

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Woman Sewing by Lamplight

Jean-François Millet (French, 1814–1875)

Date 1870–72

Medium Oil on canvas

Dimensions 39 5/8 x 32 1/4 in. (100.6 x 81.9 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1906.1.89

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 22, Breakfast Room

Commentary It has been suggested that Millet's many scenes of peasant women and their families working by lamplight were inspired by his fondness for Latin bucolic poetry, especially certain lines from Virgil's *Georgics*. Similar treatments by Rembrandt and other Dutch painters may also have influenced his choice of themes, but ultimately this picture relates most closely to what the artist was witnessing in his own home, as he wrote to a friend the year the canvas was completed: "I write this, today, November 6th at 9 o'clock in the evening. Everyone is at work around me, sewing, and darning stockings. The table is covered with bits of cloth and balls of yarn. I watch from time to time the effects produced on all this by the light of the lamp. Those who work around me at the table are my wife and grown-up daughters." In addition to this important painting by Millet, Mr. Frick owned ten drawings and pastels by the artist. Source: *Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

Collection History Durand-Ruel. Sold to Laurent-Richard in 1872. His sale, April 7, 1873, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Lot 39, sold for 38,500 francs to Durand-Ruel. Tabourier, Paris (by 1881). Fop Smit, Rotterdam. Cottier and Co. Frick, 1906. Source: *Paintings in The Frick Collection: French, Italian and Spanish. Volume II*. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.