

Re-gendered Spaces: New Research on Place and Identity in 19th-Century France

Chair: Jennifer T. Criss

This panel proposes new research from young scholars on the conception of space as a gendered entity in late-nineteenth century France. Starting with the limiting binary of female-domestic versus male-public space, the panelists will repopulate our spatial imagination with hybrid places, unpacking definitions of interiority and exteriority as distinct—sexed—spheres. Was the homefront truly a feminine realm? How did artists manipulate their contemporary understanding of gendered spaces, and what role did public reception play in this manipulation? The participants develop a fruitful vein of nineteenth-century studies into place and gender, exploring the realm of the visual, from painting to popular culture, to interrogate the historical landscapes of modernism.

Juliet Bellow
American University

Dr. Pozzi at Home: Male Interiority and Private Space at the Fin de Siècle

Scholarship on gender ideology and conceptions of space in the late nineteenth century revolves around the figure of Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur*, the man who feels at home amid the crowds filling Parisian streets, cafés, and parks. Key to the concept of "separate spheres" for men and women, this emblematic figure aligns male subjectivity with the public realm and defines female experience as its obverse, rooted in the private space of the home. This paper examines the male subject's relation to the domestic sphere through a close reading of John Singer Sargent's 1881 painting *Dr. Pozzi at Home*. This monumental portrait of Dr. Samuel Pozzi – a prominent gynecologist, society dandy, and infamous ladies' man – broke many rules governing the depiction of men, but it most egregiously breached these conventions in its emphatically domestic setting. Unlike such contemporaneous images of doctors as Thomas Eakins' *The Gross Clinic* (1875) or André Brouillet's *A Clinical Lesson at the Salpêtrière* (1887), Sargent removed his subject from the hospital or clinic. Instead, against the grain of Pozzi's well-established public persona, he depicted the doctor wearing a crimson robe de chambre that explicitly defined the space around him as his home. Moreover, Pozzi's watery eyes, mottled red skin, and contracted hands – all recognizable symptoms of neurasthenia – conjured the "rest cure" mandated for (female) sufferers from this malady. Exposing the sitter's private self, *Dr. Pozzi at Home* dramatized the difficulty of representing male interiority at a moment when the "interior," in its various dimensions, was identified primarily with women.

Jennifer T. Criss

Toward a New Woman's Art: The Masculinization of Impressionist Women's Domestic Space

In the late nineteenth century, depicting the modern world became one of the focal points of Impressionist painting. Often the hallmarks of this contemporary and radically changing society reflected spaces accessible to the male *flâneur*: the theater, streets, café-concerts, and other Parisian landmarks identified with both avant-garde and popular culture. For the women of the Impressionist circle, however, their works of art were reduced to the domestic sphere of

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French life, what Griselda Pollock has labeled the “spaces of femininity.” These scenes of female-dominated salons, private gardens, and genre scenes reflected the reality of the lives of the female painters creating the works, particularly Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot. Yet their scenes showing females in domestic spaces did not simply reveal the actuality of haute-bourgeois women’s experience in visual language; instead, these images also challenged the notions of what was acceptable for women of their upper-middle social class through a combination of artistic props and compositional techniques.

This paper seeks to explore the subversive references that Cassatt and Morisot employed in their paintings and prints from the 1870s through the 1890s to elements typically characterized as masculine and progressive. Paintings such as Cassatt’s *Reading* (1880) and *Katherine Kelso Cassatt* (c. 1889) and Morisot’s *Young Girl with a Greyhound* (1893), while focusing on traditional female subjects, include pictorial references to the male-dominated world of modern Paris. These signifiers posit the sitters as straddling two distinct societies: the avant-garde and the popular. As such, these images manipulate the traditional codes of masculinity and femininity prevalent within nineteenth-century French culture. Overall, these paintings and prints demonstrate their creators’ attempt to establish a distinct pictorial language reflective of the changing status of the female artist in fin-de-siècle France.

Paul Galvez
Columbia University

Boudin sauvé des eaux: Seascape, Sexuality, and the Disavowal of Death

Charles Baudelaire concludes his discussion of "Landscape" from the Salon of 1859 with a most unusual pairing: the pastel studies of Eugène Boudin and the etchings of Charles Meryon. What could possibly link Meryon's sinister cityscapes to the buoyant beach scenes of Boudin? Formally and emotionally disparate, these two bodies of work nonetheless convene at a deeper level: they are landscapes of loss. But whereas Meryon's mourning of pre-Haussmannized Paris veers toward the fantastic and lugubrious, Boudin, along with Claude Monet and Gustave Courbet in the 1860s, seemingly takes comfort in the sea, in willful ignorance of the new leisure class gathering on its shores. However, the argument of this paper is that there is more to these figureless seascapes than mere nostalgia for nature untouched, mere escape into infinity. The compulsion to repeat the motif over and over again, the willingness to literally drown in matter, the taking over of the spatial illusion by the temporal act of drawing (and the concomitant shift from vision to writing) – all these speak to the sexual drives, not the oceanic sublime, thus connecting them, pace Baudelaire, to Meryon's uncanny gargoyles and morgues.

Karen Leader
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Art as Tart: Allegorizing Art in the Popular Press

The question of the specifically gendered dimension to nineteenth-century French popular culture may be approached by examining the wholesale transference of a rhetorical trope, the allegorization of the female, to purely popularizing ends. Historically, the female allegorical

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figure has played many roles: she is virtue: Marianne, *liberté*, peace, diplomacy, Republic, and virgin; or vice: disease, divorce, Medusa, *bas bleu*, whore on the barricades. The allegorized female is removed from woman's corporeal experience of modernity; she is emblematic, instrumental, sometimes symbolically powerful, other times thoroughly degraded. This paper considers the preponderance of images of the concept "art" or the yearly Salon allegorized as a woman. As representing an object of desire, the work of art, or a public space of display, the Salon, she can be magical and mysterious, but is more likely to be a costumed and coiffed commodity, a sexualized symbol of the spectacle that the art exhibition had become.