

I shall be looking at life in Parisian life during the revolution using painting and drawings produced at the time. In particular, I will look at the work of Louis-Léopold Boilly (pronounced 'BWHY-ee', 5 July 1761 – 4 January 1845) but before I do, let us briefly look at the causes of the revolution.

- There was no single cause for the French Revolution of 1789 but among the many causes:
 - People were living longer, and France became the most populous country in Europe. The failure of the harvest in 1788 came on top of a long period of increasingly difficult financial burdens imposed on the poor. At the same time the peasants were becoming emancipated and were seeking to throw off the last remnants of the feudal system.
 - The intellectuals were inspired by the ideas and ideals of the Age of Enlightenment and were proposing new social and political structures to emancipate society reinforced by the success of the American Revolution of 1775-83. In addition, the newly wealthy merchants and manufacturers demanded more political power.
 - France was in a poor state financially because of the assistance it provided to the Americans during the American Revolution.
 - The French monarchy was no longer seen as appointed by God and the

monarch Louis XVI refused to accept any substantial changes.

Notes

- The art style known as Neoclassicism was inspired by the ancient works of Greece and Rome and was immersed in the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment. The French Revolution (1789–1799) was in the centre of neoclassicism (roughly 1750 to 1850) and was flanked by two artistic styles, Rococo and Romanticism.

Pre-Revolution

- Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), revitalised Baroque, created less formal Rococo, invented the *fête galantes*
- François Boucher (1703-1770), Rococo, most celebrated painter of the 18th century
- Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), late Rococo
- Elisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun (1765-1842), late Rococo with elements of Neoclassical

Post-Revolution

- Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), preeminent artist of the period who painted in the Neoclassical style
- Louis-Léopold Boilly ('bwoyee', 1761–1845), portraits and genre painting
- Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), Neoclassical
- Théodore Géricault (1791-1824), died young, a pioneer of the Romantic movement
- Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796, 1875), pivotal landscape artist, Neo-Classical but anticipates Impressionism

Romanticism

- Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), leader of the French Romantic school
- Théodore Géricault (1791-1824, aged 32), influential French painter and lithographer.



Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), *The Tennis Court Oath* (*Le Serment du Jeu de paume*), 1791, 101.2 × 66 cm, Musée Carnavalet

- France was divided into Estates, the First Estate was the clergy, the Second Estate the aristocracy, who made up only 2% of the population, and the Third Estate the vast majority of ordinary people including merchants, businessmen and professionals. The Third Estate paid most of the taxes.
- The controller general of finances called an assembly of 'notables' and proposed increasing taxes on the nobles (the Second Estate). The notables (mostly the Second Estate) refused and suggested a general assembly of the Estates-General which had not met for over 150 years. It finally met on 5 May 1789 and could not agree on the voting system and the Third Estate declared themselves a National Assembly.
- On 20 June 1789, the members of the French Third Estate took the **Tennis Court Oath** (French: Serment du Jeu de Paume), vowing "**not to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the kingdom is established**". It was a pivotal event in the French Revolution and inspired a wide variety of revolutionary activity across the countryside. In August feudalism was abolished and the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen** was

passed by the Third Estate by then known as the National Constituent Assembly.

- Jacques-Louis David was commissioned to paint the scene of the Tennis Court Oath but political reversals and financial difficulties meant that he was never able to finish the canvas. Many of the 'heroes' of the Tennis Court Oath in 1789 had become traitors of the State by 1792.
- David supported the revolution, was a friend of Robespierre and voted for the execution of Louis XVI. David heightens the drama by showing a storm blowing through windows reflecting the political storm blowing through the country.



‘People in the Castle of Bastille’, Musée de la Révolution française, lithograph by H. Jannin. The Bastille was seized on 14 July 1789.

- There were compromises by the King but not enough and rumours spread and food shortages increased. Troops were called in, the peasants were panic stricken (the ‘Great Fear’) and seized the **Bastille in 14 July, 1789**, a large weapons cache and a symbol of royal tyranny which contained only seven inmates at the time. A few days before grenadiers of the French Guard were freed from prison by the commoners. They had been imprisoned for refusing to fire on the people and it caused the troops to lean towards supporting the people and some members of the French Guard supported the mob.



Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), *The Death of Marat*, 1793, 165 × 128 cm, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium

Francois Delpech (1778-1825), *Charlotte Corday*

- Perhaps David's most famous painting of the revolution is *The Death of Marat*. Louis XVI had been executed on 21 January 1793 and on **13 July 1793 David's friend Marat was assassinated by Charlotte Corday**. Marat had a skin disease that resulted in continual itching and so he had to spend most of his time in a bath and had a desk fitted to the bath so he could continue to work.
- Charlotte Corday was a revolutionary who sided with a group called the Girondins. She opposed the more radical groups of the revolution. One of the radical leaders was journalist Jean-Paul Marat. Charlotte decided that Marat needed to die in order to preserve peace in France. Corday gained access to his house by claiming to have a list of enemies of the estate who should be executed. Marat thanked her and said that they would be guillotined next week upon which Corday immediately fatally stabbed him. She was guillotined four days later.



Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, 1801, 259 × 221 cm, Château de Malmaison

- The darkest period was known as the **Reign of Terror** and it lasted from 1793 to 1794. During this time Robespierre led the National Convention and the Committee of Public Safety. Thousands of people were arrested for treason and guillotined including most of Robespierre's political rivals. The revolution lasted ten years **from July 14, 1789 to 1799 when Louis Napoleon overthrew the revolutionary government and established the French Consulate.**
- There are five versions of this work painted by Jacques-Louis David between 1801 and 1805. They were initially commissioned by the King of Spain. It is a very idealised view of a real crossing Napoleon made through the **Great St. Bernard Pass in May 1800** on his way to Genoa and his victory at the battle of Marengo. The portrait was part of an exchange of gifts between Napoleon and Charles IV of Spain. Charles gave Napoleon sixteen Spanish horses, portraits of himself and the queen by Goya and this portrait by David. **When Napoleon saw it he commissioned three more** and David painted a fifth that he kept until the end of his life.
- In reality, Napoleon went through the pass in fine weather a few days after the

troops on a mule.

- Napoleon refused to sit for his portrait and when David explained he needed a resemblance for those that had seen him Napoleon replied, **“A resemblance? It isn't the exactness of the features, a wart on the nose which gives the resemblance. It is the character that dictates what must be painted...Nobody knows if the portraits of the great men resemble them, it is enough that their genius lives there”**. This idea expressed by Napoleon was a Romantic

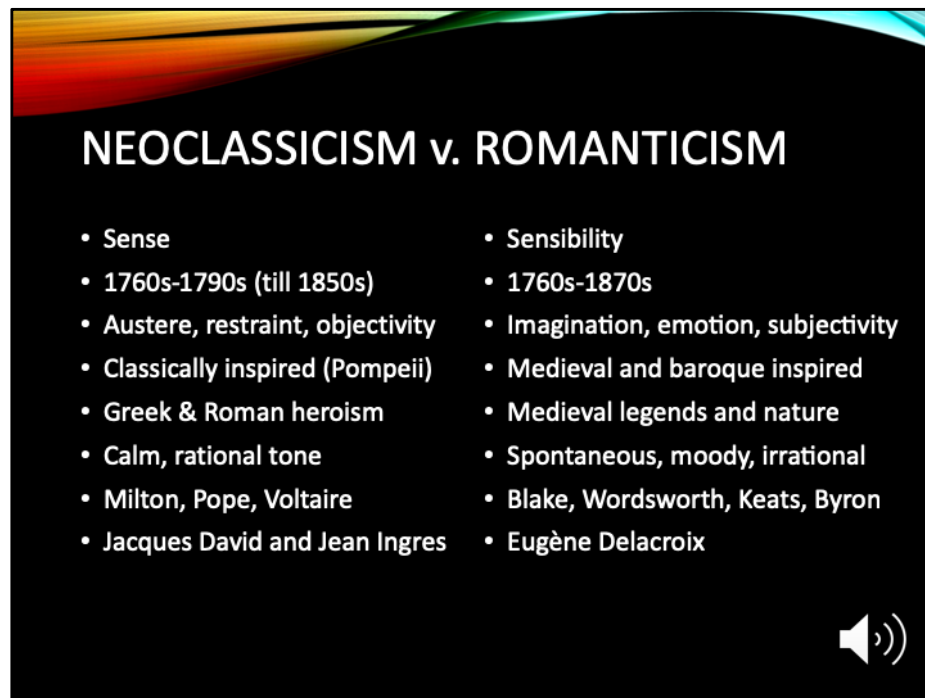


Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (*Liberty Leading the People*), October-December 1830, 260 × 325 cm, Louvre Museum

- Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815 and subsequently Louis XVIII (younger brother of Louis XVI) was restored to the throne.
- However, the revolution had a lasting influence on France and on the rest of Europe. It changed the social and political structure of France, ended the feudal system, removed political power from the Catholic Church and brought new ideas of liberty, freedom for the commoner, the abolishment of slavery and improved rights for women
- The period from 1815 to 1830 was known as the Bourbon Restoration. From 1815 to 1824 was a period of peace and prosperity although the Ultra-royalists wanted to restore the pre-1789 system of absolute monarchy. In 1824 Charles X became king. He was an ultra-reactionary and his repressive measures caused internal tensions to grow forcing him into exile in 1830. He was replaced by King Louis-Philippe in the July Revolution which lasted 'three glorious days' from 27-29th July.
- Louis-Philippe's 'July Monarchy' (1830–1848) was dominated by the high bourgeoisie of bankers, financiers, industrialists and merchants.
- During the reign of the July Monarchy, the **Romantic Era was starting to bloom**

and this painting by Delacroix of the July Revolution perfectly illustrates Romanticism in art. Driven by the Romantic Era, an atmosphere of protest and revolt grew all around France.

- On 22 November 1831 in Lyon the silk workers revolted and took over the town hall in protest against salary reductions and working conditions. This was one of the first instances of a workers revolt.



- This was a time of a major shift in society and this was reflected in art as the change from Neoclassicism to Romanticism.
- Neoclassicism was the predominate movement in European art during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The interest in Neoclassicism was fuelled by the work of the German art historian Johann Winkelmann who admired Greek sculpture and wrote about it in a series of influential books. People were also excited about the discovery of the ancient Roman ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy. It was also part of the training of the aristocracy to send sons on a Grand Tour of Europe which brought them into contact with Roman sculpture, frescoes and architecture. A few even ventured as far as Greece.
- Earlier Neoclassicism had been a reaction against the trivial, gaudy Rococo style and an ethical desire to replace it with reason, simplicity and thoughtfulness.
- One of the key exponents of Neoclassicism in France was **Jacques-Louis David** (1748–1825) who preferred “preferred the well-delineated form – clear drawing and modeling”. Drawing was considered more important than painting and the paint surface had to be perfectly smooth with no evidence of the brushstrokes.
- **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres** (1780-1867) represent the peak of the Neoclassical style and his later works contains many Romantic elements such as sensuousness and psychological insight.

- From the 1760s and 1770s onwards there was a reaction against Neoclassicism by artists who regarded the personal and the imaginative as important. This new desire to express inner, subjective emotions gave rise to the **Romantic movement** although many artists such as Ingres combined elements of both. Romantic writers and artists were inspired by the power and unpredictability of nature although some, like John Constable, were inspired by its beauty. From the 1750s the sublime became the subject of many works that explored feelings of awe and terror.
- In France the leading Romantic painter was Eugène Delacroix.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *Sheet of Studies with Five Self-Portrait Drawings of the Artist*, c. 1810, black chalk heightened with white on paper, 16.3 22.5 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Louis-Léopold Boilly (pronounced 'BWHY-ee', 5 July 1761 – 4 January 1845) was a French painter and draftsman. A gifted creator of popular portrait paintings, he also produced a vast number of genre paintings vividly documenting French middle-class social life. His life and work spanned the eras of monarchical France, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Empire (1799-1815), the Bourbon Restoration (1814-1830, Louis XVIII, brother of Louis XVI) and the July Monarchy (1830-1848, Louis Philippe I).
- Boilly was born in northern France, the son of a local wood sculptor. A self-taught painter, Boilly began his career at a very young age, producing his first works at the age of twelve or thirteen. In 1774 his work so impressed the local Austin friars that he was invited to work and study with them. He produced three hundred small works of portraiture and received instruction in trompe l'oeil before moving to Paris around 1787.

Notes

- 18 paintings at the exhibition were from the Ramsbury Manor Foundation. The collection was left to the nation by Harry Hymans who left his entire collection worth £500. His country house Ramsbury Manor in Wiltshire will be opened to the public as a National Art Gallery in a few years time. It contains works by Turner, Millet and Stubbs.



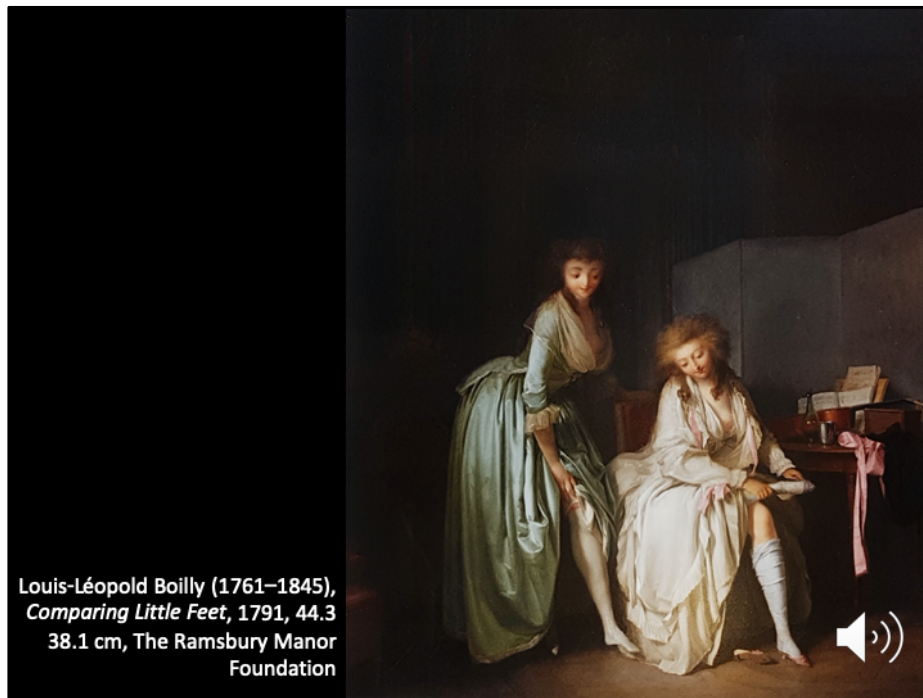
Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *Grateful Hearts*, c. 1790, 46 × 56.5 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- A wealthy woman comes to the aid of a poor family. The husband and wife kiss her hands while their child clutches at his mother's skirts, scared by the yapping dog. The staircase identifies the building as the Palais Royal and so the woman as the Duchess of Orléans (1753-1821) who was well known for her charitable work. However, the painting can be read another way. The couple are not impoverished and the man's knee is thrust between the woman's legs. She has a pleased, slightly flushed look which implies a different reading.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *Two Young Women Kissing*, 1790-4, 45.5 (x) 37.5 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- This is typical of a type of painting Boilly produced during his early years in Paris.
- Two young women are locked in an amorous embrace. The taller of the two, somewhat déshabillé, wears a white dress which has slipped from her shoulder revealing her breast. This blatantly sexual scene was of the type that led him to be called before a Republican council of the arts and accused of painting pictures “**of revolting obscenity to republican morals, the obscenity of which dirties the walls of the republic**”.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *Comparing Little Feet*, 1791, 44.3 38.1 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Here is another example, in this painting two women are innocently comparing the size of their feet but at the same time they are exposing their legs and décolletage to the viewer/voyeur. They were very popular in the French market and built on the erotic subject matter of Boucher and Fragonard. He painted some speculatively and other on commission. His miniaturistic detail and the *trompe l'oeil* effect of the flask and the cup make this painting as much about the art of representation as it is about eroticism. It was this combination of craftsmanship and eroticism that appealed. It was Boilly who originated the term *trompe l'oeil*, which he gave as the title to a painting (now in a private collection) sent to the Salon of 1800.
- At the height of the revolutionary Terror in 1794, Boilly was condemned by the Committee of Public Safety for the erotic undertones of his work. How did he escape the guillotine? Until recently it has been thought he quickly painted the patriotic *Triumph of Marat* (now in the Musée des Beaux Arts, Lille) which saved him.

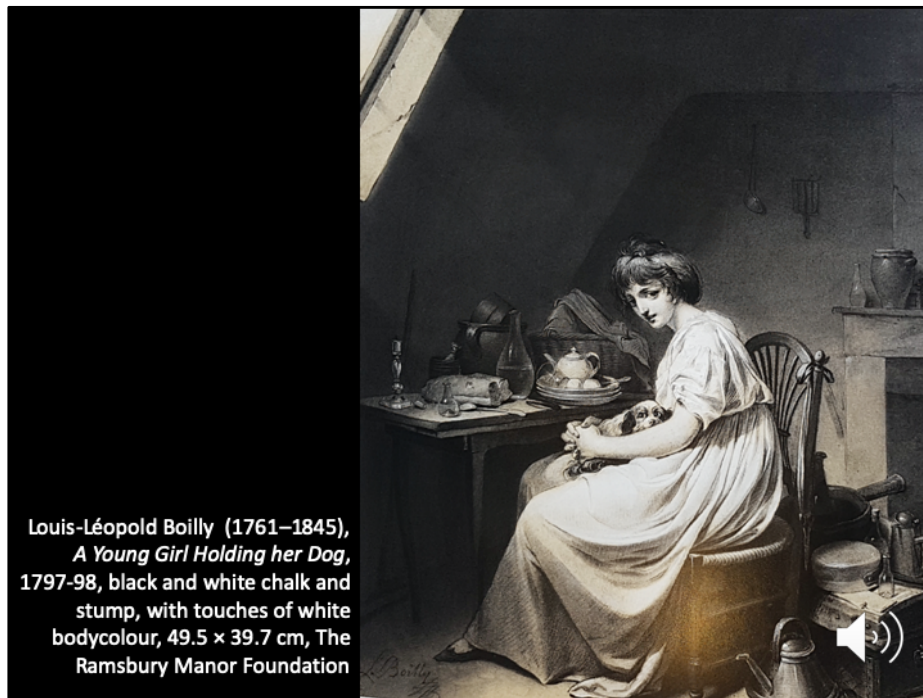


Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Triumph of Marat*, 1794, Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille

- Boilly was denounced by a rival artist in Lille and Boilly's works were described as shocking obscenities that should be 'burned at the foot of the tree of Liberty'. Boilly was warned by one of his colleagues and produced this painting in record time. It was thought that its presence in his studio when they came to arrest him saved his life.
- However, art historians have questioned this interpretation as it implies he painted it reluctantly and under duress. This version of events started in 1828 when his son claimed "one should know that this painting was undertaken out of terror, not inclination." However, this was during the Bourbon Restoration and may have been said to distance his father from the revolutionary cause.
- It now seems likely that Boilly was not politically motivated and painted this work in response to a call for paintings to celebrate the anniversary of Marat's acquittal the year before. It was not hurried and makeshift but the result of careful planning and no less than three different compositions.
- This was the first time he had produced such an elaborate multi-person composition of the type that would later characterize his work. We can see the

well-defined foreground figures, the less sharply focused background figures, a crowd of distinct groups and the single person, in this Boilly himself, looking out at us, the viewer.

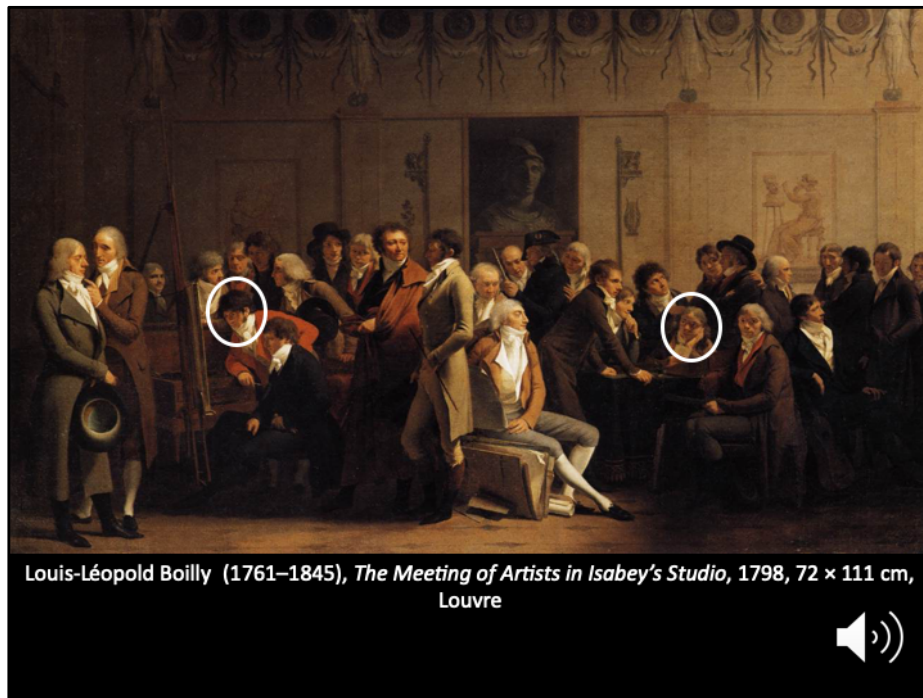
- The person in the red bonnet is thought to be a self-portrait.
- The scene recalls David's *Oath of the Tennis Court*.
- Marat was accused in 1792 of using his newspaper to undermine the Convention. In a crowded court room Marat addressed the crowd and was quickly acquitted. The crowd climbed over the barriers, hoisted Marat onto a table, and festooned him with palms and wreaths; he was then carried triumphantly through the Palais and down the steps of the Cours du Mai.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845),
A Young Girl Holding her Dog,
1797-98, black and white chalk and
stump, with touches of white
bodycolour, 49.5 × 39.7 cm, The
Ramsbury Manor Foundation

Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *A Young Girl Holding her Dog*, 1797-98, black and white chalk and stump, with touches of white bodycolour, 49.5 × 39.7 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

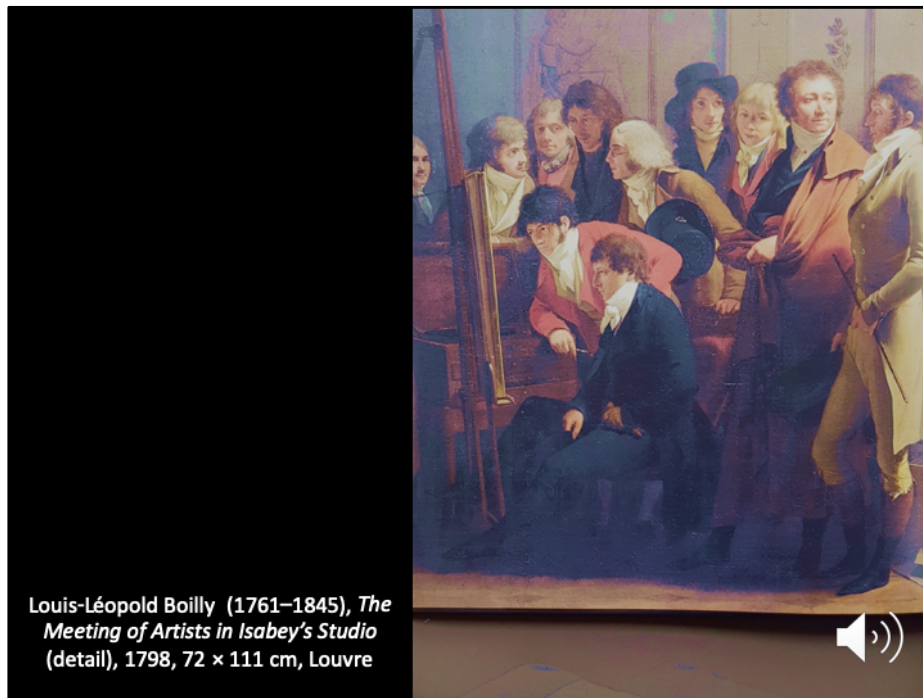
- Here Boilly uses chalk with touches of gouache to imitate a print. We seem to be in an attic but the beauty of the sitter's clothes, the lapdog and the objects surrounding her show it is not a stereotypical garret of the poor. Boilly is demonstrating his technical ability to represent the subtle diffuse lighting and the textures of the various materials and objects shown. There is a painting of the same subject called *The Beloved Dog* and an engraving entitled *The Lazy Girl*. Boilly is recalling the work of the Dutch artist Jan Steens (1626-1679) and he raises questions such as why is the bottle on the floor broken? Is the girl lazy? Does the domestic mess reflect her moral behavior?



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Meeting of Artists in Isabey's Studio*, 1798, 72 × 111 cm, Louvre

- “As a centrepiece to his showing at the Academy in 1798, he displayed *The Meeting of Artists in Isabey's Studio*, which depicted a lively gathering of 31 contemporary artists, performers and writers in the studio of the miniaturist Jean-Baptiste Isabey. In a very modern touch, a handful of the figures (including Boilly) look directly out at the viewer. As well as championing a new generation of artists, the painting blew apart the strict stylistic hierarchy of the Salon, combining the grandeur of history painting with accurate portraiture in the unmistakable format of a genre painting — until then a very lowly form indeed.” (Nancy Durrant, *The Times* review)
- From left to right it shows
 - the composer Étienne Nicolas Méhul,
 - the art critic Hoffman,
 - an unknown man,
 - the sculptor Charles-Louis Corbet,
 - the painters Michel Martin Drolling,

- Jean-Louis Demarne,
- **Jean-Baptiste Isabey (leaning towards the easel),**
- François Gérard (seated before the easel),
- Nicolas-Antoine Taunay,
- Swebach-Desfontaines,
- the miniature painter Charles Bourgeois,
- the painter Guillon Lethière,
- Carle Vernet,
- the engraver Jean Duplessis-Bertaux,
- the architects Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine and Charles Percier,
- the actor Baptiste aîné of the Comédie-Française (seated by a folio of drawings),
- the painter and architect Jean-Thomas Thibault,
- the painters Jan-Frans van Dael and Pierre-Joseph Redouté,
- the actor François-Joseph Talma,
- the painters Charles Meynier,
- **Louis-Léopold Boilly himself,**
- the actor Chénard du Théâtre-Italien,
- the painters Xavier Bidault,
- Girodet-Trioson (seated and looking at the viewer),
- the sculptor Denis Chaudet,
- the engraver Maurice Blot,
- the sculptor François-Frédéric Lemot,
- the painter Gioacchino Serangeli and an unknown man.



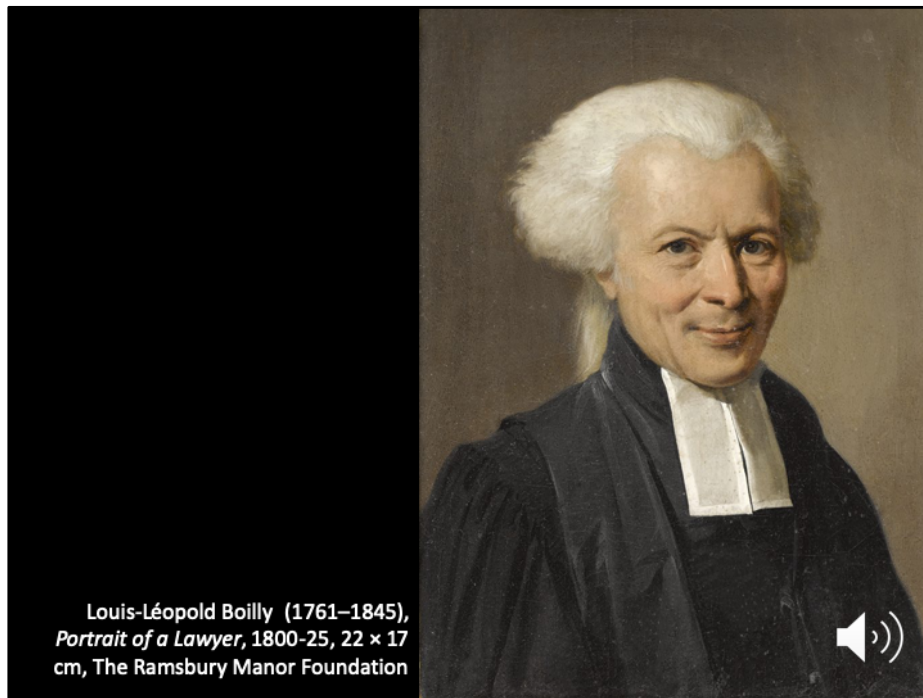
Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Meeting of Artists in Isabey's Studio*, 1798, 72 × 111 cm, Louvre

- This is a detail of the painting and it caused a sensation at the 1798 Paris Salon as viewer pushed each other aside to identify the painters, architects and other artists shown.
- Boilly was always aware of how to market his abilities and in this case he placed a number of small portraits around the painting and instead of the sitter's name he gave his address and the price of 120 francs.
- The success of this one painting made his name which enabled him to paint larger canvases and more complex compositions. He was the first artist to show Parisian street life but unlike Hogarth he does not engage in satire but in documentary recording. His work shows how, after the Revolution, the various social classes were thrown together.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *Madame Louis-Julien Gohin, Her Son and her Stepdaughters*, c. 1800-02, 65.3 × 54 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Boilly also painted thousands of portraits. He was a fashionable portrait painter and boasted that he could complete a head-and-shoulders portrait in two hours. Here we have a fashionably dressed woman in an empire-line gown. Unlike his earlier work there is no eroticism but a family scene with children's books and toys including a box containing leaves and a beetle.
- She was the second wife of a well-known colour merchant and although he is not present she holds a locket between her fingers presumably containing his portrait. The boy looks adoringly at the portrait. One stepdaughter of his first marriage looks at her stepmother and the other looks at a bee in front of the screen.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845),
Portrait of a Lawyer, 1800-25, 22 × 17
cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *Portrait of a Lawyer*, 1800-25, 22 × 17 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- This is Boilly's most successful product. In his lifetime he produced some 5,000 portraits nearly all of the same size, 22 × 17 cm, he claimed to produce them in an incredible two hours and he charged a modest 120 francs.
- This shows a lawyer wearing his business attire, which is unusual as most of his sitters wore plain jackets. It was at this time that male dress was becoming increasingly modest and female attire more elaborate.
- Boilly's portraits span the complete range of professions from military officers, businessmen, politicians and actors. Boilly described the production of these portraits as almost a military operation and he joked they were his 'service record in painting'.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Arrival of a Stage-coach in the Courtyard of the Messageries*, 1803, 62 × 24.4 cm, Louvre Museum

- Boilly was a popular and celebrated painter of his time. He was among the first artists to produce lithographs and became wealthy from the sale of his prints and paintings. He was awarded a medal by the Parisian Salon in 1804 for his work *The Arrival of a Mail-coach in the Courtyard of the Messageries*. In 1833 he was decorated as a chevalier of the nation's highest order, the Légion d'honneur.
- “The genre painter Louis-Léopold Boilly is illustrating a hitherto undepicted urban scene, the arrival of a stagecoach, and consequently the increasing role of travel in France in the early nineteenth century. Boilly, a precursor of the "painter of modern life", chronicles social life by representing people of different classes and professions. His formal model is 17th-century Dutch genre painting.
- **A slice of modern life**
 - A diligence has just arrived in the cour des Messageries, where stagecoaches converged from all over France and Europe in the early 19th century. The stagecoach is in the parking space reserved for coaches coming from northern France and Belgium, indicated by the inscription on

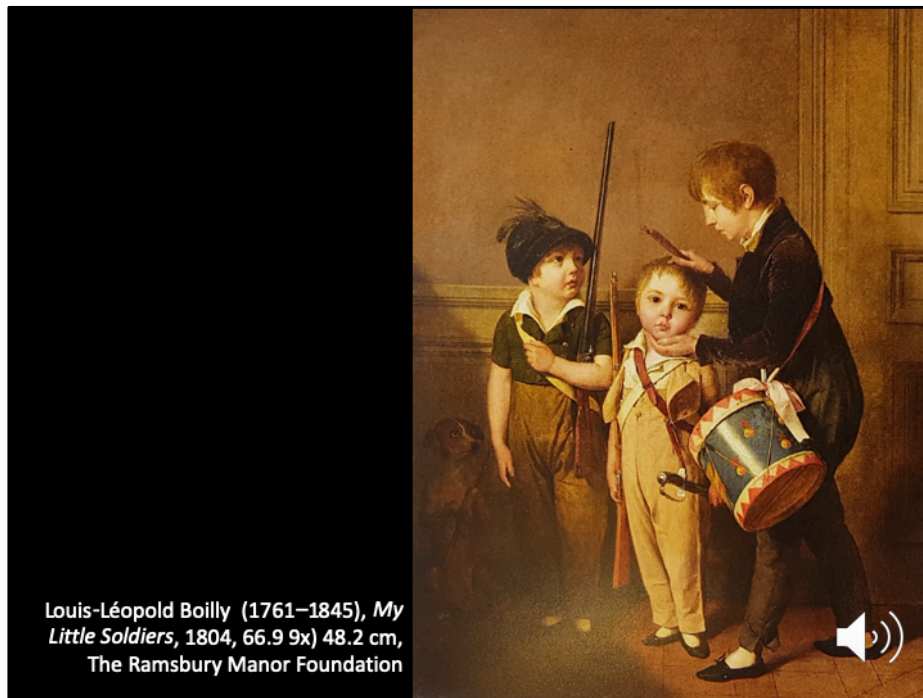
the wall. The people are of different social standing and ages: in the middle, a bourgeois being welcomed by his wife; on the left, a soldier with his arm around a flower seller who has her eye on an elegant officer; an old woman, perhaps a poor émigré, still sitting in the coach; delivery boys unloading packages. Boilly is above all interested in the scene's sentimental aspect, but he also evokes the growing role of transport in the early 19th century with the Napoleonic wars and the development of capitalism. He is describing an everyday urban event, a scene which falls within the domain of genre painting and was therefore considered inferior to history painting. This subject was unprecedented in the iconographic tradition of French genre painting, notably in the 18th century, for example in the work of Greuze.

- **A genre painting during the neoclassical period**

- Louis-Léopold Boilly painted this canvas in 1803 and presented it at the 1804 Salon, where he hoped to find a buyer. Although the picture was greatly appreciated, he did not sell it until much later. The work is in his second manner, which he developed during the Empire. During the Ancien Régime, Boilly had begun his career painting amorous subjects in the northern tradition. The Revolution enabled him to exhibit at the Salon but he was obliged to change his subject matter, which was considered immoral. He turned first to portraiture and was acclaimed at the 1798 Salon for his striking group portrait, *Gathering of Artists in Isabey's Studio* (Musée du Louvre). *The Arrival of the Stagecoach* is one of Boilly's first depictions of urban life, a genre which became his specialty (*The Shower*, Musée du Louvre). He was fond of chronicling social life and can be considered a "painter of modern life" before his time.

- **An illusionist painting**

- Boilly is representing a real-life scene, for which he made a preparatory drawing (Musée du Louvre). The canvas includes several portraits. The man being kissed by his wife is the painter Guillon-Lethière, Boilly's friend. The groups of figures are harmoniously placed to the sides in the foreground and in the centre further back. They all stand out against the long diagonal of the façade of the Messageries. Boilly's painstakingly detailed porcelain-like technique shows his admiration for 17th-century Dutch painting (Dou, Van Mieris)." (Louvre website)



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *My Little Soldiers*, 1804, 66.9 9x) 48.2 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Boilly has painted his three sons from his second marriage playing at soldiers. Julien (1796-1874) is carrying the drum and adjusting the pose of the youngest brother Alphonse (1801-1867). On the left is Edouard (1799-1854) who watches his older brother with a mixture of awe and admiration. The family dog stands to attention at the left of the picture.
- It was exhibited at the Salon of 1804 and was well received by the critics. While other painters were representing battle scenes to glorify Napoleon Boilly highlights the contrast between childhood innocence and the very real possibility of those children going to war in a few years time.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Public Viewing David's 'Coronation' at the Louvre*, 1810, 61.6 82.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

- In the background of this painting we see a famous painting by Jacques David called *The Coronation of Napoleon at Notre Dame*.
- In 1807 Jacques David completed *The Coronation of Napoleon at Notre Dame*. The painting is 10 meters wide and over 6 meters tall and is held in the Louvre.
- David had become the official painter of Napoleon Bonaparte and this painting was commissioned in 1804. A replica was commissioned by American entrepreneurs and that painting is now at the Palace of Versailles.
- The painting we are looking at is Boilly showing us the wide range of Parisian classes who came to see the painting when it was exhibited in the Louvre.
- A man in military garb reads the description to enable viewers to identify the various figures in David's picture, while Boilly scattered further portraits including his own, at far right, among the spectators. One of Boilly's most ambitious compositions, painted in 1810 it was exhibited at the Galerie Lebrun, Paris, in 1826, in the first posthumous retrospective of works by David and his school.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Barrel Game*, c. 1828, 37.8 × 46.8 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- The barrel game was a popular game in which players sought to throw disks into holes in a barrel or table top. Occasionally the disks were thrown into the mouth of a carved frog.
- The painting shows a rowdy scene outside a wine shop. As always with Boilly's crowd scenes it is the incidental detail that brings the painting to life. The women admire a child that totters towards the doorway to take an apple. Around the game men drink glasses of wine or pause to light a pipe. Two women and a man dispute something at a table and a woman is caught in a soldier's unwanted embrace while a figure in a cap urinates against the back wall. Over the years Boilly increasingly depicted strong characters such as the hook-nosed man in the green jacket on the left who is staring at the group at the right. It appears a lot depends on the outcome of this game.
- The fine paintwork and the coarse subject matter recall the painting of Jan Steen (1626-1679), the Dutch genre painter who specialized in bawdy tavern scenes.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Poor Cat*, c. 1825, grey ink and grey wash on paper, 28.2 × 35.4 cm, Ramsbury Manor

Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Poor Cat*, c. 1825, grey ink and grey wash on paper, 28.2 × 35.4 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Boilly produced this drawing and about seven years later a painting. It is interesting to examine the changes he made. Clearly the fashions changed and he has added figures to the left. He has used colour and a shaft of sunlight to emphasize the central figure group and he has also used colour to tie the elements of the groups together.
- The woman next to Punch and Judy is no longer interacting with the wealthy woman and the small boy now appears to be pickpocketing.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *The Poor Cat*, 1832, 31.9 × 40.4 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Fashionably dressed bourgeois mingle with working-class families and street urchins to watch a puppet show. A woman in a dazzling lilac dress and an extravagant hat with ostrich feathers has her daughters either side of her in white dresses and boaters. Boilly uses shades of the lilac in the man's top hat and the poorer woman's shawl to unite the composition. The scene takes place on the Champs-Élysées which at this time was a favourite road for strolling and relaxing although its heavily wooded pathways made it dangerous at night. The small boy next to the dogs is picking someone's pocket. In the shadows on the left a destitute family sits and the tiny bare toes of the child contrast with the bright red shoes of the wealthy child on the right.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *A Girl at a Window*, 55.2 × 45.7 cm, National Gallery

- This painting is a demonstration of Boilly's skill. It is a black and white picture painted in imitation of a print. He is referring to his love of 17th-century Dutch painting, the popularity of prints and to his own virtuosity.
- The girl in a white dress is sitting on a windowsill covered in an intriguing and contradictory collection of objects that range from a goldfish bowl to a telescope through which a young boy peeps. There is an antique frieze below and a canary in a cage above.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *A Carnival Scene*, 1832, 60.3 × 106.5 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Painted when he was 71 this complex composition is another demonstration of his technical skill. He had never attempted such a large group before, there are over 70 figures in the foreground groups.
- We see an enormous range of carnival characters, some dressed as apes, some Pierrots, some harlequins, some nuns and others devils. There is even a dog with a mask hang on its tail. The detail cannot be conveyed in this reproduction. His paintwork is flawless, the brushstrokes invisible and the detail amazing.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *A Carnival Scene* (detail on the left), 1832, 60.3 × 106.5 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- Here is a detail and at first the people in the centre look expressionless until you realise they are wearing flesh coloured masks tied on with thin pink ribbons.
- “It is a winter’s afternoon and characters from the Italian *commedia dell’arte* are roaming the streets of Paris alongside men dressed as monkeys and aristocratic spectres from the pre-revolutionary era. Down at the front is a dog leaping with a theatrical mask over its tail, a boy is blowing a horn, a fat lady [or a man dressed as a woman] is climbing into the coach in the middle and her skirts have blown up to reveal her bare buttocks. This is the largest panorama of Paris life Boilly attempted, and I think you can detect its influence in later panoramic anecdotal paintings.” (Books and Boots website)
- Boilly has added to the humour of the bared backside by placing above the point of a soldier’s bayonet.



Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), *A Carnival Scene* (detail on the right), 1832, 60.3 × 106.5 cm, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation

- People on carriages in the distance are straining to see what is going on. It is a street scene the Boilly knew well as he lived close by. He had lived through the French Revolution and a number of regime changes and it is as if, for one last time, he is bringing together, in the form the carnival of life, all of the scenes he had witnessed in Paris over his long life of 84 years.