



### Henri Martin

(1860-1943)

### Mother and Child

(Mère et enfant)

c. 1920

undated, signed bottom left:  
"Henri Martin"

Oil on canvas

h 45.5 cm x b 38.0 cm

WRM Dep. FC 849





## Brief Report

Martin's reproduction of an intimate mood through direct observation and the choice of a close-up beholder standpoint has led to this composition, with a heavily "cropped" depiction of a mother and child, which concentrates on the aspect of warmth and security. The brilliant colours convey the atmosphere of a garden scene. For this painting Martin took a canvas that had already been used once before, in a slightly different size and stretched on a different stretcher. The first compositional lay-in, with strong colours diverging from those we see here, is largely covered over, and can only be seen in the outlines of the child and along the edges of the picture (figs 9, 10). Martin adopted and integrated the chromatic structures of the earlier picture, the underlying colour fields interacting with the visible picture in spite of the concentration of the mother-and-child motif in the latter.

X-rays reveal nothing of the underlying motif (fig. 5). The compositional lay-in of the present picture follows a diagonal structure, which is pursued in the colour of the hat-band towards the bottom right, delimiting the figures of the mother and child. The greenish-yellow coloration of the background was fixed at an early stage, as the outline of the hat and the sleeve of the child's dress were painted over it. Martin worked with lively and heavily impasto brush-strokes in every possible direction (fig. 3). The signature, probably done with a pen, was only added after the finished painting had dried (figs 6, 7). On the canvas *verso* are a number of brush-strokes in different colours, but they do not constitute any decipherable picture, possibly showing only where the artist wiped his brush (fig. 2).



### Picture support canvas

Standard format	F8 (46.0 x 38.0 cm), vertical
Weave	tabby weave
Canvas characteristics	fine weave with a few irregularities in the yarn; vertical 21-23 threads, horizontal 18-19 threads per cm; slight Z twist (fig. 8)
Stretching	the stretching is irregular and seriously warped; it is not possible to determine whether the artist stretched the canvas himself, probably not; pronounced stretchmarks due to the first stretching remain
Stretcher/strainer	softwood; simple strainer, no particular attention given to choice of wood, some knots, no chamfering; the strainer, already used for another, larger, canvas, had some 2.0 cm removed top and bottom for the present picture (fig. 2), whether by the artist or by someone else cannot be determined
Stretcher/strainer depth	1.2 cm
Traces left by manufacture/processing	the present strainer was taken over from a larger painting and altered accordingly, but the present picture was not painted with the canvas on this strainer; the first stretching was done on a strainer without a horizontal centre bar, as in the place where it would have been the brush smears <i>verso</i> are not interrupted by the area covered by the centre bar
Manufacturer's/dealer's marks	not determined



## Ground

Sizing	a thin, semi-transparent coat can be discerned on the unpainted areas of the canvas; this coat fluoresces brightly in pale blue (cf. fig. 4); the possibility cannot be excluded, however, that filler substances are present in this coat, which would make it tantamount to a ground (fig. 8)
Colour	–
Application	–
Binding medium	–
Texture	–

## Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique	dark pencil or crayon(?)
Extent/character	at the right-hand edge a dark vertical line running parallel with the edge can be seen, possibly to delimit the picture; no underdrawing of any motif can be discerned either by IR reflectography or under the microscope
Pentimenti	–



## Paint layer

### Paint application/technique and artist's own revision

two painting phases can be distinguished:

1. first painting (overpainted and rejected, figs 5, 9, 10): undefinable image predominantly in strong colours such as red, dark green and brown; the paint applications are loose and the brushwork shows little orientation; across large areas, the paints were spread very thinly, although impasto in places; there are two small areas where the surface of this painting has been scraped or scratched (fig. 11); these scratches show that the paints had already dried, and that consequently some time elapsed between the first and second paintings; the X-ray photograph gives no clues as to the orientation, let alone the motif, of this first painting (fig. 5)

2. second painting (visible picture): this painting comes across as spontaneous and briskly executed; in the figures, brush-strokes of varying length, ranging from 2-8 cm, were applied, mostly vertical, some arc-shaped; in the woman's headgear they follow the shape of the hat, while in the child's face Martin applied numerous little dabs in various directions; in the upper part of the green background horizontal brush-strokes dominate, while elsewhere there is no consistency of orientation

Painting tools	bristle brushes of various widths
Surface structure	the first and second paintings differ in their surface structure; the impression is lively, resulting from the use of impasto applications on the one hand and spreading the paint thinly on the other; the vigorous brushwork can be clearly recognized in the X-ray (fig. 5)
Palette	visual microscopic inspection of the visible painting reveals: white, pale yellow, medium yellow, red lake, blue, two greens and earth colours VIS spectrometry in the visible painting: chrome yellow(?)/cadmium yellow(?), zinc yellow(?), unspecified red lake, ultramarine blue, viridian VIS spectrometry in the rejected painting: zinc yellow(?), cadmium red(?), viridian
Binding mediums	presumably oil



### Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition                      unvarnished

### Signature/Mark

When?    “Henri Martin” bottom left in a dark medium, clearly applied after the work was finished, in a colorant not used for the painting itself (figs 6, 7)

Autograph signature    implement cannot be determined, stroke of conspicuously even width, thin, almost transparent colorant, forming an edge; possibly applied in ink/India ink with a (funnel) pen or similar

Serial    –

### Frame

Authenticity    not original

### State of preservation

Stretching very loose; second painting becoming detached in small areas from the first, with losses; abrasions of the surface of the first painting (fig. 11); around the edge, some squashing of impasto areas as a result of framing before the painting was fully dry.



### Additional remarks

On the canvas verso are brush-strokes in different colours, which together do not constitute any discernible pattern; possibly they result from a brush being wiped dry; these are concentrated more in the lower half of the canvas; some are from top to bottom, others from bottom to top. The colours of the paints can possibly be matched with those of the visible painting. The brush-strokes continue beneath the horizontal cross-bar of the current strainer and thus prove that the canvas was not stretched on this strainer when these strokes were made (fig. 2).

### 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, no cat. no., p. 422, 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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Henri Martin – Mother and Child  
Brief Report on Technology and Condition

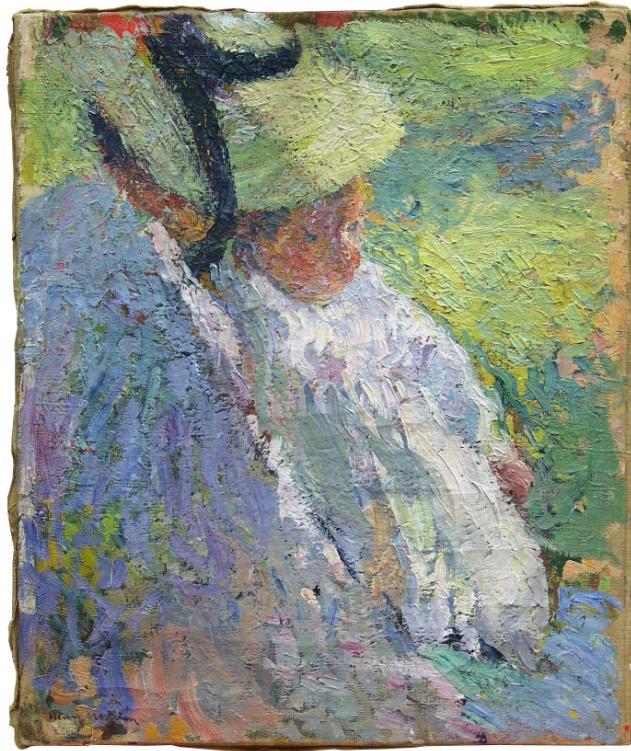


Fig. 1  
Recto



Fig. 2  
Verso



Fig. 3  
Raking light



Fig. 4  
UV fluorescence





Fig. 5  
X-ray

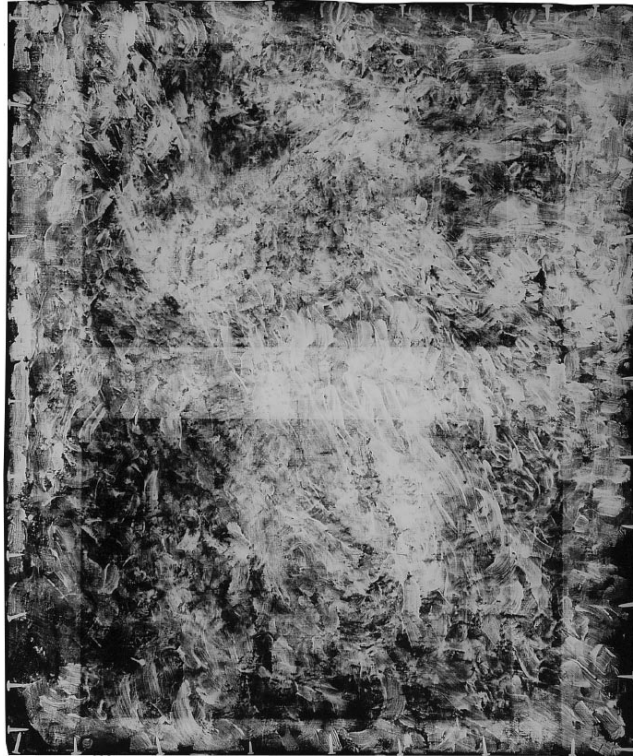


Fig. 6  
Detail, signature





Fig. 7  
Signature, letters “Ma”,  
microscopic photograph  
(M = 1 mm)

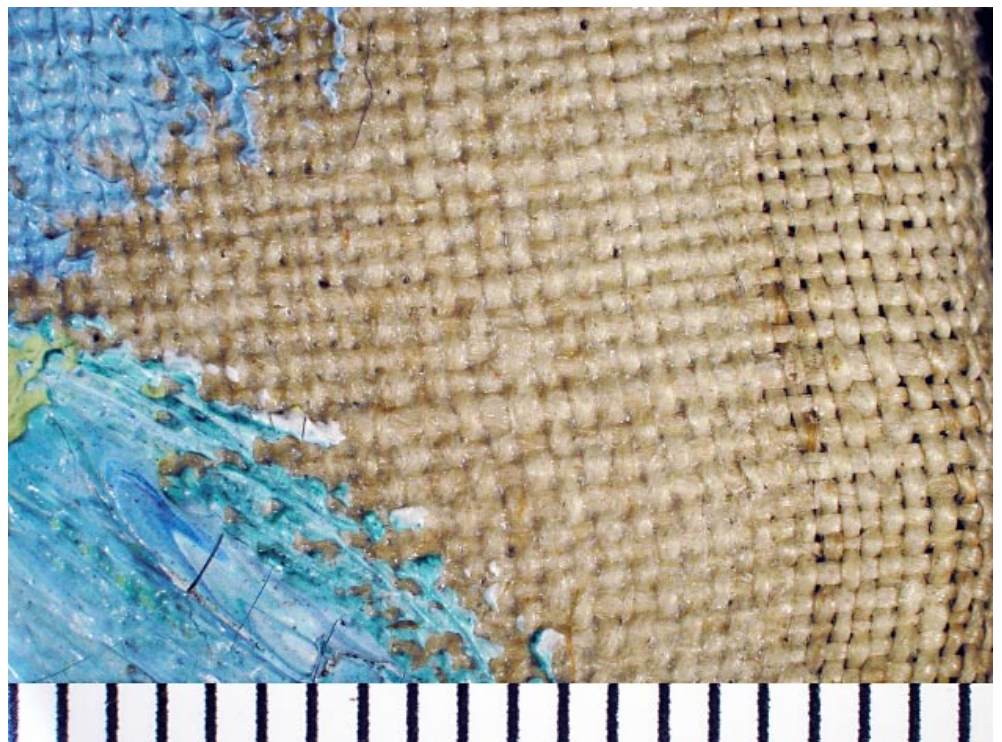


Fig. 8  
Right-hand edge of  
picture, unpainted area,  
view of the pre-treatment  
of the canvas (sizing or  
priming), microscopic  
photograph (M = 1 mm)





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## Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Fig. 9  
Detail top centre, along  
the edge of the picture  
and in areas not covered  
by the paint of the  
second painting, the  
strong colours of the first  
painting can be seen



Fig. 10  
Detail, bottom right  
corner, as fig. 9





Fig. 11  
Abrasion of the paint-  
layer of the first painting,  
microscopic photograph  
(M = 1 mm)