



**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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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 Amphis* (cat. 3)

Small raised rings in the upper left may be material dripped onto the surface prior to the painting's execution. There is no varnish, and the surface has a fairly even low luster, except for a few glossy spots due to local paint colors. There may be a few retouches in the upper right sky on either side of the left tree. These strokes together with the palest stripe in the left sky show somewhat differently than the rest of the pigments under ultraviolet light.

There is no ground layer on the painted side, but there may be a size layer. The dark gray commercial preparation on the reverse probably gives the picture a bit more support than the paper sheet could provide on its own. There are occasional skips in the paint application, revealing the paper below. The warm tonality of the paper may be deepening slightly with age. Examination in infrared revealed a broad sketch, possibly in graphite, visible as hatching in the large tree foliage, circular marks for the ground foliage, zig-zag lines for the middle-ground tree line, and an outline for the large rock in the lower left. The paint application, done with small sable brushes, is fairly dry, with very little gloss and almost no impasto. Some paint is quite granular under low magnification and some pigments may contain a colorless additive, possibly used as a drier.

1. Redding 1858, vol. 1, p. 199.
2. Thornbury 1862, vol. 1, p. 216.
3. Thornbury 1862, vol. 1, p. 220.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Woollcombe recorded meeting Turner at a dinner hosted by William Eastlake on 27 Aug. 1813 and subsequently having breakfast with him on 1 Sept. See Smiles 1989, p. 10.
6. BJ 213–24. The Bequest consists of works that remained with the artist at his death and were subsequently given to the national collections.
7. BJ 225.
8. BJ 225b.
9. Thornbury 1862, vol. 1, p. 220.
10. The only other known oil sketches are a group painted on mahogany veneer that have been dated to c. 1807. See BJ 177–94.
11. John Gage speculates that the reasons behind the artist's turning away from oils for sketching outdoors were both technical and conceptual. Not only did Turner find working with oils outside to be difficult, but his reliance on his memory of the scene superceded his need to record the effect on the spot. See Gage 1969, pp. 36–39.
12. Thornbury 1862, vol. 1, p. 221.
13. See Smiles 1989, p. 11; and Bower 1990, p. 97.
14. Bower 1990, p. 97. Neither of these findings, however, pertains to the Clark work, in which there is no ground layer on the painted surface (though the unpainted side has a dark gray preparation) and the original paper color was buff. See Technical Report.
15. Thornbury 1862, vol. 1, p. 220.
16. Butlin and Joll 1984, vol. 1, p. 134.

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### 340 | What You Will! 1822

Oil on canvas, 49.8 x 54.3

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

2007.8.107

J. M. W. Turner's homage to the French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) is immediately apparent in both the subject and the coloration of the painting entitled *What You Will!*, the artist's sole contribution to the Royal Academy exhibition of 1822. As a stage for the musical, courtly, and courtship-related activities of a group of silk-gowned ladies and stockinged gentlemen, the parkland setting recalls the scenes of dances and musical entertainments in Watteau's paintings, such as *Les Plaisirs du Bal* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London), while the lush greens and the velvety reds that Turner uses to create the enchanting environment replicate Watteau's signature color schemes. The influence of the French painter on Turner is a fascinating subject in and of itself, seen even in Turner's play on words in the title of this work; when said aloud, the first two words are the cockney pronunciation of "Watteau."<sup>1</sup> *What You Will!*, however, also demonstrates the astonishing breadth of Turner's interests that led John Constable to declare that his rival had "a wonderful range of mind."<sup>2</sup> For not only does *What You Will!* make clear that Turner was engaging with the tradition of the *fête galante*, both in France and England, but the small, evocative work also stands as the artist's first interpretation of the writings of England's most illustrious literary figure, William Shakespeare. Furthermore, the painting is important evidence of Turner's lifelong study of trends in color theory.

These multivalent concerns were ignored or misunderstood by the critics when the painting was first exhibited at the Royal Academy. The critic of the *Edinburgh Magazine* exploited the unusual title of the painting to disparage the work, using the familiar format of a dialogue between two visitors to the annual exhibit. Spectator A introduces Turner as "without exception the greatest of living painters," but calls the artist's single example "a little rock" which has "the appropriate title of 'What you will!'" In response, his companion, Spectator B, is even more explicitly derogatory of the painting, saying, "It is not a picture at all, but a mere impertinence."<sup>3</sup> The description of the painting as "a scrap of spoilt canvas" in the *New Monthly Magazine* likewise





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denies *What You Will!* the status of a work of art.<sup>4</sup> In a similar vein, Robert Hunt, the critic of the *Examiner*, wrote that “Mr. Turner has nothing of Art this season in the Exhibition. He has only a piece of coloured canvas.”<sup>5</sup> The reviewer of the *Literary Gazette* likewise dismisses the work as “a sketch, and no more”; however, alone of the critics, he connects Turner’s use of color to “the style of Watteau.”<sup>6</sup> Although his comment is brief, the critic for *The Gentleman’s Magazine* stands out for his praise of the small painting as a “splendid little piece of colouring.”<sup>7</sup>

While Turner’s exposure to the works of Claude Lorrain (1604/5–1682), in English collections as well as in the Louvre, has been well documented, his opportunities to see paintings by Watteau are more difficult to establish. The English public could see *Les Plaisirs du Bal* at the Dulwich Picture Gallery by 1814. In 1985, Selby Whittingham first proposed that the source for the composition and color scheme of *What You Will!* was Watteau’s *La Perspective*, then probably in the collection of the miniature painter Daniel Saint (1778–

1847) and now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.<sup>8</sup> He speculates that Turner saw this painting during an undocumented trip to Paris in the autumn of 1821. Ian Warrell takes up this suggestion, citing sketchbooks TB CCXI and CCLVIII (Tate Britain, London) as evidence for the 1821 trip.<sup>9</sup>

As we have seen, much was made of the seemingly whimsical title; not a single critic, however, recognized its literary origins: Shakespeare’s subtitle for his comedy *Twelfth Night*. As Andrew Wilton has pointed out, Turner does not illustrate a specific scene from the play, but rather combines elements from Act II scene 5 and Act III scene 4, both of which take place in the garden of the Countess Olivia.<sup>10</sup> In these scenes, as often in the plays of Shakespeare, the garden or woodland is a place to escape from the rigid rules of society. Thus, it is in Olivia’s garden that one of the central schemes of *Twelfth Night* is played out: Maria, Sir Toby Belch (Olivia’s uncle), and his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek forge a letter to Malvolio, Olivia’s major domo, to convince him that he is the object of

Olivia's love. Subsequently the trio hides while Malvolio, clad in yellow stockings, confronts Olivia and obliquely refers to the letter.

A possible reason for the critics' universal neglect of the *Twelfth Night* identification is that Turner had never before exhibited a Shakespeare-inspired subject. The Bard's plays provided ample themes for other painters, and, indeed, they supplied fellow Royal Academician Henry Howard (1769–1847) with source material for two paintings he exhibited in 1822.<sup>11</sup> Turner went on to exhibit *Jessica* (1830; Petworth House, West Sussex), *Juliet and Her Nurse* (1836; Colección de Arte Amelia Lacroze de Fortabat, Buenos Aires), *The Grand Canal: Scene—A Street in Venice* (1837; The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino) and *Queen Mab's Cave* (1846; Tate Britain, London).<sup>12</sup> Verses from *The Merchant of Venice* accompanied the 1830 and 1837 exhibitions and lines from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* appeared in 1846. In its dual Watteau and Shakespeare references, then, *What You Will!* should be considered an inaugural work in Turner's oeuvre, prefatory to some of his most celebrated subject-pictures of the following decade.

While it was Turner's choice of the *fête galante* and distinctive coloration that called attention to the fact that his 1822 exhibit was an homage to Watteau, it was the artist himself and his studio practice that formed the subject of his 1831 exhibit: *Watteau Study by Fresnoy's Rules* (Tate Britain, London).<sup>13</sup> Through John Ruskin, a conversation between the artist and Rev. William Kingsley came to light, in which Turner confessed that "he had learned more from Watteau than from any other painter."<sup>14</sup> The couplet from an English translation of Charles du Fresnoy's (1611–1668) *De Arte Graphica* that Turner included with the painting makes clear that it was his color theory that formed the primary appeal of Watteau to the English painter.<sup>15</sup> In particular, Turner adopted the concept that the employment of white could alter the spatial perception of an object, a theory that he applied in his *Rockets and Blue Lights (Close at Hand) to Warn Steamboats of Shoal Water* (cat. 342). In his groundbreaking study of Turner's use of color, John Gage called *Watteau Study* Turner's "first fully 'theoretical' painting."<sup>16</sup> As such, the work has generated numerous interpretations.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, while color is centrally important to the composition of a work such as *Rockets and Blue Lights*, both *What You Will!* and *Watteau Study* are notable for the prominence of the figures, pointing to a further artistic influence on Turner.

In the small-scale, fancy picture format of these paintings, Turner was acknowledging a debt to the English painter Thomas Stothard (1755–1834), whose literary, costume pictures Turner admired.<sup>18</sup> Both Stothard and Turner provided illustrations for Samuel Rogers's poem *Italy* (published in 1830), and Stothard's relationship with Rogers can be traced to as early as 1792.<sup>19</sup> Although Turner's unsociability has become central to his biography as England's artist-genius, his social connections were, in fact, of significance to his artistic practice.<sup>20</sup> Not only did Turner learn about Watteau through the work of Stothard, but also he was directly exposed to the work of Watteau through Rogers, whose extensive collection of paintings included *La Lorgneuse* (location unknown), the smaller framed painting in *Watteau Study*.

These artistic and social connections extend to the history of ownership of *What You Will!*, which was purchased by the sculptor Sir Francis Chantrey in the year of its execution. There is some debate over whether Turner painted the work with Chantrey in mind—as Gage points out, the prominence of garden statuary in the painting might lead to such a conclusion.<sup>21</sup> Even more suggestive is the fact that in 1819, Chantrey and Turner were both in Rome, where Turner had made sketches of antique statues at the Vatican. Turner used these sketches as the basis for the statues in *What You Will!*<sup>22</sup>

Though diminutive in scale, *What You Will!* is rich in literary and artistic allusions, pointing to Turner's varied interests and influences. Executed in the aftermath of his long-delayed first trip to Italy of 1819, the canvas, so clearly indebted to Jean-Antoine Watteau's style, is also a testament to Turner's understanding of the historical roots of that artist's oeuvre. While Watteau brought the lush Venetian pastorals of Giorgione and Titian into the eighteenth century with such brilliance and success, however, the lack of critical appreciation of *What You Will!* reflects the contemporary expectations of Turner to produce large-scale paintings embodying the drama of nature, not the intrigues of Shakespearean comedy. EP

**PROVENANCE** Sir Francis Leggatt Chantrey (1822–d. 1841); Lady Chantrey, his wife, by descent (1841–61, sale, Christie's, London, 15 June 1861, no. 91, sold to Agnew's); [Agnew's, London, from 1861]; R. Newsham; J. H. Nettlefold (until 1910, his sale, Christie's, London, 12 Feb. 1910, no. 68, sold to Vicars Brothers); [Vicars Brothers, London, sold to Agnew's]; [Agnew's, London, sold to Darell-Brown]; Sir H. Darell-Brown (until d. 1924, sold to Rofé in 1927, with Agnew's as agent

for Darell-Brown Estate);<sup>23</sup> Albert Rofé (1927–59, sold to Agnew's); [Agnew's, London, sold to Sobell, 1959]; Sir Michael Sobell (1959–d. 1993, sale, Christie's, London, 15 Apr. 1994, no. 60, sold to Pilkington); Brian Pilkington (from 1994); [Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York, sold to Manton, 27 Dec. 1999]; Sir Edwin A. G. Manton, New York (1999–d. 2005); Manton Family Art Foundation (2005–7, given to the Clark); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

**EXHIBITIONS** London 1822, no. 114; London 1910, no. 2; London 1967, no. 13; London 1974–75, no. 307; Paris 1983–84, no. 35; Essen–Zurich 2001–2, no. 128; Williamstown 2007a, no cat.; London–Paris–Madrid 2009–10, pp. 158–59, no. 53, ill. (French ed., pp. 182–83, no. 63, ill.; Spanish ed., pp. 158–59, no. 52, ill.).

**REFERENCES** *Gentleman's Magazine* 1822, p. 447; Hunt 1822, p. 301; *Literary Gazette* 1822, p. 330; *New Monthly Magazine* 1822, p. 255; *Repository of Arts* 1822, p. 353; *Edinburgh Magazine* 1822, p. 782; Ruskin 1857, p. 34 (Ruskin 1902–13, vol. 13, p. 128); Burnet and Cunningham 1852, p. 15, no. 132 (rev. ed., p. 100, no. 134); Thornbury 1862, p. 407 (rev. ed., p. 575, no. 138); Monkhouse 1879, p. 97; Bell 1901, p. 103, no. 145; Armstrong 1902, vol. 2, p. 237;<sup>24</sup> Chignell 1902, p. 192; Swinburne 1902, p. 188; Wyllie 1905, pp. 68, 168; Hind 1910, p. 123; Whitley 1928–30, vol. 2, pp. 28–29; Finberg 1961, pp. 274–75, 484, no. 277; Butlin and Rothenstein 1964, pp. 42, 68, pl. 78; Ziff 1965, p. 64n30; Gowing 1966, p. 86–87; Lindsay 1966, p. 245n49; Gage 1969, p. 92; Reynolds 1969a, p. 138; Wilton 1979, p. 271, no. P229, pl. 137; Gage 1980, p. 244; Stuckey 1981, p. 7; Butlin and Joll 1984, pp. 138–39, no. 229, vol. 2, pl. 232; Faulkner 1985, p. 281; Whittingham 1985a, pp. 12–16, 18, fig. 13; Whittingham 1985b, pp. 31, 35; Gage 1987, pp. 147–49, 246n55, figs. 224, 225; Wilton 1987, pp. 140, 150, 165 (rev. ed., pp. 122, 136, 235); Butlin, Luther, and Warrell 1989, pp. 51–52, fig. 44; Wilton 1989, pp. 17, 19; Shanes 1990, p. 251; London–Paris–Le Havre 1999–2000, p. 22; Wilton 2001, pp. 51–53, no. 13, ill.; Ferrara–London 2003, p. 276 (English ed., pp. 190, 228); London–Minneapolis–New York 2003–4, p. 146; Gage 2010, p. 238, 240–41, fig. 200.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The canvas support has 16 threads per cm and has been glue-lined to a flat, even-weave canvas of the same weight. The lining may have been done in the early twentieth century. There is noticeable age crackle throughout the paint layer and a bull's-eye crack network in the upper trees to the left of center. There are traction cracks in the red-brown glazed trees, and some very deep traction cracks and losses at the upper right edge. There are old losses in the lower left foreground and an unretouched fill in the upper tree foliage. Losses in the women's dresses show some filling material, but these were only roughly inpainted. The older varnish layer is uneven due to selective cleaning. The ultraviolet light fluorescence is stronger in the trees and foreground, while the sky and the paler figures have less old var-

nish remaining. The original varnish residues are brownish in tone with a glassy fracture network. There may be additional retouches below those visible in ultraviolet light.

The ground layer is off-white, and there appears to be a warm brown imprimatura layer below the paint. No underdrawing was seen in normal light, although pale lines, possibly of graphite, may be visible in infrared light in the foreground figures. The entire image, under low magnification, is a multi-layered structure of paste application, glazing, and scumbling. There are flecks of color floating in glaze layers and intentional splattering effects scattered over the surface. What look like black ink scumbles in the costumes and other details are fractured and abraded. The sleeve of the middle female figure was painted over the right-most woman's costume, which may suggest the central figure was added later or merely that the costumes underwent adjustments.

1. Gage 1987, p. 147.
2. John Constable to Maria Bicknell, 30 June 1813, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 2, p. 110.
3. *Edinburgh Magazine* 1822, p. 782.
4. *New Monthly Magazine* 1822, p. 255.
5. Hunt 1822.
6. *Literary Gazette* 1822, p. 330.
7. *Gentleman's Magazine* 1822, p. 447.
8. Whittingham 1985a, pp. 12–13.
9. London–Paris–Le Havre 1999–2000, pp. 19–22.
10. Wilton 2001, p. 52.
11. These were: *Ariel Released by Prospero* (no. 72) and *Caliban Teased by the Spirits of Prospero* (no. 76).
12. BJ 333, 365, 368, and 420.
13. BJ 340.
14. Ruskin 1903–12, vol. 35, p. 601n1.
15. The lines were: "White, when it shines with unstained lustre clear, / May bear an object back, or bring it near." See Butlin and Joll 1984, vol. 1, p. 192.
16. Gage 1969, p. 91.
17. This painting is the focus of Selby Whittingham's article "What You Will; or Some Notes Regarding the Influence of Watteau on Turner and Other British Artists (2)"; Whittingham 1985b.
18. Andrew Wilton believes that C. R. Leslie misheard Turner, when he claimed that he "consider[ed] the Giotto of the English School" and that rather, Turner called him the "Watteau" of English painting; Wilton 1987, p. 150 (rev. ed., p. 137). Whittingham, however, casts doubt on this interpretation; Whittingham 1985a, p. 8. For Watteau's influence on Stothard, see Bennett 1988, pp. 53–55.
19. Bennett 1988, p. 23.
20. Selby Whittingham also points out that Stothard was a friend of Sir Francis Leggatt Chantrey, the sculptor who was the first purchaser of the present painting; Whittingham 1985a, p. 15.
21. Gage 1969, p. 251n86.

22. Jerrold Ziff was the first to show the link between the statues in Turner's "Vatican Fragments" (Tate Britain, London, TB CLXXX) and those of *What You Will!*; Ziff 1965, p. 64n30.
23. The painting was offered for sale at H. Darell-Brown's posthumous sale, Christie's, London, 23 May 1924, no. 42, ill., but was bought in.
24. Armstrong mistakenly states that the painting was once in the Swinburne Collection.

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**341 | View off Margate, Evening** c. 1840

Oil on canvas, 32.1 x 48.9 cm  
Gift of the Manton Foundation in memory of Sir Edwin  
and Lady Manton  
2007.8.117

Though painted at about the same time as the ambitious *Rockets and Blue Lights (Close at Hand) to Warn Steamboats of Shoal Water* (cat. 342), this modest oil of a stretch of beach from which a mother and two children watch a small sailboat stands as a contrast to the much larger canvas. The theme of nature versus technology at the heart of Turner's 1840 exhibit at the Royal Academy, as well as its chromatic relationship to *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston),<sup>1</sup> also exhibited that year, marks *Rockets and Blue Lights* as a summa of the artist's technical and conceptual preoccupations in his later works. *View off Margate, Evening*, a painting first viewed by the public more than a decade after Turner's death, speaks more to the altogether less well-known private side of the artist's life, both in its history and in its subject matter.

The painting's first public viewing was very brief, on the occasion of its sale at Christie's on 24–25 March 1865. In the sale catalogue, the Clark oil was given the title *A View off Margate—evening*.<sup>2</sup> John Pound, who was known to be the seller although he was not named in the catalogue, was the son by her first marriage of Sophia Caroline Booth, at whose lodging house in Margate Turner stayed between 1827 and 1846 on his visits to the Kent coastal town. In 1846, Turner brought Mrs. Booth to London to look after his house at 119 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, and their relationship even prompted his neighbors to call him "Mr. Booth."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the early identification

of the scene as Margate can probably be attributed to the painting's connection to Sophia Booth. Turner's relationship to the town of Margate dates to his childhood. Although he was born in London, to a father who was a barber and wig-maker and a mother who was the granddaughter of a butcher, his mother, Mary Turner née Marshall, suffered from mental problems, and, in the 1780s, the young Turner was sent to live with her relatives in Margate.

Described in 1858 as a "suburb of London,"<sup>4</sup> even before the advent of the railroad, Margate was easily accessible from the city, and Turner returned to the Kent town frequently throughout his life. His earliest depictions of the town focus on the shipping activity near the pier, such as his *Old Margate Pier* (Ernest H. Gaskell collection),<sup>5</sup> which was probably exhibited at Turner's own gallery in 1804, and *Margate* (Tate Britain, London; displayed at Petworth House),<sup>6</sup> which he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1808. Interestingly, two watercolors of Margate, which were painted in the 1820s,<sup>7</sup> were owned by John Ruskin, as were two later watercolors.<sup>8</sup> Although in a passage in the 1856 *The Harbours of England*, Ruskin disparages Margate as "utterly devoid of all picturesque or romantic interest," he praises one of the watercolors he owned, now in the Ashmolean, as "very beautiful and highly characteristic."<sup>9</sup>

While the watercolor Ruskin discusses is clearly identifiable as Margate, the Clark oil, with its minimum of detail in both shore and water, has been the subject of debate over the identity of its location. When the painting was next shown to the public in an exhibition at the Tate in 1977, having been in the collection of the Rugby School for ninety years, Evelyn Joll adopted the proposal of "a former Curator of the Rugby School" that the ghostly ship shrouded by fog on the left side of the canvas was on the Goodwin Sands, a notorious sandbank visible from Ramsgate, just to the south, but not Margate, and endorsed the title *Off Ramsgate (?)*, while noting that any precise identification of such a sketchy image would be difficult.<sup>10</sup>

Andrew Wilton disputes both this title and Butlin and Joll's association of the painting with two other small canvases that Turner painted at about the same time. Butlin and Joll's reason for connecting the Clark painting to *Margate Harbour* (Sudley House, Liverpool)<sup>11</sup> and *Morning after the Wreck* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff)<sup>12</sup> is the size of the canvases and their shared coastal subject. Wilton notes that the differences—the simpler composition and the sketchier paint application of the Clark painting—outweigh the