

Julio GONZALEZ (Barcelona 1876 - Arceuil 1942)

Visage cubiste

Coloured wax crayons, India ink and pencil on paper trimmed to shape and laid down onto another sheet.
Signed with initials and dated JG / 1936 at the lower left.
Inscribed visage étroit nez (the last two words overwritten Cubiste) on the verso of the backing sheet.
Further inscribed F and Raisonné on the reverse of the backing sheet.
211 x 79 mm. (8 3/8 x 3 18 in.) [sheet, at greatest dimensions]
280 x 188 mm. (11 x 7 3/8 in.) [backing sheet]

This drawing may be grouped with a large number of studies of heads with faceted, cubistic forms, produced by González between 1936 and 19373, many of which seem to be related to sculpted heads carved in stone between about 1932 and 1936. Common to most of these drawings is a use of crayons or watercolour in three colours, according to a simple formula adopted by the artist, with yellow for light areas, green for dark or shaded zones and red for intermediate areas. Examples of drawings of this type are in the collections of Tate Modern in London, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris, the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul de Vence and the Berardo Collection Museum in Belem, Portugal.

The present sheet once belonged to the notable French collector Gildas Fardel (1906-1997), who assembled a significant group of 20th century abstract works. In 1958 he gifted a part of his collection to the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nantes, followed by further donations to the same museum in 1969, 1972 and 1989. Fardel owned several drawings and sculptures by Julio González, including a 1941 self-portrait drawing now in Nantes, as well as some works by the artist's daughter Roberta. The present sheet, however, remained in Fardel's collection until his death.

Provenance:

Possibly the artist's daughter, Roberta González, L'Hay–les-Roses
Gildas Fardel, Paris
His posthumous sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 1 December 1999, lot 92
Galerie Fabien Boulakia, Paris
Acquired in 2001 by the Triton Collection Foundation, The Netherlands.

Literature:

Josette Gibert, Julio González dessins: Projets pour sculptures, figures, Paris, 1975, illustrated p.71;
Sjraar van Heugten, Avant-gardes 1870 to the present: The Collection of the Triton Foundation, Brussels, 2012, illustrated p.233.

Artist description:

Julio González is regarded, alongside Constantin Brancusi, Alberto Giacometti and Pablo Picasso, as one of the most innovative and original sculptors of the 20th century. Despite his professional training as a metalworker, before 1928 González was working mainly as a painter. He also drew throughout his career, and his early drawings – such as the present sheet, which may be dated to around 1906 – display the artist's origins in the turn of the century style of the School of Barcelona, despite the fact that he had been living in Paris since 1900. The influence of French painting of the same period is also readily evident. As Tomàs Llorens has noted of the first few years of the 20th century, when Picasso and González worked closely together in Paris, 'Gauguin and the style of a group of his followers, Synthetism, left a visible mark on the work which Picasso and González did during that period, especially in the case of Picasso, who was going through what he later called his "Blue Period". The works by González that we can date to those years – numerous drawings devoted to subjects such as mother and child, landscape and daily life, and a few oil paintings – sometimes show a clear resemblance to Picasso's "Blue" style, though they are graver in style and more reminiscent of Puvis de Chavannes than of the painter from Málaga.' González's friendship with Picasso ended abruptly in 1908, for reasons that are not quite clear, and was not reestablished until the 1920's, when Picasso asked for González's help and advice in working in metal sculpture.