Sally Webster and David Schwittek

A Digital Recreation of the Lenox Library Picture Gallery: A Contribution to the Early History of Public Art Museums in the United States

*Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 17, no. 2 (Autumn 2018)


Published by: *Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art*

Notes: This PDF is provided for reference purposes only and may not contain all the functionality or features of the original, online publication.

License: This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Abstract:
The genesis of this digital reconstruction of the Lenox Library Picture Gallery is nine archival photographs (ca. 1882) that replicate the installation of the paintings owned by the New York bibliophile and art collector James Lenox. This three-dimensional, interactive platform allows easy access to the paintings and their history. The primary goal is to demonstrate that Lenox’s picture gallery is representative of the pre-Gilded Age era, when issues such as collecting and installation practices in the United States were coming to the fore and curatorial strategies were becoming articulated.
A Digital Recreation of the Lenox Library Picture Gallery: A Contribution to the Early History of Public Art Museums in the United States
by Sally Webster and David Schwittek

Introduction | Scholarly Essay and 3D model | Project Narrative | Appendices

This digital humanities project, “A Digital Recreation of the Lenox Library Picture Gallery: A Contribution to the Early History of Public Art Museums in the United States,” contains several parts. Its principal element is the three-dimensional model of the Lenox Library Picture Gallery as it appeared in the 1880s. Within this virtual environment are varied functionalities: links that connect the paintings to the accompanying text, the ability to see the gallery from different angles, pre-programmed arrangements of paintings that illustrate juxtapositions stated in the text, and an information (or text) panel for each painting accessible by clicking on each individual painting. Included in a given text panel is the title of the painting, the name of the artist, and other tombstone information, as well as short explanatory content. There are two complementary articles: the scholarly essay, “A Digital Recreation of the Lenox Library Picture Gallery: A Contribution to the Early History of Public Art Museums in the United States,” and the project narrative. The scholarly essay focuses on the paintings and curatorial strategy found in James Lenox’s (1800–80) picture gallery analyzed within the context of the establishment of the first public museums in the United States. The essay also has links to the nine archival photographs, to individual paintings, and to groups of paintings with shared affinities. The project narrative documents the history and construction of the project. Other materials include appendices containing a list of engravings, auction data, and an itinerary of Lenox’s travels.


Email the author: salweb38[at]gmail.com