

**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,  
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James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

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

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est child was born in 1871. Given the date of the canvas, the subject could represent Eliza, second wife of Stevens's brother, the art dealer Arthur Stevens, with their second child Suzanne, born in 1874;<sup>1</sup> from the choker and jewel around the baby's neck, the child would seem to be a girl. No evidence, however, has come to light to confirm the identification of the models.

The clear color, with the flesh tints set off against the dominant contrast between blue and golden yellow, is quite unlike the more tonal, chiaroscuro treatment of Stevens's earlier work. It seems likely that this change reflected his awareness of the heightened color schemes in the work of his Parisian contemporaries, and especially those of his friend Édouard Manet, whose own paintings had become lighter and brighter in the early to mid-1870s. JH

**PROVENANCE** George Campbell Cooper, New York (by 1883–d. 1895); [F. Schnittjer and Son, New York, sold to Knoedler, 1940]; [Knoedler, New York, sold to Clark, 9 Nov. 1940]; Robert Sterling Clark (1940–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** New York 1883, no. 82, as *Mother and Child*, lent by Cooper; Williamstown 1960b, ill.; Williamstown–Hartford 1974, pp. 100–101, no. 62, ill.; Williamstown 2000–2001, no cat.

**REFERENCES** Southampton–New York 1986, p. 33.<sup>2</sup>

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a mahogany panel 1 cm thick with the grain running vertically. The reverse is varnished except along the chamfered edges (1.3 cm in width). The reverse bears a number of labels, among which is the colorman's stamp of Vieille, Paris. There are mahogany additions 0.4 cm wide nailed and glued to all four edges, presumably to facilitate a frame fitting. The plane of the support is quite badly twisted from the lower left to the upper right, with a severe arch in the lower right corner. There is scattered frame abrasion due to the warping. Narrow aperture traction cracks in the yellow background run primarily in a horizontal direction. The woman's face and neck have suffered solvent abrasion, which appears to have revealed the tops of small white paint inclusions. The painting was cleaned in 1940, in New York, by Murray. An old scratch goes through the signature. The previous cleaning left some older varnish residues, now cracked, in the hair of the woman and the lower right signature area. Smaller deposits of the very yellow earlier coating remain in paint recesses. The surface reflectance is uneven and rather matte, with old patches of resin causing shinier spots.

The ground is probably commercially applied, and is comprised of two layers, gray over white. No underdrawing was detected using the infrared viewing equipment, although there may be thin dark paint lines, and there is a gray paint

sketch for the woman's dress. Several changes in the child's hat and clothing are visible in the right background. A leaf at the lower right of the bouquet is now covered by the wall color, and red paint below the flowers and leaves seems to indicate some alteration. The paint is applied in scumbles mixed with vehicular impastos, with quite high peaks in some white strokes. The thickness of the paint and anomalous brushwork in the background suggest that changes were made in this area. In general, the pigments seem unevenly ground, resulting in some pebbly textured surface areas. The woman's face is more nebulous in appearance than the child's, though this may be partially the fault of overcleaning. Ink lines may have been used for occasional dark details. The signature is applied in brown paint.

1. Lefebvre 2006, p. 206.

2. In Southampton–New York 1986, p. 33, Maureen C. O'Brien does not identify the painting Cooper lent to New York 1883 as the Clark painting, since she seemingly was unaware of its Cooper provenance, and suggested it was the *Young Mother* now in the Worcester Art Museum.

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### 319 | Spring 1877

Oil on canvas, 118.6 x 59.8 cm  
Lower right: Alfred Stevens  
1955.868

### 320 | Summer 1877

Oil on canvas, 118.4 x 59.6 cm  
Lower left: Alfred Stevens  
1955.869

### 321 | Fall 1877

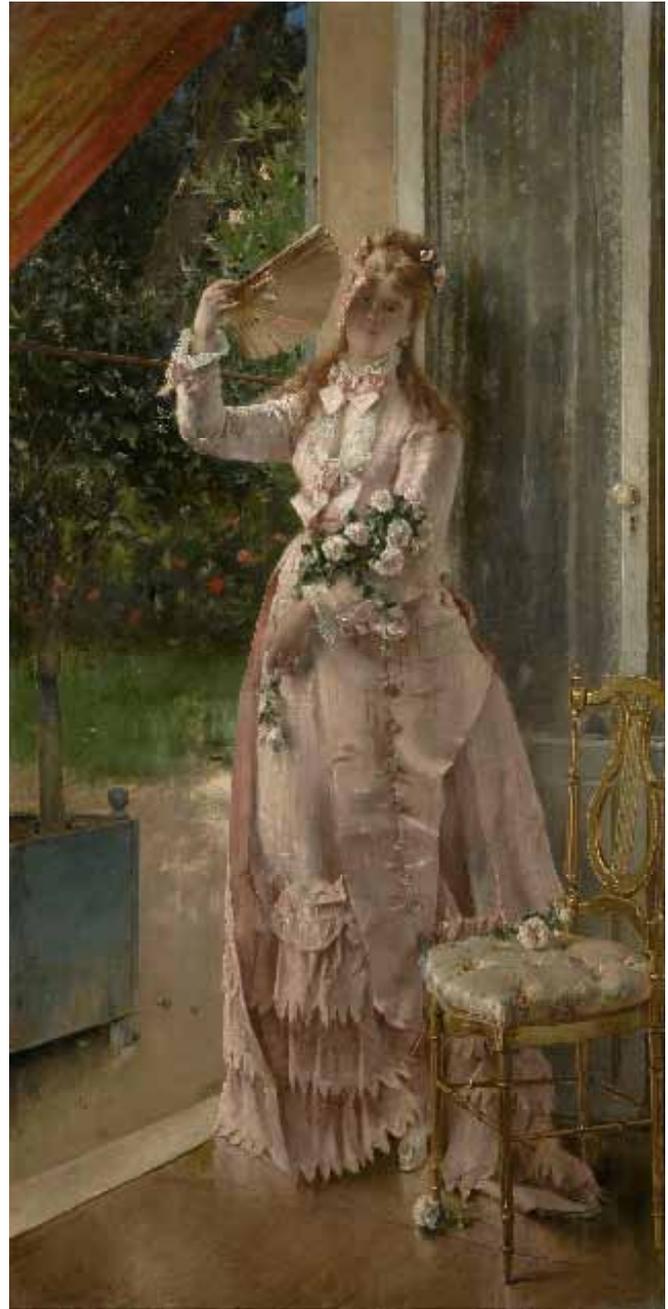
Oil on canvas, 118.9 x 59.6 cm  
Lower left: Alfred Stevens  
1955.870

### 322 | Winter 1877

Oil on canvas, 118 x 59.4 cm  
Lower left: Alfred Stevens  
1955.867



319



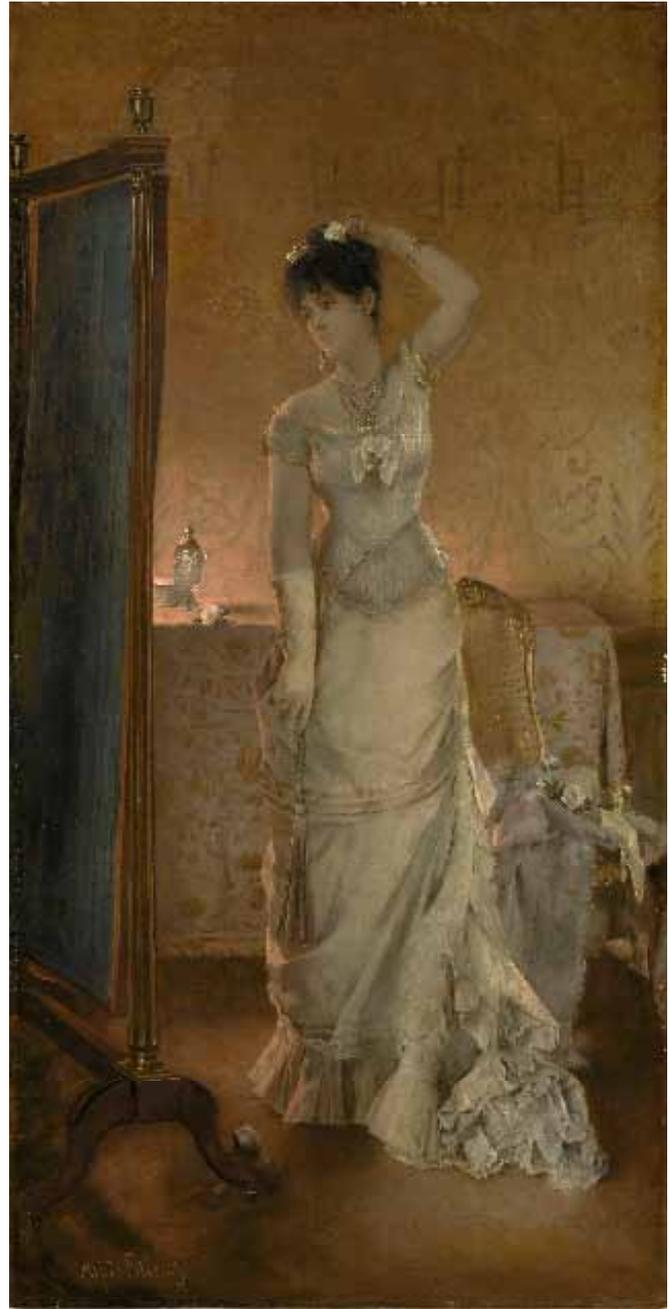
320

King Leopold II of Belgium commissioned a set of four paintings on panel representing the four seasons from Alfred Stevens in 1866.<sup>1</sup> Stevens took a decade to complete this commission; the first of these, *Spring*, was completed in 1869, the other three not until 1875–76. By contrast, the present set was rapidly completed; it was commissioned from Stevens in 1877 by the wealthy Belgian industrialist and collector Arthur Warocqué (1835–1880), probably through the intermediary of the dealer Henry Le Roy et Fils, for his mansion on the Avenue des Arts in Brussels.<sup>2</sup> A third, smaller, set is documented in a Swedish private collection, and other variants exist of individual paintings from the series.<sup>3</sup> The Warocqué paintings differ

from the original royal commission primarily in their format. The royal panels are taller and narrower, with arched tops, to fit a decorative ensemble; the Warocqué canvases are squarer, their height double their width. They too were originally painted with arched tops, though they have been installed in both arched and squared frames at different times. It seems likely that they were intended for a specific decorative role in Warocqué's mansion, but their original location is unknown. By 1907, however, the four, still with arched tops, were installed in a single composite frame; they can be seen displayed in this form in a photograph of the installation of the posthumous Stevens retrospective exhibition in Brussels in that year.<sup>4</sup> Apart from



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their format, *Summer*, *Fall*, and *Winter* differ only in minor details from their royal prototypes; the model in *Spring* is depicted in a different and more elaborate dress, presumably to bring the image up to date.

Stevens treated the traditional theme of the four seasons in explicitly contemporary terms, in images of fashionably dressed young women; in the announcement of the original royal commission in 1866, it was emphasized that the theme would be treated “no longer by banal mythological allegories, but by four female figures of different ages and wearing costumes that are dictated by the state of the landscape through which they are passing.”<sup>5</sup> There was, though, a change to this initial plan, as Camille Lemonnier noted in his

extended description of the first series in 1877. The final subject of *Winter* was not Stevens’s choice: “It is nature in four canvases, and, except for *Winter*, one could say that these four pictures are also the four seasons of woman. The wish of the King, their owner, prevented Alfred Stevens from completing his work in a logical way; Leopold II wanted to have on the walls of his palace only young, fresh grace, and the trilogy was forced to end with *Autumn*, that final incarnation of youth. *Winter* would, though, have been the opportunity for the painter of modern beauty to renew himself with that extraordinary thing: the old woman.”<sup>6</sup> The backgrounds of the paintings serve a triple function: as representations of the season in question (with

winter indoors by artificial light), as images of the times of the day, and as complements to the narratives implied by the pictures. The latter were succinctly summarized by Lemonnier in 1877: “the first hopes, the second loves, the third regrets, the fourth has the sort of vague, undefined virginity of winter.”<sup>7</sup>

The women in the first three paintings in the set all wear elaborate, fashionable day-dresses. *Spring*, set in a woodland glade, is personified by a young girl standing amongst flowering trees with a white dove perched on her shoulder. She holds a plucked flower, and seemingly unselfconsciously holds open the front of her dress to reveal the beribboned slip beneath—perhaps a hint that she is opening herself to the prospect of love. The vivid blue dress complements the overall cool tonality of the canvas, suggesting the effect of early morning light. In the background are low bushes and a bank of trees, together with both the turret of a castle and a humble cottage, signs perhaps of the young woman’s status and of her modesty. She wears no rings on her fingers.

In *Summer*, the figure holds a bouquet, or rather, perhaps, an armful of roses, which spill onto the chair and the floor; she stands in an open French window which is shaded by an awning, and fans herself from the implied summer heat. The pink of the roses and the dress give the picture a predominantly warm tonality; a tree in a planter stands outside the door, and the garden beyond is hemmed in by dense foliage—an evidently artificial setting, in contrast to the hints of countryside in *Spring*. The figure wears a ring with a stone in it on the third finger of her left hand, presumably signifying her engagement.

The stone bench behind the figure in *Fall* shows that the setting is a park rather than the open countryside, but the trees behind her suggest woodland rather than a cultivated garden. Their drab tonality complements the figure’s brown dress. The fallen leaves and the figure’s hunched, enclosed posture contrast with the flowery expansiveness of *Summer*, and the book, with a dog-eared cover, that she holds under her arm suggests that she has only reading to keep her company in her solitude. The ring, here, is on the second, not the third, finger of her left hand.

As Lemonnier’s account of the king’s intervention suggests, the imagery of *Winter* does not obviously complete the cycle. The emphasis, here, is rather on artifice; the figure preens herself by lamplight before a full-length mirror, her elaborate and tightly corseted ball-gown suggesting that this is the prelude or after-

math of a formal ball. Whereas the other three figures are implicitly focusing on their relationships with men, here the woman is absorbed in perfecting her own image; the tonality of the whole, in soft pinks and grays, heightens the sense of artificiality. Her right hand is gloved, and no rings can be seen on her bare left hand.

The series cannot be seen as images of different stages of a single woman’s life because the models chosen for each season are distinctly different in physiognomy, hair color, and body type. Rather, in each canvas the figure type complements the season in question, as does the hair color: blonde for spring, golden for summer, brown for autumn, and black for winter; the distinctly different tonality of each picture enhances its overall mood. The details included also encourage the viewer to seek a potential narrative in each, so that they can individually be interpreted in terms similar to the genre paintings by which Stevens made his name, as well as, together, forming a cycle of the seasons.

Stevens was not alone in seeking this type of fusion between allegory and contemporary life. In 1866, Charles Marchal (1825–1877) had exhibited a canvas showing a young Alsatian girl looking out through a window onto a sunlit spring garden with the title *Spring* (location unknown), and in 1865 Henri Schlesinger (1814–1893) showed a group of five canvases, joined as a decorative ensemble, with the title *The Five Senses* (location unknown); these depict fashionable young women, each accompanied by attributes that suggest the sense in question. Shortly after Stevens had completed the present set of the four seasons, his friend Édouard Manet embarked on the theme, but was only able to complete *Spring* (private collection, U.S.A., on loan to National Gallery of Art, Washington) and *Fall* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy) before his death in 1883.<sup>8</sup> In these, as in Stevens’s canvases, the clothing and appearance of the model, together with the overall tonality and the accompanying flowers, suggest the season in question, but without the inclusion of the details by which Stevens suggested potential sentimental narratives; Antonin Proust later recorded Manet’s opposition to this specific aspect of Stevens’s work.<sup>9</sup> JH

**PROVENANCE** Commissioned by Arthur Warocqué, Brussels, possibly with Henry Le Roy et Fils as agent (1877–d. 1880); Madame Arthur Warocqué (Marie Warocqué-Orville), Brussels, his wife, by descent (1880–after 1900);<sup>10</sup> Raoul Warocqué, Brussels, her son, by descent (by 1907–before 1918);

Léon Guinotte, Brussels;<sup>11</sup> [Galerie J. Allard, Paris, sold to Clark, 4 Mar. 1936]; Robert Sterling Clark (1936–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Paris 1900c, no. 180, as *Les Quatre Saisons*, lent by Mme. Arthur Warocqué and Raoul Warocqué; Brussels 1901b, no. 80;<sup>12</sup> Brussels–Antwerp 1907, no. 94, as *Les Quatre saisons*, lent by R. Warocqué; Williamstown 1960b, ill.; Williamstown 1992–93, no cat.; Williamstown 2000–2001, no cat.

**REFERENCES** Cat. 319: Lemonnier 1888, p. 147n1; Lemonnier 1906a, pl. 31; Monod 1909, p. 8; Vanzype 1936, pp. 52, 101, no. 39; Jottrand 1970, pp. 24–25; Ann Arbor–Baltimore–Montreal 1977–78, p. 63; Wentworth 1978, p. 186, ill. p. 189, no. 43e; Herbert 1988, pp. 184, 186, fig. 186; Kern et al. 1996, pp. 56–57, ill.; Frankfurt–Munich 2006–7, p. 197, ill.; Derrey-Capon 2009, pp. 67, 103, ill. (installation view of Brussels–Antwerp 1907) (Dutch ed., pp. 68, 103, ill.).

Cat. 320: Lemonnier 1888, p. 147n1; Lemonnier 1906a, pl. 31; Mourey 1906, p. 38, ill.; Monod 1909, p. 8; Vanzype 1936, pp. 52, 101, no. 39; Jottrand 1970, pp. 24–25; Ann Arbor–Baltimore–Montreal 1977–78, p. 63; Adler and Garb 1987, pp. 56, 68, pl. 45; Kern et al. 1996, pp. 56–57, ill.; Kihara 2002, pp. 275–78, pl. 6.25; Lille–Martigny 2002, pp. 184–85, ill.; Derrey-Capon 2009, pp. 67, 103, ill. (installation view of Brussels–Antwerp 1907) (Dutch ed., pp. 68, 103, ill.).

Cat. 321: Lemonnier 1888, p. 147n1; Lemonnier 1906a, pl. 32; Mourey 1906, pp. 37, 44; Monod 1909, p. 8; Vanzype 1936, pp. 52, 101, no. 39; Jottrand 1970, pp. 24–25; Ann Arbor–Baltimore–Montreal 1977–78, p. 63; Adler 1986, p. 216, fig. 209; Cikovsky 1990, pp. 107–9, fig. 26; Washington–Boston–New York 1995–96, p. 100, fig. 77; Kern et al. 1996, pp. 56–57, ill.; Kihara 2002, pp. 275–78, pl. 6.22; House 2003, p. 12, fig. 7; Frankfurt–Munich 2006–7, p. 197, ill.; Derrey-Capon 2009, pp. 67, 103, ill. (installation view of Brussels–Antwerp 1907) (Dutch ed., pp. 68, 103, ill.).

Cat. 322: Lemonnier 1888, p. 147n1; Lemonnier 1906a, pl. 32; Monod 1909, p. 8; Vanzype 1936, pp. 52, 101, no. 39; Jottrand 1970, pp. 24–25; Ann Arbor–Baltimore–Montreal 1977–78, p. 63; New York 1986–87, p. 54, fig. 1; Kern et al. 1996, pp. 56–57, ill.; Kihara 2002, pp. 189–90, 276, pl. 4.52; Derrey-Capon 2009, pp. 67, 103, ill. (installation view of Brussels–Antwerp 1907) (Dutch ed., pp. 68, 103, ill.).

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support on all four paintings is a fine-weave linen (28 threads/cm). The early conservation history is extensive and identical, as the four paintings were treated as a set until recently. The paintings were cleaned in 1936 by Madame Coincé of Paris, glue-lined and cleaned in 1939 through Knoedler in Paris, and cleaned again in New York in 1949 by De Wild. During one of these restorations, probably the last, the original stretchers were replaced with heavy seven-member mortise-and-tenon mahogany stretchers. The bare spandrels of the arch-shaped tops were painted to match the nearby original paint during one of the earlier restorations.

In 1977, prompted by continual flaking problems, *Spring* and *Fall* were relined using wax resin, and the mahogany stretchers were replaced with ICA redwood spring tension designs. The reverse of *Fall* revealed the canvas stamp for Vieille. *Spring* presently has a shallow dent in the upper right corner. Although *Summer* was also recommended for relining in 1977, this was not performed. *Fall* was also cleaned, which exposed the original arched top and a general abrasion of the image, some of which was then re-inpainted. The other three paintings still retain their 1949 surface restorations, which may include some of the 1939 cosmetic work as well.

Due to continuing cleaving and flaking, *Spring*, *Summer*, and *Fall* were locally consolidated, surface cleaned, and revarnished as needed in 2004. *Winter*, *Spring*, and *Summer* all exhibit a rather dense fluorescence in ultraviolet light. Visually *Winter* looks the most yellow, while both *Winter* and *Spring* have extensive overpaint in the spandrels, the background details, and the heads of the models. The overpainted arch spandrels on *Summer* have darkened, and in general the three older surfaces have a slightly uneven sheen due to the number of restorations. All four paintings have suffered solvent damage, in some areas down to the thread tops, with much reglazing to compensate for detail loss and thinning.

All four pictures seem to have been executed on the same commercially prepared fabric, having a grayish to off-white ground layer. No underdrawing was found on any of the images using infrared light equipment, although small areas of charcoal were seen under low magnification on each painting. They may also have a thin gray or brown paint sketch below the final colors. There were some changes in the paint, notably dress and fan alterations on *Winter*, and a shift between the drawing and painting of the bow near the waist on *Summer*. All four works are painted in a thin manner, with *Summer* perhaps having the thickest paint film, including some impastos. The floor lines on *Winter* may be done in brown ink.

1. *La Presse* 1866, p. 3.

2. The commission for Warocqué is mentioned in Lemonnier 1888, p. 147n1. On its first publication in 1888, Lemonnier's essay "Alfred Stevens et les Quatre Saisons" was dated 1877. Jottrand 1970, pp. 23–25, discusses the acquisition of the other paintings by Stevens owned by Warocqué, but cites no documentation about *The Four Seasons*.

3. For more on the Swedish set, see the Clark's curatorial file.

4. Derrey-Capon 2009, p. 103.

5. *La Presse* 1866, p. 3: "non plus par les banales allégories mythologiques, mais par quatre figures de femmes d'âges divers et de costumes commandés par l'état du paysage qu'elles traverseront."

6. Lemonnier 1888, p. 147: "C'est la nature en quatre tableaux et, n'était l'hiver, on pourrait dire que ces quatre tableaux sont en même temps les quatre saisons de

la femme. Le vœu du roi, leur propriétaire, a empêché Alfred Stevens d'achever logiquement son œuvre; il a plu à Léopold II de n'avoir sur les murs de son palais que la grâce jeune et fraîche, et la trilogie s'est forcément arrêtée à l'*Automne*, cette incarnation dernière de la jeunesse. L'*Hiver* eût été pourtant, pour le peintre de la beauté moderne, l'occasion de se renouveler [*sic*] dans cette chose extraordinaire: la femme vieille." See note 2 for the dating of Lemonnier's essay.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 151–52: "la première espère, la seconde aime, la troisième regrette, la quatrième a l'espèce de virginité vague, indéfinie de l'hiver."
8. RW vol. 1, 372, 393.
9. Proust 1897, pp. 202–3 (1988 ed., p. 45); see House 2004, p. 23.
10. Madame Arthur Warocqué died in 1909, but her son Raoul, and not she, is listed as the lender to the Brussels–Antwerp 1907 exhibition, suggesting that the ownership of the paintings went to him before her death. The Allard invoice prepared for Clark does not include Madame Warocqué as an owner, but this may be an oversight.
11. From the Allard invoice.
12. From the Allard invoice. This exhibition is known only through secondary sources. See Derrey-Capon 2009, p. 223.

**323 | Moonlight (Au clair de la lune) c. 1885**

Oil on panel, 27.3 x 21.8 cm  
 Lower left: AStevens [AS in monogram]  
 1955.864

A young woman, lavishly dressed in an evening gown adorned with French jet or something similar, and with a scarf around her neck, stands at an open window, looking out over the sea, her right hand resting on the padded upper rail of a decorative metal railing. It is night, the sky is spangled with stars, and the moon can be seen at the left edge of the picture, its cool light illuminating the woman's face. The sea is enlivened by sailing boats and one small dark steamship, but the shoreline is not visible; nothing comes between the woman at her window and the vast space outside. She might have just risen from the chair behind her; as she turns her face to the moonlight, she seems absorbed in contemplating the spectacle before her, but, beyond this, there is no suggestion of the nature of her emotions in front of the scene.



Fig. 323.1 Alfred Stevens, *The Milky Way (La voie lactée)*, c. 1884–86. Oil on canvas, 67.7 x 52.7 cm. Private collection

In his collection of aphorisms on painting, *Impressions sur la peinture*, written in 1885–86 and published in 1886, Stevens wrote: "The moon beautifies everything. It lends accent to sterile landscapes that the sun itself is powerless to animate, because it suppresses details and gives value only to the mass."<sup>1</sup> From the style of the dress, it seems likely that *Moonlight* was painted around this date, though the light effect here clearly does not suppress the details of the scene.

The first traced owner of the painting was the American painter William Merritt Chase, who initially made Stevens's acquaintance around 1881, and bought at least a dozen paintings by him over the years.<sup>2</sup> When Chase loaned the present painting to an exhibition in New York in 1911, it bore the title *Moonlight*; in the catalogue of the auction of pictures from Chase's collection the following year, it was given the title *On the Balcony*. Which title, if either, Stevens himself gave to the picture is not known; the earliest recorded title is adopted here. The preface to the 1912 sale catalogue, by Dana H. Carroll, highlighted the exceptional nature of the pictures, as an artist's collection, none of them bought for profit: "It may almost be said—of those not themselves artists—that to like a painting in the Chase collection is to be a connoisseur. . . . Some of the canvases in the collection are of museum importance.