



PABLO PICASSO

(Málaga 1881–1973 Mougins)

Portrait de Françoise aux Cheveux flous. 1947.

Aquatint. 1/50. Signed in pencil in lower right: Picasso, also mirror-dated in the plate lower right: 24 juin 47. Image 61.3 x 45.3 cm on wove paper by Arches (with the watermark) 66.5 x 50.5 cm.

Catalogue raisonné: - Bloch, no. 457. - Baer, no. 791 Bb1. Picasso, the graphic magician. Pablo Picasso was the artist of the century, the graphic magician (see: Betsy G. Fryberger: Picasso: Graphic Magician, Stanford / New York 1999), who throughout his life's work was intensively involved with the specific possibilities of printing techniques and created more

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than 2000 prints, using the most diverse processes. Each time he mastered a new technique, he used it to re-develop his favourite themes. From the woodcut and copper engraving, to lithography, etching and linocut, he employed all printing methods with an astonishing ease and great mastery; he developed complex combinations of media, and experimented with multi-coloured prints. Amongst his main themes of bullfighting, circus scenes and paraphrases of the old masters, portraits of his family were ever-present. Françoise Gilot (born 1921) was the woman at Picasso's side for ten years. He used Françoise's portrait as a template for a large number of experiments, both in painting and printing, employing the most diverse facets and styles. The aquatint etching from 1947 offered here at auction comes from his mature printing work in which he again turned to etching. Françoise was herself a painter and met Pablo Picasso in 1943 at her own exhibition. The then 22-year-old Françoise and the painter, who was 40 years her senior, became a couple. She lived with him both in Paris and in the South of France. There were two children from the relationship, Claude and Paloma. Tradition has it that Françoise was the only person in the life of the master who could astonish him. She is regarded as the most independent and most intelligent of Picasso's lovers. Amongst other things, Françoise was the first woman who was not abandoned by Picasso, but who ended the relationship herself. Many years after the separation, she published two books on Picasso: "My life with Picasso" (1964) and "Matisse and Picasso. A friendship in art" (1990). Today, at the age of 97, Françoise Gilot lives and works in New York. With his characteristic formal language, the artist has succeeded in creating a significant portrait of his then muse, who in his pictures is always shown from the front or in profile. Her facial features as depicted, with her long narrow nose, the accentuated arc of the right eyebrow, the large almond shaped eyes, the beautiful curved lips, the long neck, the beauty spot on her chin, as well as the full and lavish hair, form the basic framework of all portraits of Françoise. This aquatint from 1947 includes all these features. Delicate and self-confident, Françoise looks at the viewer. Thanks to the technique of the aquatint, the etched lines are achieved with half tones and delicate shading. The execution of this

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work is very characteristic of Picasso's etching style: it is entirely influenced by the phenomenon of drawing, which is not necessarily given to this medium. He "draws" his etchings often sketchily, accentuated by an element of the unfinished. Everything unfolds wonderfully: the delicate strokes of the aquatint, the soft expression of the sitter and the clear traces of the whole composition – a wonderful work by Pablo Picasso.

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