



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*

**MAX WEBER**

(1881-1961)

*The Sisters*, 1917

oil on canvas

35 x 20 inches

signed lower right "Max Weber"



**Provenance**

The Artist and His Estate

[Forum Gallery, New York]

Private Collection, Harrison, NY (1975)

Private Collection (by descent from the above)

**Exhibited**

*Max Weber: Retrospective Exhibition 1907-30*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 13 – April 2, 1930

**Literature**

*Max Weber: Retrospective Exhibition 1907-30*, The Museum of Modern Art, [New York: Plandome Press, Inc., 1930], no. 48, p. 19, Listed and p. 31, Illustrated.

Cahill, Holger. *Max Weber with Thirty-two Reproductions*, The Downtown Gallery, [New York: Stratford Press, 1930], p. 43, Referenced.

**Note**

Max Weber is widely regarded as the first American Cubist. His studies and important relationships with the Parisian avant-garde of the early twentieth century uniquely placed him at the forefront of a burgeoning American modernism. Weber arrived in Paris in 1905, in time to see a major Cezanne retrospective and the Fauvist work of Matisse, Derain, and Vlaminck. He participated in the circle of expatriate American artists and was a founding member of Edward Steichen's New Society of American Artists (1908-1912). His circle of influence further widened, both at the salon of Gertrude Stein, where he met Picasso, and that of Berthe Félice de Rose where he befriended Henri Rousseau. He studied at the Académie Julian and enrolled in classes at the private "Académie" of Henri Matisse. Weber also joined the circle of Cubist theoreticians and practitioners Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes and critic Guillaume Apollinaire.

After Weber returned to the United States in 1909, his mind was brimming with artistic possibilities and he soon spawned his own original, hybrid Cubism. At the height of this pivotal early period of creative experimentation, Weber painted *The Sisters* in 1917. It was exhibited in Weber's 1930s solo exhibition at The Downtown Gallery. In his essay to accompany the exhibition catalogue, Holger Cahill wrote: "(Weber) thought much about the power of the childlike and the primitive in art, and he was drawn to a searching study of the force that is in the aboriginal arts of America." He highlighted *The Sisters* as exemplary, embodying "the very essence" of this idea, where Weber "thought a good deal about the simplification of space relations, and perfection of proportion."

Cahill continues, noting that this concern with proportion and the relationship of forms led directly to Weber's best-known abstract period (1916-1920) where he produced many seminal works, including *Chinese Restaurant*, 1915 (Coll. Whitney Museum of American Art), and *The Cellist*, 1917 (Coll. Brooklyn Museum).

Also in 1930, Weber was given a retrospective exhibition by The Museum of Modern Art. A catalogue was published to accompany the exhibition in which Max Weber provided further insight into *The Sisters*:

"This is an expression of withheld emotion or ecstasy – a subconscious state of the spirit. Technique, process, style were utterly abandoned and useless in the painting of this picture. – M.W."



Max Weber, *Chinese Restaurant*, 1915 (Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art)



Max Weber, *The Cellist*, 1917 (Collection of the Brooklyn Museum of Art)