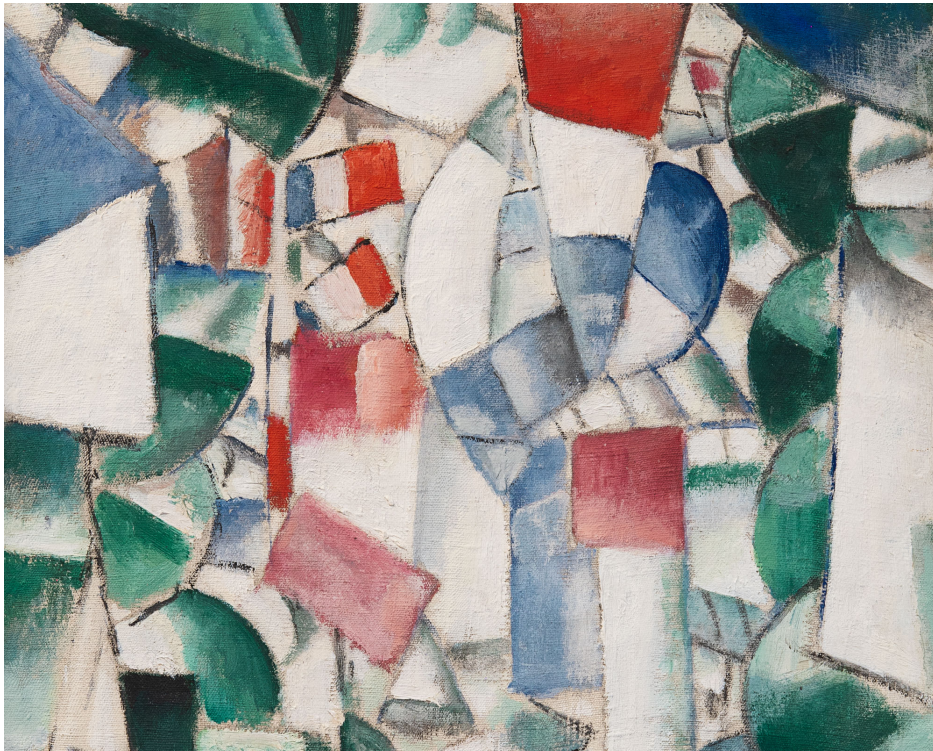


Living the Avant-Garde: The Triton Collection Foundation

New York Auction / 14 November 2023 / 6pm EST

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Auction 14 November 2023 6pm EDT

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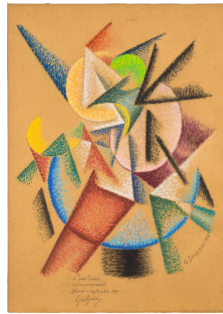
Sale Interest: 30 Lots



1
Wassily Kandinsky
Entwurf zu Komposition IV
Estimate
\$500,000 — 700,000



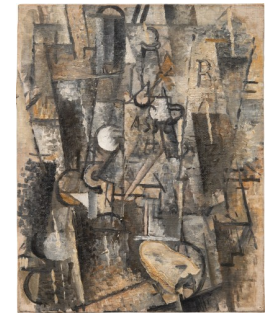
2
Amedeo Modigliani
Tête de jeune fille (Louise)
Estimate
\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000



3
Gino Severini
Mare = Ballerina
Estimate
\$80,000 — 120,000



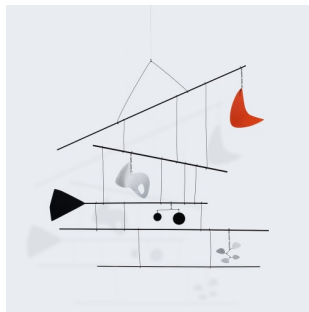
4
Theo van Doesburg
Composition (Seated Figure)
Estimate
\$900,000 — 1,200,000



5
Georges Braque
La bouteille de Bass
Estimate
\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000



6
Joan Miró
Personnage et oiseaux
Estimate
\$700,000 — 1,000,000



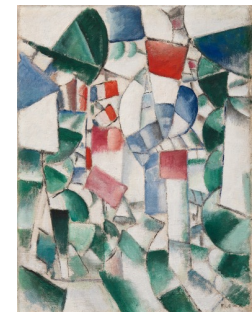
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Alexander Calder
New Blériot
Estimate
\$3,000,000 — 5,000,000



8
Jean Dubuffet
Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue
Estimate
\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000



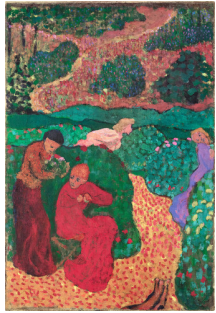
9
Jean-Paul Riopelle
Ariane
Estimate
\$600,000 — 800,000



10
Fernand Léger
Le 14 juillet
Estimate
\$15,000,000 — 20,000,000

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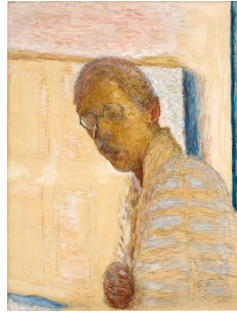
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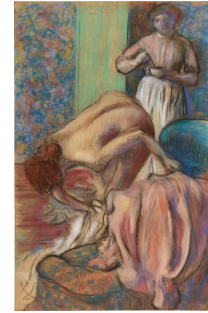
11
Édouard Vuillard
Le Cantique des cantiques
Estimate
\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000



12
Maurice Denis
La Vendange mystique
Estimate
\$300,000 — 400,000



13
Pierre Bonnard
Autoportrait
Estimate
\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000



14
Edgar Degas
Le petit déjeuner après le bain
Estimate
\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000



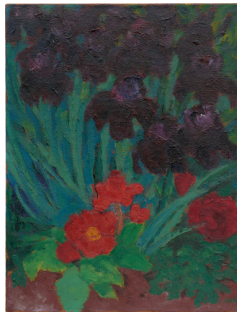
15
Roy Lichtenstein
Woman Contemplating a Yellow...
Estimate
\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000



16
Pablo Picasso
Femme en corset lisant un livre
Estimate
\$15,000,000 — 20,000,000



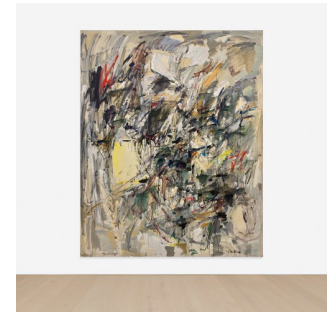
17
Heinrich Campendonk
Im Garten - Frau, Pferd, Ziege
Estimate
\$500,000 — 700,000



18
Emil Nolde
Iris
Estimate
\$500,000 — 700,000



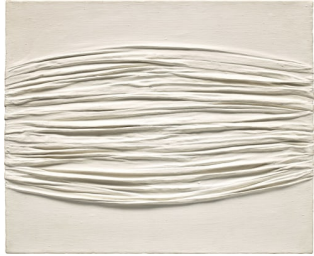
19
Pablo Picasso
Femme accroupie
Estimate
\$200,000 — 300,000



20
Joan Mitchell
Untitled
Estimate
\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000

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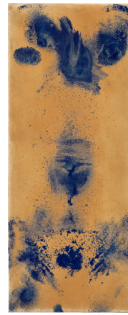
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21
Piero Manzoni
Achrome
Estimate
\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000



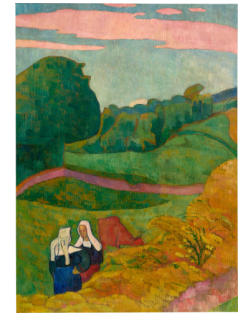
22
Louise Bourgeois
Tits
Estimate
\$250,000 — 350,000



23
Yves Klein
Anthropométrie sans titre, (ANT...
Estimate
\$800,000 — 1,200,000



24
Max Beckmann
Blühender Garten
Estimate
\$400,000 — 600,000



25
Émile Bernard
Paysage de Bretagne (Paysage ...
Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000



26
Paul Sérusier
La Cueillette des pommes
Estimate
\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000



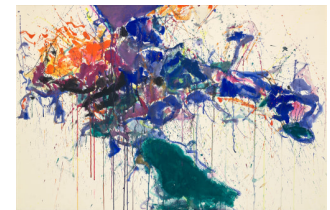
27
Félix Vallotton
Papotage
Estimate
\$300,000 — 500,000



28
Paul Gauguin
Masque de Meyer de Haan
Estimate \$60,000 — 80,000



29
Robert Ryman
Untitled, Prototype
Estimate
\$300,000 — 500,000



30
Sam Francis
Purple, Orange & Green
Estimate
\$200,000 — 300,000

Living the Avant-Garde: The Triton Collection Foundation

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LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

1

Wassily Kandinsky

Entwurf zu Komposition IV

etching with watercolor and India ink on paper
5 5/8 x 8 3/8 in. (14.2 x 21.2 cm)
Executed in 1911.

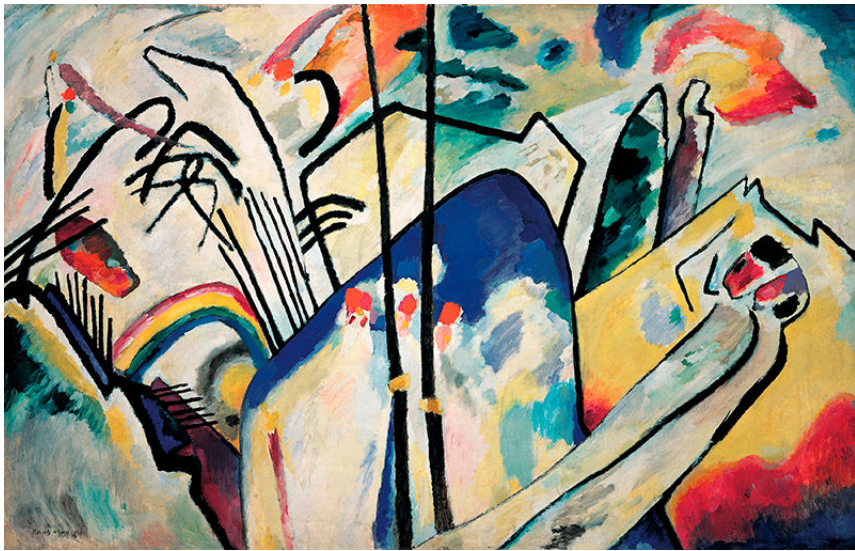
Estimate

\$500,000 — 700,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Entwurf zu Komposition IV, 1911, is a rare and essential record of the process behind Wassily Kandinsky's *Compositions*, a series of ten works executed between 1909 and 1939. The present work is a preparatory work for *Composition IV*, 1911, which now resides at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf. As *Compositions I-III* were destroyed in World War II, *Composition IV* is the first extant iteration of the series and also the first of the group to turn more fully towards abstraction.ⁱ As Kandinsky himself explained, the *Compositions* are distinguished from his other bodies of work by their mural-like scale; the centering of "pure painting"—which, for Kandinsky, signified the expression of the soul of the artist—rather than representational subject matter; and the deliberate (versus improvisational) manner of their creation. As we look back across the twentieth century, Kandinsky's works from 1911 can be viewed as the genesis of a course of abstraction that meets its apex in the work of the Abstract Expressionists nearly half a century later.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition IV*, 1911. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

With *Entwurf zu Komposition IV*, Kandinsky created a drypoint etching printed in black ink, and then painted rich watercolor washes over the composition. These formal qualities provide an incredible insight into the process behind *Composition IV*. With the compositional details of the work determined by the etching, Kandinsky is free to play with color in the present work, and determine how he will use blue, red, yellow, and green to the desired effect in the final

Composition IV. His embrace of printmaking into his painting process indicates the lasting influence of *Jugendstil*, the German Arts and Crafts movement of the late 1890s, and Kandinsky's appreciation of *loubki* Russian folk prints, which Magdalena Dabrowski notes "provided a new source of motifs, an abstract treatment of space, a coloristic quality, and the directness of meaning that affected [Kandinsky] on formal and spiritual levels."ⁱⁱ

Color plays an essential role in Kandinsky's practice. The Russian-born artist is famous for the spiritual and emotional resonance he found in color, as articulated in his treatise, *On the Spiritual in Art*, in 1911. Published the same year as *Entwurf zu Komposition IV*'s creation, *On the Spiritual in Art* argued that colors have both a physical and psychological effect that activates the viewer's very soul. Kandinsky associated colors with feelings, moods, sounds, tastes, and other synesthetic phenomena: "vermillion attracts and pleases the eye as does flame, which men always regard covetously," he wrote. "Bright lemon yellow hurts the eye after a short time, as a high note on the trumpet hurts the ear. The eye becomes disturbed, cannot bear it any longer, and seeks depth and repose in blue or green."ⁱⁱⁱ Such peaks and valleys of emotional experience cast across the composition of the present work.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Cossacks*, 1910-1911. Tate Modern, London. Image: © Tate, London / Art Resource, NY

In *Entwurf zu Komposition IV*, as in the larger *Composition IV*, painted color holds more significance than representational form. As Dabrowski explains, *Composition IV* engages “hidden imagery,” which allows Kandinsky to pursue his abstract, colorist goals without completely sacrificing representational subject matter.^{iv} In *Entwurf zu Komposition IV*, then, a discerning viewer can pick out the red hats of three Cossacks holding two black lances at center, standing below a blue mountain, with a green fortress on top. There is a rainbow bridge to the left, with boats, and the black arches of men fighting on horseback. Two figures, one red-faced, the other blue, recline at bottom right, while above them, two figures in blue and green robes observe the scene.

However, the viewer’s ability to identify every motif in the present work was not Kandinsky’s primary concern. In the artist’s commentary on *Composition IV*, published with the first monograph of his work in 1913, Kandinsky did not pick out these individual representational elements for his reader. Instead, he drew their attention to line, color, and the emotional impact of their juxtaposition in the work. He wrote: “lower center—blue (gives the whole picture a cold tone); upper right—divided blue, red, yellow; upper left—black lines of the entangled horses; lower right—extended lines of reclining figures.”^v The composition’s symbolic meaning depends on the contrast “between entangled line and entangled color, and principal contrast: between angular, sharp movement (battle) and light-cold-sweet colors,” *not* on the specific cultural meanings of representational forms.^{vi}

The mission of *Entwurf zu Komposition IV*, then, is to draw out this “principal contrast” between line and color, and the attendant symbolic meaning of this formal juxtaposition. As Dabrowski and others have suggested, *Composition IV* may symbolize the delicate balance between violence and peaceful harmony, values represented by line (indicated as a “battle” by Kandinsky), and “light-cold-sweet colors,” in turn.^{vii} Other scholars posit wider connections to innovations in music and philosophy in Munich around 1911, and the dynamic, fractured movement between line and color in the work also evokes Italian Futurism, which was developing concurrently to Der Blaue Reiter.^{viii} Regardless of Kandinsky’s particular symbolic intent, the medium of etching and watercolor provides an inherent, extra distinction between line and color, which perhaps aided Kandinsky in determining his final *Composition IV*.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Entwurf zu Komposition IV*, as reproduced in *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach*, 1914.

Entwurf zu Komposition IV was reproduced as a color plate in the deluxe edition of *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach* of 1912, the premier publication of Der Blaue Reiter, a group co-founded by Kandinsky, which was one of the most influential avant-garde movements of the 20th century. The work’s first owner was Reinhard Piper, publisher of *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach*.^{ix} *Entwurf zu Komposition IV* thus represents the development and influence of Kandinsky’s work beyond his individual practice, as one of the defining artistic personalities of his time. *Entwurf zu Komposition IV* is an invaluable part of his creative process, and a rare insight into Kandinsky’s first, vanguard steps into abstractions that would redefine the course of twentieth century art.

ⁱ Magdalena Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1995, p. 31.

ⁱⁱ Dabrowski, p. 15.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kandinsky, “On the Spiritual in Art,” in Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, eds., *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, 1982, p. 157.

^{iv} Dabrowski, p. 16.

^v Kandinsky (1913), quoted *ibid.*, p. 32.

^{vi} *Ibid.*

^{vii} Dabrowski, p. 32.

^{viii} *Ibid.*, p. 33.

^{ix} Vivian Endicott Barnett, *Kandinsky: Drawings, vol. I: Individual Drawings*, cat. rais., Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 2006, p. 35.

Provenance

Reinhard Piper, Munich

Private Collection, Germany

Hauswedell & Nolte, Hamburg, December 8, 2005, lot 992

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

London, The Tate Gallery, *Abstraction: Towards a New Art. Painting 1910-20*, February 6–April 13, 1980, no. 166, p. 64

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Liefde! Kunst! Passie! Kunstenaarsechtparen*, February 21–June 1, 2009, p. 59

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Kandinsky en Der Blaue Reiter*, February 6–May 24, 2010, no. 25, pp. 134, 229 (illustrated, p. 134)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 212–213, 549 (illustrated, pp. 212–213)

Amsterdam, Joods Historisch Museum, November 18, 2013–March 16, 2014

Literature

Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky, eds., *Der Blaue Reiter*, Munich, 1914, pl. 3, pp. 65, 135 (illustrated, p. 65)

Ulrike Becks-Malorny, ed., *Kandinsky 1866-1944: De weg naar abstractie*, Cologne, 1999, p. 64

Vivian Endicott Barnett, *Kandinsky Drawings: Catalogue Raisonné, Volume One, Individual Drawings*, London, 2006, no. 5, pp. 35, 130 (illustrated, p. 130)

Meer dan kleur. Fauvisme en expressionisme uit de collectie van de Triton Foundation, exh. cat., Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 2009, p. 20 (illustrated)

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LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
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2

Amedeo Modigliani

Tête de jeune fille (Louise)

signed "Modigliani" upper left
oil on board

20 x 14 5/8 in. (50.9 x 37.2 cm)

Painted in 1915.

We thank Marc Restellini for his assistance in
researching this work.

This work has been requested for inclusion in the
artist's forthcoming exhibition *Modigliani: Modern
Gazes* organized by the Museum Barberini, Postdam,
to be held from April 27–August 18, 2024.

Estimate

\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000

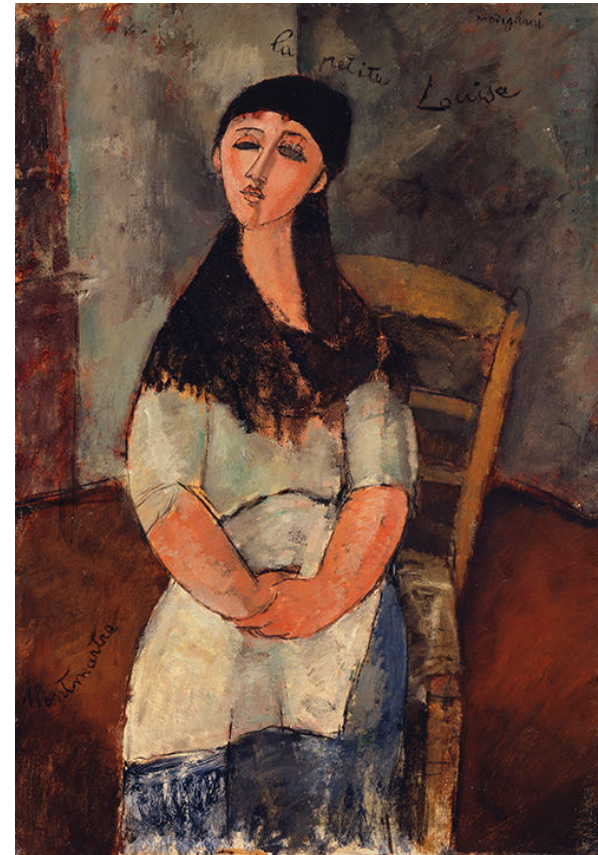
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“To do any work, I must have a living person, I must be able to see him opposite me.”
—Amedeo Modigliani

With its near-sculptural use of paint, in brushstrokes built up in varying tones to give dimension to the face and head of the sitter, *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)* is a portrait of remarkable immediacy and intensity. Painted in 1915 during a pivotal moment in Amedeo Modigliani’s career, where the artist returned with force to painting after a period dedicated to his sculptural practice, *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)* draws on a range of stylistic influences, synthesized through the artist’s distinctive pictorial idiom and refined into what he would term “*Le grand style*.”

Rendered in warm, terracotta tones with flushes of pink, and darker notes vibrantly accented by bold brushstrokes in blue and green, *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)* demonstrates the sophistication of Modigliani’s handling of paint. In keeping with Modigliani’s stylistic development during these crucial months, we can see all of the characteristics of his early style—the “importance of black in structuring the picture; mid-length, frontal figures against an indeterminate, deliberately rough background; the absence of details and the beginnings of distortion”—pushed in sophisticated new directions.¹ With her elongated neck, elegantly sloping shoulders, and distinctive almond eyes, *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)* demonstrates the significant developments made in this important year towards realizing the artist’s signature style, notably in the more stylized treatment of her features and darker construction of the eyes that would be such a prominent feature of his portraits in the following years.



Amedeo Modigliani, *Little Louise*, 1915. Private Collection. Image: © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images

Although little is known about the sitter, Modigliani returned to her several times between 1914 and 1917, first in a sensitively rendered watercolor, in which she appears with the same dark headscarf that accentuates the smooth curve of her forehead and rounded face. The present work is most closely related to a slightly larger portrait, *Little Louise*, 1915, showing the model in the same pose, but presented in a three-quarter seated view. In focusing more directly on the face and head of the titular Louise with disarming directness in *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)*, Modigliani generates a profound psychological charge, adding a note of sensuality in the delicate rendering of her gently parted lips and blushed cheeks.

Just as in his earliest years in Paris, when the artist was based in Montmartre and painted his friends and neighbors gravitating around the rue du Delta, he resumed this practice when he returned to painting in 1915. Modigliani created portraits of the cosmopolitan collection of writers, dealers, and artists gathered around the bars and studios of Montparnasse including the likes of Chaim Soutine, Juan Gris, and Moïse Kisling. As in *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)*, the more closely cropped format of these bust portraits, and the sense of tender familiarity between artist and model that they document, work together to “underscore the intimacy and immediacy with which the artist approached his subject.”ⁱⁱ

A Sculptor’s Vision

Modigliani’s move to Montparnasse had been prompted by the close working relationship that he had developed with the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi, and it is easy to imagine the enthusiasm with which a young man who had spent his childhood in provincial Italy would approach this vibrant new city and blend of intellectual and artistic ideas. In the artist’s own words, in these years he was at the epicenter of “this great intellectual crossroads, where the sons of all races mingle, united in a common artistic ideal, where the art of tomorrow is developed, where the fusion of all the peoples of Europe and the world is perhaps being prepared”—vividly captured in his portraits from this height of his career.ⁱⁱⁱ



[Left] *Portrait Mask (Gba gba)*, Baule, Ivory Coast, before 1913. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New

York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY [Right] Constantin Brancusi, *Mademoiselle Pognany [I]*, 1912. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, PA, USA / Gift of Mrs. Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee, 1933 / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Although known primarily as a painter, Modigliani’s sculptural practice, developed in the early 1910s, would profoundly shape his painterly language, with the “attenuated forms and stylized features of the stone pieces, and the flat, linear style of the drawings [...] resurfacing in his later paintings.”^{iv} Friend and fellow painter Nina Hamnett would emphasize the primary importance of sculpture in Modigliani’s practice, and although he also worked in wood, his carved limestone heads first presented at the 1912 Salon d’Automne are a stunning articulation of the artist’s fundamental preoccupation with questions of line and form. Recalling the technical finesse and expressive power of his mentor Brancusi’s rounded and radically simplified forms, Modigliani rejected a tradition exemplified in the modern age by the expressive turbulence of Auguste Rodin’s sculpted surfaces. Modigliani turned increasingly to non-Western modes of representation in the exquisite refinement and purification of his forms.

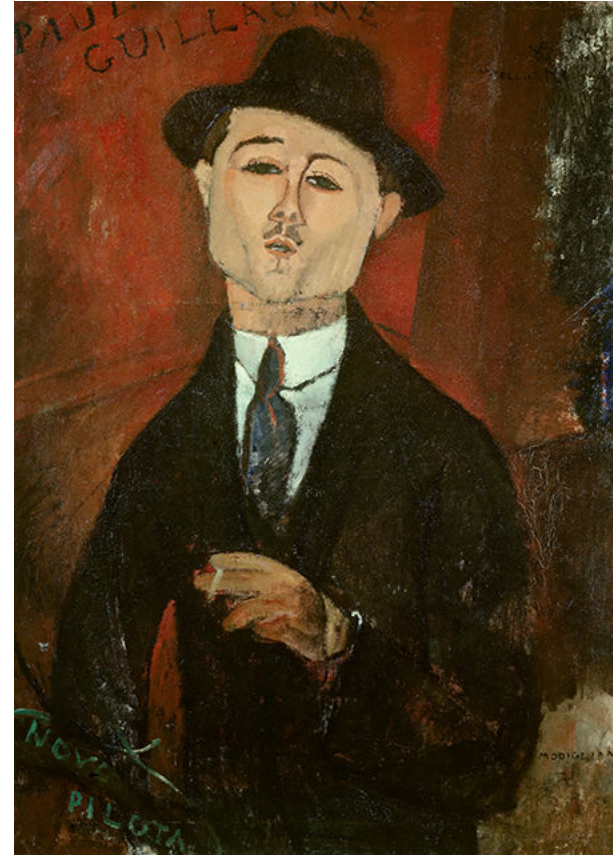
As with other avant-garde artists of the period, Modigliani’s access to the so-called “primitive” wooden masks imported, exhibited, and circulated by his friend and dealer Paul Guillaume would prove vital in these years. The immediacy and expressiveness of these carved facial forms was uniquely synthesized in Modigliani’s work with the elongated distortions characteristic of the 16th century Italian Mannerist painting that would have been so familiar to him. Modigliani first met Guillaume at the close of 1914, the same period that Carl Einstein’s hugely influential primitivist study *Negerplastik* was published, celebrating the “state of motionless ecstasy” achieved in these objects through an “elaboration of a purified structure.”^v



Parmigianino, *Madonna with the long neck*, 1535-1540. Galleria Uffizi, Florence. Image: Bridgeman Images

Representing one of the most important professional relationships in Modigliani's short life, Guillaume was hugely active in promoting the artist's work both in Paris and internationally, sending examples of his sculpture to New York in 1916 to an important group exhibition at the Modern Gallery. It was Guillaume who was instrumental in Modigliani's return to painting in these years, and his proximity to both the intellectual Guillaume and his impressive collection of African art would motivate the formal and stylistic innovations pioneered by the artist from this point on. In the well-known series of drawn and painted portraits of Guillaume created by Modigliani between 1914 and 1916, Modigliani celebrated his sitter's unique role in shaping and guiding this next chapter of avant-garde experiment. In the masterful *Paul Guillaume, Nova Pilota*, 1915, Musée

de l'Orangerie, Paris, the extent to which the artist had successfully transposed the plastic effects of the mask from sculpture into painting is evident; the dealer's likeness is rendered through a carefully observed stylization and schematization focused on pure line and volume.



Amedeo Modigliani, *Paul Guillaume, Nova Pilota*, 1915. Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris. Image: © Photo Josse / Bridgeman Images

Intensified though the close focus on the head of the sitter here and the rhythmic background of animated broken brushwork that she is set against, *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)* evidences the same sculptural approach taken by the painter in these years, his "gradated use of black paint" immediately effective in bringing out the more lively, luminous quality of her flesh.^{vi} Establishing

the geometric simplification, elongated forms, and stylized facial features that would come to define the artist's work, in *Tête de jeune fille (Louise)* Modigliani strikes a perfect balance between the expressive and reduced volumes of African sculpture with the specificity of his sitter, charging this portrait with a remarkable and disarming poignancy.

ⁱ Sophie Krebs, "Modigliani & Paris," in *Modigliani*, exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2017, p. 21.

ⁱⁱ Anette Kruszynski, *Amedeo Modigliani: Portraits and Nudes*, London, 2000, p. 36.

ⁱⁱⁱ Amedeo Modigliani, quoted in Krebs, p. 23.

^{iv} Simonetta Fraquelli, "A Personal Universe: Modigliani's Portraits and Figure Paintings," in *Modigliani and his Models*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2006, p. 33.

^v Carl Einstein, quoted in Marc Restellini, ed., *Modigliani: The Primitivist Revolution*, exh. cat., The Albertina Museum, Vienna, 2021, p. 171.

^{vi} Kruszynski, p. 42.

Provenance

Georges Chéron, Paris

Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (acquired on October 5, 1921)

Dr. Noréro (acquired from the above on February 9, 1922)

Antonio Mazzotta, Milan (acquired by 1958)

Farsettiarte, Prato, November 29, 1997, lot 382

Private Collection

Galerie Cazeau-Béraudière, Paris (acquired in 2002)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Milan, Palazzo Sociale, La Donna nell'Arte, *Da Hayez a Modigliani*, April–June 1953, no. 222, pp. 33, 161 (possibly; titled *Testa*)

Milan, Palazzo Reale, *Mostra di Amedeo Modigliani*, November–December 1958, no. 16, p. 23 (illustrated, n.p.)

Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, *Modigliani*, January–February 1959, no. 11, pl. 8, n.p. (illustrated; titled *Testa di ragazza*)

Frankfurt am Main, Steinernes Haus. Römerberg, *Amedeo Modigliani*, June 21–July 28, 1963, no. 12, n.p. (illustrated)

London, Tate Gallery, *The Arts Council of Great Britain 1963. Modigliani*, September 28–November 3, 1963, no. 14, pl. 11, pp. 15–16 (illustrated, n.p.)

Florence, Palazzo Strozzi, *Arte moderna in Italia 1915–1935*, February 26–May 28, 1967, no. 441, pp. 97, XXII (illustrated, p. 97; titled *Louise*)

Prato, Galleria D'Arte Moderna Fratelli Farsetti, *100 Opere di Artisti Toscani*, May–June 1972, no. 73, n.p. (illustrated)

Verona, Galleria dello Scudo, *Modigliani, dipinti e disegni. Incontri italiani 1900–1920*, November 25, 1984–January 1, 1985, no. 30, p. 123

Venice, Palazzo Grassi, *5 Artisti Toscani: Amedeo Modigliani, Ottone Rosai, Gino Severini, Ardengo Soffici, Lorenzo Viani*, April 14–May 1, 1984

Verona, Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Palazzo Forti, *Modigliani a Montparnasse 1909–1920*, July 14–October 30, 1988, p. 38 (illustrated)

Livorno, Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori Villa Mimbelli, *Cézanne, Fattori e il '900 in Italia*, December 7, 1997–April 13, 1998, no. 34, p. 113 (illustrated; titled *Louise*)

Paris, Musée du Luxembourg; Milan, Palazzo Real, *Modigliani: L'ange au visage grave*, October 23, 2002–July 6, 2003, no. 41, pp. 230–231 (illustrated, p. 231)

Paris, Galerie Cazeau-Béraudière, *Morceaux choisis*, 2004, pp. 112–113 (illustrated, p. 113)

Tokyo, The Bunkamura Museum of Art; Sapporo, Museum of Contemporary Art; Osaka, Daimaru Museum Umeda; Shimane Art Museum; The Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, *Modigliani et Hébuterne, le couple tragique*, April 7–December 16, 2007, no. 4, pp. 38–39, 200 (illustrated, p. 39)

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Modigliani y su tiempo*, February 5–May 18, 2008, no. 61, pp. 106, 197 (illustrated, p. 106)

Tokyo, The National Art Center; Osaka, The National Museum of Art, *Modigliani et le primitivisme*, March 26–September 15, 2008, no. 25, pp. 112–113, 248 (illustrated, p. 113)

Bonn, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Amedeo Modigliani: ein Mythos der Moderne*, April 17–August 30, 2009, no. 52, pp. 56, 177 (illustrated)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Parijs Stad van de moderne kunst 1900–1960*, October 15, 2011–January 29, 2012, pp. 68–69 (illustrated, p. 68)

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 360–361, 554 (illustrated, p. 361)

Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul Arts Center, *Modigliani: Legend of Montparnasse*, June 26–October 4, 2015, pp. 105, 106–107 (illustrated, p. 107; detail illustrated, p. 105)

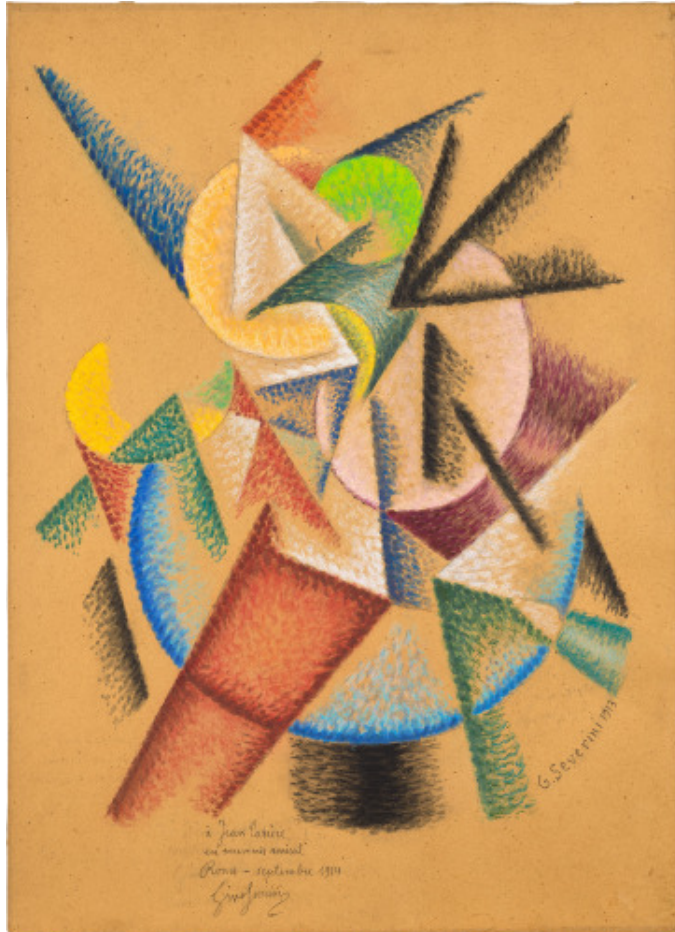
Villeneuve-d'Ascq, LaM, Lille Métropole Musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut, *Amedeo Modigliani: L'oeil intérieur*, February 27–June 5, 2016, no. 45, p. 70 (illustrated)
 Genova, Palazzo Ducale, *Modigliani*, March 16–July 16, 2017, no. 50, pp. 84–85, 119 (illustrated, pp. 85, 119)
 The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Art Deco–Paris*, October 14, 2017–March 3, 2018, no. 4.09, p. 80 (illustrated)
 Vienna, The Albertina Museum, *Modigliani: The Primitivist Revolution*, September 17, 2021–January 9, 2022, no. 118, pp. 182–183, 211 (illustrated, p. 183)

Literature

Pierre Descargues, *Amedeo Modigliani 1884–1920*, Paris, 1951, pl. 7, n.p. (illustrated; titled *Portrait*)
 Ambrogio Ceroni, *Amedeo Modigliani: Peintre*, Milan, 1958, no. 50, p. 48 (illustrated, n.p.)
 Nello Ponente, *Modigliani*, New York, 1969, no. 19
 Leone Piccioni and Ambrogio Ceroni, *I dipinti di Modigliani*, Milan, 1970, no. 94, p. 92 (illustrated, n.p.)
 Joseph Lanthemann, *Modigliani 1884–1920. Catalogue Raisonné*, Barcelona, 1970, no. 89, pp. 113, 182 (illustrated, p. 182; titled *Tête de jeune fille (la petite Louise)*)
 Jacques Lassaigne, *Tout Modigliani. La peinture*, Paris, 1982, no. 94, pp. 28, 32 (illustrated, p. 28)
 Osvaldo Patani, *Amedeo Modigliani: Catalogo generale*, Milan, 1991, no. 97, p. 117 (illustrated; titled *Louise*)
Têtes Fleuries: 19e en 20e eeuwse Portretkunst uit de Triton Foundation, exh. cat., Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 2007, p. 19

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3

Gino Severini

Mare = Ballerina

signed and dated "G. Severini 1913" lower right; signed, inscribed and dedicated "à Jean Carrère en souvenir amical Rome - septembre 1914 Gino Severini" lower center; signed, titled and inscribed "17 mare = ballerina (studio) Gino Severini" on the reverse
chalk, tempera and pastel on board
25 1/4 x 18 1/4 in. (64.1 x 46.4 cm)
Executed in 1913-1914.

This work will be included in the additional volume to the *Catalogo Ragionato dell'Opera pittorica di Gino Severini*, currently being prepared by Daniela Fonti and Romana Severini Brunori.

Estimate

\$80,000 — 120,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Mare = Ballerina is a radiant composition of arcs and angles rendered in prismatic color. Gino Severini's marks are alive with energy, which seems to burst forth from each dynamic stroke. Created in 1913-1914, concurrent to the publication of Severini's first personal Futurist manifesto, "The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism," 1913, *Mare = Ballerina* encapsulates Severini's interpretation of Futurist values in terms of color and composition; moreover, the title of the work is the very analogy Severini uses in the text to explain his theory.



Georges Braque, *Nature morte, harpe et violon*, 1911. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf / Walter Klein / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Born in a small town in Italy, Severini spent his teenaged years in Rome, and moved to Paris in 1906. Severini was an early, dedicated member of the Futurist movement—he signed the first two manifestos in 1910, and his studio practice in Paris formed a crucial link between the Parisian Cubists and Italian Futurists, in both artistic and social terms. *Mare = Ballerina*, for instance, evokes the stippled brushstroke of Georges Braque (whose studio was next to Severini's), and the essential fragmentation of early analytical cubism. Severini represented such Cubist ideas of prismatic color and simultaneity among his Italian peers, and, inversely, he organized the first Futurist exhibition outside of Italy at Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, in 1912.

With "The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism," written for his solo exhibition at Marlborough Gallery, London in 1913, Severini outlined his personal interpretation of Futurist values. For Severini, it was useless for an artist to depict individual objects; rather, it was the relationships between objects—the associations, memories, or "analogies," as he called them—that were worth painting.ⁱ These analogies represent the gap between external reality and the interior of the individual mind, and so, they exist in a separate dimension of "qualitative radiations," which can only be rendered visible in Futurist artistic terms; e.g., the artist's unique "plastic sensibility."ⁱⁱ

As an example, Severini used the analogy, *mare = ballerina*.ⁱⁱⁱ He explained: "The sea dancing, its zig-zag movements and contrasting silver and emerald, evokes within my plastic sensibility the distant vision of a dancer covered in sparkling sequins in her world of light, noise, and sound.

Therefore *mare = ballerina*.^{iv} Crucially, *Mare = Ballerina* does not depict the sea or a dancer in representational terms; rather, it captures the energy of the dynamic movement that unites both phenomena in Severini's mind, his "plastic sensibility." *Mare = ballerina* is the gesture of emotional and kinetic correspondence between the two.

"The artistic ensemble mare = ballerina should preferably have luminous irradiations (forms and color-light) moving from the center towards space (centrifugal)." —Gino Severini, "The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism," 1913

Severini's manifesto then lists the core aesthetic tenants of Futurism, all of which are present in *Mare = Ballerina*. The composition is "vertically rectangular," dynamic, and "open in all directions towards space," as Severini wrote.^v There is simultaneous contrast of line, planes, and volumes, and "constructive interpenetration" of forms in "spherical expansion," as seen in the angular black, red, and green prisms and arrows that cut through the expanding circles of yellow and blue.^{vi} Each shape consists of pure, unmixed color, with prismatic radiance that encompasses the spectrum of visible light. *Mare = Ballerina* makes use of its neutral support, as well as strategic placement of black and white marks, "to obtain the greatest intensity from the colors."^{vii} Taken together, the work is an encyclopedic exemplar of Severini's Futurist techniques.



Gino Severini, *Sea = Dancer*, 1914. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: © Stefano Baldini / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Gino Severini / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Mare = Ballerina is inscribed by the artist at lower left to his friend, Jean Carrère, whom he had known since 1911. Together, they had been foreign correspondents in Libya, reporting on the conflict between Italy and the Ottoman Empire. Inscribed “in friendly memory” in Rome, and dated September, 1914, Severini remembers the pair’s past, and looks forward to the future of their friendship.

ⁱ Gino Severini, “The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism— A Futurist Manifesto, 1913,” in Umbro Apollonio, ed., *The Documents of 20th-Century Art: Futurist Manifestos*, The Viking Press, New

York, 1970, pp. 118-125.

ii Ibid.

iii Note that in logical exercises, the equals sign is used to denote analogous relationships; just as in a literary analogy, *a is b*, so *a = b* in logic.

iv Severini, p. 123.

v Ibid.

vi Ibid

vii Ibid., p. 124.

Provenance

Jean Carrère, Paris (gifted by the artist in September 1914)

Galerie Cazeau-Béraudière, Paris

Private Collection, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2009

Exhibited

Rome, Galleria Futurista, *Esposizione di pittura futurista: Boccioni, Carra, Russolo, Balla, Severini, Soffici*, February–March 1914, no. 17

San Francisco, The Palace of Fine Arts, *Panama-Pacific International Exposition*, 1915, no. 1166, p. 274

Vienna, Kunstforum, *Futurismus. Radikale Avantgarde*, March 7–June 29, 2003, no. 111, pl. 25, pp. 139, 280 (illustrated, p. 139)

Paris, Musée national de l'Orangerie; Rovereto, Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea, *Gino Severini 1883-1966. Futuriste et néoclassique*, April 27, 2011–January 8, 2012, no. 32, pp. 141, 225 (illustrated)

New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Inventing Abstraction 1910-1925: How a Radical Idea Changed Modern Art*, December 23, 2012–April 15, 2013, no. 101, pp. 129, 373 (illustrated, p. 129)

Literature

Gino Severini, *Témoignages: 50 ans de réflexion*, Rome, 1963, p. 52

Giovanni Lista, *Futurismo. La rivolta dell'avanguardia- Die revolte der avantgarde*, Cinisello Balsamo, 2008, no. 79, p. 434-435 (illustrated, p. 434)

Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation, exh. cat., Kunsthall Rotterdam, Brussels, 2012, pp. 290-291, 563 (illustrated, p. 291)

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4

Theo van Doesburg

Composition (Seated Figure)

signed with the artist's monogram and dated "1918"
lower right

oil on canvas, in artist's frame
21 7/8 x 15 7/8 in. (55.5 x 40.5 cm)
Painted in 1918.

Estimate

\$900,000 — 1,200,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Theo van Doesburg was a leading founder of the *de Stijl* movement in the Netherlands and beyond, as both an artist and the publisher of the movement's periodical of the same name, which was first issued one year prior to the creation of *Composition (Seated Figure)*, 1918. Van Doesburg's *de Stijl* brought his radical ideas and those of his peers, including Piet Mondrian and Bart van der Leek, to an international audience. A rare example from the initial groundbreaking moments of the movement, *Composition (Seated Figure)* demonstrates that van Doesburg's comprehensive understanding of *de Stijl* was not limited to his literary involvement—he was on the vanguard of its painterly execution.

“Strip nature of all its forms, and you will have style left.” —Theo van Doesburg

Beginning with his correspondence with Mondrian in 1915, van Doesburg played a critical role in theorizing *de Stijl*. Instigated by the destruction of World War I, drawing on the utopian ethos of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and anticipating the desires of the Bauhaus, adherents to *de Stijl* believed in a social need to unify all aspects of life under one aesthetic. For van Doesburg, Mondrian, and their peers, this aesthetic was geometric and grid-based, with a formal reduction of color and representation to the barest essentials. In contrast to what they saw as the “individual domination in every state” that led to World War I, van Doesburg and his peers imagined *de Stijl* as a collective effort; as a result, the artists were close collaborators in the early years of *de Stijl*, with the innovations of one artist invigorating the whole group.ⁱ By stripping form down to pure style, van Doesburg and Mondrian believed their art could reach a new level of universal, spiritual resonance.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Grid No. 1*, 1918. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Image: © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston / Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Schlumberger / Bridgeman Images

Composition (Seated Figure) crystallizes van Doesburg's interpretation of *de Stijl* in 1917-1918. Though the painting ostensibly includes a figure, such a figure has been completely abstracted, into a series of overlapping rectangles in blue, yellow, green, grey, black, and white. The inclusion of grey and green distinguishes van Doesburg's work from that of Mondrian; the latter dropped such colors from his palette in the 1920s, but van Doesburg retains a subtlety of planes through the use of grey and green, reminiscent of Cubist portraits of the early 1910s.ⁱⁱ In this sense, *Composition (Seated Figure)* holds onto a depth of pictorial space, synthesizing what van Doesburg saw as the most important innovations of his avant-garde peers into one canvas.



Georges Braque, *Woman with a Mandolin*, 1910. Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. Image: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza / Scala / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Careful study of the surface of *Composition (Seated Figure)* reveals that the artist began by painting the black outlines, and then filling in rectangles of pure color. This approach aligns with Mondrian's centering of the vertical grid in the composition of paintings, which van Doesburg advocated as an element of *de Stijl* until the mid-1920s.ⁱⁱⁱ Van Doesburg's outlines in *Composition (Seated Figure)* are as adamant and self-assured as Mondrian's, reflecting the core *de Stijl* value of working together towards a collective aesthetic at this time.

Van Doesburg's order of operations also speaks to the influence of his concurrent artistic

project—the design of stained glass windows. In line with the principles of *de Stijl*, van Doesburg believed that the success of the movement lay in its integration into all aspects of life, interior design included. Such an open-minded and omnivorous approach to artmaking would ensure the longevity of the movement. Van Doesburg's personal approach to *de Stijl*, exemplified in *Composition (Seated Figure)*, had a direct influence on the founding teachers of the Bauhaus, and its lines trace further into the clean and streamlined aesthetics of the 21st century, a true aesthetic revolution.

ⁱ Theo van Doesburg (1918), "De Stijl: Manifesto I," translated in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory: 1900-2000*, Malden, 2003, p. 281.

ⁱⁱ George Heard Hamilton, *The Pelican History of Art: Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880-1940*, Penguin, New York, 1967, p. 322.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

Provenance

P. Tideman, Amsterdam (probably acquired in 1918 directly from the artist)
 Mak van Waay, Amsterdam, May 1, 1973, lot 37
 Monet (J.P. Smid), Amsterdam (acquired at the above sale)
 Private Collection (by descent from the above)
 Galerie Noortman, Maastricht (acquired by 2003)
 Private Collection, New York (acquired by 2004)
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2009

Exhibited

Miami, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, *Less is More: The Influence of the Bauhaus on American Art*, February 7–March 10, 1974, no. 9, p. 12

Cologne, Kunsthandel Kiefisch, *Die Styl und sein Kreis*, 1974

Utrecht, Central Museum (on long term loan, 1975–1999)

Laren, Singer Museum, *Presentatie. Tentoonstelling georganiseerd door de Nederlandsche Kunstkoopersbond*, May 1976, no. 64, p. 33 (illustrated)

Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein (p. 182, illustrated); Utrecht, Centraal Museum (no. 50, pp. 166–167, 307; illustrated, p. 167); Bonn, Rheinisches Landesmuseum, *Van Gogh bis Cobra: Holländische Malerei 1880–1950*, November 23, 1980–June 10, 1981

Holland, Michigan, Hope College, De Pree Art Center & Gallery, *Dutch Art and Modern Life: 1882–1982*, October 2–November 13, 1982, no. 24, pp. 74–75 (illustrated, p. 75)

Amsterdam, Institute of Contemporary Art, *The Antagonistic Link: Joaquín Torres-García, Theo van Doesburg*, May 31–August 23, 1992, fig. 50, p. 111 (illustrated)

Paris, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *La beauté exacte: Art Pays-Bas XXe Siècle, de van Gogh à Mondrian*, March 25–July 17, 1994, no. 4, p. 289

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum (on long term loan, 2011–2017)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Mondriaan en De Stijl: een definitieve plek in Nederland*, September 16, 2011–January 16, 2012, fig. 43, pp. 66–67 (illustrated, p. 67; caption inverted with fig. 44)

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 305, 544 (illustrated)

Brussels, Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR), *Theo van Doesburg: A New Expression of Life, Art, and Technology*, February 26–May 29, 2016, no. 9, p. 41 (illustrated)

Literature

Sergio Polano, *Theo van Doesburg: Scitti di arte e di architettura*, Rome, 1979, no. PITT 120, p. 527 (illustrated)

Carel Blotkamp, *Daubigny, Van Doesburg, Daniëls en 88 andere hoogtepunten uit de collectie moderne kunst van het Centraal Museum*, Utrecht, 1987, no. 38, pp. 90–91 (illustrated, p. 91)

Els Hoek, ed., *Theo van Doesburg: oeuvre catalogue*, Utrecht, 2000, no. 582, pp. 227–228 (illustrated, p. 227)

Eddy Schavemaker, *Noortman: One Hundred Master Paintings*, Maastricht, 2003, pp. 262–264 (illustrated, p. 262; detail illustrated, p. 264)

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5

Georges Braque

La bouteille de Bass

signed "G Braque" on the reverse
oil on canvas

16 1/8 x 12 3/4 in. (41 x 32.5 cm)

Painted in 1911-1912.

Estimate

\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



“There is in nature a tactile space. I might almost say a manual space [...] This is the space that fascinated me so much, because that is what early Cubist painting was, a research into space.” —Georges Braque

Painted in 1911-1912, within the short period of intensive creative exchange and ferment that would mark the high point of the early, analytical phase of Cubism, George Braque’s *La bouteille de Bass* is an exceptional work from this defining chapter of painterly modernism. Working, as Braque would famously term it, like “a pair of climbers roped together,” he and Picasso would scale remarkable heights in these decisive years, pushing painting into radical new territory as they overturned centuries of pictorial tradition.ⁱ While they had worked closely together in Paris, the innovations of one inspiring further feats of painterly daring in the other, in the spring of 1911 Braque was leading the charge. As John Richardson details, it was Braque who intensified the Cubist grid with the introduction of oval canvases, and who first applied stencil lettering to his compositions, experiments that would be most fully interrogated and extended by the two artists in Céret that summer, where they worked more closely together than ever before. While Picasso would redefine the terms of Cubist perspective, it was Braque who “invented the space in which Cubist objects could live and breathe.”ⁱⁱ



Pablo Picasso, *La bouteille de Bass*, 1912. Museo del Novecento, Milan. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Acquired first by Braque’s dealer and the early supporter of Cubism, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, before its purchase by renowned collector and writer Alphonse Kann, *La bouteille de Bass* has an illustrious pedigree and rich history. A principal influence, as many believe, for Charles Swann—the protagonist of Marcel Proust’s ambitious novel cycle, *À la recherche du temps perdu*—Kann was widely respected for his discerning eye, amassing one of the most important collections of works by artists of the early 20th century avant-garde between 1927 and 1938, when he was forced to flee Paris as the threat of war pressed closer. Hung alongside other masterworks of the era (including, incidentally, an example of Fernand Léger’s *Fumées sur les toits*, not unlike the work from the Triton Collection Foundation being offered concurrently), *La bouteille de Bass* exemplifies the

pictorial experiments pioneered by Braque in this crucial year. The present work was confiscated from Kann during the Nazi occupation of France in June of 1940, but restituted to his possession after the war, in 1947.



Georges Braque, *Homme à la guitare*, 1911-1912. On long-term loan to The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Built up in luminous passages of whites, greys, and ochre tones, the surface of the work is activated through a series of rhythmic exchanges between curvilinear forms and more rigidly rendered line, and the fluctuations of shorter, more densely worked brushstrokes against delicate,

transparently rendered layers. Working within and against the Cubist grid here, these syncopated elements combine and detach from one another in a masterful illustration of Braque's visual choreography which the artist described as "a matter of harmony, or rapports, of rhythm, and-most important for my own work-of 'metamorphosis.'"ⁱⁱⁱ

Pearlescent highlights cause the eye to dance more freely across the composition, a lilting, even musical effect recalling perhaps Braque's own love of instrumentation and his more explicit statements regarding the relationship of still life to notation whereby "a vase in a still life delineated a void just as a phrase in music delineated silence."^{iv} An accomplished flautist and enthusiastic concertina player, Braque filled his studio with instruments and paper constructions of his own creation. These constructions offer real-world correlates to John Golding's emphasis on Braque's notion of *le tableau object* and the extent to which the Cubists "saw their paintings as constructed objects having their own existence, as small, self-contained worlds, not reflecting the outside world but recreating it in a completely new form."^v Although many of his still lifes would directly incorporate the more familiar forms of violins and guitars as a way of anchoring his increasingly fragmented compositions, the combinations of solid forms and open cavities that characterize stringed instruments in particular, must surely have informed his most audacious attempts to overcome notions of the object as a unified, singular entity by opening it up to the space surrounding it.

Cubism, Cézanne, and the Still Life

"In a still life space is tactile, even manual, while the space of a landscape is a visual space." —Georges Braque

More than any other subject, from this point on still life would remain the primary mode of Braque's investigations into the nature of perception, drawing especially from Paul Cézanne's treatment of everyday objects arranged in space. Although Braque was certainly already familiar with Cézanne's work, the 1907 retrospective held at Galerie Bernheim-Jeune brought together more paintings by the artist than had ever been seen before. This exhibition enabled a much deeper appreciation and more forensic understanding of Cézanne's fractured geometries, volumetric masses, and—most importantly for Braque—his pioneering treatment of the space surrounding and separating objects as of equal importance and substance as the objects themselves. Although Braque applied these lessons first to a series of landscapes produced in the summer of 1908 in L'Estaque—acknowledged as the first truly Cubist canvases by the likes of Henri Matisse, Kahnweiler, and the acerbic critic Louis Vauxcelles—it would be in still life painting, rather than landscape or portraiture that Braque would most fully apply and extend these lessons.



Paul Cézanne, *Pommes et oranges*, 1895-1900. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

While both Braque and Picasso would find in Cézanne the key to breaking with the traditional single-point perspective, Picasso pursued a line of pictorial inquiry more directly related to the sculptural reality of the object, its composition, and his deconstruction of it; for Braque, the tactile qualities of space itself would come to take precedence. While the fragmentation of form had allowed him to establish a “spatial element” in his paintings that would be carried over into “spatial movement,” it would be in turning to still life that he would most assertively extend these experiments making, for the first time, the “relationship between the moving subject and the resting, palpable object available to experience.”^{vi}

Unlike the landscape, to which we more readily anchor ourselves from a distant, single perspective, the objects arranged by the hand of the artist on a tabletop enabled a more immediate appreciation of what Braque described as “tactile space,” capturing at once the movement towards and around the object and the durational aspect of this experience. Arranged on a horizontal and vertical axis and structured through the rhythmic intersections of line enforced by the architecture of the grid here, the objects of *La bouteille de Bass*—including the titular bottle of beer and

transparent glasses—are shattered into openness with the surrounding space. Conforming to what Douglas Cooper identified as a defining aspect of the Céret period where “broken brushwork [was] used to create a luminous palpitation, to differentiate between planes and to make the surface of the canvas more vibrant and tactile,” the surface of *La bouteille de Bass* is brilliantly animated, realizing the plastic potential of this tactile treatment of space.^{vii}



Only known paper sculpture by Braque, in his studio, 1914. Archives Laurens. Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Wonderfully evocative of this heady atmosphere of café culture, intellectual debate, and painterly daring, *La bouteille de Bass* incorporates a favorite motif of both Braque and Picasso's: the letters

of the Bass bottle, with the label pulled apart in the present work to reinforce this sense of perspectival multivalency. Anticipating the next great Cubist innovation of *papier collé*, the letters introduce a real-world element to the composition, “forms which were outside space and therefore immune to deformation.”^{viii} They also sound a more playful note, the shifting *B* and *ASSE* fragments not only announcing the branded beer, but also drawing on the French term, *bas*, meaning “low.”



Édouard Manet, *Huîtres*, 1862. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image: © National Gallery of Art Washington, D.C., Gift of the Adele R. Levy Fund, Inc., 1962.3.1

Towards the lower edge of *La bouteille de Bass*, Braque's inclusion of a beautifully rendered and legible oyster anchors the more abstracted elements of the canvas, its silky texture and opalescent qualities echoed in the dancing highlights of white and grey tones that repeat throughout the composition. No doubt a familiar bar food for of the two painters during their stay near the coast in Céret, the oyster also holds an important place in the history of still life painting, making prominent appearances in the canvases of Jean-Siméon Chardin, Philippe Rousseau, and Édouard

Manet. An early example of what would become a favorite motif of Braque's still lifes in later years, the oyster here seems to announce Braque's alignment to the masters of the still life tradition while emphasizing the radical new territory that Cubism would push the genre.

ⁱ Georges Braque, quoted in Richard Friedenthal, ed., *Letters of the Great Artists*, London, 1963, p. 264.

ⁱⁱ John Golding, “Braque and the Space of Still Life,” in *Braque: Still Lives and Interiors*, exh. cat., Hayward / South Bank Centre, London, 1990, n.p.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dieter Buchhart, “Georges Braque: The World as Still Life,” in *Georges Braque: Pioneer of Modernism*, exh. cat., Acquavella Galleries, New York, 2011, p. 50.

^{iv} John Richardson, *Life of Picasso*, p. 150.

^v Golding, *Cubism*, London, 1968, pp. 93-94.

^{vi} Buchhart, *ibid.*, pp. 54, 56.

^{vii} Douglas Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch*, London 1994, p.53.

^{viii} Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, 1907-1917: The Painter of Modern Life*, London, 1996, p. 190.

Provenance

Galerie Kahnweiler, Paris

Alphonse Kann, St. Germanin-en-Laye, France

Confiscated from the above by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg following the Nazi occupation of France in June 1940 (ERR inv. no. Ka 1120)

Recovered by the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section

Restituted on July 11, 1947 to Alphonse Kann, London

Private Collection (by descent from the above)

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris (acquired from the above)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2000

Exhibited

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Kubisme Uit de Collectie van de Triton Foundation*, March 27–July 2, 2006, pp. 5, 10–11 (illustrated, pp. 5, 10)

Rotterdam, The Netherlands Architecture Institute; Weil am Rhein, Vitra Design Museum, *Le Corbusier: The Art of Architecture*, May 26, 2007–February 10, 2008

Vienna, Belvedere, *DYNAMIK! Kubismus, Futurismus, KINETISMUS*, February 10–June 5, 2011, p. 155 (illustrated)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Parijs Stad van de moderne kunst 1900–1960*, October 15, 2011–January 29, 2012, pp. 54–55 (illustrated, p. 55)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 17, 278–279, 540 (illustrated, pp. 17, 279)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Mondrian en het kubisme Parijs 1912–1914*, January 25–May 11, 2014, p. 26 (illustrated)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum; Paris, Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, *The Dutch in Paris 1789–1914: Van Spaendonck, Scheffer, Jongkind, Maris, Kaemmerer, Breitner, Van Gogh, Van Dongen, Mondrian*, October 13, 2017–May 13, 2018, no. 19, p. 29 (illustrated)

Otterloo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Fernand Léger and the rooftops of Paris*, November 19, 2022–April 2, 2023, fig. 25, pp. 40, 42, 99 (illustrated, p. 40)

Literature

Nicole Worms de Romilly and Jean Laude, *Braque: Le Cubisme. Catalogue de l'oeuvre 1907–1914*, Paris, 1982, no. 118, pp. 150, 273 (illustrated, p. 150)

Pablo Picasso: Ik zoek niet, ik vind, exh.cat., Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 2011, p. 26 (illustrated)

Art Deco Paris, exh. cat., Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 2017, fig. 1.22, p. 26 (illustrated)

Living the Avant-Garde: The Triton Collection Foundation

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LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

6

Joan Miró

Personnage et oiseaux

signed "Miró" lower left; signed, titled and dated
"MIRO. 12/2/63 Personnage et oiseaux" on the
reverse

oil on board

29 x 40 7/8 in. (73.7 x 103.8 cm)

Executed on February 12, 1963.

Estimate

\$700,000 — 1,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Personnage et oiseaux combines two of Joan Miró's signature symbols in an explosive, abstracted composition of bold black lines and flashes of pure color. The human figure and bird are core elements of Miró's symbolic repertoire that fascinated the artist for decades, dating back to his associations with the French Surrealists, but, in the present work, created on February 12, 1963, the symbols' facture takes on a uniquely Abstract Expressionist tone. Reflecting the movements of the contemporary avant-garde, yet firmly committed to his own symbolic vision, Miró's

Personnage et oiseaux represents the undying curiosity and playful spirit of one of the 20th century's greatest artistic innovators.

Growing out of a Parisian, Surrealist context in the 1920s, in which automatism, intuition, and the power of the subconscious were highly valued, Miró developed his own symbolic language of signs. These forms, abstracted from their real-world equivalents, held multivalent and complex meaning in the artist's finely articulated compositions. The human figure and bird were two of Miró's most enduring forms—the *personnage*, at center in the present work, stands with oversize eyes, half-concealed by the strong vertical black lines of the body, and accented with coarse application of pink paint below each eye, like blush. For Miró, open eyes represented an engagement with reality, while closed eyes signified presence in a world of sleep and dreams; the figure in *Personnage et oiseaux*, thus, falls somewhere in between these worlds. The birds, to the left and right of the figure, function as symbolic links that fly between dreams and reality, in contrast to the grounded human being. Poet and art critic Jacques Dupin identified a dual precarity and balance in Miró's human and animal pairings; in his words, "nothing is heavy or stabilized in this poetic stylization of [the figure] in the process of metamorphosis between fixity and volatility."ⁱ



Joan Miró, *Le bel oiseau déchiffrant l'inconnu au couple d'amoureux*, from *Constellations*, 1941. Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

While the symbols present in *Personnage et oiseaux* are some of Miró's favored forms, the attitude of their execution in the present work reveals the influence of midcentury movements in painting on Miró's practice. Where the figures and birds of Miró's earlier works are rendered in neat, sinuous, articulate lines, the brushstroke of *Personnage et oiseaux* is thick and expressive, like the black brushstrokes of Franz Kline. The edges of Miró's oil paints halo, almost like the work of Helen Frankenthaler. His paint splatters and drips, like Jackson Pollock's. Miró first became acquainted with the Abstract Expressionists while visiting Alexander Calder, Yves Tanguy and Marcel Duchamp

in New York in 1947. Though Miró himself was a stylistic inspiration for the Abstract Expressionists, he was strongly moved by their sense of gesture and handling of paint in turn. Miró recalled that seeing their work was like a "blow to the solar plexus."ⁱⁱ



Franz Kline, *Mahoning*, 1956. The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Image: © Whitney Museum of American Art / Licensed by Scala / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © The Estate of Franz Kline / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

In 1959, Miró made his second trip to the United States to attend the opening of his retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and this renewed contact with his artistic colleagues came at a crucial moment for the artist; he had not painted since 1955, instead focusing on printmaking and ceramics, and this visit provided ample inspiration to return to painting. Compositions like *Personnage et oiseaux* are bright and evocative of the energy Miró found in Abstract Expressionism.

The playful handling of paint in *Personnage et oiseaux* is matched by the work's board support, a testament not only to Miró's experimental nature, but to his fertile imagination. As Dupin and

Ariane Lelong-Mainaud write, "[Miró's] supports, too, are subject to the same unruliness" as his painting technique, with surfaces that "varied from wooden boards to Masonite, sometimes burned and incised or cork, fibro-cement, cardboard in all its forms, jute, [and] sack cloth glued on newsprint."ⁱⁱⁱ

"For me a form is never something abstract; it is always a sign of something. It is always a man, a bird, or something else. For me painting is never form for form's sake." —Joan Miró

While he embraced the gestural boldness, innovative paint handling, and formal innovation of his American peers, Miró was unwilling to take the leap to completely abstract subject matter. For Miró, form could be *abstracted*, but never without representational referent. His enduring commitment to his own symbolic language, while incorporating the vibrancy of Abstract Expressionism in *Personnage et oiseaux*, speaks to the strength of Miró's personal aesthetic vision.

ⁱ Jacques Dupin, *Miró: Life and Work*, London, 1962, p. 485.

ⁱⁱ Joan Miró, quoted in Dupin, *Miró*, Paris, 2012, p. 276.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dupin and Ariane Lelong-Mainaud, eds., *Joan Miró, Catalogue Raisonné. Paintings 1959-1968*, cat. rais., vol. IV, Paris, 2002, p. 10.

Provenance

Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York
Marilyn Cole-Fischbach, New York and Paris
Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2006

Exhibited

Paris, Galerie Maeght, *Miró Cartons*, May 1965, no. 21
New York, Pierre Matisse Gallery, *Miró "Cartones" 1959-1965*, October 19–November 13, 1965, no. 18, n.p. (illustrated; detail illustrated, n.p.)
Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 319–321, 350–351, 554 (illustrated, p. 351; detail illustrated, pp. 320–321)

Literature

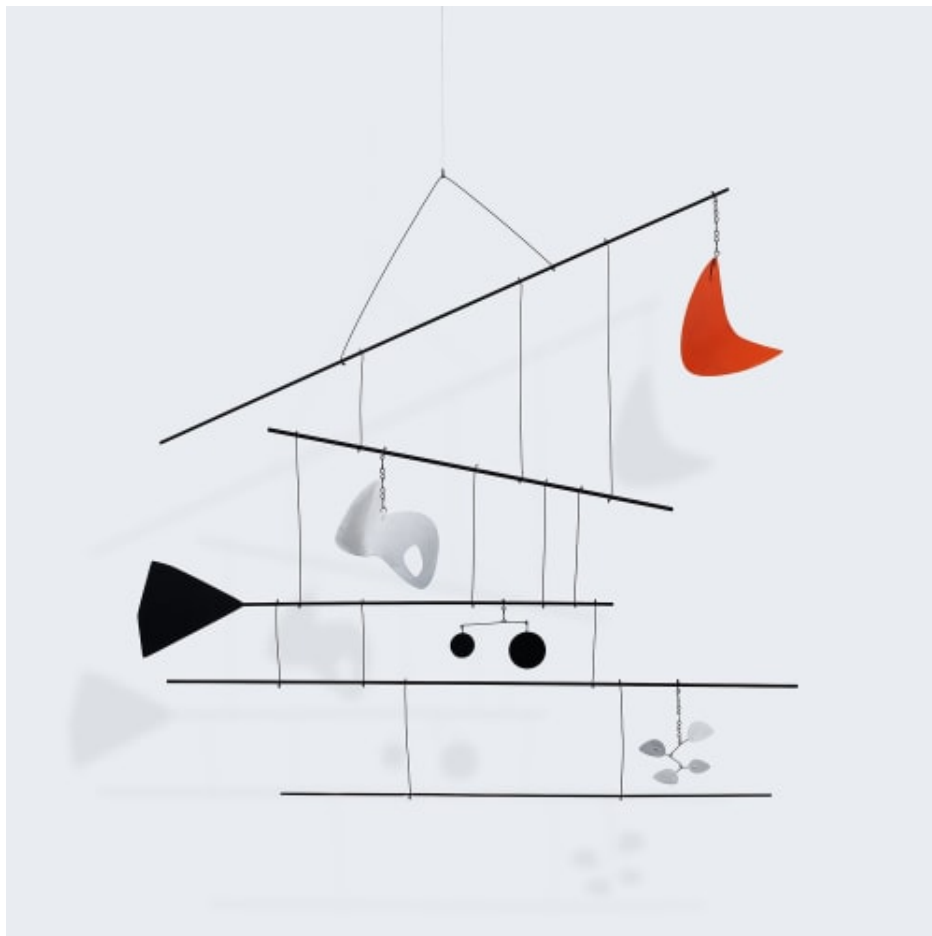
James Johnson Sweeney, *Joan Miró*, Barcelona, 1970, p. 73 (illustrated)

Rosa Maria Malet, *Joan Miró*, Barcelona, 1983, no. 72, pp. 80-81, 128 (illustrated, p. 81)

Jacques Dupin and Ariane Lelong-Mainaud, *Joan Miró Catalogue raisonné. Paintings. Vol. IV: 1959-1968*, Paris, 2002, no. 1035, p. 37 (illustrated)

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7

Alexander Calder

New Blériot

sheet metal, wire, rod and paint

46 1/2 x 50 x 11 in. (118.1 x 127 x 27.9 cm)

Executed circa 1950, this work is registered in the archives of the Calder Foundation, New York, under application number A09320.

Estimate

\$3,000,000 — 5,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Just as one can compose colors, or forms, so one can compose motions." —Alexander Calder

In 1910, when Alexander Calder was 11 years old, the French aviator Louis Blériot completed the first flight over the English Channel, piloting his sleek "Blériot XI" monoplane for the 36-and-a-half-minute journey. Winning a prize of £1,000 offered by the *Daily Mail* newspaper for doing so, Blériot became an overnight celebrity and is today remembered as a pioneer in the early era of aviation, a European counterpart to the Wright Brothers in America. Calder was long captivated by the heroism and enterprise of early flight: while in Paris in 1927, the artist rushed to Le Bourget with friends to cheer "L'aviateur!" as Charles Lindbergh landed the first solo transatlantic flight.ⁱ Circa 1949–1950, as propellers were becoming replaced by ultra-powerful jet engines, Calder executed two of his iconic floating "mobiles"—*The Blériot* and *New Blériot*—in reminiscence of the early days of air travel. Composed of rods that demarcate rows of squares and emulate the open-box structure of the Blériot XI, they embody the nostalgia and optimism that aviation history represented for Calder and his peers.

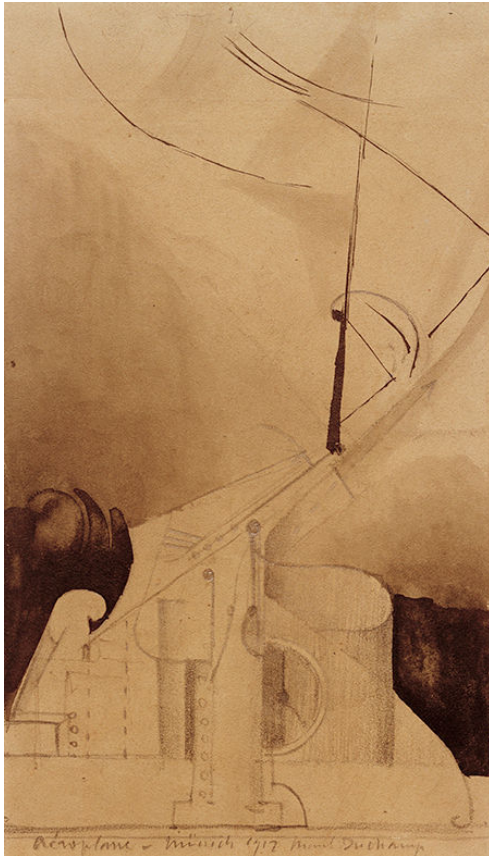
Blériot's incredulous achievement sent shock waves across the world, ushering in a new age marked by innovation, freedom, and promise. "Great Britain is no longer an island," a sensationalist headline from *The Daily Express* exclaimed in the wake of his flight; the Blériot XI was immediately hurried to London and put on public display at Selfridges department store. The ambitious aspirations of modern technology galvanized several of the 20th century's leading artists, including Calder, to develop their own responses to the new era symbolized by Blériot's groundbreaking invention. In his landmark 1913 text *The Cubist Painters*, Guillaume Apollinaire suggested that only "an artist as free of aesthetic considerations and as concerned with energy as Marcel Duchamp" could rival Blériot's triumph.ⁱⁱ The following year, Robert Delaunay painted his own *Hommage à Blériot*, 1914, Kunstmuseum Basel, a kaleidoscope of color that captured the Parisians' enthusiasm following the trailblazing Channel crossing. Six years after Calder's *New Blériot* was executed, Joseph Cornell dedicated two of his shadowboxes to the French engineer, including the enigmatic *Untitled (Homage to Blériot)*, 1956, Art Institute of Chicago.



Robert Delaunay, *Hommage à Blériot*, 1914. Kunstmuseum Basel. Image: Kunstmuseum Basel

One affinity Calder sensed between his process and that of Blériot may have been their experimentation with industrial materials, which took place in metal-filled workshops more closely suited to the needs of an amateur aviation engineer than any fellow artist. "There is a resemblance between Calder's procedure and that of the Wright brothers," for example, the art critic and writer Selden Rodman recalled of a visit to the sculptor's studio in the 1950s. "...This was no studio such as sculptors and traditionally worked in throughout the ages. No casts, no marble, no plaster, no armatures. Not a bicycle shop, to be sure, but certainly a machine shop. The floor was deep in steel shavings, wire, nuts and bolts, punched sheet metal. The benches sagged under lathes and power saws. The air was busy with dangling 'contraptions,' such as the brothers in Dayton used to call their experimental warped airfoils and rudimentary engines."ⁱⁱⁱ The rods, wires, and flattened sheet

metal used in *New Blériot* are not dissimilar materials to those the Wright brothers and their French peer employed for their monoplanes.



Marcel Duchamp, *Airplane (Aéroplane)*, 1912. The Menil Collection, Houston. Image: akg-images, Artwork: © 2023 Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

“But more significantly, I thought,” Rodman continued, “the Wrights too were in love with simplicity, with perfection of motion and economy of means. They began and ended their work as *artists*. Gliding and work with kites came naturally to them. They *appropriated* a small motor and attached it to their wings; but the motor was an afterthought...” This focus on the mechanics of motion—not mechanization—is palpable throughout Calder’s corpus, surfacing in his first

mobile as early as 1932. Despite its seemingly whimsical and weightless character, the construction of *New Blériot* required a remarkable degree of precision: the pieces of sheet metal, suspended only by a thin wire, are held in a precarious and ever-shifting balance by air currents and forces of gravity. The artful elegance of both Calder’s sculptures and early airplanes were achieved by capturing the harmony as well as the tension innate in the natural world and its forms.



The Blériot XI, 1909. Image: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

The kinetic achievements of *New Blériot* suggest Calder’s beginnings in mathematics and science, which saw the mechanical engineering graduate work as a draughtsman and hydraulic designer for New York Edison as a young man. Considering the work’s weighty yet airborne quality that seemingly betrays the laws of physics, it is perhaps fitting that it was first exhibited in a seminal solo show at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge—the university that spearheaded America’s first aeronautical engineering course. Hovering in the air, the white and black circles appear as a set of back and front wheels, while the kite-shaped black form and red airfoil element resemble a propeller and tailwing. It is the graceful motion of the mobile, however, that echoes the work’s namesake more than any precise figurative reference. According to Calder’s friend Robert Osborn, the artist evoked the early aviation pioneers such as the Wright Brothers in his “engineering care and assurance—they and Calder would have understood one another. Their approach was quite the same... There was an incredible integrity about the way he put works together, with the joining of parts so masterly and well-conceived.”^{iv}

ⁱ David Bourdon, *Calder: Mobilist, Ringmaster, Innovator*, New York, 1980, p. 29.

Alexander Calder

ⁱⁱ Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Cubist Painters*, trans. Peter Read, Berkeley, 2004, p. 75.

ⁱⁱⁱ Selden Rodman, "Alexander Calder," *Conversations with Artists*, New York, 1957.

^{iv} Grace Glueck, "Friends of Calder Honor Him As Loving, Happy 'Bear of a Man,'" *The New York Times*, December 8, 1976, p. 106.

Provenance

Carlos Raúl Villanueva, Caracas (acquired directly from the artist in 1955)

Margot Villanueva, Caracas (by descent from the above)

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris (acquired from the above)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2007

Exhibited

Cambridge, New Gallery, Charles Hayden Memorial Library, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *Calder*, December 5, 1950–January 14, 1951

Houston, Contemporary Art Museum, *Calder–Miró*, October 14–November 4, 1951, no. 20, p. 17

New York, Curt Valentin Gallery, *Alexander Calder: Gongs and Towers*, January 15–February 10, 1952, no. 5, n.p.

Caracas, Museo de Bellas Artes, *Calder*, September 11–25, 1955, no. 30

Caracas, Sala de Exposiciones Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, *Calder en Venezuela*, July 8–August 3, 1969, no. 19, p. 41 (illustrated)

Caracas, Museo de Bellas Artes, *Colección Carlos Raúl Villanueva: Las colecciones privadas en Venezuela 7*, 1972, no. 13

Caracas, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Sofía Imber, *Villanueva El Arquitecto*, 1988–1989

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum (on long term loan, 2012–2014)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Alexander Calder: De grote ontdekking*, February 11–May 28, 2012, pp. 210–211, 252 (illustrated, p. 211)

Düsseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, *Alexander Calder– Avant-Garde in Motion*, September 7, 2013–January 12, 2014, no. 62, p. 74 (illustrated)

Riehen/Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Alexander Calder & Fischli/ Weiss*, May 29–September 4, 2016, no. 74, pp. 194, 266 (illustrated, p. 194)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *From Rodin to Bourgeois: Sculpture in the 20th Century*, October 15, 2016–January 22, 2017, pp. 129, 265 (illustrated)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-Gardes 1870 to the Present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 522, 523, 541 (illustrated, p. 523)

Literature

Virginia Evans, "Calder," *America Illustrated*, vol. I, 1957, pp. 20–23 (illustrated, p. 22)

Paulina Villanueva and Paolo Gasparini, *Villanueva en tres casas*, Caracas, 2000, n.p. (illustrated)
A Modern Definition of Space: Calder Sculpture, exh. cat., Van de Weghe Fine Art, New York, 2003, p. 83 (New Gallery, Cambridge, 1950, installation view partially illustrated)

Calder: The Forties, exh. cat., Thomas Dane Gallery, London, 2005, p. 36 (New Gallery, Cambridge, 1950, installation view illustrated)

Alexander Calder: Performing Sculpture, exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2015, p. 23 (New Gallery, Cambridge, 1950, installation view partially illustrated)

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8

Jean Dubuffet

Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue

signed and dated "J. Dubuffet 67" lower left; signed,
titled and dated "Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue J.
Dubuffet janvier 67" on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

51 1/8 x 63 7/8 in. (129.9 x 162.2 cm)

Painted on January 23, 1967.

Estimate

\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



With its squiggling, black-outlined forms, and red, white, and blue color palette, *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue*, 1967, is a summative example of Jean Dubuffet's *L'Hourloupe* series. An expansive body of drawings, paintings, and sculpture created between 1962 and 1974, *L'Hourloupe* grew out of Dubuffet's subconscious, originating in a ballpoint pen doodle that the artist drew absentmindedly while on the telephone. The series had a devoted exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, one year prior to the present work's facture, indicating that *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue* dates to a peak of Dubuffet's international recognition for *L'Hourloupe*. Though it belongs to such a large body of work, *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue* has a robust exhibition history, including three shows in three different countries in 1968 alone, indicating, from the start, that *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue* has been seen as a representative *L'Hourloupe* work.

Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue encapsulates the virtuosic draftsmanship, humor, and embrace of disorder that defined Jean Dubuffet's *L'Hourloupe* series, and his legacy as a grandfather of graffiti art. A playful expression of Dubuffet's wandering imagination, the picture flows easily between figuration and abstraction, with the profiles of the titular inspectors nearly indistinguishable from the expressive forms of the background. It is only through a canny use of color and outline that Dubuffet pulls the white faces of his officers out of the painted shapes that surround them.



Jean Dubuffet in his studio, 1967. Image: © Tallandier / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Artists

Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

L'Hourloupe is a neologism, coined by Dubuffet to evoke the wild wonder and distortion of the series; the term recalls both the French verbs *hurler* (to roar or yell), and *hululer* (to hoot), as well as *la loup* (wolf). The term *loupe*, which in both French and English signifies a magnifying glass, speaks to the sense that each work in *L'Hourloupe* is part of a wider, imagined universe; if one zoomed out from *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue*, perhaps, the entire world of the inspectors' madness and fantasy might reveal itself.

The playful, inventive titling of *L'Hourloupe* applies to the present work as well; *Sinoque* and *Dingue* are not proper names, but pejorative, slang terms meaning stupid or crazy. Dubuffet's combination of *sinoque* and *dingue* with the French title for a police detective picks up on the anti-authoritarian ethos of the 1960s, perhaps most acutely anticipating the Parisian student uprisings of 1968. Such wordplay and use of contradiction and disorder speak to the larger legacy of Dubuffet's *art brut* on his artistic practice.

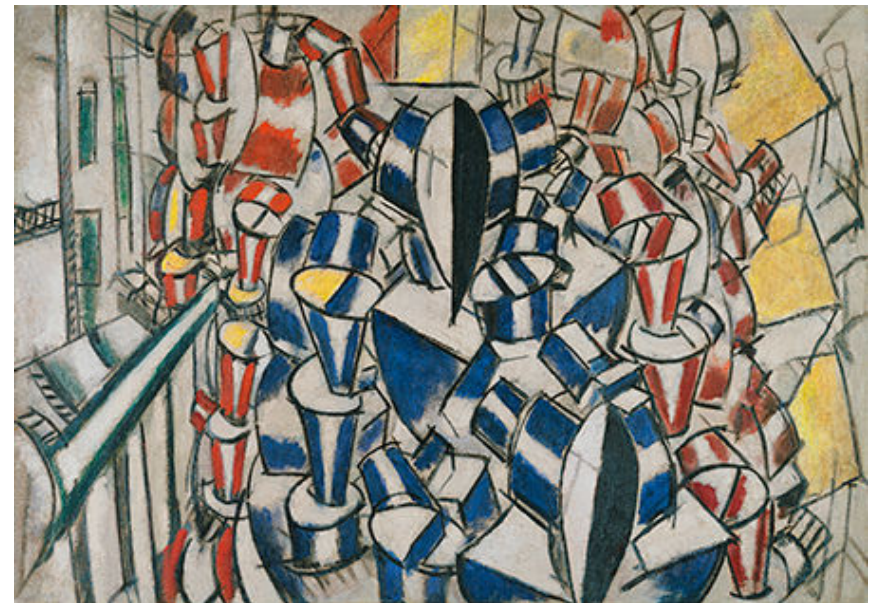


Jean Dubuffet, *Léautaud, Redskin-Sorcerer*, 1946. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Dubuffet embraced the instinctive and indigent in *art brut*, which he developed in the 1940s as an elevation of outsider aesthetics in fine art. Drawing on so-called primitive arts, such as wooden figural sculpture from Africa and Oceania, as well as the art of the mentally ill, Dubuffet sought to create work that was more honest, more *brutal*, more real, which, in the process, revealed in a Surrealist sense the idiosyncrasies and everyday wanderings of the artist's psyche. *L'Hourloupe* works like *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue* were a new iteration of Dubuffet's *art brut* goals. Per Dubuffet, *L'Hourloupe* "was characterized by a much more seriously arbitrary and irrational mood than anything I had done before. This was a plunge into fantasy, into a phantom parallel universe.

My renewed interest in outsider art was no doubt not unconnected with this sudden new development."ⁱ

Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue dates to a high point of *L'Hourloupe*, in the year after Dubuffet's 1966 Guggenheim exhibition dedicated to the series. At the time of *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue*'s creation in early 1967, the series was both benefiting from this international art world recognition, and undergoing a decisive conceptual shift. Beginning in late 1966, the visual lexicon of *l'écriture logologique* (logological writing) emerged in *L'Hourloupe* works, as Dubuffet took on the concept of *logos* as his artistic challenge. *Logos* is a term for the divine reason or predominant logic that orders and forms the universe, as articulated in Ancient Greek and Early Christian philosophy. Dubuffet sought to "endow this word with the opposite of its usual meaning" as a shorthand for the structures and belief systems that order contemporary life. As he explained, *logos* "commonly designates the mental operation of name and classification... my intention is, on the contrary, to wipe out categories and turn back to an undifferentiated continuum."ⁱⁱ



Fernand Léger, *The Staircase (Second State)*, 1914. Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. Image: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza / Scala / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Such an "undifferentiated continuum" exists within *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue*, as the

articulation of the painted surface does not discriminate between figure and form. The inspectors are rendered in the same black outline as the space around them; they are built from the same squiggling shapes, the same ellipses, bent ovals, rounded trapezoids. Dubuffet finds both humor and liberation in this breakdown of pictorial and philosophical order; through *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue*, he says, he “reveal[s] the arbitrary and specious character of the *logos* with which we are familiar.”ⁱⁱⁱ

“The aim of these works is, by breaking down the conventional logos, to set up or, rather, to suggest a new [logos], to reveal the arbitrary and specious character of the logos with which we are familiar, and the enduring possibility of reinterpreting the world and basing our thinking on a logos of a very different kind.” —Jean Dubuffet

Logos-as-chaos, then, is a utopian prospect for Dubuffet, an opportunity to create the world anew. Dubuffet takes this task seriously in *L’Hourloupe* works, as evidenced by the abundance of drafts and early drawings that go into each seemingly spontaneous composition. The present work, dated Jan. 23, 1967, takes its inspectors from two separate drawings done earlier that month, *Personnage (buste)*, Jan. 3, 1967, and *Personnage (buste)*, Jan. 4, 1967. The twenty days between these initial drawings and the final composition reflect the length and intensity of Dubuffet’s process, as he defines and redefines the terms of his *écriture logologique*.



[Left] Jean Dubuffet, *Personnage (buste)*, Jan. 3, 1967. Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris [Right] Jean Dubuffet, *Personnage (buste)*, Jan. 4, 1967. Artwork: © 2023

Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Dubuffet’s intentional approach to *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue*, and his wholehearted commitment to chaos, disruption, and unconventionality made him an inspiration for some of the greatest artists of the late 20th century. His unpretentious *art brut* sensibility, intuitive draftsmanship, and acute social consciousness resonated with younger artists, particularly those working in the context of graffiti and street art. The scrawling, iterative shapes of *Inspecteurs Sinoque et Dingue* anticipate the way in which graffiti can take over a city surface, as a utopic reclamation of space. As Oliver Shultz explained, “for Dubuffet, it was always about disruption. Disrupting the normal circuits of your ability to perceive the world around you.”^{iv}

ⁱ Jean Dubuffet, quoted in Agnes Husslein-Arco, et al., *Jean Dubuffet: Trace of an Adventure*, exh. cat., Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, 2003, p. 174.

ⁱⁱ Dubuffet, quoted in Jean Dubuffet and Mildred Glimcher, *Jean Dubuffet: Towards an Alternative Reality*, New York, 1987, p. 223.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Oliver Shultz, quoted in Isis Davis-Marks, “By Way of Jean Dubuffet,” *Phillips*, 2022, [online](#).

Provenance

Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris / Galerie Beyeler, Basel

Private Collection, Paris

Galerie Cazeau-Béraudière, Paris

Private Collection, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2009

Exhibited

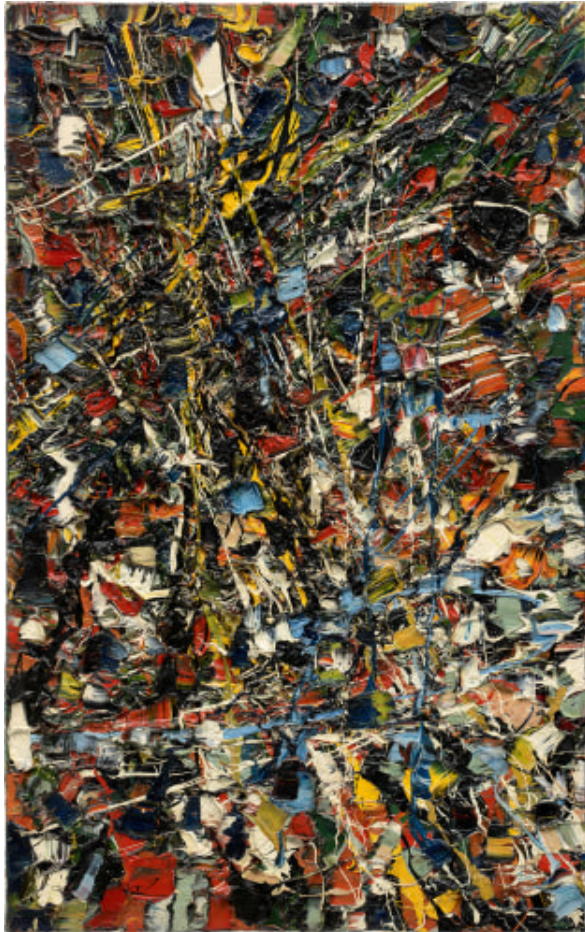
- Basel, Galerie Beyeler, *Jean Dubuffet*, February 2–April 8, 1968, no. 24, n.p. (illustrated)
- Saint-Paul, Fondation Maeght, *L'art vivant 1965-1968*, April 13–June 30, 1968, no. 82, n.p.
- Darmstadt, Kunsthalle, *Menschenbilder*, September 14–November 17, 1968, no. 45, p. 103 (illustrated)
- The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, *L'Homme du commun: travaux de Jean Dubuffet*, December 19, 1969–January 31, 1970, no. 75, p. 57 (illustrated)
- Basel, Kunsthalle, *Jean Dubuffet: L'Hourloupe*, June 6–August 2, 1970, no. 45, n.p. (illustrated)
- Vitry-sur-Seine, Salle des expositions municipales, *La figure dans la peinture aujourd'hui*, February 13–March 14, 1971
- Geneva, Artel Galerie, *Jean Dubuffet: L'Hourloupe*, May 3–July 28, 1973, n.p. (illustrated)
- Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, *Jean Dubuffet*, September 28–December 20, 1973, no. 171, n.p.
- Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, *Jean Dubuffet 1901-1985*, December 7, 1989–February 25, 1990, no. 83, pp. 202, 251 (illustrated, p. 202)
- Issoire, Salles Jean Hélion, Centre culturel, *Jean Dubuffet: peintures, sculptures, dessins 1953-1971. Les années d'une amitié avec Alexandre Vialatte: L'Hourloupe, 1962-1971*, June 16–September 22, 1991, no. 13
- Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Dubuffet*, March 4–June 10, 1993, no. 99, pp. 155, 214–215 (illustrated, p. 155)
- Vence, Château de Villeneuve Fondation Émile Hugues, *Chambres pour Dubuffet*, July 1–October 30, 1995, no. 72, pp. 111, 141 (illustrated, p. 111)
- Sarrebruck, Saarland Museum, *Jean Dubuffet: Figuren und Köpfe*, September 12–November 14, 1999, no. 57, p. 131
- Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 502–503, 545 (illustrated, p. 503)

Literature

- Max Loreau, *Catalogue des Travaux de Jean Dubuffet, fascicule XXII: Cartes, Ustensiles*, Paris, 1972, no. 290, pp. 111, 182 (illustrated, p. 111)
- Jan Kříž, *Jean Dubuffet*, Paris, 1989, no. 68, pp. 108, 158 (illustrated, p. 108)

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9

Jean-Paul Riopelle

Ariane

oil on canvas

23 3/4 x 14 7/8 in. (60.3 x 37.8 cm)

Painted in 1950.

Estimate

\$600,000 — 800,000

[Go to Lot](#)



With its striking composition of viscous, thickly applied oil paint, *Ariane* is an early painting that evokes Jean-Paul Riopelle's formative interest in Surrealism. Executed in 1950, three years after the French-Canadian artist moved to Paris, and one year after his first Parisian solo exhibition at the Surrealist Galerie La Dragonne, *Ariane* displays the rich impasto and chromatic vibrancy that define Riopelle's mature work. *Ariane* represents the artist's lasting contribution to Lyrical Abstraction, Abstract Expressionism's Parisian counterpart; works from the early 1950s, thus, are some of the most significant and desirable of Riopelle's career.



Giorgio di Chirico, *Ariadne*, 1913. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

The work's title, *Ariane*, references the Ancient Greek myth of the Minotaur in the labyrinth—in the myth, the heroine, Ariane (or Ariadne), gifts a magical ball of thread to the hero, Theseus, to ensure he does not get lost in the monster's maze. For Riopelle, the reference is twofold: as a younger artist, Riopelle was inspired by the Surrealists, including those who contributed to the popular periodical, *Minotaure* (1933-1939). Many Surrealists, including Salvador Dalí and Max Ernst, were inspired in turn by Giorgio di Chirico, who made a series of paintings that featured Ariane. On a formal level, the thread of Ariane can be said to guide the viewer through the

composition of *Ariane*, in the thin white, yellow and blue lines of paint that track through Riopelle's thick and shining impasto. These light lines, straight as taught threads, are a visual aid through the mass of squared marks—deep red, pale blue, greenish yellow, ultramarine, white, and black—that streak across the canvas.

Riopelle abandoned both figuration and his traditional painter's tools when he moved to Paris in 1947. In lieu of applying paint with a brush, Riopelle used palette knives and spatulas to spread paint in staccato marks on his canvases. However, he continued to paint on an easel, akin to the practices of Impressionist Claude Monet, and Post-Impressionist Paul Cézanne, both of whom Riopelle admired. When painting, Riopelle was known to enter a trance-like state—"exuberant and magically alive with the burden of all that was about to be transcribed into painting," Pierre Boudreau once witnessed, like "a warrior about to do battle."ⁱ Each emotional and physical impulse informed the application of paint to canvas. In this sense, paintings like *Ariane* further the Surrealist concepts of automatism (intuitive mark making) and the role of the subconscious in art.



Claude Monet, *The Rose Path at Giverny*, 1920-1922. Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images

Riopelle's unconventional tools gives the surface of *Ariane* a square, almost sculptural quality, like bricks or tiles, which art historian Georges Duthuit identified as "mosaic" in nature. Riopelle's painted geometry gave his works a structure, which led to more harmonious and organized, and yet vibrant and expressive compositions; with *Ariane*, for instance, the thread-like lines of paint snap the disparate blocks of color together like a grid.

"Riopelle painted tableaux that were textured with thick pastes, applied with a brush and more and more often with a spatula, and these depths, already bubbling with

colors, were then slashed in all directions by fine spurts of paint whose network constitutes a kind of jazz rhythm: jerky, syncopated, muscular."—Guy Robert

The formal, gestural, and indeed, textural innovations realized in *Ariane* are indicative of the generative nature of the Post-War Parisian art scene. An international milieu of artists, including Riopelle, Sam Francis, Jackson Pollock, and Joan Mitchell, among others, came together with writers and philosophers in a rich exchange of ideas in the French capital. For Riopelle, Mitchell would prove to be the most significant of these connections, as the two artists, who first met in 1955, had a turbulent relationship that lasted into the late 1970s. Their romance grew out of a mutual artistic influence; *Ariane*, with its lyricism and deep impasto, perhaps conveys the artistic qualities Mitchell would come to admire in Riopelle.ⁱⁱ It was the palette knife, however, that was Riopelle's ultimate legacy. As Mitchell wrote to him in 1958, "last night I painted eight pictures... some were grey and dark and had an influence of someone I know in Paris—including a palette knife."ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ Pierre Boudreau, *Riopelle*, exh. cat., Arthur Tooth and Sons, London, 1959, n.p.

ⁱⁱ Éric de Chasse, "A Country of Her Own: Joan Mitchell and France, 1948-1967," in Sarah Roberts and Katy Siegel, eds., *Joan Mitchell*, exh. cat., The San Francisco Museum of Art and Baltimore Museum of Art, 2020, p. 90.

ⁱⁱⁱ Joan Mitchell, quoted *ibid.*

Provenance

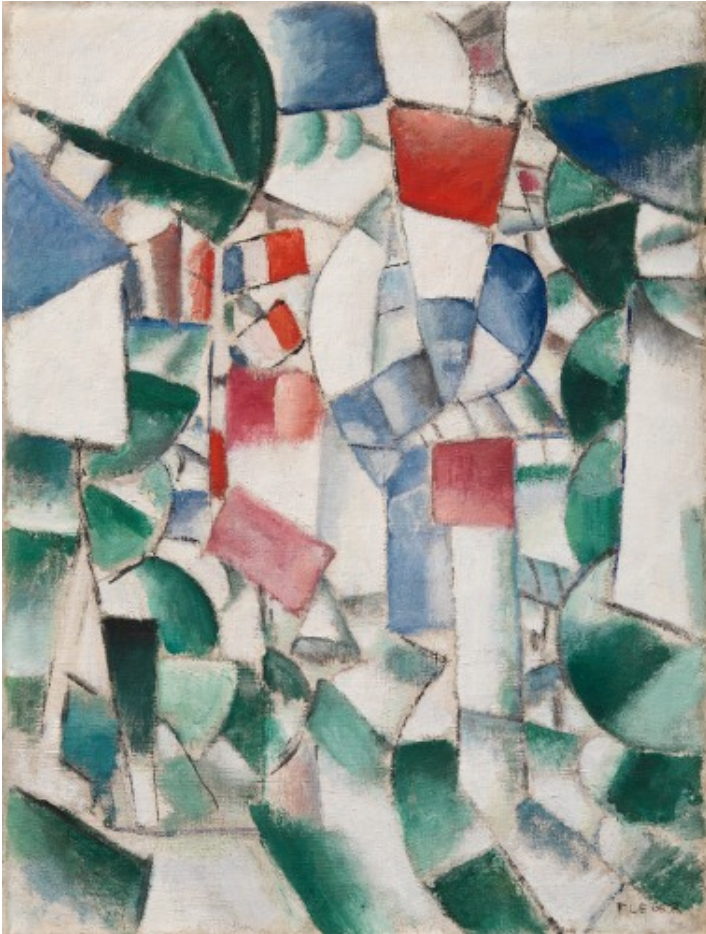
John Peter Warren Cochrane, London (gifted by the artist)
Martin Summers Fine Art Ltd, London (acquired from the above)
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2005

Exhibited

London, Arthur Tooth & Sons, *J-P. Riopelle: Paintings 1949-1959*, June 23-July 18, 1959, no. 15, n.p. (illustrated)
Amstelveen, Cobra Museum voor Moderne Kunst, *Paris Central, Vrije stad, vrije kunst in de jaren '50*, October 24, 2009-January 17, 2010, pp. 6, 157 (illustrated, p. 6; dated 1949)
Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012-January 20, 2013, pp. 418-419, 504-505, 561 (illustrated in the inverse orientation, p. 505; detail illustrated, p. 418; dated 1949)

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10

Fernand Léger

Le 14 juillet

signed "F LEGER" lower right

oil on canvas, double-sided

23 5/8 x 17 7/8 in. (60 x 45.7 cm)

Painted circa 1912-1913, this work is accompanied by a
certificate of authenticity issued by the Comité Léger.

This work features a recently-discovered artwork on
the verso, from the series *Fumées sur les toits*, painted
circa 1911-1912.

Estimate

\$15,000,000 — 20,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I wanted to arrive at self-isolating tones, a very red red, a very blue blue. [...] directly to the straightforwardness of color and volume, the contrast." —Fernand Léger

Lively and utterly absorbing, its joyous blend of bold colors and confidently realized forms deftly capturing the jubilation of the festival day that it commemorates, Fernand Léger's *Le 14 juillet* is a work of remarkable significance, both within the contexts of the artist's oeuvre, and as a record of his profound contribution to the development of Cubism in these pivotal years. Executed between 1912 and 1913, it crystalizes Léger's unique application of Cubist principles in his own pictorial idiom, and epitomizes his celebrated *Contrastes de formes* series, examples of which are now almost all housed in prestigious institutional collections across the world. Remarkably, this work includes a second painting on the verso, an earlier work, long believed to have been lost, that further emphasizes the consistency of Léger's vision. Representing a major art historical discovery, the identification of the hidden work as belonging to Léger's *Fumées sur les toits* series—of which only seven other examples are known—not only illuminates the pictorial problems that the artist was working through across these two cycles of work, but reinforces the important conceptual and stylistic connections between the two.

First gifted by the artist to his close friend Marc Duchène on the occasion of his wedding, *Le 14 juillet* remained in the family's collection for generations. Following Duchène's premature death in service during the First World War, the work was removed from display in the family's home.

Writing to Louis Poughon on the 3rd of November, 1914 that the news of Duchène's death had "broken my legs," Léger powerfully expressed the depth of this personal loss, and of its resonance on a more collective level during this tumultuous period.¹ Acquired by the Triton Collection Foundation in 1999, *Le 14 juillet*; *Untitled* from the series *Fumées sur les toits* represents a Cubist jewel in this illustrious collection and formed the focus of a major presentation of the *Fumées sur les toits* series in the 2022 exhibition, *Fernand Léger and the Rooftops of Paris*, hosted by the Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo.



Bastille Day celebrations at Place de la Concorde, July 14, 1919. Image: Bridgeman Images

Cubism: New Directions

"Considering that a picture must be, in the material sense, the contrast to a wall on which it is placed, it must express movement and life in all its ebullience."
—Fernand Léger

Responding to the speed of technological change and the dynamism of the modern, urban metropolis in the early decades of the 20th century, radical new modes of representation began to take shape in the compositional experiments undertaken by the artists of the avant-garde. Of these, no other movement captures the birth of modernism in Europe more completely than Cubism, which revolutionized the question of how to represent observable reality on a two-dimensional picture surface. Doing away with a centuries-long tradition of using linear perspective to create the illusion of depth, Cubism instead fractured the painted subject and the space around it, breaking pictorial plane into distinct facets as it combined multiple viewpoints into a single, simultaneous, comprehension of the three-dimensional whole in space.



Robert Delaunay, *La tour rouge*, 1911. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: Mondadori Portfolio / Bridgeman Images

Although pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in its earliest phases, Cubism found a novel vision in Léger, who combined its pictorial lessons with those of the Italian Futurists, and Paris-based Orphist painters, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, to reintroduce color and the stirring spirit of the modern city into his compositions. Hugely influenced by Paul Cézanne's experimental treatment of volume, and what he described as the artist's "sensitivity to the contrasts of forms," which he saw firsthand at a major 1907 retrospective, Léger began to adopt a similar, structural approach to his brushwork, building up his compositions in rounded, sculptural blocks.ⁱⁱ

Fumées sur les toits

"Here you are, beautiful tones, light colors and you too; bubbling shapes; the pleasing plumes of smoke are the sign of civilization." —Guillaume Apollinaire

Like Delaunay, Léger turned to the modern city as a source of inspiration, surveying the changing skyline from his windows and capturing the dynamic interaction of its solid and more ephemeral elements. It was this investigation that would form the conceptual basis for his pivotal *Fumées sur les toits* series, enthusiastically evoked in poet Guillaume Apollinaire's 1913 *Les peintres cubistes: Méditations esthétiques* as the very sign of urban modernity itself. Looking out over the rooftops from his new studio at 13 rue de l'Ancienne Comédie to Notre-Dame beyond, Léger applied his singular vision to the rendering of these surroundings and the perceptual experiences that they generated, contrasting rounded, billowing columns of smoke with the more angular, tessellated patterns of glass windows and zinc roof panels that spread out before him.



View from Léger's studio window, 13 rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, Paris.

Fundamentally constructive where Cubism tends towards a more deconstructive approach, these experiments would directly inform Léger's notion of the "law of plastic contrasts"—the principle to which all his subsequent work would remain anchored to. As the artist explained in 1923: "I apply the law of plastic contrasts, which, I think, has never been applied to this day. I group them according to contrary hues, flat surfaces juxtaposed with shaped surfaces, figures composed of volumes juxtaposed with the flat façades of houses, plumes of smoke in shaped masses juxtaposed with lively architectural surfaces, pure flat tones juxtaposed with modelled grey tones or the other way around."ⁱⁱⁱ

As Léger highlighted, color would come to play as important a role as form in establishing these contrasts, an evolution that becomes quickly apparent when looking across the compositions related to the series that the artist executed between 1911 and 1912. Moving from the more muted

palette dominated by softer grey and ochre tones employed in the earliest canvases, Léger introduced bolder color contrasts, creating spatial divisions and introducing a more dynamic sense of movement within his compositions. Especially evident in the present work where angular black planes react against softer passages of white and grey, Léger constructed a sense of pictorial space which was further complicated by sharp juxtapositions of bold red, blue, and orange tones. What was once still recognizable as the exaggerated ziggurat line of windows nestled in the eaves of the buildings towards the left edge of the painting when compared directly with another 1912 iteration is here reconfigured into a solid blue rectangular form.

Fernand Léger, *Fumées sur les toits*



Fernand Léger, *Fumées sur toits*, 1911. Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



Fernand Léger, *Fumées sur toits*, 1912. Private Collection. Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



Fernand Léger, *Les Toits de Paris*, 1912. Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



Fernand Léger, *La Fumée*, 1912. Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Image: Buffalo AKG Art Museum / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

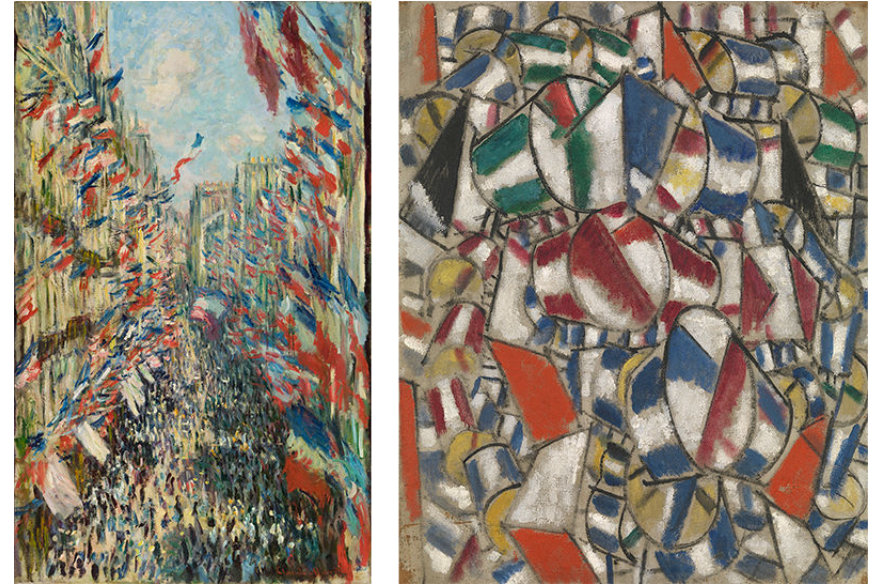
Apollinaire was not alone in recognizing the significance of this series, with fellow “Salon Cubists” Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger devoting space to the series in their 1912 *Du “Cubisme”*. Similarly, Kahnweiler’s 1920 *Der Weg zum Kubismus* would locate Léger’s paintings as an important touchstone in the evolution of Cubism, providing the foundations for the later accounts of modern art by the likes of Douglas Cooper and John Golding. A pivotal painting within this series, the present work exemplifies Léger’s ability to “manipulate space not only by the use of curving smoke and angular lines but by the juxtaposition of pure color,” anticipating the shift towards abstraction taken by the final works in the series that would be more fully realized in the *Contrastes de formes*.^{iv}

Le 14 juillet: Towards a law of Plastic Contrasts

“If pictorial expression has changed, it is because modern life has required it. [...] The compression of a modern painting, its variety, its decomposition of forms, are the result of all this.” —Fernand Léger

Art historian and critic Michel Seuphor famously marked 1912 as “perhaps the most beautiful date in the whole history of painting in France,” and Léger’s contribution to this becomes especially clear when we appreciate the radical pictorial experiments that he was working through in the present work.^v Moving even further into the more abstract mode that would come to characterize the *Contrastes de formes*, *Le 14 juillet* nevertheless reasserts the formative early influence of Impressionism on Léger’s distinctive Cubistic idiom. While he shared a deep appreciation for Cézanne with Braque and Picasso and had ultimately shed the Impressionistic techniques and overall harmonies that characterized his earliest forays into painting, the quiet persistence of select stylistic aspects of their project helps to contextualize his points of departure from the Analytical Cubism then at its height.

In this respect, *Le 14 juillet* is a work of singular importance, illuminating the extent to which, while pushing the radical experimentalism of the *Fumées sur les toits* forward, Léger retained important lessons in pictorial rhythm, luminosity, and the oscillation between solid and more ephemeral elements that he would apply in a uniquely constructive approach to form. Léger’s commitment in these years to forging a visual language that accurately captured the dynamism of urban modernity forged fascinating and unexpected thematic dialogues with Claude Monet’s scenes of a rapidly industrializing Paris, and Gustave Caillebotte’s documentation of the interaction between the city’s architecture and modern life. While Analytical Cubism was dominated by close attention to individual or arranged objects in a palette deliberately limited to darker, earthy tones, Léger’s move towards bright, bold color contrasts again carried resonances of Impressionism’s innovative approach to pure color.



[Left] Claude Monet, *La Rue Montorgueil à Paris. Fête du 30 juin 1878*, 1878. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY [Right] Fernand Léger, *Contrastes de formes*, 1913. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Monet had famously turned to a very similar subject in 1878; his riotous *La Rue Montorgueil à Paris. Fête du 30 juin 1878* and its associated sister paintings capture the busy urban scene, with buildings lined with waving flags in a flurry of small, rapid brushstrokes. Recreating the animation of the crowd and the movement of the flags in the breeze, Monet’s Impressionistic technique clearly differs from that adopted by Léger here, although it is significant that both found something uniquely modern in these scenes of national celebration as glimpsed from the windows above the street.

Working from an absorbent ground, Léger built up his forms in a more restrictive palette. The dominant tones of red, white, blue, and green suggested by the Bastille Day scene mark a breakthrough in his attempt to structure pictorial space through the contrast of plastic form. Using a confident, black line, Léger set out the structure and shapes of his composition, establishing the pictorial rhythms and sense of linear movement that would animate the work; but it was only with the introduction of color that these volumetric forms sprang into vibrant life. All compositional elements of line, form, and color are activated and set into dynamic interaction with one another here. This is offset by Léger’s subtle tonal gradations and his combination of zinc and lead whites, which create a more luminous effect.

Already in *Le 14 juillet* we can see the shifting, stacked forms that characterize the *Contrastes de formes*, a series which Léger continues after completing the present work. Alongside two sister works, now held in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Museum Folkwang in Essen, *Le 14 juillet* provides a remarkable document of the brief moment before Léger fully committed to the radical abstraction realized in the *Contrastes de formes*. Retaining details from the observable landscape such as the rounded forms of the trees and the bold tricolor design in the process of being translated into representative volumetric forms, the work illuminates a vital stage in the evolution of the *Fumées sur les toits*, whose “large shapes wheeling among the clouds” Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow accurately identified as “non-representational forms inserted by Léger to contrast with the scene depicted beneath.” Drawing direct conceptual connections between the experiments of the *Fumées sur les toits* and this later, hugely influential body of work, they continued: “These [non-representational forms] become more assertive in later works in the series, and two years later Léger made their inclusion a major preoccupation. What once had been a ‘battle of volumes’ thus yielded to the initial formulations of Léger’s theory of contrasts, which dominated his painting until it was interrupted by the declaration of war in August 1914.”^{vi} Looking closely at the direct dialogue established between *Le 14 juillet* and *Untitled* from the series *Fumées sur les toits* in the present work, we can clearly chart how Léger refined and reduced his formal vocabulary in these crucial months, exemplifying the artist’s own frequent discussion of the construction of plastic values in painting, and the role of contrasting forms in this realization.

ⁱ Fernand Léger, quoted in Sjraar van Heugten and Gwendolyn Boevé Jones, *Fernand Léger and The Rooftops of Paris*, exh. cat., Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, 2022, p. 14.

ⁱⁱ Léger, quoted in *Fernand Léger*, exh. cat., Aquavella Galleries, New York, 1987, p. 10.

ⁱⁱⁱ Léger, “A propos de l’élément mécanique,” in Léger, *Fonctions de la peinture*, Paris, 1963, pp. 50–52.

^{iv} Katherine Kuh, *Léger*, exh. cat., The Art Institute of Chicago, 1953, p. 16.

^v Michel Seuphor, quoted in Clement Greenburg, “Master Léger,” in *Partisan Review*, vol. XXI, Jan.–Feb., 1954, p. 90.

^{vi} Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow, *The Essential Cubism: Picasso, Braque & Their Friends, 1907–1920*, exh. cat., Tate, London, 1983, p. 204.

Provenance

Marc Duchène, Paris (gifted by the artist circa 1912–1913)
Private Collection, Paris (by descent from the above)
Reid & Lefèvre Fine Art, London
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1999

Exhibited

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Kubisme Uit de Collectie van de Triton Foundation*, March 27–July 2, 2006, p. 20 (illustrated on the cover; illustrated, p. 20)
Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *¡1914! La Vanguardia y la Gran Guerra*, October 7, 2008–January 11, 2009, no. 5, p. 14 (illustrated)
The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Parijs Stad van de moderne kunst 1900–1960*, October 15, 2011–January 29, 2012, p. 62 (illustrated)
Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present. The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 282–283, 551 (illustrated, pp. 282–283)
The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Mondriaan en het kubisme Parijs 1912–1914*, January 25–May 11, 2014, p. 46 (illustrated)
Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Fernand Léger and the rooftops of Paris*, November 19, 2022–April 2, 2023 (illustrated)

Literature

Georges Bauquier, Irus Hansma and Claude Lefebvre du Prey, *Fernand Léger: Catalogue raisonné de l’œuvre peint 1954–1955. Supplément et corrections des volumes précédents*, Paris, 2013, no. 1645, pp. 94–95, 208 (illustrated, pp. 94–95)
“Un tableau longtemps perdu de Fernand Léger découvert au dos d’une toile,” *Le Figaro*, October 9, 2022, online (illustrated)
Jade Pillaudin, “Un Fernand Léger découvert dans une collection privée,” *Le Quotidien de L’Art*, No. 2468, October 9, 2022, online (illustrated)
Laurence Mouillefarine, “L’incroyable histoire d’un tableau inédit de Fernand Léger,” *Architectural Digest*, November 23, 2022, online (illustrated)
Virginie Chuimer-Layen, “Un Fernand Léger inédit exposé aux Pays-Bas,” *La Gazette Drouot*, January 24, 2023, online (illustrated)

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11

Édouard Vuillard

Le Cantique des cantiques

stamped "E. Vuillard" lower right
oil on canvas

29 1/8 x 19 5/8 in. (74 x 50 cm)

Painted in 1891.

Estimate

\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Édouard Vuillard's *Le Cantique des cantiques*, 1891, represents the zenith of Synthetism: the short-lived movement emphasizing flat patterns and broad swaths of pure color championed by Paul Ranson, who was the first owner of the present work. A veritable and relatively unknown Nabis masterpiece, this enigmatic picture is a possible mate to another work in the Triton Collection, Maurice Denis' *La Vendange mystique*, 1890. Both paintings were owned by Paul Ranson—they were in his studio at the same time—and they are of near-identical size. Antoine Salomon and Guy Cogeval, the authors of Vuillard's catalogue raisonné, suggest that the pair “were either meant to form a diptych inspired by the same literary motif, or were painted for a decorative ensemble to which other Nabi artists may have contributed. Perhaps we should consider the possibility that these two works, steeped in Symbolism, hung on the walls of Paul Ranson's studio, the ‘temple’ of Nabi art? Denis naturally explored the mystical and the redemptive aspects of The Song of Songs, whilst Vuillard, drawing inspiration from the sensuality of the Biblical verses, sought to create a veritable choreography of rapture.”ⁱ



Paul Ranson, *Nabis landscape*, 1890. Private Collection. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

Indeed, *Le Cantique des cantiques* presents a celebratory scene of sinuous curves and dappled color. Vuillard's foreground figures twist together, flitting and flirting through the flowering

shrubbery, which transforms into pure pattern in the background. With a focus on two dimensionality, the Synthetists were highly influenced by the Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints which permeated Parisian popular culture as early as the 1870s. Meaning “floating world,” *ukiyo-e* artists studied and often celebrated the ephemerality of life. Vuillard himself had a collection of about 180 of these woodblock prints, even painting them into some of his compositions. Compositionally, *ukiyo-e* prints do not convey pictorial depth, but rather, rely on the simplicity of form and color to create an emotional connection with the viewer and narrate a complex story. Vuillard draws on both the formal aspects of *ukiyo-e* in his use of pattern and flatness in *Le Cantique des cantiques*, and the spirit of the movement through the charm of his quotidian scene, which allows the viewer to weave their own narrative through the composition.



Katsukawa Shunsho, *Women in a garden from a series*, mid-late 18th century. Freer Study Collection,

The National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, D.C. Image: Freer Study Collection

Vuillard joined the Nabis in 1890, and by 1891, he was ensconced in the mystical society of artists. While interested in mysticism and the occult, the Nabis ultimately sought to break down the barriers between art and life, creating both individual artworks and full-blown sensory experiences. One such experience was a collaborative night of theater on December 11, 1891, which featured excerpts from the [Canticle of Canticles](#). Nabis artists, including Vuillard, Denis, Ranson, and Paul Sérusier, contributed drawings and set designs to the evening, while poets and playwrights performed their work. While *Le Cantique des cantiques* was not a set design itself, the painting is presumably an extension of Vuillard's set design process, perhaps akin to a maquette.



Paul Sérusier, *Portrait of Paul Ranson Dressed as a Prophet*, 1890. Private Collection. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

The text of the Canticle of Canticles, also called the Song of Songs, or Song of Solomon, is a celebration of natural female beauty, which Vuillard captures in the women communing in the garden in the present work. The ancient poem is traditionally read during Passover, and while Vuillard himself was not Jewish, some of the most important people in his life were, including his dealer Jos Hessell, and his patrons Henri Bernstein and Thadée Natanson; the word “Nabis” itself, too, is a Hebrew term. Through *Le Cantique des cantiques*, we see how Vuillard's curiosity and embrace of different cultures, including Japanese motifs and Jewish texts, pushed his output in one of the earliest examples of a truly contemporary art practice.

ⁱ Antoine Salomon and Guy Cogeval, *Vuillard: The Inexhaustible Glance, Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*, exh. cat., vol. 1, Skira, Wildenstein Institute, 2003, p. 186.

Provenance

Paul Ranson, Paris
 M. Michel Ranson, Paris (by descent from the above by 1964)
 Collection Salomon, Paris
 Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris (acquired from the above)
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1998

Exhibited

Mannheim, Kunsthalle, *Die Nabis und ihre Freunde*, October 23, 1963–January 6, 1964, no. 173, n.p. (illustrated; titled *Frauen im Garten*)

Florence, Palazzo Corsini, *Il Tempo dei Nabis*, March 28–June 28, 1998, no. 29, pp. 68–69, 184 (illustrated, p. 69; titled *Ragazze in un giardino*); then travelled as The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, *The Time of the Nabis*, August 20–November 22, 1998, no. 172, pp. 33, 118–119 (illustrated, pp. 33, 118; titled *Women in a Garden*)

Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais; London, Royal Academy of Arts, *Vuillard*, January 19, 2003–April 18, 2004, no. 58, pp. 91, 113–115 (illustrated, p. 114; detail illustrated, p. 91)

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Gauguin y los orígenes del simbolismo*, September 28, 2004–January 9, 2005, no. 117, pp. 240, 327 (illustrated, p. 240)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Around Gauguin: Post-Impressionist works from the Triton Foundation*, April 8–June 12, 2005

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Klarenstoot voor de moderne kunst. De Nabis in de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 29–November 30, 2008, pp. 12, 24–25 (illustrated, p. 25)

Marseille, Musée Cantini (no. 196, pp. 321–322, 331; illustrated, p. 331; detail illustrated, pp. 321–322); Rovereto, Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (no. 196, pp. 328–329, 349);

Toronto, Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, *de la Scène au Tableau*, October 6, 2009–September 26, 2010

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Impressionist Gardens*, November 16–February 14, 2011

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant gardes, 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7–2012 January 20, 2013, pp. 15, 160–161, 567 (illustrated, pp. 15, 161)

The Cleveland Museum of Art; London, Royal Academy of Arts, *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse*, October 11, 2015–April 20, 2016, no. 71, pp. 169, 184 (illustrated, p. 184)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (on long term loan, November 2019–November 2022)

Literature

George L. Mauner, *The Nabis, Their History and Their Art, 1888–1896*, New York and London, 1978, no. 172, fig. 59, p. 212 (illustrated, n.p.; titled *Femme au jardin*)

Guy Cogeval, *Vuillard. Post-Impressionist Master*, New York, 2002, pp. 32–33 (illustrated, p. 32)

Antoine Salomon and Guy Cogeval, *Vuillard: The Inexhaustible Glance, Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*, Milan, 2003, no. III-31, vol. I, pp. 185–187 (illustrated, p. 185)

Living the Avant-Garde: The Triton Collection Foundation

New York Auction / 14 November 2023 / 6pm EST



LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

12

Maurice Denis

La Vendange mystique

signed "MAV DENIS" center right; inscribed "BOTRVS
CYPRI DILECTVS MEVS MIHI IN VINEIS ENGADDI"
upper right

oil on canvas mounted on board
29 1/8 x 19 7/8 in. (74 x 50.5 cm)

Executed in 1890.

This work will be included in the forthcoming Maurice
Denis catalogue raisonné being prepared by Claire
Denis and Fabienne Stahl.

Estimate

\$300,000 — 400,000

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1890 was a watershed year for Maurice Denis. Aged just nineteen, the painter of *La Vendange mystique*, 1890, participated in the Salon de la Société des Artistes Français for the first time, and he published the manifesto of the Nabis, which he had developed with Paul Sérusier, in *Art et Critique* that summer.ⁱ He was also an attendee of the original weekly Nabis meetings at painter Paul Ranson's studio in Paris, known as "the Temple" among the Nabis, where the artists met to work through their nascent painting philosophy.ⁱⁱ The present work was gifted by Denis to Ranson, with an inscription in Latin taken from the *Canticle of Canticles*; *La Vendange mystique* remained in Ranson's possession until his death in 1909.ⁱⁱⁱ

The work is likely a companion to another work in the Triton Collection, Édouard Vuillard's *Le Cantique des cantiques*, 1891, also from the collection of Ranson, and inspired by the same Biblical poem. However, where Vuillard's painting leans into the sensual and natural imagery of the poem, Denis engages the work's mystical and spiritual themes, filtered through his own Catholic faith.

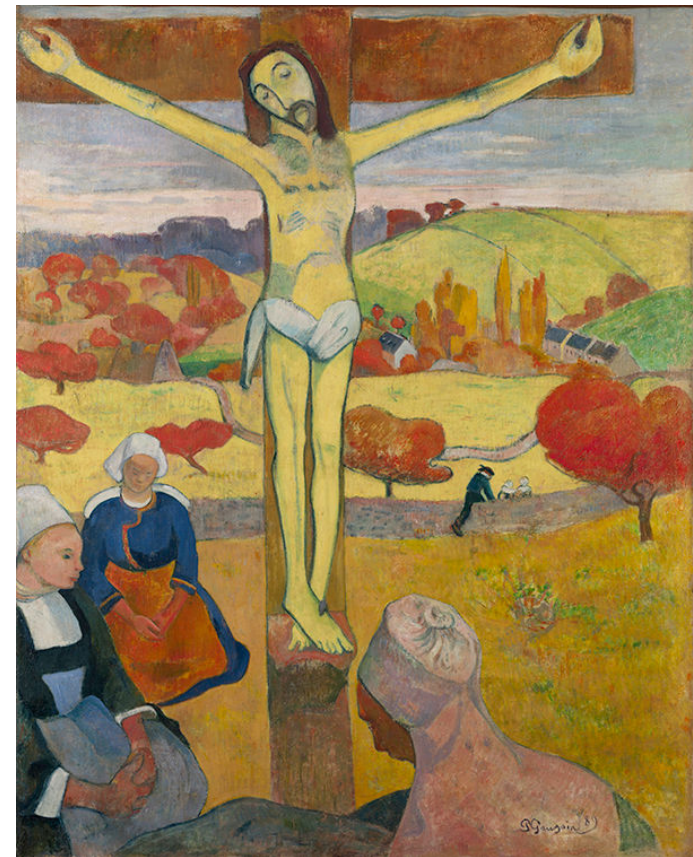


Maurice Denis, *Hommage à Cézanne*, 1900. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images

One of the youngest and most precocious Nabis painters, Denis uniquely fused the radical Nabis painting philosophy with his devout Catholic faith. He was quick to grasp the Symbolist

significance of color, as articulated in the work of Paul Gauguin, rather than representational reality, in his paintings. Denis takes the same approach to *La Vendange mystique*, with heightened hues of yellow, scarlet, indigo and emerald green emphasizing the emotional intensity of the divine scene. The colors give form to the ardent faith of the nuns, gathering grapes in a mythical vineyard.

"A cluster of cypress my love is to me, in the vineyards of Engaddi." —The Canticle of Canticles, I, 13, Douay-Rheims translation, 1899



Paul Gauguin, *The Yellow Christ*, 1889. The Buffalo AKG Museum. Image: Buffalo AKG Art Museum / Art Resource, NY

In contrast to his traditional subject matter, Denis' approach to painting is secular and avant-garde. As the title of the work indicates, the content of *La Vendange mystique* parallels his fellow Nabis' secular scenes of harvest and natural splendor, including Sérusier's *La Cueillette des pommes*, 1891, and Émile Bernard's *Paysage de Bretagne*, 1892. As in his peers' work, the subject matter of women working in a rural setting is the springboard for experimentation with color and form. Denis applies cloisonnist principles through his use of bold outline in analogous colors (red outlines on golden baskets; yellow outlines on green leaves, and so forth), and his stippled brushstroke belies a Post-Impressionist pointillist impulse. The yellow figure of Christ at upper left evokes Gauguin's Symbolist masterpiece, *The Yellow Christ*, 1889, The Buffalo AKG Art Museum; however, Denis' stippled brushstroke renders the holy figure with a glowing, serene tenderness.

"A painting—before it is a battle horse, a nude woman, or anything else—is essentially a flat surface covered in colors, assembled in a certain order."—Maurice Denis, 1890

La Vendage mystique represents Denis at his most daring and significant, and speaks to the Nabis' commitment to painterly experimentation. As Denis wrote in his Nabi manifesto of 1890, the subject matter of a painting can be incidental. What matters most is the innovative application of color.

ⁱ *Maurice Denis*, exh. cat., Orangerie des Tuileries, Paris, 1970, p. 91.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Anthony Maas, "Engaddi," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1909, [online](#); "Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon)," Chapter 1, verse 13, *The Douay-Rheims Bible*, 1899, [online](#).

Provenance

Paul Ranson, Paris (gifted by the artist in 1890)
 Paul Ranson Estate Sale, Drouot, Paris, June 7, 1909, lot 72
 Galerie Eugène Druet, Paris (acquired at the above sale)
 Marcell de Nemès, Paris
 Marcell de Nemès Collection, Drouot, Paris, November 21, 1918, lot 39
 Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)
 Drouot, Paris, December 7, 1953, lot 43
 Galerie Saint-Honoré, Paris (acquired at the above sale)
 Drouot, Paris, December 10, 1987, lot 60
 Alain Lesieutre, Paris (acquired at the above sale)
 Private Collection, Paris
 Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris (acquired from the above in 1999)
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1999

Exhibited

Budapest, Művészház, *Nemzetközi Impresszionista Kiállítás*, 1910, no. 11

Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, *Bonnard, Vuillard et les Nabis (1888-1903)*, June 8–October 2, 1955, no. 103, p. 55 (titled *C'est la fête du blé*)

Paris, Galerie Huguette Berès, *Maurice Denis 1870-1943*, 1992, no. 7, n.p. (illustrated)

Japan, Gifu, The Museum of Fine Arts; Gunma, The Museum of Modern Art, *Tournant de la peinture entre la seconde moitié des années 1880 et les années 1890. Théories artistique et peinture française*, February 4–May 16, 1993, no. 126, pp. 83, 172 (illustrated, p. 83)

Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts; Cologne, Wallraf- Richartz Museum; Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery; Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Maurice Denis 1870-1943*, September 29, 1994–September 17, 1995, no. 11, p. 130 (illustrated)

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Gauguin y los orígenes del simbolismo*, September 28, 2004–January 9, 2005, no. 99, pp. 223, 320 (illustrated, p. 223)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Around Gauguin: Post-Impressionist works from the Triton Foundation*, April 8–June 12, 2005

Edinburgh, The National Galleries of Scotland, *Gauguin's Vision*, July 6–October 2, 2005, pl. 103, pp. 84, 126 (illustrated, p. 84)

Paris, Musée d'Orsay; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, *Maurice Denis: Earthly Paradise (1870-1943)*, October 31, 2006–September 23, 2007, no. 6, pp. 119-120 (illustrated, p. 119)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Klaroenstoot voor de moderne kunst: De Nabis in de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 29–November 30, 2008, pp. 22-23 (illustrated, p. 23; titled *Mysticism and occultism*)

Taipei Fine Arts Museum, *Elsewhere: Gauguin*, November 27, 2010–February 20, 2011, pp. 286-287, 361 (illustrated, pp. 287, 361)

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant gardes: 1870 to the present, The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 158-159, 543 (illustrated, p. 159)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (on long-term loan, November 2019–November 2022)

Literature

Caroline Boyle-Turner, *Les Nabis*, Lausanne, 1993, pp. 20-21 (illustrated, p. 21)

Édouard Vuillard, exh. cat., The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 2003, fig. 1, p. 115 (illustrated)

Antoine Salomon and Guy Cogeval, *Vuillard: The Inexhaustible Glance, Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*, Milan, 2003, vol.I, pp. 185-186 (illustrated, p. 185)

Living the Avant-Garde: The Triton Collection Foundation

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LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
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13

Pierre Bonnard

Autoportrait

signed and dated "Bonnard 1930" lower right
watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper
25 5/8 x 19 3/4 in. (65.1 x 50.2 cm)
Executed in 1930.

The authenticity of this work has kindly been confirmed by Guy-Patrice Dauberville and Floriane Dauberville and will be included and reproduced in the second volume of the *catalogue raisonné des aquarelles, gouaches, pastels, crayons de couleurs et lavis de Pierre Bonnard* being prepared by Guy-Patrice and Floriane Dauberville.

This work has been requested for inclusion in the artist's forthcoming exhibition *Amitiés, Bonnard-Matisse pour les 60 ans de la Fondation Maeght* organized by the Maeght Foundation, Saint Paul de Vence, France, to be held from June 29–October 6, 2024.

Estimate
\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



“The artist who paints the emotions creates an enclosed world—the picture—which, like a book, has the same interest no matter where it happens to be. Such an artist, we may imagine, spends a great deal of time doing nothing but look, both around him and inside him.” —Pierre Bonnard

Stunningly realized in delicate accents of rich blues, warm pinks and pale yellows, Pierre Bonnard’s 1930 *Autoportrait* represents one of the definitive self-portraits created by the artist throughout his career, and a masterwork of his mature period. Although the artist turned to his own likeness at various points throughout his life, *Autoportrait* marks a decisive shift in this practice, the first of a small series of works that would occupy the artist for the next fifteen years and across which he charted with unflinching honesty the passage of time through and on the body. With the majority of these works now held in some of the world’s most prestigious private and institutional collections worldwide, the presentation of this work represents the first time that a late self-portrait of this significance has come to auction since the 1990s.

Completely fresh to market and widely exhibited over the years, *Autoportrait* remained in the family collection of Bonnard’s nephew, Charles Terrasse until it was acquired by the Triton Collection Foundation in 2003, and has been included in the artist’s most important touring retrospectives of recent decades, including *Pierre Bonnard: The Colour of Memory* which opened at Tate Modern, London, in 2019; the 2015 *Pierre Bonnard: Peindre L’Arcadie* which traveled from the Musée d’Orsay in Paris to Madrid and San Francisco; and *Bonnard*, the 1998 collaboration between the Tate and The Museum of Modern Art in New York. The work presents with a disarming emotional impact and stands as one of the most sensitive and deeply affecting artist self-portraits of the period.



Jean Baptiste Siméon Chardin, *Autoportrait de Chardin à son chevalet*, 1775-1779. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

Widely regarded as one of the supreme colorists of the 20th century, Bonnard understood that color could be harnessed as an emotional as well as structural element in his paintings. His reworking of passages in paint approximates the essential ephemerality of mood and memory, and the restless equivocations of the self.ⁱ Nowhere is this more profoundly explored than in the artist’s self-portraits, especially those created towards the end of his life as he recorded his shifting responses to his own ageing body and its storehouse of memories.

Bonnard painted his first self-portrait in 1889; *pince-nez* perched on the bridge of his nose and wing collar neatly arranged, the young artist looks directly out at us, hesitating for a moment and

seemingly caught between a desire to announce himself and trepidation at such an exposure. In this early self-portrait, as with the others that would follow, Bonnard is not so much presenting himself to us as he is staging an act of self-searching, a distinction more overtly stated in the later, more concentrated series of works to which this 1930 *Autoportrait* belongs.

Pierre Bonnard, *Autoportraits*



Pierre Bonnard, *Autoportrait*, 1889. Private Collection. Image: Bridgeman Images



Pierre Bonnard, *Autoportrait*, 1904. Private Collection. Image: Maidun Collection / Alamy Stock Photo



Pierre Bonnard, *Autoportrait à contre-jour, papier à fleurs*, 1923. Private Collection. Image: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo



Pierre Bonnard, *Autoportrait*, 1938-40. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Image: Art Gallery of New South Wales / Bridgeman Images



Pierre Bonnard, *Autoportrait dans la glace du cabinet de toilette*, 1939-45. Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

Although Bonnard had turned to himself as the subject of paintings and drawings intermittently throughout his career, this quiet introspection intensified during the 1930s as he advanced in years and fell increasingly into the gently domestic rhythms of life at “Le Bosquet” in Le Cannet. Situated near the coast on the Côte d’Azur, the property was surrounded by dense, luscious vegetation and bathed in Mediterranean light, a constant source of inspiration for the artist who absorbed these elements and transformed them into some of his most luminous and chromatically vibrant compositions. While this is more immediately obvious in the glimpses of rich foliage and warm light seen beyond the frame of his more typically *Intimiste* interiors, or in his dazzling portraits of his wife Marthe bathing, *Autoportrait* similarly draws on the reflective quietude of life in Le Cannet, its soft diffusion of light and sensitively realized color charging the work with a profound emotional resonance.

Slightly stooped, with a heavy patterned shawl wrapped protectively around his shoulders, the artist’s slender frame is exaggerated by the awkward twist of his head as he turns out towards us here, exemplifying early critic Claude Roger-Marx’s astute assessment of Bonnard’s artistic project as one which “catches fleeting poses, steals unconscious gestures, crystallizes the most transient expressions.”ⁱⁱ Light bouncing off his spectacles, his expression is difficult to read; as if caught off-guard by his own reflection in the mirrored glass, he seems to grip the shawl more tightly around himself in a defensive gesture, his knotted eyebrows adding a touching poignancy to this confrontation with the body’s advancing frailty. The use of watercolor and gouache here is deeply significant in this respect too, the artist having started working with these materials on the advice of Dr. Arthur Hahnloser during a period spent in his clinic recovering from ill health in the same year. Although an altogether quieter, more contemplative image, the raised fist here anticipates the dynamic, pugilistic stance taken up by the artist in certain subsequent works from this series, where Bonnard more explicitly “wages battle against himself and makes the painting the place where his own existential struggle is exposed.”ⁱⁱⁱ



Pierre Bonnard, *Le Boxeur (portrait de l'artiste)*, 1931. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

Bonnard's treatment of space here speaks to this too, the bathroom that had served as the setting for so many paintings of Marthe at her toilette here somehow smaller and more confined, his sophisticated color contrasts, alongside the juxtaposition of shorter, more textured brushstrokes with transparent washes of watercolor and gouache complicating the spatial logic of the composition. As David Sylvester noted in relation to his paintings, instead of relating his forms to the vertical and horizontal lines at the limits of the paper's edge here, Bonnard introduces "at least one emphatic vertical line and at least one emphatic horizontal line meeting at right angles." Controlling the composition from the center outwards in this way, these structural elements "form an armature around which the picture is held," a framing mechanism that amplifies the expressive immediacy of his drawn line and intensifies the existential focus of the work.^{iv}



Edvard Munch, *The Night Wanderer*, 1923-1924. Munch Museum, Oslo. Image: Munchmuseet, Oslo

Although these mature self-portraits are often read as meditations on the fragility of the human body, similar to Edvard Munch's anxiously self-searching late self-portraits, *Autoportrait* is more nuanced in its effects and intentions. As the artist's great-nephew Antoine Terrasse has highlighted, this 1930 work is a direct response and homage to Jean-Siméon Chardin's *Autoportrait de Chardin à son chevalet*, inspired by Bonnard's visit to the Chardin exhibition mounted at the Théâtre Pigalle in Paris in the October of 1929. Turning to a new medium in the last decade of his life, Chardin also turned his gaze more directly on himself, creating a sequence of famous pastel self-portraits in which he affirmed his identity as an artist above all else.

In a poetic echo of his very first self-portrait where a somewhat hesitant young Bonnard crosses his

palette and brushes to his chest in a shy statement of his artistic intentions, in aligning himself so closely to Chardin's self-portraits here, *Autoportrait* does not simply dramatize the act of self-recognition involved in the production of such an image but stages the more complex and shifting perception of the self as an artist. As curator John Elderfield put it, by reframing the space of the mirror as coterminous with the picture's edge in these late works, Bonnard places himself simultaneously in front and within this image, "placed in front of the canvas-mirror, looking at it, [he] sees only a virtual image of himself 'inside.'" ^v Characterized, famously, as a "painter of happiness," these late self-portraits introduce a note of subtle nuance and human complexity to the painter who looks back at the viewer.

ⁱ Pablo Picasso, quoted in *Pierre Bonnard: The Colour of Memory*, exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2019, p. 204.

ⁱⁱ John Elderfield, "Seeing Bonnard," in *Bonnard*, exh. cat., Tate Gallery, London, 1998, p. 33.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nicholas-Henry Zmelty, "Le Boxeur," in *Bonnard: Painting Arcadia*, exh. cat., Musée d'Orsay, Paris, p. 24.

^{iv} David Sylvester, *Pierre Bonnard: The Colour of Memory*, p. 206.

^v Elderfield, *ibid.*, p. 44.

Provenance

Michel Terrasse, Paris (acquired directly from the artist)
Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris (acquired from the above)
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2003

Exhibited

Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne; Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection; Dallas Museum of Art, *Bonnard*, February 23–November 20, 1984, no. 37, pp. 122–123 (illustrated on the cover; illustrated, p. 123; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)
Zurich, Kunsthhaus; Frankfurt, Städtische Galerie im Städelischen Kunstinstitut, *Pierre Bonnard*, December 14, 1984–July 14, 1985, no. 124, pp. 246–247 (illustrated, p. 247; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)
Bordeaux, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, *Hommage à Bonnard*, May 10–August 25, 1986, no. 80, pp. 150–151 (illustrated, p. 150)
Milan, Palazzo Reale, *Pierre Bonnard*, October 28, 1988–January 8, 1989, no. 32, pp. 97, 204 (illustrated, p. 97; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même (Autoritratto)*)
Humblebäck, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, *Pierre Bonnard*, September 11, 1992–January 10, 1993, no. 138, pp. 96, 79 (illustrated, p. 79)
Düsseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, *Pierre Bonnard. Das Glück zu Malen*, January 23–April 12, 1993, no. 45, pp. 163, 185 (illustrated, p. 163)
München, Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, *Bonnard*, January 28–April 24, 1994, no. 116, p. 238 (illustrated, n.p.; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)
London, Hayward Gallery; Newcastle, Laing Art Gallery, *Bonnard at Le Bosquet*, June 23–October 30, 1994, no. 9, pp. 57, 127 (illustrated, p. 57)
Paris, Galerie Schmit, *Pierre Bonnard 1867–1947*, May 3–July 12, 1995, no. 41, n.p. (illustrated)
Toulouse, Fondation Bemberg, *Bonnard Retrouvé (1867–1947)*, May–October 1997, pp. 30–31, 34 (illustrated, p. 30)
London, Tate Gallery; New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Bonnard*, February 12–October 13, 1998, no. 101, pp. 249, 269 (illustrated, p. 249)
Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Bonnard*, June 11–November 14, 1999, no. 70, pp. 176–177 (illustrated, p. 177)
Paris, Fondation Dina Vierny-Musée Maillol, *Pierre Bonnard*, May 31–October 9, 2000, no. 1, pp. 18, 98 (illustrated, p. 18)
Madrid, Sala Juan Gris, Centro Cultural del Conde Duque, *Una mirada sobre Pierre Bonnard*, January 15–March 4, 2001, no. 65, pp. 76, 102 (illustrated, p. 76)
Lisbon, Fundação Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva, *Pierre Bonnard*, July 11–September 30, 2001, pp. 82–83 (illustrated, p. 83)
Paris, Galerie Schmit, *Oeuvres sur Papier: Instants choisis des 19e et 20e siècle*, February 14–April 12, 2002, no. 1
Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection; Denver Art Museum, *Pierre Bonnard: Early and Late*, September 22, 2002–May 25, 2003, no. 134, pp. 2, 242 (illustrated, p. 242; detail illustrated, p. 2)
Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Pierre Bonnard, the work of art, suspending time*, February 2–May 7, 2006, no. 5, pp. 40–41, 302 (illustrated, p. 40)
Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, *Matisse e Bonnard. Viva la pittura!*, October 6, 2006–February 4, 2007, no. 217, p. 475 (illustrated)
Berlin, Akademie der Künste, *Raum. Orte der Kunst*, February 23–April 22, 2007, pp. 212, 372 (illustrated, p. 212; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)

Le Cannet, L'espace Bonnard, *Bonnard-Matisse: la Méditerranée*, July 2–September 16, 2007, pp. 8, 86–89

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Têtes Fleuries: 19e en 20e Eeuwse portretkunst uit de Triton Foundation*, July 17, 2007–April 27, 2008, p. 21

Sakura, Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art; Hayama, The Museum of Modern Art, *Matisse et Bonnard: Lumière de la Méditerranée*, March 15–July 27, 2008, no. 121, pp. 189, 243 (illustrated, p. 189; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)

Wuppertal, Von Der Heydt-Museum, *Bonnard: Magier der Farbe*, September 14, 2010–January 30, 2011, pp. 103, 280 (illustrated)

Giverny, Musée des Impressionnistes, *Bonnard et Normandie*, April 1–July 3, 2011, no. 42, pp. 84–85, 146 (illustrated, p. 85)

Le Cannet, Musée Bonnard, *Bonnard et Le Cannet. Dans la Lumière de la Méditerranée*, June 26–September 25, 2011, no. 46, pp. 107, 154 (illustrated, p. 107)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Parijs Stad van de moderne kunst 1900–1960*, October 15, 2011–January 29, 2012, pp. 126–127 (illustrated, p. 127; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-Gardes 1870 to the Present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 18, 366–367, 539 (illustrated pp. 18, 367; illustrated on the cover)

Paris, Musée d'Orsay; Madrid, Fundacion Mapfre; Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, *Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947). Peindre L'Arcadie*, March 17, 2015–May 15, 2016, no. 6, pl. 13, pp. 22–23, 292 (illustrated, p. 23; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)

Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, *Matisse-Bonnard: Long Live Painting!*, September 13, 2017–January 14, 2018, no. 2, pp. 2, 231 (illustrated, p. 2)

London, Tate Modern; Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek; Vienna, Bank Austria Kunstforum, *The CC Land Exhibition. Pierre Bonnard: The Colour of Memory*, January 23, 2019–January 12, 2020, pp. 148, 222 (illustrated, p. 148)

Le Cannet, Musée Bonnard, *Trésors Nabis du Musée d'Orsay- Bonnard, Denis, Ranson, Vallotton, Vuillard*, December 18, 2020–April 18, 2021

Literature

Georges Besson, *Bonnard*, Paris, 1934, n.p. (illustrated on the cover)

Charles Terrasse, “Pierre Bonnard,” *Le Point. Portraits d'Artistes*, Paris, 1937, p. 93 (illustrated; titled *Pierre Bonnard par lui-même*)

“Pierre Bonnard,” *Les Publications Techniques et Artistiques*, Paris, 1945 (illustrated on the title page)

Guy Amoureux, *L'Univers de Bonnard*, Paris, 1985, p. 139 (illustrated)

Michel Terrasse, *Bonnard et Le Cannet*, Paris, 1987, p. 117 (illustrated)

Antoine Terrasse, *Bonnard*, Paris, 1988, pp. 285, 315 (illustrated, p. 285; titled *Portrait de l'artiste par lui-même*)

Michel Terrasse, *Bonnard: du dessin au tableau*, Paris, 1996, p. 232 (illustrated)

Ludovic Janvier, *Bientôt le soleil: Pierre Bonnard*, Paris, 1998, p. 48 (illustrated)

Timothy Hyman, *Bonnard*, London, 1998, no. 138, p. 171 (illustrated)

Antoine Terrasse, *Bonnard: Shimmering Color*, New York, 2000, pp. 96, 140 (illustrated, 96)

Matisse e Bonnard: Viva la pittura!, exh. cat., Complesso del Vittoriano, Rome, 2006, no. 217, p. 475 (illustrated)

Pierre Bonnard: The Late Still Lifes and Interiors, exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2009, fig. 41, pp. 30–31 (detail illustrated, p. 30)

“Bonnard et Normandie,” *Connaissance des Arts*, special issue, Paris, 2011, p. 27 (illustrated)

Petite promenade au Cannet avec Bonnard, exh. cat., Musée Bonnard, Paris, 2011, p. 4 (illustrated)

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14

Edgar Degas

Le petit déjeuner après le bain

stamped "Degas" lower left

pastel on paper

41 1/8 x 26 7/8 in. (104.5 x 68.3 cm)

Executed circa 1894.

Estimate

\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000

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“What we may see in these works is the unforgettable veracity of these types, captured with a deep-seated and ample draftsmanship, with a lucid and controlled passion.”
—J.K. Huysmans

A quintessential painter of modern life, whose scenes of the café concert, laundries, and days at the races represent some of the defining themes and stylistic approaches associated with Impressionism, it was the human figure, and more specifically the female nude, that preoccupied Edgar Degas throughout his career. Ranking alongside his iconic depictions of ballerinas, the theme of the woman bathing was an almost obsessive preoccupation of the artist and opened up an infinite range of compositional and stylistic opportunities for him. In the last three decades of his life especially, this motif would come to dominate his output, the intimate studio setting enabling a remarkably close observation of his models. Executed in pastel and charcoal on an impressive scale for the artist, *Petit déjeuner après la bain* belongs to a small suite of works featuring the same model at her *toilette*, her maid in attendance. Other examples featuring the nude bather with her attendant are now held in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Fondation Beyeler, while the model's distinctive auburn chignon is clearly recognizable from some of his most iconic depictions of the subject, including the 1886 *Le Tub* housed in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.



[Left] Edgar Degas, *Le Tub*, 1886. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images [Right] Edgar Degas, *Le petit déjeuner après le bain*, 1895-1898. Fondation Beyeler, Basel. Image: HIP / Art Resource, NY

Intimate and unguarded, the scene seems spontaneous, the fleeting instant of a moment captured in Degas' deft charcoal line and flurry of brilliant pastel tones. One arm stretched behind her, rested on the edge of the tin bath from which she has just emerged, the model folds her body forward, toweling her legs as her maid waits with breakfast in hand. A highly dynamic and active composition, Degas nevertheless demonstrates an exceptional compositional control here, his command of shallow pictorial space accentuated by the interplay of vertical line and more softly

realized horizontals, the curve of her spine echoed in the gentle bend of her arm and the rounded edges of the armchair and bath. The full force of Degas' mark-making is in evidence here, his experimental approach to pastel in these later years combining vigorous cross-hatching, rapid, tightly looping marks, and softer passages smudged and polished with his fingers.

“I am a colorist with line.” —Edgar Degas

Daringly modern in terms of both their compositional arrangements and subject matter, these late pastels belong to a tradition of representing women at their *toilette* closely associated with late Impressionism. The subject fascinated fellow artists Mary Cassatt and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and would later find sublime expression in Pierre Bonnard's depictions of his wife Marthe floating weightlessly in the bathtub. As much as these have come to represent Degas' pioneering modernity, especially given their proximity to the artist's interest in emergent photographic technologies, they also draw on a range of art historical references.



[Left] Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Baigneuse*, 1808. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY [Right] Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Rousse (La toilette)*, 1889. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

Showing remarkable promise as a young draughtsman, at the age of eighteen Degas became a

registered copyist at the Louvre, reproducing skilled renderings of masterpieces by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Eugène Delacroix. Given Degas' persistent interest in depicting his models as seen from behind, and the special focus that he placed on capturing the exquisite, rounded forms of his model's backs in particular, he must surely have kept in mind Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' *La Grande Baigneuse*, 1808, Musée du Louvre, Paris, whose harmonious sense of line and delicately accented highlights are echoed here. Christopher Lloyd has placed special emphasis on these early drawn experiments, suggesting that the practice of copying "developed the artist's visual memory and he continued the practice throughout his life. The absorption and distillation of what he saw in the work of his predecessors and contemporaries, when allied to his own visual acuity and highly individual treatment of subject matter, is the essence of Degas' style."ⁱ

For both Degas and Cassatt, the trend for *Japonisme* that swept Paris in the late 19th century would prove hugely influential in refining their pictorial language, especially in the circulation of popular *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints. An accomplished printmaker himself, Degas—like many others in his circle—was an enthusiastic collector of these reproductions and, as in his approach to Western Old Masters, in turning to these striking images he successfully "transposed and absorbed them into his own idiom."ⁱⁱ Alongside the innovative experiments in cropping and framing enabled by photography, the formative influence of *ukiyo-e* prints—their closely cropped, often asymmetrical compositions characterized by flat fields of color, highly patterned areas, innovative framing devices, and shallow pictorial space—is particularly clear in the pictorial arrangement of *Petit déjeuner après le bain*.



[Left] Utamaro Kitagawa, *Japan: Two young women at their toilette*, late 18th century. Image: Pictures from History / Bridgeman Images [Right] Edgar Degas, *Après le bain*, 1896. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Image: Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program

One of some 200 pastels that Degas would produce on the subject of the nude bather—a late body of work that he first publicly exhibited at the eighth and final Impressionist Exhibition of 1886—here the artist combines careful observation with a newly invigorated and imaginative experimentalism, the energy of his drawn line and the relationship it establishes with the resonating pastel shades bringing the work to life.

The introduction of a second, standing figure marks a variation to the series. Standing in shadow and fully clothed, she introduces an important counterpoint to the crouching nude, reminiscent of Édouard Manet's infamous pairing of a nude white woman and her Black maid in *Olympia*, 1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. However, Degas uses light, rather than his models' race, to mark the differences between his bather and her maid. This primacy of light is a signature Impressionist feature of the present work; the sense of morning sun filtering through an unseen window in *Le petit déjeuner après le bain* provides "discreet touches of white on the body" of the bather that draw out the contrast between the two women.ⁱⁱⁱ Degas intensifies this effect in the remarkable variation achieved in his application of pastel; taken together, his "'shivering' vertical striations, summary contours, some rubbing, and audaciously [...] complex interactions of colors coalesce in the formation of a 'magical and haunting image.'"^{iv}

- ⁱ Christopher Lloyd, *Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Drawings*, London, 2019, p. 73.
- ⁱⁱ Richard Kendall, *Degas by Himself: Drawings, Prints, Paintings, Writings*, London, 2000, p. 149.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ronald Pickvance, *Degas*, exh. cat., Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny, 1993, p. 119.
- ^{iv} Ibid.

Provenance

Atelier Edgar Degas, Paris
 Vente Atelier Edgar Degas, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 1ère vente, May 6–9, 1918, lot 198
 Jacques Seligmann, Paris (acquired at the above sale)
 American Art Galleries, New York, January 27, 1921, lot 58
 Ambroise Vollard, Paris (acquired at the above sale)
 Sir Alfred Chester-Beatty, Dublin (acquired after 1946)
 Arthur Tooth & Sons, London
 Reid & Lefèvre Gallery (Alex Reid & Lefèvre), London
 Sotheby's, London, April 7, 1976, lot 16
 Mr. & Mrs. Heller, Miami
 Murauchi Art Museum, Tokyo
 Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001

Exhibited

London, Lefèvre Gallery, *Edgar Degas 1834-1917*, June 4–July 4, 1970, no. 16, pp. 52–53 (illustrated, p. 53)
 London, The Royal Academy of Arts, *Impressionism. Its Masters, its Precursors, and its Influence in Britain*, February 9–April 28, 1974, no. 59, pp. 38–39
 Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, *Van Monet tot Picasso: Meesterwerken op papier 1860 – 1960*, November 15, 2002–February 2, 2003
 Tokyo, Bunkamura Museum of Art; Fukuoka Museum; Hiroshima Museum of Art, *Toulouse-Lautrec et son cercle*, November 10–December 23, 2009, no. 74, p. 117; then travelled as, Yokohama Museum of Art, *Edgar Degas*, September 18–December 31, 2010, no. 77, pp. 123, 209 (illustrated, p. 123)
 Milwaukee Art Museum; Vienna, Albertina, *Impressionism: Pastels, Watercolors, Drawings*, October 14, 2011–May 13, 2012, pl. 24, fig. 1, pp. 55–56, 89, 169 (illustrated, p. 89; detail illustrated, p. 56)
 Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-garde: 1870 to the present, The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7–January 20, 2013, pp. 15, 64–65, 542–543 (illustrated, pp. 15, 65)
 Essen, Museum Folkwang; Kunsthhaus Zurich, *Monet, Gauguin, van Gogh... Japanese Inspirations*, September 27, 2014–May 10, 2015, no. 19, pp. 158, 352 (illustrated, p. 158)
 Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum; Paris, Musée de Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, *Les Hollandais à Paris 1789-1914. Van Spaendonck, Scheffer, Jongkind, Maris, Kaemmerer, Breitner, Van Gogh, Van Dongen, Mondrian*, October 13, 2017–May 13, 2018, no. 158, p. 172 (illustrated)
 Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum; Saint Louis Art Museum, *Millet and Modern Art: From Van Gogh to Dalí*, October 4, 2019–May 17, 2020, no. 65, pp. 75, 77, 200 (illustrated, p. 77)

Literature

Paul-André Lemoisne, *Degas et Son Œuvre*, Paris, 1946, no. 1150, pp. 670–671 (illustrated, p. 671)
 Franco Russoli and Fiorella Minervino, *L'opera completa di Degas*, Milan, 1970, no. 1017, pp. 132, 147 (illustrated, p. 132)
 Paul-André Lemoisne, *Degas et Son Œuvre*, New York and London, 1984, vol. III, no. 1150, pp. 670–671 (illustrated, p. 671)
Trésors du Musée de São Paulo. De Manet a Picasso, exh. cat., Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny, 1988, p. 76 (illustrated)
 Élisabeth Santacreu, “Millet le modèle, de Van Gogh à Dalí,” *Les Journal des Arts*, October 30, 2019, online



LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

15

Roy Lichtenstein

Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study)

signed and dated "Rf Lichtenstein '94" on the reverse
tape, cut painted paper, cut printed paper and graphite
pencil on board

36 1/8 x 44 3/4 in. (91.8 x 113.7 cm)

Executed in 1994.

Estimate

\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



The female figure made a triumphant reappearance in Roy Lichtenstein's images in the 1990s, thirty years after his seminal *Girl* paintings. However, in this late body of work, the women have been lifted from their contrived, comic book settings to navigate worlds replete with motifs spanning the artist's 50-year corpus. Often nude, they were birthed from his concurrent *Interiors* series that caricatured the sterile representations of Post-War bourgeois domesticity found in *Architectural Digest* spreads and *Yellow Pages* advertisements. First contained within decorative paintings on the walls, these women soon began to inhabit these homes themselves, their likeness as satirically commodified as the pristine furnishings which surrounded them.

"I don't think the importance of the art has anything to do with the importance of the subject matter. I think importance resides more in the unity of the composition and in the inventiveness of perception."—Roy Lichtenstein

Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study) exemplifies this remarkable chapter of work Lichtenstein executed in his final years, an introspective group of images that brought his career full circle. Created in 1994, the collage prefigures a larger aluminum wall relief created the following year with a similar composition. A disembodied woman's head peers into one of Lichtenstein's immaculate rooms, empty spaces that "...give you the feeling that you might be able to walk into them," Lichtenstein expressed. "On the other hand, the painting is so artificial in style that you know it's impossible."ⁱ The room is not a lived-in space but a liminal one: there is no evidence that anyone has ever drank from the cup perfectly placed on a small table, or sat on the well-fluffed chair behind it. Even more disorienting is how the very vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines that are meant to establish a three-dimensional configuration undermine it. A crooked border cuts off the bottom of the image; not entirely defined, the chair cushions disappear into space. These inconsistencies are reminiscent of printing glitches, collapsing the illusion of depth and disrupting any pictorial coherency.



René Magritte, *Les valeurs personnelles*, 1952. San Francisco Museum of Art. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The contouring suggested by Ben-Day dots, Lichtenstein's stock-in-trade, further complicate the spatial logic of *Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study)*. The artist's subjects "are part light and shade, and so are the backgrounds, with dots to indicate the shade," Lichtenstein elucidated. "The dots are also graduated from large to small, which usually suggests modeling in people's minds, but that's not what you get with these figures."ⁱⁱ Though they allude to the building blocks of draftsmanship and rudimentary chiaroscuro, the dots here simply figure as a two-dimensional decorative patterning: by not corresponding to any conceivable delineation of positive and negative place, they ironically emphasize the flatness of the picture plane instead of concealing it. The formal idiosyncrasies of *Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study)* represent the culmination of Lichtenstein's career-long efforts to convey a complete deconstruction of three-dimensional space. As a critic illuminated, "Lichtenstein's work... is not so much about the subject matter as about what his treatment—outlines, unmodulated color, Ben-Day dots—does to the subject."ⁱⁱⁱ



Caspar David Friedrich, *Woman at a Window*, 1822. Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin. Image: © NPL - DeA Picture Library / Bridgeman Images

Though the protagonist is depicted as a *Rückenfigur*—a common art historical motif translating to “figure from the back”—it is clear by her perfectly-kept hair, gently tied back with a ribbon, that she epitomizes the Post-War feminine ideal. Lichtenstein’s often-blonde bombshells were typically sourced from 1960s romance comic books, which are evoked by the present work’s close-up framing and narrative simplicity. Within her field of vision is an emblem of Lichtenstein’s engagement with the lexicon of modernism—an enigmatic framed image harkening back to his “Surrealist” period in the late 1970s. The composition is particularly reminiscent of Pablo Picasso’s abstracted portrayals of his lover Marie-Thérèse Walter from the 1930s, which Lichtenstein was reminded of in 1994 when he visited the exhibition *Picasso & the Weeping Women* at the

Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. These feminine icons of the 20th century—Picasso’s women and Lichtenstein’s girls—meet in the present work, representing a direct confrontation between the “high culture” of modern painting and the “low culture” of comic book illustration.



Pablo Picasso, *Two Figures (Marie-Thérèse and her Sister Reading)*, 1934. Private Collection. Image: © Christie's Image, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The plant and titular yellow cup that sit on the table are also a nod to Lichtenstein’s still-life works, another of the artist’s renegotiations of the art historical canon, which spanned 1972 through the early 1980s. In a sense, *Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study)* can be interpreted as a metaphorical collage that coalesces much of the iconography that characterized Lichtenstein’s

pioneering visual idiom: Ben-Day dots, comic book beauties, vacuous interiors, and modernist painting. This reading is underscored by the work's function as a physical collage as well, an important step in the artist's process that saw him work through compositional and stylistic questions. Though Lichtenstein eradicated any suggestion of the artist's hand from his works, they each involved a painstakingly manual procedure perfected through a series of sketches and typically one collage. These preparatory works, such as *Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study)*, offer a unique window into the Pop master's method, betraying the ironically handcrafted quality of his work and the systematic planning which allow the paintings and sculptures to appear effortless and mechanical. Layers of tape and painted paper in the present work lift the curtain behind the development of the subsequent wall relief fabricated by Donald Saff.

Considering the myriad references to Lichtenstein's oeuvre and process in the present work, it is perhaps no coincidence that *Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study)* was executed the same year as Lichtenstein's monumental retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, a time that saw him reflecting on the breadth of his career. Emblematic of the artist's mature approach, *Woman Contemplating a Yellow Cup (Study)* encapsulates many of the hallmarks of the artist's iconic postmodern vision.

ⁱ Roy Lichtenstein, "A Review of My Work Since 1961 - A Slide Presentation (November 11, 1995)," in *Roy Lichtenstein*, "October Files," Cambridge, 2001, p. 70.

ⁱⁱ Roy Lichtenstein, quoted in Michael Kimmelman, *Portraits: Talking with Artists at the Met, the Modern, the Louvre, and Elsewhere*, New York, 1998, p. 89.

ⁱⁱⁱ Marina Isola, "Going Dotty over Roy Lichtenstein," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 28, 1995, p. 141.

Provenance

James Goodman Gallery, New York
Maurice Keitelman Gallery, Brussels (February 1996)
Private Collection, Brussels
Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2008

Exhibited

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 389, 552 (illustrated, p. 389)

Living the Avant-Garde: The Triton Collection Foundation

New York Auction / 14 November 2023 / 6pm EST



LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

16

Pablo Picasso

Femme en corset lisant un livre

oil and sand on canvas
36 1/8 x 23 3/4 in. (91.8 x 60.3 cm)
Painted circa 1914-1918.

Estimate

\$15,000,000 — 20,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"[Picasso] was experiencing an evident pleasure in painting, in exploring every available decorative possibility, [...] but Eva was once again the queen of this flowering, which, with a sequence of still lifes dedicated to Ma Jolie and an explosion of color, combines the most intense lyricism and humor. This will later be called Rocco Cubism, a particularly ill-chosen term. It is, in fact, amorous Cubism."
—Pierre Daix

A tender and lyrical portrait first commenced in Avignon circa 1914, *Femme en corset lisant un livre* documents the pivotal shifts in the visual language of Cubism pursued by Pablo Picasso in the years following the height of the movement's so-called "Analytic" phase, pioneered by himself and Georges Braque between 1908 and 1912. While this earlier stage of Cubism was characterized by restricted palettes, and a fracturing of solid form and the space surrounding it to enable the simultaneous presentation of multiple perspectives on a single plane, its second "Synthetic" period was announced through the incorporation of color, texture, and the material of everyday life into their compositions. Although the interruption of the First World War and relocation of many artists (including Braque) to the front marked a natural end to the spirit of collaboration and creative exchange that had defined this era, Picasso would carry these lessons forward into his painting during these years as new personal and professional opportunities introduced a more playful note to these later Cubist experiments.

Bold and beautiful, *Femme en corset lisant un livre* exemplifies the lessons learned from this intensive period of radical experiment in the years before war. The flattened sense of pictorial space, complex compositional arrangement, and playful interactions of color, texture, and pattern are all hallmarks of Picasso's evolving style in these pivotal years. An intimate and innovative depiction of his muse and lover Eva Goeul, commenced just one year before her untimely death, and returned to in the years following, it also marks a triumphant reappraisal of portraiture that would henceforth come to define the artist's oeuvre more completely than any other genre.

J'aime Eva...

"I love [Eva] very much and I will write this into my paintings." —Pablo Picasso

Picasso first met Eva Goeul in 1911, when she was still known as Marcelle Humbert, a confidante of Picasso's then-partner, Fernande Olivier. Goeul and Picasso quickly embarked on a clandestine romance. Building on the system of signs developed to such a sophisticated level in his Analytical compositions and galvanized by Braque's introduction of stenciled letters into his work as early as 1911, Picasso encrypted declarations of love to this new muse and mistress in a variety of compositions, most famously in *Ma Jolie*, 1911-1912, now housed in The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Ostensibly a reference to a popular music hall song, and thus fulfilling Cubism's public

declaration to incorporate the material of everyday life into their compositions, it also operated as a private message to the lover he had nicknamed *ma jolie*. Other compositions would make even bolder statements. Picasso included the words "J'aime Eva" high on the thigh of the figure in one 1912 piece, whose intersecting transparent planes edged in the very beginnings of brighter color combinations anticipate the more solid rematerializing of form that we see in *Femme en corset lisant un livre*.



[Left] Eva Goeul, Picasso Archives. Image: Yale University Art Gallery, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library [Right] Pablo Picasso, *Ma Jolie*, 1911-12. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

During this earlier stage of their relationship, Picasso had started to make his first, tentative steps towards reintroducing color – a sign perhaps of the artist's tendency to announce the entrance of a new partner into his life with a change in stylistic direction that would become such a feature of his later work. Although Picasso was the first to introduce everyday materials directly into his compositions with the inclusion of a piece of oil cloth in the 1912, *Nature morte à la chaise canée*, Musée national Picasso, Paris, Braque's extension of this into his innovative *papier collé*

experiments would prove vital in this next phase of Cubism's stylistic evolution. As Picasso wrote excitedly to his friend and rival in October of 1912, "I've been using your latest papery and dusty methods," highlighting the close conceptual connections made by Picasso at this early stage between the pictorial potential of the flat *papiers collés* and the tensions that these material elements might generate with passages of more roughly textured paint.ⁱ

In what Meyer Schapiro famously termed the "Cubism of Rehabilitation," during this period, "the figures and objects that had been diced, fragmented, and increasingly displaced in Analytical Cubism were now reincorporated as shaped flat planes forming coherent signs."ⁱⁱ Combining elements of drawing, collage, painterly imitations of collage, and non-painterly textures such as sand and earth, Synthetic Cubism was absolutely a "synthesis" of the lessons of Analytical Cubism and the introduction of a variety of more diverse technical and stylistic approaches. Most importantly, these experiments allowed Picasso to successfully reintegrate the figure within the distribution of forms perfected in his still lifes. Invigorated by Cubism's experimental syntax, Picasso returned to the motif of the seated woman—one which would of course come to occupy a major place in his practice—reimagining this motif with "the freedom that came from painting in signs, and that obtained by using fragments of actual objects."ⁱⁱⁱ

Reconquering the portrait

As Pierre Daix has suggested, over the course of 1913-1914, Picasso experimented with several different compositional arrangements of the seated woman motif in order to achieve a fully "Synthetic" portrait of Eva. Turning first to the series of studies and final painting of *Nude in an Armchair*, completed at the very close of 1913, we can see the many different compositional possibilities explored by Picasso, and the central role of collage and construction in refining his approach. In the final painting we can trace the same elegant wave of her long hair and gently parted hairline so tenderly rendered in *Femme en corset lisant un livre*, while the sculpturally rendered gathering of her silk underskirts in the 1913 work is here simplified and communicated more experimentally through the scalloped sign of the petticoat's edge.



Pablo Picasso, *Nude in an Armchair*, 1913. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Picasso would continue these experiments through the winter of 1913-14, celebrating *ma jolie* across a series of works in which Cubist figuration sat alongside moments of quasi-illusionistic figuration. Returning to Avignon in the summer of 1914, these deeply lyrical canvases would find their ultimate expression in what Daix describes as "one of the most beautiful, joyous, loving, and the freest of his 'synthetic' Cubist portraits of Eva," his *Portrait de jeune fille*, now held in the collection of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, with which *Femme en corset lisant un livre* sits in direct dialogue.^{iv} Balanced and harmonious, the internal rhythms of the flattened, intersecting planes endow the painting with a remarkable serenity, echoed in the gentle curve of her

downturned eyes and tilted head as she holds the open book lightly in her lap.



Pablo Picasso, *Portrait de jeune fille*, 1914. Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Elizabeth Cowling has suggested another important source for the newfound flatness of Picasso's compositions in these years: his *papier collé* experiments extended with reference to dressmaker patterns, which are "by definition abstract, two-dimensional blueprints for concrete, three-dimensional objects."^v Given Eva's own facility with a needle and thread, this perspective adds a touchingly personal note to the scalloped edges of her open *déshabillé* here, the corset beneath

perhaps even anticipating the recurring motif of the dressmaker's mannequin in certain Surrealist paintings. Given that the work was recorded as completed in 1917-1918 (meaning that Picasso returned to the work in the years following Eva's death in 1915), it is tempting to read the painting forwards and draw connections between its bold intersections of bright planes of color and the vibrant costume designs that the artist would go on to design for the Ballet Russes in his first production, *Parade*, staged in 1917. A supreme example of the "joyous and radiant Cubism" that came directly out of Picasso's *papier collé* experiments of 1914, *Femme en corset lisant un livre* underscores Picasso's restless and vanguard experimentalism in these years, as much as it affirms the role played by collage and construction in pushing the visual language of Cubism to its final, jubilant conclusion.

ⁱ Pablo Picasso, quoted in John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, 1907-1917: The Painter of Modern Life*, London, 1996, p. 250.

ⁱⁱ William Rubin, "Reflections on Picasso and Portraiture," in *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation*, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1996, p. 35.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pierre Daix, *Picasso: The Cubist Years 1907-1916*, London, 1979, p. 145.

^{iv} Daix, "Portraiture in Picasso's Primitivism and Cubism," in *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation*, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1996, p. 288.

^v Elizabeth Cowling, "The Fine Art of Cutting: Picasso's *papiers collés* and constructions in 1912-14," *Apollo*, Nov. 1995, no. 7, p. 16.

Provenance

Marina Picasso, Paris (by descent from the artist and until at least 1982)
 Galerie Jan Krugier, Geneva
 Private Collection (acquired circa 1987)
 Private Collection (acquired in 1995)
 Private Collection, Japan
 Acquavella Galleries, New York
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2010

Exhibited

Paris, Grand Palais, *Hommage à Pablo Picasso*, November 1966–February 1967, no. 105, n.p. (illustrated)

Munich, Haus der Kunst; Cologne, Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Museum Ludwig; Frankfurt am Main, Städtische Galerie im Städtischen Kunstinstitut, *Pablo Picasso. Sammlung Marina Picasso*, February 14, 1981–January 10, 1982, no. 105, pl. 21, pp. 62, 286 (illustrated)

Venice, Centro di Cultura di Palazzo Grassi, *Picasso: Opere dal 1895 al 1971 dalla Collezione Marina Picasso*, May 3–July 26, 1981, no. 125, pl. 26, pp. 102, 248 (illustrated)

Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art; Kyoto Municipal Museum, *Picasso Masterpieces from the Marina Picasso Collection and from Museums in U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.*, April 2–July 24, 1983, no. 87, pp. 83, 229, 340 (illustrated, p. 83, 229)

Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria; Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Picasso: Works from the Marina Picasso Collection in collaboration with Galerie Jan Krugier*, Geneva, July 28–December 2, 1984, no. 63, p. 68 (illustrated)

Geneva, Galerie Jan Krugier, *Picasso: Œuvres Cubistes de la Collection Marina Picasso*, April 18–June 18, 1986, no. 153, n.p. (illustrated)

Fondació Caixa de Barcelona, *Picasso Cubista 1907-1920. Collecció Marina Picasso*, May 11–July 31, 1987, no. 1, pp. 11, 15, 85, 93, 98 (illustrated on the front cover)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Pablo Picasso: Ik zoek niet, ik vind*, February 5–May 29, 2011, pp. 36–37 (illustrated on the cover; illustrated, p. 36)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 20, 284–285, 557–558 (illustrated, pp. 20, 285)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Mondriaan en het kubisme Parijs 1912-1914*, January 25–May 11, 2014, p. 53 (illustrated)

Museo Picasso Málaga, *Picasso: Registros alemanes*, October 19, 2015–February 21, 2016; then travelled as Kunsthalle Würth, Schwäbisch Hall, *Germany, Picasso und Deutschland*, April 6–September 18, 2016, pp. 165, 338 (illustrated, p. 165)

Osaka, Abeno Harukas Art Museum, *The Secret of Picasso's Genius*, April 9–July 3, 2016, no. 77, pp. 116–117, 178 (illustrated, p. 116)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *González, Picasso and friends*, November 25, 2017–April 2, 2018, pp. 161, 263 (illustrated)

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum (on long term loan through April 26, 2021)

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Picasso / Chanel*, October 11, 2022–January 15, 2023, no. 25, pp. 76–77 (illustrated, p. 77)

Literature

Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso. Œuvres de 1917 a 1919*, Paris, 1949, vol. 3, no. 105, pp. 37, 157 (illustrated, p. 37)

Franco Russoli, *L'opera completa di Picasso cubista*, Milan, 1972, no. 902, pp. 128–129 (illustrated, p. 128)

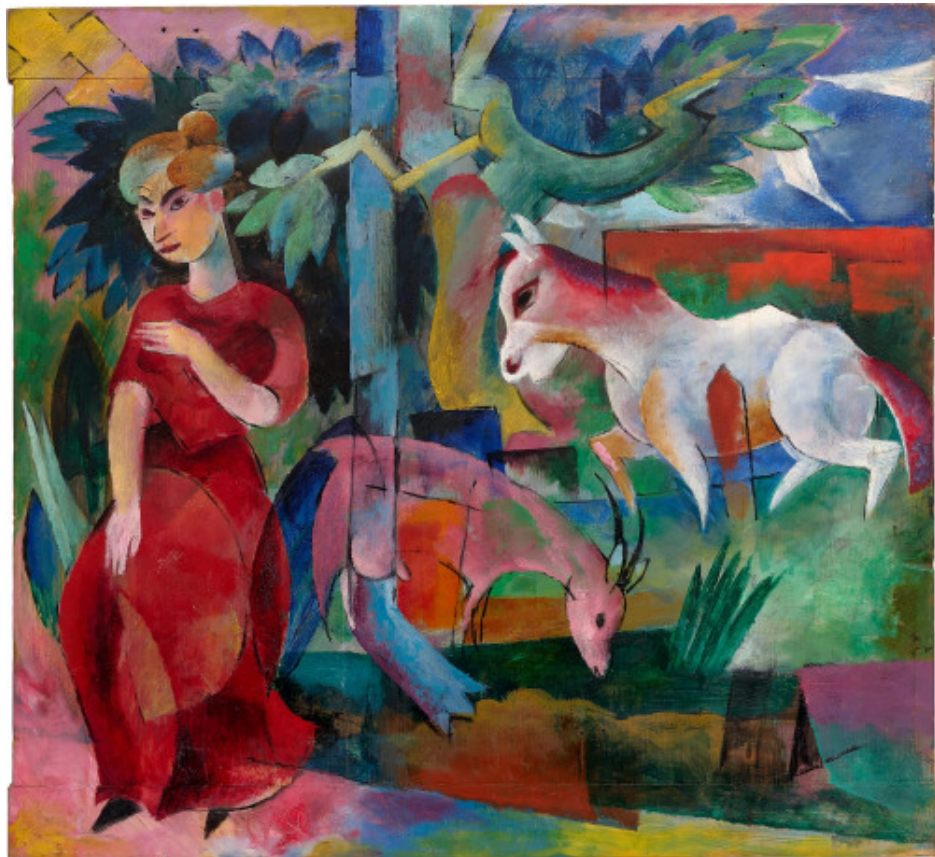
Fiorella Minervino, ed., *Tout l'oeuvre peint de Picasso. 1907-1916*, Paris, 1977, no. 902, pp. 128–129 (illustrated, p. 128)

Joseph Palau i Fabre, *Picasso Cubism (1907-1917)*, New York, 1990, no. 1266, pp. 425, 520 (illustrated, p. 425)

Parijs Stad van de moderne kunst 1900-1960, exh. cat., Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 2011, pp. 66–67 (illustrated, p. 67)

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17

Heinrich Campendonk

Im Garten - Frau, Pferd, Ziege

signed and dated "Campendonk 1915" on the reverse
oil on wooden door panel

21 1/2 x 23 3/8 in. (54.5 x 59.5 cm)

Executed in 1915.

Estimate

\$500,000 — 700,000

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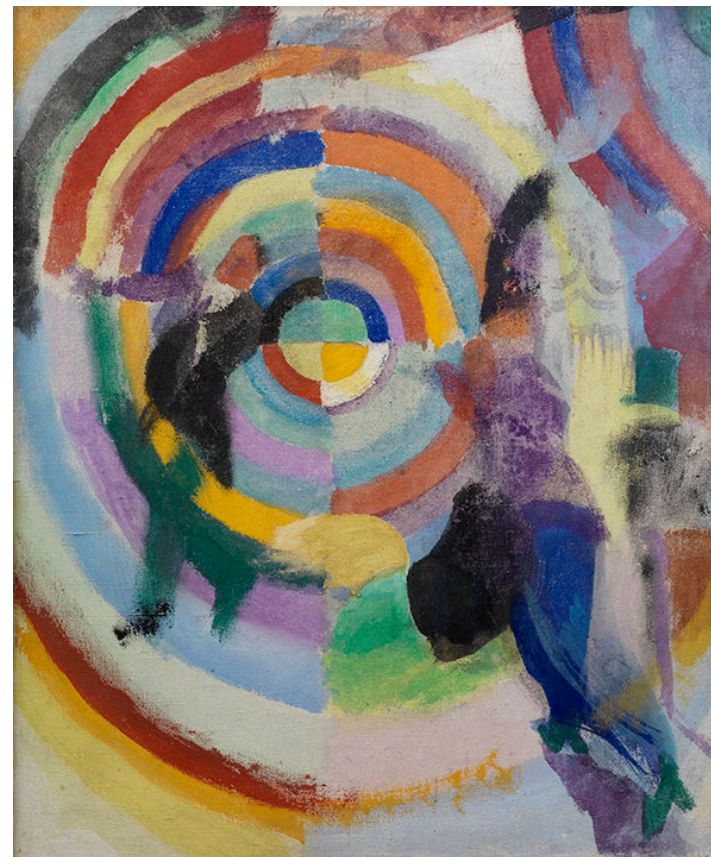
Im Garten – Frau, Pferd, Ziege, 1915, represents the sum of Heinrich Campendonk’s artistic interests and influences of the early 1910s. Campendonk began his career as the youngest artist included in the inaugural *Der Blaue Reiter* exhibition of 1911, and his friendships with the movement’s leaders—Franz Marc, Wassily Kandinsky, and August Macke—were absolutely formative for him. By the creation of *Im Garten – Frau, Pferd, Ziege* in 1915, however, Campendonk had synthesized the lessons of his friends, and his wider avant-garde milieu, into a pictorial language all his own. The present work bears the artist’s signature—an extremely rare feature for an early Campendonk painting—as the young artist humbly considered himself an apprentice to his older peers. The signature on *Im Garten – Frau, Pferd, Ziege* thus reflects the artist’s own confidence and satisfaction with his work.



Franz Marc, *The Large Blue Horses*, 1911. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Image: HIP / Art Resource, NY

Like his friend Franz Marc, Campendonk lived in a small village in the Bavarian Oberland, which allowed him to take in the beauty of the countryside while staying connected via train to the artistic circles of Munich.ⁱ From this rural vantage point, Campendonk developed a visual language of humans and animals in natural settings, related to Marc’s paintings of animals. For Marc, animals had deep spiritual intelligence and emotional depth to express through painting, but for Campendonk, animals were not a painted subject matter on their own.ⁱⁱ Rather, as Gisela Geiger argues, Campendonk’s interest was in the human-animal pair as parallel to depictions of saints with symbolic attributes, like St. Luke with his ox, or St. George riding a horse.ⁱⁱⁱ Campendonk’s animals are symbolic; they are formal openings that connect his avant-garde practice to a rich

Bavarian folk tradition and medieval art aesthetics.^{iv}



Robert Delaunay, *Crime of Passion*, 1914. Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe / Wolfgang Pankoke / Art Resource, NY

Campendonk’s paintings of women sitting in landscapes, such as *Im Garten – Frau, Pferd, Ziege*, are “provocatively static,” per Geiger; the genre, called *Zustandsbilder*, or stational images, uses a surreal sense of idyllic ease to evoke a still, magical feeling.^v The stasis of the woman—modeled after the artist’s first wife, Adda—and animals in the present work also brings to light, by contrast, the frisson of Campendonk’s brushstroke, as he renders them each in overlapping shapes of varying opacity. His preoccupation with opacity and layers of paint derives from two sources: first,

the Bavarian folk tradition of reverse painting on glass, in which details must be painted in reverse order, from foreground to background; and second, Robert Delaunay's use of white paint to create transparency and more vibrant color in his innovative Orphic Cubist paintings.^{vi}

Here, the fence post overlaps into the body of the horse, and the legs of the goat and trunk of a tree elide together. Only color separates out these disparate elements. Layered and radiant, *Im Garten – Frau, Pferd, Ziege* represents Campendonk's synthesis of both the French and German avant-gardes, in a prismatic, expressive interplay of color, space, and form.

ⁱ Gisela Geiger, *Heinrich Campendonk*, Hirmer Verlag, Munich, 2022, p. 16.

ⁱⁱ George Heard Hamilton, *The Pelican History of Art: Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880-1940*, Penguin, New York, 1967, p. 217.

ⁱⁱⁱ Geiger, p. 32.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, p. 23.

^v *Ibid.*, p. 23.

^{vi} *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 55-56.

Provenance

Private Collection, Germany

Private Collection, North Carolina (by descent from the above)

Achim Moeller Fine Art, New York (acquired from the above in 2002)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2003

Exhibited

Berlin, Der Sturm, *Campendonk: Gemälde und Aquarelle. Zeichnungen / Holzschnitte*, October 1916, no. 7 (possibly; titled *Gartenbild 7*)

Stadtmuseum Penzberg, *Rausch und Reduktion: Heinrich Campendonk 1889-1957*, September 13–November 18, 2007, pp. 55, 172 (illustrated, p. 55)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Meer dan kleur. Fauvisme en expressionisme uit de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 11–September 6, 2009, pp. 24-25 (illustrated, p. 24)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Kandinsky en Der Blaue Reiter*, February 6–May 24, 2010, no. 73, pp. 192, 231 (illustrated, p. 192)

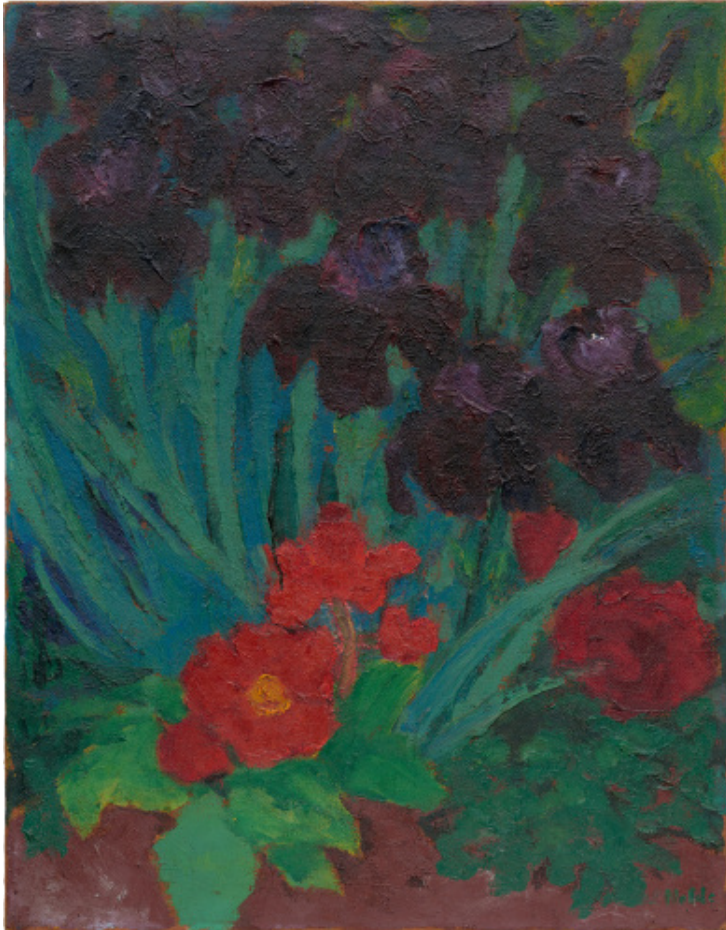
Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 16, 193, 196, 214-215, 541 (illustrated, pp. 16, 215; detail illustrated, pp. 194-195)

Literature

Andrea Firmenich, *Heinrich Campendonk 1889-1957. Leben und expressionistisches Werk. Mit Werkkatalog des malerischen Oeuvres*, Recklinghausen, 1989, no. 510, p. 270

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18

Emil Nolde

Iris

signed "Nolde" lower right; signed and titled "Emil
Nolde "Iris"" on the stretcher

oil on canvas

35 5/8 x 27 3/4 in. (90.5 x 70.5 cm)

Painted in 1916.

Estimate

\$500,000 — 700,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"They are such calm and beautiful hours when one sits or moves about between the fragrant and blossoming flowers; I really wish to give my pictures something of this beauty..."—Emil Nolde

Emil Nolde's *Iris*, 1916, is a vibrant painting of deep purple irises, accented by a flash of scarlet poppies. Nolde's vigorous, German Expressionist brushstroke and strong sense of color create a gorgeous contrast between the turquoise stalks of the titular irises and the rich, jewel-toned blossoms above and below. The impasto of the vermillion soil and emerald underbrush is almost wet, as if the flowers have been freshly watered. With the majority of Nolde's floral paintings as later watercolor works, *Iris* is a rare and early oil painting, which reveals the central role that the flowering countryside of Northern Germany played in the development of Nolde's Expressionist idiom.

Born and raised on a farm in the frontier of Northern Germany, close to Denmark, Nolde spent his childhood surrounded by flora and fauna. He held particularly fond memories of his mother's garden, and would plant his own garden at every home he lived in, for the rest of his life. 1916 was an important year of transition for Nolde as a gardener, as he and his wife moved from their cottage on Als Island to a new home in nearby Utenwarf, where Nolde immediately set to work planting a garden. *Iris* dates to this period of transition and renewed vigor in floral painting, as Nolde took in the "higher, fresher air," and "harsher and stronger beauty" of the west coast at Utenwarf. The emotional intensity Nolde associated with the landscape of Utenwarf translates into the depth of color and strength of brushstroke in *Iris*. The diagonals of the composition—along the heads of the irises, and up the stems of their stalks—reflect, too, the topography of Nolde's garden at Utenwarf; the garden, "a tiny piece of paradise," as he described it, "grew particularly well and had an amazing richness of flowers due to its position at a diagonal from the sun."



Emil Nolde, *Blue and Violet Flowers*, 1916. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

For Nolde, the significance of his garden to his art practice was not merely limited to representational paintings of flowers like *Iris*; throughout his career, and particularly in his most radical and innovative early German Expressionist years, Nolde sought to incorporate the brightness, freshness, and vivacity of spirit he found in the garden into all of his paintings, regardless of subject matter. Indeed, his floral paintings played a pivotal role in his development of the vibrant, dynamic painting style that earned him an invitation to join the avant-garde group *Die Brücke*. Nolde discovered color as his own individual means of expression via the flower paintings he created on Als Island in 1906; acceptance by *Die Brücke* came that same year, and some of his best-known and most innovative paintings soon followed. One could argue that the two aspects of his practice, floral and Expressionist, are inseparable strands of one avant-garde pursuit.

Nolde's acutely attuned relationship to the natural world, and the richness of color and form within it, had a direct effect on his skills as an Expressionist painter, particularly towards his ability to imbue color and brushstroke with emotional intensity. "Even the purely fantastic is somehow also attached to nature," Nolde wrote. Nolde had such a visceral reaction to the colors of the natural world, that he could not help but incorporate them into his work. "The color of the flowers drew me

magnetically to them,” he said, “and suddenly I was painting.”

ⁱ Manfield Reuther, “‘Greetings from our young garden’—Emil Nolde’s Gardens and his Flower Paintings,” in Reuther, et al., *Emil Nolde: Mein Garten voller Blumen (My Garden full of Flowers)*, Nolde Stiftung; DuMont, Cologne, 2009, pp. 22, 26.

ⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 26.

ⁱⁱⁱ Emil Nolde, quoted *ibid.*

^{iv} Ibid., p. 27.

^v Reuther, p. 23.

^{vi} Nolde, quoted *ibid.*, p. 19.

^{vii} Reuther, p. 23.

^{viii} Nolde, quoted *ibid.*, p. 24.

Provenance

Paul Rickmers, Hamburg (acquired directly from the artist in 1918)

Private Collection, Hamburg (by descent from the above)

Christie's, London, November 28, 1988, lot 44

Coubertin de Helo, Portugal (acquired at the above sale)

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2007

Exhibited

Hannover, Kestner Gesellschaft, *Emil Nolde: Gemälde, Graphik*, January 6–February 6, 1918, no. 60

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Meer dan kleur. Fauvisme en expressionisme uit de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 11–September 6, 2009, pp. 17–18 (illustrated, p. 17)

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 207, 557 (illustrated)

Literature

Martin Urban, *Emil Nolde: Catalogue Raisonné of the Oil-Paintings. Volume Two 1915–1951*, London, 1990, no. 734, pp. 117, 617 (illustrated, p. 117)

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19

Pablo Picasso

Femme accroupie

signed and dated "20 septembre 39 Picasso" lower left
gouache on paper

10 3/8 x 8 1/8 in. (26.4 x 20.6 cm)

Executed on September 20, 1939.

Estimate

\$200,000 — 300,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Executed in 1939, just a few weeks after the Nazi invasion of Poland, *Femme accroupie* exemplifies many of the pictorial and thematic concerns that defined Pablo Picasso's oeuvre at the outbreak of World War II. The work is a robust rendering of his mistress and muse, the French Surrealist photographer Dora Maar, instantly recognizable by her long dark hair. Her radically distorted body and face—the figure's chin and right breast are outlined by the same stroke—characterizes Picasso's expressive approach to the human figure throughout the 1930s. Executed on September 20, the composition appears to have evolved from a gouache he painted the same day, which is now housed in the Musée Picasso, Paris. Though the initial image depicted a nude bathing next to the artist himself, represented in his iconic Breton striped shirt, the current work presents her alone against an ambiguous *grisaille* expanse, her arms clutching her knees to her chest.



Pablo Picasso, *Nu et homme assis au tricot rayé*, 1939. Musée Picasso, Paris. Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Picasso's relationship with Maar was one of the most tumultuous and mythologized of his life, with their passionate romance spanning from 1936 to 1943. First meeting the Surrealist photographer in the autumn of 1935, Picasso was immediately captivated by Maar's confident presence and intellectual prowess, which stood in direct contrast to the sweet and gentle nature of Marie-

Thérèse Walter, his previous lover and muse. Maar, who famously documented Picasso's process behind the creation of his masterpiece *Guernica* in 1937, was credited with galvanizing Picasso to produce more politically engaged work. He found her mysterious and self-assured demeanor endlessly inspiring: she became his muse for seven years, her likeness appearing in hundreds of his images from this period. "The name Dora Maar, for most true enthusiasts of Picasso's work,"

Brigitte Léal wrote, "conjures up one of the greatest moments of his creative efforts."ⁱ Their intense affair was marked by a rich intellectual exchange Picasso had not yet experienced with any partner, and his portraits inspired by her—including the present work—betray Maar's daring and conspicuous influence.



Dora Maar, *Autoportrait*, circa 1935. Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists

Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

As war broke out during the height of their romance in early September, 1939, Picasso and Maar rushed south to the small resort town of Royan in the Bay of Biscay, where he had installed Walter and their shared young daughter Maya in relative safety a couple months prior. He set up a provisional make-shift studio in a ground-floor room in the villa Gerbier-des-Joncs; lacking virtually any art supplies, he hurriedly scoured local shops for paper and some tubes of gouache. These media, utilized for *Femme accroupie*, became Picasso's primary vehicle for expression during his so-called "Royan period." Characterized by its dark palette concentrated with browns, greys, and blacks, this body of work reflected the torment and anxiety of global conflict without explicitly portraying it. "I have not painted the war because I am not the kind of painter who goes out like a photographer for something to depict," Picasso would later explain. "But I have no doubt that the war is in these paintings I have done."ⁱⁱ

Picasso's wartime portraits of Dora Maar—including *Weeping Woman*, 1937, Tate, London, and *Dora Maar in an Armchair*, 1939, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York—are among the most celebrated of his corpus and have come to personify the tumult of Europe during the war years. Full of pathos and agony, these pictures achieved a sense of tragic beauty that was unmatched by the rest of his vast repertoire.

ⁱ Brigitte Léal, *Picasso and Portraiture*, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1996, p. 385.

ⁱⁱ Pablo Picasso, quoted in *Picasso and the War Years*, exh. cat., California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1998, p. 13.

Provenance

Private Collection, Japan

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2007

Exhibited

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Pablo Picasso: Ik zoek niet, ik vind*, February 5–May 29, 2011, p. 51 (illustrated; titled *Nu accroupie*)

Literature

Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso. Œuvres de 1939 à 1940*, Paris, 1959, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 2, 177 (illustrated, p. 2)

Avant gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation, exh. cat., Kunsthal Rotterdam, Brussels, 2012, pp. 343, 558 (illustrated, p. 343; titled *Woman Washing Herself*)

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20

Joan Mitchell

Untitled

signed "J. Mitchell" lower right
oil on canvas

96 1/8 x 77 1/4 in. (244.2 x 196.2 cm)

Painted circa 1953.

Estimate

\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Dynamic and vivid, *Untitled*, c. 1953, encapsulates the stylistic innovations forged by Joan Mitchell in a transformative period of her career. This early, large-scale masterpiece dates to the brief time in which the artist lived in Manhattan and established herself as a strong new voice amongst her predominately male Abstract Expressionist peers. With *Untitled*, Mitchell engages the practices and techniques of Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline, while pushing her own idiosyncratic, impassioned brushstroke to ever greater heights. *Untitled* sees an artist coming into her own: it functions as a bridge between Mitchell's earliest canvases and the brightly colored, explosive compositions that she would go on to create in France.

"Where to go next was a constant question for Mitchell during the early 1950s, and she moved continually through painting's possibilities."—Katy Siegel

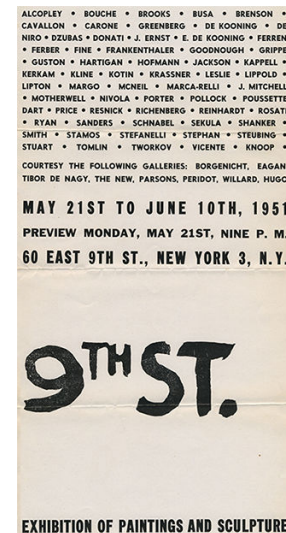
Painted circa 1953, *Untitled* belongs to a body of work which scholars have identified as one of the most critical in Mitchell's entire career; the work was one of just three selected to represent this essential year in Mitchell's posthumous retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 2002. As Nils Ohlsen explains, "a fundamental change occurred in Mitchell's painting in the year 1952. By taking a decisive step away from the painted form to the autonomous brushstroke or gesture, she appeared to be expressing a radically changed view of what painting is... Color and composition no longer served Mitchell as a means of creating illusions in a very abstracted form, but instead became the actual purpose of the painting. The organization of the painted plane was identical with the spontaneous and direct form of artistic expression."ⁱ

This fundamentally changed organizational principle for painting is clearly evident in the composition of *Untitled*. The work, as a bright, whirling mass of layered brushstrokes, is a painted record of Mitchell's embodied, emotive practice. The composition trails along an x-shaped structure, with quick, thin, darker marks tracking from lower left to upper right, and a cascade of looser, grey and green marks from upper left to lower right. At the massive scale of *Untitled*, these brushstrokes express the widest reach of Mitchell's body and paintbrush, emphasizing the full-body experience of painting.

Coming into her own: Downtown New York, 1951-1953

Untitled dates to the prime of Mitchell's career in New York, and marks a period of transformation within a series of accumulating professional successes. In 1951, she was invited to join the exclusive Artists' Club—as one of the few female members of the group, she was in the elite company of Elaine de Kooning, Lee Krasner, and Helen Frankenthaler. In May of that year, she was included in the Club's legendary *Ninth Street Show* alongside such Post-War icons as Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning, and Kline. Her acceptance and inclusion into the group signaled

her arrival to the downtown art scene.



[Left] Poster for *Ninth Street Show*, Artists' Club, New York, May 21-Jun. 10, 1951. [Right] Joan Mitchell in her St. Mark's Place studio, c. 1954. Image: Photo by Walter Silver. © The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: The Photograph Collection, The New York Public Library

Mitchell had her first New York solo exhibition at the New Gallery in January of 1952, which marked the start of a year of new beginnings for the artist. She amicably divorced her husband, Barney Rosset, and moved to a new studio on St. Mark's Place in downtown Manhattan. Mitchell kept the studio into the early 1980s, long after she had permanently moved to France in 1959.ⁱⁱ Mitchell's decades-long maintenance of the St. Mark's Place studio speaks to the lasting significance of this time period and space in Mitchell's development as a painter.

Accuracy and Emotion: de Kooning and Kline

In addition to cultivating relationships with artists and writers her own age in New York, including Michael Goldberg and Frank O'Hara, Mitchell unabashedly sought out the elder artists she most admired, de Kooning and Kline, in their New York studios.ⁱⁱⁱ At the beginning of the decade, when she visited the Whitney Museum of American Art, she was struck by de Kooning's *Excavation*, 1950, Art Institute of Chicago. The painting features a balance of gesture and all-over application

of color that stayed with Mitchell, as evident in *Untitled*, painted three years later.

Mitchell decided to meet de Kooning by any means possible. “On my way to find whoever knew him,” she recalled, “I found Kline.”^{iv} Immediately impressed by the black-and-white paintings that adorned Kline’s studio during her visit in the summer of 1950, she struck up a friendship with the artist—as well as with de Kooning soon after, whose abstracted cityscapes captivated her far more than his *Woman* paintings.



Willem de Kooning, *Excavation*, 1950. Art Institute of Chicago. Image: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Mitchell integrated what she determined as the best aspects of both de Kooning and Kline’s practices into her own work. From de Kooning, she learned what she called “accuracy,” or, the artist’s virtuosic ability to apply paint to canvas, and from Kline, she was inspired to new heights of honest, emotional expression.^v

Untitled combines the methods of these artists in turn. Mitchell implements de Kooning’s “accuracy” through the strategic placement of primary colors, interspersed in flashes of scarlet, lemon yellow, and phthalo blue throughout the composition. The bright, primary colors, combined with intentional expanses of white and pale grey pigment, keep the composition forceful and light. They create contrast with the purposefully muted secondary colors—the passages of sage green, deep violet, and warm ochre—that add depth to the blacks and browns of the x-shaped composition.

Mitchell plays with the viscosity of paint in *Untitled*, as well, letting her greens run pale, and liquid, while her black and violet marks are as dark and intense as calligrapher’s ink. These darker colors, of course, reference the emotive power of Kline, particularly in the thin, staccato black and violet marks that dash across the composition, like check marks, insisting on *Untitled*’s energy and compositional rigor.

With *Untitled*, Mitchell interprets the practices of both de Kooning and Kline on her own terms. As Patricia Albers observes, “One can parse the 1953 paintings for the influences of Kandinsky, Mondrian, Gorky, and de Kooning, and one can note that they marry the permission of New York painting with the rigor of Analytic Cubism, yet they were fully Mitchell’s own. Freely admitting the subjectivity of consciousness to their negotiations between the materiality of paint and feelings of weather and landscape, these were not pictures of the world ‘out there’ but rather pictures consonant with the world.”^{vi}



Franz Kline, *Nijinsky*, 1950. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2023

Painting as Progress: The Stable Gallery Show and Beyond

In 1953, Mitchell's career truly blossomed; after her successes with the *Ninth Street Show* and New Gallery, she was taken on and given a solo show by The Stable Gallery, which solidified her place as one of the most promising young painters in the city. Mitchell grew rapidly as an artist between the exhibitions at New Gallery and The Stable Gallery, which were just over a calendar year apart; where the New Gallery paintings show the aesthetic influence of de Kooning's brushstroke, by the works created for The Stable Gallery show, Mitchell's painting style is more determinedly her own.

Formally, *Untitled* builds on the innovations of Mitchell's Stable Gallery works, and numbers among the rare and distinguished transitional works from this period which populate esteemed public and private collections.



[Left] Georges Braque, *Le Gueridon*, 1911. Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. [Right] Poster for *Joan Mitchell*, The Stable Gallery, New York, Apr. 7- Apr. 23, 1953.

In December of 1952, Mitchell wrote self-effacingly to a friend of the “sort of decent pale paintings—different & more meaningful I think—(anyway to me)” that she was working on for her show with The Stable Gallery.^{vii} In the process of creating these works, art historian Katy Siegel reports, Mitchell discovered the painterly marks that would become her signatures, all of which are present in *Untitled*.

She frames the canvas with right-angled strokes, most visible at lower left; moments of immediacy, such as the flashes of scarlet and blue, contrast against built up, blurrier areas of umber, black, green, and grey. Pale grey drips mix with sharp, angled lines of black and violet, which pierce through the composition with raw energy. Jane Livingston calls out this “finely honed technique... of using gravity to create drips, or runs of paint both to enliven and to anchor the pictorial space,” which Mitchell would continue to employ for the rest of her career.^{viii}

Scribbles of pale grey, taupe, and white, inspired by water and reflections, line the bottom edge of

Untitled, balancing out the dark, deeply colored areas of thinner marks. This strategic use of white and light-colored paint restores a sense of openness to the composition, a practice, Siegel notes, that would become central to Mitchell's work.^{ix} With such a virtuosic display of the styles that would become her signature, *Untitled* can be seen as one of Mitchell's very first mature paintings.

Untitled is a record of a stage in Mitchell's development as an artist, of who she was becoming in the mid-1950s. The work is a synthesis of her study of de Kooning and Kline; it builds on the innovations of her works from The Stable Gallery, and anticipates the changes to come in the summer of 1954, when Mitchell pushed herself to incorporate more color into her work. *Untitled* hints at these later canvases, in the strategic juxtapositions of primary and secondary colors; contrasts of texture and opacity; and variance of wide and narrow brushstrokes. *Untitled* presents the artist in a period of transition, both deeply attuned to her community in New York, and fiercely committed to her individual vision as an artist.

A Pivotal Moment: Joan Mitchell, c. 1953



Joan Mitchell, *Untitled*, 1952-1953. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville. Artwork: © Estate of Joan Mitchell



Joan Mitchell, *Untitled*, 1952-1953. Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva. Artwork: © Estate of Joan Mitchell



Joan Mitchell, *Painting*, 1953. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

ⁱ Nils Ohlsen, “‘Mitcha, why aren’t you home painting?’ Joan Mitchell’s New York Years,” in *Joan Mitchell*, exh. cat., Kunsthalle Emden, 2008, p. 21.

ⁱⁱ Katy Siegel, “St. Mark’s,” in Sarah Roberts and Katy Siegel, eds., *Joan Mitchell*, exh. cat., The Baltimore Museum of Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2020, p. 33.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., pp. 31–32.

^{iv} Joan Mitchell, quoted in Judith E. Bernstock, *Joan Mitchell*, exh. cat., Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1988, p. 21.

^v Siegel, p. 32.

^{vi} Patricia Albers, *Joan Mitchell: Lady Painter*, New York, 2011, p. 259.

^{vii} Mitchell (1952), quoted in Siegel, p. 33.

^{viii} Jane Livingston, *The Paintings of Joan Mitchell*, exh. cat., The Whitney Museum of American Art, 2002, p. 83.

^{ix} Siegel, p. 33.

Literature

Klaus Kertess, *Joan Mitchell*, New York, 1997, no. 4, pp. 48, 177 (illustrated, p. 48; dated 1954)

Provenance

Estate of the Artist

Private Collection (acquired in 2004)

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2006

Exhibited

New York, Xavier Fourcade, Inc., *Joan Mitchell: The Fifties, Important Paintings*, March 1–April 5, 1980

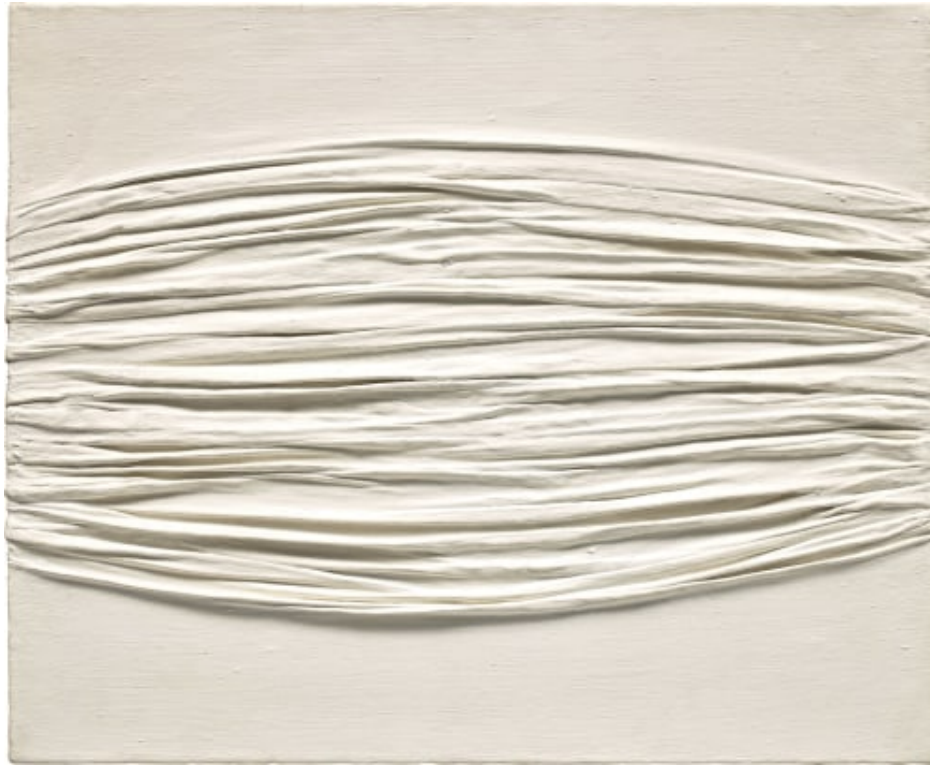
New York, Robert Miller Gallery, *Joan Mitchell: Paintings 1950 to 1955. From the Estate of Joan Mitchell*, May 5–June 5, 1998, n.p. (illustrated)

New York, Whitney Museum of American Art; Birmingham Museum of Art; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; Des Moines Art Center, *The Paintings of Joan Mitchell*, June 20, 2002–April 25, 2004, pl. 5, pp. 22, 48, 88–89, 198 (detail illustrated, p. 48; illustrated, p. 89; dated 1954)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Collection Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 406–407, 554 (illustrated, p. 407; dated 1954)

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LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
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21

Piero Manzoni

Achrome

creased canvas and kaolin
19 3/4 x 24 in. (50 x 61 cm)
Executed circa 1959.

Estimate

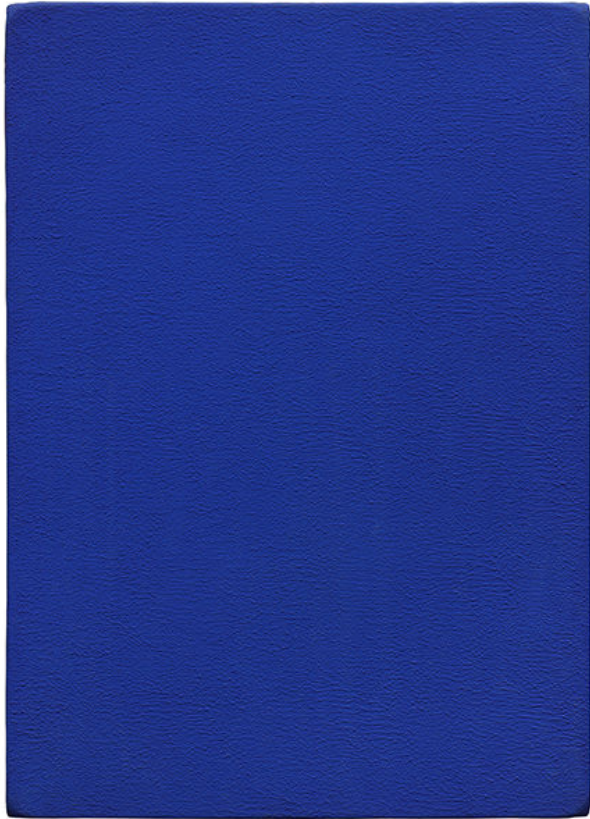
\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Infinity is strictly monochromatic, or better still, colorless."—Piero Manzoni

Achrome, c. 1959, belongs to Piero Manzoni's radical series of the same name, a proto-Minimalist, proto-Conceptual project that captivated the artist for the final six years of his all-too-short career. Inspired by Yves Klein's blue monochromes, which he saw in Milan in 1957, Manzoni took Klein's chromatic minimalism to a new extreme with *Achrome* by excluding paint altogether. The present work dates to the tail end of the first—and most iconic—group within the *Achrome* series, of works made solely from creased canvas soaked in liquid kaolin, a colorless porcelain slip; thus, *Achrome* is not white, but without color entirely.



Yves Klein, *Monochrome bleu (IKB 219)*, 1956. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP

/ Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

With the name *Achrome*, Manzoni indicated both an absence of painted hue and subject matter, as well as the removal of the artist's hand from the final appearance of the work. Left to dry naturally, the fossilized surface of *Achrome* is created by air on clay, rather than paintbrush on canvas. Trailblazing and irreverent, Manzoni's *Achrome* challenges preconceptions of what it means to make a painting, and what a painting really is, in the first place.

"I do not understand painters who... still stand in front of a canvas as if it were a surface needing to be filled... Why not try to make the limitless sense of total space, of a pure and absolute light, appear instead?"—Piero Manzoni, Libera Dimensione, 1960

Concurrent to the creation of the present work, Manzoni published his first solo manifesto, *Libera Dimensione*, 1960, which expressed the aims of the *Achrome* series. In the manifesto, Manzoni radically asserted that artists who approach the canvas as a surface to be filled in with color, form, and brushstroke did not address "contemporary problems."ⁱ Such a statement is a thinly-veiled critique of American Abstract Expressionism, which had been the predominant international influence in painting of the past decade. Manzoni, with a nihilistic sense of alienation cultivated by his association with the Nuclear group in Milan, did not attribute the same value to the individual brushstroke of the artist-genius as his American peers. Rather than seeing painting as a means to individual expression, Manzoni interpreted the canvas as "a surface with limitless possibilities," which he wanted to keep as open as possible.ⁱⁱ Manzoni sought to "liberate [the] surface" of the canvas, which he believed was blocked and covered in conventional painting, an object "receptable" full of paint.ⁱⁱⁱ *Achrome* empties itself of the "inventions" of painting—no color, no form, no brushstroke—just "pure and absolute light."^{iv}



Nike removing her sandal, c. 410 BCE. Acropolis Museum, Athens. Image: Album / Art Resource, NY

With painterly intervention minimized, Manzoni opened *Achrome* up to timeless natural and art historical associations.^v The absence of color grants focus in on the texture of the porcelainized surface. The folds of the canvas, hardened by kaolin, rise in ridges across the work, like rippling waves, striated clouds, or a sunset reflecting over the horizon. The horizontal format recalls the form of Ancient Greek and Roman low-relief friezes, while the dynamic, yet arrested stillness of the kaolin-coated canvas resembles sculpted drapery. Associations with European funerary sculpture, with shrouds carved from marble, surface as well, and the powdery surface of the work, like plaster of Paris, furthers the sculptural antecedent. The question arises, then: is *Achrome* a painting, or a sculpture?



Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*, 1915-1923. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Such proto-Conceptual questions were Manzoni's signature, as his mature career interrogated the nature of what it means to be an artist, and what constitutes an art object. His body of work was both profound and irreverent at once, poking at the rigid categorizations and distinctions of art with an earnestness and commitment akin to Marcel Duchamp's attitude. With *Achrome*, Manzoni endeavored to make a transcendent art object devoid of color, gesture, and the artist's hand, but therein lay an inherent contradiction: as a man-made object, *Achrome* was still handmade by Manzoni. The artist folded the canvas himself, arranged the fanning creases, soaked it in kaolin. The work did not spring forth, ready-made. This fundamental tension, and irony, connected

Achrome to Manzoni's most ironic and infamous works, such as *Fiato d'Arista (Artist's Breaths)*, 1960, and *Merda d'Artista (Artist's Shit)*, 1961, both in the collection of the Tate Modern, London. Taken together, his corpus pushed the limits of our collective understanding of art and artistry as a sublime and transcendent force in our lives.

Manzoni was earnest in his pursuit of the infinite through *Achrome*, and equally aware that such an artistic pursuit is futile. *Achrome* is grandiose, infinite, nothing. As Manzoni concluded in 1960, "There is nothing to explain: just be, and live."^{vi}

ⁱ Piero Manzoni, "Free Dimension," 1960, reproduced in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory: 1900-1990*, Blackwell Publishers, 1992, p. 709. Accessed via Internet Archive.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Ibid., p. 710.

^{vi} Ibid., p. 711.

Provenance

Gian Enzo Sperone, Turin
 Galerie Elke Dröschner, Hamburg (1978)
 Private Collection, Hamburg (acquired from the above)
 Christie's, New York, November 11, 2003, lot 37
 Private Collection, U.S.A. (acquired at the above sale)
 Christie's, London, February 11, 2010, lot 13
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Herning Kunstmuseum; Madrid, Sala de Exposiciones de la Fundación "la Caixa"; Turin, Castello di Rivoli-Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, *Piero Manzoni*, March 28, 1991– May 3, 1992, no. 30, pp. 90, 218 (illustrated, p. 90)
 Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 516-517, 552-553 (illustrated, p. 517)

Literature

Germano Celant, *Piero Manzoni Catalogo generale*, Milan, 1975, no. 152cg, p. 161 (illustrated)
 Freddy Battino and Luca Palazzoli, *Piero Manzoni catalogue raisonné*, Milan, 1991, no. 421, p. 293 (illustrated)
 Germano Celant, *Piero Manzoni Catalogo generale, vol. II*, Milan 2004, no. 359, p. 447 (illustrated)

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22

Louise Bourgeois

Tits

black marble

9 1/2 x 21 1/4 x 11 1/4 in. (24.1 x 54 x 28.6 cm)

Conceived in 1967 and executed in 1982.

Estimate

\$250,000 — 350,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Though named for feminine anatomy, Louise Bourgeois' *Tits*, 1967-1982, is an ambiguously gendered sculpture. The black marble work, shaped like two footballs fused together, recalls both breasts and the base of a phallus; its anatomical corollary is further confused by its abstracted form. Bourgeois' *Tits* sit in the round, detached from the human body, a sculpted object with heavy psychoanalytical connotations.

Bourgeois conceived of *Tits* in 1967, and executed the first editions of the sculpture in plaster and onyx that same year. Concurrently, she began working with marble in Italy, and enjoyed how the medium expressed the softness of skin.ⁱ The present work was created in 1982, the year of the artist's traveling retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York—Bourgeois was the first female sculptor to receive such an honor. A bronze edition of *Tits* resides in the shared collection of the National Galleries of Scotland and the Tate Modern, London.

"I have fun carving marble. I can't destroy it. I'm not going to be destroyed either, by the way." —Louise Bourgeois

Tits draws on a rich art history of sculpted bodies, and attendant associations of sensuality, objectification, and desire. The crude title—not breasts, but *Tits*—speaks to the ambivalence of women's position in heterosexual relationships, as both objects of an often violent, patriarchal desire, and as individuals with their own sexual agency. For Bourgeois, black marble was the ideal medium to work through this ambivalence: "there's a great element of pleasure in the black marble," she explained in a 1982 interview, "the pleasure to hack away at something which offers enough resistance...attacking a material that can resist you. And this has a direct symbolism with human relations."ⁱⁱ



Sarah Goodridge, *Beauty Revealed*, 1828. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Gloria Manney, 2006, 2006.235.74

Known for a wide-ranging oeuvre that mines her own trauma and relationships to gender and motherhood, *Tits* reveals the role of Freudian psychoanalysis in Bourgeois' work. Bourgeois participated in psychoanalytic therapy for fifteen years, and found the practice useful for working through her past, and expressing it in her art.ⁱⁱⁱ As art historian Rosalind Krauss writes, *Tits* functions, in psychoanalytic terms, as a "part-object," a part of the body that becomes objectified at infancy: "For the newborn, suckling divides the mother's breast from its bodily support, separating the organ from her as the target to satisfy the infant's needs. The world of the infant splinters into such part-objects: its own desiring organs as well as their reciprocal targets: so many breasts, mouths, bellies..."^{iv} *Tits* draws on this separation, as a body part isolated from the body, so abstracted, that its legibility as sculpted breasts is called into question.

"There has always been a sexual suggestiveness in my work. Sometimes I am totally

concerned with female shapes... but often I merge the imagery—phallic breasts, male and female, active and passive.” —Louise Bourgeois

The gendered ambiguity of *Tits* is emblematic of Bourgeois’ approach to sculpture from the 1960s onwards. Bourgeois found rich meaning in forms that could read as both male and female at once, as a visual representation of the ambivalent emotions she herself felt towards human sexuality. Complex and multivalent, Bourgeois’ *Tits* move beyond corporeal representation, towards the expression of an emotional, embodied state.



Constantin Brancusi, *Male Torso*, 1917. Cleveland Museum of Art. Image: © Cleveland Museum of Art / Hinman B. Hurlbut Collection / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

ⁱ Margherita Leoni-Figini, “Louise Bourgeois,” *Centre Pompidou*, 2008, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Louise Bourgeois (1982), quoted in Barbara Flug Colin, “A Conversation with Louise Bourgeois,” *Frigate: The Transverse Review of Books*, 2000, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Bourgeois, quoted in Juliet Mitchell, “Love and Hate, Girl and Boy,” *The London Review of Books*, vol. 35, no. 21, Nov. 6, 2014, [online](#).

^{iv} Rosalind Krauss, quoted in Allan Madden, “Louise Bourgeois: *Tits*, 1967,” *Tate*, Feb. 2015, [online](#).

Provenance

The Artist

Cheim & Read, New York

Peter Blum Gallery, New York (acquired from the above in 2000)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2009

Exhibited

Los Angeles, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, *Louise Bourgeois*, November 17–December 1, 1984

Cincinnati, The Taft Museum; Miami, Frost Art Museum at Florida International University; Austin, Laguna Gloria Art Museum; St. Louis, Henry Art Gallery, Washington University; Syracuse, Everson Museum of Art, *Louise Bourgeois*, May 5, 1987–November 26, 1989, n.p.

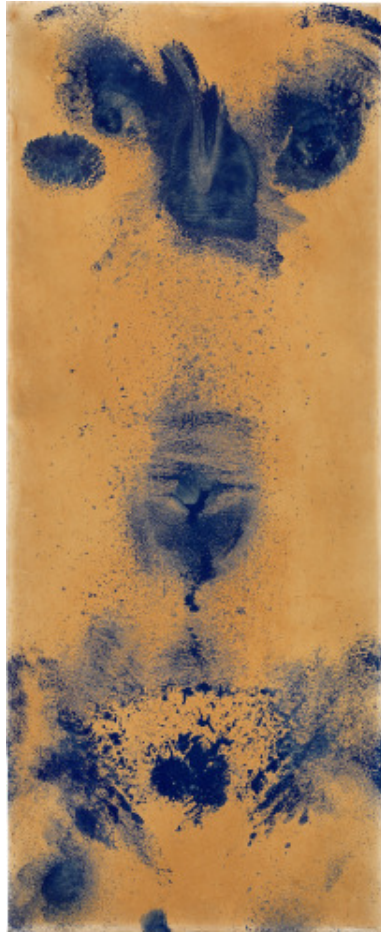
Humblebæk, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, *Louise Bourgeois: Life as Art*, February 15–June 22, 2003, no. 20, pp. 36, 78 (illustrated, p. 36; dated 1967–1968)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Bellmer / Bourgeois – Double Sexus: Supplemental Installation*, September 11, 2010–January 16, 2011, p. 149 (illustrated)

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 21, 534–535, 540 (illustrated, pp. 21, 535)

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23

Yves Klein

Anthropométrie sans titre, (ANT 149)

signed "Yves Klein" on the reverse
pigment and synthetic resin on wove paper mounted
on canvas

24 3/8 x 9 7/8 in. (61.9 x 25.1 cm)

Executed in 1958, this work is registered in the Yves
Klein Archives under number ANT 149.

Estimate

\$800,000 — 1,200,000

[Go to Lot](#)



A tour de force executed at the height of Yves Klein's revolutionary eight-year career, *Anthropométrie sans titre*, (ANT 149), 1958 is a compelling and concise expression of the female form rendered in the artist's signature International Klein Blue. Performative and provocative, the work results from the imprint of a nude model's painted body, pressed against a sheet of paper. By cropping the composition in on the model's midsection and thighs, Klein focuses *Anthropométrie sans titre*, (ANT 149) on the body as flesh, desirable and desiring; *Anthropométrie sans titre*, (ANT 149) emphasizes the emotional eroticism of the human form in a brilliant monochrome trace.ⁱ The present work first belonged to Klein's photographer, Frédéric Barzilay, who documented the artist's innovative practice.

"Now, what a miracle, the brush returned, but this time it was alive." —Yves Klein

Raised by painters who worked within the abstract *l'art informel* and Post-Impressionist styles, but having received no formal training himself, Klein revolutionized the medium beyond its pre-war avant-garde. Claiming that the new, post-war world needed a new man, Klein rejected brushes as "too excessively psychological," opting to instead use paint rollers that provided distance from artist's hand.ⁱⁱ The *Anthropométries* marked a major advancement in Klein's conceptual development, fully separating the artist's hand from the work. Klein began his *Anthropométries* in 1958 as private experiments before staging an inaugural performance for the opening of the new Galerie internationale d'art contemporain in Paris on March 9, 1960. Executed during the experimental first year of the *Anthropométries*, the present example celebrates the liberated physical action. As declared by Klein, "my pictures represent poetic events, or rather, they are immobile, silent, and static witnesses to the very essence of movement and life in freedom, which is the flame of poetry in the pictorial moment."ⁱⁱⁱ



Performance of *Anthropométries* in the studio of Charles Wilp, with model Katja, 1961. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Charles Wilp / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Klein pioneered a performative new type of practice by relinquishing his formal artistic tools. Reinventing the conventional artist-model relationship, Klein used nude women as "living paintbrushes" to apply paint to substrate. Klein meticulously directed the positions and movements of the blue-coated women as they made their traces onto paper, relishing "it was the flesh itself that applied the color to the canvas, under my direction, with a perfect precision, allowing me to remain constantly at an exact distance of 'x' from my canvas."^{iv} As he witnessed Klein creating these works, critic Pierre Restany recalled, "The marks thus left on the paper represented the central part of the body, breasts, abdomen, and thighs, in the manner of an

anthropomorphic sign. I could not help exclaiming: ‘These are the *anthropométries* of the blue period!’” in reference to the study of human body measurements. Restany continues, “Yves, who had been waiting for just this, jumped up in triumph. He had his title: *Anthropométries*.”^v

Klein’s blue period began the year prior to creating *Anthropométrie sans titre*, (ANT 149), in 1957, solidifying the artist’s longtime fixation with the ultramarine hue. Klein even claimed, according to the artist Arman, “The blue sky is my first artwork,” referencing a moment during his youth in which he wrote his name across the sky in Nice.^{vi} The heavenly color has long been associated with the divine, not in the least due to the elusiveness of obtaining and using blue pigment. Since 1956, Klein had been experimenting with a polymer binder to stabilize and preserve the texture and appearance of ultramarine pigment; notoriously difficult to work with, the tone can easily lose its incandescence, dulling and darkening when mixed with linseed oil. With the help of Parisian art supply store owner Édouard Adam, Klein developed his signature International Klein Blue in what has become a mythologized moment in 20th century art history. In 1960, he successfully patented his IKB formula in an unheard-of thought experiment in “owning” a color, setting a precedent followed by the likes of Anish Kapoor, who acquired the rights to Vantablack in 2016, and companies such as Tiffany & Co. that have trademarked their signature colors.

“Blue has no dimensions... It ‘is’ beyond the dimensions of which other colors partake.” —Yves Klein

Klein’s *Anthropométries* redefined the possibilities of artmaking. Broaching the material and immaterial realms, *Anthropométrie sans titre*, (ANT 149) is imbued with cosmic energy amongst the smears and smatters of International Klein Blue. From an artist intrigued by the possibility of overcoming the effects of gravity, the tactile, immediate impression of flesh achieves a radiant sense of levitation.

ⁱ Yves Klein, “Truth Becomes Reality,” in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, Thompson, CT, 2007, p. 182.

ⁱⁱ Pierre Restany, “Testimonial of Pierre Restany on Yves Klein,” 1981, [online](#); Klein, *ibid.*, p. 183.

ⁱⁱⁱ Klein quoted in Denys Riout, *Yves Klein: Expressing the Material*, Paris, 2004, p. 29.

^{iv} Klein, “Truth Becomes Reality,” p. 183.

^v Pierre Restany, “The Nouveaux Réalistes Declaration of Intention,” trans. Martha Nichols, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, Berkeley, 1996, p. 307.

^{vi} Arman quoted in Thomas McEvelley, “Conquistador of the Void,” in *Yves Klein, 1928–1962: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Institute for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, 1982, p. 28; Klein, “Truth Becomes Reality,” p. 181.

Provenance

Frédéric Barzilay, Paris
Gallery Ronny van Velde, Antwerp
Galerie Jacques de la Béraudière, Brussels
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2010

Exhibited

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Parijs - Stad van de moderne kunst 1900-1960*, October 15, 2011–January 29, 2012, p. 222 (illustrated)
Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 439, 549 (illustrated, p. 439)

Literature

Paul Wember, *Yves Klein: Werkverzeichnis, Biographie, Bibliographie, Ausstellungsverzeichnis*, Cologne, 1969, no. ANT 149, p. 115 (illustrated)
Yves Klein, exh. cat., Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2004, fig. 3, p. 157 (illustrated)

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24

Max Beckmann

Blühender Garten

signed, inscribed and dated "Beckmann O. 33" lower
right; inscribed "Kaulbach Garten Ohlstadt" on the
reverse

oil on canvas

29 1/2 x 30 3/4 in. (74.9 x 78.1 cm)

Painted in 1933.

Estimate

\$400,000 — 600,000

[Go to Lot](#)



“Learn the forms of nature by heart, so you can use them like the musical notes of a composition. That’s what these forms are for.” —Max Beckmann

Max Beckmann’s *Blühender Garten*, 1933, shows a garden alive with energy, as if painted in a moment of calm before a summer storm. His brushstrokes bristle to attention, with black outlines, quivering flowers, and a still swimming pool.

Beckmann rose to prominence as a painter associated with *Neue Sachlichkeit*, a post-World War I German avant-garde movement that reacted against the bright and emotional pre-War German Expressionism. With works such as *Die Nacht*, 1918-1919, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Beckmann depicted the horrors of World War I from a distorted and disillusioned point of view. The placid, yet ominous *Blühender Garten* picks up on the social urgency of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, as a rejection of passive acceptance of the rise of Nazism in Germany; in Beckmann’s view, even the daffodils and foxgloves are affected.

In 1933, the year he painted *Blühender Garten*, Beckmann was dismissed by the Art School in Frankfurt after Hitler was named Chancellor of the Reich. Beckmann would be ostracized as a “degenerate artist” in the coming years, and eventually flee to Amsterdam at the outbreak of World War II. This political tension simmers beneath the surface of Beckmann’s serene *Blühender Garten*, rendered in moody shades of blue and green.¹



Max Beckmann, *Die Nacht*, 1918-1919. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf / Walter Klein/ Art Resource, NY

The flowering garden of *Blühender Garten* is likely that of the Villa Kaulbach, the Bavarian estate of Beckmann’s in-laws. Between 1930 and 1935, Beckmann and his wife, Mathilde “Quappi” von Kaulbach, often traveled to the Kaulbach home in Ohlstadt, Upper Bavaria on holiday. Built by Quappi’s father, the noted German painter Friedrich August von Kaulbach, the home had a large painting studio on the premises which Beckmann used frequently. The Villa Kaulbach became a welcome retreat for the artist, who, discouraged by fascist censorship of the German avant-garde, took the opportunity to devote time to his paintings of nature.

Beckmann began his career as a landscape painter, and always held a propensity for the genre. While Beckmann’s atmospheric renderings of the natural world may suggest an Impressionist influence, Beckmann in fact allied himself more closely within the legacy of the Post-Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne. Beginning with Cézanne’s strong sense of pictorial order, Beckmann took a more patchwork approach to his landscapes, evident in the jagged brushstrokes and bold black lines of *Blühender Garten*, which stand in stark contrast to Cézanne’s layered, constructive

application of paint.



Paul Cézanne, *The Pool at the Jas de Bouffan*, late 1880s. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Stephen C. Clark, 1960, 61.101.5

As Carla Schulz-Hoffmann says, “Beckmann’s work always exists on two levels... even when a work appears as a breathtaking *peinture*, it lures the viewer into a deceptive security which is merely a façade for the abyss looming behind.”ⁱⁱ This could be said to be the case for *Blühender Garten*. While appearing as a simple garden scene, one cannot disentangle this striking work from the context in which it was painted—namely, the rising tensions in the artist’s hometown of Frankfurt, and his impending exile from Germany. Painted at a pivotal moment in the artist’s career, *Blühender Garten* is simultaneously a testament to the artist’s knowledge of the darkness of the world he is commemorating, and celebration of the beauty of nature that continues to bloom, despite it all.

ⁱ “Max Beckmann – The Pre-Exile Years,” *Arts in Exile*, accessed Sep. 28, 2023, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Carla Schulz-Hoffmann, “Bars, Fetters, and Masks: The Problem of Constraint in the Work of Max Beckmann,” in Walter Barker, ed. *Max Beckmann: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1984, p. 15.

Provenance

The Artist’s Studio

Erna Hanfstängel, Munich (acquired directly from the above in 1937)

Deposited (from the above) for safekeeping at the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlung, Munich, where recovered by the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section, and by whom transferred to, Munich Central Collecting Point (Munich No. 16027), on December 8, 1945

Returned to Erna Hanfstaengl on September 2, 1946

Adolf Wüster, Munich (acquired circa 1948)

Kunstkabinett Kliehm, Munich

Dr. Henry Goverts, Vaduz (acquired in 1950)

Galerie Ketterer, Campione d’Italia (acquired in 1967)

Sotheby’s, London, April 12, 1972, lot 43

Modarco Collection, Geneva (acquired at the above sale)

Galerie Thomas, Munich

Private Collection, Germany (acquired in 1976)

Van Beveren Expertise, The Hague

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2008

Exhibited

Kunsthalle Bern, *Max Beckmann, Marguerite Frey-Surbek, Martin Christ, Fernand Riard*, February 19–March 20, 1938, no. 13 (titled *Garten in Bayern*)

Kunstverein Winterthur, *Max Beckmann*, April 3–May 8, 1938, no. 15, n.p. (titled *Garten in Bayern I*)

New York, Spencer A. Samuels and Company, *Expressionismus*, October 22–November 16, 1968, pl. 46, pp. 98–99 (illustrated, p. 98; titled *Garten in Bayern I (Kaulbach Garden in Ohlstadt)*)

Munich, Galerie Thomas, *Die Ersten 15 Jahre*, February 7–March 27, 1980, no. 21, n.p. (illustrated)

Dortmund, Galerie Utermann, *Werke des Deutschen Expressionismus und der Klassischen Moderne aus 7 Dortmunder Privatsammlungen*, September 1–30, 1995, no. 5, n.p. (illustrated)

Murnau am Staffelsee, Schloßmuseum, *Max Beckmann. Abseits der Großstadt – oberbayerische Landschaft*, April 3–July 12, 1998, p. 41 (illustrated)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Meer dan kleur. Fauvisme en expressionisme uit de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 11–September 6, 2009, pp. 30–31 (illustrated, p. 30)

Kunstmuseum Basel, *Max Beckmann: The Landscapes*, September 8, 2011–January 22, 2012, no. 35, fig. 11, pp. 30, 35, 134–135 (illustrated, pp. 30, 35; titled *Garden in Bloom*)

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 210–211, 538 (illustrated, p. 211; titled *Garden in Bavaria*)

Literature

Roman Norbert Ketterer, *Moderne Kunst IV*, Campione, 1967, no. 2, pp. 6–7 (illustrated, p. 6; titled *Garten in Bayern I*)

Roman Norbert Ketterer, *Moderne Kunst V*, Campione, 1968, no. 4, p. 8 (illustrated; titled *Garten in Bayern I*)

Roman Norbert Ketterer, *Moderne Kunst VI*, Campione, 1969, no. 6, pp. 14–15 (illustrated, p. 14; titled *Garten in Bayern I*)

Erhard Göpel and Barbara Göpel, *Max Beckmann: Katalog der Gemälde*, vol. I and II, Bern, 1976, no. 378, vol I, p. 259; vol II, p. 128 (illustrated, vol. II, p. 128)

Susanne Rother, *Beckmann als Landschaftsmaler*, Munich, 1990, p. 80

"Ich kann wirklich ganz gut malen." *Friedrich August von Kaulbach - Max Beckmann*, exh. cat., Schloßmuseum, Murnau am Staffelsee, 2002, p. 89

Max Beckmann und Berlin, exh. cat., Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, 2015, pp. 210, 215

Anja Tiedemann, Barbara Göpel and Erhard Göpel, *Max Beckmann: Die Gemälde*, vol. I, Ahlen, 2021, no. 378, pp. 456–457 (illustrated, p. 456; detail illustrated, p. 457)

Anja Tiedemann, *Max Beckmann Catalogue Raisonné der Gemälde*, 2016–online, no. MB-G 378 (illustrated; accessed on September 22, 2023)

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New York Auction / 14 November 2023 / 6pm EST



LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

25

Émile Bernard

*Paysage de Bretagne (Paysage avec deux Bretonnes
et vache)*

oil on board mounted on panel
45 5/8 x 32 5/8 in. (116 x 83 cm)
Painted in 1892.

Béatrice Recchi Altarriba has kindly confirmed the
authenticity of this work.

Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

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Paysage de Bretagne (Paysage avec deux Bretonnes et vache), 1892, is one of the strongest examples of Émile Bernard's Nabi, cloisonnist style in private hands, with an exceptional provenance dating back to esteemed Post-Impressionist gallerist Ambroise Vollard, and including Arthur G. Altschul, who assembled the premier 20th century American collection of Nabi art. By 1892, the year of this work's facture, Bernard was at the peak of his powers as a Nabi painter; the following year, he began a decade of travel that forever disrupted his place in the avant-garde milieu of late 19th century France.

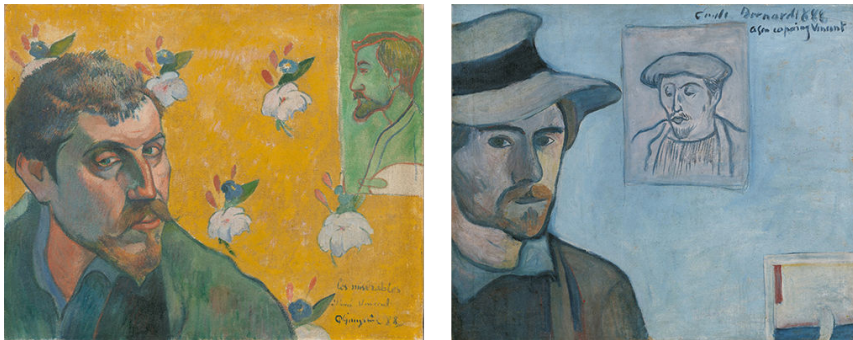
Bernard was a member of the Nabis, a group of young French painters who took Paul Gauguin as their aesthetic guide. The group, including Paul Sérusier and Maurice Denis, among others, found great inspiration in the elder artist's Symbolist approach to color and form, wherein symbolic or spiritual resonance was more important than adherence to representational reality. Bernard, himself a talented and precocious painter, maintained that *he* inspired Gauguin in turn, claiming that he had introduced the artist to cloisonnism, a style of painting that takes its approach to form from the *cloisonné* metalwork technique, which uses thin lines of metal to delineate designs in enamel or precious gems, with an effect akin to that of the panes of stained glass windows.ⁱ



Émile Bernard, *La Moisson*, 1888. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

Paysage de Bretagne features two Breton women in traditional dress standing with their cow in the countryside, a subject matter that reflects Bernard's early participation in the Pont Aven school, which also circled around Gauguin. The artists of the Pont Aven school admired the humility of Breton women, and romanticized their old-fashioned dress and rural lifestyle.ⁱⁱ This group, a precursor to the Nabis, was based in the town of Pont Aven in Brittany, where Bernard first met Gauguin in 1886. Two years later, Bernard joined Gauguin again in Pont Aven, in a meeting encouraged by the pair's mutual friend, Vincent van Gogh.ⁱⁱⁱ Art historian Nancy Mowll Mathews describes the profound effect Bernard had on Gauguin during their summer together in Pont Aven, writing that "Gauguin was energized by Bernard's forceful rejection of the old tenets of naturalism

and his desire to found an art based on entirely new principles... it is surprising how swiftly Gauguin assimilated Bernard's new verbal and pictorial language," namely, cloisonnism and Japanese aesthetics.^{iv} "You are extraordinarily gifted," Gauguin wrote to Bernard after their summer in Pont Aven, "and painting now, you will undoubtedly arrive."^v



[Left] Paul Gauguin, *Self-portrait with Émile Bernard (Les Misérables)*, 1888. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Image: Bridgeman Images [Right] Émile Bernard, *Self-portrait with Paul Gauguin*, 1888. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Bernard and Gauguin sent these portraits to van Gogh while working together in Pont Aven in the summer of 1888. Image: HIP / Art Resource, NY

The mutuality of his relationships to both Gauguin and van Gogh bettered Bernard as an artist, encouraging him to seek out authentic, resonant subject matter, and to push himself through the use of vibrant, brighter-than-life color, as seen in *Paysage de Bretagne*. Bernard and van Gogh exchanged over a dozen letters between 1888 and van Gogh's death in 1890, revealing a rich exchange of artistic practice. Bernard sent sketches and poems to the elder artist, who responded with his own sketches, thoughtful critiques, and advice to the eager young Bernard.

Writing to his brother in 1888, van Gogh noted that "young Bernard has perhaps gone further than [cloisonnist painter Louis] Anquetin in the Japanese style."^{vi} Such a statement was a strong endorsement of Bernard's talent, as Anquetin was a leading figure in critical reviews of so-called "Japonism" at that time.^{vii} To van Gogh, Bernard's best work brought together the bright color and limpidity of Japanese painting and printmaking. Later, among his Nabis peers, Bernard would be known for the influence of Japanese art on his painting, with Paul Ranson going so far as to nickname him "*Le Nabi très Japonard*," or, the very Japanese Nabi.^{viii}



[Left] Utagawa Hiroshige I, *Distant view of Mt. Fuji*, 1855. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image: Freer Gallery of Art Study Collection, Gift of Victor and Takako Hauge [Right] Paul Sérusier, *Eve bretonne*, 1890. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

The lush, rural landscape of Brittany comes to life in *Paysage de Bretagne* through Bernard's masterful juxtaposition of contrasting colors in cloisonnist, Japanese-inspired style. He places golden tall grasses and the vermillion cow against the bright green of the fields; soft, pink clouds float against a clear blue sky. Within each contained unit of color, Bernard creates subtle variations in tone, recalling the glittering effect of light against enamel surfaces, or seen through stained glass. Such vibrant use of color theory, combined with the religious associations of precious cloisonné objects, give Bernard's landscape a mystical, even spiritual connotation—his *Paysage de Bretagne* is almost mythically serene. This spiritual effect is a hallmark of the Nabis, who, as a group, believed that art should not be merely representational, but decorative; integrated into our daily lives, and aesthetically valuable for doing so.

ⁱ George Heard Hamilton, *The Pelican History of Art: Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880-1940*, Penguin, New York, 1967, p. 105.

ⁱⁱ Paul Sérusier, letter to Maurice Denis, dated "Jour de Vénus, 1889," in Sérusier, *ABC de la peinture*, Librairie Floury, Paris, 1950, p. 2, online.

ⁱⁱⁱ Vincent van Gogh, letters to Émile Bernard, Aug. 5, 1888 and Aug. 21, 1888, translated in Leo

Jansen et al., eds., *Vincent Van Gogh—The Letters*, vol. 4, The Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 2009, nos. 655 and 665.

^{iv} Nancy Mowll Mathews, *Paul Gauguin: An Erotic Life*, New Haven, 2001, pp. 107-108.

^v Paul Gauguin, letter to Bernard, Oct. 1888, quoted and translated in Maurice Malingue, ed., *Paul Gauguin: Letters to his Wife and Friends*, Boston, 2003, p. 101.

^{vi} Van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, Jun. 5, 1888, translated in Jansen, et al., no. 620.

^{vii} Op. crit., *ibid.*

^{viii} Hamilton, p. 113.

Provenance

Ambroise Vollard, Paris (acquired directly from the artist)

Christian de Galéa, Paris

Édouard Jonas, Paris

Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris (acquired from the above in 1962)

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Altschul, New York (acquired from the above on June 2, 1965)

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2003

Exhibited

Vannes, Musée de Limur, *Peintres de la Bretagne: de Gauguin à nos jours*, July 5–September 26, 1964, no. 157, p. 31

Berkeley, University Art Museum, *Excellence: Art from the University Community*, November 6, 1970–January 9, 1971, no. 268, n.p.

Roslyn Harbor, Nassau County Museum of Art, *Poets and Painters*, June 8–September 7, 1997, pp. 12, 75 (illustrated, p. 12)

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Gauguin y los orígenes del simbolismo*, September 28, 2004–January 9, 2005, no. 105, pp. 229, 319 (illustrated, p. 229)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Around Gauguin: Post-Impressionist works from the Triton Foundation*, April 8–June 12, 2005

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Klaroenstoot voor de moderne kunst. De Nabis in de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 29–November 30, 2008, pp. 19–20 (illustrated, p. 19)

Paris, Galerie Malingue, *Émile Bernard, époque de Pont-Aven*, May 21–July 17, 2010, pp. 32–33 (illustrated, p. 33)

Tokyo, The National Art Center; Fukuoka, Kyushu National Museum; Nagoya City Art Museum, *Van Gogh: The adventure of becoming an artist*, October 1, 2010–April 10, 2011, no. 101, pp. 170–171, 245 (illustrated, p. 171)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Dreams of Nature. Symbolism from Van Gogh to Kandinsky*, February 24–June 17, 2012; then traveled as, Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery; Helsinki, Finnish National Gallery, Ateneum Art Museum, *Van Gogh to Kandinsky. Symbolist Landscape in Europe 1880–1910*, July 14, 2012–February 17, 2013, fig. 113, pp. 161, 199 (illustrated, p. 161)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 142–145, 539 (illustrated, p. 143; detail illustrated, pp. 144–145)

Verona, Palazzo della Gran Guardia; Vicenza, Basilica Palladiana, *Verso Monet: Storia del paesaggio dal Seicento al Novecento*, October 26, 2013–May 4, 2014, pp. 322, 435 (illustrated)

Madrid, Fundación Mapfre, *Zuloaga en el París de la Belle Époque, 1889–1914*, September 28, 2017–January 7, 2018, no. 36, pp. 144–145 (illustrated, p. 145)

Literature

Jean-Jacques Luthi, *Émile Bernard: Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint*, Paris, 1982, no. 329, pp. 50–51 (illustrated, p. 51)

Teio Meedendorp, “Willem Cordia en de Stichting Triton,” *Bulletin van de Vereniging Rembrandt*, 2004, vol. 14, no. 1, p. 9 (illustrated)

Jean-Jacques Luthi and Armand Israël, *Émile Bernard: instigateur de l'École de Pont-Aven, précurseur de l'art moderne - sa vie, son oeuvre. Catalogue Raisonné*, Paris, 2014, no. 297, pp. 187, 427 (illustrated, p. 187)

Living the Avant-Garde: The Triton Collection Foundation

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LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

26

Paul Sérusier

La Cueillette des pommes

oil on canvas, triptych

left 26 5/8 x 15 3/4 in. (67.5 x 40 cm)

center 28 3/4 x 21 1/2 in. (73 x 54.5 cm)

right 26 5/8 x 15 3/4 in. (67.5 x 40 cm)

overall 28 3/4 x 53 1/8 in. (73 x 135 cm)

Painted in 1891.

The authenticity of this work has been confirmed by
the Comité Paul Sérusier – attestation from the Comité
Paul Sérusier dated October 11, 2023.

Estimate

\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Paul Sérusier was a founding member of the Nabis, a group of young French painters who redefined representation in art through from the 1880s through the 1890s. Sérusier named the group for the Hebrew word for “prophet,” after their artistic idol and “prophet,” Paul Gauguin. Sérusier and his peers admired the elder artist for his Symbolist approach to color and subject matter, wherein symbolic resonance was prized over realism. One of the most articulate and theoretically committed of the Nabis artists, Sérusier’s intellectual engagement with the movement shines forth in his uniquely shaped canvas, *La Cueillette des pommes*, 1891. Arguably one of the most significant works from the artist’s short career, this work represents the culmination of Sérusier’s studies with Gauguin, as the artist forged his voice as both Symbolist and Nabi.

“I’m going to leave behind the girls with the pretty white headdresses for the young girls in tatters, yellow, thin, and strong, who watch their cows on the great rocky cliffs... I’m working here in small gardens full of flowers; I aspire to the dry and simple solitude of the coasts. I dream of such grand things...” —Paul Sérusier, letter to Maurice Denis, Pont Aven, 1889

Sérusier spent the summers of 1889 and 1890 in Le Pouldu, Brittany, painting with Gauguin, and *La Cueillette des pommes* builds off of the lessons of these summers. Significantly, as Dr. Caroline Boyle-Turner writes, the work is Sérusier’s first allegorical painting.ⁱ Boyle-Turner identifies the landscape of *La Cueillette des pommes* as that of the bluff above la Plage des Grands Stables at Le Pouldu, but instead of choosing a strictly representational composition, Sérusier builds off of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes’ allegorical mural, *Inter artes et naturam*, c. 1890, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which Sérusier may have seen at the Salon du Champs-de-Mars in 1890.ⁱⁱ



Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *Inter artes et naturam*, c. 1890-1895. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Harry Payne Bingham, 1958, 58.15.2

La Cueillette des pommes functions as a triptych across three shaped canvas panels, depicting the stages of the harvest of an apple tree in rural Brittany as an allegory of knowledge. The woman and baby at left, both in white caps, represent innocence, sitting under a tree ripe with fruit waiting to be tasted. At center, the youthful figures acquire knowledge as they harvest fruit from the apple tree, in a classic invocation of the Judeo-Christian Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden; these reaching figures also parallel the pose of the woman and child picking fruit in Puvis de Chavannes’ *Inter artes et naturam*. At right, figures in black caps, representing old age, walk away, skirts laden with untasted fruit, and a barren tree behind them.

The expanded chronology of the allegory unfolds like a narrative across time, and its articulation across three panels gives *La Cueillette des pommes* a frieze-like quality. And yet, there is a quality of stillness, a serenity that evokes Puvis de Chavannes’ Neo-Classical sensibility. The women wear timeless peasant clothes, rendered by Sérusier in brighter-than-life colors that expand into the countryside beyond. There’s a medievalism akin to the pre-Raphaelites here, evoked by the triptych form akin to medieval and Renaissance folding altarpieces, and yet the mode of painting is distinctly Nabis, uniquely Sérusier. The allegorical theme of apple-pickers captivated Sérusier, even as his painting style evolved past the Nabis. His circa 1912 painting, *Age d’or, ou la cueilleur de pommes*, returns to the same theme as the present work, revealing the enduring resonance of *La Cueillette des pommes* across his career.



Paul Sérusier, *Age d’or, ou la cueilleur de pommes*, c. 1912.

Raised in Paris, Sérusier admired what he perceived as the simplicity and raw honesty of country life in Brittany. He wrote with rapturous eagerness to fellow Nabi Maurice Denis, of the “young girls in tatters, yellow, thin, and strong,” whom he painted; of the rocky cliffs and expansive countryside.ⁱⁱⁱ Inspired by Gauguin, Sérusier and the Nabis integrated their sincere emotional

response to the countryside back into their paintings of the region through a heightened, Symbolist use of color, and the invocation of medieval, folk, Japanese, and other so-called “primitive” aesthetics.^{iv}

Sérusier, in particular, held a marked interest in how color could be most effectively used in painting. Inspired by a painting lesson with Gauguin in Pont Aven in 1888, Sérusier shared the elder artist’s Symbolist technique of using pure color to emotive, rather than strictly representational, effect with his Nabis peers. With Gauguin’s technique as a springboard, Sérusier developed his own color theory across the 1890s, which he relayed in lengthy correspondence to Denis and minor Nabi painter Jan Willibrod Verkade.^v He also seems to have shared his ideas in letters to Gauguin himself, as extant responses from Gauguin from 1891, the year of *La Cueillette des pommes*’ creation, indicate: “You are kind to attribute your intellectual progress to me,” Gauguin wrote, “though I played only a small part... *you* made this progress, it is you who made this happen.”^{vi}

“Sérusier was not just a friend and disciple of Gauguin. Sérusier made paintings of a highly personal quality.” —Marius-Art Leblond



Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?*, 1897-1898. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Image: © 2023 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved. / Tompkins Collection / Bridgeman Images

As Gauguin’s response to Sérusier’s lost letter of 1891 suggests, by this time, the student had evolved his own style, independent of his teacher. It is possible, too, that Sérusier’s work in 1891 influenced Gauguin in turn, as there are marked compositional similarities between *La Cueillette des pommes* and Gauguin’s 1897-1898 masterpiece, *Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Most noticeably, the two works share a central figure picking fruit, though there are parallels in the arrangements of seated figures at left, and walking figures at right, as well. Both works encapsulate multiple chronologies within these compositions, creating a sense of simultaneity, narrative continuity, and timelessness at once. In addition to

these formal similarities, both Sérusier and Gauguin use a heightened sense of color and a flattened picture plane to emphasize the emotional, sensory impact of their subject matter.

For Sérusier, color elevated the timeless relevance of the apple-picking scene. He rendered the silhouette of the apple tree in a quintessential autumnal vermillion, while the grass is bright and vernal, and the sea behind a deep, cerulean summer hue. The apples gather in skirts and baskets in painterly flashes of green, pink and sunshine yellow, symbolizing a fruitful harvest more than any particular variety of apples. The abundance of Sérusier’s scene transcends seasons, in a Nabi celebration of color and form on the coast of Brittany.

ⁱ Caroline Boyle-Turner, “Triptyque: La Cueillette des Pommes or Le Paravent, c. 1891,” *L’Éclatement de L’Impressionnisme*, Musée Départemental du Prieuré, 2000.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Paul Sérusier, letter to Maurice Denis, dated “Jour de Vénus, 1889,” in Sérusier, *ABC de la peinture*, Librairie Floury, Paris, 1950, p. 2, online.

^{iv} Ibid., p. 3.

^v Ibid., pp. 4, 15-17, et c.

^{vi} Paul Gauguin, letter to Sérusier, dated Nov. 1891, *ibid.*, p. 9.

Provenance

Jean Claude Bellier, Paris

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001

Exhibited

Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, *De Pont-Aven aux Nabis: Rétrospective 1888-1903 (Société des Artistes Indépendants, 82e Exposition)*, April 16–May 9, 1971, no. 93, n.p. (illustrated; titled *Le Tryptique de Pont-Aven*; dated 1889-1893)

London, Royal Academy of Arts; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, *Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European Painting*, November 17, 1979–September 1, 1980, no. 191, p. 129 (illustrated; titled *Pont-Aven Triptych*; dated 1892-1893)

Tokyo, Mitsukoshi Gallery; Osaka, Mitsukoshi Gallery; Fujisawa, Saikaya Gallery; Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée du Prieuré, *L'Éclatement de l'impressionnisme*, July 21, 1981–January 16, 1983, no. 43, pp. 97, 139 (illustrated, p. 97; titled *Triptyque de Pont-Aven*; dated 1892-1893)

Marcq-en-Baroeul, Fondation Septentrion, *Autour de Gauguin à Pont-Aven 1886-1894*, March 24–June 23, 1985, no. 60, n.p. (illustrated; titled *Triptyque de Pont Aven*; dated 1889-1893)

Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, *Le chemin de Gauguin, genèse et rayonnement*, October 7, 1985–March 2, 1986, no. 366, pp. 178, 216 (illustrated, p. 178; titled *Triptyque de Pont-Aven*; dated 1892-1893)

Morlaix, Musée des Jacobins, *Paul Sérusier 1864–1927*, July 3–October 5, 1987, no. 14, pp. 40-41, 46 (illustrated, pp. 40-41; illustrated in the inverse orientation, p. 46; dated 1892-1893)

Paris, Galerie Bellier, *Polyptyques et Paravents: Un Siècle de Création 1890-1990*, April 6–July 14, 1990, pp. 26-27 (illustrated; dated 1892-1893)

Zurich, Kunsthhaus, *Die Nabis Propheten der Moderne*, May 28–August 15, 1993 (no. 109, pp. 255-256; illustrated, p. 256); then travelled as: Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, *Nabis 1888-1900*, September 21, 1993–January 3, 1994, no. 109, pp. 255-256 (illustrated, p. 256)

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Gauguin y los orígenes del simbolismo*, September 28, 2004–January 9, 2005, no. 106, pp. 231, 326 (illustrated, p. 231)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Around Gauguin: Post-Impressionist works from the Triton Foundation*, April 8–June 12, 2005

Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, *Paul Gauguin: Artist of Myth and Dream*, October 6, 2007–February 3, 2008, no. 136, pp. 406-407 (illustrated, p. 407; titled *Pont-Aven Triptych*)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Klaroenstoot voor de moderne kunst: De Nabis in de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 29–November 30, 2008, pp. 3, 18-19 (illustrated on the cover and p. 18)

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 148-151, 563 (illustrated pp. 150-151; detail illustrated, p. 149)

Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum; Nagoya, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, *Van Gogh and Gauguin: Reality and Imagination*, October 8, 2016–March 26, 2017, no. 31, p. 75 (illustrated)

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (on long term loan, January 2019–April 2023)

London, The National Gallery, *After Impressionism: Inventing Modern Art*, March 25–August 13, 2023, no. 36, pp. 116-117, 250 (illustrated, pp. 116-117)

Literature

Wladyslawa Jaworska, *Paul Gauguin et l'école de Pont-Aven*, Neuchâtel, 1971, pp. 134-135, 259 (illustrated, pp. 134-135; titled *Triptyque de Pont-Aven*)

Marcel Guicheteau, *Paul Sérusier*, Paris, 1976, no. 52, pp. 206-207 (illustrated, p. 207; titled *Le Paravent*)

Sophie Monneret, *L'impressionisme et son époque. Dictionnaire International*, Paris, 1979, vol. I, p. 848 (titled *Triptyque de Pont-Aven*; dated circa 1883)

Yann le Pichon, *Les peintres du bonheur*, Paris, 1983, pp. 206-207, 284 (illustrated; titled *Le Paravent, ou triptyque de Pont-Aven*)

Yann le Pichon, *Sur les traces de Gauguin*, Paris, 1986, pp. 216, 262 (illustrated, p. 216; titled *Triptyque de Pont-Aven*)

Diane Kelder, *The Great Book of Post-Impressionism*, New York, 1986, no. 203, pp. 194-195 (illustrated)

Denise Delouche, ed., *Pont-Aven et ses peintres à propos d'un centenaire*, Rennes, 1986, pp. 81-85 (illustrated, p. 81; titled *Le Triptyque*)

Belinda Thomson, *Gauguin*, London, 1987, no. 175, p. 196 (illustrated; titled *Pont-Aven Triptych*)

Caroline Boyle-Turner, *Paul Sérusier: La technique, L'oeuvre peint*, Lausanne, 1988, pp. 80-81, 155 (illustrated, p. 81; titled *Le Triptyque*)

Polyptyques: Le tableau multiple du Moyen âge au vingtième siècle, exh. cat., Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1990, no. 39, pp. 179-181 (illustrated, p. 181)

Gloria Groom, *Edouard Vuillard: Painter-Decorator. Patrons and Projects, 1892-1912*, New Haven and London, 1993, fig. 54, p. 37 (illustrated)

Claude Jeancolas, *La peinture des Nabis*, Paris, 2002, pp. 112-113 (illustrated; titled *Le Tryptique de Pont-Aven*)

Frances Fowle and Belinda Thomson, eds., *Patrick Geddes: The French Connection*, Oxford, 2004, no. 23, p. 53 (illustrated)

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LIVING THE AVANT-GARDE: THE TRITON
COLLECTION FOUNDATION

27

Félix Vallotton

Papotage

stamped "F. Vallotton." and bears the inscription "99"

lower right

oil on board

14 7/8 x 20 1/4 in. (38 x 51.5 cm)

Painted in 1902.

Estimate

\$300,000 — 500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Félix Vallotton was a preeminent painter of intimate interior scenes in *fin-de-siècle* Paris, of which *Papotage*, 1902, is a quintessential example. *Papotage* presents a familial scene of the artist's wife, Gabrielle Rodrigues-Hénriques, in conversation with relatives, placed at an emotional and physical remove that aligns with Modernist anxieties of the isolation and anonymity of city life. The painting reflects a significant change in Vallotton's artistic and social milieu, initiated by his 1899 marriage to Gabrielle, the daughter of the founder of Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, an important venue for Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. Vallotton's newfound financial stability, alongside consistent access to exhibition space, allowed the artist to focus on the interior paintings, like *Papotage*, that would become his enduring legacy as an artist.ⁱ The present work was inherited at the artist's death by his wife and his brother; his son-in-law, Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques, applied the *timbre* marking the work's authenticity.



Félix and Gabrielle Vallotton at Lausanne, May 1899.

Though friendly with the Nabis, Vallotton built his own reputation as one of Paris' leading printmakers of the 1890s. Credited with reviving the medium of woodcut printing, Vallotton was famous for the pictorial simplicity, acerbic wit, and acute social commentary of his prints, and he was one of the favored illustrators of *La Revue blanche*, a radical arts and literary magazine that published work by the top artists and writers of *fin-de-siècle* Paris.ⁱⁱ In *Papotage*, Vallotton translates the clean pictorial surfaces and wry sensibility of his woodcut prints into his practice as a painter.

Papotage, which translates to “chatter” or “gossip,” depicts Gabrielle at center in a bright purple dress, while her sister, Marguerite Aghion, at right, and a woman named Mademoiselle Barney lean towards one another in conversation. Vallotton simplifies Aghion and Barney's facial features to the shadows of cheeks and eyelashes, but Gabrielle's expression is bright and clear. With just a few lines of brown paint, Vallotton renders a raised eyebrow, quick, dark eyes, and a barely-concealed smirk on his wife's face. This virtuosic painted shorthand reveals Vallotton's skill, honed as a printmaker, for expressing a depth of wit in limited pictorial means. His lifelong admiration for Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres shines as well, through the smooth rendering of surfaces, especially the women's skin, and the rounded contours of their bodies and armchairs.ⁱⁱⁱ

While *Papotage* reflects a wider change in Vallotton's subject matter around 1900 from the streets of Paris to bourgeois interiors, his astute grasp of human relationships remains paramount. So, too, does the artist's sense of self as an outsider, or observer—the Swiss artist was called *le Nabi étranger* by his French peers, and he was a stranger to his wife's social class, still adapting to his new place in her family, including as stepfather to her children.^{iv}



Félix Vallotton, *Le Poker*, 1902. Musée d'Orsay. Image: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY

In *Papotage*, there is a clear separation between the gossiping women and the viewer—the women sit deep in the picture plane, their distance from the viewer further defined by the length of the tan bench receding sharply towards them. The opacity of the women's expressions creates a sense of emotional distance, as well; the viewer is close enough to see these women, to paint them, but perhaps too far to hear what they are saying. Aghion's leaning posture further suggests a whispering confidentiality and exclusion of eavesdroppers.

Vallotton deployed this depth of plane as a means of emotional distancing across his oeuvre, as in *Le Poker*, 1902, Musée d'Orsay, another work in which Gabrielle and her family are placed deep in the scene, behind a long, receding table.^v Vallotton expresses his ambiguous position as both outsider and member of the family through the pictorial space and surface of *Papotage*, in a wry marriage of emotional resonance and artistic form.

ⁱ Dita Amory et al., *Félix Vallotton*, exh. cat., the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2019, pp. 9-10, 13-14.

ⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 26.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 14.

^{iv} Ibid., pp. 32-33; 9-10.

^v "Le Poker," *Musée d'Orsay*, accessed Sep. 2023, [online](#).

Provenance

Succession F. Vallotton, Paris

Gabrielle Rodrigues-Henriques, Paris (by descent from the above)

Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques, Paris (by descent from the above in 1934)

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Altschul, New York (acquired from the above on May 16, 1956)

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris (acquired by 2003)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2003

Exhibited

- Paris, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, *Peintres de Portraits au profit de la "Société d'entr'aide des membres de la Légion d'Honneur,"* May 17–June 28, 1952, no. 61, n.p. (titled *La Conversation*; dated 1899)
- Paris, Maison de la pensée française, *Félix Vallotton 1865-1925*, April–June 1955, no. 7, n.p. (titled *Papotage de trois dames*; dated 1899)
- The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, *The Nabis and their Circle*, November 15–December 30, 1962, p. 147 (dated 1899)
- New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, *Neo-Impressionists and Nabis in the Collection of Arthur G. Altschul*, January 20–March 14, 1965, no. 45, pp. 102, 107 (illustrated, n.p.; dated 1899)
- New York, Hirschl and Adler Galleries, Inc., *Félix Vallotton (1865-1925): A Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings, Woodcuts and Engravings*, April 7–25, 1970, no. 32, n.p. (illustrated; titled *Gossiping*; dated 1899)
- Los Angeles, The Grunwald Graphic Arts Foundation, University of California, *The Graphic Art of Félix Vallotton*, October 24–November 19, 1972, no. 4, n.p. (dated 1899)
- Art Gallery of Ontario, *Puvis de Chavannes and the Modern Tradition*, October 24–November 30, 1975, no. 66, p. 150 (illustrated; dated 1899)
- New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery; Houston, Museum of Fine Arts; Indianapolis Museum of Art; Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum; Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, *Félix Vallotton: A Retrospective*, October 24, 1991–January 31, 1993, pl. 280, pp. 228–229, 298–299 (illustrated, p. 228)
- Munich, Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung; Essen, Folkwang Museum, *Félix Vallotton*, August 25, 1995–February 18, 1996, no. 41, n.p. (illustrated)
- Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Around Gauguin: Post-Impressionist works from the Triton Foundation*, April 8–June 12, 2005
- The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *De Omslag: Illusie en Werkelijkheid in de Kunst van de Jaren '50 en '60 uit de Triton Foundation*, November 1, 2005–March 26, 2006, pp. 2–3, 13
- The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Klaroenstoot voor de moderne kunst. De Nabis in de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 29–November 30, 2008, pp. 29–30 (illustrated, p. 29)
- Tokyo, Bunkamura Museum of Art; Fukuoka Museum; Hiroshima Museum of Art, *Toulouse-Lautrec et son Cercle*, November 10, 2009–March 22, 2010, no. 96, p. 138 (illustrated)

Literature

- Félix Vallotton 1865-1925*, exh. cat., Kunsthhaus, Zurich, 1938, no. 477, p. 51 (titled *Intérieur 3 femmes peinture*)
- Rudolf Koella, *Félix Vallotton*, Zürich, 1979, p. 43 (illustrated)
- Richard Shone, *The Post-Impressionists*, London, 1979, fig. 146, pp. 126–127 (illustrated, p. 126)
- Günter Busch, Bernard Dorival, Patrick Grainville, Doris Jakubec, *Vallotton*, Lausanne, 1985, pl. 74, pp. 78, 233 (illustrated, p. 78)
- Antoine Salomon and Guy Cogeval, *Vuillard: The Inexhaustible Glance, Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*, Milan, 2003, vol. I, p. 228 (illustrated; titled *Malicious Gossip*)
- Marina Ducrey, *Félix Vallotton 1865-1925, L'Oeuvre peint, vol. II. Catalogue raisonné*, Milan, 2005, no. 402, p. 249 (illustrated)
- Nathalia Brodskaja, *Félix Vallotton. The Nabi from Switzerland*, New York, 2013, pp. 76, 198 (illustrated, p. 76)
- Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Collection Foundation*, exh. cat., Kunsth Rotterdam, Brussels, 2012, pp. 118–119, 566 (illustrated, pp. 118–119)
- Jérôme Prieur, "La peinture cinéma de Vallotton," *Libération*, October 10, 2013, online

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Paul Gauguin

Masque de Meyer de Haan

watercolor on paper
5 3/4 x 7 5/8 in. (14.7 x 19.5 cm)
Executed circa 1889-1890.

This work will be included in the forthcoming new
edition of the Catalogue Raisonné by the Wildenstein
Institute, Paris.

Estimate
\$60,000 — 80,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Masque de Meyer de Haan, c. 1889-1890, exemplifies the creative approach to color and expressive touch that defined Paul Gauguin as the leader of the Pont Aven school of artists. Scholars believe the work outlines the striking features of Gauguin's friend, Jacob Meyer de Haan, a Jewish artist who traveled with Gauguin across Brittany from 1889 through 1890, from Pont Aven to Le Pouldu; others posit that the work is a self-portrait. Gauguin painted the present work during his time with Meyer de Haan, perhaps as a study for *Nirvana: Portrait of Meyer de Haan*, c. 1889-1890, The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.ⁱ Meyer de Haan intended to travel to Tahiti with Gauguin as well, but his poor health prevented the voyage, and he passed away in 1894. Still, the image of Meyer de Haan stayed with Gauguin, and his striking visage transformed into a symbolic motif in one of Gauguin's final paintings from French Polynesia.



Paul Gauguin, *Nirvana: Portrait of Meyer de Haan*, c. 1889-1890. The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.

The present work is an impressive feat of both draftsmanship and color; without an initial graphite sketch, Gauguin paints the planes of the face in a surprising palette of lime green and bright blue. In lieu of a more traditional *grisaille* approach, Gauguin uses the green to indicate highlights on the face—the bridge of the nose, edge of the jaw, and forehead—while the blue is graded to the areas of the face in shadow. This color combination recalls the advice Gauguin gave to another Pont Aven artist, Paul Sérusier, in 1888, when instructing him to paint a tree: “Is it quite green?” Gauguin

asked. “Then put on green, the finest green on your palette; —and that shadow, is it a bit blue? Don’t be afraid to paint it as blue as possible.”ⁱⁱ With *Masque de Meyer de Haan*, Gauguin seems to take his own advice, using color towards emotional, rather than directly representational, ends.



[Left] Paul Gauguin, *Portrait of Meyer de Haan*, c. 1889. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY [Right] Paul Gauguin, *Portrait of Meyer de Haan*, c. 1889. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

Gauguin painted at least two portraits of Meyer de Haan during the pair's travels in Brittany. The present work shares the same exaggerated, slanted eyes and three-quarters profile as Meyer de Haan's face in *Nirvana*, albeit in mirror image. Meyer de Haan's face in *Nirvana* is masklike, isolated out from the rest of the composition by a brown outline, akin to the turquoise blue that demarcates the literal mask, or *masque*, of the present work.ⁱⁱⁱ Even the green and blue hues of *Masque de Meyer de Haan* have parallels in *Nirvana*, with the blue shadows of the nose and eyes, and greenish yellow highlights of the eyebrows and upper lip.



Paul Gauguin, *Contes Barbares*, 1902. Museum Folkwang, Essen. Image: HIP / Art Resource, NY

Gauguin's masklike treatment of the figure's face depersonalizes his features, blurring the painted line between representation and expression, and anticipating how the Cubists would fracture the panes of the face in their painted portraits, ten years later. By turning the face into a mask, Gauguin unlocks the ability to slip his friend's features onto allegorical figures in later works. *Nirvana* moves towards such allegorical treatment, presenting Meyer de Haan as a representation of the Buddhist final state of transcendent bliss. Eleven years later, Gauguin would give his friend's face to another spiritually significant figure—this time, a menacing missionary—in *Contes Barbares*, 1902, Museum Folkwang, Essen, one of Gauguin's final paintings, and the masterpiece of his Marquesan years.^{iv} *Masque de Meyer de Haan* represents the first step towards *Contes Barbares*; Gauguin's shift from figuration to allegory, enabled by a Symbolist use of color, would

forever change the trajectory of Western art history.

ⁱ John Rewald, *Gauguin: Drawings*, Thomas Yoseloff, New York and London, 1958, p. 26.

ⁱⁱ Paul Gauguin, quoted in George Heard Hamilton, *The Pelican History of Art: Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880-1940*, Penguin, New York, 1967, p. 106.

ⁱⁱⁱ Catalogue entry, "Nirvana: Portrait of Meyer de Haan," *Wadsworth Atheneum*, accessed Oct. 10, 2023, [online](#).

^{iv} George T.M. Shackelford, "Splendor and Misery: Gauguin in the Marquesas Islands," in Shackelford and Claire Fréches-Thory, eds., *Gauguin Tahiti*, exh. cat., The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2003, p. 254.

Provenance

George-Daniel de Monfried, France

Jean Souze, France

Wildenstein & Co., New York

Hammer Galleries, New York

The Closson Galleries, Cincinnati

Frederic W. Ziv (acquired from the above on November 9, 1968)

Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2006

Exhibited

Long Beach Municipal Art Center, January–February 1953

Vancouver Art Gallery, *The French Impressionists*, March 24–April 19, 1953, no. 59, p. 24

New York, Wildenstein & Co., *Timeless Master Drawings*, November–December, 1955, no. 131, n.p.

London, Wildenstein & Co., *The Art of Drawing: XVIth to XIXth Centuries*, May 9–June 16, 1956, no. 90, p. 24

Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, *Paul Gauguin: Artist of Myth and Dream*, October 6, 2007–February 3, 2008, no. 57, pp. 258–259 (illustrated, p. 259; titled *Study for a Portrait of Meyer de Haan*)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Klaroenstoot voor de moderne kunst. De Nabis in de collectie van de Triton Foundation*, April 29–November 30, 2008, pp. 34–35 (illustrated, p. 34; titled *Study for a Portrait of Meijer de Haan*)

The Cleveland Museum of Art; Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Paul Gauguin: The Breakthrough into Modernity*, October 4, 2009–June 6, 2010, no. 103, pp. 177, 179, 240 (illustrated, p. 179; titled *Self-Portrait*)

Milwaukee Art Museum; Vienna, Albertina, *Impressionism: Pastels, Watercolors, Drawings*, October 14, 2011–May 13, 2012, pl. 42, pp. 102, 170 (illustrated, p. 102; titled *Self-Portrait*)

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 154–155, 547 (illustrated, p. 155; titled *Self-Portrait*)

's-Hertogenbosch, Het Noordbrabants Museum, *Van Goghs intimi. Vrienden, familie, modellen*, September 21, 2019–January 12, 2020, no. 87, pp. 115, 212 (illustrated, p. 115; titled *Zelfportret*)

Literature

Annie Joly-Segalen, ed., *Lettres de Gauguin à Daniel de Monfried*, Paris, 1950, no. 14, n.p. (illustrated; titled *Masque*)

John Rewald, *Paul Gauguin (1848–1903)*, New York, 1954, pl. 34, n.p. (detail illustrated; titled *Meyer de Haan*)

Robert Goldwater, *Paul Gauguin*, New York, 1957, p. 18 (illustrated)

John Rewald, *Gauguin: Drawings*, New York, 1958, no. 26, p. 26 (illustrated, n.p.; titled *Study for a Portrait of Jacob Meyer de Haan (Brittany)*)

Robert Goldwater, *Paul Gauguin*, New York, 1983, p. 18 (illustrated)

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Robert Ryman

Untitled, Prototype

signed and dated "Ryman 69" lower center
acrylic on fiberglass panel
18 7/8 x 18 7/8 in. (47.9 x 47.9 cm)
Executed in 1969.

This work will be included in the forthcoming
catalogue raisonné project being organized by David
Gray under number 1969.036.

Estimate

\$300,000 — 500,000

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“There is never a question of what to paint, but only how to paint. The how of painting has always been the image.” —Robert Ryman

Robert Ryman’s *Untitled, Prototype*, 1969, rewards close looking. Viewed from afar, one sees a white square punctuated by four brown notches, one in each corner. Take a step closer, however, and a wealth of texture is revealed. The artist’s application of the white paint is almost cross-hatched in nature, creating subtle ridges and channels of paint, a mountainous terrain—while the brown gaps remain flat and untouched.

Untitled, Prototype is part of a series the artist began after 1967, in which he purposefully used the thinnest possible supports—such as canvas, card or fiberglass—with the intention of having the work lie as close to the wall as possible, as if part of the wall itself.ⁱ The four unpainted tabs in *Untitled, Prototype* are the result of sticky tape that Ryman used to hold the sheet of fiberglass against the wall while painting. There is an intentionality to the absence of paint at the corners—a deliberate reminder that *Untitled, Prototype* is just board and paint. The present work is also one of the first in the artist’s oeuvre to bear the title *Prototype*—Ryman began using the term in the late 1960s to distinguish the paintings he identified as models for subsequent works in their respective series.ⁱⁱ *Untitled, Prototype*, then, is quite literally the exemplum of its kind.



Piero Manzoni, *Achrome*, 1961. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

Ryman was born in Nashville and moved to New York in 1952 with the intention of becoming a jazz musician rather than an artist. However, his abstract painting practice would ultimately be equally informed by both his day job as a security guard at the Museum of Modern Art, and his nightly devotion to modern jazz. Inspired by the strict and theoretical teaching style of his jazz mentor Lennie Tristano, Ryman’s art practice was similarly structured in pursuit of “nonreferential and self-sufficient objects.”ⁱⁱⁱ Throughout his life, he would remain committed to four tenets in his practice: white paint, square format, brushstroke, and support.

“I don’t think of myself as making white paintings. I make paintings; I’m a painter. White paint is my medium.” —Robert Ryman

Ryman’s use of white paint holds no hidden symbolic or mystical implications; rather, it is a technical choice, an engagement with material over imagery. For the artist, white paint allowed him to focus on the subtleties of color—more specifically, the color that arose when white paint

was applied over various supports. Moreover, Ryman saw too much color as confusing, for which reason he largely limited himself to white.



Robert Ryman, *Classico 5*, 1968. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Robert Ryman/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Untitled was painted the same year as Ryman's exhibition at the Konrad Fischer Gallery in Düsseldorf—the artist's second exhibition in Europe. This exhibition presented the artist's "Classico" series, named after the brand of paper support used for each work. *Classico 5*, 1968, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, consists of one dozen vertically orientated sheets taped to the

wall to create a horizontal composite that was partially covered with a synthetic polymer white. Once the paint dried, Ryman removed the tape, exposing small tabs of untouched paper beneath. This pattern of notches serves to visually reinforce the grid of papers and the painted rectangle.^{iv}

Like *Classico 5*, *Untitled* makes use of tape to create a palpable tension between presence and absence, and to disrupt what would otherwise be a uniform application of paint. It is these tensions and disruptions which make *Untitled* such a pivotal work in Ryman's oeuvre, and which grounds the work in the artist's ultimate fascination with the fundamental properties of the materials he employs.

ⁱ "Untitled, Robert Ryman, 1969," *Mercedes-Benz Art Collection*, accessed Oct. 4, 2023, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Jeffrey Weiss, "Radiant Dispersion: Robert Ryman's *Philadelphia Prototype*, 2002," *Artforum*, vol. 41, no. 1, Sep. 2002, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ "The man who turned Robert Ryman onto jazz," *Phaidon*, May 30, 2018, [online](#)

^{iv} Robert Storr, "Robert Ryman," *The Museum of Modern Art*, accessed Oct. 5, 2023, [online](#).

Provenance

Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf

Private Collection

Sotheby's, New York, May 3, 1989, lot 220

Private Collection, Chicago

Phillips de Pury & Luxembourg, New York, May 15, 2003, lot 9

Private Collection, Santa Fe

Private Collection (acquired from the above)

Sotheby's, New York, May 15, 2008, lot 116

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2009

Exhibited

Rotterdam, Kunsthall, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 397, 561–562 (illustrated, p. 397)

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Zero Art/Minimal Art*, May 18–October 13, 2013

Literature

William Anastasi: *Paintings, Small Works, Drawings*, exh. cat., Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Modena, 2009, pl. 80, n.p. (illustrated)

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30

Sam Francis

Purple, Orange & Green

watercolor on paper
26 1/4 x 39 1/4 in. (66.7 x 99.7 cm)
Executed in 1958.

Estimate
\$200,000 — 300,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Purple, Orange & Green, 1958, combines Sam Francis' Western sense of color and light with East Asian aesthetic principles of negative space and calligraphic line. 1958 was a pivotal year in Francis' career, as he returned to Paris after a yearlong trip throughout Asia, including two and a half months in Japan in late 1957. The present work expresses the direct influence of the artist's travels, as Francis explored an attention to space, form and calligraphic line learned from Japanese aesthetics. Fusing Western and Eastern ideologies, *Purple, Orange & Green* comes to auction on the heels of Francis' landmark exhibition, *Sam Francis and Japan: Emptiness Overflowing*, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art earlier this year.

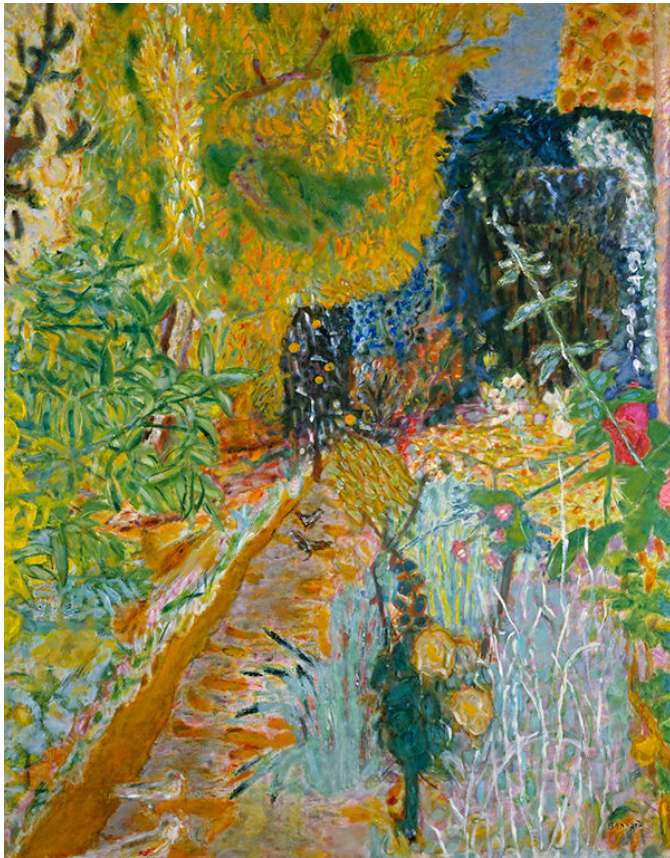


Sam Francis, *Moby Dick*, 1957–1958. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Sam Francis Foundation, California / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York

Purple, Orange & Green belongs to a group of works inspired by Herman Melville's epic novel, *Moby Dick*. The center of the composition arches like the back of a whale, and scholars have noted similarities between protagonist Ahab's determined quest, and the universal human desire for meaning that Francis seeks in his work, particularly paintings like *Purple, Orange & Green* that are influenced by the artist's exposure to Eastern philosophy. Indeed, as curator Pontus Hultén wrote, Francis thought of "his brush as a harpoon, like the harpoon Ahab uses in his chase for the great whale."ⁱ

"Color is the real substance for me, the real underlying thing that drawing and painting are not." —Sam Francis

Francis moved to Paris in 1950, and, using the work of French colorists such as Henri Matisse, Claude Monet, and Pierre Bonnard as his guide, he began to create more colorful paintings. He moved away from the dark, monochromatic canvases of his American years to explore the effects of color and light, and his palette shifted accordingly, from deep reds and blacks in the early 1950s, to more brilliant jewel tones in the second half of the decade, as seen in *Purple, Orange & Green*. Here, the bright orange pigment at upper left appears to jump off of the pictorial plane, while the rich lavenders vibrate against the artist's signature blue. These varying tones create an interplay of light and dark across the work, in an almost map-like arrangement. The contrasting hues inform one another, guiding the viewer through the interpretation of light within the composition. For Francis, "color is light on fire. Each color is the result of burning, for each substance burns with a particular color."ⁱⁱ



Pierre Bonnard, *The Garden*, c. 1937. Grand Palais, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

Francis first traveled to Japan in 1957, a visit that coincided with the moment when European informal and American Abstract Expressionism became popular within the Japanese art world. Francis' work featured in the series of revelatory group shows in Japan, such as, *Sekai konnichi bijutsu ten* (Art of the World Today), 1956, and *Dai-yon-kai Nihon Kokusai Bijutsu Ten* (The Fourth International Art Exhibition of Japan), 1957, which brought Western-style abstraction to a Japanese audience.ⁱⁱⁱ European and American sensibilities of color and gesture collided with strong Japanese traditions of space and line in a fruitful environment of artistic exchange.



Sam Francis painting *Tokyo Mural*, 1957, in a studio borrowed from Sofu Teshigahara in Mita, Tokyo, 1957. Image: François-René Roland, Paris / © 2023 Sam Francis Foundation, California / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York

Francis had known Japanese artists, such as Sofu Teshigahara, since his time in Paris, but his trip to Japan in 1957 broadened his exposure to traditional Japanese aesthetics.^{iv} Francis learned about Japanese art practices from his peers, such as the aesthetic concept of *ma*, the interaction of negative space with form.^v *Ma* appears in *Purple, Orange & Green* as Francis allows the blank space of the paper to peek out from between the colored forms. This white space unifies the composition, and draws attention to the artist's intentional dripping and splattering of color. The background holds its place against the calligraphic, almost meditative, brushstrokes of pure, vivid color.

Japanese artists have a long history of using painted line to both representational and abstracted ends, as evidenced in the rich tradition of calligraphic writing, which also inspired Francis. For many calligraphy artists throughout the centuries, the gestural dynamism of their writing was prized more than its legibility. Francis uses calligraphic line to define space in *Purple, Orange & Green* in a way that shows the distinct influence of the Japanese tradition; his ultramarine blue line twists around the purple, orange, and green areas, articulating the contrasts between these secondary colors. The work is declarative and bold, bringing together the best of both Japanese and American Abstract Expressionist approaches to line and color.

ⁱ Pontus Hultén, quoted in “Purple, Orange, & Green,” *Sam Francis online catalogue raisonné project*, accessed Oct. 4, 2023, online.

ⁱⁱ Sam Francis, quoted in *Sam Francis*, exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1980, pp. 9–10.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bert Winther-Tamaki, “Japanese Views of the Void in Sam Francis’s Painting during the ‘Informel Whirlwind’,” in *Around the Blues 1957, 1962–3 by Sam Francis*, Tate Research Publication, 2019, [online](#).

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Eli Anapur, “LACMA Examines the Practice of Sam Francis in Relation to Japanese Art and Aesthetics,” *Widewalls*, Apr. 11, 2023, [online](#).

Provenance

John Peter Warren Cochrane, London (gifted by the artist in 1959)

Martin Summers Fine Art Ltd, London (acquired from the above)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2005

Exhibited

London, Arthur Tooth and Sons, *Actualités: Contemporary Watercolors and Gouaches*, January 20–February 14, 1959, no. 18, n.p. (illustrated)

Hanover, Kestner-Gesellschaft, *Sam Francis*, April 25–May 28, 1963, no. 39, n.p. (illustrated)

London, Martin Summers Fine Art, March 2005

Rotterdam, Kunsthal, *Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation*, October 7, 2012–January 20, 2013, pp. 404–405, 546 (illustrated, p. 405)

Literature

Hilda Bouma, “Jaloersmakend,” *Het Financieele Dagblad*, November 17, 2012, p. 25

Debra Burchett-Lere, ed., *Sam Francis: Online Catalogue Raisonné Project*, no. SF58-284, online (illustrated)