

HIDING
MAKING
SHOWING
CREATION

The Studio from Turner to Tacita Dean

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CHAPTER 2

Jean-Léon Gérôme, His Badger and His Studio

MATTHIAS KRÜGER

BLAIREAU, BLAIREUTÉ, BLAIREAUTAGE AND BLAIREAUTEUR

Jean-Léon Gérôme's painting *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El Assaneyn* (fig. 1), shown at the Salon of 1866, prompted the art critic Edmond About to exclaim in awe:

It is the Orient captured in one of its less endearing aspects. Yet the horror of the subject contrasts in the most unique manner with M. Gérôme's polished and licked execution. The antithesis is as captivating as the contrast of vocals and accompaniment in Mozart's famous serenade.¹

The quotation contains a pun on the word *exécution*. The painting shows the heads of executed rebels, exhibited as a deterring example at the door of a mosque. For About, the brutality of these killings contrasted most effectively with the manner in which the artist had executed his painting, described as *polie et blaireauté*, here translated as "polished and licked." Both adjectives suggest an immaculately smooth pictorial surface. The latter, *blaireauté*, is a technical term referring to the brush employed by the artist to achieve a perfect smoothness of the picture plane, the *blaireau* (English: badger-brush or blender) – a special tool made out of the long, supple hair of the badger. Resembling a powder puff, such a brush was employed dry, that is, with neither pigment nor binder, and used to efface all traces of brushwork by circling it across the paint surface. The technical vo-



FIG. 1 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El Assaneyn*, 1866, Doha, Orientalist Museum, inv. OM.184

cabulary of the time coined a verb to describe the action of handling this brush: *blairotter*. The action itself was called *blaireautage*.²

Blaireautage resulted in *fini* or “finish” – another technical term, used to describe the perfect smoothness of the picture plane. For many critics, *fini* was the hallmark of academic painting.³ Most commentators strongly disapproved of the use of the badger. Artists who employed it (or were believed to have made use of it) were taunting-

ly given the moniker *blaireauteurs*. It was an allegation often made against Gérôme, whom many believed to foster an excessive love for this utensil. Gérôme's strong affection for the badger brush was notorious: the entry on the word *blairotter* in the Larousse of 1866 quotes the dictum of the critique Paul de Saint Victor: "Gérôme blairotte trop ses tableaux."⁴

Indeed, painting manuals of the nineteenth century warn not to overdo *blaireautage*, as an excessive use of the badger deprives the painting of vigor and energy.⁵ Rather than achieving *fini*, the painter would end up with *léché* – a surface that looked as if it had been the result of incessant licking. *Léché* was regarded as a perversion of *fini* and the term was essentially synonymous with *blaireauté*.⁶ According to one contemporary dictionary, Adeline's *Lexique des termes d'art* of 1883, the *tableau blaireauté* "seduced the vulgar through its showy finish."⁷ Here the implication is that the real connoisseur would despise its meretricious gloss as a wholly superficial quality.⁸

Given Gérôme's reputation as a *blaireauteur*, it comes as something of a surprise that neither the catalogue of the huge Gérôme exhibition staged in Paris in 2011 nor other recent publications on the artist pay any attention to the badger brush at all.⁹ As technical examinations in this direction have not been carried out, it is difficult to say whether and how much Gérôme really relied on the badger brush when creating his paintings. Even William Bouguereau, for many the *blaireauteur* par excellence, denied having employed a badger brush at all. He claimed to have achieved the *fini* of his paintings with a razor instead.¹⁰

Let us return to the quotation of the introduction. About's comment on Gérôme's painting *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El Assaneyn* is remarkable for two reasons. First, it is the only positive use of the word *blaireauté* I have discovered in contemporary art criticism. In all other instances of its use, the term has derogatory overtones. While About compares Gérôme's *blaireautage* to the accompaniment in Mozart's *Enführung aus dem Serail*, for most others the badger was a tool to which only second-rate artists resorted or, as one critic put it in 1858: "The badger is to the incompetent painter what the pedal is to an impotent pianist" – a means to hide his deficiency.¹¹

Second, for About, the *fini* was not something invisible. He did not look *through* the picture surface as through a windowpane, but rather

appreciated its polish and finish for its own sake. For him, the function of *fini* in Gérômes painting was not to render the surface of the picture transparent, but rather to create a contrast with the cruelty of the subject.

About's attitude did not differ from that of the opponents of academic *fini* in this respect. Indeed, few critics really cared about academic theory. Rather than describing the *fini* of academic paintings as an immaterial screen, critics compared it to materials with a smooth surface. Most prevalent were comparisons with porcelain and silk, although more inventive critics gave full reign to their imagination. Thus, in 1878, Emile Zola – to give but one example – compared the shiny perfection of Gérôme's finish with both lacquered carriage doors and painting with enamels on porcelain.¹²

HIDING MAKING

Given its critical reception, one might wonder why academic painters insisted on *fini*. Why was their aim the hiding of making? The most obvious answer to this question would be the one offered by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, for many contemporaries the embodiment of the Academy. It is recorded in Henri Delaborde's monograph on the artist:

What one calls "touch" [or brushmark] is an abuse of execution. It is but a quality of spurious talents and spurious artists, who have distanced themselves from the imitation of nature in order to show their hand [...]. Instead of showing the represented object it shows the painting technique, instead of the thought it exhibits the hand.¹³

This was academic doctrine in its purest form. The purpose of *fini* consisted in concealing the painter's craft.

Even conservative critics were reluctant to consider Gérôme as a representative of the Neo-classical tradition. If anything, the artist was chided on account of having a penchant for representing frivolous anecdotes, such as is seen in his *Caesar and Cleopatra* (fig. 2), a

painting that hung next to *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El As-saneyn* at the Salon of 1866 and which plays a similarly intricate game of showing and hiding.¹⁴ The painting shows Cleopatra, who – having been wrapped in a carpet and smuggled into the chamber of the

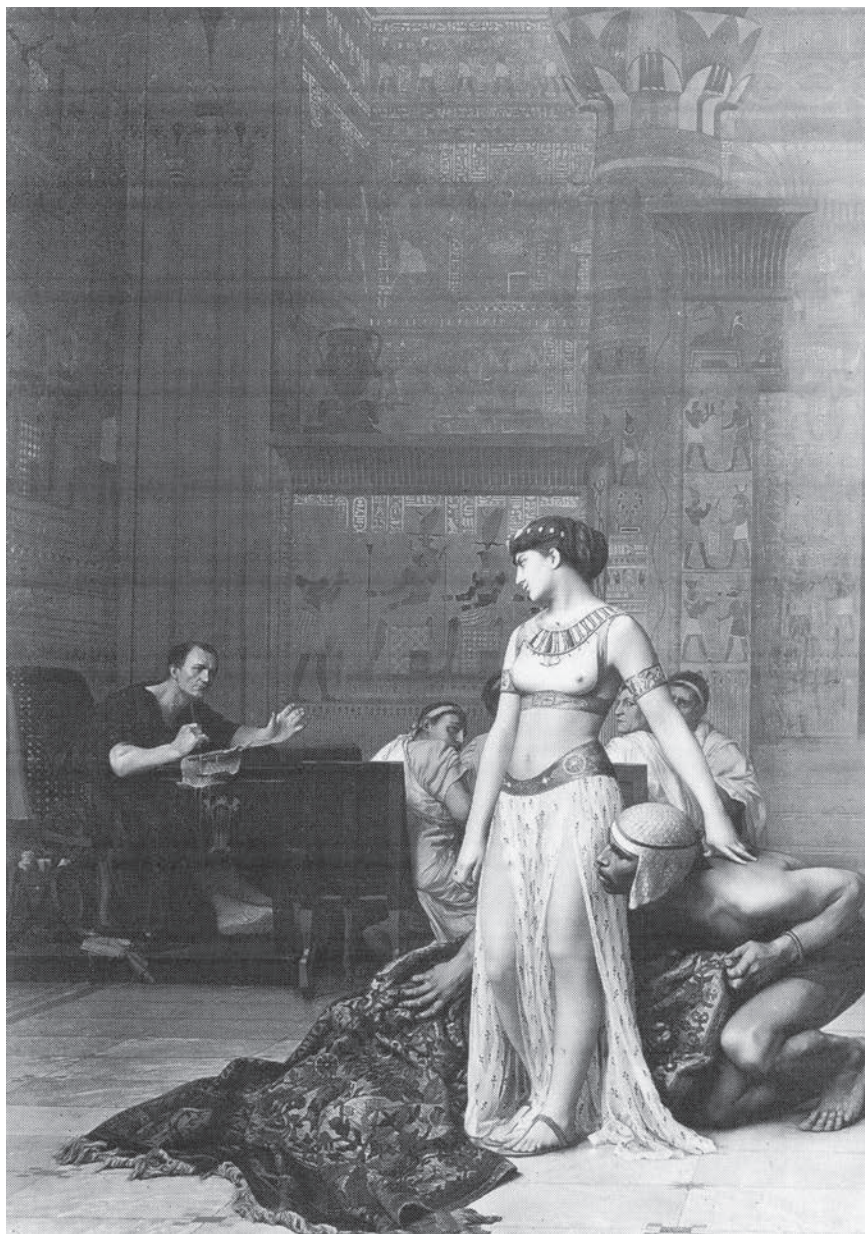


FIG. 2 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Cleopatra and Caesar*, 1866, Private collection

Alexandrian palace hosting Julius Caesar – is now unveiled to him. The blatantly voyeuristic nature of the scene, however, clearly did not prevent the critic Maxime Du Camp from reading the painting's *fini* as an expression of Gérôme's Neo-classicist ideology:

It is the force of the conception and not the skill of the hand that makes true artists [...]. Unfortunately the general tendency today is towards manual know-how and that is perhaps the reason why the Cleopatra of Gérôme does not attain the success she would merit. Because one does not find those certain impastos that enthuse the pretentious connoisseur in this charming painting, and because it does not offer the violent hues which now seem to be the *ne plus ultra* of art it is claimed that Gérôme is on the decline and that his canvases are not worth as much as before.¹⁵

The *fini* not only hid making, it could also be interpreted as a conceptual achievement in its own right. Consider for instance the American painter Cady Eaton, who was allowed to observe Gérôme at work. According to Eaton, Gérôme “knew the exact amount of every pigment necessary for the production of any required color, tone, shadow. When the work was finished, his palette was clean.”¹⁶

In the same vein, one might interpret the absence of any impasto as evidence of the strength of the artistic conception. There was not one grain of pigment too much on either palette or painting! In the end, the finished picture corresponds exactly to the image the artist had envisioned in his mind. Hence, the execution followed the conception entirely. The picture of Gérôme painted in words by Eaton is one of an artist who controlled his working process with almost mathematical precision.

Though the *fini* of his paintings refused to acknowledge the fact that the colors he used – to paraphrase Clement Greenberg¹⁷ – “came from tubes or pots,” Gérôme actually made pigment the subject matter of one of his paintings. In *The Color Grinder* of 1890–91 (fig. 3), painting subject and paint surface can be interpreted as contrasting with one another. Set in Cairo, the painting shows color grinders in their workshop, thus conjuring up the notion of the Orient as “an ex-

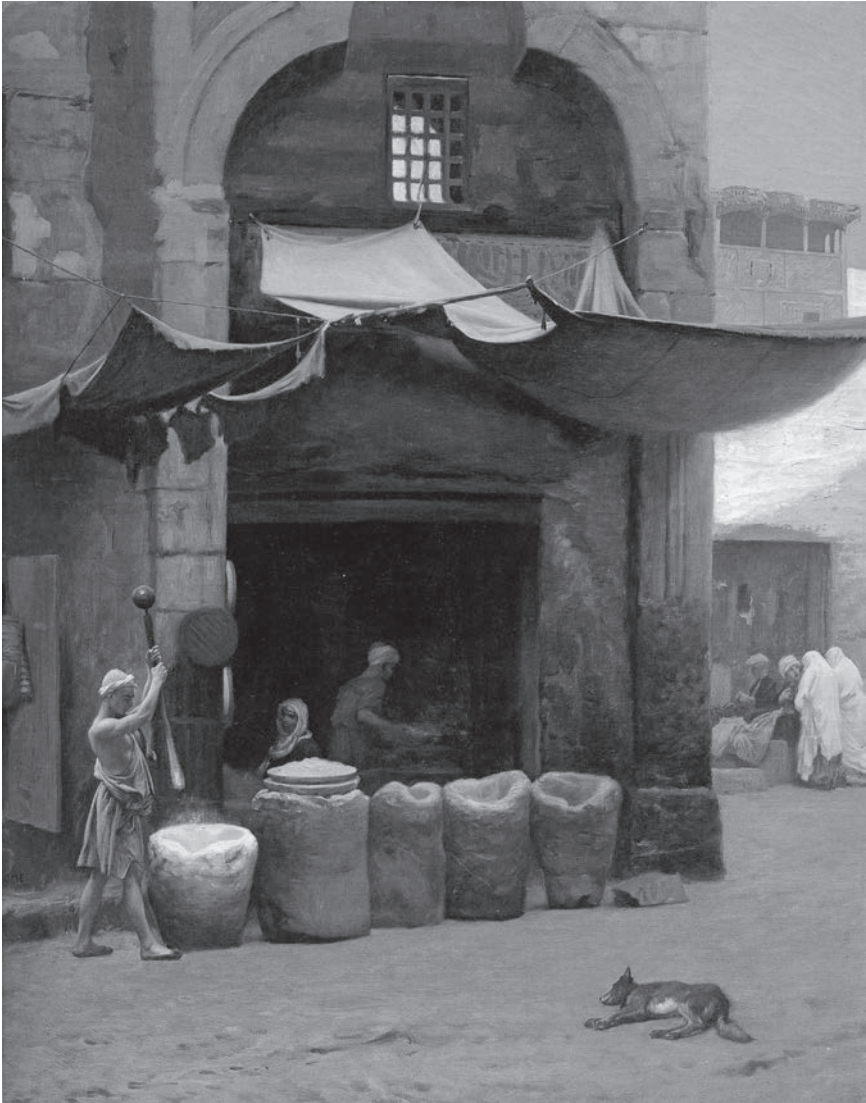


FIG. 3 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Color Grinder*, 1890–91, Private collection, on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. L-R-2.1995

citing and dangerous repository of colored materials and attitudes.”¹⁸ The gaudy colors of the pigments they are producing, however, contrast with the extreme polish of the picture surface: the exotic sensuality of the Orient is tamed and domesticated by the unyielding *blaireau* of the Parisian artist.

The critical discourse on the *fini* was not, however, dominated by idealistic notions such as those put forward by Maxime du Camp. The prevailing understanding was somewhat different and is exemplified by the art criticism of Théophile Gautier, the famous poet, travel writer and journalist, who – in the introduction to his review of the Salon of 1857 – noted a general tendency towards subdued colors and smooth execution:

The brushwork has disappeared to make room for a more tranquil, unified and subdued execution. We believe to detect here an advice of photography. The wild, turbulent, inspired and sketchy manner, formerly so highly appreciated, has but few supporters today – and they belong to an older generation. The brush and the pencil hide themselves so as to facilitate the emergence of the object.¹⁹

This passage marks a radical shift in the interpretation of *fini*, showing that it was no longer regarded as an emblem of Neo-classicism, but as an emulation of the transparency of the photographic image. Thus a work of art was not interpreted as being the expression of an idea that the artist had formed in his mind, but rather as a challenge to photography when it came to representing detail with clarity.

For Gautier, no one represented this tendency better than Jean-Léon Gérôme, whose invisible brushstroke and meticulous rendering of detail led many a critic to accredit a high degree of objectivity to his paintings – an asset that served Gérôme particularly well in his Oriental paintings and earned him the reputation of a painter ethnographer.²⁰

Although of great importance to Jean-Léon Gérôme's work and its critical reception, the scope of this essay does not allow a comprehensive investigation of the rivalry then emerging between painting and photography and, indeed, this subject has drawn a huge amount of scholarly attention in recent years.²¹ There was, however, a further advantage of the *blaireauté* that has escaped attention until now. *Blaireautage* might be seen as a preliminary stage in the reproduction

of a painting. In an article about the latest developments in photography published in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* of 1859, Philippe Burty observed that one of the greatest problems faced by the photographer was that of light catching bumps on the paint surface – such as brush-marks or impastos – which frequently appeared as white spots in the reproduction.²² In 1861, however, Burty was able to announce a significant step forwards achieved by the photographer Robert Jefferson Bingham:

Bingham has, through long practice, and with the help of the facilities that allow him to light the paintings of Meissonier, Gérôme and others brought into his studio as he pleases, managed to overcome, if not the insurmountable obstacles that certain tones present, at least the problems caused by the roughness of the paint-media and the furrows of the brush.²³

It is certainly no coincidence that Burty names two artists who were then famous for their neat application of paint. Gérôme's *blaireauté* especially lent itself brilliantly to photographic reproduction, since through *blaireautage* he had removed all unevenness from the surface. One might even venture the thesis that Gérôme, whose paintings were mass reproduced by the art dealer Goupil, saw *blaireautage* primarily as enhancing the reproducibility of his images.²⁴

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE STUDIO

Let us return now from the photographic studio to the painter's workshop. While the badger brush belonged to the standard equipment in a painter's *atelier*, it was often rejected by landscape painters. As *blaireautage* was a time-consuming operation and required a lot of patience, the badger brush was hardly a suitable tool when producing paintings *en plein air*. Furthermore, although *blaireautage* was seen as an obligatory stage in painting figures, most painting manuals of the period admitted that there was little use for the badger brush in landscape paintings. Karl Robert's attitude, expressed in his *Traité pratique de la peinture à l'huile* from 1878, serves as a typical example:

I cannot let the use of the badger brush, which has its benefits, but also inconveniences, go unmentioned. *Blaireautage* renders the tone faint and is detrimental to the solidity and the relief of a landscape [...].²⁵

If used at all in landscape paintings, the badger brush was reserved for special tasks such as the creation of a cloudless sky or the calm surface of a pond.²⁶ The most important reason for banning the badger brush from the landscape artist's toolbox, however, had to do with the new evaluation of the brushstroke as a mark of originality,²⁷ a tendency that was to climax with the Impressionists, who – as is well known – broke with a time-honored convention when they showed sketches at their first public exhibition in the studio of the photographer Nadar on Boulevard des Capucines.

A proper academic artist presented only finished works to the public, keeping preliminary drawings and oil sketches in his studio. This principle corresponded with a more general social code of behavior that stipulated more formal conduct within the public sphere, as opposed to a more relaxed way of behaving in the privacy of one's home. This analogy is suggestively deployed in a description of Gérôme's outer appearance given by Jules Claretie in his *Peintres et sculpteurs contemporains* of 1873:

When going out, Gérôme walks upright, keeps himself stiff. He is clean, he is smooth, he is as irreproachable as one of his paintings. [...] He is straight-faced, his suit is conventionally buttoned, the knot of his tie is geometrically tied, and his slightly rough moustache never deviates from perfect regularity. [...] everything is accomplished and licked, not a grain of dust on the suit of the author, not a daub on the canvas [...].²⁸

Claretie here compares the *fini* of Gérôme's paintings to the finish of his public appearance. Both paintings and public persona obey the strict rules of the *comme-il-faut*. Though nothing is said about his private conduct, the suggestion is that Gérôme was more relaxed at home. At the same time, however, this mention of Gérôme's strict

adherence to the rules of decorum may imply a critique of the artist, whose true personality is hidden both in public and in the rigid *fini* of his paintings.²⁹

WOMEN'S WORK

Blaireautage can thus be compared to a person's toilette.³⁰ Indeed, the name, the form and the function of the badger brush lend themselves easily to such comparisons. The French *blaireau* can refer both to the brush used by the academic painter to achieve *fini* and to a shaving brush. Furthermore, its form resembles both a shaving brush and a powder puff. And even the function had a lot in common with cosmetics: by eliminating all the marks of the brush, the roughness and furrows, *blaireautage* made the painting presentable and thus served a similar purpose to the toilette. Due to its close affinity to the application of cosmetics, *blaireautage* was frequently belittled as an operation more suitable for a woman than for a male painter – even a pupil of Gérôme's, Thomas Eakins, regarded the finish as “ladies' work.”

Gérôme tells us every day that finish is nothing that head work is all & that if we stopped to finish our studies we could not learn to be painters in a hundred life times & he calls finish needle works & embroidery & ladies' work to deride us. His own studies are rough quick things mere notes & daubs, but his pictures are finished as far as any man's [...].³¹

Gérôme's dictum, as reported by Eakins, shows the contempt for manual labor typical among academic painters of the time. Although considered necessary in a completed painting, *fini* was also regarded as a rather secondary quality – just as the finish of a person's outer appearance was a necessary but also secondary quality in a perfect gentleman. However important finish was in regard to male conduct, its lack was much less tolerated when it came to a woman's behavior.³²

In 1877, rumor had it that the painter Jean-Léon Gérôme was producing a sculpture. “Gérôme quitte le blaireau pour l’ébouchoir,” wrote Marc de Montifaud in *L’Artiste*: “Gérôme abandons the badger brush for the chisel.”³³ Gérôme was working on a statuary group of gladiators, taken over from one of his most famous paintings, the *Pollice verso* of 1872. The amazement Gérôme’s first sculpture provoked when first shown at the Universal Exhibition of 1878 was enormous. Jules Claretie recalls this event in his biography on the artist:

Yes, the same hand that handled the badger brush with such delicacy, set out, through great masses, to petrify the clay, and next to his numerous and most interesting works, all cherished and accomplished, in that smooth execution that sometimes makes you think of painting on porcelain, but which is masterly and always sovereign, Gérôme felt obliged to offer the public an admirable statuary group and this fight of the gladiators that Gérôme presented as a sculptor won admiration due to its strong and manly execution.³⁴

Claretie adopts the traditional gendering of sculpture and painting, which had its roots in the *paragone* between *sculptura* and *pittura* in Renaissance art theory. Since executing a sculpture required more strength, sculpture was usually considered the more masculine art. In the passage quoted above, this contrast is further enforced by the reference to the badger brush, a tool equated with delicacy that had been associated with women’s work.

The gendered connotations of the badger brush allow a new interpretation of Gérôme’s fascination with the mythological figure of Omphale, the subject of a statue exhibited by the artist at the Salon of 1887. The statue, though lost today, is documented in a series of photographs by Louis Bonnard, which show the artist, his model Emma, and the maquette of the statue in his studio, as well as a painting by Gérôme that was almost certainly inspired by these photographs, his *End of the Seance* (fig. 4). These documents suggest that the figure of Omphale served the artist’s self-reflexive ends.³⁵ Indeed, one might

suggest that the statue functioned as a symbol for Gérôme, the painter who had now morphed into a sculptor.

The myth of Hercules and Omphale is a story about the inversion of gender: Omphale, having made Hercules her slave, seizes his club and his lion skin and forces him to spin while clad in women's clothes.



FIG. 4 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The End of the Seance*, 1886, Santa Ana, Frankel Family Trust

Gérôme accentuates the role reversal by representing Omphale in the pose of the *Hercules Farnese*, probably the most famous sculptural rendering of the ancient Greek hero.

The story of Hercules and Omphale was one often depicted in nineteenth-century Salon paintings, most notably by Gustave Boulanger, an artist who was not only Gérôme's fellow student in the atelier of Paul Delaroche, but who was frequently said to be his kindred spirit. Boulanger's version of the Hercules and Omphale theme, shown at the Salon of 1861, was heaped with critical scorn on account of its excessive *blaireauté*. Maxime du Camp joked that he would not have been surprised to discover that the two figures had been copied in the workshop of a sculptor rather than painted after live models, for the Omphale in the painting appeared to have been made out of plaster and the Hercules out of clay.³⁶ And Léon Lagrange, writing for the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, condemned the work as

[...] a smooth painting, lacking in force, where the badger brush, this awful leveller, has glossed both flesh and marble in the same monotonous manner. Which form, however strong, could resist this enervating execution? Thus, Hercules, in spite of the exaggeration of his muscles, seems empty and inflated.³⁷

Interestingly, Léon Lagrange does not consider the possibility that the artist might have been aiming for the very effect he criticized. Might it not be possible to interpret the obvious tension between the *blaireauté* and Hercules's enormous muscles in the same way as Edmond About had interpreted the contrast between *blaireauté* and horror in Gérôme's *Heads of the Rebel Beys*? Moreover, would not such an interpretation actually be in line with the subject of Hercules and Omphale? As such, the contrast between the athletic body of Hercules and the softening effect of the badger brush could be read as a means to represent the effeminate regression of masculine virility.³⁸

The case of Charles Gleyre shows that for nineteenth-century artists, *fini* was indeed such a means to this end. According to his early biographer, Charles Clément, Gleyre had responded to the criticism

of his version of *Hercules and Omphale*, shown at the Salon of 1863, with the following rebuttal: “Have you not, then, understood my painting? What I intended to represent is the *aplatissement*, the ‘flattening’ of the man by the woman.”³⁹

Given the obvious self-reflexivity of Gérôme’s statue of Omphale, one might ask whether the artist saw a parallel between his becoming a sculptor and Omphale assuming the role of Hercules, between his exchanging the badger brush for the chisel and her trading the distaff for the club. It is worth recalling at this final juncture that Gérôme himself compared *fini* to “needle works & embroidery & ladies’ work.”⁴⁰ Thus, Gérôme’s essays into sculpture can be interpreted as an attempt to dissociate himself from the image of a *blaireauteur*. The art critical discourse on Gérôme’s badger shows that the importance of tools was not restricted to the working practice of an artist inside his studio. Tools could also play a vital and often strategic role in defining the artist’s public persona.⁴¹

NOTES

I am grateful to Rachel King and Michael Seydel for their excellent proof-reading of the text.

1 Edmond About, *Salon de 1866* (Paris: Hachette, 1867), 205: “C’est l’Orient pris sur le vif dans un de ses aspects les moins aimables; mais l’horreur même du sujet contraste le plus singulièrement du monde avec l’exécution polie et blaireautée de M. Gérôme. L’antithèse est autrement saisissante que celle de l’accompagnement et du chant dans la fameuse sérénade de Mozart.”

2 On the *blaireau*, see Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique and the Making of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 175–176. See also Matthias Krüger, *Relief der Farbe. Pastose Malerei in der französischen Kunstkritik 1860–1890* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007).

3 On *fini*, see Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, “The Ideology of the Licked Surface,” in: Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner (eds.), *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth Century Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984). Curiously Rosen and Zerner pay no attention to the technical procedure required to achieve *fini*. On *fini*-paintings as opposed to impasto-paintings, see also Krüger 2007.

4 Pierre Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Vve P. Larousse, 1866–76), 786.

- 5 Jacques-Nicolas Paillot de Montabert, *Traité complet de la peinture* (Paris: Bossange père, 1829), 198–200.
- 6 On the *léché* as a perversion of the *fini*, see Krüger 2007, 39, 300, note 53.
- 7 Jules Adeline, “Blaireauter,” *Lexique des termes d’art* 51 (Paris: Quantin, 1884), 176. Translation from Callen 2000.
- 8 The contempt art critics of the nineteenth century expressed for *blaireutage* contrasts significantly with the esteem that was paid to the art of *verdrijven* in earlier art theory. See Ann-Sophie Lehmann, “Fleshing out the Body: The ‘Colors of the Naked’ in Workshop Practice and Art Theory 1400–1600,” *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 58 (2008) 87–109: 94–96.
- 9 See Laurence De Cars (ed.), *The Spectacular Art of Jean-Leon Gérôme (1824–1904)* (Milan: Skira, 2000); Scott Allan and Mary Morton (eds.), *Reconsidering Gérôme* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010).
- 10 On this allegation, see Marc Steven Walker, “Bouguereau at Work,” in: Louise D’Argencourt (ed.), *William Bouguereau 1825–1905*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1984), 78.
- 11 Eugène-Louis-Ernest de Buchère de Lépinos, *L’art dans la rue et l’art au Salon* (Paris: Dentu, 1859), 48–49: “Le blaireau est pour le peintres incomplètes ce que la pédale est pour les pianistes impuissants: un moyen de dissimuler la grossièreté de la trame, les fauses notes du modelé, la pauvreté de l’harmonie.” A more favorable comparison between *blaireutage* and playing the piano can be found in Edmond Duranty, “Atelier,” in: *Les pays des arts* (Paris: Charpentier, 1881) 189. Here, the painter Marcillon is described as “effleurant sa toile d’une touche délicate, et déposant son pinceau pour la lisser avec un petit blaireau qu’il essayait à tout moment au coin de sa veste, le tout avec des mouvement précieux comme ceux d’une pianiste.”
- 12 Emile Zola, “Ecole française de peinture à l’exposition de 1878,” in: F.W.J. Hemmings and R.J. Niess (eds.), *Salons* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1959), 206.
- 13 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres quoted in Henri Delaborde, *Ingres, sa vie, ses travaux, sa doctrine* (Paris: Plon, 1870), 150: “Ce qu’on appelle ‘la touche’ est un abus d’exécution. Elle n’est la qualité des faux talents, des faux artistes, qui s’éloignent de l’imitation de la nature pour montrer simplement leur adresse [...]. Au lieu de l’objet représenté, elle fait voir le procédé; au lieu de la pensée elle dénonce la main.”
- 14 On these two paintings in the Salon of 1866, see Jane Mayo Roos, *Early Impressionism and the French State (1866–1874)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28–29.
- 15 Maxime Du Camp, “Le Salon de 1866,” *Revue des deux mondes* 63 (1866) 701: “C’est la force de la conception et non point l’adresse de la main qui fait les vrais artistes [...]. Malheureusement, la tendance générale aujourd’hui est vers habilité matérielle, et c’est peut-être à cause de cela que la Cléopâtre de M. Gérôme n’obtient pas tout le succès qu’elle mérite. Comme dans ce gracieux tableau on ne trouve pas certains empâtemens qui font pâmer les faux connaisseurs, comme il n’offre aucun de ces tons violens qui semblent maintenant le nec plus ultra de l’art, on prétend que M. Gérôme baisse et que

sa toile ne vaut pas celles qu'il nous a montrées jadis."

16 Daniel Cady Eaton, *A Handbook of Modern French Painting* (New York: Dodd, Mead and company, 1909), 190.

17 Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in: John O'Brian (ed.), *The Collected Essays and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 86. According to Greenberg, the historical value of the Impressionists was in their abjuration of underpainting and glazes in order "to leave the eye under no doubt as to the fact that the colors they used were made of paint that came of tubes or pots," and thus openly acknowledge the properties of the medium of painting.

18 John Gage, *Color and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 10.

19 Théophile Gautier: "Salon de 1857," *L'Artiste* 1 (1857) 191: "La touche aussi a disparu pour faire place à une exécution plus tranquille, plus unie et plus soutenue. Nous avons cru connaître là un conseil de la photographie. Cette manière heurtée, turbulente, spirituelle, touchée en esquisse, qu'on appréciait beaucoup autrefois, n'a plus que de rares sectateurs, et encore appartiennent-ils à une génération plus ancienne. La brosse et le pinceau se dissimulent tant qu'ils peuvent pour mieux laisser paraître l'objet."

20 Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in: *The Politics of Vision. Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1989), 33–59.

21 On this issue, see Hélène Lafont-Couturier (ed.), *Gérôme et Goupil. Art et Entreprise* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2000); and Pierre-Lin Renié, "Gérôme: Working in the Era of Industrial Reproduction," in: *De Cars* 2000, 173–178.

22 Philippe Burty, "Exposition de la Société française de photographie," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 2 (1859) 211.

23 Philippe Burty, "La photographie en 1861," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 10 (1861) 245: "M. Bingham, par une longue pratique, par les facilités qu'il a d'éclairer à sa guies les tableaux des MM. Meissonier, Gérôme, etc., transposés dans son atelier, est arrivé à vaincre, sinon les obstacles insurmontables qu'offrent certains tons, au moins les rugosités de la pâte ou les sillons de la brosse."

24 See Krüger 2007, 238–241. See also Wolfgang Ullrich, *Raffinierte Kunst: Übung vor Reproduktionen* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2009) 47–48.

25 Karl Robert, *Traité pratique de la peinture à l'huile: Paysage* (Paris: Georges Meusnier, 1878), 44–45: "Je ne puis passer sous silence l'emploi du blaireau, qui a son utilité, mais qui présente aussi ses inconvénients. Le blaireautage rend le ton mou et nuit à la fermeté et au relief d'un paysage." See Callen 2000, 176. The limited application of the badger brush in landscape painting is stated in a number of other contemporary manuals; see, for example, Frédéric Goupil, *Traité méthodique et raisonné de la peinture à l'huile [...]* (Paris: Le Bailly, 1867), 28: "L'excès de blaireautage est un défaut très-grave dans certaines occasions; un terrain ou des rochers de premier plan dans un paysage, ne devant jamais être blaireautés: les rugosités et la rudesse de la pâte dans ce cas feront toujours bien sur le sol ou pour représenter des surfaces qui ne doivent pas être lisses d'habitude. Voulez-vous peindre de belles eaux? blaireautez-les, au contraire, afin

de faire disparaître toutes les aspérités de la pâte.”

26 Robert 1878, 44–45.

27 On *touche* as the mark of originality, see Richard Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

28 Jules Claretie, *Peintres et sculpteurs contemporains* (Paris: Charpentier, 1873), 12: “M. Gérôme, dans la rue, marche droit, se tient raide. Il est propre, il est lisse, il est irréprochable comme une de ses toiles. On le prendrait pour un officier en tenue de ville. Il ne bronche pas ; son vêtement est régulièrement boutonné; le nœud de sa cravate géométriquement fait, et sa moustache, un peu rude, ne s’écarte pas d’une régularité parfaite. [...] tout est parachevé et tout léché ; pas un grain de poussière sur l’habit de l’auteur, pas une tache sur sa toile [...]”

29 See Matthias Krüger, “The Art Critic as Graphologist. Handwriting, Typography and the Painterly Touch in the Era of Impressionism,” in: Annamaria Ducci (ed.), *Chirurgia della Creazione. Mano e arti visive* (= *Predella* 29, 2011). http://predella.arte.unipi.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=175&catid=65&Itemid=94 (Accessed January 1 2012).

30 On this comparison, see Krüger 2007, 85–86.

31 Letter from Thomas Eakins to his father Benjamin Eakins from 29 October, 1868, quoted in Sarah Burns and John Davis (eds.), *American Art to 1900. A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) 591. On the feminine connotations of the *fini*, see Rosen and Zerner 1984, 223. Quoting from a letter by Eakins’s sister, Rosen and Zerner attribute the association of *fini* with “ladies’ work” to Eakins instead of to Gérôme, from whom he had adopted it.

32 See Krüger 2007, 71–73, 92–93.

33 Marc de Montifaud, “Salon de 1877,” *L’Artiste* 49/1 (1877) 342.

34 Jules Claretie, *Peintres et sculpteurs contemporains* (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1884), 77: “Oui, cette même main qui maniait le blaireau avec tant de finesse allait, par grandes masses, pétrir la glaise, et, à côté de ses travaux nombreux et des plus intéressants, tous soignés et achevés, dans cette facture lisse qui fait songer parfois à la peinture à porcelaine, mais magistrale et toujours souveraine, Gérôme devait offrir au public un group admirable, et ce combat de Gladiateurs, que M. Gérôme exposait comme sculpteur, emportait l’admiration avec sa facture puissante et mâle.”

35 On these photographs and paintings, see Victor I. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 61–180. Stoichita interprets the photographs and the paintings as modern variations of the Pygmalion theme. See also, more recently, Susan Waller, “Fin de partie. A Group of Self-Portraits by Jean-Léon Gérôme,” *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide*, 9/1 (2010). http://www.19thcartworldwide.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=364&Itemid=124 (Accessed January 1 2012). Waller argues convincingly that the painting *The End of the Seance* makes a judgment on the old competition between the media sculpture and painting: “Beyond asserting Gérôme’s double identity as painter

and sculptor, the self-portrait, which stages a contest between media and replays the paragon of the Renaissance, suggests that for Gérôme the two media were in tension. Here, at least, the award goes to painting: Gérôme's sculpture remains merely a lifeless lump of clay, while his painting brings to life the model's fleshy body and the delicate petals of the rose."

36 Maxime Du Camp, *Le Salon de 1861* (Paris: Librairie nouvelle, Bourdillat, 1861), 31.

37 Léon Lagrange, "Salon de 1861," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 10 (1861) 266: "[...] peinture lisse et sans force, où le blaireau, terrible niveleur, a satiné avec une fadeur égale la chair et le marbre. Quelles formes assez puissantes résisteraient à cette énervante exécution? Aussi l'Hercule, malgré l'exagération de ses muscles, paraît-il vide et soufflé."

38 See the psychopathological interpretation of the theme given by Edward J. Kempf, *Psychopathology* (St. Louis: Mosby, 1920), 140–142. Kempf uses Boulanger's painting to illustrate his book.

39 Charles Clément, *Gleyre. Étude biographique et critique avec le catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre du maître* (Paris: Didier, 1886 2nd edition), 293: "Vous ne comprenez donc pas mon tableau? Ce que j'ai voulu représenter, c'est l'aplatissement de l'homme par la femme." See Michel Thévoz, *L'académisme et ses fantasmes: Le réalisme imaginaire de Charles Gleyre* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1980), 55–56, especially Thévoz's suggestive question: "Comment ne pas deviner sous ce voile mythologique et dans l'avilissement d'Hercule la position sexuelle de Gleyre lui-même?"

40 A further role reversal is staged in Gérôme's painting *The End of the Seance*, as has been pointed out by Allan Doyle in "Groping the Antique. Michelangelo and the Erotics of Tradition" (Allan and Morton 2010, 15–16): "Hercules' absence from the sculptural group casts Gérôme in the role of the indentured hero. Although his deep bend displays an impressive athleticism for his age, showing himself washing his tools in a bucket of water also hints at domestic servitude. The sponge he holds echoes the task associating him with the administration of the queen's nightly moisturizing regime. Given Jean-Léon's delight in visual jokes and word play, it is no surprise that lions were a favorite motif. Omphale's borrowed lion skin implies she has adopted not only Hercules' but her maker's as well."

41 This importance was not only acknowledged by Gérôme but also by a number of other artists of the nineteenth century as well, most notably perhaps by Gustave Courbet, whose use of the palette knife – often associated with a trowel – contributed strongly to the shaping of his public image as a worker-painter (*peintre-ouvrier*). On Courbet's use of the palette knife, see Petra Chu's contribution to the present volume, as well as Matthias Krüger, "Gespachtelter Zufall. Gustave Courbet und die Messermalerei," in: Philippe Cordez and Matthias Krüger (eds.), *Werkzeuge und Instrumente* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012), 109–127. On Courbet's image as a *peintre-ouvrier* see James Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980); and Matthias Krüger 2007, 197–208.