

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 historical 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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**REFERENCES** Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 26, ill., as *In the Woods*; Fidell-Beaufort and Bailly-Herzberg 1975, p. 190, no. 141, ill., as *Le Ruisseau sous bois / Woodland Scene*; Hellebranth 1976, p. 71, no. 190, as *Le Ru de Valmondois*.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a mahogany panel 1 cm thick with chamfers 1.3 cm wide along the back edges. The panel's grain runs vertically, the back is painted gray, and the wood has a slight convex warp. There are some age cracks in the paint, although most cracks are only in the varnish. A raised trail of a human hair is lodged in the upper right quadrant and a brush hair is deposited on the surface in the lower left, probably left behind during varnishing. Frame abrasion is visible on the top, left, and right edges, along with gold deposits from the frame. The yellow discoloration of two thick coatings is partially disguised by the general green tone of the painting. The lower coating may be the original varnish, and there seems to be some retouching floating between the two layers, located in the water at the lower left and the dark portions of the trees. The tops of the impastos have less varnish, which seems to have been abraded off. The sheen is uneven with matte bands within 1.3 cm of the top and bottom edges.

The ground is a thin, commercial, off-white layer visible in the upper trees. A few age cracks have ground layer oozing up through to the surface. No underdrawing was detected. A few broad strokes below the upper paint may be unrelated to the final image. The paint was applied in small wet-into-wet strokes. There is a small bit of reworking by the artist in the light area of the image where pale strokes cover quite dark green foliage. A mix of transparent and opaque colors gives considerable luminosity to the scene.

1. Fidell-Beaufort and Bailly-Herzberg 1975, p. 31.
2. Hellebranth 1976 catalogues two paintings as early as 1835 (H 216–17, both unlocated); an example in the Musée de Pontoise is signed and dated 1877 (H 196).
3. Victor Geoffroy-Dechaume, quoted in Moreau-Nélaton 1925, p. 7; translation from Fidell-Beaufort and Bailly-Herzberg 1975, p. 33.
4. Aulnay-sous-Bois 1990, introduction.
5. H 182.
6. Astruc 1859, p. 303; translation from Fidell-Beaufort and Bailly-Herzberg 1975, p. 49.
7. Henriet 1857, p. 197; “Moi qui ne me demande jamais devant une peinture si elle est une esquisse ou un tableau, mais tout simplement si elle est bonne ou mauvaise.”
8. RSC Diary, 9 Feb. 1928.
9. See letter from Knoedler of 8 Sept. 1980 in the Clark's curatorial file.

## Honoré Daumier

French, 1808–1879

### 101 | The Print Collectors (Les Amateurs d'estampes) c. 1860–63

Oil on panel, 30.7 x 40.7 cm

Lower right: h. Daumier

1955.696

This is one of a considerable number of images in Daumier's oeuvre dealing with the subject of connoisseurs and art admirers. Print collectors in particular must have held a certain fascination for Daumier, since he himself relied on printmaking for his livelihood and for much of his reputation. The scene takes place in a darkened space whose walls are hung with what appear to be framed paintings, since they are represented with touches of color. Three men hover over the shoulders of the central figure, who holds a sheet up to the light that beams down on his shock of hair, white scarf, and on additional prints on the table, creating the brightest areas of the composition. Perhaps one of Daumier's earliest treatments of the idea of a group of art-lovers huddled intently in front of a work was a wood engraving of viewers of a painting, made to illustrate an article published in 1841, which he later revised in a lithograph published in 1862.<sup>1</sup> Both prints caricature the figures they represent, giving them exaggerated squints, grimaces, and expressions of pleasure—the caption to the lithograph reads “Fichtre! . . . Epatant! . . . Sapristi! . . . Superbe! . . . ça parle!” which is roughly translatable as “Gosh! Stunning! Heavens! Superb! It speaks!”

The figures in *The Print Collectors* are not caricatures, yet the intensity of their concentration and the sheer centripetal force with which Daumier shows them leaning, and almost straining, toward the object of their attention retain a hint of the prints' exaggerations. Ségolène Le Men has identified two of the men in the lithograph as Daumier himself and the landscape painter Jules Dupré, identifications that give the image a degree of self-mockery.<sup>2</sup> Since the figures in *The Print Collectors* are more generic, and are admiring a print rather than a painting, the situation is rather different. Here the trace of satire might reflect ambivalence on Daumier's part about his own dependence on what he may have seen as the excessive enthusiasm of such admirers for the printed image,



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and implicitly, their relative indifference to his painted work. Moreover, since this painting is generally dated to the three-year period during which Daumier was fired from his regular job as one of the principle caricaturists for the satirical journal *Charivari*, the irony of these *amateurs'* enthusiasm becomes even sharper.

While the condition and attribution of the Clark's *An Artist* (see cat. 102) may be problematic, this work, in contrast, has a long history of ownership, and shows clear evidence of Daumier's characteristic working methods. *The Print Collectors* appeared in the first comprehensive exhibition of the artist's work, organized just before his death, at the Durand-Ruel Gallery in 1878, where it was lent by a Monsieur Béguin. Although this owner's first name is not known, he was related to the Bureau family, which owned one of the great collections of Daumier's work thanks to inheritance from Auguste Boulard (1825–1897), an artist and one of Daumier's close friends.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, infrared light reveals what is likely to be considerable underdrawing, done in quick, nervous strokes that are closely comparable to the artist's drawings on paper. These lines often differ from the paint layer above them, again pointing to Daumier's habit of reworking his paintings numerous times in successive layers.<sup>4</sup> In addition, K. E. Maison identified a small charcoal and wash drawing as a study, or a fragment of a study, for this painting (private collection, Paris).<sup>5</sup> Like the paint-

ing, the drawing centers on the gesture of the principal figure holding a print at arm's length, but two secondary figures around him, while again peering intently at the sheet as in the painting, are arranged considerably differently, and less forcefully. The development from sketch to painting demonstrates the first step in Daumier's process of refining his composition. SL

**PROVENANCE** Béguin (in 1878); Joanny Peytel, Paris (by 1912–d. 1924); [Knoedler, London, sold to Clark, 13 Oct. 1925]; Robert Sterling Clark (1925–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Paris 1878a, no. 14, as *Amateurs de gravures*, lent by Béguin; Saint Petersburg 1912, no. 244, lent by S. [sic] Peytel; Basel 1921, no. 52, lent by J. Peytel; Williamstown 1958a, ill.; Williamstown 1959b, ill.; Williamstown 1962, no. 1, pl. 1; Williamstown 1997a, no cat.; Ottawa–Paris–Washington 1999–2000, pp. 398–99, no. 248, ill.

**REFERENCES** Frantz 1913, pp. 190, 194, ill.;<sup>6</sup> Sadleir 1924, pl. 33; Fuchs 1927, p. 50, no. 99, pl. 99; Escholier 1930, p. 118, pl. 33; Lassaigue 1938, p. 69, ill.; Cassou 1949, pl. 37; Schweicher 1954, pl. 15; London 1961, p. 36; Mastai 1962, p. 202, ill.; *Emporium* 1962, p. 74, ill.; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 29, ill.; Escholier 1965, pp. 172, 177, ill.; Hoetink 1967, p. 54; Maison 1968, vol. 1, p. 130, no. I-147, pl. 94; Roy 1971, p. 67, ill.; Mandel 1971, pp. 104–5, no. 193, ill. on cover, p. 105, pl. 37; Brooks 1981, pp. 40–41, no. 16, ill.; Neidhardt 1994, p. 18, ill.; Kern et al. 1996, pp. 52–53, ill.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The original support is an oak panel (0.3 cm thick) with the grain running horizontally. The wood grain is visible through all layers on the surface. The panel's plane has a slightly twisted, concave warp, perhaps explaining the presence of the pine cradle. Small wood strips were added to all four edges at the time the cradle was applied. The reverse was stained dark after cradling, possibly to mask a thinning and leveling of the panel to remove chamfered edges. The edges of the paint film are furrowed, indicating that the picture was framed very tightly at an early date, while the paint was still soft. The picture was treated in 1930 by Chapuis and Coince of Paris, and again in 1956. The present surface coating is thick and shiny, with many horizontal and some vertical cracks, possibly induced by pressure from the formerly immobile cradle. There is considerable retouching in all the facial features, the hair of most of the men, scattered dark costume passages, and around the edges, areas that are now foggy in appearance. The right-most face still shows some effect of cleaning abrasion. There are also some deep cracks scattered in the paint film, and accidental deposits of gold leaf in the surface.

The ground layers are white, as seen at the edges. The paint layers are very vehicular in appearance, and are probably comprised of several glaze layers. A number of changes are visible in infrared reflectography. The lower layers may encompass both true underdrawing, and also more broadly applied dark paint washes used to lay in the forms. Finer alternate sketch lines are very nervous and lively strokes, not all of which can be seen in the final paint layers. There are changes to the head and proper left arm of the left-most figure. The array of pictures on the back wall was blocked-in differently at first, especially the large dark central picture. There are changes in the position of the standing figure on the far right and adjustments to the face that refine both his features and his expression.

1. For both, see Ottawa–Paris–Washington 1999–2000, p. 380.
2. Ibid.
3. For this provenance information, see Maison 1968, vol. 1, p. 31.
4. Aviva Burnstock and William Bradford analyze Daumier's use of drawing techniques in his paintings from a conservation perspective. See Burnstock and Bradford 1998, p. 220.
5. Maison 1968, vol. 2, p. 130, no. 380.
6. Listed incorrectly as having been in the Rouart collection.

## Honoré Daumier or Imitator of Honoré Daumier

French, 1808–1879

### 102 | An Artist (The Painter at His Easel)

c. 1870–75

Oil on canvas, mounted on panel, 35.4 x 27 cm

Lower left: h. D.

1955.697

Daumier regularly depicted artists in his painted and graphic work, generally showing them either absorbed in the solitary effort of creation or engaged in displaying their work to collectors or onlookers. He himself had taken up painting somewhat later in life, after achieving success as a printmaker and caricaturist, and was almost entirely self-taught in painting techniques. Perhaps because of the apparent age of the figure in *An Artist*, as well as his powerful, energetic presence and concentration on his work, qualities Daumier presumably also displayed, this work has sometimes been called a self-portrait, though the identification is clearly incorrect. Instead, the generalized figure represents a type, an embodiment of the creative process. Most sources agree that it was painted toward the end of Daumier's career, when his command of the medium was at its height, perhaps as late as 1870–75.

This painting bears a very close relationship to another of the same subject in the Phillips Collection in Washington, *The Painter at His Easel* (fig. 102.1), a relationship that makes the evaluation of the present work challenging. There is a third related work in the Barnes Foundation that, because it is much smaller and considerably different visually, is less relevant to the discussion.<sup>1</sup> Both the Clark and the Phillips paintings have almost exactly the same dimensions (the Phillips work is 34 x 26.4 cm), and the historical record for both works probably dates back only to the early twentieth century, a fact that is fairly common for paintings by Daumier.<sup>2</sup> The artist regularly made multiple versions of a composition, and as Michael Pantazzi has discussed, his method for doing so often involved tracing the outlines of an image so that he could repeat and rework it.<sup>3</sup> While this might have led to paintings that are essentially copies of each other, Daumier seems not to have used his tracings in that way, but rather nearly always introduced changes in