



Achille Laugé

(1861-1944)

The Walk along the Riverbank
(La promenade au bord de la rivière)

1888

no signature

Oil on canvas

h 35.9 cm x b 46.0 cm

WRM Dep. FC 757





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Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Brief Report

The painting is rigorously and regularly laid-in with rectangular and mostly horizontal patches of colour applied in a mosaic-like fashion in a single layer on a pale ground which can be seen between each of them. Starting from an outline of the composition with a colour matching the area in question, Laugé carefully filled out the fields of colour. The pure, strong colours of the foreground were lightened for the regions of the sky and the water by adding

white. It is only for the first outlining, and the execution of details such as those of the trees, the plants on the bank and the people, that the direction and rhythm of the otherwise largely uniform brushwork varies. The airy mood of the painting is enhanced by the visibility of the pale ground, although the character of these unpainted areas has been changed by a restoration in the past (figs 3, 10, 12).



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Picture support canvas

Standard format	close to F8, however no longer to be determined with accuracy, as the format has been altered since and the canvas cropped on three sides in the process
Weave	tabby weave
Canvas characteristics	mixed fibres, with extant selvage on the top edge, warp almost white, cotton(?), weft irregularly spun, linen(?); 13 warp threads and 15 weft threads per cm
Stretching	not authentic, as the original canvas has been cropped and a striplining was executed
Stretcher/strainer	strainer, not authentic, format altered
Stretcher/strainer depth	1.7 cm
Traces left by manufacture/processing	grooves on the right-hand bar at the top and left-hand bar at the bottom preparatory to the manual execution of the mortise-and-tenon joints
Manufacturer's/dealer's marks	–



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Ground

Sizing	undetermined
Colour	off-white
Application	thin, single-layer application with a brush; on the uncut selvage the ground reaches to within 5 mm of the outer edge; this scanty margin makes it unlikely either that the ground was applied in the classical manner by hand by the artist after stretching, or that the canvas was commercially pre-primed; it is possible that the artist simply stretched the canvas on a board in order to prime it; some areas with a very thick application with traces of scratching, which may be due to a palette knife, strengthen the assumption that the ground was applied manually
Binding medium	not determined
Texture	single layer, thin; the structure of the canvas remains visible

Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique	not determined
Extent/character	in many areas outlines were laid-in in paint (line of the bank, horizon, house)(figs 1, 7); these lines, composed of short dashes, deviate from the otherwise predominant horizontal orientation of the paint application; in some cases these lines remain easily visible in the composition, while in others they were covered in the further course of the painting process; for this reason they can be assigned unambiguously to the early lay-in of the picture and take on the function of an underdrawing
Pentimenti	–



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Paint layer

Paint application/technique
and artist's own revision

systematic composition through deliberate juxtaposition of the individual brushstrokes and dots (fig. 5); Laugé may have worked with a number of brushes for the different colours, which he used in different parts of the painting; in some areas (trees, figures)(fig. 8) he revised his composition, by completely covering and changing the older, already dry areas of paint

Painting tools

small brushes, for the colour fields probably flat-ferrule brushes 5 mm in breadth, in some places very fine brushes for the details of the figures (fig. 9)

Surface structure

the different thickness of application results from the consistency of the paint and reinforces the mosaic effect (figs 4, 5)

Palette

visual microscopic inspection reveals: yellow, orange, red, green, blue, violet, black
Vis spectrometry: cadmium yellow(?), red lead, iron-oxide red, chrome red(?), ultramarine blue, Prussian blue(?)

Binding mediums

probably oil

Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition

not authentic, heavily browned remains of an earlier coat can be discerned under the microscope (fig. 11)



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Signature/Mark

When? no signature present

Autograph signature –

Serial –

Frame

Authenticity not authentic

State of preservation

Picture-support cropped on three sides; striplining later extended on all sides; heavily abraded ground (result of an earlier cleaning measure or varnish removal?), the elevations of the threads of the canvas are in many cases exposed (figs 10, 12); in some places the paint layer is slightly compressed, a few areas of re-touching especially in those areas where the ground is visible (fig. 3), varnish has been renewed.

Additional remarks

There is on canvas verso a very early paper sticker with the handwritten inscription: “No 14 Achille Laugé/ Madame Marie Petet/ Rue Pont Neuf/ Limoux Aude” (fig. 6); it was presumably transferred to this location.

Literature

- Budde/Schaefer 2001: Rainer Budde, Barbara Schaefer, *Miracle de la couleur* (exhib. cat. Cologne, Köln Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, 8 September - 9 December 2001), Cologne 2001, cat. no. 70, p. 174, with ill.



Source of illustrations

All illustrations and figures Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud

Examination methods used

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Incident light | ✓ VIS spectrometry |
| ✓ Raking light | – Wood identification |
| – Reflected light | – FTIR (Fourier transform spectroscopy) |
| ✓ Transmitted light | – EDX (Energy Dispersive X-ray analysis) |
| ✓ Ultraviolet fluorescence | – Microchemical analysis |
| ✓ Infrared reflectography | |
| ✓ False-colour infrared reflectography | |
| – X-ray | |
| ✓ Stereomicroscopy | |

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Fig. 1
Recto



Fig. 2
Verso





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Fig. 3
UV fluorescence



Fig. 4
Raking light





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Fig. 5
Detail in raking light



Fig. 6
Detail, sticker



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Fig. 7
Detail with line of
horizon



Fig. 8
Detail for the
composition of the
tree Laugé uses small,
dynamic dabs of the
brush





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Fig. 9
Execution of the face
of a person in the
foreground; very small
dabs of the brush
applied wet-in-wet,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)



Fig. 10
Yellow dabs of the
brush, with abrasion,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)



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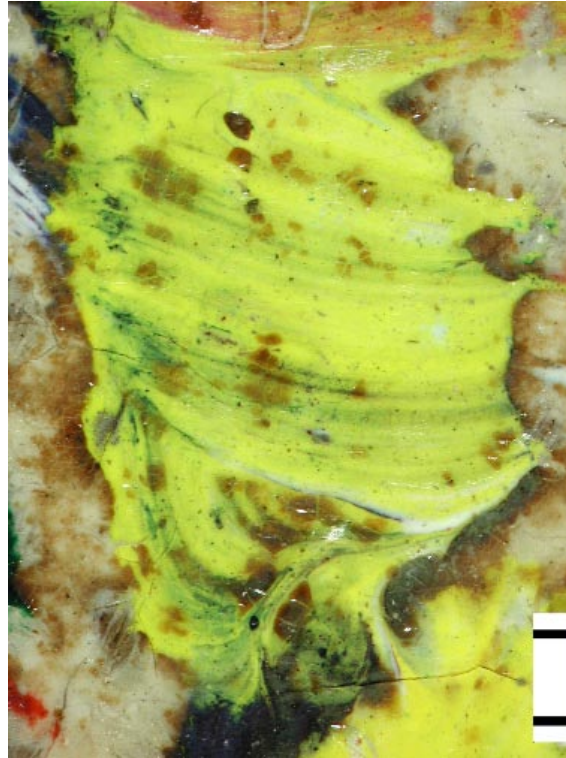


Fig. 11
Browned remains of
varnish, microscopic
photograph (M = 1 mm)



Fig. 12
Heavily abraded ground,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)