



**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)

whom Constable is known to have sketched in 1803, early in his career.

Chrysler, an avid collector, gave the bulk of his collection to the city of Norfolk in 1971. Although this gift included masterpieces of European and American painting, beyond a few portraits, he was not known for collecting works by British artists in any depth.<sup>4</sup> EP

**PROVENANCE** Walter P. Chrysler Jr., New York and Norfolk (by 1960, his sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, 30 Apr. 1960, no. 172, as by John Constable, sold to Manton); Sir Edwin A. G. Manton, New York (1960–d. 2005); Diana Morton, his daughter, by descent (2005–7, given to the Clark, as by George Frost); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

**EXHIBITIONS** None

**REFERENCES** Parris 1994, p. 115, nos. 41–43, ill.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** These three images are numbered on the reverse. All are on poor quality laminate cardboard supports, varying in thickness from 0.04 cm to less than 0.08 cm. Each has been mounted to a secondary layer of cardboard 0.16 cm thick. They have paper tape tabs for framing adhered to the top and bottom edges on the back, and previously had tabs adhering to the left and right edges.

The *Landscape with Church* (cat. 359) is severely warped into a concave shape. It also has a severe diagonal crease in the upper left quadrant through the original support and paint layers. There is roughness in the paint layer along the edges, and shattered paint and varnish along the crease. The natural resin varnish has discolored toward the brown and has deposits of undissolved resin scattered in the surface. The varnish is shattered in the upper right, and there is a large lifted plate of paint and varnish in the center right area. The ultraviolet light fluorescence from the aged coating is moderate. No ground layer was detected, but the upper surface of the support looks shiny, as if pressed or possibly coated with a glue size layer. The paint was applied quickly, wet-into-wet, with sketchy vehicular strokes. There are some thicker impastos in the lower half of the image. The brushes used seem to be only smaller sables.

The *Landscape with Windmill* (cat. 360) is slightly larger than the other two and was roughly trimmed, possibly at the time of the mounting. The right edge is particularly damaged with score lines, losses on the lower right, and a missing upper right corner. There is a notch along the bottom edge. The secondary cardboard layer is delaminating, and the two supports seem to be coming apart. The supports have only a slight warp, and a shallow diagonal crease runs from the center to the lower left corner. The discolored natural resin varnish is brownish and uneven with lumps of undissolved resin. Scattered deposits of gold leaf, especially along the top, suggest that a frame once covered quite a bit of the image. In reflected light, the surface is lumpy where the two

supports are separating. The upper surface of the original cardboard is smooth and appears to have a brownish paint or size layer. The paint application was very quick and vehicular in consistency, although not as fluid as on cat. 359. There are impastos in the cloud tops and a few landscape elements. It appears that 0.64-cm bristle brushes were used together with sables. The surface is the duller of the three sketches.

The original support on *Mountain Landscape* (cat. 361) is splitting along the right edge, but the work as a whole has only a slight warp. There is a lump in the mounting to the right of center. Minute traction crackle occurs in the sky, and old losses appear in the upper right. The varnish is discolored and is especially thick in the upper half, where there are also areas of shattered resin. The sheen of this painting is similar to that of cat. 359. There is no ground layer, so the cardboard surface can be seen in the color application skips in the lower third of the image. Most of the paint looks wet-into-wet and quickly applied. Some of the bright red details look like paint splattered or transferred from another surface after the body of the image was dry.

1. Sir Edwin A. G. Manton to Leslie Parris, 2 Sept. 1992, in the Clark's curatorial file.
2. See Hayes 1966.
3. Fleming-Williams and Parris 1984, p. 159.
4. For more on Walter P. Chrysler Jr., see Chrysler Museum of Art 2007.

## Artist unknown

British, 19th century

### 362 | Lane to the Village 19th century

Oil on canvas, 31.3 x 25.4 cm

1955.657

An early purchase of Sterling Clark's while he was living in Paris, *Lane to the Village* had been in the important London collection of George Salting as a Richard Parkes Bonington (1802–1828).<sup>1</sup> Although the small-scale country scene, possibly painted in front of the motif, calls to mind the innovations in landscape painting practiced by Bonington, the English-born artist's widespread influence on Anglo-French landscape painters of the first half of the nineteenth century precludes assigning the work to the artist himself. The complexity inherent in establishing the authorship of works produced by the group of artists working closely together with Bonington is exacerbated by



362

the immediate posthumous flourishing of his reputation and the innumerable works made to capitalize on his popularity. In her discussion of Bonington's career, Marcia Pointon considers at length the various problems involved in making a solid attribution to the artist, concluding that only a clear provenance can establish authorship with any certainty.<sup>2</sup>

Setting aside the thorny issue of authorship, this scene of a villager walking along a wooded lane provides a useful touchstone to examine the transformation of the subjects and status of landscape painting in the nineteenth century in both Britain and France. In

1817, the same year that Bonington's family had moved from the lace-making center of Nottingham to Calais, the French Academy instituted a prize to be offered at the Salon in the field of *paysage historique*, or idealized, classical landscape in the tradition of Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain. But the increasing popularity of open-air sketches produced by watercolor painters challenged this tradition of large-scale works composed in the studio.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the portability of the equipment necessary for watercolor painting allowed artists to work outside in a medium that encouraged the recording of fleeting environmental phenomena.<sup>4</sup>

With only her back visible to the viewer, at the very edge of the shadowy lane, the villager demonstrates the renunciation of the strict rules of composition that defined the classical landscape. The sense that the woods are about to swallow the diminutive, anonymous figure is reinforced by the compression of space: these woods effectively block the viewer's progression along the lane into the middle distance. The viewer is initially drawn in by the broad, open lane, stretching the entire width of the frontal plane, and its deep cart tracks that diminish rapidly in width to suggest distance. Blocked from proceeding further in space by the dark mass of the woods, the eye is led upward, following the rise of three thin tree trunks that are silhouetted against an indeterminately cloudy sky.

These trees resemble those in a signed oil painting by Bonington, *Roadside Halt* (fig. 362.1), which dates to 1826. Indeed, the overall compositions of the Williamstown and New York works are quite similar, both being vertically oriented canvases with a lane leading toward a wooded area with trees rising above. The larger painting in New York also includes a group of three figures in the foreground—two by a fallen tree trunk and one mounted on a horse—which endows the work with narrative overtones. In addition, differences in painting technique can be observed, especially in the treatment of the sky, where Bonington carefully built up the clouds to achieve an airier, more luminous effect. The similarities between the paintings, however, demonstrate the influence of Bonington's oeuvre on nineteenth-century European landscape painting. EP

**PROVENANCE** George Salting, London (d. 1909); [P. & D. Colnaghi & Obach, London, sold to Clark, 23 July 1917]; Robert Sterling Clark (1917–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown 1958a, ill., as by Bonington.

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The original fabric is a moderate weight linen, which had been glue-lined to linen and attached to a replaced, five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The tacking margins were cut off during this earlier lining. Lifted cracks and plates of paint had been recorded on this picture since at least 1963, and dislodged paint covered the central third of the picture. In 2008, the painting was cleaned and relined using Beva 371, an interleaf of lightweight polyester monofilament fabric and a linen lining fabric. Age cracks are visible primarily in the upper two-thirds of the image, and there is



Fig. 362.1 Richard Parkes Bonington (English, 1802–1828), *Roadside Halt*, 1826. Oil on canvas, 46 x 37.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Francis Neilson, 1945 (45.146.1)

some frame abrasion along the right edge. The losses were filled and new retouchings were done over a layer of synthetic non-yellowing varnish. Two names were found on the back of the stretcher, “[Wm or Mrs] Corbett” and “Wm. [?]anby.”

The ground layers are off-white and can be seen in scattered locations on the surface where the paint has left voids. A few underdrawing lines are visible to the right of the tall tree's foliage, and under magnification, deposits of charcoal are evident along the edges of the tree trunks. The paint layer has soft-contoured, low-level impastos, some of which are flattened from the lining pressure. Some of the larger sweeping brushwork in the sky runs off the left edge of the picture. While this may be the style of this artist, there is also over-paint on this edge, which may suggest that the painting was cut down from a larger image.

1. For Salting's collection, see Victoria and Albert Museum 1926.
2. Pointon 1985, pp. 33–39.
3. For an extensive discussion of the history of the plein-air painting, see Philip Conisbee, “The Early History of Open-Air Painting,” in *Washington–Brooklyn–Saint Louis 1996–97*, pp. 29–43.
4. Patrick Noon discusses the role of the watercolor in the context of the Anglo-French exchange of the 1820s and 1830s in *London–Minneapolis–New York 2003–4*, pp. 232–37.