

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,
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)

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

[F. & J. Tempelaere, Paris, sold to Clark, 19 Dec. 1912, as *Nature morte (pêches dans une assiette et raisins noir)*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1912–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Paris 1906, no. 73, as *Pêches et raisins*; Williamstown 1956a, no. S-12, ill.

REFERENCES Fantin-Latour 1911, p. 165, no. 1558, as *Fruits*; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 54, ill.; Lucie-Smith 1977, p. 161.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is an unlined canvas with an uneven, moderate-weight weave (16–19 x 25 threads/cm). The five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher is original. The brown background color stops short of all the surface edges. Pinholes in all four corners suggest that the painting was done while pinned to a board, then stretched. The tacking edges were painted in a thin dark color after the picture was stretched, as there is no color staining the canvas beneath the tack heads. There are drying/age cracks in the thicker paint layers of the fruit. The picture shows no evidence of cleaning, and the ultraviolet light fluorescence is very dense. The varnish has its own age crack network, primarily running horizontally with the warp canvas threads. The right and left edges are retouched on top of the upper varnish layer. In reflected light the surface is shiny except for a very matte 3.8-cm strip along the top and the repainted edges. Clark may have had the picture revarnished and retouched sometime after its purchase in 1912.

The commercial priming is an off-white color. There may be a charcoal underdrawing around the fruit and dish, which may be faintly visible in infrared reflectography. The background looks deliberately rubbed, probably by the artist, to expose some ground color. The paint is applied rather like pastel, in small strokes over the background and table colors, giving a slightly rough, textured appearance. The very resinous looking colors are applied in both thick and thin strokes, using a wet-into-wet technique, which intermixes the colors on the surface. Small detail strokes float over thicker resinous paint areas. Some of the flower petals appear to have discrete strokes of a pure mauve or lavender pigment invented in the nineteenth century, as no blending of red and blue particles is detected under magnification.

1. Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 256.
2. See Distel 1990, pp. 171–4.
3. Washington–Boston 2001–2, p. 146.
4. Astruc 1870, p. 3; translation from Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 256.

Imitator of Henri Fantin-Latour

136 | *Roses in a Vase* Late 19th century

Oil on canvas, 45.1 x 37 cm

Lower left: Fantin 72

1955-733

At first glance, *Roses in a Vase* has many of the characteristics of a still life by Henri Fantin-Latour. A vase of flowers sits on a book against a plain background. Several of the roses are opened fully while other stems are still in bud form. A bee rests on the lowest cream-colored flower, and some text can be seen on the spine of the book at the picture's center. The picture is signed "Fantin 72" in the lower left. This still life, however, has a flat, rigid appearance unlike those for which Fantin-Latour was known. The vase and book are awkwardly situated on the canvas, and the space of the image is poorly articulated. The roses are not painted in a particularly sophisticated manner but instead appear stiff.

Along with these obvious visual cues, the execution of this work is different from those in the Clark collection unquestionably by Fantin-Latour. In general, the paint is handled in a much simpler manner, and in one instance, this artist used a traditional blending of separate colors to achieve a shade of purple, whereas Fantin-Latour usually employed a more recently developed pure purple paint (see Technical Report below and for cat. 135). Moreover, this painting does not have the scumbled surface, textured appearance, or adeptly painted flowers of those by Fantin-Latour. A further complication appears on the bottom folded-over edge of the canvas, where lettering on the spine of the book appears to read "Die . . ." and "[1]874." If these are a German word and a date, they would be very hard to explain on a work by the French artist, particularly given the conflict with the 1872 date at the lower left. Finally, the fact that the signature lies on top of paint that had already developed age cracks indicates that it was applied a considerable length of time after the image was completed. While this painting is clearly not by Fantin-Latour, then, its author and his or her purpose in making it are uncertain.

One possible attribution is to Fantin-Latour's own wife, the artist Victoria Dubourg (1840–1926). Fantin-Latour met her, as he did Édouard Manet and many other artists, while copying works at the Louvre. An accomplished still-life painter in her own right, she



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often employed simplified subjects and neutral backgrounds much as her husband did, if in a somewhat drier and less atmospheric manner. *Roses in a Vase*, with its stylized appearance, is closer to her work than to her husband's. The Clarks actually purchased several still lifes by her, including a watercolor of narcissus¹ and an oil of roses (cat. 130). Yet Dubourg's *Roses*, too, are much softer and more nuanced than the present work, and she usually signed her paintings "V. Dubourg" or with the monogram "V.D.," rather than with the "Fantin" that appears on this picture.

It has been suggested that *Roses in a Vase* is by Otto Scholderer (1834–1902),² a German artist who became friends with Fantin-Latour and Manet during his first visit to Paris in 1857. Fantin-Latour later depicted Scholderer standing behind Manet in his grand *A Studio at Les Batignolles* (1870; Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Given Scholderer's close friendship with Fantin-Latour, and his penchant for still lifes

painted with considerable control and finish, the attribution is possible, although difficult to prove. In 1871, Scholderer moved to London, where Fantin-Latour's still lifes were very popular and his style emulated by other artists. One Scholderer still life, *Lilac* (dated c. 1860–1902), is currently in the National Gallery, London, and while it is far more subtly handled than *Roses in a Vase*, the slender glass container in both canvases is remarkably similar. The word inscribed on the book spine of the present work, if it is indeed German, might also support such an attribution. In this case, the later addition of the "Fantin" signature might be viewed as an attempt by an owner or dealer to append a more salable name to the work. This scenario, however, is purely speculative, as is the attribution to the German artist.

Other possible attributions have been considered, including those to the American still life painters John O'Brien Inman or James Henry Wright.³ Although it

doesn't necessarily rule out an American author for *Roses in a Vase*, the fact that the stretcher is of European design and size probably indicates that the work was painted in Europe.

While the artist of this work cannot ultimately be determined, it is clear that the association with one of the most prominent and successful French still-life artists was intended to make a lesser work more appealing to collectors. Several other works attributed to followers of Fantin-Latour have surfaced at auction in the past decade, evidence that he was a popular artist to copy in this genre.⁴ Interestingly, whoever signed this painting "72" may have known that 1872 was the year that Fantin-Latour first found some recognition in France for his still lifes when the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel purchased more than twenty of his works in the genre between August and November of that year.⁵ KAP

PROVENANCE J. S. Hansen, New York (until 1940, on deposit to Durand-Ruel, 12 Sept. 1940);⁶ [Durand-Ruel, New York, sold to Clark, 2 Dec. 1940, as *Fleurs*, by Fantin-Latour]; Robert Sterling Clark (1940–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1956a, pl. S-10, as by Fantin-Latour.

REFERENCES Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 56, ill., as by Fantin-Latour.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is an unlined, brittle fabric of moderate weave (19 threads/cm). The five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher is of European design and measurement. As there is paint on all four tacking edges, it is assumed that the picture was painted flat or on a larger frame, then attached to this stretcher. Some time later, the right edge was apparently restretched, as the tacking margin has an extra set of holes. The lettering and date on the fully articulated book spine on the bottom folded-over tacking margin are cut through, reinforcing the possibility that the picture was originally larger. There are scattered age cracks throughout the surface, and traction cracks appear in the yellow rose and the leaves in the vase. The varnish is very yellowed and splotchy, with short, branched cracks running primarily in a vertical direction. Staining on the canvas reverse suggests that the painting was revarnished after the cracks had formed.

The ground appears to be a commercially prepared off-white layer. Although a complete underdrawing was not detected, scattered lines on the small yellow rose and in the background to the right of the flowers look as if they were applied after the background color was laid in. There may be a drawn spray of leaves hanging from the vase in the lower

right quadrant, which was not included in the final image. Although many details were painted over the background color, the larger flowers were painted in reserves left for them on the surface. Unlike Fantin's use of a pure purplish pigment, this artist blends his pinks and purples using blue and red pigments. In general, the smooth paint structure is far simpler than the complex texturing and color glazing seen on the Fantin-Latours. When the signature, which is rendered in brown ink, is inspected at high magnification, some of the lettering strokes cross over old paint-film cracks, indicating a later application.

1. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.1645.
2. Note from C.C. Cunningham, 18 Mar. 1975, in the Clark's curatorial file.
3. Michael Floss to Stuart Feld, 27 June 1983, in the Clark's curatorial file.
4. *Roses in a Chinese Bowl* was sold at Christie's London, 31 Oct. 2007, no. 1453, as was a glass vase of flowers at Strides Auctions (UK), 25 June 2010, no. 400, both as by followers of Fantin-Latour.
5. Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 256.
6. Information from Durand-Ruel archives. See correspondence of Caroline Durand-Ruel Godfrey, 24 Apr. 2001, in the Clark's curatorial file.

John E. Ferneley

English, 1782–1860

137 | **Duchess** 1831

Oil on canvas, 86 x 107.7 cm
Lower right: J. Ferneley / Melton Mowbray / 1831.;
lower center: DUCHESS.
1955.924

The extent to which John Ferneley's paintings of the 1820s and 1830s are associated with the hunting scene of Melton Mowbray is revealed by Quorn Hunt historian Colin Ellis's comment that "The Melton of those days is the Melton of John Ferneley."¹ Ferneley's career coincides with the height of Quorn activity, with fox hunting taking place six days a week. Born in Leicestershire, the heart of hunting country, Ferneley settled in Melton Mowbray in 1814, remaining there and painting until his death in 1860.

The story of Ferneley's genesis as a painter is typical of the trope of the native genius discovered by chance. In this case, Ferneley, the son of a wheel-