



**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

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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)

PAGE VIII: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Woman Crocheting* (cat. 267)

PAGE X: Claude Monet, *Seascape, Storm* (cat. 222)

PAGE XII: Jacques-Louis David, *Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure de Turenne-d'Aynac* (cat. 103)

PAGE XVI: William-Adolphe Bouguereau, *Nymphs and Satyr* (cat. 33)

PRECEDING PAGE 2: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Snake Charmer* (cat. 154)

1916, p. 94; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 61, ill.; Polley 1967, p. 31; Thompson and Wright 1987, p. 288, ill., as *Arabes faisant boire des chevaux*; Thompson and Wright 2008, p. 349, ill., as *Arabes faisant boire des chevaux*.

TECHNICAL REPORT The present support appears to be a mahogany panel 0.8 cm thick, but it is possible that the original panel may be a thinner board now glued into a tray-like mahogany panel, which has a raised perimeter lip 0.6 cm wide. This may mean that the original dimensions are about 1.2 cm smaller in both directions. The reverse also has a cradle that may be contemporaneous with the back panel since they are both varnished in the same manner. There is a 3.8-cm crack at the right edge of the original panel, located 35.2 cm up from the lower edge. The paint in the lower right quadrant is wrinkled, probably due to the artist's changes in the composition. Presumably the painting was once over-cleaned, as there is solvent abrasion in the raised wrinkled areas, and extensive retouching was detected throughout the image. De Wild cleaned the picture in 1945. There appear to be two or three varnish layers on the painting, and the sky and the dark background colors fluoresce quite densely under ultraviolet light. The surface reflectance is shiny for the most part, with scattered matte patches. In 1997, minor adjustments were made in some discolored retouches.

The panel may not have a traditional ground layer, although in some locations a rough, possibly artist-applied off-white layer is visible. The underdrawing is done in black ink and may outline primarily the animals and figures. Some paint changes by the artist are visible in reflected light as wrinkling, while other alterations are visible using infrared reflectography, including several large tree branches, which are painted out in the left third of the image. The man in the white robe at the right appears originally to have been closer to the center of the composition. Remnants of this placement are detectable in infrared light, on the X-radiograph, and in normal light. Among numerous other changes, the rear leg of the pale brown horse at the right was moved. It is possible that there are additional alterations or that the artist was reusing a support with an earlier partial image, as the X-radiograph shows a number of shapes that seem unrelated to the final image. The paint was applied in dry scumbles in a sketchy manner, with smaller, more fluid, detail strokes. A warm-toned black ink was used for the signature, and appears to have been used for the dark outlines on the black horse. This particular horse may also have been added on top of the scenery, perhaps when the small figures and animals were applied in the center background area. Most of the figures and horses were painted before the surrounding scenery.

1. Zarobell 2010, pp. 77–78.
2. These sources include the records of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the long-term loan of this painting from George W. Vanderbilt, from 1886 to 1919; and the 1945 sale catalogue of the Vanderbilt collection, where

- the inscription is given as “Algiers” rather than “Algérie.”
3. See Thompson and Wright 2008, pp. 120, 117.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 328: “Dans ses tableaux égyptiens, de même que pour l’Algérie, Fromentin commença par représenter des sites spécifiques. . . . À la fin, les œuvres égyptiennes fusionnent souvent imperceptiblement avec les souvenirs plus distants d’Algérie.”
 5. From “Carnets du voyage en Égypte” (1869), quoted in Thompson and Wright 2008, p. 307: “Je voudrais donner des choses que je vois une idée simple, claire et vraie.”
 6. From “Carnets du voyage en Égypte” (1869), quoted in Thompson and Wright 2008, p. 307: “émouvoir avec le souvenir de ce qui m’a ému, laisser le lecteur indifférent pour ce qui ne m’a pas intéressé moi-même.”
 7. Zarobell 2010, p. 84.
 8. Eugène Fromentin to Charles Busson, June 1871, in Wright 1995, p. 1683: “faire beaucoup; et battre monnaie.”
 9. George Washington Vanderbilt placed this and a number of other works on long-term loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1886. The works were returned to his nephew in 1919.

José García y Ramos

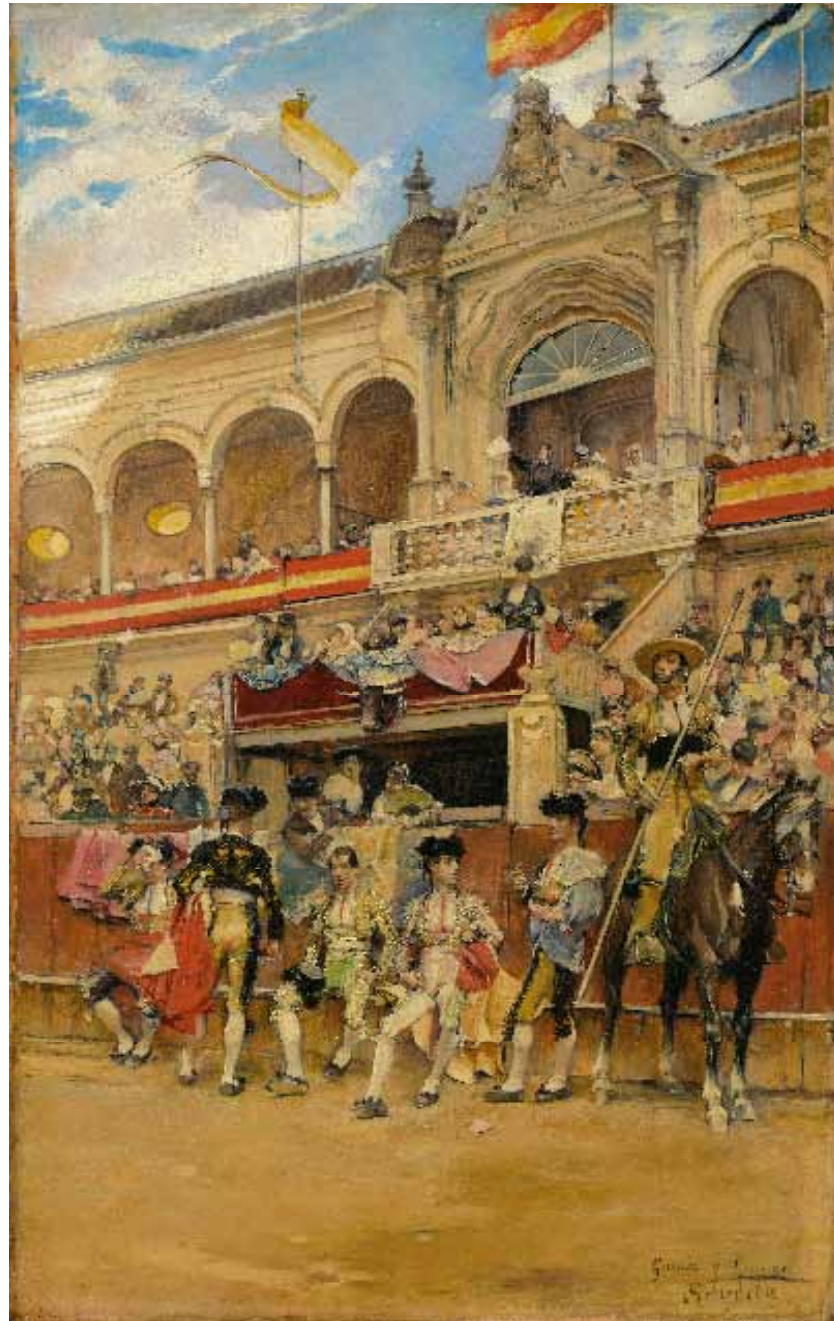
Spanish, 1852–1912

146 | Inside the Bullring c. 1880

Oil on panel, 28.4 x 18 cm
Lower right: García y Ramos / Sevilla
1955.837

Five bullfighters and a mounted picador rest next to the wall of a bullring. One of the matadors smokes a cigarette while another wipes the sweat from his brow with a handkerchief. A standing man converses with a gentleman located behind the protected area of the plaza. Yet another figure sits against the barrier beside another matador who has his cape draped over his left arm. The picador sits on his horse, gazing into the distance. On the balcony above these men, the president of the bullfight waves a handkerchief, a gesture that could signify the presentation of a trophy in honor of a bullfighter's success. The tiers and balconies of the bullring are partially filled with spectators.

Rather than focusing on the drama of a bullfight, García y Ramos depicts a respite from the action and features a partial view of the bullring of Seville from a perspective that is inside the arena. The resting bullfighters and their attire are depicted in great detail,



146

from their clinging silk stockings to the glittering highlights of their jackets. This same attention to detail is seen in the way the artist has modeled the spectators, an interest exemplified in the standing man waving his handkerchief and the uniformed figure below him.

The artist gives the same importance to the architecture. This section of the bullring contains the eighteenth-century Box of the Prince (Palco del Prín-

cipe) in the historic bullring of La Maestranza (Plaza de Toros de la Maestranza) in Seville. The beautiful balcony is flanked by two engaged columns that terminate in Corinthian capitals. These columns support a curved, yet broken tympanum in which is carved the royal coat of arms of Spain's monarchy and two allegorical figures.¹ This majestic architectural setting, which also inspired other contemporary Span-



Fig. 146.1 José García y Ramos, *Sketch of the Plaza de Toros with Toreadors*, c. 1880. Pencil on paper, 28.4 x 17.9 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (D4550)



Fig. 146.2 Infrared reflectogram of *Inside the Bullring*

ish artists, is depicted in the work of Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874) in his painting *The Bullfighters Salute*, from 1868 (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh), and in Ramón Casas's (1866–1932) painting on panel *The Maestranza in Seville* (1887; private collection). While other Spanish artists did not document this specific section of the bullring, they painted similar compositions of bullfighters in repose.

An extraordinary testament to the way in which García y Ramos created these small paintings, and in particular *Inside the Bullring*, is an unpublished drawing that is related to this painting and is now in the collection of the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid (fig. 146.1). When comparing this drawing with the infrared photograph of the panel, in which part of the

underdrawing is revealed (fig. 146.2), it is apparent that García y Ramos used the Prado drawing to trace the outlines of some of the figures and, more importantly, the architecture of the bullring onto the panel. The transfer of the Prado's drawing to the panel was done by covering the verso of the paper with a pastel-like medium that adhered to the wood panel when the artist applied pressure to the drawn lines. The infrared image also shows several changes the artist made in the composition—most noticeably, the drawn lines of a larger flag at the upper left in the preliminary drawing are still visible alongside the thinner banderole that replaced it in the final painting.

When evaluating the differences between the drawing at the Prado and the final work, it is clear that

García y Ramos did not follow the preliminary drawing precisely, as the final painting omits three bullfighters and features the remaining figures in different poses, and it has far more spectators, most of them painted directly on the panel without preparatory outlines. Curiously, the drawing depicts three of the toreadors bearing the inscriptions “2,” “3,” and “4.” This numbering is perhaps related to the painter’s effort to establish some sort of order among the figures or perhaps as a way to identify them with the names of specific bullfighters. The preparatory drawing also shows a line on the left side of the composition that would have helped the artist with a sense of scale in his depiction of the figures. Technically, García y Ramos painted with precise care in order to depict every possible detail of the bullfighters’ elaborate costumes as well as the spectators watching from the tiers of the bullring. He reproduced the architecture with the same attention, outlining with mathematical precision the contours of the arcades, balconies, and barrier.

Closely related to this painting, probably a pendant, is García y Ramos’s *Outside the Bullring* (cat. 147). Both works complement each other although they are individually meaningful as well. One scene is based on the people of Seville entering the bullring while the other depicts a quiet moment during a bullfight. The paintings were probably done at the same time. MR

PROVENANCE [N. Mitchell, London, sold to Clark, 25 Oct. 1935]; Robert Sterling Clark (1935–1955); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

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

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a pale-colored, close-grained hardwood, 0.8 cm thick, with the grain running vertically. On the back, it has the same steep, chamfered edges (1.9 cm wide) and the same oval stamp reading “Giosi Roma” as the companion (cat. 147). The panel has a slight twist, with the upper left and lower right corners lifted slightly. The reverse is thinly varnished. There are small drying cracks in the thicker white painted areas. There is also a fine-aperture network of square traction cracks, possibly initiated by tension from an older varnish layer. Apparently both paintings were cleaned and restored by Madame Coince in 1935, shortly after their purchase. The signature is somewhat abraded. The picture was cleaned of grime and part of its varnish in 1988. Thinness of the paint execution and sensitivity of the red color were cited as reasons for the partial

cleaning. The surface has a slightly speckled appearance due to an upper layer of sprayed Soluvar matte varnish. There is a small trail of retouches in the sky and along the top edge.

The off-white ground is a very slight wash over the panel’s surface. Short, dark flecks within the panel’s grain are revealed throughout the thin paint layer. Using infrared reflectography, the precise underdrawing is most decipherable in the thinly painted architectural elements. There are no changes within the image, despite the wealth of detail depicted. The paint handling is the same as that on the companion piece, wet-into-wet strokes of thin paint, with very delicate impastos. The wood’s color is used as a middle tone for some passages.

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1. For more about the history and architecture of the bullring of Seville, see Cossío 1964, vol. 1, pp. 550–54, and Morales et al. 1981, pp. 101–2.

147 | Outside the Bullring c. 1880

Oil on panel, 28.6 x 17.8 cm

Lower left: García y Ramos / Sevilla

1955.838

In front of the bustling entrance to the monumental Door of the Prince (Puerta del Príncipe) of the historic Plaza de Toros de la Maestranza in Seville, a young boy sells bullfighting brochures and souvenirs. Behind him, two ladies holding fans wear typical Andalusian fashions characterized by long ruffled skirts and embroidered silk shawls. These women are being admired by a mounted picador behind them. Next to one of the columns that flank the entrance, a mounted lancer observes the crowd entering the ring. Inside the building, in the far background of the composition, the public is filling the tiered seats and an awning provides shade to a small section of the bullring.

Throughout most of his career, García y Ramos specialized in subjects of modern life in Andalusia, preferably scenes of his beloved hometown of Seville. In these often joyful views, the painter included identifiable elements from this particular region of Spain, such as flamenco dancing, regional costumes, and famous monuments and buildings. A contemporary British author wrote of his paintings: “He interpreted the light and romantic side of life, with an air at times of the old and brilliant chivalry so identified with his nation.”¹ In this work, García y Ramos chose to paint one of the