

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Pablo PICASSO (Malaga 1881 - Mougins 1973)

Study for Les Demoiselles d'Avignon: A Nude Woman Standing with Arms Raised Above her Head (Jeune femme debout, de face, les bras levés)

Charcoal.

Signed *Picasso* in pencil at the upper right.

Further signed *Picasso* and numbered 7 in pencil on the verso.

Inscribed and dated 7120 / *Picasso* / 1906 in pencil on the verso.

Inscribed with mountmaker's notes in pencil on the verso.

319 x 246 mm. (12 1/2 x 9 3/4 in.)

Unknown to Christian Zervos when he published his monumental catalogue raisonné of Picasso's work, this drawing is closely related to, and is a preliminary study for, the central figure in artist's seminal painting *Les Femmes d'Alger*, painted in the first half of 1907 and today in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The gestation of this important painting occupied Picasso over a period of six or seven months going back to 1906, with the artist filling several sketchbooks with around two hundred composition and figure studies, alongside a further six hundred or so related drawings. As Alfred Barr has noted, '*The resolution and culmination of Picasso's labors of 1906 is concentrated in one extraordinary picture, Les Femmes d'Alger, which was painted for the most part in the spring of 1907 after months of development and revision... Each of the five figures in the final composition was the subject of considerable study, beginning in several cases in 1906 and continuing in "postscripts" long after the painting was finished... Les Femmes d'Alger is a transitional picture, a laboratory, or, better, a battlefield of trial and experiment; but it is also a work of formidable, dynamic power unsurpassed in*

As Barr has further noted of *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 'To judge from his work it was at Gósol in the summer of 1906 that Picasso first began to plan a large composition of nudes.' Picasso and his mistress Fernande Olivier spent several weeks in the spring and summer of 1906 in the remote mountain village of Gósol, in the Spanish Pyrenees. During his stay in this small village of some nine hundred inhabitants, Picasso produced a substantial and varied body of work. As John Richardson has written, 'During the ten weeks or so he spent in Gósol, he achieved as much as he had in the previous six months, if not more: at least seven large paintings...a dozen or so medium-sized ones, plus countless drawings, watercolors, gouaches and carvings. He also filled two sketchbooks.' Of the works of this period, Gary Tinterow has written that, 'In the remote Catalan village of Gosol, in the Pyrenees, Picasso achieved an almost schematic rendering of form by stripping his images of both narrative content and ornament. As always he concentrated on the human figure, but in Gosol the majority of paintings and drawings were of nudes – adolescent boys, young children, and his lover Fernande – unselfconscious in their nudity and closely related to their elemental settings.'

It was while he was in Gósol in 1906 that Picasso produced a handful of drawings and paintings of nude male and female figures standing with their arms and hands above their heads. He continued to develop this motif on his return to Paris that year, in works such as the present sheet. The frontal pose of a standing female nude with her hands above her head found in a significant number of important drawings by Picasso of this period.

The art dealer, auctioneer, publisher and collector Eberhard W. Kornfeld (1923-2023) played an important role in the scholarly appreciation of Picasso's graphic work. From 1996 onwards his publishing house issued Brigitte Baer's revised catalogue raisonné of Picasso's prints, and Kornfeld himself assembled an exceptional collection of prints and drawings by the artist. On the occasion of Picasso's 90th birthday Kornfeld's gallery in Bern hosted an exhibition of the artist's graphic work, which was also well represented in exhibitions of Kornfeld's own collection held in Basel, Winterthur, Fribourg and Vienna between 1975 and 2009.

A photo-certificate from Maya Widmaier Picasso, dated 17 January 1995, accompanies the present sheet.

Exhibitions

Amberg, Amberger Congress Centrum and Schwäbisch Hall, Bausparkasse, *Picasso: Zeichner des Menschen*, 1997, no.18; Bern, Kunstmuseum, *Picasso und die Schweiz: Meisterwerke aus Schweizer Sammlungen*, 2001, no.32; Madrid, Fundación Juan March, *Espíritu de modernidad. de Goya a Giacometti: Obra sobre papel de la colección Kornfeld*, 2003, no.33; Tübingen, Kunsthalle, *Bordell und Boudoir: Schauplätze der Moderne*, 2005, no.129; Vienna, Albertina, *Wege der Moderne: Aus der Sammlung Eberhard W. Kornfeld*, 2008-2009, no.29.

Literature:

Roland Doschka, *Picasso: Zeichner des Menschen*, exhibition catalogue, Amberg and Schwäbisch Hall, 1997, pp.10-11, pl.18; Marc Fehlmann and Toni Stoos, ed., *Picasso und die Schweiz*, exhibition catalogue, Bern, 2001, pl.32; Madrid, Fundación Juan March, *Espíritu de modernidad. de Goya a Giacometti: Obra sobre papel de la colección Kornfeld*, exhibition catalogue, 2003, illustrated p.65, no.33; Götz Adriani, *Bordell und Boudoir: Schauplätze der Moderne*, exhibition catalogue, Tübingen,

2005, no.129, illustrated p.228; *The Picasso Project. Picasso's Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings and Sculpture: A Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue 1885-1973. The African Period – 1907-1909*, San Francisco, 2014, p.28, no.1907-102.

Artist description:

‘I do not know if I am a great painter, but I am a great draughtsman.’ (Picasso to Max Jacob).