



TITLE: *Pour la méditation II (For Meditation)*
preparatory etching for the book *Pensées (Thoughts)*

ARTIST: Albert Gleizes

DATE: c. 1949-1950

SIZE: framed: 15 5/8 x 12 5/8; image: 9 3/4 x 6 3/4 in.

MEDIUM: etching

ACQUISITION #: 2000.5.83

Additional works in the collection by the artist? Yes ___ No X

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Also a great theorist and writer, Albert Gleizes (1881-1953) was a French artist of the Cubist Movement. Though we usually associate Cubism with its great masters, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris (called the "Montmartre Cubists" because they lived in that section of Paris), there also existed a small parallel group of five French artists which included Gleizes (known as the "Salon Cubists"). When these artists first exhibited their abstract works in 1910, the critic Louis Vauxcelles coined the term *cubisme*, saying the works seemed to be composed of many tiny cubes.

Gleizes grew up in a suburb of Paris and at age 19 began working for his father's interior design and fabric company. The beginning of his career was marked by an Impressionist style which soon developed into the even more avant-garde and abstract Cubism, to which he remained faithful for most of his life. Gleizes enjoyed collaboration and had a fondness for social as well as formalistic art. Often, he joined or established various artist communes in France. He was publicly active as an artist, exhibited in many of the major avant-garde shows, and co-wrote *Du Cubisme* (1912) with Jean Metzinger. Toward the end of his life, Gleizes became increasingly religious and many of his works became overtly spiritual.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"The question Cubism posed, more vigorously and more visibly than the other movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century was, precisely: is it possible to realize a painting without conventional support of a figurative reproduction—a painting which would be based on natural laws, not giving itself up to fantasy and anarchy?"

—letter to fellow Cubist artist Jacques Villon

RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Cubism: an artistic avant-garde movement that lasted roughly from 1907 into the 1920s. Cubist artwork is characterized by a flat and fractured picture plane, simultaneous viewpoints, the destruction and merging of multiple forms, and often a lack of color.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

This etching is based on a preparatory sketch for one of the seventy-two illustrations made in 1949-1950 for a book by the renowned 17th century philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal. *Pensées sur l'homme et dieu (Thoughts about Man and God)* is the title given posthumously to the fragments left uncompleted at Pascal's death, which he intended as a defense of the Christian religion. The book was published in Paris in an edition of 200 in 1961, and is comprised of 207 pages of Pascal's text and poetry alongside Gleizes' illustrations. The project was significant to Gleizes as he converted to Roman Catholicism later in life.

MEDIA DESCRIPTION

The **etching** process was first discovered in the 16th century. First, the artist applies to a metal plate a waxy, acid-resistant ground, through which he draws to expose the metal. The plate is then submerged in acid, which eats into the exposed lines, creating an incision. The artist then removes the ground with a solvent. He puts ink on the plate, making sure to get it inside the incised lines, and then wipes the ink off the surface. The plate is placed face up on the bed of an etching press. A sheet of dampened paper is laid on top, padded with a blanket, and run through the press. Pressure forces the paper into the etched lines to pick up the ink.

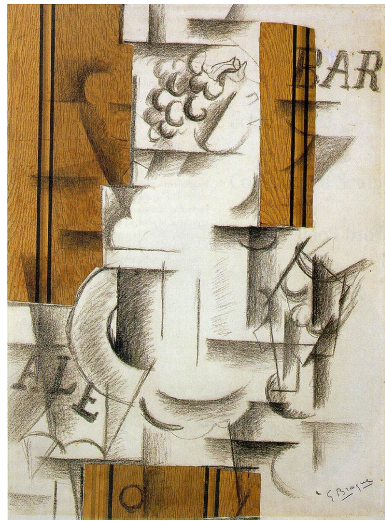
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- Brooke, Peter. *Albert Gleizes: For and Against the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Clarke, Desmond. "Blaise Pascal." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (July 6, 2010), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pascal/>.
- Robbins, Daniel. "Gleizes, Albert." *Grove Art Online* (July 6, 2010), http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T032851?q=albert+gleizes&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit.
- "What Is a Print?" *The Museum of Modern Art* (July 6, 2010), <http://www.moma.org/interactives/projects/2001/whatisaprint/print.html>.

Completed Summer 2010, Lauren Higbee

THE "OTHER" CUBISM

ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: all grades



Georges Braque, *Fruitdish and Glass* (1912), papier collé, charcoal on paper.

Session Activity: Gleizes and the “Salon” Cubists never accepted papier collé, or collage, as a legitimate form of art as did Picasso and Braque of the “Montmartre” Cubists. Here students will try their hands at the Montmartre method of collage using various materials to create a Cubist still life.

Objectives:

1. The student will be able to conceptualize a coherent work of art with a discernible subject out of many disparate parts.
2. The student will understand the way in which the Cubists used multiple perspectives in order to give the impression of the depth and weight of an object.

Materials: (each material is optional) paper, glue, pencil, pen, newspaper, construction paper, wallpaper, magazine pages, fabric. A still life set up by the teacher can include things such as a bottle, fruit, a newspaper, a book, a guitar or other stringed instrument, etc. Since Cubists often utilized subject matter from their environments, encourage students to provide objects from their lives.

Activity Procedures: First, show students a few Cubist works. Then divide them into two groups, Salon and Montmartre Cubists. All will sit in a circle around the still life, but each group will use a different method. *1st/Montmartre method:* students will use 4 different sheets of paper. On the first sheet, they will draw 1 perspective of the still life for 5 to 10 minutes, then everyone will get up and move to a new seat a

quarter of the way around the circle and begin drawing on a new sheet of paper. This will be repeated 3 times so everyone has 4 views. After students finish drawing, they will cut and paste the various views of the still life with pieces of newspaper, fabric, and other scraps (2-dimensional) to create a Cubist collage. *2nd/Salon method:* Same process, but students will draw all four views intersected or layered on one sheet and will not collage, but paint (or leave it as a drawing). Discuss the characteristics, pros, and cons of each method.

Vocabulary: **Papier collé:** another French expression meaning collage. Collage and *collé* both come from the verb *coller*, meaning to glue or paste. *Papier* means paper and *collé* is the past tense meaning glued or pasted. A work of art composed of various pieces of media glued together.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: K-5

Strand A: Skills and Techniques

Standard: uses and organizes two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, techniques, tools, and processes to produce works of art that are derived from personal experience, observation, or imagination.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 6–12

Strand C: Cultural and Historical Connections

Standard: understands how social, cultural, ecological, economic, religious, and political conditions influence the function, meaning, and execution of works of art.

IT TAKES TWO

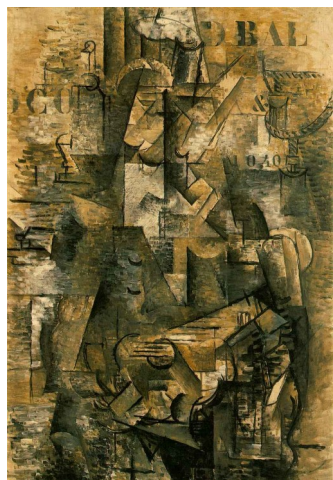
ART HISTORY LESSON PLAN: 9-12

Session Activity & Objectives: In this activity, students will discuss the differences between the two groups of Cubists, the so-called Montmartre and Salon Cubists. They will focus on issues of color, line, structure, volume, and the basic aims and conditions of both groups.

1. The student will understand the way in which the aims of both groups of Cubists differ.
2. The student will actively contribute to a conversation about art history, bringing in his/her own knowledge of the subject, as well as using art historical terms correctly and effectively.

Discussion:

- In the Cinquecento (sixteenth century) in Italy, there existed a debate between artists of Florence and Venice as to what was the most important aspect of a painting: the underlying drawing or the vibrant use of color. The Florentine artists ascribed to the *disegno* (drawing) camp while the Venetians argued for *colorito* (coloring and light).
- A similar issue existed among the Cubists—Picasso and Braque swore off the emotions associated with color for the sake of concentrating on the manipulation of their subjects. The Salon Cubists instead held fast to color as a useful tool of visual communication and also sought to create structure in their works, rather than to break them apart like puzzles. While the Montmartre Cubists were concerned mostly with experimentation, Gleizes sought to rediscover order and stability in his art against the backdrop of the uncertainty of modern concerns such as industrialization and the destruction brought about by World War I.



Braque, *The Portuguese* (1911), oil on canvas.

Activity: The teacher will find images (online) of the following artworks and then use them as teaching aides for a discussion, first of the political and historical issues surrounding the birth of Cubism in Paris in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Discussion can focus on industrialization, immigration, urbanization, the unifications of Italy and Germany, World War I, etc. Second, students will look at the artworks and compare and contrast them to pick out specific formal differences between the two groups and the reasons why such differences might exist.

Works: Picasso, *Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler* (1910). Kahnweiler was a Jew and was eventually forced to give up his Paris gallery and flee to Germany during WWI. Robert de la Fresnaye, *Conquest of the Air* (1913). Fernand Léger, *The City* (1919). Georges Braque, *Man with a Guitar* (1911-12). Robert Delaunay, any version of the Eiffel Tower between 1909 and 1914. Robert Delaunay, *Carousel with Pigs* (1922). Juan Gris, *Still Life with Checked Tablecloth* (1915). Braque's *Le Portugais* at left and Gleizes' *Woman with Animals* above.



Gleizes, *Woman with Animals, Madame Raymond Duchamp-Villon* (1914), oil on canvas.