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Outline of the Landscape of Digitization in French Art Libraries : current projects in the BnF (French National Library) and INHA (National Institute for Art History)

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Almost every day, an increasing amount of electronic resources is made available on the Web. Next to numerous databases which list iconographic documents or « objets d'art », often originating from museum institutions, periodicals and exhibition catalogues are also made available on line. Furthermore, thanks to new digitized programs launched in national and special libraries, frontiers are overcome and international research thus experiences new confrontations and discoveries.

This paper mainly deals with two major initiatives in the area of digitized offer in Art History : the Gallica and Gallica 2 programs of the BnF and the INHA project of Digital Library.

The BnF was one of the first in launching a digital library project named Gallica as early as 1995, which allowed until 2007 the digitization of about 80 000 images and 90 000 texts, equivalent to 250 000 printed documents when taking into account the journal items. This has been done in image mode for the largest part, fac-simile reproducing only the visual aspect of the original document, while the text mode, resulting from an integral digital input or from the output of a Optical Character Recognition (OCR) specialized software, will allow the search for words in the digitized text.

Gallica is meant to be an heritage and an encyclopedic library, presenting together prestigious editions, dictionaries and periodicals concerning history, literature, philosophy, law, economic and political sciences, in French preferentially.

But Gallica provides also for the history of art, through a number of literary and artistic periodicals, such as, for instance, *L'Artiste*, *La Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, *La France musicale*, *Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique*, or further still through specific library collections such as the program-booklets for the « Salon officiel » and the reviews of artistic salons.

Gallica also incorporates iconographic documents for exceptional collections in the BnF, which have been progressively digitized : for example the drawings of Etienne-Louis Boullée, Jean-Jacques Lequeu or the photographs of Eugène Atget (from the Department of Prints and Photography), the collection of Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville (from the Dep. of Maps and Surveys), portraits of musicians (from the Dep. of Music), the Basile collection (from the Coins, Medals and Antiques Dep.), or the « Galeries théâtrales » of Martinet-Hautecoeur (from the Dep. of the Performing Arts), ancient illuminated manuscripts, as well as illustrated books from the Rare books Department.

In Gallica can equally be found collections external to the BnF, often originating from its network of « associated poles » (meaning other important French libraries, covering significant thematic fields) : for example illustrated books from the « Musée de l'homme » and the « Museum d'histoire naturelle » libraries, photographic collections of the Geographical Society, musical scores of the Philidor collection in the Town-council library of Versailles.

But starting in 2007, a new and ambitious approach has been initiated within the framework of the European Digital Library, as the BnF has undertaken to digitize « en masse » about 100 000 works per annum until year 2009, in text and image mode, among which are to be found a large corpus of periodicals and texts on art, especially in the areas of excellence of its specialized departments : i. e. engravings, photography, numismatics, music, performing arts. A first corpus of art periodicals published in France between 1750 and 1938 has been constituted in the framework of the contract for mass digitization which started in 2008 : as a matter of fact, these documents make up an essential basis for research, as the periodicals collections of the BnF are particularly rich and widely consulted. Digitization of art periodicals is meant to be a tool for scientific publics, professionals and advanced students as well as a means of conservation, and continuing Gallica's initial offer. Thus, periodicals that have been already partly digitized such as *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* (1863-

1932) will be duly completed, and other titles will be selected according to their importance or originality, such as *Le Cabinet de l'amateur et de l'antiquaire* (1842-1863), *Le Journal des artistes* (1827-1870), *Le Journal des Arts* (1855-1867), *Le Scapin, journal théâtral, artistique et littéraire* (1881), *La Silhouette : album lithographique* (1829-1831), *L'Ecrin, moniteur de la bijouterie-joaillerie* (1863-1870) - or the jewel-case, monitoring the jewellers' trade -, *Le Journal des coiffeurs faisant suite au Bon ton* (1836-1875) - or the hairdressers journal, continuing the « Bon ton » publication -, and many others. At first, about 500 titles were selected from bibliographies, based on documentary or scientific relevance, covering fine and applied arts, fashion, performing arts.

Booklets and catalogues for artistic « salons », as well as the numerous critical reviews published on those occasions, make up the second theme of the digitization project for art in Gallica 2. We will try to digitize as much of these fragile documents as we can, because they are essential for researchers. Starting with the exhibitions of the XVIIIth century such as the « St Luke Academy exhibition » (1751), up to the « Winter Salon » (1924), selecting important events such as the « Salon des Refusés » (1863), the « Salon des Indépendants » (1884) or the « Salon d'Automne » (1903) as well as more modest ones (e. g. « Salon des arts décoratifs » - 1882 -, « Salon des Rose-Croix » - 1892 -, « Salon des Cent » -1894-, « Salon de l'Art nouveau » - 1895-), we intend to select Parisian as well as provincial exhibitions. A limited corpus has been established to begin with, parallel to an already existing project managed by the Orsay Museum which is setting up a database on past French art exhibitions. The two approaches are finally supplemented by a selection of reference works on art, itself a complement to the program « Classics in art history » developed by the INHA, in the areas of engraving, photography, numismatics and music, which are « poles of excellence » in the BnF specialized departments. We are adding a number of dictionaries and bibliographies concerning general aspects of art history, for a total of about 600 documentary items for the 2007-2009 project.

Gallica 2 not only allows a wider scope of documentary offer in the arts area, but also makes for more interactive services and more performing practices for research and navigation. The texts in Gallica are progressively transferred from image-mode to text-mode, using OCR software. Research on the full text is already possible for a great number of works. There is also a new customisation function allowing to create personal files with selected documents, while flagging them with markers or stickers.

By mid-2008, Gallica 2 has been further enriched with new sorts of documents such as the press which is treated by a specific program, and by the end of this year, it will receive the sound archives of Gallica, marking the end of the project. Finally, a partnership with the French National Union of Publishers foresees the accessibility of recent titles (still under copyright) in digital format via e-distribution sites, in free access or conditional mode.

The second largest digitization project is that of the Digital Library of the Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA, National Institute of Art History). It came to be two years old on April 2007, although digitization had already started in 2002. This program combines three existing institutions that eventually will merge to constitute the INHA's library in its final form (the Institute itself was created in 2001). These three institutions are : the Library of the Bibliothèque de l'Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts (BENSBA, Higher School of Fine Arts), the Bibliothèque centrale des musées nationaux (BCMNM, Central Library for all national Museums), and the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet (Jacques Doucet Library), which for the moment is the library actually housed in the INHA.

This large project with its specialisation in art history will offer digital access to a great variety of documents of particular interest to art historians and archeologists, but also to historians, historians of books, amateurs of art and heritage.

The project comes under two main headings. On the one hand, a corpus of « classics of art history », texts from the XVIth to the beginning of the XXth century, published in France in several languages or translated into French, that might reach up to 1000 works by 2010. On the other hand, digitization of specialized documents, such as the Louvre catalogues before 1920, prints, engravings, drawings, surveys, photographs, stereoscopic plates and manuscripts. For example newly accessible on line in 2008 are the archives of the painter Meissonier, prints of Mary Cassatt and Odilon Redon, photographs by Atget, and drawings by Charles Garnier, among many others.

The joint policy for digitization was actually established in 2002-2003 defining the scope and contents of programs to come. At the same time was launched a separate database giving access to the « Répertoire d'Art et d'Archéologie ». By this spring, 200 000 images were already on line, 7% of which are pictures (drawings, architectural drawings, prints, engravings and photographs), 6% are manuscripts, and 87% books. Digitization is performed in colours and shades of grey in high-level resolution in order to guarantee the definition of details and a true rendering of the original.

A project concerning the « classics of art history » - mentioned earlier, was launched in 2004. The first phase lasting two years covered the XVIth to the beginning of the XIXth century. It was followed by a second phase from 2007 to 2010 covering the XIXth to the beginning of the XXth century. This project will aim at offering an almost ideal reference library for researchers. Choices are based on a study of bibliographies, the indication from actual experience of the works most in demand and an appreciation of specialists. A balance has been thought desirable between the main themes : books on festivities, architecture, ancient guides of Paris, basic works for the description of old collections and ancient monuments destroyed or transformed, archeology, history of the tastes and collections, figurative arts, decorative arts, art theory and landscaping.

As previously mentioned, the very important collection of catalogues from the Musée du Louvre before 1920, and from the Bibliothèque centrale des musées nationaux, is being digitized. It includes about 72 000 images already on line and should be fully completed by 2010. This collection contains the general catalogues together with those of the specialized departments of the museum : these documents are old, fragile, often annotated by hand, so digitization is also meant as a means of preservation from too frequent communication to readers, for they are very much in demand, by the public as well as by the museum professionals themselves.

In the iconographic domain, 1884 stereoscopic plates dating from the early XXth century representing ancient and religious buildings in Italy (the Collinet-Guerin legacy) and more than 8 000 prints, drawings and architectural drawings from the heritage collection from the Jacques Doucet Library have been digitized : among them Goya, Manet, Toulouse-Lautrec, or, concerning the XVIIIth century, drawings from Jean Pillement, the « Galerie du Palais Royal », urbanistic projects, and, for the XIXth century, drawings by the architects Laurecisque and Vaudoyer. 10 000 modern engravings have also been digitized from colour microfilms. Other iconographic collections come from the library of Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts : photographs, maps, architectural drawings and surveys, selections of prints representing artists' portraits and town views, and also drawings, such as the album of caricatures by Charles Garnier, making up about 13 000 images.

The INHA Digital Library offers also manuscript and archival documents from both the Jacques Doucet collection and the Bibliothèque centrale des musées nationaux, allowing manuscripts by Delacroix to be brought together for the first time : his *Journal* (from Jacques Doucet) and his correspondence (from both sources). There also may be found drawings with water-colours of archeological material by Jean-Charles Geslin, the correspondence of Meissonier, artists autographs, etc.

The actual development of the digital library is progressive, and the present « host structure » is temporary : from now on until 2010, the INHA is going to acquire its own multimedia system, AGORHA, a French acronym which stands for Access to Globalized and Organized Resources in Art History. The digital library will then move from its present interface to become part of the new system, based on the software Flora of the Ever company, and which will contain other databases. It will be possible to isolate as a single work a sheet from a whole selection, or look up the tables of contents, « encapsulated » for the time being in PDF format, and possibly proceed to full-text researches on XIXth century printed materials, after treatment by OCR. Lastly, OAI (Open Archives Initiative) bridges will be put in place with a view to referencing documents from other databases such as Gallica2.

To conclude, I would like to mention that more modest digital projects relevant to art history are appearing all over France, namely a project called « Bibliothèques humanistes virtuelles » (virtual humanistic libraries) in the Centre supérieur d'études de la Renaissance (Center for Higher Studies on the Renaissance), in Tours, which started in 2002, in collaboration with the Institut de recherche en histoire des textes (IRHT, Research Institute on Text History), or the digital library of the Conservatoire national des Arts et Métiers (CNAM, center for technical crafts and applied sciences), which deals with national and universal Exhibitions. Such projects already are or will shortly appear on Gallica2, among many others.

But these programs, often originating in universities, whose purposes and norms are at times different, may generate confusing « double-entries » in the treatment of documentation. The French Ministry of Culture performs a valuable and important task in identifying and checking these initiatives, on its website, and the BnF network of associated poles allows coordination with many of them. Thus we can see there are many opportunities being offered, but we should find the means of publicizing them. This could be : either by creating links with digitalized documents within the existing library catalogues, as is already the case in BN-

OPALE PLUS, the BnF catalogue, or, by creating collective data gateways, as foreseen in the framework of the project for a European Digital Library (Europeana, in which France is an active participant), with a view to facilitate national and international exchanges.

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