



**NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS  
AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE**

**VOLUME ONE**

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With an essay by Richard Rand  
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(cats. 21–27), whose work Clark also admired. It is likely that Clark, who spent hours discussing clothing with his wife's milliner and whose diaries are filled with references to fashion, was also intrigued by Lynch's handling of the woman's dress.<sup>1</sup> In the end, however, it seems that the deciding factor leading Clark to purchase the painting was the pleasure he took in acquiring a beautiful painting at a bargain price. Throughout his diary entries in February 1928 there are repeated references to his amazement that he bought such a fine picture for only forty dollars. He seemed to take particular pleasure in showing it off to the dealer George Davey and noting that a similar painting by Carolus-Duran, albeit less masterful in Clark's eyes, had a price tag of three hundred fifty dollars.<sup>2</sup> Even as Clark's collection continued to grow, he still valued this painting, as suggested by a restoration bill for *Portrait by Gaslight* dated 25 October 1939, eleven years after its purchase. It was most likely on display in one of his residences, perhaps in the Upperville, Virginia, estate to which the 1939 bill was addressed. DC

**PROVENANCE** Sale, American Art Association, New York, 2 Feb. 1928, no. 7, as *Portrait by Gaslight*, sold to Knoedler; [Knoedler, New York, sold to Clark, 11 Feb. 1928]; Robert Sterling Clark (1928–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown 1982a, no. 13, ill., as *A Girl of 1900*.

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a fine-weave linen (approximately 25 threads/cm), on its original five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The bleached, double-weave linen and glue lining was done by Beers Brothers in 1939. The picture was cleaned in 1982, when the flower on the woman's shoulder was revealed. The paint layer is inordinately thick, and a general lumpiness of the paint and multiple colors seen through the cracks and along the edges suggest the possibility of paint layers and perhaps an earlier image below the visible surface. Tests along the top edge in the sky indicate the presence of at least one lower color. There are traction cracks in the trees, and wrinkling paint and wandering age cracks are scattered throughout the surface. Old losses in the upper part of the bodice are now inpainted. Other recent retouches include the background to the right of the figure's head, the upper lip of the face, and one area of the trees. The ultraviolet light fluorescence of old varnish residues is patchy, with heavier deposits across the bottom edge. The trees in the right background are matte, and some wrinkling, underlying brushstrokes, and traction cracks are also more visible in reflected light.

The off-white ground is probably a commercially applied layer. The canvas texture is obscured by the ground, and possibly by additional paint layers below the upper image. Graphite underdrawing can be seen in the architectural elements and the gloves of the hand on the balustrade. A brown or black paint sketch can be seen below some areas, forming such details as the nose and eyes. In infrared reflectography, drawing changes can be seen in the hand on the balustrade, and on the width of the skirt on both sides. The paint has a paste consistency throughout the surface. It is possible the proper right arm was originally in a straighter position, though still placed behind the figure. There seem to be old adjustments to the line of the bodice, and there may still be a flower buried under old repaint on the other shoulder.

1. See for example RSC Diary, 8 Jan. 1929. Indeed, his love of fashion was so pronounced that one of the few times he agreed to lend his artwork to an exhibition was Wildenstein's 1943 *Fashion in Headdress*. The paintings he loaned were Barbour's *Woman Reading* (cat. 8), Jan van Beers's *Woman in Evening Dress* (cat. 11), and Jules-Adolphe Goupil's *Woman Seated* (cat. 158).
2. RSC Diary, 3–4, 6, and 19, Feb. 1928.

## Raimundo de Madrazo y Garreta

Spanish, 1841–1920

### 198 | Confidences (The Morning Visit) c. 1870

Oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm

Lower left: R. Madrazo

1955.798

In the intimacy of a room, a woman is sitting on a chair and finishing getting dressed as she receives the visit of another young woman. The visitor is wearing a two-piece ensemble consisting of a long skirt and a long-sleeved jacket. Under an elaborate mirror, which reflects a pair of curtains, is a narrow mantelpiece on which a number of objects are placed, including a porcelain vase and a porcelain and silver gilt candlestick. Closer to the corner of the chamber is an opened upright secretary topped with a small vase of flowers. An oval painting of a female nude hangs on the wall above the cabinet.

For the past century, this work has been fully attributed to Raimundo de Madrazo as there are elements that are typical of the artist's work, including the fine modeling of the hands of the half-dressed woman

and the casual depiction of the blankets piled on the chair on the right side of the composition. Madrazo's technical virtuosity, however, is not so apparent in the modeling of the standing figure or in the numerous objects that ornament the room, casting a slight degree of uncertainty on the attribution. In fact, when comparing this work with any of the other six paintings by Madrazo in the Clark's collection and with other known works, the differences in technique and quality become obvious, and emphasize the uniqueness of this painting in Madrazo's oeuvre. In addition, the signature that is inscribed near the rail of the fireplace at the lower left, which clearly reads "R. Madrazo," does not match the style of any of the other known signatures by the painter, who in most cases preferred a much more angular approach to writing his name.

Nevertheless, there are still many unknown aspects to the life and work of Raimundo de Madrazo, an important artist who has yet to be fully studied. Perhaps one of the biggest gaps is related to his early years in Paris, where he moved permanently in the 1860s. Judging by the clothing of the women in *Confidences*, the painting most likely corresponds to this period. It was a moment when Madrazo's career was at a crossroads. Trained in a very academic manner in Spain, Madrazo specialized in history and religious subjects and was only just beginning to adapt to the styles and subjects popular in Paris, such as genre painting. In addition, the second half of the 1860s would also correspond to a period when Madrazo was not yet influenced by his brother-in-law, the great Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874), an artist from whom he learned to adopt a looser manner of painting and to explore more fully wider ranges of color and the importance of light.

From this perspective, *Confidences* would constitute an excellent example of Raimundo de Madrazo's early attempts at painting genre scenes. Genre painting was in increasing demand in France but had little acceptance in Spain, where the primary interest for painting was mainly in history, regional scenes, decorative commissions, and portraiture. In fact, Madrazo's father, the acclaimed painter Federico de Madrazo (1815–1894), tried to dissuade him from painting genre scenes. For many decades Federico de Madrazo was the most influential and powerful artist in Spain. A follower of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), Madrazo was for many years director of the Museo Nacional del Prado, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes of San Fernando in Madrid, and first painter to Queen

Isabella II. In a letter to his son, written in Madrid on 9 May 1866, roughly the same period in which Raimundo de Madrazo might have painted this canvas, his father wrote: "You mention to me that among your projects is doing *genre painting* . . . I do not know what to tell you about that—there are so many genre painters! . . . I believe that genre will soon tire everybody—in addition, having taken serious studies, I think that you should have much higher goals—I think that once the Exposition Universelle is over, what would be advisable for you is to go to Italy *to study*."<sup>1</sup>

Despite his father's objections, Madrazo rapidly began working on these new subjects and would soon specialize in them. These generational differences testify to the multiple directions that art was taking during the 1860s, and although Federico de Madrazo was correct when he anticipated the decline of genre painting, which happened roughly in the 1880s, Raimundo proved to have the initiative and desire to break from the traditional vision of his home country and use his skills as a painter to work on one of the most fashionable artistic subjects in Paris. *Confidences* could exemplify Madrazo's early attempts at finding a place in the international art scene and adapting his work and technique to the taste of cosmopolitan Parisian society.

The image of a partially dressed woman in the intimacy of her chambers, often treated in a compositionally similar manner, appears in the work of other genre artists, such as Alfred Stevens (1823–1906) or James Tissot (1836–1902). With greater variations it was also taken up by artists painting in other styles, including the Impressionists. The final result combines a typical genre scene, depicting a chapter from the daily life of a bourgeois society woman, with a strong degree of voyeurism. In fact, in the following decades, Raimundo de Madrazo painted a similar subject with much greater intimacy, in *After the Bath (Female Nude)* (c. 1895; Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid). This painting has more erotic overtones, depicting a full-length female nude powdering her body while wearing only slippers.<sup>2</sup>

Over the following decades, Madrazo refined his technical skills to become one of the most gifted genre painters of his period in the depiction of female beauty. After 1903,<sup>3</sup> *Confidences* was part of the collection of Catholina Lambert (1834–1923), a prominent American entrepreneur who, at the turn of the twentieth century, owned a vast number of paintings by European Old Masters as well as modern artists.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Puvis de Chavannes's *Death and the Maidens* (cat. 257) and Renoir's *Woman Crocheting* (cat. 267)



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also at the Clark, were once a part of his collection. The Spanish School was prominently featured in his collection, especially the Old Masters. He owned only two paintings by modern Spanish artists, a landscape by Martín Rico entitled *On the Riverside* and the Clark's *Confidences*.

The title of this painting has changed over time. The oldest recorded title is *Confidences*, the name under which it was catalogued in the collections of Catholina Lambert and Mrs. James B. Wilbur Jr., where it was also subtitled *La toilette*. Only in more recent

decades was it called *The Morning Visit*. Sterling Clark purchased it as *La toilette*, but a label on the back of the canvas of a type Clark regularly used gives the title as "Morning Visit." This is the only record of this alternate title. Curiously, in the stock books of the art dealer Adolphe Goupil, there is a painting by Madrazo with the same title, *La visite matinale (The Morning Visit)*, which might perhaps be the present painting. This work was acquired on 12 September 1867 and sold to the art dealer Knoedler in New York on 2 June 1868, for 1,200 francs.<sup>5</sup> MR

**PROVENANCE** [Durand-Ruel, Paris, sold to Lambert]; Catholina Lambert, Paterson, New Jersey (probably after 1903–16, his sale, American Art Association, New York, 21 Feb. 1916, no. 72, as *Confidences*, sold to Wilbur); James B. Wilbur Jr., Manchester, Vt. (1916–d. 1929); Mrs. James B. Wilbur Jr., Manchester, Vt., and New York, his wife, by descent (1929–33, sale, American Art Association, New York, 14 Dec. 1933, no. 57, as *Confidences* [*“La Toilette”*]); private collection, New York; sale, Parke-Bernet, New York, 24 Nov. 1939, no. 78, as *Confidences* (*“La Toilette”*), sold to Durand-Ruel; [Durand-Ruel, New York, 1939–40, sold to Clark, 13 Mar. 1940, as *La toilette*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1940–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown–Hartford 1974, pp. 76–77, no. 46, ill.; Williamstown 1979b, no cat; Williamstown 1982a, no. 14; Williamstown 1983a, no. cat.

**REFERENCES** Trapier 1932, vol. 1, p. 133; Cincinnati–Washington–Elmira 1992–93, pp. 76–77, ill.; Simon 1995, p. 188, ill.; Albuquerque–Dallas 2005–6, p. 345, no. 268.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a moderate-weight linen, possibly a twill weave, 19 threads/cm, which was glue-lined sometime in the twentieth century to a very coarse double warp and weft bleached linen (9 doubled threads/cm). The five-member mortise-and-tenon pine stretcher appears to be original. The tacking edges were removed at the time of lining. The surface is not in plane, and the amount of adhesive used in the lining may be accelerating its breakdown. The painting was cleaned by Murray in 1939, and he may also have done the lining. Age cracks in the paint are open laterally or are abraded, showing the pale ground layer. The age cracks and cupping are more pronounced in the horizontal direction, suggesting that the picture may have once been rolled. There are stretcher creases, especially along the horizontal crossbar, and corner stress crackle in the upper and lower right corners. Old handling creases arc horizontally through the upper portion of the image. A network of short traction crackle appears in the blue and gray passages, and there is an old scratch in the lower right. The picture has been cleaned at least once and revarnished, probably at the time of lining, and the present coating is quite yellowed, brittle, and uneven, with resin residues in the paint interstices. The ultraviolet fluorescence is moderately dense and reveals at least two layers of natural resin varnish. Reflected light examination shows an uneven gloss and a heavier band of coating along the bottom edge. The space to the left of the right woman’s head has been repainted together with scattered areas of the nearby background. Retouches buried below the varnish are visible as matte areas in reflected light, but are less detectable in ultraviolet light.

The cream-colored ground is probably a commercially applied layer. Although no underdrawing was detected, infrared reflectography reveals paint changes in various portions of the image. The right figure was originally placed

slightly to the left of its final position, and her jacket may have been slightly longer. On the left woman’s costume, a change was made in the white skirt lying on the floor, and a dark, now hidden horizontal band once ran through the dress hem 3.8 cm up from the lower edge. The colors in the floral rug were also altered by the artist. The paint technique is wet-into-wet, especially in the details, with scumbling used over the top of the dried lower brushwork. Both sable and bristle brush hairs were found embedded in the paint layers.

1. Madrazo 1994, vol. 2, p. 648: “Me hablas de que entra en tus proyectos el hacer *pintura de género* . . . no sé que te diga sobre esto—¡hay tanto pintor de género! . . . yo creo que el género va a cansar pronto a todo el mundo—y además, habiendo hecho estudios serios, creo que debes tener otras miras más elevadas—Yo creo que después de pasada la Exposición Universal lo que te convendrá sería ir a Italia para *templarte*.”
2. For more on *After the Bath (Female Nude)*, see Madrid 2005–6, pp. 173–76.
3. In a small catalogue published in 1903 featuring European paintings from the collection of Catholina Lambert, only four Spanish paintings are mentioned, and this Madrazo is not among them. See New York 1903. It is not clear whether this catalogue included all or only part of his collection. If it represented the entire collection, Lambert must have purchased this Madrazo after 1903.
4. Born in England, Lambert emigrated to America in 1851 and became highly successful in the textile business, with mills and interests in New Jersey, New York, and England. For more on Lambert and his collections, see Graf 1970 and Alaya 1984.
5. See Goupil Stock Books, book 3, p. 162, no. 3043, and book 4, p. 40, no. 3043. Although the name of the artist is recorded only as “de Madrazo,” it is clear from the subject matter that it must be Raimundo and not his father Federico.

## 199 | Woman with a Guitar c. 1870

Oil on panel, 30.2 x 17.8 cm

Lower right: R. Madrazo

1955-799

Raimundo de Madrazo settled in Paris in the mid-1860s and became part of the influential artistic circles in the French capital. He specialized in genre painting, which was increasingly desired by the prominent bourgeoisie who valued the fine quality of these paintings as well as the themes of leisure activities