



**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

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Curtis R. Scott, Director of Publications  
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Designed by Susan Marsh  
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Copyedited by Sharon Herson  
Bibliography edited by Sophia Wagner-Serrano  
Index by Kathleen M. Friello  
Proofread by June Cuffner  
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1. SC XI-100.
2. See Salomon and Cogeval 2003, vol. 3, p. 1428.
3. This second marriage is the source of the previous identification of this work. In a note inscribed on the back of a photograph of the pastel, dated just after the work's sale at Sotheby's in 1958, Jacques Salomon, who was Vuillard's nephew and had already begun work on the artist's catalogue raisonné, identified the sitter as "Madame Maugey-Rosengart rue de Naples à Paris dans le salon de Madame Hessel," giving the sitter's then-current name. Photograph in the Clark's curatorial file.
4. See SC XI-234-244, and XII-67-68.
5. SC XI-234.
6. Chastel 1946, p. 94; translation from Washington and others 2003-4, p. 356.
7. Washington and others 2003-4, p. 357.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

## Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch

Dutch, 1824-1903

### 349 | *Washing Clothes* c. 1850-80

Oil on canvas, mounted on panel, 20.6 x 33 cm

Lower left: J. H. Weissenbruch f.

1955.895

The palette of *Washing Clothes* by the Dutch artist Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch demonstrates why The Hague School is sometimes referred to as "the Gray School." Weissenbruch imbued the atmosphere of this rural landscape with silver light. The overcast sky hangs heavily as the figures in the picture go about their lives. At the center of the image, a woman, who is defined by cursory strokes, bends over as she washes clothes in a canal. Next to a cottage on the left side of the painting, a woman dressed in black stands on the road with a child in a pale red skirt or apron. Like the laundress, the woman and child are only roughly indicated with a few brushstrokes. A row of trees and a grassy knoll separate these two figures from the watery bank where the other woman is working. The shore on

the opposite side of the canal divides the small waterway from a larger body of water that can be seen on the horizon. The water in the distance and in the inlet appears placid despite the gloomy clouds above. The overall sense of calm in the painting belies the intense labor of washing clothes by hand. This, combined with the minute size of the figures, suggests that the true subject of this painting is something other than what the title suggests. Weissenbruch's focus appears to be the cool, unifying light that envelops the scene.<sup>1</sup>

Weissenbruch came from a family of artists, but he stands out among them for his relationship to The Hague School and the success of his landscape paintings, albeit largely at the end of his career. Weissenbruch, who lived his whole life in The Hague, liked to go for long walks in order to observe nature. He especially took notice of stormy weather and did not let inclement conditions keep him indoors.<sup>2</sup> Weissenbruch chose to live in town and visit the countryside on occasion so the landscape would remain fresh in his eyes.<sup>3</sup> He would sketch with charcoal, waiting to paint what he saw when he was back in his studio. He occupied himself with painting windmills, farms, seascapes, and especially the polder—the wide, flat stretches of land flooded with water like that seen in *Washing Clothes*. Like *Washing Clothes*, most of Weissenbruch's paintings are rather distant views, demonstrating that he gave primacy to the image as a whole rather than the individual subjects.

Though Weissenbruch took nature as a teacher, he also studied with the Norwegian painter J. J. Löw and at the Academy in The Hague with Bartholomeus Johannes van Hove (1790–1880). His early works also show the influence of Andreas Schelfhout (1787–1870), an artist with whom he would have been familiar thanks to his father's art collection. Like others in The Hague School, Weissenbruch spent time at the Mauritshuis Museum in The Hague, copying from the work of seventeenth-century Dutch masters, such as Jacob van Ruisdael.<sup>4</sup> Weissenbruch found inspiration in these various sources and combined them using the lens of nature, creating cohesive visions of his beloved homeland. Even though he did not receive much attention from the public, he still rose to prominence among the members of The Hague School because his fellow artists recognized his talent. KA

**PROVENANCE** [Clyfford Trevor, New York, sold to Clark, 12 Nov. 1947]; Robert Sterling Clark (1947–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown, 1988–89, no cat.; Williamstown 1990a, no cat.

**REFERENCES** None

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The support is a flat-threaded weave, moderate-weight canvas (13 x 19 threads/cm), glue-mounted to a mahogany panel 0.5 cm thick and cradled in mahogany. Some impasto tops are flattened and cracked, which indicates that the mounting took place after the picture was painted. There are age cracks in the thicker, more vehicular paint passages. Considerable solvent abrasion is visible, especially in the thin upper right sky and the thin areas of the marsh and water. The picture was probably cleaned at the time the panel and cradle were added. There is frame abrasion along the right edge and in the corners. The picture was cleaned again in 1976 by Ronald Cunningham of Hartford, Connecticut. In ultraviolet light, some older residues of varnish remain in the trees, the house, and the foreground to the left. There was no retouching detected. The canvas texture is visible in reflected light.

The ground is an off-white, commercially applied layer. Strong black charcoal underdrawing lines can be seen with the unaided eye in the vegetation and water. Using infrared reflectography, wide, somewhat loose drawing can be seen in the building, tree group, marsh, and punts. The paint is applied using a mixture of washes, pale scumbles, and thin vehicular paste strokes, with very low impastos.

1. Oss—The Hague 1999–2000, p. 10.
2. Colmjon 1951, p. 26.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
4. Paris—London—The Hague 1983, p. 275.

## Adolphe-Léon Willette

French, 1857–1926

### 350 | Young Woman After 1900

Oil and charcoal on canvas, 54.3 x 46.4 cm

Lower left: Willette

1955.898

While Adolphe Willette may not be a household name to many today, there are few who would not recognize the cultural circle in which he was a pivotal figure—that of Parisian fin de siècle bohemia. When Le Chat Noir, one of the first and most influential Montmartre cafés, opened its doors in 1881, it was Willette's paintings, stained-glass window, and street sign that adorned the