



Paul Signac

(1863-1935)

Samois, Study No. 8

(Samois, Étude no. 8)

1899

no signature, undated

Oil on artists' board

h 27.1 cm x b 34.7 cm

WRM Dep. FC 684





Brief Report

The study with the depiction of the Seine landscape near Samois was painted as part of a cycle of 14 oil studies, which Signac executed at the end of 1899 and beginning of 1900 [Cachin/Ferretti-Bocquillon 2000, p. 243]. For this series and thus also for this study bearing the number 8, Signac used an artists' board on which was pasted a pre-primed cotton cloth (*carton toile*), a support which can be found in altogether 33 small-format paintings in his oeuvre. This one, which was presumably executed in the presence of the motif, was preceded by a drawn compositional lay-in, in which the contours of the landscape are coarsely sketched (fig. 5). The subsequent execution in colour integrates the white ground in all parts. The loose paint applications are dominated by short, often arc or hook-shaped brush-strokes. The riverbank in the left foreground by contrast is characterized by longer linear brush-strokes (fig. 3). The different thicknesses of the paint applications seems to be primarily dependent on the proportion of white in paint that was often mixed rapidly. The higher the proportion of white, the more impasto and also the more matt the paint appears, in a painting that has remained unvarnished to this day.

The traces of scratching or smearing running vertically down from the top edge of the picture, which were created while the paint was still wet, could have been caused by sliding the picture into the lid of a painting case or some other container (figs. 3, 6). Numerous squashed impasto areas have paper fibres adhering to them, which resemble those of the paper covering of the board verso. They could easily come from another study in the series which was laid with its back to the still wet paint on this one. Striking colour changes and degradations affect above all those paint applications with admixtures of yellow, orange and green (figs. 10, 11). The changes are very varied in nature, and often no longer permit any reconstruction of the pristine coloration; they are due to different proportions of cadmium-yellow pigments whose instability was probably itself due to production methods [Leone/Burnstock/Jones 2005]. Signac gave away this painting, which he never signed or dated, to his fellow-artist Charles Angrand in 1899, i.e. almost as soon as it was painted.



Picture support board

Standard format	F5 (35.0 x 27.0 cm) horizontal
Thickness	3 mm
Characteristics	cardboard whose type and structure cannot be identified precisely, pasted recto with a pre-primed, very fine cotton fabric (vertical and horizontal 32-34 threads per cm), while the surface verso is covered with two layers of paper
Color	the coverings recto and verso make it impossible to determine; verso more than one layer of originally blue paper, probably containing wood shavings
Manufacture/modification	industrially produced, the cardboard was first pasted with the pre-primed fabric, which was folded over at the edges to form a hem verso of up to 1.5 cm in breadth all round; subsequently the board was pasted verso with two layers of different paper, before the company label was affixed (figs. 2, 7)
Producer's/dealer's marks	Paper label with the inscription "ENCADREMENT, DORURE/CADRE, CHÊNE, POIRIER, ETC/Maison CLUZEL/L. VIVIEN/COULEURS FINES & ARTICLES POUR ARTISTES/33, Rue Fontaine, PARIS"; h 3.8 x b 6.7 cm (fig. 7)

Ground

Sizing	board: undetermined; cotton: weakly present
Colour	pure white
Application	presumably applied in one layer before cutting to size and pasting
Binding medium	presumably oil
Character and appearance	thin and largely pore-filling so that the fine texture of the fabric remains visible; numerous fine air-bubbles; generally matt and brittle



Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique:	presumably soft graphite pencil
Extent/character	all the important shapes of the landscape motif are underdrawn with loose pencil strokes (figs 5, 8); the black pencil-marks are mostly confined to the elevations of the weave (figs 8-10); individual parallel lines suggest that the artist was using the underdrawing to find the best form
Pentimenti	none

Paint layer

Paint application/technique and artist's own revision	paint applications, mostly in arc and hook-shaped strokes, integrate the white ground into the generally pastel-like colour composition; alongside applications with a saturated brush, there are individual drier brush strokes which only cover the elevations of the primed fabric; the higher the proportion of white pigments, the more impasto and matt the application; mostly pure colours with or without admixture of white, less often blends of yellow with orange and/or green
Painting tools	brushes, for the most part presumably narrow bristle brushes
Surface structure	lively variation between thin and heavily impasto applications, which appear matt where paints have been mixed, but often glossy where the paint is thin and above all where it is brightly coloured; the highest gloss is in the bright red
Palette	visual microscopic inspection reveals: medium yellow, bright orange, pale red, bright red (the orange fluorescence suggests rose madder, cf. fig. 4), pale green, dark green, medium blue, violet; Vis spectrometry impossible owing to the impasto application; cadmium yellow (FTIR)
Binding mediums	presumably exclusively oil



Surface finish

Authenticity/ Condition	preserved in its unvarnished state
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Signature/Mark

When?	no signature present
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Autograph signature	–
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Serial	–
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Frame

Authenticity	not original
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State of preservation

The picture-support bulges slightly recto; squashing of impasto areas and highlights often with paper fibres adhering; colour changes and degradations in applications containing blends of yellow, orange and green (FTIR evidence of cadmium yellow) are recognizable as transparent brownish material with a crust-like surface as well as fungus-like white efflorescences which under the microscope resemble polystyrene foam balls (fig. 11); according to FTIR analysis, the semi-transparent and white reaction products contain cadmium sulphate.



Additional remarks

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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, no cat. no., pp. 364-365, with ill.
- Cachin/Ferretti-Bocquillon 2000: Françoise Cachin/Maria Ferretti-Bocquillon: *Signac. Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint*, Paris 2000
- Leone/Burnstock/Jones 2005: Bronwyn Leone, Aviva Burnstock, Chris Jones: "The deterioration of cadmium sulphide yellow artists' pigments", in: ICOM-CC 14th Triennial Meeting, The Hague, 12-16 September 2005, 2, 2005, pp. 803-813.

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 | ✓ Fibre analysis of the pasted fabric recto |
| ✓ False-colour infrared reflectography | |
| ✓ X-ray | |
| ✓ Stereomicroscopy | |

Author of examination: Katrin Menz
Author of brief report: Iris Schaefer

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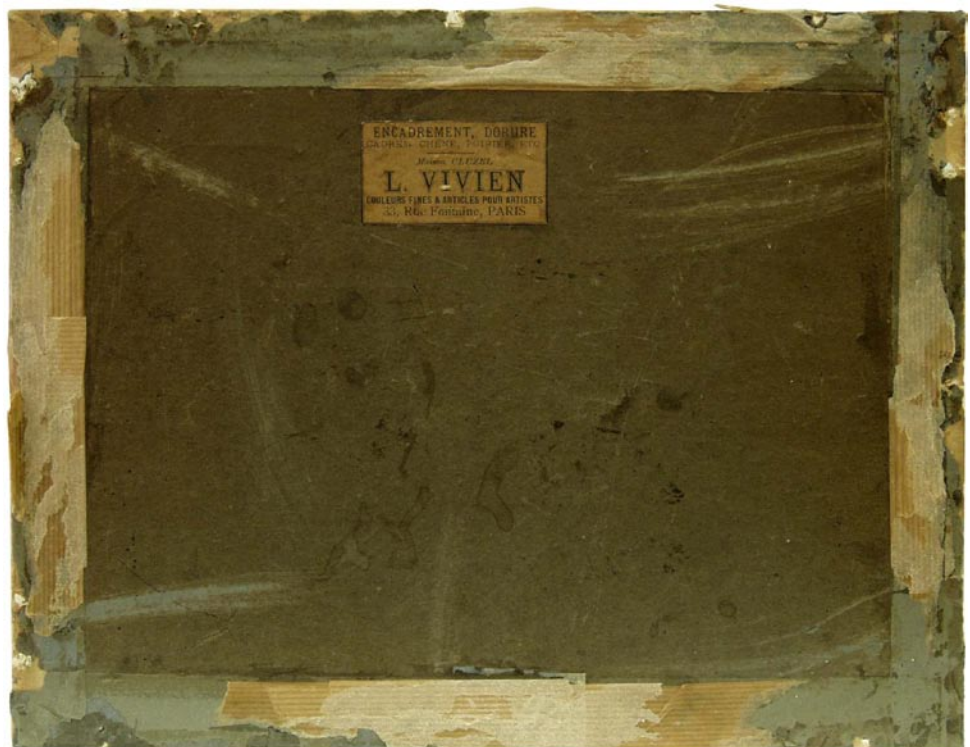


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Fig. 1
Recto



Fig. 2
Verso





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Fig. 3
Raking light



Fig. 4
UV fluorescence





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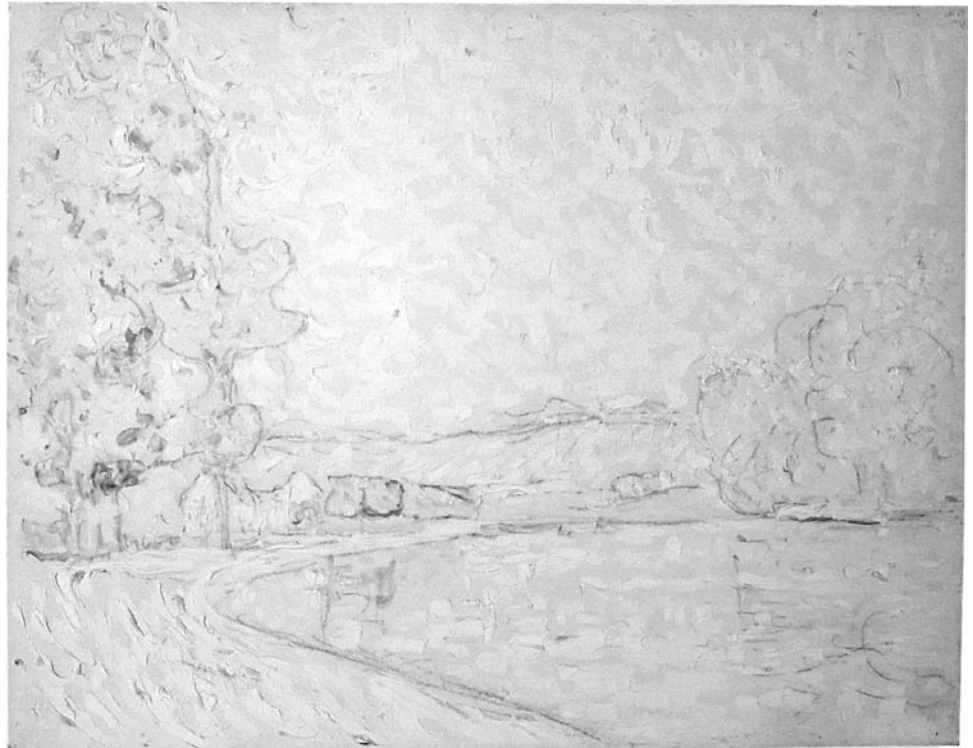


Fig. 5
IR reflectogram



Fig. 6
X-ray



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Fig. 7
Detail, company label
verso



Fig. 8
Detail, IR reflectogram,
houses on the bank





Fig. 9
Detail, houses on
the bank with visible
underdrawing lines



Fig. 10
Detail, paint applications
in the area of the bank
with underdrawing lines
and colour changes





Fig. 11
Detail, heavily degraded
paint with transparent
crust-like coating and
white efflorescences,
microscopic photograph
(M = 1 mm)

