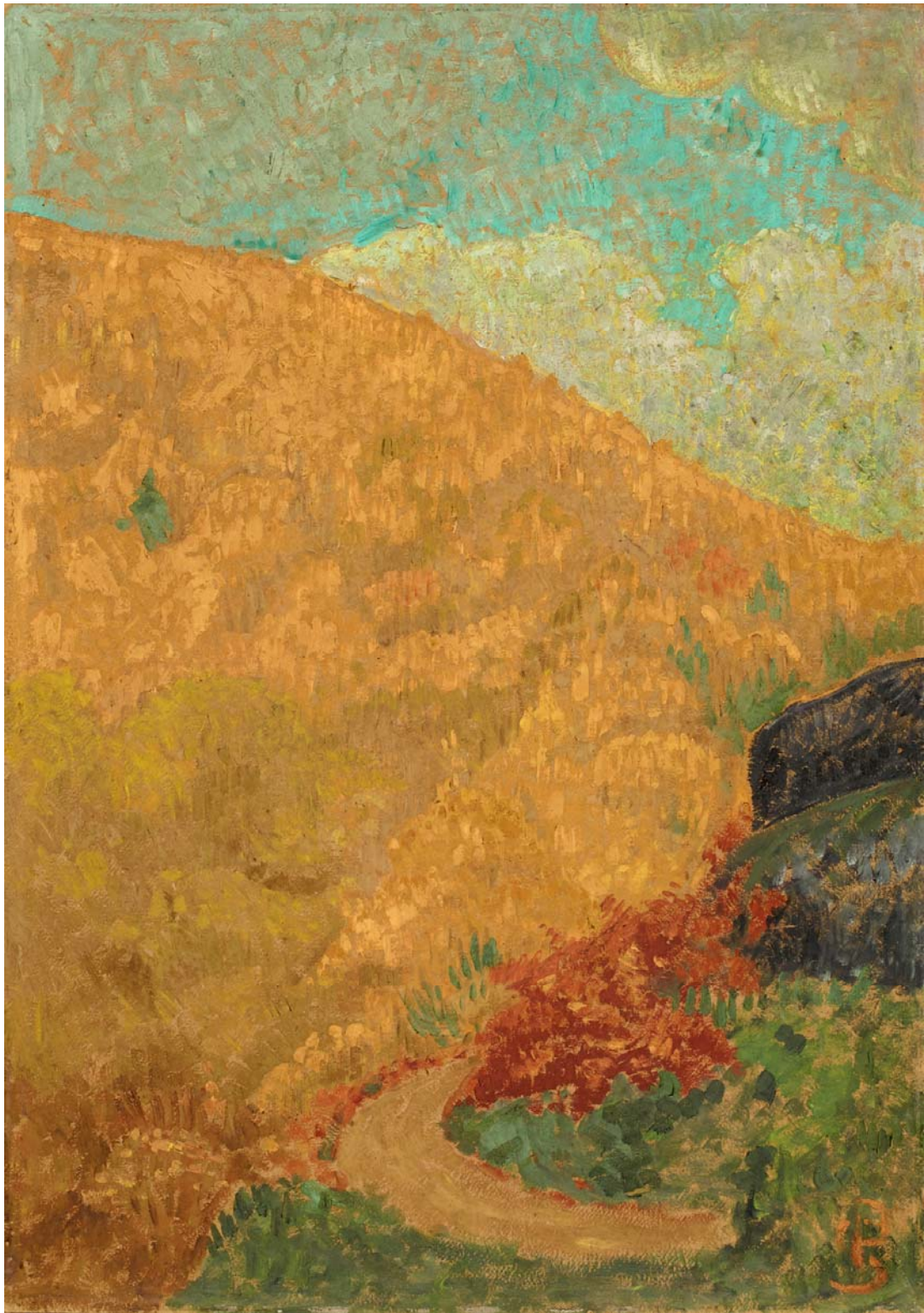


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PAUL SÉRUSIER

1864 Paris - Morlaix 1927

Paysage d'Automne à Châteauneuf

Tempera on cardboard, cradled; c.1919.

Monogrammed lower right: PS.

54,5 x 38,5 cm

PROVENANCE: Galerie Saluden, Brest – Private collection, France.

Paul Sérusier was a French Post-Impressionist painter and theorist who was instrumental in the formation of the short-lived, but influential art movement known as the *Nabis*. During the summer of 1888 Sérusier travelled to Pont-Aven in Brittany. That summer, in conversations and painting sessions, Émile Bernard (1868-1941) and Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) developed their notions about the freedom to move beyond Impressionism and its studies of light and nature – to simplify, interpret, and arrange nature.

According to Maurice Denis, Gauguin had with Sérusier the following dialogue:

"What color do you see these trees?"

They are yellow.

Well, then paint it yellow. And that shadow?"

Rather blue.

*Do not be afraid to paint it as blue as possible. And these red leaves? Put vermilion."*¹

During his vacation, Sérusier painted with Gauguin, and this meeting was a turning point in his art: He went back to Paris with an unfinished painting – or better a demonstration of technique – painted under his direction. It was known to the *Nabis* as *The Talisman*, and it is considered the first Nabi painting [Fig.1]

In 1898 Sérusier visited, for the first of several times, the Benedictine abbey of Beuron in Germany, which was the site of an art school. He was deeply influenced by their concepts of religious symbolism and geometry and sacred proportions in composition. Sérusier continued to develop his philosophy and to paint and sketch according to it, and in 1908 he began teaching colour theory at the Académie Ranson in Paris.

¹ Selon Maurice Denis, Gauguin avait tenu à Sérusier les propos suivants :

De quelle couleur voyez-vous ces arbres ?

Ils sont jaunes.

Eh bien, mettez donc du jaune. Et cette ombre?

Plutôt bleue.

Ne craignez pas de la peindre aussi bleue que possible. Et ces feuilles rouges ? Mettez du vermillon.

Cited in: Marcel Guicheteau, *Le rencontre avec Gauguin*, in *Paul Sérusier*, Paris, 1976, p. 19.

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In 1921 he published his *ABC de la peinture*, a short treatise in which he develops a theory of curves and simple shapes, a theory of colour and research method of muted colours. This is the memorial of all his aesthetic research.

Our painting was executed in Chateauneuf-du-Faou and is a beautiful example of his works featuring the people and landscapes of Brittany, which are noteworthy for their muted, contemplative mood. The short and vigorous brushstrokes give the painting a dynamic that reminds us of the late Vincent van Gogh, who lived together with Paul Gauguin in Arles for 2 months in 1888-89.

The authenticity of this work has been confirmed by the Comité Paul Sérusier and is registered under the catalogue raisonné number *C-087.Pay*.

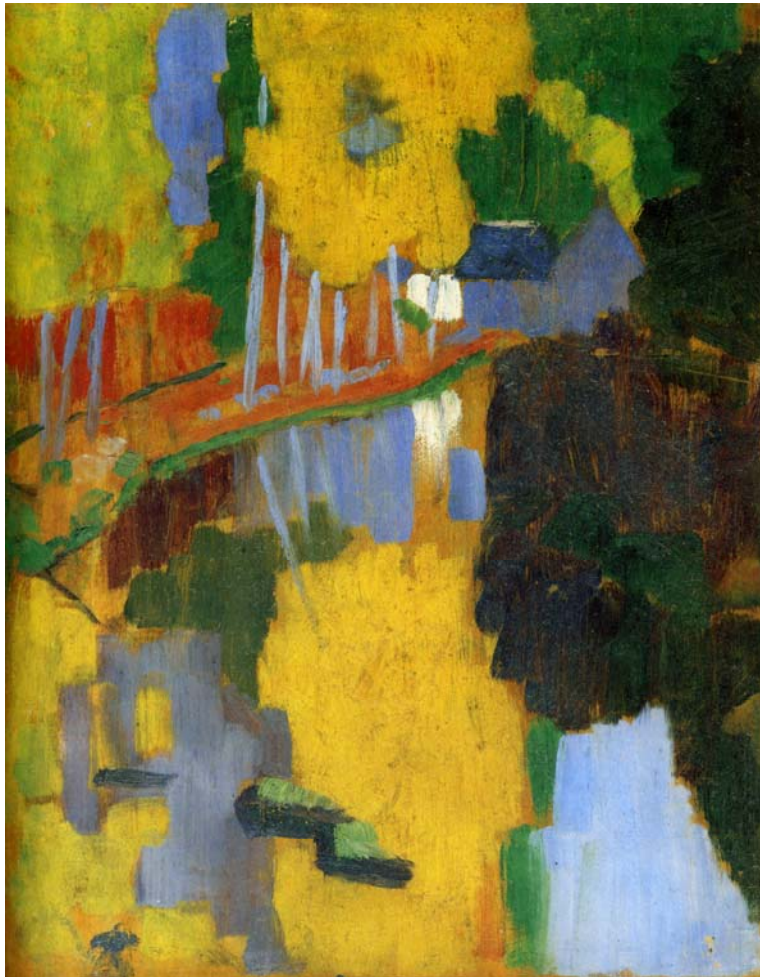


Fig. 1: Paul Sérusier, *The Talisman*, 1888.
Oil on panel, 27 x 21,5 cm.
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.