



**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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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)

Sirna 2006, pp. 100–101, ill.; Dauberville and Dauberville 2007–10, vol. 2, pp. 237–38, ill.; Distel 2009, pp. 182–84, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a very fine-weave linen (28 threads/cm). In 2009, two very coarse, very rigid, and delaminating old glue linings were removed and replaced with a lighter weight linen and Beva 371 lining. Evidence of old lifted paint in the hat and a small tear in the sitter's proper left cuff suggest the reason for the original lining. The twentieth-century six-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher, added in the earlier treatment, was retained. When the painting was unlined, a supplier's stamp for Rey-Perrod, Paris, was uncovered on the back of the original fabric. Numerous scattered impastos, which had been coated by the glue-lining pressure, are now in proper plane. There are scattered age cracks, some opening up as traction cracks through the ground and paint. Traction cracks and wrinkling are seen in the hair and the blue costume, with especially wide traction cracks in the hat and the hair-ribbon areas where the lower orange paint oozes up to the surface and spreads over the crack edges. Old yellow-brown residues were removed during the 2009 treatment, and disturbing traction cracks were inpainted.

The ground is a thin commercially applied off-white layer, which allows the canvas texture to be visible. No underdrawing was detected. There may be a thin orange-brown sketch, which can still be seen between brush marks in the background color. In some places the paint is three levels deep. Opaque and transparent colors are mixed and blurred together in broad strokes, many applied in a distinct diagonal pattern from upper left to lower right. The sitter's face shows an unusual use of a yellow pigment combination to shade the flesh, and blue to form the eye. The background was applied after the figure.

1. Pierre-Auguste Renoir to Paul Berard, 22 June 1882, quoted in *Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98*, p. 311n7.
2. For a discussion of the suite of Durand-Ruel family portraits, see *Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98*, pp. 190–97.
3. *Blanche 1927*, p. 64: "Les enfants Durand-Ruel posaient pour lui dans un jardin de la côte de Rouen, sous des marronniers aux feuilles mouvant; le soleil tachait leurs joues de reflets incompatibles avec le beau 'modèle plat' des éclairages d'atelier."
4. Pierre-Auguste Renoir to Paul Berard, autumn 1882, Durand-Ruel Archives, part quoted in *Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98*, p. 311n15, part in *London–Paris–Boston 1985–86*, p. 231: "Durand n'est pas je crois très content des siens . . . ne me parlez plus de portraits au soleil. Le joli fond noir, voilà le vrai."
5. *Ottawa–Chicago–Fort Worth 1997–98*, pp. 196, 313.
6. *Ibid.*
7. RSC Diary, 17 Oct. 1937.

284 | Apples in a Dish 1883

Oil on canvas, 54.1 x 65.3 cm

Lower left: Renoir. 83.

1955-599

Apples in a Dish contrasts markedly with *Onions* (cat. 280), painted in Italy only two years earlier. In contrast to the animated, informal arrangement of the onions, the apples here are presented on a table viewed frontally, with the majority of the fruit carefully stacked in a large blue bowl. This arrangement bears a clear resemblance to the fruit still-life paintings that Paul Cézanne had been executing in the years around 1880—canvases that Renoir would have had a chance to see when he visited Cézanne early in 1882, on his return journey from Italy. It can be compared to canvases such as Cézanne's *Still Life with Fruit Dish, Apples, and Bread* (fig. 284.1).

In certain canvases in these years, Renoir's paint handling also bears comparison to Cézanne's brushwork in his use of sequences of parallel strokes (see cats. 285 and 287). Nevertheless, here, despite the Cézanne-like arrangement of forms, the touch is more flexible and supple. On the background wall, the strokes eddy in various directions, and on the fruit they generally serve to model their forms by following their contours, though on a few of the apples in the bowl they run in slightly more insistent parallel sequences than the shape of the fruit would seem to demand.

Contrasting warm and cool colors run throughout the canvas. The intense deep blue of the fruit bowl with its white edges and feet acts as the focus of the composition, set off against the rich red-orange tones of the ripe apples, and the same contrast is picked up in the soft pastel-like hues of the background wall. Alongside this, greens and yellows contribute to a constantly variegated surface; unusually for Renoir, the overall effect is one of insistent diversity, rather than one that revolves around a single dominant color relationship.

There is something of a contrast between the seemingly rough homespun surface of the background wall and the formality of the arrangement, with the elaborate fruit bowl and the complex patterned drapery on the table. A set of near-vertical blue strokes can be seen through the present paint layer down the right margin, suggesting that the background may originally have been framed by a curtain—another



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device that is found in many of Cézanne's canvases of still-life arrangements. The formality of the image is countered, again, by the evident signs of rotting in the foreground apple on the table—a specific sign of the passing of time that appears in some of Gustave Courbet's still-life paintings executed in 1871–72, during or after his imprisonment for participating in the Paris Commune, but otherwise most infrequently in nineteenth-century still-life paintings; this seems at odds with Renoir's general avoidance of signs of decay and aging in his art. JH

PROVENANCE The artist, sold to Durand-Ruel, 9 Sept. 1885, as *Nature morte pommes*; [Durand-Ruel, Paris, 1885–1926, sold to Coburn, 30 Mar. 1926]; Annie Swan Coburn, Chicago (1926–d. 1932, bequeathed to the Fogg); Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass. (1934–51, sold to Levy, 11 Apr. 1951); [John Levy Galleries, New York, in 1951, sold to Knoedler]; [Knoedler, New York, sold to Clark, 19 May 1951]; Robert Sterling Clark (1951–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

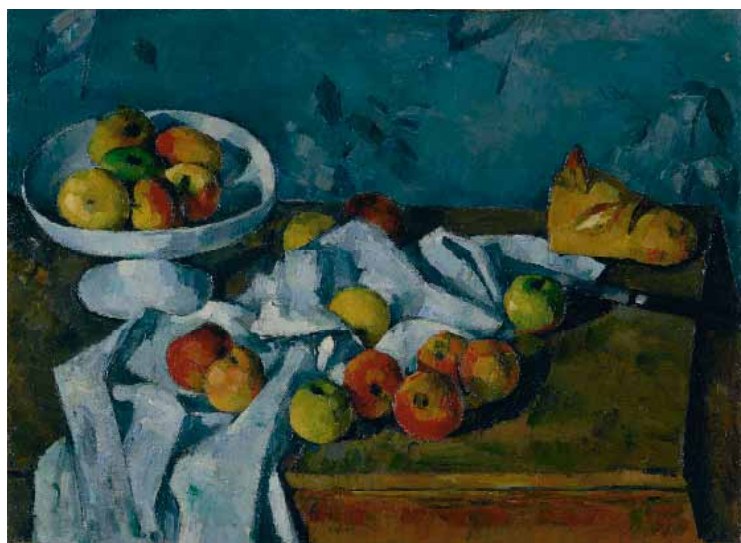


Fig. 284.1. Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906), *Still Life with Fruit Dish, Apples, and Bread*, c. 1879–80. Oil on canvas, 55.1 x 74.4 cm. Collection Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz," Winterthur (inv. 1921.2)

EXHIBITIONS Chicago 1932, p. 24, no. 35; Williamstown 1956b, no. 143, pl. 8; New York 1967, no. 42; Williamstown 1996–97, pp. 27, 92–93, ill.; Williamstown–New York 2006–7, pp. 104–5, 262, fig. 95; Madrid 2010–11, pp. 35, 96, 114–16, no. 26, ill.

REFERENCES Vollard 1920, not listed in French ed. (English ed., p. 241); Fogg Art Museum 1934, p. 18; Barnes and de Mazia 1935, pp. 88, 455, no. 132; Jewell 1944, p. 112, ill.; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 103, ill.; Fezzi 1972, p. 114, no. 570, ill. (French ed., p. 111, no. 544, ill.); Huyghe 1974, p. 178, fig. 155; Dauberville and Dauberville 2007–10, vol. 2, p. 32, no. 731, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a moderate-weave linen (22 threads/cm) that had its failing paste and gum elemi lining of heavy double-weave fabric (13 threads/cm) removed in 2005. The five-member pine stretcher is original. There are two fairly large repairs on the right side of the dish, which were known to be overpainted losses in the paint layer only, as a 1986 radiograph shows no disruption of the fabric or ground layers at this location. The painting was relined in 2005 with linen and Beva 371 after a moisture treatment to reduce the weave impression from the old lining fabric. The blue paint in the dish has an ongoing flaking problem, possibly caused in part by the slick surface of the white upper ground layer. Several small blows to the canvas have produced crack networks, including a bull's-eye crack system in the red apple on the table. There is an old diagonal handling crease through the lower left quadrant, which was induced from the back of the canvas. Some traction crack networks in the apples on the table and the tablecloth are more noticeable because they expose the ground layer; others are interlayer paint problems showing a lower red pigment oozing to the surface. The thick varnish layers that were removed in 2005 may have been contributing to the shearing stresses in the paint layer. The large losses in the dish were compensated using primarily acrylic colors over a synthetic resin varnish.

The lower ground is an off-white, commercially prepared layer. There is a heavier, pure white artist-applied ground layer, which extends unevenly to the front picture edges. Although no underdrawing was seen in infrared reflectography or under the microscope, there may be blue painted outlines for each element of the picture. The right side of the background has a series of blue vertical brush marks, which may have been the beginnings of a drapery element, but are now partially obscured by the upper paint layer. The vehicular paint is applied wet-into-wet in pure color strokes. The paint is quite thick in some areas, with some paint buildup on the fruit, and large high impastos in such details as the white knobs of the ceramic dish. Some background strokes were applied around the fruit, although the interlacing edges are well blended.

285 | Low Tide, Yport 1883

Oil on canvas, 54 x 65 cm

Lower right: Renoir. 83.

1955.607

Renoir traveled to Yport, a small town just west of Fécamp, on the northern coast of Normandy between Dieppe and Le Havre, during August 1883, to visit Alfred Nunès, mayor of the town and a relative of Camille Pissarro. There Renoir painted portraits of Nunès's two children; in a letter, he complained that he was "busy with two brats who make me furious" and that there were "a few too many parties, that's the weak point. . . . For at their place you spend the whole day at the table."¹ *Low Tide, Yport* served as the basis for the view in the background of one of these portraits, the one representing Alfred Nunès's son Robert in sailor-boy costume on the beach (fig. 285.1). The scene depicted in both paintings can be firmly identified as the view looking eastward from Yport toward Fécamp (fig. 285.2). For many years it was misidentified as a view of Guernsey (see cat. 286); Sterling Clark bought it in the belief that it represented Guernsey.²

By the late nineteenth century, the coast of Normandy had become highly developed as a destination for vacationers, and Yport, like many other towns, had a casino. A number of Parisians, particularly artists and writers, also owned villas in Yport,³ but it had not lost its original natural charm. Although the guidebooks of the period regularly denigrated the place for its rocky and unpleasant beach,⁴ seen in the foreground of Renoir's canvas, its cliffs were highly praised; in 1866, Eugène d'Auriac described the view that Renoir chose: "to the right the cliffs and waves extend as far as the eye can see; . . . the whole scene forms a picture that is gracious, imposing and full of poetry."⁵ As late as 1887, the place could still be recommended to painters: "The outsiders who live in Yport, the painters who like to paint the many varied aspects of the Bay of Fécamp, who find so many interesting motifs in the comings and goings of the fishermen and their boats, . . . praise the solitude of their retreat, and the beautiful appearance of the sea and the cliffs."⁶

Renoir's canvas gives no indication of the status of the place as a resort, though the artist does take some note of the activities of the local fishermen, with the small boat and the summary indications of figures out on the rocks. The primary focus is on the rocks them-