

The Four Models for Studio Art Instruction, and Why They are Incompatible

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The problem:

First Year art education is a work in progress

**It is unlike First Year physics or chemistry, and even
unlike First Year art history (which are much better
understood)**

**There are no standard histories, textbooks, journals,
or occasions for discussion**

Sources for discussions of First Year in studio and in Art History

	First year art history	First year studio art
Histories	Udo Kulterman, Jan Bakos, Matthew Rampley, Rob Nelson, Barbara Jaffee...	? Howard Singerman, Nikolaus Pevsner, Carl Goldstein
Principal textbooks	<i>Art Since 1900, Story of Art</i> , Gardner, Janson, Honour and Fleming	?? Art appreciation texts, visual culture texts
Journals	? <i>Art Journal</i>	??? <i>FATE in Review, Art Journal, Journal of Visual Art Practice</i>
Occasions for discussion	?? CAA, CIHA, AAH, ASA	???? CAA, NASAD, AICAD (where this talk was first given)

Elements of First Year Programs

1. The first year history of art survey(s)

- How should they include non-Western art?
- Should they be chronological or thematic?
- How can they be made “relevant” (useful)?

2. “Art appreciation” courses

- Should they include space, form, time, etc?
- Are they appropriate for art schools
(or only for liberal arts colleges)?

3. Studio art instruction (subject of this lecture)

Form of this lecture

- Four models of art instruction
- Three recent attempts to solve the problem
- Conclusions, and two proposals

The four principal models of art instruction:

I.	The Académie française	c. 1780 Baroque / Neoclassical
II.	The Romantic academy	c. 1810 Romanticism
III.	The Bauhaus	c. 1930 Modernism
IV.	Postwar art schools	c. 1960 Postmodernism

Woodpecker Affiliations
Species Found in Oregon
Oregon State University

(Thanks to Buckley Yates, Eugene, Oregon)

I.

The Académie française

Salient history

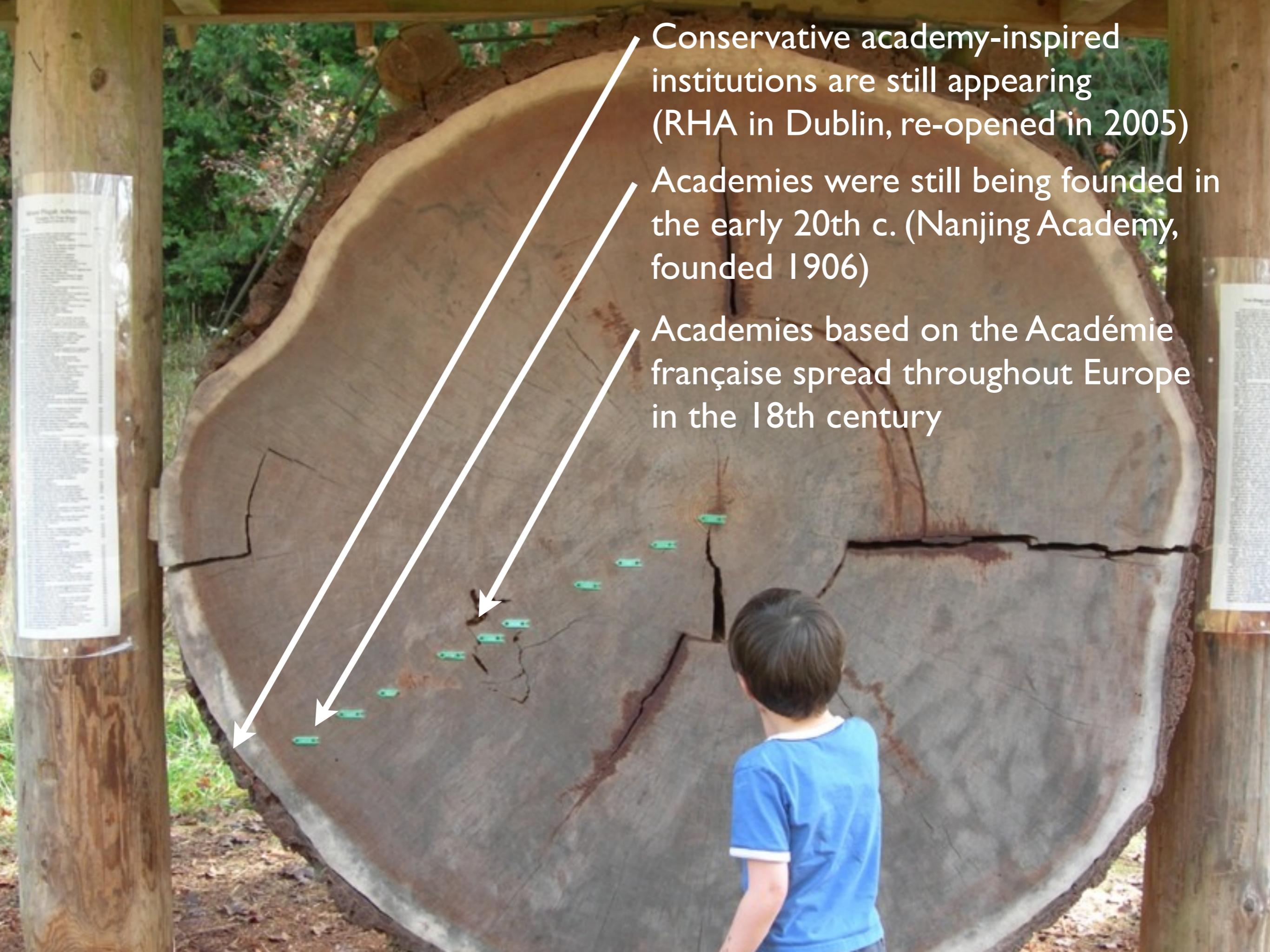
1545

Academies began in 1563, the year before Michelangelo died

1579

A model was provided by the Carracci Academy at the beginning of the 17th century

The Académie française consolidated several of these tendencies in 1655

A photograph of a massive tree trunk, likely a redwood, showing its intricate grain and several green tags attached to its bark. A young child in a blue shirt is seen from behind, looking up at the tree. The scene is outdoors with greenery in the background.

Conservative academy-inspired institutions are still appearing (RHA in Dublin, re-opened in 2005)

Academies were still being founded in the early 20th c. (Nanjing Academy, founded 1906)

Academies based on the Académie française spread throughout Europe in the 18th century

Three characteristics of the French Academy that remain in current First Year curricula

1. The emphasis on drawing
2. Life classes
3. Unquestioned criteria

I. The emphasis on drawing

Students learned only drawing in the French Academy

(In this lecture, critical remarks are in red.)

Today drawing has a twilight existence in art curricula

- between department and “concentration,” “center,” etc.
- between requirement and option
- between medium and trans-medium

We can't believe it is a universal foundation,

but we can't let it go

2. Life classes

Renaissance and Baroque academies codified life drawing

Long poses (a month, or more)

Students learned chiaroscuro, contrapposto, touch...

Life drawing made sense as a foundation because

- Art was naturalistic
- Painting was narrative
- Art was a humanist discipline, founded on the classics

Now the body is just a complicated test object, like a toaster

3. Unquestioned criteria

Students in ateliers were graded 1°, 2°, 3°...

Criteria were known, but not argued

(Artists' rankings were argued)

Today criteria are also largely unquestioned

- Because of pluralism and relativism
- Because we use place-holders like “interest”

II.

The Romantic academy