

Reading Between the Lines:
Drawing Habits in Nineteenth-Century France

Shana Cooperstein

Department of Art History and Communication Studies

McGill University, Montreal

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Abstract

This dissertation examines nineteenth-century French drawing pedagogy's relationship to concepts of habit and habit formation (also known as procedural and muscular memory). In the nineteenth century, habit was understood as any set of behaviors acquired through repetition and performed unconsciously. Habit was the acquisition of reflexes and thought patterns; it was the incorporation into one's own mind and body certain modes of comportment and movement that became automatic and "second nature" over time. Within historical philosophical, scientific, and artistic discourses, habit often was interpreted negatively and perceived as a threat to autonomy and as anathema to creativity. As a result, many art historical studies have argued that nineteenth-century artists, particularly those linked to the avant-garde, eluded artistic training to undermine the well-worn habits or routines advocated by the Academy. Contrary to this consensus, my doctoral thesis shows how fundamental habit was to the philosophical tensions at play in drawing education itself and how its impact was much greater than previously thought. I argue that the opposition to habit is a retrospective art historical conceit that has prevented many scholars from understanding its importance to nineteenth-century art pedagogy. Through archivally-rooted chapters focused on four influential pedagogues—the philosopher Félix Ravaisson, the academician Eugène Guillaume, the instructor Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, and the draftsman Félix Régamey—this thesis analyzes "habitual" drawing practices to shed new light on the education of expert eyes, the material practices of schematization, and the global impact of French artistic training.

Résumé

Mes recherches portent sur la pédagogie des arts plastiques et du dessin technique au XIX^{ème} siècle, plus précisément sur les théories de l'habitude et leurs formations (également appelé "mémoire procédurale" et "mémoire musculaire"). Ce projet soutient la thèse selon laquelle l'opposition à l'habitude est un concept rétrospectif qui empêcherait les universitaires contemporains de comprendre son importance dans le cadre de la pédagogie artistique à l'époque de la modernité. J'affirme que l'habitude est l'un des concepts les plus fondamentaux de la pensée philosophique, essentiel dans l'enseignement du dessin tel que nous le connaissons autrefois. Historiquement, l'habitude est considérée comme une menace potentielle dans la formation de la pensée libre et la créativité; depuis des siècles, de nombreuses critiques, historiens, et philosophes, tel que Kant, ont décrit l'habitude comme l'anathème de la production artistique et de l'innovation industrielle. Par conséquent, beaucoup de textes historiques et théoriques en histoire de l'art ont soutenu que les artistes du XIX^{ème} siècle esquivent l'enseignement officiel dans le but de saper le caractère déterministe des habitudes et la routine promue par l'Académie. Cette thèse s'appuie sur la recherche fondamentale et originale pour pousser l'histoire de l'art dans une direction pluridisciplinaire. Motivé par les questions non résolues sur le rôle joué par les philosophes de l'esprit dans le développement des pratiques artistiques du XIX^{ème} siècle, ce projet examine comment la science et la psychologie ont construit les moyens d'instruire l'art.

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Introduction

“...as a rule, all habits are objectionable.”¹
- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

The relevance of habit acquisition to artistic training was radically rethought in the modern age. Over the course of this period, habit referred to a behavior or set of behaviors learned by repetition and performed unconsciously. The ability to practice learned techniques without conscious thought was (and still is) considered to be a mark of proficiency. Nonetheless, its significance to the “plastic arts” (particularly in the rise of modern art) has been complicated. At the same time habit acquisition enables dexterity, its dependence on recurrence has led critics, artists, and art historians to complain that such routine behaviors stifle creativity.² This doctoral research, as a result, unearths the alternative perspectives of this long-standing philosophical debate by foregrounding a series of pedagogical programs that did not consider habit formation as anathema to artistry. In fact, there existed a significant strain of pedagogical thinkers who valorized the acquisition of visual and manual habits as a requirement of knowledge acquisition and artistic production.

Nowhere does the valorization of habit emerge more clearly than in the heated debates surrounding drawing pedagogy and its ability to educate the eye (which reflected a belief in drawing’s capacity to routinize vision so-to-speak) in mid- to late-nineteenth-century France. During the Second Empire and first few decades of the Third Republic, drawing pedagogy

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), trans. Robert B. Louden, in *Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History and Education*, eds. Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 261 as cited by Clare Carlisle, *On Habit: Thinking in Action* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 94.

² For a summary of the habit’s unstable position within the history of artistic modernity, see: Aron Vinegar, “Habit,” in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, edited by Michael Kelly, 2nd ed., 259-262 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

acquired an importance and sense of urgency that has since gone unmatched. Beginning around 1850, competing methods of drawing instruction emerged within several institutional contexts that spanned fine and applied arts academies, and primary and secondary schools. What drawing pedagogy should accomplish and how drawing should be taught to realize these goals were questions that carried great weight among artists, pedagogues, and politicians alike. This was because France's status as a cultural and economic leader depended, in various ways, on reforms linked to drawing education. As has been the focus of much existing scholarship, drawing served as a litmus test for, so it was thought, a nation's strength in industrial design, the good taste and education of its people, and, particularly in the case of France, its cultural hegemony over the fine arts.³ Within a rapidly globalizing context, the fear of losing supremacy in these domains became a viable threat to France's ostensible superiority, and raised the stakes associated with the introduction of drawing education to public schools and drawing's reform in academies.⁴

Britain's growing control of an international market in industrial design exacerbated these concerns, particularly after Léon de Laborde's (1807-1869) notorious review of the Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851 (an event that featured commercial items from around the world).⁵ De Laborde was an archaeologist, politician and pedagogical theorist who—after attending the

³ Scholarship on the institution of public drawing programs in nineteenth-century France primarily looks at how France's inability to compete in a globalizing market kindled the desire to institute drawing education geared toward industrial design nationally. For instance, see: Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Stéphane Laurent, *L'Art utile: les écoles d'arts appliqués sous le Second Empire et la Troisième République* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998); Stéphane Laurent, *Les arts appliqués en France: Genèse d'un enseignement* (Paris: Éditions du C.T.H.S., 1999).

⁴ The belief that art education could promote *le bon goût* and improve industrial design was not new in the nineteenth century. See: Renaud D'Enfert, *L'Enseignement du dessin en France: Figure humaine et dessin géométrique (1750-1850)* (Paris: Belin, 2003), 31-33.

⁵ Léon de Laborde, *Exposition universelle de 1851. Travaux de la commission française sur l'industrie des nations publiés par ordre de l'Empereur, 1856*, in *L'Art social de la Révolution à la Grande Guerre. Anthologie de textes sources*, ed. Neil McWilliam, Catherine Méneux and Julie Ramos (Paris: INHA, 2014), <http://inha.revues.org/5465>.

international exposition—lamented the degradation of French decorative arts programs. Building from his initial criticism, de Laborde published *Quelques idées sur la direction des arts et le maintien du goût public* (1856) and *De l'Union de l'art et de l'industrie* (1857), two texts that encouraged the introduction of drawing programs in public schools to advance France economically—by improving industrial design output through drawing instruction—and culturally—by instilling in French citizens *le bon goût*.⁶

Today, Laborde's assessment is widely viewed as having fueled both nationalistic fervor and a renewed desire to reform drawing pedagogy across divisions of formal learning (i.e. public primary and secondary schools, and institutions geared toward post-secondary learning or particular trades, such as design schools and at the École des beaux-arts). Because of the popular belief that nations were at risk for cultural degeneration, cultivating new procedures to meet the technological and aesthetic needs of industrializing countries, like France, also took on a social dimension.⁷ The preoccupation with the socio-economic factors kindling pedagogical reforms has led scholars to obscure how particular drawing systems operated, and the broader conceptual terrain on which drawing reforms acquired ground.⁸

While economic factors motivated reforms geared toward drawing pedagogy and its key institutions, few instructors justified their regimens in such material terms. Across divisions of formal learning, a standard objective of drawing instruction became the education of the eye and the acquisition of visual habits (and by extension, hand-eye coordination). By the mid nineteenth

⁶ Léon de Laborde, *Quelques idées sur la direction des arts et le maintien du goût public* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1856); Léon de Laborde, *De l'Union de l'art et de l'industrie* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1856).

⁷ For more on this, see: Laura Otis, *Organic Memory: History and the Body in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995) and Robert A. Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁸ Mainardi, *The End of the Salon*; Laurent, *L'Art utile*; Laurent, *Les arts appliqués en France*.

century, drawing was well-established as a foundation to training in the fine arts (sculpture, painting, architecture) and applied arts, as well as in engineering. Until this point, drawing techniques within these domains adhered to two classificatory schemes. Whereas institutions dedicated to the fine arts historically taught imitation by practicing on classical models, technical institutes in design and engineering privileged procedures rooted in geometry. When instructors between the 1850s and early twentieth century responded to socio-economic pressure to reform existing drawing practices, they rarely foregrounded these boundaries between fields of learning and even reconciled diverse aims and practices. Nor did the weight of market demands overshadow basic methodological justifications for each drawing program. What was common among competing drawing systems was that they all laid claim to an ocular education, a form of training that referred to an ability to learn to *see* in particular ways (whether to suppress detail or to gauge proportions).

Drawing as Visual Pedagogy

In order for a particular drawing regime to count as useful, it needed to support visual training. This meant that regardless of institutional affiliation, *métier*, and political position, drawing's utility depended on its perceived capacity to educate the eye. What the education of sight actually signified to those instructing it was never explicitly stated. Thus, this dissertation is motivated by unresolved questions about the role that the philosophies of the mind and senses played in the development of nineteenth-century art-making practices, particularly as this relates to the form individual drawing regimens took and the habits such practices engendered.

To analyze the importance of habit to art pedagogy, this research unites four men with diverse career trajectories: the philosopher-cum-bureaucrat Félix Ravaisson (1813-1900),

academician Eugène Guillaume (1822-1905), art instructor Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran (1802-1897), and artist-instructor Félix Régamey (1844-1907). Ravaissou worked as a civil servant after having earned a reputation as a metaphysical philosopher and an amateur salon painter. Between the 1850s and 1870s, he pursued public art instruction on behalf of the French state. By the 1870s, Guillaume emerged as Ravaissou's leading adversary in a series of debates geared toward drawing instruction in primary schools. Distinct from the other educators showcased here, Guillaume also was an academician who served as a professor at the elite École des beaux-arts and director of the Villa Medici (which, over the course of the nineteenth century, hosted France's *Prix de Rome* winners, an art competition that took place at the École des beaux-arts and granted winners the opportunity to study in Rome for three to five years). At the same time Ravaissou and Guillaume debated measures for elementary instruction, Lecoq systematized *dessin de mémoire* at the École spéciale du dessin et de mathématique, a school founded a century earlier to improve training in the decorative arts. His studio practice, which tested visual mnemonics by forcing students to draw entirely from memory, appealed to a wide range of artists, including Auguste Rodin, Henri Fantin-Latour, and Alphonse Legros. One of Lecoq's students, in fact, is the final instructor treated in my study. When Régamey became a drawing teacher at the end of the nineteenth century, he proposed a regimen for elementary education that made concessions to the procedures advocated by Lecoq, Guillaume, and Ravaissou.

At first glance, uniting these figures may appear to be an unusual choice. With the exception of Lecoq and Régamey, these men did not share institutional affiliations, nor were their pedagogical regimes necessarily geared toward the same age group and population. Nonetheless, they were interlocutors whose competing pedagogical systems, employed between

the 1850s and the early 1900s, were made in reaction to each other's work.⁹ In spite of any obvious distinctions between their regimes, each sought to reconcile models and techniques previously estranged as “fine” and “applied,” and more important to this study, all hinge on drawing's position relative to vision and habit acquisition. Their visualization strategies—which range from practicing on antique statuary, geometry lessons, and visual memory training—set distinct standards for what counted as a “proper” education of the eye, and as a result, provide related accounts about the relationship between observation and various truth claims. Rather than train the eye to see “more,” what further unites each program was a desire to educate the eye to see “less,” or rather, to concentrate on the “essential features.”

Drawing's association with visual training was not unique to this historical context. The sustained observation required to draw from models (be they two-dimensional prints and photographs, sculptures, or the live nude, known in France as an *académie*) has led many thinkers—that range from draftsmen, teachers, art critics and scholars—to articulate that drawing educates the eye.¹⁰ Notably, drawing specialist Deanna Petherbridge explains in her 2008 essay “Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Drawing” that “The correlation between the act of drawing and training the eye is a significant aspect of drawing which has dominated much subsequent art school teaching, in the West and globally, and which remains one of the few

⁹ These figures not only cited each other's work in their published writings, but also they exchanged written correspondence. Today, many of these letters have been preserved by the Musée d'Orsay as part of the Fonds Eugène Guillaume. See: Lecoq de Boisbaudran to Guillaume, May 29, 1878, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, L48-22 (in this letter, Lecoq apologized for his absence from Guillaume's wedding). Likewise, there are a series of letters between Guillaume and Ravaissou: Ravaissou-Mollien to Guillaume, October 28, 1896, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France L52-3(2); and Ravaissou-Mollien to Guillaume, December 26, 1868, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, L52-3(3).

¹⁰ Deanna Petherbridge, “Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Drawing,” in *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing practice and Research*, ed. by Steve Garner, 14-30 (Chicago: Intellect Books, 2008).

notions about drawing generally regarded today as ‘irrefutable.’”¹¹ Champions of this position enter into *sketchy* territory and ignore Ernst Gombrich’s (1909-2001) apt warning that “it is dangerous to confuse the way a figure is drawn with the way it is seen.”¹² Gombrich, one of the most influential art historians of the twentieth century, devoted much of his career to historicizing stylistic change alongside psychological theories. When he distinguished between the way we see and how we represent in his seminal text titled *Art and Illusion* (1960), he believed that art-making required a negotiation between inherited “schema” (or conventions of representation) and what is visible by eye. Of course, many of his claims should be read skeptically; some of his larger theories, particularly those that explain stylistic change over time, rest on untenable universal truths about the nature of humankind. Nonetheless, his caution about drawing’s position relative to vision still warrants consideration.

When western art instructors, particularly since the Renaissance, laid claim to the education of the eye, their drawing strategies and accounts about what this meant varied greatly. It would thus be wrong to assume that they all conflated “learning to draw” with “learning to see” in seemingly straightforward ways, that is, to create a match between subject and object, or to observe more detail. Instead, it is more likely that drawing practices determined or cultivated certain observational procedures; such procedures trained individuals to look for particular qualities in their models and to represent them in standard ways. This line of thinking became the guiding principle of Omar Nasim’s recent scholarship, *Observing by Hand: Sketching the*

¹¹ This is not to suggest Petherbridge adopts this position. In fact, she addresses the shortcomings of this perspective among which are the growing emphasis on “de-skilling.” Petherbridge, “Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Drawing,” 18-9.

¹² Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 74.

Nebulae in the Nineteenth Century.¹³ His rigorous investigation of British astronomical imaging strategies, which serves as an exemplary model for my own work, argues that drawing techniques shaped observational procedures adopted by astronomers pursuing nebular research before the feasibility of using photographic technologies.

In nineteenth-century France, the connection between drawing and seeing was a rhetorical device also ubiquitous in pedagogical discourses.¹⁴ Among those most cited in the French context are Charles Blanc, a widely-read art critic who served as Director of the École des Beaux-Arts between 1870-73, and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), an architect known for his dissatisfaction with Beaux-arts curriculum, and who agreed that drawing required an education of the eye.¹⁵ In 1867, Blanc drafted a well-known drawing manual that explained that to copy nature, the artist “must know how to look, he must learn to see.”¹⁶ Whereas Blanc’s ideas about drawing rested on a canon of academic types rooted in antiquity, that privileged symmetry, equal proportions, and ideal beauty, Viollet-le-Duc championed experiential learning by encouraging students to leave the studio and to draw directly from nature using geometry as an aid. Yet, when it came to the goal of drawing education, Viollet-le-Duc and Blanc were likeminded. Like Blanc, Viollet-le-Duc noted that “Drawing, properly taught, is the best way of developing intelligence and forming judgment, for one learns to see, and seeing is knowing.”¹⁷

¹³ Omar W. Nasim, *Observing by Hand: Sketching the Nebulae in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

¹⁴ For more on the relationship with the education of the eye and artistic modernity, see: Howard Singerman, “The Practice of Modernism” and “Innocence and Form,” in *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*, 67-124 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

¹⁵ Petherbridge, “Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Drawing,” 18-9.

¹⁶ Charles Blanc, *The Grammar of Painting and Engraving with Original Illustrations*, trans. by Kate Newell Doggett (Chicago: S.C. Griggs, 1879 [original published in 1874]), 98-99.

¹⁷ Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d’un Dessinateur: comment on apprend à dessiner* (Paris: J. Heizel, 1883), 302 as cited by Petherbridge, “Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Drawing,” 18-9.

This, however, did not mean that learning to draw necessarily meant learning to see *more* detail.

My doctoral research further explores drawing's relationship to sight by foregrounding a series of pedagogues whose programs recommended visual economy, or rather, to overlook detail.¹⁸ These figures prescribed a distinct set of drawing practices intended to instruct the eye that included the imitation of antique sculptures, geometry exercises, visual memory training, and one program that combined all three strategies. Each practice operated to abbreviate what was visible by eye, rather than to impose a match between subject and object.

Drawing Habits

A central aim of my research is to complicate the perceived distinctions between the instinctive and conditioned, especially as this concerns the role of the hand and eye in drawing practices.¹⁹ I disrupt this literature with recourse to theories and understandings of habit and habit formation. A habit, as I have noted, is a behavior acquired through repetition and gradually performed unconsciously. Coterminous with “second nature,” habit is the naturalization of learned customs over a period of time. Habits not only provide structure and order to our lived experience, but also allow us to minimize the effort required to execute daily tasks. While habits rise to the level of instinct and are performed unconsciously, habit acquisition always represents

¹⁸ My emphasis on a “visual economy” is particularly provocative in relationship to Erika Wicky’s analysis of the “detail” in nineteenth-century French discourses on realism. Rather than adopt her perspective, that “detail” became increasingly associated with seeing and knowing, I argue for the opposite, that there was a school of thought that privileged the ability to see the whole or essence. See: Erika Wicky, *Les Paradoxes du détail: Voir, savoir, représenter à l’ère de la photographie* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

¹⁹ This dichotomy stems from a broader way of theorizing drawing in the history of European art since the Renaissance. Within this context, a tension has recurred between drawing as an unfinished, instinctive “sketch” and as a finished artwork representative of an individual’s technical proficiency. As the curator Laura Hoptman noted, “the history of drawing has seesawed between appreciation of the sketch and of the finished work: if sixteenth-century Florentine connoisseurs prized the *primi pensieri* of the Renaissance masters, the French collectors of the early eighteenth century competed hotly for ‘presentation drawings’ by master draftsmen like Watteau.” See: Laura J. Hoptman, *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 11.

a form of learning, thus complicating the opposition between what is trained and what is innate or intuitive.

To best understand what is meant by habit and some of the larger stakes of this research on the education of the eye and our understanding of the development of modern art movements, one might look to a quote often cited in the secondary literature on nineteenth-century French art by the poet and critic Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898). “The hand, it is true, will conserve some of its acquired secrets of manipulation, but the eye should forget all else it has seen...,” he urges. “It should abstract itself from memory, seeing only which it looks upon, and that as for the first time; and the hand should become an impersonal abstraction guided only by the will, oblivious of all previous cunning.”²⁰ This statement, written in 1876 in support of Edouard Manet (1832-1883) and the Impressionists, encourages an odd—if not impossible—practice, that is, the recovery the eye’s “innocence.” He describes a virginal eye, an eye that can rebuke representations based on learned, academic formulae. An eye “impaired” by routinization, he laments, does not have the capacity to see and reproduce the momentary and fugitive effects of light and atmosphere privileged by the Impressionists. Yet, the eye’s ability to see anew is compromised by the hand’s susceptibility to habit, Mallarmé argues. The hand, in this instance, becomes a corruption of the eye, guilty of inertia and thus, forever subject to its training.

While neither Mallarmé’s criticism nor his poetry feature prominently within my thesis, his description of the hand and eye aptly alludes to wider debates launched against artistic training, and its by-product, habit acquisition, in nineteenth-century France. At this time, habit was understood as any behavior or set of behaviors learned through repetition that became

²⁰ Stéphane Mallarmé, “The Impressionists and Edouard Manet,” (1876), in *The New Painting: Impressionism 1874-1996*, edited by Charles S. Moffett, et al., 27-35 (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1986).

unconscious, near instinctual routines. Habit was the acquisition, in certain contexts, of reflexes and thought patterns; it was the incorporation into one's own body of certain ways of comportment and movement that became a kind of automatic "second nature."²¹ Unlike instincts, which were believed to operate as deep-seated, spontaneous actions occurring without the intervention of the will, habits were considered seemingly innate actions acquired over time (this understanding of instincts and habits remains today).

Despite its seemingly innocuous meaning, within historical philosophical and artistic discourses, habit often was interpreted negatively and perceived as a threat to autonomy and morality.²² As evident from the introductory quote, for instance, Kant relegated the habitual to the domain of the involuntary, monotonous, unthinking, and, thus, "objectionable."²³ Kantian attitudes, which attached the habitual or routine to mindless, passive compulsions, came to dominate modern western conceptions of habit. Coinciding with the rise of industrialization, thinkers, including Kant, Hegel, and Mallarmé, closely connected habit to the machinelike, fearing an industrialized society that would produce dull, lifeless citizens governed by the monotony of the machine.²⁴

Mallarmé was not alone in his denigration of the hand as seat of habit and as an instrument that preserved the secrets of its cunning. Habit commonly was considered a menace to free thought and creativity; numerous philosophers, art critics, historians and artists over the

²¹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "habit" became synonymous with "second nature" as early as 1662. See "Second, adj. and n.2," *OED Online*. September 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/174500?redirectedFrom=second+nature> (accessed October 28, 2015).

²² Clare Carlisle, *On Habit* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 3.

²³ Ibid; See also: Catherine Malabou, "Addiction and Grace: Preface to Felix Ravaisson's *Of Habit*," in *Of Habit*, vii-xx, trans. Clare Carlisle and Mark Sinclair (London: Continuum, 2009).

²⁴ Carlisle, *On Habit*, 3-4.

past 300 years, understood it as anathema to artistic production and industrial innovation. As a result, many art historical studies have argued that nineteenth-century artists eluded artistic training to undermine the well-worn habits and routines advocated by the Academy, an institution which standardized artistic education and production since 1648 at the *École des beaux-arts* through its system of *concours*, examinations designed to rank students.²⁵ Indeed, Mallarmé's aversion to habit has become part of a broader, seasoned art historical narrative centered on modernism's opposition to art education. As noted by Aron Vinegar in his entry on habit in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (2014), "Habits are often negatively associated with continuity, stability, and the repetition of previous forms of behavior, and thus often seen as an impediment to the modernist desire for change, flexibility, heightened sensory response, and new ways of being."²⁶ Sketching, a drawing practice that refused emphasis on the modulation of tone in favor of a speed of execution came to represent these very modernist values.²⁷ While

²⁵ The negation of academic training as mere "routine" or as "blind routine" has been naturalized within nineteenth- through twenty-first-century criticism and history. For instance, on page 78 of Louis Vitet's "De l'enseignement des arts du dessin en France," in *À Propos de l'enseignement des arts du dessin*, 29-65 (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1984), he writes: "C'était bien vraiment là l'Académie de cette époque: c'était son penchant habituel, son esprit dominant; mais aujourd'hui nous tomberions dans la routine à notre tour..."; Likewise, in the 1855 publication *The Westminster Review*, a contributor remarked: "Some five-and-twenty or thirty years ago a number of young Art-students at Munich, of serious minds and enthusiastic temperament, shocked by the prosaic worldliness into which Art had sunk, and discontented with the routine of 'academic' painting and its results, resolved upon starting on a new course" and that "Our young friends are somewhat in the position of the French artist. Seeing how the old routine had deadened sincerity and originality; how the imitation of the ancient masters had estranged modern Art from modern life..." See: "Art," *The Westminster Review* 63 (January 1855), 152-3; In Philippe Grunchev's *The Grand Prix de Rome: Paintings from the École des beaux-arts, 1797-1863* (Washington, D.C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1984), he argues that the system of *concours* at the *École des beaux-arts* accommodated academic style. The standardization of style through *concours* contributed to the widespread perception that academic art was formulaic, mannered, and routine. This text was also published as: Philippe Grunchev, *Les Concours de Prix de Rome, 1797-1863*, 2 vols (Paris: Ecole Nationale Supérieur des Beaux-Arts, 1986).

²⁶ Vinegar, "Habit," 260.

²⁷ Sketching's seemingly privileged relation to an artist's *première pensée* has been central to its theorization in the history of western European art, especially since the Renaissance. While the significance of a sketch and the act of sketching should be understood as historically and socially contingent, a sketch typically refers to a rough, initial idea for an unfinished artwork that is drawn (often on paper) with the intention of being refined. It is often pursued as exploratory, or as an initial study rapidly-conducted to conceptualize and determine the composition of a painting, sculpture, or architectural program. As such, sketching frequently has been described as

drawing's ability to educate the eye was once regarded as "irrefutable," Petherbridge notes that this popular "truism" became undermined by "the fact that few students in the twenty-first century develop sophisticated hand-eye skills, and most drawing tends to be slight, spontaneous, expressive, gestural and often deliberately de-skilled."²⁸ Her statement summarizes modernist discourses that highlight mark-making's perceived relation to instinct, freedom of expression, cognition, and unmediated forms of production better suited to change and "originality."²⁹ Despite the drive towards the "fleeting" and "original," particularly as proselytized by Mallarmé, among other nineteenth-century champions of Impressionism and other modernist movements, teaching art always has been rooted—in one way or another—in the acquisition of habit.

Rather than view habit as suspect—or to denigrate art education as a stultifying force that encouraged conformity through shared habits—this thesis examines pedagogical theorists who saw in habit virtues necessary for artistic production—be they academic or avant-garde. The negative valence often cast over habit by art critics and historians (from the nineteenth century to the present) obscures the influential ideas of many prominent nineteenth-century art educators who did not find all types of habit and creativity incompatible. Learning to draw, noted the famed architect Viollet-le-Duc, was indeed a matter of "contracting a supple habit between eye, brain, and hand."³⁰ Thus, through a comprehensive analysis of primary texts and images focused

revelatory of an artist's thought process. See: Deanna Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

²⁸ Petherbridge, "Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Drawing," 18-9.

²⁹ Several scholars have problematized the ways in which drawing discourses center on modernist values. For instance, Karen Kurczynski undermines this tendency by contextualizing this rhetoric in relationship to neoliberalism. See: Karen Kurczynski, "Drawing is the New Painting," *Art Journal* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 91-110.

³⁰ Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Learning How to Draw; or, The Story of a Young Designer*, trans. Virginia Champlin (New York: Putnam's, 1881), 69. This text was originally published in French as *Histoire d'un dessinateur; comment on apprend à dessiner* (Paris: Bibliothèque d'Éducation et de Récréation, 1879). My emphasis on such questions is indebted to the art historian David Rosand's 2002 *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression and Representation*. He approaches the history of drawing and drawing theory (primarily in the

on habit and art education, this dissertation argues that opposition to habit is a retrospective art historical conceit that has prevented contemporary scholars from understanding its importance to nineteenth-century art and art pedagogy. It further argues that habit was fundamental to the philosophical tensions at play in art education itself during the nineteenth century, as well as to many of the artworks produced at the time. At the same moment that the established canons for academic artistic training were being undermined by their contemporaries as “routine,” “monotonous,” and “habitual” (this is not to claim that these words are necessarily synonymous), the ability to draw without conscious effort was (and still is) considered a sign of skill or mastery over the subject.

This research project therefore explores how the belief that habit generated skills necessary for artistic practice, as well as industrial design, became deeply ingrained in widespread discussions about the nature and goals of art education in art academies, technical institutes, and public schools. Rather than view repetitive drawing techniques as stifling and exhaustive of individuality, several pedagogues believed it offered new possibilities for art, architecture, and design.

Habit as Vice or Virtue: A Broad Historical Look

Counted among today’s habits are the time scheduled for breakfast during the work week to activities exercised so frequently that they no longer require much conscious thought, such as riding a bike or—for some—playing the piano and drawing. What appears innocuous, even mundane and easily disregarded has been the object of unresolved philosophical scrutiny for centuries. Figures associated with diverse schools of thought have interrogated who or what can

Renaissance) phenomenologically. See: David Rosand, *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

acquire habits, what it means for something to be a habitual practice, and how habits are taught, become unconscious and then may be forfeited.³¹ In Saint Augustine's (354-430 AD) early Christian theology, for instance, habit was associated with sin because it led individuals to desire.³² From the point of view of a later Christian thinker, the Dominican friar Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), habit did not drive sinful behaviors, but instead was an important feature of the soul (thus excluding both bodily and animal behaviors).³³ To thinkers who occupied very distinct historical periods, such as Spinoza (1632-1677) and Marcel Proust (1871-1922), habits concealed nature, therefore obfuscating knowledge.³⁴

Whether or not habit acquisition is advantageous to humankind has become entrenched in its philosophical history and divided prominent thinkers on its merits and demerits. This has led current scholarship to retrospectively categorize philosophies of habit according to two dominant tendencies: the Aristotelian and Kantian paradigms.³⁵ Aristotle and Aristotelian thinkers attributed to habit morals and an orderly life.³⁶ Aristotle believed that virtuous character can only be achieved through habitual practices because one good deed does not make a person principled.³⁷ Champions of this perspective believed that habits stem from human volition (or

³¹ Tom Sparrow and Adam Hutchinson, "Introduction: *Reflections on the Unreflected*," in *A History of Habit: From Aristotle to Bourdieu*, eds. Tom Sparrow and Adam Hutchinson (New York: Lexington Books, 2013), 2.

³² Carlisle, *On Habit*, 114.

³³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, volume 22-23, trans. W. D. Hughes (Oxford: Blackfriars and London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969).

³⁴ Benedictus Spinoza, *The Collected Writings of Spinoza*, volume 1, trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Marcel Proust, "The Captive/The Fugitive," vol. 5, in *The Search of Lost Time*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Vintage, 1996); Carlisle, *On Habit*.

³⁵ Malabou, "Addiction and Grace: Preface to Félix Ravaisson's *Of Habit*," vii-xx; Carlisle, *On Habit*.

³⁶ Thornton C. Lockwood, "Habituation, Habit, and Character in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," in *A History of Habit*, 19-36.

³⁷ Carlisle, *On Habit*, 19.

free will), making them a product of ethics.

Distinct from Aristotelian thinkers, who viewed habit as key to knowledge production, self-determination and ethics, Kant and his sympathizers denigrated habit as a mechanistic compulsion. Kant in particular decried habits as uncontrollable compulsions bound to physical laws rather than free will. Because Kant believed that ethics can stem only from one's own will and that habits are outside the control of the will, he concluded that habits cannot inspire moral behavior.³⁸ Of course, this is not to suggest that opposition to habit did not exist before Kant. Many writers, notably Spinoza, viewed habit with suspicion well before Kant. Among those considered to adopt similarly negative views of habit include Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941); unlike Kant, Bergson did not adopt such a rigid conception of human nature, but he did worry that habits become uncontrollable, automatic behaviors. Today, Kant receives credit for crystalizing the negative appraisal or "camp" of habit because of his extremism. To Kant, habit's embodiment cannot rise to the status of the will, the only human faculty characterized as free and thus, able to support moral behaviors.³⁹

This is not to suggest that philosophies of habit can be delineated categorically in terms of either virtue or vice. Hegel, for instance, recognized positive and negative characteristics of habit.⁴⁰ Contemporary historian of philosophy Clare Carlisle similarly describes habit as both good and bad, a blessing and curse, and as analogous "...to the Greek concept of the *pharmakon*, which is a drug that may be both a poison and a cure."⁴¹ At the same time habit acquisition fosters education and our ability to acclimate to particular environments or ways of being, it also

³⁸ Carlisle, *On Habit*, 94.

³⁹ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁴¹ Ibid., 4.

allows individuals to economize thought, and to perform operations “mindlessly” which can lead to trouble. A contemporary example of habit’s failures is the popularly cited statistic that car accidents primarily take place within ten minutes of leaving home; because habit leads individuals to feel a false sense of security (or familiarity) when they perform operations that are based on familiar experiences, drivers are likely to employ fewer active forms of thinking and therefore to overlook details that could cause accidents.

More recently, Pierre Bourdieu has deployed a related concept, *habitus* (Latin for “habit”), within the social sciences.⁴² *Habitus*, in this case, is an intellectual apparatus that allows us to investigate how cultures are configured and particular behaviors endure. Applied in this way, questions of habit lead us to think more critically about the way societies are organized. Bourdieu’s approach is an entry point into thinking through the cultivation of certain habitual practices, particularly how they are manifested within social classes and in certain social contexts. Bourdieu’s understanding of habit has extended to his theory of social fields, which explains power dynamics that emerge within groups and are recognized by an individual’s *habitus*.⁴³ As an example of this, he looks to signifiers of social class that are negotiated to acquire cultural capital. In the history of art, *habitus*—or the negotiations enacted by a series of art world contributors ranging from the artists and critics to collectors and the public—plays a central role in determining both taste and success within social groups.⁴⁴

Importantly, Bourdieu’s line of inquiry has an art historical lineage. His concept of *habitus* stemmed from Erwin Panofsky’s *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (1957), which

⁴² Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Manet: A Symbolic Revolution*, trans. by Peter Collier and Margaret Rigaud-Drayton (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017 [originally published in French in 2013]).

Bourdieu translated into French in 1967.⁴⁵ In this published lecture, Panofsky argued that a shared set of “mental habits” led some Gothic architects and prominent twelfth- through thirteenth-century scholastic philosophers to privilege the same set of concerns, above all, order and clarity of meaning. An allegiance to habit, therefore, allows him to draw connections between the emergence of different forms of cultural expression. Whereas Panofsky and Bourdieu look to habit to rationalize commonalities or shared conceptions that manifested in particular cultures, my work does not exploit *habitus* as a means to legitimize the existence of social constructs. Rather than interpret art from the perspective that shared cognitive habits must have existed, this doctoral research historicizes how competing claims about the necessity of habit emerged within discourses devoted to art education in the second half of the nineteenth century. Panofsky’s and Bourdieu’s commitment to habit as a force that supports cultural expression has, much like the instructors I examine, a significance bound to a particular socio-historical context.

Briefly sketching out such distinct perspectives on habit is not intended to undermine the complexity of its philosophical history and theories. Instead, it gestures toward the huge stakes associated with habit; habit raised (and continues to raise) questions about what it means to be human and the nature of being. Habits, after all, are considered voluntary actions and thoughts that—through repetition—gradually become an involuntary “second nature.”

Habit in Nineteenth-Century France

In nineteenth-century France, habit took on a distinct significance that exceeded the scope of philosophical circles. When Ravaisson published his thesis *Of Habit* in 1838, the

⁴⁵ Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957) and Erwin Panofsky, *Architecture gothique et pensée scolastique*, trans. by Pierre Bourdieu (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967).

concept had been a site of major philosophical, medical and pedagogical debates, and was even understood to describe individual identity.⁴⁶ In fact, his intervention into existing discourses on habit was one of many theses written on the subject in nineteenth-century France. Several competing theoretical claims, such as those by the physiologist Xavier Bichat (1771-1802) and philosopher Maine de Biran (1766-1824), centered on habit and habit acquisition; these works had preceded Ravaisson's and emerged around 1800 as prompts and responses to an essay contest hosted by the *Académie des sciences* in Paris on the subject of *habitude*.⁴⁷ This historical context is exemplary of habit's widespread significance in intellectual thought at the time. Indeed, habit became such a popular subject in evolutionary, medical, psychological, and philosophical theses that it had huge ramifications for the way philosophers, doctors, and scientists understood morality, pedagogy, metaphysics, disease, and evolution. In natural history, for instance, "*habitude du corps*" came to signify the conformation of plants and animals.

Along with natural historians, physicians discussed human psychological and physiological behaviors, as well as general health in terms of habit. Doctors P.M. Bourrousse de Laffore, G. Voillot, J. Roumier, J.B. Téraube, Auguste Pauly, and Thomas Linn, amongst others, wrote dissertations on habit's effects on the body and health.⁴⁸ In these contexts, habit referred to the constitution of the body. Dr. Bourrousse de Laffore's 1809 medical thesis on habit, for

⁴⁶ Félix Ravaisson, *De habitude* (Paris: Imprimerie de H. Fournier et Cie, 1838).

⁴⁷ The French philosopher François-Pierre-Gonthier Maine de Biran (1766-1824) won this competition. In Clare Carlisle's "Between Freedom and Necessity: Ravaisson on Habit and the Moral Life," in *A History of Habit: From Aristotle to Bourdieu*, 156, she writes that "In 1800 the Institut de France—no doubt prompted by Bichat's work—announced an essay competition on the topic of the influence of habit on the faculty of thinking. Yet in chapter one of her later publication, *On Habit*, Carlisle writes: "In 1799 the Académie des sciences in Paris announced an essay competition on the subject of habit." See Carlisle, *On Habit*, 1.

⁴⁸ P.M. Bourrousse de Laffore, *Dissertation sur l'influence de l'habitude dans quelques maladies et dans leurs traitements* (Paris: De l'imprimerie de Didot le Jeune, 1809); G. Voillot, *De l'habitude* (Paris: De l'imprimerie de Didot le Jeune, 1815); J. Roumier, *Essai sur l'habitude* (Paris: De l'imprimerie de Didot le Jeune, 1827); J.B. Téraube, *Essai sur l'habitude* (Paris: De l'imprimerie de Didot le Jeune, 1825); and Thomas Linn, *De l'habitude et ses rapports avec l'hygiène et la thérapeutique* (Paris: Imprimerie des écoles, 1888).

instance, focused on diseases prone to habitual reoccurrence, such as intermittent fevers and hemorrhages.⁴⁹ He also questioned how habitual medication use lessened the effectiveness of treatment.⁵⁰ Many perceived habit as a mechanism that regulated human physiology, such as respiration, circulation, reproduction, and digestion, and structured the way mental faculties function, including memory, imagination, attention, judgment and will. To the physicians and philosophers engaged in defining the scope of habit, habit shaped each organ's memory and thus, physical capabilities.⁵¹ As a result of these medical studies, habit held a privileged status over mental and physical faculties, such as memory and muscle memory, hand-eye coordination, perception, and intelligence.

Because of habit's dominion over physiological and intellectual competence, scientists, doctors, philosophers, and educators theorized what they believed to be the most effective ways to cultivate "good" habits. Medical research corroborated childhood and adolescence as the stage of life most conducive toward habit formation. Although no one was immune to habit's authority, some physicians argued that a person's likelihood of contracting particular habits increased or decreased due to gender, age, and climate.⁵² Children's organs, because they were not believed to be fully developed until adulthood, were seen as the most impressionable or predisposed toward habit contraction.⁵³

⁴⁹ Bourrousse de Laffore, *Dissertation sur l'influence de l'habitude dans quelques maladies et dans leurs traitements*, 11.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁵¹ J. Paradis, *Influence de l'habitude sur l'homme* (Paris: De l'Imprimerie de Didot Jeune, 1816), 5.

⁵² Ferdinand Ceccaldi, *Essai sur l'habitude* (Paris: De l'Imprimerie de Didot le Jeune, 1830), 33; Similar conclusions are drawn on page 15 of Roumier's *Essai sur l'habitude*, on page 25 of Téraube's *Essai sur l'habitude*, and in Auguste Finot's *Dissertation sur l'habitude, considérée comme une propriété des organes* (Paris: De l'Imprimerie de Didot Jeune, 1805), 45.

⁵³ Voillot, *De l'habitude*; Finot, *Dissertation sur l'habitude*, 12.

It should come as no surprise that education was (and still is) the primary vehicle for habit formation. This was a fact recognized by physicians, philosophers and teachers alike. Within Ravaissou's cultural context, for instance, Roumier, a physician writing his dissertation on habit in 1827 explained that: "L'éducation n'est que l'art de faire contracter de bonnes habitudes à l'enfant, en empêchant les habitudes vicieuses de s'établir."⁵⁴ In a similar vein, another physician, Ceccaldi, explained in 1830 that:

L'enfance et l'adolescence sont les deux époques de la vie où l'on est le plus disposé à contracter des habitudes; alors la sensibilité est neuve, les organes, semblables à la cire molle, se moulent facilement aux objets des impressions, et ces impressions tendent d'autant plus à se renouveler, que l'enfant, tourmenté du besoin de se sentir, vivre, veut tout voir, tout toucher, tout connaître. L'éducation doit savoir tirer parti de ces dispositions: mettre toujours l'utile à côté de l'agréable, faire en sorte que les bonnes coutumes reparaissent toujours, sans dépasser les limites de l'organisation, augmenter toujours la quantité, la fréquence, ou l'intensité des actions dont on veut obtenir une pleine habitude; telle est, ce nous semble, la meilleure marche à suivre pour arriver à détruire ou à perfectionner les bonnes ou les mauvaises dispositions que l'enfant montrera dès son âge le plus tendre.⁵⁵

The growing emphasis on instilling in children and adolescents' "correct" habits cannot be separated from the wider cultural context. Movements to educate children—and to make primary school obligatory—emerged simultaneously and alongside the spread of republican doctrine. Equal access to education was not only a commitment of progressive politics, but also stemmed from socio-political discourses that categorized childhood as a unique stage in intellectual and moral development. This perspective gained notable headway by the end of the century with the rise of child development studies by figures including Corrado Ricci (1858-1934), Ebenezer

⁵⁴ Roumier, *Essai sur l'habitude*, 15.

⁵⁵ Ceccaldi, *Essai sur l'habitude*, 11. For a similar perspective, see: Jules Payot, "De la transformation des sensations en idées," *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger: paraissant tous les mois dirigée par Th. Ribot* 31 (1891): 615-6.

Cooke (1837-1913), and James Sully (1842-1923).

Nineteenth-century French society accepted the view that human nature was flexible and impressionable, and as such, was a product of habit. This corresponds to the long-standing notion that habit is a “second nature.” Second nature (translated in French as *seconde nature*), has, for centuries, described a set of artificial customs learned formally or informally through repetition that become an ingrained part of individual identity (as automatic, and seemingly natural behaviors).⁵⁶ For instance, in Michel de Montaigne’s *Essais* (1580)—a text which outlines his perspective on a wide range of topics including education, reason, and the nature of being—he famously writes that “L’accoutumance est une seconde nature, et non moins puissante.”⁵⁷ It remains unknown when the phrase “second nature” became pervasive in French thought; however, by the nineteenth century, a variation on Montaigne’s expression—“habit is a second nature”—was listed in popular dictionaries as a proverb.⁵⁸ At this moment (and even in the present day), second nature referred to the belief that being (which included how humans think, act and interact with the world) depended on learned behaviors that became unconscious. Closely related to customs, or cultural practices, second nature described—and continues to describe—various changes in an individual’s being that took place over time since birth.

By the end of the nineteenth century, scientists developed more complex understandings of memory and its relationship to habit. It was within this context that the term *mémoire*

⁵⁶ Téraube, *Essai sur l’habitude*, 5-6; Auguste Pauly, *De l’habitude dans ses rapports avec la physiologie et l’hygiène* (Paris: A. Parent, Imprimeur de la faculté de médecine, 1872), 5; Linn, *De l’habitude et ses rapports avec l’hygiène et la thérapeutique*, 7, 12-13.

⁵⁷ Michel de Montaigne, “Chapitre 10: De mesnager sa volonté,” in *Essais*, Troisième livre, ed. by P. Villey and V.-L. Saulnier (Paris: P.U.F., 1965 [originally published in 1580]).

⁵⁸ For instance, see: Emile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française contenant: la nomenclature, la grammaire, la signification des mots, la partie historique, l’étymologie*, Tome Deuxième (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1873), 1968.

musculaire—which refers to a procedural memory effectively synonymous with habit—became more commonly used in French language resources. Between the 1880s and early 1900s, muscle memory in fact preoccupied psychological and social scientific discourses in France and abroad. It is impossible to determine with certainty who coined the term, however. The Oxford English Dictionary attributes “muscle memory’s” first English-language use to the Victorian polymath Francis Galton (1822-1911). In 1883, Galton wrote a book on human development that noted “Our favourite expedient was to associate the sight memory with the muscular memory.”⁵⁹ Galton understood muscle memory as the inherent capacity to execute movements performed in the past (such as to play a song on the piano years after it was first learned); as indicated by his quote, he believed that visual faculties reinforced or aided muscular memories. This will be explored in Chapter Two, where I examine how Galton looked to Lecoq’s pedagogical practice to support his claims about the bodily predisposition to habit.⁶⁰

Following the precedent set by Galton, Lecoq’s drawing regimen frequently was cited as evidence in discussions about *mémoire musculaire* in French contexts as well. Lecoq’s work offered a compelling example for conceptualizing the relationship between both memory and imagination, and visual and motor memory in cutting-edge sciences of the mind by Alexandre Brierre de Boismont (1797-1881), William James (1842-1910), Alfred Binet (1857-1911), Gilbert Ballet (1853-1916), Émile Peillaube (1864-1934), and Frédéric Queyrat (1858-1926).⁶¹

⁵⁹ Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883), 106.

⁶⁰ Correspondence from Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran to Francis Galton dated 11 juillet 1880, Galton papers, Galton/2/7/2/9/2, Wellcome Library, London, United Kingdom.

⁶¹ Lecoq saw his work contributing to science and as potentially offering a data set to scientists. Art historian Petra Chu explains that Lecoq “...suggested that his students should, after completing their mnemonic training, participate in psychological debates concerning the rapport between memory and imagination.” See Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, “Lecoq de Boisbaudran and Memory Drawing: A Teaching Course between Idealism and

As noted by Galton, Lecoq's pedagogical regimen lent credence to the belief that visual memory was strengthened by motor memory.⁶² Binet summarizes their positions by writing: "There are people who best remember a drawing when they trace the contours with their finger. Lecoq de Boisbaudran used this method in his artistic instruction to accustom his students to draw from memory; he made them trace the contours with a pencil held in their hand at a distance [from a particular object], forcing them to associate muscle memory with visual memory."⁶³ Decades later, experimental psychologist and pathologist Émile Peillaube continued to cite Lecoq's program to support the notion that "muscle memory reinforces visual memory."⁶⁴

Outside specialist spheres, *habitude* was a term used colloquially to describe a custom or disposition acquired through periodicity.⁶⁵ *Comme d'habitude*, for instance, was a popular idiom to express "as always." Likewise, "*c'est un homme d'habitude*," entered into French dictionaries

Naturalism," in *The European Realist Tradition*, ed. by Gabriel P. Weisberg (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982), 279.

⁶² William James, *The Principles of Psychology: Part II* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1950 [originally published in 1880]); Alfred Binet, *La psychologie du raisonnement, recherches expérimentales par l'hypnotisme* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1886); Gilbert Ballet, *Le langage intérieur et les diverses formes de l'aphasie* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1886); Émile Peillaube, *Les images: essai sur la mémoire et l'imagination* (Paris: M. Rivière, 1910); Frédéric Queyrat, *L'imagination et ses variétés chez l'enfant: étude de psychologie expérimentale appliquée à l'éducation intellectuelle* (Paris: Germer Baillière et Cie, 1893).

⁶³ The original French reads: "Il y a des personnes...qui se souviennent mieux d'un dessin quand elles en ont suivi les contours avec le doigt. Lecoq de Boisbaudran se servait de ce moyen, dans son enseignement artistique pour habituer ses élèves à dessiner de mémoire; il leur faisait suivre les contours avec un crayon tenu à distance avec la main, les obligeant ainsi à associer la mémoire musculaire à la mémoire visuelle." See: Binet, *La psychologie du raisonnement* cited by Ballet, *Le langage intérieur et les diverses formes de l'aphasie*, 56.

⁶⁴ Peillaube, *Les images: essai sur la mémoire et l'imagination*, 55.

⁶⁵ Pierre Larousse's 1878 edition reads: "Coutume; disposition acquise par des actes réitérés." See: Pierre Larousse, *Nouveau dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: A. Boyer et Cie, 1878), 302. Other dictionaries adopted similar definitions. In 1821, the Académie française issued a dictionary that defined *habitude* similarly, explaining that it is a "disposition acquise par des actes réitérés; habitude du corps, complexion, disposition, temperament...qui résulte du maintien; connaissance, accès, fréquentation; commerce de galanterie." See: José René Masson, *Petit dictionnaire de l'Académie française ou Abrégé de la cinquième édition du Dictionnaire de l'Académie*, Tome 2 (Paris: Masson et fils, 1821), 31. Likewise, in 1865, Louis-Nicolas Bescherelle and Antoine-Joseph Pons's *Nouveau dictionnaire classique de la langue française* (Paris: Garnier frères, 1865), 540 defined habit as a "forte inclination causée par la répétition fréquente des mêmes actes."

to describe what has, for a long time, been translated in English as “creatures of habit.” As clarified by these sources, habit often was understood as a particular operation of the mind or body learned through repetition that fostered predictability and in the case of creatures of habit, hostility to change. That such behaviors were the result of human agency, but gradually turned into instinctual mannerisms that required no conscious thought, was reflected in related terms, like the verb *s’habituer à* (which describes a process of acclimatization or familiarization). Habit’s vernacular uses, such as *comme d’habitude* and *habitude de comportement et de vie*, still endure in French today.

As the above examples demonstrate, an analysis of competing claims about habit and habit formation sheds light on nineteenth-century French understandings of human nature, the body, and even medical practices. In many ways, a subsidiary concern of this study is how habit’s unstable place in French thought encouraged new theorizations of humankind and what it meant to be human. The more central concern of this thesis, however, is the ramifications that theories of habit had on art historical discourses and image making.

At a time when projects emerged to reform existing pedagogy between 1850 and the early twentieth century, whether or not habit represented “know-how” came under increased scrutiny; this study thus reexamines what it meant to be “skilled” in the modern era. When analyzing pedagogical practices designed to train draftsman, habit emerges as an important theoretical apparatus for understanding the stakes of such projects. This is not to suggest that the connection between habit and artistic training was unique to this context. Within the history of education more broadly, habit acquisition often has served as a mark of proficiency. Because of the conviction that habit also restrains free will, its connection to mastery over a given subject

has experienced some traction in the case of artistic training and art making, particularly with modernism's negative understanding of habit and emphasis on "originality."

In addition to the fact that there were philosophical and scientific investments in questions of habit in the mid to late nineteenth century, what makes conceptions of *habitude* particularly relevant to the history of drawing procedures is that practices of image-making underwent considerable changes in the nineteenth century. After the invention of photography in 1838, many critics linked the ostensibly deadening effects of habit (such as mindless automaticity) to the camera. The complaints leveled against Lecoq and habit acquisition during the second half of the nineteenth century can be linked to the anxieties associated with photography and industrialization more broadly. "Mechanical" forms of representation, like habits, were often derided as passive, servile forms of reproduction that removed all need for conscious thought. Questions of agency and image-making thus could not be easily separated from the issue of photography's supposed "mindlessness." Habit's position relative to processes of image-making, as a result, became redefined alongside the development of photographic media and wider anxieties about industrialized society.

When drawing education became subject to reforms in the mid to late nineteenth century, questions of habit dominated discourses across divisions of formal learning. What kinds of habits particular drawing exercises engendered in its practitioners in fact fueled the rhetoric of competing pedagogical regimes. Procedures rooted in distinct practices, such as visual memory training, geometry lessons, and imitation, each laid claim to an education of the eye, and particular ocular habits. The stakes of habit formation were huge; drawing's connection to good taste, industrial design, and knowledge production, meant that particular working habits could improve or devastate France's hegemony over the arts and economy.

Organization

This thesis is divided into four chapters that focus on the different kinds of manual habits and visualization strategies cultivated by artistic instruction. The first chapter, “Drawing at the French Academy and its Contestants,” provides a literature review of the history of drawing pedagogy in nineteenth-century France alongside wider discourses on questions of making and knowing. The second chapter, “The Emancipation of Habit: Revisiting Lecoq de Boisbaudran and Visual Memory Training,” explores how Lecoq’s system of visual memory training was deployed to teach artists to recall features of human vision and visual experience. Distinct from techniques which juxtaposed subject and object within the artist’s frame of vision (such as drawing after the live model), working from memory detached direct observation from the representational process and instead, relied on recollection. Whereas the first chapter harnesses the historiography of training to conceptions of habit and habit acquisition, the second shows how habit acquisition sat at the core of Lecoq’s regimen and was understood to have emancipatory qualities.

Chapter three, “Guillaume, Ravaisson, and the Problem of Habit,” revisits the competing drawing programs designed by Ravaisson and Guillaume with an eye toward theories of habit. When these men sought to satisfy socio-political pressure to institute drawing instruction into public schools nationwide, whether or not habit was a mark of proficiency emerged as a point of contention between their respective regimes. I argue that habit’s negative associations have overshadowed contemporary scholars’ understanding of Guillaume’s drawing program as well. Despite receiving official sanction between 1878-1909, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Guillaume’s *méthode géométrique* has come to embody the negative effects of habit formation, that is, servility and passivity. This chapter looks beyond the bias against his program

to uncover what it was about this regime that led to its institution in the first place. It examines what standards of utility determined the use of drawing in primary education.

“From Bodily Habit to Collective Custom: Félix Régamey, *Japonisme*, and National Art Education,” the final chapter of this dissertation, historicizes Régamey’s diverse applications of Lecoq’s system of visual memory training over the course of his lifetime. By charting Régamey’s professional trajectory alongside his devotion to *la mémoire pittoresque*, this part unifies his rich career as an illustrator, salon painter, inspector of drawing education, and teacher. What distinguishes Régamey’s work from Lecoq’s other students is twofold: first, he was an instructor who responded to the systems organized by Ravaisson, Guillaume and Lecoq. As such, his system provides a fitting conclusion to this study. What further distances Régamey from both Lecoq’s students and the men featured in this study is the significance he attributed to habit as a force generative of cultural heritage over long periods of time. His ideas about national identity and artistic style derived equally from his expertise in Japanese artistic production (an area in which he published widely and enjoyed great success). Thus, this chapter examines how Régamey merged the three drawing strategies deployed by Ravaisson, Guillaume, and Lecoq, as well as elements of Japanese artistic training into a comprehensive system aimed at cultivating national identity.

Rethinking Modernism with Drawing Habits

An awareness of the intricacies of drawing pedagogy and its relationship to theories of habit alters our understanding of modern art, particularly art made from the 1860s onward. It forces scholars to reexamine histories of modernism that prioritize the independence and originality of the artist—specifically those deemed avant-garde and to whom these

characteristics have come to define. Molly Nesbit, for instance, is an example of an art historian who successfully studied pedagogical practice to significantly change how such a crucial figure as Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)—described as a quintessentially original, boundary-pushing artist—was understood.⁶⁶ By linking Duchamp to more regimented and learned forms of drawing (tied to repetition and habit formation), Nesbit questions the belief that such avant-garde artists were self-taught and rejected standardized artistic learning.

My dissertation provides a nuanced examination of the complexities of Lecoq's, Ravaisson's, Guillaume's, and Régamey's drawing programs—both in terms of their intersections and their disaccords. Yet, it does not engage in lengthy analyses of the ways in which their practice was taken up or rejected by artists during their time. Rather, it contributes to the history of modern art by providing an analysis of pedagogical practice, and importantly, a detailed study of the troubled conception and use of habit—in an age plagued by fears of humans turning into machines and the rise of photography—from which studies of modernist art practice can build. In the case of Lecoq's legacy, for instance, close scrutiny of his program adds to some of the existing narratives about artists who studied under his regime and their reliance on repetition, notably Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Alphonse Legros (1837-1911), and Henri Fantin-Latour (1836-1904), as well as artists who were known to work from memory, such as Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947). The creative potential of recycling learned technical procedures, compositional structures, and motifs has been invoked by scholars, such as Patricia Mainardi, to revise narratives about what “originality” actually meant to nineteenth-century artists and critics.⁶⁷ The emancipatory capacity of repetition is clarified in this

⁶⁶ Nesbit, “Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model,” 53-64, and *Their Common Sense*.

⁶⁷ Patricia Mainardi, “The 19th-Century Art Trade: Copies, Variations, Replicas,” *Van Gogh Museum Journal* (2000): 62-73; Heather J. Vinson, “Répétitions: Memory and Making in Degas's Ballet Classroom Series,”

thesis by examining its role in artistic learning and its centrality to theories of habit and habit acquisition. Indeed, Ravaisson's conception of habit as a source of spontaneity and novelty is central to understanding the persistence of academic methods and compositional structures.

Overall, this thesis argues that the emphasis on theories of habit took a distinctive form in art education and drawing practices in nineteenth-century France. Habit, however, also possessed a significance that went beyond art pedagogy; it suggested a particular way of conceiving the self, subjectivity and what it meant to be human within the context of a rapidly modernizing and colonizing France. Given this context, this project focuses on four interrelated areas of inquiry: the history of art pedagogy, theories of medium, theories of knowing, and human subject formation. By connecting these areas of interest, this thesis analyzes the way the education of the senses shaped conceptions of intelligence, thought, and knowing.

doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 2013); Eik Kahng, ed., *The Repeating Image: Multiples in French Painting from David to Matisse* (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum, 2007).

CHAPTER 1

Drawing at The French Academy and its Contestants

By the mid-nineteenth century, professional training in drawing took place at art academies, artist-run studios, and in technical institutes geared toward the applied arts and engineering. The Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture in Paris (renamed Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1816), for instance, set a longstanding precedent for formal education in the fine arts. For over two centuries following its foundation in 1648, the Academy had a hegemony over artistic instruction and oversaw drawing pedagogy that primarily prescribed classicism. Within its classrooms at the École des beaux-arts, a rotating series of instructors imposed a graduated system that began with the imitation after prints and ancient statuary, and culminated in studying the live model (which were male nudes). Prior to reforms enacted in 1863, the Academy was not responsible for providing technical training in any medium besides drawing. Rather than teach the rudiments of painting or sculpture, this institution prioritized art theory via lessons rooted in drawing.

At its inception, the Academy's purpose went well beyond training and in many ways, was a venue for the professionalization of art students. In fact, the emphasis on drawing was part of a larger mission to redirect the focus of art away from manual skill and instead, to market it as a site of erudite knowledge. The Academy not only elevated the status of artist from craftsman to intellectual. It also facilitated official patronage and centralized the art world for centuries through the Salon, a highly-selective exhibition held annually or biannually to showcase royal taste.

As early as the seventeenth century, there were extensive discussions about setting prizes and premiums as a way to spur stylistic conformity that catered to royal tastes. By the nineteenth

century, these practices became codified into a rigid series of contests. Beginning with the entrance examinations (known as *concours des places*), *beaux-arts* curriculum groomed students for the *prix de Rome* competition, the winner of which was granted a scholarship to study art in Rome for up to five years.⁶⁸ To prepare students for candidacy, the professors organized *concours*, or contests that foreshadowed the work conditions imposed upon competitors for the *prix de Rome*. Both the *concours* and the *prix de Rome* contests required participants to execute a subject matter selected by the professors within a limited amount of time. In order to excel within this system, as well as at the Salons, artists needed to adopt academic stylistic virtues, notably the idealization of heroic subject matter.

To learn medium-specific practices (or what was considered “craft” knowledge), such as methods of painting in oil, students enrolled in an artist’s teaching studio. Studios were spaces occupied by artists specifically for the purposes of art-making. In the nineteenth century, artists preferred studios that typically were single, spacious rooms with large windows facing north to maximize even light exposure. While studios from this era became closely associated with the bohemian lifestyles of young, emerging artists, they were equally an important site for training.⁶⁹ Indeed, by the Second Empire and in the first few decades of the Third Republic, private studios no longer were spheres to acquire supplemental instruction in painting and sculpture; they also

⁶⁸ Art historian Philippe Grunhech’s book titled *The Grand Prix de Rome: Paintings from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1797-1863* (1985) explains how competition for the prestigious *Prix de Rome* operated as a pedagogical tool and set standards of taste. This practice was first initiated in 1663 and continued until 1968. Nonetheless, his leading scholarship on this competition focuses on the period between 1797 and 1863, when the recipients of this award most rigidly represented the tenets of academicism. See: Grunhech, *Les Concours de Prix de Rome*, and *The Grand Prix de Rome*.

⁶⁹ For primary resources that connect bohemian lifestyles to artist studios, see: Henry Murger, *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1851) and Emile Zola, *L’Oeuvre* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1886). For secondary literature on artist studios, see: John Milner, *The Studios of Paris: The Capital of Art in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) and France Nerlich and Alain Bonnet, eds., *Apprendre à peindre: Les ateliers privés à Paris 1780-1863* (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2013).

became an increasingly popular alternative to training at the École des beaux-arts altogether. A notable example is the teaching studio of Rodolphe Julian (1839-1907), the success of which led to its conversion into a school called the Académie Julian. Julian's *atelier* did not discriminate against female applicants, nor did it impose on potential students a rigid entrance exam (as did the École des beaux-arts).⁷⁰

The Academy's failure to accommodate the burgeoning number of students pursuing a career in the arts led to the popularity of private, studio-based training. Over the course of the nineteenth century, work as an artist became a more respectable career option for members of the bourgeoisie. However, the Academy's hegemony over artistic training waned because it could no longer support higher enrollment figures nor secure patronage for the increased number of emerging artists.⁷¹ Artists began to seek training and sponsorship elsewhere as a result. To diversify their patronage base (which was previously limited to official commissions and royal taste), artists began to meet the growing demand for smaller, genre scenes by the middle classes. This increased artists' ability to produce and sell more works in shorter spans of time (as opposed to the long time devoted to paint a monumental history painting, once deemed the sign of an artist's excellence and coveted by the state). Beginning in the 1870s, the rise of the dealer-critic system rectified the Academy's shortcoming and resumed control over the finances and patronage of artists (especially for the Impressionists whose legacies benefited the most from the system).⁷²

⁷⁰ For more on the Académie Julian, see: Jane R. Becker and Gabriel P. Weisberg, eds. *Overcoming all Obstacles: The Women of the Académie Julian* (Rutgers University Press in association with Dahesh Museum of Art, 1999); and Tamar Garb, *Sisters of the Brush: Women's Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

⁷¹ Cynthia and Harrison White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (New York: Wiley, 1965).

⁷² Ibid.

The Academy's inability to manage the rapid growth within the field of artistic production was further complicated by the growing frustration with academic techniques and exhibition practices. Rhetoric launched against the Academy acquired traction in the mid nineteenth century. Nowhere did opposition to the Academy emerge more coherently than in discourses on modernism. Until this moment, the French Academy successfully reinforced the belief that history painting (large-scale representations of historical or mythological subject matter produced to glorify its subject) was the most prestigious genre. The first modernist painters—a classification applied retrospectively to artists linked to realism and impressionism, like Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and Edouard Manet (1832-1883)—challenged this belief by elevating commonplace genres scenes, such as depictions of middle-class funeral rites and of everyday modern types, to the scale of history paintings. These painters were celebrated and criticized for moving away from the idealizing style of the Academy to more idiosyncratic and “original” painting styles that were described as more “realistic.” Among artists and art theorists, this practice expanded what counted as serious art; that academic principles fostered sterility and homogeneity—as opposed to valorized qualities, such as “originality”—was in fact central to art in the modern age.

Opposition to the Academy also manifested in discourses explicitly against artistic training. Mallarmé, indeed, was not alone in his crusade against habit and its primary agent of transmission: academic artistic formation. In a letter penned fifteen years earlier, Courbet set a precedent for this perspective by famously proclaiming that art cannot be taught. During his lifetime, Courbet was an outspoken opponent of academic art who became infamous for elevating depictions of modern life to the monumental scale of history paintings. “I cannot teach my art, nor the art of any school whatsoever, since I deny that art can be taught [...] in other

words, I maintain that art is completely individual, and is, for each artist, nothing but the talent issuing from his own inspiration and his own studies of tradition.”⁷³ Courbet issued this statement a few months before he set up a short-lived “school” on the Rue Notre-Dame des Champs at the request of the art critic who championed his work, Champfleury (1821-1889).⁷⁴ Given his aversion to training, it is unlikely Courbet initiated any formal lessons with his followers; rather, his studio became a meeting place for artists who likewise felt that academic procedures prevented artists from exploring representations of modern life (and instead, narrowly prescribed idealistic portrayals of classical mythology, biblical scenes, and heroic histories).⁷⁵ In actuality, neither Courbet’s nor Mallarmé’s desire to discredit academic art did much to dispel the necessity of acquiring an education at this historical moment. Their complaints nonetheless have overshadowed existing discourses on the Academy and art education.

In the mid to late nineteenth century, the established canons for academic training procedures indeed began to be undermined, rendering the traditional forum for the education of artists increasingly irrelevant. This is not to suggest that academic principles dissolved. As argued by the art historian Albert Boime, academic approaches toward painting and drawing continued to inform many practices categorized as unconventional and anti-academic in the late

⁷³ Gustave Courbet, “Letter to Young Artists” (December 25, 1861), in *Art in Theory 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, 402-4, eds. Jason Gaiger, Charles Harrison, and Paul Wood (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 402-4.

⁷⁵ It is safe to assume that artists were not entirely discouraged by Courbet’s proclamation that art cannot be taught; the opportunity to learn at his heels attracted avant-garde artists seeking alternative representational strategies than those practiced at leading institutions including the École des beaux-arts. That is not to suggest students were satisfied with Courbet’s teachings. For Henri Fantin-Latour’s experience, see: Bridget Alford, *Fellow Men: Fantin-Latour and the Problem of the Group in Nineteenth-century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 93. Susan Sidlauskas notes that Lecoq sought training here too. See: Susan Sidlauskas, “Body into Space: Lecoq de Boisbaudran and the Rhetoric of Embodiment,” in *Body, Place and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting*, 6-19 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

nineteenth century; for instance, the unfinished appearance of Impressionist paintings that Boime calls the “aesthetics of the sketch” derived from academic strategies.⁷⁶ Rather than describe such art as a refusal of academic training, Boime’s research titled *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (1971) is remarkable for its more nuanced account of the ways academic procedures informed what were considered anti-academic, innovative styles.

Since then, examinations of nineteenth-century art education primarily have reinforced the perception that the French Academy’s pedagogical regimen remained relatively static since its inception in 1648, above all in its dedication to neoclassicism. This is because of a historiographic tendency to situate its drawing curricula and strategies within a broader, classificatory scheme. In the case of Nicolas Pevsner’s classic *Academies of Art Past and Present* (1973), for instance, he distills training from art academies across western Europe into a centralized set of principles.⁷⁷ Rather than focus on the work of individual academicians or drawing regimes, he masterfully synthesizes general practices at institutions that flourished over the course of four centuries from their first iterations in Renaissance Italy as informal spaces for discourse to the codification of strict rules and regulations enforced in France and Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Given its wide breadth, Pevsner’s work has become an important starting point for more recent scholarship.

In the 1990s, the Academy and its methods of training acquired more traction in art historical scholarship. Within this research, two major tendencies emerge. The first tendency builds from Boime’s study to vindicate popular misrepresentations of the relationship between the Academy and modernist artists. Around twenty years after Boime’s landmark publication, the

⁷⁶ Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Phaidon Press, 1971).

⁷⁷ Nicolas Pevsner, *Academies of Art Past and Present* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973).

art historian June Hargrove's edited volume titled *The French Academy: Classicism and its Antagonists* (1990) complicated the Academy's allegiance to classical principles. Whereas Boime proved that academic training shaped some modernist practices, Hargrove's essays also argues that the Academy fostered multiple styles. In doing so, she revises the perceived tension between qualities attributed to this institution, above all "formula" and "idealism," with attributes given to modernist movements in the nineteenth century, such as "invention" and "realism."⁷⁸ Thus, it adds to accounts like Boime's which nuances the distinctions between academic and modernist styles.

Boime's and Hargrove's research has not entirely disrupted the tendency to reduce the academic to a static concept. Following Pevsner, many art historians continue to couch academic art pedagogy within a wider, classificatory scheme. The art historians Carl Goldstein, Monique Segré, and Thierry de Duve, for instance, have investigated the institutions and philosophies shaping the aims of art education and the exercises taught in artist's *ateliers* over the course of the nineteenth century and throughout modernity. At times, their work sacrifices the complexity of socially and historically distinct moments and individual pedagogical practices in favor of constructing a broader narrative.⁷⁹

De Duve's "When Form Has Become Attitude—and Beyond" offers an interesting example of this historiographical tendency. He distinguishes between two predominant pedagogical models in modernity (the academic and the Bauhaus) to highlight a more recent shift

⁷⁸ June Hargrove, ed., *The French Academy: Classicism and its Antagonists* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

⁷⁹ Carl Goldstein, *Teaching Art: Academies and Schools from Vasari to Albers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Monique Segré, *L'Art Comme Institution: L'École des Beaux Arts XIX^e-XX^e siècle* (Cachan: Editions de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan, 1993); and Thierry de Duve, "When Form Has Become Attitude—and Beyond," in *The Artist and the Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context*, ed. by Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster, 23-40 (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton, 1994).

in artistic training since the 1960s. The Academy privileged “talent-métier-imitation” as its key virtues by setting official standards that artists must match in order to receive prizes and premiums. Whereas the Academy emphasized talent acquired through practice, the Bauhaus stressed an innate capacity toward art-making understood to exist universally. He thus concludes that the Bauhaus model displaced “talent-métier-imitation” with the virtues: “creativity-medium-invention.” This shift stressed the importance of introspection and experimentation rather than mastering seasoned practices set by ancient and neoclassical precedents. These two tendencies are then juxtaposed next to late-twentieth-century practices described as “attitude-practice-deconstruction.”⁸⁰ While de Duve acknowledges that his model oversimplifies these shifts, such generalizations shed light on what is distinct about today’s emphasis on ideological positioning (rather than skill or creativity with media) in artistic formation. In addition to reducing the diversity of pedagogical practices in these periods to two dominant paradigms, these models imply that institutions like the École des beaux-arts initiated no significant amendments to its curriculum in nineteenth-century France. Such accounts also disregard the role of individual masters in recommending techniques.

Even in scholarship dedicated specifically to reviewing the French Academy’s negative reputation, it proves difficult to challenge the characterization of academicism as fixed if not retrograde.⁸¹ Rafael Cardoso Denis’ and Colin Trodd’s edited volume titled, *Art and the academy in the nineteenth century* (2000), for example, has two aims: first, it seeks to nuance definitions of “academic.” In art historian Paul Barlow’s chapter, titled “Fear and loathing of the academic, or just what it is that makes the avant-garde so different, so appealing?,” he argues

⁸⁰ De Duve, “When Form Has Become Attitude—and Beyond,” 28.

⁸¹ Rafael Cardoso Denis and Colin Trodd, eds., *Art and the academy in the nineteenth century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

that the term “academic” historically has been deployed to represent two key tendencies: it can refer to both an “idealized rigidity” and the “illustrative” or “literary” (as opposed to avant-garde, which can refer to more valorized concepts, such as “engaged dynamism” or “authenticity”).⁸²

In addition to providing an intellectual history of the term “academic,” this scholarship successfully expands what institutions and artists count within discussions of academic art by looking to understudied figures (such as women enrolled at David’s studio) and to institutions outside of France; it provides more context for the Academy’s rich student body and global presence.⁸³ Nonetheless, it does very little to dispel the notion that academic methods of training were static. This is because, methodologically, a social and cultural history is prioritized at the expense of analyses of the technical procedures deployed at art academies (such as the sight-size technique in which the artist works from a point such that the surface of the paper and subject matter appear to be equal in size by eye).

In an essay more narrowly focused on France’s educational system, Paul Duro’s “The Lure of Rome: The Academic Copy and the *Académie de France* in the Nineteenth Century,” reinforces the perspective that the Academy clung to classicism.⁸⁴ He examines a moment when this institution’s hegemonic reign over the arts came into doubt. Yet, he still foregrounds the Academy’s unyielding allegiance to Rome via a requirement imposed upon *Prix de Rome*

⁸² Paul Barlow, “Fear and loathing of the academic, or just what it is that makes the avant-garde so different, so appealing?,” 15-31.

⁸³ For instance, Gen Doy’s chapter in this anthology recovers the overlooked contributions of women history painters to the perpetuation of Davidian principles in Paris during his exile in the early nineteenth century. See: Gen Doy, “Hidden from histories: women history painters in early nineteenth-century France,” in *Art and the academy in the nineteenth century*, 71-85.

⁸⁴ Paul Duro, “The Lure of Rome: The Academic Copy and the *Académie de France* in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Art and the academy in the nineteenth century*, 133-149.

winners to produce academic copies for pedagogical purposes who brought back works “by” the Old Masters to France to be objects of study.⁸⁵ This is not to suggest that this scholarship is not valuable; it explains how the Academy attempted to uphold certain standards. However, my work focuses attention toward how art was taught and locates alternative viewpoints that welcomed new pedagogical methods.

Not all scholarship on the French Academy examines its commitment to classicism, nor do they all reduce the institution’s rich history to a set of principles that reinforced elite tastes. Within the past ten years, many scholars have rejected these kinds of narratives in favor of socio-historical specificity; their approaches to the question of art pedagogy often takes place from the vantage point of institutional history.⁸⁶ In the nineteenth century, the Academy oversaw the standard operating procedures upheld by *École des beaux-arts*. Guidelines stipulated that each academic calendar was divided into two semesters (winter and summer). Until the reforms of 1863, fifteen professors supervised training; twelve taught drawing by practicing on antique statuary, and three taught electives, including anatomy, perspective and *l’histoire et antiquités*. These courses prepared students for the scholastic *concours*, the contests held during the term to rank participants. Whereas the *Prix de Rome* was organized by medium, the *concours* at the *École des beaux-arts* could be divided into three broad categories, including the *concours d’émulation*, the *concours dits spéciaux* (which included perspective and anatomy as subjects), and the *concours d’exécution*.⁸⁷ In order to excel within this system, students needed to meet the standards maintained by the Academy.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 133-149.

⁸⁶ Alain Bonnet, *L’enseignement des arts au XIXe siècle: la réforme de l’École des beaux-arts de 1863 et la fin du modèle académique* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006).

⁸⁷ Ibid., 81.

In nineteenth-century France, academic rules and regulations were much less stable than it might seem. For a detailed account of the Academy's institutional history, Alain Bonnet's *L'Enseignement des arts aux XIXe siècle* (2006) is exemplary. Each time a new political regime came into power, Bonnet notes, the administrative requirements upheld by the Academy underwent revision.⁸⁸ In August 1793, for instance, the French Revolutionary government closed down academic institutions. Two years later, the government replaced artistic (and scientific) societies with the Institut national, a new title assigned to French academies (such as the Académie française) that signified a less aristocratic patronage system. Under Napoléon's "Hundred Days," the period of time in which he regained power after temporary exile on the island, Elba and until the Bourbon monarchy was restored, he approved a petition to increase membership within the Fine Arts sector of the Institut to 40 members. When the Bourbon monarch was restored in 1816, the government united and renamed three institutions—previously known as the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, the Academy of Architecture, and the Academy of Music under the *Ancien régime*—as the Académie des beaux-arts. This reflected a renewed effort to link the institution to the aristocratic past and to maintain traditions. Such changes are further complicated by institutional changes adopted by the Academy's key participants.

Bonnet's administrative history of the Academy and École des beaux-arts culminates in the sweeping reforms that took place within these institutions in 1863. At the time, art's social function and position relative to industry underwent renegotiation; additionally, artistic training became increasingly democratized, leading the Academy to revise its mission and course offerings. Frustrated by the institution's unwillingness to oversee technical training, artists

⁸⁸ Ibid., 40.

pressured the school to introduce teaching studios geared toward craft knowledge in painting and sculpture. With the approval of Emperor Napoléon III, France's leading institution for artistic formation initiated measures to significantly modernize its standard operating procedures.

From the perspective of Viollet-le-Duc, Bonnet notes, curriculum at the Academy failed to encourage “originality.”⁸⁹ Viollet-le-Duc was an architect, pedagogical thinker, and alumnus of the École des beaux-arts who spearheaded these reforms. When he deployed “originality” as the catch phrase for reform, it represented a call to artists to liberate themselves from academic conventions and to turn instead toward nature as model. Until reform measures took shape in the 1860s, the artists elected to judge the annual concours had the power to reinforce academic conventions by awarding only the students who adopted their style; this was because the Academy primarily self-elected judges who upheld academicism.⁹⁰ When Viollet-le-Duc recommended reforms that would encourage originality, it therefore was as much an attack on style as it was on the academicians who oversaw the determination of prizes and premiums. His position should not to be conflated with the various ways that “originality” entered into modernist discourses throughout the twentieth century. Originality was a term valorized by many more artists and their critics to describe creativity.⁹¹ As a “virtue” of modernism, originality carried a range of connotations, including those associated with an artist's innate capacity to produce art, such as “truth,” “spontaneity,” and “authenticity.”

Pressure to reform the Academy not only came from practicing artists, however. The

⁸⁹ Bonnet, “La réforme de l'École des beaux-arts de 1863,” and *L'enseignement des arts au XIXe siècle*, 181.

⁹⁰ Bonnet, “La réforme de l'École des beaux-arts de 1863,” and *L'enseignement des arts au XIXe siècle*. For more on Viollet-le-Duc, see: Martin Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 1814-1879* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁹¹ For scholarship that examines the concept of originality, see: Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986).

factions that developed in support and against reform often had political motivations for Bonnet. During the Second Empire, the *comte de Nieuwerkerke* (1811-1892), Napoléon III's Superintendent of Fine Arts, targeted the Academy's political power by wresting its control over the administration of the *École des beaux-arts*. The government sanctioned reforms decreased the Academy's influence over the *concours*, which were then officially overseen by a special jury. The new laws also stated that the school would be directed by one person, rather than organized by the *Conseil des professeurs*, a teaching body that previously exerted authority over the school. While Bonnet's scholarship is unmatched in its level of detail on the Academy's institutional history and its reforms, drawing curriculum plays a minor role in his study. In fact, discussions devoted to the technical procedures exercised in specific studios are mostly excluded.⁹²

Post-Academic Pedagogy: A Look Beyond the *École des beaux-arts*

What distinguishes my approach to the history of artistic training is that I look at pedagogical regimes that cut across divisions of formal learning, rather than focus solely on the Academy. My doctoral research also shifts the focus away from the institutional history of the Academy and toward the pedagogical justifications for particular drawing regimes, especially those that depended on habit acquisition. Drawing instruction surpassed the limited scope of the *École des beaux-arts* and entered into discourses in public education and technical training in the applied arts. Within the past ten years, French-language scholarship on nineteenth-century

⁹² Among the few scholars who have tackled the issue of individual pedagogical programs is Philip Hotchkiss Walsh, whose 1995 dissertation builds from the institutional history of the *École des beaux-arts* to examine the theoretical underpinnings of—and pedagogical practices deployed within—Gustave Moreau's *atelier* between 1891 and 1898. Moreau's studio, he argues, not only had a huge impact on modern artistic production in the early twentieth century; it also cultivated an important artistic community that challenged many tenets of academicism that typically characterize its institutional home. See: Philip Hotchkiss Walsh, "The Atelier of Gustave Moreau at the *École des Beaux-Arts*" (doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1995).

drawing pedagogy has looked beyond the Academy to alternative educational contexts.⁹³ This body of research is indebted to scholarship that did not prioritize conventional artistic formation; in the mid 1990s, Marie-Claude Genet-Delacroix, Claude Troger, and Stéphane Laurent shifted their focus to primary and secondary education, and applied arts institutions, respectively. For example, in 1994, Genet-Delacroix and Troger drafted a history of art education in French primary and secondary schools beginning in the Second Empire.⁹⁴ Four years later, Laurent's research, titled *L'Art Utile: Les écoles d'arts appliqués sous le Second Empire et la Troisième République*, charted the diversification of institutions dedicated to training in the applied arts during the Second Empire and Third Republic.⁹⁵ At this time, access to training in the applied arts struggled to meet the market demands associated with the rate of industrialization. This led, he argued, to the proliferation of schools dedicated to technical drawing for men and women, such as the *écoles professionnelles pour jeunes femmes* in Paris (three of which opened in 1862).⁹⁶ It also led to the increased desire to sanction technical training in public schools nationwide.

While the Second Empire and Third Republic briefly were credited with the

⁹³ Significant strides in the history of French drawing pedagogy have been made recently in French-language scholarship. See: Dominique Poulot, Jean-Miguel Pire and Alain Bonnet, eds., *L'Éducation artistique en France du modèle académique et scolaire aux pratiques actuelles XVIII^e-XXI^e siècles* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010); Alain Bonnet, Juliette Lavie, Julie Noirot and Paul-Louis Rinuy, eds., *Art et Transmission: L'Atelier du XIX^e au XXI^e siècle* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014). Outside the limited scope of French history, there was already a precedent for this. A large amount of scholarship is devoted to drawing programs in technical institutions and in public schools. See: Arthur Efland, *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990); Stuart MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2004); Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁹⁴ Marie-Claude Genet-Delacroix and Claude Troger, *Du dessin aux arts plastiques, histoire d'un enseignement* (Orléans: C.R.D.P. de la Région Centre, 1994).

⁹⁵ Laurent, *L'Art utile*.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

diversification of institutions dedicated to drawing instruction, subsequent scholarship by Renaud d'Enfert traced the social pressure to institute more drawing schools as far back as the eighteenth century.⁹⁷ Beginning in the 1750s, he argues that institutions devoted to drawing instruction were inaugurated across France to accommodate growth in the decorative arts sector. These schools were initially labeled *écoles de dessin* (provincial drawing schools that trained artisans), such as the École speciale de dessin et de mathématiques in Paris. The school was originally founded by Jean-Jacques Bachelier (the director of the porcelain factory in Sèvres) in 1766 as the École Royale Gratuite de Dessin to teach drawing courses relevant to the so-called decorative arts (today, it goes by neither its original or nineteenth-century name; it has since been renamed as the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs).⁹⁸ This led d'Enfert to note that “Le siècle des Lumières est également celui du meuble.”⁹⁹ Under the revolutionary government and Napoleonic regime, as well as the July Monarchy and Second Empire, drawing instruction continued to be perceived as a social and professional necessity.

At the same time that these institutions began to flourish, drawing instructors designed competing systems to support a wide range of cultural practices that included the fine and applied arts, and engineering.¹⁰⁰ Like the École des beaux-arts, which historically taught classicism through imitation, elite draftsmen privileged academic drawing procedures. Industrial design and applied arts institutions (such as the École de dessin de Lequien in Paris, La Martinière in Lyon, and the “*écoles des manufactures royales*,” notably the Gobelins in Paris)

⁹⁷ d'Enfert, *L'enseignement du dessin en France*.

⁹⁸ For more information on the transition from an “*école de dessin*” to an applied art school in the 1850s, see Laurent, *L'Art utile*.

⁹⁹ d'Enfert, *L'enseignement du dessin en France*, 32.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

typically mastered the reproduction of ornamental models often via geometric methods. These catered to three distinct social needs, the first being the popularity of drawing as an elite hobby, known as *art d'agrément*. Second, drawing was crucial to training in the applied arts. Finally, it was a major component of the technical procedures used in engineering.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, many practicing painters, sculptors and architects acquired formal training at schools initially created to further training in the applied arts. In fact, by the 1850s, the École speciale de dessin's ability to effectively train fine and applied artists made it a viable alternative to—and an unofficial preparatory school to—the École des beaux-arts. To distinguish it from what was then known colloquially as the *grande école*, the École speciale de dessin was given the nickname “*petite école*.” Such a label alluded to the fact that this establishment did not share the same level of prestige as the *grande école* nor the same intellectual foundation; nonetheless, distinctions between official training in these domains grew particularly thin throughout this period. New directors and instructors, such as Jean-Hillaire Belloc and Lecoq de Boisbaudran, increasingly introduced curriculum that catered to both fine and applied artists. To meet the demands of both fields, the school deployed methods to train applied artists, categorized as *dessin géométrique*, and fine artists, described as *dessin d'imitation*. Whereas the former included courses in algebra and geometry, “imitation” typically described drawing lessons grounded by copying the plaster cast and the live model.¹⁰¹

When public drawing education became obligatory in the first decade of the Third Republic, the methods imposed on primary and secondary schools became entangled in the century-old debate concerning the benefits and disadvantages of geometric drawing regimes and

¹⁰¹ This institution introduced a series of new courses that catered to both fine and applied artists, such as the history and composition of ornament (1835) and visual memory training (1847). By 1863, the director enacted provisions to teach sculpture and architecture. See: Laurent, *L'Art utile*.

imitation. For almost one hundred years, many primary and secondary schools elected to integrate drawing pedagogy into their curriculum. As in technical institutes, the preoccupation with France's status as a cultural and economic leader in the production of luxury goods also encouraged both the state and privately-run organizations to institute drawing curriculum for the applied arts into primary and secondary schools nationwide.¹⁰² As early as the French Revolution of 1789, the perceived utility of drawing to all social classes made it feature prominently within pedagogical reforms pursued by the short-lived government.¹⁰³ This not only was part of a systematic effort to improve French industrial design. It also grew from sensationist philosophies by figures, such as Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714-1780), who believed that the mind was a *tabula rasa* and as a result, all knowledge stemmed from sensory experience.¹⁰⁴

Well into the nineteenth century, the importance of pedagogical reforms to primary and secondary education remained a hotly contested subject. Before primary and secondary education became standardized nationwide in the 1880s, official schools, Catholic-run centers (such as those organized by the Frères des écoles chrétiennes, a religious group inaugurated in France and devoted to teaching), and private tutors, lacked a unified drawing curriculum. By the time Napoleon III became emperor (1852-1870), many believed that the lack of a unified curriculum led to France's decline in the fine and applied arts sectors, an issue which allowed such debates to earn more traction.¹⁰⁵ Far from being a domain in decline, philosophers, art

¹⁰² How geometric drawing regimes became a component of primary education was explored by Molly Nesbit. Nesbit argues that the legacy of this drawing system informed modernist visualization strategies. See: Molly Nesbit, "Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model," *October* 27 (Summer 1986): 53-64, and *Their Common Sense* (London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2000).

¹⁰³ d'Enfert, *L'enseignement du dessin en France*, 20-22.

¹⁰⁴ For scholarship that situates Condillac's philosophy of the mind relative to French political history, see: Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

critics and politicians all developed competing pedagogical programs to further training in the arts and design.

My doctoral research underscores discourses on artistic training that cut across these divisions of formal learning.¹⁰⁶ When strides toward reform took place, the pedagogues engaged in such debates, notably Ravaisson, Guillaume, Lecoq, and Régamey, promoted regimes that defied clear categorization as fine or applied art, and often discussed primary and secondary schooling alongside professional education. I add to existing scholarship on art pedagogy by contextualizing drawing systems designed for distinct schools and academic levels in dialogue with wider debates about the goals of art and general education. I prioritize a historical moment in which these debates became centralized under the supervision of the French state. For the purposes of this research, I refer to regimes that do not fit easily into existing categories as “post-academic” pedagogy.

Pedagogical Practice: Between Hand, Eye, and Mind

The primary intervention of this thesis is to articulate *how* art was taught (as opposed to *what* was taught). Whether it is centered on the Academy, privately-run studios or public schools, the majority of scholarship on art education outlines the curriculum (what was taught) as opposed to pedagogy (how art was taught). This subtle distinction between the exercises

¹⁰⁵ d’Enfert, *L’enseignement du dessin en France*; Renaud d’Enfert and D. Lagoutte, *Le dessin à l’école de 1800 à nos jours* (Lyon: INRP: 2004); Genet-Delacroix and Troger, *Du dessin aux arts plastiques*.

¹⁰⁶ There is not much of a precedent set by existing scholarship to compare drawing regimes across divisions of formal learning. To date, projects that do have a tendency to map a broad range of practices in France over the course of the mid to late nineteenth century. This provides a strong foundation for research, like mine, that examines the intricacies of particular technical procedures and debates. See: Richard A. Moore, “Academic ‘Dessin’ Theory in France after the Reorganization of 1863,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 36, no. 3 (Oct., 1977): 145-174, and Dominique Poulot, Jean-Miguel Pire and Alain Bonnet, *L’Éducation artistique en France du modèle académique et scolaire aux pratiques actuelles XVIII^e-XXI^e siècles*.

deployed by students in pursuit of artistic formation and the way skills particularly were understood to operate is crucial. Copying ancient models, for instance, was the dominant exercise used to train artists. Yet, few studies discuss the technical procedures deployed to produce copies or the various ways this practice was imagined to support artistic production.¹⁰⁷

The aim of this dissertation therefore is not to revise claims about the Academy's resistance to change nor its commitment to upholding the tenets of classicism. Rather, I shift the emphasis away from institutional frameworks (such as the Academy or artist's studio), and instead, put a spotlight on what drawing exercises actually *did* to and for practitioners. I thus interrogate the conceptual stakes of particular drawing strategies on theories of the mind, and understandings of the body. I articulate the psychophysiological assumptions underlying artistic curricula by asking: what was the role of the teacher? How did he impart drawing skills to his students? Could art be taught? By examining the way pedagogues understood habit as a force that determined the way the mind and body interacted and functioned, my research analyzes the assumptions such programs made about the mind, hand-eye coordination, memory and muscle memory, and human volition.

This line of inquiry poses some historical challenges. Primary sources that support examinations of art pedagogy include drawing manuals, artists letters, sketchbooks, and minutes from official meetings that took place within institutions like the Academy. How specific professors organized their teaching studios or justified certain pedagogical practices is much less clear, however. There is very little extant testimony that explicitly summarizes why instructors

¹⁰⁷ The interest in the repetitive nature of copying has emerged in scholarship as a way to undercut the art historical attachment to the "unique" and "original." See: Patricia Mainardi, "Copies, Variations, Replicas: Nineteenth-Century Studio Practice," *Visual Resources: an international journal on images and their uses* 15, no. 2 (1999): 123-147. See also: Patricia Mainardi, "The 19th-Century Art Trade: Copies, Variations, Replicas," *Van Gogh Museum Journal* (2000): 62-73. For more on repetition in studio practice, see: Kahng, ed., *The Repeating Image*.

adopted particular methods and how these skillsets were modeled for their students. This is further complicated by the fact that at institutions like the École des beaux-arts, academicians devoted very little time to their students' training; students arrived at the school with a background in drawing. Likewise, whereas students practiced drawing after models for two hours every day, professors offered corrections only twice a week. Very few pedagogues offered explicit justifications for the strategies they deployed in the classroom. In the absence of clear teaching philosophies, it should come as no surprise that many artists, critics, and scholars have questioned whether art could be taught.

The inability to determine what skills were (and still are) essential for artistic formation, and how they could be transmitted between individuals has led contemporary art historian James Elkins to argue that art cannot be taught. His twenty-first century scholarship should not to be confused with Courbet's assertion 150 years beforehand that art was the product of innate talent. In *Why Art Cannot be Taught: A Handbook for Art Students* (2001), Elkins claims that no one understands how art is taught, making art virtually "unteachable."¹⁰⁸ As an example of this, he evaluates contemporary studio practices and the studio critique model upheld in art schools across North America. The mission of most M.F.A. programs, Elkins notes, is to teach "visual acuity," technique, theory and critical thinking skills; however, this hardly amounts to any clear understanding of what constitutes art instruction or the instruction of "successful" art.

Elkins' scholarship has inspired a major question of this dissertation: what were particular exercises supposed *to do* to and for practitioners? Unlike Elkins' study, which is circumscribed to contemporary studio practices in M.F.A. programs in the United States, I analyze how skills were conceptualized and taught across nineteenth-century French art schools,

¹⁰⁸ James Elkins, *Why Art Cannot Be Taught: A Handbook for Art Students* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2001). For more on what studio arts courses teach, see: Singerman, *Art Subjects*.

studios, and in elementary education, to understand and consider what affect these had on the physiological assumptions underlying drawing regimens and their transmission.

Artistic Knowledge and Interdisciplinarity: Between Theory and Practice

Art's position relative to knowledge and knowing has been a major focus of scholarship at the intersection of art and science. There has been, for instance, a growing body of research into what Pamela Smith (a historian of early modern artistic and scientific cultures) has called the "maker's knowledge" and more recently, what the art historian Matthew Hunter has referred to as "wicked intelligence."¹⁰⁹ Focusing on the periods between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, Smith's *The Body of the Artisan* (2004) examines the growing emphasis on naturalism in the arts and sciences, especially as this concerns the bodily methods of working with nature. In the case of Hunter's book, *Wicked Intelligence: Visual Art and the Science of Experiment in Restoration London* (2013), he focuses on the experimental visualization strategies deployed by Robert Hooke in late-seventeenth-century London alongside the representational practices used in artistic traditions. These discourses are united by an examination of both the requisite knowledge for art-making, and the way technical procedures shaped scientific understandings of the world in early modernity (and vice versa). These interdisciplinary approaches are important to my work because they provide models for thinking through the effects of material procedures on the way knowledge was conceived.

Though differentiated by historical and geographical contexts, Nasim's *Observing by Hand* and the art historian Zeynep Çelik Alexander's "kinaesthetic knowing" also have taken

¹⁰⁹ Pamela Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Matthew Hunter, *Wicked Intelligence: Visual Art and the Science of Experiment in Restoration London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

on similar briefs in recent years. Nasim studied nineteenth-century British nebular research to examine the way drawing informed observations of the night sky. Alexander similarly charted the way experiential modes of knowing informed a variety of teaching practices that emerged in Germany between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s that range from Heinrich Wölfflin's art history lectures to studio courses at the Bauhaus.¹¹⁰ Consonant with their research, I explore the shared vernacular determining the way society learned to communicate and comprehend visual information. Because the material techniques of draftsmanship informed the representational conventions and approaches to visualize knowledge, my scholarship examines the scope of the “possible” and “communicable” in disciplines that relied on visualization, above all, art and industrial design.

It is worth briefly mentioning the conceptual similarities between what Mallarmé referred to as the “cunning” of the hand in 1876 and Alexander's 2017 notion of “kinesthetic knowing.” In the case of Mallarmé, cunning is a useful metaphor that captures a particular type of “embodied” intelligence or tacit knowledge used in artistic production. Since forms of tacit knowledge were understood as related to instinct or instinctual modes of intelligence that could not rise to the level of—or register as—thought, one can read his hatred of the manual as akin to fears of the thoughtlessness and monotony associated with habit. The inability to control “sleights of hand” has a strong presence in the history of drawing. This provides an interesting tension with the valorization of forms of knowing that emerged in Germany not long after Mallarmé made such claims. In Alexander's intellectual history of “kinaesthetic knowing,” she argues that embodied interactions with the environment became a viable source for knowledge production in the early twentieth century; she examines how “immediate experiences” were as

¹¹⁰ Nasim, *Observing by Hand*; Zeynep Çelik Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing: Aesthetics, Epistemology, Modern Design* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

valuable as long periods of reflection. My research adds to the literature by considering the perceived virtues of habit. Like her work, I question how behaviors that become immediate were understood as a crucial part of the way we know and engage with our surroundings (rather than something that obstructs knowledge).

What knowledge or skillset is necessary for artistic production also has emerged in scholarship on contemporary studio practices. In 2012, Elkins published an edited volume adapted from a roundtable discussion in 2009 which provocatively asks: *What Do Artists Know?*¹¹¹ By posing this question, Elkins staged a debate among nearly 50 specialists in the history of art instruction, higher education in the fine arts, and philosophy from around the world. Building from Elkins' premise that "no one knows what an M.F.A. is," this forum discussed competing theories of art and how they inform current practices in art education. Elkins asked each participant to consider the role of historical practices in determining the state of current and future teaching agendas, what techniques are relevant to art students today (such as *académies* and the Bauhaus color charts), and how is art taught across the globe. These issues culminated in the final section: what artists know. The knowledge needed to produce art has always been contentious and vague. In some cases, it required technical proficiency in a given medium, such as oil painting. Alternatively, some critics and artists did not privilege technical skill and instead valorized "intuition" as the most important attribute of an artist. Such shifting conceptions of what knowledge or skill-sets corresponded to artistic production had a profound impact on the shifting modes of training. Ultimately, this led the group to ask whether art's theories are commensurate with systems of artistic training in higher education. While Elkins' query is geared toward current policies, it is equally relevant to the history of drawing education

¹¹¹ James Elkins, ed., *What Do Artists Know?* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012).

which similarly dislocates theory from practice, obscuring the need for certain standard operating procedures.

An article by the art historian Margaret MacNahmidhe, titled “Rose-Period Picasso: Drawing, Habit, and Effort in Modernism” (2014), rectifies this historical shortcoming by calling attention to forgotten studio practices.¹¹² She argues that current scholarship in drawing primarily valorizes the medium’s supposed immediacy, spontaneity, and transparency, as well as the “fluency” and “effortlessness” which characterizes the work of the draftsman.¹¹³ As such, there is a tendency to advance theories of drawing that depend upon working from the wrist.¹¹⁴ MacNahmidhe looks to Picasso’s academic training to examine how the gestures required to draw on a vertical surface required working from the shoulder rather than the wrist, which would require much more physical exertion. By looking to Picasso’s academic gestures and trained movements, she thus addresses the gap between current theories of drawing that are applied retrospectively, and the drawing methods actually deployed historically, in this case, in an early-twentieth-century European academy. The estrangement between theories of drawing and drawing practices pinpointed by MacNahmidhe was equally at the very heart of pedagogical debates I investigate in this dissertation.

The Education of the Eye

To historicize what knowledge and skillsets were deemed necessary to practice art, my

¹¹² Margaret MacNahmidhe, “Rose-Period Picasso: Habit, Drawing, and Modernism,” *nonsite* (2014), unpaginated.

¹¹³ MacNahmidhe cites: Michael Baxandall and Svetlana Alpers, *Tiepolo and the Pictorial Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

¹¹⁴ MacNahmidhe, “Rose-Period Picasso: Habit, Drawing, and Modernism,” unpaginated.

dissertation explores the pedagogical justifications for particular technical procedures, such as the belief that visual memory training and geometry lessons would train the mind to order pictorial thought. For a broad range of drawing strategies, the education of the eye became a widely accepted—or rather, sought after—outcome. The notion that the eye could be conditioned to see first gained traction in pedagogical debates in late-eighteenth-century writing and philosophy (and was popularized by Jean Jacques Rousseau’s book *Emile, or On Education* (1762), which argues that drawing teaches observation).¹¹⁵ Well into the nineteenth century, champions of sensory education continued to cite drawing as an effective vehicle for ocular and manual training; so much so that this area forms the foundation for this study. As a result, I question how competing pedagogies laid claim to the education of ocular habits via drawing regimes rooted in copying antique statues, geometry, and through visual memory training. In this respect, this research is positioned at the nexus of vision and visibility studies.

This thesis argues that nineteenth-century French art education cannot be understood in isolation from theories of habit and vision. Many pedagogues, I argue, viewed art education as a mechanism for the acquisition of—what I term—ocular habits. Ocular habits—often used synonymously with the “educated eye”—refer to modes of seeing learned by repetition; it describes how the eye was taught to prioritize visible information via an education, for instance, that taught shortcuts to suppress detail in favor of the “whole” to later create a visual reproduction. In the cases examined here, visual habits were acquired via particular drawing regimes linked to specific pedagogical figures. My focus represents a marked shift from existing scholarship on art pedagogy that primarily takes the form of social art history and institutional critique. To date, scholarship that contextualizes drawing practices relative to shifting socio-

¹¹⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979 [originally published in French in 1762]).

economic pressures (such as the democratization of public drawing instruction alongside the growing interest in applied arts) and relative to institutional critique where training becomes a tool to enforce conformity do not emphasize how drawing's material practice related to ideas about knowing.

My emphasis on the “educated eye” also provides an alternative model to Mallarmé’s call for artists to snub academic modes of visualizing (and seeing) the world, and related discourses on the “childlike” or “innocent” eye. Backlash against academic modes of seeing was so widespread that art critics and artists recommended experimenting with new modes of seeing. This issue is central to art historian Gordon Hughes’s *Resisting Abstraction: Robert Delaunay and Vision in the Face of Modernism* (2014), a text which looks at the legacy of such conceptions of vision on the art produced in early-twentieth-century Paris.¹¹⁶ “Historical figures as diverse as Jules Laforgue, John Ruskin, Paul Valéry, and Walter Benjamin all argued,” Hughes notes “that painting can return us to a more ‘primitive,’ ‘natural,’ or ‘innocent eye’ [...] through the recovery of an otherwise long-lost mode of infantile vision that precedes the acquisition of form.”¹¹⁷ This was a group of figures who conceived of second nature, or learned behaviors (be they ways of seeing) as something that restrains creativity. The child’s innocent eyes acquired popularity as a rhetorical device to describe the capacity of habit to stifle or conceal, to dull our senses to the world around us. French Colonialism also shaped a parallel discourse which characterized so-called “primitive” cultures in similar ways; “primitive” people, like children, were described as uncorrupted by industry and European modes of artistic learning

¹¹⁶ Gordon Hughes, *Resisting Abstraction: Robert Delaunay and Vision in the Face of Modernism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014). See also: Singerman, “Innocence and Form,” 97-124.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 69.

that fostered an “artificial,” second nature.¹¹⁸ To overcome the ill effects of habit, these thinkers recommended a rupture with established conventions of art-making.¹¹⁹

In the mid to late nineteenth century, the idea that the plastic arts were dependent upon human sense-perception was self-evident; that the operations of the eye could be manipulated to see differently by rejecting the eye’s education emerged as a defining feature of debates about artists linked to Impressionist and Post-Impressionist movements. Art critics often credited diverse artists, including Manet and Seurat, with modifying how the eye was trained to see in order to produce a different kind of aesthetic liberated from “routine,” academic conventions.¹²⁰ In 1883, for instance, the French Symbolist poet Jules Laforgue (1860-1887) published a definition of Impressionism that hinged on a distinction between academic and Impressionist vision.¹²¹ Laforgue, like Mallarmé, encouraged artists to reject ways of seeing rooted in academic schema.

When Mallarmé championed Manet’s work and Laforgue urged some Impressionists (like Monet and Pissarro) to undermine learned academic conventions in the 1870s and 1880s, they both suggested that artists could appeal to what could be visible in nature. By this time, the idea that a “return” to nature would curb the ill-effects of academicism was hardly new. In fact, artists who were considered realist or naturalist (and their champions) often used the same

¹¹⁸ Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “Going Native: Paul Gauguin and the Invention of the Primitivist Modernism,” in Norma Broude and Mary Garrard, eds., *The Expanding Discourse*, 315-329 (New York: Westview Press, 1992).

¹¹⁹ For thinkers like Panofsky, the shared desire to overthrow acquired habits would nonetheless stem from “mental habits” that existed in late-nineteenth-century France. See: Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*.

¹²⁰ Michelle Foa, *Georges Seurat: The Art of Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

¹²¹ Jules Laforgue, “Impressionism” (1883), in *Impressionism and Post Impressionism 1874-1904: Sources and Documents*, edited by Linda Nochlin, 14-20 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966).

rhetoric in support of their visualization strategies. From the rejection of perspective to the valorization of “realism,” a wide range of artists sought to reproduce nature as it exists, not as it ought to be (as recommended by academic doctrine). The French naturalist writer and art critic Emile Zola (1840-1902), for example, commended Manet’s adept ability to undermine artistic precedents and to appeal to direct observation (this is similar to Mallarmé, who, wrote about Manet’s paintings relative to vision 9 years later).¹²²

My emphasis on the “educated eye” engages with a body of literature in vision and visuality studies. Interdisciplinary scholars, including Jonathan Crary, Josh Ellenbogen, Jordan Bear, Peter Galison, and Lorraine Daston, have examined how nineteenth-century models of vision, subjectivity, and knowledge shaped representational strategies deployed in the arts and sciences.¹²³ The consensus among these leading scholars is that modern subjectivity estranged seeing from knowing. Not only did scientists address the different ways individuals perceived, and arrived at knowledge about the world, but also theorists understood seeing separately from knowing, particularly because the camera could capture more than was perceptible by eye without the aid of instrumental registration.

My study reevaluates this history by showing how drawing instructors attempted to reconnect seeing and knowing via their own particular approaches to educating the eye. At the same time that vision became inextricably linked to individual subjectivity, it also became increasingly subject to training in particular ways that were deemed conducive to generating

¹²² Émile Zola, “Edouard Manet” (1867), in *Art in Theory: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, 554-565, eds. Jason Gaiger, Charles Harrison, and Paul Wood (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

¹²³ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: The MIT Press, 1992); Josh Ellenbogen, *Reasoned and Unreasoned Images: The Photography of Bertillon, Galton, and Marey* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012); Jordan Bear, *Disillusioned: Victorian Photography and the Discerning Subject* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015); Peter Galison and Lorraine Daston, *Objectivity* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007).

knowledge. Rather than position the changes in artistic styles as a result of changing notions of vision and subjectivity—as does the majority of scholarship in this field—I argue that art pedagogy became a tool to actively remedy the growing disconnect between sight and knowledge. Historians of medicine have long focused on the role of the “expert eye” in knowledge production, specifically as articulated by Michel Foucault’s “medical gaze.”¹²⁴ Like Foucault, whose scholarship examines how physicians sifted “pertinent” information from visible signs and symptoms, I argue that pedagogical programs instituted particular modes of seeing via drawing procedures, and thus represent an attempt to create standard models of perception.

In conclusion, this research examines the pedagogical justifications used to legitimize competing drawing strategies designed in mid- to late-nineteenth-century France. By examining debates that took place across divisions of formal learning, it argues that the education of the eye and the acquisition of ocular habits motivated the systematization of distinct drawing practices based on the imitation of ancient models, geometry-based lessons, and visual memory training. This is not to suggest that these practices were—or are—capable of actually training the eye; rather, it offers a new understanding of the way the mind and human subjectivity was understood in modern France.

¹²⁴ Michel Foucault, “Seeing and Knowing,” in *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, 131-151, trans. by A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1973).

CHAPTER 2

The Emancipation of Habit: Revisiting Lecoq de Boisbaudran and Visual Memory Training

“On instruit nos enfants exactement comme on dresse les chiens savants, par la répétition indéfinie du même acte,” complained the French philosopher Eugène Véron (1825-1889).¹²⁵ Véron’s grievance, which appeared in his 1878 publication titled *L’esthétique: origine des arts, le goût et le génie, définition de l’art et de l’esthétique*, represented a wider dissatisfaction with existing methods of artistic training in the second half of the nineteenth century. About two decades before Véron published this text, the French architect Viollet-le-Duc famously initiated a movement to reform the methods of instruction practiced at the École des beaux-arts. For Véron and Viollet-le-Duc among many other critics, the Academy’s emphasis on learning from masters represented inertia, a sterile resistance to change crystalized through the rigid, subservient emulation of classical and Renaissance masters.

By likening the education of children to the training of dogs, Véron pointed out that the Academy rewarded tireless obedience to a master, rather than independence of mind and conduct. Students, much like dogs, acquired certain behaviors that were alien to their innate constitution, a kind of second nature that privileged conformity through the repetition of seasoned exercises. As he complained:

La fatigue et la monotonie des exercices aboutit fatalement à une mécanisation générale, des professeurs aussi bien que des élèves. L’impacable routine domine en maîtresse absolue. Chaque jour de l’année le maître répète doctoralement et ennuyeusement la leçon qu’il répétait le jour correspondant de l’année précédente, et cette leçon, la plupart du temps, s’adresse uniquement à la mémoire de l’élève.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Eugène Véron, *L’esthétique: origine des arts, le goût et le génie, définition de l’art et de l’esthétique* (Paris: C. Reinwald, 1878), 169, 171.

Drawing lessons, Véron feared, conditioned pupils into a mechanical uniformity, depressing their natural aptitudes and modes of comportment in favor of art-making tactics commanded by their teacher.

Within this context, Véron and Viollet-le-Duc lauded Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran's system of visual memory training as an acceptable alternative to *beaux-art* curriculum. Between the 1840s and 1870s, Lecoq systematized a pedagogical regime that claimed to strengthen artists' memory of form and color through a series of repetitive, graduated drawing exercises. The method furnished *la mémoire pittoresque*, defined by Lecoq as "the retention of one's observations" and "stored observations," and likewise facilitated its translation into forms one could then reproduce from memory by hand.¹²⁷ To strengthen visual recall, he taught a graduated series of exercises that focused on the visual memory of form and color with increasing difficulty. Students attentively observed each subject before reproducing it "by heart;" these ranged from simple lines and shapes to practicing on prints and sculptures, and culminated in figure study after the live model [Figures 6-13]. Distinct from techniques which juxtaposed subject and object within the artist's frame of vision, Lecoq encouraged artists to work from memory, detached from the direct observation associated with practicing on models, and instead to rely exclusively on recollection—the practice moved away from immediate visual study and toward intellectual recall.

For three decades, Lecoq codified and disseminated these procedures by authoring a series of drawing manuals, titled *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1847; 1862), *Un Coup d'oeil sur l'enseignement des beaux-arts* (1872), and *Sommaire d'une méthode pour*

¹²⁶ Ibid., 169, 171.

¹²⁷ Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque et la formation de l'artiste* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1920 [originally published in 1848]), 34.

l'enseignement du dessin et de la peinture. Lettres à un jeune professeur (1876).¹²⁸ Shortly after the publication of these manuals, Lecoq reprinted a volume that united all three texts as *Un Coup d'oeil sur l'enseignement des Beaux-Arts* in 1879. By the end of the nineteenth century, the prominent art critics Léonce Bénédict (1859-1925) and Roger Marx (1859-1913) specifically attributed “la plus belle génération d’artistes” and the “les plus originaux de ce temps” to Lecoq’s teachings.¹²⁹ When the critics praised Lecoq’s lessons (known equally as “visual mnemonics” and “drawing from memory” and in French as *dessin de mémoire* and *la mémoire pittoresque*), the lessons already had acquired a reputation as a pedagogical regimen to teach fine and applied artists to recall features of human vision and visual experience.

Against Habit: Lecoq’s and Visual Memory Training’s Detractors

Despite a tradition of upholding visual memory as a valuable tool in the production of art, in the nineteenth century such training became a hotly contested subject.¹³⁰ Of all nineteenth-

¹²⁸ Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, “Education de la mémoire pittoresque,” *La Phalange* 6, no. 2 (1847): 354-366 republished in 1848 as: Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (Paris: La Librairie Sociétaire, 1848); Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *Sommaire d’une méthode pour l’enseignement du dessin et de la peinture: lettres à un jeune professeur* (Paris: Vve A. Morel, 1876).

¹²⁹ Léonce Bénédict, *Rapports du jury international de l’Exposition de 1900* (Paris: Ministère du Commerce, 1900), 223; Roger Marx, *Maîtres d’hier et d’aujourd’hui* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1914).

¹³⁰ Around the same time Lecoq began pursuing this regime, several others had programs in place. See: Étienne Rey, *Exposé succinct d’une méthode analytique, mnémonique et synthétique pour l’enseignement du dessin* (Paris: Chez Hachette, 1834), and Madame Cavé, *Cours de dessin sans maître d’après la méthode de Madame Cavé* (Paris: Ancienne Maison Aubert, c. 1856). Memory training also achieved great popularity in Fourierist circles (to which Lecoq had close connections). Scholars, such as Neil McWilliam, connect Lecoq’s interest in mnemonics to the Fourierist movement. See: Neil McWilliam, *Dreams of Happiness: Social Art and the French Left, 1830-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 232. The process also was well-established in Renaissance art theory, which understood memory as essential to art-making. Celebrated masters, above all Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), argued that imagination depended upon the strength of visual recall, setting an influential precedent that lived on through notable Romantic artists, such as Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863). For scholarship on Leonardo da Vinci’s interest in memory see: David Rosand, “Remembered Lines,” in *Memory & Oblivion: Proceedings of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art*, edited by Wessel Reinink and Jeroen Stumpel, 811-816 (Dordrecht: Springer-Science+Business Media, 1996). For more on Delacroix’s interest in memory as an artistic tool, see: Michèle Hannoosh’s “The Memory of the Painter: Delacroix’s Journal,” in *Memory & Oblivion*, 63-67. In addition, Delacroix defended Madame Cavé’s pedagogical program rooted in visual memory training. See: Frank Anderson

century pedagogical programs, few received as much critical attention as Lecoq's system because of its emphasis on *la mémoire pittoresque*. Throughout his career, the reception of his work ranged drastically among critics, artists, and pedagogues, from validation to derision to celebration again, leading French writer Octave Uzanne (1851-1931) to describe Lecoq in 1888 as "le plus intelligent et le plus persécuté des professeurs d'art de notre époque."¹³¹

Many of Lecoq's contemporaries withdrew support from his regimen on the grounds that memory training (much like academicism) fostered servile, "mechanical" reproduction. This possibility became so divisive that it led Lecoq to accumulate notable adversaries over the course of his career, including the academic painter Jean-Jacques Henner (1829-1905).¹³² Among his alleged failures, other drawing instructors accused the regimen of rendering drawing a passive, *habitual* act. Only a few years after the École spéciale de dessin et de mathématique (Petite école) integrated *dessin de mémoire* into official curriculum in 1847, the philosopher Félix Ravaisson presided over a committee to critically appraise existing drawing regimens, the main

Trapp, "A Mistress and a Master: Madame Cavé and Delacroix," *Art Journal* 27, no. 1 (Autumn, 1967): 40-47+59-60.

¹³¹ Octave Uzanne, "Un Illustrateur aquafortiste: Félix Buhot," *Le Livre revue mensuelle* 9 (1888): 70. While this description can be found in Uzanne's writing, some have attributed this quote to Philippe Burty, a French art critic who wrote in support of Lecoq's pedagogical regimen in his book chapter titled "L'Enseignement du dessin," in *Maîtres et petits maîtres*, 1-19 (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1873, 1877). For instance, in Émile Dacier's "Félix Buhot," *La Revue de l'art ancien et moderne* (1902-01-10): 5, he writes: "...ce maître que Burty a qualifié 'le plus intelligent et le plus persécuté des professeurs d'art de notre époque....'" Likewise, in Paul Lafond's *Degas* (Paris: H. Floury, 1918), the author cites Burty, explaining that: "c'est le procédé de Lecoq de Boisbaudran, 'le plus intelligent et le plus persécuté des professeurs d'art de notre époque', a écrit Ph. Burty, de l'atelier duquel sortirent Alph. Legros, Bonvm, Fantin-Latour, G. Régamey, Ribot, Cazm, etc. C'était déjà l'opinion de Poussin, qui a dit: 'C'est en observant les choses que le peintre devient habile, plutôt qu'en se fatiguant à les copier.'" It is unclear whether or not Uzanne was quoting Burty or if the quote had been misattributed to Burty.

¹³² Henner was a celebrated artist commissioned to paint portraits of influential men, such as Jules Janssen, and who became a successful salon painter known for his use of chiaroscuro in religious and mythological subject matter. Incidentally, like Lecoq, he received recognition at the Exposition universelle of 1900 when he won the Grand Prix in painting. Henner was an artist who upheld existing standards and openly detested Lecoq's disregard for working directly from nature; in 1925, his biographer (E. Durand-Greville) retrospectively quoted Henner, who claimed that: "'He [Lecoq] swamped me with brochures, and as I had never given him my opinion of them, he assumed that I agreed with his views! He wants students to draw without having the model before their eyes, even though the greatest masters have so much trouble drawing from nature!'" E. Durand-Greville, *Entretiens de J.J. Henner* (Paris, 1925), 52 cited by Milner, *The Studios of Paris*, 15.

object being to design a curriculum for public art education. The 1853 proceedings, which resulted in a publication titled *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées* (1854), warned against many “new” drawing methods that took shape, notably Lecoq’s visual memory training.¹³³ Ravaisson cautioned that it could encourage *la manière*, an artistic “defect” caused by replacing truthful imitation with a “uniform way of altering form.”¹³⁴ Thus, he advised that no draftsman commit to memory forms he had not studied closely from life (advice that Lecoq himself recommended). Mnemonic exercises, if not practiced with an eye toward “correct” observation and “faithful” imitation, Ravaisson alerted, were detrimental to students.

More virulent antagonists likewise claimed that unlike drawing directly after nature, visual memory training encouraged cursory, inaccurate renderings dependent upon routine, mindless monotony. Victor Ruprich-Robert (1820-1887), an architect and professor who worked alongside Lecoq, criticized the system for encouraging “le servilisme de la reproduction matérielle.”¹³⁵ Such techniques, he claimed, stultified the act of drawing by passively depending upon remembered forms, removing the need for active, intellectual thought. By 1869, Lecoq’s toughest detractors forced him to resign as director of (and as a professor at) the Petite école because of this emphasis on recitation.

Even in current scholarship, the legacy of Lecoq’s program has been complicated by its dependence on memorization. Whether visual memory generated or restrained creativity was a key feature within wider debates staged by art critics in the mid to late nineteenth century. As charted by the art historian Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu in her text, *Eye, Memory, Hand. The*

¹³³ Félix Ravaisson, *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées* (Paris: P. Dupont Impr., 1854), 22.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹³⁵ Victor Ruprich-Robert, “École Impériale des arts du dessin appliqués à l’industrie,” F/21/644, folio 4 as cited by Veerle Thielemans, “The Afterlife of Images: Memory and Painting in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France” (doctoral thesis, The Johns Hopkins University, 2001), 74.

Nineteenth-Century Debate about the Role of Visual Memory in the Creative Process (2011), visual memory's significance to art was, within this milieu, broadly conceived.¹³⁶ As Chu explains, artists and critics understood visual memory as a key component of caricature, the depiction of movement, and a stimulus to imagination. Strong visual memory not only passively facilitated faithful likenesses, but also, as Chu points out, "served at once as a sieve and as a magnifier."¹³⁷ For the art critic and poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), it allowed caricaturists like Daumier to recall the most salient features and to transform those features based on previously "stored" observations. Visual memory's praise did not go unmatched by its condemnation. *La mémoire pittoresque* was also viewed with suspicion, however; it represented the mind and body's proclivity to stultify, to endlessly repeat rather than innovate.

The alleged dangers of memorization, more often than not, have minimized the actual significance and goals of Lecoq's regime. Art historian Veerle Thielemans has examined the perceived risks of visual memory training in her 2001 doctoral dissertation titled "The Afterlife of Images: Memory and Painting in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France."¹³⁸ Similar to Chu, Thielemans' research offers excellent insight into the ways memory entered into discourses at the intersection of artistic production and psychology of the mid to late nineteenth century. Her work situates Lecoq's project in relationship to broader discourses on memory, ultimately arguing that critics viewed his reliance on "involuntary memory" as dangerous.¹³⁹ She argues

¹³⁶ Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Eye, Memory, Hand: The Nineteenth-Century Debate about the Role of Visual Memory in the Creative Process* (Groningen: The Gerson Lectures Foundation, 2011).

¹³⁷ Chu, *Eye, Memory, Hand*, 16.

¹³⁸ Thielemans, "The Afterlife of Images," 47-102.

¹³⁹ "Involuntary memory" is a term Thielemans uses to describe unconscious forms of memory and movement; more commonly, "involuntary memory" refers to the way sensory experiences trigger past memories, as a threat to human agency and art-making, popularized by Proust's allusion to the madeleine in his 1913 novel, *In Search of Lost Time*.

that “Instead of developing personal observation and judgment, they [Lecoq’s critics] said artificial memory training turned artists into reproductive machines. Deprived of imaginative power, and capacity of judgment, they would no longer possess a freedom of choice or individual expression.”¹⁴⁰ The warning that artists should not strengthen memory at the expense of other mental faculties was, as noted by Chu, just one camp that surfaced in the midst of a multi-faceted debate about visual memory in the mid nineteenth century.¹⁴¹

When Lecoq began teaching, he was well aware of the dangers associated with memory training. The art historian Marc Gotlieb has argued that Lecoq feared the instructor’s authority so much that he refrained from teaching by example, and hid his work from students.¹⁴² To rectify the problem of uniformity, Lecoq disrupted the relationship between student and teacher that typically defined artist-run studios for centuries. Until this point, it was common for artists to train under the direct supervision of an accepted master. Drawing from memory diverged from *ateliers* wherein masters imposed their corrections onto student work, and instead, this method removed the teacher’s hand from training to preserve the student’s individuality. Exposure to existing artworks, especially by the teacher, required strict limitations to safeguard the student’s “originality.” Gotlieb summarized: “To Lecoq, mere exposure to the teacher’s work threatened to implant in students’ minds the wrong kind of memory, condemning them forever to recall and involuntarily to imitate the paintings of another.”¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Thielemans, “The Afterlife of Images,” 72.

¹⁴¹ Well beyond the context of artistic training (and that of nineteenth-century France), memorization by repetition became increasingly misunderstood as a detrimental pedagogical practice over the course of modernity. The American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952), for instance, became one of the most famous outspoken critics of education based on memorization. See: John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Kappa Delta Pi, 1938).

¹⁴² Marc Gotlieb, “Meissonier’s Memory,” in *The Plight of Emulation: Ernest Meissonier and French Salon Painting*, 96-154 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 146.

Given that the anxieties associated with memorization have had such a rich afterlife in the secondary literature on Lecoq, it might come as a surprise to be reminded of his program's short-lived success. Indeed, in spite of the threats it posed to students, this system achieved great popularity by the end of the nineteenth century as a method for artistic training. For those who championed *dessin de mémoire* between the 1850s and first few decades of the 1900s (like Marx and Bénédictine), these procedures liberated students from the academic routines that curbed invention and free will. This apparent contradiction presents a conundrum. Why did Lecoq pursue the systemization of visual mnemonics irrespective of the dangers associated with it? And how was it possible that this regime represented both a solution to—and a perpetuation of—the problem of pictorial uniformity?

Revisiting the programmatic nature of Lecoq's drawing pedagogy, especially with respect to his conceptions of vision, memory, and habit acquisition, offers a fitting explanation of such inconsistencies. Lecoq's practice, which rested at the intersection of observation and imaging technique, helped to sustain an emphasis on economical visual habits. To better understand the logic of Lecoq's program, this chapter contextualizes his regime (and the conception of ocular habits it recommended) alongside the status of mechanical reproduction and schematization (and the perceived relationship between the two) at this time. Once the goals of Lecoq's program are outlined, I conclude by questioning what a "mechanical" image in these debates actually looked like. A discussion of Rodin's drawing practice is interwoven throughout this discussion to showcase how Lecoq's ideas about visual habits shaped the way one of his most celebrated students approached artistic production.

Lecoq: Painter and Pedagogue

¹⁴³ Ibid., 146.

After having trained at the École des beaux-arts under the supervision of Pierre Peyron (1744-1814) and Guillaume Guillon Lethière (1760-1832), men known for neoclassicism, Lecoq spent a number of years as a practicing artist. In fact, between 1831 and 1844, he followed in his teachers' footsteps by exhibiting several history paintings that featured religious subject matter at the annual salons, including *Sainte Geneviève rendant la vue à sa mère*, *Sainte Madeleine*, and *Christ aux Jardins des Olive*.¹⁴⁴ With the exception of an oil painting and a drawing, however, none of his artworks are known to survive (few are held in public collections). The accessible works are a self-portrait acquired by the Louvre in 1928 from the collection of Raymond Régamey, and a drawing of a woman acquired by the Louvre from the Musée du Luxembourg [Figures 1-2]. At first glance, these two objects appear quite dissimilar in terms of subject matter and style. Whereas Lecoq executed the self-portrait bust in three-quarter profile in oil paint, he drew the woman in pencil and brown ink on gray paper, using a stump to smudge white charcoal across the figure's hair and face. Both represent his great attention toward human figure study; in each work, he focused on facial features at the expense of any setting or background. During his career as a salon painter, Lecoq acquired a reputation as a mediocre artist.¹⁴⁵ By 1844, he abandoned painting and instead, focused more seriously on teaching, a form of employment he first took up in 1841 at the École spéciale de dessin et de mathématiques (Petite école), the Parisian technical institute *par excellence* with a long history as such.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Evidence of his works are cited in many sources including Thielemans, "The Afterlife of Images," 8; *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure des artistes vivants exposés au musée royal des arts, le 4 Novembre 1827* (Paris, Mme. Ve. Ballard, 1827), 243; Charles Gabet, *Dictionnaire des artistes de l'école française au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Mme Vergne, 1831), 422; and Régamey, *Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses élèves*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁵ On page 45 of "Un portrait de Lecoq de Boisbaudran par lui-même," *Bulletin des musées de France* (1929), René Huyghe explained that "Puis, brusquement, il porte sur ses oeuvres la plus désenchantée des critiques, il se juge assez impitoyablement pour renoncer à exposer et pour consacrer désormais sa vie à développer chez ses élèves une originalité qu'il n'espère plus pour lui."

When Lecoq was hired as a professor in 1841, the Petite école had altered its identity as a technical institute and became known as an unofficial preparatory school to the Grande école. One hundred years after its inauguration in 1766, this institution increasingly chose to forsake Bachelier's original mission to prioritize training in the applied arts and expanded curriculum to accommodate students pursuing the fine arts.¹⁴⁷ Drawing *après la bosse* (objects in relief) had been added to the curriculum to introduce students to the principles of drawing shadows [Figures 3-4].¹⁴⁸ In 1848, *L'Illustration: journal universel* published an article on the drawing program offered at the Petite école during its reform period. While the publication predates the institution of Lecoq's system of *dessin de mémoire* into the official curriculum upheld by the school, it includes insight into the years Lecoq initially began work there and the kinds of classrooms that existed. In "Salle d'étude pour le modelage de la figure et l'ornement, d'après les plantes vivantes," the printmaker depicts a classroom with a high ceiling and skylight that is flanked with a long desk and bench on either side of the room to accommodate students practicing on plaster fragments of human body parts suspended from the wall. In the second print, "Salle d'étude pour le dessin et le modelage, d'après la bosse," the printmaker represents a classroom with amphitheater-style seating that is centered around a few sculptures of the human body, portrait busts and anatomical models.

¹⁴⁶ After Lecoq systemized visual memory training, he also taught this drawing procedure at the lycée Saint-Louis and at the École libre d'architecture. See: Gustave Vaperau, "Lecoq de Boisbaudran (Horace)," in *Dictionnaire universel des contemporains contenant toutes les personnes notables de la France et des pays étrangers*, volume 2 (Paris: Hachette et cie, 1893), 950.

¹⁴⁷ Scholars, such as Renaud d'Enfert, have argued that the long directorship of classically-trained painter Jean-Hilaire Belloc (1831-1866) marked a moment of transformation in pedagogical method and mission. Indeed, Belloc revised the curriculum to make enrollment more advantageous to artists (as opposed to only designers) either dissatisfied with academic curriculum or who were not accepted at the Academy. See: Renaud d'Enfert, "De l'École royale gratuite de dessin à l'École nationale des arts décoratifs (1806-1877)," in *Histoire de l'École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs (1766-1941)* (Paris: Belin, 2004), 81.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 76; 81.

It was in this same spirit for reform that motivated Lecoq to design an award-winning drawing instrument called a *recteur* during his first ten years as a professor. Lecoq's *recteur* was a cross-shaped tool that helped artists gauge vertical and horizontal lines that appeared before them with accuracy so that they could reproduce the subject matter perspectively. The *recteur* received recognition at the *Société libre des Beaux-Arts*, a Parisian association founded in 1830 that was dedicated to improving the fine and applied arts. In 1847, M. Péron championed the device for resolving the problems associated with using the *porte-crayon* to gauge plumb lines.¹⁴⁹ *Porte-crayons* were metal tubes used to hold crayons; they took on an additional function in the absence of an instrument to gauge verticality and horizontality. Artists tied string from the *porte-crayon* to help visualize straight lines yet the string could not gauge accurately. M. Péron explained:

...le porte-crayon est le moins propre à cet usage, puisque par sa forme, le peu d'espace laissé entre ses deux extrémités ne présente jamais un corps régulièrement droit, et que ces mêmes extrémités commencent et se terminent en lignes courbes. Joignez à cela l'application et le jeu des viroles, et vous conviendrez que cet instrument, tel qu'il est, doit faire commettre de grandes erreurs.¹⁵⁰

Lecoq's instrument rectified this shortcoming, Péron argued, because it allowed the artist to find perpendiculars and proportional relationships among objects with exactitude.¹⁵¹

Visual Memory Training

As early as 1847, Belloc encouraged Lecoq to teach visual memory training as an

¹⁴⁹ Presumably, M. Péron refers to Louis-Alexandre Péron, an established painter and drawing professor at the Petite école between 1817-1855, who co-founded the society. See: M. Péron, "L'instrument appelé recteur," *Annales de la Société libre des beaux-arts* (20 avril 1847): 110-114.

¹⁵⁰ Péron, "L'instrument appelé recteur," 110-114.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 110-114.

extracurricular in order to test the efficacy of his method.¹⁵² Lecoq explained that: “Professor à l’École impériale de dessin....ma position semblait des plus favorable pour me livrer aux observations sur lesquelles devait s’appuyer un enseignement qu’aucun précédent ne venait guider.”¹⁵³ Lecoq then set up two trial courses which occurred outside school hours. The courses were divided according to student age. Lecoq’s methods were quickly accepted. By 1848, the Parisian *succursale* of the Légion of Honor instituted his regimen.¹⁵⁴ A year later, Belloc sanctioned the introduction of *dessin de mémoire* into official curriculum at the Petite école.¹⁵⁵

The primary goal of Lecoq’s imaging technique was to educate the eye so that students could eventually recall and reproduce fugitive, ephemeral effects encountered outside the studio, in modern life. To prepare students for this task, Lecoq designed a regime that overcame the inadequacies of looking, that is, the difficulties surrounding the selection and memorization of a vast array of visual detail available to the eye. Observation, to artists steeped in visual memory training, instantaneously transformed visible material into something new and which had meaning based on their expert draftsman skills. Unlike existing regimes, Lecoq’s drawing course deployed neither geometry nor was it about the memorization of a vast array of forms or simple schemata reduced to a grammar of moves of the hand, or the modulation of tone. Instead, he privileged abstract modes of arriving at knowledge of one’s surroundings through measurable distances between fixed points and suavity of contour. To be a competent member of this domain, he advocated observational methods which schematize visual memory so that these

¹⁵² Renaud d’Enfert, Rossella Froissart-Pezone, Ulrich Leben, and Sylvie Martin, *Histoire de l’École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs (1766-1941)* (Paris: École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs, 2004).

¹⁵³ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 24.

¹⁵⁴ Régamey, *Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses élèves*, 9.

¹⁵⁵ CAC 950147/6, Archives nationales as cited by d’Enfert, “De l’École royale gratuite de dessin,” in *Histoire de l’École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs (1766-1941)*, 76.

memories could be drawn later. These skills were obtained by habit acquisition through a graduated recitation system (which enabled the automatic regurgitation of information mastered through repetition).

In the nineteenth century, the education of the eye was a concept that exceeded the limited scope of drawing instruction.¹⁵⁶ Much like the role of atlases in scientific education, as described by Daston and Galison, Lecoq's program trained the vision and judgment of its practitioners to recognize the most salient features of a given subject (in this case, to pursue the construction of a composition free from convention). Unlike the atlases made during his lifetime which preached mechanical objectivity, Lecoq's imaging system depended upon schematization and the suppression of minute details. As will become clearer in this chapter's conclusion, schematization in the arts came to represent a form of mechanical reproduction in spite of its association with subjectivity and artistry in some scientific circles.

To foster visual education, Lecoq effectively composed a theory of drawing that paralleled certain philosophies of habit. The authority of habit over perception was well entrenched in medical, scientific, and philosophical literature at this time. Philosophers, physicians, and pedagogues alike often conceived of habit as a mechanism that intervened in the way humans sensed and perceived. For instance, in many medical dissertations dating to the

¹⁵⁶ That the eye needed to be trained to see in accordance with particular disciplinary standards was taken up in Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison's important scholarship, titled *Objectivity* (2007).¹⁵⁶ Through an analysis of the imaging techniques deployed in the production of scientific atlases between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries, their research aligns visualization strategies with shifting conceptions of objectivity; in turn, they forge a connection between certain epistemic virtues and the ways scientist's imagined their identity or role in producing knowledge, especially after the invention of photography in the nineteenth century. In scientific learning, atlases became an important resource for the education of expert or disciplinary eyes. In the second half of the nineteenth century, mechanically produced images safeguarded knowledge from, so they argued, human subjectivity, or errors imposed onto objects made directly by hand. Scientists became increasingly suspicious of individual agency over image production, arguing that it amounted to a tyranny of schema. Photography's independence from schematization (by virtue of its ability to capture visual details democratically) led to its valorization; however, it posed a pedagogical problem when it came time to train the viewer to make judgments (for instance, how could an individual learn to recognize particular diseases based on individual cases rather than general types). Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*.

nineteenth century, doctors, such as Thomas Linn and Auguste Pauly, argued that habit shaped sense perception.¹⁵⁷ Because they believed that humans are born imperfect, one goal of education was to perfect the senses. To these physicians, eyesight strengthened or degenerated based on the type of exercises enacted by the eye. They argued, for instance, that landscape draftsmen developed a habit of reproducing objects in their true proportions through a routinized method of surveying nature.¹⁵⁸

This followed a historical precedent set by other physicians, such as Paradis, whose 1816 medical thesis explains the process whereby habit strengthens eyesight:

La vision, confuse chez l'enfant qui vient de naître, se perfectionne chez lui par l'habitude: ce n'est d'abord qu'une impression physique produite sur on oeil, par les objets qui sont à sa portée: bientôt il reconnaît, à l'aide du toucher, que cette impression est due à des corps extérieurs; l'image en devient chez lui plus distincte; il apprend bientôt à la rapporter à l'endroit où l'objet existe, à distinguer les couleurs et les formes des corps, et à apprécier les distances qui les séparent.¹⁵⁹

According to early nineteenth-century French medical literature, eyesight developed through—or became codified by—habit; habit structured the way children learned to see the world and privilege details. One of the reasons that physicians stressed the importance of particular modes of seeing was because of vision's special relationship to knowledge.

Within Lecoq's published pedagogical manuals, the ability to draw (what was observed) without conscious thought (or habitually) was deemed a mark of proficiency. The goal of drawing, he explained, was “contracter une habitude telle qu’il arrive à les faire sans y penser et pour ainsi dire instinctivement.”¹⁶⁰ To describe this ambition, Lecoq drew parallels between

¹⁵⁷ Linn, *De l'habitude et ses rapports avec l'hygiène et la thérapeutique*, and Pauly, *De l'habitude dans ses rapports avec la physiologie et l'hygiène*.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Paradis, *Influence de l'habitude sur l'homme*, 13.

drawing and reading in his epistolary teaching manual, titled *Sommaire d'une méthode pour l'enseignement du dessin et de la peinture. Lettres à un jeune professeur* (1876). "Drawing," Lecoq notes, "...should in this resemble reading, where the mind must be quite unconscious of [or to busy oneself with] the complicated processes involved in the act of reading, if it is to appreciate the sense to the full [*Il doit en être pour la pratique du dessin comme pour celle de la lecture, où l'intelligence, pour être tout entière au sens de ce qu'il s'agit de lire, ne doit plus avoir à s'occuper des opérations compliquées de la lecture elle-même*]."¹⁶¹ For Lecoq, to read, one did not need to see individual details (such as letters and some words) in order to grasp the entire meaning of a sentence. Similar to reading, Lecoq understood that there are details which the eye does not need to see in order to grasp the view before him (a feature which has much in common with Ravaissin's theory of habit and vision explored in the following chapter). In other words, his graduated series of lessons aimed to inculcate in students a particular habit of seeing the whole through choice details; the student "...apprendra bientôt à choisir entre eux les plus remarquables, les plus favorable à son travail, et à faire abstraction des moins nécessaires."¹⁶² He therefore designed a program geared toward the acquisition of ocular habits, or a set of behaviors performed unconsciously and learned by repetition.

Lecoq provided the most comprehensive outline of his pedagogical program thirty years after he began teaching in this same text (1876). Written as a series of five letters addressed to a former student and fellow teacher Jean-Charles Cazin, a naturalist painter, who, on occasion, served as a model to his friends, like Rodin, Lecoq clarified his method so that drawing

¹⁶⁰ Lecoq, *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 115.

¹⁶¹ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 115 as translated in Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 117.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 114.

instructors could incorporate visual memory training into their curriculum.¹⁶³ Designed as a graduated series of lessons, each letter corresponded to a phase that increased with difficulty. These ranged from repeatedly practicing on simple shapes to drawing after prints and antique sculptures before culminating in drawing from the live, moving model in landscapes.

Lecoq's format merely modified the drawing exercises set forth by the *École des beaux-arts* since its inception.¹⁶⁴ In fact, he mapped his regime onto academic precedents which organized art education into three major steps: drawing after prints or drawings, drawing after plaster casts, and drawing after male nudes or "from life."¹⁶⁵ Rather than work directly from the model as practiced at the *Grande école*, visual mnemonics had students reproduce absent subject matter after close visual analysis. Before copying two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks (stages one and two at the *École des beaux-arts*), lessons began by copying a series of static shapes. Once students mastered the reproduction of inert subjects ranging from simple shapes and existing artworks to the classically-posed figure, advanced lessons culminated in the reproduction of moving figures and phenomena found outside the studio.

When Lecoq designed *la mémoire pittoresque*, recitation was an important model for his program. During this period, many instructors like Lecoq, regarded recitation as foundational to education and a person's ability to perform work. In primary schools, recitation was a practice in which students rehearsed grammar rules (such as conjugations of verbs), mathematical formulas, historical facts, and assigned literature by memory at the instructor's request. It was a test of

¹⁶³ Around this time, Cazin had solicited Lecoq's advice and clarity for his method of drawing instruction as he attempted to introduce visual mnemonics into his drawing program at the *École de dessin* in Tours.

¹⁶⁴ However, many scholars describe his regime as reform-minded. See: Susan Sidlauskas, "Body into Space: Lecoq de Boisbaudran and the Rhetoric of Embodiment," in *Body, Place and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting*, 6-19 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁶⁵ Bonnet, *L'Enseignement des arts au XIX siècle*, and Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*.

discipline and will (rather than an individual's ability to critically appraise the material recited) driven, in part, by anxiety associated with reciting information in front of peers. Pedagogical justifications for recitation usually centered on the fact that memorization of simple rules and formulas was foundational for more difficult forms of learning and reasoning needed for reading comprehension. Moreover, recitation was central to literary, moral and aesthetic education because it trained students on models deemed worthy of imitation.

Often described by Lecoq as *la récitation dessinée*, his regime challenged students to “rehearse” visual reproduction by memory.¹⁶⁶ “Comme l’écuyer du collège doit, pour apprendre sa leçon, la répéter un certain nombre de fois à haute voix ou mentalement,” Lecoq explained, “de même l’élève dessinateur devra retracer son modèle par la main ou par la pensée, le nombre de fois nécessaire pour pouvoir le reproduire de mémoire lorsqu’il lui sera retiré.”¹⁶⁷ Assessment via recitation demanded that students rehearse memorized information, such as poems, out loud in front of the class. Similar to the recitation of poems, Lecoq’s regime required students memorize visual features that—in its elementary stages—could subsequently be auto-corrected by referring back to the original subject matter.

While recitation was a mainstay of public education in France at the time, it also was a practice increasingly viewed with great suspicion by teachers. In Ferdinand Buisson’s *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d’instruction primaire* (1887), he published an entry on the role of “memory” in learning in which the author cautioned that:

Today, everyone says that one of the principal defects of the ‘old pedagogy’ was to address only memory and to exclude judgment [*de laisser le jugement en souffrance*]—[and] that the superiority of the ‘new pedagogy’ consists essentially in cultivating the mind before mnemonic knowledge [*consiste essentiellement à*

¹⁶⁶ Thielemans, “The Afterlife of Images,” 125.

¹⁶⁷ Lecoq, *L’éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 22.

faire passer la culture de l'esprit avant le savoir mnémonique].¹⁶⁸

A satirical print published by J.J. Grandville (1803-1847) in *Les métamorphoses du jour* (first published in 1828-9 and republished over the course of the 1850s and 60s) addresses some of the criticisms directed at recitation, which he depicted as the mindless rehearsal of memorized information [Figure 5]. By recourse to animal analogies, Grandville caricatures the French school system by representing a teacher as a donkey, an animal typically employed for farming and known for their obstinacy and mocked as stupid. The teacher presides over a class of five parrots. One parrot stands before the instructor reciting information that the teacher himself has not mastered (as indicated by the depiction of the teacher's face plunged into a book, presumably to verify the student's memory work). Here, the stakes of memory training are twofold. First, he implies that recitation does not require comprehension (without which the students exist as mere parrots, reciting words that carry no meaning to them). Second, this training jeopardizes individuality, rendering students all the same. While Grandville's print poked fun at the recitation of literature, the fears associated with mindless, mechanistic repetition—and the effect this had on art—were not assumed by Lecoq.

Recitation fostered Lecoq's practice by training the mind to economize or overlook certain details so that it can focus on the analysis and recall of more indiscernible visual phenomena (like moving clouds and changing light effects). This point clearly emerged again in Buisson's *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire* (1887), which also included an entry on "recitation."¹⁶⁹ Recitation, the account argued, cultivated intellectual working procedures. Such "habits of the mind," Buisson's entry clarified, facilitated an individual's

¹⁶⁸ F. Buisson, "Mémoire," in *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1887), 1892.

¹⁶⁹ Buisson, "Récitation," 2546.

ability to work by economizing the mental mechanisms required to accomplish certain practices. The record noted: “Cette mémorisation normale [recitation] leur abrégera, leur facilitera le travail, et ce travail lui-même cessera, autant que faire se peut, d’être mécanique.”¹⁷⁰ While the author did not cite Lecoq’s program, it is possible to draw meaningful connections to the aims of his procedures. Lecoq’s system provided students with a set of tools to translate observable phenomenon into something that can be easily recalled later on. To do so, he taught a graduated system that would condense or abbreviate what the mind needed to remember.

Particularly, stage one (or the *premier degré*) began with the most rudimentary exercises, such as copying a simple line, a circle inside a square, a square, and a curved line. Lecoq’s most elementary lesson was to faithfully reproduce a vertical line labeled AB with respect to its original size.¹⁷¹ Rather than draw a line freehand (or without the aid of instruments), Lecoq recommended that students first mark point A. ““Cherchez donc la position du point B, en appréciant la distance qui le sépare du point A, et cela avec le seul jugement de votre oeil; car toute mesure prise à l’aide d’un instrument supprimerait précisément l’exercice qui, seul, peut former la justesse du coup d’oeil.””¹⁷² Once the student noted the end points of the mark, they could accurately copy the line with respect to its original length. This seemingly simple task became the foundation upon which Lecoq’s program was based, that is, to train the eye to see the most salient points.

When Lecoq designed this initial exercise, he had issues of habit acquisition in mind. Particularly, he wanted to cultivate visual habits that supported the reproduction of subjects

¹⁷⁰ Buisson, “Récitation,” 2547.

¹⁷¹ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 109.

¹⁷² Ibid., 109-110.

encountered in modern life. Much like the habits associated with reading—in which one need not consciously see each letter to comprehend the entire word—, Lecoq trained students to gauge proportions between major points (rather than to observe each component of the subject matter or to employ a mathematical formula).¹⁷³ For Lecoq, this skillset allowed individuals to quickly measure. In his drawing manuals, he referred to this as a habit of judgment, a “certain rectitude du coup d’oeil, par le jugement des distances:”

L’habitude ainsi acquise de se rendre compte des grandeurs au moyen d’une unité de mesure empruntée aux mesures usuelles, et gravée dans la mémoire, donnerait à l’oeil une méthode de jugement et une grande précision dans l’appréciation des proportions et des rapports des objets extérieurs; ce premier apprentissage deviendrait d’une grande utilité dans les différentes professions et industries auxquelles les enfants sont destinés.¹⁷⁴

The ability to gauge proportions by eye was further cultivated by practicing on more complex shapes, such as a square and a circle in a square according to the same principle of locating major points of the composition before working on details. In addition to training draftsmen to produce vertical, horizontal and parallel lines, this exercise, Lecoq argued, taught the students to reproduce points in relationship to each other to maintain the correct proportions.

“Gauging” has been an important reference point in art’s theorization. In certain instances, methods of estimation by eye have been interpreted as a certain kind of visual education (not unlike Daston and Galison’s scholarship on the “expert eye”).¹⁷⁵ Michael Baxandall, for instance, has read strategies of gauging as testimony to the existence of a “period eye” in his 1988 *Painting and Experience: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 108; Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 63.

¹⁷⁴ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 71; Lecoq, *Sommaire d’une méthode pour l’enseignement du dessin et de la peinture*, 17; Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 77.

¹⁷⁵ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*.

The “period eye” refers to the construction of a culturally contingent “cognitive style” or way of viewing. Viewership, Baxandall contends, depended upon how individuals sought visual information in their daily lives, such as, in the case of the *Quattrocento*, the procedures of gauging a barrel’s volume. Expectations of certain “stock patterns” thus informed how artists and audiences responded to art.

A comparison between Lecoq’s method of judging proportion and Baxandall’s theorization of a “period eye” sheds lights on the aims of Lecoq’s project. In the case of visual memory training, gauging proportions had nothing to do with mathematics taught in schools; rather, it accommodated perception in a rapidly modernizing society. For Lecoq, the mind needed to be populated with simple lines and shapes and artistic precedents before learning to gauge proportions encountered in real life. The knowledge of an internal measuring system and previous artworks, Lecoq claimed, eased the effort required to memorize subject matter found outside the studio (the final stage of his program), and to reproduce subject matter based on what had been observed. Discerning proportions habitually allowed the student to reproduce objects with respect to their logical size and relationship or distance between other objects featured in the composition.

Once students mastered the reproduction of inert subjects ranging from simple shapes by gauging proportions and distance (and the gauging that entailed), they then pursued the *deuxième degré* or second phase, the representation of existing two-dimensional artworks to the study of reliefs. In this phase, students represented more difficult models, such as drawing after two-dimensional representations of shaded heads and extremities, as well as drawing from memory the nose in profile before pursuing the memorization of heads. To depict this subject matter,

¹⁷⁶ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Lecoq recommended, students should proceed “toujours, pour le jugement des grandeurs ou des teintes, des détails ou de l’ensemble, par comparaisons, par rapports, par unité de mesure.”¹⁷⁷

Buisson’s pedagogical dictionary reinforced the necessity of mastering this material:

il est notoire, d’abord, que toutes les opérations mentales, sans exception, supposent plus ou moins le pouvoir de retenir les impressions et les idées, que non seulement le raisonnement compliqué, mais la plus simple comparaison, mais l’intuition même, en apparence instantanée, seraient impossibles sans la mémoire.¹⁷⁸

Like the second stage, the *troisième degré* required that the student continue to practice on preexisting artistic models. These included busts *d’après la bosse* and details of ornament.¹⁷⁹

It was at this level that Lecoq also introduced drawing from memory by beginning with subject matter, such as a line drawing of a nose in profile. To support *dessin de mémoire*, Lecoq encouraged students to recycle some of the techniques deployed ordinarily to depict subject matter through observation. For instance, he suggested that students map “les lignes horizontales et verticales, tirées idéalement sur le modèle, et donnant par leurs intersections avec les formes du dessin des points de repère précieux pour le souvenir.”¹⁸⁰ He likewise advised students to study forms by comparing proportions.

Building upon these tasks, the *quatrième degré* progressed to the study of antique and old masters at museums both from direct observation and from memory after having closely observed a select artwork, a task that preoccupied Rodin during part of his schooling [Figure 6]. As is evident by his *Copy after an antique scene*, Rodin’s early training included working after classical models. To the left, this drawing features a nude, male musician playing an aulos (a

¹⁷⁷ Lecoq, *Sommaire d’une méthode pour l’enseignement du dessin et de la peinture*, 23.

¹⁷⁸ Buisson, “Mémoire,” 1893.

¹⁷⁹ Lecoq, *Sommaire d’une méthode pour l’enseignement du dessin et de la peinture*, 25-6.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

wind-instrument) leading a procession of two centrally-placed figures walking behind him; these figures wear ancient-inspired togas and carry a kantharos (a drinking cup).

This stage included drawing from life models, anatomy lessons, perspective, painting and composition. At this phase, students also spent more time drawing from memory artworks they previously had observed in museums and at libraries. For instance, in the 1862 edition of *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque*, Lecoq included two plates of memory drawings after artists such as Alphonse Legros, a Salon painter closely affiliated with Rodin and who became the Slade Professor of Fine Art at University College London (1876). When Legros enrolled as a student in Lecoq's studio, he first drew from memory after a painting of the Dutch humanist Erasmus by Holbein [Figure 7].

Legros' portrait, like the one by Holbein, features Erasmus seated in profile at his writing desk, concentrating on the work before him. While it is nearly identical in subject matter and composition, Legros translated the oil on panel into a drawing on paper which was then printed in a published text (the original size of the drawing is unknown). Lecoq's text quotes Legros explaining how he pursued a memory drawing in the following manner:

Un jour qu'il m'avait envoyé dessiner le portrait d'Erasme mon carton était si grand et embarrassant que je ne réussis pas à le faire tenir debout et renonçai à mon intention. Tout de même je ne m'agitai pas, et résolu d'apprendre le sujet par coeur et d'essayer malgré tout de le faire à l'École. / Je calculai les distances exactes entre les différents points, je fixai les traits les plus caractéristiques dans ma mémoire puis les traits secondaires, assez faciles une fois les plus importants bien établis. / Et de cette façon j'appris à disséquer et reconstruire ce chef-d'oeuvre.¹⁸¹

Legros' description shows how the technique encouraged students to fixate on particular points as anchors upon which to remember and reproduce the rest of the image. Drawing, in this case, was not based on modulation of tone, suavity of contour, or geometry (the primary modes of

¹⁸¹ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 167-8.

drawing instruction at the time); rather, it was based on approximate distances between fixed points that “anchor” the rest.

After students mastered two-dimensional subjects, they pursued drawing from memory after an antique sculpture [Figure 8]. Legros, for example, selected to copy Myron’s *Discobolus* (*Discus thrower*) (c. 450 BCE), a Roman copy—popularly reproduced—of an ancient Greek bronze.¹⁸² This sculpture—that represents a young, idealized discus thrower moments before he releases the discus—reflected several aims of Lecoq’s program. Rather than depict a static figure, such as one standing in contrapposto (a pose taken to signal movement), Lecoq encouraged students to draw figures in movement from memory. Though Legros, by depicting an antique statue did not follow all of Lecoq’s advice, his rendering of the figure’s body, contorted in preparation of the discus toss, conveys a dynamism that Lecoq deemed important; in fact, the figure’s body is twisted with his left side hunched over as his face peers back at his right arm which extends upward. This was preparation for the final stage of Lecoq’s program: depicting entire figures in motion in landscapes through recollection. The idea being that once students populated their minds with representations of movement, they can more readily observe and memorize movement in nature.

While Lecoq’s emphasis on working outside the studio made it popular in certain artistic circles (notably within drawing pedagogy by Viollet-le-Duc, and among artists including Degas, James McNeill Whistler, and Manet), it was in the intermediary stages that his exercises geared toward *dessin de mémoire* acquired some level of official success. The Académie des Beaux-Arts and the Société d’encouragement pour l’industrie nationale legitimized his program in 1851 and

¹⁸² It is unclear from which collection Legros could have seen this iteration. Because the plate was published in 1862 (a year before Legros moved to England), it is likely that he observed the statue in France, yet no copy exists at the Louvre today. It is possible that during the nineteenth century there existed a copy in the Atelier de moulage du Louvre.

1856, respectively, as a tool for both artistic and industrial design. The feedback from the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie nationale regarding Lecoq's program, albeit scarce, emphasized "accuracy" of visual memory training vis-à-vis the original subject. For example, the Académie, which assessed pedagogical techniques over the course of the nineteenth century, organized a committee composed of well-known painters MM. Couder, Horace Vernet and Robert Fleury to critically appraise Lecoq's method.¹⁸³ The committee imposed two tests on student participants. Using an object that had never been publicly exhibited, the committee invited the first student to study a statue of Poussin by Dumont from a private collection for a limited period of time before drawing it by "heart." Following this, another student drew Dantan's bust of Carle Vernet from memory after careful observation.¹⁸⁴ The painters who examined the results commended Lecoq's system for its ability to systematically and accurately train visual memory with respect to the subject.

After securing these positive results from the Academy, Lecoq sought recognition for his method within the applied arts at the Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie nationale. The Society of Encouragement of Industry was an organization founded in 1801 to improve industrial innovation in France. The association historically valorized mechanics, chemistry, agriculture, economics and commerce. Here, Lecoq won the *médaille d'argent* for his work.¹⁸⁵

Accompanying the *quatrième degré* were introductions to color (a component excluded from the educational program at the École des beaux-arts). The scope of color lessons derived directly from French chemist Michel-Eugène Chevreul's (1786-1889) famous text, *De la Loi du*

¹⁸³ Régamey, *Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses élèves*, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 46.

¹⁸⁵ Régamey, *Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses élèves*, 9.

contraste simultané des couleurs (1839).¹⁸⁶ When Chevreul was appointed as director of the dyeworks of the national tapestry workshop Manufacture royale des Gobelins from 1824-1885, he determined that the vibrancy of the colors used to decorate tapestries was dependent upon optical (rather than chemical) features. As a result, he developed a theory on simultaneous contrast of color, a law which claimed that the ways humans see and differentiate between hues and tones depended upon the juxtaposition of two or more colors. In art historian Laura Anne Kalba's recent scholarship on Chevreul, she summarizes this phenomena in the following manner: "Dark colors, blues and violets in particular, he observed, seemed to cast a yellowish shadow onto the black surfaces in the tapestries, making them appear paler than they actually were."¹⁸⁷ In other words, the juxtaposition of colors could either weaken or heighten their intensity. By 1855, Chevreul presented his findings into a chromatic diagram (or color wheel) that organized colors into complementary relationships. His theory of color perception earned him great attention among artists, educators and designers (notably some Impressionists who juxtaposed colors—rather than blended them—to enhance their brilliancy). Chevreul's fame likewise became a significant marketing tool for Lecoq. Over course of the 1860s and 70s, Chevreul was among the many celebrities who championed Lecoq's system.¹⁸⁸ In turn, Lecoq integrated Chevreul's law into his pedagogical program.

To teach the rudiments of color, Lecoq deployed a series of graduated exercises that

¹⁸⁶ Michel-Eugène Chevreul, *De la Lois du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des objets colorés*, *Atlas* (Paris: Pitois-Levrault et cie, 1839).

¹⁸⁷ Laura Anne Kalba, "Chapter One: Michel-Eugène Chevreul, Color, and the Dangers of Excessive Variety," in *Color in the Age of Impressionism: Color, Technology and Art*, 15-40 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2017), 19.

¹⁸⁸ Lecoq, Appendix III, in *The Training of Art*, 52; Henri Delaborde, "L'Enseignement du dessin en 1871," *La Revue des deux mondes* (1871), 85; Félix Régamey, *L'enseignement de dessin aux États-Unis* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1881), 16.

asked students to reproduce juxtaposing tints in oil paint.¹⁸⁹ As Lecoq explained:

Le premier de ces modèles offrait la plus simple combinaison possible: deux teintes plates placées l'une à côté de l'autre comme deux fiches de couleurs différentes. / Ces deux teintes étaient peintes sur un papier préparé avec une teinte grisâtre pour leur servir de fond. / Des papiers également recouverts de cette teinte étaient distribués aux élèves, afin que leurs premières reproductions pussent s'exécuter dans des conditions d'opposition et de contrastes identiques à celles de leurs modèles.¹⁹⁰

Much like repetitive drawing lessons, training students to recognize hues demanded reproduction until they achieved precision. Lessons first began with complementary tints which were easily distinguished by virtue of their clear contrasts. Following this, he used three tints with less discernable chromatic relationships. When Lecoq introduced color theory into his curriculum, it was a radical gesture that undermined the Academy's emphasis on line rather than color.

When Lecoq systematized visual memory training, he increasingly feared that French art was in a period of decline. Beginning in the 1840s and 50s, a growing interest in stylistic alternatives to the perceived theatricality and monotony of neo-classicism threatened academicism. Of all objections leveled against the Academy in the second half of the nineteenth century, the "routines" it propagated became a conceptual rallying point around which diverse criticisms were launched for decades.¹⁹¹ Routine, in some instances, referred to the Academy's refusal to introduce studios that offered technical training, particularly in painting (which was the

¹⁸⁹ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 24-5.

¹⁹⁰ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 39.

¹⁹¹ As early as 1848, the art critic Gustave Planche (1808-1857) drafted an article on the future of French artists and alerted his readers of routine's many dangers: "Il faut sans doute combattre la routine et la prévenir par tous les moyens imaginables." See: Gustave Planche, "De l'éducation et de l'avenir des artistes en France," *La Revue des deux mondes* (1848), 473-4. By the time Viollet-le-Duc spearheaded a campaign to reform the Academy in 1863, "routine" became the most common critique directed at the institution. For Viollet-le-Duc's involvement in the reform of 1863, see: Vitet and Viollet-le-Duc, *À propos de l'enseignement des arts du dessin* and Bressani, *Architectural and the Historical Imagination*. In the years leading up to Viollet-le-Duc's project, an anonymous critic, publishing under "A. de L.," accused the official art establishments of being "endormies dans la routine." See: A. de L., "Sommaire d'une méthode de l'Enseignement du dessin et de la peinture, par M. Lecoq de Boisbaudran," *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité: supplément à la Gazette des beaux-arts* (16 Décembre 1876): 40.

major impetus for reforms in 1863); it likewise represented the pressures surrounding the *concours*, which rewarded students whose work narrowly reflected academic precedents.

Lecoq's most comprehensive reflection on the state of French artistic production and education appeared nearly twenty years after he systematized visual memory training, in a text titled "A Survey of Art Teaching" (first written in 1872, and published in 1879).¹⁹² This essay summarizes the pedagogical methods deployed by Parisian municipal schools and the École des beaux-arts with the explicit purpose of critically appraising existing educational systems in terms of their propensity to encourage stylistic uniformity and monotony, and what often became described as "routine." In the era of industrial mechanization, the debates about "routine" had larger purchase; "routine," passive repetition (rather than active invention) became an expression of the anxiety attached to industrialization and the uniformity of their yield. To exacerbate these fears, the increasing number of world's fairs put France into direct competition with—and showcased the advancement of—other nations. This, coupled with the rise of capitalism and economic competition after the fall of a class system one hundred years earlier, led artistic circles and the opponents of industrialization alike, to become fearful of monotony at the expense of novelty and individuality.

The impetus to review existing pedagogical methods in fact derived from Lecoq's dissatisfaction with the 1867 and 1878 Universal Exhibitions. After attending the Universal Exhibition of 1867's comparative drawing pedagogy installation (which featured drawing exercises completed by students), Lecoq noted that: "Malheureusement, leurs résultats les plus avancés, notamment ceux de l'école de Bavière, présentaient, à de rares exceptions près, une telle monotonie, que les nombreux dessins exposés semblaient procéder tous de la même

¹⁹² Lecoq, *Un Coup d'oeil à l'enseignement aux Beaux-Arts*.

conception et de la même main.”¹⁹³ When describing examples of drawings from French schools ten years later, he similarly lamented: “Ce qui frappe tout d’abord lorsque l’on visite à l’Exposition de 1878 les travaux des écoles françaises de dessin, c’est la monotonie de ces résultats,” he continued, “il est impossible d’y trouver aucune différence appreciable quant à la manière de faire et de sentir. Partout le même aspect, le même procédé d’exécution uniforme, la même et complète absence d’initiative personnelle, d’ingénuité, d’invention indépendante.”¹⁹⁴ Lecoq’s account does not explicitly reference what artists he looked at, nor what style and visual effects he deemed monotonous. As a solution to the problem of monotony, Lecoq rethought the relationship between student and teacher, and ultimately advised that “l’enseignement...il ne faut pas confondre avec sa réglementation.”¹⁹⁵ His point was to condemn a lack of individuality among artists’ working methods.

From Lecoq’s perspective, modern pedagogy failed at quality control. “[L]’éducation artistique moderne,” he wrote, “étouffe souvent les germes naturels, comprime les élans vrais et spontanés et passe un même niveau sur toutes les intelligences.”¹⁹⁶ Like many of his reform-minded colleagues, Lecoq argued that “defective technical processes” encouraged “monotony,” “effacement précoce de l’individualité,” and “au nivellement, à la fusion, à la banalité des talents.”¹⁹⁷ Lecoq, for instance, reproached some accepted academic visualization strategies, such as a triangular composition, by claiming that such techniques paralyzed “l’initiative” and

¹⁹³ Lecoq, *L’Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 66.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 96.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 66.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 96.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 96.

led students to “uniformiser toutes les conceptions.”¹⁹⁸ Though Lecoq did not offer a visual example to justify this reproach, it is a structure closely associated with history paintings produced by a range of artists from the Renaissance to modernity; in the nineteenth century, this scheme appeared in art by diverse artists known for grand history paintings like Jacques-Louis David’s (1748-1825) *Oath of the Horatii* (1784) and Théodore Géricault’s (1791-1824) *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819). *The Oath of the Horatii* is a large-scale oil painting based on an ancient story from 669 B.C.E. wherein the Romans settled a dispute with the city of Alba by staging a fight between the Horatii and the Curiatii brothers (representatives from either city). When David imagined the Horatii brothers’ pledge to their father fight for Rome prior to combat, he arranged the male figures according to a triangular compositional structure. The father stands before his three sons holding their swords upward; the sons raise their arms straight toward their father, to salute the swords, creating a triangle. When Géricault depicted a raft carrying seamen following the shipwreck of the Medusa in oil in 1818-19, he also used a similar trope: a pyramidal compositional structure. In this painting, Géricault arranged the composition around two neighboring pyramids formed by a mast and bodies strewn across the raft, and by a hopeful figure signaling land. Lecoq recommended that advanced students work from nature, in lieu of the triangular and pyramidal schemes. According to this logic, Lecoq critiqued the pyramidal structure because it was artificially contrived and therefore, was not a product of direct observation of modern life. Indeed, it was by teaching direct observation that Lecoq aimed to refute the “excessive centralisation” often associated with the Academy.¹⁹⁹

At the pinnacle of visual memory training sat the reproduction of scenes from modern

¹⁹⁸ Lecoq, *L’Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 144.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 73.

life, such as figures in landscapes or walking the streets of Paris. “Après avoir, par des exercices progressifs, rendu la mémoire apte à conserver l’image des formes fixes, telles que nous les présentent les dessins, la ronde bosse ou celles des formes plus changeantes des modèles vivants,” Lecoq explained, “il est temps de diriger définitivement cette faculté, fortifiée et assouplie vers sa véritable application artistique, qui est de retenir les effets fugitifs, les mouvements rapides et spontanés.”²⁰⁰ For Lecoq, the earliest stages of his program fostered the reproduction of scenes from modern life (whether urban, suburban, interiors or landscapes); by populating the mind with the ability to gauge proportions, students then, according to his logic, could quickly recognize the most salient points to convincingly represent a given subject matter.

Drawing from (Second) Nature

Lecoq’s method culminated in the recall of elusive visual effects directly from nature, such as human and animal locomotion and weather. Lecoq argued that restricting artists to the studio—which was typically lit by a northern window—caused a “monotony” of lighting effects present in paintings. Leaving the studio had several benefits: “Elle pourrait parvenir ainsi à rompre le cercle sans issue dans lequel l’art décoratif moderne tourne sans cesse et se trouve enfermé.”²⁰¹ He specifically suggested that the student “aurait, ensuite, à étudier également par l’observation une chèvre vivante. Puis, muni de ces deux souvenirs, seul avec ses réflexions, sa manière de sentir et d’exprimer, il exécuterait une composition nécessairement originale, parce qu’elle émanerait réellement de lui.”²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Lecoq, *L’Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 134.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 101.

²⁰² Ibid., 143.

In a posthumously published edition of *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque et la formation de l'artiste*, the editor and translator, L.D. Luard, included reproductions of memory drawings after nature by Frédéric Régamey (1849-1925), Lhermitte, and Cazin—all artists that the editor believed met such challenges.²⁰³ For instance, Luard included Frédéric's *Avenue de l'Observatoire*, a depiction of a Parisian boulevard that lines the periphery of the Jardin des Grands Explorateurs (marking the south entrance of the Jardin du Luxembourg) and runs south until the north entrance of the Observatoire de Paris. Régamey was a French artist who, alongside his two older brothers Félix and Guillaume, studied Lecoq's drawing techniques at the Petite école [Figure 9]. In this realistic depiction of a road from memory made with pencil on paper, he represented a winter street scene with coachmen navigating horses in multiple directions, others unearthing a carriage tire that appears firmly embedded in snow. On either side of the street is a row of trees that recede in space toward the observatory using atmospheric perspective. The centrally-placed, west-facing carriage is pointed in the wrong direction, blocking the path of an approaching horse led by a man on foot. Régamey faced multiple challenges when he depicted a scene that evolved before his eyes, from an unusual vantage no less. Using dark and light tones, he highlighted the chaos which befell Paris in the aftermath of snowfall through the asymmetrical, monochromatic composition. He further destabilized the sense of order characteristic of the new Parisian boulevards by producing an image that is slightly off center.

Among the other subjects pursued by senior students included choir practice, workers, medical exams, and crowded streets [Figures 10-12]. G. Bellenger's *Débardeurs sur la Seine*, for instance, was a drawing executed from memory like Régamey's street scene, that featured

²⁰³ Lecoq, *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque et la formation de l'artiste*, plate XIV. This plate does not appear in all editions of Lecoq's text.

working class laborers transporting boxes on top of their heads from boats anchored to the river bank. Cazin's *Un examen à l'École de Médecine* and Lhermitte's *Une maîtrise* similarly pursued genre scenes from recollections of modern life. Whereas Cazin represents a medical classroom populated by students and teachers huddled around desks, Lhermitte's image foregrounds a church choir clustered together behind stands holding their sheet music as they perform. These unfolding scenes, recalled from life, defied some of the artificial, highly posed compositional structures used in grand history paintings, such as adhering to the rules of one-point perspective or the use of a pyramidal configuration to organize figures in space. Lecoq instead catered to the growing interest in art that was rooted in first hand visual experience.

Without visual mnemonics, Lecoq argued, artists faced an insurmountable obstacle to render movements perceived outside the studio. He noted that "il est à peu près impossible de reproduire les animaux, les nuages, les eaux, les mouvements rapides, les expressions, la couleur et les effets fugitifs."²⁰⁴ Later in the text, he continued: "[S]ur les eaux, dans le ciel, dans les bois, dans les vapeurs lointaines, sur mille creatures animées [...] Ces splendides spectacles de la couleur, la nature les prodigue à tous, mais l'artiste qui se souvient peut seul en saisir et en fixer les beautés fugitives."²⁰⁵ Memorizing such subject matter posed a mnemonic problem for Lecoq's students, however. How could an artist "recite" with exactitude the multitude of visual details available in nature? The challenge was not only limited to the vast amount of detail, but also included variability in an environment subject to constant change, such as due to light and weather effects. Lecoq, in essence, systematized visual memory training so that artists could see and reproduce elements that were challenging to observe by virtue of their ephemerality.

²⁰⁴ Lecoq, *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 23.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 42.

Depicting subject matter from outside the studio posed a representational challenge because the eye/hand struggle to see/reproduce instantaneously as could instruments like the camera. Lecoq's claim to develop a regimen that trained the eye to see quickly—an education of the eye that resembled saccadic vision—allowed students to grasp the momentary.

Rethinking Lecoq's Visual Habits: Abridged Memory and the Economy of Thought

When Lecoq asked students to represent natural environments from memory, he understood it to be the most challenging assignment in his program. As Lecoq wrote, “Qui peut rassembler ces innombrables matériaux que la nature a partout disséminés et surtout les replacer sous le jour, sous l’aspect où ils ont impressionné l’artiste, si ce n’est la mémoire?”²⁰⁶ Indeed, an artist's immersion into a fast-paced arena comprised of an “infinite variety” of visual effects caused by rapidly changing weather, lighting effects, and movement, necessitated great skill, such as rapid observation and decision making. But Lecoq, well aware of the imposition these chance elements puts on the observer/artist, conceived of *la recitation dessinée* to equip artists make sense of infinite visual details in a short amount of time, and to allow artists to economize visual and manual processes. That the mind, when confronted by a huge array of variables, needed to process or translate the information into a useful, digestible form was clear. When Lecoq translated the practice of verbal recitation into a drawing system, the infinite availability of visual details emerged as a difficulty. He worried that the abundance of (and ever-changing nature of) observable visual information could cultivate incoherent minds. He reasoned that: “lorsque la mémoire est livrée à un entier abandon qu’elle court risque, si elle ne périt pas, de s’emplir d’éléments incohérents et dangereux, tandis qu’au contraire, si l’on en prend la direction

²⁰⁶ Lecoq, *L’éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 33.

scientifique, il y a chance et espoir de la guider, de l'instruire, et aussi de la préserver.”²⁰⁷ The mind's task, within Lecoq's program, was therefore to determine which elements were necessary for visual recall and thus, representation.

To prepare the eye and mind to make sense of limitless visual detail, he conceived of a drawing system dependent on schematization. Schematization refers to the process of modeling an idea according to an interpretative framework or outline. Within the history of schematization, the concept took on a particular significance in the nineteenth century. For the notable philosopher Kant, for instance, schema mediated between the domain of concepts (or the mind) and the sensible.²⁰⁸ “Schematism,” from his perspective, therefore described the ways that sensory information could acquire meaning through theoretical deduction via schema. Put another way, he understood judgment, as opposed to direct observation, to adopt the form of schemata. For Lecoq, the capacity to work from memory to capture fugitive, ephemeral effects similarly depended upon a way of schematizing what was observed. In fact, his system claimed to educate the eye to see in particular ways such that a student can instantaneously turn visual phenomenon into something new that had meaning based on their expert draftsman skills. Without a schema, the visible could not take on a comprehensible meaning within his system.

Lecoq dedicated the majority of his program to line drawing because of its economical, schematic mode of representation. In “Note D” to his drawing manual titled *Sommaire d'une méthode pour l'enseignement du dessin et de la peinture*, Lecoq referred to *le trait* or line as “la fiction de génie.”²⁰⁹ What prompted this assertion was the suggestion that because lines do not

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 31.

²⁰⁸ Immanuel Kant, “Schematism of Pure Concepts of the Understanding,” in *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 [originally published in 1781/1781]).

²⁰⁹ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque*, 160.

exist in nature, it is preferable to train students to express perceptible forms, that is, lights and shadows.²¹⁰ Lecoq contended that

Mais o scrupuleux observateurs de la nature! elle n’a tracé, non plus, aucune grande ligne dans le ciel ni sur la terre. Elle n’a marqué aucun méridien, aucune écliptique, point de tropiques ni d’équateur, et pourtant de quel secours ces lignes supposées n’ont-elles point été pour l’étude des positions, des grandeurs, des mouvements des corps célestes!²¹¹

Although line drawing set up a conventional, schematic relationship between representation and human visual experience, it nonetheless was an important tool, a “fiction of genius” that mediated between the sensible and comprehensible.

Schema, in the case of Lecoq’s program, served as mnemonic devices (instruments that fostered the memorization and recitation of a vast array of historical facts). The historian Matt Matsuda has explored the popularity of text-based mnemonic devices in late-nineteenth-century France in his chapter “Words: The Grammar of History” (1996).²¹² This chapter, published as part of his book-length study *The Memory of the Modern*, argues that mnemonic guides increasingly valorized the written word over images (such as the popular “memory palaces,” which used the recollection of space or spatial memory as a “site” to store and retrieve information). Between the fall of the Commune and the start of World War I, conceptions of memory underwent severe renegotiation in some interconnected spheres, be they pedagogical, nationalistic public art projects to encourage collective memories, and in cutting-edge neuroscience. Matsuda’s scholarship highlights some of these transformations to showcase how various institutions and social practices supported various understandings of individual and

²¹⁰ Ibid., 160.

²¹¹ Ibid., 160.

²¹² Matt K. Matsuda, “Words: The Grammar of History,” in *The Memory of the Modern*, 61-77 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

collective memories and memory-making in modernity.

About the same time Lecoq began to systematize visual memory into a set of observational and drawing exercises, the prevailing memorization technique taught in public schools operated as a coded, notational sign system that attached numbers to syllables. Particularly, published manuals instructed students to associate sounds and letters with a designated value. Matsuda explains:

Depending on the method, letters, vowels, or clusters of consonants would be assigned some number or value: 1=b, p; 3=f, ph, v; 4=g, j, ch; and so forth. A piece of information to be recalled, such as the death of Henri IV would be rendered first with a statement, 'Mort qui fait à l'histoire une suprême époque.' With the method, 'suprMe ePoQue' configures to MPQ, in which M=6, P=1, Q=0, thus 1610.²¹³

The enunciated word, in this kind of system, was a device that carried the memory for the individual capable of decoding it. Matsuda notes that this practice, initially developed by the music teacher Aimé Paris in the 1820s, stemmed from stenography (a shorthand method of dictation to facilitate faster forms of note-taking, especially in business). While the practice predated the nineteenth century, new methods proliferated to accommodate the fast pace of modern life, especially in business.

While Lecoq did not deploy a notational system of this caliber, his memory procedures were also textual in conception.²¹⁴ As previously indicated, Lecoq understood his program to cultivate ocular habits that paralleled reading. The eye, while reading, does not need to register individual letters and some words to grasp the entire meaning of a text. Like reading, drawing

²¹³ Matsuda, "Words: The Grammar of History," 62.

²¹⁴ In fact, Lecoq wrote: "Elles ont été surprises aussi que je n'aie rien emprunté aux différents systèmes de mnémonique ayant pour objet les mots ou les idées, les dates ou les nombres. / Toutes les différentes sortes de mémoires présentent, sans doute, entre elles, des points d'analogie, mais elles offrent en même temps de telles différences que leurs opérations respectives seraient difficilement aidées par l'emploi des mêmes moyens. / La plupart des systèmes en question ont d'ailleurs le défaut de procéder d'une manière toute mécanique et sans s'adresser à l'intelligence." See Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 53.

would not (according to his logic) demand the observation and recollection of individual details to determine the most salient parts for a composition. Literacy likewise became a key rhetorical device Lecoq deployed to describe the aims of mnemonic anatomy lessons, which commenced in stage two of his drawing program. Lecoq explained, “Il lui faut, en quelque sorte, savoir lire et écrire l’anatomie couramment.”²¹⁵ An untitled study of human anatomy by Frédéric Régamey exemplifies this sentiment [Figure 13]. It features 5 human figure studies executed in pencil, pen and black ink on paper that were subsequently cut and pasted onto a single support. On the page, the studies were organized into two different sets representative of two distinct figures. In each set, Frédéric showcases his adept anatomical skills by depicting the same figure from life and according to its skeleton (and in the second set, includes an *écorché*). While it is difficult to determine whether he performed this study from a live or drawn model, the juxtaposition reflects Lecoq’s desire to train students to substitute a visible figure with memories of anatomical features (a practice which Rodin might have employed when he executed a skeleton and pasted a drawing of a skull on the same page [Figure 14]).

In order to cultivate certain visual habits that counteract the failures of sight and memory, Lecoq recommended a series of mnemonic aids. He taught students that there are five visual components that operated as mnemonic aids: dimension, position, form, modeling, and color.²¹⁶ To anchor these formal properties, he urged students to use imagined lines. “To appreciate the respective position of the different parts, imagine horizontal and vertical lines passing through the most noticeable points. These lines and their points of intersection once established, will give the memory exact landmarks from which to make definite observation.”²¹⁷ Imagining a grid upon

²¹⁵ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 132.

²¹⁶ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 42.

which students could picture or map essential aspects of the composition and their positions relative to each other abets, Lecoq surmised, visual recall. Similar to the sign system which contained the memory for students capable of decoding it, the grid trained students to locate information via mapped points.

The most successful memorization strategy endorsed by Lecoq was to trace the subject in the air. “Being suitably placed for studying the object that you wish to commit to memory, draw its forms in your head, and to concentrate your attention the better, follow the forms, at a distance, with the end of your finger or anything pointed. Then shut your eyes, or look away from the object, and draw it again in the air.”²¹⁸ This was a subtractive procedure that reduced and substituted visual sensations to a set of lines. When Frédéric made human figure and anatomical studies, he anchored each with an outline of the body. Note, in the top left example pasted onto the support of Figure 13, that a line circumscribes the skeleton and creates a container in which he could insert recollections of skeletal structures. Similar to the way words contained the memory, lines and points on a grid operated to aid recollection of draftsman.

Lecoq argued that over time, students lost dependency on the memorization strategies used to aid visual recall. “[A]lors, les dimensions, les positions, les formes, le modelé et les couleurs sont appréciés par ce que l’on pourrait appeler la vue intérieure de la mémoire,” he explained, “presque comme le ferait la vue ordinaire, sans le secours de calculs et de raisonnements préalables.”²¹⁹ Honing one’s “artistic intelligence” thus relied, in part, on training the eye to instinctively determine “the effect[s] of the whole”—which include judging

²¹⁷ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 42.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 43.

²¹⁹ Lecoq, *L’éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 43.

proportions and distinguishing colors.²²⁰ With practice, students developed particular habits of seeing that enabled them to discern and thus, reproduce, visual effects “unconsciously.”²²¹ Although most English-language translations use the word “unconscious” and “unconsciously” to describe Lecoq’s method, the original French employs phrases such as: “sans s’en apercevoir” which translates literally as “without noticing,” and “s’en rend nullement compte” which translates more directly as “without realizing.”²²² Lecoq uses the phrase “without thinking” to describe the goal of drawing lessons, as he explains:

Le professeur doit surveiller avec un grand soin l’enfant qu’il dirige dans ses premières études, afin de s’assurer qu’il comprend et exécute bien ses opérations, puisqu’il s’agit de lui en faire contracter une habitude telle qu’il arrive à les faire sans y penser et pour ainsi dire instinctivement. Il doit en être pour la pratique du dessin comme pour celle de la lecture, où l’intelligence, pour être tout entière au sens de ce qu’il s’agit de lire, ne doit plus avoir à s’occuper des opérations compliquées de la lecture elle-même.²²³

His lessons therefore intended to train students to perform tasks unconsciously or habitually. It was a method created to economize thought and modes of seeing to save students energy and to develop proficiency.

Theories of “economy” clarify exactly how Lecoq imagined his mnemonic system to work. The necessity of economizing and the “economy of thought” was part of a wider discourse that exceeded the limited scope of artistic pedagogy. Within this socio-historical context, the “economy of thought” referred to the mind’s ability to condense or abbreviate information to reduce the effort needed to operate efficiently. For late-nineteenth-century scientists, notably and the physicist and amateur landscape painter Pierre Duhem (1861-1916) and the physiological

²²⁰ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 122.

²²¹ Lecoq, *Lettres à un jeune professeur*, 16.

²²² Lecoq, *Coup d’oeil sur l’enseignement des beaux-arts*, 7.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 7.

psychologist Ernst Mach (1838-1916), the ability to economize solved a serious problem that faced knowledge production: the availability of too much information or data.²²⁴ This discussion is not intended to suggest that Lecoq read Duhem's or Mach's work. In fact, Lecoq's project preceded theirs by many years. Rather, I situate the conceptual justifications for Lecoq's project within a broader history of construing memory and representation in *fin de siècle* France.

Duhem's defense of economization appeared in his 1906 philosophy of science titled *La Théorie physique: Son objet, sa structure*.²²⁵ Written as a methodology and theory of science, this text touches on the necessity of economy to the comprehension of physical systems. For Duhem, the abbreviation of propositions into theory simplified scientific work. Physical theories served science by condensing laws into a series of mnemonic acts derivative of phenomena that have not been directly observed; for instance, gravity issues from all individual observations and then becomes an equation, this equation encompasses information that you cannot observe, but once it is established physicists no longer need to make the original observations.

To justify this position, he distinguished between different ways individuals experienced and understood their environments. Duhem attributed these distinctions to two distinct kinds of minds, categorized as "ample" and "abstract." For Duhem, the "ample" mind boasted of an extraordinary visual memory. Far from a virtue, he explained that such strong visual memory prevented individuals from fully comprehending their surroundings; ample minds were incapable of synthesizing a world comprised of infinite details into coherent, comprehensive set of knowledge. In contrast to the unsystematic, "ample" mind, Duhem valorized the "abstract" mind

²²⁴ The application of these concepts to image-making has been explored at least once before in scholarship by Josh Ellenbogen. See: Ellenbogen, *Reasoned and Unreasoned Images*; Josh Ellenbogen, "Camera and Mind," *Representations* 101 (Winter 2008): 86-115, and Josh Ellenbogen, "Educated Eyes and Impressed Images," *Art History* 33 (June 2010): 490-511.

²²⁵ Pierre, Duhem, *La Théorie physique: Son objet, sa structure* (Paris: Chevalier et Rivière, 1906).

(which he interestingly described as “French”) as a mode of intelligent reasoning dependent on “economical condensation and abbreviation” of thought.²²⁶

Abstract minds, Duhem believed, were better suited to science because of their proclivity toward logical deduction and reason. Minds that operated in this way created classificatory systems dependent on schema as a kind of “reasoned memory work” and method to think quickly. “Reasoned” memory work, or ersatz memories, described the notion that the mind needs to schematize observations and knowledge to comprehend it. He explained that there are infinite kinds of memories; to navigate and build upon these theories, scientists required a system that allowed such information to be used without much conscious thought.

Even though Lecoq’s procedures were taken up in contemporaneous scientific literature in France and England, it is extremely unlikely that Duhem had much awareness of—let alone conceptualized his philosophy of science in relationship to—visual memory training. Nonetheless, he clarified his ideas with recourse to drawing. He wrote: ““The physicist who complicates the theoretical representation of observed facts by correction...is like the artist who, after finishing the line sketch of a drawing, adds shading to express better on a plane surface the model in relief.””²²⁷ In order to make sense of objects, scientific minds therefore deployed approximation measurements to render objects schematically.²²⁸ Such schematizations were used to counter the “chaos” present in the material world.²²⁹

²²⁶ Ellenbogen, *Reasoned and Unreasoned Images*, 58.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

²²⁸ As summarized by Ellenbogen, “It will not do [for an abstract mind] to absorb material simply by concentrating or gazing on it. One can remember data only via their situation in a properly established classificatory scheme.” He continues: “According to Duhem, physical scientists simply do not work with sensory phenomena as they might exist outside a measurement system...” *Ibid.*, 58-61.

²²⁹ Ellenbogen quotes Duhem: ““To render present to the eyes of the imagination a very great number of objects, in such a way that they should be grasped simultaneously in their complex fitting together, and not taken

When Lecoq designed his method, the inadequacy of observation shaped his conception of mnemonics and mnemonic techniques in analogous ways. While Lecoq's program was rooted in direct observation of nature, throughout his publications he recommended that students deploy memorization strategies with an attenuated relationship to vision and visual experience as an economization strategy. The reasons for this can be clarified by Mach, who took up the question of "economy" in his 1883 book chapter titled "The Economy of Science" (in *The Science of Mechanics*) and his 1910 "The Guiding Principles of My Scientific Theory."²³⁰ In E.C. Banks's 2004 article "The Philosophical Roots of Ernst Mach's Economy of Thought," he summarizes the position in the following manner: "Mach's world was a bewildering flux of intensities appearing in one instant, opposed by others, and then vanishing in the next, leaving no trace of their existence behind. There would be no way to orient oneself in such a world; no stable form to hold on to."²³¹ For Mach, much like Lecoq, only through habituation could individuals make sense of the variety of stimuli constantly before them. Habit, as a way to economize knowledge, was understood to orient individuals toward the world and to anticipate what they would encounter.²³²

one by one, arbitrarily separated from the whole to which they are in reality attached, this is for many men an impossible, or at least, extremely arduous operation. A crowd of laws, all put in the same plane, without any classification grouping them, without any system coordinating them or subordinating some to others, appears to these men as a chaos where their imagination takes fright, like a labyrinth where their intelligence gets lost." Ibid., 59.

²³⁰ Ernst Mach, "The Economy of Science," in *The Science of Mechanics: A Critical and History Account of its Development*, trans. T.J. McCormack (La Salle: Open Court, 1960 [originally published in German as *Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung* in 1883]); Ernst Mach, "The Guiding Principles of My Scientific Theory of Knowledge and Its Reception by My Contemporaries," in *Physical Reality: Philosophical Essays on 20th Century Physics*, ed. By S. Toulmin (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

²³¹ E.C. Banks, "The Philosophical Roots of Ernst Mach's Economy of Thought," *Synthèse* 139, no. 1 (March 2004): 27.

²³² This is not entirely dissimilar from the two kinds of imagination distinguished by the French psychologist Théodule Ribot in his 1900 essay titled "L'Imagination." As noted by Chu, visual memory has the capacity to either "eliminate the non-essential" and has an "associative potential [that] allows it to relate to various continuous visual experiences. See Chu, *Eye, Memory, Hand*, 20.

Indeed, if we think about the conventions and schemas by which nineteenth-century artists were taught to draw, it could be the case that the types of habits which Lecoq wanted to indoctrinate in students through manual, formulaic procedures were thought of as being an abridged kind of memory. Although Lecoq's lessons were geared toward mnemonic training and thus would seem related to the "ample" mind, his program, above all, privileged particular, "abstract" modes of arriving at knowledge of one's surroundings. As I have already shown, Lecoq's system sought to engrave on the student's eye and memory standardized measurements in order to best view proportions (a skill which he noted was beneficial to students pursuing scientific careers).²³³ Learning to see the most salient features, which Lecoq compared to reading, where one does not need to see individual details (such as letters or words) in order to grasp the entire meaning of a text, parallels Duhem's notion of "reasoned memory work" and ersatz memories.²³⁴ In other words, akin to Lecoq's techniques of procedural memory is ersatz memory where the procedure you follow is one where it is as if you remember, but you do not ever (as in reading, you don't need to think rigorously about or acknowledge remembering individual letters in order to understand a word). This also manifested in Lecoq's desire to teach students to remember ephemeral visual phenomena that surpass the eye. Like Duhem, Lecoq encouraged students to deploy schemas to aid the memory.

Rodin: Hand and Eye

Lecoq's emphasis on visual economy offers insight into artists who studied under his regime. Of all the artists connected to his program, existing scholarship often focuses on the

²³³ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 71, 117.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

work of Rodin. Beginning in the 1890s, Rodin produced *les instantanés du nu féminin* (or snapshots of nude women), a series of drawings made through close observation of a live model moving freely around his studio [Figures 15-17].²³⁵ It was the prioritization of figures in motion—rather than posed—that has since led scholars to refer to the legacy of Lecoq’s training on this practice.²³⁶ Between 1854-1857, Rodin enrolled in Lecoq’s course dedicated to *dessin de mémoire*. Over fifty years after he studied at the Petite école, Rodin reflected on his time in Lecoq’s class in a letter dated November 19, 1913: “*La plus grande part de ce qu’il m’a appris, me reste encore. / Je voudrais bien que tout jeune artiste pousse [sic] profiter de son enseignement....*”²³⁷

To best seize the fugitive effects and unconventional poses associated with human locomotion in these drawings, Rodin fixed his gaze upon the model, resisting the temptation to inspect the work done by his hands.²³⁸ That these figures, tests of hand-eye coordination, were the result of direct observation might seem preposterous in the late nineteenth century. Rodin’s figures appear simplified, nearing the point of abstraction; he excised from the scene any hint of setting, narrative, any recognizable attributes of his models, and instead prioritized contours in an undefined space.

The tendency to describe Rodin’s turn of the century drawing practice as an expression of Lecoq’s system of visual memory training might seem strange. Rodin’s drawings are a far cry

²³⁵ Roger Marx, “Cartons d’artistes: Auguste Rodin,” *L’Image: revue artistique et littéraire* 10 (September 1897), 299.

²³⁶ Musée Rodin, *Rodin et le Dessin: Dossier documentaire* (2017), accessed online at www.musee-rodin.fr; Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin’s Art: The Rodin Collection Iris & B. Gerlad Cantor Center for Visual Arts Stanford University*, ed. By Bernard Barryte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 206; Ruth Butler, *Rodin: The Shape of Genius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

²³⁷ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), n.p.

²³⁸ Marx, “Cartons d’artistes: Auguste Rodin,” 299.

from artwork made by figures who are remembered for their strong visual memory, such as the French painter Ernest Meissonier (1815-1891) [Figure 18]. During his lifetime, Meissonier was best known for his small-scale military paintings that were executed with an attention to minute detail and exactitude that recalled the visual effects of Dutch Golden Age painting. Meissonier also produced drawings. *Standing Cavalier*, for instance, features a centrally placed gentleman regally looking over his shoulder, the left side of his face delicately offset by a light source from the right [Figure 19]. Much like Rodin's nudes, this man appears in an undefined space. Whereas Rodin's female models evoke movement through the fluidity of his contours and their unusual postures, Meissonier's male figure strikes a pose; it exemplifies Meissonier's great skill at depicting detailed clothing with an attention toward light effects and shadows. With this in mind, this chapter answers how cultivating visual memory resulted, in the case of Rodin, in economy.

When Rodin executed his *dessins instantanés*, he embarked on a practice closely tied to Lecoq's pedagogical aims. In Lecoq's system of visual mnemonics, the artist abbreviated observed phenomenon to foster recollection. Much like the way Lecoq aimed to cultivate a kind of visual memory that did not depend entirely on information that existed in nature, Rodin approached his subject matter using a visual economy, reducing the figures to schematic contours quickly sketched before the model. In this sense, Rodin appealed to Lecoq's advice to foreground the most salient features.

As a mnemonic aid, Lecoq often encouraged students to trace the outlines of objects in the air before reproducing them by hand on paper. It would be impossible to determine what visualization techniques Rodin actually deployed while producing these figures, especially because he did not work entirely from memory (since he set his gaze directly on the model). Nonetheless, Rodin's process similarly emphasized hand-eye coordination. Much like Lecoq's

recommendation to operate the hand and eye in unison, Rodin focused his gaze entirely on the model and tested his hand-eye coordination by resisting the urge to review the progress of the drawing produced by hand.²³⁹ In doing so, he mastered Lecoq's advice: "dessiner: l'oeil regard l'objet, *la mémoire en conserve l'image*, et la main la reproduit."²⁴⁰ This technique opposed Mallarmé's plea to disentangle the hand's habits from the eye. When Mallarmé advised artists to depict the fugitive, ephemeral qualities of modern life, he conceded that his instruction fell short because of the artist's difficulty to estrange the processes of the hand from the eye. Mallarmé accused the hand of culpability, describing it as a corruption of the eye due to its susceptibility to habit. While Lecoq and Rodin, like Mallarmé, valorized the representation of movement, and insisted on conceiving objects as unstable, as perpetually changing, their ideas about the hand's habits are entirely reversed. The hand, to Lecoq and Rodin, helped the eye abstract what it sees, forming an abridged memory. This contradicts some existing accounts of Rodin's *dessins instantanés*, which have long been characterized by their supposed "immediacy," "instinct," and "spontaneity." His procedures are instead harnessed to habit acquisition, mediation, and learning.

Dangers of the Mind and Photographic Memory

The sustained emphasis on visual economy arguably led Lecoq to boast that his system escorted intellectual development. For Lecoq, his strategies combatted routine monotony by cultivating intelligence. This was a perspective which earned traction among several artists and critics, including Viollet-le-Duc, Philippe Burty and Delaborde. On August 12, 1866, Lecoq delivered a speech in the *grande salle* at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand to commemorate the

²³⁹ Marx, "Cartons d'artistes: Auguste Rodin," 299.

²⁴⁰ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque*, 23.

distribution of *les prix de l'École impériale de dessin et de mathématique*. This event ranked students within each course, such as drawing from memory or from life. Yet, Lecoq's talk, far from celebrating the success of the new award-holders, offered words of advice to all the attendees. "Develop the strength and activity of the brain," he urged.²⁴¹ Rather than assume students had predetermined strengths or weaknesses, he granted individuals agency over potential intellectual growth. "L'individu modifie son cerveau par sa volonté, il fait en quelque sorte lui-même, pendant sa jeunesse, son organe intellectuel, c'est-à-dire l'instrument avec lequel il comprendra, pensera, donnera le véritable titre de sa valeur; en un mot, se fera sa place dans le monde...."²⁴² Lecoq's account provided an incentive for students to take their education seriously, not to mention offered them important insight into the perceived benefits of his regime.

Throughout Lecoq's career, developing intelligence became a major aim of his pedagogical program. Lecoq recommended that readers cultivate intelligence alongside visual memory.²⁴³ His pedagogical ambitions found their most fervent support in writings by Viollet-le-Duc, the architect who, as previously mentioned, spearheaded campaigns in the 1850s and 1860s to wrest the École des beaux-arts from the Academy's strict control. Viollet-le-Duc's crusade—which surpassed the limited milieu of the École des beaux-arts and shaped the nature of drawing pedagogy enacted in design schools and public education nationwide under the Second Empire and Third Republic—was a deep concern for developing the intellect. In an article published in 1858 in *L'Artiste*, for instance, he criticized the practice of teaching students to copy graphic and

²⁴¹ Félix Régamey cited this speech in his biography of Lecoq titled *Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses élèves*, 13.

²⁴² Ibid., 13.

²⁴³ Lecoq, *The Training of the Memory in Art*, 14.

cast models before drawing from the live model. “This method which is not new, and which shows that to be older is not better, habituates the hand to reproduce the forms that the eye perceives, but it hardly exercises the students’ intelligence.”²⁴⁴ Instead, he championed Lecoq’s program of *la mémoire pittoresque* to expand intellectual capabilities.

In 1868, M. Gault de Saint Germain, a fellow drawing professor at the Petite école, shared Viollet-le-Duc’s sentiments when he acclaimed that memory training “is precisely a higher education that broadens the students’ intelligence by exercising their judgment.” Shortly after in 1871, Delaborde glorified Lecoq’s program as a method for “procuring intellectual gymnastics.”²⁴⁵ Art critic and Symbolist writer Joris-Karl Huysmans matched the flattery of other thinkers many years later in his review of the Official Salon of 1881 in which he deferentially described Lecoq as “the only master whose teaching has not depressed the intelligence or aggravated the incompetence of the lucky students who learned their craft under his orders.”²⁴⁶ The year following Huysmans tribute, Véron published a second text that similarly defended Lecoq’s method against detractors. “Dans ce refus obstiné du monde officiel d’examiner et d’étudier la méthode Lecoq de Boisbaudran,” he explained “on sent une haine plus ou moins consciente des principes artistiques de l’esthétique moderne, dont elle n’est que l’application raisonnée et intelligente.”²⁴⁷

That Lecoq’s method of schematization came to represent—at least in some artistic circles— “reasoned,” intellectual memory work warrants additional consideration. Recitation, much like the ill-effects of habit formation, became a hotly contested subject in pedagogical

²⁴⁴ Viollet-le-Duc, “Un Cours de dessin,” 154.

²⁴⁵ Delaborde, “L’Enseignement du dessin en 1871,” 83-6.

²⁴⁶ Joris-Karl Huysmans, “Le Salon officiel de 1881,” *L’art moderne* (1929), 197.

²⁴⁷ Véron, “L’enseignement du dessin: Méthode de Lecoq de Boisbaudran,” 374.

circles and often was represented as a commitment to monotony than innovation. How Lecoq's program gained support as a means to exercise—rather than suppress—judgment can be clarified in relationship to photography and the perceived relationship between photographic technologies and the operations of the mind and sense perception. Of course, this is not to suggest that Lecoq and his supporters conceived of visual memory training's educational benefits necessarily in shared terms. Rather, the distinctions between methods of image-making via schematization and photography highlight the perceived virtues of his lessons.

When Lecoq designed visual memory training, it entered into a rivalry with photographic technologies. Visual mnemonics, like the camera, facilitated the reproduction of scenes from modern life, and was praised for its ability to efficiently capture transitory phenomena. A diverse range of critics including Véron and Marx credited Lecoq's methods with a set of qualities often attributed to photography. Visual memory training, Véron in particular claimed, habituated the eye to “seize on the fly [*saisir au vol*].”²⁴⁸ When Marx described Rodin's work as *dessins instantanés*, this title similarly likened Rodin's ability to quickly capture movement to a snapshot.

Among some of Lecoq's supporters, a strong visual memory surpassed the camera's capabilities. One example came from a very unlikely source: the French printmaker and photographer, Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, better known as, Nadar (1820-1910). Around the same time the Petite école sanctioned Lecoq's course in *dessin de mémoire*, Nadar produced a print that indicated the benefits of working from memory (even at the expense of his own livelihood as

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 374. Véron writes: “La facilité qu'elle donne, en exerçant la mémoire des formes, de saisir au vol les traits essentiels, les attitudes et les gestes caractéristiques, et de les reproduire avec les exagérations expressives auxquelles elle lâche la bride, aurait évidemment produit depuis longtemps une nombreuse école de jeunes artistes amoureux de la vie et du mouvement, habitués à donner libre carrière à leurs préférences et à leurs qualités artistiques.”

a photographer) [Figure 20]. Set in his studio, Nadar represented a dialogue that took place between himself and a customer; the client sought a photograph of her late husband because—as she notes—photographs look more realistic than paintings made from memory. Their transaction was complicated by the fact that her husband had died two years prior in Buenos Aires. In this instance, working from memory achieved a feat that the camera—even as a symbol of cutting-edge technology—could not: the representation of a subject matter that is not present.

What Nadar's invented patron imagined to be a shortcoming of visual memory, Lecoq and his supporters viewed as an indication of its success. The type of visual memory cultivated by Lecoq was explicitly not photographic, however, it can be explained in relationship to the problems confronted by the earliest photographers. The long exposure time for daguerreotypes prevented the photographic plate from showing visible traces of moving subjects. As a popular example of this, scholars often cite Louis Daguerre's (1787-1851) 1838 *Boulevard du Temple* [Figure 21]. While Daguerre captured what would have been a heavily populated, bustling street, the only people visible on the plate are the shoe-shiner and the man whose boots he polishes. This was because the long exposure times required to reproduce a subject on a photographic plate could only capture the static features. When Lecoq designed his program, he understood that the mind (like a photographic plate subjected to long exposure times) could not possibly recall every observable detail. Even were the mind capable of such exploits, many critics, above all Charles Baudelaire, feared the incidence of photographic memory in art. While there is no evidence to suggest that Baudelaire knew of Lecoq's program, it seems likely he would have been familiar—if not admired—it. Baudelaire championed many of Lecoq's students, notably Legros. Regardless, Baudelaire's conception of photographic memory sheds light on the aims of Lecoq's cultivation of *la mémoire pittoresque*.

Photographic memory was a concept first discussed in the 1850s that referred to the ability to recall facets of visual experience with exactitude, as did a camera. Baudelaire lamented that photographs, like misused memory, amassed visual details without order or logic.²⁴⁹ Unlike art, which, for Baudelaire, was the result of an active mind, photographs—which were related to passive memory—represented the world inhumanly. Whereas humans filter visual data, the camera captures, to Baudelaire’s dismay, materiality indifferently, making it unartistic. In other words, because the goal of art was to match human mentality (which included creativity and intelligence) with materiality (to transform materiality through mentality), a photograph and passive memory could not obtain the status of high art. Baudelaire described copying—mechanically and passively—as menial and as going against human nature. Humans, he believed, see the world in hierarchies where some things emerged into prominence and other details do not. Photography, Baudelaire worried, had the capacity to undermine this aspect of human visual and mental experience.

When he described the problems with photographic memory, Baudelaire referred explicitly to the artists Vernet and Meissonier, two painters known for their exacting details of military subjects. He protested that, like cameras, Vernet and Meissonier captured a democracy of visual detail at the expense of hierarchically privileging features as does human vision. Baudelaire complained that Vernet’s encyclopedic memory made him “the absolute antithesis of [an] artist[,]” and that, “he substitutes *chic* for drawing, cacophony for colour and episodes for unity; he paints Meissoniers as big as houses.”²⁵⁰ For Baudelaire, Vernet’s procedures hardly differed from a student reciting facts.

²⁴⁹ Baudelaire, “Salon of 1859,” in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*.

²⁵⁰ Charles Baudelaire, “Salon of 1846,” in *The Mirror of Art: Critical Studies*, translated by Johnathan Mayne (New York: Phaidon Publishers, 1955) 100.

Baudelaire's position against Vernet's visualization strategy was well-accepted (though not unanimous). As art historian Mark Gotlieb explains in his book *The Plight of Emulation: Ernest Meissonier and French Salon Painting* (1995): "Critic after critic charged Vernet with failing to consolidate his diversity of experience into unified pictorial [tableaux], particularly in the case of his battle paintings."²⁵¹ For instance, although art theorist Charles Blanc championed entirely different artistic styles than Baudelaire, he also derided Vernet's proclivity to depict details. "According to Blanc," Gotlieb explains, "Vernet failed to combine the disparate episodes of a modern battle into ensembles that communicated themselves to the spectator in a single glance."²⁵² The ability to represent individual details was, according to thinkers like Baudelaire, alien to human nature which always saw the world schematically. Seeing at a glance or *à coup d'oeil*, a concept explored in detail in this thesis' third chapter), was at the core of academic art theory that valorized compositional unity over the proliferation of details. For Blanc and Baudelaire alike, "photographic" details hindered the viewer's capability to see the whole composition at a glance by demanding equal attention be given to multiple parts within the "whole."

This "photographic" aspect of their work privileged a multitude of details with indifference to human visual experience, rather than render hierarchically visual detail as does the eye. In her 2015 book *Les Paradoxes du détail: Voir, savoir, représenter à l'ère de la photographie*, Erika Wicky addresses the stakes of representing excess detail in mid-nineteenth-century France.²⁵³ Although detail was often understood as anathema to idealization, particularly

²⁵¹ Gotlieb, "Meissonier's Memory," 131.

²⁵² Ibid., 131.

²⁵³ Wicky, *Les Paradoxes du détail*.

with the rise of realism, naturalism and impressionism, Wicky articulates how it also endowed history paintings, such as those produced by Vernet and Meissonier, with the liberty to make particular truth claims. The focus on detail, at the expense of harmonic compositions, Wicky claims, led to a reorganization of the hierarchy of genres, narrowing the boundary between academic history painting and realism by making them indecipherable.

When Baudelaire expressed fear about an “*émeute de details*,” it had implications beyond the obstruction of compositional unity and harmony in photographs or Meissonier’s paintings.²⁵⁴ At stake in Baudelaire’s criticism of photography and the ways “photographic memory” manifested in painting was passive thinking, and as a consequence, self-determination. Rather than actively selecting and synthesizing aspects of nature harmoniously, Baudelaire perceived photography and misuses of memory (photographic memory) as a passive, mindless activity which divorced the image from intelligence by attending to too many disjointed details. For Baudelaire, the fundamental problem with photography and photographic memory was that it amounted to a destructive relationship with what it meant to be human. To his worldview, perception should be synthetic (and photography should be analytic). For Baudelaire, this meant that Vernet did not see or represent the world properly, in a way that hierarchically privileged details.

While Baudelaire condemned photography and photographic memory, he offered a very distinct take on memory’s significance to artistic production at different points during his lifetime. As noted by Petra Chu, “To Baudelaire, visual memory [in some cases] was a *sine-qua-non* not just for the caricaturist but more generally for all painters of modern life.”²⁵⁵ In his Salon

²⁵⁴ Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life.”

²⁵⁵ Chu, *Eye, Memory, Hand*, 16.

of 1846, Baudelaire also valorized the mnemonic as a source for the imagination. While “exact imitation spoils a memory,” he looked to a quote by the German writer E.T.A. Hoffman to describe the artistic value of memory.²⁵⁶ The quote by Hoffman said: “True memory...consists, I think, in nothing else but a very lively and easily-roused imagination, which is consequently given to reinforcing each of its sensations by evoking scenes from the past, and endowing them, as if by magic, with the life and character which are proper to each of them....”²⁵⁷ Well into the 1860s, Baudelaire maintained that memory played a crucial role for artists working from life, notably Constantin Guys, a painter who Baudelaire praised for his depictions of urban scenes and modern life. When Guys was “assaulted by a riot of details” in his observation of Parisian life, Baudelaire explained that Guys’ strong memory allowed him to synthesize and abbreviate what he had seen (much like Rodin would later do).²⁵⁸

In Baudelaire’s Salon of 1859, he alternatively established an opposition between qualities like memory and imagination, the “queen” of faculties. When he opposed these faculties, alongside qualities like “nature” and the “beautiful,” “passive” and “active,” it is likely that these were oppositions he never actually accepted.²⁵⁹ To account for the inconsistent descriptions of memory endorsed by Baudelaire in his 1846 and 1859 salons, it is likely that these oppositions only existed for those whose sensibilities had been corrupted by photography. As such, this offers a more complicated account of Baudelaire’s reaction to photography and

²⁵⁶ Charles Baudelaire, *Art in Paris: 1845-1862. Salons and Other Exhibitions*, trans. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1985), 80.

²⁵⁷ Baudelaire, “Salon of 1846,” 100.

²⁵⁸ Chu, *Eye, Memory, Hand*, 16.

²⁵⁹ Baudelaire, “Salon of 1859,” in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*.

memory, as well as a more complicated account of how Lecoq's program was imagined overcome any opposition that began to develop between memory and creativity.

When Lecoq began teaching visual mnemonics, he not only excluded photographic models from his regime, but also he self-consciously designed exercises in reaction against photographic media. Much like Baudelaire, Lecoq too warned against "working photographically," stating that "Nombre de peintres semblent...entreprendre avec la machine, une lutte aussi laborieuse que vaine....il [art] n'est pas dans la nature telle quelle, mais dans ses interprétations part le sentiment et le genie humain."²⁶⁰ Lecoq anticipated similar complaints against his program. "On objectera peut-être encore d'une manière plus générale," he noted, "que l'on ne rencontre que trop souvent dans le monde de ces personnes dont la mémoire surchargée est comme un magasin vivant de faits, de dates, de prose et de vers..."²⁶¹ Lecoq's defense was that in the case of "these bores," their training was imbalanced; he states: "d'abord le défaut d'équilibre dans l'éducation des différentes facultés; il est aussi absurde, en effet, de cultiver trop exclusivement la mémoire que de la négliger entièrement."²⁶² Throughout Lecoq's writing, he urged exercising intelligence alongside visual recall to prevent the problems associated with too strong a memory. The ability to synthesize and select, for Lecoq, represented intellectual, "reasoned" work.

Conclusion: Drawing Schemes in the Age of Photography

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the positive appraisal of Lecoq's program

²⁶⁰ Lecoq, *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque* (1920), 99-100.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 30.

²⁶² Ibid., 30.

hardly shielded it from its fair share of criticism. Much like the ill-effects associated with photography (and negative conceptions of habit), critics like Ruprich-Robert and the Republican sculptor Antoine Etex (1808-1888) also accused visual memory training of encouraging mechanical, passive forms of reproduction. Indeed, the emphasis on schematization caused the system to run into severe criticism. Artists steeped in visual memory training schematized what was observable by eye so that a particular subject matter could be easily reproduced by visual memory later on.

Visual memory training's dependence on schematic memorization techniques led Ruprich-Robert and Etex to complain that it fostered *chic* and *poncif*. When these men slandered Lecoq's drawing regime with such labels, it was hardly an innocuous complaint; *chic* and *poncif* were artistic categories widely used to critique recycled representational conventions.²⁶³ By the time Ruprich-Robert argued that Lecoq's regime led to *chic*, it was, in fact, a vernacular term popularly deployed by critics to deride paintings made from memory without reference to nature (or forms reused to the point of routine). For Ruprich-Robert, in particular, working *de chic* removed the need to actively select subject matter and style (like recitation) and therefore, it undermined the need for intellectual faculties and artistic agency. Etex (an artist unaffiliated with the Academy who nonetheless received several state commissions for public art), much like Ruprich-Robert, reprimanded the method for encouraging *poncif*, a related concept deployed in art criticism to describe a tendency to repeatedly draw *de chic*, recycled forms learned by heart; in other words, he argued that such methods encouraged artists to reuse particular stylistic

²⁶³ To Charles Blanc, these terms were "pests" that infested the artworld. See: Charles Blanc, "Ingres: sa vie et ses ouvrages," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 25 (1868): 243-4, 248; In the preface to Lecoq's posthumous edition of *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque*, Luard defines it in the following way: "le dessin de 'chic,' qui est la répétition de certaines formes, couleurs, ou effets devenus habitude cérébrale, ou simple tour de main." See: Lecoq, *L'Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque*, 7.

elements to the point of habit and banality.²⁶⁴ For these men, Lecoq's program facilitated *chic* and *poncif* because of its dependence on visual memory more so than direct observation. Visual mnemonics (as a practice that fostered *chic* and *poncif*) then excised valorized qualities including intelligence, judgment, and individuality from artmaking by promoting a mindless subservience to schema. At the heart of their criticisms was the artist's ability—and liberty—to make decisions.

Baudelaire offered the most explicit condemnation of these tendencies in his Salon of 1846.²⁶⁵ In his short essay titled "Of 'Chic' and 'Poncif,'" he described *chic* as an "abuse of memory...[a] memory of the hand rather than memory of the brain."²⁶⁶ As an example of this "modern monstrosity," Baudelaire cited calligraphers, whose script could be executed with their eyes closed, automatically. He argued that distinct from Art, which required imagination, calligraphy depended upon the repetition of memorized forms.

For those who cast doubt on Lecoq's program, these schemas crowded out the variable and ultimately became a "mechanical" procedure. "Mechanical" imaging techniques played a central role in Daston and Galison's history of objectivity that I discussed on pages 78-79.²⁶⁷ They argue that advancements in photographic technology led to the incidence of "mechanical objectivity," a term used to describe a rejection of the hand-made image in some scientific contexts. In certain milieus, selection, synthesis, idealization, and schematization became emblematic of subjectivity. Such kinds of "subjective distortions" represented an imposition of

²⁶⁴ Antoine Etex, *Dix leçons sur le dessin appliqué aux arts et à l'industrie comprenant la géométrie, la perspective, l'architecture, la peinture et la sculpture* (Paris: Chez Masgana, 1861), 211-212.

²⁶⁵ Charles Baudelaire, "Of 'Chic' and 'Poncif,'" in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, translated by P.E. Charvet, 86 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

²⁶⁶ Baudelaire, "Of 'Chic' and 'Poncif,'" 86.

²⁶⁷ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*.

human error onto nature and therefore, needed to be avoided.²⁶⁸ “Wary of human mediation between nature and representation,” Daston and Galison explained, “researchers now turned to mechanically produced images.”²⁶⁹ Machines safeguarded knowledge from the tendency of individuals to speculate, or to exert judgments that were not grounded in fact.

Within objectivity’s rich historical narrative, “mechanical” described data produced with the aid of registration devices (instead of those produced directly by hand) and was often linked to scientific imaging. At this time, the term “mechanical” pejoratively scorned manual labor as a kind of modest work achieved through physical effort rather than intellectual engagement. The changes in labor brought on by the Industrial Revolution did little to recast the depreciatory connotations of the term. As summarized by Daston and Galison, the term “mechanical” in the second half of the nineteenth century often characterized workers who oversaw machinery, a connection forged to reduce individuals to the mindless machines they operated.²⁷⁰

While certain scientific circles valorized mechanical registration, emulating photographic media became a hotly debated subject in discourses devoted to the fine arts.²⁷¹ To meet the accepted standards of art-making, according to critics like Baudelaire, art required imagination (a quality linked to human subjectivity). It required selection and judgment, the very qualities derided by some scientists.

Read alongside this narrative, the attacks against Lecoq’s program appear unusual. What is strange about such attacks was that they represented an instance where servile, “mechanical” reproduction referred not to photographic representations, but to schematization. In the sciences,

²⁶⁸ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 105.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 120-121.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 137.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 246.

the valorization of “mechanical” images described the anti-schematic quality of photographs (or the capacity of photography to capture minute details). In contrast, schemas became entangled in debates about the “mechanical” in artistic circles; indeed, mechanical often described, as exemplified by Lecoq’s detractors, a schematic quality that artists endlessly recycle as mere habit. The aims and criticism associated with Lecoq’s drawing program adds more nuance to existing discussions about what constituted a “mechanical” image in the nineteenth century and what such images were understood to look like.

In constructing a technique that taught students how to arrive at and draw important information automatically, or without needing to think through each step, Lecoq created a method for efficiently seeing and reproducing the visible world; he wanted to create a system that could aid the eye to instantaneously make sense of the whole, rather than be “confused” by nature’s infinite details. As a result, the highest level of Lecoq’s program rested upon inculcating in students visualization strategies that mediate the practice of direct observation. In this case, direct observation was no longer about studying visual detail carefully by eye. Lecoq encouraged students to deploy a mnemonic schema to reproduce an environment. To Lecoq, unlike his opponents, his imaging technique cultivated ocular habits that could abbreviate observed subject matter; as a source of originality, such habits enabled (rather than curbed) creativity.

CHAPTER 3

Guillaume, Ravaisson, and the Problem of Habit

At the same time Lecoq systematized *dessin de mémoire*, discourses devoted to drawing instruction proliferated across divisions of formal learning. Over the course of the 1860s and 1870s, the philosopher Félix Ravaisson and the academician Eugène Guillaume likewise emerged as the leading thinkers in a series of debates about drawing lessons. Distinct from Lecoq's emphasis on professional training, Ravaisson and Guillaume were preoccupied with the introduction of drawing into public education nationwide. The belief that drawing was as important to education as reading, writing, and arithmetic was near ubiquitous and as a result, led to contentious debates about the nature and scope of its pedagogy. When Jules Ferry's republican administration enacted reforms geared toward primary and secondary schools between 1878 and 1881, they included provisions to adopt the drawing regimen Guillaume systematized into official pedagogy. Guillaume's procedures, known equally as *la méthode Guillaume* and *la méthode géométrique*, privileged descriptive geometry and incorporated clauses to stipulate practicing on geometric shapes and ornament before the human figure.

The disputes that ensued between these two men at the meetings of the *Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts* have become a notorious feature in histories of nineteenth-century French art and artistic training.²⁷² Guillaume's desire to forsake the dominance of human figure study in favor of geometry flew in the face of the practices Ravaisson had been recommending for twenty

²⁷² Gérard Monnier, *L'Art et ses institutions en France. De la Révolution à nos jours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), 234-5; Stéphane Laurent, *L'Art utile: les écoles d'arts appliqués sous le Second Empire et la Troisième République* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998); Laurent, *Les arts appliqués en France*, 124-5; Genet-Delacroix, *Du dessin aux arts plastiques*, 33; 38-9; Bonnet, *L'enseignement des arts au XIX^e siècle*, 322-3; Bonnet, "L'introduction du dessin dans le système public d'enseignement au XIX^e siècle," in *Art et transmission*, 263-284; d'Enfert, *L'Enseignement du dessin en France*, 175-6.

years. Whereas Ravaissou maintained that an artistic education grounded in classical figure drawing would benefit students in both the fine and applied arts, Guillaume opposed this perspective, asserting the primacy and necessity of geometricized, industrial models to cultivate *une langue universelle*. Ever since Guillaume's program acquired more political traction, it has represented a moment when the French state prioritized industrialization and economic growth over humanist concerns.

This chapter recasts narratives about Guillaume's approach to drawing and the industrialization of French society. I demonstrate that the quarrel with his key interlocutor, Ravaissou, was a precursor to the philosophical questions about drawing, habit, and originality that came to preoccupy modernist discourses in the twentieth century.

Guillaume: When Industry became Habit

"Quelle est la fin de l'éducation? Est-ce d'ajouter des machines humaines à toutes les machines de l'industrie...? Est-ce de supprimer l'esprit en supprimant l'invention? de disposer par une habitude plutôt organique qu'intellectuelle quelques rouages qui se mettent en mouvement avec une précision infaillible?"²⁷³ With these rhetorical questions, the French professor of philosophy Gabriel Séailles (1852-1922) condemned *la méthode géométrique* in an article published in 1880. At that point, Guillaume's regime had not been practiced very long, but would hold tenure in French public schools nationwide for thirty more years. "[C]ela [education] ne faut pas former l'homme comme on dresse l'animal, par une routine empirique et machinale," he continued, "il faut...lui donner moins l'habitude d'actes déterminés, sorte

²⁷³ Gabriel Séailles as "Deux méthodes dans l'enseignement du dessin: M. Guillaume.—M. Ravaissou," *Revue politique et littéraire: Revue bleue* 6 (7 August 1880), 186.

d'instincts acquis, que créer en lui des facultés dont il ait la libre initiative.”²⁷⁴ Beginning in the 1890s, Séailles’s position—that *la méthode géométrique* curbed “invention” and free will—acquired traction, especially among instructors. By the time the program’s hegemony came undone in 1909, critics complained that it was “abstraite et morte,” undergirded by a “dogmatisme calculateur,” and dependent upon a “reproduction servile.”²⁷⁵ Underlying their criticism was the belief that Guillaume’s mathematical method symbolized industry, and the key vices associated with the habits industry engendered: passivity and servility.

Long after geometric drawing procedures lost favor as an agent for industrialized production, its poor reputation has continued to reverberate in art historical scholarship. In this respect, the secondary literature on *la méthode Guillaume* has shown no mercy. That his program forged connections between artistic pedagogy and the picturing strategies deployed in non-artistic domains, above all industrial design, has cast a dark shadow over his work in twentieth- and twenty-first-century art-historical narratives. Over one hundred years after the implementation of Guillaume’s procedures into public programs, Albert Boime published an article in 1985-86 titled “The Teaching of Fine Arts and the Avant-Garde in France During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century” that reinforced Séailles’s accusations. Boime argued that there were dark undertones to Guillaume’s program, citing his desire to ““regulate the minds”” of the working class.²⁷⁶ That this system was geared, in part, toward blue-collar labor is

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 186.

²⁷⁵ P. Boursin, “La réforme de l’enseignement du dessin dans les écoles primaires élémentaires,” *Revue pédagogique*, 1er semestre (1911), 320; Louis Guérin, “L’enseignement actuel du dessin. Son esprit, ses conséquences,” *Revue des arts décoratifs* 13 (1892-1893): 121; F. Henry, “L’enseignement du dessin dans les petites classes primaires,” *Revue pédagogiques*, 1er semestre (1904): 554.

²⁷⁶ Albert Boime, “The Teaching of Fine Arts and the Avant-Garde in France During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Art Magazine* 60, no. 1-5 (1985-86): 48.

indisputable. However, Boime's willingness to characterize Guillaume's project as a means to render the working class submissive to the state's authoritarian needs also stems from a failure to correctly translate the nuances of a phrase that appears in *Idée générale d'un enseignement élémentaire des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie* (1866), Guillaume's first publication on drawing pedagogy, and which is repeated again in his dictionary entry on *dessin* nearly twenty years later.²⁷⁷ "Faire commencer l'étude de l'art comme celle d'une profession exacte," Guillaume noted, "c'est le meilleur moyen de *régler* les esprits."²⁷⁸ Translating "régler" as "regulate" rather than "calibrate" or "standardize," "arrange" or "adjust," and "fine tune" or even "settle" has large stakes. It shifts the intention of Guillaume's program away from a mere intellectual exercise and to mind control, a much more serious accusation. Guillaume, in more likelihood, selected the word because of its association with organization. For instance, the French expression "être réglé comme du papier à musique" refers to a person who is well-organized. "Réglé" (ruled) and related terms like "règle" (ruler) also had a particular relevance to his drawing regime which prioritized working according to the laws (*règles*) of geometry.

Indeed, Boime is one of several scholars who emphasized the sinister motives driving official curriculum. Nowhere has this emerged more forcefully than in Molly Nesbit's scholarship. In her article titled "Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model" (1986) and subsequent book, *Their Common Sense* (2000), Nesbit investigates the legacy of Guillaume's curriculum, in its emphasis on utilitarian objects, on modernism.²⁷⁹ In "Ready-Made Originals," Nesbit traces Duchamp's artistic practice to the repetitive, mechanical drawing techniques

²⁷⁷ Eugène Guillaume, *Idée générale d'un enseignement élémentaire des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie* (Paris: Union centrale, 1866).

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 10.

²⁷⁹ Nesbit, "Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model," 53-64, and *Their Common Sense*.

incorporated into public education in the 1880s. Her book project, an extension of the article, convincingly connects the institution of *la méthode Guillaume* to the rise of industrial design, commodity fetishism, and abstraction between 1880 and 1925. Conceptually oriented toward questions of “common sense,” Nesbit shows the betrayal of Guillaume’s commitment to reason, by foregrounding the unreasoned and even contradictory ways that French curriculum described linguistic and visual sign systems. Her analysis provides readers no shortage of Guillaume’s critics. In fact, Nesbit cites Georges Moreau, a man who championed drawing from nature; he complained that under Guillaume’s regime, students ““have acquired a certain manual dexterity correctly executing a projection drawing, have copied fairly exactly after a plaster cast an antique torso or a figure, but that is nothing but a mechanical piece of work, a contracted habit.””²⁸⁰

In many ways, Nesbit’s book reinforces this criticism. Projection drawings became derided as mechanical, purely utilitarian practices to support industry and capitalism. This point contradicts Miriam Levin’s take on Guillaume’s program, who noted in her 1986 study of Republican aesthetic ideology that “Nothing in the primary school art curriculum was overtly utilitarian.”²⁸¹ Unlike Boime and Nesbit, Levin claimed that art education became a tool of the early Third Republican politicians to train students to order thought and their experience of the material world. Nonetheless, the connections to industry are tough to escape; she writes: “For Guillaume, and for Ferry as well, drawing would form the individual in the image of the machine....”²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Georges Moreau, “La nature, maître de dessin,” *Revue universelle* 119 (1 octobre 1904) as cited by Nesbit, *Their Common Sense*, 529.

²⁸¹ Miriam Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 81.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 79, 84. On page 80, she explained: “Because it required the physical as well as mental engagement of the individual, drawing was seen as one of the most effective ways to have large numbers of individuals bring a sense of order and restraint into their socioeconomic interactions.” On page 82, she further clarified that: “The

Existing scholarship on public drawing instruction during the first decades of the Third Republic not only couches Guillaume's system within wider debates about French industrial design, but also vilifies it as an instrument of the Academy as it sought to regain its increasingly lost cultural hegemony. In Christiane Mauve's text titled "L'Art à l'école?," she argues that Guillaume's method, by foregrounding geometry over human figure study, prevented the lower classes access to the aesthetics of "high art."²⁸³ Patricia Mainardi adopts a similar position in her seminal work titled *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*. She interprets the incorporation of this drawing regime in primary schools as a method of "social engineering" that redirected students toward the decorative arts who might otherwise have pursued careers in the "lower categories of art."²⁸⁴

Considered in light of period pedagogical debates, it is rather unusual that Guillaume has been singled out. First of all, he was not the only drawing instructor to systematize descriptive geometry to train draftsmen. In the mid to late nineteenth century, many other instructors connected to distinct artistic "traditions," including the academic and its perceived antithesis, the experiential/observation based, designed drawing regimes rooted in geometry, notably the mathematician Louis-Benjamin Francoeur (1773-1849), and the architect Viollet-le-Duc.²⁸⁵ More often than not, these procedures were geared toward public education and as such, can be

decision to begin training by having students draw two- and then three-dimensional geometrical figures seems to have developed from the Republicans' desire to give young children a rational conceptual framework and method in which human nature and the external world were brought into manner...."

²⁸³ Christiane Mauve, "L'art à l'école?," in *Esthétiques du peuple*, 131-144, ed. Jacques Rancière (Paris: St. Denis, 1985).

²⁸⁴ Here, she refers to genre paintings. See: Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, 66-70.

²⁸⁵ Viollet-le-Duc's program was unusual in that it merged the aims of experiential/observation based with geometry. See: Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d'un dessinateur*.

understood as part of a wider tendency to privilege geometric drawing lessons in public schools around the world. That the popularity of such methods exceeded the limited geographical scope of France has come to represent, within the secondary literature on the topic, a preoccupation with utilitarian concerns and global economic competition in modernity. Indeed, its champions, such as Guillaume, Viollet-le-Duc, and politicians like Napoléon III and Ferry, typically envisioned the broadest application of geometry-based systems which would encompass both artistic and industrial learning. By considering Guillaume in light of these debates, this thesis provides a more complete history of the role of geometric learning in nineteenth-century France.

To accommodate multiple career paths, Guillaume, among several others, targeted exercises that diverged from the Academy's emphasis on the human figure; geometry, he believed, would promote skills with universal applicability, that is, "precision" and "exactitude." This is not to suggest that there was no opposition to his regime. Guillaume elsewhere noted a prejudice against methods of precision, and wrote that "L'idée que, dans les écoles grecques, aussi bien chez Polyclète que chez Pythagore ou chez Platon, la géométrie était l'étude première et fondamentale, cette idée nous met en révolte. Nous nous refusons à considérer que le sentiment y trouvait son exercice et son frein..."²⁸⁶ Even though the Academy recommended the study of antiquity, Guillaume noted, the significance of geometry to artistic training was misunderstood. To Guillaume, it was geometry's canons of equilibrium, canons of perfection that supported academic art.²⁸⁷

Far from orchestrating the mechanization of the working classes (and from making work the product of unconscious habits), the object of Guillaume's regime was *le travail réfléchi*, or

²⁸⁶ Eugène Guillaume, "Le Doryphore du musée de Naples," in *Etudes d'art antique et moderne* (Paris: D. Perrin, 1888), 425-6.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 425-6.

“reasoned work” (work that required conscious thought). When he arrived at this aim, whether or not habit was a mark of proficiency became, I argue, a key undercurrent in pedagogical disputes. Indeed, Ravaissou was inclined to think of drawing and visual pedagogy in relationship to his seminal theory of habit published in 1838. Guillaume, on the other hand, designed a regime that upset the relationship between drawing and habit. This perspective can be best illuminated through his ideas about theories of medium, particularly sculpture, the domain in which he made his own reputation as an artist. This chapter thus encourages us to consider Guillaume’s and Ravaissou’s pedagogy alongside, rather than in isolation from, their aesthetic philosophies and artistic practices.

Guillaume: Sculptor, Art Historian, Academician

By the time Guillaume designed a drawing regime, he was an academician who had trained at the École des beaux-arts under the supervision of James Pradier (1790-1852), a man known for his sculptures of idealized, female nudes representative of mythological subject matter and that were classical in style. Like most academicians, Guillaume revered antique precedents as models and influence, and exploited this stylistic and narrative preference over the course of his career, beginning with his sculpture *Thésée trouvant sous un rocher l’épée de son père* that won him the *Prix de Rome* in 1845. At the Villa Médicis, he had executed plaster models (that were later cast in bronze) for the *Faucheur* (1849) and *Les Gracques* (1853), sculptures that were acquired by Napoléon III and les Musées Impériaux, respectively [Figures 22-23]. These projects exemplify Guillaume’s commitment to classicism. *Faucheur* is likely a quote of the *Borghese Gladiator*, a Hellenistic marble sculpture made around 100 B.C.E. Instead of representing a warrior in battle, however, Guillaume features a timeless, male reaper whose ideal muscles are flexed as he valiantly undertakes the strenuous task of reaping grains with a scythe. Whereas

Faucheur heroizes agricultural labor, *Les Gracques* represents a double-portrait bust of two brothers—Tiberius and Gaius Gracchi—elected officials who were assassinated for their efforts to institute political reforms to redistribute wealth and land-holdings in favor of the working classes in the second century B.C.E. Guillaume’s *Gracchi* are depicted as handsome youths presented side-by-side, united by their ideals (which are embodied in the form of a parchment paper that their hands clasp together). Guillaume’s decision to represent a heroic reaper and to monumentalize the youthful, sober Gracchi brothers in the format of a cenotaph was a bold choice given the political climate of France in the 1840s and 1850s. He celebrated the ideal figure of the reaper shortly after the revolutions of 1848 and the upheaval that took place with the start of the Second Empire, when the plight of rural laborers became particularly polarizing in France.²⁸⁸ The death of the Gracchi brothers, who were known for their agrarian reforms, came to symbolize a period of political instability in the Roman Empire. Given the parallels between domestic political upheaval in France and Rome, Guillaume’s classical works carried a not so subtle political connotation.

Regardless of Guillaume’s political position, he was well-admired under the authoritarian Second Empire and during the first few decades of the populist Third Republic. Of all mid-nineteenth-century French artists respected by the Academy and the state, few received as many prestigious posts and commissions as Guillaume. Considered by M. Anatole de Montaisson to be “sain, profondément consciencieux, souvent grave, toujours élevé,” Guillaume was a highly respected artist from the “école de Bourgogne.”²⁸⁹ Patronage for his art was diverse and ranged

²⁸⁸ T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).

²⁸⁹ Pierre Larousse, “Guillaume (Jean-Baptiste-Claude Eugène),” in *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle: français, historique, géographique, mythologique, bibliographique*, T. 17 Suppl. 2 (Paris: Administration du grand Dictionnaire universel, 1866-1877), 1334.

from sculptural commissions on façades of churches and buildings including Sainte-Clotilde, the Louvre and the Opéra Garnier, as well as portrait busts of notable French political, scientific and historical figures ranging from Jules Grévy and Eugène Chevreul to George-Louis Leclerc (Comte de Buffon).

In addition to obtaining noteworthy sculptural commissions, Guillaume climbed the ranks as an art instructor and civil servant alongside Ravaissou. In the 1860s, he earned membership at the Institut (1862) and the Académie des Beaux-Arts (1862), and over the course of his lifetime, he obtained multiple titles affiliated with the *Légion d'honneur*, including *Chevalier* (1855), *Officier* (1867), *Grande Officier* (1889) and *Grande Croix* (1900). Such titles, which exceeded those conferred upon Ravaissou, were bestowed upon him in honor of his rich contributions to France's artistic culture. After serving as a Professor at the École des beaux-arts in 1863, he became the Director from 1864 to 1878 before working as director-general of Fine Arts between 1878-79. It was at this time that Guillaume also conducted important scholarly projects including a biographies of Michelangelo and Charles Blanc, as well as texts on the *Doryphore du Musée de Naples* and the *Panthéon d'Agrippa* (1892).²⁹⁰ His investment in art history, coupled with his writings on aesthetics, made him the most obvious candidate to replace Charles Blanc as *Chaire d'Esthétique* at the Collège de France in 1882. Nonetheless, his investment in technical training never subsided; later in life, he was employed as a drawing professor at the *École polytechnique* (1887-1894) and as Director of the Académie de France in Rome in 1891 to 1904.

Guillaume defies easy categorization, however. Though he represented the Academy and

²⁹⁰ Eugène Guillaume, "Michel-Ange, sculpteur," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2nd per., vol. 13 (1876): 34-118. For more on Guillaume's writing on Michelangelo, see: Claire Black McCoy, "Made to Measure: Eugène Guillaume's Michelangelo," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2017): www.19thc-artworldwide.org.

upheld tradition, by the end of his life he became close friends with Rodin.²⁹¹ After having trained under Lecoq's supervision, Rodin became a sculptor, in addition to a draftsman, known for rejecting the conventions of academicism, especially its emphasis on smooth, polished surfaces, and the idealization of human figures; he instead privileged depictions that communicated emotion through visible texture and exaggerated features. Near the end of his life, Guillaume commissioned Rodin to reproduce his likeness [Figure 24]. Rodin's portrait bust of Guillaume was cast in bronze and rebuffed the idealism and polish which characterized Guillaume's work; instead, he favored an unflattering realism that lacked "finish."²⁹² His face appears old and haggard; his bust, unclothed and marred by Rodin's touch.

At first glance, this might seem like an unusual transaction. As noted by Albert E. Elsen in 2003, "That Rodin should have agreed to [...] to portray him in 1903 briefly made these two men the odd couple of the Paris art world. Guillaume represented institutions, teaching, and a style of art opposed by Rodin all his life."²⁹³ Indeed, there were many obstacles that led Guillaume to be described by Gustave Coquiot in 1915 as "un des plus irréductibles ennemis de Rodin."²⁹⁴ Almost thirty years before the commission, Guillaume was a participant in the scandal that surrounded one of Rodin's entries to the 1876 salon: many people questioned whether or not

²⁹¹ Surviving letters between the two men attest to this fact. Rodin often addressed correspondence to Guillaume as "Mon cher maître" and in one letter, Rodin noted that he was touched by Guillaume's friendship. See: Auguste Rodin to Guillaume, January 3, 1895, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, L52-20(1); Auguste Rodin to Guillaume, February 9, 1903, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, L52-20(2); and Auguste Rodin to Guillaume, May 22, 1904, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, L52-20(3).

²⁹² It is believed that Rodin ceased to work on the bust after Guillaume passed away and left it unfinished. Albert E. Elsen, Walter A. Haas, *Rodin's Art: The Rodin Collection of Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center of Visual Arts at Stanford University* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003), 418-19.

²⁹³ Elsen, *Rodin's Art*, 418-19.

²⁹⁴ Gustave Coquiot, *Rodin: 57 statues, portrait de Rodin par Renoir* (Paris: Ternheim jeune, 1915), 54.

The Age of Bronze, a life-size, unidealized depiction of a male nude, was cast from life [Figure 25].²⁹⁵ When, thirty years later, Rodin agreed to the commission, Rodin had become a celebrity while Guillaume had suffered several professional blows. As early as 1879, Guillaume was being criticized by the art critic Jules Castagnary as “the detractor of free art, [and] the apostle of academic mediocrity.”²⁹⁶ Guillaume’s art and thoughts about artistic training have since received much more scrutiny than appreciation.

That a friendship formed between these two seemingly opposite figures should come as no surprise, however. Admiration for antiquity and an attention toward the technical procedures necessitated by statuary were among the chief concerns shared by both men. When Rodin exhibited the bust of Guillaume at the Salon of 1905, it drew favorable criticism that sheds light on what qualities would have attracted Guillaume to Rodin’s art in the first place. Whereas the critic Roger Marx noted that the portrait attained “à la beauté de l’antique,” Louis Vauxcelles described it as “expressif de feu” with an “intensité de vie extraordinaire.”²⁹⁷ This criticism shows that their artistic commitments were more aligned than previously thought; Rodin, like Guillaume, looked to antiquity for inspiration. Moreover, the two men contributed to discourses on the material production of sculpture. In Maurice Hamel’s review, he praised Rodin’s technical proficiency, writing that: “Le buste d’Eugène Guillaume n’est pas moins admirable par la force de la construction, le serré du travail, la qualité de la ciselure.”²⁹⁸ Guillaume likely was not immune to Rodin’s adept ability to sculpt and could have seen in Rodin’s work a foil to his own

²⁹⁵ Elsen and Haas, *Rodin’s Art*, 418-19.

²⁹⁶ “Courrier,” *Le Siècle* (February 9, 1879) as cited by Mainardi, *The End of the Salon*, footnote 60, page 54.

²⁹⁷ Roger Marx, “Le Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Art,” *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* (15 avril 1905), 115; Louis Vauxcelles, “Sculpture,” *Gil Blas* (14 avril 1905), n.p.

²⁹⁸ Maurice Hamel, “La Sculpture,” in *Le Salon de 1905* (Paris: Manzi, Joyant et Cie, 1905), 34.

failures. Nowhere is this more evident than through criticism by Vauxcelles in 1905, who also championed Rodin's bust of Guillaume, but condemned Guillaume's statuary as "mediocre," undertaken with "la régularité d'un irréprochable industriel." Significantly, Vauxcelles critique of Guillaume's approach would later come to plague his pedagogical regimen as well.²⁹⁹

Ravaisson: Painter, Philosopher, Pedagogical Theorist

That Guillaume ever contradicted Ravaisson, especially as this concerns a commitment to classicism, is surprising given their comparable pedigrees. The two occupied similar social circles and received many of the same honors and awards despite Ravaisson being nine years older. Whereas Guillaume concentrated primarily on the arts, Ravaisson was a philosopher, archaeologist, conservator, and amateur artist made famous by his prize-winning thesis titled *Essai sur la métaphysique d'Aristote* (1837; 1846) and his disquisition on contemporary philosophy, titled *La Philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle* (1867). Ravaisson refused the opportunity to work as a professor of philosophy in Rennes in favor of official—and more cosmopolitan—positions in Paris.³⁰⁰ Instead, he earned a living working as a French civil servant under the Second Empire and Third Republic. In the capital, he held important posts as the Inspector General of Libraries of the Realm (1839-1844; 1847-1853), the Inspector General of Education (1859-1888), and the Honorary Inspector General of Higher Education (1888). In recognition of his excellent work, he was awarded the Legion of Honor (1862). Likewise, the Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres, the Conseil supérieur de l'Instruction publique, and the Académie des sciences morales et politiques each solicited his service as member.

²⁹⁹ Vauxcelles, "Eugène Guillaume," n.p.

³⁰⁰ Mark Sinclair, "Editor's Introduction," in *Félix Ravaisson: Selected Essays*, 1-30 (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

Of central importance to his administrative career and personal life was his keen interest in art. Ravaissou trained as an artist, and throughout his lifetime, he submitted portraits to the Salons under the name Laché. Perhaps as a result of his desire for anonymity, the only known oil painting of his that survives is a self-portrait bust that foregrounds recognizable features, notably his long white hair and beard that earned him the nickname, *le lion* [Figure 26].³⁰¹ Unlike Guillaume, Ravaissou never received much recognition as an artist.³⁰²

Ravaissou surrounded himself with important painters who, on occasion, rendered his likeness, such as Théodore Chassériau (1819-1856) and Jean-Jacques Henner, a figure described in the previous chapter as a major opponent to Lecoq's system of visual memory training [Figures 27-28].³⁰³ Their respective portraits attest to Ravaissou's prominent role in the art world over the course of his lifetime which spanned the greater part of the century. While Chassériau sketched Ravaissou as a young man seated in front of a writing desk, Henner painted him as an established intellectual positioned behind a desk with a book wearing a legion of honor pin on his right lapel. The visualization strategies deployed by each artist accentuate the distinct phases of Ravaissou's life that they documented. Chassériau's sketchy, seemingly unfinished pencil drawing captures Ravaissou at the beginning of his career with his future figuratively undefined. Whereas Chassériau depicted Ravaissou in a casual pose, with one hand in his right pocket and

³⁰¹ Christine Walter, "Ravaissou, Félix," in Philippe Sénéchal and Claire Barbillon, eds., *Dictionnaire critique des historiens de l'art actifs en France de la Révolution à la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris 2009, <http://www.inha.fr/spip.php?article2508>.

³⁰² For scholarship on Ravaissou's surviving drawings (acquired by the Bibliothèque nationale de France), see: Tullio Viola, "The Serpentine Life of Félix Ravaissou: Art, Drawing, Scholarship, and Philosophy," in Markus Rath and Ulrike Feist, eds. *Et in Imagine Ego: Facetten von Bildakt Und Verkörperung*, 155-174 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag: 2012).

³⁰³ During their lifetimes, Chassériau and Henner were distinguished artists who received official recognition over the course of their careers, especially for their depictions of female nudes. Whereas Chassériau primarily produced history paintings that couched these nudes within a mythological account, Henner was widely acclaimed for his use of chiaroscuro and often pursued dramatically lit nudes with bright, white flesh against dark backgrounds.

the other comfortably draped over his lap, Henner's oil painting adopted a smoother, "finished" aesthetic to represent Ravaisson in a more rigid pose with a stern facial expression that reflected his prominent political position under the Third Republic.

Professionally, Ravaisson supported the arts by spearheading public art instruction based on classical figure drawing in primary and secondary schools from the 1850s through 1870s. In 1853, for instance, the Minister of Public Instruction, Hippolyte Fortoul (1811-1856), ordered Ravaisson to direct a committee, the main object of which was to standardize drawing instruction in *lycées* or secondary schools nationwide.³⁰⁴ The committee, which included renowned figures such as Viollet-le-Duc, painter Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), and painter Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin (1809-1864), critically appraised existing drawing techniques like Lecoq's system of visual memory training, and proposed a pedagogical program based on their findings. Their work culminated in a report drafted by Ravaisson titled: *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*.³⁰⁵ His dedication to drawing pedagogy based on classical figure study was furthered through the 1860s and 1870s as he served on similar committees. From 1870-1887, he also worked as a Conservator at the Louvre.

Much like Guillaume, Ravaisson's strong interest in the arts is evident by the numerous texts he wrote on art and art theory. In conjunction with his role at the Louvre, he published essays that shed light on antique Greek sculpture, such as *L'Hercule ÈΠΙΤΡΑΠÉΖΙΟΣ de Lysippe* (1888), "Notice sur une amphore peinte du musée du Louvre, représentant le combat des

³⁰⁴ Hippolyte Fortoul served as Minister of Public Instruction between 1851 and 1856. Scholars often describe the formation of this committee as a direct result of—or the perceived French failure in the category of decorative arts or industrial design at—the first *exposition universelle* at the Crystal Palace. See: Marcel Baizeau, "Introduction," in *Du dessin aux arts plastiques, histoire d'un enseignement*, 10; In a similar vein, Mouna Mekouar's, "Étudier ou rêver l'antique. Félix Ravaisson et la reproduction de la statuaire antique," *Images Re-vues* 1, no. 6 (2005): 1-14, notes that the lack of standardized drawing programs in public schools encouraged the formation of this committee.

³⁰⁵ Ravaisson, *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*.

dieux et des géants” (1876), and *La Vénus de Milo* (1871).³⁰⁶ In these texts, he pursued object-based research on ancient artifacts housed by the Louvre, such as an amphora (an ancient Greek vase with a narrow neck and two handles that hug an oval body), and the *Venus de Milo*, an ancient Greek sculpture “discovered” in 1820 and donated to the Louvre the following year.³⁰⁷ Using these objects, he attempted to answer questions about ancient art including, how to interpret their iconography and can conservators restore artifacts to resemble their appearance prior to centuries of aging and damage. He also paid homage to Renaissance artists who, in line with his grecophilia, privileged classical, idealized models, including Leonardo da Vinci and Pisanello.³⁰⁸ Ravaissou viewed antique Greek art and its stylistic appropriation by figures like da Vinci as the epitome of beauty. Similar to the emphasis on order, rationality, and harmony characteristic of classicism, Ravaissou proffered that “Beauty, ultimately, is the quality of proportions that art has assumed for its own office the expression.”³⁰⁹

Guillaume’s *méthode géométrique*

Guillaume’s contributions to the history of public drawing pedagogy began in earnest in 1865, about fifteen years after Ravaissou first entered these discourses. That year, the

³⁰⁶ Félix Ravaissou, *L’Hercule È IIITPA IIÉZIO Σ de Lysippe* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1888); Félix Ravaissou, “Notice sur une amphore peinte du musée du Louvre, représentant le combat des dieux et des géants,” in *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 20^e année, no. 1 (1876): 34-46; Félix Ravaissou, *La Vénus de Milo* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1871).

³⁰⁷ When Paris was under siege, Ravaissou, then the conservator at the Louvre, stored the Venus de Milo in the basement. This cautionary measure exposed the work to enough humidity that the plaster pieces (which were appended later to the original sculpture where the arms had fallen off), came detached. This led Ravaissou to spearhead a debate about how to restore the statue, especially in relationship to the position of the arms. For more on this history, see: Gregory Curtis, *Disarmed: The Story of the Venus de Milo* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

³⁰⁸ Félix Ravaissou, *Une oeuvre de Pisanello* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1895); and Félix Ravaissou, “Beaux-arts: Léonard de Vinci et l’enseignement du dessin,” *La Revue politique et littéraire: revue des cours littéraires* (1887): 627-629.

³⁰⁹ Ravaissou, “De l’Enseignement du Dessin dans les lycées,” 4.

government commissioned him to draft a formal response to an exhibition hosted by the Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts Appliqués à l'Industrie that centered on existing models of drawing education. The Union Centrale, an institution founded in 1864 as legacy to the Société d'encouragement de l'art industriel (1857-1863), took as its mission the amelioration of French decorative arts. Growing pressure to improve drawing education was driven by anxieties about France's weakened supremacy within the domain of applied arts. With support from the state, private manufacturers and artists, the Union Centrale staged public outreach events geared toward the unification of art and industry; that the decorative arts could be improved via the merger of art and industry was a widespread belief perpetuated by the Union centrale's public exhibitions and lectures, as well as *La Revue des arts décoratifs*, a journal published between 1880 and 1902.³¹⁰

Guillaume's report, which culminated in a speech at the Union Centrale on December 10, 1865 and a publication titled *Idée générale d'un enseignement élémentaire des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie* (1866), responded to the *Exposition des écoles de dessin*, an exhibition that took place at the Union centrale in 1863 and featured over 8000 objects.³¹¹ Drawings, molds, and their models from over 239 establishments were exhibited side-by-side to illustrate the status of French artistic and industrial production.³¹² Guillaume's response spoke little of what was actually on display; instead, he used the space to describe the nature of drawing, then to

³¹⁰ Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 356.

³¹¹ Guillaume, *Idée générale d'un enseignement*; A catalogue published in conjunction with the *Exposition de 1869*, notes that this exhibition took place in 1863; Union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie, *Catalogue des écoles de dessin et supplément au catalogue des oeuvres et des produits modernes* (Paris: à l'union centrale, 1869), v.

³¹² Renaud d'Enfert and Daniel Lagoutte, eds., *Un Art pour tous: le dessin à l'école de 1800 à nos jours* (Paris/Rouen: Institut national de recherche pédagogique, 2004), 12; Laurent, *L'Art utile*, 118.

recommend a series of pedagogical reforms that would better accommodate artistic and industrial learning. That drawing instruction should no longer estrange the fine from the applied arts was the major principle guiding Guillaume's work. "Nous n'avons qu'un regret," he explained, "c'est que cet enseignement soit généralement séparé du dessin d'art, et qu'au lieu d'en être considéré comme le fondement, il ne soit pas même envisagé comme en étant une branche parallèle."³¹³

The need to forge an alliance between art and industry earned official recognition under the Second Empire and Third Republic: shortly after Guillaume's publication, Victor Duruy (1811-1894), the Minister of Public Instruction between 1863 and 1869 who had training as an apprentice himself, added authoritative weight to the belief that drawing instruction would prove to be advantageous to both the arts and industry.³¹⁴

To encourage unity among the arts, Guillaume imagined a set of drawing strategies rooted in geometry that could support practices ranging from architecture, sculpture and painting to the decorative arts and engineering. As previously noted, the emphasis on geometric procedures was not unprecedented.³¹⁵ What separated Guillaume's program from these precedents was the belief that it was foundational to the fine and applied arts. Guillaume hoped his program would serve as a groundwork for individuals seeking careers in multiple fields. Though drawing's application to the fine arts was an important preoccupation, Guillaume maintained that "il est préférable de montrer à dessiner comme si la carrière d'artiste ou celle d'ingénieur n'existaient pas. Mais cela ne veut pas dire que l'on doive négliger l'occasion qui est

³¹³ Guillaume, *Idée générale d'un enseignement*, 11.

³¹⁴ D'Enfert, *Un Art pour tous*, 6 and 12.

³¹⁵ There had been multiple efforts to institute drawing regimes founded on geometric principles in France. These included the painter Bachelier's *Discours sur l'utilité des écoles élémentaires en faveur des arts mécaniques* (1766) and the mathematician Francoeur's system, known under the title *Le dessin linéaire d'après la méthode de l'enseignement mutuel* (1819) which taught linear drawing to meet economic demands.

offerte, par l'étude du dessin, de perfectionner le goût des élèves et, partant, le goût public.”³¹⁶

The technical language of drawing (such as lines, surfaces, plans, symmetry, proportion), also labeled as the *science du dessin*, he claimed, did not differ between the geometer or artist which was what made it so universally applicable.³¹⁷ At its core, geometry depended on contours that had utility in each domain of the fine arts. He wrote:

Les contours tracés sur un plan de manière à représenter les objets qui sont dans l'espace consistent le genre de dessin qui s'applique à la peinture. L'étude des contours dont les rapports deviennent aussi nombreux et aussi variés qu'il y a de points de station autour d'un corps, c'est l'application du dessin à la statuaire, à la sculpture d'architecture et d'ornement.³¹⁸

Line drawings, he argued, supported painting by representing an object as it exists in space (perspectivally), and supported three-dimensional practices, such as by delineating orthographic projections (geometrically).

To Guillaume, this meant that drawing also could be exercised to represent objects according to both truth (geometrically) and appearance (in perspective). Whereas *dessin géométral* offered mathematical truths inaccessible by eye alone, perspectival drawings corresponded to physiology. Geometrical drawing is “dans son essence et dans ses procédés purement mathématique,” Guillaume noted.³¹⁹ In that sense, it was an abstraction that conformed to the innate desire to depict objects how we know them to be rather than how we see them. Because geometry was grounded in reason and science, it became characterized as universally

³¹⁶ Eugène Guillaume, “L'Enseignement du dessin,” *L'Art pour tous: encyclopédie de l'art industriel et décoratif* (juin 1903), n.p.

³¹⁷ Ibid., n.p.

³¹⁸ Guillaume, “Dessin,” 684.

³¹⁹ Eugène Guillaume and Jules Pillet, “L'Enseignement du dessin,” in *Recueil des monographies pédagogiques, publiées à l'occasion de l'Exposition universelle de 1889*, Tome IV (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1889), 549.

applicable. For Guillaume, the arts no longer would be divided by specialization, but instead, would be unified by science.

The idea that the world operated according to geometric laws earned traction at a time when people were seeking political and economic stability. “On observe d’ailleurs que la figure des corps célestes et de leurs systèmes, et même que la forme de plusieurs corps inorganiques et celle de tous les corps organisés attestent l’intervention d’une géométrie suprême,” Guillaume explained. “La régularité apparaît dans la création comme la marque d’une intervention intelligente.”³²⁰ He was not alone in subscribing to this belief; figures like Viollet-le-Duc also saw in nature geometric laws and connected their discernment to intelligence.

A year after Guillaume’s program acquired official traction, Viollet-le-Duc published a drawing manual that rivaled *la méthode Guillaume*. Couched within a narrative titled *Histoire d’un dessinateur* (1879), his pedagogical regime unfolds through the apprenticeship that emerged between the novel’s two protagonists, Jean and M. Majorin.³²¹ From military and factory work, to careers as a merchant or lawyer, and as an artist or engineer, Viollet-le-Duc, like Guillaume, marketed drawing instruction as foundational to a wide range of careers. And it is upon this premise that M. Majorin introduces Jean to a variety of disciplines via geometry-based drawing practices. Viollet-le-Duc’s text has been the focus of immense scrutiny in existing scholarship; it has served as a metaphor for his own childhood and as a means to flout academicism, as well as represented an important source for his architectural practice.³²² It has not been discussed often

³²⁰ Guillaume, “Dessin,” 685.

³²¹ Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d’un dessinateur*.

³²² E.H. Gombrich, “Viollet-le-Duc’s *Histoire d’un dessinateur*,” in *Discovering Child Art: Essays on Childhood, Primitivism, and Modernism*, ed. by Jonathan Fineberg, 27-39 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Aron Vinegar, “Chatography,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 71, no. 3 (September 2012): 362-385; Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination*.

in relationship to Guillaume's project even though the two men championed similar drawing strategies grounded in geometry lessons. They likewise had much more in common; they were acquaintances who frequented the same social circles and shared an admiration for art history.³²³

In many ways, Viollet-le-Duc's writing reinforced Guillaume's beliefs about drawing education and practices. Geometry's universal applicability, for starters, was one of the guiding assumptions that drove Viollet-le-Duc's regime. Much like Guillaume's position, Viollet-le-Duc described geometry as the ordering principle of the universe: "La géométrie est dans tout, on la rencontre partout, elle est la grande maîtresse de la nature donc, il la faut savoir si l'on veut observer et comprendre les produits de la création."³²⁴ That geometry could be wielded as an instrument to access nature's truths was what made it fundamental to primary instruction. Viollet-le-Duc's program diverged from Guillaume's regime, particularly as this concerned experiential and nature-based learning. To uncover these laws of nature, Viollet-le-Duc's protagonist, M. Majorin, has his pupil, Jean, practice geometry in a variety of geographic conditions. For instance, in chapter seventeen, "Douze Jours dans les Alpes," Jean learned about glaciers, and their ability to shape the landscape.³²⁵ In "La pointe d'Ucello, à Splüghen," and "Frottement des glaciers sur les rochers," Jean first indicated the principal lines before representing the geometric angles visible in nature.³²⁶ This marked a shift from Guillaume's regime, which made no provisions for practices outside the classroom.

³²³ According to letters acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, Guillaume was close friends with Viollet-le-Duc. In their correspondence Viollet-le-Duc referred to Guillaume as "Mon cher ami" and signed a letter "Votre viel ami." See: Viollet-le-Duc to Guillaume, no date, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France, L22-101, and Viollet-le-Duc to Guillaume, May 24, 1875, Fonds Eugène Guillaume (1840-1926), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

³²⁴ Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d'un dessinateur*, 32.

³²⁵ Ibid., 251.

³²⁶ Ibid., 255.

What the two men had in common was the desire to train individuals to rationally comprehend the visible world using mathematics as a guide. When Guillaume argued that geometry also had a relationship to the inter-workings of the mind, he, like Viollet-le-Duc, understood it to provide order to thought. Guillaume explained:

Par la rigueur de sa méthode, par la nécessité ou nous sommes de lier nos idées, de leur imposer des règles, des bornes et une mesure, par le besoin impérieux que nous éprouvons de former des plans réguliers et définis, la géométrie tient au plus intime de l'intelligence humaine, si avide dans ses conceptions d'un ordre formel et de la conséquence rigoureuse qui semble manquer aux événements.³²⁷

This was in line with Republican ideology during the first few decades of the Third Republic which privileged ideas of aesthetic harmony as a reflection of social harmony.³²⁸ Though Guillaume's program did not prioritize experiential learning as did Viollet-le-Duc's, the two prescribed to the notion that vision could curb knowledge if one was not trained how to see or rather, how to understand what was seen. For Marjorin, geometry's utility, as a tool for knowledge, depended upon a particular conception of the relationship between seeing and knowing. Intended to educate the eye, Viollet-le-Duc explained through his narrative that teaching students to see and draw "geometrically" resists the eye's susceptibility to deception or illusion.³²⁹

Drawing Figures: Ravaisson's Classicism

Guillaume's emphasis on geometry flew in the face of practices that were recommended by Ravaisson for over a decade. Beginning in the 1850s, Ravaisson advocated pedagogical

³²⁷ Guillaume, "Dessin," 685.

³²⁸ Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, 92.

³²⁹ Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d'un dessinateur*, 51.

programs based on antique figure study. Ravaissou's opportunity to champion his method began while carrying out his bureaucratic duties; these included leading commissions designed to evaluate and propose artistic curricula, and serving as a member of the *Conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique* and as *Inspecteur général de l'enseignement supérieur pour les lettres*. In a report drafted in 1854, for instance, he recommended a regimen that emphasized figure study as the foundation for drawing instruction. In addition to presiding over a committee assigned to evaluate and suggest drawing curricula in 1853, Ravaissou also served on another board to appraise drawing programs practiced in municipal schools in Paris in 1863.³³⁰ Building from his earlier commission, this project included both the critical appraisal of then popular drawing systems, and the sanctioning of the most effective program. He also worked on more administrative tasks, such as developing a budget for drawing aids and designing a qualifying exam for candidates interested in teaching drawing.³³¹

According to his first plan, drawing lessons began at *collège*, French schools for students between the ages of 11 and 15 years.³³² In the *sixième* and *cinquième années* (which currently corresponds to grades 6 and 7 in most American schools), exercises included the imitation of simple figures, ornamentation and parts of the head using a *crayon* (which referred to a lead or chalk pencil).³³³ Following this, in the fourth year (grade 8 in North American middle schools), teachers instructed students in the rudiments of perspective, human proportions, and the human

³³⁰ The members included MM. Dumas, Le comte de Nieuwerkerke, Merruau, Denière, Onfroy, Léon de Laborde, Ravaissou, Baltard, Viollet-le-Duc, Gérôme (painter), Marguerin, and Edouard Brongniart. An untitled article published in *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* no. 31 (10 Juillet 1863), 270-1 describes the committee's role.

³³¹ Ibid., 270-1.

³³² Ravaissou, *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, 74.

³³³ Ibid., 62, 74.

head after prints or photographs.³³⁴ In the third and second years, students drew the head and extremities primarily after photographs of classical reliefs and sculptures, or after photographs of object drawings by Renaissance masters. Throughout the third year (which corresponds to grade 9), students also mastered drawing “artificial” forms, such as furniture, decorative arts, ornament and edifices.³³⁵

When Ravaissou outlined a pedagogical “method,” he addressed art theory more than practice. In fact, his written accounts on drawing equate its instruction with the education of the eye (which he conceived as the eye’s ability to gauge proportions). Excluded from his reports were more material concerns, such as how instructors could—in practical terms—transmit to students abstract modes of behavior that become second nature (like learning to see or how to hold the crayon), and effective classroom design. Among his many contributions to the history of art education, Ravaissou produced photographic and plaster drawing models, and eventually, authored texts on the necessity and proposed scope of art pedagogy in public schools.³³⁶ As a result, one can only speculate that Ravaissou may have recommended a well-lit room with desks appropriate to practicing on two-dimensional models. Unlike the large amphitheater styled seating characteristic of life drawing courses at the École des beaux-arts, it is more likely that Ravaissou imagined a classroom in which some desks faced the wall away from the light source to accommodate smaller, flat models that needed to be fixed against a surface (like a wall or easel) for observation, as this was key to his methods.

³³⁴ Ibid., 74.

³³⁵ Ibid., 75.

³³⁶ For his writing on drawing pedagogy, see: Ravaissou, *De l’enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*; Ravaissou, *L’Art dans l’école*; Félix Ravaissou, “Beaux-arts: Léonard de Vinci et l’enseignement du dessin”; and Félix Ravaissou, “Dessin” and “Art” in *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d’instruction primaire*, ed. F. Buisson (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1887). Ravaissou also wrote about the goals of education more broadly. See: Félix Ravaissou, “Éducation,” *Revue politique et littéraire: Revue Bleue* 1, 17 (23 April 1887): 513-520.

Ravaisson hardly described the actual act of instruction. Instead, he was preoccupied with the production of models in the 1850s and 1860s, especially after he received a stipend to photograph drawing aids as something like an addendum to his 1854 report.³³⁷ These photographic models culminated in a series of 138 images titled *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique* published in 1875.³³⁸ The models ranged from black and white photographs of classical sculptures representing muses, nymphs, and pagan gods, such as Bacchus, Venus, and Apollo, to drawings after the Renaissance artists, such as Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Holbein, and Rogier van der Weyden [Figures 29-32]. It also included a study of a female figure after *Prix de Rome* winner Flandrin (who also sat on Ravaisson's 1853 committee to reorganize drawing pedagogy). Although he privileged figure study, Ravaisson's program was not limited to human or sculpted models. Ravaisson, well aware of the increasing pressure to develop decorative arts and industrial design production in France, incorporated classical ornament and geometricized shapes in his books. Keeping in line with his grecophilia, these models included fragments of friezes and rosettes from Athenian temples [Figure 33]. The photographs typically were printed no larger than—approximately—an 8 x 11 ½ inch paper, but they have since been pasted onto large, blue construction paper. Today, these photographs are held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

While Ravaisson's photographs never received official sanction and thus, were not distributed nationwide, his models were deployed in the 1860s at some municipal schools in

³³⁷ Note pour Monsieur le Ministre, Paris, 24 avril 1864, F17 6902, Archives nationales.

³³⁸ Cent trente-huit des photographies du corpus de Ravaisson intitulé *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique*, Cote Kz-365 (1-3) Boîte Fol., Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Estampes et de la Photographie published as *Les Classiques de l'art: modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin* (Paris: Rapilly, 1875). For scholarship on these photographs, see: Mekouar, "Étudier ou rêver l'antique. Félix Ravaisson et la reproduction de la statuaire antique."

Paris.³³⁹ His models also were exhibited at world's fairs on numerous occasions and experienced great success. For instance, Ravaisson first won an award for his photographic project at the *Exposition Universelle de Vienne* in 1873 and exhibited them again in Paris in 1878.³⁴⁰

To forward his pedagogical program, Ravaisson also produced plaster casts, which were reproductions of sculptures and ornaments. These were part of a broader interest in developing a *musée de plâtres*, or museum of plaster casts that existed across Europe that sought to connect nation-states to Greek and Roman lineage, especially in an age of renewed imperial (or colonial) ambitions. In the nineteenth century, many European states commissioned the production of plaster casts after antique sculptures for pedagogical purposes.³⁴¹ This made the works of antiquity more widely accessible to those who could not afford to travel to Greece or Italy. To produce these models, the maker applied plaster directly onto the sculpture to create a mold that could then be filled; because plaster was white, it provided a visibly convincing—not to mention expedient and cheaper alternative to reproducing in—marble. Like his photographic series, Ravaisson first lobbied for the production of plaster casts after Greek sculptures and glyptics in 1862, and later published written defenses of this position in 1875 and 1885.³⁴² In these essays,

³³⁹ Note pour Monsieur le Ministre, Paris, 24 avril 1864, F17 6902, Archives nationales.

³⁴⁰ This information is listed in the Commissariat général de France's *Liste des Récompenses décernées aux exposants français par le jury international*. According to this list, Ravaisson won a Médaille de mérite. See F/21/526, Archives nationales; The Commissariat général's catalogue titled *Exposition universelle de Vienne, 1873: France. Produits industriels* (Paris: Hôtel de Cluny, 1873), 528-9 lists his contribution as "Modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin; photographies d'après les chefs-d'oeuvres de l'art de différentes époques."; *Exposition universelle de 1878: Catalogue du Ministre de l'instruction publique des cultes et des beaux-arts*, volume 1 (Paris: Imprimerie de la société de publications périodiques, 1878), 61-2. This catalogue lists Ravaisson's contribution as "Modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin, publiés sous les auspices du Ministre de l'instruction publique (photographies transformées en impressions inaltérables par le procédé Arosa)."

³⁴¹ For a broader history of the plaster cast, see: Rune Frederiksen and Eckart Marchand, eds., *Plaster Casts: Making, Collecting and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010).

³⁴² Félix Ravaisson, "Projet d'un musée de plâtres," in *Comptes rendues des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 19 année, no. 4 (1875) and "Conférence de M. Ravaisson: Un musée de moulages d'antiques," in *Séance d'ouverture du 11 novembre 1885 à l'École spéciale d'architecture* (Paris: Imprimeur Delalain frères, 1885-6).

he proposed to exhibit these casts at a public museum that was never realized, but which he envisioned would feature plaster models of antique sculpture for archeological and artistic purposes.³⁴³ This type of exhibition would serve a pedagogical function in line with his theory of art; it would train viewers in *le bon goût*. He explained that:

...pour développer le goût dans nos pays et même pour y éveiller le génie, il ne fallait pas seulement établir dans toutes les écoles des Musées élémentaires composés de reproductions des chefs-d'oeuvres de l'art, ce qu'on a essayé de faire depuis par l'institution des Musées scolaires, il fallait aussi former à Paris un Musée central où seraient réunies des reproductions par le moulage des plus belles oeuvres qu'eût produites l'art aux meilleurs temps, et particulièrement aux époques les plus brillantes de la Grèce.³⁴⁴

Ravaisson's proposal to include antique casts in a new museum never came to fruition. It was a project idea which stemmed from an earlier exhibition he organized in 1860 featuring plaster *moulages* of antique sculptures.³⁴⁵ As part of this project, Ravaisson commissioned twenty-five casts that were exhibited at the Palais de l'Industrie and at the Musée Napoléon III.³⁴⁶

The Debate

The demise of the Second Empire in 1870 did little to disrupt the debates concerning the nature and necessity of drawing pedagogy. During the early years of the Third Republic, Ravaisson and Guillaume spearheaded this campaign in an official capacity. Beginning in 1876, they were among the many celebrated thinkers called upon by the French state, presided over by Philippe Chennevières (Director of Fine Arts), to design drawing curriculum for primary and

³⁴³ Ravaisson, "Projet d'un musée de plâtres."

³⁴⁴ Ravaisson, "Conférence de M. Ravaisson: Un musée de moulages d'antiques," 17.

³⁴⁵ Walter, "Ravaisson, Félix."

³⁴⁶ For more on this exhibition, see: Meredith Shedd, "Phidias in Paris: Félix Ravaisson's *Musée Grec* at the Palais de l'Industrie en 1860," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (April 1985): 155-170.

secondary schools. Although they were appointed to prestigious official posts, their ideological positions did not align perfectly with the range of political factions that came into—and lost—power during this period. The art historians Claire McCoy and Patricia Mainardi both noted that Guillaume’s appointment as successor to Charles Blanc took place at the discretion of a monarchist government (toward which Guillaume had a slight ideological preference).³⁴⁷ Ravaisson, on the other hand, adopted a liberal political position that appeared out of touch with the realities of French domestic policies.³⁴⁸ This led the historian of philosophy Marc Sinclair to describe Ravaisson’s aristocratic ideology as “patrician, or that his political evocations of the past—ancient Greece was ruled by gentleness just as the court at Versailles was governed by sympathy—are picturesque....”³⁴⁹

When the two men were solicited to join a committee to design drawing education for public curriculum, far from adopting similar perspectives, a notorious debate ensued.³⁵⁰

Geometric-based drawing programs diverged from the academic precedents recommended by Ravaisson in many obvious ways. Particularly, *la méthode géométrique* overthrew Ravaisson’s

³⁴⁷ McCoy describes Guillaume as mostly indifferent where politics are concerned, however. McCoy, “Made to Measure: Eugène Guillaume’s Michelangelo,” n.p.; Mainardi, *The End of the Salon*, 48.

³⁴⁸ Mark Sinclair, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Félix Ravaisson: Selected Essays*, 1 -30 (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁵⁰ This debate ensued at administrative meetings and in publications throughout the mid to late nineteenth century. For transcripts from these meetings see the following unpublished archival material: Commissions de l’enseignement du dessin, *Procès-verbaux des séances*, 21 July 1879a, in folders Procès-verbaux de Commissions 1876-1883, F21 7540, Archives nationales; Commissions de l’enseignement du dessin, *Procès-verbaux des séances*, 25 July 1879b, in folders Procès-verbaux de Commissions 1876-1883, F21 7540, Archives nationales; and Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts, *Procès-verbaux des séances de la Commission de l’organisation de l’enseignement du dessin*, 1876, in folders Procès-verbaux de Commissions 1876-1883, F21 7540, Archives nationales; A response to the administrative debates which took place at these meetings was published by Séailles as “Deux méthodes dans l’enseignement du dessin: M. Guillaume.—M. Ravaisson,” 182-188; For secondary literature on their debate see Genet-Delacroix, “L’enseignement artistique au XIXe siècle,” 34, 38-39; Chantal Georgel, *L’enfant et l’image au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1988), 38-40; and Laurent, *Les arts appliqués en France: Genèse d’un enseignement*, 118, 124-5.

decision to make human figure study the starting point of a draftsman's education. It likewise privileged mathematical knowledge over retinal data. Guillaume's work was less a reaction to the Academy than it was a rejection of the emphasis placed on "sentiment" and empiricism within art training. His primary qualm with existing procedures based on these qualities, above all copying two-dimensional reproductions of art, was that he believed that they had no rational basis and therefore, were not representative of universal laws.³⁵¹ Art that was not produced geometrically had, to Guillaume's line of thinking, no logic or correspondence with truth. Instead of privileging tone, the effects of light and shadow, or textures, this program prioritized the analysis of parts.³⁵²

Guillaume believed that geometry held a privileged relationship to nature and therefore, so should the human mind. The conviction that nature was a product of geometric laws, in fact, led Guillaume to conclude that "si la géométrie préside à la conformation des êtres...elle existe aussi dans la constitution des esprits."³⁵³ If the mind operated in accordance with geometric truths (rather than sentiment), Guillaume claimed, human thought operated with reason. The notion that geometry provided an order and logic to thought was foundational to his regime. Nature, he fathomed, needed the guide of universal laws to prevent anarchy.³⁵⁴ This was because he understood the universe to be governed by geometric truths.

When Jules Ferry officially sanctioned standardized drawing courses in public schools in 1878, he adopted the program designed by Guillaume. Existing scholarship has interpreted this

³⁵¹ Guillaume, "Dessin," 684; Genet-Delacroix, "L'enseignement artistique au XIXe siècle," 33.

³⁵² Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, 111. She notes that this was a means to train students to organize information.

³⁵³ Guillaume, "Dessin," 685.

³⁵⁴ Guillaume, *Idée générale d'un enseignement élémentaire*, 22, 59.

as evocative of the Ferry administration's pledge to prioritize France's economic imperatives over the artistic, and arguably upheld art as an elite diversion.³⁵⁵ Guillaume, such scholarship contends, convinced officials that his scientific *méthode géométrique* encouraged reason and debarred sentiment, making it an apt system to train skilled workers (a goal which acquired traction due to the losses suffered after the Franco-Prussian war and Prussia's annexation of Alsace-Lorraine). Despite his reservations about Ravaissou's method, Guillaume made concessions, however, by including drawing after antique plaster statues and the human figure. Because this was a seasoned pedagogical technique used in art education for hundreds of years, it would have been almost impossible if not unthinkable to exclude it from his program. Unlike Ravaissou, whose program commenced with figure drawing, Guillaume introduced the human form at the final stage of schooling (by the time many students already would have quit to start their professional careers).³⁵⁶ To prepare drawing instructors in this area, Guillaume taught drawing after antique plaster casts and after the live model to candidates interested in teaching drawing such as at the 1882 *Session Normale pour la préparation des Candidats aux certificats d'aptitude à l'enseignement du dessin*.³⁵⁷ These were courses designed for future drawing

³⁵⁵ Christiane Mauve proposes this argument in "L'art à l'école?," 131-144; Monnier, *L'Art et ses institutions en France*, 234-5; Laurent, *Les arts appliqués en France: Genèse d'un enseignement*, 124-5.

³⁵⁶ Nesbit notes "Still more programs were elaborated for the last, but optional years of secondary schooling in lycée...where the student was introduced to the drawing of the body, both human and animal, and to the study of landscapes. These would by and large be studied through the imitation of works of art. Only here, at the point well beyond the schooling of the average citizen, did the fine art tradition make a timid entrance." See: Nesbit, *Their Common Sense*, 30-31.

³⁵⁷ These sessions took place on Tuesday, April 11th from 9 to 11 and from 1:30-3:30 at the École des Beaux-Arts, and on Friday, April 14th from 9-11 and 1:30-3:30 at the École des beaux-arts. See AJ/53/166, Archives nationales; On page 37 of Genet-Delacroix's "L'enseignement artistique au XIXe siècle," she states that "L'arrêté du 16 juin 1881 rend le dessin obligatoire pour le certificat d'études primaires élémentaires, celui du 23 décembre 1882 introduit le dessin comme matière d'examen au certificat d'aptitude au professorat dans les écoles normales." As explained by Molly Nesbit, "The 1881 programs in drawing, for example, were accompanied by a stricter set for use in the teachers' colleges. In preparation for the certification examination, the brevet élémentaire, the rules for drawing were clarified in ways one might not expect: as projection was separated from the perspective, the teachers' program took care to distinguish line's male and female parts." See Nesbit, *Their Common Sense*, 79.

teachers.

In its official form, *la méthode géométrique* can be summarized into three stages beginning with *dessin linéaire*, followed by *le dessin d'ornement*, and culminating in *dessin d'imitation*. *La Chronique des Arts et de la curiosité* issued an official statement by A. Bardoux, the Minister of Public Instruction, who outlined both the scope of the curriculum and its models shortly after it was sanctioned by law.³⁵⁸ The most elementary procedures—geared toward children ages 6-8—taught students to copy straight lines and planar geometric figures, and the rudiments of perspective.

Tracés de lignes droites, évaluation à vue de leurs longueurs absolues; division de ces droites en parties égales; appréciation des rapports suivant lesquels elles sont divisées; copie de lignes droites fractionnées d'une manière quelconque, tels seront les exercices préliminaires que le professeur imposera aux élèves, comme une gymnastique préparatoire et indispensable destinée à former leur coup d'oeil en ce qui concerne la première des trois dimensions, la longueur.³⁵⁹

Guillaume understood drawing to exercise the eye, to train children to see lines and to gauge relative proportions. However, his program diverged from Ravaisson's in that he elected to practice on simple geometric shapes and encouraged decomposition of forms that were based less on what could be observed in nature than mathematical law. Guillaume placed the drawing models at the center of the classroom. Instructors used *modèles muraux* on the black board or on large sheets of papers to display techniques of reproduction, then circulated to observe each student's progress.³⁶⁰ This period would continue with the study of regular curves (such as ellipses and spirals) and would culminate in ornament inspired by organic matter.³⁶¹ It was at this

³⁵⁸ A. Bardoux, "Enseignement du dessin," *La Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité* (25 mai 1878), 161-2.

³⁵⁹ Guillaume, "Dessin," 685.

³⁶⁰ Guillaume and Pillet, *L'enseignement du dessin*, 31-32.

³⁶¹ Guillaume, "Dessin," 685.

level that Guillaume incorporated *dessin dicté* (or drawings performed based on the instructor's verbal direction) and a variation on Lecoq's *dessin de mémoire*.³⁶²

Subsequently, the second stage of instruction was dedicated to the representation of three-dimensional objects. Students between the ages 9 and 12 copied ornament often those with curves and ellipses, such as rosettes, foliage, moldings, and vases. It was in these courses that students began to distinguish between geometrical and perspectival drawings more seriously. In a surviving *Cahier à dessin*, for instance, the program required students to visualize objects from two different angles, known as orthographic projection (a term used to describe the two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional object from multiple viewpoints including above, below, and the sides) [Figure 34]. This workbook featured an oil flask from the top and side views (also referred to as the plan and elevation, respectively). To begin, the student must determine which side to represent first. From this view, the student projects the second view onto a different plane using projectors drawn from the edges of the initial view. The same process was used to depict a tankard in a *Cahier à dessin* from 1890 [Figure 35]. The student divided the page into four quadrants. In the top left quadrant, the student represented the side view. From there, the student plotted projectors onto the bottom left quadrant to depict the plan from above.

Finally, advanced courses geared toward 12-14-year-old children had students practice on prints and three-dimensional objects in relief including architectural forms, human heads, to plants and fruit, as well as machines. Henri Jules Jean Geoffroy's 1895 oil on canvas, *Une leçon de dessin à l'école primaire*, illustrates this phase in a standard drawing class [Figure 36]. In the foreground, Geoffroy, commonly known as Géo, depicts about a dozen boys attentively copying an architectural plaster cast on upright easels (as opposed to horizontal desks that would

³⁶² Ibid., 686.

encourage students to look away from the model); the teacher looms over a seated child's drawing board to offer points of advice. The child's eyes are fixated on the teacher's hand as it demonstrates the act of line drawing or corrects the student's work. *Une leçon de dessin à l'école primaire*'s clean, sober classroom, coupled with the students' concentration, embodied the values of the Third Republic and its call to order. This was one of five paintings commissioned in 1893 by the Minister of Public Instruction to represent scenes from "la vie scolaire" in Paris, in Brittany, and Algeria.³⁶³

Ten years later, Guillaume and his colleague, Jules Pillet, published a more detailed drawing manual organized around the two primary modes of training taught simultaneously: imitation and geometric drawing exercises.³⁶⁴ In each system, they recommended that instructors deploy a graduated method that begins with the elementary study of two-dimensional to three-dimensional objects and figures. For imitation, models then ranged from first the reproduction of lines and angles, to ornaments (like rose windows) and regular curves; then, instructors assigned the depiction of three-dimensional figures in projection and perspectively, such as ornaments in relief (like *rais de coeur*). Before culminating in human figure study, exercises geared toward imitation privileged architectural fragments and an introduction to human figure and animal study. In geometric drawing lessons, teachers adopted a similar framework that began with the study of two-dimensional figures, such as regular polygons, to the execution of simple motifs and decorations including *carrelages* and *parquetages* [Figure 37]. Subsequently, students likewise pursued three-dimensional figures, like the projection of solids, the elementary study of architecture, and applications of these exercise in topography and drawings of buildings and

³⁶³ Paul Leroi, "Dictionnaire de la peinture au salon de 1894," *L'art: revue mensuelle illustrée* (1894): 146.

³⁶⁴ Eugène Guillaume and J. Pillet, *L'enseignement du dessin. Recueil des monographies pédagogiques publiées à l'occasion de l'Exposition Universelle de 1889*, t. IV (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1889).

machines.

With the exception of Jimena Canales's article "Movement Before Cinematography: The High-Speed Qualities of Sentiment" (2006), these deliberations have not been the focus of much sustained scrutiny.³⁶⁵ Canales, a historian of science with an expertise in philosophies of time and time-based media, argues that the success of Guillaume's program corresponded to improvements in cinematographic technologies. When Guillaume designed *la méthode géométrique*, he explicitly countered Ravaisson's emphasis on empiricism; it was only through exact measurements, he believed, that individuals arrived at truth. Canales explains that photography's role in drawing education exacerbated Guillaume's and Ravaisson's opposing perspectives on vision's relationship to truth. Whereas Ravaisson deployed photographic models, Guillaume condemned photography as an unscientific tool, as an instrument incapable of representing movement faithfully because it isolates individual moments. The truth value of photographs indeed became part of a wider discourse in nineteenth-century artistic and scientific discourses. In the twentieth century, Guillaume's position—that sequential photography and burgeoning cinematographic technologies rectified the shortcomings of instantaneous photography—became, as Canales argues, crystalized; it was commonplace to characterize synthesis as the product of distinct instants of analysis. Canales recounts the debates between Ravaisson and Guillaume to unearth an alternative conception of movement, "where 'sentiment' and 'spirit' played essential roles" she notes.³⁶⁶

While Canales's work offers the most sophisticated account of the conflict between Ravaisson and Guillaume, it falls short on a few accounts. Canales goes so far as to argue that

³⁶⁵ Jimena Canales, "Movement Before Cinematography: The High-Speed Qualities of Sentiment," *Journal of Visual Culture* 5, no. 3 (2006): 275-294.

³⁶⁶ Canales, "Movement Before Cinematography: The High-Speed Qualities of Sentiment," 289.

Ravaissou's and Guillaume's opposing ideas about education extended to fundamentally incompatible epistemological worldviews.³⁶⁷ Her article exaggerates points of distinction between the two figures who—in actuality—had very similar aesthetic preferences and career trajectories. For example, when Guillaume designed his regime, he cited the same sources as Ravaissou, particularly Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Pascal. Moreover, by mapping their pedagogies alongside broader debates about the nature of movement and scientific truth, her article overlooks the ramifications of these debates on the production of art and questions of art-making (the primary domain in which these discussions unfolded). One way to reorient this dispute is to highlight more closely photography's unstable position within drawing education.

That photography emerged as a particular point of contention between Ravaissou's and Guillaume's pedagogical programs has been examined by Canales.³⁶⁸ In particular, she has examined how the debates staged at the meetings of the *Conseil supérieur* unraveled around questions about the medium of models. In the 1860s-1870s, photographic reproductions of painted and sculpted models were the backbone of Ravaissou's program (and was, at the time, an increasingly common practice among artists). When Guillaume's method became official in the late 1870s, however, drawing after photographic models was prohibited in the classroom, particularly because of photography's relationship to empiricism. In the meeting minutes from the *Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts* in 1876, M. le Préfet chose to “repousse absolument toute espèce de modèle photographique, comme...dangereux au point de vue de l'enseignement qu'au point de vue du goût. La photographie est fatalement un traduction inintelligente et infidèle, tant pour les oeuvres de sculpture que pour les oeuvres de peinture, qu'il ne faut pas mettre sous les

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 275-294.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 286-7.

yeux des enfants.”³⁶⁹ There was subsequently a motion to formally suppress photographic models. Of course, there were many contradictions to this line of reasoning, especially as this concerned photography’s use in the sciences which was noted by Ravaisson in 1876 (and is invoked by Canales).³⁷⁰ Shortly after the invention of photography, astronomers, physiologists, and physicians, among others, appropriated the medium to advance their studies. Because the camera supposedly recorded data without the impediment of human subjectivity, it became a popular representational method in scientific domains.³⁷¹ Ravaisson wondered why a program that identifies as scientific would discard photography. He recommended the use of photography as a way to “reinvent” objects, to capture them close up in controlled lighting.³⁷²

Guillaume and the Problem of Photography

Given that Guillaume’s drawing strategies have come to embody the deadening effects associated with industry and habit, one would expect him to have enjoyed photography or at least seen its pedagogical potential. Much of the criticism launched against his regime could easily have been mistaken for the same complaints that were directed at photography. The relatively common nineteenth-century belief that “mechanical” forms of representation encouraged passivity, servile reproduction, and removed all need for conscious thought also exacerbated the

³⁶⁹ Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts, *Procès-verbaux des séances de la Commission de l’organisation de l’enseignement du dessin*, February 28, 1876, in folders Procès-verbaux de Commissions 1876-1883, F21 7540, Archives nationales, page 29.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 30; Canales, “Movement Before Cinematography: The High-Speed Qualities of Sentiment,” 286. Ravaisson was quoted saying that many scientists use photography, such as to study meteorological phenomena.

³⁷¹ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” *Representations*, no. 40 (Autumn 1992): 81-128; For a more nuanced account of photography’s relationship to vision and reality in the second half of the nineteenth century, see: Josh Ellenbogen, “The Eye of the Sun and the Eye of God,” *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation* 26, no. 2 (2010): 113-130.

³⁷² Mekouar, “Étudier ou rêver l’antique. Félix Ravaisson et la reproduction de la statuaire antique,” 1-14.

fears about the ill-effects of industrialization on society.³⁷³ When Guillaume's program became official in 1878, he prohibited drawing from photographic models and positioned his program self-consciously against "retinal" forms of image-making, above all Ravaissou's decision to emphasize imitation of figure studies before teaching proportion via geometry. An examination of his regime relative to photography allows us to rethink some of the larger stakes of his program.

According to Guillaume, even photographs that captured sculptural masterpieces did not constitute models upon which to practice drawing.³⁷⁴ This perspective was, I argue, in line with his emphasis on non-retinal technical procedures. Remember, Guillaume's program made clear distinctions between drawing methods that corresponded to seeing and knowing. His program emphasized the latter via geometry lessons. Although he distanced geometry from empiricism, Guillaume claimed that his practice did not disrupt the goals usually attributed to alternative models of drawing pedagogy, that is, the education of (and coordination between) the eye, hand, and mind. Guillaume's unwillingness to detach visual training from the aims of his program is significant; many of his competing regimes laid claim to the education of the eye. In the history of art pedagogy more broadly, the belief that drawing instruction is connected to sensory training has become a ubiquitous feature.³⁷⁵ For current scholarship, the technical procedures grounded in geometry provide an interesting vantage from which to consider an ocular education precisely because of its strained relationship to what is perceptible by eye. Geometry could not operate according to the "laws" of human vision; nonetheless, it is described as a method of visual

³⁷³ This perspective emerged most coherently in the writing of photography's key critics, such as Charles Baudelaire. See: Charles Baudelaire: Excerpts from the "Salon of 1859," in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*.

³⁷⁴ Guillaume, "Dessin," 688.

³⁷⁵ Petherbridge, "Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Drawing," 14-30.

education or as a way to order visual information in the mind.

That the camera left no visible traces of its construction also proved to be central to Guillaume's position against photography. Evidence for this emerged after his debate with Ravaissin in the 1870s found a new forum: published texts. The official sanction of this program by Ferry did not mark the conclusion of the debates between Ravaissin and Guillaume. After Guillaume's program was legitimized, both men were solicited by Ferdinand Buisson to contribute to editions of his *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire* (1882; 1887). Guillaume was well aware that Ravaissin published an opposing view; in the Fonds Eugène Guillaume acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, there is evidence that Ravaissin even sent Guillaume a copy of his entry for "art," a short article in which Ravaissin critiqued the exclusion of art from modern education for the lower classes before proposing a theory of art rooted in Leonardo da Vinci's writings.³⁷⁶ Much like his writing on art pedagogy, Ravaissin used his definition of art to advocate for the education of the eye and taste through human figure study.

In Guillaume's entry on drawing, he proposes a method of model selection that made photographs exempt. Guillaume privileged models that revealed their construction process:

Les bon modèles, ceux qui accusent des vues de méthodes et la connaissance de principes, sont rares. C'est pourquoi les photographies, dans lesquelles rien n'est sacrifié, qui représentent tout ce que l'on place devant un objectif, sans dégager ni principe, ni procédé graphique, c'est pourquoi, disons-nous, les photographies, même, lors-qu'elles reproduisent parfaitement les chefs-d'oeuvre de la sculpture, ne constituent pas des modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin.³⁷⁷

While photography became increasingly used as a pedagogical tool in the arts, Guillaume rejected the medium's utility to drawing instruction on the basis that it did not expose drawing

³⁷⁶ Letter from Félix Ravaissin to Eugène Guillaume, 29 mai 1878, L.8.10 (1&2) and L.8.11, Fonds Eugène Guillaume 1840-1926, Musée d'Orsay Archives.

³⁷⁷ Guillaume, "Dessin," 688.

principles or procedures. When Guillaume made this statement, he was aware that the operations (and representational strategies) of the camera were distinct from—but not entirely incompatible with—those of humankind, a fact of which he grew extremely critical. In her study of Republican aesthetic programs, Levin explained that “Signs of workmanship were aesthetically pleasing because they revealed the logical series of steps by which the maker had brought order to his materials and, in the process, to his thoughts and feelings.”³⁷⁸ For Guillaume, photography, unlike drawing, did not represent an individual’s thought process or the ordering of ideas, making it a poor model.

Guillaume’s position on photography can also be gleaned from his Salon criticism. In his review of the 1879 Salon, Guillaume complained about the number of portraits produced after photographic models rather than from life. Photography, he explained, “exercises a good and bad influence over today’s art.”³⁷⁹ On the one hand, he believed photography helped artists escape convention. On the other hand, he continued, it removed the need for active intellectual engagement with the subject, and made the hand servile. He explained:

Par malheur les deux instruments, la machine et l’homme, sont très différents, leur fonction essentiellement diverse, pour ne pas dire opposée. La plastique sensible et inconsciente donne une image instantanée, mais qu’y trouve-t-on en dehors de la forme, quand celle-ci n’est pas altérée? Une sorte de spectre sombre des choses, une trace exacte mais obscure de la réalité. L’artiste, lui, prétend saisir au passage les effets rapides et brillants de la couleur....Mais tandis que là tout se passe d’une manière simplement mécanique et fatale, ici c’est l’observation et la mémoire qui opèrent pour produire un travail dû, en réalité, à l’activité réfléchie de l’esprit. Ce que l’on nomme l’*impressionisme* est né de la photographie.³⁸⁰

Like photography, Guillaume noticed, some Impressionists (whom he did not identify by name)

³⁷⁸ Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, 28.

³⁷⁹ Eugène Guillaume, “Salon of 1879,” in *Etudes d’art antique et moderne* (Paris: D. Perrin, 1888), 211-2; 232.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 211-2; 232.

emulated many of the camera's attributes, particularly the capacity to seize instantaneous visual effects. Guillaume remarked that this tendency did not adequately reflect reality, a point noted by the art historian Marnin Young in *Realism in the Age of Impressionism: Painting and the Politics of Time*, a book that investigates how realist practices diverged from the growing interest in questions of speed and instantaneity espoused by the Impressionists.³⁸¹ For Young, Guillaume's criticism is significant because it represented one of the first descriptions of Impressionism in terms of instantaneity.³⁸²

Guillaume's ideas about Impressionism, I argue, help to unravel the relationship between photography, habit, and other forms of art-making; this is because through his critique of Impressionism, he offered some insight into what should distinguish art from mechanical forms of representation. With this in mind, it is no surprise that he positioned his regime in opposition to Ravaisson, a drawing theorist who not only recommended using photographic models, but also who emphasized visual training in ways that resembled Guillaume's critique of Impressionism. In fact, the aim of Ravaisson's program was to see form instantaneously, an aim that Guillaume claimed was "mechanical and fatal."

Ravaisson and Seeing à Coup d'Oeil

Visual pedagogy, according to Ravaisson, not only had the capacity to regenerate society, but also could prepare students for a variety of professions.³⁸³ By introducing students to antique art through a regimented drawing routine, teachers educated the eye in matters of taste and

³⁸¹ Marnin Young, *Realism in the Age of Impressionism: Painting and the Politics of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 84.

³⁸² Ibid., 84.

³⁸³ Ravaisson, *L'art à l'école*, 4.

abstract reasoning.³⁸⁴ An ocular education, Ravaisson justified, was the most advantageous skill for careers in the sciences and engineering, such as astronomy, navigation, architecture, and hydraulics, as well as in crafts, such as painting, carpentry, and metalwork.³⁸⁵ Although the specific ways an ocular education or *le bon jugement de l'oeil* (also described as *le bon justesse d'oeil*) benefited these *métiers* was unclear, Ravaisson characterized the type of seeing necessary to make good judgments as cultivated by his methods of drawing instruction.

Art educators, like Ravaisson, often considered ocular and artistic education synonymous. In order for art pedagogy to count as useful in public schooling, it needed to institute particular modes of seeing. By educating the eye in seeing *à coup d'oeil* or *à seul regard* through a regimented routine based on drawing after antique statues, Ravaisson encouraged teachers to show students how to gain knowledge about one's surroundings visually. For Ravaisson, seeing *à coup d'oeil* or “at a glance” involved a particular way of seeing objects proportionally or in relationship to each other. Exercising this skill meant to see the whole, rather than individual parts or details; seeing *à coup d'oeil* entailed seeing the relationship or harmonious proportions between objects in a given field of vision. Corresponding to this aim of art pedagogy, Ravaisson defined drawing as, fundamentally, the representation of proportions.³⁸⁶ According to this line of thinking, drawing achieved merit by representing the “accord” or harmony of proportions.³⁸⁷ In order to train students to represent and recognize what he saw as the beauty of proportional relationships, the main task of drawing pedagogy was the routinization of vision to good judgment. Ravaisson writes in *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*:

³⁸⁴ Ravaisson, *L'art à l'école*, 4.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 4.

³⁸⁶ Ravaisson, *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, 23.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 8.

“To teach drawing, it will be therefore, as we see it, to teach the eye to judge well.”³⁸⁸ To lend credence to this truism, he cites Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo:

...c’est pour l’œil que travaillent tous les arts du dessin. De là, il résulte aussi que si les arts du dessin en général consistent à représenter, telles qu’elles sont ou qu’elles doivent être, les proportions des choses, savoir dessiner c’est savoir les estimer de l’œil. Exécuter, ce n’est que traduire et appliquer à une matière quelconque le jugement que l’œil a porté sur les proportions.³⁸⁹

The aim of drawing instruction for Ravaissou, like Lecoq, rested on the cultivation of an internal measuring system. For Ravaissou, the education of the eye referred to the capacity to gauge symmetrical proportions by eye by practicing on reproductions of classical sculptures.

Ravaissou, like many nineteenth-century Europeans trained in academic art, privileged Greek and Roman art as exemplary artistic models for training the eye. Indeed, his ideas surrounding the education of the eye derived from the work of Phidias, Polykleitos and Euphranor (which he described as the hallmark of good art), as well as pedagogical procedures outlined by the following authors and texts: Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), and Albrecht Dürer’s (1471-1528) *Trattato della pittura* (first published in 1651), *Della pittura* (1435) and *De Symmetria Partium in Rectis Formis Humanorum Corporum* (1557).³⁹⁰ Building from these texts and models, which emphasized spatial clarity and symmetry, Ravaissou argued that students could form *coup d’œil*. This meant that individuals learned to prioritize idealized, harmonious elements that fell within their visual field.

Ravaissou’s notion of seeing *à coup d’œil* or *à un seul regard* derived from several historical precedents. He cited Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), a French philosopher, mathematician,

³⁸⁸ Ravaissou, *De l’Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, 14.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 14.

³⁹⁰ See: Ravaissou, *De l’Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, 50; Ravaissou, *L’Art dans l’école*; Ravaissou, “Beaux-arts: Léonard de Vinci et l’enseignement du dessin.”

and scientist, who attributed seeing *à un seul regard* to *l'esprit de finesse*.³⁹¹ In his philosophy of mind, Pascal describes two dominant modes of thinking: *l'esprit de géométrie*, the geometrical mind, and *l'esprit de finesse*, the mind of intellectual acuteness.³⁹² Whereas the mathematical mind privileges deductive, logical reasoning, the *esprit de finesse* relies on intuition to hypothesize information about the world. To Pascal, intuitive thinkers arrive at knowledge rapidly through the immediacy of *un seul regard*. Unlike intuitive thinkers, mathematical minds rely more on principles than on sight. Pascal describes *les esprits de géométrie* in the following manner:

...c'est qu'ils ne voient pas ce qui est devant eux; et qu'étant accoutumés aux principes nets et grossiers de géométrie, et à ne raisonner qu'après avoir bien vu et manié leurs principes, ils se perdent dans les choses de finesse, où les principes ne se laissent pas ainsi manier. On les voit à peine, on les sent plutôt qu'on ne les voit; on a des peines infinies à les faire sentir à ceux qui ne les sentent pas d'eux-mêmes: ce sont choses tellement délicates et si nombreuses, qu'il faut un sens bien délicat et bien net pour les sentir, et juger droit et juste selon ce sentiment, sans pouvoir le plus souvent les démontrer par ordre comme en géométrie, parce qu'on n'en possède pas ainsi les principes, et que ce serait une chose infinie de l'entreprendre. Il faut tout d'un coup voir la chose d'un seul regard, et non pas par progrès de raisonnement, au moins jusque un certain degré.³⁹³

Pascal continued to clarify the intuitive thought process by explaining that distinct from mathematical minds, *les esprits fins* make comprehensive judgments exhaustive of individual details “at a glance.”³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Blaise Pascal, “Différence entre l'esprit de géométrie et l'esprit de finesse,” in *Pensées de Pascal publiées dans leur texte authentique* (Paris: Dezobry et E. Magdeleine, 1852 [first published posthumously in 1670]), 100. Ravaisson cites Pascal in several texts such as “Art à l'école” and “Dessin.” Ravaisson's debt to Pascal is noted by several scholars. See: Canales, “Movement Before Cinematography: The High-Speed Qualities of Sentiment,” and Viola, “The Serpentine Life of Félix Ravaisson: Art, Drawing, Scholarship, and Philosophy.”

³⁹² Ibid., 101.

³⁹³ Ibid., 102.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 103.

Ravaissou appropriated Pascal's notion of *l'esprit fin* to articulate how a proper drawing lesson can aid viewers arrive at a particular type of knowledge. He explained that the Pascalian *regard*

est un acte où, réunissant les objets en un tout, nous prenons conscience de leur relation harmonique, de même que par l'oreille, en comparant deux sons, nous prenons conscience, dans l'accord qu'ils forment et sans aucune estimation mécanique ni logique, de leur rapport sensible. Or, quel est le moyen, dans le deuxième cas, d'acquérir la faculté d'immédiate et intuitive estimation d'où procède le bon jugement de l'oeil?³⁹⁵

Drawing, if taught in a particular way, trains the eye to find such unity.

Although Ravaissou credits Pascal for his definition of seeing *à un seul regard*, the concept appears in many other sources. In the eighteenth century, encyclopedias defined *coup d'oeil* as a drawing technique capable of training the eye to see compositional elements including the figure and proportions. One encyclopedia geared toward the arts defines it as: "...l'habitude de saisir, à la simple vue, la figure, la grandeur & les proportions, avec tant de précision, qu'il s'en forme un tableau exact dans l'imagination."³⁹⁶ Similar uses of the term as a habitual mode

³⁹⁵ Ravaissou, "Dessin," 674.

³⁹⁶ The definition continues: "Le *coup-d'oeil* est le premier & le plus indispensable des talents que les arts du dessin exigent. Ni la règle, ni le compas ne peuvent suppléer au défaut du *coup d'oeil*. Il faut, comme s'exprimoit Michel-Ange, que le dessinateur ait le compas dans les yeux, & non dans la main; & l'un des plus grands peintres, le célèbre Mengs, veut que la première tâche de l'élève soit de se rendre l'oeil juste, au point de pouvoir tout imiter. C'est, selon lui, au *coup-d'oeil* que Raphaël même devoit une grande partie de ses succès. Le *coup-d'oeil* ne fait pas simplement qu'on puisse imiter chaque objet, mais il met encore dans cette imitation un si haut degré de vérité, que l'ouvrage en acquiert une énergie frappante....Il en est de ce talent comme de tous les autres, la nature en fait les premiers frais, par les dispositions qu'elle donne; mais un long exercice y peut beaucoup ajouter. Presque tous les peintres qui vivoient lors de la restauration des arts, possédoient le *coup-d'oeil* dans un degré éminent....Une moitié de l'art consiste à s'exercer sans relâche au *coup-d'oeil*; voilà sans doute le sens de la devise d'Apelle: / '*Nulla dies sine linea*.'" *Supplément à l'Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres. Mis en ordre et publié par M****, volume 2 (Amsterdam: Chez M. M. Rey, Libraire, 1776), 641. This is the same definition provided in Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers par une Société de gens de lettres. Mis en ordre & publié par M. Diderot; & quant à la Partie Mathématique, par M. D'Alembert*, 9th tome (Geneva: Chez Pellet, Imprimeur-Libraire, 1777), 703-4, and in M. Watelet's *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure* (Paris: L.F. Prault, 1792), 540-541. A very similar definition appears in Jean Baptiste Bon Boutard's *Dictionnaire des arts du dessin, la peinture, la sculpture, la gravure et l'architecture* (Paris: Chez Le Normant père, libraire and Ch. Gosselin, Libraire, 1826), 194. He writes: "Aptitude à saisir à la simple vue avec précision, et de manière à s'en former une idée exacte, la figure, les dimensions, les proportions et le caractère des objets. Le coup-d'oeil, don de la nature, que l'exercice

of seeing also were deployed in non-artistic contexts. In a text devoted to military stratagems titled, *Encyclopédie méthodique: Art militaire* (1785), *coup d’oeil* became valorized as a habit that served militaristic purposes; the author described one’s ability to translate the perception of a landscape or nature in a way beneficial for military stratagems.³⁹⁷ As with draftsmen, this aptitude ostensibly allowed soldiers to locate other troops and to survey the landscape quickly in order to recognize how to best exploit it for battle.

Seeing *à coup d’oeil* did not lose its currency in nineteenth-century French parlance. In fact, it came to represent an aim of competing pedagogical regimens (including the first stage of Guillaume’s program). Translations of Swiss pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi’s (1746-1827) elementary drawing courses also emphasized the formation of *coup d’oeil*.³⁹⁸ In aiding children to develop *le coup d’oeil*, he explained, instructors must “...l’habituer à comparer et à juger une copie d’un objet régulier et simple.”³⁹⁹ To Pestalozzi, *coup d’oeil* was the product of habituation; students learned to evaluate copies of simple geometric objects themselves. Interestingly, Pestalozzi was a figure whose methods were of the very ilk derided by Ravaissou because of his emphasis on geometry over figure study.⁴⁰⁰ At the heart of his distaste was an opposing perspective on what it meant to educate the eye.

perfectionne, est une qualité essentielle au peintre, au sculpteur, à l’architecte.” On page 316, he explains that “Le génie des arts du dessin consiste en une perception exquise de la forme et des autres apparences des objets, jointe à la justesse du coup d’oeil et à l’adresse de la main....”

³⁹⁷ Louis Félix Guinement Keralio, “Coup d’oeil,” in *Encyclopédie méthodique: Art militaire*, volume 2, 144-151 (Paris: Chez Panckoucke; Liège: Chez Plomteux, 1785), 144.

³⁹⁸ Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi and Alexandre Boniface, *Cours élémentaire de dessin linéaire, appliqué à l’enseignement mutuel, à l’enseignement individuel, et à l’enseignement simultané d’après les principes de Pestalozzi; suivi d’un traité élémentaire de perspective linéaire*, 4th edition (Brussels: Chez J.B.A.M. Jobard, 1826). Pages 2-37 of this treatise describes the “formation du coup d’oeil.”

³⁹⁹ Pestalozzi and Boniface, *Cours élémentaire de dessin linéaire*, 2.

⁴⁰⁰ Ravaissou, “Dessin.”

In a similar vein, Louis Alvin's (1806-1887) *Les académies et les autres écoles de dessin de la Belgique en 1864* notes the significance of cultivating *coup d'oeil* through drawing pedagogy. Before acquiring a reputation as a playwright, Alvin briefly served as Director of Public Instruction in Belgium, a role that led him to write authoritative texts on the importance of art to industry.⁴⁰¹ In his 1864 summary of drawing schools in Belgium and abroad, he included a translation of Prussian drawing instruction that highlighted *coup d'oeil*:

Le programme de l'enseignement du dessin dans les établissements supérieurs, et particulièrement les gymnases, embrasse aussi, outre l'éducation de l'oeil Les élèves apprendront donc par des exercices gradués à saisir d'un coup d'oeil les formes caractéristiques des objets et à apprécier d'un manière raisonnée les tableaux de la nature et les chefs-d'oeuvre des arts plastiques.⁴⁰²

Like Pestalozzi, Alvin's excerpt introduced Belgian audiences to the fact that Prussian pedagogues trained the eye to see form through a graduated system of drawing instruction.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, many teachers advocated different drawing techniques to form *coup d'oeil*. Nonetheless, it became a visual skill mastered by means of habituation, particularly through drawing lessons. This type of “panoptic” visual habit so-to-speak—that allowed viewers to survey and grasp information perceptible by eye with immediacy—also taught students how to arrive at knowledge platonically. In Richard Moore's 1977 article on theories of *dessin* in France following the academic reforms of 1863, he contextualizes this practice in relationship to *la correction*. *La correction* was a term used to describe a quality of *dessin* theory that instructed students to see contours “planimetrically” rather than individual details.”⁴⁰³ Moore explains that: “[L]a correction implied that everything

⁴⁰¹ Louis Alvin, *L'Alliance de l'art et de l'industrie* (Bruxelles: Bruyland-Christophe & Compagnie, 1863).

⁴⁰² Louis Alvin, “Programme pour l'enseignement du dessin dans les gymnases et les écoles polytechniques du royaume de Prusse,” trans. M. Petit, in *Les académies et les autres écoles de dessin de la Belgique en 1864: Rapport présenté le 14 août 1865* (Brussels: Typographie Bruylant-Christophe & Comp., 1864), 481-2.

should be reduced to a common overall pattern of linear controls that allowed the viewer to read any composition virtually all at once (*toute de suite*, or at a *coup d'oeil*) as a single design motif or unit.”⁴⁰⁴

The abstraction required for this mode of observation was articulated clearly by the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) in his speech on the life and career of Ravaissou delivered at the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in 1904. He wrote:

The philosopher who remains in the abstract stops at that. He thinks he can proceed to the unification of things by way of increasing generalization: he really proceeds by gradual extinction of the light which brought out the differences between the colors, and ends by blending them together into a common obscurity. Quite different is the method of true unification. In this case it consists in taking the thousand and one different shades of blue, violet, green, yellow and red, and, by having them pass through a convergent lens, bringing them to a single point. Then appears in all its radiance the pure white light which, perceived here below in the shades which disperse it, enclosed above, in its undivided unity, the indefinite variety of multi-colored rays. Then would also be revealed, even to each shade taken individually, what the eye did not notice at first, the white light in which it participates, the common illumination from which it draws its own coloring. Such is no doubt the kind of vision that, according to M. Ravaissou, we must ask of metaphysics. From the contemplation of an antique marble can spring more concentrated truth, in the eyes of a real philosopher, than is to be found in the diffused state, in a whole philosophical treatise. The object of metaphysics is to recapture in individual existences and to follow even to the source form which it emanates the particular ray which, while it confers on each one its own particular shade, attaches it by that means to the universal light.⁴⁰⁵

Bergson rationalizes Ravaissouian knowledge production by way of seeing light and color. To Ravaissou, Bergson explains, the eye synthesized component parts into a whole like seeing *à seul regard*. This whole offers the viewer access to truth. Learning to see the whole or unity of

⁴⁰³ Moore, “‘Dessin’ Theory in France after the Reorganization of 1863,” 145-174.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 169.

⁴⁰⁵ Ravaissou, *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, 192.

parts included recognizing how things are composed even elements not readily apparent or visible to the unaided eye. Ravaisson used a similar metaphor in his discussion on the double law of habit in 1838 (which I will examine toward the end of this chapter). He describes the ability for perception to be dulled or refined. For the artist, this meant learning to see the whole harmoniously and to notice variations of light and dark.

Ravaisson: Visual Habits and Being

What further separated Guillaume's program from Ravaisson's was their distinct viewpoints on the nature of habit and habit acquisition as a mark of proficiency. A close analysis of Ravaisson's texts demonstrates that he understood drawing in relationship to habit. I argue that his understanding of artistic pedagogy derived from his 1838 thesis, and question why and how habit informed Ravaisson's method of teaching. By forging a link between habit and Ravaisson's pedagogical philosophy, I show how Ravaisson thought of drawing in relationship to the broader significance of habit. In existing scholarship, however, Ravaisson's legacy depends primarily on his contributions to philosophies of habit, not on how he linked drawing to habit formation. In fact, the secondary literature on Ravaisson privileges his contributions to phenomenology, noting his thesis's—*De l'habitude* (1838)—influence on theorists including Bergson, and via Bergson, notable phenomenologists, such as Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), and Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995).⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, few scholars connect his seminal philosophy to his pedagogical program and art theory.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Ravaisson's influence on twentieth-century phenomenologists recently has been explored by several scholars. Christian Dupont, "Félix Ravaisson," in *Phenomenology in French Philosophy: Early Encounters*, 32-33 (New York: Springer Dordrecht, 2014); Elizabeth Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," *Body & Society* 19, no. 2 & 3 (2013), 217-239; Mark Sinclair, "Ravaisson and the Force of Habit," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 49, no. 1 (2011): 65-85; and Mark Sinclair, "Is Habit 'The Fossilised Residue of a Spiritual Activity'?" Ravaisson, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 42, no 1 (2011): 33-52.

When Ravaisson wrote *De l'habitude*, he rebuffed the tradition exemplified by Descartes and Kant; instead of vilifying habit as mechanization at the expense of conscious thought, he revived Aristotle's arguments in favor of habit's ontological significance. Aristotle was not his only inspiration. Mark Sinclair has constructed an intellectual genealogy of Ravaisson's conception of habit by charting some of Ravaisson's various sources.⁴⁰⁸ Consonant with habit's wide-ranging import, he points out that Ravaisson's thesis engaged with ideas that spanned diverse fields including natural history, philosophy, and medicine, ranging from Aristotle's and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling's (1775-1854) metaphysical interests, to Pierre Maine de Biran's voluntarist philosophy and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's (1646-1716) "monadological metaphysics," among others.⁴⁰⁹ The way Ravaisson positioned his work among these thinkers, however fascinating, is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. More important to this line of inquiry is what sets Ravaisson's theory of habit apart from his interlocutors.

Ravaisson understood habit as fundamental to human nature; a necessary tool to orient oneself to an ever-changing world.⁴¹⁰ As such, his inquiry into habit was equally a statement on the nature of being; it kindled theories concerning what it meant to act, think, and ultimately, to be alive.⁴¹¹ In his text *On Habit*, Ravaisson's ontology of the concept is divided into two parts that attempt to define nature and second nature, respectively. Whereas Part I describes the

⁴⁰⁷ Of course, an exception is Canales's "Movement Before Cinematography: The High-Speed Qualities of Sentiment," 275-294.

⁴⁰⁸ Sinclair, "Editor's Introduction."

⁴⁰⁹ Sinclair, "Editor's Introduction," 6-7; Many scholars have written on Ravaisson's engagement with Schelling's philosophy. For the most recent text, see: Gaëll Guibert, *Félix Ravaisson: d'une philosophie première allemande en France au xix^e et xx^e siècles* (Lille: Presses du Septentrion, 1994); Jeremy Dunham, "From Habit to Monads: Félix Ravaisson's Theory of Substance," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2015.1078775>.

⁴¹⁰ Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," 220.

⁴¹¹ Carlisle and Sinclair, "Editor's Introduction," in *Of Habit*, 1-21.

conditions necessary in nature for habit to exist or to exert control over behavior, Part II investigates the role of habit on human consciousness, the body, intelligence, morality, and spirituality.

Flux was central to his conception of habit. For Ravaisson, habit offered almost instinctual ways to respond to changing environments; they were the capacity of behaviors to repeat in response to change. This is why Ravaisson defines habit in his text as “a disposition relative to change, which is engendered in a being by the continuity or repetition of this very same change.”⁴¹² Put another way, because habit relies on repetition, it encourages regularity and a sense of stability in an ever-changing, ephemeral world.⁴¹³ Organic matter depends on habit acquisition to economize effort; it is what allows us to remember and reorient ourselves within the world. In order for a habit to develop spontaneously or intentionally, he explained, a subject must introduce a new behavior or series of behaviors, causing a change in one’s mode of being. According to Ravaisson’s logic, the repetition of a particular comportment or conduct gradually becomes a more permanent quality of one’s disposition, or a habit. Because such learned behaviors are obtained through repetition, habit exists only in relationship to time and duration, or change and permanency.

As a corollary to this, Ravaisson argued that habit carries varying weight or authority with respect to a being’s ability to move within space—understood as a quality of permanence—and time—a quality of change. Because of this, he described change and permanence, and thus

⁴¹² Ravaisson, *Of Habit*, 80.

⁴¹³ This point is eloquently made by Elizabeth Grosz in “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us.” On page 219, she writes: “...habit is regarded not [only] as that which reduces the human to the order of the mechanical...but rather as a fundamentally creative capacity that produces the possibility of stability in a universe in which change is fundamental. Habit is a way in which we can organize lived regularities, moments because it already contains the past within it. For those who affirm perpetual change, Heraclitan variation or Bergsonian duration, habit is an anchor, the rock to which the possibilities of personal identity and freedom are tethered, the condition under which learning is possible, the creation of a direction, a ‘second nature’, an identity.”

habit, as limited to the organic realm; Ravaisson argues that habit manifests in living beings ranging from vegetation, animals, and humans. This belief stemmed from the notion that habit allows consistency in beings whereas the inorganic—whether it is mechanical or physical—is constantly affected by external stimuli.⁴¹⁴ Yet, habit does not manifest the same in different organisms; habit’s authority increases vis-à-vis a given being’s mobility. Put another way, Ravaisson reasoned that time-based movements directly correlate to the strength of habit. This meant that plants, for instance, are less mobile than humans, and are therefore, less susceptible to habit formation.

Central to Ravaisson’s thesis was the “double law” of habit, an idea that was articulated by figures before him, such as Maine de Biran. With practice, so this law explains, certain activities become increasingly refined, performed with increased spontaneity; through repetition, what once required conscious thought, operates with more precision yet less effort. With practice, habits exist within a continuum between activity and passivity; the activity required to exercise becomes increasingly more mechanical, nearing the level of instinct. Ravaisson wrote:

If movement becomes swifter and easier because intelligence knows better its parts, and because the will synthesizes the action with more precision and assurance, how is it that the increasing facility of movement coincides with the diminution of will and consciousness? Both physical and rationalist theories are lacking on this point. The law of habit can be explained only by the development of a Spontaneity that is at once active and passive, equally opposed to mechanical Fatality and to reflective Freedom.⁴¹⁵

It also described, as noted by Mark Sinclair, how “continued sensation, also in becoming less conscious, produces a need, which is manifest when the source of the sensation is removed—as

⁴¹⁴ Leandro M. Gaitán and Javier S. Castresana, “On habit and the mind-body problem. The view of Felix Ravaisson,” *Front. Hum. Neurosci.* (09 September 2014), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00684>.

⁴¹⁵ Ravaisson, “Of Habit,” 44.

when, on a journey, we wake up when the car has come to a stop.”⁴¹⁶ Whereas this aspect led Sinclair to note that Ravaissonian habit resulted from desire, it led Elizabeth Grosz to write that habit had the capacity either to “mute or intensify” certain kinds of behaviors.⁴¹⁷ The way habit complicates activity and passivity has a distinct effect on sense-perception. Repeated exposure to certain stimuli can either refine/strengthen or degenerate/dull our sensory capabilities.

Ravaisson, in recent years, has acquired a certain level of popularity because his theory undercuts prevalent dualisms in western philosophy separating the mind from body. His thesis, that habit provides a continuum between mind and matter, has led to its appropriation by many phenomenologists writing in the twentieth century, such as Bergson, Deleuze and Derrida.⁴¹⁸ Ravaisson’s double law of habit argues that these activities occur through will and intention, the bodily being driven by the mind. He construed habit as “embodied” intelligence; it is an idea rendered corporeal, manifesting through the body. Elizabeth Grosz noted that: “It is an anti-Cartesian intelligence, one that doesn’t know but acts, that has effects, produces actions and sensations.”⁴¹⁹ As such, Ravaisson’s understanding of habit established a continuity—rather than a rift—between intellectualism and materialism, idealism and empiricism, or the mind and body, as well as a link between closely associated concepts, such as freedom and necessity, subject and object, and will and instinct.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ Sinclair, “Editor’s Introduction,” 7.

⁴¹⁷ Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 222.

⁴¹⁸ Dupont, “Félix Ravaisson,” 32-33; Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 217-239; Sinclair, “Ravaisson and the Force of Habit,” 65-85; Sinclair, “Ravaisson and the Force of Habit,” 33-52; Sinclair, “Is Habit ‘The Fossilised Residue of a Spiritual Activity’?” Ravaisson, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty,” 33-52; and Patrick O’Connor, “Letting Habits Die: Derrida, Ravaisson and the Structure of Life,” *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 19, no. 1 (2015), 222-47.

⁴¹⁹ Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 223.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-21.

The significance of Ravaissonian habit also has emerged in recent scholarship in media studies. In Wendy Hui Kyong Chun's book titled *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media* (2016), she understands his theory of habit (among others) as a mechanism that mediates our relationship to technology.⁴²¹ It is routine behaviors that accommodate the gradual absorption of artificial customs into an individual's or culture's state of being.⁴²² Habit, she argues, thus operates as a force determining how technologies enter our lives and shift from new to routine. Chun uses theories of habit to displace the emphasis on "virality" in discussions on networked computations and technological change.

The Ravaissonian theory of habit, because it undermined popular dualities, also emerged as an important interpretative lens for Michael Fried's analysis of both Courbet's artwork and Flaubert's stylistics.⁴²³ In 1992, Fried first deployed Ravaissonian habit as an intellectual apparatus to put into relief certain thematics that he believed were pursued by Courbet, namely somnambulant figures. Rather than argue that Courbet was familiar with Ravaisson's philosophy, he explained that "Courbet's predilection for pictorial structures that evoke an inner continuity between absorptive states and conditions, and even more his tendency to thematize the mutual interpenetration of action and passivity, will and automatism, have much in common with Ravaisson's views."⁴²⁴ This is important because it represents an instance where Ravaisson's abstract ideas found visible form; Courbet, like Ravaisson's theory of habit, reconciles seemingly

⁴²¹ Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media* (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2016).

⁴²² This distinction is explained by Thorton Lockwood: "In English, one may speak about a person's 'habits' (e.g. punctuality is a good habit) but also their means of acquisition (e.g. 'I learned to swim by habitual practice')." See: Lockwood, "Habituation, Habit, and Character in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," 19.

⁴²³ Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Michael Fried, *Flaubert's "Gueuloir": On Madame Bovary and Salammbô* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁴²⁴ Fried, *Courbet's Realism*, 183-4.

opposite states of being, such as consciousness and unconsciousness. Courbet approached such conceptual issues through the depiction of sleeping figures who are neither conscious nor completely unconscious.

The utility of Ravaisson's work was more fully developed in Fried's analysis of Flaubert's stylistics and the problem of authorial intention. Fried argued that the extent to which an author could exert control over his/her writing is thwarted by acquired habits; nowhere did this issue become more vexed than in the case of Flaubert. Flaubert attempted to evade certain stylistic qualities, notably the repetition of assonances and consonances, by reading his work out loud. For Fried, Flaubert's failure to remove these formal features from his writing represented an inability to assert the author's will and to suppress his habitual inclinations during the writing process. Fried thus reads Ravaisson's theory of habit into Flaubert's desire to overcome the distance between automaticity and will.

While unconscious forms of automaticity complicate an author's or artist's control over their work, they were (and still are) features of all forms of learning. Given habit's ability to make a behavior or set of behaviors automatic, its pedagogical function should come as no surprise. According to Carlisle, Ravaisson "suggests that forming a 'second nature' is 'the secret of education.'"⁴²⁵ Education also required (and still requires) habitual practices for effective and efficient learning, and cultivated particular habitual behaviors. In order to master a particular domain or skill-sets, teachers often deployed methods that are repetitive. Students learned through habitual practices, and education encouraged particular habitual behaviors, such as practicing good hygiene. Through imitation and repetition, teachers transmitted habitual ways of thinking and acting. An example of this was recitation. Teachers commonly instructed children

⁴²⁵ Carlisle, *On Habit*, 104-107.

to rehearse learned poems without an aid. In doing so, they cultivated instinctual mechanisms of reproducing the words with little effort. Habit, as noted by Grosz, became a useful mechanism in this context because it “skeletalizes action, making it more efficient, minimizing the time and effort it requires while maximizing its effects...it is the creation of a new bodily mode of existence, the learning of a way of simplifying action by selecting its key muscular efforts while hiding their conceptual accompaniments.”⁴²⁶ In the case of reading, this becomes quite clear. What begins as the memorization of letters ends with the seemingly unconscious ability to comprehend sentences.

Ravaisson did not explicitly forge a link between habit and “*coup d’oeil*.” However, it is evident that his understanding of ocular and artistic pedagogy derived from his thesis *De l’habitude*, a work that, as I have shown, focuses on human nature through an investigation of habit formation. Of central importance to Ravaisson’s thesis and his pedagogical program is vision’s susceptibility to habit. Within nineteenth-century pedagogical theory, ocular habits became increasingly valorized as a tool applicable in a variety of careers. Given these debates, this idea drives a series of larger questions, such as what did it mean to impart visual habits and why did drawing pedagogy become an apt method for transmitting particular ocular habits? Because of the pervasive belief that practicing art presupposed an ocular education or skill-set, drawing instruction became widely accepted as a vehicle that instilled in children habitual or routinized modes of seeing. Imitation and visual memory training, for instance, introduced students to particular habits of perceiving, such as to determine the most salient features of a subject matter à *coup d’oeil*.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 221.

As I noted in the previous chapter, the authority of habit over perception was well entrenched in nineteenth-century medical, scientific, and philosophical literature. In line with Ravaissou's desire to teach students to see at a glance, some physicians similarly valorized seeing *à coup d'oeil* as part of childhood development. In one medical thesis from 1872, for instance, a doctor explained that habit trains the eye to rapidly appreciate visual information, such as dimensions and proportions.⁴²⁸ Because vision was considered habitual, these doctors argued that viewers could be trained to see in particular ways. Pauly wrote that:

Après cette première éducation, l'oeil étend le cercle de ses connaissances, et applique son activité à des études spéciales où il acquiert quelquefois un haut degré de perfection. Il y a des artistes auxquels un coup d'oeil suffit pour saisir dans une oeuvre les qualités ou les défauts qui resteraient cachés à des yeux moins exercés. C'est dans l'habitude de l'observation que se trouve le secret de ces appréciations si justes et si rapides.⁴²⁹

This physician explained that through visual experience, the eye is taught to perceive in certain ways. Pauly describes a method of seeing *à coup d'oeil*, a glance that takes in a comprehensive view. Ravaissou's notion of art education—the object of which is to see *à coup d'oeil*—derived from his understanding of habit and habit formation and is consonant with sources like this.

The association of habit with sense perception and modes of seeing became so pervasive in nineteenth-century medical, philosophical and pedagogical discourses that it appeared in popular dictionaries also. In a scientific dictionary published in 1847, for instance, the entry on *habitude* explains that: “It is habit that gives to our eye and to our hand a facility, a precision of

⁴²⁷ This is not to suggest that each program wanted to institute the same habits. On the contrary, different pedagogues understood habit and its relationship to psychology in unique ways. For instance, Ravaissou sought to instill in students habits of seeing proportions *à coup d'oeil* or at a glance.

⁴²⁸ Pauly, *De l'habitude dans ses rapports avec la physiologie et l'hygiène*, 25-6.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

movements....”⁴³⁰ The 1887 edition of Buisson’s pedagogical dictionary—in which Ravaisson was a contributor—echoes this sentiment by crediting humankind’s ability to discern and identify fugitive colors or nuances to habit. The author explained that: “A number of perceptions are, within us, the result of habit: it is habit that permits the eye to appreciate the relative distance between objects which originally or at first appear all on the same plane.”⁴³¹

Like these figures, Ravaisson described the authority of habit over human sense perception. In fact, Ravaisson deployed his “double law of habit” as one method to think about habit’s influence over the senses.⁴³² This law posits that habits have the capacity to refine/strengthen or degenerate/dull sense perception. To express how habit affects the senses, Ravaisson provided an anecdote featuring a wine connoisseur and an alcoholic. He writes in *Of Habit*:

...in every sensation...mobility and perception have a role. This is a role that continuity or repetition does not destroy, but which, on the contrary, it develops and perfects. In applying itself to the most obscure sensations in the senses of taste and smell, activity releases them in a certain manner from their subject and gradually transforms them into objects of distinct perception, adding judgment to the feeling, or entirely replacing it. Activity increasingly reduces, in the warm and the cold, in odour, colour or sound, the element of affection and pure sensation, and develops the element of knowledge and judgment. In this way, the sensations in which we seek only pleasure soon fade. Taste becomes more and more obtuse in the one who, by passion, is delivered over to the frequent use of strong liquors; in the connoisseur who discerns flavours, it becomes more and more delicate and subtle.⁴³³

⁴³⁰ *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques par une société professeurs et de savants* (Paris: L. Hachette et Cie), 4.

⁴³¹ “Habitude,” in *Dictionnaire pédagogique de l’instruction primaire*. Similar ideas have emerged in more recent (and much more complicated) theories of neuroplasticity, which explains how the brain develops and alters habits based on our surroundings.

⁴³² Ravaisson, *De l’habitude*.

⁴³³ Ravaisson, *Of Habit*, 49.

In her 2014 analysis of Ravaissan's text, Carlisle points out that both the alcoholic and the connoisseur continue to drink.⁴³⁴ Yet, whereas the drunkard passively tastes his wine less, the connoisseur's palate becomes increasingly refined. Of course, it is difficult to ignore the possible dimensions of class and elitism which inspired this statement, but the primary point remains that Ravaissan believed that the effect of passive and active habits on sensation allows for this dichotomy of experience.

When applied to art, it becomes clear that for Ravaissan, learning to see correctly and actively allowed students to refine their sense of sight; similar to the way the wine connoisseur can taste ingredients or the composition of his drink, active visual habits allow students to discern the relationships between objects in a given whole.⁴³⁵ This relates back to the way visual habits were conceived by physicians to allow observers to see the whole rather than component parts (like Bergson's metaphor for seeing white which is a combination of colors on the visible spectrum). Eyesight could be routinized to synthesize parts into a whole and to analyze the composite parts. Because the way one sees was believed to be determined by habit, several mental faculties, such as the ability to judge, reason, abstract and generalize, as correlates of vision and sensation more broadly, were considered habitual. Thus, art making not only was considered habitual because it relied on imitation and repetition to master, but also because the ability to judge proportions and to see the whole was consigned to the domain of the habitual.

Ravaissan's pedagogical program attended to the training and cultivating of sensory habits in order to provide students access to a particular type of knowledge. Yet, Ravaissan's drawing regime and conception of art also shared an analogous relationship with his theory of

⁴³⁴ Carlisle, *On Habit*, 81-3.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 81-3.

habit formation, and the nature of being and knowledge. Ravaisson asserted that art, like habit, stems from human volition and offers insight into metaphysics and the nature of being. Like his conception of habit, Ravaisson's artistic practice—his seeing "*à seul regard*"—required a continuity between what was seen and invented, and between the material and ideal. Just as habit provided insight into the organisms it governed and on whose bodies it manifested itself, art, for Ravaisson, offered knowledge about its subject: the world.

For Ravaisson, seeing *à coup d'oeil*, like habit, granted individuals access to truth by overcoming perceived disjunctions between materiality and ideality. As I have established, to teach such modes of seeing, Ravaisson assigned students the human figure. Rather than render individual body parts, he required students to see and reproduce the synthesized whole. In assigning a photograph of a sculpture of a woman wearing a toga, for example, Ravaisson privileged Leonardo da Vinci's conception of the "serpentine" line [Figure 38]. Here, the body is positioned in an "s" curve where the arms reach out as if to embrace another figure. The curve undulates down the body, accentuated by the way the drapery falls from and hugs the body. To emphasize this curve, the sculptor rendered the left leg elevated with the knee bent. The folds of the drapery fall from the thigh, diagonally back toward the right leg and foot to highlight the body's curvature. This curvature, he argued, represented the essence of humankind and was a manifestation of human agency and the will through movement. In 1904, Bergson explained Ravaisson's and da Vinci's use of the serpentine line in the following way: "the painter's art does not consist in taking in detail each trait of the model...Neither does it consist in picturing some impersonal and abstract type...True art aims at portraying the individuality of the model and to that end it will seek behind the lines one sees the movement the eye does not see...."⁴³⁶

⁴³⁶ Bergson, "The Life and Work of Ravaisson," 194-6.

Ravaisson argued that Greek sculptures like this one are revelatory of the serpentine line and thus of human “essence.” In his own art, Ravaisson attempted to capture this line by emphasizing quickly-drawn contours over carefully-rendered details [Figure 39].⁴³⁷ In a surviving sketch of two dancers, for instance, Ravaisson represents two nude models reduced to a set of rapid, imprecise lines that do not carefully delineate anatomy (like arms and facial features), or a background which is left blank. Instead, he produces long, fluid lines to communicate the figure’s movement and curves.

Making and reproducing this sculpture required an eye routinized in particular modes of seeing that involved grasping and representing harmony through movement; it required, Ravaisson claimed, an eye skilled at understanding and perceiving humanity and human nature. The sculpture captured and taught students to remark on movements that are both voluntary and instinctive, that exist as a product of freedom and necessity, in other words, as a result of habit. This is significant because all pedagogical programs must involve habit, but habit and art education did not need to involve discerning human nature by overcoming philosophical dualities. To attribute to habit the power of perceptual refinement and free will separated it from related practices that inspired habit acquisition, notably rote memorization.

The importance of Ravaisson’s position can be clarified by turning to his distaste for Guillaume’s *méthode géométrique*. Ravaisson cautioned that such models did not instill in students seeing *à coup d’oeil*. Instead, they habituated students into “erroneous,” “pernicious” and “vicious” visual modes or “...to see only one aspect [within a given field of vision], [because of this] the eye gradually becomes incapable of understanding the infinite variety that nature offers.”⁴³⁸ As I explained, the *méthode géométrique* did not rely solely on figure drawing.

⁴³⁷ Viola, “The Serpentine Life of Félix Ravaisson: Art, Drawing, Scholarship, and Philosophy.”

Instead, Guillaume's project was rooted in abstract mathematical reasoning as a tool for developing utilitarian objects and the decorative arts. His program aimed to teach students to visualize objects at different angles that could better facilitate production.

For Ravaissou, geometry could not serve as a channel for the acquisition of "correct" visual habits. Such techniques operated in opposition to habitual ways of seeing that did not overcome dualities between the material and ideal; they did not share a direct relationship to human perception, nor did they ask the viewer to invent. In a similar way to the camera—which Ravaissou described as an automatic imitation that did not require the eye to appreciate form—Ravaissou argued that geometric methods did not teach students to observe harmony in nature: they reproduced objects as they exist in nature regardless of human visual and imaginative experience and relied on the mathematics of materiality. Although competing pedagogical regimes, such as those relying on imitation and geometry, all laid claim to an ocular education, Ravaissou argued that systems rooted in geometry privileged details or parts instead of the whole, and thus inculcated in students "bad" visual habits.⁴³⁹

Ravaissou's distaste for systems privileging the part instead of the whole was directed at a particular practice common in nineteenth-century drawing instruction. While Ravaissou's method of training the eye by practicing drawing on classical statuary followed from popular *Ancien Régime* pedagogy, he was equally critical of the graduated method of drawing idealized, isolated features prior to sculpted human figures and models in their entirety that acquired popularity during this period [Figures 40-42].⁴⁴⁰ The major criticism against this method

⁴³⁸ Ravaissou, *De l'enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, 36.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁴⁰ Despite this, his photographic models did include a few isolate features, such as mouths.

surrounded habit formation and was most clearly outlined in Buisson's *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire* (1887). In Buisson's entry on Dupuis, he explains the demise of graduated Academic pedagogy based on isolated features by citing the complaints yielded by Dupuis in a brochure published in 1839.⁴⁴¹ He quotes:

Dans tout enseignement rationnel ... on procède des divisions principales aux subdivisions; pour le dessin, on suit une marche inverse. On présente d'abord l'élève des détails, *un nez, une bouche, un oeil, une oreille*, qu'on lui fait copier successivement de profil, puis de trois quarts, et enfin de face. Ce n'est que lorsqu'il a consacré beaucoup de temps à cette besogne fastidieuse, qu'on lui permet d'essayer un ensemble. Qu'arrive-t-il? l'élève, dominé par l'habitude, commence un modèle par le plus petit détail. Le professeur l'arrête aussitôt, et, lui indiquant brusquement une marche nouvelle, il exige que son disciple attaque d'abord les divisions principales. On sent ce qu'il y a de choquant dans une méthode qui force le professeur à condamner ses premières leçons. L'élève, exercé à une copie minutieuse de détails, n'a pas contracté l'habitude de lire largement, c'est-à-dire de saisir les principaux plans et le mouvement du modèle: ses premières études, loin de lui être de quelque secours, sont un obstacle de plus à surmonter. / Jugeons les modèles eux-mêmes. Copier des dessins ne peut apprendre qu'à manier les instruments et non à dessiner. Comment, en effet, prétendez-vous exercer et former le coup d'oeil en ne lui offrant point les objets tels qu'ils existent! Est-ce donc avec des surfaces planes que nous accoutumerons l'oeil à juger des formes, qui partout s'offrent en relief? d'ailleurs, après avoir perdu un temps précieux sur ces copies de copies, ne faut-il pas en venir à l'étude des reliefs?⁴⁴²

According to Dupuis, copying isolated features encouraged students to see small details instead of the larger concept; it inhibited students from seeing the whole *à coup d'oeil*.

Although Ravaisson disparaged Dupuis's method for not using the human figure as foundational, he, like Dupuis, refused methods that privileged details over the ensemble or seeing the whole comprehensively. In his 1854 report titled *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, Ravaisson writes:

⁴⁴¹ Buisson, "DUPUIS (Alexandre)," in *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire*, 750-751; Buisson cited Alexandre Dupuis's *De l'enseignement du dessin sous le point de vue industriel* (Paris: Chez Giroux, 1836), 72.

⁴⁴² Buisson, "DUPUIS (Alexandre)," 750.

ce qui apprend à bien voir, c'est l'exercice qui consiste à estimer de l'oeil les formes en les appréciant, selon les termes de Pascal, d'un seul regard, d'une seule vue, dans l'ensemble harmonique de leur caractère et de leurs proportions, puis à s'efforcer de les reproduire de même; et c'est cela qui s'appelle proprement le dessin: le dessin, c'est-à-dire le projet (dessin, de dessein), l'esquisse de la représentation complète et adéquate... Or enfin, parmi toutes les formes, quelles sont celles qui sont les plus propres à faire l'éducation de l'oeil, à rendre son jugement sûr? Ce sont celles, tous les maîtres l'ont pensé, qui offrent le plus de physionomie, et dont les proportions sont le plus harmoniques; en d'autres termes, les formes de ce que la nature vivante a des plus élevé et de plus parfait, c'est-à-dire la figure humaine.⁴⁴³

Ravaissou wanted the eye to see a synthesis of movement (that he believed was evident in the sculpture of an antique woman). Distinct from geometrical methods that required mathematical reasoning and showed what exists regardless of the eye or mind, Ravaissou's program relied on an older model of habit—that of imitation—between individuals and tangible environments.

Ravaissou's conception of habit and art, and as such, what it meant to be human centered on imitation. This makes for an interesting account of what it meant to be human. Guillaume, unlike Ravaissou, did not explicitly harness "habit" to his conception of the nature of being or art.

Nonetheless, Guillaume's program was condemned by his contemporaries, like the philosopher Séailles among other drawing professors, and more recently, by art historians, for its emphasis on formulaic habits.

Guillaume, Sculptural Practice, and *le travail réfléchi*

When Guillaume systematized his method, he positioned himself against some of the very qualities that came to be associated with the ill-effects of both photography and habit, notably servility and passivity. In fact, in his definition of *dessin*, he critiqued Ravaissou's program for allowing drawing to rise to the level of instinct and advocated instead for *le travail*

⁴⁴³ Ravaissou, *De l'Enseignement du dessin dans les lycées*, 5-6.

réfléchi. Guillaume writes about drawing: “ce n’est pas un phénomène purement instinctif qui, ne relevant que du sentiment, peut nous permettre de rendre l’expression et la vie en faisant bon marché de la précision. Sans doute l’homme possède l’instinct graphique, ainsi, comme nous l’avons dit, il en règle l’exercice conformément aux lois et aux besoins de sa raison.”⁴⁴⁴ He even described Ravaissou’s program as little more than calligraphy exercise, a kind of imitation that he thought required no intelligence. In this light, it is strange that the historiography of Guillaume describes his regime as mechanistic and unthinking.

Guillaume’s stake in distancing proficiency from the ill-effects of automaticity and habit likely stemmed from his own practice as a sculptor and academician. Over the course of his lifetime, his investment in geometry-based drawing education indeed emerged in his aesthetic and art historical texts, as well as his sculptural practice (which, as we saw in the beginning of the chapter, drew on antiquity by representing idealized, heroic figures). Though his aesthetic philosophy and sculptural practice are often treated in isolation from his pedagogy in recent histories, these domains were not immune to the same questions that were plaguing art instruction.⁴⁴⁵ A close reading of his writing on the history and procedures of art-making, notably *La sculpture en bronze* (1868), in fact, unfolds onto a larger debate about an individual’s relationship to work and working materials, as well as aesthetic concerns. These concerns illuminate why his program depended on geometry and reason, instead of qualities like vision and sentiment.

Around the same time Guillaume began focusing on pedagogy, he was actively engaged

⁴⁴⁴ Buisson, *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d’instruction primaire*, 685.

⁴⁴⁵ Canales, “Movement Before Cinematography: The High-Speed Qualities of Sentiment”; Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, 66-70; Monnier, *L’Art et ses institutions en France*; Bonnet, “L’introduction du dessin dans le système public d’enseignement au XIX^e siècle,” 263-284; Mauve, “L’art à l’école?,” and Nesbit, *Their Common Sense*.

in theories of medium and the practical application of such theories. This was in part precipitated by the growing pressure to institute technical training at the École des beaux-arts, which culminated in the reforms of 1863. Until that time, the Academy prioritized a theoretical education grounded in drawing rather than a more technical training in material production. Not long after these reforms, Guillaume participated at a conference organized by the Union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie that took place on April 29, 1868 to promote strategies of working with bronze. The same year, he published a corresponding text titled *La sculpture en bronze*.⁴⁴⁶

Guillaume's ideas about bronze-work shed crucial light on his conception of the applied arts and artistic instruction. They not only clarify his opinion of the negative connotations associated with habit, but also the aims of his pedagogical regime. For example, he was deeply concerned with the growing problems caused by industry's division of labor.⁴⁴⁷ Guillaume cautioned against applying industry's division of labor to the arts.⁴⁴⁸ Guillaume, like many of his contemporaries, was vexed by industry's ability to render men as little more than machines who "manufacture" the same object by rote. This problem, which he described as a "spirit of aristocracy," existed in France, but had done little to disrupt sculpture; most sculptural *ateliers* at this time continued to accept apprentices who learned from a master.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁶ Eugène Guillaume, *La sculpture en bronze: conférence faite à l'Union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie* (Paris: A. Morel, 1868).

⁴⁴⁷ He wrote: "La division du travail, qui se justifie à bien des égards, produit dans les arts de regrettables effets." Guillaume, *La sculpture en bronze*, 29.

⁴⁴⁸ He writes: "De toutes parts elle [the individual] disparaît dans les oeuvres collectives: l'individu s'anéantit de plus en plus dans l'action de la masse; nous allons à n'être que des grains de poussière confondus dans un tourbillon. Notre intelligence se scinde par l'action isolée qu'il nous faut donner à nos facultés: celles-ci s'émiettent dans des applications bornées..." Ibid., 29.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 30.

To redress this problem, Guillaume recommended that artists and their students return to an education that prioritized material production. That art education became entangled in debates about the ill-effects of the division of labor in society was noted by Gaston Cougny in his 1888 publication *L'Enseignement professionnel des beaux-arts dans les écoles de la ville de Paris*.⁴⁵⁰ He wrote: “Car un apprenti forcément *spécialisé*, exclusivement exercé à une partie-très restreinte de sa profession, confiné dans l’exécution de certains détails, de certains pièces détachées, comment espérer obtenir autre chose qu’une machine humaine, automatique et inconsciente, qui accomplira une besogne, sans même se rendre compte de son utilité?”⁴⁵¹ To evade this problem, Guillaume recommended *le dessin*, but carefully cautioned against the complications associated with using *le crayon*. “Or, depuis longtemps déjà, le crayon est un despote qui nous pousse,” he explained.⁴⁵² By this, he meant that artists had grown accustomed to the unfortunate tendency of using the pencil as a means to quickly take notes without precision or a means to then translate this into information necessary to construct it.

That Guillaume exhibited, at times, a suspicion towards the negative attributes associated with habit formation does not mean he argued against the cultivation of second nature, nor sought the retrieval of a “clean slate” with which to make art so-to-speak. In fact, Guillaume questioned the very possibility of studying nature without any kind of intermediary. “Voir la nature sans intermédiaire, sans préjugés de race et d’éducation, et pour ainsi dire face à face la représenter en s’affranchissant des illusions que l’imagination peut créer et des dispositions constantes ou passagères des sens et de l’esprit,” he explained, “c’est chose difficile, c’est chose

⁴⁵⁰ Gaston Cougny, *L'Enseignement professionnel des beaux-arts dans les écoles de la ville de Paris* (Paris: Quantin, 1888).

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁵² Guillaume, *La sculpture en bronze*, 35-6.

impossible pour des artistes.”⁴⁵³ For Guillaume, humankind could not view the world “first-hand,” without a variety of subjective factors and learned behaviors that shape an individual’s engagement with reality. Guillaume noted that the science of observation “exigent ce dépouillement continuuel de toute idée préconçue de la part de l’expérimentateur; et pour celui-ci l’idéal consisterait à apporter, pour chaque expérience nouvelle, une intelligence et des organes qui fonctionneraient pour la première fois. Mais dans les arts d’imitation la nature ne peut être vue et reproduite sans le concours de toutes les facultés.”⁴⁵⁴ To observe without acquired habits, Guillaume maintained, individuals needed to expunge preconceived ideas about the world. In the fine arts, this was impossible because art could only exist as a product of the intellect, as the work of memory and imagination; the mind, to this logic, exerted control over art-making.

These ideas emerged more forcefully in Guillaume’s writing on the question of the place of aesthetics in art education. In “De l’esthétique dans l’enseignement de l’art” (1886), Guillaume gave caution about another problem plaguing the arts: the separation of art from philosophy.⁴⁵⁵ While Ravaisson condemned his emphasis on materialism, Guillaume too sought to reconcile theory with technique and argued that whereas the senses became linked to art, aesthetics alone could address reason.⁴⁵⁶ His object then was to unite the science of form (which he believed existed independently of humans) with the science of the ideal (an invention of humans to express beauty).⁴⁵⁷ “Je voudrais,” he wrote, “pouvoir intéresser l’un à l’autre le travail

⁴⁵³ Guillaume, “Salon of 1879,” 162-3.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 162-3.

⁴⁵⁵ Eugène Guillaume, “De l’esthétique dans l’enseignement de l’art,” *Gazette des beaux-arts* (1886): 280-298.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 281.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 282.

de la pensée et le travail de la matière, qui devraient être inséparables dans les arts du dessin.”⁴⁵⁸

For Guillaume, there were psychological and metaphysical components to his philosophy of beauty. Art, to his logic, should become a means to reconcile the real and ideal, an idea that converged with those of Ravaisson, and numerous other nineteenth-century artists, critics and educators.

According to Guillaume, geometry became a tool that could, while merged with the physiology of the eye, unite theory and practice and provide order. Thus, drawing instruction was equally about the genesis of beauty. For Guillaume, the mind could generate beauty by improving upon what is perceptible by eye. This was a problem he had addressed in *La sculpture en bronze* as well. He wrote: “Une véritable lutte s’établit...L’intelligence les reconnaît, & bien que la pensée semble s’établir de vive force dans la matière rebelle, le génie que celle-ci contient en puissance met sa marque sur l’oeuvre de l’homme & lui confère un caractère indélébile.”⁴⁵⁹ Guillaume’s interest in technical training was not at the expense of the supremacy of drawing. Drawing’s significance, as established by his pedagogical regime, was acquired by its ability to unify the arts. However, in order for these operations to work, what was seen needed to be translated within the mind.

Conclusion

The historiography of Guillaume’s pedagogy serves as an expression of the larger anxieties about cultural life in the era of industrial mechanization. By the time the French government replaced *la méthode géométrique* with the “intuitive method” in the first decade of

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 281.

⁴⁵⁹ Guillaume, *La sculpture en bronze*, 11.

the twentieth century, Guillaume's regime began to signify the ill-effects of industrialization, notably passivity and servility. Geometry's dependence on established formulas likewise underscored the drawbacks of habit acquisition to many pedagogues and politicians who saw it as mechanical and thoughtless repetition. Nonetheless, Guillaume conceived of a system that exercised the mind, that forced students to apply reason rather than passively reproduce the world according to vision.

When Guillaume systematized the geometric method for primary education, he contradicted a pedagogical precedent set by Ravaisson that emphasized the cultivation of vision and sentiment through human figure study. For Guillaume, the stress Ravaisson placed on vision was the regime's main shortcoming. Vision, he maintained, obscured truth because it was the product of an education and individual subjectivity. Geometry, therefore, became much more reliable as a source of truth to his line of thinking. Guillaume described geometry lessons as less expedient, as less contingent on habits than it was on reasoned procedures and conscious thought. This is not to suggest that he believed individuals could escape habit acquisition; rather, he encouraged a pedagogical model that resisted the tendency to rely entirely on unconscious thought.

Ravaisson's curriculum and perspective on habit diverged from Guillaume's program. Years before Ravaisson designed his method, he became an accepted authority on philosophies of habit. His theory saw in habit virtues for artistic production, namely that repetition fosters refined skillsets and can be an agent for spontaneous, innovative changes. For Ravaisson, the ability to practice habitual skills without much thought did not operate as a check on free will and consciousness. Distinct from Guillaume, who misunderstood the significance of habit, Ravaisson recognized that the association of habit and pedagogy was unsurprising and necessary.

What is surprising in the case of Ravaissou was the status he accorded to habit and habitual vision. Ravaissou's conception of habit, vision, and art pedagogy opposed the pervasive perspective on habit as negative; his claims hinged on a particular definition of the human as habitual despite this. Because habit so often was treated—and continues to be treated—as mechanistic and inhuman, it is a strange thing on which to hang a definition of the human. Although the majority of late-nineteenth-century conceptions of habit described it as bodily, animalistic, and too unthinking, Ravaissou used the habitual as a pathway to a kind of humanism that embraced humankind's status as both mind and matter, thus describing habit and imitation as a basis for what it meant to be human. By explaining the complexity of Ravaissou's conception of habit in relation to drawing instruction, this thesis provides a new way of thinking about the automatic and mechanistic in nineteenth-century discourses.

Ravaissou and Guillaume disagreed about habit's role in arriving at knowledge. Guillaume's procedures, unlike Ravaissou's, did not depend upon empirical information as a source of knowledge. Because Ravaissou's drawing project centered on the education of the eye and he conceived of vision as habitual, habit became a method for giving humans access to knowledge. Guillaume rejected photography and instead, relied on projective geometry as a source of truth because it entailed problem-solving based on universal laws rather than expedient, habitual reproductions of the visible world. To Guillaume, the visible and habitual were mechanical procedures that required minimal conscious thought, therefore, they were not the product of *le travail réfléchi*, and therefore, were fallible.

Chapter 4

From Bodily Habit to Collective Custom: Félix Régamey, *Japonisme*, and National Art Education

By the end of the 1890s, *la méthode Guillaume*'s hegemony over drawing curriculum in primary education began to waver. That geometry-based procedures were perceived as too rigid and formulaic, not to mention alien to the aims of "high" art, featured among the key complaints launched against it. Opponents attacked Guillaume's system as a "dogmatisme calculateur," as a force that stultified rather than fostered creativity in children.⁴⁶⁰ In 1909, the geometric program was supplanted by Gaston Quénieux's *méthode intuitive*. Quénieux was a professor at the École nationale des arts décoratifs, the lycée Michelet, and the lycée Lakanal, whose system, also known as *la méthode naturelle*, rebuffed technical procedures. Instead, he called for "dessin libre," which rebuked the accurate reproduction of models in favor of the child's representational preferences (in terms of subject matter and style). This shift was understood to be more in line with then nascent studies surrounding childhood development by figures including Corrado Ricci, Ebenezer Cooke, and James Sully, and drawing instructors, such as Franz Cizek (1865-1946); these thinkers connected schematic conventions, from abstraction to realism, to mental growth.⁴⁶¹

Although Quénieux's curriculum succeeded Guillaume's, support for his measures were not unanimous. Growing pressure for reform unfolded in the capital, spearheaded by Louis

⁴⁶⁰ L.G. [Louis Guébin], "L'enseignement actuel du dessin. Son esprit, ses conséquences," *Revue des arts décoratifs*, vol. 13 (1892-1893), 121, and E. Pottier et M. Servier, *Conseil aux instituteurs sur les nouveaux programmes de l'enseignement du dessin* (Paris: Hachette, 1909), II as cited by Renaud d'Enfert and Myriam Boyer, "Le dessin s'émancipe: vers un nouvel équilibre? (1909-années 1960)," in *Un Art pour tous*, 66.

⁴⁶¹ Corrado Ricci, "The Art of Little Children," trans. L. Maitland, in *The Pedagogical Seminary*, vol. 3 (Worcester, MA: J.H. Oprah, 1894 [originally published in 1887]); Ebenezer Cooke, "Art Teaching and Child Nature," *Journal of Education* (December 1885): 462; James Sully, *Studies of Childhood* (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1895).

Guébin (1854-1933), a drawing professor who became the principal inspector of drawing in Parisian municipal schools in 1898.⁴⁶² Guébin, alongside several other Parisian instructors, began debates in *Le Moniteur du dessin*, a journal founded in 1897 as a mouthpiece for their campaign.⁴⁶³ In the early twentieth century, the criticism mounted in this periodical acquired a wider platform at the Exposition Universelle (1900), and at congresses dedicated specifically to the state of drawing in public schools that took place in Paris (1900 and 1906), Bern (1904) and London (1908).

Among the key figures agitating for reform was Félix Régamey, a successful salon painter and commercial illustrator who trained under the supervision of Lecoq de Boisbaudran in the 1860s [Figure 43]. Today, Régamey primarily is remembered as an accepted authority on *Japonisme* (a term used to describe the French admiration for the Japanese arts) alongside the ranks of Philippe Burty, the Goncourt brothers, and Ernest Chesneau, to name a few.⁴⁶⁴ However, shortly after he completed his studies, Régamey pursued a career in art education. He initially became a drawing professor at the École spéciale de dessin et de mathématiques in Paris (Petite école) between 1868 and 1870.⁴⁶⁵ Following the loss of the Franco-Prussian War, he

⁴⁶² O. Brunet, “L’enseignement du dessin dans le secondaire, 1852-1946. Émergence et évolution de la discipline,” *Mémoire de DEA en sciences de l’éducation à l’Université Paris V*, 79 as cited by d’Enfert and Boyer, “Le dessin s’émancipe: vers un nouvel équilibre? (1909-années 1960),” in *Un Art pour tous*, 66.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁶⁴ This is not to suggest his work provides an accurate view of Japanese art or culture, however. See: Ting Chang, “Entre art et science: la représentation des autochtones dans les ‘Promenades japonaises’ d’Émile Guimet and Félix Régamey,” in *L’artiste savant à la conquête du monde moderne*, 157-166 (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2010). In recent scholarship by Christopher Reed and Ting Chang, his work has been positioned alongside the writers, collectors, and artists most commonly associated with this phenomenon, such as Theodore Duret, Émile Guimet and Vincent van Gogh. See: Christopher Reed, “Introduction,” in *The Chrysanthème Papers. The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthème and other documents on French Japonisme*, 1-60 (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2010); Ting Chang, “The Labor of Travel: Guimet and Régamey in Asia,” in *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, 73-110 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Ting Chang, “Paris, Japan and modernity: a vexed ratio,” in *Is Paris still the capital of the nineteenth century? Essays on art and modernity, 1850-1900*, 153-170, ed. by Hollis Clayson and André Dombrowski (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

traveled to London, and from London to the United States where he was soon elected as an academician at the Academy of Design, now known as The Art Institute of Chicago, in 1873.⁴⁶⁶ By the time he designed a new drawing regime in reaction to the status quo, he also had been employed as Inspecteur de l'Enseignement du Dessin à Paris (1881-c. 1904).

Histories of Régamey's role as a *japoniste* have been treated in isolation from his pledge to reform art pedagogy at the end of the century. However, Régamey's expertise as a drawing instructor converged with his interest in Japanese art and culture on multiple occasions. For instance, he acquired a significant commission on behalf of the French state that included the analysis of drawing procedures deployed in Japan (1899).⁴⁶⁷ Furthermore, Régamey's contributions to *japonisme* and drawing education both depended on the looming legacy of Lecoq's visual memory training, a feature which remains unexamined in existing secondary literature. Over the course of his lifetime, Régamey's commitment to Lecoq's regime remained steadfast. Around forty years after he enrolled at the Petite école, Régamey even penned the first and only biography dedicated exclusively to the life and legacy of his teacher. This account, titled *Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses élèves, notes et souvenirs* (1903), has become an enduring statement on Lecoq.⁴⁶⁸ In addition to chronicling Lecoq's family history and career path, Régamey's text offers a compelling defense of Lecoq's controversial system of visual mnemonics. To pay tribute, Régamey collated personal testimonies from Lecoq's most

⁴⁶⁵ David Karel, *Dictionnaire des artistes de langue française en Amérique du Nord* (Laval: Les presses de l'université Laval, 1992), 681-2. He also was briefly employed as an instructor at École spéciale d'architecture, a private institution founded by M. Emile Trélat. See: "Ça et là," *Gils blas* (02 juin 1907), n.p.

⁴⁶⁶ "Art in the Cities," *The Art Journal* 6 (1880), 62; Félix Régamey, "À Chicago Il Y A Vingt Ans," *Le Tour du monde* (20 mai 1893), 305-320. The Art Institute has no extant documentation to support this, however.

⁴⁶⁷ He also was commissioned to study the drawing procedures deployed in the United States (1879).

⁴⁶⁸ Régamey, *Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses élèves, notes et souvenirs*.

celebrated students, including Rodin and Fantin-Latour, that acknowledge the “profound impact” of Lecoq’s teachings on their professional trajectory.⁴⁶⁹

This chapter charts Régamey’s artistic and pedagogical career alongside his infatuation with *dessin de mémoire*. Consideration of Régamey’s professional commitments meaningfully expands on the original prompt of this dissertation by examining the capacity of habit formation (via systems of visual memory training) to generate stylistic change over time and in different geographic contexts. Like the other drawing instructors discussed thus far, Régamey understood memorization by repetition to be emancipatory; what distinguished Régamey’s position from the other instructors featured in this research is the way he explicitly conceptualized visual memory as a force that—when applied to art—drove civilization forward. This chapter untangles the rich interplay between Régamey’s ideas about *la mémoire pittoresque*, comparative drawing pedagogy, and national identity. By mapping his ideas about Japanese artistic training and drawing pedagogy alongside his preference for visual mnemonics, it becomes clear how Régamey harnessed the acquisition of visual and manual habits to collective customs. I therefore explore the tensions between how Japanese artistic practices and pedagogues shaped French approaches to the methods of artistic production, and vice versa.

Régamey: Artist, *Japoniste*, Drawing Instructor

In addition to his work as an educator, Régamey was a caricaturist and illustrator for French periodicals, notably the *Journal amusant*, *Le Boulevard*, *L’Indépendance parisienne*, *La Vie parisienne*, and *Les Faits-Divers illustrés*. During *l’année terrible*, he established *Le Salut public*, a revolutionary (and short-lived) newspaper devoted to the Committee of Public Safety of

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 6.

the Commune of Paris (1871).⁴⁷⁰ After the collapse of the Commune, Régamey's support for this "illegitimate" regime led to his forced exile from France and to temporarily seek political asylum abroad.

By the 1870s and 1880s, Régamey cultivated an international reputation working as a contributor to journals based in London and New York, such as *The Graphic* and *Harper's Weekly*. In the wake of France's political disaster, many foreign periodicals commissioned Régamey's illustrations on French foreign and domestic policies. *The Political Situation in France* is a print, for example, that shows a chiseler looking down at several groups of men gathered below his scaffolding (each group crowds around a distinct musical score held by one individual) as he stands before a decorative relief commemorating the year 1870 (the year that marked the violent end of the Second Empire and the disaccord that took place as new political regimes fought for power) [Figure 46]. Although *Harper's Weekly* published this drawing in November 1873, it represents the instability of French politics and national identity from three years earlier.

Régamey not only was solicited as a satirist, but also produced drawings to illustrate news reports. When *The Illustrated London News* related a tragedy that took place at a baptism in New Orleans in May 1887, for instance, it published the story alongside Régamey's *Negro Baptism by immersion in a river in the United States of America*, a drawing that exemplifies Régamey's expertise in recording religious rituals from modern life [Figure 45]. Régamey depicted a baptism that took place at an unidentified location when he visited the United States over ten years earlier. The drawing features a well-dressed African American crowd huddled

⁴⁷⁰ Copies of this series are now held by the Musée Carnavelet. For a description of its contents, see: Firmin Maillard, *Histoire des journaux publiés à Paris pendant le siège et sous la Commune: 4 septembre 1870 au 28 mai 1871* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1871), 24-5.

along the banks of a pond in prayer. Two men emerge from the crowd, forcefully carrying a person lying upright toward the water where a pastor baptizes another man in a shallow pond. While the drawing was ostensibly taken from life rather than imagination, the exaggerated facial features of the black figures conform to preexisting racial and racist stereotypes rather than to portray recognizable likenesses.⁴⁷¹

Far from hurting his career, the chance to live in London and the United States led him to further cultivate his friendships with noteworthy poets, including Paul-Marie Verlaine (1844-1896) (who he met in Paris in 1869 and maintained contact with during and after the Commune) and Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), and artists, such as William Morris Hunt (1824-1879). After Verlaine's death in 1896, Régamey published a collection of Verlaine's drawings under the title *Verlaine dessinateur* that attests to their friendship [Figures 47-48].⁴⁷² Alongside a caricature of a man's assassination, for instance, Verlaine dedicated the scene to "Félix Regalaine" and was signed by "Paul Vermei." Following his time in London, Régamey relocated to the United States where he sat for a portrait by Hunt, a prominent American portrait painter primarily based in Boston, and who had painted alongside the Barbizon school in France [Figure 49]. Hunt's portrait situates Régamey in a dark, undefined setting without any attributes representative of his career as a draftsman and *japoniste*. He depicted Régamey standing contrapposto with his right arm on his hip, sporting an archaic costume which included a doublet (a jacket commonly worn between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries) and breeches.

After a brief stint in the United States, Régamey traveled to Asia in 1876. Régamey first

⁴⁷¹ Guy C. McElroy, *Facing History: The Black Image in American Art 1710-1940* (San Francisco: Bedford Arts, Publishers, 1990); Albert Boime, *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990); Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Adrienne L. Childs and Susan H. Libby, eds., *Blacks and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2014).

⁴⁷² Félix Régamey, *Verlaine dessinateur* (Paris: Floury, 1896).

voyaged to Japan, China, Sri Lanka, and India alongside Émile Guimet (1836-1918), a French industrialist whose collection of artifacts from this trip to Asia resulted in the construction of the *musée Guimet*, a museum dedicated to *les arts asiatiques* that was first established in Lyon in 1879, then moved to Paris in 1889. Guimet was commissioned to conduct a survey of Asian religions on behalf of the French Minister of Public Instruction between 1876 and 1877 [Figure 50].⁴⁷³ Before he traveled to San Francisco to embark for Japan, Guimet participated in the 1876 World's Fair in Philadelphia, where he met Régamey.⁴⁷⁴ This encounter led Guimet to invite Régamey to join the excursion and to produce collaborative research on Japanese culture and to document their travels across Japan to cities such as Yokohama, Kamakura, Nikkô, Tokyo and the isles of Enoshima, Kyoto, Ise (a coastal city with Shinto shrines), to a short trip to Osaka and Kobe (on Osaka Bay) before traveling to China and India.⁴⁷⁵ During their trip, Régamey was responsible for the production of visual documentation.

For French audiences, Régamey's and Guimet's tour of Japan made them widely accepted as credible experts, with the perceived capacity to offer accurate insight into Japanese culture. Régamey's credibility was tied to his visual memory, and ability to produce convincing, life-like illustrations following his travels. Shortly after their trip, they produced an illustrated report of their journey titled *Promenades Japonaises* (1878, 1880).⁴⁷⁶ *Promenades Japonaises* is

⁴⁷³ Ellen Conant's, "The French connection: Émile Guimet's Mission to Japan, a Cultural Context for Japonisme," in *Japan in Transition: Thought and Action in the Meiji Era, 1868-1912*, edited by Hilary Conroy, Sandra T. W. David and Wayne Patterson, 113-146 (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984) connects Guimet's personal interest in Japanese art and culture to France's economic interest in acquiring a larger commercial presence in Japan, above all as this relates to the silk industry.

⁴⁷⁴ Reed, "Introduction," 19.

⁴⁷⁵ For resources outlining their itinerary, see: Keiko Omoto and Francis Macouin, *Quand le Japon s'ouvrit au monde* (Paris: Gallimard/Réunion des musées nationaux histoire, 1990), 60-1, 66, and Francis Macouin and Françoise Chappuis, *D'outremer et d'Orient mystique: Les itinéraires d'Émile Guimet* (Sully-la-Tour: Éditions Findakly, 2001).

⁴⁷⁶ Émile Guimet and Félix Régamey, *Promenades japonaises* (Paris: Charpentier, 1878); Émile Guimet,

a two-volume text written by Guimet and illustrated by Régamey that recounts their journey to Japan. The first focuses on their excursion to Yokohama and Kamakura; the second summarizes their trip to Tokyo and Nikkō. As noted in her 2001 study of Guimet's relationship to Japan and Japanese artifacts, historian Keiko Omoto points out that these two tomes only reflect a small portion of their travels; while they collected enough material for two additional volumes that documented their trip through the Tōkaidō road (or what was an important route between Kyoto to Tokyo during the Edo period), they never were published.⁴⁷⁷ Guimet's and Régamey's publications reconfigure the scope of Guimet's original mandate, that was, to chart world religions in East Asia, instead focusing exclusively on Japanese culture, above all the arts, theater, and daily life. Although their work most conspicuously focuses on customs, recent scholarship by Ting Chang compellingly articulates how this book is revelatory of complex—and subtly expressed—ideas about travel, mobility, race, and class that existed and intersected in modernity.⁴⁷⁸

The same year that Guimet and Régamey published the first iteration of *Promenades Japonaises*, they also participated in the exhibitions held at the Palais du Trocadéro in conjunction with the Exposition universelle of 1878. The Palais du Trocadéro, also known then as the Musée ethnographique des missions scientifique, was built that year under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Education as an anthropological museum. In 1878, three rooms of the Trocadéro were dedicated to the *Exposition historique de l'art ancien et de l'ethnographie des*

and Félix Régamey, *Promenades Japonaises: Tokio-Nikko* (Paris: C. Charpentier, 1880). Régamey's interest in *Japonisme* also would lead him to participate in the *Société Franco-Japonaise* in Paris.

⁴⁷⁷ Keiko Omoto, "Dans le Japon de l'ère Meiji," in *D'outremer et d'Orient mystique: les itinéraires d'Émile Guimet* (Sully-la-Tour: Éditions Fidakly, 2001), 48.

⁴⁷⁸ Chang, "The Labor of Travel: Guimet and Régamey in Asia"; Ting Chang, "Paris, Japan and modernity: a vexed ratio," in *Is Paris still the capital of the nineteenth century? Essays on art and modernity, 1850-1900*, 153-170, ed. by Hollis Clayson and André Dombrowski (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

peuples étrangers à l'Europe.⁴⁷⁹ According to an article published in *L'Illustration*, one of these rooms juxtaposed Asian religious objects acquired by Guimet (such as sculptures of Buddha) with paintings by Régamey that documented the men's excursion east.⁴⁸⁰ This curatorial strategy also was documented in a gouache made by Régamey titled *Présentation de la mission scientifique d'Émile Guimet en Asie à l'Exposition universelle de 1878* [Figure 51].

Présentation de la mission scientifique d'Émile Guimet en Asie à l'Exposition universelle de 1878 represents a slightly off-centered aisle that leads toward a salon-styled installation. Paintings that document the diverse religious rites of Japan and drawn studies of Japanese “types” (nameless busts against blank backgrounds) populate the entire back wall [Figures 52-53]. In the center of the gouache, there is a visitor viewing a large scale, identifiable oil painting that was produced by Régamey for this event, titled *Bonze de Colombo* [Figure 54]. This work depicts two Buddhist monks wearing mustard colored robes, standing on muted, brown earth in front of a building with blue-green pillars in present-day Sri Lanka. The actual palette of the oil painting is obscured in the gouache, wherein Régamey adopted the aesthetic of printed newspapers at the time. In fact, the monochromic palette he embraced in the gouache provides an interesting contrast to the spectrum of colors visible in the actual paintings that were exhibited in 1878 and which are currently housed at the Musée Guimet. In most of his oil paintings and studies of types, Régamey used lifelike hues that range well beyond the gouache's grey and light brown tones. *Pont sacré et pont banal à Nikko* (1877-8), for instance, is another painting by Régamey that is featured among the artworks installed on the wall in the gouache (its presence in the 1878 exhibition is confirmed by a surviving photograph of the exposition [Figures 55-56]. As

⁴⁷⁹ Mario Proth, *Voyage au Pays des Peintres: Salon universel de 1878* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1879), 324.

⁴⁸⁰ “Les collections de M. Guimet, au Trocadéro,” *L'Illustration* (16 novembre 1878), 310.

in *Bonze de Colombo*, Régamey painted a scene he observed during his time in Asia. Again, whereas Régamey illustrated the exhibition using a limited set of tones in the gouache, the landscape painting features a bridge with red rails that unites the foreground with a lush, green forest that dominates the background.

Although the gouache shows only a fraction of what appears to be a large, crowded room, with objects installed from floor to ceiling, it is clear that the exhibition deployed the conventions associated with both the salon and cabinet of curiosities, particularly the stacking of images and objects on shelves and in glass vitrines, to showcase religious objects collected on their journey. For instance, underneath Régamey's *Bonze* is a series of sculptures of the Buddha. Flanking either side of the composition are two displays of similar artifacts; whereas to the left, there are tables with glass vitrines (the catalogue notes that there were 8), to the right, there is a large pedestal around which plants, furniture, and sculptures associated with religious rites were placed. In the middle of the room is a facsimile of "Mandara de Kooboo-Daishi dans le temple de Too-dji," a mandala (circle or altar) dedicated to Kūkai (774-835), a Japanese Buddhist monk posthumously known as Kōbō-Daishi, at the Toji (Tō-ji) Temple in Kyoto.⁴⁸¹ Bronze statues surrounded the mandala, including two of Mizo Boasts (Ksitgarbha Bodhisattva) and sacred vases.⁴⁸² The effect this immersive curatorial strategy had on viewers was manifold; in addition to resembling the home of a connoisseur, the reproduction of sacred sites and its objects allowed the viewer to travel vicariously through the installation.

According to exhibition reviews, Régamey's depictions of temples, religious ceremonies and "types de races" were completed with a "scrupuleuse exactitude," and offered "la valeur

⁴⁸¹ *Notice Explicative sur les objets exposés par M. Émile Guimet et sur les peintures et dessins faits par M. Félix Régamey* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1878), 7.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 7-15.

scientifique d'un document."⁴⁸³ "Un autre Japon se révèle au Trocadéro, le Japon humain, ethnographique et vivant," declared Mario Proth in a similar vein in his 1878 review.⁴⁸⁴ Although he achieved lasting recognition as an authority on Japanese culture during his lifetime, by today's standards, the veracity of Régamey's work is hardly an accurate portrayal of Japanese culture.⁴⁸⁵ Chang casts doubt over the accuracy of their project by noting that the two men desired to "classiciser" the Japanese, in particular Régamey who "*occidentalis[é]*" his depictions. The comparison of Japanese culture to antiquity appeared both within their written publications and at the aforementioned exhibition. The catalogue which accompanied the show describes the figures in *Bonze de Colombo* as "sénateurs romains en toges jaunes."⁴⁸⁶ Though Chang rhetorically questions whether this decision took place "by design or unconsciously," Régamey specifically notes that the comparison between Japanese culture and antiquity was common in *fin-de-siècle* France, suggesting that such allusions were not understood to be incompatible with the accuracy of their projects.⁴⁸⁷ Moreover, Lecoq's pedagogical program—which Régamey followed—encouraged this practice. By discouraging artists from working directly from the model, *dessin de mémoire* invited artists to imaginatively merge the "real" (what was visible by

⁴⁸³ "Les collections de M. Guimet, au Trocadéro," 310.

⁴⁸⁴ The writer added: "M. Félix Régamey compte comme un exemple et comme un maître parmi ces vaillants, trop rares encore, à qui ne suffit pas l'étroite vie contemplative, et qui s'efforcent d'entraîner l'art français vers la voie scientifique et féconde de l'internationalisme moderne." See: Proth, *Voyage au Pays des Peintres: Salon universel de 1878*, 324.

⁴⁸⁵ This point has been argued by Chang in her 2010 essay titled "Entre art et science: la représentation des autochtones dans les 'Promenades japonaises' d'Emile Guimet and Félix Régamey." See: Chang, "Entre art et science: la représentation des autochtones dans les 'Promenades japonaises' d'Emile Guimet and Félix Régamey," 157-166.

⁴⁸⁶ *Notice Explicative sur les objets exposés par M. Émile Guimet*, 41.

⁴⁸⁷ Chang, "Entre art et science: la représentation des autochtones dans les 'Promenades japonaises' d'Emile Guimet and Félix Régamey," 159 and 165; Keiko Omoto and Francis Macouin also noted the way classicism informed Régamey's representations of Japan. See: *Quand le Japon s'ouvrit au monde*, 62-3; E. Pottier, "Grèce et Japon," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, t. II (1890): 105-132 as cited by Félix Régamey, *Le Japon pratique* (Paris: J. Heizelet et Cie, 1891), 19.

eye) with the “ideal” (conventions learned from artistic precedents).⁴⁸⁸

Within the context of nineteenth-century France, Régamey’s trips to the United States and Japan were believed to legitimize his capacity to truthfully document foreign customs. For instance, at the same time he produced large-scale paintings of Japan, he also recorded different Protestant religious rites that he encountered in the United States in a similar vein. “[I]l passait au monde yankee, affairé, laborieux et positif,” explained the art critic Antony Valabrègue in 1882.

Il assistait au spectacle de cette activité commerciale, de cette colonisation pressée, qui peuple si promptement les dernières solitudes du Far-West; il voyait les grandes villes qui deviennent des centres considérables et où se forme une société nouvelle, fière de son expansion démocratique, se mettant à l’oeuvre de tous côtés, et ayant hâte d’échapper aux vieilles servitudes industrielles qui la rattachent encore à l’Europe.⁴⁸⁹

Among the oil paintings Régamey produced was *Baptême d’indiens aux États-Unis* (1877-78) [Figure 57]. This work depicts a balding, bearded pastor dressed in a plaid, button-down shirt with his sleeves rolled up to his biceps, and dull, grey pants; while standing in knee-deep water, he aids an indigenous man who wears only a loin cloth, step into a shallow lake. In the background are other indigenous figures huddled together and seated on a dry, barren landscape as they bear witness to the baptism that will soon take place. Régamey refused the heroizing conventions of academicism in favor of seemingly ordinary, depictions of events and figures. In fact, he rejected the attributes of academic history paintings, such as chiaroscuro and theatrical poses, to suggest that this was not an artificially contrived scene from his imagination, but that it was an event he had viewed first-hand.

⁴⁸⁸ Chu, “Lecoq de Boisbaudran and Memory Drawing: A Teaching Course between Idealism and Naturalism,” 242-289.

⁴⁸⁹ Antony Valabrègue, “L’Art en Amérique,” *L’Artiste: journal de la littérature et des beaux-arts* (1882), 97.

In another artwork he produced on this occasion, titled *Shakers aux États-Unis* (1877-78), the religious practice is less clearly illustrated [Figure 58]. He represented three women wearing bonnets and engaged in contemplation facing opposite of a man plainly dressed and reading from—what we could assume to be—scripture. Whereas the baptism took place outdoors, the setting for the Shaker ceremony is non-descript. In spite of the differences between these works in terms of subject matter, in both works, he adopted a realist style; figures appear lifelike, represented without the stark tonal contrasts, classical poses, or idealized physiques that characterized *beaux-arts* history paintings at this time.

Régamey's "drawing lectures"

In 1891, Régamey painted a circular gouache titled *Conférence sur le Japon* that features a self-portrait of himself standing before a crowd in a dimly lit conference hall [Figure 44]. He is centrally-placed and positioned at the front of the room with his back turned toward the audience as he draws on a large sheet of paper supported by an easel. Within the monochromatic, green theater, Régamey's drawing emerges as the focal point, offset by a yellow tint. Régamey portrays himself confidently looking over his left shoulder, peering away from the canvas and toward the spectators as he masterfully draws upon the board entirely from memory.

That Régamey presented himself working publicly from memory rather than from the live model reflected the technical skills he acquired under the supervision of Lecoq. In the 1860s, Régamey trained at the Petite école alongside his brothers, Frédéric and Guillaume. The infamy surrounding Lecoq's dismissal by the end of the decade did not prevent the siblings from having successful artistic careers. Importantly, the gouache self-portrait foregrounds Régamey's primary identity (and prestige) as a *japoniste*. Though set in a Parisian theater, Régamey portrays himself

drawing a Japanese-inspired genre scene from memory. On his canvas, he represents a social exchange between a mother clutching her child and a figure who presumably sold birds. The mother stands behind a child as he reaches up toward a bird that was recently freed from its cage. The third figure kneels before them, to be at eye level with the child, beckoning his attention with the cage she holds out toward him. Régamey's subject matter and style in the canvas were linked to his first-hand experience in Japan; he incorporated attributes that came to typify Japanese culture to westerners, such as kimonos (a thin garment popularly worn by both men and women that wraps around the body like a robe and is secured with a belt), and buns (a hairstyle that pulls hair away from the face toward the back of the head, and tightly twists it into a circular knot).

Over the course of the 1880s and 1890s, Régamey exploited his visual memories of Japan to advance his career. As shown in the self-portrait, Régamey highlighted his ability to work from memory by portraying himself depicting a Japanese-inspired image. Régamey in fact showcased his methods by organizing popular *soirées de dessin* in the 1880s. *Soirées de dessin* were a series of public lectures which took place *chez* Madame Edmond Adam and at the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers and which were often dedicated to his memory of Japanese theater decades after his trip to Japan. Today, little documentary evidence survives that can account for each meeting's content. From the traces that remain, it appears that at the *soirées*, Régamey executed ethnographic drawings without the aid of live models while Guimet provided commentary. As noted in 1884:

Pendant que M. Guimet racontait ce qu'il avait observé avec soin, un artiste, M. Félix Régamey, son compagnon de voyage dans l'extrême Orient, faisait revivre par son crayon les personnages et les choses. Sur un large tableau de quatre mètres carrés, avec une agilité et une sûreté de main surprenantes, M. Régamey présentait tour à tour au public émerveillé le machiniste aux formes robustes, le torse nu, le marteau à la main; le danseur, le prestidigitateur et les types les plus

caractéristiques du théâtre japonais....⁴⁹⁰

More than a mere lecture, Régamey illustrated Guimet's narrative as it unfolded as a performance.

When Régamey drew from memory at the *soirées de dessins*, he had already become known as a respected ethnographer and painter of Japanese culture. This, coupled with his unique and known ability to draw from memory quickly, led *La Nature* to reproduce some of his "croquis dessinés" in 1881, alongside French scientist Gaston Tissandier's description of the *soirée* [Figure 59].⁴⁹¹ Some of these black and white illustrations depict the conventions of Japanese theater and theater production using dark, bold lines. "En moins d'une heure de temps," Tissandier explained, "on le voyait non sans un légitime étonnement, couvrir de croquis gigantesques, des longueurs extraordinaires de papier sans fin, crayonner des scènes relatives à l'ethnographie, à la géographie, à l'histoire, improviser avec une sûreté de main inouïe et un goût exquis de véritables tableaux."⁴⁹² According to this account, Régamey's extemporaneous drawing performances impressed audiences through the assumed effortlessness which characterized the act.⁴⁹³

It was in the 1880s in France that Régamey's peers legitimized his practice of drawing from memory.⁴⁹⁴ Critics applauded his purported capacity to reproduce what was seen "on the

⁴⁹⁰ *Courrier de l'art* (30 mai 1884), 270.

⁴⁹¹ Gaston Tissandier, "Les Soirées de dessin de Félix Régamey [sic]," *La Nature* (4 juin 1881), 55.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁹³ This practice of working from memory, elsewhere referred to as *conférences en dessin*, first began in Boston around 1876. While the subject of his American drawing-lecture is unknown at present, the Parisian *soirées* centered on Japanese theater. See: Guimet, and Régamey, *Promenades Japonaises: Tokio-Nikko*, 191.

⁴⁹⁴ Christian de Trogo, "Courrier des Théâtres," *Gils Blas* (31 mai 1884), 4. This wasn't the only time Régamey participated in a drawing-lecture dedicated to Japanese theater. In Le Diable Boiteux's "Nouvelles & Echos," *Gils blas* (16 novembre 1880), it says that "Un monde fou hier soir chez Mme Edmond Adam. M. Gaston

fly” by heart. An anonymous critic writing about Régamey’s performances, for instance, noted that “cet artiste improvisateur” knows how to capture “...en quelque sorte au vol tous les objets, les tableaux de la nature qui lui passent sous les yeux...”⁴⁹⁵ This was a skillset which corresponded to the critical appraisal of Lecoq’s visual mnemonics. As discussed in Chapter Two, Lecoq’s program responded to the representational challenges that accompanied the growing interest in working outside the studio, that is, how artists could recall with exactitude the multitude of visual details possibly perceptible in nature. Lecoq designed a series of techniques to translate fleeting facets of human visual experience into forms one could then reproduce from memory by hand. His method culminated in genre scenes unfolding in nature “by heart” (such as laborers transporting materials along the Seine or medical students taking an exam), similar to Régamey’s depiction of a mother clutching a child standing before a crouching figure freeing a bird from his cage. That this program hinged on the education of the eye—to train the eye to see instantaneously, to accurately observe and reproduce the fugitive and ephemeral—benefited Régamey’s critical reception.

I argue that Régamey’s reputation as an adept draftsman and painter with a strong memory did not hinge on an exact correlation between what was directly observable by eye and what he then reproduced by hand. Rather, he deployed particular naturalist pictorial techniques and conventions to satisfy the viewers’ belief in the imagery’s purported accuracy. For instance, in an oil painting titled *Émile Guimet and Félix Régamey chez les musulmans chinois (à Canton)*, Régamey presents a scene from a vantage that he could not have inhabited by embedding a self-portrait [Figure 60]. Here, Régamey depicts himself and Guimet seated in summer suits inside

Berardi faisait une conférence sur le *théâtre au Japon*, d’après le livre de M. Félix Regamey [sic]. / M. Regamey dessinait à mesure sur un tableau.”

⁴⁹⁵ “Publications de la librairie Charpentier,” *Le Mémorial diplomatique*, no. 51 (18 décembre 1880), 840.

what was likely a mosque at Canton (Guangzhou) at a centrally-placed table with drinks. One figure dressed in religious costume approaches their table while other local Chinese onlookers peer half-hidden by columns or doors to catch a glimpse at the European guests. When Régamey included a self-portrait in their encounter of Chinese Muslims and in his drawing-lecture, his credibility as an “eye-witness” so-to-speak was not threatened by the fact that he reproduced subject matter he could not have observed directly. By providing a lifelike depiction of a specific architectural setting, recognizable portraits (including his own) and painting in a way that showed little brushwork, he made images that French audiences found convincing.

In contrast, when Régamey actually drew from memory at the *soirées de dessin*, he depended upon his memory of compositions he had already produced. Furthermore, by performing before a crowd without recourse to texts and images, he showed his audience that he worked from memory. We have no such proof with the staged paintings. The gouache’s subject matter was one he must have known well. The same year he created the gouache, he published an illustrated text that featured the same scene in *Le Japon pratique* (1891), an illustrated guide to Japanese art and industry that also shed light on Japan’s ceremonial customs (ranging from birth, marriage, to funerary, theatrical) and government [Figure 61].⁴⁹⁶ To publicize his work, *Le Figaro* also published a reproduction of it, alongside an excerpt of the text.⁴⁹⁷

As in the nineteenth-century reviews of his drawing-lectures, the perceived match between what was seen and reproduced in Régamey’s detailed illustrations gave them equal weight to written historical and ethnographical accounts. “Quand l’historien hésite, mal satisfait

⁴⁹⁶ Maurice Montégut, “Variété: Le Paradis retrouvé,” *Revue bleue politique et littéraire* (1892), 381-2; Régamey, *Le Japon pratique*.

⁴⁹⁷ Régamey, *Le Japon pratique*, 16; Félix Régamey, “Excerpt from *Le Japon pratique*,” *Le Figaro. Supplément littéraire du dimanche* (31 octobre 1891), 174.

d'une description, —doutant d'être compris par la foule ignorante, sans éducation préalable," the novelist Maurice Montégut explains in a review of Régamey's book. "[L]e crayon, le pinceau, viennent au secours de la plume; ils font voir, exposent pertinemment les types ou la couleur, et des yeux d'enfant même sont à l'instant renseignés."⁴⁹⁸ Critics like Montégut thus attributed to Régamey's practice a certain kind of immediacy and thus ignored the entire process of producing art which demands years of practice, an element of imagination, and an engagement with artistic conventions including style. Contextualizing his performance in relationship to the acquisition of learned conventions of representation complicated the perceived spontaneity of his performance. Through strategies acquired by visual memory training, he could repeatedly and effortlessly reproduce learned subject matter "by heart" and made it look spontaneous even when it was not.

Régamey and Visual Memory Training

Régamey's keen interest in Japanese cultural production, coupled with his employment as Inspecteur de l'Enseignement du Dessin à Paris, led him to return to Tokyo a second time in 1899 for three months (January-March) to pursue a more comprehensive study of Japanese drawing education on behalf of the French State.⁴⁹⁹ He received this commission not only because of his adept skills as a draftsman and his familiarity with Japanese art and culture, but also because of his expertise in the domain of art education, especially as this concerned comparative pedagogy (which I use here to refer to the evaluation of distinct educational

⁴⁹⁸ Montégut, "Variété: Le Paradis retrouvé," 381-2.

⁴⁹⁹ It is unclear exactly when Régamey was first hired. Nineteen inspectors were hired by the state in 1881. In unpublished transcripts of meetings held in 1876 to discuss drawing curriculum in French secondary education, one participant (Bardoux) demanded 51,000 francs to fund the employment of 17 inspectors of drawing instruction. See: *Procès-verbaux des séances de la Commission de l'organisation de l'enseignement du dessin*, 1876, in *Procès-verbaux de Commissions 1876-1883*, F21 7540, Archives nationales. Whether or not Régamey was among those hired that year would require revisiting the archives. It is clear that he had the job as early as 1884, in a text dating to 1884, the author notes that "M. F. Régamey a été nommé récemment inspecteur de l'enseignement du dessin dans les écoles de la ville de Paris." See: "Chronique," *Bulletin / Société historique et Cercle Saint-Simon* (1884), 161.

systems).

This was not the first time Régamey was commissioned to chart foreign drawing models; because of his strong background in the English language, he also reviewed American art and design programs. In 1879, Régamey traveled to the United States for the second time to study drawing education. This project culminated in the publication of *L'Enseignement du dessin aux États-Unis. Notes et documents* in 1881, a summary of the various drawing systems deployed in public schools, art academies, and technical institutes in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Saint-Louis, Chicago and Washington.⁵⁰⁰ Upon his return, he re-encountered drawing from memory in a classroom in Washington, D.C. “[L]e professeur peut enseigner l’histoire, la géographie, etc., à l’aide de croquis, qui, rapidement tracés au tableau, excitent l’intérêt et soutiennent l’attention des élèves,” Régamey explained.⁵⁰¹ Such actions, Régamey believed, not only captured the students’s attention, making the lesson “less arid,” but also the combination of visual and auditory material made the material easier for students to remember.⁵⁰² This was a practice he was already familiar with because of Lecoq’s drawing instruction. Whether or not this was a means to legitimize his own practice remains unclear. What is clear is that this exercise would later contribute to his pedagogical philosophy.

When Régamey began cultivating his own drawing regime decades later, he was inspired in part by the increased demand for such programming in public schools in France and abroad. Régamey, like many other thinkers of his age, understood drawing as foundational to competitive industrial design production. The allure of economic success in the applied arts

⁵⁰⁰ Régamey, *L'Enseignement du dessin aux États-Unis. Notes et documents*.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 114.

⁵⁰² Régamey, *L'Enseignement du dessin aux États-Unis. Notes et documents*, 114.

became a major impetus for governments to introduce drawing instruction into public schools around the world throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. “De l’autre côté de l’Atlantique, comme de ce côté-ci,” Régamey notes in his evaluation of U.S. education, the state of drawing instruction, “est devenu pour les esprits éclairés la grande préoccupation du moment.”⁵⁰³ Régamey’s commission to examine drawing pedagogy in the United States and later in Japan stemmed from France’s cultural and economic stake in art education. At this time, nationalized French drawing curriculum featured prominently on the international stage, circulating widely in competitions at worlds fairs. The end of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of conventions specifically devoted to drawing and art education in public schools, such as International Congress on Public Art in Brussels (1898) and the Third International Congress for the Development of Drawing and Art Teaching in London (1908). These events became a forum for France to showcase its technical training and to gauge its supposed success via-à-vis examples displayed by other nations.

That Japan came to rival more industrialized nations in the applied arts motivated Régamey’s 1899 anecdotal study. It was not until the mid nineteenth century that Japan relinquished its isolationist policy and “opened its doors” to the west. To protect its feudal political system, Japan had enforced national seclusion (later referred to as *sakoku*, or “closed country”) for almost two centuries. In practice, this insular protocol tolerated some international trade; in fact, commerce with the Chinese and Dutch existed, but was strictly regulated. In 1853, a small United States Navy fleet led by Commodore Matthew Perry entered Japan’s harbor to demand that the government sign a trade agreement that would allow American merchants to expand their operations. The Japanese capitulated and shortly after, the pressure inflicted on the

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 10.

Japanese government by this transaction eventually contributed to the demise of the Shogunate, the ruling system led by a military dictator that had been enforced for two centuries.

In the first few years of the subsequent Meiji era (1868-1912), Japan underwent severe social transformations in line with the defining features of modernity. Modernization, which was typically conflated with “westernization,” characterized the new emperor’s regime. Among the many changes heralded by modernization was the deconstruction of the feudal class structure.⁵⁰⁴ Indeed, the term “Meiji,” or “enlightened rule,” refers to the name adopted by the emperor to describe his reign after the fall of the “great general,” known as the Tokugawa shogun. This led to the country’s emphasis on improved transportation systems, increased industrialization, and educational reforms. As part of Japan’s commitment to participate in global trade, the new government introduced policies geared toward the modernization of marketable commodities and their production, including the amelioration of applied arts through the dissemination of drawing pedagogy.

Such abrupt social and economic changes led the government and pedagogues to a decisive debate about what it meant to teach and to acquire the technical proficiency for a career in the arts. By the time Régamey conducted his study, drawing methods indeed became a hotly contested subject among Japanese pedagogues, politicians, and artists. Much like the discussions in France, Japan debated the utility of drawing regimens rooted in geometry, and practicing after antique statuary and Renaissance masters at institutions ranging from public primary schools to art academies.⁵⁰⁵ The stakes of this issue were complicated by the fact that foreign governments imported these systems to Japan. While Japan was not an official colony to any western nation,

⁵⁰⁴ Victoria Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity: Okakura and His Circle* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2004), 59.

⁵⁰⁵ Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 63.

the state's assimilation of foreign customs was motivated by force; in 1853, Commodore Perry arrived with military backing to ensure the acceptance of trade agreements.⁵⁰⁶ This is not to claim that this period in Japanese cultural history can be understood as strictly a moment of "westernization," however. At the same time Meiji era Japan confronted the importation of North American and European customs, it also harkened back to its rich cultural traditions to renegotiate a new identity within a globalizing society.⁵⁰⁷

Not long before Régamey's first trip to Japan in 1876, drawing lessons were integrated into Meiji Era primary schools to improve applied art production. Like the laws proclaimed by Jules Ferry a decade later which made primary education compulsory in France (and had carved out a space for drawing instruction within its curriculum), primary school in Japan became obligatory in 1872 and likewise incorporated measures to train children in drawing.⁵⁰⁸ Making school mandatory was part of a wider trend, particularly in North America and Europe, that increasingly valued learning as a social right and crucial tool for nation-building.⁵⁰⁹

Far from preserving Japanese artistic conventions, the pedagogical models instituted in 1872 were based on European and American models.⁵¹⁰ Similar to *la méthode Guillaume* described in the previous chapter, Japanese curriculum sanctioned geometry-based exercises that could be traced back to Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's pedagogical recommendations in the early

⁵⁰⁶ For recent scholarship on Japan's political and cultural history in the second half of the nineteenth century, see: Mark Ravina, *To Stand with the Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵⁰⁷ Ravina, *To Stand with the Nations of the World*.

⁵⁰⁸ Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 63.

⁵⁰⁹ In the United Kingdom, attendance became compulsory in 1880 for children (under 10 years of age). In the United States, Massachusetts enacted the first legislation geared toward the institution of universal public schooling in 1852 (some states did not adopt similar measures until the 1920s, however).

⁵¹⁰ Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 63.

nineteenth century. Pestalozzi's graduated system trained students to reproduce simple lines and shapes before pursuing more complex subjects, such as the human figure.⁵¹¹ The decision to adopt western methods based on Pestalozzi's methods derived from a study conducted in 1853 and sponsored by the Japanese government, shortly after Japan entered into a trade agreement with the United States.⁵¹² At this time, the government commissioned Kawakami Tōgai (1827-1881) to examine and disseminate western drawing methods, above all those rooted in rudimentary geometry that began with simple lines and shapes.⁵¹³ His work, which recommended the use of pencil and paper (as opposed to ink and brush, traditional Japanese artistic tools), was foundational to the regimen deployed in primary schools twenty years later.⁵¹⁴

In its entirety, Régamey's work outlines the competing demands facing Japanese institutions while they negotiated the place of western practices within core curriculum. Such demands ranged from improving industrial design to cultivating national identity; drawing pedagogy served a similar function in France. Régamey's illustrated inquiry appeared in print under the titles *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio* (1899), *Japon* (1900), and *Le Japon en images* (1900).⁵¹⁵ These texts summarized Japanese artistic formation and culture

⁵¹¹ Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *How Gertrude teaches her children. An attempt to help mothers to teach their own children and an account of the method. A report to the society of the Friends of Education, Burgdorf*, trans. by Lucy E. Holland and Frances C. Turner, and ed. With introduction and notes by Ebenezer Cooke, second edition (Syracuse, N.Y.: C.W. Bardeen, 1898 [originally published in German in 1801]); Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *ABC der Anschauung; oder Anschauungs-Lehre der Maßverhältnisse* (Zürich: Geßner, 1803).

⁵¹² Weston notes that "Japan's Ministry of Education first employed Western-style drawing manuals based upon Pestalozzi's method. Kawakami Tōgai (1827-1881), a Western-style oil painter and teacher, developed the Ministry's first such drawing book in 1871, *Manual of Western Drawing* (*Seiga shinan*).” See Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 63.

⁵¹³ Ellen Conant, *Nihonga Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868-1968*, exh. cat. (Saint Louis: The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1995), 22.

⁵¹⁴ Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 22, 63.

⁵¹⁵ Félix Régamey, *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio* (Paris: Atelier F. Régamey, 1899); Régamey, *Japon* (Paris: P. Paclot, 1900); Régamey, *Le Japon en images* (Paris: Paclot, 1900). An excerpt from the 1899 publication also was published as an article. See: Félix Régamey, "L'Enseignement du dessin dans les

for western audiences; whereas Régamey authored the comparative pedagogy essay for French instructors and politicians eager to assess alternative methods of training in a rapidly globalizing market for industrial design and art, *Le Japon en images* offered French popular audiences insight into the daily lives and customs of the Japanese.

Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio, far from being an exhaustive analysis of art schools in Japan, focused on drawing courses deployed in Tokyo, which was newly minted as Japan's capital in 1868. The decision to focus exclusively on drawing programs in Tokyo represented a major cultural shift that had recently taken place. The new imperial government transferred Japan's seat of power from Kyoto to Tokyo and with it, came a new capital of artistic production. The displacement of the artistic capital was matched by new modes of artistic training; in fact, the move was accompanied by the introduction of new art academies as an alternative to the apprenticeship model that had been perpetuated by the Kano school, the predominant style in place in Tokugawa Japan (1615-1868). Historically, technical skills were transmitted between master and pupil over nearly a decade of study in an artist's studio.⁵¹⁶ During the Meiji Era, professional training in the arts diversified through the emergence of several new art academies. These include the inauguration of the short-lived Technical Fine Arts School (Kobu Bijutsu Gakkō) from 1876-1883, the Tokyo Fine Arts School (Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō) in 1889, and the founding of the Japan Art Institute (Nihon Bijutsu-in) in 1898.

It was indeed public education and the art school, rather than the artist's workshop, that

écoles de filles au Japon," *Revue des arts décoratifs* (1900), 113- 124. There is evidence to suggest that he also held an exhibition in Paris at the Cercle de la Librairie, 117, boulevard Saint-Germain, in conjunction with his findings. See: "Concours et expositions: Expositions nouvelles," *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* (19 juillet 1902), 212.

⁵¹⁶ For more on drawing instruction in nineteenth-century Japan see: Brenda G. Jordan "Copying from Beginning to End? Student Life in the Kano School," *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, ed. by Brenda G. Jordan and Victoria Weston, 31-59 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).

became the focus of Régamey's attention in 1899. Organized by institution, he began his tour at the Imperial University (now known as the University of Tokyo), followed by the École normale (which was divided by gender) and the Lycée de Tokio, as well as the École des Nobles (also divided by gender). His investigation—which did not preserve the Japanese titles and instead, translated them into French for his book—was not limited to general education, but also included specialized institutions, such as the École des Arts et Métiers, the École Professionnelle libre (girls), the École commerciale supérieure, the Ecole municipale supérieure (girls), and the École des Sourds-Muets et des jeunes Aveugles. His study concluded with the École Impériale des Beaux-Arts de Tokio and the École libre des Beaux-Arts de Tokio (today known as Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō). Though Régamey focused on large institutions instead of artist-run workshops, his inquiry did not exclude Japanese methods of studio-based training. In fact, some academies retained those regimes favored by the Kano painters or taught them alongside western models.

Régamey was careful to note discrepancies in teaching models that co-existed in Japan. In fact, he saw value in multiple methods. For example, years earlier, he hesitated to support the standardization of drawing regimes and celebrated the diversity of methods found in the United States.⁵¹⁷ Far from being singular in scope, he believed that taught drawing techniques should correspond to their application. This belief emerged most conspicuously in the conclusion of his examination of American drawing pedagogy which discussed his findings relative to the status quo in France: “Très judicieusement on pense que le moyen d’intéresser sérieusement les villes au développement des écoles de dessin n’est pas de leur imposer un enseignement uniforme [...] Approprié aux besoins de la production locale, cet enseignement a bien plus de chance d’être

⁵¹⁷ Régamey, *L’Enseignement du dessin aux États-Unis*, 119.

apprécié.”⁵¹⁸ When Régamey studied Japanese art education, he expressed an anxiety about importation of foreign models to Japan and about the influence of western customs on Japanese culture more broadly.

Putting Cultural Customs on the Line: The Politics of Artistic Exchange Between Japan and the “West”

When Régamey published the results of his 1899 study on Japanese drawing programs, the negotiation between traditional Japanese and imported western visualization strategies was his central concern. That some of the technical procedures deployed in Japanese classrooms were not indigenous to Japan generated anxiety about the possible loss of Japanese cultural customs for *Japonistes* like Régamey and Japanese citizens alike. The French admiration for Japanese art had in part stemmed from a perceived purity or authenticity of a culture supposedly “untouched” by the ills associated with western society. This point has been explored in Victoria Weston’s *Japanese Painting and National Identity: Okakura and His Circle* (2004), which examines how late-nineteenth-century Japanese art instruction became entangled in heated debates about nationalism and nation-building. Whether or not Japanese public schools should adopt western European and American models at the expense of their own traditions was a major issue fueling the discussion. As Weston explains, curricular reform exceeded the scope of primary education and had ramifications for professional artistic training. The ability to practice with western artistic precedents, such as the valorization of human figure study, were among the newly accessible modes of training. It was at this time that a new term was coined to distinguish between Japanese practices and those associated with the west, notably in oil painting:

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 119; He was quoted asking a similar question in *Commission d’enquête sur la situation des ouvriers et des industries d’art: Instituée par décret en date du 24 décembre 1881* (Paris: Imprimerie de A. Quantin, 1884). “Vous pensez bien que l’enseignement du dessin est unique; vous demandez qu’on apprenne le dessin, indépendamment de la préoccupation de la matière à laquelle on devra l’appliquer?”

“Nihonga,” translated as “Japanese-style painting,” referred to a diversity of traditional Japanese artistic practices, including calligraphy and ink drawings that drew on Chinese conventions.⁵¹⁹

The desire to preserve Japanese practices was further complicated by a dissatisfaction some Japanese artists felt with seasoned models. When Régamey conducted his study, Kano technical procedures faced similar criticisms as those launched against the academicism championed by European institutions, notably the École des Beaux-Arts. As in Paris, Japanese art instruction operated according to a graduated system of practicing on objects produced by the masters. In this system, students repeatedly copied a traced model before submitting a final copy to the master for evaluation; only with the instructor’s approval could students pursue more difficult models.⁵²⁰ Whereas the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris enforced a canon of types through the *concours*, the masters in Japanese studios strictly controlled and standardized practice.⁵²¹

Criticism of the Japanese studio system took place within and outside Japan. At the same time many thinkers, such as Régamey and Guimet, were outspoken opponents of the importation of western styles and procedures to Japan, there was an equally heated debate in Japanese artistic circles about the sterility of traditional studio models. In reaction to both the dissatisfaction with western and seasoned Japanese models, a competing pedagogical philosophy emerged in Japanese artistic discourses that called for a new system, one that could better cultivate national identity.

Beginning in the 1880s, the idea that art should support a uniquely Japanese national identity led to the emergence of new pedagogical regimens across Japan.⁵²² An outspoken

⁵¹⁹ Conant, *Nihonga Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868-1968*, 6.

⁵²⁰ Jordan, “Copying from Beginning to End? Student Life in the Kano School,” in *Copying the master and stealing his secrets: talent and training in Japanese painting*, 31-59, 34.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 37.

proponent of such measures was Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), an American who was employed as a professor at the Tokyo Imperial University in 1878. Though he was hired to teach political economy, Fenollosa became increasingly preoccupied with the state of artistic production in Japan and its associated reform. Fenollosa not only recommended dispensing with the drawing systems imported from the United States and western Europe, but also encouraged the modernization of existing drawing systems to better reflect what the Japanese saw as their national identity.⁵²³ Alongside Okakura Kakuzo, he established a curriculum at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko) (now known as the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music, Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku). The task of this institution was, as noted by Régamey, to ““conserver et de développer l’art caractéristique du Japon.””⁵²⁴ Fenollosa rebuffed seasoned methods in favor of an entirely novel mode of production. As Victoria Weston explains, Fenollosa’s desire to promote a new style was driven by his distaste for the popularity of literati painting known in Japanese as *bunjinga* and which described a tendency to deploy calligraphic lines (usually in black ink) and to engage directly with Chinese art and literature.⁵²⁵ At this time, *bunjinga* was successful on the art market.⁵²⁶

While Fenollosa’s view of Japanese art differed drastically from Régamey’s outlook, both men exhibited reservations about cultural exchange. In fact, Régamey’s entire investigation is connected by a series of anecdotes that describe the ill-effects of westernization, which he

⁵²² Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 59.

⁵²³ Ibid., 28-9.

⁵²⁴ Régamey, *Le dessin et son enseignement*, 49.

⁵²⁵ Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 32.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 32.

referred to as “l’influence européenne.”⁵²⁷ For instance, at the Lycée de Tokio [sic], one of five preparatory schools for the Imperial University, Régamey witnessed the practice of what he referred to as “scientific” and “industrial” drawing, caused by European influences “sans toutefois donner de résultats bien marqués.”⁵²⁸ At the Imperial University, the introduction of European plaster casts likewise led to results that were hardly better, or as Régamey put it, “dépourvus d’intérêt.”⁵²⁹

After Japan renounced isolationist policies, its diplomatic engagements with Europe and North American led to a discourse on the advantages and disadvantages of cultural exchange at home and abroad. “Japan does not have enough confidence in its own morals; it too quickly wiped its slate clean of the customs, institutions, and ideas that produced its strength and happiness,” claimed Guimet in 1880.⁵³⁰ Guimet feared the fragility of national customs; this was not an unusual perspective to adopt. As art critic Ernest Chesneau noted ten years earlier: “At the moment when we introduce Western mores, customs and arts to Japan, would I have the ridiculous pretension to encourage you to subject French art to Japanese art?”⁵³¹ Despite these pervasive debates, few art historians have explored the anxieties surrounding the cultural exchanges between France and Japan.⁵³² Such regrets fit uncomfortably within narratives about France’s “civilizing mission,” a concept used to legitimize colonialism on the premise that

⁵²⁷ Régamey, *Le dessin et son enseignement à Tokio*, 22.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁵³⁰ Guimet and Régamey, *Promenades Japonaises: Tokio-Nikko*, 113.

⁵³¹ Ernest Chesneau, *L’art japonais: conférence faite à l’Union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l’industrie* (Paris: A. Morel, 1869), 27-8.

⁵³² Some of these anxieties do emerge in scholarship on the broader histories of France’s engagement with Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century. For instance, see: Richard Sims, *French Policy Towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan 1854-95* (Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1998).

French culture was superior to other societies and was going to “help” other nations.⁵³³

Japonisme, after all, is a term used to describe the French admiration for arts from Japan. Art historians have long emphasized French artists’ celebration, and appropriation, of Japanese visual effects, focusing on prints and the phenomenon’s champions, notably Philippe Burty, Edgar Degas, James Tissot, and the Goncourt brothers, amongst others.⁵³⁴

Régeamey was sympathetic to Guimet’s and Chesneau’s perspectives about the ill-effects of cultural exchange throughout his life. During his 9-week sojourn in 1876, he focused primarily on Guimet’s project to study eastern religions. Nonetheless, his observations about Japan’s cultural exchange with American and European nations foreshadowed some of the key complaints launched against Japanese art education in his 1899 appraisal. “Le vieux Japon s’écroule, la civilisation marche à grand pas—comme on dit—les lampes à pétrole, les gibus, et les parapluies sévissent assez généralement,” he lamented.⁵³⁵ In a letter drafted to his mother, Régamey expressed regret about Japan’s “westernization.” ““J’assiste à la fin de ce monde merveilleux, artistique, poétique, plein de douceur qui s’en va sombrer dans le sombre fatras de la civilisation,”” he feared.⁵³⁶ To stress his point, Régamey drew a Japanese man wearing a gibus top-hat and wrote: ““C’est à faire dresser les cheveux sur la tête du plus chauve des rapins.””⁵³⁷

⁵³³ For a brief introduction this concept, see: Vanessa Schwartz, “Civilization and empire,” in *Modern France: A Very Short Introduction*, 40-45 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵³⁴ Gabriel Weisberg, “Lost and Found: S. Bing’s Merchandising of Japonisme and Art Nouveau,” *19th Century Art Worldwide* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2005); Gabriel Weisberg, “Philippe Burty and Early Japonisme,” in *Japonisme in Art: An International Symposium*, 109-25 (Tokyo: Committee for the Year 2001, 1980); Gabriel Weisberg, *The Independent Critic: Philippe Burty and the Visual Arts of Mid-Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: P. Lang, 1993); Gabriel Weisberg et al., *Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art, 1854-1910* (Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975); Jessica M. Dandona, *Nature and the Nation in Fin-de-Siècle France: The Art of Emile Gallé and the École de Nancy* (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁵³⁵ Omoto and Macouin, *Quand le Japon s’ouvrit au monde*, 66.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 68.

The joke, of course, was that the Japanese adoption of European social customs seemed so ridiculous and was such a shock that it would “raise the hair” of a bald man.

The belief that exchange with Europe and the United States adulterated Japanese art and culture was also the inspiration for Régamey’s *The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthème*, an account first published in *La Plume* (1893) before it was reprinted as a book in 1894.⁵³⁸ This text, written as a journal from the perspective of Madame Chrysanthème, recounts the failed marriage between a Japanese woman and a French naval officer temporarily based in Japan. Régamey’s narrative was an adaptation of Louis Marie Julien Viaud’s much more widely acclaimed *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887-8), a semi-fictitious diary written under the pseudonym Pierre Loti.⁵³⁹ Set in Nagasaki, Loti’s loosely autobiographical account logs the story of a naval officer who temporarily wed a Japanese woman. The success of Loti’s *Madame Chrysanthème* in France not only led to its translation in multiple languages, but also inspired a series of adaptations, including Régamey’s, and operas by André Messager and Giacomo Puccini titled *Madame Chrysanthème* (1893) and *Madame Butterfly* (1904), respectively.⁵⁴⁰ What distinguishes Régamey’s adaptation from others was his desire to vindicate Japan from Loti’s harsh critiques. Whereas Loti appropriated tropes that characterize “orientalist” narratives, such as the subjugation of—and condescension toward—non-white women, Régamey wrote from Chrysanthème’s perspective to exonerate Japanese women from racist stereotypes launched against them by Europeans (while nonetheless adhering to some “positive” racial stereotypes, such as that the women are docile).

⁵³⁸ This text was published first in *La Plume* in October 1893.

⁵³⁹ Loti’s text was first published in installments in *Le Figaro* (1887), then as a book in 1888.

⁵⁴⁰ Reed, “Introduction,” 1.

Régezey's rebuttal to Loti's harsh depiction of Japan complicates our understanding of late-nineteenth-century French attitudes toward cultural exchange. Régamey's narrative redirects the critical appraisal away from "the Japanese woman" and toward "the Frenchman;" he created a character whose vulgarity prevented him from recognizing Chrysanthème's virtues and Japan's allure. Régamey recast the naval officer as crude, as a character whose racist and sexist bias against the Japanese prevented him from admiring Chrysanthème's refinement. Régamey's vilification of Loti's story does not excuse his own reliance on Japanese stereotypes. As noted in the introduction to its 2010 translation by Christopher Reed, both authors perpetuated preconceived notions that essentialized Japanese womanhood: each author described the female character as meek and submissive.⁵⁴¹

Régezey's adaptation of *Madame Chrysanthème* became a forum to undermine preconceived notions about Japanese art. His adaptation, in fact, makes an important point relative to the central aim of this chapter, that is, his ideas about drawing pedagogy and collective customs. In both Loti's and Régamey's versions, the authors invoke drawing techniques in support of their respective claims about Japan. Loti, who was an adept draftsman, declared the superiority of the "French school." He recounts an incident where the officer's training in lifelike drawing techniques easily impressed a Japanese audience more familiar with schematic conventions:

I...fetch a notebook and get right to work...while behind me the three women crowd close, very close, following the movements of my pencil with amazed attention. Never have they seen anyone draw realistically, since Japanese art is completely conventional, and my style delights them...the three Japanese women are enraptured by how [real] my sketch looks.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴¹ Reed, "Introduction," 31.

⁵⁴² Ibid., 153.

When Régamey adapted Loti's text, he did not overlook Loti's desire to distinguish between Japanese and French methods of art-making.

Régamey, as a *japoniste* who despised the imposition of geometry-based training at home and abroad, predictably contradicted Loti by noting the ill-effects of European models in his novel. "Whether these [drawing] classes are advanced or intermediate, everywhere the same kind of things have served as models for these unfortunate children: cooking pot, cap, school desk, etc., the same 'everyday object' lifeless and expressionless, that has been so overused here, but that, happily, we are starting to leave behind," Régamey noted.⁵⁴³ He likewise lamented that: "The worst is that for these studies, the use of the brush—that admirable tool, both so supple and so strong, the national tool—has not been preserved. It is our dry lead pencil and smudgy, sticky wax crayon that are awkwardly used by these misguided little Japanese."⁵⁴⁴ Régamey's critique here was twofold. He undermined Loti's assumption that Japanese art-making practices differed from those deployed in France. At the same time, he also condemned the importation of drawing methods that increasingly supplanted seasoned Japanese techniques.

The representational strategies Régamey deployed in his frontispiece further amplify this critique. Whereas Régamey's frontispiece emulated Japanese conventions of linearity, emphasizing bold outlines and flat planes of color (in this case, black and white), Loti's heavily illustrated novel employed a realistic style in its figures using a range of graduated tones to render the subject matter (which included landscapes, interiors, and figure studies) [Figure 62]. For example, in Régamey's text, the female figure is seated on a bench dressed in a kimono with her hair pulled away from her face and on top of her head. She hunches forward as she reads

⁵⁴³ Reed, "Introduction," 68-9.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 68-9.

from a scroll held in her hands. Like Régamey's frontispiece, Rossi (the artist who illustrated Loti's text) depicted a Japanese woman seated, reclining under an umbrella that she holds above her head with her left hand [Figure 63]. Distinct from Régamey's emphasis on linearity, Rossi's drawing set his model outside using series of modulated tones applied like watercolor.

Japanese Drawing Techniques and the Economy of Thought

Over the course of his lifetime, Régamey attributed to Japanese artists and artistic training qualities highly valued by his tutor, Lecoq. In fact, Régamey's descriptions of Japanese art instruction would lead us to believe that there were many points of commonality between Japanese art and Lecoq's system of visual mnemonics. The capacity to reproduce ephemeral atmospheric effects and scenes from modern life, along with the conceptualization of drawing as writing (and as such, a habitual practice), and the removal of the master's hand were among the key features he lauded, and which resembled Lecoq's system.

The belief that Japanese artists were exempt from the rigid hierarchy of genres, and were perceived to prioritize subjects rooted in nature were among the many features of "traditional" Japanese art that Régamey admired. In contrast to the stress placed on historical, religious, and allegorical subject matter at the *concours* organized by the École des beaux-arts in Paris, Régamey noted that Japanese competitions foregrounded landscape imagery. For instance, "La fumée de la chaumière perdue dans la vallée" was the theme assigned to an artistic competition that took place among Japanese students enrolled at L'École Impériale des Beaux-Arts de Tokio during his second trip to Japan [Figure 64].⁵⁴⁵ While this theme did not reflect the French Academy's preferences (especially for landscapes that foregrounded a mythological narrative or ancient past), Régamey likened the ability to depict smoke to a litmus test to prove adept

⁵⁴⁵ Régamey, *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio*, 40.

draftsmanship described by one of the most famous French academicians, the Neoclassical painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867). “Ingres, a master in design and an enthusiastic admirer of Japanese art, was wont to say to his pupils [...] ‘You will know nothing until you are able to sketch, in the course of his fall, a man falling from a roof.’”⁵⁴⁶ Because it is difficult to convincingly reproduce moving figures or natural phenomena, like a person falling and smoke, the ability to do so attested to an artist’s great perceptual and representational skills. While drawing smoke rebuffs the Academy’s preference for human figure study, both Ingres and Japanese masters (from Régamey’s perspective) privileged the visual rendering of the ephemeral as demonstrative of drawing proficiency. The ability to represent the transitory was also, as discussed in Chapter Two, the pinnacle of Lecoq’s regime.

Régamey’s 1899 investigation was not the first time he attributed to Japanese artists a skill that was highly coveted by French artists. The ability to reproduce unfixed, variable atmospheric effects, like the body in motion, was a skill attributed to a strong visual memory, especially in Lecoq’s training. Instantaneous photography likewise served French artists with a model for the reproduction of motion, notably Eadweard Muybridge’s (1830-1904) celebrated photographs of animal locomotion that were produced in the 1880s. However, Régamey argued that the Japanese, like Lecoq’s students, arrived at the momentary without the aid of registration devices like photography. Instead, the capacity to see and reproduce inconstant, active elements was a skill-set supposedly acquired thanks to the Japanese admiration for observation. In *Le Japon pratique*, he notes that:

But do not speak to them [the Japanese] either of moldings or photography. Never would they consent to look to *them* [plaster casts and photographs] for their first instruction; it is to nature herself, to nature only that they apply. All in vain was it for nature to have aspects so

⁵⁴⁶ Félix Régamey, *Japan in Art and Industry: With a Glance at Japanese Manners and Customs*, trans. by M. French Sheldon and Eli Lemon Sheldon (London: G.P. Putnam Sons, 1893), 22-3.

fugitive, and movements so elusive, that we had been unable to seize them till instantaneous photography came to our aid; the Japanese—they had long found them out—had fixed them and reproduced them for us. That which in their pictures we censured as *outré*, was all simply the result of marvelous ability of execution in the service of a *naïve* power of observation passionately clear-sighted, and aided by a memory specially exercised.⁵⁴⁷

Régeamey's account both venerates Japanese art and culture, and essentializes "Japaneseness" by attributing to the Japanese an innate constitution that amounted to perceptual strength.⁵⁴⁸

Régeamey was not alone in noting this perceived skill, however. According to Viollet-le-Duc, the Japanese could arrive at the transitory without the aid of the camera due to their preference for the essential rather than details.⁵⁴⁹

Viollet-le-Duc, like Régamey, argued that the facility with which the Japanese could effortlessly reproduce the nearly imperceptible was connected to their ability to abstract or reduce what was seen to essential lines.⁵⁵⁰ As an example of this, Régamey's *Le Japon pratique* looked to "those sketches of landscapes and of animals, the representations of which are obtained by a single, uninterrupted stroke" [Figure 65].⁵⁵¹ He exemplifies this tendency in his representation of a bird and mouse composed of a minimal number of drawn lines, or a visual economy. Régamey admired what he perceived to be restraint in deploying the drawn line to construct images; using fewer lines demonstrated the artist's proficiency to visualize subject matter with minimal information or details.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 21-2; Félix Régamey, "Le Japon vu par un artiste," *Revue politique et littéraire: revue bleu* (1890), 652.

⁵⁴⁸ In the second half of the nineteenth century, this perspective became very common among artists known for "primitivism," most famously in Gauguin's descriptions of Tahiti.

⁵⁴⁹ Régamey, *Japan in Art and Industry*, 24.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 23-4.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 25.

This was not the only publication in which Régamey described Japanese drawing in this way. Eight years earlier, in 1891, *Le Petit Français illustré*—a journal for schoolchildren printed between 1889-1905 and which typically published *bandes dessinées*—featured a set of drawing exercises by Régamey titled “Le Dessin d’après les Japonais” [Figure 66].⁵⁵² This exercise explained how to reproduce subject matter with a limited number of lines. Though Régamey’s contribution contains no narrative dimension, he adopted a similar format to *bandes dessinées* separating six motifs by a grid composed of two columns and three rows. Whereas the first row depicts two line drawings—produced with the aid of a compass—of a bat in the moonlight and a frog followed by a second frog in the rain, the second row reproduces the same figures using a greater range of tones afforded by a wash drawing. In the third row, Régamey juxtaposes two squirrels eating seeds with two Daimyos (a term used to describe feudal lords who inherited land in Japan until the Meiji period). Unlike the bat and frogs, the final two images were produced “à main levée, sans esquisse et sans preparation”; to aid draftsmen, Régamey recommended following the numbers indicated next to the lines so as not to exceed a limited number of brushstrokes.⁵⁵³

“Dissecting” Japanese motifs into their component lines was not a device Régamey designed specifically for children. Rather, it derived from the popular conception that Japanese drawing and writing procedures were indistinguishable from one another. In “L’Enseignement artistique au vieux Japon” from 1903, Jules Pillet—a drawing instructor who helped systematize *la méthode géométrique*—traces a genealogy of Japanese drawing practice back to Chinese

⁵⁵² Félix Régamey, “Le Dessin d’après les Japonais,” *Supplément au Petit Français illustré: journal des écoliers et des écolières* 127 (1er août 1891), n.p.

⁵⁵³ Régamey, “Le Dessin d’après les Japonais,” n.p.

calligraphy.⁵⁵⁴ It was, he argued, this origin in Chinese calligraphy that allowed Japanese training manuals to show how to construct images using a limited number of brushstrokes [Figure 67].

Avant de songer au portrait fidèle de la nature, les hommes ont cherché tout d’abord à fixer une silhouette simple, le souvenir des êtres et des choses: l’hiéroglyphe se transformera par la suite et fera souche en deux branches bien distinctes; simplifié à l’excès, le linéament transformé en clé ou en lettre constituera l’élément nécessaire à tout langage écrit, enjolivé au contraire, il se rapprochera mieux de la physionomie de l’objet naturel et deviendra la charpente du dessin artistique tel que nous le connaissons. Le symbole a précédé le portrait de ce qui nous entoure.⁵⁵⁵

Because Pillet understood all art as existing in “perpetual genesis,” as part of an evolution, this practice came to inform the drawing practices that emerged in nineteenth-century Japan (that held wider ramifications for changing practices around the world).⁵⁵⁶

By the time Régamey conducted his 1899 study of artistic training in Japan, he had been introduced to—and perpetuated the idea that—Japanese art derived from Japanese writing systems. Many of his ideas were based on Guimet’s texts about Japan. Shortly after his first trip to Japan in 1876, Guimet had connected Japanese art to its writing procedures in *Promenades Japonaises* (1880): “[L]es artistes emploient dans leurs oeuvres les procédés hiéroglyphiques le symbolisme et la simplification, la pensée exprimée d’un trait.”⁵⁵⁷ Japanese script, as a combination of Logographic kanji and syllabic kana, is not categorized today by linguists as a pictographic writing system. Nonetheless, the perceived equivalence between drawing and writing persisted among *japonistes* in the second half of the nineteenth century, above all the

⁵⁵⁴ Jules Pillet, “L’Enseignement artistique au vieux Japon,” *L’Art pour tous: encyclopédie de l’art industriel et décoratif* (June 1903), n.p.

⁵⁵⁵ Pillet, “L’Enseignement artistique au vieux Japon,” n.p.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., n.p. He writes: “Un style ne s’invente pas, il n’existe que par suite de l’évolution naturelle de l’Art!”

⁵⁵⁷ Guimet and Régamey, *Promenades Japonaises: Tokio-Nikko*, 169.

notion that thought could be abstracted to a set of mere lines. In *Le Japon pratique*, Régamey drew similar conclusions as Guimet. He noted that the Japanese “ont assimilé l’art calligraphique à l’art du dessin.”⁵⁵⁸ It was the association between drawing and writing that also led Régamey to provocatively conclude in the same text that: “[A]u Japon tout le monde dessine.”⁵⁵⁹

The connection between drawing and writing had a particular significance in relationship to Lecoq’s system of visual memory training. Régamey, in fact, likened the exercise to Lecoq’s. He wrote in *Le Japon pratique* that:

Ils vont de l’analyse longue, patiente et sûre, à la synthèse, —et ne se tiennent pour satisfaits que le jour où, après des éliminations successives et raisonnées, ils ont réussi à trouver la *dominante*. Aussi ne dessinent-ils directement d’après nature que pour apprendre et pour se meubler la mémoire. Puis, quand ils créent, ils appliquent ce qu’ils savent, sans hésitation et sans *repentirs*. Alors, qu’ils dessinent ou qu’ils peignent, ils ne *copient* pas plus ce qu’ils exécutent, qu’on ne copie les lettres de l’alphabet en écrivant.⁵⁶⁰

Régamey’s text linked Japanese approaches to art to Lecoq’s notion of drawing from memory. As explored in Chapter Two, the ideal outcome of Lecoq’s *dessin de mémoire* was to render drawing as effortless as reading and writing. “Drawing,” Lecoq explains, “...should in this resemble reading, where the mind must be quite unconscious of the complicated processes involved in the act of reading, if it is to appreciate the sense to the full.”⁵⁶¹ Set on par with reading and writing, Lecoq wondered why drawing should not operate the same way as language production. Régamey adopted this metaphor to describe the habitual nature of Japanese drawing methods that allowed artists to produce an image without conscious effort of the individual

⁵⁵⁸ Régamey, *Le Japon pratique*, 165.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 26-7.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁵⁶¹ Lecoq, *Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque*, 115.

details that comprise the whole.

Régeamey adapted Lecoq's allusion to drawing as reading to explain the perceived simplicity of Japanese art. Both Lecoq and Régamey conceived of drawing as dependent on the cultivation of certain habits that minimize effort while improving precision. Régamey noted the necessity of habit formation through repeated practice with an allusion to becoming a blacksmith: "Il y a loin, en effet, entre le précepte et l'action, entre l'écriture et le dessin, et ce n'est qu'en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron."⁵⁶² To become a draftsman, like blacksmith, required persistent practice. To read, one need not see individual details (such as letters and some words) in order to grasp the entire meaning of a text; in a similar vein, practicing writing removes the effort required to think about spelling. Similar to reading and writing words, Lecoq understood that there are details which the eye does not need to see in order to grasp a view.

Régeamey's enthusiasm for the ubiquity of drawing skills in Japan rested on the assumption that Japanese drawing practices hardly differed from their writing habits and preceded formal training. "La mère ou le maître guide l'enfant, non en lui conduisant la main, comme chez nous, mais en tenant par le bout du manche, le pinceau qu'il dirige," he declared. "On enseigne de même à dessiner; ces deux études sont simultanées."⁵⁶³ In *Le Japon pratique*, Régamey also included a supplementary image to illustrate the transmission of this skillset between mother and daughter [Figure 68].⁵⁶⁴ In this work, the daughter sits in front of a table holding a brush perpendicular to paper; rather than work from a model, the mother crouches closely behind her student, guiding her wrist. A similar depiction was reproduced in *Promenades*

⁵⁶² Régamey, *Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin*, 42.

⁵⁶³ Régamey, *Le Japon pratique*, 170.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 238.

japonaises which featured a teacher guiding the top of the brush as the student writes [Figure 69].⁵⁶⁵

Régeamey's emphasis on knowledge transmission between teacher and student diverged from Lecoq's set of concerns to some extent. The relationship between student and teacher created anxiety for Lecoq, the problem being that exposure to the instructor's "hand" could curb a student's individuality. Lecoq therefore urged the removal of the instructor's "hand" from technical training to protect the student's idiosyncratic working methods. In the Japanese systems recorded by Régamey, how certain skillsets were transmitted was much less opaque than in Lecoq's system. Régamey even illustrated the proper modes of holding and moving brushes among the Japanese craftsmen he encountered [Figure 70].⁵⁶⁶ The significance of Régamey's decision to include evidence of manual training is unclear though he must have thought it important given the illustration and emphasis in his texts. While Lecoq's philosophy put a premium on individuality as a marker of originality, Régamey emphasized how drawing regimes could cultivate a broader nationality identity, thus making shared knowledge and skills a necessity.

Between Science and Sentiment: Régamey's Drawing Regimen as Physiological Education

During his lifetime, Régamey not only studied Japanese art and artistic training, but also pursued pedagogical reforms in reaction against *la méthode Guillaume*, the prevailing system of drawing instruction in primary and secondary schools. As early as 1890, he began to lecture publicly on drawing education, and by the early twentieth century, he ran the Atelier d'Élèves

⁵⁶⁵ Guimet and Régamey, *Promenades Japonaises: Tokio-Nikko*, 166.

⁵⁶⁶ Régamey, *Le Japon pratique*, 169; Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*.

that operated at 28 rue Serpente in Paris with courses designed for boys and girls.⁵⁶⁷ These classes directly criticized Guillaume's method by teaching children to balance geometry lessons with Ravaisson's conception of "sentiment." This aspect of his career, though described by his close friends as a "vast project," is excluded from existing scholarship, in part, because his program was never incorporated into official curriculum.⁵⁶⁸ Nonetheless, his important contributions to pedagogical discourses did not go unrecognized by his contemporaries. By the turn of the century, they were familiar not only with his older work but with his more recent publications on pedagogical philosophy and practice (published in 1906 as a manual titled *Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin*).⁵⁶⁹

In a eulogy commemorating Régamey shortly after his death in 1907, his close friend, the art critic Louis Vauxcelles, noted Régamey's contributions to art pedagogy, especially Régamey's rejection of geometric drawing methods. Vauxcelles stated that "la méthode Guillaume le mettait en fureur, et je le conçois sans peine."⁵⁷⁰ While Guillaume's method emerged as the victor in a series of debates enacted over the course of the 1870s to define the scope of drawing pedagogy in public education (see Chapter Three), by the end of the nineteenth century, Guillaume's regimen faced severe criticism. Frustrated by the system's failure to improve drawings and with it, France's status as a leader in industrial arts, Régamey, alongside figures including Guébin and Quénieux, openly disdained Guillaume's work. When Guillaume's

⁵⁶⁷ "Association Amicale des professeurs de dessin de la ville de Paris," *Chronique du journal général de l'imprimerie et de la librairie* (4 Janvier 1890), 4; Pamphlet, "Félix Régamey, 'Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin,'" Box F21 4336, Folder "Régamey, Félix," Archives Nationales, Paris, France.

⁵⁶⁸ Louis Vauxcelles, "Félix Régamey," *Gil Blas* (07 mai 1907), 1. He notes that "...il avait conçu un vaste projet de réforme de l'enseignement."

⁵⁶⁹ Félix Régamey, *Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin* (Paris: Bernard, 1906).

⁵⁷⁰ Vauxcelles, "Félix Régamey," 1.

program reached its conclusion around 1909, his largest detractors complained that it was too rigid and did not cater to children's intellectual development.

The dependence on the mind, rather than the eye, was among Régamey's chief complaints about Guillaume's system: "La faute capitale de la méthode qui est en honneur aujourd'hui en France—la géométrie—est de favoriser les spéculations de l'esprit au détriment de l'organe de la vision, l'oeil, dont le développement importe avant tout, et exige une culture spéciale, plus nécessaire que celle de la main certainement."⁵⁷¹ He believed that this failure was manifest in a series of drawings by schoolchildren that were exhibited in France in 1906. Rather than test the eye, these images exhibited—to Régamey—a mechanical dependence on reason and mathematics.

Later that year, an exhibition of drawings produced under the supervision of Alphonse Peeters (who taught children in Antwerp, Belgium) became another forum for Régamey to publicly discredit Guillaume's system; he believed that Belgians were following Guillaume's lead. The exhibition took place in the *grande salle* of the École des beaux-arts, located on the first floor by the *le quai Malaquais*.⁵⁷² Featured within "la belle salle où s'étale l'exposition ratée" were a series of works executed by boys and girls aged 6-9 from *écoles primaires* and aged 9-15 from *primaires supérieures*. Régamey warned that these works exemplified the "...l'avertissement du mensonge géométrique."⁵⁷³ Working after ornaments in relief, rose

⁵⁷¹ Félix Régamey, "Le dessin à l'école primaire," in *Préface, patronage, comités, adhésions, conférences préparatoire, programme, discours d'ouverture, travaux, résolutions, rapport général*, ed. by IIIe Congrès international de l'Art Public, 1-7 (Published in conjunction with the Exposition Universelle de Liège, 1905); "Séances Plénières: Rapport sur les travaux de la première section," in *Préface, patronage, comités, adhésions, conférences préparatoire, programme, discours d'ouverture, travaux, résolutions, rapport général*, ed. by IIIe Congrès international de l'Art Public (Published in conjunction with the Exposition Universelle de Liège, 1905), 1.

⁵⁷² Félix Régamey, "À propos d'une Exposition de dessins," *Le Gils blas* (20 août 1906).

⁵⁷³ Ibid., n.p.

windows in Gothic church and a mask of Apollo, the drawings led Régamey to ask satirically in a review published in *Le Gil Blas*: “Comment l’esprit humain peut-il laisser surprendre par des aberrations aboutissant à la présentation pompous de telles pauvretés!”⁵⁷⁴ Régamey’s article did not include reproductions of the drawings he referenced. However, one might convincingly speculate that they resembled the products of Guillaume’s geometric method, which excised subject matters from the space it inhabits and reduces representations to a set of orthographic projections [Figures 34-35]. Régamey even argued that Guillaume’s method was at fault: “Cette leçon vaut bien un fromage, sans doute!” Régamey, drawing from Jean de La Fontaine’s fable “Le Corbeau et le Renard,” warned against flattery by suggesting that France flattered itself for exporting a poor model to Belgium.⁵⁷⁵

Régamey’s Pedagogical Philosophy

Régamey outlined his pedagogical philosophy and practice in a text titled *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin* (1906).⁵⁷⁶ This work ultimately wed the aims of *la méthode géométrique* to Ravaisson’s investment in sentiment and Lecoq’s system of visual memory training. Before uniting these strategies into a cohesive system, he provided an intellectual justification for his amendments to existing programs. He argued that a theory of drawing education should precede the actual curriculum he advanced: “Avant de songer à enseigner quelque chose, il faut au moins savoir ce qu’est ce ‘quelque chose.’”⁵⁷⁷ Since what counted as “drawing instruction” was such a contentious issue at the time, Régamey argued that there was

⁵⁷⁴ Régamey, “À propos d’une Exposition de dessins,” n.p.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., n.p.

⁵⁷⁶ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 12.

confusion about what skillsets were prioritized.⁵⁷⁸ Learning to draw, he claimed, could be summarized by the following formula: “[A]pprendre à reconnaître l’apparence des choses et à les représenter matériellement.”⁵⁷⁹ Elsewhere simplified to “la forme visible,” Régamey’s drawing regime first prioritized physiological training—the education of the eye—over psychology, which he understood as knowledge acquired by the mind.⁵⁸⁰

Régamey carefully defined form according to two elements—“*mesure*” and “*physionomie*”—that corresponded to Guillaume’s emphasis on psychology and Ravaisson’s emphasis on physiology, respectively.⁵⁸¹ Whereas *mesure* was associated with reason and could be produced geometrically, *physionomie* was rooted in observation and produced via the *trait*. In this sense, measurement was the consideration of form geometrically, in terms of *le tracé* (or the points plotted according to spatial dimensions), and physiognomy referred to summarizing the character or essence by *le trait* (line).⁵⁸² He therefore merged the aims of the geometric method with Ravaisson’s system of imitation based on intuition or sentiment.

Because of form’s dual properties, Régamey argued that drawing education must depend on two types of exercises, the “*essentiels*” and “*auxiliaires*,” that developed *physionomie* and *mesure*, respectively.⁵⁸³ Copying, interpretation, drawing from memory, and composition, were

⁵⁷⁸ Régamey, “Le dessin à l’école primaire,” 1-7; Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 12.

⁵⁷⁹ Régamey, “Le dessin à l’école primaire,” 1-7; In Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 12 he adjusts the formula slightly to read: “*apprendre à reconnaître l’apparence des choses et à les représenter graphiquement*.”

⁵⁸⁰ Interestingly, Régamey had some experience working with medical atlases on the anatomy and physiology of the eye. It is believed that he produced 24 chromolithographic plates after the work of Joseph Lemercier for the ophthalmologist Maurice Perrin’s atlas titled: *Traité d’ophtalmoscopie et d’optométrie* (Paris: V. Masson et Fils, 1870-72). His familiarity with chromolithography stems from his father, Guillaume Régamey (1814-1878), who designed new technology for this practice.

⁵⁸¹ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 12; Régamey, “Le dessin à l’école primaire,” 1-7.

⁵⁸² “Séances Plénières: Rapport sur les travaux de la première section,” 9.

among the “essentials” exercises that trained *physionomie* by appealing to physiology via sensory training. Régamey imagined these exercises would support an ocular education through the acquisition of visual and representational habits; such habits would, he claimed, train the eye to discern the most essential features instantaneously. When Régamey described *physionomie*’s capacity to render likeness, he offered an anecdote that exemplifies this belief:

Alors que vous ne sauriez vous remémorer le détail des traits du visage d’un de vos amis éloignés; que vous ne pourriez dire comment il a la barbe taillé et même s’il en a; que, par conséquent, fussiez-vous bon peintre, il vous serait impossible d’en donner une image ressemblante, le ‘je ne sais quoi’ qui distingue cet homme des autres hommes fera, que, du plus loin que vous l’apercevrez, vous le reconnaîtrez instantanément. C’est le triomphe du sentiment—de la *physionomie*.⁵⁸⁴

Physionomie therefore represented the skill of economizing, of reducing the representation to only the essential features much like Ravaisson’s “serpentine line.” It could likewise be linked back to Régamey’s analysis of Japanese drawings and praise for their economical use of line. The ability to glean the most salient attributes of a sitter to produce a convincing likeness was tantamount to artistic production; regardless of the subject matter, artists negotiated the minimal number of visual elements that are necessary to synthetically describe the “whole.”

“Auxiliary” exercises complemented—if not counterbalanced—the emphasis placed on *physionomie* (or physiognomic renderings) by essential exercises. To Régamey, art also demanded representational skills grounded equally in *mesure*, a term used to describe mathematical analysis or drawings produced through reason (rather than by eye), as it did synthesis (or the ability to quickly see the “whole”). Geometric practices, such as perspective, alongside anatomy and art history were categorized as “auxiliary” subjects that exercised

⁵⁸³ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 16.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

“*measure*.” These were, Régamey argued, psychological exercises, rooted less in what is seen than what is known, and used to equip the mind with scientific notions needed to comprehend form.⁵⁸⁵

To illustrate how *physionomie* and *measure* (or essential and auxiliary skills), operated in unison while drawing, Régamey provided an anecdote that compared drawing habits to the conduct associated with firing a weapon. Learning to draw was like learning to shoot a pistol, Régamey believed.⁵⁸⁶ The eye provides aim, guiding the bullet toward the target (unless of course, Régamey added facetiously, the gunman is Buffalo Bill). The accuracy required to hit the target depends on two points beginning with the gun’s handle and the target, the firing line or line of vision. To plot these points, from the gun to the target, requires not only vision, but also an understanding of distance relative to position using horizontal and vertical planes. When using a firearm, “*measure*” and “*physionomie*” operate in tandem to mark a point and to draw a line between points. This practice, like firing a gun, reduces effort and improves accuracy. “C’est aux prix d’un travail persistant que le Conscient, alimentant l’Inconscient, lui fournit les réflexes nécessaires au perfectionnement du pouvoir d’expression.”⁵⁸⁷ Through conscious effort, Régamey remarked, the skills required to draw become unconscious, seemingly instinctual routines that can be performed without thought; they are, in effect, based entirely on acquired habits of seeing, moving, and remembering.

Régamey’s pedagogical philosophy merged the aims of Ravaisson’s and Guillaume’s respective systems to refine the physiological and psychological processes employed in art-

⁵⁸⁵ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 16-7.

⁵⁸⁶ Of course, his account exhibits very little understanding of how to actually operate a gun. See: Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 22.

⁵⁸⁷ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 22-3.

making. Conceptualized as *physionomie* and *mesure*, artists required practice in each domain to master synthesis (discerning the parts most constitutive of the “whole”) and analysis (exhibiting knowledge of the parts based on mathematical law rather than what is perceptible by eye). Whereas working directly from models and memory—understood as the essential exercises—strengthened synthetic perception, geometry lessons—described as auxiliary exercises—cultivated analytic reasoning. Together, Régamey’s pedagogical justification maintained that these skills became habitual, allowing the artist to unconsciously and effortlessly reproduce what was visible according to its most salient attributes and scientific truth.

Régamey’s *exercices essentielles* and the Systemization of Visual Memory Training

In his seminal 1906 text, Régamey offers a detailed account of the “essential” exercises. He argued that the four “essential” exercises included: 1) *Copie rigoureuse* after prints; 2) *Interprétation* after plaster models, objects in relief, still lifes, culminating in the live model; 3) *Dessin de mémoire*, that began by copying prints “by heart,” before depicting objects in relief and in nature from memory; 4) *Composition* (unlimited choice of subjects).⁵⁸⁸

Copie rigoureuse, elsewhere referred to as *Libre copie*, was the program’s first exercise that began with the reproduction of prints. Among the reproductions selected were “La silhouette d’un Mendiant de Callot, d’un Ange Raphaël, d’une Colombine de Watteau ou d’un héros grec de David.”⁵⁸⁹ At this stage he advised that drawings should be executed quickly on a paper folded in half, forcing students to reduce scale. Corrections immediately followed.

⁵⁸⁸ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*; Ch. L., “L’Enseignement du dessin (Ce qu’il est, ce qu’il doit être),” *La Construction moderne* (29 mars 1902), 307-8.

⁵⁸⁹ In 1905, Régamey gave a public talk at the Third International Congress for Public Art in which he cited these models. He published his lecture in conjunction with this conference. See Régamey, “Le dessin à l’école primaire,” 6. This work informed the publication of his philosophy and pedagogical program in 1906.

The reproduction of two-dimensional models, rather than working from plaster models, was a feature of Régamey's drawing program that resembled conventional *beaux-arts* practices observed by Ravaisson and Lecoq. This decision also diverged explicitly from *la méthode géométrique*'s emphasis on drawing from plaster casts, which, he claimed rested on nothing substantive.⁵⁹⁰ Without dismissing *mesure* altogether, the first stage consisted primarily of training students on models that demanded *physionomie*, or viewing the lines clearly.

The second essential exercise was the phase of interpretation. Following the mastery of drawing from prints, students then practiced on *moulages* and sculptural figures after antique models to plants, drapery and the live model. It was at this stage that Régamey recommended introducing the study of perspective.⁵⁹¹ To Régamey, copying three-dimensional models was a much more challenging task than working from prints; this stage required that students translate three-dimensional qualities into two-dimensional lines themselves, such as by gauging lines and proportion. As such, "interpretation" consisted of two key visualization strategies that stemmed from the skills acquired in the first level: "*Mise aux carreaux.—Tracé Raisonné*" and the "*Copie exacte.—Trait senti*."⁵⁹²

These two copying exercises reconciled the competing aims of the *méthode Guillaume* (particularly, the cultivation of reason, or what Régamey called *mesure*) with the program designed by its primary contender, Ravaisson (particularly his view that art should be driven by sentiment, the quality Régamey described as *physionomie*).⁵⁹³ To execute a "reasoned" copy

⁵⁹⁰ Régamey, *Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin*, 26.

⁵⁹¹ "C'est après qu'une mise au point suffisante de l'appareil visuel aura été obtenue par l'étude de l'estampe," Régamey explained, "qu'il sera permis à l'élève d'aborder le modèle en relief, ouvrant le champ à l'interprétation, faite d'abstractions et d'équivalences." Ibid., 25-6.

⁵⁹² Régamey, *Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin*, 45-6; Régamey, "Le dessin à l'école primaire," 1-6.

aligned with the aims of the geometric method, Régamey presented a duplicate mural to the students; the second iteration was amended only by the addition of a numbered grid overlaying the subject [“le tracé en bleu d’un certain nombre de carreaux numérotés qui le recouvrent”].⁵⁹⁴ Each square had to be reproduced with their numbers by a student using a ruler and blue pencil.⁵⁹⁵ This exercise taught students to plot the major points and best prepared them for the next exercise, the “felt” [*senti*] copy. Similar to Ravaisson’s preference for working by eye (rather than mathematically), the “felt” copy demanded that students reproduce the mural in relationship to the most expressive features (realized by *le trait*).

Régamey’s drawing method received attention because of the way it united “reasoned” and “felt” approaches to copying.⁵⁹⁶ In 1902, an anonymous writer who operated under the title “Ch. L.,” for instance, praised Régamey’s approach for remodeling existing strategies. As an example of this, he referenced “interpretation,” the second exercise. “*L’Interprétation* fournit à M. Régamey,” explained Ch. L.,

l’occasion de rappeler la lutte presque homérique qui eut lieu, il y a près de vingt années, entre deux des maîtres les plus célèbres du haut enseignement supérieur en France, tous deux inspecteurs généraux, membres de l’Institut, grands dignitaires de la Légion d’honneur, lutte qui aboutit au régime absolu du modèle plâtre, combiné avec les exercices géométriques dits préparatoires et l’imitation d’objet usuels.⁵⁹⁷

As noted by Ch. L., Régamey sought a “happy medium” between what had been described as a

⁵⁹³ Régamey, “Le dessin à l’école primaire,” 1-6.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 4-5.

⁵⁹⁶ Accessing this primary source material would require more archival research. In Régamey’s texts, he does not provide full citation information for this article, but it appears to have been published under the title “L’Enseignement du dessin; ce qu’il est; ce qu’il doit être” in the *Revue Intern. De l’Enseignement*.

⁵⁹⁷ Ch. L., “L’Enseignement du dessin (Ce qu’il est, ce qu’il doit être),” 307-8.

mere “équation à résoudre,” and Ravaisson’s emphasis on sentiment.⁵⁹⁸

Dessin de mémoire, the third essential exercise in Régamey’s program, contributed even more powerfully to the education of the eye.⁵⁹⁹ Copying from memory referred to the reproduction of a particular subject matter by heart rather than from direct observations of the model. This exercise, like the previous stages, had an added benefit to the *instituteur*. These strategies encouraged students to self-correct, easing the *instituteur*’s burden of managing growing class sizes. By allowing students to identify how much their reproductions diverged from the original model, the instructor was less likely to impose on pupils their own working methods (a feature of Régamey’s program that likewise resembled Lecoq’s anxiety about students emulating the teacher).

Régamey’s decision to deploy visual memory training not only mimicked his own formation in Lecoq’s studio, but also was in line with scientific studies that emerged near the turn of the century, particularly works by the psychologist Alfred Binet.⁶⁰⁰ The way Régamey’s drawing regime contributed to cutting-edge research in psycho-physiology did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries. His expertise in visual memory led him to help found the *Société d’hypnologie et de psychologie*, and to receive an invitation to teach a course titled *Psycho-physiologie de l’art* that was created for him at the École de psychologie.⁶⁰¹ In his “Eloge de

⁵⁹⁸ Régamey, “Le dessin à l’école primaire,” 1.

⁵⁹⁹ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 29.

⁶⁰⁰ See: Binet, *La psychologie du raisonnement, recherches expérimentales par l’hypnotisme*; Ballet, *Le langage intérieur et les diverses formes de l’aphasie*; Peillaube, *Les images*; Queyrat, *L’imagination et ses variétés chez l’enfant*. Drawing from memory also became integrated into some of the earliest intelligence quotient exams designed by Binet.

⁶⁰¹ Dr Barillon, “Eloge de Félix Regamey [sic],” *Revue de l’hypnotisme expérimental et thérapeutique* 1 (juillet 1907), 7-8; Notice de Félix Régamey, on the “Base prosopographique: la France savante,” *Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (2017), cths.fr

Félix Regamey [sic],” Dr. Barillon, the Secrétaire général de la Société d’hypnologie et de psychologie, remarked on the course, explaining that Régamey “y démontrait la nécessité pour le véritable artiste de se dégager des lisières conventionnelles imposées par les école officielles et y exposait les erreurs que la routine ne cesse de perpétuer dans le domaine de l’art.”⁶⁰² As indicated by Dr. Barillon, Régamey’s drawing regime acquired legitimacy within scientific communities because it was grounded in physiological conceptions of the mind and body (as opposed to the belief that the Academy’s sole emphasis on artistic precedent without consideration for the body).

When Régamey began to publicize his third essential exercise in the 1890s, visual memory training had indeed become well-entrenched in scientific discourses as an object of fascination. In Régamey’s 1906 publication, he incorporated evidence of the way Lecoq’s visual mnemonics had, since its inception in the 1840s, attracted scientific scrutiny.⁶⁰³ Particularly, Régamey cited the physiologist Théodule Ribot’s (1839-1916)’s survey on visual memory.⁶⁰⁴ While working in affiliation with the Laboratoire de psychologie physiologie (founded by Henri Beaunis at the Sorbonne in 1889), Ribot disseminated a questionnaire for artists centered on the role of visual memory. According to Régamey’s citations, questions ranged from “can you easily and clearly represent an object, flower, statue, landscape, a friend’s figure?” to inquiries about the hand’s dependence on “mechanical” movements.⁶⁰⁵ Such scientific studies supported Lecoq’s regime as a valid method of training.

The final stage of his regime concluded with “composition.” In order to encourage

⁶⁰² Barillon, “Eloge de Félix Regamey [sic],” 8.

⁶⁰³ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 30-1.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 30-1.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 30-1.

“originality,” this stage relinquished students from the stylistic, narrative, and compositional conventions associated with *beaux-arts* training; this represented a rejection of the heavily contrived subject matter that typically presupposed art historical knowledge, such as dramatic mythological stories with idealized figures. Instead, students were required to compose their drawings from life without recourse to acquired knowledge of style or narrative. Régamey argued that this exercise, as with all others, should be completed with *crayon noir*. “N’est-il tout naturel d’admettre que l’instrument servant à l’acquisition de ce qu’on ignore doit répondre à certaines nécessités avec lesquelles n’aura pas à compter celui qu’on devra employer pour atteindre à l’expression de ce qu’on sait?”⁶⁰⁶ Blurring charcoal, he worried, led to superficial observation and monotony.⁶⁰⁷

Shortly before his untimely death in 1907, Régamey staged exhibitions to publicize his drawing regime. In fact, that year, he had the opportunity to organize two shows in conjunction with the *Ier Congrès National Français de L’Enseignement du Dessin* (Paris, August 1-10, 1906).⁶⁰⁸ These events, which took place in 1906 and 1910, provided a forum to debate reforms to art pedagogy. In the *Exposition des Travaux des élèves (Filles & Garçons)*, Régamey exhibited images produced by students enrolled in his *cours spéciales* and after *modèles muraux*.⁶⁰⁹ Whereas the former part included 15 drawings (10 after prints, 5 after plaster casts), the latter was comprised of seven different models reproduced in black and white pencil or chalk

⁶⁰⁶ Régamey, *Le Problème de l’enseignement du dessin*, 36.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁰⁸ Pamphlet, “Ier Congrès National Français de l’enseignement du dessin: Exposition des travaux des élèves (Filles & Garçons) by Félix Régamey,” Box F21 4336, Folder “Régamey, Félix,” Archives Nationales, Paris, France.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

and in color by students in varying levels, and 29 drawings produced after 2 of these models.⁶¹⁰

There was also a second *Exposition particulière* held off-site at l'Hôtel des Sociétés savants between July 25 and August 15 that also displayed work by students enrolled at his *atelier*.⁶¹¹ Together, these shows were said to have provided a comprehensive overview of Régamey's drawing regimen.⁶¹² With the exception of what survives in an extant pamphlet publicizing the exhibitions, however, little is known about the material on display.

Régamey's contributions to art pedagogy appear distinct from his preoccupation with *Japonisme*. Rather than draw explicitly on Japanese drawing techniques, his drawing regimen was intended for French audiences and traced direct links to the work of three major educational strategies: Lecoq's visual memory training, Guillaume's *méthode géométrique*, and Ravaisson's emphasis on sentiment. Because Régamey's philosophy prioritized the cultivation of *la mémoire pittoresque*, it is strange that he did not unequivocally turn to Japanese methods which he had linked to strong visual memories.

Régamey's Visual Memory Training, Japanese Instruction, and Stylistic Change

Nevertheless, Régamey's essential exercises of artistic training were tied to the Japanese format he encountered during his second trip to Japan in 1899, wherein drawing was taught through four key stages that merged reason, sentiment, and visual memory training. This is evident in his 1899 study titled, *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio*, that summarizes Japanese drawing education across institutions of formal learning. In this work,

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Ibid.

Régeamey adapts a practice he encountered at the École normale (filles) (a primary school for which he did not provide the Japanese title). This school organized drawing curriculum according to four key exercises that he translated to: 1) *Exercice de pinceau*; 2) *calqué*; 3) *copié*; and 4) *composition*.⁶¹³ To exemplify what these lessons taught, Régamey reproduced four drawings completed by Japanese students as part of this regime [Figure 71].⁶¹⁴ Labeled I, II, III and IV, each drawing in *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio* features a plant or animal excised from its background. Figure I, for instance, represents a grass-like plant produced with long strokes of dark and light tones that stem from the bottom edge of the paper, curving upward toward the top; it was an exercise intended to “l’initier à certains tours de main” using a *pinceau*, a small brush.⁶¹⁵ Figures II and III depict a bird seated on a branch and in flight, respectively. Unlike the first image, which was composed entirely of lines to acclimate the artist’s handling of the brush, the second and third depicted more complex subject matter using a greater range of tonal variation, and exhibited attempts at shading. These stages demanded that students first *calqué* than *copié*. Using the same models, students then were expected to reproduce the subject matter entirely from memory; to aid students, the teacher put “les lignes maîtresses” or the essential lines on the board (but students were required to reproduce the model in all its details). Finally, the lessons culminated in the interpretation of objects in relief or from nature. As an example of this, Figure IV shows a radish next to a basket of collected plants in the foreground using a combination of linear brushstrokes to represent the basket and thick pools of ink to describe the radish’s stalk.

⁶¹³ Régamey, *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio*, 19.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 18.

When Régamey systematized his own drawing regime, this Japanese model provided a frame for his own program. He likewise distilled the essential exercises into four stages that included: 1) *Copie rigoureuse*; 2) *Interprétation*; 3) *Dessin de mémoire*; 4) *Composition*. However, it diverged from this model to a great extent, especially by including visual memory training. His graduated series excluded the earliest stage, brush exercises (because Régamey's program did not employ brushes, he would have had little need of this lesson and opted not to familiarize his students with pencil). Instead, Régamey began by copying after prints and continued quickly to the second stage, interpretation (stages 2 and 3 at the École normale). Whereas the Japanese school concluded with "composition," Régamey included drawing from memory before finishing with "composition." One might speculate that Régamey incorporated visual memory training into a system geared toward French students to compensate for a skillset he already attributed—with admiration—to the innate constitution of the Japanese.

While Régamey's program emulated the program at the École normale (filles), he rejected the models they used. In fact, when Régamey revised existing drawing regimens in France, he purposefully excluded Japanese models. "Vouloir substituer de toutes pièces notre art de peindre à celui des japonais, serait une faute,—j'allais dire un crime," Régamey cautioned.⁶¹⁶ That Régamey warned against Japanese models might come as a surprise. Régamey, after all, attributed to Japanese artists the very positive qualities he harnessed to visual memory training. While Régamey did not forsake cultural exchange altogether, he recommended that it be approached with caution. In his book *Japon en images* (1900), for example, Régamey warned that "Il ne suffit pas de s'en tenir à la superficie des choses, et l'adoption irréfléchie de formules neuves est tout aussi pernicieuses qu'est paralysante la copie servile des oeuvres du passé."⁶¹⁷ By

⁶¹⁶ Régamey, *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio*, 48.

this, Régamey warned that the exchange of technical procedures could stultify artistic production. In *Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin* (1906), he also discouraged a feature that he described as central to Japanese drawing instruction: using the brush. Pencil, he justified, fostered “research,” a skillset conducive to learning (whereas the brush facilitated “production”).⁶¹⁸ Régamey’s pedagogical approach therefore represented a complicated relationship with Japanese artistic production; his acceptance and rejection of Japanese art-making strategies grew from a complex understanding of art and its history that was popular in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Régamey’s decision to both privilege and caution against certain Japanese artistic practices, I argue, contributed to wider debates about the perceived correspondence amongst stylistic change, evolution, and civilization. The connection between artistic production and civilization was summarized by Régamey in his illustrated text *Japon en images* in the following terms: “Qui dit Art dit Civilisation. La civilisation marche à pas lents et le temps détruit rapidement ce qu’on a fait sans lui. / C’est par l’enchaînement des travaux accumulés des générations que le progrès s’achève.”⁶¹⁹ His statement, modernist in its universalizing desire to connect stylistic change to Japanese civilization’s perceived tendency toward progress, suggests that art is a product of accrued advancements. For Régamey, this position exceeded the scope of Japanese art history and became a popular method to explain artistic change across Europe as

⁶¹⁷ Régamey, *Le Japon en images* (Paris: Paclot, 1900), n.p.

⁶¹⁸ On page 37 of *Le Problème de l'enseignement du dessin*, Régamey also wrote: “Frappés des résultats surprenants obtenus par les aquarellistes japonais, quelques personnes ne sont demandées s’il n’y aurait pas avantage à appliquer le pinceau à l’étude. Vaine illusion. Ce procédé favorise la [production], il ne convient pas à la [recherche]. Ces deux actes bien distincts, sont trop souvent confondus. C’est pour n’avoir pas tenu un compte suffisant de cette distinction que la plupart des méthodes d’enseignement actuelles pèchent par la base.”

⁶¹⁹ Régamey, *Japon en images*, n.p.

well.

To art historians, part of this narrative should be familiar. Similar ideas emerge in our discipline's historiography. In the first half of the twentieth century, for instance, art historical scholarship began to adopt the vocabulary of evolution to explain stylistic change in the arts (a position which has since been heavily criticized).⁶²⁰ When art historians tackled the unresolved question—what determines stylistic variation over the course of centuries—many found it profitable to describe such transformations as “inherited” or “acquired” traits, as a kind of “natural selection” that took place among existing representational conventions. Of course, these ideas harken back to much older philosophical traditions that predate the popularity of Darwinian theories of evolution (first promoted in the 1850s).⁶²¹ In nineteenth-century France, many thinkers harnessed artistic training to “advanced” civilization (a term which, at the time, was often used synonymously with French national identity).⁶²² Art was one of many arenas understood to advance alongside civilization; it also reflected a given society's mental and physical wellness. This led many philosophers, art critics, and politicians to connect art's histories to nation and race.⁶²³

⁶²⁰ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, similar ideas emerged in discussions of *Kunstwollen* and artistic volition by Alois Riegl (1858-1905) and Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968). See: Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. by Rolf Winkes (Roma: G. Bretschneider, 1985); Erwin Panofsky, “The Concept of Artistic Volition,” trans. By Kenneth J. Northcott and Joel Snyder, *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (1981): 17-33. It likewise came to inform Gombrich's interpretation of stylistic change in art history. See: Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960).

⁶²¹ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859); Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. with notes by F.P.B. Osmaston, 4 vols. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1975).

⁶²² Schwartz, “Civilization and empire,” 40-45.

⁶²³ In the history of art, Michael Fried's scholarship has been foundational to understanding the preoccupation with cultivating a French school of painting in the nineteenth century. For instance, he examined how Manet negotiated a commitment to “Frenchness” with an interest in Japanese, Dutch, and Spanish precedents. See: Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

When Régamey characterized stylistic change in Japan as “travaux accumulés des générations,” his perception was, therefore, not unique. Earlier in this chapter, I briefly explained a similar attitude expressed by Régamey’s colleague, Pillet, in an article on ancient Japanese artistic training (in which he cited a lecture by Régamey). Pillet’s statement is worth repeating because it likewise symbolizes a Hegelian idea that was popular in France:

L’art est toujours en perpétuelle genèse, il se transforme sans cesse, il modifie les factures pour les maintenir en harmonie avec les nécessités nouvelles de l’existence; mais il ne se crée pas de toute pièce telle Minerve sortant tout armée du front de Jupiter. Un style ne s’invente pas, il n’existe que par une suite de l’évolution naturelle de l’Art!⁶²⁴

Pillet, like Régamey, believed that art operated according to a law driving toward perfection.

Contextualized in relationship to broader discourses on art and civilization, one can speculate why Régamey excluded Japanese artistic models from his French curriculum. If art, for Régamey, was understood as the accumulation of centuries of work, might he have based his decision to suppress models from French students as a way to preserve the historical process of French stylistic change?⁶²⁵ Certainly, this is not to suggest that Pillet or Régamey believed that the end goal of artistic production in distinct cultural groups were incompatible. As noted by Pillet,

Malgré la différence des mœurs et des époques, malgré les divergences de races, l’esprit humain semble toujours identique à lui-même; et, pour représenter la nature, tout en se pliant à des nécessités diverses, en respectant des conventions souvent opposées, les maîtres de tous les pays ont toujours enseignés les mêmes bons principes: aussi plus d’un jeune artiste, rêvant de créer un art nouveau ou un nouveau style, ferait bien de méditer et de respecter les règles souvent si judicieuses des vieux professeurs chinois et japonais.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁴ Pillet, “L’Enseignement Artistique au vieux Japon,” n.p.

⁶²⁵ For research on the complicated relationship between the cultivation of a national, French artistic identity and the growing interest in *Japonisme*, see: Dandona, *Nature and the Nation in Fin-de-Siècle France*.

⁶²⁶ Pillet, “L’Enseignement Artistique au vieux Japon,” n.p.

In spite of distinct representational conventions that existed around the world, Pillet explained, the core procedures for art-making hardly differed. Régamey's writing on Japan and pedagogy adopted a similar attitude. Like Pillet, Régamey praised the shared methods that existed in Japan and France, such as the emphasis on visual memory training; however, he did not recommend stylistic appropriation. I argue that this was because they believed that adopting models from other cultures would disrupt each "school's" evolution. A related perspective appeared in Guillaume's 1886 essay "De l'esthétique dans l'enseignement de l'art."⁶²⁷ Studying European art alongside non-western art, Guillaume claimed, would offer insight into universal truths about art's history. What differed had less to do with principles or artistic ideals than the effect of subject matter and models on France's artistic trajectory.⁶²⁸

A return to the question of habit explains why this might have been the case. Régamey conceptualized drawing practices in relationship to questions of habit and habit acquisition. Unlike Ravaisson, Guillaume and Lecoq, Régamey explicitly linked drawing and the habits it required and engendered to a state's culture. In doing so, he essentially argued that the cultivation of national identity depended on establishing contact between bodily habits and a related concept, "collective customs." Distinct from habit, custom referred to commonly accepted behaviors or modes of behaving that are socially and historically contingent (or specific to a particular society, a definition which resounds today).⁶²⁹ In discourses on habit in the nineteenth century, it was common to establish a point of continuity between custom and habit. For example, in Émile Littré's 1872-1877 *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, he distinguishes

⁶²⁷ Guillaume, "De l'esthétique dans l'enseignement de l'art," 280-298.

⁶²⁸ Dandona, *Nature and the Nation in Fin-de-Siècle France*.

⁶²⁹ Carlisle, *On Habit*.

between *coutume* and *habitude* before expressing how these two concepts converge:

Coutume est objectif, c'est-à-dire indique une manière d'être générale à laquelle nous nous conformons. Au contraire, habitude est subjectif, c'est-à-dire indique une manière d'être qui nous est personnelle et qui détermine nos actions. L'habitude devient un besoin; mais la coutume ne le devient jamais. Cependant on dira également: j'ai la coutume ou j'ai l'habitude de prendre du café, avec cette nuance cependant que avoir la coutume exprime seulement le fait que je prends ordinairement du café, tandis que avoir l'habitude exprime qu'un certain besoin s'y join.⁶³⁰

Littre, thus, explained how custom and habit often were used to explain one's relationship to having a daily coffee. What distinguished these two concepts was that to adopt and practice certain customs required individual agency, or as the result of free will, whereas habits referred to behaviors that became a necessity, or a thoughtless practice that verged on compulsion. In the case of coffee consumption, however, whether it was a practice driven by custom or habit is often difficult to determine.

For Régamey, the learned habits required to produce art could not be easily disentangled from the cultivation of national identity, and vice versa. What started as a custom, much like daily coffee consumption, over time became a habit performed unconsciously and transmitted over generations. At stake in the classroom, then, was the indoctrination of habits that would lead a society to degenerate rather than contribute to a universal tendency toward perfection. This was because practicing on preexisting artistic models (rather than after nature) adhered to certain representational conventions and therefore, reinforced qualities that embodied distinct artistic periods and places. For instance, by requiring that students copy antique sculptures, the French Academy reinforced the importance of human figure study and ideal types for two centuries. Therefore, for Régamey, the material—or “sources”—introduced to classrooms could have a

⁶³⁰ Émile Littré, “coutume,” in *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, second edition (Paris: Hachette, 1872-77).

great effect on individuals and society as a whole.

Régeamey's perspective might seem like an unusual take on habit. By the twentieth century, mechanistic models of habit acquired much more traction in philosophical discourses (especially by William James) and have since overshadowed some alternative interpretations of habit's social role. As a result, habit has since become more commonly understood in terms of a stimulus/response model wherein habits are performed as a response to a stimulus. At the time Régamey pursued drawing education, however, distinct positions existed. The idea that universal laws were analogous to habit and habit acquisition permeated philosophical and evolutionary discourses in the mid to late nineteenth century.⁶³¹ Within the domain of Lamarckian evolutionary theory, for instance, a range of thinkers described instincts as acquired habits; instincts were, in this line of inquiry, a series of unconscious memories that were then inherited.⁶³² When Régamey attributed certain innate, instinctual qualities to the Japanese, he did not necessarily consider these attributes unrelated to the work being done in the classroom. For Régamey, the habits transmitted between individuals in a given society had a distinct significance; they obtained a teleological purpose, and as such, were driven by a desired outcome.

Régeamey's contributions to comparative art pedagogy and drawing education cannot be disentangled from nationalist discussions that permeated French thinking at the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time the French state encouraged global trade, such as, in this

⁶³¹ For instance, one such theory was written by the French psychologist and philosopher Léon Dumont (1837-1877) and published as "De l'habitude" in *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* (1876).

⁶³² These include Hering, Butler, Haeckle, among others. See: Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern*, 9; Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1977), 96-97; For a related history, see: Laura Otis, *Organic Memory: History and the Body in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

instance, by sponsoring Régamey's trips to Japan and the United States, the cultivation and maintenance of uniquely French, Japanese, and American national identities were central to artistic discourses that flourished at home, in France. This led Régamey both to celebrate Japanese art and to caution against the appropriation of its stylistic characteristics.

Conclusion

Régamey's career exemplifies the diverse applications and formulations of Lecoq's system of visual memory training in art pedagogy and practices in France and abroad. From the reputation he acquired as an artist to his own work as a pedagogue, and to the ways he viewed Japanese art as the product of strong visual memory, Régamey's work depended on *la mémoire pittoresque*. When Régamey began to instruct drawing, however, he initiated a program for primary schools that engaged directly with the diverse measures enacted not only by Lecoq, but also by Ravaisson and Guillaume. Indeed, when Régamey designed a drawing regimen at the turn of the twentieth century, he harkened back to—and united the strategies championed within—three competing pedagogical models. By merging Ravaisson's focus on sentiment with Guillaume's emphasis on reasoning, and Lecoq's system of visual memory training, Régamey reconciled the habits each pedagogical precedent engendered in students.

While Régamey explicitly linked his pedagogical regime to the three programs featured in this dissertation, the art historical significance of his program is nonetheless distinct from these thinkers. An analysis of Régamey's artistic "values" alongside his pedagogy ultimately sheds light on the conceptualization of artistic learning and practice relative to national identity at the end of the nineteenth century. This is not to suggest that neither Ravaisson or Lecoq understood the power of art as a tool for social regeneration, or that Guillaume's ideas about

stylistic evolution as a reflection of a state's well-being differed substantially; rather, Régamey's curriculum exemplifies—for current art historians—how the complex links amongst nationality, artistic style, and art-making became exacerbated within a pedagogical context. At the heart of these concerns was habit's unstable position relative to collective customs. Because habits could cultivate customs, and vice versa, the inclusion of Japanese models into French pedagogical regimes could upset what would characterize the French school.

CONCLUSION

Habit's "Double Logic" and the History of Modern Art

Drawing's orientation toward questions of habit and habit acquisition acquired a particular significance in nineteenth-century French pedagogical discourses. France's desire to maintain cultural and economic supremacy in a rapidly globalizing market led the state to reform and innovate numerous institutions and occupations which included recasting its methods of drawing instruction in primary and secondary education, technical institutes, and in famed art schools like the *École des beaux-arts*. Whether or not habit was a mark of proficiency emerged as a key concern among pedagogues and had huge ramifications for the ways that drawing instructors envisioned their regimes. While habit enabled the acquisition of skilled practices, it also exacerbated certain anxieties, especially those about national strength and integrity that permeated in an age grappling with new forms of mechanical reproduction and industrialization.

Habit's dependence on recurrence and memorization, coupled with the fact that it operates independently of conscious thought, dominated discussions about the nature and scope of artistic training across divisions of formal learning. Habit became increasingly viewed with suspicion as photography and industrialization came to the forefront of artistic, philosophical and political concerns. Much like the criticisms launched against photography and mechanized forms of labor, the belief that habit curbed creativity by fostering mindless forms of repetition gained traction. Against this backdrop, artistic training emerged as a site in which theories of habit were hotly debated. Many thinkers from Viollet-le-Duc to Mallarmé thought that the Academy taught habits that interfered with the originality of artistic production. Nonetheless, even Viollet-le-Duc believed that certain kinds of habit acquisition would support novel forms of art-making.

Lecoq, Ravaissou, and Régamey found virtues in habit, albeit in different ways, at a moment when habit became increasingly chastised. For instance, Lecoq designed a pedagogical regimen that valorized habit as crucial to original artistic production. His visual memory training was a drawing system grounded in learning by memorization, and intended to routinize vision to facilitate the representation of scenes from modern life. Whereas Lecoq depended on the acquisition of habits to facilitate his students' ability to navigate a broad range of visual details, Ravaissou recommended practicing on antique statuary to cultivate ocular habits. Shortly after Ravaissou began to publicize his program, Guillaume proposed an alternative curriculum that diverged from Lecoq's and Ravaissou's approaches; rather than valorize habit, he actively sought to counter habitual behaviors and train draftsman to depend more heavily on "active thought" (rather than skillsets that could be performed unconsciously). By the time Régamey became preoccupied with pedagogical concerns at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, he reimagined the strategies recommended by Lecoq, Ravaissou, and Guillaume by organizing them into one method. His pedagogical philosophy was invested in the belief that the habits cultivated by drawing regimes were connected to broader ideas about collective customs and national identity.

When these instructors designed a series of competing drawing regimes under the Second Empire and first few decades of the Third Republic, they self-consciously constructed and defended their work against popular conceptions of photography which understood the mechanical medium as a passive, mindless form of reproduction. The criticisms against habit not only reflected those leveled against photography, but also the utility of drawing depended on the perception that it provided a skillset and product entirely distinct from the camera. Regardless of whether or not instructors supported or vilified habit acquisition and its effects on art-making,

they all faced the challenge of justifying the benefits of their program in an age that saw new (and increasingly rapid) modes of image-making.

Lecoq and Ravaisson, for instance, developed drawing programs that they argued would facilitate the immediate observation of the most salient features of the subject matter (be it a still life, human figure study, or genre scene) for reproduction (an attribute which Régamey similarly admired in Japanese art). Distinct from the camera, their regimes trained selection and judgment (qualities that were not attributed to the camera, which was often criticized by figures like Baudelaire for its inability to privilege certain details). The ability to summarize the visible world—economically—to its most essential features depended, in the cases of Lecoq, Ravaisson, and Régamey, upon certain ocular habits; Lecoq's visual memory training, like Ravaisson's serpentine line and Régamey's description of Japanese drawing strategies, valorized artistic practices that reduced detail by economizing, or overlooking the unnecessary components. Lecoq and his colleague, Viollet-le-Duc, similarly championed methods that they claimed strengthened intellectual faculties precisely because they necessitated active thought (as opposed to what they saw as passive, mindless reproductions produced by photography). Lecoq's visual memory training, similar to Viollet-le-Duc's geometric drawing program, culminated in representations made outside the studio that then exercised judgment, selection, and gauging proportions, or qualities they closely linked to intellectual faculties. For Lecoq, training cultivated in draftsmen the ability to represent without conscious thought; it enabled a set of visual habits necessary to achieve a goal. Guillaume's *méthode géométrique* differed from Ravaisson's and photography's emphasis on empiricism and the ill-effects of habit acquisition by arguing that his regime instead required reason. Unlike the camera, which he vilified as passively reproducing the world without conscious thought, his program depended on *le travail réfléchi*, an active mode of thinking.

Historical Interventions

In its entirety, my dissertation intervenes in three areas of inquiry: 1) the history of art pedagogy; 2) drawing studies; and 3) the history of modern art. To date, there are two dominant methodological tendencies that exist in scholarship on artistic education. The majority of research on art pedagogy situates drawing programs within a broader, classificatory scheme from the Florentine Academies to the French Academy, and culminating at the Bauhaus.⁶³³ The second tendency is to write an institutional history.⁶³⁴ While such work is foundational to my research, I cut across divisions of formal learning to showcase a discourse that spans the fine and applied arts, and public schooling, as well as attracted artistic, scientific, and political contributions. Particularly, I question what it meant to be a proficient draftsman in an age that saw the rise and dissemination of photographic media.

Improvements in photographic technologies over the course of the nineteenth century have led many scholars to obscure the relative importance of drawing and drawing instruction during this period. At the same time the camera became increasingly accessible to the public, politicians and instructors alike viewed drawing as crucial to primary and secondary schooling. Drawing's significance, I argue, was reconceptualized alongside photographic discourses. Indeed, its pedagogical justifications all depended on establishing a distance between the draftsman's working procedures and that of the camera.

That several drawing professors turned toward the vocabulary of habit to describe the utility of their regimes contradicts the language commonly used in current drawing studies

⁶³³ For example, see: Pesvner, *Academies of Art Past and Present*, Goldstein, *Teaching Art*, and de Duve, "When Form Has Become Attitude—and Beyond."

⁶³⁴ Segré, *L'Art Comme Institution*; Bonnet, *L'enseignement des arts au XIXe siècle: la réforme de l'École des beaux-arts de 1863 et la fin du modèle académique*.

scholarship. For example, the perceived automaticity and spontaneity of the drawn line has been described as “instinctual.”⁶³⁵ By showcasing the ways drawing pedagogy paralleled and intersected with certain theories of habit, I complicate the perceived distinctions between learned and instinctual behaviors. In doing so, I contribute to existing research by scholars like Omar Nasim and Zeynep Çelik Alexander that connects material practices with theories of knowing, “know-how,” and knowledge production.⁶³⁶

More broadly, my doctoral research recasts narratives about the history of modern art. Habit’s salience to drawing pedagogy, of course, extends well beyond the context of nineteenth-century France. Learning always has depended upon the acquisition of certain habits. Between 1850 and 1900, this concept became especially important in French discourses for two reasons. First and foremost, this historical period saw momentous changes in the training of artists and draftsmen across educational institutions. Indeed, when the traditional procedures for academic artistic training were revised and rejected by artists who have since come to be known as leading avant-garde figures, a rich set of discussions focalized around drawing, and the habits it engendered, emerged in a provocative way. Second, theories of habit were specifically important to French philosophical thought and language—so much so that it had become common to describe individual constitution and education in terms of an acquired second nature and sets of habits. It was widely believed by philosophers, pedagogues, and physicians alike that the body was governed by habit.

Against Habit: Childlike Vision in Modernity

⁶³⁵ The modernist language used to describe drawing was problematized by Karen Kurczynski in her article titled “Drawing is the New Painting,” *Art Journal* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 91-110.

⁶³⁶ Nasim, *Observing by Hand* and Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*.

Habit's relationship to artistic training has been particularly fraught ever since artists like Courbet and Manet began challenging academic training and promoting originality, and as the new capitalist world order offered artists alternative ways to sell and exhibit work and the market demand for novel and idiosyncratic styles increased. As noted by Aron Vinegar, "At times it would seem as if modernist art and aesthetics was pitted *against* habit, often interpreting it as the very impossibility of aesthetic experience and judgment in its capacity to deaden perceptual sensitivity."⁶³⁷ In the increasingly popular notion that the quintessentially modern art was original, innovative, and rejected the past, the notion that artists also eluded training has been a recurrent theme: it is a myth perpetuated by artists, art criticism, and art historical scholarship from the nineteenth century to the present. Habit's dependence on repetition indeed confounded the modernist valorization of change and novelty, and contributed to habit's association with mindless automatism. As a result, its negative attributes continue to overshadow its more positive associations with the development of certain crucial skills and modes of learning.

From the emphasis on "authenticity" to the emphasis on originality and novelty, many of the attributes that have come to define modern artists also have represented a disenchantment with second nature and a quest for "first nature." Over the course of the nineteenth century, the status of children and conceptions of child development drastically changed; it was a moment when social reforms sought to redefine childhood as a stage of life that requires nurturing and protection (for both individual wellness and to cultivate educated, healthy citizenry on behalf of the state). Against this backdrop, art critics like Baudelaire romanticized and celebrated what they perceived to be the unbridled creativity characteristic of children. Baudelaire, for instance, asserted that "Genius is childhood recovered at will."⁶³⁸ This position is complicated by the fact

⁶³⁷ Vinegar, "Habit," 259.

that at the same time he admired the childlike, he also attributed to his revered *flâneur* the analytic qualities of a man. He deployed this kind of rhetoric to undermine the perpetuation of academicism and its emphasis on the rigid emulation of artistic precedents in favor of learning to capture the fast pace of modern urban life in a style that embodied the present rather than the past.

Outside of France, the Romantic British painter and critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) similarly urged artists to retrieve childlike sight in his 1857 text *The Elements of Drawing*. “The whole technical power of painting,” he explained, “depends on our recovery of what may be called the innocence of the eye; that is to say, of a sort of childish perception of these flat stains of colour...without consciousness of what they signify.”⁶³⁹ While Ruskin valorized a very distinct set of artistic principles from Baudelaire, childlike vision—in the French context—became a metaphor to describe a state of being free from habit (especially those associated with bourgeois culture, capitalism, and industrialization).⁶⁴⁰ Childlike vision, coveted as more “honest,” “true,” and “naïve” ways of seeing the world became a popular source of inspiration to artists; it symbolized creative potentiality, particularly to artists in the last decades of the century, such as Paul Gauguin, Vincent Van Gogh, and others who were looking to escape industrialized

⁶³⁸ Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), 8, 12. On a similar note, in *Les paradis artificiels, opium et haschisch* (Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1860), 271, Baudelaire also explains that: “C’est dans les notes relatives à l’enfance que nous trouverons le germe des étranges, rêveries de l’homme adulte, et, disons mieux, de son génie. Tous les biographes ont compris, d’une manière plus ou moins complète l’importance des anecdotes se rattachant à l’enfance d’un écriture ou d’un artiste....”

⁶³⁹ John Ruskin, “From ‘The Elements of Drawing,’” in *Art in Theory: 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), footnote 1, 605.

⁶⁴⁰ Carlisle summarized Baudelaire’s and Ruskin’s widespread perspective in her 2014 book *On Habit*. She explains that there existed “...the Romantic idea that ‘nature’ has a spontaneity and a creative power that habit reduces to mechanical uniformity, rather as a child’s spontaneity is progressively curbed by the imposition of social custom and convention. From this Romantic perspective a ‘second nature’ appears to corrupt or constrict what is truly natural....” See: Carlisle, *On Habit*, 16.

societies. Of course, this summary paints a reductive picture of the varied and complex ways childhood symbolized habit's constraints on free will for many modern artists and critics. However, it evidences the ways that childhood came to represent human nature untainted by artificial, learned customs and modes of comportment.

Within the French milieu, the opposition between childlike and adult vision paralleled distinctions forged between the vanguard and the academic, and their related attributes, such as the "authentic" and "routine," respectively. Instead of championing drawing exercises that promoted habitual ways of seeing and experiencing the world, such as practicing on antique statuary, some vanguard artists and critics believed that seeing through "unprejudiced eyes" could yield more original art. Scenes from modern life, such as those by Claude Monet or that were shown at the Impressionist exhibitions became closely associated with eyes that recorded nature as it was experienced rather than trained by preconceived models. Academic "habits" that privileged preexisting compositional structures were perceived as dulling the senses whereas artworks based on nature were regarded as refining perception.

We should not conflate the educated eye with academic conventions, however. When Ravaisson, Guillaume, Lecoq, and Régamey designed competing drawing regimens, they each recommended distinct approaches to vision and drawing that were not necessarily academic (as much as they were schematic). By examining the nuances and complexities of these particular pedagogical regimes and their distinct relationships to conceptions of habit, this thesis argues that habit played a much more central, albeit troublesome, role in modern artistic practices. Across these spheres, arguments for and against the indoctrination of visual training constructed the eye as flexible and subject to change, and not as rigid and formulaic as has been suggested by most narratives of modernism.

The need to protect childlike vision from acquiring habits entered into debates about the disadvantages of Guillaume's geometric method at the end of the century. When Guillaume's program fell out of favor, it represented a renegotiation of pedagogical values at the national level. Under *la méthode géométrique*, students acquired a skillset that could be applicable to a variety of careers, thus rendering them valuable members of French society. Rather than render drawing an instinctual practice, Guillaume organized a regimen that he believed necessitated intellectual work. Quénieux's intuitive method rejected geometry to protect what he conceived as unadulterated nature and childlike creative expression from the ill-effects of learning.

Programs, such as the one designed by Quénieux in the early 1900s, in fact, claimed to safeguard childhood from education's capacity to stifle creativity by removing models from which children were forced to study.⁶⁴¹ A similar perspective more famously emerged in a contemporaneous program initiated by Franz Cizek at the Vienna School of Applied Arts. His regime relinquished technical drawing exercises in favor of drawing instinctually, or guided by "natural" preferences.⁶⁴² Cizek rebuffed formal technical training and the imposition of models on the grounds that it suppressed a child's predisposition toward creative expression (a quality he believed they lost by the age of fourteen, necessitating a pedagogy that nurtured the child's imaginative abilities). When Régamey proposed a program that merged the tenets of Ravaissonian habit with Lecoq's emphasis on visual memory and Guillaume's geometry lessons, it therefore signified an older framework for elementary drawing pedagogy that imposed preexisting artistic models and techniques onto students by programmatic method. While some

⁶⁴¹ d'Enfert and Myriam Boyer, "Le dessin s'émancipe: vers un nouvel équilibre? (1909-années 1960), in d'Enfert and D. Lagoutte, eds., *Le dessin à l'école de 1800 à nos jours*, 66-75.

⁶⁴² Donna Darling Kelly, *Uncovering the History of Children's Drawing and Art* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2004), 85.

drawing programs intended to determine (or cultivate) certain habits and others, to undermine them, what each regimen held in common was an anxiety about habit acquisition and a desire either to suppress or control it.

This thesis complicates the history of modern art by challenging narratives that stress modernism's commitment to novelty and rejection of training. By providing a detailed study of the pedagogical programs of four drawing instructors who did not view habit as anathema to creativity nor as a phenomenon that curbs invention, I have demonstrated that habit was not simply linked to academic training or industry or mechanical reproduction. Rather, habit and memorization often were celebrated within academic and avant-garde circles as rich sources for original artistic production.

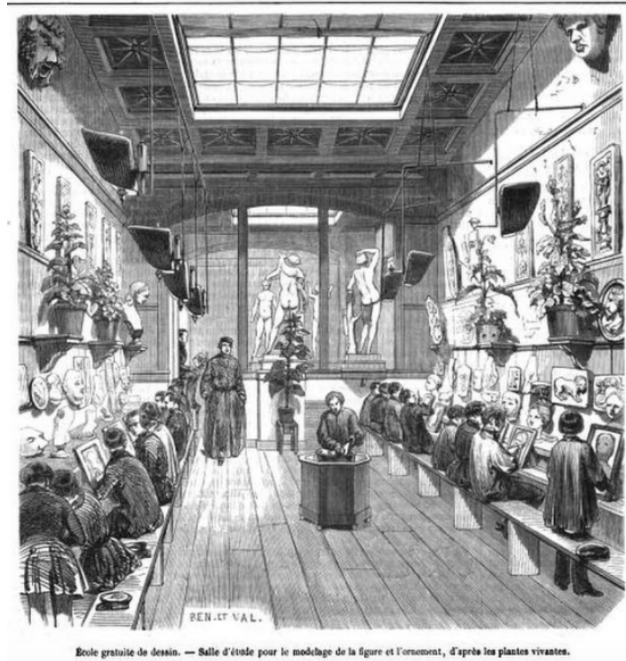
Figures



Figure 1 Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *Portrait de l'artiste* (1802-1897), late 19th century, oil on canvas, Louvre, Paris, France

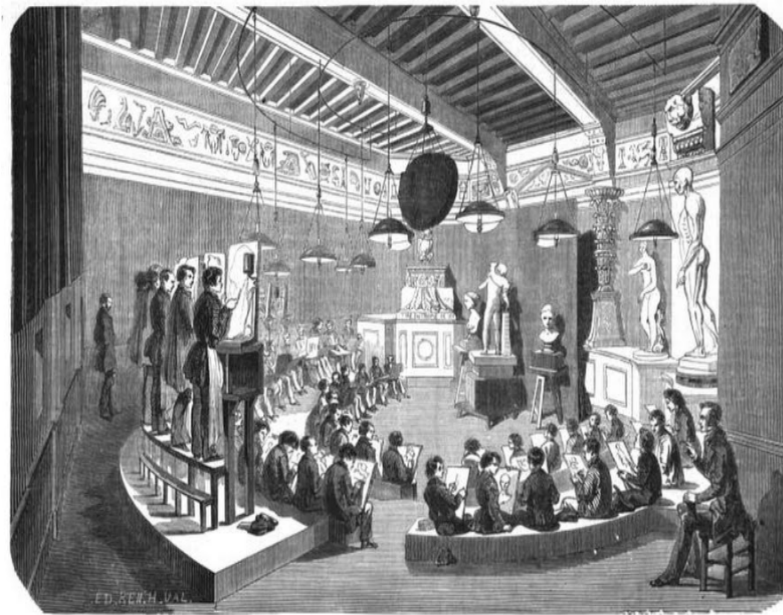


Figure 2 Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *Tête de femme, inspiré de l'antique et figure d'homme*, 19e siècle, crayon noir, papier gris, plume (rehaut), encre brune, estompe, Louvre, Paris, France



École gratuite de dessin. — Salle d'étude pour le modelage de la figure et l'ornement, d'après les plantes vivantes.

Figure 3 From Saint-Germain Leduc's "École nationale de Dessin et de Mathématiques et de Sculpture d'ornement," *L'Illustration: journal universel* 11 (1848): 388-390.



Ecole gratuite de dessin. — Salle d'étude pour le dessin et le modelage, d'après la bonae.

Figure 4 From Saint-Germain Leduc's "École nationale de Dessin et de Mathématiques et de Sculpture d'ornement," *L'Illustration: journal universel* 11 (1848): 388-390.



Figure 5 J.J. Grandville, “L’école des perroquets,” in MM. Albéric Second, Louis Lurine, Clément Caraguel, Taxile Delord, H. de Beaulieu, Louis Huart, Charles Monselet, Julien Lemer’s *Les Métamorphoses du jour* (Paris: G. Havard, 1854).



Figure 6 Auguste Rodin, *Copy after an antique scene*, before 1860, pencil on paper, Rodin Museum, Paris, France



No. 5.—MEMORY DRAWING FROM HOLBEIN'S "ERASMUS."

By A. LEGROS.

Figure 7 Alphonse Legros, *Memory Drawing From Holbein's "Erasmus,"* reproduction from Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran's *The Training of The Memory of Art and the Education of the Artist*, translated by L.D. Luard (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911).

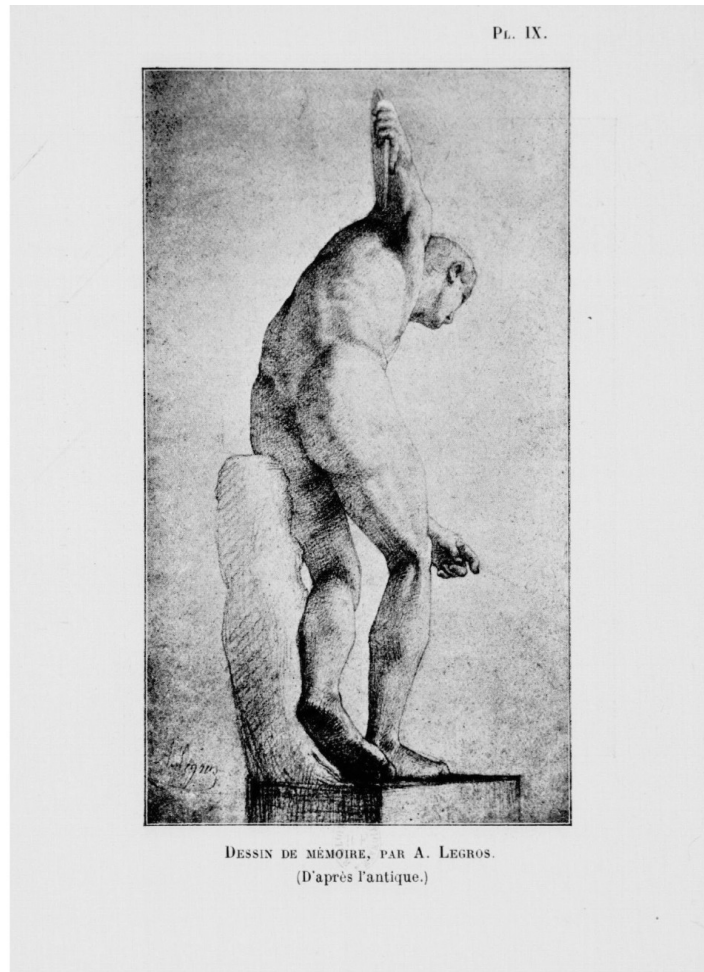


Figure 8 Alphonse Legros, *Drawing from memory after the antique*, reproduction from Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran's *The Training of The Memory of Art and the Education of the Artist*, translated by L.D. Luard (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911).

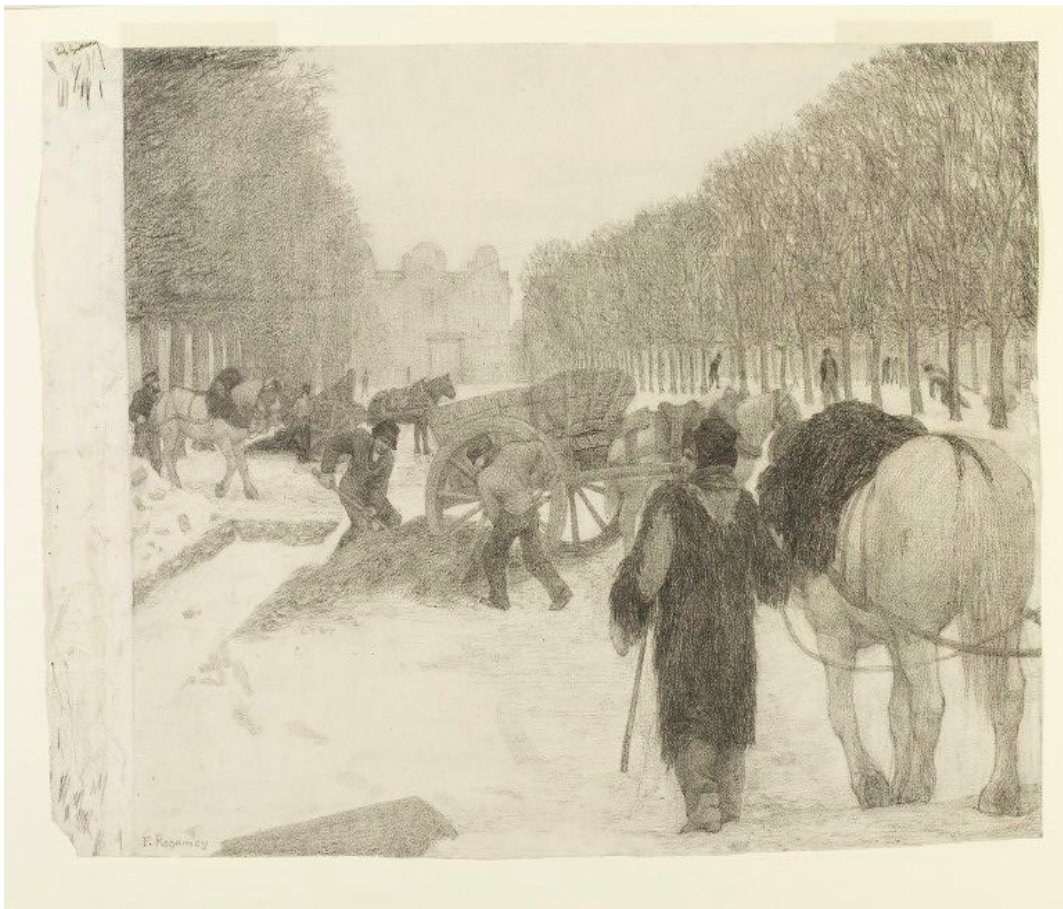
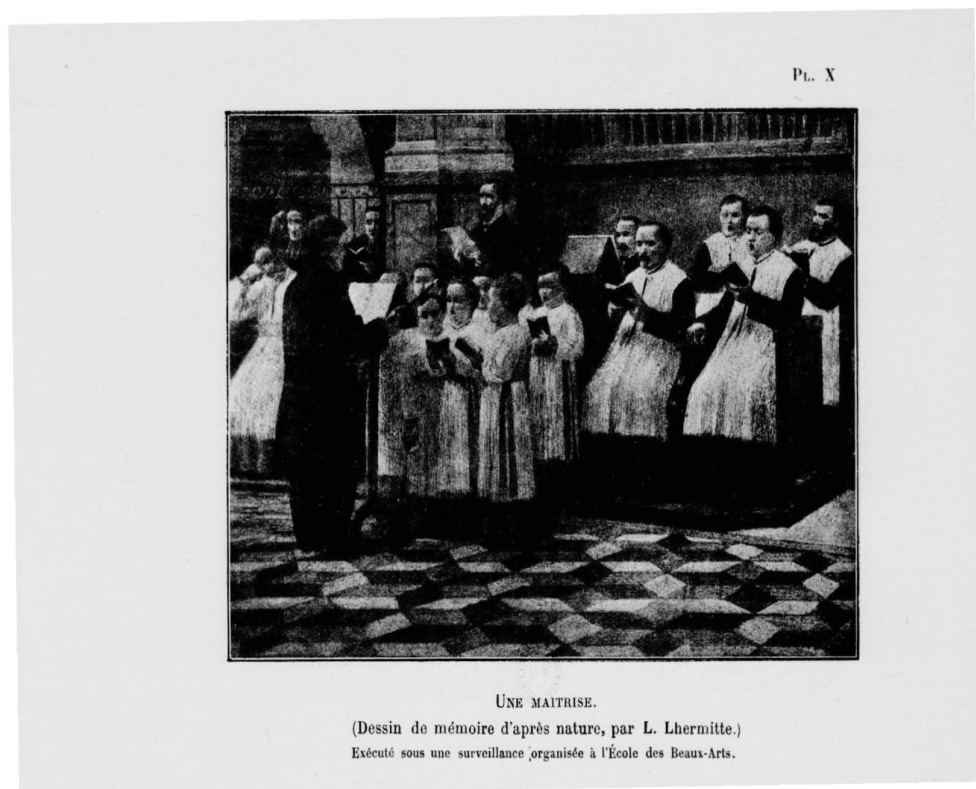


Figure 9 Frédéric Régamey, *Winter Scene in a Paris Boulevard. Excavators and Carmen at Work*, c. 1863, pencil on paper, ENSAD, Paris, France



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 10 Léon Lhermitte, *Une maîtrise*, drawing from memory, reproduction from Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque et la formation de l'artiste* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1920).

Pl. XII.



DÉBARDEURS SUR LA SEINE.

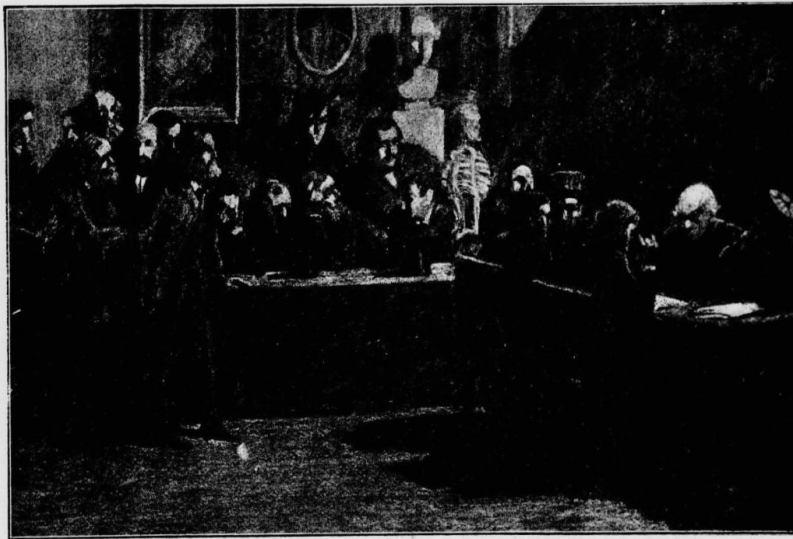
(Dessin de mémoire d'après nature, par G. Bellenger.)

Exécuté sous une surveillance organisée à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 11 G. Bellenger, *Débardeurs sur la Seine*, drawing from memory, reproduction from Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque et la formation de l'artiste* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1920).

Pl. XIII.



UN EXAMEN A L'ÉCOLE DE MÉDECINE.
(Dessin de mémoire d'après nature, par J.-C. Cazin.)
Exécuté sous une surveillance organisée à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 12 Jean-Charles Cazin, *Un examen à l'École de Médecine*, drawing from memory, reproduction from Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, *L'éducation de la mémoire pittoresque et la formation de l'artiste* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1920).



Figure 13 Frédéric Régamey, *Untitled study of human anatomy*, c. 1860, pencil, pen and black ink on paper, cut out and pasted on a support, ENSAD, Paris, France

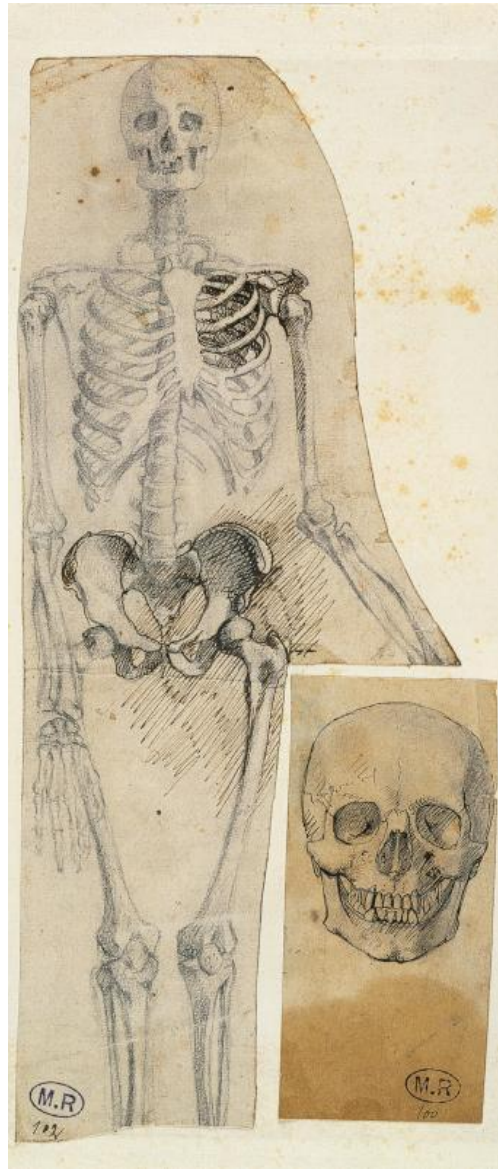


Figure 14 Auguste Rodin, *Skeleton and Skull*, c.1856, pencil, pen and black ink on paper, cut out and pasted on a support, ENSAD, Paris, France



Figure 15 Auguste Rodin, *Femme nue assise, de face, les mains derrière la tête*, after 1896, crayon au graphite (trait) sur papier vélin, Rodin Museum, Paris, France



Figure 16 Auguste Rodin, *Reclining Nude Female Figure*, n.d. graphite on paper, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States



Figure 17 Auguste Rodin, *A Reclining Female Nude, Arms Folded over Her Head*, ca. 1910, graphite on thin smooth white wove paper, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, United Kingdom

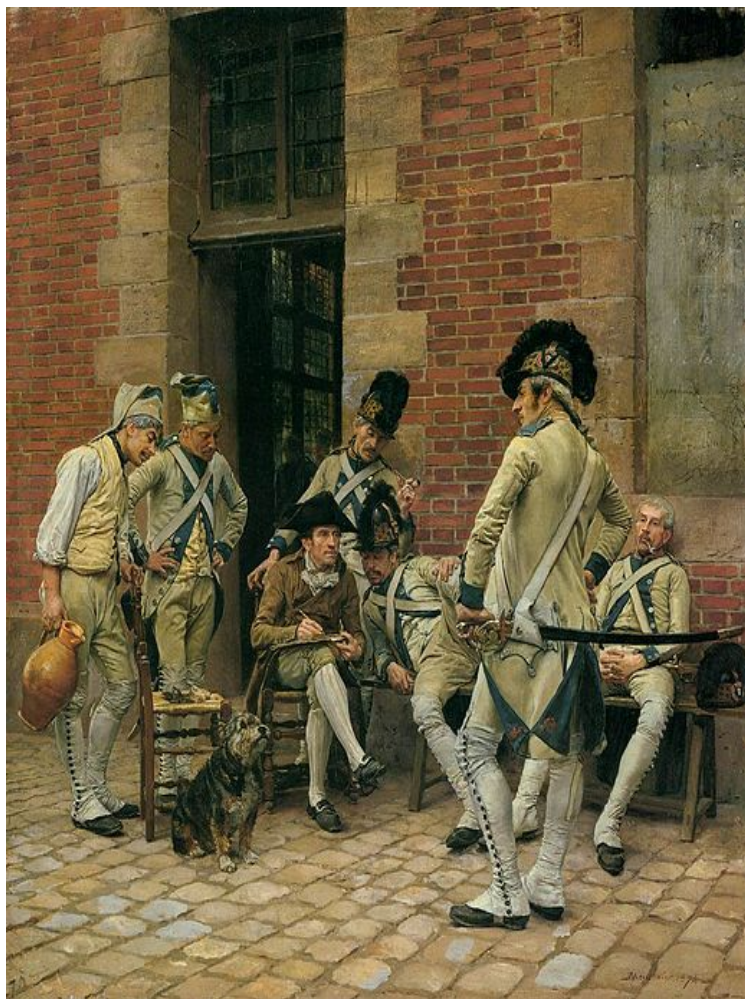


Figure 18 Ernest Meissonier, *The Portrait of a Sergeant*, 1874, oil on canvas, Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany



Figure 19 Ernest Meissonier, *Standing Cavalier*, 1882, black ink, gray wash, and white gouache on brown paper, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts

UNE THÉORIE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE, — par NADAR.



Figure 20 Nadar, “Une théorie photographique,” *Petit journal pour rire* 20 (1856).



Figure 21 Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple*, 1838, daguerreotype



Figure 22 Eugène Guillaume, *Le Faucheur*, 1849, bronze, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France



Figure 23 Eugène Guillaume, *Les Gracques*, 1853, bronze, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France



Figure 24 Auguste Rodin, *Bust of Eugène Guillaume*, 1903, bronze, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France



Figure 25 Auguste Rodin, *The Age of Bronze*, 1875-76, bronze, 180.5 x 68.5 x 54.5 cm, Musée Rodin, Paris, France

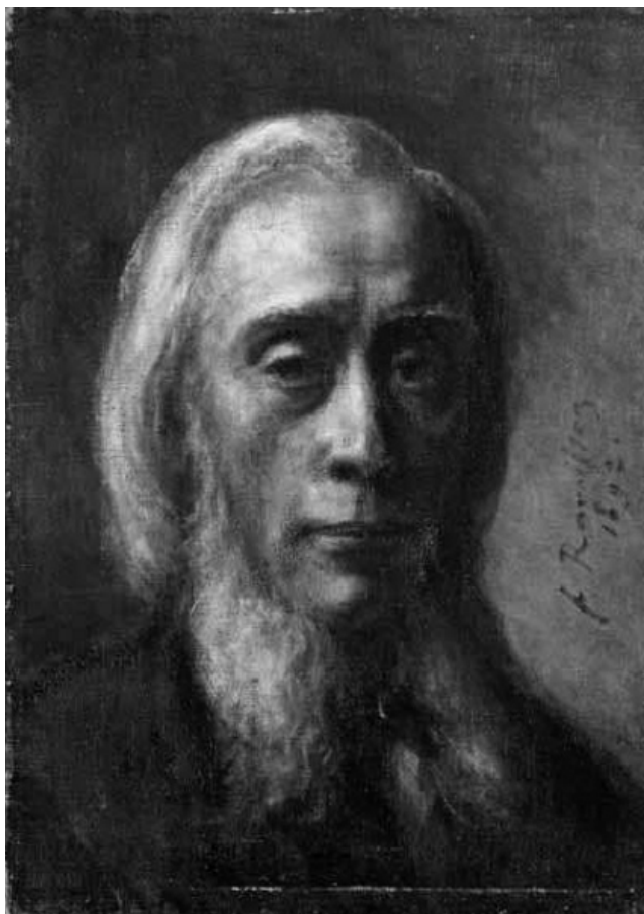


Figure 26 Félix Ravaisson, *Self-Portrait*, 1892, oil on canvas, 33 x 24.5 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France



Figure 27 Théodore Chassériau, *Portrait de Felix Ravaisson-Mollien*, 1846, graphite on white wove paper darkened to buff, 33.3 x 25.4 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, New York

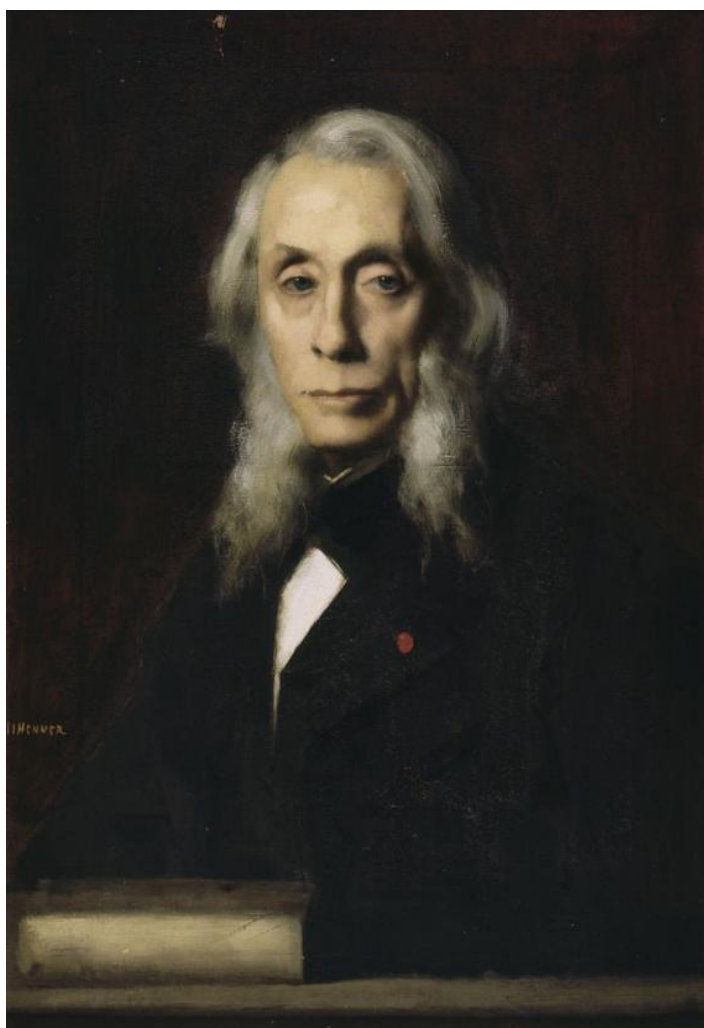


Figure 28 Jean-Jacques Henner, *Portrait de Félix Ravaisson-Mollien*, 1886, oil on canvas, 66.5 x 46 cm, Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France

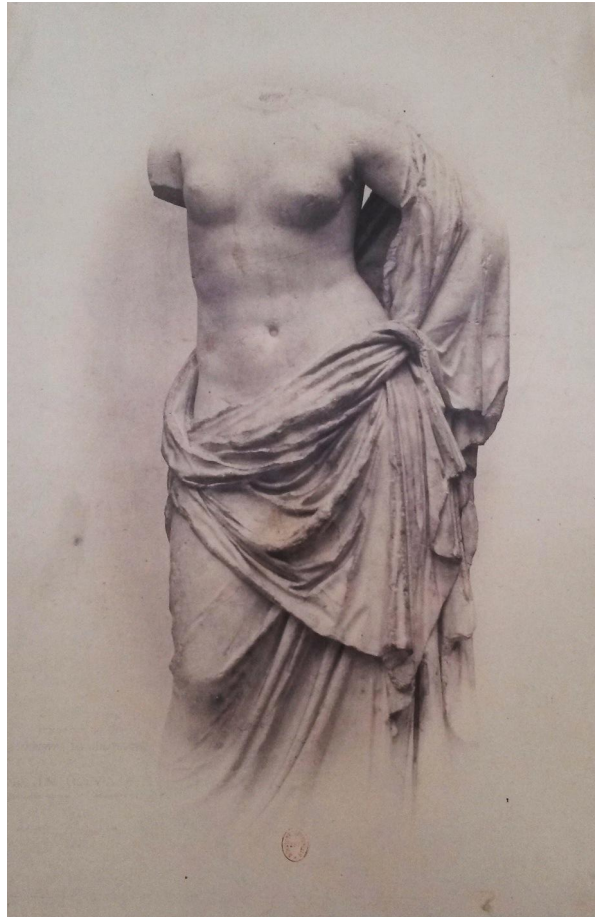


Figure 29 From Félix Ravaisson, *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique*, Cote Kz-365 (1-3) Boîte Fol., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France

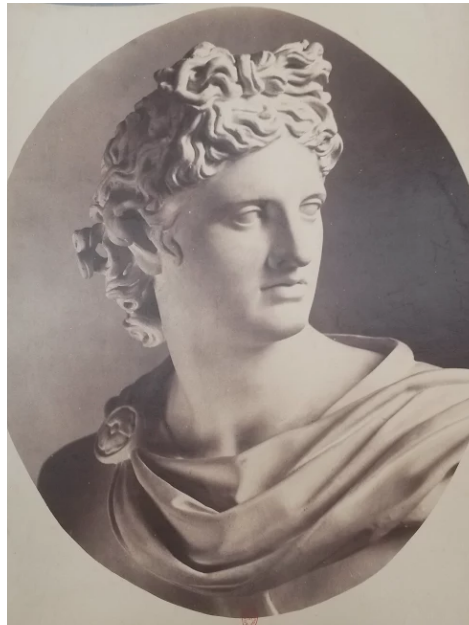


Figure 30 From Félix Ravaisson, *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique*, Cote Kz-365 (1-3) Boîte Fol., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France

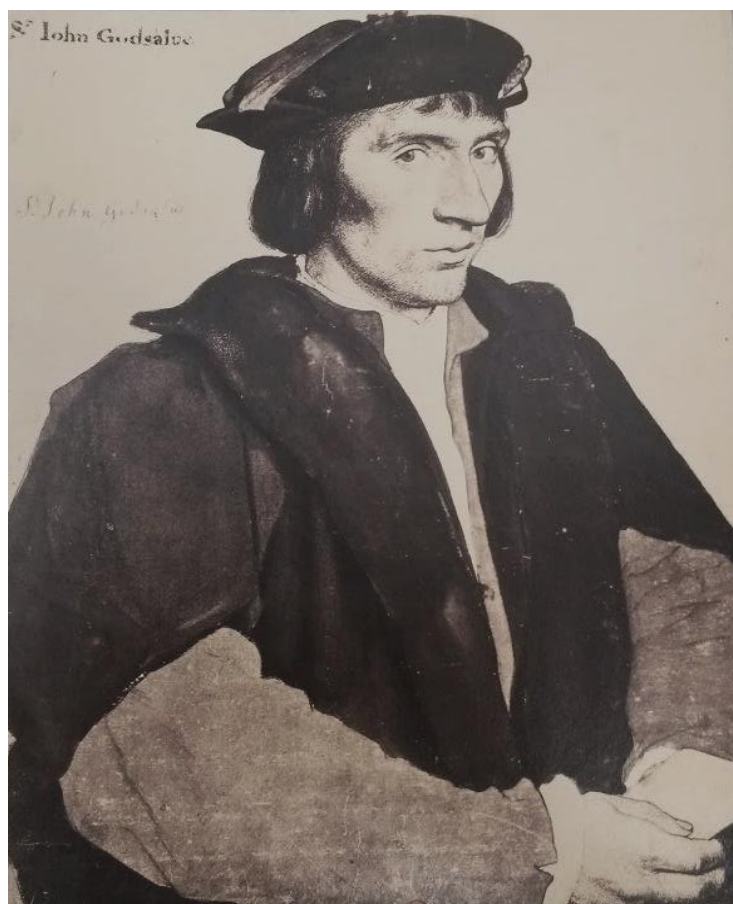


Figure 31 From Félix Ravaisson, *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique*, Cote Kz-365 (1-3) Boîte Fol., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France



Figure 32 From Félix Ravaisson, *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique*, Cote Kz-365 (1-3) Boîte Fol., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France



Figure 33 From Félix Ravaisson, *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique*, Cote Kz-365 (1-3) Boîte Fol., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France

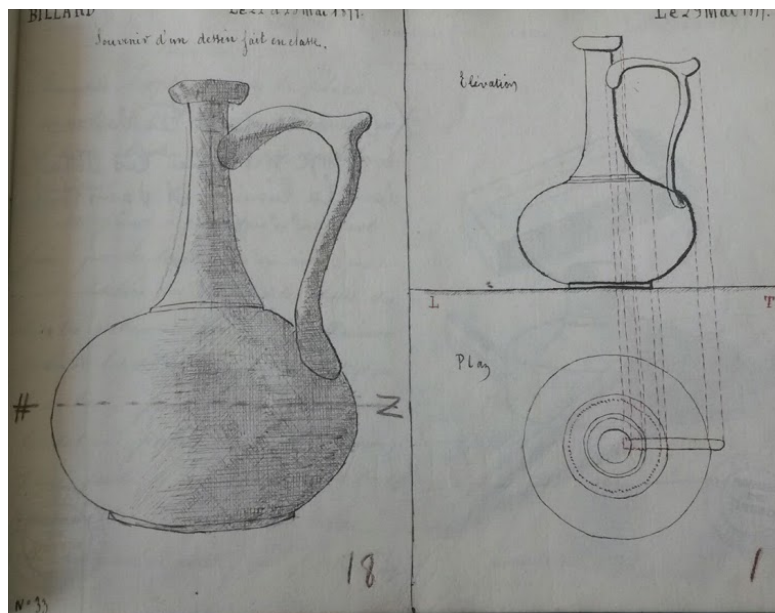


Figure 34 *Cahier à dessin*, c. 1890, Musée national de l'éducation, Rouen, France

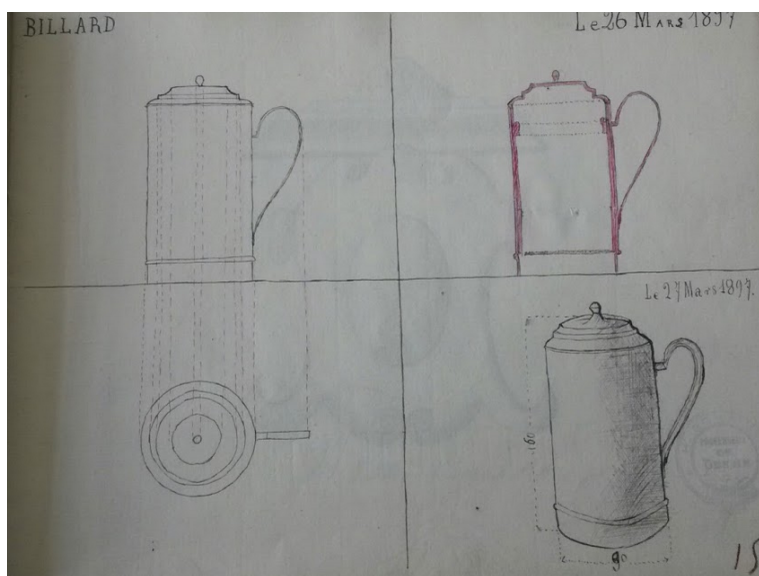


Figure 35 *Cahier à dessin*, c. 1890, Musée national de l'éducation, Rouen, France



Figure 36 Henri Jules Jean Geoffroy, *Une leçon de dessin à l'école primaire*, 1895, oil on canvas, 185 x 230 cm, Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris, France

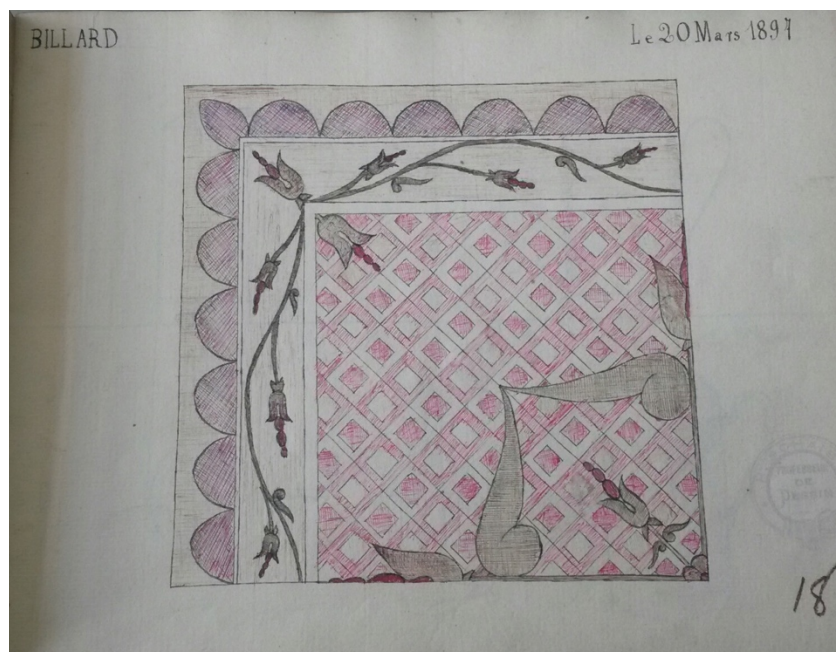


Figure 37 *Cahier à dessin*, c. 1897, Musée national de l'éducation, Rouen, France



Figure 38 From Félix Ravaisson, *Classiques de l'art, modèles pour l'enseignement du dessin publiés sous les auspices du ministre de l'Instruction publique*, Cote Kz-365 (1-3) Boîte Fol., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France



Figure 39 Félix Ravaisson, *Two Dancers (maenads?)*, undated, pen on paper, 16.5 x 7.5 cm, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France

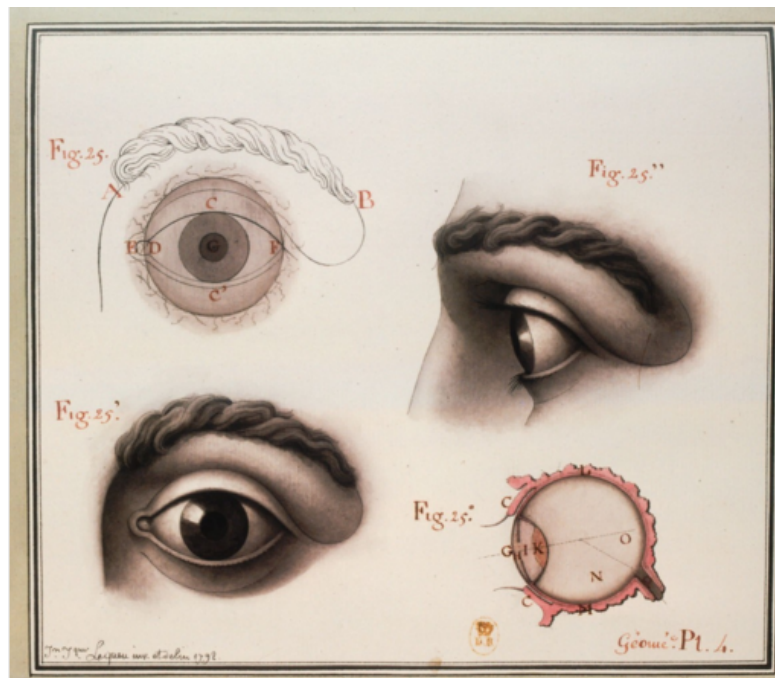


Figure 40 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, *Etudes de l'oeil*, 1792, dessin, 23 x 26.8 cm, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France



Figure 41 Jean-Baptiste Clésinger, *Moulage de la main de Frédéric Chopin*, c. 1847, moulage en plâtre d'après nature, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France

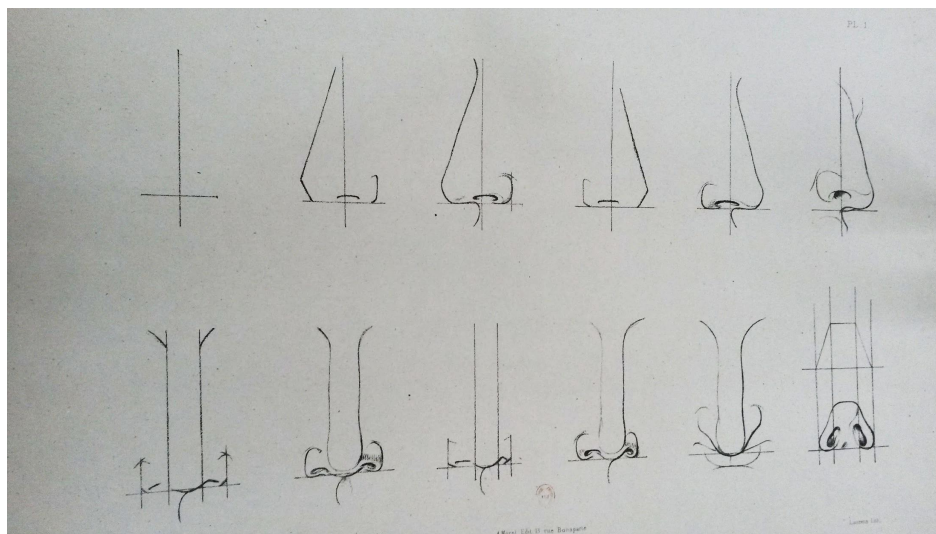


Figure 42 From Jules Laurens, *Cours elementaire et gradué du dessin de la figure humaine* (Paris: chez A. Morel, 1870).



Figure 43 José Maria Mora, *French painter and caricaturist Félix Régamey (1844-1907)*, c. 1870, photograph



Figure 44 Félix Régamey, *Conférence sur le Japon*, 1891, gouache, Collection Takahashi, Tokyo. Reproduced in Keiko Omoto and Francis Macouin's *Quand le Japon s'ouvrit au monde* (Paris: Gallimard/Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1990), 100-101.



Figure 45 Félix Régamey, *Negro Baptism by immersion in a river in the United States of America*, engraving from a drawing, from *The Illustrated London News* 90, no. 2509 (May 21, 1887).

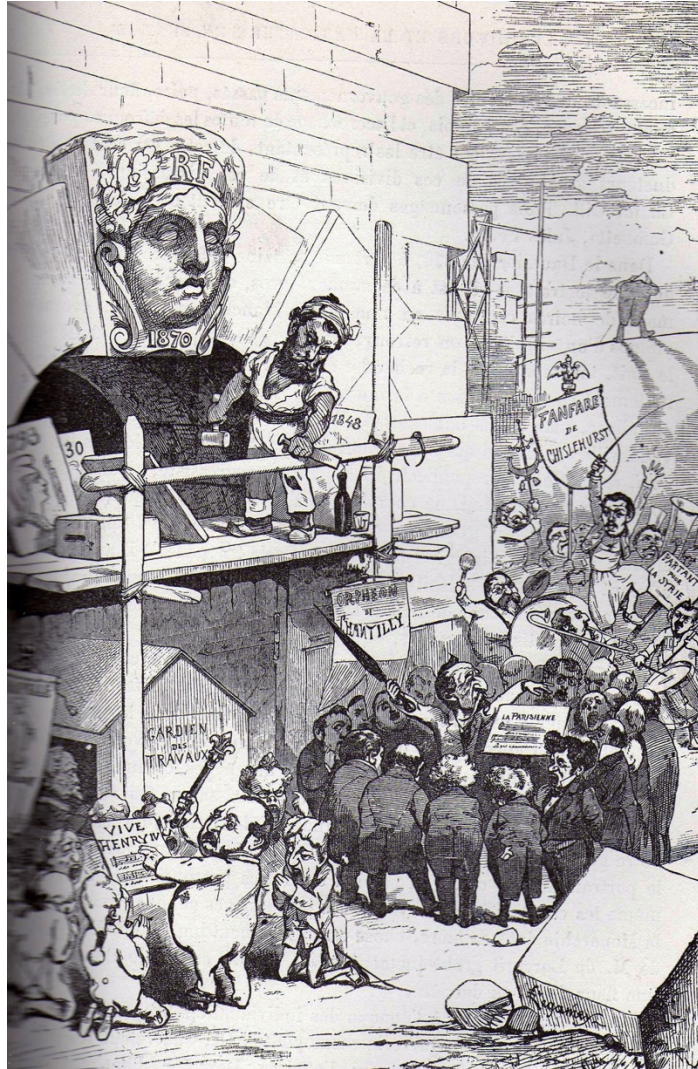


Figure 46 Félix Régamey, *La situation politique en France*, engraving from a drawing, from *Harper's Weekly* (November 1873).

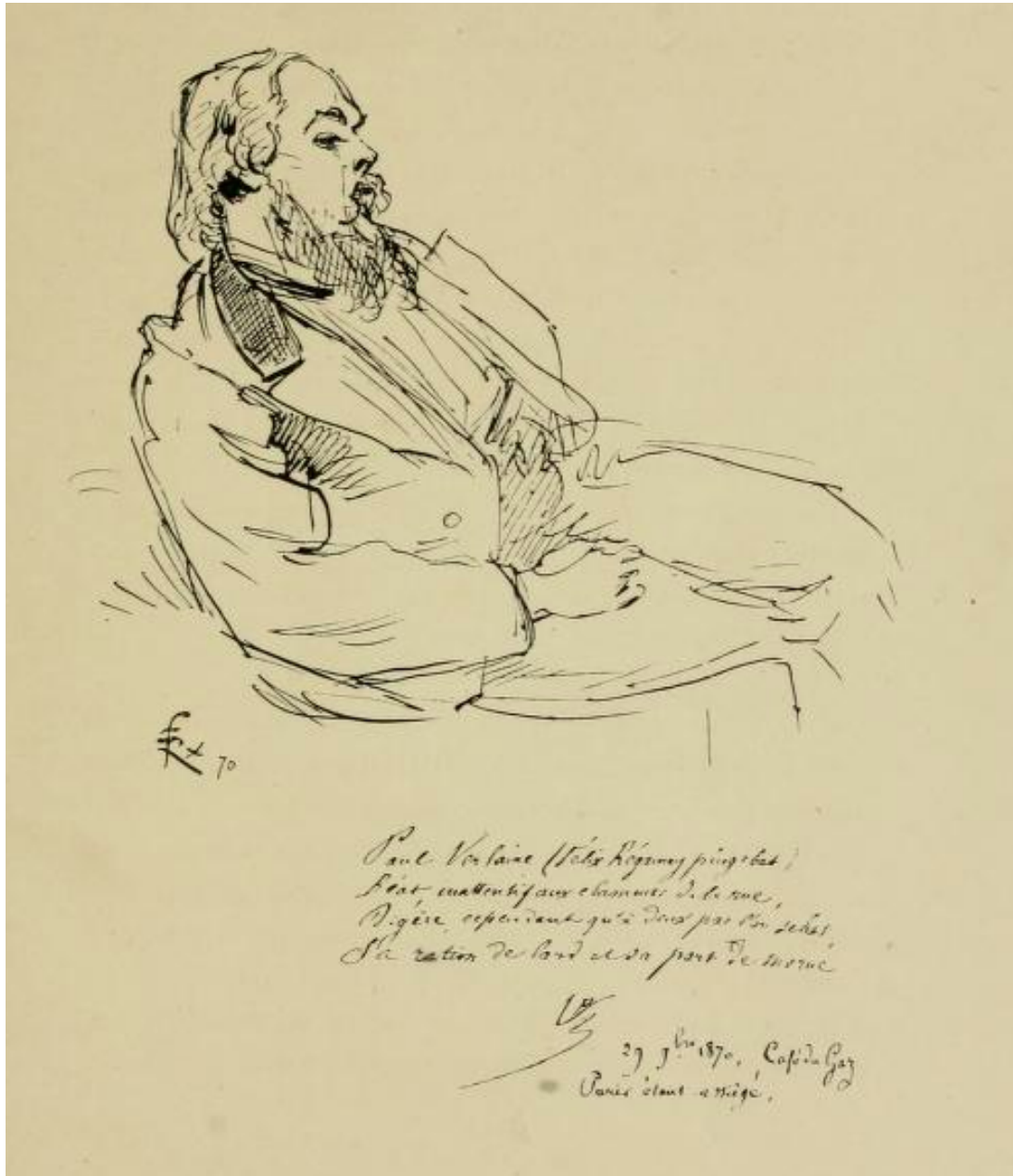


Figure 47 From Félix Régamey, *Verlaine dessinateur* (Paris: Floury, 1896).

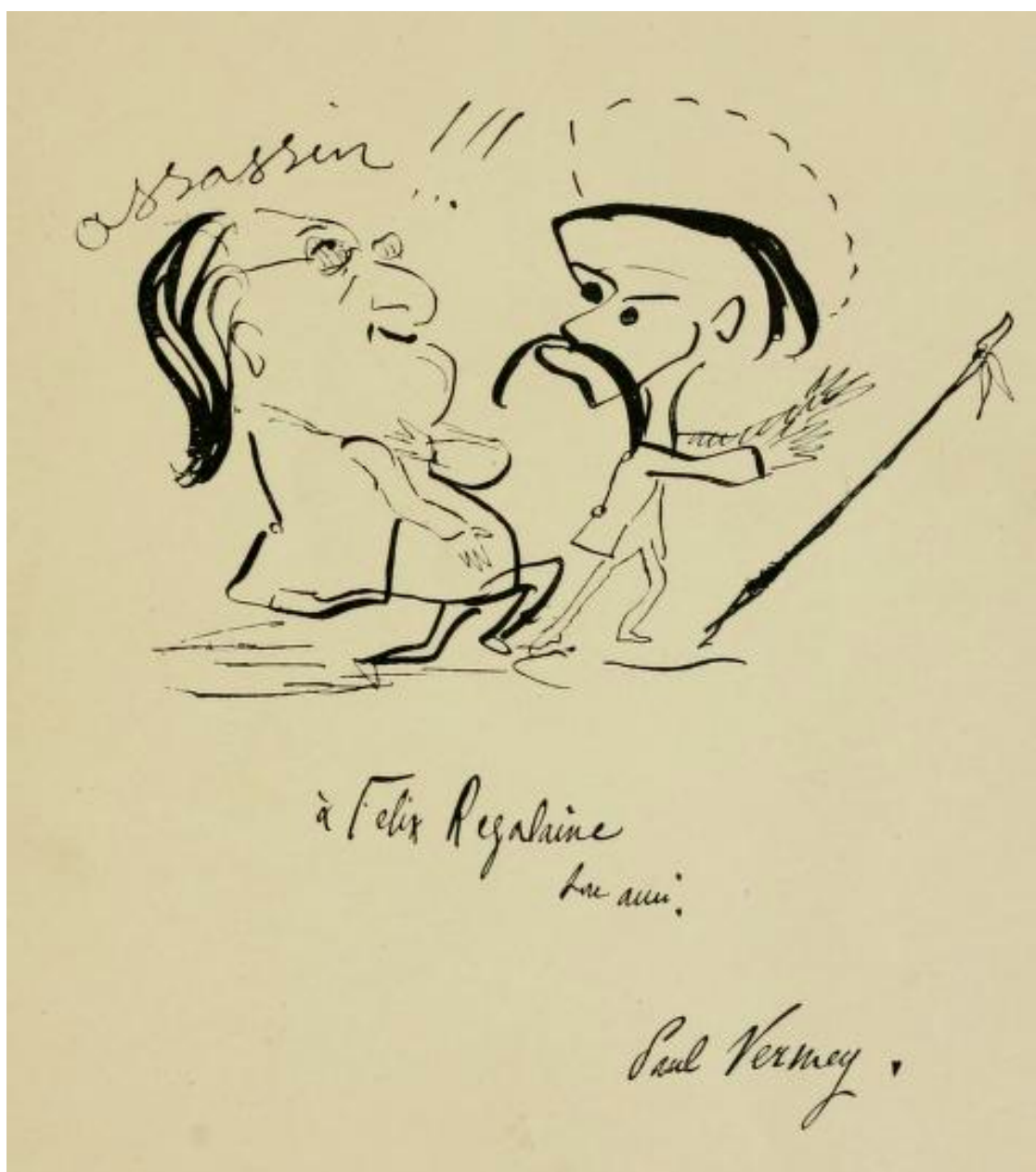


Figure 48 From Félix Régamey, *Verlaine dessinateur* (Paris: Floury, 1896).



Figure 49 William Morris Hunt, *Portrait of Régamey*, c. 1876, collection unknown



Figure 50 Anonymous, *Emile Guimet et Félix Régamey accompagnés de leurs interprètes, lors d'un voyage au Japon en 1876*, 1876, positif monochrome sur support papier, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France



Figure 51 Félix Régamey, *Présentation de la mission scientifique d'Emile Guimet en Asie à l'Exposition universelle de 1878 au palais du Trocadéro*, 1878, gouache sur papier, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France



Figure 52 Félix Régamey, *Jeune fille à Yamada*, 19e siècle, dessin, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France



Figure 53 Félix Régamey, *Tête de matrone à Kyôto*, 19e siècle, dessin, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France



Figure 54 Félix Régamey, *Bonze de Colombo*, 19e siècle, oil on canvas, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France



Figure 55 Félix Régamey, *Pont sacré et pont banal à Nikko*, c. 1876-78, oil on canvas, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France



Figure 56 *Exposition universelle de Paris 1878. Au premier plan, les oeuvres japonaises rapportés par Émile Guimet, aux murs des peintures de Félix Régamey, Photographie, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France*



Figure 57 Félix Régamey, *Baptême d'indiens aux Etats-Unis*, 1877-78, oil on canvas, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France



Figure 58 Félix Régamey, *Secte de Shakers aux Etats-Unis*, 1877-78, oil on canvas, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France

Ce fut, d'après la légende, la consécration du drame.
Jusqu'à nos jours, en souvenir du miracle de
Nara, cette même danse, appelée *Sambasho* (1),

précède chaque représentation théâtrale et est imitée
par un acteur costumé en prêtre d'autrefois.
Le peuple ayant pris goût à ces parades religieu-

Fig. 1.



1. Sambasho.

2. Tama-tori.

ses, fort simples à l'origine, le clergé *shintoïste*
organisa de véritables *comédies-pantomimes*.

L'une d'elles, nommée *Tama-tori* (2), nous montre
une sainte femme, agitant un sistre aux grelots tin-

Fig. 2.



1. Contrôleur.

2. Guidepost.

3. Ametaki.

4. Policeman.

tant, qui défend la boule précieuse de cristal, em-
blème de pureté et de vérité, contre les entreprises
des *Ametaki*.

ges aux couleurs vives reproduisant les principales
scènes de la pièce annoncée.

Figure 59 From Gaston Tissandier, "Les Soirees de dessin de Félix Regamey [sic]," *La Nature* (4 juin 1881), 56.



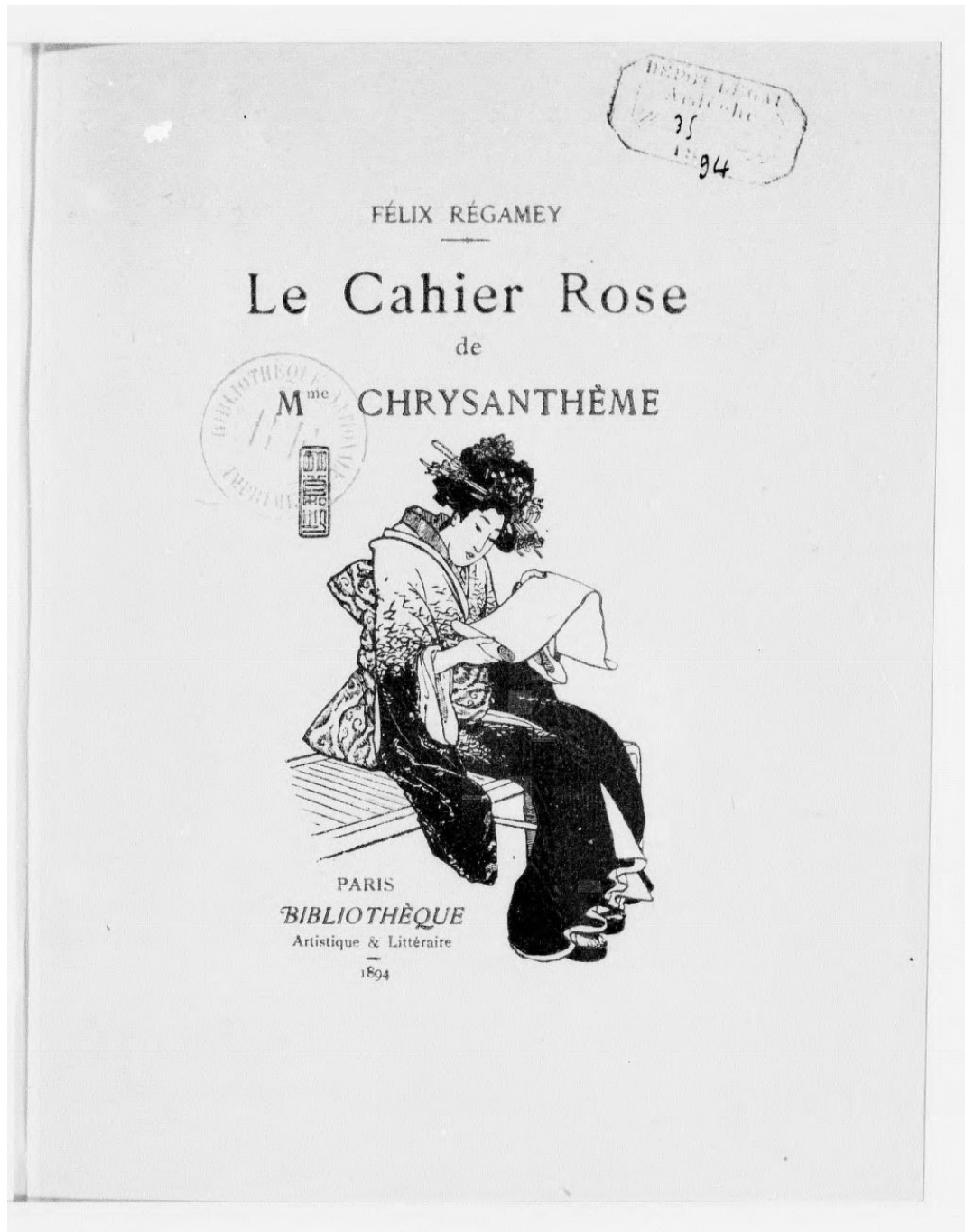
Figure 60 Félix Régamey, *Emile Guimet et Félix Régamey chez les musulmans chinois (à Canton)*, 1878, oil on canvas, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques, Paris, France

Puis il ajoute : « A notre connaissance, ce système est en vigueur depuis trois siècles, et, d'après le témoignage universel, le résultat est des plus satisfaisant ».



L'Allemand Kämpfer, le père jésuite français Charlevoix et le Hollandais Titsing, s'accordent à dire que l'affection, l'obéissance et le respect des enfants pour leurs parents n'ont pas de bornes. Les parents choisissent leurs enfants pour leur servir d'arbitres dans les querelles avec les étrangers, et

Figure 61 From Félix Régamey, *Le Japon pratique* (Paris: J. Heizel et Cie, 1891), 16.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 62 Frontispiece from Félix Régamey, *Le Cahier rose de Mme Chrysanthème* (Paris: Bibliothèque artistique et littéraire, 1894).



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 63 From Pierre Loti, *Madame Chrysanthème*, illustrations de Rossi et de Myrbach; gravées par Ch. Guillaume (Paris: E. Guillaume 1888).



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

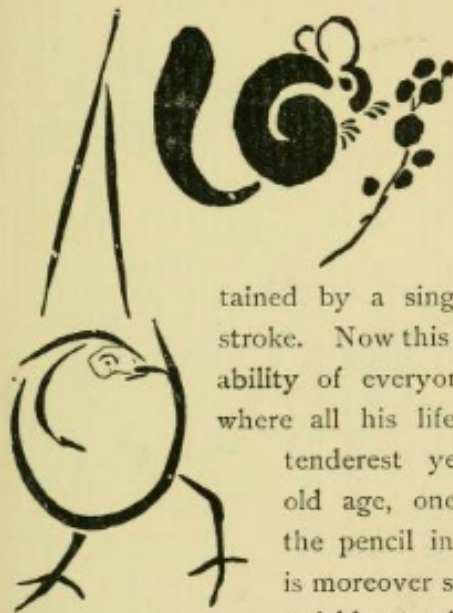
Figure 64 From Félix Régamey, *Le Japon en images* (Paris: Paclot, 1900).

for ever in the memory of men, as the liveliest expression of the influence of beauty on human sentiment." *

* * *

The study of simplicity in conception, and especially in execution, is one of the characteristics of

Japanese art. Hence those sketches of landscapes and of animals, the representation of which is ob-

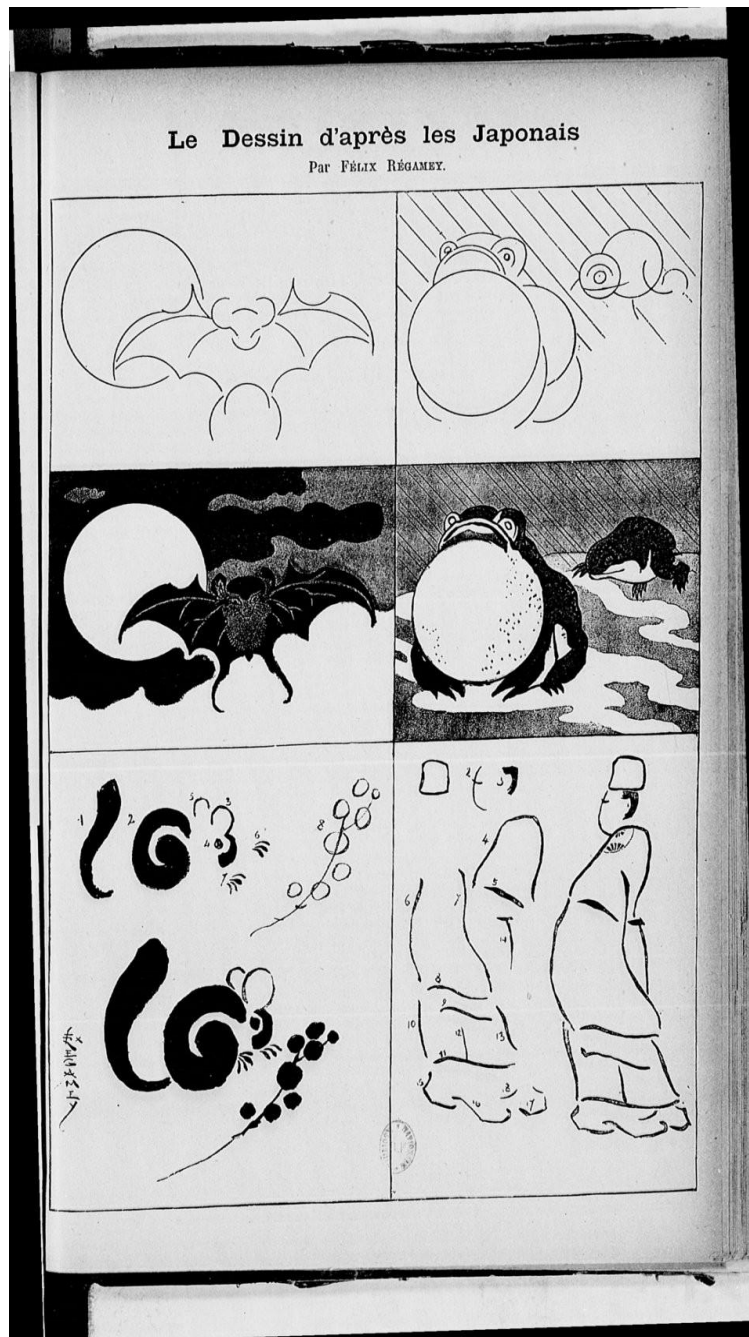


tained by a single uninterrupted stroke. Now this skill is within the ability of everyone in a country where all his life long, from the tenderest years to extreme old age, one has constantly the pencil in hand. Practice is moreover so much the more quickly acquired that the pen-

cil is used not only for designing and painting, but also for writing. Thus without hyperbole it may be said that in Japan all the world sketches. This is the reason why, according to the measure of these acquirements, put to use for the sake either of his

* *Comment on devient dessinateur* (Hetzel, éditeur).

Figure 65 From Félix Régamey, *Japan in Art and Industry: With a Glance at Japanese Manners and Customs*, trans. by M. French Sheldon and Eli Lemon Sheldon (London: G.P. Putnam Sons, 1893).



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 66 Félix Régamey, "Le dessin d'après les Japonais," *Le Petit Français illustré* (1891), n.p.

M. Hirth : Il faudrait être peintre chinois et avoir passé sa vie en peignant et en se perdant dans des pensées abstraites et profondes sur l'art pour comprendre ces courts axiomes.

Et cependant il s'en dégage ceci d'intéressant : c'est que cet art avait une technique avancée, reposant sur des préceptes excellents, que nous pourrions encore proposer à la méditation des artistes nouveau genre, créateurs d'un art néo-chinois ou japonais, parfois indigène.

Il est conseillé à l'artiste d'avoir de la vigueur, de l'exactitude, de la délicatesse, de la dignité, de la richesse, de la clarté, de la légèreté ; il doit comprendre les styles et les manières des grands peintres anciens et modernes, mais il ne doit pas utiliser style et manière en les confondant, donc, il ne devra pas mélanger les styles *Shin, Guo et So*.

Un Empereur doit toujours être digne, un savant loyal et humble ; un arbre sera peint autrement qu'une herbe ; il faut proportionner les formes aux dimensions du papier ou de la soie que l'on utilise, etc.

Les trois talents de Moriatou peuvent, d'après M. Hirth, se définir :

L'Esprit — le Talent — l'Habileté mécanique.

Autant dire que le peintre devra posséder une instruction générale suffisante pour choisir avec esprit, avec intelligence le sujet noble ou épisodique qu'il va représenter. Celui-ci sera ensuite bien rendu, c'est-à-dire bien composé par l'artiste ; enfin, sa figurelure exige une habileté mécanique, un faire spécial, en un mot, la pratique ou le métier qui permet de faire vivre la scène évoquée.

Voici les douze défauts à éviter, pour un peintre, d'après Nyo-Shizen (1800-1808) :

1° (Le traducteur japonais n'a pu définir en français) :

- 2° Les distances manquant de clarté (1) ;
- 3° Les montagnes non disposées en chaîne (2) ;
- 4° Un fleuve n'ayant pas de source (3) ;
- 5° Un fond trop uni ;
- 6° Un chemin trop étroit ;
- 7° Un rocher n'ayant qu'un côté (3) ;
- 8° Un arbre ayant moins de quatre branches (3) ;
- 9° Un personnage ressemblant à un nain ;
- 10° Des maisons et des terres mal distribuées ;
- 11° L'épaisseur de l'encre pendant le degré convenable ;
- 12° La distribution au hasard, sur une peinture, des taches et des couleurs.

Si l'Empereur doit manifester la dignité et le soldat l'impétuosité, le barbare ou étranger doit exprimer le désir de revoir la Chine et d'obéir à son gouvernement avec plaisir (cette dernière obligation nous paraît assez difficile à satisfaire). Pour peindre un paysage, le peintre doit être guide par notre cœur.

Voici une règle de proportion fort importante : sachez donc, ami lecteur, que, lorsque vous dessinerez une montagne de dix pieds de haut, l'arbre aura 1 pied, le cheval 1 inch, et un homme sera aussi petit qu'un pois.

C'est une règle secrète de peinture qui oblige une personne éloignée à n'avoir pas d'yeux, un arbre éloigné pas de branches, une montagne éloignée pas de dents et semblable à un sourcil, l'eau pas de vagues et montant au niveau des nuages.

C'est encore une règle secrète qui veut que l'un des côtés de la montagne soit couvert de nuages, qu'une montagne rocheuse possède une source, que la tour soit ombragée par des arbres, un chemin parcouru par des individus, une pierre exposée selon ses trois faces, etc.

Il ne faut pas se contenter de l'enseignement oral du professeur et de l'étude des livres, il faut bien méditer cet enseignement :

- « Quelqu'un me demanda un jour si le meilleur moyen pour faire des progrès était de peindre en ayant toujours sous les yeux un livre de modèles »
- « ou de peindre en n'emportant jamais pareil livre. »
- « Je lui fis cette réponse : »
- « Celui qui peint toujours sans livre de modèles et seulement en suivant son idée n'est qu'un artiste adroit et inexpérimenté ; son œuvre n'aura pour admirateurs que des yeux peu exercés ; il tombera dans l'hérésie sans jamais atteindre la célébrité. »

Ainsi parle Moriatou.

- (1) La dégradation perspective est donc imposée à l'artiste.
- (2) La montagne, exprimée en hiéroglyphe, comporte trois ou quatre dents.
- (3) Le caractère symbolique subsiste, la peinture se ressent encore de son origine hiéroglyphique.

En raison de l'origine calligraphique de l'art japonais, nous ne serons pas étonné de voir dans le *Gougen* des suites de planches montrant la façon d'exécuter un arbre, un bambou, un oiseau, et l'on décompose le travail en numérotant les coups de pinceau.

Ainsi, pour peindre un bambou, il faut connaître les règles de l'ombre (*in*), de la lumière (*yo*), les règles relatives à la forme des nœuds, la hauteur des branches ; à leur nombre, soit à gauche, soit à droite ; à la forme des feuilles, qui ont chacune leur dénomination ; il y a des feuilles en petit bateau — nouvelle lune — queue de poisson — oie au vol.

Pour des groupes de feuilles, nous aurons la queue d'hirondelle, l'oe descendante, etc.

Le *Kai shi yen Gonaden* est consacré à l'exécution des bambous.

Voici son sommaire : Courte notice sur la peinture du bambou. 13 règles.

Comment on commence à peindre un bambou	9	—
Manière d'exécuter la tige	5	—
Manière d'exécuter les branches	6	—
Manière de peindre la tige et ses branches	4	—
Manière de peindre les feuilles tournées vers le ciel	8	—
Manière de peindre les feuilles tournées vers la terre	6	—
Manière de distribuer les feuilles	3	—
Manière de terminer le sommet	3	—
Manière pour diriger le sommet vers le sol	1	—
Manière pour le peindre horizontalement	1	—
Manière de le distribuer vers le ciel	2	—
Enfin, manière de diriger ses racines.		



Et nous pourrions ainsi multiplier nos citations ; il nous paraît que le lecteur acquerra la conviction que beaucoup de ces principes d'exécution et de composition, retrouvés dans les vieux livres japonais, sont identiques à bien des conseils que nous trouvons aussi dans les ouvrages des écrivains et des artistes de la vieille Europe. Malgré la différence des mœurs et des époques, malgré les divergences de races, l'esprit humain semble toujours identique à lui-même ; et, pour représenter la nature, tout en se plaçant à des nécessités diverses, les maîtres de tous les pays ont toujours enseigné les mêmes bons principes : aussi plus d'un jeune artiste, rêvant de créer un art nouveau ou un nouveau style, ferait bien de méditer et de respecter les règles souvent si judicieuses des vieux professeurs chinois et japonais. L'art est toujours en perpétuelle genèse, il se transforme sans cesse, il modifie les factures pour les maintenir en harmonie avec les nécessités nouvelles de l'existence ; mais il ne se crée pas de toute pièce telle Minerve sortant tout armée du front de Jupiter. Un style ne s'invente pas, il n'existe que par suite de l'évolution naturelle de l'art !

Il faut étudier ce qui nous précède pour apprécier ce qui se fait aujourd'hui et prévoir ce que nous réserve l'avenir. Il serait curieux de connaître plus en détail cet ancien enseignement de l'art au Japon et de le comparer ensuite à l'enseignement professé par les grands artistes de la Renaissance ; nous restons convaincus que le parallèle mettrait en évidence l'analogie des conseils données comme des règles imposées. Il serait nécessaire toutefois de bien se pénétrer du sens et de la valeur des règles japonaises, car, si plusieurs lignes de cet article paraissent amusantes et drôles, qui sait si elles ne sont pas très justes et très sérieuses, la traduction, non équivalente, ne nous donnant pas la valeur exacte de cette phrase, née dans un cerveau chinois ou japonais.

F.-J. PILLET.



EXPOSITION D'HORTICULTURE

L'Exposition d'Horticulture s'ouvre depuis l'année dernière dans les serres du Cours-la-Reine ; d'une architecture sobre, mais rayonnante d'éclat et de lumière, bien exposées, avec la Seine, qui passant à leurs bases, semble venir porter ses flots bienfaisants sous toute cette nature éphémère de fleurs coupées et de feuillages parés pour le plaisir des yeux.

Il est réconfortant et salutaire de voir ainsi réunies en un espace si restreint, les merveilles de la flore. C'est l'éblouissement des yeux, avec des heurts de couleurs incroyables, placés les uns à côté des autres, non par des peintres qui auraient cherché des gammes heureuses, mais par le hasard et la fantaisie ; l'on est bercé, ébloui, charmé, et tout cela dans une atmosphère tiède, idéalement parfumée, mais d'un parfum triste de fleurs qui se fanent et qui meurent.

L'Exposition dure cinq jours, mais elle devrait n'en durer qu'un seul ; le seul jour où les fleurs ont été cueillies dans tout l'épanouissement de leurs beautés, car les heures laissent sur les fleurs, comme sur le visage des femmes, le souvenir du temps qui passe où elles ont été délicieusement convoitées, adorées et les fleurs qui se fanent sont si douloureuses à regarder, avec leurs têtes penchées qu'il vaut mieux passer sans les voir.

Les orchidées, quoique très goûtées par un certain public, sont des fleurs prétextuelles, sans parfum et de forme alambiquée, sans grandes lignes ; il faut citer cependant les collections de MM. Magne, Leseur et Duval ; mais cette fleur sans feuillage ne doit avoir, au point de vue artistique et même décoratif, que peu d'ambition, et l'épilhète de fleur est-elle bien la sienne.

Dans la première serre, le regard est attiré à droite par un merveilleux parterre de géraniums, les coloristes ici seront dans la joie. Mais la véritable exposition artistique, là où un artiste sent s'élever en lui un bien-être inconcevable, c'est dans la longue galerie qui sépare les deux serres, ce ne sont plus là les fleurs coupées, mais l'harmonie grandiose d'une serre qui monte, l'infinie douceur des tons et des gammes ; je crois qu'il est impossible de rêver mieux, de plus divinement chatoyant et de plus beau.

C'est ici les azalées blanches, aux pétales si purs, si chastes qu'on n'ose les regarder, et les rododendrons aux fleurs vermeilles et rouge vif, c'est du mauve tendre au rose clair, ce sont des flots de bourgogne doré et de champagne qui éclaboussent de mousse les nuances et les icônes. Ce n'est plus la nature parée, apprêtée, où l'on sent le fil de fer qui pique et qui apparaît tristement, c'est la flore où vibre dans la lumière des ruissellements de tons d'azur et de crépuscule, et où toutes les corolles montrent leurs minignonnes têtes vers ce firmament à elles doivent d'être là. Toutes ensemble, dans cette charmante famille où les plus petites vous rient et vous embaument et avec leur éclat font un concert très doux, très tendre, comme du Beethoven, c'est un timide hosanna vers leur créateur.

La dernière serre est consacrée aux rosiers tiges et nains, les variétés sont merveilleuses et les floraisons bien venues. Il faut signaler dans cette serre un groupe de bégonias fleuris qui sont d'un effet vraiment charmant, cette fleur, qui, toute seule, à l'air chétif, en groupe fait très bien ; cette serre conduit à l'Exposition de peinture réservée spécialement aux peintres de fleurs et de fruits. L'Exposition renferme des envois très honorables de peintres connus et estimés du public, mais là où est l'écueil, et il faut absolument y mettre ordre, c'est qu'il ne faudrait pas que cette Exposition fût une Exposition d'œuvres de refusés aux grands Salons. Il faudrait, au contraire, que les tableaux envoyés soient faits pour l'Exposition même ; le moyen est simple, faire déposer en un local de la Société en prenant comme dernier jour d'admission le dernier jour de réception des œuvres de peinture à la Société des Artistes français.

Figure 67 Jules Pillet, "L'Enseignement Artistique au vieux Japon," *L'Art pour tous: encyclopédie de l'art industriel et décoratif* (June 1903), n.p.

et vingt ans. Ils apprenaient l'escrime, l'équitation, l'écriture, la littérature, etc.

Les visites se font dans l'après-midi, et parfois on



Leçon d'écriture.

retient des visiteurs à dîner; les invitations se font toujours à l'improviste et le repas du soir est le plus important.

De quoi parlent les femmes entre elles ?

philosophie shintoïste sans modifier les croyances déjà acquises sur la nature et sa sainteté.

Mais l'écriture chinoise fut pour les Japonais et pour l'art japonais un formidable moyen d'éducation.

Chaque *caractère* chinois contient à la fois un signe phonétique, un



signe représentatif et un signe déterminatif. Il représente l'objet même dont il est le nom, il est déterminé par une *clef* indiquant s'il s'agit d'un mot appartenant aux idées abstraites, aux choses humaines, animales, végétales, minérales, etc.; il donne enfin le son syllabique qu'il faut prononcer pour lire le mot.

Tout cela est horriblement compliqué. A force de vouloir être clair, le scribe chinois s'est

jeté dans un dédale dont il ne peut jamais voir les issues. Mais le scribe chinois est forcément un artiste; il tient un pinceau qui doit représenter tout un tableau, parfois plusieurs tableaux, dont il ne doit prendre que les traits caractéristiques. De là une nécessité, une habitude de simplifier, une habileté incroyable pour saisir le contour qui désigne à lui seul un objet ou une idée.

Ainsi procéda l'écrivain des hiéroglyphes égyptiens; mais, plus heureux que le Chinois, il arriva presque à l'alphabet net et précis des Grecs et se tira d'affaire en supprimant le plus possible les voyelles (habitude sémitique) et en restreignant le nombre des signes.

Dans les deux cas, il fallut arriver à un moyen rapide de repré-

Figure 69 From Émile Guimet, and Félix Régamey, *Promenades Japonaises: Tokio-Nikko* (Paris: C. Charpentier, 1880), 166.

Exceptionnellement, on se sert d'un appui-main fait d'un morceau d'ivoire, d'os ou de bambou, ayant



la forme d'une tuile étroite et évasée, en faïence le plus souvent.

Figure 70 From Félix Régamey, *Le Japon pratique* (Paris: J. Heizel et Cie, 1891).

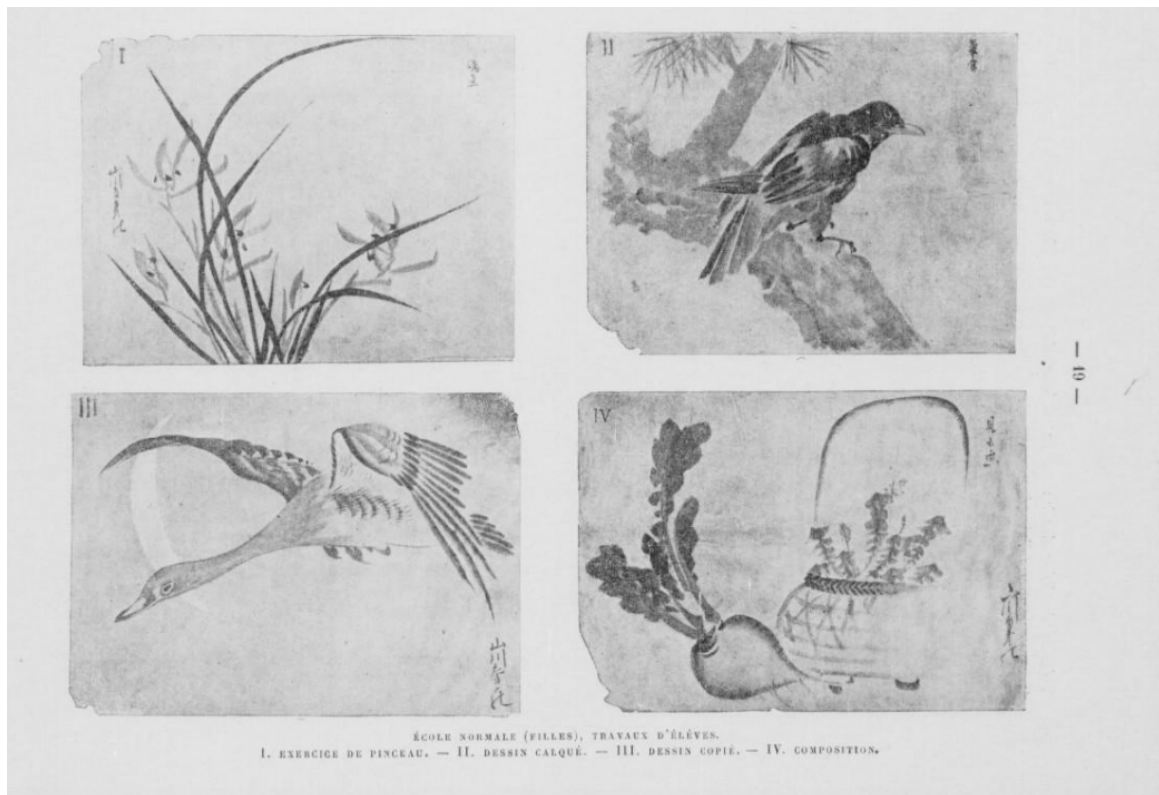


Figure 71 From Félix Régamey, *Le dessin et son enseignement dans les écoles de Tokio* (Paris: Atelier F. Régamey, 1899), 19.

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