



Georges Lemmen

(1865-1916)

The Cliffs of Dover

(Les falaises de Douvres)

1892

signed bottom right, monogram "GL"

undated

Oil on canvas

h 16.5 x b 24.2 cm

WRM Dep. FC 766





Brief Report

For this little study, Lemmen used a ready-made stretched and pre-primed standard P2 size canvas. The plain, very thin and open tabby-weave, together with its single-layer ground (*à grain*) corresponds to the *toile étude* which can be found in trade catalogues. On the white ground Lemmen made an underdrawing of the major outlines in black pencil, and then a lay-in of the main areas of the composition in pale colours (figs. 7, 8). On these areas of colour he used carefully placed dabs of paint to differentiate and model; the sequence of application is easy to follow.

Many areas are executed wet-in-wet, testifying to the brisk progress of the work. The pale ground plays a part in many areas of the picture and evokes the filmy character of the picture (fig. 9). Unfortunately a lining operation along with an inexpert varnish removal have impaired the pristine delicacy of the colour effect (figs. 10-12).



Picture support canvas

Standard format	P2 horizontal (24.0 x 16.0 cm), format stamp 2 P in blue ink on the left-hand stretcher bar (fig. 8)
Weave	tabby weave
Canvas characteristics	very fine, loosely woven canvas; 14 x 15 threads per cm vertical and horizontal; Z-twist
Stretching	cut to size precisely along threads; present stretching has produced no stretchmarks; the conspicuous widely separated stretchmarks on the right-hand side derive from the stretching of the long length of fabric prior to pre-priming in the factory, i.e. the small format was evidently cut from the edge of a large piece of prepared canvas (fig. 3)
Stretcher/strainer	stretcher, presumably original
Stretcher/strainer depth	1.0 cm
Traces left by manufacture/processing	Traces left by manufacture/processing: mortise-and-tenon construction, fastened with an iron nail at each corner; traces of use of marking gauge; bevelling of inner edge by 4 mm
Manufacturer's/dealer's marks	none present

Ground

Sizing	presumably present, as the ground has not seeped into the canvas
Colour	off-white
Application	single layer, very thin (à grain); no discernible traces of any utensil; the very broad stretchmarks, which do not result from the current stretching, point to this canvas having been cut for this painting prior to stretching from the edge of a larger pre-primed canvas
Binding medium	presumably oil
Texture	very smooth



Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique	presumably lead or graphite pencil, linear, very fine lines
Extent/character	sparse outlines with little internal structure (figs. 5, 6)
Pentimenti	–

Paint layer

Paint application/technique and artist's own revision	after an all-over lay-in of the composition in white and blue paint, brisk spontaneous Pointillist technique integrating the white ground; wet-in-wet; the sequence of application of the dabs of paint was: white, then blue and green, then orange, pink and yellow
Painting tools	bristle brushes of different widths
Surface structure	in places very impasto, clearly visible brushwork everywhere
Palette	visual microscopic inspection reveals: white, yellow, orange, red lake, green, blue mixed with white in differing proportions, various pink tones made by mixing red with white VIS spectrometry: chrome yellow(?), cadmium yellow(?), cadmium orange, rose madder(?), copper-based green pigment, cobalt blue
Binding mediums	presumably oil

Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition	varnished, not authentic; the present coat is superimposed on a paint layer much reduced by the removal of an earlier coat of varnish; remains of a browned coat of varnish still discernible in the area of the signature (fig. 9)
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Signature/Mark

When?	at the same time as the picture was painted
Autograph signature	“GL” as monogram framed in a circle (fig. 6) in the bottom right-hand corner; diameter of circle c. 0.9 cm, all in a blue identical with the blue in the painting
Serial	–

Frame

Authenticity	not original
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State of preservation

Lined, whereby the original fold-over edge was cut off all round; linear broken and repaired areas of the paint layer are due to folds or creases in the original picture support; serious abrasion both of the paint layer and in the ground where this was not covered with paint, in particular on the high points of the canvas weave; brushwork has been levelled off in many places, impasto applications have been squashed (figs. 11,12).

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, cat. no. 86, p. 208, 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 | |

Author of examination:	Wibke Neugebauer
Author of brief report:	Hans Portsteffen

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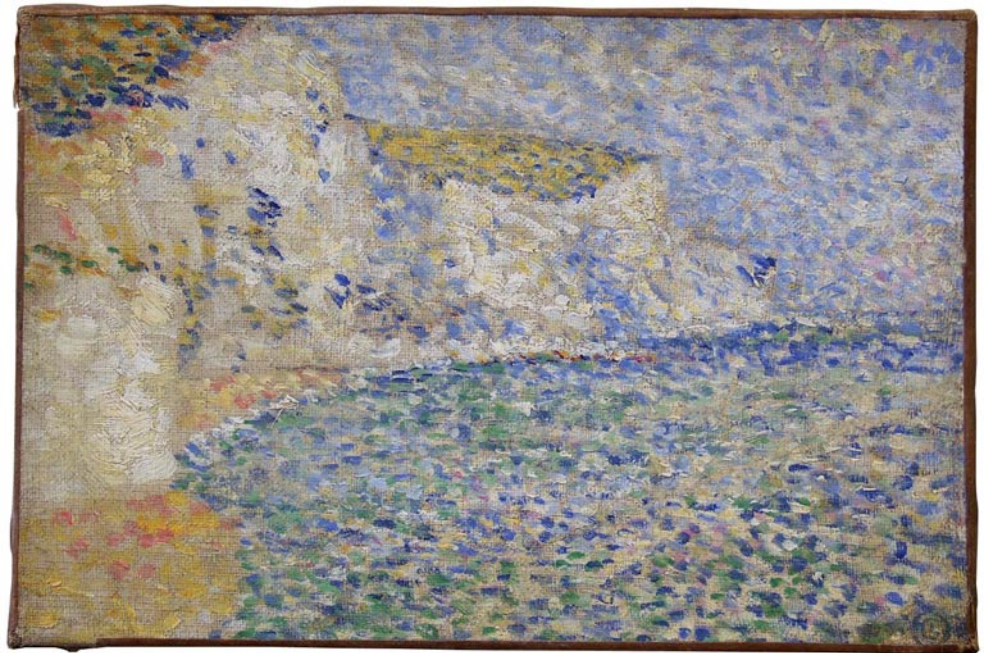


Fig. 1
Recto



Fig. 2
Verso, lined



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Fig. 3
Raking light, on the right-hand edge a broad stretchmark can be seen; it does not correlate with the present stretching points, and dates back to the stretching of the length of canvas for pre-priming in the factory, prior to cutting

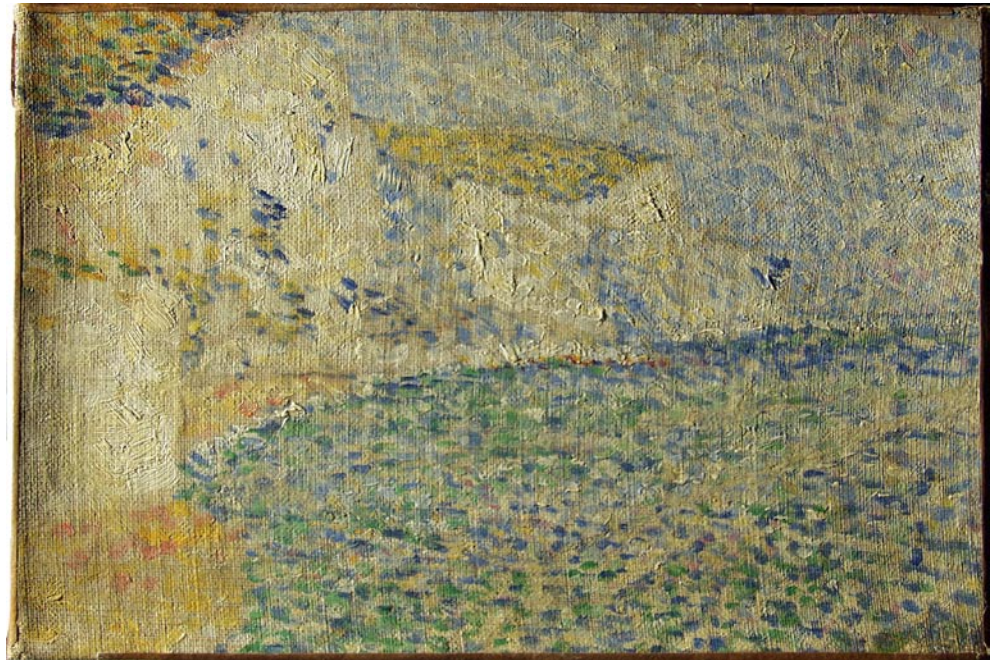


Fig. 4
UV fluorescence





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Fig. 5
IR reflectogram



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



Fig. 7
Visible horizon in the
underdrawing beneath
the paint layer (arrow),
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)



Fig. 8
Detail, format stamp
"2P" on the left-hand
stretcher bar

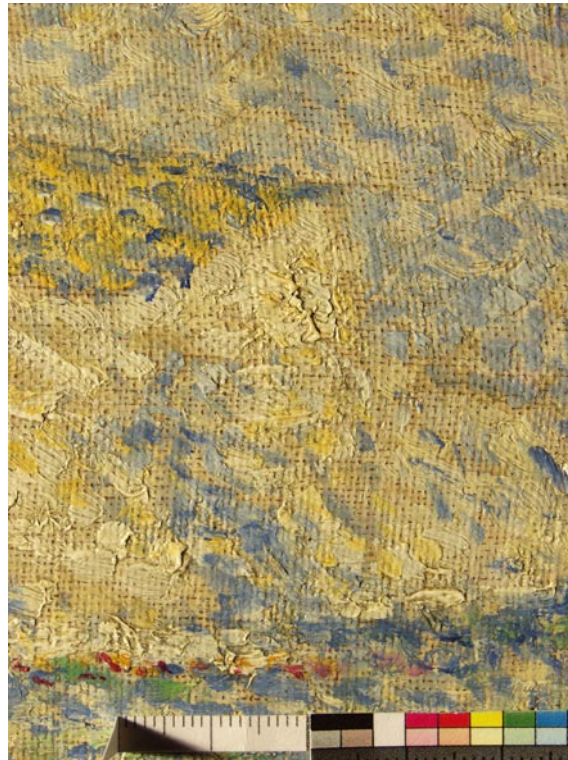


Fig. 9
Detail under raking light,
area of the chalk cliff
with ground left visible



Fig. 10
Abbed paint application,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)



Fig. 11
Abraded paint layer and
ground, the high points
of the weave are visible,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)



Fig. 12
Damaged surface due
to lining and incompe-
tent removal of varnish,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)