

Frictions and friendships. Cultural encounters in the nineteenth century

The Hague, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, 19 and 20 June 2019

Organized by ESNA (European Society for Nineteenth-Century Art), RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, The Hague and NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research)

The exhibition *The Dutch in Paris*, which was on show in the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam and in the Petit Palais, Paris during the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018 respectively, aimed to visualize the artistic exchange between Dutch and French artists between 1789 and 1914. As part of a larger research project, set up by the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, the exhibition generated so much response that ESNA, in collaboration with the RKD and NWO, decided to organize an international conference on the subject, focusing specifically on international as well as national and local points of encounter and how they facilitated artistic exchange.

Vincent van Gogh wrote in 1883: 'I would certainly very much like to spend some time in Paris, because I believe I would get the friction [in Dutch: 'wrijving'] with artists that I'll have to have at some point'. Van Gogh used the word 'friction' in a positive sense, as an encounter in which he could learn and develop his ideas and his art. Peter Burke defined encounters as information and objects that flow in different directions, even if unequally. He noted that 'Ideas, information, artefacts and practices are not simply adopted but on the contrary, are adapted to their new cultural environment. They are first decontextualized and then recontextualized, domesticated or localized. In short, they are translated'.

Burke, however, does not address the strategy and process of encounters. In his quest for friction, Van Gogh sought the utopia of a shared workspace but ended up with broken friendships. Frictions and encounters can abrade and chafe but can nevertheless lead to artistic exchange. The various processes involved in the realization of artistic exchange might have friendship at their base but can just as easily be born out of more antagonistic points of view. This paradox, which can be tested through, for example, theories of friendship, hospitality, solidarity, communication, and productive conflict, among others, is what we want to explore during the conference.

We therefore welcome papers in English, French or German which discuss the role of encounters, how they came about and how they facilitated artistic exchange during the long nineteenth century. We specifically welcome papers that present the mechanisms and prerequisites which make a site, a person or an institution an effective point of encounter, with a special focus on the contextual, theoretical and methodological aspects.

Papers may concern the following topics, but are not limited to these:

- The theoretical aspects of encounters;
- The notion of hosting and hospitality;
- The notion of agonism and agonistic spaces;
- Different forms of points of encounter (exhibitions, training studios, cafés, hotels and inns, art galleries, salons, etc.);
- The position of individual actors within the process of encounter and their strategies for the realization of artistic exchange;
- The role of geo-referenced art history and points of encounter;

- Time in the context of encounters;
- The role of gender;
- The role of the art market;
- The role of the art critic

Please send proposals (max. 300 words) for a 20-minute paper in English, French or German for this conference to esnaonline@hotmail.com by 1 January 2019 at the latest. Selected speakers will be contacted by the end of January 2019.

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