



**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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Nineteenth-Century European Paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute is published with the assistance of the Getty Foundation and support from the National Endowment for the Arts.



The Getty Foundation



Produced by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute
225 South Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267
www.clarkart.edu

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Production by The Production Department,
Whately, Massachusetts
Printed on 135 gsm Gardapat Kiara
Color separations and printing by Trifolio, Verona

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Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London
P. O. Box 209040, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-9040
www.yalebooks.com/art

Printed and bound in Italy
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

Nineteenth-century European paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute / 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, Fronia E. Wissman.

volumes cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-935998-09-9 (clark hardcover : alk. paper) —

ISBN 978-0-300-17965-1 (yale hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Painting, European—19th century—Catalogs. 2. Painting—Massachusetts—Williamstown—Catalogs. 3. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute—Catalogs. I. Lees, Sarah, editor of compilation. II. Rand, Richard. III. Webber, Sandra L. IV. Title. V. Title: 19th-century European paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

ND457.S74 2012

759.9409'0340747441—dc23

2012030510

Details:

TITLE PAGE: John Constable, *Yarmouth Jetty* (cat. 73)

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applied in several layers. The surface has a striated appearance, and the ground may be varnished. In infrared light, many underdrawing lines of a very sketchy nature can be seen in the windows of the buildings, some of the soldiers, the figures standing against the left wall, various trees, and the horizon line below Saint Paul's. Graphite underdrawing details can be detected in normal light in numerous locations. The paint is nebulous overall, executed in thin vehicular washes and sketchy strokes. The sky colors are so thinly diluted that they have separated into pools, leaving a mottled pattern throughout most of the sky. Impastos in the dark foreground and foliage areas are very low, soft, and rounded. Besides the medium- to large-sized brushwork, some colors look as if they had been applied with a palette knife. A sponge may have been used in the foreground to create lighter details through the wet brown paint. There are thin sgraffito lines in the balcony, cornices, and windows of the left building. Ink applied with a brush may have been used for some details.

1. R 32.1.
2. R 19.37.
3. R 17.5–7.
4. Leigh 1818, p. 308.
5. London 1976, p. 112.
6. R 19.24.
7. Farington 1978–84, vol. 15, p. 5396, entry for 11 Aug. 1819.
8. R 20.1.
9. Farington 1978–84, vol. 16, p. 5582, entry for 21 Nov. 1820. This second conception is possibly the larger *Sketch for "The Opening of Waterloo Bridge Seen from Whitehall Stairs, June 18th, 1817"* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London; R 19.23).
10. John Constable to John Fisher, 18 July 1824, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, p. 168.
11. Leslie 1845, p. 227.
12. London 1991a, pp. 206–11, 369–72. Reynolds's chronology under his entry for the final version is also useful (Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, pp. 233–34).
13. R 32.2.
14. London–Washington–San Marino 2006–7, pp. 57, 184–89.
15. John Constable to John Fisher, 7 July 1826, in Beckett 1962–70, vol. 6, p. 223.
16. *Ibid.* Anne Lyles cogently analyzes the ambiguity inherent in this statement when compared to the post-1826 sketches, none of which has been extended by that amount (London–Washington–San Marino 2006–7, pp. 186–87).
17. R 29.63.
18. Reynolds 1984, vol. 1, p. 213.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
20. London 1991a, p. 369.
21. Leslie 1845, p. 227.

22. See Ivy 1991, pp. 13, 32, 39–40, 43, 46.

23. BJ 345.

24. See Leslie 1860, p. 135.

25. The painting was offered for sale at Sotheby's, London, 12 July 1995, no. 102, ill., but was bought in.

26. The painting was offered for sale at Sotheby's, London, 29 Nov. 1978, no. 101, but was bought in.

67 | Sandbanks and a Cart and Horses on Hampstead Heath c. 1820–25

Oil on canvas, 19.7 x 25.4 cm

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

2007.8.37

To escape the polluted atmosphere of central London in the interest of protecting his wife Maria's fragile health, Constable first rented a house in Hampstead Heath at the end of August 1819. From that year until Maria's death in November 1828, the almost yearly removal of his growing family to the northern suburb became part of the artist's routine and added a new subject for his landscape studies.¹ Most famously the venue for his sky studies of 1821 and 1822, the heath itself was the object of on-the-spot studies beginning in 1819, continuing most intensively in 1821 and 1822, tapering off in the remainder of the decade. Constable exhibited four Hampstead subjects at the Royal Academy: *Hampstead Heath and Harrow* in 1821; and *Hampstead Heath and View from the Terrace, Hampstead* in 1822.² Because the locations of these paintings are today unknown, the record of Constable's activities on the heath is formed primarily from oil sketches such as *Sandbanks and a Cart and Horses on Hampstead Heath*.

Hampstead Heath, with its open air and views of central London, was celebrated for its natural beauty by poets and artists; as Constable depicts in *Sandbanks and a Cart and Horses*, however, its natural resources also provided necessary raw materials for brick-making and iron foundry casting. The geological composition of the land consisted of the sand that was essential for those industries. Furthermore, because part of the Heath was common land in the Manor of Hampstead, tenants had a right to dig for sand and gravel. There is archaeological evidence that digging and quarrying sand on the heath was conducted in the



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Middle Ages. Over the course of the nineteenth century the amount of sand dug and carted away increased exponentially, from eight loads a day in 1814 to thirty by 1866.³ This digging resulted in sandpits that filled with water, as can be seen in Constable's *Hampstead Heath: The House Called the Salt Box in the Distance* (c. 1819–20; Tate Britain, London).⁴

In *Sandbanks and a Cart and Horses*, however, Constable shows neither the digging itself nor the results of the digging. Rather, he depicts a transitional moment in the transformation of the landscape: the cart transporting the sand to its new location. Even within the confines of the small canvas, Constable creates an expansive scene that extends across the length of canvas as the eye retraces the route of the cart along the track that curves from the foreground around the right side. Although the horses and cart are captured just as they move into the middle ground, Constable uses the same brown paint of the cart to indicate the immediately preceding movement of the

cart. Etched into the sandy track are the depressions where the wheels dug into the soft surface as the cart rounded the corner. Although the path continues behind the sandbanks, moving us back into the middle of the composition, we can also see a valley just beyond the cart and horses at the extreme right of the canvas. Hampstead's elevation did indeed provide extensive views south to London and west to Harrow.

Two separate but fragmentary labels on the back of the work help to reconstruct the history of the sketch. John Constable's grandson Clifford authenticated and identified the scene on a now-damaged label in 1895.⁵ Using that label, Leslie Parris has identified the sketch as no. 16 in the inventory of Captain Charles Golding Constable (John's son and Clifford's father) from 1880.⁶ After his death in 1879, Charles's widow, Anna, first lent the paintings in his collection to the South Kensington Museum and subsequently to the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art until their children came of age.⁷ Probably because the captain had

not specified how to divide the works in his collection, the fifty oils, eighty-one watercolors and drawings, and various other sketches and engravings were sold at Christie's in 1887. Soon after that sale, the sketch came into the hands of James Orrock (1829–1913), who later owned the Clark's *Rockets and Blue Lights* (cat. 342) by Turner.⁸ Orrock, a collector and dealer, had acquired the work by 1888 when he lent it to the Grosvenor Gallery's first exhibition of *A Century of British Art from 1737 to 1837*. It was the purchaser of the sketch at Orrock's sale at Christie's in April 1895 who brought it to Clifford Constable for authentication. EP

PROVENANCE Charles Golding Constable, the artist's son, by descent (d. 1879); Anna Maria Blundell Constable, his wife (1879–87, Constable estate sale, Christie's, London, 11 July 1887, no. 73, as *View at Hampstead, with a cart and horses*, sold to Permain);⁹ Permain (from 1887); James Orrock (by 1888, his sale, Christie's, London, 27 Apr. 1895, no. 276, as *Gravel Pits*, sold to Radcliffe); Radcliffe (from 1895); Mrs. Michaels (in 1955); [Simon Dickinson, Ltd., London, sold to Thune]; Richard M. Thune, New York, sold to Leger; [Leger Galleries, London, sold to Manton, 18 Oct. 1996]; Sir Edwin A. G. Manton, New York (1996–d. 2005); Manton Family Art Foundation (2005–7, given to the Clark); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007.

EXHIBITIONS London 1888, no. 290, as *Gravel Pits*; New York 2000; Williamstown 2007a, no cat.

REFERENCES Parris 1998, pp. 26–27, no. 52, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a moderate-weight canvas with a weave of 13 threads per cm. It has a fairly recent wax lining to a linen with a thread count of 16 threads per cm, and a five-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The lining was probably done in 1996. Remnants of brown paper tape suggest that an old lining was removed prior to this treatment. The painting has a dished surface, jumbled and overlapped areas of paint, and moated impastos. The picture may have shrunk in response to some moisture treatment as the paint is wrinkled and curled out of plane in a lifted square crack pattern across the entire surface. Cleaning abrasion on the edges of all the lifted paint gives the picture a very broken-up appearance. The painting may also have been cleaned in 1996, and there are small, unfilled retouches in the sky. Residual old varnish remains in the trees of the middle ground and in the impastos, and wax deposits appear on the horses and are scattered in other locations.

The visible ground layer is pink, and this contributes to the coloration of the sandbanks and other areas of the image. No underdrawing was detected. There may be a minimal paint wash to delineate the dark and light passages of the image. Most colors are laid on the surface in a paste

consistency, wet-into-wet, with little blending of juxtaposed strokes. Along the tree line, some trees were shortened with the sky color, while others extend over the sky color. There are impastos scattered in the paler details of the middle ground and foreground. Brushes from small sables up to bristle brushes of 1–1.3 cm were used.

1. The exception to this yearly pattern was 1824, when, in May, Constable took his family to Brighton, where they returned in 1825 and 1826, though in those years they first went to Hampstead. In 1827, No. 6 Well Walk, Hampstead, became the family's primary residence.
2. R 21.4, 21.6, and 22.3–4.
3. Ikins 1971, p. 11. For the attraction of artists to Hampstead in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Wedd 2001, pp. 53–65.
4. R 21.7.
5. A paper label that had presumably been placed on the back of the stretcher was removed at some point, mounted to a thin cardboard, and stapled back onto the stretcher. The label was damaged during this procedure, but the ink inscription is still partially legible, and reads: "[This small picture of Hampstead] / was painted by my / Grand Father John Constable / R. A. / Clifford Constable / 46 Carlton Hi[ll] / St John's Wood / N.W / June 11th 1895." The first five words were transcribed by Richard Thune in April 1996 when the label was more intact. See Parris 1998, p. 26. The second label is also damaged and darkened, though still in place on the stretcher; the partially legible ink inscription includes the words "Gravel Pits – John Constable."
6. Parris 1998, p. 27.
7. Fleming-Williams and Parris 1984, pp. 81–84.
8. For Orrock's dubious activities as a forger and dealer in fake Constables, see Rhyne 1981, pp. 403–8, 416.
9. From 1880 to 1883, Mrs. A. M. Constable lent this painting to the South Kensington Museum, London (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), with the title *Sketch at Hampstead, with a Cart and Horses*. From 1883 to 1887, it was similarly on loan to the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art (now the National Museum of Scotland).