

The background of the cover is a detailed 19th-century painting of a storm at sea. The sky is filled with heavy, dark, and turbulent clouds, with some light breaking through near the horizon. The sea is dark and choppy, with white-capped waves crashing against a sandy beach in the foreground. Several large sailing ships with multiple masts and sails are visible on the horizon, some appearing to be struggling against the wind. On the left side, a wooden pier or wharf extends into the water, with a few small figures of people on it. The overall mood is one of intense natural power and maritime drama.

**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,
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,
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3. See, for example, Damisch 1972.
4. Anne Lyles provides a useful survey of this debate in her chapter “‘The Glorious Pageantry of Heaven’: An Assessment of the Motives behind Constable’s ‘Skying,’” in New York 2004, pp. 29–54.
5. Leslie 1845, pp. 84–85. Leslie’s biography is heavily dependent on Constable’s correspondence with his friends and family. As Leslie Parris and Ian Fleming-Williams have shown, however, Charles Robert Leslie often edited his friend’s statements in an effort to create an entirely positive persona. See Fleming-Williams and Parris 1984, pp. 31–35.
6. R 20.1. Fisher had bought the painting from his friend and gave it to his lawyer, John Pern Tinney, in appreciation for the positive outcome of a lawsuit Tinney had handled for him.
7. John Constable to John Fisher, 23 Oct. 1821, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, p. 77.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. Badt 1950.
11. London 1976, p. 127. Louis Hawes presents his counter-argument to Badt in Hawes 1969.
12. Thornes 1979.
13. Thornes 1999, p. 200.
14. Holmes 1902, p. 164.
15. Reynolds included *Cloud Study* (cat. 70) and *A Study of Clouds over a Landscape* (cat. 71) in his catalogues; on the occasion of the appearance of *Cloud Study* (cat. 72) at the July 1997 sale at Sotheby’s, Henry Wyndham of Sotheby’s confirmed to Peter Johnson (acting as Manton’s agent) that Reynolds saw and approved of this *Cloud Study*.
16. *Cloud Study* (cat. 72) was once laid on canvas that was subsequently removed. See Technical Report.
17. Graham Reynolds to Deborah Gage, 4 Oct. 1993. In fact, as John Bull recorded in his treatment report of 7 Sept. 1993, “an early ‘restorer’” had added an inch to the bottom of the canvas “to ‘improve’ the composition by adding a poorly painted row of hedges and foliage in the foreground to give the landscape more prominence.” In Sept. 1993, Bull removed this later addition. See the Clark’s curatorial file.
18. Hoozee 1979, pp. 121–23.
19. Badt 1950, p. 76.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 99. Badt transferred Coleridge’s criticism of Wordsworth’s “matter-of-fact honesty” to Constable’s public paintings. Only in the artist’s sketches—“painted in the open air” did Badt believe the artist’s “emotional excitement raised him above all doubts and scruples, in which his feeling was adequate to fill the excerpt of nature with sufficient details which his imagination produced in an uninterrupted flow.” See Badt 1950, pp. 99–100.
21. For example, Badt wrote that the clouds in the *The Mill Stream* (Tate Britain, London; R 14.47) and *The Glebe*

Farm (Victoria and Albert Museum, London; R 11.34) “had no independent life of their own” (Badt 1950, p. 52).

22. Constable’s sketches epitomized the skill necessary to capture the fleeting effects of nature, especially that of weather conditions, and surely this practice should be seen as the precursor to Impressionism. In art history’s often Franco-centric presentation of canonical works, it is the Impressionists and not Constable who are most closely associated with the virtuosity and radicalism of painting quickly. See, for example, London–Amsterdam–Williamstown 2000–2001.
23. Sir Edwin Manton to Peter Johnson, 11 July 1958, in the Clark’s curatorial file.
24. The early provenance comes from an inscription on the back of the stretcher which reads: “Study of Sky (from Nature) / by John Constable RA Bought with a sketch-book / (thro T. Maclean) direct from the Constable Family 1896 / Arthur Kay.”

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Oil on canvas, 32.4 x 51.1 cm

Gift of the Manton Foundation in memory of Sir Edwin and Lady Manton
2007.8.36

Constable depicted the coast at Great Yarmouth several times, but the history of his connections to the town, and of his images of it, is limited. There is only one mention of Constable’s visit to the site early in his career.¹ There are, however, three known paintings dating to about 1822–23 depicting Yarmouth jetty, including the present picture, acquired by Sir Edwin Manton in 2000.² In addition, David Lucas engraved the composition as *Yarmouth, Norfolk* for the fifth and final number of Constable’s *English Landscape Scenery*.³ Finally, one of the two paintings Constable contributed to the 1831 Royal Academy annual exhibition was *Yarmouth Pier*, a work that remains untraced.⁴

As Constable himself wrote, his paintings representing the sea, whether of the Norfolk coast or his scenes of Harwich Lighthouse, were “much liked.”⁵ It is easy to see why seascapes like *Yarmouth Jetty* were popular. The low horizon line and the blue tones harken back to the seventeenth-century Dutch seascapes of the Van de Veldes, whose paintings were themselves popular with British collectors. The expansive sky, the boats under sail, the activity along the



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pier, and the highly detailed rendering of the boat and horse and cart on the beach fill the canvas with incident. These same details appear in the two other versions, one in a private collection and one at Tate Britain, London.⁶ The mezzotint, published in 1832, differs from the paintings by the inclusion of two figures standing on the beach and looking out to the North Sea. The distance between the boat and horse and cart in the foreground and the second beached boat is also compressed in the print.

All three canvases have similar dimensions. The work in a private collection is signed and dated 1822, and is, therefore, considered the likeliest candidate for the painting Constable contributed to the British Institution in 1823 (no. 148). Leslie Parris has detailed the poor condition of the Tate version, and Graham Reynolds has speculated that it might be derived from the print.⁷ There is a further aspect to the repetitive quality evidenced by these three works: the sky of both the Clark and the private collection *Yarmouth Jetty* is the same as in his series of *Harwich Lighthouse*.⁸ This earlier group of four paintings, dating to around 1820—the year Constable exhibited one version at the Royal Academy—has yet another connection to the Clark's *Yarmouth Jetty*.

Constable reported to John Fisher on 18 August 1823 that he had given his "Windmill Coast Scene" to Dr. Robert Gooch (1784–1830) to thank him for "his

kind attention to my children."⁹ Because Fisher had previously described the *Harwich Lighthouse* exhibited in 1820 as "the sea-coast windmill,"¹⁰ scholars have taken Constable's use of a similar description to refer to one of the versions of *Harwich Lighthouse*. Another possibility arises, however, when the history of the Clark *Yarmouth Jetty* is considered. At the auction in 1857 by Frederick Winslow Young, Osbert Cundy (a relative of the purchaser, Charles Fishlake Cundy) recorded that *Yarmouth Jetty* had been inherited by Young's brother, George, from Dr. Gooch, the same physician cited in the artist's letter to Fisher.¹¹

Furthermore, Constable himself wrote that Gooch did indeed own a Yarmouth scene. In 1831, not long after Gooch's death, the artist informed his bookseller friend John Martin that "my poor friend Dr. Gooch used to put a similar picture [to *Harwich Lighthouse*] of Yarmouth which I did for him (–) on the sofa [sic] while he breakfasted."¹² To complicate matters, Constable added that Gooch's painting subsequently passed to George Jennings, rather than to George Young, who is more easily traceable in the provenance of the Clark painting. Constable may have misremembered the history of Gooch's painting, or the 1857 note concerning Young's inheritance of *Yarmouth Jetty* from Gooch may have been incorrect. Given the uncertainties surrounding both the *Harwich Lighthouse* and *Yarmouth Jetty* series, it cannot be definitively determined whether

Gooch owned one painting of Harwich and one of Yarmouth, or only one painting, surely of Yarmouth.

There is no doubt, however, that the Clark *Yarmouth Jetty*, together with the other two versions, sheds light on an aspect of Constable's career that is often overlooked. Although Constable's practice resulted in his painting the same sites multiple times over many years, only on rare occasions did he produce replicas. With the Clark *Yarmouth Jetty*, then, the artist appears in a less well-known mode. Taking advantage of the unusual circumstance of having produced a popular subject, Constable was not averse to engaging in a practice followed by his contemporaries. EP

PROVENANCE The artist, possibly given to Gooch; possibly Dr. Robert Gooch (d. 1830, possibly bequeathed to George Jennings or to George Young);¹³ Frederick Winslow Young, George Young's brother, by descent (his sale, Rushworth & Jarvis, 30 Jan. 1857, no. 99, sold to Cundy); Charles Fishlake Cundy (from 1857); Rev. T. S. Cooper, his nephew, by descent; O. S. Cundy-Cooper, his son, by descent; Lord Ivor Spencer-Churchill; [Agnew's, 1949]; R. P. Silcock; Mrs. J. M. Stephens; [Leggatt's, London]; Hon. Moira Nivison (1975–d. 1984);¹⁴ private collection, by descent, sold to Manton, 11 Dec. 2000, with R. M. Thune as agent; Sir Edwin A. G. Manton, New York (2000–d. 2005); Manton Family Art Foundation (2005–7, given to the Clark); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

EXHIBITIONS London 1870, no. 251; London 1889, no. 37; London 1976, p. 114, no. 214; Williamstown 2007a, no cat.

REFERENCES Hoozee 1979, pp. 123–24, no. 362, ill.; Parris 1981, pp. 106–9; Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, pp. 46, 108–9, 228, no. 22.37, vol. 2, pl. 363.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a moderate-weight canvas with a weave of 16 threads per cm, with its tacking margins removed. The old glue/paste lining, whose canvas weave is 16 x 19 threads per cm, is now very discolored and spotted on the reverse. There is a six-member mortise-and-tenon pine stretcher. Clusters of holes in both stretcher uprights suggest that the painting was hung by the stretcher at some point. There are numerous short unconnected cracks in the sky. The last cleaning of the painting was probably done between 1975 and 2000. Although the general impression of the image is good, many of the dark details are abraded, there is old grime trapped in the brushwork, and some of the small impastos in the whitecaps are flattened. There is retouching along the top and bottom edges, on the stretcher creases at the top, right, and left sides, and in some dark details of the distant boats. Hairs and dust are adhered to the varnish.

The ground is made of several applications, a pink color over an off-white layer, and is likely a commercial production.

Two groups of horizontal score marks at lower center, through the end of the jetty and in the water to the right, seem unrelated to the image and appear to have been there before the painting commenced. Underdrawing lines, probably in graphite, can be seen in low magnification around the buildings at the far left, along the jetty, and surrounding the cart and horse in the left foreground. Those around the buildings do not quite align with the final painted details. The paint is a vehicular consistency that modifies from a paste thickness down to mere washes of color. The green used for the ocean is quite thin, and all distant vessels are painted over the completed sky colors after they had dried. The brushwork reveals a wide range of brush sizes, from 1.3 cm bristle brushes to small sables for the distant features. A large soft brush may have been used to soften and blend the sky and cloud colors.

1. An anonymous biography in manuscript form records a sketching tour Constable made to Yarmouth in the 1790s. See Parris, Shields, and Fleming-Williams 1975, p. 142.
2. R 22.36–38. Reynolds lists three further versions (R 22.39–41) whose existence he culled from Constable's correspondence and early sales but whose present whereabouts are unknown.
3. See Shirley 1930, ill. opp. p. 177.
4. R 31.6. The other was *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (private collection, on loan to The National Gallery, London; R 31.1), one of the paintings most closely associated with the artist.
5. John Constable to John Fisher, 18 Aug. 1823, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, p. 128.
6. R 22.36 and R 22.38.
7. Parris 1981, p. 108; Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, p. 109.
8. R 20.6–9.
9. John Constable to John Fisher, 18 Aug. 1823, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, p. 128.
10. John Fisher to John Constable, 19 Apr. 1820, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, p. 53.
11. See Parris, Fleming-Williams, and Shields 1976, pp. 130, 200n1, and Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, p. 109.
12. Beckett has determined that this undated letter from Constable to John Martin was written in 1831. See Beckett 1962–70, vol. 5, p. 89.
13. The early history of the painting is somewhat unclear, as Constable himself seems to have suggested that it passed from Dr. Gooch to George Jennings (W. G. Jennings, 1763–1854), a friend and amateur artist. This may be an error for George Young, or the work may have passed from Jennings to Young, or the comment may refer to a different painting. See the commentary and Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, pp. 108–9.
14. From 1983 to 2000, the painting was on long-term loan to the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne.