



**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,
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Details:

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

OPPOSITE COPYRIGHT PAGE: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Jane Avril* (cat. 331)

PRECEDING PAGE 474: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Onions* (cat. 280)

PAGES 890–91: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Women of Amphisa* (cat. 3)

- the vicinity, see Los Angeles–Chicago–Paris 1984–85, pp. 79–80.
7. Brettell 1990, p. 150.
 8. Los Angeles–Chicago–Paris 1984–85, p. 79. The cause of Pissarro's first departure from Pontoise, in 1871, was the advance of the Prussian army toward Paris.
 9. PDR 158.
 10. The continuity between these two periods is also apparent in a vividly textured, diagonally receding street scene of c. 1866–68 from Pontoise, *Rue de l'Hermitage* (private collection; PDR 110), which has much in common with the present work.
 11. Neither the behavior of the pedestrians nor Pissarro's brush marks indicate whether he intended to paint falling rain or its immediate aftermath. The artist's own title for the picture is not known.
 12. For a summary of this period and the possibility that Pissarro was more directly involved in the activity at Bougival than has generally been understood, see London–Paris–Boston 1980–81, pp. 19–20.
 13. PV 1514. The origin of marks in an earlier composition beneath the final paint layer (see note 14) or in an initial session that was interrupted by the rain he was recording should also be considered.
 14. X-radiography reveals an earlier version of the present scene, or perhaps an entirely different landscape. Pissarro's limited finances at this period often prompted him to reuse abandoned or unsold canvases; see also cat. 246.
 15. W 147. For a detailed analysis of this work and its links with Pissarro, see Los Angeles–Chicago–Paris 1984–85, p. 90. Richard Brettell asserts that Monet was staying with Pissarro when the picture was painted and that the snow in Monet's picture may have fallen in the severe winter of 1869. For Pissarro's own painting of the route de Versailles under snow in 1869, see fig. 246.1.
 16. RSC Diary, 14, 18, and 19 Dec. 1940.
 17. Sterling Clark, when he was considering the purchase of this painting, referred to it as the "Carstairs Pissarro which Bignou offered him [Carstairs]," indicating that Bignou owned it at the time. See RSC Diary, 18 Dec. 1940. Since Étienne Bignou was one of the organizers of the Paris 1930b exhibition, it is likely that the painting was in his possession by that date. Also note that Ludovic-Rodolphe Pissarro and Lionello Venturi, in their 1939 publication (vol. 1, p. 89), incorrectly stated that the painting was once owned by the Corporation Art Gallery, Glasgow. A letter of May 1966 to the Clark from the Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries confirms that they never owned or borrowed this work. See the Clark's curatorial file.

246 | Route de Versailles, Louveciennes 1870

Oil on canvas, 33 x 41.3 cm
 Lower right: C. Pissarro. 1870
 1955.828

Unusually for Sterling Clark, this picture was bought a year after he acquired another work by the same artist with an identical date and a closely related subject: Pissarro's *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes, Rain Effect* (cat. 245). Clark's diaries shed no light on his choice, but he may have noted that the two canvases make an informal pair, their compositions and palettes almost mirroring each other. Both of them are constructed around the diagonal line of a highway, which in *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes, Rain Effect* slants boldly up from the lower right, and in *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes*—like a virtual reflection—rises at the same angle from lower left. In their color and atmosphere, the former could be said to evoke the landscape at its grayest, while the latter is a celebration of sunshine, pale blue sky, and limpid shade. Even at the minuscule level, Pissarro chose to introduce into each scene a distant wagon or carriage, pulled by a single horse in *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes, Rain Effect* and by two in the present picture.¹ As paired images, such works provide an important insight into Pissarro's highly nuanced creativity at a formative moment of Impressionism, when technique and the role of the motif itself were in radical transition.

Both pictures can be tellingly compared with a slightly earlier depiction of this location, *The Corner of the Route de Versailles and the Chemin de l'Aqueduc, Louveciennes* (fig. 246.1).² Executed in late 1869, the Walters canvas was painted from effectively the same vantage point as the Clark *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes* of 1870, establishing the avenue of trees, assorted houses, and advancing horse and wagon that were to reappear in subsequent variants.³ On this first occasion, however, the town was blanketed in snow, which Pissarro rendered in brilliant grays and silvers against a lilac and peach-tinted sky. The contrast with the greens, golds, and deep red-browns of the Williamstown version is almost startling, as if Pissarro was contemplating a suite of "Four Seasons" like the series he created on a larger scale in 1872.⁴ Apart from such shifts in weather and tonality, these subtle restatements of a single panorama in the crucial



246

period 1869–70 allow us to analyze his handling of an inhabited landscape with unusual precision. When he returned to the site to begin *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes*, Pissarro stepped back a few paces to allow more of the marginal elements of the scene to be prominent in his new painting, reducing the scale of the figures and flanking houses accordingly.⁵ While such refinements are to be expected, we are less prepared for his modifications to the architecture itself. Now the large dwelling at front left, for example, is relatively narrower and taller, standing higher than the corresponding structure across the street, the reverse of the relationship in the Walters scene. Further examination reveals altered rooflines and chimney types, and other discrepancies that cannot be accounted for by the passing seasons or slight changes in viewing angle.⁶ Working on the spot or from memory, or perhaps both, Pissarro took liberties with a subject he knew well, and may have fearlessly and self-consciously rearranged the evidence of his senses. In this respect, at least, the artist appears to have placed the internal dynamics of his picture above the demands of description.⁷



Fig. 246.1. Camille Pissarro, *The Corner of the Route de Versailles and the Chemin de l'Aqueduc, Louveciennes*, 1869. Oil on canvas, 38.4 x 46.3. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

Pissarro's use of a single section of road as the basis for knowingly varied configurations of form, texture, and atmosphere was to be echoed in much early Impressionist art. Variations on the oblique thoroughfare in *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes*, which presupposes a viewer looking into deep space just as it asserts the picture's flat geometry, would similarly be revisited and put to a number of contrasted uses. In *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes, Rain Effect* it is the starkness of the format that strikes us, while in the smaller Clark canvas, its impact is softened by a pattern of shadows and the distractions of the spring landscape. If Pissarro's range of hues and values is still rooted in the previous decade, a subtle mastery is evident in much of the picture's detail.⁸ Signaling his artfulness, Pissarro placed two tall, improbably symmetrical trees at either side of the composition, invoking classical stability and generating calm. Despite this apparent license, we are persuaded by the vividness and particularity of the suburban avenue and by the physical traces of the painter's presence. Modulated surfaces, from the worn road and well-trodden roadsides in the foreground to the hazy branches and soft clouds at the horizon, argue for palpable and sympathetic contact with the place itself, while his supple brushwork translates this intimacy into paint. Though traces of another composition beneath *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes* remind us of Pissarro's need to recycle rejected or unfinished canvases, numerous touches in the still-wet color hint at the immediacy and responsiveness that would soon become his hallmarks.⁹ RK

PROVENANCE Lucien Pissarro, the artist's son, London (1904–until at least 1938, probably sold to Rosenberg, c. 1940–41);¹⁰ [Paul Rosenberg, New York, c. 1940–41, sold to Salz, 14 July 1941]; [Sam Salz, New York, sold to Durand-Ruel, 15 July 1941]; [Durand-Ruel, New York, sold to Clark, 26 Feb. 1942, as *Route de Versailles*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1942–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS London 1911, no. 22; London and others 1931–32, no. 38 (Birmingham ed., no. 32; Nottingham ed., no. 3; Stockport ed., no. 3; Sheffield ed., no. 2; Bootle ed., no. 2; Leeds ed., no. 23; Northampton ed., no. 27; Blackpool ed., no. 27; Rochdale ed., no. 27); Amsterdam 1938, no. 187, lent by Lucien Pissarro; Williamstown 1956a, pl. S-4, ill.; Williamstown 1981a, no cat.; Huntington–Baltimore–Memphis 1990, pp. 32, 62, no. 57, ill.; Paris–New York 1994–95, pp. 251, 253, 263, 448, no. 163, fig. 318 (French ed., pp. 251, 253, 260, 446, no. 163, fig. 318); Lyon 2005, pp. 115, 322, no. 26, ill.; Baltimore–Milwaukee–Memphis 2007–8, pp. 50, 100, 102–3, no. 14, ill.

REFERENCES *Stockport Express* 1932; Pissarro and Venturi 1939, vol. 1, p. 89, no. 77, vol. 2, pl. 14, no. 77; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 99, ill.; London–Paris–Boston 1980–81, p. 81; Shikes and Harper 1980, pp. 82–83, ill.; Lloyd 1981, p. 42, ill.; Marly-le-Roi 1984, p. 84; Eitner 1988, vol. 1, p. 404 (rev. ed., p. 416); O'Brian 1988, pp. 98, 100, ill.; Laÿ and Laÿ 1989, p. 51, fig. 48; Pissarro 1993, p. 61, fig. 54; Solana 1997, pp. 64–65, 74, ill.; Washington–San Francisco–Brooklyn 1998–99, p. 136, ill.; Pissarro and Durand-Ruel Snollaerts 2005, vol. 2, pp. 136–37, no. 151, ill.; Williamstown–New York 2006–7, p. 98; Simms 2008, pp. 46–47, fig. 33; Grenoble 2010, p. 17, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The original support is linen of medium weight (13 x 16 threads/cm). The right and left edges show cusping of the fabric, which may indicate that the colorman stretched the canvas before priming it. In 1980, a failed glue-paste lining was removed and replaced with a wax-resin lining and an ICA spring-design stretcher. The tacking margins had been removed during the first lining. During treatment a partially legible canvas stamp for the supplier Deforge-Carpentier was recorded. The painting, which had been cleaned once before, was again cleaned and revarnished with Acryloid B-72. There are still small residues of the earlier natural resin varnish in the deepest paint interstices. Inpainting was applied in several cracks in the sky and along the right edge to complete the rectangular shape.

The only area where the off-white ground is visible is on the right edge. The paint consistency is somewhat dry, allowing upper layers to skip across the tops of threads and underlying strokes. The paint is fairly heavy, sometimes comprised of several layers of equally thick brushwork. The most fluid details occur in the distant horses, figures, and some vertical strokes in the building façades. While there is no detectable underdrawing, there is evidence of layout changes and reworking of color passages. There are touches of green paint along the lower edge and partially visible colors under other details in the lower half of the painting. The X-radiograph shows a horizontal band 7.6 cm wide along the lower edge, below the darker brown house to the left of center. There are also two tree groups, one close to the house, and a larger group in the right third of this lower image. The final trees and buildings did not record on the X-radiograph. Several pentimenti in the center are visible in infrared light, where larger figures, which may have belonged to a different composition, were painted out by the artist. These figures are also visible in normal light as anomalous vertical brushwork below the final paint layer. The sky appears not to have additional paint layers below the surface. The painting was signed and dated in dark gray while the image paint was still tacky.

1. A further distinction is that the vehicle in the present work is apparently a cart loaded with hay and accompanied by a farm worker, where in *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes, Rain Effect* the smaller, black-topped

carriage would presumably have held a single driver. So small are these details within their respective pictures, however, that their significance barely registers in the larger scene.

2. PDR 138.
3. For the Walters canvas, see *Paris–New York 1994–95*, p. 447, where evidence for its 1869 date is recorded.
4. PDR 238–41.
5. For the same reason, Pissarro has limited the depth of the foreground in the Clark painting. Close comparison also shows that his vantage point was moved laterally by a step or two, slightly tilting the perceived line of the right-hand margin of the road.
6. Variations in the shape and height of trees are hard to justify in terms of elapsing time, though such matters have traditionally been more subject to artistic whim; the significance of Pissarro’s willingness to modify trees and branches at this period is discussed in Brettell 1990, pp. 5–7.
7. Additional light is shed on Pissarro’s approach to this motif by the *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes* in the Musée d’Orsay, Paris (PDR 224), dated 1872, where this same vista is shown with significantly fewer trees. In Shikes and Harper 1980, pp. 83–84, it is speculatively argued that this change was made to “enhance the effect of a cool evening light on the facades of the houses,” but another explanation is possible. Between the painting of the Clark and Musée d’Orsay versions, Louveciennes had been occupied by the Prussian army in the fierce winter of 1870–71, when wood was much in demand for fires and defenses. Richard Thomson, in *Birmingham–Glasgow 1990*, pp. 21–23, discusses some of the losses to the town during the war and it might be suggested that the disappearing trees in the Orsay’s *Route de Versailles, Louveciennes* should be added to them.
8. While the shadows on houses, walls, and road are strikingly light and clear, they are still painted in descriptive local color, rather than in the purer, fragmented hues of mature Impressionism.
9. The lower part of the picture was once more green and X-rays have suggested that a plain, squat building was formerly situated left of center. It is possible that the lost painting was a variant of Pissarro’s early factory motif, such as PDR 130.
10. In the Paul Rosenberg Archives, there is an undated letter from Lucien Pissarro to Paul Rosenberg, sent to 15 East 58th Street, New York (the Hotel Madison), an address Rosenberg used only from 1940–41. In it, Pissarro describes arrangements for shipping three paintings to Rosenberg from London, one of which is titled “La Route de Versailles à Louveciennes.” Although no further documentation identifying this work was found, it may correspond to the Clark painting. See *The Paul Rosenberg Archives*, a gift of Elaine and Alexandre Rosenberg, II.A.23. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

247 | The River Oise near Pontoise 1873

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55.7 cm
 Lower right: C. Pissarro. 1873
 1955-554

Vividly evoking the sensations of a summer landscape, this small canvas has nevertheless been cited most frequently for its one anomalous feature: the cluster of buildings and chimneys in the middle distance. We know from Richard Brettell that these structures were loosely based on the factory complex of Chalon et Brenot, situated on the eastern bank of the River Oise outside the town of Pontoise.¹ The Clark picture has thus been included among the earliest depictions in Western art of such “symbols of industrialization,” which were previously considered “unworthy of an artist’s attention,” in John Rewald’s phrase,² Pissarro completed three other compositions at this site in the same year, each of them engaged with the visual equilibrium of the flat local terrain and the natural and man-made forms rising out of it.³ Closely similar in size, these works vary considerably in tonality and emphasis, at one extreme showing a somber, close-up view of the factory itself (fig. 247.1),⁴ at the other, the



Fig. 247.1 Camille Pissarro, *Factory near Pontoise*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 65 cm. The James Philip Gray Collection, Michele and Donald D’Amour Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts