

*MADAME MANET IN THE CONSERVATORY*  
A COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO VERSIONS



RESEARCH FORUM PAINTING PAIRS COLLABORATION

BY  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

Each year The Courtauld Institute of Art provides a unique opportunity for students of the Postgraduate Diploma of the Conservation of Easel Painting and Masters Degree students in the study of the History of Art to collaborate in an investigation of a painting in order to better understand the union between art history and technical analysis. This collaboration is a part of the Research Forum lecture series, named “Painting Pairs: Art History and Technical Study.” The further aim of this research programme is to expand our understanding of how the two fields often rely on one another to gain a more rounded analysis of paintings, both within the historical timeline and material timeline of the painting. “*Madame Manet in the Conservatory: A Comparison Between Two Versions*” is one of five paintings investigated for this lecture series for the 2015/16 academic year.

*Madame Manet in the Conservatory*, a privately owned painting being treated at The Courtauld Institute of Art, is a version of an Édouard Manet painting of the same name in the National Museum of Art, Architecture, and Design (*Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design*) in Oslo, Norway. The following report is an investigation into the relationship between these two paintings, using historical research as well as visual and technical analysis to determine the answers to some key questions: How does the privately owned painting’s history relate to the signature version housed in Oslo? Can historical and technical analysis better determine who created this painting and the relationship of this artist to Manet? Under what circumstances was this privately owned version made?

The hypothesis presented in this project is that an artist who knew the Manet family, and had access to the signature Manet version, created the privately owned version for Suzanne Manet, Édouard Manet’s wife. Based on this hypothesis, this project further proposes that the artist of the privately owned version is likely Suzanne Manet’s nephew, Édouard Vibert. An historical and material comparison of both the privately owned version and the signature Oslo version provides evidence which supports this hypothesis. This report will examine the two histories, their narratives, and how they each correlate to Manet’s style and oeuvre, as well as the ways technical analysis of the painting supports or refutes them.

## II. HISTORY

### PROVENANCE

*Madame Manet in the Conservatory* was brought to The Courtauld Conservation & Technology Department in Spring 2015. Although this painting was brought to The Courtauld for conservation treatment, the painting was in overall good condition, and therefore the conservation treatment will not be the focus of this paper. Instead, it will focus on the historical and technical investigation that was conducted to better understand the placement of this painting within the oeuvre of Manet and his family estate. Both the privately owned version and the Oslo version have extensive provenance detailing their histories, and both have a history of exhibitions and literature, which indicates that the privately owned version could not be a modern copy.

The provenance of the Oslo version (Fig. 1) has been well documented throughout the painting's entire history. According to this provenance and the records of the *Nasjonalmuseet*, the Oslo version was painted in 1879 and sold by Madame Manet in 1895 to Maurice Joyant for the Galerie Georges Bernheim. It was later given to the *Nasjonalmuseet* by the Friends of the *Nasjonalgalleriet* in 1918.



**Fig. 1: *Mme Manet in the Conservatory*, Édouard Manet, c. 1879, 100 cm x 81.5 cm, The National Museum of Art, Architecture, and Design Oslo, Norway**

Provenance for the privately owned *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* (Fig. 2) does not see the painting sold until after Suzanne's death. Sold in the estate sale of Suzanne Manet, this version was owned and then sold as a Manet painting by a

number of reputable art collections, such as Otto Gerstenberg and Max Silberberg.<sup>1</sup> According to Theodore Duret, a close friend of the family and Manet's long-time dealer, Manet painted the privately owned version before the Oslo version. In his *catalogue raisonnée* of Manet, Duret says that Suzanne did not like how ruddy her face looked in the first painting, so she asked for another to be done. Based on this, Duret claims that the Oslo version is the alleged second version.<sup>2</sup>



**Fig. 2: *Mme Manet in the Conservatory*, Unknown artist, c. 1875-1895  
100.5 cm x 81.5 cm, Private Collection**

While this history would be an exciting one to accept without question, it is a contested history. Adolphe Tabarant, an art critic and Manet biographer, originally attributed the privately owned version to Manet in his 1931 catalogue,<sup>3</sup> but later changed his attribution for his 1947 catalogue raisonnée, stating instead that it was painted by Édouard Vibert, Suzanne Manet's nephew.<sup>4</sup> According to Tabarant, the Oslo version was the first and only version made by Manet, and Suzanne's nephew painted the privately owned version sometime after Manet's death in 1883. He asserts that when she was forced to sell her Manet's paintings in the estate sale of 1895, she requested that her nephew copy a number of them for her, including

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<sup>1</sup> The provenance provided by the owner lists the owner as Leo Silberberg, however Magdalena Palica has suggested that it was owned by Max Silberberg in a profile of the privately owned version on the Silesian Collections website. Max Silberberg was known for his considerable collection of art, particularly impressionists. Magdalena Palica, 'Madame Manet in the Greenhouse,' *Silesian Collections*, published December 8, 2009, [silesiancollections.eu](http://silesiancollections.eu).

<sup>2</sup> Théodore Duret, *Histoire De D'Édouard Manet Et De Son œuvre*, (Paris, 1919) no.252; and Paul Jamot, and Georges Wildenstein, *Manet*, vol. I, (Paris: Beaux-Arts, Éd. D'Études Et De Documents, 1932), 157.

<sup>3</sup> Adolphe Tabarant, *Manet : Histoire Catalographique*, (Paris: Éd. Montaigne, 1931), 346.

<sup>4</sup> Adolphe Tabarant, *Manet Et Ses Oeuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 342.



*Madame Manet in the Conservatory, Boy with a sword, The Balcony, Fishing, and A Vase of Flowers.*<sup>5</sup>

The implications of these provenances could support either Duret or Tabarant: if Suzanne Manet had two versions done by Manet it is possible that she kept one for herself, but it is also possible that in the years after Manet's death she had time to have her nephew Édouard Vibert copy the painting before its sale in 1895. Based on this information, the privately owned version can date from before 1879 if it was the first version by Manet, to around 1895, if it was painted by Édouard Vibert in anticipation of the sale of the signature copy.

## MATERIAL PLACEMENT WITHIN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

By the end of the nineteenth century, many artists had begun to utilise pre-made materials, such as prepared canvases and industrially prepared paints. This is in comparison to the earlier artists' workshops where the artists or their apprentices prepared the materials in house, often through laborious methods.<sup>6</sup> This new industrialization of materials allowed for not only more ease when painting, such as the Impressionist style of *en plein air* due to the invention of the paint tube, but also allowed for more uniformity of materials between artists.<sup>7</sup> Possibly due to the standardization of materials at in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the materials between the two versions of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* parallel each other closely, and therefore do not require a point by point comparison. Instead, the majority of the materials discussed will be those found in the technical analysis of the privately owned version, and key differences between the two paintings' materials will be brought to attention.

The canvas used in both paintings is a finely woven linen<sup>8</sup>, commonly used during the nineteenth century in France. During the Industrial Revolution, innovations in the weaving process allowed for such finely woven canvases to be produced, such as fine *toile fine*, and slightly heavier *toile demi-fine*.<sup>9</sup> The canvases in these two versions of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* are so finely woven that their thread counts, or threads per centimetre squared, average about 30 by 30 threads per centimetre square.

Technical investigation of the privately owned version, allows us the opportunity to see the raw canvas in some areas from the back, due to the excess canvas used in manufacturing the painting. It is this raw edge that provided the information that the privately owned version's canvas is linen, as determined through analytical testing, by revealing characteristic nodes found in linens, again placing this canvas within the proper context of impressionist materials.

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<sup>5</sup> While originals exist for many of these paintings, the only one of these alleged Vibert paintings other than *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* that has been identified is *Fishing*, which is in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. The other possible Vibert paintings are lost.

<sup>6</sup> Anthea Callen, *Techniques of the Impressionists*, (London: Tiger Books International, 1990), 22.

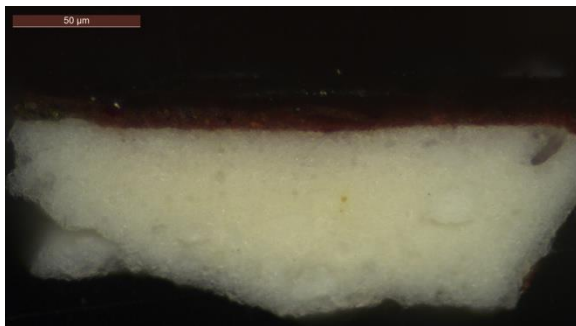
<sup>7</sup> Paint tubes were available in France by 1850. Ibid, 40.

<sup>8</sup> Oslo version untested.

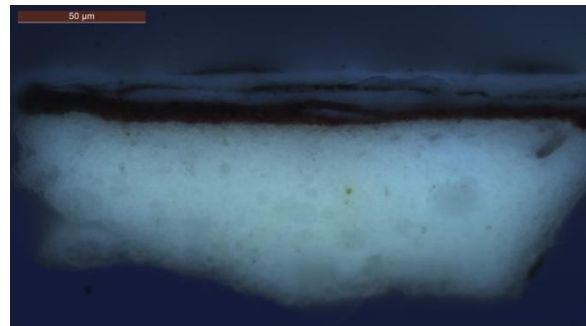
<sup>9</sup> Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique and the Making of Modernity* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 31.

By having access to the original canvases edges on the privately owned painting, it is also evident that the privately owned version was produced on commercially primed canvas. This is clear due to one edge being raw, unprimed, and the other three containing the ground layer directly to the edge of the canvas, indicating that the canvas was prepared at a larger scale and cut down for the artist's needs. It is likely that the Oslo version was also produced on commercially primed canvas, however this painting has since been lined with the original excess canvas trimmed, making it impossible to say, without a doubt, that the Oslo version's canvas was commercially primed.

At the time of these paintings, there were two main fashions in priming canvas. Canvases with one priming layer were known as *à grain*, while canvases with two priming layers were known as *lisse*.<sup>10</sup> By examining cross sections of the privately owned painting, we can see that there is only one layer of ground present, indicating that this is an example of *à grain* priming (Figs. 3 and 4).



**Fig. 3: Cross section from privately owned version in regular light showing the presence of one ground layer**



**Fig. 4: Cross section from privately owned version in Ultraviolet light showing the presence of one ground layer**

Through the use of elemental analysis, it was determined that the ground layer on the privately owned painting is composed primarily of lead white, with trace amounts of barium, sulphur, and calcium, indicating the presence of barium sulphate and chalk as extenders to the ground. Although samples were not taken in Oslo, as this is an invasive procedure not allowed on this painting at the present time, elemental analysis through the use of X-Ray Fluorescence indicate that the same materials were also used in the ground layer of the Oslo version, and in similar proportions. Additionally, analyses performed on other Manet paintings have shown the same or similar results.<sup>11</sup> This indicates that the canvas and ground of the privately owned version can be placed in close relation to the materials commonly used by Manet. It is possible that the same canvas manufacturer was used for both versions of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*, however as this ground formula was not uncommon in 19<sup>th</sup> century France, it is difficult to determine this with any certainty.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> David Bomford, Raymond White, and Louise Williams. *Art in the Making: Impressionism*. (London: National Gallery in Association with Yale University Press, 1990) 47.

<sup>11</sup> Information based on analysis from an ongoing Manet project at The Art Institute of Chicago, to be published in a forthcoming online collection catalog (<http://www.artic.edu/research/digital-publications/online-scholarly-catalogues>).

<sup>12</sup> Callen, 2000, 67.

Through the use of elemental analysis, specifically SEM-EDX and FTIR on the privately owned version, and X-Ray Fluorescence and microscopy on both the privately owned version and the Oslo version, the majority of pigments used in each painting were successfully identified. On both paintings, pigments identified were consistent with those found in other Manet paintings, such as *The Waitress*, of 1878-80.<sup>13</sup> Scanning X-Ray Fluorescence also allowed us to create maps of the elements detected in the privately owned version further showing the prevalence of elements and therefore pigments used across the painting.



Fig. 5: Scanning X-Ray Fluorescence map  
Mercury



Fig. 6: Scanning X-Ray Fluorescence map  
Chrome

In Figure 5, the map illustrates the presence of mercury, and thus indicates the use of vermilion, especially seen in the face and flowers. In Figure 6, the map illustrates that the majority of the foliage contains chrome, which indicates the use of pigments such as chrome yellow or viridian, a green pigment.

The consistency of the canvas, ground, and pigments to those used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in France helps corroborate the historic timeline of the privately owned version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*, when combined with the written documentation of the painting's provenance.

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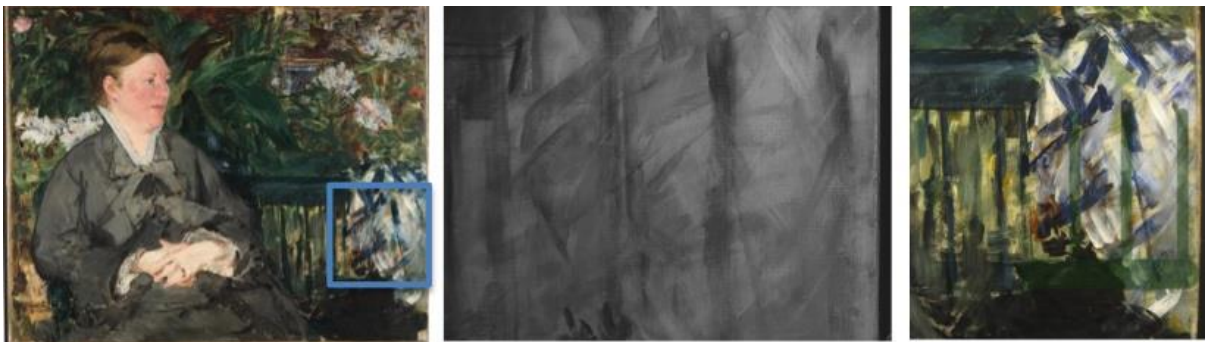
<sup>13</sup> David Bomford and Ashok Roy, "Manet's 'The Waitress': An Investigation into Its Origin and Development," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 7 (1983): 14-16.

### III. COMPOSITION

#### TECHNICAL EXAMINATION OF TECHNIQUE AND CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION

As it was initially believed that the privately owned version was the first version of this painting, as has previously been discussed, changes in the compositions, or lack there of, reinforce our hypothesis that in fact the privately owned painting was a copy of the Oslo version.

Infrared imaging of the bench in the Oslo version shows us that the composition of this painting was altered in a working out stage. In this imaging it is possible to see that the bench posts at one point extended to the edge of the canvas (Fig. 7). It was later changed to have the shawl placed on top of the right side of the bench. These posts are faintly visible in regular viewing light when examined closely, but the below overlay better illustrates the placement of the original bench posts under the shawl.



**Fig. 7:** This series of images illustrates how infrared imaging of the Oslo version can show how the bench posts originally extended to the edge of the canvas. The right image is an overlay of the bench posts placement.

In the privately owned version, however, no changes were made here, and instead it appears that the shawl and bench were separately blocked in, with no indication of posts under the shawl (Fig. 8). This indicates that while changes were made to the Oslo version, an already established composition was followed in the privately owned version.



**Fig. 8:** Infrared imaging of privately owned version illustrating how the bench posts do not extend under the shawl

Additionally, X-Radiography of the two paintings also shows the varying amount of changes present between the two images. The x-ray of the privately owned version on the left has clean shapes and the image is clearly visible (Fig. 9). On the right, however, in the x-ray of the Oslo version, the features in the head of Madame Manet are not clearly visible (Fig. 10). One explanation for this is that Manet may have scraped down the face and reworked it, as he was known to rework his paintings extensively.<sup>14</sup> This scraping down may explain the white shape seen across and around the face and head in the x-ray. Since x-rays show elementally dense materials as white, if a face composed heavily of lead white was scraped down repeatedly, the dense paint could be pushed into the canvas around the form of head, causing this unusual appearance in the x-ray.



Fig. 9: X-Radiograph - privately owned version



Fig. 10: X-Radiograph - Oslo version

It is unlikely that a first version would be devoid of such composition changes, while a second version would have numerous alterations. Instead one would expect the reverse: that a first version would include changes made as the artist worked out the composition and refined the details, while a second version or copy would mimic the final desired appearance of the first. This further indicates that the privately owned version is a copy made, as it is unlikely the artist of this version was aware of any or all the changes made in the Oslo version. This leads us to another aspect of the planning of the compositions.

With regard to the objects within the composition, it appears that the artist of the privately owned version may have been somewhat unaware of what was being depicted in the Oslo version, as these objects' depictions in the privately owned version are not clearly identifiable unless referencing the Oslo version. This is particularly apparent in the vase, the hat, and the ring on the hand. In these areas, it appears that the artist of the private version struggled to recreate shapes which he could not identify.

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<sup>14</sup> Mary Anne Stevens and Lawrence W. Nichols, *Manet: Portraying Life*, (Toledo: Toledo Museum of Art, 2012), 21.



Fig. 11: Illustration of objects depicted between the two versions

As can be seen here in Figure 11, in the Oslo version these elements are much more easily interpreted. In the privately owned version the ring is not placed on the finger and the vase and hat are not clearly recognizable forms, and until recently, the hat was identified as Suzanne Manet's black cat, Zizi.<sup>15</sup> This illegibility of forms indicates the work of a later version, misunderstanding what is in the original version.

It is important to also consider the structure of the composition for additional clues that may help indicate who the artist may or may not be. After having visited Oslo, we can now speak more in depth about Manet's use of ground, washes, and his layering structure in *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* in Oslo, compared to that in the privately owned version. In addition to his use of exposed ground, Manet was also known for his use of washes.<sup>16</sup> While some painting passages were left as washes of colour, other passages were reinforced and reworked with more opaque paints.

Within the versions of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*, one such example illustrating the use of differing layer structures is seen in the top left side flower. The paint layers of this flower in the Oslo version were applied in the following order: directly above the ground is a green thin wash, a brown thin paint layer, the pink flower, and opaque green leaves surrounding the flower, reinforcing the foliage (Fig. 12). The thin dark washes create depth as the flower sits in front. This depth, however, is lost in the privately owned version, where the layer order of the paint passages differ greatly. In this version, the layers are simplified. There are no thin

<sup>15</sup> There is a portrait of Madame Manet wearing the hat that is seen on the bench, which has the same characteristics of the object to the right of Mme Manet in *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*. *Madame Édouard Manet*, c.1873. Mary Anne Stevens, meeting at The Courtauld Institute of Art, March 18, 2016. Stevens, 2012, 177.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Coffin Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 164.

paint layers or washes beneath the flower, and thus the depth is not as apparent. Instead, it appears that the flower was painted directly on the ground, and then the leaves and foliage around it (Fig. 13). While the Oslo version's pinks and greens alternate in order, the privately owned version is more straightforward in order, somewhat flattening the image.



Fig. 12: Oslo version upper left flower



Fig. 13: Privately owned version upper left flower

Additionally, the use of ground as a compositional element differs greatly between the two paintings. Manet often chose to leave exposed ground in his paintings, creating a sense of immediacy.<sup>17</sup> In the Oslo painting, exposed ground is present throughout, but is particularly noticeable in the spaces between the bench posts (Fig. 14). In contrast, in the privately owned version, a beige or faintly yellow paint has been applied to the same area to simulate exposed ground (Fig. 15). This indicates that the artist of the privately owned version may have understood the importance of the exposed ground, to stylistically resemble Manet, but was not able to successfully achieve this in this section of the painting.

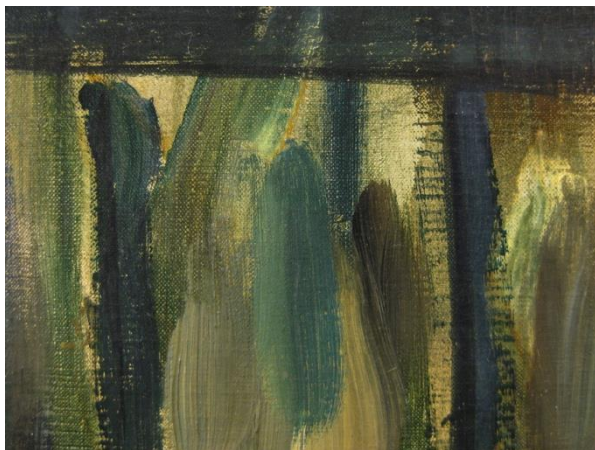


Fig. 14: Oslo version bench  
exposed ground present



Fig. 15: Privately owned version bench  
no exposed ground present

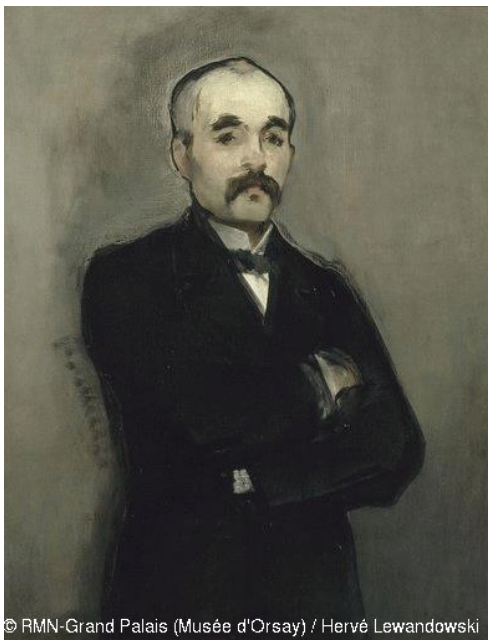
<sup>17</sup> Examples of exposed ground can be seen in paintings such as *A View of the 1867 Exposition Universelle*, of 1867, and *Mme Manet with Her Cat*, of 1880-82, among many others. Anthea Callen, *The Work of Art: Plein-air Painting and Artistic Identity in Nineteenth-century France*. London: Reaktion Books, 2015, 73.

These slight changes in the painting techniques again shows us that the artist of the privately owned version has copied what is seen immediately, as opposed to recreating the painting in a method that was often used by Manet, layering paint to create dimension and depth, and leaving exposed ground as an element of the painting.

## CHANGES FOUND IN OTHER MANET PAINTINGS

Manet was not known to make copies of his works, and there are only a handful that exist, but they prove to be useful tools to question when and why he did choose to make a copy and also to determine if the privately owned version of Madame Manet is one of them.

The first example is Manet's portrait of Georges Clemenceau- the version at the Musée d'Orsay completed in 1879-80 (Fig.16) and the second version in the Kimbell Art Museum made in the same year (Fig.17).



© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski  
Fig.16: Édouard Manet, *Clemenceau*, 1879-80, Oil on canvas, 94.5cm x 74cm, Musée D'Orsay.

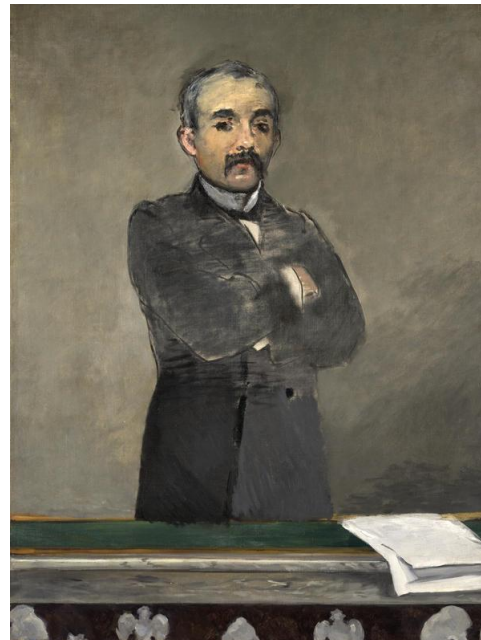


Fig. 17: Édouard Manet, *Portrait of Georges Clemenceau*, 1879-80, Oil on canvas, 115.9cm x 88.2cm, Kimbell Art Museum.

Both works are unfinished by Manet, as Clemenceau was not able to sit long enough for Manet's tedious habit of scraping down faces and beginning again- in fact, in 1884, Bazire wrote that Manet's *Bon Bock* required eighty sittings, and in 1925 Jacques Emile Blance wrote, "Manet rubbed out and repainted incessantly."<sup>18</sup> Because of this, it was likely that Manet worked from a carte-de-visite for both of these, which explains the pose, but evidently these works are quite different. The

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<sup>18</sup> Hanson, 160.



tone and colour of each of these suggests that it was not just one part that needed to be changed but the whole colour scheme.

Next, we will examine the three finished versions of *The execution of Emperor Maximilian*. The first image, at the MFA Boston, is an unfinished oil painting, completed in 1867 (Fig. 18). The second is at National Gallery, another large (6') painting in pieces, which was completed in 1867-8 (Fig. 19), followed the year after by a small work in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (Fig. 20). The largest version of the painting was completed in 1868-9 and is held in the Kunsthalle Mannheim (Fig. 21)



Fig. 18: Édouard Manet, *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian*, 1867, Oil on canvas, 195.9cm x 259.7cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston.



Fig. 19: Édouard Manet, *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian*, 1867-8, Oil on canvas, 193cm x 284cm, National Gallery, London.

As you can see, each of these paintings has something significantly different about it- the first, totally unlike the others, the second with a bright blue sky in the background and grass below, the third in a much darker unarticulated background, and finally the last, which features the grey wall and nature beyond it. These features were not like scraping down a face- Manet would have had to scrape down the entire backdrop- which likely explains why he made several versions.

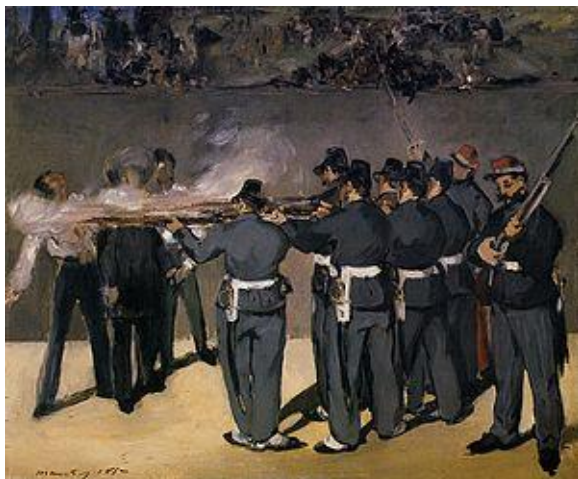


Fig. 20: Édouard Manet. *The Execution of Maximilian*. 1868-69. Oil on canvas, 48cm x 58cm, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.



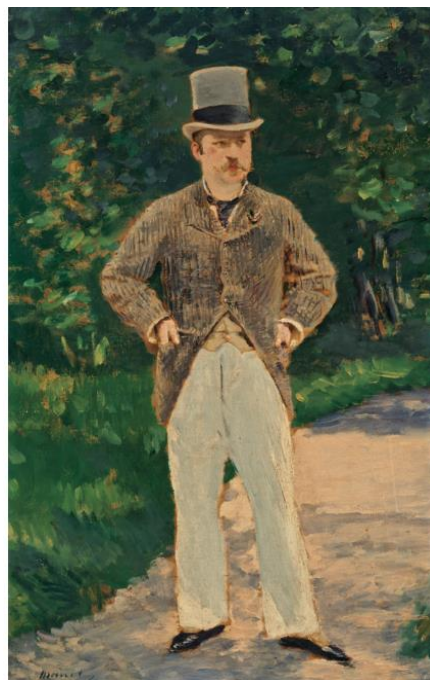
Fig. 21: Édouard Manet. *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*. 1868-69. Oil on canvas, 252cm x 302cm, Kunsthalle Mannheim.

The next set of copies by Manet we'd like to discuss are portraits of Monsieur Brun, from the Museum of Western Art in Tokyo c. 1879 (Fig. 22) and the copy from a Private collection completed in 1880 (Fig. 23)

The second version was kept in the Brun family as being more desirable of the two— which makes a lot of sense— the second is warmer and more congenial, whereas the first conveys a sense of cold modernity with many more blues and blacks.<sup>19</sup> In this case, too, the changes to be made were far more substantial than just the face to be worked with, which explains the second version.



**Fig. 22: Édouard Manet, Portrait of Monsieur Brun, 1879, Oil on canvas, 192cm x 104.2cm, Museum of Western Art, Tokyo.**



**Fig. 23: Édouard Manet, Portrait of Monsieur Brun, 1880, Oil on canvas, 55cm x 35.5cm, Private Collection.**

Evidently in these copies made by Manet, there were significant changes between the versions: tonal ranges, colour palates, entire backgrounds. Scraping down faces to make changes is one thing, but it would have been impractical for him to scrape down entire swathes of canvas to make changes— he just started fresh instead. As we discussed earlier, the story Duret told established that Madame Manet didn't like her face, and indeed that is the only noticeably different aspect of the privately owned painting, but if that is so, why wouldn't Manet have just scraped it down and repainted the face, which he was known to do for so many other paintings?

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<sup>19</sup> 'Portrait of Mr. Brun,' *Sotheby's*, accessed March 28, 2016, [sothebys.com/it/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.31.html/2011/impressionist-modern-art-evening-sale-n08741](https://sothebys.com/it/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.31.html/2011/impressionist-modern-art-evening-sale-n08741).

## IV. MATERIALS

### PIGMENTS AND THEIR USES

In technical study, Manet has become known for his use of a complex mixture of pigments in seemingly simple colour passages.. When considering this, in comparison, the colour passages seen in the privately owned version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* appear more simplified than those seen in the Oslo version. One example of this is the mixture of pigments in the dark greys of Madame Manet.

By investigating the two paintings through microscopy, pigments are easily identified, and comparisons of technique can be made. In the Oslo version, we can see that although it is grey overall, in fact the paint is a complex mixture of reds, blues, blacks, and white (Fig. 24). This technique has been noted previously in analysis of other paintings by Manet, with pigments found in the greys ranging from cobalt blue to warm ochres.<sup>20</sup>

We can compare this to the pigments found in the greys in the privately owned version, where bone black is the overwhelmingly visible pigment (Fig. 25). There are a few stray particles that appear to be yellow or red, but these do not seem to be intentional, and instead could be the result of a contaminated brush. It is necessary to point out that in these examples, the Oslo version is varnished, while in the privately owned version the varnish has been removed. The varnish on the Oslo version has slightly yellowed, and even through this, we can clearly see the variation of pigments used by Manet.

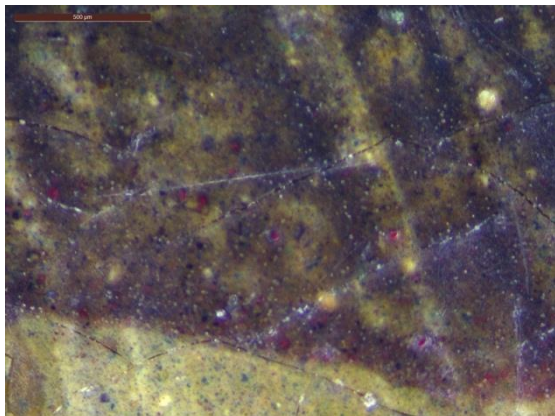


Fig. 24: Pigments in the grey dress of the Oslo version

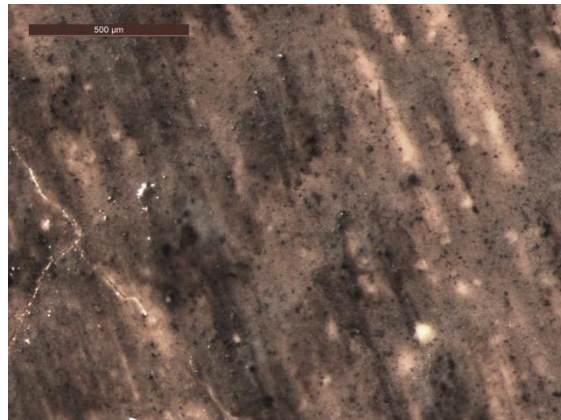


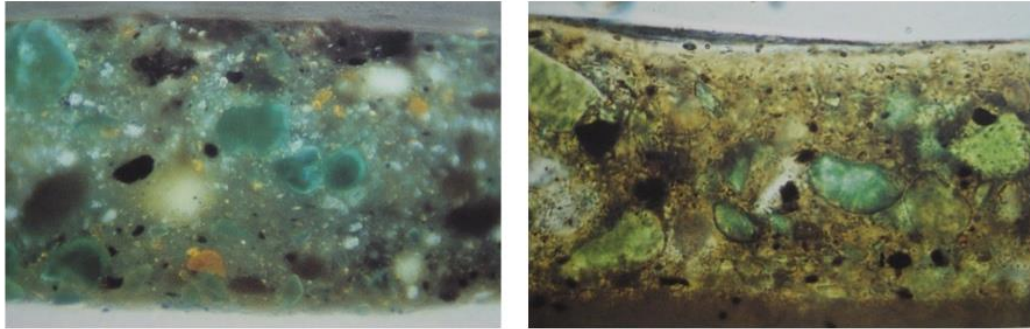
Fig. 25: Pigments in the grey dress of the privately owned version

Similarly, the greens used in the Oslo version of this image are also more complexly mixed than seen in the privately owned version. Microscopy again shows an example of a green mixture found to the right of Madame Manet's head in the Oslo version (Fig. 27). Along with emerald green and viridian, there is a combination of yellows and brown earth pigments to further complicate the pigment mixture.

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<sup>20</sup> Bomford et al. 1990, 117.

Similarly technical investigation of *Music in the Tuileries Garden*, performed at The National Gallery, London, shows us similar mixtures to those found in the Oslo version (Fig. 26).<sup>21</sup> Again, this differs significantly to the green mixtures in the privately owned version.

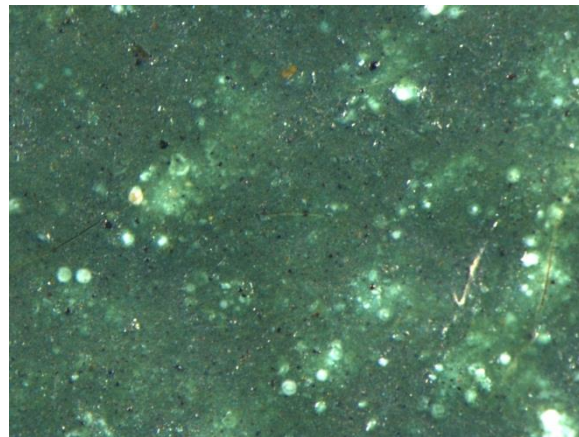


**Fig. 26: Cross sections of green foliage from *Music in the Tuileries*, 1862, Analysis performed by the National Gallery, London (Bomford, 1990, 119)**

With regard to the privately owned version, the examples seen in microscopy portray the uniformity in the green passages (Fig. 28). In this, there is no emerald green present in any of the green passages, and as you can see, yellow and brown pigments were not combined with greens. Instead, overwhelmingly viridian was used, with few other pigments, indicating a simplicity not seen in the Oslo version.



**Fig. 27: Pigments in the green foliage of the Oslo version**



**Fig. 28: Pigments in the green foliage of the privately owned version**

Although microscopy was necessary to see the differences in pigment combinations in the greens and greys, one clear difference can be seen without high magnification images: the inconsistency of colours used in the right side flowers. In the Oslo version, the flowers appear a blue grey (Fig. 29), while in the privately owned version there is no question that the flowers are pink. Our hypothesis was that the flowers in the Oslo version were at one time pink and faded after the completion of the privately owned version. Analysis in Oslo provided us with interesting evidence which indicates that this was, in fact, the case.

<sup>21</sup> Bomford et al, 1990, 119.



Fig. 29: Faded flowers in the Oslo version

Although these inconsistencies are visible to the naked eye, it is only with technical analysis through microscopy that the reason for these differing colours was determined. Evidence is present in the Oslo flowers that a red lake was applied on top of the lower white layer (Fig. 30). In many instances, only trace amounts of this red lake pigment were visible. However, there were a few locations where it is more clearly seen at higher magnifications. At the time in which the privately owned version was created, it is likely that the red lake pigment was still clearly visible to the naked eye.

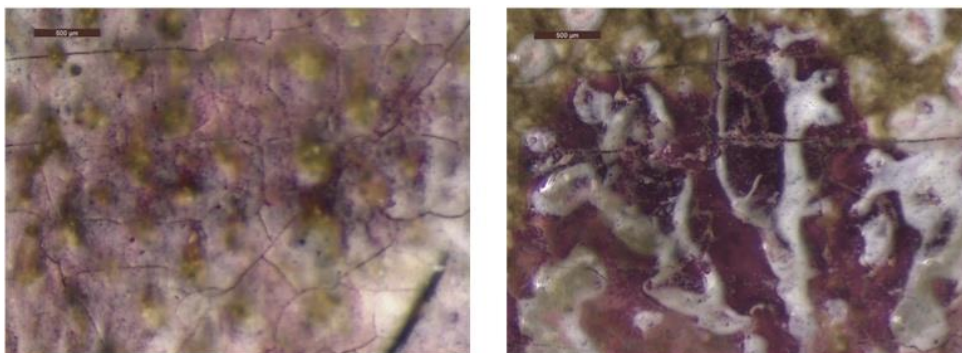


Fig. 30: High magnification of flowers in Oslo version, showing trace amounts of red lake

However, lake pigments are known to fade, sometimes within a few years. The cause of fading lake pigments is not completely understood, but is likely partially due to mixtures of paints or additives present. What is understood about lakes is that they are highly light sensitive, and reflection of light from white paint, whether mixed with the lake or reflections of light from a lower white layer may cause accelerated fading.<sup>22</sup> With a primarily white layer beneath these lake pigments in the Oslo version, this may explain the faded colour. Additionally, it is known through contemporary writing that Manet was aware of fading colours, and that he may have

<sup>22</sup> David Saunders and Jo Kirby, "Light-induced Colour Changes in Red and Yellow Lake Pigments," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 15 (1994): 89-90.

used brighter passages of paint in order to compensate for a more than likely fading.<sup>23</sup>

When comparing these flowers with those in the privately owned version, red lake is not present, but instead vermillion was used. So as the lake pigments in Oslo faded, the vermillion in the privately owned version retained its vibrancy. It is interesting to consider what the Oslo version may have once looked like before the red lake faded. Through the use of Photoshop, an overlay image was created, imitating the red colour of the privately owned version on top of the Oslo version (Figs. 31 and 32).



Fig. 31: Oslo version as seen today



Fig. 32: Oslo version with red flower overlay

But what do these comparisons tell us? Evidence such as this indicates that although the artist of the privately owned painting was quite familiar with the Oslo version, he was not completely familiar with the pigment combinations that Manet used in the Oslo version, or pigment combinations that Manet used frequently. In other words, colours were matched with accuracy, but without the knowledge of how Manet mixed the colours or created his paint layers.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH A MANET FOUND IN THE PUSHKIN

Next, we'd like to focus on these attributions to Vibert by Tabarant. After Manet died, Madame Manet supposedly asked her nephew to create copies as sentimental works, knowing she would have to sell the originals. These alleged copies were then sold after her death in the early 1900s and handled by her son, Leon Koëlla-Leenhoff.

In Figure 33, you can see a business sheet from Leon's wife's chicken feed business, which details several paintings, highlighted, that were sold. Each of these paintings (which are all identified by Tabarant as copies) listed were already sold in Édouard Manet's estate sale in 1884, so they are either copies by Manet, or perhaps, copies made by Vibert for Madame Manet.

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<sup>23</sup> Andrea Kirsh and Rustin S. Levenson, *Seeing through Paintings: Physical Examination in Art Historical Studies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 169.

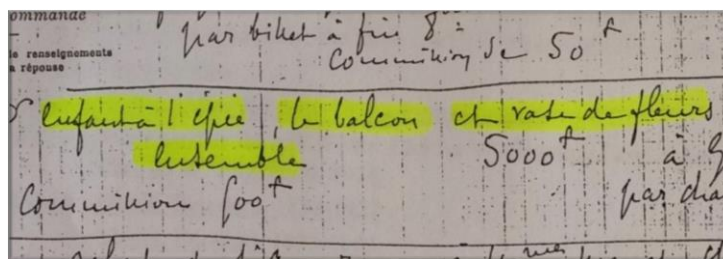
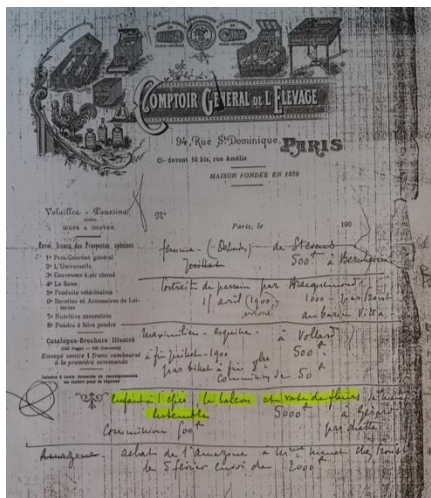


Fig. 33: Sale notes on a business sheet from Mrs. Koëlla-Leenhoff's chicken feed supply (left), and a detail of the paintings sold (above): 'enfant à l'épée, le balcon et vase des fleurs ensemble.' c.1905-1910.

The works sold, in addition to the other works identified by Tabarant, would have certainly had sentimental value to Madame Manet. *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* is a portrait of her by her husband; *A Boy with a Sword* and *The Balcony* depict Mme Manet and Édouard Manet's son Leon and her sister Berthe Morisot; *Fishing* which was essentially a wedding portrait of the Manets,<sup>24</sup> and *A Vase of Flowers*, which was likely one of Manet's last works (he did a number of flower still lifes right before his death), and also represented a subject he painted often.<sup>25</sup>

The narrative of the Vibert copies makes sense- if there had been any other alleged copies, it would be more difficult to believe, but considering the probable sentimental value of the ones listed, Tabarant's story seems to be more believable.

Next, we would like to compare the only other pair of paintings identified as Manet/Vibert copies currently known. *Fishing* by Édouard Manet (c.1962-3) (Fig. 34), is held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The second version of *Fishing* is at the Pushkin Museum of Art in Moscow. Unfortunately, we couldn't obtain image rights for this online report, however it was a part of our second presentation at the Courtauld Institute of Art on May 9, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> 'Fishing,' *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, accessed March 30, 2016, [metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436951](http://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436951).

<sup>25</sup> Still Life paintings actually made up about one-fifth of Manet's oeuvre. 'Still lifes by Manet,' *Musée d'Orsay*, accessed May 6, 2016, [musee-orsay.fr/en/events/exhibitions/in-the-musee-dorsay/exhibitions-in-the-musee-dorsay-more/article/manet-les-natures-mortes-4169.html?print=1&](http://musee-orsay.fr/en/events/exhibitions/in-the-musee-dorsay/exhibitions-in-the-musee-dorsay-more/article/manet-les-natures-mortes-4169.html?print=1&)



Fig. 34: Édouard Manet, *Fishing*, c.1862-3, Oil on canvas, 76.8cm x 123.2cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Looking closely at this image of *Fishing*, there are several areas which we would like to identify. The trees, water, sky, flora, and the figures are of particular interest because of the differences seen in the Pushkin version of the painting, which we will endeavour to explain as clearly as possible without the image. Looking at these two images, there is a clear difference in either skill or effort (or both) in the Pushkin version as compared to the Met version, and we hope to parallel the differences between these two paintings with the differences between the Oslo version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* and the privately owned version, which would mean that the two alleged copies were done by the same artist, possibly Vibert.

The trees and flora in the Met version of *Fishing* are carefully articulated, highlighted and shaded with small, purposeful strokes of the brush. This is similar to the greenery in the Oslo version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*. In the privately owned version, as in the Pushkin version of *Fishing*, the plants and leaves are not easily distinguishable or readable as leaves without the context of the surrounding environment. In the Pushkin's *Fishing*, the trees are extremely loosely done and look as if the artist made minimal effort to articulate them, as if they were just trying to get the colour down in swathes. Furthermore, the grass in the lower left corner in the Pushkin version is a group of limp, thick, straight brushstrokes instead of the fine and lifelike grass in the Met version.

The water and the sky in these two versions of *Fishing* also show a clear chasm in representative skill. The clouds in the sky of the Met version are light and fluffy, particularly in the centre where patches of blue sky peek through. In the Pushkin version, the brush strokes are clearly visible and the application was much thicker



and more heavily applied. The horizon line is also not clearly defined against the areas of blue.

The heavy and undefined application of paint can also be clearly seen in the top right corner of the privately owned version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*. There are thick dabs of green and burgundy haphazardly placed among the pink flowers, which is significantly different from the technique applied in the Oslo version, which has a considerable amount of canvas showing through, also uses the thin dabs of green to create readable groups of leaves around and behind the flowers.

Next, the figures are of particular interest: the dog in the centre right of the Pushkin *Fishing* has a thin line of golden yellow surrounding it. By looking closely at the image it is clear that this occurs because the figure of the dog was painted first and the background was filled in. This effect could have occurred because the artist made an underdrawing (or tracing) of the figures (which, as we will discuss, is not a typical practice of Édouard Manet).

Finally, the overall layout of the painting exhibits the same qualities in both the versions of *Fishing* and the versions of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*. In the case that whoever made the Pushkin version of *Fishing* and the privately owned version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* (if they are the same individual) did copy the other versions, they clearly had access to these paintings when they created the copies, because the positioning of the figures and objects are almost identical. In Figure 35, you can see the Oslo version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* with a drawn overlay of the lines in the privately owned version. With the exception of small movements to the left or right (which could be attributed to tracing paper moving slightly in the process of drawing), the objects are in the exact same positions in both paintings. This kind of exactitude is extremely unlikely in a painting made without a tracing. In the versions of *Fishing*, the same features can be seen.



**Fig. 35: Oslo version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* with a drawn overlay of the privately owned version.**



Fig. 36: Met version of *Fishing* with a drawn overlay of the Pushkin version.

As you can see in Figure 36, the Pushkin version of *Fishing* has a similar, slightly-offset but nearly identical overlay of figures.

Based on these similarities of style and positioning, and as we will argue further in our discussion of techniques, the privately owned version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* and the alleged copy of *Fishing* at the Pushkin have many of the same attributes, and very likely could have been done by the same person, with the same access to the original but without the same training or understanding of the actual composition.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DRAWINGS

Regardless of who the artist is of the privately owned version, whether Manet, Vibert, or another of Manet's followers, because of how close the paintings relate, one would expect to find evidence of a tracing of some sort. Underdrawings detected in the two paintings may indicate that while adjustments were made to the Oslo version, an image was followed in the privately owned version.

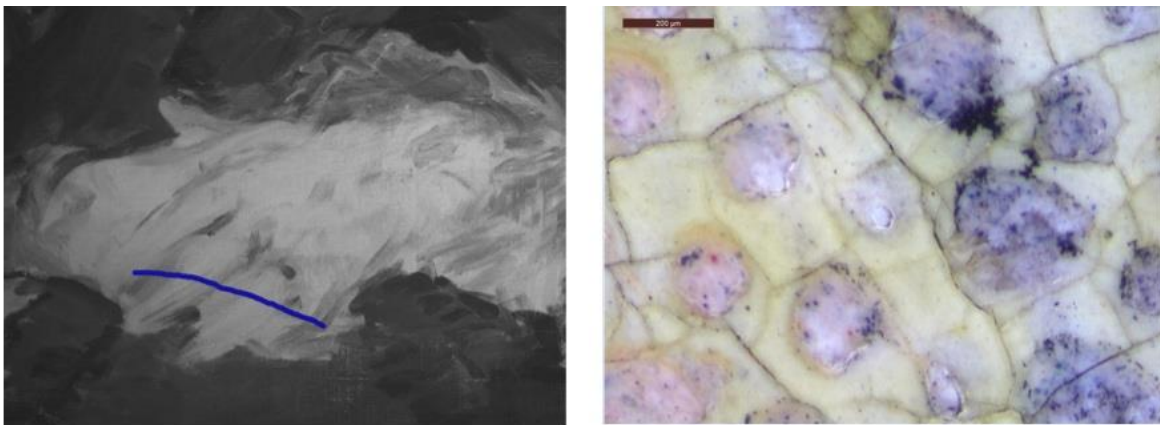
In several locations, a pink or peach underdrawing was identified in the privately owned version. It is particularly noticeable in the hands, but can be found in several areas where the ground layer is visible. Because of how faint these lines have been applied, it was not until the yellowed varnish was removed from the hands that the drawing was made visible. In other areas of the painting, there is no indication of this line, most likely because of the thickness of the paint.



**Fig. 37: Photomicrograph and overlay of underdrawing found in privately owned version**

In the privately owned version, the underdrawing was detected through microscopy. Once identified, a diagram was then created, illustrating all the visible areas where it was found in the hands (Fig. 37). It appears that the drawing was used as a template in this version, as the painted passages closely follow these lines, not only including the anatomical features of the hands, but also the shadow and highlight brushstrokes in the hands.

This differs from the carbon based drawing found in the Oslo version, detected through Infrared imaging, where the drawing cuts across the fingers of the sitter, more as a guide that one would expect to find in a sketch (Fig. 38). It is a rough idea of where the hand should lay, but adjustments were made from the drawing to the painting composition as the painting was completed.



**Fig. 38: Overlay of drawing found in Oslo version and photomicrograph of carbon in drawing**

A common practice for image transfers involved the use of gridlines. However, there is no indication of grid lines or any marks that could indicate a grid system in the privately owned version to explain how the image was so accurately transferred. If a carbon based material had been used to create a grid or underdrawing, it would be detected through the use of Infrared imaging, as the Oslo drawing was, and neither has been identified in the privately owned version. If a non-carbon based material had been used, one would still expect to find some trace visual evidence of a gridline, and again, no evidence of this is present.

Instead, however, another traditional method of transferring images may have been used in the privately owned version, which involved transferring a pigment powder on the reverse of a tracing. With the powdered side against the canvas, the lines may have been re-traced, transferring the pigment to the canvas. Although it is possible that this was the method used to transfer the image in the privately owned version, it was not determined definitively if this method was used or if the drawing of the privately owned version was created by hand.

The presence of these drawings and their drastic differences provide evidence that create a timeline between the two versions of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory*. The template like drawing in the privately owned version indicates that the Oslo version was the first in the sequence of paintings.

## V. CONCLUSION

This project aimed to contextualize the privately owned *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* of 1875 to 1895, both within the oeuvre of Manet and more specifically in relation to the signature version of *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* of 1879, located in *Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design*, Oslo, Norway. Through historical research into the primary accounts of the Manet family, visual comparisons of this privately owned painting in relation to other Manet paintings and their respective versions, and technical analysis of the two versions of this composition, much information has been gained on the painting practice of Manet and that of the copyist.

The main hypothesis of this project was that the nephew of Suzanne Manet, Édouard Vibert, created the privately owned version, inasmuch as it is known through family documents that he did create several paintings for Suzanne Manet after she sold the signature versions. Although it is not possible at this point to positively identify the style and techniques of Vibert, as no other existing works by him have thus far been definitely identified, the research presented here indicates that he is the most likely artist of this painting.<sup>26</sup> It has been proven that the person who created this privately owned version was at minimum an acquaintance with the Manet family, as the precision of composition would require personal interaction with the signature version. Additionally, the provenance of both paintings further verifies the likelihood of this artist being an acquaintance, due to the paintings' close dates. However, technical analysis has shown that the artist of the privately owned version was not fully familiar with the complex painting techniques of Manet.

Although it is now understood that the privately owned version of this painting is not the original version by Manet, this project will hopefully provide information for future technical investigations into the works of Édouard Vibert, should other paintings come to light as possibly being by his hand.

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<sup>26</sup> The version of *Fishing* at the Pushkin very likely could be another of these alleged Vibert copies, however this has not been verified or tested to compare it to the privately-owned *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* or works by Manet.

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