



**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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name appears to be an “E,” adds to the uncertainty about the artist.

The architecture of the Louvre depicted in *The Tuileries Gardens* and *Strollers in a Parisian Park* makes it clear that these paintings were executed after 1883. Formerly, the Tuileries Palace had enclosed the courtyard of the Louvre and would have blocked Baré’s chosen view of the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel. The palace was set on fire during the Paris Commune in 1871, but it was not fully dismantled until twelve years later. Neither painting displays any trace of the former building, so the two cannot have been executed prior to 1883. The gardens, however, remained predominantly unaltered from their original design of 1665 by André Le Nôtre. Public gardens served as symbols of modernization in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the Tuileries Gardens set the precedent as various parks were renovated during that time.² KA

PROVENANCE Robert Sterling Clark (bought 3 Feb. 1942–55);³ Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1980a, no cat.; Williamstown 1987–88, no cat.

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a mahogany panel 0.5 cm thick, with a slight convex warp. The reverse has a crazed varnish layer and chamfered edges 1.6 cm wide all around. The numeral “1” stamped on the back refers to the smallest commercially produced French portrait size. Frame abrasion is visible along the lower edge, plowed-up paint from frame pressure appears on the right edge, and there are a few traction cracks. The picture was cleaned in 1942 by Murray (probably of Beers Brothers). There is solvent abrasion in the man’s and boy’s suits on the right and in the small background figures. The colors look faded, as if the picture was once exposed to too much sunlight. A thin layer of yellow varnish, which was applied in the frame, has left pools of resin 1.3 cm in from all edges.

The white ground is a commercially applied layer. In low magnification, underdrawing lines in charcoal can be seen in the faces of the two seated women at the left and on the central female figure. In addition, faint outlines of the buildings can be seen using infrared reflectography. The paint was applied wet-into-wet, in a very thin and sketchy manner, with the ground showing through most colors. Some building details appear to be a thin glaze layer, and there are low rounded impastos in the white and paler brushstrokes. The signature, executed in gray ink, reads quite clearly “E. EARE” in capital letters.

1. *Strollers in a Parisian Park* was offered for sale at Sotheby’s, New York, 5 May 1999, no. 303, but was bought in.
2. Thomas 2006, pp. 35–36.
3. In his diary, Clark notes that he bought the painting from a silver shop on Madison Avenue in New York City. See RSC Diary, 3 Feb. 1942.

Antoine-Louis Barye

French, 1795–1875

10 | Tiger at Rest c. 1850–70

Oil and charcoal on paper, mounted on canvas, 31 x 46.5 cm
Lower left: BARYE
1955.640

“I will never be able to twist a tiger’s tail like that man!” Eugène Delacroix is reported to have declared of his friend Antoine-Louis Barye.¹ Indeed, Barye dedicated his art to capturing the nuances of physiognomy and behavior of wild animals. Best known as an *animalier* sculptor, Barye fashioned a successful career translating close observation into compelling depictions of animals in bronze and in paint. For the most part, his works contain no narrative beyond the frequent evocation of the drama of animals acting on instinct or succumbing to their fate as prey. He struggled to find acceptance within the academic establishment for such work, which was seen by some as more decorative than serious, but he was a widely celebrated artist by the time of his death.

Big cats—lions, tigers, and leopards—were among his most common and most popular subjects. To study these beasts, he sought out opportunities to sketch specimens both living and dead. He and Delacroix famously leapt at the chance to make sketches and measurements of a lion within hours of its death in 1829, and there are many extant drawings by Barye of living lions and tigers observed in their enclosures in the menagerie of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.²

Although he publicly exhibited only a handful of watercolors during his long career, Barye was a prolific painter in both watercolor and oil. He sold a number of watercolors to private collectors during his lifetime, and his estate sale in 1876 included ninety-nine oils and seventy watercolors, which had been found following his death both in his house in Barbizon and



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in his Paris studio.³ The chronology of his painted work is not well understood, in part because none of these works is dated, and few can be assigned to documented events such as translation into prints, public exhibition, or specific sale to patrons. Despite a number of helpful studies on the topic, this remains an area that begs for cataloguing and systematic study of known sketches, watercolors, and oils.⁴

In the Clark painting, Barye used monochromatic, sketchy paint to indicate a sheltered resting place for a recumbent yet alert tiger. All four paws are prominently featured, impressive in their scale even as their relaxed positioning belies their latent lethality. The sinuous line that defines the tiger's back, reflected as is typical in Barye's paintings by the undulations of the surrounding rock and vegetation, also hints at the inherent energy the tiger can summon at an instant's notice.

The rough outlines of vegetative and rocky forms recall the oil sketches Barye made during his stays in Barbizon starting in the 1840s, which reappear as habitats for various wild animals and reptiles in his watercolor and oil paintings.⁵ The same composition of rocks, hills, and jagged tree branch in the Clark painting reappears in the center of a watercolor showing a jaguar in an expanded landscape.⁶ This reuse of landscape setting is typical of Barye's imaginative use of his collected studies from nature—he developed nuanced depictions of animals based on sketches done in local zoos, and then situated the animals



Fig. 10.1. Antoine-Louis Barye, *Lion in Repose in a Landscape*, c. 1860. Oil over black chalk on canvas, 27.3 x 35.4 cm. Collection of Eugene V. Thaw, New York

within landscapes often based on sketches he made in the wilder areas of the Fontainebleau forest.

The Clark sketch is closely related to several other works. A tiger in identical pose reappears in a smaller but more finished oil painting (private collection, Switzerland), in which the tiger is set into a larger and somewhat different landscape.⁷ Two related paintings, with the position of the tiger reversed, exist in a comparable combination of oil sketch (fig. 10.1) and more finished oil painting (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford). In the Thaw and Wadsworth Atheneum paintings, the tiger's position has been slightly altered so

that the animal's head rests more convincingly on a now-flattened paw, the tiger is more stretched out, and the tail is curled up at the end. The Thaw and Wadsworth Atheneum paintings are more colorful, with dramatic lighting along the horizon. The head on paw motif common to these tigers appears to stem from several earlier sketches, including a drawing of a tiger now in the Louvre,⁸ which may in turn be based on a loose charcoal sketch of a lioness.⁹

The Clark painting (sold to Clark in 1913 as *Tigre couché*) does not bear the wax stamp of the 1876 Barye sale, nor does it correspond in size to any of the four paintings titled *Tigre au repos* listed in the sale.¹⁰ Both circumstances may be explained by the fact that the Clark work was painted on paper and probably laid down on canvas at a later time. As an oil sketch on paper, rather than a painting on canvas or panel, it may not have been catalogued with the paintings but might have been among the drawings, many of which were not listed individually or were omitted from the sale. One could consider this work as much a drawing as a painting, given the support, the extensive use of charcoal, and the fact that it may not have been mounted on canvas and varnished until after Barye's death.

The dating of these interrelated works is difficult to determine. Barye reused figures of animals and landscape elements, sometimes transferring a design of an animal by means of a *calque*, or tracing, onto the new support. In the case of the Clark painting and its more finished variant (private collection, Switzerland), the scale of the tiger differs significantly, suggesting not the use of a *calque* but rather a transfer of the design by another means. Indeed, the Clark's work shows evidence of a five-centimeter graphite grid that could have been used to facilitate the transmission of design elements. The more awkward pose of the Clark tiger when compared to the Thaw/Wadsworth Atheneum tigers, its sketchier quality, and the use of a paper support may suggest it came early in the sequence of these works. KM

PROVENANCE [Levesque, Paris, sold to Clark, 3 Jan. 1913, as *Tigre couché*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1913–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1984a, not in cat.; Williamstown 1993b, no cat.; Williamstown 1994b, pp. 33, 70, no. 33, ill.; New York 1994, pp. 95, 127, no. 101, ill.

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The original paper support has been glue- or paste-lined onto a stretched canvas. A restoration was performed in 1935 by Mme Coince of Paris, who probably applied the lining and the shiny natural resin varnish. The varnish has yellowed slightly and has developed cracks that do not involve the image layers.

The paper surface was quickly primed by the artist in an off-white paint. Wide brushstrokes extending in various directions can be seen quite clearly through the thin image. This priming layer covers dark marks or perhaps a partial sketch in paint. Small remnants of green and black paint seen under magnification in the lower right quadrant are visible due to a series of scratches through the whitish priming. With infrared light examination, long curved vertical strokes are revealed, two of which run through the tiger's hindquarters. The surface was also faintly gridded below the image in five-centimeter squares using graphite. Under magnification, charcoal can be seen scattered over the entire surface, some below the areas strengthened by oil paint, and some now embedded in the varnish. Heavier charcoal deposits can be seen with the unaided eye in the lower right foliage forms, where the dry crumbly medium is left unpainted, unlike the upper left quadrant which contains dry black paint strokes. The thin brown color areas are slightly wrinkled, suggesting the use of the transparent pigment bitumen. Occasional strokes of a thick white paint were used to accentuate the animal's face and stripes, and slightly thinner opaque brushwork can be seen in the background. Charcoal is pressed into the tops of the thick white strokes, which suggests that the picture was unvarnished for some time and that it came into contact with charcoal from another surface.

1. Alexandre 1889, p. 99: "Je ne pourrai jamais arriver à tordre une queue de tigre comme cet homme-là!"
2. The Jardin des Plantes acquired a live Asian tiger on 28 Oct. 1830, as indicated in the menagerie's records (ms. no. 25, t.II, 28 Oct. 1830; see Paris–Lyon 1996–98, p. 52n6). On the opportunities Delacroix and Barye had to study tigers in the late 1820s and early 1830s, see Kliman 1984, esp. p. 72. Barye continued studying directly from live animals throughout his career, and in 1854 he was named professor of zoological drawing at the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle, a post he retained until his death (New York 1994, p. 26).
3. Drouot 1876b.
4. The first systematic study of Barye's watercolors by Charles Otto Ziesenis remains indispensable (Ziesenis 1954). Wildenstein & Co. mounted an exhibition of Barye paintings with a useful catalogue in 1994 (New York 1994). Also see the essays by Martina Roudabush Norelli, "The Watercolors of Antoine-Louis Barye," in Houston and others 1988–90, pp. 61–65, and Béatrice Tupinier Barrillon, "Dessins, aquarelles, peintures," in Paris–Lyon 1996–98, pp. 75–82. Most recently, the catalogue produced by William R. Johnston and Simon Kelly



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(Baltimore–Tulsa 2007) includes an insightful essay by Kelly on Barye’s paintings as well as informative catalogue entries.

5. Of the ninety-nine oils included in the 1876 estate sale, sixty-two are identified as “*Forêt de Fontainebleau*” and another twelve are identified as “*Intérieur de forêt*.” William R. Johnston reports that seventy-three paintings were found in Barye’s cottage in Barbizon after his death. See Johnston 1974, p. 405.
6. *Jaguar Discovering a Snake* (Brooklyn Museum).
7. *Tigre couché*, oil on wood, 25 x 30 cm. For a reproduction, see Montebello Fine Art 1993, p. 11.
8. *A Tiger on the Platform of Its Cage* (Musée du Louvre, Paris).
9. *Study of a Lioness Reclining, Paws Facing Out* (location unknown). For a reproduction of this work, see Drouot 1956, p. 33, no. 4.
10. Including the Clark work, there are at least six known paintings that correspond to the title *Tigre au repos*: a canvas measuring 51 x 121 cm in the Louvre (RF 1956-10); the Thaw oil sketch, the Wadsworth Atheneum oil, the Swiss private collection oil (all roughly 25 x 32 cm); and a canvas measuring 48.7 x 114 cm at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. Based in part on size, it seems most likely that the latter four paintings correspond to those sold in the Barye sale, where three are listed with measurements of roughly 25 x 32 cm and one of 49 x 115 cm.

Jan van Beers

Belgian, 1852–1927

11 | **Woman in Evening Dress** After 1882

Oil on canvas, 27.4 x 35.6 cm

Lower right: A L'AMI CANONNE / JAN VAN BEERS
1955.888

Jan van Beers, the son of a Belgian poet laureate, was born in Antwerp in 1852. Beers began studying at the age of seventeen at the Antwerp Academy of Art, and initially painted grand historical subjects.¹ In 1876, he won a gold medal in Amsterdam for *The Funeral of Charles the Good* (Petit Palais, Paris), in which hundreds of twelfth-century figures mourn their beloved king. When Beers moved to Paris about 1882, his style changed with his new surroundings. He found that painting charming Parisian women was not only enjoyable, but also profitable.² Beers painted fantasy pictures as well as portraits and landscapes. He exhibited regularly at the Salon and at special exhibitions organized at the galleries of Georges Petit and Durand-Ruel. Though he was diverse in his production, the public adored Beers’s miniature pictures of the chic side of urban life.³