COMMERCIALISING CULTURE: THE SALE, DISPLAY AND CIRCULATION OF ART IN FRENCH, BRITISH AND AMERICAN DEPARTMENT STORES (1875-1914)

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the sale, display and circulation of fine art in French, British and American department stores between 1875 and 1914. Grounded in the logic and history of the department store itself, it first shows the crucial importance of the mass-commercial system of the department store, which was predicated on high-volume, low-cost commerce, and its direct influence on the objects which passed through it, which included paintings, sculptures and prints. This history is thus related through focusing in turn on three essential functions of that system – sale, display and circulation – and their relationship to and impact on art both within and without the department store. This is because it is further shown how the sale, display and circulation of art by the department store were key catalysts in the development of the modern art market and the propagation of the globalised art world of the twentieth century. By situating art firmly in the realm of mass commerce, the department store acted as a foil to the mainstream art market, which in turn helped to propel its evolution and development.

For mom, dad
and David

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INTRODUCTION

WRITING ABOUT ART IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE AND THE PROBLEM WITH SURFACES

> 'As we hurried through the streets of the great city, the brilliancy of the shops, the traffic and crowds of busy people, were quite bewildering to a little country girl. Presently we turned a corner, and I heard the glad ringing of chimes; and there we were, before Old Grace Church – and the great Wanamaker Stores.'[1]

'Elizabeth "Betty" Fordham' wrote the above quote in 1909, in a pamphlet published by the New York branch of American department store Wanamaker's. Ostensibly written to her mother while visiting her wealthy college friend, Betty's letter was interspersed with images of a new store feature, the 'House Palatial', which was a twenty-four-room display replicating the mansions of the very wealthy springing up along New York's Fifth Avenue. The pamphlet is quite apparently a form of publicity rather than an authentic personal letter, with the professional photographs matched perfectly to the florid, but inordinately precise, descriptions – just as the House Palatial was a simulated, rather than a real, mansion (fig. 1). 'Betty' was almost certainly in Wanamaker's employ and working in the store's publicity department. The pamphlet, innocently entitled *Betty Comes to Town: A Letter Home*, is therefore a perfect example of the creative and manipulative advertising department stores helped to pioneer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In one publication, the store's advertising team managed to promote a new feature, the House Palatial, in an entertaining and engaging manner through the supposedly objective view of a random shopper, who could also be any one of the shoppers reading at home. Most importantly for

[1] Wanamaker's New York, *Betty Comes to Town: A Letter Home*, 1909, p. 8. Hagley Museum and Library, call number HF5465.U64 W36 1909.

this study, the images of the House Palatial throughout the pamphlet, and especially those that show the display of fine art on the walls of the 'mansion', make it a useful source for the study of both the department store and its display of fine art. Still, how can one come to understand these images, documents and display schemes, all of which are not only biased advertising devices but also blatant constructions, without being too beholden to the surface narratives they tell?

This is an especially crucial question for the study of the relationship between the department store and fine art, for it was in advertising, display and other such constructions that fine art often found its most prominent and important uses in the department store. Moreover, fine art not only featured in advertisements and displays, but also helped contribute to the public 'face' of the department store, which was painted as charitable and community-orientated. In fact, this was the veneer that hid the commercial logic fuelling the enterprise. It is looking beyond this surface and investigating the commercial mechanisms of the department store, in order both to ground its displays and other art-related activities in an historical framework and to describe exactly how the department store 'commercialised' culture, which is the aim of this thesis.

The two-sided nature of the department store, where displays of art, musical performances and other elements of 'culture' effectively hid the commercial reality of the business itself was remarked upon during the period under consideration in this study. For instance, Émile Zola in his still-groundbreaking novel on the late nineteenth-century department store, *Au Bonheur des Dames – The Ladies' Paradise* in English – variously

described both aspects of the store.[2] He infamously called the department store a 'cathedral of modern commerce, solid and light, made for a people of clients', which spoke both to its architecture and to its emergent significance to French national life; with the undertone of the latter point that, just like the cathedral for pre-modern France, department stores were not only becoming the physical centres of city life but also encapsulated the *esprit du temps*.[3] This spirit of modern life was commerce itself, with many private, public and cultural activities increasingly revolving around commercial institutions and pursuits. These activities and displays, seductive in their convenience, beauty and promise of fulfillment, masked the commercial machinery that lurked below. Zola would consistently characterise the department store as a machine, whether it was in describing the deplorable working conditions of female staff – still expected to be the pretty, smiling face of the organisation – or in an oft-quoted passage describing the store:

> 'Denise began to feel as if she were watching a machine working at full pressure, communicating its movement even as far as the windows. They were no longer the cold windows as she had seen in the early morning; they seemed to be warm and vibrating from the activity within… There was the continual roaring of the machine at work, the marshalling of the customers, bewildered amidst the piles of goods, and finally pushed along to the pay-desk. And all that went on in an orderly manner, with mechanical regularity, quite a nation of women passing through the force and logic of this wonderful commercial machine.'[4]

Zola visited and studied numerous Parisian department stores in preparation for writing his novel and his notes, published as they have been for many of his works, show a deep and

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[2] Another leading study of the department store published during the period which considered both its commercial and its cultural impact, and especially the way they related to one another, is: Georges D'Avenel, 'Le mécanisme de la vie moderne: les grands magasins', *Revue des Deux Mondes, 4e période*, tome 124 (1894), pp. 329-69.

[3] Émile Zola and Ernest Alfred Vizetelly (trans.), *The Ladies' Paradise: A Realistic* Novel, Digireads Publishing: Overland Park, KS, 2011, p. 136.

[4] Ibid, pp. 10-1.

extensive understanding of department stores as systems.[5] He knew that underlying the glitter and promise of the department store that attracted its customers was a commercial machine with its own structure and logic driving the larger operation and experience.

The commercial system of the department store will act as a guiding framework for understanding its relationship with fine art in this thesis. What is meant by 'commercial system' are the processes involved in selling mass-produced goods in volume and usually at low cost; this system of commerce being generally called mass commerce. In this thesis, the relationship between the department store's mass commercial system and fine art will be analysed through the way it sold, displayed and circulated art. This positioning is helpful not just in giving coherence to the large number of examples, many quite geographically and culturally disparate, which exist for the practice, but also in arguing for specificity in the art sale and display practices of the department store. This is because the determining feature of the department store, and what distinguishes it from other institutions, is, in fact, its commercial system. Commerce was not only the reason the department store existed, but also the driving force behind which kind of goods it sold and which markets it targeted. It also determined the way the department store was structured as an experience for its customers and workers alike. Moreover, commerce for the department store inevitably meant mass commerce, the outlook and methods of which differed in key ways to the commercial practices that prevailed in the art world. Rooting this history in the commercial system of the department store, while still recognising and discussing the external factors and events which

[5] Zola took extensive preparatory notes for his novels, with the notes for *Au Bonheur des Dames* published as a volume in a series of such publications. Colette Becker and Véronique Lavielle, *La Fabrique Des Rougon-Macquart. Volume IV: Au Bonheur Des Dames (1883), La Joie de Vivre (1884)*, Honoré Champion: Paris, France, 2009.

also drove it, thus provides the ideal perspective from which to compare the art sale and display practices of the department store to those of other commercial art institutions.

The department store has rarely been taken seriously as an art institution in and of itself, often being used to buttress other studies concerned with either the commercialisation of art particularly or the commercialisation of culture generally. Incredibly, this has been done without taking into consideration the specificity of department store commerce itself, or its implications for the shape and development of this history. This thesis will thus detail the way department store commerce functioned in relation to the fine art displayed and sold within it in the countries and time period under consideration. Detailing this history will also reveal how that relationship impacted on fine art more generally, by showing the way that the department store's art sale and display practices coincided with the development of the art market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

I. Literature Review

In the early to mid-twentieth century, scholarship analysing the department store tended to treat it as an economic, rather than as a cultural or even historical, object.[6] The pinnacle of these studies was *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution, and Economics* by Hrant Pasdermadjian, which was first published in French in 1949 and then translated into English in 1954.[7] Commissioned by the International Association of Department Stores, it is a wide-ranging study that examined the economic characteristics and evolution of the

[6] Examples of this literature include: J. Russell Doubman and John Reinert Whitaker, *The Organization and Operation of Department Stores*, Wiley: New York, NY, 1927; and Robert D. Entenberg, *The Changing Competitive Position of Department Stores in the United States by Merchandise Lines*, University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, PA, 1957.

[7] Hrant Pasdermadjian, *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution and Economics*, Newman Books: London, England, 1954.

department store system from its origins in the nineteenth century up to the mid twentieth century. Pasdermadjian's study has its issues, including a near total neglect of the contributions of British retailing and an attribution of title of 'first' department store to Parisian department store Au Bon Marché. Even so, his attempts to express the history of the department store to a contemporary audience as well as his international, rather than just local or national, remit make *The Department Store* an ambitious work that presaged department store literature to come. Still, it was not until the 1970s, after the sociological and post-modern turns in cultural studies and history, that the department store began to be considered beyond the realms of economics for its role in the development of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century society and culture.[8]

Since the 1970s, the department store has become a keystone of sociological, historical and cultural studies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This is arguably due both to their centrality to modern life itself and to the propensity of those who ran such stores to attempt to drive economic and cultural change. This, at least, is what is argued in William Leach's important book on the development of American commercial culture, *Land of Desire*, Rosalind William's seminal study of mass consumption in France, *Dream Worlds,* and *Shopping for Pleasure*, Erika Rappaport's analysis of the development of London's West End.[9] All three books convincingly posit that commercial institutions, and especially the department store, orientated both the modern city and modern life itself around commerce and consumption. What is more, the department store even concentrated all of the

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[8] Robert Proctor discusses the advent of this scholarship in 'A Cubist History: The Department Store in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 13 (2003), pp. 227-35.

[9] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture*, Vintage Books: New York, NY, 1993; Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2001; and Rosalind H. Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1991.

pleasures of modern life, including those offered by the city and foreign travel, into one ideal package. One no longer needed to travel abroad or go to a museum, concert or educational exhibit when all of these experiences were provided by the local department store. Furthermore, these exhibits and displays helped shift attitudes towards commerce, enabling its extension into modern households and lives. As such, Leach discussed different examples of department store art display under a chapter devoted to the idea of 'service'.[10] Service, meaning everything from the 'customer knows best' attitude adopted by modern retailers to amenities such as restaurants and art galleries, was one of the key differences between shopping at a department store and buying goods straight from a producer or at a market. Largely, service was the veneer that hid the transactional reality of the department store experience, allowing commerce to sink into areas that it had never before occupied.[11]

While Leach, Williams and Rappaport have prioritised placing consumer-orientated institutions, and especially department stores, into their rightful role in the development of commercial culture, this is not to say that they neglect the daily commercial realities of the store themselves. In fact, it underpins these studies through the way that cultural activities are shown to support commercial ones; art display being just one of the many ways this was done. Still, it is the way that the commercial system of the department store is disguised through a store's 'surface' offerings to customer that is often the focus of these studies, and particularly in what concerns their writing about art, meaning that a direct view of the mechanisms of department store commerce itself on art cannot but take a back seat. Conversely, a book that focuses on defining in detail the commercial structure and function

[10] Leach, 1993, pp. 136-7.

[11] Other leading studies that pursue the line of enquiry discussed in this paragraph include: Simon J. Bronner, *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, W.W. Norton & Co: New York, NY, 1989; and Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain, *Cathedrals of Consumption: the European Department Store, 1850-1939,* Aldershot by Ashgate: Farnham, England, 1999.

of the department store and its impact on the development of modern life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is Michael Miller's *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store*.[12] Focusing on late nineteenth-century France, Miller shows how the hierarchy of labour in the department store, which was formulated around the modern mass retailer's commercial needs, impacted the class structure and culture of bourgeois society. Miller's analysis of the development of culture and society in the late nineteenth century by way of the commercial structure of the department store – essentially considering how commercial structures can structure society – is an important influence on this thesis. Still, Miller also describes Au Bon Marché's displays of art, a major topic of consideration in this thesis, in a chapter concerned with the 'window dressing', so to speak, of the department store's commercial system, called 'Selling Consumption'.[13] This thesis sets out to do as Miller has done for the relationship between the labour and commercial structure of the department store and the structure of modern society, except by applying that commercial system to its relationship to fine art – and in turn the manifestations of that relationship to the larger commercial art market.

The lack of particularity in delineating the relationship between fine art and the department store in the previously described studies is understandable given that art is not their focus. Instead, the focus is on the department store and its relationship to society, using fine art display as just one example in an overarching dynamic. In the field of art history, there is yet to be a monograph on the subject of department store art sale and display in the Western world, which has limited the full development of the subject and its historical

[12] Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store 1869-1920*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1994.
[13] Ibid, pp. 167-8.

ramifications. Shorter studies, usually focused on the display of individual paintings or exhibitions in department stores, are an important source of information and a beginning point of analysis.[14] The scholarship that does focus on the practice of department store art display more largely in the countries under consideration, and in the Western world – meaning Europe and America – generally, has tended to take the form of articles or shorter studies in edited books.[15] Similar to the works of historical and cultural studies already discussed, these studies also tend to emphasise the relationship between department store art *display* and the commercialisation of culture – culture in this sense now also taken as the art world particularly as well as culture generally.[16] There has been very little discussion of the sale of art in the department store, or of its role in the circulation and movement of art, despite the fact that the sale and circulation of objects are the two major functions of the department store as an institution.[17] By considering the department store as a commercial

[14] These studies include: Laura Morowitz, 'A Passion for Business: Wanamaker's, Munkácsy, and the Depiction of Christ', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 91, no. 2 (2009), pp. 184-206; Aaron Sheon, '1913: Forgotten Cubist Exhibitions in America', *Arts Magazine*, vol. 57, no. 7 (1983), pp. 93-108; and Kristin A. Schwain, 'Consuming Christ: Henry Ossawa Tanner's Biblical Paintings and Nineteenth-Century American Commerce', in James Romaine and Linda Stratford (eds.), *ReVisioning: Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art*, Cascade Books: Eugene, OR, 2013, pp. 277-93. As evidenced by this list, most of the scholarship on art display in department stores has tended to focus on the American context. This thesis will help to re-balance this focus.

[15] These studies include: Antonia Finnane, 'Department stores and the commodification of culture: artful marketing in a globalizing world', in J. R. McNeill and Kenneth Pomeranz (eds.), *The Cambridge World History Volume 7: Production, Destruction and Connection 1750–Present, Part 2: Shared Transformations?*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England, 2015, pp. 137-59; and Shoshana-Rose Marzel, "Contexte mercantile, sociabilité et œuvre d'art: l'exemple de l'art dans les premiers grands magasins parisiens", *COnTEXTES*, vol. 19, no. 2017 (2017), n.p.

[16] A recent study that does help to amend this overriding focus is Anca I. Lasc's *Interior Decorating in Nineteenth-Century France*. Similar to Chapter Two of this thesis, Lasc in Chapter Four of her book largely considers how French department stores such as Au Bon Marché capitalised on cultural initiatives such as art display in order to sell furniture and market interior designs. Yet, she also briefly mentions how department stores such as Au Tapis Rouge and Grands Magasins de Pygmalion sold art via their catalogues, thus not only making it available to a larger range of customers but also effectively commodifying it. This is a subject that is covered in extensive detail and in light of its ramifications on the art world in Chapter One of this thesis. Anca I. Lasc, *Interior Decorating in Nineteenth-Century France: the Visual Culture of a New Profession*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, England, 2018, pp. 160-3.

[17] The main exception to this rule is Younjung Oh's important doctoral thesis, which thoroughly examines the relationship between art and early twentieth-century Japanese department stores, as well as the ramifications of that relationship on the development of the Japanese art world. While the topic is similar to my own, this thesis

system and applying its functions to its relationship with fine art, these aspects of the history of the relationship between the department store and art can be revealed. This will not only flesh out the history of department store art practices, framing the literature already mentioned, but also lend credence and specificity to any arguments about the department store's role in advancing the commercialisation of art and culture.

The role of commerce in the creation and dissemination of art is a topic that has gained increased currency over the course of the twentieth century. From a virtual pariah in both the art world and the field of art history, commerce is now a frequent consideration in discussions both of the subjects of works of art – perhaps best exemplified by the literature on Impressionism – and of the forces that regulate their creation and dissemination. This change can largely be attributed to the pioneering works of the 1960s and 70s, by authors such as Cynthia and Harrison White and Albert Boime, which focused on the late nineteenth century and considered the decline of the academic system of creation and patronage and the rise of art market as an alternative.[18] These studies and the veritable avalanche of literature which followed have tended to focus on the institutions of the art market which are orthodox today but were a revolution in the period under consideration by this thesis: art galleries; auction houses; and the press.[19] Often notably missing is an analysis of institutions of art

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has both a different geographical focus and timescale. Any similarities in argument are manifestations of the continuity of the department store's commercial system across national boundaries – a main topic in my thesis – and the persistence of the impact of that system even on culturally disparate contexts. Younjung Oh, 'Art into Everyday Life: Department Stores as Purveyors of Culture in Modern Japan', PhD thesis, University of Southern California, 2012.

[18] Albert Boime, 'Entrepreneurial patronage in nineteenth-century France' in Edward C. Carter, Robert Forster and Joseph N. Moody (eds.), *Enterprise and Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century France*, The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD, 1979, pp. 137-207; and Cynthia A. White and Harrison C. White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, 1993.

[19] An excellent distillation of literature on the Western art market, with excerpts from crucial articles and books on the topic, is: Titia Hulst (ed.), *A History of the Western Art Market: A Sourcebook of Writings on Artists, Dealers, and Markets*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2017.

commerce outside those of the mainstream art market. These are institutions that also sold and displayed art, but often to a different market and under very different merchandising policies than the art gallery and the auction house. These institutions comprise world's fairs – including the original Crystal Palace, which was relocated to South London and renowned for its display and sale of art – and, of course, the department store.[20]

The relative lack of coverage is undoubtedly because it is the art galleries and auction houses, and not the fairs or department stores, which have become mainstays of the art market. Yet, arguably, to understand the development of a process or market it is also necessary to understand its foil, or the counter-forces driving it. In the case of the art world, the counter forces are, as Lawrence W. Levine has argued, mass culture and the mass market.[21] Levine contends that high culture in America developed by increasingly isolating itself from what at the time was a more generalised field of cultural pursuit - for instance Shakespeare performed for miners, or in the case of this thesis Parisian salon paintings displayed for the paying masses – causing a split which resulted in 'high' and 'low' realms of culture.[22] Whereas art had, throughout much of the nineteenth century, found a home in the middle ground – as symbolised by its presence in the department store – from the 1920s it again largely became a reserve of the cultural and economic elite. This thesis argues that

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[20] An important contribution to this literature is Kate Nichols' work on the Crystal Palace after its relocation to Sydenham, South London; for example: Kate Nichols, 'Art and commodity: sculpture under glass at the Crystal Palace', in John C. Welchman (ed.), *Sculpture and the Vitrine,* Ashgate Publishing: Farnham, England, 2013, pp. 23-46.

[21] Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (The William E. Massey Sr. Lectures in the History of American Civilization), Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1990.

[22] The high/low dichotomy is also discussed and problematised in important art historical works by Thomas Crow and Andreas Huyssens. Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture*, Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1996; and Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 1986.

exploring the art practices of institutions of mass commerce such as the department store can help to explain and contextualise this split.

As an institution of mass commerce, the outlook, principles and methods of the department store were usually in direct opposition to those of the key institutions of the art market, namely the gallery and the auction house. By inserting itself into the realm of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fine art, the department store was bringing a unique approach, predicated on mass commerce, to a complex object and to a quickly evolving context. This thesis will thus show how the art world, and especially the art market, evolved in conjunction with, but mainly in opposition to, the art sale, display and circulation practices of the department store.

II. Methodology

This thesis focuses on three countries, each with distinct cultural and economic circumstances that regulated not just the history and development of their department stores but also the shape of their art world. France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America were selected for practical as well as thematic purposes.[23] Practically, all three countries provide a large number of examples through which to examine the practice of department store art display. America, France and the UK also had strongly provisioned and distinct systems of art production, display and commerce in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which allows illustrative comparisons on the impact of the department store's art activities to be made. Thematically, the choice to examine department store art display from a transnational perspective was intended to determine the extent to which it can

[23] For the sake of simplicity, the United States of America will hereafter be referred to as America. The United Kingdom will also be referred to as the UK.

be conceived of as a practice of department stores generally, rather than a trait of one store individually or a common quirk of stores located within a certain local or national context. This choice was also meant to emphasise the globalising tendency of commercial institutions such as the department store, which by disseminating foreign goods helped not just to propagate cosmopolitan sympathies but also commercial culture more generally. It also serves to analyse the role that the department store played in the concurrent globalisation of art and the art market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The fact that department stores operated within and fostered increasingly global networks of trade and communications was a pre-indication of their management's awareness of and interaction with influences outside their own local or even national context. A key example of the influence one department store could have on another is the large shadow cast by Parisian department store Au Bon Marché, which became the example *par excellence* of a department store - and not just in France but also in America and the UK. This is evidenced by the fact that two separate stores in these Anglophone countries copied the store's famous, but very French, name: one in Brixton, London and another in Seattle, Washington. Yet, while researching and writing this thesis, it became apparent that the most important unifier between the department stores of America, France and the UK was not their ties through a larger network of trade, but their commonly employed system of retailing, which was perfectly suited to mass commerce whatever the location. By employing this common system of commerce to classify the many examples of department store art activities, it became possible to tell a unified, inclusive history, which centered on establishing a practice and not on comparing individual stores or national contexts. This, in turn, has meant avoiding overt emphasis on national contexts in the thesis itself. While there

are undoubtedly geographical particularities to account for in this history, the coherence of the commercial system allows cohesion in the narrative, while also showing how commerce, via the department store, had a homogenising influence on local and national cultures – a key effect of globalisation.

Much of the previous scholarship on both the department store and on department store art display has considered the topic through a purely local or national lens. While this helps to concentrate historical narratives in an illustrative manner, it can arguably be an issue given the previously described international commercial networks in which department stores were crucial vectors. Moreover, it is also considered increasingly important in the field of art history to study the creation and dissemination of art as a dynamic process that often exceeds national borders, and in fact to study the mobility or movement of art itself.[24] This is especially true of art created in the modern period, variously defined as beginning in either the seventeenth or the eighteenth century, when networks of trade and communication began to vigorously modernise and expand. This thesis can thus be considered as a part of the expanding literature with a transnational focus in art history, and which also considers the 'networks' through which art moves and which influence its creation.

The process of researching this thesis followed its transnational focus, with archives and collections accessed in America, France and the UK. Collecting as much primary research as possible was particularly necessary for this topic, which not only lacks a pre-existing monograph that documents the practice, but which is also often used as a point of argument to buttress other tangentially related studies. As already described, the display of

[24] A key example of literature on the mobility of art is: Jennifer L. Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2014. An important aspect of late contemporary art historical literature is the historicisation and analysis of networks, and especially transnational networks, of exchange and movement. Examples of scholars who have worked in this area include: Kate Nichols; Matthew Potter; Tapati Guha Thakurta; H. Barbara Weinberg and many others.

art in department stores has become an oft mentioned, yet little substantiated, point in the history of both the commercialisation of culture and the union of art and commerce in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Thus, alongside evidencing – or alternatively disproving – this literature, it was also of prime concern to form a wide-ranging, cohesive history of the practice through extensive use of primary sources.

There were many department stores that sold and displayed art during this period, presenting a wide body of examples from which to draw upon. Still, certain conditions of access to archives and materials have determined those that have been featured most heavily. Ironically, the most accessible collections have tended to be those of department stores which, although mighty in their heyday, were closed or sold off to competitors during the twentieth century. This is because the companies that bought them often deposited their materials wholesale in publicly accessible libraries and museums. An example is Wanamaker's, which was sold to Albert Taubman, who had also purchased Washington, D.C. department store Woodward & Lothrop. The store's entire archive, which comprised hundreds of boxes of materials, was deposited in 1988 at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.[25] This has allowed a vast amount of material on Wanamaker's history to be preserved and widely accessible to research. The opposite effect of the 'merger mania' of the twentieth century on the preservation of primary materials is that certain department stores were closed or sold off and their materials subsequently scattered to the wind. This is true of Manchester department store Kendal, Milne & Co. Although the store was bought by Harrods in 1919, which was then bought by House of Fraser in 1959, the only records remaining from the store in the House of Fraser company archive document the property

[25] Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 'John Wanamaker collection, 1827-1987 | 2188'. http://www2.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/w/Wanamaker2188.html [accessed 15 September 2018].

rights for the site. Presumably these documents, necessary for the running of the business, were the only one that either Harrods or House of Fraser considered necessary to conserve for their own files. Whether any materials that might have been collected over the history of the business remained at the store and were subsequently lost – perhaps in the fire that the store suffered in 1939 – or were disposed of by Harrods of House of Fraser staff at the time, remains uncertain.

Department stores which have remained open and operating under their own name, even if they have been subsequently bought by other stores or corporations, tend to have archives of materials, and often on-site. The question with these continually operating enterprises is whether their archives are accessible. Department stores that have granted me precious access to their in-house archives and collections include Harrods, Le Bon Marché (the contemporary moniker of Au Bon Marché) and Macy's. One archive which is still extant but which I was unable to access is that of London department store Selfridges. Although this collection was previously loaned to the History of Advertising Trust, allowing researchers to access its primary materials for their books and projects, the store recalled and closed the collection before I began my research.[26] This does not mean that primary materials were impossible to find for Selfridges or for stores without cohesive archives. As modern masters of marketing and advertising, department stores have a tendency to widely publicise many aspects of their activities, meaning that newspapers and magazines can provide insight into their art practices. Department stores themselves also routinely published catalogues and even books documenting their activities, both of which have provided rich ground for this thesis. These documents can be found in general libraries such as the New York Public

[26] An example of a recent publication which employed the Selfridges archives is Lindy Woodhead's informative book *Shopping, Seduction and Mr. Selfridge*, which was used as the basis for the TV series 'Mr. Selfridge'. Lindy Woodhead, *Shopping, Seduction and Mr. Selfridge*, Random House: New York, NY, 2013.

Library, the British Library and the Bibliothèque National de France, and specialist libraries and collections such as the Musée Forney and the Frick Art Reference Library at The Frick Collection.

The modern department store's need for publicity has meant that, even without archives, it is still often possible to formulate a history for, and arguments around, the art practices of various stores. This is true of Kendal, Milne, which as previously described lacks a cohesive archive – or at least one which has been located by researchers – but which is prominently featured as an example in Chapter Two of this thesis thanks to newspaper records and the catalogue of a major exhibition. Still, the large remit of this thesis, as well as the ever-active nature of the department store publicity machine, has meant that the full extent of material recovered, whether in archives, libraries or through newspapers, could never be represented in its entirety in the text itself. Ideally, any examples of department store art display or department stores that go unmentioned in the body of the thesis itself are such because the information repeats an argument or example represented elsewhere. For instance, the large amount of material on Wanamaker's art practices, which comprised over thirty years of art sales and special exhibitions, could not be represented fully even in a thesis fully devoted to Wanamaker's, let alone one that covers three different countries replete with many different department stores. Whilst Wanamaker's importance to the history of art display in American department stores is proportional to the store's representation in this thesis, I have still been forced to leave aside many interesting examples of their practices; such was the store's fecundity. In order to give the full sketch of department store art display as a practice in America, France and the UK between the years 1875 and 1914, encompassing briefly as well the years leading up to and the institutions foregrounding the

practice, it has been necessary to concentrate the history and argument in fewer examples than the primary material itself provides.

The timeframe of the thesis has also been circumscribed in order to tell a full and cohesive history of department store art display in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The main history has always begun in 1875, with the first example of department store art display at Parisian department store Au Bon Marché – although there is also brief coverage in Chapter One of the period preceding this in order to show the antecedents of the practice and its full evolution. The departure has come with the end point, with the original timeframe stretching through the 1920s. This not only amplified the amount of material to cover, but also presented a problem of narrative and argument. The department stores discussed in this thesis began to change in a significant manner following the First World War, both in the kind of art that they displayed and, most importantly, in the markets they targeted. Whilst the essential functions of the department store, meaning the sale of a wide range of goods at volume, remained the same, competing retailers emerged to undercut their business at the lower end of the market.[27] These retailers were the variety stores, also called five and dime stores or penny bazaars, such as Woolworths and Marks and Spencer. These stores did not stock the immense range of goods that the department store did – extending from the smallest necessity to the most lavish and extravagant items – but they did provide customers with everything they required on a daily basis. They could also sell at lower prices because of their lower operating costs. Variety stores pioneered self-service shopping, meaning a reduction in floor staff, and reduced the frills and amenities that came to be

[27] For a history of department store retailing from the 1920s in America, see: Richard W. Longstreth, *The American Department Store Transformed, 1920-1960*, Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 2010. Michael Miller also ends his history of Au Bon Marché, the quintessential late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store, at the year 1920, with the store declining in market share and influence from its high as the king of Parisian retailing during the period under consideration in this thesis. Miller, 1994, p. 47, 236.

associated with department store shopping, which included everything associated with fine art.

The second major change associated with the era following the First World War was the popularisation of personal motor vehicles, which gave the average consumer more individual mobility and began the process of urban sprawl. The department stores under consideration in thesis are all based in major urban centers and surrounded by adequate transport networks to accommodate shoppers from both the surrounding city and region.[28] Before the advent of the car most shoppers, if not purchasing their goods from a catalogue, would travel into the closest major urban center via public transport in order to pick and purchase their goods, which were then usually delivered back to their homes – a function for which major department stores were furnished with huge delivery departments. The amount of business drawn like a magnet into large urban department stores encouraged their transformation into the huge behemoths, furnished with every available amenity, that they became in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[29] Customers, who treated department stores as both destinations and bases during their trips into the city, also desired and demanded these amenities. Yet the advent of the car allowed customers to stay closer to home for at least part of their shopping needs, which in turn encouraged the creation of smaller stores that could respond to smaller markets. These stores, which were both variety stores and regional outlets of popular urban department stores, were more utilitarian than

[28] Louisa Iarocci explores the connection between the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store and urban space in America. As Iarocci argues, the department store was dependent on developments in urban planning and mass transportation for its development and pre-eminence in this period. When various factors, including the motor vehicle, undermined the importance of the city, so the department store also began to lose market share and cultural prominence. Louisa Iarocci, *The Urban Department Store in America, 1850-1930*, Routledge: Abingdon, England, 2014.

[29] Miller describes the development of the Parisian boulevard systems under Baron Haussmann and Napoléon III as a precondition for the rise of the department store. Department stores deliberately placed themselves on boulevards and near major transport hubs, which themselves followed the boulevard system, in order to benefit from the constant funnel of people in and out of the city. Miller, 1994, pp. 35-6.

their major urban counterparts, without the large variety of extra amenities such as art exhibitions or concerts. Department store art galleries where customers could buy art for their homes were also largely made redundant in the new regional and suburban stores, as they had never made a huge amount of money for department stores in the first place.

Both the variety stores and the suburban retail centers drew sales and customers away from the urban department stores that are the focus of this study, lowering their profits and necessitating two major changes in their operations. The first of these changes was for the class of department store under consideration in this study to generally become increasingly upmarket, meaning somewhere that appealed to the richest consumers and also where the average shopper could go for special experiences or purchases. The second was for these same urban department stores to open up bargain departments, sometimes called bargain 'basements', which could compete with the low amenity, low cost models of their variety and suburban competitors.[30] These changes marked a large-scale shift from the focus of the average department store pre-1914, which was always directed squarely at the middle of the market. Thus, as for culture generally, department stores eventually split their effort and goods down the middle, with 'high' and 'low' areas of focus or markets. Art was necessarily part of the former, rather than the latter, area of focus.

As will be shown in this thesis, both the mechanisms and the narratives around art sale and display in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store were always predicated around not just mass commerce but also the general market – meaning the largest share of consumers possible – with the main consideration accessibility. This, moreover, was the quality of the department store that put it so at odds with the mainstream

[30] John Hepp describes the development of the bargain basement and its significance for the transformation of the department store in: John Henry Hepp IV, *The Middle-Class City: Transforming Space and Time in Philadelphia, 1876-1926,* University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, PA, 2003, pp. 159-62.

art world. When art sale and display in the department store moved towards the upper end of the market in the period following the First World War, it also began to accord better with the practices of the art world itself. This was, for instance, largely when the department store began to sell and display 'modernist' art, having avoided with suspicion anything to do with modernism prior to this. This thesis tracks the period before this merging, when through sale, display and movement of art the department store acted as a counterbalance to the mainstream art world, which in turn drove the evolution of the latter.

III. Chapter Outline

Chapter One considers the subject of commerce, meaning both the merchandising system of the department store and the department store's sale of art. Although the issue of commerce underlines this study, looking specifically at department store art commerce can reveal not only its history, but also how the development of the merchandising system itself of the department store determined that history. This will be shown by first considering the department store's predecessors in mass merchandising: the French *magasin de nouveautés*; the American dry goods palace; and the British bazaar. Of these three retailers, only the bazaar sold fine art. This is because, due to the bazaar's decentralised commercial structure, it also sold domestic goods such as furniture – something the magasin de nouveautés and dry goods palace did not do. It was not until department stores started selling domestic goods that they in fact came to be defined as department stores. It was also not until they sold domestic goods that they sold fine art. As Chapter One shows, when fine art was sold in the department store it was overwhelmingly as a domestic good, marketed alongside furniture and decorative objects such as carpets. Moreover, when department stores did begin to sell

art, it implicitly followed that it was subjected to the department store's mass merchandising system, which meant marked with fixed prices, subject to liberal returns policies, and sometimes even sold in sales. This brought to the fore art's status as a commodity, and a domestic commodity at that – a particular problem for the art world as the general rise of the art market also made this hard to deny. Still, the merchandising system of the department store as pertains to art presented unique opportunities for consumers and producers. On the side of consumption, the merchandising system of the department store both lowered prices and streamlined the process of purchasing art, making it more accessible to the lower- to middle-class market and, arguably, women. The department store also provided another outlet for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artists to sell their art – the department store being particularly attractive for this because of its large clientele and relatively straightforward merchandising policies. Although arguably not a first choice, the department store helped to prop up the developing commercial art system not only by fostering a market but also by supporting young artists, and sometimes under exceedingly generous commercial policies. Because art was never the department store's main commodity, it could adopt a half-mercantile, half-charitable approach appropriate to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a transitional period from a system of art patronage to full commercialisation.

Chapter Two revolves around the more orthodox subject of consideration in literature on the relationship between art and the department store: display. Display in this thesis means both the use of art as an advertising mechanism – or as something used to 'frame' other saleable objects – and the general physical presentation of art in the department store. Crucially, art for sale in the department store could be just as much of an advertising

mechanism as art purely for 'display', and this as a result of the system of mixed display employed, both out of necessity and commercial opportunity, by the department store. Because of their diverse selection of merchandise as well as their unique commercial pressures, including spatial limitations coupled with the quickly evolving landscape of mass retailing, department stores tended, out of necessity, to display many different kinds of goods alongside each other. Yet mixed retailing also had specific commercial benefits for the department store, especially in relation to art. Because most of the department store's profits came from low cost, mass-produced goods, association between these goods and fine art helped to 'lift' the former. The department store thus encouraged both spatial and visual mixing between fine art and other kinds of goods, with this chapter considering the ramifications of this on art in the department store before looking specifically at the display dynamic between art and two kinds of products: furniture and fashion goods. When combined with art, this display system helped to turn furniture and fashion into something more than mass-produced commodities. Yet what benefitted the department store could reflect negatively on fine art, especially considering the trepidation around the advancing commercialisation of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art world. To avoid associations between art and commodities, commercial art institutions such as the gallery and the auction house developed display tactics in direct opposition to those employed by mass commerce. The final section of this chapter details those display developments, showing them to have mass commercial art display, as embodied by the department store, as their foil.

Finally, Chapter Three looks at the movement or circulation of art by the department store. Unlike the previous two chapters, this chapter takes the form of a case study considering the American context and, more specifically, the activities of Philadelphia

retailer John Wanamaker. This is firstly because of the wealth of materials documenting the display of art in American department stores, and more specifically their display of imported European art. American department stores' tendency to import and display foreign art distinguishes them from their French and British counterparts, which tended to sell and display art made by local artists. The American department store which best exemplifies this practice is indeed Wanamaker's. Yet, by first considering other activities undertaken by John Wanamaker outside of his department store business, and specifically revolving around his political career, the significance of imported art to American department stores in general becomes clearer. As shown in this chapter, John Wanamaker employed European fine art to promote a certain strand of cosmopolitanism, which is more appropriately called commercial cosmopolitanism. This is because, instead of the traditional cosmopolitan emphasis on pluralism, commercial cosmopolitanism revolved around the allure of foreign goods and the increased global capacity for travel and trade. By employing foreign objects and art to promote cosmopolitanism, Wanamaker and the department stores that followed his lead could also induce a culture of consumption, for the allure of the goods and art was in their exoticism and not necessarily their method of production. Yet American department stores, and especially Wanamaker's, did not just display European art. They also promoted American art made in the European, and especially French, model. This cosmopolitan art was popular with turn-of-the-century American artists for reasons not necessarily mirrored by the prerogatives of the department store. Still, the utilisation of cosmopolitanism by commerce, as well as the commercial processes underlying the expansion of cosmopolitanism, created a crisis of production for artists and undermined their ability to organise themselves in national

schools. The globalisation of the art world via commerce meant that style would henceforth reign.

IV. Conclusion

Much has been written in the fields of history, sociology and even art history about the department store's commercialisation of culture. This thesis does not dispute the idea that department stores aided in the expansion of a culture based around commercial institutions and processes in the Western world, and specifically in America, France and the UK. What it does is interrogates this process as it pertains specifically to department store art sale, display and circulation. This is best summarised by breaking down the term 'commercialising culture'. The first goal of the three chapters to follow is indeed to show how the department store commercialised artistic culture, or linked art to commerce in new ways. For instance, by opening art galleries in department stores, the process of viewing and enjoying art was commercialised. What is more, by department stores selling artworks, art necessarily became another commercial product. Yet art is not something that was passively commercialised by the department store, but instead an object that played an active part in commercialisation. This made art itself 'commercialising culture', or culture which commercialises. The second goal of the following three chapters is thus to show how fine art became a significant aspect of the department store's crusade for the expansion of commerce and consumerism. With art sale, display and circulation increasingly falling under the department store's umbrella, and with art itself acting as a propagator of commercial culture at its behest, the final question to be answered is how these two equally challenging aspects of the department store impacted both the development of the art market and the future of art.

CHAPTER ONE

COMMERCE: SELLING ART IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE

I. Introduction

Despite the frequent claims of management to 'higher', non-commercial motives, the department store is, at its centre, a commercial institution. As such, it is not only driven by a commercial imperative – that of high volume, mass retailing – but also structured by a definable system of merchandising, with its own history, function and impact. This merchandising system is defined by sales policies such as fixed prices, free entry and liberal returns policies. Yet even more specific to this system are the three developments which historian Rudi Laermans argued distinguish the department store from its mass retailing predecessors: the opening of departments for domestic goods such as furnishings and home decorations; the evolution of advertising and other promotional mechanisms, which included developments in display; and the use of 'loss leaders', i.e. items sold at cost to attract customers to the store.[1] It would not be until the last three decades of the nineteenth century that magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces, the objective predecessors of the department store, adopted these merchandising policies. This, alongside the full assumption of the mass retailing procedures to be outlined in Section II of this chapter, is the basis for the development of the distinct merchandising system known as the department store; and it is not a coincidence that it was also in this period that these formerly dry goods-focused enterprises began to sell and display art.

[1] Rudi Laermans, 'Learning to Consume: Early Department Stores and the Shaping of the Modern Consumer Culture (1860-1914)', *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 10 (1993), p. 83.

The latter two of the above listed developments give the impression that, as is supposed by much of the literature on the topic, fine art was in fact an outpost of department store advertising; meaning that it was part of the general 'service' culture of commerce that made the customer king (or queen) and engendered not only loyalty to the store but also the luxurious atmosphere that framed mass-produced goods and made the department store so appealing. Especially as practices became more sophisticated and complex, many department stores did begin to display art not as a saleable item but instead as a pure advertising mechanism and aesthetic feature. Examples of this and the rationale and ramifications of it as a practice will be considered in Chapter Two. Yet, as this chapter will show, both the organisational structure and the commercial purview of department stores are integral components to this history, because they determined when and how fine art first entered mass retailing environments. They also allow us to consider a much-neglected aspect of the history of art in the department store: its actual sale, versus just its display.

Throughout the history of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store, the sale of fine art has been linked to the sale of domestic goods. This chapter will detail the crucial link between these two areas of the department store's trade by first demonstrating how the link in fact predates the department store itself, and specifically through the example of the bazaar. The bazaar was a quintessentially British form of mass retailing that was characteristised by a loose central organisation, which gave it a greater capacity to diversify than its main competitors, the French magasin de nouveautés and American dry goods palace. Because the bazaar branched into domestic goods earlier than its peers, it also sold fine art earlier. The history of the sale of art in department stores – the department store itself evolving more directly out of the magasin de nouveautés and dry

goods palace than the bazaar – is thus intimately linked with their diversification into domestic goods such as furniture. This is shown in Section III of this chapter through the example of Parisian department store Au Bon Marché, which was the first department store in America, France or the UK to sell and display art. Importantly, its sale and display of art emerged in lockstep with its diversification into domestic goods.

The essential link between fine art and the sale of domestic goods in the department store shows the importance of taking into consideration the commercial system of the department store itself. Yet this chapter does not just detail the historical development of department store art commerce, but also its implications for both art and the art market. In order to engender customer loyalty and to make shopping as easy as possible, thus ensuring more sales, department stores took pains both to perfect and to advertise their systems of mass merchandising. The policies they operate under are well-known: fixed prices on goods; liberal entry; returns policies; and sales both to offload dead merchandise and to bring customers into the store. As a saleable good, fine art was necessarily subjected to the department store's merchandising system in general and these policies in particular. This chapter thus also considers, through the case example of French department stores especially, how art was not just commercialised but commodified via its sale in the department store. Displayed with price tags and marketed as another domestic good, the commodity status of art in the department store could hardly be denied.

Section IV of this chapter considers the impact of the department store's overt commodification of fine art on the art market, which in this chapter means both consumers and producers. The changes in nineteenth-century Western society that led to the formation of markets that could sustain mass retailers – modernised industry, enhanced communication

networks, increased familial and personal wealth, and a growing trend towards urban living – also created an expanding market for art. This market in turn was matched by a boom in the numbers of practicing artists attempting to respond to it. Yet, despite the advent of commercial art galleries to serve this market in a more adequate manner than the traditional system of patronage represented by the art academies such as the Royal Academy of Arts Britain and its salons, many consumers and artists still suffered from a lack or access or representation. The department store served this end of the market, more commonly called the 'mass market', by selling art affordably and at volume. Its voracious appetite for art also served artists, who in the department store found a direct commercial outlet in which they could meet, and serve, this growing market. Section IV will thus argue that department stores served a distinct sub-sect of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art market. Before the crystallisation of the market around the now orthodox art market institutions of the art gallery and the auction house, the department store was one of a number of commercial art outlets within a constellation of diverse offerings that gave both consumers and artists not just a choice in their patronage, but also increased accessibility and access to both art and the market itself.

II: Art and Early Mass Retailing: The Bazaar, *Magasin de nouveautés*, and Dry Goods Palace

Delineating the department store as a specific system of retailing, as well as placing its sale of art in its systemic and historical contexts, is most easily done by outlining both the similarities and differences between its sales methods and those of earlier mass retailers: the bazaar; the magasin de nouveautés; and the dry goods palace. These retailers emerged *en masse* in the early nineteenth century – a period from approximately 1810 to 1830 – and were

emblematic of the key shift in western economies from a primarily agrarian to an industrial base.[2] This revolution in production, predicated on new forms of technology and developments in transportation, necessitated new means of dispersing vast quantities of manufactured goods, which early mass retailers with their comparatively vast establishments and streamlined retailing policies provided. Discussing these retailers not only helps to place the development of the department store within a longer and more nuanced economic and commercial history, but also provides a means of avoiding a major pitfall associated with writing about them: the tendency to mythologise one or another store, retailer or even country as the progenitor of the system. As stated by Laermans in his critical essay on the development of the department store and modern consumption:

> 'The very same authors who ascribe to the Boucicaut myth also quite incorrectly consider the early department stores as important pioneers within the field of retailing methods.[3] They depict them as led by revolutionary businessmen who had the audacity to abolish with one stroke traditional retailing methods. As a matter of fact, historical evidence points to a more gradual, less discontinuous evolution of commercial practices.'[4]

Department stores undoubtedly developed and adopted certain practices that distinguished them from earlier retailers. This process of evolution helped to define them as

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[2] This economic shift is often more largely termed the market revolution. For a history of the market revolution and its significance specifically in America, see: John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England, 2010; and Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 1991.

[3] The 'Boucicaut myth' is the theory that Aristide Boucicaut, head of Au Bon Marché (but not its founder, as the store was first established as a magasin de nouveautés by Paul and Justin Videau) opened the first department store. Pasdermadjian's *The Department Store, Its Origins, Evolution and Economics*, an otherwise nuanced academic study, perpetuated the Boucicaut myth in the mid-twentieth century, while biographies of retailers such as John Wanamaker and R. H. Macy have attempted to allocate the title elsewhere (sometimes with nationalist aims). Recent approaches to department store history, such as Laermans' article or Michael Miller's book on Au Bon Marché show the developments in the field, as well as the importance of placing department stores within both their local and international contexts. Still, the popularity of department stores and their history means that the founder myths persist. Pasdermadjian, 1954, pp. 3-4; Miller, 2014. For the aforementioned biographies, see: Harry E. Resseguie, 'Alexander Turney Stewart and the Development of the Department Store, 1823-1876', *The Business History Review*, vol. 39, no. 3 (1965), p. 301.

[4] Laermans, 1993, p. 85.

distinct organisations with a specific relationship to the objects that passed through them, including fine art. Identifying these original aspects of the department store's merchandising system will be critical in elaborating its reasons for and means of selling art, as well as what this meant for consumers and the larger art market. Yet department stores also built on earlier developments pioneered by magasins de nouveautés, dry goods stores and bazaars, some of which were applied to art as early as the 1810s. The fact that only one of these retailers, the bazaar, sold or even displayed art, will demonstrate the key role that developments in the commercial structure and purview of department stores played in when they moved into this area of trade. The potential impact of the sale of art by bazaars on the precociousness of the British art market in the early nineteenth century also offers a model for the impact that department stores had on the art market of the late nineteenth century.

Bazaars, magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces were among the first retailers to capitalise on the increased productive capacity of industry, to gather diverse products in one space, and to cater to a mass audience. In his article on Irish-American retailer A. T. Stewart, Harry E. Resseguie lists the merchandising policies of early mass retailers. Their shared innovations – because to sell at scale one largely had to adopt these practices – were: 'buying for cash and in large quantities; maintaining a small mark-up; truthful presentation of merchandise; the one-price policy; the "free entrance" policy; merchandise returns and cash refund policy; selling for cash; maintaining a clean stock [i.e. sales]; building an efficient, highly disciplined store organization; worldwide selection of merchandise; departmentalization; vertical and horizontal integration [i.e. control of the entire supply chain, including production and distribution of goods]; and volume sales'.[5] Although in his

[5] Resseguie, 1965, pp. 301-22.

article Resseguie is responding to the 'Boucicaut myth' by instead making a case for Stewart as the inventor of the department store, his list is useful in detailing a wide range of retailing practices adopted either wholly or in part by early mass retailers, and certainly present in the later department stores. Despite key additions, these were the tried-and-true merchandising policies which defined mass retailers, including the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department stores, and which they applied to their sale of goods, including fine art.

While the magasin de nouveautés in France, the dry goods palace in America, and the bazaar in Britain all began to adopt modern merchandising practices, the main difference was in the degree of centralisation of their organisation. This centralisation in turn determined the kinds of goods they sold, which as will be shown included fine art. For instance, the magasin de nouveautés and the dry goods palaces, which are widely considered the predecessors of the department store, were among the first retailers to sell what were previously conceived of as different lines of goods in a single space and under a single commercial organisation. Figure Two, for instance, shows the expansive and cavernous salesrooms of Parisian magasin de nouveautés Aux Villes de France, the *grande galerie* of which housed rolls of fabrics, finished garments such as cloaks, and small fashion items such as gloves (sold from behind counters). This was a significant shift from the specialised stores and single-line producers that had previously dominated the retailing landscape – a situation enforced in France until the Revolution by the guild systems that forbid such promiscuity in retailing in order to protect producers. Yet this does not mean that magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces immediately stocked everything we would expect from a mass retailer today. In fact, both

focused on textiles, haberdashery and fashion or 'novelty' goods, and sold little besides that.[6] Still, the expanded purview of the stores meant not only that they grew physically, but also that they attracted a larger and more constant stream of clientele. As Philippe Perrot has stated of the magasin de nouveautés: 'The "fancy goods stores" specialised in millinery, notions, and rather ordinary ready-to-wear articles, but because of their size and commercial practices, they anticipated the department stores of the Second Empire.'[7] The complexity and unprecedented size of a retail operation of this kind gave rise to many of Resseguie's listed merchandising policies, such as fixed prices, departmentalisation and cash purchases of bulk stock – something that only a store with sufficient clientele and capital could risk. All of these merchandising policies necessarily emanated from the centre of the organisation, which in this period was the proprietor or proprietors, and sometimes their financial backers.

The organisation and development of the magasin de nouveautés and dry goods palace can be contrasted with that of the bazaar, the other major mass retailer to appear in the early nineteenth century.[8] These establishments, the first of which opened in 1816, are best described as indoor markets that contained a selection of independent retailers who sold their wares from rented counters or showrooms.[9] In the organisational sense, they are most closely

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[6] Examples of these different kinds of goods include: textiles such as silk, linen and calico bought by the piece; prepared textiles in the form of curtains and bed linens; haberdashery items such as button and ribbons; and fashion goods such as hats, gloves and umbrellas. In the 1840s, they also began to market a complete innovation: ready-to-wear clothing. For French retailing history vis-à-vis magasins de nouveautés, see: Miller, 2014, pp. 25-31. Resseguie also outlines the history of the dry goods palace in America and their commercial purview in his article on Stewart.

[7] Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1996, p. 54.

[8] For one of the most specific and most recent studies of the British bazaar, see: Ian Mitchell, 'Innovation in non-food retailing in the early nineteenth century: The curious case of the bazaar', *Business History*, vol. 52, no. 6 (2010) pp. 875-91. Mitchell also discusses the bazaar in his monograph on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English retailing, *Tradition and Innovation in English Retailing, 1700 to 1850: Narratives of Consumption*, Ashgate Publishing: Farnham, England, 2014, pp. 140-4.

[9] Mitchell states that Trotter's in Soho Square, which opened as a bazaar in 1816, was the 'first true nineteenth-century bazaar'. Mitchell, 2014, p. 140.

related to both the traditional arcaded markets for non-food retailing exemplified in Britain by the Royal Exchange in the City of London, and the *passages* (arcades) of Paris, which were covered thoroughfares between public streets with self-contained retail units (fig. 3).[10] Yet, physically, the bazaars in fact closely resembled the magasin de nouveautés or dry good store. A drawing of London's Western Exchange, which opened in 1817, typifies the spatial organisation of the early nineteenth-century bazaar. With its indoor and largely unified sales space, the Western Exchange could easily be mistaken for a magasin de nouveautés or dry goods palace (fig. 4)**.** That is, except for the kinds of items for sale and on display. G Smith's drawing in Figure 4 shows a variety of dry and domestic goods, including pottery and ceramics, large fancy mirrors, and small items on the central sales counters that are most likely textiles or *nouveautés* such as gloves and jewellery. Most importantly for this analysis, there are also a number of paintings. In particular, the wall on the left side of the image features two small landscape and two larger portrait paintings in gilded frames. There are also paintings hung through an archway, at right, and on the walls of the first-floor gallery. The bazaar could accommodate this diversity of goods because it was a hybrid of the arcade and the magasin de nouveautés/dry goods palace. It contained distinct, specialised retailers, but collected them in a single, shared space, which not only streamlined the shopping experience but also necessarily associated the different goods and the retailers with one another. Unlike magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces, which were boldly experimenting with centralisation, diversification and economies of scale, retailers in bazaars benefitted from increased footfall – the Soho Bazaar was said to receive 2,500 visitors per

[10] For a history of the Royal Exchange, see: Walter Thornbury, 'The Royal Exchange', in *Old and New London: Volume 1*, Cassell Petter & Galpin: London, England, 1878, pp. 494-513.

day – and the ability to openly display goods without the same expansion risks or overhead.[11] It was thus in these spaces, and well before the department store, that one could find a painting or sculpture for sale alongside Spitalfields silk or domestic goods such as furniture.

As Ian Mitchell argues in his recent writing on bazaars, their popularity with shoppers limited the number of arcades eventually opened in London.[12] The lack of arcades in the city is especially notable when compared to Paris, where dozens opened in the decades following the French Revolution. The limitation of the arcades for expansion and growth also explains why Parisian drapers started to set up shop in multi-story, freestanding buildings, which would become even larger and grander under the urbanisation programme of Napoléon III and Baron Eugène Haussmann. Comparatively, the size and flexible central organisation of the bazaars explain why they persisted as a retail form through to the mid-nineteenth century in Britain, while magasins de nouveautés quickly replaced the arcades as the most dynamic form of retailing in France in the 1830s and 40s.[13] Bazaars contributed to the 'eclecticism' of early nineteenth-century British retailing in terms of both the goods sold in most establishments and the variety of stores that shoppers could choose to patronise.[14] While this has often been considered a factor in the relatively late development of a fully-fledged department store culture in Britain, it also means that art was displayed and sold in mass retail spaces there earlier than in the other countries outlined. It further meant that some

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[11] Reverend Joseph Nightingale, *The Bazaar, Its Origin, Nature, and Objects Explained, and Recommended as an Important Branch of Political Economy,* London, England, 1816, p. 16.

[12] Mitchell, 2010, p. 879.

[13] There is also something to be said about the particularity and even precociousness of British retailing in general. Although bazaars were one of the precursors of the British department store, England also had large, multi-department drapery stores similar to dry goods palaces and magasins de nouveautés as early as the eighteenth century. An example is Harding and Howell, which was established in 1796 and located on London's Pall Mall. Like the dry goods palaces and magasins de nouveautés that followed them, Harding and Howell did not sell fine art.

[14] Resseguie, 1965, p. 304.

major British department stores evolved from bazaars, although most in their intermediate history at least did not maintain the same eclecticism in their goods. As Mitchell explains, both Kendal, Milne & Co. in Manchester and Jolly's of Bath began their fortunes as bazaars or in spaces that were formerly bazaars, but quickly transitioned into the more profitable – or just easier to manage – business of dry goods.[15] It seems that to foster the strong central organisation and the expertise indispensible to running an enterprise as complex as a department store, it was necessary to expand slowly into other lines of goods rather than to acquire them in one fell swoop.

IIa: The Bazaar: An Experimentation in Fine Art and Mass Retailing

While bazaars did not operate under a single retailer like the magasins de nouveautés or dry goods palaces, they did apply many of the principles of mass retailing to the goods they sold, and much of this was down to the building's proprietor. Although the financial risks – as well as the potential gains – associated with mass retailing were spread amongst the many individual merchants contained in a bazaar, the proprietor had an additional interest in whether the larger business itself ultimately succeeded or failed. Moreover, the open layout of the bazaar meant that the suspect merchandising practices of one retailer could potentially impact the reputation of another, or even that of the overall enterprise. It thus befit the proprietor to mandate policies and maintain certain standards. An important example of this in action is the aforementioned Western Exchange, which was also called the Old Bond Street Bazaar.[16] George Oakley, a draper and upholsterer who also sold goods from a show

[15] Mitchell, 2010, p. 887.

[16] The Western Exchange was not the only bazaar to have strict merchandising policies. Mitchell states in reference to the Soho Bazaar that 'Counters in the bazaar were let by the day, at a price of 3d a foot, and were therefore accessible to poorer people or those just starting out in business… At the same time, the bazaar was to

room in the bazaar, opened the Western Exchange in early 1817. Proprietors such as Oakley had a good deal of control over the sale policies of their bazaars, as they could set the terms for the counter space they rented to tenants and also received items which they personally sold on commission for manufacturers and artists. While it is not apparent whether Oakley mandated a fixed price policy for all of his traders from the outset, he certainly employed it himself, as was commented upon in an article in the *London Courier and Evening Gazette* that described a trip by Princess Elizabeth Augusta, the Duchess of Gloucester, and the Countess of Cardigan to the bazaar.[17] By at least the end of March 1817, fixed price and free return/exchange policies were applied to the entire bazaar.[18]

Press from the period shows that this method of retailing was well received by the public and critics alike, and even in the case of the sale of artworks. An article in the *London Courier and Evening Gazette* described the bazaar in the following laudatory manner:

> 'A lofty saloon diffuses light through the whole building; from the area, a gallery is seen above, approached by a light stair-case communicating with exhibition and commission-rooms containing elegant furniture, bronzes, pictures, rich glass lustres, lamps, transparent lanthorns, and an infinite variety of useful and ornamental requisites, each marked with prices on them. A depot of this kind cannot fail of being acceptable to purchasers, in preference to the inconvenience of laying out their money at other places, under the many unpleasant disadvantages attending them.'[19]

It seems likely that the gallery described was filled with objects sent to the bazaar on commission, which were then sold for fixed prices from which Oakley took a percentage. If so, this was an innovation that approximated the kind of relationship art dealers would later

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be respectable – testimonials were required before a counter was let and there were strict rules governing sales practices, including marking goods with their ready money price and allowing no abatement from this.' Ibid, p. 880.

[17] The article stated that: 'Mr. Oakley, the Proprietor of this magnificent building, attended their Royal Highnesses, who were also pleased with his own display of cabinet goods, and his plan of affixing the lowest price by a label on each article. These too, were deemed very reasonable. It is but to see, to compare, and to judge.' *London Courier and Evening Gazette*, 25 April 1817, p. 2.

[18] *The Morning Chronicle* (London), 25 March 1817, p. 1.

[19] *London Courier and Evening Gazette*, 10 January 1817, p. 3.

have with artists. Indeed, the *Morning Post* described the bazaar as offering buyers a 'facility hitherto unknown', and compared it favourably to auctions – the primary means at the time of re-selling luxury objects such as artworks – which were called expensive, inconvenient and 'artificial'.[20] The Western Exchange's approach to selling items as diverse as pottery, gloves and paintings was straightforward and accessible to even the uninitiated. It also drove down prices, which is exemplified by the *London Courier* article on the royal visit that noted how reasonable they were.[21] This was not a negative trait for the aristocracy and it did not seem to faze the British public either, who made the Western Exchange one of the more successful, and certainly the most fashionable, of the early nineteenth-century London bazaars. It also, on the surface, was not a problem for artists – and even established ones.

In May 1828, English artist John Martin rented a space in the Western Exchange to display his new painting, *The Fall of Nineveh* (1828), which was inspired by a poem by Edwin Atherstone of the same title. In Martin's typical style, the massive painting depicted the destruction of the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh in a detailed and melodramatic manner. The opening of the exhibition was frequented by the aristocracy and early nineteenth-century luminaries such as Walter Scott, J. M. W. Turner, John Soane and French sculptor David d'Angers, who brought engravings of Martin's work back to France that were seen by Victor Hugo and possibly influenced the author's work.[22] It was subscriptions for engravings of the painting, catalogues and admission, and not necessarily the painting itself, which Martin sought to monetise at the exhibition. Both the admission fee and the catalogue were charged at one shilling, and the engraving subsequently did a brisk trade, if its

[20] *The Morning Post* (London), 3 January 1817, p. 2

[21] *London Courier and Evening Gazette*, 25 April 1817, p. 2.

[22] For a list of attendees, see: *The Morning Post,* 13 May 1828, p. 3. For the painting and exhibition's connection to Hugo, see: Christopher W. Thompson, *Victor Hugo and the Graphic Arts (1820-1833)*, Libraire Droz: Geneva, Switzerland, 1970, p. 85.

widespread presence in contemporary collections is any indication.[23] Martin's success led to exhibitions at the Western Exchange by other artists, including Benjamin Haydon, who in 1830, showed his large-scale paintings *Eucles* (1829), *Punch* (1830) and *Napoleon at St. Helena* (1830) as well as various sketches and drawings there.[24] Haydon also charged one shilling for admission but only six pence for catalogues. Although both artists specialised in history painting, which was the favoured genre of the art establishment, they were also known for their quarrels with the Royal Academy of Arts and the British Institution, and for the constant rejections of their work from both institutions' annual juried exhibitions.

Martin and Haydon's exhibitions at the Western Exchange can be seen both as attempts to overtly monetise their work through display, something done only covertly or indirectly at the Royal Academy or British Institution, and as a testimony to the role of private retail spaces as alternatives to hegemony and orthodoxy in the early nineteenth-century art world. The works of portraitists and landscapists were even more controversial than Martin and Haydon's variations on history painting, for they were already considered pure commercial products similar to the Spitalfields silk and furniture they were displayed alongside, with none of the elevating aspects of 'true' art. While these comparisons could only become more stark and pointed through display in a bazaar, mass retail spaces still offered distinct opportunities. In the bazaars, artists had an outlet for continuous display of their work. Of course, that also meant subjecting their paintings and sculptures to the bazaar's merchandising system. Selling a work of art in a bazaar meant its integration into an all-encompassing system of merchandising, which was shown to lower prices, as well as its

[23] 'The Fall of Nineveh, Deluge', *The Examiner* (London), 29 June 1828, p. 14. These collections include: the Art Gallery of New South Wales (item number DB4.1960); the British Museum (item number Mm,10.5); the Royal Collection (item number RCIN 813259); and the Victoria and Albert Museum (item number E.567-1968).

[24] 'Mr Haydon's Pictures of Eucles and Punch', *The Examiner* (London), 21 February 1830, p. 13.

overt commodification.[25] In the first half of the nineteenth century, and especially between 1815 and 1840, this was one of the few choices an artist whose work was not already targeted towards a select audience of rich or gentlemanly patrons had if they wanted to present their art to potential buyers without having to go through the Royal Academy or other established – and thus potentially closed – channels. The bazaar thus filled the gap in the developing art market for display and sales spaces accessible to both emergent artists and middle-class buyers

The Western Exchange was not the only bazaar in which Haydon displayed his work, as he is also proven to also have shown at the Pantheon Bazaar, which opened on Oxford Street in 1834 with a particularly innovative feature: a self-contained, purpose-built art gallery on the first floor of the bazaar. The proportion and importance of the space allocated to art sales is shown in a floor plan drawn up by prominent London architect Sydney Smirke, who transformed the theatre that formerly occupied the site (fig. 5). Like George Oakley before them, the proprietors of the bazaar sold the art displayed in the gallery on behalf of the artists for a commission fee.[26] The Pantheon's picture gallery became something of a joke amongst the London intelligentsia, who intimated that the works displayed there were lost on their bourgeois audience. A *Punch* article from 1843 called it the 'the Pantheon Picture Gallery for promoting the sale of unsold pictures', and mockingly described a few of the portraits and scenes from modern history that were displayed there.[27] It is hard to ascertain how many of the works of art in the Pantheon's gallery actually sold, and the article does not

[25] Mitchell cites a contemporaneous critique of bazaars, which laments the cheapness of goods sold there and their ability to undercut more traditional retailers. Mitchell, 2014, p. 141.
[26] Charles Knight, 'London Shops and Bazaars', in *London Volume V*, Charles Knight & Co: London, England, 1843, p. 396.
[27] 'The Picture Gallery at the Pantheon', *Punch or the London Charivari*, vol. V, July to December 1843, pp. 12-3.

give the names of the painters concerned. As a response to his repeated rejections from the Royal Academy and British Institution, Haydon took to sending his work to the Pantheon for display, including two cartoons, *The Curse of Adam* and *Edward the Black Prince*, in 1843, and a large-scale history painting of Alexander the Great fighting a lion in February 1844.[28] These exhibitions were in the three years before Haydon, suffering after years of struggle and with seemingly insurmountable debts, took his own life.[29] His letters to Elizabeth Barrett Browning show that the Pantheon Bazaar was one of the few places he could display his art without incurring a cost or the ignominy of rejection by a jury of his peers. And in the two decades that followed, despite the rise of the commercial art gallery, bazaars continued to serve as an alternative display space for artists. This is shown by a lithograph of the Crystal Palace Bazaar, which opened in 1858 and was named and modelled after the groundbreaking 1851 exhibition (fig. 6). An enlarged portion of the image clearly depicts paintings displayed over two stories of wall space, including a number of portraits, landscapes, and small genre scenes (fig. 7).

Given their merchandising policies, which are rarely if ever associated with art, the phenomenon of the sale of art in bazaars is an interesting and potentially illuminating aspect of early British art retailing which has gone largely unstudied. Many recent studies of the British art market, such as Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich's edited volume *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939,* have taken the view that London was not only

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[28] In correspondence with Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Haydon describes his disputes with various members of the art world (running the gamut from collectors to keepers of collections and the press) and their supposed coordinated attempts to ruin his reputation. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Barrett Browning, Philip Kelley and Ronald Hudson, *The Brownings' Correspondence, Volume 7*, Wedgestone Press: Winfield, KS, 1989, pp. 320-2; and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Barrett Browning, Philip Kelley and Ronald Hudson, *The Brownings' Correspondence, Volume 8*, Wedgestone Press: Winfield, KS, 1990, pp. 192-3.

[29] For more information on the life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, see: Paul O'Keeffe, *A Genius for Failure: The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, Bodley Head: London, England, 2009.

the centre of the global art market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but also the crucible for the birth of the modern art market altogether.[30] While the catalysts for this situation are often listed as the city's place at the centre of a global empire or other economic and logistical factors – the sophisticated industrial economy, modern transportation networks, etc. – there does seem scope to suggest that the early commercialisation of art within London's bazaars may have played a part in this supposed precocious development. Neither bazaars nor the London art market are the sole topics under consideration in this thesis, which means that this is an area of study that must be fruitfully and fully explored elsewhere. In this thesis, bazaars offer an important pre-history of the sale and display of art in department stores, as well as another example of the overarching lack of study on the history and impact of the sale of art in spaces of mass retail. As might be expected, the few studies that do mention the presence of art in bazaars focus on its display or role as an advertising device. Alongside retail historians such as Mitchell, who lists art as one of the attractions of the bazaar, art historian Charlotte Klonk briefly mentions the display of art in bazaars in her book *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800-2000*. She states that 'most bazaars also had art on offer, as would department stores after 1850, but most of all, it was the new kinds of artistic exhibitions such as the dioramas and cosmoramas that were used to attract customers to the premises.'[31] Indeed, some bazaars did include dioramas and cosmoramas among their attractions. It is also important, from the perspective of the histories of both art and display, that art was increasingly employed as an element of the visual spectacle of commerce. Yet, the overwhelming emphasis on the display or the visual aspects

[30] Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, England, 2011.
[31] Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800-2000*, Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 2009, p. 26.

of bazaars and department stores alike has tended to overshadow the commercial and historical implications of their sale of art.

Admittedly, display is an underlining theme of Klonk's study, yet the continual focus on the visual rather than the commercial potential of art in department stores creates an imbalance that hides some key findings. For instance, if art was primarily used for advertising and display purposes, then why did magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces not display it? As enterprises reliant on the vagaries of consumer sentiment, they were undoubtedly just as interested in innovations in display and advertising as were bazaars. The truth of the matter seems to be that the organisation of the stores concerned and the commercial potential of the objects they dealt in mattered a great deal to when and where art was both displayed and sold. Thus, the bazaars could accommodate the sale and display of a great variety of items, including both art and domestic goods such as furniture, through their loose central organisation and lack of a concrete departmental system, meaning that proprietors only had a fleeting commitment to lines of goods or retailers which did not appeal to customers or which sold too slowly. Magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces, on the other hand, were dependent on developments in both manufacturing and consumer sentiment before their management could risk branching into such diverse areas of trade as domestic goods and fine art. The development of the department store's merchandising system thus played a crucial role in determining when art was both sold and displayed therein. The next section will consider the first appearance of fine art in a department store, at Au Bon Marché in 1875, and its implicit connection to the development of the department store's merchandising system. It will also look at the general sale of art in French department stores during the time period under consideration in this thesis, and its continual link to the

sale of furniture and other domestic goods. This history shows how fine art and domestic goods were not only linked through department store commerce, but also how the department store overtly commodified art as a saleable good, which presents key questions for the development of the art market and art world of the late nineteenth century to be considered in the final section of this chapter.

Section III: Commerce and the Commodification of Art: The Cases of Au Bon Marché and France

It was the bazaar's eclecticism, which saw domestic products sold alongside dry goods and novelties, as well as its decentralised organisation, which enabled that eclecticism, which led to it selling and displaying fine art nearly fifty years before its mass retailing peers. Magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces focused on textiles, clothing and fashion products in large part due to their total centralisation, which meant that proprietors were financially implicated in every sale, failed or successful, in the store. Anything that could not be produced in sufficient quantity, required undue expertise to sell, or that remained unsold for too long undermined the mass retailer's ultimate goal to sell low and sell often. While low prices were not necessarily ideal, they enabled retailers to apply economies of scale to goods. Yet, before one could sell goods at scale, one needed a sufficient amount of those goods to be produced.

The development of the merchandising system of the department store was thus rooted in innovations in manufacturing, which needed to create a surplus of goods to sell at low prices but in high volumes. In his crucial study of the history of clothing and fashion in France in the nineteenth century, Philippe Perrot detailed the emergence of a modern industry for the production of textiles and clothing. Although full mechanisation was more of a dream

than a reality in the early nineteenth century, innovations in cloth cutting and in the division of labour, with workers increasingly grouped in sweatshops, enabled stores such as Parisian institution La Belle Jardinière to sell a new suit for marginally more than the cost of a used one as early as the 1820s.[32] As the century progressed, innovations in mechanisation – for instance the invention of the sewing machine – further bolstered the commercial logic of the magasins de nouveautés and dry goods palaces, which through their success in the mass retailing of textiles were able to pioneer the merchandising system later applied to a larger range of products by the department store. As Perrot states: 'Department stores were thus born of the textile industry, the cutting edge of French industry and the major purveyor of fabrics and ready-to-wear, but they expanded as mass production developed and diversified.'[33] In the 1870s, when developments in mechanisation and in the division of labour were finally brought to bear in the production of domestic goods, and especially furniture, the French department store began to sell roughly the full range of products familiar to us today, save technologies that were invented later.[34] This timescale also applies to British and American department stores. Whiteley's of Bayswater, the 'first' British department store, expanded beyond the drapery business into domestic goods in 1875.[35] In America, retailer Rowland Hussey Macy, as historian Regina Lee Blaszczyk states, 'braved the home furnishings frontier in 1874 by adding china and glassware to its stock at the urging

[32] Perrot, 1996, p. 53.

[33] Ibid, p. 59.

[34] Perrot comments that the range of products available in department store catalogues reflects the evolution of different areas of industry, which is an interesting way of linking the histories of production and consumption. This could also be judged through the opening of new sales departments in the physical stores, although catalogues have the additional benefit of showing exactly what was on sale in these departments and how much it cost. Ibid.

[35] Michael Ball and David Sunderland, *An Economic History of London 1800-1914*, Routledge: Abingdon, England, 2001, p. 140. Erika Rappaport discusses Whiteley's diversification from the perspective of urban planning and gender in *Shopping for Pleasure,* 2001, pp. 16-47.

of Nathan Straus, a partner in L. Straus & Sons, one of Manhattan's leading crockery importers.'[36]

The relatively slow progression from artisanal to mass production of domestic goods, as compared to the giant leaps made in the production of textiles, explains their delayed integration into the mass merchandising system of the department store.[37] Yet any delay should not be seen as a lack of manufacturing knowhow or, alternatively, commercial interest. Leora Auslander's crucial history of French furniture during the modern period, meaning from the reign of Louis XIV through the First World War, details some of the specificity of its production, and in later chapters compares its place in the department store with that of textiles.[38] A strong skills-based identity among furniture makers, who as a legacy of the then-disbanded guild system were concentrated in certain Parisian *faubourgs*, helped them in part to resist the creeping division of their labour in the nineteenth century.[39] Yet, more importantly, it was the nature of the consumption of furniture itself that delayed the forces of mass production and mass retailing. As Auslander states:

> 'The vending of furniture was very different from that of clothing, for example; readymade clothing, sold largely by the department stores, quickly transformed the market. Because furniture was purchased much less frequently than clothing, the convenience offered by department stores – the centralization of consumer goods in one location – was less relevant to furnishings than to fashions. The stereotype of the department store as the dominant mode of bourgeois distribution in late nineteenth-century Paris is, therefore, somewhat too simple. In fact there was intense competition among different forms of retailing.'[40]

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[36] Regina Lee Blaszczyk, *Imagining Consumers: Design and Innovation from Wedgwood to Corning*, Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD, 2002, pp. 66-7.

[37] Miller also discuses this lag in his history of Au Bon Marché, 2014, p. 33.

[38] Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1996.

[39] Auslander describes how even into the 1860s, furniture producers were using universal expositions to advocate collectively for their craft. At these fairs they emphasised the artistic aspects of their work, which is a significant difference from the later emphasis on wages and working hours by formalised unions. Ibid, pp. 231-4.

[40] Ibid, p. 326.

Auslander explains how, even into the final decades of the nineteenth century, the furnishing of anything but an upper class or aristocratic home would largely have occurred during important life events, such as marriages or births of children.[41] Much of a couple's furniture was also inherited, either after the passing of a relative or, especially for new brides, by moving into a spouse's family home.[42] The infrequency of new purchases, and the fact that both the sale and production of furniture were subject to down periods, meant that it was not as well suited to mass retailing as textiles or clothing. In fact, one can see how the flexibility of the bazaar, where proprietors were not directly implicated in sales and vendors could quickly give up their counter space during slowdowns, was particularly well suited to the sale of furniture and other domestic goods during the first half of the nineteenth century.

IIIa: The Case of Au Bon Marché

Department stores' expansion into the domestic goods trade in the 1870s thus represented two major shifts: first, changes in production which began to favour high-volume retailing; and second, changes in the pattern of consumption which accorded with a greater frequency of purchase by a larger portion of the population. Yet, while the entry of domestic goods into the department store was certainly inevitable, its assumption did not occur all at one time for the many stores across France and, more largely, America and the UK. As both Auslander and a survey of primary sources make apparent, department stores were 'slow to sell furniture and even slower to engage in the actual design and building of it.'[43] Au Bon Marché is a notable exception, for it not only sold standalone pieces of furniture as early as the 1850s

[41] Ibid, p. 274.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid, p. 339.

but was also one of the first French department stores to sell a full range of furnishings in the 1870s and complete room sets by the early 1880s.[44] Globally, it was also the first department store to sell fine art and to open an art gallery, two developments which occurred in 1875. These two facts alone make it an ideal case study to sketch out not only the entry of domestic goods and fine art into the department store, but also the link between these two areas of department store commerce, for they arose and were formalised almost simultaneously at Au Bon Marché.

In his pivotal book on Au Bon Marché and French retailing in the late nineteenth century, Michael Miller describes the store's massive profile and central place in the global retail market. Across Western Europe and America, this was manifest by the numerous retailers who, attempting to capitalise on Au Bon Marché's fame and reputation, took its name for their own enterprises.[45] In France, Au Bon Marché can accurately be compared to its competitors by its financial pre-eminence, with the store's sales figures even into the first decade of the twentieth century amounting to at least twice those of most of its Parisian peers.[46] These figures were not obtained through sheer luck or fashion – the store's location in the relatively sleepy and residential Parisian Left Bank even put it at a distinct disadvantage to its competitors, who were based in the city's main commercial and

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[44] Miller, 2014, p. 50. One of the main exceptions was *Le Tapis Rouge* – one of the first magasins du nouveautés in Paris – which called itself a *'vaste magasin de nouveautés et d'ameublements'*. It sold a range of *ameublements complets*, or furniture sets, as early as 1871. *Journal officiel de la République française*, 23 June 1871, p. 1536.

[45] For instance, a department store named 'Bon Marché' and inspired by the eponymous Parisian store was opened in 1877 in Brixton, South London. In the 1880s, Edward Nordhoff, who was born in Germany and even worked at Au Bon Marché's rival the Grands Magasins du Louvre, moved to Seattle, Washington and in 1890 opened his own 'Bon Marché', which is today a Macy's.

[46] For context, Miller calls the period between 1870s and 1914 the 'golden years of the Bon Marché' and describes how the store's total sales figure of 227,000,000 francs in 1910 was going on double that of its nearest competitor, the Grands Magasins du Louvre, which sold only 152,000,000 francs worth of goods. Shockingly, stores such as Printemps, la Samaritaine and Galeries Lafayette were 'still selling at levels the Bon Marché had surpassed nearly three decades earlier'. Miller, 2014, p. 47.

entertainment districts across the river. Instead, Miller explains how the secret to Au Bon Marché's success was its ability to both reflect and form its bourgeois consumers, who the store knew and appealed to so well. Miller describes how the store stood 'at a cross-roads of bourgeois culture', acting as both a familiar abode and an orientating device for the French bourgeoisie.[47] This was innate in everything from the way the store was laid out, to the division and hierarchisation of store labour and the types of goods it sold**.** Consistent with this approach, Au Bon Marché's precocious display and sale of furniture and other domestic goods was undoubtedly an attempt to transform bourgeois buying patterns in this area. This sub-section will thus, in the first sense, show how the store's art gallery was an innate aspect of this mission. The fact that the gallery was not a true commercial department of the store – in fact it was run as a 'charitable' endeavour, with artists allowed to display and sell their work there for free – marks it as a sophisticated marketing tool that foreshadowed the way art would later be employed as a framing device for other goods in department stores across France, America and Britain. Yet it was also a transitional step towards the full commodification of art by the department store, first as a domestic good and then, later, as a good consumable on its own terms or even impulsively in the course of a shopping trip or flip through a catalogue. To arrive at the latter result, which in many ways best describes the shopping style department stores tried hardest to inculcate in their consumers, it is first necessary to describe Au Bon Marché's subtle manoeuvring of fine art into the realm of the domestic commodity, which was a matter of both timing and of purposeful framing in the store's furniture catalogues.

[47] Ibid, p. 48.

Au Bon Marché's major bout of diversification, which occurred in the 1870s and saw it begin to open set departments for domestic goods, coincided with the store's complete physical reconstruction and enlargement. This building work began in 1869 and continued in various stages until the late 1880s.[48] The first phase stretched from 1869 to 1872, and culminated with new frontages on the Rue de Sèvres and Rue Velpeau, an ornate multi-story central hall and new sales spaces for the store's long-established dry goods and novelties trade (figs. 8 & 9). The second phase, from 1872 to 1874, saw the building extended to the Rue Babylon, meaning that it now covered the whole city block (fig. 10). This immense expansion, as well as the three extra stories added on to the main gallery, quadrupled the store's floor space.[49] It was at this time that the store began to sell full room sets, or '*ameublements complets'*, as was proudly carved on the façade of the building fronting the Rue Velpeau (fig. 11). It was also during this phase that the store opened its famed *Galerie de tableaux*, which featured prominently in much of the press coverage of the extension.[50]

While there are multiple reasons to regard Au Bon Marché's sale of domestic goods and its art gallery as connected, their simultaneous emergence is the most immediate. Besides its expansion into furniture, Au Bon Marché from 1874 also greatly increased its display and sale of carpets. Most of the home furnishing trade conducted by department stores before the 1870s was related to textiles. For instance, French magasins de nouveautés had long sold *étoffes pour ameublements*, or fabric to upholster furniture. Carpets were a natural evolution of this trade that corresponded with their long-term specialisation in textiles, and Au Bon

[48] The construction was overseen by two of France's greatest proponents of industrial materials and architecture: architect Louis-August Boileau and engineer Gustave Eiffel, who later became famous for the Statue of Liberty and his eponymous tower. For more information, see: Ibid, pp. 41-3.
[49] 'Les Grands Établissements de Paris: Le Bon Marché'*, Le Monde Illustré*, 13 March 1875.
[50] For examples, see: 'Magasins du Bon Marché', *L'Illustration*, 6 March 1875; and *Le Monde Illustré*, 13 March 1875.

Marché like many other stores had sold them since at least the 1860s.[51] Yet Au Bon Marché's newly opened second floor sales space, located just below an immense iron and glass skylight engineered by Gustave Eiffel (before the construction of his eponymous tower), formalised this trade and consecrated an unmatched amount of prime retail space to it (fig. 12). Concentrated around a massive light well, it was here that the store sold a selection of oriental carpets from across the Ottoman Empire, Iran and India. The leftmost portion of Figure 12, which shows cabinets and other wooden objects of various sizes stretching to the back of the building, suggests that this was also where the store displayed and sold furniture. This is a fact that has to be inferred, because the location of the furniture sales area is not mentioned in advertisement or catalogues from the time of the expansion. More than anything, this shows how minor the trade in furniture was for department stores at the time. Yet, this inference presents the opportunity to compare the space in which the store sold domestic goods, and especially furniture, with its new art gallery.

The spectacular and unabashedly commercial modernity of Au Bon Marché's carpet and furniture departments contrasts markedly with the ornate lavishness of its art gallery, which has been compared to the first architectural triumph of the reign of Louis XIV: the *Galerie d'Apollon* at the Palais (now Musée) du Louvre (figs. 13 & 14). While the gallery seems preposterously anachronistic beside the *comptoir* in Figure 12, it was firmly in line with the general trend for historical pastiche in the mid to late nineteenth century. In fact, Au Bon Marché's art gallery is comparable to the interiors of the Opéra Garnier, which opened only a few months before Au Bon Marché's art gallery and is arguably the best-known example of the eclectic style. While this could be taken as mere mimicry, the fact that the

[51] Aux Trois Quartiers, for instance, noted in an 1868 advertisement in *Le Gaulois* that it was opening a department for carpets and upholstery. La Ville de Saint-Denis opened its carpet department in 1869. 'Étrennes 1869', *Le Gaulois*, 5 December 1868; and 'Agrandissements Considérables', *L'Univers*, 3 August 1869.

store increasingly also sold domestic goods in this very style is undoubtedly of significance given the previously discussed synchronicity in the emergence of these facets of its operations. The relevance of historical pastiche to furniture is especially apparent in Au Bon Marché's *Albums de l'ameublement,* which it began to publish towards the end of the decade. In these catalogues, the store advertised both individual pieces of furniture and room sets through descriptions and engravings. While the 1881 album included an engraving of a bedroom in the *style moderne*, it was especially heavy in examples of historicising styles, including a 'Renaissance' dining room and a 'Louis XIV' salon (figs. 15 & 16).[52] The art gallery was thus an especially fitting reflection of the furniture on sale in the store and, in its decoration and in the art it sold, lent both legitimacy and an artistic air to the store's mass-produced goods, and especially its furniture.

Aesthetics thus present a compelling link between the art gallery and the sale of domestic goods at Au Bon Marché, yet not one that considers the commercialisation of art itself. As stated in the introduction to this thesis, there is a need to look beyond the admittedly attractive narrative presented by store display alone to capture the full view of the relationship between fine art and the department store. This can in part be achieved by studying store catalogues – the best snapshot we have of department store commerce – and in this case again Au Bon Marché's Albums de l'ameublement. Images of room sets in these catalogues were meant to depict the ideal home interior as proffered by Au Bon Marché. Although the first catalogues, published in the early 1880s, did not generally depict fine art in the images, those published in the 1890s overwhelmingly did. This is evident from the 1899

[52] Au Bon Marché, *Album de l'ameublement*, 1881. Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), FOL-WZ-211.

album, where art is featured in almost every ensemble regardless of the room's function (fig. 17).[53]

Anca I. Lasc demonstrates that the images featured in Au Bon Marché's Albums de l'ameublement were produced by independent artists – as evidenced by the signatures visible usually in a bottom corner of each image – yet were also likely a product of a close relationship between the store and these illustrators.[54] For instance, Lasc suggests that frequent image contributor E. Mathiot began to work directly with Au Bon Marché from the mid-1880s not just to provide illustrations of complete rooms but also to design individual pieces of furniture.[55] The supposition that this was done under contract from Au Bon Marché is buttressed by the fact that, in the mid- to late- 1880s, Au Bon Marché like other large retailers in France began to manufacture a larger variety of its own goods, including furniture and other domestic products.[56] The catalogues of the 1890s were thus more direct reflections of each store's commercial vision. In the advertising images in the later albums, which were much more centred on the store's own manufactured offerings than those that came before, Au Bon Marché was thus sending the message that art was an integral accompaniment to the fashionable bourgeois home, just as ribbons were to a woman's dress. With its art gallery, Au Bon Marché could not only mirror or even manipulate what current fashion dictated about the ideal home, but also provide for it materially. Albums and catalogues published by Au Bon Marché from the 1890s forward continued to include fine art in almost every image of a

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[53] Au Bon Marché, *Album de l'ameublement*, 1899. Bibliothèque Forney, CC182, Boîte 2.
[54] Lasc, p. 163-72.
[55] Ibid, p. 166-7.
[56] Ibid, p. 163. Philip Nord also discusses Parisian department stores' tendency from the 1880s to organise their own factories and manufacturing systems – essentially sweatshops or piecework networks – to produce their merchandise. Philip G. Nord, *The Politics Of Resentment: Shopkeeper Protest In Nineteenth-Century Paris*, Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, NJ, 2005, pp. 68-70.

domestic interior.[57] The gallery therefore became not just an advertising auxiliary but also an embedded component of the store's commercial offerings.

The expansion and diversification of department stores, which made them repositories not only of all modern products but also all of the world's bounty – exemplified at this moment by the sale of oriental carpets, but soon after by goods of East Asian origin – meant that it was inevitable that they would also eventually begin to sell art. This is especially true from the period when stores began to branch into the realm of domestic goods, with the goal of catering to everything the modern consumer needed for their home. Yet both timing and the store's own sales models suggest that, like it did with furniture, Au Bon Marché was very much a pioneer of this trade. As a result, it was not only an innovator but also, arguably, a catalyst in the development of a middle-class art market. The store took a novel approach to the sale of art. As long as the gallery was open – and it remained so for about 50 years, which is many lifetimes in the history of a department store – it offered artists the opportunity to display their art for free. This meant that, unlike art dealers, Au Bon Marché did not demand a commission fee on the works of art sold via its premises. The way this system works is explained in a pamphlet published in 1876 detailing Au Bon Marché's store rules and procedures.[58] Artists were to invite store representatives to their studios so that they could evaluate the works to be displayed and how much space they would occupy. If the representatives approved and had sufficient space in the store's gallery, the artists were then asked to deliver their works to the store where, barring sale, they would be displayed for a period of six weeks. Each work was displayed with a tag indicating the title and/or subject of

[57] This is evidenced for instance by: Au Bon Marché, *Nouveautés de la Saison*, 1915, p. 31. Bibliothèque Forney, CC 182, Boîte 6.

[58] Au Bon Marché, 'Galerie d'exposition de peinture et de sculpture', *Renseignements généraux et reglement d'intérieur,* 1876, pp. 16-7. Bibliothèque nationale de France, microfilm, MFILM 4-WZ-3266.

the work, the name and address of the artist and the price of the work. If the artists did not wish the price to be so publicly displayed, they could leave 'instructions necessary for the sale' with the gallery clerk.[59]

The art gallery, at least in its 1875 to 1925 iteration, was never made a full 'department' of Au Bon Marché, meaning that the store took neither full responsibility for supplying its stock (artists were at least in part expected to come to them) nor profited from it directly. This might indicate that it was, in the end, more of an advertisement than a commercial endeavour. Indeed, the gallery was used as a base and an inspiration for other promotional mechanisms of the store, with its image featuring prominently in catalogues and city guides published by Au Bon Marché and very often targeted at foreign tourists.[60] The gallery's merchandising policies were also looser than those employed for the rest of the store's products, with prices not necessarily displayed on objects and sales open to direct negotiation between artists and shoppers. In the context of the consolidation of the modern commercial structure of the department store, Au Bon Marché's reticence to open a properly integrated 'fine art department' might even be attributed to its larger reputation for conservatism. Yet in light of the history of the gallery itself and Au Bon Marché's precociousness in opening it, the gallery's operating model speaks less to conservatism and more to extremely canny business sense.

The opening of the art gallery was ultimately highly speculative, because it was both the first of its kind and without a tested market. Comparatively, the store's expansion into a

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[59] 'instructions nécessaire pour la vente'. Ibid, p. 17.

[60] Au Bon Marché published a 'souvenir' book for the Exposition Universelle of 1900 with an image and information on its art gallery. It also published souvenir books in foreign languages, including one in English in 1909. This is alongside the many *agendas buvards* and *albums* that the store published for its regular customers, and which included images and descriptions of the gallery. Au Bon Marché, *Souvenir de l'Exposition de 1900*, 1900. Bibliothèque Forney, CC182, Boîte 2; and Au Bon Marché, *Souvenir of a Visit to the Bon Marché*, 1909. Bibliothèque national de France (Tolbiac), FOL-WZ-212.

complete range of furnishings was couched in a pre-established trade in certain pieces. By keeping the gallery as partially separate from the store's commercial structure, Au Bon Marché could test the waters in terms of art commerce without a set commitment to this kind of trade or the same level of investment necessitated by a full department. Ultimately, the store's dynamic yet measured approach to mass retailing contributed to its prime position in the market, and its largesse allowed it to maintain its charitable approach to the gallery and the artists who showed their work there. The fact that this was contingent on the store's almost unprecedented share of the French retailing market is shown by the major store refurbishments of the early 1920s. In an era of increasing competition in the retail market, Au Bon Marché modernised both its store and its art selling practices. It closed the gallery described above and opened a new, fully commercial gallery in the walkway between the main store and an annex located on the Rue du Bac and Rue de Sèvres.[61] This annex was originally opened in 1909 for the sale of domestic goods and still served this purpose after it was rebuilt following a fire in 1915 (fig. 18).[62]

Although Au Bon Marché never fully commercialised the art gallery it opened in 1875, it did undoubtedly commodify both the gallery and the art sold within it – and not just by using it for advertising. As shown by the store's *Albums de l'ameublement* published in the 1890s, fine art was increasingly portrayed as an essential element of the fashionable home, and one which the store's gallery could provide for materially. Yet even before this

[61] The store publication that mentions the new walkway-cum-art gallery is: Au Bon Marché, *Au Bon Marché Maison A. Boucicaut – Paris: Magasins les plus importants vendant le meilleur marché*, 1925. Bibliothèque Forney, CC182, Boîte 8. The 1875 art gallery is pictured in another catalogue dated 1923, indicating that it was closed sometime between 1923 and 1925. Au Bon Marché, *Souvenir de l'inauguration des nouveaux magasins du Bon Marché*, 1923. Bibliothèque Forney, CC182, Boîte 7.

[62] Today the building still partially serves this function, but more importantly it houses the store's extremely popular grocery department, *La Grande Epicerie de Paris*. For mention of the fire that destroyed the annex, see: Miller, 2014, p. 232.

noticeable shift in the imagery of the albums, the store's gallery was steadfastly linked to the sale of domestic goods. One of the earliest albums published by Au Bon Marché, from 1881, shows an image of the gallery that is, quite literally, encased in a neo-classical wooden frame (fig. 19). Emphasising the framed aspect are the fringed and tasseled drapes around the image, which seem to have been opened to reveal it. At the bottom of the frame is a list of the main domestic goods sold by the store: furniture, chairs, window dressings and carpets. Even leaving aside the style of the frame and the presence of the drapes, these words make the connection between the framed image and the store's commerce implicit, which in turn allows a particular interpretation of what is happening within the frame. What might otherwise be seen as viewers leisurely wandering the store's art gallery could now equally be seen as a commercial activity – the act of viewing becoming the act of shopping. This seems like a particularly apt connection when one considers that this image was in what was essentially a catalogue, which was perused as much for the practical necessity of having an idea of what to buy as for the pleasure of viewing. Someone flipping through this catalogue would thus have been predisposed to seeing the art on display in the gallery as a domestic commodity equal to curtains, furniture and carpet. Au Bon Marché's unique financial success and position in the market allowed it to maintain the store gallery as, at its base, a non-commercial enterprise, yet its display of art was still implicitly connected, both through timing and imagery, to the diversification of the store into domestic goods and the underlining commercial imperative of mass retailing, which was low price, high volume sales. As will be shown in the next sub-section looking at the larger situation in France, this connection was the spark that brought art not just to Au Bon Marché but to French department stores in general.

IIIb: The Case of France

Au Bon Marché was considered the example *par excellence* of a department store both in France and abroad, yet few department store owners or managers could afford to copy the example set by its art gallery in any sustainable manner. The canniest amongst them realised that it was from the basis of commerce that they should start their endeavours. Thus, John Wanamaker, who even in his time was called America's most influential retailer, began his forays into selling and displaying art by opening a commercial art gallery in 1881. This prefaced his later extravagant displays of art either from his own vast collection or obtained directly from Parisian salons and ateliers. From John Wanamaker's successful start, the sale of art snowballed into a central activity of the great majority of American department stores. Moreover, the commercial logic and origins of the relationship between art and British mass retailers has already been extensively detailed in the first section of this chapter that discussed bazaars. When British department stores began to sell and market art in the 1890s, they did so with a commercial zeal that befit the example set by their predecessors at the bazaars. Either of these contexts would make appropriate case examples through which to examine the sale and commodification of art by the department store, yet the following section instead lingers on the case of France. This is as much to bring the example set by Au Bon Marché to its natural conclusion as to nuance some persistent platitudes about this period.

The most prominent of these clichés, and in fact originating in the period itself, is that America was the epicentre of the rising tide of 'mass commercial culture', as perpetuated by the country's supposedly inherent capitalist tendencies. On the other hand, European

countries such as France and Britain – with their high culture, museums and inherent class systems – were only infected with commercial culture *à la Américaine* rather than themselves sources of it. As Rémy Saisselin shows in his important book *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot*, this was an especially current view amongst late nineteenth-century Americans, who travelled for a taste of the 'authentic' first to Britain and France and then, when those places became too 'compromised' by commerce, to Italy.[63] America, which was simultaneously undergoing an almost unprecedented industrial, land and population boom, certainly experienced especially breathtaking commercial development when compared to its largely rural composition at the beginning of the century. Yet, as shown in this chapter, mass retailing and its bedfellow commercial culture were on the move in France and Britain from as early as the late eighteenth century, which shows that American retailing quickly adapted to, rather than originated, this system. Regardless of the reputation of France amongst late nineteenth-century Americans, it had its own, native, commercialising tendencies, many of which were perpetuated by its mass retailers. Although most French department stores took slightly longer to begin to sell art than their American or British counterparts, by the first decade of the twentieth century almost all did. The following sub-section will describe the evolution of this practice and how the merchandising system of the department store itself determined both its timescale and the shape of its development.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was often the outward signs of Au Bon Marché's successful formula that were first copied by its competitors in Paris, and this included both the operational format and aesthetics of its gallery. In terms of the former, it took only three years for another Parisian department store, the Grands Magasins de la Place Clichy, to open

[63] Rémy G. Saisselin, *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot*, Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ, 1984, pp. 119-31.

its own 'free' art gallery. An 1878 article in *La Gazette des Femmes* stated: '…to be uniquely agreeable to their many clients, this store has just opened an art gallery which has the dual purpose of being useful to artists; the store receives no commercial benefit from these transactions.'[64] La Place Clichy was located on the Boulevard des Batignolles in the burgeoning artistic district of Montmartre and in close proximity to the building that in 1889 would house the Moulin Rouge. Although it did not have the same locational advantage as some of its Right Bank competitor stores, including the Grands Magasins du Printemps with its location on the bustling Boulevard Haussmann or the Grands Magasins du Louvre with its situation across from the illustrious Musée du Louvre, it was still one of the most prominent Parisian department stores throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This is likely due to the fact that, in order to serve its direct market, the store embraced an 'artistic' identity, of which its art gallery is one of the first indications. For instance, it was also one of the first stores to offer free prints with purchases (fig. 20).[65] Even the store's advertisements were at the height of artistic modernism, including E. Charle Lucas' rather daring and modern drawing for the store's 1895 carpet and furniture sale (fig. 21). Most importantly, starting in the 1880s the store carved out a niche for itself in the 'artistic' furniture trade.[66] Lucas' advertisement shows the orientalist and art nouveau furniture that the store specialised in and that it also provided to furnish various fine art exhibitions, including salons held at the Palais de l'Industrie in the 1890s.[67] These marketing ventures were meant to appeal to their

[64] '…pour être uniquement agréable à leur nombreuse clientèle, ces magasins viennent de créer une galerie de tableaux qui aura le double but d'être utile aux artistes; cette maison ne prélevant aucun bénéfice sur les transactions.' *La Gazette des Femmes*, 12 October 1878, p. 4.
[65] Ibid; and *Le Petit Journal*, 9 April 1883, p. 4.
[66] La Place Clichy's 'artistic' reputation, and especially in what concerns furniture, is noted in numerous articles on the store, including: 'Aux grands magasins de la place Clichy', *Le Figaro*, 6 April 1900, p. 5.
[67] 'Les Trois Salons du Salon (Palais de l'Industrie)', *Figaro Salon*, 1891.

'clientele of artists and of people of taste'.[68] Yet, despite the store's growing specialty in artistic furniture and decorative goods, which took off starting in the 1880s, there is no indication that La Place Clichy's Au Bon Marché-style art gallery persisted much beyond its first advertisement.[69] At this early stage in commercial diversification, and without Au Bon Marché's outstanding profit margins, there was little need or even possibility for most department stores to support such an expensive endeavour – even for one that styled itself as 'artistic'.

A more successful appropriation of Au Bon Marché's art gallery could be found in the architecture and decoration of the reading room of its major rival, the Grand Magasins du Louvre (fig. 22). The Louvre opened its reading room in 1879 as part of a major expansion and renovation. Located on the first floor and in proximity to the store's *buffet*, the reading room only ever served as that; there is no indication that the store ever used it to display art. Thus, despite its architectural similarities to Au Bon Marché's art gallery, which are especially apparent in the use of caryatids around the ceiling entablature and in the grand mantelpiece, the reading room still made sense within the internal logic of the store. The Louvre diversified into a more general, less textile-focused range of domestic goods later than Au Bon Marché. The store's specialisation in fashion and high-end textiles was, in fact, a central part of its identity. In the extensive notes Émile Zola took for his influential novel *Au Bonheur des Dames*, he called the Louvre 'more coquette and costlier' than other Parisian

[68] 'clientèle d'artistes et de gens de goût...'Jean-Camille Fulbert-Dumonteil, *Guerrières et guerriers du Dahomey au Jardin zoologique d'acclimatation: février 1891*, Jardin zoologique d'acclimatation: Paris, France, 1891, p. 6.

[69] As early as 1882, for instance, the store advertised a sale of furniture and decorative items that had been used at the annual salon. This sale was said to be of especial interest to 'artists and amateurs'. Le Gaulois, 25 June 1882, p. 4.

department stores.[70] Since the richest shoppers were still, in this period, likely to order their furniture custom-made from one of the many specialty shops in Paris, there was little need for the Louvre to invest in a full-scale furniture department, and thus also little reason for it to sell or display fine art. Still, a crisis was coming, and most French retailers would need to change in order to weather it.

In his seminal study of late nineteenth-century French shopkeepers, Philip G. Nord describes how a financial crisis in the 1880s impacted the political and economic outlook of the country and shifted the tone of French retailing.[71] After the collapse of the Union Générale bank in 1882 and then the near-collapse of the Paris Bourse, which was ultimately bailed out by the Banque de France, France entered a decade-long recession – in fact the same recession that led Paul Gauguin to quit his job as a stockbroker and take up painting full-time. A short-term consequence of the recession was a run on loans and a lack of liquidity in the market. The long-term outcome of was the hollowing out of much of the traditional market, and especially for niche or specialty trades – a development that especially hurt small retailers, including specialty furniture stores and less competitive magasins de nouveautés. The most significant development for this study was that the larger stores, such as the Louvre, Printemps and Au Bon Marché, began to assume more market share through a lack of competition and an increasing necessity to hedge bets during economic downturns. Moreover, this was not just based along class lines. Department stores began to target not just lower middle- and even working-class shoppers, but also men, children and adolescents as specific consumer groups. The Louvre, for instance, advertised its creation of two new *comptoirs* in February 1886: 'men's shoes and clothing for young

[70] Nord, 2005, p. 76.
[71] Ibid, pp. 143-205.

people'.[72] It was thus in the 1880s that advertising, industry and the economy came together to formulate the modern retailing landscape in France. It was also during and after this decade that art became fully incorporated into the commercial offerings of most French department stores, and subject to the same merchandising policies as all other saleable goods.

Art was sold in two different, but related, contexts. The first was, as discussed throughout this section, in the context of departments for domestic goods. A key example of this is again the Louvre, which was extensively renovated in the late 1880s following the removal of the Hôtel du Louvre, which had occupied the same building as the store, to the western side of the Place du Palais Royal. This enlargement allowed the store to dedicate a significant amount of sales space to a variety of domestic goods beyond carpets and upholstery. For instance, the store at this time inaugurated counters for porcelain, crystal, kitchen products and *articles de ménage*, or general household items.[73] The emphasis on both the decorative and practical shows a significant evolution in the Louvre's relationship to the sale of domestic goods, which was further mirrored in the space the store would come to devote to this trade. Three images created during the first decade of the twentieth century depict the store's three main display areas for domestic goods, which were stretched over its second and third floors: *Le Hall des cristaux et porcelaines*; *La Galerie des marbres*; and *La Galerie des ameublements* (figs. 23, 24 & 25). As is apparent in Figure 25, small works of art were readily included amongst the jumbled furniture and exemplary room displays of the *Galerie des ameublements*. In describing the Furniture Department in 1909, a store publicity catalogue indicated that these were in fact 'old engravings in antique frames', a category that

[72] 'chaussures pour hommes et vêtements pour jeunes gens.' *Le Radical*, 26 February 1886.
[73] *Le Monde Illustré*, 3 March 1888, pp. 146-8.

fit well with both the authentic and reproduction antique furniture sold there.[74] It was on the third floor, where the store sold decorative domestic goods such as light fixtures, *objets d'art*, marbles, bronzes and 'marvelous objects brought back from China and Japan', where one could find a more varied range of antique and modern paintings and prints.[75] The Louvre described the displays as 'great exhibitions of painting and sculpture attracting every year connoisseurs and large buyers'.[76] The gallery's containment in this section of the store as well as the sale of prints in the Furniture Department show that art present in the Grands Magasins du Louvre was intrinsically linked to the store's larger trade in practical and decorative domestic goods.

As was the case for department stores across America, France and the UK, by the final two decades of the nineteenth century the Louvre had moved from a focus on textiles and novelties to also offering its customers a complete range of domestic products. The inevitability and rationality of this shift, as well as the commodification of art as a domestic good, has been described throughout this section. Yet there was a second, and arguably more challenging, context in which art was sold by this period: in catalogues. Specifically, French department stores advertised art in their annual *catalogues d'étrennes*, or holiday catalogues. Because of their ubiquity as an advertising item across all major department stores, as well as the large variety of goods they advertised, these catalogues are a critical resource for understanding the commercial offerings of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French department store. Crucially, they show that, by the first decade of the twentieth century, most Parisian department stores sold a wide range of art, including oil paintings,

[74] '…vieilles gravures dans les cadres anciens.' Grands Magasins du Louvre, *Grands Magasins du Louvre: les plus beaux et les plus vastes du monde,* 1910, p. 24. Bibliothèque Forney, CC 268 [1910] A.
[75] '…merveilles rapportées de Chine et du Japon.' Ibid, p. 26.
[76] '…grandes expositions de peintures et sculptures attirant chaque année les connaisseurs et les gros acheteurs.' Ibid.

watercolours and prints, both modern and *ancien*. La Place Clichy, for instance, advertised in 1908 two sober landscape paintings alongside a selection of modern and historical chairs, all of which fit within the store's reputation for artistic and tasteful products (fig. 26). A year later, Galeries Lafayette – a relative newcomer to the Parisian department store scene, having only opened in 1895 – took a more varied approach, advertising oil paintings, prints and watercolours (fig. 27).

These are just two examples of advertisements for fine art in early twentieth-century catalogues d'étrennes. Other stores that sold paintings, prints and sculptures via their catalogues include the Louvre, Printemps, and la Samaritaine.[77] These catalogues are proof that, at the majority of French department stores in the early twentieth century, a variety of art could be bought at various price points, with the sole proviso that each piece was sold for a *prix fixe*. This applied even to oil paintings, which most stores had available in a variety of sizes and with prices matched to their size, as evidenced by La Samaritaine's 1909 catalogue d'étrennes (fig. 28). With these catalogues customers not only benefitted from the accessible and straight-forward purchase policies of the stores themselves, but could also buy art from the comfort of their own home via the catalogues that were sent to thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of households in France and its colonies. Moreover, if these customers were unhappy with what they ordered, having potentially never seen it in person, then they could return it either by mail or in person according to each store's rules of exchange.

Art had thus become fully incorporated into the commercial system of the department store. Correspondingly, it bore many of the hallmarks of a commodity, in that it was often

[77] Grands Magasins du Louvre, *Catalogue d'étrennes*, 1906-7, p. 23. Bibliothèque Forney, Cote: CC268"1906"déc A; Grands Magasins du Printemps, *Catalogue d'étrennes*, 1906-7, p. 33. Bibliothèque Forney, Cote: CC274"1906"déc; and Grands Magasins de la Samaritaine, *Catalogue d'étrennes*, 1904-5, p. 13. Bibliothèque Forney, Cote: CC275"1904"déc A.

priced according to its size and, at least in many department store catalogues, tended not to bear the artist's name, both of which are evidenced by Figure 29. Both points were matters of standards and practicality because, for instance, a store could not advertise a particular work of art by a certain artist for it to then be sold and made subsequently unavailable – keeping in mind that catalogues were meant to remain current for a season or even an entire year Yet, while the sale of art in department stores and via their catalogues undoubtedly operated according to a standardised commercial system and had the potential to lead to a rationalisation of the complicated endeavour of buying art, it also provoked as many questions and issues as it solved, for both customers and artists. The next two sections will look in turn at these areas of the art market and outline the impact that the sale of art in department stores had on each.

Section IV: Department Store Art Commerce and the Art Market: Consumers and Producers

IVa: Market Share

Before any direct analysis of department store customers and their art buying patterns, or of the artists who sold their art in the department store, an important question should be addressed: how much art did department stores sell, and how central was it to their trade? Unfortunately, finding sales numbers for particular departments of a department store is much harder than finding information about its overall profits or turnover. This is often because the latter figures were recorded in a number of formats, including minutes from internal meetings and even in publications or catalogue meant for the general public, while the former was typically employed on a more practical basis and was of less immediate

concern to executives. Department stores certainly kept track of these figures, yet the increasingly competitive environment for retail trade, shrinking profits, and merger mania of the twentieth century meant that many stores were closed and their internal records often destroyed or lost. Stores which have extant and extensive archives such as Harrods, Wanamaker's, and Au Bon Marché are the most likely to yield this kind of information, yet even the substantial records they offer to current researchers pale in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of boxes of printed material a store could produce during its operation.[78] Still, the few records that do survive produce a picture of the viability of this trade, and thus its direct commercial benefit to the department store.

Of the three stores listed, only Harrods and Wanamaker's can attest to the commercial yield of fine art for the department store because, of course, Au Bon Marché did not seek to profit directly from its display of fine art until well into the 1920s. Yet the fact that it did eventually partake in this trade should indicate that, as the figures show for Wanamaker's in America and Harrods in Britain, there was a consistent profit to be made in the sale of fine art and its accessories, whether that meant frames and engravings or oil paintings and watercolours. The earlier of two records to be highlighted comes in the form of a Wanamaker's ledger dated 1893-1894 for the period between 1 February and 30 November, and which listed the sales figures for different departments across the store.[79] These years are

[78] In his book on Au Bon Marché, Michael Miller relates that, while he was carrying out research at the store in the 1970s, a trunk containing historical documents was accidentally set out with the trash before it was rescued – and this occurred at a store that made an effort to preserve its history! Documents from other stores are certain to have been discarded in a similar way. Given the high level of pride and interest that many department store employees take in their store and its history, and which I have personally experienced many times during my research, any loss is undoubtedly due not to carelessness and more to what Miller rightly notes is the frenetic pace of working at a constantly changing institution such as a department store. Miller, 2014, p. 241.

[79] Wanamaker's Philadelphia, Ledger 1893-4. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Wanamaker Collection (2188), box 1B. This period excludes the lead up to and aftermath of the Christmas season. The pre-Christmas shopping blitz as well as the major sales traditionally held after New Year marked a standout period for retailers, so it is logical that it would be considered separately.

of particular interest because they fall both before and immediately after the so-called 'Panic of 1893', which resulted in the failure of many enterprises and widespread unemployment.[80] The ledger lists the sales figures for the Frames and Engravings Department – which was in fact the art gallery opened in 1881 – as $41,386.96 in 1893 and $38,361.22 in 1894. It is readily apparent that the sale of fine art was a comparatively minor section of the store's trade, especially when considered alongside the store's largest departments, which were usually those dedicated to women's clothing and accessories. The Dress Goods Department, for instance, made close to one million dollars in 1893, and was by far the best performing area of the store. While engravings could hardly compete with fabrics in the world of late nineteenth-century retailing, the art gallery and Framing Department did achieve sales that closely matched or even exceeded other major departments, including Dressmaking, Optical Goods and Wall Paper. Moreover, while the ledger shows a roughly three thousand dollar decrease in sales between the same period in 1893 and 1894, which reflected the financial difficulties and uncertainty of the period immediately following the crisis, a ledger comparing just the November sales for these same years records a modest increase of $66.21. This demonstrates the trade's resiliency and its continued attraction to customers, even in difficult economic circumstances.

A collection of sales figures for Harrods also tracked a period of global upheaval and historical interest: the years during and around the First World War.[81] Still, it was not the war years, during which sales dropped and after which they picked up again, but the years immediately preceding them that are the most enlightening in terms of sales tactics and the

[80] David O. Whitten, 'The Depression of 1893', 2001. https://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-depression-of-1893/ [accessed 15 September 2018].
[81] Ledger, 'Departmental Results for the Half-Year 1911-19'. Harrods Company Archive, London, England.

long-term position of picture departments within department stores. The Harrods ledgers are more expansive than the Wanamaker's examples, for they also include figures for each department's stock costs, expenses and gross/net profits. The first ledger, from 1911, shows that, as was again the case at Wanamaker's, Harrods' Picture Department did a relatively minor trade compared to high-volume departments such as Carpets or Millinery, which had sales figures amounting to £38,001 and £18,092, respectively. A total return of £2189 for the Picture Department just could not compete with these numbers. Yet a direct focus on the department's figures between 1911 and 1914 indicates that its performance was not deemed inconsequential or undeserving of attention on behalf of the store. In fact, total return figures doubled year on year from 1911 to 1912, and maintained their height of £4000 to £5000 until just after the start of the war in 1914. As stock costs remained the same over this period, the only change that can be identified is in the department's expenses, which doubled from £388 to £824 between 1911 and 1912. It thus seems that a direct investment was made in the department, and most likely in both the hiring and training of additional permanent staff and in enhanced advertising.

This reinforces the idea that, rather than being a pure accompaniment to furniture departments or an advertising mechanism for higher value areas of trade, picture departments and art galleries were treated as legitimate and active places of sale, and thus subject to the same commercial tinkering and market development as any other department. While art may lend a certain allure to industrial products, enhance display environments, or appeal to a customer's desire for social and cultural advancement, it was also a viable commodity for the stores that sold it, and they necessarily sought ways to increase their turnover and enhance their investment. Ironically, this meant using advanced sales tactics to push something that

itself was often employed as a visual or cultural incentive – or an advanced sales tactic by any other name – for the purchase of other goods in the store. Any skilled salesperson, whether working in a department store or an art gallery, would know not to take the inherent attractiveness of any good, even fine art, for granted. Making a success out of a picture department or gallery, which almost every department store in France, Britain and America had by 1914, meant identifying and targeting a certain market. Who comprised that market, and what did the department store have to offer them?

IVb: Consumers: Consideration of Class and Gender

Both received wisdom and observed reality dictate that the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store was a solidly middle-class institution. Miller's study of Au Bon Marché indeed shows how its success and power were due to its innate understanding of its middle-class market and the perfection of an operating model based around its lifestyle and values.[82] Naturally, then, any study of art consumption in the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century department store would primarily consider how it either formulated or accorded to the taste and buying patterns of the middle class. Yet, ironically, the merchandising system itself of the department store helped to progressively break down the rigid class boundaries of the nineteenth century, which were largely based around birth or profession, and usher in the new age of mass consumption that characterised much of the twentieth century, where class was increasingly determined by what and how

[82] For studies on the connection between department stores and class, and particularly the middle class, see: Elaine S. Abelson, *When Ladies Go A-Thieving: Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 1992; Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940*, University of Illinois Press: Urbana, IL, 1986; Hepp, 2003; Lancaster, 1995; and Jan Whitaker, *Service and Style: How the American Department Store Fashioned the Middle Class*, St. Martin's Press: New York, NY, 2006.

one consumed. Numerous scholars of nineteenth-century consumption, including Miller, Auslander and Leach, have characterised this shift as the natural outcome of the commercial and cultural systems of the department store.[83] In terms of commercial practices, any system of mass retailing where volume sales are prioritised over high margins naturally drives down prices, making products more widely accessible to a greater portion of the population.

The uptick in consumption across class boundaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the resultant difficulty of visually differentiating between individuals from different sections of society, led to a quickening of fashion cycles – in clothing, fine art, food, etc. – and ever more esoteric forms of cultural and stylistic discrimination. Undeniably, this is one of the reasons behind the development of 'avant-garde' movements in fashion, literature and fine art. Thus, while consumption was relatively democratised, the goalposts of class were arguably only moved rather than dismantled. Still, in the period before the First World War, when the department store was the leading form of retailing in both sales and influence, it contributed to a fluidity between class boundaries by targeting ever-wider groups of consumers for the purchase of goods. The following sub-section will show how this was especially true of fine art which, contrary to popular belief, appealed both in principle and in practice to what John Wanamaker deemed the 'abounding, multitudinous, mixed assembly of all classes' who patronised his and other department stores.[84] The regulated merchandising system of the department store, which not only lowered prices but also made the shopping experience itself more streamlined and accessible, also made the purchase of art more feasible for the department store's clientele.

[83] Miller, 2014, pp. 236-40; Auslander, 1996, pp. 415-25. Leach, 1993, pp. 263-348.
[84] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 10 December 1881, p. 6.

It may be assumed that the 'classier' the department store the more likely it was to sell and display art, but this was not in fact the case. As already noted, the Grand Magasins du Louvre, which Émile Zola deemed the most 'coquette' and fashionable of the Parisian department stores, declined to follow the example of Au Bon Marché in displaying art from the 1870s. Ironically, Au Bon Marché's art display was one of the reasons that it so readily cornered the market on such a large cross-section of the aspirational Parisian and provincial middle classes, which in turn allowed it to thrive and maintain these free services even during tough economic circumstances, as compared to the Grands Magasins du Louvre which had to widen its target market and even began to sell art. The importance of markets to art sale and display is especially seen in America where, because such a large portion of the population shopped at department stores, they were arguably even more class-stratified than those in Europe. Major cities such as New York, which by virtue of its large and diverse populations could accommodate a variety of department stores, best exemplify this situation. New York's so-called 'carriage trade' stores, such as Arnold Constable, Benjamin Altman, and Lord & Taylor, almost exclusively served the upper middle class and the elite, including titans of industry and the wives of presidents.[85] Their customers likely enough already owned art, either through purchase, inheritance or both, and thus did not need to acquire it through a mass merchandiser such as the department store.

Conversely, the numerous New York department stores that began to sell art almost simultaneously in the late 1880s were all targeted at a solidly middle or even aspirational working-class clientele. These stores included Frederick Loeser and Weschler & Abraham in

[85] Marjorie Pearson, *Ladies' Mile Historic District Designation Report Vol. 1*, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission: New York City, NY, 1989, p. 85.

Brooklyn, and Bloomingdale Bros. and Macy's in Manhattan.[86] Macy's, for instance, was renowned in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for its affordability. Like many other mainstream retailers of the era, Macy's founder Rowland Hussey Macy instituted a cash-only sale policy, which served to lower prices by allowing the store to avoid the complications of credit accounts and thus create large reserves of cash with which management could buy merchandise. Cash purchases from stockists and manufacturers incurred discounts for department stores, as all of the goods to be sold in store were purchased up front. The Straus family, who opened a crockery concession in the store's basement in 1874 and bought out the entirety of the operation in 1888, kept this policy in place until 1939, when it finally instituted deferred and installment payment policies – yet another way of making consumer goods accessible to a larger portion of the population.[87] The Straus family was also responsible for the first fine art sales at Macy's, with paintings displayed alongside china and glassware in the family's former concession. An image of this space, which appeared in an 1890 catalogue, depicts a room filled with fancy china and Bohemian cut crystal, while in the background framed paintings were hung on the portions of wall not occupied by the multitudinous vases and candlesticks (fig. 30).[88] Similar to art, fine china, glass and silver were among the luxury products that department stores such as Macy's made accessible to a larger range of buyers in the late nineteenth century so, beyond their association as domestic goods, it was logical that they would at first be sold alongside

[86] Advertisements which mention the sale of art include, respectively: *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 2 December 1888, p. 5; *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 11 November 1887, p. 3; *The Evening World*, 15 June 1889, p. 4. Macy's sale of art is noted numerous times throughout this thesis.

[87] Blaszczyk, 2002, p. 66; Lendol Calder, *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Consumer Credit*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1999, pp. 276-7.

[88] Macy's, *R. H. Macy & Co.: Importers, Manufacturers & Retailers*, 1890. Macy's Company Archive, New York, NY.

each other. Yet Macy's should not be thought of as appealing only to those on a limited budget and instead as a true mass-market retailer.

For both fine art and crockery, Macy's emphasised its range of products for all budgets, such as in its 1903-4 catalogue, when it stated that it sold art ranging from '… inexpensive subjects costing but a trifle to the superb canvases that run into the hundreds of dollars.'[89] Whatever the budget, the store professed to its shoppers that it would offer them a competitive, 'reasonable' price.[90] These claims were part of the general service culture of the department store, which was strictly enforced and aimed for repeat business and customer loyalty – a necessity for volume sales. Alongside fixed prices, free entry to browse and liberal returns policies, assurances of good treatment and fair prices helped to initiate those of little or new means into consumerism by simplifying the buying process. This was especially applicable to fine art, which was otherwise sold under notoriously complex and opaque circumstances. For example, a potential buyer at an auction house would need not only to manage the frenetic pace but also understand the often-unstated rules and cues of the establishment and its many regulars, many of whom already knew each other either as art professionals or frequent buyers. As John Ott argues in his study of late nineteenth-century American art auctions, the public and competitive nature of bidding drove up prices, making late nineteenth-century art buying even more expensive and speculative than it already was, while the auctions themselves solidified the 'class values and identity' of a nationwide American elite through both esoteric performances of wealth and exclusion of the non-

[89] Macy's, *Fall-Winter Catalogue*, 1903-4, p. 372. Macy's Company Archive, New York, NY.
[90] Ibid.

wealthy.[91] A watercolour painting by Swiss artist Gustave-François Barraud of an auction at the eminent Parisian art dealer Georges Petit's gallery depicts the space as a veritable theatre in the round where value was determined in real time before its wealthy audience (fig. 31). Buying at an art gallery, on the other hand, meant facing luxury retailing in its traditional form: specialised salesmen working on commission and selling a small number of objects after an expected period of haggling.[92] Faced with these two situations, it is easy to understand the appeal of a department store art gallery to a first-time art buyer or to someone uninitiated into, or just uninterested in, the high drama and subtle politics of modern art commerce.

The lack of financial records makes it difficult to determine how many 'superb canvases' department stores sold to their wealthiest customers. By the turn of the century, most American department stores were importing paintings directly from Europe to sell in their galleries, with retail prices ranging anywhere from ten to hundreds of dollars, as is shown in this 1909 advertisement from Chicago department store Marshall Field (fig. 32). The substantial outlay this entailed indicates that the stores in question saw at least a moderate return on their investment. Still, it is highly unlikely that department stores majorly disrupted the business of galleries or auction houses, which expanded heartily during this period.[93] Department stores were more likely to corner the market at the lower end, which

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[91] John Ott, 'How New York Stole the Luxury Art Market: Blockbuster Auctions and Bourgeois Identity in the Gilded Age, *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 42, no. 2/3 (2008), pp. 133-58.

[92] Perhaps the best example of these commercial practices was the gallery of Charles Sedelmeyer, which was patronised by many of the richest American collectors of the day. Christian Huemer describes some of the dealer's more convoluted and theatrical practices in: 'Charles Sedelmeyer's Theatricality: Art and Speculation in Late 19th-Century Paris', in Ján Bakoš (ed.), *Artwork Through the Market: The Past and Present*, VEDA Publishing House: Bratislava, Slovakia, 2004, pp. 109-23.

[93] Robert Jensen, for instance, notes that there was a marked increase in the number of galleries in the Parisian market in the 1890s. Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1997, p. 67.

meant the sale of watercolours, prints and small oil paintings. This is especially apparent in the early history of Wanamaker's art gallery, which opened in 1881 and was the first department store art gallery in America. Located on the newly opened third floor of the store, the gallery at first sold an array of objects including paintings and prints. As the store's distinct advertisements-cum-editorials show, when first opened the gallery even offered a selection of paintings 'representative of the works of many of the most distinguished artists of Philadelphia'.[94] The early gallery did indeed contain the work of Philadelphia artists whose names have lasted the test of time, including popular *trompe-l'oeil* painter John Frederick Peto, the burgeoning American Impressionist Colin Campbell Cooper and Stephen Parrish, father of Maxfield Parrish.[95] Yet, despite the quality of the paintings and prints in the gallery, the sale of the work of American artists was not a resounding success. The store itself stated in another editorial published only a few months later that 'paintings hav'n't [sic] amounted to much with us yet', and subsequent advertisements shifted focus almost entirely to foreign engravings.[96]

If we take this advertisement at its word and believe that trade shifted towards engravings because they were more profitable, rather than because it was easier to sell reproductions than negotiate directly with financially interested artists, then there is one practical reason for their relative popularity compared to paintings: price. In comparing the advertisement for paintings with a catalogue of engravings available at the store in 1882, an

[94] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 25 April 1881, p. 4.

[95] Although artists' first and middle names are largely written as initials on the list in the advertisement, certain correspond directly to artists known to be living in Philadelphia during the period. 'C. C. Cooper', for instance, almost certainly stands for Colin Campbell Cooper and F de B. Richards for landscape painter Frederick DeBourg Richards.

[96] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 25 November 1881, p. 4.

obvious price differential emerges in favour of the engravings.[97] While a large portion of the over 1,000 engravings on sale at Wanamaker's could be bought for as little as 50 cents, the least expensive American painting, which was called 'Flowers' and painted by a C. Schussel, was eight dollars. Moreover, the average price of a painting was 120 dollars, compared to the most expensive print – an artist proof engraving of John Everett Millais' *The Bride of Lammermoor* – which cost 53 dollars and 50 cents.[98] The Millais engraving would have been targeted at prosperous middle-class households looking for a decorative centrepiece from a renowned artist, while the cheaper end of the engravings could be sold to furnish the homes of the lower middle or even working class. Daily wages for skilled and unskilled male workers living in Philadelphia in 1880 averaged out to two dollars and one cent and one dollar and 30 cents respectively.[99] Eudice Glassberg's calculations of the average annual budget for a normal standard of living in Philadelphia for 1880 even included 64 dollars and 81 cents for 'sundries' – i.e. miscellaneous consumer goods such as books, holiday presents, theatre tickets and home decorations, including pictures. As Susan Porter Benson highlights, precarity and periods of joblessness were serious issues for working families in America into the twentieth century, meaning that steady wages could not be guaranteed.[100] Non-essential spending also depended on the number of dependents and the willingness of a male breadwinner to share his discretionary income with his family. Still, Glassberg's budget figures were for a family of five with a stay-at-home mother, meaning that all factors

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[97] Wanamaker's Philadelphia, *Catalogue of Engravings*, Times Printing House: Philadelphia, PA, 1882.
[98] Ibid, p. 66.
[99] These statistics can be found in a Philadelphia Manufacturing Census from 1880, as well as Eudice Glassberg's article, which quotes it and other contemporaneous sources on living standards from the period in question. Eudice Glassberg, 'Work, Wages, and the Cost of Living, Ethnic Differences and the Poverty Line, Philadelphia, 1880', *Pennsylvania History*, vol. 66 (1979), pp. 17-58.
[100] Susan Porter Benson, 'Living on the Margin: Working-Class Marriages and Family Survival Strategies in the United States, 1919-1941', in Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough (eds.), *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1996, pp. 212-37.

considered – the stability of the economy, availability of work, average number of dependents, the willingness of women to work, etc. – it is feasible that a foreign engraving at the lower end of the price range could be purchased at Wanamaker's by a large portion of the working population as a home decoration, educational item, present or even just a treat.

Importantly, by the time the 1882 catalogue was published, Wanamaker's had begun importing engravings directly from Europe. This was a significant development from when the gallery first opened in 1881 and it relied on American importers to furnish its stock. This change in source was at least partially due to the demonstrable market for these objects, necessitating larger and more diverse stock; but it was also attributed to the interference of local dealers in the store's trade with importers. Given the paucity of comparable price information for the sale of foreign engravings at the time, this situation clarifies the extent to which Wanamaker was seen as disrupting the art trade in Philadelphia.[101] On 22 April 1881, only 18 days after the gallery opened, the store declared that 'Philadelphia dealers in paintings and engravings have formed an association, the object of which is to keep up prices, and to keep out competition.'[102] Later, the store detailed the means by which their competitors did this: asking New York importers and wholesalers to provide engravings to the store only under the condition that it promised not to undersell other Philadelphia dealers.[103] As a point of principle and, undoubtedly, a point of publicity, the store refused. This meant that it had to resort to other means to obtain imported engravings, including buying the stock of Charles F. Haseltine, a Philadelphia art dealer who had decided to focus

[101] The main point of comparison is a Wanamaker's advertisement in which the store listed its prices for the prints then displayed in its western display case side by side with those of other Philadelphia print dealers, with the Wanamaker gallery on average 5 dollars cheaper. *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 23 January 1882, p. 4.
[102] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 22 April 1881, p. 4.
[103] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 25 November 1881, p. 4.

exclusively on selling paintings.[104] Haseltine's switch as much as anything indicates the increasingly small returns in the prints markets, as well as the threat mass retailers posed to a once profitable trade. For their part, Wanamaker's seemed to delight in the challenge and remained self-assured in its business model. The store published numerous gloating editorials describing the particular threat they posed to traditional dealers, which included the following:

> 'We thought there were reasons why we might undersell them. We have an abounding, multitudinous, mixed assembly of all classes of people here every day, who carry off all sorts of things in great quantity. Because we had this multitude of buyers we could afford a smaller profit than a dealer who only catered to one little class. We ought to buy more advantageously, buying largely and variously, and we ought to sell matters of Art, as we sell anything else, as the public has learned to expect us to sell everything we touch, and as our general principles lead us to sell, viz, as low as we properly can.'[105]

Volume and the mass market were thus shown to work in tandem to lower prices and make art, and especially prints, more accessible. There is of course no small measure of irony in a large retailer crushing middle-class salesmen to make luxury goods more affordable for the masses – a situation eulogised contemporaneously by Zola in *Au Bonheur des Dames* and an eternal feature of shifts from small-scale to mass retailing.[106] Yet, in the case of an imported item such as a foreign painting or engraving, fewer middlemen did mean better prices for customers; and, with their large profits, most department stores could afford in the 1880s to establish their own import offices in European cities such as London and Paris.[107] This

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[104] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 10 December 1881, p. 6.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Zola, 2011. Rachel Bowlby also discusses the link between mass consumption and shifting class and gender relations as told through *Au Bonheur des Dames* in her seminal book, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola*, Routledge: Abingdon, England, 2009, pp. 40-9.

[107] Wanamaker's opened its Paris office in 1881 at 22 rue Richer, but soon after moved to a permanent base on the rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière (in proximity to the Haussmann shopping quarter). Joseph H. Appel, *The Business Biography of John Wanamaker*, The Macmillan Company: New York, NY, 1930, p. 401.

allowed them to acquire stock at the source and drive down prices on imported luxury goods even further by cutting out importers.

For top-level art galleries such as Haseltine's or James S. Earle & Son – the latter perhaps the most prolific late nineteenth-century Philadelphia art dealer – the direct commercial impact of department stores was on the lower cost, high-volume trade in engravings, frames and mirrors, in which both galleries had previously specialised alongside their sale of paintings.[108] In terms of the actual sale of paintings and sculptures, the threat posed by department stores was in many ways more ideological than directly commercial, in the fact that they compromised the value and sanctity of fine art by exposing it to a merchandising system designed for mass consumption and mass-produced goods. As Wanamaker's noted, department stores' large consumer base and high volume of trade also meant that they could afford small profit margins on their sale of art, which tended towards the suppression of prices. Art sold in the department store could sometimes even be subjected to the 'discount bin'. It was not atypical to see a department store advertising their stock of fine art, meaning anything from engravings to oil paintings, at a steep discount in order to move product. For example, Chicago department store Marshall Field advertised in 1911 an 'important clearance' of pictures at anywhere from 25 to 50 percent off (fig. 33). Yet perhaps the greatest threat to the legitimacy of the art market was the democratisation of consumption, as well as the veneer of luxury, that department stores working in league with modern industry offered to a larger range of American, French and British citizens than ever before.

[108] 'Earle's Galleries' opened as early as the 1850s and specialised in both pictures and 'looking glasses', as mirrors were called. 'Disastrous Fire in Philadelphia', *Sunbury American*, 8 July 1854, p. 2; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 November 1860, p. 2.

Images of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interiors, including arguably prominent examples by renowned photographer Eugène Atget, show how the forces of commerce had led to a homogenisation of the domestic environment across multiple levels of society, which included not only the style of furnishings but also the kind of art on display.[109] Auslander calls the aesthetic and manner of decorating of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the 'bourgeois stylistic regime', which occurred when style began to be dictated not by producers but by distributors and their increasing and amorphous body of consumers.[110] Although the quality of furniture and decorative goods in dwellings could vary dramatically – a family of large means, for instance, might have original *ancien régime* pieces while a middle class family would shop for reproductions – the general style and look was very similar. If department stores, as Auslander argues, helped to democratise the consumption of furniture and other domestic goods to such a point where these goods lost, at least outwardly, much of their power of societal distinction, then there is no reason why, with their commercial art galleries, they were not able to assist in doing this for art as well.[111] Working alongside technologies such as printing and mediums such as publishing, department stores thus helped to bring art and its consumption to a larger range of customers and classes than ever before. Yet the department store's democratisation of art commerce stretched beyond class concerns, and specifically into those of gender.

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[109] Reproductions of Atget's photographs of a wide variety of Parisian interiors and an analysis of that body of work, especially along the lines of class, can be found in: Molly Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums*, Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1994.

[110] Auslander, 1996, p. 20.

[111] French theorist Pierre Bourdieu propounded the theory of 'distinction', the premise being that in a class system it is the upper class that defines 'good taste'. Those who fall lower on the social spectrum are impelled to adhere to this orthodoxy of taste and decorum, although lack the cultural capital to do so. If they do achieve it, the guideposts of taste necessarily change. Thus, while the department store could democratise consumption of both furniture and art, that consumption did not necessarily break down class boundaries. While objects themselves may have become more accessible, the markers of good taste wrapped up in style could always shift. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, Routledge: Abingdon, England, 2010.

It is widely recognised that the department store's consumer base consisted disproportionately of women. As Susan Porter Benson quotes in her book on gender relations in the American department store, they were even called 'An Adamless Eden'.[112] This was an ironic moniker, as the department store's managerial strata consisted almost exclusively of men, although it does reflect the overwhelmingly female clientele and the male managers' efforts to appeal to them. The large number of female shoppers who dominated the nineteenth-century retail landscape was due in large part to the rise of the bourgeoisie. Although women had long been associated with shopping, the need for middle-class men to work – as opposed to their upper class peers, who rarely did – meant that consumption both personal and domestic fell increasing to the wives and daughters they were expected to keep at leisure. Department stores, recognising their market, catered for these female shoppers by advertising directly to them and also by providing interiors and services designed to appeal to them. It is less likely that the merchandising system of the department store, which as described throughout this chapter evolved in order to best suit mass commerce in general, was formulated specifically with women in mind. That said, the more streamlined and altogether pleasurable and accommodating sales experience it prompted undoubtedly appealed to the female shopper who liked to treat a visit to the department store as a leisurely diversion, or who might otherwise be intimidated by entering a traditional specialty store and being forced to negotiate a price with a male shop attendant. Cash buying also did away with the embarrassment and complications of the credit system, further simplifying shopping.

The sales figures of department stores, which as discussed in the previous sub-section were most robust in the areas of dress and fancy goods, both prompted and justified the focus

[112] Benson, 1986, p. 74. Another study which discusses gender relations in nineteenth-century retailing and commercial culture, and specifically the prevalence and importance of female shoppers, is Rappaport's *Shopping for Pleasure…*, 2001.

on female shoppers. Women were expected to buy not only their own clothing but also linens for the familial home, meaning they were the prime consumers in the area of textiles at large. This new feminine dominance of consumption, and especially in the areas of fashion and textiles, prompted worries for the aesthetic future of countries such as France, with women's taste usually thought at best underdeveloped and at worst garish. The trepidation at the thought of France's aesthetic future – so intricately tied to the country's economy and vision of itself as a world power – lying in the hands of women, as well as the efforts made to 'educate' them to be better consumers, is discussed in Lisa Tiersten's book *Marianne in the Market*.[113] It is useful to discuss this fundamental aspect of late nineteenth-century French aesthetic history because it was to the new commercial institutions and figures such as magazines, interior designers and department stores that the task of developing feminine 'taste' was given. Moreover, this is an important area in which the idea of 'art' and 'artistry' has tended to be associated with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store – even more so than in the sale and display of fine art. This is because the idea and ethos of art was used not only to market products, but also to rebrand consumption itself. This is perfectly encapsulated by Figure 34, which shows the cover of Au Bon Marché 1901 catalogue for its important annual linens sale, the *vente de blanc*. The elegant female consumer is not only looking with an expert and appraising eye at newly purchased table linens, but is also surrounded by artworks that associate the process of buying and using those linens with the aesthetic act of looking at a sculpture or painting. Further confirming this connection is that fact that the linen has been extravagantly called 'Le Donatello'. Images such as these, accompanied by continuous rhetoric from department stores in

[113] Lisa Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-Siècle France*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2001.

America, France and the UK alike describing their largely mass-produced products as 'art', and the process of buying and using them as 'artistic', were thought to 'civilise' feminine taste and patterns of consumption.

With the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century woman more responsible than ever for dispensing the family income, it was thought necessary to market shopping not as a feminine feeding frenzy but as a considered, thoughtful task that held within it the aesthetic prominence and future of a nation. Associating fashion and textiles with art were an ideal means of doing this. Yet what of furniture and other domestic goods? These items not only entailed a higher price than dress goods, but also carried highly gendered connotations, meaning women were very rarely expected or even allowed to furnish a home completely under their own steam.[114] Moreover, the fact that furniture and other domestic goods were sold in 'traditional', specialist retailers – sometimes connected to the producers themselves – for far longer than fashion and textiles was another barrier to women's dominion over their consumption. As Auslander explains, the haggling-based retailing associated with furniture and domestic goods, with the expectation of a sometimes unpleasant back and forth between merchant and purchaser, was in both image and practice an especially masculine realm.[115] This was amplified in the traditional art market, where connoisseurs sought rare paintings and sculptures from far-flung locales, often going to great lengths to obtain them. The thrill of the chase was an intrinsic part of the appeal of this market, alongside the inherent competition and one-upmanship between limited numbers of top collectors, many of whom were also connoisseurs. Although the late nineteenth-century art market, with its galleries

[114] The gender politics of late nineteenth-century furniture consumption is discussed in Chapter Seven of *Taste and Power*. Auslander, 1996, pp. 277-305.
[115] Ibid, p. 298.

and auction houses acting as intermediaries, had become more streamlined and institutionalised, much of the opacity and roughness of the previous system remained, and particularly with the continued practice of haggling. This allowed buyers to still conceive of themselves as collectors rather than mere shoppers – the latter term having an especially feminine connotation.

While the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art market, save some important exceptions such as Isabella Stewart Gardener, was still very much a masculine realm, can the same be said of the art commerce in the department store? Was 'art' in the department store to be accessible to women only insofar as goods were marketed as 'artistic'? Certainly, department stores did not preclude women, their target market, from their spaces of art commerce. In fact, Figure 13, which is the earliest image of a department store art gallery, prominently features women looking, and in one case quite closely, at various works of art in the gallery. A young girl even joins in the looking, while her older female companions seem to be discussing the large canvas in front of them. Still, looking was not buying, although undoubtedly it was the first step in doing so. Moreover, Au Bon Marché's art gallery still functioned in many ways as a traditional gallery, with some prices held back and the possibility of direct purchase and negotiations between buyer and artist still on the table.

It would only be in the later department store art galleries, which fully applied their mass merchandising systems, that art could become the preserve of women shoppers. This is because the merchandising system of the department store made art not only affordable but also accessible; effectively, it turned art into a general consumer good, to be 'shopped' for like any other item. Although, as far as research for this thesis has shown, department store

records did not define sales by gender, advertisements and other records can show the extent to which art was marketed to women. The first tactic was, of course, to emphasise low prices, which would mean that art was accessible both physically and monetarily in the department store. One of the most creative examples of this was an early twentieth-century advertisement from Macy's entitled 'Bits of Gossip'. Reporting on different reactions to the store, the advertisement noted that one 'woman of wealth':

> '…said to me last week that she thought Macy's was becoming the best store in town. She remarked that if one of her cars happened to run off it would find its way to Herald Square without asking a policeman! This woman haunts the Fourth Floor. She loves the upholsteries, the pictures, the Far East treasures, the Chinese rugs. And, knowing values, she is well aware that she saves considerable sums by selecting at Macy's.'[116]

This advertisement served two purposes: first, to advertise the low prices of Macy's domestic goods; and second, to appeal to women's sense of aspiration. If a woman of wealth (meaning also taste) was decorating her home with pictures from Macy's, then surely a woman reading at home would want to as well. The pictures at Macy's were therefore not only affordable and accessible but also aspirational as well. Most importantly, rather than looking to a man for lessons in taste in pictures, this Macy's advertisement asks female shoppers to follow the lead of another woman. Yet, for all of its daring, this advertisement still framed pictures as domestic – something that for most of the nineteenth century was already considered the reserve of women. An even greater rupture was undoubtedly when department stores advertised art as something not just for the family home, but for the individual.

This can be seen in a series of holiday gift guides published by Washington, DC retailer Woodward & Lothrop in the early 1900s. These guides gave gift suggestions dependent on the person for whom the customer – very likely a woman – was shopping.

[116] Macy's, *Bits of Gossip*, c. 1910s-1920s. Macy's Company Archive, NY.

Looking at the 1902 guide, one can see categories such as 'sweetheart', 'newly married couple' and even 'very old man'.[117] Naturally, pictures were recommended for the newly married couple, as were many other kinds of 'domestic' goods. Yet, pictures were also recommended for the 'mother', while not at all for the 'father'. In this, pictures are evidently shown as being targeted at a female demographic, and not just in the sense of domestic decorating. In the spirit of true equality, it recommended pictures as a gift for the 'young man' and the 'young lady'. As these two sets of customers were unlikely to have a home of their own, or at least not one needing much furnishing, the gift of pictures was more likely to be for the individual than their home. Moreover, even if the paintings were intended for a young lady's home, it is significant that it could be *her* home, and not necessarily her parental or marital home. By assuming that young women desired pictures as gifts in equal measure to young men, it could also be assumed that they might someday purchase them for themselves. Moreover, the department store's merchandising system made this an easy and even likely proposition. It can even be said that the department store assumed she would be their shopper, and not her husband – even in the area of fine art.

It was in this way that the department store catered for a market of art consumers not normally targeted by the mainstream art market. The next sub-section will consider the production side of the equation, showing which artists furnished the department store with the fine art it sold, and arguing that, like it did for customers, the department store served an area of the art market underserved by its mainstream commercial counterparts: artists who were starting their careers or lacked representation. In this the department store was an important release valve for an art market whose institutions were still in development, and

[117] Woodward & Lothrop, *Holiday Shopping List*, 1902. Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Woodward & Lothrop records, 1873-1995 (MS 0542).

whose opportunities for sale and display lagged behind the ever-increasing number of artists trying their hand at making a career from art in the period under consideration.[118] Most would-be artists found a much less illustrious and lucrative set of circumstances than salon darlings such as Jules Bastien-Lepage or Hungarian painter Mihály Munkácsy. The history of the relationship between art and the early nineteenth-century bazaars exemplifies how retailers have long acted as an alternative display space and source of income for artists underserved by more traditional venues such as the salons and exhibitions of the academies, exemplified in this chapter by the Royal Academy of Arts. This practice persisted into the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with artists and even some dealers turning to the now primary mass retailer, the department store, in order to access its vast market of customers.

IVc: Producers: Artists and the Department Store

This chapter has thus far shown not only how fine art was commercialised in the department store, but also that there was a definable market for art, composed of middle- to lower-class shoppers and women, that the department store sought both to serve and foster. This subject has been very little covered in scholarly literature concerning the art market of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century. Yet this should not be construed as a willful gap, with the answer to why this is the case being far simpler: art market institutions of this period increasingly turned away from the 'mass' market, making it of little importance to their daily practices except as a foil to the market they were seeking to develop and access. This was a major departure from the gallerists of the early to mid-nineteenth century – for instance

[118] Sarah Burns, for instance, cites the swelling ranks of artists as one of the major catalysts for changes in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art world. Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America*, Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1996, pp. 26-7.

Thomas Agnew and Ernest Gambart – who very often commissioned paintings or patronised certain artists with an eye to exploiting the new bourgeois market for art.[119] Agnew and Gambart made their fortunes by selling the bourgeoisie engravings or charging them a fee to see exhibitions of popular paintings in London or even further afield if the painting toured. Yet, despite this, the 'popular' market became increasingly irrelevant, and even anathema, to the mainstream art market in one of its most important periods of development – except, of course, as a foil.

Arguably, the consolidation of the mass market itself, and the mass production and commercial systems that fostered it, carried the seeds of its own rejection and neglect. The masses were no longer just a group of consumers to whom gallerists could sell engravings, but a cultural force with their own mores and, importantly, retailers and merchandising systems catering to them. The increasing prominence of the mass market, which is reflected still today in the fact that the most successful luxury brands are those that cater to the mass market with accessories and cosmetics, necessarily meant a decline in the economic and cultural capital of the elite. Yet the mass market did not just pose a societal or ideological threat, but also a material one. This was especially true for fine art, which in subjection to a mass merchandising system would, as shown in this chapter, be transformed into an obvious commodity, with all that that entailed. This not only undermined the autonomy of art but also its value as a saleable product. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art world, which included the mainstream art market, thus evolved in opposition to the commodification of art by mass commerce. As Robert Jensen states in *Marketing Modernism*: 'I have found no polarization more exemplary of modernist rhetoric than the

[119] Fletcher and Helmreich, 2011, p. 10.

endlessly voiced distinction between authentic art and commodities, an opposition central to the definition of "avant-gardism"'.[120] Of course, as Jensen also relates, the existence of a modern art market itself meant that art was already commodified, just under different merchandising and marketing terms than those employed in mass commerce. An Impressionist would never sell his or her art in a department store, yet selling in a gallery, which could be made more aesthetically and commercially amenable, was more palatable and, crucially, necessary for survival.[121] Who then did sell their art in the department stores of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and why?

Returning to the example of Au Bon Marché allows us to see which artists sold their art in the department store even from the first instances of department store art commerce. Although the store claimed in this period to publish and distribute catalogues listing the art on display in its *Galerie de tableaux*, no evidence of these catalogues remains. The best indication of the artists and kind of paintings displayed there are thus visual documents and a few isolated articles that include this information. In particular, an edition of *Les Petits Tableaux de Paris*, which was written by Camille Debans and detailed a visit to Au Bon Marché at the time of the gallery's opening in 1875, offers vital insight into this question.[122] Debans states that the gallery included paintings by a fair number of Barbizon-affiliated artists, including the two Daubignys (*père* and *fils)*, Belgian artist César de Cock and even Camille Corot, who died only a month before the gallery's opening and whose paintings

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[120] Jensen, p. 10.

[121] Aruna D'Souza describes the lack of images of the department store produced by Impressionists as well as the reasons for this, which centred in large part although not wholly on commerce, in her chapter for *The Invisible Flaneuse?...* Aruna D'Souza, 'Why the Impressionists Never Painted the Department Store', in Tom McDonough and Aruna D'Souza (eds.), *The Invisible Flaneuse?: Gender, Public Space and Visual Culture in Nineteenth Century Paris*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, England, 2006, pp. 129-47.

[122] Camille Debans, *Les Petits Tableaux de Paris*, 1875, pp. 17-9. Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), LK7-18041.

were seeing a significant appreciation in value. Alongside their landscapes were displayed what Debans called '*toiles populaires*', or realist paintings of popular genre subjects by artists such as the German painter Carl Bernhard Schlösser and Swiss artist Albert Anker, as well as fifty other unclassified paintings which were undoubtedly in the same two categories already described.[123] Debans also mentions a collection of small sculptures, including 'a *statuette* by M. Paul Dubois, a terracotta statue by Carpeaux, a pretty marble statue by Carrier-Belleuse, *le Somnolence* by Leroux and works by Desprez, Delaplanche, etc.'[124]

How these works found their way to Au Bon Marché is somewhat of a mystery, because the store never detailed its exact method for obtaining a continual supply of art to satisfy its six-week display cycle. Still, certain suppositions on the basis of Debans' description can be made. Because it is doubtful that the Barbizon painters, especially given their advancing age, approached the store themselves, Au Bon Marché in all probability worked with a dealer or collector, or perhaps even one of the artists displaying their own works, who had stock in the paintings and took the opportunity to sell them without paying a commission. In the case of the other works, and especially those by the unnamed multitudes who supplied the majority of the paintings over the gallery's history, it is likely that they either approached the store themselves or, especially while the gallery established its reputation, were recruited by other artists working with Au Bon Marché. For the latter case, the perfect candidate is Diogène Maillart, a graduate of France's École des Beaux Arts and winner of the Prix de Rome whom the store not only contracted to paint the ceiling of its reading room but also commissioned to complete a history painting, entitled *La distribution*

[123] Ibid, p. 18.

[124] '…une statuette de M. Paul Dubois, une terre cuite de Carpeaux, un joli marbre de Carrier-Belleuse, le Somnolence par Leroux, des oeuvres de Desprez, Delaplanche, etc.' Ibid, p. 19.

des dons anglais dans les magasins du Bon Marché, which celebrated the store's relief efforts during the Franco-Prussian War. This painting, as Debans relates, was also displayed in the gallery at the time of its opening.[125] Maillart, like many other elder academic artists, was a key figure in Paris' scholastic art world, teaching fledgling artists in his capacity as Professor of Drawing at the Manufacture des Gobelins.

Given his own willingness to work directly with a department store, Maillart may well have informed his students of the opportunity to display their art at Au Bon Marché. Moreover, it is undoubtedly students, or those who were just starting their careers, that would have been best served and least likely to be tarnished by the store's mass merchandising system; and Paris' popular art schools would have provided more than enough of them to keep a continual stream of art flowing into Au Bon Marché's gallery. The fact that Au Bon Marché continued to be a popular alternative to the salons and exhibitions of the Académie des Beaux Arts, the premier institution of fine art in France, and even the emergent modern gallery system is reflected in images of the gallery, including Figure 35, which depicts art quite literally spilling out of the gallery onto the walls of the store's main atrium. Postcards from the 1900s, such as that in Figure 36, also show an abundance of paintings hung on every available inch of wall space. When visiting department stores in the early 1880s as research for *Au Bonheur des Dames*, Zola characterised the art he saw on display in the gallery as mediocre – a label that has stuck as much on the basis of Zola's reputation as on the contemporaneous repudiation of commerce by both poles of the art world.[126] Yet, it is worth remembering the similarity between this attitude and those that the periodical *Punch*

[125] Ibid.

[126] Émile Zola. *Œuvres. Manuscrits et dossiers préparatoires. Les Rougon-Macquart. Au Bonheur des dames. Dossier préparatoire. Deuxième volume*, 1881, p. 47. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cote NAF 10278.

held towards the Pantheon Bazaar's picture gallery, which as has been shown was displaying the art of the not insignificant painter Benjamin Haydon. While the rise of the commercial art gallery meant that display and sales opportunities were, theoretically, not as limited in the late nineteenth century as they had been fifty years earlier, the enormous increase in the number of artists meant that the actual situation could be just as strained, leading artists of all calibers to search for alternatives. The department store, with its more transparent merchandising policies, represented a useful port of call when salon or gallery shows were less forthcoming; and with Au Bon Marché's offer to sell art *sans commission* – which undoubtedly helped to guarantee a constant stream of art for display – artists were presented with another incentive. As art did not represent the whole of the department store's income stream, and of course factoring in their more transparent merchandising practices, it was highly likely that they could be less predatory than galleries or dealers, and especially with young artists.

The increasing competitiveness of the art world, and particularly the art centres of France and Britain, was due at least in part to an influx of artists from across Europe and the United States into art schools and exhibitions. The internationalism of the painters displaying their work in Au Bon Marché thus reflected the growing diversity of the Paris art world and even the Académie des Beaux Arts, where artists jockeyed to display their works and win awards to bring back to their home countries.[127] The popularity of French art in the United States, which had become a market for everything European, but especially anything French, was a particular issue for American artists, who on top of shifting consumer taste had to

[127] For a study of the competitiveness between not just the legions of artists who flocked to Paris, but also the different exhibition societies that sprang up in the late nineteenth-century to serve the many artists contending for fame and fortune, see: Fae Brauer, *Rivals and Conspirators: the Paris Salons and the Modern Art Centre*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle upon Tyne, England, 2013.

contend with a much more hands-off approach to culture from their own government compared to those in Europe. American department stores compounded these problems by fuelling the mania for French products, yet they also ironically alleviated them by providing American artists with commercial outlets to sell their art at a time when many galleries were focusing on the assured seller that was European art. This makes Wanamaker's display and sale of paintings by American artists in 1881, mentioned in Section III, especially striking. Moreover, as was supposed for Au Bon Marché's gallery, many of the artists in the Wanamaker's exhibition were relatively young and just embarking on their careers. This includes John Peto, 27 at the time of the exhibition, Stephen Parrish, who was 35 with a ten-year old son, Maxfield, and Colin Campbell Cooper, who was only 25 and fresh out of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Both Parrish, with Maxfield in tow, and Campbell Cooper left the United States for Europe within five years of the exhibition – in 1884 and 1886, respectively – in order to tour its sites and study at its art schools, and especially those in Paris.[128]

For American artists, travelling to Europe was as much as commercial opportunity as an educational one, for the paintings that sold best back home were by and far those in the aesthetic of *l'école française*. The artists who studied in Paris' private art schools, for instance the Académie Julian, which itself was located in one of Paris' most legendary commercial corridors, the *Passage des Panoramas*, learned not only this style from key practitioners such as William Bouguereau or Tony Robert-Fleury, but also, as Karen L Carter

[128] Delaware Art Museum, 'Maxfield Parrish: Illustrated Letters · Delaware Art Museum, Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives Digital Exhibitions'. https://delartlibrary.omeka.net/exhibits/show/parrish--letters [accessed 15 September 2018]; and Shannon Fine Art Auctioneers, 'COLIN CAMPBELL COOPER - Essay - Lot 73'. https://www.shannons.com/0418-colin-c-cooper-essay-lot-73 [accessed 15 September 2018].

has detailed, commercial skills such as illustration and design.[129] The school's 'entrepreneurial spirit' – Bouguereau himself was said to unabashedly instruct his students in financial and professional matters – encouraged its students to apply their skills to the booming commercial arts sector. The influence of this education was wide-ranging. Maxfield Parrish, who was exposed to Paris' private art tuition during his family's travels through Europe, became one of the most successful commercial American artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, creating everything from traditional paintings to illustrations for catalogues, including for Wanamaker's, with equal zeal and skill (fig. 37). For Campbell Cooper, who committed himself more wholly to the fine arts, his experience in Paris and at Wanamaker's may well have prompted him to take a dynamic approach when attempting to break into the American art market.

Campbell Cooper's career in particular shows how department store art galleries could act as a crucial source of income and proving ground for young artists or those who had yet to find their public. After returning to Philadelphia in the early 1890s, Campbell Cooper took up teaching at the Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry, and displayed his art in both solo and group shows at the city's key art institutions, the Arts Club and the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Art, as well as in his own studio at 1224 Chestnut Street.[130] As was the case with many American artists, Campbell Cooper spent his summers in European art colonies, including Dordrecht, Holland, where in 1897 he met American artist Emma Lambert, marrying her the same year. After a prolonged honeymoon of travelling and

[129] Karen L. Carter, '"Earning a living" in the International Graphic Arts: the Académie Julian and the teaching of poster design and illustration, 1890-1914', in Karen L. Carter and Susan Waller (eds.), *Foreign Artists and Communities in Modern Paris, 1870-1914: Strangers in Paradise*, Routledge: Abingdon, England, 2015, pp. 53-63.

[130] 'Water Color at the Art Club', *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 17 March 1895, p. 6; 'Matters Artistic', *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 January 1896, p. 7; 'Tete-a-Tete', *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 18 December 1897, p. 6.

painting throughout Europe, the couple moved back to America in 1902 and began exhibiting the large collection of work they had amassed in their years of travel. Perhaps due to the financial pressures of married life, or maybe just in the spirit of new directions, the Campbell Coopers consigned a collection of their watercolours to Wanamaker's Philadelphia store to sell in their gallery. The advertisement for the exhibition stated that the sale included '*Salon* pictures', and 'some of them medal-winners', meaning that shoppers could not only ornament their home with a lovely European landscape, but also one that had been vetted by European art authorities.[131] Moreover, as long as American artists painted in this vein, they would have a commercial outlet in the department store, and not just Wanamaker's. By the 1890s and 1900s, department store art galleries were just as likely to advertise the work of American artists as that of European artists. In fact, they were usually listed alongside each other, as shown in a 1905 advertisement from Chicago department store Carson Pirie Scott (fig. 38). The sheer volume of American art on offer at department stores across the country suggests that stores and artists had found a mutually beneficial alignment. While in direct competition with Europeans or the masses of other European-trained artists for scant, although slowly growing, gallery space, Americans could rely on the equally numerous department stores to market or even buy their art to then sell on to their customers. Department stores, on the other hand, could rely on American artists to produce enough art to fill their gallery space with an ever-changing range of works to sell to the public.

Campbell Cooper's exhibition at Wanamaker's can be considered a kind of off-loading sale, for it marked a distinct break in his career when he turned his gaze from Europe, with its rural landscapes and picturesque views, to the American city – his works

[131] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), 15 May 1902, p. 5.

taking especial inspiration from the commercial structures of Philadelphia and then New York, where he moved in 1904. These paintings and watercolours are by and far the most notable in his oeuvre, and those for which he received the most contemporaneous praise. Campbell Cooper was, moreover, one of the first artists to make a specialty out of painting that most American of all architectural styles: the skyscraper (fig. 39). The fact that Campbell Copper stopped selling his art at Wanamaker's, or any department store, after finding more stable success and recognition in the American art world shows the role that the department store filled for artists. As a commercial institution with a voracious appetite for objects of all types, department stores were important alternative venues for artists to display and sell their works, providing both monetary support and exposure to a large number of potential buyers. In the interim between training and acclaim, the department store acted as both a haven and a proving ground for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artists.

Department stores promoted this 'alternative' potential of their art galleries, citing them as a boon for both artists and customers. This was shown in this chapter by the examples of Au Bon Marché's gallery, which advertised the fact that it sold artwork without taking a commission from artists, and advertisements for Wanamaker's 1881 gallery, in which the store argued that it offered a better deal for customers through applying its merchandising system to art. Both of these examples pitted the department store art gallery against the traditional art gallery and the art market at large. Yet department stores also positioned themselves against the most traditional of art world institutions: the academies. Taking on the authority of the academies, whether representative of France, Britain or America, was a risky proposition, so it makes sense that the task would fall to someone as visionary and contrarian as Henry Gordon Selfridge. The opening of Selfridge's eponymous

London store on 15 March 1909 coincided roughly with preparations for the Royal Academy of Arts' annual Summer Exhibition, which had been held every year since 1769. It remained for some artists the most prestigious venue in which to show one's art and had few major competitors. By 1909 its main rival, the New English Art Club, which was founded in 1885 to counter the Academy's conservatism, shared many members with it, including John Singer Sargent and George Clausen. A *Times* review of the 1909 Summer Exhibition even remarked that a watercolour by Robert Moony looked like signaled an 'invasion of the Academy walls from the New English Art Club'.[132]

The excitement of the period and the attention garnered by the exhibition made it an ideal outlet for Selfridge's publicity machine, and on 9 May an advertisement appeared in *The Observer* entitled 'The Little Academy'.[133] Addressed to 'Art Connoisseurs and Picture Buyers', it stated that an exhibition of paintings and drawings 'crowded out' of the Summer Exhibition would open the following day in the store's Fine Art Gallery (Room 13, Third Floor). By calling the exhibition 'The Little Academy', it is apparent that either Selfridge or his art gallery staff wanted to associate this department in the new enterprise with the established Royal Academy, thus lending it some of the credence of the 141-year-old institution. Yet the advertisement also undermines the Exhibition in subtle ways, the first of which was its mention of the 'lack of wall space' at the Academy. With the ever-increasing number of submissions and limited space in Burlington House, a former private home never intended to host public exhibitions, the Summer Exhibition could only display a fraction of

[132] The watercolour mentioned was *The Lady and the Poet* (entry 811). 'The Royal Academy', *The Times* (London), 25 May 1909, p. 13.
[133] *The Observer* (London), 9 May 1909, p. 16.

the works received; and, with the jury composed of members of the Academy itself, the rationale behind the works chosen was often self-interested and political.

Selfridge's own neo-classical palace, which dwarfed Burlington House, thus presented an ideal venue for the display of art one might want to see but which was unfortunately excluded from the main show, which in turn drew attention to the ability of commercial venues to act as alternatives to traditional state and royal institutions. Moreover, the works displayed in the Selfridge's exhibition were not inconsequential and unworthy of display at the Royal Academy, but in fact potential 'works of true genius' excluded through a pure lack of space. This meant that Selfridge was in reality doing a sort of public service for artists and the Academy by finishing its job. The fact that the advertisement implies that the 'genius' qualities of the works required a 'discerning eye' was also a subtle challenge to the jury, who perhaps through sheer ignorance let these works slip through their hands – something the store or the public would not do. Finally, this commercial establishment offered distinct commercial advantages: prices clearly marked on the works by the artists themselves; free admission to the show and even a free catalogue, both of which cost a shilling at the Exhibition. For the working class of London, Selfridge's exhibition was a chance to see or even just stumble upon Exhibition quality artwork. Most importantly for this sub-section, Selfridge's display also presented artists shut out of the Exhibition with a chance to display their art in front of the throng of people guaranteed to enter Selfridge's new, massive store. If the artists were lucky, they might also sell their art to those same people, who might themselves be lured into buying by the simplicity of Selfridge's merchandising policies.

Like the many commercial art galleries before it, Selfridge's was presenting itself as an alternative to the hegemony of both the Summer Exhibition and the Royal Academy. This reflected an intrinsic truth: that commerce was slowly but surely displacing traditional systems of display and patronage. Galleries, whether on Bond Street or in a department store, were better suited to representing artists' needs, as well as the reality of an increasingly commercialised society, than the Academy. Yet it was the commercial art galleries on Bond Street, and not Selfridge's art gallery, that were in fact the concrete future of the art market. While both the salons of the Royal Academy and the department store art gallery eventually passed into irrelevancy, the commercial art gallery thrived, reducing the need for alternative institutions through its complete adherence to the needs of the market – a fundamental need of which was to mask the commodity status of art in any way possible. Still, as shown in this chapter, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the department store art gallery had an active and necessary place in an art market that had yet to consolidate around its now-orthodox institutions of the commercial art gallery and the auction house. While it was the commercial art gallery, and not the department store, that was the true alternative to the hegemony of the art academies, the department store helped to prop up the fledgling commercial art system. Not only did it foster a market for art, but it also provided initial opportunities to artists such as Campbell Cooper, who could go on to have a successful career selling art in the mainstream art market.

V. Conclusion:

Many more artists who would never achieve Campbell Cooper's level of renown undoubtedly displayed and sold their art in department stores during the period under consideration. Team this with the many customers, of increasingly diverse backgrounds, who bought art at the department store whether for domestic or personal purposes, and the department store is shown to be as close to a democratising medium for art as a commercial institution can be. As shown throughout this chapter, this was facilitated by the department store's mass merchandising system. By selling goods at fixed prices and under a high-volume sales model, department stores helped to lower the cost of both original and reproduction works of art. Moreover, because of their liberal entry and returns policies, which sought to make purchase as stress-free as possible, department stores also made art commerce more physically *and* psychologically accessible for consumers not traditionally targeted by the mainstream art market. The downside of this commercial model was that art, through its integration into the mass merchandising system of the department store, was necessarily exposed as a commodity. This made both the department store and the art sold within it outsiders in the art world, which sought above all to maintain a veil of anti-commercialism.[134] Yet, ironically, art displayed in the department store could have the opposite effect on the other goods sold alongside it – hiding their commodity status and making them seem to be more than just saleable goods. The next chapter will consider this aspect of the relationship between the department store and fine art.

[134] This perceived polarity between fine art and the market, or the 'high/low' dichotomy, is discussed and problematised in numerous works of art historical scholarship, but particularly: Crow, 1996; Huyssen, 1986; and Levine, 1990.

CHAPTER TWO

DISPLAY: FRAMES TO INCLUDE AND FRAMES TO EXCLUDE

I. Introduction

Chapter One has shown how the department store's mass commercial system had a direct impact on both the relationship between fine art and the department store, and between the department store and the greater art market. This is a very different narrative to the one that is told in many studies considering the subject, which tend to focus on the cultural and aesthetic ramifications of department store art display rather than on the commercial or even cultural implications of department store art sale, even though the latter aspect was very much a reality in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store.[1] Moreover, even the analysis of department store art display tends to ignore commerce, or more specifically the commercial rationale for art display. For commerce to a department store does not just mean something as directly transactional as selling goods to customers. As a systemic logic implies, commerce underpins the entirety of a department store's activities, from logistics to finance to advertising – essentially anything that facilitates the larger goal of the system, which is high-volume sales. This chapter considers the latter of these activities of the department store – advertising – and its connection to fine art, particularly through the medium of physical display. Specifically, it looks at how the mass commercial system of the department store was the driving force behind its display practices, and how those practices in turn determined the reasons and realities behind department store art display.

[1] Examples of these studies were given in the Introduction to this thesis but, to reiterate, they include: Leach, 1993; Miller, 1994 and Williams, 1991.

The same commercial considerations that dominated the relationship between the department store and fine art in the last chapter will again feature prominently in this chapter; specifically, this means the department store's high-turnover, fixed-cost sales model, and its diversified stock of goods. Both came to bear on the department store's primary style of display, which I am terming 'mixed display'. This term refers to the two most crucial display principles of the department store: first, the promiscuous mixing of goods, including fine art, amongst other kinds of goods; and second, the department store's near panoramic visual landscape. The open, diverse display landscape of the department store meant that goods readily mingled with one another on both the sales floor and in the eye of the consumer. Significantly for the department store's sales model, which revolved around the sale of mass-manufactured products, this meant that any object in the store could either be uplifted by association with another one, or conversely act as an elevating influence. For fine art, this style of display not only exposed it to association with every other object in the store, but also transformed it into a versatile and mobile advertising device that framed both the store itself and its goods. Art thus became deeply embedded both in the physical environment of the department store and its commerce. The association of art with a raft of modern goods, from mass-manufactured furniture to women's fashion, undoubtedly had overt implications not just for fine art's perceived rarity but also its autonomy. From this basis, the second goal of this chapter is to understand the interaction of the department store's display system with other systems of display in the art world, and especially its potential impact on the development of forms of commercial art display and the art market.

Scholarship on the relationship between display and the art market developed after that on the activities of critics and dealers, although it has made great strides in the past thirty

years.[2] Some of the first texts on the subject, written in the early 1990s, are by art historian Martha Ward, who postulated the importance of private and commercial spaces and display practices, including those of the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists, in the creation of a market for modern art that operated autonomously to the dominance of France's Académie des Beaux Arts and to the academic style it propagated.[3] Subsequent research on pioneering private galleries such as London's Grosvenor Gallery has emphasised the importance of the physical space of the gallery in demarcating it as a private, elite space of culture, separate from both the direct commerce of the so-called 'entrepreneurial' galleries and the public commerce and politics of the Royal Academy of Arts.[4] These studies have been foundational in showing the equal importance of display to the activities of critics and dealers in formulating modern art and fostering a modern art market. That said, they tend only to consider display as it pertains directly to fine art, and display systems contained very much in the art world.

On the one hand, this has meant that displays of objects beyond fine art have been discounted from the history of commercial art display. On the other, it has resulted in a polarity developing in scholarship where modern art and the gallery system are held as developing in diametric opposition to the salons of the art academies, such as the Royal Academy of Arts or the Académie des Beaux Arts without due consideration of other

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[2] For a key example of pioneering scholarship on the art market that focuses on the role of critics and dealers, see: White and White, 1993. Subsequent scholarship includes: Jensen, 1997; Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, 'The Periodical and the Art Market: Investigating the "Dealer-Critic System" in Victorian England', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 41, no. 4 (2008), pp. 323-51; and J.M. Mancini, *Pre-Modernism: Art-World Change and American Culture from the Civil War to the Armory Show*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2005.

[3] For examples of this literature, see: Martha Ward, 'Impressionist Installations and Private Exhibitions', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 73, no. 4 (1991), pp. 599-622; and Martha Ward, *Pissarro, Neo-Impressionism, and the Spaces of the Avant-Garde*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, 1996.

[4] These studies include: Colleen Denney, *At the Temple of Art: The Grosvenor Gallery 1877-1890*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press: Madison, NJ, 2000; and Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney, *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England*, Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1996.

regimes of display. This chapter seeks to redress this imbalance by showing how the department store's mixed display style related to and influenced developing forms of art display in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Specifically, it will show how modern art display developed to exclude not just the outside world but also other kinds of objects. Arguably, this was in direct response to the department store's use of fine art in its diverse, mass commercially orientated displays. This chapter will also consider the visual paradigm of mass commerce, as seen in the department store, and the way that galleries and artists alike worked to shield their art from it. In sum, as the department store developed a display style which sought to bring mass-manufactured and fashion goods into the orbit of high culture and art, the commercial art world simultaneously developed its own forms of display to exclude anything but.

This chapter will thus, in Section II, first consider both the development and commercial imperatives behind department store art display, as well as their impact on fine art. This will be done first by elaborating the visual paradigm of the department store, and then its propensity to 'mix' goods amongst each other. Section III then looks more particularly at the role of art in this display landscape, and specifically by considering the way it was associated in turn with domestic goods and women's fashion. The outcome of this was to elevate these goods beyond 'mere commodities' and into the orbit of fine art. Finally, Section IV considers the ramifications of the department store's display style not just on fine art but also on the developing system of commercial art display as practiced in art galleries and auction houses. While associations with fine art could only uplift a department store's main stock of goods, it was perceived to have the opposite impact on art itself. This is shown through the steps taken to expel other kinds of objects from these environments and to create

a ‘neutral’ display landscape fully focused on fine art and which framed art itself as itself more than a commodity.

II. Displaying Art in the Department Store

As prominently discussed in Chapter One, department stores are defined in large part by their divergent product lines; or, in simpler terms, by the many different kinds of goods they sell. Mass retailers such as department stores and their predecessors – bazaars, magasins de nouveautés, and dry goods palaces – can be distinguished from traditional retailers because of the latter’s specialisation in one product or line of products, such as furniture, clothing or perishables. This means that mixed retailing does not just define the department store but mass retailing in general. That said, department stores certainly brought the practice to its apex, first by expanding their offerings to all of the products we might expect from modern mass retailers, such as today’s big box shops and digital platforms, and second by concretising and perfecting the merchandising system, described in Chapter One, which allowed mass retailing to function and prosper. Mixed retailing had many commercial benefits for a department store, and was a key factor in its ability to sell a greater amount of goods to more people and at a lower price than its competitors. Yet, moving beyond the strictly commercial and transactional, mixed retailing, and mixing in general, was a key characteristic of the department store and its impact on society as a whole. Ironically, this is perhaps best measured through the criticisms levied by the department store’s competitors and detractors, as it showed what they feared most about the department store’s potential to shift western economic and cultural mores. As historian Erika Rappaport states in reference to London retailer William Whiteley and his groundbreaking store: ‘Whiteley’s enemies

charged that by selling an array of commodities, services, and pleasures to a mixed shopping crowd, he had disorganized class, gender, moral, and aesthetic categories… Opponents charged that Whiteley was selling more than just goods; he was now inventing new identities.'[5]

Rappaport's book focuses on the implications of mixed, mass retailing on gender relations. Yet, as indicated by the above quote, it is just as important to consider the physical and aesthetic fall out of mixed retailing, which is what this chapter does through the medium of department store display. As will be shown, mixed retailing had a formative impact on department store display. For one, it meant the creation of a dynamic shopping landscape where different kinds of goods associated with and supported one another. The open spaces it necessitated also influenced the visual landscape of the department store, creating a panoramic space in which, again, goods and objects melded in the eyes of the shopper. The implications of this on art, which as shown in the previous chapter was present from an early point in the department store as a saleable good, are key. The mixed display style of the department store inevitably meant that a work of fine art could easily be found on display amongst the mass-manufactured goods that were the department store's true bread and butter. While fine art, the value of which was increasingly staked on ideas such as originality and rarity, might be damaged through display alongside mass-produced commodities, the same association could only elevate the latter. This is why, despite the presence of fine art in the department store as a saleable good, the greatest worth of that same art and even the business of art commerce itself was in its ability to 'frame' other goods, thus potentially increasing their value. While the open, mixed nature of department store display meant that any object

[5] Rappaport, 2001, p. 30.

could find itself used for display purposes, fine art was a quintessential display object for its low commercial worth but its high display worth. The sale and display of fine art in the department store thus made commercial sense not only under the department store's promise to sell any and all objects, but also under the commercial necessity to frame and transform the mass-manufactured goods in which it specialised into something more like art.

In contrast to the following section, which will look at the way art display was targeted to create certain environments and sell certain products, this section will focus on the larger conditions under which it was displayed. Starting with Au Bon Marché's contained and relatively 'respectful' gallery as the first example of a type of department store art display – although this premise is itself shown to be problematic– it will be argued that, as the period in question progressed, there were fewer conventions around the practice of department store art display. Department stores in America, France and the UK displayed art in a variety of unique and inventive ways. This included in lavishly decorated galleries such as Au Bon Marché's, on bannisters overlooking soaring grand courts, in mock mansions and in a variety of dedicated sales spaces. These defied contemporaneous display methods and put fine art in immediate contact with saleable goods in ways that it had rarely been before. The following two sub-sections will consider how the department store and its commercial system necessarily dictated its forms of art display, and especially encouraged the visual and spatial mixing that defined the department store's display relationship with fine art.

IIa. Viewing Art in the Department Store

It is appropriate to start again with the case of Au Bon Marché and its art gallery. Whereas the previous chapter considered the gallery as a directly commercial vector for the store, this

chapter can look at its more widely discussed contributions to the advertising and display aspects of the store. Moreover, Au Bon Marché's gallery is an ideal starting point to discuss two interrelated display issues characteristic of the department store: its promotion of a particular kind of visual experience, and the impact of that visual experience on the art displayed. As has been supposed by numerous scholars, the nineteenth century was the first century of 'vision', meaning a century in which vision was considered the primary sense.[6] Yet, the idea of 'vision' was not consistent over time, as Jonathan Crary has highlighted in his important book *Techniques of the Observer*.[7] The conception of vision in the nineteenth century was fundamentally different from that of the eighteenth century, in the fact that vision was in the nineteenth century considered to be produced subjectively rather than objectively. This implicitly meant numerous changes in visual culture, which Crary highlights. It also meant new opportunities for commerce, which as early as the first decades of the nineteenth century took advantage of this spectacular new visuality to draw in and create new customers. As Rappaport states: 'Arcades, panoramas, bazaars, museums, theaters, zoos, and shop windows addressed the public as spectators, inviting people to look at goods and associate that looking with pleasure.'[8]

Department stores were key propagators of this new form of looking, which made the shopper the centre point around which a panorama of available sights, sounds and, most crucially, commodities were arrayed. Of course, the openness and potential of this endless

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[6] Jonathan Crary, presenting a kind of pre-history of the theories of Guy Debord, argues that vision displaced touch as the most important sense during the nineteenth century. Both Crary and Debord's writing is fundamental to understanding the dominance of vision in capitalist society as well as the primary visual expression of such a society: spectacle. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2012**;** and Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Zone Books: Cambridge, MA, 1995.

[7] Crary, 2012.

[8] Rappaport, 2001, p. 28.

horizon of available goods concealed the fact that the customer was, in reality, encased in a commercial world of his or her own making. As the commercial world structured vision, so a person's own sight would transform everything around them into a commodity, enmeshed in the commercial whole. This was true as well for objects in the department store, which inevitably blended into the department store's larger environment and helped to build its brand by dint of association. This sub-section will show how the department store's display tactics encouraged this kind of visual relationship between viewer and store. It will also show the part that art played in building a department store's brand through visual association, and in turn suggest some of the inevitable ramifications of this, to be followed up later in the chapter, on art.

Au Bon Marché's gallery is an ideal vector through which to look at this phenomenon not only because of the plethora of images available of the gallery and the store, but also because it is the only example of department store art display found during research for this thesis which was described and analysed simultaneously by someone from the art world and someone from the store itself. The two articles in question, published at the time of the opening of Au Bon Marché's gallery's in March 1875, give a unique insight not only into the gallery's layout and its display techniques but also into the appropriateness and use of these display techniques as conceived by two representatives with two opposing views of art's place in commerce. The first article, which detailed the inauguration of the refurbishments and changes to the store in 1875, one of which was the new Galerie de tableaux, was published in popular French periodical, *L'Illustration*.[9] Importantly, this article was almost

[9] *L'Illustration*, 6 March 1875.

certainly written by the store's own publicity department.[10] The second was written by important art world professional Alfred Darcel and published in *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*.[11]

We learn a few key facts about Au Bon Marché's gallery from the article in *L'Illustration*. It was designed by Louis-Charles Boileau, who worked alongside his father, Louis-Auguste Boileau, and famed engineer Gustave Eiffel on the store's larger remodelling project.[12] Measuring twenty by eight metres, the gallery encompassed two stories, the second of which was bordered by balconied bays that allowed shoppers to look in on the room from above.[13] The gallery's sumptuousness is apparent in an etching, published alongside the article, which shows the room's surfeit of ornamentation (fig. 13). Its decoration was the result of numerous artists and artisans, all of whom are mentioned, if only briefly, in the article.[14] This includes Henri-Léopold Lévy, an academic artist better known for his painted decorations for churches and government buildings. Although hardly visible in the etching, the article gives emphasis to the cartouches adorning the gallery walls and lists some of the celebrated textile innovators and manufacturers whose names were featured on them, including Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf and Joseph-Marie Jacquard. Alongside its

[10] In his study of Au Bon Marché, Michael Miller states that the store's archive holds working copies of this and other articles published in the 1870s about Au Bon Marché, strongly suggesting that the store's publicity department was involved in their creation. Miller, 1994, p. 173.
[11] Alfred Darcel, 'Peintures de MM. H. Lévy et D. Maillart dans les galeries du Bon-Marché', *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, no. 13 (27 March 1875), pp. 105-6.
[12] *L'Illustration*, 6 March 1875.
[13] This can best be seen toward the rear of the etching, and is mentioned by the author of the article who states: 'La hauteur est prise dans deux étages et d'élegantes baies d'ajournement s'ouvrant sur les galeries des étages supérieurs forment balcon et permettent d'admirer le coup d'oeil vu d'en haut.' Ibid.
[14] The artists and artisans mentioned in the article include: M. Henri-Léopold Lévy; M. Perrey, who made the cornices and the caryatides; MM. Valadin and Lucien Feuchères, who completed the decorative paintings; and M. Séguin, who made the marble fireplace based on a design by Boileau. Ibid.

emphasis on the cartouches, the article also characterised the gallery as 'a temple to Art, elevated by Industry.'[15]

Three weeks later, *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* published Darcel's analysis of Au Bon Marché's gallery. Principally taking the form of a review of Lévy's paintings, Darcel does not mention many of the other artists and artisans named in *L'Illustration*'s article. He begins his commentary by remarking that the gallery recalls the Louvre's *Galerie d'Apollon*. This is not a laudatory observation, as he also notes that neither the architecture nor the décor of Au Bon Marché's gallery befit a contemporary exhibition space, with the lavishly ornamented walls making particularly poor supports for paintings.[16] Darcel proceeds to consider Lévy's paintings, which he states were designed specifically for the gallery. Situated in various coffers and medallions along the ceiling and walls, they depicted allegorical figures in scenes representing the interactions of commerce, industry and beauty. The ceiling's central panel, for instance, is entitled *La Toilette de Vénus* and shows the goddess of love seated on a cloud while Mercury, god of merchants, brings her a gold plate covered in jewellery. The other paintings continue with this theme; and, in a rare stroke of luck, the two octagonal coffers that flanked the central panel and matching the paintings Darcel calls *Industrie* and *Commerce* in his review, appear to have escaped the destruction of the gallery in the 1920s.[17] *Allegory of Production* depicts an enthroned female figure spinning wool brought to her by a shepherd (fig. 40). At her feet a male figure holds a metal bowl and the hammer he used to make it. The second painting features another female figure seated beneath a baldachin (fig. 41). A Moorish-style figure stands before her emptying a

[15] The author states: 'C'est le temple de l'Art, élevé par l'Industrie'. Ibid.
[16] Darcel, 1875, p. 105.
[17] Hampel Fine Art Auctions, *16th-18th Century Paintings*, 19 June 2012, lot 218.

vase full of jewels, and in the lower left corner of the image a male figure holds scales to weigh the treasure. Darcel paraphrased the overall theme of these paintings as 'Industry and Commerce working together to adorn Beauty'.[18] This statement evokes Au Bon Marché's own characterisation of its gallery as 'a temple to Art, elevated by Industry'. Yet this is largely where the similarities between the two articles end; and, taken together, they arguably mark the diverging views of the department store and the art world vis-à-vis the form and function of an art gallery.

While not uniquely illustrative of the increasingly diverse and complicated French art world, Darcel was as integrated into and representative of it as one could be in the mid to late nineteenth century. Like many of his contemporaries, he assumed multiple roles: administrator of the Manufacture des Gobelins; director of the Musée de Cluny; inspector for the Commission des Monuments Historiques; and critic for *L'Illustration* and *Le Journal de Rouen*.[19] His numerous activities, including a prolific publishing career, led to him being awarded the *Légion d'honneur* in 1885.[20] Darcel's review can thus in many ways be taken as a snapshot of the prevailing view of the mainstream art world towards a department store art gallery. Yet what is perhaps most revealing about Darcel's review is not his skeptical view of Au Bon Marché's activities – this much was largely to be expected by art world professionals faced with such an openly commercial institution entering their field – but neglect of what were arguably the more interesting and challenging aspects of art display at the store, which

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[18] Darcel states this as: 'L'Industrie et le Commerce concourant à parer la Beauté'. Darcel, 1875, p. 105.

[19] For biographical information on Darcel, see: IdRef (Identifiants et Référentiels pour l'Enseignement supérieur et la Recherche), 'Darcel, Alfred (1818-1893)'. https://www.idref.fr/033020132 [accessed 15 September 2018]; Patrons de France, 'Darcel, Alfred | Système d'Information Patrons et Patronat Français | XIXe-XXe siècles'. http://www.patronsdefrance.fr/?q=sippaf-actor-record/21463 [accessed 15 September 2018]; and 'Alfred Darcel et l'école impressionniste', *Les Amis de Flaubert*, no. 48, 1976, p. 42.

[20] Ministère Français de la Culture, 'Alfred Darcel LH/658/56'. http://www2.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/leonore_fr?ACTION=CHERCHER&FIELD_1=COTE&VALUE_1=LH%2F658%2F56 [accessed 19 September 2018].

were the non-traditional techniques of display being developed and exposed to the store's multitude of shoppers.

While Au Bon Marché was certainly nodding to tradition, and likely also trying to alleviate skepticism and trepidation towards its art activities, by creating a specially designated, separate gallery for art, this space in particular and the store's display practices in general exceeded any sort of orthodoxy from the outset. The divergent spaces where one could find art as early as 1875 in Au Bon Marché include its 'buffet' room and reading room, the latter of which was, like the gallery, decorated with easel and ceiling paintings by a renowned academic artist, Diogène Maillart (figs. 42 & 43). Darcel did review Maillart's ceiling paintings, and with more sympathy than Lévy's, although in much less detail – the mention of them being a veritable footnote in the larger review. Yet perhaps one of the most glaring examples is the fact that, as mentioned in *L'Illustration*, the store built a balcony overlooking the gallery from its main atrium and adjoining sales spaces, which allowed shoppers to look in on the scene from above. This vantage point, which is visible to left and on the far wall in *L'Illustration*'s image, undoubtedly undermined the gallery's status as a sacrosanct art display space by transforming it into a visual panorama quite separate from the act of looking at art (fig. 13). It also mirrored the kinds of looking available into and from other store spaces, as shown also by the balconied gallery depicted in the image of the store's reading room (fig. 43).

The importance of looking, and especially the fostering of certain kinds of looking, was central to the emerging theories around and definitions of the 'gallery' in the nineteenth century. As Charlotte Klonk details in her important book *Spaces of Experience*, the nationalisation of art collections, and thus also the creation of the public art gallery, led to

drastic developments in both the definition and display practices of the gallery, with the new 'museum professionals' of the nineteenth century employing pioneering scientific methods to understand and regulate the visitor's relationship to art.[21] The idea of art as a perceptual experience emphasised the need for the art itself to become more visible, meaning both closer to the viewer and displayed for optimal viewing conditions. These changes shed light on Darcel's review, which in quite a modern sense reviewed not only the quality of art in the gallery but also the gallery's potential as a site for viewing art. The importance of viewing in Darcel's review is shown by his critique of the natural lighting in Au Bon Marché's gallery, which he lamented came only from one source, the windows represented on the right of *L'Illustration*'s etching, and which was directed towards the store rather than onto the art for which the room was designed.[22] As Darcel was deeply enmeshed in the institutional art world of the late nineteenth century, he would have been more than aware of the debates around art display. Au Bon Marché's own image of its gallery in *L'Illustration* even seems to play to these discourses, by showing a restrained atmosphere with patrons looking closely and appraisingly at the paintings and sculptures on display. A study of the light and shadows in the image would also seem to suggest that light fell directly on the art. Yet these aspects of the image, at least, did not accord fully to the reality of art display at Au Bon Marché. In the first place, this image, unlike the image of the reading room, notably does not show shoppers utilising the balcony to peer into the art gallery. But the most marked divergences between the viewing ideal and the viewing reality at Au Bon Marché can be seen in later images.

Only a few years after the 1875 opening of its gallery, Au Bon Marché was publishing images that demonstrated a drastically different art-viewing environment than that

[21] Klonk, 2009.
[22] Darcel, 1875, p. 105.

increasingly preferred by connoisseurs and professionals alike. In particular, an image published in the 1886 copy of the store's annual *Agenda buvard* of what it called its '*galerie de rubans'* – in fact its main atrium – shows paintings quite literally spilling out of the gallery and into the store (fig. 35). At left, one can see paintings hung one on top of the other on every aspect of the walls that formed the opening to the art gallery. There are also, on the floor above the entrance to the gallery and where one could find the balconied viewing point visible in the *L'Illustration* image, paintings hung from the ceiling. This chaotic viewing environment, which involved not only masses of paintings hung in a manner that was quite inconducive to easy viewing, but also a busy store heaving with goods, was undoubtedly as far from the art display ideal as could be mustered. This image shows not only how popular the gallery must have been with artists, but also the extremely lax attitude the store could have towards the viewing potential of its art gallery. The emphasis was patently on long-range viewing from a distance, and thus also on the total visual environment of the store, rather than on ease of viewing a single work of art. Compounding this paradigm was the fact that images of the gallery were very often included on postcards, such as the one featured in Figure 44. Nothing can better speak to the gallery's use as a long-range store branding mechanism than images sent potentially thousands of miles in which the art on display is arguably a secondary feature.

The catch is that, while department stores over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century readily opened designated galleries for both the sale and display of art – thus adhering at least loosely to the art world's burgeoning display ideal – they at the same time would display art wherever they thought fit, and even if it was at the expense of the viewing experience. One of the most egregious, but also typical, examples can be seen on an

early twentieth-century postcard published by Philadelphia retailer Strawbridge & Clothier (fig. 45). It shows a three-story atrium with the store's women's clothing section on the two lower floors. Hanging from the balconied aisles on the top floor are numerous small landscape and genre paintings. The caption on the postcard rightfully glazes over the bizarre presence of these paintings, as it is rather obvious they are there not to be looked at themselves but instead to contribute to the overall display environment of the store. It certainly would be impossible to get a close look at these paintings – that is without having to lean dangerously over the balustrade! A second postcard from the same period shows that this was a popular place for the store to display paintings (fig. 46). Comparing these images to those from Au Bon Marché shows that this bizarre form of display was not only not without precedence, but also an altogether normal occurrence that even transcended national boundaries.

One can only imagine Darcel's reaction to art being displayed in this manner. Yet, when in his own review he called the theme of Au Bon Marché's ceiling paintings 'Industry and Commerce working together to adorn Beauty', he hinted at the rationale determining such unorthodox display practices. While art was undoubtedly a standout feature of the department store, it, like any other object in the store, was secondary to the store itself. As commerce supported beauty in Lévy's paintings, so it was the department store itself that was the bedrock upon which the entire visual experience lay. This is not to say that, as will be discussed later in this chapter, art was not itself emphasised to create a certain environment or to sell certain goods. But it does mean that even the most rarefied of objects were liable to be subsumed into the larger environment of the store, for it was the store itself and what it offered to customers in terms of commercial and leisure opportunities that was the ultimate

justification and draw. The prevalence of images of department stores, whether this meant sweeping images of exteriors or panoramic views of interiors, shows the importance of the stores to their own advertising. While it was the goods for sale, it was the store itself that did the selling, and especially in the period before the rise of the national and international brand. This situation encouraged a kind of 'panoramic' viewing environment, where goods, displays and store could blend together. This form of viewing was repeated in images of the stores, and is especially noticeable in Figure 45, where the eye is drawn down the length of the store atrium to, fittingly, a selection of framed paintings just visible on the far wall. These paintings, displayed more naturally and normally on a wall, may well have been part of the store's fine art sales space, meaning that the display served a more directly commercial purpose. Even so, in Figure 45 it acts as just another store adornment to capture the eye and, hopefully, draw the customer into the store.

It is easy to see how this form of viewing might be challenging to the art world and especially its new focus on the relationship between the viewer and art, but at the same time be extraordinarily useful to the department store. Not only did panoramic viewing showcase the grand spaces of the stores themselves, but the visual elision between art and store could also lend the stores new connotations that helped to sell goods. This can especially be seen in Au Bon Marché's image of its *Galerie de ruban* (fig. 35). With art spilling out of the art gallery and into the store, it is hard to tell where one ends and the other begins, blurring the boundaries between the two. This implied that, even outside its art gallery, Au Bon Marché displayed and sold beautiful things, and was even itself a veritable aesthetic experience. This, of course, similarly implied that what it sold was also artistic – whether it was art or not. This blurring and mixing is where the department store not only expressed its fundamental nature,

but also where it was at its most dynamic and challenging. As shown in this sub-section, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store fostered a form of viewing that not only differed drastically from new art world conceptions around art display and the gallery, but also created overt visual connections between both fine art and the department store. The next section will look at art display in the department store from the perspective of space, and particularly the way the spatial arrangement of the department store encouraged a mixing between fine art and goods.

IIb. Issues of Space and the Mixing of Art and Goods

Although fine art began its display life in the department store in a relatively traditional manner at Au Bon Marché, it increasingly came to be displayed in many new, interesting, and some might say wholly inappropriate places – for instance hung from balconies or in cluttered, chaotic store atriums – all of which challenged the visual supremacy of art. Yet the display of art in the department store also had another aspect that pushed the conventions of art display and the idea of the 'gallery' to the extreme. This sub-section will consider issues around space, and especially the way that the commercial demands of the department store and its open display style meant that art often had to share its display space with numerous other kinds of goods.

Department stores developed more specific and more rationally conceived means of separating and categorising goods during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – a necessity given the extent to which stores were growing – which reflected in their spatial layout. By the end of the nineteenth century most department stores would, for instance, offer maps of their different floors, many even with a key listing corresponding departments and

sub-departments. This not only allowed shoppers to navigate the store but also gave department stores the tools to rationalise their own sprawling spaces. Yet this did not mean that every object in the department store stayed in its own 'box'. As detailed in the previous subsection, department store display was far more dynamic than a rationally conceived 'departmental' system might indicate. Not only did the visual style of the department store foster immediate connections between store and object, aided in its own way by open display, but the necessarily open and free-flowing spaces of the department store made the strict organisation of objects more of a formality than a reality. With goods brought out from behind counters and into the open in the late nineteenth century, and in addition the commercial reality of stores constantly expanding in terms of lines of goods but not necessarily space, different kinds of objects were vastly more likely to encounter each other than not.

We can again look to Au Bon Marché for a first example of the particularities, but also the opportunities, of department store art display, but this time in terms of space. As already described, Au Bon Marché opened a purpose-built gallery in 1875 dedicated to the display of art. Yet, not long after the gallery opened, it was combined with the store's reading room to form a single space, called the 'Salon de Lecture et Galerie d'Exposition de Peinture et Sculpture'. The postcard in Figure 44 shows both this title and the gallery's new physical configuration, which saw a long central table for reading and writing placed in the centre of the room. The store never explained this merger, which is mainly evidenced through images and descriptions of the space after the fact. Immediate assumptions about this change might include that the gallery was unpopular with artists, and thus lacked enough art to fill it, although images featured previously in this chapter show the gallery quite literally

overflowing with art. Similarly, it might have been the reading room that was unpopular, although, given the fact that other department stores soon copied it, this is also unlikely to be the case.[23] The most probable answer is thus that Au Bon Marché needed additional sales space and decided to merge these two indirectly commercial spaces into one. Most department stores in the late nineteenth century, but Au Bon Marché especially, integrated new product lines and increased their consumer base at a breakneck speed. These developments required continual expansions of sales space, hence the constant refurbishments and even complete reconstructions of many department stores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These spatial demands as well as the evolving field of department store commerce thus account for Au Bon Marché's sacrifice of its reading room. It is telling in terms of the store's priorities that the management decided, in light of such significant spatial pressure, to keep the oversized art gallery at all. Yet what is still more telling is that the store did not find the diversification of the purpose of the art gallery unduly troubling. For a store that began with a gallery space dedicated wholly to art display, Au Bon Marché quite quickly adopted the wisdom of mixed-use spaces for art. Of course, this choice suited the store's developing eclectic and open style of display, as evidenced by the 1886 image of the *Galerie des rubans* (fig. 35).

Au Bon Marché demonstrates the importance of spatial demands on art display, showing that even resource-rich department stores could rarely afford to segregate art for too long. This was especially true of the nineteenth-century department store, which experienced quick growth in limited spatial confines, with many store often cobbled together from multiple, older buildings. Some stores even shared their premises with other businesses.

[23] As discussed in Chapter One, Grands Magasins du Louvre opened its own reading room, which was almost a carbon copy of Au Bon Marché's gallery and reading room, in 1879.

Grands Magasins du Louvre, for instance, shared its building with the original occupant, the Grand Hôtel du Louvre for 20 years before the hotel moved to another building on the Place du Palais Royal in 1875. The year that Au Bon Marché opened its gallery, 1875, was still early in the development of the true department store model, as established in the previous chapter, and most stores were yet to develop their business to the point where architectural expansion was a feasible investment. Yet some department stores even into the early twentieth century had to deal with severe spatial issues, adjusting their display accordingly. This was especially true of London department stores such as Harrods, which were subject to draconian planning restrictions that limited their operation and expansion. Under these rules, it became even more useful and important to mix goods in multi-use spaces, as shown by Harrods' art gallery.

The following arguments concerning Harrods were developed from study of the store's sales catalogues, which are illuminating for a few reasons. The first is that they provide a snapshot of the store's development tracked year by year. For instance, a study of catalogues in the Harrods Company Archive (London, England) shows that the store only opened a sales area for pictures in the early twentieth century, and most likely around 1900, trailing other department stores such as Au Bon Marché and Wanamaker's development in this area by almost 20 years.[24] The second reason is that Harrods' catalogues contain a number of floor plans that reveal the exact space where art was sold in the early twentieth century: a room shared by the Pianoforte Department. The third, and most important, reason is that they reveal a key aspect of British department stores: their warehouse quality. Harrods catalogues were the phonebooks of their day: huge tomes of thousands of pages packed with

[24] The 1900 catalogue is the first to mention a Picture Department. The closest prior catalogue in the store archive dates to 1897 and does not mention pictures, indicating that the department was developed sometime between 1897 and 1900. Harrods, *Catalogue*, 1900, p. 1675. Harrods Company Archive, London, England.

tens of thousands of items. American shopper Olivia, from the Edwardian shopping guide *Olivia's Shopping and How She Does It,* stated about the London shopping context that American-style service was difficult to find, with department stores seemingly more concerned with providing everything their customers could want – the Harrods motto being *Omnia Omnibus Ubique* or 'everything for everyone, everywhere'.[25] This was due as much to spatial limitations as it was to cultural and market differences, with stores in London forced, through building regulations, into the relatively small spaces they could cobble together. This necessarily impacted both how they developed and operated, and limited the space for the kind of amenities found in American and French stores, including art display.

The Harrods picture gallery could hardly be said to resemble Au Bon Marché's gallery. Located on the ground floor of the store, it was neither as lavish nor was it purpose-built or decorated. An image from the store's 1902 sales catalogue shows a room with painted walls, classical columns, functional lighting fixtures and a ceiling covered in a low-relief geometric pattern – a far cry from Au Bon Marché's Second Empire extravaganza (fig. 47).[26] As seen in the 1902 photograph, the Picture Department shared space with the store's Pianoforte Department. In fact, the photograph is primarily meant to depict the piano showroom, with paintings shown in the peripheries of the image. The sales space for pictures was limited to the walls and sometimes the floor of this cramped room. A floor plan in the 1907 store catalogue elaborates on the Picture Department's situation and surroundings (fig. 48).[27] The room was in fact part of a larger space that also included the Jewellery Department, which itself opened onto Hans Crescent. The Picture, Pianoforte and Jewellery

[25] 'Olivia', *Olivia's Shopping and How She Does It: A Prejudiced Guide*, Gunpowder Press: Santa Barbara, CA, 2009 [first published 1906].
[26] Harrods, *Catalogue*, 1902, p. 1122. Harrods Company Archive, London, England.
[27] Harrods, *Catalogue*, 1907, p. 2. Harrods Company Archive, London, England.

room was then connected to a series of other sales spaces. From the Jewellery Department one could enter into Tailoring and 'Gent's Hats'; and from the Picture Department one had the choice of venturing into the Furnishing and Drapery Departments or the Turnery and Saddlery Departments. The area of the ground floor thus described was one of the first to be redeveloped during the store's transformative rebuilding works from 1894 to 1912. Working anti-clockwise until the redevelopment reached opposite Hans Road, this period saw a collection of pell-mell buildings turned into a more cohesive and modern store.[28]

The management at Harrods undoubtedly would have preferred to have grown and developed the physical space of the store as quickly as their American and French counterparts, but the situation on the ground in London was wholly different to that in Philadelphia or Paris. The London County Council doggedly controlled the physical size of buildings in the city, a fact that often limited how rapidly businesses could expand and change. As detailed in the Brompton Volume of the *Survey of London*, buildings over 250,000 cubic feet were subject to a number of rules and regulations which typically resulted in complex building arrangements.[29] Thus, unlike their towering steel-framed American and French cousins, British department stores rarely exceeded two stories, because of the stipulation that access to upper floors had to be wholly separate from the rest of the building. Sales spaces were therefore restricted to the first two stories of the building and warehouses, sweatshops or flats were built on the upper floors to maximise income. These limitations shaped London department stores, which then proceeded to influence such stores elsewhere in Britain, both in terms of the way they were laid out and when and how they sold and

[28] F. H. W. Sheppard, 'Brompton Road: South Side', in *Survey of London: Volume 41, Brompton* [online], London County Council: London, England, 1983.
[29] Ibid.

displayed art and other goods. It is telling, for instance, that despite an auspicious start to art display and retailing in the British bazaar, British department stores sold and displayed art comparatively later than those in France and the United States. For example, the earliest example of art display or sale at a British department store that it has been possible to identify is D. H. Evans, which opened its 'Fine Art Shop' in October 1898.[30] Moreover, it fits with this argument that D. H. Evans pursued an aggressive programme of expansion in the 1890s, buying as many adjoining Oxford Street properties as possible – the only way to grow a department store in late nineteenth-century London.

While the spatial limitations faced by London department stores were likely supremely frustrating for Harrods' management – to say nothing of the picture salesman who had to present his products to the tune of piano players of all ages and competencies – they reveal the central role of space in the development and practice of department store art display. Harrods' particular spatial situations suggest that, rather than not wanting to offer its shoppers a picture gallery, it instead may not have been a physically viable option before the store's major rebuilding project stretching from the 1890s to the 1910s. The department store's particular commercial and spatial reality also likely explains why the Picture and Pianoforte Departments occupied such close quarters in the early 1900s. As stated, it does not seem like an ideal situation, especially for those interested in quiet enjoyment of art. Still, by locating the art gallery and the piano salesroom in the same space, Harrods could take advantage of an intrinsic link between the two kinds of objects, in that they were both largely high-cost, aspirational domestic goods. As previously established in Chapter One, department store art commerce revolved around art's appropriateness as a domestic

[30] A reference to this opening can be found in a store ledger book located in the House of Fraser archive. D.H. Evans, 'Private Book of Weekly Figures' (1897-1901). House of Fraser Archive, University of Glasgow, call number Fras 374/1.

decoration. Given their size and cost, pianos were also natively domestic objects that, like art, could act as a keystone of the bourgeois family home. By placing these two objects alongside each other, Harrods could directly target the shopper looking to buy an object in this category with another that also fitted the bill. Thus, just through the convenience of location, Harrods developed a situation in which art could always act as an advertisement for pianos, or vice versa. Moreover, images of the picture/piano salesroom show the pains the store took to show fine art even while ostensibly advertising pianos. This brings home another key benefit of mixed display: that an object did not need to be a 'display' object in order to sell another item. Even simple saleable goods such as an oil painting or a piano, displayed in no special manner, could work together with other objects in their environment to create useful associations to sell other goods. Despite – or perhaps because of – Harrods' spatial limitations, it is apparent that the store took the advertising potential intrinsic in the organisation of its sale spaces very seriously.

Even as department stores expanded spatially beyond their mid nineteenth-century predecessors' wildest dreams, mixed display continued to function as an essential advertising mechanism. A key example of the progressive spatial transformation of the nineteenth-century department store, but also the continued importance of mixed display, is Philadelphia department store Wanamaker's. The first iteration of the store, opening in 1876 and called the Grand Depot, sold only men and boy's wear at the time of its opening. By 1877 it was progressing towards the sale of the fuller range of department store goods, including the all-important category of women's wear. It was in 1881 when the store opened its Furniture Department that it also began to sell fine art and prints. No images exist of this sales space – in fact very few images at all exist of the interiors of the Grand Depot as they appeared in the

1870s and 1880s – but advertisements for the gallery published in 1881 show that it was located on the third floor of the store and most directly accessible via the stairway at the Chestnut Street entrance.[31] In 1881, the store still appeared and functioned much as it did in 1876, being composed of a large former railway depot that was converted into a three-story store with a basement (fig. 49). From later store directories, published circa 1886 and 1887, it appears that the gallery originally shared the third floor with the Furniture department – a development that coincides well with the argument of Chapter One, which was that furniture and fine art had an intrinsic commercial connection in the department store.[32] Yet, as likely occurred at Au Bon Marché, the quick growth of the Furniture and Home Goods department (one could also buy bedding and mattresses on this floor) likely meant that the picture gallery was subtly phased out. Although it was still located on the third floor in 1883, by at least 1886 the sale of art had moved to the basement and had been refocused largely towards its top selling item, engravings.[33] This was arguably something of a wilderness period for Wanamaker's display of art. After a strong start in 1881, in the mid 1880s the store largely cut back on its art display before re-launching in the late 1880s with the display of large amounts of art imported from Europe, and especially Paris.

There are, of course, likely to be multiple reasons for this down period in Wanamaker's art display. They include John Wanamaker's relative distraction from the business during the ramping up of his political career and time as Postmaster General, from 1888 to 1892, and the fact that John's son Rodman only went to work as resident manager of

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[31] *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 December 1881, p. 5.

[32] Wanamaker's Philadelphia, *The Wanamaker Store Directory*, c. 1886; Wanamaker's Philadelphia, *The Wanamaker Store Directory*, c. 1887. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188), box 29b.

[33] *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 January 1883, p. 5; and *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 16 December 1886, p. 4.

the store's Paris office in 1888, after which he took over the championing of the artistic side of the store and began sending much of its displayed art back to Philadelphia.[34] Still, it cannot be denied that the store lacked ready display space in the 1880s. It quickly grew into the once capacious railway depot, requiring both the moving of departments – something that store directories attest happened frequently – and, eventually, significant expansion. This came in the form of a six-storey addition fronting Thirteenth Street and built around 1887 (fig. 50).[35] The new building gave the store significantly more floor space, which meant that, in 1891, it could re-open its picture gallery in exactly its original spot: on the third floor of the Grand Depot and in proximity to the Furniture Department.[36]

The 1887 addition also allowed the store to accommodate much grander spaces of display, including its Transept (fig. 51). It was near this space that, at the same time as the opening of the new third floor art gallery in 1891, the store constructed a special display – one of its first – involving art and goods. It was lavishly called 'Apotheosis of Silk' and described as such:

> 'The Apotheosis of Silk is a very beautiful decoration clustered about several choice paintings in silken frames. Three of the paintings are by the distinguished American artist, W. M. Chase – the others are French. The silks that adorn the enclosure are among the richest of our late importations.'[37]

Unfortunately, no images exist of this spectacular display involving the paintings of one of America's most important late nineteenth-century artists, William Merritt Chase. The advertisement also does not make it clear whether the paintings were for sale or just part of the general display – information one might consider key in a retail setting – or what is meant

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[34] Appel, 1930, pp. xi-ii.
[35] Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, *Wanamaker Grand Court*, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, n.d., p. 23.
[36] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 15 September 1891, p. 6
[37] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 17 September 1891, p. 6.

by ‘silken frames’. Were these frames covered in silk, or does this fanciful term indicate that the silk drapes ‘framed’ the paintings? Still, in many ways, the uncertainty of the advertisement says as much about the advertising potential of mixed display spaces as would images of the display itself. For it is the ambiguity that mixed display fostered that enabled one set of objects to lend associations to another. For instance, where in this display does art end and silk begin? If the paintings really were in silk frames, or even if silk was just displayed artfully as a frame, then the boundary between the two becomes inordinately blurred. Moreover, what exactly was for sale in this space? If the paintings were not for sale, what did that say about the silk, which certainly was for sale? The connotation is undoubtedly that the silk, just like the paintings, was artful, valuable and cosmopolitan. In this display’s ambiguous mixing of items, Wanamaker’s was able not only to create an attractive display for customers, but also to elevate silk, a fine but ultimately mass-produced domestic or fashion good, into a veritable work of art equivalent to paintings by one of America’s most illustrious artists. This was the power of mixed display, the manifestations and commercial uses of which will be discussed in more detail in the section that follows.

III. Fine Art as Frame

As detailed in the previous section, there were specific practical and commercial considerations behind the display regime of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store. Moreover, these display practices necessarily impacted upon and shaped department stores’ display of art, and often in ways that put them in opposition to the prevailing display practices of the mainstream art world. Art, however, was not just impacted by the department store’s display regime, but also actively contributed to it. Investigation of

this means switching focus from the impact of the department store commercial system on art display, to what art itself contributed to that system – or, more directly, the reasons for art's display in the first place. Yet, before this topic can be broached, it is first necessary to consider the function that display was structured to fulfill for the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store in general. It will then be possible to see how art worked with and within it.

While it was the industrial revolution that set into motion the changes that increasingly enabled the citizens of Western Europe and America to buy, rather than produce, their immediate necessities, retailing was a wholly crucial facet of this shift because it acted as an intermediary between production and consumption. Industrial production and modern retailing were thus, from the perspective of practicality, two sides of the same coin and wholly dependent on each other. Yet upending longstanding patterns of production and consumption was not just a straightforward question of separating the two spheres. For the majority of the population, consumption for many centuries had meant producing one's own goods, using only what was needed, and buying objects that lasted. Modern industrial goods were, in both the way they were produced and consumed, usually held completely contrary to these long-held values. It was thus necessary to change not only the way the public participated in but also viewed consumption. Department stores, which themselves had a vested interest in increasing domestic and personal consumption, became key instigators of this change.

While advertising campaigns on the part of manufacturers helped to accustom potential customers to new products and ways of consumption, it was arguably the department store that played the largest role in shifting shoppers along a modern course. This

is, at least, what William Leach claims in his important book *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture*.[38] For one, Leach writes that it was the department stores that intertwined culture and leisure with commerce by providing amenities such as restaurants, reading rooms and, of course, art galleries – an important step in the creation of modern commercial culture.[39] Leach also argues that it was the department store that pioneered the new advertising and display methods on which manufacturers would come to rely in order to develop their national and international brands, and also on which commercial culture was built and propagated.[40] Leach's argument is logical when it is considered that, unlike manufacturers, department stores were client facing. Retailers had always lived and died on the number of shoppers that passed through their doors, whereas not all manufacturers focused on consumer goods. Moreover, those who did could often rely on department stores, which dominated the late nineteenth-century retail market, to do much of their advertising for them. Advertising and the media by which it is propagated were also still in a state of relative development even late into the nineteenth century.[41] For instance, halftone printing, or the process used to print photographic images, only became widely employed in the 1890s, meaning the more time-consuming process of etching remained popular into early twentieth century for use in print media.[42] This limited the amount and

[38] Leach, 1993.

[39] Ibid, pp. 134-7.

[40] Ibid, pp. 39-70.

[41] Jackson Lears presents a cultural history of American advertising in his key study of the subject, *Fables of Abundance*. He locates the origin of formal advertising agencies, which helped corporate clients to legitimise their businesses and products, to the 1850s and 60s, but the true concretisation and professionalisation of the industry to the period between 1890 and 1917. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, Basic Books: New York, NY, 1994, p. 88 & pp. 198-218.

[42] Half-tone printing is a kind of photoengraving that uses dots, in different shades of grey, to form an image. It became a widespread tool of commercial publications from the late 1880s and 1890s because of technological innovation such as the Levy brothers' commercial halftone screens, invented in Philadelphia in 1890, and the Ben-Day process, invented in New York in 1879. Paul F. Borth, 'Photoengraving | printing', 1998. https://www.britannica.com/technology/photoengraving [accessed 15 September 2018]. Neil Harris describes

arguably the effectiveness of images used in advertising. But, most importantly, the idea of branding and brand identity, so crucial to the marketing and sale of consumer goods, was still in its infancy in the mid to late nineteenth century, only beginning to come into its own in the 1890s. This is the key reason that department stores proved so important to the development of advertising and the propagation of consumer culture. Display was essential to the sale and marketing of goods in the late nineteenth century, and department stores were at the forefront of it.

Much like the world's fairs that proliferated in the nineteenth century, department stores provided environments for goods that could frame them in the eyes and minds of prospective shoppers. As social historian William Lancaster states in his wide-ranging study of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department store: 'Despite the rise of registered trademarks, the [department] stores themselves created the ethos of the goods sold. The department store with its displays, services and most important, tradition, functioned as the brand.'[43] Driving this point home is Wanamaker's Jubilee publication, the *Golden Book*, in which authors Joseph Herbet Appel (who was also, tellingly, one of Wanamaker's earliest publicity-men) and Leigh Mitchell Hodges write that art was meant to 'put the right note in the stores' – or, in other words, to contribute to the store's 'brand' identity and create an atmosphere in which people wanted to shop and buy.[44]

Thus, at an important juncture between the dry goods palace/magasin de nouveautés and the development of the department store, merchants realised that the context in which

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the crucial importance of the invention and propagation of half-tone printing to the development of American visual culture, advertising and thought in: *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Taste in Modern America*, The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, 1990, pp. 304-17.

[43] Lancaster, 2000, p. 88.

[44] Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, 1911, p. 253.

consumers bought goods was just as important as their system of merchandising or the goods themselves; and this was particularly true if they wanted to grow their market share or expand their sales numbers. Department store entrepreneurs such as John Wanamaker and Au Bon Marché's Aristide Boucicaut began to use display not only to directly frame products, but also to define their own store brand, which itself was a powerful merchandising tool. And while art was in no way a 'new' display technology, it follows that it would have been deployed in much the same fashion as Leach suggests new display forms such as electric lighting, vivid colours and plate-glass were used in department stores: to transform mass-produced products into desirable purchases and to create a particular ethos or environment attractive to customers and conducive to selling.

From this perspective, the reasons for the display tactics described in the previous section come into sharp focus. Although they were not always – in fact, were rarely – ideal for the viewing of art itself, they served the store's bottom line by making art a frame for both the store, which as described was both physical environment and merchandising mechanism, and the goods sold within it. The following two subsections will explore how this applied to two kinds of department store products: furniture and fashion. As detailed in Chapter One, the sale of art and furniture were intimately connected in the department store, with the opening of art galleries and furniture departments usually occurring in quick succession and the location of the respective sale spaces often in close proximity. This was because, when art was sold in the department store, it was overwhelmingly as a domestic decoration. Yet art's physical proximity to furniture was appropriate for more than just their commercial connection. When displayed in conjunction with furniture, whether in a simple sales room or a lavish mock-domestic space, fine art helped to amplify a key feature of late

nineteenth- and early twentieth-century domestic design: its appeal to social aspiration. In fact, these were the aspirations of the largely middle-class customers who shopped at the department store, and which department stores sought themselves to capture and reflect through such displays.

The importance of reflecting, and even shaping, both store and consumer identity through art display is deepened by considering what was arguably the department store's most important product: fashion goods. The framing of these goods occurred not just through the direct display of art, but also through the physical association between paintings and another vital element of department store display: mirrors. Displays of fine art and mirrors often complemented each other, with art display lending department stores notes of rarity and artistry and mirrors reflecting these traits back on both the goods and customers. This situation, where the artistry and value associated with the store via art display was conferred on fashion goods through both their literal and figurative framing, presages the advertising and the display tactics of turn-of-the-century fashion brands, showing the key precedent set by mixed department store display methods in the development of modern branding and advertising.[45]

IIIa. Framing Furniture

The department store displayed goods in and amongst other kinds of goods not only for practical reasons, but also for the merchandising potential the association of one set of objects with another could produce. This is particularly easy to see with fine art because it was not exactly typical of the department store's retail offerings, which largely revolved

[45] Nancy J. Troy discusses the intersection of fine art and fashion in the early twentieth century in *Couture Culture: A Study in Modern Art and Fashion*, The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2003.

around the affordable and mass-produced. This meant that, as will be explained in more detail momentarily, art display could be easily and powerfully instrumentalised to frame industrial goods. Still, as described in the previous chapter, department stores did indeed sell art, meaning that it intermingled as a saleable good with other saleable goods. The fact that art was largely sold as a domestic good meant that, when department stores had dedicated sales space for art, they were almost always located in proximity to the sales spaces for other domestic goods, and especially furniture. This meant that fine art could not only frame the 'staple' domestic goods around it, such as furniture and bedding in the case of Wanamaker's, but also itself be framed by these goods. It is worth quickly settling on this, because it not only illustrates the way that mixed display was implicitly linked to merchandising, but also the kinds of associations fine art was expected to lend, and be lent by, other domestic goods. Harrods, which is the most prominent example of mixed commercial display in this thesis and certainly one of the more confounding display situations, presents the ideal case study. As stated in the preceding section, Harrods displayed paintings intended for consumption, and specifically domestic consumption, alongside pianos in a shared sales space. Given the previously mentioned sensorial clashes possible in this display configuration, the question remains why Harrods picked these two items to display alongside each other.

Pianos and pictures were two types of consumable goods charged with a surfeit of meanings in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British society. Historians Francesca Carnevali and Lucy Newton show, for instance, how pianos were complex symbols of social mobility, domesticity, and femininity. Crucially, they were at the same time considered both

a staple decoration of the bourgeois home and an object of luxury.[46] Their ambiguous status thus directly reflected that of art sold in the department store, which was implicitly luxurious and artistic while at the same time marketed as a necessary component of bourgeois domesticity. Presenting pianos alongside pictures could thus be said to compound the artistic connotations of the piano while at the same promoting a domestic purpose for pictures. Moreover, by looking more largely at the departmental arrangement of this area of Harrods, it is apparent how these aspects of fine art were reflected on other goods. For one, as described in the previous section, the fine art section of the showroom led directly into the store's Furnishing and Drapery Department, an arrangement which through spatial association could stress the domestic purpose of pictures and the artistic possibilities of upholstery and drapery – something Wanamaker's had earlier done in its 'Apotheosis of Silk' display. The other end of the fine art sales space then led directly into the jewellery department, with an apparent link between the perceived luxury and rarity of both sets of objects.

Pictures sold at Harrods in the early twentieth century were thus presented simultaneously as luxury and staple goods with dually artistic and domestic connotations. They could be for the individual, like a piece of jewellery, or for the home, like a piece of furniture. Moreover, it was not just art, as the story usually goes, but also the goods around it that could be used for framing and merchandising – in this case also art itself. Indeed, this was one of the key benefits of the department store's dynamic display style, with mixing being not just a practical or physical but also a symbolic exercise. Yet it is true that it was largely art, being of less commercial impact to a store's sales figures than the goods around

[46] Francesca Carnevali and Lucy Newton, 'Pianos for the People: From Producer to Consumer, 1851-1914', *Enterprise & Society: The International Journal of Business History*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2013), pp. 37-70.

it, which was meant to do most of the merchandising. This dynamic can be seen directly in photographs of Harrods' art and piano sales space. Figure 47 demonstrates how it was the 'Pianoforte Showroom', and not the art gallery, that was in focus – a fact repeated across all images of this space in early twentieth-century Harrods catalogues.[47] Although, as demonstrated in Chapter One, the sale of art was moderately profitable for the store, paintings and prints were by no means leading products. The primary value of art was in its ability to frame domestic products rather than as a saleable domestic product itself. This can be evidenced by the fact that one of the earliest examples of British department store art display comes from a store not known ever to have sold art. In 1887, Manchester department store Kendal, Milne & Co. featured paintings in a special furniture display at the Royal Jubilee Exhibition, which was held just outside the city.[48] I have found no evidence that Kendal, Milne sold or displayed fine art at its store during the period under investigation in this thesis, which makes it especially significant that the store decided to feature art in connection to furniture at such a prominent civic event.[49]

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[47] These catalogues include: Harrods, *Catalogue*, 1903; and Harrods, *Catalogue*, 1904. Both are accessible at the Harrods Company Archive, London, England.

[48] The exhibition, which commemorated Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, approached the better-known world's fairs of the mid to late nineteenth century in both scope and scale. It encompassed numerous exhibition categories, including 'Industrial Design', 'Fine Art' and, more uniquely, 'Irish', and many attractions, including a reconstruction of 'Old Manchester'. It was also extraordinarily popular, with over 4.5 million visitors and numerous members of the British and foreign aristocracy in attendance. For more information on the exhibition, see: Bill Newton, *Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition Old Trafford, 1887*, Trafford Leisure Services: Manchester, England, 1998.

[49] As Helle B. Bertramsen states in her doctoral thesis on the subject of Manchester department stores in the Victorian period, there is no archive of Kendal, Milne material such as exists for other stores. This makes it difficult to say with absolute accuracy that art sale and display did not take place. As Bertramsen did for her thesis research, I have relied on newspaper records as the basis for my claim. Specifically, I extensively searched the British Library's digitised newspaper holdings. In my experience, department stores almost always, at one point or another, advertised their art sale or display, making it significant that, as far as I have seen, Kendal, Milne did not do so. Bertramsen, who focuses a large portion of her thesis on Kendal, Milne, also does not mention art sale or display in her writing: Helle B. Bertramsen, 'Rethinking the Victorian Department Store: Manchester's Two Emporia, Kendal, Milne and Lewis', 1836-1890', PhD Thesis, University of Lancaster, 2002, pp. 28-9.

Kendal, Milne is often cited as one of Britain's first department stores. Indeed, the store, which is today an outlet of House of Fraser, has a long history, having started as a drapery business in 1796 before transitioning into a bazaar in 1832. Its prominence in the Manchester retail market is evidenced by the fact that Morris & Co. chose the store to be their Manchester agent, even listing this as part of their entry in the exhibition's catalogue.[50] This shows that Kendal, Milne already had, or at least was trying to foster, a strong emphasis on domestic goods when it decided to include art in the mock interiors that it displayed in Jubilee House, located in the exhibition's Botanical Gardens. Kendal, Milne's participation in the exhibition was extensive. It was also undoubtedly meant as a marketing opportunity for the store's own furniture manufactory, which was located on Southgate Street in inner-city Manchester and in close proximity to the store. The store not only constructed its own displays but also provided furnishing and decorations for a suite of rooms used by the Prince of Wales (future King Edward VII), who attended the exhibition with his wife, Princess (and future Queen) Alexandra. This included a salon, smoking room and dining room (figs. 52 & 53). These luxurious rooms featured silk wallpaper, a copper repoussé frieze, fine wood furniture and, not to be forgotten, numerous paintings consisting primarily of landscapes and fit for a Prince. The commercial and marketing importance of this venture was shown by the fact that, for their efforts, Kendal, Milne was awarded a royal warrant when Edward ascended the throne in 1901.[51] But even at the time of the exhibition, Kendal, Milne had it in mind to transfer the prestige of decorating a suite of rooms for the Prince on to a much more

[50] *Royal Jubilee Exhibition*, John Heywood: Manchester, England, 1887, p. 79.

[51] Kendal, Milne's royal warrant is mentioned in: *The Red Book of Commerce or Who's Who in Business*, J. Whitaker & Sons, Ltd.: London, England, 1914.

lucrative business: goods destined for public consumption. This public was, additionally, a varied one, because the store constructed mock suites of rooms at two price points.

As stated in the catalogue, the first set of rooms was meant for a 'gentleman's town or country residence' (fig. 54).[52] In many ways, the room featured in Figure 54 resembled the Prince's salon, although with perhaps a more masculine tone. It included, for instance, darker wallpaper, bolder furniture and practically no drapery. The paintings are also in the same vein, although bolder. While similarly a collection of landscapes, genre images, and rural scenes, the paintings in the store's display rooms are larger and feature on almost every spare inch of spare wall. This was certainly a room meant to impress wealthy, upwardly mobile buyers who might want to imitate the Royals but on an ever grander scale. The second suite of rooms was intended for a 'workman's dwelling house', which, while markedly more affordable and certainly more gender neutral, was by no means under-decorated in comparison to the previous example (fig. 55). The image of the drawing room in Figure 55 shows a space equipped with floral wallpaper, ornate furniture, numerous decorative pieces, and at least two large works of art – probably prints – on the walls. This meant that it had all the features of the more luxurious suite of rooms, but at a lower price point. Moreover, similarly for both rooms, fine art, which includes the prints on display in the room in Figure 55, was the only category of object on display that the store did not sell. This meant that, like the association with the Prince and the later royal warrant, it was used solely as a means of

[52] The full description of the rooms is as such: 'Drawing-room: For gentleman's town or country residence, decorated and furnished. Satinwood dado wall and ceiling framing, with panels of figured silk, the furniture in rosewood with delicately engraved inlays in the style of the Italian Renaissance. Dining-room : Oak wall panelling carved and inlaid, the frieze of bold repoussé work in copper. Mahogany sideboard, chimney piece, grate, &c. A dining-room, drawing-room, and bedroom completely decorated and furnished for a house of £40 annual rental. A workman's dwelling house, comprising kitchen, sitting-room, parlour, and bedrooms, completely furnished. The furniture is entirely made of hard woods, such as oak, birch, ash, and elm. Suitable for a rental of 6s. or 7s. per week...' Royal Jubilee Exhibition, 1887, p. 78.

elevating the display's main focus, which was the domestic goods the store was trying to sell. By selling a certain lifestyle, framed by fine art and embodied in the full suites of rooms, the store could go on to win full decorating projects or just, as was more typically the case, sell individual pieces of furniture. The fact that, as evidenced by the Prince's quarters, no properly attired, late nineteenth-century domestic space lacked art meant that just its display indicated the worth and status of a room and in turn the objects located within it.

This example of Kendal, Milne's display at the Jubilee Exhibition not only demonstrates the merchandising power of art vis-à-vis domestic goods, but also how it was used in relation to store branding. It is important that, given the emphasis on manufacturing at the exhibition, it was not another company's domestic products that the store was trying to sell but its own. As stated in Chapter One, it was common for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department stores to manufacture a portion of their own goods because it allowed them to better respond to stock needs and customer taste and also to cut out the dreaded 'middleman'. As described in relation to British department stores based in London, limitations on sale space meant that it was convenient to locate a certain amount of manufacturing on the upper floors of the store itself. In the case of Kendal, Milne, Victorian Manchester was dense with factories and mills where the store could cheaply manufacture its own goods. The Jubilee Exhibition was thus the perfect opportunity for the store not just to expose millions of potential consumer to its 'own brand goods' – this term tellingly native to a period long after the one under discussion – but also to shape the store's identity in a manner that it could become a brand for these same goods. The association with Morris & Co., the suite of rooms for the Prince of Wales, and the extensive display of art show that

Kendal, Milne was aiming to market itself as a purveyor of finely crafted, aspirational goods, even though its products were made around the corner from the store in a modern factory.

The fact that, unlike other manufacturers at this industrial fair, Kendal, Milne only displayed its products in ensembles – in this case completed room displays – shows the importance of cross associations in selling a product, and the department store's sophistication in creating these associations. Much like the previously discussed 'panoramic' images of department store art display, it was often not the individual object but its contribution to the whole that was key. The whole, in turn, sold the individual product. Kendal, Milne's display at the 1887 Manchester Jubilee Exhibition is a clear example of the proto-branding exercises in which department stores partook, and for which they readily employed fine art. Kendal, Milne's foray into these activities also took place outside of the confines of its store, showing the versatility of display as a merchandising tool for the department store. Yet it stands to reason that display was at its most dynamic and effective within the store itself, as it was here that department stores could experiment most frequently and readily with different tactics and tools. It was also here where they could invest in long-term display environments intimately connected to the store brand.

The latter point is evidenced by the New York branch of American department store Wanamaker's. This store was arguably even more dynamic than its Philadelphia counterpart. Although it originally occupied A. T. Stewart's Iron Palace – John Wanamaker having purchased the building in 1896 – ten years of quick growth necessitated the construction of a new, 16-storey retail tower, which was almost twice the size of Stewart's store.[53] The two buildings were joined by what the store extravagantly called the 'Bridge of Progress', in

[53] Appel and Hodges, 1911, pp. 292-3.

which one could find a selection of neo-classical urns and statues (fig. 56).[54] Crucially, this new building was consecrated to the New York store's huge decorating and domestic goods trade. It was described in the business' Jubilee anniversary publication, the *Golden Book*, as such:

> 'This new building was specially constructed for a particular purpose, to install a new kind of furnishing and decorating business. Excepting only the main floor, it is devoted exclusively to furniture, draperies, carpets, china and glass, and pianos and organs, housefurnishings and the spacious, light and large work-rooms required to economically make draperies, mattresses and housefurnishings.'[55]

The amount of space devoted to this area of the store's trade was impressive in itself, but the most interesting and original aspect of the new building was undoubtedly what the store called the 'House Palatial': a twenty-two room mock mansion constructed completely within the store itself.

Opened to much fanfare in October 1908, the House Palatial easily exceeded, in terms of audacity and lavishness, anything built by an American department store of the period. As stated in the *Golden Book*, it was intended to replicate 'the home of a family of taste and wealth', and specifically one of the mansions built by the aristocracy or the super-wealthy around New York's Fifth Avenue or London's Hyde Park.[56] Costing the store a quarter of a million dollars, the House Palatial contained the finest of everything, including fine art. Eccentric American author and frequent Wanamaker's associate Elbert Hubbard described the House Palatial as a domestic decoration 'mecca', where homemakers and professional designers alike could come and study the different kinds of room and styles of

[54] Ibid, p. 294.
[55] Ibid, p. 293.
[56] Ibid, p. 296.

decoration on display.[57] On the 'first' floor of the house (really the store's sixth floor) there was, for instance, a 'French Colonial' style reception hall with representative neoclassical columns and bronze fixtures, an Elizabethan-style library, and a Louis XV drawing room (fig. 57). The plethora of styles and periods continued upstairs, where one could find a Georgian hallway (figs. 58 & 59).

It is in Figures 58 and 59, images of the Georgian Hallway, where one can get a taste of the luxurious art objects on display in the house. Not only does it show a tapestry, a must for any early twentieth-century upper class dwelling, but, as described by Hubbard, numerous 'choice paintings and etchings'.[58] Through the selection of paintings – largely period portraits and old master works – it is apparent that the store was hinging its domestic goods marketing on appeals to tradition and history, as a family of means was also likely to do in their home. This shift from the present, as represented by contemporary commerce, to tradition and lineage in the House Palatial and the Wanamaker furniture department can be no better depicted than in Figure 56, where the 'Bridge of Progress' is shown to be a literal passage from the modernity of the fashion-orientated Stewart store and its *art nouveau* fixtures to the classically-minded 'New' store – an ironic appellation. In this passage, classical statuary signifies not only the changing range of goods but also the changing marketing tone. The statues arrayed up the sides of the bridge thus become a quite literal frame for the store's furniture business and one of its key marketing features, the House Palatial.

[57] Wanamaker's New York and Elbert Hubbard, *The Wanamaker House of Artistic Suggestion*, Wanamaker's: New York, NY, 1907.
[58] Ibid, n.p.

Hubbard's description of the House Palatial as a 'mecca' for inquisitive shoppers fit well with Wanamaker's typical rhetoric around its displays, which was that they were meant to 'educate' Wanamaker's shoppers to be better consumers and even better citizens.[59] Of course, Wanamaker's was not in the business of education. For the store to invest a quarter of a million dollars in what was, essentially, one massive display-piece, it had to expect a substantial return on its money. The House Palatial was thus truly meant not to teach homemakers what to buy, but to encourage them to buy. It is no coincidence that the house was meant to replicate that of a millionaire, which the vast majority of Wanamaker's customers were not. Not only did the prospect of seeing how the 'other half' lived attract numerous potential buyers, but it could also encourage them to emulate that lifestyle through purchasing less expensive versions of the original pieces owned by the elite. It was in this way that physical store display branded saleable goods with certain associations deemed attractive to buyers. In this case, shoppers would begin to associate both Wanamaker's and its goods with the rarity, cosmopolitanism and luxury exhibited in the House Palatial. Desirous themselves of these qualities, they would visit Wanamaker's sales room and buy its products in the hope of reconstructing, to the best of their abilities and budget, the lifestyle embodied by the House Palatial. In this vein, it was logical that the store's art gallery, where shoppers could buy art, was located just upstairs on the eighth floor (fig. 60).[60] Of course, as shown by advertisements for the store's fine art gallery, the art sold was usually more in the vein of prints or contemporary paintings as opposed to the classical statuary, portraits and old

[59] The most complete distillation of Wanamaker's educational rhetoric vis-à-vis art can be found in Chapter IV of the *Golden Book*. Appel and Hodge, 1911, pp. 245-56.
[60] Wanamaker's New York, *The Guide Book and Information Concerning the Wanamaker Mail Order Service*, Wanamaker's: New York, NY, 1909, p. 33. Athenaeum of Philadelphia, call number HF 5465. U5 W4 1909.

master works associated with the House Palatial.[61] As with most displays in the department store, the fine art in the House Palatial was a fantasy frame to sell less rare, often mass-manufactured, items.

Whereas Kendal, Milne had displayed art without the attendant store outlet to buy it, Wanamaker's showed its merchandising prowess by not just including it in displays but also making it available to purchase. Depending on one's outlook, this could increase the merchandising power of the House Palatial, and fine art display in general, by putting the lifestyle on display within a shopper's reach – even if the associated costs were still too high. Most importantly, what the House Palatial also shows is the importance of collective, mixed displays to the sale of the individual object. As evidenced by Figure 60, Wanamaker's New York had a sales space devoted to fine art, just like it had rooms filled with pianos, furniture and assorted other goods. Yet it was in display that these goods, as well as the store itself, gained meaning to the shopper. Just like brands and advertising today, department store display constructed certain images and lifestyles in order to sell products, only in a purely physical form. In this way the fine art physically displayed in the House Palatial was no different from the fantasy frames drawn around the images in Figures 57 & 58: ultimately, a marketing exercise with questionable substance. Fine art's role in the domestic displays discussed in this sub-section was thus, as argued, to signal aspirational, upper class living. The following sub-section will similarly consider mixed display through the relationship between fine art and mirrors and its power to sell fashion – in this case taken to imply women's clothing in general – and construct identity.

[61] Advertisements of this sort include: *The New York-Tribune*, 12 February 1907, p. 4; and *The New York-Tribune*, 11 May 1908, p. 10.

IIIb. Framing and Reflecting Fashion

In *Land of Desire*, Leach quotes John Wanamaker as stating that 'our minds are full of windows'.[62] Add to this another Wanamaker saying which Leach quotes – 'show windows are eyes to meet eyes' – and one can see the significance of glass, and especially its mirroring effect, to department store retailers and to the scholarship about them. As previously mentioned, glass was one of the key display features which Leach argues helped to advance commercial culture. On the other hand, Elizabeth Carlson has written about the role of the mirror in constructing the relationship between consumer, store and goods.[63] Yet, for all of the important discussion of the use of glass and mirrors in the department store, no study has considered the connection between the latter as a display device and fine art. This is despite one very apparent link: their sale. Fine art and mirrors were often sold alongside each other, and even under the same departmental umbrella, in the department store. For instance, in 1911, Macy's advertised 'a notable gathering' of framed pictures and mirrors in its picture shop on the third floor.[64] With mirrors and pictures so apparently allied for the purposes of domestic display, it follows that they would also be linked under the logic of store display.

Mirrors were, undoubtedly, of practical necessity to any dress section of a department store, for they allowed shoppers to judge the suitability of an item on their own body before purchasing it. However, their ubiquity in the department store indicates a greater purpose. Carlson examines the complex uses of the mirror in the department store as well as their impact on the relationship between store and shopper. Not only did mirrors help to

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[62] Leach, 1993, p, 39.
[63] Elizabeth Carlson, 'Dazzling and Deceiving: Reflections in the Nineteenth-Century Department Store', *Visual Resources: an international journal on images and their uses*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2012), pp. 117-37.
[64] *The New York Times*, 17 December 1911, p. 29.

incorporate the shopper into the larger store environment – quite literally framing her within it – they also functioned as a leading means of surveillance for store management. Mirrors could thus be construed as supremely constrictive. Yet they could also be liberating by allowing shoppers not only to self-fashion but also to imagine and enact dreams of mobility. In many ways this description of the purpose and power of the mirror coincides with that of fine art outlined in the last section, except rather than domestic objects it is the shopper who is framed. The question that remains is what new qualities or realities shoppers were meant to see reflected back at them when they looked in these mirrors. This is where art comes in.

The previous sub-section demonstrated how fine art helped to frame industrially produced domestic goods as artisanal and aspirational. Yet, as shown by the initial example of Harrods' spatial placement of goods, art itself was dually framed as something for the home and for the individual – or as both domestic and 'artistic'. Of course, as both the last chapter and numerous works of contemporary scholarship have shown, designing and decorating one's home was increasingly seen as itself an artistic and individual act in the late nineteenth century – and was particularly used by women as such.[65] Yet there was an extreme emphasis on the 'artistic' quality of fashion, and the women who wore it, in the department store. This is perhaps because of what numerous scholars, including Philippe Perrot and Rémy Saisselin, describe as the transition from an *ancien régime* view of fashion as a non-gender specific interest to the bourgeois segregation of fashion to the feminine sphere.[66] What is more, while the families who occupied the domestic sphere were still multi-gendered units, fashion was overwhelmingly purchased and worn by women. It was thus of paramount

[65] A study which considers the artistic potential of home decoration for women is: Karen Halttunen, 'From Parlor to Living Room: domestic space, interior decoration, and the culture of personality', in Simon J. Bronner (ed.), *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, W. W. Norton & Co.: New York, NY, 1989, pp. 157-89.
[66] Perrot, 1996; and Saisselin, 1984.

importance to give aesthetic credence and meaning to what were often construed as frivolous, unnecessary purchases. The emphasis on the woman over the family meant that fashion was a much more individual, although no less patriarchal, pursuit. It was therefore both the fashion object and the individual, in the form of the woman, which were equally framed by mirrors and art as creative and artistic. For the object, this framing meant that it was worthy not only of serious consideration but also of consumption. For women, this meant an increased sense of purpose and agency. Still, as Carlson points out, what liberates can also constrict.

As previously stated, mirrors and fine art were often displayed alongside each other for the purpose of direct commerce. The image of a fashion display at Wanamaker's Philadelphia store in Figure 61, to which I will return, also shows how mirrors and fine art were displayed alongside each other for the purposes of merchandising. Yet, in order to show the importance and widespread employment of 'artistic' display to the sale of women's fashion, it is first useful to demonstrate how fine art, in its traditional form of individual paintings, sculptures or prints, was not even strictly necessary to the construal of a department store as artistic. Even just an association with fine art, or with an institution which displayed it, could help the department to portray itself and its products as artistic. This is clearly demonstrated in the display and decoration at Grands Magasins du Louvre. Although the Louvre did not follow its main competitor Au Bon Marché's example by displaying fine art for purposes other than direct commerce, it did imitate the architecture of the other store's art gallery for its reading room. In this the Louvre was able to build on the artistic cachet of Au Bon Marché's gallery without having to commit to such a time and labour intensive undertaking. Yet the Louvre also had something that Au Bon Marché did

not: a location directly across the street from the Musée du Louvre, where France's most important art collection still resides.

The Grands Magasins du Louvre had long been negatively compared to the Musée du Louvre, with insinuations that the women who patronised the store were too blinded by it to see the true treasures on the other side of the Rue de Rivoli.[67] Rather than fight a war of worthiness, the Louvre decided instead to move into the orbit of the older institution, framing itself as an associate and even inheritor of the aesthetic and cultural importance of the museum. This is shown by a 1910 publicity publication, which took the form of a written tour of the store, with florid explanations of the store's significance added in for good measure.[68] The publication described the store's neighbour as an 'apotheosis in stone of the political and artistic past of France from Clovis to the present day'.[69] But, over politics, it is the continuing artistic significance of the Louvre that the store emphasised, with the text continuing that 'today, after having housed princes and kings, it houses their collection: artists of genius, painters, sculptors, and decorative artists from every country. It is the most beautiful and most complete museum in the world'.[70] It is this level of aesthetic glory that the store tried to match, with the publication stating: 'Next to these masterpieces of French art, the Grands Magasins du Louvre must endeavour to achieve an artistic outfit of the first order.'[71] This was evident throughout the store, from its architecture to its window displays

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[67] Jonathan Conlin cites a joke to this effect in his article on Ernest Cognacq's collecting practices and their link to his store, La Samaritaine. Jonathan Conlin, 'Le "Musée de marchandises": the origins of the Musée Cognacq-Jay', *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2000), pp. 193-202.

[68] Grands Magasins du Louvre, *Grand Magasins du Louvre: les plus beaux et les plus vastes du monde*, 1910. Bibliothèque Forney, CC 268 [1910] A, Boîte 3.

[69] 'apothéose de pierre du passé politique et artistique de la France depuis Clovis jusqu'à nos jours', Ibid, p. 1.

[70] 'aujourd'hui, après avoir abrité les princes et les rois, il abrite les oeuvres de ces rois: les artistes de génie, peintres, sculpteurs, ouvriers d'art de tous les pays. Il est le plus beau et le plus complet musée du monde.' Ibid.

[71] 'A côté de ces chefs-d'oeuvre de l'art français, les Grands Magasins du Louvre devaient d'efforcer d'atteindre une tenue d'art de premier ordre.' Ibid.

and leisure spaces – the reading room being a key example of this – but of especial merit were its fashion sales rooms.

The importance of the visual and physical aspects of the store, and especially for its fashion sales rooms, is shown in how the publication's text is interspersed with numerous extensively detailed images. Moreover, of these images, 6 out of 11 depict spaces mainly devoted to textiles, such as the Hall des Soieries, or to women's fashion (fig. 62). In terms of fashion, there are images of the exquisitely decorated Galerie des Modes and Galerie des Manteaux (figs. 63 & 64). The publication described the collective space occupied by the Hall des Soieries, Galerie des Modes and Galerie des Confections pour Dames (which was in fact the same space as the Galerie des Manteaux) as 'the most beautiful hall and the most beautiful galleries in the Grands Magasins du Louvre'.[72] The two galleries in particular were 'decorated everywhere, on all sides, on the heights of all of the columns, on all of the walls, the length of the arches with a prodigious craftsmanship'.[73] These decorations included 'gold, sculptures, and paintings'; elements that the store stated mixed, opposed and completed each other, creating 'an effect of seizing grandeur.'[74]

In addition to the artistic decorations in these spaces one could also find 'mirrors rising to the vaulted ceiling.'[75] Mirrors were in fact omnipresent in the store's fashion sales rooms, reflecting not only the customers but also the elaborate architecture and decoration. This is especially apparent in a later photograph of the Galerie de la Mode showing a different perspective on the space (fig. 65). Panelled mirrors can be seen in the arch just

[72] 'plus beau hall et les plus belles galeries des GRANDS MAGASINS DU LOUVRE.' Ibid, p. 18.
[73] 'ornées partout, sur tous les côtés, sur toute la hauteur des colonnes, sur tous les murs, le long de leur voûtes d'un travail prodigieux'.' Ibid.
[74] 'l'or, les sculptures, les peintures… un effet d'une saisissante grandeur.' Ibid.
[75] 'les grandes glaces montant jusqu'à la voûte.' Ibid, p. 20.

above a case of hats to the left of the image, and numerous full-length mirrors also surround the columns leading into the Galerie des Confections pour Dames. What this image also demonstrates are some of the purposeful similarities between the Grands Magasins du Louvre and the Musée du Louvre. For instance, the long, vaulted ceiling that features in the Galerie de la Mode evokes a combination of the Galerie d'Apollon and the museum's exalted Grande Galerie. This is especially apparent in nineteenth-century images, which show the Grand Galerie as it appeared during this period (fig. 66). Although the ceiling at the store employs a rib vaulting effect, the perspective and rounded aspect of the ceiling is similar to that of the museum's most prominent display space. In many ways, the store's architecture and decoration were even more lavish than that of the museum, with painted decorations on the ceiling substituted for the innate artistry of the framed paintings on the walls of the Grand Galerie. At the store and in place of these paintings, one would instead find goods in display cases and large mirrored surfaces. This transferred the emphasis from art, the focal point of the Musée du Louvre, to both fashion goods and the shopper, with art playing the supporting act. Whereas the restrained yet aristocratic architecture of the Grand Galerie framed the old master paintings and sculptures on display, the Grands Magasins du Louvre inverted this relationship in a way that was useful for its own commercial purposes but challenging to the centrality of art.

Les Grands Magasins du Louvre thus used both its geographic proximity to the Louvre and aesthetic references to its neighbour's interiors in order to frame both its fashion goods and its shoppers as artistic, with mirrors central to this endeavour in two ways. First, they captured, multiplied and finally projected the 'saisissante grandeur' of the store's artistic decoration on to everything in the room. The many mirrors in the space could literally 'seize'

both shoppers and artistic goods within its artistic atmosphere, framing them in the reflected glory of the space. Second, mirrors allowed the shopper to see *herself* as framed by the store, and also allowed her to construct a new self-image or identity through dress. Just as the Grand Magasins du Louvre formed its identity around its own decorative *tenue,* which was then legitimised through reflection in its customers' admiring eyes, so the Louvre shopper could not only create her own outfit but also her own character and identity. By composing her outfit from the artistic objects and inspiration presented to her by the store, a woman could, in other words, become her own work of art.

This may seem a stretch, but it is a premise that is implicit in many images of department store fashion display, such as Figure 61. This image records an evening 'viewing party', ostensibly for new art acquisitions, although it is clear that the fashion of the day was also on display via the various posed mannequins. Proving that this was more of a marketing exercise than a disinterested art viewing party is the fact that the fashions worn by the women in the period portraits resemble those worn by the mannequins, and especially in the swooping, off-the-shoulder necklines. Most tellingly, for a viewing party none of the mannequins seem to be looking at the art. Instead, they are talking amongst themselves, staring at the viewer from a loveseat or, most strikingly, admiring their own reflection in a framed mirror. The fashionable mannequins are quite apparently the focus of this virtual window display, which only really lacked glass to complete the effect. In this, the display perfectly encapsulates Wanamaker's statement that 'windows are eyes to meet the eyes'. As the viewer looked onto a scene of women in fashionable early twentieth-century dress conversing or lounging while surrounded by art, they could very well be seeing themselves staring back. What is more, it was the mannequins in fashionable dress and framed by art that

mirrored them, and not the art itself. By taking what objects and inspiration they could from the artistic environment and choice of goods curated by the department store, it is implied that the Wanamaker's woman could transform herself into a work of art. Nothing could exemplify this idea more than Figure 67, an image of the entrance to the Wanamaker's Millinery Department. Above the ornate columned entryway are wooden panels in the shape of an artist's palette with a fashionable, modern woman in white relief. These palettes proclaim that beyond the columns lies the land of the woman artist, who creates her masterpieces through bringing together individual fashion items – hats, gloves, a garment – and transforming them into an ensemble. It is telling that there are no works of art in the space. While women were meant to draw their inspiration from the works of art displayed in the store, it was in the sales areas, festooned with mirrors and reflective surfaces, that through commerce she realised her own artistic vision.

This process of construction and abstraction also explains why art showing outdated fashion, such as that on the portrait figures shown in Figure 61, often prominently featured in conjunction with women's fashion. A key example of this is a Strawbridge & Clothier exhibition held in September 1908 celebrating the store's 40th anniversary. Called 'Epochs and Eras in Women's Dress', it comprised a number of detailed reproductions by French artists 'Messr Auglay' (likely Auguste Auglay) and Victor Dupont of renowned paintings largely of French history and meant to give examples of women's dress throughout time. These included *The Coronation in Saint Denis* (1622-4) by Peter Paul Rubens and Charles-André Van Loo's portrait of Marie Leczinska (1747) (fig. 68).[76] This exhibition was accompanied by requisite sales displays, which the store titled 'Expositions of the Fashions

[76] Strawbridge & Clothier, *Epochs and Eras in Women's Dress*, 1908. Hagley Museum & Library, Strawbridge & Clothier collection (Accession Number 2117), box 75.

for Autumn, 1908', and which comprised constantly changing presentations of contemporary fashion across the store. Significantly, the two main areas of the anniversary display, art and fashion, were related but physically separate. Women were instead to take their inspiration from the paintings before constructing their own idea of beauty – that is, not to become direct copies of art but instead images of fashionability. The store voiced this directly when, a year later in an advertisement, it stated about one of its fashion displays:

> 'Marvelous evening gowns of rare grace and beauty have been gathered into this little gem of a salon, and draped upon figures. About them in lavish luxury, are displayed all the needful articles and garments to complete the wearer's equipment and make her the perfect mirror of fashion.'[77]

This statement conveys an element of copying or, more charitably, inspiration taking, but it also reflects the creative element of women's dress. As Strawbridge & Clothier's art exhibition exemplified, fashion was a non-permanent and subjective art form. Art, especially when presented as a succession of images as found in this exhibition, could thus give women both the inspiration and the creative license to experiment with their look, while the store provided an array of items to fit every whim and taste. In this way, fashion and mirrors literally mirrored each other, both being completely individual and ever changing. While art could set off the fashion journey, making it a necessary element of department store fashion display, the mirror could complete it by turning the woman herself into her own work of art. This not only lent increased value and meaning to the commercial fashion goods that came together to form the artistic outfit, but also gave women an accessible and powerful way to experiment with and formulate their own outward presentation and inward identity. This, in turn, justified consumption – and especially consumption of fashion.

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[77] 'Louis XIV Salon is Dress Beauty Feast', *The North American*, 19 October 1909.

The idea of identity and society being formulated around consumption and through fashion was, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, still hotly debated and contested between social forces, including religion. As Jackson Lears argues, the imposition of some form of deeper significance on women's consumption of fashion was necessary in order to legitimise this crucial area of the economy.[78] This is why fashion purveyors such as magazines and department stores began promoting fashion as an individual and creative act – one that expressed the essential character and identity of the shopper. These efforts transformed both fashion and the mirror from the epitome of narcissism and artifice into the frame for the woman-as-artwork. As Lear states: 'What emerged was an antifashionable ideology of fashion, in which the authentic self became a constructed objet d'art, carefully framed by its material surroundings.'[79] Fine art was essential to this dynamic for the way that it lent inspiration and credence to these individual explorations and to the greater cultural shift that was occurring through them. Even as shoppers turned away from art and turned towards their own reflection in the mirror, art stood behind them in the department store as a benevolent sentry, justifying their experience. Moreover, as fashion and interior decoration were accepted as legitimate forms of artistic expression, fine art became relatively superfluous to commercial display. Although it is still today used by brands such as Louis Vuitton, these brands also stand on their own as purveyors of art and culture.[80]

The story of fine art's legitimisation of fashion through display directly parallels the significance of art display to the legitimacy of department store; yet, instead of individual

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[78] Jackson Lears, 'Beyond Veblen: rethinking consumer culture in America', in Simon J. Bronner (ed.), *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, W. W. Norton & Co.: New York, NY, 1989, pp. 73-97.

[79] Ibid, p. 82.

[80] A key example of this is Louis Vuitton's 'The Masters Collection', a collaboration with artist Jeff Koons which saw the artist brand merchandise with illustrious paintings from across the history of art. Jonathan Jones, 'Jeff Koons' Louis Vuitton bags: a joyous art history lesson', *The Guardian*, 12 April 2017.

consumption, in the latter it was the enterprise and its goods that were legitimised. Even when the reflection of fine art was concentrated on the shopper, in a way that might be considered especially emancipatory for women, the end goal was always to justify and enable consumption. In this way, women and fine art were both employed towards the fulfillment of the department store's commercial premises: to sell as many products to as many people as possible. Yet it was not just the women who shopped in the department store or the fine art that was displayed in it that were impacted by the department store's practices. In respect of the former, scholars such as Lisa Tiersten, Erika Rappaport and Susan Berenson have shown how mass commercial culture, especially as formulated by the department store, constructed the general female experience in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[81] Moreover, it was arguably the same for art, in the sense that even art that was not displayed in the department store was impacted by the influence of mass commerce and consumer culture generally, and the department store in particular. The story of the fallout, and the way that the art world dealt with it, involves two different commercial systems and their attendant display practices, both of which will be considered alongside each other in the next section.

IV. Framing Fine Art: New Commercial Display

As described in Chapter One, the sale of art in department stores and its integration into the department store's mass merchandising system exposed its status as a full-fledged commodity. Certain elements of department store art display – for instance the piled up, undifferentiated display of department store art galleries, as exemplified by Figure 60 – show one of the ways this merchandising system could bear itself out in physical practice. Images

[81] Rappaport, 2001; Tiersten, 2001; and Benson, 1987.

from Au Bon Marché, Harrods, and many other department stores exemplify how typical it was to see paintings piled up or mixed amongst other goods, like knickknacks at a market or fruit in an Impressionist still life. On the other hand, art, whether it was on sale or purely for display, was also used as a prop to sell the department store's most lucrative products: mass-manufactured domestic or fashion good. While this necessarily spelled the importance of art as a cultural cue, as well as the continued relevance of artisanal or hand-produced wares, it also challenged the value, both cultural and monetary, of art as well as its status as an autonomous object. These issues were formative to the commercial art market and its institutions and, as will be argued in this section, were propelled and amplified by the display practices of the department store. They also helped to formulate the display history and practices of these institutions

Even just through association, an artist's work could be tainted by the sales and display practices of the bazaar and the department store, which were openly and blatantly orientated towards a kind of commerce that the art world rejected and from which it tried to disassociate itself. The irony is that, as the art world became ever more dependent on the open market for its propagation and livelihood, commerce and its realities became ever more taboo. Even more ironically, institutions that at their basis were non-commercial were those most liable to come into critics' crosshairs. This is especially true of art academies and their salons, which were the linchpin of the art world for much of the nineteenth century. In *The End of the Salon*, Patricia Mainardi's seminal study of the Académie des Beaux Arts, she artfully details the evolution, and eventually dissolution, of the Académie's annual salon as

well as the larger political, societal and aesthetic context that influenced its decline.[82] Specifically and crucially, she shows how the Académie, often at the behest of the government, did change and liberalise over time. Although the typical history of the nineteenth-century Académie pits academic insiders such as William Bouguereau against avant-gardists such as Édouard Manet – and certainly there were issues with exclusion of certain artists and their art into the early 1860s – the complete history, as Mainardi explains, was much more complex.

Even when the Académie des Beaux Arts was eventually forced to make it easier for artists, whether French or foreign, to access and display their work in its salon, these artists were still often dissatisfied with the circumstances under which they had to do so. The annual salon, with its masses of visitors and paintings piled one on top of the other, was consistently critiqued as being debased by commerce, or 'no better than a marketplace or bazaar'.[83] The concerns behind the wording of these criticisms make the kind of commerce at issue quite clear. For instance, one of the most important sticking points was the venue that in the mid nineteenth century began to be used for the salon: the Palais de I'lndustrie. As a general exhibition hall, not only did it house the salon, but it was also the site of numerous agricultural and industrial fairs. This drew uneasy comparisons between fine art and 'base' goods such as machinery and produce.[84]

The key issues thus boil down not just to representation, meaning who had the ability to expose their art to the public, but also the means by which that art was exposed. Artists certainly had a need for increased representation, which the Académie provided by becoming

[82] Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England, 1994.
[83] Ibid, p. 23
[84] Patricia Mainardi, 'The eviction of the Salon from the Louvre', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 6, no. CXII (1988), pp. 31-40.

less elite or more 'mass', but they also had an aversion to exactly these changes, which evoked too closely the blatant commercialism of the key institutions of liberal society such as the stock market and the department store. This, in turn, left artists and their art open to uncomfortable comparisons to merchants and their wares. Thus, after confronting the issue of representation, the main issue I argue that artists had with the Académie and its salon centred around one key discomfort, which was the association with commodities and the mass market that they and their work risked in a truly liberalised display space. In essence, artists sought to benefit from the liberalisation of both society and the economy, which meant greater representation and also greater access to a vast market of buyers, while also harbouring a desire to retain the exclusivity of the salon of the *ancien régime* and its lionisation of art as more than just a base good. Forced to adopt the liberal policies as well as many of the sites and display techniques of the new institutions of mass commerce, art academies and their salons largely failed to adjust to the demands of artists for both access and exclusivity and became increasingly shunted to the peripheries of the art world in favour of art galleries, auction houses and museums, which could offer both. Thus, from the early nineteenth century in Britain and from the mid nineteenth century in France and the United States, the art world developed or adapted institutions which, while directly commercial, also sought to camouflage not just any inflections of commerce but, more specifically, of mass commerce – and the best way to achieve this was through display.

Just as department stores used display to frame goods as more than just mass-produced objects, so the modern commercial art venues that emerged in the mid to late nineteenth century used display to frame their goods as more than just commodities. While the focus of galleries and auctions houses on fine art over other commercial goods inverts the

display focus of the department store, it significantly parallels the department store's approach in the way that display framed saleable goods as more than just that. This meant that, while their focus and approach opposed those of the department store, the result sought and achieved by galleries and auction houses was the same. The following two sub-sections will consider the display tactics of commercial art institutions such as the art gallery and auction house and the way they differed from, and were influenced by, the particular brand of mass commercial display practiced by the department store, and especially in what concerned art. The first sub-section will consider the process of specialisation, whereby commercial art outlets separated fine art retailing from the sale of other products. The second sub-section will consider commercial art display in the visual sense by dissecting the visual mode of mass commercial society and showing how the art gallery attempted to shield art from it. Both of these display practices helped to disguise the modern art world's commercial bent as well as art's new status, by virtue of its involvement in this system, as a commodity.

IVa. Specialisation, or the Great Purge

This chapter has argued that the display model of the department store and its impact on, and relationship with, fine art can be explained through reference to the department store's commercial system. In essence, this commercial system is based on selling many items at a fixed, often low, price. Crucially, display was intended to frame the products as more than low cost, mass-produced goods. Whether this meant bolstering the department store's reputation as artistic, which meant that its products would in turn be perceived as such, or directly framing products through association, fine art was a key tool in the department store's pursuit of higher sales through higher meaning for its products. The department store

achieved these ends through two display tactics. The first was the mixed display of goods, which allowed fine art and mass-produced goods to mingle and associate in the eyes of customers. The second display tactic was to reflect the positive values imbued in a department store by art display onto its products and its customers. This sub-section will focus on the first of these display tactics, considering what it meant for the art world and for the development of modern art commerce.

Yet this is not to say that modern institutions of art commerce, meaning art galleries and auction houses, were formed on and influenced solely by mass retail display. Just as department store display is centred on its commercial system, so, arguably, is that of art galleries and auction houses. Whereas department stores orientated their merchandising methods and display tactics around low-price, mass-produced products, art galleries and auction houses dealt almost unilaterally in higher cost, original objects. What is more, while department stores sold products of a largely utilitarian nature, fine art was, and still is, objectively a luxury item sold to a smaller pool of customers. The sale of fine art thus necessitated a completely different commercial approach; and it follows that display tactics employed by art galleries and auctions were also different to those employed by the department store. Still, the rise of mass commerce in the mid to late nineteenth century also coincided with a period of evolution in the art market, when commercial art display positioned itself in direct polarity to the display tactics of mass merchandising. Key to these new commercial display tactics, and to be discussed in this sub-section, was the almost wholesale seclusion of art from other kinds of saleable goods. This was a result of the progressive specialisation of commercial art venues, or their direct focus on the sale of fine art.

The importance of specialisation to the value and sale of art can best be comprehended by looking at the history of early nineteenth-century commercial art outlets, operating from approximately the 1780s to the 1850s, which, like the magasin de nouveautés was for the department store, were the predecessors of modern art galleries. They include antique/curiosity dealers and *magasins de luxe*, or luxury goods shops. In the case of the former, art historian Mark Westgarth has shown the central role of antiquarians and curiosity dealers in the early nineteenth-century British art market.[85] Like bazaars, they acted as a stopgap in the developing art market. Focusing largely on the secondary, or resale, trade – although some also sold contemporary productions and supported working artists, meaning there was no hard rule – these dealers imported thousands of paintings, sculptures and prints into the UK. In doing so, they tapped into a growing market composed of middle-class buyers seeking to furnish their town homes in the manner of aristocratic mansions. Yet, importantly, pictures were not the only item that dealers such as Dominic Colnaghi and Horatio Rodd offered to shoppers. They also sold everything from antique furniture to suits of armour and stained glass. As Westgarth states: 'The boundaries between picture dealing and other trades were extremely fluid and picture dealers trading in curiosities and antique furniture were the convention rather than an exception in the early nineteenth-century art market.'[86] These 'hybrid' firms predominated until the 1850s, when modern, specialised galleries and auction house sales slowly replaced them. Importantly, many of these same dealers and firms also evolved into modern art dealers, and always by beginning to specialise in fine art to the detriment of other areas of their former trade.

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[85] Mark Westgarth, '"Florid-looking speculators in Art and Virtu": the London picture trade c. 1850', in Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich (eds.), *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London: 1850-1939*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, England, 2011, pp. 26-46.
[86] Ibid, p. 29.

The French context shows that items of a more fashionable, and also feminine, bent were also sold alongside fine art in these key transitional retail environments. An important article by art historian Nicholas Green details the history of Paris' premier mid nineteenth-century commercial art district: the rue Lafitte.[87] Like Westgarth, Green also differentiates between the merchandising principles of dealers in the period prior to and after 1850. Dealers of the early nineteenth century, such as the prominent Impressionist associate Giroux et Cie., sold art alongside items what were termed *articles de luxe*. An 1833 Grioux advertorial shines light on what largely constituted *articles de luxe* while also briefly describing the store's range of products and services.[88] Addressing itself to New Year's shoppers seeking presents 'de bon ton' for women, girls and children, the advertorial describes the store's offerings as 'all the marvels of art', specifically listing 'painting, cabinetmaking, luxury stationery, leather bound books with gilded pages, musical instruments, ingenious children's toys…'[89] Added to these luxury items was women's wear, including 'scarves and shawls in cashmere' and 'velvet dresses.'[90] As Green makes clear, contemporary fine art, like the goods it was displayed amongst in Giroux's heaving and popular shop, was objectively considered a '*luxury commodity*' in the early nineteenth century.[91] Bringing home this point was the fact that, if so inclined, one could even rent paintings and sculptures from these stores at a set rate. This meant that a middle-class family could admire an ever-changing variety of art on the walls of their own home. As the tentacles of the liberalised economy and its attendant

[87] Nicholas Green, 'Circuits of Production, Circuits of Consumption: The Case of Mid-Nineteenth-Century French Art Dealing', *Nineteenth-Century French Art Institutions*, vol. 48, no. 1 (1989), pp. 29-34.
[88] In this period the French still exchanged presents on New Year's rather than Christmas Eve. 'Revue fashionable', *Le Ménestrel: journal de musique*, 22 December 1833.
[89] 'toutes les merveilles de l'art'; 'la peinture, l'ébénisterie, la papeterie de luxe, la libraire maroquinée et dorée sur tranche, les instruments de musique, les jouets d'enfants les plus ingénieux…' Ibid.
[90] 'des écharpes et des châles en cachemire'; 'les robes de velours.' Ibid.
[91] Green, 1989, p. 32.

vector, commodity culture, wrapped around every area of modern life – including, as the above advertisement shows, important holidays – fine art was at risk of being subsumed into its kaleidoscopic array of saleable goods. It was, essentially, at risk of becoming just another commodity. Green's short profile of the commercial arrangements of Théodore Rousseau, who 'from the 1850s… preferred working with the new *art* dealers [of the rue Lafitte]… to working with the older generation of luxury-goods traders', shows how artists were aware of this pitfall inherent in the world of modern art commerce.[92] As Green states, Rousseau 'quickly grasped the implications for his own value implicit in the shift from generalized luxury consumption to individualized art speculation'.[93]

It was art speculation that was offered by the galleries and auction houses of London's Bond Street and Paris' rue Lafitte. The newly liberalised economy of the nineteenth century, with its huge marketplace and free flowing capital, harnessed man's speculative impulse, turning formerly stable assets into 'investments'. The value of these investments was in turn based in large part on an idea of future desirability, with a subsequent payoff for those who bought at a lower price. Speculation was, therefore, the opposite of consumption. Whereas consumption was for immediate gratification or need, speculation was buying with an eye to future profit. It was thus an ideal outfit in which to dress up modern art commerce. Separated from need or even desire, art could also hold itself apart from the average commodity. As discussed in the Introduction, many works of scholarship have charted the development of the speculative art market and its importance to the formation of the modern art world. Of these works, one of the most renowned is certainly the Whites' *Canvases and Careers*, which tracks how 'expert' (another word for highly

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

specialised) dealers and art critics, such as Paul Durand-Ruel and Bernard Berenson, emerged to direct and facilitate the world of art commerce, where unlike the department store cost was extremely variable.[94] The Whites' scholarship, with its establishment of a three-way nexus between artists, dealers and critics, led the way for subsequent scholarly investigations of art speculation and speculators to emphasise rhetoric over physical display. Yet, as Westgarth's and Green's writing shows, 'hybrid retailing' or mixed display was easily the most important retailing practice to begin to be phased out as contemporary art commerce switched definitively from consumption to speculation. It thus stands to reason that, without first separating art out from other goods, which even includes valuable curios and antiques, speculation as a commercial system could never have gotten underway.

Speculative buying may have been the natural repost for art commerce, but the system supporting it was wholly artificial, and itself composed by a number of different practices. These practices were 'frames' for the paintings, sculptures and prints sold by modern art galleries and auction houses for ever-more eye watering prices. Like mixed display for the department store, 'isolated' display for the art galleries and auction houses was thus also a frame through which the value of fine art was concretised. By ensuring that fine art was held as separate from other commodities, art galleries and auction houses could obscure art's true commercial nature and secure its worth as more than just an *article de luxe*. This in turn supported the speculative aspect of art buying by framing works of art as unique, collectable objects rather than simple saleable goods. Department store display worked towards similar ends – making mass-produced goods out to be unique and beautiful by way of their association with fine art – although through a different means. While department

[94] White and White, 1993.

stores relied on associative, mixed display, art galleries and auction houses utilised specialist, solitary display. This ultimately meant the near complete seclusion of art from other saleable goods. As shown by both Westgarth's and Green's writing, both of whom highlight auction houses and art galleries, this was as true of one as the other. Still, with the next section focusing on gallery display, it is useful here to highlight the specific case of the auction houses and its transformations over the course of the nineteenth century. Auction houses were, early on, one of the foremost institutions not just of the art market but also the market in general, used in the eighteenth century to sell everything from books to scientific instruments, furniture and fine art. While the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century auction house was not specifically formatted for the art trade, it most closely approached the increasingly specialised and speculative nature of the late nineteenth-century art market. Still, there was room to encourage speculation and maximise profit, and this growth and development was facilitated by commercial and display mechanisms that went against those of mass commerce.

A key example of this is Hôtel Drouot, an auction house in Paris. Art market historian Lukas Fuchsgruber calls the 1852 opening of the Hôtel Drouot a 'sea change' in both the French auction trade and the larger art market for the way it concentrated auction activity in one venue.[95] Whereas, similar to Britain, French auctions had once been held in a more ad hoc manner in a variety of places and spaces, the Hôtel Drouot and its twenty rooms became the specialised venue for auction activity. In 1875, commentator Victor-Charles Préseau tellingly compared the Hôtel Drouot's impact on the larger auction market to that of the department store on the smaller retailers, such as boutiques and even the magasins de

[95] Lukas Fuchsgruber, 'The Hôtel Drouot as the stock exchange for art. Financialization of art auctions in the nineteenth century', *Journal for Art Market Studies* [online], vol. 1, no. 1 (2017).

nouveautés, which it replaced – the pull of the Hôtel Drouot being such that independent auctioneers found it hard to survive.[96] Although Fuchsgruber associates this with the size and central position of the Hôtel Drouot and the department stores, it seems more apparent, given the nature of his analysis of the institution, that it was just as much their specialised environments and sales tactics that gave them market prominence. From the 1850s, both the auction house and the department store began to come into their own as commercial institutions. This meant the streamlining of everything from location to sales tactics and the merchandising policies that underlined the businesses. Just as department stores became specialised *general* retailers, with sales models tailored towards selling as many items as possible, so auction houses became specialised venues for speculation, including in art. With the sales model of the auction house already largely concretised, it was the trappings of the auction itself, what might be called its 'framing', that were reimagined.

To this end, the Hôtel Drouot's art auctions were depicted as high-end events where the rich and the *nouveau riche* could buy only the best of statement and 'investment' pieces. As shown by Figure 69, late nineteenth-century art auctions at the Hôtel Drouot were bustling affairs where finely dressed and largely male buyers participated in a ritual show of value and social status. Augmenting both the atmosphere and the value of the goods were special exhibitions, where potential patrons (or those who wished they were) could browse the works coming to auction, and exquisitely illustrated catalogues which acted as both provenance for the art and mementos of the experience. No longer a distributional mechanism for a limited and underdeveloped market, auctions became the premier venue for art speculation in an art world increasingly packed with choices for buying, selling and being

[96] Ibid.

seen. Arguably, this is due to the choice of venues such as the Hôtel Drouot to frame themselves as specialist retailers with rarefied environments where only the best and most unique items were sold and only the richest buyers, calling themselves collectors, could acquire them.

With the prestige and status of art auctions concretised through the above described framing procedures, there was only one way to make auctions houses and the art sold through them even more elite: specialisation. This meant the creation of auction houses that specialised fully in the sale of art and selected *objets d'art*. While art auctions tended to receive the most attention and the highest prices, many different kinds of objects were (and still are) sold at the Hôtel Drouot. This is also true of other prominent, extant auction houses, such as Sotheby's, Christie's and Bonhams. From their institution to the present day, all of these auction houses have subsisted on selling not just fine art but a variety of goods, from entire estates to jewellery, furniture and classic cars. But in the late nineteenth century, auction houses emerged which took art speculation to its highest level, the most prominent of which was the American Art Association. Opened in 1883, the AAA was ideally suited to the American art market, which was arguably the most dynamic and profitable market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century due to the country's exploding private wealth. It contained both an auction house and a gallery, making it a one-stop shop for rich Americans. Its owners James F. Sutton, R. Austin Robertson, and Thomas Kirby were also well versed in sourcing the best foreign fine art and *objets d'art* from around the world. Yet arguably the most significant of all of the AAA's attributes was its specialisation in the sale of art. Although John Ott in his article on the AAA describes how it presided over a period of almost unprecedented art speculation in Gilded Age America, he does not mention

specialisation, which objectively was the main characteristic that set it apart from competitors.[97] Specialisation and in turn the isolated, rarefied displays which naturally followed it, contributed to the AAA's success in an art world which survived on increasingly exclusive and highbrow rituals of wealth and status.

In order to see how specialisation and its attendant display policies helped to solidify the AAA's position in the market, it suffices to look at their 'framing' policies, including display. The AAA excelled at acquiring some of the finest and most prominent collections of art in America for auction, but not before marketing them through catalogues and displaying them in its galleries. These displays, as Ott shows in his article, became society events in New York and were a key aspect of the auction house's business. The AAA catered to the nation's wealthiest collectors, so every aspect of their marketing policies had to be geared towards the highest level of the market – or, as Ott states 'top-shelf consumption'.[98] Marketing of sales started with their finely decorated catalogues, the most exquisite of which were held back for the richest patrons. These collectables, filled with images and almost art objects in themselves, became highly sought-after markers of societal status amongst America's growing elites, but even more importantly showed the high standard to which the AAA targeted its marketing activities. Yet the crowning jewel was their art openings and exhibitions, held in the AAA's galleries on Broadway and opposite Madison Square. Crucially, these exhibitions were separate from the AAA's designated auction venue, Chickering Hall. Alongside the lavish décor, which included vases of flowers and other hallmarks of a fine domestic space – an important aspect of late nineteenth-century gallery display that will be discussed in the next sub-section – this segregation of display from sale

[97] Ott, 2008, pp. 133-58.
[98] Ibid, p. 137.

only amplified the rarefied, seemingly non-commercial allure of the AAA. While the display spaces resembled not the 'musty' auction houses of Europe (as critics lamented them to be) but the finely decorated private galleries of top level art dealers, the AAA raised the bar by completely separating display from commerce.[99] The AAA could thus capitalise on the reputation for specialisation and the display tendencies of commercial art galleries, while also benefitting from the highly emotive and openly commercial spectacle that was the auction.

The AAA in no way revolutionised the methods of art commerce. As Ott states: 'the AAA did not create this new and specialized market but only captured it by best actualizing its key features of luxury and exclusivity.' One of these features was undoubtedly specialisation, or the pure focus on art and *objets d'art*, which had previously defined art galleries but could now also be applied to auction sales. Moreover, the AAA's focus on the items that comprised the finest of collections is undoubtedly the reason why it acquired the rights to auction so many of these collections accumulated by the new titans of American industry, including notably that of early mass retailer A. T. Stewart. Stewart's auction is an ideal example of the difference between the means by which these fortunes were accumulated and the way the collections bought by them were acquired and then ultimately sold off. Although Stewart's collection was stated as achieving lower prices than Mary J. Morgan's sold the year before, the auction was still a millionaire's game. As reported in *The Weekly Adviser,* Savannah, George-based artist Carl Brandt squared up against banker John S. Kennedy for Frederick Edwin Church's *Niagara Falls, from the American Side* (1867),

[99] Ibid, p. 138.

with Kennedy's bid of $7,500 ultimately triumphant (fig. 70).[100] Brandt was reported as saying of this experience that 'there is no use bucking against a millionaire'.[101] While Stewart undoubtedly overpaid for many of his works, the thousands of dollars they achieved at auction was still many times the average American salary in the 1880s. Moreover, while A. T. Stewart may have advertised his collective sales figures on the basis of thousands of items of different types and prices, the AAA did so on the basis of one or ten paintings. The stark difference between Stewart's business dealings and those of the AAA are evidence alone of the disparate results of their two different business models, and especially the difference between mixed and specialist retailing. Both were highly successful, yet in a completely different area of commerce. Stewart generated his wealth by appealing to the masses with the variety of goods they needed in their daily life, while the AAA targeted the wealthiest in the population with a specialist product only they could afford. Ironically, one of the AAA's founders, James F. Sutton, married Rowland Hussey Macy's daughter Florence, in 1870, showing again that these two forms of commerce could easily merge. Indeed, they were two poles of the same system dressed up in different packaging.

As Ott's article shows, advertising and display techniques such as finely decorated catalogues and commercial art galleries displayed as if they were a private picture gallery were just means of supporting an auction house's speculative business model, rather than a goal in themselves. Yet the clearest exemplification of this difference between the preferred business models of department stores and art commerce, and relating directly to the realm of auctions sales, can be found in a component of Harrods' large business. In 1897, Harrods opened its 'House and Estate Offices', an in-house department of the store which provided

[100] 'The Stewart Sale', *The Weekly Adviser* (Montgomery, AL), 31 March 1887, p. 7.
[101] Ibid.

services in everything that concerned locating or moving from a property.[102] Included under the service was an auction business, which even acquired its own 'Property Auction Hall' when the Estate Office moved across the road from the store in 1919. Unlike the AAA's specialised auctions, which were fully orientated around fine art, Harrods' auction house dealt more generally in the full-scale dispersal of entire estates, including household goods. It is interesting to note that this is also largely the way many of today's leading auction houses, including Christie's, started. Newspaper advertisements from the late 1760s and early 1770s, the decade when James Christie established the enterprise, show that its auctions centred on the sale of estates. An example is an August 1769 advertisement from the *Leeds Intelligencer*, in which Christie announced that, 'some Time next Month', he would auction a freehold estate comprising 104 acres of land located in West Riding, Yorkshire.[103] This is just one of a number of properties Christie sold through his Pall Mall auction room in the years after its opening. Given the fact that most estates were auctioned either as a result of death or bankruptcy, this was a distinctly utilitarian business model. It was also, as Ott notes, a model still followed by many auction houses into the late nineteenth century, and even for art. 'Fire sale' and 'liquidation' auctions where art was sold unceremoniously were the norm rather than the exception before the entry of the AAA, with its considered and specialised marketing and sales tactics, into the American market.[104]

The early history of Christie's reflects the more utilitarian and distributional origins of the auction trades, and contrasts directly with the specialised sales and the fine art auction houses that abounded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Department stores,

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[102] Harrods Estates, 'History of Harrods Estates'. https://www.harrodsestates.com/company-info/history [accessed 15 September 2018].
[103] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 22 August 1769, p. 2.
[104] Ott, 2008, p. 138.

with their mixed retailing model and even, in the case of Harrods, estate auction departments, in many ways more closely resembled the early business practices of the auction house. Critically, as auction houses and department stores began to diverge in their business models and sales remits over the course of the nineteenth century, so did their art display practices. In much the same way art galleries evolved into specialist retailers, ejecting many of the objects sold by their predecessors, the curiosity shop and the *magasins de luxe,* so as shown in this sub-section did the auction house, which to the best of its management's abilities also separated art out from other objects. This directly contrasts with the display model of the department store, where, as shown, fine art was readily displayed and sold amongst other goods. Yet isolated display was not the only tactic that commercial art venues harnessed in order to distinguish themselves from mass retailers and their products from commodities. Auction houses and art galleries also had to regulate the visual relationship between viewer and painting, and especially considering the panoramic visual style of department stores and mass commerce which consistently threatened to expose fine art to public view.

IVb. Focusing and Re-focusing Display

As argued throughout this chapter, department stores used a mixed display style not just because it was practical for their large variety of goods, but also because it helped to create commercially beneficial associations between different objects. The latter point is especially prevalent to the presentation of fine art, for display alongside it could help to 'lift' the mass-manufactured goods that were the department store's main product line. Yet this display style did not just rely on the creation of overt physical connections, but also on the promotion of a certain regime of looking which itself prompted these associations in the eyes and mind of

the shopper. I have termed this the department store's 'panoramic' display style, where fine art could not only mingle with goods but also with the larger landscape of the store, adding to the latter's credibility, reputation and ability to sell goods – display being a key form of proto-branding. This display style was buttressed by the department store's commercial model, which revolved around the retailing of low-cost, mass-manufactured goods at volume. Conversely, as shown in the previous sub-section, commercial art institutions such as auction houses and art galleries took a completely different track. Instead of general retailing and mixed display, commercial arts venues became more specialised. A major benefit of this, and perhaps even a catalyst, was that fine art could be displayed on its own, and not amongst other saleable goods, making it less likely to be perceived as a commodity in an increasingly commercially orientated art world. Yet it was not only this physical seclusion that ran completely opposite to the art display realities of the department store. The relationship between commercial art institutions and visuality, meaning the visual paradigm between art object and viewer, was also at the opposite end of the spectrum from the department store's panoramic style. This sub-section will consider the display of art in commercial art galleries from this perspective, showing how they progressively took steps to focus and re-focus visual attention on the art object at the expense of the environment and all other external factors, until all that was left was the art work and the white wall.

Nicholas Green noted the importance of promoting a certain visual relationship between art and the viewer to the commercial art world as early as the mid nineteenth century. Describing the 'window-scape' of the Rue Lafitte, Green discussed the disparity between the brightly lit windows of the galleries, which opened up to the city and all of its commercial possibilities, while the actual 'goods', meaning the works of art, were often

locked away either out of sight or upstairs.[105] This dual stance was meant to appease the two competing aspects of the gallery. The first was the commercial aspect, which required visibility. In a parallel manner to the department store's infamous window displays, an art gallery's windows provided ready-made advertising that could not only tempt in street traffic but also act as an interface between the gallery and the larger realm of public life. On the other hand, galleries needed to respect the 'artistic integrity' of their goods, and this entailed shielding them from the glare of the commercial city and the roving eyes of its passing public.

Anne Friedberg, in her writing on the modern and postmodern visual experience, calls this the 'mobilized gaze'. Friedberg argues that technological and architectural innovations such as window displays helped to inculcate this form of visuality, while commercial institutions such as the department store commodified it.[106] Tony Bennett in his seminal essay, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', similarly argued that nineteenth-century display culture ushered in a period of externalisation, when previously hidden processes and objects, such as art works, were brought firmly into the public view.[107] This externalisation was, moreover, a crucial step towards the commercialisation of culture, with the power of sight now endowed on the public who were invited to visually consume everything around them. Bennett cites the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition in London as one of the catalysing moments in this social shift, and undoubtedly world's fairs played a major role in transforming visual culture as they spread out from London across the world. Yet it was the department store, a key associate of the world's fair, which was the permanent commercial fixture in the modern city and which

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[105] Green, 1989, p. 32.
[106] Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1993, p. 4.
[107] Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *new formations*, vol. 4 (1988), pp. 73-102.

could relentlessly colonise city streets with their display windows and ephemera. It was from this totalising commercial landscape, predicated on panoramic visuality, which art galleries sought to protect their art – with display central to doing so.

As discussed by Charlotte Klonk, one of the key methods which museums and galleries alike used to shield art from the crassness of commerce was to domesticate display.[108] This meant creating interiors that replicated domestic spaces because of their connotations of privacy and their separation from the public realm. While Klonk focuses largely on museums, there are many important examples of this in the realm of art commerce. The Galerie Georges Petit, for instance, was renowned for its plush interiors replete with velvet settees and palm trees, which in total replicated a grand bourgeois home. In the case of London's Grosvenor Gallery, the domestic setting was more aristocratic than bourgeois, duplicating the soaring ceilings and fine decoration of a Mayfair mansion. The domestic aspect of the Grosvenor's decoration was highlighted from the earliest reviews, including even before the gallery was opened, such as in the short-lived American version of *The Art Journal,* which stated: 'We may mention that the furniture is to be of the richest, the walls being hung with crimson silk; and the pictures are to be arranged with the same care and attention to space as if the gallery containing them were the drawing-room of a private house.'[109]At the Grosvenor one could also experience the home pleasures of a lending library, a restaurant and conveniences – the latter especially useful for female patrons (fig. 71). Yet, while the domestication of the commercial art gallery was undoubtedly a crucial tool for galleries to distinguish themselves from the public city, it was also one used extensively by the commercial department store. In spite of its lavish décor, Au Bon Marché's art gallery

[108] Klonk, 2009, pp. 49-86.
[109] 'Art in London: The New Grosvenor Gallery', *The Art Journal*, New Series, vol. 3 (1877), p. 94.

and reading room were also meant to provide home conveniences to visitors and help to replicate a domestic environment in a public-facing institution.

Department stores replicated domestic décor for the same reason that art galleries did: to elevate their products by distinguishing themselves from the chaotic, open marketplace that was the commercial city and its public spaces. Although there are apparent differences in framing – in that in art galleries it was the display framing the art, whereas in department stores art acted as frame – the impulses tied up in such display environments were patently the same. In this, Green's remarks about the disconnect between the art gallery's windows and its interior again becomes relevant. For, even if these interiors could not be seen from the outside of the gallery itself, they were still often projected into public view through images and advertisements. Like window displays, art galleries used images of their interiors to foster an awareness of their presence and activities on the part of the public. Figure 71, which depicts the Grosvenor Gallery's range of luxurious amenities, is just one example. These advertisements were, in essence, virtual windows through which the commercial public could observe a space that ironically portrayed itself as private and closed off from public view through its own display tactics. This is the dualism inherent in the commercial gallery, at once attempting to sell goods while also attempting to shield art from the corruptions of commerce – or at least to appear to do so. While each gallery reckoned with these inherently contradictory impulses on their own terms, some inevitably being more open to overt commercialism than others, the overarching inevitably was that each was subject to it. Still a spectrum of commercialism undoubtedly formed, judged by the openness of each institution, and even each artist, to the glare of the mass commercial public.

Thus, on one side, galleries such as that run by Georges Petit became, through their activities, a byword for commercialism. In fact, Émile Zola called the Galerie Georges Petit, in the working notes to his novel on the Parisian art world, *L'Oeuvre*, 'les *magasins du Louvre* de la peinture'.[110] Petit's open door, openly commercial approach to art commerce meant that he could attract buyers ranging from aristocrats to provincial shoppers and rich foreigners on a trip to Paris.[111] Figure 72, for example, shows one of Petit's more ingenious marketing ploys: a Christmas party in which the gallery was transformed into a theatre, with all that entailed for issues of spectacle and visuality. On the other hand, galleries such as that of Charles Sedelmeyer played with visbility, or a lack thereof, to appeal to a more firmly elite selection of buyers, including American tycoons such as John Wanamaker. Renowned for selling what were arguably the most expensive paintings of the nineteenth century, Mihály Munkácsy's *Christ before Pilate* (1881) and Jean François Millet's *L'Angelus* (1857-59), Sedelmeyer was said to 'keep back' certain paintings in the upper floors of his gallery for his richest clients. After revealing the artwork to great effect, he then argued that he could not sell the piece, provoking in his clients a sense of competitiveness and acquisitiveness that ultimately drove up the price.[112] While both galleries used a similar business model based on negotiation and speculation, the openness of their galleries and the visibility of their products were means to target different segments of the art market. Ultimately both Petit and Sedelmeyer were highly successful, revealing the diverse commercial applications of this marketing technique as well as the diversity of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art market itself.

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[110] Ward, 1991, p. 616.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Huemer, 2004, pp. 112-3.

It is exactly the kind of sleight-of-hand commerce practiced by Sedelmeyer in his dealings with tycoons that, as explained in Chapter One, department stores eliminated from their own dealings in order to sustain their mass-market business model. While department stores could play with visibility through holding private opening evenings or dramatic unveilings of new window displays, all saleable products ultimately had to be forthrightly displayed and priced in order for stores to maintain public trust and ensure repeat business. Open display thus not only facilitated a department store's advertising initiatives, but also signified its status as a trustable mass-market retailer. 'The Exhibitionary Complex' underlines the importance of this reputation for visibility and accessibility for mass retailers. Bennett argues that, conversely to *ancien régime* society when the right of sight was the reserve of the elite, for the ascendant powers of modern commercial culture to gain a hold over society vision had to be dispersed amongst the newly conceived body of consumer-citizens. The citizenry then used this power both to survey their modern kingdom of consumer goods and to survey each other – judging and enforcing order on one another as best befit the overarching values and needs of commercial society.[113] Seeing was thus the first step not just to buying goods but also to buying into consumer culture through those goods. Even if one did not have the ability to buy, just the visual accessibility of the wide range of products on display in the department store gave the illusion of shared ownership and control. For the consumer, to see an object was to own it; for the object, to be seen was to be consumed.

It was thus from this roving, all-consuming gaze that art galleries attempted to shield their goods, while still trying to market and sell them along the lines of modern commerce –

[113] Bennett, 1988, p. 78.

a difficult line to walk. Yet it was not just art galleries that felt the implications and pressures of having the eyes of mass commerce and commercial culture upon them, but also artists. A key example, and especially relevant to the subject of modern commercial display, is Edgar Degas' images of Parisian milliners and millinery shops. As Ruth Iskin discusses in her book chapter devoted to the subject, Degas' images of female milliners and their customers are more like disorientating snapshots than full scenes.[114] Certainly, it is difficult even to tell what kind of millinery shop Degas is depicting – is it a small boutique or a corner of a larger establishment, such as a department store? The style of painting also makes it difficult to tell whether some of the figures are customers or milliners, the two often blending together in a way that is surprising for a time of rigorous societal division demarcated by dress. This is particularly true of the painting in Figure 73, which while Degas' largest painting on the subject still only obliquely depicts the environment and the figure, who herself is half hidden behind the hats and the table. While all of this could be put down to the Impressionists' looser, less narrative style of painting, works such as Figure 74 & 75 show Degas' continuous propensity throughout this series to disrupt the viewers' ability to perceive the subject as she would have perceived herself: a fashionable whole.

Iskin contends that Degas' curiosity about, and ultimately his frustration with, commerce and its visual demands shines through in these paintings and drawings, a point that rings true as the series moved progressively towards the depiction of milliners and their work. Degas not only disrupts the panoramic visual mode of commerce, but also ultimately shuns the subject completely, instead preferring to turn towards the depiction of production. While Iskin argues that this change reflected Degas' more cynical attitude towards commerce

[114] Ruth Iskin, *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist Painting*, Cambridge University Press: New York, NY, 2007, pp. 60-113.

in particular in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the entire series in fact reflects the Impressionists' preoccupation with the visual conventions of commerce and commercial society – one of the key aspects of their modernity. As Iskin also describes in her book, Édouard Manet's painting *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, is an expert mediation on commerce, vision, and modernity in the way that it shows Suzon, one of the Folies-Bergère barmaids, the bar products arrayed alongside her, and her customers reflected as distortions in the large mirror (fig. 76).[115] The question is to which extent these preoccupations with the visual modes of commerce, and their impact on artists and fine art, also came to bear on art display through the Impressionists or subsequent groups of artists.

A tantalising indication of the answer to this question can arguably be found in the circumstances around the Impressionists' first group exhibition, which was held in photographer Nadar's former studio on the Boulevard des Capucines. Although the volume and availability of the studio, and Nadar's own receptiveness to the exhibition, were reason enough to hold it there, the more concrete argument is undoubtedly in the independence of the exhibition itself – autonomous from the overt commerciality of the salon and its attendant exhibition, the Salon des Refusés. It was at the Salon des Refusés, re-launched the same year as the Impressionists' first independent exhibition, where the group's paintings would have been displayed one on top of the other, offering a panorama of failed art for the mass public. The ignominy of this display would only have been compounded the following year, in 1875, when the Salon des Refusés was held on the first floor of a defunct bazaar called Magasins Réunis.[116] Opened in 1866, the failed commercial venture was transformed into an all-

[115] Ibid, pp. 35-59.
[116] Jules Claretie, *L'Art et les artistes français contemporains. Avec un Avant-propos sur le Salon de 1876*, Charpentier et Cie.: Paris, France, 1876, p. 304.

purpose commercial and entertainment complex.[117] Yet this was not the end of the building's journey. Eugène Corbin, whose father had opened a department store also conveniently called Magasins-Réunis in Nancy, France, eventually bought the large building, perfectly designed for mass commerce, in 1910. Corbin was renowned for his support of the *art nouveau* artists and designers of the École de Nancy, whose work he also displayed in and amongst products in his department stores.[118]

It was thus that the Magasins-Réunis in Paris, for many reasons, spelled the union even in the institutional worlds of the Académie des Beaux Arts and the French government between fine art and mass commerce. It was therefore also apt that the Impressionists turned away from these two worlds and towards the world of the private art market, which offered a cleaner slate and more leeway to experiment with different visual and display conventions, at this same moment. Martha Ward's important writing on independent and private exhibitions in late nineteenth-century France shows the importance of these venues to the development of commercial art display, and particularly in techniques that projected a rarefied, anti-commercial atmosphere. As already described in this sub-section, one of the first of these techniques was the creation of forthrightly private, even semi-domestic, spaces. To this end, display conventions, such as the colour of frames, worked to blend paintings in with their domestic surroundings.[119] Yet there were important tensions between modernism and the idea that art should accord with its environment, essentially becoming decorative – one being the

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[117] For a history of Magasins-Réunis's rise and fall under its first manifestation in the 1860s, see: N.A., *Réflexions sur les Magasins-Réunis. Leur chute. Leur réorganisation*, Imp. de Renou et Maulde: Paris, France, 1869. Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Tolbiac), call number VP-28261.

[118] For an article on the link between Magasins-Réunis and the École de Nancy, see: Catherine Coley, 'Les Magasins Réunis: From the Provinces to Paris, from Art Nouveau to Art Deco', in Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (eds.), *Cathedrals of Consumption: the European Department Store, 1850-1939*, Ashgate Publishing: Farnham, England, 1999, pp. 225-52.

[119] Ward, 1991, pp. 610-8.

modernist lionisation of autonomy and another the fact that displays of this type needed to take place in private spaces, shielded from the public. The display innovations of the Neo-Impressionists show that it was not in fact public space, but the visual paradigm of mass commerce prevalent in public space, that was at issue.

The Neo-Impressionists' participation in the Société des Artistes Indépendants throughout the late 1880s, which was held in a public building and supported by public funds, helped to further display methods that resisted commodification. White frames, which in substituting for the more typical gold frame already made a statement that the artwork on display was not an *article de luxe*, helped to assert the autonomy of the work within its large environment. As Ward states: 'The autonomy of the work came foremost: the separation of the painting from its environment and its exclusive claim to the viewer's attention were essential to secure.'[120] Unlike art displayed in the department store, which never stood by itself and was always meant to blend into the general environment and atmosphere of the store, the Neo-Impressionists' display of their paintings demanded that they be looked at as autonomous to, and could resist assumption by, their containers. Rather than shielding art from the public gaze, the Neo-Impressionists showed that it was possible to create a transportable mode of display that could project the seeming independence of art to mass commerce. In this, as Ward argues, it is possible to see the beginnings of the 'white cube', which instead of having purely aesthetic origins is also rooted in the interface between artists and society – and particularly commercial society.[121]

[120] Ibid, p. 619.
[121] Ibid, p. 621.

V. Conclusion

The logic of the commercial system of the department store pervaded not only its own system of display in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but also that of the commercial art world. This happened in a reverse fashion, for it was necessary for commercial art display to counteract the display techniques of the department store and mass commerce in general as they pertained to art. By mixing works of art amongst 'luxury commodities', such as furniture, fashion and pianos, or simply by subjecting them to the panoramic visual landscape of mass commerce, the department store not only undermined art's aesthetic autonomy, and thus its significance as an object, but also threatened to expose it as a luxury commodity. The art world, fuelled by the artists most dependent on it, thus developed display techniques and environments that ensured that art would be perceived not just as more than a commodity, but also in many ways as separate from the society that surrounded it. Still, even just the necessity of such overt gestures of separation show that mass commercial society already surrounded art, determining both its display and, as will be argued in the next chapter, its circulation and style.

CHAPTER THREE

MOVEMENT, MASS COMMERCE AND COSMOPOLITANISM: AN AMERICAN STUDY

I. Introduction

The preceding two chapters have shown how the sale and display of art in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department stores in America, France and the UK was moulded by the department store's commercial system. Specifically, this means high volume, low-cost mass commerce. Chapters One and Two also considered how both art commerce and art display in the department store related to and influenced similar mechanisms in the art world, and especially the consumption, production and display of art. Yet one central function of the department store has yet to be considered in this study: their circulation, or movement, of goods. Fundamentally, department stores are funnels for goods, moving them from the factories or, in the case of art, the studios of producers into the homes and lives of consumers. While, as mentioned in the preceding chapters, some department stores, aided by their innate understanding of consumers' needs and desires, did manufacture their own goods in this period, this production comprised only a portion of their stock. The amount and variety of consumer goods emerging in this period, as well as the rise of marketable brands, meant that no retail outlet the size of a department store could conceivably manufacture everything consumers needed or wanted to purchase. What is more, the expansion of global trade meant that goods were circulated in a larger volume and with a greater ease across larger swathes of the world than ever before. Department stores were a crucial nexus in these trade routes, for both their large operational capacity, which meant that they could source and

distribute vast amounts of foreign goods, and for their access to consumers, in whom they could stoke a desire for these goods. Thus, evaluating the department store as a commercial system also means taking into account its role as a distributor or mover of objects; and this chapter will do this in reference to issues of circulation and globalisation in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art world, and particularly in America.[1]

Just like mass commerce and mixed display, circulation of goods is a key function or characteristic of the department store. Moreover, as was the case for mass commerce and mixed display, this is true of department stores in America, France and the UK alike. If one is to call the department store a system, then it follows that this system would function the same across the board. Still, this is not to say that the prevailing effects of the system did not manifest in different ways depending on local circumstances. This is especially true of the circulation of goods, which is particularly dependent on pre-existing trade routes. Thus, for instance, British department stores had a particular advantage in their access to the trade routes of the British Empire. These routes made it easy to import a wide variety of goods, but they also had a more particular and unique impact, in that trade routes linking Britain to the Empire meant that British department stores could foster a roaring trade in the export of goods manufactured in the UK. The catalogues of British department stores, including

[1] Largely, globalisation means the expansion and perpetuation of networks of capital, communication, trade, immigration, etc. on a global scale. While trade routes such as the Silk Road and the activities of consortiums such as the British East India Company show that exchange across borders had long taken place, a variety of technological and social factors led to an unprecedented rate of international exchange and trade in the nineteenth century (and especially the second half of the nineteenth century), leading to it being called the first period of globalisation. This history is considered in the writing of economists such as Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, for instance: Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalization and History: The Evolution of the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy*, The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 1999; and Kevin H. O'Rourke, 'Europe and the Causes of Globalization, 1790 to 2000', in Henryk Kierzkowski (ed.), *Europe and Globalization*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, England, 2002. Their writing considers catalysing factors such as changes in transportation technology and the movement of labour, both of which directly impacted the production and circulation of commodities in this era. Chapter Three of this thesis in turn considers how department stores, beneficiaries of globalisation, used fine art to promote its acceptance in societies not necessarily predisposed to do so – as shown by the wide-ranging use of protective tariffs.

Harrods and the Army and Navy Store in London, are a physical manifestation of this. Their phonebook-like heft and thousands of pages of products attest to the fact that they were sent not just around Britain but also around the world, and as such were required to list everything needed in the modern home no matter how remote. Harrods, in particular, played on its export business and its reputation as an international retailer, as shown by the trade card in Figure 77. Listed in catalogues and thus also included in this export business were works of art, and especially paintings and engravings.[2]

French department stores did not cultivate such a large export market, preferring instead to focus in part on the many potential shoppers from across the world who visited France, and especially Paris. The importance of cultivating the tourist trade for French department stores is shown by the large number of advertisements they placed in English-language periodicals (Fig. 78).[3] Globally, it is also shown by promotional materials from Au Bon Marché, which were published in languages such as English and Spanish and targeted visitors to Paris with descriptions of the store and even physical tours of its many amenities.[4] Crucially, these tours started in the store's art gallery and reading room.[5] This was a particular benefit to the artists who displayed their work at Au Bon Marché, as the visitors may well have been predisposed to buy one or more of the works as a souvenir of their tour or their larger trip to Paris. For the store, the tours brought shoppers into its sales spaces

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[2] Outside of the previously featured Harrods catalogue, a catalogue that exemplifies this is: Army & Navy and Alison Adburgham, *Yesterday's Shopping: The Army & Navy Stores Catalogue 1907*, David & Charles Publishers: Exeter, England, 1980, pp. 450-69.

[3] Other examples of these advertisements can be found in: *The Buffalo Commercial*, 8 April 1885, p. 2; and *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 10 May 1914, p. 29.

[4] Examples of promotional pamphlets in English and Spanish include: Au Bon Marché, *Souvenir of a Visit to the Bon Marché*, 1909; and Au Bon Marché, *Recuerdo de Une Visita Almacenes del Bon Marché* (Au Bon Marché: Paris, 1911). Both pamphlets are in the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), FOL-WZ-212.

[5] Au Bon Marché, *L'Exposition et Paris: Guide Illustré du Bon Marché*, 1900. p. 253. Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris, Cote 762378.

while also establishing it as an acceptable and reliable standard of French taste for visitors to the capital. The number of 'guides' to the various world's fairs held in the city throughout the late nineteenth century that Au Bon Marché published show how important fostering the itinerant tourist trade was for Parisian department stores, and how much they relied on the city itself as an advertising mechanism.

Either of these contexts could be explored to show the importance of the department stores' circulation of goods to the dissemination not just of fine art but also of different styles and, more largely, of taste. British department stores, for instance, were active in distributing British art across the Empire in a largely affordable and accessible manner. French department stores arguably helped to advance the prominence of French art by catering to the tourist trade, who then returned to their homes to spread the gospel of French style and taste. Yet this chapter will focus on the American context over the explicitly transnational focus of the previous two. This is for a few different, although related, reasons. The first is the amount of material on the American context, including publications of all stripes, images and archival materials, which make it a particularly rich case study. The sheer number of documents also shows what an important practice this was for American department stores; a phenomenon that itself warrants explanation. The second is that, unlike French and British department stores, American department stores were more predisposed to display and sell imported, and usually French, art than their European counterparts, which overwhelmingly displayed and sold art made locally. At the very least, art on display in an American department store was always a mix of European and American artworks. This trend not only allows a clear insight into American taste in this period, but also relates to the shift in Western economies and cultures from production to consumption. Few items can promote

the values and benefits of consumption over production more than an item that was not made in the country where it is consumed. Imported goods thus represented not just the widening world of culture, communication and trade, but also the new values and ways of life of an increasingly commercial, globalised society.

As already argued, department stores symbolised and enabled this shift in the fact that they separated production from everyday, middle-class life, and because they also enabled larger swathes of the population than ever before to engage in conspicuous consumption. The upper classes had long partaken in both conspicuous and cosmopolitan consumption – consuming, for instance, imported Chinese porcelains and Indian fabrics – yet, as shown by the previous chapters, it was only with the advent of mass retailing that consumption in general could really be considered a national pursuit. This is also true of cosmopolitan consumption, with foreign goods becoming accessible and affordable when mass retailing arose to sell them at volume. The novelty of these products helped them to sell themselves, a key attraction for retailers and a matter of immense fear for local producers. In the late nineteenth century, when a raft of free trade laws were passed, foreign goods could also yield vastly higher profit margins because of the lower labour costs in Europe as compared to America. This made foreign goods not only supremely marketable but also a smart commercial choice for American retailers. Yet, foreign products warrant investigation for more than just their commercial benefits and practicalities. For, in fact, foreign products, including foreign fine art, were arguably at the centre not just of the economic shift from production to consumption, but also a cultural sea change, often called 'cosmopolitanism', which impacted everything from aesthetics to American foreign policy.

The main text on the importance and development of American cosmopolitanism as regards foreign goods is Kristin Hoganson's *Consumers' Imperium*.[6] Hoganson describes how, in the same period that America and its businesses were on the cusp of international expansion and dominance, Americans, and especially American women, were consuming as much foreign fashion, furniture and other finery as possible. Since much of this consumption was tied up in issues of cultural and economic imperialism, the cosmopolitanism under discussion is better conceived as a form of globalist consumerism than a cosmopolitan pluralism, as in Stoic or Kantian philosophy.[7] In the way that the United States embraced this form of liberal economics and then sought to perpetuate it throughout the world, and often much to the sole economic benefit of America, it can in fact be conceived as a form of American imperialism. Yet, ironically, Hoganson shows how associations with cultures and products from outside the borders of the United States underlined this imperialism, and American consumer identity more broadly. Hoganson focuses on consumer products such as fashion and food with only a quick foray into fine art by way of the work of American cosmopolitans such as William Merritt Chase – the argument being that the erudite and upper class circles that participated in the art world were practicing cosmopolitan consumption long before it became a widespread societal phenomenon.[8] This is undoubtedly true, with Hoganson showing how the American upper class had long emulated its European counterparts either through travel or the ability to purchase from the upscale retailers who sold foreign goods. The middle classes that Hoganson focuses on required mass retailers,

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[6] Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920*, University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, NC, 2007.

[7] For an overview of the theory of cosmopolitanism and its use in philosophy, economics and culture, see: Eric Brown and Pauline Kleingeld, 'Cosmopolitanism', *Plato.stanford.edu*, 2013. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmopolitanism/ [accessed 15 September 2018].

[8] Hoganson, 2007, pp. 30-1.

such as department stores, to make these goods accessible. Yet by only focusing on consumer goods and American artistic production we neglect a critical aspect of this history: foreign fine art imported and displayed not just in the art galleries of the rich, but also on the walls of the same mass retailers importing foreign goods.

This chapter will consider the way imported fine art was used to promote commercial cosmopolitanism. This pertained not just to the sale of goods in the department store itself, with fine art acting as a frame for foreign products, but also to the promotion of cosmopolitanism as an economic and cultural trend more generally across society. Focusing on the latter two aspects is essential because, despite the inevitable push towards globalisation via commercialisation, certain economic and societal forces in the late nineteenth century still acted as bulwarks for the free trade and open cultural acquisitiveness useful to department stores. A key example of this is protective tariffs, which complicated the trade and limited the profits of consumption-based industries such as retailing, and which will be an important subject of consideration in this chapter. As Hoganson shows, foreign products fostered cosmopolitan attitudes in the American public that helped to boost not only consumption but also receptiveness to globalisation more generally. By using fine art as a lure, department stores could ease the entry of these goods both into the country and into consumers' homes.

A key proponent of this tactic, and an important focus of this chapter, is retailer John Wanamaker. Wanamaker's Philadelphia store has received a large amount of attention in this thesis for its leading role in department store art sale and display in America, yet Section II of this chapter will consider John Wanamaker's activities in respect of art importation and display outside of his department store business. This is because they show how the

promotion of cosmopolitanism was a key motivation for the art sale and display that occurred in his department store. By focusing on Wanamaker's personal art collection, which was almost exclusively composed of contemporary European art, and its relationship to his economic, political and religious activities in the first section of this chapter, it becomes clear how Wanamaker used art not just to help centre American policy but also identity around cosmopolitanism. Section III then uses this impulsion as a basis for understanding the art display practices of American department stores more largely, with Washington, D.C. department store Woodward & Lothrop, New York department store Abraham & Straus and again Wanamaker's Philadelphia store acting as illustrative examples. It also considers the ramifications of this importation and promotion of European art on American artistic production and taste. The activities of John Wanamaker's son Rodman, including his presidency of an important American art organisation in Paris, show how department stores were equally interested in promoting American art made in the European model. While cosmopolitan culture and art had previously been restricted to elites, department stores helped bring it to a much larger segment of the American public. In doing so, they also helped to foster cosmopolitan identifications that quickened the rush towards worldwide commercial harmonisation – also called globalisation. The troubling irony was that, for American cosmopolitan artists – meaning artists working in the European style – who embraced the department store to help promote their particular view of what should compose the American 'school', the exact commercial system of the department store also assisted in undermining the previously infallible dominance of national identifications and schools.

II. John Wanamaker and the Art of Politics

In the parlance of the previous chapters, foreign fine art was not only a desirable purchase for America's aspirational middle classes made more accessible through the department store's merchandising system, but also a framing device for the foreign goods that Hoganson discusses in her study of cosmopolitan consumerism. Evidence of these arguments will be highlighted throughout this chapter. Yet, beyond this, it will also be argued that the ability just to access foreign fine art, which was facilitated by the logistical systems and rational of mass commerce, was constructive of a national culture of cosmopolitan consumption ultimately beneficial to these same commercial institutions. By targeting what can be construed as a mass audience with exhibitions of fine art, American department stores transmuted upper class and bourgeois values of cosmopolitan consumption into cross-class and even national values. Given Chapter Two's elaboration of the importance of display to the business of the department store, it would be a natural point of departure to first investigate displays of imported art in American department stores, of which there were many. Still, before branching into this topic, it is useful to highlight the career and activities of John Wanamaker, a figure who was key to this movement, and in ways never before considered by another study.

Wanamaker's eponymous Philadelphia store has been discussed extensively in this thesis for its importance to department store art display. Not only was it the first department store in the United States to sell and display fine art, it was also undoubtedly a leader in the practice. Many department stores, including not just other Philadelphia stores but also those as far flung as New York and Chicago, took Wanamaker's art display and sales practices as a model. Evidence of this emulation, to be presented through this chapter, not only cements

Wanamaker's importance to department store art display, but also shows how focusing on Wanamaker's store itself can provide an orientating mechanism for understanding the American context. Still, this section will look only tangentially at the store, although its importance always underlines the analysis, and instead focus directly on the life and work of its founder. This is because of the relevance of Wanamaker's other activities, which included political and economic pursuits, not just to the function and structure of his business but also, arguably, to the moulding of the larger American economy and society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

While Wanamaker's department stores are undoubtedly the foundation of all of his ventures, it was his ancillary activities that really show the retailer's underlying interests and the way they came to bear in his commercial activities. Wanamaker was deeply involved in all of the most critical areas of late nineteenth-century American life, including publishing, religion, education, charity and, of course, culture.[9] Even taking into consideration his reliance on a small coterie of advisers and managers, including business partner Robert C. Ogden and sons Rodman and Thomas, few retailers before or since have had the same national profile. This standing in society, which Wanamaker constantly sought to foster, was arguably one of his greatest tools, as it gave him a direct line to the heads and hearts of the American people. Yet Wanamaker's ends were not achieved through influence and ministry alone. He also had a hand in moulding the hard skeleton, composed of economic realities and governmental policies, on which Americans built their daily lives.

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[9] There are two main biographies of Wanamaker's life and business. The first was published by Wanamaker's official biographer Herbert Adams Gibbons in 1926, four years after Wanamaker's death. The second is by Joseph Appel, a Wanamaker's employee who worked in the store from at least the 1880s and helped it forge its singular advertising style. He responded to Gibbon's biography by publishing his own in 1930. While both are relatively effusive in their praise, they can be relied on to provide accurate dates, a history of the business and Wanamaker's life, and the quoted views of Wanamaker and his sons Rodman and Thomas. See: Herbert Adam Gibbons, *John Wanamaker*, Harper & Brothers: New York, NY, 1926; and Appel, 1930.

This section will consider Wanamaker's political career, one aspect of his undertakings in the late nineteenth century that arguably best reveals the embedded commercial connection between Wanamaker's business interests, his ancillary activities and, crucially, his collection of fine art. Wanamaker's collection of art that included his most celebrated acquisition, Mihály Munkácsy's *Christ before Pilate* (1881), will be shown to be at the center of many of his manoeuvers in the 1880s and 1890s which led to him undertaking the role of Postmaster General in the cabinet of Republican President Benjamin Harrison.[10] From this position he could then exert the economic, political and cultural control needed to work towards achieving his end goals: the easing of import tariffs and trade regulations popular with manufacturers and the Republican Party, and the promotion of commercial cosmopolitanism. The buildup to Wanamaker assuming this position also revolved on the issue of movement, meaning the actual movement of works of art, which was encapsulated both in Wanamaker's importation of a large collection of European art and in a bizarre, cross-county tour of Munkácsy's massive painting. Wanamaker's instrumentalisation of fine art towards his own ends shows two crucial aspects of the relationship between art and the circulatory logic of the department store. The first is how movement, and in this case the movement of fine art, can help to create culture. In a very literal example of this, Wanamaker had Munkácsy's painting carted around the country in order to foster a culture of cosmopolitan consumption and open up markets. The second is how culture, in turn, can create movement. By bringing his collection of European art to Washington, DC, Wanamaker sought not only to impress his fellow politicians but also to manipulate the Republican policy on tariffs. The story of Wanamaker's activities both pre-Washington and

[10] Hereafter referred to as *Pilate*.

while in cabinet shows how crucial circulation was to the commercial wellbeing of the department store, and the way that fine art helped to promote it. It also shows how department stores helped to bring European fine art to a larger portion of the American public.

IIa. A Museum for Munkácsy

Although Wanamaker opened his store's commercial gallery in 1881, his own most vigorous period of art collecting began after this point.[11] Significantly, Wanamaker's business before this period was far from the commercial empire it would become. He only bought and began to transform the building that would become his department store, an old railway depot in the then underdeveloped uptown area of Philadelphia, in 1874, and it took him until 1877 to begin to sell women's wear, the linchpin of the department store business. The opening of the store's art gallery, as well as the furniture business which accompanied it, signified the solidification of its dry goods trade, which then allowed it to expand into other areas of merchandise.

With his business ticking along and a highly experienced team headed by Ogden to help him run it in his absence, Wanamaker could finally turn some of his attentions to other interests, including art collecting and politics. Wanamaker joined Henry Clay Frick for a portion of the latter's trip to Europe in the summer of 1887, what was to be Frick's first major collecting venture.[12] Wanamaker and Frick had business interests in common, as Wanamaker was a 'major supplier' to the general stores on Frick's Western Pennsylvania

[11] Joseph Appel confirms this timeline, stating: 'John Wanamaker began to acquire pictures in the early eighties [1880s]'. Appel, 1930, p. 403.
[12] Quentin R. Skrabec, *Henry Clay Frick: The Life of the Perfect Capitalist*, McFarland & Company, Inc.: Jefferson, NC, 2010, p. 90.

minefields.[13] Frick also contributed twenty thousand dollars to the Harrison campaign in 1887, for which Wanamaker was the finance manager.[14] They also shared a fierce dislike of unionised labour and favoured what might be termed 'enlightened capitalism' to alleviate societal ills. In many ways, both men came into their own in the 1880s, with their business interests and art collecting coalescing at almost the same time. Their taste in art also reflected each other's, as well as the greater elite collecting practices of the time. In the 1880s and 90s, Wanamaker and Frick both stocked what would become their immense collections with works by the most popular European academic artists of the time, including Johann Georg Meyer von Bremen and Tito Lessi.[15] Yet, despite the similarities in their collecting schedules and, at least in the beginning, their general taste, the display histories of Frick and Wanamaker's collections followed very different trajectories. As is well known today, Frick willed much of his collection and the house in which it was contained – a massive mansion on New York's Fifth Avenue – to the public to be opened as a museum. The Frick Collection opened in 1935, after the death of his widow and the home's conversion into a museum. Wanamaker, on the other hand, sought to display his collection to the Philadelphian and the American public almost as soon as he began acquiring it.

Thus, despite their many similarities, Wanamaker and Frick had hugely diverging ideas of the audience for their collection, Frick choosing to maintain his as a private collection during his life and Wanamaker giving his a very public profile. Moreover, the public-facing nature of Wanamaker's collection and the largely private outlook of Frick's reflect their different commercial interests. As a producer and distributer of steel, a non-

[13] Ibid, p. 90, 135.
[14] Ibid, p. 90.
[15] Ibid. For a rough list of Frick's collecting activities by year, see: George Harvey, *Henry Clay Frick: The Man*,, Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, NY, 1928, p. 337.

consumer commodity, Frick did not need to foster public interest and commercial appetites in the same way that Wanamaker did. Wanamaker, on the other hand, was wholly dependent on both consumer sentiment and the fostering of new markets to expand his business. As follows, this sub-section will argue that Wanamaker used his art collection almost from the moment he bought it to introduce European objects and culture to his shoppers. In fact, as well be demonstrated, certain works in the collection were purposefully acquired in the hope of drawing in those least likely to be exposed to foreign art of this calibre: the urban working class. Wanamaker thus sought as early as 1887 to display and to instrumentalise his collection of European paintings, with a goal not only to sell goods but also to mould American identity. While the attempt was abortive for reasons that will be described in this sub-section, it is illustrative of the principles underlying American department stores' particular relationship to art display. Wanamaker's intended display centred on Hungarian artist Mihály Munkácsy's monumental painting *Pilate* (fig. 79).[16] Although ignored by art historians for much of the twentieth century, it has received recent attention partly for its religious subject matter, and partly for its connection to Wanamaker.[17] Indeed, the story of Wanamaker's purchase of *Pilate* and its companion painting *Christ on Calvary* (1884) is arguably one of the best-known examples of department store art display (fig. 80).[18] Despite this, little attention has been paid to Wanamaker's early plans for the painting, which revolved around the creation of a store art gallery.

Munkácsy was a Paris-based academic painter originating from Hungary who specialised in historical and contemporary genre subjects before his first major venture into

[16] Hereafter referred to as *Pilate*.
[17] Regarding this recent scholarship, see: Anna O. Marley, 'Introduction', in Anna O. Marley (ed.), *Henry Ossawa Tanner: Modern Spirit*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2012, pp. 17-46; Morowitz, 2009; and Schwain, 2013.
[18] Hereafter referred to as *Calvary*.

religious subject matter with *Pilate*. As Christian Huemer makes clear, the painting was largely a product of Munkácsy's collaboration with his art dealer, who was also Wanamaker's personal art dealer, Charles Sedelmeyer.[19] After the success of Munkácsy's painting *Milton Dictates 'Paradise Lost' to his Daughters* (1878) and its purchase by American collector Robert Lenox Kennedy, Munkácsy signed a contract with Sedelmeyer stipulating that the artist paint a large exhibition piece suitable for an international tour.[20] The two men put their heads together to find a subject that would draw fee-paying crowds to see it and, likely enough, an American to buy it. They eventually settled on arguably the best-known story in the Western world: the Passion of Christ. Munkácsy's depiction of Christ on trial has two standout elements. The first is its realism, which is evidenced by the putatively 'historical' interior and the careful figuration of Christ, Pilate and the members of the crowd – shown for instance in their dress. The second is its theatrical or illusory quality, manifested in the strong lighting of the recessed pictorial space and the sheer size of the canvas, which measures around 13.5 by 21 feet. The theatrical aspect of Munkácsy's composition was also emphasised in Sedelmeyer's display of the work in his chic gallery on the Rue de la Rouchefoucauld in Paris. The painting was set at ground level, flanked by Corinthian columns and lit by bright spotlights, which created the effect of a *tableau vivant*.[21] Both the illusory display and the realism of the painting prompted a reported reverence among viewers during the painting's tour of Europe.

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[19] Munkácsy was under a ten-year contract with Sedelmeyer in which the dealer gave him an annual stipend in return for sole financial control over his works. The contract also stipulated that they come to a mutual agreement on the subject matter of the painter's work. For more information on Sedelmeyer and his relationship to Munkácsy, see: Huemer, 2004, pp. 109-24.

[20] New York Public Library, 'Blind Milton dictating "Paradise Lost" to his daughters'. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/66760d80-c7f1-0135-7e34-49d3fe482577 [accessed 15 September 2018].

[21] Huemer, 2004, p. 119.

Munkácsy's composition and Sedelmeyer's display played to the public's love of the theatre as well as contemporary interest in the 'historical' Christ, and around one million people paid to see the painting when it toured Europe.[22] When it finally arrived in New York in November 1886, its notoriety and popular appeal meant that it again received an audience of over 100,000 and nationwide press coverage.[23] Sedelmeyer could very well have continued cashing in on an American tour yet, as it happened, Wanamaker snatched up the painting in early February 1887 before it had the chance to travel beyond its first port of call. The retailer's desire for the painting was such that it reportedly took him only a few hours to decide to pay 100,000 dollars for it, making it at that time the most expensive painting in America.[24] Yet determining Wanamaker's exact reasons for buying the painting involves a measure of inference because he did not, at the time, make a statement to the media. Ogden and Sedelmeyer, two men exceedingly close to Wanamaker, did make their own statements to the press in the days following the purchase, which introduce a degree of clarity to the endeavour. Ogden was present at the purchase and was liable to have the most insight into Wanamaker's thought process, having worked closely with him for eight years and being a renowned art collector himself. In response to the understandable interest of the Philadelphia press in the purchase, Ogden stated:

> 'Mr. Wanamaker has not yet decided what to do with it [the painting], but you can say that this community will have an opportunity of seeing it. Thousands viewed it with admiration in New York and the European cities in which it was exhibited. In Manchester alone over 180,000 persons, mostly from the working class, saw it and admired it. I think I can say that the painting has created more critical interest than any

[22] 'John Wanamaker's Purchase', *The Chicago Tribune*, 13 February 1887, p. 23.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid. Some journalists disputed the advertised purchase price of 100,000 dollars and said it was closer to 40,000, the amount for which *Pilate* was said to be insured when it was shipped to Paris for display at the Exposition Universelle in 1889. *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 24 March 1889, p. 4.

other painted in this generation. Some hypocritical critics have been rather severe upon it, but it touches the popular heart in a way that is simply wonderful.'[25]

Ogden's emphasis on working class interest in the painting coincides with Laura Morowitz's argument that *Pilate* was inextricably tied to notions of popular culture and the 'crowd'.[26] This is apparent in the composition, which not only uses tactics reminiscent of forms of mass entertainment such as the theatre, but also features a Jewish crowd crying for Pilate to convict Christ. The latter point coincided with the late nineteenth-century fear of the masses, or the uncontrollable crowd, which in America often meant working class, non-Protestant immigrants. Morowitz shows how these elements as well as latent anti-Semitism in American society make *Pilate* an object which highlights the complexity of late nineteenth-century commerce's appeals to popular sentiment**.** Yet it is hard to say that Ogden's tone in the above statement projects fear or even disrespect for the 'crowd', increasingly formed in late nineteenth-century Philadelphia of immigrant Catholics and Jews fleeing persecution, famine and poverty. In fact, Ogden seems to indicate to *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that the same working-class crowds that flocked to see the painting in Manchester would be replicated in Philadelphia.

The subtle parallel between Philadelphia and Manchester in Ogden's statement indicates the care with which he chose his words, for Philadelphia's burgeoning status as the industrial capital of America would have been further concretised through comparison to the English city at the heart of the Industrial Revolution. Ogden's off-hand knowledge of the number of visitors to the Manchester exhibition also suggests that he and Wanamaker spoke to Sedelmeyer about the relative popularity of the painting with the industrial working class.

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[25] 'Christ Before Pilate: Mr. Wanamaker's Purchase of Munkacsy's [sic] Great Picture', *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 February 1887, p. 2.
[26] Morowitz, 2009, pp. 184-206.

And although the space where these crowds would be accommodated is left vague in Ogden's statement, it is clarified in Sedelmeyer's, which revealed that:

> 'Mr. Wanamaker has for some years been engaged in collecting art treasures, and I myself have lately sold him some of the best works of Munkacsy, Brozik and Tito Lessy [sic]. It is the intention of Mr. Wanamaker to build a suitable gallery adjacent to his mammoth store, and on certain days of the week charge no admission. The "Christ before Pilate" will be exposed in a special room. The plans of the new gallery are already in the hands of an architect'.[27]

While Sedelmeyer's statement was, in all likelihood, meant as a bit of self-promotion, the details he revealed about the gallery sparked public interest at the time and today offer tantalising clues as to Wanamaker's intention for his collection. It seems that Wanamaker intended *Pilate* to form the nucleus of a kind of store museum: a separate display space for his collection that was adjacent to the store and, crucially, free to enter. If this space had materialised, it would have been an indisputable boon for Philadelphia's art going public. Before the acquisition and display of the Wilstach Collection in 1892 by the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, there was no permanent display space for contemporary or even old master European art in Philadelphia.[28] As Steven Conn outlines, the Pennsylvania Museum was founded on the model of the South Kensington Museum.[29] The museum's focus on industrial and decorative art served Philadelphia's industrial economy, but it left a gap in its art display landscape compared to New York and Boston, which Wanamaker's gallery could have helped to fill.

Besides *Pilate*, Wanamaker acquired at least two other works from Sedelmeyer at the time of the Tabernacle exhibition: *The Duo* by Czech painter Václav Brožík and *After the*

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[27] 'Munkacsy's [sic] Great Painting: Mr. Wanamaker Pays Over $100,000 for "Christ Before Pilate"', *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 11 February 1887, p. 8.

[28] For more information on the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art and its transformation into the Philadelphia Museum of Art, see: Steven Conn, *Museums and American intellectual life, 1876-1926*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, 1998, pp. 192-232.

[29] Ibid.

Marriage, also by Munkácsy (fig. 81).[30] These smaller genre paintings were shown in a room adjacent to the main display space at the Tabernacle exhibition, and were speculated to have been included in the purchase price for *Pilate*. Their acquisition by Wanamaker was another step towards forming a large collection of contemporary European paintings, although it was an auction held only a few weeks later that best showed Wanamaker's taste and collecting ambitions. This was the auction of retailer A. T. Stewart's collection, which was discussed in the previous chapter in reference to its auctioneers, the American Art Association. Wanamaker greatly admired Stewart, who died in 1876 after almost forty years as America's top retailer. Given the status of both Stewart and his collection, it is little surprise that Wanamaker wished his own burgeoning art collection to mirror that of the older retailer, which was almost completely comprised of works by contemporary European artists and included Rosa Bonheur's internationally renowned painting *The Horse Fair* (1855), which itself was previously the subject of an international tour and extensive reproduction.[31] Wanamaker sent a representative, a young Charles M. Kurtz, to the sale with instructions to 'buy anything that seems cheap enough.'[32]

While Wanamaker's words to Kurtz do not at first sound a ringing endorsement of his estimations of Stewart's collection, a closer reading coupled with knowledge of Wanamaker's well-known regard for the older retailer in fact indicates the opposite. So convinced was Wanamaker that Stewart's collection represented 'good' taste, that he was

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[30] 'Christ before Pilate: Mr. Wanamaker's Purchase of Munkacsy's [sic] Great Picture', *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 February 1887, p. 2.

[31] American Art Association, *A.T. Stewart collection of paintings, sculptures, and other objects of art*, American Art Association: New York, NY, 1887. Numerous digital copies of the auction catalogue exist courtesy of American museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

[32] Telegram from Wanamaker to Kurtz dated 29 March 1887. Kurtz kept what seems like most of his received correspondence during his career, giving a rich view of his work during the Munkácsy tours. This correspondence is conserved in a general archive of his materials at the Archives of American Art. 'The Charles M. Kurtz papers, 1843-1990, bulk, 1884-1909', Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.

happy to send a representative – and a relatively inexperienced one at that – in his stead to snap up anything that seemed a good deal. The telegram also shows that Wanamaker was looking to build a collection, and fast. Using Stewart's collection as a model, and the auction as an opportunity, Wanamaker augmented the group of paintings that he was planning to put on display in conjunction with his department store. The decision to display his collection publicly greatly differentiated Wanamaker from Stewart, who despite having acquired a well-regarded collection of art within his lifetime did not display it in his store. Like Frick, Stewart decided instead to keep his collection on private display in his New York mansion (fig. 82). That said, the general taste in paintings on display, which hinged towards contemporary European genre, landscape and military scenes spanning the 1850s to the 1880s, was the same. Stewart had even bought a genre work by Munkácsy, sentimentally entitled *A Visit to the Baby* (1879), which was auctioned at the same time as his larger collection.

The largest outlier in comparing the two collections was undoubtedly Wanamaker's star player, Munkácsy's *Pilate*. Not only was it a religious scene, but it also dwarfed anything owned or displayed by Stewart. Even Bonheur's *Horse Fair*, which took up the largest part of a wall in Stewart's gallery, paled in comparison. Of course, both the size and the subject matter of *Pilate* make perfect sense when one considers the mass audience for which it was always intended. Whereas Stewart bought works appropriate for private consumption, Wanamaker had bought *Pilate* with an eye towards its mass popularity and accessibility, having already seen the large crowds it drew in New York. Undoubtedly, Munkácsy's infamous composition was meant to act as something of a headlining act, pulling in not just the middle classes but also Ogden's working 'masses', who would then stay to see

Wanamaker's larger collection of fashionable and tasteful art. In Wanamaker's gallery, Pilate would have been surrounded by secular genre paintings of the kind Munkácsy typically painted and Stewart collected; and, although inevitably the star attraction, this meant that *Pilate* was, in fact, just another work of European art within Wanamaker's collection. While *Pilate*'s size, subject matter and renown often mean that it is considered a work apart, both from the artist's oeuvre and the retailer's collection, Wanamaker's gallery would have contextualised it more largely to an American audience as a foreign 'good' like the others on display – a bit less easily consumed from the perspective of size, but still presented as a desirable commodity and as an exemplar for American taste. Just as Sedelmeyer meant *Pilate* not just as a sideshow draw but also as a gateway for American collectors to his gallery and to Munkácsy's larger body of work, so Wanamaker also used the painting as a stepping stone for American viewers onto other, more exotic fare, squarely in the realm of commercial cosmopolitanism.

Wanamaker's true marketing genius was fully on display in his decision to buy and display *Pilate* as the star draw of his gallery and, in turn, his store and its goods. Still, what some may consider genius others saw as blatant commercialism completely at odds with both art and religion. As the owner of a department store, Wanamaker was an easy target for those wary of the commercialisation of art; and the price of the *Pilate* as well as plans for a 'store' gallery whipped these tensions up even further. As soon as word spread that Wanamaker had purchased *Pilate*, certain news sources were already calling it an 'advertisement'.[33] While some critics relied on this veiled language, others freely articulated their disproval. One particularly unimpressed commentator stated:

[33] Numerous newspapers called the purchase an advertisement, including: *The Pittsburgh Daily Post*, 12 February 1887, p. 1 and *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 11 February 1887, p. 8.

> 'Should Mr. Wanamaker erect an art gallery in conjunction with his mammoth establishment in Philadelphia, and exhibit "Christ before Pilate" as a sort of side-show to the latter the apotheosis of the great American commercial age will indeed have been reached.'[34]

Wanamaker's purchase had hit a nerve in a time when ever-increasing auction and sales prices – for instance the record-breaking purchase price for *Pilate* – seemed to broadcast confusion between the value of art and money. In the case of *Pilate*, Wanamaker also faced criticism for his supposed attempts to mix business with religion, thus shocking 'old-fashioned Christian people' – a particular blow for a man who devoted most of his free time to the church.[35]

The negative coverage as well as the cacophony of other interested voices discussing every aspect of the transaction – and not forgetting the print sellers hawking engravings of the work in newspapers across the country – may have been what put Wanamaker off his immediate plans to build a gallery. Yet it is more likely that other concerns, and especially a bid for national political prominence, distracted him from what was otherwise a long-term goal. For instead of constructing the planned store art gallery with *Pilate* as its star, Wanamaker did as Sedelmeyer had intended and sent the painting on a tour of the country, where it was shown in religious, private and public venues alike. The tour, which was administered in part by Kurtz, who was then in the early stages of his career, visited cities across the East Coast and Midwest.[36] In May 1888, after Wanamaker bought Munkácsy's next great religious work, *Calvary*, it joined *Pilate* on the road, meaning that two large-scale

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[34] 'The Stewart Pictures', *The Weekly Wisconsin*, 19 March 1887, p. 6.

[35] 'Stray Sunbeams', *The Saint Paul Globe*, 27 March 1887, p. 4.

[36] Some sources for these dates and locations are, respectively: Boston, Horticultural Hall: *The Boston Post*, 7 June 1887, p. 5; St. Louis, Entertainment Hall- St. Louis Exposition: *The St Louis Post-Dispatch*, 10 October 1887, p. 5; Cincinnati, College Hall- 168 Walnut St.: *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2 October 1888, p. 5; Indianapolis, Plymouth Church: *The Indianapolis News*, 26 November 1888, p. 2; and Chicago, Central Music-Hall: *The Chicago Tribune*, 10 April 1888, p. 3.

religious works by Munkácsy were then touring the country.[37] Wanamaker adopted wholesale Sedelmeyer's publicity tactics and even some of his employees – Kurtz had originally contracted with Sedelmeyer to run the planned American tour – in a confounding turn of events that was as ambiguous as it was ambitious. Why did Wanamaker feel it necessary to have two paintings the size of billboards carted across the country? The next sub-section will consider this question, showing how Wanamaker's activities were connected not just to his commercial but also his political ambitions and further showing how, in important way, these two aspects of his work were one and the same.

IIb. Art on Tour

Much has been written in contemporary scholarship, as indeed much was written at the time, about Wanamaker's purchase of Munkácsy's *Pilate* and *Cavalry,* but much less about their separate yet concurrent tour of America.[38] What is more, little to nothing has been written about the Wanamaker & Brown stores located around the American Midwest during the tour that often found their advertising in direct contact with that of the exhibitions as these arrived in their town. Wanamaker's goals for the expansion and dispersion of the 'Wanamaker System' – what he extravagantly called his system of mass merchandising – have normally been limited to the store's entry into the New York market in 1896, yet the Wanamaker & Brown branch stores show that it occurred earlier than usually described, and at exactly the same moment when Wanamaker himself was financing a costly and time consuming effort to transport monumental paintings across the country. Taken together, they manifest themselves

[37] 'Christ on Calvary', *The St Louis Post-Dispatch*, 22 May 1888, pg. 2.
[38] Works of contemporary scholarship include: Marley, 2012; Morgan, 1999, pp. 318-21; Morowitz, 2009; and Schwain, 2013.

as an effort to conquer America with a combination of commerce and art. Yet it was not only direct commerce at stake. As will also be shown in this sub-section, Wanamaker took pains to link up the tour of *Pilate* and *Calvary* with his political ambitions, by hiring out both of the paintings and Kurtz's talents for marketing to Benjamin Harrison's presidential campaign. *Pilate*, *Calvary* and Kurtz alike thus became a mobile 'soft' marketing mechanism for Wanamaker's concerns and commercial activities. Appropriately, his political concerns also centered largely on movement, and specifically the facilitation of the movement of goods. Yet Wanamaker also used *Pilate* and *Calvary* to foster attitudes amenable to commerce, meaning ultimately the movement of goods from his stores into consumers' homes.

Despite the fact that the tour itself was proclaimed loudly and widely by its tour managers, neither the Wanamaker name nor any connection with the business was made public after the initial purchases.[39] It thus fell to Kurtz, an art world figure whom Sedelmeyer had initially contracted in this eventuality, to become the face of the tour.[40] While Kurtz met with venue operators, arranged and oversaw transport, and published catalogues and advertisements under his name, Ogden remained in continual contact, giving him instructions on where to show the painting, how to display it and asking for continual updates on its progress. Moreover, when Kurtz eventually transferred to the tour of *Calvary* after Wanamaker bought the painting in 1888, Ogden facilitated the contact between Kurtz and James Grant, who was simultaneously touring with *Pilate*. Wanamaker, through Ogden, footed the costs of the tour himself, with bills sent directly to the retailer's personal account,

[39] In a letter dated 10 August 1887, Odgen explicitly states: 'I do not want to connect the picture with our business, and think it will be far better to disassociate it'. Kurtz was also instructed not to use Wanamaker stationary on the tour. 'The Charles M. Kurtz papers, 1843-1990, bulk, 1884-1909', Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.

[40] Letters from 1887, when *Pilate* arrived in the United States and embarked on its tour, show that Kurtz was in close contact with Sedelmeyer representative Eugène Fischoff. He continued to correspond with them on different matters during the tour, including when Kurtz purchased different display materials from them. Ibid.

meaning that Wanamaker also profited when ticket and catalogues sales allowed it. Letters between Ogden and Kurtz demonstrate a concern for managing costs and achieving profits, showing that while the tour may have had a higher purpose, it still needed to adhere to Wanamaker's ethos of smart business. Still, there seems to have been no small amount of pressure put on Kurtz when he found it hard to break even on the phenomenal expense of transporting Munkácsy's massive paintings and their accompanying decorative materials across the country. Kurtz even seems to have quit the tour for a period in 1888 before returning to it a few months later.[41] The tone of the letters from Ogden to Kurtz indicates that Wanamaker was either losing money or not making very much considering the effort of all involved. The fact that Wanamaker kept the tour going despite his losses signals that he had reasons beyond profit for his substantial commitment to this tour.

The first stop on what would become a whistle-stop tour largely of the American Midwest was in fact Boston, where *Pilate* was displayed in Horticultural Hall from 7 June to 20 August 1887.[42] Soon after this exhibition both *Pilate* and *Calvary*, which joined its companion on the road in 1888, would be crisscrossing the country, with shows in cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis and Cincinnati. Still, it was a review in *The Boston Globe* from *Pilate*'s very first tour stop that gives the best idea of the effect that Wanamaker and his associates were trying to achieve with the exhibition experience.[43] The massive painting, which occupied the entire east end of Horticultural Hall, was displayed on a stage surrounded by maroon draping.[44] Added to this was a strong electric light hidden at the top of the drapes

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[41] A letter to this effect was sent from Ogden to Kurtz on 28 January 1888. Kurtz was back on the job, arranging for *Calvary* to be moved from Boston and displayed in Cincinnati. Ogden to Kurtz 14 May 1888. Ibid.

[42] *The Boston Globe*, 31 May 1887, p. 11 and *The Boston Globe*, 20 August 1887, p. 3.

[43] *The Boston Globe*, 5 June 1887, p. 2.

[44] *The Boston Post*, 4 June 1887, p. 4.

that dramatically lit the painting. Walking into the darkened hall, viewers would have been struck by the illuminated scene presented as if it were a real-life event being enacted before their eyes. The display was very apparently aimed at creating an emotive and immersive experience for viewers buoyed by both theatrical staging and the near-illusionistic realism of the painting itself. Reviews claimed that visitors to the exhibition spoke in hushed voices, and that men even doffed their hats to the painting.[45] While newspaper art critics in the cities the paintings visited usually judged both the paintings and their display quite harshly – although no publicity was bad publicity, as Sedelmeyer remarked in a letter to Kurtz – viewers ranging from shoppers and tourists to church and school groups still came to see the paintings in droves.[46] Wanamaker was succeeding in directly reaching the American public, but what was he trying to say to them, and why?

Existing scholarship on Wanamaker, Munkácsy and the link between the two can help to reveal Wanamaker's angle in orchestrating these exceedingly expensive tours to which he did not even put his or his business' name. Scholarship often situates Wanamaker's relationship to *Pilate* and *Calvary* in reference to his role in the Social Gospel movement.[47] This is appropriate in the sense that, as William Leach has shown, the evangelical Protestant endeavours to which Wanamaker was most devoted, including the YMCA and the World Sunday School movement, helped to mainstream Christianity and denude it of its critical power, which in turn facilitated the unhampered growth of consumer culture.[48] While Leach connects these activities directly to Wanamaker's religious endeavours, David Morgan in his

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[45] David Morgan, *Protestants & Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 1999, pp. 320-1.
[46] Sedelmeyer stated to Kurtz that 'You know already of your experience with the *Pilate* that all sharp attacks are good for the picture.' Letter from Charles Sedelmeyer to Kurtz dated 12 October 1887.
[47] Also see: Schwain, 2014, pp. 277-93.
[48] Leach, 1993, pp. 191-224.

important book *Protestant and Picture*s employs Wanamaker's purchase and promotion of *Pilate* as an example of how European, and especially Catholic imagery was broadcast throughout America in order to take the critical sting out of Protestantism and refocus religion on devotion rather than scripture.[49] Morgan shows how, beyond just their personal embrace of European-Catholic art motifs, American elites such as Wanamaker and J. P. Morgan took extraordinary measures to shift the country towards a more materialistic, less puritanical form of worship. That said, he does not mention Wanamaker's tour of *Pilate* and *Calvary* across America. This is an extraordinary omission, as arguably nothing better represents the importance Wanamaker attributed to this matter than the costly and potentially reputation-ruining tours of *Pilate* and *Calvary*.

The tours also show the significance Wanamaker placed on the actual viewing of art to quite literally convert viewers to his cause. Rather than relying on the many descriptions and reproductions of *Pilate* and *Calvary*, which Morgan notes were circulating in the press, Wanamaker took the extraordinary step of physically moving the gigantic works from city to city in order to achieve his intended effect. And achieve he did, for as Morgan expresses in his book it was quite outside American religious mores to look so reverently – some might say in worship – at an image. Wanamaker's use of actual display over image and description alone not only compounds the argument of Chapter Two, which was that display itself was considered a vital marketing mechanism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century department store, but also shows how Wanamaker's commercial, political and aesthetic decisions were influenced by and even replicated the logic of mass commerce. Rich in

[49] Ibid, pp. 318-21.

experience of how to speak to the mass public, Wanamaker necessarily brought these tools and tactics to his activities outside of, although undeniably associated with, his business.

Given the slim margins entailed in transporting monumental paintings across large expanses of America, the indirect profits of the tours of Munkácsy's *Pilate* and *Calvary* were Wanamaker's main windfall. These benefits were, in part, as has been argued here and by other scholars, the ability to propagate a new kind of religious devotion, more accommodating to commerce and commercial society as a whole, across large swathes of America. Moreover, Wanamaker's attempts to do this on such a large scale, not limiting himself to his home market of Philadelphia, were arguably the main thrust of the expensive and complicated tour endeavour. It was visitor numbers, not profits, which Wanamaker was ultimately interested in, as shown by correspondence between Ogden and Kurtz. When the number of attendees lessened as the tour of *Calvary* pushed its way into the Midwest, Ogden instructed Kurtz to halve the price of tickets, stating: 'I would rather have double the number of people and half the price.'[50] While there were attempts to appeal to the elite of each city through private viewings, Ogden and Wanamaker's ultimate emphasis was on quantity over exclusivity, or on speaking to the masses rather than the upper or even middle classes.

The tours of *Pilate* and *Calvary* gave Wanamaker the national sounding board that he desired for his commercial and political plans. As shown, these commercial plans could be as ambitious as promoting a certain kind of religious devotion. Yet why did Wanamaker, a retailer with interests largely centred on the East Coast, feel it so necessary to speak to audiences as far west as Missouri? A practical answer to this is that the Wanamaker business had in fact expanded well past the Pennsylvania borders and into the Midwest. The source of

[50] Ogden to Kurtz, 12 June 1888. 'The Charles M. Kurtz papers, 1843-1990, bulk, 1884-1909', Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.

this expansion was the franchising of one of the family businesses based in Philadelphia, Wanamaker & Brown. Franchising, or the licensing of a brand name and product, was an ideal way for Wanamaker not only to expand his business empire, but also to bring his 'Wanamaker System' of merchandising to Americans living outside his home market.

Wanamaker & Brown was not a department store in the same manner as the Grand Depot, which opened in 1876, but a men and boy's clothing store opened in 1861 by Wanamaker and his brother-in-law. It continued trading even as Wanamaker expanded into other sites and lines of goods. Also called Oak Hall, its operations outside Philadelphia began with the consignment of goods and samples to sales agents who sold them on the basis of the Wanamaker & Brown name.[51] Perhaps due to the success of this endeavour, the Philadelphia business sent an associate, D. L. Anderson, to Louisville, Kentucky in 1885 to open the first branch store, and by 1887 three other stores had opened in Chicago, St. Louis and Pittsburgh.[52] It is unclear how direct Wanamaker's involvement was in the branch stores, although it was his own brothers Thomas and William who ran the main Wanamaker & Brown store and the outlets. Wanamaker certainly had a financial interest as a stockholder in the store, a fact that was proven in 1889 when it became the subject of controversy surrounding a circular issued by Wanamaker & Brown asking for postmasters – Wanamaker

[51] J. H. Munholland, sales agents in Bloomington, Illinois, advertised in 1884 their full line of Wanamaker & Brown card samples, which could be used to order piece goods. *The Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL), 23 October 1884, p. 4. The template of the advertisement was issued by Wanamaker & Brown to all of their authorised agents, as evidenced by an 1884 advertisement from P. Hoeflich & Bro of Maysville, Kentucky. *The Evening Bulletin* (Maysville, KY), 10 October 1884, p. 2.

[52] An article in *The Louisville Courier-Journal* states: 'Wanamaker & Brown have a reputation almost national. But if there are any persons in the neighborhood of Louisville, Ky., who do not thoroughly understand the popular system pursued by that firm, they now have an opportunity of making themselves familiar with it, as a branch store, with the large signs of "Wanamaker & Brown, Oak Hall," has just been opened there. This branch store will be conducted on the same principles that have made the form so popular in this city. It will be under the charge of Mr. D. L. Anderson, who by reasons of his long connection with the firm in this city is thoroughly familiar with the entire business…' *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, 19 June 1885, p. 8.

then holding the office of Postmaster General – to suggest sales agents to the business.[53] While Wanamaker could not have directly managed all of his business interests, the volume of business done by Wanamaker & Brown would certainly have enriched Wanamaker and served to spread the family name far and wide.

The outlets also adhered to the general tone of Wanamaker advertisements, which itself was streamlined across the three Philadelphia branches: direct, conversational and almost sermon-like. The advertisements contained a large amount of negative space around the type that made them relatively uncluttered compared to competitors, who tended to pack in listings of specific items and prices, and which gave them the appearance of a framed image**.** Perhaps even more so than the Philadelphia store, the advertisements for the outlet stores were exceedingly didactic, with an emphasis on differentiating the proper, modern retail methods used at Wanamaker & Brown from the tactics of unscrupulous competitors. For instance, an advertisement from the Louisville branch celebrating the store's two-year anniversary stated:

> 'Two years ago to-day we put our advertisement in the paper over the name of WANAMAKER & BROWN. We opened our doors here to do "the finest Clothing Business," determined not to lower our standards, but as we grew older, and perhaps wiser, to raise the standard higher than ever. Our coming to Louisville was the beginning of a new era in the history of the Retail Clothing Business – bringing the buyer close to the manufacturer, bringing Philadelphia to Louisville… A few other advantages we decided to bring you: Tell the Truth in advertising; not to urge people to buy…'[54]

Although this language is undoubtedly an advertising mechanism built on the good will of the Philadelphia stores, it also coheres to a sustained effort by Wanamaker to spread and

[53] As this circular was sent after Wanamaker had been made Postmaster General under the Harrison Administration, it was argued by some to be a breach of his position. 'Using the Postmaster', *The New York Times*, 20 April 1889, p. 1.
[54] *The Courier-Journal*, 28 May 1887, p. 8.

propagate his retail ethos, which he deemed a 'new kind' of business policy – as in his 'New Kind of Store', a moniker given to the Grand Depot.

While neither invented by Wanamaker nor necessarily new, the truthful advertising, unconditional returns and fixed-price policies that he promoted were also not *de rigeur* across the country, with many a customer burned through haggling, bait and switch advertising or shoddy products in an era before governmental consumer protection. Throughout his career Wanamaker campaigned for an increased legitimacy for the mercantile profession, and this included improving its transparency and fostering a more professional approach to retailing. By branching out from Philadelphia, the company was thus not only bringing clothes from East to West, but also attempting to transfer Wanamaker store reform and morals. Furthermore, while not as transparently connected to his business as Wanamaker originally intended them to be, the tour of Munkácsy's paintings not only disseminated values and notions of taste to large swathes of the American public, but also conferred a certain amount of authority on the Wanamaker businesses, and particularly the Wanamaker & Brown branches. Like the stores, the main method of advertising destinations on the paintings' tours of the country was in newspapers. Kurtz and Grant took out advertisements for the exhibitions in each city in which they stopped. Appearing in the advertising sections, they often ended up in an advertisement's proximity, and in some cases even right next to, advertisements for the Wanamaker & Brown stores (fig. 83). While this may have been a coincidence occasioned by the stores' high advertising volume, the frequency at which it happened – numerous times each in Chicago, St. Louis and Pittsburgh – shows that the stores

and the tour had the same audience and methods of outreach.[55] The Wanamaker & Brown branches, as emergent stores in the increasingly competitive retail environment of the 1880s, stood to gain a larger profile by subtly capitalising on the good will and public fervour around the Munkácsy paintings as they made their way across the country and its consciousness. Even more than this, they could reinforce their connection to the Wanamaker name and everything that it stood for through Wanamaker's running and expansion of his businesses, and also through his ambitious cultural endeavours such as the Munkácsy tours.

Like his religious endeavours, the propagation of the Wanamaker System was another way to influence and shape American society, as it not only sought to regulate commercial interactions but also everyday American shoppers' belief and trust in commerce as a vector around which economics and society were formed. The voyage of *Pilate* and *Calvary* around America at the same time that Wanamaker's business interests and ethos were also spreading across the country also shows the importance Wanamaker placed on face-to-face interaction with the public, which necessarily involved both the physical expansion of his businesses and, in the case of the Munkácsy paintings, a gruelling tour of canvases not much smaller than a building. Yet movement was not just a vital element of Wanamaker's marketing tactics, it was also an economic and governmental policy in which he believed and agitated for through his political activities. Moreover, one was necessarily linked to the other, for without the ability to bring paintings such as Munkácsy's *Pilate* or the foreign products that Wanamaker sold in his store to America, Wanamaker also could not expose them to the American public. Just as Wanamaker used European paintings to spread his 'gospel' through the country, he also used them to ease his way into political office, where he could prop up

[55] Advertisements which exemplify this include: *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, 15 June 1888, p. 3 and *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 10 October 1887, p. 5.

his ability to import goods in the first place. This started as early as the Munkácsy tours, with Wanamaker again utilising the paintings towards his own commercial and political ends. As one of a decisive contingent of Pennsylvania Presidential Electors, Wanamaker helped ensure the nomination and eventual triumph in 1888 of Benjamin Harrison, who thanked Wanamaker by appointing him Postmaster General in his administration. The road to political office was marked with early indications that Wanamaker was willing to put his money where his mouth was to further his final interests. As the campaign's finance chairman, he set to work soliciting donations – or 'frying the fat', as it came to be called, out of the party fat cats.[56] Yet Wanamaker went further than marshalling money by also contributing the profile of his nationally renowned paintings as well as the press relations skills of Kurtz to the campaign.

Kurtz reported in a letter to his wife that, while in Cincinnati with *Calvary*, he received a 'peculiar' telegram from Ogden asking if he was sufficiently in favour of the election of Harrison to do 'a little political work'.[57] Kurtz accepted and travelled to Indianapolis where, for almost two weeks, he surveyed Harrison's 'front porch' campaign for the presidency and wrote at least two carefully crafted puff pieces that were published as far afield as New York – a critical swing state and incumbent Grover Cleveland's home ground.[58] Kurtz's writing resembled the pleasant yet informal narrative tone of the typical Wanamaker's advertisement or the catalogue for *Pilate*, which Kurtz had edited and then re-written. Taking an observational stance, the articles were more of an on-the-ground view of the candidate and his campaign than a hard policy sell, and made Harrison seem relatable to

[56] Lewis L. Gould, *Grand Old Party: A History of the Republicans*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England and New York, NY, 2012, p. 107.
[57] Kurtz to Judy Kurtz, 20 September 1888. 'The Charles M. Kurtz papers, 1843-1990, bulk, 1884-1909', Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.
[58] Ogden reported on where the articles had been picked up in his letter to Kurtz dated 4 October 1888. Ibid.

the average reader. Entitled 'In Harrison's House' and 'A Friend of the Workingmen', the articles also reflect this goal in their content, with the former featuring a particularly sentimentalised story of Harrison's reception of wounded and impoverished Civil War veterans at his home.[59] The latter, an in-depth but accessible interview with Harrison, shows that Kurtz was given a level of access that could only have been called in by Wanamaker himself. By recruiting Kurtz to sell Harrison, Wanamaker was quite apparently aiming at the same popular audience that was the target market for the tours of *Pilate* and *Calvary*. To top it off, Ogden also made sure that Harrison was given tickets to view the paintings anytime their location coincided with his campaign tour, an act guaranteed to get press for both areas of Wanamaker's activities.[60]

Wanamaker's understanding of marketing and popular sentiment, evident in both his retail activities and his relationship with art, are an underrecognised aspect of his contribution to Harrison's successful but hard-fought campaign. Scholarship has tended to focus on his central position on Harrison's campaign finance team.[61]This is understandable, because the unprecedented amount of money Wanamaker was able to raise started a shift in the nature of American elections and politics in general, which had previously hinged on party membership but would henceforth increasingly be shaped by business interests. Yet where Wanamaker is important in this study is not in the magnitude of any individual political endeavour but in the way that he continually promoted cultural and economic change,

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[59] The articles are initialled 'C. M. K.' and published as 'special correspondence of *The North American*' – a newspaper owned by Wanamaker's son Thomas. Charles M. Kurtz, 'In Harrison's House', *The North American*, 4 October 1888; Charles M. Kurtz, 'A Friend of the Workingmen', *The North American*, 5 October 1888.

[60] Sedelmeyer to Kurtz, 12 October 1887 and Ogden to Kurtz, 17 September 1888. 'The Charles M. Kurtz papers, 1843-1990, bulk, 1884-1909', Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.

[61] For examples of this scholarship, see: Robert E. Mutch, *Buying the Vote. A History of Campaign Finance Reform*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England, 2014, pp. 15-6; and Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England, 1982, pp. 74-5.

focused particularly on facilitating the movement and trade of goods, through the display of fine art. As shown in this sub-section, this could even manifest itself in the quite literal movement of art itself, as with the tours of *Pilate* and *Calvary*. The next sub-section will consider Wanamaker's time in Washington and how he harnessed foreign fine art to speak to his new audience, civil servants and politicians, and to the American public, all with the goal of facilitating the movement and trade of goods.

IIc. Tariffs and Stamps: Wanamaker at the Post Office

Harrison's success was considered crucial for businessmen like Wanamaker because the 1888 election was pitted between two candidates with hugely diverging opinions on the most important economic question of the day: protective tariffs. Harrison promised to shore up the tariffs that safeguarded American industry from foreign competition, while his opponent, Grover Cleveland, advocated lowering these tariffs at the behest of the consumer. A quintessential Republican policy, Wanamaker declared to completely back protective tariffs despite his own propensity for buying and importing foreign art and his desire to circulate and show that art to the American people. Yet beyond Wanamaker's personal and public activities involving art, even his basic commercial activities gave away the disparity between his professed commitment to tariffs and his real interests. In the final heat of the 1888 election, articles exploded on to the front pages of newspapers across the country detailing Wanamaker's lawsuit against Collector of Port John Cadwalader over the reduction of a duty on ribbons from 50 to 20 per cent.[62] Dire claims that the reduction would kill a home industry, and that Wanamaker and Thomas Dolan, a prominent Philadelphia textile

[62] 'Now a Serious Matter: How a Court Decision will Affect a Home Industry', *The Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia, PA), 13 October 1888.

manufacturer and Elector-at-Large for the Harrison ticket, had factories in Germany and England, prompted accusations of hypocrisy and self-interest that would follow Wanamaker throughout his political career as Postmaster General. Wanamaker's baffling defense – that he had to acquire goods from abroad because American tariffs were not high enough to protect and foster home industries – suggests an ambiguous attitude towards this headlining Republican policy.[63]

Tariffs were an essential aspect of economic nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, making them difficult to legislate or even argue against in an era of increased international competition and belligerence. Yet despite their essential protective powers, they also limited the growth of the consumer economy. While this was not considered an issue for the majority of the Republican electorate, who generally either owned or worked in heavy industry, they did represent a problem for department stores, which, even leaving aside completely the innate desirability of 'foreign' objects, depended on cheap foreign labour and goods to heighten profits. Wanamaker thus had to strike a careful balance between his own business interests and his desire to influence the nation's economy and culture from Washington. While he could not advocate directly for free trade, he could promote cultural cosmopolitanism as not only desirable but also as an acceptably patriotic stance; and this is what this sub-section argues he did during his stint as Postmaster General under the Harrison administration. Significantly, European art again played a major role in his endeavours.

To say this was a risk on Wanamaker's behalf is to recognise the particularly vociferous debates around protectionism in late nineteenth-century America. While America

[63] 'Conditions of Prosperity', *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), 27 October 1888, p. 2.

was far from the only country to levy tariffs, Republican politicians were renowned for their particularly uncompromising stance, tariffs having a central place on their party platform (fig. 84). One measure that went beyond the pale for many moderates was the tariff on foreign art, which was unique in the Western world.[64] The tariff was not only the scourge of art collectors, but was also said to hinder the development of American taste by restricting the public's contact with European fine art. Most art world figures, including artists and professionals such as Kurtz, grew to despise the tariff and all of its ramifications.[65] One of its more pernicious effects was the hostility it prompted towards American artists in European countries, some of whom were studying in state art schools and showing their work at local exhibitions. Because of the fallout from the Civil War and the dominance of the industrial economy, Republican politicians controlled American politics from the end of the War until the Great Depression, with only two Democrats in total elected President. This meant that there was little reprieve from tariffs in general, including the art tariff.

Tariffs were such a key aspect of American nationalism in the period that it was considered anti-American to lower or even question them, as shown in criticism of Harrison's Democratic opponent Cleveland (fig. 84). This was particularly true in Pennsylvania, which was one of the most industrialised states in America. Gaining any sort of political power there meant joining the Republican Party, which Wanamaker did despite

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64 William J. Barber gives a comprehensive overview of the history of America's art tariffs in the following article: William J. Barber, 'International Commerce in the Fine Arts and American Political Economy, 1789-1913', in Craufurd D. W. Goodwin and Neil De Marchi (eds.), *Economic Engagements with Art*, Duke University Press: Durham, NC and London, England, 1999, pp. 209-34. Other important studies of the circumstances and reaction to the art tariffs instituted in the late nineteenth-century are: Albert Boime, 'The Chocolate Venus, Tainted Pork, the Wine Blight, and the Tariff: Franco-American Stew at the Fair', in Annette Blaugrund (ed.) *Paris 1889: American Artists at the Universal Exposition*, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts: Philadelphia, PA, 1989, pp. 67-91; and Kimberly Orcutt, 'Buy American? The Debate over the Art Tariff', *American Art*, vol. 16, no. 3 (2002), pp. 82-91.

65 Arleen Pancza Graham discusses Kurtz's opposition to the art tariff in her doctoral thesis: Arleen Pancza Graham, 'Charles M. Kurtz (1855-1909): Aspects and Issues of a Cosmopolitan Career', PhD thesis, City University of New York, 2002, pp. 88-118.

the obvious disjuncture between his own interests and those of the Party. Stephen Skowronek has stated in reference to Wanamaker's ambitions that he was 'a merchant who had no special interest in the protectionist policies that attracted industrial capital to the Republican Party but who had a great interest in the businesslike delivery of governmental service.'[66] Wanamaker's contributions to Harrison's campaign made him a shoo-in for a position in the new cabinet that could capitalise on his business acumen. Most assumed that the natural appointment would be as head of the Treasury Department. Yet, as had also happened when Ulysses S. Grant proposed A. T. Stewart for the position in 1869, Wanamaker was excluded from the role because he was an active merchant and importer. Harrison instead offered Wanamaker the position of Postmaster General, which was also appropriate for a man whose livelihood relied on the movement of goods. Wanamaker thus set to work proposing and imposing policies that would facilitate that movement. As Skowronek states, Wanamaker 'planned the parcel post system, expanded the free delivery service, integrated the U.S. Post Office and the merchant marine, introduced steamship post offices and a postal tugboat service for international delivery and, in the process, increased the postal surplus.'[67] In each of these reforms, his retailer's understanding of supply chains and bureaucratic organisation, as well as his businessman's aversion to inefficacy and waste, helped to streamline a service that was crucial to the health of the economy and American retailing. Socially and culturally, the growth and modernisation of the post office had the benefit of, as Richard Handler states, 'knitting together a geographically dispersed population'.[68] By decreasing the actual delivery time of letters and parcels and thus shortening the perceived distance between people and

[66] Skowronek, pp. 75-6.
[67] Ibid, p. 76.
[68] Richard Handler, 'Mining the time-space matrice: Commemorative postage stamps and US world's fairs, 1893-1915', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2016), p. 301.

cities, Americans could become less reliant on their local communities and increasingly in touch with the wider world – an unendingly cosmopolitan outcome.

Wanamaker was thus in an ideal position not only to change the shape of the American economy but also to mould American identity, and not just through his policies. As a political and business leader with an almost unprecedented national profile, he could lead the country by example; and one case of this was the decoration of his personal residence in Washington. Compared to the White House, with its neo-classical architecture and staid nobility, Wanamaker's house on I Street burst with bric-à-brac and European flair. Photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston spent much of her early career in Washington, D.C. and, as part of a series on the homes of Washington politicians for *Demorest's Family Magazine*, published a photo-story on Wanamaker's house.[69] The article goes into great detail about the objects and art in the house, but also describes its key social function for Washington society. Like William C. Whitney who occupied the house before him and served as Secretary of the Navy under Grover Cleveland, Wanamaker assumed the role of social organiser for the Harrison Administration. The centre of this activity was the house's grand ballroom, about which Johnston stated:

> 'This room is the far-famed ballroom added by Secretary Whitney, and there is hardly an interior in Washington more talked about or oftener described than this same handsome apartment. With good reason, too, – for with its rich decoration, wealth of artistic treasures, and frequent assemblages of notable people, it has always been one of the famous salons of the Capital.'[70]

Wanamaker retained much of the house's furnishings from Whitney's time, but brought with him the 50 paintings as well as the many engravings, etchings and drawings that now

[69] Her photographs and article were reprinted in a book complied by Wanamaker's private secretary at the Post Office, Marshall Cushing, called *The Story of Our Post Office* and published by A. M. Thayer & Company, Boston, MA, 1893.
[70] Ibid, p. 913.

adorned its walls. Many of these paintings were hung in the ballroom, which was transformed into a picture gallery (fig. 86). With the furniture in the gallery arranged salon style, the Washington, D.C. elite, which often included Harrison, would gather amongst some of the most fashionable European art money could buy. Represented in the house were paintings by Jean-François Millet, Camille Corot, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Jules Breton. Again, showing his regard for Stewart in his collecting practices, Wanamaker also hung a watercolour by Rosa Bonheur called *Return from the Horse Fair* (1873) in the home's dining room (fig. 87).[71]

In the picture gallery, Johnston notes specific paintings, such as an 'exquisite' landscape by Charles-François Daubigny, a 'Venetian Sunset' by Félix Ziem, a *genre* scene by Václav Brožík, and a 'glowing bit of Orientalism' by Jean-Léon Gérôme.[72] Hung beside the main entrance to the ballroom-cum-picture gallery was also one of William Bouguereau's prized religious paintings depicting the Virgin and Child being serenaded by angels, called *La Vierge Aux Anges* (1881) (figs. 88 & 89). In sum, these works were undoubtedly the 'art treasures' which Sedelmeyer had mentioned in reference to Wanamaker's plans for *Pilate*, making this room a private version of Wanamaker's planned public museum. Each one of these works was not only, if Johnston is to be believed, of an obvious quality, but in retrospect can be called a typical example of each artist's *oeuvre*. This made Wanamaker's collection not only impressive but also appropriately didactic, turning the house into a veritable museum of all that was great and good in Europe's salons and art schools over the

[71] This echoed Stewart's ownership of the artist's famous work in oil, *The Horse Fair*, which Cornelius Vanderbilt bought at the Stewart auction and donated to the Metropolitan Museum. The watercolour mentioned might be the same work that is now held at The Cleveland Museum of Art. Cleveland Museum of Art, 'Return from the Horse Fair | Cleveland Museum of Art'. http://www.clevelandart.org/art/2008.410 [accessed 15 September 2018].
[72] Cushing, 1893, pp. 916-7.

preceding thirty years. Munkácsy was represented in the form of an interior scene called *After the Wedding,* which Wanamaker acquired from Sedelmeyer at the same time as *Pilate* (fig. 81). The painting was hung in the picture gallery's 'music corner', an area that with its piano and scattered chairs is characteristic of the constructed informality and intimacy that Wanamaker undoubtedly thought representative of an ideal family space as well as conducive to socialising and networking (fig. 90). Notable in their absence to this ensemble were, of course, *Pilate* and *Calvary*. The jewels of Wanamaker's collection remained at the family's home outside of Philadelphia, Lindenhurst. Wanamaker would have been hard pressed to fit either painting on the walls of the house, although their absence also undoubtedly speaks to the different settings and audiences concerned directly by the displays.

Wanamaker's picture gallery would have marked him as both modern and cosmopolitan to the politicians and their families who visited his home. Further, given Wanamaker's position in Harrison's administration and the importance of his home as a social centre, there is a likelihood that both he and the decoration of his house influenced a rare softening in the Republican stance towards the art tariff during his time in office. Harrison's administration was the only Republican government in the period from 1861 to 1909 to lower the tariff on foreign art. The Tariff Act of 1890 (also called the McKinley Tariff for its author William McKinley), which otherwise raised import taxes across the board, halved the tariff on art from 30 to 15 per cent; and the President himself even advocated for the art tariff's complete abolishment.[73] In fact, William J. Barber calls the lowering of the art tariff 'an arresting exception' in the extremely protectionist act. While it is unclear exactly how much sway Wanamaker held over Harrison – although there were

[73] Barber, 1999, p. 223.

pernicious rumours that the President was in Wanamaker's pocket – Wanamaker's house undoubtedly sent a strong message to both his colleagues and Congress about the role he believed European art and decorative objects should play in everyday American life. The transmission of this message was not, moreover, limited to Wanamaker's political circle.

Wanamaker not only allowed Johnston to photograph and write about his home for a popular magazine, but also had her article reproduced in a book that he commissioned during his time as Postmaster General. Called *The Story of Our Post Office*, it was compiled by Wanamaker's private secretary at the Post Office, Marshall Cushing, and marketed to Americans through newspapers and department store book departments.[74] Everyday Americans could thus see how the Postmaster General lived and, if they were so inclined, copy to a degree that lifestyle. This is because engraved reproductions of the work of artists on display in Wanamaker's own picture gallery could be bought in his store's art department in Philadelphia.[75] Like Wanamaker's paintings, these engravings marked their purchaser as worldly and cosmopolitan even if they did not or could not travel to Europe. Ultimately, Wanamaker's efforts to disseminate images of his house to the larger public through official means are a clear case of his attempts to integrate cosmopolitan consumerism into the national identity. Further, as already expressed in regard to his influence in Washington, Wanamaker's business success and his position as Postmaster General gave him the most important tool of all: authority. Thus, although Wanamaker could not openly campaign against protectionism, his personal consumption of European art marked cosmopolitanism as both aspirational and wholly American. The purchase and display of prints was one way of

[74] Cushing, 1893.
[75] Wanamaker's Philadelphia, *Catalogue of Engravings*, Times Printing House: Philadelphia, PA, 1882.

projecting this identity for the average American shopper, but Wanamaker's *coup de grâce* was to integrate cosmopolitan consumption directly into the postal system.

This was again achieved through art, and specifically by reproducing paintings, drawings and sculptures on the country's first set of commemorative stamps, the Columbian Issue.[76] Wanamaker had to appeal directly to a skeptical and obstructionist Congress for approval and financing, which they only grudgingly granted. Containing 16 stamps of denominations from one cent to five dollars, the Columbian Issue was planned to coincide with the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893, and the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the New World (fig. 91). Naturally, the stamps featured images relating to Columbus' most important feat: his voyage to and colonisation of the Americas. Yet they also showed Columbus in Europe drumming up support for his mission, which in itself innately implied a connection between the fates of the Old World and the New. The choice to feature the work of a range of international contemporary artists also added to the stamps' cosmopolitan credentials. The American artists featured were, namely, early nineteenth-century neo-classicist John Vanderlyn, German-American history painter Emanuel Leutze, recently deceased sculptor Randolph Rogers, painter W. H. Powell and Augustus Goodyear Heaton, who was the first American to study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. All five were renowned artists who had work displayed in Washington, D.C. in governmental collections or as decoration on state buildings, making them natural choices for the set. The contemporary European painters were largely Spanish and Italian, and included Antonio Muñoz Degrain, Francisco Jover y Casanova and Luigi Gregori. The main outlier was Brožík, who was of course one of Sedelmeyer's represented artists and whose work was

[76] For a history of the Columbian Issue, see: Handler, 2016, pp. 293-316; and Siegel Auction Galleries, *The World's Fair Collection: 1893 Columbian Issue*, Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries: New York, NY, 2013.

hung in Wanamaker's Washington home. His painting *Columbus at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella* (1884) was featured on the five-cent stamp, which was issued in the third largest amount in the series at 35,248,250 copies (fig. 92). Despite the diversity of the artists' origins, all worked in a similarly historicist and academic style, and even the Americans largely trained in and in many cases lived most of their lives in Europe.

During the planning phase in 1892, Wanamaker emphasised a connection between the stamps' aesthetics and their consumability, stating: 'The beauty and unique character of the new Columbian stamps will cause their sale in large quantities simply for use in collections'.[77] Indeed, the stamps were a resounding success with collectors and speculators, one of whom was even reported to be wearing disguises in order to make repeated purchases at the Washington, D.C. post office.[78] As Wanamaker hoped, the Columbian Issue made money for the Post Office on a product that, in many cases, was not even redeemed against services. This proved that pure consumption rather than tariffs could be a means to fund the government. Most importantly for department stores and their cultural endeavours, with the aesthetics of the stamps so important to their desirability, foreign art was again marked as a key means to promote consumption amongst Americans, and not just the well-heeled collectors who could afford the price of a full set. Any American who used the postal service could opt for one of Wanamaker's impressive Columbian Issue stamps to put on their letter or package at no additional cost. Given their exceptional imagery, their novelty and their orientation – which was situated horizontally like a landscape or narrative painting rather than vertically like a standard stamp – buying a Columbian Issue stamp seemed more akin to buying an art object than a utilitarian one. Cosmopolitan consumption and culture were made

[77] Siegel Auction Galleries, 2013, p. 7.
[78] Ibid, p. 8.

available to everyone by being integrated directly into an action so basic as sending post, and an institution so American as the country's postal service.

Despite all of his hard work in commissioning the stamps, Wanamaker would not be Postmaster General when they were finally released three months before the Columbian Exposition. In 1892 Harrison again faced Cleveland, whom he had beaten in 1888, but this time he lost. The election was again largely run on economic differences, with tariffs being by far the most important issue. Democrats rode a wave of popular sentiment fuelled by rural poverty and urban clashes between workers and industrialists to achieve the most decisive election result for 20 years. Cleveland's election meant the overturning of the controversial Tariff Act of 1890 and the outright abolition of the art tariff. Although Wanamaker had lost his position of power in national government, Cleveland's policies were ultimately beneficial to his business. The McKinley Tariff had driven up the price of goods for importers and consumers, which compounded an already high level of inflation caused by a mismanaged monetary policy. The inflationary bubble which had grown since 1890 burst just before the opening of the Columbian Exposition in 1893, resulting in a four-year economic depression that has been called one of the most severe in America's history.[79] The abolished tariffs and the falling price of consumer goods, which benefitted the big stores, meant that they were largely insulated from the financial panic, and they began importing art in droves. This resulted in a mushrooming of department store art galleries and special exhibitions, and it was indeed in the 1890s that the department store gallery finally became a staple feature of America's commercial and artistic landscape. The next section will consider the period following Cleveland's election and up to 1914, looking at both the display of imported,

[79] David O. Whitten, 'The Depression of 1893', 2001. https://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-depression-of-1893/ [accessed 15 September 2018].

European art in American department stores and the connections between department stores and American cosmopolitan artists, who modelled their own production on European styles and their larger European art training.

III. Cosmopolitanism in the Department Store

IIIa. Salon Art in the Stores

After being ousted from Washington, Wanamaker returned to Philadelphia and his business interests with a vengeance. This included ramping up the display of European art, and in 1893 the store began its tradition of showing works purchased at the Paris salons. These importations started as a trickle but became a flood of hundreds of paintings and sculptures, to the point where the Paris office was sent a cable in 1903 reading: 'Stop: we cannot find space to hang them all.'[80] John Wanamaker's son Rodman bought the first major work of European art that was displayed in Wanamaker's: Pierre Fritel's *Les Conquérants* (1892) (fig. 93).[81] The entry of this large-scale European painting into the store in 1893 was linked, at least in store lore, to the circumstances around import tariffs described in the previous section. This is shown in a 1905 store publication, which stated:

> 'The year 1892, in which Mr. Cleveland was again elected President, was memorable in an art sense here. In this year's Paris Salon the famous painting "The Conquerors" had its first exhibition, and it was then brought to this store, in which it still remains – a masterpiece.'[82]

Yet this is not to say that, prior to 1892, tariffs were a non-negotiable impediment to the importation and display of art in American department stores; John Wanamaker would

[80] Appel, 1930, p. 404.
[81] Hereafter referred to as *Conquerors*.
[82] Wanamaker's Philadelphia, *A short history of the United States: with an interwoven chronology of the John Wanamaker business together with other historical and economic data*, 1905. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, call number: Wf* .86 v.1.

certainly have been subject to tariffs for the art he bought for his collection and intended store gallery, for example. More usually, department stores acquired works through dealers, who would either lend works or knew how to manipulate tariff laws, or display paintings that had been created in America but adhered to their larger cosmopolitan leanings. Still, the abolition of the tariff set the stage for the flood of imported art that followed and persisted even after the reinstatement of the tariff under the presidency of William McKinley. The persistence of this practice showed the ever-increasing importance of the display of European art to American department stores.

An example of art display before the short abolition of the art tariff under Cleveland can be found at Washington, D.C. department store Woodward & Lothrop. Opened in 1887 by two retailers from Massachusetts, Samuel Walter Woodward and Alvin Mason Lothrop, it often went by the title 'The Boston House', although colloquially it was known as 'Woodies'. Woodward & Lothrop was the preeminent department store of the Washington metropolitan area, which put it in direct competition with Wanamaker's Philadelphia store to be the leading Mid-Atlantic retailer. Wanamaker's presence in Washington as Postmaster General may even have felt like a slight provocation to the ambitious and younger retailers; and because Wanamaker made art so central to his endeavours, it was a natural area to counter him. Woodward & Lothrop added an art gallery to their store in December 1890, only a few months after Johnston's article featuring Wanamaker's home on I Street was published in *Demorest's Family Magazine*. A column in the Washington newspaper *The Evening Star* described the gallery opening and the art shown, which was largely by prominent European artists.[83] The display was especially heavy in art by Barbizon painters

[83] 'A New Departure', *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 5 December 1890. p. 3

such as Théodore Rousseau, Constant Troyon and Narcisse Virgilio Díaz, but also included works by contemporary artists such as Dutch landscapist Jozef Israëls and figure painters Jean-Jacques Henner and Guillaume Seignac.

This was an unfailingly fashionable and cosmopolitan ensemble, which attracted an appropriately privileged audience that included 'many ladies prominent in society and a large number of gentlemen of leading position in political, professional and business life'.[84] The article itself seems to be written with this same cosmopolitan and mobile audience in mind, for as an overture it stated: 'As visitors to Paris know, one of the great features of the *Bon Marche*, the famous dry goods emporium of that city, is its spacious picture gallery, which affords such a delightful meeting and lounging place for its patrons.'[85] The reviewer then speculated about whether the owners were inspired by Au Bon Marché in the creation of their gallery, implicitly tying Woodward to what was, at the time, the world's most imitated store and a destination *par excellence* for American shoppers. Although the gallery was very likely opened as a response to Wanamaker's picture gallery, the reference to Au Bon Marché sought to take it out of the sphere of his influence. Indeed, the focus on Barbizon paintings reflected the works shown in the Parisian department store's gallery, which also opened in 1875 with paintings by Charles and Karl Daubigny and Camille Corot on display.[86]

Still, Wanamaker cast a large shadow, and especially in what concerned his most notable acquisition, Munkácsy's *Pilate*. Most American department stores tried, at some point, to contend with this most famous of works, whether that meant selling prints of it or displaying a work with a similar profile. Woodward's answer to *Pilate* was German artist

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Debans, 1875.

Otto Wolf's painting *Christ and the Adulteress* (1886), which was also shown at the opening (fig. 94).[87] The subject of Christ forgiving an adulteress brought before him by the Pharisees has been popular in European art since the Renaissance, having been depicted by Titian (1508-1510), Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1565) and many others. Yet Wolf's composition deviates from the norm of paintings of the subject, which were typically set either outside or within a tightly framed pictorial space, by depicting, in a clear imitation of *Pilate,* a historicised interior with various groupings of onlookers. These compositional similarities as well as the size of the painting, which was markedly bigger than the other works on display, prompted *The Evening Star*'s reviewer to draw a clear parallel between *Christ* and *Pilate*. What the reviewer did not mention was that Wolf's *Christ* was also imported to America in 1887 and displayed for an entry fee of 50 cents by a New York gallery obviously seeking to capitalise on the popularity of Sedelmeyer's *Pilate* display.[88]

Whichever painting viewers preferred, it is clear that Woodward & Lothrop was participating in a trend for large-scale European paintings with religious subject matter in America more largely and in American department stores particularly. Newspaper records testify that the painting continued to be shown on a near permanent basis for many years, and at least until the 1920s.[89] A photograph of the store's mezzanine shows it occupying an entire wall and surrounded by potted palms and settees, creating a semi-domestic, semi-museal space where shoppers were encouraged to contemplate – perhaps with a certain amount of devotion – the painting rather than glance at it on their way to the sales (fig. 95). This focused and isolated display, which allowed the full impact and message of the painting to

[87] Hereafter referred to as *Christ*.
[88] The painting was shown at George W. Carmer's New York gallery at 176 Fifth Avenue in November 1887. 'Otto Wolf's Painting on Exhibition', *The Evening World*, 4 November 1887, p. 2; and G. W. Carmer, 'A Religious Lesson', *The Sun*, 13 November 1887, p. 15.
[89] *The Alexandria Gazette*, 4 February 1896, p. 3.

shine forth, was reminiscent of Sedelmeyer and Wanamaker's presentation of *Pilate* and *Calvary* during their tours. It seems apparent Woodward & Lothrop were not only taking inspiration from Wanamaker but also directly imitating his methods in order to benefit from the same cultural and marketing forces Wanamaker set to work in his own utilisation of fine art. This is not to besmirch Woodward and Lothrop, who as younger retailers would necessarily want to model themselves on a successful, older example, just as Wanamaker did with Stewart. Moreover, Wanamaker undoubtedly owed his display of *Pilate* to Sedelmeyer, who set the precedent with his European tour of the painting, just as Au Bon Marché set the stage for department store art display more generally. Still, Wanamaker's innovative inter-mixing of culture, religion and commerce via fine art display in America, where he and his store were not only the first in art sale and display but also generally set the tone for such, helped propagate not just the practice, with all that it entailed for audiences, but a certain style across the country. In the case of Wanamaker, this largely meant European painting in the academic tradition. Moreover, with almost every major city, and even many smaller towns and cities, in America having its own department store by the 1890s, a network for dispersing this style was easily formed. Department stores could act almost as beacons, beaming art and culture from one to another and then into the lives and homes of consumers. And this did not just apply amongst American stores, as Wanamaker himself undoubtedly took inspiration from his European counterparts in the department store and the art worlds. The growth of commercial outlets thus gave the average American increased access to an expanding and cosmopolitan world of movement, travel and shared culture, as previously experienced by the elites. Moreover, unlike the average dealer-led painting tour, shoppers did not need to pay to see grand works of art in the department store.

Although public outlets to view art were distinctly on the rise in late-nineteenth century America, issues of access still abounded, as evidenced by debates over Sunday openings.[90] This sometimes made it difficult for those without the luxury of leisure time to access art even if they were so inclined. There were those who argued that wageworkers were not interested in going to experience 'high culture', meaning fine art and classical music, even when institutions were made more accessible. Department stores provided a remedy to both of these points through the inclusion of art in a space that was both predicated on accessibility in order to increase the flow of potential customers, and utilitarian in its provisioning of goods, which meant that a member of the public could stumble on art without even meaning to do so. Artists and dealers naturally picked up on the fact that department stores provided in-built audiences and venues, and some gladly took to sending their art on tours of stores across the country. A key example of this is *Niagara Falls in Winter* (1889) by British expatriate artist Peter Caledon Cameron.[91] Cameron painted the subject twice: once in 1884 not long after his arrival in America from England, and again in 1889.[92] Rochester, New York businessman Hulbert Harrington Warner, known for selling patent medicines, bought the 1884 version for 30,000 dollars while it was on display in Smith & Perkins, a

[90] This can be seen in reference to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which resisted opening on Sundays in the late 1880s because of misgivings by certain members of the board of directors put down to religious objections. The museum finally instituted Sunday openings in 1891. *Helena Weekly Herald*, 19 May 1887, p. 1; and *The Chicago Tribune*, 22 May 1891, p. 9.

[91] Hereafter referred to as *Niagara*.

[92] The 1884 painting is likely the same one auctioned by Sotheby's in 2004 and 2016, for two reasons. First, the dimensions of the auctioned version, which measures about 6 feet by 4 feet, are well under half the reported size of the 1889 version. Second, it is reportedly dated 1884 on the reverse of the canvas. This is in contradiction to a book about views of the Niagara area written by early twentieth-century historian Frank H. Severance, who wrote in 1911 that the 1884 version was destroyed in a fire in London. Warner had business interests there selling his American medicines to British consumers, so he could well have brought it over as a form of artistic merchandising. It is unclear why Severance reported that the first version was destroyed in a fire. It is also unclear where the 1889 version is, although its massive size may have sealed its fate. Sotheby's, 'Peter Caledon Cameron 1854 – 193' (2016). http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.77.html/2016/american-art-n09580 [accessed 15 September 2018]; and Frank Hayward Severance, *Studies of the Niagara Frontier*, Buffalo Historical Society: Buffalo, NY, 1911, p. 150.

local wholesale grocery store.[93] The second version, completed in 1889, reportedly measured 10 by 21 feet.[94] Wanamaker's was naturally the first department store to show Cameron's massive painting in 1892, where it could be found in the Art Room on the second floor.[95] The store did not mention the fact that Cameron was British, preferring instead to lead with the size of the painting, which they suggested bringing opera glasses to view.[96] In this case, the painting was more spectacular than the artist's perceived foreignness, and the fact that the subject was American may have affected the framing. Still, the fact that Cameron had only recently moved to America reflected the increasingly cosmopolitan and international American art community, and his reported eagerness to tour the painting in Europe shows that interest in foreign culture and landscapes was shared across the Atlantic.

In April 1893, only a few months after its showing at Wanamaker's, Cameron's painting travelled to Brooklyn. There, it was shown at Abraham & Straus, a store that had only days before been reopened as a partnership between the Straus family, the Rothschilds and original store founder Abraham Abraham.[97] The newly branded store featured an art gallery, and within a few days of opening its doors it was advertising its display of *Niagara*. Like Wanamaker's, Abraham & Straus played up the size of the painting and its realistic depiction of the spectacular scenery of the iced over falls by displaying it in a room by itself and surrounded by drapery – just as Sedelmeyer and Wanamaker had done for *Pilate*.[98] In this way, viewers could experience the 'bewilderment of believing that some marvelous

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[93] 'The Big Painting', *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, 9 December 1884, p. 6.
[94] 'The Famous Painting at Abraham & Straus' Store', *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 6 April 1893, p. 4.
[95] 'Niagara Falls in Winter', *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), 27 September 1892, p. 6.
[96] Ibid.
[97] The store was formerly called 'Wechsler & Abraham', and run as a partnership between Abraham Abraham and Joseph Wechsler. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 2 April 1893, p. 1.
[98] 'The Famous Painting at Abraham & Straus' Store', *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 6 April 1893, p. 4.

power has brought the falls to Brooklyn', just as they might entertain the idea Christ was before them when viewing *Pilate*.[99] Although Wanamaker's had again pre-empted a department store trend, Abraham & Straus did one better by giving visitors Cameron himself. Professor Cameron, as he was called in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, attended the exhibition for 'several afternoons' to explain the creation of the painting and its natural setting to visitors.[100] This increased the display's educational value, and answered a call to action published only two months later in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. In a letter to the editor, a reader suggested modifications to the educational system, including the idea that the surplus of American artists should be put to use educating the public, and particularly the working class.[101] Just as department stores were beginning to really frame themselves as civic and educational outlets, the *Eagle* reader drew a line in the sand between their offerings and those of traditional institutions of education and display, stating:

> 'Are artists not aware that good pictures and the makers of art, nay our city artists, are only known in the art world. We know scores of intelligent persons that know nothing of both the New York and Brooklyn art academies. They do not even know their names or situation; know not of their existence (although they know every nook and corner in Abraham & Straus' or Loeser's stores). As these persons know nothing of art galleries of academies they know less of the pictures inside them. Yes, art is only known in its sphere.'[102]

Despite disparaging the public's interest in shopping, the art activities of department stores in fact increasingly aligned with the reader's goal of uniting the public with art and artists. In the case of Abraham & Straus, its continued exhibitions of art throughout the next two decades were a distinct presence in the Brooklyn community. As evidenced by an

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] 'Letters to the Editor: Some Alleged Defects in the School System', *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1 June 1893, p. 3.
[102] Ibid.

advertisement the store took out to commemorate the Columbian World's Fair, in which a sketched image of the store's frontage shows a framed painting prominently on display in a window, this presence also extended to the city streets (fig. 96).[103] The local magazine *Brooklyn Life*, which detailed the cultural events occurring in the borough, often reported on the consistent infusions of new art into the store.[104] These exhibitions started as early as one month after the opening of the special display of *Niagara*, and a month before the *Daily Eagle* editorial. The artists displayed in the new gallery included Swedish painter August Hagborb, French painters Henri Duvieux and Léon Richet, and Adrien Taunay the Younger, a young French watercolourist and landscape painter who travelled to the Pacific and South America with his artist father on a French Artistic Mission and died in 1828 while crossing the Guaporé River.[105] Taunay's watercolours documented the lives and landscapes of people and places most Brooklynites would never see. Thus, if the people of Brooklyn were receiving their art education from Abraham & Straus, it was undoubtedly a cosmopolitan one. But precisely what lessons underlined these displays, and how did they relate back to the department store?

To answer this, it is useful to return to Wanamaker's. This is not only because the store was a leader in many things concerning art, but also because the dialogue they carried on with customers in store, in advertisements and in catalogues often detailed its management's intentions and goals with surprising candour. One of the most telling instances is their first display of a large-scale European salon painting. At first glance, *Conquerors*

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[103] 'Abraham & Straus' Front, Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY', *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 27 June 1893, p. 21.

[104] Examples of this reporting include: 'Pictures at Abraham & Straus', *Brooklyn Life*, 9 November 1895, p. 21; Addison Steele, 'The Looker-on', *Brooklyn Life*, 26 June 1897, p. 9; and 'Here and There', *Brooklyn Life,* 2 June 1900, p. 26.

[105] 'Some Pictures at the Abraham & Straus Rooms', *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 21 May 1893, p. 3; and 'Art in Earnest! Many Costly Paintings Here', *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 16 May 1893, p. 3.

might be considered a surprising choice of subject to display in a late nineteenth-century department store, which often framed themselves as gentile retreats. Julius Caesar, Napoléon Bonaparte, and Attila the Hun advancing on horseback down a road lined with the corpses is not exactly what one might expect to see on the way to the fashion sales or the store's restaurant. In fact, store records show that the painting was put into storage around the 1930s because it was deemed 'very controversial'.[106] Contrary to its pariah status some 60 years later, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Fritel's painting was a prominently featured component of Wanamaker's display and identity, and the store did not shy away from highlighting the more challenging aspects of the composition. Although the initial display of the painting was generally depoliticised, with advertisements focusing on its location and reception at the 1892 Paris Salon, the store progressively framed it as an allegory or lesson for viewers.[107] An early twentieth-century store pamphlet on the painting said that it was 'the most powerful sermon ever preached on canvas against the lust and the arbitrament of the sword'.[108]

The painting also entered into the national forum through its display in the Philadelphia and New York stores, but especially through its photographic reproduction in newspapers. As America became increasingly embroiled in conflicts abroad, directly challenging the country's non-interventionist foreign policy, Fritel's *Conquerors* was often taken to symbolise the futility of war. In the run up to and after the outbreak of the First World War, for instance, it was featured prominently in numerous newspapers across the

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[106] Letter from G. G. Abel to Mr Raasch, 1948 and letter to Mr Gicker, 1965. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker collection (2188), box 49A, folder 6.

[107] An example of an early advertisement is: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 April 1893, p. 8.

[108] Wanamaker's Philadelphia, *The Conquerors: Some Account of the World-Famous Painting on Exhibition in the John Wanamaker Stores Philadelphia Together with Sketches of its Leading Characters*, n.d. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker collection (2188), box 65A.

nation with taglines such as 'The Price of War' and 'Who Will Be Added to the Host that Rides Among the Skeletons When This Terrible Conflict is Over?' (fig. 93)[109] Wanamaker owned the painting's copyright – as is prominently stated under some of the images – meaning that either he or his company gave permission for this kind of use. This coincides with Wanamaker's pacifist leanings, which were based in a deep commitment to both religion and commerce. Although painted as otherwise, Wanamaker was strongly opposed to America's first venture into expansionism by military force, the Spanish-American War, which he agitated against both behind the scenes and on the public stage. Richard F. Hamilton in *President McKinley, War and Empire* quotes a telegraph that Wanamaker sent to McKinley's Secretary of War Russell A. Alger in mid-April 1898 stating that he was opposed to the war unless 'honourably unavoidable'.[110] Wanamaker also dusted off one of the most powerful weapons in his arsenal: Munkácsy's *Pilate*. Along with *Calvary*, *Pilate* was displayed for the first time ever in Philadelphia at the Church of the Epiphany, which Wanamaker had bought for 600,000 dollars in 1896, with admission fees donated to the Red Cross to benefit victims of the Cuban War of Independence against Spain.[111] Wanamaker's display of the most notorious paintings he owned can be considered a protest against the machinations of the Democratic Party, which arguably strong-armed his Republican ally McKinley into war with Spain when aid might have been more suitable, and against war itself, with Christ as the symbol of pacifism. Wanamaker maintained this non-interventionist view on the eve of the First World War, and even made the startling and singular claim in 1915 that, rather than committing soldiers to the conflict, America should pay 100 billion

[109] *The Ward County Independent*, 27 August 1914, p. 14.
[110] Richard F. Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, Transaction Publisher: New Brunswick, NJ, 2006, p. 120.
[111] 'To Aid Cuban Sufferers', *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 20 February 1898, p. 5.

dollars towards Belgian independence from Germany.[112] Wanamaker was roundly criticised and even called un-American following his suggestion to buy Belgium's freedom and end the war through monetary rather than military means. Yet his belief in the importance of maintaining commercial links, as well as his commitment to the survival of the larger European community, are reflective of the cosmopolitanism that was a common cultural factor in America and Europe before the First World War. For Wanamaker, the transmutation of conflicts from military to commercial grounds could have a constructive rather than destructive effect, while also increasing America's connection to Europe through its economic interest in Belgium.

Wanamaker's attitude towards the First World War was indicative of the values he had perpetuated through art display since the 1880s, and was especially apparent in the display history of *Conquerors*, which presented a natural means to comment on these issues. From the moment it entered the store in 1893, *Conquerors* was consistently displayed alongside saleable goods, including in the Carpet Department when it was first shown in 1893. Unlike *Pilate*, which was afforded a slightly more individualised and reverent display, *Conquerors* became a moving palimpsest on which the store could project a message about the merits of cosmopolitan commerce through creative juxtapositions with imported goods. This was especially pronounced in the store's 1894 display of the painting, which was hung in an area called 'The Beautiful Assembly'. Located on the third floor of the store, it contained a collection of special and aesthetically orientated displays, including 'The Golden Galaxy', 'The Decorative Melange', and 'The Study in Black Cotton and White Marble'. On 22 January 1894, the store added to this ensemble what it called the 'Crystal Salon': a 130-

[112] 'Would Buy Belgium for $100,000,000: Wanamaker Plan to Set Her Free – Would Stop Our Foreign Trade to End War', *The New York Times*, 23 July 1915.

foot long crystal display case filled with spring dress goods and silks imported directly from Paris. In a striking juxtaposition, *Conquerors* was hung on the wall opposite. While this might be chalked up to the impulse to put all of their headlining displays in one area, the store made the connection between the two implicit, stating:

> 'With this opening of February the *Crystal Salon* will take on a chameleon character – frequent changes of hue. There will be some changes to-day, more to-morrow. The plain English of it is that the Conquerors – the new Dress Goods – are coming, and marching into the Crystal Salon, they possess it.'[113]

Although these words might be taken in a more light-hearted manner in another context – perhaps implying the conquering of hearts or pocketbooks – the spatial relation of the display case to *Conquerors*, which presents a stark case for the need to break with the history of nationalist expansion and conflict, suggests a different meaning and message. The importation and purchase of foreign goods can, the display suggests, not only displace conflict in favour of commerce, but also help to knit peoples together through commercial cosmopolitanism. It may be that inclusion in a department store, which as this chapter has shown were overwhelmingly committed to the unfettering of trade and the construction of cosmopolitan leanings, would always evoke these points, which undoubtedly went beyond Fritel's original interpretations of *Conquerors*. Still, in their typical fashion, Wanamaker's took the step of spelling out their message and their intentions, which was to use commerce to propagate cosmopolitanism, and vice-versa, all via the display of European art. Large-scale salon paintings, with their accessible subjects and narrative compositions, were especially useful for clubbing home the messages that department stores – and especially Wanamaker's – would broadcast via their frequent advertisements. Yet smaller paintings,

[113] *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), 1 February 1884, p. 8.

and the galleries that they occupied, were used just as frequently to accomplish the same goal.

An informational pamphlet that Wanamaker's published about *Conquerors* stated that its galleries were 'in close relation with the Paris Salons, and with all art centres…'[114] By galleries the store meant its dedicated art galleries where it displayed art both for sale and for display. These spaces varied in location and formation across the history of the store, yet a major commonality during this period was the mass importation and display of fine art from the Parisian salons. Every art season, Wanamaker representatives would trawl the various salons, including that of the Académie des Beaux Arts but also offshoots such as the Salon des Artistes Français, searching for art to buy and ship back to Philadelphia for sale and display in the stores. There was little logic to what was on display and what was for sale, with the decision seeming to come down to what Rodman Wanamaker determined was important for the store to keep on permanent display or, after the New York branch opened in 1896, what he wanted to tour there after display in Philadelphia (or vice versa, from New York to Philadelphia). Having a permanent collection of European paintings also allowed the stores to continually feature attractive displays of art even outside of salon season. An ideal example of this was the purchase and display of the contents of Brožík's Paris studio after the artist's death in 1901, including the furniture and fabric backgrounds. The ensemble was displayed first in Wanamaker's Philadelphia picture gallery, located on the Third Floor of the Grand Depot (fig. 97). The sheer number of paintings and studio materials would not only have impressed the viewer and offered them an insight into the creative process behind European painting, but also proved the store's deep connection to the Parisian art world.

[114] Wanamaker's Philadelphia, *The Conquerors*… n.d.

The latter aspect of the Brožík display was undoubtedly the most important, as it helped compound the cosmopolitan atmosphere and credentials of the store. For those who could not afford to travel to Paris for this annual bonanza of art and culture, they could travel to Wanamaker's (sometimes from out of state, as claimed in the *Conquerors* catalogue) and have the experience re-created for them. The continual importations of art 'brought' Paris to the store, which meant that Wanamaker's shoppers could almost experience the city for themselves. This not only acted as a draw to the store, but also lent another 'frame' to the foreign goods in which Wanamaker's specialised. Cosmopolitanism was thus not only useful from a political and cultural perspective, but also as an advertising mechanism for selling goods to the middle to lower classes that frequented the department store. Part of this was based in fantasy, as in the ability to virtually voyage to Paris, and the other part in aspiration, or the desire to live like the upper classes that could travel abroad to buy these goods. With fine art as the frame, cosmopolitanism was imbued in everything from personal goods, such as fashion, to domestic goods, such as furniture.

The use of cosmopolitanism, as embodied in European art, was such that most major department stores began to follow Wanamaker's example in importing large lots of art from Europe, and especially from the various salons held across Paris. For instance, Abraham & Straus published a catalogue in 1902 with selected images of its most recent importation of 'Old World' paintings, stating:

> 'The largest and finest display of paintings for sale ever made in Brooklyn is ready now in the Picture Salons at the rear of the third floor. It is a notable gathering, one that must attract attention far and near among lovers of good art and discriminating judges of good paintings. Our experts have purchased for us and brought from Europe a large number of more recent canvases by the best of the Old World artists, among

them a striking group of paintings from the Paris Salon of 1902. These alone make an exhibition worth a day's journey to see.'[115]

Abraham & Straus' description of their exhibition shows how important these importations were in drawing customers into the department store. While there were numerous opportunities for Americans to purchase publications featuring images of popular works at the most recent salon, opportunities to see the art in person, and fresh off the walls of the salons at that, were much more rare. Department stores thus exposed Americans far and wide to contemporary European painting that they would have little opportunity to see otherwise, not having access to the private galleries of the country's richest cosmopolitan travellers. Yet it was not just European art that the average American would see in the department store. As mentioned on the last page of the Abraham & Straus catalogue, when they advertised the presence of 'a most notable gathering of the most important works of American artists who are winning rapidly a high place in the esteem of art lovers' in the gallery, the work of artists from closer to home could also be found on a visit to the department store. These American artists worked in a hybrid American-European style that came to be called Cosmopolitan. The Cosmopolitan style was influenced by the large number of American artists who travelled to Europe for artistic training and education, as well as the overall influence of Europe on Americans' view of what should compose their own cultural practices. As institutions inherently interested in cosmopolitanism forming part of American identity, department stores helped to materially support American Cosmopolitans by displaying and selling their work. In this, they also exposed the style to a larger selection of the American public, but especially to two social groups who had less experience of it than the more

[115] Abraham & Straus, *New Paintings in the Art Galleries of Abraham and Straus*, 1902. New York Public Library, Art & Architecture Collection, Call number MAY (Abraham and Straus. New paintings. 1902).

mobile elites: the middle and the lower classes. Yet an essential disjuncture existed between Cosmopolitan art as a national style, or American 'school', and the role of the department store as a circulator of goods beyond national borders.

IIIb. Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: Department Stores and American Art

Loosely defined, 'Cosmopolitan' art has come to indicate the production of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century American artists who indulged in an array of foreign influences and who employed a range of stylistic postures to produce art which reflected its time: increasingly trans-national; eclectic and obsessed with surfaces. While the term 'cosmopolitan' has re-gained prominence as a category since the 1970s and 1980s, when art historians such as H. Barbara Weinburg sought to work against a nativist canon of American art and prove that 'what was American in late nineteenth-century American art was the fact that it was not very American', the term and indeed production of Cosmopolitan art in the period was deeply associated with creating a national style and school.[116] An example of this outlook can be found in one of the earliest propagators of European art and Cosmopolitan tendencies in America, the Cosmopolitan Art Association. In 1854 American publisher Chauncey Lyman Derby founded the CAA in Sandusky, Ohio. Like its successful but unstable predecessor the American Art-Union, the CAA acted as a subscribers' lottery for fine art; yet, unlike its predecessor, which focused primarily on contemporary American art, it increasingly diversified into European paintings and prints.[117] Following a move to New

[116] H. Barbara Weinburg, 'Late-Nineteenth-Century American Painting: Cosmopolitan Concerns and Critical Controversies', *Archives of American Art Journal*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1983), pp. 19-26.

[117] For a history of the Art Union of London and the American Art Union see: Joy Sperling, '"Art, Cheap and Good:" The Art Union in England and the United States, 1840–60', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* [online], vol. 1, no. 1, (2002). As evidence of the Cosmopolitan Art Association (and indeed the American public's) increasing interest in European art, the Association offered an 'Artists' Prize Fund' in 1860 which

York in 1855, the CAA began publishing a journal for members that, like the AAU's journal before it, reported on the news of the organisation and judged the state of the art world. An early article entitled 'Nationality in Art' laid out the cosmopolitan aspirations of the organisation and their desire to delineate a specifically American style:

> 'The name "Cosmopolitan" was assumed only after mature consideration, and when it was decided to give the Institution truly world-wide sympathies and brotherhoods. It aims at no sectionality, and shall in no way minister to the prejudices or assumptions which would narrow its labors, or circumscribe its influence. To achieve its mission, it will draw upon Art, everywhere, for contributions, which, in proper time, shall find their way over the length and breadth of our land; thus bringing into the homes of our people the works of many lands, and thus enabling all to form a true estimate of what Art in America is, and what it ought to be.'[118]

Although popular with subscribers and financially sound, the CAA disbanded for good on the eve of the American Civil War. Its promotion of cosmopolitanism, as embodied by an openness to viewing, consuming and taking inspiration from foreign cultures, as foundational to American art and identity was carried forward by newspapers, museums and art societies. As described throughout this chapter, department stores, fuelled by their own commercial interests, also had a crucial role to play; and their most important conduit was undoubtedly John Wanamaker's son, Rodman.

Rodman Wanamaker was the main force behind the European art inundation that began at Wanamaker's Philadelphia store in the 1890s and continued through his tenure as head of the New York branch. Rodman joined his father's business in 1886 and was sent abroad to run the Paris office in 1888.[119] He then returned to America in 1898 to help run the

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funded an American artist to study and train in Europe. The Cosmopolitan Art Association, 'The Cosmopolitan Gold Medal and Artists' Prize Fund', *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1860), p. vii.

[118] Cosmopolitan Art Association, 'Nationality in Art', *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, vol. 1, no. 3 (March 1857), pp. 75-7.

[119] Ibid, p. 402.

business, before taking the position of head of the New York branch in 1911.[120] Rodman never truly left Paris behind, often travelling back to conduct business, see friends and buy art. Rodman was a quintessential cosmopolitan who aligned himself closely with cosmopolitan endeavours and identifications such as the *Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur,* for which he was made a *chevalier* for his services to French art in 1897.[121] Moreover, it was Rodman's long tenure in Paris that helped to concretise the store's role not only as one of the most important propagators of European art but also cosmopolitanism in general in America. Wanamaker family biographer Joseph Appel quoted John Wanamaker on his son's eccentric (and expensive) habit of sending miscellaneous paintings, *objets d'art* and historical relics to the Philadelphia store from Paris with little to no insight into his rationale or the objects' intended purpose, stating:

> 'We didn't know what to make of it… Thomas (his other son) and I began to think Rodman had gone out of his head. We didn't understand the things he was sending over. We didn't know how to sell them. We tried to curb him. He wouldn't be curbed. I was in Washington. Mr. Ogden and Thomas were in charge of the business. They went through a trying time… Now I know what he was about (he said many years later), and I am humbly appreciative of the uplift Rodman gave to the business.'[122]

As shown in the previous sections, the elder Wanamaker had a keen idea of the commercial, cultural and political potential of foreign fine art, and thus with this statement was employing his well-known propensity for mythmaking and marketing. Undoubtedly, Rodman based his vociferous promotion of cosmopolitanism in all areas of the Wanamaker business and American life on the model set by his father. Yet, from his position in the store's Paris House, Rodman was key to formalising and expanding the circuits of trade in culture and cultural objects from Europe to America, as well as the reverse trade in American culture and

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[120] Appel, 1930, p. xii.
[121] 'Recognizes His Service in Encouragement of Art', *Detroit Free Press*, 12 August 1907, p. 2.
[122] Appel, 1930, p. 402.

business to Europe through his substantial activities there; and, in terms of American art, his most important activity was undoubtedly his involvement in the American Art Association of Paris.

Founded in 1890, the AAAP was a club that catered to American artists training or living in Paris. Its premises on the Left Bank acted, as Emily Burns argues, as a bastion of Americanism in Paris. American artists could display their work, celebrate American holidays and network amongst themselves and potential American patrons.[123] One of these patrons was Rodman Wanamaker himself, who was a founding member and became President in 1895, taking over from American artist A. A. Anderson. Wanamaker used his tenure as President to support American artists, including African-American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner who preferred to work in Paris and was also a member of the AAAP.[124] Although Tanner had previously received support from Wanamaker associate Ogden, including his purchase and display in the Philadelphia store of the artist's painting *The Bagpipe Lesson* (1893), Rodman took this patronage a step further.[125] After a visit to Tanner's Paris studio in 1897, Rodman decided to fund two study trips made by the artist to the Middle East.[126] These trips were meant to enhance the realism and effect of Tanner's renowned religious paintings, included amongst which was Tanner's *Behold! The Bridegroom Cometh!* (1908). This painting would come to be hung beside Munkácsy's *Calvary* in the Philadelphia store – a visual testament to the international reach and the

[123] Emily Burns details the history of the AAAP and its more conservative counterpart, the Paris Society of American Painters, in her 2015 article for *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*. Emily C. Burns, '"Of a Kind Hitherto Unknown": The American Art Association of Paris in 1908', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* [online], vol. 14, no. 1 (2015).
[124] Terra Foundation for American Art, 'Henry Ossawa Tanner'. https://collection.terraamericanart.org/view/people/asitem/items$0040null:361/0 [accessed 15 September 2018].
[125] Alan C. Braddock, 'Painting the World's Christ: Tanner, Hybridity, and the Blood of the Holy Land', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* [online], vol. 3, no. 2 (2004).
[126] Ibid.

patronage power of Wanamaker *père* and *fils* (fig. 98). Rodman's patronage also speaks to his belief in the importance of movement to the creation of art, for by enabling Tanner to travel to the Middle East he undoubtedly believed he was helping to better his output.

Rodman thus used his position at the AAAP to, as Burns states, 'scout for art to purchase for his father's personal collection' – which as proven throughout this chapter also meant art for display in their stores.[127] Another artist that he met and supported through the AAAP, and whose work also inevitably ended up in Wanamaker's department stores, was American Impressionist Frederick Carl Frieseke. Rodman commissioned Frieseke to paint a series of murals for the New York store and the Shelburne Atlantic Hotel in Atlantic City – an enterprise in which Rodman had a financial stake – bringing modern, European-style American painting to his shoppers and patrons (figs. 99 & 100). Tanner and Frieseke were two of Rodman's favourite artists, meaning they received enhanced commissions and patronage. Yet Rodman's larger role at the AAAP meant that he could support American Cosmopolitan artists and propagate their art in Europe generally as well. To this task he contributed not only his business acumen, encouraging Parisian galleries such as Paul Durand Ruel's to display the work of American artists, but also his money. In 1898, he endowed the AAAP with funds to begin awarding the 'John Wanamaker Prize' for outstanding works at its annual salon.[128] These exhibitions not only acted as springboards for American artists to test work for the official salon of the École des Beaux Arts, but also provided the winners necessary funds to continue creating and boosting the profile of American art in Europe, the Americanism of the AAAP being a key component of its mission and ethos. The irony, which Burns describes in her article on the AAAP and in her doctoral

[127] Burns, 2015.
[128] *The Topeka State Journal*, 4 June 1900, p. 4.

thesis on American artists in Paris, is that despite the professed cosmopolitan leanings of American artists and their desire to study and even live in foreign countries such as France, when actually abroad they tended to overemphasise their national origins.[129] This was aided by organisations such as the AAAP, which acted as havens of Americanism in Paris and promoted American art in foreign contexts. This emphasis on American particularity even in the most 'cosmopolitan' contexts shows the continual focus on national schools and styles underlying American cosmopolitan art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[130]

The idea of a 'cosmopolitan', or international, art style was thus patently at odds with the still relevant idea of cohesive national schools in the late nineteenth-century. Ironically, then, artists were participating in a form of art that undermined their own ability to organise themselves in a legibly national fashion. The naivety in style and subject matter that Burns argues emerged as a trait of American art was a response to this enforced cosmopolitanism, which uprooted artists from national contexts for the sake of producing art that was at all marketable. Yet nationalism did not disappear from the art world, or Western culture generally, completely. As argued throughout this chapter, the source of nationalism just shifted from production to consumption. Cosmopolitan consumption, which separated the shopper from the origin of the goods they were buying, helped to embed consumption in the American psyche. American nationalism thus became centred on the ability not to produce but to consume. This is arguably mirrored in the creation of art. Just as cosmopolitanism embedded consumption in the American psyche, so cosmopolitanism also instituted an emphasis on style over school in American art. The production of art became centred not on

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[129] Emily C. Burns, 'Innocence Abroad: The Construction and Marketing of an American Artistic Identity in Paris, 1880-1910', PhD Thesis, Washington University in St Louis, 2012.

[130] Another study underlining the link that emerged between American cosmopolitanism and nationalism is: Sarah J. Moore, *John White Alexander and the Construction of National Identity: Cosmopolitan American Art, 1880-1915*, University of Delaware Press: Newark, DE, 2003.

shared educational experiences and productive patterns but instead on shared 'style', as manifested by the importance of art movements over schools throughout the twentieth century.

Cosmopolitan consumption is, arguably, America's most important retailing legacy. While, as shown throughout this thesis, the essential components of mass retailing were operational in both France and the UK, 'the alliance between consumerism and national identity', as Rappaport calls it, was largely an American dogma.[131] It thus accords that American art and artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were especially enthralled with cosmopolitanism, and also that their art is particularly illustrative of its qualities and disjunctions in this key transitional period. American department stores helped to spread this cosmopolitanism both through their importation and display of European art and their support, as shown by the art activities of Rodman Wanamaker, of American artists who worked in the European mode. In this, they helped to fuel the evolution of art beyond its reliance on national schools into a more modern mode, embodied by the emphasis on movements and styles.

IV. Conclusion

Embedded in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cosmopolitanism, which as a concept had lost much philosophical grounding, was an emphasis not just on movement but also on consumption of foreign goods and cultures. Pioneering retailers such as John Wanamaker thus saw cosmopolitanism as an ideal means of propagating a culture of consumption, for the privileging of foreign goods and objects also innately emphasised

[131] Rappaport, 2001, p. 149.

consumption over production. Yet, rather than department stores thrusting foreign goods into the lives and homes of consumers – something they, as important distributional structures, were well positioned to do – they instead undertook a much more sophisticated campaign to win the hearts and minds of America, and a key tool in this campaign was imported European art. As shown by the political and cultural activities of Wanamaker, arguably America's most influential late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century retailer, the display of European art was used to send a powerful message not only about the desirability of foreign goods, but also about the necessity for openness and permeability in America's culture and economy. Yet, despite the potentially ethical and moral possibilities of this position, which can well be painted as anti-nationalist, this cosmopolitanism was, as Hoganson argues, imperialism by another name: commerce. It was thus that free trade and commerce became a crucial part not just of the American economy but also of American national identity. Art, through its integration into these networks of trade and influence, was necessarily impacted by this shift, which manifested itself in multiple ways. The most important was the privileging of style over national school or, in other words, the privileging of issues of consumption over those of production. The negation of difference produced by links between distinct art centres and means of production was, moreover, an essential step towards the formulation of the global art world, and more largely the globalisation of culture and society in general.

CONCLUSION

'IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT'

The First World War, and especially the ten years which followed it, spelled numerous changes for the department store. As briefly described in the Introduction, these changes revolved in large part around new modes of transportation, in particular the rise of the personal motor vehicle, and increased competition in the mass retail market.[1] These developments hollowed out some of the market on which the gigantic institutions described throughout this thesis had come to depend. Combined with other factors, including the merger mania of the interwar period when many large department stores were integrated into national 'chains', and the year 1914 can be taken as marking the end of a distinct era in the history of the department store in America, France and the UK alike.

The impact of these shifts on the relationship between fine art and the department store is perhaps most poetically exemplified by a Wanamaker's New York advertisement from 1922.[2] Listing the many departments in the store for the provision of domestic goods as well as some of the wonders they held, the advertisement described its offerings in the realm of fine art, although arguably not in a manner familiar to late nineteenth-century shoppers or readers of this thesis. Under 'Pictures and Mirrors', it stated: 'Paintings – if you can afford them – water colors, oils, pastels – in the Picture Gallery.' In this advertisement we see some of the hallmarks of department store art commerce described in Chapters One and Two, including the fact that art is being sold alongside mirrors as a domestic good. Yet the tone,

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[1] Longstreth, 2010; and Iarocci, 2014.

[2] The New York Herald, 30 January 1922, p. 22.

which proclaims not only cost – perhaps too expensive even to list – but also the exclusivity of the works in the picture gallery, is new. The commercial model of the department store developed in the nineteenth century from a desire to take advantage of the mass market, which for the vast majority of department stores meant appealing, in both merchandising policies and tone, to the largest segment of shoppers possible, and also to developing new markets where possible. For this latter objective, objects such as fine art were employed to accustom new segments of the market to consumerism. At the forefront of both department store commerce and the use of fine art as a tool within that system was Wanamaker's. This makes it particularly jarring to see this shift in marketing tone, which undeniably indicated at its base a shifting market.

Increasingly in the interwar period, nimbler, less top-heavy mass retailers such as Marks & Spencers and Woolworths undercut the prices offered by department stores, and thus also their ability to appeal to the masses of the mass market. Although department store merchandising policies, which included fixed prices, liberal entry and returns policies and loss leaders did not change – in fact they have become standard for all but the most specialised and elite retailers – the composition of the market, both in terms of the kind of retailers and the perceived profile of shoppers, did. This is not to say that department stores ignored the lower end of the market completely. In fact, they worked harder than ever to target that market with goods and prices tailored to its needs, and specifically by opening bargain departments, sometimes called bargain basements, in which savvy shoppers could find deals rivaling those offered by competitors.[3] Yet an undeniable segmentation of the market was occurring, which especially impacted the large urban department stores profiled

[3] Hepp, 2003, pp. 159-62.

in this thesis. While department stores still aimed to sell to everyone, their marketing split down the middle with different goods increasingly marketed towards different groups. This segmentation especially impacted luxury goods such as fine art, which as shown above in the Wanamaker's advertisement was increasingly promoted not just as aspirational but also as expensive and rarified. Moreover, while art was still sold as a domestic good, the kind of homes the department store catered for with art also pushed towards the upper end of the market. This is shown by the numerous specialist home decorating departments opened from the late 1910s and into the 1920s in America, France and the UK – for instance Belmaison at Wanamaker's and the various ateliers d'art, including Primavera and Pomone, in France.[4] But perhaps the most meaningful development in department store retailing as pertains to fine art was the closure in the early 1920s of Au Bon Marché's Galerie de tableaux. A veritable landmark of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century retailing, with its middle-class appeal and the largesse of its non-commercial function, the gallery's destruction, its painted decorations ripped from the walls and dispersed at auction or lost, symbolised not just the end of the department store's centrality to both retailing and modern, mass culture, but also a turning point in the department store's relationship with art. Yet, by losing the middle ground, the department store ironically came into closer contact than ever with art. By moving its art-based retailing and marketing activities to the upper end of the market, the department store finally mirrored the art world's own emphasis on exclusivity. This is a key reason why, from the 1920s, there was an explosion of fruitful collaborations between department stores and artists such as that between Bonwit Teller and Andy Warhol in 1961,

[4] Primavera was the atelier d'art of Parisian department store Printemps and Pomone was that of Au Bon Marché. For a history of Primavera which touches on the atelier d'art movement more largely, see: Alain-René Hardy and Gérard Tatin, *Primavera - L'Atelier d'art du Printemps 1912-1972*, Éditions Faton: Paris, France, 2014. Nancy J. Troy also discusses the French ateliers d'art in *Modernism and the Decorative Arts in France: Art Nouveau to Le Corbusier,* Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1991, pp. 159-226.

and continuing still today with a 2016 collaboration between Chinese artist Ai Weiwei and Le Bon Marché.[5]

Having been a virtual pariah in the late nineteenth-century, the department store from the 1920s arguably came to represent the accord between fine art and certain areas of commerce – so long as it was aimed at the right market and with the right tone. Yet the art world was not always so amenable to commerce, and this thesis is in fact partially the story of the development of that accord from the prospective of mass commerce, and specifically the department store. By comparing the practice of department store art circulation, display and sale to the practices of the art market, it is possible to see how the former impacted the latter. Thus, in addition to detailing a cohesive history of the relationship between late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century department stores and art, this thesis has also detailed the role that mass commerce largely, and the department store specifically, played in propelling the development of the modern art world. In Chapter One, this was shown through describing the development and function of department store art commerce. While the commercial system of the department store underlines the analysis in this thesis, commerce in Chapter One specifically means the sale of art as well as its commodification through that sale. As shown by the example of the British bazaar, department store art commerce developed out of the sale of domestic goods such as furniture. Yet it was not just the classification of art as a domestic good which served to commodify it; instead, the more critical factor was the department store's own merchandising system. By selling art with fixed prices (usually marked on the work itself), under liberal returns policies and sometimes even without mentioning the artist's name, which often the case when art was sold via

[5] Arthur C. Danto, *Andy Warhol,* Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 2009, pp. 21-5l and LVMH, 'Ai Weiwei's fantasy world on show at Le Bon Marché – LVMH', 2016. https://www.lvmh.com/news-documents/news/ai-weiweis-fantasy-world-on-show-at-le-bon-marche [accessed 15 September 2018].

catalogues, department stores made the commodity status of art hard to deny. Who therefore would want to buy, or more crucially sell, art in the department store?

As shown in Chapter One, while the merchandising policies of the department store repelled certain portions of the art market, those who bought art there were attracted by, or at least benefited from, these very same policies. Thus, the primary customer base for department store art commerce were those new to or locked out of the mainstream art market: the lower to middle classes and everyday female shoppers. By selling art, department stores not only made it easy to buy but also more affordable. Moreover, while the generally low or market-rate prices of art sold in the department store was not a prime attraction for artists, the ease of department store commerce as well as the large consumer base they catered to were sufficient reasons to sell there. Given the large numbers of artists practicing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century who remained underrepresented in the traditional art market, department stores were an important stopgap that helped to shore up the still concretising world of art commerce. The department store should thus be considered alongside advertising and magazines in the history of popular forms of art dissemination in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. From the side of production, they should also be considered alongside commercial activities such as illustration for magazines and advertisements for their role in providing alternative means of support and exposure for artists.

Although art was never a leading sales item for department stores, which instead were driven primarily by women's wear and novelties, art commerce had knock-on benefits for the stores besides direct profits. These benefits, which revolved around advertising and marketing, were explained in Chapter Two through the medium of display. Display was the

department store's primary means of advertising and marketing in an era preceding the dominance of branding and certain key technological developments in publishing. It not only framed the store's goods but also the store itself, which in both a physical and reputational sense was the most important marketing device a department store had. Department stores thus employed a logic of mixed display that meant that fine art physically and visually intermixed with items as diverse as textiles, fashion goods and furniture. This mixed display style made perfect sense from the perspective of department store commerce, as department stores not only suffered from logistical and business pressures which made it hard to separate one item from another in any lasting manner, but also were benefited by the creation of associations between a high-value, symbolically charged item such as art and the largely mass-produced goods in which they specialised. Yet, again, what was beneficial to the department store's system of mass commerce not only revealed the commodity status of art, but also challenged art's perceived autonomy vis-à-vis commerce. Although the art world was also progressively commercialising, its developing modes of display took pains to hide both the commodity status of art as an object and its integration into an explicit system of commerce. Crucially, these modes of display, which not only segregated art from other kinds of goods but also ensured its full visual autonomy, were antithetical to those utilised for mass commerce and more specifically in the department store. Chapter Two thus showed how, in order to fully understand the evolution of commercial art display, it is also necessary to consider its foil: mass commercial display.

Another area of the art world that mass commerce, and particularly the department store, helped to push to its logical conclusion was American art made in the cosmopolitan model. Elite consumers and producers had long participated in forms of culture which,

through the influence of trade and travel, pulled from other areas in the world. In nineteenth-century America, this form of consumption especially focused on European objects and culture; and the art world reflected this through the propensity for American artists to study and work in Europe and produce art in the European model. Department stores helped to introduce cosmopolitan consumption to the greater population of America by selling foreign, and especially European, goods, and also by importing and displaying European art. Yet this was not just a quest for new and interesting objects to sell but also, as shown in Chapter Three, an attempt to propagate a culture of consumption in general. As institutions defined by their ability to circulate and distribute goods into a wide variety of homes, often touching the most personal and meaningful areas of their customers' lives, department stores were ideally situated to spread new cultural mores and identities, with the employment of European art to do so being a critical yet underexplored aspect of this history. Moreover, in addition to displaying European art en masse for their in-built audiences, Philadelphia retailer John Wanamaker, his son Rodman and many other American department stores also promoted American art made in the European model. Thus, American department stores, and especially Wanamaker's, helped to expose and educate Americans in European art and culture while also supporting contemporary American artists – yet at a distinct cost. The same consumerism that the department store helped to propagate with European art and Cosmopolitan American art also served to undermine traditional aspects of society and the art world alike. Specifically, this meant the emphasis on production as well as the link between style and national schools. Using foreign influences and culture as the basis of art, and the emphasis this created on style in general, weakened the ability of artists to organise themselves around schools and nationality. The unmooring of art from this traditional base,

which was perpetuated by commercial cosmopolitanism and, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, mass commerce, was undoubtedly a crucial step in the development of the globalised art market of the twentieth century. The circulation not only of goods but also fine art through the department store was thus constructive not just of society but also of the art world as it is known today.

This thesis has thus, through the medium of the department store, considered the conflicting, polarised and yet often mutually constructive relationship between art and mass commerce in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Bringing the timeframe further into the twentieth century, and especially given the large amount of primary material that exists for this period, would serve to elaborate on this history in an important and illuminating manner. This would undoubtedly be a useful and productive means of expanding not just this thesis but also the purview of the history of art in general. Yet, doing so would, as elaborated in this conclusion, mean branching into what is arguably a different relationship and narrative. By the 1920s, the relationship between art and the department store had materially changed, with the department store becoming more elite in what concerned art and the art world reaching full commercialisation. As this merging was a product of the relationship between art and mass commerce that preceded it, it is not only informative but also crucial to detail that history in order to understand what is arguably the better-known and more celebrated period that followed. It is researching and analysing the department store's system of mass commerce as it first developed, and the way that this related to the sale, display and circulation of art, that is thus the important first step.

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COMMERCIALISING CULTURE: THE SALE, DISPLAY AND CIRCULATION OF ART IN FRENCH, BRITISH AND AMERICAN DEPARTMENT STORES (1875-1914)

by

SARA ELIZABETH THOM

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(volume two)

Department of Art History, Curating and Visual Studies
School of Languages, Cultures, Art History and Music
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
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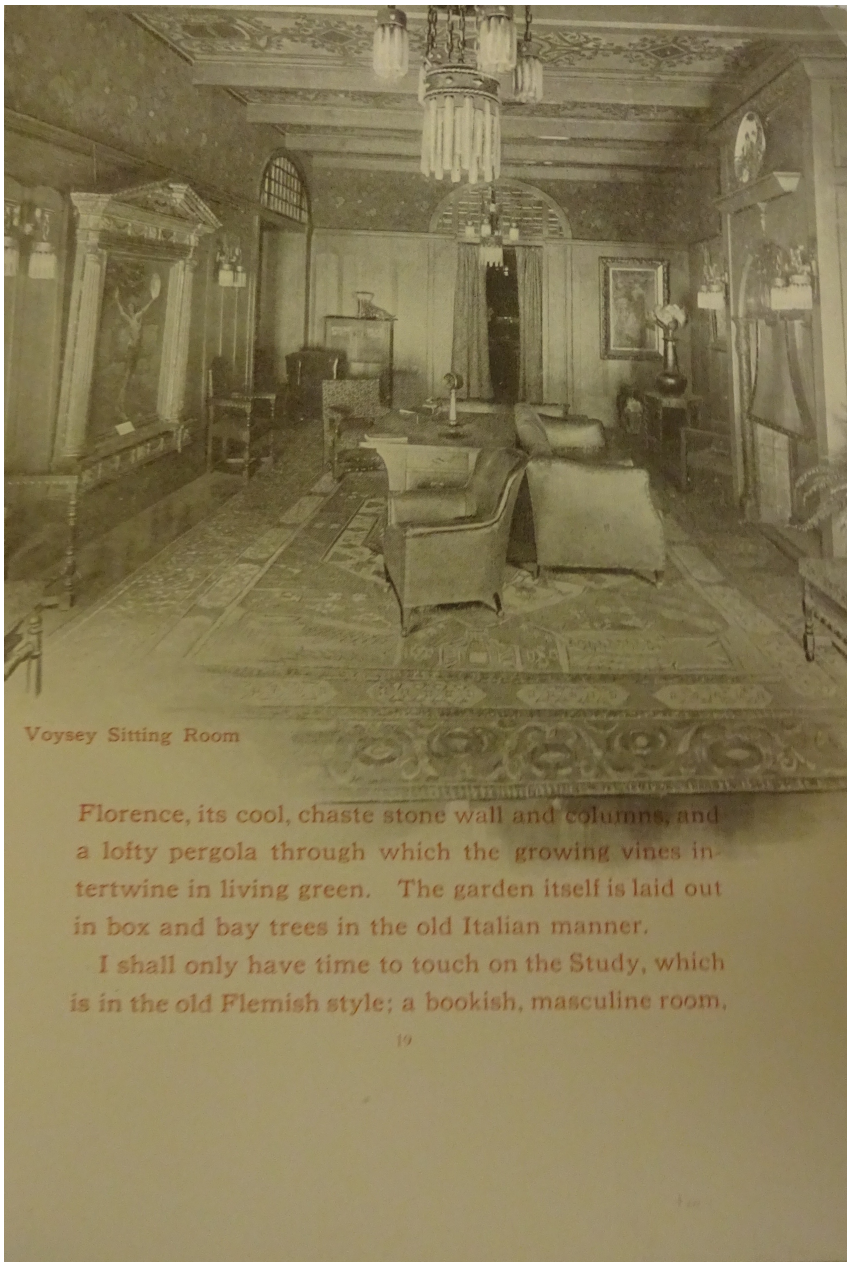


Figure 1: Voysey Sitting Room in the House Palatial. Wanamaker's New York, *Betty Comes to Town: A Letter Home*, 1909, p. 8. Hagley Museum and Library, call number HF5465.U64 W36 1909.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 2: Typographie de J. Best (Paris), *Aux Villes de France. Paris. Soieries et Nouveautés*..., 1861. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département Littérature et art, V-4330.



Figure 3: 'La galerie d'Orléans', *L'Illustration*, 7 February 1846.



Figure 3: 'La galerie d'Orléans', *L'Illustration*, 7 February 1846.



Figure 3: 'La galerie d'Orléans', *L'Illustration*, 7 February 1846.



Figure 4: G. Smith and T. Sutherland, *Western Exchange, Old Bond Street*, 1817. Museum of London, Item number 001806.

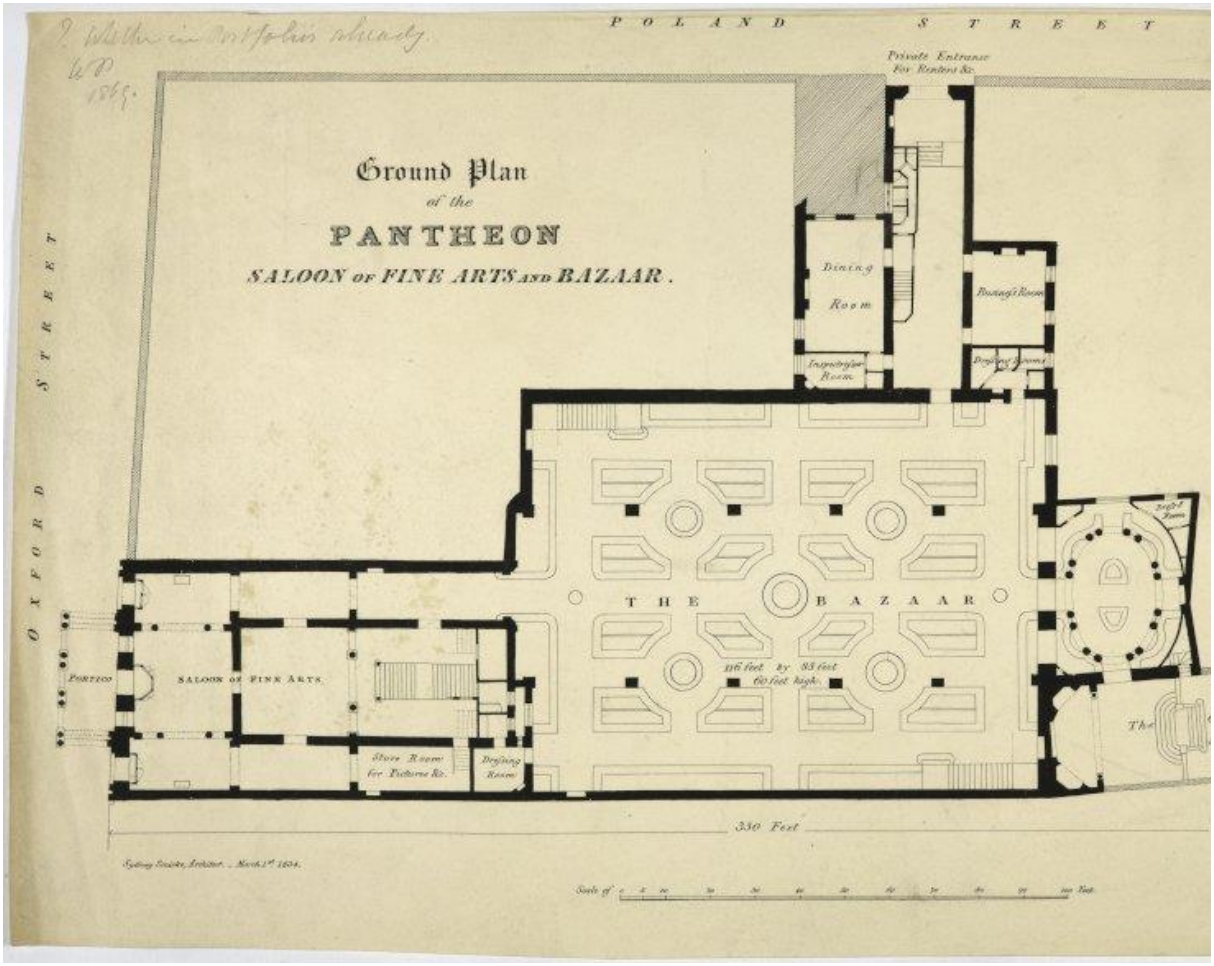


Figure 5: Sydney Smirke, 'Ground Plan of the Pantheon Saloon of Fine Arts and Bazaar', 1834 [detail from original]. RIBA Collections, Ribapix Reference Number RIBA68933.



Figure 6: 'Crystal Palace London Regent Street', c. 1851. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C, Library of Congress Control Number 2003677916.



Figure 7: Paintings displayed on the walls of the ground floor and first floor landing of the Crystal Palace Bazaar [detail of Figure 6].



Figure 8: Au Bon Marché at the intersection of Rue Velpeau and Rue de Sèvres. *Le Monde Illustré*, 23 March 1872.



Figure 9: Grand Hall of Au Bon Marché. *Le Monde Illustré*, 30 March 1872.



Figure. 10: Frontage of Au Bon Marché on the Rue Velpeau [detail from original]. Musée de Carnavalet, Cabinet des arts graphiques, Topo PC 117 D.

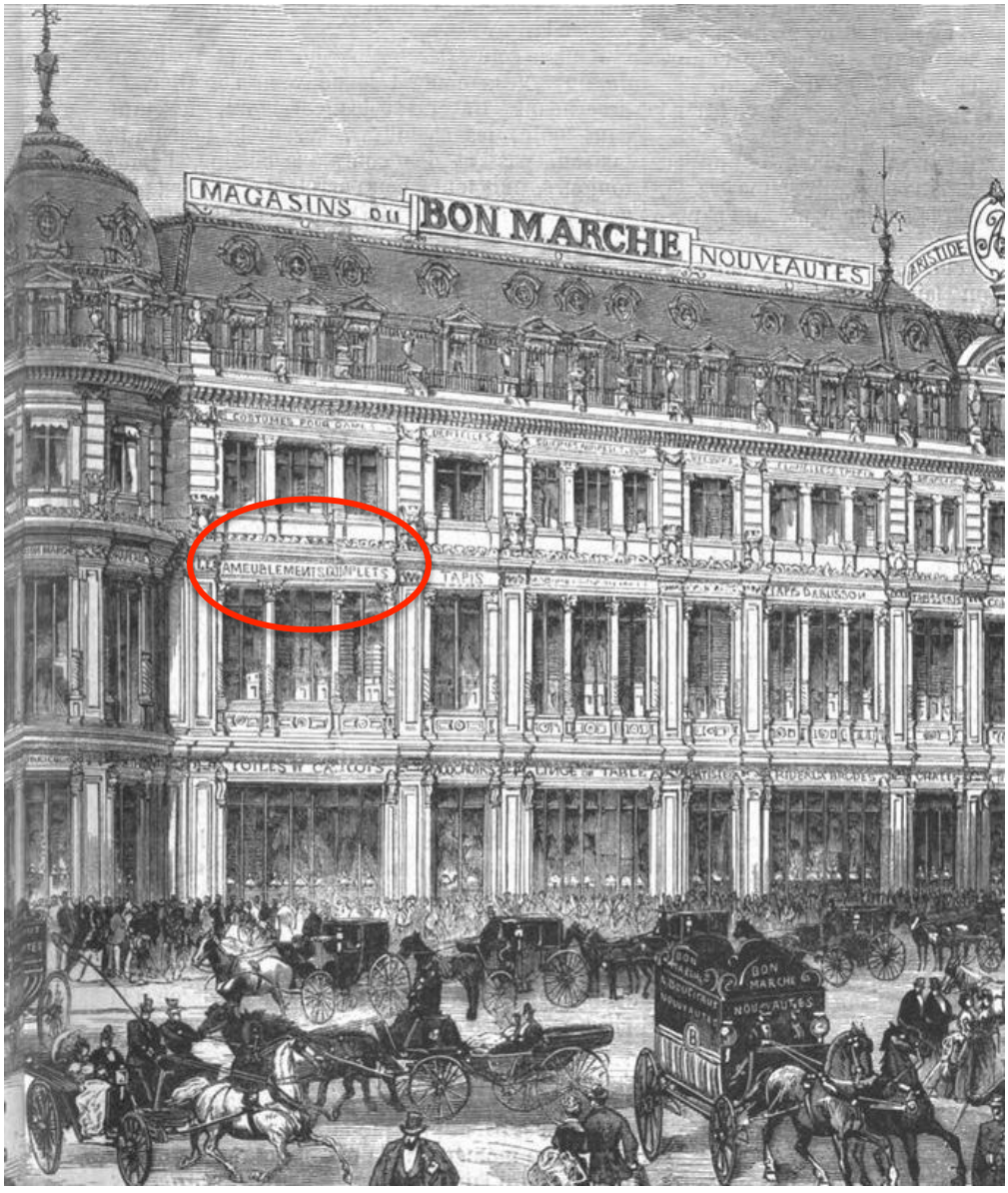


Figure 11: Frontage of Au Bon Marché on the Rue Velpeau. Text on the façade reads ‘Ameublements Complets’ [detail of Figure 10].



Figure 12: Camille Debans, *Les Petits Tableaux de Paris*, p. 25. Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), LK7-18041.



Figure 13: Au Bon Marché's *Galerie de tableaux*. *L'Illustration*, 6 March 1875.

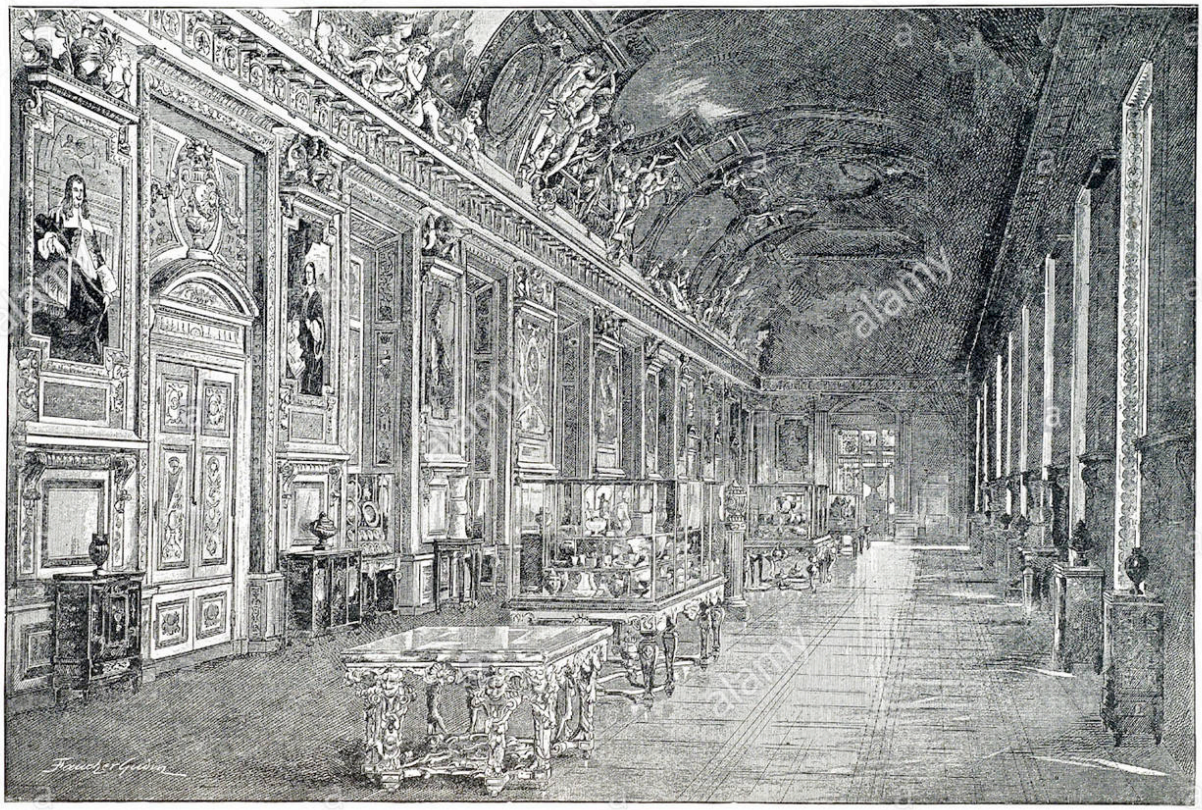


Figure 14: Henry Sutherland Edwards, *Old and New Paris: Its history, its people and its places*, Cassell: London, England, 1893-94.



Figure 15: Au Bon Marché, *Album de l'ameublement*, 1881, p. 19. Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), FOL-WZ-211.

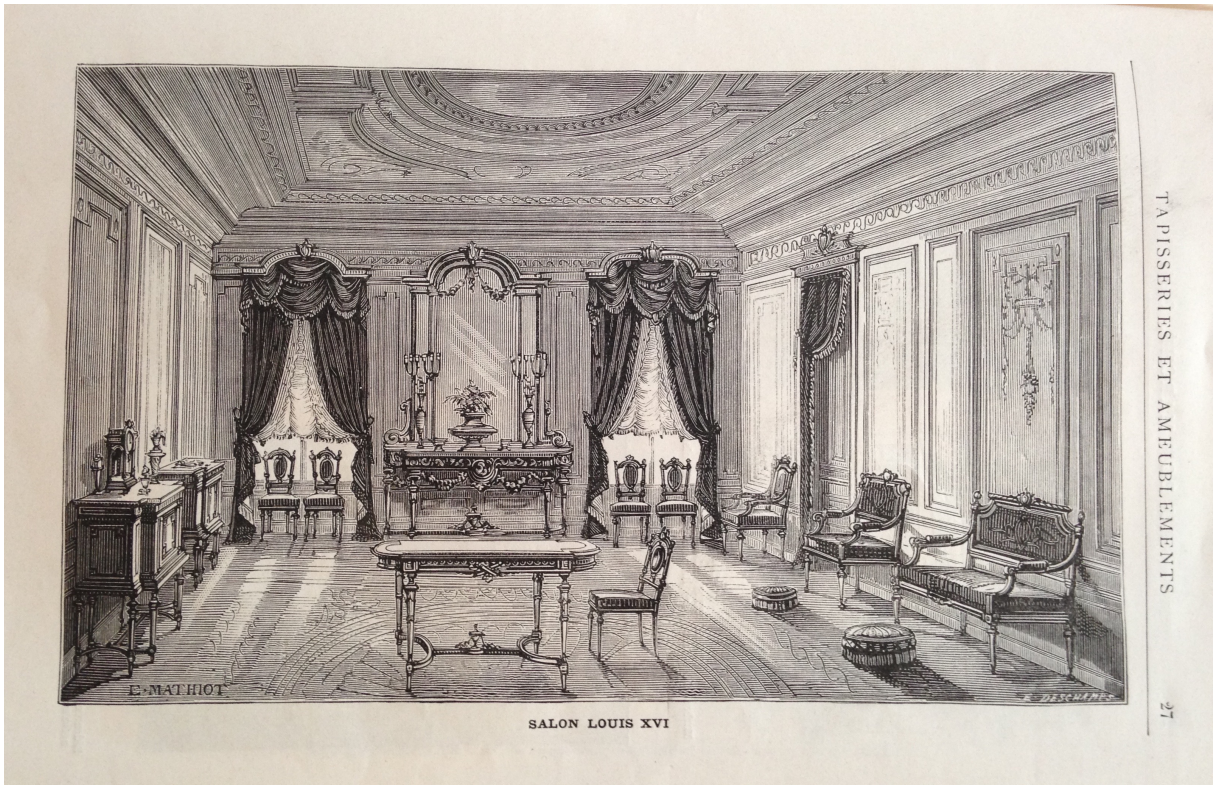


Figure 16: Au Bon Marché, *Album de l'ameublement*, 1881, p. 27. Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), FOL-WZ-211.

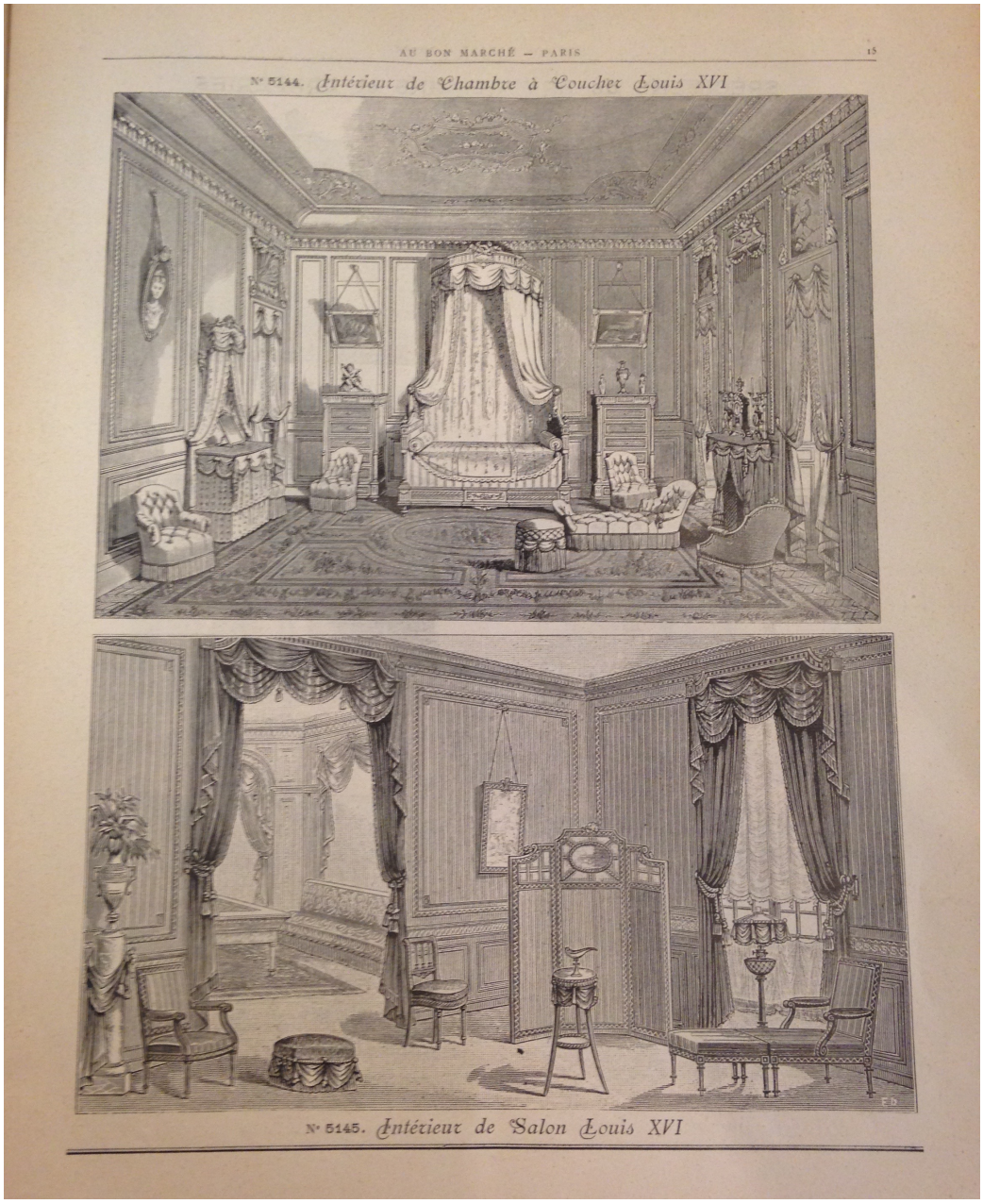


Figure 17: Au Bon Marché, *Album de l'ameublement*, 1899, p. 15. Bibliothèque Forney, CC182, Boîte 2.



Figure 18: Au Bon Marché, *La Mode et l'Ameublement au Bon Marché*, 1920. Bibliothèque Forney, CC182, Boîte 7.



Figure 19: Au Bon Marché, *Album de l'ameublement*, 1881. Bibliothèque nationale de France (Tolbiac), FOL-WZ-211.



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Figure 20: A La Place Clichy advertisement offering a souvenir colour print for each purchase. *Le Petit Journal*, 9 April 1883, p. 4.



Figure 21: E. Charle Lucas, *A La Place Clichy: Tapis-Ameublements*, c. 1895.



Figure 22: 'La Salon de Lecture des Grands Magasins du Louvre', *Le Monde Illustré*, 4 October 1879.



Figure 23: Grands Magasins du Louvre, 'Hall des Cristaux et Porcelaines', c. 1900.



Figure 24: Grands Magasins du Louvre, 'Galerie des Marbres', c. 1900s.



Figure 25: Grands Magasins du Louvre, 'Galerie des Ameublements', c. 1900s.

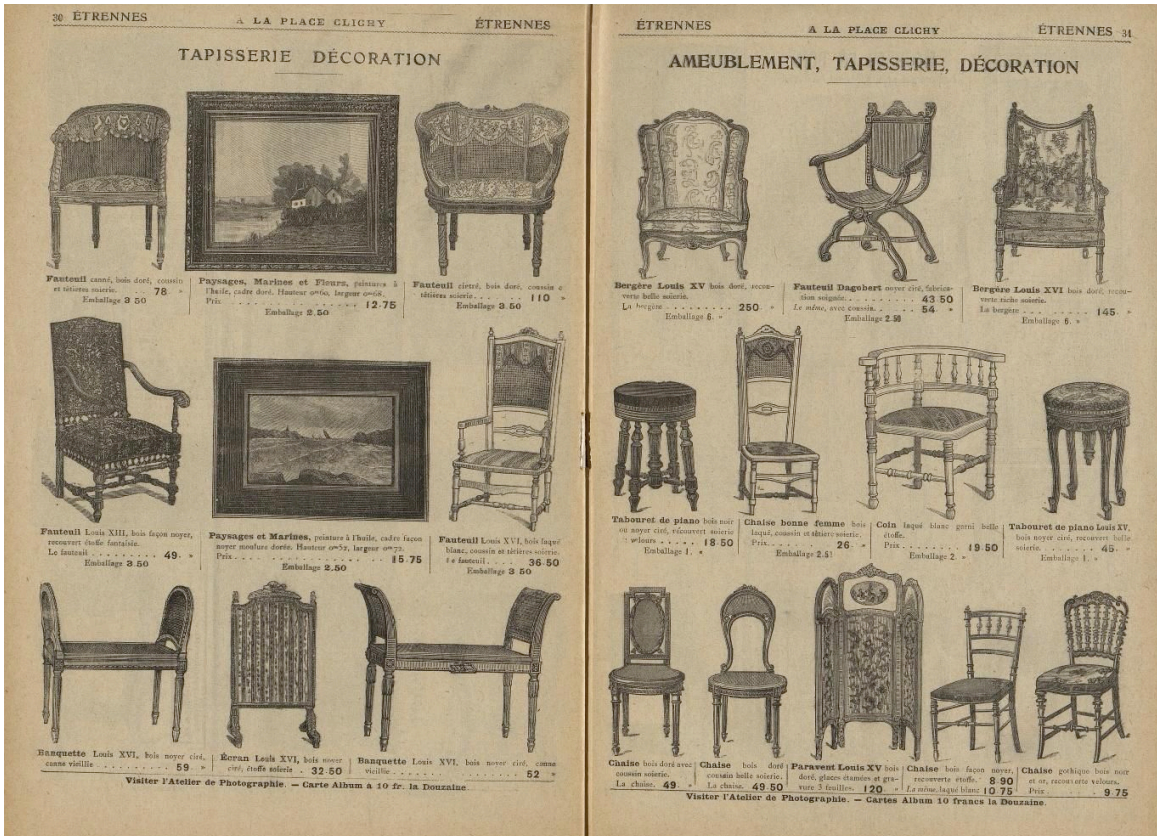


Figure 26: Grands Magasins de la Place Clichy, *Jouets-Étrennes*, 1907-8, p. 30. Bibliothèque Forney, Cote: CC 284"1907"déc A.



Figure 27: Aux Galeries Lafayette, *Étrennes et Jouets*, 1909-10, p. 17. Bibliothèque Forney, Cote: CC 267"1909"déc.



Figure 28: Grands Magasins de la Samaritaine, *Étrennes et Jouets*, 1908-9, p. 26. Bibliothèque Forney, Cote: CC 275"1908"déc.

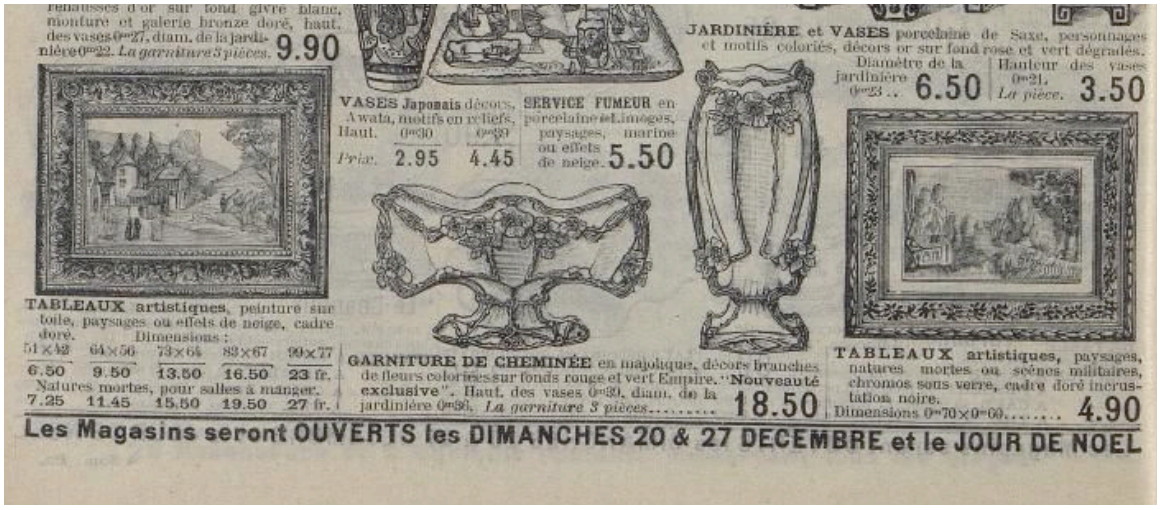


Figure 29: Grands Magasins de la Samaritaine, *Étrennes et Jouets*, 1908-9, p. 26 [in detail]. Bibliothèque Forney, Cote: CC 275"1908"déc.



FINE ART, CHINA, AND SILVER ROOM.

Figure 30: Macy's, *R. H. Macy & Co.: Importers, Manufacturers & Retailers*, 1890. Macy's Company Archive, New York, NY.



Figure 31: Gustave-François Barraud, *The Auction Room in the Galerie Georges Petit in Paris*, 1911, watercolor and gouache on ivory, 6 by 8 in. Location unknown.



Figure 32: Marshall Field advertisement. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 March 1909, p. 6.



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Photogravures,

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Figure 33: Marshall Field advertisement. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 January 1911, p. 6.



Figure 34: Au Bon Marché, *Grande mise en vente de blanc*, January 1901. Bibliothèque Forney, CC182, Boîte 3: de 1901 à 1905.



Figure 35: Au Bon Marché, 'Galerie des Rubans', *Agenda buvard*, 1886. Le Bon Marché Company Archive, Paris.



Figure 36: Postcard depicting Au Bon Marché's Reading Room and Art Gallery, c. 1910s. Bibliothèque Forney, collection Jacques Courant. Volume 19. 4eme partie: Commerces: magasins divers [cartes postales]; call number: ICO CP Courant 19 4.



Figure 37: Maxfield Parrish, *No. 40. Wanamaker's Goods & Prices, Spring & Summer 1896*, Boston Public Library, Print Department Collection, Accession number 2012.AAP.176.



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Transporting gold from Siberia, by C. Stiloff, size 12x22, $65.00.

Ideal head, by J. Petrecolli, size 14x22, $50.00
In the studio, by A. Felser, 22x28, $125.00
Dogs, by E. Petit, 20x24, $50.00
Pasture, by R. A. Fox, 20x26, $75.00
Cats, by Bernard Neuville, 14x17, $37.50
Cattle and Sheep, by C. Share, $25.00
Moonlight, by C. J. Dorien, size 10x14, $20.00
Homeward bound "Sheep", R. Neil., $137.50

Musketeers, by Petri, 10x18, $35.00
Chickens, by A. Perh, 22x28, $50.00
Cattle, by Emil Furst, 22x28, $75.00
Interior—Introduction, L. Doriel, 12x18, $35
Mountain scene, by J. Hughes, 20x28, $45.00
Three ideal heads, by Bumfield, 8x15, $37.50
Fine Boy, by K. Wilkowski, 22x28, $250.00
Woodland, by E. Enerick, size 20x24, $75.00

Old Wine and Young Love, size 24x36, at $1.25

All the above paintings are beautifully framed in shadow boxes.
The last three groups of paintings framed and inclosed in mahogany finish shadow boxes.

20 paintings framed, size 12x18, to close, $12.50
25 paintings framed, size 9x12, to close, $7.50
30 paintings, framed, size 8x10, to close, $5.00, including frames and mahogany shadow boxes.

Figure 38: Carson Pirie Scott & Co. advertisement. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 December 1905, p. 16.



Figure 39: Colin Campbell Cooper, *The Cliffs of Manhattan,* 1903, oil on canvas, 36 by 48 in. Collection of the City of Santa Barbara.

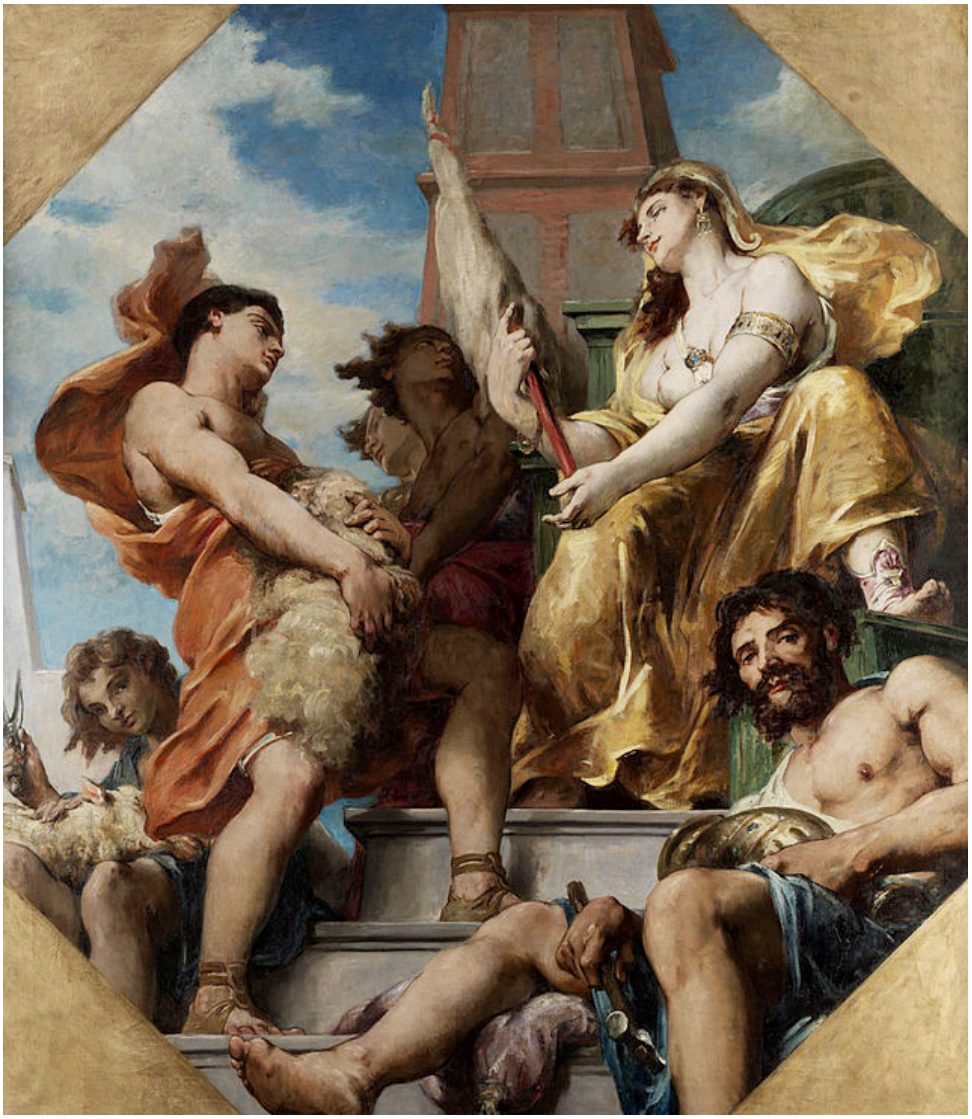


Figure 40: Henri-Léopold Lévy, *Allegory of Production,* c. 1875. Hampel Fine Art Auctions, *16th-18th Century Paintings*, 19 June 2012, Lot 218.



Figure 41: Henri-Léopold Lévy, *Allegory of Trade,* c. 1875. Hampel Fine Art Auctions, *16th-18th Century Paintings*, 19 June 2012, Lot 218.



Figure 42: The Buffet of Au Bon Marché. Bibliothèque national de France, Estampes et Photographie, Va 270 j folio.



Figure 43: Au Bon Marché's Salon de Lecture. Bibliothèque national de France, Estampes et Photographie, Va270 j Folio.



Figure 44: 'Salon de Lecture – Galerie d'Expostion de Peinture et Sculpture'. Le Bon Marché Company Archive, Paris.



Figure 45: Strawbridge & Clothier postcard, c. 1900. Hagley Museum and Library, Strawbridge & Clothier records, call number 1995.25 0, Box 3.



Figure 46: Strawbridge & Clothier postcard, c. 1900. Hagley Museum and Library, Strawbridge & Clothier records, call number 1995.25 0, Box 3.



Figure 47: Harrods, 'Pianoforte Showroom and Picture Gallery', *Catalogue*, 1902. Harrods Company Archive, London.

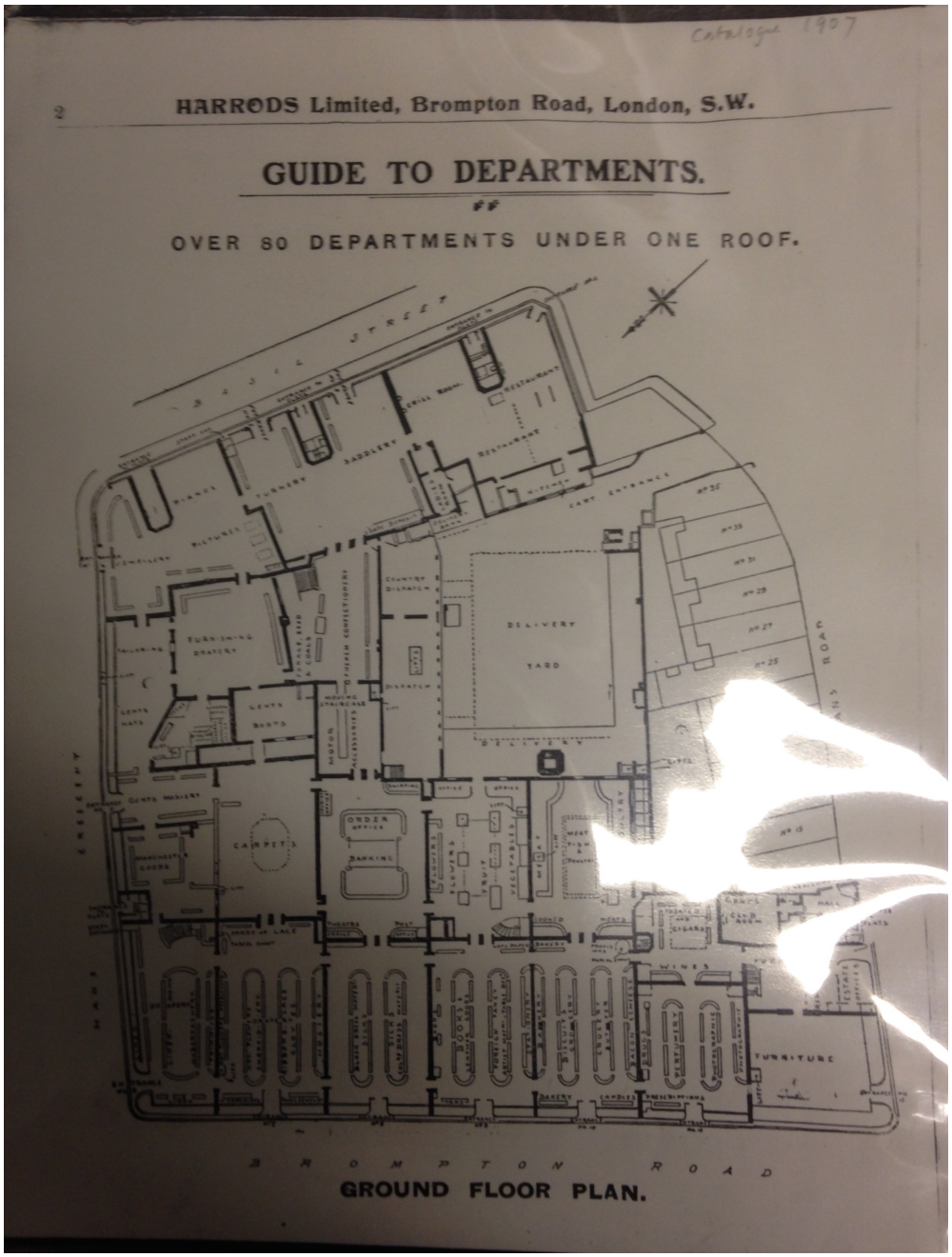


Figure 48: Harrods, 'Ground Floor Plan', *Catalogue*, 1907. Harrods Company Archive, London.



Figure 49: 'John Wanamaker 13th and Market location pre-1904 demolition and renovation exterior photographs, 1886-1902'. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188).



Figure 50: 'John Wanamaker 13th and Market location pre-1904 demolition and renovation exterior photographs, 1886-1902'. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188).



Figure 51: Wanamaker's Transept, c. 1900, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188).



Figure 52: The Prince's Room at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, decorated by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08478.



Figure 53: The Prince of Wales' Salon, decorated by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08488**.**



Figure 54: 'A display at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, showing the interior of a high class dining room'. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08496.



Figure 55: ‘A workman’s dwelling house’ design by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08494.



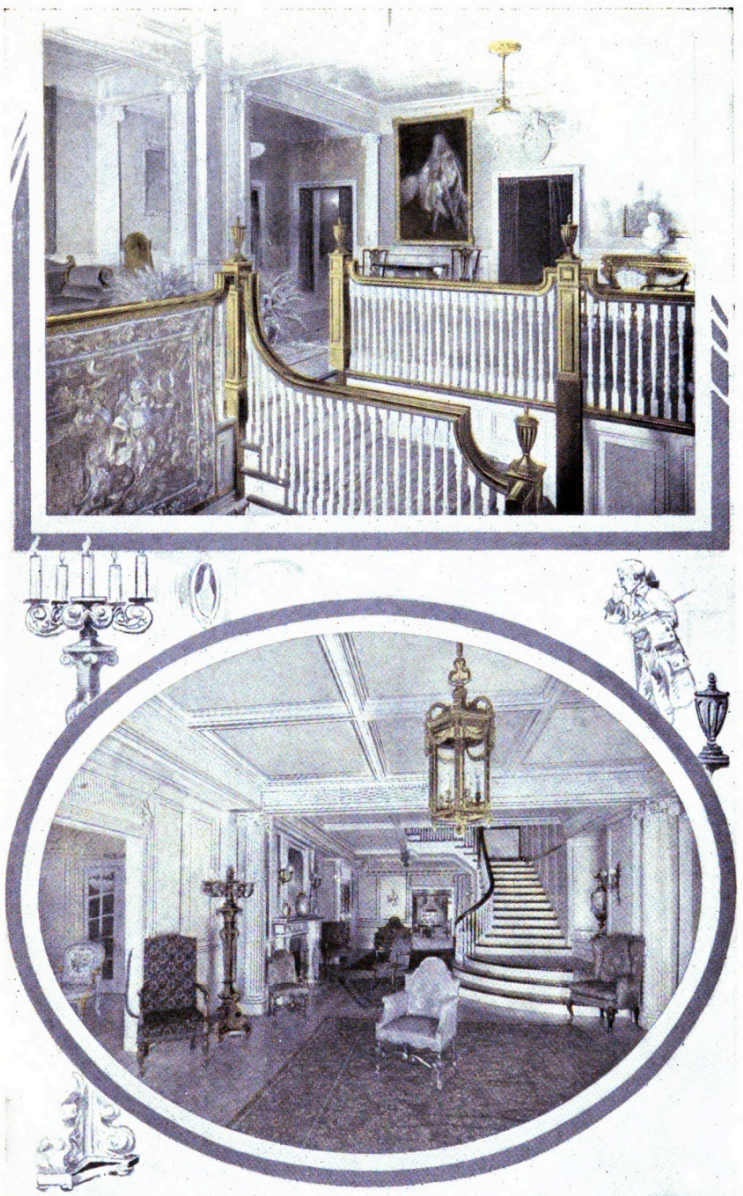
The "Bridge of Progress" connecting the Stewart Building with the New Wanamaker Building, New York. Grand Stairway in the Rotunda of the Stewart Building.

Figure 56: 'Bridge of Progress' in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, 1911, p. 303.



Louis XV. Drawing Room. House Palatial, New Wanamaker Building, New York.

Figure 57: House Palatial in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, 1911, p. 298.



Colonial Stairway, first and second floor, House Palatial, New Wanamaker Building, New York.

Figure 58: House Palatial in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, p. 299.



Figure 59: House Palatial in Wanamaker's New York. Wanamaker's New York and Elbert Hubbard, *The Wanamaker House of Artistic Suggestion*, Wanamaker's: New York, NY, 1907.

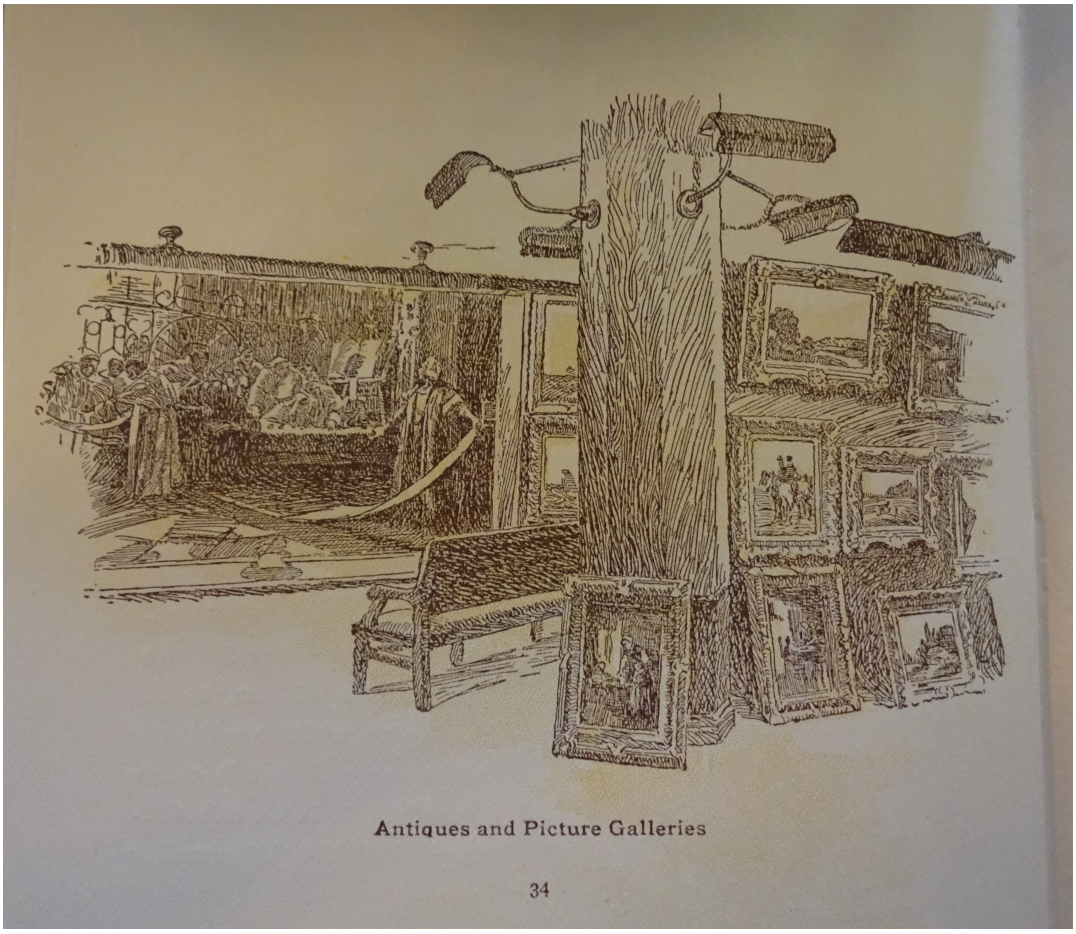


Figure 60: Eighth-floor Picture Gallery in Wanamaker's New York Store. Wanamaker's New York, *The Guide Book and Information Concerning the Wanamaker Mail Order Service*, Wanamaker's New York: New York, NY, 1909, p. 33.



Figure 61: Wanamaker's Philadelphia, 'Evening party viewing new art acquisitions', 1912. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188), Box 122.



Figure 62: Postcard depicting the Grand Hall des Soieries in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909. Although the image originates from a postcard, it is the same used in the 1909 store publication. This also pertains to Figures 63 and 64.



Figure 63: Colourised postcard depicting the Galerie des Modes in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909.



Figure 64: Postcard depicting the Galerie des Confection pour Dames/Galerie des Manteaux in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909.



Figure 65: Postcard depicting the Hall de la Mode/Galerie des Modes in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1920. Copyright Collection-jfm.fr.



Figure 66: Thomas Allom, 'Interior view of the Great Gallery at the Louvre with tourists and painters', published by Fisher, Son & Co., London and Paris, c. 1844. An example of this print (with different figures) can be found in the collection of the British Museum, Museum Number: 1892,0714.495.



Figure 67: Wanamaker's Philadelphia, 'John Wanamaker's department store women's hats display interior photograph', c. 1903. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188), Box 120, Folder 15.



Portrait of Marie Leczinska, the Wife of Louis XV,
from painting by Van Loo.

Eighteenth Century

FASHIONS move in cycles. More than a century after the Elizabethan age of "wire and whalebone," in England, comes another wire and whalebone age, in France. The reign of Louis XV, from 1715 to 1774, saw the triumph of huge paniers. Pamphlets, orations, sermons were directed against "the enormous abomination" of paniers. In vain! The "abomination" held its own.

The *Journal de Barbier* observes: "It will scarcely be believed that the Cardinal de Noailles has been much exercised with regard to the paniers worn by women under their skirts to make them stand out. They are so large, that when the wearer sits down, the whalebones, being pushed, fly up in an extraordinary manner, and armchairs have had to be constructed expressly for them."

Figure 68: Strawbridge & Clothier, *Epochs and Eras in Women's Dress*, 1908, p. 20. Hagley Museum & Library, Strawbridge & Clothier collection (Accession Number 2117), Box 75.

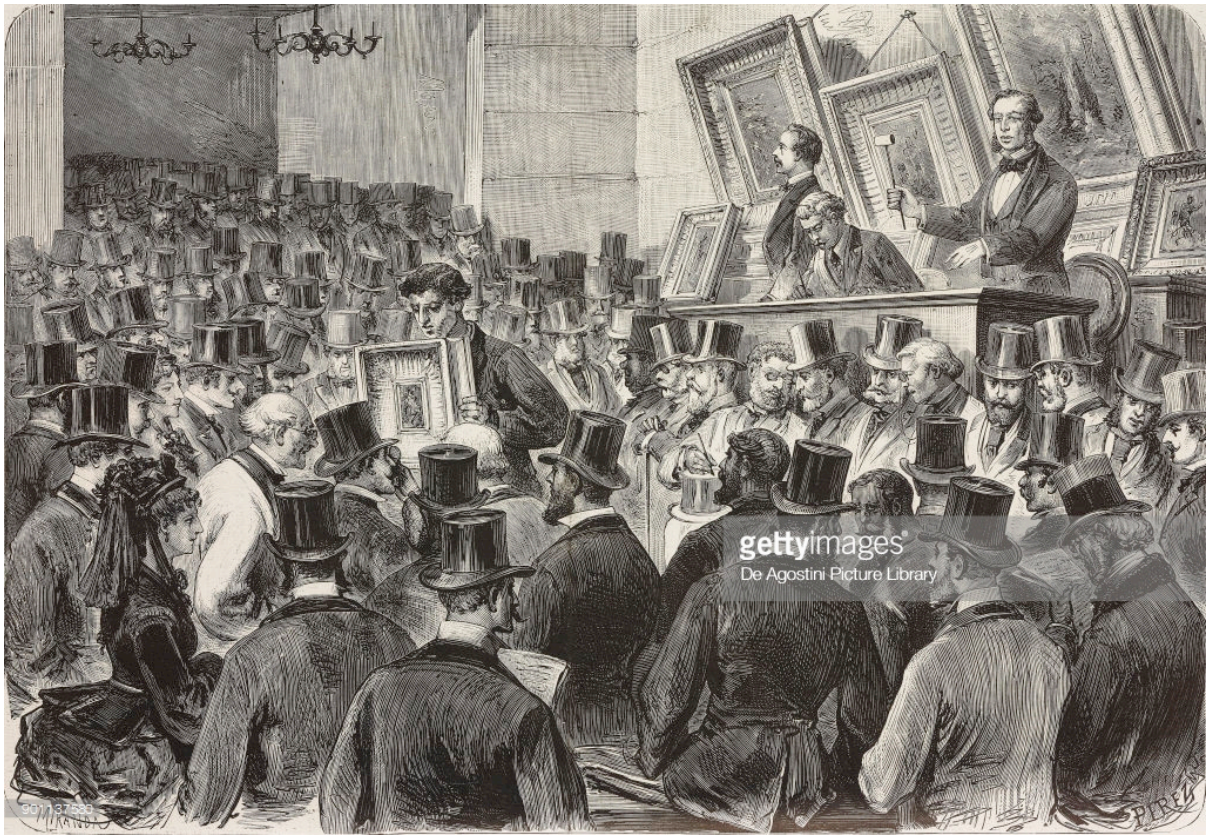


Figure 69: Sale of paintings at Hôtel Drouot. *L'Illustration*, vol. LXIII, no. 1619 (7 March 1874).



Figure 70: Frederic Edwin Church, *Niagara Falls, from the American Side*, 1867, oil on canvas, 101 by 89 in. National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh.

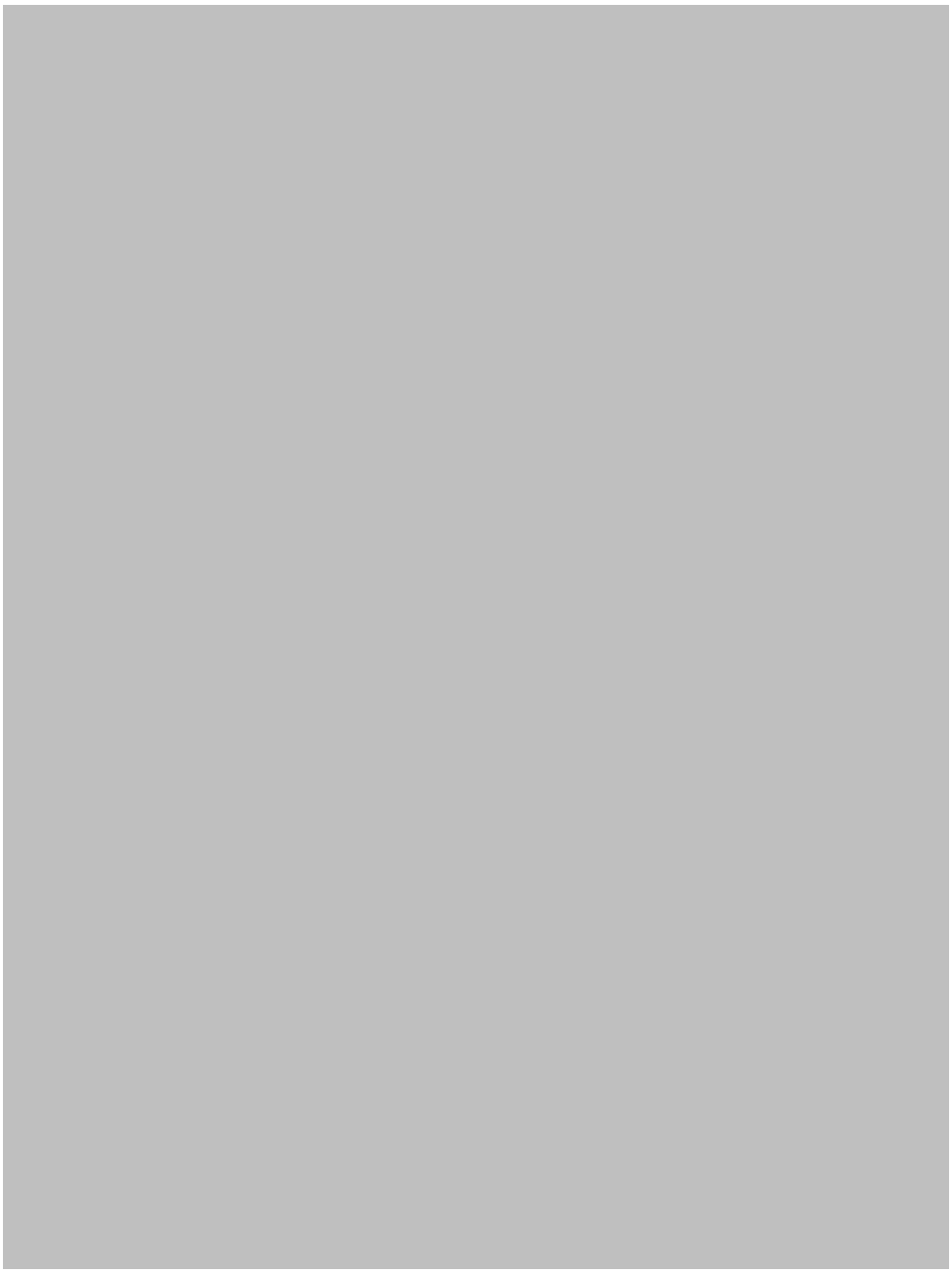


Figure 71: The Grosvenor Gallery's lending library and restaurant. *The Illustrated London News*, 26 March 1881, p. 24.



Figure 72: Christmas party at the Galerie Georges Petit. *Le Monde Illustré*, 2 January 1886, p. 13.



Figure 73: Edgar Degas, *The Millinery Shop*, 1879-86, oil on canvas, 39 by 43 in. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL.



Figure 74: Edgar Degas, *At the Milliner's*, 1882, pastel on paper, 30 by 34 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.



Figure 75: Edgar Degas, *At the Milliner*, 1882-5, oil on canvas, 24 by 29 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA.



Figure 76: Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882, oil on canvas, 38 by 51 in. The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, England.

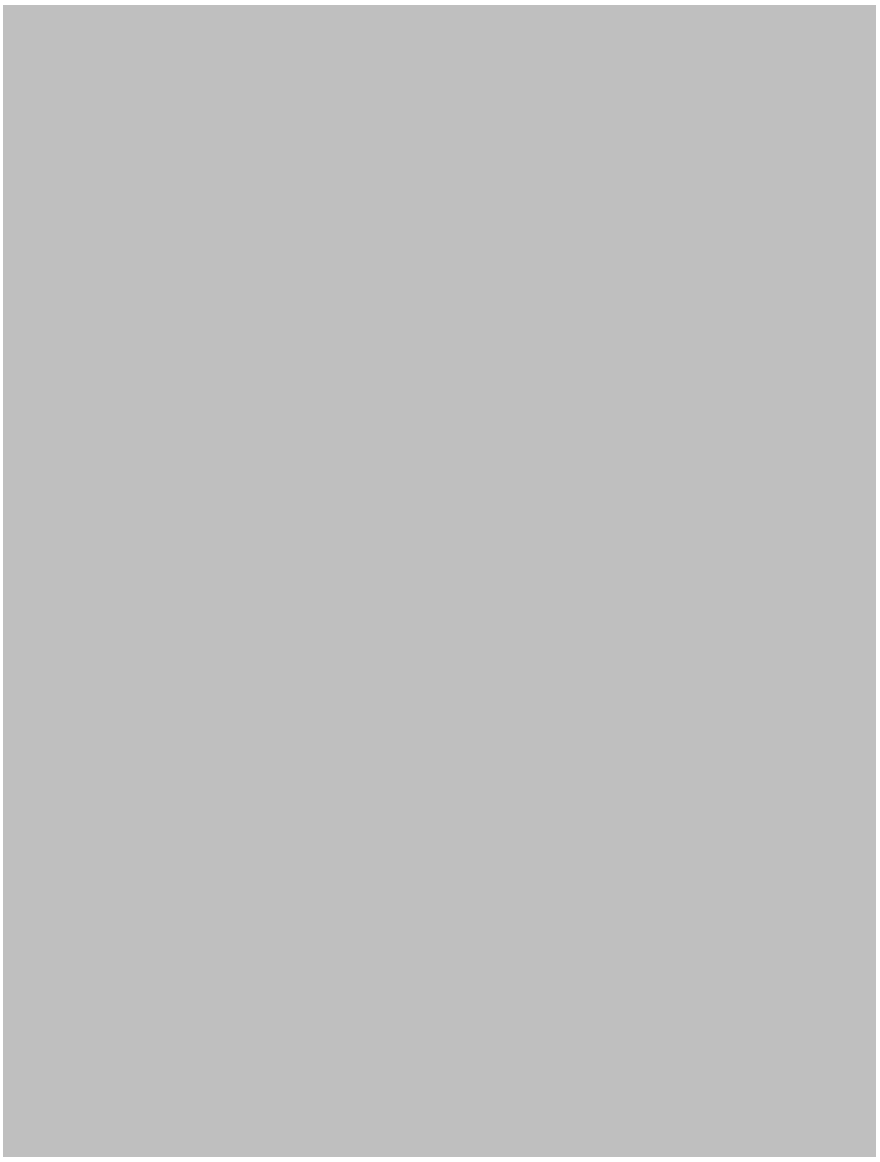


Figure 77: Harrods trade card, c. 1902. Mary Evans Picture Library.



Figure 78: Au Bon Marché advertisement. *Harper's Weekly*, vol. XLV, no. 2268 (9 June 1900), p. 539.



Figure 79: Mihály Munkácsy, *Christ before Pilate*, 1881, oil on canvas, 164 by 250 in. Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary.



Figure 80: Mihály Munkácsy, *Christ on Calvary* or *Golgotha*, 1884, oil on canvas, 181 by 280 in. Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary.

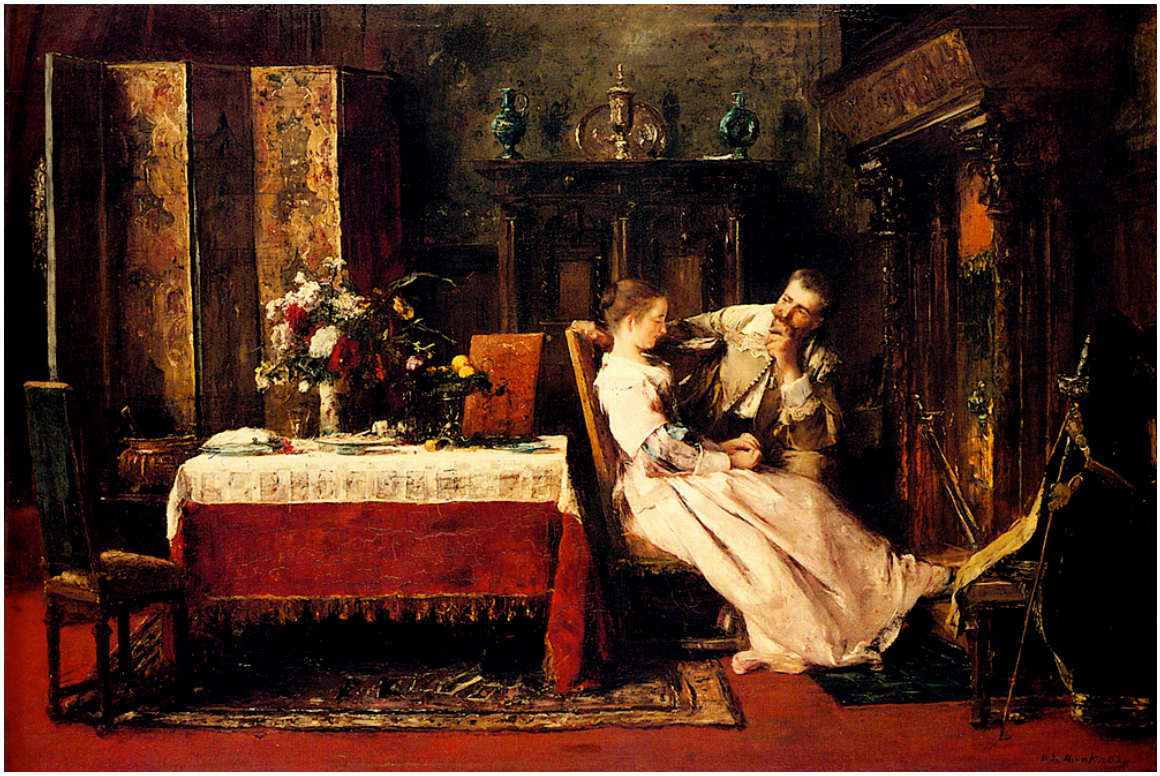
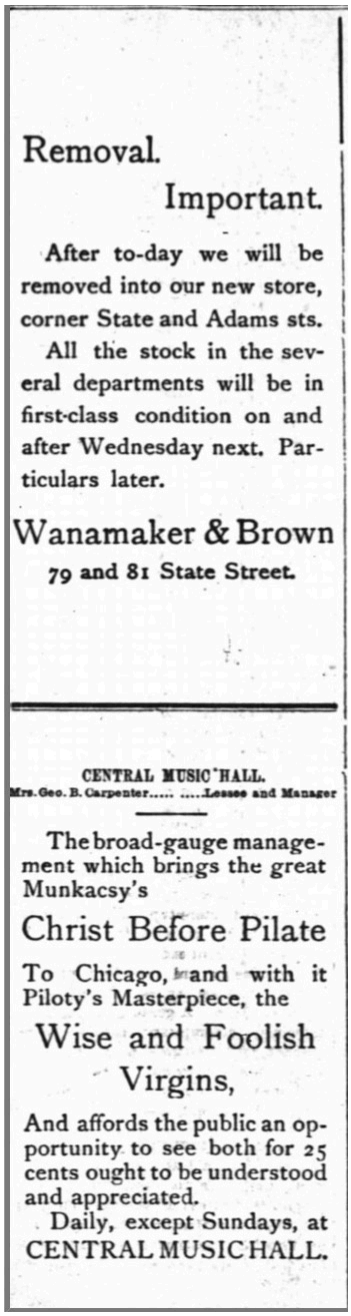


Fig. 81: Mihály Munkácsy, *After the Wedding* or *Honeymoon*, c. 1880s, oil on canvas, size unknown. Location unknown.



Figure 82: 'Mrs. A. T. Stewart's Picture-Gallery', 1883. The New York Public Library, Digital Collection, Image ID 1955657.



Removal.

Important.

After to-day we will be removed into our new store, corner State and Adams sts.

All the stock in the several departments will be in first-class condition on and after Wednesday next. Particulars later.

Wanamaker & Brown

79 and 81 State Street.

CENTRAL MUSIC HALL.

Mrs. Geo. B. Carpenter..... .....Lessee and Manager

The broad-gauge management which brings the great Munkacsy's

Christ Before Pilate

To Chicago, and with it Piloty's Masterpiece, the

Wise and Foolish Virgins,

And affords the public an opportunity to see both for 25 cents ought to be understood and appreciated.

Daily, except Sundays, at CENTRAL MUSIC HALL.

Figure 83: Wanamaker & Brown advertisement adjacent to an advertisement for the Chicago tour stop of Mihály Munkácsy's *Christ before Pilate* (1881). *The Inter Ocean*, 7 May 1888, p. 5.

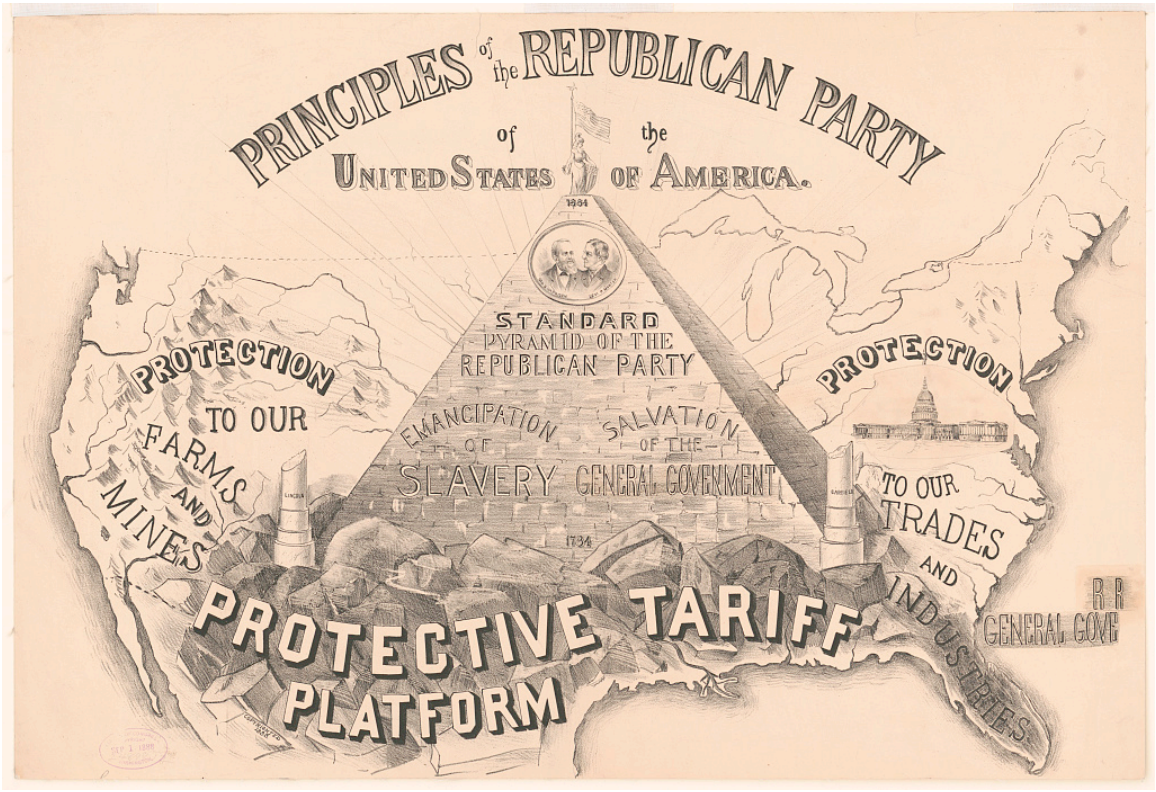


Figure 84: 'Principles of the Republican Party of the United States of America'. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-DIG-pga-07978.



Figure 85: Currier & Ives., *John Bull and his friend Cleveland*, c. 1888. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

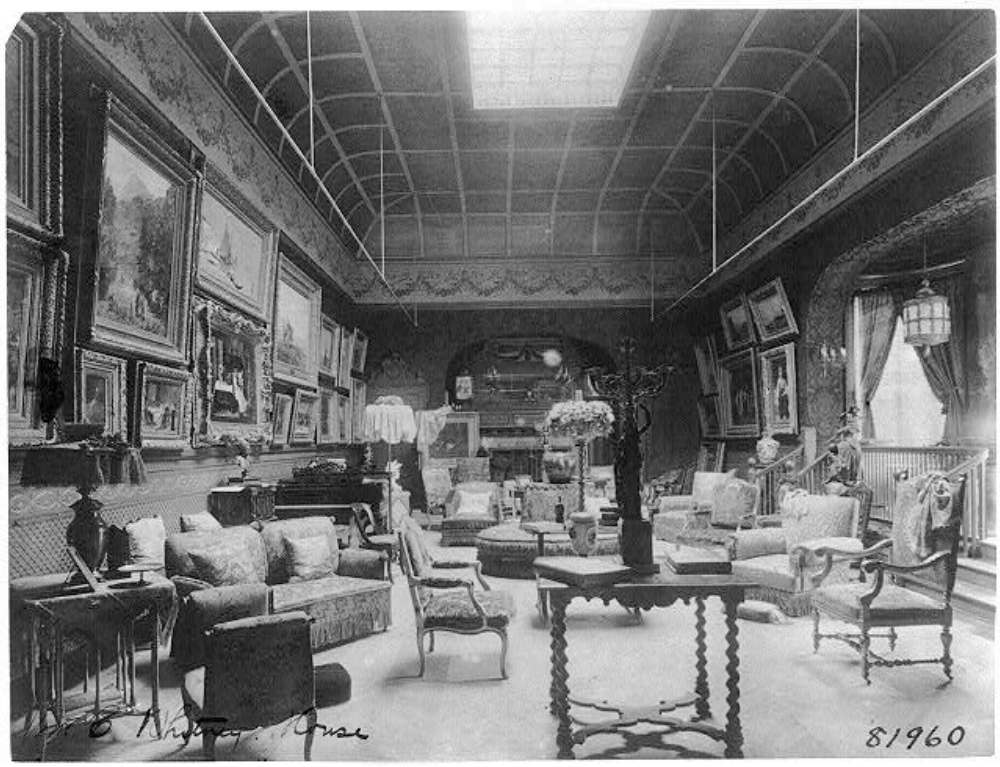
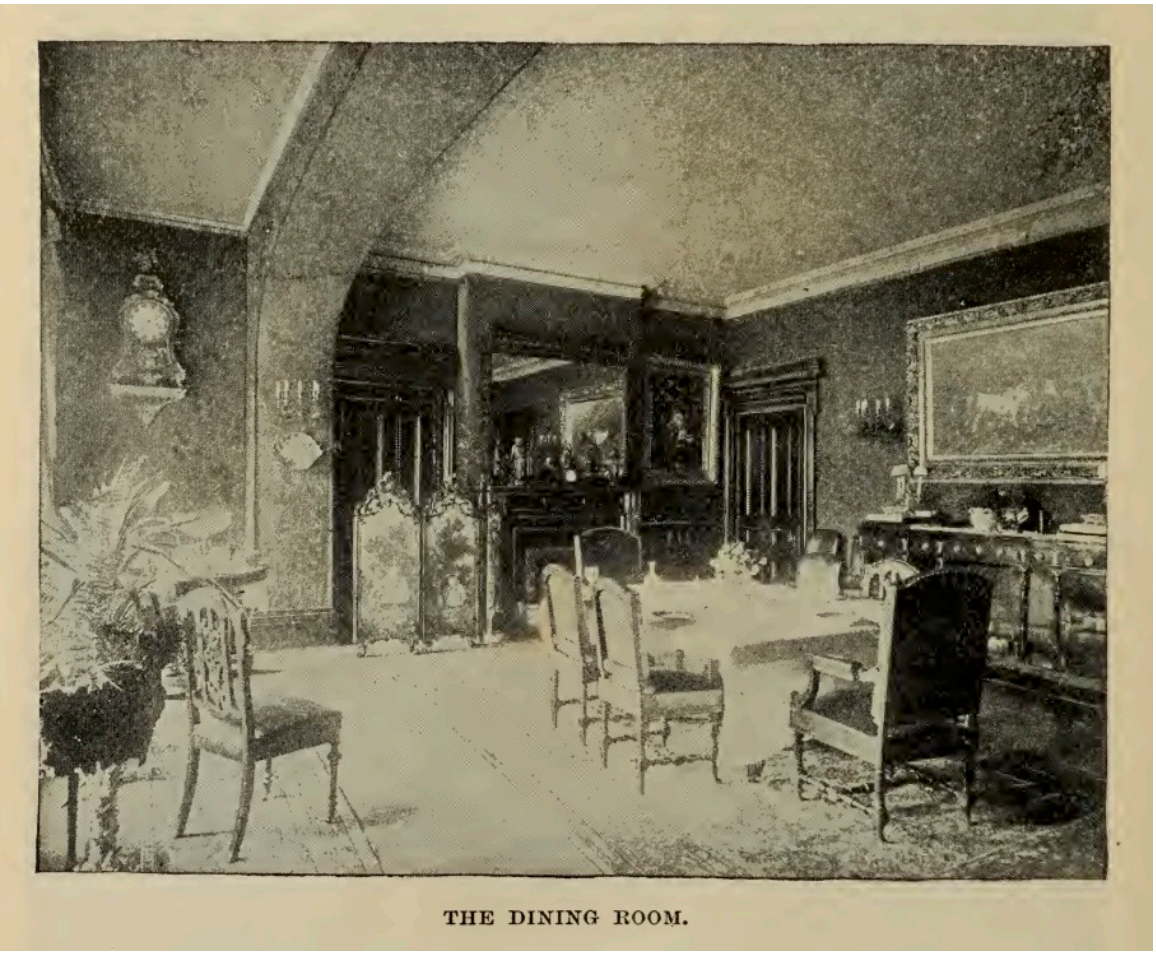
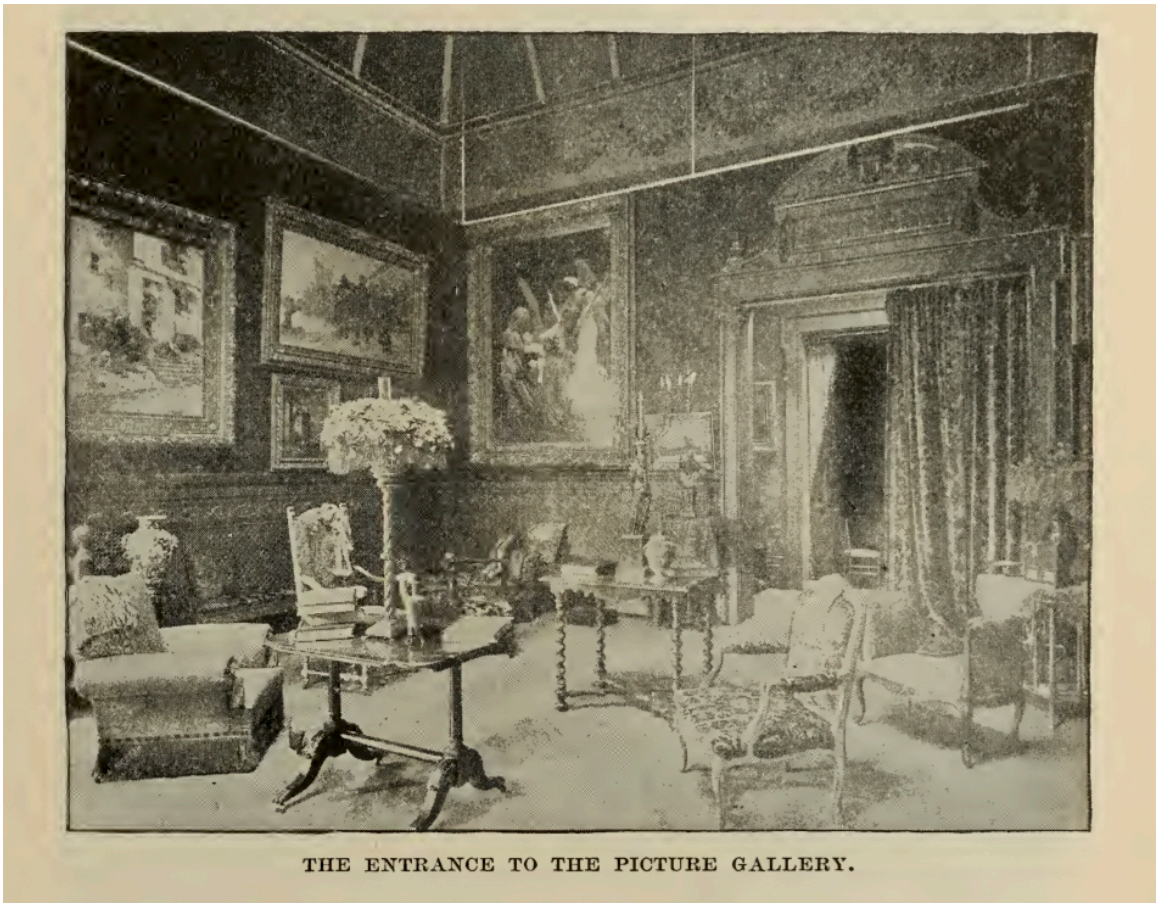


Figure 86: Frances Benjamin Johnston, 'Large parlor of the William C. Whitney house, Washington, D.C.' Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LOT 11727.



THE DINING ROOM.

Figure 87: John Wanamaker's Washington, D.C. dining room with display of Rosa Bonheur's *Return from the Horse Fair* (1873). Marshall Cushing, *The Story of Our Post Office* A. M. Thayer & Company: Boston, MA, 1892, p. 910.



THE ENTRANCE TO THE PICTURE GALLERY.

Figure 88: Picture gallery in John Wanamaker's Washington, D.C. home. Marshall Cushing, *The Story of Our Post Office* A. M. Thayer & Company: Boston, MA, 1892, p. 911.

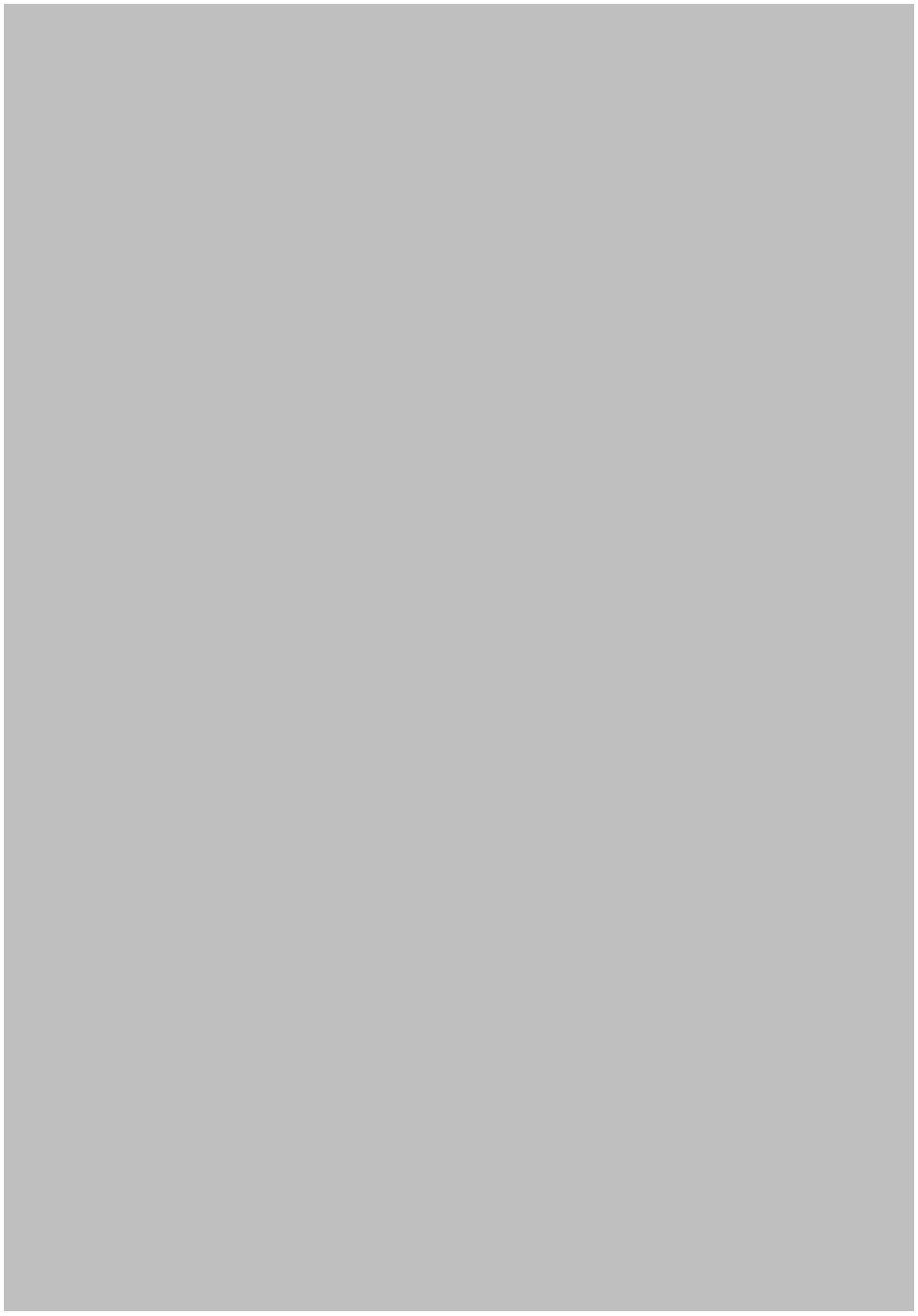
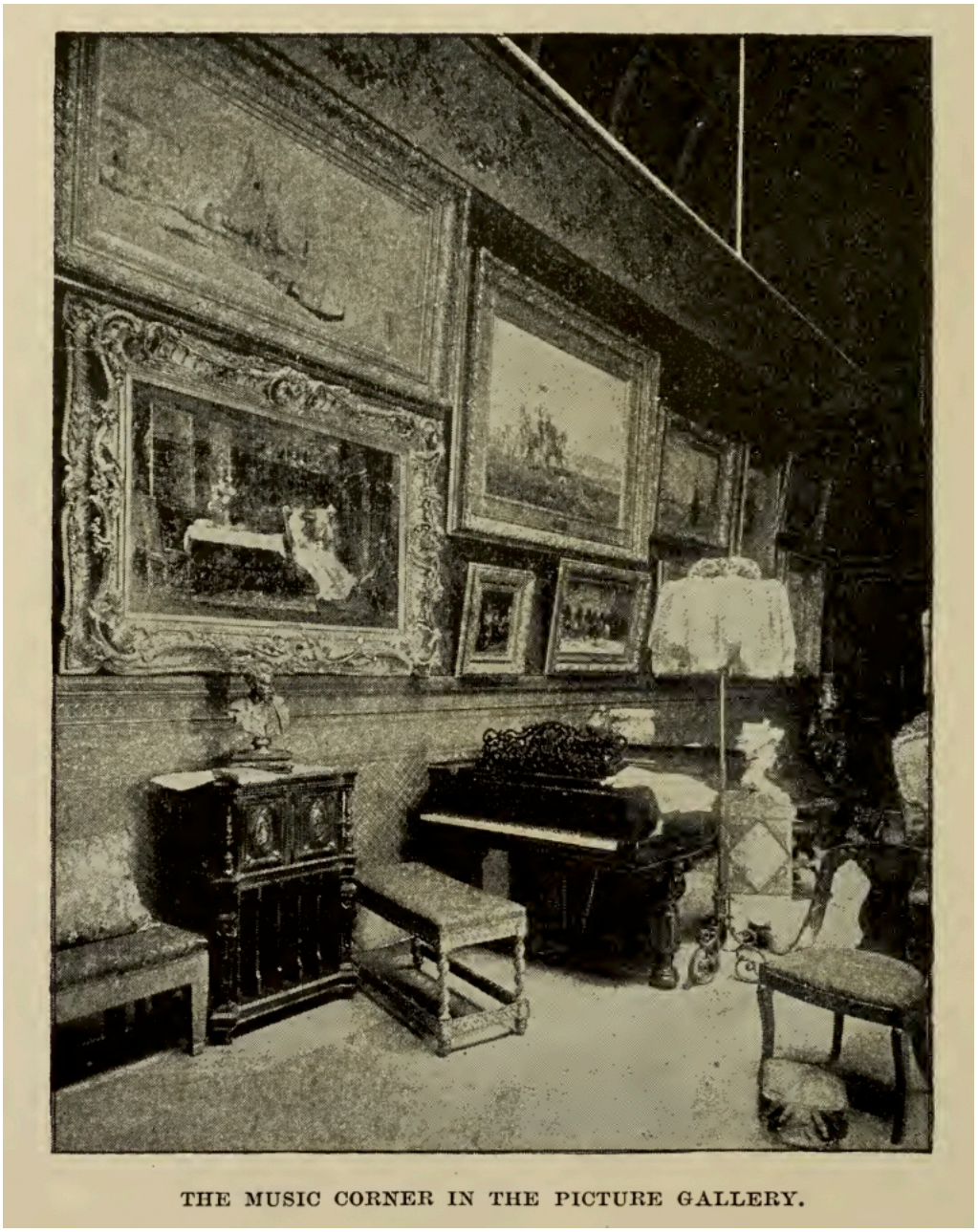


Figure 89: William-Adolphe Bouguereau, *La Vierge Aux Anges*, 1881, oil on canvas, 84 by 60 in. Forest Lawn Museum, Glendale, California.



THE MUSIC CORNER IN THE PICTURE GALLERY.

Figure 90: Music corner in John Wanamaker's Washington, D.C. picture gallery. Marshall Cushing, *The Story of Our Post Office* A. M. Thayer & Company: Boston, MA, 1892, p. 914.



Figure 91: Columbian Issue stamps commissioned by John Wanamaker as Postmaster General, 1893. Terry Gregory, 'Stamps of the Columbian Exposition', *Chicagology.com*.

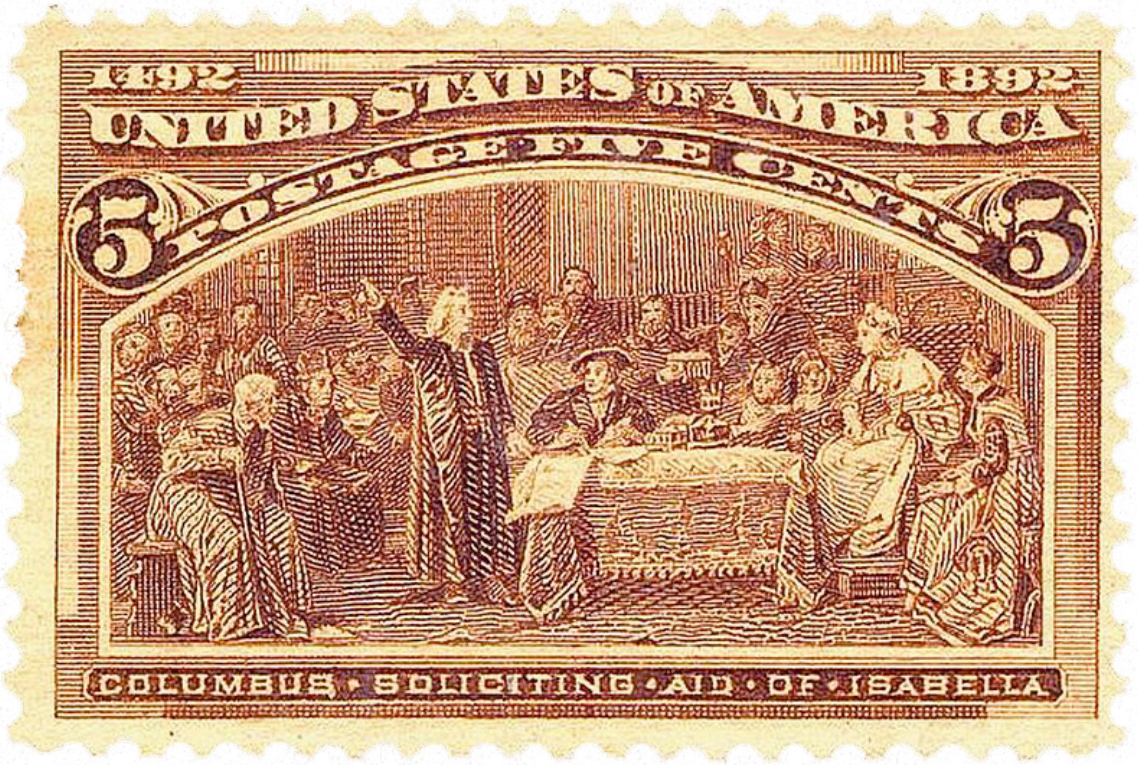


Figure 92: Columbian Issue five cent stamp engraved by Alfred Major after Václav Brožík's *Columbus at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella* (1884). Terry Gregory, 'Stamps of the Columbian Exposition', *Chicagology.com*.



Figure 93: A reproduction of Pierre Fritel's *Les Conquérants* (1892). *The Ward County Independent* (Minot, ND), 27 August 1914, p. 14.



Figure 94: Engraving of Otto Wolf's *Christ and the Adulteress* (1886). Friedrich Pecht and Erster Jahrgang, *Die Kunst für Alle:* Malerei, Plastik, Graphik, Architektur, Verlagsanstalt für Kunst und Wiffenschaft vorm. Friedrich Bruckmann: Munich, Germany, 1886, p. 277.



Figure 95: Otto Wolf's *Christ and the Adulteress* (1886) on display in Woodward & Lothrop. Historical Society of Washington, DC, Woodward & Lothrop records, 1873-1995 (MS 0542).

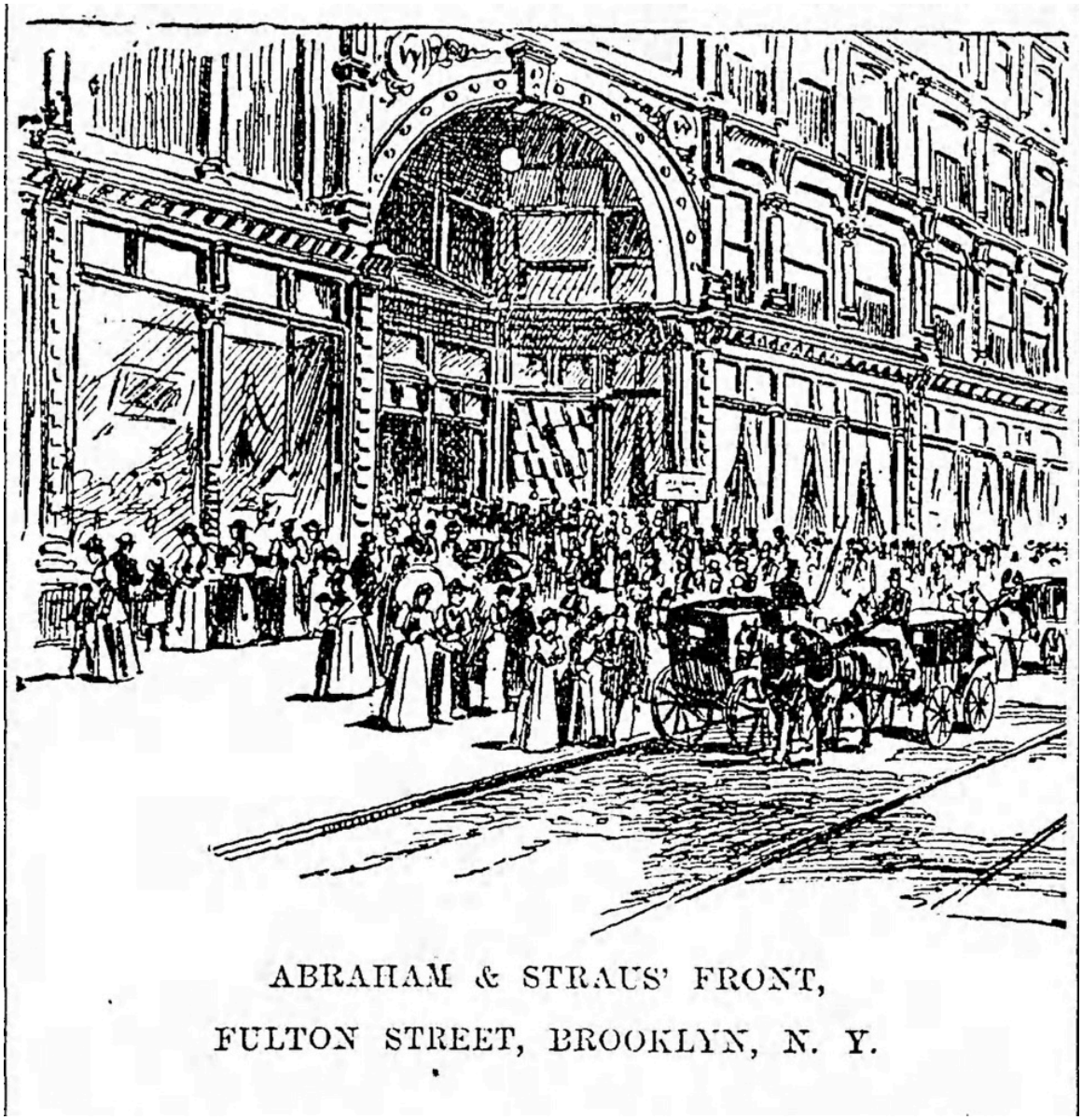


Figure 96: Sketched image of Abraham & Straus' frontage with painting in the window. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* 27 June 1893, p. 21.



Figure 97: Wanamaker's Philadelphia, Brožík studio collection in Wanamaker's picture gallery, c. 1903. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188), Digital Library Permanent ID: 2835.



Figure 98: Mihály Munkácsy's *Christ on Calvary (*1884) and Henry Ossawa Tanner's *Behold! The Bridegroom Cometh!* (1908) displayed in Wanamaker's Furniture Department, c. 1910s. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188), Digital Library Permanent ID: 2837.



Figure 99: Mural painted by Frederick Carl Frieseke for Rodman Wanamaker at the Shelburne Atlantic Hotel, 1905-6, oil on canvas, 60 by 178 in. Heather James Fine Art.



The Ground Floor of the Auditorium

Figure 100: Mural by Frederick Carl Frieseke in the amphitheatre of Wanamaker's New York. Wanamaker's New York, *New York: Metropolis of the World*, 1920, p. 49.



Figure 4: G. Smith and T. Sutherland, *Western Exchange, Old Bond Street*, 1817. Museum of London, Item number 001806.



Figure 6: 'Crystal Palace London Regent Street', c. 1851. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C, Library of Congress Control Number 2003677916.



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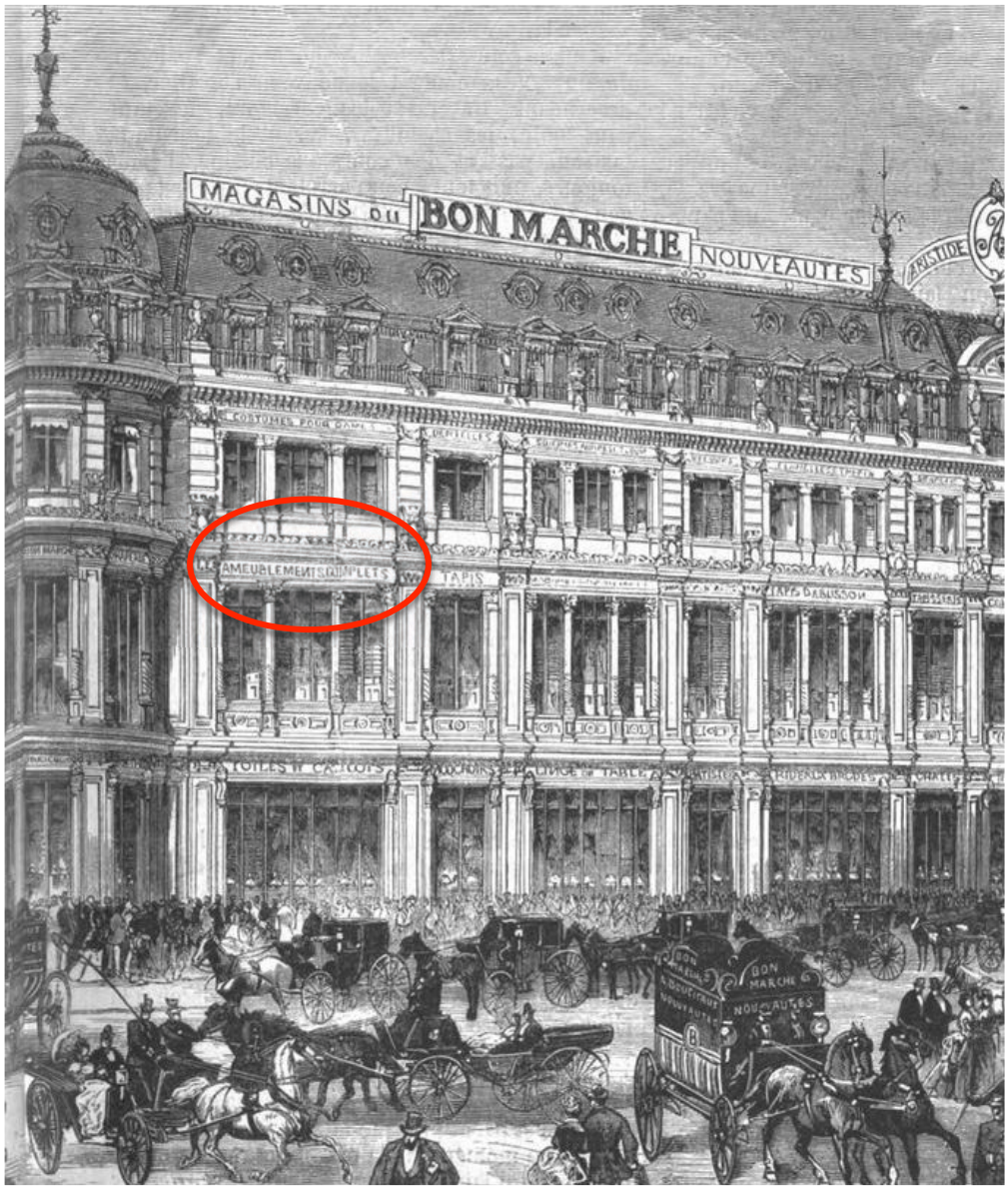


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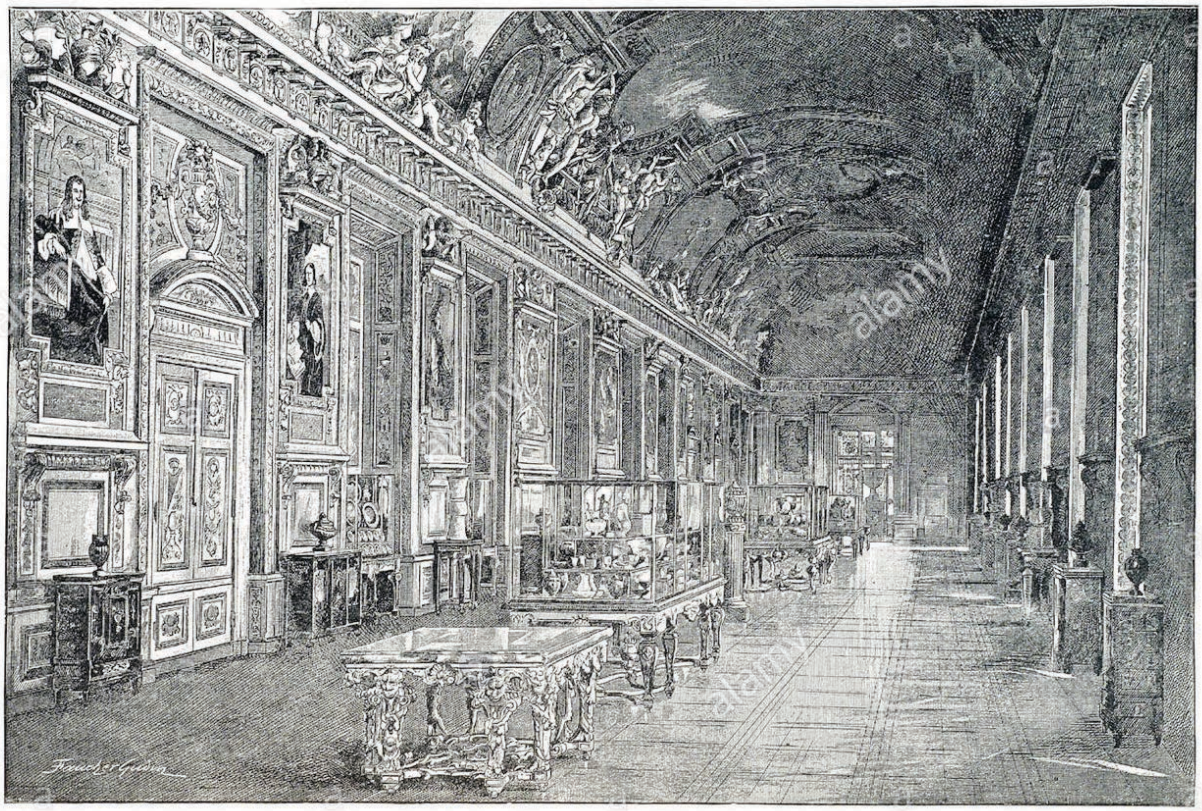


Figure 14: Henry Sutherland Edwards, *Old and New Paris: Its history, its people and its places*, Cassell: London, England, 1893-94.



Figure 37: Maxfield Parrish, *No. 40. Wanamaker's Goods & Prices, Spring & Summer 1896*, Boston Public Library, Print Department Collection, Accession number 2012.AAP.176.

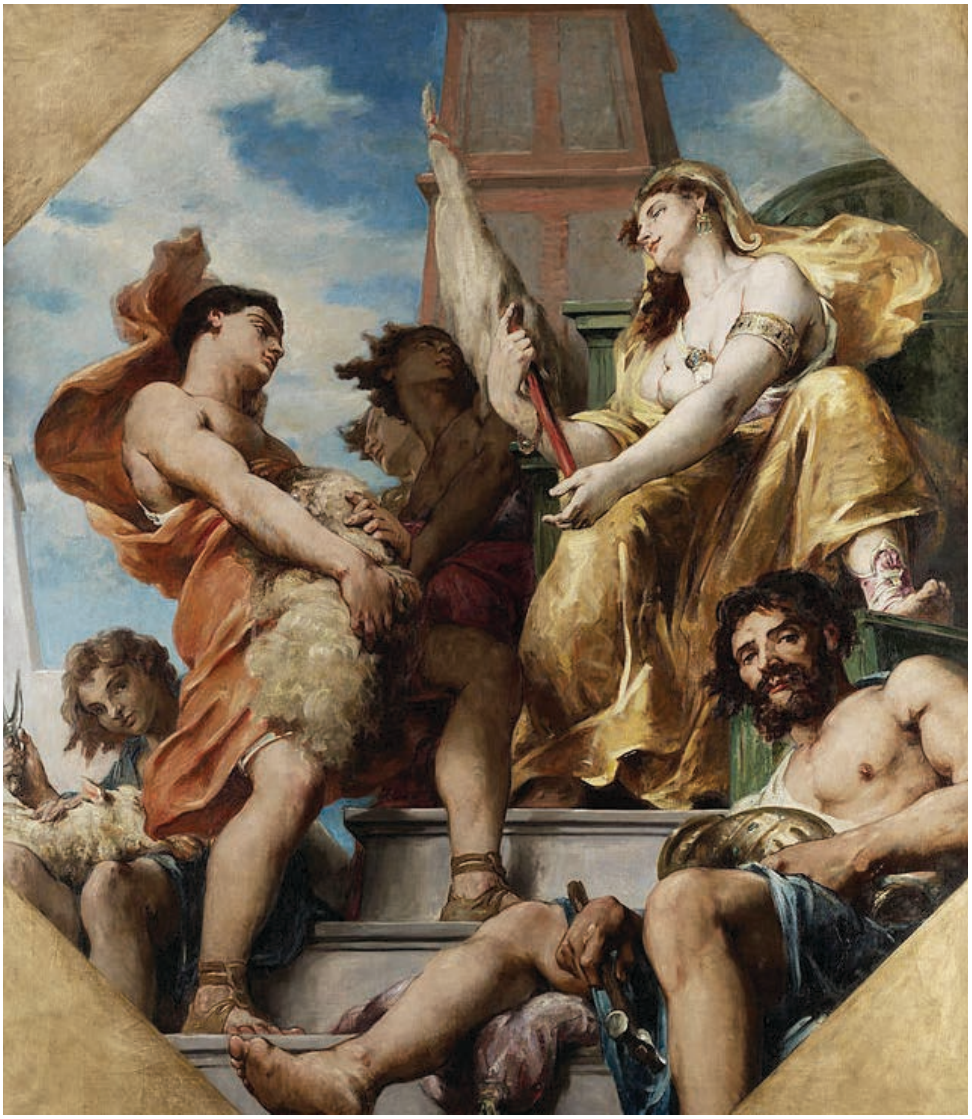


Figure 40: Henri-Léopold Lévy, *Allegory of Production,* c. 1875. Hampel Fine Art Auctions, *16th-18th Century Paintings*, 19 June 2012, Lot 218.



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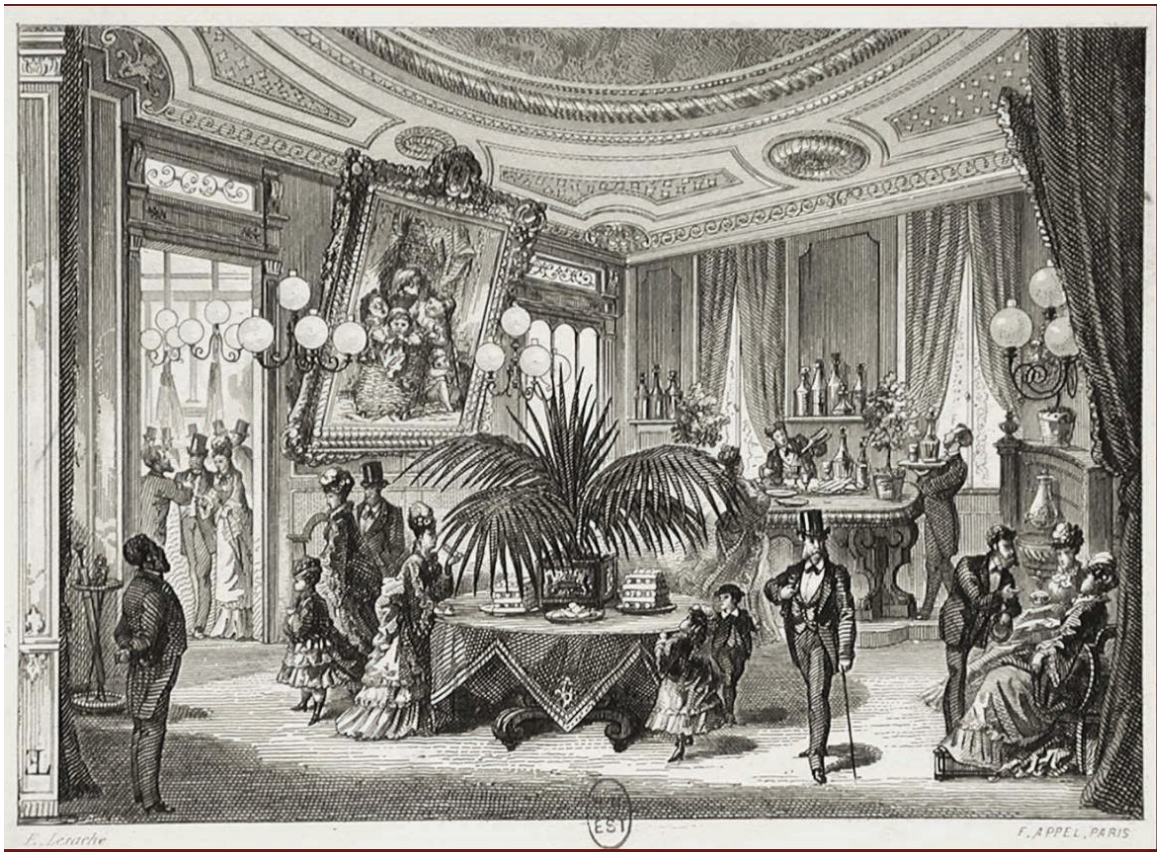


Figure 42: The Buffet of Au Bon Marché. Bibliothèque national de France, Estampes et Photographie, Va 270 j folio.



Figure 43: Au Bon Marché's Salon de Lecture. Bibliothèque national de France, Estampes et Photographie, Va270 j Folio.



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Figure 51: Wanamaker's Transept, c. 1900, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188).



Figure 52: The Prince's Room at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, decorated by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08478.



Figure 53: The Prince of Wales' Salon, decorated by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08488**.**



Figure 54: 'A display at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, showing the interior of a high class dining room'. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08496.

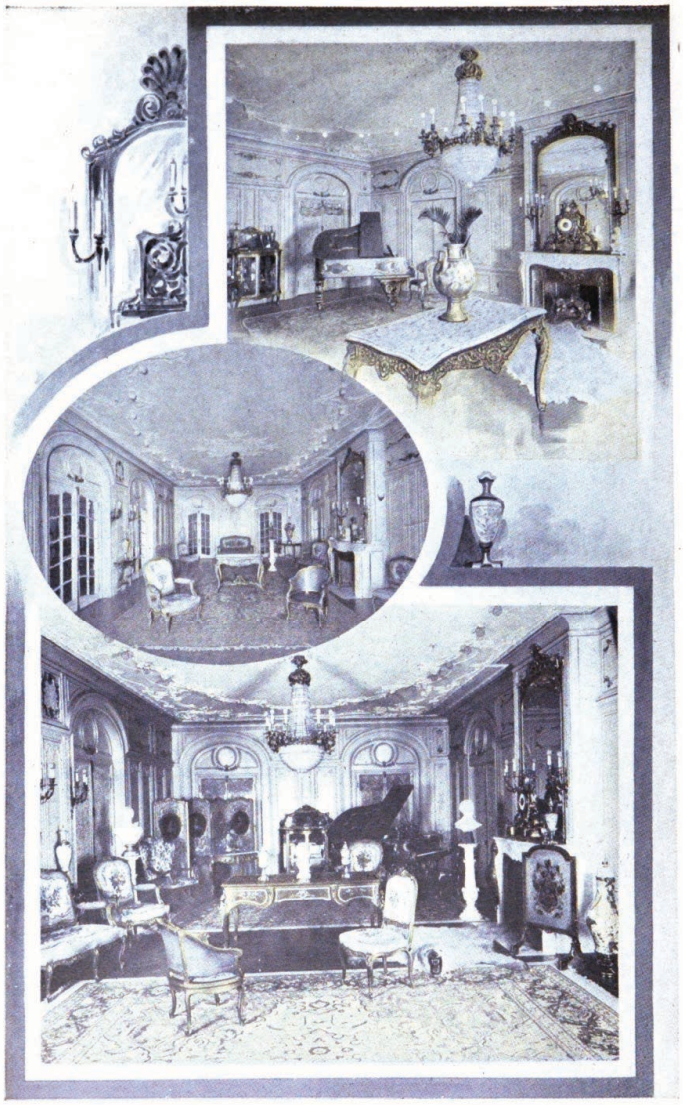


Figure 55: ‘A workman’s dwelling house’ design by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08494.



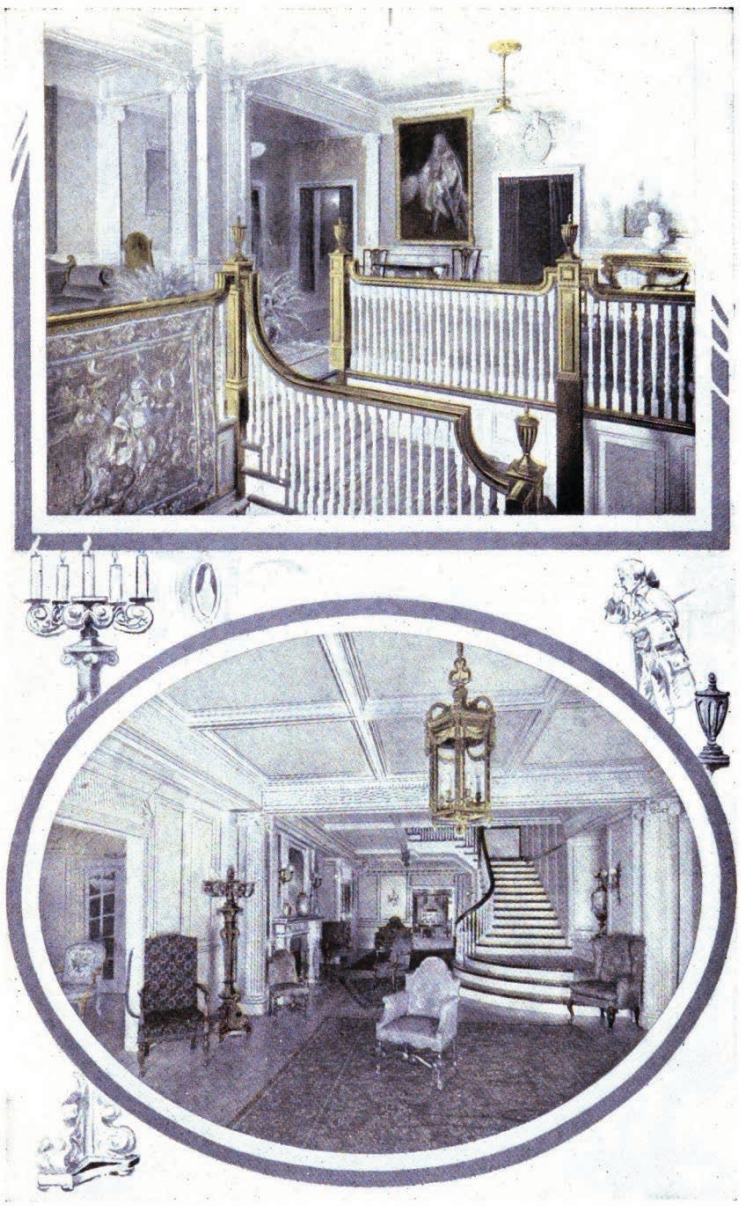
The "Bridge of Progress" connecting the Stewart Building with the New Wanamaker Building, New York. Grand Stairway in the Rotunda of the Stewart Building.

Figure 56: 'Bridge of Progress' in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, 1911, p. 303.



Louis XV. Drawing Room. House Palatial, New Wanamaker Building, New York.

Figure 57: House Palatial in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, 1911, p. 298.



Colonial Stairway, first and second floor, House Palatial, New Wanamaker Building, New York.

Figure 58: House Palatial in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, p. 299.



Figure 62: Postcard depicting the Grand Hall des Soieries in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909. Although the image originates from a postcard, it is the same used in the 1909 store publication. This also pertains to Figures 63 and 64.



Figure 63: Colourised postcard depicting the Galerie des Modes in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909.



Figure 64: Postcard depicting the Galerie des Confection pour Dames/Galerie des Manteaux in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909.



Figure 65: Postcard depicting the Hall de la Mode/Galerie des Modes in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1920. Copyright Collection-jfm.fr.



Figure 66: Thomas Allom, 'Interior view of the Great Gallery at the Louvre with tourists and painters', published by Fisher, Son & Co., London and Paris, c. 1844. An example of this print (with different figures) can be found in the collection of the British Museum, Museum Number: 1892,0714.495.

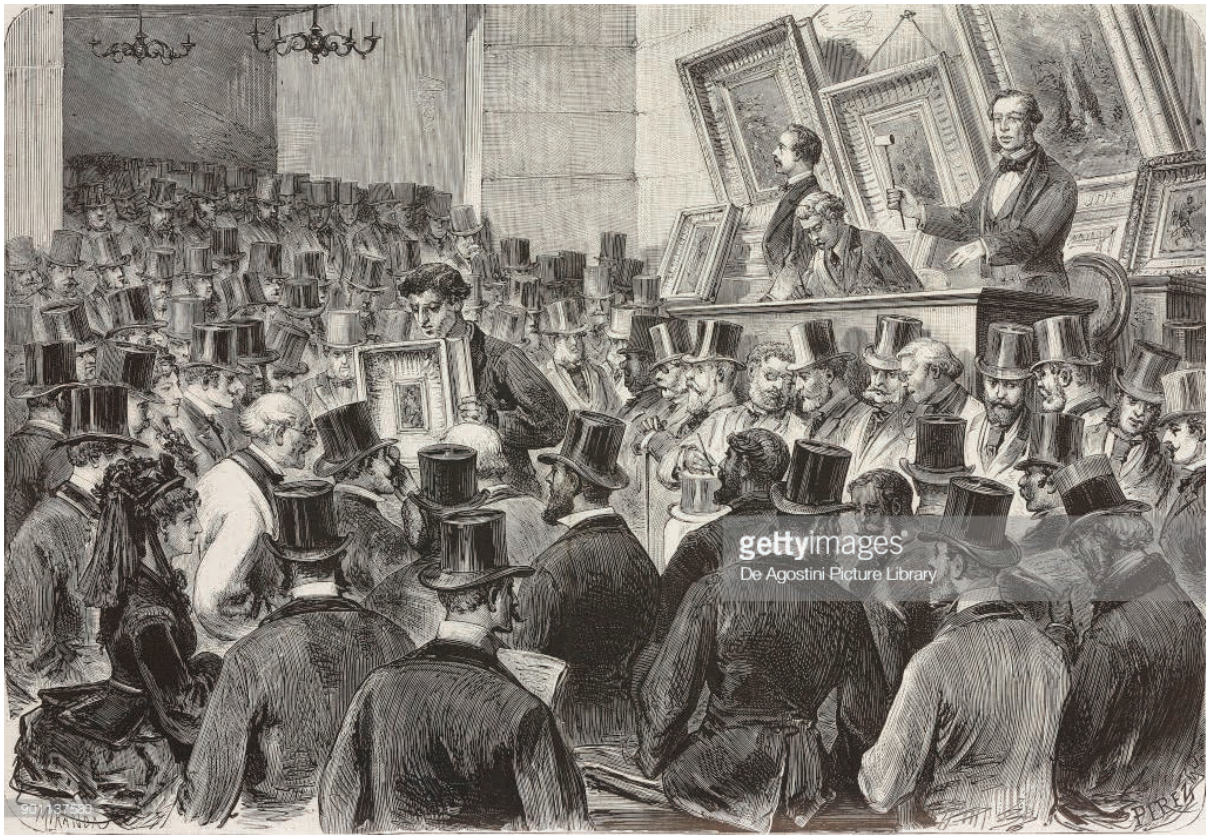


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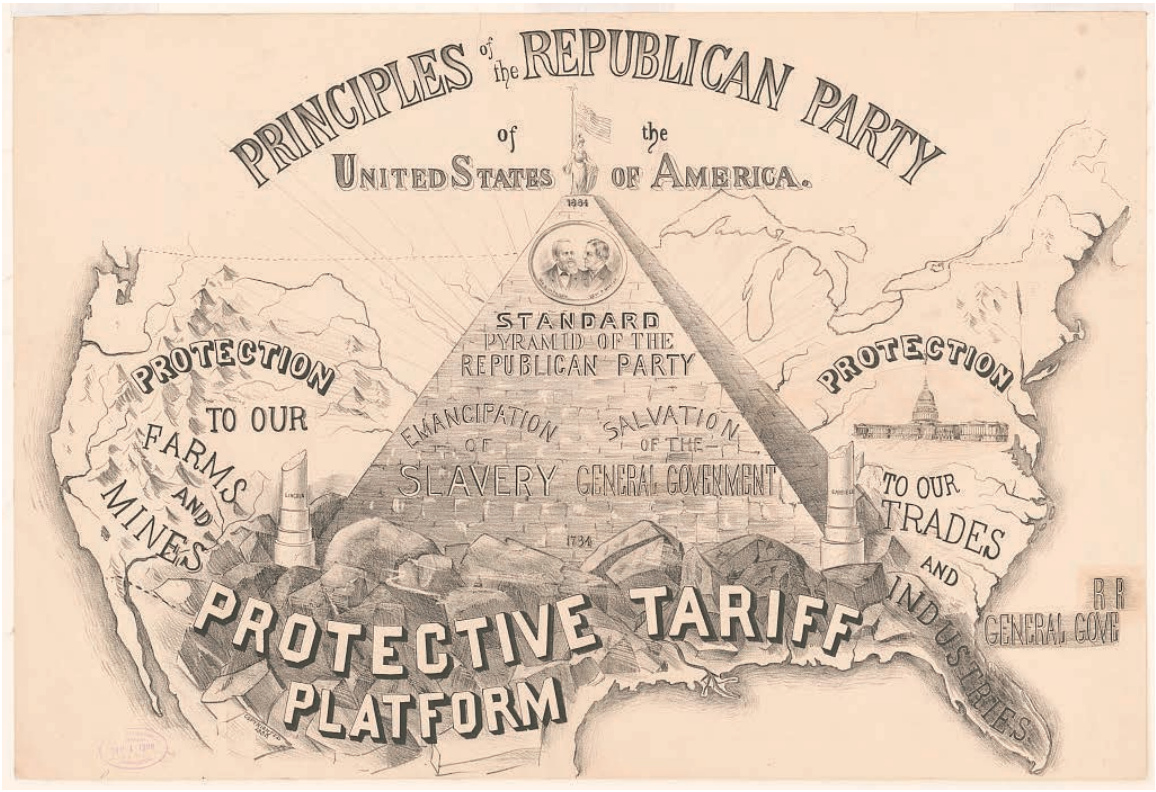


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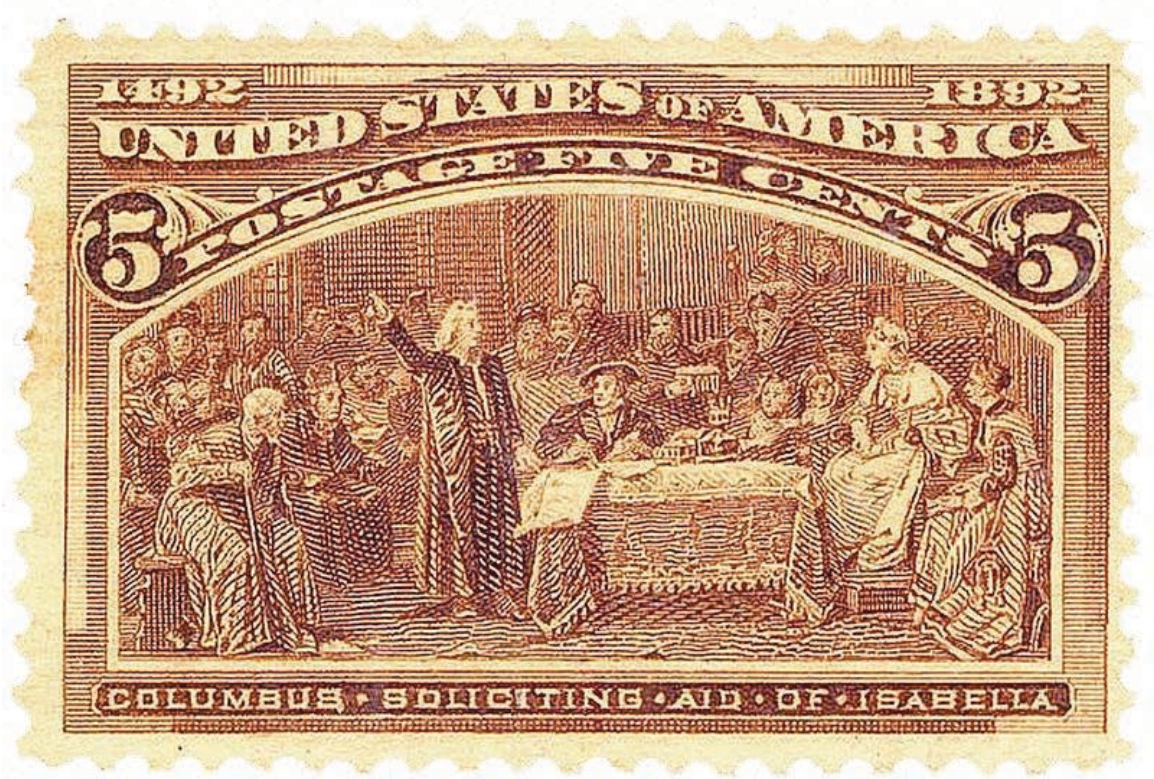


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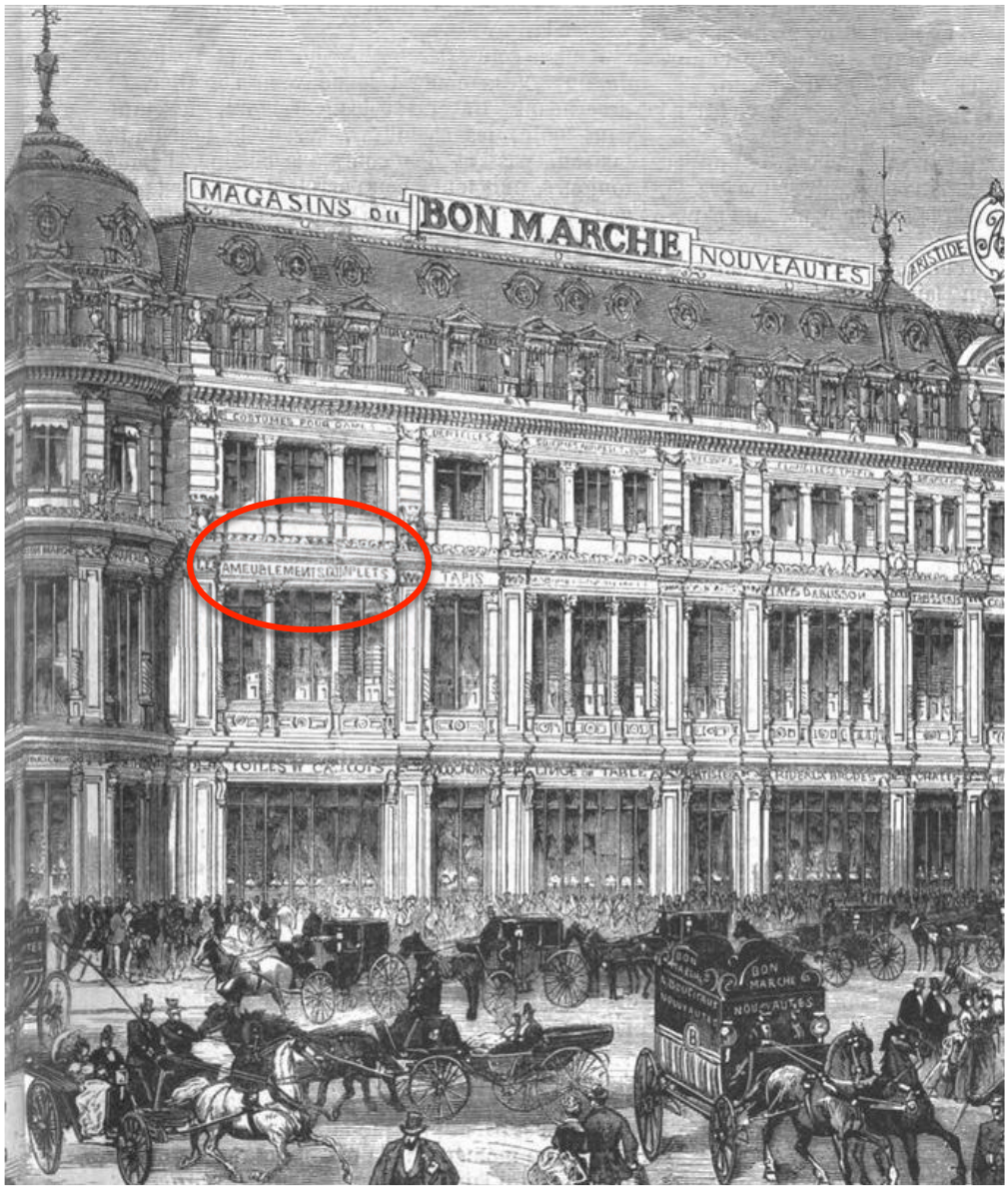


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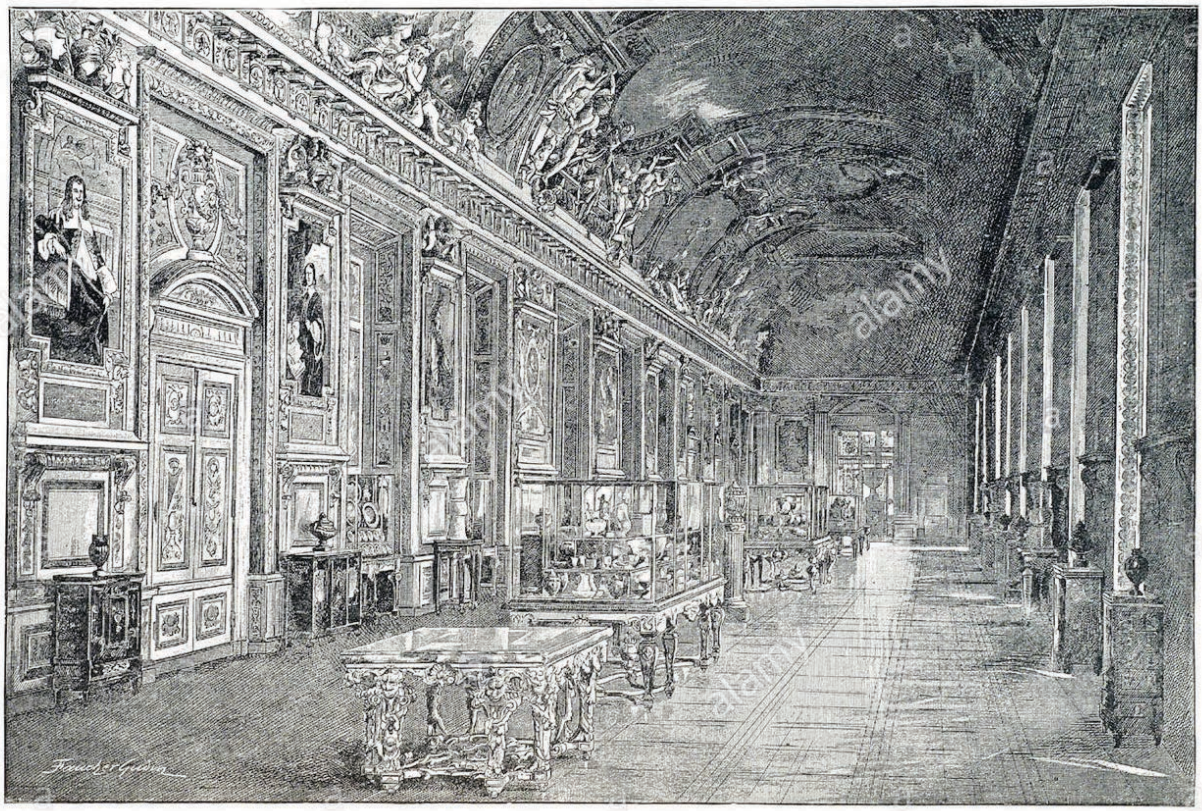


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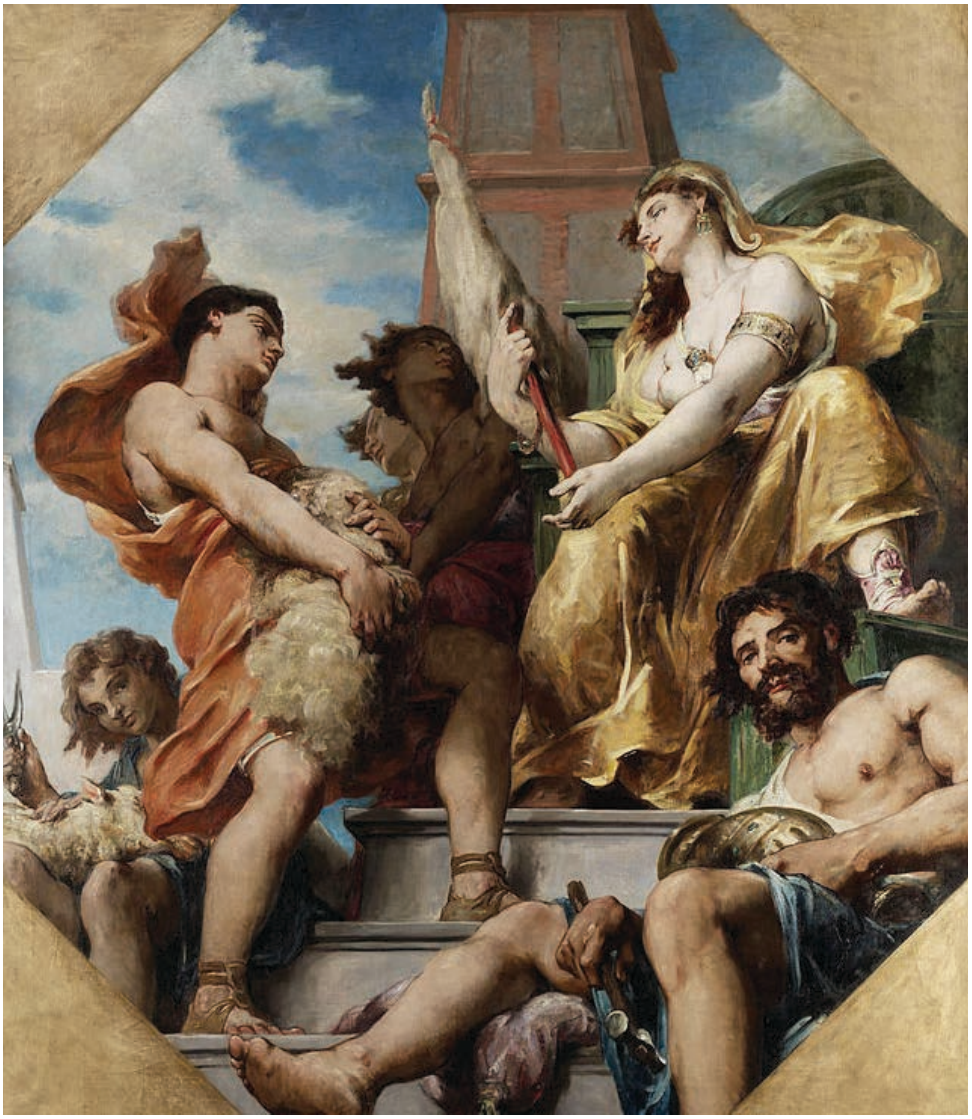


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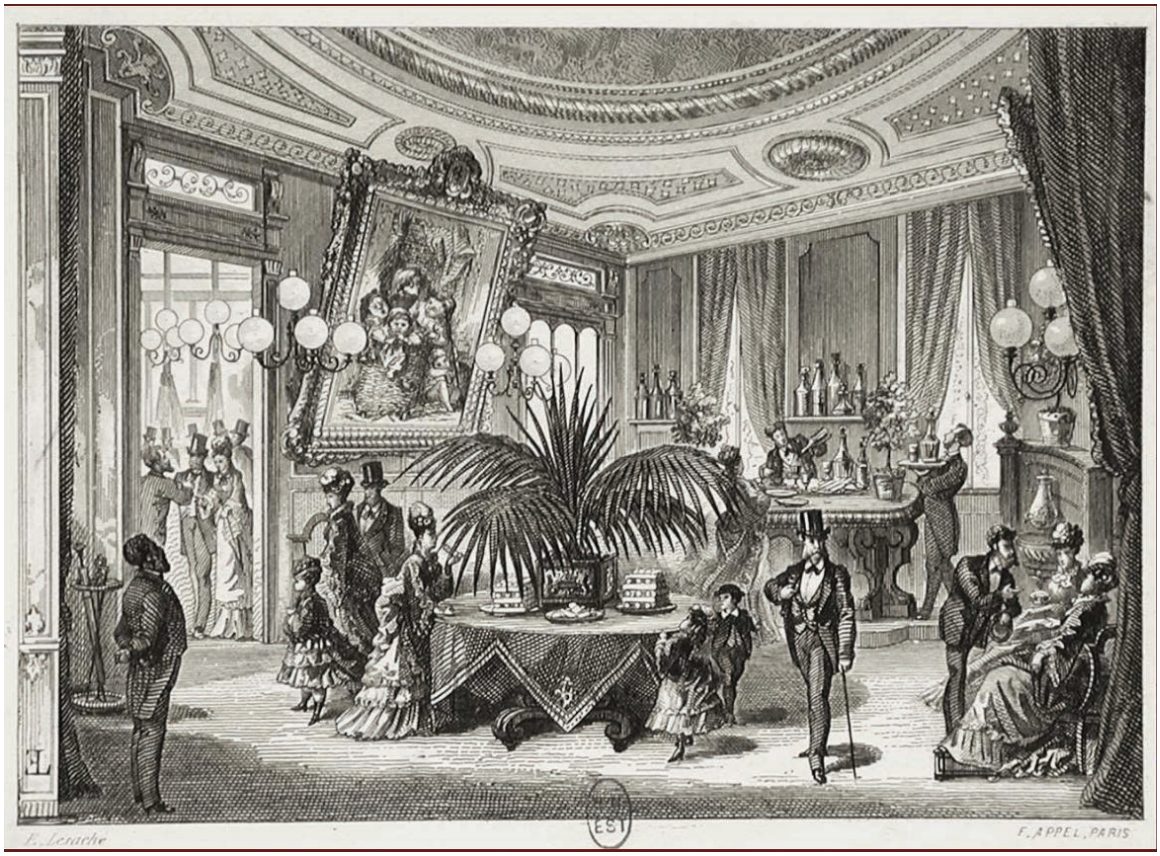


Figure 42: The Buffet of Au Bon Marché. Bibliothèque national de France, Estampes et Photographie, Va 270 j folio.



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Figure 52: The Prince's Room at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, decorated by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08478.



Figure 53: The Prince of Wales' Salon, decorated by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08488**.**



Figure 54: 'A display at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, showing the interior of a high class dining room'. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08496.

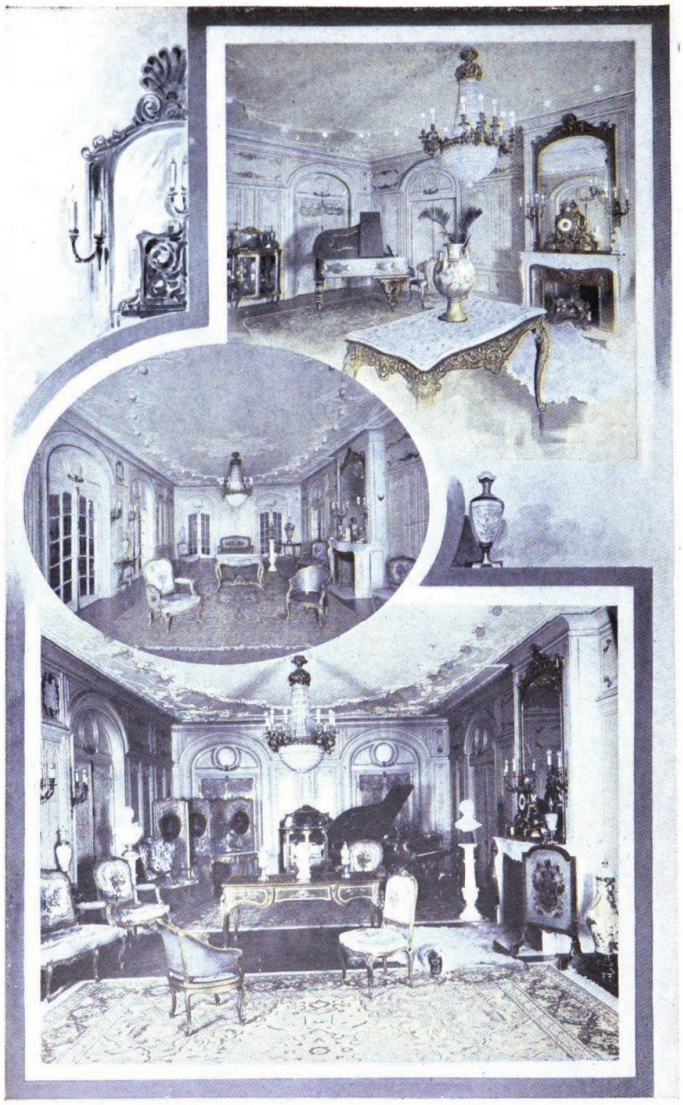


Figure 55: ‘A workman’s dwelling house’ design by Kendal, Milne & Co. English Heritage, National Monuments Record Centre, Bedford Lemere and Company Collection, Reference Number: BL08494.



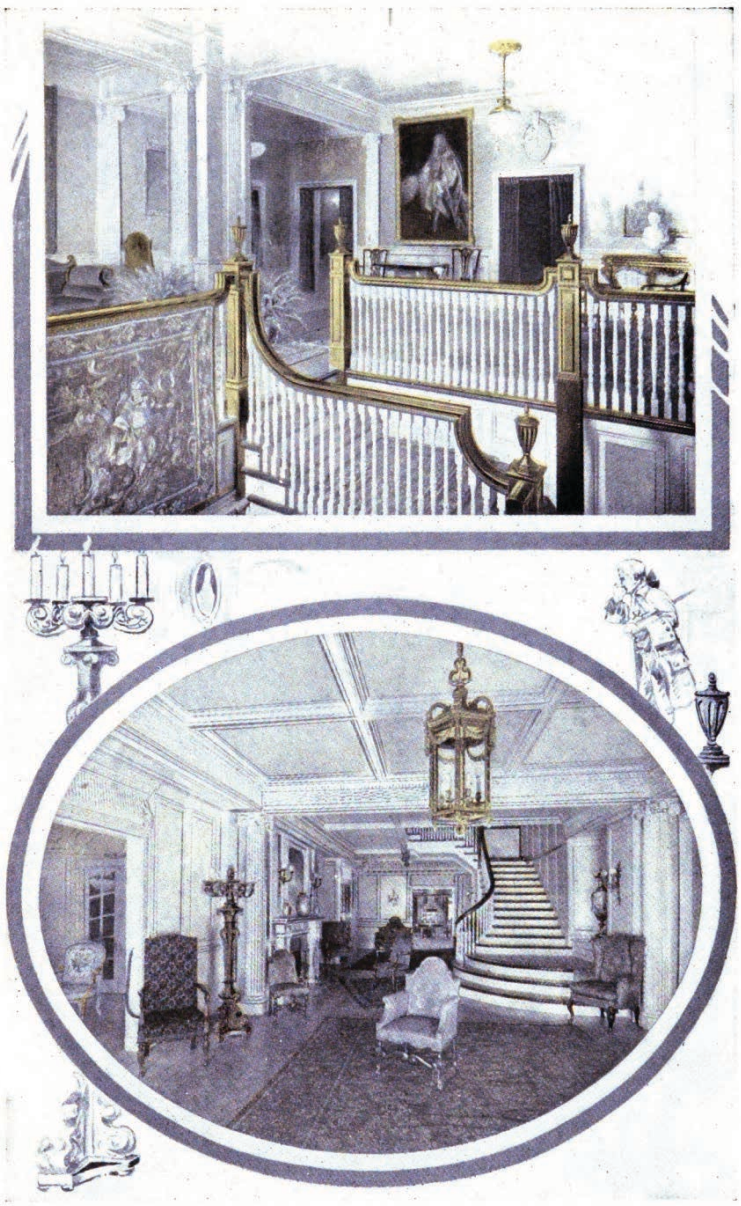
The "Bridge of Progress" connecting the Stewart Building with the New Wanamaker Building, New York. Grand Stairway in the Rotunda of the Stewart Building.

Figure 56: 'Bridge of Progress' in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, 1911, p. 303.



Louis XV. Drawing Room. House Palatial, New Wanamaker Building, New York.

Figure 57: House Palatial in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, 1911, p. 298.



Colonial Stairway, first and second floor, House Palatial, New Wanamaker Building, New York.

Figure 58: House Palatial in Wanamaker's New York. Joseph Herbert Appel and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, Wanamaker's Philadelphia: Philadelphia, PA, p. 299.



Figure 62: Postcard depicting the Grand Hall des Soieries in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909. Although the image originates from a postcard, it is the same used in the 1909 store publication. This also pertains to Figures 63 and 64.



Figure 63: Colourised postcard depicting the Galerie des Modes in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909.



Figure 64: Postcard depicting the Galerie des Confection pour Dames/Galerie des Manteaux in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1909.



Figure 65: Postcard depicting the Hall de la Mode/Galerie des Modes in Grands Magasins du Louvre, c. 1920. Copyright Collection-jfm.fr.



Figure 66: Thomas Allom, 'Interior view of the Great Gallery at the Louvre with tourists and painters', published by Fisher, Son & Co., London and Paris, c. 1844. An example of this print (with different figures) can be found in the collection of the British Museum, Museum Number: 1892,0714.495.

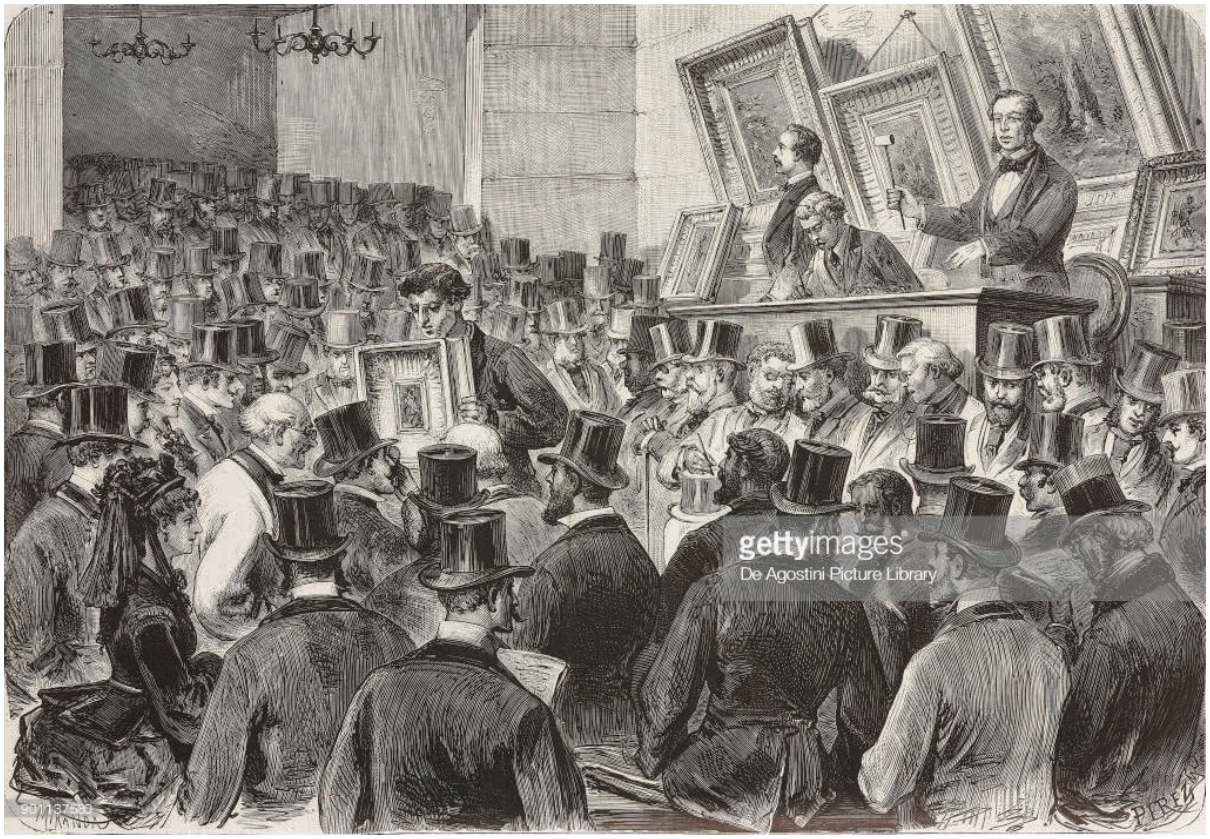


Figure 69: Sale of paintings at Hôtel Drouot. *L'Illustration*, vol. LXIII, no. 1619 (7 March 1874).



Figure 70: Frederic Edwin Church, *Niagara Falls, from the American Side*, 1867, oil on canvas, 101 by 89 in. National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Figure 73: Edgar Degas, *The Millinery Shop*, 1879-86, oil on canvas, 39 by 43 in. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL.



Figure 74: Edgar Degas, *At the Milliner's*, 1882, pastel on paper, 30 by 34 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.



Figure 75: Edgar Degas, *At the Milliner*, 1882-5, oil on canvas, 24 by 29 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA.



Figure 76: Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882, oil on canvas, 38 by 51 in. The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, England.



Figure 79: Mihály Munkácsy, *Christ before Pilate*, 1881, oil on canvas, 164 by 250 in. Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary.



Figure 80: Mihály Munkácsy, *Christ on Calvary* or *Golgotha*, 1884, oil on canvas, 181 by 280 in. Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary.



Fig. 81: Mihály Munkácsy, *After the Wedding* or *Honeymoon*, c. 1880s, oil on canvas, size unknown. Location unknown.

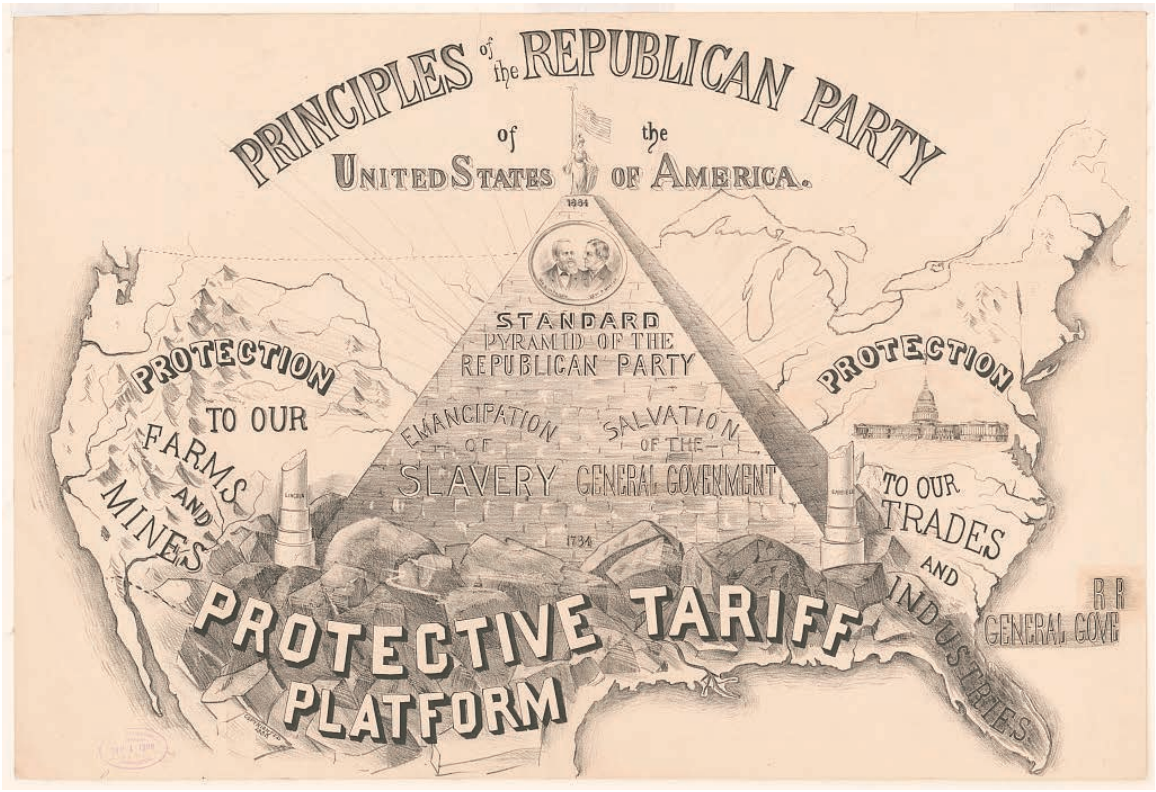


Figure 84: 'Principles of the Republican Party of the United States of America'. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-DIG-pga-07978.



Figure 85: Currier & Ives., *John Bull and his friend Cleveland*, c. 1888. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.



Figure 86: Frances Benjamin Johnston, 'Large parlor of the William C. Whitney house, Washington, D.C.' Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LOT 11727.

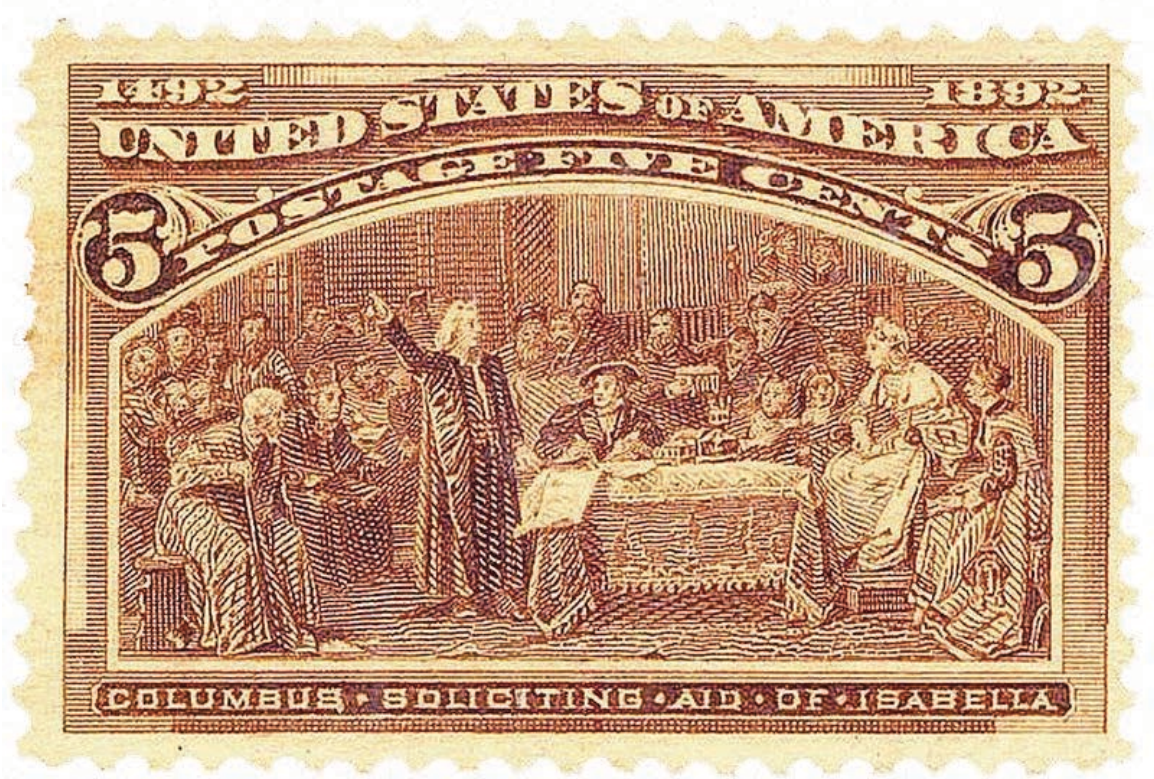


Figure 92: Columbian Issue five cent stamp engraved by Alfred Major after Václav Brožík's *Columbus at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella* (1884). Terry Gregory, 'Stamps of the Columbian Exposition', *Chicagology.com*.



Figure 97: Wanamaker's Philadelphia, Brožík studio collection in Wanamaker's picture gallery, c. 1903. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188), Digital Library Permanent ID: 2835.



Figure 98: Mihály Munkácsy's *Christ on Calvary (*1884) and Henry Ossawa Tanner's *Behold! The Bridegroom Cometh!* (1908) displayed in Wanamaker's Furniture Department, c. 1910s. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, John Wanamaker Collection (2188), Digital Library Permanent ID: 2837.