

French Art of the Present in Hitler's Berlin

Michèle C. Cone

On June 5, 1937, an exhibition of French modern art, *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart* (French Art of the Present), opened at the Preussische Akademie der Künste in Berlin.¹ It featured works by, among others, Henri Matisse, Maurice de Vlaminck, Georges Braque, and Fernand Léger—painters officially designated “degenerate” by the Nazis. Hermann Göring attended the opening of the show, and Adolf Hitler visited it in the company of the French ambassador to Germany, André François-Poncet.

On the surface, such an event, cosponsored by the French and German governments, appears astonishing. The Preussische Akademie der Künste, responding to Nazi directives, had recently expelled its “degenerate” members (including Ernst Barlach, Otto Dix, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Oskar Kokoschka). That same year the Nazis’ notorious exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) opened in Munich. And the artists so courteously received by Nazi officials in Berlin in 1937 had had their works removed from the German museums that owned them, starting in 1934.²

On closer examination, the apparent contradictions of the exhibition disappear. Documentation shows that each government used the occasion of an outwardly cordial gesture to further its own propagandistic ends. The French ultimately hoped to interest Germans in visiting the costly *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques* scheduled in Paris for the spring and summer of 1937 (it opened May 24, 1937), while presenting a “healthy” all-French image to their frightening neighbor. The Germans sought a quid pro quo—an exhibition of German sculpture to be held in the prestigious venue of the Jeu de Paume—as well as to demonstrate to their populace the harmlessness of the French as potential foes and, by contrast, the vigor of the German national racial tradition. *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart* thus contributes a new perspective on the Socialist government of Léon Blum and sheds new light on the Nazi reception of non-German modern art.³

French officials viewed the exhibition as a testing ground for *rayonnement culturel*, or cultural radiance, the French answer to the aggressive propaganda tactics that totalitarian regimes, particularly Nazi Germany, were using so successfully as a weapon for their cause.⁴ “For its defense, a country cannot depend exclusively on an army. Its rays can shine abroad through the press, the radio, the word, or natural beauty,” reads a report by the *député* Ernest Pezet to the French Chambre des Députés dated March 28, 1935.⁵ During the rule of the Popular Front, the Socialist government led by Léon Blum from May 1936 to June 1937, the “defense and illustration” of French culture became a focus of the government’s attention. *Rayonnement culturel*, with its connotations of spiritual enlightenment, remains one of the legacies of the Popular Front to this day.

Jean Zay, French minister for national education in the Blum government and the moving force behind *rayonnement culturel*, conceded the political dimension behind it:

In the realm of what is called “propaganda”—a word to be proscribed—the Ministry for National Education, with the *Action Artistique*, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs . . . extensive theatrical tours . . . exhibitions of French art . . . the shipping of books to universities in foreign capitals, etc. . . . Many other decisions were taken, whose character might seem purely technical, and yet had a political dimension.⁶

In several respects, *rayonnement culturel* was a new term for an old idea, for there had always been a cultural dimension to colonialism. What gave the concept a new urgency was the context. In 1937, the European democracies suffered from economic depression, high unemployment, and political turmoil, their political values threatened by competing forms of government—Communism, Fascism, Nazism. All these factors placed them on the defensive. Thus, for France, at least in theory, the political aims of *rayonnement culturel* were caught up in defending democracy against totalitarianism, using democracy’s most vital symbol, freedom of expression in art and literature.

The exhibition in Berlin, however, presented a rather different view of French art. In hindsight, *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart* strikes us as cautious and conservative (see App. below). It managed to avoid all the signs of what the Nazis termed decadence: no distortion, no abstraction, no figures inspired by African statuary. The human form was idealized in both the painted portraits on view, such as *Portrait of a Blond Woman* by André Derain and *Portrait of Mme Othon Friesz* by Othon Friesz (Fig. 1), and the figurative sculpture by Aristide Maillol and Charles Despiau (Fig. 2). Many of the landscapes, in styles ranging from Impressionism to naive, depicted regions of France: *The Seine near Champagne* by Henri Verge-Sarrat, *View of Avignon* by André Planson, *Brittany Landscape* and *Basque Landscape* by Roland Oudot, *Snow in the Doubs* by Jules Zingg.

Genre scenes included upper-class pastimes (*Golf at St. Tropez* by André Dunoyer de Segonzac, *Regatta* by Raoul Dufy), work and leisure activities (*Fair [Brittany]* by Lucien Simon [Fig. 3], *Camping* by Gaston Balande), and family life, including an example by Édouard Vuillard. In this last group, *Departure* by Roger Chapelain-Midy (Fig. 7) and *Children’s Vespers Bread* by Maurice Asselin (Fig. 8) could easily have found a place in an exhibition of Nazi-approved art, alluding respectively to duty to the homeland and duty to the family.

A drawing by Bernard Naudin showing a stern couple and their teenage daughter dressed in Victorian clothes for a visit to an art exhibition was used for the cover of the catalogue



1 Othon Friesz, *Portrait of Mme Othon Friesz*. Location unknown (first reproduced in *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, exh. cat., 1937; photo: Frick Art Reference Library, New York)

(Fig. 4).⁷ Finally, a few allegorical paintings were shown, including *Leda* by Marie Laurencin, *Judgment of Paris* by Raymond Brechenmacher, and *Adam and Eve* by Georges Desvallières.

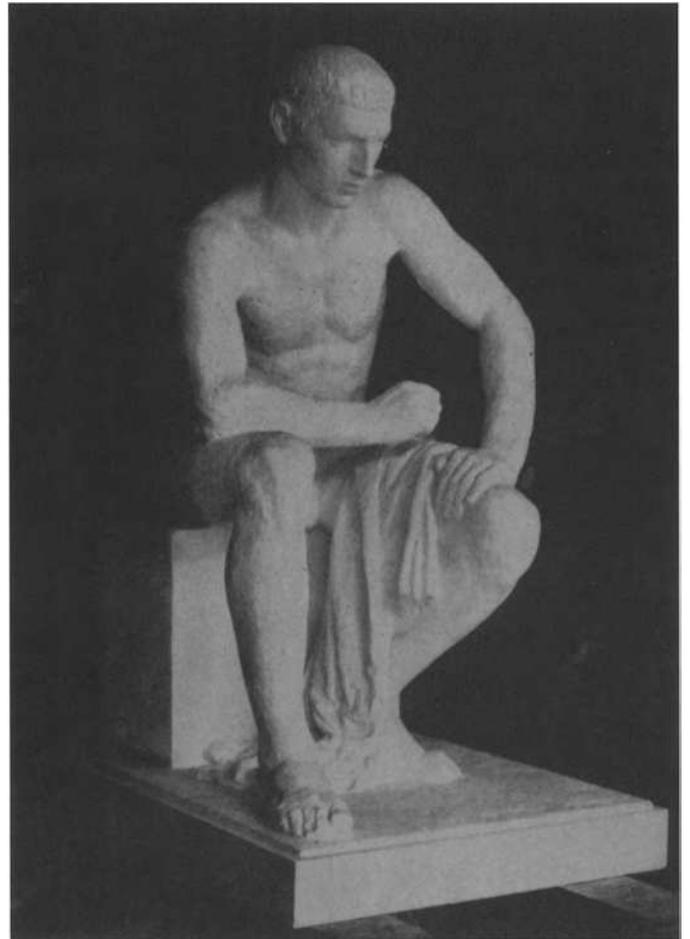
Although the exhibition displayed works by many modernists once associated with the French avant-garde, particularly the Fauves, a comparison with a list of artists who participated in the exhibition *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant 1895–1937* held in Paris in 1937, also sponsored by the French state, reveals that many more controversial artists had been left out. The modernists included in the Berlin show had come to prominence at the beginning of the century, and their styles were familiar. The works by these artists placed on view in Berlin seemed to have been chosen for their inoffensiveness. Matisse was represented by three paintings (Fig. 5), including his 1914 *Branch of Lilacs* (Fig. 9), Vlaminck by three paintings, including the landscape *Huts* (Fig. 6). There were three works by Charles Camoin, three by Henri Manguin, three by Albert Marquet, three by Derain, three by Dufy, five by Dunoyer de Segonzac, two untitled drawings by Léger, and *Mandolin and Vase* by Braque.

In light of the reputation of the Popular Front as the first French government to demonstrate serious interest in helping the cause of avant-garde art, and of Léon Blum's personal affinity for the work of Robert and Sonia Delaunay, a bolder selection might have been expected. However, the involvement of François-Poncet helps to explain the visual conservatism of the works on display in the Berlin exhibition. A close reading of his correspondence makes it clear that he had a different conception in mind for *rayonnement culturel* than Blum's ambition to defend and illustrate art from France in its "inclusiveness [*sa globalité*]" and "continuity."⁸ He was using it to promote the image of a "healthy" art. With their emphasis on leisure activities for different social groups—regattas, golf, camping, going to art exhibitions—on a daily life oriented toward healthy family values, and on a figurative style understandable by all, the selected works illustrated values dear to Socialist governments rather than articulating freedom of expression under the Popular Front.

The presentation of the artists in the catalogue, however, suggests a more complex agenda than does the visual text alone, and also answers other questions raised by the Berlin

show. On several points, the exhibition catalogue was very specific on details while, on one point, it remained pointedly silent. Next to Pierre Bonnard's name in the catalogue, for example, was the following notice: "Born in 1867, in Fontenay-aux-Roses. Decorative paintings for the Theatre of the New Palais du Trocadéro at the International Exhibition 1937."⁹ Yves Brayer was presented as a recent recipient of the Prix de Rome working in the Pavillon Thermal; Alfred Courmes is described as working in the "Pavillon des Manufactures de Sèvres" (probably the display for la Manufacture de Sèvres in the Pavillon de la Céramique); Raoul Dufy as working for the Palais de l'Électricité; Jean Aujame, Georges d'Espagnat, Marcel Gromaire, André Lhote, and Maurice-Georges Poncelet were said to be working in the Palais de la Découverte; Pierre Ladureau in the Pavillon du Centre Régional des Flandres; Adrienne Jouclard and Henri Verge-Sarrat in the Pavillon de l'Enseignement. The special mention of the involvement of a number of the artists in the decoration of public buildings in Paris raises the possibility that an economic agenda—to sell the artists' experience in the adornment of public buildings to Nazi Germany—accompanied the idealistic agenda of *rayonnement culturel*.¹⁰

The catalogue description also meticulously entered the birthplace of all the artists following their names. Every single one of the artists showed roots in the French soil. No artist not born in France who had made France a permanent home was included. It appears that Jewish artists were not considered French even if they had been born in France. Although making a distinction between foreigner and French-born artist, between Aryan and Jew, was a common practice in France during those years, it did not apply to every official exhibition of modern French art at that time. *Maîtres de l'Art*



2 Charles Despiau, *Figure for a Monument*. Location unknown (first reproduced in the 1937 catalogue; photo: Frick)



3 Lucien Simon, *Fair (Brittany)*. Location unknown (first reproduced in the 1937 catalogue; photo: Frick)



4 Cover for *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, exh. cat., New York, Frick Art Reference Library

Indépendant 1895–1937, an exhibition with a similar agenda organized by Raymond Escholier for the city of Paris at the Petit Palais that same year, included a far wider selection, as can be observed by comparing the list of artists in the two exhibitions (see App. below). Had the French and German coorganizers of the Berlin exhibition reached a consensus not only on aesthetics but also on issues of nationality? Is it a coincidence that the chosen representatives of “French art of the present” could demonstrate “pure” racial lines, from the German point of view?

While the exhibition catalogue for the Berlin exhibition gave precise information on birthplace and public works, it supplied the scantiest of information in the matter of the lenders. Since this was an exhibition co-sponsored by the French government alone, the works that came from French museums were clearly identified.¹¹ The provenance for the other works was either omitted or in specific instances listed as “private.”¹² In at least one case, *Branch of Lilacs* by Matisse, investigation proved that the work had been lent by the artist himself.¹³ Such discretion on the part of lenders, like the continued silence of French historians on the subject of the exhibition, raises the possibility that the show was perceived as politically problematic from its inception.¹⁴

Before the experiment in *rayonnement culturel*, the cultural activities of the French state had essentially fallen to the fine arts department (Direction Générale des Beaux Arts) of the Ministry for National Education. With the new policy, French diplomats working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs became involved, looking for opportunities to display and sell French culture in the countries where they were posted. Thus, it is hardly surprising to find the name of the French ambassador to Nazi Germany as cosponsor of the exhibition.

Until François-Poncet became involved in the Berlin show of modern French art, little is known about his taste in modern art. He had had his portrait painted by an official portraitist of those years, Lucien Jonas. This portrait figured in the Berlin show. Named ambassador to Germany in 1931, two years before the advent of the Third Reich and five years before Léon Blum came into office, François-Poncet kept his post after the arrival of Hitler and during the Socialist government of Blum. He was known as a perennial appeaser.¹⁵

Born in 1887, François-Poncet began his career as the director of an economic research institute. He wrote an essay on the ideas of German youth in 1911 and later published a book on Goethe.¹⁶ Clearly fascinated by German culture, the French ambassador spoke fluent German and had many private conversations with Hitler. “He was the only Western diplomat at Hitler’s court able to understand the Führer without an interpreter’s help and to talk to him and his lieutenants in fluent German,” states the foreword to his memoirs.¹⁷

Writing about his feelings on leaving Nazi Germany for Fascist Rome in 1938, François-Poncet, the instrumental figure behind the defense and illustration of French culture in Nazi Germany, admitted to an obsession for Hitler’s regime: “I was obsessed by this regime, by its methods and language and mystery and police, by its tyranny and pride and songs and parades, by its clicking of heels and hallucinating thud of boots along the streets.”¹⁸

Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart, the exhibition of modern French art associated with the name of François-Poncet, must have been organized in great haste. In an overlooked series of letters to and from the ambassador, it appears that the first discussions of the exhibition occurred at the beginning of 1937.¹⁹ The first mention of an exhibition of modern French art in Nazi Berlin is found in a letter dated Berlin, January 28, 1937, from François-Poncet to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yvon Delbos:

In the course of a recent conversation with M. Goebbels, I had the opportunity to talk to him about the eventual organization in Berlin of an exhibition of modern French painting. The Minister for Propaganda opined that such an event would probably be a success and that it might have as its counterpart an exhibition of German sculpture in Paris. During my last trip to France, I had already broached the subject with the Direction Générale des Beaux Arts, which seemed very favorable to that project.²⁰

Although the letter is ambiguous about who first raised the subject of a show of modern French painting in Berlin, the French ambassador or the German minister of propaganda, it indicates that the French ambassador had broached the

possibility of such a show while in Paris, prior to the oral exchange with Goebbels. It also seems that the Nazi minister for propaganda was quick to seize on the opportunity that such a show might provide, namely, the display of Nazi-approved German sculpture in a Paris museum. From the start, the Nazis attached a quid pro quo with respect to the propaganda efforts of the French government.

The letter to Delbos goes on:

Modern German painting is rather weak. In any event, it is far from capable of presenting an ensemble of names and canvasses of the first rank as ours does. On the other hand, there is in the Berlin public a real taste for painting. An exhibition of modern French art would have a good chance of success. . . . This event would constitute a happy prelude to our 1937 Exhibition [Internationale des Arts et Techniques], and would possibly help to attract the German public there if, as I hope will be the case, an agreement can take place on the question of foreign exchange.²¹

A display of modern French painting in Berlin, the ambassador tells his superior, would accomplish two goals at once. It would enhance the prestige of France by showing Germans the superiority of French art over German art—fulfilling the goal of *rayonnement culturel*—and it would act as publicity for the international exhibition about to open in Paris. From the start, propaganda and publicity goals were considered complementary rather than contradictory.

In the letter to Delbos, the ambassador also raises the issue of a venue for the two shows, proposing the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and the Jeu de Paume in Paris. The choice of the Jeu de Paume for a show of new German sculpture made sense to the extent that that institution was devoted to exhibitions of art of foreign origin. Even so, offering a prestigious venue in Paris to Nazi-approved German sculpture would have meant carrying appeasement policy to the point of legitimating the Nazi approach to art. For that reason, perhaps, the show did not occur in Paris in November 1937 as initially scheduled.²²

As for the Akademie der Künste, it had not had an exhibition of French art since before World War I. Rarely noticed until now is the fact that since 1933, the program of the academy alternated between shows imported from abroad and shows of German artists, suggesting that the exhibition of French art may have been part of a larger cultural project. In 1933, a survey of recent Belgian art had taken place there, followed in 1935 by an exhibition of contemporary art from Poland.²³ In 1936, the academy had held a jubilee celebrating one hundred and fifty years of its existence. Just before the June–July 1937 exhibition of modern French art, there had been a spring exhibition of German painting and sculpture with work by, among others, Georg Kolbe, Gerhard Marcks, and Arno Breker. A show of modern Italian art was scheduled for November 1937. Though the academy appeared a proper place for the display of modern French art, the fact that it had recently expelled its “degenerate” members—Ernst Barlach, Rudolf Belling, Otto Dix, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Oskar

Martinie, Berthe

Geboren 1883 in Nerac (Lot & Garonne). Arbeitet Skulpturen mit Vorliebe in Wachs und in direkter Ausführung im Material. Schuf Basreliefs für den Jardin des Plantes

222. Ruhender Tiger 3.

223. Ruhender Ochse 3.

Matisse, Henri

Geboren 1869 in Cateau (Nord). Schüler von Gustave Moreau. Einer der berühmtesten Maler unserer Zeit von entscheidendem Einfluß

224. Bildnis auf gelbem und grünem Hintergrund 6.

225. Schlafende 6.

226. Lieder 6.

Morin, Jean (genannt Morin-Jean)

Geboren 1877 in Paris. Schüler von Waltner und Delâtre. Arbeitet im Holzschnitt und besonders im Kupferstich. Essayist und Archäologe. Verfasser von Werken über gallische Keramik und über die Kunst der prähistorischen Zeiten

227. Zinnien und Dahlien Stich

228. Blumenvase Stich

Nr. 227 und Nr. 228 im Besitz des Louvre

229. Korb mit Äpfeln Kupferstich

Naudin, Bernard

Geboren 1876 in Châteauroux. Einer der berühmtesten Meister der Zeichnung und der Lithographie

230. Kreuzigung Rad.

231. Entwurf für den Katalogschlag und das Plakat der Ausstellung 3.

Im Besitz des französischen Staates

5 *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, exh. cat., p. 37

Kokoschka—should have given pause to the French ambassador (unless he condoned these artists' dismissal).²⁴

At France's Ministry for National Education, the response to the ambassador's proposal seemed hesitant. Scheduling was a problem and the project needed further analysis.²⁵ It was thought that the show of German sculpture in Paris should be postponed until November 15, “because shows of Catalan, Austrian and American art were scheduled until the autumn season.”²⁶ As for the exhibition of French art in Berlin in the spring, it was approved with some reservations.²⁷ Delbos, the minister for foreign affairs, however, was enthusiastic.²⁸

Usually, this type of exhibition would have been financed by the Association d'Expansion et d'Échanges Artistiques, a private group of dues-paying wealthy art patrons, whose director was also the director of the Service d'Action Artistique à l'Étranger.²⁹ In 1937, the director was Robert Brussel. For reasons that can only be surmised—disagreement among its members?—the association refused to finance the exhibition,³⁰ and the required sum of one hundred thousand francs had to be found elsewhere. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs appropriated the necessary funds.³¹ And, at the end of



6 Maurice de Vlaminck, *Huts*.
(French) State purchase 1937,
formerly Musée du Luxembourg,
Paris (photo: Frick)

March 1937, while an exhibition of new German art, *Grosse Deutscher Kunsthausstellung*, was being prepared for Munich and the French curator Raymond Escholier was working on the exhibition *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant 1895–1937* for Paris, German officials approved the Berlin show of new French art—*Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*—for a June opening.³²

According to the telegram to François-Poncet dated March 4, 1937, a French curator had to be chosen who “would go to Berlin so as to organize with the French Ambassador and the German authorities the conditions under which this event could be prepared to which a sculpture exhibition would answer in Paris.”³³ This phrasing is worth noting not only for its convoluted wording but because of its implications. The French curator would have to defer to the French ambassador and to the German authorities who, in practical terms, could veto any art or artist that did not meet their approval. René Huyghe apparently declined under these conditions.³⁴ The assignment fell to Robert Rey, who in 1941, during the Vichy period, published *La peinture moderne ou l'art sans métier*,³⁵ a text the fascist polemicist Lucien Rebatet would approvingly call in his review for the newspaper *Je Suis Partout* “a sort of fascist treatise on the condition of the Fine Arts.”³⁶

At the time of the French show, Rey had recently been named to the post of inspector general of the fine arts, an important position created by the Blum government to improve the quality and performance of provincial museums. An enigmatic figure of the art world of his day and a friend of Georges Huisman, general director of fine arts in the French government, to whom he dedicated his 1938 monograph on Edouard Manet, he shared with Huisman an abhorrence for abstract art that he formulated at length in his book *Contre l'art abstrait*.³⁷

While in Berlin in April 1937, Rey collected information on the conditions under which the show of modern French painting would take place and transmitted them to the Ministry for National Education, which forwarded it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The date of the opening was confirmed as well as the Akademie der Künste as the locale for the exhibition. Of note is the fact that the catalogue and the poster were going to be paid for and produced by the “German organizers.” Specified in the conditions was the fact that the show would have to take place without the participation of public and private Berlin collections.³⁸ Their holdings in modern French art were in the process of confiscation by the Hitler regime. Having agreed to these conditions, the French organizers were allowed to include a few pieces of sculpture to what was originally to be a show of paintings only.

A telegram dated Berlin, June 5, 1937, from François-Poncet to Delbos described the opening of *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, claiming the presence of Nazi officials as a great triumph for Franco-German relations:

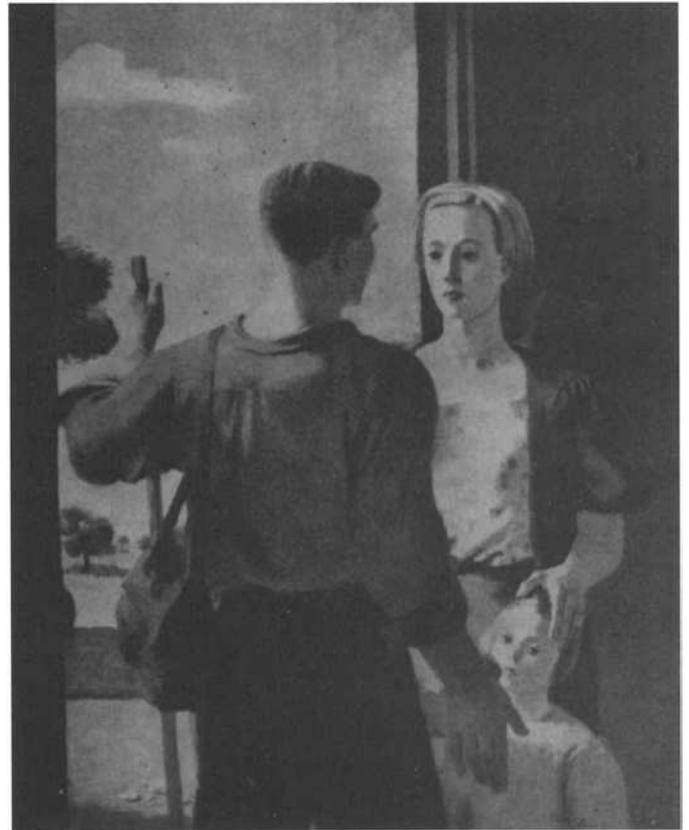
This morning at noon in Berlin, the exhibition of French art was inaugurated in the locale of the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts. The ceremony took place under the best of conditions, and the German authorities had neglected nothing to make it a brilliant event. Göring was there in person, although a recent fall from his horse obliges him to use a cane. He was accompanied by M. von Neurath, M. Schacht, and the Minister for Public Instruction, M. Rust. . . . A large crowd of guests filled the rooms. Speeches were made by the President of the Academy, Prof. Schumann, by me, and by Minister Rust. The latter spoke in very flattering terms about our country and its art, and

declared himself very happy about this event. The Academy offered a lunch in honor of the French curator. . . .³⁹

Three days after the opening of *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, François-Poncet wrote again to Delbos. In this very long letter, he first cautioned Delbos that expectations should not be too high: "One should not have too many illusions on the scope of this event. It will not change much in the atmosphere of the relations between France and Germany. They are dominated by problems that transcend cultural events." Then he explained the dual goals that he hoped the exhibition would achieve. On the one hand, he said, "It will have shown to the Germans that it is false to represent France as enclosed in an insurmountable antipathy vis-à-vis Germany, in an attitude of wall-like negation and aversion reaching down to hatred. It has, on the contrary, fully revealed the feelings of humanity and understanding that are ours." At the same time, he claims, "It is also an opportunity to show to some Germans whose opinions are still wavering, that there is a way to conceive of life other than that honored in the Third Reich."⁴⁰

In reality, the goals of turning Germans who were still hesitant about Nazism toward democracy—*rayonnement culturel* in action—and improving relations with a country whose every propaganda move was aimed at converting Germans into full-fledged Nazis were mutually incompatible. One of the goals of the Berlin exhibition had to eclipse the other. The next sentence of the ambassador's letter gives away his priority: "It [the exhibition] will have made them [the Germans] feel our presence; it will have reminded them of the existence of a great neighbor [France] . . . a neighbor whose face has been wrongly depicted [as hostile] by tendentious [Nazi] press campaigns, and one whose culture and whose art are neither decadent nor in regression." He would deem the Berlin exhibition of French art a success not for turning hesitant Germans toward freedom of expression but for representing France as a friendly neighbor to Nazi Germany, one that echoes Nazi sentiment on decadence in modern culture and shares with Nazi Germany a healthy artistic culture that should *not* be perceived as decadent or in regression.

While the French ambassador reveals his agenda in this long informative letter to Delbos, his analysis of the German reception of the exhibition in the same letter points to another major puzzle of the Berlin exhibition, the motivation of the host country in accepting the presence of art it had officially attacked. Although the reception of the show was overwhelmingly positive, François-Poncet told Delbos, he noticed a certain reticence in *Angriff*, the party's official voice. "Visibly, they wish to avoid giving the Party militants the impression that they have fallen into the guilty errors of the Weimarian epoch when . . . admiration for French art was dogma."⁴¹ The speeches of German officials at the opening were also very courteous, he wrote, although, "some revealed the desire to justify in the eyes of public opinion the organization of an event that is so sharply in contrast with the ultraprotectionist tendencies of the regime." He then reports the remarks of Minister Bernhard Rust, who claimed that the Third Reich had "concentrated on eliminating the nefarious influence of a decadent and sick art that had exerted itself in



7 Roger Chapelain-Midy, *Departure*. Location unknown (first reproduced in the 1937 catalogue; photo: Frick)

Germany before the arrival in power of Chancellor Hitler" but "remains perfectly accessible to the artistic beauties and to the culture of other countries," insofar—and this was the obvious, though unstated condition—as they were free of what German officials considered decadence and sickness.

The most popular work in the show, according to François-Poncet, was Roger Chapelain-Midy's *Departure* (Fig. 7), which, he said, was reproduced in all the illustrated newspapers of Berlin. *Departure* showed in the foreground a young man, satchel on his shoulder and walking stick in hand, saying farewell to wife and child, the brave threesome standing by a door that frames the view of a garden. Although the destination of the departing figure is unknown, the painting can be interpreted as pointing to the necessary division of tasks between the father, whose duty is to leave home, perhaps to go to war, and the mother, who must stay behind to take care of the family.⁴² The ambassador named Vlaminck, Marie Laurencin, Othon Friesz, Vuillard, and Ker-Xavier Roussel among other favorites. Aristide Maillol, the ambassador said, was qualified as one of the two or three greatest sculptors of the time.⁴³ As for Georges Leroux's *Group of Athletes Preparing for a Race*, it "is one of the works that M. Göring most enjoyed."⁴⁴

One might rightly suspect the French ambassador of exaggerating the positive reception of the show and of playing down Nazi attacks on the so called "degenerate" works in the French show. But a German art historical publication from that time confirms that the exhibition that the French had brought to Nazi Germany received an extremely courteous response. The reviewer for *Kunst*, Fritz Von Hellweg, gave a



8 Maurice Asselin, *Children's Vespers Bread*. Location unknown (first reproduced in the 1937 catalogue; photo: Frick)

measured yet at times enthusiastic reaction to the works on view. He singled out Maurice Asselin's *Children's Vespers Bread* (Fig. 8) for "speaking directly to the German sensibility."⁴⁵ This work, showing two boys and their parents around a kitchen table in a plain, thick-walled farm interior, was indeed a sober celebration of wholesomeness, duty to the family, and a simple way of life.

But he did not hesitate to praise Matisse for his "very reserved portrait of a girl, in flat, wide, yellow and pale green brushstrokes"; Braque, "master of the still-life with a handsome harmony of his famous brown-blue hues"; Dunoyer de Segonzac, "represented by an incandescent symphony of red"; Derain, "whose marvelously balanced wooded landscape exudes a great sense of peace, and also his brilliant female portrait"; and Vlaminck, "here represented by a painting entitled 'Huts' [which] shows a sparkling, red and yellow field under a billowing blue sky." The other artists he mentioned favorably were an eclectic group ranging from Laurencin, Maurice Brianchon, Friesz, and Chapelain-Midy to Lucien Simon, Dufy, Yves Brayer, and Marguerite Louppe.⁴⁶ He concluded his review by saying that "the exhibition was a pleasurable experience . . . even if it does not make completely clear what is the artistic creativity in France in our time."⁴⁷ Illustrated in his article were the Vlaminck landscape, the Asselin and the Lucien Simon genre scenes, a Maurice Denis religious scene, and Suzanne Valadon's portrait of her son Maurice Utrillo and his grandmother.

According to information supplied by the Akademie der Künste to François-Poncet, who then sent it to Paris, in two months the exhibition was visited by 23,000 persons, 7,732 catalogues were sold, and 300 inquiries concerning purchases

of the exhibited works were addressed to the secretariat. Sixteen inquiries were followed up, for which the Reich exchange office authorized the transfer of 30,000 marks (283,547 francs). Among the works sold were, according to the ambassador, a bronze statue by Maillol, two landscapes by Albert Marquet, one Utrillo, and a small marble by Louis Dejean, this last purchased by the Italian ambassador.⁴⁸ In his memoirs, François-Poncet mentioned that Hitler had purchased a statuette: ". . . Hitler's taste in this field did not go beyond the 1850s; for him, impressionism and cubism were one and the same thing, both products of the Jewish mind. Nevertheless he took the trouble to visit the exhibition and to purchase a statuette."⁴⁹

The positive reception in Nazi Germany of an exhibition that included Matisse, Léger, Braque, Vlaminck, and other artists whose works had been removed from the museums that owned them as "degenerate art" remains somewhat mystifying. First, it should be noted that criticism was banned in Nazi Germany at that point, while injunctions on how to review an exhibition emanated from the very top of the hierarchy of the Third Reich. Since the minister for propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, had approved the exhibition of modern French art, and Göring attended the opening, such a courteous response was to be expected.⁵⁰

On the other hand, the chancellor of the Third Reich, faced with the conflicting views of his advisers as to whether Expressionism or *völkisch* art better communicated the ideology of a new Germany to the German people, had determined that artists must identify an essentially racial Germanic tradition and make their paintings on that basis.⁵¹ The most difficult task was to isolate this uniquely Germanic tradition.

According to Berthold Hinz, comparing and contrasting images, or, in his words, “synoptic confrontation,” was the devised strategy: “In the first years of the Nazis’ art struggle, long before they took power in 1933, the party had pursued political polarization by polarizing—comparing and contrasting—images.”⁵² He cites the case of clinical photographs of human deformities juxtaposed with recent works by German Expressionists as intended to eliminate Expressionism from this new Germanic tradition and deemed to show by contrast that art representing perfect human types would belong within the new racial Germanic canon.

It is thus conceivable that the viewing of modern art symbolizing a foreign national tradition could, by comparison and contrast, highlight the essence of a pure racial Germanic tradition. This might explain why, according to François-Poncet, the Nazi press was “preoccupied . . . with making clear the general characteristics that distinguish French art from German art.”⁵³ Acting in unison as if they had been drilled ahead of time, the reviewers for the *Bourse Gazette*, the *Lokal Anzeiger*, and the *National Zeitung* of Essen, from which the ambassador quoted, compared and contrasted French and German art, concurring that German art was “philosophical” whereas French art was about art for art’s sake, about pleasure and decoration, about the natural play of light and color.⁵⁴ The philosophical—a euphemism for ideologically loaded—quality of the new German art had apparently been made clear by contrast to what the Nazi press read as the quality of art for art’s sake in French art, a generalization that could only be made by virtue of the presence of paintings such as Matisse’s *Branch of Lilacs* (Fig. 9) and the other Fauvist works. The Matisse still life and similar works in the exhibition that might have symbolized in other contexts French nonconformism had been turned to advantage by the Nazi press so as to make clear to German readers that art for art’s sake was of French origin and did not belong within the canon of the new German art.

Although information on a curatorial and diplomatic trade-off does not appear in the correspondence concerning the exhibition, the contents of the exhibition as they are described in the catalogue suggest that there had been a price to pay for the inclusion of art by Matisse, Braque, Léger, Vlaminck, and others in an exhibition held in the heart of Nazi Germany at the very moment when works by these same artists were being removed from the museums that owned them and sold at auction or destroyed. The price was the exclusion of many other deserving artists from the exhibition. Even in the context of a rapidly shifting and narrowing down of what constituted modern French art in 1937 in Paris itself, the Berlin exhibition of French art presented a startlingly narrow and nationalist view of French art of the present.

The definition of a country’s most valid artistic contribution at a given moment of its history is rarely agreed upon. In 1937 in Paris, as powerful critics endorsed the notion of French decadence in art and associated it with foreign influences on the French artistic tradition, it was less and less likely that non-French-born artists, including Jewish refugees who were contributing to the French patrimony, would be treated in the same way as French-born artists. Under these



9 Henri Matisse, *Branch of Lilacs*, 1914. Private collection (from *Henri Matisse* [New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992]) © Succession H. Matisse, Paris/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

circumstances the concept of French art of the present was problematic, and what we easily condemn as a “revisionist” view of French art of the present in 1937 is only so in retrospect. Yet the Berlin show was revisionist in its own time by comparison with *Maîtres de l’Art Indépendant 1895–1937*. The two exhibitions date from the same year, were both sponsored by the Popular Front government, and had a common agenda, the celebration of modern French art.

Visually, both the Paris and the Berlin exhibitions conveyed the idea that the thirties were a time of a “return to order,” a nostalgia-filled moment.⁵⁵ Both exhibitions included work by Charles Camoin, Derain, Dunoyer de Segonzac, Vlaminck, Friesz (Fig. 1),⁵⁶ Dufy, Marquet, Matisse, and Manguin among the Fauves, and Maurice Denis, Jacques-Émile Blanche, Vuillard, and Bonnard among the Neo-Impressionists and Symbolists—French masters who had made their most original artistic statements at the beginning of the century and whose production had become mainstream (and, for some, acceptable to the academy). Other works included in both the Berlin and the Paris shows were by French artists associated with Cubism: Braque and Léger, among others. The classical

sculpture of Maillol and Charles Despiau (Fig. 2) also appeared in both exhibitions (see App. below).

However, in comparison with the Petit Palais selection for the *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant* exhibition, with its Cubist paintings by Louis Marcoussis, Pablo Picasso, Leopold Survage, its sculpture by Pablo Gargallo, Jacques Lipchitz, Ossip Zadkine, and many other modernist works next to more conservative ones by Moïse Kisling, Henri Lebasque, François Pompon, and Jane Poupelet, among others, the Berlin show did not reflect much of a push and pull between tradition and the avant-garde and was hardly a mix of talents and tastes. Reading the introduction to the catalogue of the Berlin show by Rey we learn that French tradition in the arts is rooted "in the single desire to represent nature and life in its most ordinary everyday manifestations with gentle vitality, without regard for theories and fashions."⁵⁷ Thus, works of art that referred to an interior vision and/or posed a challenge to the viewer were condemned as outside the French tradition.

Furthermore, not only was the Berlin show less eclectic than the Paris one, it also included a large contingent of winners of the Prix de Rome, professors of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, and Académie des Beaux-Arts nominees, all of them members of the conservative Société des Artistes Français. Among them was Jean Dupas, Marcel Baschet, Yves Brayer, Raymond Brechenmacher, André Devambez, Lucien Jonas, Henri Martin, Lucien Simon (Fig. 3), Henry Bouchard, Jean Boucher, and Paul Landowski. The curator of the Paris exhibition, Raymond Escholier, looked on these figures of the French art world with the greatest disdain, calling them the "disciplined troops that occupy en masse the Palais des Beaux Arts [at their annual Salon des artistes Français]," and made no room for their work in the Paris show of independent art.⁵⁸ Indeed, these figures of the French art world were anything but independent. Due to their status as prestigious servants of the state and their connections with French officials, they tended to receive an unfair share of government commissions for the decoration of public buildings and to appear all too frequently in officially sponsored exhibitions.

Superficially, both the Berlin exhibition of French art and the *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant* appeared to emerge from a common national viewpoint: both favored French-born artists. "This segregation seems today to be very nationalist," writes Bernadette Contensou. "It was at that time considered natural by everybody. Had not the State created a museum for foreign schools?"⁵⁹ Yet while the Paris show of French art was "happy to honor at the same time these artists from the School of de Paris, who had come from all points of the world, Parisians before anything else," to use Escholier's own words,⁶⁰ that was not the case with the Berlin show. Picasso, Gargallo, Lipchitz, Chaim Soutine, Marc Chagall, Juan Gris, and Max Ernst had works in the Paris show, but not in the Berlin one. The Berlin exhibition conferred the title of French artist only on artists who were French-born and of Aryan type.

If rejection of the extreme avant-garde (the absence of Surrealists in Berlin and their scant presence in Paris) was a common agenda of the Paris and Berlin shows, the inclusion of artist "bureaucrats" and the exclusion of "foreign-born" and Jewish artists in the Berlin show point to a model of

modern French art quite different from that embodied by the Paris one. In several respects, *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart* was a censored version of *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant 1895–1937*. It represented the triumph of xenophobia and anti-Semitism at a time when in Paris such attitudes and feelings were on the rise but could not yet be so openly put into practice. The Berlin exhibition of modern French art failed to show France in its "inclusiveness and continuity," to use Blum's chosen phrase. Whoever was responsible for the exhibition—and there seem to have been three different organizers: the French ambassador, the French curator, and the German authorities—produced a show that echoed in French terms the racial tradition being perpetrated in German art of the period.

Despite the ambassador's satisfaction with the results of the exhibition, repression of its existence began in France almost immediately. Except for an anonymous editorial in *Cahiers d'Art* of 1937 that stated—a bit too confidently—that "its" artists had refused to "collaborate" out of "solidarity for German colleagues who have been banned from the society of artists by national socialism,"⁶¹ the French art press was silent. As for the general press, it focused on Hitler's visit to the show: "Berlin 30 June. The Führer visits the exhibition of French painting," announced *Le Temps* (July 1, 1937) in small print on its last page. The article was short and matter-of-fact:

Chancellor Hitler visited the French exhibition of painting at the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts this morning. In the course of this visit, which lasted close to three-quarters of an hour, M. André François-Poncet, the French Ambassador, presented the paintings on view to the Chancellor. Mr. Adolf Hitler showed the most vivid interest in these works of modern French painting and sculpture.⁶²

France's minister for national education during the Blum government, Jean Zay, omitted to mention the Berlin exhibition in his memoirs (he mentions Amsterdam, Belgrade, and Cairo as cities where exhibitions of French art took place under the Popular Front government of Léon Blum).⁶³ Even François-Poncet, who in 1937 had taken responsibility for the show and proclaimed it a big success for France's *rayonnement culturel*, revised his role in his postwar memoirs. There, he took no credit for the Berlin exhibition of French art and tersely attributed its organization entirely to the Germans: "In June an exhibition of French painting was organized in Berlin by the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts."⁶⁴ In *La belle illusion: Culture et politique sous le signe du Front populaire 1935–1938*, the major work on cultural life in France during the years of the Popular Front, Pascal Ory names Venice, Prague, Warsaw, Bucharest, Bogotá, and Lisbon—not Berlin—as cities that received art from France.⁶⁵ More telling yet, the exhibition at the Akademie der Künste does not appear in any of the chronologies or exhibition lists of the major artists whose works were shown.

The repression of this event by the French establishment of historians of the present is hardly a surprise. French specialists do not like to deal with revelations that place their country, its artists, and its politicians in a bad light.⁶⁶ They

would protect Matisse, who lent work from his studio and thus revealed an indifference to politics that reached new heights during Vichy, by claiming that his contribution to the French artistic patrimony outweighs all other considerations.⁶⁷ They would defend François-Poncet's appeasement by pointing out that appeasement was the policy of the day.⁶⁸

In retrospect, it is difficult not to see 1937 as a low point in Franco-German relations. The rearmament of Germany, Hitler's reneging on treaties that his country had freely signed, the German reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936, Germany's military interference in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Fascist leader Francisco Franco in 1937 followed one another like the signposts of "an inexorable march toward war. . . ."⁶⁹ However, as the Munich accords of 1938 attest, resistance to the idea of yet another war was powerful, and appeasement policies repeatedly led to humiliating compromises on the part of democratic countries like France and Great Britain.

Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, a specialist of Franco-German relations during the 1930s, maintains that the Popular Front government did not reverse the appeasement trend set before it: "It is not in the debate over foreign policy . . . that one must look for an original path. 'Desire for peace,' 'collective security,' 'arms limitations'—in this program, nothing that makes a break with customary ideas."⁷⁰ Under these circumstances, the French ambassador's willingness to foster appeasement suited equally the mood of Blum's enemies, those who screamed, "Rather Hitler than Blum," and the mood of inveterate pacifists within Blum's Socialist party. In this context, it would have been difficult for the Berlin show of French art to go against the grain of appeasement diplomacy.

Even so, by condoning a view of modern art that was the French equivalent of a German racial tradition, the partisans of appeasement carried their policy to new extremes, for such a view helped the Nazi cause and comforted the included artists, among them Matisse, Vlaminck, Derain, Braque, and Léger, in the idea that they had nothing to fear from the Nazis. The French policy of *rayonnement culturel* had been subverted into not merely an appeasement politics but one proposing accommodation and prefiguring state collaboration.⁷¹

A year before, at the Olympics, the French participants had already signaled "collaborationist" sympathies by raising before Hitler what was taken as a Nazi salute. Neither the British nor the American athletes had done so.⁷² British painters had apparently been approached by the Nazis for an exhibition in Berlin but, as Jane Clapp reports in *Art Censorship: A Chronology of Proscribed and Prescribed Art*, they had turned down the offer. "Germany's invitation to British painters to exhibit in Berlin, 'with specified reservations as to race and political faith' was 'promptly rejected.'" ⁷³ As more and more events like the 1937 exhibition of French art in Berlin and images of the 1936 Olympic Games emerge from obscurity, the spread of Nazism through continental Europe comes into sharper focus, and Marshal Pétain's handshake with Hitler on October 30, 1940, at Montoire can be seen as more and more predictable.

Appendix

Comparative Table of Participants in the Exhibitions *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart* (Berlin) and the *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant 1895–1937* (Paris)

<i>Exhibited only in Berlin</i>	<i>in Berlin and Paris</i>	<i>only in Paris</i> ⁷⁴
Robert Antral	Yves Alix	Abbal
Jean Aujame	Albert André	Émile Bernard
Emanuel Auricoste	Maurice Asselin	Joseph Bernard
Gaston Balande	Pierre Bompard	Roger Bissière
Georges Barat-Levraux	Jean-Louis Bousingault	Maria Blanchard
Valdo Barbey	Georges Braque	Pierre Bompard
Marcel Baschet	Charles Camoin	Georges Bouche
Hugues de Beaumont	Edmond Céria	Antoine Bourdelle
Paul Belmondo	Maurice Denis	Marc Chagall
Gabriel Belot	André Derain	Giorgio De Chirico
Jacques-Émile Blanche	Charles Despiau	Lucie Cousturier
Pierre Bompard	Georges Desvallières	Jean Crotti
Henry Bouchard	Léon Drivier	Robert Delaunay
Jean Boucher	Georges Dufrenoy	Raymond Duchamp-Villon
Yves Brayer	Raoul Dufy	Max Ernst
Raymond Brechenmacher	André Dunoyer de Segonzac	Guy-Eugène Fauconnet
Maurice Brianchon	Georges d'Espagnat	André Favory
Auguste Brouet	Othon Friesz	Jules Flandrin
Christian Caillard	Paul Gernez	Pablo Gargallo
Robert Cami	Marcel Gimond	Albert Gleizes
Carlegle (Charles-Émile Egli)	Édouard Goerg	Emmanuel Gondouin
Jules Cavaillès	Marcel Goemaire	Juan Gris
Auguste Chabaud	Charles Guérin	Auguste Herbin
Roger Chapelain-Midy	Edmond Kayser	Mateo Hernandez
Pierre Eugène Clairin	Marie Laurencin	Moïse Kisling
Gérard Cochet	Fernand Léger	Roger de La Fresnaye
Louis-Eugène Corneau	André Lhote	Amédée de La Patellière
Joaquin Costa	Robert Lotiron	Pierre Laprade
René Cottet	Maximilien Luce	Henri Laurens
Alfred Courmes	Aristide Maillol	Henri Lebasque
Jean Gabriel Daragnès	Henri Manguin	Henri-Victor Le Fauconnier
André Dauchez	Albert Marque	Léon Lehmann
Albert Décaris	Henri Matisse	Jacques Lipchitz
Louis Dejean	Pierre Poisson	Maurice Loutreuil
Jacques Denier	Jean Puy	Jean Lurçat
Alexandre Descatoire	Georges Rouault	Manolo (Manuel Martinez Hugue)
Frédéric Deshayes	Ker-Xavier Roussel	Louis Marcoussis
André Devambez	Maurice Utrillo	André Mare
Louis Dideron	Suzanne Valadon	Albert Marque
Pierre Dubreuil	Louis Valtat	Jacqueline Marval
Charles Dufresne	Maurice de Vlaminck	Jean Metzinger
Jean Dupas	Édouard Vuillard	Amedeo Modigliani
Gabriel Fournier	Henri de Waroquier	Luc-Albert Moreau
André Foy	Robert Wlérick	Chana Orloff
Jean Frelaut		Amédée Ozenfant
Madame Galtier-Boissière		Henri-Ernest Parayre
Odette des Garets		Jules Pascin
Denis Gelin		Charles Péquin
Pierre Girieux		Francis Picabia
Georges Gobo		Pablo Picasso
Jean Gabriel Goulinat		François Pimienta
Auguste Guenot		René Piot
Georges Guyot		François Pompon
Louise Hervieu		Jane Poupelet
		Auguste Renoir

Gustave Louis Jaulmes
 Alfred Jeannot
 Lucien Jonas
 Adrienne Jouclard
 Paul Jouve
 Tristan Klingsor
 Jean-Émile Laboureur
 Pierre Ladureau
 Paul Landowski
 Raymond Legueult
 Louis Lejeune
 Georges Le Meilleur
 Philippe Le Molt
 Georges Leroux
 Henri Le Sidaner
 Roger Limouse
 Alfred Lombard
 Marguerite Louppe
 Berthold Mahn
 Lucien Mainssieux
 Henri Malançon
 Jean Marchand
 Henri Martin
 Berthe Martinie
 Jean Morin
 Bernard Naudin
 Louis Neillot
 François-Paul
 Niclausse
 Roland Oudot
 Picart-Ledoux
 Andre Planson
 Albert Pommier
 Maurice-Georges
 Poncelet
 François Popineau
 René Favier Prinnet
 Alphonse Quizet
 Louis Riou
 Sabatté
 Georges Saupique
 Maurice Savin
 Maurice Savreux
 Edmond Sigrist
 Marie-Louise Siméon
 Jeanne Simon
 Lucien Simon
 Louis-Joseph Soulas
 Jean Souverbie
 Jean Alphonse Stival
 André Strauss
 Jacques Thévenet
 Henry-Georges
 Troussard
 Henri Verge-Sarrat
 Eliane P. de la Villéon
 Hubert Yencesse
 Jules Zingg

Auguste Rodin
 Henri Rousseau
 Claude Roy
 Paul Sérusier
 Gino Severini
 René Seyssaud
 Paul Signac
 Chaim Soutine
 Leopold Survage
 Félix Valloton
 Georges Valmier
 Kees Van Dongen
 Antoine Villard
 Jacques Villon
 Ossip Zadkine

1996) and *Fascist Visions* (Princeton University Press, 1997) [260 West Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013].

Frequently Cited Sources

- AD: Nantes, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Archives Diplomatiques, Oeuvres Françaises à l'Étranger
 Cone, Michèle C., *Artists under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
 François-Poncet, André, *The Fateful Years: Memoirs of a French Ambassador in Berlin 1931–1938*, trans. Jacques LeClercq (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949).
 Ory, Pascal, *La belle illusion: Culture et politique sous le signe du Front Populaire 1935–1938* (Paris: Plon, 1994).

Notes

I would like to thank John Paoletti for his steadfast encouragement and most useful suggestions, and express my heartfelt thanks to Lory Frankel for her truly splendid work on this manuscript. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

1. This had been known previously as the Königlich Akademie der Künste.
2. A recent biography of Samuel Beckett that includes Beckett's German diaries from 1936–1937 shows that process in action and reveals the conditions under which Beckett was able to see works by modern artists while traveling through Germany. See James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), chap. 10.
3. This exhibition has yet to be examined in the context of French Popular Front propaganda-through-art politics. For that purpose, scholars have generally used a corpus of images provided by the Paris *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques* and art exhibitions at various venues in Paris in 1937. It has also been neglected by students of Nazi art in favor of *Entartete Kunst* and *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung*, exhibitions organized exclusively by the Germans and comprising for the most part art made by German artists. It is brought up by Berthold Hinz, "La peinture durant le III^{ème} Reich et l'antagonisme de ses origines," in Gérard Regnier, ed., *Les réalismes 1919–1939*, exh. cat., Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1981, 123–24, as an example of the "secret continuity" between vanguardism and genre painting in the French conception of art, in contrast with Nazism, which exploited an alleged antagonism between the two for political reasons; it is mentioned in passing by Dawn Ades, "Paris 1937: Art and the Power of Nations," in Ades et al., *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930–1945*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London, 1996, 62; in Michèle C. Cone, *Artists under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 166–67, the show is discussed as suggesting a predisposition toward collaboration on the part of participating artists, since twelve of the thirteen "travelers" to Nazi Germany in 1941 had been in the Berlin show of French art in 1937.
4. See Serge Tchakhotine, *Le viol des foules par la propagande politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939).
5. Ernest Pazet, quoted in Pascal Ory, 524.
6. Jean Zay, *Souvenirs et solitude* (Paris: Julliard, 1945), 375.
7. The catalogue was entirely and exclusively in German, using the Gothic script that Hitler had revived (Fig. 5). A copy of it can be consulted at the Frick Library in New York under "Berlin, Royal Academy."
8. Ory, 524. Those were the words used by Léon Blum in the preface to the catalogue for the exhibition at the Palais National des Arts in 1937, which the French premier called "his" exhibition.
9. *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, exh. cat., Preussische Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 1937, 19.
10. The names of Alfred Courmes and Pierre Ladureau do not appear in the index of artist participants in the 1937 International Exhibition catalogue, *Cinquantième de l'exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans La vie moderne* (Paris: Institut Français d'Architecture/Paris Musées, 1987).
11. The French state lent seventeen works from its national collections at the Musée du Luxembourg, among them *Landscape* (no. 297) by Maurice Utrillo, *Landscape and Still Life with Grapes* (nos. 308 and 310) by Maurice de Vlaminck. The Louvre sent thirteen, and the Musée de la Ville de Paris only two, including *Mandolin and Vase* (no. 35) by Georges Braque. As Robert Rey, the curator, knew these artists personally, I suspect that they were aware of the event.
12. According to a German critic of the exhibition, few of the works were recent, and few came from the artists themselves. See Von Fritz Hellwag, "Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart/Preussische Akademie der Kunst zu Berlin," *Kunst* 75 (Aug. 1937): 334. *Kunst*, then edited by Paul Kirchgraber, predated the Nazi period but had had to adjust to the new policy banning art criticism.

Michèle C. Cone, an independent scholar, is the author of *Artists under Vichy* (Princeton University Press, 1992) and *The Roots and Routes of Art in the Twentieth Century* (Horizon, 1975) and contributor to *The Jew in the Text* (Thames and Hudson,

13. According to information provided to the author by John Elderfield's office at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in a telephone conversation of February 4, 1997, the 1914 painting had been put aside for the Russian collector Sergei Shchukhin, but the advent of World War I in Aug. 1914 and then the Russian Revolution had caused the painting to remain in the artist's studio through 1937.

14. There is also the possibility that some of the lenders were Jewish.

15. See the anonymous foreword to André François-Poncet, *The Fateful Years: Memoirs of a French Ambassador in Berlin 1931–1938*, trans. Jacques LeClercq (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949), vi. "As a historical figure, André François-Poncet belongs to the era of appeasement. . . . He was aware of the unqualified abhorrence of war which, up to Munich, held its sway over both his own country and allied Britain."

16. *Ibid.*, v.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 279.

19. In Bernadette Contensou, ed., *Paris 1937: L'art indépendant*, exh. cat., Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1987, 14, the date of January 20, 1937, is given for the first meeting relative to a sister exhibition in Paris, *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant 1895–1937* at the Petit Palais, suggesting that the two shows were organized in tandem.

20. Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Archives Diplomatiques (AD), Oeuvres Françaises à l'Étranger, Box 513, letter of Jan. 28, 1937, headed "Ambassade de France à Berlin," and signed "André F. Poncet."

21. Prior to the Third Reich, German painting had been far from weak. However, Hitler himself was dissatisfied with the new German painting, as compared with the new German sculpture.

22. It is possible that the Arno Breker retrospective at the Musée de l'Orangerie in June–July 1942 had something to do with the broken promise of 1937.

23. The exhibition of contemporary Polish art is interesting in light of the German-Polish accord signed Jan. 26, 1934.

24. See Stephanie Baron, *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, exh. cat. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1991, 9.

25. AD, Box 513, letter of Mar. 4, 1937, headed "Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale. Beaux Arts," signature illegible.

26. *Ibid.*

27. AD, Box 513, letter of Mar. 11, 1937, headed "Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale. Beaux Arts," signature illegible. "I approve the principle of a French exhibition in Berlin for the Spring, in spite of certain difficulties that we will meet in the gathering of the works, in the first place because national museums must keep their most important works during the [Paris] 'Exposition,' also because of the desire of art dealers not to empty their galleries during that time, and last because of the lack of enthusiasm shown by collectors toward our requests."

28. AD, Box 513, telegram of Mar. 4, 1937, headed "Ministère des Affaires Étrangères."

29. Louis Hautecoeur, *Les beaux arts en France: Passé, avenir* (Paris: Picard, 1948), 267.

30. See n. 27 above.

31. AD, Box 513, letter of Mar. 23, 1937, headed "Association Française d'Expansion et d'Échanges Artistiques," and signed "R. Brussel."

32. AD, Box 513, note of Mar. 24, 1937, headed "Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères. Service des Oeuvres Françaises à l'Étranger," and signed "S. Marx."

33. See n. 25 above.

34. *Ibid.* The name Huyghe was crossed out and that of Robert Rey, who accepted the assignment, written above his.

35. Robert Rey, *La peinture moderne ou l'art sans métier* (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, Que Sais-je, 1941).

36. Lucien Rebatet, "Peinture moderne," *Je Suis Partout*, Feb. 14, 1942.

37. Robert Rey, *Contre l'art abstrait* (Paris: Flammarion, 1938).

38. AD, Box 513, letter of Apr. 13, 1937, headed "Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale."

39. AD, Box 513, telegram of June 5, 1937, 19:10, headed "Berlin Affaires Étrangères."

40. AD, Box 513, letter of June 8, 1937, headed "ambassade de France à Berlin," and signed "André F. Poncet."

41. *Ibid.*

42. Chapelain-Midy, born in 1904, was one of the painters that Bernard Dorival grouped within the generation of 1930. "Thus these painters," he wrote, "hope to give painting a large audience and put an end to the divorce of the artist and his public"; Dorival, *Les étapes de la peinture française contemporaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 257. He won the Carnegie Prize in 1938.

43. For more on the German response to Maillol, see H. Eckstein, "Maillol," *Kunst* 75 (Jan. 1937): 107–15.

44. See n. 39 above.

45. Hellweg (as in n. 12), 339.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.* For more on Hellweg's review of the show, see Cone, 166–68.

48. AD, Box 513, telegram of Aug. 7, 1937, headed "Berlin Affaires Étrangères," and signed "François Poncet."

49. François-Poncet, 213.

50. Göring collected modern French art in secret, and Goebbels was among the ideologues who had proposed that German Expressionism become the model of new Nazi art.

51. See Stephanie Baron (as in n. 24), 12. In the cultural wars that raged in the first years of the Nazi regime, Goebbels had lost to Alfred Rosenberg, the partisan of *völkisch* art—art for and of the people—finally siding with Hitler on the issue of a racial Germanic tradition as the essence of the new German art.

52. Berthold Hinz, "Degenerate and Authentic," in Ades et al. (as in n. 3), 331.

53. See n. 40 above.

54. *Ibid.* From the *Bourse Gazette*: "What is striking is that the painters represented in this exhibition remain loyal to the tendency of 'l'art pour l'art' whose native land is France. The French do not paint to express a philosophical idea but for the pleasure of the eye and to decorate life with a decor in good taste. For us Germans, on the contrary, it is essential that life always have something to do with philosophy." From the *Lokal Anzeiger*: "French art is not a philosophical art. It does not show a philosophy in paint, but painting which comes out of a philosophy of life, fixed once and for all." From the *National Zeitung*: "If one wishes to characterize the evolution of contemporary French painting, one can say that it has generally turned away from abstraction, from doctrinaire tendencies, from fashion, to give itself over fully to the natural play of forms and colors."

55. See Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

56. A portrait of Mme Othon Friesz was in both exhibitions.

57. Robert Rey, foreword to *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart* (as in n. 9), 14.

58. Raymond Escholier, "Préambule," in *Maîtres de l'art indépendant 1895–1937*, exh. cat., Petit Palais, Paris, 1937, 5.

59. Bernadette Contensou, "Autour de l'Exposition des Maîtres de l'art indépendant," in Contensou (as in n. 19), 13.

60. Escholier (as in n. 58), 6.

61. "Une exposition d'art français à Berlin," *Cahiers d'Art* 12 (1937), 62. Despite this proclamation, Matisse and Léger, both *Cahiers d'Art* artists, had works in the Berlin show.

62. *Le Temps*, July 1, 1937.

63. Zay (as in n. 6), 375.

64. François-Poncet, 213.

65. Ory, 945 n. 46.

66. See Sonia Combe, *Archives interdites* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994); and idem, "Today's French Historical Research," *Telos*, no. 108 (Summer 1996): 149–64.

67. Whether Matisse's knowing participation in the Berlin exhibition was exceptional or not, it raises the question of vigilance with respect to the context in which artists exhibit their work during their lifetime. See "Un entretien avec Umberto Eco," *Le Monde*, Oct. 5, 1993, on that subject. Whether the show as a whole reveals an attitude of cooperation on the part of the artists who participated depends, of course, on the knowledge they had of the circumstances and conditions of the 1937 event. So far, the best evidence of this attitude is that when, in 1941, a trip was organized for artists by the Nazi Propaganda Office, all twelve French artists who agreed to go on the trip had been part of the Berlin show. See Cone, 168.

68. The French historian René Remond has repeatedly maintained that good history interprets the past in terms of what was known at the time and without the benefit of hindsight. Such an argument has enabled the Vichy epoch to remain clouded in ambiguity. Before judging the appropriateness of the Berlin show Professor Remond would ask us to situate the exhibition in the appeasement atmosphere of the time. But would that condone the absence on racial and xenophobic grounds of so many major artists then working in France and who considered France their (adopted) "homeland"?

69. Eugen Weber, *La France des années trente: Tourments et perplexités* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), 13.

70. Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *La décadence 1932–1939* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1979), 294.

71. What an exhibition aiming at the defense and illustration of French culture in 1937 ought to have been about is worth pondering. If indeed the fear and imminence of war were part of the collective unconscious on both sides of the border, then images conjuring the memory of World War I would have been appropriate.

72. In *The Fateful Years*, 205, François-Poncet writes of the French athletes at the Olympic Games: "They cut a good figure as they marched smartly by. As they neared the stand, on a given order, they gave the Olympic salute, raising their right arms horizontally on a line with their shoulders. The crowd mistook this gesture for the Hitlerian salute. Believing it a chivalrous homage to the Third Reich and its leader, they gave vent to a wholly mistaken enthusiasm." Why, if that was the case, did the British and the Americans not give the same "salute" when they went by the official stand?

73. Jane Clapp, *Art Censorship: A Chronology of Proscribed and Prescribed Art* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1972), 255.

74. This information is taken from *Paris 1937* (as in n. 19).