

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



PABLO PICASSO

1881 Málaga - Mougins 1973

Fillette jouant à la balle

Pen and ink on paper; 1906.

Signed in pencil.

320 x 250 mm

PROVENANCE: Jeanne Lanvin, Princess de Polignac, Paris – Prince Louis de Polignac – Thence by descent to the previous owner (until 1998) – Private collection, Great Britain

Pablo Picasso's first decades in Paris coincided with a rapidly increasing public awareness of the historic tradition of drawing. Access to the medium in the original and in reproduction was being provided on a much wider scale than at any previous time. Picasso would have been aware of the rising interest in drawing at a time when the potential for mass reproducibility of images through photography would have conferred even greater status on the hand-made, the original, and the unique mark of the artist. The variety of modes and techniques, and the breadth of references that characterize his drawings from the outset show him as an active consumer of ideas wherever he could find them, fuelling his powers of invention on both a conscious and unconscious level.¹

Picasso spent the greater part of the summer of 1906, with Fernande Olivier in the Pyrenean village of Gósol. The summer at Gósol would prove to be an extremely fruitful period in his career, with the paintings and drawings he produced there paving the way for a new sculptural approach in his art as a whole. His chief model for both drawings and paintings was Fernande, but boys from the village also sat for him.²

In the autumn of the same year, he worked with furious energy. He was poised to make a major advance in his approach to form and space and the intense activity of drawing, which he carried out primarily with brush and ink or gouache, helped him to move forward.

At about this time he met a number of wealthy Americans who visited Paris regularly to buy paintings. Among them were the Cone sisters Claribel and Etta. The Cones sent him the comic supplements to American Sunday newspapers, or would bring them on their yearly visits. Besides buying many paintings, the sisters were allowed to ransack his wastepaper basket, rescuing throwaways that would later become priceless.

In this way, some of Picasso's most sensitive drawings of children entered the collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art.³

¹ Susan Grace Galassi, *Picasso's Drawing Journey: The First Thirty Years*, in *Picasso's Drawings 1890- 1921: Reinventing Tradition*, Susan G. Galassi and Marilyn McCully (eds.), exhib. cat., The Frick Collection, New York, 4 October 2011 – 8 January 2012; National Gallery of Art, Washington, 29 January – 6 May 2012, p. 9

² Galassi and McCully, op. cit., p. 122.

³ Helen Kay, "All that was just sentiment" in *Picasso's World of Children*, New York 1965, p. 73 ff.

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A drawing very closely related to our sheet is also titled *Fillette jouant à la balle* (*Young Girl Playing Ball with a Small Hoop*) [Fig. 1] and dated 1906 (Christian Zervos dates it to 1902, see Z.XXI, 355). It is now in the Cone Collection of Modern Art⁴ at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland.

Some of these drawings were made primarily as experiments, while others served as the basis for finished compositions realized in oil on canvas.⁵

Our drawing almost certainly provided the basis for the canvas titled *Nude Girl Playing with a Tambourine* [Fig. 2].

The first owner of the present drawing was Jeanne Lanvin (1867-1946), the renowned French fashion designer and founder of the haute couture fashion house and perfume company.

Claude Picasso has confirmed the authenticity of the drawing.

⁴ In the early 20th century, Baltimore sisters Claribel and Etta Cone visited the Paris studios of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso and began amassing an exceptional collection of approximately 3,000 objects. These were displayed in their Baltimore apartments before entering the Museum's collection. The sisters also acquired 114 works by Picasso, including an important group of prints and drawings from the artist's early years in Barcelona to his Rose Period in Paris (1905–06.)

⁵ McCully, op. cit., p. 130

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Fig. 1: Pablo Picasso, *Fillette jouant à la balle*
(*Young Girl Playing Ball with a Small Hoop*), 1906,
pen and black ink, 28.8 x 19 mm.
Baltimore Museum of Art



Fig. 2: Pablo Picasso, *Jeune Fille au tambourin*
(*Nude Girl Playing with a Tambourine*), 1906,
oil on canvas, 43.8 x 22.2 cm
Private collection.