



**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,
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: John Constable, *Yarmouth Jetty* (cat. 73)

OPPOSITE COPYRIGHT PAGE: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *Bathers of the Borromean Isles* (cat. 89)

PAGE VIII: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Woman Crocheting* (cat. 267)

PAGE X: Claude Monet, *Seascape, Storm* (cat. 222)

PAGE XII: Jacques-Louis David, *Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure de Turenne-d'Aynac* (cat. 103)

PAGE XVI: William-Adolphe Bouguereau, *Nymphs and Satyr* (cat. 33)

PRECEDING PAGE 2: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Snake Charmer* (cat. 154)

painting, *Woodlands*, the house that belonged to the artist's parents, which was also in Hampshire, east of Southampton. According to a second inscription on the back of the painting, Archer-Burton gave or bequeathed this work to his young niece, Florence Annie. Both his painting and military careers were cut short by his death on 4 October 1855 while posted to Turkey.⁶ EP

PROVENANCE The artist, given or bequeathed to Florence Annie Archer-Burton; Florence Annie Archer-Burton, later Mrs. George Graves, his niece, by 1855; Mabel Earle Archer-Burton, Lady Crofton, her sister, by descent;⁷ [Newhouse Galleries, Inc., New York, by 1962, sold to Manton, 29 Jan. 1962, as *Rockstone Place*, by John Constable; Sir Edwin A. G. Manton, New York (1962–d. 2005); Diana Morton, his daughter, by descent (2005–7, given to the Clark); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

EXHIBITIONS None

REFERENCES Parris 1994, pp. 101–2, no. 33, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a brown wood-pulp board 0.2 cm thick with a gray painted reverse. The board is still fairly flat, with minor chips and dents around the edges. All the corners except the lower right are crushed and bent back slightly. An old scratch near the lower edge below the dog can be seen, along with flexing cracks in the upper right corner, and to a lesser extent in the other corners. The very thin blue sky is abraded throughout. The present varnish is clear and probably fairly recent. Ten to fifteen percent of the sky is retouched, including an area above the building, and additional retouching is seen scattered in the two lower corners and the shady patch in the lawn's lower left. The coating is fairly reflective, but the retouches are more matte, making the sky look particularly uneven. The tops of some impastos are physically abraded, as if the painting had been stacked with others in a storage box.

The ground layer is a pinkish color and is probably a commercial application along with the gray paint on the reverse. In normal light, fissured black ink outlines can be distinguished along the roof and chimney forms. Infrared reflectography confirms ink outlines along only the top of the building; it also shows several changes in the chimney placement and painted location of trees in the stand to the right. There may be a brown imprimatura below the foliage. The paint film is comprised of thin vehicular strokes, with small flicks of lighter colors. Parts of the image are executed wet-into-wet, while some details were added on top of dry paint. The artist may have used ink for part of the dog's coat. For the most part, small brushes were used, and a few white bristles were left behind in the paint. There is also a long dark hair, presumably the artist's, embedded in the paint to the left of the dog.

1. See correspondence of James R. Archer-Burton to Sir Edwin A. G. Manton, 17 June 1983, in the Clark's curatorial file.
2. R 06.86, 06.100, 06.104–5, and 06.107–8.
3. His promotion is recorded in Watts 1854, p. 443.
4. Leslie Parris believes that he would have been too young to have been taught by John Constable himself, and that it is more likely that Lionel was his instructor. See Parris 1994, p. 102.
5. See correspondence of James R. Archer-Burton to Sir Edwin Manton, 17 June 1983, in the Clark's curatorial file. In this letter, Jane Gubbins's great-grandson identifies the dog in the lower right corner of *Woodlands, Emsworth, Hampshire* as the artist's pet, named Beau.
6. His death was reported in the November issue of *Gentleman's Magazine* 1855, p. 558.
7. Information from Newhouse Galleries label on the panel reverse. See the Clark's curatorial file.

Enrique Atalaya González

Spanish, 1851–1914

7 | **Circus Scene** c. 1890

Oil on panel, 16.5 x 37.9 cm

Lower right: ATALAYA

1955.635

Inside a circus ring, a clown performs for the many spectators around him, cajoling three geese to scale a hurdle. A young female rider dressed in a corset, tutu, and stockings, patiently sits sidesaddle on a horse, waiting for her act to begin. Next to her, two gentlemen, one of them the ringmaster, observe the clown's number. On the other side of the ring, another assistant stands next to a tall bench and three hoops that will be used for one of the acts. Three enormous glass chandeliers hang from the ceiling. They are not lit, but their form and monumentality is evident even in the darkened space thanks to the numerous reflections on the crystals that adorn them.

In the nineteenth century, circuses were among the most important venues for entertainment. Because of their popularity, major European cities such as London and Paris constructed permanent structures instead of the more common circus tents to accommodate thousands of people. During the last third of the nineteenth century, when this work was painted, Paris had



7

several permanent circuses, among them the Cirque Fernando (later named Cirque Medrano), the Cirque Metropole (later named Cirque de Paris), the Cirque Napoléon (later named Cirque d'Hiver), Le Nouveau-Cirque, and the Cirque Olympique.¹

A number of French artists documented Parisian circuses, including James Tissot, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Edgar Degas, Georges Seurat, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, all of whom preferred to depict singular acts or individual performers. It is rare, however, to find this popular subject done by Spanish artists, as only a handful of circus-themed paintings exist. Most of them were done by painters who traveled and worked in France, such as Francisco Peralta del Campo (1845–1897), Joaquín Sunyer (1875–1956), and most importantly, Pablo Picasso (1881–1973).

Atalaya's circus scene was almost certainly painted in Paris after 1886, the year that he moved to the French capital—he would obtain French citizenship four years later. He was probably inspired to paint the scene after seeing a performance in one of the great Parisian circuses. In contrast with his French colleagues, who were interested in reproducing the frenetic movement and dynamism of the attractions or the colorful and vibrant effects of the costumes and settings, Atalaya treated the scene much more formally. He depicted a wide array of figures distributed in the ring, some of them performing, others waiting to start. Rather than reproducing a specific act, Atalaya represents a panoramic view of the entire ring and depicts a gallery of circus performers. The scene reveals little realism since most figures are standing still as if they were posing for a photograph; the only characters suggesting movement are the clown in the foreground and the three geese heading toward the hurdle.

Technically, this painting testifies to a simpler composition and execution than similar works executed by his fellow countrymen or the more avant-garde artists of the period. One of the few known discussions of Atalaya from the period is a commentary that mentions one of his most important accomplishments, a procedure he developed about 1880 that made it possible to paint on any kind of support, and that was “better than any of the already known products since it did not need varnishes, adhesives, or oils to obtain brilliancy, being at the same time easy and economical.”² This novel technique was perhaps applied to the Clark's painting, which is executed on a prepared hardwood panel. The detailed elaboration of the performers contrasts with the hastier manner in which Atalaya depicted the spectators, allowing the central figures to be the focal point of the painting.

Although Atalaya was a very active painter, first exhibiting in the National Exhibitions in Madrid (1876) and later in the Parisian Salons (1883, 1888, and 1900), as well as in Germany at galleries in Berlin and Dresden, today only a handful of his paintings are known. His work, which was briefly represented by the important French art dealer Adolphe Goupil during the mid-1880s, was mainly oriented to depicting genre scenes of Spain, including themes such as Don Quixote, bullfights, and romantic subjects. Like *Circus Scene*, many of his other paintings are small works with uncomplicated subjects and compositions, and great care shown in the refinement of detail. Today, *Circus Scene* remains one of the few examples of paintings in public collections by this relatively unknown artist. MR

PROVENANCE [Jean Oppenheim, Paris, sold to Clark, 1 July 1938]; Robert Sterling Clark, 1938–55; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS None

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a white, lightweight hardwood panel, 0.5 cm thick, possibly lime, which has been stained dark. The grain runs horizontally, and only the top and bottom edges have reverse chamfers. The panel has a slightly twisted convex warp. Small age cracks throughout form a rectangular pattern typical of painted wood, and a group of radiating cracks in the upper left corner stems from framing pressure. An old series of gouges appears in the stand at the far right of the stage. The edges show frame abrasion, transferred gold leaf, and a small bit of wood from the frame rebate. Traction cracks that cover the upper third of the image may relate to the choice of pigment or medium for the dark passages. There is solvent abrasion in the thin brown details of the background, the feathers on the geese, the whips, and the horse's head. The painting may have been cleaned through Knoedler in 1949. The ultraviolet light fluorescence indicates that older varnish was only partially removed, leaving a thin layer in the background and corners, with an especially dense 2.5-cm band along the top edge. The present glossy varnish has yellowed. There are scratches in the coating in the far left background area. No retouching was seen.

The ground is a white layer, which contributes to the high key of the circus ring. There is a diagonal ridge of ground lying across the upper left background. A fairly simple but thorough graphite underdrawing lies below most of the image. Even to the unaided eye, drawing lines are visible for all the figures, animals, and props. Under infrared reflectography, the lines running beneath the red and thinly painted white details are enhanced. The background appears to have been painted first, with reserves left for each figure that penetrates into the darkness. Quick wet-into-wet strokes define the audience figures, applied in vehicular washes that barely cover the ground layer.

1. For more on Parisian circuses see Dérens, Fort, and Gunther 2002; and Phillip Dennis Cate, "The Cult of the Circus," in *Boston–New York 1991*, pp. 38–46.
2. Ossorio y Bernard 1883–84, p. 55: "procedimiento . . . ventaja a los ya conocidos en no necesitar barnices, gomas ni aceites para adquirir brillantez, siendo al mismo tiempo tan sencillo como económico."

Barbour

French or American, 20th century

8 | *Woman Reading* c. 1910

Oil on millboard, 21.1 x 27 cm

Lower right: Barbour.

1955.638

Portraits of women reading were popular in France and elsewhere in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. This and the commonness of the surname "Barbour" have made it difficult to identify the origin of *Woman Reading*. Scholar Sandra G. Ludig has proposed the American illustrator Harold S. Barbour (1889–1961) as the most probable candidate for the authorship of this painting.¹ Barbour studied at the Arts Student League in New York City and began his career in Boston. He produced book illustrations, political cartoons, and, in the 1930s, murals and paintings for the Works Progress Administration of workers in Connecticut, where he had moved in 1929.² While the carefully delineated elements of *Woman Reading*, along with the figure's early twentieth-century costume, may suggest that it could be an early work by Harold Barbour, the signature on this painting is considerably different from the signatures on his known works of the 1930s, which are most often signed "H. S. Barbour" in all capital letters. The identification of the author of this work therefore remains uncertain. Moreover, the dimensions of the support are labeled on the reverse of the board and are consistent with the size of commercially manufactured millboard in France. This accounts for the work's inclusion in the present catalogue, although it does not necessarily mean that the artist was French.

This painting shows a woman reclining in a chaise longue in an enclosed garden. The green vegetation surrounding the manicured lawn creates a secluded spot. Here, the woman is able to relax in solitude. She leisurely reads a letter and smokes a cigarette. Smoke faintly rises from the glowing embers of her cigarette. The woman is completely absorbed by the words of her correspondent. Gathered lace covers her bosom and drapes from her three-quarter-length sleeves. The ruffles at the bottom of her long skirt spill off the seat and give a glimpse of her bright red stockings. Large palm fronds spring out of a blue pot by the woman's feet. Her hat and long brown gloves lie underneath the armrest of the chair. In the bottom right corner, a small