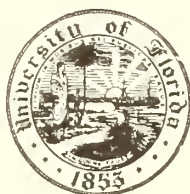



BRAQUE

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Braque



Genl Richardson
S. B. [unclear]
1955

G. Brayne

TEXT BY
JOHN RICHARDSON
61-967

34 COLOUR PLATES

43 BLACK AND WHITE



NEW YORK GRAPHIC SOCIETY

GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT

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SO SUBTLE AND RETICENT AN ARTIST IS BRAQUE THAT HIS GREAT POWERS are apt to escape recognition; even his admirers tend to see him as "an exquisite manipulator of paint", or "a latter day Chardin". These views contain a particle of truth, but they leave out of account the fact that Braque is one of the last—if not *the* last—of a heroic line of French masters who, in the past hundred years, have revolutionized one by one every aspect of painting. Therein lies his enormous importance for the art of today—and tomorrow. Let us, therefore, try to see Braque's achievements in a historical context.

To appreciate what a revolutionary artist has achieved, we must start by seeing what it was he reacted or rebelled against. Take Courbet, the first of the 19th century iconoclasts: we do not properly appreciate Courbet's greatness unless we realize that he overthrew the convention that morally elevating subjects, taken from history, legend or religion, were those most worthy of an artist's attention. Courbet thus established the artist's right to paint any subject no matter how humble and ordinary. Manet, on the other hand, was the first artist publicly to react against the academic cult of "finish" and "detail", which he sacrificed to a general impression or momentary revelation: hence the emergence of the sketch as an end in itself. Manet also showed how absurd was the time-honoured academic practice of painting in a gamut of intermediary tones keyed to a *nuance dominante* (a single dominant colour) and thereby made it possible for the Impressionists, in their turn, to abandon *chiaroscuro* and revolutionize the painting of light. Gauguin attacked orthodoxy at yet another point: he challenged the supremacy of the classical tradition and established a new and no less valid set of aesthetic values deriving in part from primitive and oriental art. Cézanne, by contrast, was a counter-revolutionary in that he put back into painting the volumes which the Impressionists had been at pains to banish from it, and established a new relationship between form and colour. In the same way, Seurat, Van Gogh and Matisse—to name only the most prominent innovators—managed after titanic struggles to explode old fallacies, particularly with regard to colour and technique, and develop new and more expressive means of pictorial notation. But what did Braque rebel against?

Braque himself would answer nothing, for he chooses to believe that he is no rebel; indeed, he once claimed that none of his actions had ever been deliberate, let alone revolutionary. Notwithstanding these words, I shall persist in regarding Braque as a rebel, for he has always been an active enemy of conventions in art as well as in life; and, involuntarily or not, he has been responsible—more than anyone else of our century except Picasso—for dismantling what remained

of classical and Renaissance traditions and substituting a new range of artistic concepts in their place. I have not the space in which to do justice to all Braque's discoveries and innovations. However, I should like to discuss three of his most revolutionary achievements—ones that coincide roughly with the three main periods of his work. First, Braque's rejection of geometrical perspective, which resulted in the cubist approach to pictorial recession; second, his refusal to be bound by convention in his handling of artist's materials, which resulted in his exploitation of unorthodox paint-surfaces and a new kind of tactile values; and, third, his rejection, in recent years, of the accepted views of reality, which has resulted in his "metamorphic" view of appearances and an ambivalent artistic vision which is neither figurative nor non-figurative but something between the two.

* * * *

Why did Braque reject perspective? For the true reason we must go back into the distant past. Ever since Brunelleschi had formulated certain principles of geometrical perspective at the beginning of the 15th century, painters had been obsessed with the problem of recession not only in landscape but in interior scenes and even still-lives. Claude, for instance, was always at great pains to lead the eye gradually back into depth from plane to plane; he would place his figures, animals and clumps of trees strategically in the foreground, then further back a bridge or temple, then more trees and finally a river winding round mountains and over waterfalls before disappearing into an infinite blue remoteness. His deep understanding and observation of nature allied to a superlative artistic sensibility enabled Claude to transcend the artificiality of this so-called "ideal" approach to landscape. But in later, lesser hands Claude's picturesque formulae degenerated into a series of theatrical tricks—*repoussoirs*, an enfilade of side-screens and wings of rockery and stagey bosage—all devices to give the illusion of an unending spatial continuum. "Make your Landskip to *shoot away*," wrote William Salmon, the 18th century author of an English do-it-yourself book on painting, "and make one part lower than the other, that the landscape may appear to be taken from the top of a hill." No wonder so many picturesque landscapes, whether by Zucarelli, Vernet or Richard Wilson, look about as real as peep-show *décors*, as witness those eternal plunging views taken from a high terrace of a never-never land which is neither Italy, France nor England. By the end of the 18th century, no European artist would have dreamed of disagreeing with Thomas Campbell's lines:

'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view
And robes the mountain in its azure hue.'

And even the perceptive Hazlitt wrote an essay on the same questionable theme, entitled *Why distant objects please*.



Fig. 1 - LA JEUNE BRETONNE 1904. Oil on canvas: 55 × 46 cm. (21⁵/₈ × 18 in.)

Monsieur Menachem Rosensaft, Montreux.

In certain last outposts of academic resistance this equation of distance with enchantment still persists. But in France the reaction against it began just over a hundred years ago, when Courbet painted landscapes in which nature is rendered in all its density and earthiness, and not as if it were as flimsy, picturesque and remote as stage scenery. Then came Cézanne who dispensed with most of the traditional aids to recession, especially in his late works which are based on a new kind of colouristic perspective. But Cézanne did not set himself up as a theorist and did not apply his ideas scientifically nor even try to follow them to their logical conclusions. No more is Braque a theorist: on the contrary, he has the greatest mistrust of intellectual formulæ and always relies on instinct and intuition. However, quite early in his career, he perceived the full implications of Cézanne's discoveries; at the same time, he saw "the downright dishonesty" of the tricks by which Renaissance and post-Renaissance artists achieved their illusory effects of distance. By the same token he saw that it was a lie to try to represent three dimensions in terms of two. The two-dimensional surface of canvas or paper must be respected. Here are Braque's own words: *

"The whole Renaissance tradition is repugnant to me. The hard-and-fast rules of perspective which it succeeded in imposing on art were a ghastly mistake, which it has taken four centuries to redress; Cézanne and after him Picasso and myself can take a lot of credit for this. Scientific perspective is nothing but eye-fooling illusionism; it is simply a trick — a bad trick — which makes it impossible for an artist to convey a full experience of space, since it forces the objects in a picture to disappear away from the beholder instead of bringing them within his reach, as painting should. Perspective is too mechanical to allow one to take full possession of things. It has its origins in a single viewpoint and never gets away from it. But the viewpoint is of little importance. It is as if someone spent his life drawing profiles and ended by believing that man was one-eyed. When we arrived at this conclusion, everything changed, you have no idea how much."

To Braque it followed that if the artist were ever "to take full possession of things", he must represent an object from all sides, or at any rate from more than one side, simultaneously; hence the multiple—or "simultaneous", as they were usually known—views that are such a feature of cubist pictures. It likewise followed that the artist must dispense with the vanishing point of traditional perspective and represent space, which is infinite, as if it were finite. And so Braque set about reducing the spatial element to a shallow recession in order to bring everything as near to the surface of the canvas as possible. Again, to bring things within our grasp, Braque started to facet and fragment his forms, because, as he said, "this was a means of getting as close to the objects as painting allowed. Fragmentation allowed me to establish a spatial element as well as a spatial movement."

* *Note:* All quotations are taken either from the various statements that Braque has published, notably his invaluable interview with Dora Vallier (*Cahiers d'Art*, 1954), or from conversations that the author has had with him.

At first, this process must seem puzzling, but if we examine a series of Braque's landscapes painted between 1905 and 1909, it is not difficult to follow. Unlike Picasso, Braque was not a child prodigy, and his early works—such as that reproduced on plate 1—presage neither rebelliousness nor genius. This conventional, sub-impressionist view of Honfleur is, however, interesting because it shows that, even at the start, Braque did not see things pictorially in terms of receding planes.

Braque's conversion from a moderately talented student into an artist of the highest promise happened with startling abruptness. At the Salon d'Automne of 1905 his eyes, he says, were "suddenly opened by the novelty, the physical excitement, the youthfulness, the paroxysmal qualities" of the *fauve* painters—and of Matisse and Derain in particular. Fired by their example, he took to painting pictures in which light was transposed into primary colours, not represented in terms of *le ton juste*, as it had been by the Impressionists. At the same time, the forms in his pictures became flatter and the spatial element more shallow; in the typical *fauve* landscape that we see on plate 2, the foreground trees, far from providing the setting for a distant prospect, blend with and frame a mass of buildings and rocks that prevent the eye from penetrating further. Even in *La Calanque* (plate 3)—a somewhat exceptional work, because it allows us a free view to the horizon—everything is brought near to us and flattened as in a tapestry. Likewise *L'Hôtel Mistral à l'Estaque* (plate 4) which was painted a few months later, during the autumn of 1907, and which is a key-work in Braque's changing attitude to recession and the representation of form. This transitional—partly *fauve*, partly Cézannesque—picture, which was started at L'Estaque on the Mediterranean coast and finished in Paris (after the artist had visited the retrospective exhibition of Cézanne's works at the Salon d'Automne), is still *fauve* in its tonality and mildly expressionistic style. However, it has little or no recession. At the same time, the forms—like Cézanne's forms—are more clearly defined, emphatic, angular and closer to the surface of the canvas than those in previous works. Here we have the earliest premonitions of cubism—the style that was to find its first full expression in landscapes of the following year (e.g. plate 8)—and the proof that, in the space of only two years, Braque had become a modern painter, one of the two or three most inventive of his generation.

The speed with which Braque effected his evolution from fauvism to cubism is immediately apparent if we compare plates 2 (summer, 1906) and 8 (summer, 1908) which depict almost identical views of L'Estaque. In plate 2 Braque is mainly concerned with rendering the brilliance of southern light and creating a decorative schema; he dispenses with recession and accepts the lack of a spatial element in his picture. In plate 8, on the other hand, Braque has managed, despite a comparable lack of recession, to surround his very solid looking forms with an almost tangible expanse of space—a conjuring trick which he could not have brought off without Cézanne's

help. The muted ochres and viridians—a far cry from the primary colours of plate II—are Cézannesque; so is the articulation of the planes and the way they are faceted and tonally contrasted in order to conjure up space and volume. But Braque has gone much further than Cézanne and carried to its conclusion the famous dictum of the Master of Aix (published for the first time the previous autumn): “Treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere and the cone.” In doing so, he has imposed his own vision on the landscape instead of allowing the landscape to impose itself on him. Moreover, by virtually excluding the sky—what little we can see is painted the same ochre as the landscape—and by faceting his forms and tilting them at various angles to the surface of the canvas, Braque has managed to bring everything within our grasp and to confine the pictorial space in such a way that we are made to feel it as a tangible, measurable element. When this and other similar views of L’Estaque were submitted to the Jury of the Salon d’Automne in 1908, they were all rejected, Matisse remarking that they were made of “little cubes”. And when the reactionary critic, Vauxcelles, reiterated this quip in print, the useful but misleading term, ‘cubism’, originated. Thus Braque’s L’Estaque pictures of 1908 are land-marks in the history of modern art. All the same, we must never forget that, between 1909 and 1914, cubism—which can be summarized as a conceptual, as opposed to perceptual, means of representing form and space and recreating the reality of things—was a joint venture on the part of Braque and Picasso. “It was as if we were two mountaineers roped together” was Braque’s comment many years later.

The last landscape (plate 7) which I have chosen in order to show Braque’s progressive rejection of conventional perspective and recession was painted a year later than *Les Arbres à L’Estaque*—that is to say in 1909—and is one of a series of eight depicting the picturesque Seine-side village of La Roche-Guyon with the castle of the La Rochefoucaulds perched above it. What a long way we have come from the plunging views of the picturesque tradition! What a long way from Cézanne, though the latter’s influence remains ever present in Braque’s work, even if less and less perceptible! And what a long way from Braque’s own works of two—let alone four—years before! Here the sky is completely excluded and even the top-most buildings are painted as if within our reach. Plate 7 is the first and most naturalistic painting of the series, but in subsequent versions of the subject Braque reduced everything to a complex of faceted shapes that rise in tiers and yet appear to be tumbling out of the picture at the spectator. Claudian principles have thus been completely reversed. By bringing objects so near to the surface of the canvas, the artist puts us into the closest possible touch with the physical reality of things and draws us into their spatial environment.

At this point Braque perceived that still-life would lend itself even better than landscape to testing his new pictorial conception. So, after the Roche-Guyon pictures, he turned his back on



Fig. 2 - NATURE MORTE AUX CRUCHES 1906. Oil on canvas: 60 × 50 cm. (23⁵/₈ × 19³/₄ in.)

Fine Arts Associates, New York.

the natural scene and, with a few rare exceptions, did not concern himself with it again for almost twenty years, that is to say not until he embarked on a series of beach pictures towards the end of the 1920's. In these Braque continued to draw on his cubist discoveries, but made no serious attempt to analyze forms; and again in his most recent landscapes (e.g. plate 53) he evokes the tactile qualities rather than the basic structure of nature. "After 1909, I ceased to be primordially a landscape painter," he has said.

Braque's struggle to make the objects in a still-life advance towards us instead of receding away from us can again be followed—like his parallel struggle with landscape—in a series of representative pictures. Already in figure 2, a conventional exercise in an idiom owing as much to Cézanne as to Matisse, there is little enough recession. But in plate 5, a cardinal work which Braque claims as his "first cubist still-life"—this was the first composition he did from imagination, a principle he followed in all his subsequent cubist and post-cubist works—perspective has been

discarded and we are shown more of each object than the eye could normally see. (As Picasso once said, "in cubism you paint not what you *see*, but what you *know* is there.") In plate 6 this process is carried much further: the objects fall out of the canvas at us, like the houses in some of the Roche-Guyon pictures, and we have the feeling that we can actually see round the guitar and the fruit-dish. Then in plates 9 and 10 (versions in different media of the same composition) it is carried further still. Here Braque has abandoned not only perspective and recession but almost all reference to natural appearances. The objects merge with one another, with the space surrounding them and with the background. Indeed, only a practised eye can decipher them: a bottle of "Old Tom" gin, a glass, a packet of cigarettes and a playing card on a small table with a drawer (the lettering on the right refers to Fox's English Bar, a favourite rendez-vous of the Cubists and their friends). Small wonder that the fascinating, if difficult, pictures that Braque and Picasso executed at this, the closest, period of their collaboration are referred to as "hermetic", or that, despite their obsession with reality, the two artists faced the danger of falling into total abstractionism; too much had been sacrificed to spatial and formal considerations.

At this crucial juncture—roughly at the beginning of 1912—Braque and Picasso reverted to a more legible style. But they were not really saved from their dilemma until, between them, they had evolved the techniques of *collage* and *papier collé* (figure 3 illustrates the first of these). *Papier collé*—which I discuss at greater length in a subsequent section—was an extremely valuable discovery, because it revealed to the artist how he could reduce everything to flat planes and thus respect the two-dimensional surface of paper or canvas, while at the same time conveying the illusion of a spatial element. It also made possible the style that has come to be known as "Synthetic" cubism—the final episode in the Cubists' campaign to liberate art from the tyranny of Renaissance science. For instead of breaking down reality *analytically* into its component parts, the artist was now able to achieve as good, if not better, results by employing the reverse process, that is to say by reconstructing reality *synthetically* out of a heterogeneous assortment of elements that were flat and pictorial, but not necessarily representational. The consequences of this total rejection of formal indications as well as perspective and recession changed everything not only for Braque, Picasso and other lesser Cubists, but for the subsequent development of art. If so many modern paintings have an immediacy and reality which is not to be found in the art of the past, it is largely because Braque—and Picasso—brought nature back within our grasp. At all events, it is undeniable that in the space of four years the two inventors of cubism changed the whole course of still-life and landscape painting. "From then on," says Braque, "all kinds of new developments became possible."

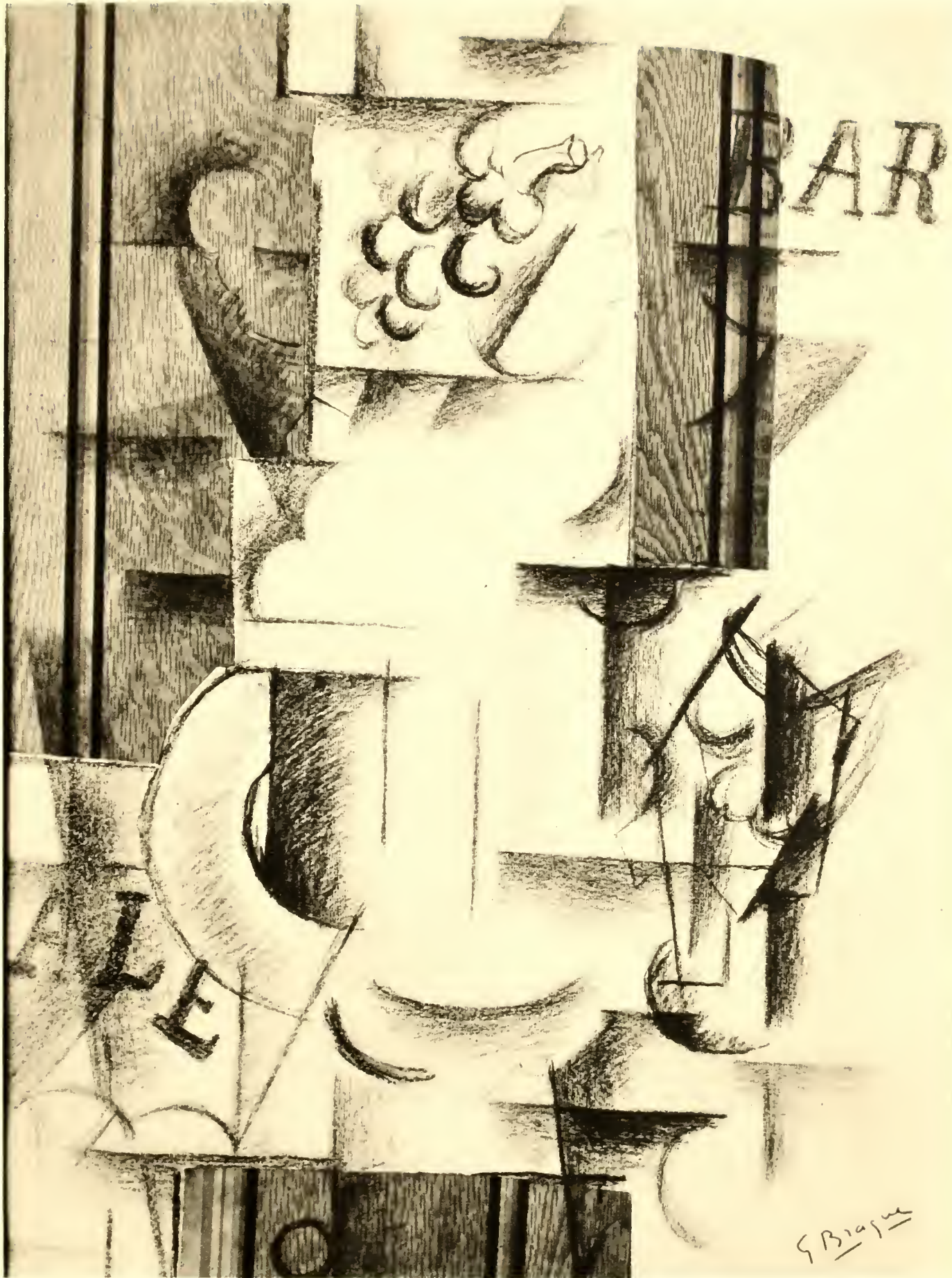


Fig. 3 - COMPTOIR ET VERRE Autumn 1912. Collage and charcoal: 60 × 44 cm. (24 × 17½ in.) Private Collection, France.

No less far-reaching in its consequences has been Braque's revolutionary attitude to what the late Mr. Berenson described as "tactile values." Tactile values, said Berenson, "occur in representations of solid objects when communicated in a way that stirs the imagination to feel their bulk, heft their weight, realize their potential resistance, span their distance from us and encourage us, always imaginatively, to come into close contact with, to grasp, to embrace or to walk around them." And Berenson cites Giotto and Masaccio as perhaps the greatest purveyors of tactile values—values which raise the works of these artists onto "a higher plane of reality" and endow them with a "greater degree of material significance." Few of us, I am sure, would quarrel with Berenson's view that the presence of tactile values enhances the power of a painting. Unfortunately, however, Berenson was so absorbed by Italian Renaissance art that he did not see beyond it and try to pursue his idea through its later manifestations in 19th and 20th century painting. Far more than either Giotto or Masaccio, Cézanne endows what Berenson calls "retinal sensations" with tactile value. What admirer of modern art is not stirred to "feel the bulk and heft the weight" of Cézanne's apples? However, although Cézanne conveys a fuller experience of a still-life than any of his precursors, Chardin included, there is one tactile aspect which he never really tackled: so preoccupied was he with establishing his apples or onions, glasses or bottles as objects in space, that he overlooked their textural properties. In a painting by Cézanne, one cannot easily distinguish between a real or a paper flower, a real or a wax apple, a stone or a wooden table-top. What mattered to Cézanne was that their volumes should accord with his pictorial conception. This is no less important to Braque. But Braque's still-lives are an advance on Cézanne's to the extent that the reversed perspective enables the artist to make objects more immediately tangible and because their textural properties are rendered in all kinds of subtly contrasted and expressive ways. Braque disclaims all knowledge of Berenson's theories, but instinctively and intuitively he has arrived at some of the same conclusions. "It is not enough to make people see what one has painted," he has written, "one must also make them want to touch it." And again, "there are two kinds of space: *visual* space which separates objects from one another; *tactile* space which separates objects from us." Let us briefly try to see how Braque has put these ideas into practice.

Not for nothing is Braque the product of a family of house-painters. Since he himself spent more than three years learning the tricks and secrets of the trade—marbling, wood-graining, lettering and every kind of decorative effect—he has always known how to give life to his materials, and even his earliest paintings betray an innate painterliness. Take the *fauve* landscapes: Braque's have a richer, more varied and more seductive paint-surface than those of Derain or Vlaminck, although their execution may be less sure and their effect less exhilarating. Likewise even in cubist compositions of 1910-1912, when Braque and Picasso were trying to eliminate the personal element in

painting by suppressing their quirks and mannerisms, Braque's pictures are distinguished by subtle and painterly passages, which Picasso would probably have thought too redolent of art for art's sake for his own works.

Earlier I have emphasized that cubism should primarily be seen as a joint venture. Nevertheless we are still entitled to differentiate between the contributions of its two creators: between Picasso's phenomenal vitality and plastic awareness and Braque's feeling for the ingredients and properties of different kinds of pigment and his instinct for new combinations of media. In particular, it was Braque who first realized that whereas the traditional attitude to subject-matter, colour, composition, academic finish, representationalism and perspective had been—or was in the process of being—revolutionized, only one important pictorial element still remained sacrosanct: the artist's medium. Courbet, Manet, Monticelli, Gauguin, Seurat, Van Gogh—to name but the most obvious examples—had used oil-paint in original ways to suit their various purposes, but in the last resort had always respected the purity of the medium. Braque felt no such compunction. Thus he was the first (in 1910) to use sign-writer's lettering as a pictorial element (e.g. plates 13, 14 and 17), because, said he, letters “were forms which could not be deformed: being two-dimensional, they existed outside three-dimensional space: their inclusion in a picture allowed one to distinguish between objects which were situated in space and those which belonged outside space.” Braque was also the first to mix sand, sawdust, ashes, metal filings and even tobacco with his paint to give it added substance as well as to enable him to vary his textures (e.g. plates 12, 17 and 18). Most important of all, it was Braque who saw the full implications of Picasso's discovery of *collage* and devised the technique of *papier collé*: the incorporation into a picture of pieces of cut and pasted paper.

The first *papier collé* (figure 3) was created at Sorgues in the autumn of 1912, at a time when Braque was trying to see how positive colours—hitherto banished from cubist painting, “because they would have been a distraction”—could be reconciled with the cubist conception of representing form and space. At first he had hoped to equate colour with texture, varying his paint surfaces and exploiting his repertory of decorator's effects. But this proved to be only a partial solution. The advantage of *papier collé* was that it enabled him to separate the pictorial functions of form, as represented by drawing, and colour as represented by pieces of cut paper; it also enabled him to represent an object—such as the newspaper in plate 15—by an exact equivalent of itself. At the same time, it opened the door to a new range of tactile effects, injected an extra measure of reality into pictures and undermined the cult of *belle peinture* by establishing the artist's right to make a work of art with the humblest materials. Going still further, this discovery meant that Braque was able to cross the traditional barrier between sculpture and painting, because his pic-

ture became what he and Picasso called a *tableau-objet*—that is to say, something which is not a mirror-image of nature or a wall-decoration, but an autonomous object with an identity of its own.

Instead of being acclaimed for his inventiveness and daring, Braque was accused by colleagues and critics alike of defiling the noble medium of oil-paint and of perversely ennobling the tricks and materials of a decorator. Granted, Braque—no less than Picasso, who shared in his discoveries and exploited them in a more sensational manner—paved the way unintentionally for many of the freakish and frivolous experiments in texture and *matière* which plague us today: the burnt burlap of Burri, the sandy wastes of Tapies, the torn blue-jeans of Arthur Dove, or the stuffed birds of Rauschenberg. But, by and large, Braque's imaginative approach has enriched and widened the artist's technique and been responsible for many valuable developments in the work of men as disparate as Gris, Laurens, Boccioni, Schwitters, Arp, Ernst, Miró and de Staël. Braque himself went on to imitate *papiers collés* in *trompe l'œil* passages of paint. Compare, for instance, the *papier collé* reproduced on plate 15 with the oil-painting on plate 17 in which some of the same objects appear. In the *papier collé* the musical instrument is represented by a piece of wood-grained wall-paper; in the painting by an area of brown pigment combed to imitate wood-graining. Likewise in plate 15 the newspaper, *Le Quotidien du Midi*, is represented by itself, whereas in plate 17 it is simulated in paint; and look how in plate 15 the different pieces of cut paper are contrasted with one another, just as in plate 17 thick impasto is contrasted with thin, *faux marbre* with *faux bois*, and drawing in paint with drawing in charcoal. The subtlety of these tactile contrasts, which play an essential part in the organization of "Synthetic" cubist pictures, adds another dimension to our enjoyment in the same way that combinations of texturally contrasted ingredients make a dish more appetizing.

"In painting, the contrast between textures plays as big a role as the contrast between colours," Braque has gone so far as to say. "I profit from all the variations in *matière*, and the colour takes on a much deeper meaning... and has much greater diversity. With a lacquer, for example, which is transparent, and an ochre which is opaque one can arrive at a harmony, that is to say one can confront opposites just as with colours. But then what is colour really? When one says red or green, one says nothing. If it is a crimson lake, it is one thing; if it is a red ochre, another—and so on *ad infinitum*. Oh what a difference!" Although these ideas first manifested themselves in works of 1912-14, the artist did not exploit their full possibilities until after the war, when he painted a series of still-lives in which the forms are flat, like those in early "Synthetic" cubist works, but which are noticeably more colourful and more varied in texture. Another innovation: Braque painted these compositions on a black ground to give resonance to the colours and help him to evoke depth without having to indicate recession; one feels that the forms might be floating on



Fig. 4a and 4b - CANEPHORAE 1922. Oil and sand on canvas: 180×72.2 cm. (70³/₄×28¹/₂ in.)

Musées Nationaux de France.

the surface of a dark pool. Plate 18 provides an outstanding example of this new procedure. The texture changes from one part of the picture to another; the right-hand half of the guitar is grained to resemble wood and is highly varnished; some background areas are built up to give a feeling of density and depth; shiny and matt surfaces are juxtaposed and certain sections enlivened with pointillistic brushwork. Especially skilful is the passage in the foreground where the texture and tonality of four whiteish objects—the high-lit front of the table, the thickly impasted clay pipe, the thin matt paint of the ace of clubs and the polished ivory dice—are set off against each other so effectively that one's hand itches to touch them, and placed so cunningly that the eye feels it is being lead deep into the middle of the picture. What better example of "tactile" space? All this is the more remarkable for being achieved—as almost always when Braque has complicated problems to solve—with an appearance of extreme simplicity.

Braque could not achieve this degree of tactile perfection if he did not take the utmost care over the priming of his canvases. "The priming," he once said, "is at the basis of everything else, just like the foundations of a house." Thus in the 1920's we find him preparing his canvases with a thickish sandy layer of matt black paint, which Braque has compared to coffee-grounds or tea-leaves, because, like a fortune-teller, he can "divine there things that others cannot see." This priming provides a marvellous foil for the flat lambent washes of colour with which he builds up his monumental *Canéphorae* (figures 4 *a* and 4 *b*) and his somewhat ornate still-lives (e.g. plates 21, 22, 27 and 28) of the same period. But towards the end of the decade, when he started experimenting once again, he discarded the dark grounds—some of which (e.g. plate 27) are so thick and tarry that they threaten to extinguish the luminosity of the colours—in favour of other types of surface. For instance, Braque painted a series of masterly *Guéridons* (e.g. plates 33 and 34) in delicate washes of oil paint over a neutral-coloured priming of sand mixed with gesso, which enabled him to achieve an exquisitely powdery, fresco-like effect. He also executed a number of highly simplified still-lives (e.g. plate 38) in areas of thinly applied colour across which a network of fine white lines is often scratched. And he engraved slabs of plaster, painted black, with mythological scenes in the manner of a classical intaglio (figure 7 illustrates a recent example of this technique). Some of these experiments, it is true, tend towards the decorative, yet they are always redeemed and made meaningful by tactile qualities. Later, towards the end of the 1930's, Braque started work on a series of still-lives (e.g. plate 43)—so thickly painted as almost to constitute bas-reliefs—which are often set off against a scumbled back-ground. One of the most impressive is a *Vanitas* (not reproduced but similar to plate 45) which has remained in the artist's possession. The beads of the rosary are built up with a thick, nutty impasto which seems to invite the spectator to finger it; and even the subject has been chosen for its tactile potentialities (as



Fig. 5 - TETE DE FEMME. Pencil.

Monsieur Georges Braque, Paris.

Braque once said of the musical instruments in his cubist still-lives, “I am always drawn to paint things which are animated by touch”). How characteristic of Braque that a *Vanitas*—an allegory of the transience of human life and aspirations—should inspire him for its tactile and not for its philosophical or religious possibilities!

During and after the recent war, Braque continued to vary his surfaces in all kinds of subtle and ingenious ways; also he went to ever greater trouble in his search for appropriate materials: using wood panels for small cabinet pictures, nubbly sheets of antique paper for an edition of engravings, unprimed hessian to get a certain breadth or roughness, as in some of the *Ateliers*, and occasionally newspaper, cardboard or canvas of a silken fineness. But, for Braque, surface enrichment has never become an end in itself, as was sometimes the case with Rouault, any more than it has become an eye-catching device to distract attention from weaknesses of colour or content, as in the case of an artist like Dubuffet. Braque has always used texture to harmonize with or enhance the colours and forms of his figures, landscapes and still-lives, and above all to give them added reality. Studying the plates in this book, the reader cannot fail to be struck by Braque’s capacity for finding appropriate equivalents in paint for the rough glaze of a pitcher (plate 27), the thick nap of a billiard table (plate 52), the undulating surface of a field of corn (plate 53) or the powdery bloom, the shiny rind and skin of all kinds of fruit. Braque endows things with such a compelling feeling of life that one longs to reach out and touch them. And it is not only concrete things that Braque tempts one to touch. In his recent bird pictures (e.g. plates 67 and 68) his skies have such tactile depth that one is persuaded that they are not just areas of blueish paint but an element in which birds could fly. I will always remember watching Braque at work on *A Tire d’Aile* (plate 67); for days and weeks he went on adding liquid greyish paint, layer by layer, until the canvas had become so caked with pigment that it could barely be lifted on and off the easel. The result is a sky that has an astonishing cumulus quality and seems more tangible than the bird—a typically Braquian paradox. Previously he had used a similar technique for the Louvre ceiling (figure 8)—Braque’s first full-scale treatment of the bird theme—which again explains the marvellous azure depth of the sky in these panels. Braque convinces us that it would be possible and even pleasurable to *feel*, and not merely see, our way about his pictures, as we might feel our way on a dark night or in a dense fog, when distances have to be measured by touch as well as by sight. This is to convey a far greater measure of tactile values than any previous artist—let alone an art-historian like Berenson—ever envisaged.

Mention of these mysterious bird pictures brings me to the last of Braque's revolutionary conceptions that I want to discuss: his rejection of all hitherto accepted views of reality (surrealism included) in favour of a "metamorphic"—or what he also calls "poetic"—view of things and an ambivalent type of vision which is neither figurative nor non-figurative. What do these vague words "metamorphic" and "poetic" mean? Braque mistrusts explanations, for he is afraid of dissipating the mystery which is fundamental to his recent work, so perhaps the most tactful thing is to let him speak for himself: *

"The only valid thing in art is that which cannot be explained," I once wrote. I still feel this very strongly. To explain away the mystery of a great painting — if such a feat were possible — would do irreparable harm, for whenever you explain or define something you substitute the explanation or the definition for the real thing. The same is true of science. Each time a new problem is solved, I feel that something of value has been lost. Instead of having matters made clearer, I should like to have them made even more obscure. *Il faut toujours augmenter le trouble*. What about criticism? Critics should help people to see for themselves; they should never try to define things or impose their own explanations, though I admit that if — as nearly always happens — a critic's explanations serve to increase the general obscurity, that is all to the good. Poets are particularly helpful in this respect. Few of them have understood the first thing about modern painting yet they are always trying to write about it..

"There are certain mysteries, certain secrets in my own work which even I do not understand, nor do I try to do so. Why bother? The more one probes, the more one deepens the mystery; it's always out of reach. Mysteries have to be respected if they are to retain their power. *L'art est fait pour troubler: la science rassure*. If there is no mystery then there is no 'poetry', the quality I value above all else in art. What do I mean by 'poetry'? It is to a painting what life is to man. But don't ask me to define it; it is something that each artist has to discover for himself through his own intuition. For me it is a matter of harmony, of *rappports*, of rhythm and — most important for my own work — of 'metamorphosis'. I will try to explain what I mean by 'metamorphosis'. For me no object can be tied down to any one sort of reality. A stone may be part of a wall, a piece of sculpture, a lethal weapon, a pebble on a beach or anything else you like, just as this file in my hand can be metamorphosed into a shoe-horn or a spoon, according to the way in which I use it. The first time the importance of this phenomenon struck me was in the trenches during the first World War when my batman turned a bucket into a brazier by poking a few holes in it with his bayonet and filling it with coke. For me this commonplace incident had a poetic significance; I began to see things in a new way.

"Let me give you another example. You go to lunch at a friend's house, smell the meal being cooked, and because you are hungry, say to yourself 'how delicious'. But after you have eaten, you find the smell that hangs around the house nauseating. Yet it is the same smell as before. Everything changes according to circumstances: that is what I mean by metamorphosis. When you ask me whether a particular form in one of my paintings depicts a woman's head, a fish, a vase, a bird or all four at once, I cannot give you a categorical answer, for this 'metamorphic' confusion is fundamental to the poetry. It is all the same to me whether a form represents a different thing to different people or many things at the same time or even nothing at all; it might be no more than an accident or a 'rhyme' — a pictorial 'rhyme' by the way, can have all sorts of unex-

* Note: The following statement, based on conversations which the author has had at various times with Braque, is an excerpt from an article that appeared in *The Observer* (1 December, 1957).

pected consequences, can change the whole meaning of a picture — such as I sometimes like to incorporate in my compositions.

“You see, I have made a great discovery: I no longer believe in anything. Objects do not exist for me except in so far as a *rapport* exists between them and between them and myself. In other words, it is not the objects that matter to me but what is in between them; it is this ‘in-between’ that is the real subject of my pictures. When one reaches this state of harmony between things and oneself, one reaches a sort of intellectual *néant* — what I can only describe as a state of perfect freedom and peace — which makes everything possible and right. Life then becomes a perpetual revelation. *Ça, c’est de la vraie poésie.*”

Anyone acquainted with Zen-Buddhism will immediately be struck by analogies between Braque’s ideas and some of its tenets. Was this resemblance fortuitous. I once asked Braque, for I knew that he had been intrigued by this mystical doctrine long before it had been made fashionable by the Beatniks. Braque said that he had never been directly influenced by Zen; he had simply been interested to discover how closely it corresponded in certain respects to views which he had held for most of his life and which he had originally formulated while convalescing from a war-wound in 1917-18. He admitted that he had never really studied Zen; all he had read were books by E. Herrigel (one of which, *Le Tir à l’Arc*, he recently illustrated) and by the westernized Japanese, Daisetz Suzuki—an authority who is not taken very seriously by the Japanese. Yet, for all that Braque’s notions of Zen are highly subjective and based on imperfect understanding, I do not think we can properly appreciate the artist’s recent work without reference to it.

Zen—or rather Braque’s idea of Zen—has brought into the open some latent feelings which had never emerged before and heightened others to which the artist had already given expression: for instance his prejudice against anything cut-and-dried, didactic or cerebral. Zen has also encouraged Braque in his fatalism, in his cult of solitude and mystery—an essential ingredient of the pictorial poetry which he values so highly—as well as in his love of paradoxical or equivocal effects. Furthermore, it has confirmed his dependence on the subjective processes of intuition and revelation and, above all, his feeling of empathy. For Braque has an almost mystic and truly Zen-like ability to experience a kind of spiritual unity with whatever he may be painting, regardless of whether this is animate or inanimate—a bird, a cloud, a jug, or something that partakes of all three, or that may even be nothing at all. However, I do not want to pursue this idea any further, because, as Braque so rightly maintains, there is no logic here, and whatever we try to pin down we destroy. Instead let us look at some of the paintings in which these ideas find their fullest expression—in particular the magnificent recent series of *Ateliers*.

In order to understand what these *Ateliers* are about, we should try to visualize them in relation to the real thing: to the various studios (two in Paris, two in Normandy) in which, for reasons of temperament and to some extent of health, Braque has spent most of the last fifteen years and

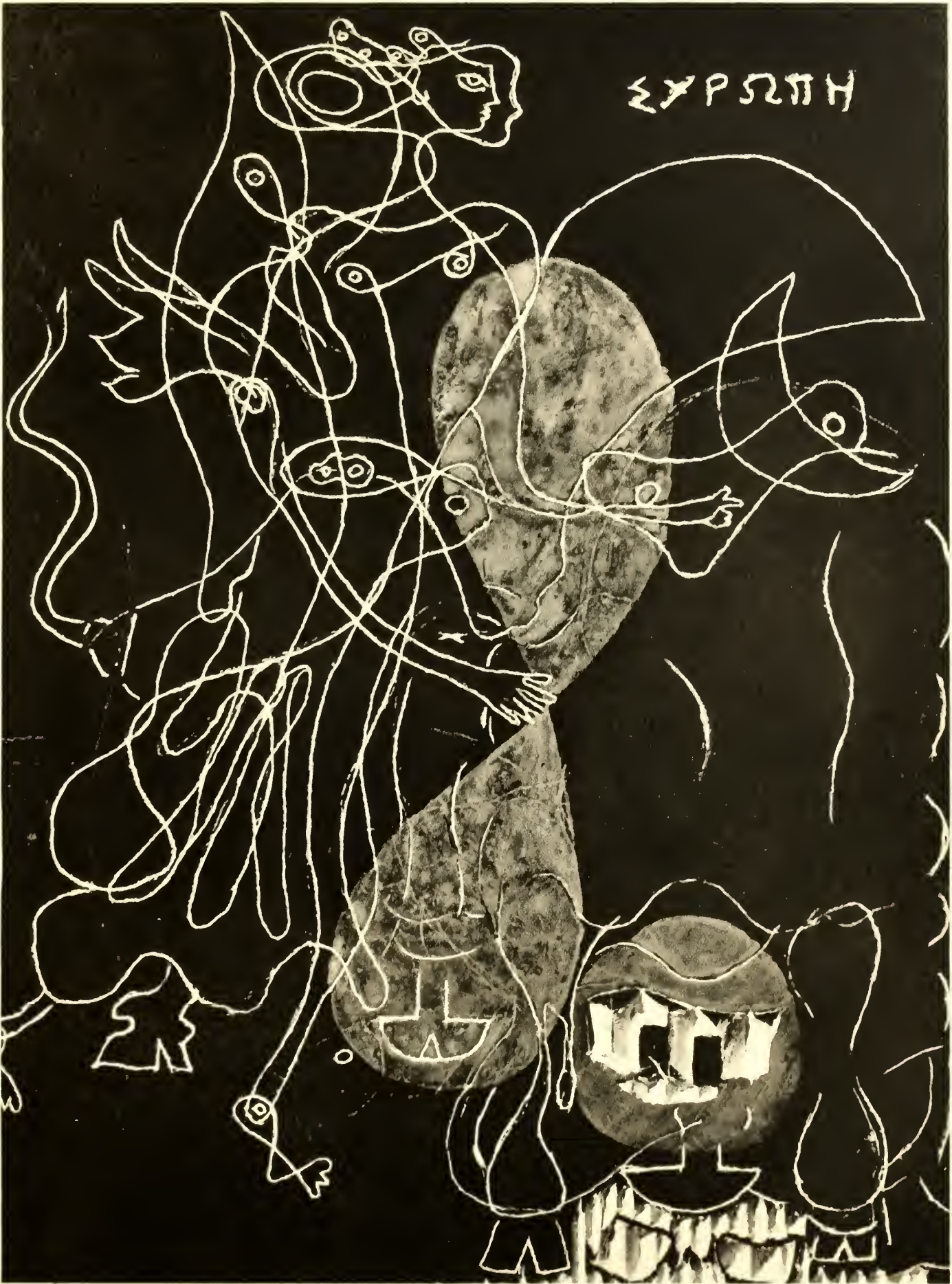


Fig. 6 - EUROPA c. 1950. Engraved on plaster.

Private Collection, France.

which he has come to regard as a kind of microcosm of the whole universe. These austere, fastidiously arranged rooms resemble one another in almost every respect, while being as different—above all in atmosphere—from other artists' studios as Buddhist temples are from Christian churches. One's first impression is that everything is blurred or veiled and in a constant state of flux. Contrary to usual practice, the huge windows face south instead of north, so that the light which is doubly filtered through panes of white-washed glass and curtains of fine linen is never constant and never entirely clear. Carefully disposed on easels and stands against the neutral background of curtains which divide these rooms are ever-changing displays of paintings, lithographs and drawings, framed and unframed, in various stages of completion. These are arranged in such a way that the artist, who is nothing if not a perfectionist, has most of his current output permanently before his eyes and can go from one picture to another making minute adjustments, or sit for hours contemplating them, meditating on the nature of art and reality and, as he says, "painting pictures in my head." Elsewhere in the studio canvases and frames are stacked; on a lectern is a pile of sketchbooks which Braque claims he uses as "cookery-books" to provide ideas and suggest subjects for compositions, for we must not forget that since 1909 the artist has never worked directly from life. Small tables are laden with artists' materials, while others are covered with pots, vases, musical instruments, bowls of fruit, pieces of sculpture, *objets trouvés*, philodendron plants and all kinds of odds-and-ends such as occur in his still-lives. And yet somehow the total effect is not contrived. One has the feeling that Braque is out to transform—or, as he would say, metamorphose—his chosen surroundings into art. So successful is he, indeed, that one can no longer be sure where everyday reality leaves off and pictorial reality begins. Could it be that the painted *Ateliers* are more real than what they represent?

Time and again, from the cubist period onwards, Braque has discovered subjects for his pictures among the paraphernalia of his studio. Not, however, until 1936, did he consciously begin to exploit the full possibilities of his surroundings in a number of extensive interior scenes—*salons* and music-rooms as well as studios—which contain one or two usually female figures painting pictures or playing musical instruments (e.g. plates 42 and 46). These figures are undeniably impressive, but even Braque's admirers are apt to admit that they are not entirely convincing representations of living human beings. Braque may well have felt the same, for he soon eliminated them and, in 1938-39, took to peopling his interiors with an inanimate, but more lively-looking, assemblage of studio-objects—easels, cane chairs, skulls, palettes, set-squares, canvases, bottles, fruit-dishes and pots and vases of flowers, some of which we see in plate 44. Interiors or glorified still-lives as the case may be, the major paintings of this immediately pre-war period are more or less figurative compositions in which objects retain their identities and most of their physical char-



Fig. 7 - TETE DE CHEVAL c. 1946. Bronze: length 94 cm. (37 in.)

acteristics. But later, during the war years—years of solitude and sadness for Braque—the artist's approach to such subjects became more equivocal, more “metamorphic”. Take, for instance, the two masterly interiors reproduced on plates 47 and 48, works which presage the mood of the later *Ateliers*. How arbitrary, yet how effective is the outline of the easel in the foreground of plate 47! Quite apart from its decorative, compositional role, this device enables the spectator to identify himself with the artist, because he can feel that he is actually seeing through and around the easel and thus in physical touch with the objects portrayed.

Even more arbitrary is an interior, *Le Salon* (Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris), which Braque painted two years later (1944); the objects on the right-hand side of this picture have melted into one another and merged with the spatial element to the extent of becoming indecipherable. Yet this remains one of Braque's most memorable—and I would even say *real*—recreations of a room. From this same period date the superb interiors in which attention is focused on a single piece or conglomeration of furniture: for example the stove in plate 49, the wash-stand in plate 50, the rusty-looking *Tables de Cuisine* or the various *Billards* (plate 51 reproduces the most impor-

tant). Thanks to Braque's craftsmanly feeling—amounting to a kind of empathy—for inanimate things, and his ability to represent a commonplace object as if it had a recognizable identity and organic existence all its own, these paintings are as meaningful, as imbued with life as Chardin's *Chocolatière* or Van Gogh's *Yellow Chair*. By any standard they are masterpieces; all the same they do not—to my mind, at least—have as great a claim on our attention as the eight * triumphant *Ateliers* (1948-56) which they immediately precede, for the *Ateliers* constitute an entirely new approach to visual appearances.

Nothing in these *Ateliers* is ever quite what it seems: sometimes shadows have substance, while things of substance turn out to be shadows; forms are flattened and flatness is given form; what is hard is painted as if it were soft; what should be opaque appears transparent and *vice versa*; objects are only half indicated, or they merge with one another, become something else and disappear; patterned surfaces are introduced for no logical reason, while lines frequently lead nowhere and define nothing. One cannot, therefore, be sure whether certain configurations—for instance the big jar-like form in the foreground of plate 62—in these *Ateliers* are intended to be real objects, such as one finds lying around the studio, or whether they refer to paintings of these objects, or whether they are real objects in the process of becoming painted ones. My third hypothesis is not as far-fetched as it might at first appear; such is Braque's passion for equivocal effects that he is quite capable of paying oblique tribute to the mystery of artistic creation—a mystery which fascinates him so deeply that he dreads the moment when a painting is finished and the creative process comes to an end. The bird, which appears in all but two of the *Ateliers*, raises similar problems. This is not a *live* bird—Braque would hardly allow a creature the size of an albatross to fly around his studio—nor has it any symbolical significance (“*il n’y a jamais eu aucun symbole dans ma peinture,*” insists Braque). It is simply a picture within a picture, a reference to the large canvas (now destroyed) of a bird in flight which the artist had painted shortly before starting work on the series. There is another good reason for its presence: as we have seen, Braque has always been obsessed with the representation of space, and what more appropriate theme could such an artist find than a bird in flight? The sense of this is immediately apparent if we compare the various *Ateliers*; whereas in *Ateliers II* and *III* the bird is clearly a “painted” image, in later ones (notably in *Ateliers V* and *VIII*) it detaches itself from its background and floats freely round the room, thus enlivening the spatial element. Then in the final version, *Atelier IX* (plate 62), the bird returns once more to its original background, where its fragmented remains—shades of cubism—are impaled on a kind of cruciform scaffolding.

* *Note:* Although numbered 1-IX, the *Ateliers* in fact comprise no more than eight paintings, since Nos. VII and IX refer to the same picture. This account of the series is based on a longer analysis by the author which appeared in *The Burlington Magazine* (June, 1955).



Fig. 8 - CEILING IN THE LOUVRE 1 1953. Oil on canvas: 211 × 272 cm. (83 × 107 in.)

I have singled out the bird for attention, because it is the most prominent and also the most puzzling ingredient of these pictures, but other elements behave no less capriciously. Indeed, each picture is both a law unto itself and a reality in itself: this much is fundamental to Braque's aesthetic. Braque respects no system of pictorial logic; by virtue of his ability to create a magical "accord" between different objects and the space around them as well as between the various rhymes, accidents and passages of decoration that play such important supporting roles in his compositions, he can—and does—permit himself every liberty. Colour, texture, form, theme, rhythm, design—all the elements are perfectly synthesized in the *Ateliers* as in a symphony. Analogies between painting and music are generally invidious, but no student of Braque can afford to overlook the significance of the artist's musical talent and sensibility (Bach and Satie are among his favourite composers). Quite apart from the numerous references to musical instruments, posters and scores in his still-lives, it is revealing that Braque has described the *Ateliers* as symphonic works.

I hope that I have not implied that of late Braque has been turning into an abstract painter. Quite the reverse. Braque despises the bulk of contemporary abstract art. Slick, superficial and

mannered are some of the adjectives he applies to it. He reproaches most non-figurative artists with not having the guts to take risks—in Braque’s eyes a terrible failing—and with avoiding issues, above all the crucial issue of pictorial reality. For, although his own work sometimes seems to suggest the contrary, Braque has never, even at the most hermetic phase of cubism, ceased trying to pin down reality. His starting-point may be nothing more than a meaningless arrangement of coloured forms, but his picture will not be finished until these coloured forms have ceased to be a mere abstract pattern, that is to say have “revealed their identity” and simultaneously developed an organic pictorial relationship with one another, as in the *Ateliers*. This is inevitably a slow, complex and excessively risky process, depending as it does on intuition and moments of revelation. Every brush-stroke is a gamble.

Given his highly idiosyncratic approach and method of working, it is not surprising that Braque—who is old and in poor health—has produced relatively little in recent years and has often been obliged to abandon or destroy a picture because he could not resolve it. A case in point is a canvas of a bird hovering which the artist has given up—temporarily?—after two or three years work. As in Balzac’s *Le Chef d’Œuvre Inconnu*, the subject of this painting grew progressively less and less decipherable. And yet the less decipherable it became, the fuller was the experience of space that it conveyed. Braque once complained that the bird was “recalcitrant,” that it “refused to declare itself.” Nevertheless one had the impression that the whole picture-surface quivered with the fluttering movement of wings and that the complicated network of brush-strokes added up to something that would be warm and feathery to touch. Whether this extraordinary picture can ever be resolved there is no telling, but if it can be, it will surely rank among the most exciting and inventive of Braque’s recent masterpieces. Others which I have in mind are the large *Charrue* (1960)—so tangible that one feels it could be cut of the canvas and set to plough a furrow—and some lyrical skyscapes (e.g. plates 67 and 68) in which a bird is used as a pretext for bringing the firmament within our reach. The latter have already been praised for their tactile qualities; however, tactile considerations should not be allowed to blind us to the mystery and poetry of these images. The more we look, the more we wonder: are these really clouds or moons or birds? Do not the dark silhouettes in plate 67 resemble a rocket heading through outer space towards some burnt-out planet, some ball of vapour? Likewise the moonlit sky in plate 68: this has such density that we could be at the bottom of the sea looking at some strange winged fish. Even the decorative foliate form on the left—an arbitrary, but integral part of the composition—can be interpreted in different ways: as a tree, a lichen, or the frond of some waterplant. It is this “metamorphic” confusion, so carefully nurtured by the artist, which gives these pictures their power to move us, to haunt our memories.

So much in these recent paintings is equivocal and unfamiliar that it is hardly surprising that people find them puzzling and esoteric. But anyone who is willing to sink himself in them and search out their special qualities will come to realize that, like some of Cézanne's late and often unresolved masterpieces, they are the expression of a new vision—above all a painter's vision—of the world. Because they point towards a solution of the most vexed problem in art today, the schism between representational and non-representational painting, I am convinced that in time they will prove to be of eye-opening significance for other artists. By reducing objects to pictorial metaphors, by relegating their identities to the melting-pot and dissolving their forms in a new kind of space, Braque transcends the limitations of both approaches.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1882 May 13th: Georges Braque born at Argenteuil-sur-Seine, only son of a *peintre-décorateur*.
- c. 1890 Family moves to Le Havre.
- c. 1897 Attends evening classes at Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Le Havre.
- 1899 Leaves school; apprenticed to local *peintre-décorateur*.
- 1900 In Paris trains as craftsman; also attends evening art classes.
- 1901 Awarded craftsman's diploma; starts military service.
- 1902 Demobilized; decides to become painter; enrolls at Académie Humbert; also visits Louvre and dealers' galleries.
- 1904 Rents studio in Montmartre and works on his own.
- 1905 "Eves opened" (Braque's words) by room of *fauve* paintings (by Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck etc.) at *Salon d'Automne*; enters *fauve* orbit.
- 1906 Spends summer with Friesz painting *fauve* views of Antwerp, winter at L'Estaque near Marseille.
- 1907 Exhibits six pictures at *Salon des Indépendants* — all sold; spends summer at La Ciotat and L'Estaque; returns in autumn to Paris, disillusioned with fauvism; signs contract with Kahnweiler; very impressed by Cézanne retrospective; meets Apollinaire who takes him to Picasso's studio; first shocked then influenced by *De-moiselles d'Avignon*.
- 1908 Summer at L'Estaque painting the first cubist landscapes; after being rejected by Salon d'Automne, these are exhibited by Kahnweiler at Braque's first one-man show.
- 1909 Summer at La Roche-Guyon; after returning to Paris, forms close association with Picasso: "Analytical" cubism.
- 1910 Summer at L'Estaque.
- 1911 Summer at Cérêt (Pyrenées) with Picasso: "Hermetic" cubism.
- 1912 Marries Marcelle Lapré; in July, joins Picasso at Sorgues (near Avignon), where he rents a house, his summer quarters for the next fifteen years; in September executes first *papier collé*: "Synthetic" cubism.
- 1911 Spring: Exhibition of 38 pictures in Dresden and Berlin; summer at Sorgues interrupted by mobilization.
- 1915 May 11th: Wounded in head at Carency (Artois); temporarily loses sight but recovers after trepanation; long convalescence.
- 1916 Summer: Demobilized with *Légion d'Honneur* and *Croix de Guerre*.
- 1917 Summer at Sorgues: begins to paint again; Léonce Rosenberg becomes his dealer.
- 1919 Exhibition at Léonce Rosenberg's *Galerie de l'Effort Moderne*.
- 1920 Kahnweiler opens Galerie Simon and again becomes Braque's dealer.
- 1922 Exhibits 18 important recent works at *Salon d'Automne* — all sold; moves from Montmartre to Montparnasse.
- 1923 Winter: Diaghilev commissions décor for *Les Fâcheux*.
- 1924 Paul Rosenberg, Braque's new dealer, holds exhibition; moves to new house built for him by Auguste Perret, near Parc Montsouris, Paris.
- 1925 Diaghilev commissions décor for *Zéphyre et Flore*.
- c. 1928 Instead of going south to Sorgues, takes to spending summers in and around Dieppe; paints small seascapes.
- 1931 Builds country-house at Varengeville (near Dieppe).
- 1933 First important retrospective at Basel and publication of first serious monograph (Einstein).
- 1934 Retrospective exhibition at Brussels.
- 1937 Awarded first prize at Carnegie International, Pittsburgh.
- 1939-40 Retrospective exhibitions in Chicago, Washington and San Francisco.
- 1940 June: After German break-through, takes refuge first in Limousin, then in Pyrenées; returns in autumn to Paris where he remains, working in isolation, for rest of war.
- 1944 Resumes spending summers at Varengeville.
- 1945 Serious illness; stops painting for several months.
- 1946 Exhibition of recent work, Tate Gallery, London.
- 1947 Spring: Serious illness (pneumonia); first exhibition at gallery of his new dealer, Aimé Maeght.
- 1948 Publishes *Cahier de Georges Braque: 1917-47*, a collection of thoughts and maxims on art; exhibits recent works at Venice Biennale, is awarded first prize.
- 1948-49 Large retrospective at Cleveland Museum of Art and Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 1949 Jouvet commissions décor for Molière's *Tartuffe*.
- 1950 Exhibition of *Ateliers I-V* and other important recent works, Galerie Maeght.
- 1952-53 Executes ceiling decorations for Louvre's Etruscan gallery.
- 1953 Retrospective exhibition at Berne and Zurich.
- 1953-54 Serious illness; stops painting for several months.
- 1954 Completes stained glass windows for church at Varengeville; publishes illustrations to Hesiod's *Theogony*, originally commissioned by Vollard in 1932.
- 1956 Important retrospectives at Edinburgh and London (Tate Gallery).
- 1957 Exhibition of recent work, Galerie Maeght.
- 1958 Retrospective of entire graphic work, Geneva; small retrospectives in Rome, where he is awarded prize, and Venice (Biennale).
- 1959 Exhibition of recent work, Galerie Maeght, Paris.
- 1960 Retrospective at Basel.

Plates



PL. 1 · LE COTE DE GRACE, HONFLEUR. 1905. Oil on canvas: 50×60 cm. (19 ³/₄×23 ⁵/₈ in.) Musée des Beaux-Arts, Le Havre.

In later years Braque destroyed most of his early works, but the few surviving examples — either townscapes (as here) or portraits of relations or friends — reveal that he was a moderately talented student who expressed himself in an agreeable, impressionistic style owing much to Corot, early Monet and, on one significant occa-

ion (a large portrait of his mother which Braque recently burnt), to Toulouse-Lautrec. The contrast between the hesitant, if nicely painted, picture above and the dazzling landscape opposite proves how greatly Braque's style benefited from the influence of Matisse and the Fauves as well as from the impact of the Mediterranean scene.



PL. 2 - L'ESTAQUE. 1906. Oil on canvas: 46 × 38 cm. (18 1/8 × 15 in.)

Private Collection, Basel.



PL. 3 - LA CALANQUE, LA CIOTAT. Summer 1907. Oil on canvas: 60 × 73 cm. (23 ⁵/₈ × 28 ³/₄ in.)

Perls Gallery, New York.

*When Braque exhibited a group of his *sauve* landscapes at the Salon des Indépendants in the spring of 1907, he sold them all. Thus encouraged, he returned at once to the Mediterranean, this time to La Ciotat, between Marseille and Toulon. The landscapes which date from this second visit are no less *sauve* than their predecessors, but are less naturalistic and more*

personal and experimental than before. At the end of the summer, Braque returned briefly to L'Estaque, where he and his old friend, Othon Friesz, painted the same view from the Hôtel Mistral. After returning to Paris and seeing the Cézanne Retrospective at the Salon d'Automne, he repainted his view (reproduced opposite) from memory in terms of form rather than light.



PL. 4 - VUE DE L'HOTEL MISTRAL, L'ESTAQUE. Autumn 1907. Oil on canvas: 80×60 cm. (31½×23⅝ in.) Mr. and Mrs. Werner E. Josten, New York.



PL. 5 - NATURE MORTE AUX INSTRUMENTS DE MUSIQUE. Autumn 1908. Oil on canvas: 50 × 61 cm. (19³/₄ × 21 in.) Monsieur Georges Braque Paris.

Braque claims that the still-life above is his "first cubist painting", because it is the first which he did entirely from imagination and not from life: i.e., it is his first conceptual, as opposed to perceptual, work. Once liberated from models, Braque could take whatever pict-

orial liberties he liked. Here, for instance, he deliberately distorts the slight twist in the neck of the mandoline in order to show us more of the object than the eye can normally see. He repeats the same device with the guitar in the still-life opposite.



PL. 7 - LA ROCHE-GUYON, LE CHATEAU. Summer 1909. Oil on canvas: 80×60 cm. ($31\frac{3}{4}\times 23\frac{5}{8}$ in.) Monsieur Rolf de Maré, Stockholm.

"I found that the exaltation which had overwhelmed me on my first visit and which I had put into my (fauve) pictures was no longer the same," Braque has said of his third visit (with Raoul Dufy) to L'Estaque, in the summer of 1908; "I saw something else." What he saw is reflected in a series of Cézannesque landscapes — like the one opposite — works which gave rise to the word "cubism". The following summer, Braque went to La Roche-Guyon, a small town on the Seine near Mantes, and painted eight masterly landscapes

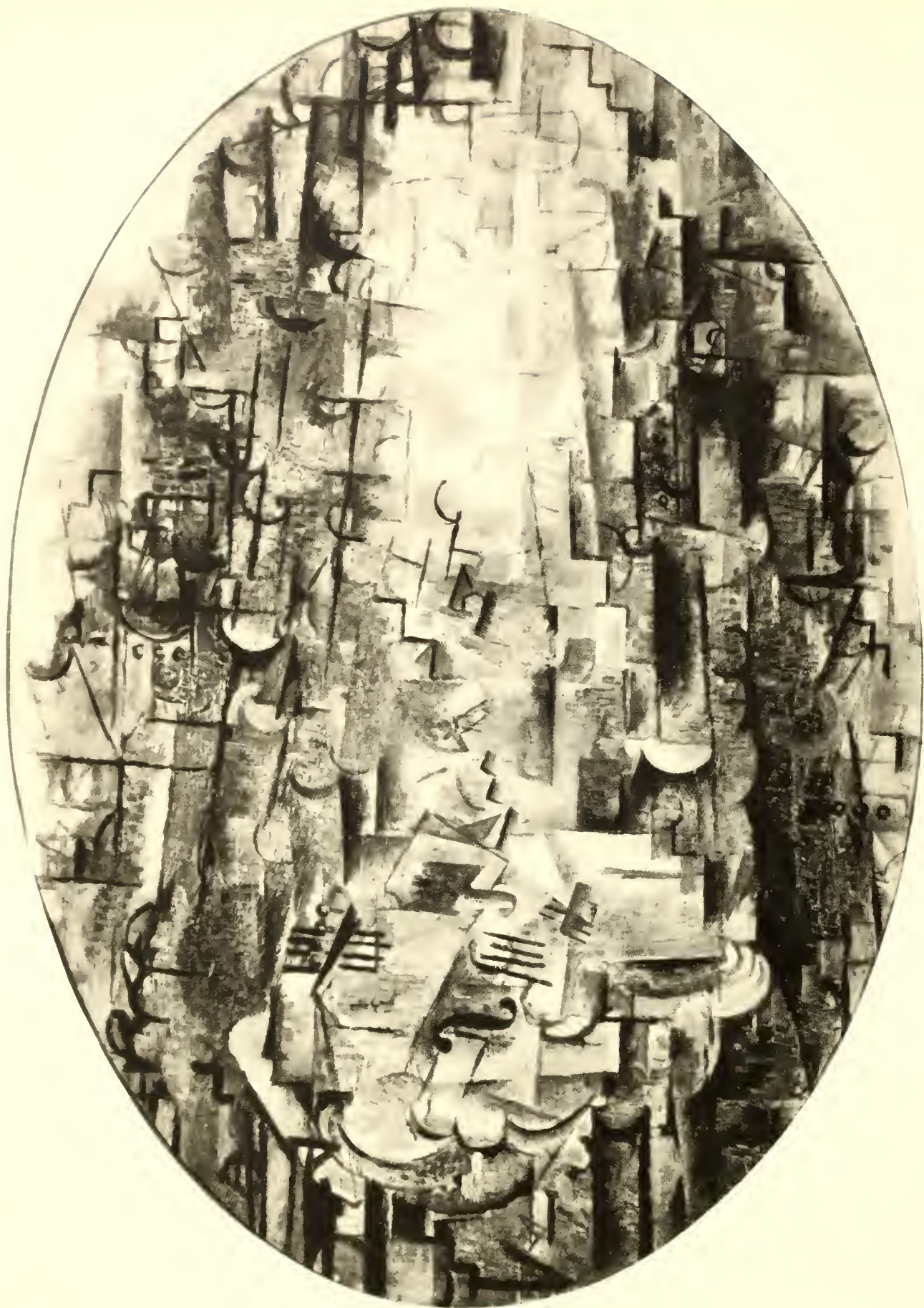
— including the one above — of the watch-tower, viaduct and château of the La Rochefoucaulds. These carried cubism a stage further. In 1910, Braque returned once more to L'Estaque and painted a few views of the Rio Tinto factory. But by that time he had realized that the cubist conception could be better expressed in terms of still-life. It is a curious coincidence that Cézanne and Renoir had worked together both at L'Estaque and La Roche-Guyon.



PL. 9 - NATURE MORTE: FOX. 1911. Engraving: 55 × 38 cm. (21½ × 15 in.)

In 1911, when their stylistic resemblance was closest, Braque and Picasso were each commissioned by Kahnweiler, their dealer, to do a large engraving. Both chose to do a still-life incorporating more or less the same elements; and the resultant engravings — Braque's is reproduced above — provide the clearest evidence of the artists' attempt to eliminate the personal element and arrive at a common style. But they also reveal that certain fundamental differences could not be ironed out. The Picasso is spontaneous and summary: the work of a draughtsman. The

Braque is tentative and travaillé: the work of a painter. And, although the handling of Fox is notably more elaborate and varied than Picasso's, it would be invidious to say which was the better work. Braque subsequently executed a painting (opposite) which closely follows the composition of the engraving and includes the same references to café life — a bottle of "Old Tom" gin, a glass, a saucer marked 15 (centimes), a playing-card, a packet of cigarettes and so forth. The letters, Fox, refer to Fox's English Bar, a Parisian rendez-vous of the Cubists and their friends.



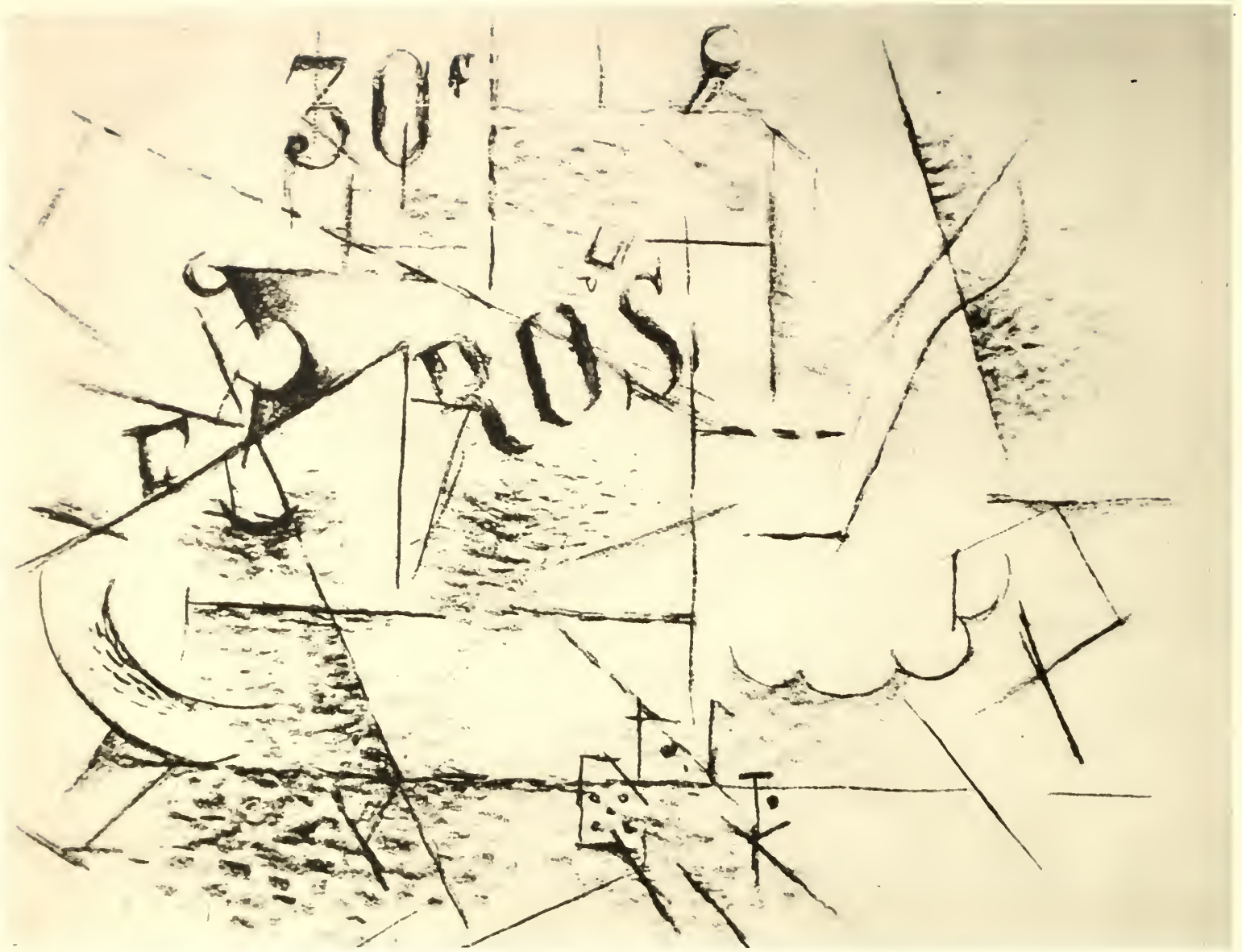
Pl. II - L'HOMME AU VIOLON. Winter 1911. Oil on canvas: 100 × 71 cm. (39 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 28 in.) Heirs of Herr Emil Bührle, Zurich.

"The point of my oval compositions was that they allowed me to rediscover the contrast between horizontals and verticals," Braque has said. At the same time, he realized that an oval format would make his compositions more compact, there being no awkward corners to

fill. Later Braque experimented with irregular ovals (e.g. plates 17 and 18) which make a pleasing foil for the flat rectilinear forms of "Synthetic" cubism; he also framed a series of still-lives in octagonal, almond, lemon, diamond and eye shapes.



PL. 12 - L'HOMME AU GUITARE. 1914. Oil and sand on canvas: 130 × 72,5 cm. (51 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.) Monsieur André Lefèvre, Paris.



PL. 13 - NATURE MORTE AUX DES. 1912. Black chalk: 25 × 32 cm. (9³/₄ × 12¹/₂ in.)

Private Collection, France.

“Again with my usual desire to get as near to the reality of things as possible,” Braque has said, “I started to introduce letters into my pictures. These were forms which could not be deformed, because, being two-dimensional, they existed outside three-dimensional space; their inclusion in a picture allowed one to distinguish between objects which were situated in space and those which belonged outside

space.” In the above drawing the letters, ROS, refer to a sign for Vin Rosé (30 centimes a glass). Note how this sign is fixed to the wall by a trompe l’œil nail (with shadow) - a device that points up the contrast between an object “situated in space” and one “belonging outside space”, as well as the contrast between the conventional and cubist methods of spatial notation.



Pl. 14 - LA BOUTEILLE DE RHUM. 1914. Oil and charcoal on canvas: 46 × 55 cm. (18¹/₈ × 21¹/₂ in.)

Private Collection, Garches.



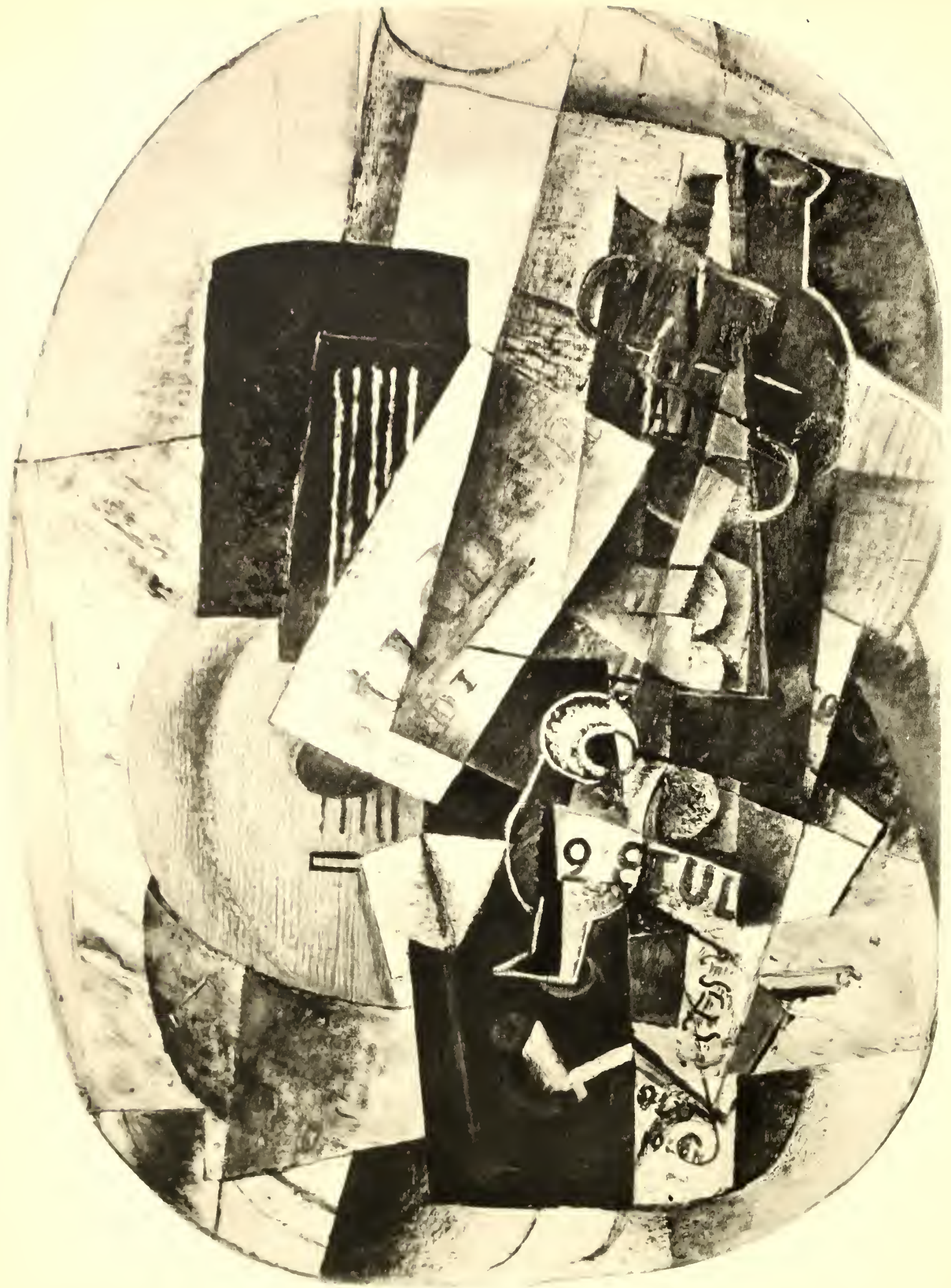
Pl. 15 - VIOLON ET PIPE. Winter 1912. Collage and charcoal: 72 × 104 cm. (28 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 41 in.)

Monsieur André Lefèvre, Paris.



PL. 16 - GUITARE ET CLARINETTE. 1918. Collage, charcoal and gouache on cardboard; 77 × 95 cm. (30 1/4 × 37 1/2 in.)

The Philadelphia Museum of Art (Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection).



Pl. 17 - NATURE MORTE AU GUITARE. 1913-14. Oil, charcoal and sand on canvas: 55 × 38 cm. (21½ × 15 in.) *Private Collection, New York.*



PL. 18 - NATURE MORTE AU GUITARE. 1918. Oil and sand on canvas: 91×55 cm. (35³/₄×21⁵/₈ in.) *Private Collection, France.*



Pl. 19 - GUITARE, JOURNAL ET VERRE, 1917. India ink: 18×27.5 cm. (7×10³/₄ in.)

Private Collection, France.

While convalescing from his war wounds, Braque, who was unable to paint, formulated a series of aphorisms on art and life, which provide a number of clues vital to an understanding of his work. One of these maxims is always being quoted — “J’aime la règle qui corrige l’émotion.” But it is characteristic of Braque’s love of paradox that he subsequently emended

this by adding the words, “J’aime l’émotion qui corrige la règle” — a truth which is born out by his later work. When these aphorisms were published in the literary review, Nord-Sud, in 1917, Braque embellished the pages with drawings (one of which is reproduced above) executed in a linear technique suited to cheap and easy reproduction in black-and-white.



Pl. 20 - LE GUERIDON NOIR. 1919. Oil and sand on canvas: 75 × 130 cm. (29 1/2 × 51 1/8 in.)

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris.



PL. 21 - CLARINETTE, COMPOTIER ET GUITARE. 1918. Oil on canvas: 73 × 100 cm. (28 ³/₄ × 39 ³/₈ in.) *Kunstmuseum, Basel.*

Up to 1914, Braque was preoccupied with solving formal and spatial problems and had neglected the sensuous aspects of art. After the war, however, he set about humanizing the "Synthetic" cubist style in a series of still-lives which are more naturalistic, richer in colour and texture and more lyrical in feeling than their austere predecessors. Instead of painting on a white or neutral ground, Braque now took to priming his canvases with black, because

this gave added resonance to his colours and enabled him to suggest a degree of depth without resorting to three-dimensional illusionism. When the first fruits of this new style — notably the *Guéridons* (e.g. plates 20 and 22) — were exhibited at Léonce Rosenberg's *Galerie de l'Effort Moderne* in March, 1919, Braque was at last acclaimed in Paris as a leading modern artist with a personality of his own.



PL. 22 - NATURE MORTE AU GUERIDON: "CAFE-BAR". 1919, Oil and sand on canvas: 160 × 82 cm. (63 × 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.) *Kunstmuseum, Basel,*



Pl. 23 · Corot · PORTRAIT DE CHRISTINE NILSSON. 1874. Oil on canvas: 80×57 cm. (31½×22½ in.) Museu de Arte, São Paulo.

The exhibition of 24 figure-paintings by Corot at the Salon d'Automne in 1909 was a revelation for Braque and many other artists. Corot's influence manifested itself shortly afterwards on the subject-matter and compositions of numerous cubist figure-paintings — notably those with musical instruments (e.g. plate 11) — by Braque and Picasso. But Braque's admiration for Corot has persisted, as witness the Souvenir de Corot (opposite), which is not a copy but

a variation on one of Corot's favourite themes, and also the various compositions (mid - 1930's) of women-painters and musicians in interiors which are reminiscent of Corot's subjects, if not his style. It is perhaps significant that Paul Rosenberg organized two major Corot exhibitions at his Paris gallery in 1928 and 1930, that is to say when he was Braque's dealer; also that a reproduction of Corot's Christine Nilsson is pinned to the wall of Braque's studio.



Pl. 24 - SOUVENIR DE COROT. c. 1922-23. Oil on canvas: 41 × 33 cm. (16 1/8 × 13 in.)

Monsieur Georges Braque, Paris.



PL. 25 · DESIGN FOR "LES FACHEUX" (never executed). 1924. Pencil and watercolour.

Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford.

Before 1914 Braque had treated the human body as material for formal analysis; in the early 1920's, he began to explore its sensuous potentialities. The two monumental Canéphorae (figures 4 a and 4 b) painted in 1922 announce a numerous series of paintings (plate 26 is one of the finest) and large drawings in charcoal and sanguine which preoccupied the artist for the next five years. Unlike the figures of the cubist period or of the 1930's which are mostly clothed, these giantesses are naked or lightly draped, and they

hold baskets of fruit in place of musical instruments. But they resemble later figure-paintings in that much about them is equivocal: they are monumental yet deliquescent, decorative yet imbued with life, massive yet flat. While working on the series, Braque was commissioned by Diaghilev to do the sets for *Les Fâcheux*, a ballet with music by Georges Auric. One of his projects for a drop-curtain (reproduced above) was based on a Canéphore — note how both figures are framed in dark cloud-like shapes—but it was not found suitable.



Pl. 26 - CANEPHORE. 1925. Oil and sand on canvas: 100 × 81 cm. (39½ × 32 in.)

National Gallery of Art, Washington (Chester Dale Collection).



Pl. 27 - ANEMONES. 1927. Oil and sand on canvas.

Private Collection.

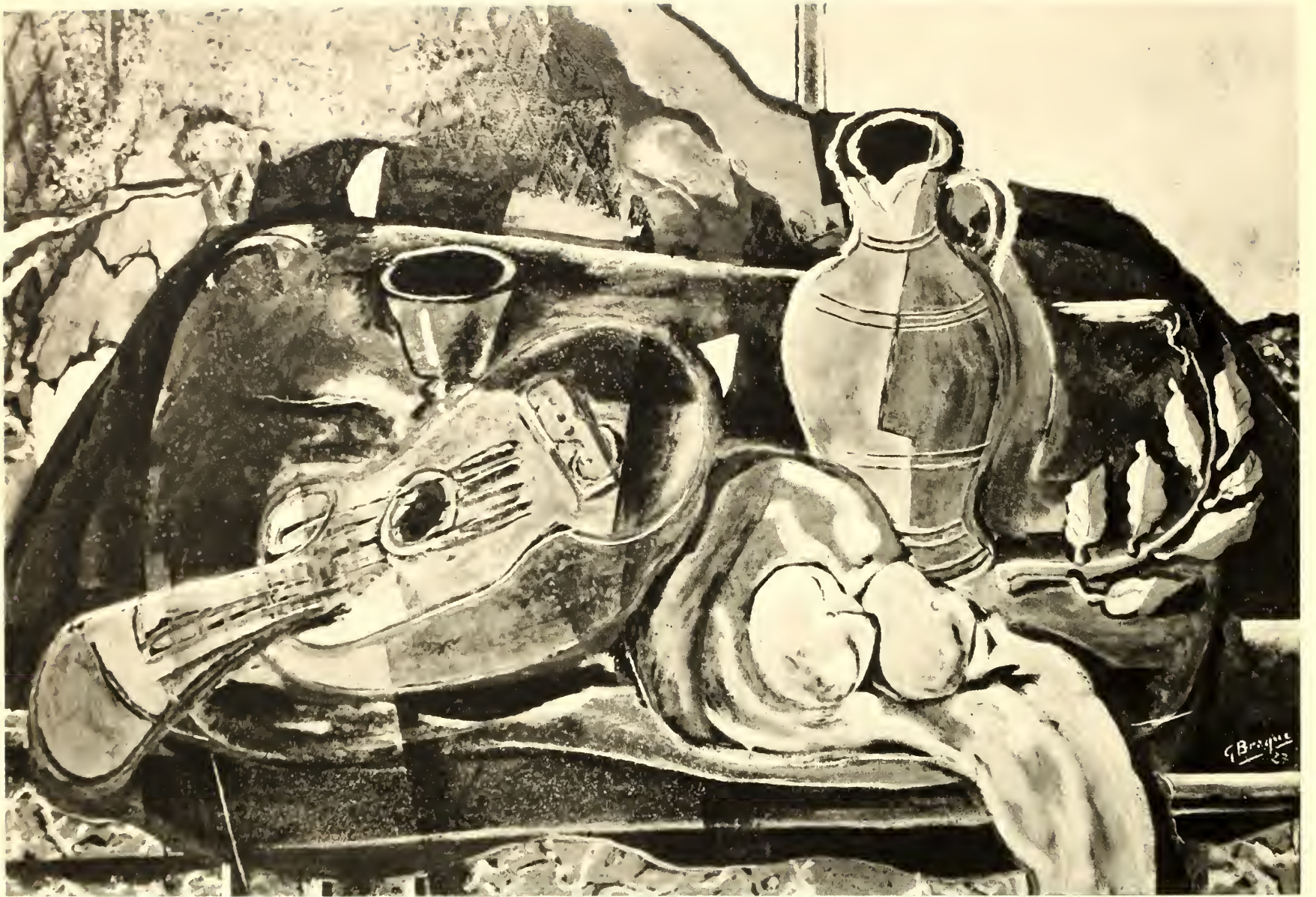
Braque's popularity with European and American collectors dates from the early 1920's and was due in great measure to the success of the cabinet pictures — mostly still-lives, rich in texture, sonorous in colour and often exaggeratedly oblong in format — which he began to paint soon after the end of the first world war. In these he tends to eschew the uncompromising style of his bigger, more adventurous works for a naturalistic idiom that is a blend of modern and traditional elements.

These charming paintings are one of the glories of the French still-life tradition — the 20th century equivalent of works by Chardin or Desportes, Manet or Cézanne. Vases of anemones (as above), bowls and baskets of peaches, figs and grapes (e.g. plates 31 a and b), plates of oysters and mussels and groups of musical instruments: these and other attributes of the good life are evoked with a sensuousness usually reserved for the human body.



PL. 28 - BOUTEILLE, VERRE ET FRUITS, 1924. Oil and sand on panel: 53 × 55 cm. (20 ¹/₈ × 21 ⁵/₈ in.)

Lord Amulree, London.



PL. 29 - MANDOLINE, VERRE, PICHET ET FRUITS. 1927. Oil and sand on canvas: 80 × 114 cm. (31½ × 44⅛ in.) Tate Gallery, London.

With a small repertory of still-life objects Braque has managed to obtain an amazingly wide range of effects. The composition of these two still-lives is virtually the same, but whereas

the one reproduced above is soft and deliquescent in treatment, plate 30 is conceived in terms of the flat planes of "synthetic" cubism.



PL. 30 - GUITARE, PICHET ET FRUITS. 1927. Oil and sand on canvas: 73,5 × 91,5 cm. (29 × 36 in.)

Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Schuster, New York.



Pl. 31 a - NATURE MORTE AUX FRUITS. 1924. Oil and sand on canvas: 26 × 65 cm. (10 1/4 × 25 1/2 in.)

Private Collection, Switzerland.



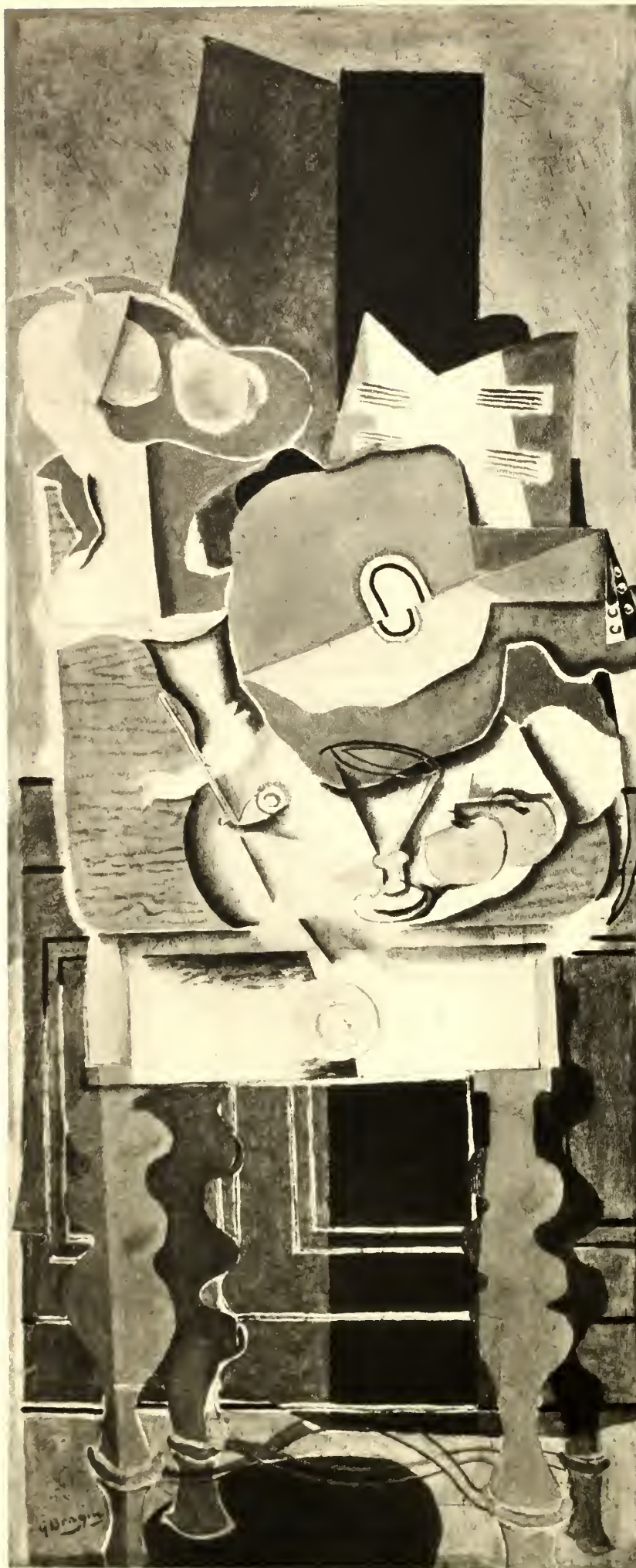
Pl. 31 b - CORBEILLE DE FRUITS. 1925. Oil and sand on canvas: 18 × 46 cm. (7 1/8 × 18 in.)

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., Saint Louis.



PL. 32 - COMPOTIER, BOUTEILLE ET VERRE. 1930. Oil on canvas.

Private Collection.



PL. 33 · LE GUERIDON, 1928. Oil and sand on canvas: 180 × 73 cm. (70¹/₈ × 28³/₄ in.)

Saidenberg Gallery, New York.



Pl. 34 - LE GUERIDON. c. 1928. Oil and sand on canvas.

Private Collection, Garches.



PL. 35 - LES BAIGNEUSES. 1931. Oil on canvas: 131 × 195,5 cm. (51 1/2 × 77 in.)

Mr. Edward Bragaline, New York.

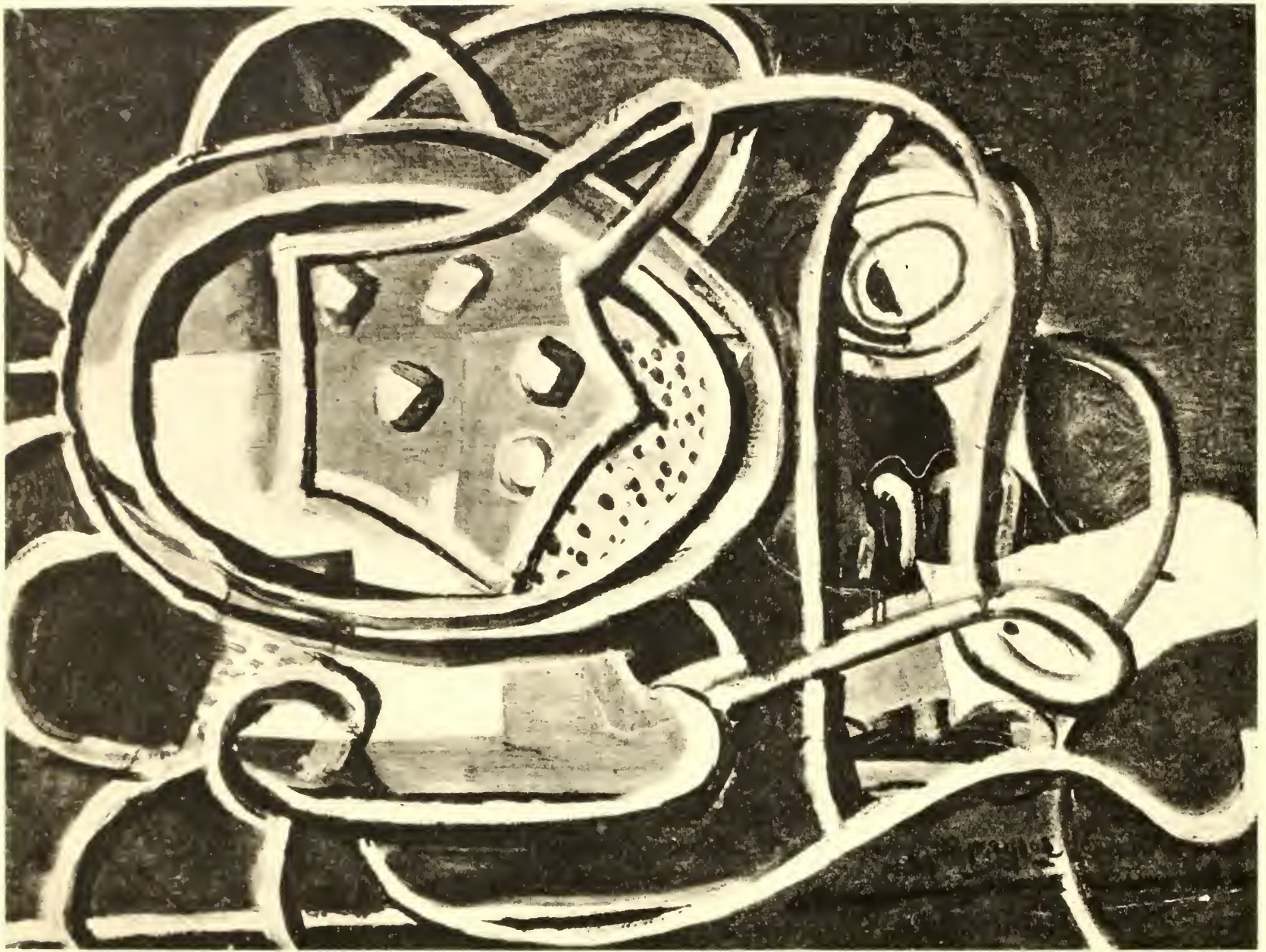
From 1912 onwards, Braque and his wife spent most of their summers in a small villa which they rented at Sorgues, near Avignon. But, towards the end of the 1920's, Braque began to weary of the brilliant meridional light and, for a change, took to visiting the Normandy coast. In 1931, he moved into a house which he had built for himself at Var-

engeville, near Dieppe, and, except for the war years, he has spent every subsequent summer there. This change of residence coincided with a change of style and subject-matter, bathers, seascapes and beach-scenes becoming favourite themes. Varengeville continues to supply the artist with subjects, e.g. plates 53 and 54.



Pl. 36 - LES FALAISES. 1938. Oil on canvas: 50 × 65 cm. (19 ³/₄ × 25 ¹/₂ in.)

Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Block, Chicago.



PL. 37 - COMPTOIR ET VERRE. 1931. Oil on canvas.

Private Collection.



Pl. 38 - NATURE MORTE AUX POMMES, 1933. Oil on canvas: 89 × 116,5 cm, (35 × 45 ³/₄ in.)

Galerie Maeght, Paris.



Pl. 39 - LA NAPPE ROUGE, 1933. Oil and sand on canvas: 96.5 × 130 cm. (38 × 51 in.)

Walter P. Chrysler, Warrenton, Virginia.



PL. 40 - NATURE MORTE A LA MANDOLINE. 1938. Oil and sand on canvas: 114 × 146 cm. (44 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 57 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Block, Chicago.



Pl. 41 - BUSTE DE FEMME, c. 1937, Black chalk: 19 × 13.5 cm. (7 1/2 × 5 1/4 in.)

Monsieur Georges Braque, Paris.

“Profile and silhouette: evolution and progress” — this, one of Braque’s more puzzling aphorisms, does not really explain why the artist divides his figures vertically down the middle into a dark and light area. Some critics have rashly suggested that he was hinting at a psychological duality; but the true explanation, as nearly always with Braque, is a pictorial one. The double profile is a device, deriving from cubism, which permits the artist to indicate form without recourse

to modelling and perspective, to confront the spectator with two aspects of a figure simultaneously, to articulate an otherwise flat plane and to enhance the decorative effect. Braque’s attempt to humanize his work by introducing figures into his compositions lasted from 1936 until 1939. Subsequently he has virtually abandoned figure-pictures, but — paradoxically — his interiors have become the more imbued with life for being peopled with inanimate objects instead of human beings.



PL. 42 - LE DUO. 1937. Oil and sand on canvas: 130 × 160 cm. (51¹/₈ × 63 in.)

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris.



Pl. 43 - NATURE MORTE A LA PALETTE, 1913. Oil and sand on canvas: 50 × 61 cm. (19³/₄ × 29 in.) Galerie Nathan, Zurich.

Note how Braque used sand in different ways to vary the surfaces of these two paintings. In the still-life above the jug is built up with a very thick impasto, so that it stands out in high relief and has a rich tactile quality. In plate 44, on

the other hand, the artist has primed the whole of his canvas with a mixture of sand and gesso which gives a dry, matt surface like a fresco. Note also how he has run a comb through the paint in the background in imitation of wood-graining.



PL. 44 - NATURE MORTE A LA PALETTE. 1939. Oil and sand on canvas.

Private Collection.



Pl. 45 - VANITAS, 1938. Oil on canvas: 54 × 65 cm. (21 ¹/₄ × 25 ¹/₂ in.)

Galerie Charpentier, Paris.

In 1938 Braque embarked on a series of still lifes entitled Vanitas, because their subject-matter includes such traditional reminders of mortality as rosaries, skulls, mirrors and crucifixes. These allegories, which were inspired by 17th century Dutch still-lives, are sometimes said to have been intended as oblique tributes on the part of the artist to his wife's piety. Braque, however, has categorically denied the

presence of symbols in his work. It would seem that the tactile possibilities of these objects interested him more than their philosophical or religious connotations. This and the painting opposite reveal the degree of Braque's obsession with patterned surfaces in the late 1930's. "Ornamentation," he has said, "helps to free colour from form." Papier collé (collage) served a similar pictorial purpose.



PL. 46 - PEINTRE ET MODELE. 1939. Oil and sand on canvas: 130 × 175 cm. (51 × 69 in.)

Walter P. Chrysler, Warrenton, Virginia.



PL. 47 - L'INTERIEUR: LA TABLE GRISE, 1942. Oil and sand on canvas: 142 × 196 cm. (55¹/₈ × 77¹/₈ in.) Private Collection, Houston.

When the Germans invaded France in 1940, Braque left Paris and took refuge in the Pyrenees, but in the autumn he returned to the capital. Fearing that his house might be commandeered, the artist did not move from Paris for the rest of the war. Inevitably, a feeling of isolation and seclusion communicated itself to his work, as witness the somewhat melancholy and claustrophobic interiors — bedrooms, kitchens, studios, salons or bathrooms (e.g. plate 50) — which he painted between 1941 and 1945. After the war he continued to execute similar subjects, but the atmosphere is less

oppressive. Here are two versions of one of Braque's finest wartime interiors. The first (opposite) is little more than a subtle arrangement of coloured planes. The second (above) is more atmospheric and complex; passages of decoration and heavy impasto have been introduced, and the outline of the top of an easel has been superimposed on the composition. This device enables the spectator to identify himself with the artist and thus feel that he is actually seeing through and around the easel, and in physical touch with the objects portrayed.



Pl. 48 - L'INTERIEUR: LA TABLE GRISE. 1941. Oil and sand on canvas: 100 × 100 cm. (39³/₈ × 39³/₈ in.)

Private Collection, Italy.



PL. 49 - LE POELE. 1941. Oil and sand on canvas: 146 × 89 cm. (57¹/₂ × 35 in.) *Private Collection.*



PL. 50 - LA TOILETTE AUX CARREAUX VERTS, 1945. Oil and sand on canvas: 162 × 64 cm. (63 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington.

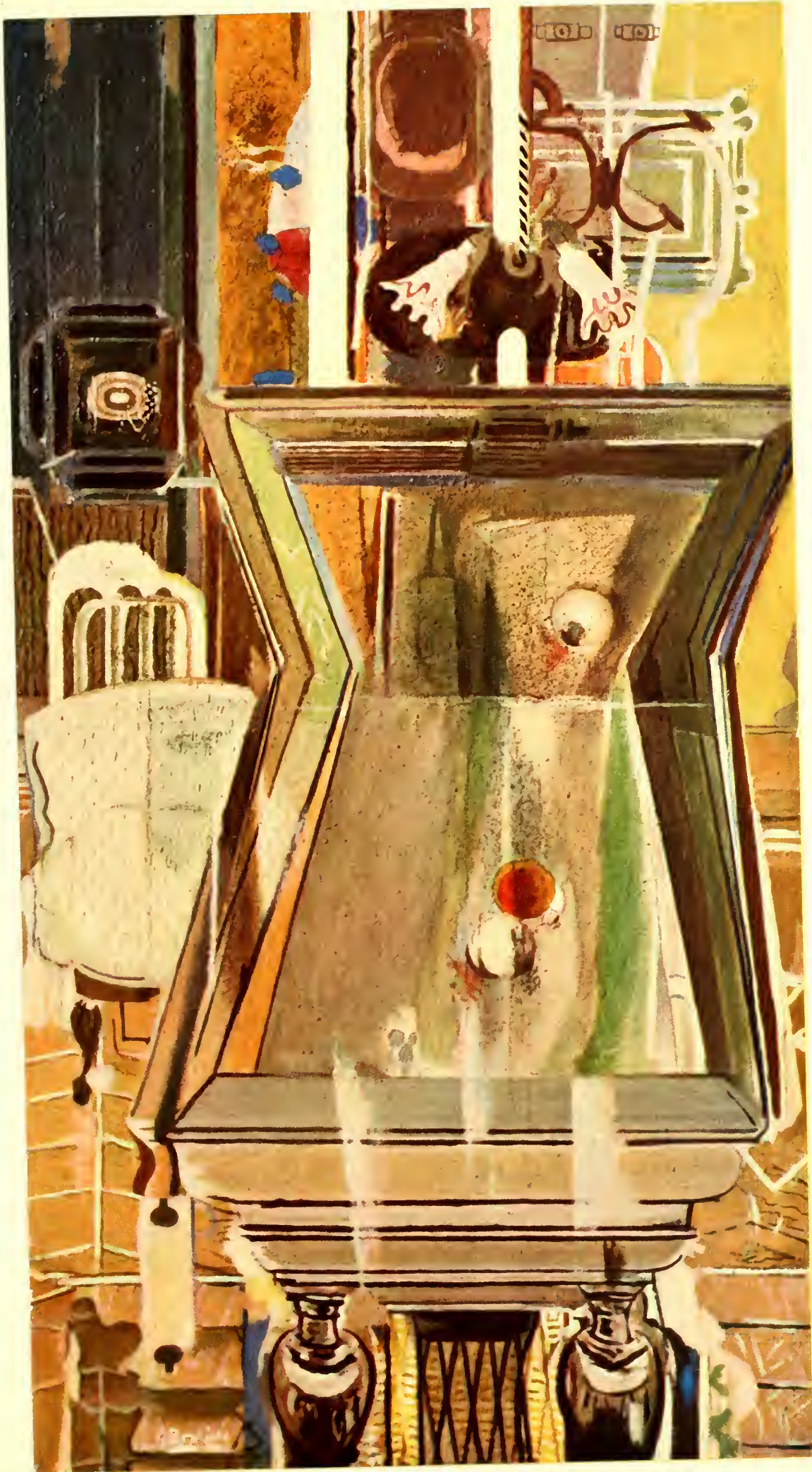


PL. 51 - SKETCH FOR "LE BILLARD". c. 1911. Black chalk.

Monsieur Georges Braque, Paris.

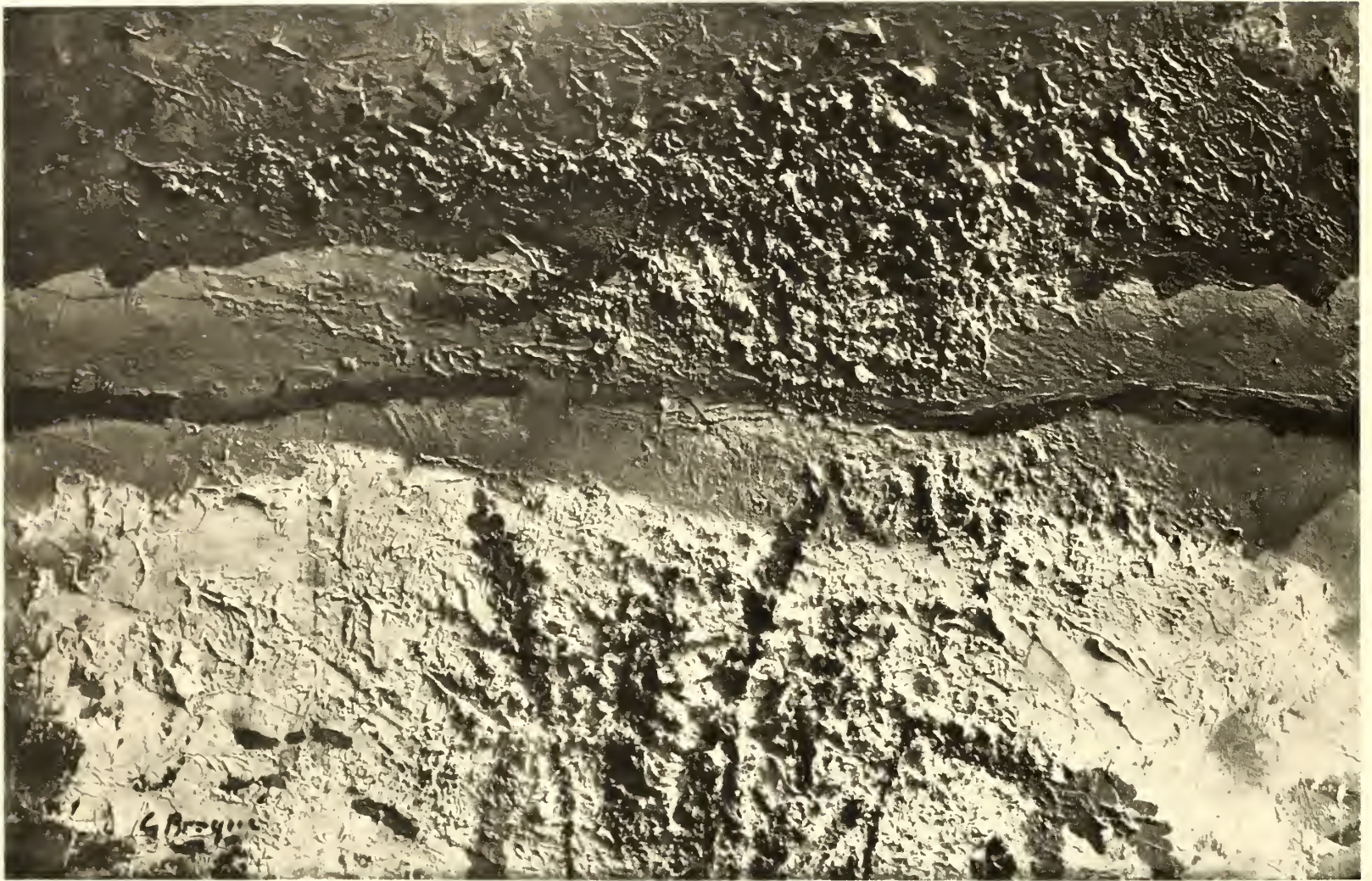
In 1911 Braque started work on a series of Billiard Tables, a series which was frequently interrupted by illness. A notable feature of these paintings is a vertical or, as here, horizontal bend, which articulates the table-top and forces the surface of it forwards at the spectator. If we compare the sketch above with the painting opposite — the culminant picture of the

series — we will be able to appreciate Braque's "metamorphic" way of working. The fish bowl (top left) has turned into what may be a telephone; the window at the back has become a framed mirror or picture; while the lighting-fixture has merged with a hat-stand and the "rhyming" outline of the back of a chair.



PL. 52 - LE BILLARD. 1944-52. Oil and sand on canvas: 195 × 97 cm. (76 ³/₄ × 38 ¹/₄ in.)

Mr. Jacques Gellman, Mexico City.



Pl. 53 · LE CHAMP DE BLE. 1950. Oil and sand on canvas: 36,5 × 56 cm. (14¹/₄ × 22 in.)

Herr Gustav Zumsteg, Zurich.



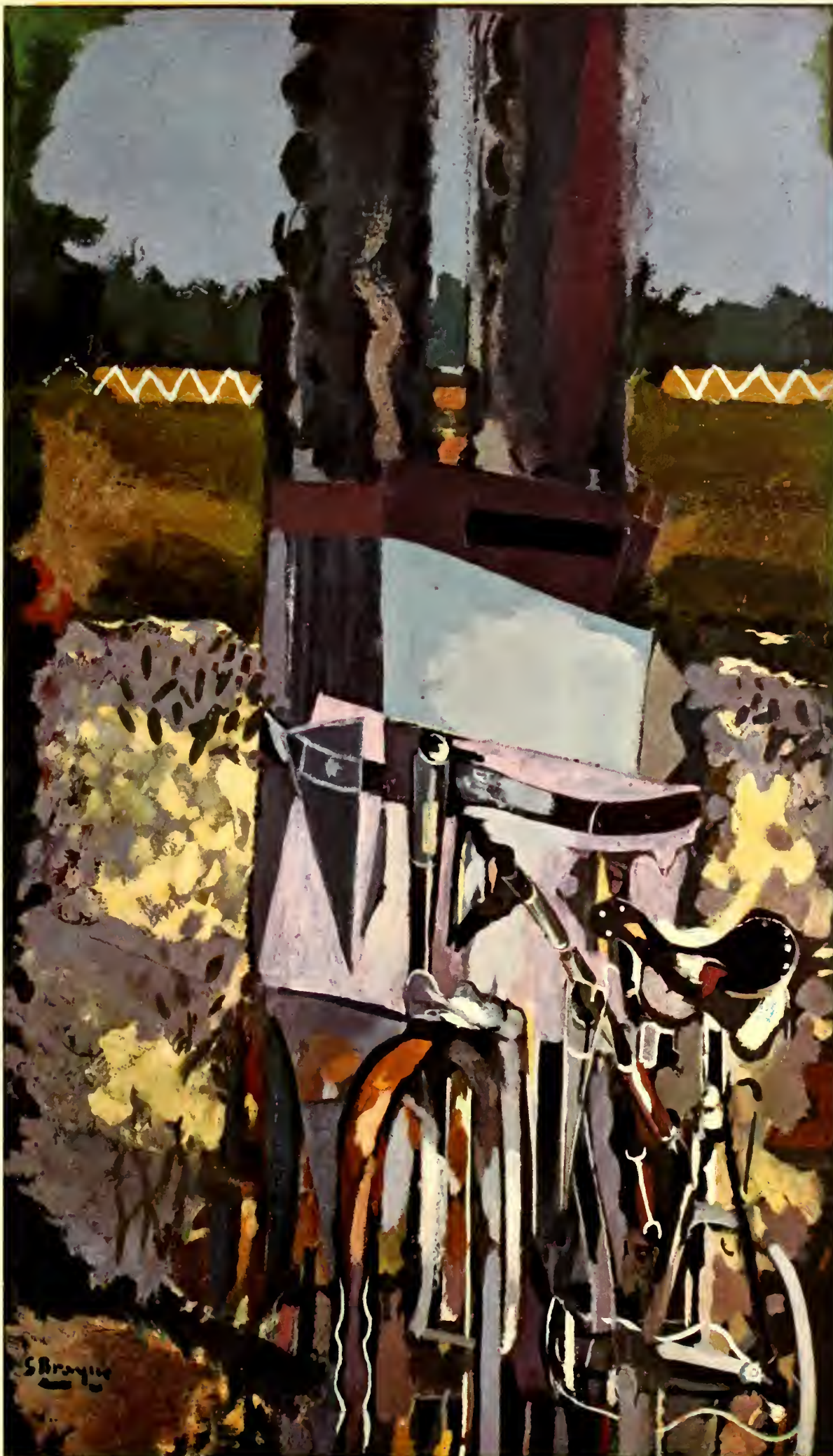
PL. 54 - BARQUES SUR LA PLAGE. 1949. Oil on canvas: 46 × 61 cm. (18 1/8 × 24 in.)

Mr. Crozer Martin, Cœligny.



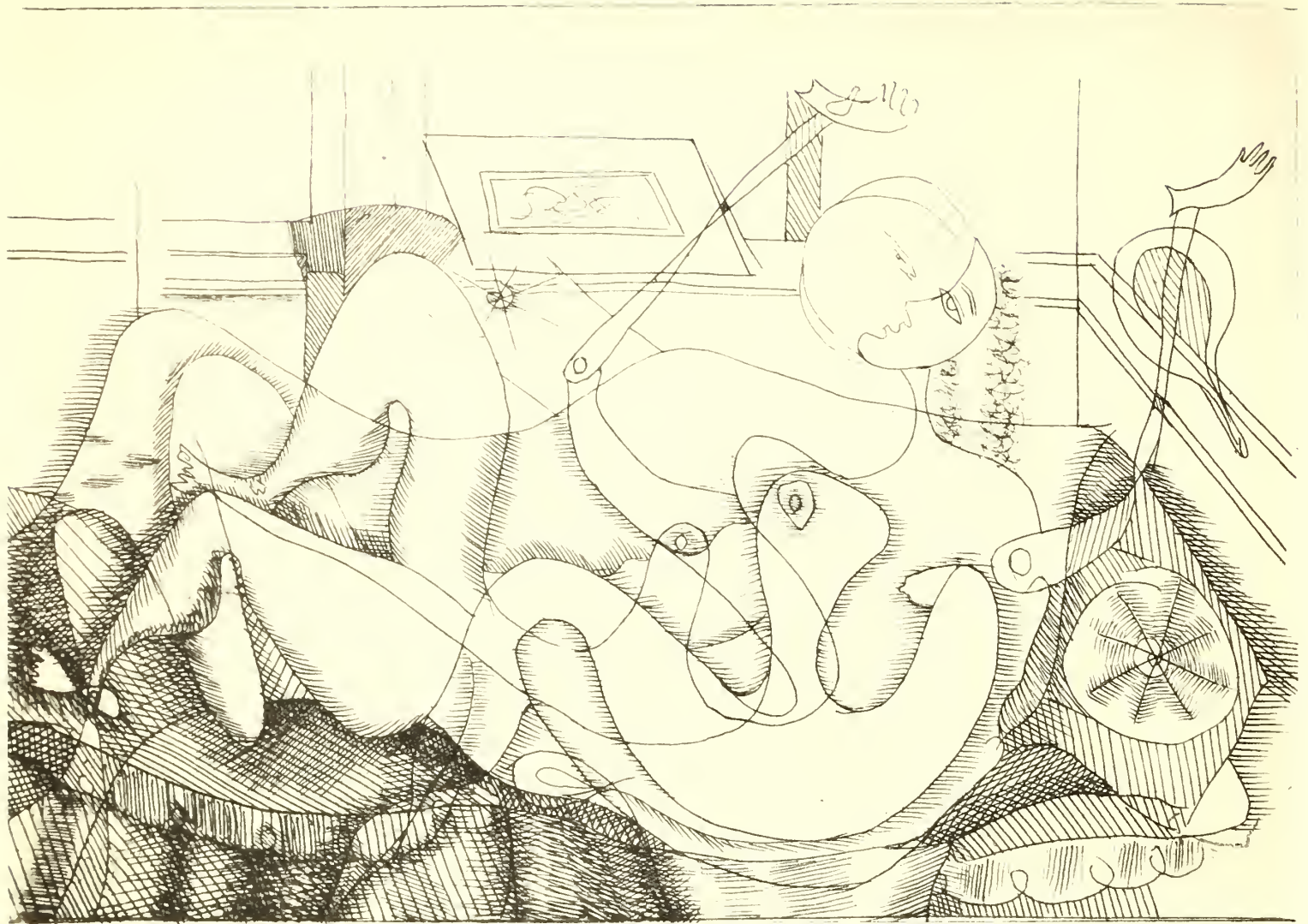
Pl. 55 - LE PHILODENDRON. 1951-52. Oil and sand on canvas: 129,5×74 cm. (51×29 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)

Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington.



PL. 56 - LA BICYCLETTE. 1951-52. Oil and sand on canvas: 133×78 cm. (52 ¹/₄ × 30 ³/₄ in.)

Monsieur Menachem Rosensaft, Montreux.



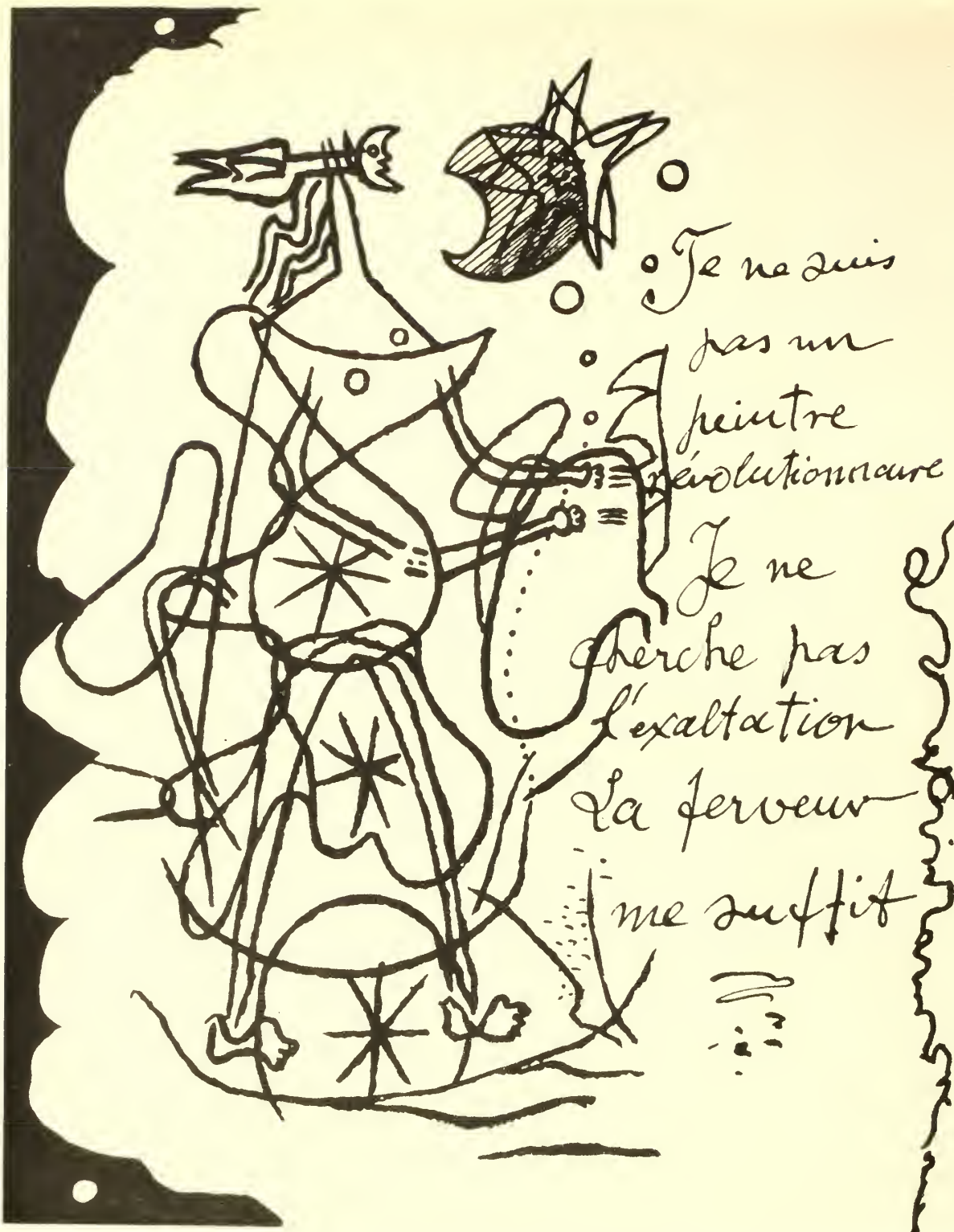
Pl. 57 - NU ALLONGE. 1934. Engraving: 18 × 30 cm. (7 × 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

In 1930-31 when his style and subject-matter were undergoing radical changes, Braque embarked on a series of *Baigneuses*, in which the female figure is reduced to a simplified pattern of flat arabesques and free, swirling contours. Some of these (e.g. plate 35) are interesting experiments in a decorative vein; others do not seem to have pleased the artist, for in recent years he destroyed one of the most important and repainted two others, one of which became the picture on the opposite page. Thanks to the engraving reproduced above,

which gives us a rough idea of the original appearance of the *Femme Couchée*, it is possible to see that the basic forms have not greatly changed. The artist has simply re-interpreted them in an idiom which harks back to "Analytical" cubism and yet is a free and arbitrary as that of the late *Ateliers*. As a result, the *Femme Couchée* conveys a far greater experience of form and space than the other *Baigneuses* of 1930-31; moreover, it is a unique work; for like no other, it synthesizes three phases — early, middle, and late — of Braque's development.

Pl. 58 - FEMME COUCHEE, 1930-52. Oil and sand on canvas: 73 × 180 cm. (28 ³/₄ × 70 ¹/₈ in.)

Galerie Maeght, Paris.



Pl. 59 - PAGE DU CAHIER, c. 1947. India ink.

Like plate 58, Ajax (opposite) also relates to the crucial period, 1930-31, when Braque's art branched out in fresh directions. One of the new techniques which he developed was to engrave slabs of painted (usually black) plaster with a hieroglyphic design representing a mythological deity. Braque first tried out this technique, which derives from pre-classical Greek intaglios, in a group of four decorative murals (1932), then shortly afterwards executed

a large painting (Odysseus) and a series of engravings to illustrate Hesiod's *Théogonie* in the same linear style. Most of the *plâtres gravés* (e.g. figure 7) and lithographs (e.g. the *Helios* series: 1946-47) of similar mythological subjects are decorative objects or pleasing ideograms. Ajax, however, transcends the decorative limitations of the genre; it is one of Braque's most original and equivocal images.



Pl. 60 - AJAX, 1949-54. Oil on paper: 180 × 72 cm. (70 ¹/₈ × 28 ¹/₄ in.)

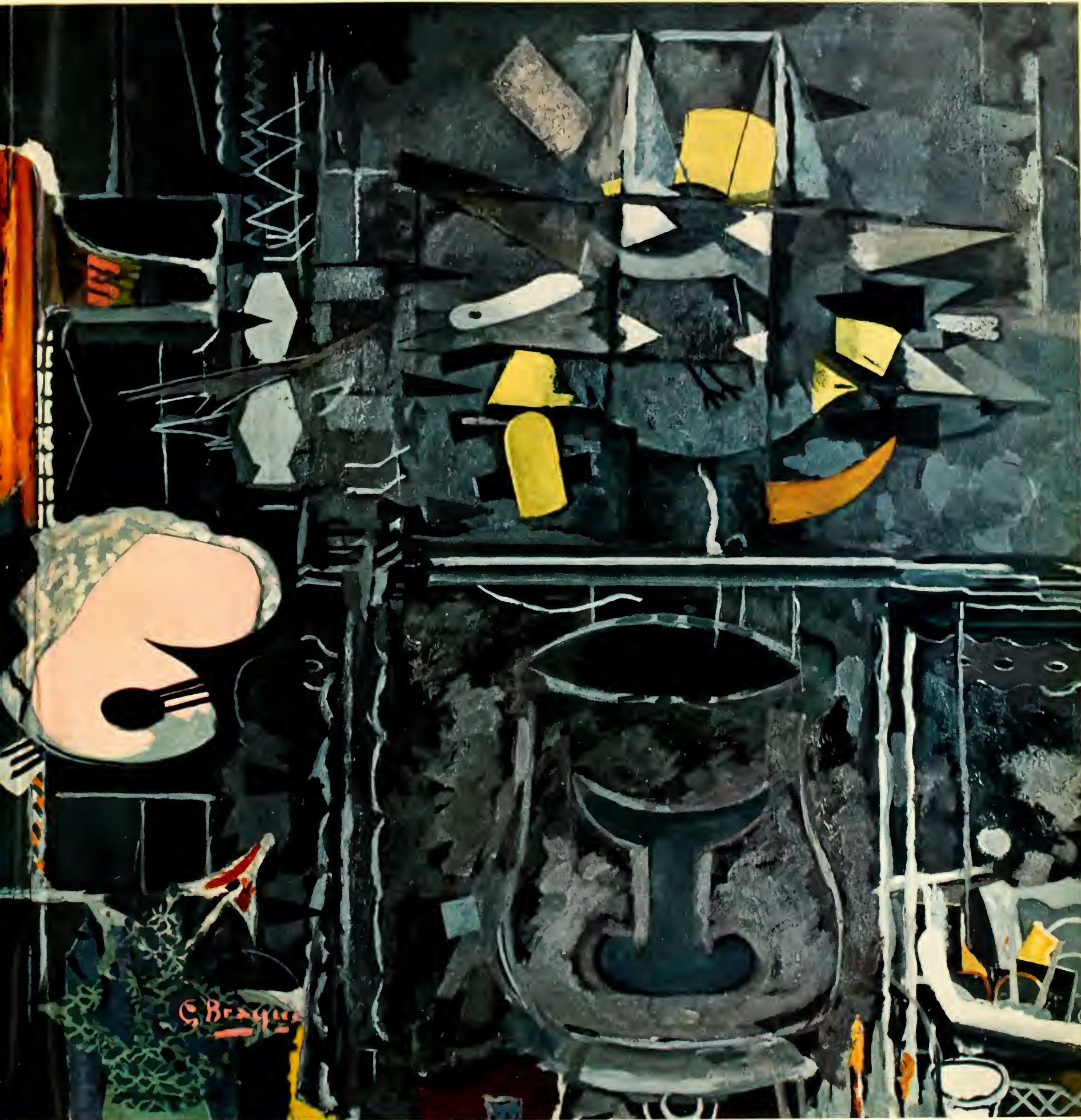
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Marx, Chicago.



Pl. 61 - ATELIER VII (unfinished state). (Photo Doisneau).

The above photograph shows the artist at work on this picture in 1953 when it was his seventh Atelier. He subsequently painted Atelier VIII,

the culminant painting of the series, and then reworked this one into its definitive form (see opposite) to which the number IX was assigned.



Pl. 62 - ATELIER IX (ex-VII), 1952-56. Oil on canvas: 145.5 × 146 cm. (57 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 57 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

Galerie Maeght, Paris.



Pl. 63 - L'OISEAU ET SON NID. 1957. Watercolour, gouache, pencil and India ink: 21,5 × 28,5 cm. (8 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.) Private Collection, France.

Since 1945 birds have played an increasingly important role in Braque's art. After being a dominant element in the Ateliers, they provided the subject for the Louvre ceiling (figure 8) in 1952-53, and for a decoration in a villa at Saint-Paul-de-Vence in 1954. Then, in the early summer of 1955, Braque visited the bird-sanctuary in the Camargue belong-

ing to his friend Lukas Hoffmann, and was greatly impressed by the spectacle of flamingos, egrets and other birds flying about under a heavy sky. This experience indirectly inspired a number of works in different media, including *A Tire d'Aile* (plate 67) and these two evocations of a bird alighting on its nest.



PL. 64 - L'OISEAU ET SON NID, 1957-58. Oil and sand on canvas: 113 × 131 cm. (44 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

Monsieur Georges Braque, Paris.



Pl. 65 · NATURE MORTE A LA SERVIETTE. c. 1947. Oil on paper mounted on canvas: 49 × 63 cm. (19 ¹/₄ × 24 ³/₄ in.) *Matthiesen Gallery, London.*



PL. 66 - PICHET, HUITRES ET SERVIETTE. 1954-57. Oil on canvas: 60 × 73 cm. (23 ⁵/₈ × 28 ³/₈ in.)

Mlle. Mariette Lachaud, Paris.



PL. 67 - A FIRE D'AILE, 1956. Oil and sand on canvas mounted on three-ply: 115 × 171 cm. (45 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 67 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.) *Monsieur Georges Braque, Paris.*

Pr. 68 - L'OISEAU. 1958. Oil on canvas: 82 × 163 cm. (32¹/₄ × 64¹/₄ in.)

Galerie Maeght, Paris.

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