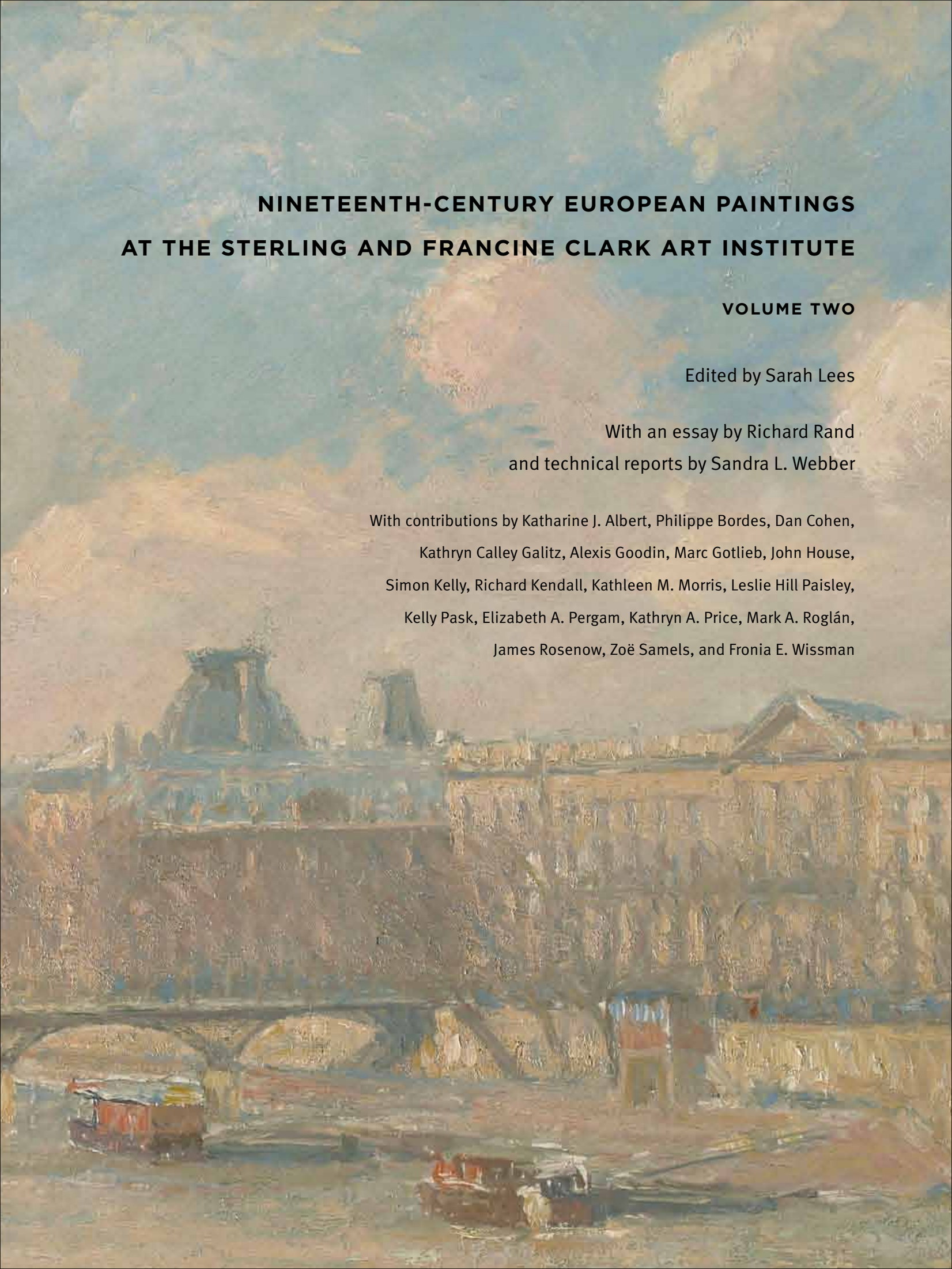

NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE

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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unfinished right edge. There may also be a thin gray wash between the ground and paint. Pinholes in some corners, together with paint extending onto parts of the tacking margins, suggest the image was painted off the stretcher. No underdrawing was found. The vehicular paste-consistency brushwork is very pronounced, and was applied wet-into-wet in a direct manner with very little blending. Old losses and oozing color in the bright red flowers point to paint applied over lower strokes that were still wet. The wall color was added around the flowers at the top. The signature stamp in thick brownish black ink was applied after the ground had cracked and suffered surface abrasion.

1. Berthe Morisot to Edma Pontillon, 11 May 1869; translation from Rouart 1987, p. 38.
2. RW vol. 1, 89.
3. Clairet et al. 1997, nos. 65 and 44 bis. In a letter of 1867, Morisot also mentions a "Pot de Fleurs" she had painted; see Rouart 1987, p. 26.
4. Not dated by Morisot herself, the canvas was designated "1876" in the catalogue of the 1896 memorial exhibition; see Paris 1896, no.163. At this period, Morisot was living and painting in the rue Guichard, where *Dahlias* was presumably executed.
5. W 492.
6. Valéry 1960, p. 119.
7. This is particularly evident at the right of the canvas, where this background wash was not subsequently painted over and barely reaches the edge.
8. The second version, *La Cheminée*, was painted in 1885; see Clairet et al. 1997, no.190.
9. See Paris 1896.
10. Information on this exhibition from Durand-Ruel Archives. See correspondence of 24 April 2001, in the Clark's curatorial file.

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Oil on canvas, 92.1 x 73.3 cm
Lower right: Berthe Morisot / Berthe Morisot
1955.926

Berthe Morisot was among the most loyal members of the Impressionist circle, participating in seven of their eight group exhibitions.[1] It was at the final exhibition in 1886 that *The Bath* first appeared in public, the most ambitious picture in Morisot's display and one of the largest of her career.[2] As on previous occasions, her submissions showed marked technical versatility, here in the use of oil paint, pastel, watercolor, drawing, and in the decoration of fans. Less varied was Morisot's characteristic subject matter, divided between two broad themes: landscape, and studies of women and children. One of the few female contributors to these events, Morisot was often patronized by critics who felt they should exercise "gallantry"[3] toward works with "the floating charm of sketches,"[4] which she did not "trouble to finish."[5] Several commentators, however, acknowledged her feeling for color and light, admiring a "gaiety and nonchalance" in her art that reminded them of a Rococo painter such as Fragonard.[6]

At the 1886 show *The Bath* attracted widespread and mainly favorable comment. The critic Jean Ajalbert approved of Morisot's "piercing quickness of eye," claiming that "she paints precisely, just as she sees and without flourishes . . . her brushstroke follows her glance."[7] If another writer felt that the figure in *The Bath* "did not come out well,"[8] a third announced that it was "veritably magnificent" with "perfect color and marvelous drawing."[9] Comparing Morisot's image with academic paintings by Bouguereau and Cabanel, Émile Hennequin argued that *The Bath* showed "the primordial character of Impressionism," with its distinctive emphasis on "truth" and "extreme research."[10] The subject of the picture proved more challenging, not least for male observers faced with a woman's art. Uncertain whether to see the bather as an adult or a child, Maurice Hermel found that such "diaphanous creatures" were "deliciously troubling,"[11] while Octave Maus exclaimed, "What seduction in the young girl at her bath, whose humid flesh shines out against a background of pink."[12]

The circumstances in which *The Bath* was made and the qualities of the canvas itself allow further insights into its place in the forty-five-year-old Morisot's oeuvre. Married to Eugène Manet, brother of the more famous Édouard, Morisot was broadly restricted in her choice of appropriate themes by gender and social convention. Her paintings of sisters and friends in their bourgeois homes and at leisure could thus be seen by an intimate of the family such as Paul Valéry to "keep closely in step with her development as a girl, wife, and mother."[13] Morisot excelled in observing nuances of body language, the pleasures and constraints of fashion, and the subtle rapport between parents and their children. A favorite motif, presumably recalling her own experience, was the young woman dressed for a public excursion, often in an elaborate gown or outdoor costume. Here the

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informality of Morisot's brush paid dividends, suggesting both the excitement of a glamorous occasion and the tremulousness of youth. A smaller but even more original body of work explored the private settings of bedroom and bathroom, where lightly clad adolescents appear to be comfortable with themselves and their surroundings. In paintings from the 1870s onward, we see girls who inspect their face or figure in a mirror, conduct their toilette, or wash a foot in a bowl. Morisot was progressively emboldened to show their bodies, advancing from a bare neck and arms to a nude back and ultimately to a wholly naked figure.[14] With the passing years, such scenes inevitably took on a new poignancy as Morisot's own daughter, Julie, grew beyond childhood.

The Bath is one of the culminations of this development, a boldly conceived statement about a teenager's self-realization on the threshold of womanhood. In an age when uncovered flesh was subject to countless taboos, this matter-of-fact depiction of *deshabille* was both startling and defiant, making few concessions to prudishness. Avoiding the flirtatious implications of eye contact, the model is absorbed by the mundane act of tying her hair and seems untroubled by the presence of the artist. Nuances of this kind were almost certainly arrived at after Morisot's careful consideration of a genre that was highly visible in her immediate milieu. There was frequent contact at this time with colleagues such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Edgar Degas, both of whom hired professional models as they created their own characteristic images of the modern female form. On 11 January 1886, a letter records that Morisot visited Renoir in his studio and praised some recent drawings of "women going into the water," noting his remark that nudes were "one of the essential forms of art."[15] Degas, who had long been engaged in making pictures of women bathing and attending to their hair, was currently completing a suite of pastels for the same exhibition that would feature Morisot's *The Bath*. Most of Degas's pictures showed naked but fully mature figures from behind, assumed by several critics to be prostitutes.[16]

In extreme contrast, we know that Morisot's subject was a personal friend, Isabelle Lambert, a "little seventeen-year-old" who posed for the canvas in the bathroom of the artist's home, as well as for other paintings, drawings, and pastels at this period.[17] Far from the buxom goddesses preferred by Renoir, in such works as *Bather Arranging Her Hair* (cat. 287), and equally distant from the rustic backgrounds they improbably graced, this figure occupies an emphatically domestic space. At right, the glimpse of a fixed bathtub with a gilt faucet tells us that the home has superior amenities, but no other details encourage narrative or anecdote.[18] Seen frontally, the sitter is neither idealized nor burdened with a role in some social drama, beyond that of implicitly sharing the artist's leisured world. With the characteristic respect shown to all her models, Morisot presents Isabelle in her own right.

Morisot's evident ease in this encounter, combined with the pleasures of revisiting her own youth and imagining that of Julie, all found expression in the making of *The Bath*. Using a pale palette, a flat background, and a central emphasis to the composition, she created a mood of frank simplicity with just a hint of Rococo escapism. Her handling of the paint, too, suggests naturalness, as if the scene were improvised in summer morning light when Morisot allowed the brush to "follow her glance." In reality, the artist's practice was rarely so straightforward and her approach to realism so unconsidered. A surviving charcoal and pastel study on paper shows that she first fixed the positions of head and arms by means of drawing, which was then transferred to the canvas as dark lines.[19] This was followed by successive applications of paint, including broad sweeps and flourishes of sky blue, silver white, and, above all, a pervasive range of pinks, from light salmon to meaty red. In a work on such a scale intended for exhibition, this departure from all notions of conventional finish is remarkable, even with Morisot's reputation for a "loose"[20] and "sketch"-like technique.[21] Certain areas, for example, still show glimpses of the raw, unprimed linen on which the picture was executed, while others are encrusted with layers of color added wet over dry.

More surprising are indications that Morisot returned to this surface when at least some of the paint had hardened, using a sharp implement to scratch around the model's shoulders and face, and thus define them more precisely. This unorthodox reworking is perhaps acknowledged in the double signature, though it is uncertain when the latter was added.[22] Combining the virtues of exuberance with those of Morisot's mature mastery, *The Bath* nevertheless failed to attract a buyer and remained with the artist until her premature death less than a decade later. It then passed into the collection of Claude Monet, who presumably remembered the picture from the year it was painted: his letters show that he was

another friend and supporter who visited Morisot's home in 1886.[23] Inherited by his son, Michel Monet, *The Bath* was bought in 1949 by Robert Sterling Clark, who had long been an admirer of Morisot's work. From the 1920s, Clark's diaries record approval of her pastels, watercolors, and drawings, and in 1926 he purchased a "Child's Portrait" then thought to be by Morisot, though the attribution has since been rejected (see cat. 372).[24] In January 1939, Clark noted "a small Berthe Morisot of a woman standing against the light, the best of that painter I have ever seen!," but it would be more than a decade before he finally added the even grander figure painting, *The Bath*, to his collection.[25] RK

PROVENANCE The artist (d. 1895); Claude Monet, Paris (by 1896–d. 1926); Michel Monet, Paris, his son, by descent (1926–at least 1941); [Knoedler, New York, sold to Clark, 30 Nov. 1949, as *Au Bain*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1949–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Paris 1886a, no. 94 bis, as *Au bain*; Paris 1896, no. 40, as *Le Bain*, lent by Monet; Paris 1907, no. 145, as *Le Bain*, lent by Monet; Paris 1929, no. 39, as *Le Bain*, lent by Monet; Paris 1941, no. 74, as *Le Bain*, lent by Monet; Williamstown 1959b, ill.; New York 1967, no. 26, as *Girl Arranging Her Hair*; Williamstown 1981a, no cat.; Washington–Forth Worth–South Hadley 1987–88, pp. 116, 120, 196, 215, 220, pl. 63; Bilbao 2001–2, pp. 76–77, 217, no. 12, ill.; Lille–Martigny 2002, pp. 318–21, no. 97, ill.; Montgomery and others 2005–7, no cat.; Williamstown–New York 2006–7, pp. 104, 106–7, fig. 94; Frankfurt–San Francisco 2008, pp. 59, 306, ill., as *The Toilette*.

REFERENCES Fouquier 1886a, p. 2; *Moniteur des Arts* 1886, p. 174, as *Une femme au bain*; Auriol 1886, p. 708, as *Femme qui se peigne*; Hermel 1886; Fénéon 1886a; Hennequin 1886; Ajalbert 1886; Maus 1886; Fourreau 1925, p. 53, fig. 20, as *Au bain*;[26] Angoulvent 1933, p. 128, no. 222, as *Le Bain*; Bataille and Wildenstein 1961, p. 35, no. 190, fig. 208, as *Le Bain*; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 93, as *Girl Arranging Her Hair*; Washington–San Francisco 1986, p. 445; Edelstein 1990, pp. 34, 55, 112, pl. 19; London 1990–91a, p. 36, as *Le Bain*; Kern et al. 1996, pp. 94–95, ill.; Shennan 1996, pp. 33, 229, 250–51; White 1996, pp. 234–35, ill.; Berson 1996, vol. 1, pp. 431, 434, 443, 448, 453, 457, 463, 467; vol. 2, p. 246, 266, no. VIII-94 bis, ill.; Clairet et al.1997, p. 209, no. 194, ill., as *Le bain*; *Antiques* 1997, pp. 523–24, pl. IV; Copenhagen 2006–7, pp. 260–61, fig. 220; Madrid 2010–11, p. 34, fig. 17.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a fine-weave unprimed canvas (28 threads/cm) that was treated in 1980 to hold down severely cupped paint. The paint layer was consolidated from the front and back with Acryloid B-72 resin prior to being lined to a stiff Dacron polyester mesh (25 filaments/cm) with PVA "hot-melt." The stretcher was replaced with an ICA spring-design stretcher. Horizontal cracks, spaced at regular intervals in the center section, may have been imparted from rolling the canvas. Areas of old paint and ground loss in the thin pink application near the top of the picture, and shattered blue paint in the lower right skirt, could also be the result of flexing the canvas during rolling. There are scattered age cracks in the thicker paint, with odd traction splits in some heavier strokes. Small pits follow the weave interstices in more flatly painted passages. At the time of lining, locally applied areas of varnish were removed, and it is believed that no continuous coating had ever been applied. The only areas revarnished were the thicker paint strokes, and there are no retouches or old varnish residues visible under ultraviolet light. The now stabilized cracks are still visibly cupped in reflected light.

There is no ground layer, and the now warm-toned aged raw canvas can be seen throughout the background. The charcoal underdrawing is applied in broad black outlines, visible to the unaided eye in the skirt. Underdrawing lines on the face are visible only in infrared reflectography, as are strong lines for the hairbrush bristles, among other things. There may be a thin brown interlayer sketch, now buried under the thick paint in most places. Most of the image is executed in very thick, broad, and open strokes. The artist may have used a palette knife to smooth or scrape the lower colors. There are two signatures, a larger one in red and a smaller one in a shade of green that appears black.

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1. Morisot's work appeared in all but the fourth exhibition of 1879, the year she gave birth to her daughter, Julie.
2. In the 1886 catalogue, the picture was listed as no. 94 bis, perhaps indicating that it was added to Morisot's list of submissions at the last moment. Its title was given as *Au bain*. See Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 423.
3. *Événement* 1877, p. 2; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 145: "galanterie."
4. Hermel 1886; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 456: "charme flottant de l'ébauche."
5. Charry 1880, p. 3; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 273: "ne se donne-t-elle pas la peine de finir."
6. Ephrussi 1880; reprinted in Berson, p. 278: "la gaieté, l'insouciance." In 1880, Philippe Burty invoked Fragonard in his review of Morisot's work shown in the fifth Impressionist exhibition. See Burty 1880, p. 2; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 269. A later claim that Morisot was distantly related to Fragonard has since been refuted: see Washington–Fort Worth–South Hadley 1987–88, pp. 81, 183n192.
7. Ajalbert 1886; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 431: "saisissante promptitude de l'oeil, et elle peint juste, comme elle voit et sans fioriture; son coup de pinceau suit son coup-d'oeil."

8. Fouquier 1886a, p. 2; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 448: "ne sorte pas très bien."
9. Auriol 1886, p. 708; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 434: "véritablement magnifique . . . Coloration parfaite et dessin merveilleux."
10. Hennequin 1886; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol.1, p. 453: "le caractère primordial de l'impressionnisme"; "vérité"; "recherche extrême."
11. Hermel 1886; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 457: "créatures diaphanes . . . sont délicieusement troublantes."
12. Maus 1886; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 463; "Quelle séduction dans la jeune fille au bain, dont les chairs humides resplendissent sur un fond rose!"
13. Valéry 1960, p. 119. Valéry married Jeannie Gobillard, Morisot's niece, in 1900.
14. See, for example, Clairet et al. 1997, nos. 98, 172, 195–96, 269, 317.
15. See Rouart 1987, p. 145.
16. See Berson 1996, vol. 2, pp. 258–59, for the identities of these works.
17. See Rouart 1987, p. 145, and Bataille and Wildenstein 1961, nos. 174–75, 192–93. Lambert was also the model for the painting *Le Lever*, shown as no. 87 in 1886, and perhaps for *Portrait de Mlle. L*, no. 90. For the latter case, see Berson 1996, vol. 2, p. 246.
18. In Lille–Martigny 2002, p. 318, it is erroneously stated that the forms at right represent a "console" with a marble top, on which is a "precious perfume diffuser in crystal" ("une console . . . précieux vaporisateur à parfum en cristal").
19. The drawing, which broadly corresponds to the size of these elements in the finished painting, is Bataille and Wildenstein 1961, no. 498. See Technical Report for the presence of charcoal on the Clark picture.
20. Mornand 1880; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 303: "un peu lâchée."
21. Lora 1877; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 162: "ébauche."
22. Repeated signatures on pictures by certain artists may indicate later phases of work on the composition. See Technical Report for further discussion of this feature.
23. Rouart 1987, pp. 146–47. Monet is listed as the owner of *The Bath* in the catalogue of the memorial exhibition of Morisot's work; see Paris 1896, no. 40. The circumstances of its acquisition, whether by gift or purchase, remain unclear; see Wildenstein 1974–91, vol. 5, p. 222, where four works by Morisot in the artist's possession are mentioned.
24. RSC Diary, 22 Dec. 1926; 10 Dec. 1938; 28 Oct. 1939; 6 Nov. 1940.
25. RSC Diary, 27 Jan. 1939.
26. Fourreau transposed the owners of his figs. 19 and 20, confusing the Clark painting with another now known as *Nu de dos*. See Clairet et al. 1997, no. 172.

Sir Alfred James Munnings

English, 1878–1959

236 | Solario 1926

Oil on laminate cardboard, 43.2 x 51.1 cm
Lower right: Colour study of / "Solario" / Newmarket July 1926 / A. j. Munnings; upper right: Lovely horse with a kind eye; lower center: red orange greeny blue purple blues violets; upper left: Sir John Rutherfords famous horse "Solario" by "Gainsborough" see racing calendar 1955.925

Sir Alfred Munnings remembered the racehorse Solario as "the most peaceful hero ever bred."[1] Annotating this color sketch of the winner of both the Saint Leger and the Gold Cup, Munnings observed, "Lovely horse with a kind eye." The most successful twentieth-century British specialist of racehorses painted this sketch at Newmarket in July 1926 after Solario had cemented his champion status in the Gold Cup that June during Royal Ascot. His first significant win had been as a three-year-old in the Saint Leger at Doncaster, one of the "Classic Five" tests for thoroughbreds.

In the second volume of his memoirs, Munnings took the reader back twenty-five years as he recalled the circumstances of the commission for which the Clark's work is a study: "I see the Ascot meeting—the race for the Gold Cup in 1927 [*sic*]; Solario, challenged by the little French horse, Priori II, winning in great style, to the cheers of the whole crowd. I am standing near when the horse is led in. His owner, Sir John Rutherford, is there. Reggie Day, his trainer, is there. Sir John, turning to me, asked if I would paint the horse with Childs on his back."[2] Sir John Rutherford had bought Solario, who was sired by Gainsborough (as Munnings notes on the sketch) out of Sun Worship, as a yearling. Reggie Day was a Newmarket-based trainer whose ambition Munnings described by noting that he "trained his horses big."[3] Solario won the Saint Leger and the Gold Cup with Joe Childs as the jockey.[4]

Munnings's affection for this champion is clear from both his annotations and this statement: "Many times when staying in Newmarket since painting Solario have I called on him in his home. Twice have I painted him in his box to refresh my vision, as well as to gain peace of mind; for the horse breathed calm and peace." While the color study necessarily focuses