



PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)

La Communiantte Avec Missel

oil on canvas

25 5/8 x 21 1/2 in. (35 x 30 1/2 x 3 in.)

1919

38026

PROVENANCE:

Estate of the artist

Claude Picasso

Pace Gallery, New York

James Goodman Gallery, New York (until March 1989)

Fabian Carlsson, London

Private Collection, New York

James Goodman Gallery, New York

Collection of Sydney E Frank, acquired from the above in 2003

Private Collection, purchased from Sydney Frank Estate in 2018

EXHIBITION:

Paris, Galerie Claude Bernard, Picasso Peintures 1901-1971, 1980, no. 5, illustrated in the catalogue

New York, James Goodman Gallery, Paintings, Watercolors and Drawings by Dubuffet, Léger and Picasso, 1988, no. 14

LITERATURE:

Josep Palau i Fabre, *Picasso: from the Ballets to Drama (1917-1926)*, Barcelona, 1999, no. 373, illustrated p. 128

1988. [NY.88c*]. *Paintings, Watercolors & Drawings by Dubuffet, Léger & Picasso* (James Goodman Gallery, New York, September - October, 1988). New York.

NY.88c*:14

Picasso, *Peintures, 1901-1971* (Galerie Claude Bernard, Paris, juin, 1980). Paris. PA.80a*:5

An exemplary work from Picasso's Neo-Classical period, *La communiantte avec missel* belongs to a rare series. Picasso revisited the theme of children receiving communion a few times and in a few styles, from this solemn classic version to the dynamic fragmentation of Cubism. A Neo-Classical example comparable to this piece is in the collection of the Musée Picasso in Paris.

While this time period after World War I saw many artists looking to tradition, a return to order as a reaction against the destruction of war, Picasso's Neo-classicism was not so much a refuge, but a vehicle by which he could explore new themes and ideas. In *La communiantte avec missel*, we see certain hallmarks of Picasso: the visual weight that the girl carries and the statuesque features of her face. These elements are softened by the curved lines the artist has used for her body and dress. In Picasso's hands, the painting is a meditation of youth and religion marking the rites of passage.

Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga in 1881. He grew up in Barcelona, where he spent his childhood studying drawing and painting under his father, Jose Ruíz, who taught at the local art school. Picasso spent a year studying at the Academy of Arts in Madrid,

before traveling to Paris in 1900. Landing in the center of the European art world, Picasso shared lodgings with the poet and journalist Max Jacob, with whom he lived the Bohemian lifestyle of the poor and starving artist. The next few years saw an improvement in his fortunes and he spent time in Paris and Madrid, founding and illustrating the art magazine *Arte Joven*. Picasso began to mingle in the company of other artists and literary figures including the poet Guillaume Apollinaire and the legendary writer, art critic and salon hostess Gertrude Stein, whose portrait he painted in 1906.

He had astonishing powers of invention, continually innovating and refreshing his work and experimenting with one style after another. His earliest distinguishable period is the Blue Period, dating approximately from 1901 to 1904 when he used a mostly blue and blue-green color palette and painted poignant images of beggars, prostitutes and other tragic figures from the streets of Paris. His Rose Period, which followed thereafter, made use of a warmer color palette and focused on generally less somber subject matter. Around 1907, Picasso became very influenced by African masks and art which began making their way into Parisian museums following the expansion of the French Empire into Africa. The faces and simplified, angular planes of the women in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)*, clearly derive their style from African masks and sculptures and this painting is often heralded as the beginning of Cubism. Along with his contemporary, Georges Braque, Picasso began to develop an artistic style, later known as Analytical Cubism, which approached the visual world from the perspective of geometric forms. In 1926, Picasso turned towards Surrealism, a movement that was growing in strength and popularity among Parisian artists. Picasso's most famous surrealist work, *Guernica*, depicted the bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. This painting is a powerful anti-war statement warning against the suffering and devastation of war.

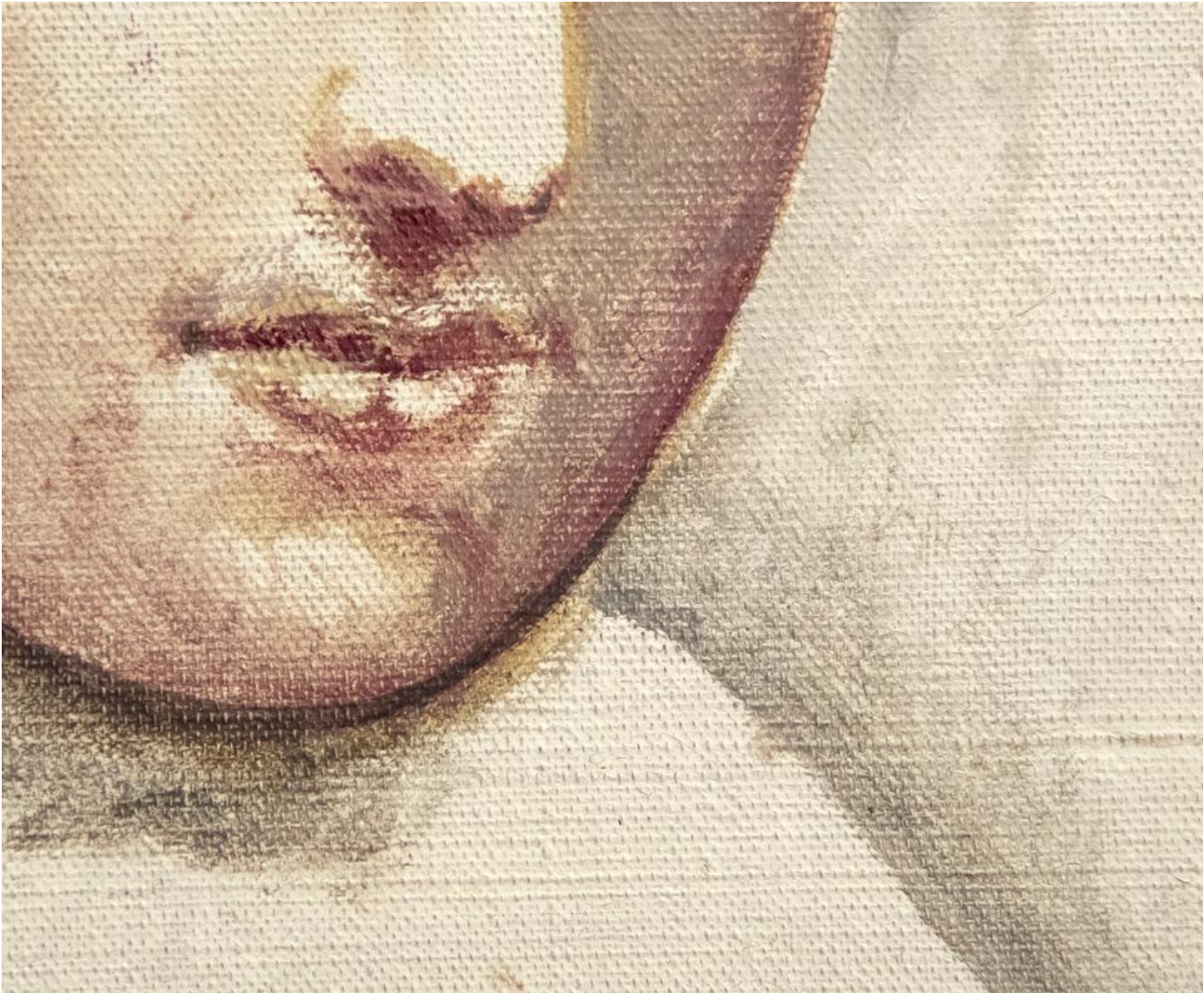
Arguably one of the greatest, most radical and most influential artists of the 20th century, Picasso's legacy is far-reaching and enduring. More than any other artist, Picasso defined Modern Art of the twentieth century by his establishment and development of one of its major movements, Cubism.

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