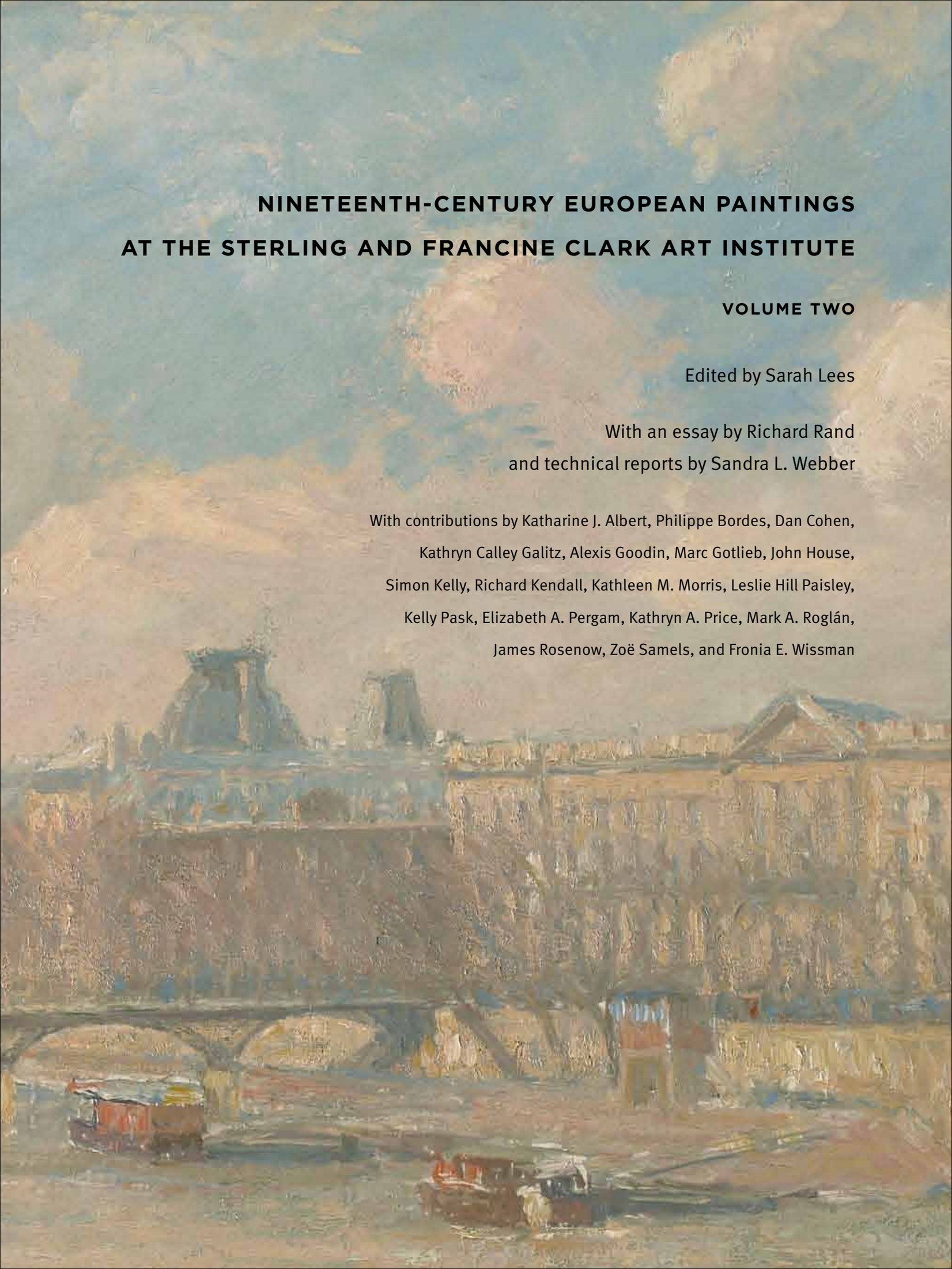

# NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE

## 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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**PROVENANCE** Posetta collection;[10] [Georges Bernheim, Paris, sold to Knoedler, 18 Jan. 1927]; [Knoedler, Paris, sold to Clark, 9 June 1927]; Robert Sterling Clark (1927–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** London 1927, no cat.; Williamstown 1959b, ill.

**REFERENCES** Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 91, ill.; Polley 1967, p. 31.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a walnut panel varying in thickness from 0.3 to 0.5 cm, the top edge being thicker. There are no chamfers on the reverse, the grain runs vertically, and the panel has a mahogany cradle, which may have been applied in 1935. The panel was probably thinned and any chamfers removed in order to level the back in preparation for the cradling. There is no varnish or finish on either the cradle or the back of the panel. The panel has a slightly wavy warp pattern following the placement of the fixed cradle bars, which are more concentrated at the right, presumably to support the two splits in the lower right quadrant. A third split in the panel runs down from the right portion of the upper edge. All the cracks have been inpainted, and there is glazing covering scattered raw wood areas. There is also some frame abrasion in the lower left. The varnish layer is yellowed and has compression cracks following the grain of the wood. The surface sheen varies from extreme gloss to patchy matte areas, some of which look physically scuffed. There may have been a partial varnish application or a partial cleaning attempt.

There is no ground layer, which allows the raw, warm-colored wood to show throughout the image. There were no underdrawing lines detected, and little, if any, changes in the paint layer. The figurative areas were executed wet-into-wet in a thick paste application, with heavy impastos visible in the flowers, vase, and table. Cracking in the purplish red paint may indicate the presence of resin in this color. The background appears to have a more vehicular consistency.

1. See Frances Fowle, "Painting like a Provençal: Cézanne, Van Gogh, and the Secret of Monticelli's 'Alchemy,'" in Fowle and Thomson 2003, p. 136.
2. Pittsburgh and others 1978–79, p. 69.
3. Given the similarity of composition and style between these works and the Clark panel, a date of c. 1875 for the Clark work is likely.
4. An eccentric character "with a fondness for absinthe, colorful dress, and strange remarks," Monticelli was labeled a "madman" because his painting style was so uncompromising. See Pittsburgh and others 1978–79, p. 64.
5. Sheon 1967, p. 444.
6. Ibid. Five of these works are now in the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. See Vergeest 2000 for more information on these works: *Woman at the Well* (s 252 V/1962), no. 731, p. 238; *Arabs and Horseman* (s 250 V/1962), no. 733, p. 239; *Flower Still Life* (s 251 V/1960), no. 740, p. 240; *Meeting in the Park* (s 249 V/1962), no. 744, p. 242; and *Woman with a Parasol* (s 253 V/1962), no. 745, p. 242.
7. Guigou and Lauzet 1890.
8. Sheon 1967, p. 445.
9. Aurier's statement was first published in his article "Les Isolés: Vincent van Gogh," *Mercure de France* (Jan. 1890), p. 29, and was referenced by Van Gogh in a letter the artist wrote to Aurier on 9 or 10 Feb. 1891. See Janson et al. 2009, vol. 5, p. 198.
10. According to Knoedler invoice. See the Clark's curatorial file.

## Albert Joseph Moore

English, 1841–1893

### 231 | Lilies 1866

Oil on canvas, 29.7 x 47.9 cm
Upper left: [artist's insignia: anthemion]
1955.818

The title, composition, and coloration of *Lilies*, exhibited at the French Gallery in 1866, all demonstrate the break with narrative tradition that made Albert Moore an early practitioner of an art for art's sake.[1] Moore's interest in formal problems over subject matter is seen in his naming this work after the flowers that stand at the far right of the canvas. Rather than developing a story around the sleeping girl, whose tissue-thin garments were dubbed "Greekish,"[2] Moore devotes his attention to the challenges of depicting the drape of her robes, the pleats and folds of upholstery, the weave of the carpet, the reflection of glass, and the glaze of porcelain.

While the symbolism of flowers had most recently been exploited by the Pre-Raphaelites, with white lilies representing purity (see, for example, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Ecce Ancilla Domini* [Tate Britain, London]),[3] the eponymous lilies of Moore's painting seem less symbolic than decorative, providing a vertical footnote to the recumbent figure. Moreover, with their dignified erectness and buds outnumbering the two fully blossomed flowers, it is the stems and leaves, rather than the white petals, that play a more active role by forming a visual ladder up the edge of the canvas.

Moore's use of the single-word title describing an object rather than the figure indicates the change in

231

his artistic direction around 1865. While earlier works, such as *Elijah's Sacrifice* (1863; Bury City Art Gallery), can be understood within the context of mid-century religious painting in Britain, *Pomegranates* (1865–66; Guildhall Art Gallery, London), *Apricots* (1866; Fulham Public Library, London Borough of Hammersmith), and *Lilies* herald the beginning of Moore's lifelong prioritization of form over subject.

Exhibited just a year after the Royal Academy success of *The Marble Seat*—Moore's first public statement of his rejection of narrative content—*Lilies* was described as a "sweet little picture" by the *Times* reviewer.[4] Although the reviewer criticized the inclusion of the vase of lilies, his praise of the "exquisite" color harmonies became a standard theme for Moore's admirers. In *Lilies*, Moore experimented with a limited but complementary palette of blues and salmon pinks. The light blue covering of the sofa stands out against the narrow, horizontal strip of periwinkle wall. Contrasting with these blues are the whites of the girl's draperies, whose transparency tints them pink from her barely covered flesh. This combination of blue and white is continued in a starker form with the darker blue and purer white of the rug and the Chinese vase in the foreground. Through his spatial compression and horizontal emphasis, Moore presses his composition close to the picture plane.

In a perceptive early consideration of Moore, Sidney Colvin fully understood the implications of the artist's resistance to traditional symbolism. Describing *Lilies* as part of a group of works exhibited in the preceding four or five years, he noted: "No great care had been taken with the symbols by which each was identified, still less with their expressions of feature: but immense care had been taken with the pose of their limbs and the adjustment and colour of their draperies."[5] Colvin rightly sees Moore's divergence from painting trends as encapsulated in the artist's redefinition of the subject: "The subject, whatever subject is chosen, is merely a mechanism for getting beautiful people into beautiful situations; whereas in modern art the aspect of the people and their situations, whether beautiful or otherwise, has been generally merely an instrument for expounding the subject."[6]

Although Colvin writes that Moore is an "incomplete" painter as his works lack "depth, force, relief, lustre, preciousness, splendour, mystery, truth, glory," his praise of Moore's "harmony and delicacy" allows him to conclude that he is "a consummate designer and born artist."[7] It was no doubt these qualities that appealed to Edward William Godwin in his otherwise negative assessment of the London exhibitions of 1866. Calling *Lilies* "the nearest approach to the spirit of the true wall-painter," Godwin goes on to exhort Moore to lead a "school of monumental art."[8]

The small scale of the Clark's painting would seem to undermine the architect-designer's appeal for monumentality, yet Moore's attention to the formal effects of patterning, color, and composition links him to the Aesthetic Movement that Godwin championed. Moreover, as one of Moore's earliest treatments of his favored trope—that of the reclining female figure

on a sofa—*Lilies* and its successors form a series that together demonstrate more clearly the aesthetic concerns of the artist.

These repetitions of compositions in different color combinations most clearly reveal Moore's attention to the formal effects of his palette. Moore produced variations on a theme for a number of years after 1866—see, for example, the standing figures of *Sea-Gulls* (1870–71; Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead) and *Shells* (1874; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool). His focus on form over content, as well as his continued interest in the challenges of the recumbent female form, can be seen especially clearly in four works all dated to 1875 that develop the idea first explored in *Lilies*: the single-figured *A Palm Fan* (private collection) and, particularly, three versions of a single composition showing two sleeping women, differentiated only by varying color schemes, titled *Apples* (private collection), *Beads* (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh), and *A Sofa* (private collection).[9]

Moore's use of Grecian robes inevitably led to comparison of his work to the Néo-Grec painters such as Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. While Alma-Tadema was praised for his archaeological accuracy, Moore was often accused of anachronism. In an 1885 review, Cosmo Monkhouse summarizes the difference between these two artists and defends the latter, noting that such anachronism is acceptable because Moore "seeks only after beauty"; he "employs the robes and draperies of Athens only because they are to his eyes far more beautiful than any costume which has been invented since."[10]

In his obituary of Moore, Frederick Wedmore acknowledged the importance of such critics to the appreciation of an artist who was never elected to the Royal Academy.[11] Echoing Colvin and Monkhouse, Wedmore concluded that such writers "saw that with this refined and fastidious master, decoration was never *banale*: they felt, too, that behind his experiments in *technique*, behind the problems he set himself, there was ever, urging him forward, the true sentiment of beauty."[12] EP

**PROVENANCE** [French Gallery, London, in 1866]; Alexander Shannan Stevenson, Tynemouth (by 1873); William Hesketh Lever, 1st Viscount Leverhulme, Thornton Manor, Wirral, Merseyside (d. 1925, his sale, Anderson Galleries, New York, 18 Feb. 1926, no. 182, sold to Scott & Fowles); [Scott & Fowles, New York, 1926–28, sold to Clark, 1 Feb. 1928]; Robert Sterling Clark (1928–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** London 1866, no. 162; Williamstown 1976a, no cat.; Milwaukee 1988, p. 127, no. 46, ill., as *Reclining Model (Lilies)*; Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1989–90, p. 93, no. 75, ill.; Williamstown 1991–92, no cat.; Birmingham–Williamstown 2000–2001, not in cat. (exhibited in Williamstown only).

**REFERENCES** Godwin 1866, p. 757; *Times* 1866, p. 10; Colvin 1870, p. 5; Stephens 1873, p. 407; Monkhouse 1885, p. 195; Hedberg 1978, pp. 148–49, under no. 76; York–London 1980, p. 26; Van Hook 1990, p. 46, fig. 1; Morris 1994, p. 129; Asleson 2000, pp. 63, 89, 91–92, 129, 215n66, pl. 84; Staley 2011, p. 135–36, ill.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a coarse canvas (weave count inaccessible, possibly 9 threads/cm), lined to a coarse twentieth-century, bleached double-weave fabric. The stretcher may be original. Age cracks are scattered throughout, with some raised cracks in the proper right arm of the figure. There is a small filled loss with no inpainting in the lower left. Several areas, associated with particular colors of paint, have been apparently altered by heat. These include an extensive area of beige paint in the fabric to the right of the sitter's head and in the pillow behind the lilies, as well as the blue paint in the carpet in the lower left. This presumably occurred during the lining, when hot irons were used to dry and set the adhesive. The picture was cleaned in 1978, and there are retouches along the top, right, and bottom edges, as well as a few small spots in the face, arm, and plant leaves. In ultraviolet light, there appear to be remnants of a scumbled color on the figure's torso and thighs. Although the picture appears unvarnished in reflected light, it has a very light spray application of Acryloid B-72.

The off-white ground is probably commercially applied and is quite thick; the coarse fabric is visible in only a few areas of the image. Several pinholes at the edges suggest that the picture was painted while pinned flat to a board, and later stretched. There may be underdrawing in the face and figure, though it is hard to detect through the thick paint, except for a slight adjustment in the position of the figure's proper left hand. Other changes are visible on the surface, including alterations in the size and location of the glass container holding the zinnias, and small changes in the drapery of the orange costume. There was also a vertical band of orange paint on the left, seen through the fabric throw and extending down the sofa. There may be a thin warm brown sketch below the final paint. The entire palette of the painting is mixed with white, resulting in an unusually pale, washed-out tonality. The paint was applied quite thickly, wet-into-wet, in a slightly vehicular paste consistency.

1. For the most perceptive recent analysis of Moore's aesthetic and technical interests, see Asleson 2000.
2. Stephens 1873, p. 407.
3. The subject of flowers in Pre-Raphaelite paintings has most recently been surveyed in Mancoff 2003.

232

## Adrien Moreau

French, 1843–1906

**232** | **Contemplation** 1873

Oil on canvas, 65.1 x 38 cm
Lower right: ADRIEN·MOREAU. / 73
1955.1031

On a country path beside a pond stands a young woman dressed in the latest fashions, wearing a highly elaborate dress with clear echoes of the costume of the 1760s and 1770s, a nostalgic style popular a century later.[1] With her left hand on a fence, she pauses for a moment and looks down toward the water, while with her right hand, she raises the hem of her flounced dress to reveal a glimpse of her petticoat. Beyond the setting and her expression, the picture contains no obvious clue to a potential narrative. It is not known whether the title that the picture now bears, *Contemplation*, is its original one; if so, the hint is that the woman has paused for thought and reverie, and the viewer is invited to imagine where her thoughts might be straying. It is possible, however, that this is the canvas exhibited at the Salon in 1874 with the title *Waiting*, although no reviews have come to light of this painting, so its identity cannot be determined; with a title such as this, a potential romantic narrative would become more explicit.

The contrast between the figure, in her elaborate artificial costume, and her natural surroundings is striking; she has strayed far from her everyday habitat. The ducks on the pond seem to look up with interest at this apparition, as she looks down into their space, while at lower left a patch of brambles suggests a more uncomfortable encounter. A comparable contrast between the natural world and a fashionably dressed figure is set up in Heilbuth's *Woman with Flowers* (cat. 170), painted at about the same time; in Moreau's painting, though, there is no sign of human habitation in the background. The figure is surrounded by the lavishness of natural growth—a far cry from the artificial elaboration of her clothing and appearance.

This contrast is accentuated by the handling of paint. The plants and trees are notated in crisp, deft strokes that emphasize their tangled forms and contrasting textures without recourse to illusionistic detail, whereas the figure is treated with considerable delicacy, her clothing modeled in non-assertive

4. *Times* 1866, p. 10.
5. Colvin 1870, p. 4.
6. Ibid., p. 5
7. Ibid., p. 6.
8. Godwin 1866, p. 757.
9. For reproductions of *A Palm Fan*, *Apples*, *Beads*, and *A Sofa*, see Asleson 2000, pp. 128, 130–32.
10. Monkhouse 1885, p. 195. Ten years prior to Monkhouse, John Ruskin had compared Moore's technique with that of the smooth surfaces of Alma-Tadema. See Ruskin 1903–12, vol. 14, pp. 272–73.
11. Moore's first biographer and cataloguer, Alfred Lys Baldry, cites "purely personal" reasons for the artist's exclusion from official acceptance." See Baldry 1893, p. 23.
12. Wedmore 1893, p. 436.