



475 Park Avenue at 57th Street, New York, New York 10022

Tel: (212) 355-4545 Fax: (212) 355-4547 www.forumgallery.com

Robert Fishko, *Director*

PABLO PICASSO
(1881-1973)

Portrait de Femme, c. 1897
colored pencil and charcoal on paper
8 1/8 x 6 1/8 inches
Signed and dedicated lower right
"P. Ruiz Picasso for Paula"

(Wofsy 1897-108)

Certificate of Authenticity provided by
Maya Widmaier-Picasso



Provenance

The Artist
Private Collection, Paris, France
Galerie Berès, Paris, France

Exhibition

It's Pablo-matic: Picasso According to Hannah Gadsby, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY,
June 2 – September 24, 2023

Literature

Wofsy, Alan. *Picasso's Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings & Sculpture: Picasso in the Nineteenth Century: Youth in Spain II, 1897-1900*, Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA, 2008, no. 1897-108, p. 34, Illustrated.

McCully, Marilyn. *Picasso: The Early Years (1892 – 1906)*, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1997, no. 13, p. 64, Illustrated.

Note

This rare original drawing predates 1900, when Picasso was still a teenager. Still living in Spain, his subject is a woman named Paula who worked in the Picasso household and to whom the drawing is dedicated. Although still so young, Picasso conjured this ethereal, pensive and beautiful portrait of Paula, her eyes downcast with demure dignity, with a sensitive handling of colored pencil and charcoal. Picasso signed this portrait "P. Ruiz Picasso," but was to drop the "Ruiz" almost entirely from his artistic persona by the time he was eighteen.

Picasso's father, José Ruiz y Blasco, taught drawing at the Malaga School of Fine Arts and was the curator of the city's municipal museum. Under his tutelage, Picasso was exposed to the Old Masters and Spain's many museums. His extraordinary artistic talent was evident at such an early age that when Picasso was just thirteen years old his father famously vowed to give up painting declaring that his son had surpassed him as an artist.

Following the passing of his sister, Conchita, from diphtheria in 1895, the family relocated to Barcelona. Picasso was deeply affected by Conchita's death but continued his academic arts training at the School of Fine Arts in Barcelona, before entering Madrid's Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, one of Europe's most renowned art schools at the time, at just age sixteen. While in school, Picasso studied the Prado's esteemed collection of works by Diego Velázquez, Francisco Goya, Francisco Zurbarán, and El Greco, their influence emerging quickly in Picasso's rapidly evolving work.

Although a reflection of the academic realism of his training, *Portrait de Femme* is also indicative of Picasso's youthful observations of the avant-garde art circulating Europe at the time. The emotive yet simple use of color in this drawing suggests Picasso's awareness of Symbolism and the modernist revolutions of Manet that paved the way for Picasso's insatiable and innovative creative impulses. The figure of Paula is set against an undefined space of blue color, her personal presence magnified further by the abstraction of her yellow-orange clothing. The focus is the self - Paula's self - revealing Picasso's interest in the modernist fixation of the individual. The use of blue is suggestive too of Picasso's drive towards his emotionally charged Blue Period (1901-1904), the works created during this time representing the inner turmoil Picasso felt from loss, war, and familial instability.