



**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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225 South Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267
www.clarkart.edu

Curtis R. Scott, Director of Publications
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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
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Charles-Olivier de Penne

French, 1831–1897

242 | End of the Hunt c. 1850–97

Oil on panel, 19 x 24.5 cm

Lower left: Ol. De Penne

1955.708

243 | Hunting Hounds c. 1850–97

Oil on panel, 27.2 x 21.5 cm

Lower right: Ol. De Penne

1955.913

244 | Two Pointers c. 1850–97

Oil on canvas, 46.5 x 61.2 cm

Lower right: Ol. De Penne

1955.709

Charles-Olivier de Penne was known for his association with the Barbizon school, having studied with Charles-Émile Jacque (1813–1894), and lived in and around the forests there. Although he won awards early in his career for painting grand religious subjects, he was most passionate about hunting and

sporting scenes featuring dogs, of which Sterling Clark purchased three. Clark's interest in these kinds of pictures reflects his own enthusiasm for outdoor pursuits, as well as the continuing popularity of the subject into the twentieth century. Penne found great success during his career with collectors, and he exhibited frequently at the Salon.

Penne was an extremely efficient draftsman, and his watercolors, pencil drawings, and prints reflect his skill in capturing various breeds in all media. Eugène Montrosier, the author of *Les artistes modernes*, observed of Penne: "He knows his dogs so well that his paintings are really illustrious portraits. Each of them which he has projected upon the canvas, in oil or watercolor, are from a proud line and their lineage is often more authentic than the lineage of those they serve."¹ In *A Chronicle of Friendships, 1873–1900*, Will Hicok Low (1853–1932), an American pupil in the studios of Gérôme and Carolus-Duran, described Penne's personality at length during his visit to Barbizon:

Olivier de Penne, a relic of the days of the court of the Second Empire at Fontainebleau, witty and cynical, openly regretting the Bonaparte dynasty, apparently never at work, yet producing constantly pictures of surprising numbers and merit. . . . [He] lived on the other side of the forest at Marlotte, though scarce a week went by without his soldier-like figure, erect on his horse, being seen at [Hotel] Siron's.

Dismounting, his stay would at times be prolonged for days. From listening to him, I fancy that I arrived at a better understanding of the amazing adventure of the Second Empire . . . the whole attitude of the man compelled interest. Like many others, he was not so black as he was painted by his own hand, and, as for his actual painting, many collections here and in France count his clever water-colours, of hounds and huntsmen in the green forest on the borders of which he lived, as choice possessions.²

In *End of the Hunt*, Penne depicted the English Setter, one of the oldest gundog breeds. He painted this scene quickly, including the dogs' characteristic feathered coats, which are white with darker hairs—markings called “belton.” As the title indicates, the dogs have done their duty, retrieving the rabbit to end the hunt, excitedly about to return it to the hunting party.

Two Pointers has a much more finished look than *End of the Hunt* despite the fact that it, too, was painted quickly and wet-on-wet. Penne captures the two short-haired hounds among the tall grass as they have just discovered the location of the game they are tracking. The artist's skill in depicting animals is especially apparent in this picture: as the dogs aid the hunter by pointing out the game, Penne paints their muscles in a lifelike manner, proving his familiarity with their anatomy.

Even within the small size of *Hunting Hounds*, Penne created a more extensive composition with half a dozen hounds. Unlike the other two Clark pictures, this scene shows the dogs leashed together, overseen by a huntsman with a hunting horn wrapped around him, while other members of the hunting party can be seen on horseback in the rear of the scene. As in *End of the Hunt*, there is considerable underdrawing in black ink, to help lay out the details of the scene. KAP

PROVENANCE Cat. 242: [Wallis & Son (The French Gallery), London, sold to Clark, 23 Mar. 1931, as *The End of the Hunt*]; Robert Sterling Clark (1931–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

Cat. 243: Robert Sterling Clark (by 1955);³ Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

Cat. 244: [Neuville & Vivien, Paris, sold to Clark, 31 Dec. 1935]; Robert Sterling Clark (1935–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Cat. 242: None

Cats. 243–44: Williamstown 1961.



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REFERENCES None

TECHNICAL REPORT Cat. 242: The support is a white oak panel (0.8 cm thick), tangentially cut, with the diagonal grain running principally in a horizontal direction. There are chamfered edges 0.8 cm wide on the reverse and the name of the Paris artist's supplier Paul Denis stamped into the end grain. The panel has a very slight convex warp. Drying cracks have formed in the thicker paint and age cracks run diagonally along the wood grain. Accidental smearing of some colors occurred before the paint was sufficiently set, and debris and grime are embedded in the upper surface of the impastos, as if the picture rested against a flat dirty surface. The varnish is discolored, especially in the upper corners, with a separate crack network running with the panel grain. There are small flake losses in the foliage along the right side.

The off-white commercially prepared ground has a pebbly canvas texture visible in the sky. There is very sure underdrawing seen on the dogs, done in black ink with some shading lines. Some drawing lines remain as part of the final image, as in the rabbit's head and ears. There is also a thin brown wash, which appears to extend over the lower half of the image, perhaps as a local imprimatura. The paint is



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vehicular in consistency and was applied wet-into-wet, from the thin layers in the sky to low-level impastos in the dogs.

Cat. 243: The support is a commercially prepared mahogany panel (0.8 cm thick), with the wood grain running vertically. The panel shows a slight convex warp along the left side, particularly in the lower left corner. The reverse is varnished and displays a large colorman's stamp for Paul Denis, Paris, and a stamp for the standard French support size number 3. The varnish is a slightly discolored natural resin that fluoresces lightly in ultraviolet light. A few matte oil paint retouches in the upper left corner and the right edge near the dogs are less discolored than the coatings.

The ground is a pebbly textured, slightly off-white, commercially applied layer. There seems to be an overall sketch in black ink visible under the microscope. Infrared reflectography confirms the lines used for the distant trees at the left background. The paint consistency is vehicular, with low to moderate-height impastos. Paint strokes were laid on wet-into-wet and quite heavily in the right tree and the central figure's costume.

Cat. 244: The support is an unlined linen of very fine weave (28 threads/cm) on its original five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The canvas bears the colorman's stamp of Paul Denis, Paris, and a stamp for the standard French canvas size number 12. There are stretcher creases along the top, center, and bottom bars, and corner stress cracks radiating inward from the lower left and the two upper corners. There are scattered age cracks and some areas of frame abrasion. The painting was probably cleaned and varnished in 1936 by Chapuis and Coince. The coating is now yellowed,

particularly in the sky, and was applied while the picture was framed. Reflected light accentuates the cupping stretcher creases and age cracks, as well as the diagonal sweeps of an underlayer of ground or paint in the sky.

The cream or off-white ground layers are commercially applied. No underdrawing is visible, but there may be a preliminary yellow-brown sketch in the lower half of the image. Infrared reflectography reveals that a distant landscape, extending from above the dog's back to the right edge, was later painted over, becoming part of the sky. This is corroborated by examination of the picture edges and the dogs' outlines. The paint was applied very wet and vehicular, with some later scumbling, and brown and black inks were used for the darker details of the dogs. Some grass stems were drawn through wet paint in a sgraffito technique, probably using a brush handle. The signature was also applied into wet paint. Both sable and bristle brush hairs were found embedded in the surface. Under low magnification, a softening of the brushstrokes across much of the landscape is recorded in diagonal feathering running from the upper left to the lower right. This blurring appears to have been deliberate, possibly done with a soft sweetening brush through the still-wet paint.

1. Quoted in Secord 2000, p. 337.

2. Low 1908, pp. 34, 102–3.

3. There is no invoice for this painting in the Clark's curatorial file. Clark may have purchased it in the 1930s, in the same period when he purchased his other works by Penne.