



Eugène Boudin

(1824-1898)

Kerhor, Fisherwoman

(Kerhor, Les pêcheuses)

1870

*signed and dated bottom left:
„E. Boudin 70“*

Oil on canvas

h 85,5 cm x b 121,5 cm

WRM Dep. FC 657





Brief Report

This painting is a completed work. The most recent research shows that it was evidently exhibited at the Salon Officiel in 1870, the year of its completion. While this could hitherto only be presumed by dint of archive studies [Honfleur 1992, Lempertz 1998], X-ray examination has now provided confirmation: compared with a second, far smaller version of this composition dating from the same year, and with a similar title [Schmit 1973, vol. I, no. 527, figs. 12, 13], significant changes in the grouping of the figures allow no conclusion but that the small picture was a study for the present work. Thus not only is the sequence of the two works proved, but also the appearance of this one at the Salon, for Boudin would certainly have entered the completed large-format work and not the study. These revisions by the artist, discernible above all in the area of the figures, represent one of the special features of this painting (figs 5-7, cf. fig. 12). The only figures left unchanged were the two with yellow shawls. All the others were previously placed up to about 2.5 cm higher. Additionally, the women were shifted slightly leftwards or rightwards. In this connexion, it is conspicuous that the woman with the blue shawl seated with her back to the beholder was moved twice, and thus her distance from the other two figures was changed three times.

The three women on the right were originally not so close together as they are in the visible painting. Furthermore, the first draft of the picture seems to have two more women with white bonnets beside the figure now on the extreme right. Even though the lay-in of the figures was possibly attuned to the total composition from the outset, and was oriented to the small-format study, the fact that they were shifted suggests a dissatisfaction that was perhaps only noticed during the transfer to the larger format, leading to the revision. In addition, it may be noted that the first ground layer, immediately next to the canvas, is very thin and ochre-coloured, and was subsequently covered with a grey layer (fig. 11). Whether the latter is an underpainting or a second ground layer cannot be said with certainty, as it can only be seen in a few places. The painting evinces lively brushwork with a multilayered structure, many areas having been worked wet-in-wet, and smeared into each other (fig. 9). The original delicacy of the surface was impaired by a seriously invasive restoration carried out a long time ago.



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Picture support canvas

Standard format	not a standard size
Weave	tabby weave
Canvas characteristics	vertical app. 18, horizontal app. 19 threads per cm; relatively even
Stretching	the original foldover edges have been lost; the painting has been re-stretched on a new stretcher; stretchmarks from the original stretching visible all around the edge
Stretcher/strainer	original stretcher not preserved (fig. 3)
Stretcher/strainer depth	2.0 cm
Traces left by manufacture/processing	none
Manufacturer's/dealer's marks	none

Ground

Sizing	undetermined
Colour	ochre, slight traces of red, yellow and black pigment particles (fig. 11)
Application	presumably primed after cutting to size and stretching, as stretchmarks are present; very thin application, thread structure of the canvas visible in places
Binding medium	presumably oil or a medium containing oil
Texture	–



Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique	–
Extent/character	on the ground there is in places a layer of medium-grey paint with large particles of dark-blue and black pigment, which could be interpreted as underpainting, a second layer of ground, or as imprimitura (fig. 11)
Pentimenti	–

Paint layer

Paint application/technique and artist's own revision	paint application presumably in three phases: partial lay in of the composition in colour, subsequent filling out of the space wet-in-wet, then placing of details, colour accents and highlights; brisk and in places very lively painting technique, leading to a mixing of individual paint layers; extensive revision through re-grouping of the figures as described above (figs 5-7)
Painting tools	flat-ferrule brushes, bristle brushes
Surface structure	dense impasto and multilayer painting
Palette	visual microscopic inspection reveals: pale yellow, orange, pale red, red lake, greenish blue, pale blue, medium blue, dark green VIS spectrometry: chrome yellow(?) or cadmium yellow(?), iron-oxide yellow, iron-oxide red, vermillion, cochineal lake(?), cerulean blue, cobalt blue, Prussian blue, viridian, also an undetermined white
Binding mediums	presumably oil

Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition	present coating not original, remains of a browned natural-resin varnish are present in the hollows of the impasto areas
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Signature/Mark

When?	applied before the paint was completely dry
Autograph signature	partly wet-in-wet, individual letters painted over in a second phase before the first paint was dry, early shrinkage cracks (fig. 9)
Serial	–

Frame

Authenticity	not original
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State of preservation

The painting has been lined; in the process the foldover edges were removed and pressure marks were left on the relief of the paint layer; inexperienced removal of the varnish led to damage to sensitive parts of the picture; in the craquelure, substance squeezed up from underlying paint layers points to severe exposure to heat or solvents; extensive retouching (fig. 4).

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. 10, p. 42, with ill.
- Schmit 1973: Robert Schmit, *Eugène Boudin 1824-1898*, vol. 1, p. 1996, no. 526 (with ill.), Paris 1973
- Honfleur 1992: Eugène Boudin, exhib. cat. Musée Eugène Boudin, Honfleur 1992, p. 203
- Lempertz 1998: Lempertz Bulletin, 1/1998, p. 2 (colour ill.)



Source of illustrations

Figs 11, 12: Schmit 1973, vol. 1, cat. no. 527, p. 197

All further 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 | |

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Date: 05/2007

Date: 11/2007



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Fig. 1
Recto



Fig. 2
Verso





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Fig. 3
Photograph in UV region
of spectrum



Fig. 4
Detail, revised group of
fisherwomen



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Fig. 5
X-ray photo, detail as
in fig. 4; the multiple
changes in the positions
of the figures are clear

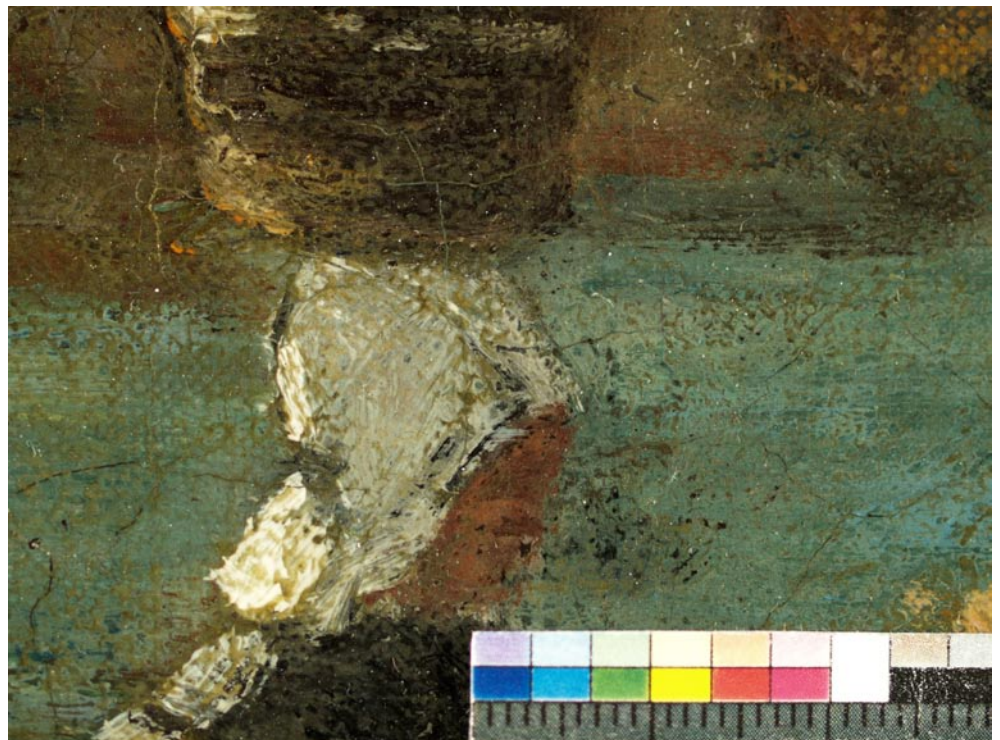


Fig. 6
Detail, fisherwoman



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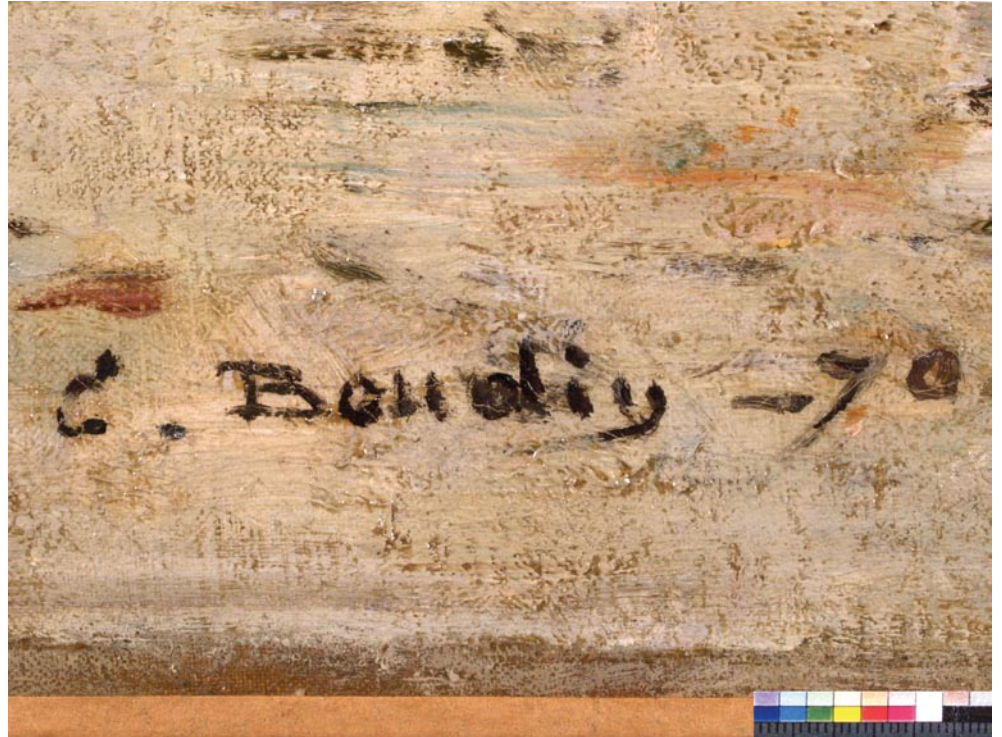


Fig. 7
Signature

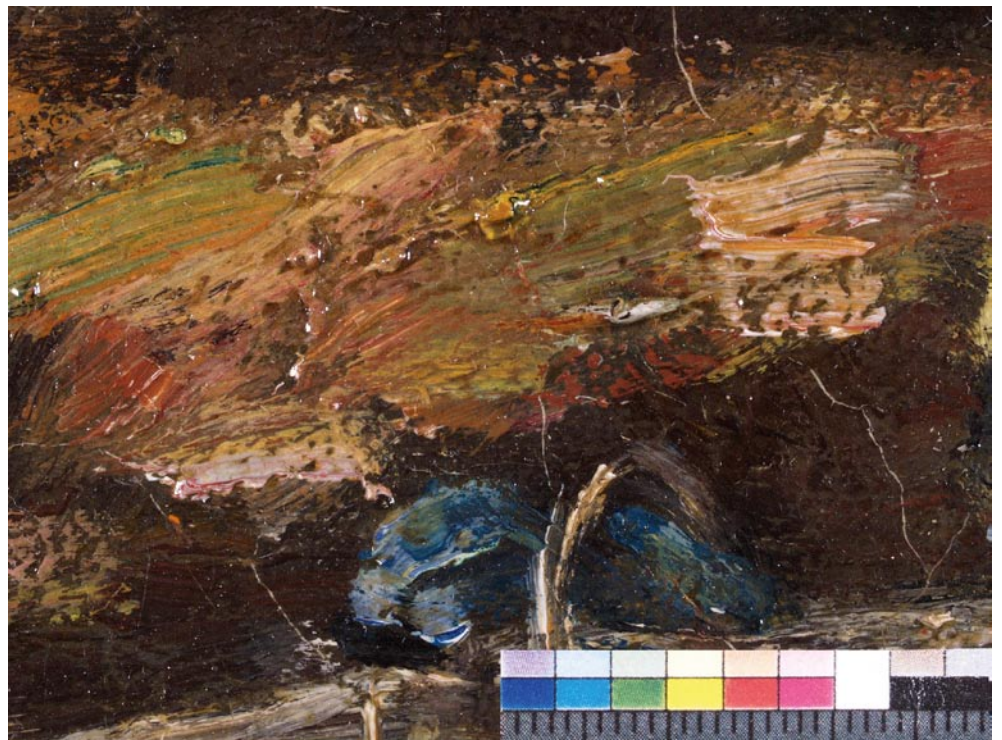


Fig. 8
Detail, wet-in-wet paint
application



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Fig. 9
Detail, shoes in foreground, an earlier position was rejected and painted over by the artist

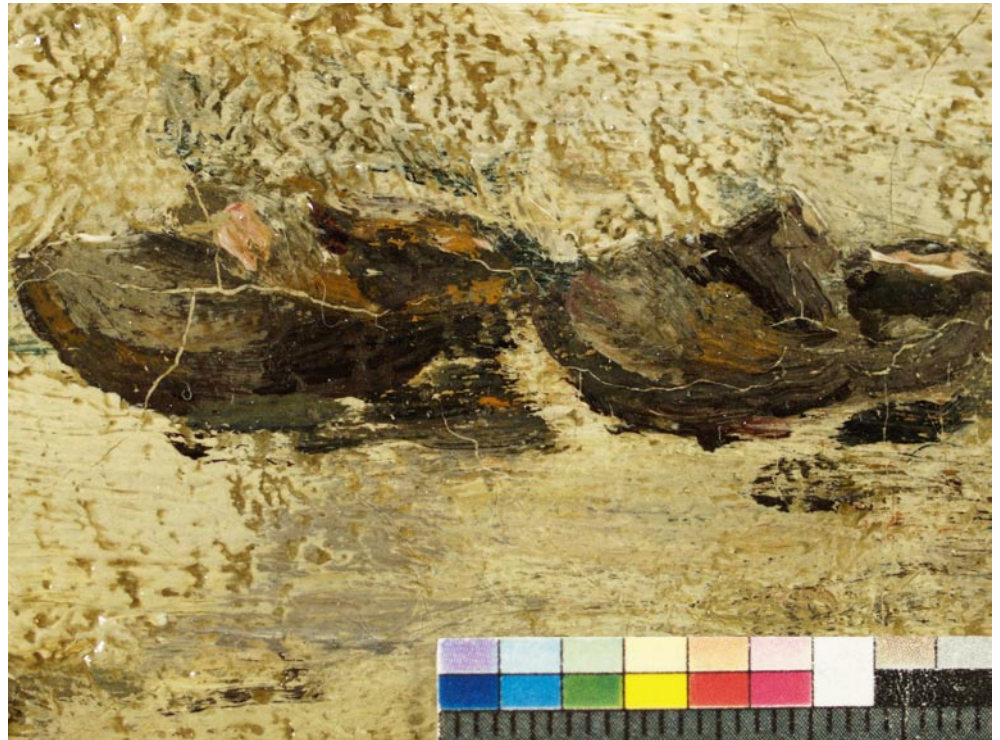
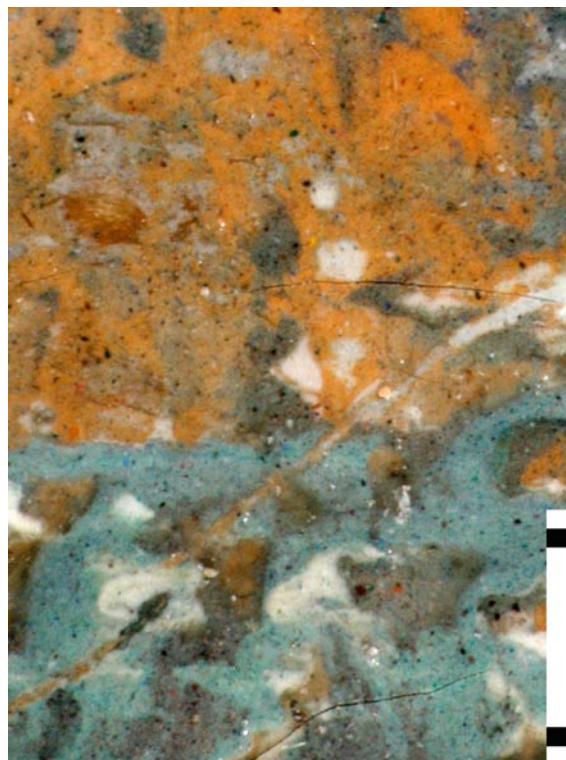


Fig. 10
Grey-and-ochre layer, whose function as ground, underpainting or imprimatura is unclear





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Fig. 11
Study by Boudin, *Les pêcheuses de Kerhor*, 1870,
h 46.0 cm x b 66.0 cm,
private collection



Fig. 12
Group of figures for
comparison, detail from
fig. 11

