feeling of belonging to a community.

Space is therefore a key element in how images shape our understanding and use of visual information. It can be generated by the image itself, as in the case of card games involving the arrangement of printed fragments to form a complete image. The process of arranging these fragments reveals how images are multiplied, disseminated, altered, and adapted to various uses and consumption practices. Furthermore, space can be found in different visual forms: physical, imaginative, symbolic, or figurative. For instance, a motif we see in a shop sign can be transferred to objects as diverse as bills, paper games, book frontispieces, and business cards. Here, the transfer of visual information questions the change in the space where these images are consumed and highlights the power and uniqueness of a single image as it adapts to multiple functions and contexts.

Lastly, Chapter Four analyses writings on art. The aim of this chapter is to examine how spaces constructed by and described through textual sources, including artists' writings, exhibition reviews, theatrical plays, and satirical pamphlets, affected the perception and understanding of art. Taking as a starting point the perception of contemporary art exhibitions, and in particular the Salon, these texts discuss, through different strategies, the scholarly approach to contemporary art and to the resources used to understand it. We will see that not only living artists but also the old masters are considered.

Exploring the construction of spaces in texts should be considered both an imaginative and a practical experience. The imaginative experience comes from assembling a vision of the artwork evoked by these written sources. The practical experience involves the act of viewing that these texts provoked and the remembering of the visit that they facilitated. Within this context, it is useful to study the extent to which written sources contributed to creating spaces and how this construction developed.

The main question in this chapter is how texts affected the process of perceiving contemporary art; particular attention is devoted to considering the images through which this process was expressed. I will discuss various literary genres, such as satires, popular dialogues between two fictional characters, and theatrical plays. Rather than solely serving political propaganda and artistic policy, texts create an intermediary space between reality and its perception. Furthermore, we will see that such space is also hybrid and transitional. It is hybrid because it consists of different literary forms and calls into question different kinds of knowledge, and it is transitional because it offers a narrative and fictional ensemble that is defined within a literary framework and that functions as an experimental area. Here, space indicates a period of artistic change and bears witness to an ongoing shift from one perception to another, from one audience to another, and from one artistic tradition

to another. This space also links actors and aspects of art perception, such as the public, public opinion, and events, for instance exhibitions. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the construction process for spaces defined by literature. Art-related issues include the questioning of contemporary art and the imaginary visits to the Louvre staged in pamphlets and satirical booklets like *Arlequin au Muséum*. Spanning different genres, such as theatre, art criticism, satire, and artistic literature, these texts highlight the written perception of artworks, thus calling into question the established approach to contemporary art and offering a new alternative.

Art is not confined to a single space. The Napoleonic regime provides us with a multitude of spaces where art was present. These spaces do not solely facilitate the display, production or consumption contemporary art, but instead serve a range of purposes. For instance, a reading room or entertainment venue could also become an exhibition room. Spaces were crucial to the socio-cultural transformations occurring in France, and they testify to the need for a constant rethinking of their function. This book analyses how various spaces affected approaches to the visual and to visual arts, which themselves changed significantly during this period, and questions what cultural practices these spaces involved and what types of artistic imagery developed within them. Analysis of space makes it possible to study its relationship to works of art as well as its capacity to create an exchange between the visual and the knowledge it generated. Space is an experimental entity that effectively reacts and readjusts our approach to the visual, thus generating new systems – and modes – of art perception.³²

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