



PAINTINGS EXAMINATION REPORT

CNS 258167

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OWNER/AGENT		
Owner's id nr.	n/a	
Date received	May 28 th , 2025	
EXAMINER	Margaret Priest	
Faculty supervisor(s)	Fiona Beckett	
Date of report	October 6 th , 2025	

Above: *Figure 1.*

ARTIST/MAKER (Owner Attribution)	Pavel Dmitrievich Schmaroff
Signature, Location	Top right "P. Schmaroff 1923"
Title ("") or description	Unknown (portrait of a young man)
Date created	1923
Materials	Oil on canvas
Dimensions (HxWxD) cm	84 x 61 x 2.5 cm (33 x 24 x 1)
Accessories (frame, other)	None
Legends/labels/stamps	Some stamps on stretcher bars (will be described when stable)
Other distinguishing marks	None

I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

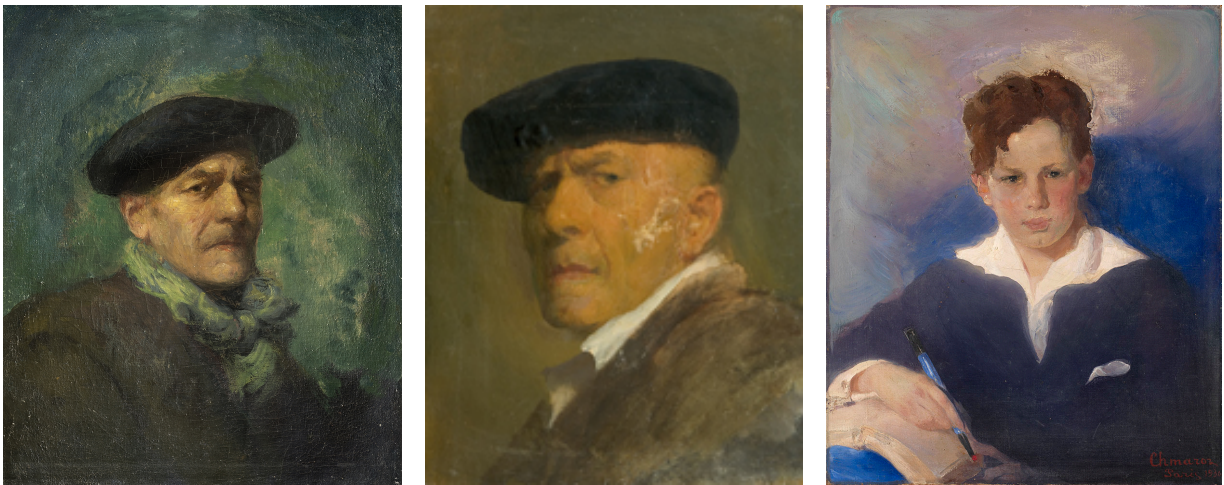
The artist is identified through his signature as Pavel Dmitrievich Schmaroff (nee Shmyrov or Schmirov, 1874 – 1950; sometimes anglicized as 'Paul,' Chmaroff, Chmarov, Schmarov). He was born in Voronezh, Russia (Garcia and Boncenne, 2012). As a young man, he attended a graduate program at the Imperial Academy of Art, where he studied under Ilya Repin. In 1923, he moved to Rome for two years, before eventually settling in Paris (Museum of Russian Impressionism). His most common subjects of painting were the picturesque, including bathing nudes, Russian genre scenes, and society portraits for commission. Schmaroff is also known to have painted still lifes, landscapes, and created drawings and watercolor paintings. Over 500 of his works have been collected and independently exhibited in Paris by antique dealer and trade fair organizer Joël Garcia. A few of his genre paintings and bathing nudes have been collected by Museums, including the Museum of Russian Impressionism, the Voronezh Regional Art Museum, the State Russian Museum in Saint Petersburg, and the Toledo Museum of Art.

This piece is a portrait of an unknown young man who appears to be seated. Since it is dated to 1923, it could have been created in either Russia or Rome. The figure wears a loosely rendered black suit. The contours of the sleeves are created with undulating lines against the tan background. His arm is partially rested on what appears to be the arm of a dark green chair—though some luminescence of the hand is visible underneath the painted layer of the chair. The man has a rumpled white handkerchief in his pocket, a prominent gold cufflink, and wears a diagonally striped blue, green and white tie accented with a large pearl or silver tiepin. A yellow line near his lapel could be the pinned chain of a pocket

All conservation documentation should be retained with the artifact as part of its historical record. Documentation which the department provides complies with the principles set forth in the *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice* of the American Institute for Conservation

watch. He glances off the left edge of the painting with a slightly wry or intrigued expression. The signature reads “P. Schmaroff | 1923” in the top right corner. It appears to be applied by brush with a thinned black paint and rendered in a rounded script.

It is difficult to compare this piece to the rest of the artist’s oeuvre. There is a significant lack of primary or secondary sources for biographical information accessible in English. Although Joël Garcia extensively collected, documented, and exhibited Schmaroff’s work, including portraits, the exhibition website is decommissioned, and only some images are available through the Wayback Machine. A few of these low-quality images indicate that some of his other portraits show signs of similar damage. In broad comparison, the image uses a more neutral color palette than other paintings in Schmaroff’s oeuvre, which frequently features brilliant and vivid colors. The figure also appears younger than many of the male portraits by Schmaroff, though he did also paint younger women and children.



Left: *Figure 2*. Self-portrait by Schmaroff from 1948, owned by the Museum of Russian Impressionism. Shows a similar blistered paint texture on the edges.

Center: *Figure 3*. Image of portrait by Schmaroff from Joël Garcia, accessed via the Wayback machine. Could show similar paint loss in the figure’s face and lower right corner.

Right: *Figure 4*. Portrait of a Young Boy by Schmaroff, dated “Paris 1930,” sold by MacDougall’s in November 2007 for \$45,838. The composition is similar to the 1923 painting, especially in the figure’s hand.

II. CONDITION

Current Condition Summary:

The painting is in poor condition aesthetically and structurally with no apparent cause of damage (water or fire damage). There are large areas of loss in the paint layer with active flaking and blistering. The canvas is sagging in the center with draws in the corners. The painting also has some dirt accumulation, a tear, and drips of another paint.



Figure 4. Color-coded diagram of condition. Blue: location of stretcher bars (see Section 1), Pink: tears and scratches (Sec. 2, 6), Purple: areas without grounds in transmitted light (Sec. 3, Fig. 5), Green: paint loss (Sec. 5), Yellow: drips (Sec. 6).

1. AUXILIARY SUPPORT

Construction

The auxiliary support consists of a simple rectangular stretcher made of four members. It is likely not the original support of the painting. Each stretcher bar is labeled or stamped with manufacturer information. The stretcher bars are highlighted in blue in *Figure 4*. The construction will be further described when the painting is stable enough for handling.

Condition

No keys remain. The strainer may be out of plane. Splits, dents, dirt, and corners will be further examined when stable.

2. SUPPORT

Construction

The main support is a canvas that appears to be from linen fibers. It is plain-woven and has a thread count of 44 x 44 per square inch. The canvas is adhered to its stretcher with tacks. The painted tacking edges on the left, right, and bottom are slightly folded around the back of the stretcher. The top tacking edge is shorter, and flush to the strainer. An excessive number of black tacks (possibly black upholstery tacks due to their uniquely large shape) has been used: 28 on the left side, 26 on the right (one is missing), 20 on the bottom, and 3 on the top corners along with 19 metallic tacks that appear to be somewhat corroded. Some of the tacks appear to not be fully inserted (especially on the top left corner fold). Cusping that does not match the current tacks is visible in the canvas weave. This indicates that the painting is not in its original dimensions and has been removed from its original strainer and re-stretched to a slightly smaller size. The corners of the tacking edges are externally folded and nailed down on the top and bottom edges.

Condition

The canvas is very slack to the point of sagging in the center with draws in the corners. A rupture or incision around 3 in long is present near the bottom of the right edge. The bottom right corner fold of the canvas has been bent backwards over the tack and is protruding at an angle from the object. Conditions concerns are highlighted in pink in *Figure 4*. In areas with thin ground and paint, the canvas is highly visible but appears in good condition. The sagging of the canvas has introduced some creasing over the stretcher bars.

3. GROUND LAYER(S)

Construction

The ground layer is particularly visible in areas of paint loss on the left of the image. These are highlighted in green in *Figure 4*. The layer is moderately thick, with some of the high points of the canvas texture visible. The ground appears either unevenly colored or aged to a matte tan. Through transmitted light pictured in *Figure 5*, areas with visible ground are especially red compared to areas where light is transmitted without interruption in the lower right corner. The areas that show transmitted light without visible grounds are distinguished with a purple highlight in *Figure 4*.

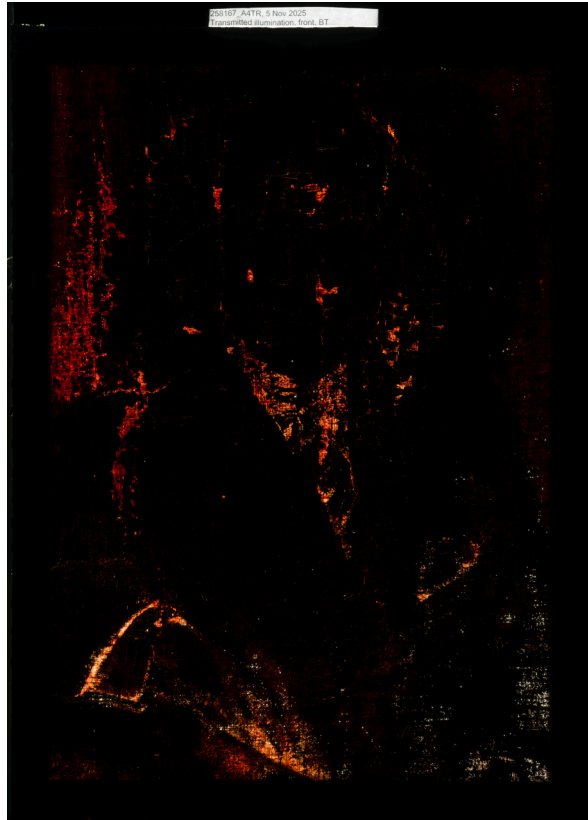


Figure 5. Transmitted light (light source positioned behind the painting).

Condition

The ground layer is not properly adhered to the paint layer, resulting in the cracking and friability. There may also be failing adhesion between the ground layer and canvas support resulting in some areas of ground and paint loss. The ground is visible on the underside of some of the larger paint flakes that are peeling up.

4. COMPOSITION PLANNING

In visible light, there is no evidence of composition planning.

5. PAINT LAYERS

Construction

The paint is observed to be oil applied with brushes. Most areas suggest a wet-on-wet application due to the smooth blending and color transitions, but the canvas texture in the cuff and hand suggest a dry-on-wet application. The palette is comprised of naturalistic colors, with a relatively flat black area defining the figure's suit, and a yellow-beige background. The colors are usually smoothly blended, with selective areas of impasto; notably, in the tiepin, cufflink, cuff, and the possible pocket watch chain. It appears intentional that no paint was applied in the immediate area between the hand and the cuff of the shirt, despite being uncharacteristic for the style and time period.

Condition

The paint layer is in a precarious state of severe friability and flaking. The entire surface is blistering off the canvas support and/or ground layer with risk of detachment. Major and minor areas of loss are present throughout the composition, but more prevalent in white and light areas. Paint losses are

highlighted in green in *Figure 4*. This includes flat areas like the background, and areas of detail in the face and collar. There are some craquelure networks visible near areas of loss, but their characteristics are somewhat disrupted by the thick, blistering layer of paint. The blistering causes the black sections to appear unsaturated. There is no direct evidence of severe fire or water damage to have caused the extent of damage. It seems more likely to be the product of mechanical stress or the use of incompatible materials combined with possible previous treatment. It is possible that the area of loss around the cuff are a conditional result of the dry-on-wet application, or under-bound pigment leading to friability. The paint layer still has flexibility; and is not cracking but creasing over the stretcher bars as the canvas sags.

6. VARNISH/ SURFACE COATING(S)

Construction

Under handheld UVA irradiation, some of the surface fluoresces with a blue-green color that indicates a natural resin varnish was used. It was most likely applied with a brush. Areas of overpaint on the face, suit, and possibly background are visible since they do not fluoresce.

Condition

The varnish is partially unsaturated in the dark areas, though this may be partially due to the pronounced texture of the paint layer or possible overpaint. The varnish is slightly discolored to yellow and is covered with light dirt and grime overall. There is a drip of a milky white substance—possibly another paint—on the bottom center of the image which is highlighted yellow in *Figure 4*. A scratch appears to be pulling some of the paint layers on the left of the subject's face, though this may be an incision. It is highlighted in pink in *Figure 4*.

7. FRAME

The painting is unframed.

8. SUMMARY OF TREATMENT HISTORY

The painting has no known treatments; however, the peculiarities of the tacking edges (mismatched tacks and cusping) indicate that the painting has been removed from its original support and possibly attached to another and cropped. Areas of possible overpaint are visible under handheld UVA irradiation.

9. ADDITIONAL NOTES OR COMMENTS

The signature is located on a section of the surface that is not immediately susceptible to paint loss.

10. ANALYSIS PERFORMED

11. REFERENCES

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