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DYING GESTURES IN ARTISTIC MEDIA: HAPTIC EFFECTS IN JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID'S PORTRAITS OF REVOLUTIONARY MARTYRS

PhD Thesis

DENİZ EYÜCE ŞANSAL

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We hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under our supervision by **DENİZ EYÜCE ŞANSAL** entitled **"DYING GESTURES IN ARTISTIC MEDIA: HAPTIC EFFECTS IN JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID'S PORTRAITS OF REVOLUTIONARY MARTYRS"** be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Cinema and Media Research.

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ABSTRACT

DYING GESTURES IN ARTISTIC MEDIA: HAPTIC EFFECTS IN JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID'S PORTRAITS OF REVOLUTIONARY MARTYRS

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In late eighteenth-century France, Neoclassicism took over Rococo in a cultural shift that occurred in parallel to the French Revolution. The current interpretation of this shift within the emerging field of 'Sensory Studies' is that, as a reaction to the Rococo sensuality associated with the court, French Neoclassicism defended a total abandonment of multi-sensory elements in visual arts and adopted a purely ideological and argumentative style. The present dissertation questions this interpretation. It asks whether a style defined as the visual embodiment of such a physically and psychologically violent era as the French Revolution can avoid multi-sensory effects in the communication of a panoply of complex messages to a public in metamorphosis. *Dying Gestures* argues that the constant social and political changes of the Revolution caused a proliferation of corporal and sensory motifs that are visible in the visual culture of the age. As an artist directly implicated in the political scene of the Revolution, Jacques-Louis David's works from the early years of the Revolution provide the most poignant examples to the case. Specifically, this dissertation analyzes David's portraits of three Jacobin martyrs: Lepeletier, Marat and Bara. To do so, it proposes a model for the analysis of kinesthetic, tactile, vestibular and visceral effects in visual representation. *Dying Gestures* aims to demonstrate that these martyrdom-pictures communicate a haptic pathos to the beholder. Finally, it concludes that David's haptic strategy lies in his (both politically and aesthetically) revolutionary reshaping of the foundational principle of History painting: conveying content by the effective representation of significant moment and dramatic gesture.

Keywords: French Revolution, Neoclassicism, Formalism, Sensory Studies, Hapticity, Pathos

ÖZET

SANATSAL MEDYADA ÖLÜM İŞARETLERİ: JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID'İN FRANSIZ DEVRİMİ ŞEHİTLERİ PORTRELERİNDE DOKUNSALLIK

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On sekizinci yüzyılın sonlarında, Fransız Devrimi'ne paralel bir kültürel değişimin sonucu olarak, Rokoko estetiğin yerini Neo-klasisizm aldı. Duyu Çalışmaları alanında yapılan araştırmalarda bu değişim Fransız Neoklasisizmin, saray ile bağdaştırılan Rokoko estetiğin tenselliğine tepki göstermek ve salt ideolojik bir görsel sanat üretmek hedefiyle, duyular arası etkileri tamamen reddetmesine dayandırılmıştır. *Ölüm İşaretleri* bu mevcut yorumu sorgulamaktadır. Bu tez, Fransız Devrimi gibi fiziksel ve psikolojik şiddeti yüksek bir dönemin görsel dili olarak görülen Neoklasik stilin, devrimin bir dizi karmaşık mesajını dönüşmekte olan bir kitleye iletirken duyulara hitap etmekten gerçekten kaçınıp kaçınamayacağını sormaktadır. Devrim boyunca süregiden sosyal ve politik değişimler, bedensel ve duyusal motiflerin çoğalmasını ve dönemin görsel kültüründe görünürlük kazanmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Devrimin politik sahnesinde aktif rol almış bir sanatçı olarak, Jacques-Louis David'in eserleri bu duruma örnek oluşturmaktadır. Bu tez, spesifik olarak, David'in Jakoben rejim şehitlerini resmettiği 1793 tarihli üç tabloyu incelemektedir: *Ölüm döşeğindeki Lepeletier*, *Marat'nın ölümü ve Genç Bara'nın ölümü*. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu tez kinestetik, dokunsal, vestibüler ve visseral [hareket-duyumsal, temas-duyumsal, mekân-duyumsal ve doku-duyumsal] etkilerin analizi için bir model önermektedir. *Ölüm İşaretleri*, söz konusu şehit tablolarının izleyiciyle iletişime geçmek için dokunsal bir *pathos* oluşturduğunu göstermeyi hedefler. David'in dokunsal stratejisinin, Tarih resminin kurucu öğeleri olan 'anlamlı an' ve 'dramatik jeste' getirdiği, politik ve estetik anlamda devrimci yaklaşımda yattığı sonucuna varır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fransız Devrimi, Neoklasizm, Formalizm, Duyu çalışmaları, Dokunsallık, Pathos

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1. INTRODUCTION

"Robespierre, if you drink the hemlock, I will drink it with you!". These are the words painter and deputy Jacques-Louis David is reported to have said in *La Convention Nationale* on 26th July 1794 (Schnapper & Sérullaz 1989, p.25). The next day, 9 Thermidor of the Year II in the Republican calendar, marked the fall of Maximilien Robespierre.[1] David did not accompany Robespierre to the guillotine because, reportedly, he was ill the day of the arrest (Rosenblum 1974, p.79).[2] He survived the anti-Jacobin fervor of *Le Directoire* government with two consecutive periods in prison. He was able to paint in prison, and he survived to rebuild, albeit painstakingly and not for very long, his reputation as an artist (Lajer-Burcharth 1994, p.226).

David's Socratic exclamation is relevant to this dissertation in three ways: Firstly, it recalls the artist's *Death of Socrates* (1787) and demonstrates that, already in his lifetime, David's pre-Revolutionary paintings were being attributed Revolutionary meaning. It demonstrates, also, that the artist implicitly supported this retrospective reading. Secondly, David's words constitute an example to Antiquity's afterlife, as an attractive image, in late eighteenth-century culture. They point at a fascination with the antique in moral, political and aesthetic terms and with the imagined heroic attitudes of Antiquity in eighteenth-century France. Thirdly, and most importantly, David's words remind us that all artists are living—thus mortal—beings, bodies and minds that have to face their deaths. The French Revolution had a lethal rhythm that forced its players, including those of the artistic sphere, to contemplate an always possibly imminent death. David's unkept promise to Robespierre is a testimony of 1790s visceral dynamics and the artist's sense of self as a mortal body, which are points inseparable from the representations he produced. Etienne-Jean Delécluze, who was to become a student of his in a few years, observed the painter's visible pain and sweat during the difficult moments of his

[1] For an integrated chronology of important dates in the history of French Revolution and in David's life and career, see Annex 1. Table 1.

[2] Anita Brookner informs us that, a while back, David had also demanded to be executed alongside Marat in the event that the Montagnard deputy, then under prosecution in the Convention, should be condemned to death (1987, p.95).

questioning in the Convention the day after Robespierre's execution (Delécluze 2015, p.12). Delécluze's testimony is a stark reminder that the artist was not only a creative mind but also a breathing body.

The research behind the present dissertation took its point of departure in this fundamental fact that visual representation, until the advent of artificial intelligence into the mix, is the product of a complex process of creation in which the artist, or the artisan, weaves together the stems of an intellectual corpus and the sensory residues of his corporeal existence. More specifically, this research began with the motivation to include the world around the painted canvas in the questioning of the multisensory qualities of a painting. Such a motivation required a return to the sources of the question, especially to the eighteenth century during which the philosophical branch of 'aesthetics' took shape as the study of our experience of beauty through sensory perception and took the sense of taste as a primary metaphor for the creation and the consumption of art (Shelley 2017). The genesis of aesthetics and theories of taste is a vast subject. It intersects with an eighteenth-century phenomenon that still provides a fertile ground for research in the field of sensory culture: the French Revolution and the dramatic metamorphose that it commanded in the realm of visual arts, replacing Rococo frivolity by the heroic figures and lessons of Greco-Roman antiquity. The political revolution had many protagonists, amongst whom Robespierre and Marat. Even though the artistic revolution that occurred in parallel also had several prominent players, such as Vien and Peyron, Jacques-Louis David is the one that attracted most of the scholarly and popular attention due to his active role in the design of Jacobin visual propaganda.

Thus, *Dying Gestures in Artistic Media: Haptic Effects in Jacques-Louis David's Portraits of Revolutionary Martyrs* proposes a sensory analysis of David's portrayal of three Revolutionary martyrs, all of whom died in 1793: *Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau on His Deathbed*, *The Death of Marat* and *The Death of Young Bara* (completed in 1794). It analyzes the haptic effects built in these three canvases. In doing so, *Dying Gestures* aims to demonstrate that David's aesthetic strategy was to create haptic nodes on the surface of the canvas for an effective communication of the ideological, emotional and narrative content of the painting to the citizen-beholder. This aim appears, at first sight, counter-

intuitive. Even though his style was in constant transformation until the end of his life, David is essentially a Neoclassical painter (Brookner 1987, p.26). French Neoclassicism, however, is considered as a politically engaged and ideological style. *Dying Gestures* argues that the development of the new style did not implicate a total purge of sensory effects from visual arts. The revival of the antique accompanied, indeed, a reaction to Rococo style, which was identified with the sensual and material excesses of the court. However, *Dying Gestures* argues that the *Prix de Rome* winners' firsthand experience of the antique promoted the development of an alternative sensory grammar in painting, of which David's works became the most notable examples. Specifically, *Dying Gestures* argues that David's trilogy of portraits of the Revolutionary martyrs constituted the turning point in the artist's grasp and application of such an alternative sensory grammar. In other words, the portrayals of Lepeletier, Marat and Bara form a series through which David built his particular take on Neoclassicism, reshaping its stylistic tropes to implement the representation of contemporary events and emotions.

Despite all the torment that the artist's involvement in Jacobin politics brought upon his professional and personal life, the aesthetic lessons David drew from his creative output in the first five years of the Revolution, especially during his membership of the Convention, infiltrated into his post-Revolutionary works. The main reason behind David's constant haptic research was the impact of the four years he spent in Italy as a student of the Academy of Paris in Rome. The firsthand experience of Italian and ancient arts defined David's aesthetic grammar. From there onwards, he continued to revise and reform this individual grammar. Therefore, it is essential to begin this dissertation with a basic introduction to the origins of Neoclassical style, its particular development in the French context, and finally, David's arrival into the world of antique revival.

1.1 NEOCLASSICISM: ROOTS AND THE FRENCH VERSION

The Neoclassical style emerged in Italy around 1740s. The legacy of ancient Greeks and Romans had survived, in fragments, throughout the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque ages. However, the discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the 1740s and the beginning of systematic excavations (Bietoletti 2009, p.10) seemed to reopen, centuries

later, a direct line of communication with the past. At the same time, foreign artists, notably Gavin Hamilton and Benjamin West whose works were going to inspire David, were studying in Italian academies, frequently sketching or copying from ancient and modern artworks, and learning ancient history and literature. This taste was part of a broader international vogue. In the eighteenth century, a conceptual approach to the past took shape and History became a framing notion. Protagonists of ancient civilizations became models for moral pedagogy and artistic excellence. As we will explore shortly, the rising value of History motivated rich and young European men, mainly from Britain, to tour around Italy to learn about the Roman civilization *in situ.*

As a style in visual arts, Neoclassicism survived for nearly a century. However, Hugh Honour argues that it was triumphant only in the 1780s and 90s and that it started to decline by the beginning of the nineteenth century (1991, pp.14-15). It was, also, one of the last artistic languages with its roots in a pre-nationalist and pre-industrial world and its peak moment in the intense course of the French Revolution and the early stages of the Industrial Revolution. Thus, the visual grammar of Neoclassicism was constantly adapted to conform to the cultural, political and economic shifts occurring in its diverse geographical contexts. In other words, Neoclassicism was a conceptual laboratory of visual aesthetics on a global scale. It was an international phenomenon, and therefore, had various dialects. It was, in sum, a geo-historical mixture. From the twenty-first-century vantage point, Neoclassicism is the eighteenth-century revival of ancient Greco-Roman arts and culture. For a 'citizen' of the eighteenth century, too, 'the great style' or the *à l'antique* was a complex compound. The absorption of ancient Greek culture by that of the Roman conquerors had blurred the line between the two cultures forever. Thus, Italian artists of the Renaissance were already looking back at a composite image of Antiquity. Producing neo-Platonic strategies of the visual (i.e. linear perspective) for patrons who fostered ambitions of a neo-Roman nature (i.e. the Medici), Italian masters of the Renaissance continued to corrode the borders between ancient Greek and Roman worlds.

In the eighteenth century, artists of different national and cultural backgrounds were studying and working in Italy, as we mentioned, because it was considered to be the center

and motherland of arts (Bietoletti 2005, pp.16-17). Expatriates in Italy were discovering Antiquity not only firsthand (literally, as they were effectively able to touch the ancient remains they saw)[3] but also through the works of Renaissance masters. They were, moreover, able to compare masterpieces of the Baroque style with the rest of the artistic canon. Consequently, eighteenth-century artists were creating their particular re-mixture of the past. The key procedure of artistic education in the eighteenth century, notably in the Roman branch of *l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture) was the observation of ancient civilization from original fragments now in ruin and from subsequent copies. To this close study of the ancients was added the copying of Renaissance and Baroque paintings that had only been accessible, to foreign artists, in black and white engravings or painted copies made by their elders.[4] Simultaneously, discoveries like those of Pompeii and Herculaneum re-actualized the classical values of balance, harmony, clarity and restraint. The splendor, vividness and drama of works by Michelangelo and Caravaggio provided a provocative contrast to the classical sense of restraint. Synthesizing the vast array of similarities and contrasts between the visual conventions or singular masterpieces of all these different eras in their youthful work must have represented a welcomed challenge to the ambitious students of the French Academy in Rome.

An example to Italy's inspirational character is that the intellectual forefathers of both Neoclassicism, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and of Romanticism, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, posed for a same type of portrait during their Italian sojourns: the *grand tour* portrait (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). In both canvases, the man of culture is sitting on ancient stones in a recumbent pose. Both backgrounds consist of architectural elements merging with an idyllic nature. However, subtle differences in the details hint at the theoretical contrasts between the two authors. On the one hand, beneath the toga-like beige shawl covering almost his entire body, Goethe is dressed in contemporary clothes: This costume heightens the contrast between the time of the protagonist and the ruinous state of the fragments around and behind him. On the other hand, Winckelmann's toga is decidedly antique. The architectural elements behind him remain strong and spectacular despite

[3] As alluded by Pierre Paolo Panini's *Ancient Rome* and *Modern Rome* paintings (Figures 1.5 and 1.6).
[4] To give an example from the French context, the Louvre was enriched during Napoléon's reign, as a result of the artworks he had confiscated in his military expeditions in Europe (McClellan 1999, pp.116-118).

their old age. As visualized in Fuseli's melancholic image of a ruined statue and Piranesi's meticulously engraved ruins (Figures 1.3 and 1.4), Romanticists saw, in ancient remains, nature's imposing power over human-made order. On the contrary, looking at the same ancient landscape, Neoclassicists saw a projection of aesthetic perfection that had survived the test of time and that was transformed into a gallery of masterpieces comparable to Giovanni Paolo Panini's gallery views of ancient and modern Rome (Figures 1.5 and 1.6). Winckelmann 'constructed' the systematic analysis of not only artworks but also of the typically human creative practice that is Art (Didi-Hubeman 2002, p.14).

The *grand tour* was the rising phenomenon of the era and, therefore, a vital aspect of eighteenth-century sensory culture.[5] It was a promoter of the new taste for the antique. The tour brought the antique to international attention and generated new objects (souvenirs) like miniature or real size replicas of antique artworks and fragments. This tour was an extended trip around the Italian peninsula. The typical grand tourist of the eighteenth-century was a young man of a wealthy, usually aristocratic, English family and was sent the cradle of the arts and culture with his tutor. After the difficult crossing of Alps, the tourists visited the main cities such as Milan, Florence, Rome, perhaps Naples, and inevitably, Venice. Given the conditions of transport and accommodation of the era, the grand tour experience was inevitably a corporal one for these young gentlemen of a comfortable upbringing. It was also, in most cases, a sensual one because it provided the chance for exotic experiences. Thus, the visual experience of art and history was accompanied by the bodily experience of the country and people of the day. The grand tour portrait is an example of the simultaneously intellectual and material nature of such an experience. In these portraits, the visual proof and reminder of the culturally edifying journey was allied to the tactile and atmospheric appeal of the works seen on location. These portraits were souvenirs, at once sensory and material anchors for the memory of the sitter(s).

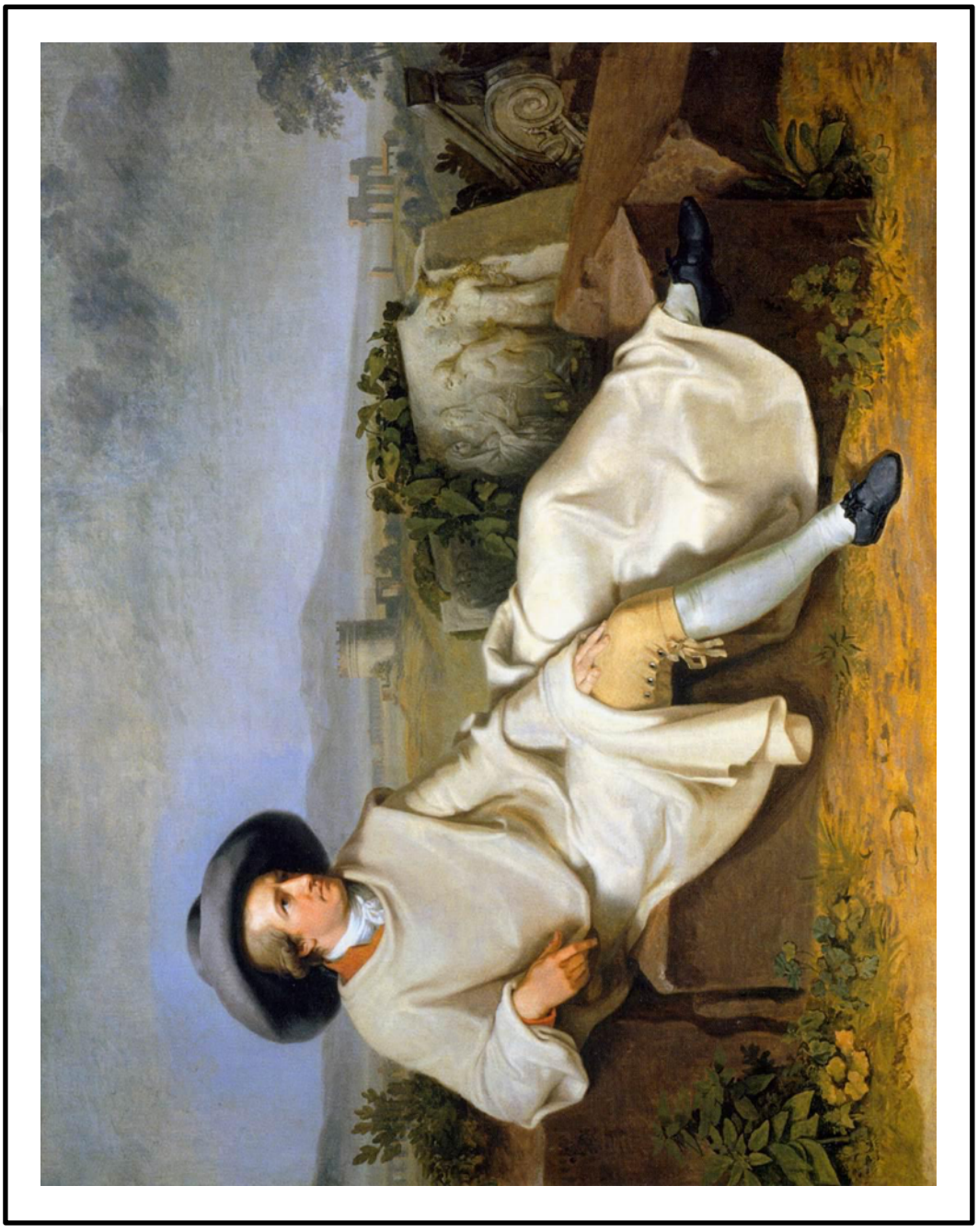
[5] For a detailed study of the Grand Tour, see. Black, J., 2011. *The British and the Grand Tour*. London Dover, N.H: Croom Helm.

Figure 1.1: Artist unknown (c.1760) *Winckelmann in Rome* [Oil on canvas]. Royal Castle, Warsaw.



Source: Winckelmann and the spread of neoclassical taste, https://research.reading.ac.uk/winckelmania/our-exhibits/from-italy-to-britain/

Figure 1.2: Tischbein, J. H. W. (1878) *Goethe in the Roman Campagna* [Oil on canvas]. Staedel Museum, Frankfurt am Main.



Source: Staedel Museum Digital Collection, https://sammlung.staedelmuseum.de/en/work/goethe-in-the-roman-campagna

Figure 1.3: Fuseli, J. H. (1778-9) ***The Artist Moved by the Grandeur of Antique Fragments*** **[Red chalk and sepia wash on paper]. Kunsthaus, Zurich.**



Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/f/fuseli/02antiqu.html

Figure 1.4: Piranesi, G. B. (c.1748) *Views of Rome* [Etching]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/362911?&searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=Giovanni+Battista+Piranesi&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=10

Figure 1.5: Panini, G. P. (1757) *Ancient Rome* [Oil on canvas]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437244

Figure 1.6: Panini, G. P. (1757) *Modern Rome* [Oil on canvas]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437245?&searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=Giovanni+Paolo+Panini&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=3

Figure 1.7: Batoni, P. (1766) *Portrait of Count Kirill Grigorjewitsch Razumovsky* [Oil on canvas]. Private Collection.



Source: Sotheby's Auctions, http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.83.html/2008/old-master-paintings-evening-sale-l08033

Among the contemporary Italian artists who were part of the international mix in Italy, Pompeo Batoni was a prominent figure. He was a renowned portraitist and a respected History painter.[6] He painted many portraits for the grand tourists and the Europeans sojourning in Italy. One of Batoni's most intense works in this specific context is the *Portrait of Count Kirill Grigorjewitsch Razumovsky* (1766) (Figure 1.7). The polish count is wearing all the prestigious attributes of his rank and home country. He has just posed his cane and hat on the chair. He points, with his right hand, at the ancient sculptures compiled behind him, and by extension, points out to us his erudite taste. The works in question are none other than the *Reclining Ariadne*, the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Laocoön.* This canvas and numerous similar works by Batoni are surviving proof of the material and multi-sensory appeal of the firsthand experience of Antiquity and Italy for eighteenth-century people.

1.1.1 The Particular Genesis of French Neoclassicism

France did not adopt the antique taste as fully and quickly as other European countries. The Academy, founded in the seventeenth century, had taken Italian arts as a model and therefore asserted the importance of the ancients. From 1745 to her death in 1764, Louis XV's mistress Mme de Pompadour had ruled the affairs and the artistic choices of the court. She had defined the Rococo age[7], by her support to François Boucher and other Rococo artists, and by placing those close to her in important positions in the administration of the arts (Fumaroli 2013, p.480). Upon Mme de Pompadour's death, the next mistress of Louis XV (reigned from 1715 to1774), Mme du Barry, supported a renewal of French aesthetics towards a relatively sober and severe style, especially towards the end of the King's life. She commissioned the famous Rococo painter Fragonard to paint a series of paintings for the Louveciennes pavilion. The series was titled *The Progress of Love*. When it was completed in 1773, she refused the paintings (Figure 1.8), returned them to Fragonard, and did not pay the artist. Instead, she commissioned Joseph-Marie Vien to paint a new series on the same subject, but in the new style (Fumaroli 2013, p.651). In other words, the last mistress of the libertine King

[6] For an explanation of History painting and of his status in the hierarchy of painting types in the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, see Table 3.1 on page 137.
[7] Indeed, Rococo and "Pompadour style" became synonyms (DeJean 2009, p.163).

was, in fact, one of the earliest patrons of the rising *à l'antique* taste. However, Mme du Barry, who survived the King and the scorn of Marie-Antoinette, did not survive the Revolution. She was sent to the guillotine. As to Vien, he had sojourned in Rome in 1750s and knew the Neoclassical style. He was the author of an engravings book titled *Suite de Vases Composée dans le Goût de l'Antique* (*Album of vases designed in the antique taste*) published in 1760. More importantly, he was David's teacher. David had initially wanted to study with Boucher (Figure 1.9), but the Rococo master had sent him to Vien, arguing a younger artist—with rising popularity—would offer a better future to the young talent (Fumaroli 2013, p.651). Vien's version of *The Progress of Love* replaced the French taffetas of Fragonard's protagonists with figures dressed *à la grecque* (Figure 1.10). His paintings were still Rococo in essence because they told a story of intimacy and love in a tender fashion and on a lush natural background. However, he was also introducing recently unearthed ancient motifs (Rosenblum 1974, p.20). A clearer example to Vien's ancient sources is *The Cupid Seller* (1763), in which he copies from an ancient fresco (Figures 1.11 and 1.12) (Rosenblum 1974, p.4).

It was during Louis XIV's reign from 1643 to 1715 that Italian arts and crafts had become referential as a model of manufacture and artistic taste and an adversary in the quest for the pride and prestige of France. The creation of the Academy in Paris was a move that paralleled similar institutional endeavors of the Sun King Louis XIV. Charles Le Brun was the director of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture and a student of Baroque painter Nicholas Poussin who became an academic model in the 1770s. Charles Le Brun designed a program of academic education anchored in the importance of the narrative to be represented and of the effective communication of its lesson through the gestures and facial expressions of the human figures. The annual competition of *tête d'expression* (expression head), established during this period, was still taking place during David's studentship (Figures 1.13 and 1.14) (Brookner 1987, p.47). The establishment of the *Prix de Rome* was another reflection of France's fascination by and competition with Italy (Brookner 1987, p.20). Each year, the student who won the first prize was sent to the French Academy of Rome. This prize was, as will be discussed later, the turning point in David's career. In sum, the Italian reference was shaping the administration, education and production of French arts under Louis XIV's reign.

In addition to the complicated influence of Louis XV's court and the legacy of Louis XIV's arts' administration, another vital element defined the visual arts in France in the eighteenth century was the biannual exhibition organized by the Academy of Painting and Sculpture called *Le Salon.* The exhibition was open to the general public and reflected the institutional taste of the age. *Le Salon* was a venue of recognition for young artists too. Importantly, *Le Salon* encouraged the development of a new literary genre, art criticism, and of a new intellectual figure that Anita Brookner called "the disapproving critic" (1987, p.14). The critical approach that accompanied the popularity of the *Salon* constituted a link between the worlds of art and philosophy. In other words, the *Salon* connected the eighteenth-century French arts to the broader movement of Enlightenment. The *philosophe* Denis Diderot wrote critiques of each *Salon* from 1759 to 1781. In fact, in his very last *Salon*, Diderot mentioned David's *Belisarius* noting that "He [David] has soul" (Diderot 2008, p.480). However, Diderot's critiques were written in the form of letters addressed to foreign subscribers, and they were published in France only after the philosopher's death. The first readers of the *Salons* did not have the possibility of seeing the originals of the works criticized by Diderot. Thus, his letters constituted the ground for an analysis of *ekphrasis* and inter-modality in eighteenth-century visual arts (Bryson 1981, pp.179-203).

The Enlightenment era was also defining eighteenth-century France by the revaluation of intimacy, privacy and sensibility in the *Salons littéraires*—not to be confused with the biannual exhibitions.[8] This other *Salon* was, typically, a private meeting in the house of a lady, attended by philosophers, artists and amateur intellectuals equally, and in which discussions of popular subjects took place. The number of literary salons was multiplying in the first half of the century because, after the death of Louis XIV in 1715, members of the court and intellectuals returned to Paris in search of their sense of privacy and intimacy lost under the Sun King's strict control mechanisms (Brookner 1987, p.13). Thus, a general atmosphere of intimacy, both physical and intellectual, as well as a series of new sensory and sentimental experiences took shape in eighteenth-century France.

[8] For a history of the literary Salons, see Lilti, A., 2015. *The world of the salons : sociability and worldliness in eighteenth-century Paris*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Figure 1.8: Fragonard, J-H. (1771-3) *Progress of Love: The Lover Crowned* [Oil on canvas]. The Frick Collection, New York.



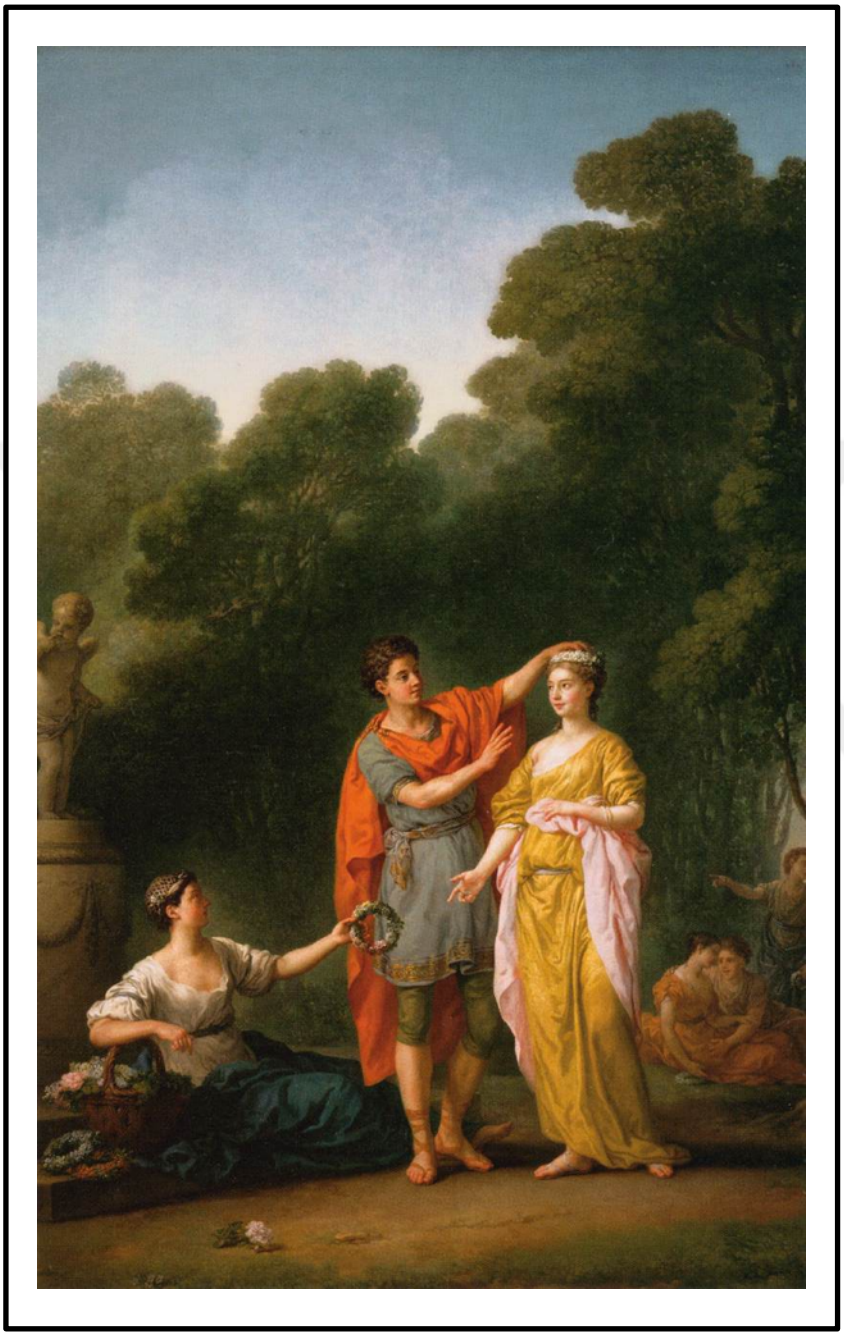
Source: The Frick Collection, https://collections.frick.org/objects/173/the-progress-of-love-the-lover-crowned

Figure 1.9: Boucher, F. (1750-58). *Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour* [Oil on canvas]. Harvard Art Museums, Massachusetts.



Source: Harvard Art Museums, https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/303561

Figure 1.10: Vien, J-M. (1773) *Progress of Love: Lover Crowning His Mistress* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



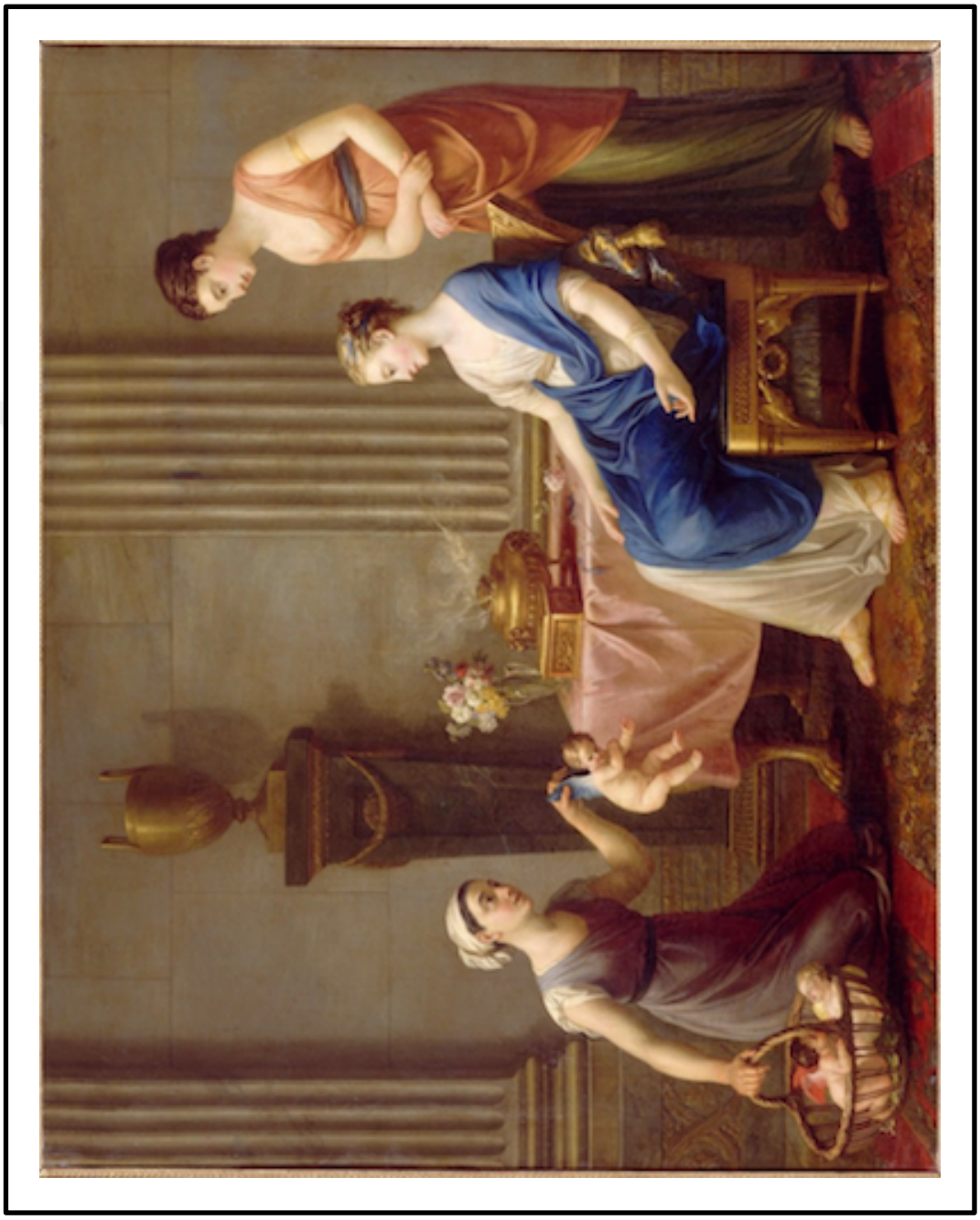
Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/v/vien/progres2.html

Figure 1.11: Artist unknown (A.D. 1-50) *The Cupid Sellers* [Fresco]. Villa di Arianna at Stabiae, Pompeii.



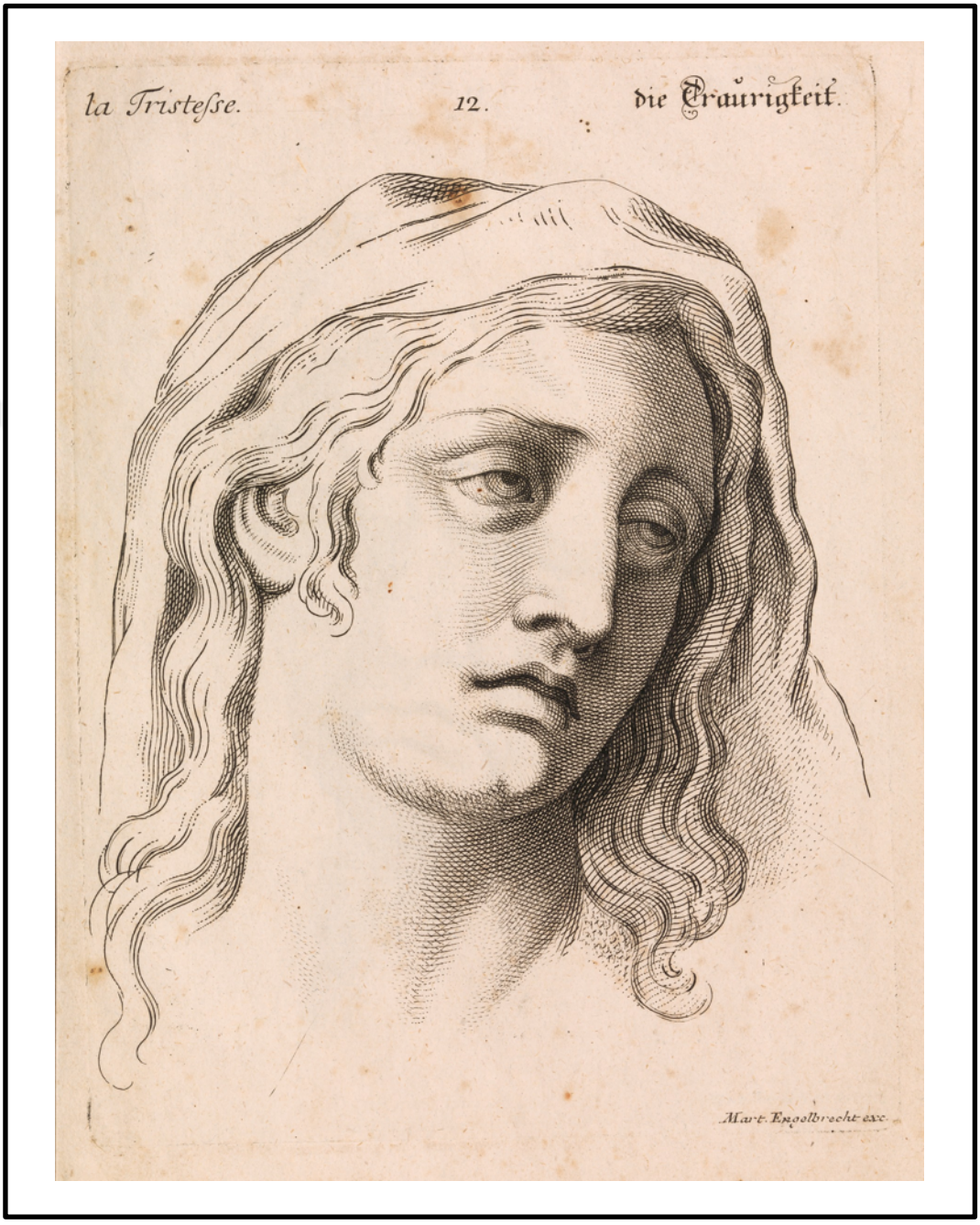
Source: The J. Paul Getty Museum, https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/pompeii/cupid_sellers.html

Figure 1.12: Vien, J-M. (1763) *The Cupid Seller* [Oil on canvas]. Musée National du Château, Fontainebleau.



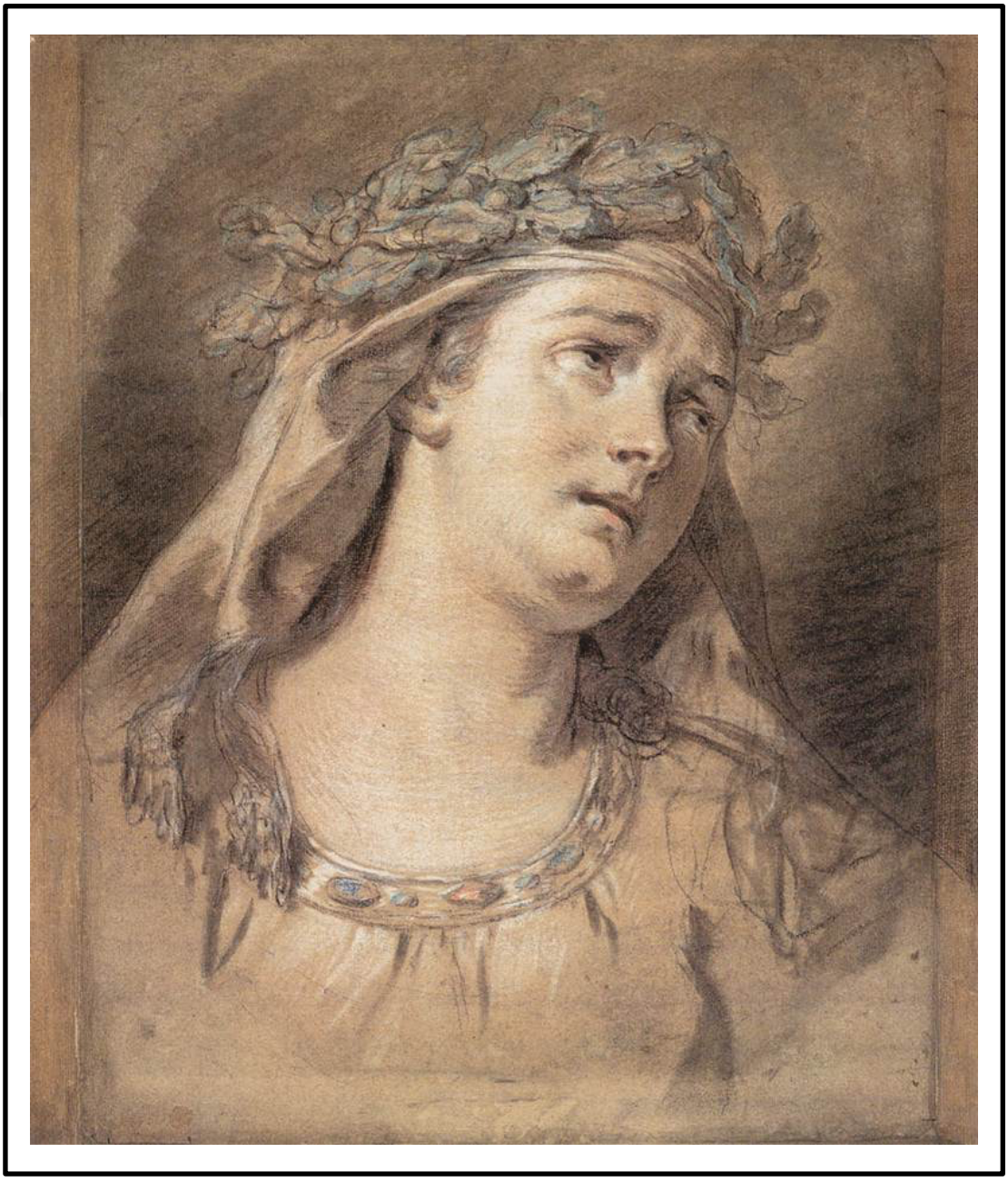
Source: The Athenaeum, https://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=119574

Figure 1.13: Le Brun, C. (1732) *Sadness* from the album *Expression of the passions of the soul* [Engraving]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/376816

Figure 1.14: David, J-L. (1773) *Sorrow* [Pastel]. Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris.



Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/d/david_j/index.html

As Paris was recuperating its ebullient cultural life and social networks, a typical figure of the French Enlightenment emerged: the *philosophe engagé*, in other words, the philosopher who actively engages himself in socio-political matters and aims to direct the society toward a better future. Three important *philosophes* of the era were Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau. All three philosophers died before the first sparks of the Revolution. After their deaths, these three philosophers became idols for a new generation of socially and politically engaged citizens. Voltaire's ideas were vital to the political and religious schemas that the first legislators of the Revolutionary movement wanted to establish. His tragedy, *Brutus* (1730), was re-staged during the early years of the Revolution with the closing scene copying David's eponymous painting (Feilla 2016, p.280). Significantly, Voltaire was the first Enlightenment figure to be pantheonized[9] in a ceremony designed by David and to be detailed in the last chapter. Rousseau was a vital reference for Robespierre who must have seen in this *promeneur solitaire* a kindred and similarly 'incorruptible' spirit. The most piercing example to Robespierre's inspiration in Rousseau is the organization of festivals to mark the most important anniversaries in the Republican calendar. The festival was a type of event that Rousseau preferred to that of theatre which he considered illusory and artificial (Brookner 1987, p.33). Finally, Diderot became an aesthetic reference for young artists like David, especially upon the posthumous publication of his critical reviews of the *Salons*. In other words, in addition to the historical mixture of the antique revivalist taste, French artists of the late eighteenth century took support from a mixture of Enlightenment aesthetics and politics.

1.1.2 Jacques-Louis David: An Unlikely Neoclassicist

The transition from Rococo aesthetics and the Enlightenment discussions to Neoclassicism and Revolution was physically and culturally painful. From the first meeting of the *États-Généraux* to Napoleon's seize of power, there was a constant revision of the official visual language, and a very prolific popular imagery. As power changed hands, from the National Assembly to the Convention, from the Jacobin Convention to the anti-Jacobin *Directoire*, the meanings of objects, figures, and motifs

[9] Pantheonization was the ceremony by which the remains of a person of national importance were transported to the Panthéon, a commemorative building designed by Quatremère de Quincy to replace the canons and churches of Christianity.

changed to a speed that turned—and cost—many heads. To give just the most obvious example, the guillotine, initially designed as the symbol of humane justice, became a cruel political weapon in the hands of Robespierre (Arasse 1989, pp.11-12). Nevertheless, the whirlwind history of the Revolution, especially of the first five years, is crucial to the arguments of this dissertation.

Jacques-Louis David's creative output during the first five years of the Revolution stood in-between the official and popular fields of revolutionary visual culture. David's interest in Revolutionary politics was initially motivated by a desire to react to the stubborn elitist politics of the Academy. As Brookner underlines in terms of human psychology, David's reaction to the Academy was fueled by a double rejection: that of his candidacy to the post of Director of the Academy in Rome and of his proposal to organize an exhibition of the works of his favorite student Drouais who died very young from cholera (Brookner 1987, pp.95-97). Later, during his days as a deputy in the Convention, David painted the first 'martyrs of the Revolution', who were publicized as such by the Jacobins and their leader Robespierre. By doing so, David established a Jacobin canon that participated in the Convention's ambition of shaping the lives and minds of the French people, of the emerging 'nation'. However, David was also the organizer, choreographer and stage designer of choice for the key events of the First Republic, like the pantheonization of Voltaire's remains, the funerals of Lepeletier and Marat, and Robespierre's Festival of the Supreme Being in the summer of 1794 (Greenhalgh 1989).

Both Anita Brookner and Norman Bryson remind us that in his formative years, David was not convinced by the antique style (Bryson 1984, p.38; Brookner 1987, p.49). However, by his own metaphoric admission and using another familiar trope of the century—the blind man gaining sight—David's "cataracts had been removed" upon his journey to Naples in 1779 (Schnapper & Sérullaz 1989, p.9). As I will discuss further, the paintings and sketches he created in Rome as part of his scholarship convey the enthusiasm of discovery. His painting *Funeral of Patroclus* and the frieze-like drawing depicting the funeral procession of an unnamed ancient hero (Figures 3.16, and 3.17) are ambitious in size and detail. Upon his return to Paris, David produced critically acclaimed History paintings like *Belisarius receiving alms* and *Andromache mourning Hector*

(Figures 3.21, and 3.22). These paintings have canonical value in the history of Neoclassical art. Moreover, they established David as a member of the Academy as a History painter and provided a flow of young students to his studio.

In the heyday of *La Terreur* established by Robespierre (see. Annex 1. Table 1.), David distilled his Neoclassical grammar to obtain the essence of its principles, and to employ these in the formulation of a haptic grammar that would be able to communicate with all the *citoyens* (citizens) of the new regime. Having failed to accompany Robespierre in his fatal fall, David got out of prison a slightly changed man. His post-Thermidor (post-Robespierre) portraiture shows a continuing interest in haptic effects. The History work he painted in this new stage of his life, *The Intervention of the Sabines* (1799) (Figure 1.15) is undeniably Neoclassical in form and choice of subject. However, David went on to become Napoleon's painter, and his portrayals of the Emperor and his deeds are, surprisingly, closer to the Romanticist style (Figure 1.16). It is only during the self-imposed exile to Brussels in the last phase of his life that David returned to the traditional core of Neoclassical subjects, delving deeper into Antiquity, specifically to discover the 'purity' of the Greek style in his Anacreonic paintings such as *The Anger of Achilles* (Figure 1.17). Even at this last stage, however, David was not a typical Neoclassicist. He was focusing, more than ever, on the haptic provocation of the eye through the glossy clarity of the image and the playful juxtaposition of depth and flatness.

To give an anecdotal example, *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*, which can be accepted as a post-revolutionary painting because of its metaphorical call to end violence, was exhibited with mirrors on the wall facing the canvas so that the beholder would feel immersed into the scene, creating an early form of installation (Desbuissons 2003, p.433). Applied to this painting of spectacular size, David's exhibition design proves that the artist did not limit his aesthetic research to the narrative and intellectual content communicated through visual representation. He envisioned an immersive experience of his picture(s) that would pull the body of the beholder into the scene, an experience by which the beholder would become aware of his/her own body and of its emplacement in relation to the picture. Thus, it would make sense to scratch the surface of disciplinary

readings of David's works and search for strategies created by David to give a much deeper grounding to the painted image beyond the retinal.

It must be noted that David was not the only artist interested in a renewal of sensory effects in painting, and more generally, in representational arts. Two very striking examples, one by a portraitist considered a stern royalist and the other by an adversary of David in the *Salons*, demonstrate the extent to which the introduction of instances of touch into the grammar of visual representation had proved to be a popular strategy. The first canvas is Rémy-Furcy Descarsin's *Portrait of a National Guard Officer and his Wife* from 1791, and the second is Pierre-Narcisse Guérin's *The Return of Marcus Sextus* from 1799, the same year as David's *Sabines* (Figures 1.18 and 1.19). Descarsin's double portrait shows us "two working-class centenarians [René Dogereau and his wife Perrine Trouillard] who were rescued from poverty by the local *Société des amis de la constitution*" (Freund 2014, p.105). The couple is looking directly at us, with a profound gaze and wrinkles that testify of their honest and laboring lives. The point in common between this and Guérin's painting is this motif of holding, of a physical grasp that translates the emotional state of the protagonist to visible form. Moreover, in Guérin's canvas, the physical contact is emphasized by its doubling. Marcus Sextus' daughter is wrapping her arms around her father's leg while the man who has just returned home and found his wife dead is holding her hand and staring into the void.

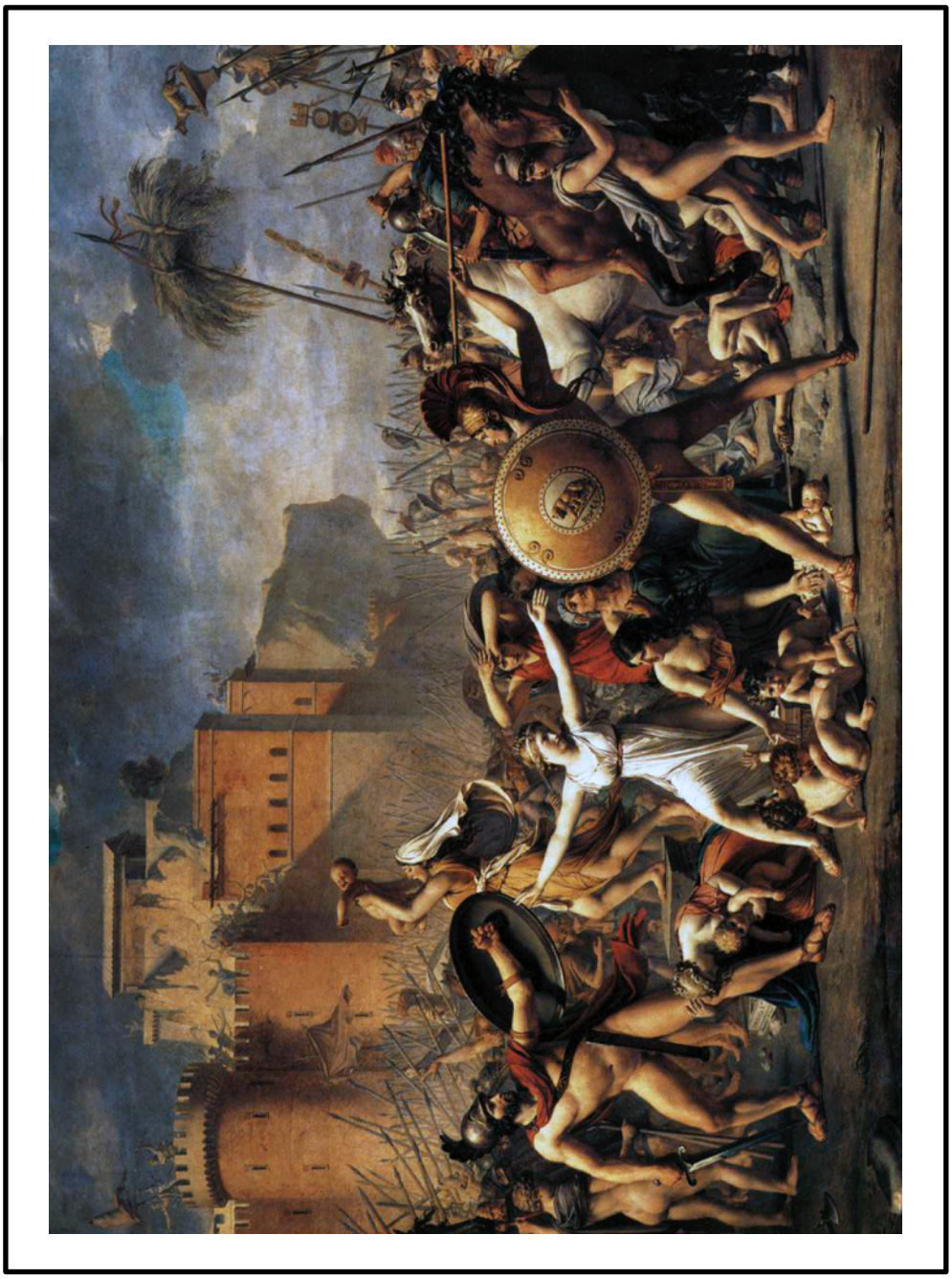
Neoclassicism and David's works are intersecting areas of study. However, David's aesthetic grammar exceeds the borders of the Neoclassical "doctrine," as Aby Warburg used to refer to this style (Warburg 1999, p.553). David both created the most memorable examples of French Neoclassicism and then proceeded to dismantle the basic visual principles of the style. He was able to do that thanks to the experimentative modifications he realized in the treatment of the spatial feel of the scene depicted. Consequently, the study of haptic effects in Neoclassicism could be the object of another study. Indeed, I believe that David was not the only artist marked by the first-hand sensory experience of Italy. I would argue, therefore, that ancient and early modern haptic tropes did have — borrowing another term by Warburg—an *afterlife* (*Nachleben*) in Neoclassicism. This was, in fact, the initial direction of the present research. The focus on David started to

take shape during an initial analysis of *The Death of Marat.* It became inevitable to analyze its predecessor, *Lepeletier de Saint Fargeau on His Deathbed* and its successor, *The Death of Young Bara* This analysis of David's martyrdom trilogy demonstrates that the painter did have a haptic awareness. This trilogy was the line of fault in David's life. It marked a before and an after, much more dramatically than his time in Rome, because his Jacobin days marked David's socio-political status for the rest of his life as well as for posterity. It also marked, I would argue, his post-Revolutionary visual production.

1.2 BUILDING SENSORY ARGUMENTS ON DAVID'S PAINTINGS

There is a rich literature on every aspect and phase of David's *oeuvre*. Especially, aspects of corporality in David's works attract the most attention because they enable research on the complex relationships between artistic style and social life. Two recent studies on the corporeal aspects of David's paintings are Ewa Lajer-Burcharth's *Necklines: the art of Jacques-Louis David after the Terror* (1999) and Satish Padiyar's *Chains : David, Canova, and the fall of the public hero in postrevolutionary France* (2007). These studies point at a rising scholarly interest in David's life and career after his active days of Jacobinism and time in prison as a result of his attachment to Robespierre. Additionally, Mark Ledbury's edited volume *David after David: essays on the later work* (2007) and Michael Fried's *Another light: Jacques-Louis David to Thomas Demand* (2014) point at the revaluation of the later phase of David's art, especially of the works produced during his self-exile in Brussels at the end of his life. David's stylistic innovations in the famous canvases he painted up to the beginning of the Revolution are thoroughly analyzed too. Seminal works paying extended attention to David's first phase of maturity include Albert Boime's *Art in an age of revolution, 1750-1800* (1987), Robert Rosenblum's *Transformations in late eighteenth-century art* (1989) and Dorothy Johnson's *Jacques-Louis David: art in metamorphosis* (1993). In other words, the corporeal and sensory aspects of, firstly, the very beginning and, secondly, the Revolutionary phase of David's career are still awaiting renewed analyses.

Figure 1.15: David, J-L. (1799) *The Intervention of the Sabines Women* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: Musée du Louvre, http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=22496&langue=fr

Figure 1.16: David, J-L. (1800-1) *Napoleon crossing the Alps* [Oil on canvas]. Château de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison.



Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/d/david_j/index.html

Figure 1.17: David, J-L. (1819) *The anger of Achilles* [Oil on canvas]. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth.



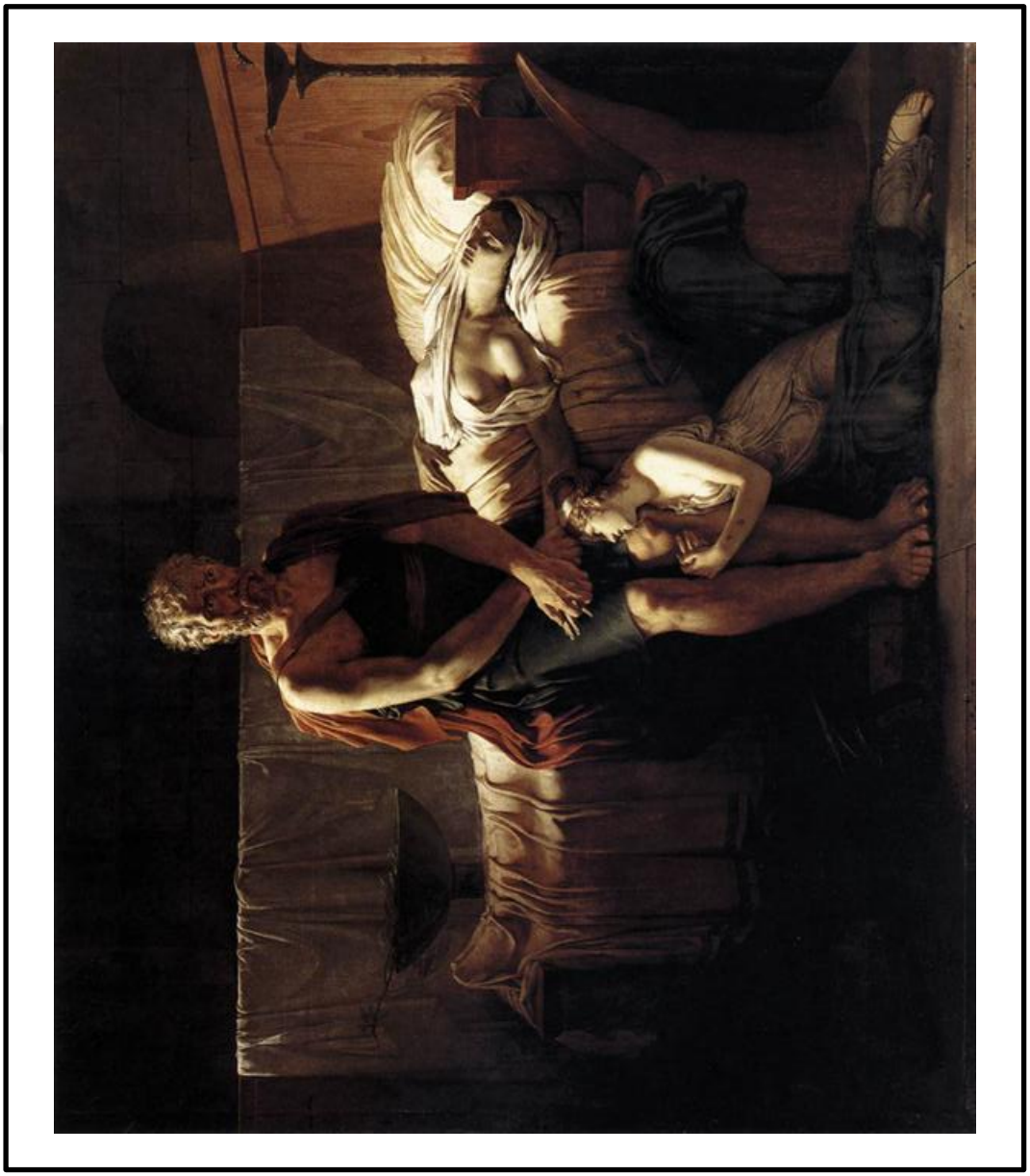
Source: Kimbell Art Center, https://www.kimbellart.org/collection/ap-198007

Figure 1.18: Descarsin, R.-F. (1791) *Portrait of a National Guard Officer and his Wife* [Oil on canvas]. Musée de la Révolution Française, Vizille.



Source: Rodama 1789, http://rodama1789.blogspot.com/2013/12/not-just-revolution-for-young.html

Figure 1.19: Guérin, P.-N. (1799) *The Return of Marcus Sextus* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/g/guerin/index.html

Despite the continuing popularity of Neoclassical arts and Jacques-Louis David's work for researchers interested in questions of corporeality in visual representation, there remains a gap in the literature. As mentioned above, art historians and visual culture scholars like Norman Bryson, Michael Fried, Dorothy Johnson, Satish Padiyar and Ewa Lajer-Burcharth convincingly analyzed the corporeal qualities of David's paintings. However, Sarah Cohen's 2014 account on eighteenth-century visual arts in *A cultural history of the senses in the age of Enlightenment, 1650-1800* does not discuss the sensory aspects of Neoclassicism, even though Sophia Rosenfeld analyzes the sensory world of the Revolutionary France within the same volume (Cohen 2014, Rosenfled 2014). In other words, the richness of the multi-sensory context of late eighteenth-century France is already recognized but the its reflection in the artistic world is still to be assessed.

The principles and visual grammar of the Neoclassical style were formulated in reaction to the sensual and material excesses of the Rococo style. Thus, the revival of ancient Greco-Roman style was an ideological move. However, it is not possible to explain the French Revolution as the work of a homogenous political group. People with incompatible political convictions played equally crucial parts in the Revolutionary momentum. By extension, the late eighteenth-century French sensorium, which constitutes part of the context in which the Neoclassical style was shaped, was a highly vivid one. French Neoclassicism was, indeed, avoiding the Rococo sensory language. However, the new visual style needed to take into account the lively sensorium of the era and create new sensory markers to be able to address the emerging French public.

At the end of the previous century, Albert Boime, Norman Bryson, Michael Fried and Dorothy Johnson had already laid bare threads of continuity, not only specifically between Boucher and David but also more generally between the world of *Ancien Régime* and the new age that the Revolution had opened. Social and semiotic readings of the culture and the arts of this transitional period which lasted from the 1780s to 1820s reminded us that the newly founded Republican regime did not have the luxury to dispense altogether with old habits as fast as the Jacobins, especially Robespierre, would have liked. Early republicans struggled to find replacement motifs, embodied figures and belief systems that could help them give the newly defined nation a sense of stability, to

emulate the one that the monarchic system was so strongly capable of exuding thanks to the image of the King. This struggle for the building of a new visual culture was an experimental ground that, today, constitutes an exciting field of research for sensory studies.

Art historical scholarship did witness its own revolutionary moment towards the end of the twentieth century, as I will elaborate below. The disciplinary efficacy and frontiers of Art History were questioned from within by the emergence of Visual Culture Studies. At the same time, David Howes and Constance Classen were heralding the field of Sensory Studies. Although it emerged mainly from anthropological and ethnographical research, Sensory Studies is based on interdisciplinary principles. Monographic works such as François Quiviger's *Sensory World of the Italian Renaissance Art* (2010), and C. M. Woolgar's *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (2013) have rigorously allied art historical and sensory methodologies. Surprisingly, however, such an alliance is yet to be formed on David and Neoclassicism. This dissertation aims to take a step further in the analysis of sensory thinking and design in David's paintings up to artist's Napoleonic phase, paying special attention to what it considers to be the most dramatic point in the evolution of his sensory language: the portraits of three Revolutionary (Jacobin) martyrs.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THESIS PLAN

The art historical literature on Jacques-Louis David's *oeuvre* invites a series of questions that we can formulate with a sensory approach:

Firstly, can visual artworks created in a physically and psychologically violent era like the Revolution avoid all sensory cues? By extension, can we fully understand David's particular aesthetic grammar without taking into account the changes in the sensory culture of France in the Enlightenment age and during the Revolution? Is it possible, for example, to understand *The Death of Marat* without assessing the culture of viscera and touch in an era of regicide? Similarly, is it possible to see "pure ideology" or discursivity in the works of an artist known, by his contemporaries, as a temperamental individual and Robespierrist?

Secondly, what were the visual elements and extra-visual strategies by which the ideological grounds of French Neoclassicism—in its attachment to the revolutionary momentum—were communicated to the emergent new public? Thus, in what specific ways David's cultural and political position shaped his individual aesthetic journey? For example, in what ways did David imagine that the martyrdom-image of Marat would keep the messages of *l'Ami du peuple* alive for the people?

Thirdly, in what specific ways did David's experience of Italy and antiquity influence his visual grammar? For instance, are there any haptic qualities in his study sketches from ancient relief sculptures? Consequently, how can we analyze David's crafting of a new sensory language that aims to reach out to a demographically complex new public and to differentiate itself from the Rococo associations of sensuality and debauchery?

To answer these questions, we must first address a fourth and bigger one: what should be the fundamental elements of a multi-sensory methodology in art historical writing? More specifically, how can we renew the linguistic analysis of visual artworks with terms that would efficiently address the multi-sensory aspects of the artworks in question?

The discipline of art history stands on a strong tradition of bimodality: that of the written analysis of what is seen. Projecting the foundations of its own bi-modality onto works of visual representation, the disciplinary tradition of art historical writing operates by pairs of layers such as form / content, visual / narrative, media / meaning. As visual culture studies posed new questions to canonical artworks in addition to proposing to expand the canon itself, sensory studies can claim new dimensions in the analysis of canonical works too. Thus, this dissertation aims to define a liminal[10] area, a gap between form and content, between the visual and narrative dimensions of visual representation. It aims to address how sensation is shaped between form and content. It argues, therefore, that there is a third dimension in visual artworks that it proposes to call *the sensate*[11].

[10] Liminal: of, relating to, or situated at a sensory threshold : barely perceptible or capable of eliciting a response. From https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liminal

[11] Sensate: relating to or apprehending or apprehended through the senses. From: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sensate

The major issue with such a claim is the highly subjective character of sensation. For example, the same perfume can remind one person of a cherished love story and have absolutely no effect on another person. In other words, sensation is connected to feeling and emotion too. Also, it is difficult to translate sensation, as well as feeling and emotion, into language. Can we ever analyze, then, 'the sensate' dimension of a visual artwork? Michael Podro gives a piercing definition of the key point in Hegel's aesthetic theory. According to Podro, Hegel was asking in what ways painting can be, or is, thought-like (Podro 1982, p.18). Can we, therefore, dare to ask in what ways visual representation can be sense-like? This, I believe, is the refreshing perspective that sensory studies should bring to traditional art historical analysis. Sensory readings should not be limited to the spotting of sensory objects that are clearly visible in the artworks. To give an example, sensory analysis should not be about looking for incense burners to allow us to talk about olfactory effects in a painting. Such examples are essential to sensory reading but do not embody the whole spectrum of possibilities for researching multi-modality in visual arts. Do we not talk about *taste* in the arts and aesthetics? Does not this synesthetic metaphor already prove that the experience of representation is multi-modal, multi-sensory in essence?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, I will discuss them in two main parts: a literature review and a case study. The literature review aims to provide, firstly, a history of touch and haptics in artistic media from Greco-Roman antiquity to eighteenth-century France. Secondly, I will trace the emergence of sensory studies and its application to art historical subjects. In other words, in the literature review, I will elaborate on two parallel reviews: one historical and one theoretical. I will conclude the literature review with a methodological proposition to lay down a toolkit for the analysis of haptic effects in David's works.

The case study gives this dissertation its title *Dying Gestures in Artistic Media: Haptic Effects in Jacques-Louis David's Portraits of Revolutionary Martyrs.* Its first and foremost aim is to convince the reader that Jacques-Louis David's aesthetic language did have a multi-sensory character. More specifically, it aims to demonstrate that David

tailored new haptic effects to match the narrative and socio-political requirements of his time, and in doing so, he referred to his previous sensory experience of ancient, Renaissance and Baroque art in Italy. The argument on hapticity opposes the initial assumption, in sensory studies sources, that Neoclassicism, including David's works, was an anti-sensory visual language. My haptic argument is, in turn, continuous and compatible with the corporeal and gestural readings of David's works in previous art historical writing.

The title *Dying Gestures* aims for two different but simultaneous readings: Firstly, it aims to say that, over his long career, David slowly reversed the order of importance between gesture and haptic contact. In other words, it says that some gestural principles slowly died, disappeared from David's aesthetic grammar. The three paintings of revolutionary martyrs mark the point of origin of this subversion of traditional pictorial balance between gestural and surface effects. This is why they are the focus of this dissertation. Obviously, as an artist formed in the tradition of History painting, David never entirely abandoned gesture. He did, however, have to find new ways of conveying narrative through a particular type of body that could not move: the martyr. David had to paint a factually dead body in a way that it would exude the same sense of drama that exuded from the dynamic gesture of an ancient hero. He chose, I argue, to rely on haptic effects around the body of the martyr to achieve this goal. That is, exactly, where the second possible reading of the title emerges. Indeed, David did not abandon gesture but transformed it from a movement into a form and moment of contact. Thus, in David's portrayals of Lepeletier, Marat and Bara, dying is embodied and it gestures toward the beholder.

I should precise that, in addition to David's works after 1793, this dissertation excludes the rich body of his work in portraiture (of the living), with an exception specifically included in connection to the analysis of *The Death of young Bara*. Moreover, in terms of the works he created up to the Revolutionary trilogy of martyrdom, only specifically relevant details of the works most relevant to the main argument of the thesis are included. These decisions aim to keep the scope of the dissertation visible at all times. David is one of the most studied artists in the history of French arts. Attempting to write a new monograph on the artist as a postgraduate dissertation would be an exercise in missed

opportunities. That said, the haptic argument that emerges from David's martyrdom portraits is, in my opinion, an argument that can be followed up in the rest of David's career. Moreover, a newly emerging language of hapticity is not a phenomenon limited to David's works, and need to be studied in the more general framework of late eighteenth-century visual arts in France. To demonstrate, also, that the artistic context was paralleled by a corporally charged popular visual culture, I briefly introduced salient bodily motifs in the popular Revolutionary prints.

To conclude, *Dying Gestures* argues that, throughout the different phases of his private, political and artistic life, Jacques-Louis David developed a complex understanding and practice of haptic effects in visual representation. It argues that the most dramatic moment of this haptic understanding in evolution is to be found in the trilogy of Revolutionary martyrdom portraits that David executed in 1793. *Dying Gestures* aims to demonstrate that David's particular sensory awareness was rooted in the artist's experience of Italy, in the years he spent at the French Academy of Rome and discovered the haptic appeal of the visual arts of previous historical periods. A more general objective of this dissertation is to develop a methodological frame that will enable the analysis of haptic effects. As the following argument perfectly summarizes, our sensory perception is as much a part of, and shaped by, the cultural and political context in which we live as a subjective and cognitive matter: "The perceptual is *cultural* and *political*, and not simply (as psychologists and neurobiologists would have it) a matter of cognitive processes or neurological mechanisms located in the individual subject" (Bull, Gilroy, Howes & Kahn 2006, p.5).

In fact, the relationship described above is mutual: the cultural and political are perceptual too. The particular sensorium of an era and area is part of the shaping of its cultural and political conventions. Moreover, the pictorial communication of cultural and political content requires strategies by which the picture-maker can shape the perceptual experience of the beholder in ways that can direct the beholder towards the aimed content, narrative, message, information or *morale*. Thus, the three portraits of Revolutionary martyrdom that David painted in 1793 provide a welcome challenge through which the haptic effects used by the painter can be analyzed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides two reviews in the guise of one. The general argument of the present dissertation is that Jacques-Louis David reformulates the sensory regime of French painting by building complex haptic effects. Thus, the literature review is designed to provide a comprehensive ground for this particular art historical case study that employs sensory methodologies. In the first part of the literature review, I survey the intellectual origins of the culture of touch in late eighteenth-century French painting. In the second part, I focus on the theoretical and methodological roots of sensory approaches to art historical themes.

The first part is, in other words, a historical review that assesses the value of touch and haptic thinking in the arts and aesthetics of Antiquity, Italian Renaissance, Italian and French Baroque and, finally, French Rococo. These geographic and historical paradigms are the pillars on which French Neoclassicism stood. Addressing both primary and secondary sources on the subject, the historical review aims to sketch out the tactile and haptic basics of the canon of visual representation that defined the norms of artistic formation in Jacques-Louis David's lifetime. It begins by addressing the epistemological, artistic and aesthetic case studies on the ambiguous, yet vital status of touch in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Then, it outlines the tactile roots of *vividness* in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque. Finally, it analyzes the actuality of the sense of touch in France in the first half of the eighteenth century. The objective of this selective chronology is to mark the fundamental references of the particular cultural context in which David's haptic perception was shaped. Moreover, such an overview presents the advantage of introducing the key concepts of the sensory-visual analyses that will take place in the following chapter.

The second half of this chapter consists of a theoretical review and a methodological proposal. The theoretical review surveys the emergence of sensory studies in its relationship to disciplinary art history, and then, presents a critical review of the key sensory concepts in the works of early formalist art historians Alois Riegl and Aby

Warburg, as well as their influence on Wolfgang Kemp's formulation of Reception Aesthetics, and their most recent re-readings by Margaret Iversen, Matthew Rampley and Georges Didi-Huberman. Finally, I propose a methodological toolkit for the analysis of multi-sensory aspects in visual representation.

The historical review chapter refers to several artworks and their analyses by art historians like Michael Baxandall and Norman Bryson. These analytical examples aim to demonstrate the usefulness of combining iconological and cultural methods for the study of multi-sensory topics in visual arts. Riegl and Warburg were among the earliest art historians to use such a combined methodological approach. They studied particular visual motifs and their metamorphoses within broader cultural processes and phenomena. Therefore, the theoretical review analyzes the dynamic and open nature of their terminologies and methodologies.

2.1 ENTANGLEMENTS: A HISTORY OF TOUCH FROM CLASSICAL TO NEOCLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY AND ARTISTIC MEDIA

One question was omnipresent in the history of philosophy from Antiquity to the eighteenth-century: What is the hierarchy of the senses? The question seemed easy at first sight. The eye is the sensory organ that keeps a distance with its object of perception. Therefore, sight was deemed the sense least entangled in the mundane physicality and dangerous sensuality of things. It was the only sense capable of abstracting thought and knowledge from sensation. However, the sense of touch frequently challenged the sensory hierarchy, and sometimes even threatened the throne of vision. Different philosophers placed the sense of touch in different orders in the hierarchy. Thus, the value of touch kept changing from lowest, as the provocateur of carnal sins, to highest, as the metaphoric prototype of all sensory process.

As seen in the case for the primacy of vision, the major factor defining the sensory hierarchy was whether a sense could be considered a reliable source in the building of new knowledge or not. Proximate senses, it was argued, had to be left out of intellectual processes because of their inherently illusory effects and sensual provocation of the body. These initial questions were also transposed to the realm of aesthetics: What was the

hierarchy among music, poetry, painting and sculpture? Pairs of comparison, like painting versus sculpture and painting versus poetry, gave birth to fundamental parables of representation (i.e. *ut pictura poesis*) and methods of transmodal expression (i.e. *ekphrasis*).

In the Baroque age, following the institutionalization of visual arts by the founding of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in France, the question was also applied to the hierarchy among the subjects of visual representation in general, and of painting in particular. Larger canvases and better payments were reserved to the genre of History Painting, because of its laudable subjects: great deeds and moments of the history of western civilization. What was at stake in this proliferation of hierarchies was not only the value of the work of art but also, and more importantly, the place of the artist in the society. In sum, the hierarchical frame of mind proved a fertile ground for the shaping of visual representation as well as the formation of a European culture of the senses.

2.1.1 Antiquity

Antiquity's schematic approach to the senses was the reflection of a general anxiety to organize and hierarchize knowledge and to understand the realm of *logos* (i.e. reason, or reasoning) (Fowler 2011, pp.45,47). We still generally presume to operate through five distinct senses.[12] However, contemporary neurocognitive science challenges the strict partition of the five senses by studying the idiosyncratic condition of the "union of the senses" called *synesthesia* (Cytowic 2014). Moreover, scientists expand the initial list of five by adding to it proprioceptive modalities such as thermoception (the perception of heat), kinesthesia (a body's inner perception of its own movement) and equilibrium (the sense of balance) as complex individual senses. Ancient philosophers had already discussed some of these modalities from the 5th century BC onwards. To give only one example, Aristotle had studied thermoception while discussing the sensory pairs of

[12] In his study on allegories of touch in medieval to early modern European painting, Carl Nordenfalk insists that "Whatever modern psychology may have to say, we still count the Senses as five, and only five […]" (1996, p.109). Indeed "the five senses" are an essential item in our contemporary general knowledge. However, even Nordenfalk's own examples show that the complexity and the possible multiplicity of the senses were keenly acknowledged in pre-industrial eras, especially in the case of touch. To cite only one example, Rembrandt's *The sense of touch* (c.1624) depicts the first incision in an operation (muscle precision and pain), the hands of the patient in fists (pressure), and a candle burning very close to the faces of the protagonists, hence providing not only light but also heat.

hot/cold and moist/dry. He thought of heat in tactile terms. Defining, grouping and ordering sensory modalities were part of Aristotle's aim to make the soul and the world intelligible.

The life of the senses in the ancient Greco-Roman worlds had two fundamental branches. The first one was mythological, in which the visual languages of allegory and personification originated. The second was epistemological. It englobed all theories on *Logos* and *Psyche* (i.e. soul), and on the hierarchy of the senses. Chronologically, myths and magical thought preceded philosophy and, therefore, epistemology. Subsequently, however, myths were transformed and incorporated into philosophical explanations (Fowler 2011, p. 45; Guthrie 1989, pp. 12, 16). A notable example of this is the use of the myth of Er by Plato in his *Republic.* According to this myth, the *psyche* travels to the world of *Ideai* (the ultimate forms and patterns of which real ones are just the shadows) upon the death of the body for purification. The *Psyche* then returns to the world of human existence but has to cross the river *Lethe,* the river of oblivion, on its way back into a human body. This, according to Plato, is the reason why humans cannot have a clear memory of the *Psyche*'s existence in the world of the *Ideai.* In his theory, senses serve as fragmentary reminders of what the psyche had learnt in the realm of Truth, in the world of the *Ideai* (Guthrie 1989, pp. 97-98).

In the same vein, from the highest point of the Greek to the Roman era, the visual renderings of mythological characters, intrigues and lessons were guided by and interwoven with epistemological concerns. Consequently, Greco-Roman mythology and epistemology became the pillars of haptic and multi-sensory effects in visual representation. Perhaps the most significant example to the coming together of mythological subjects with epistemological reflections in the form of painted representations of sensory events is the enduring myth of Pygmalion. This myth is to be detailed in the coming pages, but to briefly introduce it, Pygmalion is a male sculptor who swears to remain celibate but then falls in love with the female statue he creates. The statue miraculously comes to life, because Aphrodite 'breaths' life into her. This story of mythological *inspiration* (breathing life into) and *incarnation* (becoming flesh) was recorded by ancient Roman author Ovid in *Metamorphoses* around 8 AD. However, Pygmalion's tale became a metaphor of Art. It constituted the ultimate challenge: to

"recreate" flesh with paint. It also became an essential story on the tormenting relationship of an artist to his/her *creation* (which the artist often takes to be a *creature*). The most poignant examples to the referentiality of Pygmalion are the stories of Pinocchio and Frankenstein.

Painted and literary versions of the Pygmalion myth multiplied over the subsequent centuries, but especially proliferated during the Baroque and Rococo eras (Stoichita 2008, Carr 1960). There is, for example, a melodramatic play titled simply *Pygmalion* (1770) written by none other than the Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Interestingly, the story fell from grace during the French Revolution. In a way, the darker side of the story took over: the sculptural body that gained life miraculously was replaced by the martyred body that died courageously and very much consciously. Pygmalion's story became popular again in the nineteenth century but its sculptural representations remained rare. While the most cited sculptural example is from the eighteenth-century artist Etienne-Maurice Falconet, created in 1763, the nineteenth-century master Auguste Rodin also has a work on the subject, initially modelled in 1889 (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

Classically, then, especially painters found in the story of Pygmalion an effective way to embody the miraculous nature of art, the near-liveliness of an artistic 'creation'. Pygmalion founded the earliest aesthetic problems, notably that of the illusory nature of visual representation, and it motivated sensory thinking. A famously half-quoted Greek saying reminds that *seeing is believing touching is knowing* (Purves 2017, pp.19-20). Hence the ancient Greek conviction that art could fool the eyes, but not the hands. In painting, this paradox was best embodied by the rising value of the *trompe-l'oeil* effect. *Trompe-l'oeil*, meaning an 'eye deceiver' in French, is a type of image that creates such a perfect illusion of reality that the picture is mistaken for the real thing. Even though the name of the effect is relatively recent, the earliest known example of this type of image was observed in an ancient Greek painting competition, as told by the Roman intellectual Pliny the Elder.

Pliny recounts the event in the Book 36 of his encyclopedic work *Natural History* which was completed in 77 AD. The aim of the competition was to decide who was the best

painter between Zeuxis and Parrhasius. Zeuxis was the first to reveal his work. He had painted a boy holding some grapes. When the painting was revealed, birds flew towards the grapes, hoping to have a nibble. Zeuxis and the spectators of the competition then turned to Parrhasius' work, thinking he had already lost. Zeuxis urged him to pull up the curtain covering his canvas and reveal the painting underneath. He discovered, to his own despair, that the curtain *was* the painting. While Zeuxis had fooled the birds, Parrhasius had fooled a painter. In other words, Zeuxis had fooled the animals but Parrhasius had fooled an intellectual being and a professional artist.

When we consider this story together with Pygmalion's, we realize that the ancients imagined a compelling relationship between presence and representation, and movement was an important part of this relationship. The statue moved, the curtain invited us to move ourselves and to move it. Thus, the ancients did not isolate the body from the eye. *Trompe-l'oeil* creates, also, a paradoxical status for painting and visual perception. The story of Zeuxis and Parrhasius is both a proof to the level of perfection that painters can aspire to, and, a warning about the credulous nature of human vision. In other words, it is a critical reminder of Plato's mimetic theory. Parrhasius is praised for his skill, but we should remember that those who actually "reach out to touch" the image are the birds, the animals, and not the thinking humans. However, the outcome of the competition between Zeuxis and Parrhasius demonstrates that the sense of touch, even without the act of touching, is inherent to the viewing and validation of painting since Antiquity.

Significantly, during the Enlightenment, ancient literature was widely translated to French, and Antiquity had already become a model of free, honest and courageous thinking. The letters of famous Enlightenment *philosophes* demonstrate that sources like Ovid and Pliny were popular references among intellectuals. It is now time to turn over to the major philosophers of Ancient Greece and Rome to understand the value that touch adds to visual representation.

Figure 2.1: Falconet, E-M. (1763) *Pygmalion and Galatea* [Marble]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: Musée du Louvre, http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=541&langue=en

Figure 2.2: Rodin, A. (modeled 1889 - carved 1909) *Pygmalion and Galatea* [Marble]. The Metropolitan Museum, New York.



Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/191292

2.1.1.1 Ancient Greek Philosophers on the Ambiguity of Touch

Ancient Greek philosophers' valuation of the senses, as well as their understanding of the overall function of the human sensoria, depended on the reliability, accuracy and permanence of the knowledge that sensory perception was capable of yielding. This approach defined the hierarchical order of the senses. Each sense was as trustworthy, therefore superior to the others, as the objective nature of the data it procured. The sense of sight was generally considered to be at the top of the hierarchy. This was due to its capacities of simultaneity and abstraction, which, for the ancient frame of mind, were guarantees of direct contact with the object in question and the intelligibility of its analysis. In sum, the reliability, accuracy and permanence of sensorially obtained data depended on the distance between the perceiving subject and the perceived object to ensure that bodily (subjective) sensations did not corrupt the incoming information.

The ranking of the senses sprung from three essential aspects. Firstly, as mentioned above, the provocative association between the proximate senses (smell, taste, and touch) and the bodily sensations of pleasure, lust, disgust, pain, pushed philosophers to isolate these senses from the production of knowledge. Secondly, the subject of the five senses, especially in Xenophon and Aristotle, was also part of a larger comparative study of the differentiation of human and animal biologics, which included the question on the origin of human bipedalism. The human beings' walking on two feet was supposedly the result of an inclination to, or motivation by, sight. Thus the noblest sense should be the one that made us look forward and upward.[13] Finally, the changing nature of Reality (or, the world as we perceive it, as opposed to Truth) motivated the thinkers of Antiquity to doubt any sensory data in the quest to understand *Logos*. Only intermittently were sight and hearing given passage to join this quest. In the case of sight, the understanding of forms and proportions, and in the case of hearing, the mathematical language of musical notes and harmony, meant that these two senses did have links to abstract thinking. The underlying ambiguity of such approaches is reflected in the ways in which Heraclitus of Ephesus and Democritus refer to senses. Heraclitus argues that senses are "bad witnesses" for those

[13] Later, following the same argument, Renaissance neo-Platonists saw in bipedality a proof that the human being had become closer to divinity by his ability to look upwards and therefore sight was underlined as the noblest sense in Renaissance philosophy (Boyle 1998, p. XIII)

who “have barbarian souls” (Clements 2014, p. 117). He warns that senses may fool us if we don’t allow logic to guide our sensory perceptions. Democritus refers to sensory perceptions as “dark knowledge”. He argues that these perceptions require a trustworthy instrument to decode them, but he also insists that sensory perceptions are “yet knowledge without which the mind would be helpless” (Clements 2014, p. 116).

To the above ambiguity of the epistemological approach to sensory hierarchy and status, we must add the difficulty of defining the ancient meaning of ‘touch’. In *The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle,* William K. C. Guthrie insists that ancient Greek meanings and associations of some words still in use today were crucially different from ours (Guthrie 1989, p. 5). A similar glide, admittedly of register rather than entirely of definition, exists between the ancient Greek form *haptestai,* of which the accepted translation is ‘touch’, and the contemporary use of the term ‘haptic’, which englobes tactile action but also refers to a larger theoretical configuration. Therefore, concepts like ‘tact’ and ‘tactility’ (coming from the Latin *tactus*) don’t point at the same definition as “haptic/s”, and *haptestai* does not exactly or simply mean ‘touch’.[14] Etymologically, *haptestai* includes ‘grasping’, a specific form of touching that immediately intersects touch and thinking. From the same lexical group, ‘haptikos' means “that which is able to come into contact with”, and *haptein*, from which the word ‘synapse’ derives, means ‘to fasten’. In short, when we talk about ‘touch’ in ancient Greek philosophy, we are, in fact, referring to a conglomerate of sensory modalities such as pressure, shape, texture translated via actions such as caressing, grasping, or tying (Purves 2017, p.17). Therefore, the concept of ‘haptic’ is hyperdimensional.

Pre-Socratic theories on the senses focused on the relationship between perception and truth. Rather than excluding sensory perception from the epistemological quest, these early philosophers generally argued for caution in the employment of the information obtained through the senses. While Democritus argued that senses provide “dark knowledge” to be filtered and organized by logic and reason, Heraclitus warned that

[14] It should be noted as well that the correspondences of the word *touch* in English and its French counterparts is complex: *Le toucher* can mean, at once, “the sense of touch”, “the act of touch”, and “touching that thing”. *La touche* refers to the specific touch, or retouch, of the artist on the artwork. It is also linked to *une tache* meaning a stain or mark. *Tact* is a specific and metaphoric use of the sense of touch in French Enlightenment whereby *avoir du tact* means, among other things, knowing how to act in sensitive and complex situations.

senses were “bad witnesses” for those who have “barbarian souls” (Clements 2014, pp.116-117). However, the most influential arguments on the link between sensory perception and knowledge is in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave”. Writing as a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon, Plato builds a cave in which people are prisoners watching the shadows on the wall in front of them. Light is coming from the entrance of the cave behind and above them. The prisoners and the cave represented us, humans, in the world of Reality. Thus, everything we see in this world are mere shadows cast by the light of the realm of Truth. This design is, in itself, an echo of Plato’s story on *Psyche*’s reminiscences of the *Ideai* left behind on the other shore of the river *Lethe*. The aim of the “Allegory” is to demonstrate the transcendence of philosophical knowledge and the difficulty of convincing the common citizen of the Truth in it. Thus, an underlying point in Plato’s story is that the worldly knowledge, for which humans usually refer to their sensory perceptions, is essentially incomplete.

Plato bans artists from the *Republic*, arguing that representation results in secondary copies of true forms and, therefore, in the ethical degeneration of the citizens. He believes that perfect *mimesis* (imitation of nature) is essentially flawed and its beholders would become flawed too. This platonic argument passed into the post-iconoclastic European Christian painting in the form of an aesthetic principle: painting was not supposed to recreate Reality perfectly but to suggest Truth to the imagination of the beholder. Thus, as will be discussed further, the perfect perspectives in the Renaissance Florentine paintings were still not mistakable for Reality because they were stripped bare of daily details.

Plato’s ‘idealist’ perspective is contrasted by Aristotle’s more earthly handling of the sensory categories. Contemporary studies generally agree that both philosophers prioritize sight (Kambaskovic & Wolfe 2014, p.107). However, just as the juxtaposition of sight and sound in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” is largely overlooked, the nuances that Aristotle brings to the hierarchical order of the senses in his different texts are awaiting further analysis too. In her chapter on Aristotle, Rebecca Steiner Goldner reminds us that the philosopher insists on the importance of touch in *De Anima,* having previously defended the primacy of sight in *Metaphysics* (Harvey 2003, p.4). In fact, as we shall see below, the obscurity of touch haunts Aristotle, because it does not fit

perfectly with his threefold explanation of the sensory perception. However, he still argues that touch is a vital and unique sense for humans. In his opinion, touch is the only sense without which no animal could survive. It is also, he observes, the only sense in the use of which humans excel over animals (Harvey 2003, p.11).

Still, touch is a daunting sense to frame by standard sensory theory because its perceptual fluidity does not fit in with the same categories as the other four traditional senses. In *De Anima* (in the chapter *De Sensu*), Aristotle defines sensory perception as a mechanism with three components: object, medium, organ (Purves 2017, pp.16-17). Then, he studies each sense based on this tripartite working of its perception. He starts by sight and arrives to touch only at the end not because he values touch the least, but on the contrary, because he implicitly demonstrates that at the root of all intelligent perception is the tactile sense. Aristotle's opposition to Plato's banishment of mimetic arts is based on their cathartic potential. *Catharsis, "*the process of releasing, and thereby providing relief from, strong or repressed emotions"[15] is, according to Aristotle, an effective method for the ethical formation and wellbeing of the citizens. The cathartic model of engaging with arts is a highly embodied one because it implies the establishment of a perceptive channel between the beholder and the work of art, through which both meaning and sensation can travel.[16]

Aristotle's theory on the mechanism of sensory perception occurs is similar to his cathartic schema. He argues that there are three main elements in sensory perception: the object, the medium, and the sense organ. Objects can either be "special objects" which are specific to one sense alone, as color is to sight, or "common sensibles" which are perceptible by more than one sense, as form can be perceived both by sight and touch. The medium occupies a distance. The object sets the medium in movement and, then, this movement is perceived by the organ of sense (ibid).

[15] "Catharsis" as defined in the Oxford Dictionary Online, accessed May 22, 2018. From: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/catharsis

[16] It should be further discussed whether French Neoclassicism did have a "cathartic" agenda. The proponents of the *à l'antique* style certainly prioritized the instructive function of visual representation, aiming to motivate the spectator to act appropriately. However, the cathartic model could still help us understand the nature of the link that David was trying to establish between his paintings and his projected beholder throughout his career, because of the traumatic turns he experienced in his political situation and artistic career.

The sense of touch poses a particular problem at each step of the above model. To begin with, Aristotle struggles to find a special object for the sense of touch. Instead, he has to proceed based on his observation that touch functions by sensible pairs (i.e., hot/cold, dry/moist) which imply states rather than objects. Then, he struggles to pin down the organ of touch. He tests the idea that it could be flesh. Objects 'placed on flesh' are perceived. For example, we do feel the coldness and sharpness of a cube of ice placed on our arm. In his model, however, there must be a certain distance between the object and the organ of sense so that the medium can be set in movement. Therefore, flesh cannot be the organ of touch, instead it would be its medium. As to the organ of touch, it must be deeper inside the body. The logical answer seems to be that the heart is the organ of touch, because it is, he thought, the functional center of the body. However, this finding does not solve Aristotle's problem. Antiquity envisions the human body as a composite of the four essential elements of the nature: earth, water, air and fire. The traditional premise is that the heart is a fire-organ, because it is the source of life energy and it is hot. Aristotle, meanwhile, thinks that flesh and skin, the conductors of touch, are linked to the earthly element and therefore they are cold. This meant that the heart, the conductor of "vital fire," could not be the organ of touch (Boyle 1998, p.6).

After Aristotle, the Epicureans turn to a more straightforward approach that will result less complicated. They assign a unifying role to touch by suggesting that the other four senses derive from it. In their model, vision is a result of atoms, invisible themselves, emanating from an object and hitting the eyes of the subject. These atoms have different shapes, colors or textures. Hence the visible differences between the objects around us. It is not difficult to imagine hearing and smell following a similar mechanism. These senses, therefore, become results of tactile encounters, just as taste naturally is. The Stoics, even though opposing the Epicureans, merely reverse this model by positing that we see thanks to a cone coming out of our retina and touching the objects around us. Both the Epicurean and Stoic models transform sight into a mode of touch, but much more importantly, in these models the sense of touch and the phenomena of tactile encounter transcend their physicality and become metaphors of communication.

To conclude, the inherent ambiguities of touch as expressed by the ancient philosophers ensured that this sense was continuously renegotiated by the artists and intellectuals of the eras that followed. Due to its referential status for the Neoclassicists, Jacques-Louis David's envisioning of the metaphoric and mediating capacities of touch are rooted in Ancient Greek philosophy, but the roots become more palpable in Roman records of Greek arts and aesthetics.

2.1.1.2 Ancient Roman Writers and Parables of Art

Ancient Greek sources on theories, works and anecdotes of art only survived by partial quotes in Roman records. Ancient Greek works of art, too, survived in the form of Roman copies or literary descriptions. For the eighteenth-century French artist, the authoritative source on the subject of ancient Greek arts was the 35th volume of *Natural History* written by Pliny the Elder. This volume was dedicated to the techniques and works of art, as well as to anecdotes from important artists' lives. Pliny's text reflects the ancient preoccupation about the illusory, therefore dangerous nature of vision. The antidote to visual illusion was touch, as seen in the previously mentioned saying "seeing is believing, touching is truth". This "inherent truthfulness of touch" (Harvey 2003, p.70) is powerfully embedded in the ancient culture and generates a conflicting pair of aesthetic values guiding painting in ancient times.

On the one hand, the virtue of a representation is decided based on the *ethos* it embodies. According Aristotle, *ethos* means 'quality of character', and Socrates argues that it is linked to facial expressions of the sentiments. Thus, lack of character and expressivity are considered to be the worst possible flaws in painting. On the other hand, Pliny's valuation of artists was openly based on the vividness of their creations. He notably praised Apollodorus as the father of 'true painting' because he was the first to represent things "as they appear" in the real world. *Ethos* and vividness may not seem mutually exclusive, as facial expression can add to the vividness of the human figure represented. In fact, gesture and facial expression are culturally coded. In Socrates' and Aristotle's position, *ethos* has ethical and moral implications that the beholders are expected to decode. In this conception, facial expression is bound by the shape of culture rather than the rules of

vividness. The great artist of Antiquity had to be capable of meeting both expectations, *ethos* and vividness, with aesthetic integrity.

The conflict between these two requirements is, therefore, not at the level of principles, but rather of practice. As a painter seems to excel in vividness by *mimesis* (imitation of nature), he seems to downgrade, at the same time, the importance of *ethos*. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle compares the famous visual trickster Zeuxis and the pottery painter Polygnotus to state that "The latter was good at depicting character, but there is nothing of this in Zeuxis's painting." In another passage, Xenophon writes that Socrates and Parrhasius once agreed that good painting had to be effective in its representation of the expression of sentiments, as they were 'the soul's *ethos*'. If we remember, from previous pages of this chapter, that Parrhasius is also the one who wins the painting competition against Zeuxis, we can also argue that the issue of 'character' is not only a matter for the painted surface but also of the 'character' that a painting activates in the beholder. Pliny's insistence, in various chapters across the book, on the tactile qualities of visual representation directs our attention to the painting itself as an object submitted to tactile encounter. Counting the artistic exploits of Apelles, Pliny writes that the painter applied such a thin layer of black varnish to the finished picture that "you had to touch it to see it was there" (Pliny, NH, Book 35, Chapter 36). The author proposes here a complex principle of sensory measure: he imposes the use of touch and invites the beholder to physically bind touch and sight. Furthermore, by insisting on the layered nature of paintings and on the thinness of the top layer in Apelles' specific work, Pliny emphasizes the material presence of any picture on a support.

A second Plinian example connects the above reminder of a picture's materiality to the ethereal nature of the representation of Truth in any given image. In his remarks on Protogenes' depiction of Ialysus, Pliny first informs us that Protogenes painted the picture over and over, up to four times, hoping to preserve it from the damages of use and time, "so that when an upper coat might fail, there would be an under one to succeed it" (Pliny, NH, Book 35, Chapter 36). Then he implicitly warns the reader that there are consequences to this type of extreme meticulousness. The focus of his example is the enraged dog that appears in Protegenes' picture. This is the only part with which the

painter was still unsatisfied, even after numerous attempts to correct it. According to Pliny, the painter saw that the mouth of the dog gave only a resemblance of true nature while as an artist, he aimed for nothing less than the Truth itself. The reason for this gap, Pliny argues, was the visibility of the artist's repeated 'touches': 'Art' was letting itself be seen, impeding the perfect illusion of nature. Frustrated, the painter decided to efface the problematic area. He used a sponge: a tool guided by his hand, but of which the ultimate surface of contact he cannot be in full control, unlike the brush. The sponge accidentally fixed what the artist could not fix with his conscious work, proving the superiority of nature at work.

Protogenes' case is echoed in Balzac's famous character of the old frustrated master, Frenhofer, who aspires to paint a breathing female figure on canvas and fails tragically. Even though with this example we jump to nineteenth-century France, it is significant to notice that the Antiquity's concern over the extremism of the artist's touch persists over millennia. Frenhofer is a fictional character. He aims to—and, for a very short moment, thinks he did—create a living female figure. Just like Protogenes, Frenhofer's bid for perfect realism finally frustrates him. Unfortunately, Frenhofer's story does not have a happy ending as that of Protegenes and, to remember an example given earlier, as Pygmalion's story. In Balzac's novella, *The unknown masterpiece*, Frenhofer is portrayed as a taciturn master, venerated by a middle-aged Porbus and a very young Poussin. These two characters were based on their real-life namesakes. Porbus was a court painter, and Poussin a famous Baroque French painter. After Frenhofer's remarks on Porbus' still ongoing painting, the younger painters insist that the master show them his latest work, a female nude. At first, Frenhofer is reluctant to show his beloved *creation/creature* to the others, but he cedes when Poussin offers his muse (and *compagne*) Gillette as a model for the master as he would put the finishing touches to the painting.

When Frenhofer unveils the final painting, Porbus and Poussin get confused. The young Poussin lets slip that there is *nothing* on the canvas. Frenhofer, who had mistaken their stupefaction for admiration, hears the word *nothing* and realizes, suddenly, that he had been hallucinating all this time that he had been seeing a breathing woman on the canvas. He realizes that his *tableau* is, in fact, a nebulous pile of paint. Underneath the thick layers

of *touches* (the finishing touches), and *couches* (crust of paint), Porbus and Poussin do catch a glimpse of a wonderful and delicate female foot. They realize that there is, somewhere underneath all the layers, a beautiful female figure that is now hidden by the never-ending retouches of the master. However, once the artistic veil obstructing his sense of Reality had been dissolved, Frenhofer's disillusionment becomes catastrophic. The next day, the young painters learn that the master burnt himself and his studio that night.

Both Protegenes' and Frenhofer's cases are reminders that *manmade* visual representation entails, at once, an ethereal experience (sight) and a material presence for the actual touch of the painter (tactility) and the imagined touch of the beholder (haptics). Thus, a painter has to meander continuously between the ethereal and the material realms, negotiating their interferences and their reciprocal translation. Despite the similarity of their cases, Frenhofer's character is usually studied in reference not to Protegenes, but to Pygmalion. In Ovid's version, Pygmalion chooses to remain single because he thinks women are vain and immoral creatures. He even refused to replicate the female form in sculpture. One day, Aphrodite comes to his studio and implores him to do a female statue to honor her name. Pygmalion is reluctant, but when he finally starts to work, his hands move as if by divine inspiration. When he completes the statue, Pygmalion is convinced that his inanimate creation is Beauty (both aesthetic and moral) personified. He falls in love with her and prays to Aphrodite to bestow life upon her. His prayers are answered, and his statue is *inspired* with life.

Initially, Pygmalion's story is about the limits of artistic creation and the enigma of divine *inspiration*, both as bestowal of life and as artistic impulse. It is an allegory of the ultimate challenge in sculpture, and by extension, in all mimetic arts: the creation of life. We should concentrate on the changing focus in the artistic reflections of the story. For that, we can jump in time to observe a Baroque painting, Jean Raoux's *Pygmalion admiring his statue* (1717) (Figure 2.3). Here, the narrative focus shifts from the sculptor to the statue. The crucial point of Pygmalion's narrative becomes the statues' in-between moment, when half of her body is flesh and half is still marble. As other Baroque paintings show similar concerns, we can conclude that the main aim of Baroque painters was to make the spectator feel the contrast between the coldness of the stone and the warmth of

the flesh imbued with the fire of life as the statue is coming to life. This sensory ambition would be in line with Baroque style's ambition to bring—chiefly religious, but also more broadly historical—narratives closer to the beholder. In opposition to the Protestant iconoclastic tendency, the Catholic church sponsored a highly dramatic and sensory language in visual arts in order to keep the faithful conscious of the physical and psychological endurance of Christ and of the first Christians. In this context, Pygmalion's story provided an effective case study for the Baroque painters who wanted to sharpen the vividness effect in their paintings.

To conclude on the subject of Pygmalion, then, we can argue that, regardless of the shifting focus of the story, the kind of dexterity that the painters needed to represent Pygmalion's story was the ability to fool the haptic eye of the beholder. The ability of painting to wake the haptic eye by incorporating the sculptural effect into the purely visual field means that painting is able to transform a material trope into an ideal (abstract, or immaterial) one. In this case, "hapticity" becomes an abstraction of tactility. In contrast, sculpture remains literally corporal because the beholder can, and indeed has to, walk around the work to see it fully. Sculpture is also accessible to the blind, which means it can be addressed by two different senses even when they act separately. Painting, however, is specific to vision, which is considered as the thought and knowledge producing sense. How, then, Renaissance painting developed the haptic potential of two-dimensional visual representation? By the rising of value and efficacy of vividness, as we will now discuss.

2.1.2 From Renaissance to Baroque: the Italian Impact

Both geographically and historically, Renaissance in Italy is situated in-between Greco-Roman Antiquity and French Neoclassicism. Firstly, the journey to Rome was a much-desired prize for the young talents of the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture in the eighteenth century. Once in Italy, these young artists—including David—were sketching from ancient statues, friezes and reliefs sculptures. They were also studying the works of Renaissance and Baroque masters from the originals, of which only engravings or descriptions were available in France. The journey to Rome was, therefore, a journey to Antiquity and, as we will discuss in the theoretical review, to what Aby Warburg named

the *afterlife (Nachleben) of Antiquity.* Secondly, the trip to Rome was a re-encounter with French painter Poussin (1564-1665), and other French artists who had discovered the ancient and Italian arts in Louis XIV's *Grand Siècle*. In other words, it was also a journey to France's great times. Poussin was a Baroque artist, but he belonged to the sober and classicist tradition within the Baroque aesthetic. He painted biblical and mythological scenes where idyllic landscapes dominated the background and provided an atmosphere that attracted the mind of the beholder onto philosophical ground (Figure 2.4). Although he was praised by the French art administration of the time, Poussin eventually distanced himself from the flamboyance of the Sun King's court and chose to work in Italy. Thus, the reencounter with Poussin made a new generation of French artists realize past glories of fellow countrymen and see a delay or error in the implementation of the *à l'antique* taste. The fundamental element of the appreciation and imitation of ancient aesthetics was the anatomically and morally magnificent ancient hero.

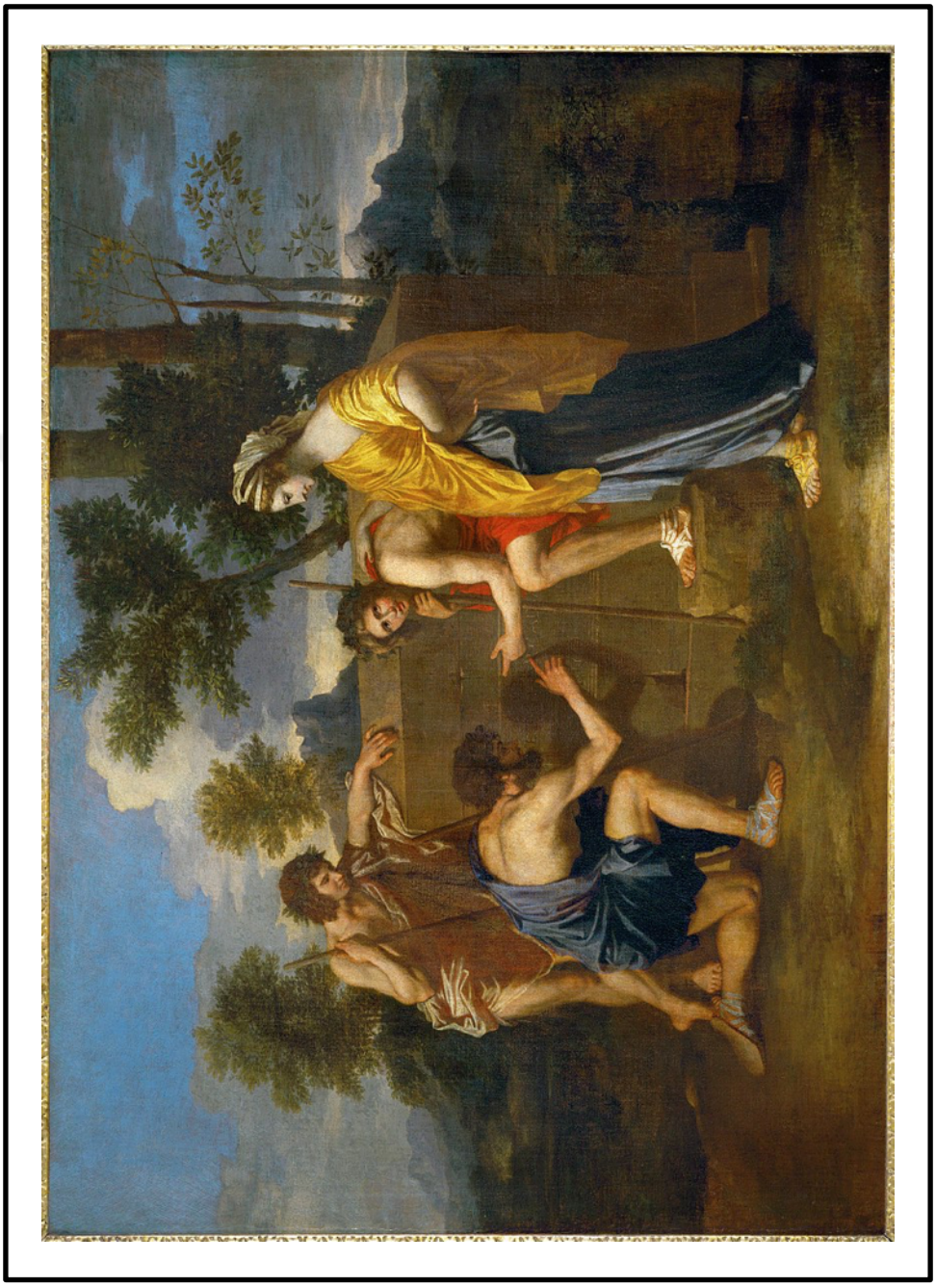
By extension, the French 'delay' was attributed to the Rococo, style which had flourished in France by the sponsorship of Louis XV's two successive mistresses: Mme de Pompadour and Mme du Barry. The King's image was, to say the least, that of an extreme *libertin* dedicated to sensory and sensual gratification, who took great pleasure in eating lavishly and having amorous adventures. By association, Rococo, or the *pompadour* style, was branded negatively by the generation of politically engaged new generation of late eighteenth-century. While this concise account glosses over the complex network of people and events that shaped the French Neoclassical style, it does reflect the general art historical narrative of the passage from Rococo to Neoclassical era. To conclude, then, the journey to Italy represented a facedown with the recent past of French politics, court and administration of arts. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the Italian impact on French artists of the late eighteenth-century. Ironically, the Italian impact was as much a sensory one as it was intellectual. From 1730s to 1780s, from the beginning of systematic excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum to the triumph of Jacques-Louis David's Neoclassical canvases, there was a change in French artists' and public's appreciation of the tactile and haptic values in visual representation.

Figure 2.3: Raoux, J. (1717) *Pygmalion admiring his statue* [Oil on canvas]. Musée Fabre, Montpellier.



Source: The Athenaeum, https://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=103876

Figure 2.4: Poussin, N. (1637) *Et in Arcadia Ego* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: Art Encyclopedia, *http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/famous-paintings/et-in-arcadia-ego.htm*

The experience of the original works of Renaissance and Baroque Italian masters, and the exercise of copying their works, constituted the perceptual frame for the appreciation of ancient artworks.

2.1.2.1 The 'Rebirth' of Vividness

Renaissance artists and intellectuals in Italy understood Greco-Roman antiquity through layers of ancient Roman appropriations of the Greek culture and medieval conventions of visual representation. To adapt Baxandall's term "period eye" (Baxandall 1988, p.29), it is possible to imagine that the 'Renaissance eye' was a combination of the surviving medieval habits of visual literacy, and of a developing taste for vividness. The unveiling of ancient architectural fragments and artworks had an aesthetic impact. One famous example was the unearthing of the sculptural group *Laocoön* (Figure 2.5). Michelangelo had witnessed the digging out of the statue, and restored part of it. It was even rumored that the statue was a hoax, that Michelangelo was the real creator. In other words, Renaissance was not only a "re-birth" of the ancient civilization and aesthetics, it was also a change of perspective, from religious to secular, in how to vividly represent divine narratives.

Medieval visual literacy was inclusive of tactile appreciation. Touching and kissing the icons was a common form of contact with the divine realm. The subsequent prohibition of touching and kissing the representation of the divine had already ceased to be a question of actuality at the time when Giotto and Masaccio were (re)introducing to fresco painting three major visual effects and, thus, marking the beginnings of Renaissance in arts: bodily volume, realistic space and narrative gesture. In Berenson's opinion, Giotto was a master in stimulating the tactile consciousness of the beholder (1896, p.5). The palpable volumes in Giotto's *Ognissanti Madonna* (1306-10), and the realistic depiction of spatial depth, material texture and drapery folds in his *trompe-l'oeil* series *The Seven Virtues* (1306) prove the art historian's point. Another example given by Berenson is Masaccio's work in the Brancacci Chapel in the Florentine church of Santa Maria del Carmine. Masaccio is "Giotto reborn" (Berenson 1896) not only in his depiction of volume and depth, but also in the entanglement of the actual space into the

representational space. To give a specific example, the shadows in *The Tribute Money* (1425) fall to the left-hand side in harmony with the window of the chapel that stays to the righthand side of the beholder of this fresco. Also, the colors of the landscape follow the rules aerial perspective and the mountains become paler as they are further away from the beholder. Lastly, both Giotto (*Lamentation*, 1306) and Masaccio (*The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, Brancacci Chapel, c.1428) employ realistic and dramatic facial expression and gesture to convey the narrative.

Nevertheless, despite the vividness of the bodies and sentiments of the figures, and despite the minute linear and aerial perspectives of the scenes, we still don't mistake Giotto's and Masaccio's paintings to be part of Reality. In Michael Baxandall's opinion, this under-realism is the result of a particular "cognitive style" that extends from late medieval to early Renaissance era. The general principles of early Renaissance masters' "pictorial style" is built on that particular cognitive paradigm (Baxandall 1988, p.46). As we will discuss later in this chapter, Baxandall understands the "cognitive style" mostly in terms of the medieval and Renaissance systems of measurement for trading purposes. His argument helps us understand the visual engagement of the Renaissance beholder with a painting of the time. However, being another dimension of the early Renaissance cognitive culture, the construction of memory by imagination could help us even more in understanding the haptic aspects of that engagement. The term imagination is used here in the sense of a *re*creation of an information or past event. In other words, the kind of imagination to which we refer is not an activity of invention, but a form of ethereal *re*presentation.

In *The sensory world of Italian Renaissance art* (2010), François Quiviger analyzes the mnemonic methods of late medieval and early Renaissance era. What he describes can be called a 'cameratic' (from Lat. *camera*, meaning room) system. Lawyers, for example, were advised to imagine a room for each case they were taking on, and to reconstruct the 'scene of the crime' with its most essential elements and characters (Quiviger). This navigable spatial reconstruct ensured that an efficient record of the case would remain in the mind of the lawyer, ready to be revisited at any necessary moment. In addition to the vestibular and kinesthetic reactivation of the remembering subject, this cameratic

cognitive world had tactile repercussions as well. As exemplified by Quiviger, the counting of the rosary beads to make sure the correct number of prayers would be cited, or the visualization of the prayer orders in circles that reminded the beholder of the rosary beads, perfectly demonstrate the powerful interlacing of the sensory experience that accompanied religious knowledge and practice.

The aforementioned examples also show that late medieval and early Renaissance mnemonic principles were inherited by the High Renaissance language of visual representation. Religious and secular episodes depicted in painting were stripped down to their basic backdrops and attributes because these pictures were designed, as Baxandall argues, for the cognitive world of the typical Renaissance subject. The Renaissance beholder was socially and culturally instructed to think of visual representation as a middle point between himself/herself and the full meaning of the scene depicted. To survive the iconoclastic zeal, the medieval icon had had to position itself as a threshold between the profane world of the beholder and the divine realm of the religious figure. The Christian beholder in the Renaissance was, therefore, conditioned and accustomed to pour his/her intellectual effort onto the representation. According to Baxandall, this was the reason why "the painter could not compete with the particularity of the private representation" (p. 46). Thus, Renaissance painters did not aim at the representation of the Real but at creating a vessel for finding the Truth.

Indeed, for the Renaissance theologist John of Genoa, the image or picture is a device, and therefore, vision precedes and pre-formulates the act. Baxandall informs us that according to John of Genoa visual representation had three specific duties: instructing simple people on religious values, thus, to leave an enduring memory of Christ's incarnation in the mind of the beholder and of all the saints' passions, and finally, the activation devote feeling (1988, pp. 40-41). In other words, As Quiviger effectively summarizes in his book, the three roles of visual representation would be pedagogy, memory and inspiration, which would parallel the three musts of a good soul: knowledge, intellect and will. Visual perception should incite the subject to think and act in the religiously defined manner. The vividness of the Renaissance image, secular or religious, was to come into effect in the mind of the beholder. Therefore, the dynamics of

"sentience" change from medieval to Renaissance aesthetics (Quiviger 2010). While the medieval icon was an object to be touched and cutaneously felt, one of the aims of the Renaissance image was to make touch more vision-like by opening an intellectual distance between its physical reality and perceptual effect in the mind.

Quiviger underlines the fact that Italian artists of the Renaissance, despite their realistic choices in representing volume, depth and texture, avoided extremely graphic representations of wounds. He cites the "impact of the Laocoön" as proof of these artists' and their public's interest in depictions of physical pain and psychological suffering, but also reminds us that, in Renaissance, open wounds and spilling blood disappeared from the Italian renderings of themes like Christ's flagellation or the plague, leaving their place to only "metonymic" wounds which consisted of scarce and bloodless points on the skin of the figure (pp. 116-119). For Quiviger "triggering the imagination of sensation is central to the fabric of Renaissance art" (p. 167) and the metonymic use is one such trigger putting a thinking distance between the act of touch and its perception.

2.1.2.2 Coding the Senses: Allegories of Touch

Another method by which senses were put into pedagogical perspective in Renaissance was allegory in painting. It is possible to argue that Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave' testifies to the presence of allegorical thinking and expression in ancient Greece. However, both Nordenfalk (1985, p.2) and Quiviger (2010, p. 88) note that there is no trace of a pictorial allegory of the senses before the Middle Ages. For the medieval Christian church, allegorical representations of the five senses were part of a religious didactic, used especially to express the dangers of temptation. The protagonists in medieval allegories of the senses were either male, or zoomorphic (Nordenfalk 1996, p.107).The choice of male protagonists was due to the linguistic fact that, in Latin, the nouns for the senses were male. The zoomorphic language, it gave the artists the advantage of choosing animal-sense associations according to the creatures' most characteristic acts. In the case of touch, Nordenfalk gives the examples of crawling spiders or biting birds (1996, p. 109). Moreover, zoomorphic language could bypass specific difficulties experienced in anthropomorphic representations, like finding an exclusively touch-oriented object.

Perhaps the most subtle difficulty in anthropomorphic allegories, however, was deciding on a specific part of the body as the organ of touch. The sense of touch was considered to be inherent in the other four senses and to cover the entire surface of the body. As a result, the hands took precedence as they stood for the body's capability to move, extend in space, reach out and grasp.

Nordenfalk argues that, in Renaissance, a significant change took place in the visual grammar of allegories of the senses. According to Nordenfalk, the tapestry series *The Lady with the Unicorn* (from late-fifteenth or early 16th century) is the earliest known example of a female pictorial program and signals "a sudden change of sex" in the allegorical grammar (1985, p. 7). Nordenfalk explains that the association between the Lady and the mythical animal points at an upcoming marriage: a type of union that involves both moral bonds (loyalty) and physical contact (sexuality). This series of six tapestries represents the five senses and a final scene titled "À mon seul désir" ("To my only desire"). In the panel depicting touch, the Lady is caressing the horn of the unicorn while holding firmly a coat-of-arms and looking toward an emblematic lion (Figure 2.6). Nordenfalk argues that the Lady's caress, which is a sensual form of touch, refers to the physical side of marital love. Simultaneously, her firm grasp of the coat-of-arms demonstrates her loyalty to the moral bond of marriage.

To the Renaissance artist, therefore, the allegorical representation of touch using human figuration was posing a problem akin to Aristotle's doubts on the place of touch in the general sensory mechanism. Sight, hearing, smell and taste could all be represented via particular groups of objects. Mirrors and paintings were common elements for referring to sight. Musical instruments were common in allegories of hearing and food, especially exotic fruits as well as wine, were frequently employed to recall the sense of taste. However, since instruments like the harp or the flute—involving direct contact with the body—were already used in allegories of hearing, or roses—of thorny spikes—in representing the sense of smell, touch struggled to find an alternative group of objects. Instruments of manual labor that required dexterity and delicate animals held in arms frequently came to the rescue of artists.

A common and narratively rich method of representing touch was depicting a particular instant of the act of touching, as in the aforementioned *The Lady with the Unicorn*. The instant chosen could emphasize the moral value, or lack thereof, involved in the kind of touch in question. For example, in *The Ship of Fools,* touch is represented by a woman holding a man's hand while kissing another man on board as their ship nears the shores of the idyllic love island of Cythera (Nordenfalk 1985, pp. 11-13) (Figure 2.7). Instants of touch could also be chosen based on the sensation that would be the result of the depicted instant, such as pain, pleasure, cold or burn. We have a crucial example of this last type in a Baroque painting: *The Sense of Touch* (1617-18). This painting was the result of a collaboration between the Flemish artists Jan Bruegel the Elder and Pieter Paul Rubens and part of a series on the five senses (Figure 2.8). In *The Sense of Touch,* the artists juxtapose objects of tactile appeal like armors, tapestries and stone walls, with acts of touch of pleasurable nature such as kisses and caresses. The objective and the subjective idioms are, therefore, merged in a dual allegory. The tactile qualities of textures and materials are juxtaposed to the carnal and sentimental appeal of lips, skin and flesh. Thus, the beholder does not only imagine the softness of human skin, the coldness of iron and the roughness of stone, but also relives his/her own sensual and sentimental experiences.

The Allegory of Touch is a demonstration of the essential, direct, involuntary and subjective entanglement of the sensations with the sentiments. This is the main reason why allegories of senses in painting are fundamental to the development of the sensory language in representation and of the expression of senses in visual culture. *The Allegory of Touch* is a relevant example, also, because in the following centuries Rubens became a major reference in aesthetic discussions on the sensory value of painting. He was a Flemish painter who had adopted and adapted Italian principles. He allied Titian's colors with Caravaggio's dramatic light (see Figure 2.9) and conquered the Spanish rulers of Flanders. In the Baroque and Rococo France, his style played a decisive role in the understanding of painting. Rubens and Poussin became the embodiment, respectively, of the importance of *colorido* versus the importance of *disegno* in the Dispute on color, an academic quarrel starting in late seventeenth century and dividing French style into two main branches until the late nineteenth century.

Figure 2.5: Artist unknown (c. 40-30 B.C. copy of an ancient Greek original)
***Laocoön* [Marble]. Musei Vaticani, Rome.**



Source: Musei Vaticani, http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-pio-clementino/Cortile-Ottagono/laocoonte.html

Figure 2.6: Artist unknown (c.1500) *Touch* from *The lady and the unicorn* tapestry series [Wool and silk]. Musée de Cluny – Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris.



Source: Art Gallery NSW, https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/the-lady-and-the-unicorn/

Figure 2.7: Jodocus Badius Ascensius (1500). *Touch*, from *The Ship of Fools*. Paris.



Source: Nordenfalk, C., 1985. The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art. Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes. **48**, p.4.

Figure 2.8: Rubens, P.P and Brueghel the Elder, J. (1618) *The Sense of Touch* [Oil on panel]. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Source: Museo del Prado, https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-sense-of-touch/c7b96909-44f6-4e3c-9e29-7d1ef33e23ad

Figure 2.9: Rubens, P.P. (1609-10) *Samson and Delilah* [Oil on wood]. The National Gallery, London.



Source: The National Gallery, https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/peter-paul-rubens-samson-and-delilah

To connect it to allegorical strategies, we can briefly say that two sides argued on what constituted the value and specificity of painting in comparison to other forms of visual representation. The followers of Rubens argued that color was setting the art of painting apart from, say, sketching. They argued, also, that color connected the beholder to the painting by acting directly on his/her emotional and sensational mechanism. The followers of Poussin, in turn, argued that drawing-related aspects, such as composition, anatomical accuracy etc., set painting above other visual arts involving manual labor, like sculpture. Drawing, therefore, abstraction, brought painting closer to intellectual professions. This dispute demonstrates that Enlightenment France inherited, from the Italian Renaissance and Baroque, a specific attention to power of the senses to transmit, simultaneously, linguistic meaning and extra-linguistic experience.

2.1.3 French Enlightenment and Rococo

Eighteenth-century French artists found inspiration in the rising social and literary value of intimacy, sentimentality, and sensibility in the age of the Enlightenment. They explored the dialogue between emotions, sensory perception and thinking processes. The artist who embodies this multi-modal research like no other is the *genre* painter Jean-Baptiste Greuze. He painted scenes from the everyday lives of common people, which had moral narratives. Consequently, the choice of dramatic moment and gesture were fundamental to his multi-figure compositions like the *Broken Eggs* (1756) (Figure 2.10). In this painting, Greuze portrays an emotional opposition embodied in the limp posture of the young woman on the foreground that contrasts the tense postures and gestures of the rest of the figures around her: the young man, the old lady and the young child. Greuze painted sentimental, and sometimes sensual, portraits of youth as well. In *A boy with a lesson book* (1757), Greuze depicts a young boy lost in his thoughts, perhaps trying to understand or memorize the words in the book in front of him (Figure 2.11). This painting introduces us to a complex mind who does not exist uniquely by knowledge but also by sentiment. Lastly, in *The Souvenir* (1787-9) we see a young girl holding a dog close to her heart (Figure 2.12). This portrait carries sensual traits that are much more pronounced in other female depictions by Greuze, but it's carnality is toned down by symbolism. The dog

stands for fidelity, playfulness and tenderness. The girl's upward looking eyes hint at the recalling of a fond memory.

In short, as exemplified in Greuze's work, the interlacing of sensual and sentimental layers was a major characteristic of French Rococo painting. The sensual layer in Rococo was not limited to visualizations of the sense of touch. Still, as a sensory topic and a metonym for each painter's individual style, touch was a defining trope in Rococo. In *The Painter's Touch*, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth argues that a "strategic embrace of materiality" connects the *oeuvres* of the three important painters of the French Rococo: Boucher, Chardin and Fragonard (Lajer-Burcharth 2017, p.3). Even though she focuses on the more colorfully lush branch of Rococo, Lajer-Burcharth rightly observes that "In the eighteenth-century on art, touch was commonly associated with artistic personality and pictorial self-awareness." (ibid).

A particular contribution of Enlightenment intellectuals to French aesthetics was the emergence of a new literary genre: art criticism. Denis Diderot's writing is the indispensable reference in this case. He wrote, in the form of letters available only to private and foreign subscribers, reviews of the *Salons* from 1759 to 1784. In other words, his reviews were read by people who could not actually see the paintings. Thus, his particular contribution to art criticism was the search for the legibility of the extra-linguistic dimension with the aim of deciphering the bodily dynamics of looking at paintings. In *Word and Image*, Norman Bryson explains that Diderot 'read' a painting as a *hieroglyph* and explains the methodological consequence of this conceptualization for the analysis of the relationship between the visual and the linguistic experience of images (1981, p.179):

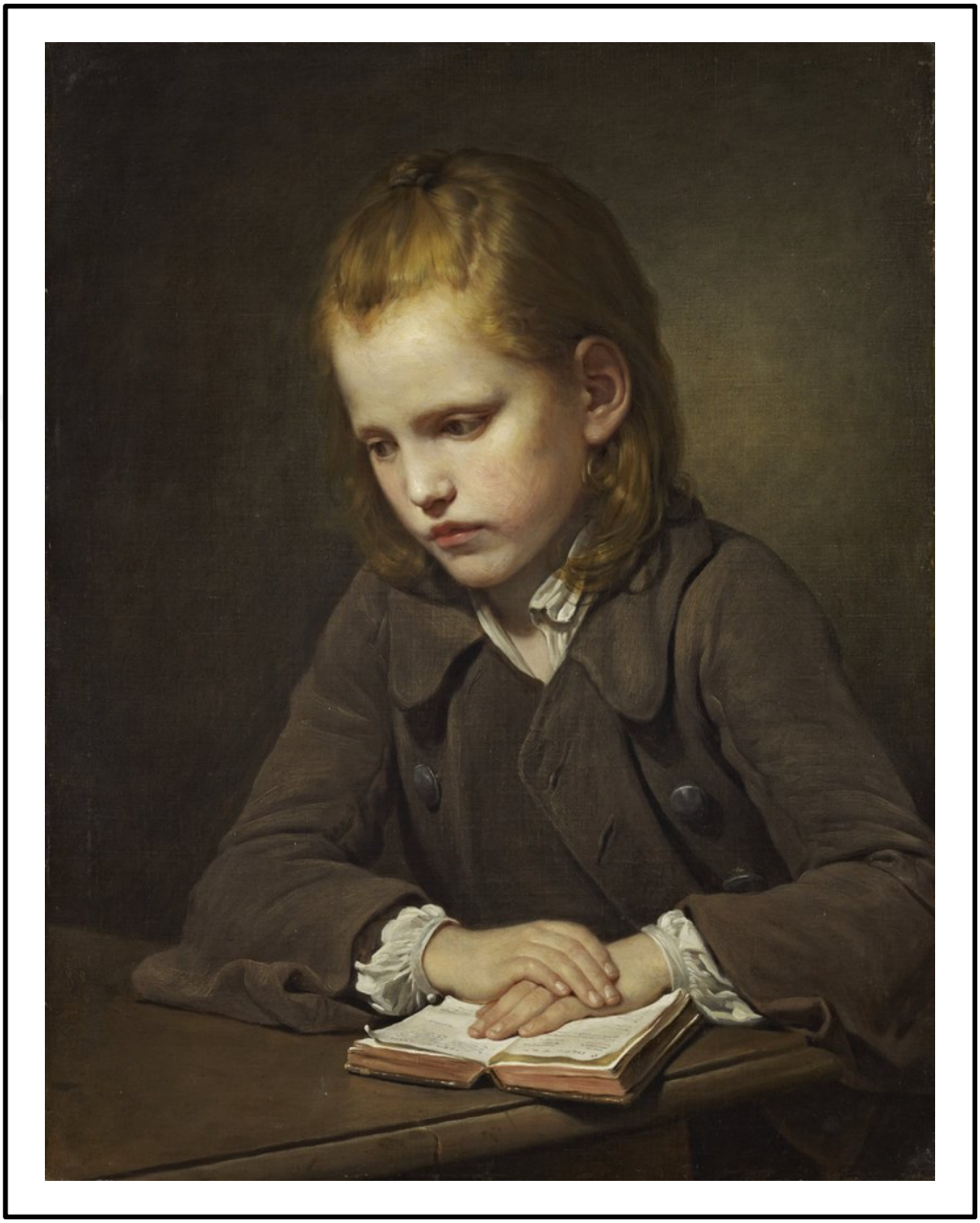
> *The name Diderot gives to his dream of the transparent sign is* hieroglyph*. That is, not a linguistic sign at all, but one that has managed a partial exit from the self-alienating trap of language and has drawn into itself some of the advantages enjoyed by the image. […] Whereas discourse is distributed in time, mind is simultaneous; it is only when the seriality of discourse has been overcome that a communication of the contents of consciousness from one being to another can occur.*

Figure 2.10: Greuze, J-B. (1756) *Broken Eggs* [Oil on canvas]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



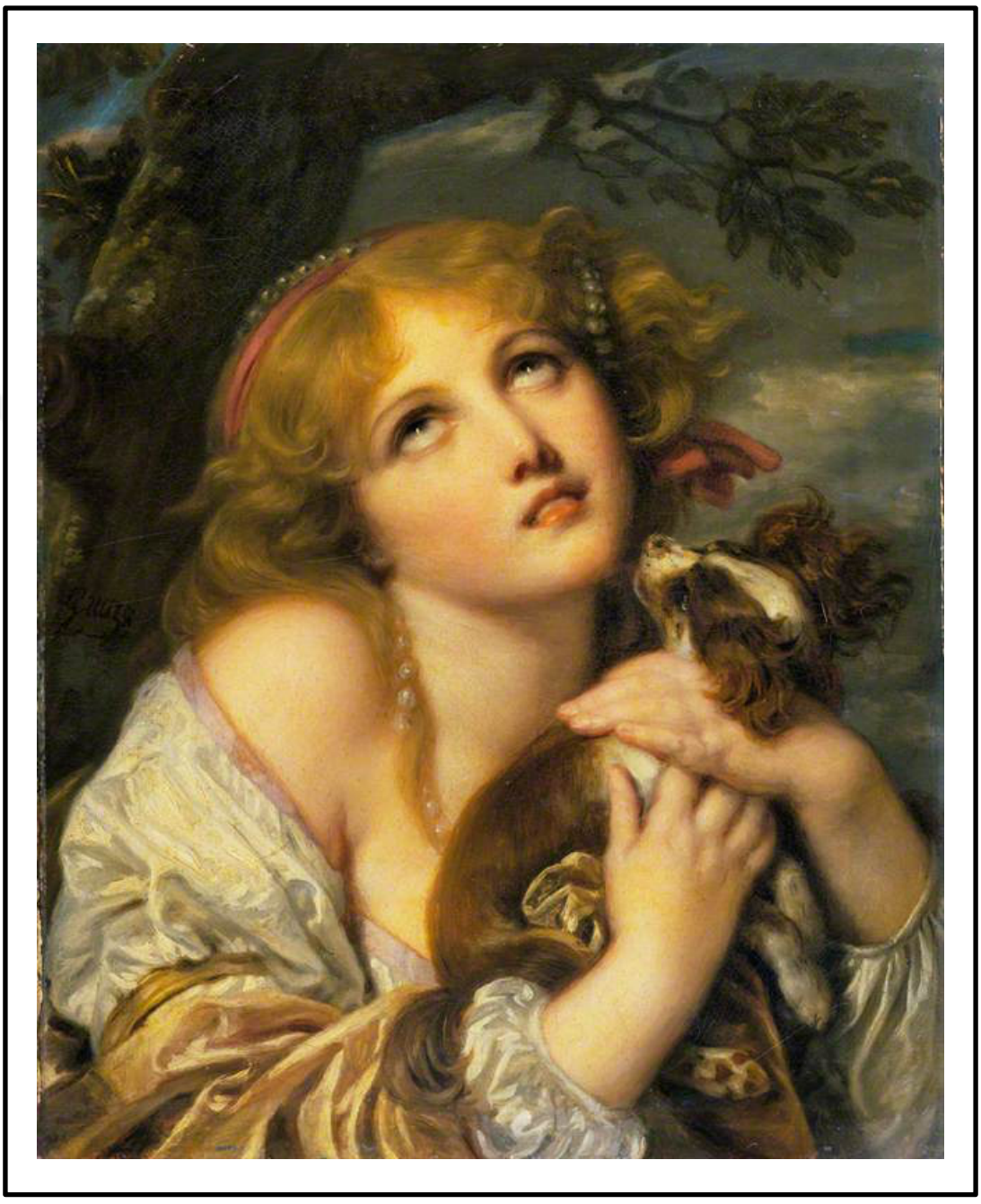
Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436579

Figure 2.11: Greuze, J-B. (1757) *A boy with a lesson book* [Oil on canvas]. National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh.



Source: National Galleries Scotland, https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/4986/boy-lesson-book

Figure 2.12: Greuze, J-B. (1787-9) *The Souvenir* [Oil on canvas]. The Wallace Collection, London.



Source: The Wallace Collection, https://www.wallaceprints.org/image/323005/jean-baptiste-greuze-the-souvenir

At this point, it is important to return to the 'dispute on color' (*la querelle du coloris*) which dates back to late seventeenth-century, because this dispute did touch upon the communicated content and the communication method of painting in comparison to other visual arts. The dispute had its roots in another, older quarrel called the 'quarrel of the ancients and the moderns', which opposed those in favor of innovation to those in favor of the imitation of ancient masters and conventions. Roger de Piles' influential essay *Dialogue sur le coloris* (*Dialogue on color*, 1673) introduced Rubens and Poussin as the source of influence of the two opposite sides of the dispute on color. The dispute was about the values of *disegno* (or *dessein,* drawing) and *coloris* (realism and vividness in the application of color). For the members of the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, the Italian word *disegno* referred not only to the design of a picture in the sense of its overall composition, but also to the dexterity of an artist in rendering the human anatomy and posture.

The Poussinists argued that design was the most important element in painting, because it proved that painting was a liberal art that involved abstract thinking and intellectual effort. In other words, they argued that balance in composition, coherence in perspective, attention to the contours of the figures, and the careful "moulding" (*modelé,* shaping and volume) of the bodies distinguished painting from the blunt manual force involved in sculptural work and simple manual labor. The visual dimension of painting, in this model, was like a linguistic system of conventions mediating between the mind of the painter and the mind of the beholder.

The Rubenists, however, argued that the most important component in painting was color, because it was the element that differentiated painting from drawing-based forms of art, such as sketching, engraving and architecture. According to the Rubenists, the vivid coloring of the figures, the effective contrast of light and shadow, and the power of color to speak simultaneously to the soul and the body of the beholder were the characteristics that made painting a superior and powerful form of art. Color was specific to vision. A blind man could feel the shape—therefore the design—of a sculpture or listen to poetry and prose. He could not, however, feel the colors and lighting of the painting under his fingertips. *Coloris* meant the mixture and application of different colors onto the canvas

in a way that captured all the nuances of color in the real appearance of the object being painted. Therefore, *coloris* wasn't a given in painting, it required mastery just as design did.

The relevance of this late-seventeenth-century quarrel for a study on the sensory effects of painting, and of visual representation in general, is that both sides acknowledged the existence of a third dimension in addition to the traditionally cited visual and narrative dimensions. If the Poussinists seem, at first sight, opposed to the sensory effects of painting, that is only a hurried extrapolation of their arguments. Artists and theorists defending the importance of design in painting were vindicating their right to a higher social status. Their insistence on painting's power of abstraction is a rejection of the ideas limiting the value of a picture to its materials. It is also a denunciation of a relationship to pictures which wouldn't go beyond the superficial level of ocular pleasure. For the present dissertation, the significance of this long quarrel lies in the multi-modality of its arguments. Both the Poussinists and the Rubenists in this *querelle* assess the elements of painting to analyze the communicative efficiency of visual representation. For the Poussinists, this efficiency is assured only if form redirects the beholder's mind to meaning. For the Rubenists, in contrast, sensation is the anchor by which the beholder's mind is connected to visual representation. Both sides were primarily concerned by the implications of their arguments for the value and status of painting, not by the scientific understanding of the relationship among the senses, or between the senses and the formation of thought. As we will presently discuss, that particular cognitive concern occupied the philosophers and scientists of Enlightenment France, with undeniable links to the Pygmalion myth and to Rococo painting.

2.1.3.1 Statu(e)s of Touch

Early eighteenth-century French thinkers and authors could read new illustrated editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in French[17], were greatly inspired by Pygmalion's story. To use a title by Kenneth Gross that perfectly sums the phenomenon, "the dream of the

[17] J.L.Carr names two famous editions of Ovid's book with eighteenth-century engravings: The 1749 edition with Le Mire's engravings and a later edition, between 1767 and 1671, illustrated by Saint-Aubin (p.246).

moving statue" motivated the production of some landmark artworks and texts on the trope of the statue coming to life. To give an example, Rousseau's melodramatic play on Pygmalion is the earliest known version in which the female statue finally has a name: Galatea (Law 1932, p341). The attraction of Enlightenment *philosophes* to Pygmalion's story is reflected, also, in Jaucourt's article *Pygmalion* in Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, and in Voltaire's retelling of the story in contemporary verse (Carr 1960, pp.248-249). Carr discusses, also, an intellectual connection between the works of the *philosophes* and the paintings of the Rococo master Antoine Watteau (Carr 1960, p.244):

> *[…] it is perhaps to be attributed to the influence of the early eighteenth-century pastoral Pygmalion of the theatre [Rousseau] that Watteau's delightful parks invariably contain small but striking sculptures, having a degree of animation often denied to human figures reclining upon the lawns. […] The function of these pieces of sculpture is thus summed up as forming a sort of link between human and divine, and symbolizing the emotional message of the painting; herein, perhaps, lies the source of one aspect of the appeal of the Pygmalion theme to eighteenth-century artists. […] The statue legend, therefore, illustrates the point of contact between art and magic; into the statue, made in the image of Venus herself, some part of the goddess of love has been transfused.*

Carr does not refer to a specific painting by Watteau, but the painter was associated with a particular genre of painting called *fêtes galantes* and used some elements in almost all of his paintings. So, even when we don't recall a particular painting of Watteau, we can still recall the typical atmosphere of his scenes: multi-sensory artistic references (music, dance, sculpture), scenes of love or sentimentality, idyllic and lush backgrounds in which statues—and sometimes dogs—might be half-hidden (Figure 2.13). In sum, statues in painting played an important part in Rococo because they have tactile (material), artistic (professional) and sentimental (aesthetic) presence at once. True to Enlightenment and Rococo fashion, for the early eighteenth-century mind and body, Pygmalion's tale had mainly two appeals, as Carr notes: a Lockean one, concerning the philosophy of sensation and cognition, and an Epicurian one, focusing on the desire of the sculptor and the flesh of the statue. In the interpretation of Neoclassicism as a style that banishes sensory effects in total reaction to Rococo, attention is only paid to the epicurean—sensual—side of Rococo painting. It is true that the Pygmalion myth falls from fashion after the death of Enlightenment *philosophes* around 1780. However, the question of life and its absence embodied in painted figures continued to occupy artists and institutions.

Figure 2.13: Watteau, A. (1718-20) *Mezzetin* [Oil on canvas]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437926

The classical motif of dead or dying heroes was a recurrent choice in late eighteenth-century Prix de Rome competitions. David, who was well versed in the representation of the liminality of life and death, channels his experience into the images of martyrdom of 1793. Moreover, Diderot's letters on the *Salons* were posthumously published in France, thus awakening the new generation's interest in his arguments on the visual and multi-sensory characteristics of painting.

2.1.3.2 Blindness and Letters

In addition to the letters on the *Salons*, Denis Diderot was the co-editor of *L'Encyclopédie* (1751-1772) next to Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, and a prolific author of novels and essays. *The letter on the blind for the use of those who can see* (1749) is the most relevant among these texts for the present dissertation. It is not the first text on the subject. The question of how, and indeed if, a person born blind who gains sight after a successful operation would 'see' existed in twelfth-century treatises of Muslim scientists, and these texts were translated to Latin in the seventeenth century. The European popularity of the question began at that moment, with John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (1688), which was partially translated to French too. The second edition of Locke's essay included a question sent by letter by William Molyneux.

> *A Man, being born blind, and having a Globe and a Cube, nigh of the same bignes, Committed into his Hands, and being taught or Told, which is Called the Globe, and which the Cube, so as easily to distinguish them by his Touch or Feeling; Then both being taken from Him, and Laid on a Table, Let us Suppose his Sight Restored to Him; Whether he Could, by his Sight, and before he touch them, know which is the Globe and which the Cube? Or Whether he Could know by his Sight, before he stretch'd out his Hand, whether he Could not Reach them, tho they were Removed 20 or 1000 feet from Him?*

Condillac in scientific, and Diderot in philosophical terms, exemplify the topical importance of the sense and act of touch in French Enlightenment. The rise of empiricism in France, which was a British influence, did not mark the end of cartesian mind-body duality, but it gave a new recognition to the sense and act of touch: cutaneous sense and contact were reimagined as alternative channels for conceptual information, such as self-awareness and abstraction. The developing culture of sensibility is part of the same revaluation of sensory and sentimental (i.e. non-rational) mechanisms as the developing

scientific, theatrical and philosophical literature on touch. In other words, sensibility, sentiment and sensation were part of a broader opening taking place in the French Enlightenment. As Lela Graybill explains in *The visual culture of violence after the French Revolution* (2016, pp.79-80):

> *The eighteenth century's overall shift toward an empiricist worldview brought with it renewed attention to the power of representations—both visual and verbal—to affect people. Empiricism had given rise to a "culture of sensibility" in France and Britain, when philosophers, scientists, novelists, playwrights, aestheticians, and artists began to propose and explore the interrelations of the physical, political, moral, and aesthetic senses. The culture of sensibility reconfigured the senses as a morally valuable site responsive to attention and cultivation rather than as a human weakness to be banished and repressed.*

In the genre paintings of Greuze and Chardin, as well as the still life canvases of the latter, Diderot must have seen, for different reasons and at two different stages of his art criticism, a "morally valuable site responsive to attention and cultivation". In his letter on the blind, too, he questions the blind man of Puiseaux on moral points. As to Condillac, he describes the moment of self-touch as the founding moment of the distinction between the self and the other and, therefore, the origin of the moral attitude of a person. Admittedly, there was a partial dissonance between Enlightenment (literary-scientific) and Rococo (artistic-courtly) treatment of sensation and sensory effect in painting. Watteau was not only the painter of the mythical love-island *Cythera*, but also of the unsettlingly blunt *Pierrot*. Greuze painted moralizing genre paintings as well as erotic portraits of young girls with rosy cheeks and alabaster skin. In other words, in Enlightenment and Rococo, sensation was not exclusively associated to pleasure, neither pleasure was an exclusively sensory phenomenon. Moreover, pain, suffering and violence were part of the sensory equation too. As it will be commented in the next chapter, from the end of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture chose macabre themes for the Prix de Rome competition: deaths, massacres, executions, tortures from popular ancient episodes. When we remember, also, that members of the court were among the earliest promotors of the new and more sober antique style, it becomes clear that the emergence of 'Neoclassicism', as we name the style today, was originally a movement of reform—not erasure—of the multi-sensory experience of visual arts. At its most Revolutionary, or Jacobin, moment, David did not reject the accumulated artistic know-how on introducing sensory effects to

visual surface. On the contrary, he returned even more profoundly to the study of volume, texture and movement dictated to him during his academic formation. He severed the links to pleasure without getting rid of the links to the physically and emotionally painful side of sensation.

2.2 A THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF MULTI-SENSORIALITY IN VISUAL MEDIA

2.2.1 Sensory Studies and the Pictorial Turn

For humanities scholars who will take up the challenge of using sensory methodologies in their research, one fundamental source is the work of anthropologist David Howes. In "The Expanding Field of the Sensory Studies", Howes provides a concise history of sensory studies emerging as an interdisciplinary project. He summarizes this new field's thematic and methodological links to modern disciplines. According to Howes, "the sensory turn in history and anthropology" occurred in the 1980s. The first scholar he refers to is Alain Corbin, a French historian from the *Annales* school and the author of *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (1986) on the deodorization of urban France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Howes argues that, in focusing on "the sensible" as a factor of History, Corbin simultaneously broke up with *Annales* School's concept of *mentalité* and the poststructuralist concept of "discourse".

Further in his review, Howes introduces the primary sources that formulated sensory methodologies for anthropology, ethnography, sociology and geography in the following decades. A general look at his references points at a duality in the choice of titles. In some cases the term "sensory" (or even, "sensuous") is added in front of the name of the discipline, as in "sensory history" (see. Smith 2007, Stoller 1997) while in others the specification "of the senses" comes after the name of the discipline, as in "history of the senses". Howes doesn't observe a clear distinction between these two modes, and in fact, uses them interchangeably in his writing. Based on his reviews of the individual works, however, it is possible to read these two modes as two slightly different frameworks: a methodological renewal in the study of existing subjects in the first case, and in the

second, a reawakening of scholarly interest in senses and sensoria. In other words, "sensory history" seems to refer more effectively to studies casting new light on historical phenomena and narratives by readdressing these in an extended perceptual context, whereas "history of the senses" would more appropriately refer to studies focusing on the lives of the senses in specific areas of human expression (arts, literature, etc.), either focusing on a sense individually (Classen 2012 and 2005) or as a set of five (Woolgar 2006).

In another article, Howes introduces the works of early twentieth-century social scientists who had pioneered the disciplinary awareness on the undeniable role of the senses in the forming of the social, such as Georg Simmel's "Essai sur la sociologie des sens" ("Essay on the sociology of the senses", 1912) (Howes 2003, p. 6). These references show us that questions on the value and function of sensory experience did play a part in the establishment of "disciplines". In fact, as already discussed in previous pages, sensory questions have always been present in the realm of theory from Pre-Socratics onwards. The introduction of the first issue of *Senses and Society* journal, of which Howes is one of the authors, provides another example by quoting from the 1844 writings of Karl Marx: "The forming of the five senses is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present."[18] Today, we talk about sensory studies as an interdisciplinary field of research in its own right, and we date it as late as 1980s because at that specific moment there is an active search for and ongoing creation of new methodologies for the study of the role sense perception and sensory culture play in the building of social contexts. In other words, an effective study of the senses had to take into account the multimodal and omnipresent essence of the human sensorium. In the realm of western academia, such an account became possible only after the opening of disciplinary boundaries. Certainly, the example of post-disciplinarity most relevant to us is the emergence of visual culture studies, which has, to quote Howes, "its cradle in art history".

Despite the precedent in Michael Baxandall's *Painting and Experience in 15th Century Italy* (1972), the methodological reverberations of sensory studies in the field of art

[18] Cited from Marx, Karl. 1987. Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, trans. M. Milligan, Buffalo: Prometheus Books in Bull, M., Gilroy, P., Howes, D., & Kahn, D. 2006. Introducing Sensory Studies. *The Senses and Society* 1(1): p.5–7.

history spread slowly in the 1980s. Norman Bryson studied the French aesthetic regime between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries in *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (1981) and *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* (1984). Between these two studies, Bryson defined his semiotic methodology in *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (1983). For Bryson, a painting is not a "record of perception" but a "sign". To read *Ancien Régime* and Neoclassical French paintings as signs, Bryson focuses on the space depicted as well as, in the case of genre and History paintings, on the web of visibilities among the protagonists of the narrative. In other words, Bryson rejects the type of art history that is based on the evolution of styles and on the perceptual maturing of the artists. However, his methodology does not totally banish perception from art historical writing. In fact, his visual analyses reflect a kinesthetic and vestibular understanding of the paintings in question.

A game-changing decade for the discipline of art history was the 1990s. First, W.J.T. Mitchell coined the term "pictorial turn" in 1995 (pp.11.13), and then, the "Questionnaire on Visual Culture" was published in *October* journal in 1996. These two moments signaled a rising criticism of art history's heavy disciplinary cornerstones: a canon composed of masterpieces realized by genius artists, a timeline based on European and North-American History, and on separate methodological branches. The emerging field of Visual Culture Studies, as its name clearly stated, focused on "the visual" instead of the "artistic". While a survey of Visual Culture Studies is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it would be relevant to argue that the pictorial turn opened a reviewing of the established methodologies and referential authors of art history. As a foundational source, Panofsky was criticized in length. Indeed, Margaret Iversen and Stephen Melville argue, in *Writing Art History: Disciplinary Departures*, that Panofsky's iconological method largely defined the shape of art historical writing in the twentieth century to the point of becoming a reference even for its critics. In their disentangling of Panofsky's writing, theorists and historiographers of art turned to his sources, especially to Alois Riegl and Aby Warburg. Riegl and Warburg had written in German, and remained inaccessible to English-speaking scholars for a long time. In recent years, their major works became available in English. Recently, James Elkins has noted that the popularity of Alois Riegl and Aby Warburg is rising as the Panofskian methodology is declining (Elkins 2007, pp.vi-vii).

Riegl's and Warburg's methodological approaches and theoretical conclusions seem incompatible at certain points. Still, both art historians were operating with an interdisciplinary zeal. They could be considered the precursors of 1990s challenging to the disciplinary and canonical coat of art history. They were combining formal analyses with anthropo-psychological observation with the objective of giving intelligibility to the metamorphosis of artistic expression throughout the history of human civilization. Riegl's definition of a sensory "worldview" that generates artistic forms of expression, and Warburg's emphasis on form as the expression of a returning pathos (*Pathosformeln*) demonstrate that both authors imagined artistic expression as part of a dynamic interplay of physical and psychic experiences. That is why these two art historians are the methodological reference points of this dissertation.

It is important to remember that the sensory and pictorial turns coincide also with the centenary of the French Revolution. Evidently, studies on the 1789 - 1799 decade, as well as the events that led up to and those that followed it, are not limited to those that had been published in the 1980s and 90s.[19] Nevertheless, in the 1980s, there is a significant concentration of seminal studies on arts in Revolutionary France. Alongside Bryson's aforementioned works, we can cite Thomas E. Crow's *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (1985), Albert Boime's *Art in an Age of Revolution, 1750-1800* (1987), the co-edited exhibition catalogue *Aux armes & aux arts! les arts de la Révolution, 1789-1799* (1988) and Robert Rosenblum's *Transformations in Late Eighteenth-Century Art* (1989).

Significantly, within this corpus of works there is, also, Michael Fried's *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the age of Diderot* (1988) and Antoine de Baecque's *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770-1800* (1997). Both titles demonstrate the emergence of a new set of theoretical concerns that

[19] Recent examples to the unfading actuality of the Revolutionary era for art historians and visual culture scholars are the co-edited volume *Visual culture and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* (2017), Lela Graybill's *The Visual Culture of Violence After the French Revolution* (2016), Freund, A. 2014. *Portraiture and politics in Revolutionary France*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press. and Richard Taws' *The Politics of the Provisional: Art and Ephemera in Revolutionary France* (2013).

take perceptual mechanisms and corporal experiences as the focus of the research. Interestingly, Wolfgang Kemp's "The work of art and its beholder: The methodology of the aesthetic of reception", originally published in German in 1983, is translated to English in 1998.[20] In it, as we will discuss later, Kemp aims to define *reception aesthetics* and to design its specific methodology. It is noteworthy that one of his references is Riegl, more specifically *The Group Portraiture of Holland*.

Kemp's chapter on reception aesthetics includes another work of his in the references list: "The Theater of Revolution: A New Interpretation of Jacques-Louis David's *Tennis Court Oath*" published in 1994, in a volume of collected essays on visual culture co-edited by Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (1994). In other words, there is a chronological, authorial and terminological network of scholarship which demonstrates that the sensory and visual turns had direct correspondences in art historical studies on French Revolution and David. Additionally, Stefan Germer's "In Search of a Beholder: On the Relation between Art, Audiences, and Social Spheres in Post-Thermidor France" (1992), and the article he had co-written with Hubertus Kohle in 1986, "From the Theatrical to the Aesthetic Hero: On the Privatization of the Idea of Virtue in David's *Brutus* and *Sabines*" demonstrate the extent of the previously noted perceptual and corporal concerns.

As an artist who actively took part in signature events of the Jacobin Revolution, like the organization of Marat's funeral, David faced the consequences of the revolutionary trauma for the rest of his life. Therefore, his *oeuvre* incarnates the metamorphosis of French visual culture in the transitional period from 1780s to 1830s. Consequently, the centenary of the Revolutionary era also motivated the publication of art historical studies focusing on David's career, as seen in the titles above. Other examples we can cite are Walter Friedlander's *David to Delacroix* (1980) and Anita Brookner's *Jacques-Louis David* (1987).

The aforementioned publications on arts in Revolutionary France and on David's works will be addressed in length in the main chapters of the present dissertation. However, we

[20] Kemp,W.,1983. Der Anteildes Betrachters: Rezeptionsasthetische Studie. *Malereides,* 19 Jahrhunderts: Munich.

should already note two points. The first point is that there is a certain continuity in the scholarship from Riegl and Warburg on art as almost a living organism, first to Bryson, Fried and Kemp, and eventually to Germer and Kohle on Jacques-Louis David. Secondly, these studies don't pay exclusive attention to the haptic characteristics of David's works. Bryson's and Fried's visual analyses and theoretical arguments are guided by Diderot's influential corpus of writing on the *Salons*. Diderot famously talked about walking into a painting (Diderot 2008, p. 272). There is, consequently, a kinesthetic feel in both art historians' writing on David. With her emphasis on the "gestural revolution" in David's painting, Dorothy Johnson's reading of his works does address a kinesthetic mind as well. The haptic in David is, in fact, an integral part of his gestural language.

Zooming out for a moment and looking at the present-day literature on the broader theme of the interaction between the senses and arts, we can note a proliferation of research realized with cultural history methodology. *A Cultural History of the Senses* (2014) is a six-volume series, of which Constance Classen is the head editor. Each volume focuses on a specific period of western history and is comprised of a specific set of chapters on the sensory topics in the major areas of civilization such as medicine, arts, politics, etc. Very recently, in January 2018, another series has been published: *Senses and Sensation: Critical and Primary Sources.* The series is edited by David Howes and divided into 4 volumes that regroup the sources in question by discipline. Volume 4 is dedicated to "Art and Design". Both series have encyclopedic and anthological value for the interdisciplinary field of sensory studies. Moreover, these publications demonstrate that traditional subjects of art history can also be readdressed from sensory studies.

In short, *form* and *experience* are the two main elements around which sensory methodologies of art history are currently developing. *Form* and *experience* are each comprised of two major aspects. Form includes *figure* in the broadest sense (objects, bodies and their coloring), as well as *design* (drawing and composition). Experience, in turn, combines the social dimension of culture with the individual dimension of perceptual psychology. The mixing of the technical and aesthetic focus on *form* with the social and psychological studies of *experience* presents art history with new ways of interpreting the entanglements between these two main elements.

The entanglements between form and experience constitute the ground on which the *sensate* dimension of pictures enfold. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *the sensate* in visual arts is not limited to visualizations of sensory objects (mirrors, flowers, fruits) or acts (kissing, caressing). The sensate in painting is not limited to the literal representation of a sense-object or exclusive focus on a particular sense. The sensate doesn't have to be directly sensible. In other words, a sensory history of visual arts should mainly investigate the liminal and procreative space between representation (*Form*) and sense (*experience*), which is the space where artistic expression is born. The existence of such a space was founded in the German-speaking tradition of art history.

2.2.2 Form and Sense in Art and Art History

In *The Critical Historians of Art*, Michael Podro argues that art history in the German-speaking context grew as a critical thinking project which originated in Hegel's lectures on aesthetics and fine arts, as well as in Rumohr's criticism of Hegel's arguments (1982, p. xxi). Podro reminds us that for Hegel the artwork presented the mind with an opportunity to expand to physical world (Podro 1982, p.18). He also argues that Hegel's aesthetic argument operates on the fundamental supposition that art is a thing of the past, dead. In the second part, he analyzes how German-speaking art historians critically incorporated the Hegelian reference in their aim "to explore particular works in the light of our conception of art […]" (p. xv).

Podro defines the "critical" approach as research into the complex and essential reasons behind the flexibility of the concept of art. He argues that what links the works of Riegl, Wölfflin, Warburg and Panofsky, among others, is a conception of art as "a repository of our past experience" (p. xv). In other words, art is a constant of civilization, and a concept of which the definition, the function and the formal appearance change through historical eras and across cultures. The critical historians of art focus on *why,* and not *what,* art is. Podro also argues that there were two possible frames of research for German-speaking art historians of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries: the archeological and the critical. However, for Podro, these two categories were not as strictly separated in practice

because, art is, by nature and at once, dependent of and irreducible to context. Podro's diagnoses how "critical" was each art historian's position based on the writer's location on this spectrum between focus on the context and the emphasis on artistic independence (p. xx). As such, it reminds us of the same dichotomic thinking that shaped, to different extents in each individual case, the works of Riegl and Wölfflin.

Among the art historians included in Podro's survey, Riegl and Warburg guide the methodological approach of this dissertation for two principal reasons: Firstly, as discussed above, these early formalists' attention to the work of art as part of cultural and psychological webs of interaction influenced the art historians studying, notably, French arts in the long eighteenth-century. Secondly, Riegl and Warburg stand at a strategic historical point between late eighteenth-century neoclassicist thought and its present-day reassessment. In fact, choosing these two art historians as benchmarks for a study of haptic language in neoclassical painting is counter-intuitive at first sight. After all, Riegl argued that neoclassical paintings were purely optical, and Warburg repeatedly criticized Winckelmann, the fundamental author for neoclassicist artists, for seeing only tranquility in Greek art.

German intellectual Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) had formulated a neoclassicist perception of antiquity in *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* (written in 1755 in German, translated to English in 1765) and *History of the Art of Antiquity* (written in 1764, and translated to French first, in 1766). His analysis of ancient arts followed a biological model according to which ancient Greece was the pinnacle of artistic production and artworks from Hellenistic to Christian eras showed characteristics of aesthetic degeneration. With this biological approach to the study of arts, Winckelmann is still considered to be the founder of a scientific methodology of art history. Therefore, his evaluations of Greek and Roman artworks had a pivotal effect, not only for Neoclassicism but also for late nineteenth-century disciplinary studies on Antiquity.

In an extensive study on Riegl's major works, Margaret Iversen observed that Winckelmann's model of sustained decline remained mostly unchallenged in nineteenth-

century scholarship until a Viennese colleague of Riegl, Franz Wickhoff, revalued baroque painting. Iversen also notes that Riegl's *Late Roman Art Industry* showed signs of revaluation of the period in question (Iversen 1993, p. 71). Moreover, in the ambitious project of *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts,* Riegl used a tripartite scheme of birth, growth and decline similar to Winckelmann's life-cycle model, but put an evolutionary nuance allowing him to argue that the artworks of a period are to be understood within their historical context, not in comparison to those of previous eras. Even though he used the birth - growth - decline triad, these phases did not refer to the intrinsic quality of the artworks produce. Rather, they refer to the changing intellectual and religious arguments of the historical background of visual arts.

Similarly, Georges Didi-Huberman's in-depth study of Warburg's arguments and methodology put his writing in a critical relationship to Winckelmann's. According to Didi-Huberman, Warburg's reading of the history of visual arts follows a "spectral / ectoplasmique model" (*modèle fantomatique*). While English texts usually adopt the term "afterlife" as the correspondent of Warburg's concept of *Nachleben,* Didi-Huberman prefers to translate it to French as "survivance". He argues that Warburg ripped out of Winckelmann's biological model by insisting on the larger-than-life temporality of artistic creation and experience. In fact, we could argue that Warburg keeps the cyclical nature of Winckelmann's understanding of aesthetic language but adds a Nietzschean *tournure* to it. In fact, Didi-Huberman supplements his reading of Warburg with references to Nietzsche, among others, in order to argue that the study of artworks should adopt anachronism as a methodological principle (see. Didi-Huberman 1990).

2.2.2.1 Riegl: A Sensory Grammar for Visual Arts

Matthew Rampley reminds us that *Historical Grammar of the Visual* Arts is not the most studied of Riegl's texts (1996). This is partly because the original text in German was only published posthumously, in 1966, and also, Riegl's work was still relatively unfinished at the moment of his death in 1905. In comparison to *Historical Grammar*, Riegl's *Problems of Style* (1893), *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901) and *The group Portraiture of Holland* (1902) are better known across Anglo-Saxon scholarship. These three works were translated to English, respectively, in 1992, 1985 and 1999. *Historical*

Grammar was translated by Jacqueline Jung in 2004. The concept of *Kunstwollen* and a progressive reading of the history of visual arts, from tactile beginnings to optical modernity, are already present in Riegl's aforementioned works. However, as an unpublished double draft in which Riegl synthesizes his conceptual and methodological approach to the history of visual arts, *Historical Grammar* is a living picture of his mind. Therefore, the 2004 translation is crucial to understanding his art historical model.

At the beginning of the *Historical Grammar,* Riegl argues that "The creation of visual art is a contest with nature, not a desire for interchangeability with nature." (2004, p. 52) Such an assertive introductory argument demonstrates that Riegl's aim in this seminal book is to understand which spiritual, bodily and intellectual principles shaped visual arts and artworks throughout the history of European civilization. This is, at best, an overly ambitious aim. To tackle the daunting span of his project, Riegl outlined a number of grounding ideas which are now becoming core concepts for art historical investigations that incorporate the multisensory dimension of aesthetic experience.

Kunstwollen is the most popular of Riegl's concepts. It has been translated to English as "artistic volition" (Riegl 1999, p.3), "artistic intention" (Holly 1994, p.70), or "Will to Form" (Preziosi 2009, p.152). In the introduction of the 2004 English edition of *Historical Grammar,* Benjamin Binstock encourages us to opt for *will of art* as the closest translation (p.28). At first sight, that "will" refers to an ungraspable feeling dispersed in the thick mist of time and civilization, but Wolfgang Kemp insists otherwise. In his introduction to the reedition of Riegl's *The Group Portraiture of Holland,* Kemp argues that "artistic volition […] constitutes the 'visual regime' of an age." (Riegl 1999, p.3) Iversen and Melville formulate a more specific definition of the term: "*Kunstwollen*, or artistic will […] describes different fundamental assumptions people make about the mind's relationship to its objects." (Iversen & Melville 2010, p.91). We can argue, therefore, that Riegl created this term with a methodological aim. He wanted to understand the universal and particular characteristics of artistic production based on the comparative study of the formal qualities of and the braid of relationships (physical, perceptual, cultural, etc.) around the artworks.

Despite the generalizing tone of his arguments, the Viennese art historian was meticulous in shaping and detailing a historical structure that would echo the conceptual system of his project. He chose to explain particular types of artistic production, such as relief sculpture or painting, in a successive series. His aim was to demonstrate some universal principles underlying the production of visual arts through ages and types. He divided the history of European visual arts into three main periods: the first from Antiquity to Christianity becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire, the second from the Middle Ages to the end Renaissance, and third period refers to everything after the expansion of Reformation. Each period is also marked by the "growth", "summit" and "decline" of its particular worldview which shows the influence of Vasari's and Winckelmann's historical schemes that take biological life-cycles as models of historical narrative (Riegl 2004, p. 55). In Riegl's narrative, "decline" does not necessarily point to a deterioration in the aesthetic value of the works of art but to a change in the aesthetic grammar ending one specific era and giving start to the next one (Preziosi 2009, p.152). However, his text is inherently paradoxical in trying to merge the progressivist schema of Hegelian idealism with a formalist art history focused on variations of particular motifs. According to Iversen, this was a simplistic model that, nevertheless, allowed the elaboration of contextually rich visual analyses (Iversen 2010, p.13).

Effectively, Riegl's methodology matched with his understanding of what art history should do at the turn of the century. At the beginning of *Historical Grammar,* Riegl outlines a history of art history: In its first phase, art history was universalist and projected the entire production of human expression into a single timeline. In the second, specialist phase, art historians focused on isolating these works from one another, based on formal differences and chronological distances. With the description of the third phase, where Riegl placed himself too, the Hegelian foundations of his theory became visible. In a dialectical spirit, Riegl argued that in the third phase of art history scholars were searching for universal meaning through the study of particular forms. Thought in tandem with his creation of the concept of *Kunstwollen*, Riegl's historiographic reading revealed his assumption that the 'will of art history' is to compose a comprehensive account of art from its beginning to the modern age.

Another key concept in *Historical Grammar* is *worldview*, defined as "the understanding of man's relation to matter" (p.54). Riegl introduces this term before those of haptic and optic vision. Therefore, the term *worldview* prepares the ground for Riegl's history of the forms in visual arts. More importantly, it solicits the readers' sensory awareness to help convince them that the materiality of our species' primordial relationship to Reality defines the course of our visual production. Riegl's example for this point is, however, a highly speculative one. He argues that at the beginning of history, "man" realized his intermediary position between the things of nature on one side and the forces of nature on the other. Man's distinction between things and forces emerged from the mere observation that he had control over the things around him, but no control over, nor a clear understanding of, the tremendous forces of nature surrounding him. Thus, when he wanted to give visual form to nature's superior forces, man chose his own likeness as the embodiment of superiority, and anthropomorphism was born.

The above explanation of the emergence of anthropomorphism depicts *Form* as the outcome or output of a human phenomenon: the search for, and production of, *Meaning*. I would like to argue that 'Form as an outcome or output of Meaning' differs from 'Form as a container and carrier of Meaning'. The latter would be a formalist approach in the Panofskian tradition. Or at least in how Panofsky's iconological analyses are read. Riegl's highlighting of Meaning as an igniter of Form motivates us to delve deeper into visual representation, to find the underlying visceral experience in which Meaning originates. Therefore, in Riegl's understanding, Meaning is initially a sensory phenomenon which is then shaped into visual or linguistic Form. It is this double-sided experience that a re-creator of forms, such as a painter, tries to translate into pictures.

Admittedly there is a thin line between Riegl's and Panofsky's understandings of Form, but they put the stress on different points of the representational thought. Panofsky's iconological method aims to decipher the meanings incised into the representation by analyzing the visible forms. Therefore, Panofsky prioritizes instances of linguistic reasoning embodied in Form, such as the scholastic principles that 'inform' the Gothic style. Riegl's depiction of the Meaning-Form relationship certainly doesn't exclude the linguistic dimension, but it insists on the sensory perception and the feeling nature of the

human being as key players in the figuration of Meaning. In sum, in the formation of the Rieglian worldview, processes of sensory perception fuse with abstract thought. Matter interacts with intellect, and skin communicates with cornea in the human creation of meanings and artworks.

Later in *Historical Grammar,* Riegl ties the sense of sight to the organ of human tactility per excellence, the hand, when he writes: "[…] the work of art does not seek to replicate actual nature - on the contrary; if the work were not immediately recognizable as a product of human hands, it would lose its entire purpose." (p.52) Thus, the job of *re-cognizing* of a work of art as a mere representation of nature, and not as "actual nature", is entrusted to the sense of sight, but the object under the scrutiny of sight is a work of the hand. Thus, the perceivable 'once-presence' of the creating hand is a must in art, so as to provide the beholder with the aesthetic pleasure that will arise from the appreciation of the nearness of human creation to nature's own works. Ironically, then, the rift between "actual nature" and "the work of art" strengthens the human hand versus that of nature. What is initially presented as a rift becomes an artery feeding the human activity of creating Meaning, and a vital spark that catches the beholders' eyes and mind.

In other words, when we *re-cognize* a painting as re-materialization of Reality, as a crust of paint on a surface, we see, in fact, the result of the painter's *touches* and *retouches.* We *see* the absence of the painter's hand. We *behold* the picture projected onto the canvas, just as the painter once held the image at the end of his/her brush. The encounter with a painting is, therefore, an encounter with the materiality of the paint and of the painter. It is also an encounter with the being real (realness) of the picture and, more crucially, with the *actuality* of the invisible thought in which the visible picture originated. Hence, Riegl's theory points at the haptic background of the aesthetic experience.

However, Riegl does not seem to take this haptic opening any further than the realm of ancient reliefs. Indeed, some translations, including Binstock's, prefer to use the word "tactile" in the place of Riegl's German term "haptisch". To give an example to the tidal nature of Riegl's concept of hapticity, we can assess his comments on Egyptian reliefs.

Echoing his account on the emergence of anthropomorphism, Riegl hypothesizes that (p.401):

> *Peering out at the world around him, primitive man found himself confronted by chaos. Into that chaos he sought to bring order. The first step was to pull forward the things that held special attraction, so that in place of a muddled, chaotic mass he had before him individual entities. […] The optical approach showed him chaos; the tactile offered him sufficient conviction of the individual integrity of things. Visual art therefore had to begin with the tactile surface.*

For Riegl, figures in Egyptian reliefs cast only weak shadows because their modeling is to be felt by the hands, not the eyes, of the perceiver. As a result, to understand Egyptian reliefs we have to stand close and touch them, because our experience of them changes upon tactile encounter. Riegl calls this kind of encounter the "near view" (p. 188). At the opposite end of the spectrum of aesthetic perception there is Late Roman Art with its fully optical surface (p.431). The reason for Riegl's reluctance to discuss the haptic in early modern European art can be found in his arguments in *The Group Portraiture of Holland.* Podro sustains that Riegl's main concern with regard to antique art is the self-contained character of the antique artwork, its presence as an object of touch independent of, but offered to, the spectator's bodily presence. On the contrary, Dutch group portraits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries prolong themselves out of the frame, the protagonists' gazes are projected out into the beholder's field of presence and the image becomes a continuity of that field. Consequently, Dutch portraits are not situated as independent objects in front of the beholder. Riegl's understanding of Dutch group portraits continues the Hegelian notion of painting "as an art which intimates a spiritual content for which there could be no adequate sensory realization" (Podro 1982, p. 83).

According to Riegl, it is in the declining phase, beginning with Christianity becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire, that the "theme of suffering" irrupts in visual arts with a sculptural example that "stands as a direct precursor of Christian art" (p. 61): the *Laocoön* group. *Laocoön* is a chronological oddity because, in Riegl's view, the *Kunstwollen* of the first period in the history of European visual arts is to improve upon the works of nature by the representation of physical beauty. The depiction of pain, suffering, punishment are part of a visual lexicon of ugliness or evil and, in Riegl's understanding, had no place in the growth and summit phases of the first period of visual

art. However, Laocoön's depiction of suffering opens up the possibility of depicting the movements of the soul. In parallel, "sensorially inaccessible concepts, such as Kairos (Opportunity)" also had emerged (p.63) .

Riegl argues that the depiction of negative sensations and abstract concepts founded the representation of the supersensory, spiritual and intellectual properties of the soul in Christian art. In his view, visual arts had to take this *supersensory* direction to avoid competing with a unique and perfect God all the while continuing to compete with a creation of His: the Nature. In other words, the invention of supersensory direction was an artistic solution aiming to reconcile the iconophobic Jewish influence and the anthropomorphic Pagan influence. Riegl cites the idealism of Byzantine icons to demonstrate that the supersensory visual grammar allowed dramatizing and communicating spiritual values using the human figure, without running the risk of copying the pagan idols. In other words, until Renaissance, "naturalistic accuracy in the portrayal of transitory nature" (p. 77) was avoided. Here, Riegl seems to be thinking of the absences of linear perspective, bodily volume, and natural light in Byzantine icons. By bringing together the universal and the particular, and by choosing the haptic as a unit of measure, Riegl gives us a preliminary model of sensory art history.

2.2.2.2 Wolfgang Kemp and Margaret Iversen

Wolfgang Kemp describes Riegl's historiographic position as shaped, at once, by formalist concerns and studies of style—which favor the particular—and by a universalizing approach to the human-nature relationship from which visual arts emerge (Kemp 1994, pp.86-87). He argues that Alois Riegl's ambivalent position at the intersection of universal principles and particular formations in visual arts opened the way for an aesthetics of reception. Kemp insists that 'aesthetics' and 'histories' of reception are essentially different. The aesthetics of reception studies the ways in which the "function of beholding has already been incorporated into the work itself" (1998, p.181). Within the historical study of reception there are, according to Kemp, four major historical trends: the study of stylistic evolutions, the study of literary and intellectual evolutions, the history of taste, and finally, the psychology of reception.

The first trend, Kemp argues, focuses on "an anxiety of influence" experienced by the artist of a given era. This anxiety motivates, or pressures, the artist to choose and re-appropriate certain motifs among a set of "original" ones. Kemp points at Norman Bryson's *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* (1984) as an example to this trend's focus on the concept of tradition as inherited influence and as an origin to stylistic derivations (Kemp 1998, p.181). While studies focusing on inherited influences analyze the works of art directly, those that belong to the second trend read about the beholders' reactions mostly from written accounts. Kemp cites "Semiotics and Art History" (1991) co-authored by Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson as a 'promising' example but concludes that it is impossible to build a fully efficient understanding of historical documents given that such writing was guided by changing conventions (Kemp 1998, p. 182).

The third branch, the history of taste, doesn't attract extensive attention from Kemp as he prefers to place it under the general heading of curatorial and collecting studies. Effectively, 'taste' in that context refers to a set of questions on the evolution of the art market. However, it is surprising that Kemp chose not to comment on the necessity of reading the emergence of the concept of 'taste' to refer to such a specific area. Reception aesthetics could provide provoking perspectives on the adoption of a sensory term in referring to a group of socio-economic phenomena, as it does in the case of the fourth and last trend historical trend in Kemp's review: the psychology of reception.

In Kemp's opinion, psychology and aesthetics of reception share the conviction that there is "dialogue" between the work of art and its beholder. "Psychological studies place this dialogue, however, on the level of a construct created by an exchange between the organ of perception and the form of the work" (p. 182), whereas the aesthetics of reception focuses on the "implicit beholder" within the work of art (p. 183). In other words, the major distinction between the psychology and aesthetics of reception would be that the former lacks the level of historical and aesthetic contextualization that guides the latter. Indeed, contextualization is the key element connecting Kemp's theory to sensory thinking, as he writes (p.185):

> *As part of this much more general movement in the humanities - what might be called contextualism - reception aesthetics seeks to revive a sensitivity for relationships*

> *among phenomena, to train, above all, other senses, especially the "sense for relationship".*

It is possible to find an echo between Riegl's grammatical analyses of visual arts and Kemp's insistence on context and relationship, the most important being the relationship between the work of art and its beholder. Riegl had tried to put the Egyptian reliefs in their historical context by defining the affective, psychological and physical conditions of their perception at the time. Kemp uses a formula, "communicative structures", which recalls Riegl's classificatory zeal both in his periodization of visual arts from Pre-historic to modern times, and in his tripartite typology of near-normal-distant view. Furthermore, the notion of "communicative structures" is probably one of the reasons behind Kemp's analytical interest in Jacques-Louis David's work, because the art historian argues that changes in these structures could be pointing at historical shifts and would be calling for careful reading (p.186).

Kemp insists that reception aesthetics scrutinizes "the point of intersection between 'context' and 'text'" (p.186). He outlines five "forms of address" through which reception aesthetics reads the "implicit beholder" in a given work of art. The first form of address is studying the diegesis of the work of art, or the internal network of relationships of the figures being represented. The second is whether there are any "focalizer" (p.187) figures in the representation with whom the beholder could identify himself/herself. Thirdly, and with a direct reference to Riegl's theory on Dutch group portraits, how the representation positions the beholder that it imagines for itself. The fourth form of address could be named "the completeness" of the work, asking whether the visual representation in question is imagined as a fragment of "preexistent reality" (p.188). While the aspect of completeness studies the frame limiting the representation, the last form of address studies the "blanks" within the representation in a way that recalls Michael Baxandall's account of how the Renaissance beholder used paintings as a series of dots to link with their minds' projections.

In *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, Margaret Iversen argues that the main thread in Riegl's historical understanding of visual arts is the observation of "a gradual subjectivization of the objective" (Iversen 2010, p.125). In other words, the main historical thread in Riegl's theory is the change in the nature of the relationship of a visual

artwork to its beholder and to the reality in which both the work and the beholder are drenched. According to Riegl, from early Antiquity to post-Reformation, the work of art evolved from an independent object with defined borders and closed internal dynamics to an image akin to those (internal, as in imagination; or external, as in optics) in the beholder's mind.

As a representative case, Iversen examines the model of the relationship between the spectator and the canvas described in *The Dutch Group Portrait.* In that book, Riegl finds that "attention" is the central motif in Dutch portraiture, it incites the spectator's engagement with the canvas. He argues that Dutch group portraits speak to the unique subjectivity of each spectator. That is why, according to Riegl, the Dutch don't adopt the genre of History painting which unfurls a specific pictorial convention and imposes itself as a unique object calling for a unified spectatorship. The spectatorial model in Dutch portraiture is one of continuity, while that of History painting (for which, we wouldn't be wrong to mentally insert a Davidian example here) is one of discontinuity.

Iversen notes that Riegl's argument on the discontinuity between the space depicted in a History painting and the real space in which the spectator stands, would have been unsettling if Hegel hadn't made a parallel distinction between the spatial continuity in our beholding of a painting and discontinuity in our experience of a sculptural work. In his contrasting of Dutch portraiture to History painting, Riegl is refining the Hegelian model in which the main concern was to activate the expansion of the subjective mind, to push the spirit out of its bodily cage so that it can roam the world of the senses. In Hegel's theory, sculpture is a multi-dimensional object allowing its spectator to move around and therefore bringing bodily sensation to the fore. Painting, in contrast, carefully positions its spectator whose spatial and bodily confinement allows the mind to cross over to the realm of visual and sensory representations.

As Iversen notes, Riegl's application of the Hegelian theory seems to point at the historical finitude, and therefore objecthood, of the subjects typically treated in history paintings. The spectator of a History painting would be facing a complete Form, in the sculptural sense of the word. The story depicted could be re-visited from different angles

thanks to the historical distance leaving enough room for the intellectual maneuvers of the spectator. Dutch portrait paintings, in contrast, call on the spectator to take part in the composition, the be a member of the scene who isn't inside the frame but nevertheless present in the scene depicted. In this model, the spectator becomes a beholder, caught in an ongoing dialogue with the painted subject(s), looking and looked at simultaneously (Iversen 2010, p.127).

In sum, Iversen's reading of Riegl crucial because it is not only an in-depth review of Riegl's body of work, but also a haptic reading of the history, methodology and canon of art history. It is a haptic reading in the sense that Iversen analyzes multiple conceptual contacts among the cited authors, and this haptic reading challenges the traditionally optical mindset of the discipline of art history.

2.2.2.3 Aby Warburg: Movement and Pathos

> *Man, being an organic creature, […] has the specifically organic need for movement, and a purely crystalline form could only be appropriate when he himself had become an inorganic mass, that is, the dust of a corpse.*

Odd as it seems to start a review of Aby Warburg's hypotheses with a quote from Alois Riegl (2004, p.200), the above comment on humans' aesthetic need for movement is a telling example to the fact that these two art historians shared more than the language in which they wrote. For both art historians, movement expands beyond visual motif and becomes a core principle in the artwork's relationship to the world around it. In Riegl, we see the beholder taking a step away from the artwork at each successive moment of history. In Warburg, we see the dynamic interplay between the Apollonian and the Dionysian sides of the ancient Greco-Roman culture moving up towards the visible surface of artistic images.

In *The Emergence of the Antique as a Stylistic Ideal in Early Renaissance Painting* (1914), Aby Warburg argues that Greco-Roman antiquity could be embodied as "a double herm of Apollo and Dionysus". As Matthew Rampley explains, Warburg's emphasis on the emotive duality of antiquity is guided by Nietzsche's account of the ambivalence in classical tragedy (2009, p.276). In Warburg's opinion, Winckelmann had failed to

recognize that the art of antiquity was not guided by the sole principle of "tranquil grandeur". In words that remind us of his Nietzschean inclination, Warburg insists that the ancient visual motifs such as gestures and accessories express "a tragic sense of classic unrest". In other words, detail and *grandeur*, torment and tranquility coexist in the ancient regime of visual representation. In *Dürer and Italian Antiquity* (1905), he claims that "the narrow Neoclassical doctrine" prevented, for a long time, the analysis of antiquity's emotive duality. This thesis asks whether there couldn't, also, be an extended reading of Neoclassicism within the broader context of eighteenth-century French appreciation of *à l'antique* style. It suggests that the sensory motifs in late eighteenth-century French paintings could reveal overlooked ways in which the Dionysian aspect of antiquity did have an afterlife in that period, not in its pleasurable aspect but by the density of sensation and emotion that are just as typical of the Dionysian.

Here we should take a crucial detour to remember Winckelmann's arguments on ancient arts and to put his works in perspective in relation to both Riegl's and Warburg's. Warburg repeatedly criticizes Winckelmann who is considered the theoretical source of Neoclassicism and, also, one of the founders of art history next to Pliny the Elder, whose *Natural History* has already been mentioned in the first part of this review, and Giorgio Vasari, the writer of *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550). While Pliny's approach to writing on art and artists could be defined as anecdotical, Vasari's is famously biographical, for he did not only compile the biographies of individual artists but also implied a biological cycle of birth, growth, decline and rebirth of style in parallel to cultural and political contexts. As to Winckelmann, the keyword of his art historical project was, according to Georges Didi-Huberman, *imitation* (2002, pp. 24-25). Winckelmann argued that the only way to create good art again was to imitate the perfect works of the Greeks. In other words, Winckelmann's methodology and theoretical perspective was in-between, on the one hand, Pliny's attention to detail and Vasari's biographical scheme, and on the other, Riegl's and Warburg's attention to the metamorphoses of form in parallel to cultural contexts. However, Warburg's criticism to Winckelmann did not put the antiquarian's exaltation of ancient Greeks and the prescription of imitation as precondition to perfection. Warburg did observe the returning of certain ancient motifs in Renaissance

arts in a way that was akin to Winckelmann's prescribed returning motion. For Warburg, the issue in Winckelmann's reading of antiquity was the lack of recognition of the double nature of ancient culture, the exclusive focus of Winckelmann's reading on the principles of 'noble simplicity' and 'tranquil grandeur'.

Warburg argued that Antiquity was based on an interactive coexistence of emotional and intellectual realms, and that fifteenth-century Italian artists like Botticelli, had brought the ancient "double herm" back to life by emphasizing the sense of motion and the emotive power that exuded from their figures. In other words, he tied the Quattrocento images to their ancient sources from an affective as well as a formal point of view. In doing so, he paid attention to specific parts of the figures such as drapery and hair (Warburg 1999, p.89).

> *It is possible to trace, step by step, how the artists [in the Quattrocento] and their advisers recognized 'the antique' as a model that demanded an intensification of outward movement, and how they turned to antique sources whenever accessory forms—those of garments and of hair—were to be represented in motion.*

The attention to Form in Warburg and in Riegl seems to originate in the observation of a parallel between physical and conceptual distance. Riegl explained haptic and optic vision in terms of the distance imagined by the maker(s) between the picture and the beholder for an optimum experience and perception of the visual artwork. Egyptian reliefs were designed to be perceived from up close (near view, Riegl, page), but the art of painting from Renaissance onwards distanced the beholder from the picture. In other words, Riegl's model of the beholder's (ocular and corporal) movement is progressional, unidirectional and diachronic. Warburg's understanding of movement represented as Form and of the movement of the beholder is more complex (Warburg 2009, p.276-277):

> *The conscious creation of distance between oneself and the external world can probably be designated as the founding act of human civilization. When this interval becomes the basis of artistic production, the conditions have been fulfilled for this consciousness of distance to achieve an enduring social function which, in its rhythmical change between absorption in its object or detached restraint, signifies the oscillation between a cosmology of images and one of signs.*

In *Dürer and Italian Antiquity* (1905), Warburg claimed, referring implicitly to Winckelmann, that "the narrow Neoclassical doctrine" prevented, for a long time, the

analysis of antiquity's emotive duality and the *afterlife* of that duality as it infiltrated into Quattrocento painting. His observation is an accurate diagnosis of the traditional European art historical meta-narrative programmed to project the story of an evolution in visual arts from Antiquity to Modern Times which, indeed, is partly the result of Winckelmann's influence on subsequent art historians. However, historically speaking, Warburg was closer to Neoclassicism than us today and, also, he didn't provide a detailed assessment of David's paintings. Presently, we can analyze Neoclassical paintings for what they are in the full spectrum of political, historical, cultural and other contexts that surrounded them, with the added benefit of a dynamic sense of distance described by and much developed after Warburg.

2.2.3 The Haptic Pathos of Painting: Models and a Toolkit

Let us remember the famous ancient dictate: "Seeing is believing, touching is knowing". European arts and aesthetics did not abandon this dictate, but not as a strict principle. The comparison of sight to touch in terms of reliability and aesthetic value was incorporated into European aesthetics as a *problématique*, a questioning trope that does not require a final answer. Thus, a continuous interplay between platonic idealism and Plinian naturalism is inherent in the history of European visual arts and their verbal analysis. One of the artists that created the most *touching* examples—in all the *senses* of the word—of this fruitful dialectic was Caravaggio.

It may be confusing to initiate an analysis of Jacques-Louis David's works with a discussion on Caravaggio. However, a juxtaposition of David's *The Death of Marat* (1793) and Caravaggio's *The Entombment of Christ* (1603) (Figures 3.28 and 2.14) tells us that the French artist took note of the Italian's style during his studentship in the French Academy of Rome. Indeed, the Italian *sojourn* had reformed David's aesthetic point of view. Caravaggio's work is part of a panoply of references to Italian masters that David collected and combined during these four years abroad. Following his visit to architect and aesthetician, fellow Frenchman, Quatremère de Quincy in Naples, David claimed that it was as if his "cataracts had been removed" (Honour 1968, p.33).

Caravaggio's specific influence is discernible in the *chiaroscuro* and the modeling of human figures in the works that David was sending back to the Academy in Paris for his teachers' evaluations. In other words, Caravaggio's treatment of light, volume, surface and fragile equilibrium played a pivotal role in David's stylistic evolution around the time of his metaphorical cataract operation. Leaving these points to be analyzed in detail in the next chapter, we should now concentrate on what we call a 'haptic pathos' in Caravaggio's paintings, and on the *caravagesque* in David's *Marat*. These two aspects will help us in building, as a conclusion of the Literature Review chapter, a toolkit to be used in all subsequent analyses.

Firstly, we should clarify how these two works are related. David's portrayal of Marat does not date from his years in Italy but from the very particular context of 1793 and the painter's time as a deputy in *La Convention.* In other words, there is a temporal distance between the creation of *Marat* and David's aesthetic conversion in Italy. Moreover, David's representation of the most popular martyr of the Revolution is a representative of the anti-royalist and anti-religious atmosphere of the Jacobin rule. The Jacobins, especially Robespierre, were searching for a new and potent visual language that would be capable of replacing royal and Christian imagery. Despite this double distance between the two paintings, there are some stylistic affinities that their visual analysis will reveal. Also, during his studentship in Rome, David sent back for evaluation a copy of Valentin de Boulogne's *Last Supper* (Figure 2.15) who was a prominent follower of Caravaggio in early seventieth-century France. David's copy is lost today, but other assignments he sent to Paris use dramatic lighting, simple backgrounds and vividly modeled bodies. With this extended context, the juxtaposition of Caravaggio's *Entombment* and David's *Marat* becomes relevant to this dissertation's initial argument that, throughout his career, David continued to explore and reshape haptic effects for an efficient combination of the visual and narrative layers of representation. It also conforms to the specific attention given to the trilogy of martyrdom portraits as a turning point in David's haptic explorations, because it shows that, at that particular moment in his life and in French history, David returned to the core of his Italian experience.

Looking at David's and Caravaggio's canvases side by side, a first observation is that David adopts Caravaggio's signature combination of theatricality and sculpturality. The depiction of Marat's passing is theatrical by its spatial layering and simplicity. We see the ground, then the dedicatory box, then Marat's body and the tub, and finally, the background surface. This scene is also sculptural, because Marat's upper body falling out of the bathtub transforms the tub into a pillar, echoed by the metaphorical tombstone — the wooden box on the foremost position—which carries David's *dedicace* and signature. Thus, during his years in Italy, David was not evolving toward total exclusion of sensory provocation from visual representation. On the contrary, he was exploring spatial awareness.

Once he was away from the fading but still inescapable conventions of the French Rococo and the institutional character of the French art world, David must have found himself engorged in the haptic presence of ancient artworks and in an Italian language of vivid incarnation. In other words, he was discovering past uses of sensory incitement in visual representation, notably in ancient sculpture and baroque painting. It is possible to speculate that he would have compared these past uses to the sensual excesses of Rococo. However, it would be too easy to think that the discovery of and exercises in the antique, Renaissance and Baroque manners would result in a total hatred of Rococo to the point of an absolute rejection of everything he had learnt up to this point in his career. It would, more likely, result in a review and individual reform of the French style. Given his initial desire to study with François Boucher, David was no stranger to painting's sensual side. In Rome, David must have realized that sensory language is not limited to its sensual application in Rococo.

To begin the comparison between the two paintings in question here, we can address, firstly, Caravaggio's depiction of touch. The painter uses tactile and haptic tropes strategically, to intensify the beholder's perceptual experience of Christ's and divine figures' passions. He builds ways of referring to sensory experience that push the limits of perception and sensation beyond sensual pleasure and toward an embodied identification of the viewer with the lives of the divine protagonists. The key to Caravaggio's strategy lies in the kinesthetic, vestibular, tactile and visceral effects he

creates.[21] These effects act on the beholders by the dramatic use of light, which is characteristic of Caravaggio and also known as *chiaroscuro.* Before analyzing these effects in *The Entombment of Christ*, I must briefly define them, because they constitute the core of the haptic pathos in visual representation.

2.2.3.1 Four Components of Hapticity

Kinesthetic effects are the result of representational tactics that target the beholder's awareness of movement. Kinesthesia is the sense of movement. It refers to a person's awareness of his/her *musculature* and ability to command his/her limbs. It is linked to gravitation, and it helps us move with ease (to walk, eat, swim, etc.). By extension, the kinesthetic sense helps us control or keep a *pose* or *posture*. The kinesthetic effect in painting springs from the visualization of movement in a dynamic composition. A striking example is Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (1508-12) in the Sistine Chapel (Figure 2.16). Here, the two main figures are reclining and gesturing toward each. Their arms and their hands create a diagonal axis. The diagonal flow of the composition is repeated in the stretching legs of the figures, and in the slope behind Adam. Indeed, diagonals in composition create powerful kinesthesis in the beholder's mind as they challenge the upward posture of the beholder's body and the gravitational expectation of the human mind. However, even without a pronounced diagonal composition, kinesthesis can be simulated or provoked by the gesture of a figure that connects him/her to another figure or object in the picture.

Vestibular effects refer to the extension of the picture toward the space or the point of view from where the beholder is looking at the picture. Linear and atmospheric perspective play a key role in the building of vestibular effects. While linear perspective defines sizes and forms, atmospheric (or, aerial) perspective defines hues and tones. The first and obvious reason behind perspective's key role as a vestibular agent is that a realistic application of linear and atmospheric guidelines creates perfect illusion of

[21] The four modalities I focus on (kinesthetic, vestibular, tactile, visceral) are adapted from Macpherson, F. 2011. Introduction: Individuating the senses, in Macpherson, F. (Ed.). *The senses: classical and contemporary philosophical perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.3-43.

volume, and therefore depth. In other words, realistic perspective creates a diegetic space for the narrative that the picture aims to transmit, such that the beholder can imagine him/herself within the narrative (or the narrative taking place in his/her actual surroundings). However, perspective's vestibular role is to be found, also, in the capacity it gives, to the painter, of creating *trompe-l'oeil* pictures. Using foreshortening and naturalistic lighting, painters like Caravaggio created such pictures that seem to come out of the picture frame and extend toward the beholder's space. In *Supper at Emmaüs* (1601) Caravaggio paints a fruit basket that is about to fall down from the table because half of it seems to be standing out. And the hand of the apostle on the righthand side of the picture is reaching out toward us (Figure 2.17).

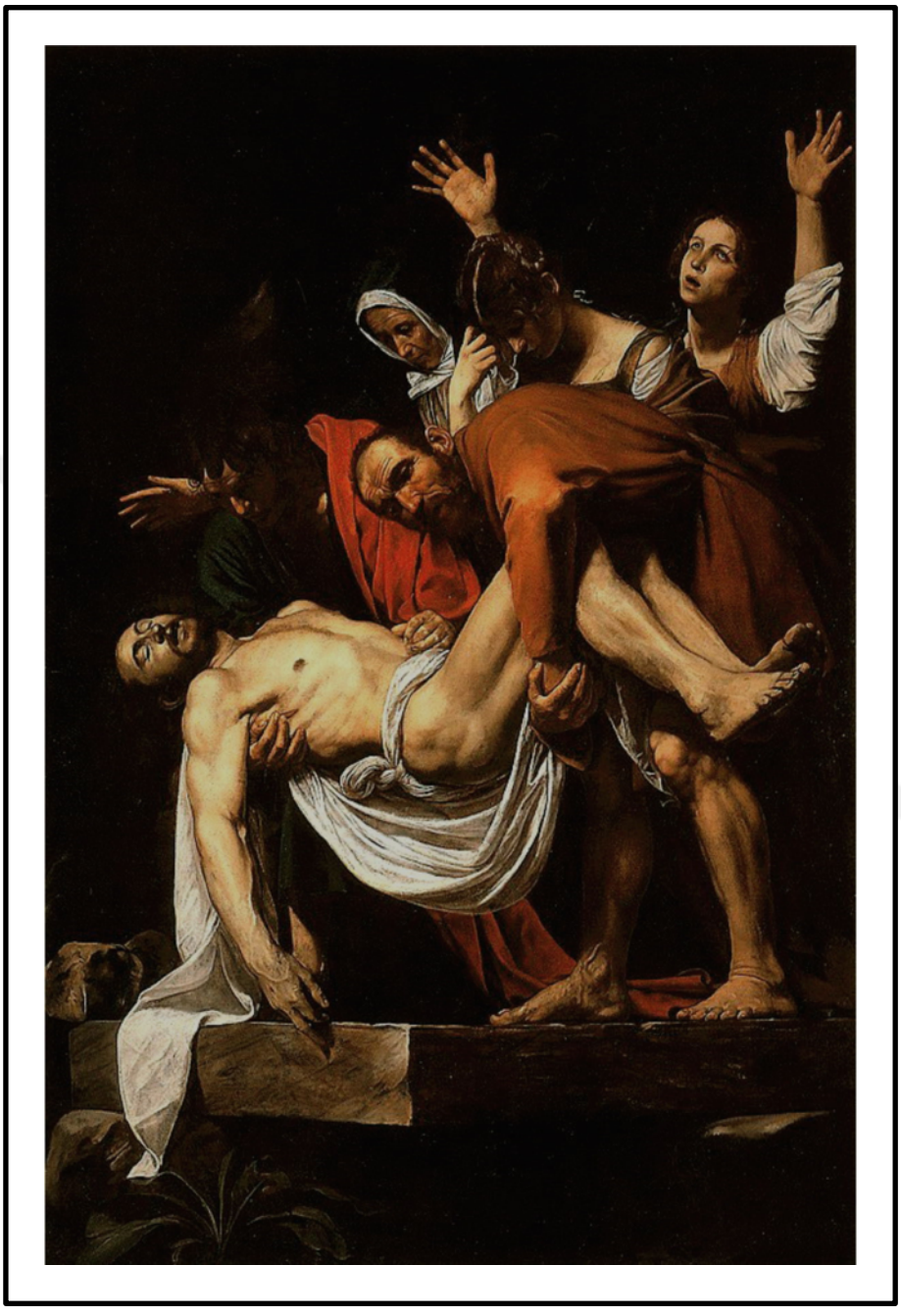
As to tactile effects, they involve two main dimensions: texture and contact. Texture is connected to the textures represented, to the artist's characteristic brushwork and to the materiality of paint. In other words, texture does not only refer to simulated texture (skin, fur, velvet, etc.) but also to whether the individual brushstrokes are discernible or not, and to the thickness of paint applied onto the canvas. Sensations that are obtained by the perception of textures (roughness, fragility, warmth…) can result in or provoke expectations of pain, danger, or comfort. That is to say, textural effects are inseparable from visceral ones. The same is true for contact-based tactile effects. Contact is connected to the specific moment that the picture pretends to have frozen. It involves, for example, depictions of actual touch, as in two figures touching or kissing each other. It also involves moments of contact between human figures and other objects and surfaces. It can be argued that this precise dimension of tactile simulation occupies the most important place in the argumentation of the present dissertation. However, to give another example from the history of painting, we can cite Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with an Ermine* (c.1490 because of the white fur of the animal and the caressing movement of the Lady's hand (Figure 2.18).

Finally, visceral effects are those by which beholders are incited to *feel* an array of sensations going from pain to pleasure. The term *visceral* has the specific aim of avoiding the immediate association between sensual charge and the multi-sensory essence of looking at paintings. To put it bluntly, both a crucifixion scene and an odalisque looking

back at the beholder aim to provoke sensation, but the particular sensations they aim for are different. Just as the crucifixion scene is not devoid of sensory charge, the picture of the odalisque is not devoid of concepts and arguments. Both more conceptually sensory and more pleasurably sensual type of painting aim to awaken the visceral awareness of the beholder. Visceral effects can spring from wounds, dismemberments, discolorations or, on the contrary, from the rosy and appealing states of the skin. An eighteenth-century example to visceral effect is Chardin's *Still Life with a Hare* (1730) (Figure 2.19). The hare in question is lying upside down against a wall. There is no line separating the ground from the background surface. The figure (the hare) and the ground enveloping it are painted using the same ochre palette. This totalizing choice reminds us of Diderot's observation on what makes Chardin a painter worthy of a great status: Chardin doesn't paint with color but with the real material of the objects he represents (Diderot 2008, pp.82-83). In other words, the visceral effect comes from a harmony between the use of color and the use of paint that transposes material substance to a visual and embodied perception of it.

All four effects just mentioned are inseparably interlaced on the picture-surface. The pose of Chardin's hare has a kinesthetic effect just as the color palette of the figure and the ground create textural, therefore, tactile hints. In addition to these effects, the haptic potential of a painting is established by a particular connection between the sensory (or, the *sensate*, as I will call it from now on) and narrative dimensions. Thus, we can argue that, in any visual representation, hapticity lies in the capacity and aim of 'making sense' through visualizations of touch. This means that hapticity is not a guarantee of 'haptic pathos', but an essential part of it. In this dissertation, I use Warburg's understanding of *pathos* in a particular way. According to Warburg, the pathos-form is a motif that returns, an element that is found in visual and cultural representation, across the World and across History, at moments of change and anxiety. Warburg's example is the representation of 'movement' in Renaissance painting. The trope of returning motifs is part of my argument, because I suggest that the haptic aesthetic of David's martyrdom portraits is rooted in the painter's haptic experience of ancient civilization.

Figure 2.14: Caravaggio, M. M. da (1601-3) *The Entombment of Christ* [Oil on canvas]. Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome.



Source: Art Encyclopedia, http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/famous-paintings/entombment-of-christ.htm

Figure 2.15: Boulogne, V. de. (1625-6) *Last Supper* [Oil on canvas]. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome.



Source: The Metropolitan Musuem of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/2016/valentin-de-boulogne-jacques-louis-david

Figure 2.16: Michelangelo (1508-12) *The Creation of Adam* [Fresco]. The Sistine Chapel, Musei Vaticani, Rome.



Source: Musei Vaticani, http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/cappella-sistina/volta/storie-centrali/creazione-di-adamo.html

Figure 2.17: Caravaggio, M. M. da (1601) Supper at Emmaüs [Oil on canvas]. National Gallery, London.



Source: The National Gallery, https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/michelangelo-merisi-da-caravaggio-the-supper-at-emmaus

Figure 2.18: Da Vinci, L. (c.1490) *Lady with an Ermine* [Oil on canvas]. Czartoryski Museum, Krakow.



Source: National Museum in Krakow, https://mnk.pl/exhibitions/leonardo-da-vinci-lady-with-an-ermine

Figure 2.19: Chardin, J-B-S. (c.1730*) Still Life with a Hare* [Oil on canvas]. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.



Source: Philadelphia Museum of Art, https://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/57049.html

Returning to Caravaggio, we can now address the kinesthetic, vestibular, tactile and visceral effects in *The Entombment of Christ*. From the upper righthand side down to the dead body of Christ on the lower left, Caravaggio compiles and compresses three female and three male figures. The three female figures of the upper half mark the beginning of a wave of gestures and emotions directing the eye of the beholder toward the three male figures of the bottom half. The hands of Mary Magdalene are raised in desperate exclamation toward Heaven, the figure of young Mary in front of is her covering her face in grief, and the older Mary's hand is almost dislocated from her body because it is visible only over the shoulder of Nicodemus. This latter is carrying Christ's body by the chest, while also pulling away Christ's wound. Nicodemus' hand mirrors what appears to be Christ's left-hand resting, senselessly, on his abdomen. Joseph is doubled up to hold a strong grip around Christ's knees. At the same time, his head is turned toward the beholder and his gaze meets us. In addition to this direct visual address to the beholder, Joseph's foreshortened elbow and lower arm standing in vertical give salience of the entire group of figures. The verticality of Joseph's lower arm is echoed in the sharp corner-line of the stone that serves as a stage to the scene, as well as Christ's right arm. Thus, Caravaggio enhances the sensation that this scene is actually coming out of the two-dimensional surface and frame. The corner of the stone/stage has a sharp angle and a dramatically lit up texture, calling out, at once, to the tactile and vestibular senses because they bring the scene closer to us. In sum, the vestibular aspect of the painting is perfectly coordinated with the kinesthetics of the composition.

Most of the tactile and visceral effects of this painting are concentrated in the figure of Christ, notably in his pale skin, skeletal body, his wound being pulled by Nicodemus' fingers and, most crucially, in his right arm falling down lifelessly. The fingers in this right hand seem to rub against the stone. In fact, the fingers of this hand are almost merged with the texture of the stone. The point where the fingers touch the stone marks the end of the visual movement that had started in the exclaiming hands of Mary Magdalene. It is the end of the narrative, standing for the end of life. This the point where coldness crosses over from lifeless material to lifeless corpse. It is, therefore, a subtle but crucial *moment*; small in proportion to Mary Magdalene's big hands but not less important because it is actually closer to the eye-level of the beholder and very close to the salient

corner of the stone/stage. In fact, the beholders could, also, "enter" the picture from this point and direct their sights upwards, which would also enhance the viscerality of Christ's wound. In short, this point of contact is a moment of narrative and sensory intensity.

As to David's *Marat*, we should focus on one specific aspect and leave the rest of the analysis to the next chapter: in the depiction of the martyr's last breath, David creates a 'moment of intensity'. In other words, he creates an encapsulation of time on the picture surface, and to do so, he condenses our attention to particular points in the *diegesis* and composition. To understand how David intensifies a significative moment, we must analyze the background/foreground relationship in this picture. On the one hand, the background is a wall and a void at once. It is a frontier and an opening. On the other hand, the foreground is neat and vivid. Marat's bathtub is covered in white and green sheets. A wooden top is placed on top, because Marat kept working during his medicinal baths. Marat's body is placed on a line of embrace between that connects the contrasting visual planes of the background and the foreground, of the horizontal (the bathtub) and the vertical (the wooden box). The simplicity and subtlety of horizontal/vertical and background/foreground contrasts are decisive in the intensity that exudes from this painting. However, the intensity is anchored in a specific moment, that is provided by one particular point in the painting. We can name what happens in that particular point as *frôlement*: a light and brushing touch.

The *frôlement* in Marat's picture is an embodiment of David's keen study of Caravaggio. It is located at the specific point where Marat's right hand is brushing the ground. Just like Christ's in Caravaggio's painting, Marat's right hand is on the ground. It is loosely holding the martyr's weapon of choice, the pen. However, this fallen hand is inadvertently (unconsciously) still caressing the ground. This caress can only provide a faint sensation on the protagonist because Marat is taking or has just taken his last breath, as the original title of the canvas indicates. Marat's arm is drawn and modeled after Christ's. However, the most important aspect of David's reference to Caravaggio is not in the visible form of Marat's arm. It is, in fact, in the *moment* and, consequently, the way in which the arm comes into contact with the ground.

2.2.3.2 Form, Meaning and the Sensate in Painting

The undefined background in Marat's representation begs a more in-depth analysis too. This ambivalent background—at once a wall and a void—is, arguably, an example to Didi-Huberman's concept of 'the visual' (*le visuel*): a 'visibly empty' part of the picture that contains meaning without recourse to a specific figure. According to Jean-Pierre Criqui, Didi-Huberman's broader theory of representation is based on a double dichotomy. It opposes the pair *'le visuel - le figurable'* to that of *'le visible - le lisible'* (Didi-Huberman et.al. 2012, p.16). In response to Criqui, Didi-Huberman explains his point of departure in the following words (p.17, my emphasis in bold):

> *I started from a specific example, an* Annunciation *by Fra Angelico, in which we see on the right a virgin, on the left an angel and in the middle* ***nothing****. But "nothing" is the word that would be used by those who are focused on* ***the visible****, those for whom there is nothing simply because there is only white. From the point of view of* ***the visual****, I say that* ***the fundamental element of this fresco is this white—which is not the invisible****, not an opening onto idealistic interpretations—that I try to name the visual in that* ***it is a pure intensity****, which not only gives the fresco its structure but also puts in virtuality an incredible number of iconological meanings.* ***Fra Angelico's white is a virtuality of intense visual sense,*** *and that's what fascinates me: what is simple, intense, and at the same time carries a great deal of* ***meaning****.*

Thus, in Didi-Huberman's theory, the visual is an invisible component of the figural layer of painting. It is a patch, not an object or human figure with a traceable contour, but just as the figure is an embodiment, or incarnation, the visual patch is a translation, or transposing of a meaning to a surface. Didi-Huberman carries on his definition of the visual by explaining that, in visual arts, "imitation" is often understood as simply the "imitation of appearance (or aspect)" (*l'imitation de l'aspect*) and that, in Fra Angelico's picture (Figure 2.20), in turn, there is the "imitation of a process" (*l'imitation d'un processus*). The type of process that Didi-Huberman wants to emphasize is communicational. That is to say, the visible on the canvas—expressed as figures imitating objects in the nature—is in direct proportion to the beholder's field of vision, but the visual is emancipated from such a direct proportionality. However, the communicational aspect in Didi-Huberman's conception of the visual is not entirely nor exclusively verbal. In other words, it is not only a message, a content that is being visualized, it is also a moment. Keeping in mind the subject matter of *Annunciation*, we could say that the visual in Fra Angelico's painting is the representation of both the message (content) and of its

deliverance (moment). Thus, it is possible to think of the visual as an area of pause in which a painting looks at itself as both a material object and a 'vision' beyond materiality, like having a vision of divine figures. In the visual patch, a picture sees itself in the act of rendering something visible and, consequently, pushes the beholder to see himself/herself in the act of seeing. By arguing that the visual is the representation of a communicational process, Didi-Huberman's concept of the visual carries us beyond the limits of attention to stylistic detail in the analysis of visual form. It allows us to see an opening in the visual texture towards understanding the presence of non-visual (other than visual) senses in pictures.

Here, I should precise that up to this point, the word 'visual' was referring to all the elements of an image or picture that speak to the sense of sight. It was used, in other words, as a roof-concept that, perhaps confusingly but instinctively, contained Didi-Huberman's particular definitions of the visual and the visible. The initial use of the word 'visual' was, also, to contrast it to the 'verbal' dimension of representation. The disciplinary way of analyzing paintings born in the academic tradition is based on this contrast between the visual and verbal dimensions of an artwork. Ironically, this contrast does set limits to the 'dimensional' and multi-modal nature of visual representation. This traditional analytical binary not only takes the visual to be a retinal (flat, surface) value, it also flattens the beholder's experience by trying to explain it in the form of a two-sided medallion. Having explained Didi-Huberman's distinction between these two components of a visual artwork, from now on I will use *Form* to refer to what is visual in a painting in the perceptual sense, and I will use the word *Meaning* to refer to what is linguistic, or verbal, in the artwork. Form includes the *visible* (figure-related) and the *visual* (color-related) elements of painting. In other words, the dimension of Form parallels the academic distinction between drawing-based aspects and color-based aspects of painting, but it doesn't project a hierarchy between these two aspects. *Meaning*, in turn, refers to the intellectual content of a picture. In the case of History paintings, Meaning is mostly constructed via narratives (events, stories).

To the binary of *Form* and *Meaning*, a third 'dimension' or 'layer', or rather, 'ground' can be added: *the sensate*. This third, intermediary ground aims to break the art historical

habit of reading paintings in terms of stylistic metamorphoses. Logically, these three grounds are not separable by strict frontiers. A color (Form) can have a message (Meaning), as in the choice of blue to reflect the innocence of Virgin Mary, and as a result of this connection, also provoke a perceptual or sentimental reaction, such as devotional excitement/ecstasy. However, the sensate is not simply an effect of the connections between Form and Meaning. Neither does it deal exclusively with beholders' physical sensations. As it is the case for the visual and verbal dimensions too, the sensate ground of a picture is mostly determined by the aesthetic and institutional conventions that shape the visual arts of an era, especially until the nineteenth century. Thus, it is, actually, a portion of the aesthetic *regime* which manages the visual arts of an era up to the point where the individual style of an artist defines the picture. To be blunt, the sensate is the sum of an artist's decisions about the specific extra-visual sensations that he/she wants to awaken in the beholder and this sum is shaped both by the aesthetic conventions of the period and by the artist's individual choices and motivations.

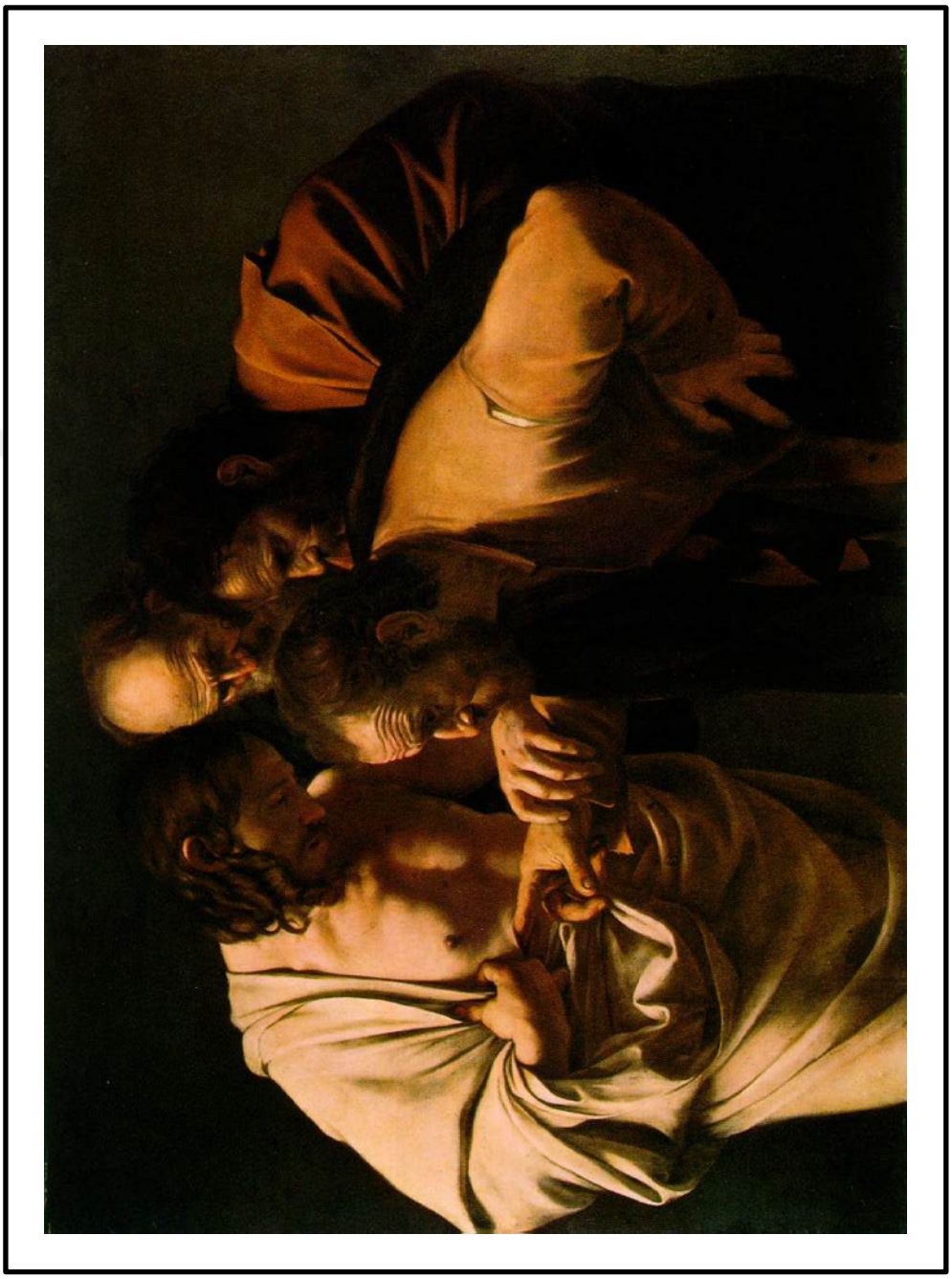
Why distinguish between Form and the sensate? Firstly, the "being visual" of a picture is its essence, its undeniable and insurmountable characteristic, its *raison d'être*. The sensate, however, is the expanded field in which the picture remains suspended even when it is absent from actual sight or from the beholders' awareness of the fact that what they are seeing is a picture, an artifice. In other words, the sensate dimension does not totally exclude vision but is emancipated from the material visuality of the picture surface. The second reason for distinguishing between Form and the sensate is, in fact, a tactical one. This dissertation has the objective of analyzing the formulation of haptic effects and the sensate in Jacques-Louis David's works. It attempts to achieve this objective by paying attention to specific points (details) on the canvases and to how these points are connected to the messages of these canvases. I argue that such points constitute *nodes*, and help build *moments of intensity*, through which the beholders are sensorially provoked to enter the picture and engage with its meaning.

Figure 2.20: Fra Angelico (c.1450) *The Annunciation* [Fresco]. Museum of San Marco, Florence.



Source: Artnet, http://www.artnet.com/artists/robert-polidori/annunciation-by-fra-angelico-cell-3-museum-of-san-a-fRyrcZy-j7m39OeCfMdSOQ2

Figure 2.21: Caravaggio, M. M. da (1601-2) *Doubting Thomas (The Incredulity of Saint Thomas)* [Oil on canvas]. Schloss Sanssouci, Potsdam.



Source: Art and the Bible, https://www.artbible.info/art/large/10.html

There is another painting by Caravaggio, which helps us revise the list of haptic effects and the sensate dimension. It also allows us to observe a transformation of the earlier allegorical modes into modern metaphors of representation and communication. Painted circa 1602 for the Italian aristocrat Vincenzo Giustiniani, who resided in Rome, Caravaggio's *Doubting Thomas*, also known as *The incredulity of Saint Thomas* (Figure 2.21) depicts the apostle putting his finger in Christ's wound while he and two other apostles are attentively looking at the act of touching (Benay & Rafanelli, 2015). The biblical episode tells that Saint Thomas had said he would only believe that the man before him was the resurrected Jesus if he saw the nail holes with his own eyes and put his finger in Christ's wound. To this Christ had answered "Blessed be those who will believe without seeing and touching". Therefore, the subject matter of Caravaggio's painting is cautioning the beholder against a skepticism that is based on material grounds. Saint Thomas has fully black eyeballs, as if to suggest that he has been blind to his own faith by asking for sensory confirmation of Christ's identity. As a matter of fact, Thomas' gaze does not exactly meet the point where his finger penetrates the wound. He seems to look further away, not seeing what he is touching. Erin Benay argues, however, that in Caravaggio's time, Saint Thomas had become the figure of the modern skeptical who "could waver and return to the fold stronger in their convictions" (Benay 2014, p.60). Consequently, then, we can think of this painting as the representation of an intellectual dilemma that will eventually be resolved to the advantage of the good Christian.

Caravaggio's painting is a distant reminder of medieval allegories of the senses in which senses were associated to the "deadly sins" in order to visually communicate to the faithful the dangers of bodily and material excesses such as lust, gluttony and greed. Caravaggio, in turn, associates sight and touch to the intellectual dilemma of the Christian as a mere human being, in other words, a soul trapped in a body. As a result, "man" has to "look" beyond his daily corporal strife, he has to believe without having recourse to his bodily senses. More importantly, however, Caravaggio's painting is an allegory of *representation* too. Thomas' finger is not only penetrating Christ's flesh, who is an incarnated reflection—i.e. the representation—of God. That finger is also penetrating the illusory surface of the painted image, it wants to penetrate the canvas.

Christ's body is mainly in different shades of white. Especially on his chest and his visible upper leg, Caravaggio takes advantage of the traditional funerary white mantel/the shroud by turning it into a white drapery emphasizing Christ's pale body. As a result, Christ becomes an irruption, on the surface, of the canvas hidden beneath the painted layer. In a detail that Benay points out, Thomas's white undergarment is revealed through the torn shoulder on his clothing (Benay 2014, p.61). We could argue this white undergarment is another instance where the canvas irrupts to the surface. The question is, therefore, why does Caravaggio create these irruptions? Why does the painter potentially belie the painted image? Why does he point at the illusory nature of the scene in front of us? With the figure of Saint Thomas who is pointing at the illusory and pellicular nature of the painted image, Caravaggio transforms a visible point into a moment of density, he creates a node tying Form, Meaning and the sensate together.

2.3 PRELIMINARY RESULTS

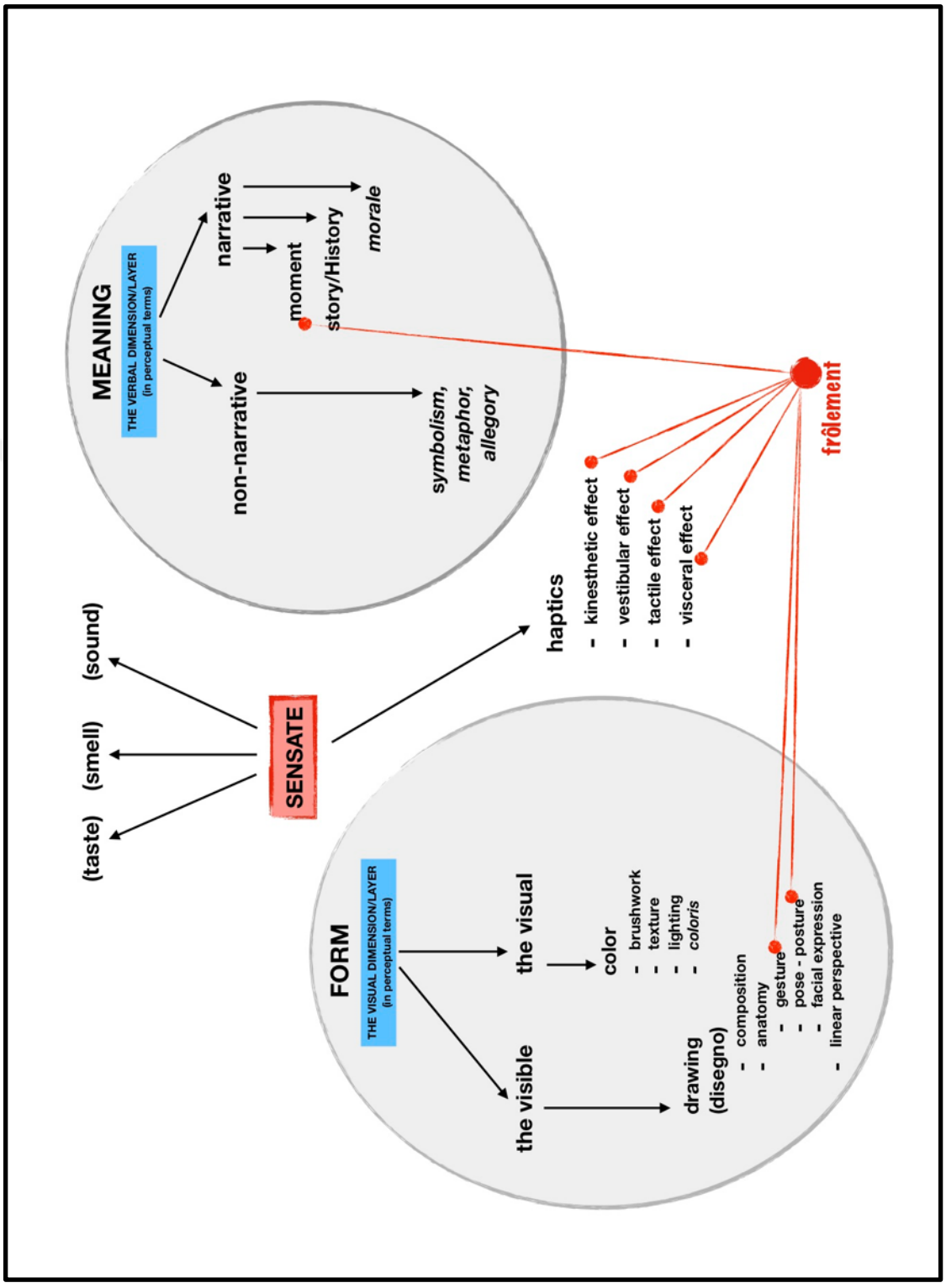
Disciplinary methodologies of art history teach us that there are major schools of visual analysis which the art historian can employ in tandem to provide an exhaustive and convincing analysis of a given artwork. Some of these methodologies, such as iconology and semiotics, developed in parallel to the theoretical turns that shaped, and still shape, Humanities. In *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Mirzoeff argued that a "surplus of experience", that structuralist methods of analysis of visual artworks don't take into account, is what establishes the links between Form and Meaning (Mirzoeff 2009). In the following paragraph, Mirzoeff takes Mieke Bal's semiological method as a case and addresses why the results of a clearly defined method "fail to convince" (Mirzoeff 2009, pp.15-16, my emphasis in bold).

> *Although literary criticism has moved on from structuralism, it continues to play a surprisingly important role in visual criticism. Mieke Bal, one of the more sophisticated semioticians at work in art history, has recently called this practice "reading art." Her method shares with reading texts that "the outcome is* ***meaning****, that it functions by the way of discrete* ***visible*** *elements called* ***signs*** *to which meanings are attributed; that such attributions of meaning, or* ***interpretations****, are regulated by rules, named* ***codes****; and that the subject or agent of this attribution, the reader or* ***viewer****, is a decisive element in the process" (Bal 1996:26). Yet in discussing specific works, this approach fails to convince. For in concentrating solely on linguistic meaning, such readings deny the very element that makes visual imagery of all kinds distinct from texts, that is to say, its* ***sensual immediacy****. This is not at all the same*

> *thing as simplicity, but there is an undeniable impact on first sight that a written text cannot replicate. It is the feeling created by the sight of the spaceship filling the screen in* 2001: A Space Odyssey*, by seeing the Berlin Wall come down on live television, or by encountering the shimmering blues and greens of Cézanne's landscapes. It is that edge, that buzz that separates the remarkable from the humdrum. It is this* ***surplus of experience*** *that moves the different components of the visual sign or semiotic circuit into a relation with each other.*

The way Mirzoeff's argument is built, the "sensual immediacy" of visual imagery is the distinctive characteristic of visual representation in comparison to textual ones. The sensual immediacy appears, also, as the key to the "surplus of experience" that remains unaccounted for in Bal's "reading" of art. Visual culture studies aimed to address this surplus by asking how vision enfolds, rather than asking how pictures take shape. The interdisciplinary approach of visual culture studies opened the road for the emergence of sensory studies which can bring new and thought-provoking approaches to the study of visual arts of all eras and media. With regard to studies on the history of painting and aesthetics, sensory research can address the existing methods of analysis adding the "sensory immediacy" more urgently into the formula. Thinking about a sensory dimension, or *the sensate*, in addition to the traditional binary of the visual and the narrative, is a first step toward this goal. Therefore, a specifically outlined model and terminology are needed in addressing the haptic qualities of David's paintings. The table on the next page attempts to ground, methodologically, the study of the haptic effects in painting in general.

Table 2.1: A diagram on the three layers of painting (Form, the sensate, Meaning).



3. HAPTIC EFFECTS IN JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID'S PORTRAITS OF REVOLUTIONARY MARTYRS

> *Neo-classicism is a deadly style: it has a* lethal *quality, and nearly all of its productions bear, somewhere on their surface, the marks of death. (Bryson 1984, p.30)*

3.1 BODIES OF THE PAST

3.1.1 History and the dead in classical painting

In *De Pictura*, written in 1435, Leon Battista Alberti outlined the following criteria for greatness in painting (2011, p.55):

> *The very great achievement of a painter is not a colossus, but the* **historia***; the praise of genius is, in fact, greater in a* historia *than in a colossus. Parts of a* historia *are the* ***bodies****; part of a body is a* ***member****; part of a member is the* ***surface****. The first parts of a work are, therefore, the surfaces, because from these are formed the members, from the members the bodies, and from the bodies the* historia *from which surely one obtains that outstanding and perfect work of the painter.* ***(my emphasis in bold)***

By "colossus" Alberti refers to the statues of towering sizes—a well-known example would be Michelangelo's *David*. According to Charles Seymour Jr., "the mystique of the colossus revived from Antiquity appeared very early in Quattrocento Florence" (1995, p.281). That "mystique" is the reason behind Alberti's comparison between *colossus* and *historia*, as Alberti is thought to have written *De Statua* before *De Pictura* (Seymour Jr. 1995, p.281). In Alberti's comparison, the aesthetic presence of the *colossus* is a matter of scale, whereas the creation of *historia* in painting is a work of translation. Step by step, from the flat surface of the canvas to the multiple bodies that compose the action and the argument of the scene, the painter of *historia* is constantly translating from narrative to visual realm. Hence his superiority to other artists in terms of *genius*.

In Alberti's model of the relationship between the parts and the whole of a composition, surface has foundational value. We can argue that, for Alberti, a painting's grasp of its spectator's attention depends on surface-effects which, in turn, stem from the painter's

skillful treatment of a variety of natural surfaces (textures and matters) on the painted, thus, unified surface (*superficie*). The following extract in which Alberti explains the perceptual criteria for the greatness of a *historia* canvas describes the underlying connection that he established between the primacy of surface and the effect that *historia* painting has on the beholder (Alberti 2011, p.59, my emphasis in bold).

> *But a* historia *that you can deservedly both praise and admire will be such that it shows itself so agreeable and rich in certain* ***stimuli*** *as to attract for a long time the eyes of the instructed spectator, or even illiterate, with a certain* ***sense of pleasure and emotion of the mind****. The first thing, in fact, that brings pleasure in a* historia *is richness itself and a variety of objects. As, in fact, in food and music, new and extraordinary things always delight, not only perhaps because of all other reasons but also and above all for the fact that they differ from those old and customary things, so the mind feels pleasure exceedingly in every variety and abundance of objects.*

In this explanation, Alberti insists on the "variety of objects" represented as the "stimuli" of "the sense of pleasure and emotion of the mind", just "as in food and music". However, he cautions the painter against a degree of variation that would result in confusion (Alberti 2011, p.60). His argument on paying attention to the number of figures suggests, also, that successful examples of comedy and tragedy should guide *historia* painters (p.60). In other words, Alberti points at textual sources as a corpus for *historia*. Then, he comments on nudity too, and argues for "modesty and decency", for depicting nudes if and when it is necessary (p.61). The question of nudity brings him, also, to touch upon an aspect that is not as aberrant in literary representation as it is in the visual: the physical appearance of the historic figure. Here, Alberti advises to follow ancient examples and "correct" the deformities of kings and heroes. This is possibly due to the Platonic understanding of mimetic works as shapers of their recipients (reader, listener, spectator) and the Homeric heritage of the association between the ugly and the villain. Consequently, the protagonists of a *historia* would have to be embodiments of moral and intellectual perfection, so that it could motivate its spectator to aim for the same level of perfection in his/her own acts and thoughts. While representation had to be honest, it had to impress the spectator with the best possible version of any laudable figure taking part in the narrative (Alberti 2011, p.61).

> *Apelles painted the portrait of Antigonus only from that side of the face where the missing eye did not appear. […] They report that Pericles had had a long and deformed head and that, therefore, he was usually represented by painters and*

> *sculptors not with an uncovered head as others, but hidden with a helmet. Plutarch reports, furthermore, that the ancient painters were accustomed, in painting kings, if there was some defect of form, not wishing it to be omitted but, as far as possible, they corrected it after having preserved the likeness. I, therefore, desire that in the entire* historia *this modesty and decency are considered in such a way that repugnant features are omitted or corrected.*

Alberti is taking the reader step by step through the intricacies of the work of translation from the narrative to the visual, and commenting on the interaction between what is seen on the canvas and what is revived in the mind of the spectator. He describes, for example, a variety of poses, postures, gestures and expressions that, according to him, should come together within the same painting in order to force the eyes of the spectator to move over the canvas and, thus, move the heart of the spectator from one emotion to another, while the mind would provide the connection between all these movements. In other words, in *De Pictura*, a multitude of prescriptions on the anatomical and compositional aspects of the representation of history are joined to directions on the intellectual effects of a *historia* painting. This was the point of departure of Charles Le Brun's insistence on the expression of emotions and on physiognomy as the essence of the academic teaching. In fact, the following extract (2011, p.61, my emphasis in bold), in which Alberti argues for the connection of physical and emotional 'movement', immediately brings to one's mind Charles Le Brun's physiognomic essays and *têtes d'expression.*

> *[…] we cry with those who cry, we laugh with those who laugh, we grieve with those who suffer. But* ***these motions of the mind are known from movements of the body****. We see, in fact, that the downcast – since they are afflicted by thoughts and exhausted by malaise – become numb totally in the senses and in powers and they linger lazily among members, pale and more than anything else unstable. In the downcast, in fact, the forehead is pressed, the neck suffering; all things finally fall down as if they were exhausted and neglected. In the irate, instead, since they have hearts fired by wrath, both faces and eyes are turbid and red. And in general in the same subjects, movements of all members are very harshly agitated also, according to the fury of anger.*

In sum, in *De Pictura*, Alberti proposes a multi-sensory, multi-modal scheme for the visual representation of *historia*, which is built starting from the surface and ending in the dynamic relationship of a variety of objects and bodies in a manner that sets the mind of the spectator in motion. The human body as a representational form works as the ideal vessel for abstraction and for the proliferation of abstract thought in the beholder's mind.

3.1.2 The French Academy on death and the dying

The French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture was founded in 1648, by King Louis XIV's decree, with Charles Le Brun as the first director. In 1666, Le Brun opened the Academy of France in Rome in cooperation with and the minister, *surintendant des bâtiments du Roi,* Jean-Baptiste Colbert. In the building of the Academy's aesthetic agenda for shaping new generations of great French artists, Le Brun was joined by André Félibien, an art critic and art historian of Vasarian methodology who wrote the *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes*, published in 10 volumes between 1666 and 1688. Félibien agreed with Le Brun in the praising of Poussin and on the importance of expression in History painting. In 1667, he gave a series of conferences that were part of the Academy's curriculum and pedagogical strategy. In the preface to the published collection of his conferences, Félibien distinguished different genres of painting from one another (Anderman 2006, p.144). This distinction became the point of departure of a hierarchical understanding of the art of painting both in institutional and administrative terms. As outlined in Table 3.1, this hierarchy defined six distinct types of painting in the following descending order: History painting, Portraiture, Genre painting, Landscape and Still Life.

Also in the preface to his *Conférences de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (1668), Félibien argued that painting and sculpture were liberal arts because (my translation from the original text in French, no pagination):

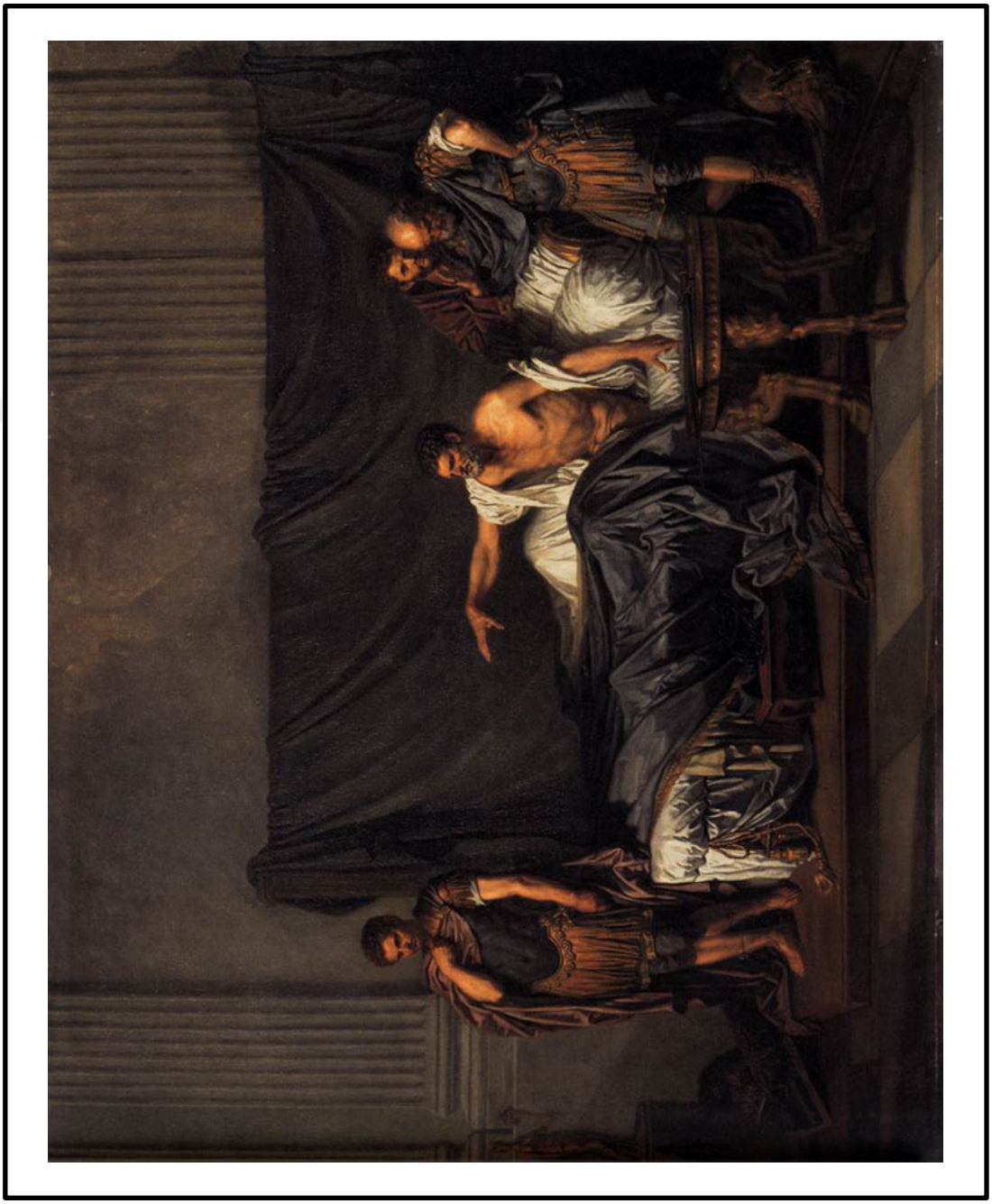
> *[…] the instruction and pleasure we receive from works of painters and sculptors do not spring simply from the science of design, the beauty of colors or the price of the material employed, but [also] from the greatness of the artists' thought and the perfect knowledge they have of the things they represent.*

In other words, what is being referred to as "art" in painting and sculpture is a part that is liberated from the work of the hand and the materials, it lies in the work of the mind. Nevertheless, in subsequent pages, Félibien sustained that a painter's excellence and prestige were parallel to the rank of his subject in the (Christian) order of Nature, hence the aforementioned hierarchy of genres. According to the critic, an artist who painted living (thus, moving) animals was more prestigious than one that painted only dead things. Since man (the human being) was seen as the greatest creation of God on earth,

artists who represented human figures were to be considered the most important ones. It should be remembered, however, that portraitists were surpassed by History painters both in skill and status because not only they represented God's best creature but also had to produce convincing renderings on a type of subject that required greater strength of imagination and skill of execution in representing harmoniously multiple human figures in a scene that had to have the power of setting in motion the mind of the spectator. Indeed, Félibien refers to History painters as "savants", equals of intellectual people, like philosophers. Based on this comparison between Portraitists and History painters, Félibien concluded that there were two main aspects in painting, which he named "theory" and "hand". He proceeded to describe the components of "theory" and "hand" and referred the readers to the specific conference in which a given component was treated in detail in the form of a case study of a masterpiece of Renaissance or Baroque painting.

In terms of "theory" in History painting, Félibien attributed the most important role to the representation of different expressions and gestures of the protagonists because, he argued, the beholder enters a painting by feeling what its protagonists feel. Death was a typical subject in History painting for, exactly, the opportunity with which the death-event provided the painter: having a range of different feelings and emotional reactions across the entire composition. In fact, there were three strong reasons behind the crucial place of the subject of death in academic painting. Firstly, the moment and circumstances of the death of a hero included common motifs, such as the death-bed or the entombment, not only in pagan Antiquity but also in the Christian canon (Greenhalgh 1989, p.171). Secondly, the representation of the pain and the heroic stoical suffering of the dying figure, as it was canonically represented in the Laocoön, was a welcome challenge for painters wishing to demonstrate their talent and worth. To give an example to the difficulty of creating a History canvas that would please the art critiques of the eighteenth century, Greuze's *Severus and Caracalla* (1769) had caused a great disappointment in Diderot who had been, up to that moment, lauding the painter's genre paintings and sentimental portraits (Figure 3.1) (Bryson 1984, p.57).

Figure 3.1: Greuze, J.-B. (1769) *Septimus Severus and Caracalla* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: Musée du Louvre, http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=11111&langue=fr

Table 3.1: An explanation of the hierarchy of painting developed in the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture.

1. History Painting
These paintings represent episodes of political, military and religious history, as well as mythological stories. They include multiple human figures in a dynamic relationship to each other, therefore require mastery of perspective, anatomy, gesture and facial expression. They require, also, the effective communication of an action and/or moment in a two-dimensional medium. Moreover, they have educational and moralizing power over the beholder. Consequently, History paintings were considered the most intellectual and the most difficult type of painting, and they were paid more than all theater types.
2. Portraiture
Portrait paintings represent people of status, especially members of aristocracy and the royal family. Therefore, they were not considered to be as complicated as History paintings but did embody the prestige and power of their sitters. In the image of the person represented, they reflect the prosperity of the family or country they stand for. Official portraits of Kings and Queens were especially important for this propagandistic reason.
3. Genre Painting
These paintings represent multiple human figures frozen in a dynamic relationship and have a moralizing message. However, their main difference from History painting is that the human figures of a Genre painting are common people, and the moments represented are scenes from their everyday—especially family—lives. In Pre-Revolutionary France, the "value" of a person was defined by his/her class. As a result, Genre paintings were not as prestigious as representations of historic or mythological heroes and deeds.
4. Landscape
Landscapes could reflect philosophical or religious sentiment, and even include human figures, but they did not focus on the moment, deed, or narrative as did History painting. They focused on nature for its own sake, not on action.
5. Still Life
Still life paintings don't include human figures. In other words, they lack 'life'. As to instances of animals and flowers being included in the painting, they work as reminders of death and of the ephemerality of life.

Source: Based on Félibien, A. 1668. *Conférences de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture pendant l'année 1667.* Paris: Frédéric Léonard.

Table 3.2: "Assigned subjects in the Prix de Rome Competition, seventeenth to eighteenth centuries". The table below includes only subjects that involve death and violence.

1680	The fratricide of Cain
1721	Manoah offering a sacrifice to the Lord
1752	Jeroboam sacrificing to idols
1753	Nabuchodonosor has the eyes of Sedecias carved out and massacres his children
1760	Manoah offering a sacrifice to the Lord
1761	Judith cuts off the head of Holophernes
1762	Death of Socrates
1766	Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetae, orders soldiers to dip the head of Cyrus in a vat of blood
1769	Achilles places the desecrated body of Hector at the foot of the slain Patroclus
1772	The children of Niobe killed by Apollo and Diane
1773	The Death of Seneca
1778	David condemns to death the Amalekite who brought him the crown of Saul
1785	Horace kills his sister Camille
1787	Nabuchodonosor has the children of Sedecias killed in the presence of their father
1788	Death of Tatius

Source: Graybill, L., 2016. *The visual culture of violence after the French Revolution*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, p.66.

Thirdly, and to return to the emotional aspect in painting, death was a recurrent subject because the death-event motivates, by its very nature, a panoply of emotional reactions in the figures standing around the dead body, who help build narrative content via the simultaneous depiction of their varied emotional reactions. In other words, the image of death in academic painting exuded a certain violence both on emotional and physical levels because death, by definition, violates life. Death can, also, violate the body of the dying if it is the result of a wound received in battle (Hector), punishment (Seneca), or of a poison (Socrates). As Lela Graybill argues (2016, p.66, my emphasis in bold):

> *The representation of violence also had a unique role in French Academic painting throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, since it was at the site of* ***the body's legible expressivity*** *that the founder of the French Academy, Charles Le Brun, had staked his aesthetic theory. For Le Brun, truth in art was the truth of the body—the revelations of its expressions and gestures, the meanings of its codings and decodings. […]* ***Violent subject matter was appropriate to elevated art because it was in those extreme moments that the true self was thought to come to the fore****.*

Consequently, the representation of death was a pedagogical opportunity for the embodiment of virtues such as courage and self-sacrifice. An ancient hero's death, for example, carried great narrative potential: it enabled the encapsulation of physical and emotional pain, encouraged the addition of laudable mourners and loathsome villains onto the stage, and it created a parallel between the opposition of life and death and that of good and evil. In other words, it required great command of the history behind or the narrative to be revived by the canvas. The representation of a death of historic and heroic value was a challenge, also, because it required mastery of anatomy, composition and coloring—elements of "the hand" in Félibien's model. In sum, both the representation and the perception of death were intermodal exercises. The death-event was difficult to re-present on the flat and unique surface of the canvas, and it had to serve as an anchor that would keep the ideological message of the canvas from escaping the mind of the beholder who was to be engaged, simultaneously, in the meaning of the artwork and in the aesthetic experience of it only through vision.

Still in terms of "theory", the subject of death had great appeal due to the variety of contextual options. There were military deaths (Patroclus, Hector); deaths by self-sacrifice, to defend a land, people or moral cause (Socrates); deaths that motivate

another's self-sacrifice (Seneca's wife) or virtuous mourning (Andromache); deaths by famine or epidemics (Saint Roch); and deaths in which the dying party was not the protagonist. To give a particularly important example to this last option, David's *Lictors bringing Brutus the bodies of his sons* (1789) depicts a case of self-sacrificial connection to death. Brutus had ordered the execution of his sons to protect the Republic. In other words, he had put his principles and the *patrie* before the survival of his own family line and before his fatherly love.

3.1.3 The King is dead! Long live the King!

The omnipresence of the subject of death in *ancien régime* arts echoed the French political cult around the King's body and the reflections of this cult in the French social imaginary. In the old regime, the signifying nature of the royal body expanded beyond the physical frontiers of the court in two specific ways. Firstly, the French King was seen as two bodies in one. The King had a mortal material body on the one hand, and an immortal divine body on the other. This ambivalent conception of the King's corporal presence was analyzed in detail by historian Ernst Kantorowicz in *The King's Two Bodies* (1957). Traditionally, the King's mortal body had to be purged of its sins before its death. In other words, as a material body, the King was expected to die in a state of being an exemplary Christian subject. His divine body, however, was considered a reflection of God's dominion upon the land and the subjects of the King. This second body was an immortal entity and was represented by an effigy of the King in the royal funeral. Secondly, as studied in historian Marc Bloch's *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (1923), poorer classes attributed a divine healing power to the King's actual touch upon their skin. In sum, the body of the King of France was not invested, solely, of the power to rule but also of the power to signify, to embody the integrity and morals of his land and subjects. Consequently, visual representations of the King, from painted or sculptural embodiments of his likeness to royal seals and emblems on documents, guaranteed that the integrity of the King's power would be communicated to his subjects, continuously, through physically and intellectually immediate (proximate) channels.

In addition to the cultic presence of the King in the social imaginary as outlined above, Kings of France were also, traditionally, physically surrounded by their subjects. The Louvre was the site of the throne until Louis XIV decided, in 1682, to move the entire court to Versailles. The Sun King removed the possibility of any spontaneous close contact between commoners and the royal body. The main motive behind this collective move was to avoid civil rebellions provoked by conspiring courtiers. Louis XIV had experienced such an episode during Cardinal Mazarin's and his mother's co-regency, named *La Fronde* (1648-1653). People were still allowed to see the King in Versailles and present their pleas, but the distance between the city and the royal palace practically excluded the poor from contact with the court and allowed control over the circulation of all of the King's subjects. Indeed, as his self-designed brand suggested, Louis XIV oversaw and directed all aspects of the court and the country like the sun above the earth. In a reign that lasted 72 years and was to be named *Le Grand Siècle*, Louis XIV carefully crafted the persona of the Sun King in the same way he worked to rebuild the prestige of France in all fields from manufacture to military power. Perhaps the best example of his visual strategy was the ceremonial *levée* (waking up) and *couchée* (going to sleep) of the King that the courtiers had to attend. Thus, the King's body marked the rhythm of the life in the palace. In short, Louis XIV added a third, "spectacular", body to the material and divine bodies of the King.

In the eighteenth century, Louis XV and Louis XVI were no longer as enthusiastic as the Sun King about the spectacular nature of the King's body and the tedium of court rituals. Both kings were attached to their intimate and private lives, although in very contrasting manners. Louis XV regularly spent time in his private small palace in the gardens of Versailles where he held long dinners and parties for a small number of select guests, often including beautiful young ladies for the King's personal entertainment and pleasure Louis XVI, on the contrary, was a solitary figure devoted to mechanical pass-times. Nonetheless, the bodies of Louis XV and Louis XIV continued to play a central part in the public imaginary. Especially during the Revolution, both Kings' bodily representations were subjected to visual violence taking aim at their personal identities and integrities.

An equestrian statue of Louis XV was commissioned to Edmé Bouchardon in 1748 following the King's triumphant intervention in the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748). The square Louis XV, where the statue was to be installed, had been specifically designed as the visual and spatial embodiment of the King's glory. However, by the time Bouchardon's statue was finally installed in 1763, France had lost in the Seven Years War (1756-1763) (Rombouts 1994, p.256). Louis XV's statue was, very painstakingly, destroyed by Parisians in 1792. Most of it was melted down to provide base material to the Revolutionary army, except the right hand (McClellan 2000, p.25). McClellan argues that, in the public imaginary, this severed hand was the very hand—part of the mortal flesh—of the King. This condensation between the mortal body of the monarch and its monumental representation demonstrates, indeed, that the body of the French King was a representational vessel. During the Revolution, the square Louis XV became, first, *Place de la Révolution* and hosted many executions, including that of Louis XVI. Once the most terrifying episodes of the Revolution were over, the same square was named, in a hopeful move toward peace, *Place de la Concorde* (McClellan 2000, p.26). The image-body (as in the two-body paradigm) of Louis XV, who was named *Louis le Bien-Aimé* at the beginning of his reign, had become an embodiment of dismantlement, destruction and debris by the end of it.

As to Louis XVI's reign, unsurprisingly, representations of the royal couple abounded in the popular visual culture from the end of 1780s to their executions. Marie-Antoinette had received the alienating nickname of *l'Autrichienne*, and attracted mockery due to her exaggerated coiffures already before the Revolution. Louis XVI had also been the subject of mockery, represented as a fat, physically and personally impotent husband who did not realize the infidelities and treacheries of his wife as shown in "L'occupation sérieuse du Roi" (*The King's serious occupation*, Figure 3.2). The tension around the royal bodies arose in 1791, the year of the royal couple's failed attempt to escape out of the country. The bodies of the King and the Queen, as well as other members of the royal family, were subjected to animalistic and scatological humor. Figure 3.3 is just one example from a rich corpus of such images. The head of the King is joint to the upper half of a goat's body, while the Queen's is joint to that of a hydra. The King has horns coming out of his wig, which are referring to the Queen's rumored affairs. The Queen's hair is decorated

with serpents and feathers that allude to her exaggerated thematic *coiffures* which had occupied the public imaginary even before the Revolution. These two hybrid and half-bodied creatures are attached to each other from their rears. They form one unique creature. The inscription under the creature says “Les deux ne font qu’un”, meaning “Those two are the one and the same thing”. This, and similar animalistic representations of the King and Queen demonstrate the highly, and crudely, corporal characteristic of popular satire in late eighteenth-century France.

3.1.4 The body and its remains in the Revolution

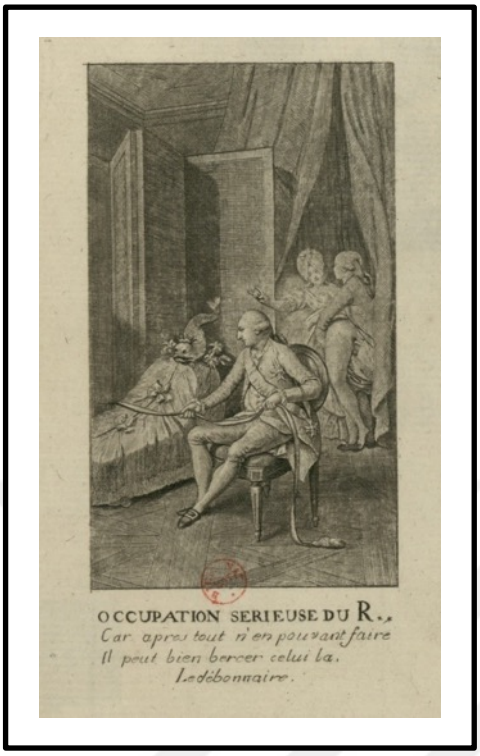
In its earliest days, when the popular ambition was not yet the abolition of the monarchy but the constitutional limitation of its power, the Revolution generated a mental image of division between the old and the new, the ‘then’ and the ‘now’, that was reflected in the popular pamphlets of the era often in bodily forms. “Le Français d’autrefois”, meaning “the French in times past”, was a recurrent title in Revolutionary pamphlets and was employed to reflect the regeneration of the society by the changes that its different traditional bodies underwent. In Figures 3.4, for example, we see an aristocratic male body recalling that of the King. This is a fat, unhealthy body that needs to be supported by a child’s walker to be able to stand. However, the walker is chained to a block representing the police of the old regime. A small beastly figure is trying to reach and pull from the aristocrat’s leg. Rats, which symbolize lawyers, secretaries and other old regime titles are climbing the aristocrat’s body. The inscription above reads “How sad you were, eaten away from all sides”. In Figures 3.5, in turn, the theme of regeneration of the French as a nation is conveyed through a juxtaposition: the French person of the past and the French person of the present are standing side by side. The French body of the Revolutionary era is a giant in comparison to that of the past. The present-day Frenchman is, moreover, a soldier of freedom. The canon behind the two men provide a reference point to the beholder for grasping the imagined sizes of the two bodies. Two more prints are worth mentioning here, because they show the era’s popular taste for extreme bodily transformations. Figures 3.6 and 3.7 are respectively titled “Past times” and “Present Times”. Both images employ the same strategy of contrast between different bodies to convey the message of the revolutionary cause for equality. They

depict, side by side, the three bodies (classes) of the French Kingdom. In both prints, starting from our right, we first see the embodiment of the clergy and the church, then the embodiment of the aristocracy, and finally the embodiment of the third state, which was composed of all the rest of the French subjects. In the representation of the past, the third state is a skeleton that carries a sword on one hand, representing its military duty, and the shovel on the other, representing its labor on the land. In other words, the third state carried the biggest weight of responsibilities in the country but was granted none of the comfort of the other two classes. It was burdened by taxes, famine and war. Indeed, the word "burden" was another keyword in Revolutionary prints, taken literally by depictions of a member of the third state carrying the members of the other two on his back. Returning to Figure 3.6, the body in the middle is an ideal body: it is muscular, almost nude except for its cloth of modesty and feathered hat, and standing in a posture of ancient taste. Interestingly, this image hints at the popular rejection of the taste for aesthetic perfection that we presently attach to Neoclassical style. The ideal nude body of the aristocracy appears as an aberration in comparison to the reality of the *peuple*. In the second image (Figure 3.x), however, aristocracy is brought to the same corporal level as the third state. In fact, the third state is now commanding the aristocratic body at the service of the country. Now, it is the clergy's turn to become skeletal. What the contrast between the past and the present reveals, thus, is a redistribution of weights, a regeneration of the third state as a healthy and strong body in command of the other two bodies of the country.

In *Commemorating the dead in revolutionary France* (2007), Joseph Clarke explains the survival of corporal symbolism from *ancien régime* to Revolutionary France in an argument that combines Bloch's and Kantorowicz's perspectives with the violent bodyscape of the Revolution (Clarke 2007, p.166, my emphasis in bold):

> *For centuries, royal ceremonial, religious iconography and, perhaps most strikingly, the spectacle of the scaffold had all dictated that the body was the principal symbol of moral and political authority in* ancien régime *France, and this tradition carried through undiminished into the Revolutionary decade. […] the body occupied a vital place in the Revolutionary imagination from the very first. As portrait, bust or caricature, this naive realism resonated on a more instinctive level, and reached a more diverse public than the more cerebral idealism of allegory could ever hope to achieve.* ***At its most visceral, the distinction between the body as sign and the body as fact dissolved in the tumult of the Revolutionary*** **journée,** ***and the cadaver itself became a means of political expression.***

Figure 3.2: Artist unknown (c.1789). *L'occupation sérieuse du roi* [Print]. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Source: Gallica, Bibliotheque National de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6942365z.item

Figure 3.2: Artist unknown (1791). *Les deux ne font qu'un* [Print]. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris



Source: Gallica, Bibliotheque National de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6947750f?rk=42918;4

Figure 3.3: Villeneuve (c.1790). *Le Français d'autrefois* [Print]. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Source: Gallica, Bibliotheque National de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6944027v?rk=21459;2

Figure 3.4: Artist unknown (c.1790). *Le Français d'autrefois, le Français d'aujourd'hui* [Print]. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Source: Gallica, Bibliotheque National de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6944033k?rk=171674;4

Figure 3.5: Artist unknown (c.1790). *Le temps passé. Le tiers-état, la noblesse, le clergé* [Print]. Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris.



Source: Gallica, Bibliotheque National de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6944036t.r=Le%20temps%20passé.%20Le%20tiers-état%2C%20la%20noblesse%2C%20le%20clergé%20%5B?rk=21459;2

Figure 3.6: Artist unknown (c.1789) *Le temps present. Le tiers-état, la noblesse, le clergé* [Print]. Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris.



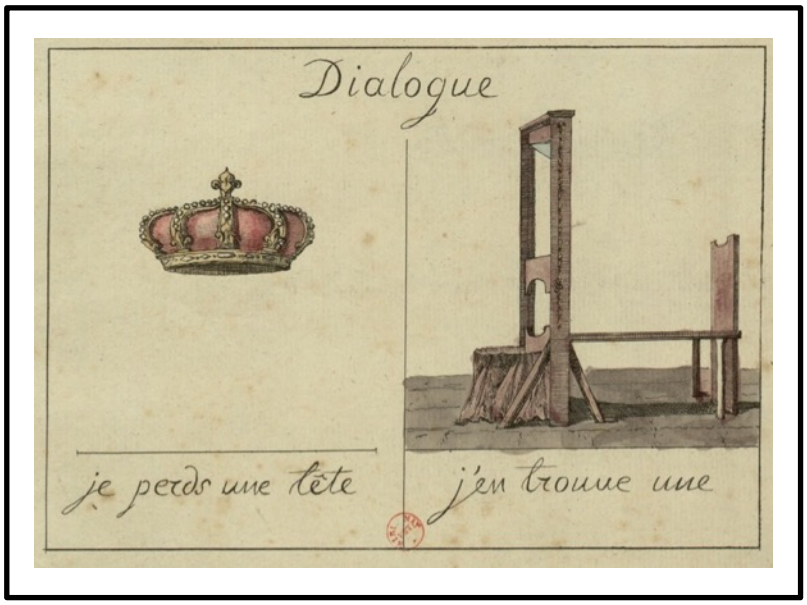
Source: Gallica, Bibliotheque National de France, https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40251672m

Figure 3.7: Artist unknown (1793). *"Qu'un sang impure abreuve nos sillons"* [Print]. Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris.



Source: Wikipedia, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Marseillaise

Figure 3.8: Artist unknown (1793). *"Je perds une tete, j'en trouve une autre"* [Print]. Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris.



Source: Gallica, Bibliotheque National de France, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb402478685

While David's martyrdom portraits seem to illustrate Clarke's emphasis on the expressive potential of the cadaver during the Revolution, we must not forget that, in fact, only Lepeletier is represented as a cadaver whereas Marat and Bara, specifically speaking, are not-yet-dead in their visual representation. It is not by the paintings, but by the veneration of their bodily remains that these martyrs enter into the category of revolutionary cadaver. The first notorious cadaver of the regenerated France was, however, Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, a member of the National Assembly, who had taken part in the oath of the Tennis Court and who was an advocate of constitutional monarchy. Mirabeau died in 1791 after a short period of illness, he died in his bed following a procession of friends who had come to pay him their respects before his last breath. Due to rumors of poisoning, Mirabeau's corpse was publicly autopsied to eliminate all potentially dangerous political plots. Then, thanks to Robespierre's decisive support, the deputies agreed on the decision to transform the church of Saint-Geneviève into a secular temple in which would rest the remains of not saints but *grands hommes*.

The Panthéon was created (Clarke 2007, pp.90-93). In the following years, it was going to greet the ashes of Voltaire, Marat and, if Robespierre had not fallen, those of Bara too. In other words, bodily remains were now potentially political material, appropriable at any moment by the regime in place. As any material presence, their fate could easily be reversed, as indeed it did during the anti-Jacobin purge that followed Robespierre's execution. Marat's remains were removed from the Panthéon and 'maratiste memorabilia' around the country were destroyed (Clarke 2007, pp.220-2). In sum, the act and ceremony of *panthéonisation* functioned as a ritual of the elevation of a Revolutionary body to the abstract state of 'virtue'. The bodily remains, although present, no longer needed to be visible as they were now a moral image, the immaterial Revolutionary equivalents of Greuze's moralist paintings.

Certainly, the greatest cadaver, although only in the fragmented image of its severed head (Figures 3.7), was the King. Louis XVI's or, as deputies were referring to him now, Louis Capet's execution on 21 January 1793 was a "ground breaking" moment for the French society because the guillotine had cut through, not only through the king's body that was now a merely human remain, but also through the integrity of the political metabolism of *Ancien Régime* France. As a print juxtaposing the crown and the guillotine hints at the

fact, the execution of the King seemed to leave a blank which was threatened to be filled in by the killing machine(Figure 3.8.). Lela Graybill emphasizes the crucial turn in the popular spectacle of execution that was the result of the new visual dynamic established to accommodate the new egalitarian and supposedly humane form of execution that is the guillotine. She explains that the speed of the new type of execution meant that the moments leading up to the actual execution, i.e. the transportation of the condemned to the scaffold, had to replace the scenes of torture that used to form the suspended crux of the spectacle. Graybill concludes that the absence of a prolonged 'watching' of the process of 'dying' of the person on the scaffold meant that the sensory details of the execution-event, as a whole phenomenon, formed a frame of sensation in order to impress, upon the public, the shock element that is supposed to make the meaning of the execution last in the memory of the beholder (2016, p.13, my emphasis in bold):

> *The emergence of the modern liberal state in the wake of the French Revolution is marked by an alteration in the texture of the display of atrocity: a trajectory in which visual culture moved away from anxious scenes of pain and suffering toward a phenomenology of sensation and shock. […]* ***The viewer's own body was now solicited as the primary "context" for making sense of violence****, displacing and often supplanting the hierarchical political and religious narratives that had previously helped to contain the meanings of violent display.*

To conclude, during the Revolution, the cadaver became a potential political property, a material medium for creating and communicating ideological arguments, and finally, a morbid and particularly Revolutionary version of allegory and personification. Thus, it is possible to argue that officially approved Revolutionary and, specifically, Jacobin visual representations (which includes not only two-dimensional images like paintings but also festivals and funerals) employed a sophisticated allegorical strategy. In the case of David's martyrdom portraits, created in the service of the Convention and, especially the painting of Bara, under strict instructions from Robespierre, the classical allegorical method is transformed by the embodiment of abstract values (courage, conscience, sacrifice, etc.) in the idealized bodies of actual individuals. Seen in the light of the Revolution's particular relationship to the subject of death and remembrance, David's portraits of martyrdom surpass the stylistic recipes of the Neoclassical doctrine. It becomes possible to analyze the sensory dimension of these portraits, because they are infused with that time's understanding of the materiality of the body. However, it also becomes an imperative to study the roots of David's own sensory thinking, which are to

be found in how the painter's firsthand experience of Italy transformed his aesthetic grammar.

3.2 DAVID'S 'DISCOVERY' OF THE PAST

Jacques-Louis David was born in 1748, the same year that the discovery of Pompeii was reviving the exotic appeal of the distant past and, no doubt, motivating a sense of unveiling of the origins of civilized society. The next year, Diderot wrote his *Letter on the blind* and, as a result, was imprisoned by Louis XV. In 1754, Condillac wrote the *Traité des sensations*, elevating touch as a cognitive channel toward self-knowledge. In 1758, Rousseau wrote the *Lettre sur les spectacles*, addressed to the encyclopedist d'Alembert, in which he favored festivals against theatre. 1759, Diderot started writing his epistolary critiques of the *Salons*, which were going to mark Boucher's fall from grace. The young David visited his distant uncle and artistic idol Boucher, and was sent by him to Vien's studio, in late 1764 or early 1765. In 1767, the last and posthumous volume of academician Comte de Caylus' *Recueil d'antiquités egyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines, et gauloises* was published.

Thus, from David's birth to his entry into the world of painting and aesthetics, a major line of inquiry in the intellectual agenda in France was the reassessment of the subject's (individual's, or citizen's) place on and interaction with the physical and social world around him/herself. David was formed in a transitional period, on a busy and noisy hinge that was going to open the door for a renewal of, among others, political and aesthetic regimes. His *Prix de Rome* entries, such as *Mars and Minerva* (1771) (Figure 3.9) reveal an artist who fuses color and form to express visible movement and to inspire emotional movement. He said to Boucher, before departing for Rome, that Antiquity would not seduce him, because it lacked movement (Brookner 1987, p.49). It lacked, as it were, life. Which, for a painter of historical narratives and dying heroes, is an ironic argument at best. At worst, this argument demonstrates a lack of grasp, in young David, of the essence of his art. *Re*presentation works with absence, with disappearance of metaphorical and physical nature, with bodies, like Galatea's, which will not move unless revived by divine breath.

There is a third option for situating David's initial rejection of the antique. We can interpret his argument, about the antique's lack of movement, as an outburst of David's stern attachment to the frugal nature of sensual experience. He would have observed, in the works of Boucher, but also those of Watteau, Chardin, Greuze, and other painters of the Rococo age, how color, form and narrative could come together in countless possible ways to represent movement on the surface of the canvas with the ultimate objective of creating movement on the body and the mind of the beholder. As another Prix de Rome entry, *The Death of Seneca* (1773) (Figure 3.11) clearly shows, with its two main figures reclining and slowly getting away from each other, even in the representation of a story of death, David chose to focus on the sensual process of dying, thus on a series of movements at different levels of representation, and not on the moment that seals the end of the process. To put it bluntly, before Italy, David was primarily a sensual artist. As Brookner expressed with beautiful concision, "as a painter David was born an Epicurean and became a Stoic" (1987, p.37)

Brookner also argues that Vien, who had accompanied David to Rome as the newly appointed director of the Academy of Rome, knew that his student, who had been oblivious to the master's antiquarianism so far, was in for a shock once he would be in the presence of the canonical works he had always known through copies. Indeed, the shock of the firsthand experience of Antiquity, Renaissance and Baroque caused an aesthetic concussion in this artist, who was already known to possess an "overactive sensibility" (Brookner 1987, p.53). For a short period in Italy, David was artistically paralyzed, unproductive. Vien suggested a visit to Naples, where David was in the company of the Winckelmann enthusiast Quatremere de Quincy for a month (Brookner 1987, p.53). Later, David claimed that the visit to Naples was like a cataract operation, just as he claimed that a fellow student in Rome, Peyron, had "opened his eyes" (Brookner 1987, p.46). Perhaps exactly because of his extremely sensible nature, David's shock in Italy resulted in the most dramatic lifting of the veil that was still clouding the vision of eighteenth-century French painting toward the antique, and generated the creation of the most piercing and popular canvases of the new style at an international level.

It should be emphasized that David's 'discovery' of the past was a material and sensory one rather than a disciplinary and theoretical one. Like most of his contemporaries, and teachers, David's knowledge of the factual and chronological History of Greco-Roman Antiquity was flattened and confuse. The corpus of his knowledge of the antique was composed of visual motifs (i.e. draperies and armures), formalistic details (i.e. reliefs and statues) and narrative tropes (i.e. deaths or funerals of heroes). In David's typically Neoclassical canvases, the antique was built atmospherically, through characteristic architectural and decorative elements such as the arches and the helmets in *The Oath of the Horatii.* To understand the innovative and sensory nature of David's treatment of details and motifs in the portraits of Revolutionary martyrs, we must first understand the change—before, during and after his Italian studentship—in his handling of the dynamic relationship between surface and depth. It should be emphasized, also, that while the analyses of David's works in this chapter mostly follow the chronological order of their creation, there will be instances of disruption to favor conceptual connections between works from different phases of his career. To be clear, scholars agree on dividing David's career in seven phases.

i. i. *Formative years, from 1760s to 1775:* This period starts with David's decision to study painting against family expectations that he would study architecture, includes his earliest commissions and Prix de Rome entries, and comes to a conclusion with David's departure for Rome in 1775.

ii.

iii. ii. *Rome, from 1775 to 1781:* This period comprises the academic assignments (study canvases, sketches, full scale paintings) that David sent back to Paris for continuing evaluation. It comes to a culmination with the exhibition of *Belisarius receiving alms* in the 1781 *Salon*.

iv.

v. iii. *Salons, from 1781 to 1789:* This period includes *Andromache mourning Hector*, with which David became a member of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1783, as well as his three most famous paintings, *The Oath of the Horatii* (exhibited in 1785), *The Death of Socrates* (1787) and *Brutus* (1789).

vi. iv. *Revolutionary years, from 1789 to 1794:* During the first five years of the Revolution David does not paint as much as he gets involved in the demands of reform in the Academy, the organization of public events and the design of public monuments and Jacobin signs. All three portraits of Revolutionary martyrs date from 1793. This period ends with David's imprisonment due to his alliance with Robespierre.

vii.

viii. v. *Post-revolutionary rehabilitation, from 1795 to 1799:* David continues to paint in the prison, including his *Self-Portrait* and profile portraits of fellow deputies in the Convention. Upon his liberation, he paints a series of portraits. The painting that marks the culmination of David's rehabilitation as an ex-Jacobin and a respected painter is *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* exhibited in 1799.

ix.

x. vi. *David under Napoléon's charm, from 1800 to 1815: Napoléon crossing the Alps* (1801) and *The Coronation of Napoléon* (1804) are the visual remnants of David's fascination with Napoléon. One of David's students, Gros, is also a painter to the Emperor.

xi.

xii. vii. *Self-exile to Brussels, from 1816 to his death in 1825:* Louis XVIII, who overtakes the throne from Napoléon Bonaparte, offers a pardon to David (Fried 2014, p.18). The painter refuses and moves to Brussels, taking with him *The Death of Marat*, hidden from the public since his imprisonment. His new students make copies of the work as part of David's teaching method.

The first four phases are the most relevant to this dissertation. In fact, the present research comes to a conclusion with the image of the young Bara, which was the third and last portrait of Revolutionary martyrdom. Also, from the formative years to the Revolutionary phase of David's career, only a number of works have been chosen for relatively close scrutiny. The remaining part of this chapter aims to demonstrate the evolution of David's understanding and representation of the sensory effects of painting. Thus, it focuses on the canvases in which an innovation of sensory terms occurs.

3.2.1 The long road to Rome

David entered, and lost, the *Prix de Rome* competition three years in a row until he finally won the prize in 1774 with *Antiochus and Stratonice*, or, to refer to its more dramatic full title, *Erasistratus discovering the cause of Antiochus' disease*. In the order of entry to the competition, *The Combat of Mars and Minerva*, *Apollo and Diane attacking the children of Niobe*, *The Death of Seneca* and *Antiochus and Stratonice* (Figures 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12) demonstrate David's slow and unwilling adoption of the rising taste for the antique. In the first three canvases David's strategy to move the eyes of the beholder on the surface of the canvas is to represent the human figures in kinesthetically demanding postures and with expressive gestures. Moreover, *Mars and Minerva*, and of *Apollo and Diane* rely on the typically emphasized diagonal and triangular geometry of Baroque composition. In *The Death of Seneca*, David sets in motion a horizontal pulling away of the two protagonists from each other, and introduce an architectural background with antique elements such as the partially visible statue on the left-hand side or the incense. It is only with the fourth canvas, with a clearer contrast of the horizontal and vertical axes that David is awarded the first prize in the competition. In *Tradition and Desire*, Norman Bryson proposes an analysis of *Antiochus and Stratonice* that would go beyond what he finds to be the limitations of classical formalist analysis. Bryson argues that in this painting David starts developing a sense of 'visuality' as the crucial element of a painting and of its visual perception by an outsider, i.e. the spectator (Bryson 1984, p.45, my emphasis in bold):

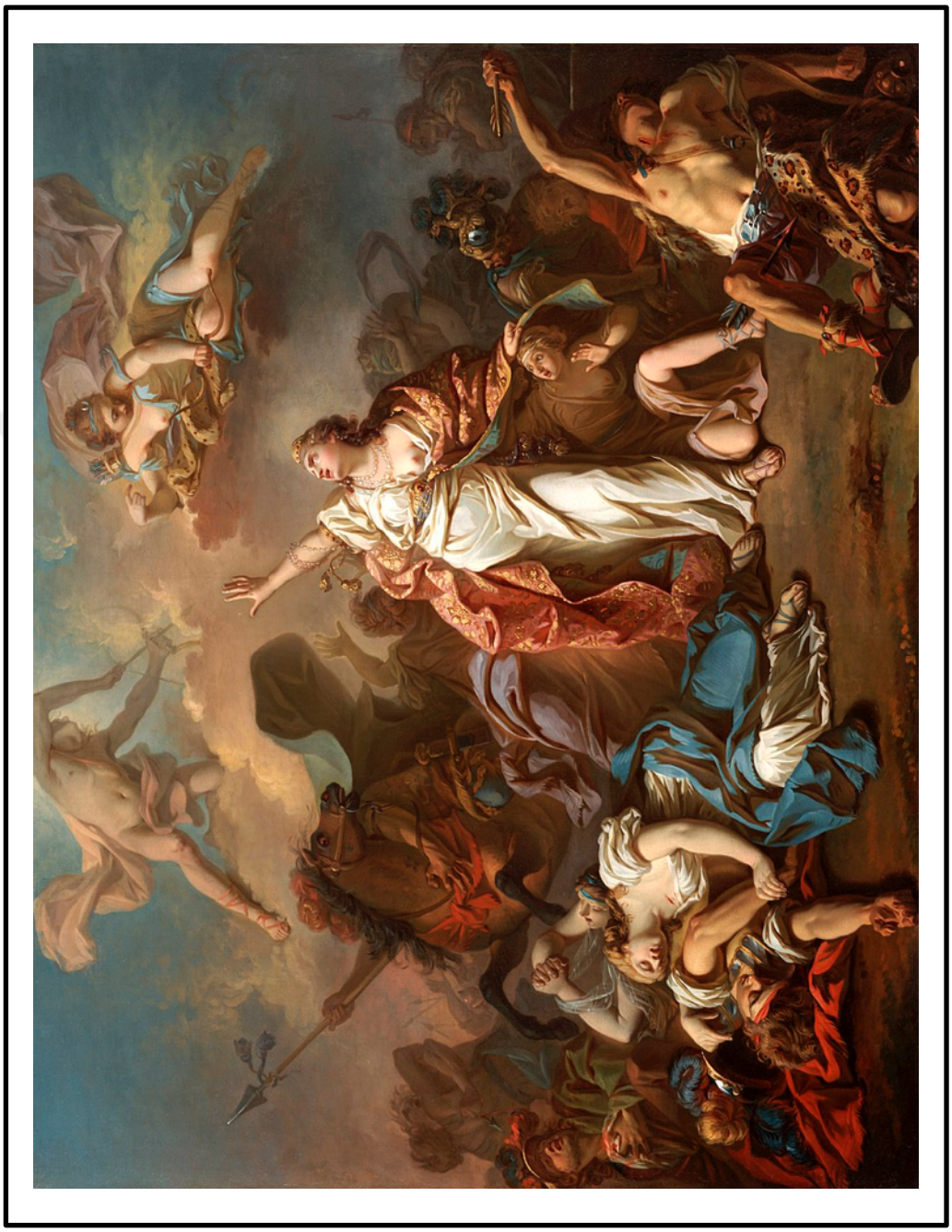
> *The inventiveness of* Anticohus and Stratonice *hardly shows up in an analysis which measures originality 'by area' for the reason that in this painting, as in* Mars and Minerva*, David is still thinking primarily* ***in tropes of style*** *(and it is precisely the trope, the turning of tradition, that classical analysis of 'influence' screens out): his deployment of sources is unusually literal and reduplicative. […] He is certainly able to manipulate the surfaces by means of his chosen trope, and his dexterity in the condensation and displacement of images is remarkable; yet basically* ***he is thinking in planes, as though his mind were itself a canvas****, bounded by the four sides of the frame. But in one respect, David is beginning to move away from the surfaces that hold him captive. This is in his handling of an aspect of the image which, again, is unlikely to be noticed in formalist analysis; yet it is a crucial element not only in David's general evolution, but in his development into a radical and a profound painter. At a local and technical level, it concerns how David arranges* eye-lines*; more deeply, it concerns the structures David invents to describe what I will be calling* ***'visuality'*** *– a term larger than 'vision', and one intended to represent the construction of vision under conditions of society and discourse, into a visuality as it unfolds within the human subject.*

Figure 3.9: David, J.-L. (1771). *The combat of Mars and Minerva* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



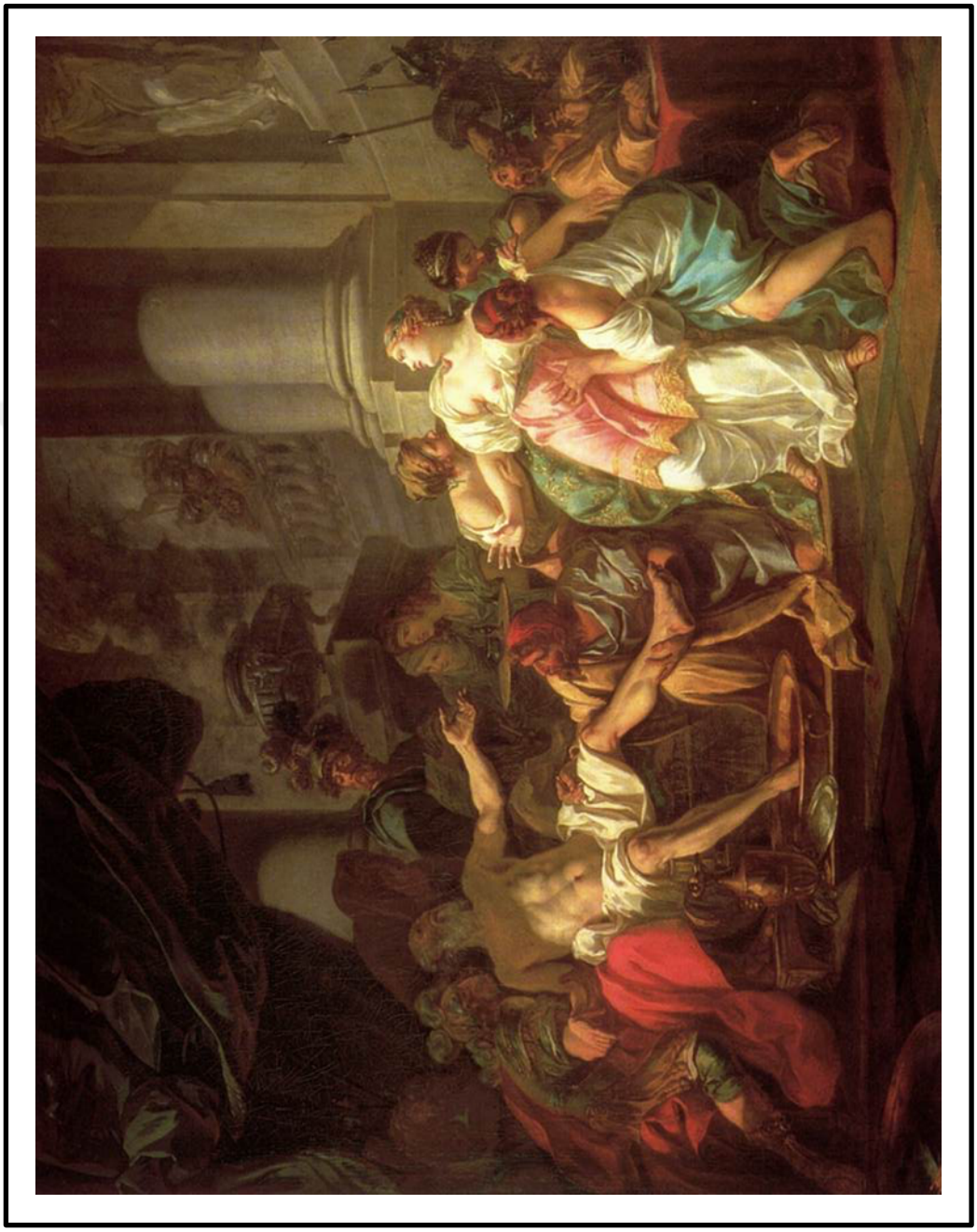
Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/d/david_j/index.html

Figure 3.10: David, J.-L. (1772) *Apollo and Diane attacking Niobe's children* [Oil on canvas]. Dallas Museum of Art, Texas.



Source: Google Arts & Culture, https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/apollo-and-diana-attacking-the-children-of-niobe/kQHMOBncm0hW2g

Figure 3.11: David, J-L. (1773) *The Death of Seneca* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Petit Palais, Paris.



Source: Petit Palais, http://www.petitpalais.paris.fr/en/oeuvre/death-seneca

Figure 3.12: David, J-L. (1774) *Antiochus and Stratonice* [Oil on canvas]. Ecole Normale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris.



Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/d/david_j/index.html

There are two important aspects in Bryson's evolutionary description above. Firstly, the art historian criticizes formalist analysis because of its focus on 'influence' and 'style', in other words, on the visible elements of an image. It must be emphasized, however, that this focus on visible qualities was only one aspect of the formalist methodology originally foreseen by the early formalists such as Alois Riegl and Aby Warburg. Bryson's conceptual suggestion, "visuality", is compatible with the embodied nature of Riegl's and Warburg's concepts like "worldview" and "pathos". In fact, and as the second aspect, Bryson's suggestion allows the assessment of the double complexity (in the sense of integrity) of a History painting: on the one side, the represented narrative has an inner integrity, the eyelines of the protagonists hold the scene together and connect the dots of the story while, on the other side, the scene is integrated into the beholder's world of perception (or viceversa, the beholder is integrated into the scene represented) and gains sensory integrity in the mind of the beholder. Thus, through the path that Bryson opens toward the inner dynamics of the image, it becomes possible to read the sensory, and specifically haptic, experience of the beholder when he/she is standing in front of the image.

3.2.2 Three *caravagesques* canvases

During his time in Italy, David sent back three *académies* from Rome to Paris. The *académie* was a specific type of assignment that the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris required from all *Prix de Rome* winners. For the winners in the painting category, the assignment consisted of a completed oil on canvas depicting one male nude figure (Brookner 1987, p.52). Its main purpose was to demonstrate that the student—considered a candidate to become a full member of the Academy in the capacity of history painter—was making progress on crucial anatomical aspects of depictions of historical scenes: correct foreshortening, correct use of light and shadows, *modelé* and posture. Two of David's *académies* were *Hector* (1778) and *Patroclus* (1779) (Figures 3.13, and 3.14). He painted, also, a religious canvas titled *Saint Jérôme* (1779) (Figure 3.15).

These three works are focused case studies and, therefore, provide insight into David's changing interpretation of the form-related aspects of painting. All three works depict

historical figures. Patroclus was killed by Hector, and Hector was killed by Achilles in the Trojan war. Saint Jerome was a Christian erudite and hermit. In these three paintings, David pays attention to light as enhancer of atmospheric drama. Moreover, all three canvases combine earthly and fiery colors. They experiment, indeed, with the four haptic effects, typically found in Caravaggio's paintings as well, that we discussed at the end of the Literature Review.

To start with the least obvious of their haptic aspects, David's *académies* are only very subtly visceral. In all three paintings, the visceral effect is created by the echoing of the drapery with the rosy areas of the protagonist's skin. Moreover, the contrast of the warm drapery-skin pair against the stone-cold background and ground of the scene. The echoing and the contrast give life, together, to the incarnated nature of the boy represented and to the beholder's carnal awareness. The dramatic contrast of light and dark areas ensure that the viscera of the protagonist is perceived as a solid volume. For example, the left-hand side of Saint Jerome's body, the left-hand side of Patroclus' back, and the upper half of Hector's torso—the lower half of the painting) are almost white. The backgrounds and surfaces around the main figure are dark and composed of stone surfaces.

Kinesthetically, in *Patroclus* and *Hector*, David lies the body of the hero on an elevated ground. In Hector's case, this elevation escalates toward the background and enables the full exhibition of Hector's body, with the hero's head at the bottom of the canvas, closer to the beholder's eye-level. This position creates an angle of view that is out of the ordinary, more secure, choice of representing the human figures standing on the same ground as the beholder. A similar reversal is used by Caravaggio in *The Conversion of Saint Paul* (1601) (Figure 3.18), in which not only Saint Paul is lying with his heads toward us, but also the horse's back is most prominent. The result of these compositional choices is a reversal of the ordinary straightforward frontality of classical painting, and with that, a kinesthetic provocation of the beholder's perceptual mechanism, a poignant intervention in the beholder's visual experience. Moreover, both Caravaggio and David include the protagonist's arms and hands into their kinesthetic tactics. In Caravaggio's painting, Saint Paul is strongly gesturing to convey the emotional strength of the event. In David's, Hector's left arm and hand have fallen on top of his head. Were he to extend

his fingers, Hector would be able to stretch out of the canvas, to reach the beholder's actual space. Finally, Hector's feet are crossed one on top of the other. This small detail adds to the elongation of his body towards the beholder's standing point, and directs the gaze in a diagonal from his head to his feet.

In *Patroclus*, the kinesthetic affect is two-fold. Firstly, we see the hero from the back, but in what seems to be a moment gyrating fall. In fact, David is quoting and reversing an ancient statue known as *The Dying Gaul* (1st-2nd century AD) (Figure 3.19) (Brookner 1987, p.55). The ancient statue shows a barbarian soldier falling down in the battlefield, his bow and arrow are on the ground next to him, he is looking to the ground in a moment of realization of pain and eventual death. In David's painting, the lower half of Patroclus' body is depicted from the side, the upper part is completely visible. His head is slightly turned toward right. His hair is , also, swept toward the right hand-side, hinting at the movement of the fall in the opposite direction. His face is hidden from us, not simply because we are facing his back, but also his right ear and right-side profile are left in the dark. Secondly, there is a kinesthetic suggestion that Patroclus might, in fact, be getting up. He is taking support from the ground by pressing his right hand on a big stone, which tensions his triceps (muscles on the back of the arm) and rhomboids (at the center of the backside). In other words, while the kinesthetic character of Hector is that of a fall that has been completed and reached inertia, the image of Patroclus can embody both a fall and a struggle to get up. In both cases, however, movement of the core and limbs is subtly communicated to the beholder. Still on the kinesthetic aspect, Saint Jerome's pose and gesture put the body's weight on the knee that is visible and the elbow that is pressing on the table made of stone. The hiding of Saint Jerome's left leg behind his toga attributes a fragile balance to the pose. David insists on the fragile balance of the Saint's body by paralleling his axis with the cross on the ground. He insists, also, on the muscular strain that such a pose creates by the parallels between the leg and the two arms of the saint.

Saint Jerome's depiction presents a variety of the tactile elements: the ground is braided mat (or straw); there is a book, a skull and a wooden cross on the foreground, grouped around the fragment of a column; there are two feather pens in the image, as well as an open book. In addition to these contextual elements, there are essential ones making up

the protagonist's figure: the drapery, skin, and hair. As to the depictions of Hector and Patroclus, they are stripped to the essentials in superposition to the stony background and ground. In Hector, we have a tactile suggestion in the drapery covering the hero's sex. In Patroclus, we have a similar suggestion in the hero's hand, on the lower right edge of the canvas, where David focused on contact and texture, echoing the tactile suggestiveness of the background and the feet. Here, with the friction of the human skin and the polished stone, the painter created a sensory node. And by using the word node, I want to really emphasize that on this specific spot, the visual and the haptic cross into each other, because David is experimenting, here, on how to transmit the narrative of the picture through references to visceral, kinesthetic and cutaneous sensations. In other words, he is building a composite haptic motif. He is opening up a gap, an intermediary space between the linguistic and the visual, where he inserts a third pictorial layer: the *sensate.*

Before discussing the vestibular aspects, we should situate the sensate dimension more clearly, to understand its specific contribution to analysis of visual artworks. This dimension operates in the gap between Reality and its visual representation, which was, as outlined in the literature review, recognized by Riegl as a willing omission by artists in order to make visible the "art" (or, artifice) involved and to affirm the creative and non-material value of their work. The visible and visual components of a painting are, also, sensory components. However, the term "sensate" does not refer to the actual sensory perception of a painting. It refers, rather, to the sensory simulations that the painting has the potential to provoke in the beholder, specifically designed by the artist for such an effect. Therefore, in terms of analysis of visual artworks, the sensate is a dimension in-between the form (visible and visual) and the meaning (narrative and non-narrative) of the work.

Finally, to assess the vestibular aspects of these three paintings in question, we must pay closer attention to their backgrounds. All three canvases share an undefined background which is not completely black or as dark as in Caravaggio's paintings, but does add to the drama of the scene by the play of light and shadow on the rock-like texture of the surface. By its stone-like quality, this background creates a wall that creates a border for the scene of the action and, consequently, defines the space around the main figure. At the same

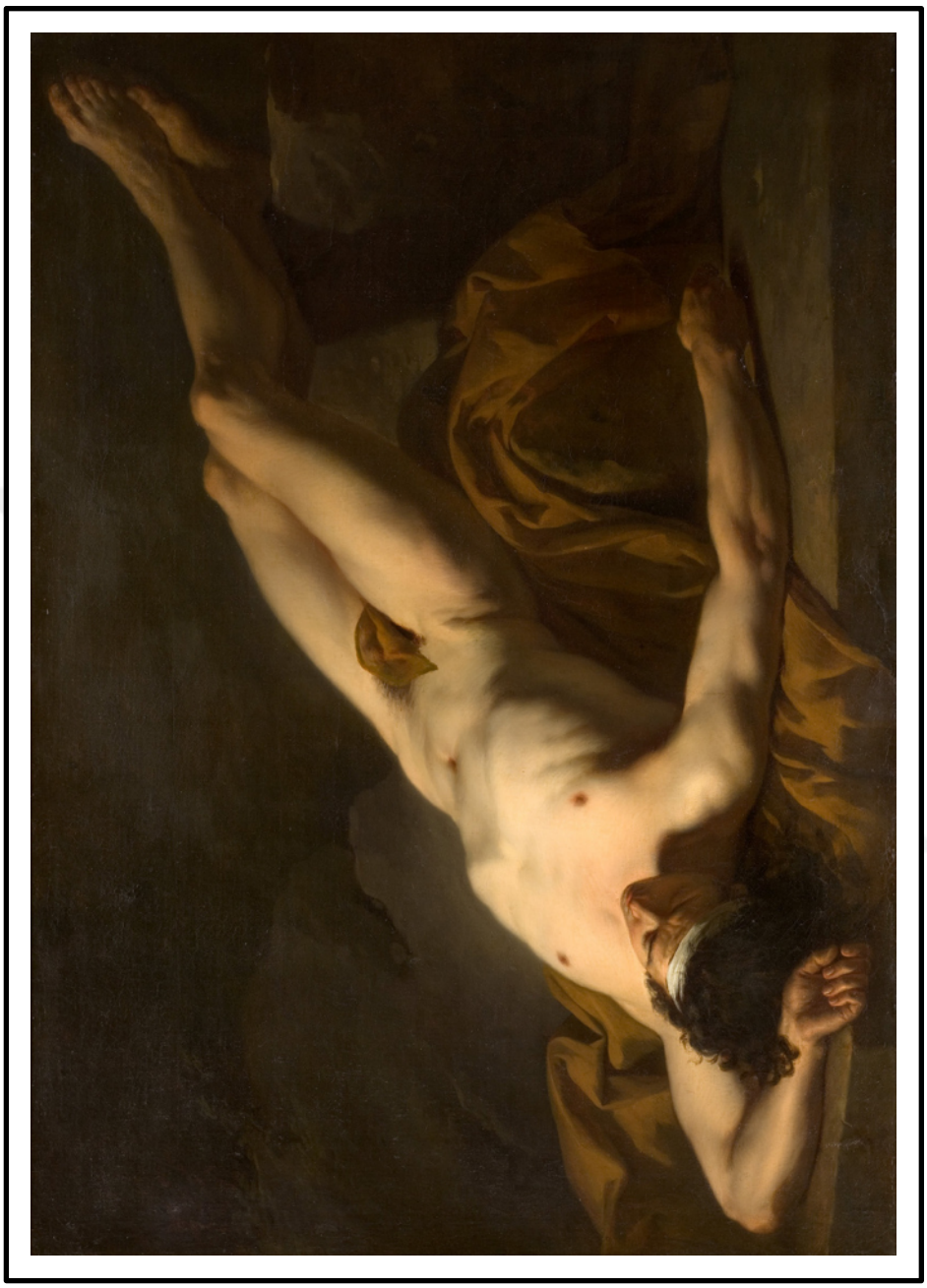
time, especially in the cases of *Hector* and *Saint Jérôme,* but subtly in *Patroclus* as well, this background could be a stormy sky. The lack of precision on the background was not uncommon in such paintings as the main objective of the exercise was anatomical accuracy. Nonetheless, the background in these three paintings are relevant to us specifically because David returns to undefined backgrounds in *The Death of Marat* and *The Death of Young Bara.*

In conclusion, these three paintings signal that, during his sojourn in Rome, a sense of human flesh and volume, as well as an update of attention to posture and contacts between different surfaces are flourishing in David's mind. In other words, in these three canvases we witness the emergence of his grasp of visceral, vestibular, kinesthetic and tactile details in the representation of the human body.

3.2.3 Davidian bodies from Saint Roch to Brutus

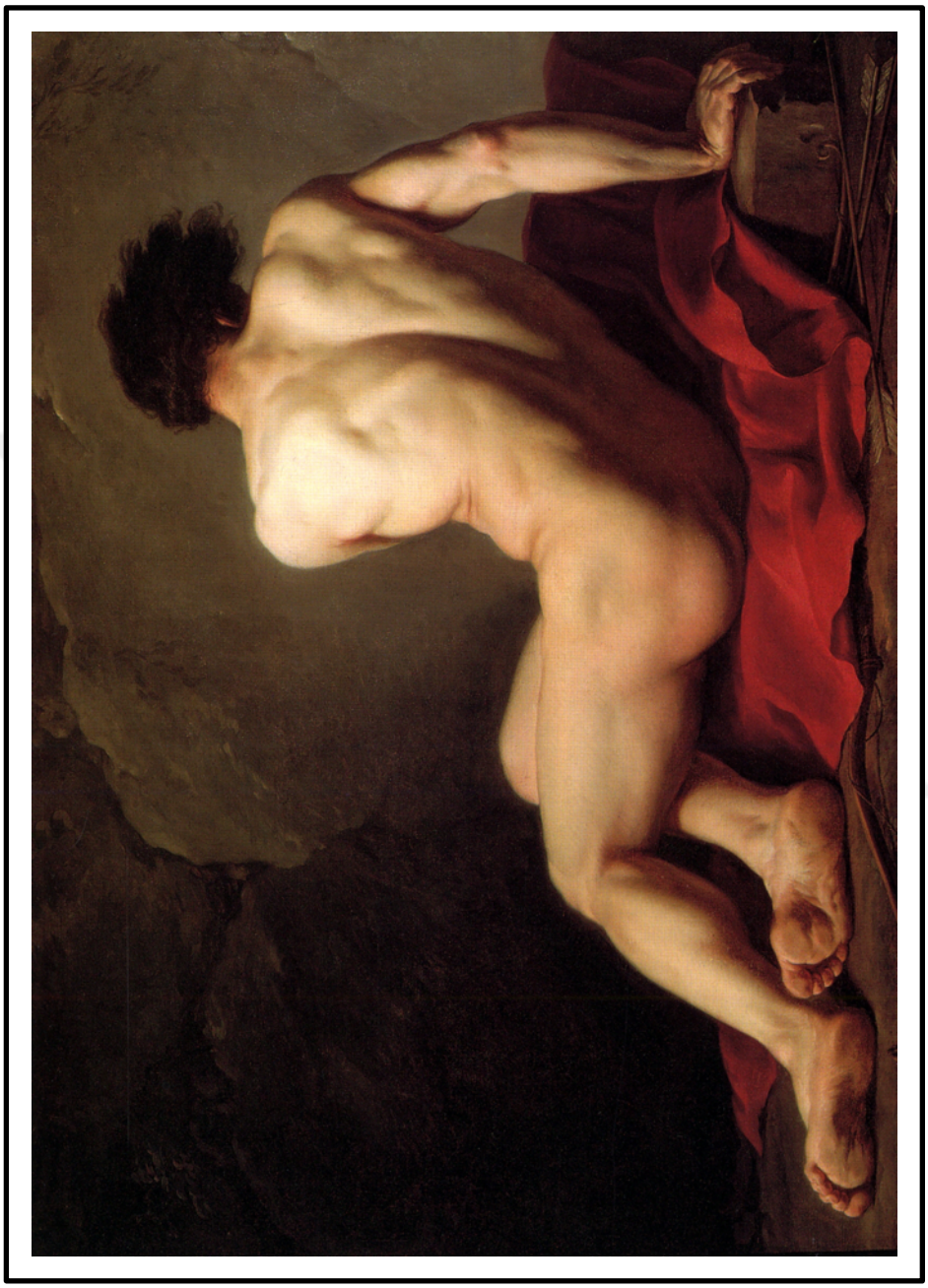
The effects of David's transformation in Rome are dramatically visible in *Saint Roch interceding with the Virgin for the plague-stricken* painted in 1780 (Figure 3.20). In this painting, David creates haptic nodes in two salient and two subtle points. Firstly, on the top left-hand side of the canvas, the Virgin and the baby Jesus are facing each other and, more importantly, Jesus is touching the chin of the Virgin. This first point of contact embodies the tenderness of the relationship between a woman and her child. The embodiment of an emotional bond through the depiction of physical contect is reminiscent, in terms of representational tactic, of Baroque allegories of touch. Depending on the direction in which the beholder's gaze moves through the canvas, upward or downward, the baby's contact with his mother is either the beginning or the end of the narrative. In either case, it requires the beholder to engage haptically with the painting. This first subtle point is connected to the first of the salient points: the Virgin is pointing at Saint Roch with her right hand, her finger is about to touch the tip of the Saints praying hands. The imminent contact of the Virgin and the Saint is also suggested by the meeting of their eyelines on the same axis.

Figure 3.13: David, J-L. (1778) *Hector* [Oil on canvas]. Musée Fabre, Montpellier.



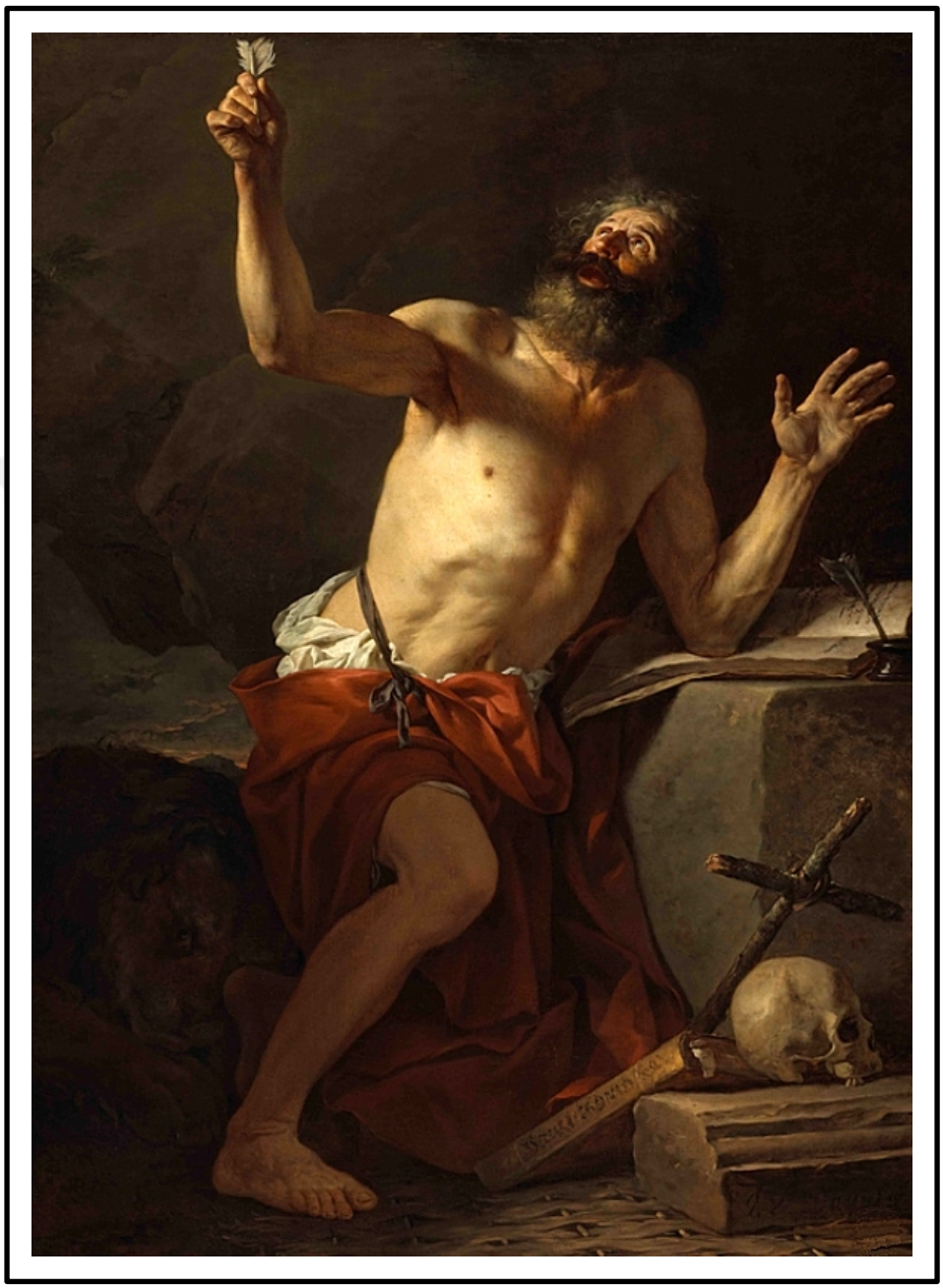
Source: Wikipedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacques-Louis_David_Patrocle.jpg

Figure 3.14: David, J-L. (1779) *Patroclus* [Oil on canvas]. Musée Thomas Henry, Cherbourg.



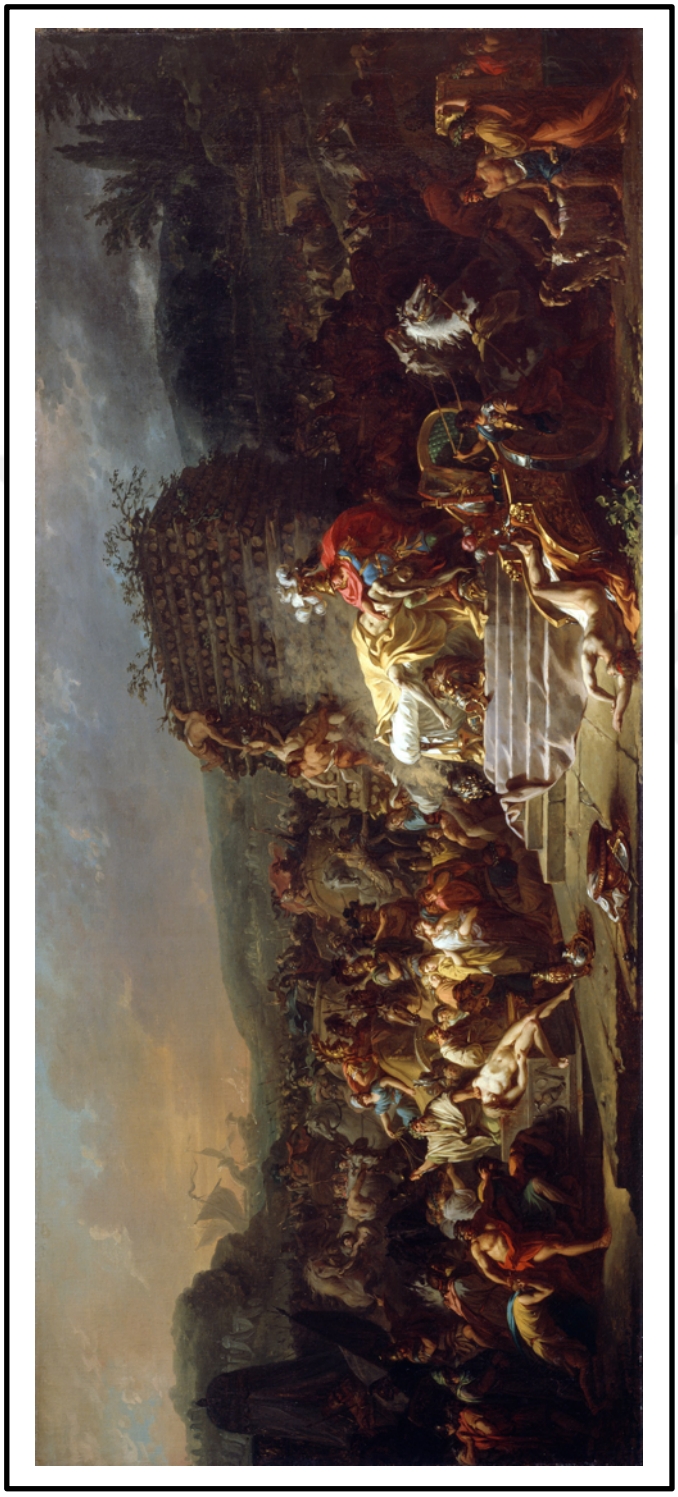
Source: Wikipedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacques-Louis_David_Patrocle.jpg

Figure 3.15: David, J-L. (1779) *Saint Jérôme* [Oil on canvas]. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Source: The Atheneum, http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/full.php?ID=138570

Figure 3.16: David, J-L. (1778) *The Funeral of Patroclus* [Oil on canvas]. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.



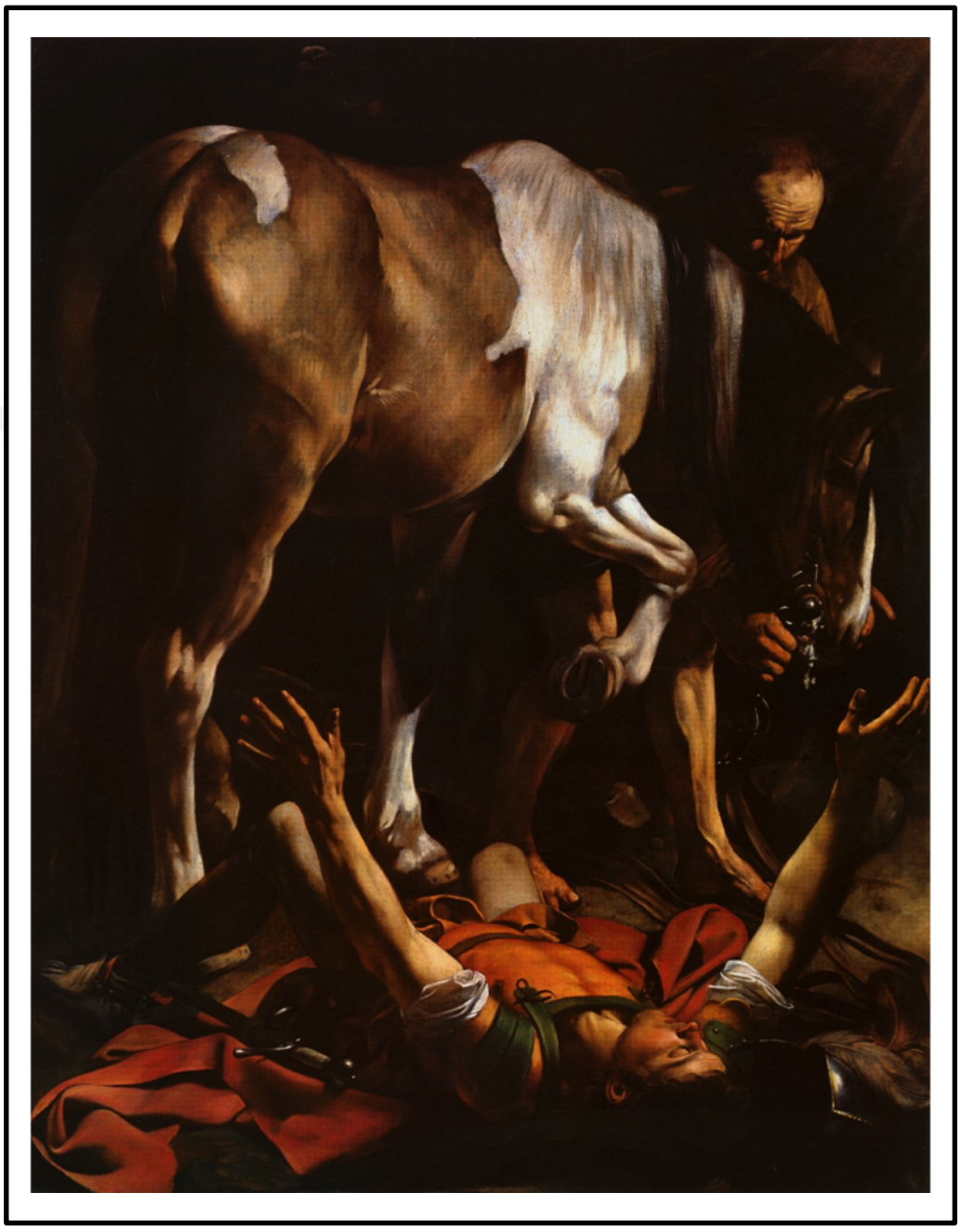
Source: An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Art, http://www.19thcenturyart-facos.com/artwork/funeral-patroclus

Figure 3.17: David, J-L. (1778). *The Funeral of a Hero* [Frieze-Drawing]. Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento.



Source: Crocker Art Museum, https://www.crockerart.org/collections/european-art/artworks/funeral-of-a-hero-1778

Figure 3.18: Caravaggio, M. M. da (1601) *The conversion of Saint Paul* [Oil on canvas]. Cerasi Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome.



Source: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_on_the_Way_to_Damascus

Figure 3.19: Artist unknown (1st or 2nd century A.D.) *The Dying Gaul* [Marble]. Musei Capitolini, Rome.



Source: Musei Capitolini, http://www.museicapitolini.org/en/collezioni/percorsi_per_sale/palazzo_nuovo/sala_del_gladiatore/statua_del_galata_capitolino

The other two points are on the lower half of the canvas. Behind the man lying along the bottom line of the canvas, we see a woman in pain and suffering, whose wrist is hold firmly by a young boy with a horrified expression. This point of contact is the second subtle haptic node of the picture, because it is placed to emphasize the blunt expression of the sick man lying on the foreground. In this strategic placement, this grasping gesture becomes a last attempt to hold on to life. Just underneath this haptic node that David placed subtly in the shadow, we see the head of the sick man being supported by his hand. This man is looking at us but, also, looking into the void through us (Bryson tradition, pp.52-53). The sense of void in the sick man's gaze is echoed in the position of his other hand which has fallen onto the drapery covering him. This hand has fallen there in such a lifeless way that it feels like the body has no longer any control over its limbs. The lifeless left hand is in contrast with the right hand which is carrying the weight of the man's head. This is the pose of a body destabilized by the plague, a body that is escaping itself, challenging us to look at it, and to imagine ourselves in its position. In other words, to achieve the beholder's empathy, the visual and the haptic are entangled, almost braided by David. While in *Saint Roch* David has still not achieved the ability to represent spatiality that he was to achieve in *Belisarius*, this painting is an important milestone in his introduction of haptic effects into the traditional language of gesture in which he had been formed.

After Saint Roch, David created some of his most famous paintings, which were exhibited and won great success in the Academy's bi-annual *Salons*: *Belisarius receiving alms* (1781), *Andromache mourning Hector* (1783), *The Oath of the Horatii* (1785), *The Death of Socrates* (1787) and *Lictors bringing Brutus the bodies of his sons* (1789) (Figures 3.21, 3.22, 3.23, 3.24 and 3.25).

3.3 BODIES OF THE DAY

3.3.1 From an Ancient Oath to a Modern one

On 20 June 1789, deputies of the Third Estate, who were locked out of the Estates General meeting by the King's order, gathered in the *Salle du Jeu de Paume* (The Tennis Court)

in Paris. They took an oath to stay united until the establishment of a new constitution and declared themselves The National Assembly. Both the act of taking an oath and its subsequent visual representation by David demonstrate that the artist's *The Oath of the Horatii* received a retrospective attribution of revolutionary presentiment as early as only a few years after its creation. Regardless of whether those present in the Tennis Court that day did, in actual fact, raise their arms and hands during the act as a reverence to *The Oath of the Horatii*, the deputies' physical and emotional rush to form a united mass to face the imminent threat of counter-revolutionary reprisal bears great affinity to the heroic and brotherly unison in David's painting. As a double irony, and as previously mentioned, *The Oath of the Horatii* was a royal commission and the specific moment it represented was totally invented by David. The fact that it was still adaptable to political actuality five years later proves the level of universality and atemporality that David could reach through aesthetic abstraction. Its further recycling into the representation of the Tennis Court event proves, in turn, that the Revolutionary movement realized the necessity of an impressive and subversive imagery faster than it could actually formulate one independently of the old regime's. According to Joseph Clarke, David's *The Tennis Court Oath* was the earliest self-representation of the Revolution (p.88). Thus, as a point of origin, this earliest self-representation heralded that *détournement* (diversion) was going to be a constant in both the verbal and visual discourse of the revolutionary years in France.

The Tennis Court's visual reference to the *Oath of the Horatii* is evidenced in the symbolic gesture of the deputies who raise their arms and point toward Bailly, the future mayor of Paris who is standing at the center of the scene, on a pedestal. He is pointing upwards with one hand, his palm facing us, and reading out the "oath" from the paper in his other hand. In the scene of the Horatii, the gesture of the oath was David's creative solution to give balance and connectivity to the overall composition while, at the same time, ensuring the dramatic vividness of the specific moment being represented. In *The Tennis Court Oath*, David takes further advantage of his initial motif and employs the same gestural node to enhance the narrative expansion/explosion of the image in the beholder's mind. Here, the triangle formed by the raised arms of the assembly proffers

not only a compositional center to the image, but also a narrative/symbolic "vanishing point" beyond the figural layer of the painting.

On the upper left side of the court hall, curtains are blowing inwards and toward Bailly, which tells the spectator that the future mayor of Paris is standing at the center of not only a physical action, but also of an invisible and complex movement mixing *emotion (individual/citizen), commotion (mass/people/nation)* and *motivation (politics)*. As the beholders follow with their eyes the raised arms of the deputies, they are driven toward a point of intersection in the figure of Bailly. The curtains work as a magnet for this perceptual flow. There is a group of three men at Bailly's feet, which has the same perceptual function as the curtains. This group is a visual anchor. It is underlining the verticality and centrality of Bailly, and redirects the beholder's eyes to the top of Bailly's raised hand. And there is an important reason for this redirection.

The space from the top of Bailly's hand in the air to the tip of the waving curtains is a large empty wall. The only representational intervention on the wall are the lines that mark the contours of its stones. This empty surface is what Didi-Huberman calls "the visual" (*le visuel*) (Didi-Huberman 2012, pp.17-18). Applying Didi-Huberman's concept of *the visual* to the empty surface on the background of *The Tennis Court Oath,* we can argue that this surface has two simultaneous functions: firstly, it serves to aggrandize, both perceptually and morally, the text in Bailly's hand; and secondly, it weighs the beholders in, invites them to feel and join the unified constitutional fervor of the day. By leaving such a big portion of the composition "empty" of people, action and objects, David stripped representation to its bare minimum of color and line. This essential minimum is a visual echo of the simple and essential clarity of the initial quests as they were acted out in the Tennis Court event: *liberté* (freedom) and *égalité* (equality).

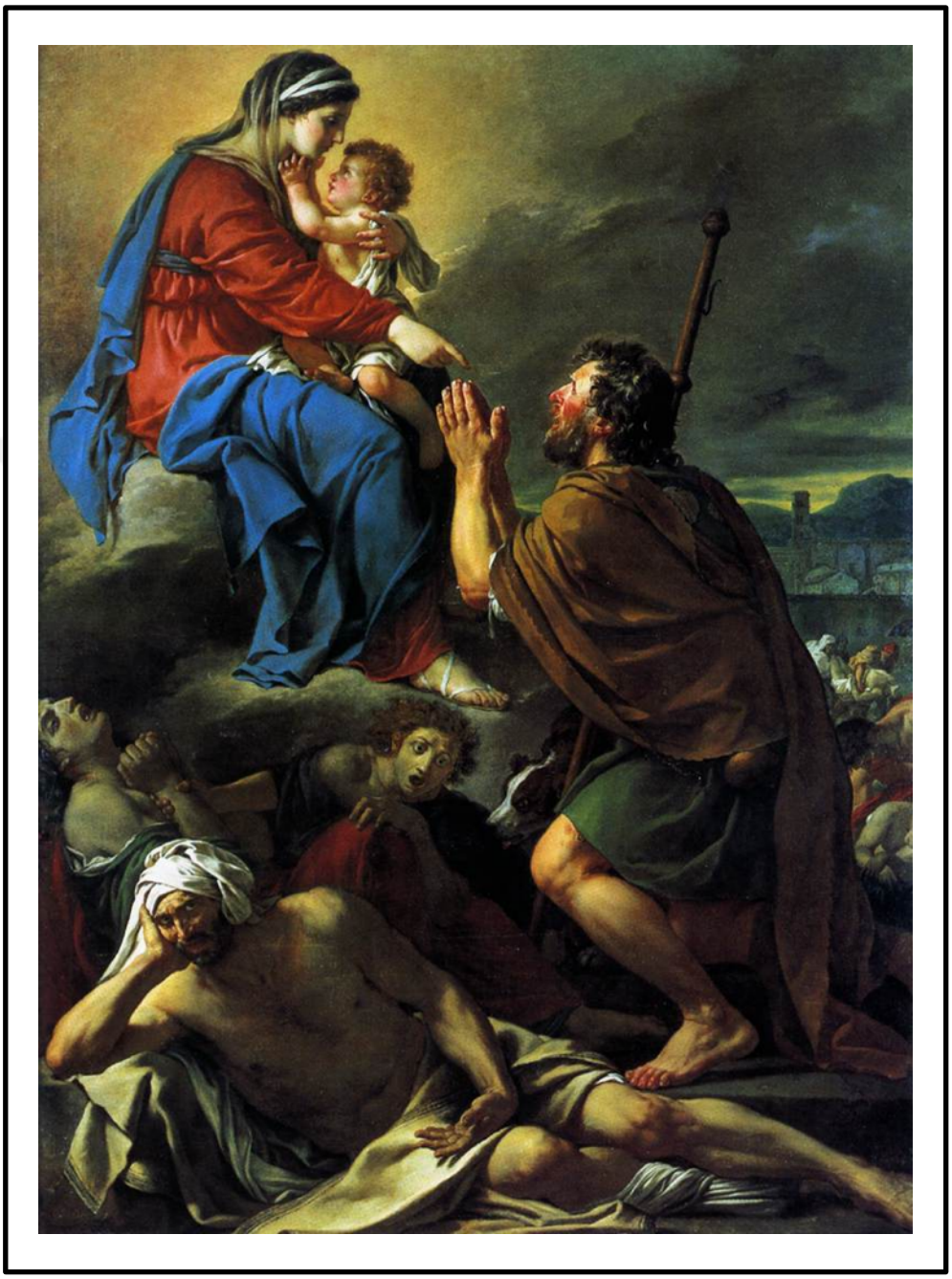
We encounter similar politics of the visual in later stages of the Revolution, because the politicians of the revolution needed new signs that would replace those of the royalty and their representative values. In *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, Lynn Hunt analyzes the new regime's complex relationship to representation in the following terms (p.88):

> *When the French Revolution challenged the political authority of the Old Regime, it therefore also called into question its cultural frame. […] Where was the new center of society, and how could it be represented? Should there even be a center, much less a sacred one? […] French revolutionaries did not just seek another representation of authority, a replacement for the king, but rather came to question the very act of representation itself.*

Hunt's research documents the republican government's inner debates on the necessity of seals, insignias, icons. She quotes Grégoire who says that, initially, seals "were only employed to compensate for the ignorance or imperfection of writing." (p.91). This position implied that the French people, having been liberated from the political and economic oppression of the royalty, would now emancipate and progress intellectually. However, as Hunt explains, Grégoire and the other deputies quickly realize that social and cultural change does not necessarily follow the pace of revolutionary politics. While not explicitly acknowledging the impatient and unrealistic ideological expectations of the Assembly/Convention from the nation, the deputies agree that a seal would motivate people to identify themselves with the revolution.

The Tennis Court Oath does not employ the anthropomorphic and nude bodies frequently used in Baroque and Rococo allegories, even though David did start the painting by sketching the protagonists' bodies nude. However, this painting does not yet opt for complete ethereality either. David's image affirms the integrity of the oath-act by embodying it in the coming together of the deputies. Antoine de Baecque argues that David's representation of the event is more "allegorical" than documentary because the artist included in his composition people who were absent that day. Thus, David positions the image as the embodiment of a principle rather than the journalistic reporting of a specific moment. However idealized, the bodies he painted belonged to real people. In other words, the painter distilled a classical pictorial trope and employed its core formula, which is very old, to express a newly emerging collective sentiment. Baecque's observation is vital to us because it supports our argument that David's general aesthetic attitude was not one of total refusal of existing tradition and taste but was based on their effective subversion. This group (the three men at the feet of Bailly) has a surprisingly allegorical feel, probably because the figure in the middle is looking directly at us, echoing Bailly's equally direct gaze.

Figure 3.20: David, J.-L. (1780) *Saint Roch interceding with the Virgin for the plague-stricken* [Oil on wood]. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille.



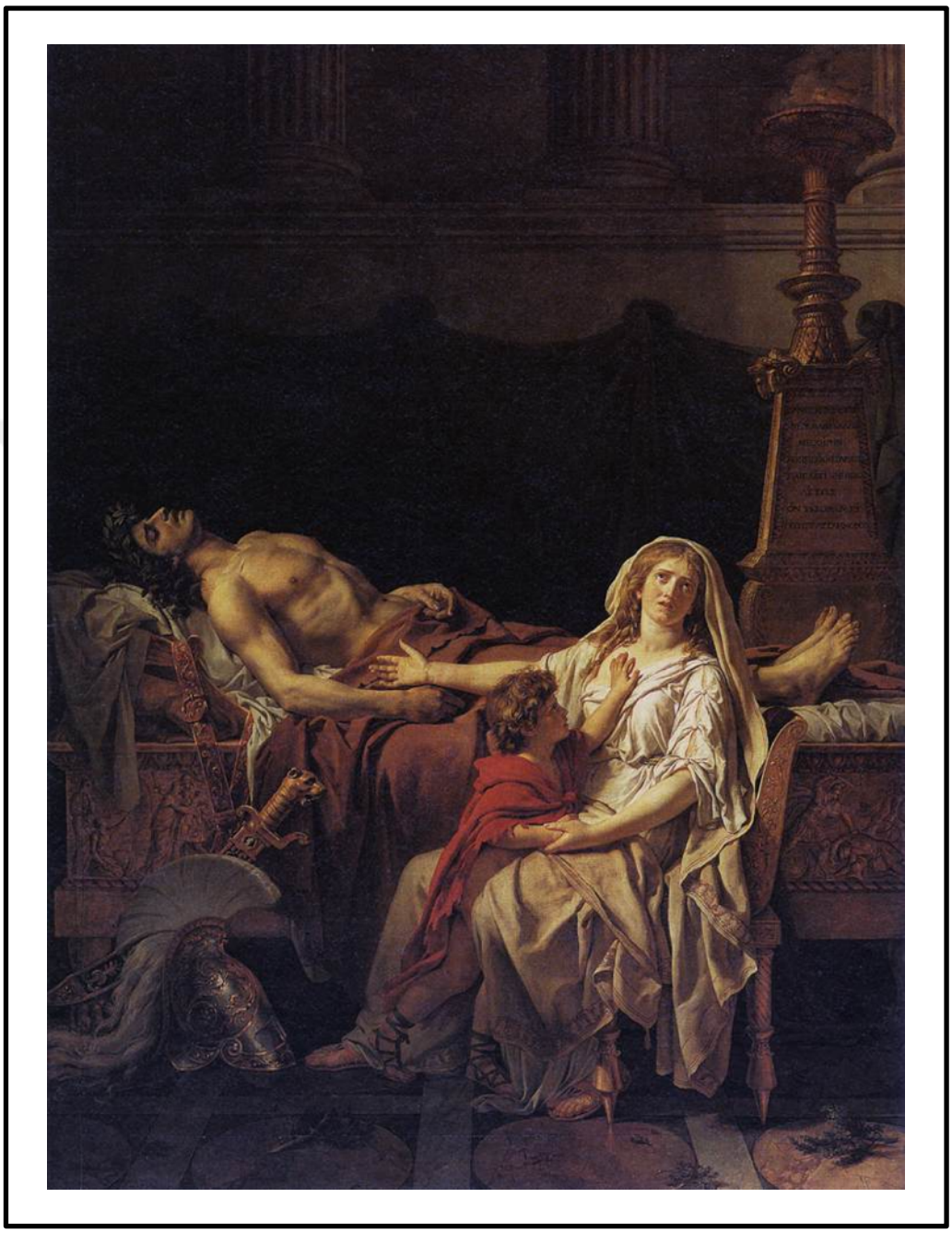
Source: Useum Beta, https://useum.org/artwork/Saint-Roch-Interceding-with-the-Virgin-for-the-Plague-Stricken-Jacques-Louis-David-1780

Figure 3.21: David, J.-L. (1781) *Belisarius receiving alms* [Oil on canvas]. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.



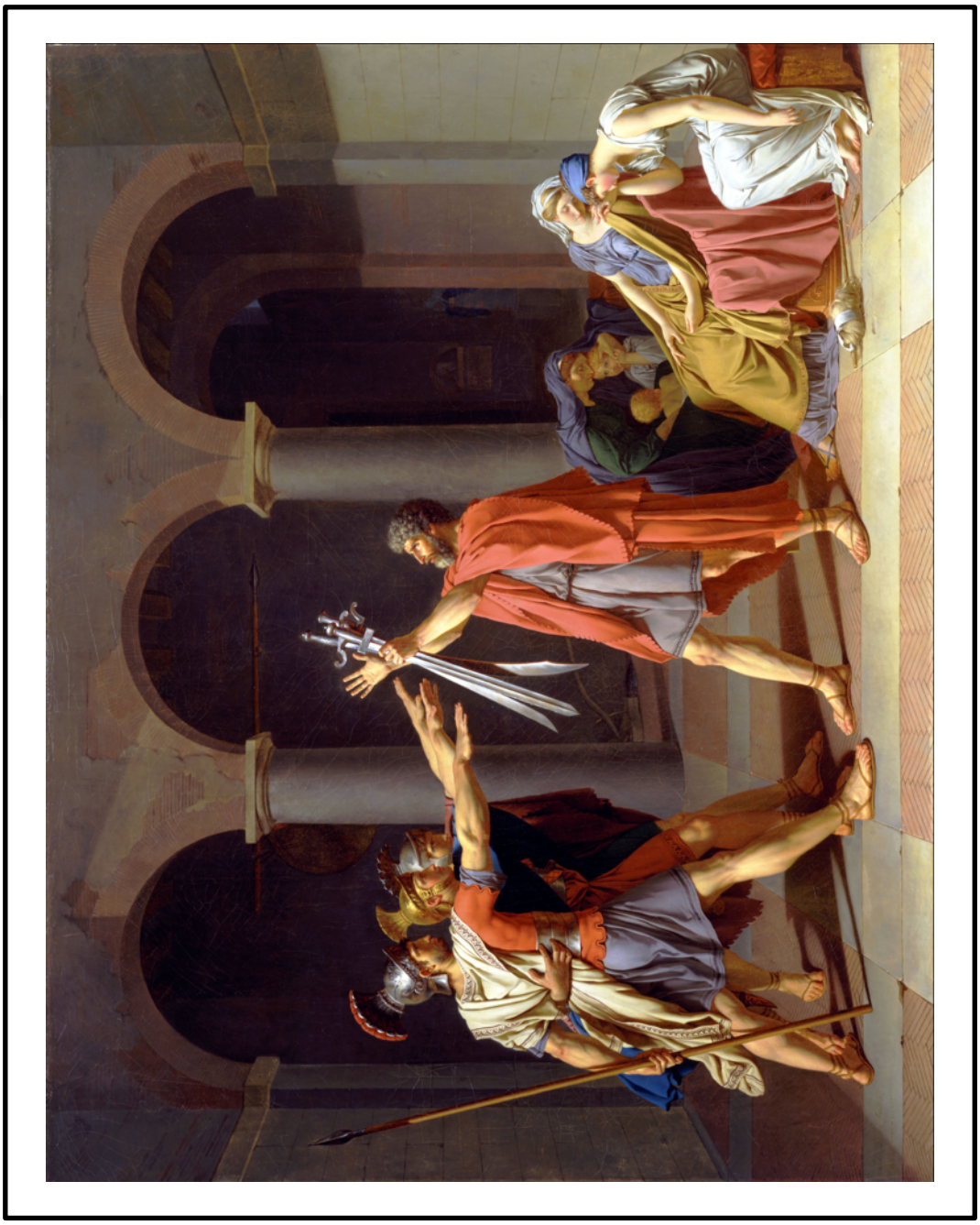
Source: Musée des Beaux-Arts, http://www.pba-lille.fr/en/Collections/Highlights/16th-20th-century-Paintings/Belisarius-Begging-for-Alms

Figure 3.22: David, J.-L. (1783) *Andromache mourning Hector* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/d/david_j/index.html

Figure 3.23: David, J-L. (1784) *The Oath of the Horatii* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



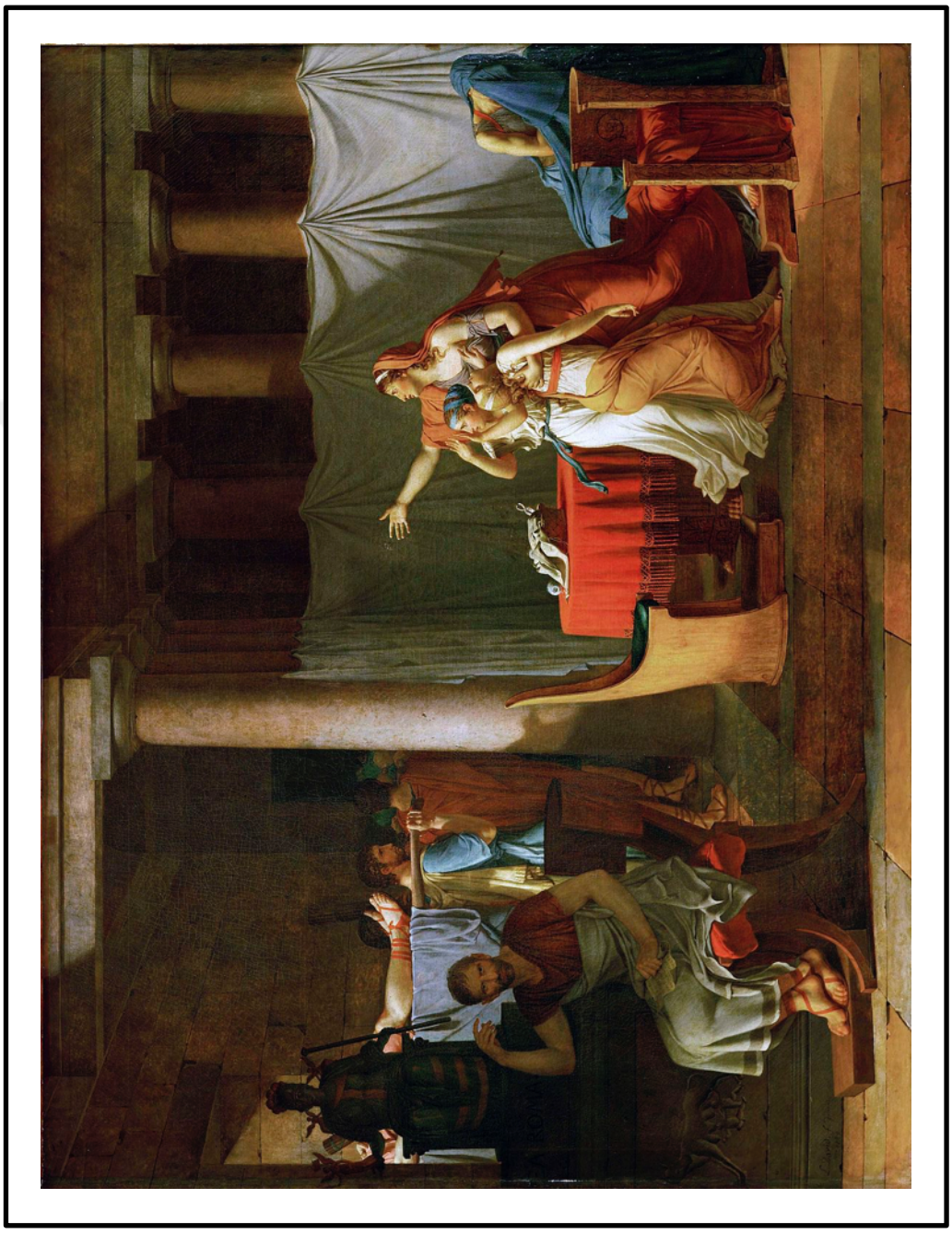
Source: Musée du Louvre, https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/oath-horatii

Figure 3.24: David, J-L. (1787) *The Death of Socrates* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



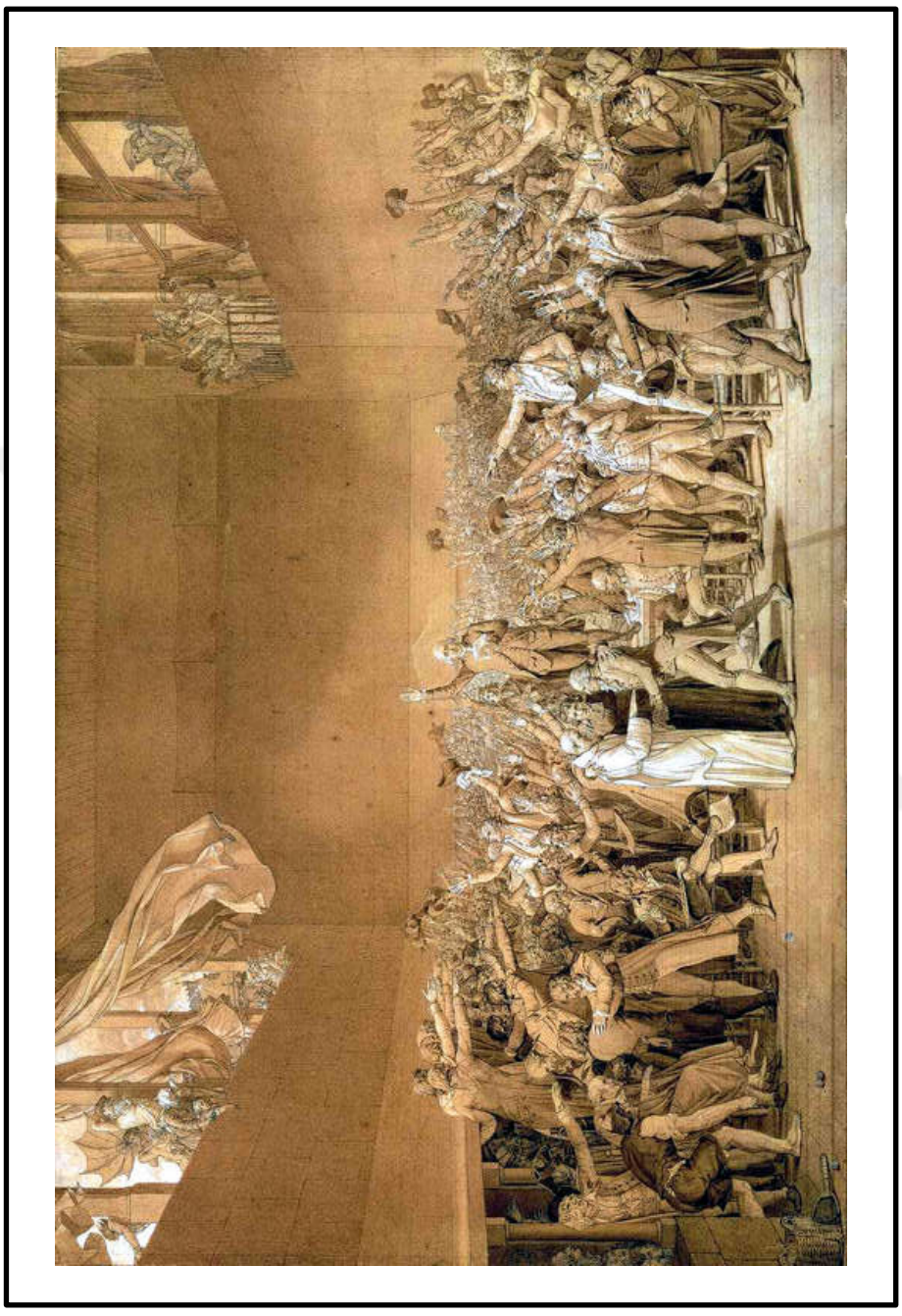
Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/31.45/

Figure 3.25: David, J-L. (1789) *Lictors bringing Brutus the bodies of his sons* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: The Web Gallery of Art, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/d/david_j/2/208david.html

Figure 3.26: David, J.-L. (1790) *The Tennis Court Oath* [Sketch]. Musée National du Chateau de Versailles.



Source: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis_Court_Oath

The man in the middle of the group, representing the *noblesse*, is embracing the other two in a brotherly gesture. These two are shaking hands. The one to our left, all in white, represents the clergy and the one to our right represents the Third State. The clergyman is replicating the Davidian gesture with his right hand.

The French Revolution began as a demand to modify the existing socio-political paradigm. It was not immediately, and never homogeneously, a republican movement. For the Third State, which included all those who weren't members of aristocracy or the clergy, the Revolution was primarily a claim to visibility. For the few members of the aristocracy and clergy who joined the constitutional cause, it was a claim to re-envision the political, social and economic dynamics of the old regime. The old regime's politics of *etiquette* and protocol were no longer seen, by the educated "subjects", as the rays of light emanating from Versailles, illuminating the entire kingdom but as empty theatrics and sensual debauchery. For the people, the bodies dwelling in the court were out-of-touch with the dire conditions of life outside the palace.

3.3.2 1793: A Year of Martyrs and David's 'Trilogy'

> *David is a deep painter, and I would say also a painter frightened by the deeps his vision opens up […]. On the surface of David's greatest canvas we see the surfaces of things, but what is really being painted is the inwardness of vision, and what it means to be a sighted being who does not see angelically, in essence and beyond time, but mortally; along with others, in tradition. In a sense what he paints is* the mortality of sight*. It is a subject that addresses an issue neither Ingres nor Delacroix face so directly: death.* (Bryson 1984, p.83)

I would like to argue that there is, in David's three successive portrayals of martyrdom, a visible metamorphosis of style and a gradual discovery of the role of haptic effects in visual representation. David's *Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau on his deathbed* (1793) no longer exists. Only a rapidly made sketch of the canvas remains (reference). The depiction of Bara (1793) seems unfinished. That is perhaps why it remains largely overlooked, in terms of analysis, in comparison to the famous *Death of Marat* (1793). In other words, a successive analysis of these three paintings presents some shortcomings. In addition to the theme of martyrdom and the year in which they were created, these three paintings

are connected by the fact that David created, in each one, a point of "cutaneous contact" which condenses an effect that I propose to call *frôlement*: a light and brushing touch.

3.3.2.1 Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau on his deathbed

Louis-Michel Lepeletier, Marquis de Saint-Fargeau was killed on 20 January, by a royalist who was protesting the Convention's vote in favor of the King's death. Louis XVI was executed the next day. Lepeletier's spectacular funeral ceremony took place on 24 January, and David presented his first martyrdom portrait to the Convention on 29. In his presentation of the painting as a *Discours* that was later printed, David points the reader toward the sword hanging above Lepeletier body by a thread of hair and explains that this visual tension embodies the great courage that it took Lepeletier and his colleagues to bring down the "tyrant".

Both the funeral theatrics and the painted image of the first martyr of the republican, and specifically, the Jacobin cause (Crow 2008, p.156), were designed by David (Brookner 1987, p.110) and shaped in the immediate aftermath of the king's execution. The loss of the head which had traditionally and symbolically united the country so far imposed the necessity of an urgent replacement so as to ensure the success of the republican project of the Jacobins. Joseph Clarke describes the stylistically innovative and Jacobin gruesomeness of the funeral in the following words (2007, pp.155-6):

> *Even by the standards of 1793, it was a gruesome affair. For three days and nights, the corpse, 'nud, livide, et sanglant' lay exposed on a bier on the Place Vendôme, the hideous gash in its chest clearly visible upon the plinth that had so recently borne the statue of Louis XIV. At once fascinating and repulsive, the gaping wound, a suppurating symbol of violated Republican righteousness, and the assassin's sword, its sinister antithesis, made for a shocking, even nightmarish, spectacle. With the body draped in classical robes on an antique couch, David's macabre* mise en scène *was certainly neo-classical in inspiration, but it bore little resemblance to Quatremère's more sedate brand of classicism.*

Lepeletier's martyrdom was carefully shaped into a republican allegory, specifically crafted to cauterize the wound that the severed head of Louis Capet had left on the traditional texture of French socio-political culture. Another outcome of the cauterizing impulse was the adoption of Suzanne Lepeletier, the martyr's daughter, by the Convention as the daughter of the nation (Crow 2008, p.156). This adoption was part of

the Convention's quest to represent itself as the new 'head' of the nation—replacing the fallen head of the King. Ironically, after David's death, Suzanne Lepeletier bought the famous portrayal of her father from the painter's heirs and destroyed it (Crow 2008, p.156). Thus, what remains from David's original painting is a drawing made by a contemporary artist. This is why Lepeletier's image is the least assessed among the three portraits of martyrdom by David. I argue that is still possible to include it in this dissertation because the drawing provides enough details on David's strategy of representation and allows us to analyze the haptic tension in the composition.

In David's commemorative canvas, Lepeletier has the muscular body of the young Hector from *Andromache Mourning Hector.* A sketch by Desvosges remaining from the original canvas suggests that the face of the martyr reflected an almost boyish beauty and a hardly discernible but serene smile. While reflecting a similar smile, David's own sketch of Lepeletier's head suggests a more naturalistic representation of Lepeletier's 32 years of age. Anita Brookner argues that, as far as the remaining copy suggests, David embellished the physical and physiognomic traits of the deputy to create "a secular hero depicted in Christian iconography to inspire worship" (1987, pp.111-112). In the painting, Lepeletier is laid on a bed, nude, his torso uncovered and his wound visible. His head and lustrous hair rest on three pillows, which support and enhance the visibility of the martyr's heroic body and attribute him a status similar to a Christian martyr. His arms rest to each side of the body, the one visible to us seems to have just loosened its fist, as if to signal imminent death.

The piercing element in David's composition is the "sword of Damocles" (Crow 2008, p.156) hanging above Lepeletier's ribcage. Three drops of blood drip from the sword like an extension that threatens to pierce Lepeletier's skin once again. With this visual tension, David embodies the Jacobin fear of the anti-revolutionary "threat". Moreover, the sword holds in place a piece of paper on which Lepeletier announces his vote in favor of the execution of Louis XVI. Indeed, his murder was a result of this vote—although he wasn't the original intended victim—and happened the evening of the vote, just the day before the king's execution. In other words, the martyrdom happened before the execution of the king, but its image was unveiled only after it. Therefore, this image is a live testimony to

the shaping of the revolutionary figure of the martyr in the aftermath of the king's execution and to appease/balance out the political, cultural and visual blow of the beheading of a body once considered to be divine.

What distinguishes the staging of Marat's image from that of Lepeletier, as far as the remaining sketch allows us to observe, is the suspended sword piercing through the fictive last words of the Lepeletier and the blood dripping from the sword. This half-gravitational and half-suspended group functions similarly to the wooden box in Marat's image, it creates relative depth.

3.3.2.2 Marat in his Last Breath

> *The people were asking for their friend again. I could hear their desperate voice, provoking my art, demanding to see again the features of their faithful friend: David! Seize your brushes, avenge our friend, avenge Marat, of whom the vanquished enemies still grow pale upon seeing the disfigured features. Reduce them to envying the fate of the one whom, having not been able to corrupt, they had to murder cowardly.*

David presented Marat's painting to the Convention with these overly dramatic, theatrical words. At the end of the same speech, he declared his vote in favor of Marat's *panthéonisation*. By the hand of the artist, the image of Marat as a martyr of the Revolution became part of the Jacobin effort to visualize and narrativize their political program. Marat as the person and the deputy had ceased to exist, but his bodily remains were now seamed into discourse, and mobilized to give vividness, durability and expansion to Jacobin politics.

The Death of Marat (1793) competes today, in terms of their significance in the overall career of the artist, with *The Oath of the Horatii* (1784) Both canvases are, to use a French word, *dépouillé:* they are stripped of unnecessary details and decorations, they present the beholder with the bare essentials of the story depicted. This sobriety and the consequent solemnity of the canvases are characteristic of David's individual style. However, in terms of its popularity and significance in the art historical narrative, *The Oath* seems to have the upper hand, especially due to its chronological primacy. It marks a singular moment in the historicizing of David's career. For example, Hugh Honour

argues that "with *The Oath of the Horatii* David suddenly reached full maturity" (p.34). Evidently, *The Oath* marked the moment of David's emancipation from studentship to becoming a master himself. In the background landscape of the *Belisarius receiving alms* (Figure 3.21), for example, David was still emulating Poussin. In *The Oath,* he was not emulating any specific master anymore but incorporating elements of style by his own hand. It is, nevertheless, possible to argue against the definitive tone of Honour's observation. At each turning point of his life and career, David reached a new level of maturity in the use of a slightly different aesthetic grammar. While *The Oath* certainly marked David's entry into maturity in his pre-Revolutionary period, *Marat* marked a peak in the artist's Revolutionary days. This painting, next to Lepeletier's, played a lead role in the propaganda of the Convention's politics. Its composition and initial status had great effects in David's changing political and aesthetic convictions. In painting Marat's death, David had to revise his painstakingly acquired style according to the complex and often contradictory conventions of the new context through which the country was going. Marat's image became perhaps even more crucial in the aftermath of Robespierre's rule as a problematic legacy haunting David's post-Thermidor social and artistic legitimacy. Finally, it accompanied to artist to his self-imposed exile. It was, in that sense, David's own *Mona Lisa*. Not only David's students reproduced the canvas as part of their studies but also the image of the most famous Republican martyr proliferated in different versions over the history of European visual arts (see Mazeau 2009). The survival of Marat's image in the nineteenth century, and even beyond, strengthens T.J. Clark's claim that modernism begins with the presentation of *The Death of Marat,* or, as it was initially titled by David, *Marat taking his last breath* to the general public on the same day as Marie-Antoinette's execution (16 October 1793) (Clark, p.13).

3.3.2.2.1 The murder, the funeral and the cult

On 13 July 1793, Jean-Paul Marat, physician and deputy in the National Convention from the leftist Montagnard section, was killed by Marie-Anne-Charlotte Corday d'Armont, who had come to Paris from Normandy. Corday was from an aristocratic family. She had adopted ideas of the Enlightenment and was sympathetic to the liberal Girondins, a group named after the southwestern French department of La Gironde. In *Rehearsing the*

Revolution, Marie-Helene Huet reports that Corday had initially planned to murder Marat during the festivities of the anniversary of the Bastille Day, which were cancelled shortly before the date. Then, she had planned to carry her act in the meeting of the National Convention but learnt that Marat was ill and resting at home. Thus, she decided to visit him with the promise of a list of Girondins traitors (1982, p.71).

3.3.2.2.2 Ambivalences of genre and style

Firstly, David's depiction of *l'Ami du peuple* is not a Neoclassical painting in the strict sense. The subject matter is not an episode from ancient history, the protagonist is not a Greco-Roman hero dying in battle, the background space and the attributes around the protagonist are not Greco-Roman. Lepeletier's body was still Greco-Roman in its nudity, profile and pose. The dead body was lying on a bed, his torso supported by cushions and wrapped in neoclassicist drapery. The sword hanging above the body was a reminder of ancient arms and attributes. In contrast, the sheets covering Marat's bathtub, the improvised table on his lap covered with a green shawl, the wooden box next to him on which his inkwell and papers stand, and the empty background wall reflect a scene isolated from historical grandeur and locked in the moment. Moreover, in comparison to David's great *Salon* paintings like *Belisarius* or *Brutus*, the shine, brightness and contrast of colors are muted in Marat's depiction. A telling absence is that of bright red drapery. Here, the color red is muted in a diluted pool of blood in the bathtub and on a few spots here and there.

In addition to the observations above, the most surprising difference between *Marat*, and David's earlier canvases is the absence of a specific type of spatial contrast: in *The Oath*, *Socrates* and *Brutus,* there is a visible interplay between the horizontal line up of the figures on the foreground and the depth, or the perspectival opening, of the diegetic space in the background. This, as discussed earlier, is a frieze-effect of ancient influence. In *Marat*, however, the horizontality is suggested by the bathtub, but it does not create the same interplay with the backdrop as the background is ambiguous. The depth of the scene relies on the wooden box placed in front of the bathtub and the perfectly foreshortened piece of paper that will, at any moment, fall off the edge of this box. The verticality of

the painting, as well as the absence of an architectural or landscape space on the background overcome, easily, the horizontal axis of division that the line of the bathtub suggests.

Secondly, it should be discussed whether Marat's depiction is a 'portrait'. In addition to his History pieces, David had created many portraits since the beginning of his career. He was, also, going to produce more after his Convention days. A couple of these portraits will be used in the following pages in the analysis of Bara's image. In fact, David's output in portraiture deserves an entire research.

However, and thirdly, *The Death of Marat* is not a History painting. Not only it alludes to a contemporary event, but also the absence of a vital element excludes this painting from the Albertian canon of *historia.* That canonical element is *action (but visible/visualization of action)*. Looking at Marat's depiction and at the title by which the canvas is currently known, we assume that the man lying before us is dead, hence immobile. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, death was a frequent subject in History painting, but another typical characteristic of that genre was the presence of multiple figures in different poses, gestures and physiognomies to provide the narrative around the death in question. Painting in the Academic manner was a two-dimensional medium capable of creating the illusion of the third dimension. It did not, and indeed historically, could not aim to recreate the fourth dimension (time) by the actual movement of the image. What History painters aimed to move was the eye and the mind of the beholder. As the beholder moved his/her vision across the canvas, motivated to do so by the gestural and compositional connections between the figures, the mind would take steps in time and proceed linguistically. So, the movement of the eye motivated the deployment of thinking, and revived the narrative content in the mind of the beholder. This double experience of movement had further importance as, according to Alberti, it had the effect of transforming the beholder in witness, a participant in the event represented.

The Oath, *Socrates* and *Brutus* were examples of David's articulation of such intermodal dynamics. The particularity of *Marat* lies in the isolation of the dead body, or as Matthias

Bleyel refers to it, in Marat being a "cadavre solitaire" (Bleyel, p.384). Bleyel observes that, in academic History painting, in subjects involving dead protagonists, the immobility of the corpse was contrasted by the actions of the live figures around it (id.). Such was the case in David's *Andromaque Mourning Hector*. Compositionally, the horizontality of Hector was contrasted by the verticality of Andromaque and the intersecting effect empowered the emotion of mourning. While Lepeletier was a solitary cadaver, David's reference to Hector in that first martyrdom portrait motivated us to think that Andromaque was replaced, in Lepeletier's depiction, by the imaginary beholder standing in front of the image.

There is a hidden act/action in this painting, the act of dying. In fact the initial title is Marat a son dernier soupir, which adds to the effect that he is suspended in time (Maleuvre 2000, p.19).

> *A photograph of Marat in the fatal bathtub would have yielded a Marat either alive or dead. The answer might not have been legible in the snapshot itself but the answer existed. Empirical proof, by contrast, has no purchase on David's painting of Marat's death. It is not to be measured against the medical chronology of Marat's death. For David sought to depict, not a moment, but how the moment eludes us. It is the opposite of snapping a moment in time.*

Didier Maleuvre argues that, in *The Death of Marat,* the artist aimed to picture how the eponymous moment "eludes us". Despite all, the canvas in question was not, to be precise about its circumstances, a philosophical work as Maleuvre's comment suggests. David was called to *immortalize* Marat by the members of the Convention, the revolutionary government of which he was an active member. The role of Marat's image was primordially to embody revolutionary martyrdom, to succeed to Lepeletier's image. Moreover, Robespierre was going to propose the same type of immortalization for two other "martyrs", namely Bara and Viala, demonstrates that the embodiment of revolutionary martyrdom was a thriving method of political communication during the period of Terror [check the date of its declaration]. In other words, both in its conception and its resounding effect, *The Death of Marat* was an image of indoctrination, or recruit, rather than philosophical reflection.

The above being said, and to return to Maleuvre's account, there is an aspect of this painting that emphasizes the eluding nature of the act of dying. David's image of *Lepeletier,* we have seen, is noticeably modeled after his own (dead) Hector in *Andromache mourning Hector* of 1783. In other words, David—metaphorically and literally—positions Lepeletier on a pedestal/bed as a noble corpse to mourn over and a "soldier" soul of the Republican cause. We can speculate that the Andromache of this scene was *la Nation,* the French Nation. In comparison, Marat's image is a reminder of the philosophical deaths previously depicted by David. On the one hand, Seneca was calmly reclining and almost floating towards his death, on the other, Socrates was decidedly pointing up to remind his already mourning friends that his self-sacrifice was more meaningful than a possible escape. Nevertheless, both philosophers were still alive on the canvas and, at once, always dying.

The initial title of Marat's representation was *Marat in His Last Breath,* which meant that the revolutionary deputy was, forever, on the brink of death. David preserved a sense of ambivalence. It seems that Marat has not yet lost hold of the objects in his hands: in his right hand a *plume* is brushing the ground but still upright and, on his left, we can still read the note written by Charlotte Corday, asking to see him urgently.

I would like to argue that the ambivalence of Marat's fate in David's painting was, in fact, a strategic choice influenced by the changing and traumatic actuality of death in the summer of 1793. Lepeletier had been killed on January 20th, Louis XVI executed the next day, David's *tableau* of Lepeletier was presented to the Convention on xxx. Corday killed Marat on July 13th, only xxx months later. In the short amount of time between Lepeletier's death and Marat's, however, the social and political tension had augmented exponentially. While Louis XVI was "the tyrant" who had fallen under the "blade of law", and Lepeletier was "the first martyr of the Republic", the contrast between traitors and heroes seemed simple. The image of the dead, and of their remains, could be easily handled. However, the execution of the King, then continuous violence in the country had fragmented France's perspective on death. the events of the *Vendée* war had been impressed on the French imaginary in a particularly gruesome fashion. Consequently, the guidelines of Marat's commemorative representation had to change.

In Marat's image, within an extremely sober, somber image that is built on a firm balance between the verticals and the horizontals, David interweaved the contextual with the universal, the verbal with the material. Bara, as we will see in the next part, was an androgynous youth cocooned by a silky and misty background.

3.3.3.2.3 Haptic reading

In a strategy that reminds us of the *académie*[22] of *Patroclus*, but which became more subtle and abstract, the wall behind Marat ceases to be a wall. The background in Marat is a field of color, free from the figurative and the verbal, and therefore from "meaning". Instead, this visual field, demands a sensory participation on the part of the beholder. This unidentifiable surface is in fact a representation of the perceptual space to which we usually refer as the human sensorium.

At the time of realizing this canvas, David's *eye* and *hand* had already gone through a decisive transformation. As previously mentioned, David had entered the world of painting as an admirer of Boucher who embodied the Rococo world of sensuality, but he had received his formal education in the academic system of late *ancien régime*, which favored the *à l'antique* style which did not entirely exclude Rococo elements such as themes of love and the Italian experience left a deep mark on David. His visit to Napoli had lifted off his cataracts and made him realize the true value of classical aesthetics (Martin, p.60). The "cataract" comment is, to be precise, a later recollection of David's about his visit to Naples, but it does show that the artist paid attention to material qualities of images. He envisioned an intermediary surface between the beholder's mind and the object of vision. In other words, he imagined a metaphorical membrane through which the perception of an artwork was filtered and shaped. In short, David's cataract comment points at a metaphorically cutaneous and visceral self-awareness.

In short, in depicting the martyrs of the Revolution, more specifically, of the Jacobin movement, David created new compositional and narrative standards. Officially, David

[22] These paintings were studies sent from Rome to Paris as proof of the young pensioner's progress.

was a History painter, which meant that the focus of his visual grammar was the significant moment of the episode in question and the building of an efficient network of gestures capable of suggesting what comes before and after the moment represented.

3.3.2.3 The death of young Bara

Joseph Bara was the last of the Revolutionary martyrs pictured by David. The details of his role in the army and of the event of his death are unclear as the death of this young man provided a fresh opportunity for Jacobin discourse just as the popular and highly materialist cult of Marat was spiraling out of Robespierre's firm grip on and ethereal vision of the new cultic regime of the Republic. In the words of Helen Weston, "Joseph Bara existed in a single heroic act and as such, he became ideal material for myth […]" (1996, p.234). In comparison to the aristocrat Lepeletier and the radical Montagnard Marat, the image of young Bara was untarnished, free of any potentially burdensome social identity. Bara's status in the Revolutionary army is unclear. He was initially portrayed as a horse guard, but commemorative prints represent him as a drummer boy. This small detail matters to the extent that, in the army, only the youngest boys were drummers. In other words, it is possible that Bara's image as a drummer boy was an invention, of none other than Robespierre, to create a simulated persona, an innocent Republican child whom all the children of the Republic would aspire to emulate.[23] Indeed, it was decided that David's portrayal of Bara would be engraved and distributed to primary schools in France (Johnson 1993, p.109). In other words, Bara's image was designed as a pedagogical supplement to those of Lepeletier and Marat.

Exactly because of this pedagogical ambition, Brookner finds surprising the lack of Jacobin signs in the painting (1987, p.120):

> *The portrait of the drummer boy who refused to shout* 'Vive le roi' *instead of* 'Vive la république' *is ardent but in an odd way absent-minded: no landscape, no cockade, no clothes, nothing to indicate the significance of the occasion except the studied androgynous beauty of the youth.*

[23] For a detailed analysis of the different narratives around Bara's death and the possible reasons behind the modifications of the facts of the event in the political and visual discourse, see Weston 1996.

As both Weston and Brookner suggest, and as in the case of David's omission of Corday's tempting of Marat with the promise of exposing counter-revolutionary Girondins, the exclusion of specific signs was a strategy that David adopted probably to allow the survival of the martyr-image in the complicated atmosphere of a quickly changing political equilibrium. Two other important points in Brookner's quote are absent-mindedness and androgyny. Both these point are relevant to the haptic hypothesis of this dissertation. Firstly, the visual anchor for Brookner's diagnosis of absent-mindedness seems to be the flickering effect of the background. Brookner argues the "incomplete" effect originated in David's portrait paintings from 1791-1792. She cites the example of the portrait of *Mme de Pastoret and her son* (1987, p.109), an aristocrat who revolutionized childcare but was imprisoned for being a royalist, thus the portrait was abandoned without the finalizing touches such as the needle that Mme de Pastoret presumably holds (Figure 3.30). Alternatively, we can introduce to this aesthetic genealogy the portrait studies that David had painted in preparation for *The Tennis Court Oath*, around the same time as Mme de Pastoret's portrait, of which Abbé Grégoire's is an example (Figure 3.31). However, it is even more revealing to see the same stained background effect continuing in David's post-imprisonment portraits. To cite two examples, five years apart, David continues to explore the same effect in a lesser known *Portrait of Catherine-Marie-Jeanne Tallard* (1795) and the famous *Portrait of Juliette Récamier* (1800) (Figures 3.32, and 3.33).

Secondly, there is the matter of Bara's androgyny which, Weston argues, is a state of "in-between-ness" that is aligned with three other liminalities in this painting: Bara, like Marat, is in a moment in-between life and death; he is in-between childhood and puberty; and finally, he is a name from real life but represented as an ideal and innocent nude (1996, pp.236-237), a dying body without any sign of any of the multiple knife-wounds that he was reported to have received (Johnson 1993, p.109). Weston argues that this series of liminalities is supported by the in-between-ness of "finish" and "unfinish" (Weston 1996, p.237). Thus, we can argue that David discovered a new, sensorially suggestive background first in his portraits of 1790s and began establishing it in the final state of the painting in Marat. In Bara, he took his exploration of this new kind of background further, boldly expanding the visibility of the flickering brushstrokes to

almost the entire background. David's post-imprisonment portraits point at the fact that he did not abandon this new background, on the contrary, continued to experiment with it.

As it had been the case with Lepeletier's and Marat's funerals, with Revolutionary festivals and with other pantheonizations, David was charged with the mission to organize the ceremony for the transfer of Bara's remains to the Panthéon and the painting of the martyr would be revealed to the public with accompanying banners painted by David's students. The event was scheduled for 28 July 1794, but never took place due to Robespierre's lethal fall from power (Weston 1996, pp.242-243). As a result, David's painting was not reproduced and distributed, and still today, remains the most overlooked of the trilogy of martyrdom. Weston's argument on Robespierre's shaping of Bara's "image" in political discourse reminds us the specific relevance of the painting within David's career, and in relation to the general hypothesis of the present dissertation that David crafted a new visual language combining Rococo and Neoclassicist references (p.242):

> *[…] with an unerring instinct for the rhetoric of both melodrama and* sensibilité*, Robespierre insisted on Bara's tender years, on his sweet and generous nature as a loving son, conjuring up a Greuzian family image of* sensibilité*. However, it lacked any heroic dimension necessary even for a contemporary history painting. Robespierre, therefore, set this filial love alongside patriotic love. […] For Robespierre, Bara had given his life for a principle and all mention of horses and brigands had disappeared to give way to an abstract embodiment of virtue which, through its beauty and affecting qualities, would act as an* exemplum virtutis *for the country's youth and for the unity and regeneration of France.*

These three paintings played a pivotal role in David's aesthetic metamorphosis, arguably even more than his *Salon* works from 1785 to 1789. In Lepeletier, David refashions Hector, but still in Neoclassical appearance. In Marat, he refashions an effect he had employed in Lepeletier. That effect is an effect of contact, a threat of lethal contact. The potential of death in the contact, is figured in Lepeletier as a tension between horizontal and vertical visual elements. In Marat, David focuses on the contact itself, as moment of intensity. The contact in question, the most prominent one at least, is Marat's hand fallen on the ground still holding the pen. In Bara's image, David goes to the extreme and

expands the contact to the whole body, the entire cutaneous envelop of the body. Laying naked, on a background of flickering texture, Bara becomes a figure of *frôlement*.

In Lepeletier's image, David took the first steps in the building of the motif of *frôlement*. Specifically, the blood dripping from the tip of the sword toward the body of the martyr lying below creates a tension, an expectation of contact between the blood and the skin, a reminder of the threat to the integrity of the bodies of the revolutionaries. In my opinion, by the time he was painting Marat's image, David realized the haptic force and the vividness of the visual tension he had created in Lepeletier's. Thus, he continued to explore the elements involved, such as contact or suggestion of contact. Marat's right had lightly brushing the ground of the room is the result of David's focus on the visual force of embodiments of contact. In other words, the motif of *frôlement* takes a more defined shape in Marat's image. By the time he was painting Bara's story, David was fully aware of the representational strategy he had formulated in the previous two paintings. He built the entire composition and narrative of *The Death of Young Bara* upon the motif of *frôlement*, focused on the hands of the young man embracing a cocarde. Therefore, taken as a trilogy, the martyrdom portraits incarnate the constant aesthetic search and transformation in David's oeuvre.

Table 3.3: The four components of hapticity, and motif of *frôlement* in David's trilogy of portraits of Revolutionary martyrdom.

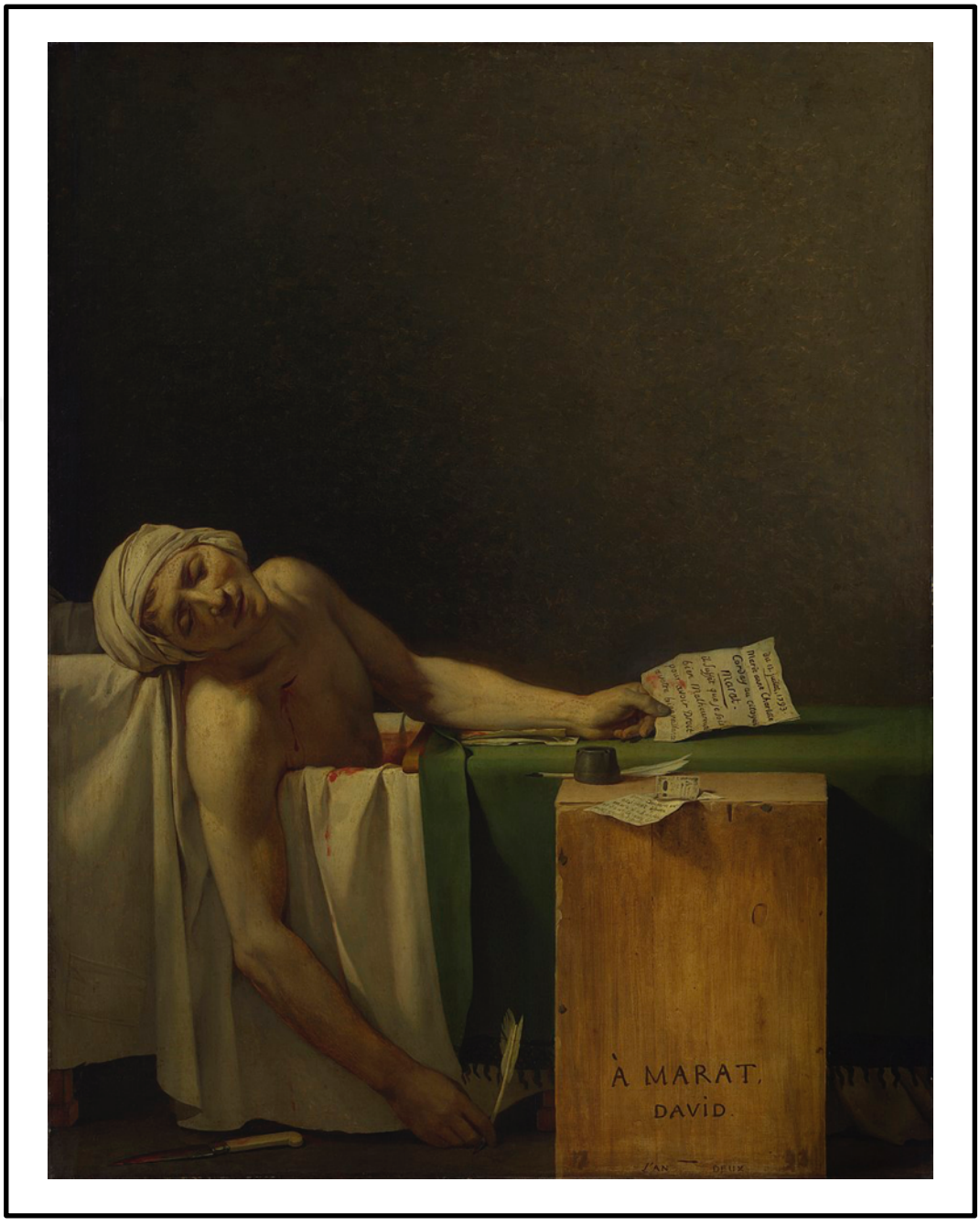
Each of the four haptic effects assessed below participate in the embodiment of the motif of ***frôlement.***			
	Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau on his deathbed (1793)	*Marat taking his last breath (1793)*	*The death of young Bara (1794)*
Kinesthetic	The sword hanging from a thread of hair, threatening to pierce through the body of the protagonist.	The head and the hands of Marat which have lost strength and fell down lifelessly.	Bara's lower body, especially legs, are lying lifeless as the position of the knees indicate. His left arm is invisible.
Vestibular	The allusion of the painted composition to the actual exhibition of Lepeletier's body on a pedestal during his funerals.	The undefined background, the bathtub and the body on the middle ground, and the improvised wooden tombstone on the foreground recall the relief friezes from which David had sketched in Rome, but they form, also, a spatial depth thanks to the foreshortened paper standing on the edge of the wooden box.	The undefined background at once isolates the body of the dying boy from realistic space (putting it in an abstract void) and swathes it firmly.
Visceral	The piercing of the paper by the sword, recalling the piercing of Lepeletier's actual body in the murder and serving as a metaphor of the cutting through of the "tyrant"s head by the revolutionaries.	Marat's wound and the pool of blood in the bathtub.	The hair and the neck of the protagonist.
Tactile	The idealized (young, beautiful and muscular) nude body of the protagonist and the drapery details that are reminiscent of David's Neoclassical paintings.	The variety of material layers in the painting (water, skin, wood, paper, drapes)	In a similar strategy to Lepeletier's, Bara's body is idealized, in more than way: Bara is a sexless, ageless body just in-between life and death.

Figure 3.27: Tardieu, P.-A. (1793) *Lepeletier on his deathbed* [Engraving], after Desvosges' drawing from David's original. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.



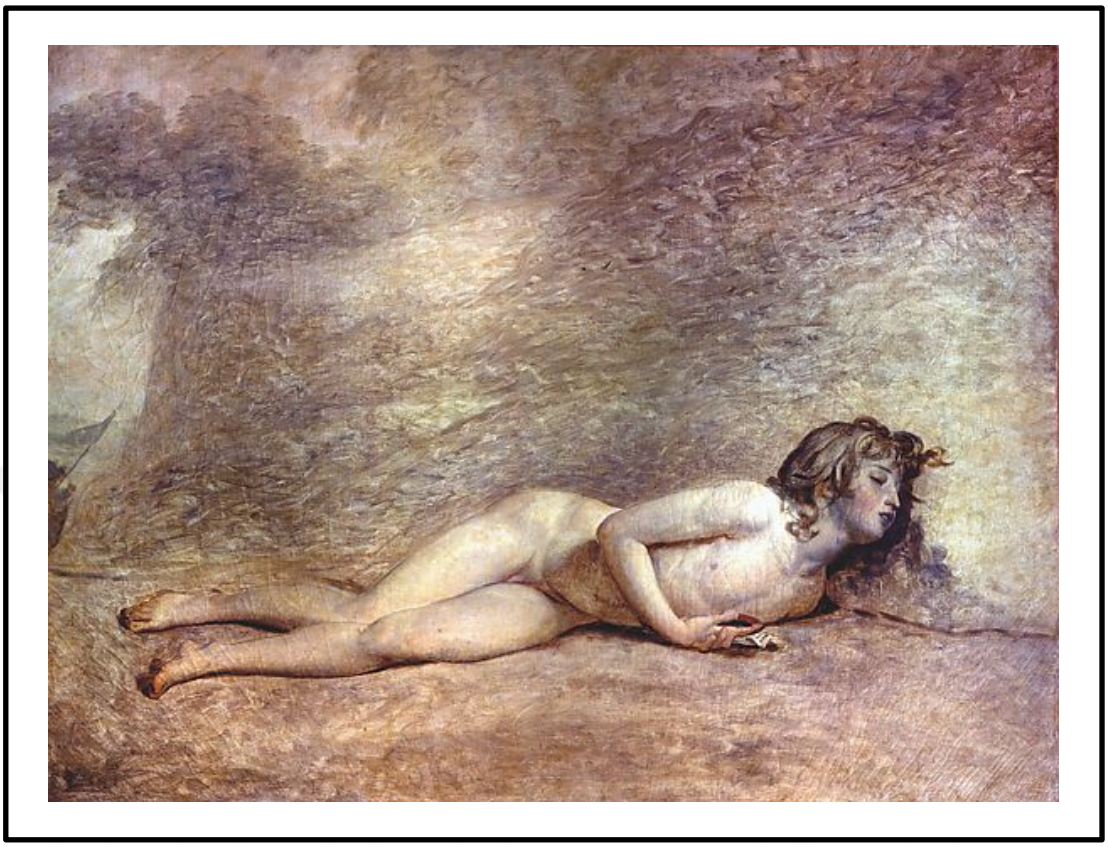
Source: MSU, Phylis Floyd, https://msu.edu/course/ha/445/david2.htm

Figure 3.28: David, J-L. (1793) *The Death of Marat* [Oil on canvas]. Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.



Source: Sanata Başla, https://www.sanatabasla.com/2013/12/04/maratnin-olumu-the-death-of-marat-david/

Figure 3.29: David, J-L. (1793) *The death of young Bara* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



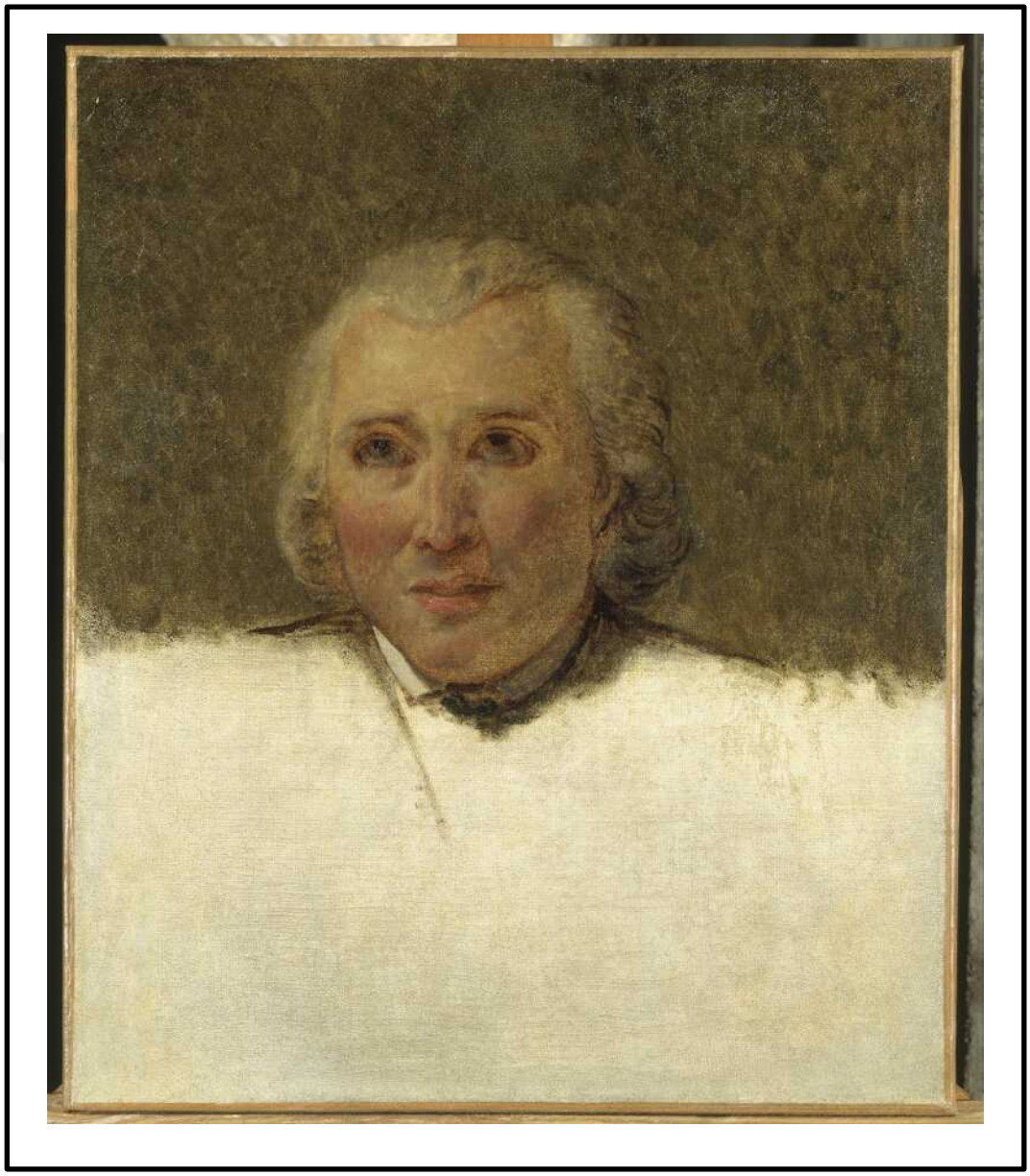
Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/656445

Figure 3.30: David, J-L. (1791-2) *Portrait of Madame de Pastoret and her son* [Oil on canvas]. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.



Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/680565

Figure 3.31: David, J-L. (1791-2) *Portrait study of Abbé Grégoire* [Oil on canvas]. Musée de Besançon.



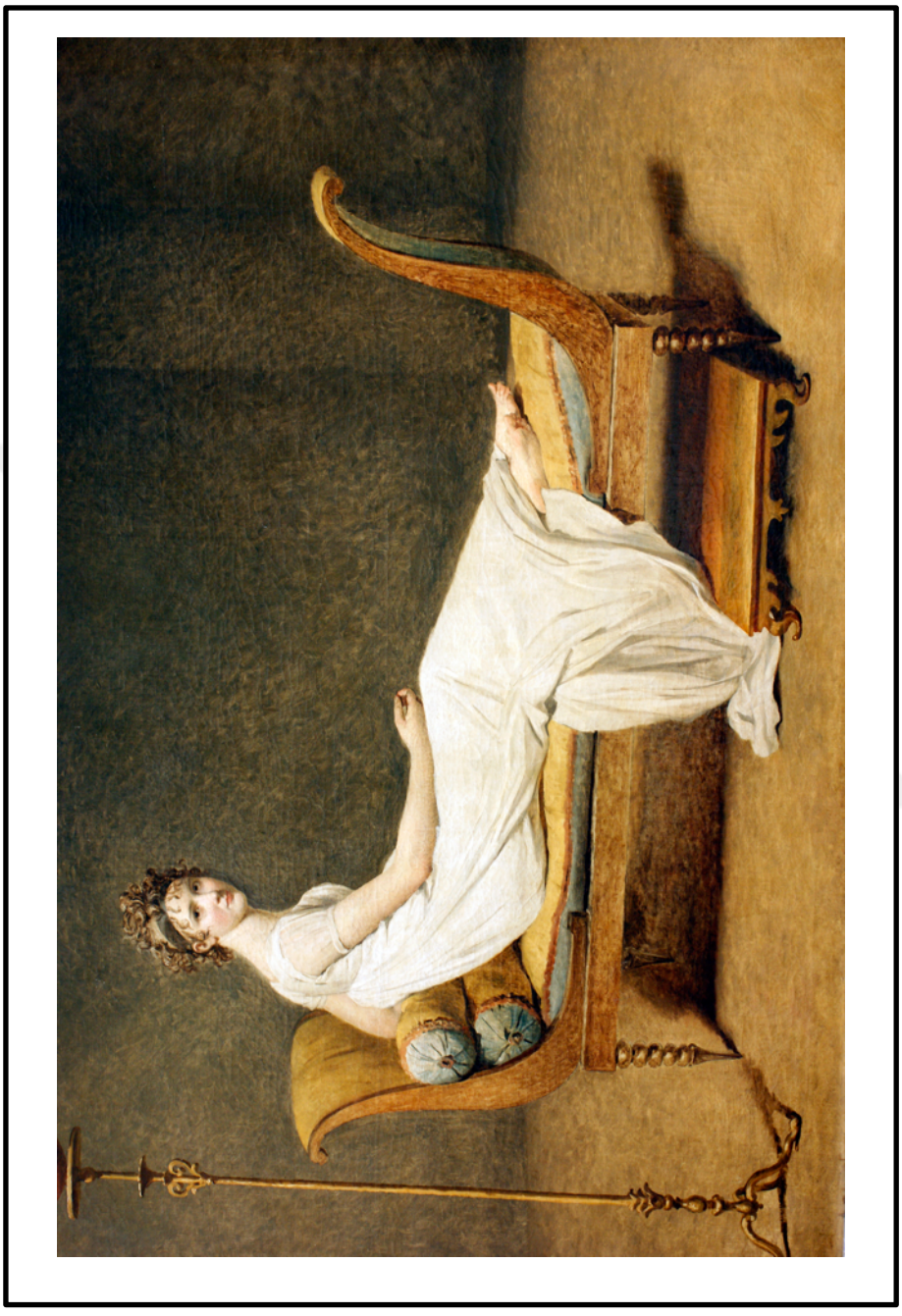
Source: Le Musée de Besançon, http://memoirevive.besancon.fr/ark:/48565/a011485786957OX6StT/1/1

Figure 3.32: David, J-L. (1795). *Portrait de Catherine-Marie-Jeanne Tallard,* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



*Source:*Musée du Louvre, http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=18870

Figure 3.33: David, J-L. (1800). *Portrait of Juliette Récamier* [Oil on canvas]. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Source: Musée du Louvre, http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=22503&langue=fr

4. CONCLUSION

To remember Anita Brookner's breathtaking observation, "[..] David was born an Epicurean and became a Stoic" (1987, p.37). It would be even more precise to say that David became a Stoic *as well*. As an extremely sensitive character and a politically engaged professional, David rapidly became an accomplished artist capable of combining the multisensory and discursive dimensions of visual representation within a stylistic language of his own. His involvement in the history of the French Revolution is, exactly, what proves that the Epicurean in David did not simply dissolve, but experienced a realization of the sensory charge of life and death beyond sensuality and pleasure. As his emotional attachment to singular individuals (Drouais, Robespierre, Napoléon), and aversion to institutions (the Academy, the King) defined the ups and downs of his professional career, David's visual grammar became more invested in communicating meaning through visible forms and visual motifs imbued with a haptic *pathos*. David's full investment with the haptic took shape during his membership of the Convention, on Robespierre's side, because the new visual language that the Jacobins were after required a renewal of the old institutional conventions of representation. The specific moment when the Epicurean and the Stoic came to a procreative cohabitation in David's personality was marked by *The Death of Marat*.

David's signature style was the fruit of a two-fold origin. On the one hand, he was an admirer of the sensual movement of colors in Boucher and a keen observer of Greuze's juggling of morality and sensibility with sensuality. On the other hand, he was a member of a new generation of students whom the Academy wished to inculcate with a renewed taste for History painting and for the antique in order to bring French arts back to reason from their Rococo excesses. This two-fold foundation of David's visual grammar meant that the painter was, as it were, aesthetically coerced to reconcile the materiality of the painted image and its effects on the body with the independent rationality inside the represented scene as perceived by the beholder's eyes and mind. To remember Norman Bryson's point, David began by thinking in terms of surfaces and colors, and evolved toward a construction of the image as a web of visualities, of the relationships between

the eyelines of the figures inside the image and those of the beholders outside. What allowed David to create successful results in this evolved individual style was, as Dorothy Johnson argued, an "gestural revolution": the assertation of gesture as the primary narrative agent beyond the Lebrunesque doctrine of facial expressions. In other words, once his cataracts were removed by the first-hand experience of the past and present in Italy, David realized the extend of the visceral and kinesthetic forces already present in the Academy's cultic approach to anatomy, as well as the force emanating from the vestibular suggestions of Renaissance perspective and Baroque vividness. From that moment onward, he aimed to reconcile the fact that the painted image is a compound of layers with the requirement that the perceived image gains depth and vividness in the mind of the spectator.

David's transformation from a painter thinking in terms of surfaces to one who kept exploring a multidimensional grammar for representation happened in two crucial stages. The first stage was the aftermath of his sojourn in Rome. From Andromache to Brutus, arguably even in Belisarius,[24] David employs a juxtaposition of frieze-like spatial continuity, by creating clear contrasts between horizontal and vertical axes and by giving vividness to the figures on the foreground through gesture and *modelé*. The second stage of transformation took place during his days as a *Jacobin* member of the Convention. As an imminent result of the Republican regime, the jury (or, *public*) for which the painter had to produce convincing works changed. Thus, the aesthetic grammar of this member of French Neoclassicism had to change too. The trilogy of the portraits of Revolutionary (Jacobin) martyrs carry the key elements of this aesthetic transformation. *The Oath of the Horatii, The death of Socrates*, and *Brutus* are the art historical trinity of Davidian scholarship and, as a result, have studied in much more detail than the martyrdom portraits have been as a trilogy. Therefore, this second stage, in which the gestural evolved toward the haptic, had to be addressed in more detail and from a multisensory perspective.

The emergence of multisensory awareness in the analysis of visual artworks is simultaneous with the emergence of the earliest examples of art criticism, as exemplified by Plato's sensitivity to the ethical implications of *mimesis* and Pliny's attention to

[24] *Belisarius receiving alms* is equally frieze-like, but we, the beholders, see the frieze from the side.

anecdotes on the perception of artworks. However, a methodological , theoretical and interdisciplinary investment in the effective analysis of the supra-visual in visual arts started to take shape only in late nineteenth-century with the works of Alois Riegl and Aby Warburg, and it became prominent in late twentieth century as a result of the successive turns in Humanities. Still, the specific angle of inquiry of haptic effects in painting has not been exhausted yet. Comprehensive studies on the presence of sensory elements in visual arts, such as François Quiviger's and C.M. Woolgar, and Ewa Lajer-Burcharth's recent work *The Painter's Touch* point at the relevance and actuality of the sensory and haptic questions in history of art. One such question is how to build a new set of terms and methods for analyzing a corpus of non-textual (even, dis-textual) aspects that are characteristic of the aesthetic experience in what is, inescapably, a text-based occupation. The fundamental step in proposing a solution to this difficult question should be, as I argued in this dissertation, to recognize that the visual representation has another dimension in addition to the usual analytical pairs of form/content, visual/narrative, Form/Meaning. This liminal perceptual dimension, that I proposed to call *the sensate*, is where visual embodiments of sensory instances (such as kisses, caresses, wounds), specifically designed by the artist to anchor the image in beholder's attention and memory, start to blossom.

It is difficult to outline such an ethereal part of our aesthetic experience of an artwork in a convincing and academic manner, even in the relatively focused area of haptics. To propose an overall strategy with feet on firmer ground, I chose to look at four particular directions in haptic perception: kinesthetic, vestibular, visceral and tactile. In other words, I proposed to study the representation of movement, space, proprioception and texture in David's works with a specific focus on his works up to his imprisonment in 1794. This timeline required a brief observation of the embodied nature of the institutional and popular visual representation. Thus, in the main part of the thesis, I briefly discussed the narrative values attributed to bodies from different classes and eras before and during the French Revolution. The juxtaposition of institutional and popular positions demonstrated that David's challenge, at the moment of creating a Jacobin visual language of martyrdom, the challenge at David's hands was to transfer the narrative power of the ideal bodies shaped by the old visual and political regime to the identifiable and mortal bodies

of the new one. As I outlined the evolution of the sensory aspect of David's style from his Prix de Rome entries to his first successes in the biannual *Salons*, I tried to demonstrate that David realized this aesthetic transfer by concentrating on the human body's "contact" with surfaces and creating a haptic motif that I proposed to call *frôlement*. This Davidian motif was efficient in communicating, to the earliest beholders of the paintings in question, the in-between-ness of the model citizen (the martyr) between material and immaterial presence, life and death, "virtuous" citizens and "tyrannical" forces.

As all research does, this dissertation has a number of missing pieces. First and foremost, to give more flesh to the argument of a specifically haptic quest, a more detailed look into contemporary testimonies and David's own words is necessary. While I tried to introduce such references to the present thesis, I believe a thorough analysis of Convention members' speeches on the questions of visual representation would deepen our understanding of David's motivations behind his aesthetic choices in the martyrdom portraits. Antoine de Baecque, Dorinda Outrram and Lynn Hunt already published seminal studies on the Republic's struggle with embodied symbols, and provided the point of departure for a study on the short-lived first Republic's struggle to create a proper national and popular language of visual arts. Another aspect that the present thesis leaves out is David's simultaneously produced corpus of portrait works. An analysis of this branch of David's work would be relevant to any arguments on the trilogy of martyrdom, because of the intermediary position of the portrayal of martyrdom between portraiture and History painting in their respective strict senses. However, at the moment of choosing the main line of inquiry of the thesis, I opted for the political and popular context of the culture of embodiment in late eighteenth-century France.

There are, at least, three possible directions in which this research could expand. The first direction is, rather obviously, following the trail of haptic pathos in David's post-imprisonment works. While his portrait works from 1795 to 1800 definitely have to be part of such an expansion, there is, also, the pressing issue of the surprising rhythm of the change in David's individual style from the academic gestural economy of *The Intervention of the Sabines Women*, to the romanticizing propaganda of *Napoléon crossing the Alps* and, finally, to his new expedition to Greek origins in his final years.

Especially in those Greek-inspired canvases, known as "Anacreonic paintings" (Fried 2014, p.18). As it is observable in the example of *The Anger of Achilles* in these later works David continues to explore the haptics of a painted image by extending the areas of contact between the protagonists, by almost pasting them one on top of the other. Therefore, an expansion of the analysis of the sensate in the David's post-Revolutionary career could points us toward additional haptic motifs or effects, and consequently, prove the continuity of David's interest in the intermodal, multisensory dynamics of visual representation.

The second direction this research could take is the study of haptic strategies in the works of David's contemporaries. Originating in the re-actualized value of antique artworks and narratives, and flourishing with the explosion of the constitutionalist feeling, haptic effects were, from 1789 to 1799, an inevitable part of the new discursive texture of France. As Descarsin's *Portrait of National guardsman and his wife* and *Guérin's Return of Marcus Sextus* demonstrated, visualizations of touch had become a powerful way of embodying the complexity and turmoil of the collective and individual emotional states while, at the same time, trying to suppress tacitly any danger lethal controversy that verbal specificity could cause in the future. To put it more bluntly, embodied representations of tactile instances and haptic phenomena presented a lesser risk of discursive obsolescence and political iconoclasm. The fate of David's Lepeletier, destroyed by none other than the royalist daughter of the martyr, shows that perhaps the only strategic fault in David's first martyrdom portrait was the clarity of its political side. In the following two canvases of what was to become a trilogy of martyrdom, David eliminated specific references. The list of *Girondin* counter-revolutionaries with which Corday had tempted Marat, so that he would let her in, is replaced by a melodramatic message in the official image. Even more extremely, in Bara is stripped naked to his androgynous childish innocence, eliminating any connection that can incurred from his uniform.

Finally, the third direction I would like to propose is the study of the impact that David's sensory reform in the realm of painting had in the works of the next generation, especially in the works of his student Ingres. In my opinion, David's rethinking of the sensory, or as I called it, *the sensate* dimension of visual representation beyond its ability to inspire

sensual pleasure, was crucial in Ingres' obsession with line and contour. Just as T.J. Clark argues that Modern art started long before late nineteenth century, with David's *The Death of Marat,* I would like to argue that David's explorations in the haptic effects of Form were fundamental in the modern stage of the history of abstraction. In my opinion, as an artist who created different ways of combining the Epicurean and the Stoic ways throughout his professional career, Jacques-Louis David has still much to offer for research in sensory art history.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Table 1: An integrated chronology of Jacques-Louis David's life and career up to his imprisonment in 1795, and the first five years of the French Revolution.

1748	David is born 30 August.
1764	Decides to abandon his studies of architecture and to become a painter. Meets Boucher, who refers him to Vien.
1770 - 4	Enters the *Prix de Rome* competition four years in a row. Finally wins first prize in 1774 with *Antiochus and Stratonice*.
1775	David departs for Rome, accompanied by Vien who becomes the Director of the Academy in Rome.
1779	David travels to Naples, where he spends a month in the company of Quatremère de Quincy. Vien gives to David the job of painting *Saint Roch*, which will be exhibited in 1781 *Salon*.
1781	David returns to Paris in August, exhibits *Belisarius* in the *Salon* and becomes a candidate to the Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Travels to Flanders and studies Flemish artists.
1783	Becomes full member of the Academy as a History painter with *Andromache mourning Hector*.
1784-5	David's Second journey to Rome where he paints and exhibits *The Oath of the Horatii*, which becomes a great success.
1787	David's *The Death of Socrates* exhibited in the *Salon*.
1789	5 May, Louis XVI opens the *Etats-Généraux* in Versailles to avoid the bankruptcy of the French Kingdom. 20 June, deputies of the third-state, the poorest and most numerous social class, gather in protest of King's closure of the *Etats-Généraux* and declare themselves as the National Assembly at the Tennis Court. 14 July, the storming of the Bastille. 5-6 August, Parisian women march to Versailles demanding bread and the moving of the court to Paris. David's *Brutus* is exhibited in the *Salon* during August and September.
1790	28 June, the Jacobin group commissions David a commemorative painting of the Tennis Court Oath.

1791	20-21 June, the King and the Queen try to escape Paris to gather counter-revolutionary forces, but are caught in Varennes and brought back to Paris.
1791	In September, France becomes a constitutional monarchy.
1792	25 April, first use of the Guillotine 10 August, Louis XVI is imprisoned. 17 September, David becomes a deputy in the Convention. 21 September, the declaration of the Republic and the foundation of *La Convention Nationale.* 13 October, David becomes a member of the *Comité d'instruction publique*.
1793	20 January, the Convention decides to execute the King. The same night, Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau is murdered by a royalist. 21 January, Louis XVI executed. **29 March, David presents the painting of Lepeletier to the Convention.** 13 July, Marat murdered by Charlotte Corday. 17 July, Charlotte Corday is executed. 8 August, David proposes the abolition of all academies. 10 August, David is the organizer of the 'Festival of Unity' 17 September, Declaration of *La Terreur*. 16 October, Marie-Antoinette executed, David sketches a profile of the Queen on her way to the guillotine. The same day, David's paintings of Lepeletier and Marat are exhibited to the public in the gardens of the Louvre. 24 October, the new Republican calendar is adopted, it starts, retrospectively, with the declaration of the Republic as day 1 of the new era. **15 November, David presents the painting of Marat to the Convention.**
1794	16 March, David and his wife, a royalist, get divorced. In May, the Committee of Public Safety commissions David for the design of a national costume. 8 June, David is the organizer of Robespierre's 'Festival of the Supreme Being'. 26 July, David promises to accompany Robespierre to death. 28 July, Robespierre and his followers are executed. David is imprisoned.

Sources: Adapted from Schnapper & Sérullaz, 1989, and Faroult, 2004.

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Education

Degree	Area	University	Graduation Year
Undergraduate	Communication Studies	Université Galatasaray	2008
Master's	History of Art	Universitat de Barcelona	2011

Published Articles

- *"Cubist Memories, Sensory Cityscapes: Representations of the Urban in Apollinaire's* Alcools*"* **Oxford French Studies Bulletin (Summer 2016) 37 (139): 33-39**

Conference Presentations

- *"The Touch of Death: Jacques-Louis David's Portraits of Revolutionary Martyrs"* **The Image Research Network, 7th International Conference, Venice International University, 31 Ekim-1 Kasım 2017.**
- *"The Puppet and the Sentient: Body and Senses in the Works of Companyia Jordi Bertràn."* **Dislocations: The Body in Catalan Culture Conference, University College Cork, September 2013.**
- *"From Cinesthesia to Kinesthesia: The Spatial Sense of Abstract Film."* **XIV. International Cinema and Media Studies Conference in Transylvania: The Cinema of Sensations, May 2012.**
- *"Visual Music in Early Abstract Cinema as a Reading and Writing of Perception's Multi-sensoriality."* **43rd Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association, September 2011. (Published in the proceedings book)**

Undergraduate Teaching Experience

Must Courses

- POV2316 Aesthetics
- POV3213 History of Camera Images I
- POV4111 – POV4112 Graduation Project I & II
- VCD1112 Art, Culture and Society

Elective Courses

- POV3333 Icons and Symbols
- POV4337 Picture Theory
- POV4411 Topics in History of Art
- GEP0113 European Art

Other Academic Activities

- 2018, October 30th: IKSV Design Biennial, Academy Days, Panel Moderator to Cemal Erez & Onur Can Çaylı, on the theme of "Tradition and Future in Design and Animation Education"
- 2009, November to December: CePSE (La Central de Préstec i Serveis Especials), Public Libraries of Catalonia, Cataloguing of the collection of Turkish Literature.

Magazine Articles and Translations

- "Resim bizi içine doğru çektiğinde: Stendhal sendromu ve sinestezya*"* **Kitap-lık (November-December 2014) 176: 29-32**
- *Yeni Başlayanlar İçin Tiyatro Tarihi***, Habitus, 2012 (Translated from Spanish to Turkish)**

Administrative

- Faculty of Communication, Academic Exchange Coordinator for Incoming and Outgoing Erasmus and World Exchange Students, responsible for Learning Agreements and Course Transfers (September 2014 to November 2018)

Languages

- English - Advanced: YDS, April 2019 , 98.75/100
- French - Advanced: Lycée Saint-Joseph & Université Galatasaray
- Spanish - Advanced: DELE Superior, November 2010, 92/100
- Catalan - Upper Intermediate: C2 Certificate, June 2011, 67/100