Call for proposals: Special Issue 45 of ILCEA: "Painting, national identity and international style in Europe around 1900"

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Call for submissions
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This Special Issue invites scholars to examine the contribution of painting - be it avant-garde or not, from Southern or Northern Europe - to this quest for national identities around 1900 from the following perspectives:

• The notion of national / international style: besides the artists, who were the actors in the artistic field that participated in the process of building this notion and in this reading of artistic production? (critics, writers, exhibition curators, museum curators, art historians ...)
• Since this confrontation could not be reduced to an opposition between a patriotic corset and an emancipatory opening to the outside, how did artists conceive their belonging to a national school and what use did they make of references to foreign traditions, either at the same time or later on?
• What are the ways in which painting contributed to the elaboration of national imaginary? (landscape, history, customs, ethnotypes ...)
• How are contrasts and continuities between nationalism and regionalism articulated in pictorial production and in its reception?
• Is it possible to separate the contribution of painting to the elaboration of a national imaginary from the question of national style?
• How was the relationship between painting and national / international identity staged? (places of exhibition, places of creation, workshops-museums ...)

In the second half of the nineteenth century, as artists and works of art moved with increasing ease around the western world and as aesthetic trends claimed to overcome national borders, the national prism often played a key role in the way in which artistic production was evaluated and classified. World’s Fairs and International Art Exhibitions—those spaces of peaceful confrontation—offered the best example of an approach explicitly structured around the commonly accepted yet still imprecise notion of a national school. If this framework seemed logical in the case of exhibition venues intended to stage national differences, it was much more surprising to see it also used in deliberately internationalist contexts. Though the avant-garde movements defined themselves...
through complex interaction between the national and the international, at the beginning of the 20th century their self-professed cosmopolitanism did not make them immune to the nationalist exacerbation that affected the majority of western countries [Joyeux-Prunel]. Or, to give another example, the artificial nature of the opposition between the Fauvists and “Die Brücke” betrays the influence of nationalist criteria in the history of art [Lebensztejn].

The life and work of Joaquín Sorolla (1863-1923) perfectly illustrate the blending of these two approaches. Sorolla’s modern, sometimes bold yet never avant-garde, style allowed him to triumph in a market where works of art were produced and circulated internationally, while also protecting his national roots. On the one hand, he consciously kept close to the transnational examples of Bastien-Lepage, Zorn, Sargent, or Krøyer; on the other hand, he associated himself with the idea of Hispanic heritage and became increasingly attuned to the ideas of national and regional identity, which constituted the raison d'être of Vision of Spain—the enormous commission from the Hispanic Society to which he dedicated more than seven years at the end of his life. The reflection on national identity, stimulated by the surge of “peripheral nationalisms” and by the moral crisis triggered by the loss of Spain’s last colonies - the “disaster” of 1898 - intensified Spanish artists’ connection to tradition and history, as well as the landscape [Vega]. This was also the time of new debates—for example, the opposition between the “black Spain” of Zuloaga and the “white Spain” of Sorolla—in which artists, as well as writers, were called on to take sides and self-identify. Moreover, this identity quests did not take place in isolation but were, rather, products of transnational and transatlantic markets of regional and national imagery, set in motion by Euro-American elites [Hoganson, Kagan].

While Spain had its own peculiarities, in the early 20th century most European nations experienced a surge of nationalism, fueled by international tensions and the expansion of internationalist labor movements. The moral crisis occurring in Spain did not differ significantly from the fear of decadence felt by a good number of European intellectuals. Looking for national essences, many of them believed that the cultural expression of a nation was determined, as Taine wrote, by the combination of “race, milieu, and moment.” Continuing the romantic idea of Volksgeist, the organicist conception of the nation lead to highlighting regional identities while also allowing the national sentiment to be articulated through the exaltation of “little motherlands” [Storm]. Such a phenomenon, particularly noticeable in newly unified nations, could be observed even in a country like France, where nationalism is traditionally perceived as remarkably centralizing [Chanet].

Stages and timeline:
• 2,000-3,000-character long proposals in French, English or Spanish, accompanied by a short CV and a list of the author’s selected publications, should be sent by December 18, 2019 to pierre.geal@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr and eugenia.afinoguenova@marquette.edu.
• Authors will receive notification of acceptance of rejection by December 25, 2019.
• Complete texts must be received by March 15, 2020.
• Authors will receive the results of the review by the two evaluators in the spring of 2020.
• Special Issue 45 of ILCEA will be published in November 2021.

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Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, Annexes - de l'oeuvre d'art, Bruxelles, La Part de l'oeil, 1999.
Eric Storm, The culture of regionalism: Art, architecture and international exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain, 1890-1939, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010.
Jesusa Vega, Pasado y tradición. La construcción visual del imaginario español en el siglo XIX, Madrid, Ediciones Polifemo, 2016.

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