

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42144-8 - Academies of Art: Past and Present
Nikolaus Pevsner
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ACADEMIES OF ART
PAST AND PRESENT

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42144-8 - Academies of Art: Past and Present
Nikolaus Pevsner
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42144-8 - Academies of Art: Past and Present
Nikolaus Pevsner
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ACADEMIES
OF ART
PAST AND PRESENT
BY
NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1940

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42144-8 - Academies of Art: Past and Present
Nikolaus Pevsner
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107421448

© Cambridge University Press 1940

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1940

First paperback edition 2014

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-42144-8 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42144-8 - Academies of Art: Past and Present
Nikolaus Pevsner
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

*To
W. P.
in grateful and faithful
remembrance
of the past*

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42144-8 - Academies of Art: Past and Present
Nikolaus Pevsner
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

To explain one or two peculiarities of this book, a few personal remarks may be justifiable. Preparatory research was begun, and a first text finished, while I was living and working in Germany. Consequently there may still remain certain passages in which references to German affairs are better documented than references to activities in other countries. But what is more, the problem in itself would perhaps not have taken its present shape in England, where academies of art are not the central government art schools as they are on the Continent. However, this would only have been a matter of form, for the social problem underlying this book is just as much to the fore in this country as it is in Germany. I first realized its importance twelve years ago, when I was on the staff of the Dresden Gallery, and at the same time writing on art exhibitions for a Dresden newspaper. In studying the art of the past and meeting the artists of to-day, I was struck with the contrast between the social position of art and the artist then and now. Gradually I began to see that a history of art could be conceived not so much in terms of changing styles as of changing relations between the artist and the world surrounding him.

The question which cannot fail to alarm any art historian looking at contemporary conditions is how and why the artist has become so painfully severed from his public. Why has modern art become so unwelcome, why has it become a laughing stock to some, an object of keen hatred to others? Where are the germs that have caused this perilous disease? A doctor must acquaint himself with the pre-history of an acute illness that he is to cure, so the historian may well think that he should be consulted in helping art out of its present dangerous situation. For this task, the historian of art must for a while give up looking at the development of aesthetic phenomena exclusively, and give up summarizing aesthetic realizations into groups to form the

PREFACE

phases and epochs of a style, or the regional and national characteristics of a people. It is only a social history of art that can help here. Later on, when I was teaching in a German university, I saw that little had as yet been done to collect data for such a social history of art. Still later, when I had settled down in England, it was suggested to me to embark on some research into the conditions of design and the designer in contemporary British industrial art.¹ There again, and still more when I came into even closer contact with the practical everyday application of this problem, I was impressed with the immense importance of certain social aspects for the history and the future of art.

In writing the present book, I have not set myself the ambitious task of providing that social history of art which is so badly needed, not in order to replace a formal history of art, but alongside of it. Had it been my intention to prepare such a work, the history of taste would have been part of it—the history of aesthetic theories, of exhibitions, art collections, art dealing. All this I left out, and concentrated upon one aspect: art education, or rather the artist's education. And even there, I did not concern myself with either the Middle Ages, or the whole of the architect's education, problems far too complex to be dealt with by the way.² Narrow as the aims of my book have thus become, it still tries to achieve something more than a pure compilation of facts for the sake of compilation. For—to link up a great issue with a small undertaking—in this century of ours, this century of Liberalism declining, and Absolutism returning, of Collectivism with widely accepted ideologies in the ascendancy and Individualism with patient unbiased research on the downgrade, the historian can no longer shut himself off from contemporary needs. Everywhere he finds himself entangled in topical questions, or pushed aside into academic seclusion. Is it not one of the most urgent tasks for twentieth-century historiography to

¹ *An Enquiry into Industrial Art in England*, Cambridge University Press, 1937.

² A preliminary account of the history of the architectural profession I have given in *Kritische Berichte zur Kunstgeschichte*, 1930–31, pp. 97–122.

PREFACE

reconcile scholarship and direct utility? Too often has the journalist got hold of the evident demand for books on history which at the same time are books on problems of the day, and too often has he provided meretricious biographies or monographs written without any of that conscientious respect for facts that characterizes genuine historical writing. But it is not by pretending that the past was exactly as the present, not by using the slang of 1938 in describing Roman or medieval or Baroque data, not by picking up a few scattered facts and forging them into a chain leading straight from some remote point of the past to one man, one nation, one class in their present stage, that an understanding of topical problems and difficulties can be attained. On the contrary. Only by throwing into relief the individual oneness of any given period or style or nation, and the logical coherence of all its utterances in the most varied fields of human activity, will the historiographer in the end be able to make his reader discover what form a certain problem must take at the present moment.

With regard to the special topic with which this book is concerned, my task was accordingly to provide a straightforward description of four centuries of artists' education, linked up with certain political, social, and aesthetic data. A few hints at conclusions that can and should be drawn from this development are left to the last pages, but will gradually become visible to anybody attentively following the history of art academies through the Italian Cinquecento, the *siècle de Louis XIV*, the time of Goethe and the Romantic Movement, and the century of Liberalism.

And now, in order to finish so pretentious a foreword to so pedestrian a publication, it only remains for me to pay a tribute of gratitude to my mother, Frau Annie Pevsner at Leipzig, and to my wife, who have helped me with untiring patience while this book was in the stages of manuscript and typescript, and to Miss Helen Munro and Miss Francesca M. Wilson who read and improved it, before it went to press. I also want to thank the Cambridge University Press for the great care which they have taken in setting, correcting and printing this book.

N. P.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42144-8 - Academies of Art: Past and Present
Nikolaus Pevsner
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

Chapter I. INTRODUCTION *page 1*

The term “academy” in Greece, 1—In Italy during the Renaissance, 1—In the Northern Renaissance, 5—Changes in the meaning of the term in Italy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; new tasks and new organization of academies, 7—The first academies of letters (Crusca, Edmund Bolton’s plan, the Académie Française, the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres), 14—The first academies of science (Lincei, Cimento, Royal Society, Académie des Sciences), 18—Leibniz and Berlin, 21—Enlightenment and academies, 22.

Chapter II. FROM LEONARDO DA VINCI TO THE ACCADEMIA DI S. LUCA (THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY) *page 25*

The seven Leonardo engravings, 25—Leonardo’s theory of art, 30—The social position of the artist during the Renaissance, 31—Michelangelo, 32—Leonardo on art education, 34—Lorenzo de’ Medici and Bertoldo’s school, 38—The Bandinelli academy, 39—Vasari’s Accademia del Disegno in Florence, 42—Fed. Zuccari’s letter, 51—The foundation of the Accademia di S. Luca in Rome, 55—Its history up to the middle of the seventeenth century, 61.

Chapter III. BAROQUE AND ROCOCO (1600–1750) *page 67*

Struggles between artists and guilds in Italy: Genoa, 67—Bologna, 68—Federigo Borromeo’s academy in Milan, 69—Private Italian art academies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 71—The Accademia degli Incamminati, 75—Karel van Mander’s academy in Harlem, 80—Foundation of the Paris academy, 82—Colbert, 88—Organization of the Paris academy, 89—French theory of art of the seventeenth century, 93—The Académie de France in Rome, 99—History of the Paris academy up to the middle of the eighteenth century, 101—German art academies 1650–1750 (Nürnberg, Augsburg, Dresden, Berlin, Vienna), 115—England, 124—The Netherlands, 126—Differences of approach to the academic system in France and the Netherlands; different social positions of the artist; different classes of patrons, 131.

Chapter IV. CLASSIC REVIVAL, MERCANTILISM AND ACADEMIES OF ART *page 140*

Large number of new academies founded between 1750 and 1800, 140—The Classic Revival, 143—Winckelmann’s theory of art and that of other contemporary writers, 144—The artist’s message according to Schiller and the authors of the Classic movement in Germany, 148—Neo-Classic writers and artists and the new academies of art, 150—Mercantilism and the new academies of art, 152—Enlightenment and general education, 159—New French drawing schools for trades, 162—Organization of the new academies, 166—Differences from the Paris system, 170—Sulzer on a complete academy of art, 172—Growing “academisation”, 173—Time-table of the Berlin academy about 1800, 175—The École des Élèves Protégés in Paris, 177—Larger premises of eighteenth-century academies, 179—The St Petersburg academy, 181—The Royal Academy in London, 183—The Madrid academy, 187—Summing-up, 187.

CONTENTS

Chapter V. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY *page 190*

Sturm und Drang and hatred against academies, 190—David and Carstens, 193—Criticism of academies by German artists of the Romantic school, 200—The Nazarenes, 205—Cornelius, 207—Conditions at Düsseldorf and Munich at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 209—Cornelius's programme, 213—Schadow and the introduction of Meisterklassen, 215—Paris studios of the early nineteenth century, 215—Spreading of the new system of Meisterklassen: in Germany, 219—in other countries, 220—Academic art of the nineteenth century, 221—New social position of the artist; achieved academization of art instruction, 222—Reactionary attitude of nineteenth-century academies, 226—Slow introduction of innovations, 230—Anti-academic sayings of nineteenth-century artists, 235—Summing-up, 240.

Chapter VI. THE REVIVAL OF INDUSTRIAL ART, AND THE ARTIST'S EDUCATION TO-DAY *page 243*

Beginning academization of the craftsman's training, 243—Mercantilism and the craftsman's training, 244—England: The Parliamentary Commission of 1835, the Normal School of Design, 246—The Exhibition of 1851, 248—Laborde, Semper, Owen Jones, 249—South Kensington, 255—Tuition methods in nineteenth-century schools of applied art, 257—William Morris, 259—The Arts and Crafts Movement, 264—Germany: Kunsterziehung, reform of schools of applied art and of trade schools, 266—Workshops in academies of art, 269—Suggested reforms of art academies, 273—Gropius and the Bauhaus, 276—Amalgamation of art academy and school of arts and crafts in Berlin, 281—Present-day situation in France, 287—in Italy, 289—in Britain, 290—Summing-up, 294.

Appendix I. CODE OF RULES OF VASARI'S ACCADEMIA DEL DISEGNO, 1563 *page 296**Appendix II. LITERATURE ON ACADEMIES TREATED IN CHAPTERS IV AND V* *page 305**Index* *page 311*

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figs. 1 and 2.* Two engravings by Leonardo da Vinci or one of his pupils. They bear the inscription Academia Leonardi Vin(ci) and Ach(ademi)a Le(onardi) Vi(nci). *-facing p.* 25
- Fig. 3.* Federigo Zuccari: Self-portrait. Rome, Accademia di S. Luca. 25
- Fig. 4.* Giorgio Vasari. From a woodcut in the second edition of Vasari's *Vite*. 25
- Fig. 5.* Baccio Bandinelli's "Academy" in Rome. Engraved by Agostino Veneziano in 1531. 39
- Fig. 6.* Baccio Bandinelli's "Academy" in Florence, about 1550. Engraved by Enea Vico. 42
- Fig. 7.* Drawing from life in a Bolognese studio, perhaps that of the Carracci, about 1600. Düsseldorf, Staatliche Kunstakademie. 78
- Fig. 8.* Drawing from life in Rembrandt's studio, about 1650. Weimar, Kupferstich-Kabinett. 78
- Fig. 9.* The programme of French art instruction in the eighteenth century. This engraving by C. N. Cochin the Younger, dated 1763, stands at the beginning of the set of plates dealing with *Design* in Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. It shows drawing from drawings on the left, drawing from the cast in the centre and on the extreme right, and drawing from the nude in the background on the right. 92
- Figs. 10–12.* Five of the rooms of the Berlin Academy in 1696. Drawings by Augustin Terwesten in the collection of the Berlin Akademie der Künste. The subjects taught are, according to the Dutch extracts underneath the original drawings, drawing from plaster, drawing from drawings, anatomy, and perspective. *Fig. 12* shows the meeting room. 118
- Fig. 13.* Charles Lebrun. Bust by Antoine Coysevox. London, Wallace Collection. 124
- Fig. 14.* J. J. Winckelmann. Painting by A. R. Mengs. Krakow, Lubomirski Collection. 124

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 15.* Drawing from life in the Hague Academy, about 1750.
 By Aert Schouman. Hague, Royal Archives. *facing p.* 130
- Fig. 16.* Drawing from life in the Vienna Academy, about 1750.
 Painting by M. F. Quadal. Vienna, Akademie der bildenden
 Künste. 154
- Fig. 17.* A gathering of members in the life room of the Royal
 Academy in London. Mezzotint by R. Earlom after a painting
 by J. Zoffany, 1772. 186
- Fig. 18.* Peter Cornelius. Drawing by Karl Philipp Fohr. Heidel-
 berg, Museum. 208
- Fig. 19.* Wilhelm von Schadow: Self-portrait. Drawing in the
 National Gallery, Berlin. 208
- Figs. 20 and 21.* The Turin Academy, about 1900. Life room, and
 studio of the painter Senatore G. Grosso. 238
- Fig. 22.* William Morris. From a photograph by Emery Walker. 260
- Fig. 23.* Walter Gropius. From a photograph of about 1925. 260
- Fig. 24.* Silversmiths' Workshop at the London Central School
 of Arts and Crafts, opened in 1907. 266
- Fig. 25.* The Staatliches Bauhaus in Dessau, Walter Gropius's
 Art School, built in 1925/26. 278
- Figs. 26 and 27.* Two classrooms in the Berlin Vereinigte Staats-
 schulen für freie und angewandte Kunst, about 1930. Top: paints
 and their use (Professor Sandkuhl); bottom: bronze founding
 (Professor Kluge). Photographs, A. von Perckhammer. 285
- Fig. 28.* Letter headings of letters received by the author in 1932
 from the Berlin, London and Paris academies. 287