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A database dedicated to Jean-Baptiste Oudry's painting technique.

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A collaborative and pluriannual project

Between the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the C2RMF, supported by the DIM-MAP Ile de France.

Actors:

Claire BETELU, Painting Conservator, Doctor in Art History, Assistant Professor with tenure, University Paris 1 : Technical study.
 Claire GERIN-PIERRE, Curator at the C2RMF, Painting Restoration department.
 Dorothee LANNO, Doctor in Art History, Post-Doctorate University Paris 1 : Archival research.
 Johanna SALVANT, Doctor in Chemistry, Research Engineer at the C2RMF : Materials identification.

I. The Project



Perronneau Jean-Baptiste (1715-1783), *Jean-Baptiste Oudry, Painter*, oil on canvas, (105 x 131 cm) (inv7158), Paris, musée du Louvre (C: RMN Grand Palais, Franck Raux)

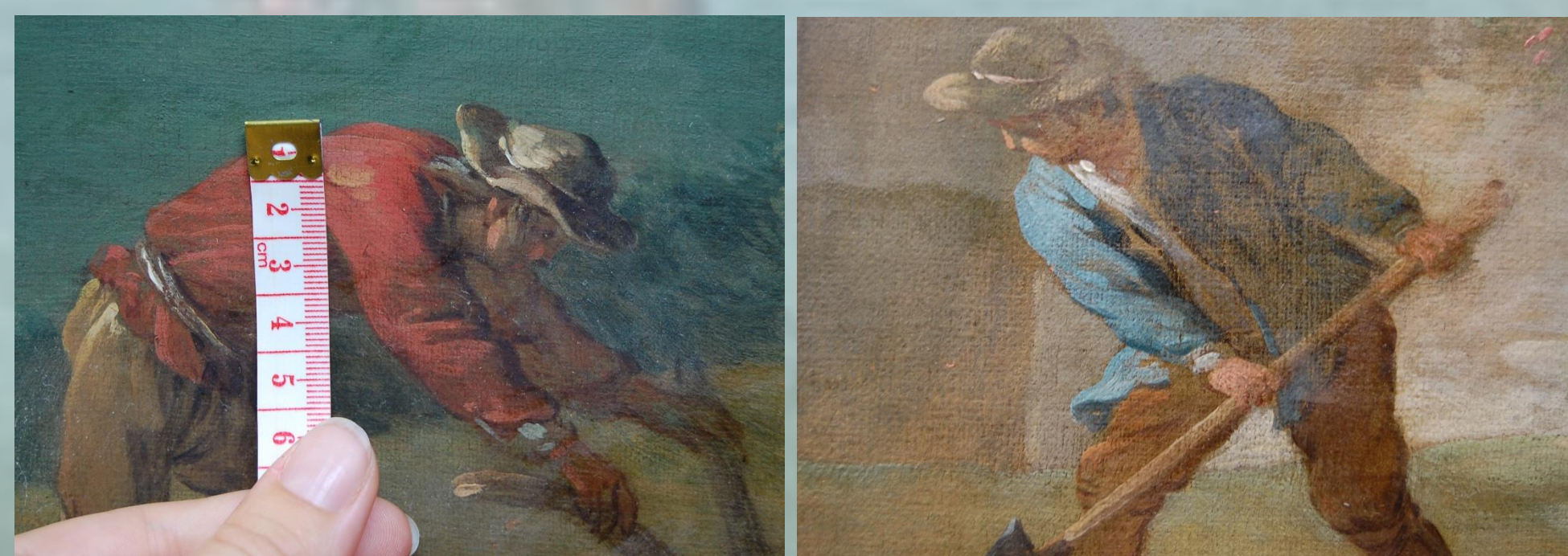
Jean-Baptiste Oudry is a French painter from the end of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th. Oudry is received at the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1717. His painting production is estimated around more than one thousand paintings.

Why did we choose Oudry for our research program ?

Because of his two conferences at the Academy in 1749 and 1752. They appear for the 18th century as the only conferences with technical data. Indeed, Oudry is the only painter talking about painting techniques. He wrote his texts at the end of his career reporting his experience as painter and an in-depth knowledge of old practice and painting material behavior in time. He proposes an interpretation of painting degradation reasons and suggests how to avoid or how to slow it down.

The interpretation of Oudry's painting technique and part of the one of his contemporaries' are based on his conferences when almost none material examination or analyses have been done.

A specific attention to the paintings conservation condition.

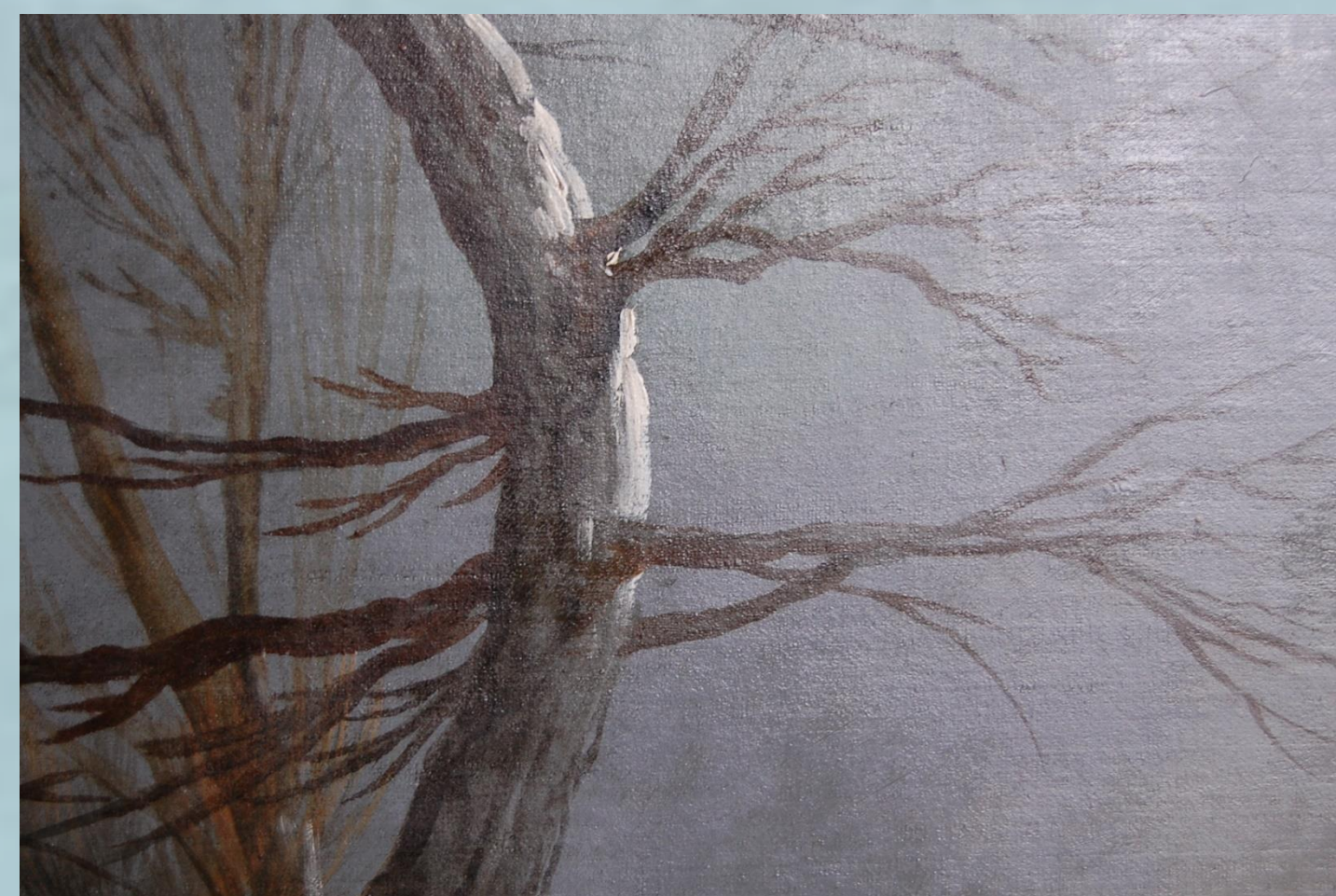


Spring, Detail of two characters. On the left, good preserved paint layer. On the right, blue layer abraded by previous conservation treatments. (C: C. Betelu)

PictOu facilitates the access to painting technology. The restoration documentation and the time of restoration are valorized. The painting condition description is presented as a preamble to technical information in order that visitors, students, art historians, curators, understand that the value and the scope of the information depends on it.

As in the following example, the information quality about Oudry's painting technique depends on the painting conservation state.

Four Seasons (Château de Versailles et du Trianon) is a decorative set composed of four paintings painted in 1749 for the Chateau de Versailles. However, patrimonial history and restoration treatments of this set make look at the four paintings by pairs. On one hand, *Spring* and *Winter*, lined on canvas, present a well-preserved paint layer: Artist's touch, marks left by tools are clearly visible. On another hand, *Autumn* and *Summer* supports were changed several times. They are now glued on wood. For these two paintings, the original support is missing as well as the majority of the ground layer and a third of the paint layer. What is conserved has been totally flattened.



Winter, Detail Top left hand corner. Fluid brown paint applied on an opaque grey layer. Brush strokes visible. (C: C. Betelu)



Summer, Detail Bottom left hand corner. Lacunas in burned, flattened paint layer. (C: C. Betelu)

II. PictOu Database

PictOu database is a contribution for painting technique research with an easy navigation. Three main tabs: "Project", "J.B. Oudry", "Case of Study". For now, there is not an option for searching with key words and the database is in French. PictOu database offers a large photographic documentation in high definition, a summary of information for each studied painting and referenced sources. Pdf may be downloaded.

Section : PROJECT

The project, its objectives and the main actors involved are presented. The description of their mission, their curriculum vitae and their email address may be found. A tab is dedicated to PictOu's partners, one to related projects and another to PictOu actuality.

Section : JEAN BAPTISTE OUDRY

The second section is dedicated to JEAN BAPTISTE OUDRY. So far, only one exhaustive work on the artist has been done : *Opperman's catalogue* in 1982 for the exhibition in Paris *J.-B. Oudry 1686-1755*.

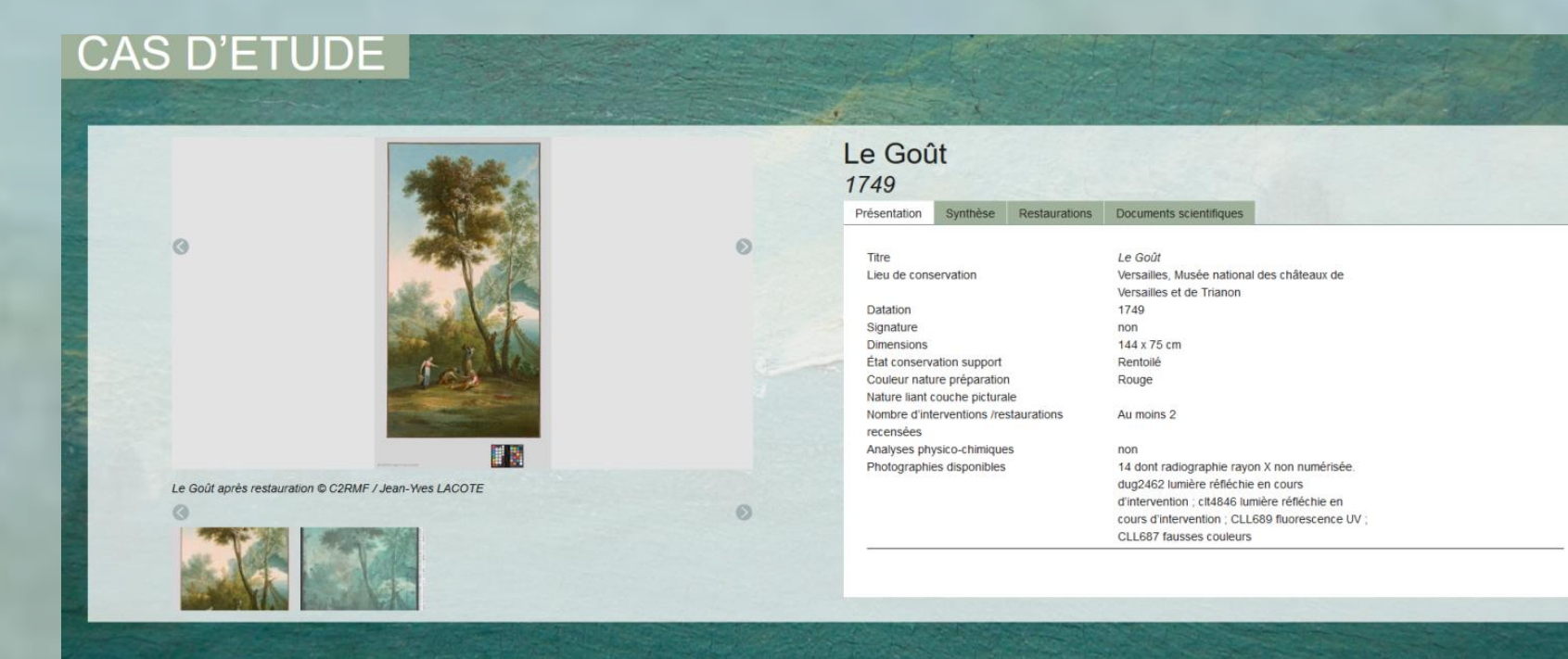
The tabs "SOURCES" and "BIBLIOGRAPHY" are as exhaustive as possible and refer to an active link when the documents are online. Thus, you can find the French digital and complete version of the conferences of Oudry housed by the German Institut of Art History and the English version housed by the Getty.

Section: CASE OF STUDY

This section will grow in time. For each case of study, a slide show and four tabs are presented.



First tab : General presentation in a table (title, dimensions, date, conservation place, nature and authenticity of the support, nature and colour of the ground layer, number of known restorations, existence of analysis, photos).



Second tab : Exhaustive presentation of the painting

- Order context and conservation history
- Technical and conservation description

Third tab : Restoration history. If this part is important to understand the condition of each painting, the synthesis of all the information participates to understand Oudry's critical fortune. In the same time, it will contribute to a French restoration history.

Fourth tab : Referenced list and a description of all the documents used. So the visitor can check the information or get back to the document if he want more specific information.

Pictou.univ-paris1.fr