



The Borghese Collections and the Display of Art in the Age of the Grand Tour

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The redecoration of the exhibition spaces at the Borghese palace and villa, undertaken together with the reinstallation of the family's vast art collections, was one of the most important events in the cultural life of eighteenth-century Rome. In this comprehensive study, Carole Paul reconstructs the planning and execution of the project and explains its multifaceted significance: its place in the history of Italian art, architecture, and interior design at a complex moment of transition from baroque to neoclassical style, as well as its unrecognized but profound influence on the development of the modern art museum.

The study shows how the installations and decorations worked together to evoke traditional themes in innovative ways. Addressed primarily to a new audience of tourists from abroad, the thematic content of the spaces celebrated the greatness of the Borghese family and of Roman tradition, while their stylistic diversity and sophistication made a case for the continued vitality - even modernity - of Roman art and culture. Designed for the exercise of a highly refined social performance, these sites helped to model the experience of art as a form of enlightened modern civility.

Contents

Introduction; The Borghese collections and the Grand Tour; The Galleria Terrena; The Villa Borghese; The casino and the decoration of the salone; The decoration of the casino's smaller rooms; Epilogue: a new era in display and viewing; Appendices; Index.

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