

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide

a journal of nineteenth-century visual culture

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Editors' Welcome

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Editors' Welcome

Earlier this year, Petra Chu, representing *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, was invited to attend a colloquium co-sponsored by the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute and the Mellon Foundation on "The Portals of Art History." Participants in the symposia were more or less equally divided between those who occupy key positions in major art history portals, such as Artstor, Grove Dictionary of Art Online, or the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Timeline of Art History*, and those whom we may call "art history portal mavericks," individuals who, single-handedly, or with one or two collaborators, have created major sites. Among the latter were Katie Deepwell, founder and editor of [n.paradoxa](#), a feminist art journal; Didier Rykner, founder and editor of [La Tribune de l'art](#); and Corinne Welger-Barboza, founder and editor of [Observatoire Critique](#), a site that offers a critical perspective on the use of the internet in the history of art. A report and comments on the colloquium (partly in French) are found on the latter site.

The mixture of representatives of major institutions with a good deal of money behind them and individuals with lots of enthusiasm and energy but little or no financial support created an interesting dialogue, which led to a predictable outcome. While the entrepreneurs admitted they had to spend valuable time to scrape together necessary funding—through donations, advertising, etc—they also rejoiced in the freedom they have to publish what they want and how they want it. By the same token, the representatives of large institutional projects felt they occasionally were hampered by funder-driven policy or became bogged down in bureaucratic detail.

What did strike everyone who was present at the colloquium is that the internet has created the possibility for enterprising individuals or small groups to independently initiate major publishing projects with potential worldwide impact. And for everyone who lives in fear of the complete take-over of the publishing industry by a few enormous media companies, this is a consoling thought. At the same time, the new capacity of narrowly-based publishing projects to reach large audiences creates ethical responsibilities for their leaders—responsibilities that have to do with quality, clarity, and transparency.