



**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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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

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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)

Attributed to Lépine

to allow the canvas weave to show. Cusping in the threads along only the top edge suggests that the support may have been cut from a larger stretched canvas; the remaining three edges show no such weave distortion. No underdrawing was detected, although there may be a black and brown painted sketch or full-covering imprimatura layer below the final colors. The paint is applied wet-into-wet in some areas. The entire lower edge has been repainted, possibly by the artist, as have reworked areas in the sky.

1. Galerie Schmit to Martha Asher, 11 Mar. 1999; in the Clark's curatorial file.

Philippe-Jacques Linder

French, active 1857–1880

192 | Spring 1870s

Oil on canvas, 32.7 x 22.5 cm

Lower left: P. Linder

1955.792

193 | Autumn 1870s

Oil on canvas, 32.7 x 22.3 cm

Lower left: P. Linder.

1955.793

These two small canvases, evidently a pair, fall into the same category as Alfred Stevens's *The Four Seasons* (cats. 319–22), in presenting the imagery of the seasons in contemporary terms, rather than through traditional allegory. Linder, though, rather than focusing on a single female figure, presents spring and autumn in terms of happy and unhappy lovers, and, implicitly, the beginning and end of a relationship, as the happy togetherness of the poses and expressions in *Spring* gives way to the distanced, distracted figures in *Autumn*. The tonality of the figures' clothing and of the background woodland landscapes complements their expressions.

It is not clear whether we are meant to see the two pictures as representing the same couple in two stages of their relationship. The man's informal dress in *Spring*—consisting of a boater, pale suit, and casually knotted tie—contrasts with the more formal, and



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seemingly higher class, apparel of cutaway jacket and pocket square in *Autumn*. While this might suggest that two different couples are represented, the contrast is more pointed if they are understood to be the same figures in both. It might suggest that their relationship, carefree when on vacation in springtime, could not survive the resumption of more formal roles and the pressures of everyday propriety later in the year. Conversely, one of the focuses of moral anxiety in these years was people—both men and women—who dressed above their status, and thus were not what they appeared to be.¹ In this interpretation, the suggestion might be that when this couple abandoned their “true” informal or lower-class identities in order to seek advancement, their relationship was thrown into turmoil.

The free brushy handling of these two paintings is very different from the technique and teachings of Linder's teacher, the Swiss Neoclassical painter Charles Gleyre (1806–1874), with whom he studied after leaving his native Saarland for Paris. This treat-



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ment carries echoes of the sketch-like execution of the more informal canvases of French eighteenth-century painters such as Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806). The clear differentiation in treatment between the figures and their settings suggests that parallels should not be drawn between these paintings and the contemporary work of the Impressionists. There was a ready market for such small, pleasing paintings through the commercial art dealers of Paris. JH

PROVENANCE [Jean Oppenheim, Paris, sold to Clark, 5 Nov. 1937]; Robert Sterling Clark (1937–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS None

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT Cat. 192: The support is assumed to be a moderate-weave linen, based on the visible fabric on the companion painting *Autumn*, although here the surface texture is more like paper. The weave count was inaccessible,

but may be close to the brown-toned lining canvas (16 x 19 threads/cm). Restoration of the two Linders was performed by Henri Helfer of Paris in 1937–38, through Knoedler Gallery. The five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher may be original. There are pinholes visible in three corners, which may suggest that the painting was executed before being stretched. Age cracks extending through the ground and support layers resemble paper splits, with scattered and shallower age cracks in the ground and paint film. The painting was likely cleaned in 1937 and presently has a discolored varnish with its own cracks. There are dark, older varnish residues and some grime trapped below the 1937 coating. The moderately dense ultraviolet light fluorescence is slightly patchy and reveals retouched edges, especially along the right and top. The surface reflectance is streaky and uneven, and the edges are shiny.

The ground is a thin, smooth buff-colored layer, which shows in thinner passages of the background paint. Using infrared reflectography, a very sketchy charcoal underdrawing was seen in the two heads, costumes, the man's arm positions, and some plant details on the right. The top of the woman's hat was originally drawn higher than the final painted placement. The vehicular paint is loosely applied with wet-into-wet strokes, ranging from thin to moderate in thickness. There are low impastos in the tree blossoms and dress.

Cat. 193: The support is a moderate-weave canvas, thread count not accessible, glue-lined to a toned canvas of similar weight (16 x 19 threads/cm). Unlike the companion piece, the original canvas layer is visible at the right edge. A large, protruding vertical thread runs along the left side of the man. The painting was lined and cleaned in 1937–38 by Henri Helfer of Paris. Lumpiness around the man's proper right knee is probably pockets of excess lining glue. There are fewer age cracks than on the other Linder painting. Solvent abrasion has exposed the tops of large white pigment particles in the dress, which now have off-color retouches to hide them. The painting seems to have been partially cleaned and has other retouches in the woman's head and along the edges. Spots of opacity in the varnish suggest it is delaminating, and there are scratches in the man's jacket and boots. The varnish is yellow, and the surface reflectance is shinier than that of the companion picture.

The ground is a buff-colored commercially applied layer. The underdrawing of the figures, which has the same scribbly character as on *Spring*, appears to be in charcoal. The vehicular paint is thin to moderate in thickness. Changes can be seen from the drawing to the painting stage in the front opening of the man's suit coat and the drape of the pale lower section of the woman's dress, and possibly the hat ribbons.

1. See House 2004, pp. 17, 218n25.