display today in the Daru and Mollien rooms would not have come into existence without the state as actual patron or potential buyer: they are mostly too large to go anywhere but a museum or other public building. Moreover, the knowledge that his painting was going to be exhibited at the Salon meant that an artist would be conscious of the need for eye-catching effects in order to compete with all the other paintings hanging on the walls for the attention of the public. It is important to keep these points in mind when analysing French paintings of this period.

Between them, these galleries allow visitors to trace the chronological development of French painting from Neoclassicism (in the Daru room)

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*Figure 1* Monsalvy and Devisme, View of the Salon, 1799, engraving, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.