

## Preface and Acknowledgments

The Barnes Foundation is the world's greatest repository of paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, with 181 works amassed by Albert C. Barnes between 1912 and 1942. Every phase of Renoir's long career is represented, but the great majority of works in the collection are late ones, painted between 1900 and 1919 — arcadian landscapes and impossibly fleshy bathers that seem at once so traditional and so modern, so familiar and so strange. Renoir's presence, felt immediately in the Gallery with twenty-four canvases hanging in the first room alone, reverberates as one moves through the collection.

Scholarship on Barnes's astonishing Renoir holdings is sparse. The 1971 catalogue raisonné of Renoir's figure paintings up to 1890 by François Daulte, for example, includes just twenty-seven of the Barnes's 181 works. Major pictures such as *The Henriot Family* (cat. 6) — celebrated in Barnes's time as one of the artist's great early pictures — vanished from the Renoir literature after entering the collection in 1935. Several canvases received scholarly attention in the mid-1990s, when the Foundation published *Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation: Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Early Modern*, with illuminating entries by Christopher Riopelle on seventeen of the Renoirs. But most of the Renoirs have gone largely unstudied since the 1935 publication of Barnes's own book on them, due in large part to his policy against lending works and to the fact that the Foundation's doors were for so long closed, both physically and metaphorically, to scholarship.

As the first catalogue to explore the Renoir collection in its entirety, *Renoir in the Barnes Foundation* fills a major gap in the literature on the artist. Its origins extend back to 2004, when the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation began generously funding research into the Barnes's Renoir holdings as part of a larger endeavor called the Collections Assessment Project. Under this project, initiated by former Barnes Executive Director Kimberly Camp and entirely supported by Mellon, the art collection was inventoried for the first time, conservators assessed the condition of the holdings, and a team of archivists catalogued the Barnes's rich archives. A Curatorial Advisory Committee chaired by Joseph J. Rishel assessed the state of art-historical scholarship on the Barnes collection and found that the existing body of knowledge on the Renoirs was particularly lacking. John House was brought on as the Senior Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, and I was appointed as the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Renoir Studies.

Our mission was to catalogue and document the entire Renoir collection — a daunting task. Internal curatorial records were scant, consisting of index cards, written perhaps in the 1930s, that occasionally indicated dates of purchase but not much else. In most cases, the past lives of the Barnes paintings — their ownership histories, their exhibition histories, their titles before they came into the collection — were undocumented. Thankfully, many answers surfaced as the Foundation's archivists catalogued, for the first time, Dr. Barnes's voluminous correspondence; others were uncovered in repositories at the Frick Art Reference Library, the Musée d'Orsay, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Durand-Ruel Archives. While the majority of the Renoirs were acquired from the expected major dealers, there were some surprises, too. We discovered that fourteen canvases came from the famous collection of Leo Stein — the whereabouts of Stein's Renoirs had long been a mystery — and forty-one others proved to have been among the works left in the artist's studio at his death. John House and I identified sitters and locations, corrected dates and titles, and found preparatory sketches and works relating to the Barnes pictures. We spent many fruitful hours with Head of Conservation Barbara Buckley, examining paintings and studying Renoir's technique. These findings are illuminated in technical notes written by Barbara and her team of conservators.

Over the course of our research into individual paintings, we became increasingly interested in broader questions about Barnes as a collector of Renoir. Why was he so obsessed