

The background of the cover is a detailed 19th-century painting of a storm at sea. The sky is filled with heavy, dark, and turbulent clouds, with some light breaking through near the horizon. The sea is dark and choppy, with white-capped waves crashing against a sandy beach in the foreground. Several large sailing ships with multiple masts and sails are visible on the horizon, some appearing to be struggling against the wind. The overall mood is one of intense natural power and maritime drama.

**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,
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James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

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ship, 1798 is related to Caldecott's oil sketch *The Girl I Left Behind Me* (Manchester City Art Gallery), in which a cavalryman looks on wistfully as his love walks away from the garden gate. *The Volunteer's Courtship, 1798* takes place at a prior moment as the couple sit in a garden engaged in animated conversation. The soldier's casual pose—leaning forward with his left arm on his knee, his right in a gesture of speech—indicates a sense of both intimacy and urgency. His head is level with that of his beloved, who is seated in a smaller chair knitting (possibly socks for the soldiers fighting abroad), looking lovingly at her officer. Although one of his less expensive purchases, the subject found favor with Sterling Clark who called it “a real nice little picture.”⁴

Although this work was painted during a relatively peaceful period of British history, the realities of maintaining a worldwide empire nonetheless encouraged nostalgia for the heroic days of the Napoleonic Wars. The flamboyantly clothed, red-coated, and plumed-hatted soldier figures in Caldecott's illustrations as well, such as the humorous “The Great Panjandrum Himself” (London, 1885). EP

PROVENANCE C. J. Waddell, Manchester (by 1888–90, his sale, Christie's, London, 5 May 1890, no. 39); [Grundy and Smith, Manchester]; [Agnew's, London, Liverpool, and Manchester]; William Clough, Knutsford, Cheshire;⁵ sale, Parke-Bernet, New York, 11–12 Apr. 1939, no. 81, sold to Clark; Robert Sterling Clark (1939–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955

EXHIBITIONS Manchester 1888, no. 60; Williamstown 1981–82, no cat.

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The original support is paper or pressed wood-pulp board 0.2 cm thick, which was mounted to the smooth side of a piece of untempered Masonite 0.6 cm thick. This treatment was probably performed before 1939, judging by the powdering deterioration of the Masonite attachment. Edge losses have occurred due to shrinkage of the excess mounting adhesive. The tree near the right edge has a scratch and paint has chipped along all edges from frame abrasion. The frame rabbet has dented the paint along the left and right edges. Some impastos are flattened, and foreign debris and fibers are crushed into the thicker paint of the young woman's skirt, probably caused during the clamping used for the mounting. The painting was cleaned in 1939 through Durand-Ruel, New York. The varnish is a very thin layer with no obvious discoloration. There are several small

retouches in the trees, which are more visible in reflected than in ultraviolet light.

The ground is commercially primed with two or three off-white layers with a pebbly texture in the uppermost layer. A vertical striation is visible in the surface, possibly the result of some tool or technique used in the ground application. There may be a thin gray wash over the entire ground, seen as the final color in the foreground. Although there was no discernible underdrawing, there was a change in the woman's proper left arm, visible under infrared light. Below the final paint, there may be a thin brown sketch, which is visible at the edges of the figures and costumes. The size of some pigment particles suggests that certain colors may have been hand ground rather than commercially prepared tube colors. The figures were executed in a fluid wet-into-wet style with the background details added afterward in a more sketchy technique.

1. Caldecott 1867.
2. Ibid.
3. Engen 1988, p. 14.
4. RSC Diary, 12 Apr. 1939.
5. The preceding three entries in the provenance come from labels on the back of the frame and panel; their place in the chronology of ownership cannot be determined.

Henri-Eugène Callot

French, 1875–1956

41 | Harbor Scene c. 1905

Oil on laminate cardboard, 50.2 x 61.1 cm
Lower left: h. CALLOT
1955.669

Henri-Eugène Callot was born in the mid-Atlantic port town of La Rochelle and would have been familiar with the iconic towers that flank the entrance to the old port, the main subject of this painting. The two stone towers stand as sentries that serve as reminders of La Rochelle's long history as a fortified city on the western coast of France. Callot painted the active harbor from the perspective of the north shore just outside the gates. The cream sails of the passing boats add liveliness to the cool, damp landscape. Callot employed shades of gray to compose the sand, water, and sky. Closer inspection reveals a wide variety of colors that give dimension to the monochrome palette. The turquoise body of the boat moored on the



41

beach provides distinction between the land and the sea. The water reflects the color of the hull and demarcates the otherwise indistinguishable water's edge. The application of wet paint on the rough, dry surface left some of the support visible underneath. Callot's paint handling complements the harsh conditions of the seaside on a drizzly day.

The round fortress on the left, the Chain Tower, holds the chain that historically secured the port. The chain would be stretched across to the larger Saint-Nicolas Tower on the opposite bank. Officials closed off the port to keep out enemies and to collect taxes from departing ships. Both towers were built in the fourteenth century and once belonged to a greater system of fortifications that were destroyed in the seventeenth century after the Siege of La Rochelle. The towers were declared historical monuments in 1879 and subsequently underwent several restoration campaigns.

Little is known about Callot's life, but his frequent use of his hometown as a subject makes clear his affection for this city. Though Callot studied with Jules-Joseph Lefebvre (1836–1912) and Tony Robert-Fleury (1837–1911) in Paris, it seems that the coastal vistas of his youth provided the greatest influence on his work. A quarterly anthology printed in La Rochelle proudly documented the participation of its natives in the Parisian Salons. As noted in this publication, Callot exhibited a painting called *Interior of the Port of La Rochelle* at the Salon of the Société des Artistes Français in 1903.¹ KA

PROVENANCE [Possibly Galerie Monna Lisa, Paris, in 1934, sold to Clark, 13 Feb. 1934];² Robert Sterling Clark (possibly 1934–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS None

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is gray laminate cardboard 0.4 cm thick. It has a slight complex convex warp that is especially visible in the two upper quadrants. In some areas, there may be a texture impressed or scored into the cardboard surface, in a diagonal pattern, stronger in direction from the upper left to the lower right. Gouges made before the paint was applied are found in the front vessel in the center foreground. The wood strainer, most likely a later addition, is attached by wire brads nailed through the front edges of the picture. This rough pine, five-member strainer is slightly smaller than the original cardboard. The crossbar covers part of an inscription “F—T.” on the reverse. Across the left half of the back is a black charcoal inscription “Bordeaux,” and in the lower right is a longer illegible phrase in fainter strokes in the same medium. There are no age cracks in the paint, although the corners are fraying and delaminating, with accompanying paint loss. There is a line of bronze powder 1.9 cm up from the lower edge, and minor flaking along the left edge from contact with the frame. There are retouches in the clouds in the upper left and right sky. Although the image may have no varnish, it has an uneven gloss due to variations in the oil content of the paint. There is a layer of yellow surface grime, probably tar and nicotine. The strong yellow ultraviolet light fluorescence probably reveals the presence of zinc white in nearly every area of the painted image.

There is no ground layer, and the cardboard surface shows through the paint film sporadically as a degraded, hot-brown grayish color. No underdrawing was detected. The palette is quite dull, and the paint was broadly applied using paste consistency strokes in a jumble of wet-over-dry patches. The cardboard support probably accelerated the drying time of the initial paint layers by leeching some of the oil from the paint. Rough scumbles and glazes were then applied in such areas as the blue boat hull. The sky was reworked around the buildings and landscape elements, and a dry brush was used in the upper sky to brush out and extend the color.

1. *Recueil de la Commission des arts et monuments historiques de la Charente-Inférieure et Société d'Archéologie de Saintes* 1902–4, p. 316.

2. An invoice in the Curatorial files from the Galerie Monna Lisa, Paris, of 13 Feb. 1934 reads “1 paysage d’Henri Callot / Sologne.” This may record the purchase of this picture or of Callot’s *Port of La Rochelle* (cat. 42); since the Sologne region of France is inland, however, neither painting reflects such geography. Either the notation is incorrect, or the painting invoiced is no longer in the collection.

42 | **Port of La Rochelle** c. 1905

Oil on canvas, 46.5 x 61.1 cm

Lower left: h. CALLOT

1955.668

Little is known about the artist Henri-Eugène Callot, whose known body of work consists predominantly of harbors, boats, and maritime activities. Callot exhibited at the Paris Salon actively between 1898 and 1940 and was a member of the Société des Artistes Français.¹

This painting shows the limestone cliffs near the port of La Rochelle on the mid-Atlantic coast of western France. Callot painted from the perspective of someone standing on the grassy edge of a cliff and looking across the bay. Callot’s signature on the patch of grass in the bottom left corner marks the ledge from which he surveyed the beach, rocks, and water below. Green vegetation on the horizontal surface of the cliffs separates land from sky. A transparent blue shadow advances from the bottom left corner, sliding across the cliff face and the beach. The sides of the cliffs match the beige sandy beach below. A thick layer of paint in the bottom right quadrant gives a three-dimensional quality to a cluster of rocks that jut out into the water. Callot mixed dashes of yellow and green into the dark burgundy impasto. This variation of color is befitting the kind of vegetation that commonly grows on rocks that appear and disappear with the changing of the tide. The serpentine motion of the pale cliffs and beach leads the eye back and halfway across the width of the painting. The blue water hugs the edges of the land, drawing attention to an inlet on the horizon. Here, the white buildings of a port town materialize. The point of a spire reaches toward the clouds, which are punctuated by pockets of blue. The underbellies of the clouds are tinged with lavender, but they condense into a blanket of gray in the upper left corner of the picture.

Callot’s use of vibrant colors to capture the landscape near La Rochelle probably predates the brilliant spectrum employed by Paul Signac (1863–1935) for his paintings of the same harbor. Between 1911 and 1930, Signac repeatedly focused his attention on the activity of the port that can be seen in the distance of this painting by Callot. The white steeple in Callot’s painting corresponds to the Lantern Tower of La Rochelle. At fifty-five meters tall, the fifteenth-century