

Marketing Modernism in Fin de Siecle Europe



Edouard Manet (1832-1883)
Le Chemin de Fer (The Railroad)
1872-73 (170 Kb); Oil on canvas, 93 x 114 cm (36 1/2 x 45 in); National Gallery of Art, Washington

DAY 5: Today is Saturday, January 7th, and we move to nineteenth century Paris and London to examine the decline of the French and British Academies and the rise of the art dealer. Read an excerpt from Harrison C. White and Cynthia White's *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (University of Chicago Press, 1996) to learn about the crucial role of the art dealer and the art critic in what they have termed "the dealer-critic system". It is through the dealer-critic system and the storied careers of dealers such as Ernest Gambart, Joseph Duveen and Durand-Ruel that the art market begins to operate on an international scale between France and England (and later to the United States). In your response to the reading below, discuss the crucial role of the dealer-critic system using an example of an artist, a critic, a work of art or a dealer.

Readings

Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, *Canvases and Careers : Institutional Change in the French Painting World*

[ARTH 4696 FINLEY A New System Emerges WHITE WHITE.pdf](#)

Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu, "The Lu(c)re of London: French Artists and Art Dealers in the British Capital, 1859-1914", in *Monet's London : Artists Reflections on the Thames, 1859-1914* (St. Petersburg and Uitgeverij: Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg and Snoeck, 2005), 39-54.

[ARTH 4696 FINLEY The Lu\(c\)re of London.pdf](#)

Recommended:

Pamela M. Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, "The Periodical and the Art Market: Investigating the Dealer-Critic System in Victorian England", *Victorian Periodicals Reviews*, 41:4, Winter 2008, 323-346.

[ARTH 4696 FINLEY Periodical and the Art Market FLETCHER HELMREICH.pdf](#)

Meryle Secrest, *Duveen : A Life in Art* (***Note: This is a Cornell Networked resource***)

Individual Contributions

Christina Chaplin

As we have read, by the middle of the 1800s the ideology and influence of the Academies on artistic production and sales was giving way to a new era of the dealer-critic system. To my understanding, the complexities of these systems of artistic exchange cause them to overlap for years, creating a tense atmosphere for both British and French artists hoping to settle into their newly associated "middle-class role" including a predictable salary. While it is difficult for me to immediately understand the intricacies of changing taste across international bounds over many decades, one thing at least is certain. The goal of attaining wealth was a huge driver for the emergence of dealers and critics, and for the proliferation of artists trying to market themselves independently or through these dealer-critic avenues.

With the appearance of a new middle class status in Europe at this juncture (the artist as a learned-man counting himself a part of this group), a new buyer-of-art came to influence the art market. Yet the middle class had very little use for the grand scale and haughty imagery of Historical painting. So as a result it seems that we see a greater abundance of genre painting, portraits, and landscapes- all imagery to which the more average patron can relate.

While naturally the Academies tend to shun a break from their ideologies and teachings, the break was more or less encouraged by dealers arriving on the scene. These dealers, with their personal agendas for the accumulation of wealth, needed art that could relate to a wide audience. But further from finding individual paintings that they thought would sell well, dealers were discovering that the practice of "investing" in an artist (monetarily and publicly) could inspire faith in their buyers to also see the benefit of buying from a particular artist. In this scheme of things, critics emerged as artists, literary men, governmental employees, etc. to have their say about the quality of up-and-coming artists. Though at first indifferent, critics soon came to be thoroughly entrenched in supporting their own ideas about the arts. Critics and dealers, it seemed, could control the public's reactions to art through exposure and review, and in turn influence the kinds of art that were becoming popularly accepted.

Seeing the fiscal advantages of, at least in a small way, controlling the taste of the buyers, the dealer-critic system continued to grow and to slowly overtake the stubborn ideologies of the Academies of both France and Britain. The art market started to grow into a more decentralized system comprised of many different institutions and individuals all working codependently yet selfishly. What I find most interesting at this point is the blurred boundaries and influences of each practice on the others. Art dealers, art critics, artists, and buyers were not all necessarily differentiated in the market place. There was constant overlap of employ, agendas, and authority. The grand goal of the sellers was the manipulation of the buyers, and even sometimes the makers, yet one person could inform several different areas of this system at once. This looks to be a result of the basically informal system of operation inherent in the new art market. Artists could get their start by knowing the right person, and could in turn influence the career of friends and peers by mediating introductions and relationships. Buyers could inform the prices of new works, but in some cases the buyers were also the original exhibitors. Sellers could even manipulate their own reputations through dual employment as art critics and editors with the rise of journals esp. in England.

This was the case with David Croal Thomson who became both an esteemed art dealer and an influential editor of The Art Journal. Utilizing his importance in the publication the Art Journal, Thomson furtively promoted his own interests as a branch manager for an important gallery. He hired New Critics who supported his/gallery's ideas about the future progression of the art market (implied speculation meant to encourage buyers), he featured articles about artists represented by his gallery the Goupil Maison gallery, and he even went so far as to personally author an article about the prestige and influence of said gallery. His efforts show us the distinct indistinctness of the boundaries between the market and the press. The press can here be seen to hold a great deal of sway over the inner workings of the market, and I find that this is very prominently still the case today. Public opinion has trumped academic sway for many decades (though this is not to say that the public opinion is not educated or informed intellectually). Marketing and advertisement and "good press" are extremely important for the art market of contemporary artists. With the expanding global span of the market, press and critics and the role of the dealer come together to inform the public about the endless waves of new art, and to distinguish new artists at a time when seeing them each for ourselves is impractical if not impossible.

Dalanda Jalloh

Response:

During the period in which there was a decline of the French and British academies and a rise of the art dealer, it seems that there was a much bigger focus on the individual which spurned a new focus on the players in the art market, specifically the art dealer and the critic.

With the emergence of the middle class (bourgeoisie in France) during the 18th and 19th century, there was a greater number of people who had financial ability to access elegant artwork. With more buyers, a much larger market for paintings and other art forms was needed. The art dealers recognized this need for a greater market. These dealers were critical in this dealer-critic system in that they were the people who would aid in building up an artist to specific crowds of patrons. In these times, the artists not paintings had become the focus of the system. Also, there was an emergence of genre painting, and subsequently artists began to specialize more. With artists focusing on a specific subject of art, they were now attempting to make a career of art, and use it as a means of making a living. The artists were clearly essential in providing a specific kind of art now for the buyers. Fine art was no longer inaccessible and now buyers could purchase art which depicted a certain picture. It was no longer limited to an image or structure which would exalt the elite, holiness, or the artist and his community. There were painters who would paint images of military scenes, others who focused on landscapes, or animals, and more.

The artist was essential to not only creating unique images but also allowing buyers to develop personal taste and art preferences. They enabled those individuals interested in art to find a specific genre they liked and capitalize on the many new emerging styles of art. The dealers were essential in promoting these artists and exposing the patrons to all these various styles along with recognizing what would be well received.

One of the most “intelligent and far-sighted dealers, Durand-Ruels” was one of those dealers who was able to detect the potential of a certain artist and promote the probability of that artist’s success based simply on speculation. As the new era of art emerged, he was moving in sync with the new demands. In one instance, he successfully shifted his support from Barbizon landscapists to Impressionism. They had a knack for assessing talent. The “father and son were superb judges of painting [... and] they were also superb business men who saw how to reap the ransoms as well as commissions [...]” and made a successfully living together representing many artists.

One such artist was Francois Bonvin, a French genre painter. Durand-Ruels. After art training in France, followed by his first initial sales of drawings, Bonvin gained enough popularity to progress to bigger dealers. These dealers were the only ones who could help Bonvin, and other painters alike, “from a circle of buyers, but also upon occasion bring him the official notice” in order to maintain a living.

The reading about the new system emerging by White and White was very interesting the way it showed the change. It is very intriguing to see how the dynamics between the artists and the dealer has only slightly modified from one of self-interest and dependence. Dealers and artists alike do not seem to have the aggressive urge to solely interact with each other based on status and the prospects of a great sale. It seems that individual preferences prevail in the new dealer-critic system interactions. I wonder though if any other regions (besides Paris and London) could have been the forefront of the art education development and art-selling arena. I'm not sure if it was in the reading and I missed it but what was the event that brought about this emergence of such a large middle class? How do you think the art market system would have been different if there was no middle class and the elite were the main supporters of fine art?

Charles Saunders

Lipei Yu

H Hunt Bradley III

Daniel Chazen

It's amazing how changes in society can affect the way art is marketed. White and White's analysis of the institutional changes in the French art market from an Academy System to a system based on dealer and critic is very interesting in that, in hindsight, the change seems to have been inevitable because society is more powerful than a single institution, even a prestigious one like the Academy was in France.

On the one hand, it would have appeared that the Academy's power in influencing and essentially controlling art based on a painting's academic qualities would last forever. But on the other, as early as the eighteenth century, attendance at art exhibitions already included many common people, such as "footmen and servants" (White, 79). By the nineteenth century, social mobility increased to the point where people of lower economic backgrounds became interested in "serious art" (White, 78). Yet, the Academy was not sensitive to the social and economic realities that required a "larger market for paintings" and the building up of an artist (White, 94). So the art exhibitions needed to promote the artwork to new markets – promotion that became based on the dealers and critics who used to be subsidiaries of the Academy system.

The change from an academic system to a dealer-critic system, in my opinion, was not only inevitable, but also made sense and was crucial for everyone involved, especially aspiring artists. In order to engage in promotion to a growing market, the dealers and critics had to "look at artists more than individual paintings" (White, 98). The dealers wanted to make money from the growing market and the critics wanted to advance their reputation. The academic focus of a painting gave way to the needs of a much broader market and less known artists, which meant more people and more money and necessarily involved a dealer-critic system. I think Fletcher and Helmreich describe it best when they write "the rise of the dealer-critic system was the product of human action and interaction" (Fletcher & Helmreich 343).

One very interesting example of the dealer-critic system is with dealer David Croal Thomson and critic Harry Quilter in late 18th century London. Thomson used connections between the press and the market to promote the artists he represented, while Quilter was against that. As a dealer, Thomson saw the press as a means of marketing the goods from France for which he had access. However, Quilter, the critic, saw the increasing partisan criticism and the connections between the press and the market as a threat. The art market relies on cooperation between different, yet closely related, agents to be successful. That is why I find it very telling about the large overlap between the role of dealer and critic that Thomson was able to occupy both positions simultaneously, particularly given that each role is important to one other. While a market based on a dealer-critic system requires both a critic and a dealer, they do seem to work hand in hand, and it is possible for one person to take on both roles. However, if the same person is acting as a dealer and a critic for the same artist or piece of artwork, it seems that the integrity of each role would be severely compromised.

But the question then is for the lesser-known artist who has not yet received any critical acclaim - can or should the artist's dealer also act as his or her critic?

What do you think?

Kwame Nana-Ato

The reading starts by talking about the changes that took place in the art world as well as the French society. But first I would like to talk a little bit about the academic system of the French. The academic system was structured in such a way that it became very akin and didn't give way for more expressive feelings. Due to this there was an autocratic procedure of choosing works where-by the social status of the artist was used in choosing works of art. Also artist of the academic system focused not on making money from their art, but focus more on the art-the love of it, so it could not mature to a level of being paid.

What led to change is the art the love for the art and the art market grew. Even though White states that these changes are not clear that they were the radical change for the French society, in comparison to modern art world, they are likely to have been the cause. There was an increase in wealth and growth in the size of the class to the extend that it created a broad market for art and made all members of the society interested in art.

As the love for art became common to even the layman, artists developed the idea of making money and earning profits easily from selling. Since artist travelled a lot, there was an increase in landscape paintings which depicting scenes from important historic events like the revolutionary etc. a development of hierarchy in the artist became necessary where there was a differentiation between new artists and professionals. These were made possible due to technological advancement. While these changes occurred, there were adaptations to the art market as artist found genre painting in the forefront complemented by landscape paintings. As these paintings started to penetrate the market of bourgeoisie buyers the academic system began to guard its notion of high art.

The new system saw artist being the main focus than the painting. Paris was dominated by international artist and high clientele, which raised standards and increase production while recruiting new artist. The rise of the new system was greatly affected by the function played by the dealers and critics. The dealers acted as patrons as they made advance payments to artists like a monthly salary. In so doing they recognized and encouraged new social markets for art. The critics on the other hand played an important role in studying what was going on in the impressionist society and bringing it to the notice and awareness of the public.

Durand-Ruel created a new role for the dealer. He recognized the speculative potential of purchasing unknown or unrecognized painters and persuaded others that this could be a profitable investment. He was generous toward initially unsuccessful artists, sometimes assuming the role of their patron. And finally, he also made use of new strategies, such as seeking control over all the works by an artist to gain a monopoly, or making informal contracts with the artists to bind them to him. Even though, Durand --Ruel, can be realized as being the dealer who recognized the Importance of the impressionist I feel he did some things to fulfill the express request of some of his important and faithful customers, like buying the works of Cezanne. He wasn't an effective promoter of the impressionist movement as he did not seem to have provided a continuous support for his artist. This said I would recommend that his role in the American art market as most important American collectors were introduced to impressionism through him. The idea of fueling the demand of the consumer was through the help of Monet's involvement with George Petit. Because Monet wanted to exhibit in the annual exhibitions of Petit, which was an international show that brought artist who had significant reputation in the art and targeting foreign tourist, it helped them in gaining reputation in impressionist exhibitions even though it brought little financial returns to the dealer.

The successful attack by a network of artists, dealers, critics and collectors added a lot of sociological insights to the well known heroic art history stories that highlighted the Salon des Refusés, Manet's Pavilion and the series of self-organized group exhibitions outside the Salon in the 1870s and 1880s as the decisive events in a struggle between academic art and the revolutionary "painters of modern life". The new system was supported by a highly functional new ideology in intellectual as well as in economic respect. The one-man exhibitions gave the dealers a chance to gain public's interest in so doing they were free the mass of salon paintings. As negative reviews came up from the "salons", more attention was drawn to the artist through the compliments of critics. As the market grew, the once lonely artist began to gain recognition and encouragement from the dealers, critic and buyers thus providing a form of social support for the artist. Analytically, the critical change that the Impressionists initiated in 1874 was the breakdown of the Salon's monopoly of the ability to present fine art in a public setting that critics and the public would accept as legitimate.

In making a correlation between the old system and the dealer critique system, I find the story of Francois Bonvin to be a very good example. To me it is quite surprising that he did not sell any of his works until ten years later after he completed not. It was through this that he began to make connections to the market. However, it wasn't until his exhibition at Martinets galleries that he began to form a circle of dealers and probably gain some fame. Interestingly, even though Durand-Reul was his dealer, his choice of painting theme did not sit well with well-wishers and buyers that in the later period of his career, his works got little attention from critics.

In conclusion, I believe that the old system could have been saved if the academic system had been less rigid in ideology and structure much honor given to the industrial art. The dealer-critic system provided more widely and generously for a larger number of artists and particularly for the young untried painter than did the Academic arrangements.

June Shin

The political and social changes in France in the 19th century brought about social mobility, and the rise of the bourgeoisie marks one of the most important characteristics of the period. Under a new government, state commissions and aristocratic patronage decreased while public sales through the market system thrived more than ever before. Technical developments such as lithography, paint tubes, and prepared canvases also contributed to forming the new wind in the art world. Lithography made it easy for art to be widely distributed and naturally the market was enlarged and broadened. The invention of Paint tubes and prepared canvases gave physical mobility to the artists, who were no longer confined to the walls of their studios. It also lessened the gap between professional amateur artists, causing a dramatic increase in the number of painters. The newly risen bourgeois class preferred landscapes and genre paintings over history paintings because they were looking for affordable, pleasant paintings that could be hung in their homes. Naturally, the favored size of the canvas shrunk.

The expanded market and the change in artistic taste and preference gave rise to a new system that Cynthia A. White calls the art dealer-critic system. In this new system, the dealer wanted to profit by opening up a larger market for the artists and the critic wanted to build a reputation as an intellectual whose opinions mattered. The third actor, the artist, wanted a steady flow of income. The dealers paid the artists "salaries" while artists produced the promised works in return. I would say that an art dealer was like a scout for talents. The dealers were monopolists, trying to buy as many paintings of the chosen artists as they could. Since one dealer is likely to have been in possession of most of their works, the artists must have been dependent on the dealer. But all three actors were dependent on each other. It seems that the dealer-critic system was based on faith. Artists had to trust that the dealers would promote and sell their paintings at a good price, the dealers had to have faith in the artist's talent, style, and works to be able to promise the buyers of the paintings' value. The buyers had to have faith in the dealer's judgments on which paintings to invest in. Also, the new system shifted the focus from the individual paintings to the artists. Out of needs on all actors ~~dealers, critics, artists~~ the focus needed to be on the career of the artist, not on individual works of art, for once the artist's fame was established, his works would sell. But this long-run market value of the painters was constructed by the cooperation of the critics and the dealers. It seems that, if the new system allowed the artists to break away and be independent from the traditional Academy, they were now dependent on this new system instead for the sales of their paintings.

Because now with this new system there were no ideologies or styles that were enforced and on which judgments were based, the role of the art critics became an especially important one. They were to render the new types of painting understandable and provide a basis on which artworks could be judged. However, they were not always favorable to the independent artists, as can be seen in the famous example of the Impressionists. The term Impressionism, which we use today without any negative connotation, was coined by an art critic Louis Leroy, who ridiculed the Impressionists' new, unfamiliar painting style. John Ruskin is also known to have given biting comments to Whistler's painting. So it doesn't seem that the dealer and the critic necessarily and deliberately collaborated, but the dealer-critic system worked because it met the needs of all and because the preexisting system of the Academy failed.

The dealer-critic system was flexible whereas the Academy was rigid and unable to cope with the increased number of painters in the 18th century France. The dealer-critic system came to control the communication on which the Academy depended. The new system provided for the overflowing number of artists many of whom the Academy rejected or never reached because they were outside of Paris. There were simply too many artists doing different things. The Academy demanded ideological and stylistic conformity, and there were no categories into which different types of painting could be divided and under which the artists in each field could flourish. Styles different from the "ideal" preferred by the system were suppressed, rejected, and reviled. Moreover, it is through the dealers that an artist like Francois Bonvin who had not had professional training at such institutions as the Ecole des Arts-Beaux could get opportunities to exhibit and sell his works as well as official notice and consistent state commissions. When religious genre painting, in which he specialized, fell out of favor in the government, the dealers kept Bonvin at work.

An important contribution the dealers made is that they paved way for the international flow of artworks. London was a great city for commerce and many French felt that their works had a better chance of being sold in the British art market than in the French counterpart because the British artists had already been catering to the market demand with their still lifes, genre paintings, landscapes, and portraits. Very different from France, there were numerous different groups and societies of artists in England, and the British artists had been exhibiting in groups or alone, apart from the Royal Academy's annual exhibition, a British equivalent of the Paris Salon. It was thanks to the dealers in London that such artists as James McNeil Whistler, Fantin-Latour, and Alphonse Legros were able to sell many of their works in England. Also, an art dealer Gambart regularly showed French, Belgian, and Dutch paintings in his gallery, which became known as the "French Gallery." Another important dealer was Durand-Ruel, a French. He organized regular exhibitions of the Impressionists' works as well as one-man exhibitions in his gallery in Paris. In London, when the British were no more than scornful of the Impressionists' radical style, Durand-Ruel continued to have Impressionist exhibitions, until the Impressionist paintings began to receive favorable reviews. The dealers like Gambart and Durand-Ruel not only brought the market to the artists but also made international exchange of art possible, all of which were done for their benefits as well.

Thus, it seems that the dealer-critic system was a win-win structure for all. However, I cannot help but think that the dealer was still at an advantage to the artist because if the artist had to communicate with the buyer through the dealer rather than directly with the buyer himself and the dealer had a monopoly over the artist's works, it could be possible and probable that the dealer had a control over how much he would pay the artist. So this relationship between dealer and artist doesn't seem to have completely broken away from but rather stayed very attached to the old patronage system. Do you think that this a reasonable assessment to make?

McKenzie Sullivan

With the emergence of a middle class in Europe, a new buyer-of-art came to influence the market. Although the middle class could not relate to these extravagant artworks with their grandeur imagery, it still meant that there was a large part of the population who were potential buyers of art. Thus a surge in the art market occurred with a new focus on the players, specifically on the art dealer and the critic. Dealers recognized, encouraged, and catered to the new social markets.

These dealers needed art that could relate to a wide audience and that would sell well. Dealers discovered the practice of investing and backing an artist, which would inspire faith in their buyers. The job of the critics was to work in conjunction with the dealers who accomplished the detailed task of building up of an artist in a specific circle of patrons. Dealers and critics, once subsidiaries to the Academic system, grew in numbers and independence. This growth was a response to the very success of the official system in recruitment of painters, and to the increased public interest, which had been generated by the publicity and attention given to art by the state. Seeing the advantages of controlling the taste of the buyers, the dealer-critic system, emerged and took over the stubborn ideologies of the Academies of both France and Britain. To sum up: the dealers primary purpose was to find a way to profit from the larger market that could be opened up, and the critic was interested in establishing his reputation as an influential intellectual.

The focus of the dealer-critic system was on the artists not the paintings. The new system triumphed because it could command a bigger market than the academic-governmental structure. It also dealt with an artist more in terms of his production over a career and thus provided a rational alternative to the chaos of the academic focus on paintings by themselves. A current painting as an isolated item in trade was too fugitive to focus a publicity system upon. Harrison and White's *Canvases and Careers* states that "One does not buy a copy of a recognized paintings: the next best thing for inspiring the warmth of confidence in the breast of the shrewd but nervous buyer is a younger sibling of the recognizes principle directly hostile to the institutional imperatives of the dealer-critic system, and to the social and financial needs of the artist." They point out how important it was for the dealer-critic system to focus on the artists over the paintings for the system to be successful.

In particular one enormously successful dealer was Paul Durand-Ruel. He, along with his son, was by far the most intelligent and far-sighted dealer. Durand-Ruel was committed to a middle-class way of life by the whole ethos of the Academic system, he wanted above all a predictable income, which was at the forefront of the middle-class concept of a career. Durand-Ruel was so successful in this that other dealers followed. Durand-Ruel not only brought the market to the artists but also made the international exchange of art possible. The Durand-Ruels, were superb judges of paintings and their clients developed a faith in this judgment, and faith was the key to successful career her led.

Elena Cestero

The dealer-critic system emerged in the last half of the 19th century in response to a combination of factors including the emergence of a larger middle class, a more widespread interest in art, and increasing numbers of painters (aided by advances in painting materials).

The elite patronage and academic systems of the art market declined and were replaced by the dealer-critic system. This change represented a shift in focus from the art to the artist and from single works to an artist's body of work over their career. The creation of tin paint tubes made painting accessible to amateurs and gave artists the freedom to paint anywhere. The freedom to paint outside a studio led to plein-air landscapist art and the stereotypical image of the "romanticist artist". The emergence of genre art, especially landscapes was a precursor to Impressionism.

With so many artists, both amateur and professional, it was impossible for the academic/government system to control such a large volume of such varied art, and a larger market was needed for the influx. With the increasing interest in art that crossed social class lines and the dispersion of buying power, the number of dealers grew and they began to cater to and create new social markets. This is where the critics entered, and in conjunction with dealers, they influenced the varied groups of patrons.

The art market in London was booming and some French artists attempted to take advantage of it. While some were successful, many were not initially due to the differences in art taste. Impressionist art was not appreciated in England until closer to the turn of the century. Some French dealers, such as Durand-Ruel, also tried to take advantage of the power of the London marketplace with varying degrees of success. Durand-Ruel was important in introducing Impressionist art to London although he later closed his London gallery. The art connection between the cities of Paris and London was "complex and tenuous" during this time.

While Paris was the center for art training, the dealer-critic system started in London due to its leadership in periodical press as well the "modern commercial gallery system". Art criticism rose alongside the production of art, and critics became key agents as educators and tastemakers. The critics were as varied as the art and there were disagreements among them as to the role of critics in the system, nationalism versus cosmopolitanism, and conflict of interest and unfair influence.

A prime example of the ties between the press and art was dealer and editor, David Croal Thomson. As the editor of the *Art Journal* and a dealer for Goupil gallery, Thomson used the journal to promote and review art that the gallery represented in what many would call a conflict of interest (although Thomson did not acknowledge this). Interestingly, Thomson seems to have been mostly favorably regarded despite his potentially unfair influence. Another critic, who had also been an artist and editor, and had different approach, was Harry Quilter. Quilter had more traditional and nationalistic views regarding art and was concerned by its increasing "commodification". He was adamant that critics should be disinterested reviewers and believed that the, "...loss of fair-minded review was a disaster for art." Quilter was not generally well regarded by artists or his peers.

The art market became too large and varied for the older centralized systems to be effective, and so the dealer-critic alternative replaced them. Dealers were looking for financial profit while critics were concerned with improving their intellectual reputations, and together they formed a new art market system that met the needs of both. This system was also responsible for the introduction and later rise of Impressionist and other modern art. It seems to me that the same dealer-critic system or something similar but more complex is still very much alive today.

Kelly Zona

The dealer-critic system emerged as the new relationship between artists, dealers, and critics, or the art market and the press, in nineteenth century Europe. This came about due to a multitude of social, cultural, and economic factors, resulting in the decline of the Academy, and its gradual replacement with commercial galleries. The role of the artist, dealer, and critic were closely intertwined, with a certain amount of fluidity between them. The interplay between the three and their struggle to establish their relationship to one another pushed the art market to evolve into its next form and enabled it to operate on the international scale for the first time.

The dealer-critic system began to emerge in nineteenth century France and England due to several factors. In England, the art market steadily increased due to advances in technology (Fletcher, 323). The middle class began to grow, adding such an increased demand for art, that for the first time, one could think of art in terms of a market and not solely individual buyers (White, 78). Beginning in the 1850s, the dealer-run commercial gallery began to replace individual exhibitions and other means of selling art (Fletcher, 324). Together, these conditions made England the leading art market in the world, attracting international dealers, patrons, and artists. Meanwhile, Paris, art's academic center, began to swell with such a great influx of new art students, that the Academy was no longer a viable route for the recognition of artistic merit (White, 100). French artists began to look to the commercial galleries as a means to achieve notoriety, and moved to London, which had a much stronger market. The Franco Prussian War provided the final catalyst for and exodus of French artists to London between 1870 and 1871 (House, 45).

Concurrently, the focus began to shift to the careers of individual painters instead of individual works. As speculation began to dominate the market, it became strategic for dealers to concern themselves with the careers of artists, for if a painting became popular or well known, it would be strategic to market other works by the same artist (White, 89-90). This system benefited the artist, who now considered part of the middle class, required a salary instead of sporadic income (White, 98). Thus the relationship between the artist and dealer was firmly established.

At the same time, art criticism began to flourish, as it served as a guide for potential consumers (Fletcher, 324). The critic educated the new market about which artists were particularly talented. Periodicals and art journals had major impact of the marketability of artists, who were to a large extent dependent on the press to cast them in a favorable light (Fletcher, 326). Thus the relationship between the artist and dealer was linked to the critic and the press.

The intricacies of the dealer-critic system are well illustrated through the career of Harry Quilter, an art critic 1890s England. Quilter exemplifies the fluidity between roles- he was actually both a critic and an artist, which perhaps helps to explain certain biases he held. Quilter had a strong judgmental basis for aesthetics, based on "valuing art for its sincerity, evidence of work, and moral purpose" (Fletcher, 336). Quilter sided himself with the British landscape tradition and vehemently attacked foreign art, particularly that of the Impressionists (Fletcher, 336). Though at the time, as artists and dealers sought to differentiate their works from one another, and new aesthetic criteria placed a high value on originality and cosmopolitanism. Quilter, however, did not accept these new criteria as legitimate and continued to defend the British tradition. He grew concerned about the commodification of the art market, particularly advertising (Fletcher, 337). He began to write about what he perceived as the paradox of the art market- a growing audience is becoming interested in art, though workmanship is declining to the point where most art is fraudulent. He blamed the influence of advertising and the link between the dealers and the press, a link which he felt was highly susceptible to corruption (Fletcher, 338). He felt that critics were in a dangerous position, and could be easily influenced by the opinion of those who finance their periodicals. He also criticized New Journalism, which he believed to favor "good copy" over real critical value, and concluded that it was impossible for the everyday reader to know the difference (Fletcher, 339-340). Quilter also noted the possible conflict of interest concerning the new speculative market, which now focused on artists careers instead of individual works, anticipating that criticism was likely to be skewed to promote an artist even after his work declined.

Quilter, who had exposed the potential corruptions of the dealer-critic system and established his position supposedly outside of it, established himself as a critic with integrity, unsuceptable to the pressures of the system. Yet, he used his position to condemn popular foreign movements. Quilter had correctly revealed the potential abuses of the dealer-critic system, yet took part in those abuses to advance his own opinion. Quilter's biography reveals the intricate connections in the dealer-critic system and the new implications that this system had for the art market.

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Jacqueline Park

Tadd Phillips

One of the main roles of the dealer-critic system was to allow artists to rise to prominence even if they were outside the circles of the Academy. François Bonvin was such an artist. Although he attended an art school, it was not the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, described by White and White as the "premier source of training" for artists; most of Bonvin's classmates went on to careers in industry. Bonvin worked in an office, then for a printer. He later received some informal training from another painter, Granet. With this background, Bonvin would not have been able to succeed under the Academy system. But small dealers, such as Painel, were willing to take a chance on him. Bonvin gained some regular buyers and eventually was able to regularly exhibit his work at Salons.

Khrystyne Wilson

Today's readings discussed the importance of the dealer, and the critic in the art market. Prior to the nineteenth century, art was marketed through an academic system, meaning that it was promoted to the higher classes through education in the academy. The enjoyment of art was something only the upper class could do because of their level of wealth, and their ability to spend more time studying art, and visiting museums and art shows. The Academic market, however, was not brought about to make money, but rather focused on the art for arts sake, and art to increase the status of the buyer and the artist. This however, changed with the change in social statuses. With the increased exposure of lower classes to art, coupled with the new emergence of a middle class, poorer citizens, and people outside of the aristocratic class began to acquire a taste for art.

Due to the emerging interest in viewing, and purchasing an art piece for themselves, the lower and middle classes of the 19th century began a demand for art that required a new system of selling art. Thus brought about the existence of the dealer and the critic.

The upcoming dealers and critics of this time, were innovative businessmen who seized the opportunity brought about by new interest in art, to help himself, but also to enlarge the art market. With the upcoming middle class, who propelled both by love of art, and with a desire to increase their status by obtaining luxury items, such as paintings, the dealers and critics found their skills in selling, and assessing art to be very lucrative. Thus, the art system switched from one based on leisure and luxury, to one based on making money.

The dealers found themselves able to make a profit based on representing artists, either previously known, or new by acting as middle men. Dealers would pay in advance for a specific artists' work, and then turn around and sell it to other patrons. Dealers would continually pay for one artist's work, as long as it continued to sell. This shifted the emphasis of the art market from one based on a specific work of art, to one based on a specific artist, meaning instead of buying one piece of art from numerous artists, dealers promoted the idea of buying different pieces from the same artist. This idea is still present today, seen through many people desiring to purchase numerous paintings or works of art from one artist, in order to display a collection of the artist's work.

Numerous dealers became quite successful by doing this. One such dealer was Joseph Duveen, who was responsible for extending the French and English art market to the US through promoting English and French artists' work to US millionaires. He did this by promoting the artists behind the work to people in the US who were ignorant of art history. He also promoted the idea of purchasing art as a way to increase one's status.

Another successful dealer was Durand-Ruel, who at the time was a dealer. He was adept at predicting what new trends would be most successful, namely Impressionism, and thus was able to find new artists to promote.

The role of the critic worked symbiotically with the role of the dealer, in that many dealers would often also fulfill the role of the critic. Critics would publicize in many journals and newspapers new trends and artists that one could purchase. This helped the middle and lower classes, who were ignorant to the popularity and techniques of a certain type of art, to familiarize themselves with the market before acquiring their first piece.

It is interesting to note that many of the same issues of the 19th century are still present today in the US. Because of the flexible perimeters of social classes in the US, everyday people are moving up in society. In order to promote this, many people want to decorate their houses in conjunction with their new wealth, however due to their previous lowered position they do not have the knowledge of what artists and pieces will correctly convey this wealth. Thus, they look towards art magazines, critics and dealers to help secure a good purchase. I am surprised that this has not changed, however it is clear that the antiquated Academic System was not large, or versatile enough to contain the art market, and the dealer-critic system worked well to adjust to the increase in demand in art.

Nicholas Kristov

With a rising middle-class and a distribution of wealth throughout France spread more evenly, the dealer-critic system was able to flourish. The previous system of a focus on French and British Academies focused on a linear rise to fame, with warranted commissioning from patrons looking to make grandiose statements. The dealer-critic system brought art collecting to the masses. Instead of ordering a custom piece which highlighted aspects of it's patron, the new system pushed art to become an appreciable commodity for which dealers, buyers and sellers could create arbitrage opportunities.

The system created both a pull and a push relationship with buyers and sellers. Buyers needed a way to purchase art without having to special order extensive projects. However, with the insurgence of available artists, buyers needed to know which artists were going to be successful and which works were going to appreciate in value. On the other hand, artists could create what they wanted to essentially without much buyer control and had an avenue, through dealers, to distribute their art with compensation. The dealers essentially bridged the gap for the artist patron relationship. In the dealer-critic era, dealers would commission artists to create works for them to sell- ensuring a supply of art to the public. The critics played an interesting role in this relationship as a semi-knowledgeable resource for art. The critic occupation was often not their primary job. In J.C. Sloane's work, documenting the biographies of well-known critics, he mentions that nearly half of the critics held two other occupations simultaneously (cavass and careers 95). The critics were trusted with giving knowledgeable opinions on the value and possible appreciation of art, despite not being an absolute expert. The Durand-Ruels family is a great example of how the Art Market grew stronger with the dealer-critic system. The Durand-Ruels were a father and son team who gained the trust of many buyers and sellers in terms of their ability to judge paintings. They not only provided opinions on pieces, but also created arbitrage opportunities for themselves, buying the majority of certain Barbizon productions, limiting the availability to the public, and ensuring they could create an arbitrage opportunity. Many misgivings were prevalent in the rise of the dealer-critic system. However, the dealer-critic system was used to ensure that buyers could accurately judge art, and dealers could provide art to the public at a profit.

One benefit to the artist besides the influx of money from the dealers were their rise in fame due to dealers and critics promoting their work. Bonvin is a perfect example of the use of the system to gain notoriety. Born of meager resources, Bonvin studied art at certain points in his education but did not have an artists' education from a normal elite background. Instead, Bonvin studied evenings and eventually through connections had some of his work featured in the Odeon Theater. The use of dealer-critic friends and acquaintances to propel his career eventually led him to receive government commissions and industry praise. The rise in wealth not only meant that many more citizens of non- elite backgrounds could own art, but artists of non-elite education could rise in fame, as well.

Consider & comment:

Please use this space to respond to your classmates' work and to engage in lively discussions on the day's topic. Keep your comments concise and conversational by responding to others, rebutting or supporting their ideas. Use the comment box below for these observations.