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Robert Fishko, *Director*

PABLO PICASSO

(1881-1973)

Salomé, 1905 (between summer and the end of the year, Paris)

From the *Suite des Saltimbanques*

drypoint printed on Arches paper

15 7/8 x 13 3/4 inches (image)

25 3/8 x 19 3/8 inches (sheet)

One of a few impressions before steel facing,
of the third (final) state

Signed lower right "Picasso"

Printed by Eugene Delâtre, Paris, 1905

[Bloch 0014], [Baer 17.III.a]



Provenance

The Artist

Collection of James H. Clark, Dallas, Texas

Collection of Francey and Dr. Martin L. Gecht, Chicago, Illinois (1974-2016)

Private Collection, New York, New York (acquired in 2016)

Selected Literature

Geiser, Bernhard and Brigitte Baer. *Picasso: Peintre-Graveur, Tome I, Catalogue Raisonné de l'Oeuvre Gravé et Lithographié et des Monotypes, 1899-1931*, A Berne Editions Kornfeld, Switzerland, 1933 and 1955, no. 17, p. 43-44, Illustrated.

Bloch, Georges. *Pablo Picasso: Volume I, Catalogue of the Printed Graphic Work 1904-1967*, Berne: Editions Kornfeld and Klipstein, 1971, no. 14, p. 22-23, Illustrated.

Wye, Deborah. *A Picasso Portfolio: Prints from the Museum of Modern Art*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010, no. 8, p. 27, Illustrated.

Note

Part of the *Suites des Saltimbanques*, *Salomé* represents an important shift in Pablo Picasso's career as he emerged from his melancholic Blue Period (1901-1904) into the lighter Rose Period (1904 -1906). The overarching theme of the traveling acrobats, or "saltimbanques," preoccupied Picasso by 1904 when he began permanently residing in Paris with other bohemian artists, including Italian poet Guillaume Apollinaire with whom Picasso formed a friendship. Apollinaire had a profound influence on Picasso's imagination, encouraging him "to picture himself in different roles, the self-dramatizing role of a saltimbanque...the picturesque outcast at odds with conventional society." (Richardson, *A Life of Picasso*). Apollinaire and Picasso regularly visited the Cirque Médrano eventually forming friendships with the performers.

In artistic depictions, of which there are many, Salome has come to represent the *femme fatale*, or temptress, and the dangers of female seduction and power. Although the Salome story was a favorite subject of French art and literature in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is not certain why Picasso included it in his *Suite des Saltimbanques*. Nonetheless, in 1905, both Guillaume Apollinaire and Picasso boldly reimagined the biblical tale, interpreting it in their own distinctive ways, Apollinaire in his poem *Salome*, while Picasso reconceived the story to resemble a circus scene, the stout Herod as jester, and Salome as an acrobat. Themes of female agency and the power of sensuality would come to dominate Picasso's compositions throughout his career.

Displaying an early, sophisticated understanding of print techniques, Picasso chose drypoint in order to create the particular atmosphere and exceptional sense of movement in the composition. This particular impression of *Salomé* is one of a very small number printed by Eugene Delâtre in 1905 before the copper plate was steelfaced. Only these early impressions retain the full richness of the drypoint burr, and consequently, the impressions pulled by Delâtre are among the most prized by collectors.

This impression was acquired in 1974 by Francey and Dr. Martin L. Gecht, who over four decades of dedicated connoisseurship assembled one of the United States' premier collections of prints and works on paper, tracing the rise of modernism from the late-nineteenth century through the postwar period. After Dr. Gecht died in 2005 and Francey Gecht in 2014, a large number of works in the collection were selectively gifted to the Art Institute of Chicago to fill out their collection while others, including this impression of *Salomé*, were sold.