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The Joseph Winterbotham Collection

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# *The Joseph Winterbotham Collection*

MARGHERITA ANDREOTTI

*Associate Editor*

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MARC CHAGALL. *The Praying Jew*, 1923 copy of a 1914 work (pp. 148-49).



*The Joseph Winterbotham Collection*

AT THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

GUSTAVE COURBET (French, 1819–1877)

*Reverie (Portrait of Gabrielle Borreau)*, 1862

Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 63.5 x 77 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *G. Courbet / .62.*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1987.259

Gustave Courbet is known primarily as an uncompromising Realist who loudly proclaimed his independence from the past and scorned the idealizing tendencies of both Classicism and Romanticism. As this lushly painted portrait reveals, Courbet was far from the purist that he claimed to be. His style here is clearly indebted to the Spanish and Venetian artists whom he had studied as a youth in the galleries of the Louvre. He was also not above conferring to this portrait a distinctly Romantic aura through the figure's pose and setting, and through the use of a vaguely allegorical title. Courbet's vaunted Realism is most evident in the vivid portrayal of the girl's idiosyncratic features—the flaring eyebrows; the large, almond-shaped eyes; the strong nose; the thin lips, animated by a hint of a smile; and the pointed chin.

The portrait's sitter was the fourteen-year-old daughter of Laure Borreau, a woman who was apparently Courbet's lover. The artist painted at least four portraits of the girl's mother. Until fairly recently this was thought to be another portrait of the latter, both because of the close family resemblance between mother and daughter and because the girl was made to look considerably older than her actual age through the artist's dramatization of her pose and setting.

Courbet's vigorous painting technique is especially obvious here in the landscape and in the figure's dress. The paint is forcefully and heavily applied, often with a palette knife, as in the background, or with loose, confident brushstrokes, as in the area of the dress. The most sensitively painted areas are those of the girl's face, neck, arm, and hand, which present a smoother, more nuanced technique for rendering the warmth and softness of her flesh. A romantic mood, perhaps inspired by the girl's budding womanhood, is established by the dark foliage on the left, the glowing reds and pinks of a sunset on the right, and a glistening expanse of water beneath it. The girl's dark brown hair falls freely over her shoulders.

Pensively, she inclines her head and rests it on her hand. A delicate pearl pendant in the shape of a cross hangs from a gold chain around her neck. A black lace shawl and the black accents of her dress give her an almost Spanish air. In this warm portrayal, Courbet showed a taste for rich, resonant color, dramatic contrasts of light and dark, and a technique possessing all the self-assurance and flair that characterized his own personality.



EDGAR DEGAS (French, 1834–1917)

*Portrait after a Costume Ball (Portrait of Mme Dietz-Monnin)*, 1877/79

Distemper, with metallic paint and pastel,

on canvas; 85.5 x 75 cm

Signed, lower left: *Degas*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1954.325

In discussing this painting, art historians have often focused on the relationship between Edgar Degas and his subject, Adèle Dietz-Monnin, wife of a prominent French businessman and politician. It is clear from a letter to Mme. Dietz-Monnin, which Degas probably never sent, that difficulties arose between them in the course of painting the portrait. According to family tradition, she rejected the portrait because she thought it made her look drunk or like a prostitute. The portrait seems to have been originally intended as a form of payment for money lent to Degas by members of her family. Although areas of the portrait have a sketchy quality, Degas considered the painting sufficiently finished to sign it and submit it to the 1879 Impressionist Exhibition under the title *Portrait after a Costume Ball (Portrait après un bal costumé)*.

Whatever the precise nature of the disagreement between the artist and his subject—information about the circumstances surrounding the portrait remains insufficient to reach firm conclusions—this painting in many respects exemplifies the kind of subject drawn from modern life that inspired so many of Degas's best works. As is typical of him, the sitter is shown in an unguarded moment. There is a spontaneous, utterly unposed quality to her expression and posture that belies the many studies (several survive) and sittings that undoubtedly preceded it, as well as the carefully calculated decision to show the woman at this particular moment of the evening's event and in "costume" rather than street clothes. With great originality, Degas chose to focus on the complex moment of transition from a highly public event, the costume ball, back to private life. Without embellishment and sentimentality, he captured the tired expression on the woman's face, the exhaustion underlying the perfunctory smile and listless wave of the hand, the relaxation of her public persona as her shoulders slump and her whole body sinks wearily into a chair at

the end of a long evening. Lights and shapes bounce off the mirror behind her and appear as indistinct patches of color at right and left, suggesting the blurred effect of the surroundings on the sitter's tired senses.

In accordance with his taste for technical innovation and experimentation, Degas used several media in this portrait, as well as a highly varied and improvisational kind of brushwork. He tailored his medium and technique not only to the impromptu nature of his subject, but also to rendering a great range of textures—the reflective surface of the mirror; the gold of the mirror's frame and of the chairs at left; the satiny sheen, dominated by icy pinks and greens, of the woman's dress and bonnet; and the fur of the brown boa as it snakes its way down her dress.



Oil on panel; 86.5 x 115 cm

Signed on the harp: AB

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1990.443

Although Arnold Böcklin's work was widely admired in the 1880s and 1890s, his reputation waned rapidly after his death with the ascendancy of Impressionism and the French-centered conception of the development of modern art. Today's more comprehensive and complex understanding of European art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has led to a new appreciation for his work. Böcklin is now recognized as an important contributor to an international Symbolist movement (he lived alternately in his native Switzerland, Germany, and Italy), and he is also acknowledged for influencing a large number of artists, many of whom are now counted among the pioneers of modern art, such as Edvard Munch, Vasily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Giorgio de Chirico (see p. 147). De Chirico was especially impressed by the type of painting for which Böcklin became best known—eerily mysterious landscapes punctuated by an occasional lone figure, such as *Villa by the Sea* (which exists in numerous versions dating from the 1860s through the early 1880s) and *Island of the Dead*, his single most famous painting (which likewise exists in several versions dating from 1880 onward). The haunting silence of these pictures can be clearly felt in de Chirico's own enigmatic works.

*In the Sea* belongs to a type of painting that, at least superficially, has little in common with the work just described. In pictures such as this, Böcklin featured groups of mythological figures, from centaurs to mermaids, depicting them with a lusty energy and earthy realism clearly at odds with the idealizing tendencies of nineteenth-century academic art (compare, for example, Adolphe William Bouguereau's *Bathers* of 1884 in the collection of the Art Institute). The mermaids of *In the Sea* are plump and fleshy; the tritons border on the grotesque, the one at center sporting a bulging belly, the two at right featuring large, protruding ears. Rather than the idealized inhabitants of a rarefied, classical world, these

uninhibited figures seem almost coarse. The faces of the mermaids and the large harp-playing triton at center are distorted by loud singing or shouting. At far right, the heads of two other tritons emerge from the water, eager to join in the fun.

Although thematically and compositionally very different from the desolate landscapes exemplified by Böcklin's *Island of the Dead*, these mythological pictures are, upon close inspection, no less disquieting. The more we look, the more uneasy we become about certain details, which seem to throw into question the nature of this boisterous scene. We are struck, for instance, by the equivocal expression of the triton at center, as he looks upward toward the mermaid who is thrusting herself upon him with wild, predatory abandon. Is the triton merely startled or does his expression bespeak anxiety, even fear? Are the sirens benignly playful, or is there something frenzied in their actions and expressions, reminiscent of their reputation in Greek mythology for luring sailors to their death with their singing? We are likewise reminded of the dire fate of the lyre-playing Orpheus, torn to pieces by wild bacchantes. The composition's icy colors, dominated by shades of green and purplish red against a turbulent sky and glassy sea, further contribute to the vaguely ominous mood. The picture thus takes on a distinctly Dionysian character, suggesting the intoxicating and potentially destructive force of unbridled nature and evoking an amoral world in which there is no boundary between play and aggression.



*Etretat: The Beach and the Falaise d'Amont, 1885*

Oil on canvas; 69.3 x 66.1 cm

Signed, lower right: *Claude Monet*

Gift of Mrs. John H. (Anne R.) Winterbotham

in memory of John H. Winterbotham;

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1964.204

By the time this picture was painted, the Impressionists had begun to rethink the style that had marked the heyday of their movement in the 1870s. While Camille Pissarro would come under the influence of Georges Seurat's theories and Pierre Auguste Renoir changed his style to include monumental figures, Claude Monet focused with ever increasing tenacity on his original goal of painting "directly from nature, striving to render my impression in the face of the most fugitive effects." In an effort to achieve an accurate impression rather than a composite effect, Monet had by then adopted a method of working simultaneously on a number of canvases depicting the same subject. He changed canvases every time the light changed substantially and returned to a particular canvas on subsequent days when he thought the effect of light corresponded to that work. The writer Guy de Maupassant observed Monet working in this way at Etretat in 1885 and published his recollections the following year:

I often followed Claude Monet about in his search for impressions. He was no longer a painter, actually; he was a hunter. He walked along, trailed by children carrying canvases, five or six canvases representing the same subject at various hours of the day and with varying effects. He would pick them up or drop them one by one according to how the sky changed. And face to face with his subject he would sit and wait, watching the sky and shadows, gathering up a falling ray or passing cloud in several dabs of the brush and . . . setting it down on his canvas with great alacrity. I once saw him catch a sparkling shaft of light on a white cliff and fix it to a rush of yellows that gave an eerily precise rendering of the blinding ineffable effect of its radiance.

This painting seems indeed to have been achieved through such a process. The artist focused here on one of his favorite subjects, the white cliffs near the town of Etretat on the coast of Normandy, where Monet vacationed frequently between 1883 and 1886. Monet viewed this scene from a distant vantage point that enabled him to encom-

pass a vast expanse of beach, water, and sky, as well as the cliffs. These rise with rugged majesty from a curving span of beach dotted with boats and brightly colored sails. The water's surface is broken by the orange sail of a solitary boat, the horizon line animated by a bank of scudding clouds. The scene is drenched in what appears to be the early afternoon sun, since the shadows cast by the cliffs are short, indicating that the sun is overhead. Monet's brushstrokes are bold, quick, and confident, the surface of the painting often showing heavily impastoed areas, as he records the scene before him rapidly, in a constant race against time and its inevitable effects on conditions of light and atmosphere. Pinks and blues predominate, richly modulated with touches of yellow, green, purple, and white. This is in many respects a quintessential Impressionist picture, with all the freshness, vividness, and pleasure we have come to associate with that style of painting.



PAUL CÉZANNE (French, 1839–1906)

*House on the River*, 1885/90

Oil on canvas; 51.5 x 61 cm

Bequest of Joseph Winterbotham, 1954.304

One of Paul Cézanne's major contributions was a heightened awareness that, for the artist, painting involves a personal struggle to find pictorial equivalents for what he or she wishes to represent, whether it is the natural world that so obsessed Cézanne or any of the many other subjects, both real and imaginary, that have occupied modern artists. Passionately engaged in this struggle, Cézanne developed a method of painting that became legendary. He constructed his pictures purposefully and doggedly, shuttling between the canvas and "the motif" (as Cézanne referred to his subject), making endless adjustments to the painted surface to bring it in line with what his mind and eye perceived in the scene before him. An unfinished picture such as *House on the River* is thus of special interest, not only because it has the appealing freshness of a drawing or watercolor, but also because it opens a door to the mysteries of the artist's celebrated method, giving us valuable insights into the stages of the pictorial process leading up to his finished canvases.

Especially evident here is Cézanne's habit of working on most areas of the canvas at the same time, with the exception of the edges, which he sometimes left unfinished even in a canvas he considered final. This picture also shows very clearly the building up of the surface through patches of color rhythmically applied in a manner that was much imitated by his admirers. A closer inspection reveals, however, that this characteristic application of paint encompassed a wide variety of brushstrokes. Quivering outlines delineate the tree trunks and branches. Wide, patchy strokes establish the broad masses of foliage, while blocks of color define the openings in the house and their reflections on the water's surface. The color scheme is also modulated with great subtlety, as it progresses from the cool, shaded areas of the water and river bank, dominated by dark greens and

browns, to the lighter, airier, partially sunlit areas of the foliage and house, treated in pale shades of blue or silvery green.

Structurally, the composition is largely determined by the parallel bands of water and riverbank. As is typical of Cézanne, their boundaries avoid the strict geometry of a rigidly parallel alignment: as the band of water widens toward the right, the riverbank narrows, following a gentle slope. Countering this horizontal emphasis are the verticals of the trees, which echo each other in their forked growth and taper upward, dissolving into the unpainted areas of the canvas. Although unfinished, there is a balance to the entire composition that reflects Cézanne's constant concern with the internal dynamics of a picture, with maintaining at every stage of a picture's development a condition of internal harmony between its different parts. This is one of the many ways in which Cézanne made visible one of modern art's major tenets, that a work of art is not a servile reflection of the outside world, but an independent entity with its own laws, its own inner reality.



VINCENT VAN GOGH (Dutch, 1853–1890)

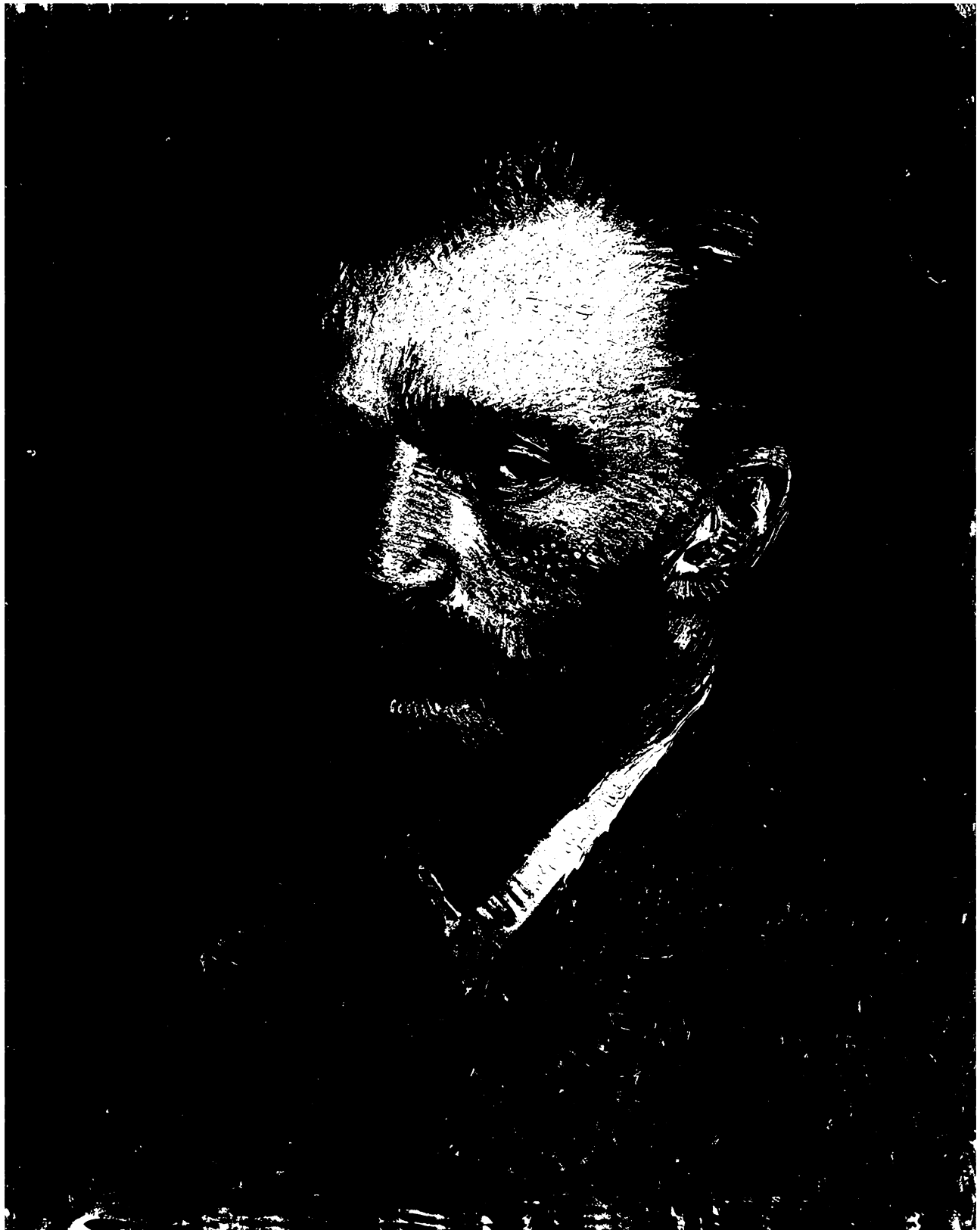
*Self-Portrait*, 1886/87

Oil on artist's board mounted on  
cradled panel; 41 x 32.5 cm

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1954.326

This small but mesmerizing painting is one of about two dozen self-portraits that Vincent van Gogh painted after his arrival in Paris in the spring of 1886. It reflects the influence of the paintings he saw in Paris by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. In contrast to the long, sinewy brushstrokes that characterize his late works such as *The Drinkers (after Daumier)* (p. 127), van Gogh here employed short, brisk strokes and dabs of pure color, a kind of modified Divisionism clearly inspired by the work of Georges Seurat, whose masterpiece, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte—1884* (1884–86; Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago), was on view that year at the Salon des Indépendants, Paris. But unlike Seurat's painting, which has lost some of its original brilliance because of the artist's use of unstable pigments, this portrait seems to have preserved all the freshness of the day it was painted. The bright palette contrasts markedly with the sober expression on the artist's face—the intense, direct gaze; the heavy, worried eyebrows; the downward turn of the mouth—which suggests both the penetrating seriousness with which van Gogh viewed the world and the fiercely passionate temperament that often exasperated those who knew him.

Van Gogh was thirty-three when he painted this self-portrait. Driven by a generous and idealistic nature, he had embarked on a long succession of failed occupations, from art dealer to teacher to lay preacher in the Belgian coal-mining district, turning finally to art as a full-time pursuit in 1880. Van Gogh's mental illness and tragic end have often monopolized viewers' attention, making it difficult to "see" his work clearly. But as this remarkably vivid portrait attests, van Gogh was first and foremost an exceptionally gifted artist who could work to brilliant effect even within the confines and self-imposed discipline of a style not entirely his own.



*Equestrienne (At the Circus Fernando)*, 1887–88

Oil on canvas; 100.3 x 161.3 cm

Signed, lower left: *T-Lautrec*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1925.523

This painting, which was widely admired at the time of its creation by artists such as Georges Seurat, has remained one of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's uncontested masterpieces. Although Toulouse-Lautrec was only twenty-four when he painted it, he already possessed a dazzling talent as a draftsman and a keen eye for boldly simplified forms, qualities that were to reach their most distilled form in the famous posters of his later years.

Thinly and rapidly painted, this picture has the confident, improvisational quality of a drawing. Its subject is the Circus Fernando, one of the first permanent circuses in Paris, which provided rich inspiration to many artists, both before and after Toulouse-Lautrec portrayed it. Here the artist has concentrated not on rich color harmonies and a seductive subject (as in Pierre Auguste Renoir's *Two Little Circus Girls* of 1878–79, inspired by the same circus, which is now in the Potter Palmer Collection of The Art Institute of Chicago), but on an incisive recording of movement and form, and on the often unflattering but revealing physical idiosyncrasies of his subjects. From Edgar Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec inherited a connoisseur's eye for gesture and expression, as well as a taste for unconventionally cropped compositions. Especially striking in this painting is the unorthodox cropping of the clowns and the heads of several of the spectators. Toulouse-Lautrec drew inspiration for the flat, linear simplification of forms against a solid ground, as in the figure of the ringmaster at left, from Japanese prints, whose influence was by then ubiquitous among the Impressionists.

The right half of the painting is dominated by the dramatically foreshortened form of a horse, his powerful rump prominently and irreverently presented to the viewer. The horse's tail billows in a manner that wittily echoes the flapping tails of the ringmaster's jacket. The equestrienne perches on the horse's saddle, readying her-

self for an acrobatic jump through the hoop held by the clown who is partly visible at top. The arch of the circus ring is echoed in the impetuous curve of the ringmaster's body, as he advances forcefully toward the horse and rider, and in the curve of his whip, which visually links the two main protagonists of the scene. Throughout, the artist shows himself a keen observer of his human subjects, attuned to their every quirk. The pointed portrayal of the figures often verges on caricature, as in the almost brutish determination on the face of the ringmaster, the forced, brightly painted smile of the horsewoman, and the jagged silhouette of the clown at left.



VINCENT VAN GOGH (Dutch, 1853–1890)

*The Drinkers* (after Daumier), 1890

Oil on canvas; 59.4 x 73.4 cm

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1953.178

This haunting painting dates to the last year of Vincent van Gogh's life—he was to die of a self-inflicted gunshot wound on July 29, 1890. In May of the previous year, the artist had voluntarily committed himself to the Asylum of Saint-Paul in Saint-Rémy, a small town near Arles. He stayed in the asylum for a full year, suffering intermittent seizures and working between bouts of illness. According to van Gogh's letters to his brother Theo, the artist based this picture on a print after a drawing by Honoré Daumier (fig. 1) while he was in the asylum in late January or early February 1890. In a letter of February 10, 1890, van Gogh reported to Theo that he found making the copy "very difficult." Certainly, it must have been a considerable challenge to render the black-and-white print in the very different medium of oil painting.

The subject of Daumier's composition may have also aroused some ambivalence in van Gogh. On the one hand, it focused on the life of humble people going about their daily activities, a subject that had engaged him from his earliest days as a painter. Van Gogh's devotion to the poorest members of society had been expressed, even before the decision to become a painter, in his stint as a lay preacher in the Belgian coal-mining district. And van Gogh's first great painting, *The Potato Eaters* of 1885, had focused on a group of peasants, lovingly portrayed in all their earthy coarseness, partaking of a simple meal. The figures in this painting—gnarled and weathered in the case of the three men, almost grotesquely chubby in the case of the child—are imbued with a certain crude vigor that is indeed reminiscent of the deliberate "roughness" with which van Gogh rendered his peasant subjects in earlier works.

On the other hand, Daumier's fig-

ures are not peasants; they are laborers in Paris's industrial suburbs. From a letter to Theo of June 1889, it is clear that van Gogh, although an admirer of Daumier's "drawing," did not consider Daumier's subjects to be as "serene and pure" as the beloved peasants of his own earlier work, whose poverty was redeemed by constant contact with nature. It is perhaps for this reason that van Gogh somewhat softened in his own rendering the dire expression of the man on the left. There is real pathos in the way van Gogh depicted these four ungainly figures, spanning the ages of man—from childhood, through maturity, to old age—and real desperation in the avidity and concentration with which they drink, as if to quench a spiritual as well as physical thirst.

By adding the landscape to Daumier's original composition, van Gogh introduced an opposition between industrialized suburb and countryside, between the corrupting forces of civilization and the restorative powers of nature. To the far left are belching factory chimneys; to the far right, barely visible, because of the pale colors used—pale pinks, blues, and greens—is a flowering orchard or garden, symbol of the natural world that is so clearly absent from the withered lives of these people.



FIGURE 1.

Charles Murand  
(French, active 1860–  
1881), after drawing  
by Honoré Daumier  
(French, 1808–1879).  
*The Drinkers*, 1862.  
Wood engraving.  
New York, The  
Metropolitan Museum  
of Art, Harris Brisbane  
Dick Fund, 1928.



PAUL GAUGUIN (French, 1848–1903)

*Portrait of a Woman in front of a Still Life by Cézanne, 1890*

Oil on canvas; 65.3 x 54.9 cm

Signed and dated, lower right: *P. Go. / 90/*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1925.753

Paul Gauguin's life rivals that of Vincent van Gogh as the stuff of legend. In 1883, he left his job as a stockbroker and, eventually, his wife and five children to take up a nomadic, often impoverished, existence as a full-time painter. His "escape" from civilization included increasingly prolonged stays in such exotic places as Martinique, Tahiti, and finally the Marquesas Islands, where he died in 1903. While still a stockbroker, Gauguin had assembled a pioneering collection of Impressionist paintings, among them five or six canvases by Paul Cézanne. His favorite was apparently the still life partly visible in this picture, known as *Fruit Bowl, Glass, and Apple* of 1879/80.

In this densely composed painting, Gauguin pays tribute to Cézanne not only by including one of his works in the background but also by emulating Cézanne's manner throughout the picture. In many areas of the portrait, especially the dress and hand, Gauguin adopts the rhythmic, parallel, patchy brushstrokes typical of the older artist. Cézanne's influence also seems apparent in the laborious, tightly woven construction of the composition, in which the woman's head seems almost embedded in the still life. An X-ray examination of this painting has revealed that Gauguin did indeed labor over many of its details, from the position of the woman in the chair—she was originally seated further back—to the relationship of her hands, which were at one point clasped in her lap, somewhat in the manner of existing portraits by Cézanne of his wife.

Gauguin's own personality is most evident here in the emphasis on rich harmonies of closely related colors (the picture is dominated by blue and its derivatives, purple and violet) and on the fluid outlines of the forms of the chair and woman's dress. This self-conscious orchestration of colors and forms became even more evident in Gauguin's later works, in accordance with his belief that lines and colors, in a manner closely akin to

music, carry intrinsic expressive qualities, independent of naturalistic objectives. Gauguin was also one of the first to turn to a wide variety of non-Western sources for inspiration in his effort to imbue painting with renewed mystery and to forge alternatives to naturalism. Some of the flatness and linear emphasis in this portrait reflects Gauguin's interest in Japanese prints. Ironically, it is because of this quality that Cézanne once disparagingly referred to Gauguin's works as "Chinese images."

The identity of the sitter of this portrait has long been debated and still remains uncertain. The picture was once thought to have been completed in Brittany, but it has since been suggested that it may instead have been painted after Gauguin's return to Paris in November of 1890 during his stay with Emile Schuffenecker, a close friend and supporter. This hypothesis finds support in the characteristics of the woman portrayed. With her elongated, refined hands and cinched waist, she seems more like a city dweller than one of the earthy peasant women found in Gauguin's Breton canvases.



PAUL GAUGUIN (French, 1848–1903)

*The Burao Tree (Te Burao)*, 1892

Oil on canvas; 68 x 90.7 cm

Titled, signed, and dated, lower right:

*TE Burao P. Gauguin 92*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1923.308

This picture was painted in Tahiti where Paul Gauguin had moved in 1891, impelled by a desire to escape the stifling effects of civilization and by the attractions of a simple, inexpensive way of life. The influence of Paul Cézanne, so evident in the earlier *Portrait of a Woman in front of a Still Life by Cézanne* (p. 129), is still apparent here in the use of rhythmic, parallel brushstrokes for certain areas of the foliage. But far more dominant is an emphasis on the undulating, linear patterns formed by the branches piled up in the foreground, and on the silhouettes of certain forms, such as the tree trunk looming at the left edge of the picture and the solitary dog on the right.

The mood of this picture is somber. The sky is cloudy, the water is slate gray. From the dense shadows of the foliage in the background emerge a hut and a robed figure at far right. The foreground presents an intricate barrier of dead branches, tree trunks, and seaweed. A lone dog wanders through the debris, possibly sniffing for prey. The picture's mood foreshadows the more explicit mystery of later works such as *Day of the Gods (Mahana no Atua)* of 1894 (now in the Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection of The Art Institute of Chicago), in which the silhouetting and patterning of forms increasingly takes on a life of its own, in accordance with Gauguin's passionately held belief that lines and colors are in themselves expressive.

A comparison with Claude Monet's landscape *Etretat: The Beach and the Falaise d'Aumont* of 1885 (p. 119), which is of a superficially similar subject—a beach scene—is particularly instructive, revealing Gauguin's dramatic departure from the Impressionism that had first formed him. Besides the obvious differences in topography between the two scenes, there is a radical difference in approach. While Monet focused on the drama of light as it bathed vast expanses of sky, land, and sea, Gauguin was concerned with suggesting a state

of mind and feeling. Monet joyously reveled in the natural spectacle before him, straining to convey with exquisite subtleness the atmospheric nuances of the scene. Gauguin instead filtered his subject through his own brooding temperament and indeed believed that a concern with precisely rendered naturalistic effects robbed the world of its essential mystery, its capacity to resonate with meaning.



Pastel over charcoals on paper; 53.6 x 37.7 cm

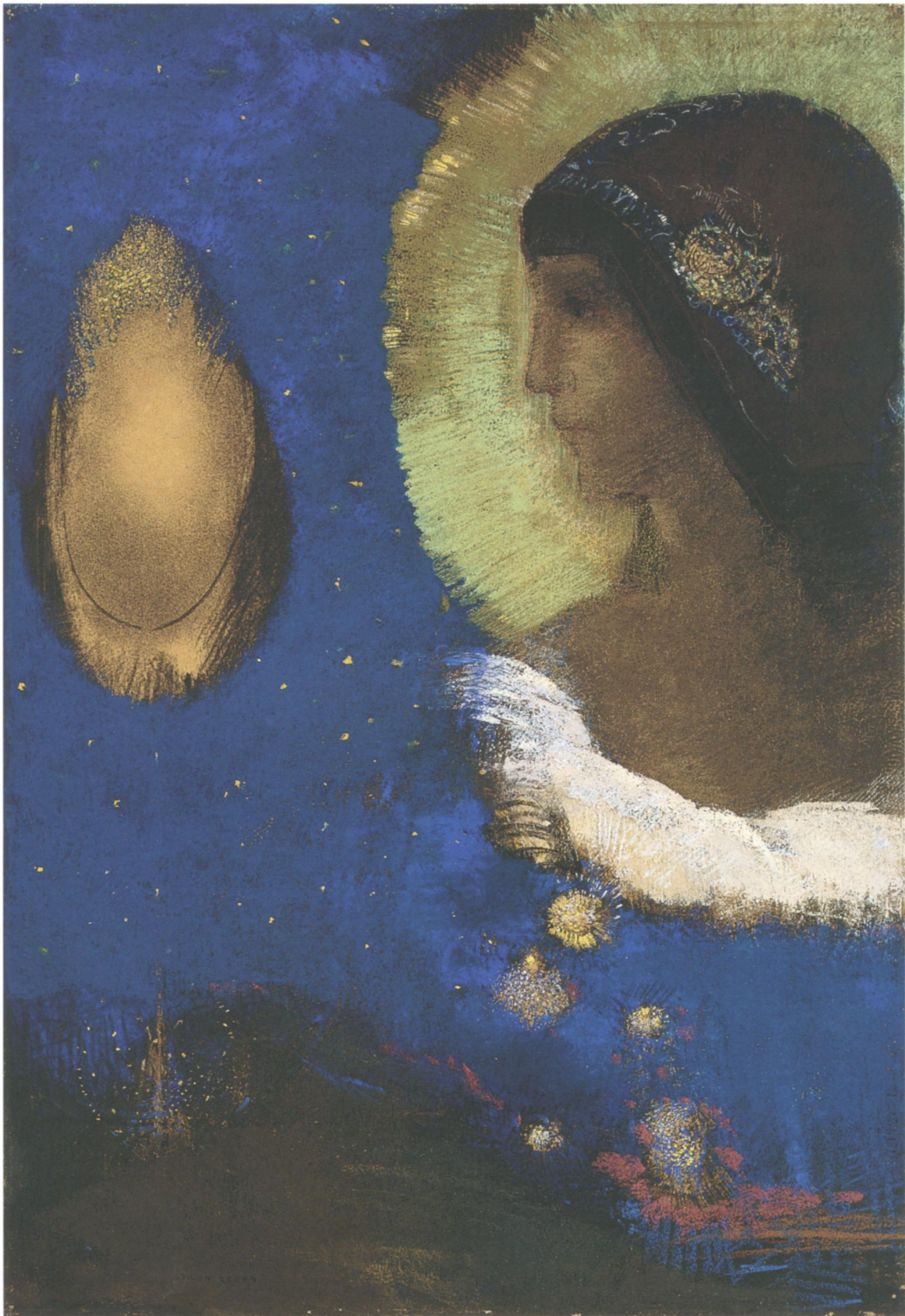
Signed, lower left: *ODILON REDON*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1954.320

Odilon Redon's gift for poetically evocative images and his exceptional eye for color are superbly illustrated in this work. Associated in his own lifetime with a group of artists, poets, and writers known as Symbolists (he was a particularly close friend of the poet Stéphane Mallarmé), Redon occupies a major place in the history of modern art, not only for the intrinsic beauty of his works, but also and perhaps most importantly for the daring quality of his imagination. Well before the Surrealists, Redon focused on his inner world, on the fantastic, sometimes frightening, and always mysterious creatures of his imagination, to evoke a realm of dreams, distant memories, and indefinable emotions. As illustrated by this pastel, Redon drew inspiration from a wide range of sources, reflecting the fascination of many of his contemporaries with exotic and occult forms of spirituality.

Until recently, this work bore the generic title *Evocation*. Based on Redon's own records, we now know that this pastel was originally entitled *Sita*, after the loyal and noble wife of Rama, hero of the Indian epic *The Ramayana*. According to this ancient text, Rama faced and ultimately prevailed over numerous misfortunes, among them the abduction of his wife by Ravana, the demonic ruler of Lanka. As she was transported through the sky, Sita tore off and threw down to earth jewels and other pieces of her attire to give Rama clues to her location. This pastel can be interpreted as a very free rendering of this story. While clearly inspired by this exotic tale, the artist alludes to its details only in the vaguest terms, as in the sparkling objects that indeed appear to be falling from Sita's image, in shimmering bursts of color, at lower right. Redon's own brief description, given in the record he kept of his works, emphasizes the image's composition and striking color scheme: "Her head in profile, surrounded by a golden-green radiance, against a blue sky, stardust falling, a shower of gold, a sort of undersea mountain below."

Sita's profile dominates the composition, hovering on a feathery pink cloud and surrounded by a luminous green halo in a manner that recalls Christian conventions for representing saints. Sita's exemplary life does in fact suggest saintly associations and perhaps inspired Redon to adapt a Christian tradition to his representation of her. Her profile is delicate, firm, and somber, with an androgynous quality that heightens the appealing mystery of her face and that has sometimes led writers, unaware of the pastel's original title, to identify the figure as male. Her gaze is steadfast, almost trancelike, and seems focused on the oval form hovering in the night sky. This may allude to the golden egg or embryo that embodied the essence of life and the source of cosmic light in the ancient Hindu text known as the Veda. Sita's skin is a richly toned brown and on her head she wears a bejeweled diadem, whose most distinctive feature is a decorative element echoing a nautilus shell in its spiraling shape. The mood is one of wonder tinged with melancholy before the beauty of this visionary landscape, which seems to evoke both the spectacle of a star-studded sky and, as suggested by Redon's own description, the silence and depth of an undersea world. As we gaze at this image, we are increasingly drawn under the spell of its luminous colors, its velvety textures, and the figure's unfathomable, almost sphinxlike expression, which seems to hint at a world of spiritual awareness and knowledge barely accessible to us.



HENRI MATISSE (French, 1869–1954)

*The Geranium (Le G ranium)*, summer 1906

Oil on canvas; 101.3 x 82.6 cm

Signed, lower left: *Henri Matisse*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1932.1342

When Henri Matisse painted this picture, he was the central figure of a group of artists labeled Fauves (wild beasts) because of their seemingly violent way of painting. During the first decade of this century, these artists (including Andr  Derain, Georges Braque, and Maurice de Vlaminck) produced some of the most influential and advanced painting in Europe. They used color with an unprecedented freedom and freshness, with what appeared at the time as a reckless disregard for its descriptive function, applying the paint with a vigor and impulsiveness that far surpassed that of their Impressionist and Post-Impressionist predecessors. *The Geranium* illustrates especially well the highly experimental nature of this period in Matisse's career by touching upon his struggles at the time not only with issues of color, but also with facture, structure, and the human figure, and his intermittent ventures into an entirely different medium, sculpture.

Matisse organized the different elements of the picture around the geranium plant. The stick that supports its arching stem establishes a strong vertical axis around which the rest of the composition revolves—the explosion of leafy greenery that occupies the upper half of the painting and the constellation of objects on the table arranged in a circle around the plant. Matisse employed here many of the same colors (pink, green, orange, blue) used to dazzling effect in such quintessentially Fauvist paintings as his *Open Window* of the previous year (Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney, New York), but somewhat tempered and muted by a thinner appli-

cation of paint and a greater use of black contours and dark areas. The brushwork is unusually varied in density, length, and direction, exhibiting a nervous intensity that differs markedly from the broad, confident strokes that characterize some of Matisse's earlier Fauvist paintings. The four reddish, round forms, arranged in a row in the foreground, are apparently pink onions. Behind the pot and to the right is a Biskra jug (Biskra is a town in Algeria), a souvenir of Matisse's travels to North Africa earlier that year, which hints at the richly patterned props favored in so many of the artist's paintings from then on. Finally, two of the statuettes Matisse modeled at this time are depicted to the left and right of the geranium, reminding us of Matisse's intense interest in the human figure, which he portrayed in such large decorative works as *The Joy of Life* (The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania) completed earlier in the same year. The sculpture on the right is *Woman Leaning on Her Hands* of 1905, a 1907 cast of which is in the collection of the Art Institute (fig. 1), while the one on the left can be identified as Matisse's *Thorn Extractor* of 1906.



FIGURE 1.  
Henri Matisse. *Woman Leaning on Her Hands*, 1907 cast of 1905 work. Bronze (from edition of ten); 15.2 x 27.9 x 17.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, through prior acquisitions of the George F. Harding Collection, 1992.654.



OSKAR KOKOSCHKA (British [born Austria], 1886–1980)

*Commerce Counselor Ebenstein*, 1908

Oil on canvas; 101.8 x 81.1 cm

Signed, lower right: O K

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1956.364

Despite its early date (Oskar Kokoschka described it as his second finished painting), this portrait already reveals the artist's great gifts as a portraitist and the hallmarks of his highly personal form of Expressionism. Like Max Beckmann (see p. 163) and Chaim Soutine (see p. 161), Kokoschka used calculated distortions of line and color in a highly individual manner to give emotional force to his paintings. As a student in Vienna, he was influenced not only by the German Expressionist artists of *Die Brücke* (The Bridge), but also by Gustav Klimt and by Jugendstil art, as shown by the sensitive, nervous line and the touch of melancholy that came to characterize his work.

Kokoschka met his sitter through the avant-garde architect Adolf Loos, who introduced him to Vienna's high society and thus provided him with subjects for a penetrating series of portraits. As tailor to the Austrian imperial court, Ernst Ebenstein was one of the most accomplished and admired members in the world of Viennese high fashion. During a visit to the Art Institute in 1958, Kokoschka remembered him as kind and generous. Ebenstein had offered to make the artist some clothes and had taught him a great deal about anatomy based on his sartorial experience as a perceptive observer of the human body. Kokoschka's affection for his sitter seems to be reflected in the compassionate yet unflinching honesty with which he recorded the signs of age on his face and hands. The sitter has been caught in a moment of relaxed introspection, his gaze averted from the viewer, his social persona momentarily laid aside to reveal his inner self. Even the sitter's impeccable black attire has a crumpled, weathered quality that bespeaks human vulnerability and frailty. As in other portraits by Kokoschka, the hands constitute a psychological focus as strong as that of the face. The artist's expressive distortions are

especially evident here. Painted in a vivid orange, these gnarled and bony hands seem to express the man's very essence and become the locus of his professional and psychological identity.



Oil on canvas; 60.6 x 51.3 cm

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1940.5

This painting dates to one of the most productive and inventive periods of Pablo Picasso's career, a summer stay in the town of Horta de Ebro (now Horta de San Juan) in Spain, which lasted, with minor interruptions, from May to September of 1909. During these months, Picasso produced a series of landscapes, heads, and still lifes that are among the most highly acclaimed achievements of early Cubism. *Fernande Olivier*, Picasso's mistress, was the model for the series of heads that the artist produced at this time.

In this painting, the contrast between the naturalistic still life in the background and the boldly faceted figure in the foreground illustrates an important stage in Picasso's evolution at the time. A series of still lifes by Picasso that were inspired by the art of Paul Cézanne preceded Picasso's powerful probing into the nature of solid form, which is exemplified here by the treatment of the head. By vigorously modeling the form in a manner that blatantly disregards the rules of illusionistic painting, Picasso conveyed information about the subject's underlying structure, about its development in the round (Olivier's bun, for example, which would normally not be visible from the front, is brought into full view), and a remarkably tactile sense of its projections and recessions. Not surprisingly, these highly sculptural portraits led Picasso to turn, as he did intermittently throughout his career, to actual sculpture upon his return to Paris in the autumn of 1909. The result was the head of *Fernande Olivier*, an early bronze cast of which is in the Art Institute (fig. 1). In this sculpture, Picasso combined the faceting of the face seen in our painting with the scalloped treatment of the hair found in a drawing from this same period, which is also in the collection of the Art Institute (fig. 2). The artist then energized the head through a dynamic torsion of the neck, replacing the relaxed, fleshy folds in the painting with an emphasis on the taut curve of the back of the neck, as the head

bends and twists in space. Although Cubism was to exert an enormous influence on the move toward abstraction among many artists in the early part of this century, *Fernande Olivier* reminds us that Cubism itself was firmly rooted in an intense study of material reality.

This painting was once in the famed collection of expatriates Leo and Gertrude Stein in Paris, and can in fact be seen hanging on the wall of Gertrude Stein's study in a photograph of 1914/15.



FIGURE 1.  
Pablo Picasso, *Head of Fernande Olivier*, autumn 1909. Bronze; h. 41.3 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949.584.



FIGURE 2.  
Pablo Picasso, *Head of Fernande Olivier*, summer 1909, brush and ink and watercolor on paper; 33.3 x 25.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949.578.



JEAN LOUIS FORAIN (French, 1852–1931)

*Sentenced for Life (A Perpétuité)*, c. 1910

Oil on canvas; 65.4 x 81 cm

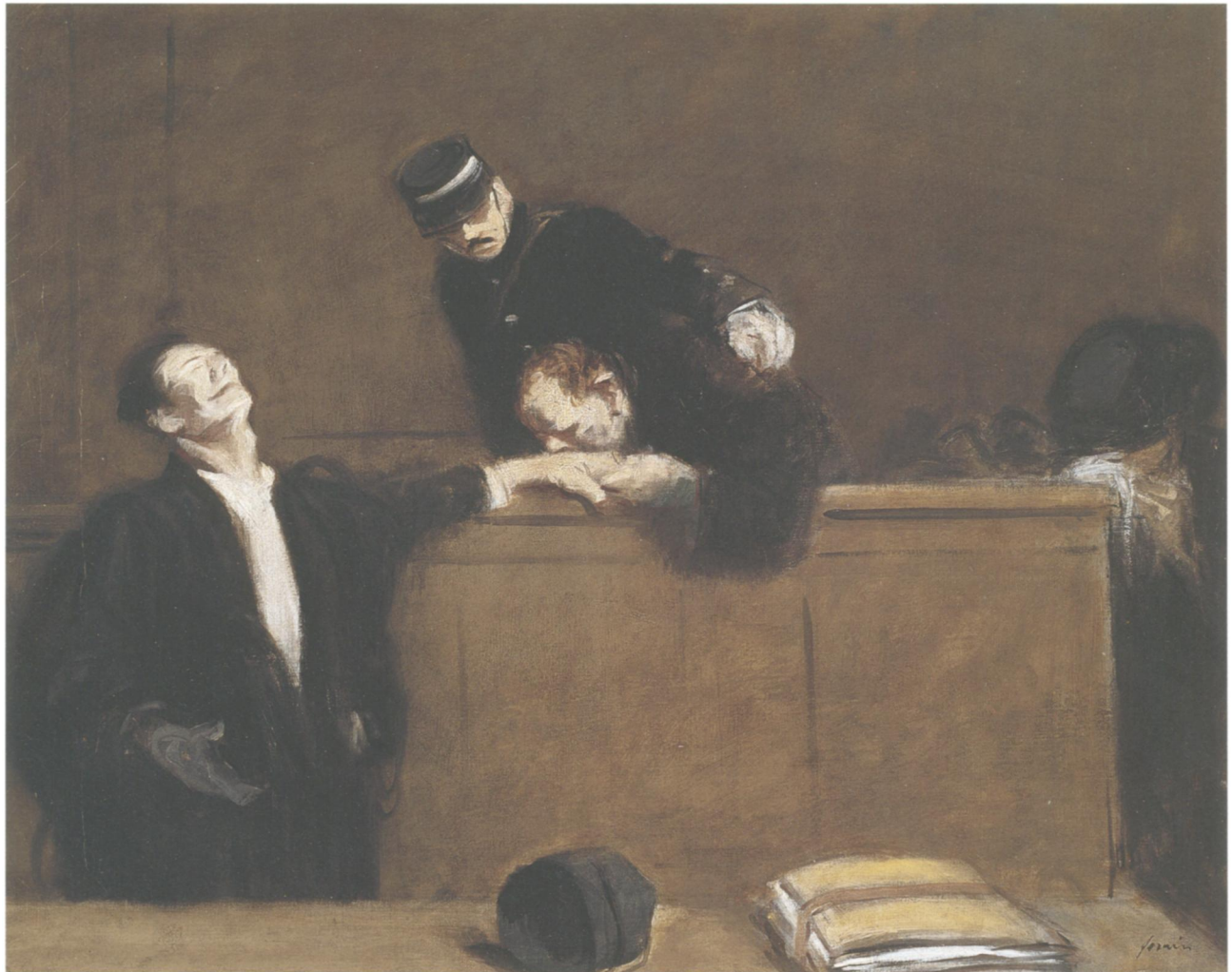
Signed, lower right: *forain*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1923.6

Jean Louis Forain is best known as a prodigious draftsman and graphic artist, who regularly contributed illustrations to the satirical papers in Paris from the 1870s on. He also produced a small but substantial body of paintings. Until 1900, these were closely related in style and subject matter to the art of the Impressionists, with whom Forain exhibited repeatedly between 1879 and 1886. After 1900, the artist's work changed considerably as a result of an intense renewal of his religious faith and an accompanying desire to imbue his work with greater seriousness. Forain abandoned the bright palette of the Impressionists in favor of a somber, dramatic style of painting, reflecting the influence of Rembrandt van Rijn, Francisco Goya, and Honoré Daumier. At the same time, he turned increasingly for his subjects to Biblical themes, as in his many versions of *The Prodigal Son*, and to courtroom scenes, which focus on the plight of ordinary people caught in the web of the French legal system.

In this fine painting, Forain deftly sketched the last scene in a trial, using a palette largely limited to black, brown, and a few strategically placed touches of white. At center, the defendant, who has just escaped the death penalty by being sentenced to life imprisonment, bends in a gesture of abject gratitude to kiss the hand of his lawyer. The lawyer, who is the focus of Forain's satire, is shown swelling with self-importance and pride, completely oblivious to the tragedy that has befallen his client and his family. Raising his head high with a smug, self-satisfied expression, he is juxtaposed to the figure on the far right, who, barely visible both to us and to the justice system, buries her head as she weeps into a handkerchief. Presumably a relative or perhaps even the wife of the condemned man, she stands for the many unsung victims of so-called justice. In contrast to the lawyer, the guard seems to show some sympathy for the condemned man, perhaps because he is also an ordinary man without the self-serving pretensions often associated with the

administrators of justice. As the guard hovers above the accused, he extends his arm over his shoulders in a complex gesture that is both a reminder that the man must follow him soon to prison and an expression of comfort and human solidarity. In this incisive piece of social commentary, Forain revealed all the ironies and hollowness of a system that dispenses justice without compassion.



ROBERT DELAUNAY (French, 1885–1941)

*Champs de Mars: The Red Tower*, begun in 1911, reworked sometime before 1923

Oil on canvas; 160.7 x 128.6 cm

Signed and dated, lower right: *r. d. 1911*

Titled, dated, and signed on back: *Champs de Mars /*

*LA Tour rouge / 1911 / r. delaunay / (époque destructive)*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1959.1

This is one of the most imposing of a series of about eleven paintings that Robert Delaunay devoted to the Eiffel Tower between 1909 and 1911. Erected for the 1889 World's Fair on the Champs de Mars, a military parade ground, the Eiffel Tower had become a widely recognized symbol of modernity. It was originally painted a brilliant red, a color that, together with its steel-girded construction and size (it was the tallest structure in the world, reaching a height of 984 feet), set it apart from the prevalent grayness of the surrounding city, as Delaunay emphasized so effectively in his painting. The imposing size of this canvas further enhances the visionary impact of the tower caught in a blaze of light as shafts of sunlight emanate from it in all directions and yellow sun disks dance around its top. Like an apparition, the tower rises above the surrounding houses, metaphorically shaking the very foundations of the old order.

Unlike his Cubist colleagues, who limited themselves to muted colors and a restricted range of traditional subjects (mostly still lifes, landscapes, and portraits), Delaunay combined a Cubist treatment of form with an interest in color theory and a fascination with contemporary subjects. In this painting, Delaunay brilliantly adapted the Cubist vocabulary of faceted and fragmented forms to render the transparent and seemingly weightless structure of the tower, as well as to evoke the extraordinary sense of excitement many experienced at the dawn of a great, new age of technological marvels. Delaunay's painting conveys this feeling of boundless optimism, the innocence and freshness of a time that had not yet witnessed the two world wars and the destructive potential of this same technology.

A 1912 exhibition photograph of this painting shows that Delaunay elaborated it at a later date.



*Carnival in Arcueil*, 1911

Oil on canvas; 104.8 x 95.9 cm

Signed and dated, upper left: *Feininger / 1911*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1990.119

This is one of a group of recently rediscovered early masterpieces by Lyonel Feininger that had been left behind when the artist and his family were forced to leave Nazi Germany in 1937 for the United States. For over forty years, this group of roughly fifty pictures remained unknown and inaccessible in the East German home of the friend in whose custody Feininger had left them. Only after a prolonged legal battle were all but three of the pictures finally returned to the artist's heirs in 1984 and exhibited as a group in 1985.

This picture reveals an artist of remarkable maturity and vision, despite the fact that Feininger had not turned seriously to painting until 1907. It was only then that improved financial circumstances allowed him to give up his successful career as a cartoonist. The setting for this painting is the town of Arcueil, south of Paris, where Feininger spent several months a year from 1906 to 1912. Its majestic viaduct became a frequent subject in the artist's drawings starting as early as 1908. His intense interest in architecture, which was to remain constant in Feininger's work, is apparent here not only in the use of the viaduct but also in the brilliantly colored block of houses in the middle ground. It may have been reinforced at this time by his interest in Robert Delaunay's work (see p. 143), in which architectural subjects likewise plays a primary role.

Feininger's early admiration for Vincent van Gogh (see pp. 123 and 127) seems evident in the heavily impastoed surface and in the use of highly saturated colors, especially yellow, which in the row of houses is beautifully modulated by touches of pink, green, and orange. Also reminiscent of van Gogh are the animated, billowing contours of the houses' rooftops, which in turn echo the sweeping movement of

the clouds. Against this dramatic backdrop, Feininger deployed a motley crew of grotesque and vaguely sinister characters, some of whom recall Feininger's earlier cartoons (see fig. 1). With their vividly colored costumes, these figures create a striking counterpoint to the dominant yellow of the background. But the ultimate impression is one of dissonance between the grandeur and beauty of the town's architecture and the bombastic artificiality of its inhabitants.



FIGURE 1.  
Cartoon characters  
by Lyonel Feininger  
reproduced in the  
*Chicago Sunday Tribune*,  
April 29, 1906.



GIORGIO DE CHIRICO (Italian, 1888–1978)

*The Philosopher's Conquest (La Conquête du philosophe)*, 1914

Oil on canvas; 125.1 x 99.1 cm

Signed, lower right: *G. de Chirico*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1939.405

Giorgio de Chirico created his greatest and most influential works during a span of a few years, from 1911 to 1917. This large painting is one of his masterpieces. He was one of the first artists to concentrate on evoking a psychic rather than material reality through incongruous juxtapositions of objects, thus foreshadowing the central goal and one of the principal techniques of Surrealism.

In this painting, de Chirico deployed a repertoire of images that he was to combine and recombine in many other paintings of the period: the vast, empty spaces, the mysterious archways, the long, eerie shadows, the train, clock, and factory chimneys. An aching melancholy pervades the scene. The warmth and bustle of human activity seem to have receded from this place. This is the stillness and silence of a Mediterranean city under the midday sun, but heightened and transformed. Only distant or menacing traces of human activity remain: the train and ship far in the background, dwarfed by the factory chimneys; the shadows of two unseen figures; the cannon jutting out of the left edge of the picture, with its two cannon balls awkwardly and provocatively stacked above it; and, in the immediate foreground, two huge artichokes, which, in their spikiness and size, discourage the viewer's approach, keeping the spell of the scene behind them unbroken.

The formal features of de Chirico's paintings, although generally overlooked in favor of the subject, are also significant. While the individual objects are rendered realistically, there is no bravura in de Chirico's approach. The forms are depicted in a flat, simplified, almost crude manner, and are either starkly silhouetted, as is the train and clock, or heavily outlined in black, with a self-conscious lack of sophistication (for example, every brick is outlined in the factory chimney in the left background). The perspective and surfaces are also often skewed and tipped in ways that have been attributed to the influence

of Cubism. The artist's skill clearly does not reside in a traditional display of realistic painting, but rather in the strong structure of his compositions and in the telling choice of and relations among objects.

A related drawing (fig. 1), dated no earlier than fall 1913, shows many of the principal features of this painting. The main differences in the drawing are a palm tree in the background, to the far left, which has been replaced in the painting by the belching factory chimney, and a group of bananas in the foreground, where the artist later placed the two oversized artichokes. Interestingly, in his choice and treatment of the artichokes, de Chirico has preserved the emphasis on a profusion of pointed shapes found in the bananas, while heightening with his new choice the incongruity of the objects placed in the picture's foreground. De Chirico also later added the two cannon balls poised above the cannon. The drawing is entitled *Le vainqueur (The Conqueror)*. The title that the picture bears today, *The Philosopher's Conquest*, suggests that the picture represents a triumph of the inner world, the painter's conquest of the human psyche.

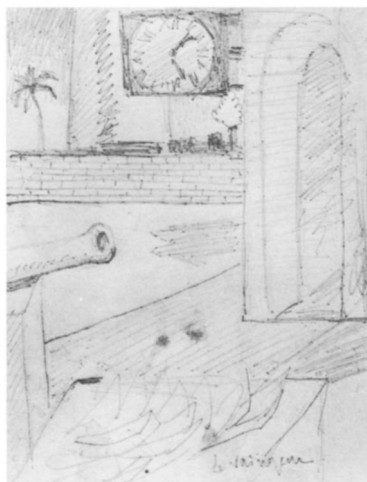


FIGURE 1.  
Giorgio de Chirico.  
*Le vainqueur (The Conqueror)*, 1913–14.  
Crayon on cardboard;  
13.7 x 10.5 cm. Inscribed  
*Le vainqueur*. Paris,  
Musée Picasso.



MARC CHAGALL (French [born Russia], 1887–1985)

*The Praying Jew*, 1923 copy of a 1914 work

Oil on canvas; 116.8 x 89.4 cm

Signed, lower right: *Marc / Chagall*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1937.188

Together with *Birth* of 1911 and *White Crucifixion* of 1938, this painting forms the nucleus of The Art Institute of Chicago's outstanding group of works by Marc Chagall. This masterful portrait shows that Chagall, although best known for works of a lyrical exuberance and color as in the Art Institute's *Juggler* of 1943, could excel with a much more limited palette and invest his images with great dignity and power.

This painting is one of two copies the artist made in 1923 before parting with the original, which had been painted in 1914 during a visit to his home town of Vitebsk (in present-day Belarus). The original is now in a private collection in Switzerland and the other copy is in the Museo d'arte moderna in Venice.

As Chagall explained in his autobiography, the model for *The Praying Jew* was an old beggar whom the artist invited to sit for the painting, wearing his father's prayer clothes. These consist of a tallis—a fringed shawl with black bands—and phylacteries—two small square leather boxes containing passages from the scriptures, which were bound with leather straps to the head and left arm of Jewish men during prayer. Chagall used the white-and-black color scheme and geometric patterns characterizing this ritual garb as the basis for a dazzling composition of highly abstracted shapes bearing witness to his assimilation of early modernist movements (such as Cubism, Orphism, and Expressionism). What is remarkable is that the artist did so without sacrificing any of the portrait's emotional impact. The abstract shapes that swirl around the figure contribute to transforming this portrait into an icon or symbol for an entire world, the Jewish world of Chagall's youth. In painting this and other pictures of Jewish life, the artist was clearly motivated by a desire to preserve a tie to a past that was threatened for him both by the passage of time and by geographical distance (Chagall had intended to return to Paris after his 1914 visit to Vitebsk, but was detained in Russia until 1923 by the

outbreak of World War I and events connected with the Russian Revolution). From the perspective of the late twentieth century, this image is all the more moving, since we know that this world and its people were to face a far greater threat than Chagall could have possibly imagined in 1914.



AMEDEO MODIGLIANI (Italian, 1884–1920)

*Madame Pompadour*, 1915

Oil on canvas; 61.1 x 50.2 cm

Signed, lower right: *modigliani*

Titled and dated, upper left: *Madam / Pompadour / 1915*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1938.217

**B**orn of Jewish parents in the Italian coastal town of Leghorn, Amedeo Modigliani settled in Paris in 1906, where he developed friendships with Pablo Picasso, the poet Max Jacob, the sculptor Constantin Brancusi, and other members of the literary and artistic avant-garde, many of whom appear in his portraits. He led a notoriously bohemian life, shortened by a self-destructive use of alcohol and drugs. Modigliani produced his finest paintings between 1914 and his premature death in 1920. Within a limited range of subjects, mainly portraits and nudes, he developed a highly distinctive style of sensitively elongated forms.

In this portrait, Modigliani's emphasis is on a strong formal structure dominated by the grid in the background and the echoing curves of the sitter's hat, shoulders, and features. There is none of the pathos often associated with his work. The artist seems instead to have invested this portrait with a note of ironic detachment, even humor, reflected in both the title of the painting (which refers to Madame de Pompadour, mistress of King Louis XV of France) and the expression of amused inscrutability worn by the sitter. Were painter and sitter perhaps both amused by the flamboyant hat? Modigliani's skill in rhyming forms, while at the same time keeping us visually interested and slightly off-balance, is evident throughout the picture, which resonates with the lessons of Paul Cézanne, Cubism, and African sculpture.

The sitter for this portrait may well have been Beatrice Hastings, an English poetess who was Modigliani's mistress at the time. Because of the artist's tendency to generalize his sitter's features, however, a comparison of this portrait with others of Hastings is inconclusive.



JOAN MIRÓ (Spanish, 1893–1983)

*Portrait of Juanita Obrador*, 1918

Oil on canvas; 69.5 x 62 cm

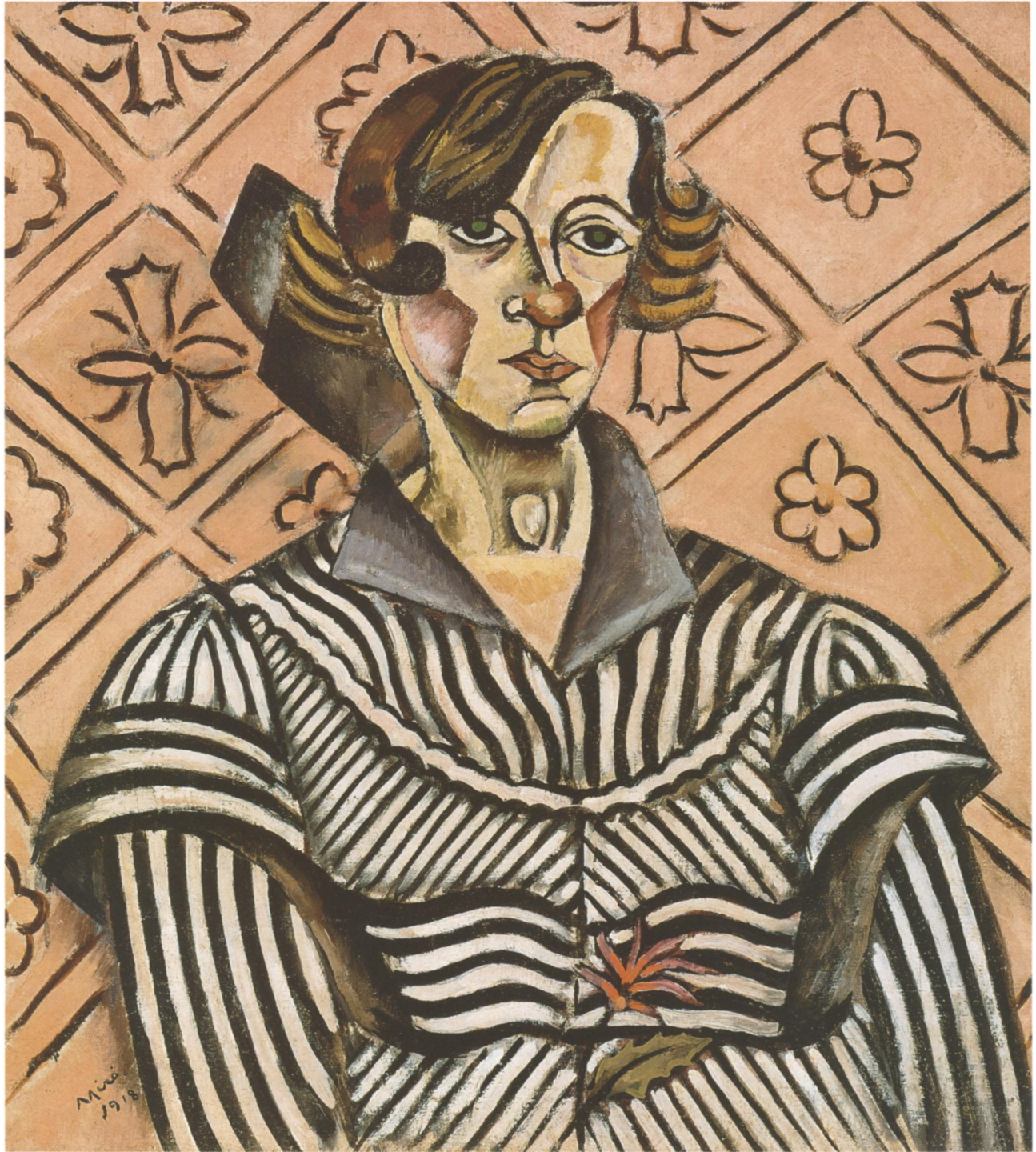
Signed, lower left: *Miró/1918*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1957.78

This painting belongs to a group of fascinating and highly individual works by Joan Miró that document his early efforts to grapple with revolutionary developments in modern art (such as Fauvism and Cubism) and to forge his own direction. These efforts culminated in the early 1920s in the artist's breakthrough to a style of fantastic, simplified forms, freely and loosely scattered across the surface of his pictures with an exuberant abandon that is hard to imagine based on this tightly constructed portrait. And yet, something of this exuberance—of the vitality and poetic intensity of Miró's later works—seems indeed to underly this strangely powerful portrait, manifesting itself, for example, in the unrestrained rhythms of the dress, barely held in check by the diamond grid in the background, or in the lyrical note introduced by the small flower on the front of the dress.

Different and often contrasting impulses are brought here into uneasy balance through the sheer force of Miró's talent for creating compelling simplifications of the forms before him. The strong rhythms established by the dress, wallpaper, and face all vie for attention, as do the artist's various sources of inspiration: the influence of the Fauves and especially of Henri Matisse (see p. 135) in the bold use of color, dense application of paint, and flat patterning of the dress and background; the effect of Cubism in the far more sculptural, angular treatment of the face; and the impact of the Romanesque frescoes of Miró's native Catalonia (which the artist himself acknowledged as a major inspiration) in the linear rhythms of the dress, hair, and background, in the frontal pose, and in the large, staring eyes. This is a painting of dramatic contrasts, between the insistent flatness of the dress and background and the Cubist modeling of the face, between the startling pink of the wallpaper and the restrained black-and-white color scheme of the dress, between the human presence of the sitter and the strong linear patterns that

threaten to engulf it. It does not seem surprising, given the impact this portrait still has today, that the young woman who initially agreed to sit for it became frightened both by Miró's intensity and his strange style of painting, forcing him to finish the portrait from memory.



GEORGES BRAQUE (French, 1882–1963)

*Still Life*, 1919

Oil on canvas; 50.2 x 92.2 cm

Signed, lower right: *G. Braque*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1929.764

Together with Pablo Picasso (see p. 139), Georges Braque was responsible for developing the revolutionary approach to painting known as Cubism (c. 1907–14). Starting with their meeting in 1907, Picasso and Braque moved together through the successive phases of this radically new style: the early phase (c. 1907–09), which was strongly influenced by the study of African art and Cézanne; the so-called Analytical phase (c. 1910–12), in which the rhythm of the picture becomes dense and broken, at times making the subject almost unreadable; and the so-called Synthetic phase (c. 1912–14), which is marked by a loosening of the picture's structure, partly under the influence of collage, in favor of broader planes, brighter color, and more decorative effects.

In this painting, we see Braque emerging after World War I (he was seriously wounded in 1915 and did not resume painting until 1917) with a style clearly indebted to his earlier Cubist works, but tempered by a mood of quiet reflection. There is a fluidity and looseness in the way Braque applied traditional Cubist devices here that bespeaks an easy familiarity without the urgency and edge of the earlier experimental work. The artist handled this favorite Cubist subject here with a fuguelike sense of visual counterpoint that seems indeed to illustrate the analogy between painting and music so widespread in the early part of this century. The broad planes and patterned surfaces of Synthetic Cubism are evident in the treatment of the objects, which are defined by large, overlapping areas of color. The decorative pointillism used to distinguish certain planes and the simulated wood grain used for the guitar's neck recall the Cubists' earlier radical experiments with collage. Cubism's legacy is, however, best exemplified here by the startling liberty Braque took with the guitar's body, its customary curvature broken at left by a gaping, angular opening, which finds its primary justification not in resemblance to an outside model but in the painting's inner logic.



FERNAND LÉGER (French, 1881–1955)

*The Railway Crossing* (Preliminary Version), 1919

Oil on canvas; 54.1 x 65.7 cm

Signed and dated on back: *Le Passage à niveau,*  
*esquisse F. Léger/19*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, gift of Mrs. Patrick  
Hill in memory of Rue Winterbotham Carpenter,  
1953.341

Like Robert Delaunay's *Champs de Mars: The Red Tower* of 1911 (p. 143), Fernand Léger's *The Railway Crossing* (Preliminary Version) is a paean to modernity, its dynamism, energy, and movement. Unlike Delaunay's earlier work, however, this painting contains no specifically recognizable objects, except the directional sign with the arrow. Rather than a representation of a railroad crossing, Léger created a new kind of visual poetry from the fragments, colors, and shapes of his environment, evoking the rich sensations elicited by modern industrialized life. Tubular beams appear to intersect the surface, evoking both the pistons of a machine and the open, metal structures used in modern construction. Other forms, such as the circular, targetlike shape on the left, the stripes that proliferate throughout the painting, and most obviously the directional sign with the arrow, seem to have been inspired by the colorful, simplified geometry of road signs or the loud, attention-getting designs of billboards and posters. In this respect, Léger prefigured the later fascination of Pop artists with these elements of modern life.

The railroad crossing, a subject epitomizing the noisy mechanical world that Léger loved, had first been painted by the artist as early as 1912. In 1919, he resumed portraying this subject, making a number of drawings and oil sketches, including our own, in preparation for a much larger, finished painting (fig. 1). The Art Institute version already contains the major compositional elements found in the final work. There is, however, one dramatic difference: for the final painting, Léger decided to turn the entire composition upside down, in what amounts to a declaration of the painting's complete autonomy from representation.

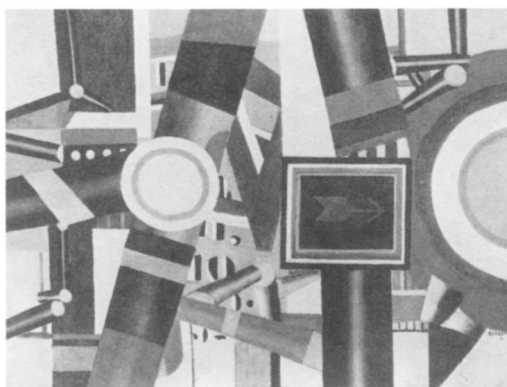


FIGURE 1.  
Fernand Léger. *The  
Railroad Crossing*,  
1919. Oil on canvas;  
97 x 130 cm. Collection  
of Raoul Laroche.



MAX ERNST (French [born Germany], 1891–1976)

*The Blue Forest*, 1925

Oil on canvas; 116.2 x 73 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *max ernst/25*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1988.221

Max Ernst was one of the most gifted artists associated with Surrealism, exhibiting a protean imagination that led him to produce work in an unusually wide range of styles and techniques. This painting belongs to a period, from 1925 to 1928, that was perhaps the most productive and creative of his long career. Most of the artist's extraordinarily rich work of these years depended, directly or indirectly, on a technique referred to as *frottage* (rubbing), which Ernst used to stimulate his imagination, encouraged in this by Surrealist theories about the processes of inspiration. This technique consisted in placing a piece of paper over a textured object or surface and then rubbing it with a pencil or other tool to obtain an image. Using this method as his point of departure, Ernst produced in 1925 a series of exceptionally beautiful drawings, thirty-four of which were published the following year under the title *Histoire naturelle* (*Natural History*). This painting shares with these drawings a stark and delicate beauty. Like many other works of this period, it was produced by adapting *frottage* to oil painting. The techniques used included scraping paint off the canvas, a procedure Ernst called *grattage* (scraping), or rubbing a cloth dipped in paint over the canvas, as it lay on a variety of textured surfaces from wood planks and wire mesh, as in this case, to string, chair caning, shells, and many other materials. As the title of Ernst's portfolio of drawings indicates, many of his works of these years allude to the natural world. The "Forest" series, exemplified by this painting, resumed a popular Romantic theme that continued to fascinate Surrealist artists (compare, for example, the work of Ernst's close friend Jean Arp) as a repository of mysterious, primeval forces.

Here the chance patterns produced by the wood grain of several wood planks have been transformed into a cluster of towering forms, outlined against a pale sky flecked with blue, yellow, and green. The forest's floor

presents a honeycomb pattern seemingly produced by means of a wire mesh, a pattern that is echoed in the sky in scattered bursts of color. The spare simplicity of this image enhances its associative powers, as we are drawn into our own cosmic reverie about a primordial world, encompassing far more than the forest mentioned in the title. Ernst's works thus become, in his own words, a kind of "hypnotic language [that] takes us back to a lost paradise, to cosmic secrets, and teaches us to understand the language of the universe."



CHAIM SOUTINE (Lithuanian, 1893–1943)

*Dead Fowl*, c. 1926

Oil on canvas; 95.9 x 61.6 cm

Signed, lower left: *Soutine*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1937.167

Like Marc Chagall (see p. 149), Chaim Soutine was a Russian Jew, who made his way to Paris in 1913 in pursuit of his passion for painting. In Paris he became friends with other Jewish artists, such as Chagall, Jacques Lipchitz, and especially Amedeo Modigliani (see p. 151), who painted several portraits of him. Like Modigliani and Chagall, he forged a personal idiom that did not fit neatly into a group movement, though it shows the influence of Vincent van Gogh (see pp. 123 and 127), the Fauves, and particularly Expressionism. The highly expressive work of earlier artists, such as El Greco and Rembrandt van Rijn, was also a major inspiration, as Soutine developed his feverishly intense vision of reality.

One of more than twenty pictures of dead birds painted by the artist in the mid-1920s, this powerful work demonstrates Soutine's talent at extracting the last ounce of tragic meaning from his otherwise ordinary subjects. In typical fashion, the painter has invested this still life with a frenzied vitality, which contrasts markedly with the lifeless condition of the bird. Rather than the limp surrender of death, Soutine seems to have been portraying the bird's writhing battle against death, its fierce resistance to its fate. This is reflected in the savage application of paint, in the flickering color, and in the highly unstable composition. The front of a table or chair emerges from the dark ground, but rather than supporting the dead bird, it is skewed at a dizzying angle, thus emphasizing the turbulent drama of the scene.



*Reclining Nude*, 1927

Oil on canvas; 83.4 x 119 cm

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1988.220

World War I was the decisive event in Max Beckmann's career. The slaughter and suffering that he witnessed at the front, where he served as a medical orderly, and his subsequent nervous breakdown drastically changed his outlook and, by extension, his work. Discharged from the army, Beckmann soon started to produce a series of shockingly new paintings reflecting what he described in a letter from the front as "life's unspeakable contradictions." Unflinching and brutally direct, works such as the barbaric *Night* of 1918–19 (Düsseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen), which depicts a band of thugs torturing a man and woman, set the tone for the rest of Beckmann's career. As shown by the sinister *Self-Portrait with Red Scarf* of 1917 (Staatsgalerie Stuttgart), and the many other self-portraits that were to follow (such as his *Self-Portrait* of 1937 in the collection of the Art Institute), Beckmann spared no one, not even himself, from his merciless scrutiny.

Within this context, it comes as no surprise that the theme of the nude is fairly rare in Beckmann's work, harking back as it does to a tradition that often treated the female body as an exercise in the representation of ideal beauty. Masterfully painted, this work shows Beckmann's vehement handling of pigment laid down in broad slabs of color and in dark, chiseling contours. Although the picture's theme is related to the countless reclining female nudes of art history, from Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) to Francisco Goya's *Naked Maja* (c. 1798–1805; Museo del Prado, Madrid) to Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863; Musée du Louvre, Paris), Beckmann has injected it with something of the unsettling quality so pronounced in his more well-known works. This is the nude stripped of its idealizing veneer and depicted as the object of blatant and disquieting erotic impulses. The woman's body is shown through the distorting lens of the viewer's

intense desire. The torso is unnaturally compressed and reduced to a pair of huge, bulging breasts. So dominant is this feature, in fact, that the woman's head seems overshadowed, no more than a perfunctory afterthought, and oddly discontinuous with the rest of the figure. From the abbreviated torso, the figure's limbs—the thighs and arms inordinately long—sprawl in different directions. Despite the lush handling of paint and the beautifully sketched still life on the lower right, there seems to be more than a hint of aggression in the unabashed emphasis on the woman's breasts and in the ostentatious splaying of the figure.



RAOUL DUFY (French, 1877–1953)

*Open Window, Nice*, 1928

Oil on canvas; 65.1 x 53.7 cm

Signed, lower right: *Raoul Dufy*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1937.166

Raoul Dufy's work often draws comparison with that of Henri Matisse, and the two artists indeed had a number of things in common: they both worked on the Riviera, a circumstance that led them at times to treat very similar subjects (compare, for example, Matisse's *Woman Standing at the Window* of 1919, formerly in the Winterbotham Collection [see p. 106, fig. 4]); they both went through a Fauvist phase and continued to give primacy to color in their subsequent work; and they both traveled to North Africa and were seduced by the lush, exotic patterns of that region. But in Dufy's work, an extraordinary facility often masks the traces of intellectual effort and intense experimentation so apparent in the art of Matisse (see p. 135). The mood in Dufy's paintings is one of unalloyed pleasure, and so unwaveringly is this mood sustained throughout his work that it has been said that "Dufy never painted a sad picture."

At his best, as in this superb example, Dufy displayed an unrivaled decorative sense, juggling with consummate skill broad areas of bold, saturated color (blue, red, green, yellow), a calligraphic line of great verve and fluidity, and an assured if carefree appreciation for the compositional liberties of modern painting. Dufy here brilliantly transformed the common modernist motif of the slanted, upturned tabletop (see, for example, Georges Braque's *Still Life*, p. 155) into an abstract circular shape that hovers magically at the joyous center of his composition. Its quiet, undisturbed surface contrasts markedly with the richly patterned areas that surround it, while its perfectly self-contained shape becomes a symbol for the state of sensual fulfillment embodied in this picture.



YVES TANGUY (American [born France], 1900–1955)

*Title Unknown*, 1928

Oil on wood, hinged folding screen in eight panels,  
each panel 200 x 59.7 cm

Signed, lower right: *YVES TANGUY 28*

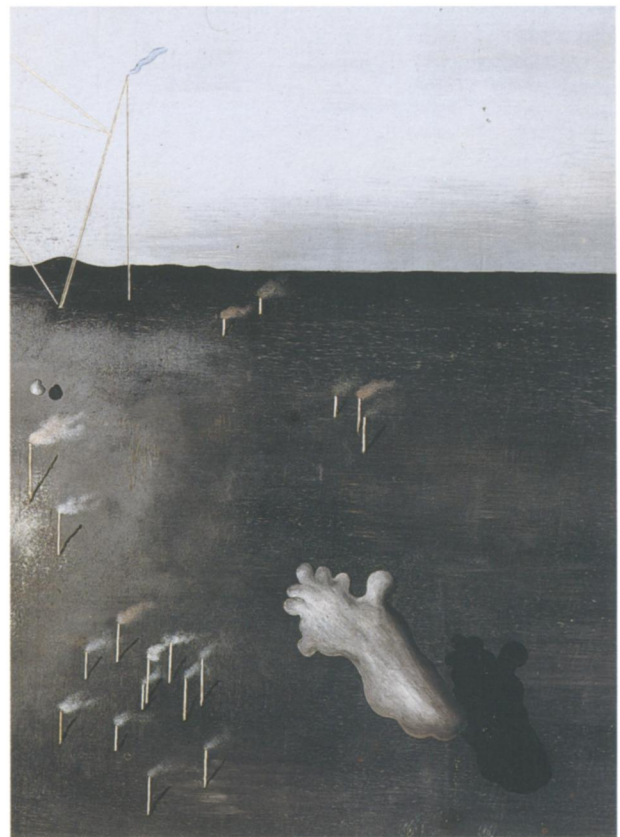
Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1988.434

In 1923, Yves Tanguy saw a painting by Giorgio de Chirico (see p. 147) in an art dealer's window and, like Max Ernst, René Magritte, and Paul Delvaux (see pp. 159, 171, and 173), was profoundly affected by his encounter with Metaphysical art. As a result, Tanguy resolved to make painting his life work and, despite his lack of formal artistic training, soon developed his own distinctive brand of Surrealist painting, which consists of vast, imaginary landscapes populated by oddly amorphous creatures.

Surprisingly, nothing is known of the circumstances surrounding the creation of this extraordinary and unique screen, which is certainly one of Tanguy's masterpieces. Given its size and ambition, this work was likely created for a specific patron. It shares many of the characteristics of Tanguy's other works of this period, but because of its almost environmental scale, the haunting grandeur of Tanguy's infinitely expanding vistas reaches here an unprecedented intensity.

As usual, Tanguy painted this work with great care and a profusion of subtle details, which reward close inspection and gently but inexorably draw us under the spell of his strange and marvelous world. For example, the horizon line, which appears almost flat in a reproduction, due to the enormous reduction in size, actually presents numerous hilly modulations. And the color scheme, although muted, reveals an infinite range of gradations, from white to gray to black or brown, punctuated by touches of vivid color—orange-red, blue, green. Similarly, the surface treatment is more varied than would initially appear—smooth and lush in the expanse of the sky, roughly textured through heavy scratching in the dark area below the horizon line. A number of bulbous creatures, uncertainly bridging the animate and the inanimate worlds, are scattered throughout the landscape and are sometimes paired in almost human ways (see the two forms in the lower right corner of the fourth panel from the left). Vaporous, cloudlike entities and plumed,

linear structures are interspersed among them. This seems to be a lunar or undersea landscape, in which the pull of gravity is either absent or gentler than in our own world, since these creatures at times rest lightly on the ground, and at other times hover buoyantly above it. As we gaze into this aquariumlike world, Tanguy's forms tenuously join and separate as if engaged in a slow dance. This is a parallel universe, which seems to unveil the deepest secrets and mysteries of our own.



*detail*

*Inventions of the Monsters (Les Inventions des monstres)*, 1937

Oil on canvas; 125.1 x 99.1 cm

Signed and dated on back: *Salvador Dali 1937*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1943.798

While Surrealists such as Giorgio de Chirico (see p. 147) and René Magritte (see p. 171) generally focused on unlocking the mystery of everyday objects, Salvador Dali populated his visionary landscapes with the often monstrous creatures of his imagination. Dali also favored dazzling displays of painterly skill, rather than the deadpan realism of de Chirico and Magritte, in giving his scenes a dramatic and hallucinatory intensity.

When this painting was acquired by the Art Institute in 1943, Dali sent the following telegram commenting on the circumstances of the work's creation and its symbolism:

Am pleased and honored by your acquisition. According to Nostradamus [sixteenth-century French physician and astrologer] the apparition of monsters presages the outbreak of war. This canvas was painted in the Semmering mountains near Vienna a few months before the Anschluss [the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in March 1938] and has a prophetic character. Horse women equal maternal river monsters. Flaming giraffe equals masculine apocalyptic monster. Cat angel equals divine heterosexual monster. Hourglass equals metaphysical monster. Gala [Dali's wife] and Dali equal sentimental monster. The little blue dog alone is not a true monster.

As Dali's comments suggest, there is an ominous mood to the painting. A hand mysteriously emerges from the lower left corner of the picture and points admonishingly to the scene before us. Here a sibylline figure gazes from black sockets at the butterfly and hourglass she holds in her hands, both of which may be interpreted as *memento mori*, reminders of death. Behind her emerge the heads of Gala and Dali, which are vividly caught in a happily shared moment, as they gaze with apparent amusement and fascination at the varied objects (a hand holding a ball, a long loaf of bread, and what seems to be a small portrait bust) on the long table before them. In the center of the picture, a kind of altar supports a female bust, her nakedness painted with the lush eroticism that so appealed to the Surrealists. The

woman's head merges with that of a horse, associating her with the horse-women shown bathing at left. What Dali refers to above as a "cat angel" leans against the altar, seemingly in conversation with the horse-woman. In what is now the empty right-hand corner of the picture, a dog was once visible (painted in a chemically unstable pigment, it has now faded almost completely). The populated areas of the picture in the foreground and middleground seemed to be threatened by some kind of conflagration in the far right corner, a danger epitomized by the "flaming giraffe." As Dali's comments make clear, the artist understood this to refer to the approaching threat of World War II.

A number of preparatory drawings exist for this painting. One of these is presently on loan to the Art Institute (fig. 1) and shows Dali working to define the painting's double-headed woman by combining a profile and frontal view. The deep, receding perspective found in the painting is already suggested here by the small figure and hill sketched in the far distance.



FIGURE 1.  
Salvador Dali.  
*Formation of the Monsters (Formation des monstres)*, 1937.  
Black ink on pink paper; 23.8 x 15.9 cm.  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Lindy and Edwin Bergman Collection, 110.1991.



RENÉ MAGRITTE (Belgian, 1898–1967)

*Time Transfixed* (*La Durée poignardée*), 1938

Oil on canvas; 137 x 98.7 cm

Signed, lower right: *Magritte*

Titled, signed, and dated on back: “*LA DURÉE / POIGNARDÉE*” / 8OP / MAGRITTE / 1938

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1970.426

René Magritte owed a direct debt to Giorgio de Chirico, whose work he first saw in 1922. This painting is one of Magritte’s most compelling images. In it, the influence of de Chirico is apparent in a shared approach to the creation of mysterious and enigmatic images through incongruous juxtapositions of familiar objects; it is also evident in Magritte’s adoption of some of de Chirico’s motifs (the clock, the locomotive), as a comparison with de Chirico’s *The Philosopher’s Conquest* (p. 147) makes clear. Magritte has, however, given his own imprint to the ideas implicit in de Chirico’s early paintings. His images are less complicated and more immediately comprehensible than de Chirico’s. His brand of realism is more meticulous in both technique and composition. Magritte’s emphasis on order is apparent in the uncluttered and precisely rendered surfaces, in the grid of moldings and frames that controls the composition, and in details such as the smoke of the locomotive, which tidily disappears under the mantelpiece. There is an engaging coarseness and naïveté to de Chirico’s images that Magritte exchanged in this painting for clarity and immediacy. There is, nevertheless, nothing slavish about Magritte’s realism, as illustrated by his deliberate omission, in his final composition, of the shadow of the candlestick on the right. A comparison of the painting with a preparatory sketch (fig. 1) shows this and other small but significant changes, such as the enlargement of both the clock’s face and the locomotive. In typically compulsive fashion, these two circular forms are made to share the same diameter.

In a letter of 1959, Magritte commented at length on this painting, emphasizing that his goal was to unveil or evoke “the mystery” of things “that seem familiar to us [out of error or habit].” Having decided on a locomotive as his subject,

“the problem,” he explained, was “how to paint this image so that it would evoke mystery.” Magritte added, “The image of a locomotive is immediately familiar: its mystery is not perceived. In order for its mystery to be evoked, another *immediately* familiar image without mystery—the image of a dining room fireplace—was joined with the image of the locomotive.” He also remarked that “the title *La durée poignardée* is itself an image (in words) joined to a painted image” and that *Time Transfixed* did not seem to him “a very accurate translation.” Indeed, although the English title has the memorable quality that Magritte often sought, it is both more catchy and less forceful than the original French. It does not convey the sense of duration and passage through time in the word “durée” (duration) or the violent impact of something stabbed with a dagger in the word “poignardée” (stabbed).

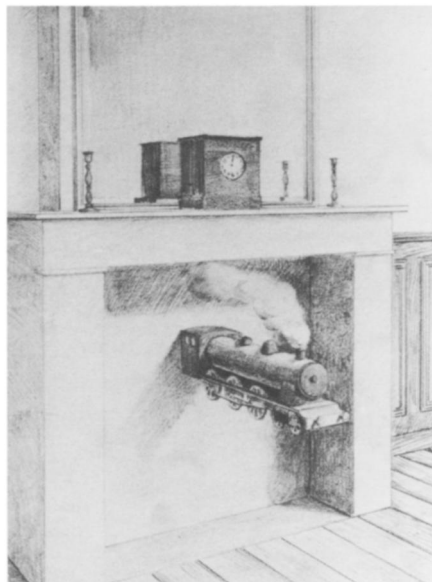


FIGURE 1.  
René Magritte. Study  
for *Time Transfixed*  
of 1938. Pencil on paper;  
30 x 25 cm. Private  
collection, Brussels.



PAUL DELVAUX (Belgian, 1897–1994)

*The Awakening of the Forest (L'Éveil de la forêt)*, August 1939

Oil on canvas; 170.2 x 225.4 cm

Signed and dated on rock at lower right:

P. DELVAUX / 8–39

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1991.290

This is one of the most ambitious paintings that Paul Delvaux produced during the late 1930s, when, under the influence of Surrealism, he made a dramatic and lasting change in his work. Like so many of his Surrealist predecessors, he was particularly affected by the early paintings of Giorgio de Chirico (see p. 147), whom Delvaux dubbed “the poet of emptiness” and whose work he admired for giving pictorial form to “a poetry of silence and absence.” In de Chirico’s work and in that of Salvador Dalí (see p. 169) and René Magritte (see p. 171), Delvaux discovered new possibilities for giving visual form to his complex inner world, a world populated with childhood memories and dominated by the obsessive recurrence of the same mysterious female type.

In *The Awakening of the Forest*, it is the artist’s childhood passion for the novels of Jules Verne that inspired this elaborate recasting of a traditional, bucolic subject. The artist has freely rendered here an episode from Jules Verne’s novel *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), in which Professor Otto Lidenbrock and his nephew Axel discover deep inside the earth a prehistoric forest, beautifully preserved with its profusion of now-extinct vegetation. As Delvaux explained, he was drawn to the figure of the professor by “the somewhat comic, very picturesque side of his personality.” In the painting, the professor is shown at left, immersed in the examination of a rock or fossil, apparently oblivious to the scene unfolding before him. Behind him, the artist has portrayed himself in the role of Axel, gazing away from the scene with the same wide-eyed, trancelike, self-absorbed expression shared by the other figures in the painting. In the background, under the gray light of a full moon, a group of women, as pristine in their nakedness as the forest is geologically, advance like automatons, as if moved or drawn by some invisible force. In the foreground, several figures combine elements from different realms, the human and the vegetal in the case of the two

women who have sprouted leaves in the place of hair, the male and the female in the case of the two hermaphrodites (the adolescent languidly resting on a huge leaf at center and the flutist standing at right). In their ambiguity, these figures seem to belong to a primordial, not yet completely differentiated state. On either side, a female figure in long Victorian dress advances holding an oil lamp, vainly attempting to shed light on the unyielding mystery of the scene.

There is in fact a sense of emotional estrangement, an oppressive silence at the very heart of the picture, that will not be denied, despite the languid eroticism evoked by the proliferation of naked forms and the artist’s fussy preoccupation with details. There seems to be no genuine connection between the many figures populating the scene, all of whom seem ultimately isolated in their own world. Even when engaging in some action, as are the two women embracing in the far center of the picture, there is an automatic, passive, unfulfilling quality to their gestures that seems to defy real communication. This is a world of suspended and unrequited desires, in which all but the comically oblivious professor, who may well function in some respects as an alter ego for the artist obsessed with his work, seem to express a melancholy awareness of the unbridgeable distance between desire and its fulfillment.



*Solitaire (Patience)*, 1943

Oil on canvas; 161.3 x 161.5 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *Balthus 1943*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1964.177

Balthus is a master of vague menace and unease. As in many of his other paintings, the artist focused here on the unself-consciously provocative pose of a pubescent girl, thereby injecting something unsettling into an otherwise banal scene. The girl's taut, arching pose indicates a physical restlessness, an impulsive and unrestrained quality, that seems to threaten the normality and predictability of this bourgeois interior. Against the insistent regularity of the back wall, which is covered with striped wall paper and is perfectly aligned with the picture's rectangular frame, the artist has placed every object slightly askew, as if to suggest the disruptive effect of the girl's presence. Many of these objects, especially the open book and box on the chair, seem to reflect, in their disordered state the girl's distracted, bored handling of them. In her restlessness, she seems to have carelessly moved many of the objects from their customary position: the cluster of containers and books stacked on the lower left, the open book and box dumped on the chair, the silver candlestick and cup pushed to the edge of the table. Even the furniture and rug seem to have been disturbed. The activity in which the girl is engaged, a game of *solitaire*, seems insufficient to contain her pent-up energy. A sense of frustration, of a force and impulse vainly seeking an appropriate channel, pervades the picture.

The muted colors and simplified volumes of Balthus's style of painting hark back to the figurative tradition of artists such as Piero della Francesca, whom he greatly admired. In its tight execution and controlled contours, this style confers to the scene a still, frozen quality that further heightens the feeling of repressed sexual energy expressed by the girl's pose. Painted in Switzerland, where Balthus took refuge during World War II, this picture has, not surprisingly, been interpreted as a metaphor for the restless waiting game of the *émigré*.



YVES TANGUY (American [born France], 1900–1955)

*The Rapidity of Sleep (La Rapidité des sommeils)*, 1945

Oil on canvas; 127 x 101.6 cm

Signed, lower right: YVES TANGUY 45

Titled on back: *La Rapidité des sommeils*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1946.46

This painting exemplifies Yves Tanguy's late style, especially as he practiced it after his move to the United States in 1939, where he married the American painter Kay Sage. The forms have become harder and more sculptural, resembling strangely shaped stones, rather than the amorphous creatures of his earlier paintings, and echoing more clearly the prehistoric stones—the dolmens and menhirs—of Tanguy's native Brittany. Color is also intensified, as the artist makes more generous use of the orange-red and blue found only spottily in earlier works, such as his 1928 screen (p. 167). The arrangement, size, and shape of these forms has become more varied, from the regimented clustering of forms on the right to the horizontal scattering of forms on the left and in the background. The viewer is also brought visually closer to the scene through the cropping of forms in the foreground.

The title of the painting (inscribed on the back as *La Rapidité des sommeils*) works in conjunction with the image to heighten its enigma and mystery, as in the works of Giorgio de Chirico and René Magritte (see pp. 147 and 171). Perhaps the title refers to the onset of sleep, or to the different stages of sleep, as the French use of the plural “*sommeils*” seems to suggest. This interpretation seems to find a visual equivalent in the progression from congested, active foreground to sparse, quiet background, from the thicket of vertical forms on the right to the more relaxed rhythm of horizontal forms extending into the distance. In the middle ground, at left, is an unusual configuration that seems particularly evocative in relation to the title. A horizontal form reminiscent of a sleeping figure lies, as in a bed or coffin, within the rectangular space defined by a rocklike border. Is Tanguy referring to the sleep that ushers in the dream-world of his landscapes or to the ultimate sleep, the sleep of death? The mood of the picture hovers uncertainly between the ominous and the contemplative, between lower and upper

halves, engendering a desire to traverse the inhospitable foreground to reach the soothing, misty reaches of the background. Given the date of the work, at the end of World War II, one also wonders whether there is embedded in this work something of the emotional tenor of the times, a yearning for a peace that would transcend recent history.



*Genuflection of the Bishop (L'Agenouillement de l'évêque)*, 1963

Oil on canvas; 217.8 x 298.5 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *J. Dubuffet 63*

Titled, signed, and dated on back: *L'agenouillement / de l'évêque / J. Dubuffet / octobre 63*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1964.1087

In 1942, Jean Dubuffet gave up a successful career as a wine merchant to become a full-time artist. His goal was to create art outside the boundaries of tradition and received notions of beauty and ugliness. In the pursuit of this goal, Dubuffet turned for inspiration to so-called “outsider” art—the art of children, the insane, prison inmates, naive artists, and the “primitives,” whose work he described as *art brut* (“raw art”).

This painting belongs to a long series of works that occupied Dubuffet from 1962 to 1974, and for which he coined the term *Hourloupe*. As the artist himself explained, “L’Hourloupe [in French] calls to mind some object or personage of fairytale-like and grotesque character and at the same time something tragically growling and menacing.” A quality both whimsical and disturbing indeed characterizes this painting. Following his resolve to make art from the raw stuff of “daily life,” stripped of the veneer of culture, which he regarded as “a dead language” or as “a coat that . . . no longer fits us,” Dubuffet took his inspiration for the *Hourloupe* series from his own ballpoint doodles. These soon took on a life of their own, expanding, as in this case, to huge proportions and eventually encompassing not only painting, but sculpture and architecture as well. One of the sculptures to emerge from this series, *Monument to the Standing Beast* of 1969, has since become a Chicago landmark in its position in front of Helmut Jahn’s equally unorthodox State of Illinois Building (now the James R. Thompson Center).

This painting initially overwhelms the viewer with a dizzying proliferation of forms, all of which fit together with the unyielding flatness of a jigsaw puzzle. On closer scrutiny, five indeterminate figures or personages emerge from the background, including, at center, the kneeling “bishop” of the title. There is an unsettling tension between the painting’s insistently repetitive design and its figurative and possibly narrative content, which makes

us constantly waver between abstraction and figuration in our reading of the surface. Similarly disturbing is the tension between the endearingly grotesque figures conjured from the artist’s imagination and the feeling of their suffocating spatial confinement within the painting. At any moment, the figures seem in danger of being swallowed up by the obsessive patterning of the picture’s surface.



GERHARD RICHTER (German, born 1932)

*Christa and Wolfi (Christa und Wolfi)*, 1964

Oil on canvas; 150 x 130 cm

Titled on back: *Christa u. Wolfi*

Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1987.276

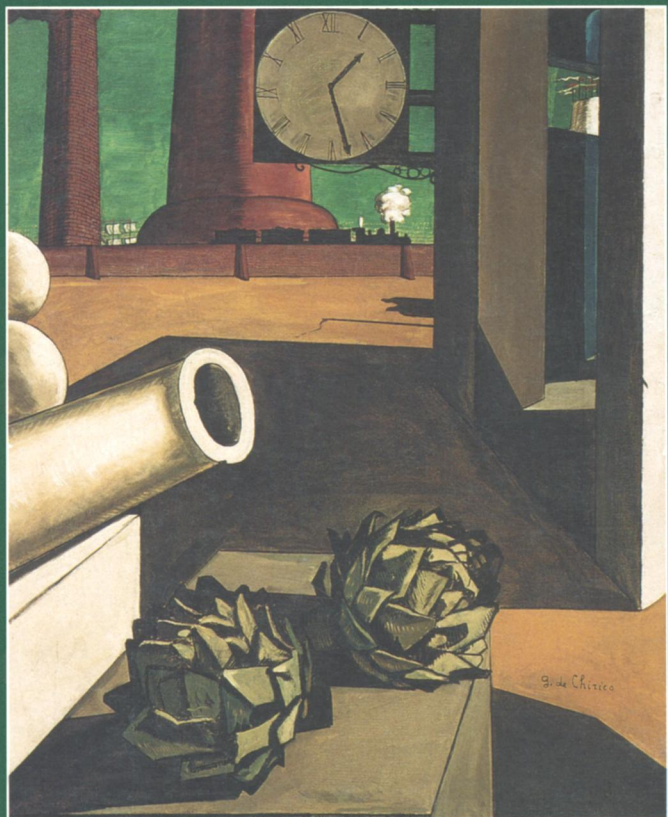
Considered in its entirety, Gerhard Richter's work seems to defy traditional notions of cohesion, for he has worked, often simultaneously, in diametrically different modes. In addition to the so-called Photo Paintings of the 1960s, of which this is a major example, his work includes austere grids of colored rectangles, based on color charts, and, most recently, a series of colorful, exuberant, and highly gestural abstractions. At first, it would seem that the only common element among these is a surprisingly single-minded devotion to the traditional medium of oil painting. It is only on closer inspection that one begins to appreciate the questioning, exploratory attitude that underlies Richter's work, an attitude that leads him to focus, in a quintessentially modern manner, on the different and even contradictory ways in which we record reality. In his Photo Paintings, he concentrated on photography, especially family snapshots and journalistic photographs; in his impersonal, gridlike works, he focused on the symbolic language of maps and charts; and in his most recent paintings, he has self-consciously adopted the style of Abstract Expressionism. Richter thus increases our awareness not only of the different ways in which we are accustomed to perceiving or constructing reality, but also of the incompleteness and inadequacy of any single mode of representation before a reality that is irreducibly elusive and complex. "My own relation to reality," Richter has said, "has always to do with haziness, insecurity, inconsistency."

In this painting, which appears to be based on a family photograph, Richter gave to the image a blurred, liquid quality, as if it were no more than an unsteady, fleeting reflection, like a reflection on water. In some instances, parts of the picture are entirely obscured, as in the case of the hand of the figure on the left, which is reduced to a hazy stump. The title of the painting, which is inscribed on the back of the canvas, further enhances the sense of

incompleteness and mystery evoked by the image, since only one of the two women is identified by name (Wolfi presumably refers to the dog). All of these factors heighten our awareness of time's inevitable blurring of the past and the nostalgia—a word used by Richter—associated with this kind of family snapshot.



*The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, published twice annually, presents articles on the collections and history of the Art Institute. This issue is devoted entirely to the Joseph Winterbotham Collection, a remarkable group of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European paintings. This special issue of *Museum Studies* includes an essay on the Winterbotham family, followed by short, informative essays on all of the works in the Winterbotham Collection. Each of the paintings in the collection is reproduced in full color, including works by VAN GOGH (pictured on the cover), TOULOUSE-LAUTREC, PICASSO, CHAGALL, DE CHIRICO (pictured at right), and MAGRITTE.



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