



V A N W E Y E N B E R G H

## Painting or reproduction ?

### The surface

If someone believes to be in possession of an authentic painting, the first step is to rub the surface of the work with one's fingers. If the surface has some thickness with rugged paint reliefs, that one is almost sure to be in the presence of a painting. There are however printing techniques, designed at the start of the 20th Century in Germany (Oleodruck), enabling to reproduce a painting with such reliefs but the canvas supporting the work would often look new. All the more there would be no trace of brush on these reproductions of very little value. However, new techniques have been designed in the 1950's by which a reproduction would show a thick surface with brushstrokes. These reproductions are often produced with the help of a photography on which paint would have been added by hand or mechanical wise.

Regarding a watercolor, the surface of the paper should have some grain and not be glossy and flat. In addition, the best way to determine whether the work is a watercolor or gouache is to wet the tip of a small cotton ball and to apply it gently on a patch of color. Some color would then appear on that tip, suggesting that it is a genuine work.

Still, some reproductions are heightened with watercolor or gouache. So it seems essential to use a magnifying glass to detect crayon lines or a sketch underneath the watercolor. If regular dots are seen, then the work might simply be a print heightened with colors.

If there is a printed copyright mention on the lower left or right side of the work, then this is surely a print. If there is a signature in crayon or watercolor, then the work would probably be genuine.

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