



**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,  
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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)

painting. The distortion of threads around the edges suggests that the artist stretched the canvas himself prior to applying the priming layers. The red color is visible below the dress, around the flesh of the arms, and as a background to the mantilla. The painting technique is quite unusual, with extremely thin glazes over the red ground making up much of the image. Even the face is done in very thin layers, using a wash of white over the ground to provide the flesh coloration. There are some paste-consistency details in the flesh and low impastos on the flowers. The X-radiograph of the head confirms the extremely thin paint, except for the flower.

## J. Grant

Probably British, 19th century

### 163 | Plaisanterie 1886

Oil on canvas, 38.1 x 46.4 cm

Lower right: J. Grant / 86

1955.751

This depiction of the racehorse Plaisanterie by a little-known artist follows in the tradition of equine portraiture. From the eighteenth-century examples by George Stubbs to the Regency period represented by Benjamin Marshall, into the twentieth century as recorded by Sir Alfred Munnings, the Sport of Kings has provided British artists with a steady source of patronage. Although the stereotypical client of "Sporting Art" was more often the frequenter of racecourses and stables rather than of art galleries, Sterling Clark was able to combine his two disparate interests.

Clark and his three other brothers were all involved in breeding thoroughbreds. Judging by his acquisition of works such as John Ferneley's *Duchess* (cat. 137), James Pollard's *Tom Thumb with Peter Brown and His Wife in a Gig* (cat. 255), and Munnings's oil studies of *Solario* (cat. 236), Clark's interest in horses carried into his art collecting. Moreover, the worlds of art and horses overlapped when he "talked horse"<sup>1</sup> with Stevenson Scott of the art dealers Scott and Fowles, the source of many of the works in his collection.

Although nothing is known of the artist J. Grant,



he is clearly working within the conventions of portraying a racehorse, with his jockey mounted and the racecourse, usually the location of a recent triumph, as the setting. With the jockey looking straight ahead, the chestnut, ears pricked forward, stands calmly and turns his head slightly to display his diamond. From breeding records, it is possible to identify Plaisanterie tentatively as a French horse by Wellingtonia from Poetess, who was born in 1882. EP

**PROVENANCE** Robert Sterling Clark (by 1955); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** None

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a somewhat open-weave canvas (19 threads/cm), glue-lined to a fabric with the same thread count. The five-member stretcher appears to be original, as there is an earlier set of tack holes in the wood edges. The tacking margins were preserved, and the original tack holes filled with an off-white putty. There are scattered groups of age cracks in the paint and ground structure, including some mechanical cracks in starburst patterns. The pinholes in the corners may indicate that the picture was executed while pinned flat to a board and stretched later. There may be slight solvent abrasion on the black hat and shirt, although generally the paint film is in good condition. The varnish is quite yellowed, with some horizontal streaking in the sky which corresponds to the direction of the brush application. A separate crack network occurs in the varnish, and there are retouches along the edges.

The ground is a commercially applied cool white or pale gray layer. An indistinct charcoal underdrawing is visible in several artist changes, as well as in the fainter drawing lines of the background features. The horse's head was originally facing forward, not turned slightly toward the viewer. The saddle blanket, jockey's silks, and even the jockey himself seem to have been altered. The jockey seems to have been drawn as a larger man who looks nothing like the jockey now depicted and who seems to have had a mustache and goggles. Colors below the visible ones suggest that the horse's saddle blanket was once a white square with an orange band and the jockeys' silk shirt was also bright orange. The paint was applied in an even thickness using delicate brushwork, with only occasional low-level impastos in the flowers and clouds. Larger brushes were used only in the sky.

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1. RSC Diary, 30 Jan. 1930.

## Armand Guillaumin

French, 1841–1927

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### 164 | Quay in the Snow c. 1873

Oil on canvas, mounted on Masonite, 46.2 x 65.2 cm  
Lower right: AGuillaumin [AG in monogram]  
1955.887

Armand Guillaumin began his artistic training in Paris, taking classes at a municipal art school while working long hours as a clerk for his uncle.<sup>1</sup> By 1860, he had enrolled in the Académie Suisse, where he met Paul Cézanne and Camille Pissarro, both of whom became lifelong friends and influences on Guillaumin's work. By 1868, tired of struggling to carve out enough time to draw and paint, he had found employment with the Département de Ponts et Chaussées, working the night shift digging ditches so he could paint during the day.

*Quay in the Snow* is a relatively early work in Guillaumin's career, and likely represents the first winter snow in a village just outside Paris. Green grass is still visible around the trunks of the trees closest to the viewer, and two of the largest trees in the foremost row have not yet shed their leaves. Daubs of purple paint along the horizon at left represent other trees with their leaves still attached. One wonders if the woman with an orange coat to the right of center has been persuaded to explore the snow by the child she accompanies, who looks up at her questioningly, but nevertheless seems ready to brave the elements with her head warmly wrapped in a blue scarf.

While living in Paris and studying painting, Guillaumin would sometimes take a train to small towns outside the metropolis to paint. For example, in 1873, Guillaumin was active depicting the environs just outside Paris, including Charenton, Hautes-Bruyères, Vitry, and others.<sup>2</sup> It seems most likely that this quiet scene is set in a small town along the Seine. When Robert Sterling Clark purchased this painting in 1954, it was entitled *Snow at Pontoise*. Comparison of this work with Camille Pissarro's paintings of Pontoise and old postcards of this town do not support the idea that Pontoise is the subject of the Clark Guillaumin, despite the fact that Cézanne, Pissarro, and Guillaumin painted together at Pontoise in 1872. A second picture of an almost identical scene is given the title *Snow, Paris*,<sup>3</sup> but there is little evidence to pinpoint the location of either canvas to Paris. The scene is