

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide

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Editors' Welcome

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Editors' Welcome

During a recent visit to several New York dealers specializing in nineteenth-century painting and sculpture, we heard the suggestion that the interest in nineteenth-century art may be waning. Auction records are no longer set in the field of nineteenth century art but rather in that of late twentieth-century and contemporary art.^[1] And collectors' interest appears to be refocused accordingly.

It is, indeed, possible that the nineteenth century, today, is suffering from its being one century removed from our own time, making it more "distant" than it was in the late twentieth century, when it enjoyed its greatest vogue. This supposition is belied, however, by the very healthy audiences of museums of nineteenth-century art, like the Musée d'Orsay and the Van Gogh Museum, as well as of exhibitions devoted to nineteenth-century topics, like *Nineteenth-century Italian Painting* at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (2012: 425,000 visitors) and *Beauty, Morals and Voluptuousness* at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris (2012: 422,954 visitors), to name only a few examples.^[2]

In academia, as well, nineteenth-century art still is a field that enjoys a good deal of interest. I have heard complaints from young art historians about a scarcity of jobs in nineteenth-century art, and, surely, the economy has not benefited art history. But one would need a sophisticated statistical study to assess whether this scarcity is relatively greater than the dearth of jobs in other fields of art history. From our perspective, the call for papers for the annual graduate student symposium in nineteenth-century art, organized by the Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art (AHNCA), always draws a healthy number of proposals and, typically, the selection committee can only accommodate one out of four or five students to participate in this one-day event. Similarly, *NCAW*, for each issue, receives many more manuscripts than it can publish.

All this being said, it is never too early to start countering possible downward trends, even if we are not sure they exist. We therefore encourage all who love nineteenth-century art to do what they can to lend their support to *NCAW* and its publisher AHNCA, which do much to keep the interest in nineteenth-century art alive. And we express our warm thanks to all of those who already sponsor our two organizations (see <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/ncaw-sponsors>).

Notes

[1] The fact that few price records are set in the field of nineteenth-century art may be attributed to the scarcity on the market of top-quality works. The same is not true in the fields of twentieth-century and contemporary art.

[2] *Statistics Art Newspaper*.