



**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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Index by Kathleen M. Friello
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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.¹ 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.² 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.³ 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



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format, content, or details that make each version clearly and distinctly different. As Pantazzi put it, “the painted repetitions are seldom copies, and their intention is not to replicate; rather, they are stages of refinement of an idea, and almost always differ in detail and emphasis.”⁴ In the pair of paintings *Don Quixote and the Dead Mule*, for example, one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the other in the Rijksmuseum Kröller Müller, Otterlo, the general compositions are very close, but, among other notable discrepancies, the figure of the mounted Don Quixote is much larger and rises above the ridgeline of the distant mountains in the Metropolitan version, while remaining below it in the Kröller-Müller work.⁵

There are many fewer such differences between the Clark *Artist* and the Phillips *Painter*. Certainly the tonality of the present work is considerably lighter than the Phillips version (though the condition of the painting, which will be discussed below, plays a major role), but in their outlines, relative positions, and details, virtually every element of the two works is closely comparable. Only the contours of the artist’s jacket, which are more animated in the Clark work, and the position of what appears to be a piece of cloth thrown over a chest or chair, which is shifted slightly from one image to the other, are exceptions to this observation. This lack of substantive difference in itself might begin to raise questions about authen-

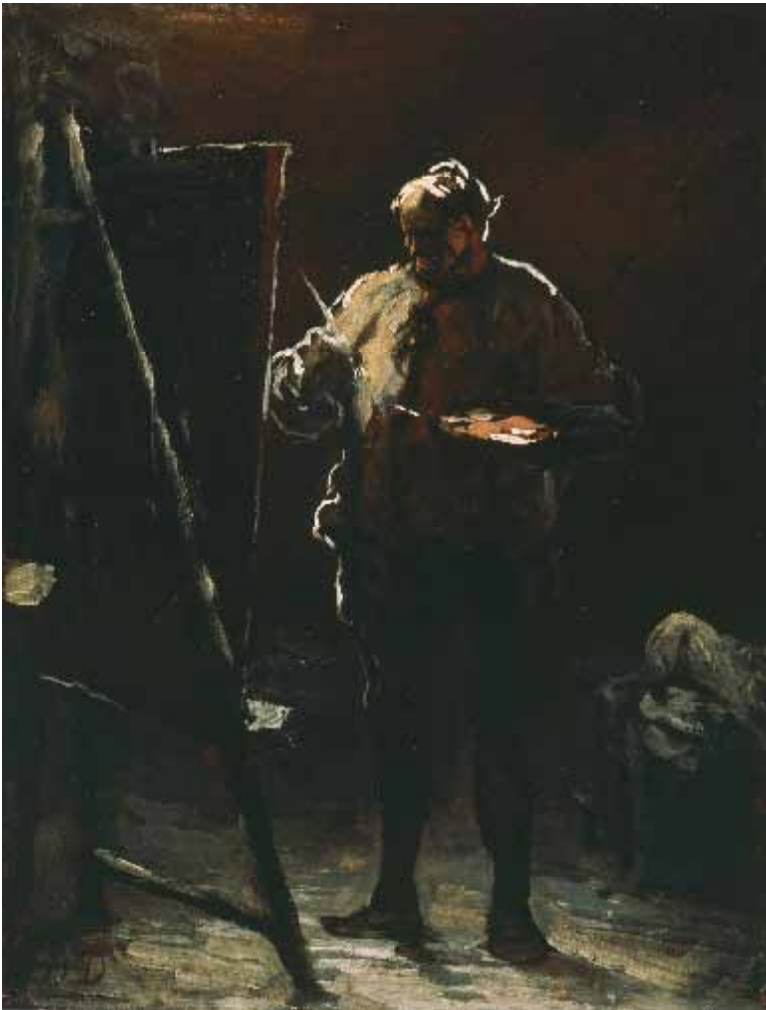


Fig. 102.1. Honoré Daumier, *The Painter at His Easel*, c. 1870. Oil on panel, 34 x 26.4 cm. The Phillips Collection, Washington. Gift of Marjorie Phillips, 1967

ticity, since it diverges considerably from Daumier's usual practice. More subjectively, the Phillips *Painter* is a loosely brushed, shadowy, improvised-looking work, in which the white highlights that catch the edges of the figure and objects seem almost independent of the forms they help to define, while these suggestive, allusive aspects seem to become literal and concrete in the Clark version, as if its creator were trying to clarify the ambiguities of the Phillips image. There is also a greater sense of depth and space to the Phillips work, where the Clark image seems less three-dimensional, almost verging on caricature. In addition, the "D" of Daumier's monogram seems shakier in the Clark painting, and the curving, uppermost stroke of the letter loops over the top of the left-hand verti-

cal stroke with only the slightest perceptible overlap, rather than forcefully intersecting it as it does in nearly every other signature on the artist's paintings.⁶

This comparison, however, must be considered in light of the condition of the Clark work, a condition that has been open to question since at least the time of Sterling Clark's acquisition in 1944. After purchasing the work from Knoedler, Clark sent it to the conservator Charles De Wild, who, upon examining it, stated that there was "nothing to do except to take off varnish and replace it."⁷ Just over a week later, the transformation was apparently striking. According to Clark, De Wild had removed what he described as overpaint and a "coach varnish"—presumably a very thickly applied varnish containing oil (see Technical Report)—using lye, an unusually radical treatment that has left just a few traces of abrasion and etching on the current paint surface, since the varnish itself was probably not completely removed. De Wild also commented that the layers he had removed had likely been applied thirty to fifty years earlier, possibly by Max Liebermann, the German artist and former owner of the painting. Given the condition of what remains, the original appearance of *An Artist* cannot be known, though it is likely to have been darker than at present, perhaps more in keeping with the Phillips panel.

De Wild's comment that the Clark work had been overpainted raises still more serious questions. The problematic nature of attribution and physical condition in Daumier's oeuvre has long been acknowledged. The issue was touched on early in the twentieth century by the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, who noted in his posthumously published memoir that the artist had died "leaving unfinished paintings and many sketches, which contemptible speculators took from his widow one day for a ridiculous sum. Most of these works, retouched by them in varying degrees, were later sold at very high prices."⁸ Most subsequent publications have similarly noted this problem, from K. E. Maison in his 1968 catalogue raisonné, whose introduction includes a long and well-documented overview of both the unstable condition of many paintings as the artist created them and the reworking by later hands of other paintings, to the catalogue of the 1999 retrospective exhibition. None of these publications, however, has questioned the attribution of the Clark *Artist* wholly to Daumier.⁹ Indeed, Bruce Laughton cites the Clark, Phillips, and Barnes paintings as "about the most extraordinary case in point" of Daumier's practice of exploring the process

of painting itself, “trying to perfect the performance,” by making multiple versions of a composition, thus implicitly seeing only the artist’s hand in all three.¹⁰

In fact, other aspects of this painting’s execution, even in its present state, might support the attribution to Daumier. A study by two conservators of a group of the artist’s works (which did not include any of the three under discussion) concluded that he often worked over an opaque white priming layer, and frequently used both drawing and painting techniques, and oil- and water-based media, in creating his paintings.¹¹ As Sandra Webber has noted, there are bright blue lines, possibly of ink, visible to the unaided eye around certain forms in several passages, most noticeably in the proper left foot of the figure. While no underdrawing per se is visible with infrared reflectography, these lines may well have served either as an initial laying-in of the composition or as part of a transfer process, something Daumier himself is known to have done regularly. Further, certain passages of thinly applied paint allow a whitish ground layer to show through. Even the complex layers of paint, glazes, and line work seem congruent with the artist’s characteristic working methods. Considering the visual appearance of the Clark and Phillips works, it seems difficult to accept full attribution to Daumier for the Clark painting. Nonetheless, given all the information currently available about *An Artist*, and acknowledging that its appearance has changed significantly over the years, there is very little definitive evidence that might allow a final assessment of this painting. SL

PROVENANCE [Gaston Alexandre Camentron, Paris, d. 1919]; Hermann Eissler, Vienna; Max Liebermann, Berlin (by 1927–d. 1935); Martha Liebermann, Berlin, his wife, and/or Mrs. Kurt Riezler (Käthe Liebermann), Berlin and New York, his daughter, by descent (from 1935, until at least 1938);¹² [Galerie André Weil, Paris]; [Knoedler, New York, sold to Clark, 1 Nov. 1944]; Robert Sterling Clark (1944–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Amsterdam 1938, no. 82, ill., as *Le peintre / De schilder voor zijn ezel*; Williamstown 1958a, ill.; Williamstown 1959b, ill.; Williamstown 1962, no. 2, pl. 2; Williamstown 1981b, pp. 15–16, 47, no. 10; Ottawa–Paris–Washington 1999–2000, pp. 514–15, no. 350, ill. p. 515 (exhibited in Ottawa only); London–Amsterdam–Williamstown 2000–2001, p. 11, fig. 1.

REFERENCES Klossowski 1923, p. 122, no. 392, as *Le peintre devant son tableau*; Fuchs 1927, p. 46, no. 1, pl. 1, as *Der Maler (Selbstporträt)*; Jedlicka 1933, p. 40 (2nd ed., pp. 26–27); Ven-

turi 1947, p. 191, fig. 137; London 1961, p. 36; Mastai 1962, p. 202; *Emporium* 1962, p. 74; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 28, ill.; Aymar 1967, p. 76, pl. 34; Maison 1968, vol. 1, pp. 172–73, no. 1–221, pl. 102; Mandel 1971, p. 112, no. 281, ill.; Janda 1973, p. 125, no. 10, pl. 14; Laughton 1996, pp. 149, 187n32; Vienna 1997–98, pp. 239–40.

TECHNICAL REPORT The original support is a coarse canvas, probably a twill weave with the warp threads oriented horizontally. The painting was unevenly trimmed prior to its mounting to a piece of tropical hardwood 1.1 cm thick with chamfered back edges. Narrow parts of the four tacking margins were apparently added to the surface at this time, especially at the lower edge where 0.6 to 1 cm of canvas was extended. The combined support plane is very level, but the surface has a strong weave impression from the mounting process. The mounting may have been performed prior to 1927, possibly to repair a small damage seen to the lower right of the picture on the easel and extending into the background.

In 1944, the restorer Charles De Wild treated the picture, noting that he had used lye rather than alcohol to remove what he felt was overpaint and a coach varnish, which probably contained oil, making it harder to solubilize. The ultraviolet fluorescence is still quite strong, suggesting that the varnish was reduced rather than removed. There are a few etched paint areas that can be linked to the use of the caustic lye, and the tops of the paler impastos are abraded slightly by cleaning. The painting is made up of multiple, fluid, vehicular paint and glaze layers. Some passages are thin enough to allow the whitish ground layer to show through, while other colors are thick, with traction cracks revealing a lower paint layer. Many paint strokes are either floating on a resinous layer or appear to be embedded in the thick varnish. The current coating was apparently brush applied in a very viscous solution, as brushstrokes are still standing on the surface in the upper half of the image, causing some variation in the gloss. The thick resin has caused a network of glassy fractures separate from the paint film cracks, as well as microscopic surface rippling where the paint dried in deep pools. There is also some fogging, and several drips mar the surface. Although there is no visible retouching, the brightness of the ultraviolet light fluorescence could be obscuring any that lies below the coating. There is no underdrawing visible in infrared reflectography, but in normal lighting narrow bright blue lines, perhaps ink, are visible along the outside of several forms.

1. The Phillips painting, which is oil on panel, is Maison 1968, vol. 1, no. 1–222. The Barnes is Maison 1968, vol. 1, no. 1–220.
2. In some documentation, including Duncan Phillips’s own correspondence, the Phillips painting is said to have been exhibited in the Daumier exhibition at Durand-Ruel in 1878, no. 93, *La leçon de peinture*, lent by Jean Dollfus. Maison, however, connects no. 93 with a different paint-

- ing, *Le dessinateur (The Artist)* (1853; Mildred Lane Kemper Museum, Saint Louis). In fact, neither the Phillips nor the Kemper painting seems to fit the 1878 description perfectly. In *Ottawa–Paris–Washington 1999*, p. 514, the first owner of the Phillips work listed is Paul Rosenberg, by 1901.
3. Pantazzi in *Ottawa–Paris–Washington 1999*, p. 24.
 4. *Ibid.*
 5. The Metropolitan painting is *Maison 1968*, vol. 1, no. I-201 and the Kröller-Müller is no. I-202.
 6. As *Maison* notes, however, such monograms are not a reliable basis for judging attributions of works overall, and, he states, “the question of the authenticity of a monogram is in fact of minor importance.” *Maison 1968*, p. 39.
 7. RSC Diary, 20 Oct. 1944. It might be noted that in a 1994 conservation report, the Phillips painting was described as having a “thick and extremely discolored surface coating,” from which a layer of yellow/brown grime was removed, leaving the varnish in place. Elizabeth Steele, conservation report, Phillips Collection files. Many thanks to Ms. Steele and to Karen Schneider for granting access to this information.
 8. See Venturi 1939, vol. 2, p. 208. Translation from *Ottawa–Paris–Washington 1999*, p. 28. Durand-Ruel had died in 1921.
 9. Certain experts, however, have raised doubts in conversation with Clark curators, including Michael Pantazzi to this author in 2001. The Ottawa venue of the 1999 exhibition may have been the only time that the Clark and Phillips works have been seen side by side.
 10. Laughton 1996, p. 149.
 11. Burnstock and Bradford 1998, pp. 217–22.
 12. Fuchs 1927, p. 46, published the painting as already belonging to Max Liebermann. According to Janda 1973, p. 122, Liebermann deposited this and a number of other paintings at the Kunsthaus Zurich in Sept. 1933, where they remained for several years. A letter to the Kunsthaus Zurich from Walter Feilchenfeldt of the Paul Cassirer gallery, dated 2 May 1933, lists this work among those to be deposited, and it was no. 3 on the Kunsthaus deposit list; see Vienna 1997–98, pp. 239–40. At Liebermann’s death in 1935, ownership passed either to his widow or to his daughter, Käthe, wife of Kurt Riezler, a philosopher and political theorist. The pictures, including this one, were sent to Amsterdam for exhibition from July to September 1938, after which, again according to Janda, they were returned to Riezler. The Riezlers emigrated to New York in December 1938 but retained possession of their collection; see Thomson 1980, p. 217. A number of works from the collection were sold or donated at about this time; this was probably approximately when this picture was sold to André Weil.

Jacques-Louis David

French, 1748–1825

103 | Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure de Turenne-d’Aynac 1816

Oil on canvas, 71.8 x 56.2 cm
Below center, left: L. David / 1816
1999.2

David painted Henri-Amédée de Turenne (1776–1852) twice in 1816, when both were living in Brussels away from the Bourbon government in France. In a list of his works drawn up in Brussels in 1819, six years before his death, under the rubric “In my exile,” one finds both “portrait of M. de Turenne, bust” and “portrait of M. de Turenne, large scale,” with the full-length portrait of Maurice-Étienne Gérard (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) between the two.¹ The Williamstown canvas was thus the first to be executed, whereas the other (fig. 103.1), which early biographers describe as a “large scale repetition,”² was perhaps prompted by the enviously large scale on which Gérard chose to be portrayed.

While Turenne had closely linked his career and his fate to the Napoleonic regime since 1805, he was not a banished imperial officer.³ Although he was not a direct descendant of the great military commander of Louis XIV, as his family descended from a Turenne bastard branch recognized by testament in 1399, he most likely used the enormous prestige that his namesake enjoyed during the Revolution and Empire to further his own career. Enrolled as a volunteer in the army of the Pyrénées-Orientales in 1793–94, he ran into trouble during the Terror on account of his aristocratic lineage and chose to abandon military life for the next ten years. His remarkable second career in the army began only in 1805. Engaged in major campaigns with the Grande Armée all across Europe, he rose steadily in the military hierarchy. In 1809, he was gratified with a court appointment, as one of the sixty chamberlains of the emperor, and then in 1811 as Napoleon’s *maître de la garde-robe* (master of the robes).⁴ In 1813, he was accorded the title of *comte de l’Empire* (count of the Empire). Promoted to colonel by Napoleon on 8 March 1814, he was presumably present at his abdication on 6 April, since six days later he sent a letter of allegiance to Louis XVIII from Fontainebleau. Without wasting any time, he petitioned the Bourbon govern-