



**NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS
AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE**

VOLUME ONE

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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Kelly Pask, Elizabeth A. Pergam, Kathryn A. Price, Mark A. Roglán,
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doesn't necessarily rule out an American author for *Roses in a Vase*, the fact that the stretcher is of European design and size probably indicates that the work was painted in Europe.

While the artist of this work cannot ultimately be determined, it is clear that the association with one of the most prominent and successful French still-life artists was intended to make a lesser work more appealing to collectors. Several other works attributed to followers of Fantin-Latour have surfaced at auction in the past decade, evidence that he was a popular artist to copy in this genre.⁴ Interestingly, whoever signed this painting "72" may have known that 1872 was the year that Fantin-Latour first found some recognition in France for his still lifes when the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel purchased more than twenty of his works in the genre between August and November of that year.⁵ KAP

PROVENANCE J. S. Hansen, New York (until 1940, on deposit to Durand-Ruel, 12 Sept. 1940);⁶ [Durand-Ruel, New York, sold to Clark, 2 Dec. 1940, as *Fleurs*, by Fantin-Latour]; Robert Sterling Clark (1940–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1956a, pl. S-10, as by Fantin-Latour.

REFERENCES Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 56, ill., as by Fantin-Latour.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is an unlined, brittle fabric of moderate weave (19 threads/cm). The five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher is of European design and measurement. As there is paint on all four tacking edges, it is assumed that the picture was painted flat or on a larger frame, then attached to this stretcher. Some time later, the right edge was apparently restretched, as the tacking margin has an extra set of holes. The lettering and date on the fully articulated book spine on the bottom folded-over tacking margin are cut through, reinforcing the possibility that the picture was originally larger. There are scattered age cracks throughout the surface, and traction cracks appear in the yellow rose and the leaves in the vase. The varnish is very yellowed and splotchy, with short, branched cracks running primarily in a vertical direction. Staining on the canvas reverse suggests that the painting was revarnished after the cracks had formed.

The ground appears to be a commercially prepared off-white layer. Although a complete underdrawing was not detected, scattered lines on the small yellow rose and in the background to the right of the flowers look as if they were applied after the background color was laid in. There may be a drawn spray of leaves hanging from the vase in the lower

right quadrant, which was not included in the final image. Although many details were painted over the background color, the larger flowers were painted in reserves left for them on the surface. Unlike Fantin's use of a pure purplish pigment, this artist blends his pinks and purples using blue and red pigments. In general, the smooth paint structure is far simpler than the complex texturing and color glazing seen on the Fantin-Latours. When the signature, which is rendered in brown ink, is inspected at high magnification, some of the lettering strokes cross over old paint-film cracks, indicating a later application.

1. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.1645.
2. Note from C.C. Cunningham, 18 Mar. 1975, in the Clark's curatorial file.
3. Michael Floss to Stuart Feld, 27 June 1983, in the Clark's curatorial file.
4. *Roses in a Chinese Bowl* was sold at Christie's London, 31 Oct. 2007, no. 1453, as was a glass vase of flowers at Strides Auctions (UK), 25 June 2010, no. 400, both as by followers of Fantin-Latour.
5. Paris–Ottawa–San Francisco 1982–83, p. 256.
6. Information from Durand-Ruel archives. See correspondence of Caroline Durand-Ruel Godfrey, 24 Apr. 2001, in the Clark's curatorial file.

John E. Ferneley

English, 1782–1860

137 | **Duchess** 1831

Oil on canvas, 86 x 107.7 cm
Lower right: J. Ferneley / Melton Mowbray / 1831.;
lower center: DUCHESS.
1955.924

The extent to which John Ferneley's paintings of the 1820s and 1830s are associated with the hunting scene of Melton Mowbray is revealed by Quorn Hunt historian Colin Ellis's comment that "The Melton of those days is the Melton of John Ferneley."¹ Ferneley's career coincides with the height of Quorn activity, with fox hunting taking place six days a week. Born in Leicestershire, the heart of hunting country, Ferneley settled in Melton Mowbray in 1814, remaining there and painting until his death in 1860.

The story of Ferneley's genesis as a painter is typical of the trope of the native genius discovered by chance. In this case, Ferneley, the son of a wheel-



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wright, apprenticed to his father, was rescued from a life of manual labor by the Duke of Rutland. Having seen some of his sketches, the Duke encouraged (and possibly underwrote) his study with the leading horse painter of the day, Benjamin Marshall (1767–1835). Thus, between 1801 and 1804, Ferneley studied in London with Marshall, from whom he learned the attention to detail that characterized his work throughout his career.

After a decade spent traveling to Ireland and other locations, Ferneley returned to his native county in 1814, where he was able to concentrate on recording aspects of the hunt. His subjects range from ambitious, multfigured depictions of the hunt in action, to groups of unsaddled horses in the paddock or stable, to portraits of hunters standing with their grooms or owners. The Clark's painting of *Duchess* mounted by her owner is typical of the subcategory of horse portraiture, which was the bread and butter of Ferneley's oeuvre, as his account books make clear.

As in human portraiture, the identification of the subject in horse and rider portraits is often central to the work's significance, especially if the horse had won distinction on the field. From Ferneley's signature, dating, and inscription, we know that *Duchess* was painted in 1831. Although there is no work spe-

cifically entitled "Duchess" in his account books, this painting has been tentatively identified as the portrait of H. H. H. Hungerford, Esq., on horseback for which he paid the artist twenty-one guineas, Ferneley's standard price for such a picture.²

Although the identification cannot be a positive one, the painting itself is typical of the qualities for which Ferneley is often praised. Set outdoors in a dramatically windswept field with a clouded sky, horse and rider are perfectly posed, each in profile with their head turned slightly to address the viewer. The refined head and pricked ears of *Duchess*, the attention given to her dappled hindquarters and legs, and the tight muscles of her neck convey a sense of the hunter's power. Her owner's easy seat, immaculate outfit, and sparkling spurs, with his whip resting gently on *Duchess*'s lower neck, match the horse's air of nobility. The painting thus stands as a testament not only to Ferneley's skill in depicting the character of both horse and rider, but also to the importance of hunting in the social and cultural life of Leicestershire in the first half of the nineteenth century. EP

PROVENANCE The artist, possibly sold to H. H. H. Hungerford, 1831, as *Portrait of Himself on Horseback*;³ Possibly H. H. H. Hungerford, Northamptonshire; [Knoedler, London, sold to Clark 11 July 1932, as *H. H. Hungerford on "Duchess"*];

Robert Sterling Clark (1932–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1961, ill.; Williamstown 1980b.

REFERENCES Possibly Paget 1931, p. 139, no. 334.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a fairly coarse linen (approximately 16 threads/cm), glue-lined to a heavy, double warp and weft bleached canvas (13 threads/cm). The five-member stretcher, which carries many old labels, appears to be original, but the tacking margins have been removed. The lining, cleaning, and edge retouching were performed in 1940 by the Beers Brothers through the Durand-Ruel Gallery. The cracking, together with several old lifted paint areas, were likely the reason for the treatment. There is a weave enhancement, probably from both fabric layers, and some flattened impastos from the lining process. Old cracks appear near the sitter along the center vertical stretcher bar, and age cracks can be seen in the left and right sky areas. Traction cracks are visible in the man's red jacket and in the background surrounding the horse's rear legs. The left edge may be extended, judging from the band of repaint 1.3–1.9 cm wide. Small flecks of blue paint in the sky appear to be a restoration application, used to imitate the thinness of the original sky paint. A small arrow shape, perhaps a cockade, protruding from the sitter's hat, seems to be abraded. There are old drips in the lower left quadrant. The varnish is a thin brush coat of natural resin with moderate yellowing.

The ground appears to be several commercially applied, cream-colored layers. Only a few underdrawing lines are visible in low magnification, one along the ridge of the horse's neck, and there may be deposits of charcoal along some paint edges. There are no detectable alterations between the drawing and painting stages. The paint application runs from thin to moderately thick strokes, with the sky being applied quite broadly and sparingly after the horse and rider were complete. There are a few low-level impastos in dark details and in the white highlights. Black ink, evident in its uneven adherence to the surface, may have been used for some details.

1. Ellis 1951, p. 51.

2. Paget 1931, p. 139, no. 334. As the account books show, Ferneley charged £10 10s. for single horse portraits, increasing the sum depending upon the number of horses and figures in the work. For the identification of the Hungerford picture with the Clark's painting, see the Clark's curatorial files.

3. See Ferneley's account book from 1831, reproduced in Paget 1931, pp. 139–40, nos. 328–339. Of all the paintings listed from 1831, the painting sold to H. H. H. Hungerford titled *Portrait of Himself on Horseback* (no. 34) seems the most likely to be the Clark picture due to both its description and price.

Eugène Fichel

French, 1826–1895

138 | Madame P . . . 1857

Oil on panel, 24.2 x 18.9 cm

Lower left: E. FICHEL. / 1857.

1955.735

Fichel's painting was exhibited at the Salon in Paris in 1857 with the title *Portrait of Mme P . . .*; it was standard in these years for portraits of women to be titled in this way even if their sitters were well known, preserving a veneer of decorum through anonymity when their image appeared in the very public forum of the Salon. The subsequent history of many of these pictures, including the present small panel, has detached them from the circumstances of their making; the identity of Madame P. remains unknown.

The sitter is seated in a static and relatively formal pose, her gaze toward the viewer and her hands joined on her lap. She is dressed in pink, wearing an elegant and elaborate crinoline ball gown, made of "flounced taffeta."¹ Beyond this display of lavish fabrics, further interest is added to the image by the objects on the carpet-covered table beside her: an open jewel box, with a necklace spilling out of it, and, beside this, a pair of gloves, a closed fan, and—perhaps—a white shawl. These details emphasize the sitter's role in society, suggesting that she is preparing to go out (or she may have just returned). The richly decorated room, with its carved wood cabinet and ornamented wall coverings, also underscores the sitter's affluence. Beyond this, though, there are no clues that suggest any further dimensions of her situation or personality.

Fichel was taught by Martin Drölling and Paul Delaroche; his main specialty as a painter was multi-figure genre scenes, sometimes in contemporary dress but more often in eighteenth-century costume. He won a third-class medal at the Salon in 1857, the year in which this picture was exhibited, and was made *chevalier* of the Legion of Honor in 1870. JH

PROVENANCE [Georges Muller, Paris, sold to Clark, 10 Dec. 1937]; Robert Sterling Clark (1937–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Paris 1857, no. 967, as *Portrait of Mme P . . .*; Williamstown 1982a, no. 9, ill., as *A Girl in Pink (Portrait of Mme P . . .)*.