



### Georges Lemmen

(1865-1916)

### The Coast at Heyst

(La Côte à Heyst)

1891

*inscribed and dated verso:  
"Heyst 21 juillet 91 / 8 le soir";  
monogram bottom right: "GL"*

*Oil on poplar panel ;*

*h 12.5 cm x b 21.6 cm*

*WRM Dep. FC 715*





## Brief Report

This little panel is one of a series of more than 20 extant studies which Lemmen painted during a summer sojourn on the Belgian coast at Heyst [cf. Heyst no 16, WRM Dep. FC 716]. Here Lemmen depicts a section of the coast with a view of the open sea in evening light, documenting the date and time precisely with an inscription verso (“21 juillet 91 / 8 le soir”, i.e. 21 July 1891, 8 pm) (fig. 5). The pale poplar panel (*panneau d'étude*) in the standard M1 size was unprimed and to start with briskly covered with horizontal brushstrokes in the basic colours of the major areas of the sky, sea and beach. The horizon here served as orientation, but was largely left unpainted at this stage. Lemmen then placed Pointillist dabs in an undogmatic manner on the still wet paint, thus breaking up the swathes of colour (figs. 11, 12).

The painting becomes looser towards the sides of the picture. The character of this oil study was seriously altered by someone else at a later date, in that the open areas in particular were overpainted consistently, albeit in a quality deviating in technique and colour from the original (figs 4, 8, 9). The picture support exhibits two notches in the top edge and one in the bottom edge (positions, top, from left: 10.0 and 11.2 cm; bottom, from left, 10.5 cm); these notches could be the traces of the picture's being attached to a painting box or a case used for transport.



### Picture support panel

Standard format	M1 (12.0 x 22.0 cm), horizontal
Thickness	app. 3-4 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	slight, arc-shaped traces of tooling perpendicular to the grain of the wood verso cannot be explained beyond doubt (saw?); the panel is chamfered on the short sides recto (!); the breadth of the chamfer is app. 1.6-2.6 cm, reducing the thickness 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	present; glute size(?)
Colour	not present
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

to start with, large-area, loosely applied underpainting in the regions of the sea and sky, on top of this lay-in of the main colour areas in horizontal brushstrokes; while these areas were still wet, Lemmen added individual dots of paint; towards the sides, the painting becomes very open and sparse; every pigment was used in its pure form or blended with white

Painting tools various bristle brushes, breadth of strokes 5–7 mm

Surface structure in places heavily impasto, e.g. in the clouds and the dots of paint, while in other places the rather viscous paint has been spread out smoothly (figs. 10, 11)

Palette microscopic visual inspection reveals: white, yellow, orange, green, violet, red lake, blue  
Vis spectrometry: chrome yellow(?), cadmium yellow(?), viridian, rose madder(?), cobalt blue

Binding mediums presumably oil; an inventory sticker attached by the artist verso reads “huile bois”, supporting this assumption (fig. 2)

### Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition not authentic; beneath the present varnish are the browned remains of an older coating; whether this is original cannot be determined



## Signature/Mark

When?	cannot be determined
Autograph signature	a GL monogram framed in a rectangle; in reddish-brown paint with a very thin brush; the signature is heavily abraded and in places re-traced in black (fig. 6)
Serial	–

## Frame

Authenticity	not original
--------------	--------------

## State of preservation

Originally the painting was very open towards the sides, but someone other than the artist has re-worked it and continued the paintwork to the edges; in the process some of the original painting was covered over; this overpainting does not harmonize with the original either technically or in respect of colour, and possibly has also aged differently; abrasions of the paint surface and remains of an older, browned coat of varnish attest to an earlier removal of varnish (figs 4, 8, 9, 10).

## Additional remarks

In addition to the autograph inscriptions regarding location, time and date 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 2 1891 huile bois; h: 13 x 22 cm”; and printed beneath this “No 276”; 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 (figs 2, 7); the sticker and stamp suggest an inventory; it is not clear when this was drawn up, nor whether the stamp can be interpreted in the context of the administration of the estate.



## 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. 84, p. 206 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

Date: 08/2003

Author of brief report: Hans Portsteffen

Date: 12/2007





Georges Lemmen – The Coast at Heyst  
Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Fig. 1  
Recto

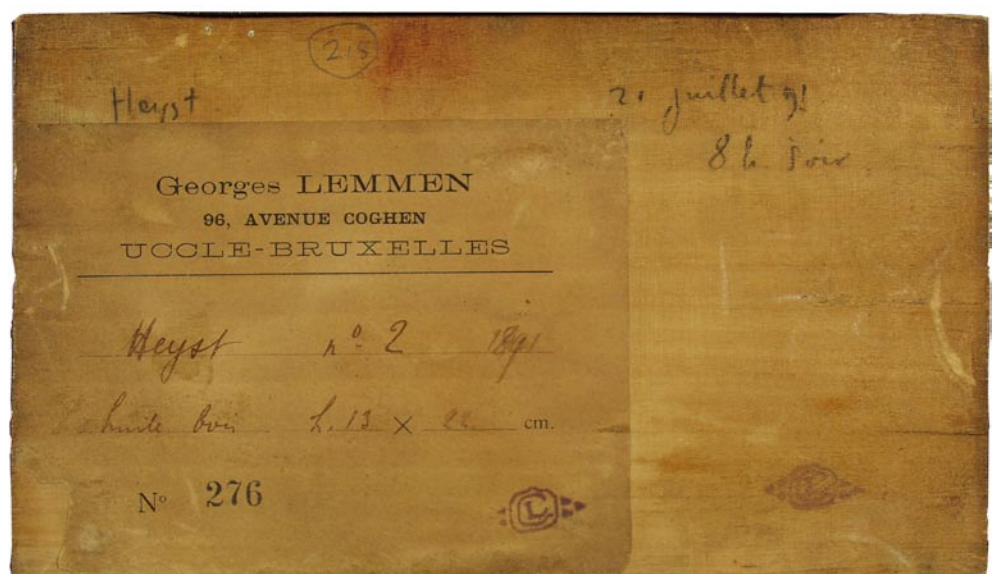
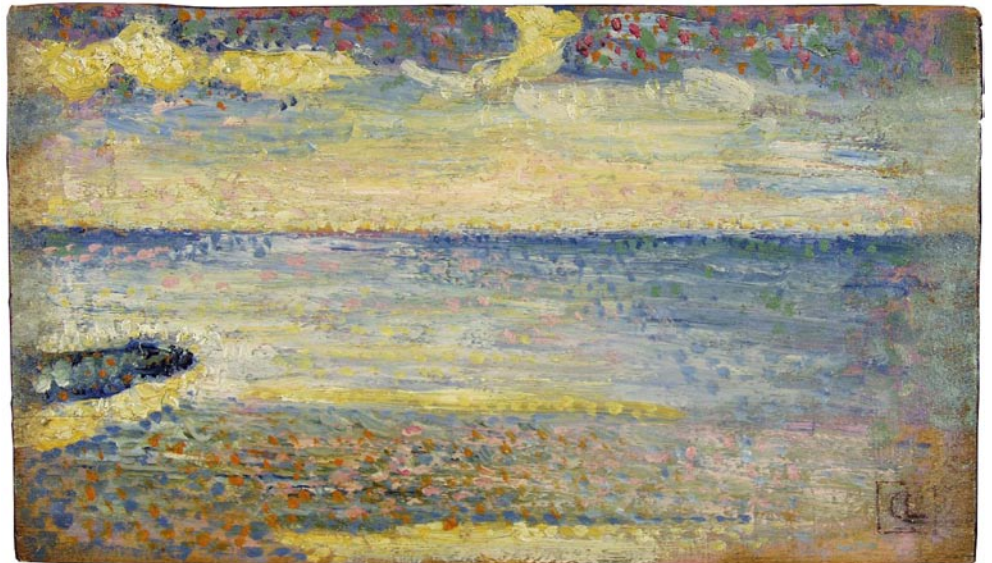


Fig. 2  
Verso

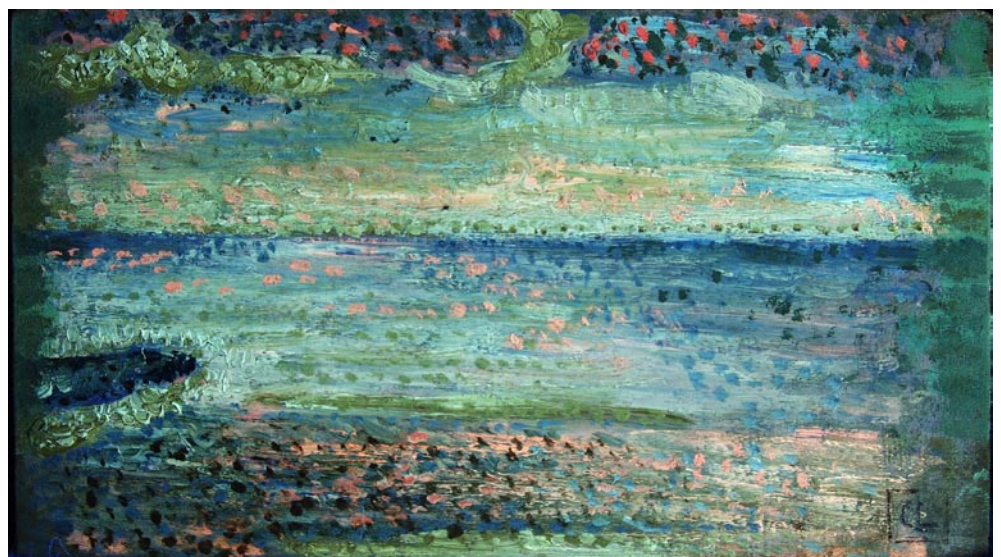


Georges Lemmen – The Coast at Heyst  
Brief Report on Technology and Condition

Fig. 3  
Raking light



Fig. 4  
UV fluorescence





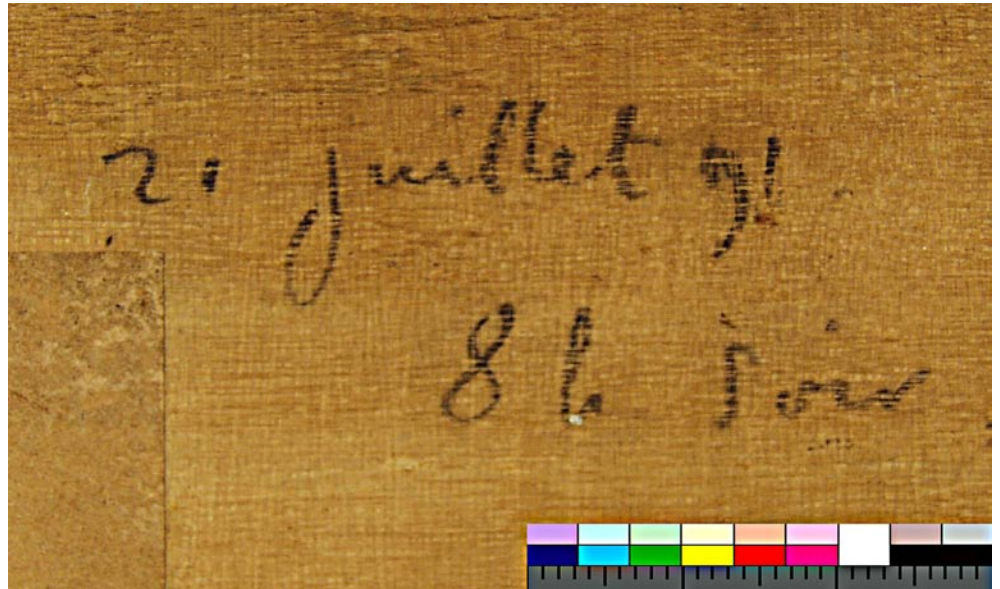


Fig. 5  
Detail, inscription verso  
"21 juillet 91 / 8 le soir"



Fig. 6  
Signature, microscopic  
photograph (M = 1 mm)





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



Fig. 8  
Detail, revisions by  
another hand at the  
right-hand edge of the  
panel



Fig. 9  
Detail as fig. 8, false-  
colour IR reflectogram  
clearly revealing  
revisions at the right-  
hand edge



Fig. 10  
Impasto dots of paint  
squashed at the top and  
with browned varnish in  
the crevices, microscopic  
photograph (M = 1 mm)





Georges Lemmen – The Coast at Heyst  
Brief Report on Technology and Condition



Fig. 11  
Varied surface relief  
resulting from dots of  
paint, revision at left-  
hand edge, microscopic  
photograph (M = 1 mm)



Fig. 12  
Individual dots of paint  
on the broader areas of  
colour, microscopic pho-  
tograph (M = 1 mm)