

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. On the left side, a wooden pier or wharf extends into the water, with a few small figures of people on it. 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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130

Victoria Dubourg

French, 1840–1926

130 | **Roses in a Porcelain Planter** c. 1875–1900

Oil on canvas, 33.3 x 41.2 cm

Lower right: V D

1955.726

Victoria Dubourg began her artistic career copying paintings in the Louvre. She first showed her work at the Paris Salon in 1868, and continued to exhibit at this venue throughout her career, winning a medal for her submissions in 1895.¹ She focused her efforts on painting still lifes, especially flowers and fruits, but early on she tried her hand at portraits, including one of her sister, Charlotte Dubourg, a canvas now in the Musée de Grenoble.²

Dubourg's work is sometimes confused with that of Henri Fantin-Latour (see cats. 133–35), fellow artist, friend, and possibly teacher, whom she married in 1876.³ They likely were introduced a decade earlier through friends who belonged to the circle of Édouard Manet, although they may have met while copying paintings in the Louvre.⁴ Both Dubourg and Fantin-

Latour painted still lifes of flowers, often using similar compositional devices and brushwork. This has led critics to suggest, unfairly, that Dubourg was less original than her husband, that she blindly followed his example. Art historians do note that Dubourg's marriage to Fantin positively influenced his career, giving him a family life he so desired and the camaraderie of a supportive artistic partner.⁵ He may have also been inspired by her artistic example.

Dubourg inherited a country house from her uncle at Buré in Lower Normandy in 1880; she and her husband spent their summers there, painting arrangements of flowers cut from the gardens. Fantin-Latour painted his still lifes with the intention of quickly selling them; although he was sometimes frustrated by his reliance on this genre, they provided much-needed income. Dubourg seemed content to work within the still-life genre, submitting her paintings periodically to exhibitions in Paris, Dijon, and London. Although contemporary art historical literature often refers to this painter as "Mme Fantin" or "Victoria Fantin-Latour," which aligns the artist with her husband, Dubourg continued to sign her paintings and exhibit oils and watercolors under her maiden name after her marriage, signaling her independence as an artist. That she painted roses, a subject favored by her husband and his critics, suggests that

she was not afraid of comparison with him—that she believed in the merit of her own work. In addition to her painting, Dubourg proved an excellent hostess, helping to organize musical evenings for their artistic and literary circle at the couple's Parisian home. She was also a scholar of her husband's work. In 1911, she published a catalogue raisonné of Fantin's oeuvre.⁶ While working on this project, Dubourg was obliged to set aside her own painting. The catalogue that ensured her husband's reputation did so somewhat at the expense of her own painting career.

In the Clark picture, Dubourg depicts a shallow white porcelain planter overflowing with a bountiful bouquet of pink, peach, and white roses. The flowers at left and center are bathed in a soft light from a source beyond the left-hand side of the painting. The petals on the blooms are freely painted, individual brushstrokes discernible, especially in the white rose that gracefully droops over the side of the bowl. Dubourg layered paint to give depth and texture to the blooms, adding impasto to highlight the topmost white rose. She employed moderately thick paint to articulate most of the flowers in the bowl, but some areas, especially the background, are worked relatively thinly, and reveal the finely woven canvas support beneath. The simple dull brown of the background and the muddy gray of the table contrast with the pale pastels of the flowers, giving the roses added lushness while imparting an Old Master temperament to the canvas.

This work is similar in subject and composition to the Dubourg *Roses* in the Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow.⁷ The Hunterian canvas features a wicker basket of tea roses in hues of yellow, pink, and white. A single rosebud has been artfully arranged on the table to the left of the basket, as one has been placed to the left of the planter in the Clark picture. Dubourg often returned to the same subjects, exploring similar compositional devices, throughout her career. She exhibited paintings with the title *Roses* at London's Grosvenor Art Gallery in 1890, the Dijon Salon in 1892, and the Paris Salon of 1895.⁸ None of these exhibited works can be connected with any certainty to the painting in the Clark collection or to the work at the Hunterian Art Gallery.⁹

Given Dubourg's interest in reworking the same motifs throughout her career and the infrequent inscription of a date on her canvases, it is difficult to assign a precise date to many of her works. Stamps on the reverse of *Roses in a Porcelain Planter* yield a broad date range for the painting. The canvas and stretcher are stamped with the Parisian colorman P. Hardy-

Alan's 56 rue du Cherche-Midi address. Hardy-Alan, who also supplied Henri Fantin-Latour and James McNeill Whistler with artist materials, opened his rue du Cherche-Midi premises in 1868, having formerly been located at 1 rue Childebert.¹⁰ Dubourg's painting clearly postdates this move. Hardy-Alan was in business until 1903;¹¹ one G. Vasseur took over and had moved the shop to 72 boulevard Raspail by 1914.¹² Dubourg's painting likely dates before the transfer of ownership, although it is possible the canvas was purchased before 1903 and stored for later use.

In March 1936, Robert Sterling Clark bought this canvas from Ferdinand and Julien Tempelaere, dealers of modern paintings in Paris. This family firm enjoyed a long history with Dubourg and Fantin-Latour. Ferdinand and Julien's father, Gustave, became Fantin-Latour's dealer in 1887. Gustave Tempelaere also worked with Dubourg to organize an auction of her husband's drawings and prints in 1905, after his death in 1904. When the Dubourg painting was sold to Clark, it was entitled *Roses dans une jardinière en porcelaine*. Whether this was the Tempelaeres' descriptive title, or perhaps indicated by the artist, is uncertain.¹³ AG

PROVENANCE [F. & J. Tempelaere, Paris, sold to Clark, 27 Mar. 1936, as *Roses dans une jardinière en porcelaine*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1936–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS None

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is an unlined, brittle, very finely woven canvas (38 threads/cm). There is a large partial stamp of the Parisian colorman Hardy-Alan on the canvas, and another on the crossbar of the original narrow-gauge stretcher. The stamped "6" on the stretcher indicates the standard French canvas size. Severe frame abrasion is visible on the right and lower edges. Abrasion along the canvas thread-tops was done deliberately before the picture was painted, possibly to provide more tooth to the surface. The painting may never have been cleaned although a second layer of varnish appears to have been added. The varnish layers are slightly yellowed and shiny, with an uneven reflectance. Despite the shine, the colors are not fully saturated, and matte patches appear in the upper right background, several roses, and the foreground table surface. Wrinkles run vertically through the coating in the lower right quadrant. The ultraviolet light fluorescence of the coatings is moderately dense, with no evident retouchings.

The ground is a very thin, dark brown wash applied over a thin off-white layer. As the brown layer extends fully onto the tacking margins, it is possible that the canvas was com-

mercially prepared with both layers. This dark imprimatura layer was deliberately abraded, which can be seen through the intact transparent red and green paint. Although no underdrawing lines were found, there may be a green painted sketch, which has been incorporated into the final paint film. Combined with the more opaquely handled brushwork are extremely transparent red and green glazes, some of which extend directly over the brown background layer. The artist's monogram was incised into the partially set paint of the lower right corner.

1. Her first submission to the Paris Salon was entitled *Still Life: The Casserole*. In 1895, Dubourg submitted *Roses and Basket of Flowers*. She was awarded a third-class medal.
2. The portrait was exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1870.
3. Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier and Étienne Grafe suggest that Fantin-Latour was Dubourg's teacher; see Hardouin-Fugier and Grafe 1989, p. 179. In her essay on Dubourg for Grove Art Online, Valérie M. C. Bajou indicates that Dubourg studied with portrait painter Fanny Chéron (b. 1830); see Grove Art Online, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T027517pg2#T027521>.
4. See Gabriel Weisberg in Cleveland and others 1980–82, p. 287.
5. Kane 1988–89, p. 15.
6. Fantin-Latour 1911.
7. The Clark canvas also resonates with Henri Fantin-Latour's *Roses in a Dish* (1882; Musée d'Orsay, Paris).
8. Dubourg exhibited two paintings at the Grosvenor that summer, *Chrysanthemums* and *Roses*, listing the London address of Mrs. Ruth Edwards for her contact information. Edwin and Ruth Edwards were friends of the Fantin Latours, and regularly marketed his work, and perhaps also hers in this instance.
9. The provenance for the Hunterian picture dates back to 1961, when Glasgow art dealer Ian McNicol sold it to Dr. Charles Hepburn, who subsequently bequeathed the work to the Hunterian in 1971. Provenance information for the Hunterian work from correspondence with Anne Dulau Beveridge, Curator, Hunterian Art Gallery, 31 March 2009.
10. See Young et al. 1980, vol. 1, p. 40.
11. MacDonald et al. 2003 indicates that Hardy-Alan's shop flourished until 1903. It is not clear whether he died that year. See http://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/correspondence/people/biog/?bid=Hard_A_1&firstname=&surname=Hardy-Alan.
12. A stamp on the reverse of the Clark's Dagnan-Bouveret canvas *Primavera* (cat. 97), which is dated 1914, gives G. Vasseur as the successor to Hardy-Alan, at 72 boulevard Raspail.
13. The provenance of this painting is uncertain before 1936. The painting may have been consigned to Tempelaere by the artist before her death in 1926 or perhaps purchased from another collector.

Jules Dupré

French, 1811–1889

131 | Landscape with Cattle c. 1865

Oil on panel, 22.3 x 28 cm
1955.727

Firmly attributed to Jules Dupré by the authority on the artist, Marie-Madeleine Aubrun, this painting nonetheless posed for her several perplexing questions. When she first catalogued the panel in 1974,¹ she noted that the picture had been exhibited in Paris in 1892 at the Galerie Georges Petit.² The illustration in the book accompanying that exhibition (fig. 131.1) differs from the picture at the Clark in small but significant ways: a bold signature is visible at the lower right, the composition is slightly wider, and the brushwork overall seems more nuanced. Presumably on the basis of the 1892 illustration (since in 1974 she did not know the whereabouts of the painting), Aubrun declared that it was characterized by “an impastoed design” and “a heavy facture,” leading her to date the work “without doubt . . . after 1875,” that is, to Dupré's late period.³ Between 1974 and 1982, when she published the supplement to the catalogue raisonné, she became aware of the presence of the painting at the Clark. With a more recent photograph in hand, Aubrun redated the work to the mid-1860s and stated that it (that is, her no. S 87) was the basis for the other version (her no. 589), done a decade or more later. Aubrun nonetheless gives the same—and correct—accession number for both pictures. All of these statements cannot be true. Aubrun 1974, no. 589 is identical to Aubrun 1982, no. S 87, making the Clark's picture the one that was exhibited in Paris in 1892. The dimensions for the painting shown at Georges Petit are 21 by 27 centimeters, whereas the Clark work measures 22.3 by 28 centimeters: not exactly the same, but extremely close.

The question of identity, however, is not so easily solved. A plausible but tentative explanation is offered here. The Clark painting is on a mahogany panel 0.6 centimeters thick that is bordered by a faux-wood frame approximately 1.6 centimeters wide, which was painted before the landscape (see Technical Report).⁴ Regrettably, the Georges Petit publication did not specify support. On 18 May 1945, two years after Robert Sterling Clark bought the painting, he noted in his diary that the conservator Charles De Wild showed