

14

The School of Paris After World War I

In post-1918 Paris, in many quarters, years of tragic warfare had dampened enthusiasm for artistic experimentation, and cultural movements turned away from “scandalous” avant-gardism toward an art based on the values of the classical tradition. “After the war,” said the former Fauve painter André Derain, “I thought I would never be able to paint—that after all that—no one would be interested.” By the end of the war, Derain had himself turned from his earlier innovative work to a classicizing style (see chapter 7), and in the twenties the general trend toward classicism in all the arts gathered momentum. It was characterized by poet and playwright Jean Cocteau as a “call to order.” So profound was the longing for stability that even Dada, once it finally hit the French capital around 1919, soon fizzled and gave way to the less nihilistic, if thoroughly antirationalist, movement known as Surrealism (see chapter 15). But far from transforming Paris into a citadel of reaction, this new common sensibility ushered in a mood of enlightened tolerance. Official taste grew less aggressively hostile to modernism; progressive painters and sculptors felt free to relax from formal experimentation and to settle for a period of consolidation and refinement of the extraordinary gains already made. Large numbers of gifted artists in retreat from revolution in Russia, economic hardship in Germany, and provincialism in America were thus lured to Paris, assuring the continuing status of Paris as the glittering, cosmopolitan capital of world art.

Eloquent Figuration: *Les Maudits*

The School of Paris embraced a wide variety of artists between the two world wars who shared common ground not only through their base in France but also in their independence from narrowly defined aesthetic categories. While distinctly modernist in their willingness to distort imagery for expressive purposes, they nonetheless regarded figurative imagery as fundamental to the meaning of their work. This diverse and distinguished group included Braque, Léger, Matisse, and Picasso. Perhaps even more

representative of the polyglot School of Paris than those major figures, however, is a subgroup known as *les maudits*—Modigliani from Italy, Soutine from Lithuania, the Frenchwoman Suzanne Valadon, and her son, Maurice Utrillo. *Les maudits* means “the cursed”—an epithet that alluded not only to these artists’ poverty and alienation but also to the picturesque, ultimately disastrous, bohemianism of their disorderly life-styles. Much of this gravitated around the sidewalk cafés of Montparnasse and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the quarters on the Left Bank of the Seine favored by the Parisian avant-garde since before the war, when Picasso and his entourage abandoned Montmartre to the tourists.

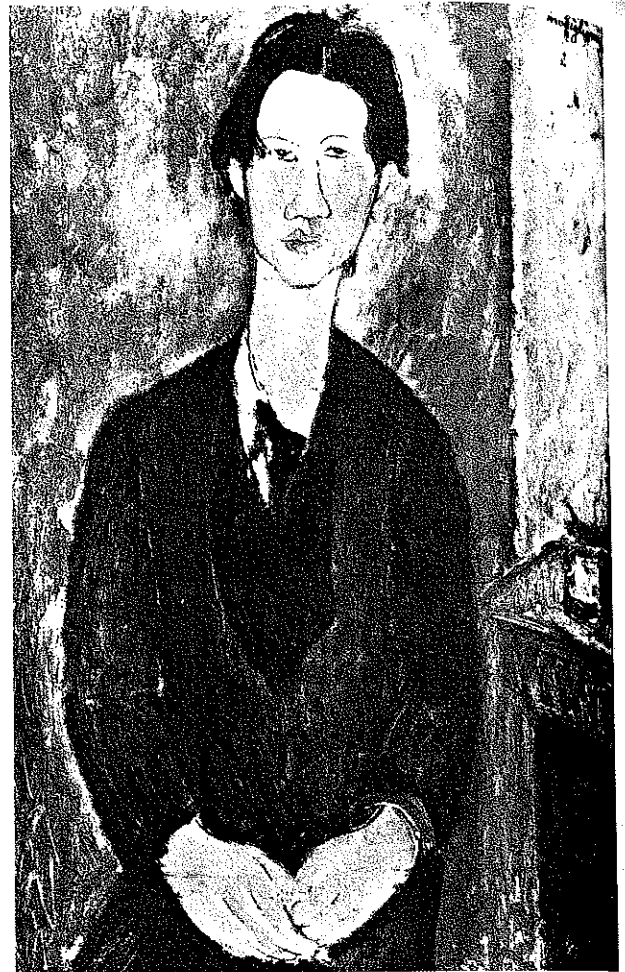
Modigliani

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920) was born of well-to-do parents in Livorno, Italy. His training as an artist was often interrupted by illness, but he managed to get to Paris by 1906. Although he was essentially a painter, in around 1910, influenced by his friend Brancusi (see chapter 9), he began to experiment with sculpture. Modigliani’s short life has become the quintessential example of bohemian artistic existence in Paris, so much so that the myths and anecdotes surrounding his biography have somewhat undermined a serious understanding of his work. For fourteen years he worked in Paris, ill from tuberculosis (from which he eventually died), drugs, and alcohol, but drawing and painting obsessively. He spent what little money he had quickly, and he tended to support himself by making drawings in cafés that he sold for a few francs to the sitter.

With very few exceptions, the experiments that Modigliani carried out in sculpture between approximately 1910 and 1914 (he rarely dated his works) are carved stone heads (fig. 14.1). He believed that modern sculpture should not be modeled in clay but should result only from direct carving in stone. Beyond the powerful example of Brancusi, the sculptural sources that appealed to Modigliani were rooted in European medieval art and the art of a diverse range of cultures including Africa, Egypt,



14.1 Amedeo Modigliani, *Head*, c. 1911–13. Limestone, height 25 × 6 × 8½" (63.5 × 15.2 × 21 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.



14.2 Amedeo Modigliani, *Chaim Soutine*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 36½ × 23½" (91.8 × 59.7 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



14.3 Amedeo Modigliani, *Nude*, 1917. Oil on canvas, 28¾ × 45¾" (73 × 116.2 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Archaic Greece, and India. Most of the heads have highly abstracted, geometricized features, with the characteristic long nose, almond eyes, and columnar neck. As we see here, Modigliani sometimes left the block of stone only roughed in at the back, making the sculptures strictly frontal in orientation. This tendency may be related to his apparent intention to group the heads into some kind of decorative ensemble. It has been suggested that Modigliani abandoned the demanding métier of sculpture because of his frail health and the expense of the materials. While both of these factors may have played a role in his decision, it seems likely that he wanted to be a painter first and foremost.

In subject, Modigliani's paintings rarely departed from the depiction of single portrait heads, torsos, or full figures against a neutral background. His career was so short that it is difficult to speak of a stylistic development, although a gradual transition can be seen from work inspired by the Symbolist painters (see chapter 3), in which the figure is securely integrated in the space of an interior, toward a pattern of linear or sculptural detachment. Modigliani knew Picasso and occasionally visited his studio, but he never really succumbed to the lure of Cubism.

Although all of his portraits resemble one another through their elegantly elongated features or their reference to forms deriving from Archaic art, the portraits of his friends, who included notable artists and critics of the early twentieth century, are sensitive records of specific personalities, eccentricities, and foibles.

Modigliani's closest friend in Paris was his fellow painter Chaim Soutine (fig. 14.2). Modigliani's portrayal of this Lithuanian peasant, with his disheveled hair and clothes and narrow, unfocused eyes, conveys a psychological presence lacking in many of his other likenesses.

Modigliani also painted anonymous students or children—anyone who would pose for him without a fee. For his paintings of nudes, however, he frequently relied on professional models. Modigliani developed a fairly standard formula for his compositions of reclining nudes (fig. 14.3). The attenuated figure is normally arranged along a diagonal and set within a narrow space, her legs eclipsed by the edge of the canvas. The figure is outlined with a flowing but precise line, while the full volumes are modeled with almost imperceptible gradations of flesh tones. The artist was fond of contrasting draped white sheets against deep Venetian red, as seen in this 1917 example. The influence here of Titian is unmistakable, particularly that of his painting *Venus of Urbino*. This sixteenth-century work is in the Uffizi, which Modigliani frequented during his student days in Florence. His friend and fellow Italian, Severini, detected a "Tuscan elegance" in the work of Modigliani, who kept reproductions of old-master paintings on the walls of his Paris studio. For his paintings of nudes, Modigliani frequently assumed a point of view above the figure, thus establishing a perspective that implies the subject's sexual availability to the artist and (presumably male) viewers. With their blatant sexuality and coy, flirtatious

expressions, Modigliani's nudes present a modernized eroticism. In the artist's day, the works were deemed indecent enough to be confiscated from an exhibition by the police for their excessive exposure of pubic hair.

Soutine

Chaim Soutine (1894–1943), the tenth of eleven children from a poor Lithuanian–Jewish family, developed an early passion for painting and drawing. He managed to attend some classes in Minsk and Vilna, a center of Jewish cultural activity, and, through the help of a patron, arrived in Paris before the war's outbreak. He studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, but it was through the artists whom he met at an old tenement known as *La Ruche* (The Beehive), where Chagall also lived around this time, that he began to find his way. Modigliani in particular took the young artist under his wing. He showed him Italian paintings in the Louvre and helped refine Soutine's manners and improve his French. "He gave me confidence in myself," Soutine said.

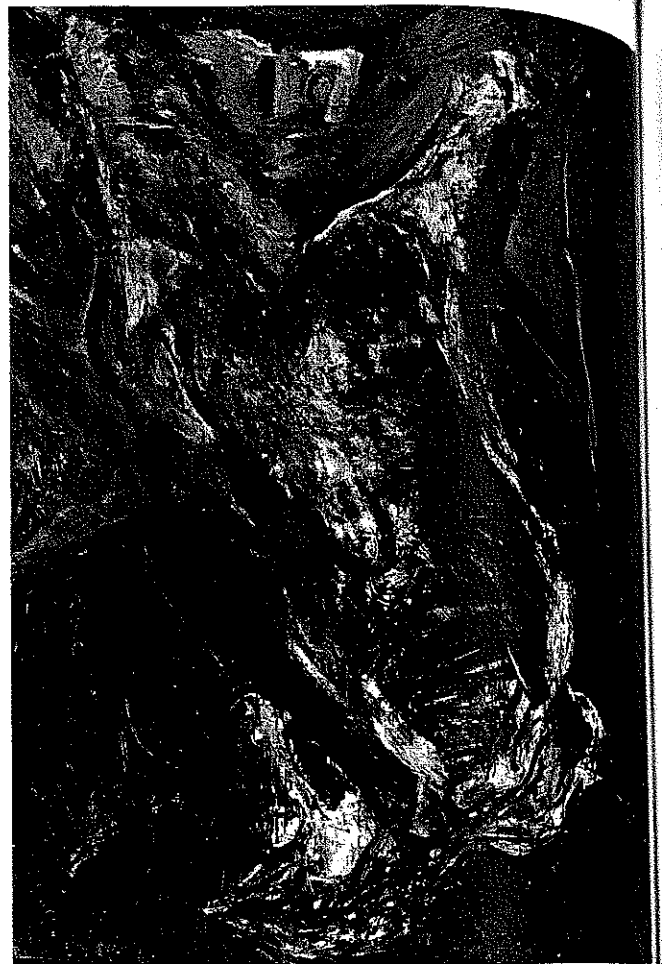
Soutine constantly destroyed or reworked his paintings, so it is difficult to trace his development from an early to a mature style. An early formative influence on his work was Cézanne, an artist also greatly admired by Modigliani. Van



14.4 Chaim Soutine, *Gnarled Trees*, c. 1920. Oil on canvas, 38 × 25" (96.5 × 63.5 cm). Private collection, New York.



14.5 Chaim Soutine, *Woman in Red*, c. 1924–25. Oil on canvas, 36 × 25" (91.4 × 63.5 cm). Private collection.



14.6 Chaim Soutine, *Carcass of Beef*, c. 1925. Oil on canvas, 55½ × 42¾" (140.3 × 107.6 cm). Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.

Gogh also provided a crucial example, although the energy and vehemence of Soutine's brushstroke surpassed even that of the Dutchman. The essence of Soutine's Expressionism lies in the intuitive power and the seemingly uncontrolled but immensely descriptive brush gesture (see fig. 14.5). In this quality he is closer than any artist of the early twentieth century to the Abstract Expressionists of the fifties, especially de Kooning (see fig. 19.5), who greatly admired Soutine.

From 1919 Soutine spent three years in Céret, a town in the French Pyrenees. The mountain landscape inspired him to a frenzy of free, Expressionist brush paintings that rivaled in exuberance anything produced by the Fauves or the German Expressionists. In *Gnarled Trees* (fig. 14.4), Soutine conveys a sense of immersion in the landscape with this composition, in which the buildings on the heaving hillside are barely decipherable through the trees and writhing coils of paint. Soutine painted furiously during this period. After his return to Paris in 1922, a large number of his canvases were bought by the American collector Albert C. Barnes, providing Soutine with his first major public success and a steady income.

In Soutine's portraits and figure paintings of the twenties there is frequently an accent on a predominant color—red,

blue, or white—around which the rest of the work is built. In *Woman in Red* (fig. 14.5) the sitter is posed diagonally across an armchair over which her voluminous red dress flows. The red of the dress permeates her face and hands; it is picked up in her necklace and in the red-brown tonality of the ground. Only the deep blue-black of the hat stands out against it. Soutine endows the static figure with tremendous vitality and movement, as the undulating surface rhythms swerve back and forth across the canvas. The hands are distorted as though from arthritis, and the features of the face are twisted into a slight grin. As in many of Soutine's portraits, the first impression is of a cruel caricature. Then one becomes aware of the sitter's highly individual, and in this case ambiguous, personality. *Woman in Red* appears at once comic, slightly mad, and knowingly shrewd.

Soutine's passion for Rembrandt was commemorated in a number of extraordinary paintings that were free adaptations of the seventeenth-century Dutch master's compositions. In *Carcass of Beef* (fig. 14.6) Soutine transcribed Rembrandt's 1655 *Butchered Ox*, in the Louvre, with gruesome, bloody impact. Unlike Rembrandt, Soutine isolated his subject, stripped it of any anecdotal context, and pushed it up to the surface. The story of the

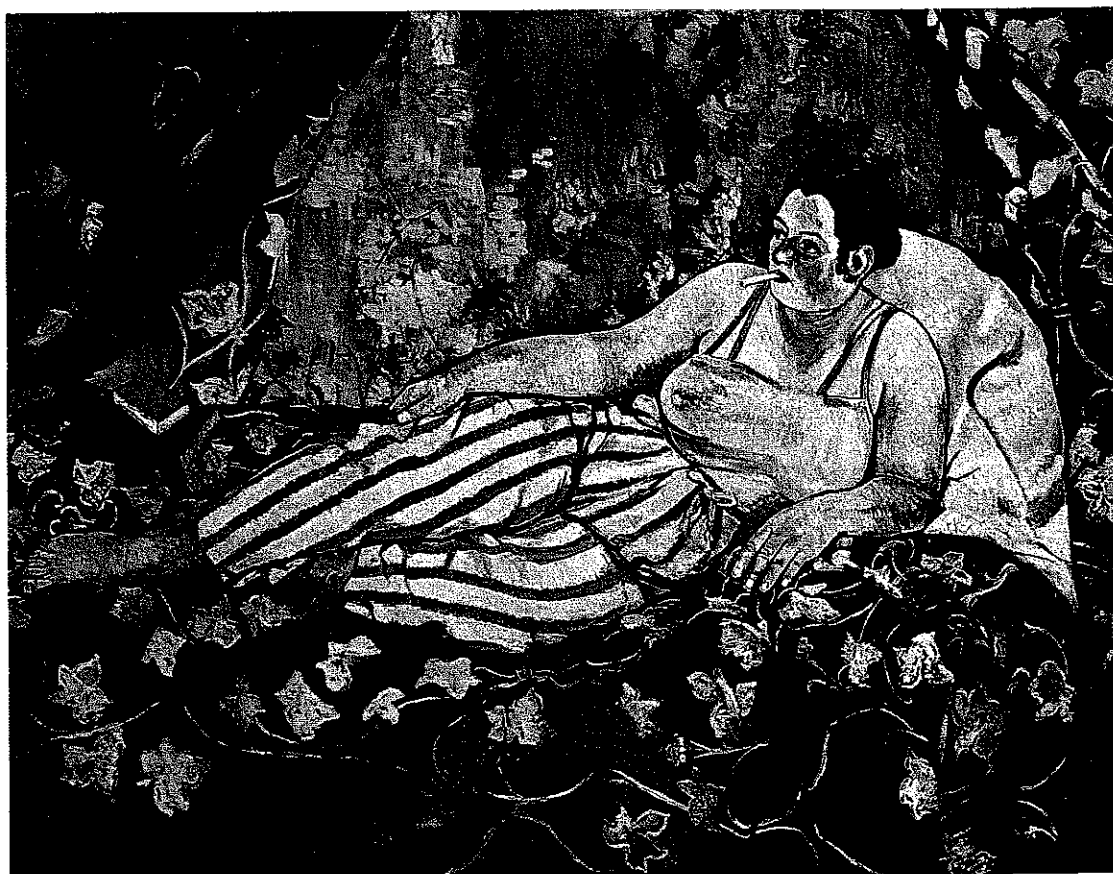
painting is well known—Soutine poured blood from the butcher's shop to refurbish the rapidly decaying carcass while his assistant fanned away the flies, and nauseated neighbors clamored for the police. Oblivious to the stench, Soutine worked obsessively before his subject, recording every detail in vigorously applied, liquid color. In this and in many other paintings, Soutine demonstrated how close are the extremes of ugliness and beauty, a phenomenon that would intrigue his Surrealist peers.

Valadon and Utrillo

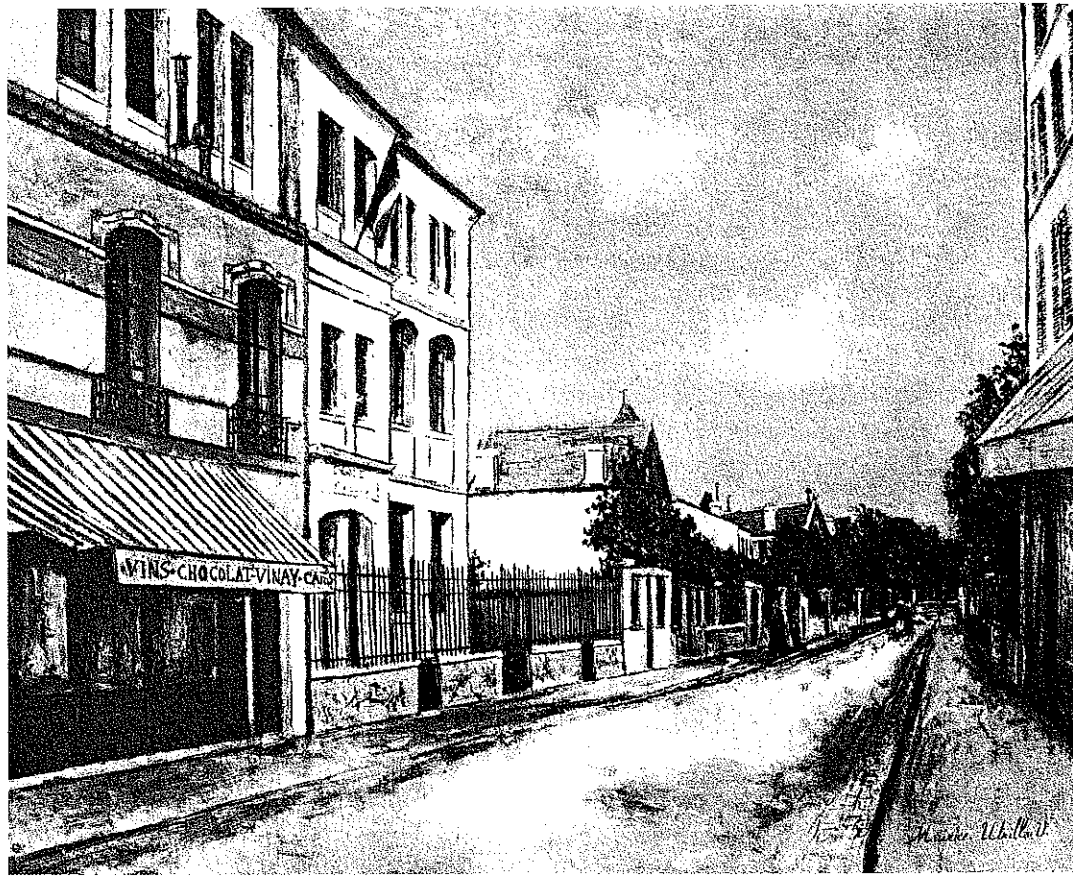
Suzanne Valadon (1867–1939) was born in central France, the child of a peasant woman who moved with her infant daughter to the Montmartre district of Paris. As a teenager, Valadon joined the circus as a performer but soon left because of an injury. She became a popular model in a neighborhood filled with artists and was soon posing for Puvis de Chavannes, Renoir, Degas, and Toulouse-Lautrec. An instinctive aptitude for drawing enabled this self-taught artist, a woman from a working-class background, to achieve a remarkable degree of success in the male-dominated art world of turn-of-the-century Paris. By the 1890s, some of her drawings had even been purchased by Degas, who introduced her to the technique of etching. Valadon made still lifes and the occasional landscape, but the bulk of her oeuvre was devoted to portraits and nudes.

The subject of the richly decorative canvas *Blue Room* (fig. 14.7) seems to fall somewhere between those two genres. While she assumes a traditional odalisque pose, this ample, unidentified woman, unconventionally dressed in striped pants, has little in common with the bold courtesans of Manet (see fig. 14.3) or the alluring nudes of Modigliani (see fig. 2.20). What is more, Valadon's model follows intellectual pursuits (note the books on the bed), and she smokes a cigarette, hardly the habit of a "respectable" woman, without the slightest self-consciousness. While her frank presentation of a female subject recalls depictions of prostitutes by her friend Toulouse-Lautrec, Valadon's painting seems a deliberate riposte to the clichéd interpretations of the theme by many generations of male artists. *Blue Room* was shown in the 1923 Salon d'Automne and purchased by the French state three years later.

The life and art of Valadon's son, Maurice Utrillo (1883–1955), provide perhaps the greatest paradox among *les maudits*. Utrillo was given the family name of the Spanish art critic Miguel Utrillo, who wished to help the boy (his actual father was rumored to be Puvis de Chavannes). As a youngster, Utrillo began to drink heavily, was expelled from school, and by the age of eighteen was in a sanatorium for alcoholics. During his chaotic adolescence—probably through his mother's influence—he became interested in painting. Like his mother, he was



14.7 Suzanne Valadon, *Blue Room*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 35% × 45% (90 × 115.9 cm). Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris.



14.8 Maurice Utrillo, *Street in Asnières*, 1913–15. Oil on canvas, 29 × 36¼" (73.7 × 92.1 cm). Private collection.

self-trained, but his art is hardly reminiscent of hers. Although his painting was technically quite accomplished and reveals stylistic influences from the Impressionists and their successors, his work is closer to the purposely naive or primitive type of painting inspired by Henri Rousseau (see fig. 3.16).

The first paintings that survive are of the suburb of Montmagny where Utrillo grew up, and of Montmartre after he moved there. Painted approximately between 1903 and 1909, they have coarse brush texture and sober colors. In about 1910 Utrillo began to focus obsessively and almost exclusively on the familiar scenes of Montmartre, which he painted street by street. On occasional trips away from Paris, he painted churches and village scenes that were variations on his basic theme (fig. 14.8). Asnières, the village depicted here, was one of the sites along the Seine favored by the Impressionists. Utrillo admired the work of Sisley and Pissarro, but unlike them, he preferred the unremarkable village streets to the banks of the river. The composition of *Street in Asnières* typifies Utrillo's preferred format. Buildings along a narrow street devoid of pedestrians disappear into a long perspective. To emulate the rough texture of the chalky, whitewashed buildings, he frequently added plaster to his zinc white oil paint. In fact, this period is often referred to as his "white" period. His favorite scenes recur over and over again, his memory refreshed from postcards. Around the end of the

war, following the white period, his color brightened and figures occurred more frequently. From 1930 until his death in 1955, Utrillo, now decorated with the Legion of Honor, lived at Le Vésinet outside Paris. During these twenty-five years of rectitude, he did little but repeat his earlier paintings.

Dedication to Color: Matisse's Later Career

As discussed in the context of Fauvism in chapter 7, the culmination of Henri Matisse's (1869–1954) prewar exploration of color may be seen in his 1911 painting *Red Studio* (see fig. 7.21). When compared with works of a similar date by Braque and Picasso (see figs. 10.16, 10.18), which have the typically muted palette of Analytical Cubism, its reliance on the power of a single strong color is particularly striking. Just as the Cubists used multiple viewpoints to undermine the conventional illusionism of single-point perspective, Matisse placed objects in relation to each other in terms not of spatial recession but of color. As he said of the *Red Studio* (which in real life was an airy, white-walled room), "I find that all these things, flowers, furniture, the chest of drawers, only become what they are to me when I see them together with the color red."

Despite his very different approach to painting, and the fact that he was considerably older than most members of

the Cubist circle (he was in his mid-forties at the outbreak of war in 1914), Matisse shared some of their concerns, including an enthusiasm for non-Western art. The influence of Cubism can be felt in his work during the war years (see below), although subsequent phases of his career – from his “rococo” decorative idiom of the twenties to the sharply defined and supremely graceful simplicity of his late cut-outs – reassert the primacy of color.

This chapter shows how the careers of Matisse and Picasso followed quite different courses through the mid-twentieth century. At the same time, the development of Matisse’s art from around 1914 onward presents numerous points of comparison and contrast with Picasso’s. Extending over decades of their long working lives, the more-or-less cordial rivalry between them fueled the popular view of these two great artists as “mighty opposites” in the history of modernism.

Response to Cubism, 1914–16

Being thoroughly immersed in the art of Cézanne, Matisse inevitably found himself responding to the structured interpretation of Cézanne’s style realized by Braque and Picasso. In 1915 the great colorist produced what is possibly his most orthodox Cubist painting in *Variation on a Still Life by de Heem*. In this response to a seventeenth-century still life that he had first copied in 1893–95 (see chapter 7), Matisse clarified for himself the development that had taken place in the intervening decades. The result is a personal interpretation of Synthetic Cubism in which

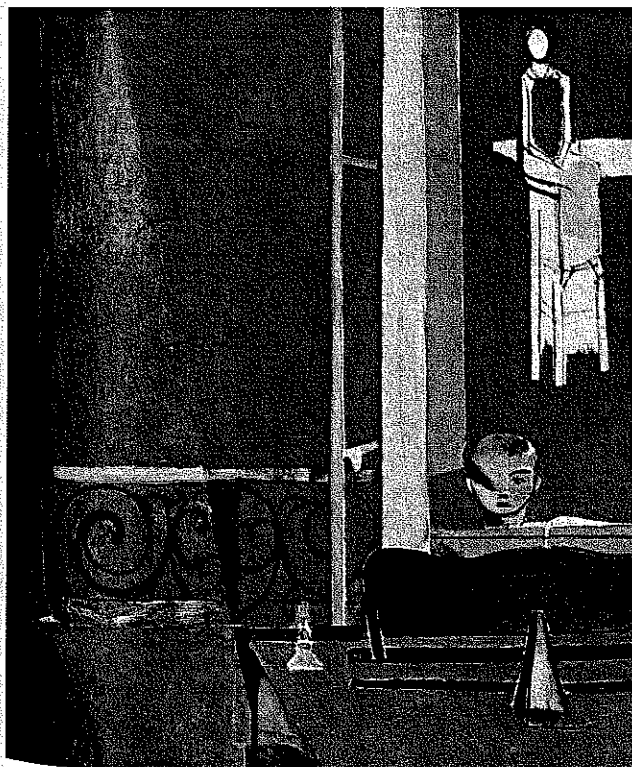
his palette has become much lighter; the space is closed in and frontalized; and the tablecloth and the architecture of the room are geometrized, as are the fruits and vessels on the table. His studies of Cubism were extremely helpful, because they encouraged him to simplify his pictorial structures, to control his intuitively decorative tendency, and to use the rectangle as a counterpoint for the curvilinear arabesque that came most naturally to him.

One of Matisse’s most austere interpretations of a Cubist mode is *Piano Lesson* of 1916 (fig. 14.9). This work is a large, abstract arrangement of geometric color planes—lovely grays and greens. A tilted foreground plane of rose pink constitutes the top of the piano, on which a gray metronome sits; its triangular shape is echoed in the angled green plane that falls across the window. The planes are accented by decorative curving patterns based on the iron grille of the balcony and the music stand of the piano. The environment is animated by the head of the child sculpturally modeled in line evoking Matisse’s 1908 sculpture *Decorative Figure*, which appears in so many of his paintings. Another of his works, the painting *Woman on a High Stool*, 1914, is schematically indicated in the upper right, but its nature, as a painting or a figure in the room, remains unclear, heightening the sense of spatial ambiguity. The stiff figure seems to preside over the piano lesson like a stern instructor. Here again, Matisse’s interpretation of Cubism is intensely personal, with none of the shifting views and fractured forms that mark the main line of Picasso, Braque, and Juan Gris. Its frontality and its dominant uniform planes of geometric color areas show that Matisse could assimilate Cubism in order to achieve an abstract structure of space and color.

Renewal of Coloristic Idiom, 1917–c. 1930

The following year Matisse undertook another version of this theme with *Music Lesson* (fig. 14.10), a painting identical in size to *Piano Lesson*, which depicts the same room in the artist’s house at Issy-les-Moulineaux, southwest of Paris. Matisse has transformed that room into a pleasant domestic setting for a portrait of his family. The three Matisse children are in the foreground while Madame Matisse sews in the garden. Everyone is self-absorbed and takes little heed of the artist or the beautiful garden view. The artist implies his own presence through his open violin case on the piano, his painting on the wall in the upper right corner, and his sculpture, *Reclining Nude I/Aurora* (see fig. 9.3), here enlarged and flesh-colored, which sits by the pond before a lush landscape. In the wake of *Piano Lesson*, Matisse replaced his previous Cubist austerity with a lush indulgence in color and decorative forms.

In late 1917 Matisse moved to Nice, in the south of France, where he then spent much time during his life. There, in spacious, seaside studios, he painted languorous models, often in the guise of exotic “odalisques,” under the brilliant light of the Riviera. These women reveal little in the way of individual psychologies; they are objects



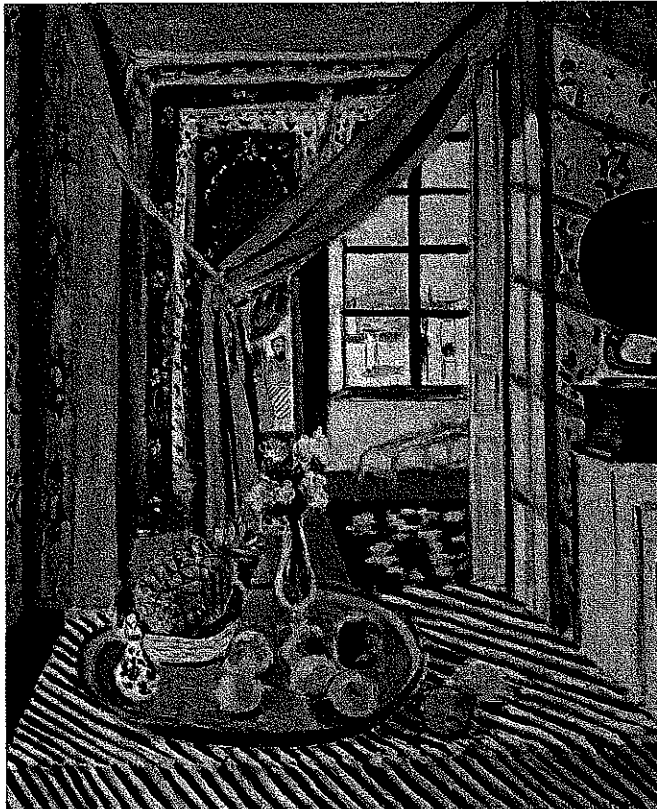
14.9 Henri Matisse, *Piano Lesson*, late summer, 1916. Oil on canvas, 8'½" × 6'11¼" (2.45 × 2.13 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



14.10 Henri Matisse, *Music Lesson*, 1917. Oil on canvas, 8'½" × 6'7" (2.4 × 2 m). The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania.



14.11 Henri Matisse, *Decorative Figure Against an Ornamental Background*, 1925–26. Oil on canvas, 51½" × 38½" (129.9 × 97.8 cm). Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris.



14.12 Henri Matisse, *Interior with a Phonograph*, 1924. Oil on canvas, 39¼ × 32" (101 × 81.3 cm). Private collection.

of fantasy and visual gratification in a space seemingly sealed off from the rest of the world. Throughout most of the twenties, Matisse supplanted heroic abstraction with intimacy, charm, and a mood of sensual indulgence, all suffused with color as lavish as an Oriental carpet and with a sense of line and pattern that owed much to Islamic art. Yet, even within this deceptively relaxed manner, the artist produced images and compositions of grand, even solemn magnificence. The *Decorative Figure Against an Ornamental Background* of 1925–26 (fig. 14.11) epitomizes this most rococo phase of Matisse's work. Owing to the highly sculptural quality of his model, Matisse manages to set the figure off against the patterned Persian carpet, which visually merges with a background wall that has been decorated with the repetitive floral motif of French baroque wallpaper and the elaborate volutes of a Venetian mirror. Such solidly modeled figures appear in his sculptures of this period and also in the lithographs he was then making.

During the twenties Matisse also revived his interest in the window theme, first observed in the 1905 Fauve *The Open Window* (see fig. 7.4) and often with a table, still life,

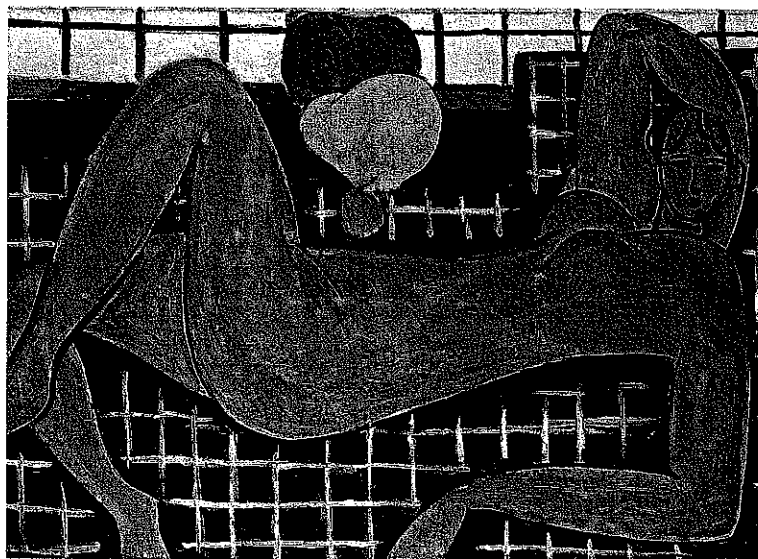
or figure set before it. Through this subject, in fact, one may follow the changing focus of Matisse's attention from Fauve color to Cubist reductiveness and back to the coloristic, curvilinear style of the postwar years. In *Interior with a Phonograph* (fig. 14.12), a painting of 1924, Matisse gave full play to his brilliant palette, while at the same time constructing a richly ambiguous space, created through layers of rectangular openings.

An Art of Essentials, c. 1930–54

Matisse had once expressed (in 1908) his desire to create "an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter, an art which would be ... something like a good armchair in which to rest from physical fatigue." Indulgent as this may seem, Matisse was almost puritanical in his self-effacing and unsparing search for the ideal. Thus, in the wake of his twenties luxuriance, the sixty-six-year-old artist set out once again to renew his art by reducing it to essentials. The evidence of this prolonged and systematic exercise has survived in a telling series of photographs, made during the course of the work—state by state—that Matisse carried out toward the ultimate realization of his famous *Large Reclining Nude* (formerly called *Pink Nude*) of 1935 (fig. 14.13). He progressively selected, simplified, and reduced—not only form but also color, until the latter consisted of little more than rose, blue, black, and white. The odalisque thus rests within a pure, rhythmic flow of uninterrupted curves. While this cursive sweep evokes the simplified volumes of the figure, it also fixes them into the gridded support of the chaise longue. Here is the perfect antithetical companion to the Fauve *Blue Nude* of 1907 (see fig. 7.7), a sculptured image resolved by far less reductive means than those of the *Large Reclining Nude*.

Like the grand French tradition of the decorative that preceded him—from Le Brun at Versailles through Boucher and Fragonard in the eighteenth century to Delacroix, Renoir, and Monet in the nineteenth—Matisse had ample opportunity to be overtly decorative when, in 1932, he began designing and illustrating special editions of great texts, the first of which was *Poésies* by Stéphane Mallarmé, published by Albert Skira. In the graphics for these volumes, Matisse so extended the aesthetic economy already seen in the *Large Reclining Nude* that, even when restricted to line and black-and-white, he could endow the image with a living sense of color and volume.

Matisse's most extraordinary decorative project during the thirties was his design for a large triptych on the subject of dance (fig. 14.14) that was commissioned by the American collector Albert C. Barnes, the same man who



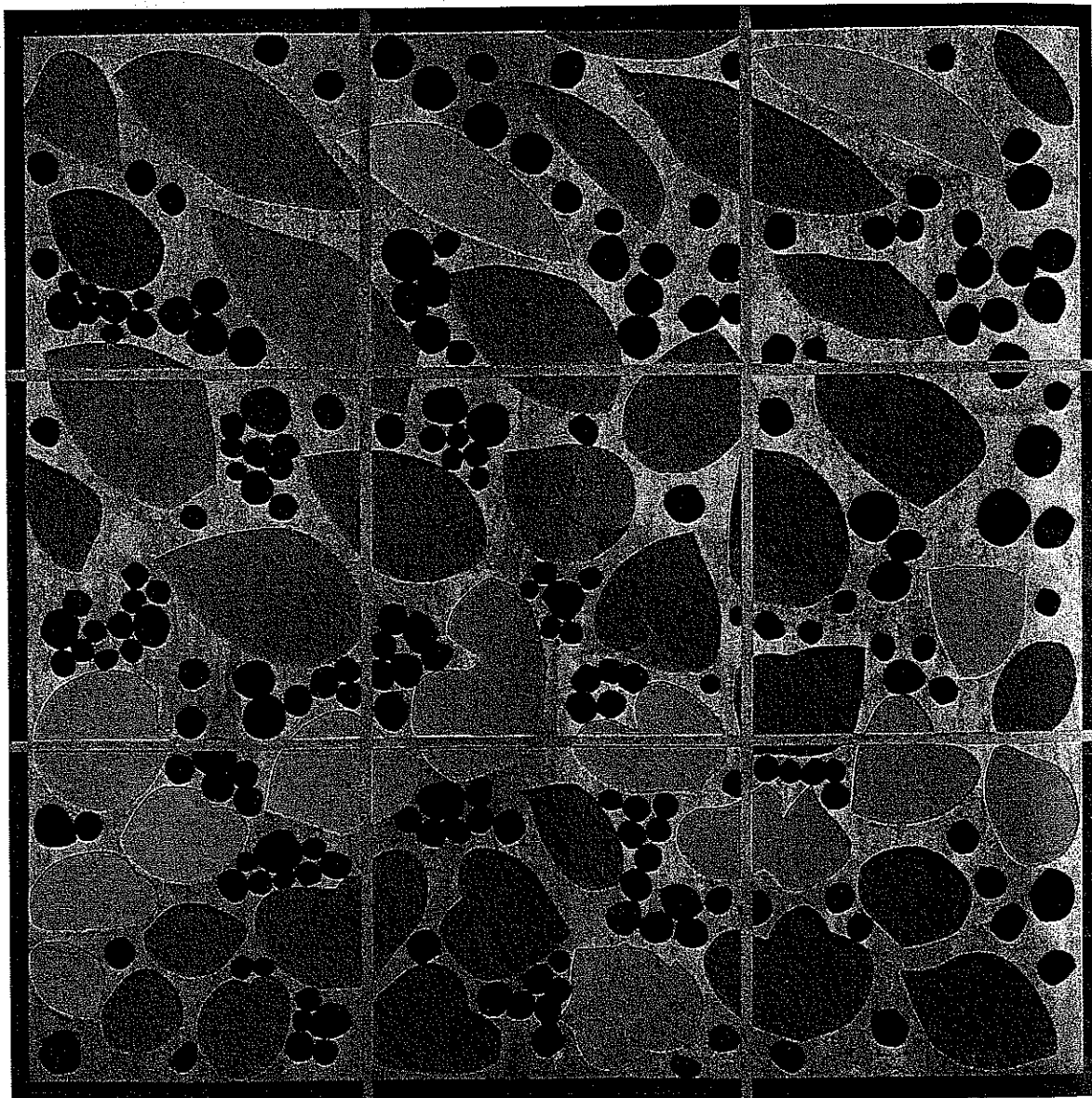
14.13 Henri Matisse, *Large Reclining Nude* (*The Pink Nude*), 1935. Oil on canvas, 26 × 36½" (66 × 92.7 cm). The Baltimore Museum of Art.



14.14 Henri Matisse, *Merion Dance Mural*, 1932–33. Oil on canvas: left 11'1¾" × 14'5¾" (3.4 × 4.4 m), center 11'8½" × 16'6½" (3.6 × 5 m), right 11'1¾" × 14'5" (3.4 × 4.4 m). The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania.

had bought the works of Soutine. The triptych would occupy three lunettes in the Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania, which housed a collection that already included more works by Matisse than any museum. Matisse began to paint the murals in Nice, only to discover well into the project that he was using incorrect measurements. So he began anew. (In 1992, in an amazing discovery, this unfinished but splendid composition was found rolled up in Matisse's studio in Nice.) When Matisse returned to work on the second version, he discovered that his usual technique of brushing in every color himself was enormously time-consuming. In order to expedite his experiments with form and color arrangements, he cut large sheets of painted paper and pinned them to the canvas, shifting them, drawing on them, and, ultimately, discarding them once he decided on the final composition. This method of cutting paper, as we shall see, became an artistic end in itself during

the artist's later years. For both compositions, Matisse turned to his own previous treatment of the dance theme (see fig. 7.19). In the final murals, the dancing figures are rendered in light gray, to harmonize with the limestone of the building, and are set against an abstract background consisting of broad, geometric bands of black, pink, and blue. The limbs of the figures are dramatically sliced by the curving edges of the canvas, which somehow enhance rather than inhibit their ecstatic movements. Matisse, of course, understood that his image had to be legible from a great distance, so the forms are boldly conceived, with no interior modeling to distract from their simplified contours. The result is one of the most successful mergings of architecture and painting in the twentieth century. Fortunately, Matisse felt the need to paint a third version of the murals, which now belongs, as does the first, to the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris.



14.15 Henri Matisse, *Ivy in Flower*, 1953. Collage maquette for a stained-glass window: colored paper, watercolor, pencil, and brown paper tape on paper mounted on canvas, 9'3 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 9'4 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (2.8 \times 2.9 m). Dallas Museum of Art.



14.16 Henri Matisse, Chapel of the Rosary of the Dominican Nuns, Vence, France. Consecrated June 25, 1951.

After war struck Europe again in 1939, Matisse reacted as he had in 1916–18 and countered the inhumanity of the moment with an art radiant with affirmative, humanist faith. In the fifties, even as age and physical disability confined him to bed, he invented a new technique and through it discovered a fresh burst of expressive freedom. With Matisse, the hand could hardly have been more secure or the conception more youthful (fig. 14.15). The new Color Field painters emerging in New York toward the end of the fifties were especially inspired by this late work, an art created by a man lying on his back, drawing with charcoal, fastened to the end of a long wand, on paper attached to the walls and ceiling above. In this way, Matisse produced vast compositions that he then executed by cutting out forms from paper he had handpainted. Once assembled into figurative and abstract–decorative compositions that were very often mural in scale, the *découpages*, or paper cutout works, can be seen as the apotheosis of Matisse’s initial Cézanne-inspired Fauve aesthetic. They consist of planes of pure color flattened by their interlocking relationships but conjuring dimensionality by the density of their color and the monumental simplicity of their arabesque shapes. By “cutting into color,” Matisse was manipulating his material in a way that translated into pictorial terms his experience in handling clay for sculpture. With this, he at last attained the long-sought synthesis of sculpture and painting, of drawing and color. The irrepressible gaiety of the cutouts could be expressed to dazzling impact on a mural scale (see fig. 14.15) or through the artist’s illustrations for the book *Jazz*, which carried a text composed and handprinted by Matisse.

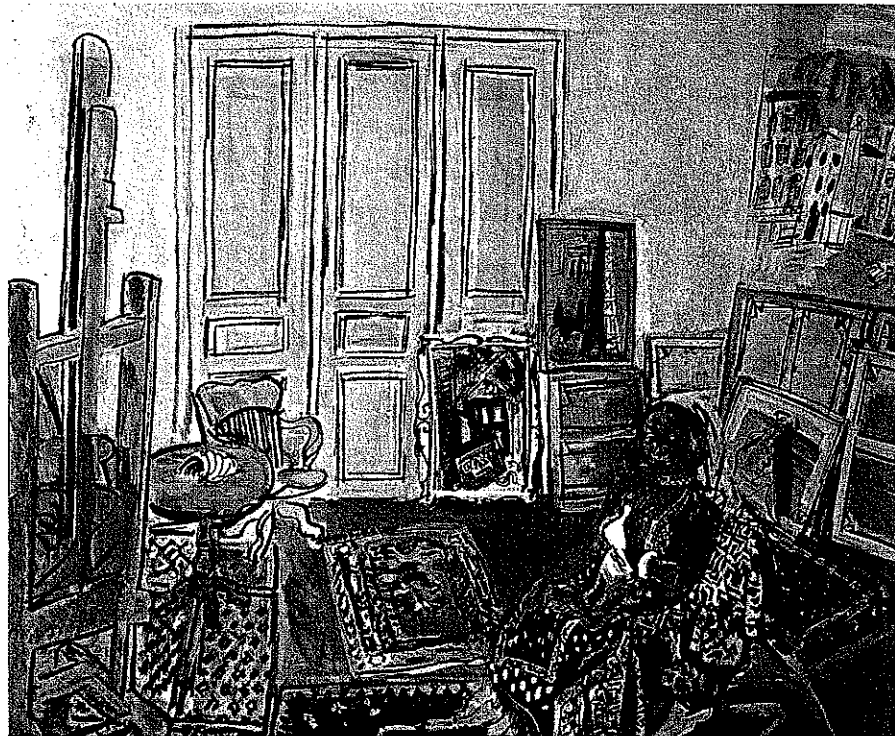
Following the experience of *Jazz*, Matisse began making cutouts in earnest, eventually to the exclusion of all other forms of artistic activity.

Beginning in 1948, Matisse used the cutout technique to design the stained glass and priests’ vestments for the Dominican chapel in the French Mediterranean town of Vence (fig. 14.16). Like the Barnes murals, the Vence chapel was a collaboration between art and architecture, but now Matisse extended his talents for decoration beyond painting to textiles, mural-sized drawings on ceramic tiles, and even a spire on the roof of the chapel.

Celebrating the Good Life: Dufy’s Later Career

Raoul Dufy (1877–1953) joined Matisse in remaining true to the principles of Fauve color but, in the years following the “Wild Beast” episode (see fig. 7.13), refined them into a sumptuous signature style. Even more than Matisse, he was a decorator with a connoisseur’s taste for the hedonistic joys of the good life. During the twenties and thirties, Dufy achieved such popularity—not only in paintings, watercolors, and drawings, but also in ceramics, textiles, illustrated books, and stage design—that his rainbow palette and stylish, insouciant drawing seems to embody the spirit of the period. *Indian Model in the Studio at L’Impasse Guelma* (fig. 14.17) shows many of the characteristics of the artist’s mature manner. The broad, clear area of light blue that covers the studio wall forms a background to the intricate pattern of rugs and paintings whose exotic focus is an elaborately draped Indian model. The use

14.17 Raoul Dufy, *Indian Model in the Studio at L'Impasse Guelma*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (81 × 100 cm). Private collection.



of descriptive line and oil color laid on in thin washes is such that the painting—and this is true of most of Dufy's works—seems like a delicately colored ink drawing.

Dufy combined influences from Matisse, rococo, Persian and Indian painting, and occasionally modern primitives such as Henri Rousseau, transforming all these into an intimate world of his own. The artist could take a panoramic view and suggest, in minuscule touches of color and nervous arabesques of line, the movement and excitement of his world—crowds of holidayseekers, horse races, boats in sun-filled harbors, the circus, and the concert hall.

Eclectic Mastery: Picasso's Career After the High-Point of Cubism

"I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them," said **Pablo Picasso** (1881–1973). This statement emphasizes the strong conceptual element in his art that lies behind both his lifelong readiness to experiment with new kinds of visual language and his capacity to assimilate the essence of a diverse range of artistic styles and techniques. Unlike Matisse, whose "art of balance," like a comfortable armchair, sought to relax and refresh the viewer, Picasso saw art as "an instrument of war against brutality and darkness." His work during the inter-war years reflects intellectual currents of the times, from the classical "call to order" that followed the war to his involvement with Surrealism and communism, and the passionate political statement of *Guernica*.

In 1914, like other European avant-garde movements, Cubism had lost momentum as artists and writers, including Braque, Léger and Apollinaire, enlisted in the armed



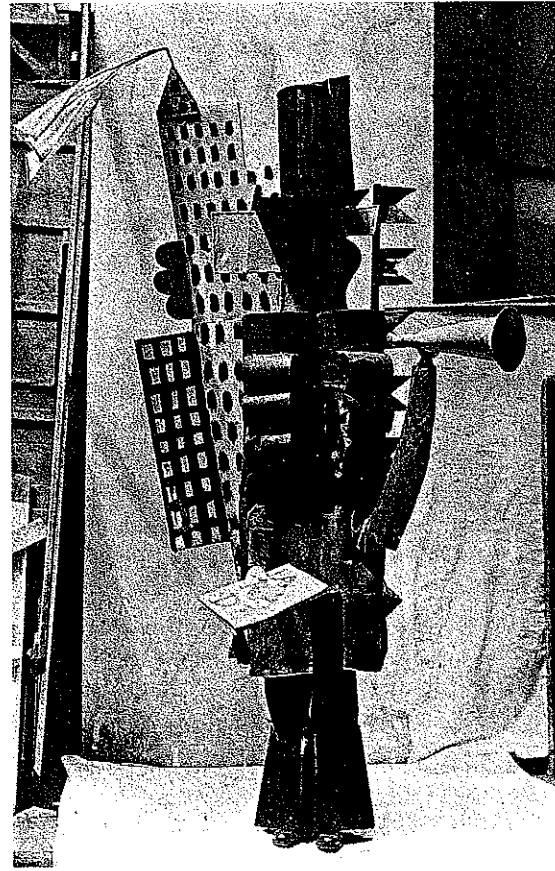
14.18 Pablo Picasso, *Ambroise Vollard*, 1915. Pencil on paper, 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (46.7 × 31.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

forces. As a foreigner, Picasso was able to remain in Paris, but he worked more now in isolation. After the period of discovery and experiment in Analytic Cubism, collage, and the beginning of Synthetic Cubism (1908–14), there was a pause during which the artist used Cubism for decorative ends (see figs. 10.25, 10.29). Then, suddenly, during a sojourn in Avignon in 1914, he began a series of realistic portrait drawings in a sensitive, scrupulous linear technique that recalls his longtime admiration for the drawings of Ingres. But works such as the portrait of Picasso's dealer Ambroise Vollard (fig. 14.18) were in the minority during 1915–16, when the artist was still experimenting with painting and constructions in a Synthetic Cubist vein.

The war years and the early twenties saw a return to forms of realism on the part of other French painters—Derain, Vlaminck, Dufy—originally associated with Fauvism or Cubism. In Picasso's case, however, the drawings and, subsequently, paintings in a realist mode constituted a reexamination of the nature of Cubism. He obviously felt confident enough of his control of the Cubist vocabulary to attack reality from two widely divergent vantage points. With astonishing agility, he pursued Cubist experiments side by side with realistic and classical drawings and paintings in the early twenties. Picasso's mastery of an eclectic range of styles—in itself one of the most extraordinary phenomena of twentieth-century art—is interesting in several ways. It shows how the artist was able to take full advantage of the experimental freedoms that were an integral part of modernism. But at the same time it shows him moving away from modernist notions of authenticity (for example, Cubism's truth to the fragmented nature of visual perception as it is actually experienced) toward modes of parody or pastiche that foreshadow postmodernism.

Parade and Theatrical Themes

In 1917 Picasso agreed, somewhat reluctantly because of his hatred for travel or disruption of his routine, to go to Rome as part of a group of artists, including the poet and dramatist Jean Cocteau, the composer Erik Satie, and the choreographer Léonide Massine, to design curtains, sets, and costumes for a new ballet, *Parade*, being prepared for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (Russian Ballet Company). The stimulus of Italy, where Picasso stayed for two months visiting museums, churches, and ancient sites like Pompeii, contributed to the resurgence of classical style and subject matter in his art. He also met and married a young dancer in the corps de ballet, Olga Koklova, who became the subject of many portraits in the ensuing years. *Parade* brought the artist back into the world of the theater, which, along with the circus, had been an early love and had provided him with subject matter for his Blue and Rose Periods (see chapter 10). Dating back to the late eighteenth century, a traditional "parade" was a sideshow performance enacted outside a theater to entice the spectators inside. The ballet was built around the theme of conflict: on the one hand, the delicate humanity and harmony of the music and the



14.19 Pablo Picasso, *The American Manager*, 1917. Reconstruction. Realized by Kermit Love for The Museum of Modern Art, 1979. Paint on cardboard, fabric, paper, wood, leather, and metal, 11'2¼" × 8' × 3'8½" (3.4 × 2.4 × 1.1 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

dancers; on the other, the commercialized forces of the mechanist-Cubist managers (fig. 14.19) and the deafening noise of the sound effects. Cocteau, who saw the play as a dialogue between illusion and reality, the commonplace and the fantastic, intended these real sounds—sirens, typewriters, or trains—as the aural equivalent of the literal elements in Cubist collages (see fig. 10.21). The mixture of reality and fantasy in *Parade* led Apollinaire in his program notes to refer to its *sur-réalisme*, one of the first recorded uses of this term to describe an art form. *Parade* involved elements of shock that the Dadaists were then exploiting in Zurich (see chapter 13). Picasso designed a backdrop for *Parade* that is reminiscent of his 1905 circus paintings (see fig. 10.3) in its tender, romantic imagery and Rose Period coloring. Like Satie's soothing prelude, it reassured the audience, which was expecting Futurist cacophony. But they were shocked out of their complacency once the curtain rose. When *Parade* was first performed in Paris on May 18, 1917, the audience included sympathetic viewers like Gris and Severini. Most of the theatergoers, however, were outraged members of the bourgeoisie. The reviews were devastating, and *Parade* became a *succès de scandale*, marking the beginning of many fruitful collaborations between Picasso, as well as other artists in France, with the Ballets Russes.

During this period, Picasso's early love of the characters from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* and its descendant, the French circus, was renewed. Pierrots, Harlequins, and musicians again became a central theme. The world of the theater and music took on a fresh aspect that resulted in a number of brilliant portraits, such as that of the Russian composer Igor Stravinsky, and figure drawings done in delicately sparse outlines.

Postwar Classicism

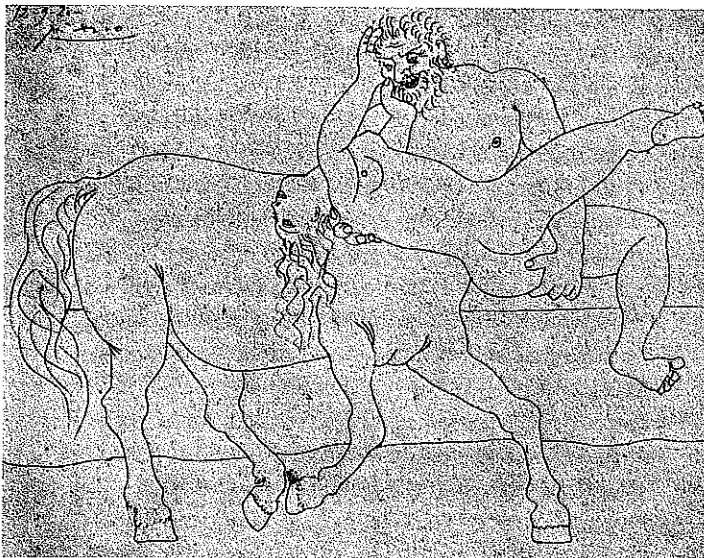
In the early postwar period Picasso experimented with different attitudes toward Cubism and representation. In the latter, the most purely classical style was manifested before 1923 in drawings that have the quality of white-ground Greek vase paintings of the fifth century B.C.E. Already by 1920 such drawings embodied a specifically Greek or Roman subject matter that Picasso continued to explore thereafter. *Nessus and Dejanira* (fig. 14.20), for example, depicts a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which the centaur, Nessus, tries to rape Dejanira, the wife of Herakles. Picasso said that his trips to the Mediterranean in the south of France inspired such ancient mythological themes. This subject so intrigued the artist that he made versions in pencil, silverpoint, watercolor, and etching. The representational line drawings also revived his interest in the graphic arts, particularly etching and lithography. He produced prints at the beginning of his career and during the earlier Cubist phase and the war years. From the early twenties, printmaking became a major phase of his production, to the point where Picasso must be regarded as one of the great printmakers of the twentieth century.

During 1920, Picasso also began to produce paintings, frequently on a large scale, in which his concept of the classical is in a different and monumental vein. He pursued this style for the next four years in painting and then continued



14.21 Pablo Picasso, *Three Women at the Spring*, Fontainebleau, summer 1921. Oil on canvas, 6'8¼" × 5'8½" (2 × 1.74 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

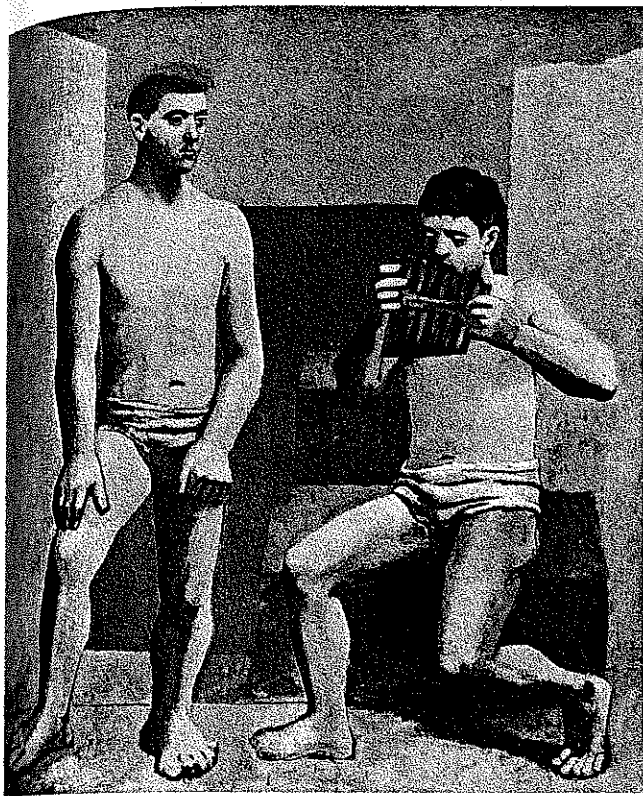
in sculpture in the early thirties. The years of working with flat, tilted Cubist planes seemed to build up a need to go to the extreme of sculptural mass. The faces are simplified in the heavy, coarse manner of Roman rather than Greek sculpture, and when Picasso placed the figures before a landscape, he simplified the background to frontalized accents that tend to close rather than open the space. Thus, the effect of high sculptural relief is maintained



14.20 Pablo Picasso, *Nessus and Dejanira*, 1920. Pencil on paper, 8¼ × 10¼" (21 × 26 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



14.22 Pablo Picasso, *Two Women Running on the Beach (The Race)*, 1922. Gouache on plywood, 13¾ × 16¼" (34 × 42.5 cm). Musée Picasso, Paris.



14.23 Pablo Picasso, *The Pipes of Pan*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 6'6½" × 5'8½" (2 × 1.70 m). Musée Picasso, Paris.

throughout. While the stone giantesses of *Three Women at the Spring* (fig. 14.21), which have been compared with Michelangelo's sibyls (prophetesses) in the Sistine Chapel, do not embody the traditional proportions of the classical canon, they are endowed with a classical sense of dignity and timelessness. Picasso prepared his compact, rigorously constructed image with several studies. The compositional elements rotate around the central placement of a jug and the women's enormous hands, which are extended in slow, hieratic gestures. Occasionally, Picasso put his figures into lumbering activity, as in *Two Women Running on the Beach (The Race)* (fig. 14.22). The colors of this painting, in accordance with its classical mood, are light and bright—blues and reds, with raw pink flesh tones. Despite their massive limbs, these ecstatic women bound effortlessly across the landscape. It has been suggested that the elated mood of some of Picasso's classical paintings has to do with a happy domestic life with Olga and their son Paulo, born in 1921. In 1924, Picasso enlarged this tiny composition to create a backdrop for Diaghilev's ballet *The Blue Train*. We should recall that such massive figures were not new in Picasso's career, for during his proto-Cubist period (1906–8) he had produced a number of comparably substantial and primitivizing renditions of the nude (see fig. 10.5).

Picasso continued to paint for two or three more years in a classical vein, but now with more specific reference to the spirit of Athens in the fifth century B.C.E. One of the outstanding works of this phase is *The Pipes of Pan*

(fig. 14.23). The two youths are presented as massive yet graceful athletes, absorbed in their own remote and magical world. The rectilinear forms of the background deny any sense of spatial recession, turning the whole into a kind of Mediterranean stage set.

Cubism Continued

The remarkable aspect of Picasso's art during this ten-year period (1915–25) is that he was also producing major Cubist paintings. He explained this stylistic dichotomy in a 1923 interview: "If the subjects I have wanted to express have suggested different ways of expression I have never hesitated to adopt them." After the decorative enrichment of the Cubist paintings around 1914–15 (see fig. 10.25), including pointillist color and elaborate, applied textures, the artist moved back, in his Cubist paintings of 1916–18, to a greater austerity of more simplified flat patterns, frequently based on the figure (fig. 14.24). Simultaneously, he made realistic versions of this subject, a favorite with him. From compositions involving figures, there gradually evolved the two versions of the *Three Musicians* (fig. 14.25), both created in 1921, the same year Picasso made *Three Women at the Spring*. One version is in the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the other is in the Museum of Art, Philadelphia. The three figures in both versions are



14.24 Pablo Picasso, *Harlequin with Violin (Si tu veux)*, 1918. Oil on canvas, 56 × 39½" (142.2 × 100.3 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art.



14.25 Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians*, summer 1921. Oil on canvas, 6'7" × 7'3¼" (2 × 2.2 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



14.26 Pablo Picasso, *Mandolin and Guitar*, 1924. Oil and sand on canvas, 56½ × 67¼" (142.6 × 200 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

seated frontally in a row, against an enclosing back wall, and fixed by the restricted foreground, but the version in New York is simpler and more somber. The paintings are a superb summation of the Synthetic Cubist style up to this point, but they also embody something new. The figures are suggestive not so much of exuberant musicians from the *commedia dell'arte* as of some mysterious tribunal. It has been persuasively argued that the three musicians represent covert portraits of Picasso's friends—the writer Max Jacob (the monk at the right), who had recently withdrawn from the world and taken up residence in a monastery, and Apollinaire (Pierrot, the “poet” at the left), who had died in 1918. Picasso portrays himself, as he often did, in the guise of Harlequin, situated in the middle between his friends. The somber, somewhat ominous mood of the painting is thus explained as the work becomes a memorial to these lost friends.

The other direction in which Picasso took Cubism involved sacrifice of the purity of its Analytic phase for the sake of new exploration of pictorial space. The result was, between 1924 and 1926, a series of the most colorful and spatially intricate still lifes in the history of Cubism. *Mandolin and Guitar* (fig. 14.26) illustrates the artist's superb control over the entire repertory of Cubist and perspective space. The center of the painting is occupied by the characteristic Cubist still life—the mandolin and guitar twisting and turning on the table, encompassed in mandorlas of abstract color-shapes: vivid reds, blues, purples, yellows, and ochers against more subdued but still rich earth colors. The tablecloth is varicolored and patterned, while the corner of the room with the open window is a complex of tilted wall planes and receding perspective lines. These create a considerable illusion of depth, which, however, seems constantly to be turning back upon itself, shifting and changing into flat planes of color. The whole is infiltrated by an intense Mediterranean light, made palpa-



14.27 Pablo Picasso, *Studio with Plaster Head*, summer 1925. Oil on canvas, 38% × 51% (97.9 × 131.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

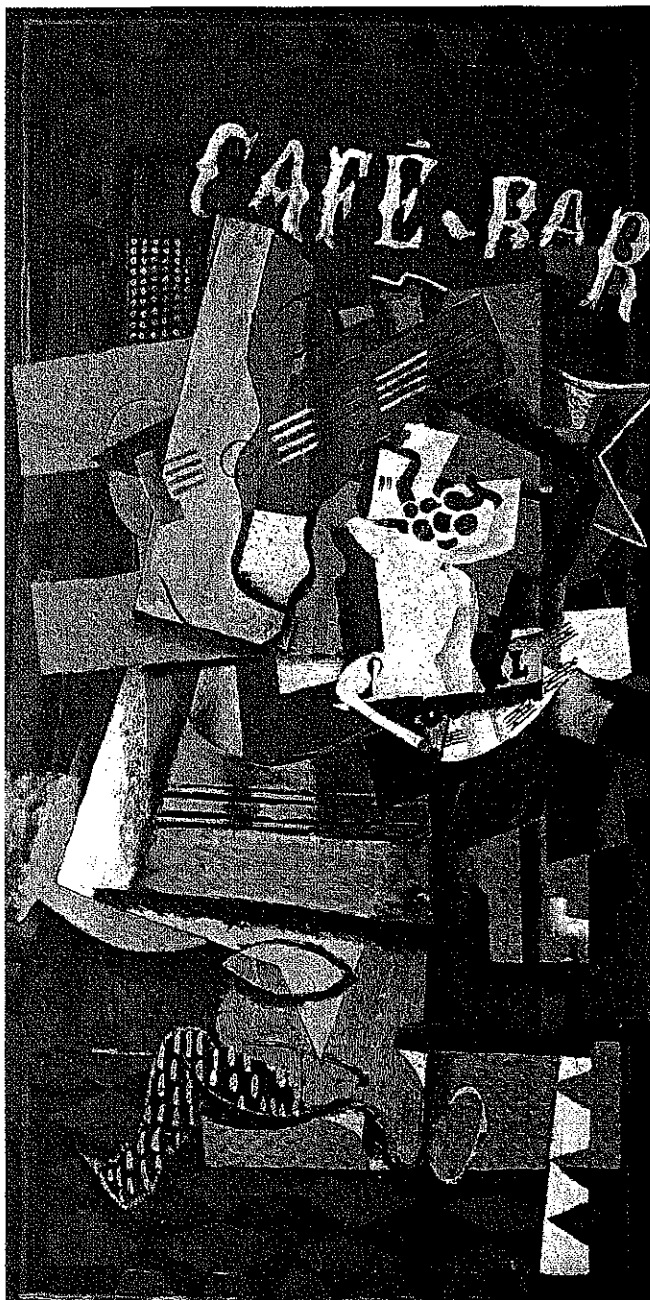
ble by the deeply colored shadow that falls across the red tile floor at the right.

It is interesting to recall the extent to which the subject of the open window, often with a table, still life, or figure before it, had also been a favorite of Matisse (see fig. 14.12). Certain relationships between Matisse's work and Picasso's contemporary paintings of similar subjects indicate that Picasso may have been looking at his colleague and great rival's work.

In some Cubist still lifes of the mid-twenties, Picasso introduced classical busts as motifs, suggesting the artist's simultaneous exploration of classic idealism and a more expressionist vision. In *Studio with Plaster Head* (fig. 14.27), the Roman bust introduces a quality of mystery analogous to De Chirico's use of classical motifs (see fig. 13.5). While the trappings of classicism are here, the serenity of Picasso's earlier classical paintings has vanished. The work belongs to a tradition of still lifes representing the attributes of the arts (including the prominent architect's square at the right), but the juxtapositions become so jarring as to imbue the composition with tremendous psychological tension. At the back of the still life, fragments of Picasso's small son's toy theater imply that the entire still life is an ancient Roman stage set. The head is almost a caricature, which Picasso manages to twist in space from a strict profile view at the right to a fully frontal one in the deep blue-gray shadow at the left. The broken plaster arm at the left grips a baton so intensely it feels animated. Just before Picasso made this still life, he had completed his large, anguished painting, *Three Dancers* (see fig. 15.39). This work takes us into another stage in Picasso's development (see chapter 15). At this moment the Surrealists were emerging as an organized group, claiming Picasso as one of their own.

Sensuous Analysis: Braque's Later Career

Georges Braque (1882–1963) and Picasso parted company in 1914, never to regain the intimacy of the formative years of Cubism. After his war service and the slow recovery from a serious wound, Braque returned to a changed Paris in the fall of 1917. Picasso was in Italy, and other pioneers of Cubism or Fauvism were widely scattered. However, Juan Gris and Henri Laurens (see chapter 10) were still in Paris, working in a manner that impressed Braque and inspired him in his efforts to find his own way once more. By 1918–19 a new and personal approach to Synthetic Cubism began to be apparent in a series of paintings, of which *Café-Bar* (fig. 14.28) is a document for Braque's style for the next twenty years. The painting is tall and relatively narrow, a shape which Braque had used during his first essays in Cubism (see fig. 10.16) and which he now began to utilize on a more monumental scale. The subject is a still life of guitar, pipe, journal, and miscellaneous objects piled vertically on a small, marble-topped pedestal



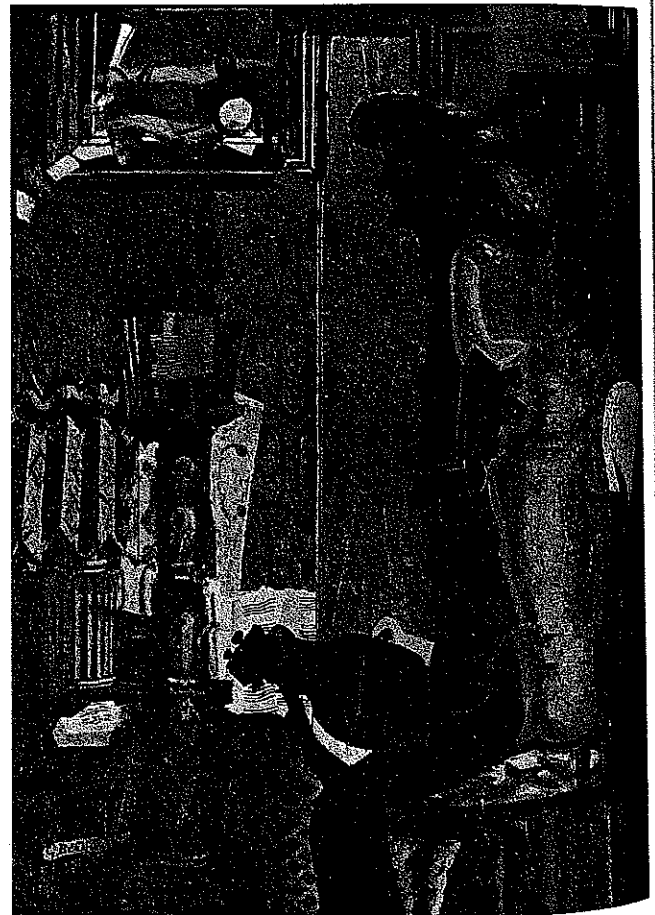
14.28 Georges Braque, *Café-Bar*, 1919. Oil on canvas, 63¼ × 31¾" (160.7 × 81 cm). Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum.

table, or *guéridon*. This table was used many times in subsequent paintings. The suggested elements of the environment are held together by a pattern of horizontal green rectangles patterned with orange-yellow dots, placed like an architectural framework parallel to the picture plane. Compared with Braque's prewar Cubist paintings, *Café-Bar* has more sense of illusionistic depth and actual environment. Also, although the colors are rich, and Braque's feeling for texture is more than ever apparent, the total effect recalls, more than Picasso's, the subdued, nearly monochrome tonalities that both artists worked with during their early collaboration (see figs. 10.19, 10.20). This is perhaps the key to the difference between their work in the years after their collaboration. Whereas the approach of Picasso was experimental and varied, that of Braque was

conservative and intensive, continuing the first lessons of Cubism. Even when he made his most radical departures into his own form of classical figure painting during the twenties, the color remained predominantly the grays, greens, browns, and ochers of Analytic Cubism. The principal characteristic of Braque's style emerging about 1919 was that of a textural sensuousness in which the angular geometry of earlier Cubism began to diffuse into an overall fluid pattern of organic shapes.

This style manifested itself in the early twenties in figure paintings in which the artist seems to have deserted Cubism as completely as Picasso did in his classical figure paintings. The difference again lay in the painterliness of Braque's oils and drawings, as compared with Picasso's Ingres-like contour drawings and the sculptural massiveness of his classical paintings. In Braque's paintings and figure drawings of the twenties, the artist effected his personal escape from the rigidity of his earlier Cubism and prepared the way for his enriched approach to Cubist design of the later twenties and thirties.

The most dramatic variation on his steady, introspective progress occurred in the early thirties when, under the influence of Greek vase painting, Braque created a series of line drawings and engravings with continuous contours. This flat, linear style also penetrated to his newly austere



14.29 Georges Braque, *Woman with a Mandolin*, 1937. Oil on canvas, 51¼ × 38¾" (130.2 × 97.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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14.30 Georges Braque,
Vase, Palette, and Skull,
1939. Oil and sand on
canvas, 36 × 36"
(91.4 × 91.4 cm).
Kreeger Museum,
Washington, D.C.

paintings of the period: scenes of artist and model or simply figures in the studio. These works exhibit some of the most varied effects of Braque's entire career. The dominant motif of *Woman with a Mandolin* (fig. 14.29) is a tall, dark silhouette of a woman seated before a music stand. Behind her, a profusion of patterns on the wall recalls the wallpaper patterns of Braque's earlier *papiers collés*. Because the woman's profile, very similar to ones in related compositions, is painted a deep black-brown, she becomes a shadow, less material than the other richly textured elements in the room. She plays the role of silent muse in this monumental painting, which represents Braque's meditation on art and music. It was probably inspired by Corot's treatment of the same subject, painted around 1860, which shows a young woman before an easel, holding a mandolin.

During the years of World War II Braque made several still life variations on the *vanitas* theme, in which a skull traditionally symbolizes the transitory nature of existence (fig. 14.30). It is a subject that Cézanne, Braque's great mentor, had frequently represented. Here Braque inserts the skull into the context of the studio. In fact, it seems to rest on his easel, implying that we are looking at a painted "illusion" rather than a "real" object. Braque has mixed sand with his oil medium, a practice he frequently applied to endow his surfaces with an almost sculptural quality. Braque continued to explore the theme of the studio in his paintings after World War II, but, inspired by Van Gogh, he also turned to landscape, a genre he had explored only intermittently since his early Cubist days.

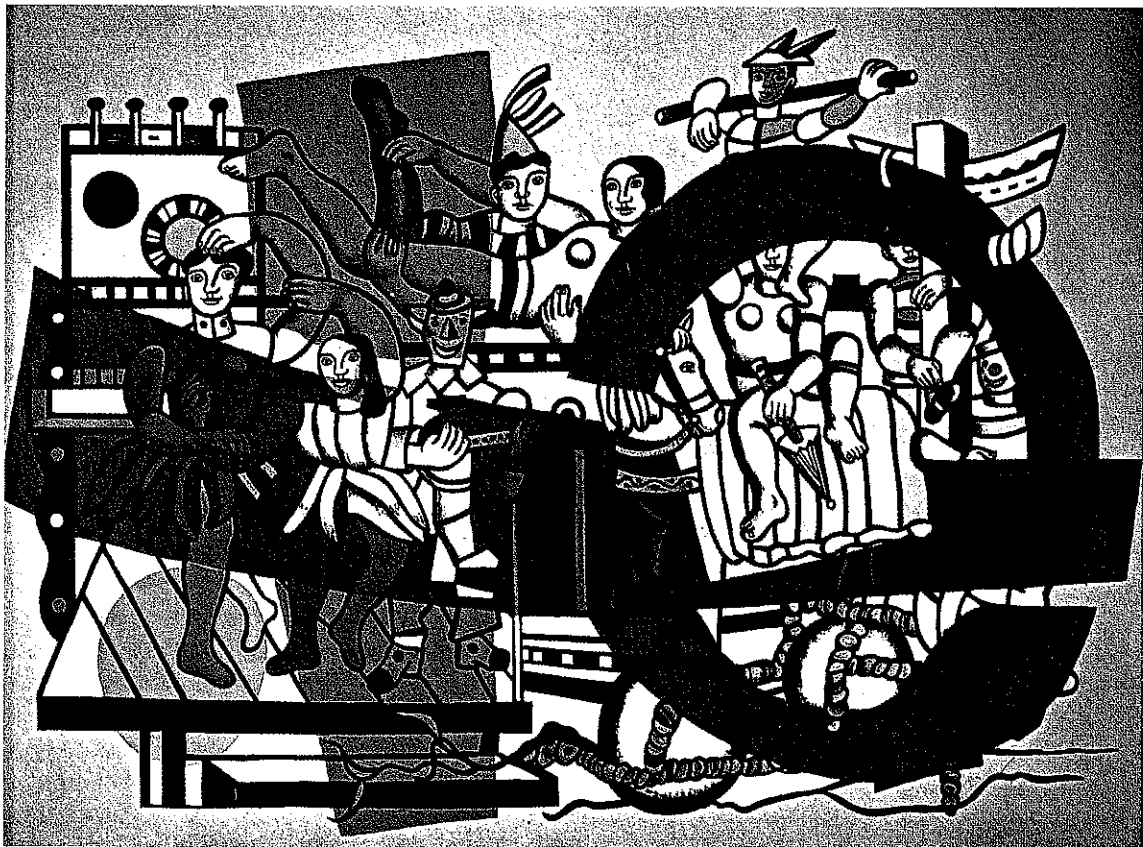
Austerity and Elegance: Léger, Ozenfant, and Le Corbusier

In his paintings of the twenties and thirties, Fernand Léger (1881–1955) took part in the so-called "call to order" that characterized much French art after World War I, in which he had served. One of his major figure compositions from the postwar period is *Three Women (Le Grand Déjeuner)* (fig. 14.31). The depersonalized figures, who stare fixedly and uniformly at the spectator, are machinelike volumes modeled out from the rigidly rectangular background. Léger labored over *Three Women*, the largest of three very similar versions of the same composition, and even repainted the figure at the right, who was originally the same marblelike gray color of her companions. He regarded the subject as timeless and eternal and said that his artistic sources were David, Ingres, Renoir, and Seurat. Although *Three Women* reflects Léger's engagement with classicism, it is also resolutely modern. In the abstract, rectilinear forms of the background one detects an awareness of the contemporary paintings of Mondrian, who was then living in Paris (see fig. 17.21). With its elements of austere, Art Deco elegance, Léger's art of this period also had much in common with the twenties Purism (see below) of Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier (see figs. 14.33, 14.34). Léger remained very close to these artists after their initial meeting in 1920.

During the last twenty years of his life, Léger revisited a few basic themes through which he sought to sum up his experiences in the exploration of humanity and its place



14.31 Fernand Léger, *Three Women (Le Grand Déjeuner)*, 1921. Oil on canvas, 6'½" × 8'3" (1.8 × 2.5 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

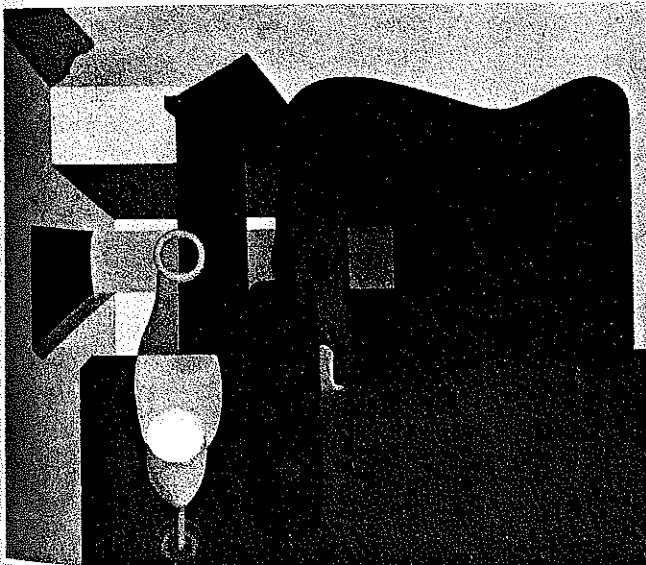


14.32 Fernand Léger, *The Great Parade*, 1954. Oil on canvas, 9' × 13'1" (2.7 × 4 m). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

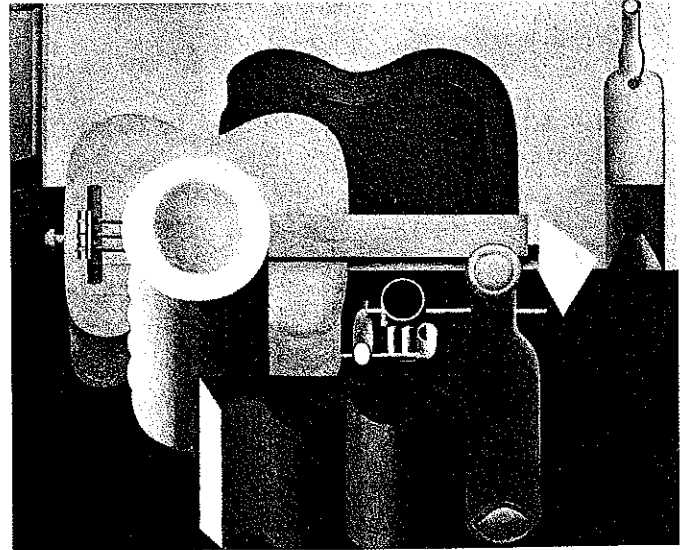
in the contemporary industrial world. It was a social as well as a visual investigation of his world as an artist, a final and culminating assessment of his plastic means for presenting it. In *The Great Parade* of 1954 (fig. 14.32), Léger brought to culmination a series in which figure and environment are realistically drawn in heavy black outline on a white ground, over which float free shapes of transparent red, blue, orange, yellow, and green. This huge work also reflects a lifelong obsession with circus themes, as well as an interest in creating a modern mural art. Léger worked on the large canvas for two years. "In the first version," he recalled, "the color exactly fitted the forms. In the definitive version one can see what force, what vitality is achieved by using color on its own." Despite his increased interest in illustrative subject and social observation, these late works are remarkably consistent with Léger's early Cubist paintings based on machine forms (see fig. 10.41). The artist was one of a few who never really deserted Cubism but demonstrated, in every phase of his prolific output, its potential for continually fresh and varied expression.

The variant on Cubism called Purism was developed around 1918 by the architect and painter Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, who in 1920 began to use the pseudonym **Le Corbusier** (1887–1965), and the painter **Amédée Ozenfant** (1886–1966). Unlike Picasso and Braque, who were not theoretically inclined, many later Cubist-inspired

artists were prone to theorizing, and they published their ideas in journals and manifestos. In their 1918 manifesto entitled *After Cubism*, Ozenfant and Jeanneret attacked the then current state of Cubism as having degenerated into a form of elaborate decoration. In their painting they sought a simple, architectural structure and the elimination of decorative ornateness as well as illustrative or fantastic subjects. To them the machine became the perfect symbol for the kind of pure, functional painting they hoped to achieve—just as, in his early, minimal architecture, Le Corbusier thought of a house first as a machine for living. Purist principles are illustrated in two still-life paintings by Ozenfant (fig. 14.33) and Le Corbusier (fig. 14.34). Executed in 1920, the year Purism that reached its maturity, both feature frontally arranged objects, with colors subdued and shapes modeled in an illusion of projecting volumes. Symmetrical curves move across the rectangular grid with the antiseptic purity of a well-tended, brand-new machine. Le Corbusier continued to paint throughout his life, but his theories gained significant expression in the great architecture he produced (see chapter 16). Ozenfant had enunciated his ideas of Purism in *L'Élan*, a magazine published from 1915 to 1917, before he met Le Corbusier, and in *L'Esprit nouveau*, published with Le Corbusier from 1920 to 1925. Ozenfant, who eventually settled in the United States, later turned to teaching and mural painting.



14.33 Amédée Ozenfant, *Guitar and Bottles*, 1920. Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (81 × 99.7 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.



14.34 Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret), *Still Life*, 1920. Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (81 × 99.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

