



**Jean Metzinger**

(1883-1956)

**Landscape with Tree**

(Paysage à l'arbre rond)

*c. 1906*

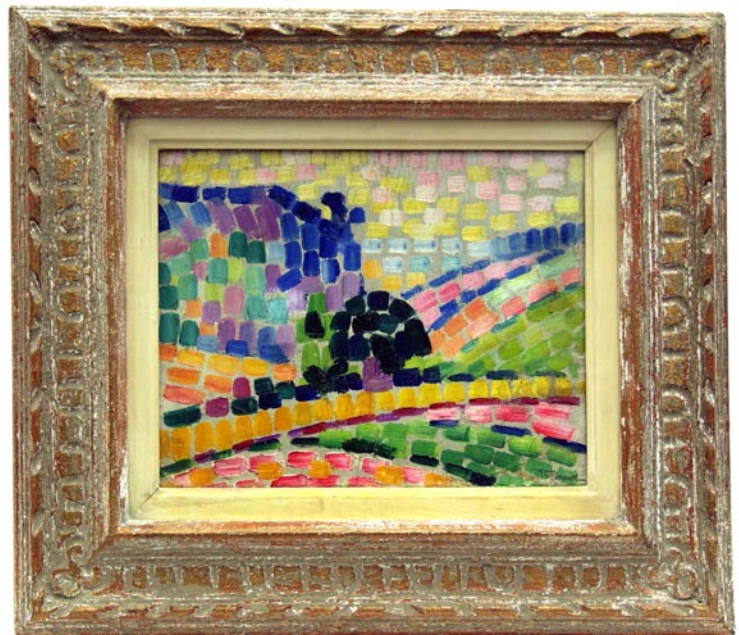
*signature stamp(?) bottom right:  
"Metzinger"*

*no date*

*oil on board, mounted firmly on a  
laminated wooden panel at a later date*

*h 22.0 cm x b 27.5 cm*

*WRM Dep. 847*





## Brief Report

This sketchy pointillist picture was completed in a single short session which probably lasted not much longer than an hour. Metzinger used a commercially available pre-primed board. With a few dry brush-strokes in blue paint he sketched the contours of horizon, house and tree (fig. 6). Next he systematically applied regularly juxtaposed large brightly coloured impasto brush-strokes. The white ground was heavily integrated into the effect of the finished picture, and appears ubiquitously between the painted areas. In general, the paint was applied in a single layer. Only in a few places was a second layer applied, in order to correct either the hue or the direction of the brush stroke (fig. 8). Contradicting our classical view of Neo-impressionism, Metzinger did not use exclusively pure colours, but also blends. The mosaic-like character of the large, evenly composed brush-strokes can be found with increasing frequency in Metzinger's work around 1906. The painting *Landscape with Tree* also belongs to this period.

Since then, however, the appearance of the picture has changed drastically as a result both of natural aging processes and deliberate restoration measures. In addition to the fact that the board was cropped when mounted on a cradled laminated panel, leading to a reduction in the picture area, the overall effect of the colours and of the picture as a whole has undergone a major change due to years of accumulated dirt. The exclusively protein-bound ground has proved to be particularly sensitive to deposits of dirt, so that the originally white hues have been replaced by an undifferentiated light-to-mid grey (figs. 9, 10). The extent to which the actual contrasts and colour of the depiction has been influenced as a result is strikingly illustrated by a reconstruction of the pristine appearance on the basis of investigation of the material (fig. 14).



Jean Metzinger – Landscape with Round Tree  
Brief Report on Technology and Condition

### Picture support board

Standard format	presumably originally F3 (27 x 23 cm), horizontal (the board has since been cropped)
Thickness	3 mm
Characteristics	board made of straw cellulose with short homogeneous fibres
Color	yellowish
Manufacture/modification	presumably industrial
Producer's / dealer's marks	none to be seen

### Ground

Sizing	undetermined
Colour	white (fig. 10)
Application	in several layers
Binding medium	purely protein (presumably rabbit-skin glue)
Character and appearance	EDX: Zn (zinc white) as the main component, a little Ca, S (calcium sulphate), and Al, Si, Fe (ochre); even, homogeneous layer; from the point of view of structure if anything thin and porous, and thus particularly liable to bind deposits of dirt (figs. 9, 10)



### Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique	flat bristle brush and blue paint
Extent/character	brisk brush sketch with dry lines to create the rough outlines of the horizon, house, tree and the path in the foreground; many of the lines are still visible in places which were not subsequently painted over (fig. 6)
Pentimenti	none

### Paint layer

Paint application/technique and artist's own revision	mosaic-like pointillist painting technique; the paint was applied in brush-strokes of similar size, juxtaposed; predominantly wet in wet; consistency, covering power and application of the paints are evenly strong, opaque and impasto; the brush-strokes are predominantly either vertical or horizontal, or else follow the contours of the motif; the start and finish of the brush-strokes are well defined; the sequence of application was from right to left, starting at the top (fig. 7) and from light (pale blue, pale yellow, pale green) to dark (dark blue, dark green); some brush-strokes were covered with a second layer of paint in order to correct their colour or direction (fig. 8)
Painting tools	flat bristle brushes of various widths, app. 0.5 to 1.0 cm
Surface structure	even; slightly impasto; clear brush-strokes (fig. 7)
Palette	hues revealed by visual microscopic inspection: white, pale yellow, medium yellow, orange, pale red lake, dark red lakes (UV fluorescence: light pink and magenta, fig. 4), medium blue, dark blue, violet, dark green; the colours were used unmixed or, where mixed, then predominantly with white VIS spectrometry: cadmium yellow(?), alizarin rose madder, cobalt blue, ultramarine, cobalt violet, viridian
Binding mediums	presumably exclusively oil



## Surface finish

Authenticity/condition	there is no evidence of any original varnish; the picture was presumably originally unvarnished; there is at present a high-gloss varnish
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## Signature/Mark

When?	the signature was added when the paint was no longer wet, but before it had hardened (fig. 5)
Autograph signature	not determined
Serial	presumably a studio stamp with thin black paint; the pressure marks in the paint layer suggest even pressure from above; there is no sign of a beginning or end of a brush-stroke; nothing is known of signing conventions in Metzinger's studio; a similar signature can be found on three other works by the artist dating from 1906: <i>Two Nudes in a Garden</i> , 1906, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City; <i>Landscape</i> , 1906, private collection, USA; <i>Montsouris Park</i> 1906, private collection, USA [from: Metzinger 1990, Metzinger 1994]

## Frame

Authenticity	not original
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## State of preservation

The board has been mounted firmly on a cradled laminated panel (fig.2); cropped brush-strokes and signs of retouching at the left and bottom edges point to the board's having been cut back by several millimetres to its present size (h 20.7 cm, b 26.4 cm), presumably by 1.3 cm at the bottom edge and by 0.5 cm (= the discrepancy between the present size and the standard size F3); the originally white ground is soiled and now an even grey (figs. 9, 10); countless vertical cracks clearly visible in the paint layer and the board arose when the board was straightened in the course of the marouflage (fig. 3); some paint loss and retouchings in the paint layer (fig. 4).



### Additional remarks

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### Literature

- Budde/Schaefer 2001: Rainer Budde, Barbara Schaefer, *Miracle de la couleur* (exhib. cat. Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud Cologne, 8. September - 9. December 2001), Cologne 2001, without cat. no., p. 426, with ill.
- Metzinger 1990: Fritz Metzinger, Daniel Robbins, Jean Metzinger, *Die Entstehung des Kubismus – eine Neubewertung*, Frankfurt/ Main 1990
- Metzinger 1994: Fritz Metzinger, *Avant le Cubisme, Vor dem Kubismus, Before Cubism*, Frankfurt/ Main 1994

### Source of illustrations

Ill. 11: ©Mikroanalytisches Labor Jägers

All further 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: Christine Dörr

Date: 10/2006

Author of brief report: Caroline von Saint-George

Date: 08/2007





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Fig. 1  
Recto



Fig. 2  
Verso





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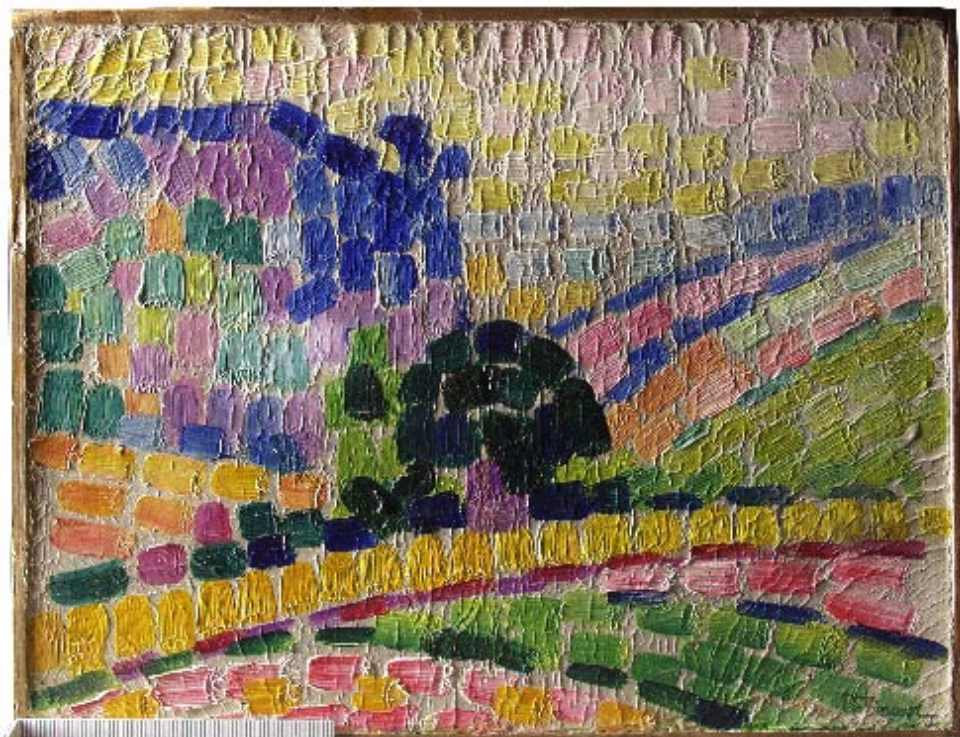


Fig. 3  
Raking light



Fig. 4  
Recto under UV





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Brief Report on Technology and Condition



Fig. 5  
Detail of signature,  
presumably stamped

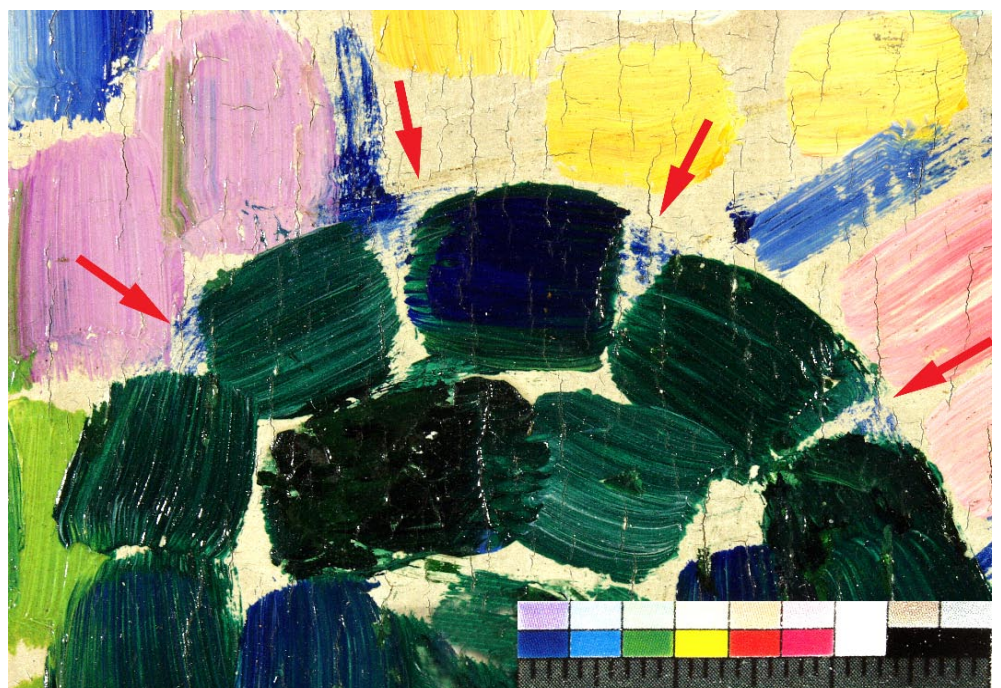


Fig. 6  
Detail of the blue  
underdrawing lines  
marked with red arrows





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Brief Report on Technology and Condition



Fig. 7  
Detail of the brush-  
strokes in raking light,  
the red arrows in the  
inset mark the direction  
of the brushstrokes



Fig. 8  
Detail of the paint  
application with clear  
corrections in the  
coloration and shape  
(marked with red arrows)





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Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Fig. 9

Detail of the sky, where the effect of the greying of the ground is particularly drastic: the white and yellow brush-strokes originally stood out dark against the white ground, but today appear paler, so the effect is the reverse of what it was

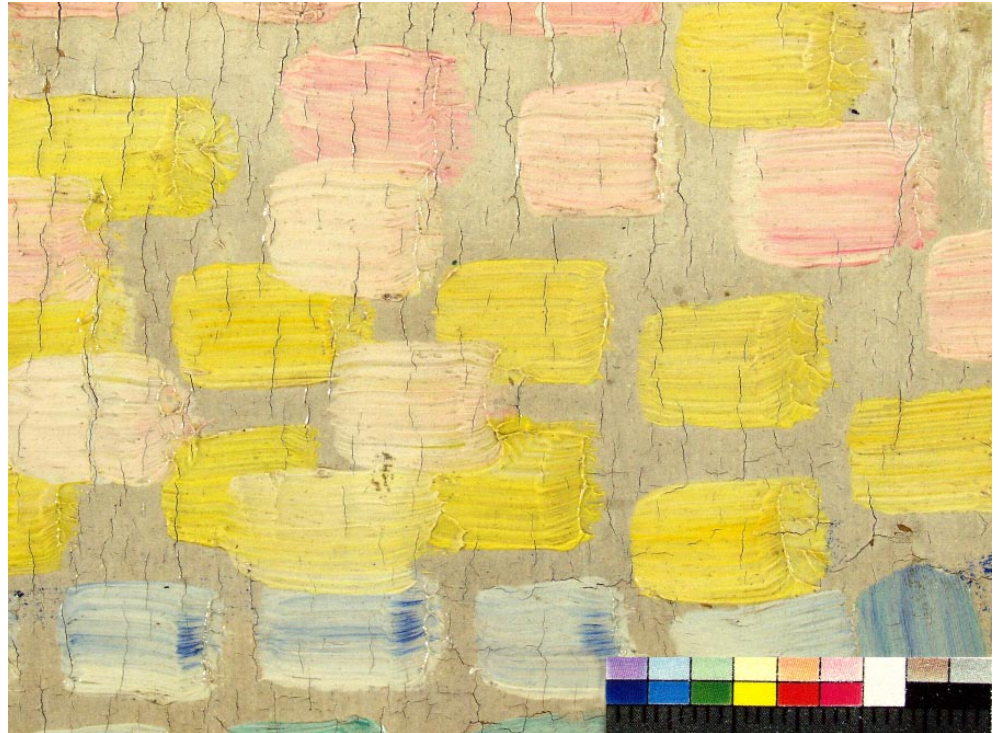
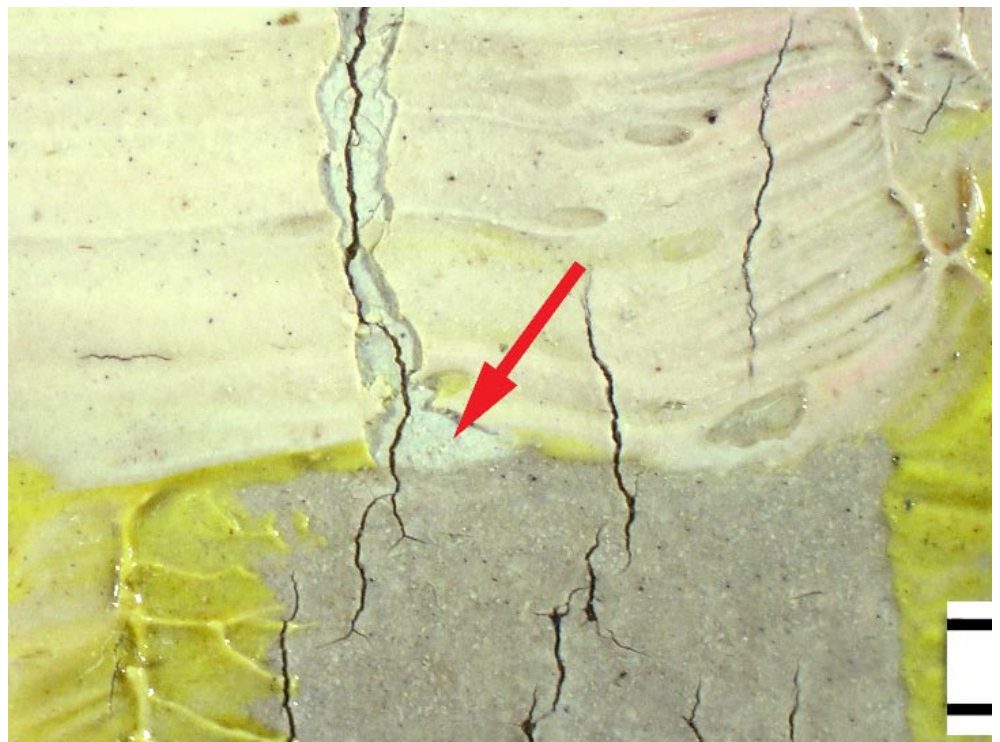


Fig. 10

The red arrow marks a detail of the ground that can still be seen in its pristine unsoiled white beneath a place where the paint has flaked: microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm)







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Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Fig. 11  
Microscopic photograph  
of the cross-section  
of the ground in  
UV fluorescence  
(stimulation filter  
350-380 nm) and in  
incident light, pure  
white layer, consisting  
overwhelmingly  
of zinc white and  
protein binding (200x  
magnification)

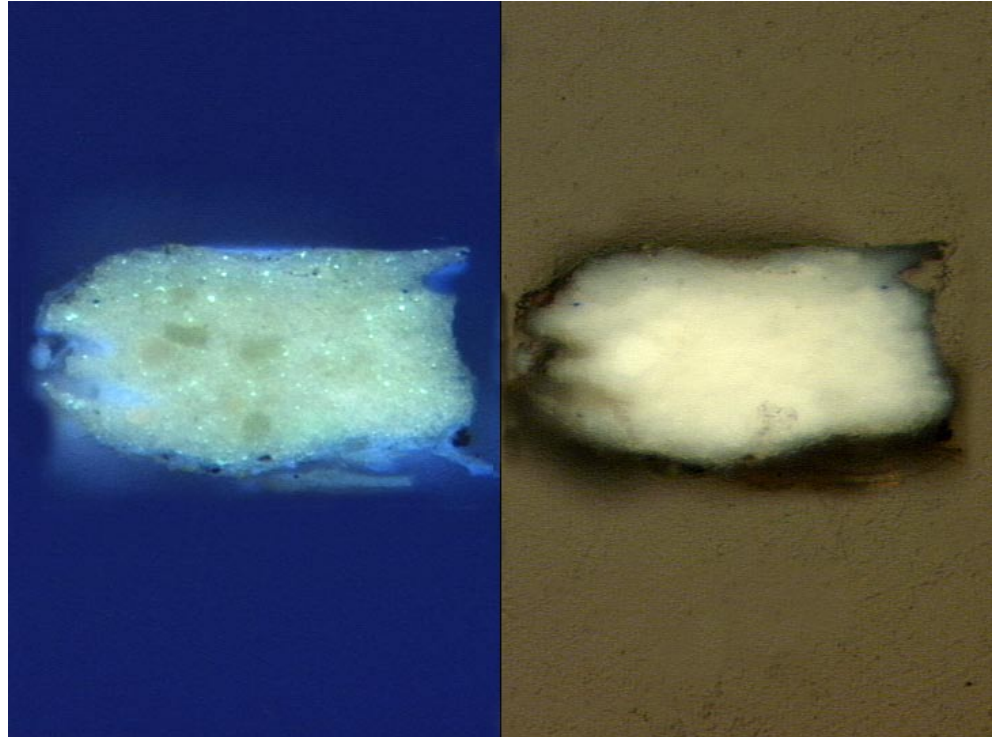


Fig. 12  
Reconstruction based  
on results of analysis  
(executed by Mareike  
Lintelmann)

