



**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,
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Curtis R. Scott, Director of Publications
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Designed by Susan Marsh
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Index by Kathleen M. Friello
Proofread by June Cuffner
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mainly for his own personal enjoyment rather than out of financial necessity.⁵ Fantin-Latour's fatigue with the subject is perhaps not surprising given his output of pictures solely of this subject—between 1864 and 1896, he produced more than 500 flower paintings. KAP

PROVENANCE The artist, sold or consigned to Edwards; Elizabeth Ruth Edwards (Mrs. Edwin Edwards), Sunbury-on-Thames, sold to Bryant; T. H. Bryant, London (by 1907, probably until d. 1913);⁶ H. Bryant, London, his daughter, by descent; [Knoedler, New York, sold to Clark, 15 Dec. 1941]; Robert Sterling Clark (1941–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1956a, pl. S-13.

REFERENCES Fantin-Latour 1911, p. 125, no. 1211, as *Roses*; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 53, ill.; Lucie-Smith 1977, p. 161.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is an unlined, stiff, brittle fabric of lightweight weave (25 threads/cm). The reverse bears the large palette-shaped colorman's stamp of Hardy-Alan, Paris. The five-member lightweight stretcher is original. There is a slight draw in the lower right, and cockling along the lower edge is due to the widely spaced tacks. The image stops short of all edges, as if the perimeter had been masked off or the picture had been stretched after painting. There are score lines on the right and lower sides, which may have acted as guidelines for the dimension. The paint has scattered fine-aperture age cracks and a few brush hairs trapped in the surface. The picture looks as though it has never been cleaned, although the coating doesn't seem discolored enough to be an original layer. The fluorescence in ultraviolet light is thin and even. Cleaning tests done in 1967 by Alan Thielker determined the colors were solvent sensitive. No cleaning was done, but a layer of Vinylite varnish was applied.

The diagonal application of the cream-colored ground gives the canvas a false twill-weave texture. The yellow ultraviolet light fluorescence of the ground suggests that it contains zinc white. No underdrawing was detected in infrared light or under microscopic examination. As on *Roses in a Bowl and Dish* (cat. 134), there seems to be a gray imprimatura wash, which fills in the diagonal ground pattern. The flowers are modeled with thin, wispy, resin-based glazes intermixed wet-into-wet with thicker white strokes. There seem to be two signatures; the one located in the lower paint layers is executed in the dark transparent color of the table, and is now illegible. The second one, in red, is visible below this and to the right.

1. Henri Fantin-Latour to Otto Scholderer, 15 June and 7 July 1871, quoted in Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 256.

2. Henri Fantin-Latour to Edwin Edwards, 20 Apr. 1873, quoted in Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 256.
3. Henri Fantin-Latour to Edwin Edwards, 2 Mar. 1865, quoted in Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 122.
4. Edwin Edwards to Henri Fantin-Latour, 25 Feb. 1865, quoted in Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, pp. 123–24.
5. Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 257.
6. Works from the estate of T. H. Bryant, probably this collector, appeared in a sale at Christie's, London, on 21 July 1913, presumably indicating his approximate date of death.

134 | *Roses in a Bowl and Dish* 1885

Oil on canvas, 45.9 x 63 cm

Upper right: Fantin. 85

1955-734

Henri Fantin-Latour's family moved to Paris from Grenoble in southeastern France when he was a young child. He first studied painting with his father, Jean-Théodore Fantin-Latour (1805–1875), from the age of ten, later entering the *École des Beaux-Arts* for a brief time. He studied with Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran at the *Petite École de Dessin* in Paris from 1850 to 1856. There, he learned to copy the Old Masters before turning to nature, and he could often be found sketching in the Louvre. It was at the Louvre that Fantin-Latour first met Édouard Manet and James McNeill Whistler, as well as his future wife, painter Victoria Dubourg, who shared his passion for depicting flowers. Fantin-Latour worked in Gustave Courbet's studio in 1861, introducing Whistler to Courbet and also to the technique of painting from memory, which he had learned at the *École*. In turn, Whistler's approach inspired the simple tonal gray backgrounds that appear in many of Fantin-Latour's still lifes.

Given his training and his associations with artists who took widely varied approaches to painting—and despite his close friendship with the Impressionists—Fantin-Latour did not adopt the emerging artists' method of *plein-air* painting. Rather than create his floral pictures outside surrounded by nature, Fantin-Latour cut his flowers from the garden and went inside to arrange and paint them where he could control the light and atmosphere. He was gifted at flower arranging, creating loose, natural compositions.



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Fantin-Latour used the genre of still-life as a vehicle for formal experimentation, changing his subject's palette, make-up, and composition from one picture to the next so as not to become tired of painting the same subject again and again. In *Roses in a Bowl and Dish*, he placed a dish to the right of the bowl. The larger roses in the dish balance the composition, their foliage hanging over the table's edge to increase the sense of depth. As this canvas demonstrates, he was masterful at capturing different textures, be it the petal of a flower, a porcelain cup, or a glass dish.

Throughout most of his career, Fantin-Latour worked in three distinct categories: naturalist portraits, still lifes, and more imaginative figural compositions. After his first two trips to England in 1859 and 1861, however, he discovered that the market for still lifes there was particularly profitable. Since he considered his images expressive rather than merely decorative, he rarely worked to a client's specifications and never thought of his floral paintings as pendants. Nonetheless, he did produce pairs of paintings on canvases of the same size, and his pictures were often purchased as pairs by his British clients.¹ Indeed, the Clark's two floral pictures can be hung together, given

their similarities (see cat. 133). Both are arrangements of large-headed white, cream, peach, pink, and red roses against gray backgrounds painted with textured surfaces and muted tones. Fantin-Latour depicted roses so often and with such convincing realism that in the twentieth century, a rose was named for him: the Fantin-Latour rose is a cabbage rose, a full and fragrant pink flower, just like those seen in both of the Clark florals. The varieties toward which he gravitated were English cottage flowers that appealed to the British craze for rose cultivation in the second half of the nineteenth century.² Besides roses, they span a broad range and include delphiniums, lilies, azaleas, petunias, larkspur, hollyhocks, poppies, peonies, tulips, hyacinths, dahlias, marigolds, asters, chrysanthemums, and carnations. He was generally fond of paler, less intense shades, often silhouetting the flowers against a plain backdrop. Fantin-Latour's earlier works tend to be more expansive, in the tradition of still lifes of earlier centuries, and include dishes for fruit, trays, bowls, knives protruding over the front edge of tables, wicker baskets tipped over with fruit spilling out of them, glasses filled with wine, carafes, books, and china such as teacups, plates, or bowls.

Not only were flowers popular in horticulture, but they were also often seen in the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century as both object and symbol.³ Perhaps this was why Fantin-Latour was highly praised by the writers of his day, including Charles Baudelaire and Joris-Karl Huysmans, and is mentioned posthumously in Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time: The Guermantes Way* (1920–21), where Fantin-Latour's flower paintings are specifically referenced.

The collector Charles Ricada, depicted several times by Fantin-Latour, bought *Roses in a Bowl and Dish* directly from the artist. Ricada introduced Fantin-Latour to Gustave Tempelaere, who became his dealer in 1887. KAP

PROVENANCE The artist, sold to Charles Ricada, Paris (until 1893, his sale, Drouot, Paris, 20 Mar. 1893, no. 66, as *Roses*);⁴ [Gustave Tempelaere, Paris]; Émile Chouanard, Paris (by 1906); [F. & J. Tempelaere, Paris]; Alfred Pacquement, Paris; [F. & J. Tempelaere, Paris, sold to Clark, 21 Apr. 1936, as *Roses de toutes couleurs*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1936–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Paris 1906, no. 122, as *Roses*, lent by Chouanard; London 1934, no. 27, ill., as *Roses épanouies*; Amsterdam 1935, no. 36, ill., as *Roses épanouies*; Williamstown 1956a, pl. S-11; New York 1967, no. 13.

REFERENCES Fantin-Latour 1911, p. 125, no. 1215, as *Roses*; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 55, ill.; Young 1967, p. 383; Lucie-Smith 1977, p. 161.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a light-weight weave canvas whose thread count is inaccessible due to the present lining. This glue lining is the second on the picture, probably done during a treatment in 1940 by Mr. Murray. It has an open-weave fabric of 16 x 22 threads per cm and the five-member stretcher may be original. The picture was cleaned again in 1995, when earlier residues, abrasion, and retouching were noted. In ultraviolet light, one can still see older varnish residues in the darker solvent-sensitive colors. The extent of solvent damage to the signature, which was once greener, suggests the entire background may be abraded, and darker deposits of background paint can still be seen between floral elements. There is solvent damage at the edges of green leaves, and possibly in touches of red and yellow glaze details on the paler roses. The thicker paint has some age cracking, and the impastos have lost their crispness due to the various lining processes and now appear quite flat. The surface is also very matte, and the colors are not as saturated as they could be.

The off-white ground has a diagonal pattern of stippled ridges, as if paint were rolled onto the surface, rather than brushed, and may have been artist-applied or specially pre-

pared at his request. Over this there seems to be a thin gray toning layer, which runs under the entire image. No underdrawing was detected, although white chalk could have been used. The image areas are created with a paste-consistency paint, applied wet-into-wet with glaze detailing. The palette has a somewhat faded appearance, especially in the reds.

1. See Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, pp. 123–24.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31.
4. The invoice from Tempelaere to Clark states that “Monsieur Ricada . . . obtained this painting from Fantin himself.” See the Clark's curatorial file.

135 | Peaches and Grapes 1894

Oil on canvas, 27.3 x 36.4 cm

Lower left: Fantin

1955.732

Sterling Clark purchased his first painting by Henri Fantin-Latour, a still life of *Peaches and Grapes*, in 1912. Clark would not purchase another Fantin-Latour for decades, until 1936. A simple composition, it consists of a plate of peaches on a table with a bunch of dark grapes to the left. It most likely dates to 1894 based on a date given in Madame Fantin-Latour's catalogue raisonné of her late husband's work. This picture represents a period in the artist's career when he had transitioned away from the still-life painting for which he was best known toward more imaginative work that had little to do with his most popular and lucrative kind of painting. Fantin-Latour had become disenchanted with still-life painting in part due to the lack of critical response he received for these works. Although very successful in England, his still lifes were much less appreciated in France, where he exhibited them only three times at the Salon, in 1873, 1874, and 1876, before becoming discouraged.¹

Peaches and Grapes, like the other Fantin-Latours in the Clark collection, has a significant history of ownership. Dealer Gustave Tempelaere (1840–1904) owned the picture soon after the artist painted it. Tempelaere's Parisian gallery represented Fantin-Latour along with the still-life painter François Bonvin (1817–1887), some of whose work is reminiscent of Fantin-Latour's. Tempelaere was an important figure