



**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,
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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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Constant Troyon

French, 1810–1865

332 | Saint-Cloud c. 1835

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 38.2 x 46.5 cm
1955.536

Constant Troyon made his debut at the Salon in 1833 with a view of the park of Saint-Cloud. Although the painting was not mentioned in any of the reviews of the Salon that year,¹ he continued to show paintings of both the chateau and park at the Salon through 1838. The park surrounding the chateau at Saint-Cloud, lying along the Seine approximately six miles west of the center of Paris, was popular with Parisians seeking fresh air. Troyon would have been well acquainted with the park, since he was born and grew up in Sèvres, which borders Saint-Cloud to the south. Both his parents worked at the porcelain manufactory at Sèvres, his father as a decorator (an occupation Troyon was doubtless expected to take up) and his mother as a polisher. Because Troyon expressed an interest in landscape rather than flower painting,

he was allowed to take lessons from the landscapist Antoine-Achille Poupart (1788–1848), who, after studying with Jean-Victor Bertin (1767–1842), also worked at the Sèvres factory.

The painting convincingly portrays the reasons people from the city would go to Saint-Cloud. This air seems moist and cool, the shade of the trees is inviting. Color harmonies do this work. Greens, blues, and pale ochers predominate. The sun, coming from the left, lightens the foliage in the middle ground to a silvery green and turns the parterre to a salmon gold. Bright accents are confined to discrete touches of red scattered across the foreground, presumably a cravat around the man's neck, the ribbon on the woman's hat, and tiny flowers in the grass.

During Troyon's lifetime, the chateau and gardens of Saint-Cloud continued their function as the imperial and royal retreat that had been established in the seventeenth century, when Philippe, the duc d'Orléans, younger brother of Louis XIV, bought the property. Its next owner was Marie-Antoinette, who lived there in the summers but a few years, since renovations were completed only in 1788. Indeed, the chateau was not intended for winter living as very few of the rooms had fireplaces. Because it was designed as a summer resi-

dence, its gardens were particularly important. They boasted a cascade and other waterworks (such as the jets that can be seen in Troyon's painting), and parterres were laid out on the banks of the Seine, spreading out from the foot of the cascade.²

After the Revolution, Saint-Cloud was nationalized, and Napoleon chose it as the site to announce his coup d'état in 1799, when he made himself First Consul. There, too, he proclaimed himself Emperor of the French in 1804 and married in a civil ceremony his second wife, Marie-Louise of Austria, in 1810. It was also where Charles X proclaimed the Four Ordinances of Saint-Cloud, which precipitated the July Revolution of 1830. Louis-Philippe and his family stayed there during the summer months. The grounds were used for fairs and celebrations and were open to tourists and visitors.

Saint-Cloud was thus an especially resonant site for the French in the early 1830s. Troyon, though, painted the park and château as if they were outside time, and he chose a view that ignores the fabled cascade, which lies well to the right of the allée pictured here.³ It is likely that Troyon was drawn to Saint-Cloud because it was a convenient site for him to paint; thirteen topographic views of the royal park by him are documented in nineteenth-century sources.⁴ Yet just as these works were not commented on in the Salon reviews, so "they did not even leave any trace in the memory of his friends."⁵ Troyon's friends in later life, who included Jules Dupré, Jean-François Millet, and Théodore Rousseau, may well not have known of these early paintings, identifying Troyon instead as the pre-eminent painter of animals in France at mid-century.

The small painting on paper at the Clark seems not to be among the thirteen listed in the nineteenth-century sources, yet it is part of a group of works by Troyon that shows a view of the south façade of the château as seen from the height of the Allée de la Balustrade, very close to Sèvres. All the paintings depict the two-story château at the end of a tree-lined allée, which terminates in the trilobed Bassin du Fer à Cheval, the entire view closed off by Mount Valérien in the distance and animated in the fore- and middle ground by figures dressed fashionably in styles of the mid- to late 1830s. Yet, as is often the case when a painter makes several versions of the same motif, details differ from one painting to the next. A version in the Musée de Valence is the most rustic. It shows the way to the château as a level greensward, not a gravel field that slopes steeply up to stone balustrades. A canvas in a French private collection introduces a metal railing stretching

across the middle of the foreground and an intermediary terrace demarcated by a kiosk to the right next to a wire fence punctuated by square columns topped by urns. In a painting at the Musée de l'Île-de-France, Château de Sceaux (this is a larger painting, measuring 96 x 146 cm, whereas the others measure 33.5 x 46 and 40.5 x 41 cm, respectively), the kiosk and fence in the midgroup reappear from the work in the private collection, but, instead of a metal railing in the foreground, that space is marked off by low stone balustrades to either side. Related to these is a drawing in watercolor and gouache in the Cleveland Museum of Art. It features the kiosk and fence with columns and the metal railing. Unlike the figures in the other works, those in the watercolor wear eighteenth-century dress.⁶ The Clark's painting includes more elaborate stone balustrades than those in the Sceaux version (urns lighten the mass) yet eliminates the wire-and-column fence and kiosk, a move that emphasizes the extent of the parterre. Then, too, the combination of few figures and the gravel paths in the Clark's picture—stretching across the foreground and extending to the basin in front of the château—make this version more geometric, more ordered, than the others. The cream color of the gravel gives the impression that the park is an extension of the similarly hued château.

There are so many figures in these other works that it is almost impossible to count them; their number imparts a sense of hubbub and excitement in being in the beautiful park, admiring the spectacle of the shooting fountains. The fountains in the Bassin du Fer à Cheval are playing in the painting at the Clark, but the six figures—two men, one child, and three women—seem inert. Only the woman holding the child's hand is looking at the fountains; the other figures look elsewhere.

Too little is known about Troyon's early work to draw definite conclusions about this painting. It, unlike the paintings cited above, is painted on paper, not canvas. The presence of pinholes does not prove it was painted out of doors but only that it was at one time pinned to a board. Its handling appears softer than that in the other oil paintings, which, even in photographs, looks to be sharp and crisp, as one would expect from a young artist whose first training came from porcelain painters. Yet, another painting on paper, dated about 1838, of Saint-Cloud seen from the heights of Bellevue, at least in a color photograph, also displays a softer facture.⁷ To complicate matters, in 1972, Charles C. Cunningham, who later in the

decade was chief curator at the Clark, suggested a different artist, Félix-Hippolyte Lanouë (1812–1872), as the painting's author. George Heard Hamilton, then director of the Clark, demurred, pointing out the different way the two artists painted foliage and also stating that too little is known about Lanouë's work overall to draw any firm conclusions.⁸ In short, a firm attribution—to Troyon or another painter—must await further research and the discovery of additional early paintings by Troyon. FEW

PROVENANCE [C. Lepoutre, Paris, sold to Clark, 2 Mar. 1921]; Robert Sterling Clark (1921–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1956a, no. 133, pl. 50; Williams-town 1981a, no cat.

REFERENCES Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 152, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is moderate-weight laid paper, with the lighter screen lines running vertically through the image. Pinholes around the perimeter and uneven cut edges on the top and bottom suggest that the picture was painted while the paper was pinned flat to a board. The old glue lining and five-member stretcher are grimy but stable, and were presumably added to stabilize the fragile support and the horizontal cupped cracks in the sky. The lining fabric is a moderate-weight linen (19–22 threads/cm). There are old breaks and losses in the paper at the edges and corners, and old fills and new inpainting have been applied to extend the edges of the original paper support to the present squared-up dimensions. Some frame abrasion is visible, and gold and bronze powder deposits are scattered along the lower edge. Age cracks in the paint layer can be seen together with very fine, dark, closely spaced cracks, possibly associated with the paper support or a layer of preparation below the paint. In 1978, several layers of streaky discolored varnish and grime residues were removed and the picture was revarnished.

The ground is an off-white color, whose brightness contributes to the luminosity in the sky. Under the microscope, some charcoal deposits can be seen near the buildings, but no underdrawing lines are detectable using infrared reflectography. There are two possible changes in the center foreground, now quite visible in normal light as pentimenti. There appear to have been two figures seated on the lawn, which were then painted out and followed by a child's hoop, perhaps the beginnings of the child with a hoop now seen further to the left. The paint is a paste consistency, applied wet-into-wet, with low impastos. The left-hand trees were painted before the bright avenue to the chateau was laid in. Thin stippling applications and subtle blending were used to produce the transparent color gradations in the sky. Dark scumbles were used to soften the shadows.

1. Miquel 1975, vol. 2, p. 322.
2. Dunlop 1985, pp. 253–70.
3. Charles-François Daubigny, by contrast, when commissioned by the government in 1862, painted the cascade. See Philadelphia–Detroit–Paris 1978–79, pp. 284–85, no. VI-38.
4. He showed five such paintings in the Salon, and five more are included in a list of his works that appeared in public sales up to 1900, as are one watercolor and two pastels. See Miquel 1975, vol. 2, under Troyon, and Soullié 1900b.
5. Soullié 1900b, p. vi: “n’ont même laissé aucune trace dans le souvenir de ses amis.”
6. Photographs of all these works are in the Clark's curatorial file.
7. Miquel 1975, vol. 2, p. 326.
8. Correspondence in the Clark's curatorial file.

333 | The Gooseherd c. 1850–55

Oil on panel, 46.2 x 37.1 cm

Lower left: C. TROYON.

1955.550

In the meager literature on Troyon, it is often implied or even stated that he began introducing animals into his paintings as a result of his trip to Belgium and Holland in 1847 and his exposure to the animal paintings, especially those of cows, by Aelbert Cuyp and Paulus Potter.¹ This appealing but false interpretation of Troyon's career began as early as the year after he died. In a short notice in *L'Artiste*, Pierre Dax, although not mentioning the trip to the Lowlands, stated that animals appeared in Troyon's Salon paintings beginning in 1849.² Dax can be excused for not knowing that in 1838, when Troyon was still exhibiting views of Saint-Cloud at the Salon, he was also showing paintings with animals; in fact, he was awarded a third-class medal that year as an *animalier* for his *Country Fair in the Limousin* (location unknown).³

By the time Troyon painted this picture, probably in the early 1850s, his art had undergone a fundamental change. Sometime in the 1830s, he met Camille Roqueplan (1800–1855), a painter and lithographer, in the park at Saint-Cloud. Roqueplan advised him to give up the tight, linear, topographic technique he had been using in his views of the chateau and park