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Robert Fishko, *Director*

PABLO PICASSO

(1881-1973)

Visage de Marie-Thérèse, 1928

(circa October, Paris)

lithograph printed on Japan paper with large margins

7 3/4 x 5 1/2 inches (image)

19 1/8 x 12 inches (sheet)

Artist proof outside the Edition of 75

Signed in red pencil lower right "*Picasso*"

Printed (probably) by Marchizet, 1928

Published by Galerie Percier, Paris

[Bloch 0095] [Baer 243.c.3]



Provenance

The Artist

Private Collection, London, England

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. 243, p. 388-389, Illustrated.

Bloch, Georges. *Pablo Picasso: Volume I, Catalogue of the Printed Graphic Work 1904-1967*, Berne: Editions Kornfeld and Klipstein, 1971, no. 95, p. 46, Illustrated.

Wye, Deborah. *A Picasso Portfolio: Prints from the Museum of Modern Art*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010, no. 93, p. 122, Illustrated.

Palau i Fabre, Josep and Julià Guillamon. *Picasso: From the Minotaur to Guernica (1927-1939)*, Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2011, no. 44, p. 44, Illustrated.

Note

Marie-Thérèse Walter (1909-1977) met Pablo Picasso on the streets of Paris in the winter of 1927. Walter was 17 and the artist was 45. Immediately taken with her blond hair, sensuous curves, and athletic frame, Picasso approached Walter telling her “You have an interesting face. I would like to do a portrait of you.”¹ The flattered Walter accepted and soon became Picasso’s muse and lover, forever immortalized in now iconic works from this period of his career and often referred to as Picasso’s “golden muse”.

Picasso remained married to Olga Khokhlova, a ballet dancer, throughout their affair. Setting up Marie-Thérèse in apartments just across the street from his primary residence or in nearby hotels on family vacations, Picasso kept their nearly decade long affair a secret from friends and family. Marie-Thérèse and Picasso had one child together, Maria de la Concepción in Boulogne-Billancourt, born in 1935. While Walter’s pregnancy would eventually drive Olga Khokhlova to leave Picasso (much to his embarrassment and devastation), she was soon after replaced by Surrealist photographer, Dora Maar. Picasso continued to support Walter and their daughter until his death.

Visage de Marie-Thérèse was created early in their relationship and stands out as a profound reflection of love, desire, and a complex interplay of emotions. Picasso infused her classical features with a radiant and ethereal quality. According to John Richardson, Picasso’s biographer, Marie-Thérèse Walter once said, “He told me that I had saved his life, but I had no idea what he meant.” Richardson observes: “She had indeed saved him: from the psychic stress of his marriage.”

The intimate scale of the image placed within a much larger sheet and the closely cropped visage of Marie-Thérèse in this magnetic composition draws our gaze as though peering through a window into the secrecy that dominated their relationship. Picasso elevates the ordinary into the extraordinary, transcending the confines of the physical realm to convey the emotional and spiritual dimensions of their relationship. According to Diana Widmaier Picasso, the granddaughter of Marie-Thérèse, Walter was, “forever an emblem of hope and peace for Picasso.”

One of a limited number of artist proofs outside the Edition of 75 impressions with large margins, this impression is signed by Picasso in red pencil. The excellence of this impression reveals Picasso’s delicate linework in this composition, a testament to his mastery of lithography.

¹ Palau i Fabre. *Picasso: From the Minotaur to Guernica (1927-1939)*, 2011, p. 19.