



**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  
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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

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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. Roglán, James Rosenow, Zoë 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)

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fits seamlessly with the Barbizon paintings collected by Clark during his lifetime. Having absorbed the atmosphere of the landscape around Fontainebleau through his lithographs after his colleagues' work, Vernier here gives it his own somewhat more picturesque interpretation. KA

**PROVENANCE** [F. & J. Tempelaere, Paris, sold to Clark, 27 Mar. 1936, as *Paysage, Route à l'orée d'un bois*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1936–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown 1958a, ill.; Williamstown 1959b, ill.; Williamstown 1979b, no cat.; Williamstown 1988–89, no cat.

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a mahogany panel 0.6 cm thick, with chamfers 1.3 cm wide on the back edges. The wood grain runs horizontally, and the panel has a slight convex warp. There is a small loss in the wood on the right edge, and some of the frame abrasion along the right and left edges is quite old, perhaps caused when the paint was still flexible. Daubs of orange paint, which may still be drying, appear to be oozing up through the surface. Short horizontal paint cracks follow the panel's grain, and where it still exists the old varnish displays a separate crack network. The coatings are uneven and moderately discolored, with residues in the green foliage, especially along the edges. All varnish layers appear to be natural resin, and the surface is shinier where the older deposits remain, especially in the lower right area. The signature is thin and abraded. The partial cleaning by Chapuis and Counce of Paris dates to 1936. The present varnish is thin enough to allow the brushwork of the paint layer to be readable in reflected light.

The off-white ground, which may have been applied by the artist, is so thin that it allows the panel grain to be visible. Several sections appear to have been pumiced or sanded, as diagonal scratches can be seen in the lower right and beneath the figures. No underdrawing was detected, although there may be a warm brown sketch laid in before the final colors. The sky was painted first, leaving reserves for the trees. The roadway appears to have been applied after the greenery, with reserves left for the two figures. The paint handling is open, loose, and lively, using small brushes throughout.

1. Guillemin 1905, pp. 4–6.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 5; *Academy* 1872, p. 165; Thomson 1915, p. 150.

## Jules Jacques Veyrassat

French, 1828–1893

### 344 | Hay Wain c. 1850–93

Oil on panel, 31.4 x 27.3 cm

Lower left: J. Veyrassat.

1955.891

Although Jules Jacques Veyrassat is not well known today outside France, he was an accomplished artist in his time. He was associated with the Barbizon School, and his subjects consisted mainly of rural scenes, many depicting farm animals and workers in the fields or returning home. Several of his works take water scenes as their subject, with boats or ferries on canals. The hay wain or cart was a frequent theme, of which this is an example.

Veyrassat worked mainly in the media of painting and printmaking, but he also made drawings and highly detailed watercolors. In each of these media he made the study of horses his specialty. A critic noted in *The Art Journal* in 1877 that Veyrassat's "admirable studies of horses . . . show his usual marvelous qualities of . . . putting on canvas the sturdy, patient draught-horse of Normandy or Flanders."<sup>1</sup> The Clark painting is a small but carefully detailed scene, and is slightly unusual for the artist in its vertical composition. Other versions of the subject by Veyrassat are strongly horizontal, in the standard format for landscapes. *Haymaking Scene*, a watercolor in the Musée des Augustins, Toulouse, bears numerous parallels to the present work, including two male workers resting on a bale of hay with a female wearing an apron standing over them, and several horses attached to a hay wain at right. Even the packs strapped to horses' backs are the same color as those in the Clark painting. *Haymakers Resting* (Williams and Son, London), an oil on canvas, is a horizontally extended version of *Hay Wain*, with a set of horses and carts on either side of a group of workers.

Little is known about the history of this picture. It may have remained with Veyrassat until his death, to be sold at his studio sale in December 1893, although the identification is not certain; Sterling Clark purchased it forty-five years later, in 1938, from Knoedler in Paris. Given the painting's small, delicate nature along with Clark's passion for horses, it is not surprising to find this among the many pictures in his



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collection that feature horses. The rural subject, attention to light and air, and brightly colored palette point to a likely date in the second half of the nineteenth century. Its affinity with Millet's naturalistic peasant farmers framed against stacks of hay also situates it in this time period.

Veyrassat's fondness for horses and farm animals was typical of the artists associated with Barbizon and their depictions of rural agriculture. His interest should also be linked to the popularity of *animalier* painting in the nineteenth century. Veyrassat must have admired the century's most famous animal painter—Rosa Bonheur—as he painted an almost exact copy (private collection) of her iconic painting *Plowing in Nivernais* (1849; Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Unlike Bonheur's horses, however, Veyrassat's are most often shown at rest rather than working. KAP

**PROVENANCE** The artist, d. 1893, possibly his studio sale, 11–13 Dec. 1893, no. 96, as *Le repos de chevaux de halage*; [Knoedler, Paris, sold to Clark, 7 Jan. 1938, as *La Charrette de foin*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1938–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown 1979b, no cat.; Williamstown 1981a, no cat.; Williamstown 1994, no cat.

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a walnut panel 0.8 cm thick, with slight chamfers on the top and bottom back edges. The wood grain runs vertically, and the surface has a slight waviness across the grain, although the panel is relatively flat. The reverse is coated with a slight layer of oil or resin. In 1980, the picture was cleaned of thick multiple layers of varnish and some overpaint in the sky. Ultraviolet light examination revealed some old varnish residues in the



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sky and the darker passages. There are edge losses from old framing pressure, and some solvent abrasion in the thin dark colors and along the tops of heavier paint strokes. There are retouches in the trees, sky, and along the top edge of the panel, with scattered smaller touches in the figures and animals. The present surface reflectance is uneven due to the variety of textures in the artist's painting technique.

The ground is a thin gray layer, which may be a water-sensitive, glue-based preparation. With use of the microscope, black underdrawing lines are visible only in a few isolated areas. Lines for the ears of the chestnut horse appear to be done with a thinly dispersed black ink, while lines below the figures look like charcoal. The figures and animals may also be outlined in warm brown paint. Using infrared reflectography, pentimenti of darker shapes in the sky suggest that the trees at the right originally extended farther to the left. This may be corroborated by anomalous brushstrokes seen beneath the sky paint. The image was created in a complex layering of thick opaque strokes and thin glaze colors, using a wet-into-wet application laid in within each form. The sky may have been bluer in an earlier paint layer. The signature was written in black ink.

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1. Hooper 1877, p. 126.

## Alfred Vickers

English, 1786–1868

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### 345 | **Wooded Country Landscape with Figures in a Cart** 1855

Oil on canvas, 63.2 x 93.3 cm

Lower left: Vickers / 1855

Gift of the Manton Foundation in memory of Sir Edwin and Lady Manton

2007.8.123

A regular contributor to the Royal Academy exhibitions for over thirty years, from his first *View near Bristol* in 1831 until the year of his death when he contributed two landscapes, Alfred Vickers took as his subject rural life in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. The locations of his scenes range from the Isle of Wight, to Wales, to the home counties and north to Yorkshire. Unlike the specificity of John Constable's landscapes of Suffolk, in *Wooded Country Landscape with Figures in a Cart* there is nothing to point to the identity of the location. Rather, the golden glow of the softly diffused sun and the benign activities of the woman washing clothes and the occupants of the cart, all placed within a classical composition, provide a timeless