



**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

*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. Rogl an, James Rosenow, Zo  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: 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 Amphis* (cat. 3)

touches quite unlike the busily active marks around her. Though relatively small in scale, this is clearly a highly finished canvas, of a type that would have found a ready outlet on the commercial art market, whether or not it appeared in any formal exhibition during the period. JH

**PROVENANCE** [N. Mitchell, London, sold to Clark, 24 Sept. 1935]; Robert Sterling Clark (1935–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown–Hartford 1974, no. 52, ill.; Williamstown 1979b, no cat.

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a finely woven pre-primed canvas (25 threads/cm), with a darkened glue lining onto coarser fabric (16 thread/cm). The five-member stretcher may be original, and is cracked at the crossbar join. The lining is early enough to have prevented stretcher creases from forming and dates before the time of export, which occurred some time after 1935. While most of the tacking margins were removed, part of the right fold-over is now added to the surface dimension. All the impastos are moated from the pressure of lining the image face down, with cracked paint around the more serious depressions. Some higher paint strokes are melted from the heat used in the lining. A slight bulge occurs in the lining at the face of the sitter, and there are age cracks throughout the paint and ground. The present, thinly applied natural resin varnish is slightly yellowed. Inspection of the surface shows only small traces of an earlier varnish, and only a little solvent damage in the trees. The surface sheen varies with the paint brushwork.

The lower ground is an off-white commercial layer which extends to the cut edges of the original canvas. The artist may have also applied a thin white layer that, like the image, stops short of the edges in precise lines. This may suggest that the canvas was taped flat to a board while the artist painted. This upper layer has a diagonal striated texture to its application. There is no evidence of either underdrawing, except a long anomalous vertical line through the cheek of the woman, or of paint changes. Thin gray paint lines may lie below the final colors. It appears that the landscape was painted before the figure and then refined around the woman. Sgraffito lines delineate the thin tree branches and individual blades of grass. The hat ribbons appear to be done in black ink, and some thin dark tree lines may also be done in brown and black inks.

1. Observation by Professor Aileen Ribeiro; personal communication with the author.

---

**233 | The Proposal** 1878

Oil on canvas, 59.9 x 81.8 cm

Lower right: ADRIEN\_MOREAU: 1878.

Gift of the Children of Mrs. E. Parmalee Prentice  
1962.151

Genre scenes presented in period costume found a ready market, in France and in the United States, during the 1860s and 1870s. Such images might be treated in nostalgic terms or as quaint comedies, but, in both cases, what was presented was a clearly intelligible world in which everyone knew his or her place. Paintings of this sort were also opportunities for artists to demonstrate their skills in the reconstruction of historical costumes and attributes—in this case, the clothing of the reign of Louis XIII in the 1620s and 1630s. Alongside his historical genre scenes, Moreau specialized in picturesque scenes of peasant life, as well as contemporary fashionable genre subjects such as *Contemplation* (cat. 232).

Moreau's *The Proposal* offers elements of both romance and comedy. The viewer is invited to empathize with the young couple on the right—with his attentiveness or with her reaction as she turns away from him with seeming nonchalance to pluck a rose. At the same time, the expression of the older man seated at the table looking across to the young couple has a mixture of curiosity and prurience that introduces a somewhat different register of response. The setting is evidently very prosperous, and a substantial house can be glimpsed through the trees on the right.

It has been suggested that this might be the canvas exhibited as *The Silver Wedding* (*Les Noces d'argent*) at the Salon in 1879.<sup>1</sup> To the contrary, the description of this canvas in the review of the exhibition in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* corresponds closely to another painting by Moreau known from photographs.<sup>2</sup> Although the present picture is elaborate and highly finished, no evidence has come to light about its early exhibition history. JH

**PROVENANCE** John D. Rockefeller Sr., New York (until 1919, given to Prentice); Alta Rockefeller Prentice (Mrs. E. Parmalee Prentice), his daughter, New York and Williamstown (1919–d. 1962); Prentice heirs, by descent, given to the Clark; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1962.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown–Hartford 1974, no. 51, ill.; Williamstown 1979b, no cat.



233

**REFERENCES** New York 1980a, p. 31, ill.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a finely woven unlined canvas (25 threads/cm), which has become brittle and slack, with tearing along the fold-over edges. The original five-member stretcher has a vertical crossbar, and the back edges are damaged from old framing nails. About one-third of the left edge has released from the stretcher, causing uneven tension across the surface, with bulges and draws along the upper, lower, and left sides. Pronounced cupped corner stress cracks span the entire surface and are most severe in the upper right and lower left. There are traction cracks in the blue hair ribbon of the woman on the left. There is flaking along the lower edge and in the lower right along a ridge caused by the stretcher joinery, as well as shattered paint in all four corners around tack holes in the painted surface. The varnish is missing in several half-inch areas. The staining on the back of the canvas, through the already formed cracks, points to a previous cleaning; but the yellowness of the varnish and the untouched condition of the paint film suggest that only a grime removal and additional varnishing may have been performed. The fluorescence in ultraviolet light is moderately dense, and there are no retouchings.

The ground is an off-white commercially applied layer. Although no underdrawing was detected, some preparatory technique was undoubtedly used for such a detailed image.

The presence of holes in the front corners may suggest that the image was transferred to the canvas using a cartoon drawing. There may be a thin lower sketch in various shades of brown paint. Precise and detailed paint strokes, applied wet-into-wet, define the entire image. Low delicate impastos, scumbles, and sgraffito work were also employed. Folds of the dress on the woman to the right may have been altered by the artist, and there is some shifting of color and detail in the background and foliage, suggesting the artist was adjusting the outlines of the female head and working out the pattern of leaves while painting. Black ink may have been used in the uppermost layer to define the lace cutouts on the table linen. The signature is executed in brown ink, and the date is either thinner or slightly abraded on the last digit.

1. Williamstown–Hartford 1974, p. 84.
2. Bagnères 1879, p. 35. The other painting is reproduced in Hook and Poltmore 1986, p. 163.