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# Convincing the public: Louis-Auguste Boileau's exhibitions and their media coverage

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## Keywords:

*Exhibition, Mediatization, Criticism, Model, Innovation*

## ABSTRACT:

In the 19th century, the Salon offered artists a major opportunity to build their reputation. Architect Louis-Auguste Boileau participated nine times between 1849 and 1893, certainly hoping, through his repeated presence, to give visibility to his work. Presenting one's work in the Salon was nonetheless a risky venture, for while it enhanced the exhibitor's prominence, it also left them vulnerable to criticism from the public and the press. Strategies were therefore devised to overcome the difficulties of accessing the Salon or to limit the impact of unfavourable opinions. In addition to the Salons, Boileau chose to exhibit his work at home and in a shop. The study of his varied exhibition practices thus sheds light on the processes that contribute to building reputation in the architectural milieu of the second half of the century.

Nel XIX secolo, il Salon offriva agli artisti una significativa opportunità per costruire la propria reputazione. L'architetto Louis-Auguste Boileau partecipò nove volte tra il 1849 e il 1893, sicuramente sperando, attraverso la sua presenza ripetuta, di dare visibilità al suo lavoro. Presentare il proprio lavoro al Salon era comunque un'impresa rischiosa, poiché se da un lato aumentava la visibilità dell'autore, dall'altro lo rendeva vulnerabile alle critiche del pubblico e della stampa. Pertanto, furono ideate strategie volte a superare le difficoltà di accesso al Salon o limitare l'impatto delle opinioni sfavorevoli. Oltre ai Salons, Boileau scelse di esporre il suo lavoro anche a casa e in un negozio. Lo studio delle sue diversificate pratiche espositive getta quindi luce sui processi che contribuiscono a costruire la reputazione nel contesto architettonico della seconda metà del secolo.

## Opening Picture:

Fig. 01: Boileau, Louis-Auguste. Church of Saint-Pierre-Fourier, Mattaincourt, 1844-1859.

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In the 1849 Salon, Louis-Auguste Boileau presented drawings of the church in Mattaincourt, in the Vosges<sup>1</sup>, which he was building at the time<sup>2</sup>. The project marked an important turning point, being the real start of his career as an architect [fig. 01]. Until then, Boileau had made a name for himself with his carpentry work, in particular his Gothic-inspired church furniture. Overall, the project was well received, with the notable exception of César Daly, who remarked, rather condescendingly, in the *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics*, that Boileau should not have changed course. “M. Boileau made himself known with his Gothic style carpentry, which has been rather successful [...] Caesar would have preferred first rank in a village over second rank in Rome: M. Boileau is not of the same opinion”.<sup>3</sup>

Boileau was deeply affected by such observations. The son of a watchmaker, largely self-taught<sup>4</sup>, Boileau was keenly aware of the gulf that separated him and most of his fellow architects, and subsequently made great effort to consolidate the social and professional position for which his background had not prepared him. Keen for success, Boileau seized every available opportunity. He exhibited in official Salons, in his studio and even in a shop. Whatever form the exhibition took, it would be reported on in the press or commented on in some publication.

How then does this mediatization work? Is it different if the work is displayed at the Salon, or exhibited by the architect himself? What strategies did Boileau adopt to build his reputation?

By the time Boileau began exhibi-

ting at the Salon, reputation was already a crucial factor in obtaining commissions. The need to be known to the public did not only concern architects, but all artists. Since the end of the Ancien Régime, links between creators and patrons had weakened considerably, and painters, sculptors and architects had to develop new professional strategies to make their newfound autonomy viable. As Oskar Bätschmann's study shows, this emancipation was accompanied by an increase in public exhibitions.<sup>5</sup> Thanks to these events artists gained visibility and could expect to receive attention. However, while they sought to break free of the constraints of aristocratic commissions and academic norms, their freedom was counterbalanced by the power of public opinion, which could make or break reputations. New obligations were thus imposed on artists, as they had to conform to the expectations of the public, both in terms of their creative output and in the way they acted in society. As such, Pierre Bourdieu noted that the constitution of the 19th century artistic milieu can be understood both as a movement towards autonomy of practice, due to the diminished status of the old benefactors, and as a phenomenon of alienation, notably increasing precariousness.<sup>6</sup>

Architects were no exception. While some were able to avoid the judgement of public opinion by virtue of a close relationship with their patrons, the majority had to find ways to deal with this factor. The architectural press, which had developed considerably from 1840 onwards, played a key role, as did the major newspapers, which took an interest in important projects and gave architects space to express themself-



ves<sup>7</sup>. The Salons were main events within the art world and received a great deal of media attention. Of course, architecture occupied a rather secondary place compared to painting, but its dedicated section was nonetheless systematically commented on in the specialised

Boileau represents an interesting case study as he proves to be particularly reactive, rushing to respond through the press if his work seems to be misunderstood, or knowing, to some extent, how to anticipate critical reactions by adapting his propositions to their judgement criteria.



**Fig. 02**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste.  
Church of Notre-  
Dame-de-France,  
London, 1867-  
1869. Biblio-  
thèque de l'EN-  
SBA.

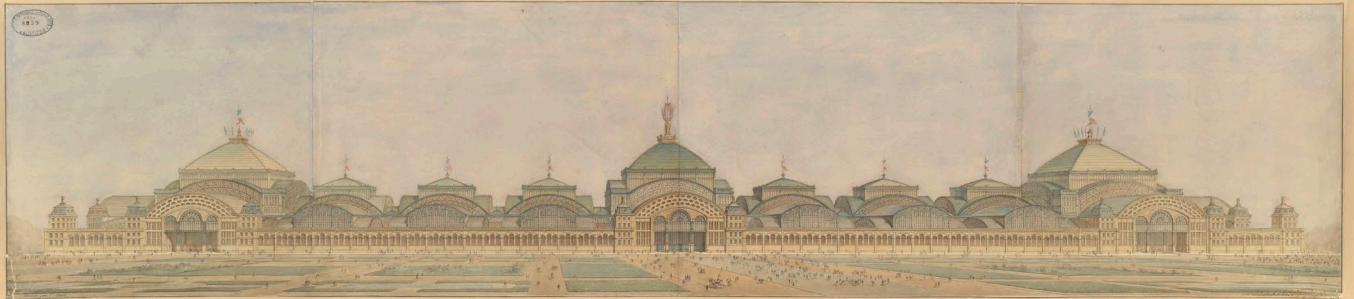
journals, especially in the *Revue Générale* or the *Encyclopédie d'architecture*. Readers who had not been able to visit the Salon could get a good idea about the content of the exhibition. While the reviews primarily described the exhibited designs, they also tended to include a critical dimension, emphasizing the quality or drawbacks of the projects, and thus influencing the way in which they were understood. Being accepted to participate in the Salon was an important first step in building a reputation, and the published reviews formed a second and almost equally decisive stage. Aware of the repercussions of these reviews, some architects developed tactics to amplify or counter their effects. Among them, Louis-Auguste

### Boileau's Salons, 1849-1893

Continuing the tradition of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture exhibitions initiated under the reign of Louis XIV, the Salons of the 19th century were a major event in the art world<sup>8</sup>. Their success resonated far beyond specialist circles and the work on display were seen by a wide public, especially since admission to the exhibition was free for all on Sundays. Architectural drawings, engravings and lithographs, however, made up only a very modest part of the exhibited work. During the 1860s, period in which Boileau was particularly pre-

sent in the Salons, the volume of architectural works was between 2% and 4% of the paintings on display. Their quantity varied from around forty (43 items in 1863) to around a

more open than during the time in which the Institut controlled the jury, a situation that would have certainly favoured Boileau.



03

hundred (114 items in 1861), while the number of exhibited paintings ranged from 1500 to 3000. Despite its limited scope, the architectural exhibition was an important occasion for the profession. Being present in the Salon was an opportunity to demonstrate one's talent in composition or draughtsmanship, perhaps more easily than in painting, as the competition was proportionally minor. Passing the selection stage was in itself a form of success, as one had to convince the jury to select the works they presented. It seems surprising that Boileau, whose work was not unanimously admired, participated so frequently in the Salons. His works were included in 1849, 1861, 1864, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869 and 1893: a total of nine exhibitions, six of which were consecutive.

His participation largely corresponds with a period in which the organization of the Salon was subject to upheaval and change. Dissolved in 1848, the jury was reinstated in 1849, but the Académie no longer controlled it. The academicians being the minority, it could be concluded that deliberations were

In 1861 the context changed. The jury was once again composed of members of the first four sections of the Académie and officials from the Beaux-Arts administration. However, it was not unfavourable to Boileau. The project he presented with his son Louis-Charles was not only accepted but awarded a "seconde classe" medal.<sup>9</sup> As well as bringing recognition, this prize opened the doors of future Salons to the father and son. Medal holders were exempt from the jury procedure and could exhibit their works without submitting them to examination, an opportunity that Louis-Auguste and Louis-Charles seized.

The drawings and engravings that Boileau Sr. exhibited at the Salon showed completed buildings, design propositions responding to topical themes, or free compositions. The built churches of Saint-Pierre-Fourier in Mattaincourt, Sainte-Marguerite in Le Vésinet<sup>10</sup> and Notre-Dame-de-France in London<sup>11</sup> were illustrated in the 1849, 1865 and 1868 submissions respectively [fig. 02]. The submissions of 1866, 1867 and 1893 exposed his

**Fig. 03**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste.  
Design for a  
World Fair palace  
[1865]. Biblio-  
thèque de l'EN-  
SBA.



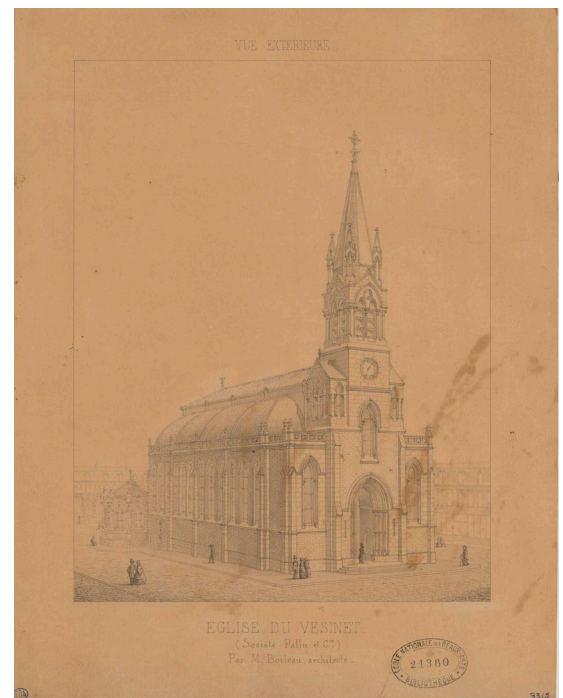
desire to participate in the architectural debates of the time. By presenting an exhibition palace in 1866,<sup>12</sup> he aimed to contribute to the advancement of thinking about large, covered spaces and their lighting, in view of the 1867 World Fair [fig. 03]. One of the 1867 submissions shows Boileau's response to the consultation initiated by the City of Paris on the subject of economic church design.<sup>13</sup> The series of drawings presented at the 1893 Salon de la Société nationale des Beaux-Arts was a proposal for a monument commemorating the 1789 Revolution, a period that was being studied by the administration.<sup>14</sup> In addition to these propositions, which respond to specific contexts, were contributions that more freely illustrated Boileau's ideas about metal construction and programmatic typologies. This is particularly the case for the submissions of 1861, 1864<sup>15</sup> and 1867, which illustrate church projects or civil monuments. Whatever might have initiated these buildings and projects, nearly all of them used structural systems developed by Boileau. Taking advantage of his exemption from the jury, he multiplied his submissions and used the Salon to show his inventions in different forms, from modest churches to grand palaces.

### The reception of the exhibited works

**Fig. 04**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste.  
Church of  
Sainte-Margue-  
rite, Le Vésinet,  
1862-1865.  
Bibliothèque de  
l'ENSBA.

The Salon reviews frequently mentioned Boileau's built works and propositions. If the form and content of the reviews vary according to the critic and the year, going from a few lines to several columns, the continuous reference to his work incon-

testably strengthened his reputation. However, such publicity comes at a price. When the judgment is unfavourable or intentions are misunderstood, it becomes necessary to



produce a counter-argument. Boileau reacted in this way after his exhibition at the 1865 Salon, where he presented the church of Le Vésinet. Following the criticism, he picked up his pen to defend his vision of architecture and express his opinion on new materials.

In his article on the 1865 Salon in the *Gazette des architectes et du bâtiment*, the question of innovation is directly addressed by Anatole de Baudot. Unusually, Baudot complements Boileau. “We recognise that, in this study, the author has made an effort that should be applauded, and that we must take into consideration the difficulties constructors always encounter with new materials. To undertake research is worthy of merit in itself, and this merit is even more admirable for its rarity”.<sup>16</sup>

Baudot was referring to the Coignet concrete used for the church's walls and bell towers [fig. 05]. While praising the experimentation undertaken at Le Vésinet, he criticized the falseness of the elevations that give the impression of a stone construction rather than a moulded form.



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However, the most important point raised by Baudot concerns the use of concrete. In his eyes, the innovation of the church lay in the use of concrete for the building's envelope, rather than the metal vaulting [fig. 06]. Yet, for Boileau, this perception, which minimized his role as an innovator, was far more problematic than the remarks about the building's design. At Le Vésinet, he was in competition with François Coignet, who was also a talented self-publicist. This can be seen in the space given to concrete in certain press articles, such as the one in the *Petit Journal* which speaks of a "pseudolithic [monument] in the Gothic style".<sup>17</sup>

Boileau felt the need to act to correct the perception of his work and prevent it from being easily associated with Coignet concrete. Writing in 1867 in the *Moniteur des architectes*, using his expertise in the field of construction as a pretext, he said he wished to give some feedback about his experience with concrete.<sup>18</sup> He set out a damning verdict on the material, attacking its permeability, lack of sharpness, and cost. Coignet counter-attacked, publishing a response in the same periodical criticizing Boileau's attitude, suggesting that he did not understand the value of such experimentation.<sup>19</sup> Boileau responded in another article, citing the compliments he had received from Victor Baltard, director of the architecture service of the City of Paris, for his previous observations.<sup>20</sup> Boileau's analyses reached Great Britain, where a slightly abridged translation of his critique of Coignet's concrete was published in 1868 in *The Builder*.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, Boileau's exhibition in the 1865 Salon cannot be understood as an isolated event. In the battle to establish whether concrete or iron brought the greatest innovation, Boileau had to defend his own interests. The process of mediatization thus included not only Baudot in the role of critic, but also Boileau himself, who in turn involved a third actor, Coignet, who also participated in the construction. This multiplication of viewpoints complexified the reception, as the Salon constitutes ultimately only one aspect of a series of interpretations.

**Fig. 05**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste.  
Church of  
Sainte-Margue-  
rite, detail of the  
façade in Coignet  
concrete (photo  
by the Author).



## Designing for the Salon

Considering the strong mediatization of the Salons, and the role they played in career development, putting together a submission that anticipates the reaction of the jury, and above all, the public must have been tempting. The work would thus find itself partly determined by the reception of the jury that the artist seeks to anticipate. In the world of painting, Gustave Courbet, accustomed to scandals, said he had created the painting “Le Retour d’une Conference” with the aim of it being rejected by the Salon, out of a desire to shock and for financial gain<sup>22</sup>. Among architects, provocation appears to have been less important. However, in seeking to anticipate the jury’s reaction, were they not operating in a similar way, even if, unlike Courbet, they were trying to please?

This question arises particularly in relation to Louis-Auguste and Louis-Charles Boileau’s 1861 submission. With this project, the work of Boileau Sr. appears to follow an inflection. Until then, he had been principally known for a project titled “Composition synthétique” in which he applied a vaulting principle he had invented [fig. 07]. Considering this experimentation and its later developments, the design of a church built of metal and masonry in 1861 appears rather conventional [fig. 08].

**Fig. 06**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste.  
Church of  
Sainte-Margue-  
rite, interior  
view showing the  
metal structure.  
Old postcard.

Several reasons could be put forward to explain this change of attitude. Firstly, the collaboration with his son might have been a factor. Louis-Charles had developed a distinct architectural and theoretical line of thought from that of his

father. His work was also often better perceived by critics, in particular by Edmond About who wrote: “Mr Boileau Jr. did not invent a new architecture, like his father did, but he understands old architecture and does it well, which is better”.<sup>23</sup>



06

The 1861 project might also owe its shape to an anticipation of the jury’s reaction. In this hypothesis, Boileau Sr. would have intentionally abandoned his search for new forms in order to present a more acceptable architecture at the Salon. Apart from metal, the project did not express a strong desire to innovate. In 1861, the use of cast iron and iron for a church, though not common, was nonetheless allowed on certain occasions. The Boileaus demonstrated their potential at Saint-Eugène in 1854-1855. Victor Baltard also used them at Saint-Augustin, the construction of which he over-





07



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**Fig. 07**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste.  
Model of the  
“Composition  
synthétique”.  
Photolithograph  
in *Nouvelle  
forme architectu-  
rale*, cliché Bisson  
frères.

**Fig. 08**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste  
and Louis-  
Charles. Design  
for a church  
built in metal and  
masonry. 2nd medal  
in the 1861 Salon.  
Bibliothèque de  
l'ENSBA.



**Fig. 09**  
Boileau,  
Louis-Auguste.  
Model of the  
“Composition  
synthétique”,  
photograph  
attributed to the  
Bisson brothers.  
Bibliothèque de  
l’ENSBA.

saw from 1859.<sup>24</sup> In all evidence, Louis-Auguste and Louis-Charles sought to seduce the jury with a composition that did not take unnecessary risks and with beautiful design. Among the drawings, the exterior perspective illustrates the sequence of linked volumes culminating in the dome while the transversal section reveals the attention paid to the interior decoration, subtly distinguishing between structure and infill without overemphasizing the contrast.

These precautions about the composition as well as the quality of the submission certainly contributed to its success. The panels were accepted and awarded a “seconde classe” medal. In the architectural press, Adolphe Lance praised the project, though he did comment, not without irony, that this success had only been possible because the father had benefitted from his son’s partnership to abandon the path of

architectural invention. “In his first attempt at innovation, Mr Boileau had sought, and believed he had found, in unfortunate, impossible forms, an original architecture, but all he had discovered was a new expression of the opposite of beauty; he seemed to believe that being bizarre was all it took to be original. The project exhibited at the Salon, which is the combined effort of father and son, proves that Mr Boileau father has since learned a lot and forgotten a lot, for which we congratulate him twice”.<sup>25</sup>

The editor of the *Encyclopédie* was well aware of the estrangement that the 1861 project represented in Boileau Sr.’s work, but he was wrong in his interpretation: the architect had not forgotten his ambitions, he had just temporarily put them aside, perhaps to allow his son the space to express his talent, possibly to maximize their chances of success at the Salon.



Thanks to the medal and the automatic right to exhibit that came with it, Boileau Sr. would use subsequent Salons, after 1861, to promote his innovations. In 1864, he presented a monumental construction and churches conceived with his “système des voûtes butantes”<sup>26</sup>. The omnipresence of Boileau elicited a certain exasperation from Baudot who expressed, in 1867, his weariness with the systematism of the compositions presented at the Salons. “Mr Boileau father. – Another church like Saint-Eugène or rather Le Vésinet: another pyramid system. It must be recognized that Mr Boileau has great perseverance, but his creations show neither a serious construction system nor artistic value”.<sup>27</sup>

### Taking the initiative to exhibit

While being particularly present in the Salons, Boileau also knew how to use other means to publicize his

work. In 1850 he organized an exhibition in his own studio, and another one in 1862, this time in a commercial space that was lent to him. This form of exhibition, stemming from an individual initiative, differed from the Salon in that it allowed freedom from the institutional framework, and especially from the jury and the display format restrictions imposed by the sheer quantity of exhibitors. Although it offer greater freedom, it did not provide the same level of recognition, as the works were not subject to examination.

The 1850 exhibition took place at a key moment in the architect’s career. Having overseen the construction of the church in Mattaincourt in the Vosges, he returned to Paris to devote himself to two important projects, the writing of a book on the history of progress in architecture, and the conception of the “Composition synthétique”.

Making use of his talent as a carpen-



**Fig. 10**  
Léon Isabey,  
Courbet Pavilion,  
built in 1855,  
photograph by  
Charles Thurston.  
V&A Museum.



ter, he created a large model at the scale of five millimetres to one metre, made of wood and cardboard, which he exhibited in his home studio [fig. 09]. He edited a brochure inviting the public to come and see it “on working days, between 2pm and 6pm, at the author’s studio, rue de Sèvres, n°11”.<sup>28</sup>

With this initiative, Boileau sought to boost his reputation. As a former carpenter, starting his career as an architect and constructor, he had neither prestigious education nor built work to enhance his status as intellectual and innovative architect. Thus, as he confirmed in his brochure, persuading the public appeared to be a necessary stage to achieve his ambition. “Firmly convinced that he has found the solution to the problem [...] the author needs to appeal publicly to all men of progress, his fellow citizens [...] An outsider to cliques and gos-

sip, he addresses enlightened public opinion [...] Whose help, which he greatly needs [...] could be given in two ways: by getting those who commission public buildings to adopt his architectural system, and by recommending his book”.<sup>29</sup>

By appealing to the public for support, Boileau hoped to receive commissions. This appreciation of the role of public opinion as judge and means of influence could be compared, proportionally, to the one formulated at the same time by Gustave Courbet. Although the context was different, the painter also tried to influence the public opinion in his favour. Feeling under-represented in the Beaux-Arts Exhibition organized as part of the 1855 World Fair, he had built, at his own expense, an independent pavilion designed by architect Léon Isabey, in which he installed around forty of his paintings<sup>30</sup> [fig. 10]. The critic



**Fig. 11**  
Magasins Delisle,  
neighbours of  
the premises  
Boileau exhibited  
his projects in  
1862. Advertising  
image.



Champfleury noted the reaction this provoked. “It is unbelievably audacious, it is a means of overthrowing the jury and the institutions, it is a direct appeal to the public, it is freedom, some say. It is a scandal, anarchy, it is art dragged through the mud, these trestles belong in the fairground, say the others”.<sup>31</sup> Boileau’s exhibition did not cause the same stir as Courbet’s, but, like that of the painter, owed its existence to the conviction that all members of society are capable of judging artworks.

In 1862, Boileau organized another exhibition. He set up his work in a commercial premises situated at n°6 boulevard des Capucines. The location was excellent, close to the famous Delisle shops [fig. 11]. *The Album pratique de l’art industriel*, edited by Charles Alfred Oppermann, promoted the event, noting that among the exhibited works, the project entitled “Monument des arts libéraux et industriels” provided the best summary of the research carried out by the architect over the past twenty-five years.<sup>32</sup> The article, which did not describe the work precisely, nevertheless stated that it displayed the advantages of great size, stability, the development of a metallic frame, economy – particularly in the suppression of flying buttresses – and good acoustics.

If Boileau benefitted from this opportunity to exhibit, it was possibly because in 1853 the Salon had become biennial and thus was not held in 1862. It did not become annual again until 1863. This 1862 presentation allowed the architect to continue to receive attention after the success of the 1861 Salon. Charles Garnier did not miss the opportu-

nity to highlight the stubbornness that this showed. “Mr Boileau uses every possible occasion to express his ideas to the public. If the exhibition halls are closed, he doesn’t give up, he shows his work in a shop. He is an extremely determined man, which is too easy an excuse to deny him benefits”.<sup>33</sup>

### **Examination of the work, an important guarantee**

As Garnier noted, Boileau was highly motivated to find ways to exhibit his work, particularly by organizing his own personal exhibitions. Such exhibitions, however, come with the inconvenience of being perceived as publicity stunts. By definition, privately initiated exhibitions are not subjected to juries to assess the admissibility of works. Apart from possible favourable reviews in the press, nothing guarantees the quality of the exhibits. The Salon suffered from this very problem in 1848 when the jury was abolished. Many agreed that a great number of mediocre works had damaged the event. In 1863, the issue re-emerged with the “Salon des refusés” created on the initiative of Napoleon III to allow those who had not been selected by the jury to show their work. Of the 2800 side-lined artists, only 1200 decided to maintain their submissions, as the prestige of showing in the Salon annexe was too insignificant.

Boileau most certainly measured the risk of submitting his works to the public without having them evaluated. He thus took the initiative to assemble a group of experts in order to carry out a critical exami-

nation of the “Composition synthétique” and its structural system.

Among them, Albert Lenoir offered strong support. The son of Alexandre Lenoir, the administrator of the Musée des Monuments français, Albert was best known for his work on medieval architecture and the project of the Musée de Cluny, inaugurated in March 1844. In 1851 he wrote an essay containing a summary of Boileau’s intentions and explications of his project.<sup>34</sup> Lenoir recalls that he wrote the essay after having examined the model together with other people, including engineers, such as Michel Chevalier, a graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique, professor of political economy at the Collège de France and future advisor to Napoleon III, and Léonce Reynaud, professor of architecture at the Ecole Polytechnique and designer of the Bréhat lighthouse. The steam engine inventor Pierre Arnaud Séguier was also present, as were writers, historians, and archaeologists Ferdinand de Lasteyrie, Prosper Mérimée and Ludovic Vitet. This group was joined by the journalist and editor Édouard Charton, and the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Sibour. The gathering of such eminent figures around the model represented an incontestable success, especially since their expertise covered diverse fields, from engineering, archaeology, and contemporary theory, to politics, journalism and religion. The attention they all devoted to the project suggests that it sparked their interest. The benefit of this operation would be minor if it was not brought to the attention of administrative departments that might favour a commission, and more generally, to the public’s attention. In order to

record their analyses, several examiners added apostils to Lenoir’s essay. Autographs (a form of lithograph) of these handwritten notes were made for them to be disseminated. Lenoir’s essay, accompanied by these apostils, was for example communicated to the *Conseil des bâtiments civils* in 1853, when Boileau sent them a large set of documents.<sup>35</sup>

If it was important to engage with the administration, it was also essential to gain public favour. To this end, in 1853 Boileau published the book *Nouvelle forme architecturale*.<sup>36</sup> It was a collection of elements presenting his research and promoting his invention. Lenoir’s essay was included, as were the apostils<sup>37</sup> and a photolithographic reproduction of the model. Thanks to the book, the public could get a good idea of the project even if they had not been able to visit the exhibition.

The whole set of actions imagined by Boileau to make himself better known was thus not just limited to the exhibition, but included the examination of the work on display and the publication of the result. These actions contributed to change his reputation. He was associated with innovation, even though the opinions on the direction his work was taking remained divided. Viollet-le-Duc, for example, expressed exasperation with Boileau’s insistence on promoting his research, which he did not find pertinent. “We express our doubts about the soundness of the *system* Boileau has adopted, a system that has been greatly publicized, via brochures and articles [...] Mr Boileau sent us his brochure twice, and we read it, whatever he may say”.<sup>38</sup>



During the 1850s and 1860s, Boileau endeavoured to consolidate his reputation as innovative architect. In parallel with his publications, the presentation of his work in exhibitions allowed him to reinforce his position. He actively participated in the official Salons, and when it seemed useful to him, he took the initiative to organize his own exhibitions. If around 1850 he was looking to consolidate his professional status, in the 1860s his reputation as architect and advocate of the use of metal was better established. Exhibiting thus provided a means to make his built work more widely known and demonstrate the validity of his theoretical principles.

Far from ignoring the institutions, on the contrary Boileau appears to have sought their support. So, his independent exhibitions in 1850 and 1862 should be understood as an opportunity for him to further establish himself rather than as a contestation of the official circuits of recognition. While they provide evidence of a certain autonomy from institutions, for Boileau they do not take the role of permanent alternatives to the official events.

To build his reputation, Boileau thus used both the Salon and his personal initiatives. In each case he tried to control the reception of his work, turning criticism in his favour by responding to, or convening experts to evaluate his proposals. The originality of his approach lies perhaps in the protean aspect of his actions. He was acting as an architect, but his practice also derived from an artisanal and entrepreneurial culture to which he remained strongly attached.

**Endnotes**

- 1 Anonymous 1849, pp. 208-209.
- 2 Daly 1849-1850, p. 214. The church in Mattaincourt was built between 1844 and 1859.
- 3 All quotes are translated from the original French into English. (Translation by R. Oldham.)
- 4 He also took lessons from the architect Louis Piel, whom he met around 1838.
- 5 Bättschmann 1997.
- 6 Bourdieu 1992. Bourdieu's analysis is quoted in Ten-Doesschate Chu 2007.
- 7 For the development of the architectural press since the 18th century, see Bouvier and Leniaud 2001, Wittman 2007, Hvattum and Hultzsich 2018.
- 8 For the history of the Salons, see Lemaire 2004, Lobstein 2006.
- 9 Anonymous 1861, p. 510.
- 10 Anonymous 1865, p. 428.
- 11 Anonymous 1868, p. 509.
- 12 Anonymous 1866, p. 396.
- 13 Anonymous 1867, p. 351.
- 14 Anonymous 1893, pp. 256-257.
- 15 Anonymous 1864a, p. 477.
- 16 Baudot 1865, p. 34.
- 17 Anonymous 1864b, p. 2.
- 18 Boileau 1867, pp. 187-190.
- 19 Coignet 1868, pp. 19-25.
- 20 Boileau 1868, pp. 67-72.
- 21 Anonymous 1865, pp. 800 and 805.
- 22 "I wanted to know how much freedom our era gave us. I had sent a painting of priests, intentionally: *Le Retour d'une Conférence* [...] I had made this painting for it to be refused. I succeeded. And for this reason, it will earn me money." Letter to Albert de la Fizelière, Saintes, 23 April 1863. See Ten-Doesschate Chu 1996, p. 199.
- 23 About 1867, p. 323.
- 24 Pinon 2005, pp. 190-199.
- 25 Lance 1861, p. 83.
- 26 Which could be translated into English with "Abutting vault system".
- 27 Baudot 1867, p. 82.
- 28 Boileau n. d.
- 29 Boileau n. d., p. 1.
- 30 Pludermacher 2019, pp. 94-109.
- 31 Champfleury 1855, p. 1.
- 32 Oppermann 1862, p. 26.
- 33 Garnier 1869, p. 31.
- 34 Boileau 1853, pp. 20-24.



- 35 Boileau 1853, p. 44.
- 36 Boileau 1853.
- 37 In *Nouvelle forme*, Henri Labrouste is mentioned among the examiners of the model as agreeing with the conclusions of Lenoir's essay. However, he is not cited in the documents conserved in the Archives nationales (AN, F19 4544).
- 38 Viollet-le-Duc 1855, p. 106.

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