



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

**VOLUME TWO**

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



Produced by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute  
225 South Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267  
[www.clarkart.edu](http://www.clarkart.edu)

Curtis R. Scott, Director of Publications  
and Information Resources  
Dan Cohen, Special Projects Editor  
Katherine Pasco Frisina, Production Editor  
Anne Roecklein, Managing Editor  
Michael Agee, Photographer  
Laurie Glover, Visual Resources  
Julie Walsh, Program Assistant  
Mari Yoko Hara and Michelle Noyer-Granacki,  
Publications Interns

Designed by Susan Marsh  
Composed in Meta by Matt Mayerchak  
Copyedited by Sharon Herson  
Bibliography edited by Sophia Wagner-Serrano  
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

© 2012 Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute  
All rights reserved.

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, including illustrations, in any form (beyond that copying permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law and except by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publishers.

Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London  
P. O. Box 209040, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-9040  
[www.yalebooks.com/art](http://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. Rogl an, James Rosenow, Zo  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

Details:

TITLE PAGE: Camille Pissarro, *The Louvre from the Pont Neuf* (cat. 253)

OPPOSITE COPYRIGHT PAGE: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Jane Avril* (cat. 331)

PRECEDING PAGE 474: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Onions* (cat. 280)

PAGES 890–91: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Women of Amphis* (cat. 3)





**249 | The Artist's Palette with a Landscape  
(Peasants with a Cart) c. 1878–80**

Oil on panel, 24.3 x 34.7 cm  
Lower left: C Piss[arro]  
1955.827

Writing to Claude Monet from Pontoise, probably in the late 1870s, Pissarro alerted him to a restaurateur in Paris who was commissioning a series of painted palettes from artists in their circle. He was “M. La Place, owner of the brasserie La Grande Pinte, on the Place des Martyrs,” who presumably wanted the palettes to decorate his premises. Pissarro noted in the letter that “Manet and others” had already taken up the offer and urged Monet to capitalize on this money-making opportunity.<sup>1</sup> M. Laplace had been persuaded to pay fifty francs for his ornamented palette, at a time when Pissarro was sometimes obliged to accept less for a small canvas.<sup>2</sup> No records survive of the palettes executed by Édouard Manet or those proposed to Monet and Alfred Sisley, and any details specified by M. Laplace concerning their design or subject matter are similarly unrecorded.<sup>3</sup> Pissarro’s palette stayed with its owner until it was acquired by Auguste Boulin, passing from the 1934 sale of Boulin’s effects to the dealer Durand-Ruel, and within a few months to the collection of Sterling Clark.

The vogue for collecting artist’s palettes was already well established at this date. Typically, an authentic wooden palette that the artist had used for some time was chosen, with the dried residue of his characteristic range of colors still in place. The larger area where these colors had been mixed in normal practice might

then be embellished by the painter with an improvised picture, often based on his or her well-known repertoire. Various completed with a signature, a date, and sometimes an inscription, these palettes were offered as gifts to friends or patrons, or—as in the case of M. Laplace—purchased by collectors who wished to hang them on their walls or exploit their decorative potential. Outside the immediate Impressionist circle, artists close to the group, such as Gustave Courbet, Camille Corot, Eugène Boudin, and Charles-François Daubigny, all painted and signed palettes, while figures from the conventional establishment—among them Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant, Charles Chaplin, and Jean-Léon Gérôme—also contributed to the genre.<sup>4</sup>

Presumably catering to his patron’s whim, Pissarro chose a wooden palette of a kind in widespread use, and arranged six prominent dabs of color along its upper edges. Though his painting techniques were continually evolving, there is reason to believe that Pissarro worked at this date with a combination of primary hues, augmented with crimson, green, and white.<sup>5</sup> For M. Laplace’s palette, however, he appears to have distributed them on the surface with decorative as much as practical considerations in mind. Accepting the conceit at face value, we see a range of colored paints and understand that they have been applied to the vignette-like central area, creating a charming rural scene and bringing to an end the palette’s useful life. Conspicuously, Pissarro made no attempt to integrate the curved edge or oval thumbhole of the palette into his composition, which broadly conforms in handling and theme to a number of landscapes of this period. Here, a dense interplay of choppy brushstrokes brings animation to the sky and pasture, forming the fine lattices of color that

characterized a number of Pissarro's works in the late 1870s and early 1880s.<sup>6</sup> No longer blending separate hues to produce neutral tones, as in *Piette's House at Montfoucault* (cat. 248), he openly juxtaposed primary and secondary colors throughout the painting to produce a modest, manifesto-like statement about his practice.<sup>7</sup> Allowing the warm brown of the palette itself to contribute its undertone, Pissarro vividly summoned up the bright light and thick verdure of a summer countryside. Less clear is whether the harvest or some other activity that involves a heavy horse-drawn cart is taking place.<sup>8</sup> Such wagons and carriages were a near-obsession of Pissarro's through much of his career, introducing a hint of movement to his two earliest canvases at the Clark (cats. 245 and 246) and frequently adding an explicatory detail to scenes of rural life and labor.<sup>9</sup> Here, the high-sided vehicle is hardly insisted upon, and it is the tender exchange of man and woman that holds our attention, despite the apocalyptic bursts of color above their heads. RK

**PROVENANCE** The artist, sold to Laplace; Laplace, Paris; Auguste Boulin, [Paris?] (until 1934, sold to Durand-Ruel, Paris, 30 Nov. 1934);<sup>10</sup> [Durand-Ruel, Paris, 1934–35, sold to Clark, 9 Aug. 1935, as *Paysans près d'une charette*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1935–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown 1956a, no. S-5, ill.; Sydney–Melbourne 2005–6, pp. 35, 149–50, 251, no. 51, ill.; Williams-town–San Francisco 2011–12, not in cat.

**REFERENCES** Geffroy 1922, p. 161; Pissarro and Venturi 1939, vol. 1, p. 145, no. 454, vol. 2, pl. 93, no. 454, as *Palette de l'artiste*; *Life* 1957, p. 10, ill.; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 94, ill.; Birren 1965, fig. 3-16; Bailly-Herzberg 1980–91, vol. 5, pp. 399–400, ill. bet. pp. 218–19; Shiff 1984a, p. 207, fig. 47 (French ed., pp. 177, 254n25, fig. 41); London 1990–91b, p. 90, pl. 55; Gage 1993, pp. 184, 187, 191, fig. 146; Shiff 1994, p. 4, fig. 1; Lamb and Bourriau 1995, pp. 28–29, fig. 9; Stephenson 1995, pp. 28–29, 159, ill.; Kirschenmann and Schulz 1996, pp. 16–17, ill.; Callen 2000, pp. 147, 151, pl. 213; Willard 2000, pp. 10–11, ill.; Rotterdam 2003, pp. 72–73, ill.; Pissarro and Durand-Ruel Snollaerts 2005, vol. 2, p. 384, no. 562, ill.; New York 2007–8, pp. 21–22, fig. 7.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The walnut panel support is a typical artist's palette with a notched edge below the thumbhole. The panel thickness varies from three to five centimeters, being thickest at the lower right corner. The reverse of the panel was varnished in 1982 as a moisture barrier. The wood grain runs horizontally and is quite visible through the sketchy paint layer, there being no priming below the paint. The warm tone of the bare wood is evident around the

perimeter of the image. Inpainting from an earlier restoration still covers some of the dark paint skips where the grain is revealed. The painting was partially cleaned and revarnished in 1982, leaving the sky the most thoroughly cleaned area. In ultraviolet light, there are fluorescing natural resin residues around the palette daubs and especially in the lower left corner. A thin layer of old varnish covers most of the darker image elements. The tops of the six large daubs of palette color are flattened, grimy, and contain wood fibers, indicating that the palette may have been carried or stored in an artist's paint-box lid. This damage probably occurred fairly soon after the painting was executed.

The limited palette contains only five colors and white, which seem to be the colors used in the image. The progress of the image seems to move from the sky downward, as some of the bright red and yellow is pulled out over the finished sky layer. The entire image was crafted with one size brush, wet-into-wet, in a very quick manner. The signature, trailing off diagonally across the lower left corner, is difficult to decipher as it rests on bare wood and is surrounded by sparsely applied paint strokes. A paper corner with printed line-work and the letter "B" or "R" is visible beneath the daub of white paint, presumably the palette seller's label. There are scattered deposits of gold leaf in the surface.

1. Camille Pissarro to Claude Monet, in Geffroy 1922, pp. 161–62: "Voyez donc M. La Place, patron de la brasserie La Grande Pinte, place des Martyrs, il vous donnera à faire une palette ornée, j'en ai fait une ainsi que Manet et autres." The letter is reprinted in Bailly-Herzberg 1980–91, vol. 5, pp. 399–400, with extended notes about M. Laplace, his establishment (which opened in 1878), and the implications for the date of Pissarro's palette.
2. See, for example, Bailly-Herzberg 1980–91, vol. 1, p. 113.
3. An oval palette bearing a painting of a foaming glass of beer was exhibited by Manet in 1873 (RW 187).
4. See Georges Petit 1911.
5. See Shiff 1984a, pp. 204–7.
6. This procedure becomes increasingly apparent after 1879. For comparable techniques and subjects, see, for example, PDR 607, 624, 646, 695, and 678.
7. In Shiff 1992, p. 28, a link is suggested between Pissarro's radical painting technique, expressed in this palette, and the socialist views evident in his scene of rural harmony.
8. At this moment, the female figure appears to be passing a spherical object, perhaps a bundle of food, to the man. Pissarro and Venturi 1939, vol. 1, p. 145, suggest that the figures are filling a sack of potatoes.
9. A similar scene on wooden panel, with a high-sided cart, is the later *Peasants Picking Apples* of c. 1890 (Mr. and Mrs. Julian Sofaer collection, London; PDR 894).
10. Information from Durand-Ruel Archives. See correspondence of 24 Apr. 2001 in the Clark's curatorial file.