

French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945

The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Editor



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Thomas Couture, *The Illness of Pierrot*, 1867–1868

Artist	Thomas Couture, French, 1815–1879
Title	<i>The Illness of Pierrot</i>
Object Date	1867–1868
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>Pierrot malade</i>
Medium	Oil on panel
Dimensions (Unframed)	13 13/16 x 16 15/16 in. (35.1 x 43.0 cm)
Signature	Inscribed and signed upper left: LA SCIENCE FAIT VOIR A CE/ DOCTEUR CE QUI N'EST PAS/ ET L'EMPECHE DE VOIR CE QUE/ TOUT LE MONDE DEVINE./ T. C.
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 32-15

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Catalogue Entry

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In the summer of 1859, French painter and teacher Thomas Couture was newly married and becoming increasingly disenchanted with life in Paris. He closed his successful atelier, which had launched the careers of such artists as Edouard Manet (1832–1883) and William Morris Hunt (American, 1824–1879), and moved with his wife to Senlis, some thirty miles north of the capital. This change in residence coincided with a shift in Couture's primary clientele and subject matter. Instead of prioritizing large imperial commissions, he began producing more modestly sized easel paintings that would appeal to private collectors, including landscapes, genre scenes, and satirical allegories.

The Illness of Pierrot belongs to the latter category. Completed around 1868, it is one of seven harlequinades, or pictures incorporating Harlequin and other stock characters from the commedia dell'arte, that Couture undertook between 1855 and 1870.¹ The scene openly pokes fun at the medical profession. Seated at the center is a tricorne-wearing doctor who takes the pulse of a bedridden patient and attempts to diagnose

what ails him. The man slumped against the pillows is Pierrot, a “comically inept male servant” given to laziness and excessive eating.² Although not one of the original commedia dell’arte characters, Pierrot gained popularity in Paris during the 1680s when the Comédie-Italienne added him to their roster of social types.³ Here, Pierrot is clearly struggling with indigestion and a hangover: telltale scraps of food and bottles of alcohol litter the foreground. Pierrot’s sometime-nemesis Harlequin, dressed in his trademark lozenged costume, feigns anguish over his condition, even though he and the maid know precisely what caused it. Only the physician remains puzzled by Pierrot’s symptoms, blinded by his supposed erudition. A French inscription at the upper left reads: “Science makes the doctor see what is not and prevents him from seeing what is obvious to everyone.”



Fig. 1. *Chapel of the Virgin, Church of Saint-Eustache, Paris*. Photo: David Iliff (Australian, b. ca. 1988), 2014. Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Couture conceived of this scene following a supernatural experience at the sixteenth-century Church of Saint-Eustache in Paris. Hired to paint three monumental murals in the Chapel of the Virgin (Fig. 1), Couture was working atop some scaffolding when he heard the chapel door open and beheld the phantom of Harlequin. The visitor contemplated the artist briefly and then sprinted around the room “with the gracefulness of a young cat,” striking Couture’s half-finished decorations as he went.⁴ He vanished momentarily, only to reappear

high above, running along the cornices. Harlequin finally came to rest behind Couture, “twittering like a real swallow” and watching him intently.⁵ Couture continued to hallucinate Harlequin over the next week, as he recounts in his 1867 publication *Méthode et entretiens d’atelier (Conversations on Art Methods)*. Desperate to stem these visions, Couture decided that the best course of action was to produce a suite of harlequinades—especially after discovering that Domenico Biancolelli (1636–1688), a renowned commedia dell’arte actor, was buried in the very chapel where the apparitions were taking place. The veracity of this tale is, of course, debatable: the autobiographical book in which it appears was meant to promote Couture’s artistic pedagogy and secure him a lasting place in history. Nonetheless, the story is central to the lore surrounding Couture’s harlequinades, and nearly every scholar of his satirical work mentions it.⁶



Fig. 2. Thomas Couture, *Pierrot in Criminal Court*, ca. 1864–1870, oil on panel, 12 11/16 x 15 7/16 in. (32.2 x 39.2 cm), Cleveland Museum of Art. Bequest of Noah L. Butkin, 1980.250

The seven paintings comprising Couture’s series vary widely in size and subject matter. The earliest and largest harlequinade, *Supper at the Maison d’Or* (1855; Vancouver Art Gallery, British Columbia), is nearly four by seven and a half feet, while the smallest picture, *The Duel after the Masked Ball* (1857; The Wallace Collection, London), is less than one square foot.⁷ Some works depict standard commedia dell’arte scenes that would have been familiar to any Parisian theatergoer, such as *The Marriage of Harlequin* (ca. 1860; Musée d’Orsay, Paris), in which the eponymous prankster and his

sweetheart, Columbine, prepare to sign a nuptial contract. Others are Couture's own invention but emulate the types of humorous situations in which Pierrot and his companions found themselves onstage, often due to Pierrot's gluttony. In fact, this vice supplies the narrative pretext for three harlequinades in Couture's series—*Sponsorship* (ca. 1860–1869; Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie de Senlis), *Pierrot in Criminal Court* (Fig. 2), and *The Illness of Pierrot*. The first of this trio shows Harlequin attempting to mollify some shareholders, who are dismayed to learn that he has misused corporate funds to satisfy Pierrot's ravenous appetite. The second painting represents Pierrot on trial for having purloined food and beverages from a restaurant, whose chef and sous-chef are witnesses for the prosecution. And the Nelson-Atkins picture, as previously mentioned, depicts Pierrot suffering the immediate consequences of having gorged himself.



Fig. 3. *Bonbons du Pierrot Gourmand*, 1899, enameled sheet metal, 13 3/8 x 9 7/16 in. (34 x 24 cm), Musée de la Vie Rurale de Steenwerck, France, 2019.0.00330. © Musée de la Vie Rurale de Steenwerck

Couture's frequent allusions to overindulgence in his commedia dell'arte works were both tactical and personal. On the one hand, Pierrot's weakness for fine

food was a beloved aspect of his identity—so much so that when Parisian entrepreneur Georges Evrard opened a candy store in the Marais in 1892, he named it "Au Pierrot Gourmand" and utilized Pierrot's likeness in his branding. Early advertisements portrayed Pierrot seated atop a crescent moon and enjoying some bonbons with Columbine (Fig. 3), while later ones depicted him falling backward into a basket of sweets.⁸ On the other hand, Couture shared Pierrot's love of eating. According to American portraitist George Peter Alexander Healy (1813–1894), who befriended Couture in 1834 and remained close to him for forty-five years, "he had a thorough appreciation of the delights of a good table, he employed an excellent cook, and his devoted wife took care that his meals should be of the best and his truffles of the largest."⁹ These dining habits unfortunately had a deleterious impact on Couture's health; over time, he became overweight and developed stomach cancer.¹⁰ Perhaps for that reason, Couture initially considered a different storyline for *The Illness of Pierrot*. In a preparatory drawing for the Nelson-Atkins picture, Pierrot is still bedridden but not due to overconsumption; instead, he has sustained a stab wound during a duel with Harlequin (Fig. 4). Whether because Couture had already painted a harlequinade about dueling or because he thought Pierrot's binge-eating and -drinking would have broader market appeal, he ultimately went with the latter scenario.



Fig. 4. Thomas Couture, *Pierrot III*, ca. 1860, graphite on paper, 18 1/4 x 23 7/8 in. (46.5 x 60.5 cm), Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie de Senlis, France, A.00.5.699. © Musées de Senlis

In a sense, the cause of Pierrot's infirmity is of little importance. What matters—and what remained

unchanged from compositional sketch to finished painting—is the physician’s incompetence. Couture strongly distrusted doctors and, as a result, declined any treatment when his health deteriorated.¹¹ He took pleasure in lampooning medical practitioners as charlatans who paraded false knowledge and took advantage of vulnerable people. Couture was not alone in this pastime: his favorite playwright, Molière, and many commedia dell’arte troupes also caricatured physicians in their work. In fact, Couture specifically looked to Molière’s dramas when creating *The Illness of Pierrot*. As he explained in a letter to American collector William Tilden Blodgett (1823–1875), the doctor tending to Pierrot “is the personification of medical science, which is so often mistaken, which is always mistaken. But since he is as nothing, let us represent him as Molière did.”¹²

Couture derived particular inspiration from two of Molière’s late-career comedies: *Le médecin malgré lui* (1666; *The Physician in Spite of Himself*) and *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673; *The Imaginary Invalid*). In the former, an alcoholic woodcutter named Sganarelle is forced to masquerade as a doctor due to the machinations of his wife, Martine. Called on to diagnose a woman named Lucinde, who has stopped speaking in order to forestall an arranged marriage, he attributes her mysterious silence to “peccant humours” and suggests bed rest and wine-soaked bread as remedies.¹³ By the third act, Sganarelle has grown so confident in this scam that he boasts to Lucinde’s lover, Léandre: “In our business we may spoil a man without its costing us a farthing. The blunders are never put down to us, and it is always the fault of the fellow who dies.”¹⁴ In *Le Malade imaginaire*, similar drollery ensues. A hypochondriac named Argan is so convinced of his imminent demise that he permits his physician, Mr. Purgon, to prescribe countless enemas and other equally ineffective “cures.” He also betroths his daughter, Angélique, to Purgon’s hapless nephew, Thomas Diafoirus (a doctor-in-training), so as to have multiple members of the medical establishment at his disposal. Even when Purgon and Diafoirus provide contradictory accounts of Argan’s nonexistent illness—with one blaming his liver and the other his spleen—Argan’s faith in physicians never wavers.

Both plays contain one or more characters who recognize the doctors as bumbling frauds. In *Le médecin malgré lui*, nurse Jacqueline warns Lucinde’s father that “all these physicians do her no good; . . . your daughter wants something else than rhubarb and senna.”¹⁵ In *Le Malade imaginaire*, Argan’s servant Toinette discerns that

Purgon and his apothecary are milking her employer for money, and his brother Béralde likewise sees through their pedantry (“the whole excellence of their art consists in a pompous gibberish”).¹⁶ These characters are reincarnated in the Nelson-Atkins composition as the charwoman, who stares incredulously at the physician. She carries a water pitcher and bed warmer, knowing that fluids and sleep are all Pierrot needs. Her sensible ministrations stand in contrast to the doctor’s foolish fixation on Pierrot’s pulse.¹⁷ Like Molière, Couture enjoyed juxtaposing an astute servant and obtuse doctor.

Couture’s interest in theater is clear on a purely formal level, too. The bed hangings evoke stage curtains, and the figures’ exaggerated gestures and facial expressions were hallmarks of Molière’s plays and the commedia dell’arte.¹⁸ Indeed, the entire scene appears ready-made for the stage—which may be why the Nelson-Atkins produced a theatrical adaptation of *The Illness of Pierrot* in the summer of 1934, only a few months after the museum’s inauguration.¹⁹ As the story goes, staff members were surprised by the tremendous response to a newspaper advertisement promoting a free class in art appreciation for children. Scrambling to devise an engaging curriculum for more than 125 youths, they decided to write and perform a play based on a work in the collection. Ruth Lindsay Hughes, an assistant to director Paul Gardner, authored the script, which she titled “Food, Not Thought,” and assigned her colleagues the various roles. The show was a triumph, despite the novice actors having only one day to rehearse. So enthusiastic were the children that Hughes’s coworker, Hazelle Hedges (1910–1984)—an expert puppet-maker and puppeteer—proposed restaging the play with marionettes.²⁰

Over the next two months, the children enrolled in the Nelson-Atkins class learned to craft marionettes using whatever materials were available (including “tennis balls for heads,” according to one report).²¹ The girls sewed doll clothes and created batik draperies to adorn the proscenium arch, while the boys assisted staffer Robert Lockard (1905–1974) in constructing the miniature stage and building pint-sized furniture. Two photographs published in the *Kansas City Star* capture several participants holding up the fruits of their labors (Fig. 5). One of the boys can be seen “putting the last nail into a French period chair” that closely resembles the seat occupied by the doctor in Couture’s picture.²² On August 30, 1934, the children reenacted *The Illness of Pierrot* in Atkins Auditorium using their homemade puppets—the first of many such plays to be staged at

the museum. Couture would surely have been pleased to see his harlequinade brought to life in this fashion and to know that Pierrot's "gastronomic peccadillo" continued to amuse subsequent generations of art-lovers.²³

retreated from the competitive artistic milieu of Paris and approached the final decade of his career.

Brigid M. Boyle
February 2023

Notes

1. Only two of the seven pictures are inscribed with dates. *The Illness of Pierrot* bears Couture's initials but no year of creation. Albert Boime dated it to circa 1859–1860 or 1860–1863 in his monograph on Couture, favoring the former date range in his image caption and the latter in his text; see Albert Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 321, 324–26. Most scholars have followed Boime's lead, but new evidence supports a later date of creation. In a letter to Couture dated June 1, 1868, French painter Edouard Armand-Dumaresq (1826–1895) asked on behalf of American collector William Tilden Blodgett (1823–1875) when he expected to finish *The Illness of Pierrot*. Blodgett already owned several of Couture's harlequinades and sought to acquire another one for his collection. Couture's reply has been lost, but it is likely that he completed *The Illness of Pierrot* sometime that year. See Armand-Dumaresq to Couture, June 1, 1868, Archives Couture, Musée national du château de Compiègne.
2. I borrow this description from Judy Sund, "Why So Sad? Watteau's Pierrots," *Art Bulletin* 98, no. 3 (September 2016): 323.
3. Sund, "Why So Sad?" 323.
4. Thomas Couture, *Méthode et entretiens d'atelier* (Paris: Typ. de L. Guérin, 1867), 133. Harlequin ran "avec la grâce d'un jeune chat." Translations are by Brigid M. Boyle unless otherwise noted.
5. Couture, *Méthode et entretiens d'atelier*, 134. Harlequin watched Couture "en gazouillant comme une véritable hirondelle."
6. For example, Alain de Leiris, "Thomas Couture, The Painter," in *Thomas Couture: Paintings and Drawings in American Collections*, exh. cat. (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1970), 20; Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision*, 293; and Jennifer Forrest, *Decadent Aesthetics and the Acrobat in French Fin de Siècle* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 43.



Fig. 5. "The Marionettes and How They Grew" and "Stage Trappings in the Making," *Kansas City Star*, August 14, 1934, 9, copy in NAMA archives

Among the first French paintings acquired by the Nelson-Atkins, *The Illness of Pierrot* remains the museum's only satirical allegory in oil by a French artist. Part homage to Molière, part diatribe against doctors, it offers insight into Couture's state of mind as he

7. A larger version of *The Duel after the Masked Ball* remains in private hands. See *Tableaux Anciens: Tableaux et dessins du XIXe siècle* (Monte Carlo, Monaco: Sotheby's, June 20, 1987), lot 448, as *Le Duel de Pierrot*.
8. The company name was subsequently shortened to "Pierrot Gourmand." See "The Pierrot Gourmand Adventure," *Pierrot Gourmand*, accessed January 30, 2023, <https://en.pierrot-gourmand.com/our-history>. To this day, customers can still purchase ceramic lollipop-holders featuring Pierrot's bust; see <https://www.pierrot-gourmand.com/coffret-gourmandise-buste-sucettes.html>.
9. George P[eter] A[lexander] Healy, *Reminiscences of a Portrait Painter* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1894), 98. Couture and Healy met in the studio of Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835).
10. Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision*, 326; Healy, *Reminiscences of a Portrait Painter*, 105. Couture's student Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow (1845–1921) described him as "a short, stout man" with "a rather heavy and puffy face." See Ernest W[adsworth] Longfellow, "Reminiscences of Thomas Couture," *Atlantic Monthly* 52, no. 310 (August 1883): 236–37.
11. According to Healy, "He was so violent in his animosity that, when he fell ill, he refused all medical aid." See Healy, *Reminiscences of a Portrait Painter*, 105.
12. Translated in Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision*, 323.
13. Molière [Jean-Baptiste Poquelin], *The Dramatic Works of Molière*, trans. Henri Van Laun (Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie, 1878), 2:278–80.
14. Molière, *The Dramatic Works of Molière*, 2:284.
15. Molière, *The Dramatic Works of Molière*, 2:271–72.
16. Molière, *The Dramatic Works of Molière*, 3:548.
17. This preoccupation with Pierrot's pulse is another nod to Molière. In *Le médecin malgré lui*, Sganarelle touches Lucinde's wrist and then declares, "The pulse tells me that your daughter is dumb"—even though her muteness had already been established. See Molière, *The Dramatic Works of Molière*, 2:277. In *Le Malade imaginaire*, Diafoirus deems Argan's pulse to be "a little irregular . . . which is a sign of intemperance in the *splenetic parenchyma*, which means the milt." His use of medical jargon impresses Argan but signals to audience members that Diafoirus is a quack. See Molière, *The Dramatic Works of Molière*, 3:538.
18. Compare, for example, Pierrot's mournful look in Couture's painting to the pained expression of French mime Jean-Charles Deburau (1829–1873) in Nadar and Adrien Tournachon, *Pierrot in Pain*, ca. 1854–1855, albumen silver print from glass negative, 10 1/16 x 8 1/16 in. (25.6 x 20.4 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005.100.255, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search> Deburau performed as Pierrot at the Théâtre des Funambules in Paris between 1847 and 1855; during this period, he posed for several "têtes d'expression de Pierrot" to help boost the Tournachon brothers' struggling business.
19. For the story of this theatrical adaptation, see "Little Hands in Art," *Kansas City Star*, August 14, 1934, 9; "Marionette Shows Thursday," *Kansas City Star*, August 28, 1934, 2; M[inna] K. P[owell], "Gallery's First Anniversary To Be Celebrated Next Week," *Kansas City Star*, December 6, 1934, 10; and Jeanne Turner Baldwin, "History of Marionettes and Puppets at the Nelson-Atkins Museum," in *Historical Marionettes and Puppets: From the Collection of Betty Nichol, Jeanne Baldwin, and James Seldelman*, exh. cat. (Kansas City, MO: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1996), unpaginated. Additional information can be found in the Lindsay Hughes Cooper Oral History Interviews, December 8, 1993, and May 5, 1994, NAMA Archives, Ephemera Collection, Record Group 70.
20. Both Hughes and Hedges had trailblazing careers. Hughes became acting curator of Asian art at the Nelson-Atkins during World War II and later worked for Asian art dealer C. T. Loo. Hedges founded her own puppet business in 1935 and became the largest exclusive manufacturer of marionettes and puppets in the world. For more on these pioneering women, see "Lindsay Hughes Cooper," *Kansas City Star*, November 18, 1997, B-4; "Generations: Women in the Early History of the Nelson-Atkins," *Google Arts and Culture*, accessed February 2, 2023, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/tAVhYuavs> "Puppet Manufacturer Hazelle Rollins Dies," *Kansas City Times*, March 26, 1984, B-6; and Mike

Joly, Hazelle and Her Marionettes: *Creating the World's Largest Puppet Company* (Independence, MO: Puppetry Arts Institute, 2005).

21. "Little Hands in Art," 9.
22. "Children's Classes at the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art and Atkins Museum Reproduce Art Objects in Interesting Miniature," *Kansas City Star*, August 14, 1934, 9.
23. I borrow this description of Pierrot's situation from M[inna] K. P[owell], "Art: Mr. Parsons Will Be Heard Thursday Night on 'The Italian Renaissance,'" *Kansas City Times*, April 12, 1932, 10.

Technical Entry

Technical entry forthcoming.

Documentation

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Provenance

Purchased from the artist by William Tilden Blodgett (1823–1875), New York, after June 1, 1868 [1];

Vincent-Claude Laurent-Richard (1811–1886), Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, by May 23, 1878—at least September 1880 [2];

Possibly by descent to his daughter, Augustine-Victoire Charcot (née Laurent-Richard, 1834–1899), and his son-in-law, Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893), Paris, by February 22, 1886 [3];

Probably Jason "Jay" Gould (1836–1892), New York, before December 2, 1892 [4];

William "Vincent" Astor (1891–1959), New York, before April 20, 1926;

Purchased at his sale, *Paintings, furnishings and architectural fittings of the Astor residence, 840 Fifth Avenue, New York: paintings of the XIX century French school, furniture, tapestries and objects of art, carved wood wall paneling, painted insets and ceilings, bronzes and ironwork*, American Art Association, New York, April 20, 1926, lot 410, as *Pierrot Malade*, 1926;

Marcel Jules Rougeron (1875–1954), New York, by 1932 [5];

With J. M. Hardy, Van Diest Gallery, New York, by April 5, 1932 [6];

Purchased from Van Diest, through Harold Woodbury Parsons, by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 1932.

Notes

[1] See letter from Edouard Armand-Dumaresq (1826–1895) to Thomas Couture, June 1, 1868, Archives Couture, Musée national du château de Compiègne, in which he relays a message from Blodgett, communicated to him via American painter Edward Harrison May (1824–1887). Blodgett wanted to know when Couture expected to finish *The Illness of Pierrot* and said his banker in Paris would transfer payment to the artist as soon as it was ready. We thank Jean-François Delmas, Conservateur général du Patrimoine, Musée national du château de Compiègne, for sharing this piece of correspondence.

[2] Laurent-Richard was a tailor and art collector. He offered the painting for sale at *Tableaux Modernes et de Tableaux Anciens Composant la Collection Laurent-Richard*, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, May 23–25, 1878, no. 8, as *Pierrot malade*, but according to an annotated sales catalogue owned by Durand-Ruel et Cie, it was bought in by Laurent-Richard. See email from Paul-Louis Durand-Ruel and Flavie Durand-Ruel, Durand-Ruel et Cie., Paris, to Nicole Myers, Nelson-Atkins, January 11, 2016, NAMA curatorial files. Other annotated catalogues from the Internet Archive and Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, list a purchase price of 8000 francs. Couture

scholar Albert Boime suggested that “Gillet” was the buyer. This may actually refer to Charles Joseph Pillet, who was the auctioneer at the 1878 sale. See Boime (Albert) Papers, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, Los Angeles, “Pierrot,” LSC.1834, Series 3, box 14, folder 9, p. 193. Special thanks to Maxwell Zupke and Neil M. Hodge, Public Services, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

In any case, Laurent-Richard owned the painting as of 1880, when he lent it to the Palais de l’industrie, Paris, in September; see Rager Ballu, *Catalogue des œuvres de Th. Couture exposées au Palais de l’industrie*, exh. cat. (Paris: A. Quantin, 1880), 51.

[3] Although it is unclear if the painting was still in Laurent-Richard’s collection at his death, his daughter Augustine-Victorine inherited the rest of his art collection. She and her husband Jean-Martin were art collectors, and Jean-Martin was a renowned Professor of Neurology. Considering the subject matter, it is possible that the Charcots kept the work after Laurent-Richard’s death in 1886.

[4] See Georges Bertauts-Couture, *Thomas Couture (1815–1879): sa vie, son œuvre, son caractère, ses idées, sa méthode* (Paris: Le Garrec, 1932), 100. No further record of this painting in Gould’s collection has been found. While it is possible that Gould’s eldest daughter Helen Miller Gould (1868–1938) inherited the painting along with his mansion, Lyndhurst, she did not sell many of her father’s paintings. If this painting belonged to Gould, it is likely that he deaccessioned it himself before his death in 1892. See letter from Henry J. Duffy, curator at Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, New York, to Danielle Hampton Cullen, the Nelson-Atkins, December 22, 2021, NAMA curatorial files.

[5] Marcel Jules Rougeron (1875–1954) was a paintings restorer, art dealer, and collector in New York. See stenciled label on verso of painting lower left corner, in shape of palette: PICTURE RESTORATION / ROUGERON / NEW YORK / 94 PARK AVENUE.

The Couture painting, *Pierrot in Criminal Court*, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, shares some of the same provenance: Jay Gould, the 1926 Astor sale, and Rougeron.

[6] The museum considered purchasing the painting as early as March 1, 1932, although it is unclear if, at this time, the painting was part of the Van Diest Gallery’s stock, or part of Rougeron’s collection with J.M. Hardy

acting as an intermediary in this transaction. If the latter, Van Diest had the painting for a very short time, since it was purchased by the Nelson-Atkins on April 5; see letter from Harold Woodbury Parsons to J. C. Nichols, March 1, 1932, NAMA curatorial files.

Related Works

Thomas Couture, *The Illness of Pierrot*, date unknown, black, white, and red chalk on blue paper, 18 3/8 x 24 1/8 in. (46.7 x 61.3 cm), Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, 1943.793.

Thomas Couture, *The Duel after the Masked Ball*, date unknown, 28 1/8 x 35 5/8 in. (71.5 x 90.5 cm), private collection, Houston, Texas.

Thomas Couture, *Supper at the Maison d’Or*, 1855, oil on canvas, 47 1/4 x 89 3/4 in. (120 x 228 cm), Vancouver Art Gallery, British Columbia, VAG 31.101.

Thomas Couture, *Pierrot the Politician*, 1857, oil on canvas, 44 1/2 x 57 1/2 in. (113 x 146.1 cm), Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, 71.2064.

Thomas Couture, *Harlequin and Pierrot*, ca. 1857, oil on canvas, 4 5/8 x 6 1/8 in. (11.9 x 15.5 cm), The Wallace Collection, London, P288.

Thomas Couture, *The Duel after the Masked Ball*, 1857, oil on canvas, 9 9/16 x 12 3/4 in. (24.3 x 32.5 cm), The Wallace Collection, London, P370.

Thomas Couture, *The Marriage of Harlequin*, about 1860, oil on canvas, 38 3/8 x 51 1/8 in. (97.5 x 130 cm), Musée d’Orsay, Paris, sans n° d’inventaire-43.

Thomas Couture, *Sponsorship*, ca. 1860–1869, oil on canvas, 29 x 36 3/8 in. (73.5 x 92.5 cm), Musée d’Art et d’Archéologie de Senlis, France, A.2002.5.1.

Thomas Couture, *Pierrot in Criminal Court*, ca. 1864–1870, oil on wood panel, 12 11/16 x 15 7/16 in. (32.2 x 39.2 cm), The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980.250.

Reproductions

Eugène André Champollion (1848–1901), after Thomas Couture, *Sick Pierrot*, ca. 1878, etching, 5 1/2 x 6 1/8 in. (14 x 15.6 cm), illustrated in *Catalogue de tableaux modernes et de tableaux anciens composant la collection Laurent-Richard* (Paris: Hôtel Drouot, May 23–25, 1878), 10.

Preparatory Works

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