

Janine Bailly-Herzberg, *Dictionnaire de l'Estampe en France, 1830-1950*. Coll. « Arts et Métiers Graphiques ». Paris, Flammarion, 1985, 384 pp., 501 illus., \$100.00 (paper)

Carolyn W. MacHardy

Volume 16, Number 1, 1989

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1073335ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1073335ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (print)

1918-4778 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

MacHardy, C. W. (1989). Review of [Janine Bailly-Herzberg, *Dictionnaire de l'Estampe en France, 1830-1950*. Coll. « Arts et Métiers Graphiques ». Paris, Flammarion, 1985, 384 pp., 501 illus., \$100.00 (paper)]. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 16(1), 70–71.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1073335ar>

facilement à un état de turbulence sociale. Lipton est portée à discriminer parmi les modernes sur cette base formelle : il y aurait ceux qui s'accommodent de l'aliénation (Monet et Renoir) et ceux qui la dénoncent en la pointant (Manet, Caillebotte, Degas). Une attention à d'autres aspects plastiques, celui de la présence de la touche et du pigment comme trace de travail, par exemple, aurait peut-être donné une vision un peu moins dichotomisée de l'avant-garde.

NICOLE DUBREUIL-BLONDIN  
*Dép. d'histoire de l'art*  
*Université de Montréal*  
*Montréal, Québec H3C 3J7*

---

JANINE BAILLY-HERZBERG *Dictionnaire de l'Estampe en France, 1830-1950*. Coll. « Arts et Métiers Graphiques ». Paris, Flammarion, 1985, 384 pp., 501 illus., \$100.00 (paper).

In his foreword to the *Dictionnaire de l'Estampe en France, 1830-1950* by Janine Bailly-Herzberg, Michel Melot compares the work to Henri Beraldi's *Les Graveurs du XIXe Siècle* "car il est le fruit non d'une compilation mécanique mais d'une recherche laborieuse qui toujours remonte au document primaire et vérifie ses sources." Few will quarrel with this statement. Bailly-Herzberg's concise dictionary cogently summarizes 12 decades of intense and varied printmaking activity in France by drawing both on primary documents and on the considerable amount of research that has been devoted to this period over the past three decades. The result is a significant and timely contribution to the literature on nineteenth- and twentieth-century printmaking in France.

The period between 1830 and 1950 was, Bailly-Herzberg notes, a particularly rich one in the history of printmaking. The *Dictionnaire* opens with 1830 because in this year "éclate le romantisme où l'eau-forte et la lithographie originales de peintre font reculer... la gravure de reproduction, fief des burinistes," and concludes with 1950 for two reasons:

Nous n'avons pas voulu faire l'injustice à toute une génération de graveurs—ceux qui ont commencé leur carrière et ceux qui ont atteint leur maturité après 1945—de les passer sous silence. Nous avons donc étudié les quelques années qui ont suivi la guerre. D'autre part nous avons jugé préférable de ne pas dépasser cette date afin d'avoir un regard plus serein que seul un certain recul rend possible (p. 10).

Nearly 600 printmakers are listed in the *Dictionnaire de l'Estampe*, beginning with Louise Addema and concluding with Anders Zorn. The alphabetic format, also used by Beraldi, was chosen for ease of consultation assuming that scholars, collectors, and print dealers consult it with regard to a particular artist rather than to a specific time period. The entries rely on information provided by the sources listed in the bibliographies and, for the most part, do not provide new information. Each entry lists the artist's dates, preferred print media, an estimate of his or her total output and an overview of his or her career, noting schooling, influences, and contacts with other artists. A brief discussion of the artist's

thematic and subjective concerns follows, including references to specific works, with a brief bibliography concluding each entry. When possible, a reproduction of one work by the artist appears on the same page as the entry; the majority of these have not been published before.

Artists such as Géricault, Goya, and Bonington are excluded because they worked prior to 1830, and so are those printmakers who worked primarily as illustrators. Consequently, Daumier and Doré receive scant notice (despite the author's description of Daumier as "le maître incomparable de la lithographie" (p. 87), while Herman Armour Webster, the substantially less famous American etcher of nostalgic, picturesque landscapes, is accorded a lengthier and more detailed entry.

Indeed, among the most useful aspects of this book are the entries on those forgotten or ignored printmakers and artists from around the world who worked in France during this period. Entries on people like Charles-Joseph Traviès, who for so long was eclipsed by Daumier, and who produced prints for both *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*, help to give dimension to this period. Similarly, articles on such artists as Donald Shaw MacLaughlan (the etcher from Charlottetown who was celebrated in the early 1900s as the most talented of Whistler's followers, but who died alone and in poverty in Morocco in 1938) and Caroline and Frank Armington (whose once considerable following has now shrunk to a small group of fans in Canada) will undoubtedly stimulate interest in their achievements. However, it is unfortunate that Caroline Armington, a talented printmaker in her own right, should merely be referred to in the closing sentences of the entry on her husband, Frank. Indeed, she deserves a separate entry.

Bailly-Herzberg's previous contributions to documenting the history of nineteenth-century printmaking in France are very much in evidence in the *Dictionnaire de l'Estampe*. Many of the members of the Société des Aquafortistes are included (a glance at the bibliographies of some of them confirms that it was Bailly-Herzberg who first brought them to attention in her much-acclaimed study *L'Eau-forte de peintre au dix-neuvième siècle: la société des Aquafortistes 1862-1867* [Paris, 1972]). And it will be noted that the entries on the Impressionist printmakers are more comprehensive than those on many others, reflecting Bailly-Herzberg's works on the prints of such artists as Berthe Morisot and Camille and Lucien Pissarro.

I would like to note a few minor concerns with regard to the bibliographies that accompany each entry. They are by no means complete, nor do they necessarily reflect the latest scholarship. For example, Bailly-Herzberg states that Charles Despiau's *Nu allongé*, reproduced on page 99, is "la seule planche originale connue de Despiau." However, in Gabriel Weisberg's exhibition catalogue *Images of Women: Printmakers in France from 1830 to 1930* (Utah Museum of Fine Arts, 1978), a second lithograph, also entitled *Reclining Nude* is reproduced. It seems that the author is not aware of this catalogue for it is not included in either this entry or in the more general bibliography at the back. Weisberg provides another interesting detail omitted by Bailly-Herzberg. Achille Devéria was the Associate Curator of the Cabinet des Estampes at the Bibliothèque Nationale, becoming Curator of the Collection before

his death. It may seem a trifle, but in light of the close association between Bailly-Herzberg and the Bibliothèque Nationale in the preparation of this book, the exclusion seems odd.

The closing 30-odd pages of the book consist of a series of important and extremely useful appendices. The author has compiled lists of some of the important print albums of the period, including their contents; of societies and associations to which printmakers belonged; of print merchants and dealers, with their addresses; of books for further consultation; and of techniques and processes used by printmakers during this period. Much of this information, with the exception of the technical data, which is based on two exhibition catalogues, is extremely difficult to find as it is scattered in libraries throughout France, and much of it has not been published before. It is important to note, however, that the listing of print albums and societies from 1830 to 1950 is not exhaustive. Such a list would require a second volume and is not within the scope of the present book. Rather, the author gives the flavour of the period and some indication of the rich resources that are available.

At times the cross-referencing in this section could be improved. For example, the Société des Peintres-Graveurs Indépendants is referred to in the entries on Lespinasse and Laboureur, but not in the entry on its third founding member, Marie Laurencin, and the reader who hopes to discover more about the activities of this society will be disappointed to find that it is not listed with the other societies and associations. And it is puzzling that the etcher Jacques Beltrand, at one time the president of the Société des Peintres-Graveurs Français, is referred to twice in the brief entry on this society but not included in the dictionary proper except for a mention that he was one of the four children of Tony Beltrand.

This final section of the *Dictionnaire de l'Estampe* is considerably more difficult to use than the first part. In the dictionary proper, alphabetical headings and numerous reproductions provide frequent visual variety. However, this second part is simply dense, and particularly so in the list of printers, editors, and dealers where name follows name for three and a half pages. This presentation is all the more unfortunate because the book itself is elegantly designed with both the casual browser and the serious researcher in mind. The white matte paper is suitable for the small black print and for the reproductions, although the paperback cover is unlikely to withstand the heavy use that the book can anticipate. The choice of Felix Vallotton's "La Paresse" for the cover is a delightfully ironic touch: I wonder if Janine Bailly-Herzberg chose it while reflecting on the nine years of toil that went into the book?

CAROLYN W. MACHARDY  
Okanagan College  
Kelowna, British Columbia V1Y 4X8

HANS HESS *George Grosz*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1985, 272 pp., 230 illus., \$20.95.

Art historians have long surveyed the work of the German painter and draughtsman George Grosz (1893-1959) in terms of the influences of Expressionism, Dada, and *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*. They have discerned shrewd primitivism in early drawings like *Crime* (1912), broad political satire in mature watercolours like *Dusk* (1922), and tragic Romanticism in late oils like *Apocalyptic Landscape* (1937). The late Hans Hess's *George Grosz* will satisfy any reader interested chiefly in a restatement of such well-worn information and interpretations. This is not to say that it is uninteresting or repetitive, for it is a very thorough biography. Hess bases his study on a personal understanding of the German cultural atmosphere of the early twentieth century, as well as on very specific information made available to him by friends and relatives of Grosz. Of course, he also exploited the Grosz archives in Princeton and the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, which goes to show that this presentation of the artist as a man is at least responsible to documentary materials. In fact, as a digest of archival sources, Hess's study is exemplary.

The problem with the book lies in the realm of interpretation. Hess's discussion of single works is seriously hampered because there is no attempt to engage the works directly or even interpretively. This is quite ironic, given that Grosz's reputation was founded on social satire and anarchistic revolt. Cases in point are afforded by every instance in which violence, sex, or crime is depicted (figs. 23-24, 26, 30, 61, 63, and so on). Hess generalizes about the strange attraction of rape and horror, asking if Grosz "thought of murder as a form of art" (p. 38), which entirely sidesteps the grotesque impact of the pictures themselves. Moreover, when he does assess specific formal features and their contributions to the content—which must surely be the largest part of Grosz's art—he settles only on woolly generalities like "naive sophistication" (p. 74).

What is perhaps worst of all is his failure to question Grosz's and his own assumptions regarding the women depicted in some of these works. *The Woman-Slayer* of 1918, for example, is a scene of sexual mutilation and murder, directly influenced by Cubism and Futurism. The author acknowledges that it is "direct and gruesome." In the same breath, however, he notes that the "victim [is] still in ecstasy" (p. 74). Elsewhere, images of unequivocal sex-crimes are described as "haunting," painted "with loving care" (p. 72). Perhaps neither Grosz nor Hess should be condemned for being products of their time, but it should at least be noted that such presumptions—in this case, of female masochism; in other cases, of critical objectivity, political disinterestedness, and the like—continually undermine the text, at least in the mind of the contemporary critical reader.

The most glaring example of Hess's reticence is his failure to comment on the words of Grosz himself: "Life has no meaning, except the satisfaction of one's appetite for food and women" (p. 52). The equation of the sex drive with hunger is patently false, if only because underindulgence in food leads to tissue deterioration, whereas sexual abstinence does not. One must look else-