

The background of the cover is a detailed 19th-century painting of a storm at sea. The sky is filled with heavy, dark, and turbulent clouds, with some light breaking through near the horizon. The sea is dark and choppy, with white-capped waves crashing against a sandy beach in the foreground. Several large sailing ships with multiple masts and sails are visible on the horizon, some appearing to be struggling against the wind. The overall mood is one of intense natural power and maritime drama.

**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,  
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Kelly Pask, Elizabeth A. Pergam, Kathryn A. Price, Mark A. Roglán,  
James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

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## 20 | Second Scene of Burglars: The Burglars Arrested 1810

Oil on canvas, 27.6 x 35.2 cm

Lower border: L Boilly pinx. II<sup>m</sup>e scène de voleurs 1810  
2007.10

The picture is one of a pair of compositions—painted *en grisaille* in imitation of engravings—representing a burglary taking place in a bourgeois home. In the first (fig. 20.1), three criminals are in the midst of ransacking the house as a mother and child sleep unaware on a canapé; they are interrupted in their actions by a noise in the corridor. The denouement takes place in the Clark painting, as an enraged mob has burst through the door to arrest the perpetrators; the three burglars are held at bay by men holding a knife, a pistol, and, in one case, a fierce dog. Despite the fact that the interiors are not precisely the same, and a second child has appeared in the Clark painting, Boilly clearly intended the two compositions to depict episodes of



Fig. 20.1. Louis-Léopold Boilly, *First Scene of Burglars: The Burglars Surprised*, 1810. Oil on canvas. Location unknown (reproduced from Marmottan 1913, pl. 33)



Fig. 20.2. Louis-Léopold Boilly, *Second Scene of Burglars: The Burglars Arrested*, 1804. Oil on canvas, 23 x 30 cm. Location unknown

an unfolding drama, as indicated by his inscriptions in the lower margins: “*1er scène*” and “*Ilème scène*.”<sup>1</sup> Signed and dated 1810, the paintings are second versions of a pair of pictures, painted in full color, that the artist exhibited at the Salon of 1804 (fig. 20.2).<sup>2</sup> These polychrome versions in fact consisted of three scenes, with the addition of an earlier episode showing the burglars outside the house seeking to gain entry through a garden window. According to Harris, this picture, although the first in the dramatic sequence, was painted long after the pair that was exhibited in 1804, as it did not appear in Boilly’s sale in 1829.<sup>3</sup> The *grisaille* pendants should be considered a complete set (that is, no *grisaille* version of the scene of the burglars in the garden is known to exist). The two pictures remained together until the Gillet sale in 1919. The Clark painting is in remarkably fine condition, on an unlined canvas attached to its original stretcher. The surface glazes have remained intact, and when displayed in its period frame under old glass, the effect of a *trompe-l’œil* engraving is remarkably convincing.

Hallam suggested that the subject was composed by Boilly in response to contemporary anxiety about increased crime in French society.<sup>4</sup> The representation of the burglars as wild and crazed ruffians, their expressions and gestures approaching caricature, seems to have struck a chord with Boilly’s audience. The full color versions exhibited in 1804 elicited a range of responses: according to one reviewer, “These scenes

of thieves are very well rendered. As for the expression and composition, the color is not as satisfying,” a response contradicted by another critic, who thought that “the scenes of burglars impress us with their truthfulness and composition.”<sup>5</sup> Aside from the two painted pairs (in full color and in *grisaille*), Boilly made versions in watercolor and in drawings *aux trois crayons*.<sup>6</sup> In addition, numerous prints after the compositions were issued in France, England, and Italy. A drawing attributed to Thomas Rowlandson (1756/57–1827), representing the main figural group of the first scene, but in reverse, is in the Huntington Library in San Marino.<sup>7</sup>

Boilly’s compositions, not surprisingly, given the inherent drama of the scenes and the theatricality of the protagonists’ gestures and expressions, inspired a two-act play in pantomime, written by Henri Franconi and Jean-Baptiste-Louis Camel and first performed at the Cirque Olympique in Paris on 30 December 1812. The action takes place at the château d’Armincourt, near the Forêt de Bondy, a place notorious in the Middle Ages as a haunt for bandits and highwaymen. The burglary is perpetrated by a servant, Glatz, who—humiliated by his unrequited love for Marton, a domestic—conspires with two companions to ransack the house of his employers. *Tableaux vivants* of Boilly’s compositions occur in scene eight of the second act, at the conclusion of the play.<sup>8</sup> The moment representing the Clark painting comes at the penultimate moment: “The brigands are arrested. But what is the indignation of M. d’Armincourt when he recognizes the infamous Glatz among them?”<sup>9</sup> If we follow the script of the pantomime, M. d’Armincourt, who has just returned from the hunt, appears in the center, “indignant” as he holds a pistol to the face of the cowering Glatz. Mme d’Armincourt reacts in fright as she shields her children from the commotion. That having been said, one cannot assume Boilly intended the viewer to understand the actions of his protagonists precisely as was interpreted by the playwright. RR

**PROVENANCE** The artist (his sale, Paris, 13–14 Apr. 1829, no. 37, as one of *Deux scènes de voleurs*); Baron Deurbroucq (his sale, Drouot, Paris, 15 Feb. 1878, no. 3, as one of two *Scènes de voleurs*); Félix Gillet, Chateauroux (by 1898–d. before 1913, his sale, Drouot, Paris, 28 Feb. 1919, no. 7, as *Troisième Scène de voleurs [sic]*, sold to Lepoutre); Lepoutre (from 1919); private collection; sale, Drouot, Paris, 28 Mar. 2007, no. 35, as *Les voleurs arrêtés*; [Étienne Bréton Fine Art, Paris, sold to the Clark, 28 Aug. 2007]; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

**EXHIBITIONS** Lille 2011–12, pp. 264–65, no. 189, ill.

**REFERENCES** HARRISSE 1898, p. 141, no. 608, as (*Troisième*) *Scène de voleurs*; Marmottan 1913, pp. 105–6, 176; Mabille de Poncheville 1931, p. 125; Hallam 1979, pp. 81–82.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is an unlined coarse canvas with a weave of 13 x 16 threads per cm. The original stretcher is a five-member mortise-and-tenon design with short tenons and a vertical crossbar. The lower stretcher bar is rolled forward slightly, causing dishing in the surface. Stretcher creases have begun to form where the canvas rests against the bars. The slight vertical undulations across the surface may also be the result of imperfect and uneven tension caused by the stretcher. Age cracks, some with cupping, can be detected in the surface, along with secured areas of old overlapped paint. The ground looks brittle, with many losses around the fold-over edges. The painting may have been cleaned just before the 2007 purchase, although there are scattered yellow natural resin residues. There are a few cotton fibers stuck in the varnish and retouches are visible below the desk and along the lower edge.

The ground is an off-white color comprised of several layers, which provides a smooth surface. The ground seems to be applied over a thicker than normal glue layer, which may be responsible for the cupped cracks on the surface. The upper ground layer may have a slight vertical combing imitative of laid paper. Dark charcoal underdrawing lines are visible around the edges of forms in low magnification, and some of these lines are faintly visible in infrared. The only change noted was in the upper right window, where the horizontal muntin was raised 0.6 cm. There may be a warm brown imprimatura or sketch layer in the figural portion of the image. The paint was applied in a precise manner, using a fluid-consistency paint, with low rounded impastos and small dot highlights, all applied wet-into-wet. The heavy white border was painted after the image was completed. Dark sable brush hairs were found embedded in the paint. Some of the title lettering looks redone, as the corrected forms, now covered in white, are visible as shadows between the final letters.

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1. Although the pendant grisaille has not been located, the Gillet sale catalogue, Drouot 1919, p. 8, indicates that it is inscribed with this title in the same manner as the Clark painting.

2. HARRISSE 1898, p. 79, nos. 27–28.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 129, no. 499. For a reproduction of this picture, see Lille 2011–12, p. 265, fig. 2.

4. Hallam 1979, p. 81.

5. “Ces scènes de voleurs sont très bien rendues. Quant à l’expression et à la composition, la couleur ne satisfait pas autant,” *Lettres impartiales sur les expositions de l’an XIII par un amateur* (Paris, 1804). See Deloynes Collection, vol. 31, no. 876, letter XXXII, p. 12; “Les scènes

de voleurs, no. 45, séduisent par les traits de vérité et de composition,” *Critique raisonnée des tableaux du Salon. Dialogue entre Pasquino, voyageur Romain, et Scapin* (Paris, 1804). See Deloynes Collection, vol. 31, no. 878, p. 12.

6. HARRISSE 1898, p. 182, nos. 1150–53.

7. *Disturbers of Domestic Happiness* (The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, Sessler 44).

8. Franconi and Camel 1813, p. 14: “Ici les auteurs ont suivi fidèlement les tableaux de M. Boilly”; see also Marmottan 1913, pp. 135–36.

9. Franconi and Camel 1813, p. 14: “Conclusion. Les brigands sont arrêtés. Mais quelle est l’indignation de M. d’Armincourt en reconnaissant parmi eux l’infame Glatz?”

## Giovanni Boldini

Italian, 1842–1931

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### 21 | *Guitar Player* 1872

Oil on canvas, 41.6 x 34.4 cm

Lower left: Boldini / 73

1955.651

In November 1871, just a few weeks after arriving in Paris, Boldini wrote to a close friend, Cristiano Banti, “I have taken up with Goupil . . . with him it’s impossible [for artists] to be unknown.”<sup>1</sup> Adolphe Goupil was a prominent dealer and publisher who represented artists including Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904), Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891), and Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874). Boldini clearly chose to work with Goupil in hopes that he would become as successful as those artists were. Several months later, in fact, the dealer purchased and then sold two of the first paintings Boldini produced in his new home, and not long afterward *Guitar Player* similarly passed through Goupil’s hands.<sup>2</sup> The painting’s small size, detailed handling, and emphasis on picturesque setting and costumes, in emulating qualities found in the work of several of the dealer’s other artists, were clearly designed to appeal to the same sort of clientele that avidly collected the more established artists’ output.

More specifically, Boldini in the *Guitar Player* seems to echo the work of Fortuny. The “Spanish” subject itself is one that Boldini rarely treated, while Fortuny, who was Spanish, often depicted figures like