Hackmann, Lisa: *Paul Delaroche — Das Phänomen globaler Berühmtheit im 19. Jahrhundert. Kunstöffentlichkeit - Kunstkritik - Kunstmarkt*, Berlin: Reimer-Verlag 2022
ISBN-13: 978-3-496-01684-7, 1 Online-Ressource (351 S.), €49,00

Reviewed by: Eveline Deneer, Utrecht University

'If there were an index that measured the past celebrity of painters as a function of their present neglect, Paul Delaroche would probably come close to the top of the scale.' [1] In 1997, when Stephen Bann published the first monograph on the French artist Paul Delaroche (1797-1856), this imbalance must still have been daunting. In his monograph, Bann convincingly argued that entrenched modernist frames of reference long prevented art historians from seeing – let alone appreciating – the innovative and impactful qualities of his work and career. [2] Defining and locating these qualities required retracing alternative trajectories beyond the lineage of avant-garde revolutions that eventually came to represent 'modernity' in the art-historical canon. Hence, Bann's conviction that 'attending more closely to the career of Delaroche would continue to open new ways of writing the history of nineteenth-century European art.' [3] Lisa Hackmann's book, Paul Delaroche. Das Phänomen globaler Berühmtheit im 19. Jahrhundert. Kunstöffentlichkeit Kunstkritik Kunstmarkt, forms a valuable addition to the growing body of literature that suggests that Bann's expectations were not unjustified. Placing Delaroche's unparalleled international fame at the heart of its inquiry, Hackmann's work allows us to appreciate the progress made over the past three decades.

Although a good number of existing publications address the issue of Delaroche's fame, few consider this historical phenomenon as an object of investigation in its own right. Hackmann's book, based on a PhD thesis defended at the Technical University of Berlin in 2020, proposes to do just this. It is particularly interesting to consider Hackmann's study alongside Patricia Smyth's Paul Delaroche. Painting and Popular Spectacle (2022), which examines the popularity of the painter's works from a very different perspective. [4] While Smyth explores the intrinsic connection between Delaroche's paintings and new modes of vision and spectatorship – marginalised in the modernist appreciation of painting as an autonomous medium but crucial to the development of other innovative media like print, photography, and film – Hackmann focuses on systemic changes in the art world's institutions, from the studio and state policy to commercial enterprise. Her main objective is to map and examine the 'scope and pathways' (p. 11) of Delaroche's celebrity in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States from his first participation in the Paris Salon until his death in 1856. Although this chronological demarcation is perfectly logical, one might regret that the Parisian posthumous retrospective of 1857 – the first of its kind and certainly a symptom of the very celebrity culture Hackmann explores – falls beyond its scope and is only touched upon briefly.

The originality of Hackmann's project lies partly in the application of theoretical frameworks from the emerging field of celebrity studies, which is still a novelty within the discipline of Art History. In

doing so, it consciously shifts the perspective from the intrinsic qualities of the works and the artist as an agent of his own career and reputation to the myriad actors, institutions, and modalities of distribution that together constitute the complex, dynamic, and increasingly international system of celebrity culture. This system and its interlocking with the art world can, as Hackmann claims, be seen as a product of fundamental changes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European society, symptomatic of the emergence of modern cultural and artistic practices. Hackmann provides a close study of this international phenomenon, compellingly bringing together source material from multiple cultural spheres and in four different languages.

The study approaches Delaroche's subject- and objecthood within this 'complex system of celebrity' from various angles. These roughly follow a chronological evolution, divided into four chapters, but also need to be considered in their interconnectedness. Indeed, one of the study's main conclusions is that Delaroche's international fame resulted from precisely this interlocking of a range of phenomena and events.

The first chapter concerns itself with the role of the Paris Salon and other exhibition venues in France, as the first public stages to set the ground for his wider renown. It demonstrates how, in the 1820s and 1830s – in the passage between neoclassicism and romanticism, which many perceived as a moment of reorientation in French painting – Delaroche's works and their celebrity were instrumentalised in animated public debates on the state and future of the French school. Critics like Théophile Gautier and Gustave Planche did not hesitate to take both the popular appeal of his paintings and its supposed decline in the late 1830s as proof of the invalidity of Delaroche's artistic choices. What makes this chapter particularly interesting is the juxtaposition of the developments at the Salons and other exhibitions in Paris and in the provinces, which have been largely neglected in the historiography. What emerges is a dynamic landscape of initiatives which sheds new light on Delaroche's refusal to participate in the Salon after 1837: rather than a response to negative criticism alone, it also appears to have been a result of shifting priorities and the development of alternative strategies for the artist, dealers, and collectors to showcase his work.

The second chapter examines Delaroche's teaching activities, particularly the international radiance of the studio he ran from 1835 until 1843. The study of institutions and structures of artistic education, particularly the private studios that thrived in nineteenth-century Paris, is a fairly recent field within Art History, certainly with regards to Delaroche. And yet, as Hackmann shows, these activities played a crucial role in the construction of his 'universal' celebrity status. The second half of the chapter, dedicated to Delaroche's international students, concentrates on students from Germany and Austria, who made up half of the studio's foreign student population (a full list is provided in the first annex). The analysis, supported by abundant source material from German archives, gives voice and agency to young artists, such as Friedrich Bouterwek (1766-1828) or Friedrich Wilhelm Martersteig (1814-1899), whose names have largely sunk into art-historical oblivion. The image that emerges is that of the studio as a pulsing hub in which Delaroche's reputation and fame worked in multiple directions. On the one hand, they attracted students whose proximity to the master could provide status and contacts crucial for further career prospects. On the other hand, the students, through their interactions within their social and professional networks, also played an important role in expanding and consolidating Delaroche's fame and reputation abroad.

The following chapter examines the interplay between Delaroche's international fame and his exceptional commercial success. The central issue – the commercialisation of original paintings and their many repetitions, replicas, copies, and reproductions in print and photography – is addressed from alternating viewpoints: from the artist and his dealer Adolphe Goupil to the collectors. It is here that the juxtaposition with Patricia Smyth's book is most fascinating: whereas Smyth asks why Delaroche's works lent themselves so easily to realisation and reproduction, Hackmann explores the ways in which the artist, dealers, and collectors capitalised on this specific quality. The complementarity of these approaches is striking, for instance, in their respective discussions of The Young Christian Martyr (1853, Saint-Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), which both authors single out as a case study. [5] One of the merits of this chapter is that it brings to the fore actors and aspects that connect and cut through lines of inquiry developed in the existing literature, both in terms of content and geographical demarcation, allowing for a dynamic and three-dimensional understanding of the issues at stake. This goes for the central role played by Goupil, but also for the international club of collectors and the analysis of the evolution of the prices paid on the art market.

The study of the exhibition of Delaroche's paintings, repetitions, and replicas beyond France, which is the subject of the final chapter, concentrates on the German-speaking sphere, London, and New York, with occasional discussions of other cities. An overview of no less than fifty exhibitions, held between 1838 and 1858, is included in the annex. If the presence of Delaroche's work abroad has already been explored on a smaller scale, for instance, in the individual cases of Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom [6], the international scope of this chapter allows for interesting new insights to emerge. Not only does it bring the United States into the equation and allow for a comparative analysis of the changing artistic discourses and conditions of mobility across the different geographies, it also makes clear that some compositions were more 'mobile' than others. In fact, out of the approximately 250 works that constitute Delaroche's painted oeuvre, about twenty, mostly dating from the 1840s and 1850s, reoccurred in exhibitions abroad. His Napoleon in Fontainebleau (1845, Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste), of which versions were visible in Berlin, London, Vienna, Prague, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Manchester, and New York, stands out for its recurrence. This provides a relevant backdrop to further explorations of the resonance of Delaroche's work across the globe, such as Teng Yuning's recent study of the appearance of Delaroche's Napoleon at Fontainebleau in Chinese illustrations. [7]

Hackmann's book is a valuable read not just for Delaroche scholars but for anyone interested in the emergence and workings of a system that can turn a living artist into a global superstar.

e.a.deneer@uu.nl

[1] Stephen Bann, Paul Delaroche: History Painted, Reaktion, 1997, p. 9.

[2] Bann 1997, p. 26.

[3] Stephen Bann, Reviving Delaroche, in: Burlington Magazine 166, 1451 (February 2024), pp. 171-177, here p. 173.

[4] Patricia Smyth, Paul Delaroche: Painting and Popular Spectacle, Liverpool University Press, 2022. Smyth's book was reviewed by several scholars, among which: Bann 2024.

[5] Hackmann 2022, pp. 185-187; Smyth 2022, pp. 200-205.

[6] See for an overview: Hackmann 2022, p. 17, note 38. To these could be added Maria Chernysheva, Paul

Delaroche: The Reception of his Work in Russia, in: Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Arts 9, 3 (2019), pp. 577–589.

[7] Teng Yuning, Napoleon as a tragic hero in China: From Paul Delaroche's 'Napoleon at Fontainebleau' to Chinese illustrations, in: Leena Crasemann, Benjamin Fellmann and Yannis Hadjinicolaou, eds., Seismografen und Orientierungsspiegel. Bilder der Welt in kurzen Kunstgeschichten, De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 214-219.

Recommended Citation:
Eveline Deneer: [Review of:] Hackmann, Lisa: *Paul Delaroche — Das Phänomen globaler Berühmtheit im 19. Jahrhundert. Kunstöffentlichkeit - Kunstkritik - Kunstmarkt*, Berlin 2022. In: ArtHist.net, Jul 5, 2024 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/reviews/42145>.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 International License. For the conditions under which you may distribute, copy and transmit the work, please go to https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/