



**NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS
AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE**

VOLUME TWO

Edited by Sarah Lees

With an essay by Richard Rand
and technical reports by Sandra L. Webber

With contributions by Katharine J. Albert, Philippe Bordes, Dan Cohen,
Kathryn Calley Galitz, Alexis Goodin, Marc Gotlieb, John House,
Simon Kelly, Richard Kendall, Kathleen M. Morris, Leslie Hill Paisley,
Kelly Pask, Elizabeth A. Pergam, Kathryn A. Price, Mark A. Roglán,
James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

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TITLE PAGE: Camille Pissarro, *The Louvre from the Pont Neuf* (cat. 253)

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1. RSC Diary, 16 Dec. 1940.
2. Despite this neutral title, the painting can be firmly identified as no. 6 in the Salle Renoir at the 1904 Salon d'Automne through a reference in the 1907 Viau Sale catalogue (Durand-Ruel 1907, p. 46, no. 61); it also appears in an installation photograph of the 1904 display in the Barnes Foundation Archives, Merion.
3. Duret 1906, p. 139.
4. Durand-Ruel 1907, p. 46, no. 61.
5. Trublot 1887, reprinted in Gachet 1956, p. 171.
6. André 1928, p. 32: "On m'a fait prendre en horreur une de mes toiles en la baptisant 'la Pensée.'" The painting is Daulte 1971, no. 227.
7. Renoir 1962, p. 66. The original French reads: "Ces bougres de marchands de tableaux savent bien que le public est sentimental. Et ils ont foutu un titre dégoûtant à ma pauvre fille qui n'y peut rien, ni moi non plus. Ils l'ont appelée *La Pensée*. . . . Mes modèles à moi ne pensent pas" (French ed., p. 71).
8. See Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98, pp. 134–36, 284–85, where further details of her career are recorded.
9. On Murer, see Gachet 1956, pp. 145–88; Distel 1990, pp. 207–15; Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98, pp. 152–54, 291.
10. PDR 582 and PV 1537–38.
11. The dates of ownership by Paul Rosenberg are uncertain. Daulte 1971 (vol. 1, no. 225) lists Rosenberg before Goldschmidt, but records in the Rosenberg Archives suggest that the painting was purchased after 1917, thus presumably sometime between 1926 and 1929, after Kann's ownership. An inventory card in the Archives also indicates that this painting was in the "collection Abdy," though no further evidence of ownership by a member of the Abdy family has been found. See The Paul Rosenberg Archives, a gift of Elaine and Alexandre Rosenberg. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
12. In the body of Vollard's text, he refers to a painting titled *Woman with a Finger on Her Lips (Femme qui a le doigt sur la bouche)*, which could refer either to this picture or to *A Young Woman Seated (La Pensée)* (c. 1867–77; Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, UK), or to *The Dreamer (La Songeuse)* (1879; Saint Louis Art Museum). In Appendix II of the 1925 English edition, the painting is listed as *L'Ingénue*.

262 | Portrait of Madame Monet (Madame Claude Monet Reading) c. 1874

Oil on canvas, 61.7 x 50.3 cm

Lower left: A. Renoir.

1955.612

Camille Doncieux (1847–1879) married Claude Monet in 1870, three years after the birth of their first son, Jean. From 1866 onward, she appeared frequently in Monet's paintings, in portraits, genre subjects and outdoor scenes, and finally in his rapid sketch of her lifeless figure on her deathbed in 1879 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

In Renoir's canvas, Camille Monet is depicted seated on a sofa, reading a paper-covered book. Her body creates a virtually straight line, a shallow diagonal axis, as she leans back against two large cushions, while her feet rest on a third. Cushions and sofa alike are boldly patterned with flowers and leaves set against an off-white background, and a large bird, perhaps a crane, appears on the left cushion. Camille's dress is equally richly patterned, but on a smaller scale; its front panels pick up the soft pinks and greens of the sofa, but the surrounding blue fabric frames the figure and sets it apart from its setting, linking it visually to the blue wall behind the sofa. The figure creates a dominant pyramidal shape nearly central in the canvas, while the narrow blue band down the front of the dress anchors the figure within the composition and hints at the form of the sitter's body. The volume of her body and the space within the scene are further suggested by the side lighting, which creates shadows beneath the sofa and the cushions, and down the right side of the figure.

Beyond this, though, there is little conventional modeling: the technique acts to dissolve the forms rather than to suggest their solidity. Throughout the canvas, small, fleck-like touches animate the surface. These serve in part to suggest the textures of the surfaces represented and complement their patterning; but at the same time, though varied in shape and direction, they lend an overall vibrancy and liveliness to the whole picture.

Although the painting has usually been dated about 1872, its small-scale fragmented brushwork and richly interwoven color accents suggest a later date, perhaps the summer of 1874, when Renoir was working alongside Monet at Argenteuil, ten miles north-



west of Paris. In the autumn of 1874, Monet moved into a new house there,¹ in which, as we can see from his *La Japonaise (Camille Monet in Japanese Costume)* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) of 1875–76, he installed flights of Japanese *uchiwa* fans on the wall. We cannot tell, though, whether the present canvas represents this house or whether fans were similarly installed in his previous residence at Argenteuil.

Monet was an enthusiast for the Japanese *objets d'art* that became so fashionable during the 1860s. From the later 1860s onward, he began to assimilate the lessons of Japanese pictorial composition into his canvases,² and Japanese objects first appear in his depictions of the interiors of his residences during his stay in London in 1870–71, in *Meditation: Madame Monet on a Sofa* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). It seems, though, that Renoir was less interested in Japanese décor and pictorial effects³ (however, see also cat. 269), and the presence of the fans on the background wall here is probably more a reflection of Monet's interests than his own. The dress that Camille Monet wears in the painting appears to be a variation on a Turkish caftan—another form of exoticism that complements the Japanese-inspired décor.⁴ Renoir depicted Camille Monet wearing the same dress in two other canvases painted around 1874 (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon; and private collection),⁵ and she may be wearing the dress again in Monet's *Camille Monet Embroidering* of 1875 (The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia);⁶ the dates of these works further support a date of about 1874 for the present painting.

Both the format of the picture and the presence of Japanese artifacts are reminiscent of Édouard Manet's *Repose* (Rhode Island School of Design, Providence), painted around 1870 and exhibited at the Salon in 1873, in which a female figure, posed by Berthe Morisot, reclines on a sofa, with a Japanese triptych print on the wall behind her. The informality of this pose—indecorous by the standards of contemporary etiquette—is echoed in Renoir's canvas. Another canvas by Manet, *Woman with Fans* of 1873 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), shows its sitter in a comparably informal pose, reclining on a sofa, with an elaborate arrangement of Japanese fans behind her, set against a Japanese wall-hanging that depicts a crane. In Manet's canvas, it has been suggested that there is a play on the French word *grue*, also popular slang for a prostitute,⁷ but, as Colin Bailey has noted, it seems most implausible that the presence of a bird that may be a crane on the cushion in Renoir's canvas should be viewed in these terms.⁸

The subject of *Portrait of Madame Monet* borders between portraiture and genre painting. Unlike Manet's *Repose*, it represents a specific individual whose initials were given in its title when it was first exhibited; it appeared with the title *Portrait de Mme M . . .* as no. 20 in the retrospective of Renoir's work at the Salon d'Automne in 1904.⁹ The picture does not focus on Camille Monet's physiognomy, but rather presents her as if caught unawares in her private, domestic space, absorbed in her reading.

The theme of a woman reading carried many associations for viewers at this date. Alongside a rapidly burgeoning market for fiction aimed at female readers, moralists were concerned about the effects of such reading on supposedly impressionable women; the character of Emma Bovary in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* of 1857 plays on just these issues. Questions about appropriate reading matter for women were treated very explicitly in a group of semi-humorous paintings by Auguste Toulmouche (1829–1890). In *Forbidden Fruit*, shown at the 1866 Salon, four young women search eagerly, and evidently illicitly, through the books in a private library, while his two canvases of 1874 and 1875, *The Amusing Book* and *The Serious Book*, contrast one pair of young women who are engaged and amused by a book with another pair who have been lulled to sleep by their reading materials. Renoir's canvas invites no such explicit interpretation; but the decision to present Camille Monet absorbed and seemingly amused by her reading distinguishes the sitter as belonging to the class of fashionable young women who were a target audience for contemporary publishers of fiction. JH

PROVENANCE The artist, sold to Durand-Ruel, before 1891;¹⁰ [Durand-Ruel, Paris and New York, before 1891–1933, sold to Clark, 2 Feb. 1933]; Robert Sterling Clark (1933–1955); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Paris 1904b, Salle Renoir, no. 20, as *Portrait de Mme M . . .*; London 1905a, no. 250, lent by Durand-Ruel; Paris 1912a, no. 13; Williamstown 1956b, no. 151, pl. XVI; New York 1969a, no. 7, ill.; Williamstown 1982a, no. 16, ill.; Tübingen 1996, pp. 104–7, no. 17, ill.; Williamstown 1996–97, pp. 35, 37, ill.; Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98, pp. 127–29, 281, no. 16, ill.; Washington–Hartford 2000, pp. 80–83, no. 16, ill.; Tokyo–Nagoya 2001, pp. 56–59, no. 3, ill.; Atlanta 2002, no cat.; Bremen 2005–6, pp. 148–49, 195, no. 31, ill.; Copenhagen 2006–7, pp. 58, 76, 107–8, 313, no. 96, figs. 68, 87; Montpellier–Grenoble 2007–8, pp. 110–11, 201, ill.; Madrid 2010–11, pp. 39, 45–47, no. 2, ill.

REFERENCES Meier-Graefe 1929, p. 57, no. 35, ill.; Paris 1933a, pp. 5–6; Graber 1943, p. 41; Kooning 1956, p. 44, ill.; Fosca 1961, p. 64; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 122, ill.; Tominaga 1969, p. 112, pl. 6; Daulte 1971, no. 73, ill.; Fezzi 1972, p. 93, no. 83, ill. (French ed., pp. 92–93, no. 79, ill.); Pach 1973, ill. under no. 5; Wheldon 1975, p. 53, pl. 39; Yoshikado 1976, p. 99; Callen 1978, p. 58, pl. III, ill. on cover; Nakayama 1978, p. 96, ill.; Nakayama 1979, p. 10; Mukherjee 1982, p. 43, ill.; Shimada 1985, pl. 39; Monneret 1989, p. 149, no. 18, ill.; Tokyo–Kagawa–Nara 1992–93, p. 16, ill.; Alphant 1993, p. 160, fig. 62; Mirazaki 1993, p. 7, ill.; Wattenmaker and Distel 1993, pp. 96, 300n5; White 1996, pp. 90–91, ill.; Ivinski 1997, p. 533, pl. IV; Herbert 1997, p. 8, ill.; Jimenez 2001, pp. 166, 168; Néret 2001, p. 180, ill.; Okamura 2001b, pp. 12–13, ill.; Williamstown–New York 2006–7, pp. 77, 253, fig. 188; Dauberville and Dauberville 2007–10, vol. 1, p. 396, no. 364, ill.; Lochnan 2008, p. 52, ill.; Butler 2008, pp. 162–64, ill.; Goetz 2009, p. 191, ill.; Distel 2009, p. 96, fig. 79; Gedo 2010, pp. 150–52, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a fine-weave twill linen, with a vertical warp (25 threads/cm) and horizontal weft (31 threads/cm). The painting has a glue lining onto a bleached, coarsely woven linen (13 x 22 threads/cm), probably dating from 1938, when Henri Helfer of Paris treated the picture. The painting is on a six-member stretcher and retains the artist's tacking margins. Occasionally erupting paint in the caftan suggests the reason the picture may have been lined. There are wandering, unconnected age cracks running primarily in a horizontal direction, the result of the uneven stresses induced by the twill fabric. There are corner stress cracks radiating down from the upper right corner. In general, the paint is in good condition. In 1994, a 1984 varnish layer was removed and a lower yellowed layer was thinned. The remaining old varnish has a slight ultraviolet light fluorescence throughout. There is minor inpainting at the edges, mostly covering old frame abrasion. In reflected light, the weave of the twill fabric is quite noticeable, especially the prominent horizontal weft threads. There is also a cluster of prominent vertical threads running through the left third of the picture. The surface has a matte reflectance, except for a few shinier brushstrokes.

The ground appears to be one thin pale gray layer. In a few areas, such as the neck of the robe, bare threads can be seen. The ground layer is visible throughout the image and is used as a base color for the sofa, flesh, and the front panels of the caftan. No underdrawing was detected, though there may be a cursory blue paint sketch. The paint is applied in a paste consistency, with brushstrokes skipping across the diagonal thread pattern. There are low to moderate height impastos throughout the image. The blue background color seems to be painted over a scant application of olive greens, browns, and darker blue strokes. Several colors look dry and crystalline under magnification, which may be the result of some additive, such as resin, in the paint. White hog's bristles are embedded in the surface.

1. See Wildenstein 1974–91, vol. 1, pp. 71–72.
2. See House 1986, pp. 47–59; Canberra–Perth 2001.
3. See Rivière 1921, p. 58; Vollard 1938, p. 196.
4. See Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98, p. 127.
5. Daulte 1971, nos. 77 and 78.
6. See Tübingen 1996, p. 106; see also Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98, p. 281n11.
7. See Reff 1976a, pp. 85–86.
8. See Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98, pp. 127, 281.
9. It was a convention that the names of female sitters were indicated only by their initials in exhibition catalogues, even if their identity was widely known.
10. The painting was re-entered as part of Durand-Ruel's stock on 25 Aug. 1891, indicating that it had been purchased earlier.

263 | Wash-House Boat at Bas-Meudon c. 1874

Oil on canvas, 50 x 61 cm

Lower left: Renoir.

1955.610

Wash-House Boat at Bas-Meudon is one of the most experimental and unexpected of Renoir's landscapes of the mid-1870s. It shows the branch of the River Seine that passes below the town of Meudon, about seven miles southwest of Paris. Although the setting appears unspoiled and rural, these wooded riverbanks were sited in the midst of a set of towns on the left bank of the Seine—Meudon, Bellevue, and Sèvres—that were increasingly being absorbed into the larger patterns of work and leisure of the capital. In *Wash-House Boat at Bas-Meudon* the view is downstream toward Sèvres, with Meudon itself out of sight to the left, and one of the islands in the Seine on the right. Meudon was famous as the site of one of Louis XIV's châteaux, very recently destroyed by the Germans during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71. Its terrace offered one of the most spectacular views over the city, and the château had been a key base for the government troops as they prepared to recapture Paris from the Communards in spring 1871.¹ Renoir, however, turned his back on both the view and the historical associations of the place, focusing instead on the nondescript boats on the river below; it is the informality of the subject and the lack of picturesqueness of the boats that mark out the modernity of the scene.