



Edvard Munch

(1863-1944)

Åsgårdstrand

1889/90

signed bottom left: "E Munch"

Oil on spruce panel

h 24.6 cm x b 35.2 cm

WRM Dep. FC 718





Brief Report

This little picture on wood was painted *en plein air* right on the waterline of the rocky beach. Munch spent the summers of 1889 and 1890 in Åsgårdstrand, returning to France after these sojourns in order to continue his studies. Here the artist used a spruce panel, deviating by just a few millimetres from the standard P5 size. There is no evidence to date that spruce panels cut to standard sizes were ever commercially available, and the presence of saw-marks on the edges of this one suggests rather that it was cut from a board destined originally for another purpose.

Munch may have taken his lead from the format which he had got to know in Paris, cutting the floor of a drawer or something similar to meet his requirements. The panel is unprimed, and the lively wet-in-wet application of the paints suggests a study. Munch worked without an underdrawing using predominantly horizontal brushstrokes from left to right, leaving the wood visible in many places. The painting is clearly the product of a single working session.



Picture support panel

Standard format	close to P5 (24,0 x 35,0 cm); whether the size was deliberately chosen is unclear; standardized spruce panels are not known to have been sold commercially (fig. 2)
Thickness	10 mm
Type of wood	spruce (<i>Picea sp.</i>)
Panel structure	two boards, abutted and glued together
Grain direction:	horizontal
Cut of panel	tangential
Traces left by production/treatment	saw-marks on the edges of the boards, surface planed smooth
Producer's/dealer's marks	–

Ground

Sizing	none present
Colour	–
Application	–
Binding medium	–
Character and appearance	–



Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique: none present

Extent/character –

Pentimenti –

Paint layer

Paint application/technique and artist's own revision brisk, wet-in-wet, with the colours blending on the surface; paint application with mostly horizontal brushstrokes, numerous places where the wood is visible (figs 7-11)

Painting tools brushes, 1.1 cm and 0.6 cm; the brush handle was also occasionally used

Surface structure very lively rapid brushstrokes; the variation in the widths of the strokes creates a vivid relief (fig. 3); brushstrokes from left to right

Palette microscopic inspection reveals: white, ochre, orange, pink, red, red lake, brown, green, blue; the colours often applied pure and mixed on the surface in the course of the painting process (figs 7-11); VIS spectrometry: chrome yellow(?), iron-oxide yellow, iron-oxide red, vermillion, rose madder(?), cobalt blue

Binding mediums oil, probably the paint came out of a tube

Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition the present varnish is not original, remains of an older varnish imply that the painting has been varnished at least twice (traces of varnish drops verso, fig. 12)



Signature/Mark

When?	in pencil, after the paint had dried (figs 5, 6)
Autograph signature	comparable with other Munch signatures
Serial	–

Frame

Authenticity	later addition
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State of preservation

A major retouching has been carried out in the top left-hand corner (fig. 4); places where the paint-layer has been cleaned, flattening of the impasto and a new coat of varnish are all due to a restoration at some time in the past.

Additional remarks

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Literature

- Schulz 1992: Sabine Schulz (ed.) Munch in Frankreich, exhib. cat. Frankfurt, 1992
- 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. 127, p. 288, 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 | – Cross-section |
| – False-colour infrared reflectography | |
| – X-ray | |
| ✓ Stereomicroscopy | |

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Fig. 1
Recto



Fig. 2
Verso, with barely legible
dealer's stamp (cf. fig. 4)





Fig. 3
Raking light



Fig. 4
UV fluorescence



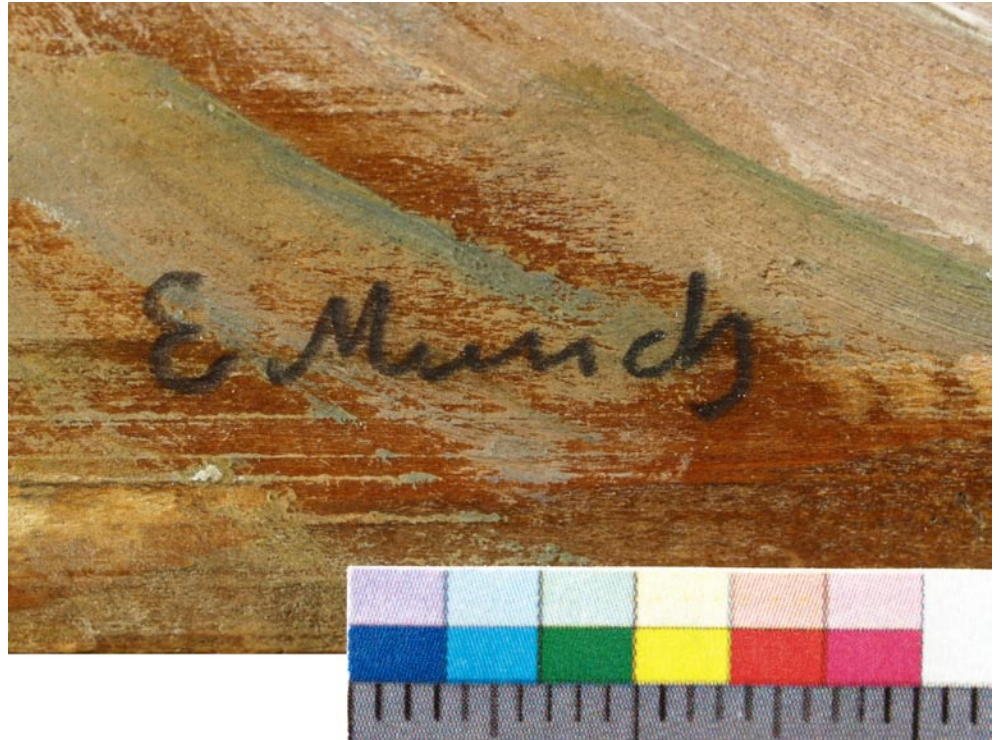


Fig. 5
Detail, signature



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

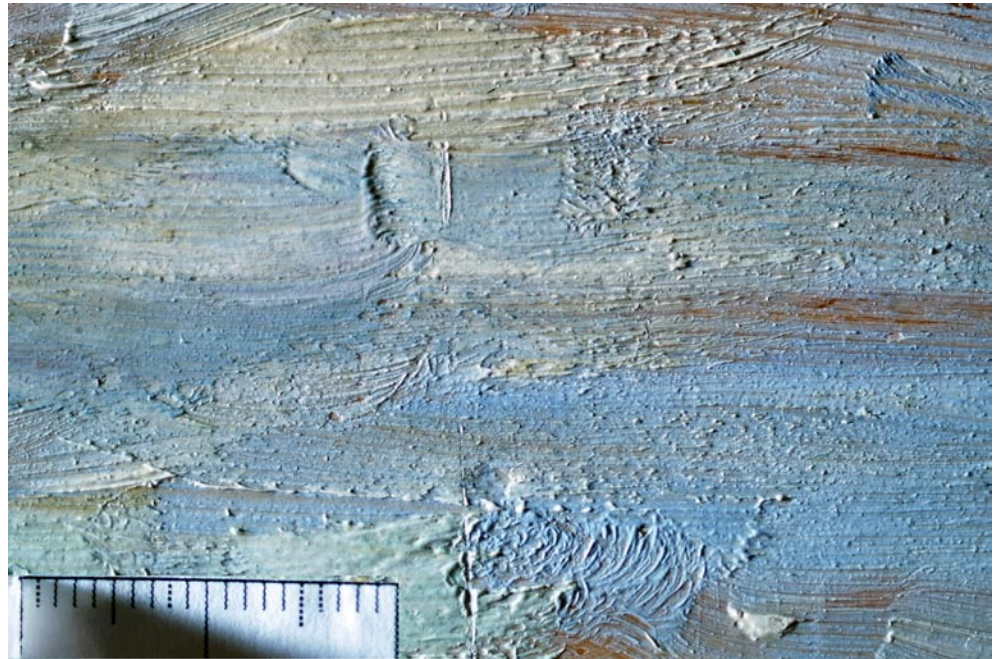


Fig. 7
Raking light, detail of
paint-layer



Fig. 8
Raking light, detail of
paint-layer

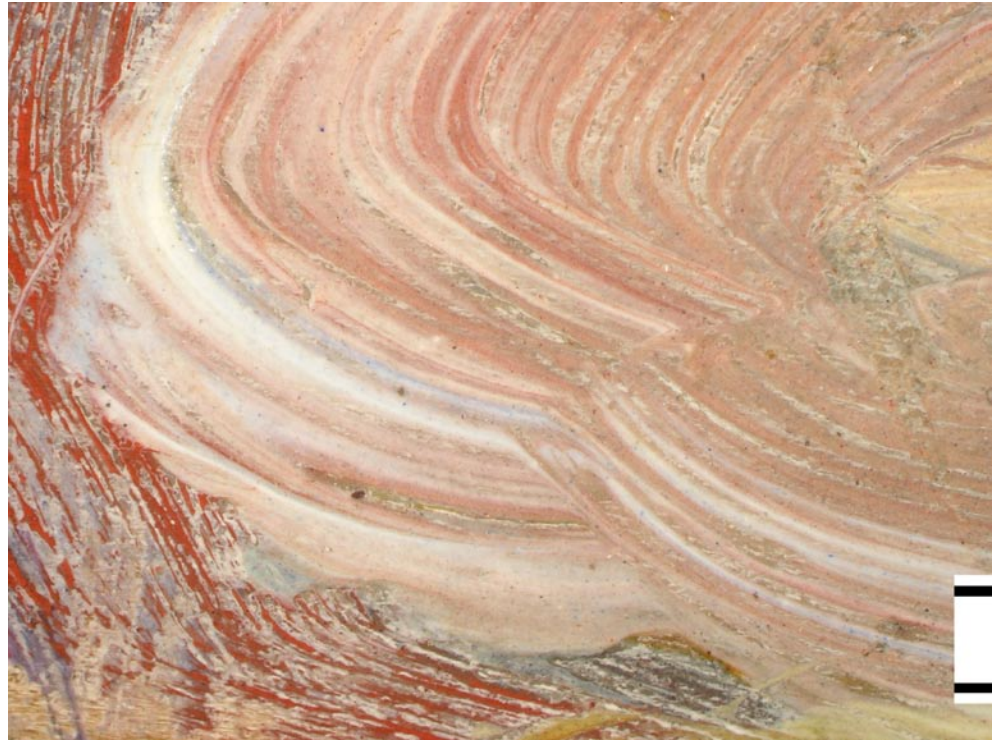


Fig. 9
Paint-layer, microscopic
photograph (M = 1 mm)



Fig. 10
Detail of paint-layer



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Fig. 11
Detail of paint-layer



Fig. 12
Detail, drops of varnish
verso