



Armand Guillaumin

(1841-1927)

Rock at Baumette Point

(Rocher à la pointe de la Baumette)

1893

signed bottom left: "Guillaumin"

dated verso: "Jer 93 4h"

Oil on canvas

h 33.0 cm x b 46.0 cm

WRM Dep. FC 559





Brief Report

Since the early 1890s, Guillaumin had painted numerous views of the rock formations in the little seaside town of Agay on the Côte d'Azur [Gray 1996, p. 50], among them the *Rock at Baumette Point*, which, according to an inscription verso was painted in January 1893 at 4 o'clock in the afternoon ["Rocher à la pointe de la Baumette Jer 93 4h", figs. 2, 7]. An exact dating such as this is the best possible evidence for the work's having been painted en plein air, and is nothing unusual in the œuvre of Guillaumin, who, as far as is known, painted predominantly outdoors all his life. The figure "4" is also to be found on the bottom foldover edge of the canvas, maybe also a note by the artist as a quick reminder, when the picture was in transport or storage, of the time of day he had painted it (fig. 7). Another indication of its being painted outdoors can be found at the top edge in the form of a semicircular impression in the still wet paint. It could have been made by the fastener used to hold the picture to the inside of the lid of a commercially available painting box (fig. 12).

The picture was painted on a densely woven standard P 8 canvas pre-primed in white, and bears verso the stencil of the Parisian dealer Tasset & l'Hôte (fig. 2). The ground does not adhere well to the support, presumably a result of the manufacturing process, and also shows abrasions, discolorations and losses due to careless handling of the primed canvas before it was painted, either by the dealer or by the artist himself. For various reasons, the white ground looks altogether darker today than originally, and thus visually resembles an unprimed canvas, such as Guillaumin often used in other works [Callen 2000, p. 67] (fig. 9). Using a black graphite or lead pencil, the artist rapidly sketched a few contours of the horizon and rock on the white ground, before completing the subsequent painting with dynamic lineation in presumably just two or three working sessions (fig. 11). A few final corrections, accents and additions, as well as the signature, followed after the paint was dry (fig. 9).



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Picture support canvas

Standard format	P 8 horizontal (33.0 cm x 46.0 cm), stencil “8” verso on the right-hand bar of the stretcher (fig. 2)
Weave	tabby weave
Canvas characteristics	vertical 18, horizontal 19 threads per cm; medium density
Stretching	authenticity doubtful; original stretching has certainly been changed at least once in any case, partial subsequent tensioning taking place presumably at the top, on the right and in the corners; original nail-holes show signs of corrosion (fig. 8), intervals between nails of between 4.0 and 6.0 cm
Stretcher/strainer	original stretcher with vertical centre-bar
Stretcher/strainer depth	2.0 cm
Traces left by manufacture/processing	fabric was cut irregularly at the edges (fig. 8)
Manufacturer’s/dealer’s marks	black stencil verso on the right-hand side: “TASSET & L’HOTE/ENCADREMENTS/31 rue Fontaine 31/PARIS/TOILES COULEURS FINES”, h 8.0 x b 12.0 cm (fig. 2)



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Ground

Sizing	not determined
Colour	white; the original chalk-white ground now looks altogether darker, presumably because of 1) dirt, 2) increased transparency due to the thin application and the absorption of oily binding agent from the paint layer, 3) colour saturation due to insulation of the ground (fig. 8)
Application	very thin, single-layer application before the canvas was cut to size and stretched (<i>à grain</i>); the raised parts of the canvas are exposed in places; cohesion between ground and support is poor, owing to production method; beneath the paint-layer abrasions and small losses are evident in the ground, as well as a circular dark discoloration (Ø 5.6 cm) at the top edge, all signs that the pre-primed picture support was showing signs of age and/or storage even before it was painted; along the foldover edges can be seen the drying edge of a transparent, binding-agent-rich coating, presumably an insulation applied by the artist to the ground in order to regulate the absorbency of the support (fig. 8)
Binding medium	not determined
Texture	–

Composition planning/Underpainting/Underdrawing

Medium/technique	anthracite-to-black pencil app. 1.0 mm broad, presumably graphite or lead; stereo-microscopic inspection reveals fine black, powdery crystal-like particles with a metallic sheen (fig. 11)
Extent/character	in the IR reflectogram under the stereo-microscope individual fine lines and dynamic short arcs of an underdrawing along the horizon and the rocks can be seen; it cannot be excluded, however, that the underdrawing also extended to other parts which cannot be completely documented
Pentimenti	–



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Paint layer

Paint application/technique
and artist's own revision

brisk painting in presumably two or three working sessions; dynamic brushwork; the procedure was "fat on lean": first the glaze-like lay-in of a few colour areas, then increasingly thicker applications of paint, becoming extremely dry and impasto; the sea and rocks were painted first, the rocks and spray being left out when the sea was painted, followed by the sky, the spray and the wave crests; finally the last corrections and colour accents and/or additions on the dry paint-layer (e.g. pentimenti along the boundaries between rocks, spray and sea, shape of the violet shadows beneath the rocks); paint-layer covers the picture relatively completely, with only a few places where the ground is visible

Painting tools

flat-ferrule brushes of various breadths between 0.2 and 0.9 cm

Surface structure

varies between smooth and impasto applications, all of them however with clearly visible brushwork (fig. 3)

Palette

hues revealed by visual microscopic examination: white, medium yellow, orange, light red, light and dark red lakes (orange fluorescence under UV, fig. 6), violet, medium blue, two dark blues, pale green, dark green, the colours were rarely applied in their pure form, but mostly mixed

VIS spectrometry: chrome yellow(?) or cadmium yellow(?), cadmium orange(?), vermillion, carmine lake, cobalt violet, cobalt blue, ultramarine, Prussian blue(?), copper green, viridian

Binding mediums

presumably oil

Surface finish

Authenticity/Condition

authentic unvarnished condition (fig. 4)



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Signature/Mark

When?	autograph signature “Guillaumin” was applied with a thin round brush in dark red (red lake mixed with violet) only after the main paint layer had dried, albeit presumably not long after, as the cracks due to aging affect the paint-layer and the signature in equal measure (fig. 9)
Autograph signature	autograph signature which corresponds unambiguously with other signatures by Guillaumin (cf. Guillaumin, WRM Dep. FC 749)
Serial	–

Frame

Authenticity	not original
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State of preservation

Original stretching edges have been shifted 4 mm inwards by excessive tensioning at some later date, in particular at the bottom edge; loss of substance in the ground along the edges of the picture and at the stretching edges.

Additional remarks

The painting bears evidence of having been completely painted out of doors (see above, Brief Report).



Literature

- Bourgeois Ainé 1888: Bourgeois Ainé, Catalogue général illustré, Paris
- Callen 2000: Anthea Callen, The Art of Impression, painting techniques and the making of modernity, New Haven, London 2000
- Gray 1996: Christopher Gray, "Armand Guillaumin. Leben und Werk", in: Vom Spiel der Farbe, ed. Rainer Budde, Cologne 1996, pp.13-73
- Rosenberg 1908: "Retrospective d'œuvres de Guillaumin", Galerie Rosenberg, Paris 1908
- Serret/Fabiani 1971: Georges Serret, Dominique Fabiani: Armand Guillaumin 1841-1927. Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint, Paris 1971, No. 291 (with illustration)

Source of illustrations

Fig. 12: painting box from Bourgeois Ainé 1888, p. 95

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 | |

Author of examination: Annegret Volk

Date: 05/2007

Author of brief report: Caroline von Saint-George

Date: 04/2008



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Fig. 1
Recto



Fig. 2
Verso



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Fig. 3
Raking light



Fig. 4
Reflected light
from an angle



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Fig. 5
Transmitted light



Fig. 6
UV fluorescence



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Fig. 7

Detail top, pencil inscription verso with indication of time when picture was painted "Jer 93 4 h" [Fr. Janvier 1893, 4 h; Engl. January 1893, 4 o'clock [pm]]; detail bottom, pencil inscription with the figure "4" on the bottom foldover edge, presumably a further indication of the exact time of the painting



Fig. 8

Detail, right-hand turnover edge with traces of corrosion caused by the original tacks and the drying edge of an insulation coat rich in binding agents, applied to the ground





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Fig. 9
Detail, signature

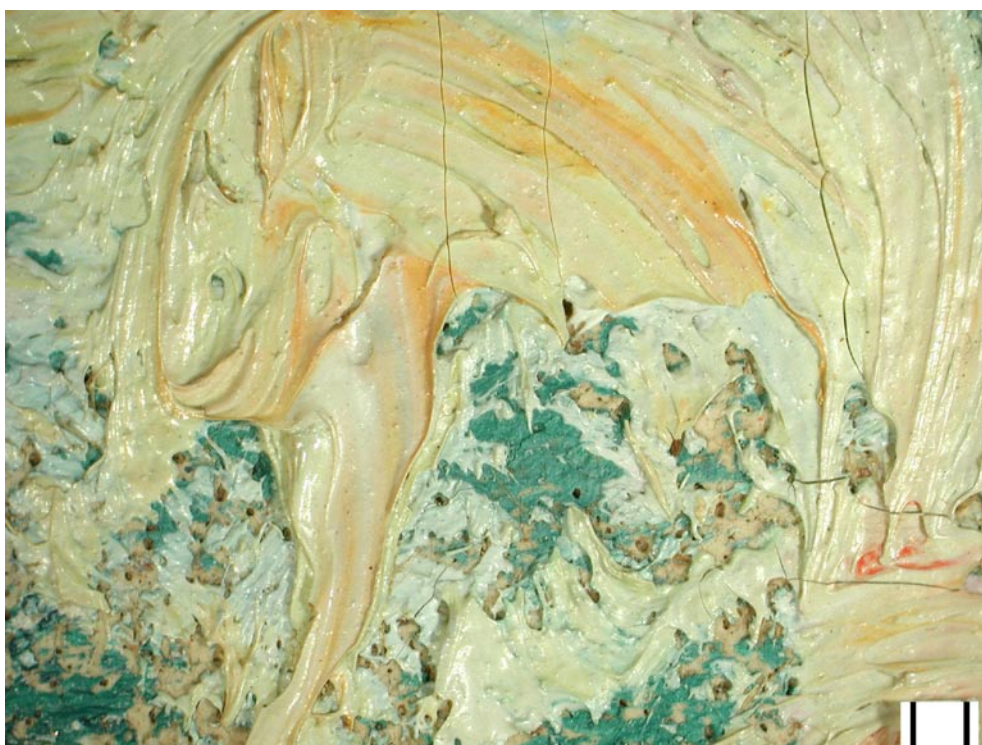


Fig. 10
The last paint applications were executed wet-in-wet on the already dry paint-layer, microscopic photograph (M = 1 mm)



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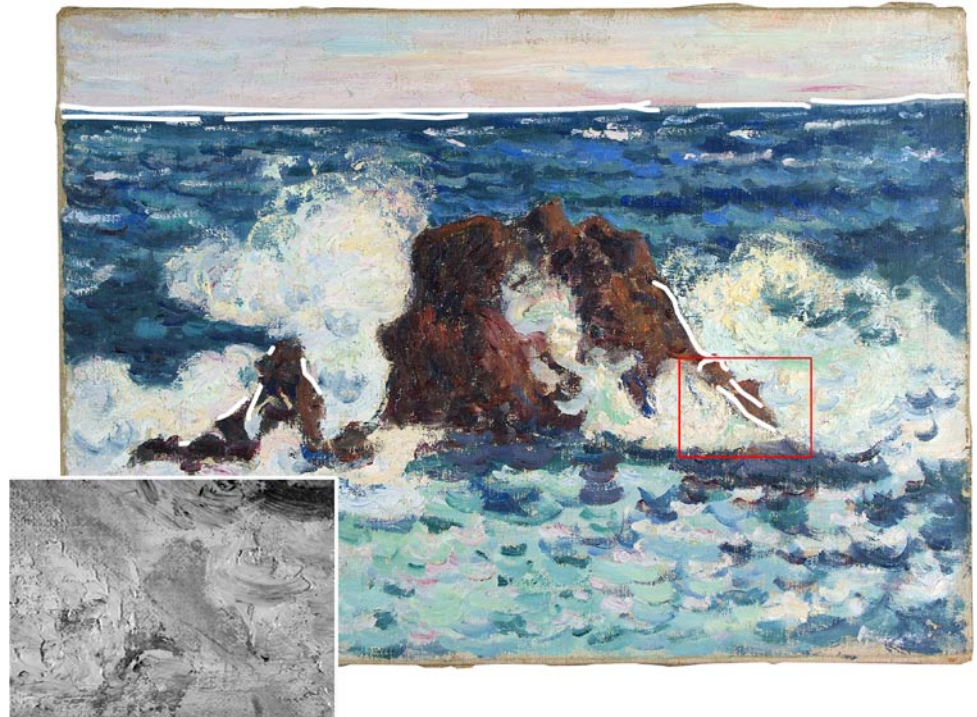


Fig. 11
Mapping of the visible
underdrawing lines
in the IR reflectogram
(detail bottom left)

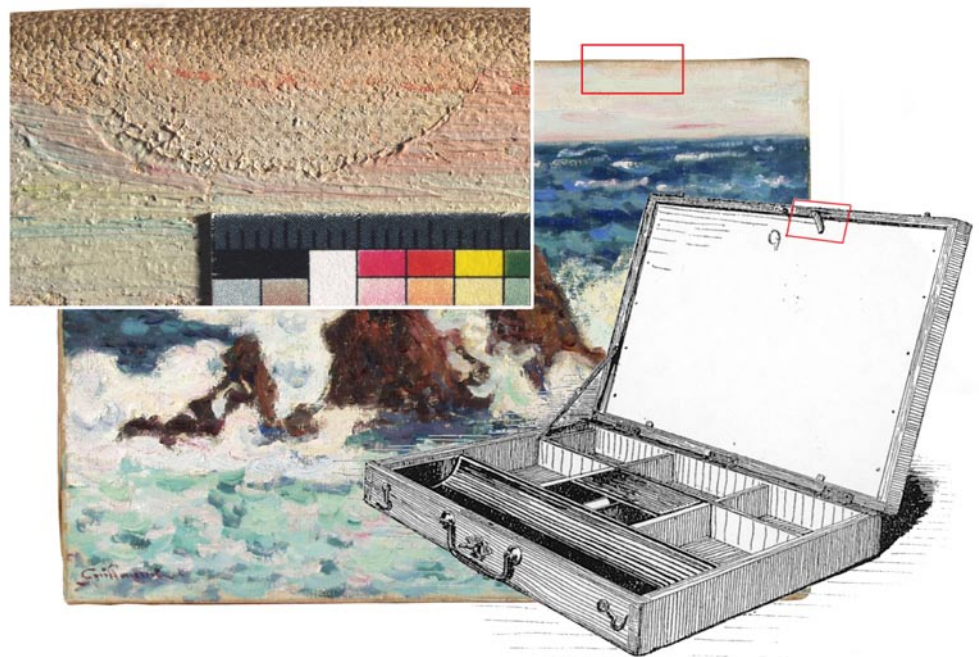


Fig. 12
Detail, semicircular
impression in the wet
paint, due presumably
to the fastener used
to hold the picture to
the inside of the lid of
a standard commercial
painting box of the time