



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

**VOLUME ONE**

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

*Nineteenth-Century European Paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute* is published with the assistance of the Getty Foundation and support from the National Endowment for the Arts.



The Getty Foundation



Produced by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute  
225 South Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267  
[www.clarkart.edu](http://www.clarkart.edu)

Curtis R. Scott, Director of Publications  
and Information Resources  
Dan Cohen, Special Projects Editor  
Katherine Pasco Frisina, Production Editor  
Anne Roecklein, Managing Editor  
Michael Agee, Photographer  
Laurie Glover, Visual Resources  
Julie Walsh, Program Assistant  
Mari Yoko Hara and Michelle Noyer-Granacki,  
Publications Interns

Designed by Susan Marsh  
Composed in Meta by Matt Mayerchak  
Copyedited by Sharon Herson  
Bibliography edited by Sophia Wagner-Serrano  
Index by Kathleen M. Friello  
Proofread by June Cuffner  
Production by The Production Department,  
Whately, Massachusetts  
Printed on 135 gsm Gardapat Kiara  
Color separations and printing by Trifolio, Verona

© 2012 Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute  
All rights reserved.

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, including illustrations, in any form (beyond that copying permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law and except by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publishers.

Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London  
P. O. Box 209040, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-9040  
[www.yalebooks.com/art](http://www.yalebooks.com/art)

Printed and bound in Italy  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

Nineteenth-century European paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute / 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, Fronia E. Wissman.

volumes cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-935998-09-9 (clark hardcover : alk. paper) —

ISBN 978-0-300-17965-1 (yale hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Painting, European—19th century—Catalogs. 2. Painting—Massachusetts—Williamstown—Catalogs. 3. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute—Catalogs. I. Lees, Sarah, editor of compilation. II. Rand, Richard. III. Webber, Sandra L. IV. Title. V. Title: 19th-century European paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

ND457.S74 2012

759.9409'0340747441—dc23

2012030510

Details:

TITLE PAGE: John Constable, *Yarmouth Jetty* (cat. 73)

OPPOSITE COPYRIGHT PAGE: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *Bathers of the Borromean Isles* (cat. 89)

PAGE VIII: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Woman Crocheting* (cat. 267)

PAGE X: Claude Monet, *Seascape, Storm* (cat. 222)

PAGE XII: Jacques-Louis David, *Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure de Turenne-d'Aynac* (cat. 103)

PAGE XVI: William-Adolphe Bouguereau, *Nymphs and Satyr* (cat. 33)

PRECEDING PAGE 2: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Snake Charmer* (cat. 154)

time before Mr. Clark's purchase. The natural resin varnish is now moderately yellowed, and horizontal banding indicates it was brush applied. There is a small eruption and loss of paint 1.3 cm up from the lower edge.

The excessive number of ground layers and the odd color seen in the middle layer suggest that the panel may have been used previously. While one often finds two layers of ground, here there appear to be five; two off-white ones against the wood, one blue, and two more pale layers just beneath the painting. A radiograph taken to investigate whether there might be a lower image was inconclusive, although there are anomalies in one or more layers. The ground layer just below the image is a pink tone similar to that seen on several other Constables in the collection. There is extensive underdrawing, possibly in graphite, some of which can be seen with the naked eye, such as the cathedral spire's initial position to the left of its final location. Under low magnification the thinly applied paint of the foreground and trees has a peculiar series of perfectly circular marks of varying small sizes. The most likely explanation is that the artist used some sort of emulsion-based paint, stirred or frothed until it was full of bubbles, which broke after the paint was brushed on the surface, leaving this tiny, interlocking pattern of rings of color.

1. See Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, no. 21.74, p. 87.
2. *Ibid.*
3. R 19.1.
4. R 11.12.
5. John Constable to John Fisher, 6 Dec. 1822, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, p. 106.
6. See Reynolds 1996, vol. 1, pp. 241–42, and Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, pp. 50–57.
7. Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, p. 87, no. 21.75.
8. R 20.53.
9. R 20.24.
10. Whittingham 1976, p. 8.
11. John Constable to Maria Constable, 15 Nov. 1821, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 2, p. 272.
12. RSC Diary, 19 Feb. 1945.
13. Mrs. A. M. Constable lent the picture to the South Kensington Museum, London, from 1880 to 1883. See Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, no. 21.74, p. 87.

---

## 69 | Malvern Hall 1821

Oil on canvas, 54.1 x 78.3 cm  
1955.683

Constable is most closely associated with depictions of the more humble architecture of mills, Willy Lott's cottage, or the English ecclesiastical Gothic of Salisbury Cathedral. Nevertheless, a small subset of his oeuvre is the country-house portrait, which was a dominant category of English landscape painting in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Constable's renditions of Malvern Hall in Solihull, Warwickshire, are among his earliest and most elaborate essays on the theme, reflecting the close connection he had formed with the owner, Henry Greswolde Lewis (d. 1829). Lewis's family was, in turn, related to the Tollemaches of Helmingham, near Ipswich, one of the artist's first important patrons.

It was a Suffolk connection between the families, in this case the Dedham solicitor Peter Firmin, that led to the initial introduction.<sup>1</sup> Lewis's elder sister, Anna Maria, was married to Wilbraham, 6th Earl of Dysart, an avid collector. Firmin recommended Constable to the sixth Earl, who, in 1807, engaged the artist to copy family portraits hanging in their London residence at Hyde Park Corner.<sup>2</sup> That same year, Lewis commissioned his own portrait from Constable.<sup>3</sup> Two years later, Lewis invited the artist to Malvern Hall to paint the portrait of Mary Freer, his teenage ward (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven).<sup>4</sup>

This first visit to Warwickshire provided the occasion for a significant innovation in Constable's painting method. Here, the artist, whose art-historical significance rests on the directness of his observations, painted his first full-scale work outside in a single day, *Malvern Hall, Warwickshire* (Tate Britain, London).<sup>5</sup> This work, an exploration of the reflectivity of water, looks across the park to the south front of the house. Two drawings done on paper from the sketchbook Constable used in 1808 and 1809 are close-up views of the south front, one taking its vantage point from the west (private collection), the other from the east (private collection).<sup>6</sup> An inscription on the former provides evidence for the dating of the Tate painting. On its verso, Constable wrote: "August the first made the / picture of the House from the / great pool." As the drawing depicts only the house and not its setting, this inscription must refer to the painting.<sup>7</sup> The paint-



69

ing itself, with its freshly observed trees, minimally delineated architecture and incomplete foreground, bears out the documentary evidence of Constable's rapid execution.

Another drawing that Constable did on this first visit likewise provided the foundation for the view of Malvern Hall from the entrance front. In particular, it is possible to see in the pencil drawing of the entrance front and Solihull Church (Museo Horne, Florence)<sup>8</sup> the roots of the carefully depicted façade of Lewis's family seat with a distant view of the village church of the Clark's 1821 oil. Moreover, the painting makes visible Lewis's modifications of the Sir John Soane (1753–1837) renovations that had occurred between Constable's two visits. While the drawing emphasizes the verticality of the unornamented front, the painting of twelve years later details its more elaborate architectural features.

Lewis himself had commissioned the young Soane in 1783 to extend and remodel Malvern Hall, which had been begun by Humphrey Greswolde around 1690.<sup>9</sup> However, Soane's paring down of the more elaborate features of the entrance front did not suit Lewis's taste and prompted him to restore the Hall "to nearly what it was 60 years ago" as he wrote to Constable.<sup>10</sup> Lewis's conservative architectural preference is shown in his oxymoronic denunciation of Soane as a "Modern Goth," who he believed had "spoil a handsome house by shaving clean every ornament, architraves, coins, keystones, string courses, & ballustrade."<sup>11</sup>

Constable's patron detailed the progress of his restoration project as he was eager for the artist to return to Malvern Hall. Lewis wanted the artist to come not only to see the architectural improvements, but also to advise him on how to landscape the grounds "to give a forest scenery."<sup>12</sup> In a following letter, Lewis appeals to the artist's preferences in subject matter, noting that the Hall "would make a much better figure in Landscape than when you painted it last."<sup>13</sup>

Lewis was successful in luring Constable for his second, shorter visit to Malvern Hall, on which occasion he drew another view of the entrance front (Executors of the late Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Constable).<sup>14</sup> This more detailed drawing, inscribed "Malvern Hall Sepr 10. 1820." takes a closer viewpoint showing the recently replaced cornice and string courses. By choosing to depict the Hall from an oblique angle, Constable gives the restored quoins a prominent position. Most striking, however, is the dramatic balustraded walkway, which provides access to the *piano nobile's* curved portico. In the drawing, the two statues that welcome the visitor stand conspicuously against the horizon, the closer of the two appearing to take aim at the spire of Solihull Church. For the finished oil now at the Clark, Constable takes a more conventional point of view. Placing Malvern Hall in the middle ground, Constable looks toward the entrance front from farther away, thereby showing the entire façade and east end with details of their architectural ornamentation.

Although Lewis gave the artist steady support and

encouragement, Constable's commission for pendants of Malvern Hall from its front and park views came not from Lewis, but from his second sister, Magdalene, who was the Dowager Countess of Dysart, having married Wilbraham's elder brother, Lionel, the 5th Earl. The Clark's *Malvern Hall* and *Malvern Hall from the Lake* (fig. 69.1)<sup>15</sup> are accepted as the pair that Magdalene ordered as a reminder of her childhood home.

Graham Reynolds has observed that not only was Constable's 1809 oil painting of Malvern Hall the first he completed out of doors, but also it served as the basis for the Havana 1821 version of the back side of the Hall as seen from the park. Indeed, the later painting retains all the features of the earlier work, differing only in the more detailed treatment of the trees, the completion of the foreground, and the addition of a pair of swans. While this view of Malvern Hall from the park coincides more closely with Constable's interest in depicting the natural landscape, the requirements of the commission of pendants of the front and back of the house necessitated a new composition for the public face of the Hall. The view from the lake provided the artist with a predetermined compositional structure to play against.

Set in the left middle ground, the entrance front in the Clark painting complements the Havana view of the back of the mansion, which in the companion piece occupies the right middle ground. While the lake is a reflecting pool for the clumps of trees that surround the garden front, the expanse of the smooth lawn—a parading ground for the peacock—is projected with the shadows of the framing trees in the Clark painting. Here, the pair of swans is a visual counterpoint to the proprietorial peacock that watches over his peahens. The balance provided in both compositions by these small but essential birds is made clear by comparison with the full-size oil study of the entrance, from which they are absent (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, this study also shows that Constable has adjusted the branches and foliage of the tree that frame the right side of the canvas to make the spire of Solihull Church and the gates to the Hall more visible.

In both the Yale study and the Clark painting, the delicate brushstrokes defining the natural architecture of the trees and the man-made architecture of the mansion block are projected forward by the equally controlled but more fluid swirl of the clouds dominating the sky. The importance of the sky as a compositional and emotional device is clear from Constable's statement from the period he was painting the pendants. Writing to John Fisher, he stated:



Fig. 69.1 John Constable, *Malvern Hall from the Lake*, 1821. Oil on canvas, 52 x 77 cm. Colección Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana

“That Landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition, neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids . . . It will be difficult to name a class of Landscape, in which the sky is not the ‘key note,’ the *standard of ‘Scale,’* and the chief ‘*Organ of sentiment.*’”<sup>17</sup>

This characteristic treatment of the sky shows Constable incorporating his personal interests and techniques while working within the confines of the well-established requirements of depicting the country houses of wealthy landowners. Landowners had commissioned artists to portray their estates for centuries as a visual record of the basis for political and economic power in pre-industrial England. Often hung in a patron's town residence both to remind the family of their country retreat and to impress visitors with signs of their wealth, these works also register the changes in approach to landscape painting. To the seventeenth-century emphasis on topographical accuracy in paintings and the classical renditions of Richard Wilson in the eighteenth, Constable brings his mixture of empirical study and romantic view of nature. The product of years of accumulated on-the-spot study, *Malvern Hall* shows how in a commissioned work Constable personalized his vision of the English countryside. EP

**PROVENANCE** Magdalene Lewis, Dowager Countess of Dysart, Malvern Hall, Solihull, Warwickshire (d. 1823); Henry Greswolde Lewis, her brother, by descent (1823–d. 1829); Edmund Meysey Wigley Greswolde Lewis, his nephew, by descent (1829–d. 1833); Henry Wigley Greswolde, his uncle, by descent (1833–d. 1849); Mrs. Florence Horatia Nelson Suckling, Romsey, Hampshire, his great-niece, by descent (1849–d. 1923, sale, Sotheby's, London, 23 July 1924, no. 112, sold to Knoedler); [Knoedler, London, 1924–26, sold to Clark, 30 Apr. 1926]; Robert Sterling Clark (1926–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Possibly London 1822, no. 219, as *Malvern Hall, Warwickshire*;<sup>18</sup> Toronto 1925, no. 8;<sup>19</sup> Williamstown 1958b, pl. 8; Williamstown 1959a, ill.; London 1976, p. 125, no. 202, ill.; New York 1983a, p. 89, no. 28, ill.; Tokyo and others 1986, no. 38, ill.; New York 1988, pp. 51, 199, pl. 24.

**REFERENCES** Leslie 1845, p. 92; Davies 1946, p. 35 (2nd ed., p. 23); *Art News* 1959, p. 40, ill.; Beckett 1959, p. 83; Beckett 1962–70, vol. 2, pp. 264, 274, 352, vol. 4, pp. 66, 182; Polley 1967, p. 31; Taylor 1973, pp. 193–94, no. 7, pl. 50; Hoozee 1979, pp. 119–20, no. 326, ill.; Myer 1980, p. 29 ill.; Parris 1981, pp. 40–42, fig. 4; Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, p. 89, no. 21.82, vol. 2, pl. 285; Cormack 1986, p. 124; Rosenthal 1987, p. 15; Rhyne 1990, p. 97; Darley 1999, pp. 69, 72, fig. 55; Williamstown–New York 2006–7, p. 105.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The original canvas is a flat-threaded tabby weave of moderate weight (approximately 16 threads/cm). The picture was glue-lined to a twisted-warp linen of similar thread count and mounted onto a replaced stretcher sometime prior to 1926. The original tacking margins are missing. The lack of age cracks may indicate an early lining date, possibly to correct a repaired and inpainted diagonal tear or scratch 7.6 cm long in the lower left corner through the tree trunk and the lawn. Small impastos are moated from pressure used during the lining process, and there are occasional weave impressions in the paint structure from the three-dimensional character of the lining fabric. Tiny, short, disconnected cracks follow the weave, some opening into lozenge-shaped gaps. In ultraviolet light, the entire surface has a slight fluorescence from a thin layer of old natural resin varnish left in place during a cleaning in 1993. The present coating is a light, soft varnish, which allows the brushwork of the artist to be visible in reflected light.

The pinkish ground layer, visible throughout the image, contributes especially to the tonality of the sky. Extensive graphite underdrawing lines, used to achieve the proper perspective, appear below the architecture and gate; many of these are visible on close inspection. There is also a horizon line traversing the entire picture from the top of the front patio balustrade to the top railing of the gate at the far right. The more precisely executed building was drawn, painted, and allowed to dry before the broad and fluid landscape elements were brushed on. The pigment combination used for the pale green tree foliage has a particularly gritty, coarsely ground texture. There are a few upper leaves of blue-green in the large right tree, which may be bound in a medium other than oil, as they seem to have resisted bonding to the surface.

1. Beckett 1962–70, vol. 4, pp. 48–49.
2. Among the copies by Constable is *Anna Maria, Countess of Dysart, as Miranda in "The Tempest," after Sir Joshua Reynolds*. See Reynolds 1996, vol. 1, pp. 116–17, no. 07.8.
3. Although the original portrait has not been traced, Lewis referred to it in 1809 when he commissioned Constable to paint a copy of it for his brother-in-law Lord Bradford.

He writes, "Your dash of the paint brush has left me undelineated for two years." Henry Greswolde Lewis to John Constable, 19 Nov. 1809, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 4, pp. 49–50. Constable painted a number of copies of this portrait. See Reynolds 1996, vol. 1, pp. 133, 187 (nos. 09.24, 09.25, 13.28) and Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, p. 188 (no. 27.46).

4. R 09.23.
5. R 09.17. For a complete treatment of this painting, see Parris 1981, pp. 39–42.
6. R 09.20 and 09.22. At this time, Constable also drew a view of the west end of Malvern Hall seen through the garden gate (R 09.21). In addition, he painted a distant view of *Malvern Hall from the Southwest* (Bristol Museums and Art Gallery; R 09.18) and a small oil on board of *Malvern Hall from the Northwest* (private collection; R 09.19).
7. An inscription written in 1840 by the then-owner J. H. Anderdon explains that Constable had also inscribed the original stretcher with the date of 1 August 1809. See Reynolds 1996, vol. 1, p. 132, no. 09.17.
8. R. 09.16.
9. Parris 1981, p. 39. The family had a long association with the region as Lewis detailed in an 1818 letter to Constable: "My Ancestor Humphri de Grousewolde came over with William the Conqueror, & settled at Yardley within 5 miles of this place." Henry Greswolde Lewis to John Constable, 19 Feb. 1818, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 4, p. 57.
10. Henry Greswolde Lewis to John Constable, 18 Apr. 1819, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 4, p. 62.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Henry Greswolde Lewis to John Constable, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 4, pp. 63–64. Beckett assigns this undated letter to summer 1819.
14. R 20.70.
15. R 21.80.
16. R 21.81.
17. John Constable to John Fisher, 23 Oct. 1821, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, pp. 76–77.
18. It is unclear which of the several views of Malvern Hall is the one Constable exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1822 as one of five paintings he showed there. The Clark painting, however, is said to have carried a label, no longer extant, which read: "No. 5. Malverne Hall Warwickshire. John Constable." The label seems to have been removed prior to its sale in 1924. Graham Reynolds thinks it is more likely that the version in Le Mans (signed "John Constable pt. A.R.A. 1821.") is the one shown at the R.A. See Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, p. 89, nos. 21.82–83.
19. This information comes from the Knoedler invoice of 1926. The catalogue for this exhibition could not be located.