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Constructing the Sublime: The Discourse on Architecture and Louis XIV's Sublimity in Seventeenth-Century Paris

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Citation

Knegt, F. J. L. C. (2019, December 17). *Constructing the Sublime: The Discourse on Architecture and Louis XIV's Sublimity in Seventeenth-Century Paris*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/82074>

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Cover Page



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Title: Constructing the Sublime: The Discourse on Architecture and Louis XIV's Sublimity in Seventeenth-Century Paris

Issue Date: 2019-12-17

Constructing the Sublime:
The Discourse on Architecture and Louis XIV's
Sublimity in Seventeenth-Century Paris

BY

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- I The sublime has always existed as a quality of greatness – and it has always been, and always will be, a play of extremes.
- II The idea of *opposite* extremes polarised seventeenth-century writers: for some people, two opposite notions could both be sublime (most often their interplay), while for others only one (high and virtuous) of both opposite extremes could.
- III These two different views (see proposition II) led to clashing and highly unstable poetics of sublimity, which are particularly apparent in writings about royal architecture under Louis XIV.
- IV The idea of Louis XIV's own sublimity (see Félibien, Rapin, Vertron) also proved problematic: while the sublime is highly subjective and cannot be wielded as an instrument, it is also poorly applicable to human beings themselves, whose lives – even those of kings – are inherently flawed.
- V A research on sublimity and Parisian architecture does not necessarily need the Château de Versailles and its gardens as a main case study – which fully merits a separate inquiry – to be able to fully address the main problem.
- VI To study a ruler in his or her garden means to study both the art of control and the urge to succumb.
- VII Printmakers Adam Perelle and Pierre Aveline are two of the most significant masters of early modern propaganda, not only because of the large number of impressions and wide distribution of their images, but mainly because of their artistic licence. The majority of their printed views display a considerable distortion of reality.

- VIII The place of imaginary architecture, hostile architecture or forensic architecture in the study of both early modern and contemporary architecture should be far greater than it is now.
 - IX Art history students should never be deprived of the experience to touch – without gloves – objects of art, if only to grasp the tactile dimension of art, and the human need to caress.
 - X The indirect role played by rabbits in medieval battles in Europe should not be underestimated.
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