



**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,  
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Curtis R. Scott, Director of Publications  
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Designed by Susan Marsh  
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Bibliography edited by Sophia Wagner-Serrano  
Index by Kathleen M. Friello  
Proofread by June Cuffner  
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**TECHNICAL REPORT** The original canvas is a very even weave linen of moderate weight (13 threads/cm) which has been glue-lined to a bleached linen. The original tacking margins were retained, and the artist’s stretcher was reused. A 1939 Beers Brothers’ treatment included lining, cleaning, and varnishing. The painting was cleaned again in 1980 to remove discolored varnish. The surface retains a thin layer of the earlier coating, which is visible in ultraviolet light. There is very little inpainting: just a few touches on one tree trunk and on the tall walking man to right of center. There are fine short fissures in the paint and ground layers running between the threads. A series of vertical indentations in the partially set paint of the lower left may have been unintentionally made by the artist, along with the deposits of charcoal dust, grime, and wood fibers seen in the slightly flattened impastos.

The ground is a commercially applied off-white layer, visible on the surface in only a few scattered locations. Tack holes in each corner suggest that the canvas was pinned to a board while the picture was being painted. This method may also account for the black border, applied by the artist possibly to tidy up the uneven edges of brushwork. The paint is applied wet-into-wet throughout. The sizes of the brushes employed range from 0.3 to 1.3 cm in width. There is no glaze work on the surface, although some transparent yellow strokes may indicate the presence of the resinous pigment gamboge. In infrared reflectography, no changes to the composition are seen; however, a close examination in infrared reflectography and under the microscope reveals a grid below the paint, located in the trees, and possibly drawn with very black graphite. There is also a drawn line following the edge of the terrace at the far left.

1. F 82.
2. F 1383.
3. F 1377.
4. The Lançon print is illustrated in Wolk 1986, p. 294, and Paris 1988, p. 45.
5. Vincent van Gogh to Horace Mann Livens, Sept. or Oct. 1886; translation from Janson et al. 2009, vol. 3, p. 364.
6. F 231, 227, 217–20, and 234–37, among others. There are three close variants of the Moulin Le Radet, F 226–28, a site that Faille may have misidentified. See Faille 1970, p. 118. Van Gogh made a large number of still lifes at various times over the late spring and summer of 1886.

7. RSC Diary, 19 Dec. 1939.
8. Ibid.
9. For a more detailed account of this incident, see Williamstown–New York 2006–7, pp. 80–81. Clark informed Charles R. Henschel, president of Knoedler in London, that “all relations between myself and Knoedler & Co. have ceased” in a letter of 9 Aug. 1934.
10. The exhibitions in Munich, Dresden, Frankfurt, and Zurich in 1908 are listed in Feilchenfeldt 1988, p. 84.

## Frederick Goodall

English, 1822–1904

### 156 | Mother and Children (The Picnic) 1851

Oil on panel, 22 x 19.2 cm  
Lower right: F Goodall / 1851  
1955.747

It is a measure of Frederick Goodall’s prominence in English artistic circles at the middle of the nineteenth century that the *Art Journal*, the most important English art periodical of the time, not only devoted a page-length profile to the young artist in 1850, but followed this attention with a four-page assessment as the fourth in its series of “British Artists and their Characteristics” in 1855. In these articles Goodall is praised for his “picturing the bright side of human life” and thereby appealing to popular taste.<sup>1</sup> The Clark’s *Mother and Children (The Picnic)* typifies the subjects of his early career, which the *Art Journal* described as “thoughtfully culled from the living masses whom he has studied and whom he so truthfully presents to us.”<sup>2</sup>

The son of the engraver Edward Goodall, renowned for his reproductions after J. M. W. Turner and other landscape artists, Frederick continued to learn from his father, even when he chose to become a painter. His trips to northern France, first to Rouen in September 1838, then to Normandy in 1839 and 1840, and subsequently to Brittany in 1841, 1842, and 1845 were important to his early work, providing him with the subject of his first Royal Academy submission of *Card Players* (location unknown), a Norman interior scene. Like William Collins, he found early encouragement through the patronage of the collector William Wells of Redleaf, who purchased one of the first two paintings he exhibited at the British Institution in 1840, and whose valuable support Goodall describes in his memoir.<sup>3</sup>



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Similar to other rustic scenes of this period in his career, Goodall's *Mother and Children (The Picnic)* of 1851 presents a harmonious image of a mother sitting in a shaded garden with her children. While her elder child is seen from behind gazing as her mother arranges flowers on a bonnet, the younger child, who sits in a little cart, reaches toward this group but looks at the viewer. Goodall's attention to small gestures indicating the interrelationship of the figures contributes to the notion promoted by the *Art Journal* that the artist observed the group from life, even though the family is depicted in a generalized leafy setting. Likewise, the bright red note of the baby's bonnet, the deeper red of the mother's jacket, and the blue-green of her dress and that worn by the baby confirm the periodical's praise of Goodall's use of color.<sup>4</sup>

Goodall was made an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1852, just a year after he painted this scene.

In 1858, with his first trip to Egypt, his subject matter changed decisively to scenes of life in the Middle East with biblical overtones. EP

**PROVENANCE** [N. Mitchell, London, sold to Clark, 23 Nov. 1937, as *The Picnic*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1937–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** None

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a mahogany panel 0.6 cm thick, with the grain running horizontally. The back edges are not chamfered, although there are sanding marks on the reverse, and the back seems to be stained to make it look darker. A colorman's stamp on the reverse reads: Rowney, London. There are wood spacers (0.6 cm wide) nailed to all four edges, presumably to center the image in a slightly wider frame. The painting was apparently last cleaned in 1938 by Henri Helfer of Paris. There is some solvent abrasion in the hat and hair of the mother, as well as in the thinner tree foliage. Bits of gold leaf appear in the varnish in the trees on the right. The present natural resin varnish is yellow. The surface reflectance has an even sheen, with the edges of some painted forms visible despite the relative flatness of the paint layer.

The grayish white commercially prepared ground is made up of multiple layers, creating a thick, smooth surface. Although there seem to be charcoal lines and deposits in some areas, the dark underdrawing visible in the wooden cart seems to be soft, dark graphite lines. In infrared reflectography, the lines of the cart are visible, along with lines for the left tree and scattered lines in the figures. A very thin brown sketch, possibly in ink, remains in some areas as the final color. The thin paint is more loosely handled in the trees. Some of the right tree's foliage may be painted over earlier brushstrokes, as seen in reflected light. There are very few impastos, except in the white passages and on the baby's red cap. In general, the paint technique is thin and glaze-like, with sparing use of concentrated color in the costumes. There are two thumb prints in the paint along the right edge, presumably those of the artist.

1. *Art Journal* 1855a, p. 112.
2. *Art Journal* 1850, p. 213.
3. Goodall 1902, pp. 18, 117.
4. *Art Journal* 1855a, p. 112.