



The First Modern Museums of Art: The Birth of an Institution in 18th- and Early- 19th-Century Europe

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The First Modern Museums of Art: The Birth of an Institution in 18th- and Early- 19th-Century Europe From J. Paul Getty Museum

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the first modern, public museums of art—civic, state, or national—appeared throughout Europe, setting a standard for the nature of such institutions that has made its influence felt to the present day. Although the emergence of these museums was an international development, their shared history has not been systematically explored until now. Taking up that project, this volume includes chapters on fifteen of the earliest and still major examples, from the Capitoline Museum in Rome, opened in 1734, to the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, opened in 1836. These essays consider a number of issues, such as the nature, display, and growth of the museums' collections and the role of the institutions in educating the public.

The introductory chapters by art historian Carole Paul, the volume's editor, lay out the relationship among the various museums and discuss their evolution from private noble and royal collections to public institutions. In concert, the accounts of the individual museums give a comprehensive overview, providing a basis for understanding how the collective emergence of public art museums is indicative of the cultural, social, and political shifts that mark the transformation from the early-modern to the modern world. The fourteen distinguished contributors to the book include Robert G. W. Anderson, former director of the British Museum in London; Paula Findlen, Ubaldo Pierotti Professor of Italian History at Stanford University; Thomas Gaehtgens, director of the Getty Research Institute; and Andrew McClellan, dean of academic affairs and professor of art history at Tufts University.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Exemplary.”—*Choice*

“Leading academics and curators contribute chapters on 15 museums, from the Capitoline Museums in Rome to Munich’s Alte Pinakothek. They provide detailed analysis of how collection, display and education were conceived at the time, as well as how the modern museum reflected the period’s broad social changes.”—*Apollo*

“[These] accounts of the individual museums give a comprehensive overview, providing a basis for understanding how the collective emergence of public art museums is indicative of the cultural, social, and political shifts that mark the transformation from the early-modern to the modern world.”—*Enfilade*

About the Author

Carole Paul is a scholar of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century art in Italy, whose recent work concerns the history of museums and collections in the early modern period. Her publications include *Making a Prince’s Museum: Drawings for the Late-Eighteenth-Century Redecoration of the Villa Borghese* (Getty, 2000).

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