



**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,  
James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

*Nineteenth-Century European Paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute* is published with the assistance of the Getty Foundation and support from the National Endowment for the Arts.



The Getty Foundation



ART WORKS.  
arts.gov

Produced by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute  
225 South Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267  
www.clarkart.edu

Curtis R. Scott, Director of Publications  
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Designed by Susan Marsh  
Composed in Meta by Matt Mayerchak  
Copyedited by Sharon Herson  
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Index by Kathleen M. Friello  
Proofread by June Cuffner  
Production by The Production Department,  
Whately, Massachusetts  
Printed on 135 gsm Gardapat Kiara  
Color separations and printing by Trifolio, Verona

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Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London  
P. O. Box 209040, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-9040  
www.yalebooks.com/art

Printed and bound in Italy  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

Nineteenth-century European paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute / 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, James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, Fronia E. Wissman.

volumes cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-935998-09-9 (clark hardcover : alk. paper) —

ISBN 978-0-300-17965-1 (yale hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Painting, European—19th century—Catalogs. 2. Painting—Massachusetts—Williamstown—Catalogs. 3. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute—Catalogs. I. Lees, Sarah, editor of compilation. II. Rand, Richard. III. Webber, Sandra L. IV. Title. V. Title: 19th-century European paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

ND457.S74 2012

759.9409'0340747441—dc23

2012030510

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**174 | Woman in the Bois de Boulogne** c. 1885

Oil on canvas, 65.5 x 50.5 cm  
 Lower right: Daniel Hernandez  
 1955.766

Not much has been written about Peruvian painter Daniel Hernández, whose career was made in Europe. He lived in Peru until 1875, when he was awarded a scholarship to study abroad. After nearly ten years in Italy, he went to Paris about 1883. It was here that he painted genre scenes popular on the Parisian art market. Consisting of pretty, well-dressed women often in the setting of a picturesque Parisian street or park, Hernández's pictures largely conformed to traditional notions of contemporary women and their fashions. Hernández was friendly with Spanish artists living in the French capital, and his style and subjects echoed theirs, as well as those of the Italian transplant to Paris, Giovanni Boldini. Hernández was also the head of the Society of Spanish Painters in Paris.

*Woman in the Bois de Boulogne* was purchased by Sterling Clark in 1935 as *Lady's Portrait in Bois*. A letter in the curatorial file from the London dealer implies that Clark had inquired about more information as to the picture's subject and previous owner. The dealer noted that the picture had been described in an untraced sale catalogue as: "A lady in a blue dress, carrying an umbrella [*sic*] and a bouquet of flowers, walking in a park, Autumn."<sup>1</sup> While Clark may have wished to learn more about this image, the figure is clearly a generic type rather than a portrait of a specific individual. Clark was familiar with these kinds of subjects, as he and Francine had already bought paintings of pretty young women in Parisian street scenes, such as Boldini's *Crossing the Street* (cat. 22), and they would go on to acquire many more, among them Jean Béraud's *A Windy Day, Place de la Concorde* and *Parisienne in a Red Dress* (cats. 13 and 14), and Baré's *The Tuileries Gardens* (cat. 9). The Clarks also collected Spanish artists, such as Raimundo de Madrazo (cats. 198–204), Martín Rico (cat. 293), and José García y Ramos (cats. 146–47). In these respects, Hernández was a natural fit in their collection.

Street scenes were just one of Hernández's favored subjects, as he also painted other types of genre scenes, including women or groups of women in interiors. A handful of his paintings of various subjects appear in the stock books of the dealer Goupil

in the late 1870s and then again in the late 1890s.<sup>2</sup> He painted several other exterior scenes like the present work, including *Elegant Lady on the Quay of Paris* and *Le Jardin de Luxembourg*.<sup>3</sup> Both feature a fashionably dressed woman set against a distinctly Parisian background. Similarities abound between these works and the present canvas, from the trees and other foliage that enliven each scene, to the elegance of the women's clothing, to their dainty pointed shoes. The artist paid careful attention to each figure's surroundings, but thanks to their placement at the center of the composition and to the colorful clothing they wear, the focus is clearly on the women. Rather than placing them in crowded urban streets as Boldini did, surrounded by other people and carriages, Hernández chose to isolate his subjects, placing them in relatively calm environs, such as in a park or on a riverbank. In the Clark painting, the setting is the Bois de Boulogne. Created under Napoleon III by Baron Georges Haussmann in 1852, the Bois was a popular destination in the nineteenth century, where fashionable men and women promenaded and rode in their carriages.

Hernández's subject in *Woman in the Bois de Boulogne* has all the attributes of a fashionable woman of her day: a blue-teal floor-length dress, a plumed hat, and a fur cape. Her accessories consist of a walking stick, gloves, and a recently purchased bouquet of fresh flowers, which she holds in her left arm. Her other hand holds up her dress as she walks. Although similar in many ways to Boldini's fashionable lady holding flowers in *Crossing the Street*, Hernández's subject is less ambiguously simply out for a leisurely stroll, without any urgent purpose or destination. As in his other street scenes, leaves are scattered about the bright green grass and on the road, indicating that this is indeed autumn, as the London dealer's catalogue entry stated. KAP

**PROVENANCE** E. C. Forbes, Wanstead; [N. Mitchell, London, sold to Clark, 18 Mar. 1935, as *Lady's Portrait in Bois*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1935–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** None

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a finely woven linen (28 threads/cm) and retains its original five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The reverse bears a canvas stamp for the color merchant Durand. The canvas has slight draws in the upper and lower left corners, and slight bulge deforma-



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tions near the paint additions in the lower portion of the skirt. There are wide traction cracks along the lower skirt, apparently where the artist adjusted its drape over the still-wet paint of the roadway. The original costume outline is visible in a welt line where the traction cracks stop. This painting may have been cleaned and restored by Madame Coince in 1935. The ultraviolet light fluorescence is unusual due to the reworking on the figure's face and skirt, as well as in the background adjoining the figure. These additions appear to have been completed after the picture was varnished. The coating is now yellowed and scratched or creased in the upper left, possibly due to an old handling damage. The paint in this location is also fractured.

The commercially applied ground layers are off-white and smooth in texture. There may be graphite lines, although this is difficult to confirm. With infrared examination, only a few underdrawing lines in the center chimney of the background building are discernible, and some of this line work seems to be on the surface. There are more pentimenti in the paint around the hat and cape. The paint was applied in moderate-

to thick-paste-consistency strokes that left impastos in many places. The sky is particularly thick and was applied with a large brush. Most of the surface was executed wet-into-wet; the horse and cab, however, were painted over the building's façade after the latter had dried.

1. Letter from N. Mitchell to RSC, 18 Mar. 1935, in Clark curatorial file. The sale is described as "collection of the late E. C. Forbes, Esq. . . . Wanstead," but no sale catalogue has been located.
2. Works by Hernández that were sold through Goupil include *The Musician (La Musicienne)*, *The Unfortunate Cat (Le Malheureux Chat)*, and *The Rejected Painting (Le Tableau Refusé)*. See Goupil Stock Books, book 9, p. 225, no. 13707; book 9, p. 71, no. 11276; book 8, p. 161, no. 11277.
3. Both are oil on panel. The former was sold at Sotheby's, New York, 23 Oct. 2007, no. 212, and the latter was sold at Christie's, London, 26 Mar. 1999, no. 61.