

Soutine and *L'École de Paris*

FROM SHMUEL TATZ'S ART COLLECTION



IN CELEBRATION OF CHAÏM SOUTINE'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

Chaïm Soutine (1893-1943) came to Paris from Vilnius and remained until the end of his life an outsider, a unique introvert whom his colleagues referred to as a *juif lituanien* and *juif maudit*. “Indifferent to everything except painting, everywhere a stranger, Soutine,” wrote Jean-Paul Crespelle. Soutine developed a highly personal vision and painting technique. He painted incessantly, spontaneously, to the point of exhaustion, driven by an obsessive energy, without preliminary studies, using broad brushstrokes and pure vibrant colors. Disregarding established concepts of beauty and harmony, he painted jumbled elements of a landscape, bloody carcasses of butchered animals, grim faces and bodies deformed by a life of hardship and disappointment.

Until his first exhibition in Paris in 1924, Soutine lived in extreme poverty and survived only with the help of close friends who understood and admired his unique talent. Soutine's worldview remained tragic and pessimistic throughout his life. At the outset of World War II, Soutine was in constant hiding from the Gestapo and died of a bleeding ulcer in Paris in 1943. Soutine, in my opinion, was a true genius – one who quickly burned up his talent.

excerpted from

“Litvak Art in the Context of the *École de Paris*”

by Antanas Andrijauskas

LITUANUS Vol.58, No.1

Author: *Professor Antanas Andrijauskas*
Editor: *Alicia Lubowski-Jahn*
Photographer: *Alexander Royzman*
Translator: *Dr. Agnė Narušytė*
Cover artist: *Jacques Chapiro*
Cover design by *Marina Royzman*
Layout by *Skaistė Ašmenavičiūtė*
Descriptive entries by *Antanas Andrijauskas, Beata Royzman, and*
Howard Schwartz (Painter/Writer)

New York - Vilnius - 2016

CONTENTS

AN INTRODUCTION TO SHMUEL TATZ'S ART COLLECTION

by Professor Antanas Andrijauskas

8

AN INTERVIEW WITH SHMUEL TATZ

by art critic Ieva Kuzminskaitė

11

AN OVERVIEW OF SHMUEL TATZ'S COLLECTION

by Professor Antanas Andrijauskas

15

CATALOGUE ENTRIES

17-65

AN INTRODUCTION TO SHMUEL TATZ'S ART COLLECTION SOUTINE AND HIS FRIENDS FROM *L'ÉCOLE DE PARIS*

My first meeting in 2010 with the collector Shmuel Tatz was in the historic center of Vilnius. I was introduced to Dr. Tatz through the efforts of my talented pupil Simona Skaigiryte-Makseliene. She had created a Vilnius auction house, widely known in the Lithuanian art world, as well as a terrific art publishing house. During a visit to her publishing house she told me about an avid Litvak¹ art collector named Shmuel Tatz, who lived in New York City. Our meetings in Vilnius and later in New York City allowed me to view his impressive collection of art by expatriate Eastern Europeans in Paris.

Soon Shmuel Tatz organized an excursion to the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. The intention was to become acquainted with Expressionist paintings by the Lithuanian-born Jewish painter Chaïm Soutine and other artists in his Parisian orbit. The Barnes, founded in 1922, holds one of the finest collections of French Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and early Modern Art. The collection was assembled by the American philanthropist and educator Dr. Albert C. Barnes (1872–1951). At the Barnes, we were able to view an astonishing twenty-one works by Soutine. Barnes, who was first introduced to Soutine by the art dealer Paul Guillaume, was the first major art collector to recognize the artist's genius. Barnes swiftly promoted Soutine's career when he acquired in 1923 around fifty of the artist's works, some of which have since then been dispersed. Together with the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, which is the largest public collection of Soutine in Europe, the Barnes's Soutine holdings are noteworthy. Following this visit, we decided to publish a study of Dr. Tatz's private art collection titled "Soutine and His Friends". I hope to convey

¹ The term "Litvak" describes Jewish origins, which stem from the cultural tradition of the Great Duchy of Lithuania corresponding with contemporary Lithuania, Belarus and part of the territories of Northern Ukraine.

in this publication Dr. Tatz's great admiration for Soutine and his passion for collecting far-flung objects brought together from all around the world. In addition, I hope to offer the reader an overview of the artists, those known and unknown, who represent the School of Paris of Soutine's generation.

Dr. Tatz's appreciation for visual art connects to his longstanding engagement with classical music. Indeed, Dr. Tatz hosted over the past ten years a forum for this kind of broad artistic flowering in the "Salon de Tatz" programs, which introduced guests to his "Soutine and His Friends" collection. Specific art themes have structured these evenings filled with stimulating lectures and concerts by both international performers and young emerging talent from The Julliard School in New York City. The selected musical repertoire also matched the music performed in Paris during Soutine's years living there (between 1913 and his death in 1943).

by Professor Antanas Andrijauskas²

² This text is excerpted from Prof. Andrijauskas's chapter "Collecting as a Passion and Giving Existence a Sense of Meaning", prepared for a forthcoming publication.

SOUTINE'S BOUNDLESS DIALOGUE WITH THE VISUAL WORLD: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ART COLLECTOR SHMUEL TATZ

What shaped your artistic taste and perception? When did you start to take an interest in art?

Ever since I was a teenager, I have appreciated other people's talents that I did not possess. Although it was out of my reach, I desired in my childhood to become a musician and my emotions were stirred by music's power. Similarly, I really loved my drawing and sports lessons, but neither pursuit was my strength. I was curious about everything and somehow fixated on challenging myself with precisely those skills that did not come easily to me. In turn, I was quite discouraged by observing my talented peer group. I felt quite ungifted and told myself that I was unable to produce anything of special value.

During the summer holidays, free from our academic worries, my classmates and I had time to get to know each other better. It was then that one classmate Kostas Endziulis returned from a visit to Vilnius and shared with me that the painter Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69) had painted subjects with Jewish content and resided near Amsterdam's Jewish quarter (*Jodenbuurt*). This was when I started to take a great interest in Rembrandt's representation of Judaism and Jewish people. I felt completely awestruck when I saw the artist's painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (c. 1668–9, The State Hermitage Museum) on my first visit to St. Petersburg. At that moment, I experienced the potential emotional impact of great art.

I later found out that the famous Russian landscape painter Isaac Levitan (1860–1900) had Lithuanian origins, and was born in the neighboring Western city of Kybartai (the city is in present-day Lithuania). He painted natural landscapes familiar to me. When I saw color illustrations of his golden, autumn landscapes in my school textbooks, I wanted to learn more about his contributions to the landscape art genre. In my youth, I was only familiar with a small number of Lithuanian artists. Growing up in the region of Dzukija

in southwest Lithuania, I was surrounded by magnificent pinewood forests, pristine lakes, and the country's largest river, the Nemunas. I was proud that two celebrated Lithuanian painters Mikalojus Konstantinas Ciurlionis (1875–1911) and Antanas Zmuidzinavicius (1876–1966), who were among those who organized the First Exhibition of Lithuanian Art in 1907, also came from Dzukija. At that time, however, I was unaware that the well-known Cubist sculptor Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973) originated in Druskininkai, a nearby spa town. There was somehow no mention of him nor did one ever hear about the famous Renaissance art historian Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), who was born in the town of Butrimoniai near Alytus. I was also interested in the printmaker Shmuel Rozin (1926–2006) simply because he was called Shmuel. The etchings by Anatoli Kaplan (1902–80) also caught my attention because my uncle had the surname Kaplan. Even in the year 1960, there was absolutely no recognition for these artists. Thus I discovered the many talented Litvak painters and sculptors from Lithuania over the course of several years.

Which artworks in your collection are the most valuable to you? Where does the great value of a work lie, according to you?

The artworks in my collection are all dear to me. Each artwork I own is equally important and has its own special value. Their acquisition stories are all equally memorable too: precisely how I found them and purchased them, even if I often can't remember how much I paid for them. Once an artwork becomes part of my collection, I think its cost is forgotten as its intrinsic value unfolds.

What works of art can be found in your collection?

I am fascinated by the painter Chaïm Soutine, and I regard him as an exceptional talent with a tragic world-view. I am also captivated by the painters and sculptors within his innermost circle. The Litvak-French artists Michel Kikoïne (1892–1968), Pinchus Krémègne (1890–1981), and later on Jacques Lipchitz were among Soutine's closest friends. They studied with Soutine at the famous School of Art in Vilnius. Like so many other geniuses—figures like Einstein, Mahler, or Beethoven—Soutine did not excel at school. Soutine lived with both Kikoïne and Krémègne at school and upon his arrival in Paris in 1913. Aside from artworks by these close acquaintances, I also acquired sculptures by Oskar Miestchaninoff (1886–1956), Léon Indenbaum (1890–1981), Ossip Zadkine (1890–1967), and Jacques Lipchitz. I'd like to note that while I have acquired the work of Litvak emigrants in Paris, my collection also includes Soutine's other artistic collaborators in Paris with origins in Russia, Italy, and other locals. All of these artistic acquaintances are a central part of my collection because they shaped Soutine during a formative period in his creative evolution. They comprehended Soutine's artistic genius and assisted in his most basic efforts to earn a living through his art.

How would you describe the evolution of your collection?

I only purchase a painting when I feel an intense emotional affinity toward a composition. My understanding of collecting in the true sense of the word is having a purposeful and defined focus. The book *Litvak Art in the Context of the École de Paris* (Vilnius, 2008) by Professor Antanas Andrijauskas helped shape my collecting focus because I was so captivated by the Litvak artists described in the publication. These artists usually studied in various art schools in Vilnius and Vitebsk and subsequently in Paris. Prof. Andrijauskas' book fostered my interest in Soutine and in the contributions by Litvak artists to a wider international history of modern art. I thus began acquiring works by Litvak artists with close ties to Soutine. These artists include Pinchus Krémègne, Michel Kikoïne, Emmanuel Mané-Katz (1894–1992), Oskar Miestchaninoff, and Léon Indenbaum.

I also collect the work of non-Litvak artists who had friendships and other ties to Soutine. I have purchased, for example, an artwork by the French writer and painter Max Jacob (1876–1944) as well as a ceramic work by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) based on the fact that these two French artists attended Soutine's funeral in Paris in 1943. Similarly, I have a watercolor by the Cubist painter Marevna (Marie Bronislava Vorobieff-Stebelska) (1892–1984), one of the wives of Diego Rivera (1886–1957), because she had a fleeting liaison with Soutine. Incidentally, Rivera was also one of Soutine's close friends. I also have a painting by Soutine's friend Moïse Kisling (1891–1953), who is the subject of a portrait by Soutine in the collection of The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

In addition, I own a painting by the Swiss painter Pau-Émil Léger (1904–91), who purchased dozens of Soutine's works. It became clear early on that collecting works by the prominent Litvak painters would be very costly and require the income of a wealthy businessman, not a physical therapist. Thus financial practicalities influenced my focusing on lesser-known Litvak artists and others in Soutine's Parisian circle. My interest in collecting grew and grew as I explored art through books and museum and gallery exhibits.

I always felt that Soutine was a kindred spirit. I intuitively sensed that when I first encountered Soutine's works firsthand in the Jerusalem Museum of Art, but I had not yet understood him then as I do now, having had an opportunity to delve deeper into the environment that informed his creations and worldview. Naturally, there must have been some nucleus for the formation of my collection. That center point was Soutine, a painter of unique and innate talent.

Soutine's force was felt by all of those in his company: while some contemporaries cherished and loved him, others despised him and resented his talent. Thus the astonishing, green-hued *Portrait of a Young Man* (c. 1920–21) by Soutine, previously in the home of the famous composer of Litvak heritage George Gershwin (1898–1937) and subsequently in the home of another Litvak, the piano virtuoso Leopold Godowsky (1820–1938), would become a crown jewel in my collection.

Soutine's tragic journey reminds me of my own life challenges just as much as my life has been uplifted by his creative self-expression and special gift. This dramatic story of a Litvak painter's arduous path to success was a constant reminder of my own trials leaving Lithuania and trying to make a new life, career, and home in Jerusalem and ultimately in New York City. Only while living in Paris did Soutine prove that he had something special, the genius of a distinguished artist. He strove for his own kind of artistic freedom shaped by powerful flights of his imagination.

Are there any significant individuals who advise your art collecting?

I try to develop my knowledge by engaging with people who share similar areas of interest and expertise. My collecting style was first inspired by my friends Celia and Léon Stern, who own an impressive collection of artworks from a variety of periods and cultures, including East Asia. We often talked about fine art, the subtleties of collecting, and painters from around the world. I was also conversing with a fellow art collector and luthier David Segal, who comes from a family of artists. I am also in frequent contact with the fashion designer Tamara Sidorov and the photographer Alexander Royzman. Without a doubt, my aesthetic taste and understanding of art has been shaped by visiting museums, galleries, and art auctions. Come to think of it, around ninety percent of the artworks in my collection "Soutine and His Friends" were purchased at international art auctions. I was constantly following auctions in Tel Aviv, New York, London, Miami, Vilnius, and other cities to acquire works by Soutine and other Litvak artists.

I cannot claim that I have a particularly sophisticated aesthetic appreciation or academic knowledge of the history of art. My most refined expertise actually resides in my profession. I heal people for a living, and I am exposed to art through my art collecting.

When I collect I first turn my attention to what I most admire in an auction sale and then, if I judge it is required, I consult with the appropriate specialists. I have been systematically collecting art since 1975. A specific shift in how I understand my role as a collector happened just over five years ago when I read Professor Andrijauskas' book on Litvak art. It was then that I came to understand that exceptional collections don't just have spectacular artworks, but they require a specific vision.

Why is it that Soutine, the artist who makes up the central axis of your collection, is so important to you?

Although I had never heard of Soutine while I was living in Lithuania, he entered my awareness in Israel. As soon as I stepped into the Jerusalem Museum of Art, I turned right to Soutine's paintings, as if some mysterious force was drawing me to his portraits. When I later visited the Tel Aviv Museum of Art in the last half hour before it closed, I concentrated on Soutine's paintings. I then started researching his biography and character

more intently. It was the first time I found out that, just like me, he spoke four languages (albeit poorly); and that, just like me, romance did not come easily to him. His professional struggles and quest to secure a fine reputation also echoed my youthful ambition. So, I have often seen myself in Soutine's paintings that are so expressive of hopelessness, melancholy, and tragedy. That is why the world of "Soutine and His Friends" became such an important, even concurrent part of my life and my cultural interests.

Historically several others felt Soutine's power as well. First, it was experienced by decisive figures in modern art, namely Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), and Georges Rouault (1871–1958). The art dealer Leopold Zborowski (1889–1932), encouraged by Modigliani's introduction, was an early champion of Soutine. Modigliani first met Soutine in Cité Falguière. However, the American Dr. Albert C. Barnes can be credited with 'discovering' Soutine in Paris: in 1923 he purchased fifty-two paintings for twenty dollars each for his foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania and suddenly offered the painter fame and financial security. Previously, fellow painters would purchase Soutine's artworks motivated by sympathy for his financial woes. After a sale, Soutine would quite often buy back a painting and resell the same piece again. Some of these painters understood this sort of purchase as kind of a financial "loan" arrangement. While, of course, some of them simply appreciated the avant-garde nature of Soutine's expressive, distinctive style. Delving into Soutine's visual world I took an interest in these painters who surrounded him in Paris and helped him forge a path as an artist. While I could sometimes discern traces of Soutine's influence in their art, I never found evidence of a reciprocal impact.

Lipchitz paradoxically stated that he didn't know whether to adore Soutine, despise him, or feel sorry for him. When I spot Soutine paintings from afar, I can always recognize them. I feel the agitated vibrations of their dramatic colors and lines. I always approach his paintings with awe, as I would the most spiritually-close human being, someone I can understand almost without any words. I must confess that there is some mysterious, unknown pull that attracts me to Soutine's works. For all these reasons, this great Litvak painter became the principal hero and passion of my collecting. To borrow the Abstract Expressionist Willem De Kooning's (1904–1997) own words, "I'm crazy about Soutine."

Interviewed by art critic Ieva Kuzminskaitė

AN OVERVIEW OF DR. TATZ'S COLLECTION

Since his arrival in Paris from Vilnius, Chaïm Soutine was almost always surrounded by a circle of his close friends who hailed from the cultural space of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which almost directly correlates with the Jewish 'settlement zone'. This is not surprising because towards the end of the second wave of *l'école de Paris* a more and more prominent role was given to painters of Jewish origin. Thus, due to the growing contribution by Jewish painters, *l'école de Paris* gradually transformed into *l'école juive* (the 'school of Jews'). Both talented and numerous, painters of Litvak origin, who trained in the art schools of Vilnius, Vitebsk, and Kaunas, gained prominence. The city of Vilnius held particular authority in the Jewish cultural world given its standing as the capital of Lithuania and role in preserving cultural traditions of the Jewish diaspora for several centuries.

The core of Dr. Tatz's collection consists of paintings by Litvak painters closest to



Soutine–Krémègne, Kikoïne, Mané-Katz, Chapiro, Miestchaninoff, Indenbaum, Zadkine, Lichitz, Arbit Blatas, and others. Krémègne and Kikoïne, Soutine's friends from his art studies in the Vilnius school of drawing, remained his closest friends during his early years in Paris. Among this trio, Soutine distinguished himself through his talent. Thus, it is not surprising that he greatly influenced the other two artists.

Litvak sculptors also played an important role in the creation of a new vocabulary in the arts and blossomed in the artist residence of *La Ruche* in the Montparnasse district of Paris. Soutine's close friends, the remarkable Litvak artists Miestchaninoff, Indenbaum, and Zadkine, helped modernize sculpture and are represented by Dr. Tatz's collection.

By Professor Antanas Andrijauskas

CATALOGUE ENTRIES

PINCHUS KRÉMÈGNE

(1890–1981)

Paysage du midi ('Midday Landscape'), 1926

Oil on canvas

21 × 26 in

Alongside other great figures of the second wave of the *l'école de Paris*, the Litvak artist Pinchus Krémègne, active as sculptor, painter, and lithographer, was one of the most prominent artistic figures. Since his arrival in Paris in 1912, his aesthetic views held weight and influenced the painters in Soutine's circle. The lyricism in his painting is strangely intertwined with an expressiveness and emotional color sensibility. Some of the similarities to Soutine can be explained by their shared formation in the Vilnius Academy of Art. Krémègne and Soutine were both passionate painters, but their touching relationship with reality was expressed in distinct ways.

Through its expressive painting style and color relations, Krémègne's *Paysage du midi* ('Midday Landscape') is reminiscent of Soutine's paintings in Céret, a town at the foothills of the Pyrénées in southern France. Krémègne built a home and studio in Céret in 1960. Compared to Soutine's Céret landscapes, Krémègne's compositions are more serene because they are less expressive and veer away from deforming motifs. The influence of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), admired by both Soutine and Krémègne, is apparent in this work.

Recounted by the artist Pinchus Kremegne, Soutine's mood sank to such a low point that he attempted to hang himself. Kremegne happened to be walking by and released the suicidal painter from the rope, whereupon Soutine oddly walked away with a cold and indifferent expression. On a later occasion, Kremegne borrowed some francs for Soutine, who then flew into an unexpected rage. After that, Kremegne denied their friendship altogether and claimed to not know him.



MICHEL KIKOÏNE

(1892–1968)

Self Portrait

Watercolor on paper

18,4 × 23 cm

An able, accomplished painter, Kikoïne was yet another from *l'école de Paris* Jewish émigré painter who came from Vilnius. His style intertwined the various modernist art currents he encountered in Paris with landscapes of his childhood and other images of Litvak daily life. His art emits a natural sense of happiness, joie de vivre, and tenderness. Unlike Soutine, Kikoïne's paintings gravitated toward Jewish motifs and Jewish mysticism. He searched for creative inspiration not only in the French art of his day, but also in the cultural traditions of ancient Semitic civilizations and his Litvak heritage. Deeply affected by the horrific death toll of the Holocaust, which killed many of his loved ones, his first journey to Israel in 1950 made a lasting impression on him. Kikoïne's style in the '50s and '60s became freer and more comfortable with experimentation.

Kikoïne's *Self Portrait* is a loose, translucent watercolor that conveys the soft and fluid style of this sensitive painter. This sensitivity is expressed through the soft blues and yellow oranges that color the artist's head and hair, colors that are so different from the powerful energized brushstrokes of his oil paintings. Kikoïne paints himself as an approachable, slightly shy man who nonetheless is able to look at the viewer straight in the eye with raised eyebrows and a bemused smile.

The soft colors are complementary and are painted as puffs of smoke, creating a peaceful atmosphere. This portrait is more of a drawing than a painting, with the contour lines of the chin and neck, as well as of the features, acting as a foundation upon which the blues and yellow-oranges rest. The diagonal line to the left of Kikoïne's face, which travels to the bottom of the paper, rebounds as relatively bright red and orange lines. These lines redirect the viewer back to the head, the focus of attention.



Philippe -

MICHEL KIKOÏNE

(1892–1968)

Still Life with Seafood, 1960

Oil on canvas

23,5 × 19 cm

Soutine met Kikoïne at the age of fifteen when he left his shtetl. They studied in Minsk together for one year, and later moved to Vilnius. While living in Vilnius, Soutine, Krémègne, and Kikoïne lived in just one room and shared two beds.

In this painting we can still see the expressive brushstrokes and spontaneity characteristic of Kikoïne's early creative period. However, the striking color and composition are representative of the painter's mature period.

The subject may be a still life with seafood, but the abstract qualities of this painting are such that the subject is almost incidental. The cerulean and cobalt blues in the center of the canvas are the most saturated colors, along with the small patch of green above the blues and the equally small dabs of red (green's complement) located on either side of the canvas. The other greens and reds in the painting are far less rich; the abrupt shifts in their tones emphasizes their distinctions.

Kikoïne creates movement throughout the painting by the repetition of similar shapes. The upper half of an oval is seen in the maroon shape near the center, which is then repeated by the yellow ochre shape above it, and repeated again by the darker shapes above that one. The spacing between these similar shapes varies, creating an engaging rhythm. Another example of repetitive shapes occurs beneath and to the right of the blue colors referred to above. A small light brown oval begins the pattern, followed by another oval. This is followed by two even smaller ovals.



EMMANUEL MANE-KATZ

(1894–1962)

Hassid à la Barbe Rousse ('Hassid with a Red Beard'), 1927

Oil on canvas
55 × 43 cm

There are several magnificent Mané-Katz paintings in Dr. Tatz's collection. Collectively they reflect his different painting styles. The charming *Hassid à la Barbe Rousse* ('Hassid with Red Beard') exhibits sensitive and unexpected color relations.

The portrait reflects a religious connection to the artist's childhood—born to a family of Litvak Orthodox Jews in Kremenchug, in central Ukraine. The dark, sensitively nuanced tones of this painting evoke mysteriousness. Typical of this painter is an affinity to religious subjects, which he portrays with rich color and drama.

This is one of many depictions by Mane-Katz of a man with a thick red beard. Other examples are *Man with a Red Beard* from 1927, *Head of Man in Bowler Hat* from 1925, and *The Conversation* from 1933. The placement of the black hat, pressed against the top left edge of the canvas, creates a series of abstract rectangles. The hat's negative shapes become just as important as its positive shapes, especially the small rectangle in the upper left corner of the canvas. This shape has its counterpart in the small black triangle in the lower left corner. The bottom of the Hassid's beard grazes the bottom edge of the canvas. Academic painting conventionally leaves space between the edge of the canvas and the contours of its focal point (in portraiture, the head of the subject). The modern perspective is aware of this norm, but plays with it. Taken to its abstract extreme, we have Mondrian, who simplifies geometric relationships by removing the physical reality that originally inspired his forms. With *Hassid à la Barbe Rousse*, the abstract and the figurative dialogue, creating a mood.

The facial features are simplified, the mouth is reduced to a curved rectangle and the nose to a curved triangle. The strongest diagonal in the composition begins at the top center of the canvas and travels down and to the right until it rests at the bottom right corner. This diagonal is the hypotenuse of a large triangle with the other two sides formed by the right and upper edges of the canvas. The asymmetry of the head, placed to the left, makes this triangle possible.



JACQUES CHAPIRO

(1887–1972)

Le Paysan ('The Peasant'), 1928

Oil on canvas

39,5 × 29 in

Born in Daugavpils (in modern-day Latvia) (some sources say Gomel (in modern-day Belarus)), Jacques Chapiro, the son of a wood sculptor, received extensive art training starting at a young age, and pursued his studies in Kraków, Kiev, and St. Petersburg. It was at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts that he fell under the influence of the Russian painter and art critic Alexandre Benois (1870–1960) and married the artist's daughter Ana. This connection with the artistic Benois family helped shape his aesthetic taste and humanitarianism. Both aware of his need for further professional development and attracted to French Modernism, Chapiro arrived in Paris in 1925. He seamlessly blended into the Litvak artistic community of *La Ruche* ('the beehive'). His style drew particular inspiration from French Realism. He would later respond to Van Gogh and Soutine, both of whom privileged color and emotive, nervous brushstrokes, as well as the innovations of Fauvism and Expressionism.

The two works by Chapiro in Dr. Tatz's collection represent two distinct periods in Chapiro's creative evolution. The painting *Le Paysan* ('The Peasant') approximates a realistic painting style that is evocative of the dark, muted depictions of village life by Jean-François Millet (1814–75) and Gustave Courbet (1819–77). In it, the commanding image of a resting peasant conveys his meager daily existence, which is filled with troubles. This sorrowful mood is emphasized by the painting's gloomy color palette.



JACQUES CHAPIRO

(1887–1972)

Self Portrait

Oil on canvas

18 × 22 in

Chapiro's *Self Portrait*, which depicts the artist wearing a red head covering and holding a paintbrush in his hand, is influenced by Soutine's chaotic painting style. Unlike Soutine's mastery of this technique, however, the emotional brushwork only graces the painted face, but is absent from the background of the composition.

Chapiro recalled in his memoir an episode in which an impassioned Soutine defended the value of his art:

And yet, given that I know him, I would like to recount an event that had to do with me. Soutine often came to visit me in my studio on the rue Barrault. This was in 1937. One day, he saw there a portrait of a young girl, the grand-daughter of the composer Scriabin. He took the painting with him with the intention of showing it to one of his patrons. On the day of the meeting with the potential buyer – it was a woman – I was waiting in the foyer of Soutine's studio, at the villa Seurat. Suddenly I heard a terrible commotion behind the closed door, accompanied by the most indignant exclamations being exchanged between Soutine and his guest.

A bit later, the door suddenly opened and the lady left the room, followed by the artist in a state of agitation, all the while swearing and almost rudely chasing this person out.

After she was gone, Soutine had barely calmed down when he turned to me:

– That vile and dishonest creature dared to offer only five hundred francs for your painting, saying that you are not well known and not yet respected by dealers!

This little story enabled me to form an opinion of Soutine as a comrade, and Soutine as a painter.



ARBIT BLATAS

(1908–1999)

Musicien ('The Musician')

Oil on canvas

51 × 17 in

In 1926, the sculptor, painter, and stage designer Arbit Blatas wrote, “When I was sixteen, I left my native Lithuania for the sake of Paris where I hoped to find people from my country.”¹ After many years, the Lithuanian-Jewish artist recollected the time when he disembarked the train at Gare du Nord and realized that he finally was in the city of his dreams. The eighteen-year-old youth found a place to stay at the heart of the Montparnasse art scene, *rue de la Gaité*. Paris made his head spin with its artistic spirit, the abundance of art, and the riches inside the museums. This youngest member of the School of Paris particularly admired Camille Pissarro (1830–1903), Maurice Utrillo (1883–1955), Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947), and Georges Rouault (1871–1958), all of whom became guiding stars in the formation of his expressionistic style. Blatas favored landscapes and portraits, and won international acclaim for a portrait gallery commemorating the great masters of the School of Paris. Blatas would also render School of Paris artists in bronze and clay. He is well known for a commission in Venice’s Campo del Nuovo Ghetto commemorating the night of Dec. 5, 1943 when Jews were forcibly collected for deportation and death. France honored Blatas in 1978 with the Order of the Legion of Honour for his contributions to French art.

Musicien ('The Musician') is an expressive, emotional, dark-toned painting with a vertical format. The work showcases Blatas’ virtuosity in brushwork, composition, and color sensibility. Blatas departs from the somber palate favored by artists in Lithuania and by the style of German Expressionism. His mature works created in France are colorful and playful in the manner favored by the Impressionists. Blatas is sometimes referred to as the last member of the *l'école de Paris*.

¹ Arbit Blatas, “Montparnasse capital de la Lithuanie des Arts” in *Kikoïne*, ed. de l’Albaron (Présence du Livre: Paris, 1992), 34.



MAURICE UTRILLO

(1883–1955)

De Rue ('Street')

Watercolor on paper
13 × 19 in

The oldest bohemian in this artist circle was the French painter Maurice Utrillo who was actually born in the Montmartre quarter. A friend of both Soutine and Modigliani, he specialized in Parisian cityscapes and scenes of Montmartre where he lived and struggled with alcoholism. After his participation in the Paris *Salon d'Automne* and *Salon des Indépendants* in 1909, Utrillo received recognition from the art establishment. His so-called “white period”, referring to his use of greyish white or milky white colors, emerged starting in 1910. A trip to paint the sunlit landscapes of Corsica and Brittany in 1913 showcased his emerging talents as a colorist. Up until the end of his life, Utrillo remained a prominent painter, receiving commissions to decorate churches and various public buildings as well as set designs for the Diaghilev ballet and other theaters.

Montmartre's winding streets, stairs, churches, and tree groupings define the urban landscape in this composition. *De Rue* ('Street') is distinguished by its grey-white and clear blue color palette that is characteristic of the artist's unique sense of color. This playful and rhythmic assembly of human figures in an urban scene nevertheless still resembles a rural landscape. It is one of the most lyrical paintings in Dr. Tatz's collection.



JULES PASCIN

(1885–1930)

Hermine David l'atelier

Oil on canvas

24,75 × 25 in

The Bulgarian Julius Mordecai Pinc was yet another Soutine friend, more widely known in the art world as Jules Pascin or the “Prince of Montparnasse”. Pascin, who arrived in Paris in 1905, is best known for his paintings and drawings of women. Alongside Modigliani and Soutine, these friends caroused in Montmartre’s bars and cafés. The future painter had lived and studied in various cultural centers (namely Bucharest, Vienna, Budapest, Berlin, and Munich), which encouraged his cosmopolitan aesthetic convictions. In 1907 he met the great-granddaughter of the legendary French painter Jacques Louise-David (1748–1825), Hermine-Lionette Cartan (known in the art world as Hermine David), who deeply influenced Pascin’s life as his muse, model, and wife. She was one of the most famous female painters of the School of Paris. Pascin is also immortalized in Ernest Hemingway’s novel *A Moveable Feast* (1964), which describes the author’s personal encounter in the spring of 1924 with the bohemian Pascin in the chapter “With Pascin At the Dôme”. Pascin’s distinctive style was disposed toward eighteenth-century models but still influenced by modernist aesthetics.

In this full-length portrait, Pascin depicts the artist Hermine David, whom he later married in the United States in 1918. She appears wearing a white dress in their study. It is one of his more academic and tame female portraits relative to the suggestive sensibilities of some of his other works.



JULES PASCIN

(1885–1930)

Two Reclining Nudes

Watercolor on paper

10 × 12 cm

This drawing appears quite restrained relative to Pascin's other drawing studies of voluptuous female nudes. With a deliberate handling of line, he depicts two young women.

Although Soutine never married, it's important to note that he had several significant relationships with women. Soutine's romances include Deborah Melnik (with whom he had a child), Madeleine Castaing, Gerda Groth, and Marie-Berthe Aurenche. An exchange between Soutine and Pascin gives an indication of Soutine's appreciation of Pascin's female nudes:

Soutine had extended a hand to Pascin and said to him: "I like your painting. Your little women really excite me!"

"I forbid you to excite yourself with my women" exclaimed Pascin!



HENRY EPSTEIN

(1891–1944)

Nature morte à l'oiseau ('Still-life with Birds')

Oil on canvas

18 × 24 cm

Soutine and his closest Litvak friends mingled with other painters of Jewish origin, including those from Poland. The Polish painter and illustrator Henri Epstein studied at the Munich Art Academy before continuing his studies in Paris. He fell into the community of avant-garde Litvak painters in La Ruche artist residence where he resided between 1913 and 1938. Strongly influenced by Fauvism and Expressionism, Epstein exhibited at various *Salon* exhibitions in Paris (in the decade between 1921 and 1931). Together with Krémègne, Indenbaum, Lichtenstein, and others he created a Yiddish magazine dedicated to Jewish art titled *Machmadim* ('Delights'). He tragically died at Auschwitz.

Epstein, who regarded Soutine as an "authentic" painter, emulated the artist's example. In this still life painting he showcases his absorption of Soutine's style as characterized by spontaneous brushstrokes and the highlighting of a central motif against a neutral background. Responding to the colorful and painterly art of Fauvism, Epstein masterfully combines expressionistic broad brushstrokes with unstudied drips and other surprises.



ISAAC DOBRINSKY

(1891–1973)

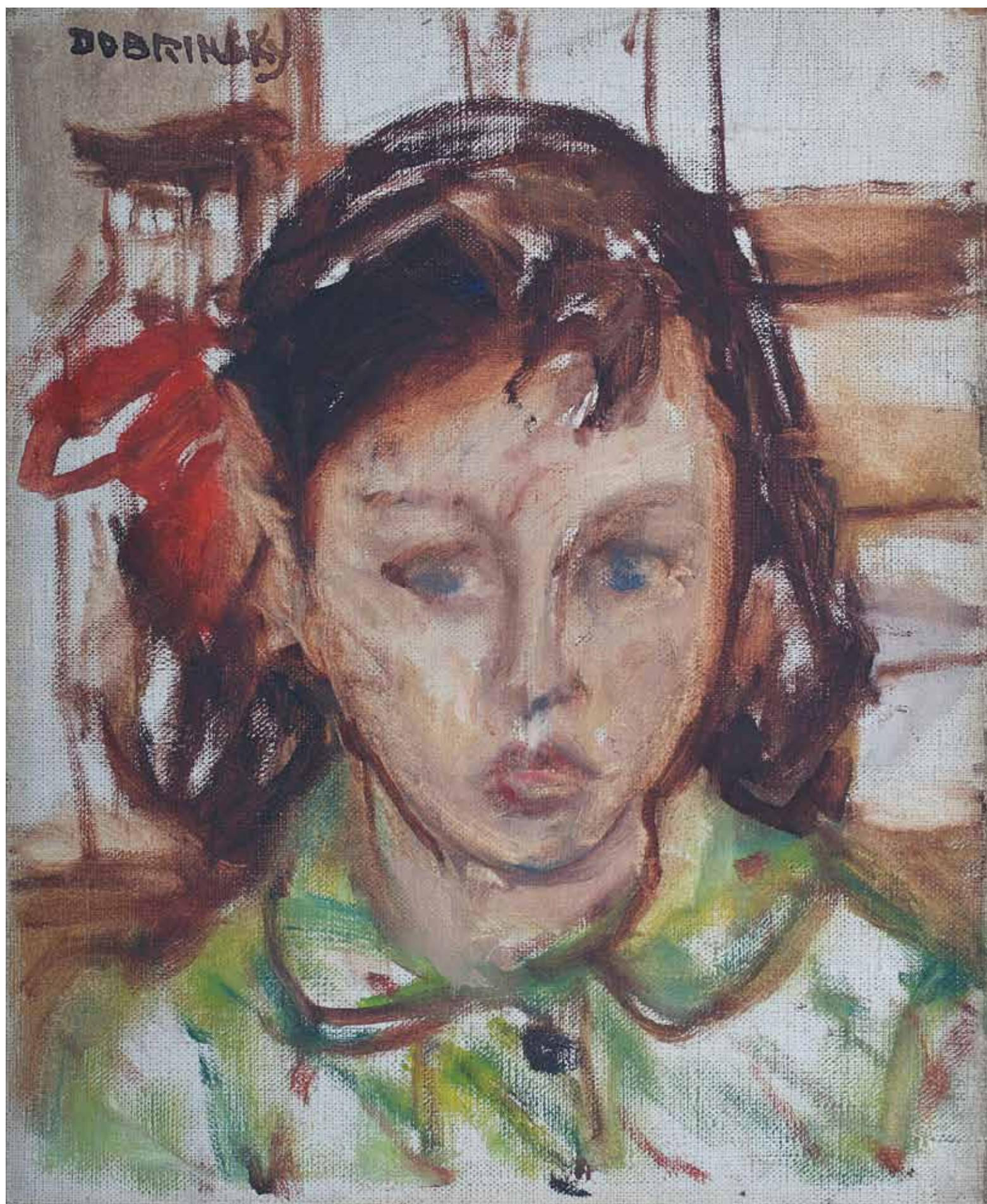
Portrait of a Girl

Oil on canvas

27 × 22 in

Dobrinsky was a Polish-French sculptor and painter who was raised in an observant Jewish household. He moved to Paris in 1912 and settled in La Ruche, where Soutine, Krémègne, Kikoïne, Modigliani, and Szwarc became his closest friends. While initially sculpture was his primary focus, the example of his peers encouraged him to delve into painting, for which he eventually became best known. Dobrinsky's intimate painting style was shaped by the influence of Impressionism and various modernist art currents. He favored several painting genres – including portraiture, abstract compositions, and nudes – and usually suffused them in bright sunlight. His attraction to light and translucent watercolors is reminiscent of Pascin.

Dobrinsky's creativity is well represented in this playful portrait of a young girl. The painting stands out for its skillful, light-toned drawing style, which while sketch-like still firmly delineates features. Dobrinsky shared a painting studio with Soutine for two years. After the war, he painted mostly orphan children.



CONSTANTIN (COSTIA) TERECHKOVITCH

(1902–1978)

Une Promenade Calèche Dimanche
(‘The Sunday Promenade With Carriage’)

Watercolor on paper
20,5 × 16,5 in

In 1920, this Russian-French painter and engraver found a community alongside the other Eastern European expatriates of Montparnasse. Beginning in 1933 he started creating decorations and costumes for the Diaghilev Russian season ballets (‘ballets russes’) in Monte Carlo. In the same year, he married his wife Yvette, who would become the central model in his paintings alongside two growing, beloved daughters France and Nathalie. In addition to portraits of his family members, the artist painted portraits of famous art world notables as well as depictions of dancers, women, and children wearing Jewish dress. He also painted abstract compositions and landscapes (both coastal and mountain views). Although keenly aware of Soutine’s spontaneous painting style, Terechkovitch was already deeply formed by Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, art movements he was exposed to already in Moscow. His post-war style would move toward the lyrical style of Les Nabis art group, especially influenced by Pierre Bonnard’s color palette and Japonisme (1867–1947).

This economical watercolor, so full of light and playful colors, speaks of life’s moments of happiness, fulfillment, and joy.



GEORGE ROUAULT

(1871–1958)

Portrait of Maria Lani

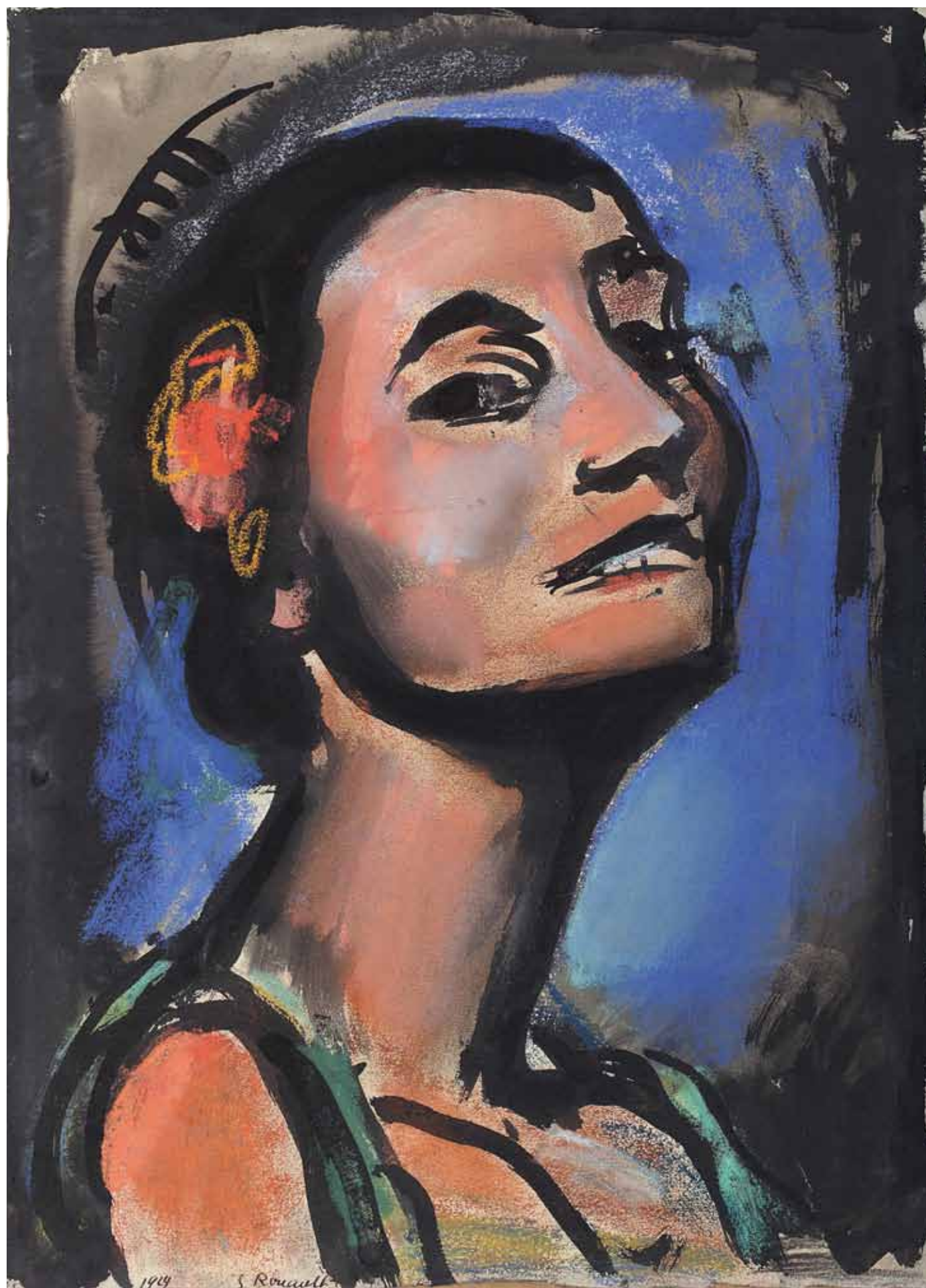
Watercolor and pastel on paper

20 × 14 in

The French painter and printmaker, often associated with Fauvism and Expressionism, studied with Gustave Moreau (1826–98) at l'École des Beaux-Arts while apprenticing with a stain glass artisan. He later became the curator of the Moreau museum. He took part in the prestigious *Salon D'Automne* exhibitions (a salon he helped found), in which mostly avant-garde painters were represented. Vis-à-vis his art, his Catholic faith inspired a moral standing—depicting negatively those he felt degraded society (prostitutes, clowns, and performers) while also portraying his adoration of Christ and Catholic emblems. He also developed a spiritual painting aesthetic, which incorporated patterns from stained-glass church windows and Byzantine mosaics. Rouault outlined his motifs with a thick black line to evoke stained glass.

The spontaneous quality of the portrait is accomplished using a suggestive line in a mixed media technique of watercolor and pastel. The movement of the young woman's head is masterfully conveyed. The sketch-like expressive style of the portrait reveals not only the subtlety of the drawing but also the ability of the artist to minimize unnecessary detail.

Among his contemporary artists, Soutine always praised George Rouault. Soutine also painted a portrait of Maria Lani.



ANDRE DERAIN

(1880–1954)

Portrait du Marchand Leopold Zborowski, 1922–1923

Oil on canvas

44,45 × 37,15 cm

This portrait's meticulous brushwork is characteristic of works by Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). It is not only the emotional power, but also the decorative style of the image that veils the identity of the sitter with a nonspecific treatment that is typical of the primitive art so highly regarded by Derain. Derain is still many years removed from the Fauvism movement of the early twentieth century that he helped to popularize. The lightest area of the canvas is the white of Zborowski's shirt. The areas richest in color intensity are the yellows above the head and the red in both of his cheeks. The background is a neutral color that is more typical of academic painting. The light source is set above Zborowski, in front of him and to his left. The lighter values of the nose and forehead push forward, giving the painting a three-dimensional quality, but Derain intentionally flattens the painting back to the second dimension by avoiding lost and found edges, making the figure look 'cut out' from the background. Zborowski is placed in the center of the composition, yet the negative shapes do not appear symmetrical.

Lipchitz introduced Soutine to Amadeo Modigliani. In turn Modigliani introduced his art dealer Zborowski to Soutine, who later became his art dealer. When Barnes saw Soutine's painting for the first time, he immediately told his art dealer to bring him to Zborowski. When his art dealer asked "why, why now?" Barnes replied "I want to buy something, everything. This Soutine is a genius!"



CHAÏM SOUTINE

(1893–1943)

Portrait of a Young Man, 1920–21

Oil on canvas

83,2 × 44,1 cm

The Portrait of a Young Man was created during the early period of Soutine's creative evolution. It was painted on the slopes of the Pyrénées, in Céret near the border with Spain. The painting has a jade-green color scheme that boasts expressive, spontaneous brushstrokes characteristic of portraits and landscapes of this period by Soutine. It is hard not to notice in this energetic painting the grotesque and conscious deformation of harmonious forms so characteristic of Soutine's portraits.

The owner of this painting was the famous American composer and pianist of Litvak origin George Gershwin (1898–1937), whose grandfather worked on laying the railway tunnel leading to Kaunas on the railway between St. Petersburg and Warsaw. It is also worth noting that Gershwin lived in Paris in the twenties. Without much prior musical education, Gershwin unsuccessfully tried to study with the French composer Maurice Ravel (1875–1937). Gershwin undoubtedly heard others speaking about Soutine and was motivated to purchase this artwork from the dealer Valentine Dudensing. This Soutine portrait was exhibited in 1936 alongside other works in Gershwin's collection at The Museum of Modern Art in New York and later was acquired by Leopold Godowsky, another Litvak born in Vilnius, who was a legendary piano virtuoso. Yet another musical legend from Vilnius, the violinist Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987) was also a collector of Soutine's art.



CHAÏM SOUTINE

(1893–1943)

Still Life, Blue Gladiolas, *Les Glaieuls*, 1919

Oil on canvas

55 × 38 cm

The rich thick glossy paint evokes Van Gogh's paintings of irises and roses at the end of his life. The greens of the gladiolas wrestle and twist against the blue of the background. As Van Gogh did before him, Soutine joins hues that are located near one another on the circumference of the color wheel. This proximity breeds an attraction and a distancing between the two colors at the same time, encouraging the most intimate and emotionally charged of emotions. Gladiolas are thought to being symbolic of passion and desire, so Soutine has chosen the perfect flower for this painting. Soutine also painted red gladiolas; including the painting *Still Life, Gladiolas*, dated 1919, which hangs in the Brooklyn Museum.

During the 1930s Soutine was very friendly with the French physician, philosopher, and art critic Elie Faure (1873-1937). Soutine ultimately decided to propose to Faure's daughter Marie-Zoline. Tragically, Faure's daughter had already accepted her cousin's proposal a week earlier, and this marred Soutine's relationship with Faure's family.



OSKAR MIESTCHANINOFF

(1886–1956)

Eve

Bronze with a brown patina
32 cm

Born in Vitebsk, Oskar Miestchaninoff arrived in Paris in 1906 and settled into the artist community of Montparnasse. The painter and sculptor lived there for almost two decades, collecting works by Pablo Picasso, Diego Rivera, Amedeo Modigliani, and Chaïm Soutine. A passionate sculpture collector, he gathered examples from various Eastern and non-European traditions. He accompanied French archaeological expeditions to India and Cambodia (1918–19) as well as to Burma, Cambodia and Siam (1926–27). His most famous work is the clay sculpture *L'homme au haut de forme (Isaac Pailes)* ('Man in a Top Hat') (1922; Centre Georges Pompidou). He moved to the United States in 1944. From 1914 to 1917 he shared a studio with Chaïm Soutine. He was very knowledgeable in Russian Literature, and introduced the writings of Pushkin to Soutine.

Miestchaninoff's sculpture *Eve* is typical of his fusion of the Western European sculptural tradition with Eastern and South East Asian forms. In particular, the separate, patterned strands of hair that crown the figure is reminiscent of Eastern sculpture. Both the indistinct facial features and the graceful treatment of the neck are typical of the sculptor.

The Brooklyn Museum has a similar sculpture by Miestchaninoff in its collection: *Head of a Young Bulgarian* (1920). The young Bulgarian is modeled with greater detail, and texture, and with her head proudly set upon her neck. *Eve* is looking down slightly, with a stern expression on her face. One can feel *Eve's* unmodeled torso shifting to the right (based on the tilt of the neck as seen from the front). The absence of the eyeballs, and the short width of the mouth, which is much shorter than the width of the eyes, shape the mood in her face.



LÉON INDENBAUM

(1890–1981)

Tête Archaique, ('Archaeological Head')

Bronze, patina brune numerate
3 × 8 × 21 cm

Upon his arrival in Paris in 1911, the Russian sculptor Léon Indenbaum stayed with his friend, the Litvak artist Oskar Miestchaninoff in the *cité Falguière* artist colony. He soon moved to La Ruche where he lived with the Ukrainian sculptor Josif Tchaikov (1888–1979). From 1914 to 1920 Indenbaum studied with Maillol and Bourdelle. He would later become Bourdelle's assistant and a guest in his studio in Montparnasse. The sculptor helped the struggling artist Chaïm Soutine during his early years. "One day" Indenbaum remembered, "he [Soutine] brought a painting he created at the Vilnius Academy that represented an old single-eyed man and asked us to buy it for 30 or 40 francs. I bought it, but after some time, he asked me to return the painting. I returned it and I learned later that he kept constantly selling that painting. He played the same comedy with me seven times; I tolerated this out of compassion".¹ Indenbaum created his first sculptures as a student in Bourdelle's studio and sought inspiration in the traditions of non-European art like so many of his contemporaries. He studied the sculpture and mythology of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Levant, and Assyria as well as the traditions of ancient Greece and Rome. Indenbaum rehabilitated the significance of fragmented, incomplete torsos as a sculptural category. His works, exceptional for their forms and lines, were exhibited in many famous museums and galleries around the world. In 1968, the Institute de France awarded him the Wildenstein award for his achievements in the art of sculpture.

¹ Although a follower of the French sculptors Antoine Bourdelle (1861–1929) and Aristide Maillol (1861–1944), Indenbaum's restrained *Tête Archaique* resembles the statuary of the ancient Near East. Its weightiness and sense of proportion are also reminiscent of Assyrian sculpture.



OSSIP ZADKINE

(1890–1967)

L'orateur ('The Orator')

Bronze

6 × 4 × 15 in

Ossip Zadkine, who arrived in Paris in 1909, had a poetic nature gifted with an innate talent for several areas of art and literature. He made a name for himself foremost as a sculptor and created some four-hundred sculptures alongside several thousand watercolors, gouaches, engravings, and drawings. His art drew from various European and non-Western traditions of sculpture as well as found inspiration in Cubism and non-visual-art forms like poetry, literature, and music. Tactility was central to his practice and he expressed great sensitivity to the beauty of materials – whether it was the natural shades of a stone or the texture of wood, which was the material he liked most of all. He, similar to Japanese masters, sought to reveal every material “from the inside out” as an important auxiliary means of artistic expression. He was among the first to use combinations of different materials in his works: granite, marble, wood, alabaster, crystal, mother-of-pearl, colored glass, and various metals. As in Far Eastern practice, he was fond of writing short poems and verses about his art.

L'Orateur ('The Orator') is influenced by Sub-Saharan African sculpture so admired by artists of Zadkine's generation at the start of the twentieth century. Cubist and Expressionist tendencies are also discernable in the geometric, intertwined shapes. The inclusion of unprocessed, raw areas contrasts with the finished aesthetic of the prior generation of sculptors.

At first glance, this sculpture appears to be completely abstract, more so than most of the body of work of this talented and creative sculptor. Upon closer inspection, two arms are seen, both of which are wrapped around something, with parallel fingers carved clearly at the end of each appendage. Below the right hand is either the figure's protruding belly or part of the object that is being held. And below this are two legs, which help to turn an abstract collection of shapes into a posed figure. Zadkine's creativity is most apparent in his handling of the orator's head. The uppermost shape resembles a flattened donut, but with a broadening of the imagination, that same donut shape begins to resemble a protruding nose with the hole in the middle being the eye socket for both eyes.



JACQUES LIPCHITZ

(1891–1973)

Prometheus Strangling the Vulture, 1936

Bronze

10 × 12 × 17 in

Lipchitz was born in Druskininkai, Lithuania. He studied in Vilnius right before his move to Paris. Lipchitz was very close friends with Modigliani, Picasso, and Soutine. Dr. Barnes, the famed American art collector, purchased a lot of his work. Dr. Barnes would converse with Lipchitz in German, and Lipchitz would respond in Yiddish. Because of their language barrier they had a limited ability to communicate. Lipchitz was buried in Jerusalem, and his art collection was placed in the Jerusalem Museum.

Lipchitz's *Prometheus Strangling the Vulture* draws on the iconography of this mythological story. Prometheus's brutal, eternal punishment by Zeus symbolizes humanity's tragic existence. The sculptor appeals to our moral ideals, namely our heroism and our mandate to fight evil (represented by the vulture). The sculptor's attention to texture, the traces of his hand imprints, and his control over his medium also recall Prometheus's own creation of mankind. The features of the face are indistinct. Prometheus is sculpted as the powerful Titan he was believed to have been. His chest is thick, and his arms and legs are muscular and strong. The shapes of the figure of Prometheus are exaggerated; the indentations and the roughness of the surface add to the tension of the struggle. This is not Lipchitz's only depiction of this story. Another version was done in the early 1940s and is in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It has the look of a sketch in three dimensions.



CHANA ORLOFF

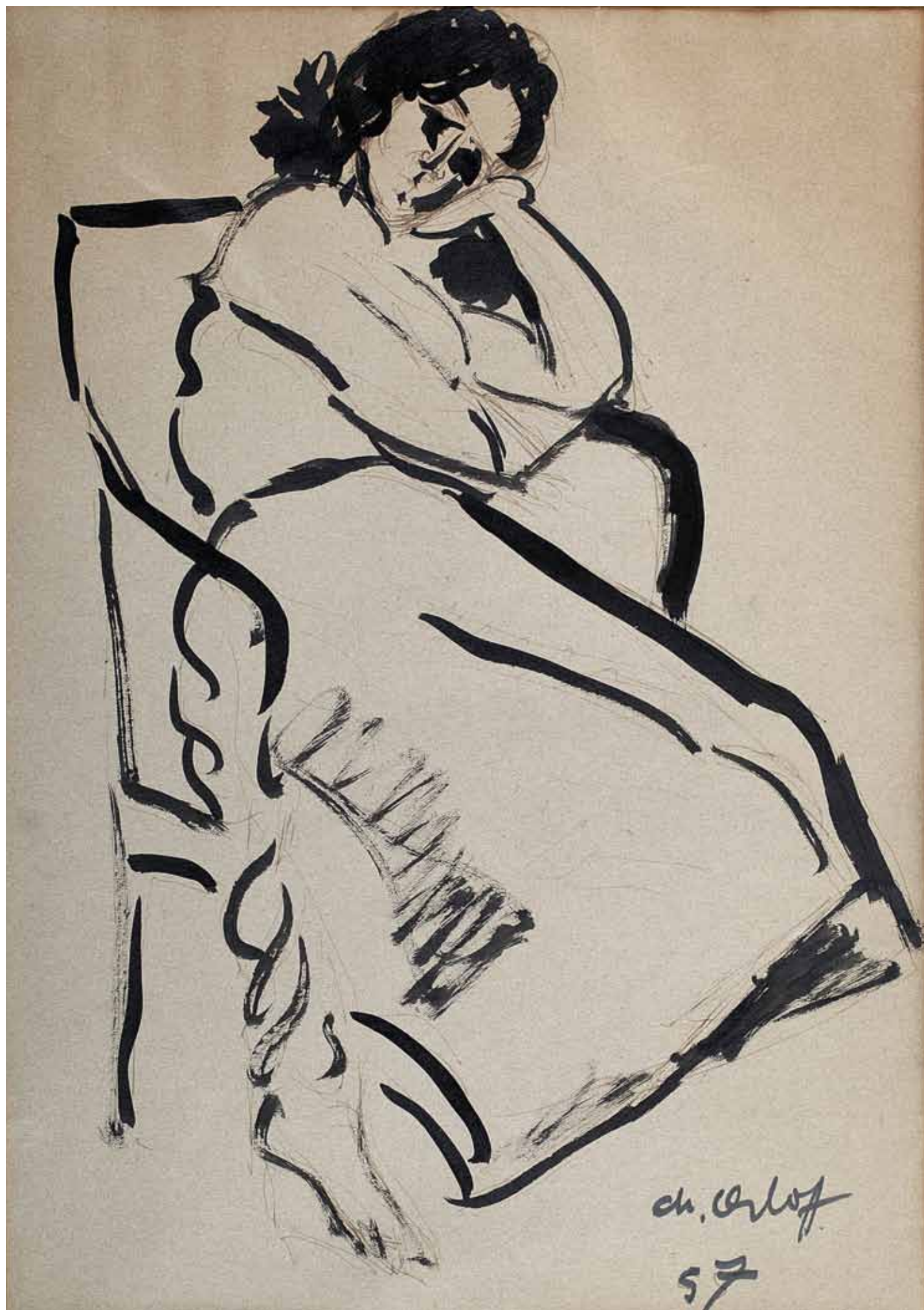
(1888–1968)

Seated Woman

Pen and pencil on paper

Chana Orloff was born to a Ukranian family of Orthodox Zionist Jews who emigrated to Palestine in 1905. While living in Jaffa, she earned money by sewing and intended to study fashion design when she arrived in Paris in 1910. Her early drawing practice was self-taught and later she would settle upon sculpture after attending the École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs and Marie Vassilieff's (1884–1957) Académie Russe ('Russian Academy'). Orloff created many sculptures from bronze, stone, marble, and other materials, which are all characterized by a magnificent sense of overarching shape, the influence of Cubist aesthetics and primitive sculpture. Having gained acclaim in France, Orloff organized exhibitions in London, Brussels, Chicago, Amsterdam, Geneva, Jerusalem and other cities.

Orloff's linear, sketch-like composition of a seated woman in an armchair is achieved by a single, expressive line. One's first impression of this drawing is that of a spontaneous sketch; upon closer inspection, pencil lines of the face are still visible, especially by the mouth and the bottom of the nose. The line where the head rests into the left hand is left in pencil as well. A possible reason for this is that the care it would take to draw a thinner, more precise line in black paint or ink would conflict with the carefree impression of the rest of the drawing. The variation of thickness of the brushstrokes adds to the drawing's expressive quality. The placement of the sitter's head at the top of the paper and the placement of the dress so that it barely touches the right edge of the paper help to create clear shapes, most notably the two triangles on the right side of the drawing.



ch. Orlov

57

SIMA SLONIM

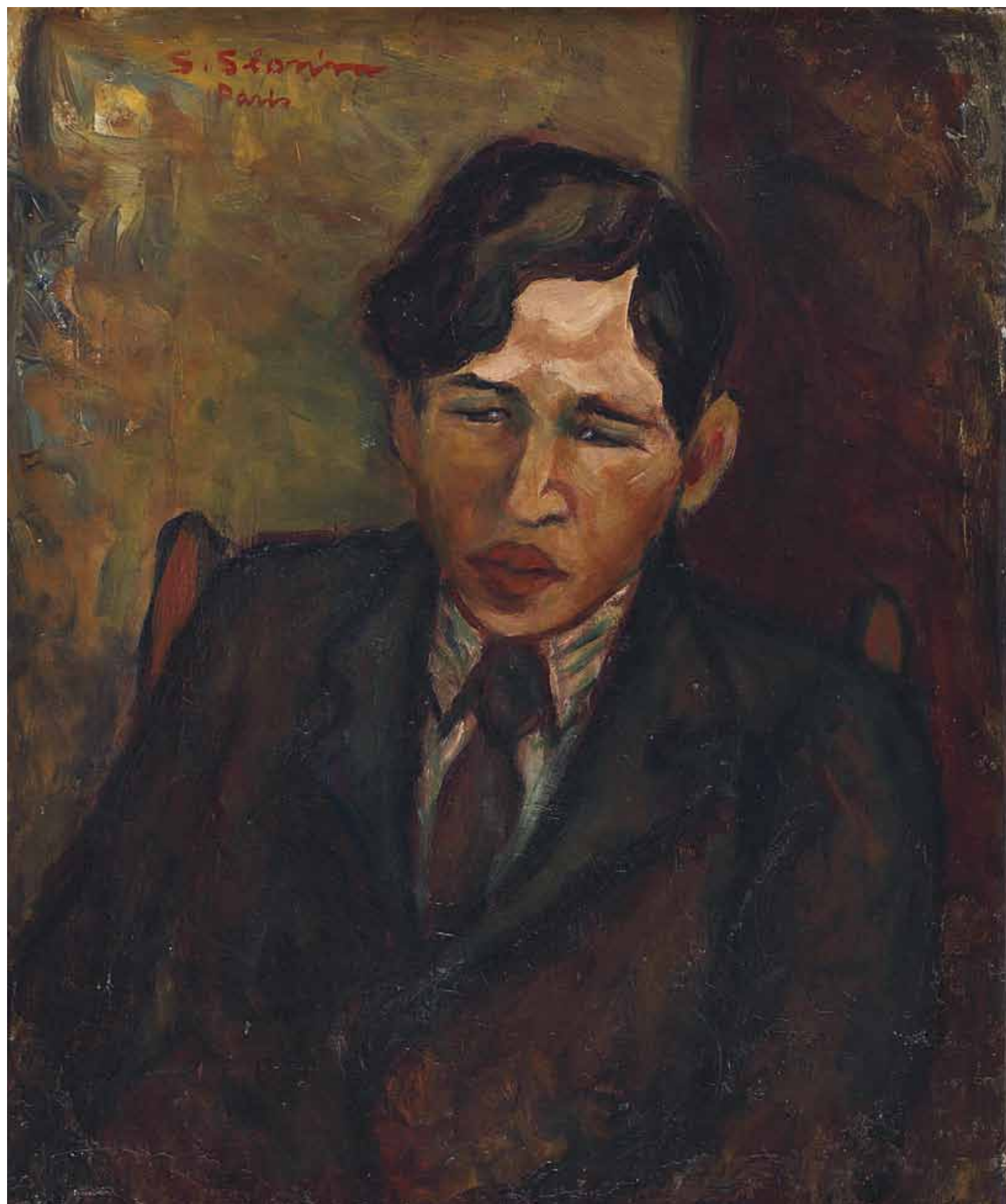
(1910–1999)

Portrait of Chaïm Soutine, 1938

Oil on canvas

23 × 19 in

In light of Soutine many painted self-portraits, the portrait of Soutine by the artist's young, Israeli girlfriend gives the viewer the opportunity to see Soutine through another pair of eyes. Slonim does a wonderful job of conveying the sadness and inner pain of her subject. She does this by having Soutine appear awkward and uncomfortable in his skin, and emphasizes Soutine's pain by painting the contour of his eyes and both eyebrows in solid black; this separates these features from Soutine's face. The brown colors of the suit jacket could be at home in a Cézanne painting (playing cards, for example). Slonim's brushstrokes are expressive and more subdued than those of Soutine. The vertical lines of the chair above Soutine's head stiffen the environment, adding to Soutine's sense of awkwardness. The greatest tonal contrast in the painting is where the hair and forehead meet. By minimizing lost and found edges, the painting acquires a less realistic, more abstract graphic quality, and this is the only section of the painting that is curved. Slonim's family describe how when Sima came to Paris she was a young, beautiful Israeli artist. She only wanted to study with the famous Soutine, who later fell in love with her and proposed. Unfortunately Sima denied his proposal, but still asked Soutine if she could paint a portrait of him. This portrait was owned by Slonim's family for seventy years.



FAÏBICH-SCHRAGA ZARFIN

(1899–1975)

Floral, Still Life, 20th Century

Oil on canvas

30 × 23,5 in

Faïbich-Schraga Zarfin was born in 1900 in Smilovitchi, in the same shtetl as Soutine. He moved to Palestine in 1914 where he joined the British army. After his military service, he moved to Jerusalem to study in the newly established Batsalel art academy, where he studied under Boris Shatz (1866–1932), who was born in Palanga. He then moved to France in 1924 where he met Soutine. Soutine was very excited to meet someone from his shtetl who spoke Yiddish with the same childhood dialect, and so he helped Zarfin establish himself as an artist.

This vase of flowers is at its most abstract when viewed from less than two feet away, a distance that certainly makes most museum guards nervous. From this intimate distance, the thickness of the brushstrokes is more easily seen, as is the maroon color that is painted over the red flowers and the hues of green (red's complement) that surround the red in the leaves and vase. The vase and leaves are subtly outlined in black, making these areas more clear and distinct, especially from a distance. Seen from a distance, the painting also appears to glow. The light blue area that separates the vase and flowers from the dark green background accomplishes this effect. The flowers appear ready to burst free from the confines of the canvas. When viewed in isolation, this still life appears colorful with its bright reds and whites. In traditional painting, a three dimensional look is primarily conveyed through tonal relationships, by how the light on form is modeled. In this painting, however, its three dimensional quality is primarily conveyed by the contrast in color relationships. Zarfin painted many still lives that are flowing with bright oranges and reds and yellows, seemingly straight out of the tube, with the leaves free of outline and the abstract relationships more prominent. By comparison, this beautiful painting is more serene, with quiet passages, that are equally engaging.



Here the mystery of the greatest painting shines forth, flesh more like flesh than flesh itself, nerves more like nerves than nerves, even if they are painted with streams of rubies, with sulfur on fire, droplets of turquoise, emerald lakes crushed with sapphires, streaks of purple and pearl, a palpitation of silver that quivers and shines, a wondrous flame that wrings matter to its depths after having smelted all the jewels of its mines.

Elie Faure