

By examining the history of France, the Revolution of 1787-1799

brought an end to centuries of absolute monarchy and feudalism in France as well as aristocratic and religious privilege constantly under attack by left-wing political groups, plebeians and rural peasants, followed by the overthrow of the traditional monarchical conception of class, aristocracy, and Catholic Church rule by the new principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

The five contexts chosen for the work were mostly those of the old French aristocracy and the history of the Revolution. Considering that the location of the exhibition had to fit the historical context of the five works chosen and the demographic fit of the audience, the hotel near the Louvre in Paris was chosen as the venue for the exhibition, as the main purpose of the travellers staying at the hotel was to visit the Louvre, and as they were interested in the Louvre, it was assumed that these travellers had a high interest in history and different cultures and art. Taking into account the above and the combined time that travellers spend at the end of their visit to the Louvre, many travellers will have more time in the evening after their visit to the Louvre to add the mini exhibition to their evening programme.

Artwork selection

Power



Fig. 2: Liberty Leading the People, Eugène Delacroix, 1830

This work is a combination of idealism and realism by the French painter Eugène Delacroix in the period immediately following the end of the French Revolution in 1830, using the French July Revolution as a backdrop. The painting shows the half-naked Valkyrie as the embodiment of freedom leading a revolt of different classes of revolutionaries to overthrow the aristocracy and the military lords (Zelazko, 2017).

By examining the background of the story of the creation of this work and the symbol of the justified rebellion against the absolute monarchy and feudal system that the author of this work wanted to express by transforming the belief in freedom into a driving force. The work was also chosen because it expresses the idea that freedom is a belief and can be translated into the power to push back against injustice, thus conveying the power of freedom to the viewer in this exhibition.

Unfree

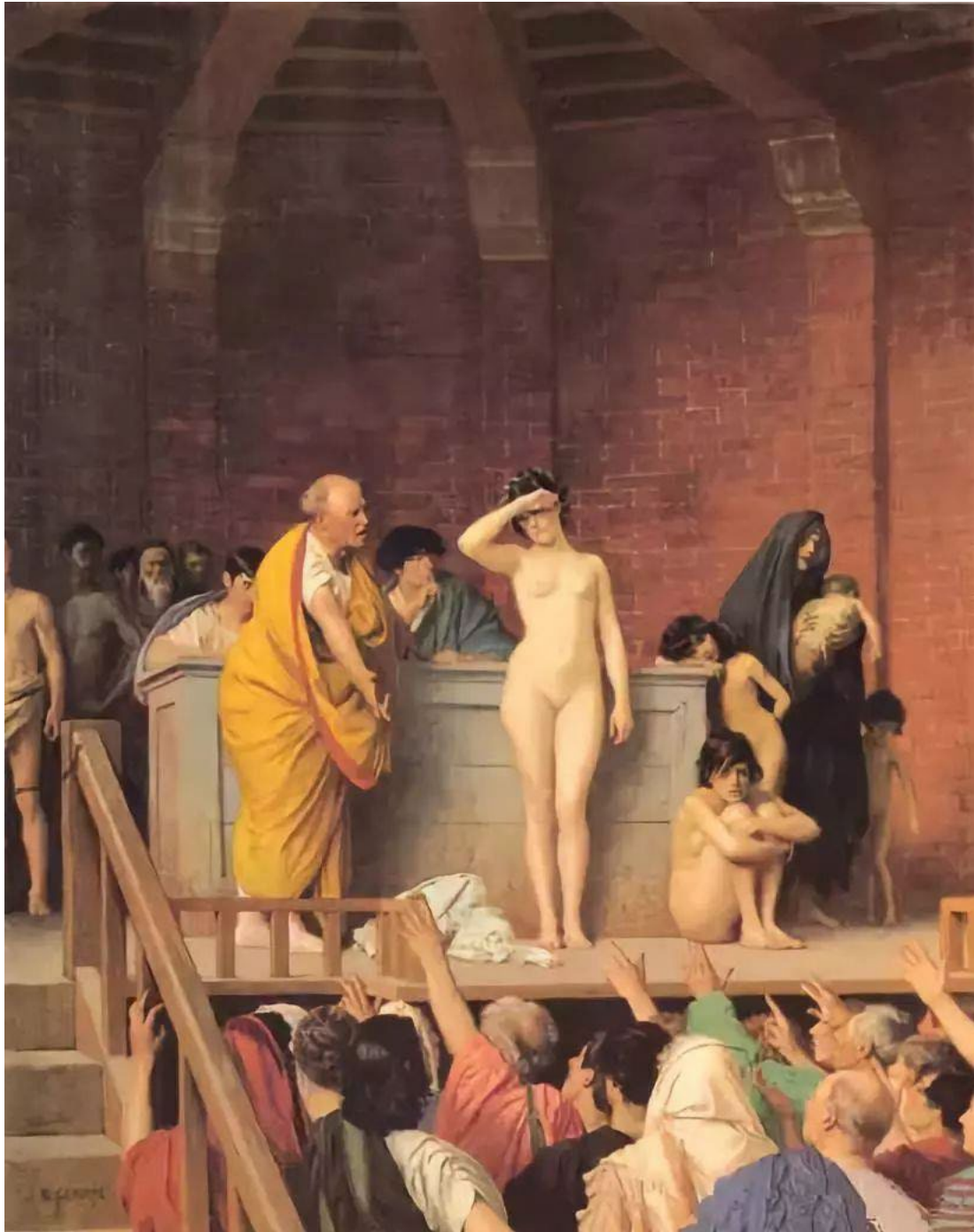


Fig. 3: Slave Market in Ancient Rome, Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1884

A painting by the French painter Jean-Léon Gérôme from around 1884, this work is set in an ancient Roman slave auction room, where the woman at the centre of the work is stripped

fully clothed by a slave trader to show the viewer the woman's body, who can only keep what little dignity she has by covering her eyes with her arms, just because she is a slave. In the scene, two naked children can be seen on the stage being used as commodities, a profound message of the freedom and humiliation of the enslaved people of the time (Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Slave Market in Ancient Rome* (1884) | H5P Creator. 2021).

I chose this work because I had researched its backstory and the theme of the work fitted well with the exhibition's theme of 'freedom'. The main reason for choosing this work was the intensity of the unfreedom it reveals. I wanted to give the viewer a sense of this unfreedom in the exhibition, so that it would be an example of the unfreedom in the exhibition in contrast to the paintings of Marx, "Joy of Life" 1905 and Odilon Redon, "The Eye like a Strange Balloon Mounts toward Infinity" 1882, which will be shown later. The contrast between these examples of freedom is believed to make for a more immersive viewing experience.



Fig. 4: The Unequal Marriage, Vasili Pukirev, 1862

In 1862 the author created 'Unequal Marriage', an ironic work in which she satirises the darkness of Russian society at the time by using unequal age weddings and the sadness that appears on the faces of young girls. The work expresses the fact that in those days few young girls in Russia had the right to choose their own lovers, and most were forced to marry someone they did not love, or who was not of the right age, because of family control over their interests. The work is a strong reflection of the way in which the Russian nobility denied these young girls the freedom to choose their own lovers for the sake of profit and selfishness. (Artisoo, no date).

The reason I chose this work is that the young girls of that period were told from birth that they had no right to be with the person they truly loved and that everything was arranged so

that they would have to marry someone they did not love at a certain age. The psychological damage caused to young women by this unequal marriage is not fundamentally different from the damage caused by slaves being undressed and displayed in front of the public in Slave Market in Ancient Rome. This psychological and physical restriction of freedom is extremely painful, even though they are physically free, they are told from birth and education that they have lost the freedom to choose a lover and thus their minds are blocked from expressing their love freely.

In 1994, the government later banned circumcision from state medical institutions and did not allow midwives to perform the procedure. (Brandt and Kaplan, 1995)

Freedom



Fig. 5: The Joy of life, Henri Matisse, 1906

The ambiguous subject matter of this work and the new style of the time created a wave of interest in his work, 'Joy of Life', by Henri Matisse in 1906, which features a group of naked humans bathing and dancing freely in a forest. His work has now been exhibited alongside paintings by the painter Vincent van Gogh. I have chosen this work as a synonym for freedom in this exhibition because the artist's unusually joyful and free-spirited approach allows the viewer to feel liberated by the free style and joyful subject matter of his work. Secondly, in this work I feel the sense of not being bound to do something for any reason, just as the characters in his work do not need a reason to dance, they are dancing because they want to dance. The contrast between this very liberating work and the examples of unfreedom mentioned above can be made even more stark, thus furthering the viewer's understanding of what it means to be free in thought.

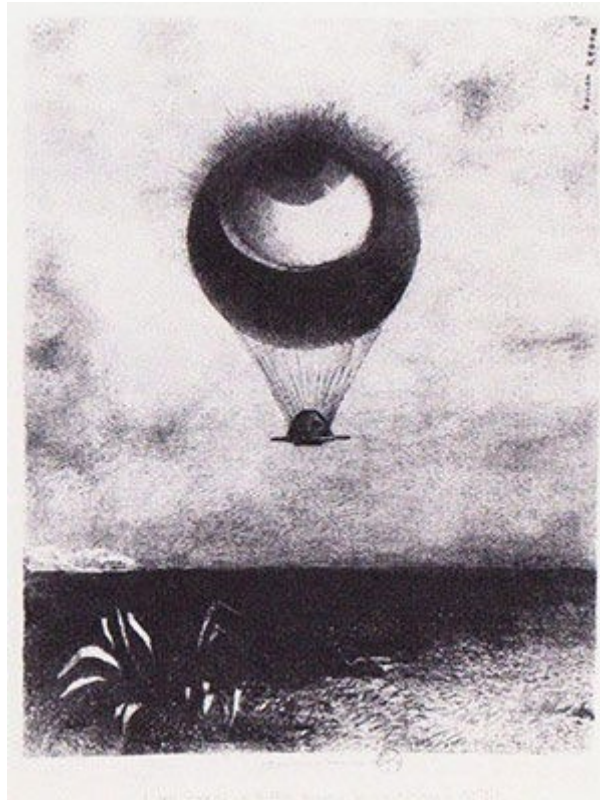


Fig. 6: *The Eye like a Strange Balloon Mounts toward Infinity*. Odilon Redon, 1882

The Eye like a Strange Balloon Mounts toward Infinity by the painter Odilon Redon in 1882, an eye like a balloon flying towards the clouds with its gaze directed towards the sky and the severed head beneath the balloon, is reminiscent of the idea that in Symbolist art and literature the severed head means freedom from the constraints of life. Even according to the thought of Peng Pai in 2019, death and the upward eye mean reaching for a higher space of consciousness. As scholar and curator Jodi Hauptman writes, "Floating above the 'infinite', free from the limitations of body and mind, Redon's eyes are truly free to transcend reality, beyond nature, beyond the visible (Peng Pai, 2019).

I chose this work because I admire the combination of symbolism and the imaginative subject

matter that evokes more possibilities for freedom. This kind of work, full of infinite possibilities and provoking infinite thoughts, is perfect for the end of an exhibition, thus giving the viewer a sense of unfulfillment and a sense of reflection on freedom even after the visit is over (e.g. what infinite freedom might look like).

Exhibition Hall Design



Fig. 7: Grand Hôtel du Palais Royal interior layout, 2023

The exact shape of the showroom was determined by searching the internet for a map of the hotel's interior layout.

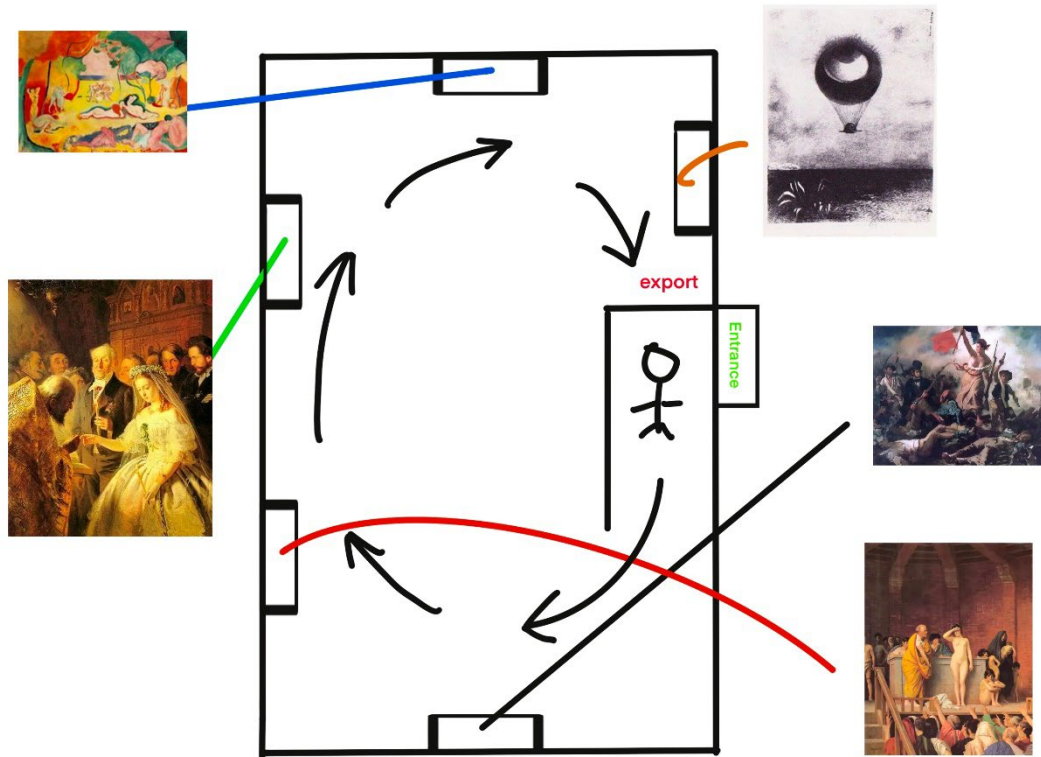


Fig. 8: Layout of the exhibition, 2023

The sequencing of the works in this exhibition is based on the relationship between the works and their division into examples of unfreedom and examples of freedom in order to understand the meaning of 'freedom' in these works. Secondly, I have used some visual hierarchy techniques in the arrangement of the works, deliberately leaving no works to the right of the entrance and thus directing the viewer to start with the works on the left, thus allowing the viewer to follow the order in which I have arranged them, thus achieving the best possible viewing effect.

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Fig list

Fig. 1: Grand Hôtel du Palais Royal on msp, 2023

Fig. 2: Liberty Leading the People, Eugène Delacroix, 1830 Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Liberty-Leading-the-People>.

Fig. 3: Slave Market in Ancient Rome, Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1884 Available at:

<https://h5p.wlu.ca/content/498>.

Fig. 4: The Unequal Marriage, Vasili Pukirev, 1862 Available at:

<https://www.artisoo.com/OilPaintingBlog/the-unequal-marriage-by-vasily>

Fig. 5: The Joy of life, Henri Matisse, 1906 Available at:

[The Joy of Life: Matisse's Early Modern Masterpiece | Singulart Magazine](#)

Fig. 6: The Eye like a Strange Balloon Mounts toward Infinity. Odilon Redon, 1882

Available at: https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_3937770

Fig. 7: Grand Hôtel du Palais Royal interior layout, 2023 Available at:

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