The vision offered of the early modern era is rich in nuance and detail. Extensive bibliographies attached to each chapter add to the practical value of this volume. Wiesner paints a vivid portrait of rural and urban women marked by social rank, inspired by religious zeal, constrained by education, and defined by marital status: generations of women whose sex determined much of what they would experience throughout their lives.

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Andrew McClellan — *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. xii, 289.

It is well known that the French Revolution first established a national museum in the palace of the Louvre and that, enriched with Napoleon's plunder, it contained during his reign perhaps the greatest collection of art in history. It is less recognized that the museum was the culmination of a long process of planning and development throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, during which the purpose of a museum was determined and the modern survey museum received its definitive form. That is really the subject of Andrew McClellan's book.

Perhaps the most important lesson we learn is that there is a lot more to creating a museum than simply hanging pictures on the walls, even for as small an exhibition as the galleries in the Luxembourg Palace, opened in 1750 to display some of the finest works from the royal collection. The motive was to afford art students the opportunity to study the works of the masters, in the hope of improving the quality of French artists. In keeping with the classical and absolute ideas of the period, it was felt that all paintings and artists could be judged by the same objective criteria, applied to the four fundamental qualities of composition, drawing, colour, and expression. Therefore, the galleries were provided to allow students to compare these attributes, rather than to emphasize historical development or national schools.

The closing of the Luxembourg gallery in 1779 led to plans for a large national museum in the Louvre in which most of the royal Old Master paintings could be displayed, as well as sculpture and French history paintings. The expressed hope that such an exhibition would not only provide useful instruction, but would also lead to the recognition of the existence and excellence of a French school, reveals a new nationalistic note.

The decade of the 1780s was occupied with plans for the reconstruction of the Louvre's Grand Gallery as a museum, but the project was delayed by indecision, lack of funds, and political conflict, all of which McClellan examines and explains in considerable, if occasionally confusing detail. During this period paintings were purchased to complement the royal collection, many of which needed cleaning and restoration, and we learn that the period saw significant advances in preservation techniques. The administration also commissioned a number of history paintings

from French artists whose subjects were intended to encourage loyalty to the regime. Among these were David's *Oath of the Horatii* and *Brutus*, which did anything but.

During the 1780s the influence of the taxonomic ideas of Linnaeus and Buffon led to a concern for the historical development of art within national schools. McClellan believes that this more rational arrangement, which would also have encouraged the recognition of a French school, would have prevailed had the museum opened under the monarchy. Eventually, it was also chosen by the revolutionary museum.

However, by the time the *Muséum français* opened on August 10, 1793, political motives had joined aesthetic ones, as evidenced by the opening date, the first anniversary of the attack on the Tuileries which brought down the monarchy. In addition to allowing students to study masterpieces, the museum was to symbolize the triumph of democracy over tyranny, both by showing the art and precious objects "liberated" from their former owners by the Republic and by opening to the people the palace formerly forbidden to them.

There is no question that politics played an important role in the development of the museum. Like many revolutionary regimes which set out to destroy the past, the French Revolutionaries found themselves in the ironic position of having to preserve it instead. Quantities of artistic and cultural objects had fallen into the hands of the state, many or even most of them associated with the execrated royalty, aristocracy, or Church. This posed a serious dilemma. Failure to protect undoubted masterpieces would only intensify the charges of vandalism which revolutionary destruction had already inspired, and national and republican pride provoked a desire to display to the world the treasures that democracy had gained for the people. However, the protection or exhibition of these works might well encourage counter-revolutionary sentiment.

How to choose what could be exhibited? The problem was resolved by the discovery of an effect now widely recognized: a work of art loses its original meaning in the transition to the museum, especially if it is displayed in a collection organized on historical principles.

Having chosen to make its collection represent as closely as possible a complete history of art, and creating in the process the model of the modern survey museum, the administration had to decide how to interpret that history. Should it accept Vasari's cyclical theory, according to which the Renaissance had been a high point from which there had since been a decline, or the more optimistic idea of nearly inevitable linear progress? Not unsurprisingly, the museum chose the latter interpretation, which was closer to the ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution.

The Louvre was by no means the only museum created during the Revolution, and perhaps none better exemplified the problems of exhibiting works of art and interpreting art history than the Museum of French Monuments, to which McClellan devotes a full and extremely thoughtful chapter. This museum was created by Alexandre Lenoir from a depot of nationalized art in the former Paris convent of the Petits-Augustins over which he was guardian. Through his determination, and despite his inability to prevent the Louvre from taking the paintings and best

sculpture, he was able to turn a collection consisting largely of funerary monuments and architectural fragments into an extraordinarily popular and influential museum. The story of Lenoir's museum illustrates even more clearly than the Louvre the contradictory forces of the revolutionary period and the way these were resolved by the museum. It also reveals the strange way in which the Revolution revived an interest in the past which it had vowed to abolish.

Nearly all the items in Lenoir's collection had religious, royal, or aristocratic roots, and none was an acknowledged masterpiece. Despite the fact that they were all French, there was little reason to expect the Revolution to preserve them, much less exhibit them. However, Lenoir's masterful arrangement of the pieces according to century in a series of galleries decorated to evoke the spirit of the period was intended to tell the story of the evolution of French art, as he claimed, from its barbaric roots to classical excellence. Here a royal tomb lost its regal and religious significance and became a bit of evidence of the progress of French art and culture. Ironically the romantically decorated galleries and the "elysian garden" containing the actual remains of a number of famous Frenchmen also revived an interest in the past, especially the medieval past. The museum was ahead of its time in that classical era, and by the blossoming of the historically oriented Romantic movement, it had been disbanded and its contents returned to their former owners.

Throughout his book McClellan has attempted, usually successfully, to set the museological and aesthetic story into its political and social context, a difficult job considering the confusion and turbulence of the period. This is a very successful book, which should appeal as much to students of French history or the history of ideas as to those concerned with the history of arts and museums. There are 84 well-chosen black-and-white illustrations.

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David Van Zahnten — *Building Paris: Architectural Institutions and the Transformation of the French Capital, 1830–1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp xix, 360.

One of a series by David Van Zahnten on the architecture of nineteenth-century Paris, this book deals with the transformation of the capital during the July Monarchy, the short-lived Second Republic, and the Second Empire. This was a period of explosive growth when central Paris took on many of the features of the present-day city — the expansion of the Hôtel de Ville, additions to the Palais de Justice, the new opera by Garnier, extension of the École des Beaux-Arts, the completion of the Louvre, erection of new libraries such as the Bibliothèque Nationale, the piercing of the great boulevards under the direction of Haussmann, and the opening of public spaces such as that in front of the Comédie française. It was also the period of the erection of grand hotels, huge department stores, imposing banks, and impressive railway stations.