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Individual Website

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September, the season of choosing a National History Day topic, can be stressful for students. I was a worried student, until I heard a rather random story about Paul Durand-Ruel on NPR. The Philadelphia Museum of Art was collaborating with Musée d'Orsay and the National Gallery of London on an exhibit, "Inventing Impressionism: Paul Durand-Ruel and the Market for Early Modernism"; in a spur-of-the-moment decision I decided to make seeing that exhibition in Philadelphia my birthday present. The exhibit showcases the less picturesque side of running a massive cultural rebellion and it intrigued me. I quickly became enraptured by the Impressionists and their work, particularly how outsiders helped contribute to their success and so my National History Day project was born.

Many museum exhibitions have a catalog or book, and just my luck there was both a catalog, *Inventing Impressionism: Paul Durand-Ruel and the Market for Early Modernism* and a memoir written by Durand-Ruel. These two sources gave me a starting point for my research. After interviewing Dr. Nancy Wolsk and Dr. Anna Brzyanski, professors of Art History, I found helpful books such as *Impression: Painting Quickly in France* and *The New Painting: Impressionism 1874-1886* to further develop my knowledge about the Impressionist movement as a whole. It is impossible to understand why a historical movement is revolutionary without some sort of knowledge of the previous movements. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a compiled a series of essays chronicling Parisian art history allowing me to understand Durand-Ruel's early art collections, the artistic styles of the time, and why the Impressionist Movement was revolutionary.

In choosing the medium to present Paul Durand-Ruel and the Impressionists' story, I wanted a way to showcase the art. And, after doing an exhibit last year, I wanted to "branch out"

and try something with which I had no experience, a website. Through a website, photographs of art can be enlarged for clarity of technique and it is easy to create a visual depiction of art history. I constructed this website by choosing the multimedia, particularly art, I wanted to feature on the various pages first. This allowed me to incorporate quotes and text that supported the ideas already conveyed through the artwork itself while giving the viewer an experience similar to that of an exhibition.

Art reflects the economic, social, and political standings of its culture, while also enchanting outsiders. The Impressionists were some of the first modern artists who explored a type of painting different from the classical style perpetuated by the Salon de Paris and the Academie. They exhibited *ébauche* sketches as their final works focusing on Parisian life. Paul Durand-Ruel bought these paintings in bulk, and supported the artists to create more work, an idea that had never been executed in the art world. He consistently supported these new explorative artists while promoting the impressionism's encounter with the Parisian public, and beyond. His efforts were part of Impressionism's impact on the world of art and western culture as a whole.