



**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

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

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 Amphisa* (cat. 3)

vision of the English landscape that harkens back to both seventeenth-century Dutch models and to the idealized scenes of Claude Lorrain (1604/5–1682) and Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665).

Although Vickers was a self-taught artist, it is clear from his careful construction of the path leading from the foreground to the middle ground and into the far distance, together with the framing device of the trees, that he was well aware of the components of the seventeenth-century classical landscape. Vickers, however, overlays this influence of Claude and Poussin with that of the Dutch landscapists, such as Jacob van Ruysdael (1628/29–1682) and Meindert Hobbema (1638–1709), who were so popular with British collectors throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In *Wooded Country Landscape*, there is little to suggest that Vickers was inclined to adopt the sort of hyperrealism that the Pre-Raphaelite landscapists were practicing at the time. Nor does the artist seem interested in the rapidly changing conditions of rural life in the mid-nineteenth century.

The first fifty years of the nineteenth century saw the population of Britain double from nine to eighteen million. The steady movement away from an agrarian to an industrial economy meant that urban centers grew at a rapid pace, drawing their populace from the countryside. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 marked the triumph of free market economics, but it also signaled the diminishment of the political power of the landed gentry. There are no signs of this profound change in the state of the English countryside in *Wooded Country Landscape*. Rather, Vickers's painting seems to be proof of Ann Bermingham's statement that "precisely when the countryside . . . was becoming unrecognizable, and dramatically marked by historical change, it was offered as the image of the homely, the stable, the ahistorical."¹ EP

PROVENANCE Private collection; sale, Sotheby's, London, 9 April 1997, no. 100, as *Going to Market*, sold to Ackermann & Johnson, Ltd., London, as agent for Manton; Sir Edwin A. G. Manton (1997–d. 2005); Manton Family Art Foundation (2005–7, given to the Clark); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

EXHIBITIONS None

REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is moderate-weight canvas with possibly a twill weave of about 16 threads per cm. The painting has been glue-paste lined onto a fine-weight canvas

having a weave of 22 x 25 threads per cm, and remounted to the original four-member pine stretcher. The lack of stretcher crossbars may be responsible for the slackness in the center of the canvas. There is a slight canvas weave impression from the lining pressure. The painting was cleaned in 1997 through the dealer Ackermann & Johnson. At some point, the sky and figures were cleaned further than the rest. There is cleaning damage in the thin dark colors and lots of old varnish resin trapped in the paint strokes. Inspection in ultraviolet light shows extensive old varnish fluorescence in the foliage. There is inpainting in the sky and along the edges, and strengthening in scattered dark details. The wheel of the cart and the horse's harness are heavily repainted. There is frame abrasion to the varnish layer.

The ground is a commercially primed off-white color, probably applied in two layers. There is extensive graphite underdrawing done in brief strokes to locate compositional elements, and then possibly sealed with a pale wash prior to painting. Lines can be seen along the mountains, tree limbs, buildings, and chimneys. Some drawing appears to have been laid on top of the sky colors after the sky was dry. In infrared light, there is also evidence of a change in the size of the cart's wheel from smaller to larger. A thin brown paint sketch may exist between the drawing and painting phases. The final image is a combination of dilute washes and vehicular details, with small feathery impastos in the foliage. There are only a few thick strokes in the horse and bright foreground colors. The painting is signed in what may be ink.

1. Bermingham 1987, p. 9.

Victor-Alfred-Paul Vignon

French, 1847–1909

346 | Snow Effect in the Suburbs c. 1875–85

Oil on canvas, 24.7 x 32.5 cm

Lower right: V^t Vignon.

1955.892

Although Victor Vignon is not very well known today, he was a friend of Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, and Paul Cézanne, and exhibited in four of the Impressionist exhibitions, from 1880 to 1886. He had initially drawn inspiration from the work of Camille Corot, who he met in 1869, but in the next few years he grew increasingly aware of the artists who would organize their first group exhibition in 1874, and by the end of the 1870s, Vignon began to spend long periods of time in



346

Auvers-sur-Oise and several neighboring towns in the Oise valley. Pissarro had taken up residence nearby in Pontoise in 1872, and Cézanne in Auvers later the same year, and all three artists were friendly with Dr. Paul Gachet (an arts supporter and collector perhaps best known for later treating Vincent van Gogh), in whose home in Auvers they may well have met. Pissarro likely provided connections to the Impressionist group and their exhibitions, and his landscape subjects, painting techniques, and color palette all clearly influenced Vignon's own approach from the 1870s onward.

Snow Effect in the Suburbs probably depicts a street in one of these small towns in the region northwest of Paris. The image centers on the intersection of a fairly large street running from the right foreground to the left, lined with shops and a walled property at the left, and a narrower street cutting between the buildings. The streets, roofs, and trees are covered with a layer of snow, and several figures pick their way along the partially cleared roads. The shops are indicated by carefully reproduced signs on the building fronts for a café and a bakery-pastry shop (*boulangerie-pâtisserie*), but the street sign at far right and some possibly more descriptive lettering on the central building are rendered illegibly, so that the precise location of the scene cannot be determined.

Vignon's choice of a suburban town in winter and the relatively broad brushwork he used in the foreground, the trees at left, and the figures recall Pissarro's typical treatment of similar elements. In *Pontoise, the Road to Gisors in Winter* (1873; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston),¹ for example, Pissarro used short, thick strokes to describe a snowy street and the figures populating it, none of whom have defined features, much like the figures in *Snow Effect in the Suburbs*. The greater precision with which Vignon represented the buildings, however, and particularly the lettering of the legible signs, contrasts distinctly with Pissarro's more open treatment. Such precision may also be somewhat unusual in Vignon's own work; another snow scene, *Entrance to the Village in the Snow* (1880/85; Heinz J. Esch Collection, Germany), while showing a similar roadway running between high walls outside a village, has much broader handling. Vignon's use of the word "effect" in his title, a designation he repeated for a number of works, also recalls the practice of other Impressionist artists, particularly Claude Monet, who painted numerous "snow effect" scenes.²

Vignon was generally well received when he exhibited with the Impressionists. Critics often commented on the modest and delicate quality of his landscape studies, while noting his affinities with

Pissarro. In 1881, Paul de Charry remarked that “M. Vignon sometimes forgets that he is *intransigent* [the term by which the Impressionists initially referred to themselves] and makes landscapes with perfect finish,” while the following year, a writer named La Fare noted that “the landscapes of M. Victor Vignon closely resemble those of M. Pissarro, but they are painted more finely, more delicately.”³ At the last exhibition, in 1886, the two critics who commented on Vignon’s work both noted a mood and quality of light that seem comparable to the flat, even illumination and quiet atmosphere of winter in the present image. For Henry Fèvre, “M. Vignon gives his light much less ostentation than his companions do,” and Gustave Geffroy wrote, “He likes hillsides that rise up like walls, paths overgrown with vegetation, village streets green with grass. What lovely and melancholy things, this *Côte Saint-Nicolas in Winter*, this *Grandes Nises Hillside!* What sweet peacefulness in this *Val-Hermay*, with its bluish houses.”⁴

Vignon had a number of prominent supporters, including the critics Arsène Alexandre and Roger Marx, and the collectors Georges Viau and Nicolas Auguste Hazard, whose posthumous sale included over thirty works by Vignon, one of which was *Snow Effect in the Suburbs*. Despite his considerable output and art world connections, his life and works are not very well documented, and his paintings are therefore difficult to date.⁵ This work was probably painted some time in the period 1875 to 1885, when his interaction with the Impressionist group was at its closest. SL

PROVENANCE Nicolas Auguste Hazard, Paris (d. 1913, his sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 1–3 Dec. 1919, no. 223, as *Effet de neige dans un coin de banlieue*, sold to a group of dealers, including 1/7 interest to Durand-Ruel, Paris); [group of dealers, 1919–22, sold to Durand-Ruel, New York, 1 Dec. 1922]; [Durand-Ruel, New York, 1922–40, sold to Clark, 3 Feb. 1940];⁶ Robert Sterling Clark (1940–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1988–89, no cat.

REFERENCES Pontoise 2002, p. 30.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a fine-weave canvas (31 threads/cm), glue-lined to a heavier canvas of uneven weave (22 x 16 threads/cm). The painting was lined and cleaned in 1940 by Beers Brothers of New York, through the Durand-Ruel Gallery. The tacking margins were preserved, as was the original five-member pine stretcher. The picture is in very good condition. There are scattered age cracks in several

areas, visible only in low magnification, and a few impasto tops flattened from the lining process. Although the Beers invoice stated that the picture was cleaned, it seems only grime was removed, as there is no evidence of any varnish removal. The painting retains its first varnish, a thin natural resin layer which was probably applied long after the picture was completed, and possibly during the 1940 restoration.

The ground is an off-white commercially applied layer. The underdrawing is difficult to characterize; some passages look like charcoal, others take the form of controlled black dots, possibly an oiled charcoal stick, or an ink or paint medium. Using infrared reflectography, diagonal shading can be seen in the darker roof portion of the central building. Black lines are visible in low magnification where the buildings meet the sky, suggesting that most of the architecture was included in the drawing phase. Most of the paint was applied wet-into-wet, with several layers of equal thickness, suggesting possible color changes here and there. The sky was painted first, stopping at the drawn rooflines of the buildings. The signature was applied after the image was dry.

1. PDR 284.
2. Perhaps the best source for the titles of Vignon’s paintings is the Impressionist exhibitions, fully documented in Berson 1996. These include *Snow Effect at Montesson*, one of the works Vignon exhibited in 1880.
3. Charry 1881; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 334: “M. Vignon oublie parfois qu’il est intransigent et fait des paysages d’un fini parfait.” La Fare 1882; reprinted in Berson, vol. 1, p. 401: “Les paysages de M. Victor Vignon ressemblent beaucoup à ceux de M. Pissarro; ils sont seulement peints plus finement, plus délicatement.”
4. Fèvre 1886; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 446: “M. Vignon met beaucoup moins d’ostentation dans sa lumière que ses confrères.” Geffroy 1886; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 450: “Il aime les côtes qui se dressent comme de murailles, les sentes encombrées de végétations, les rues de hameaux toutes vertes d’herbes. Quelles belles et mélancolies choses, cette *Côte Saint-Nicolas en hiver*, ce *Côteau des Grandes Nises!* Quel doux apaisement en ce *Val-Hermay* aux maisons bleuâtres.”
5. The most complete study appears in Pontoise 2002, which notes that there is a catalogue raisonné of the artist’s work in preparation (Pontoise 2002, p. 8).
6. Information from Durand-Ruel archives. See correspondence of 24 Apr. 2001 in the Clark’s curatorial file.