

**Gerard Sekoto**  
Street Scene (1939)  
Oil on canvas board (30 x 40 cm)  
SANG Acc 64/6

### TECHNICAL REPORT

This street scene from the years before Sekoto left South Africa for Paris is typical of the subject matter and technique of that period of his painting. Further research into the build-up of the layers and use of interlayers in his work could lead to insight in to the relative stability of these earlier works as opposed to the delamination problems seen in many of the later (Paris period) works.



Gerard Sekoto 'Street Scene' (1945)

#### Support

The painting appears to be executed on a pre-prepared (?) artist's canvas board (could not be examined unframed due to exhibition). The board appears to be masonite.

#### Ground and Underdrawing

The canvas board is pre-primed with a standard white priming layer. This can be seen at small reserves in the paint. There appears to be underdrawing applied in a blue medium. This is evident below the architecture.



Detail and close-up of reserves to ground and blue underdrawing at the door, left

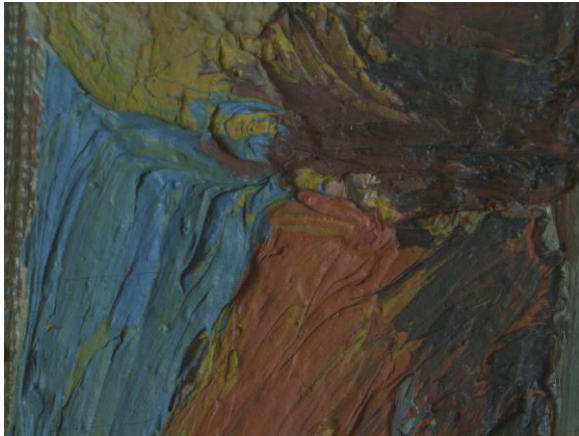
### Paint Layers

The paint layers are thickly built up with multiple small brush strokes resulting in a compacted yet impasted surface. There is much wet-into-wet working of the paint and an uneven gloss. It appears that some paints may contain an amount of resin or are very medium rich. Particularly the blues have a certain fluorescence in ultraviolet light, although this could be due to the pigment used. Some of the blues also contain an interesting drying craquelure which points to medium richness or added medium.



Raking light image showing the highly impasted surface





Detail showing impasto and wet-into-wet application in apron of walking woman



Detail of dog showing wet-into-wet application and uneven gloss



Detail showing uneven gloss of paint in woman bending over



Detail showing gloss and drying craquelure in blue of windows



Image in ultraviolet light showing interesting fluorescence of some of the blues

The highly worked surface contains some interesting techniques employed by the artist, such as sgraffito, evident in the architecture. As well as the wet-into-wet working of the paint, there is also a later application of paint after the initial layers have dried. This can be seen as a dry scumble applied over the initial working of the paint, such as at the tin roofs, the street, and yellow shirt for example, and also as a scumble over some of the sgraffito. Even the foot of the woman appearing from behind the shed can be seen to have been cursorily applied after the initial impasted buildup of the layers depicting the street had dried.



Detail showing sgraffito in the architecture



Detail showing sgraffito in the lower layer with a darker scumble applied subsequently



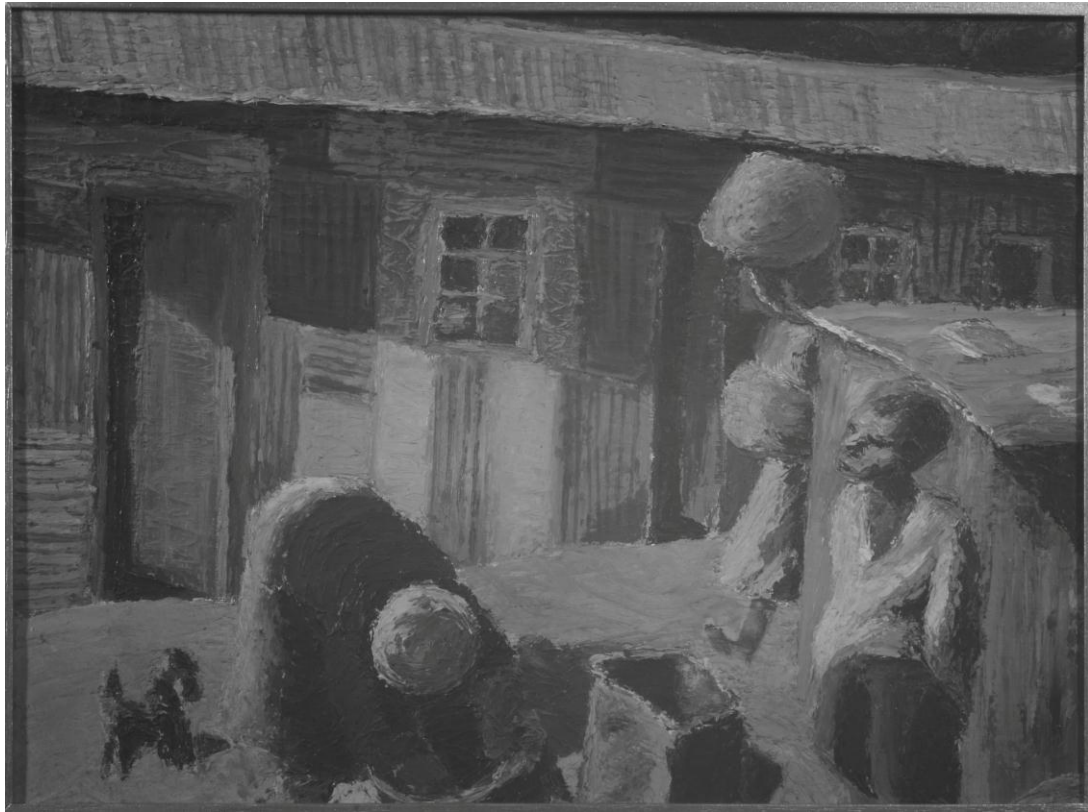
Detail showing application of a light scumble along the rooftop and adjustment of pentiment in the sky



Detail showing application of foot and scumble over initial impasted build-up of street

The painting is not varnished.





Infrared image showing comparative absorption of pigments

#### Further work:

- Re-examine out of the frame eg. Support and priming
- Underdrawing – dry/wet medium? Is it really blue?
- FTIR ?? eg. Blue fluorescing in UV
- Comparisons date wise to other sekotos and the flaking / delaminating blues issue
- Confirm date – 1945 / 1939 ??

#### Photography:

- Unframed all shots plus reverse
- UV details of fluorescing blues and matching NL details