Camille Pissarro  
(1830-1903) 

Farm at Bazincourt  
(Ferme à Bazincourt) 

1884  
Initial stamp bottom left: “C.P”  
undated  
Oil on canvas  
h 54.1 cm x b 65.1 cm  
WRM Dep. FC 693
This painting remained in the possession of the family after Camille Pissarro’s death and only came on to the art market after 1921. It shows a large farmstead on the banks of the River Epte at Bazincourt, which was often depicted by the artist. Pissarro was able to see the building and the large walnut tree from the second floor of his own house [Pissarro/Durand-Ruel Snollaerts 2005]. The artist used a commercially stretched, very fine canvas in the standard F15 size (54.0 x 65.0 cm) pre-primed with a standard cream ground (fig. 8). Before embarking on the painting, Pissarro planned the composition by making a detailed drawing in dark blue applied with a fine brush (figs 9, 10, 14), much of which can still be seen along the outlines of the motifs. His next step was to compose all the parts of the picture using a very open manner of painting, consisting of short, often curved and sometimes cruciform brush-strokes. The paints were applied wet-in-wet throughout. In many places the pale ground was left visible. It is precisely these places that at a later date were cursorily covered with predominantly greenish-blue brush-strokes in the foreground and in the trees, in a manner imitating the existing brushwork (figs 13, 15).

These additions were not carried out by Pissarro himself, however, as evidenced not only very clearly by the UV fluorescence photograph and false-colour IR reflectogram, but also by an illustration of the painting in a list of Pissarro’s works that appeared in 1939, which shows that these changes had not yet been made at that date [Pissarro/Venturi 1939]. The manner and extent of the additions, carried out presumably only after 1939, suggest that this open painting technique and the frequent exposure of the pale ground were understood to be signs that the painting was incomplete, and that the additions were meant to rectify this. The fact that the coloration deviates from the original also points to the fact that someone was seeking to enliven the colours of the landscape as a whole. The initials in the bottom left-hand corner appear black, but are in fact dark blue, and on closer inspection can be seen to have been stamped. It is not known by whom this was done, or when, but it pre-dates the additions discussed above (present on the pre-1939 photo) (figs 7, 16).
## Picture support canvas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard format</th>
<th>F15 (65.0 x 54.0 cm), horizontal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weave</td>
<td>tabby weave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvas characteristics</td>
<td>extremely fine weave with largely even yarn thickness, ranging from 0.2-0.4 mm; horizontal and vertical app. 34 threads per cm; vertical (weft?) threads are emphasized; Z twist (fig. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretching</td>
<td>not original; re-stretched on account of lining; intervals between the original tacks range from app. 4.0-8.5 cm; this tacking was re-used and supplemented by additional tacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretcher/strainer</td>
<td>stretcher with vertical centre-bar, probably authentic (fig. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretcher/strainer depth</td>
<td>2.0 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traces left by manufacture/processing</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer’s/dealer’s marks</td>
<td>none visible on account of the lining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ground

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sizing</th>
<th>present; presumably glutin size; with occasional microscopic bubbles (fig. 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>white (yellowish), Fr. <em>jaune</em> (fig. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>primed before cutting-to-size and stretching, thin, one or two layers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding medium</td>
<td>presumably oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>very even and homogeneous; pigmentation discernible under the microscope: mix of particles of yellow and red ochre of various sizes, fine black particles and in some places coarse lead-white particles (fig. 8); occasional holes in the ground discernible in places, due to bubbles in the size and the consequent inadequate wetting of the canvas [cf. Monet, WRM Dep. FC 673]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium/technique</th>
<th>brush-drawing in thin blue paint, with a strikingly high proportion of admixed charcoal particles; it cannot be excluded that the brush-drawing was preceded by charcoal markings (figs 9, 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent/character</td>
<td>where the canvas has been left unpainted, it is easily visible with the naked eye or under the microscope, but not with IR reflectography (fig. 9); the whole composition is laid-in in detail (mapping, fig. 14); the cause of the charcoal component in the brush-drawing is uncertain: charcoal may have been mixed into weakly bound paint and became deposited to varying extents, or else Pissarro may have gone over, and intensified, very precise charcoal markings in blue paint with a brush; there are blue underdrawing lines with different proportions of charcoal particles, and also apparently unbound charcoal particles which became embedded in the subsequently applied paint-layer (fig. 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentimenti</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Paint layer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paint application/technique and artist’s own revision</th>
<th>paint applied in the early Pointillist manner in short (1-3 cm) brushstrokes leaving the ground visible in numerous places; application wet-in-wet throughout; brushwork often diagonal or cruciform (fig. 12); paints often only blended on the canvas (fig. 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Painting tools</td>
<td>various brushes, on the fine side, with breadths ranging from 0.3-0.5 cm, probably tongue-shaped hair brushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface structure</td>
<td>marked vertical structure of the canvas is further emphasized by the paint application; dabbing technique and viscous paint led to visible brushwork throughout, however impasto areas are few (fig. 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palette</td>
<td>visual microscopic inspection reveals: white, medium yellow, medium red, dark red lake, medium blue, dark blue, pale green (milky); Vis spectrometry: chrome or cadmium yellow(?), vermilion, rose madder(?), ultramarine blue, viridian, copper-based green, cerulean (overpainting); EDX: zinc white, lead chromate, copper-based green (original yellow and green); cerulean blue, cobalt blue, cadmium yellow, artificial ultramarine blue, viridian (later blue-green additions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding mediums</td>
<td>presumably oil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Surface finish

| Authenticity/Condition | varnished, not authentic; remains of an earlier coating are discernible (figs 5, 7) |
### Signature/Mark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When?</th>
<th>initial-stamp “C.P.” in dark-blue, black-looking paint with a high proportion of very fine orange-red particles, applied at an unknown time but well after the original painting was completed (fig. 7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autograph signature</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial</td>
<td>microscopic inspection reveals typical signs of a stamped signature, such as viscous paint being displaced or pulled upwards; corresponding categorization in the revised catalogue raisonné [Pissarro/Durand-Ruel Snollaerts 2005, p. 511]; it is not known who applied the stamp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Frame

| Authenticity | not original |

### State of preservation

The canvas has been lined; the adhesive was also used to stick the turnover edge of the lining to the stretcher (figs 2, 8); a small dent in the background; numerous painted additions by someone other than the artist (see above, Brief Report) (figs 5, 6, 13, 15); only minor losses and abrasions in the paint-layer; fine craquelure, pronounced only in places.

### Additional remarks

There is a mark on the right-hand edge of the picture caused by slippage before the paint was completely dry.
Literature


Source of illustrations

Fig. 16: taken from Pissarro/Venturi 1939, vol. 2, cat. no. 645. A better-quality reproduction of the historic photograph of the picture before the painted additions by another hand was unfortunately impossible to obtain, as the Drouot archive in Paris, which has custody of the photograph, was in the process of moving when we made our enquiry.

All further illustrations & figures: Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud

Examination methods used

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

Author of examination: Katja Lewerentz Date: 1/2005
Author of brief report: Katja Lewerentz Date: 12/2008
Fig. 1  
Recto

Fig. 2  
Verso, lined
Camille Pissarro – Farm at Bazincourt
Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Fig. 3
Raking light

Fig. 4
Transmitted light
Fig. 5
UV fluorescence; the later additions are characterized by the turquoise fluorescence of the brushstrokes, predominantly in the foreground and in the trees.

Fig. 6
False-colour IR reflectogram, the painted additions are represented here in magenta to violet.
Fig. 7
Details, stamped initials in incident light (top) and under UV (bottom)

Fig. 8
Preparation of the canvas: bubbles are discernible in the size (top left); cream-coloured ground (bottom left), microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm); and detail with the turnover edge of the very fine canvas, which was later lined (far right)
Fig. 9
Underdrawing not covered by paint, microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm)

Fig. 10
Underdrawing lines, charcoal particles and blue paint are mixed (top); the two lower illustrations however do not exclude the possibility of two independent applications in two phases, as both the charcoal particles and the blue brush-drawing appear independently of each other, microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm)
Fig. 11
Detail, horizon

Fig. 12
Impasto, wet-in-wet paint application, microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm)
Fig. 13
Detail, paint applied in dots and dashes in the region of the tree; the various bluish-green brushstrokes are not by Pissarro (cf. figs 5, 6, 14, 15)

Fig. 14
Mapping of the underdrawing (in blue), to the extent that it is visible under the microscope and not covered by the subsequent painting
Fig. 15
Mapping (in red) of the later additions by another hand

Fig. 16
Historic photograph dating from pre-1939, original state without painted additions