Report on the content of the Museum Ludwig archives
on the painting

Still Life with Crayfish (1907)

by Mikhail Larionov

Author of the report: Verena Franken
Report editors: Jilleen Nadolny and Petra Mandt
Location and date of the report: Museum Ludwig, Cologne, February 2017
1. Provenance

There are a few notes on the painting’s provenance which are listed in the archive of Museum Ludwig. The painting probably is of the artist's studio. It was inherited by Alexandra Tomilina-Larionova, Mikhail’s second wife, in 1964 and became part of her private collection in Paris. There is no information when the Gallery Gmurzynska, which was located in Cologne that time, bought the painting *Still Life with Crayfish*. The painting was acquired by Peter and Irene Ludwig (Ludwig collection in Aachen) in 1981. In December 2011 it was donated as artistic legacy to the Museum Ludwig in Cologne after Irene Ludwig’s death in 2010 (28 November 2010).

Table 1: Listing of the painting’s provenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Paris, private collection</td>
<td>of Alexandra Tomilina-Larionova (Mikhail Larionov’s widow and second wife)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Everest Collection, Lausanne</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Cologne, Gallery Gmurzynska</td>
<td>(Galerie Gmurzynska)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981-2011</td>
<td>Aachen, collection Ludwig</td>
<td>(collection of Peter and Irene Ludwig)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2011</td>
<td>Donation/artistic legacy</td>
<td>to the Museum Ludwig, Cologne</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

References in general for the paintings exhibition history and bibliography, see:
https://www.kulturelles-erbe-koeln.de/documents/obj/05020019

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1 Mikhail Larionov and Alexandra Tomilina married in 1963 and she became Ms. Tomilina-Larionova. “Tomilina, who had been his mistress for more than 30 years, moved into his apartment on the rue Jacques-Callot, and in May 1963 they were married.” (Akinsha et al. 1997: 80).
2 Generally it is known that “on her death in the early 1990s, Madame Tomilina-Larionov left the entire collection of works in her possession to the Soviet State.” Tomilina’s property consisted of the archive and the art collection of her husband, Mikhail Larionow, and his first wife, Natalia Goncharova.” (Akinsha et al. 1997: 80). “Tomilina’s estate had two parts. The first consisted primarily of the extensive Larionov-Goncharova archive. In addition to the archive, there were some artworks. All these things were kept in Tomilina’s apartment. The second part of the estate consisted entirely of artworks: more than 600 paintings and works on paper, including some of the most important canvases by both artists. These were kept in an art-storage warehouse in Paris.” (Akinsha et al. 1997: 82).
3 Founded in 1965 in Germany Gallery Gmurzynska is now located in Switzerland.
4 Mentioned on the paper label for the exhibition: *Rétrospective Larionov, Goncharova*, 29 April to 6 June 1976, Musée d’Ixelles, Brussels.
The painting is one example of Larionov’s re-use of canvas. The reverse of the canvas shows an unfinished composition, now covered with a thin white colour, possibly painted by the artist.

The inscription « LARIONOV N. M. À L’ÉCREVISSE on the stretcher (done with a red marker pen) containing artist’s name and title in French is presumably done by A. Tomilina-Larionova. The inscription was repeated on the canvas.

ACQUAVELLA GALLERIES, Inc. 18 EAST 79TH STREET. NEW YORK 10021. Nature morte a l’Ecrevisse By MICHEL LARIONOV Oil 37 1/2 x 31 3/8 inches

artist: Larionov, Mikhail  

title, date: Still Life with Crayfish (1907)  

inventory number: ML 1331


galerie gmurzynska

obenmarspforten 21
5000 köln 1

tel. 236621/22

Michail Larionow
„Nature Morte à l'Ecrevisse”
Öl auf Leinwand
80 x 95 cm
1907

Paper label former owner: Gallery Gmurzynska.
2. Art historical information, a few notes

Various dates have been suggested for the painting *Still Life with Crayfish*: 1907⁵ and slightly later, 1908/09⁶.

Larionov’s *Still Life with Crayfish* combines elements which were decisive for his development as artist. In the first decade of the 20th century, Larionov was influenced by French art.⁷ The paint application of Larionov’s *Still Life with Crayfish* demonstrates the influence of Impressionism and the manner of paint application used by Matisse. The palette employed and the arrangement of table, tablecloth and objects as well as the inverted perspective reveal Cezanne’s influence on Larionov (Weiss 1993: 10, 143).⁸ Quite un-French, in comparison, are the motifs on the painted tin tray and the colourful wallpaper of the background (Weiss 1993: 143)⁹ with its toy-like figures. These elements recall Russian folk art and contrast to the crayfish in the foreground.¹⁰ A similar tray with landscape is seen in *Self-portrait with Tray* dated 1912 by Kontschalowski (Weiss 1993: 143).¹¹ It should be mentioned that the influence of peasant and folk-art forms in Larionov’s art was not restricted to stylistic considerations alone, for folk-art artifacts, which he appreciated for their intrinsic qualities, often appear in his paintings (Parton 1993: 90).¹²

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⁵ <https://www.kulturelles-erbe-koeln.de/documents/obj/05020019> (01.03.2017).
⁹ Rough translation of the following German text into English: „Ganz unfranzösisch sind dagegen die Folkloremotive des bemalten Tabletts in der Mitte und der Tapete im Hintergrund“.
¹¹ Rough translation of the following German text into English: „Ein sehr ähnliches Tablettd mit Landschaft ist im Selbstporträt mit Tablettd, 1912, von Kontschalowski dargestellt“.