



**Théo van Rysselberghe**  
(1862-1926)

**Le Lavandou, Var**

1908

*monogrammed and dated bottom left:  
"TVR/ 08"*

*Oil on cardboard*

*h 37.8 cm x b 55.0 cm*

*WRM Dep. FC 617*





## Brief Report

The Belgian Neo-impressionist Théo van Rysselberghe, who was greatly influenced by Seurat, stayed many times at the seaside resort of Le Lavandou on the French Riviera, whose coast is depicted here. Not long afterwards, he moved here. The present landscape was painted by the artist on an unprimed board in the standard P10 size. Verso the board was given a grey-green coat applied with a palette knife, there are no discernible dealer's marks (figs 2, 4). The painting is based on a complete underdrawing in a deep-black, soft drawing medium, which can be seen well in the IR reflectogram (fig. 6). It takes microscopic inspection to reveal that the three goats in the foreground, which cannot be seen in the IR reflectogram because of the impasto white paint, were only added during the painting process using a graphite or lead pencil with a metallic sheen (fig. 9).

These too were painted in the next phase of work. The paints were applied both wet-in-wet and wet-on-dry, from semi-transparent to opaque. The direction of the brushstrokes was often oriented to the depicted motifs (figs 8, 10, 11). The high-gloss varnish is not authentic, and gives a false impression of the original character of the picture, which was, presumably, more pastel-like.



### Picture support board

Standard format	P10 (55.0 x 38.0 cm), horizontal
Thickness	app. 4,5 mm
Characteristics	groundwood; even fibre distribution; multilayer without clear layer divisions, verso impressions of sieve (figs 2, 4)
Color	brownish-yellow
Manufacture/modification	presumably industrially produced millboard, cut edges discernible all round, in places irregular (fig. 12)
Producer's/dealer's marks	–

### Ground

Sizing	undetermined
Colour	unprimed
Application	–
Binding medium	–
Character and appearance	–



## Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique	two stages of picture planning (figs 6, 8, 9): 1. black, soft medium, possibly black chalk (fig. 8) 2. grey-black medium with metallic sheen, presumably graphite or lead pencil for the addition of the goats (fig. 9)
Extent/character	1. all the important elements were laid-in briskly and sketchily in the form of a free-hand drawing, in places exploratory lineation (fig. 6); this drawing is partially visible with the naked eye by dint of the open or semi-transparent paint application 2. only the three goats were added in pencil (graphite or lead) when the painting of the landscape had already reached an advanced stage; they were then finished in paint (fig. 9)
Pentimenti	minor deviations in the depiction of the landscape with respect to the shape of the scrub, e.g. the first bush halfway up the left-hand edge

## Paint layer

Paint application/technique and artist's own revision	the paint was applied both wet-in-wet and wet-on-dry; from semi-transparent to opaque, the direction of the brushwork often oriented to the respective motif (figs 8, 10, 11); two fingerprints left in the wet paint centre right on the top edge (fig. 12)
Painting tools	flat-ferrule brushes of varying breadth; breadth of strokes predominantly 0.5-0.8 cm
Surface structure	white areas and areas with white blends evince considerable pastosity (fig. 3), otherwise the brushwork is easily visible throughout, albeit without much body
Palette	microscopic visual inspection reveals: white, yellow, dark red lake, dark blue, medium green VIS spectrometry: cadmium(?)/chrome(?) yellow, Helio fast pink(?)/lithol rubine(?) or rose madder(?), cobalt blue, viridian
Binding mediums	presumably oil



### Surface finish

Authenticity/condition	present varnish high-gloss and not authentic
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### Signature/Mark

When?	applied after the paint-layer had dried (fig. 7)
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Autograph signature	monogram "TVR" in a square frame, beneath it the year "08" in dark-blue paint applied with a brush; monogram accords with van Rysselberghe's signing habits from about 1890 into the 1920s [cf. transcriptions in Feltkamp 2003, p. 243]
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Serial	–
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### Frame

Authenticity	not authentic
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### State of preservation

The board bulges slightly; top left-hand corner has been knocked out of shape; layers of board have come apart along the edges in a few places; the fibres have browned; extensive scratching in the region of the sky: cause unknown, presumably mechanical, dating from shortly after the painting's completion as the paint-layers were not completely dry when it occurred; the scratches are predominantly vertical, although there is one conspicuous long horizontal scratch; retouching in the region of the sky; the high-gloss varnish, which darkens the board, was only applied later.

### Additional remarks

*Pace* Feltkamp [Feltkamp 2003, p. 374], there is no address inscription by van Rysselberghe verso.



### 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                     |  |

### 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. 148, p. 334 with ill.
- Feltkamp 2003: Ronald Feltkamp, Théo van Rysselberghe 1862 - 1926, Brussels 2003, no. 1908-021 (under the title *Taormina, la côte*), p. 374, with ill.

### Source of illustrations

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

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Date: 04/2005
Date: 12/2008





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Fig. 1  
Recto



Fig. 2  
Verso, with detail of the  
side view of the board,  
microscopic photograph  
(M = 1 mm)





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Brief Report on Technology and Condition



Fig. 3  
Raking light



Fig. 4  
Raking light verso, the  
use of a palette-knife for  
the application of the  
coat verso is discernible





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Brief Report on Technology and Condition



Fig. 5  
UV fluorescence

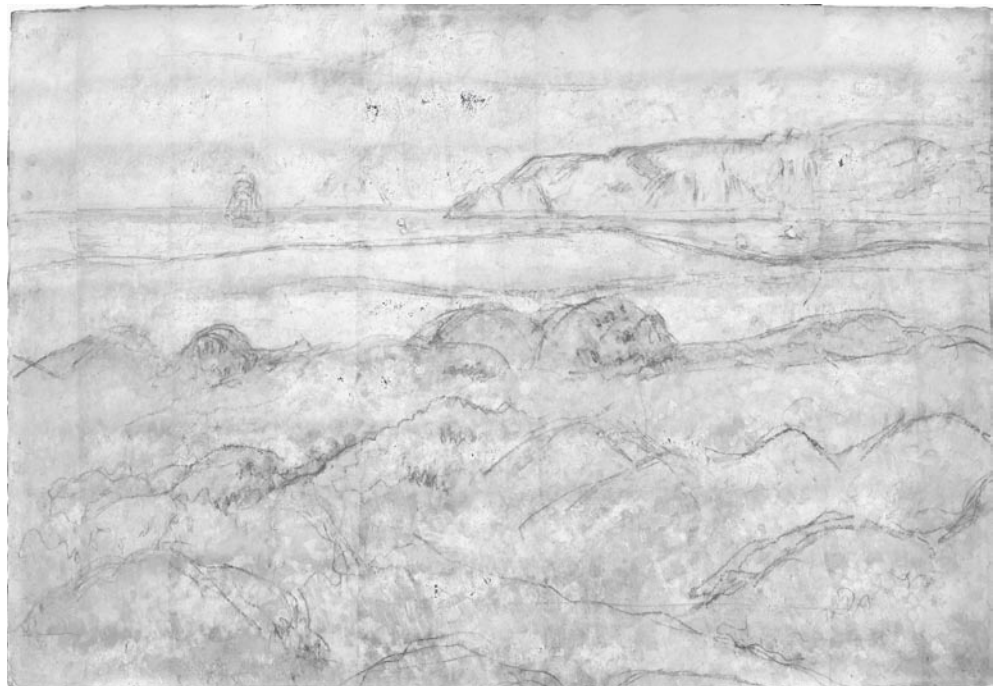


Fig. 6  
IR reflectogram





Fig. 7  
Details, monogram and date in incident light (left) and under UV stimulation (right)

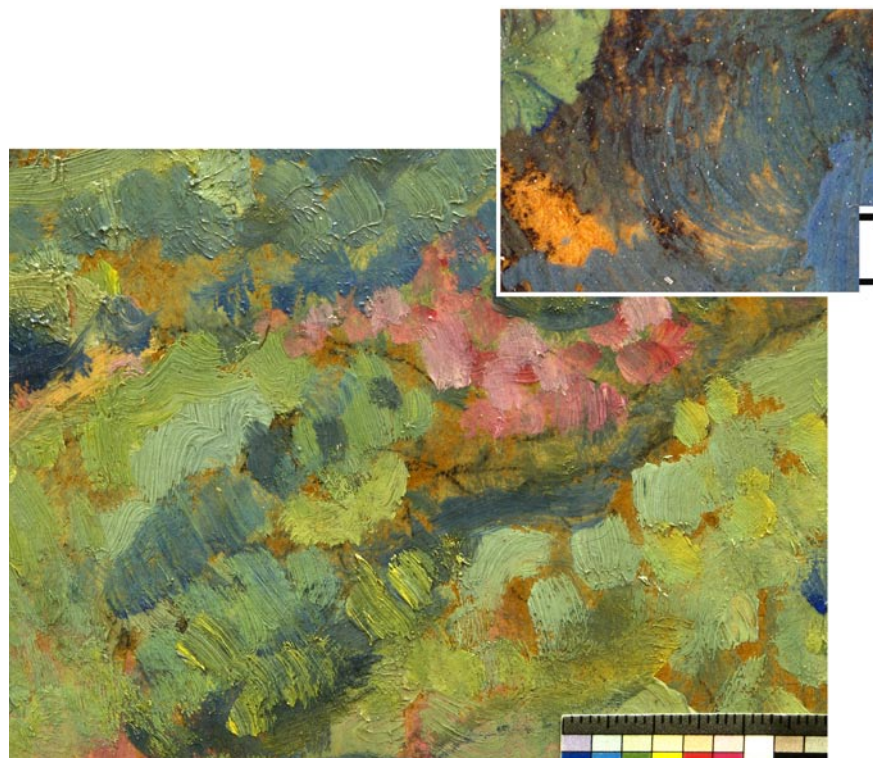


Fig. 8  
Detail, underdrawing of the landscape areas with some black drawing medium, top right microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm)





Fig. 9  
Detail and microscopic photographs of the goats, which were only added later in the painting process, with underdrawing lines; the illustrations at the top show the metallic sheen of the black drawing medium, probably a graphite pencil, microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm)

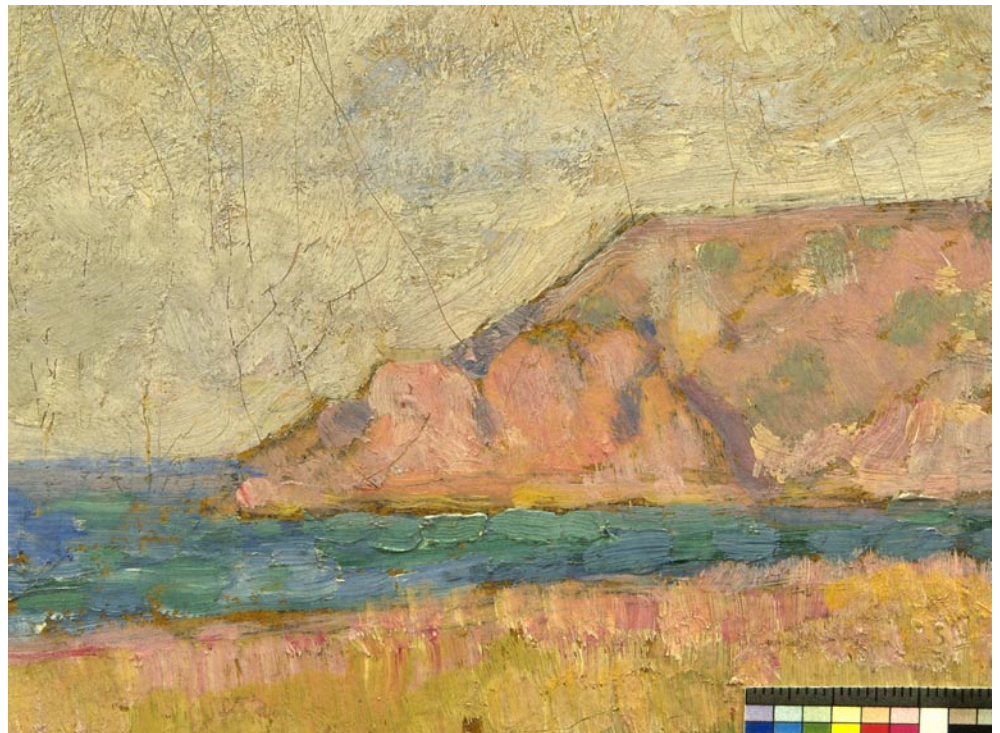


Fig. 10  
Detail top centre, lay-in in paint and execution of the cliff





Fig. 11  
Detail, loosely applied,  
directional paint  
applications in the  
bottom right-hand  
corner



Fig. 12  
Paint-layer, fingerprint  
in the wet paint on the  
top edge, microscopic  
photograph (M = 1 mm)

