

# Pablo Picasso: In Search of Language

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## Abstract

The article explores Picasso's multiple influences early in his career as he searched for a language that best expressed his vision of reality. Already the first critics, such as Félicien Fagus for his first exhibition at *Galerie Vollard*, mentioned the impact on the young Spaniard of a wide range of modern painters in addition to the great classical masters. Many of the identifiable periods in his extensive career can be associated with one or more influential artists: Casas, Rusiñol, Steinlen, Munch during the Modernist years in Barcelona; Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, Degas, Van Gogh and others in the first years in Paris; El Greco, Nonell, Puvis, among others during the Blue Period; Matisse, Redon, and others, in the Rose Period; Gauguin later on, etc., etc. These are just a few of the many artists whose styles Picasso explored in numerous ways. Their influence often occurred in complex combinations and would not fully disappear from his works once their incidence had left their imprint. Thus one can find the presence of El Greco or Van Gogh as late as the last years of Picasso's life. Here we will focus on their influence in the period that preceded Cubism, Picasso's first truly original language.

**Keywords:** Picasso, Modernisme, Blue Period, Rose Period, Gauguin

## 1. Modernisme

Young Pablo returned to Barcelona from Horta d'Ebre where he had been staying with his friend Manuel Pallarès, in late January 1899. Prior to that trip, he had had a stint at the prestigious but traditional *Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* in Madrid, where several of his father's colleagues had kept close tabs on him, until he had been forced to leave

when he came down with scarlet fever. Back in the Catalan capital, he was now determined to forge his own way, living with his family, but refusing to re-enroll at the *Escuela de Bellas Artes (La Llotja)*, where his father taught, and joining instead the avant-garde circle of Catalan *Modernistes* who gathered at the tavern *Els Quatre Gats*.<sup>1</sup> He had also given up any intention of returning to Madrid to continue his formal studies and instead embarked on a career as a graphic artist, earning a pittance by contributing drawings to journals and producing other printed materials. Despite his little success, he was considered a prodigy among his friends, although as a Catalan-speaking Andalusian, the seventeen-year-old was still seen by most as simply a “talented outsider.”<sup>2</sup>

Within weeks of his return, he had procured a tiny studio in an apartment belonging to former classmates at *La Llotja*, the Cardona brothers—Santiago (1877–1957), a painter, and his sculptor brother Josep (1878–1923) above the family’s corset factory, *El Perfill*, run by their mother at 2, carrer de Escudellers Blancs, near the Plaça Reial (*Barri Gòtic*). It is through the two brothers that he would meet Sabartés (1881–1968), an aspiring poet and writer who would in the late 1930’s become his loyal secretary, a post he would keep until the end of his life.<sup>3</sup> His stay with the Cardonas was a splendid choice for these head months of youthful discovery. He found stimulation in the local social life he enjoyed with his Catalan friends, the restaurants in the neighborhood where olive oil and garlic perfumed the air, the bodegas with their low vaults, packed with casks, ringing with the sounds of *cante jondo*; at times visiting the cabarets that opened their doors well after midnight; and, of course, the cheap brothels where one could fulfill their most intimate desires at a small cost.<sup>4</sup>

While still in the bustling Cardona studio, he executed the elegant *Portrait d’homme (Dionís Renart i Garcia)*.<sup>5</sup> The rakish-looking subject was a sculptor three years his senior, who had studied at *La Llotja* as well. He painted him in a stiff-collared shirt and a floppy bow tie, endowing the striving young artist with a cosmopolitan allure. The theatrically projected light creates strong shadows that accentuate the sitter’s chiseled cheekbones, heavy brow, and deep-set eyes. The painting combines the bravura manner of a fashionable portraitist with the moody Symbolist effects then in vogue among the Catalan avant-garde. This expressive characterization of Renart inaugurated a series of portraits that chronicled the various painters and poets he was in contact with at the time.<sup>6</sup> The picture shows the influence of the recognized portraitist Ramón Casas (1866–1932), evincing the blossoming of the young man’s ambition and creativity. He had made the leap from his previous academic schooling to freer observation, moving away from the stifling fin-de-siècle attitudes still prevalent in much of the country, adding pace and boldness to his artistic creation.<sup>7</sup> Already showing the prodigious talent and inventive impulse, he became immersed in the more experimental and

<sup>1</sup> Gual 2002, 56; Torras 2002, 94; Vallès 2014, 31; Frank 2021, 297. Others date his return earlier to November, 1898 (McGregor-Hastie 1988, 26); or later to February (Cabanne 1979, 44; McCully 1994, 211–222; McCully 1997, 28; Unger 2018, 48; Roe 2015, 9); to mid-February (Perdrisot-Cassan & Mattiussi 2021, 392); or simply to early 1899 (Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 27).

<sup>2</sup> McCully 1997, 28; Frank 2021, 297.

<sup>3</sup> Frank 2021, 297. Others claim that it is later through Mateu Fernandez de Soto that he met Sabartés (Unger 2018, 55).

<sup>4</sup> Penrose 1981, 44.

<sup>5</sup> *Portrait d’homme (Dionís Renart i Garcia)*. Barcelona. [Mid-Winter]/1899. Oil on canvas. 46,5 x 38 cm. OPP.99:197.

<sup>6</sup> Christie’s. #3B, 12145, 11/16/16.

<sup>7</sup> Stockholms Auktionsverk. #749, 10/21–22/14.

forward-thinking artistic atmosphere of Barcelona, discovering in the city the perfect environment in which to begin developing the style that would mark his early career. He soon found himself at the center of the artistic milieu that frequented *Els Quatre Gats*. Launched in the spring of 1897 by Pere Romeu,<sup>8</sup> it had been inspired by the Parisian *Le Chat Noir* and, much like its French counterpart, it was a hub of artistic dialogue and expression. It was there that Picasso met the great *Modernistes* Santiago Rusiñol (1861–1931), Miquel Utrillo (1862–1934), and the already mentioned Casas, and through them was exposed to the new artistic trends that were gaining ground all over Europe.<sup>9</sup> For as long as he remained in the city, the tavern would be the setting for his intellectual and spiritual development, a kind of Catalan parallel to the Bohemian culture of Parisian life.

Fully immersed in fin-de-siècle Barcelona, his early sketches show the influence of the existentially charged art of Edvard Munch (1863–1944) and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1865–1901); or the socially conscious illustrations of Théophile Steinlen (1859–1923). Reproductions of their work had appeared in French newspapers available in the city and thus were well known to Picasso before he arrived in Paris, although the first-hand experience of their revolutionary canvases and the decadent culture they portrayed once he got there would definitely increase his admiration for them and for the environment in which they were painted. The Catalan capital at this time was a place of contrasts, aesthetes drunkenly turning toward the northern influence of Nietzsche and Novalis, alongside anarchist troublemakers and bourgeois industrialists, crossing paths with a horribly poverty-stricken population, living in sordid filth.<sup>10</sup>

In the spring, Pablo embarked on a phase that can only be described as “tenebrism,” a term that is usually applied to the dark, religious work of the seventeenth-century Spanish masters José de Ribera and Juan de Valdes Leal.<sup>11</sup> The cultivation of rich blacks was a hallmark of their style. He equally admired the work of El Greco whose “magnificent heads” in *El Prado* he praised to some of his friends.<sup>12</sup> At that time a taste for the Greek artist implied a subversive intent. Francisco de Bernareggi, a fellow student in Madrid during 1897, recalled a session he spent with the young Pablo copying one of those paintings, “The people around us were scandalized and called us *Modernistes*. We sent our copies to our professor (Picasso’s father), who responded severely: ‘You’re taking the wrong road.’ El Greco was considered a danger.”<sup>13</sup> At only eighteen years of age, he would offer his own contribution to Catalan *Modernisme* in the form of *Les derniers moments*,<sup>14</sup> a large painting that would inexplicably vanish for more than seventy years after its inaugural display in Málaga, Barcelona and Paris.<sup>15</sup>

When the painting is compared with his earlier works, it becomes apparent that he intended this large, dramatic painting as a major statement of his new allegiance to the Catalan

<sup>8</sup> Frank 2021, 297.

<sup>9</sup> Sotheby’s. #49, L15006, 06/24/15.

<sup>10</sup> Cabanne 1979, 46.

<sup>11</sup> Richardson 1991, 123.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in McCully 1997, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Christie’s. #15B, 12145, 11/16/16.

<sup>14</sup> *Les derniers moments*. Barcelona. [Early]/1899. X-radiograph of oil on canvas. 196,5 x 129,2 cm. OPP.99:836

<sup>15</sup> Robinson 2012, 27.

bohemian culture he had embraced at the tavern's circle. In style and subject, it signaled a shift from his early academic studies toward the morbid themes of death and suicide popular among Symbolists and decadents in late nineteenth-century Barcelona.<sup>16</sup> Dark shadows seem to invade the whole canvas, to such an extent that it is difficult to make out the characters involved. The artist wanted us to approach it and examine it in greater detail. The window becomes the only element through which the picture breathes. But the landscape that can be made out through it is gloomy and forbidding, in consonance with the scene in the foreground.<sup>17</sup>

The next step for Picasso was to prove that he had fully absorbed the new style. On October 29, 1899, Ramón Casas had a successful show of pastel portraits at the fashionable *Sala Parés*.<sup>18</sup> Of the more than 150 works, 132 were portraits of local leading lights, “a Barcelona iconography” as a critic had described them. The Catalan artist had combined a free use of charcoal with a variety of media (watercolor, pastel and colored powders). That late autumn, Pablo set about showing that he could not only match but also surpass those slick portraits that had become the principal claim to fame of the so-called “idol of Barcelona.” Casagemas, Pallarès, Sabartés and the de Sotos were convinced that their young champion could do better than him. The young man accepted the challenge to put together an exhibition at *Els Quatre Gats*, and devoted the next three months to capturing not just the regulars at the the tavern, but other friends, and friends of friends.<sup>19</sup> His portraits would consist of vivid little vignettes that hovered on the brink of caricature, but provided an image that encapsulated character while revealing the subject in a candid new light.<sup>20</sup> While his style was heavily indebted to Casas, his themes of social decadence and marginalization owed more to Rusiñol. It was no coincidence that his depictions of sick, dying, decadent bohemians strongly echoed the latter's *Morphine* of 1894. Born to an affluent family of textile manufacturers, Rusiñol had abandoned his wife, daughter, and career at age twenty-eight to pursue the life of a bohemian artist. He would travel back and forth between Barcelona and Paris, where he frequented the bawdy dance halls and artist's cafes of Montmartre, eventually becoming a morphine addict himself.<sup>21</sup>

The anticipated exhibition was held February 1–24, 1900.<sup>22</sup> His subjects were depicted either full length, posed against an urban or landscape background, or were presented simply as head portraits. Stylistically, these rapid sketches showed strongly contoured with heavy outlines, the facial features often highlighted with a few precise strokes.<sup>23</sup> The portraits verged on caricature, capturing in vivid brushwork and flat areas of color the personalities and idiosyncrasies of their subjects.<sup>24</sup> The economy of means, his ability to distill a

<sup>16</sup> Robinson 2012, 38.

<sup>17</sup> Palau 1980, 173.

<sup>18</sup> Richardson 1991, 143; Torras 2002, 96; Tinterow & Stein 2010, 16; Robinson 2012, 31; Frank 2021, 298.

<sup>19</sup> Richardson 1991, 143.

<sup>20</sup> Richardson 1991, 143–145.

<sup>21</sup> Robinson 2012, 31–32.

<sup>22</sup> Cabanne 1979, 51; Torras 2002, 95; Dagen 2009, 483; Tinterow & Stein 2010, 16. Others date the opening to February 2 (Vallès 2014, 111); or simply to February (Robinson 2012, 31; Cowling 2016, 29; Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 33; Unger 2018, 61).

<sup>23</sup> Warncke & Walther 1991, 59–70.

<sup>24</sup> Tinterow & Stein 2010, 16.

personality or a pose down to its essential ingredients, would be a key to his art as he discarded the familiar signs of normal perception while managing to retain a foothold on reality.<sup>25</sup> Framed by margins of black ink, they recalled the portrait vignettes by Vallotton and other members of *La Revue Blanche* circle with which he was familiar.<sup>26</sup> Picasso often worked in polarities. The overall shape was briskly established, but within it the face and body were differently treated. In many of these portraits what interested him was not so much the sitters themselves as the language he was using to portray them.<sup>27</sup>

Reporting on the exhibit, Sebastià Trullol i Plana in *Diario de Barcelona* suggested that the influence of Barcelona *Modernisme* detracted from young Pablo's work: "Currently on exhibition in the salon of *Els Quatre Gats* are several drawings and color sketches by D. R. Picassó [sic], a youth who enters into [the world of] art with the obsession of the most extreme Modernismo. One cannot deny that Señor Picassó has talent and feeling for art; he proves this in three oils which appear in the exhibition, in which he demonstrates intuition and knowledge of the expressive potential of color; but in contrast to this, the exhibition reveals in the painter, as in many others who have preceded him and are madly in love with the Modernista school, a lamentable confusion of artistic sensibility and a mistaken concept of art ... In the collection of pencil portraits, which forms part of the exhibition, several stand out for the confidence of drawing, but it is only necessary to glance at them as a whole to recognize that this is a gallery of melancholy, taciturn, and bored characters that produces in the spectator an impression of sadness and compassion for their unsympathetic portrayal."<sup>28</sup> It is true that *Modernisme* was broadly Symbolist, with frequent depictions of loss, yearning or desire inscribed within religious and mythological iconography. The basis of their ideas was as much literary as pictorial. They read Symbolist poets like Verlaine, Mallarmé and Baudelaire, all of whom Picasso and his friends were familiar with.<sup>29</sup>

Progressively, just as he had emptied himself of his father's precepts, Picasso would empty himself of *Els Quatre Gats*—Casas, Rusiñol and *Modernisme* included. After about a year, most of these bohemians from the previous generation would have disappeared from his work. As he set about forging a new syntax, portraiture would only serve as a vehicle to self-discovery.<sup>30</sup> By the end of February, *La Vanguardia* published a list of artists whose work had been submitted for exhibition at the Paris *Exposition Universelle*. *Les derniers moments*, which he had earlier shown at *Els Quatre Gats*, was one of them.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. The First Trip to Paris

When he finally got to see the *Exposition Universelle* in person in the autumn of 1900, he was astounded. All the more, as he saw his own painting hanging in the Spanish section,<sup>32</sup> which displayed a ten-year survey. The selection had created as much controversy on the

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<sup>25</sup> Unger 2018, 62.

<sup>26</sup> Cate 1997, 133.

<sup>27</sup> Palau 1980, 185.

<sup>28</sup> Article published February 7, 1900 (Richardson 1991, 145–148; McCully and McVaugh 1978, 70; Unger 2018, 62).

<sup>29</sup> Roe 2015, 10.

<sup>30</sup> Richardson 1991, 150.

<sup>31</sup> Robinson 2012, 68.

<sup>32</sup> Perdrisot-Cassan & Mattiussi 2021, 393.



French side as in Spain. As the curator of the *Musée du Luxembourg*, Léonce Benedite, hardly an avant-gardist, wrote in *La Gazette des Beaux-Arts*: “the spirit of the Inquisition came to life again in the jury of academicians.”<sup>33</sup> There were 106 paintings by sixty painters, and Picasso’s appeared alongside the work of one of his former teachers, Moreno Carbonero, as well as two of the established artists from *Els Quatre Gats* group, Santiago Rusiñol and Ramón Casas. One can imagine the excitement he must have felt as he walked through the *Exposition* with its incandescent lights that confirmed Paris’ reputation as *La Ville Lumière*.<sup>34</sup> The streets bustled with visitors to the pavilions that stretched across the heart of the city.<sup>35</sup>

He took over the studio of the painter Isidre Nonell, who was returning to Barcelona, and would also leave an imprint on Picasso’s tendency to use blue monochromes in years to come. The place was conveniently located at No. 49, rue Gabrielle in Montmartre, the headquarters of the Catalan colony.<sup>36</sup> The little sketchbooks Picasso carried around during his first stay articulated his enchantment with Parisian life: the quiet joy of children playing in the public parks, the fancy hats and pinched faces of middle-class women strolling along the boulevards, lovers openly kissing in the street. He captured the silhouettes of lovers melting into one another to form a single figure, twisting and turning like a flame, with superfluous details rubbed out by strokes of charcoal.<sup>37</sup> The Butte was still the border countryside of Paris, with fields and vines surrounding the windmills van Gogh had painted thirteen years earlier. The middle classes took advantage of it, using it as a place to go for a taste of lowlife, tinged with memories of the Commune years, of anarchists and bloody street violence in the 1890’s for which the district had been a center stage. It was still a dangerous terrain, where crime was rampant.<sup>38</sup>

*Baraque foraine, Montmartre*<sup>39</sup> perfectly captures the artist’s interest in his surroundings. The bustling fair, with its stalls and the crowds passing through, is depicted with brushstrokes that give flowing sense of movement to the painting.<sup>40</sup> Picasso was reveling in the exuberant atmosphere of the Butte, both artistically and otherwise, observing the myriad people and entertainments with his unscrupulous eye. These public events fascinated him. To him, that was where painting was. He also loved the night life of Montmartre, the faces of street walkers, the tawdry dance halls and bawdy bals-musettes, the side streets with couples kissing. Parisian night entertainment, teeming with uninhibited hedonism and vulgarity, was a popular theme in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century painting; artists such as Degas and Manet documented this enticing, ribald nocturnal realm. However, he was not blind to the fact that the *Belle Epoque* was a false front, that the enjoyment in Montmartre hid the awful existence of an exploited working class, ravaged by prostitution and alcohol. As Cabanne commented, his Nietzscheism was coupled with the “socialism” he had picked up in Barcelona.<sup>41</sup> If Paris was the center of the cultural establishment, it also proved an irresistible

<sup>33</sup> Cabanne 1979, 53.

<sup>34</sup> Unger 2018, 83.

<sup>35</sup> Roe 2015, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Richardson 1991, 159–160; also Cabanne 1979, 53; McCully 2011, 16; Frank 2021, 298.

<sup>37</sup> Léal, Piot & Bernadac 2000, 41.

<sup>38</sup> Daix 1993, 21.

<sup>39</sup> *Baraque foraine, Montmartre*. [Paris]. [Mid-October–Mid-December]/1900. Oil on canvas. 38,1 x 46,3 cm. OPP.00:101

<sup>40</sup> Christie’s. #65, 6735, 06/24/03.

<sup>41</sup> Cabanne 1979, 55.

magnet to revolutionaries who were drawn to it in order to storm the bastions of tradition.<sup>42</sup>

From Paris he wrote a letter to Ramón Reventós on October 12 in which he described his progress in the city: “Now I am painting something about a dance at *Le Moulin de la Galette*<sup>43</sup> and also something about the *Divan Japonais*. I do not think you can say that I am wasting my time.”<sup>44</sup> The first composition he referred to showed his fascination with the lusty decadence and gaudy glamour of the famous dance hall, where bourgeois patrons and street girls rubbed shoulders. The name identified not only the reconstructed windmill on the building, but also reflected the semi-rural nature of Montmartre during this period, when the area was still dotted with fields and farms. In his canvas, Picasso showed the floor crowded with a mob of made-up working girls and their top-hatted clients doing one of those new dances. He rendered the scene in a mixture of two different takes. He was challenging two artists who were far more formidable than Casas: Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec, each of whom had devoted major works to this very subject. As Richardson explains, that someone so new to French art should have pitted himself against these masters at the top of their form is a measure of his confidence and daring.<sup>45</sup> Rather than portray his scene as a light-filled, colorful party outdoors, as Renoir had done, Picasso focused on the interior fitfully illuminated by gaslight that casts a lurid glow over the dancers, turning the harshly made-up faces of some of the women into configurations that resemble masks. As Unger notes, he successfully managed to combine the tenebrism of years before with the bright colors of the bullfight pastels he had completed right before he set out for Paris, a jarring contrast with the new festive setting.<sup>46</sup>

Although the composition is reminiscent of certain paintings by Toulouse-Lautrec, he intensified the effects, a uniform duskiess created by gas lighting surrounds the figures who appear as patches of color against a dark background. The style of brushwork is summary, working in large blocks and pinpointing only a few fashionable dancing figures with expressionless faces. They have in fact been stripped of their individuality and are merely dizzying blurs to illustrate social amusement.<sup>47</sup> In this, it differs from the brilliant observation of character and physiognomy in the French painter. Yet, he emulated the energetic handling of line and color and, the use of caricatural devices. Reproductions of his expressive paintings had appeared in French newspapers that circulated in Barcelona and were well known to Pablo before he came to Paris, but the firsthand experience of the decadent culture those canvases portrayed increased his admiration for the artist and the environment they represented. In his picture, Picasso became an intrigued observer of the spectacle of entertainment, suggesting its provocative artificiality. In vibrant colors, much brighter than any he had previously used, he captured the lively scene.<sup>48</sup> The painting was clearly a means for the young Spaniard to associate his name with the established masters. Cowling notes how he even took from Manet the familiar convention of satirical deflation

<sup>42</sup> Unger 2018, 71.

<sup>43</sup> *Le Moulin de la Galette*. Paris. Mid-October/1900. Oil on canvas. 88,2 x 115,5 cm. OPP.00:001

<sup>44</sup> Vallès 2014, 171. Others date this letter to November 16 (Frank 2021, 299).

<sup>45</sup> Richardson 1991, 167.

<sup>46</sup> Unger 2018, 89–90.

<sup>47</sup> Warncke & Walther 1991, 72–73.

<sup>48</sup> Avgikos 2003.

whereby an appropriated “high” image is converted into its low opposite. It is a good picture of the savagery inside civilization, a beauty that comes from evil, devoid of spirituality, but now and then touched with melancholy.<sup>49</sup> His women are garishly dressed-up street girls and his men top-hated libertines, and certain pairs of women placed at focal points hint at lesbianism. However, the grinning faces, glittering patches of color against the lustrous blacks and the dashing brushwork lend it an irresistible cheerfulness.<sup>50</sup> As he did in the pastels of embracing couples, he blurred his figures so that they seem to melt into a single pulsing organism. Another feature he adopted from Toulouse-Lautrec is the close-up view of the dancers, cut off at the edges, bringing an immediacy to the scene and inviting the viewer to take part in the spectacle.<sup>51</sup>

Before Nonell left Paris, introduced him to a Catalan named Pere Mañach, who was always on the look-out for promising new arrivals from Spain.<sup>52</sup> At the lower end of the art market where the prices were dirt cheap but the potential profits the greatest, a young unknown like the Malagueño was an attractive prospect. Some thirteen years older than Picasso, Mañach had been living in the city since the 1890s, and, in addition to running his little junk shop in Montmartre, he worked closely with a few true dealers, including Berthe Weill, a Jewish American born in Paris who specialized in rare books and antiques.<sup>53</sup>

Mañach offered Picasso a contract by the end of November.<sup>54</sup> These contracts between painter and dealer stipulated that the artist should make over the entirety of his production to the merchant in exchange for an agreed sum, usually. In principle, the whole output became the merchant’s exclusive property, although a clause often allowed the artist to retain some pictures for himself. In Pablo’s case, there was no such clause, and the stated monthly sum was 150 francs.<sup>55</sup> His friend Casagemas was not as successful. By mid-December, he was as depressed by his Paris experience as Picasso was invigorated by it. Pablo probably thought that it might do his friend some good to spend some time back home. The two young men started planning to return to Spain for the holidays, first to Barcelona and then to visit Picasso’s native Málaga.<sup>56</sup> They departed for Spain late in the month in time to get there for the holidays.<sup>57</sup>

Residing in Madrid the first quarter of the year, Picasso continued to receive from Mañach a monthly stipend. In late April, the dealer informed him that the well-known gallerist Ambroise Vollard was willing to host an exhibition of his work from June 25 to July 14. It was an extraordinary break for a talented up-and-comer, and it would effectively launch the young artist’s international career.<sup>58</sup> Pablo wanted to start making immediate preparation for the show, so by the end of the month he had left for Barcelona to add to the items he already

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<sup>49</sup> Julian 1977, 43.

<sup>50</sup> Cowling 2002, 69–94.

<sup>51</sup> McCully 2011, 25–26.

<sup>52</sup> Richardson 1991, 163; Vallès 2015, 178; Unger 2018, 93; Frank 2021, 298. According to others, they simply bumped into each other in Montmartre (Cabanne 1979, 53).

<sup>53</sup> Roe 2015, 26.

<sup>54</sup> Cabanne 1979, 54; Franck 2001, 20; Dagen 2009, 483; McCully 2011, 20; Frank 2021, 300.

<sup>55</sup> O’Brian 1994, 88.

<sup>56</sup> Cabanne 1979, 57; Daemgen 2005, 16; Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 37; Unger 2018, 96.

<sup>57</sup> Cabanne 1979, 57; Wright 2013, 18; McCully 2013, 39; Roe 2015, 27; Unger 2018, 97.

<sup>58</sup> Frank 2021, 301.



had at his disposal.<sup>59</sup> In the roughly two weeks of his stay,<sup>60</sup> he managed to create a considerable number of pictures designed to appeal to French buyers. The sixty-odd works he executed in such a short period would be characterized by bright color and broad brushstrokes.<sup>61</sup>

As Picasso finally got to Paris on his second visit on May 8, he moved in with Mañach to an apartment up six flights of stairs that consisted of two rooms, one small one, which also served as the entrance hall, and a larger one leading off the first. The smaller room was to be Pere's bedroom, while the latter would serve Pablo as both bedroom and studio. The only faucet and toilet were on the landing outside the apartments.<sup>62</sup> The dealer was of course stuck with the rent, which would eventually create problems.<sup>63</sup> The flat was within a few paces of the café where Casagemas had shot himself; the studio that Isidre Nonell had lent them in 1900 was also just round the corner.<sup>64</sup> Disorder soon reigned over the place, with walls lined with an increasing number of canvases propped against them. A seascape and a painting copied closely from a poster by Toulouse-Lautrec hung on the walls above his bed.<sup>65</sup>

Not long after setting up house, Mañach took Pablo to see Vollard and his stock of paintings.<sup>66</sup> The young artist was ambitious and especially eager to prove himself during this second foray into the Parisian art world. His dealer had created a great opportunity for him. Vollard was a recognized *marchand*, an acquaintance of Degas and Pissarro, with an impressive inventory of paintings by Cézanne and Gauguin.<sup>67</sup> Although he had brought some fifteen to twenty-five paintings and a quantity of drawings and pastels with him from home, Picasso still felt he did not have quite enough for the show.<sup>68</sup> The gallerist's memory of their first meeting is harsh and inaccurate: "I had a visit from a young Spaniard, dressed in a rather studied fashion and accompanied by a compatriot of his with whom I was slightly acquainted. The latter was called Manache [sic], or something like that, and was a factory owner from Barcelona ... The friend Manache now introduced me to was none other than the painter Pablo Picasso, who, though only nineteen or twenty years old, had produced about a hundred works which he now brought to me with a view to an exhibition, but that exhibition was not at all successful."<sup>69</sup>

It was probably immediately after the visit that he executed *Portrait de Ambroise Vollard*<sup>70</sup> showing him seated with legs crossed, with framed pictures in the gallery background, similar to the portrait of the art collector Victor Chocquet that Cézanne had painted earlier. It

<sup>59</sup> Torras 2002, 99; Bouvier 2019, 32. Others date the return to late April (Frank 2021, 301); simply to April (Dagen 2009, 483); to the end of April or early-May (Wright 2013, 19); to early May (Richardson 1991, 190; Tinterow & Stein 2010, 32; Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 43); or simply to May (McCully 1997, 34; Unger 2018, 102).

<sup>60</sup> McCully 2011, 31.

<sup>61</sup> Bouvier 2019, 32; Cabanne 1979, 61.

<sup>62</sup> Palau 1980, 228.

<sup>63</sup> Richardson 1991, 193; McCully 2011, 36; McCully 2013, 40; Bouvier 2019, 33; Frank 2021, 301.

<sup>64</sup> Cabanne 1979, 64; O'Brian 1994, 100; Torras 2002, 99; Daemgen 2005, 16.

<sup>65</sup> Penrose 1981, 65–66.

<sup>66</sup> In late May, 1901 (Richardson 1991, 194; Bouvier 2019, 33). Others date their first meeting to early June (McCully 2013, 40).

<sup>67</sup> Christie's #23, 1075, 05/07/02.

<sup>68</sup> Richardson 1991, 193.

<sup>69</sup> Ambroise Vollard, quoted in Palau 1980, 229.

<sup>70</sup> *Portrait de Ambroise Vollard*. Paris. Late-May–Late-June/1901. Oil on cardboard. 46 x 37 cm. OPP.01:132.

has been argued that the portrait might also represent Gustave Coquiot's place instead. With his upswept moustache and beard the critic seems to come straight out of a Toulouse-Lautrec, the exotic dancers writhing in the background reminding us also of the Provence painter. The rendering of the central space behind the figure and below the dancers as essentially a flat plane with patches of color equally bring to mind similar compositional devices employed by Gauguin and van Gogh.<sup>71</sup> Both portraits were done swiftly and sketchily, their intimate freshness making them seem as much Post-Impressionist as pre-Fauvist. Picasso did not let his work exclude visits to galleries and museums, which were one of his chief amusements during these early days in Paris. By this time, he was familiar with most of them.<sup>72</sup>

*Le cancan*<sup>73</sup> may have been one of the works in Coquiot's mind when, in his introductory article for the Vollard exhibition, he wrote of "girls who dance a frenzied cancan, legs wide apart, fixed on the canvas like agile butterflies as they swirl around in a flurry of skirts and underwear." The dance had been the subject of numerous works by artists and illustrators, most famous among them Toulouse-Lautrec. His simplified treatment of the women's skirts and stockinged legs, so perfectly attuned to the lithographic printing process, was transferred by Picasso into the medium of oil paint. Harshly made-up faces, arms, legs and garters float across a sea of billowing yellow-green skirts, only loosely connected to the bodies they represent. The Spaniard transformed the subject from a brightly lit and jolly performance into something more debauched and faintly menacing, with the two dancers in the foreground confronting the viewer, their raised skirts and flashing legs filling the center of the picture. The swirling of disjointed forms—red lips and dark eyes peering out of the shadows—are more like an apparition seen in an alcoholic haze. The palette of green tones compounds the impression of an experience seen through the contents of an absinthe glass.<sup>74</sup>

In his preparation for the show, Picasso's choice of supports and medium provides an understanding of just how he thought he should work for this important occasion. He painted directly on cardboard, which required little, if any, preparation and on which oils dried more quickly than on canvas.<sup>75</sup> Coquiot recalls that the pictures were not displayed "as they usually are today, with plenty of space and in a single line, but on top of one another almost the ceiling and unframed, while some were not even on stretchers but in large folders, at the mercy of any collector or visitor."<sup>76</sup> The exhibition, which opened on June 24, contained some sixty-four works—about sixteen on canvas and at least thirty on cardboard, plus ten on small wood panels; as well as five pastels or several drawings. Many of these had been done in only three weeks.<sup>77</sup> Iturrino, by contrast, showed thirty-five paintings featuring gypsies and Paris scenes, as well as an unspecified number of drawings.<sup>78</sup> By the standards of the time, the show was a success, even if, from Vollard's perspective, Picasso had achieved nothing out of the ordinary. But, in fact, fifteen works (more than half of those shown) were

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<sup>71</sup> McCully 2011, 39.

<sup>72</sup> Penrose 1981, 69–72.

<sup>73</sup> *Le cancan*. Paris. Late-May–Late-June/1901. Oil on canvas. 46 x 61 cm. OPP.01:686.

<sup>74</sup> Wright 2013, 124–126.

<sup>75</sup> McCully 2013, 40; also McCully 2011, 36, 55.

<sup>76</sup> Palau 1985, 257; Richardson 1991, 194; Perdrisot-Cassan & Mattiussi 2021, 392

<sup>77</sup> Palau 1980, 247–257 provides a potential list of exhibited artworks. Others have proposed an alternative list of artworks, with some items left unidentified (McCully 2013, 178–181).

<sup>78</sup> Frank 2021, 302.

marked as sold even before the exhibition opened.<sup>79</sup> The show was even referenced back in Barcelona in *La Veu de Catalunya*. The Catalan critic Pere Coll had written: “Picasso is very young ... and at his age I doubt if there are many who have done what he has. He has very great qualities but also great defects. The portraits of his companion Iturrino and one of another friend, Pere Mañach, and a self-portrait are done with great courage and great confidence, indicating the genius of the painter.”<sup>80</sup> Pablo gave Coll a painting as a token of appreciation. If, for Vollard, the exhibition amounted to little more than a *succes d’estime*, to the artist, these earnings seemed a small fortune.<sup>81</sup>

Félicien Fagus, *nom de plume* of the poet Georges Faillet (1872–1933), titled his July 15 review of the Vollard show in *La Revue Blanche* “L’Invasion espagnole: Picasso”: “a harsh imagination, somber, corrosive, sometimes magnificent, but a ... consciously lugubrious magnificence, ... All these artists ... follow their great ancestors ... particularly Goya, the bitter, mournful genius. His influence is seen in Picasso, the brilliant newcomer. He is the painter, utterly and beautifully the painter; he has the power of divining the essence of things ... Like all pure painters he adores color for its own sake ... he is enamored of all subjects, and every subject is his ... Besides the great ancestral masters, many likely influences can be distinguished—Delacroix, Manet (everything points to him, whose painting is a little Spanish). Monet, van Gogh, Pissarro, Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Forain, Rops ... Each one a passing phase, taking flight as soon as caught ... Picasso’s passionate surge forwards has not yet left him the leisure to forge a personal style; his personality is embodied in this hastiness, this youthful impetuous spontaneity ... The danger lies in this very impetuosity, ’ which could easily lead to facile virtuosity and easy success ... That would be profoundly regrettable since we are in the presence of such brilliant virility.”<sup>82</sup> Fagus commended several works, including *La ronde des fillettes*,<sup>83</sup> the picture Picasso gave him as a token of his gratitude for this review. This canvas recalled a composition by Gauguin of three girls dancing.

Pablo emerged from the exhibition as a promising artist. For a reviewer of Fagus’s level of critical perception, there was enough evidence in his work to demonstrate a clear ability to switch between different styles. This chimed with the Spaniard’s own ideas about his developing artistic identity, mirroring himself in others.<sup>84</sup> He went back to work after the Vollard show boiling with enthusiasm. If in Spain he had been prone to experimentation, France now allowed this inclination to take shape. As Pablo told Maurice Raynal, “Had Cézanne worked in my country, he would have been burned at the stake.”<sup>85</sup>

In late July, he executed the oil *Autoportrait de l’artiste: ‘Yo’*.<sup>86</sup> Painted in a combination of simple vertical, horizontal and diagonal brushstrokes in dark, subdued browns and greens, a subtle halo of light illuminates the face, as the artist emerges like an apparition, locking the

<sup>79</sup> Rubin 1980, 29; McCully 2013, 44; Bouvier 2019, 33.

<sup>80</sup> Article published July 10, 1901 (McCully 1997, 35; Unger 2018, 112; Bouvier 2019, 33; Frank 2021, 302).

<sup>81</sup> Roe 2015, 38.

<sup>82</sup> Cabanne 1979, 68; Richardson 1991, 198; McCully 1997, 35; McCully 2011, 47; Roe 2015, 37; Unger 2018, 111–112; Bouvier 2019, 34.

<sup>83</sup> *La ronde des fillettes*. Paris. Late-May–Late-June/1901. Oil on cardboard. 38 x 56,5 cm. OPP.01:126.

<sup>84</sup> Wright 2013, 23.

<sup>85</sup> Cabanne 1979, 69.

<sup>86</sup> *Autoportrait de l’artiste: ‘Yo.’* Paris. [Late-July]/1901. Oil on cardboard mounted on wood. 51,4 x 31,8 cm. OPP.01:001

viewer's gaze into his own.<sup>87</sup> It was intended to capture the more introspective painter that Picasso was striving to become. Intense and haunting, the work bears comparison with other psychologically charged self-portraits like Munch's or Van Gogh's. As Varnedoe has suggested, it can be seen as an expression of the Spaniard's likely interest in the occult that was widespread at this time, especially within the Symbolist bohemian circles in which he had moved. The eager rising star of the Vollard show had all of a sudden turned into a visionary, old beyond his years, whose burning gaze defies the world with ferocious Nietzschean authority.<sup>88</sup> Interestingly, the portrait shares certain features with this earlier depiction of Casagemas, such as the fixed, rather menacing stare and dramatically under-lit face.<sup>89</sup> It is as if he were trying to embody his late friends, and, by doing so, bring him back. A similar operation would be repeated in years to come.

### 3. The Blue Period

Rather than an isolated incident in Picasso's life, Casagemas's death fell into a pattern of events that left an indelible mark in the artist. Viewed in retrospect, it becomes clear that his preoccupation with mortality was also shaped by his early association with Modernista poets and painters who flavored their works with romantic images of death, including its most dramatic form—suicide. While working in Madrid on *Arte Joven*, he had become friendly with the dissenting writers of the Generation of 1898 who found inspiration in the life and works of Mariano José de Larra (1809–1837), among others. The essayist conveyed his disillusionment with the world through his literary alter ego, a writer named Fígaro, who became overwhelmed by pessimism and melancholy. Larra's own despair came to a dramatic climax when he killed himself after a failed love affair.<sup>90</sup> Picasso would become obsessed with depictions of poverty, deprivation and disability, old age and ill health, or even psychological depression. His paintings focused on the living dead, pained disabled people without hope of salvation, victims resigned to their lot. These figures were a mirror where Picasso projected his psyche and fears as he struggled for meaning, and perhaps redemption.<sup>91</sup>

The influence of El Greco resurfaces in the roughly executed *Carles Casagemas mort*.<sup>92</sup> Painted primarily with white and icy blue shadows, it uses an additional build-up of paint to put emphasis on the bloody scab around the temple, as if he, who had not been a witness, needed to render this detail with particularly grisly detail in order to come to terms with the finality of the act.<sup>93</sup> However, Picasso represented the lifeless head upright, as that of someone sitting for a portrait. Richardson observes this way of depicting his dead friend brings to mind the lines about death in Federico García Lorca's concept of *duende*.<sup>94</sup> Its sketchiness delivers, ironically, a greater realism through its urgent transmission of journalistic reportage from the scene, as opposed to the more aloof, in-the-studio,

<sup>87</sup> Roe 2015, 38.

<sup>88</sup> Richardson 1991, 228–229.

<sup>89</sup> Wright 2013, 164–167.

<sup>90</sup> Robinson 2012, 66–67.

<sup>91</sup> Chalif 2006, 404–416.

<sup>92</sup> *Carles Casagemas mort*. Paris. [End-Summer]/1901. Oil on cardboard. 52 x 34 cm. OPP.01:043.

<sup>93</sup> McCully 2011, 102.

<sup>94</sup> Richardson 1991, 211.

contemplative air by which heavier worked painting would be inevitably burdened. But its unadorned immediacy is secured partly, too, through its unorthodox switching of orientation from horizontal to vertical.<sup>95</sup> A drop in temperature took place in the passage from this painting to *La mort de Carles Casagemas (Carles Casagemas dans son cercueil)*,<sup>96</sup> where the brushstrokes are applied as if he were modeling with the paint itself not only the dead man's face and shroud, but the space around the coffin as well. The color blue, which contrasts the yellowish-white of the skin, serves symbolically to evoke the coldness and silence of death.<sup>97</sup> As in the other works, he took leave of Casagemas in the traditional manner of a mourner paying respect to the body lying in an open coffin.<sup>98</sup> The stylistic transition across these different portraits evinces his abrupt evolution from student of the work of painters like van Gogh to master of his own, thus, analogously, the death of Casagemas led to the birth of Picasso.<sup>99</sup>

The final oil in this series, *Evocation (L'enterrement de Carles Casagemas)*,<sup>100</sup> is composed of three tiers, connected by a rising helix, and was clearly inspired by El Greco's *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz* that Picasso had seen in the *Iglesia de Santo Tomé*, in Toledo, parodying the division of the canvas into two realms.<sup>101</sup> In his version, however, the upper realm is taken by women and children rather than celestial angels. At the bottom, a group of mourners all cold blue with touches of green, weep and console each other around the corpse, which is shrouded in white and laid out on the ground towards the bottom of the painting in the same position as St. Bonaventura in the Zurbarán picture that he had admired at the *Louvre*.<sup>102</sup> A funeral-vault stands open to the right, and what appears to be a broken column on the left identify the setting as a cemetery. Above this, a strange vision of the deceased's ascension is played out as a parody of traditional Christian iconography. A Madonna and child swathed in blue robes are flanked by a pair of naked women on the right and two young children in blue and white smocks, to the left. Across from them, a group of three prostitutes, naked but for their striped colored stockings, look up towards the white horse carrying a dark-clothed Casagemas into the clouds. Posed like a crucified Christ, he is largely obscured by a fourth naked prostitute who throws herself on him in a long embrace.<sup>103</sup>

The canvas, owing to its ample dimensions, was used as a screen to hide a pile of miscellaneous objects in the corner of the attic studio. The shimmering atmospheric light of the Impressionists had given way to a representation of sadness. He had lived through his friend's tragedy so closely that it had become his own, and his new problem was to find adequate ways of expressing it.<sup>104</sup> In Unger's opinion, painting this memorial to his departed friend in the same room where he had spent his last hours (at the same time he was making

<sup>95</sup> Parkinson 2013, 64–65.

<sup>96</sup> *La mort de Carles Casagemas (Carles Casagemas dans son cercueil)*. Paris. [End-Summer]/1901. Oil on cardboard. 72,5 x 58 cm. OPP.01:045.

<sup>97</sup> McCully 2011, 102.

<sup>98</sup> Sotheby's #22, NY7170, 05/13/98.

<sup>99</sup> Parkinson 2013, 64–65.

<sup>100</sup> *Evocation (L'enterrement de Carles Casagemas)*. Paris. [End-Summer–Fall]/1901. Oil on canvas. 150,5 x 90,5 cm. OPP.01:046.

<sup>101</sup> Bouvier 2019, 34–37.

<sup>102</sup> Cowling 2002, 69–94.

<sup>103</sup> O'Brian 1994, 101; Wright 2013, 171–175.

<sup>104</sup> Penrose 1981, 76.



love to the woman who had lured him to his doom) is a particularly morbid illustration of a fetishistic impulse that lies at the heart of the Spaniard's creative fury.<sup>105</sup> As Parkinson explains, the painting can be thought of as Picasso's own yes to life and the first statement of his own Dionysian intent. From that angle, artist and viewers participate in the burial like members of an audience watching a Greek tragedy unfold, which, following Nietzsche, bestows on all the fullness and plenitude necessary for art creation.<sup>106</sup> The blue monochrome was for Picasso one way of confirming his personal vision of the world and of making the break with naturalism. It meant simplification, stylization, unification. It was made to denote a more detached vision of the world to be configured by his own generic vitality.<sup>107</sup>

At the beginning of autumn, Picasso obtained permission from Dr. Louis Jullien to make sketches of the inmates at the *Prison de Saint-Lazare*, situated on rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis on the tenth arrondissement. Perhaps he had become curious about the place when he visited the show in *Galerie La Bodinière* at 18, located on the same street. Organized by the periodical *Art et littérature* through June 30, it included three of his works (an oil on canvas, a watercolor, and a pastel). An expanded version would later appear at *Villa Désiré* in Dinard.<sup>108</sup> Dr. Jullien was a venereologist, so Pablo may have been one of his patients.<sup>109</sup> He had also been Verlaine's personal physician, so the Spaniard might have met him through Max, who revered the late poet; or it could have been through Dr. Louis Bergerot, a friend of Jacob's, who lived not far from the prison.<sup>110</sup> Picasso could paint these poor women free-of-charge; other Montmartre artists, including Toulouse-Lautrec, had done the same before him. *Prison de Saint-Lazare*, originally a medieval convent and leper hospital, now fulfilled a dual function: one part kept women who had been given short prison sentences or were awaiting trial; the other housed prostitutes who were interned after referral by the police for "administrative" reasons—without any trial—either because they were unregistered (*insoumises*), or, if registered, had violated one of the regulations or had been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease.<sup>111</sup> The mix made it unique among Parisian penal institutions: a combination of convent, soup kitchen, laundry, and pharmacy where the inmates were charged with the spotless upkeep of the facilities. Picasso was fascinated by their attire, in particular their *bonnets d'ordonnance*, which were either brown or white, the latter distinguishing a syphilitic.<sup>112</sup> Popularly known as *la maison maudite*, it was described by contemporaries as a place of tragedy and tears, a living hell reserved for the lowest, most unfortunate members of society.<sup>113</sup> His paintings of the *Prison de Saint-Lazare* inmates would be among the key, transitional works of his nascent Blue Period and among the first in which he fully realized his ambition of becoming "the painter of human misery."<sup>114</sup> Critics had insisted that the young Picasso should settle into a style of his own, and his *Saint-Lazare*

<sup>105</sup> Unger 2018, 121–123.

<sup>106</sup> Parkinson 2013, 77–80.

<sup>107</sup> Léal, Piot & Bernadac 2000, 43–56.

<sup>108</sup> McCully 2013, 39; Frank 2021, 302.

<sup>109</sup> Richardson 1991, 218; Wright 2013, 26; McCully 2013, 46; Unger 2018, 129; Bouvier 2019, 38; Frank 2021, 302. Others date the visits to late summer (Wright 2013, 175); or simply to summer (Robinson 2012, 55).

<sup>110</sup> Bouvier 2019, 72.

<sup>111</sup> Bouvier 2019, 72.

<sup>112</sup> Tinterow & Stein 2010, 44.

<sup>113</sup> Robinson 2012, 55–56.

<sup>114</sup> Robinson 2012, 58.

women might be seen, in part, as his response to these expectations.<sup>115</sup> Pablo went beyond Toulouse-Lautrec, not even invoking the “functional” pretexts of intimate grooming or mercenary love; his women, with their flesh of molded mud, their flabby breasts high, carrying all the stigmata of decay, were not far removed from the repulsive or questionable creatures that symbolized sin in the Middle Ages.<sup>116</sup>

In *Femmes à la fontaine*,<sup>117</sup> Picasso grouped the heads of two of the prison inmates and a child around the fountain in the courtyard. The emphasis on the profiles of the figures, with the fountain behind them at the right, results in a subject evocative of something more permanent, something resonant of the endurance of sculpture. The great dignity with which he portrayed these inmates—not as low-life women, but as doomed individuals confined in their loneliness—evokes the example of van Gogh, as McCully points out.<sup>118</sup> The artist began to wield his brush in a more serious and deliberate manner, using the strokes to describe in an almost tactile way the heavy folds of the women’s gowns and the child’s blanket. Gauguin’s brooding peasants helped Picasso arrive at a mythic image that would beautify and dignify these women.<sup>119</sup> He no doubt felt the need for some ray of hope in his own life at this time, for which the Virgin’s child in *Mère et enfant (Maternité)*<sup>120</sup> was an apt symbol, which is probably why he painted such an extended series on the theme of maternity.<sup>121</sup>

For the next fifteen months, Picasso would set about perfecting the synthesis toward which he had been working ever since the Vollard show eighteen months earlier. Catalan primitives, El Greco, Morales, Poussin, Puvis, Carrière, above all Gauguin, are only some of those “others” that he resorted to and transformed.<sup>122</sup> He was not the only one showing a certain proclivity for these artists. When Junyent, with Nonell and the composer Joan Gay, went to Madrid, he made a special note of having gone to see the works of El Greco.<sup>123</sup> Also *Pèl and Ploma* had devoted an article to Gauguin in its January issue. With the aim of integrating Barcelona into the mainstream of modern European culture, the journal had been carrying commentaries on cultural activities up north, many written by *Els Quatre Gats* artists traveling abroad. The magazine had introduced its readers to a broad range of contemporary art, from the sculpture of Rodin to the paintings of artists like Böcklin and Puvis.<sup>124</sup>

Picasso returned to Barcelona in January 1902,<sup>125</sup> but traveled briefly to Paris in October.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Wright 2013, 31.

<sup>116</sup> Cabanne 1979, 67.

<sup>117</sup> *Femmes à la fontaine*. Paris. [Mid-Fall]/1901. Oil on canvas. 92,7 x 74 cm. OPP.01:168.

<sup>118</sup> McCully 2011, 106–113.

<sup>119</sup> Richardson 1991, 221.

<sup>120</sup> *Mère et enfant (Maternité)*. Paris. [Mid-Fall]/1901. Pastel on paper mounted on canvas. 46,5 x 31 cm. OPP.01:217.

<sup>121</sup> Christie’s. #64, 1722, 11/08/06.

<sup>122</sup> Richardson 1991, 269.

<sup>123</sup> Vallès 2021, 65.

<sup>124</sup> Robinson 2012, 34.

<sup>125</sup> On January 18, 1902 (Richardson 1991, 233). Others date the move to Barcelona to early January (Mahler 2015, 34; Unger 2018, 135; McCully 2021, 16); to late January (Cendoya, Dupuis-Labbé & Torras 2007, 324; Bouvier 2019, 80); or simply to January (Carmean 1980, 27; McCully 1997, 37; Dagen 2009, 483; Cowling 2016, 59; Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 50).

<sup>126</sup> In late October (Torras 2002, 101; Bouvier 2019, 86; Frank 2021, 305). Others date the third trip simply to October (Carmean 1980, 27; McCully 1997, 38; McCully 2011, 117; Milde 2002, 397; Dagen 2009, 484); mid-October (Cabanne 1979, 81); the end of October (Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 51); or to October 29 (Richardson 1991, 251).

Back in Spain again by January 1903,<sup>127</sup> he wrote to Max Jacob a few months later: “If I can work here, I will stay; but if I see that I can’t get anything done, I’ll leave straight for Paris. I’ve already worked quite hard and if I can do a bit more I won’t go to Paris until winter. This drawing I send you is the first payment, it’s a sketch of a painting I’ve made. I’ve made another painting like this. Be careful about who you keep company with. Men are very naughty, animals. I don’t care for them. You’ll give me a shout often, won’t you? Goodbye my dear Max, I embrace you. Your brother Picasso.”<sup>128</sup> Thanks to the accompanying sketch, we can date the follow-up painting *Ménage des pauvres*<sup>129</sup> which marked a return to the lonely couple theme, although rendered in a more realist mode. He heightened the dramatic impact of the scene by adding touches of red to the prevailing blue tones. The pair’s pose—their bent backs, the heaviness of the man’s arm resting on the table, and the woman’s empty gaze—betrays their utter despair.

One can see a correlation between the figures huddling together in that painting of April and the drawing *La vie (Étude)*<sup>130</sup> of early May. We know the precise date of the latter because it was painted on an invitation to a ceremony at the *Ateneu Barcelonès* honoring Bartomeu Robert (1842–1902), an eminent physician who had recently passed away. Dr. Robert had worked to achieve greater autonomy for Catalonia in his capacity as a leader of the *Lliga Regionalista*.<sup>131</sup> This and other related drawings would culminate in the masterful *La vie*,<sup>132</sup> an allegorical canvas.<sup>133</sup> Several of them would include a bearded man who enters the studio on the right and gestures towards the male figure on the opposite side, as if engaging him in conversation. At times the female companion has long hair flowing down her back, at other times her hair is either short or pulled up into a bun. In some, she appears pregnant and embraces the man beside her tenderly. As the painting progressed, the setting was transformed into a studio with canvases stacked against the wall representing different characters hunched over.<sup>134</sup> Picasso also included a second mysterious image—a *Noa Noa* woman enveloped by a large bird—which can still be dimly discerned in the underpainting of the crouching nudes. Since the latter seem to have stepped out of Gauguin’s *D’où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?*, which Picasso knew from Vollard’s, there is a case for seeing all of it as a response to the French artist, who had just died on May 8.<sup>135</sup>

During the coming months, he would work on this significant canvas, of which he would later say: “I was not the one who gave it that title, ‘La vie.’ I certainly had no intention of painting symbols; I just painted the images that rose before my eyes. It is for other people to find hidden meanings in them. As far as I am concerned, a painting speaks for itself. What is the use of giving explanations, when all is said and done? A painter has only one

<sup>127</sup> Richardson 1991, 260; McCully 1994, 212; Torras 2002, 102; Mahler 2015, 36; Roe 2015, 58; Unger 2018, 141; Perdrisot-Cassan & Mattiussi 2021, 394. Others date the return to early January (Roe 2015, 54); to late January (Bouvier 2019, 106; Frank 2021, 307); or simply to January (Cabanne 1979, 78; Geelhaar 1993, 22; McCully 1997, 39; Milde 2002, 397; Dagen 2009, 484; Tinterow & Stein 2010, 57; Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 52).

<sup>128</sup> Letter dated May 1, 1903 (Bouvier 2019, 110; Frank 2021, 307).

<sup>129</sup> *Ménage des pauvres*. Barcelona. April/1903. Oil on canvas. 81,5 x 65,5 cm. OPP.03:016.

<sup>130</sup> *La vie (Étude)*. Barcelona. 2-May/1903. India ink on invitation card. 26,7 x 19,7 cm. OPP.03:066.

<sup>131</sup> Robinson 2012, 21.

<sup>132</sup> *La vie*. Barcelona. [Spring–] Mid-May [–Summer]/1903. Oil on canvas. 196,5 x 129,2 cm. OPP.03:001.

<sup>133</sup> Robinson 2012, 5, 11; Robinson 2013, 64.

<sup>134</sup> Robinson 2012, 43.

<sup>135</sup> Richardson 1991, 273; Frank 2021, 307.

language.”<sup>136</sup> Exorcism, however, is indubitably one of the key interests in Picasso’s oeuvre, and surely *La vie* is the first major manifestation of it.<sup>137</sup> The completed picture showed a scrawny man with darkly lidded eyes and pursed lips standing in the left foreground wearing only a white loincloth. Embraced by a nude young female, he points emphatically toward an older, barefoot Madonna standing at the right, her serious face in profile, with a sleeping infant in the folds of her draped garments. The couple face the elderly woman but their glance is turned inward; engrossed in their own destiny. The painting has been variously interpreted as an allegory of sacred and profane love conveyed through the confrontation between the standing nude couple on the left and the mother and child on the right; or as a symbolic representation of the cycle of life, progressing from the pregnant woman to the infant and finally to the corpseslike woman pictured at lower center; or as a social critique with a working-class couple facing the hazards of real life, including unwanted pregnancy and venereal disease.<sup>138</sup> The peculiar pose of the young man in particular—an idealized portrait of Casagemas—seems fraught with enigmatic symbolism. Picasso had originally conceived the male character as a self-portrait in the traditional pose of the occult magus Hermes Trismegistus embodying the mystical notion that Heaven and Earth move in harmony, impelled by the same deep forces.<sup>139</sup> The gesture has also been identified with the tradition of *noli me tangere*.<sup>140</sup> In that sense, the painting can be considered as a response to his desire to attain autonomy and to make up for the resulting loss. In the face of all kinds of difficulties, Picasso presents himself both as Creator of a new art and its Messiah. If he felt guilty for abandoning the depressive friend, allowing him to return to Paris alone, then, as Cox suggests, substitution, as a form of identification, should be interpreted as reparation for guilt.<sup>141</sup>

#### 4. The Rose Period

Picasso had outgrown Barcelona by the spring of 1904. The city offered comfort and security, but not an audience capable of understanding what he was lately trying to achieve. Worse, it did not provide the stimulus he needed to grow as an artist. As many other great creators, he needed a challenging environment to thrive, being goaded by rivals as hungry for fame as he was himself, brilliant men from other disciplines as well, who could challenge him with ideas drawn from novel sources and offered him unfamiliar perspectives.<sup>142</sup> Hearing that a Montmartre studio would become available as Durrio was planning to abandon the *Bateau-Lavoir* for a larger space (with room for a pottery kiln) in the Maquis, Pablo took off for Paris on April 12.<sup>143</sup> He had hoped that Montmartre could serve as his permanent Parisian base. One sign of his determination to settle there was that he even brought along his dog Gat,

<sup>136</sup> O’Brian 1994, 121.

<sup>137</sup> Richardson 1991, 275; also Robinson 2013, 65.

<sup>138</sup> Bouvier 2019, 118.

<sup>139</sup> Unger 2018, 145.

<sup>140</sup> Becht-Jördens & Wehmeier 1999; Becht-Jördens & Wehmeier 2003.

<sup>141</sup> Cox 2010, 17–19.

<sup>142</sup> Unger 2018, 148.

<sup>143</sup> Palau 1980, 371; Richardson 1991, 293. Others date the return to mid-April (Rivero & Llorens 1992, 115; McCully 2011, 133; Mahler 2015, 38; Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 55; Perdrisot-Cassan & Mattiussi 2021, 394); or simply to April (Cabanne 1979, 87; Carmean 1980, 27; Cooper 1987, 14; Geelhaar 1993, 22; Milde 2002, 397; Cendoya, Dupuis-Labbé & Torras 2007, 324; Dagen 2009, 484; Riedel 2011, 67; Cowling 2016, 72; Gärtner 2011, 13); or later to May or June (O’Brian 1994, 124).

given to him a few months earlier by Utrillo.<sup>144</sup>

When not busy with work, Pablo would visit gallery shows all around him. One of them particularly got his attention. It was Matisse's first solo exhibition running June 1–18 at *Galerie Vollard*. It featured forty-five paintings and one drawing, dating from about 1897 through 1903. In the introduction to the catalogue, the critic Roger Marx praised the artist for having spurned fashionable success and recommended his harmonious synthesis of the lessons of Manet and Cézanne. Matisse had included a few early experimental works painted in Corsica but, otherwise, it mainly showcased works painted in shades of gray that Vollard still believed his clients preferred. In any event, neither style seemed to appeal, since there were no purchases. After the close of the show (for his usual sum of 200 francs), the gallerist offered to buy Matisse's first strongly experimental work that had scandalized his appreciative viewers, promptly reselling it on to a German collector.<sup>145</sup> While Pablo most probably visited, he had not had an opportunity to meet the French painter yet.<sup>146</sup>

From October 15 to November 15, the exhibition “Ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, dessin, gravure, architecture et art décoratif” ran during the *Salon d'Automne* at *Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées*, Paris. It included among its two thousand forty-four works, a Renoir room (thirty-five), a Toulouse-Lautrec room (twenty-eight), a Puvis room (forty-four) and a Cézanne room (thirty-one). For the latter, Matisse had lent *Trois baigneuses* in his collection. He was represented by fourteen paintings, as well as two of his plaster sculptures, the first time his work in this medium was shown to the public. He had returned to Paris this month, and would remain there until mid-May 1905.<sup>147</sup> He had brought with him another new painting, *Luxe, calme et volupté*, a sunny Arcadian scene painted predominantly in warm pink tones depicting a group of nude women relaxing on the beach and a single figure, her arms raised to her wet hair, emerging from the sea. However, the Arcadian dream, even on canvas, remained elusive, and under the constraining influence of Signac. Despite his exasperation with his protégé's work, the older painter would continue to assign him public roles. He was the one that had made him assistant secretary to this Salon and a member of the selection committee. But none of that paid the rent.<sup>148</sup> Yet, he had already caught art critics' attention. Louis Vauxcelles singled out him as the strongest of the group of former Moreau students. The Salon showed quite a number of paintings by Redon and Rouault too.

It is not known whether Picasso visited this important venue, but the Rouault's circus scenes and the delicate colors of Puvis and Redon clearly point to an influence in the transition to the Rose period.<sup>149</sup> The pictures of clowns, acrobats, and wrestlers, sometimes seen in action in a sideshow but more often shown in sad and lonely meditation, that Rouault had already begun to paint in 1903, and that he exhibited at the Salon were close in spirit to the Spaniard's. The pessimistic content of the Frenchman's works would surely have been meaningful to him. His

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<sup>144</sup> Unger 2018, 152.

<sup>145</sup> Roe 2015, 86; also Cousins & Elderfield 1992, 87.

<sup>146</sup> Bouvier 2019, 135.

<sup>147</sup> Cousins & Elderfield 1992, 87. Others date his return simply to autumn (Roe 2015, 96).

<sup>148</sup> Roe 2015, 96.

<sup>149</sup> Cousins & Elderfield 1992, 87; Parker 2003, 587–603; Riedel 2011, 61; Mahler 2015, 38; Bouvier 2019, 136; Frank 2021, 310.



symbolic conception of the clown, based on his recognition of “the contrast between brilliant, scintillating things intended to amuse us and this infinitely sad life” that the clown actually leads, and on his conviction that “this rich, spangled costume is given us by life, we’re all of us clowns, more or less,” is obviously very close to Pablo’s own conception.<sup>150</sup> One person that definitely stopped by the Salon was Leo Stein, as Cézanne’s work had started to attract the American’s attention. After his return to Paris, he had begun to haunt the more progressive dealers. While in Florence over the summer, Berenson had informed him that there were paintings by the Provençal artist to be seen in the city at Charles Loeser’s, a *Macy’s* heir and a most eclectic collector. For fear of shocking visitors, Loeser kept the numerous by the Frenchman hidden in his otherwise traditionally appointed villa. What Leo referred to as his “Cézanne debauch” would open his eyes and mind to modern art.<sup>151</sup> During the same period, Picasso had also become aware of the Cézanne compositions that explored the *Commedia dell’Arte* theme. In one of these, the painter had portrayed his son Paul in a Harlequin costume dressed for Mardi Gras, and in another he had repeated this figure joined by Paul’s friend as Pierrot. Pablo may have seen either or both of these works in person; the latter had been available at *Galerie Vollard* and became even more prominent when Cézanne exhibited it in this year’s Salon. In seeing these pictures, Picasso may have found there a kind of “authorization” to focus on these characters.<sup>152</sup>

By the end of the year, he painted two still lifes in the manner of Redon, *Fleurs dans un vase bleu*<sup>153</sup> and *Vase de fleurs*.<sup>154</sup> Picasso rarely painted bouquets unless he needed to raise money. One of these gouaches may be the flower piece that Fernande remembers the art dealer Eugène Soulié commissioned from Pablo.<sup>155</sup> In these works, we may also see an early reaction to the work of Matisse.<sup>156</sup>

*Famille d’acrobates avec singe*<sup>157</sup> is characterized by warm and delicate tones. The disappearance of the consistently blue monochrome has brought about a new type of composition set in three-dimensional space. Instead of expressing the feel of public places without human warmth as we saw in the Blue Period, the present emphasis on rose tonalities speaks of an intimacy fitting to a private home.<sup>158</sup> The acrobat’s costume is flattering, detailing the contours of his athletic body. The pleats of his white ruff are echoed in the folds of the dress worn by his female companion, sitting with an infant on her lap. They both have eyes only for the child, whose own gaze, however, is directed at the viewer, accepting his/her presence, although the attitude of the characters establishes the scene as intimate.<sup>159</sup> The slightly sad gracefulness of the two parents harmonizes with a delicacy of shape and touch that softens the animal aspect of the group.<sup>160</sup> Blunt and Pool associated this composition

<sup>150</sup> Reff 1971, 41.

<sup>151</sup> Potter 1970, 24; Richardson 1991, 396; Roe 2015, 99.

<sup>152</sup> Daix & Boudaille 1966, 70; Reff 1971, 38; Carmean 1980, 29.

<sup>153</sup> *Fleurs dans un vase bleu*. Paris. [End]/1904. Gouache and watercolor on wood. 61,5 x 47 cm. OPP.04:075.

<sup>154</sup> *Vase de fleurs*. Paris. [End]/1904. Gouache on paper. 62 x 47 cm. OPP.04:076.

<sup>155</sup> Frank 2021, 310.

<sup>156</sup> Richardson 1991, 411.

<sup>157</sup> *Famille d’acrobates avec singe*. Paris. [Early]/1905. Gouache, watercolor, pastel and India ink on cardboard. 104 x 75 cm. OPP.05:003.

<sup>158</sup> Daix 1965, 44.

<sup>159</sup> Bouvier 2019, 172.

<sup>160</sup> Cabanne 1979, 97.

with sixteenth-century representations of the Holy Family, as seen for example, in an etching by Dürer,<sup>161</sup> the ape replacing the the ox and the ass around the manger in the stable in Bethlehem. We have seen in other sections that it is not uncommon for Picasso to introduce this sort of mixture of sacred and profane motifs. Indeed, Read proposes to interpret it as a Darwinian allegory in which the figures are arranged to indicate an evolutionary pattern and genetic links relating humans to their ancestral forebears. An ape in the context of Christian imagery was meant as a provocative juxtaposition.<sup>162</sup> As it has also been pointed out, when Picasso started using this iconography, he did so ironically. Indeed, the baboon represented the artist himself with blatant erotic pride as an exaltation of creative powers.<sup>163</sup>

Clovis Sagot was aware of the allure of these new pieces and wrote on February 15 asking him to bring him several works, including *Arlequin assis sur fond rouge*<sup>164</sup> and *Le garçon au chien*.<sup>165</sup> Pablo obviously did not oblige, and the dealer was forced to visit him four days later in his studio where he bought those two works in addition to a watercolor entitled *La fleur du pavé*.<sup>166</sup> It might have been at this time that Sagot also acquired *Famille d'acrobates avec singe*, which would be included along with the others in the planned show a few days later.<sup>167</sup> Earlier on February 5, he received a letter from the critic Charles Morice advising him that the exhibition at *Galleries Serrurier* that he was organizing for him with Albert Trachsel and Auguste Gérardin was moving forward, with the opening set for February 25.<sup>168</sup> Morice would insist again on February 10 and February 11. Clearly Picasso had already accepted to participate, since Suzanne Bloch, who was in Brussels, wrote on February 13 telling him she was delighted that her portrait would be included.<sup>169</sup> For this exhibition, the Spaniard not only changed his subject matter, but he also switched from oils to gouache on cardboard for many of the pictures to be included. While his choice of tones of light blues and pinks could be associated with the acrobats' faded costumes, there was also a clear new poetic sensibility in the featured works influenced not only by Fernande, but also by his friendship with Apollinaire.<sup>170</sup> Morice sent him another pneumatique on February 18 requesting titles and prices for the works, with a reminder that it was absolutely necessary to have them framed. In addition, he discussed the catalogue on which he proposed they should collaborate. A series of lecture-discussions had also been planned by the gallery, as we know from their prospectus, on the back of which Picasso would draw *Jeune acrobate et singe*.<sup>171</sup> The showing was coming at the right moment for the Spaniard, for it would offer him a fresh opportunity to present himself as an artist in his own right—rather than in the reflected light of late-nineteenth-century French painters and one to be reckoned with on the contemporary

<sup>161</sup> Rivero & Llorens 1992, 160–162.

<sup>162</sup> Read 2011, 164–169.

<sup>163</sup> Christie's. #479, 9162, 05/13/99.

<sup>164</sup> *Arlequin assis sur fond rouge*. Paris. [Early]/1905. Watercolor and India ink on light cardboard. 57,2 x 41,2 cm. OPP.05:073.

<sup>165</sup> *Le garçon au chien*. Paris. [Mid-Winter]/1905. Gouache and pastel on cardboard. 57,2 x 41,2 cm. OPP.05:016.

<sup>166</sup> Richardson 1991, 355; Bouvier 2019, 160.

<sup>167</sup> Frank 2021, 311.

<sup>168</sup> Frank 2021, 311.

<sup>169</sup> McCully 2011, 227; Bouvier 2019, 179.

<sup>170</sup> McCully 2021, 20.

<sup>171</sup> *Jeune acrobate et singe*. Paris. [Early]/1905. Pen, ink and watercolor on paper. 21,6 x 12,7 cm. OPP.05:436.

Paris.<sup>172</sup>

Pablo wrote about the upcoming exhibition to Jacint Reventós in Barcelona on February 22: “You cannot imagine the happiness you gave me yesterday when I read your letter, because I have thought of you often and it has been a consolation for me to talk with you—you already know how lonely I am, always in the middle of a commotion and in the midst of a crowd which irritates me, but I am forced to deal with them because of interest and necessity—one has to eat—but if it were only that! ... [It’s terrible to be obliged to waste so much time, sometimes scrounging for the last peseta to pay for the studio or restaurant—and believe me all those struggles and all this trouble isn’t worth it—it’s wasted time. This only teaches you a practical and stupid moral, identical in everything to that of the last bourgeois of Barcelona. But, anyway, I continue working and in a few days I’m going to have a small exhibition. God willing people will like it and I’ll sell all I’m sending. Charles Morice is in charge of organizing it. He tries to cover whatever is in his hands in the *Mercure de France*—we’ll see about the results of all this.”<sup>173</sup> About his recent literary discoveries, he added: “Tell me whether you know Rabelais’ Gargantua. Perhaps you know it in Spanish, but what a difference. La Bruyère and all the classic French writers. One of these days I’ll send you a book by Pascal you may not know.”<sup>174</sup>

The locale of *Galeries Serrurier* on 37, boulevard Haussmann (principally an interior design and furniture shop) had had no previous or subsequent association with Picasso, and little is known about it beyond the name of the director, a Monsieur René Dulong, partner of the Belgian Gustave Serrurier-Bovy.<sup>175</sup> The catalogue of the exhibition, which ran from February 25 to March 6,<sup>176</sup> listed thirty paintings and gouaches plus three engravings and an album of drawings.<sup>177</sup> Eight Saltimbanques were listed, making it the first exhibition of works on his circus theme. The introduction was also written by Morice. Not much is known about what arrangements Picasso made with the gallery owners. Nor is there any record of sales. Most of the works were on consignment either from the artist himself or from Sagot, who had visited the *Bateau-Lavoir* on February 19 and purchased several items. This would be Picasso’s last Paris exhibition during the early period.

*Le Mercure de France* published Morice’s article “Art Moderne” on March 15. Quoting from his own preface to the *Galeries Serrurier* show, he wrote of the “luminous transformation of [Picasso’s] talent,” congratulating him on having dropped “his earlier somber vision,” the “sterile melancholy,” “a taste for the sad and ugly for their own sake,” “premature twilight of

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<sup>172</sup> McCully 2011, 142.

<sup>173</sup> McCully 1981, 51; McGregor-Hastie 1988, 45; Richardson 1991, 355; von Tavel 1992, 89; McCully 1997, 44–45; Roe 2015, 101; Unger 2018, 216; Bouvier 2019, 160; Frank 2021, 311.

<sup>174</sup> Read 1997, 213.

<sup>175</sup> McCully 2011, 140.

<sup>176</sup> Cabanne 1979, 99; Carmean 1980, 34; Daix 1992, 33; Torras 2002, 104; Cendoya, Dupuis-Labbé & Torras 2007, 324; Dagen 2009, 484; Roe 2015, 101. Others date the opening of the exhibition to February 24 (Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 362; Mahler 2015, 38); simply to February (McCully 1992, 53; McCully 1997, 44; Riedel 2011, 98); or incorrectly to February 1904 (O’Brian 1994, 124).

<sup>177</sup> Richardson 1991, 355; Daemgen 2005, 17; Bouvier 2019, 160. Others number the works at thirty-four paintings, drawings and prints, plus a sketchbook (Frank 2021, 311); or twenty-eight paintings and drawings, plus two estampes (presumably etchings), three engravings and one sketchbook (McCully 2011, 147; Geelhaar 1993, 23).

spleen,” etc.<sup>178</sup> What Morice called an anomaly, that is, the change from the Blue to the Rose style, Apollinaire saw as a “dichotomy.” During his earlier period, the artist had taken his preoccupation with the problems of society in the big city to the limits of exhaustion, and now he concentrated on essential aspects of color and lines. Outlines were seen not just as defining the contour of a body but as having their own form, while colors became independent, obeying only the will of the painter.<sup>179</sup> This is noticeable in works like the already cited *Acrobate à la boule (Fillette à la boule)*,<sup>180</sup> structured by a series of oppositions, between lightness and weight, movement and stability, line and volume. The association between the sphere and cube with the human forms may symbolize the contrast between the two characters, as we already mentioned, but more importantly, its occurrence is also prophetic of an interaction between organic and geometric form, and the artist’s ability to adapt nature to the laws of his art.<sup>181</sup> The play of contrasts between the girl’s agility and grace and the athlete’s raw bulk can be interpreted as a metaphor for the dexterity of the painter, and the balancing act involved in his mastery of pictorial language.<sup>182</sup>

It was probably around mid-March when, according to his own recollections, Leo Stein discovered the Spaniard’s work at an exhibition recommended to him by Sagot. It must have been the one at *Galeries Serrurier*, the only occurring at the beginning of the year. His sister Gertrude described the venue as “a little furniture store where there were some paintings being shown by Picasso.” Although that gallery’s premises could hardly be considered a “little store,” they were devoted to “furnishings and artistic decoration.” Having made an offer for a painting from this establishment, which remained unanswered, Leo would turn to Sagot and acquire *Famille d’acrobates avec singe* instead before the summer. This work was probably one of those shown at *Galeries Serrurier*, since in his poetic account of the exhibition (*La Plume*, May 1905) Apollinaire referred to “acrobats among the familiar monkeys, white horses and dogs resembling bears.”<sup>183</sup>

After the show, Picasso virtually ceased to exhibit in the city. Why court further misery of public showings when he could sell directly to dealers and collectors himself? Also, he did not want to pit himself publicly against emergent forces of Matisse and his associates until he felt sure that he had the upper hand. While he did not join any group shows or official exhibitions in France, Pablo did not have any problem with doing so outside the country. Still, following Zuloaga’s recommendation, he sent *Acrobate et jeune arlequin*<sup>184</sup> to the sixth *Biennale di Venezia* in mid-March; but it would be returned to him after a couple of days and would not be exhibited. His painter friend, who in the previous edition had obtained a gold medal, had been put in charge of gathering together the works of Spanish artists who were to exhibit in Hall no. XXI and in part of the International Central Hall.<sup>185</sup> Picasso was very disappointed, but this letdown did not prevent him from actively exhibiting in every major

<sup>178</sup> Cabanne 1979, 99; Richardson 1991, 356; von Tavel 1992, 89; Rivero & Llorens 1992, 158; Bouvier 2019, 162; Frank 2021, 311.

<sup>179</sup> von Tavel 1992, 91.

<sup>180</sup> *Acrobate à la boule (Fillette à la boule)*. Paris. [End-Winter]/1905. Oil on canvas. 146,4 x 94,9 cm. OPP.05:069.

<sup>181</sup> Rosenblum 1976, 14.

<sup>182</sup> Schapiro 1937, 92; Warncke & Walther 1991, 136; Bouvier 2019, 177.

<sup>183</sup> Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 362; also Roe 2015, 131; Unger 2018, 237.

<sup>184</sup> *Acrobate et jeune arlequin*. Paris. [Early]/1905. Gouache on cardboard. 105 x 76 cm. OPP.05:214.

<sup>185</sup> Rivero & Llorens 1992, 166.

European city, as long as it was not Paris.<sup>186</sup>

It was during the spring of 1905 that Leo Stein acquired *Famille d'acrobates avec singe* from Clovis Sagot.<sup>187</sup> Leo recalled: “There was a Spaniard whose works [Sagot] lauded, and as he had done me some favors I bought a little Spanish watercolor; but when he recommended another Spaniard. I balked. ‘But this is the real thing,’ he said. So I went to the exhibition, and in fact this was the real thing. Besides the pictures, there were some drawings for which I left an offer, since there was no one in charge of the show, but from this I heard nothing further. When, a few days later, I dropped in at Sagot’s to talk about Picasso, he had a picture by him which I bought. It was the picture of a mountebank with wife and child and an ape. The ape looked at the child so lovingly that Sagot was sure this scene was derived from life; but I knew more about apes than Sagot did, and was sure that no such baboon-like creature belonged in such a scene. Picasso told me later that the ape was his invention, and it was a proof that he was more talented as a painter than as a naturalist.”<sup>188</sup> Leo had not yet been introduced to Picasso, nor had he met Matisse.

In *Gil Blas*, Louis Vauxcelles wrote of the latter: “This young painter—yet another dissident from the Moreau studio who has risen freely towards the summits of Cézanne—is assuming, willingly or not, the position of leader of a school.<sup>189</sup> Matisse was on the hanging committee of the *Salon des Indépendants* which ran from March 24 to April 30. It featured a number of artists soon to be associated with Fauvism. Henri himself exhibited eight works, including *Luxe, calme et volupté*, which touched upon deep-seated fantasies of permanent pleasure, unlimited wealth, and erotic appropriation, attracting considerable attention and confirmed his position of leadership among his contemporaries, probably inspired by Seurat who was also included in a retrospective.<sup>190</sup> His new work featured blobs of high-keyed color that took on a life of their own, evoking the landscape but never losing their integrity as marks on the flat surface. Also, his brush traced graceful arabesques across the canvas that bore only the most general resemblance to the figures they described.<sup>191</sup>

It was already well into autumn<sup>192</sup> when Picasso completed *La famille de saltimbanques (Les bateleurs)*<sup>193</sup> The unity of the composition lies in the overall poetic atmosphere rather than in the legible details. It has been argued that Picasso gave Jacob’s features and small stature to the small wandering acrobat in the back; while the taller acrobat with a drum on his shoulder might have been based on the lean Salmon as Olivier described him in her memoir: “He was tall, thin, distinguished, with intelligent eyes in a very pale face, and he looked very young.”

<sup>186</sup> Richardson 1991, 357; Geelhaar 1993, 34; Bouvier 2019, 163; Frank 2021, 311.

<sup>187</sup> Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 362; also Unger 2018, 237. Others date this first purchase to late October (Richardson 1991, 397); or November (McCully 1997, 47; Bouvier 2019, 169; Frank 2021, 313, confusing it with the second purchase at Sagot’s, namely *Fillette à la corbeille fleurie (Linda la Bouquetière)*; others even reverse the order of acquisition of the two purchases by the Steins, claiming that *Fillette à la corbeille fleurie (Linda la Bouquetière)* was bought first and *Famille d'acrobates avec singe* second (Burns 1970, 125).

<sup>188</sup> Stein 1947, 169; Richardson 1991, 397.

<sup>189</sup> Article published March 23, 1905 (Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 363).

<sup>190</sup> Cousins & Elderfield 1992, 87; Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 363; Daemgen 2005, 17; Roe 2015, 101; Bouvier 2019, 162; Frank 2021, 311.

<sup>191</sup> Unger 2018, 222.

<sup>192</sup> Rivero & Llorens 1992, 250.

<sup>193</sup> *La famille de saltimbanques (Les bateleurs)*. Paris. [Late/1904]–[Fall]/1905. Oil on canvas. 212,8 x 229,6 cm. OPP.05:002.



Finally, the stout acrobat or jester in red costume once again bore an obvious resemblance to Apollinaire.<sup>194</sup> The possibility that the artist identified himself and his friends with his painted cast of characters offers some insight into his creative process, but it does not fully explain the meaning of the composition.<sup>195</sup> While capturing the marginal existence of the bohemia he still inhabited, he not only erased any signs of specific time or place, but also made his saltimbanques as immobile as figures in a Renaissance fresco.<sup>196</sup> Carmean pointed out that the picture appears as “a montage of numerous juxtaposed elements, each individually conceived in its own pictorial space.”<sup>197</sup> This brought about a change from the narrative to the symbolic.<sup>198</sup> By leaving everything so open-ended, Picasso evoked an environment that the spectator accepts as magical or poetic, intended to mask, rather than reveal, reality.

The exhibition “Ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, dessin, gravure, architecture et art décoratif” ran from October 18 to November 25 at the third *Salon d’Automne* at *Grand Palais* des Champs-Élysées. In addition to sculptures by Maillol (notably *La Méditerranée*), it featured the celebrated room VII with paintings by Matisse, Derain, Marquet, Vlaminck, Camoin and Manguin, the artists who became known as *Les Fauves*; as well as van Dongen and Renoir; and retrospectives of Manet (thirty-one paintings) and Ingres (sixty-eight paintings, including *Bain Turc*; a gallery of ten paintings by Cézanne; and a group of three paintings by Rousseau. The critic Louis Vauxcelles, who admired Le Douanier, claimed that his case demonstrated “that the most ignorant and untaught man can be a gifted artist. It was said of him that he was a kind of deaf-mute of painting, alone and intuitive, going merrily along his way, a way that no one could share and whose rules he himself didn’t know—if there were any rules.”<sup>199</sup> Also in room VII was a quattrocento-like bust, which is what had caused Vauxcelles in his preview of the Salon in *Gil Blas* to comment, “La candeur de ce buste surprend au milieu de l’orgie des tons purs: Donatello parmi les Fauves,” and christen the Fauve movement.<sup>200</sup> The paintings had put the president of the *Salon d’Automne*, Monsieur Jourdain, on guard. Though he had wished to appear tolerant, he nevertheless could not be seen to be too openly breaking with academic tradition. He had begged the jury not to accept Matisse’s landscape, insisting that their refusal could only be in the interests of Matisse himself. He was, however, overruled. The scandal of the exhibition was such that the President of the Republic refused to inaugurate the Salon.<sup>201</sup> Among Matisse’s later submissions were *Femme au chapeau* and *La raie verte*.<sup>202</sup> The majestic quality and front-facing position lend the latter portrait the charisma of an icon. Both had been submitted too late to appear in the catalogue but were on display, proving as subversive and high voltage as anything being shown by Vlaminck or Derain.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Reff 1971, 42–43.

<sup>195</sup> FitzGerald 2017, 155.

<sup>196</sup> McCully 1992, 54.

<sup>197</sup> Cowling 2002, 118–131.

<sup>198</sup> Carmean 1980, 50.

<sup>199</sup> Franck 2001, 105.

<sup>200</sup> Richardson 1991, 413; Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 363; Hülsewig-Johnen 2011, 39.

<sup>201</sup> Franck 2001, 67.

<sup>202</sup> Cousins & Elderfield 1992, 134.

<sup>203</sup> Roe 2015, 128.

The Salon exhibitions were the kind of place where innovative artists could make a splash and where dealers like Vollard and Weill often discovered new talent by mingling with the crowds to overhear the names of favorite newcomers. Thus, when Sergei Shchukin visited this year's exhibit, he reacted instinctively to the mastery of Matisse's Fauve paintings, and asked Vollard to introduce him to the artist. He would not only purchase exiting works but also commission many of the Frenchman's later masterpieces.<sup>204</sup> Picasso, unlike the older artist, never made any attempt to show at either Salon, an odd choice for someone wishing to claim his place as a new leader, but perfectly in keeping with his skeptical attitude toward banal publicity. Putting his work in front of the vulgar crowd, begging for their affirmation, struck him as a kind of sell out.<sup>205</sup> Indeed, Salmon wrote about the Spaniard's absence in "Au Salon d'Automne," published in *La Revue littéraire de Paris et de Champagne* (No. 32): "Picasso, with whom we meet, is not in the exhibition, doubtless with very good reason, but we regret not seeing here his visionary Harlequins, his prophetic children, his breathless flowers and dolorous mothers. Vollard and Sagot more happily are exhibiting some of his incomparably poignant canvases. Painters and poets are duty-bound to go down rue Laffitte. People know too well the boulevard and not enough rue Laffitte, so nearby, where there are ten canvases by Picasso, which are the newest contribution to painting for ten years, and at Durand-Ruel's there is an incomparable El Greco that Madrid could not hold onto."<sup>206</sup>

In early November, Leo Stein discovered *Fillette à la corbeille fleurie (Linda la Bouquetière)*<sup>207</sup> at Sagot's. The dealer had placed an advertisement for it under the title *La fleur du pavé* on the cover of *Le Courrier Français* (November 2).<sup>208</sup> Gertrude did not approve of the painting. She later wrote that "she found something rather appalling in the drawing of the legs and feet, something that repelled and shocked her. She and her brother almost quarreled about this picture. He wanted it and she did not want it in the house. Sagot gathering a little of the discussion said, but that is alright if you do not like the legs and feet it is very easy to guillotine her and only take the head. No that would not do, everybody agreed, and nothing was decided."<sup>209</sup>

Over his sister's objections, Leo went back to Sagot's, where, he said, he briefly met Picasso again, and bought *Fillette à la corbeille fleurie (Linda la Bouquetière)* for 150 francs, twice what the artist had been paid for it. He later wrote: "That day I came home late to dinner, and Gertrude was already eating. When I told her I had bought the picture she threw down her knife and fork and said, 'Now you've spoiled my appetite. I hated that picture with feet like a monkey's.'"<sup>210</sup> Leo was in a buying spree. A week before the *Salon d'Automne* closed, Matisse received a startling telegram from him. The American was offering 300 francs (200 less than the asking price, the bargaining tactic recommended by the Salon committee) for *Femme au chapeau*, his first acquisition by that artist. The painter was ready to rush out and

<sup>204</sup> Richardson 1991, 392.

<sup>205</sup> Unger 2018, 200.

<sup>206</sup> Read 2011, 159–160; McCully 2011, 184; Frank 2021, 313.

<sup>207</sup> *Fillette à la corbeille fleurie (Linda la Bouquetière)*. Paris. [Late-Summer]/1905. Oil on canvas. 154,8 x 66,1 cm. OPP.05:030.

<sup>208</sup> Richardson 1991, 397; Daix 1992, 39; Bouvier 2019, 169.

<sup>209</sup> Cabanne 1979, 102; Richardson 1991, 397; Daemgen 2005, 18; Rabinow 2006, 105; also O'Brian 1994, 137, 139; Franck 2001, 87; Roe 2015, 131; Unger 2018, 237.

<sup>210</sup> Richardson 1991, 398; Frank 2021, 313.

accept the offer; his wife Amélie, however, persuaded him to hold his nerve and demand the full asking price. After an excruciating week, a second telegram arrived: the buyer agreed to the higher sum. “I was so moved,” Matisse would remember, “I could not speak.”<sup>211</sup> Leo was afterward taken by Henri Manguin to meet the artist,<sup>212</sup> who was already at work on *Le bonheur de vivre (La joie de vivre)*. Stein would later bring Michael and Sarah also to see him. They would end up buying the second controversial portrait of Amélie *La raie verte* at the Salon.<sup>213</sup>

## 5. Gauguin and Beyond

Following the completion of *La famille de saltimbanques (Les bateleurs)*, Picasso had planned another ambitious, multigure picture on the theme of a group of nude adolescents watering their horses in an arid, mountainous landscape. The studies for the project suggest a grand, elegiac painting on a very large scale featuring. The relationship with the 1905 masterpiece cannot be overstated. As seen in one of the studies, not only did the composition share a similar dusty palette and landscape with it, one might claim that it is a temporal sequel to it, with the circus figures having stripped to bathe and wash their horses. In earlier sketches like *Le meneur de cheval nu: fillette à cheval (Étude)*,<sup>214</sup> the youth leading the horse had even worn a saltimbanque’s costume. The androgynous mood is another similarity, one that Apollinaire had evoked in his review of the *Galleries Serrurier* show: “These impuberate adolescents reveal the restless searching of innocence, the animals teach them religious mysteries. The Harlequins accompany the glory of women, resemble them; they are neither men nor women.”<sup>215</sup> But Picasso had put an end to that theme with *La mort d’arlequin*,<sup>216</sup> preferring now a more Arcadian setting. He shut himself up in his studio for hours and hours on end in response to his need to attend to the unfolding mysteries. As Palau remarked, it was not simply a matter of aesthetic concentration, but rather his absorption had “a Faust-like dimension” to it. Those images he put down acted on him as fertilizing agents. The fertilization led to the emergence of new beings, and this may have come about through confrontation between his art and a perception of reality.<sup>217</sup> Those visions were clearly in the spirit of both Gauguin and Puvis (whose work had been featured at the recent *Indépendants*).<sup>218</sup> While Picasso calmly borrowed what he needed, he never did so without first going through periods of reflection that with time bore the desired fruit.<sup>219</sup> He was looking for a combination of classical and primitive. What had attracted him to Puvis was his would-be-modern way of classicizing things by simplifying drawing, eliminating anecdotal detail to establish an idyllic mood.<sup>220</sup>

1906 was a transitional year for Picasso. During the following months of intense work, a

<sup>211</sup> Roe 2015, 129; Unger 2018, 226.

<sup>212</sup> Unger 2018, 239.

<sup>213</sup> Cousins & Elderfield 1992, 134.

<sup>214</sup> *Le meneur de cheval nu: fillette à cheval (Étude)*. Paris. [Mid-Spring]/1906. Chalk and watercolor on paper. 49,5 x 32,1 cm. OPP.06:734.

<sup>215</sup> Tinterow & Stein 2010, 83.

<sup>216</sup> *La mort d’arlequin*. Paris. End/1905–Early/1906. Gouache over charcoal on cardboard. 68,5 x 95,7 cm. OPP.05:504.

<sup>217</sup> Palau 1980, 432.

<sup>218</sup> McCully 1997, 48.

<sup>219</sup> Daix 1992, 42–43.

<sup>220</sup> Richardson 1991, 424.

painter of late-nineteenth-century sensibility would be reborn as a prophet of modernity. As Under notes, he took crucial steps on the path to an artistic revolution with no clear destination in mind except the intention to take his art in a new direction to challenge Matisse and his Fauve colleagues. In seeking an alternative to the Frenchman's chromatic profligacy, he steeped himself in the art of the past. His search led him once again to the art not just of Puvis, but also Ingres, as we will see.<sup>221</sup>

It is approximately in late winter<sup>222</sup> that the eighty to ninety sitting sessions began for the oil *Portrait de Gertrude Stein*.<sup>223</sup> While he was at work on it, Etta Cone, Gertrude's old friend from Baltimore, paid frequent visits to the studio. Etta did not like the portrait, and found Pablo and Fernande "appalling but romantic." However, she allowed herself to be persuaded by her friend into helping out the artist. Whenever the Spaniard's finances started to fail, she or her sister, Dr. Claribel, were "made to buy 100 francs' worth of drawings."<sup>224</sup> In her autobiography, Stein recalled the setting of her portrait: "Picasso had never had anybody pose for him since he was sixteen years old. He was then twenty-four and Gertrude had never thought of having her portrait painted, and they do not know either of them how it came about ... There was a large broken armchair where Gertrude Stein posed. There was a couch where everybody sat and slept. There was a little kitchen chair where Picasso sat to paint. There was a large easel and there were many canvases ... She took her pose, Picasso sat very tight in his chair and very close to his canvas and on a very small palette, which was of a brown-gray color, mixed some more brown gray and the painting began. This was the first of some eighty or ninety sittings."<sup>225</sup>

In painting her, Pablo needed to describe the strength of her character and mind as well as to describe her arresting appearance. For that purpose, he once again resorted to a known masterpiece, and one which had some connection with her: Ingres's *Portrait de Louis-François Bertin*. Striving for a comparable impersonal grandeur, he allowed Gertrude's right hand to hang down in a relaxed fashion over her knee and keep her head slightly averted, presenting her in a pensive attitude thus suggesting that she belonged to the world of thinkers.<sup>226</sup> Those who knew her noted how he had caught her in a characteristic pose, leaning forward in an attitude of concentrated attention. The contours of the voluminous cloak with its wide sleeves make her look massive. The whole picture bears out John Brown's comment on Gertrude that "she imposed her authority not only by her work but most powerfully by her presence."<sup>227</sup> The original version of the canvas made on the first day was striking. When her two brothers arrived at the end of that sitting, bringing Andrew Green with them, the latter begged the painter to leave the portrait in this preliminary state. But Picasso obstinately refused.<sup>228</sup> His work on Gertrude's portrait continued through March.<sup>229</sup> Practically every day after lunch, she would take a horse-drawn omnibus across Paris from

<sup>221</sup> Unger 2018, 258, 264, 266.

<sup>222</sup> Cousins & Daix 1989, 340; O'Brian 1994, 140.

<sup>223</sup> *Portrait de Gertrude Stein*. Paris. [Late-Winter-Fall]/1906. Oil on canvas. 100 x 81,3 cm. OPP.06:027.

<sup>224</sup> Richardson 1991, 404.

<sup>225</sup> Stein 1961, 42-43.

<sup>226</sup> Cowling 2002, 152-160.

<sup>227</sup> Vallentin 1963, 72.

<sup>228</sup> Stein 1961, 43-44; Vallentin 1963, 72; Cabanne 1979, 105; Richardson 1991, 403; Tinterow & Stein 2010, 109.

<sup>229</sup> Bouvier 2019, 208.

the Odéon to the Place Blanche and then drudged through the stiff climb up to the *Bateau-Lavoir*. By this time, he found the actual presence of a model altogether unnecessary, but when he reverted to custom in order to make a particularly careful portrait, he usually made heavy demands on his model.<sup>230</sup> After posing for most of the afternoon, Gertrude strode back down the hill of Montmartre, across the Seine to rue de Fleurus. Saturday evenings the Picassos joined her and dined at her place. Those evenings eventually developed into the Steins' weekly salon.<sup>231</sup>

His work was beginning to be recognized by a small circle of dealers and gallerists whose judgment he valued. They acknowledged him as a leader of the avant-garde, and increasing numbers of collectors made the trek to the summit of the Butte to purchase his pictures, relieving the usual anxiety about his immediate prospects and the day-to-day hardships. Surrounded by admiring friends and happy in love, he felt an emotional security he had never experienced outside of his family. But he was not satisfied.<sup>232</sup> While his fame was on the rise, Matisse's was already established. The exhibition devoted to Redon and Manet at *Galerie Durand-Ruel* running from February 28 to March 15 might have been the backdrop for an exchange between the two artists, reported by Leo Stein, that indicates that they had previously met. He recalled: "At Durand-Ruel's there were at one time two exhibitions on, one of Odilon Redon, and one of Manet. Matisse was at this time specially interested in Redon. When I happened in he was there, and spoke at length of Redon and Manet, with emphasis on the superior merits of the lesser man ... He told me he had seen Picasso earlier, and Picasso had agreed with him ... Later on that same day Picasso came to the house and I told him what Matisse had said about Redon and Manet. Picasso burst out almost angrily, 'But that is nonsense. Redon is an interesting painter, certainly, but Manet, Manet is a giant.' I answered, 'Matisse told me you agreed with him.' Picasso, more angrily: 'Of course I agreed with him. Matisse talks and talks. I can't talk, so I just said oui ouioui. But it's damned nonsense all the same'"<sup>233</sup> This and other factors suggest that their first meeting may have taken place several weeks before the March *Salon des Indépendants*, which is when Picasso himself later said they had first met.<sup>234</sup>

Now that he had been able to assess his adversary face to face, the competitive Picasso went into his work, as it were, full steam; he could no longer allow Matisse's supremacy to go unchallenged. In the face of his rival's ubiquity, he preferred to remain aloof, biding his time until he felt he had the upper hand.<sup>235</sup> Bois sees the interaction between the two artists as "a dialogue" using Mikhail Bakhtin's term where understanding is to utterance as one line of dialogue is to the next, striving to match the speaker's word with a counter word from the listener. To that extent, the overall production of both should be examined in relation to each other.<sup>236</sup> But if Picasso and Matisse were rivals from almost the first moment each knew of the other's existence, the contest was driven as much by those cheering from the sidelines as

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<sup>230</sup> Penrose 1981, 117–118.

<sup>231</sup> Richardson 1991, 404; also Franck 2001, 87–88; Unger 2018, 252; Roe 2015, 136.

<sup>232</sup> Unger 2018, 259.

<sup>233</sup> Stein 1947, 171; Daix 2007, 11; Bouvier 2019, 208; Frank 2021, 313.

<sup>234</sup> Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 362.

<sup>235</sup> Richardson 1991, 414–416.

<sup>236</sup> Bois 1998, 16.



by their own considerable egos. It was Montmartre versus the Latin Quarter, the *bande à Picasso* versus the Fauves, the Dionysian force of the Spaniard versus the Apollonian grace of the Frenchman.<sup>237</sup>

And yet, there is a certain complicity between *Chevaux au bain*<sup>238</sup> and the Arcadian *Bonheur de Vivre* that Matisse had exhibited at the *Salon des Indépendants*.<sup>239</sup> He had probably also seen Gauguin's *Cavaliers sur la plage* at Vollard's in 1903. Two boys stand in the middle of the composition next to twin horses that resemble chariot horses on a Greek mirror back; one is black, the other white. On one side, a boy rides toward us, and on the other, one turns away. But Picasso relied on other sources as well. The gouache reflects the early Renaissance practice of showing figures repeated in the same composition although reversed. It was a conspicuous feature in Mantegna, on whom Leo Stein was planning to write a book, and he might have pointed it out to him. There are echoes of Cézanne as well. Although he did not need the Steins to develop an interest in that artist, it would have been impossible for Leo not to convey his excitement over the Provençal painter's work at the 1905 *Salon d'Automne*.<sup>240</sup> Pablo had also taken mental notes from Degas jockey scenes like *Avant la course*. Finally, the fresco-like palette of grayed pinks, ochre, and pale blue bears the imprint of Puvis, whose work had been celebrated in Paris in 1904.<sup>241</sup>

His name was probably mentioned when he attended a *petite réunion espagnole* on April 25 in Ignacio Zuloaga's studio at 54, rue de Caulaincourt to celebrate the christening of his son Antonio. Zuloaga was the owner of El Greco's *Visión del Apocalipsis*, and he had been a pioneer in the rehabilitation of the Greek painter. Also in attendance were Degas, Rodin, Rilke, Albéniz and the Pichot clan (Ramón, his sister María Gay, Edouard Marquina, La Carmela, Llobet, and Uranga). Seeing the painting made him consider the possibility of a temporary return to Spain where he could show the world that he was the new El Greco. This is he could only do away from Paris, perhaps in some simple place where he could concentrate and put everything together in a new way.<sup>242</sup> It would not be so much a matter of resupply as of asserting independence.<sup>243</sup> In the May–June issue of *Revue de Paris et de Champagne*, Salmon published his poem “Arthur Rimbaud” in which he glorified the poet as child genius, rebel angel, African adventurer, and utopian visionary, all aspects that would have struck a chord in Picasso at this point.<sup>244</sup> This sense of visionary rebellion he sensed in Rimbaud would be replicated in the figure of Paul Gauguin reinforced at the end of April. Leo Stein had written on April 12 to inform him he had planned to call on Gustave Fayet, a major collector of Gauguin's work.<sup>245</sup> He had moved to Paris from Béziers in 1905, and had along his numerous wooden sculptures, paintings and works on paper. The collection also included ceramics, especially the stoneware figure *Oviri*, which he had made in 1894 and left

<sup>237</sup> Unger 2018, 229.

<sup>238</sup> *Chevaux au bain*. Paris. [Early-Spring]/1906. Gouache on tan paper board. 37,8 x 58,1 cm. OPP.06:061.

<sup>239</sup> Palau 1992, 76; Daix 2007, 11.

<sup>240</sup> Tinterow & Stein 2010, 83.

<sup>241</sup> Richardson 1991, 424; McCully 2011, 195; Bouvier 2019, 211.

<sup>242</sup> Richardson 1991, 431.

<sup>243</sup> Daix 1993, 58.

<sup>244</sup> Read 1997, 213.

<sup>245</sup> Daix 2007, 11; Baldassari 2007, 334; Bouvier 2019, 211; Frank 2021, 314.

with his patron before returning to Tahiti in June 1895.<sup>246</sup> Gauguin's strong influence would come to the fore in Picasso's high reliefs and canvases painted during the summer in Gósol and in Paris during the autumn<sup>247</sup> in woodcuts such as *Buste de jeune femme de trois-quarts (Fernande)*.<sup>248</sup>

Around mid-winter, he visited the *Louvre* exhibition of Iberian sculptures dating largely to the fourth century BC that had been excavated a few years earlier at Osuna and Cerro de los Santos, revealing to him a primitive art indigenous to his own country that he had been unaware of.<sup>249</sup> To the nonarcheological eye these objects might have seemed of minor aesthetic value, they tended to be small and crude in execution, but to him they were a major revelation. In addition to their atavistic aura, roughness and primitiveness commended them to someone who was looking for ways to demolish traditional canons.<sup>250</sup> There was a sense among all avant-garde painters that Western traditions were spent, and each in his own way was attempting to revitalize artistic practice by tapping into something more primeval, more authentic. For an artist like Matisse, it was Persian miniatures, medieval icons, etc., that provided alternative modes of expression which, when combined with his bright palette, gave rise to unprecedented forms. Picasso was setting out on a similar journey, but with a different destination, more in keeping with his temperament, and the sources he looked to also differed from the Frenchman's. The Iberian statues he saw at the *Louvre* reflected the native art of his native Spain before the "civilizing" impact of Greece and Rome. Far from being put off by their slipshod execution, he cherished their raw power. This was exactly what he had been searching for in his own art—a candid approach to form free from any refinement.<sup>251</sup>

It is no coincidence that the period in which primitive Iberian art was being unearthed witnessed an unprecedented change in Western art. It responded to a longing for deeper forms of existence. For artists this meant a need to invoke the mysterious totality of life linking the seemingly disparate worlds of modern and ancient art. Gauguin expressed in his works a desire to recapture that power of origins lurking in the mythic imagination and ritual enactment of primitive cultures. In his view, modern art should look for that replenishing metamorphosis that primitive artistic practices generated. Erich Neuman spoke of a "breakdown of consciousness" that would carry the artist back to "archaic qualities of participation mystique" leading to "constructive, creative elements of a new world vision."<sup>252</sup>

After *Le meneur de cheval nu*,<sup>253</sup> Picasso embarked on another large vertical composition, *La coiffure*,<sup>254</sup> which would be painted in similar neutral colors. Once again the artist adapted an element from earlier sketches depicting one girl dressing another's hair. That Picasso should

<sup>246</sup> Mahler 2015, 52.

<sup>247</sup> Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 363.

<sup>248</sup> *Buste de jeune femme de trois-quarts*. Paris. Summer–Fall/1906. Woodcut on tissue-thin tan Japon. 56 x 38,5 cm. OPP.06:101.

<sup>249</sup> Osuna is less than fifty miles from his birthplace in Andalusia (Frank 2021, 313). Others date the discovery to before May (Fluegel 1980, 59); or spring (Cabanne 1979, 108; Golding 1968, 52; Cousins & Daix 1989, 341; Richardson 1991, 428; Baldassari 2007, 334; Daix 2007, 10; Unger 2018, 272).

<sup>250</sup> Richardson 1991, 428.

<sup>251</sup> Unger 2018, 272.

<sup>252</sup> Tucker 1992, 1–26.

<sup>253</sup> *Le meneur de cheval nu*. Paris. [Mid–Late-Spring]/1906. Oil on canvas. 220,6 x 131,2 cm. OPP.06:012.

<sup>254</sup> *La coiffure*. [Paris]. [End-Spring–Fall]/1906. Oil on canvas. 174,9 x 99,7 cm. OPP.06:015.

conceive the figures as clothed rather than nude ties it to his earlier circus scenes, although the lack of any specificity in the setting connects to the timeless mood of his recent work.<sup>255</sup> The theme of dressing one's hair in front of a mirror can be traced back to classical antiquity and is especially prevalent in art whether academic or avant-garde of the nineteenth century. It is usually associated with Degas's celebrated series of nudes, shown in Paris at the 1886 Impressionist exhibition and revisited in his oeuvre until about 1910. But it is unlikely that Picasso could have seen many such examples. He more likely drew inspiration from Ingres, as that same source was used by Puvis in his development of the motif. Pablo had seen Puvis's murals at the *Panthéon*, and had recently visited the special display of his works at the 1904 *Salon d'Automne* which had also included *La toilette*. The Ingres exhibition at the 1905 *Salon d'Automne* seems to have equally revived Picasso's interest in his form of classicism, because it was soon afterward that he was prompted to begin work on this theme so dear to him. He might have been directly inspired by the central figure in Ingres's *Le Bain Turc* that takes a similar pose as she had her hair perfumed. The contrast between the original conventional conception and the bold final execution suggests that it was started in the Neoclassical spring and finished, like *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, in the Archaic autumn.<sup>256</sup> The earlier open forms had left plenty of air to circulate around them. This was followed by a tightening of the contours as seen in *La coiffure* with the sculptural figures grouped in squat, superimposed blocks with full rounded angles. In fact, the folds of the skirt of the seated woman as well as the coloring of the flesh of all three models and their background, make it appear as though carved out of a solid block of wood.<sup>257</sup> He chose to suppress any eroticism that normally attends the toilette theme, turning the picture into a contrapuntal variation on the Holy Family, with echoes of Leonardo's *La Vierge, l'Enfant Jésus et sainte Anne* at the *Musée du Louvre*.<sup>258</sup> The representation of the seated female also looks forward to future practice in the simultaneous depiction of face and bust from different angles. Initially, Picasso probably thought of giving the image more classical facial features but modified them when completing the composition to give her face of the standing woman a masklike expression.

Vollard visited his studio on May 6. He had written two days earlier apologizing for being unable to meet as originally agreed on May 1: "Please excuse me. I will come by without fault Sunday [May 6] in the morning and ask that you assemble all that you want to show me. I will come a little earlier than last Sunday, around 10 o'clock. Best wishes Vollard, 6 rue Laffitte."<sup>259</sup> On his visit he purchased twenty-seven of his most important early canvases for a total of 2,000 francs, amounting to twice the annual wage of a laborer. This was a staggering price for the then little-known twenty-five-year old.<sup>260</sup> News spread fast all over town. Leo wrote a brief note to Matisse on May 8 informing him of the remarkable purchase: "I am sure that you will be pleased to know that Picasso has done business with Vollard. He has not sold everything but he has sold enough to give him peace of mind during the summer and perhaps longer. Vollard has taken 27 pictures, mostly old ones, a few of the more recent

<sup>255</sup> Tinterow & Stein 2010, 86.

<sup>256</sup> Richardson 1991, 428; Bouvier 2019, 247.

<sup>257</sup> Vallentin 1963, 71.

<sup>258</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC 2022.

<sup>259</sup> Rabinow 2006, 105; Bouvier 2019, 211.

<sup>260</sup> Blier 2019, 20–21.

ones, but nothing major. Picasso was very happy with the price.” The style of this communication suggests that Matisse already knew “his opponent” sufficiently to take a particular interest in his financial situation, which was otherwise extremely difficult at that time.<sup>261</sup>

By May 11, he had gotten the money from Vollard for the twenty-seven paintings.<sup>262</sup> With the fresh cash in his pocket, he prepared specific plans for the trip home. He would take Fernande, and go first to Barcelona to introduce her to his parents. Then he would look for a quieter place to concentrate on his work. He had heard of Gósol, a little village in Upper Catalonia, five thousand feet up in the Pyrenees, near Andorra, through Enric Casanovas, who split his time between Barcelona and Paris and sometimes spent the summer there. The place might have also been suggested by his old friend Jacint Reventós, who used to send his patients there to convalesce: “good air, good water, good milk and good meat.”<sup>263</sup> Such an isolated place could bring about the changes he desired in his work. He could develop a form of purity and unpolluted primitivism in his style as Gauguin had found in Tahiti or Pont-Aven.<sup>264</sup>

He was determined to win over Matisse. The Frenchman was getting the attention of Russian collectors. Sergei Shchukin had visited the show at *Galerie Druet* by the time he saw *Le bonheur de vivre (La joie de vivre)* at the *Salon des Indépendants* and had asked Vollard to introduce him to the painter.<sup>265</sup> In Moscow, Shchukin lived in the grand *Palais Trubetskoy*, where the walls were lined with major works. He had been collecting modern art for eight years, starting with Monet and Renoir, then van Gogh. More recently, he had acquired works by Gauguin, which, had he hung them in the open, would have shocked his associates in Russia, so he kept them discreetly out of sight.<sup>266</sup> Perhaps he would be interested in whatever Picasso ended up bringing back from Spain.

Friends accompanied Pablo and Fernande to the station on May 20 to see them off on what would prove to be an arduous journey. They traveled third-class in a compartment that was too uncomfortable for sleep. The following day they stopped for lunch at Narbonne where at least they could stretch their legs.<sup>267</sup> They then continued to the border, where they switched to first class so as to arrive in style.<sup>268</sup> After a few weeks in Barcelona, they moved on to Gósol.<sup>269</sup> Fernande had lived with Picasso for almost a year and had known him for twice that long, but it is only at Gósol that her presence really made itself felt in his work. Portraits of her done over the next few months give off an incandescent glow. The earliest one,

<sup>261</sup> Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 362.

<sup>262</sup> Rabinow 2006, 107; also Baldassari 2007, 334.

<sup>263</sup> Richardson 1991, 434; Palau 1992, 76; Torras 2002, 105; Daix 2007, 12; Tinterow & Stein 2010, 116; McCully 2011, 196; Unger 2018, 276; Bouvier 2019, 212.

<sup>264</sup> Rosenblum 1996, 268; Franck 2001, 88.

<sup>265</sup> Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 363.

<sup>266</sup> Roe 2015, 152.

<sup>267</sup> Richardson 1991, 435; Rivero & Llorens 1992, 300.

<sup>268</sup> Baldassari, Cowling, Laugier & Monod-Fontaine 2002, 363; Daix 2007, 12; Baldassari 2007, 334; Mahler 2015, 42; Caruncho & Fàbregas 2017, 63; Roe 2015, 157; Frank 2021, 314. Others date the trip to early May (Torras 2002, 105); mid-May (Cabanne 1979, 107); or simply to May (Fluegel 1980, 59; Salus 2015, 83).

<sup>269</sup> On June 2, 1906 (Rosenblum 1996, 263; Salus 2015, 83). Others date the trip earlier to May (Dagen 2009, 74); to early June (Richardson 1991, 435; Palau 1992, 75; Cowling 2016, 84; Frank 2021, 315); simply to June (Mahler 2015, 42); early summer (Golding 1968, 52); or even more generally to summer (Warncke & Walther 1991, 143).

*Portrait de Fernande*,<sup>270</sup> was the most literal. Her beautiful features are built up out of delicate touches of pink, terracotta and vermilion. Most of the canvas has been left bare in a way that suggests the work of Ingres, but gradually her portrait took on a Gauguinesque air of mystery and gravity, turning Fernande into a persona Picasso wanted to evoke rather than depict.<sup>271</sup>

Though thinly and sketchily executed, his paintings hovered on the brink of sculpture. Picasso was evidently tempted to think in three dimensions, as his friends Manolo and Casanovas had been urging him to do. Once again Gauguin played a part, this time in his woodcarving. *Noa Noa* described how he and a young Tahitian went on an expedition to the mountains in search of rosewood—traditionally used for carvings of idols. As the Frenchman hacked away ecstatically, he rid himself of “mon vieux stock de civilisé” and became a new man, a “Maori.” Each time he took his chisel to the piece of wood, he felt “a sweet quietude ... a victory ... a rejuvenation.”<sup>272</sup> Picasso felt the same for the remote village he had temporarily chosen. Through August, the Spaniard would work on similar woodblocks, including *Nu aux bras levés*<sup>273</sup> that clearly demonstrate the shift toward a primitivist language.<sup>274</sup>

Gósol also prompted Picasso to branch out in a new direction around late summer. He addressed himself seriously to the genre of still life. On previous occasions, his leaving his habitual residence had aroused the need to immerse himself in his surroundings. The painted motifs in this case are objects of everyday use: sugar-bowls, chocolate pots, soup tureens, oil and vinegar sets, and *porrones*, containers made in the typical shapes and from the material of the area.<sup>275</sup> Early examples like *Nature morte: fleurs dans un vase*<sup>276</sup> showed small vases embellished with colorful flowers. They hark back to Redon in their pastel delicacy. Later ones look ahead to Morandi in their seeming simplicity and innocence with their earthy ochres and subtle color harmonies. With the arrangement of humble everyday objects and the interplay between translucent or opaque surfaces and squat or elongated forms, as well as its earthy palette, *Nature morte aux vases (Le porron)*<sup>277</sup> firmly belongs to the tradition of Spanish still-life painting. Each item exists within its own spatial zone, while being subordinate both to the strict overall rhythm and to the logic of confrontation and interaction in the composition. Everything is as terracotta or flesh-colored as in a figure painting; and the ubiquitous *porrón* makes once again a phallic pun. Indeed, the composition is divided into a male half (the vertical glass vessels on the left) and a female half (the rounded pots on the right, one of which has a breast-like lid).<sup>278</sup>

Another erotically charged still life is *Nature morte au tableau*.<sup>279</sup> The canvas shows a table

<sup>270</sup> *Portrait de Fernande*. Gósol. Summer/1906. Oil on canvas. 100 x 81 cm. OPP.06:173.

<sup>271</sup> Richardson 1991, 445.

<sup>272</sup> Richardson 1991, 442.

<sup>273</sup> *Nu aux bras levés*. Gósol. [Early-July]/1906. Carved wood. 46,5 x 4,5 x 6,5 cm. OPP.06:351.

<sup>274</sup> Bouvier 2019, 215.

<sup>275</sup> Rivero & Llorens 1992, 310.

<sup>276</sup> *Nature morte: fleurs dans un vase*. Gósol. [Late-Summer]/1906. Gouache on cardboard. 72,1 x 55,9 cm. OPP.06:159.

<sup>277</sup> *Nature morte aux vases (Le porron)*. Gósol. [Late-Summer]/1906. Oil on canvas. 38,5 x 56 cm. OPP.06:036.

<sup>278</sup> Richardson 1991, 441.

<sup>279</sup> *Nature morte au tableau*. Gósol. [Late-Summer]/1906. Oil on canvas. 82 x 100,4 cm. OPP.06:094.



covered by a blue-gray cloth; the objects on it, placed in a dull arrangement, are all seen in profile; a warm brown teapot sits between a small jade-green cup and a violet-gray bottle. At the far right a blue bowl ornamented in a warm glittering gold stands next to a white and light-gray *porrón*. The latter is partially hidden behind a white teapot. Set off against the beige background, a white drawing sheet and a small painting with a gold frame appear to represent a woman with a rose in her hair.<sup>280</sup> And then finally there is the ubiquitous *porrón* once again making its phallic pun as it points towards the female portrait.<sup>281</sup> Written across the bottom of the framed picture is the Catalan inscription “Les Pregunts,” suggesting the influence of Gauguin, whose Tahitian pictures often carried similar questions. The very fact that the inscribed words were in Catalan added further mystery, again echoing the Frenchman whose inscriptions often came from Tahitian.<sup>282</sup>

The increasingly Primitivist vocabulary can also be seen in the already cited *La coiffure* that he had started before leaving Paris and now completed,<sup>283</sup> as well as *Nu se coiffant*.<sup>284</sup> Thematically, the figure in the latter is based on the mythological Venus Anadyomene, the goddess of love and beauty emerging from the sea and wringing her hair dry, as depicted by Titian. But if this testifies to his continued engagement with images from the classical canon, he nevertheless subjected those models to a critical reworking, as he searched for a new, anti-classical ideal, apparent in the masklike face and the distorted body of the figure, clearly under the influence of the pre-Roman Iberian reliefs.<sup>285</sup> Primitivism brought him back once again to Gauguin. The splayed pose and archaizing features point to his statue *Oviri*. Picasso had originally sketched the figure in a crouching pose, clearly visible in x-radiographs, but he raised her later on to a standing position. As he explained, “A picture is not thought out and settled beforehand. While it is being done it changes as one’s thoughts change. And when it is finished, it still goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it.”<sup>286</sup>

Picasso’s work at Gósol had prepared him to focus on Gauguin the primitive, the supreme precursor of the modernity he himself was somewhat confusedly seeking.<sup>287</sup> The works by him he saw at the Salon left Pablo more than ever in this artist’s thrall.<sup>288</sup> It is probably under the direct influence of the Salon that he executed that October woodcuts like *Buste de femme à la main levée*<sup>289</sup> and *Buste de jeune femme de trois-quarts*,<sup>290</sup> the most Gauguinesque portraits of Fernande. Picasso worked on the plank to produce a print that was as primitive and expressive as anything in *Noa Noa*. The result is a paradoxical image that is of its time yet timeless, primitive yet classical.<sup>291</sup> The woodcut shows a certain resemblance to *Tête de*

<sup>280</sup> Boeck & Sabartés 1955, 131–136.

<sup>281</sup> Sotheby’s. #31, L17002, 03/01/17.

<sup>282</sup> Christie’s. #50, 1722, 11/08/06.

<sup>283</sup> Bouvier 2019, 216.

<sup>284</sup> *Nu se coiffant*. Paris. Fall/1906. Oil on canvas. 105,4 x 81,3 cm. OPP.06:055.

<sup>285</sup> Tinterow & Stein 2010, 106; Bouvier 2019, 251.

<sup>286</sup> Quoted in Cooke 1972, 60.

<sup>287</sup> Daix 1993, 61–62.

<sup>288</sup> Richardson 1991, 461.

<sup>289</sup> *Buste de femme à la main levée*. Paris. Summer–Fall/1906. Wood engraving. 21,9 x 13,8 cm. OPP.06:339.

<sup>290</sup> *Buste de jeune femme de trois-quarts*. Paris. Summer–Fall/1906. Woodcut on tissue-thin tan Japon 15. 56 x 38,5 cm. OPP.06:101.

<sup>291</sup> Richardson 1991, 445.

*femme*.<sup>292</sup> Composed of fiery terracotta tones overlaid with softer shades of rose pink and gray, it encapsulates this stylistic transformation, embodying a Mediterranean-inspired primitivism.<sup>293</sup>

He painted several monstrously distorted female nudes, in which there was no colored charm to attenuate the expressionism, as in the case of the Fauves. His deliberate ugliness was wildly aggressive, breaking with the millenary concept of beauty,<sup>294</sup> as seen in *Les demoiselles d'Avignon: nu assis (Étude)*.<sup>295</sup> The seated model is shown frontally, with her left leg crossed over her right knee and her head slightly inclined forward, her almond eyes painted dark. The androgynous figure extends over the full height of the canvas; the head is somewhat cropped at the top, and the right foot rests close to the edge of the frame in the lower left-hand section. Her colossal appearance is further accentuated by the sculptural treatment of her masculine bust: the muscles bulge, the limbs are thick and massive, and the breasts almost transform into pectoral muscles. And this is only a sample of even more radical anatomy still to come.<sup>296</sup> Picasso had managed, within just six years, to achieve a preternaturally early aesthetic perfection, incorporating artistic mannerisms and archaisms into the articulation of new principles for the depiction of the human body through deformation and deconstruction. In a process that only appears contradictory, his striving for new aesthetic possibilities advanced through several forms of refinement, and in a gradual emancipation from classical ideals of beauty to the realization of a groundbreaking form of artistic authenticity and autonomy.<sup>297</sup>

In early spring 1907, Picasso purchased the large canvas on which he hoped to realize “the first fruit of his experiments.” Lately he had been quite careless about the quality of his supports, but this time he chose a particularly expensive, fine-grained cotton canvas.<sup>298</sup> The Steins gave him the money for a second studio in *Bateau-Lavoir* that could fit the large canvas he planned to work on.<sup>299</sup> He immediately delved into studies of figures standing stiffly, frontally, with hands joined at the groin, a pose that seems to have had a special, independent significance for him. According to Lavin, his goal was to create “a new image of mankind out of the *disjecta membra* of the past.”<sup>300</sup> By late March, he started preparing the canvas itself,<sup>301</sup> as witnessed by Leo before his departure for Italy: “I had some pictures relined, and [Picasso] decided that he would have one of his pictures too treated like a classic, though in reverse order—he would have the canvas lined first and paint on it afterwards.”<sup>302</sup>

Everything in the masterpiece *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* teaches us of the inadequacy and

<sup>292</sup> *Tête de femme*. [Gósol–Paris]. Summer–Fall/1906. Gouache, watercolor and brush and ink on paper. 48 x 31,8 cm. OPP.06:239.

<sup>293</sup> Christie's. #7, 15483, 06/20/18.

<sup>294</sup> Cabanne 1979, 111.

<sup>295</sup> *Les demoiselles d'Avignon: nu assis (Étude)*. Paris. Winter/1906–1907. Oil on canvas. 121 x 93,5 cm. OPP.06:082.

<sup>296</sup> Bouvier 2019, 264.

<sup>297</sup> Bouvier 2019, 10.

<sup>298</sup> Unger 2018, 304–305.

<sup>299</sup> Richardson 1991, 474; Richardson 1996, 17; Roe 2015, 171; Unger 2018, 306, 320.

<sup>300</sup> Lavin 2007, 56.

<sup>301</sup> Blier 2019, 74. Others date the preparations earlier to February, 1907 (Baldassari, et al. 2002, 363).

<sup>302</sup> Stein 1947, 175.

randomness of customary visual representation.<sup>303</sup> The gaze of those women was so rivetingly expressionless that the process of being watched by them seemed literally fixed in time. As Roe argues, the overall effect was of a moving image only momentarily stilled. “For me the role of painting, Picasso once said, is not to depict movement, to show reality in movement. Its role, for me, is rather to halt movement. You must go further than movement in order to halt an image.”<sup>304</sup> The hard thing for the viewer was to get a consistent interpretation of the picture. If one lets the eye move across the frame from left to right, as in a conventional painting, we go from naked, staring faces to masked ones. Viewed from left to right, the sought impact was in the disconnection and juxtaposition of images. Unger saw the obvious sexual ramifications of the new approach: “Shading is not only inconsistent but paradoxical, so that forms seemed to protrude and recede simultaneously. The curtain, which shifted position and even color as it slithered across the surface of the canvas, highlighted this game of penetration and projection. Void was as palpable as solid; figure and ground became part of a single, accordion-like membrane. The women themselves may be singularly unsexy, given their angularity, but the rhythmic push and pull to which space is subjected diffuses the erotic charge across the entire surface of the canvas.”<sup>305</sup>

By the end of summer, the artist had set the large painting aside.<sup>306</sup> In this final version, the composition had replaced the original narrative with one in which viewers are required to complete its meaning. The five women display themselves for us, both alluring and horrifying at the same time; fixing us in their accusatory stare, creating, in Steinberg’s memorable phrase, “the startled consciousness of a viewer who sees himself seen.”<sup>307</sup> Subsequent works, with priority given to abstract form and “pure” plastic rhythms, would produce a new type of image, no longer based on the relationship with external reality, but on the power of expression. Picasso would not hesitate to distort the human figure, chopping it up into fragments and scattering them throughout the composition.<sup>308</sup> As Daix proclaims, the age of science had arrived, the moment when, in order to represent physical phenomena correctly, scientists and artists had to disregard physical appearances and common sense.<sup>309</sup> Schwartz describes “the furious motion in the painting [that] prefaces the stillness of the Cubist ideal just as the explosion of a celestial body precedes a new formation of bodies in coordinated movement.”<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Warncke & Walther 1991, 153–163.

<sup>304</sup> Roe 2015, 220–221.

<sup>305</sup> Unger 2018, 325–327.

<sup>306</sup> Richardson 1996, 43. Others date the completion to early July, 1907 (Fluegel 1980, 87); or to late summer (Unger 2018, 318).

<sup>307</sup> Unger 2018, 320.

<sup>308</sup> Seckel 1996, 24–26.

<sup>309</sup> Daix 1965, 66–68; Daix 1979, 23–26.

<sup>310</sup> Schwartz 1971, 26–30.

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