



**HAL**  
open science

# **Visions of the World. Transnational Connections of the Panorama Industry in Leipzig at the Turn of the Twentieth Century**

Antje Dietze

► **To cite this version:**

Antje Dietze. Visions of the World. Transnational Connections of the Panorama Industry in Leipzig at the Turn of the Twentieth Century. Matthias Middell; Steffi Marung. Spatial Formats under the Global Condition, De Gruyter, pp.228 - 254, 2019, 9783110643008. <10.1515/9783110643008-009>. <halshs-05135066>

**HAL Id: halshs-05135066**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-05135066v1>**

Submitted on 11 Jul 2025

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 - Attribution - Non-commercial use - No  
Derivative Works - International License

Antje Dietze

# Visions of the World. Transnational Connections of the Panorama Industry in Leipzig at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Entertainment industries played a significant role in the wave of globalization that marked the turn of the twentieth century. At that time, the cultural sector in most large cities of the Western world and beyond underwent a profound transformation. With new forms of profit-oriented businesses – like panoramas, music halls, variety theatres, amusement parks, and cinemas – having been established over the course of the nineteenth century, they now reached mass audiences and increasingly shaped urban public spheres and economies. These evolving industries relied on intense contacts and exchanges across urban networks and wide-ranging touring circuits, providing city dwellers with cosmopolitan experiences. The entertainment industries became an important element in the function of modern cities as entrance points for cultural transfers – or portals of globalization.<sup>1</sup>

As part of a transnational turn in the historiography of popular culture, urban leisure, and entertainment industries, scholars have started to uncover a broad spectrum of cross-border connections in this sector. Recent studies have emphasized the fundamental role of city networks, transimperial entanglements, transnational and transregional production networks, and cultural circulations and brokers. These studies have traced the specific patterns and spaces of interaction that played a role in the rapid expansion of art and entertainment at the time.<sup>2</sup> Investigating the different nodes and hubs of the sector

---

<sup>1</sup> See the definitions in M. Middell and K. Naumann, “Global History and the Spatial Turn: from the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization”, *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010) 1, pp. 149–170, at 162; M. Geyer, “Portals of Globalisation”, in: W. Eberhard and C. Lübbe (eds.), *The Plurality of Europe. Identities and Spaces*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2010, pp. 509–520, at 509.

<sup>2</sup> C. Charle (ed.), *Le temps des capitales culturelles: XVIIIe-XXe siècles*, Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2009; J. Osterhammel, “Globale Horizonte europäischer Kunstmusik, 1860–1930”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38 (2012) 1, pp. 86–132; L. Platt, T. Becker and D. Linton (eds.), *Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin, 1890 to 1939*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014; T. DaCosta Kaufmann, C. Dossin and B. Joyeux-Prunel (eds.), *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015; C. Balme and N. Leonhardt, “Introduction: Theatrical

as portals of globalization can be a productive avenue to further analyse the differentiated and uneven geographies of modern entertainment industries. This perspective builds on, among many other things, insights from cultural transfer studies, which have increasingly focused on understanding the particular spaces and multiple scales of cultural interaction. These include not only sites and channels of concentrated exchanges and contact, but also areas that remain excluded, shielded, or disconnected from these processes.<sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, researchers of imperial, colonial, and transnational history have called for a closer look at the scope, mechanisms, and effects of particular connections and circulations in order to overcome some unproductive abstractions and generalizations in globalization studies.<sup>4</sup>

The concept of portals of globalization adds an interesting approach to these global interactions and how they are anchored and managed at various locations. The proposal is not to revive global-local dichotomies but, on the contrary, to focus on sites of concentrated interaction where mediating agents foster, steer, or restrict connections on multiple scales; on the way they build up knowledge, practices, and institutions to deal with global connectedness; and on the long-term transformations and historical reflections of these interactions.<sup>5</sup> This approach has been used in case studies to investigate, for instance, how different forms of connectedness are produced in a variety of world regions and to conduct long-term analyses on how different stakeholders adapt or make use of portals in shifting spatial orders.<sup>6</sup> In this view,

---

Trade Routes”, *Journal of Global Theatre History* 1 (2016) 1, pp. 1–9; M. Rempe and C. Torp, “Cultural Brokers and the Making of Glocal Soundscapes, 1880s to 1930s”, *Itinerario* 41 (2017) 2, pp. 223–233.

3 M. Espagne, “La notion de transfert culturel”, *Revue Sciences/Lettres* 1 (2013), <https://journals.openedition.org/rsl/219>; A. Dietze and M. Middell, “Methods in Transregional Studies: Intercultural Transfers”, in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, pp. 58–66.

4 F. Cooper, “What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian’s Perspective”, *African Affairs* 100 (2001) 399, pp. 189–213; P.-Y. Saunier, “Globalisation”, in: A. Iriye and P.-Y. Saunier (eds.), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 456–462.

5 Middell and Naumann, “Global History and the Spatial Turn”, pp. 162–163; Geyer, “Portals of Globalisation”; C. Baumann, A. Dietze and M. Maruschke (eds.), “Portals of Globalization in Africa, Asia, and Latin America”, *Comparativ* 27 (2017) 3–4.

6 G. Castryck (ed.), “From Railway Juncture to Portal of Globalization: Making Globalization work in African and South Asian Railway Towns”, *Comparativ* 25 (2015) 4; M. Maruschke, *Portals of Globalization: Repositioning Mumbai’s Ports and Zones, 1833–2014*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019.

portals play a crucial role for the production, challenging, and recombination of spatial formats under the global condition.

Against this background, this chapter reviews the emergence and evolution of the panorama industry in Leipzig, with a special focus on the era from 1871 to the turn of the twentieth century. At that time, panoramas were among the leading forms of visual mass entertainment. The panorama industry is especially interesting for the study of portals of globalization because it not only linked urban spheres with transnational production networks, but panoramas also served as entry points for shifting spatial imaginations in an era of radically intensifying global interconnections. They are closely linked to the emergence of a modern visual culture that profoundly transformed the way audiences related to the world at large.<sup>7</sup>

The global expansion of this entertainment genre is considered here from the perspective of a city that was an important centre of culture and trade both in the Kingdom of Saxony and in the German Empire, but did not belong to the first tier of global cultural metropolises. Much academic attention has been dedicated to popular culture in leading Western metropolises like Paris, London, and New York. Those cities functioned as “labs of modernity” – pioneers, hubs, and control centres of modern entertainment industries.<sup>8</sup> But there is insufficient knowledge about how exactly the corresponding circuits operated in relation to the interplay of different spatial formats. Looking at these networks from various angles reveals how and why new forms of entertainment “travelled”, helping to better unpack the complexity of the exchanges in question. My analysis therefore does not remain limited to the city

---

7 See the classic argument on the transformed experience of space through panoramic travel: W. Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, pp. 52–69. In a similar vein, literary scholars have traced panoramic perspectives and shifts in the way reality is constructed in texts, see A. Byerly, *Are We There Yet? Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012; V. Byrd, *A Pedagogy of Observation: Nineteenth-Century Panoramas, German Literature, and Reading Culture*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017. Panoramas and nineteenth-century visual culture have been analysed in terms of a modernization of perception with profound effects on knowledge and power relations, see T. Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex”, *New Formations* 4 (1988), pp. 73–102; J. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1992.

8 On the exceptional character of the metropolises, see H. Reif, “Metropoliten. Geschichte, Begriffe, Methoden”, *CMS Working Paper Series* 1 (2006); F. Lenger, *European Cities in the Modern Era, 1850–1914*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 7–8 and chapter I.

space but presents the entertainment industries in Leipzig in relation to profound shifts in large-scale production networks and spatial imaginations.

The first section introduces the city of Leipzig as a traditional centre of long-distance exchanges and gives an initial overview of the role the cultural sector played in its changing patterns of interconnections. The subsequent sections are devoted to the example of the panorama industry, outlining its general production and distribution structures, how forms of business organization changed over time and circulated transnationally, and how and by whom panoramas were established in Leipzig. The central question is to what extent a regional metropolis like Leipzig was integrated into uneven large-scale networks of the entertainment industries as well as how local institutions and agents fostered and used this integration for their own purposes, thereby shaping the logics of this portal in reimagining and recombining relevant spatial formats at the time.

## Transnational Networks and the Entertainment Sector in Leipzig

The city of Leipzig has long been a regional metropolis and centre for long-distance exchanges and transfers. Since the Middle Ages, it has hosted an important trade fair, connecting routes and markets in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. The city grew and prospered tremendously during the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Leipzig became a premier transport hub with the first long-distance railroad line in Germany (Leipzig-Dresden, 1837–1839). It developed into a centre for trade as well as the publishing, printmaking, mechanical engineering, building, chemical, and textile industries. Its regional importance and transnational connections became a prominent feature in representations of Leipzig as a cosmopolitan city and aspiring modern metropolis. The city guide for visitors of the 1913 International Building Trade Exhibition provides a typical example of the city's public self-image:

---

<sup>9</sup> The city's population rose above 100,000 in 1871, exceeded the half million mark in 1905, and reached almost 625,000 inhabitants in 1914. The population growth was partially based on the incorporation of surrounding villages. See A. Müller, "Großstadtwerdung", in S. Schötz (ed.), *Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig*, vol. 3, *Vom Wiener Kongress bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2018, pp. 451–459. However, the city was not a political centre – the king of Saxony resided in Dresden and in 1871 Berlin became the capital of the German Empire.

Leipzig, the biggest and possibly also the oldest city of Saxony [...], is known to every German as the seat of the Imperial Court of Justice, as the arena of the Battle of the Nations, as a famous university. A city of trade and music, it enjoys a worldwide reputation: since it is the metropolis of the book trade, the leading city of the fur trade on the Continent. Its conservatory and its Gewandhaus concerts are held in high esteem overseas. Its industry is gaining increasing importance, and a number of factories [...] have become global companies.<sup>10</sup>

As this description shows, the cultural sector played a prominent role not only in the web of economic and cultural interconnections the city maintained, but also in local identity-building. Besides the book trade and university, Leipzig's cultural prestige relied primarily on institutions of "high culture" like the Conservatory of Music or the Gewandhaus Orchestra, founded and supported by the city's middle-class civil society.

Most previous research has focused on these cultural ventures and has in part also explored their transnational connections.<sup>11</sup> However, the city of Leipzig also developed into an important centre of commercial entertainment for mass audiences in the German Empire. In the late nineteenth century, the business expanded significantly, connecting the city to growing national and transnational circuits of the entertainment industries. Despite playing a major role in the cultural entanglements and transfers in Leipzig, this sector has thus far been scarcely examined. There are different reasons for this. Many entertainment venues in Leipzig were destroyed in World War II and never rebuilt, mainly because socialist cultural policies in the German Democratic Republic were rather unfavourable towards private enterprises and commercial

---

**10** My translation from *Offizieller Führer durch die Internationale Baufach-Ausstellung mit Sonderausstellungen Leipzig 1913 und durch Leipzig und Umgebung mit einem Plan von Leipzig*, Leipzig: C.F. Müller, 1913, p. 71.

**11** For studies that focus on middle-class culture in Leipzig in transnational perspective, see, e.g., T. Adam (ed.), *Philanthropy, Patronage, and Civil Society. Experiences from Germany, Great Britain, and North America*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004; T. Höpel and S. Sammler (eds.), *Kulturpolitik und Stadtkultur in Leipzig und Lyon (18.–20. Jahrhundert)*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2004; Y. Wasserloos, *Das Leipziger Konservatorium der Musik im 19. Jahrhundert: Anziehungs- und Ausstrahlungskraft eines musikpädagogischen Modells auf das internationale Musikleben*, Hildesheim: Olms, 2004; A. Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture: A Comparative History of Nineteenth Century Leipzig and Birmingham*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; W. Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; S. Keym and K. Stöck (eds.), *Musik-Stadt, vol. 3, Musik in Leipzig, Wien und anderen Städten im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig: Schröder, 2011; and the contributions in S. Schötz (ed.), *Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig, vol. 3, Vom Wiener Kongress bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2018.

entertainment.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, scholars long preferred to study prestigious forms of “high art” as opposed to “lowbrow” commercial culture. Popular entertainment has, however, gradually been rediscovered as a relevant driving force of cultural interconnections and change.

Against this background, the purpose of this contribution is to show how modern entertainment enterprises were established in Leipzig and how they gained greater significance in the city’s web of transnational exchanges. Commercial entertainment, in general, depends heavily on mass audiences to realize profits. As a consequence, it was mainly the big metropolises – as well as industry and trade exhibitions – that leveraged the breakthrough of these new formats in the second half of the nineteenth century. Leipzig, despite being among the largest cities in the German states as well as empire, was still too small to make many of the new entertainments profitable on a regular basis. The city had less than 100,000 inhabitants in 1870, compared to several million in Paris and greater London at the same time, while Berlin and Vienna were fast approaching the one million mark. So at first, it was primarily Leipzig’s trade fairs and exhibitions that facilitated the emergence of entertainment industries there.

Up until the 1870s, traveling shows came to Leipzig mainly during the big trade fairs in spring and fall in order to benefit from the visiting traders, tourists, and day trippers.<sup>13</sup> The city strongly controlled the access of itinerant traders and performers, but issued concessions more readily during fair seasons to increase the attractiveness of the fair.<sup>14</sup> The performers consisted of small impresarios, artist-entrepreneurs, and family businesses bringing all kinds of entertainments and curiosities to the city. Among these amusements were acrobats, magicians, music acts, puppet theatre, magic lantern shows,

---

**12** How and to what extent they have been replaced by new cultural institutions and transnational interconnections under the conditions of the emerging Cold War is beyond the scope of this article, but it would be an important part of a long-term analysis of Leipzig as a portal of globalization in changing spatial orders.

**13** For a detailed study of cultural offerings by traveling show people at Leipzig’s fairs ca. 1800–1918, see G. Klunkert, *Schaustellungen und Volksbelustigungen auf Leipziger Messen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen: Cuvillier, 2010, pp. 21–37, which the following historical overview is based on.

**14** Funfairs were allowed during the main Jubilate (Easter) and Michaelmas trade fairs, which each lasted three weeks. Traveling shows in general were dependent on concessions and privileges from the state and city. Strong supervision and censorship persisted even after freedom of trade was granted in Saxony and the German Empire. See Klunkert, *Schaustellungen*, pp. 23–24, 37–40; K. Hauffe, I. Höer and Y. Klüglich, “Messevergnügungen”, in: H. Zwahr, T. Topfstedt and G. Bentele (eds.), *Leipzigs Messen 1497–1997. Gestaltwandel – Umbrüche – Neubeginn*, vol. I, Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1999, pp. 301–316.

exhibitions of “exotic” or unusual people and animals, wax museums, amusement rides, shooting galleries, and so on. These shows took place in and near the city centre – in guesthouses, booths, attics, and public places, accompanying and mingling with the trade fair business.

Gradually, permanent spaces of entertainment were established in the city: first in restaurants, beer gardens, ballrooms, and club houses and then in special representative premises that were often run by corporations: a zoo was opened in 1878; a variety theatre, the Krystall-Palast Variété, replaced the older Schützenhaus entertainment venue in 1882; a permanent panorama rotunda was constructed in 1884; permanent movie theatres opened in 1906; and an amusement park was opened in 1913/14. These enterprises relied on the enormous population growth of the last decades of the nineteenth century as well as on the freedom of trade, which was introduced in Saxony in 1861 and helped to further stimulate commercial and industrial development. By the end of the nineteenth century, the entertainment sector within the city had undergone a profound structural change: it had transitioned from seasonal offerings by traveling shows at the fairs to permanent venues owned and managed by private corporations.

## The Emergence of the Panorama Business and Early Panoramas at the Leipzig Fairs

In order to give a more detailed account of what these institutional changes in the entertainment sector meant for the city and its spatial interconnections, I will limit my further analysis to the example of the panorama industry. Panoramas are a form of visual entertainment that became hugely popular following the late eighteenth century and made images of the world accessible for greater segments of the population at a time when visual representations were not yet ubiquitous.<sup>15</sup> Panorama exhibitions were introduced in most of the

---

<sup>15</sup> General information on panoramas is based on F. Robichon, “Le Panorama, spectacle de l’histoire”, *Le Mouvement Social* 131 (1985), pp. 65–86; R. Hyde, *Panoromania! The Art and Entertainment of the ‘All-embracing’ View*, London: Trefoil, 1988; M.-L. von Plessen and U. Giersch (eds.), *Sehsucht. Das Panorama als Massenunterhaltung des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt/Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1993; S. Oettermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, New York: Zone Books, 1997; E. Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles*, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2013; L. Garrison (ed.), *Panoramas 1787–1900: Texts and Contexts*, 5 vols., London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013.

major cities in Europe, North America, and Australia, and in some cities in Asia and South America, and the paintings circulated widely.

The general term “panorama” refers to a wide variety of exhibition formats. Panoramas in the narrower sense (also called cycloramas in North America) were monumental circular paintings exhibited in special round buildings, with a visitor platform in the middle. They offered 360-degree views of big cities, landscapes, or major battles, creating the illusion of being immersed in the scenery. The panorama was invented by the painter Robert Barker in Edinburgh, and he obtained a patent for it in 1787. Panoramas achieved international success after Barker built the first permanent panorama rotunda in London in 1793. Soon after, other entrepreneurs joined the business. During a first wave of panorama enthusiasm in the early nineteenth century, permanent rotundas were constructed in London, Paris (1799), and New York (1804). The only permanent panorama building in the German-speaking world at the time was at the Prater, the amusement park in Vienna (1801/1804). These cities functioned as production centres of the panorama business. From there, the paintings were also sent on tours to other cities where they were usually shown in temporary wooden constructions.

Moving panoramas consisted of very long painted canvases that were gradually rolled out in front of the audience, unfolding views of a passing landscape and creating the impression of a railway or boat trip, often accompanied by lectures and music. They were especially popular in the United States, as they could be transported easily and thus were more suitable for a frontier society. Dioramas were large flat or semicircular paintings on transparent canvas, commonly displayed behind a stage-like frame with a light show that suggested, for example, the change from day to night. The diorama was invented by Louis Daguerre, a renowned theatre designer, who would later invent daguerreotype photography, and the painter Charles Bouton. They opened a diorama exhibition in Paris in 1822 as well as a branch in London the following year. Dioramas were also shown in other European and North American cities. In Germany, the term diorama mostly referred to regular but monumental paintings exhibited in niches with special lighting and false terrain.

All these types of panoramas were exhibited during the Leipzig trade fairs. Circular panoramas that had been sent on tour from London, Vienna, and Paris, as well as panoramas from traveling entrepreneurs, came to the city early on. For example, Barker’s panorama of London was shown in Leipzig in 1800 on its continental tour.<sup>16</sup> The panorama of Toulon – painted by Pierre Prévost,

---

<sup>16</sup> For a detailed list of all sorts of panoramas exhibited during Leipzig’s trade fairs, see Klunkert, *Schaustellungen*, pp. 338–358 and CD.

Constant Bourgeois, and Charles-Marie Bouton – produced and first shown in Paris, was exhibited in Leipzig in 1802. William Barton’s panorama of Vienna was displayed in 1806 and 1834 and that of Paris in 1833; and his panorama of Gibraltar in 1815 and 1828 – they had first been exhibited in the rotunda at Vienna’s Prater. Augustin Siegert’s panorama of the Etna volcano came to Leipzig in the 1820s. The traveling artist-entrepreneur Johann Michael Sattler from Salzburg, who toured Europe with a panorama of his home town between 1829 and 1838, came to Leipzig in 1833. Dioramas, some moving panoramas from the US of the rivers Ohio and Mississippi and other forms of panoramas were also shown in Leipzig during the fairs. However, audiences in Leipzig remained dependent on the initiative of individual agents and entrepreneurs, most of them from outside the city, who decided to come and install temporary exhibitions there. Leipzig had the trade fair to attract the new visual spectacles, but, like most cities at the time, it was still too small to make permanent commercial exhibitions profitable. However, temporary panorama exhibitions continued to be exhibited during the fairs all throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.

## How the Second Panorama Wave Came to Germany: A Franco-German Transfer via Brussels

By the late 1870s, a second wave of panorama enthusiasm had begun and the business boomed in an unprecedented manner. In addition to the temporary exhibitions, permanent panorama rotundas were now built, not only in the large metropolises but also in most major cities in Europe; in Germany alone, six rotundas were constructed in Berlin, three each in Munich and Hamburg, two in Frankfurt/Main, and one each in Leipzig, Cologne, Dresden, Breslau, Bremen, Düsseldorf, and in other cities.<sup>17</sup> Panoramas also became a regular sight at industry and trade exhibitions. This was the result of a profound reorganization of the panorama business as it was consolidated into a transnational industry. This section will first provide a general overview of the new business structures that were introduced in German cities as the result of a Franco-German cultural transfer. The next section will then outline more precisely how entrepreneurs in Leipzig became involved.

---

<sup>17</sup> See Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 235–285.

The second panorama craze was initiated in Paris. Painter and military officer Jean-Charles Langlois had been producing panoramas and running panorama rotundas there since the 1830s. With a focus on patriotic motifs of France's military battles – from the Napoleonic Wars to more recent battles in Algeria, the Greek War of Independence, and the Crimean War – and with financial support by Napoleon III and the city, he was able to support his work despite the generally diminishing interest in large circular panoramas.<sup>18</sup> Langlois developed many of the artistic and economic standards that would define the panorama industry in the last third of the nineteenth century, running his business through a stock company and an elegant rotunda at the Champs-Élysées. After Langlois' death in 1870, investors founded a new company that exhibited a panorama of the Siege of Paris, from the Franco-Prussian War (1870/71), by historical painter Félix Philippoteaux. In 1878, it was included in the French national exhibit at the Parisian Universal Exhibition and became an enormous success, accruing immense profits. In the 1880s, the company was able to expand its business transnationally, producing panoramas for foreign markets and sending its own paintings on tours through Europe and North America.<sup>19</sup>

The Universal Exhibition had served as an intensifier, and now the new success formula for a profitable panorama business was appropriated by others: stock companies raising the vast quantities of money needed for the giant paintings, buildings, and innercity real estate, combined with patriotic paintings of recent military battles to draw on the collective enthusiasm in an era of nationalism and imperial expansion while providing monumental visual spectacles for mass audiences. Panoramas played an important role in the construction of national cultures during the nineteenth century, not least by serving as sites of memory for important battles.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, they presented

---

**18** Among the panoramas produced by Langlois were the Battle of Navarino (1827), opened 1831; the Battle of Algiers, opened 1833; and the Battle of Borodino (1812), opened 1834 (Ibid., pp. 158–163; C. Joubert and F. Robichon (eds.), *Jean-Charles Langlois (1789–1870). Le Spectacle de l'Histoire*, Paris: Somogy, 2005).

**19** See F. Robichon, *Die Illusion eines Jahrhunderts – Panoramen in Frankreich*, in: M.-L. von Plessen and U. Giersch (eds.), *Sehnsucht. Das Panorama als Massenunterhaltung des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt/Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1993, pp. 52–63; Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 163–167.

**20** G. Koller, "Panoramen als Orte bürgerlicher Schaulust und Bildung im Deutschen Kaiserreich", in: B. Huberl (ed.), *Kunst, Nation und nationale Repräsentation*, Bönen: Kettler, 2008, pp. 87–100; F. Becker, "Augen-Blicke der Größe. Das Panorama als nationaler Erlebnisraum nach dem Krieg von 1870/71", in: J. Requate (ed.), *Das 19. Jahrhundert als Mediengesellschaft*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009, pp. 178–191; A. Bartetzky, "Das Panorama als kommerzieller Vergnügungsort und nationale Weihestätte", in: A. Bartetzky and R. Jaworski

visions of the wider world – of long-distance trade and travel, exotic places and landscapes, as well as explorations and conquests – which were imbued with imperial or colonial imaginations and often promoting such endeavours.<sup>21</sup>

An immense wave of investment started and the boom in panorama production lasted roughly until 1900. While London had been the pioneering centre of the first panorama wave, this time the city was not as influential. The new centres of panorama production and enthusiasm were in Francophone and German-speaking Europe and the US. In the wake of the Universal Exhibition (1878), several rotundas were built in Paris, and panorama stock companies were founded in many cities. Brussels became one of the hubs of this industry – in the year 1880 alone, Franco-Belgian investors registered more than twenty panorama companies at the Brussels stock exchange.<sup>22</sup> These consortia organized and financed panoramas in different cities – including London, Berlin, Madrid, Rome, Moscow, and New York – establishing standardized transnational production and distribution networks. Many of the companies founded during the post-1878 panorama fever were short-lived, but markets continued to expand. Via the United States, the business model was transferred to Canada, Australia, and Japan.<sup>23</sup> Panorama historian Stephan

---

(eds.), *Geschichte im Rundumblick. Panoramabilder im östlichen Europa*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2014, pp. 13–26.

**21** D.B. Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011; J.P. Short, *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in German*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012; R. Benjamin, “Colonial Panoramania”, in: M. Jay and S. Ramaswamy (eds.), *Empires of Vision: A Reader*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2014, pp. 111–137; J. Plunkett, “The Overland Mail: Moving Panoramas and the Imagining of Trade and Communication Networks”, in: S. Chaudhuri et al. (eds.), *Commodities and Culture in the Colonial World*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2017, pp. 58–74.

**22** I. Leroy, “Belgische Panoramagesellschaften 1879–1889. Modelle des internationalen Kapitalismus”, in: M.-L. von Plessen and U. Giersch (eds.), *Sehnsucht. Das Panorama als Massenunterhaltung des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt/Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1993, pp. 74–83; I. Leroy, *Le Panorama de la Bataille de Waterloo. Témoin Exceptionnel de la Saga des Panoramas*, Brussels: Pire, 2009, pp. 39–49. For a historical account, see S. Hausmann, “Die neueste Entwicklung der deutschen Panoramamalerei”, *Die Kunst für Alle* 5 (1 June 1890) 17, pp. 257–263.

**23** On the worldwide expansion of the panorama business, see von Plessen and Giersch, *Sehnsucht*; Oettermann, *The Panorama*; M. Colligan, *Canvas Documentaries: Panoramic Entertainments in Nineteenth-Century Australia and New Zealand*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002; G. Koller (ed.), *Die Welt der Panoramen*, Amberg: Büro Wilhelm, 2003; G. Streicher (ed.), *Panorama: Virtuality and Realities*, Amberg: Büro Wilhelm, 2005; T. Rombout (ed.), *The Panorama Phenomenon: The World Round!*, The Hague: Panorama Mesdag, 2006; G. Koller (ed.), *The Panorama in the Old World and the New*, Amberg: Büro Wilhelm, 2010; Bartetzky and Jaworski, *Geschichte im Rundumblick*.

Oettermann estimated the numbers of visitors of 360-degree panoramas between 1870 and 1900 to be about 10 million in Germany and about 100 million in Europe and North America.<sup>24</sup>

Within a few years, a new transnational panorama network had emerged. It was based on interconnected cities with different functions that served as portals of the global industry – some were production and financing centres, others were merely sites of exhibition. While actors in the major hubs had more power to shape and control the business, no one city was independent from the wider networks, as the profitability of panoramas could only be secured by exhibiting them in several cities to increase the number of visitors.

It was by way of the Belgian companies that the new panorama business model came to Germany. They first exhibited panoramas of battles from the Franco-Prussian War, capitalizing on patriotic sentiments after the German states won the war and unified to form the German Empire. The companies commissioned paintings from celebrated German historical painters: for example, from Louis Braun in Munich and Anton von Werner, director of the Academy of Arts in Berlin. Both had been to France to study historical painting. They had never painted a panorama before, but they succeeded with the help of French and Belgian specialists.<sup>25</sup> Braun, who had been a war correspondent during the Franco-Prussian War, became the most prolific and prominent panorama painter in Germany. Panorama workshops were established in Berlin and Munich, and Munich soon became one of the major panorama production centres in Europe. Their production relied on the prestige and talent provided by the art academies and their professors and students.<sup>26</sup>

The French-Belgian parent companies mostly hid behind local subsidiaries and relied on local managers and investors. This was essential in a business that was heavily based on national and imperial propaganda. While technical standards and transnational business cooperation were developed to facilitate the circulation of the paintings for higher profits, the patriotic content, especially of the battle paintings, often obstructed cross-cultural exchange.<sup>27</sup> This

---

<sup>24</sup> Oettermann, *The Panorama*, p. 240.

<sup>25</sup> H. Siebenmorgen, *Louis Braun (1836–1916). Panoramen von Krieg und Frieden aus dem Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Schwäbisch Hall: Hällisch-Fränkisches Museum, 1986; P. Alexandre and H. Beutter (eds.), *Der Panoramamaler Louis Braun (1836–1916). Vom Skizzenblatt zum Riesenrundbild*, Schwäbisch Hall: Hällisch-Fränkisches Museum, 2012; D. Bartmann (ed.), *Anton von Werner: Geschichte in Bildern*, Munich: Hirmer, 1997.

<sup>26</sup> A. Weidauer, *Berliner Panoramen der Kaiserzeit*, Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1996; F. Schiermeier, *Panorama München. Illusion und Wirklichkeit. München als Zentrum der Panoramenherstellung*, Munich: Schiermeier, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Weidauer, *Berliner Panoramen*, p. 16; Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 236–239.

led to largely segregated distribution circuits – different paintings of the Franco-Prussian War circulated in German-speaking countries as opposed to France and Belgium. Paintings of British or Scottish battles or of the American Civil War were produced for export in the studios in Munich or Berlin.<sup>28</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, the second panorama wave ebbed in most countries. Several explanations have been put forth for this. It seems that the end of the panorama boom was brought about both by internal and external factors: the decline of the medium itself as well as new competitors in the realm of visual entertainment. Oettermann highlights the exhaustion of war themes, especially those of the Franco-Prussian War, which by then was 30 years in the past.<sup>29</sup> Formerly popular depictions of cavalry battles had become more and more anachronistic in view of new military technology, and aesthetically, realistic historical painting had passed its zenith. Entrepreneurs struggled to find new themes and styles to revive audience interest, but they succeeded only partially. At the same time, the whole media landscape had started to change dramatically. New forms of visual entertainment became available for mass audiences that offered fresh images more quickly and easily. In addition to advances in photomechanical printing, cinematography was on the rise. The lack of movement and dynamism in panorama presentations became a growing concern – it still took weeks or months to produce new canvases, and the images remained static. The First World War accelerated the collapse of the transnational business networks. Most panorama exhibitions were closed, production came to a halt, and the rotundas were torn down or turned into warehouses, cinemas, skating rinks, and the like. However, the end of the second panorama wave had complex and various causes as well as mixed impacts across uneven business networks, as surviving panorama exhibitions and studios in different countries and the recent renaissance of the panorama phenomenon indicate.<sup>30</sup>

---

**28** For example, in the 1880s, Philipp Ernst Fleischer painted panoramas of the battles of Omdurman, Bannockburn, Trafalgar, and Waterloo for the British market in one of the Munich panorama studios – see Schiermeier, *Panorama München*, p. 16. In Berlin, Bracht painted two panoramas of the Battle of Chattanooga for the cities of Philadelphia and Chicago – see Weidauer, *Berliner Panoramen*, pp. 28–29.

**29** Oettermann, *The Panorama*, p. 241. On the end of the panorama boom, see also G. Koller, “Panoramas und Film. Die Anfänge des Kinos und die Folgen für das Panorama um 1900”, in: G. Koller (ed.), *Die Welt der Panoramen*, Amberg: Büro Wilhelm, 2003, pp. 76–84.

**30** See the website of the International Panorama Council for a database of surviving panoramas and for recent developments: International Panorama Council, “Home”, <https://panoramacouncil.org> (accessed 14 December 2018).

## Second-wave Panoramas in Leipzig: The Panorama am Roßplatz and the Krystall-Palast

The two most important permanent exhibition venues for panoramas and dioramas in Leipzig were the Panorama am Roßplatz and the Krystall-Palast.<sup>31</sup> These examples show how local businesspeople from the trade, finance, and catering sectors learned to make use of commercial entertainments and built the appropriate business connections and institutional framework. They transferred business models established in other, often much bigger cities, to Leipzig and adapted them to local conditions. They can be seen as mediating agents, integrating the city of Leipzig into the second-wave panorama industry and controlling the quality and the extent of these transnational connections. Their enterprises and exhibition sites served as entry points for cultural transfers, not only bringing more images of the world to the city, but also establishing new institutions and practices to channel and exploit cross-border cultural and economic entanglements.

Leipzig's only permanent rotunda for 360-degree panoramas opened at Roßplatz in 1884.<sup>32</sup> It was an iron and stone rotunda built for circular panorama paintings measuring approximately 16 by 118 meters. The building housed a large restaurant with a garden on the ground floor, wine cellars, tasting rooms, and shops in the basement, and the panorama exhibition on the first floor. The Leipziger Panorama-Gesellschaft (Leipzig Panorama Company), which owned and managed the site, was not directly linked to the French-Belgian companies, and its shares were not traded publicly. It was one of the local initiatives that were formed in many German cities, inspired by the French-Belgian model. The company decided to link up with the existing production and distribution networks. The rotunda building matched the

---

<sup>31</sup> More panoramas and dioramas were exhibited as part of the Saxon and Thuringian Industry and Trade Exhibition (1897). See L. Fraenkel (ed.), *Officieller Führer der Sächsisch Thüringischen Industrie und Gewerbe Ausstellung*, Leipzig: G.L. Daube & Co., 1897. A Kaiserpanorama opened in the city in 1886. Kaiserpanoramas were multistation viewing apparatuses for stereoscopic glass slides, invented by August Fuhrmann. First introduced in 1880 in Breslau, they soon opened all over Europe, either as branches of Fuhrmann's enterprise or run by competitors. See D. Lorenz, *Das Kaiser-Panorama. Ein Unternehmen des August Fuhrmann*, Munich: Münchener Stadtmuseum, 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 247–250; H.-J. Böhme, "Panoramen in Leipzig – Seh-Lust im Großformat", *Leipziger Blätter* 56 (2010), pp. 28–31.

transnational standard measures, thereby allowing canvases to be circulated, and the majority of the panoramas exhibited there from 1884 to 1910 were patriotic battle paintings showing scenes from the Franco-Prussian War.

An overview of the paintings and their origins gives a clear picture of the particular production and distribution networks in which the Panorama am Roßplatz was integrated.<sup>33</sup> The first panorama exhibited there showed the Battle of Mars-la-Tour, a cavalry battle from the Franco-Prussian War. It was painted in Munich by Louis Braun and was commissioned directly for Leipzig. It remained on display until 1886 and later went on to Hamburg and Zurich.<sup>34</sup> The next one, showing the Battle of Villiers from the same war, was also commissioned for Leipzig. It had been produced under the direction of Berlin-based painter Eugen Bracht and later went to Dresden.<sup>35</sup> Another panorama produced specifically for Leipzig featured the Battle of the Nations that had occurred around the city in 1813. It was painted under the direction of Norwegian painter Otto Sinding, who had strong ties to Berlin and Munich.<sup>36</sup> Other panoramas exhibited in Leipzig had been produced on behalf of French-Belgian panorama companies and had previously been shown in other German cities. All of them featured battles from the Franco-Prussian War: the Battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat, painted by Emil Hüntten and Wilhelm Simmler, first shown in Berlin from 1881 to 1883<sup>37</sup>; a second Battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat painted by Louis

---

**33** Brochures for most of the panoramas and dioramas exhibited there can be found in the library of the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum, Leipzig. Further information on the panorama and diorama exhibitions in Leipzig has been gathered from the local newspaper *Leipziger Tageblatt und Anzeiger* (since 1905: *Leipziger Tageblatt und Handelszeitung*).

**34** “Die Schlacht bei Mars-la-Tour oder der Todesritt der Brigade von Bredow”, exhibited 1884–1886. Around 200,000 visitors allegedly came to see it within nine months. See: P. Stein, “Das Leipziger Schlacht-Panorama. Die Schlacht bei Mars la Tour”, in: *Gartenlaube* 45 (1884), pp. 738–740; Schiermeier, *Panorama München*, p. 49; Alexandre and Beutter, *Der Panoramamaler Louis Braun*, pp. 24, 129–131.

**35** “Vor Paris. Die Sachsen am 2. December 1870”, shown 1887–1890. See M. Großkinsky, *Eugen Bracht (1842–1921). Landschaftsmaler im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich*, Darmstadt: Mathildenhöhe, 1992, pp. 39, 91–92.

**36** “Völkerschlacht bei Leipzig 1813”, on display 1895–1898. See also G. Koller, “Otto Sindings panorama i Leipzig”, in: T. Sinding Steinsvik (ed.), *Kunstnerbrødrene: Maleren Otto Sinding, Billedhuggeren Stephan Sinding, Komponisten Christian Sinding*, Modum: Blaafarveværket, 2000, pp. 120–126.

**37** “Gravelotte. Sturm der Garden und Sachsen auf St. Privat”, exhibited 1892–1894. See Weidauer, *Berliner Panoramen*, pp. 17–18.

Braun in Munich and first shown 1883 in Dresden for the opening of the rotunda there<sup>38</sup>; and the Battle of Weissenburg, also by Louis Braun, painted and first shown in Munich from 1883 to 1884.<sup>39</sup>

From 1890 to 1892, the rotunda at Roßplatz housed a semicircular panorama showing a reconstruction of the ancient city of Pergamon by Alexander Kips and Max Koch, based on German archaeological excavations at the time, and a series of dioramas that featured German and British-American explorations of Africa and celebrated Emperor Wilhelm I.<sup>40</sup> All of these had first been exhibited at the jubilee exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts in Berlin in 1886.<sup>41</sup> The last panorama exhibited at Roßplatz, from 1905 to 1910, was an exception as it had been imported from France. Painted by Charles Édouard Armand-Dumaresq, it showed a French view of the Battle of Bapaume from the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>42</sup> Some of the panoramas were accompanied by diorama exhibitions with more geographically diverse contents but still with a strong emphasis on recent military battles: among them were dioramas of the defeat of the Commune uprising in Paris in 1871 by French panorama painter Félix Philippoteaux, the Second Boer War, and the Battle of Port Arthur from the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>43</sup>

While the panorama entrepreneurs in Leipzig linked up with globally interconnected production networks, this integration remained highly selective and regionally limited. The majority of the paintings exhibited in Leipzig were produced in Munich and Berlin and circulated mainly within German-speaking

---

**38** “Sturm der Sachsen unter Kronprinz Albert auf St. Privat”, exhibited 1898–1901. See Schiermeier, *Panorama München*, p. 49; Alexandre and Beutter, *Der Panoramamaler Louis Braun*, pp. 115–117.

**39** “Sturm der Preußen und Bayern auf Weissenburg am 4. August 1870”, exhibited 1901–1905. See Schiermeier, *Panorama München*, p. 46; Alexandre and Beutter, *Der Panoramamaler Louis Braun*, pp. 103–105.

**40** These included “Stanley an den Congo-Fällen” by Wilhelm Gentz and Ernst Körner, showing Henry Morton Stanley’s Congo exploration in the mid-1870s; “Wißmann auf der Elefantenjagd” by Eugen Bracht et al. showing an elephant hunt during a German expedition to Africa; “Kaiser Wilhelm I. auf der Fahrt nach dem Kriegsschauplatze” and “Das historische Eckfenster”, showing German Emperor Wilhelm I, by Berlin painter Franz Skarbina.

**41** See Großkinsky, *Eugen Bracht*, p. 92; Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 257–258.

**42** “Die Schlacht von Bapaume am 3. Januar 1871”, painted in Lille in 1882 and also shown in Paris.

**43** “Der Todeskampf der Pariser Commune. Vor/Nach der Erstürmung des Friedhofes Père-la-Chaise im Mai 1871”, two dioramas by Félix Philippoteaux and exhibited in 1893–1894; “Der Heldenkampf der Buren. Drei Dioramen”, painter unknown and exhibited in 1902–1903; “Die Seeschlacht von Port Arthur”, diorama by German painter Robert Gleich and exhibited in 1905–1906.

countries. Moreover, most of the panoramas and the texts in the accompanying brochures openly propagated German nationalism and imperialism. They celebrated the bravery and sacrifice of German troops and the defeat of the French both in the Napoleonic Wars and in the Franco-Prussian War, expressed admiration for Emperor Wilhelm I, and supported German colonial enterprises and archaeological expeditions. The panoramas and dioramas were dedicated to nation and empire-building, collective memory, and patriotic education. They also included a strong emphasis on regional identity and pride, often featuring crown prince and later King Albert of Saxony and Saxon troops.<sup>44</sup> The patriotic themes as well as the gestures of loyalty to the Saxon king helped to legitimize the commercial panorama enterprise and connect it to “higher” values and interests, all while offering popular attractions for mass audiences. At the same time, occasional exhibitions of panoramas and dioramas by prestigious French artists such as Armand-Dumaresq and Philippoteaux paid homage to the pioneering influence of French historical painting and panorama production. Patriotic imagery and rhetoric, on the one hand, and transnational entanglements and emulation, on the other, were not mutually exclusive but complementary.

Nationalism clearly served as a marketing tool that was used to strengthen the panorama industry and to embed it more effectively at the local and regional scale. The integration went as far as using panoramas to boost economic development in the city of Leipzig, which is evidenced when focusing on the owners of the Panorama am Roßplatz and the business strategies they pursued. The rotunda was built by Friedrich August Nietzsche, a master carpenter, in 1884. After 1886, the Leipziger Panorama-Gesellschaft was listed as the owner of the property. A major shareholder was the Leipziger Immobiliengesellschaft (Leipzig Real Estate Company), a local stock company engaged in property acquisition and management. The successive operators of the panorama restaurant also ran the panorama exhibitions and acquired the paintings. In 1898, a new company, the German limited liability company, Leipziger Panorama GmbH, was founded and took over the site. While the Leipziger Immobiliengesellschaft remained involved, another major shareholder came in – the Leipziger Bierbrauerei zu Reudnitz, Riebeck & Co. AG (Leipzig Beer Brewery of Reudnitz, Riebeck & Co.), one of the biggest breweries in Saxony. After 1903, it was the sole shareholder of the Leipziger Panorama GmbH. This arrangement survived the end of panorama exhibitions at the premises and remained in place until Riebeck finally absorbed

---

<sup>44</sup> Panoramas showing crown prince Albert von Sachsen and Saxon troops included Louis Braun’s Battle of Mars-la-Tour, Eugen Bracht’s Battle of Villiers, Hüntten and Simmler’s Battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat, and Louis Braun’s Battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat.

the Leipziger Panorama GmbH in 1937.<sup>45</sup> The rotunda at Roßplatz was destroyed in the bombings of World War II.

But why did these companies engage in the panorama business? It was not uncommon for real estate developers to invest in representative cultural venues that helped increase the value of the surrounding land. The Roßplatz had long been an important market and trade fair site with restaurants, guest houses, and hotels. It was remodelled in the late nineteenth century with a series of prestigious building projects, the panorama rotunda being only one of them: for example, the Hôtel de Prusse was rebuilt from 1881 to 1883; the house of the exclusive philanthropic society Harmonie opened in 1887; the elegant Café Bauer opened in 1890; and the Markthalle, near Roßplatz, opened in 1891. The Leipziger Immobiliengesellschaft was deeply involved in the redevelopment of the Roßplatz at the time.<sup>46</sup> Its holdings of the panorama premises became part of a larger real estate development process.

In the course of the nineteenth century, not only real estate developers but also brewery, restaurant, pub, and beer hall owners increasingly used the entertainment business for their own profit – the shows attracted crowds and helped sell more food and beverages. To ensure and enhance sales, the Riebeck brewery had pursued an expansion strategy and gradually acquired more and more breweries and restaurants in the region.<sup>47</sup> From this perspective, the panorama paintings helped to promote the panorama restaurant and the sale of Riebeck beer, which was also advertised on the rotunda building and in the panorama brochures sold for each exhibition. The first panorama painting exhibited at Roßplatz attracted more than 2,000 visitors on some days.<sup>48</sup> Many of them also visited the restaurant, which offered matching concerts of military

---

<sup>45</sup> See *Leipziger Adreß-Buch, 1884–1911*; Sächsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig (SStAL), Amtsgericht Leipzig, Handelsregister, file no. 21096, Fol. 10079 (Leipziger Panorama, GmbH); SStAL, Amtsgericht Leipzig, Handelsregister, file no. 21064, Fol. 6821 and HRB 293 (Riebeck-Brauerei Aktiengesellschaft Leipzig); R. Börner (ed.), *Die Sächsischen Actien-Gesellschaften und die an sächsischen Börsen courshabenden auswärtigen Industrierwerthe. Jahrbuch der Dresdner, Leipziger und Zwickauer Börse*, 7th edition, Riesa: Börner, 1897; *Handbuch der Deutschen Aktien-Gesellschaften. Das Spezial-Archiv der Deutschen Wirtschaft*, Darmstadt: Hoppenstedt, 1898–1940. See also G. Wustmann, *Leipzig und die Leipziger Immobiliengesellschaft. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Stadt im letzten Drittel des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig: Verlag der Leipziger Immobiliengesellschaft, 1899, p. 162.

<sup>46</sup> Wustmann, *Leipzig und die Leipziger Immobiliengesellschaft*, pp. 46–61, 87–99.

<sup>47</sup> See *Handbuch der Deutschen Aktiengesellschaften*, and the company's articles of association (Statut) in SStAL, Amtsgericht Leipzig, HRB 293, vol. 4, 26/4, pp. 26, 87.

<sup>48</sup> "Leipzig, 25. October. Das vor kurzer Zeit eröffnete Schlachten-Panorama. . .", *Sechste Beilage zum Leipziger Tageblatt und Anzeiger* 78 (26 October 1884) 300, p. 5707.

bands in the garden and became a popular location in Leipzig. Consequentially, Riebeck acquired all shares in the Leipziger Panorama GmbH in 1903 in order to secure its hold on the flourishing restaurant.<sup>49</sup> The restaurant was in fact able to continue on its own even after the end of panorama exhibitions in 1910 and took over the first floor. After 1911, the former exhibition hall was used for billiards, and in 1926, the Panorama-Künstlerspiele opened there, offering concerts and theatre. The end of diorama and panorama exhibitions at Roßplatz coincided not only with the end of the wider panorama boom, but also with local dynamics – both the Leipziger Immobiliengesellschaft and Riebeck exited the panorama business some years after the exhibitions had fulfilled their purpose of stimulating local economic development.

Another important location of the panorama business in Leipzig was the Krystall-Palast, the city's biggest entertainment complex, which included a diorama exhibition. The Krystall-Palast was founded by local merchant Eduard Berthold, who was an enthusiast and promoter of commercial entertainments.<sup>50</sup> In 1881, he purchased the defunct Schützenhaus, the former clubhouse of the Leipzig shooting association. The premises, which were located just outside of the city centre, had been developed by the former owners into an entertainment venue influenced by Parisian trends – with the Trianon, a spectacular amusement garden, and a big restaurant and event hall used for diverse festivities, concerts, and shows. With the help of bank loans, Berthold converted the whole site in accordance with the most up-to-date standards of show business. He added a crystal hall construction modelled after the Crystal Palace that had first made waves at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 and was later rebuilt as an exhibition hall in Sydenham. The adapted version of the Leipzig Krystall-Palast took into consideration the specific requirements of a city much smaller than London. It included a variety of entertainment, with something for everyone: theatre and concert halls, club rooms, a winter garden, bowling alleys, a restaurant and cafe, and exhibition spaces.<sup>51</sup> Berthold also tried to accommodate the widespread

---

**49** See *Jahres-Bericht der Leipziger Bierbrauerei zu Reudnitz, Riebeck & Co., Aktiengesellschaft für das achtzehnte Geschäftsjahr vom 1. Oktober 1903 bis 30. September 1904*, in: SStAL, Amtsgericht Leipzig, HRB 293, vol. 4, 26/4, pp. 249.

**50** Berthold owned a clothing store in the city centre. See *Leipziger Adreß-Buch, 1869–1890*.

**51** On the Krystall-Palast, see “Der neue Krystallpalast in Leipzig”, in: *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* 2027 (6 May 1882), pp. 365–368; O. Moser, *Entwicklungsgeschichte des Krystall-Palastes vormals Schützenhaus-Etablissement zu Leipzig*, Leipzig: Franckenstein & Wagner, 1887; P. Daehne, *Festschrift der Leipziger Krystall-Palast Aktiengesellschaft aus Anlaß des fünfundsiebzigjährigen Bestehens des früheren Schützenhaus-Etablissements, gegründet 1834, und des fünfundzwanzigjährigen Bestehens der Krystall-Palast-Aktiengesellschaft gegründet 1884*, Leipzig: J.J. Weber, 1909; E.W. Schmidt, *50 Jahre Krystall-Palast, 100 Jahre Bestehen des früheren*

interests of the city's elites in a representative and modern location for social events, providing rooms for private festivities as well as for meetings of clubs, associations, and professional organizations.

This strategy became even more pronounced when Berthold added a huge multifunctional hall to the premises in 1887. The Alberthalle was named after King Albert of Saxony. The name was probably also a tip of the hat, so to say, to the Royal Albert Hall in London, the concert hall that had opened in 1871 and was named after the deceased prince consort of Queen Victoria. With the Alberthalle, Berthold's initial aim was to construct a permanent circus hall in Leipzig, but circuses visited the city only irregularly. So he came up with a plan that permitted various uses and was regarded as a real innovation at the time. He envisioned the Alberthalle as a multifunctional event hall that could serve not only as a circus but also as a concert hall, a ballroom, an exhibition hall, and a theatre and could accommodate 3,000 to 4,000 visitors. On the upper floor, right above the big event hall, Berthold planned an additional exhibition room for dioramas. With a panorama, concert hall, municipal theatre, and his own variety theatre and club rooms already in place in Leipzig, it was economically reasonable to choose a flexible structure that included all kinds of cultural offerings.<sup>52</sup> Based on Berthold's vision, Arwed Roßbach, an architect from Leipzig who would later construct some of the most prestigious buildings in the city, designed the Alberthalle.<sup>53</sup> The hall opened at the time of the trade fair in spring 1887, with a series of guest performances by Circus Renz.<sup>54</sup> The Krystall-Palast complex was one of the biggest entertainment venues in Germany, claiming in its advertisements that it could accommodate 15,000 visitors at the same time.

Berthold decided not to install a second circular panorama in Leipzig. Instead, he opted for dioramas that could be changed more easily and, by

---

*Schützenhauses. Eine Erinnerungsbeigabe zum Jubiläums-Festprogramm vom 16. bis 31. März 1936*, Leipzig: Krystall-Palast, 1936; A. Busse, *Salto, Stars und Sekt auf Marken: Krystallpalast-Variété-Geschichten*, Leipzig: Stoneart-Verlag, 1998; T. Bitterlich, "Variétégeschichte um 1900. Studien zum Vergesellschaftungsprozeß einer sozialen Figuration im Bereich der Freizeit", MA thesis, Universität Leipzig, Institut für Theaterwissenschaft, 2002.

<sup>52</sup> See Moser, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 38–40.

<sup>53</sup> A. Rossbach, "Der Zirkus- und Diorama-Bau im Crystallpalast zu Leipzig", *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 22 (31 March 1888) 26, pp. 153–154; B.M. Kaun, *Arwed Rossbach 1844–1902. Ein Architekt im Geiste Sempers. Das Gesamtwerk*, Wettin-Löbejün: Stekovics, 2011.

<sup>54</sup> O. Moser, "Die neue Albert-Halle des Krystallpalastes zu Leipzig", *Leipziger Illustrirte Zeitung* 2284 (9 April 1887), p. 377.

showcasing several paintings, would offer something to suit all tastes.<sup>55</sup> He got connected to the same panorama and diorama distribution networks the owners of the rotunda at Roßplatz had worked with. Celebrated Munich panorama and diorama artists Louis Braun and Hans Petersen were in charge of setting up the exhibition. It opened in 1887 with seven monumental paintings by different painters from Munich. The dioramas covered a wide range of subjects – from Monaco, the Alps, and Cameroon to a harem scene, a German naval exercise, and Napoleon I in Leipzig – combining the typical range of popular orientalist, colonialist, historicist, and nationalist topics at the time.<sup>56</sup> In 1890, the exhibition was replaced by a so-called “concert and restaurant panorama”, envisioned by Berthold and executed under the direction of Leipzig-based painter Ernst Kiesling. It featured an ideal Italian landscape as a picturesque backdrop for a wine restaurant and Viennese café, but it only remained open until the end of the year.<sup>57</sup> From 1893 to 1896, the Krystall-Palast exhibited three marine panoramas, all by Hans Petersen. They showcased a German steamboat entering New York harbour (first shown in Bremen in 1890, then in Frankfurt/Main and Berlin), the island of Heligoland, which had just been handed over to Germany by the British in 1890, and a naval review in front of the German emperor.<sup>58</sup> These panoramas were in fact advertising the North German Lloyd steamship lines and reflected German public enthusiasm for the navy.

The dioramas at the Krystall-Palast reveal an interesting shift in the spatial imaginations produced by the panorama industry as well as other segments of the world that the portal now gave access to. These smaller formats were not as suitable for monumental and spectacular battle scenes. They had always been

---

<sup>55</sup> Moser, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 46–47.

<sup>56</sup> The dioramas shown at the opening in 1887 were “Monte Carlo und Monaco” and “Alpenglühen” (alpenglow) by Edmund Berninger; “Frauenleben im Orient” (a harem scene) by Franz Simm; “Bad einer römischen Kaiserin” (bathing Roman empress) by Hermann Schneider; “Deutsche Truppen an der Ostsee” (naval exercise by German troops in the Danzig Bay) by Braun and Petersen; the colonial scene “Aqua-Stadt von Kamerun” by Petersen and Leopold Schönchen; and Braun’s “Die Flucht Napoleon I. aus Leipzig am 19. October 1813” (Napoleon’s flight from Leipzig after losing the Battle of the Nations). See “Aus dem Diorama des Krystallpalastes zu Leipzig”, *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* 2302 (13 August 1887), p. 159; Moser, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 46–49; Daehne, *Festschrift*, pp. xxxi–xxxv; Schmidt, *50 Jahre Krystall-Palast*, p. 6.

<sup>57</sup> See A. Weiske, “Das Concert- und Restaurant-Panorama im Leipziger Krystallpalaste”, 7. *Beilage zum Leipziger Tageblatt und Anzeiger* 131 (11 May 1890), p. 3124.

<sup>58</sup> 1893 “Einfahrt des Lloyd-Dampfers ‘Lahn’ in den Hafen von New-York”; 1893 “Helgoland mit sturmdurchwühlter See und Rettung Schiffbrüchiger”; 1894–1896 “Flottenparade vor Sr. Majestät dem Kaiser im Kieler Kriegshafen”. See Weidauer, *Berliner Panoramen*, pp. 32–33; Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 271–273.

characterized by a larger variety of subject matters, allowing for more experimentation and quicker change. However, the choices of paintings in the Krystall-Palast also highlight new orientations that came to the forefront as the century closed. New locations were added to the imaginary geography of modern Germans through the development of tourism (especially the Alps and Italy), the peak of mass migration (to North America), German colonialism, and a focus on naval expansion in the rising competition with Britain. Some of the paintings also show an ambition to “elevate” the entertainment format through themes more typical in academic painting, reflecting the social range of patrons at the Krystall-Palast, many of them belonging to the city’s elite.

Despite various efforts, the diorama exhibitions were not successful enough and ended.<sup>59</sup> However, it was exactly Berthold’s initial decision to combine different forms of entertainment that helped to stabilize the Krystall-Palast in the long term and made it flexible enough to adapt to local conditions and changing trends. After the end of the diorama and panorama exhibitions, the Krystall-Palast offered film screenings. The Alberthalle was turned into a cinema in 1918 and the Krystall-Palast housed several film production companies.<sup>60</sup> The complex as a whole remained in business until it was destroyed in World War II.

Just like the Panorama am Roßplatz, the Krystall-Palast exhibitions relied heavily on national production and distribution networks. Following the same trends as panorama and diorama exhibitions in other German cities, the Krystall-Palast offered patriotic topics and a German view on global entanglements painted by German artists. At the same time, the Krystall-Palast company itself became closely integrated into transnational business networks. Berthold’s business plan had seemed so promising that even while the Alberthalle was still under construction, investors became interested in the venture. In March 1887, the Krystall-Palast was converted into a stock company with the help of Edmund Becker, of the local bank house Becker & Co.<sup>61</sup> The Leipziger Krystall-Palast, AG (Leipzig Crystal Palace Company, Limited) had its seat in London, with a branch in Leipzig. Berthold remained the managing director of the Krystall-Palast until 1890 but was no longer its sole owner. The company’s board of directors consisted almost exclusively of bankers, merchants, industrialists, and jurists from

---

<sup>59</sup> Daehne, *Festschrift*, p. xxxi; Schmidt, *50 Jahre Krystall-Palast*, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> The cinema was renovated and became property of the Ufa in 1924, see *Ufa-Theaterhalle. Festschrift herausgegeben zur Wieder-Eröffnung am 11. November 1924*, Leipzig 1924.

<sup>61</sup> Moser, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 40–41, 52.

Leipzig.<sup>62</sup> The innovative business plan of an enthusiast of modern entertainments had convinced the local economic elite to join and eventually take over the business. They discovered commercial entertainment as an attractive investment opportunity and then integrated Berthold's venture into the structures of transnational finance. In the era of German nationalism and imperialism, this was a delicate move. While modern cities functioned as portals of economic entanglement and global imaginations, it was still crucial that ownership remained in local hands and fantasies of the world bound by cultural and political affiliations.<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusions

Investigating the dynamics of modern entertainment industries through the lens of portals of globalization is part of a wider tendency in globalization research to focus on the particular mechanisms and geographies of cross-border exchanges as well as on their historical transformations in shifting spatial orders. Accordingly, the aim here was to examine the particular role the panorama enterprises in the city of Leipzig occupied within transnational production networks and to identify the mediating agents who devised practices and institutional frameworks to profit from and steer these interconnections. This in turn adds insights into the interplay of different spatial scales and formats in the development of modern entertainment industries under the global condition. The last decades of the nineteenth century were a critical phase in the formation of these industries, with the consolidation of large-scale business networks that rested upon an increasing number of permanent production and exhibition facilities in various locations and tapped into spatial imaginations that envisioned the relationship between city, region, nation-empire, and world.

The transition from seasonal offerings was gradual – initially, new venues and shows opened during fair season to increase the number of visitors. At the same time, older formats remained in existence – smaller panoramas were still exhibited during the fairs. But in 1907, the city relocated the Kleinmesse – sales

---

<sup>62</sup> See SStAL, Amtsgericht Leipzig, Handelsregister, file no. 21066, Fol. 6967 (Leipzig Crystal Palace Company, Limited). Roßbach and Berthold left the board of directors in 1888 and 1890, respectively.

<sup>63</sup> In his brochure presenting the new Krystall-Palast in 1887, publicist Otto Moser made efforts to downplay the London connection in order to remove existing doubts of the locals and encourage them to buy shares in the company. Moser, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 4, 52–54. In 1926, the company closed the London location and moved its headquarters to Leipzig.

and amusement stands – to the Platz vor dem Frankfurter Tor, a place outside of the city gates, separating the retail and show trade from the growing sample fair businesses in the centre. This spatial separation amplified the larger structural changes in the entertainment business that profoundly reshaped the urban cultural landscape. At the turn of the twentieth century, private corporations operating representative permanent venues dominated the entertainment sector in the city.

The transformation of Leipzig's cultural sector played out in close interaction with a reorganization of the entertainment industries on a larger scale. The second panorama boom propelled extensive shifts in the spatial organization and mechanisms of panorama production and distribution. New financial and production centres as well as transnational standards and circuits were established. These changes enabled entrepreneurs in Leipzig to construct permanent exhibition venues, as they could rely on a successful business model and a steady supply of panoramas and dioramas. While they did not exercise decisive influence on the panorama industry as a whole and remained dependent on production and distribution structures established by others, they were able to decide what panoramas were being exhibited in Leipzig, and some of the paintings they commissioned later went on to other cities.

Viewing Leipzig as a portal of globalization, these shifts reveal a changed position of the city within transnational entertainment networks as well as the emergence of new actors and institutions that fostered and controlled these interconnections. Economic and cultural exchanges and transfers were introduced and regulated differently over time. During the first panorama wave, exhibition offerings in Leipzig depended on the initiative of itinerant performers and on concessions from the city and state. During the second wave, local companies operating permanent panorama exhibitions took over some of these functions. The new panorama and diorama venues were established in Leipzig, not as part of transnational business expansion from the pioneering centres of metropolitan culture, but rather on the initiative of entrepreneurs from the city. They introduced new visual spectacles in the city that drew crowds and could be used as profit opportunities and marketing tools. Moreover, they increasingly influenced the city's public sphere and modes of relating to the world – a mediating function they were able to retain even after the decline of the panorama business.

The city of Leipzig occupied a particular position within these transnational networks of the second-wave panorama industry. The industry consisted of loosely linked circuits based on the interplay of various production sites, distribution channels, and locations for display. Apart from the global metropolises, corporate headquarters in Brussels and production facilities in Munich and

Berlin played an essential role. The Leipziger Panorama-Gesellschaft and the Krystall-Palast acquired most of their panoramas and dioramas directly from the producers in Berlin and Munich or from distribution networks that connected German-speaking cities in Europe. These were part of intersecting panorama circuits worldwide, and some of the paintings travelled as far as the United States, Australia, and Japan. But Leipzig remained largely disconnected from those other areas. Apart from a few exceptions, the panoramas and dioramas exhibited in Leipzig were patriotic paintings produced in Germany. The visions of the world they offered focused on the role and claims of Germans and the German Empire in the world, sometimes with a regional or local twist. This makes the panorama business a good example of how portals of globalization are not only transfer points fostering new connections but are also filtering to what extent these affect the location and how they are perceived. They hence play a crucial role in creating uneven and fragmented geographies of production networks and spatial imaginations under the global condition.

This uneven integration of panorama networks and markets was in part the result of an interesting tension in the industry – a play of scales between transnationally entangled business structures, national or imperial imaginations, and local or regional cultural and economic agendas. The entrepreneurs of the second panorama wave had aimed to foster transnational standards and touring of the paintings in order to increase their profits. At the same time, they had discovered nationalism and imperialism as a powerful marketing tool to draw crowds, legitimate their businesses, and secure support by political elites. Their focus on patriotic imagery had some adverse side effects: it became a barrier for the wide circulation of the canvases and led to largely separated distribution circuits in different countries or cultural spheres. Moreover, panoramas and dioramas were used as instruments of real estate speculation and the promotion of breweries and restaurants (as in the case of the panorama rotunda) or as part of a diversification strategy for an urban entertainment complex (in the case of the Krystall-Palast). Consequentially, the transnational panorama business also became integrated into diverse local and regional development projects.

Analysing the entertainment industries from the perspective of portals of globalization opens up a more nuanced understanding of a city's integration into global networks. By looking at specific transfer agents and the way they influenced changing patterns of interconnection, the city appears not as a bounded place affected by global flows, but as a dynamic interaction site. It is then possible to evaluate not only the quality and range of a city's spatial interconnections, but also the agency different kinds of actors had when managing them, and the capacities and institutions that they built up over time. This way,

we can get a more refined picture of how cultural formats “travelled” from place to place and how complex multiscale networks were established, operated, and transformed. Moreover, analysing a regional metropolis can help to better grasp the unevenness of transnational cultural and economic integration and to understand how various spatial formats, functional specializations, and logics of action come into play in different segments of the networks.

