

**THE SUITOR - Etienne Prosper Berne-Bellecour (1838-1910)**



A young man in military outfit is helping a lady wind a skein, while the young woman's parents act as not-so-discreet chaperons.

Berne-Bellecour is better-known for his battle scenes, depicting the franco-prussian war of 1870. After the war he resumed a lighter style and produced genre scenes like this one, exhibited at the 1874 Salon.

The theme itself, the winding of a skein, is a transparent allusion to the suitor as a desirable catch and is recurrent in 19<sup>th</sup> century painting.



Manuel Arevalo y Garay



William Sydney

The German counterpart to Berne-Bellecour's painting could be this print, published in an illustrated magazine in 1873, with the soldier's pointed helmet resting on a shelf in the background.



“Die Gartenlaube”, 1873

The fan illustrated below is in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, and features on the museum's well-documented website. But as usual when fans are concerned the information supplied is erroneous: not many museum curators are fan specialists.

“waaiermaker: A.Lauronce  
plaats vervaardiging: Spanje ?  
op en montuur van ivoor”

Thus the origin of the fan should of course read “*France*” instead of “*Spain*”. As for Lauronce, he is presented as “*fan maker*”, though we know that he was a *printer* supplying fan leaves to various fan makers. And ‘*bone sticks*’ would definitely be more accurate than ‘*ivory sticks*’.



Lauronce faithfully adapts Berne-Bellecour's painting, only leaving out the chair on the right and the urn in the background.

