



**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,
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Kelly Pask, Elizabeth A. Pergam, Kathryn A. Price, Mark A. Roglán,
James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

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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



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taking place in lavishly decorated apartments and palaces. Madrazo's success in depicting a woman's sensuality, charm, and elegance became an intrinsic characteristic of his work in both genre and portrait painting. Like many of his contemporaries, Madrazo often painted women enjoying music or playing an instrument, such as a guitar or a piano, as music was an important part of a woman's education and a source of entertainment for high society.

In *Woman with a Guitar*, the seated subject reads a musical score opened on a chair in front of her. She wears an elegant satin dress with fine lace ornamenting the bodice. Her hair is gathered in a voluminous bun wrapped with a silk ribbon that is tied in a bow in the back. The scene takes place in an interior richly decorated with a tapestry covering the wall, a large

mirror, rugs on the floor, a table holding various objects, and three chairs.

In this instance, music making also served another purpose, since, like many other Spanish painters working in France at the time, Madrazo incorporated in his paintings clearly identifiable elements from his home country. Thus, bullfighters, costumes, fans, Moorish architecture, or popular musical instruments such as the guitar were often used as central elements or props in genre scenes. Consequently, women playing guitars can be found in several other paintings by Madrazo, including *Woman with a Parrot*, (cat. 200), and in drawings such as *Woman with Guitar* (fig. 199.1), a work that may feature the same model as in the present painting.

In *Woman with a Guitar*, Madrazo used a very small panel, a rare format in the artist's oeuvre as he normally painted on a larger scale. Despite this reduced size, Madrazo's academic skills are evident.



Fig. 199.1 Raimundo de Madrazo, *Woman with Guitar*, c. 1870. Chalk on beige paper, 49.8 x 31.2 cm. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts (1955.1693)

He depicted the woman with great delicacy, reproducing the richness of her dress, her satiny shoes, the ornate guitar, and her face and hands, features that Madrazo painted with particular care and refinement. The tight detail of the figure contrasts with the loose brushwork of the rest of the composition in passages such as the tapestry hanging behind her. Madrazo not only worked the remainder of the picture much faster, but he even left some areas unpainted, partially exposing the wood underneath and using its color as part of the composition. MR

PROVENANCE [H. & P. De Casseres, London, sold to Clark, 23 Jan. 1935]; Robert Sterling Clark (1935–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1979b, no cat.; Williamstown 1983a, no cat.; Williamstown 1988–89, no cat.; Williamstown 1992a, no cat.

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a fruitwood 0.3 cm thick, possibly pear, panel or veneer with chamfered back edges. The wood grain runs vertically, with rough planing marks visible on both sides. In reflected light, planing marks can also be seen on the panel's surface running across the wood grain. The convex warping is severe and complicated by a diagonal twist. The paint layer is in fine condition, with the exception of very minor frame abrasion. The varnish layer is even, shiny, and smooth, with some yellowing and fine vertical cracks following the panel grain. There are bits of undissolved resin in the surface and some chipping of the varnish on the chair leg behind the sitter. There are two splashes of dark material to the left and behind the sitter's shoulder. The picture was cleaned and restored by Chapuis and Coince in Paris in 1935.

There is no ground layer, which together with the wood species, suggests that the panel came from an outside source, such as a cabinetmaker, instead of an art supplier. No preparation lines were detected using infrared equipment. There may be a brown sketch for at least some details, as seen on the outline of the face, figure, and guitar. The paint handling is very fluid, sure, and swift in execution, and uses thin wet-into-wet strokes, leaving the panel surface showing through in many areas. The face is comprised of delicate, feathery strokes, and the signature appears to have been done in black ink.

200 | Woman with a Parrot c. 1872

Oil on canvas, 49 x 38 cm

Lower left: R Madrazo

1955.800

This painting is one of the finest genre scenes by Raimundo de Madrazo, and it testifies to his technical achievements as an artist. Genre scenes were in great vogue among artists and the public, especially during the Third Republic. Madrazo's decision to redirect his work from academic to genre painting was surely motivated by the extraordinary international success of his brother-in-law, the Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874). Although his father, the prestigious painter Federico de Madrazo (1815–1894), did not approve of this change, Fortuny supported Raimundo's interest in genre painting and greatly influenced his technique and approach to these scenes. In a letter sent by Fortuny from Granada, Spain, on 8 July 1872, to one of his most important patrons, the American collector William H. Stewart (1820–1897),¹ Fortuny praised Stewart's acquisition of *Woman with a Parrot*, writing: "From what you say, I see your collection is increased by some good pictures, and especially by one which pleased me much; it is *La femme au Parroquette* [sic] by Raymundo [de Madrazo]."² Further, the Baron Charles Davillier, Fortuny's good friend and first biographer, concurred with the artist, stating that *Woman with a Parrot* was "a small *chef-d'oeuvre*."³

This canvas was one of fourteen paintings that Raimundo de Madrazo presented, out of competition, to the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1878, although none was listed in the official catalogue. The painting appears perfectly described by the French critic Théodore Véron, who wrote: "This whimsical lady, wearing a yellow silk dress, plays the guitar and delights her beautiful white cockatoo. The musician has a true and gracious pose, resting her feet on an orange cushion. The interior is as coquettish and delightful as its charming owner, the gracious musician. . . . Good small painting."⁴ Madrazo's paintings were rarely seen in exhibitions, and the artist never presented a single work in the Paris Salon during his entire career, most likely because he did not need to have his work promoted at this important venue. Madrazo, however, almost certainly presented a large selection of his work at the Exposition Universelle in order to honor his brother-in-law Fortuny, who had died only four years