

Référence électronique

HUMBERT Candice, « The Drawing School of Grenoble », translated by Alexandra Woolley, *Les papiers d'ACA-RES, Brefs historiques*, put online in March 2020.

Candice HUMBERT
Université Grenoble Alpes
LARHRA UMR 5190

The Drawing School of Grenoble

The first state Drawing School of Grenoble was created in 1763 by Jacques-André Treillard (Valence (Drôme), 1712-Grenoble, 1794), painter and engraver from the Dauphiné Province. Originally thought of as an Academy, the school gradually bases itself on Jean-Jacques Bachelier's Free School of Drawing. Favored by the Duc of Orléans's patronage in 1769, the school of Grenoble attracted many students, laying the foundations for Fine arts teaching in the region. During its time, nearly 400 students (among them 5 women), of all ages and backgrounds were trained in the art of drawing for "education" and "mechanical arts where drawing is needed". Between 1770 and 1773, the institution, housed in the Royal College, underwent adjustments to improve teaching conditions. However, the Academy came to an end after the forced resignation of Jacques-André Treillard in 1792 and despite of his successor's efforts, Pierre-Alexandre Parisot (1750-1820) who accepted a position far away, maybe in Moscow, where he died.

Nevertheless, Grenoble never lost its appeal for artistic education. In 1795, drawing lessons were given by M. Villionné which often took place "at De Pina's the emigrant" in a room in the old Jesuit College. However, it was only on the 22nd of November 1796 with the creation of the *École centrale* of Isère, a secondary state school driven by the spirit of the Revolution, that a new drawing Professor was appointed to Grenoble. In anticipation, the Isère department put forth the name of Louis-Joseph Jay (1755-1836) for the position of director of the *École centrale*'s drawing school. After having taught the art of drawing in Montpellier, the artist and teacher from Saint-Hilaire de la Côte settled in Grenoble to pursue his carrier and later became the founder and first curator of the town's Fine Arts Museum in 1798.

The drawing class welcomed during the first years between 150 and 170 students, among them Stendhal (1783-1842). The curriculum established by Louis-Joseph Jay in 1797 consisted of three drawing classes: the first year was dedicated to the study of principles, heads or "grosses têtes" and the academies. The copy of ancient and classical sculpture was encouraged following the lead of traditional teaching methods of the Eighteenth Century. During the second year, two other classes completed the curriculum: the study of sculpture in the round and of ornament. For the purpose of these classes, Louis-Joseph Jay bought works of art, constituting a collection for the use of his students. The third year, he introduced a lecture on landscape which became, because of its uniqueness and novelty at the end of Eighteenth Century, a great success.

He also set up an anatomy class with the help of a Health Officer. For this lesson, he supplied studies of drawn figures which were glued onto wood planks and also bought the *L'Écorché* (Figure of a Flayed Man) by the sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741-1828).

Furthermore, Louis-Joseph Jay also gave Art History lectures which were attended not only by his students but also by the general public. Two monthly conferences were given in which he mentions *La Vie des peintres* by Dezallier d'Argenville (1680-1765). To his most deserving students, he gave engravings of famous paintings and books like *History of Ancient Art* by Winckelmann (1717-1768). He graded drawings and hung his students' best pieces in the museum, setting them by side with celebrated works of art.

On the 23rd of September 1804, Louis-Joseph Jay was forced to give up teaching. The *École centrale* of Isère was closed and replaced by a College. It was only after the town council's decision and imperial decree given on the 1st of July 1808, that Louis-Joseph Jay could teach once more. He remained there until he was fired not only from the Drawing School but also from the Museum in 1815, during the Restauration of the Monarchy.

Two years later, Benjamin Rolland (1771-1855), a student of David's and drawing professor to the Murat family in Naples, became the director of Grenoble's Drawing School and curator to the Fine arts Museum.

Selected Bibliography

GAUDIBERT Pierre, BRETON Christine, *Louis-Joseph Jay, sa vie, son œuvre I : un musée sans architecture*, cat. expo. Musée de Grenoble, 27 janvier-15 mars 1983, Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble, 1983.

BRETON Christine, GAUDIBERT Pierre, LEGRAND Sylvie, PERARD Sylvie, *Louis-Joseph Jay, sa vie, son œuvre II: un architecte de musée*, cat. expo. Musée de Grenoble, 27 janvier-15 mars 1983, Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble, 1983.

CLERC Marianne, *Jacques-André Treillard 1712-1794, peintre dauphinois*, Grenoble, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1995.

HUMBERT Candice, *L'Élaboration d'une culture artistique régionale. Grenoble et ses artistes de 1796 à 1853*, thèse doctorat soutenue sous la direction de M. Alain Bonnet et de Mme Marianne Clerc, Université Grenoble Alpes, 2016.