



Georges Lemmen

(1865-1916)

The Coast at Heyst – Ebbing Tide

(La Côte à Heyst
– marée descendante)

1891

*monogram top left: "GL"
dated and inscribed verso: "Heyst
mercredi 19 août 1891 – 1/3 heures
– marée descendante"*

Oil on poplar panel

h 12.2 cm x b 21.5 cm

WRM Dep. FC 716





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Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Brief Report

Like the little panel titled *The Coast at Heyst* (WRM Dep. FC 715) this work is one of a series of studies with which the artist captured the light moods on the Belgian coast. The precise time and tidal situation are noted verso (“mercredi 19 août 1891 – / 3 heures – / marée descendante” i.e. Wednesday 19 August 1891 – 3 [pm] – ebb tide) (figs. 2, 6). The painting was executed on an unprimed study panel made of poplar, known as a *panneau d’étude*.

In brisk horizontal strokes Lemmen laid in the main colour areas, before covering them with numerous individual dots of paint in the Pointillist manner. In many places the pale colour of the poplar is integrated into the composition, this being particularly evident along the sides, which however were painted over at a later date by someone else (fig. 4).



Picture support panel

Standard format	M1 (12.0 x 22.0 cm), horizontal
Thickness	app. 3 mm
Type of wood	poplar (<i>Populus sp.</i>)
Panel structure	one board
Grain direction:	horizontal
Cut of panel	cannot be determined
Traces left by production/treatment	saw-marks recto and verso (fig. 8); the panel is slightly chamfered verso along the short sides; chamfer has a breadth of app. 2 cm, and reduces the thickness of the board to 2-3 mm
Producer's/dealer's marks	rear of panel inaccessible to complete inspection owing to presence of a large label

Ground

Sizing	none apparent
Colour	–
Application	–
Binding medium	–
Character and appearance	–



Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique: none detected

Extent/character –

Pentimenti –

Paint layer

Paint application/technique
and artist's own revision

presumably the artist first established the course of the horizon with a vigorous dark-blue brushstroke (fig. 9); then he worked with larger areas of paint for sky, clouds and sea, on which he placed colour accents and details in the form of small brushstrokes; linear compositions like the horizontals in the foreground were dabbed at the same time (fig.11); the paint application grows looser towards the sides and gives a particularly clear role to the intrinsic colour of the picture support in these areas; apart from yellow and orange, the colours are only blended with white

Painting tools various brushes

Surface structure highly varied structure; in the region of the surf line, very impasto; the long horizontal brushstrokes by contrast are relatively smooth (fig. 3)

Palette microscopic visual inspection reveals: white, yellow, orange, red, blue; Lemmen also used a green with a transparent effect (fig. 12)
Vis-spectrometry:chrome yellow(?),cadmium yellow(?),rose madder(?), cobalt blue, viridian

Binding mediums presumably oil



Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition	the present varnish is not authentic, beneath it there are the browned remains of an older coating; it is not possible to determine whether the latter is original
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Signature/Mark

When?	cannot be determined
Autograph signature	a “GL” monogram framed in a rectangle; in reddish-brown paint with a very thin brush (fig. 5)
Serial	–

Frame

Authenticity	not original
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State of preservation

The painting has been subjected to major reworking by someone other than the artist, including removal of an older coat of varnish, and retouching of those areas where the wood support was visible (fig. 4); subsequently a new coat of varnish was applied.

Additional remarks

In addition to the autograph inscriptions regarding the depiction there is a paper sticker (h 10.0 cm x b 13.5 cm) verso printed with the inscription: “Georges Lemmen 96, Avenue Coghén Uccle-Bruxelles”, and beneath this handwritten in ink: “Heyst no 16 1891 huile bois; h: 13 x 22 cm”; and printed beneath this “No 290”; in the bottom right-hand corner of the sticker is a stamp with Lemmen’s monogram; this stamp is present a second time on the right at the bottom of the reverse of the panel (fig. 7); the sticker and stamp suggest an inventory; it is not clear when this was drawn up; the handwritten notes by the artist regarding the work situation are partly covered by the sticker, but can be read completely using IR reflectography (figs 2, 6).



Literature

- Budde/Schaefer 2001: Rainer Budde, Barbara Schaefer, *Miracle de la Couleur*, (exhib. cat. Cologne Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, 8 September - 9 December 2001), Cologne 2001, cat. no. 85, p. 207 with ill.
- Cardon 1990: Roger Cardon, *Georges Lemmen (1865-1916)*, Antwerp, 1990

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 | – Cross-section |
| – False-colour infrared reflectography | |
| – X-ray | |
| ✓ Stereomicroscopy | |

Author of examination:	Wibke Neugebauer
Author of brief report:	Hans Portsteffen

Date: 08/2003
Date: 12/2007

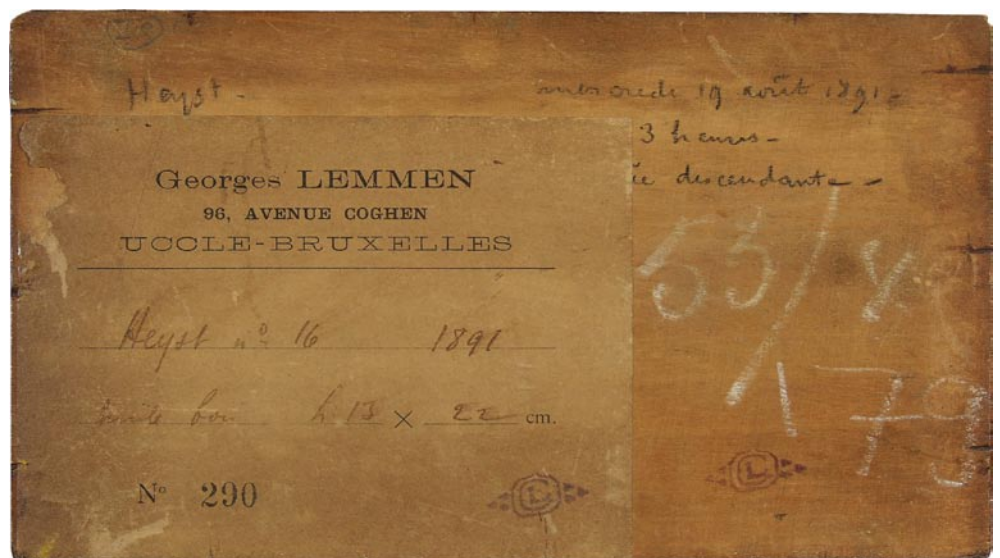


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Fig. 1
Recto



Fig. 2
Verso





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Fig. 3
Raking light



Fig. 4
UV fluorescence; the retouched areas at the sides stand out by dint of their different fluorescent behaviour





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Fig. 5
Monogram, microscopic
photograph (M = 1 mm)

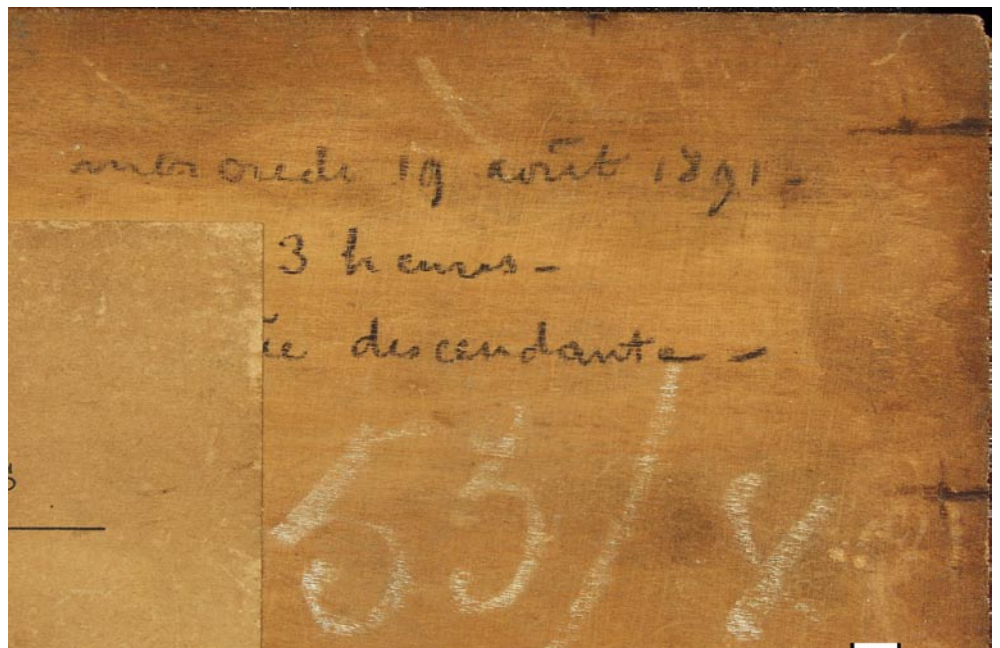


Fig. 6
Inscription verso:
"mercredi 19 août 1891
/ 3 heures - / [mar]ée
descendante -"



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Fig. 7
Estate administrator's (?)
stamp verso, microscopic
photograph (M = 1 mm)



Fig. 8
Saw-mark dating from
time of the panel's
production, microscopic
photograph (M = 1 mm)



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Fig. 9
Start of the horizon
line on the left, with
blue underpainting;
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)



Fig. 10
Paint layer in the region
of the sky, with wet-in-
wet dabs with the brush,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)





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Fig. 11
Impasto modelling
of the paint layer,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)



Fig. 12
Green pigmentation
with a transparent
appearance, microscopic
photograph (M = 1 mm)