



**NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS  
AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE**

**VOLUME ONE**

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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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Details:

TITLE PAGE: John Constable, *Yarmouth Jetty* (cat. 73)

OPPOSITE COPYRIGHT PAGE: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *Bathers of the Borromean Isles* (cat. 89)

PAGE VIII: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Woman Crocheting* (cat. 267)

PAGE X: Claude Monet, *Seascape, Storm* (cat. 222)

PAGE XII: Jacques-Louis David, *Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure de Turenne-d'Aynac* (cat. 103)

PAGE XVI: William-Adolphe Bouguereau, *Nymphs and Satyr* (cat. 33)

PRECEDING PAGE 2: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Snake Charmer* (cat. 154)

trip, Douglas wrote to the Scottish connoisseur David Laing, “if I do not flatter myself that I am an antiquary I am at least a collector.”<sup>2</sup>

Not only did objects from his personal collection appear in his paintings, but his antiquarian interests also prepared him for his election in 1877 as Curator of the National Gallery of Scotland. Douglas held that position until 1882 when he became President of the Royal Scottish Academy and was knighted. Throughout his career Douglas exhibited regularly at the Royal Scottish Academy exhibitions, as well as those at the Royal Academy in London. In contrast to many Scottish artists of his generation, however, he did not settle in the capital. EP

**PROVENANCE** [Wallis & Son (The French Gallery), London, sold to Clark, 23 Mar. 1931, as *In a Church*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1931–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** None

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a commercially supplied composition board with a pronounced convex warp. A paper label on the reverse for the colorman Charles Roberson & Co. indicates the source of the panel. The upper right corner of the support has crushed fibers, and the upper left shows the repair of a small broken section. There are old losses in the support in the lower right and a newer loss in the lower left. In general, the support is very brittle and fragile. There are traction cracks in the gray paint in the background and floor areas, and scattered age cracks in the paler colors. Frame abrasion occurs on all edges, including damage to the signature, and some wrinkling is due to an excess of either diluent or medium in the paint. The picture was cleaned and restored in 1935 by Chapuis and Coince in Paris and was “regenerated” (probably only surface cleaned and/or revarnished) in 1956 at the Clark by a Miss Testut (possibly an employee of William Suhr). Speckles of brown residue, perhaps an earlier coating, dot the surface and are especially visible in the lighter passages. In ultraviolet light, the present varnish application is seen as moderately fluorescing vertical brushstrokes, with pools of resin in some areas. The coating also has scattered cracks, separate from the paint film. There are a few retouches in the monk’s hood and along the edges of the picture, and possibly in the woman’s black dress. The surface coating is even and quite glossy in reflected light.

The ground is comprised of gritty, white, commercially applied layers. The paint technique is very vehicular with an orange-peel effect on the surface, perhaps from a slow drying medium. Under the microscope, the entire image has a blurred appearance, with very few defined edges. Although

small brushes were used to build up the flesh areas, the flowing quality of the medium has rendered most brushstrokes invisible.

1. Sales of his collection were held on two occasions: in 1865, before one of his Continental trips, and over the course of six days after his death in 1891. For the 1865 sales, see Chapman 1865a and 1865b. For the 1891 sales, see Dowell’s 1891a and Dowell’s 1891b.
2. Sir William Fettes Douglas to David Laing, 21 Feb. 1858, Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections, La.iv.17, f. 2705.

## Martin Drölling

French, 1752–1817

### 127 | Young Woman in an English Garden c. 1795

Oil on canvas or paper, 45.4 x 37.5 cm

Lower left: Drölling f.

1955-725

Martin Drölling, a native of Alsace, studied painting in the studio of an obscure artist in Sélestat before his arrival in Paris in 1780, when he enrolled in the *École des Beaux-Arts*.<sup>1</sup> The following year, he was represented by two genre paintings in the exhibition of the Salon de la Correspondance, scenes of village life recalling seventeenth-century Dutch precedents, which became his specialty.<sup>2</sup> Following the opening of the state-sponsored Salon to all artists in 1791, Drölling exhibited his works there on a regular basis from 1793 until 1817, attracting critical acclaim as well as popular success. Most of his known works date from after 1790.

At the Salon of 1795, Drölling’s submissions included a pair of paintings, described in the *livret* as “a young woman in an English garden, holding a letter and ready to cross a stream” and “a young woman near a rosebush on which she has pricked her finger attempting to pick a rose.”<sup>3</sup> The same young woman appears in both paintings, establishing their narrative continuum. In the Clark painting, the letter, evoking an absent lover, creates a mood of romantic reverie; its pendant, *The Pricked Finger* (private collection), depicts the lovesick protagonist, her bodice now suggestively unlaced, contemplating the unhappy denoue-



127

ment in an image of love gone awry. In a departure from his usual domestic genre subjects, Drölling's narrative pendants borrow a conceit popularized in ancien régime genre painting—the use of paired images to chart the progress of love—which also figured in works by his contemporaries, including Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845) and the lesser known Michel Garnier (1753–1819).<sup>4</sup> Drölling shares with these artists an interest in rendering descriptive details, as in the crisp satin folds of the young woman's skirt and their reflection in the stream in the Clark work, influenced by seventeenth-century Dutch painting. A Salon review from 1795 compared Drölling's "fluent and light" brushwork to the meticulous finish of seventeenth-century

Dutch paintings, citing the work of "van Myeris" [*sic*].<sup>5</sup> Similarly, an 1804 Salon critic dubbed Drölling "the Mieris of the century,"<sup>6</sup> aligning the artist with the Leiden "Fine" painter Frans van Mieris the Elder (1635–1681), whose works were then in the collection of the Louvre. *Young Woman in an English Garden* is rendered with a smooth surface devoid of impasto touches in keeping with the polished finish typical of late eighteenth-century French painting.

In 1887, *Young Woman in an English Garden* was exhibited in Paris as a portrait of the celebrated soprano Louise-Rosalie Dugazon (1755–1821), shown onstage in the title role of *The Miller's Wife*; it retained this attribution at the time of Clark's purchase of the

work at auction in 1936.<sup>7</sup> Recent scholarship, however, has convincingly discredited the identification of this work as a portrait of Madame Dugazon.<sup>8</sup> To this it should be added that Dugazon never appeared in *The Miller's Wife* and that, by the date of Drölling's painting, she was playing the role of matron rather than youthful ingénue, having lost the slender figure of her youth.<sup>9</sup> In the aftermath of the Revolution of 1789, Drölling's lovesick protagonist, so clearly indebted to Ancien Régime imagery, might have elicited nostalgia among Salon goers in 1795 for the frivolous preoccupations of a lost era. Certainly the subject of this work and its pendant stands in marked contrast to the topicality of one of the artist's other submissions to the Salon of 1795: a portrait of an imprisoned mother and child, a subject that had added resonance in the context of the period's social and political turmoil.<sup>10</sup> KCG

**PROVENANCE** Célestin Gandais, Paris; Delestre (by 1887–1936, his sale, Drouot, Paris, 14 May 1936, no. 129, pl. 29, as *Madame Dugazon dans le rôle de la meunière* [?], sold to Clark); Robert Sterling Clark (1936–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Paris 1795, no. 153, one of a pair, as “*une jeune femme dans un jardin anglais, tenant une lettre et prête à passer un ruisseau*”; Paris 1887, no. 28, as *Portrait de Mme Dugazon dans le rôle de la Meunière*, lent by Delestre; Williamstown 1982b, p. 25, no. 15, ill., on cover, as *Madame Dugazon*; Williamstown 1991b, no cat.

**REFERENCES** Hanover–Toledo–Houston 1997–98, pp. 192, 194, fig. 74, as *The Letter* (“*Madame Dugazon*”).

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is either a double glue-lined linen or paper or a transfer to these two layers. The original tacking margins are gone, and a thick adhesive layer visible only at the edges hides the initial support material. The painting is attached to a later nineteenth-century mortise-and-tenon stretcher by the middle lining fabric, which is a plain-weave linen. The second or backmost lining fabric is a darkened linen with a pronounced twill weave and prominent warp threads running vertically. The painting was treated by Madame Coince of Paris in 1930 and has a very deep weave impression from the substrate fabrics, especially in the upper third of the image. The colors in the sky are also wrinkled where they follow the weave irregularities. The painting was cleaned and revarnished in 1981, leaving a thin layer of older natural resin coating. At that time, old solvent abrasion along the tops of the weave impression was noted, as were small retouchings in the dress, which have now darkened slightly. Additional inpainting was done in several long, deep age cracks in the sky and flesh tones of the figure.

The white ground layers appear to be quite thick, as seen at the cutaway edges. Under magnification, the deeper cracks in the paint, which have also opened laterally, reveal different colors between the ground and final image layers. This may reflect some compositional changes by the artist. In infrared reflectography, little underdrawing is detected, except for a series of diagonal lines above the figure's head, which may indicate a change in the building. There are some thin brown paint lines visible at the edges of forms, which may constitute a working sketch on the surface. The paint was applied with delicacy using small brushes and has no impastos.

1. On the artist's early years, see Bapst 1934, 145–49 and Terrasse 1924, pp. 113–17.
2. Sanchez 2004, vol. 1, p. 556.
3. Paris 1795, p. 25, no. 153: “Deux tableaux faisant pendans [*sic*]; l'un, une jeune femme dans un jardin anglais, tenant une lettre et prête à passer un ruisseau; l'autre, une jeune femme près d'un rosier, où elle s'est piquée, voulant cueillir une rose.” For the pendant, see Hanover–Toledo–Houston 1997–98, p. 193, no. 46.
4. On this narrative tradition, see Hanover–Toledo–Houston 1997–98, p. 189.
5. [Rob—], “Exposition publique des ouvrages des artistes vivans, dans le Salon du Louvre,” manuscript, 1795, in Deloynes Collection, vol. 18, no. 469, pp. 445–46: “Quelqu'unes des compositions no. 150, 151, 152 rappellent celles de Myeris et d'autres peintres hollandais. . . . Si notre artiste ne possède pas l'art étonnant de finir qui a rendu si fameux les peintres étrangers, en revanche sa touche est facile et légère” (“Some of compositions no. 150, 151, 152 recall those of Myeris [*sic*] and other Dutch painters. . . . If our artist does not possess the stunning skill for finish that has made the foreign painters so famous, his touch, on the other hand, is fluent and light”).
6. “Monsieur Drölling est le Miéris [*sic*] du siècle”: [Jacques-Philippe Voiant], *Lettres impartiales sur les expositions de l'an XIII par un amateur* (Paris, 1804). See Deloynes Collection, vol. 31, no. 876, p. 690. I am grateful to Walter Liedtke of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for confirming these as references to Frans van Mieris rather than his son Willem (1662–1747), whose style was modeled on that of his father.
7. The work's title presumably referred to the pastoral opera by Jean-Benjamin de La Borde entitled *La meunière de Gentilly*, which debuted at the Comédie-Italienne in Paris on 13 October 1768.
8. On the erroneous identification of the work as a portrait, see Hanover–Toledo–Houston 1997–98, p. 194n3.
9. Olivier 1917, pp. 40–41 and 91–99.
10. Paris 1795, no. 150: “Portrait de Femme avec son Enfant à une fenêtre de prison, montrant le Père de l'Enfant, supposé lui-même à une autre fenêtre de prison.”