

27/11/46



PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)

Portrait de Femme (Françoise)

Dated upper left, "29 juin 46"

colored wax crayons on paper

25 7/8 x 19 7/8 in. (36 x 30 x 1 1/2 in)

1946

38166

PROVENANCE:

Estate of the artist

Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris (acquired from the above, by 1986)

PaceWildenstein, New York

The Collection of Morton and Barbara Mandel, July 1997

Sale: Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Sale, Featuring the Collection of Morton and Barbara Mandel, 2 Dec 2020, Lot 122

Private Collection, California

Françoise Gilot was Picasso's muse and lover for nearly a decade beginning in 1946, the year he created this drawing. She became an iconic recurring image in the artist's work, reinvigorating his practice with a sense of joy after the dark period of World War II, and many of these portraits remained in his collection for the rest of his life. Picasso often drew Gilot from memory, thereby rendering her as more of a symbol or an ideal than as a model. As Michael Fitzgerald notes, "Picasso's portraits of Françoise were not drawn from life...unlike in the cases of Picasso's other wives and mistresses, there are almost none that reproduce her features strictly" (Michael Fitzgerald, "A Triangle of Ambitions: Art, Politics, and Family during the Postwar Years with Françoise Gilot," in *Picasso and Portraiture*, London, 1996, p. 416). On the significance of Gilot to this period for Picasso, Frank Elgar writes, "the portraits of Françoise Gilot have a Madonna-like appearance, in contrast to the tormented figures he was painting a few years earlier" (Frank Elgar, *Picasso*, New York, 1972, p. 123).

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 Ruiz, 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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