



**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

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Production by The Production Department,
Whately, Massachusetts
Printed on 135 gsm Gardapat Kiara
Color separations and printing by Trifolio, Verona

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Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London
P. O. Box 209040, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-9040
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

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Vente / Lagarde le 27 Mars 1903—Vendu à / M. Rosenberg le 10 Avril 1903.”

7. The dates of Berthier’s ownership of the painting are uncertain; a label on the stretcher, however, includes the line “Collection du Pce de Wagram 1913.” It is thus likely that he owned it at some point during that year.
8. In London 1914, Paris 1924b, and Paris 1927a, the painting is listed in the Laroche collection, with no forename noted. The painting was lent to the 1937 exhibition by Jacques Laroche. Daulte 1971, no. 360, lists the work first with H. J. Laroche, and then with Jacques Laroche, but does not supply dates, give further identification, or mention the relationship between the two.

270 | Bouquet of Roses 1879

Oil on panel, 83.3 x 64 cm

Lower right: Renoir. 79.

1955-592

Renoir met the Protestant banker and diplomat Paul Berard (1830–1905) early in 1879 at the salon of his patron Margu rite Charpentier, through the intermediary of their mutual friend Charles Deudon.¹ The two men quickly struck up a friendship, and Berard invited Renoir to spend an extended period with him and his family at the eighteenth-century Ch teau de Wargemont, northeast of Dieppe, in the summer of 1879. During this stay, Renoir painted portraits of members of the Berard family and landscapes of the surrounding countryside and coastline, in addition to a sequence of decorations in various rooms of the house.

Bouquet of Roses was painted on a wooden door panel in the library at Wargemont; a very similar panel can be seen in a photograph of the library interior (fig. 270.1). Renoir also painted two decorative compositions on the paneling in the dining room, representing *Hunting in Summer* and *Hunting in Autumn*, showing the appropriate game for each season, as well as additional compositions of flowers in other rooms in the house. Taken together, these provided an effective complement to the architecture of the house—formally closely in tune with its classicizing decor, but introducing a distinctively Impressionist range of colors. Renoir’s son Jean recorded that these decorations were undertaken almost by accident: “when canvas and paper gave out, he painted on the doors and the walls, much to the annoyance of the kindly Mme B rard [*sic*], who did not share her husband’s blind admiration for their visitor’s painting.”² This account, however, ignores the great care and planning that Berard invested in the decor of his homes; Monet later remembered visiting him, seeking to sell him a canvas, and finding him “in his dressing gown having spent the morning arranging the eighteenth-century porcelain, metalwork, miniatures and curios from his collections that adorned an interior to which he was very deeply attached.”³

On the gray-painted panel, Renoir added a soft layer of blue beneath much or all of the primary area where the bouquet was to be placed. Traces of this blue can be seen in many parts of the painting; blues are used, in addition, for a number of leaves set behind the principal part of the bouquet. Most of the

flowers and leaves in the bouquet itself are depicted using local colors, with red and white flowers set off against green leaves, but the underlying blue retains a significant role, both in heightening the sense of space within the bouquet and as a contrast to the warmer hues of the flowers.

The brushwork throughout is variegated and freely improvised. Certain details are indicated by relatively fine strokes, but much of the brushwork is treated broadly and with a full impasto that hints at the three-dimensionality of the central flowers. Yet, beneath this fluent and informal paint surface, the composition of the bouquet is clearly ordered within the panel; the crisscrossing stems at the base anchor the arrangement, and a sequence of unobtrusive diagonals structures the rest of the bouquet.

After buying the canvas in 1933, Sterling Clark wrote in his diary: “We looked at my bunch of flowers by Renoir—it is really fine, such a variety of color and so light and airy, just like the French 18th century things.”⁴ JH

PROVENANCE Paul Berard, Wargemont (d. 1905); Mme Angelot, Paris;⁵ [Knoedler, New York, by 1932, sold to Clark, 25 May 1933]; Robert Sterling Clark (1933–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS New York 1932c, no. 11, ill.; Philadelphia 1933–34, no cat.; Williamstown 1956b, no. 165, pl. 30; Williamstown 1996–97, pp. 29, 61, 94–95, 97, 99, ill.

REFERENCES *Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin* 1933, p. 20; *Art News* 1933, p. 11, ill.; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 107, ill.; Fezzi 1972, p. 114, no. 571, ill. (French ed., p. 104, no. 372, ill.); White 1984, pp. 92–93, ill.; Monneret 1989, pp. 24–25, ill.; Whelan 1998, p. 82, ill.; Néret 2001, p. 118, ill.; Williamstown–New York 2006–7, p. 77; Dauberville and Dauberville 2007–10, vol. 1, pp. 113, no. 9, ill.; Madrid 2010–11, pp. 70–71, no. 11, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is an assembled wood panel 1.3 cm thick, made from four boards of various widths joined vertically along half-lapped edges. The wood is a pale, close-grained hardwood, possibly birch or poplar, and was originally a cabinet door panel. There is a softwood cradle of some age attached to the reverse, probably installed to support the weak joins. A slight vertical washboard effect on the front side may be original planing marks or distortions caused by the placement of the glued cradle members. A series of cracks runs down from the top edge, all following the joins except one crack 10.1 cm long that is located 32.4 cm over from the left edge. A series of small mechanical dents appears in the wood surface, below the lower tier of flowers, which has created odd circular cracks. The

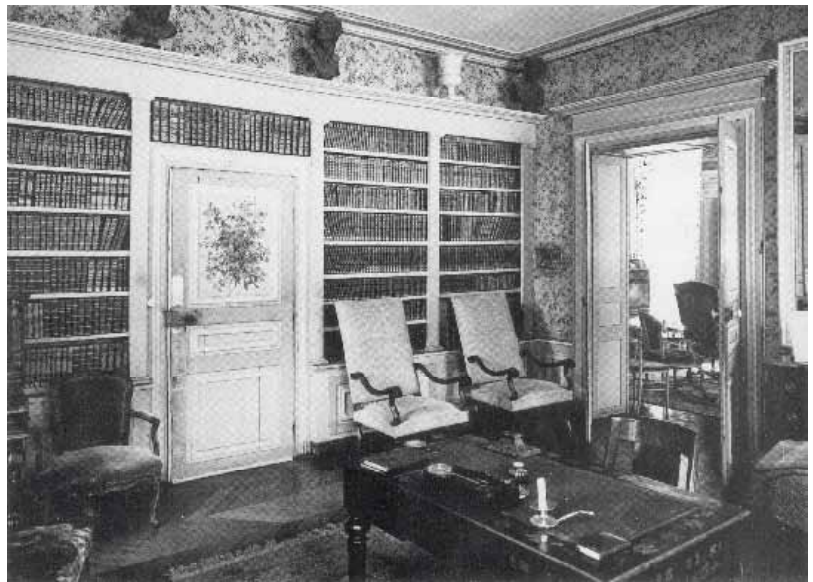


Fig. 270.1. Library at the Château de Wargemont (reproduced from Distel 1990, fig. 143)

gray base color has small gauge traction cracks throughout, and there are scattered traction cracks in the thinly painted zones of blue underpaint. Long thin cracks run horizontally across the panel, possibly due to the restraint of the cradle. In 1984, some areas of paint were treated for flaking, and two uneven, and very discolored, layers of oil-resin varnish were removed. Later blue additions to the signature were cleaned away, revealing the faint red original lying in an area with fewer background layers. There is presently inpainting on two join cracks near the top edge and in scattered spots in the background. In ultraviolet light, some residual varnish is visible in the impastos.

The priming of the panel seems to be two layers of off-white paint, with a possible ocher layer. The gray background color also seems to be comprised of two layers. There was no evidence of any underdrawing, although the design may have been sketched with blue paint, seen in the thinner blue leaves of the final image. In ultraviolet light, it appears that the upper background color still covers some leaves. The somewhat stiff paint was applied by the artist using wet-into-wet strokes in a direct manner, with some heavy impastos in the peony blossoms. The transparent pinkish red paint has its own fracture pattern.

1. Berard 1939, p. 9; in a later article, however, Maurice Berard dated their meeting around 1877. See Berard 1956, p. 239.
2. Renoir 1962, p. 127. The original French reads: “Quand il n’avait plus de toile ou de papier, il peignait les portes et les murs, au grand ennui de la bonne Mme Bérard [sic] qui ne partageait pas l’admiration ‘aveugle’ de son mari pour la peinture de leur invité” (French ed., p. 138).
3. Berard 1956, p. 240: “Nous le trouvions en robe de chambre ayant passé sa matinée à ranger des porcelains du XVIII siècle, des pièces d’orfèvrerie, des miniatures, des bibelots de ses collections qui paraient un intérieur auquel il était attaché de toute son âme.”
4. RSC Diary, 6 Oct. 1933.
5. According to Knoedler invoice in the Clark’s curatorial file.