Artistic Migration and Identity: Paris, 1870-1940

International Interdisciplinary Conference
Organized by the Observatoire interdisciplinaire de création et de recherche en musique (OICRM)

Montréal, McGill University, 27-29 April 2017

Call for papers

This conference seeks to explore the phenomenon of artistic migration to Paris during the Third Republic from an interdisciplinary perspective (music, literature, and the visual arts). Artists—foreigners as well as French—sought international recognition. Yet, although Paris was one of the principal cities (even the city) for those looking to plunge into a cosmopolitan milieu and thus attain international prestige, it was also a site of national and xenophobic tensions that were keenly felt by foreign musicians, writers, and painters. Even so, it was precisely this cosmopolitan reality that sparked the flourishing aesthetic debates without which Paris would perhaps not have achieved its status as the international capital of artistic life.

Currently, there is great interest surrounding the intercultural structure of imagined communities and the space occupied by foreigners in a region’s artistic tradition, as well as questions relating to the migration of young talent and the “globalization” of artistic products with regard to their integration in a national tradition. Detailed examination through the lens of cultural history produces the necessary historical context for such phenomena, factors that still exist today. The context of Paris from the 1870s to the 1940s, in which many communities of migrant artists searched for space in a culture regarded as “French” (and that had otherwise benefited from the contributions of other foreign artists in the past), is a field particularly fertile for interdisciplinary study of the relationships among nationality, milieu, and style.

Musicians, writers, and painters shared spaces in Paris, intermingling much more than the respective disciplines of study (musicology, literary history, and art history) often make apparent. Networking sites, such as those supplied by physical venues (housing, cafés, institutions, etc.) and media (the press, radio, etc.), facilitated connections that went beyond disciplinary boundaries. For example, an analysis of the cultural press would stand to benefit from broader study that compares art critics’ reactions with those of music critics regarding the question of French versus foreign art. Exploring the ways in which the different foreign artists’ choice of subject or technique was influenced by their physical location in Paris is also instructive for an analysis of the works themselves. This conference thus seeks to offer researchers from different fields the opportunity to compare their case studies and to formulate ideas that transcend their field of specialization, with the goal of producing a comprehensive understanding of the issues related to artistic migration to Paris during the Third Republic.
Several young artists who settled in Paris between 1870 and 1940 had left their country for political reasons, others for career opportunities or to enrich their education. All of them found their national identity accentuated in opposition to that of French artists. In what ways did the migrant experience intensify feelings of national identity, and how might it have influenced artistic production? What place were foreigners given in “French” art? What were the relationships between the discourse promoting artistic nationalism and creative practice? What were the mechanisms at work in migrant artists’ redefinition of their identity? In what measure is the work of a foreign artist in Paris connected to the creator’s physical location? At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, were there “international” genres or styles that were especially Parisian? What was the relationship between the international promotion of Paris and the fears surrounding stylistic internationalization?

Presentations will focus principally on music, the visual arts, and literature; papers on theatre and cinema are also welcome. The interdisciplinary character of the conference will find expression, on the one hand, by presentations that are themselves interdisciplinary and, on the other, through the assemblage of case studies devoted to specific artistic fields within the sessions.

The following list presents a non-exhaustive selection of themes that might be taken up in papers:

📍 **The protagonists:**
- detailed studies about foreign artists living in Paris during the period under question;
- the venues of cosmopolitan artistic interaction (cafés, studios, libraries, etc.);
- career trajectories and the strategies of young foreign artists to establish themselves in the French capital;
- the role of foreign artists in Parisian institutions;
- foreign and international artistic institutions in Paris;
- the choice of Paris as a place of residence for artists.

📍 **Discourse:**
- the discourse of the French (critics, cultural administrators, artists, etc.) about foreign artists working in Paris;
- the promotion of Paris as an international center of artistic life;
- political, trade union, and legislative debates concerning the presence of foreign artists;
- the connections between nationalism, internationalism, xenophobia, and aesthetic evaluation;
- the international character of Parisian artistic life as perceived by foreigners living in the capital or elsewhere (culled from the journals put forth by cultural communities, columns written for foreign journals, artists’ correspondence, etc.).

📍 **The works:**
- applying the concept of “migrant writing” to literature, the visual arts, and music;
- “national styles” and their redefinition in a cosmopolitan context;
- Paris as the subject of works;
- the emergence of international genres that are typically Parisian;
- the technical relationships between folklore from the countries of origin and international stylistic tendencies.

We also welcome panel proposals that bring together several papers around a specific topic.
Presentations can be given in French or in English.

Please send your proposals (3,000 characters / 450 words) by filling the online form by August 31, 2016:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1sFMYipchWZZlGHGRjsrAKIIHFqPqpqG3XINd_LHdE/viewform

+ Conference organizers
Steven HUEBNER (James McGill Professor, Schulich School of Music, McGill University)
Federico LAZZARO (Post-Doctoral Fellow, OICRM/McGill University)

+ Keynote speakers
Ihor JUNYK (Trent University)
Pascal ORY (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

+ Scientific committee
Music: Michel DUCHESNEAU (Université de Montréal)
        Annegret FAUSER (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
Visual arts: Mary HUNTER (McGill University)
        Kate KANGASLAHTI (KU Leuven)
Literature: Guillaume BRIDET (Université de Bourgogne)
        Timothée PICARD (Université de Rennes)

+ Coordination
Federico LAZZARO
Christine PARÉ (OICRM coordinator, Université de Montréal)
Judy-Ann DESROSISERS (team coordinator, OICRM)

+ Partnerships
Trio Fibonacci
Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas (IPLAI)
Project « Musique et nation dans l’entre-deux-guerres » (Université d’Evry-Val d’Essonne; SLAM-RASM and Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines; Centre d’Histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines [CHCSC])
The Montréal Museum of Fine Arts

http://oicrm.org/
http://lmhs.oicrm.org/
https://www.mcgill.ca/music/

Constantly updated information will be available on the website of the conference:
http://maiparis2017.emf.oicrm.org/
For any questions, please contact maiparis2017@gmail.com