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# The Cubist's View of Montmartre: A Stylistic and Contextual Analysis of Juan Gris' Cityscape Imagery, 1911-1912

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THE CUBIST'S VIEW OF MONTMARTRE: A STYISTIC AND CONTEXTUAL  
ANALYSIS OF JUAN GRIS' CITYSCAPE IMAGERY, 1911-1912.

by

Geoffrey David Schwartz

A Thesis Submitted in  
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ABSTRACT  
THE CUBIST'S VIEW OF MONTMARTRE: A STYLISTIC AND CONTEXTUAL  
ANALYSIS OF JUAN GRIS' CITYSCAPE IMAGERY, 1911-1912

by

Geoffrey David Schwartz

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014  
Under the Supervision of Professor Kenneth Bendiner

This thesis examines the stylistic and contextual significance of five Cubist cityscape pictures by Juan Gris from 1911 to 1912. These drawn and painted cityscapes depict specific views near Gris' Bateau-Lavoir residence in Place Ravignan. Place Ravignan was a small square located off of rue Ravignan that became a central gathering space for local artists and laborers living in neighboring tenements. In these early Cubist cityscapes, Gris attempted to reinterpret Montmartre's architectural landscape in abstracted geometric forms. My stylistic analyses establish several contextual readings for Gris' cityscapes that first address his profound interest in earlier Cubist landscapes painted by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque from 1908 and 1909. Gris' Cubist views of Place Ravignan reference his dual relationships with each painter as an honorific means of celebrating their Cubist innovations. I also explore the sociological content of Gris' cityscapes in view of his personal experiences in Montmartre. My discussion references four illustrations Gris produced for *L'Assiette au Beurre* between 1909 and 1910, which present similar pictorial attributes to the cityscapes. The *L'Assiette* illustrations are significant to my discussion because they establish an accurate socio-economic and political context for Gris' initial Cubist cityscapes.

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To

My wife Heather, our lovely daughter Ella Rayna, my sister Lauren

And

My mother Dr. Nancy B. Schwartz

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## Introduction

During the summer of 1910 José Victoriano Carmelo Carlos González Pérez, known as *Juan Gris*, began to draw and paint a small number of still-life compositions and portraits in a rented studio in Montmartre.<sup>1</sup> Among these early Cubist works, Gris created five cityscape paintings and drawings of his Montmartre neighborhood in 1911-1912. These five works reveal the artist's early experiments in reducing architectural forms to essential geometric components. Devoid of human subjects, Gris emphasizes the structure of his buildings in an imaginative two-and three- dimensional format that mirrors the *Cezannesque* technique Georges Braque (1881-1963) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) implemented in their painted landscapes of 1908 and 1909. Inspired by both artists' first Cubist works, Gris' cityscapes demonstrate a stylistic response to Braque's landscape series of L'Estaque in 1908 and Picasso's scenes of Horta de Ebro from 1909. Gris' cityscapes represent tentative experiments in a Cubist manner that were shown only to close colleagues prior to his first exhibitions at the Salon des Independants and the Salon de la Section d'Or in 1912.

This thesis explores Gris' artistic approach and the subject matter of these early works in an attempt to reveal their deeper sociological themes. The locations and architectural subject matter depicted in each cityscape reference specific experiences from Gris' early life in France. Gris was a Spanish émigré living in a diverse community of artists, laborers, and political activists in Montmartre. His five scenes capture various views of Place Ravignan. Place Ravignan later renamed Place Emile-Gordeau is a small square at the northernmost point of rue Ravignan. Gris' Bateau-Lavoir studio was located in the

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<sup>1</sup> John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II, The Painter of Modern Life: 1907-1917* (New York: Random House, 1996): 177.

square at 13, rue Ravignan. Before the start of the First World War, le Bateau-Lavoir had been the epicenter of artistic activity in Paris and it was the birth place of Cubism. The images call to mind Gris' brief interaction with Picasso at the building between 1907 and 1909 as a close neighbor and painting apprentice. As we shall see, Gris frequented Picasso's studio during this two year period, and after observing the artist's collaborative works with Braque, Gris sought his own painting career in Cubism. The experimental quality of Gris' stylization in the works and his depiction of the Bateau-Lavoir and other neighboring tenements are visual referents to these early artistic engagements with Picasso and Braque. The images refer to past experiences in Gris' discovery and stylistic development in Cubism, and as a specific group, they purport an honorific purpose towards such personal memories. Also, his scenes of Place Ravignan pictorially convey the artist's socio-economic status and political identity in Montmartre. Gris' dilapidated tenement structures underscore the impoverished working-class occupants of Place Ravignan. These buildings, reimagined through Gris' use of chiaroscuro, express an emotive barrenness that had been common sights in Montmartre's industrial landscape. As a poor artist in Paris, Gris lived in abject poverty at the building despite earning a small wage by drawing illustrations for French and Spanish satirical magazines from 1906 to 1912. Like other avant-garde peers at the Bateau-Lavoir, he subsisted on donated goods by shop owners in the community. As his architectural subject matter suggests, Gris' low economic status bound him to Place Ravignan; he rarely traveled outside of Montmartre between 1907 and 1912.

In view of these artistic and social themes, I argue for a new contextual reading of Gris' earliest cityscape drawings and oil paintings from 1911 to 1912. This contextual

examination includes a formal analysis of Gris' approach in an attempt to discern his stylistic development and reveal his personal perceptions of life in Montmartre. My study is important because it discusses each work as a means of articulating specific purposes underlying Gris' Cubist scenes, which presently have not been analyzed in past studies. This approach is different from previous scholarship, which primarily offers stylistic descriptions of individual cityscapes in summarized formats. My investigation attempts to move beyond a formal analysis of Gris' imagery by disclosing possible causes for their production that correspond with known biographical accounts of his life at the Bateau-Lavoir. This examination includes a focus on the artist's pre-Cubist career in graphic illustration by critiquing several drawings Gris produced before 1911. In illustrations published by *L'Assiette au Beurre* from 1909 to 1910, Gris incorporated urban views of Montmartre that accompanied the text and political theme of each issue. Stylistically, the compositional placement of his buildings in these drawings resembles locales near Place Ravignan that Gris may have referenced for later Cubist cityscapes. The *L'Assiette* drawings are significant to my discussion because they pictorially disclose particular societal factors that help define Gris' identity in Montmartre. Gris' troubling scenes of economic despair and political activism printed in the magazine are continuing sociological themes that appear in his later Cubist cityscapes.

### ***Place Ravignan, 1911***

Amid Gris' initial self-portraits and still-life compositions from 1910 and 1911, an accurate chronology of the cityscapes is unknown. As we shall see, his Cubist scenes were drawn first and used for later painted cityscapes. An early sketch entitled *Place*

*Ravignan* (fig.1) may have been Gris' first Cubist depiction of Montmartre. The image reveals a view of rue Ravignan, which is a short street leading uphill to Place Ravignan at the top of Montmartre's Butte. Immediately adjacent to the square was a shabby apartment complex referred to as a "Bateau-Lavoir" or laundry barge.<sup>2</sup> Gris' studio was located in the Bateau-Lavoir and his drawing captures his residence. The building's various studios and Place Ravignan were gathering places where Gris interacted with Picasso and Braque. Gris' Cubist manner developed by socializing with Picasso whose Cubist theories were presented to him in private and group discussions during the period from 1907-1911. Thus his first cityscape of Place Ravignan and the Bateau-Lavoir visually acknowledge Gris' early stylistic development and his life.

Place Ravignan was an essential component of life on rue Ravignan, especially at the Bateau-Lavoir studios. The square was a multi-functional space for local residents, and possibly fatigued visitors making their way uphill towards Montmartre's Butte.<sup>3</sup> For Gris and his neighbors, Place Ravignan was a common gathering area for socializing, and served a more practical function since the square's public fountain was an essential source of fresh water for cooking and bathing.<sup>4</sup> Gris frequented the site daily after 1907.

Gris' *Place Ravignan* does not depict the entire square but rather, it shows a more intimate view of a neighboring tenement building. From the square Gris apparently is

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<sup>2</sup> Jeanine Warnod, *Washboat Days* (New York: Orion Press-Grossman Publishers, 1972): 4. Max Jacob (1876-1944) was assumingly the first occupant to reference the building as a "bateau lavoir" upon noticing laundry hanging outside from windows as he approached the entrance for the first time in 1904. But Jacob's fellow poet-writer neighbor Andre Salmon (1881-1969) is also mentioned as using the term.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, *Juan Gris: His Life and Work* (London: Lund Humpheries, 1947): 3. In this early biographical text on Gris, Kahnweiler describes this walk as a "climb" up steps in the sidewalk leading uphill to visit different artists and poets living at the Bateau-Lavoir.

<sup>4</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 298. For an extended discussion on public fountains in Paris also see, Eugen Weber, *France: Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986): 54-56. Drinking water from outdoor wells were polluted by waste contaminates seeping into underground catch pools. Also indoor standpipes-as in the Bateau-Lavoir provided unsafe water that had harmful pollutants from nearby industries and collected waste from the Seine River.

observing the Bateau-Lavoir. The front entrance to the apartments faces the square, but its precise location to it isn't recorded. Yet, in the lower left corner a portion of a single story structure resembles the Bateau Lavoir's distinctive roof. When compared with a 1946 photograph of the square by Brassai (1899-1984) (fig.2), Gris' sketch doesn't appear to be an accurate representation. In the photograph, a narrow four-story building flanks the Bateau Lavoir's left side. In Gris' image the buildings are reversed. It appears that Gris is creating a composite image of several buildings in Place Ravignan. The tree and lantern in Brassai's photo are located at the front entrance of 13, rue Ravignan, but in Gris' drawing these objects are placed in front of his apartment building. Also, Gris drew a fence in the front of the Bateau Lavoir that was actually located at the concierge's adjoining property at the intersection with rue d'Orchampt.<sup>5</sup>

### **A stylistic interpretation via Picasso and Braque's landscapes**

Gris' re-interpretation of the scene was intentional. He was interested in addressing the underlying geometric structure of his architectural subject matter, and he envisioned the scene in two and three dimensional formats. His Cubist approach with its reduction of form, underscores the scenes' essential geometric components. To achieve this, Gris manipulated the spatial distance between objects in the foreground and background by sketching the tree and street lantern as simple abstract forms, which appear flat against the building's façade. The building's left side is drawn in perspective, and the roof of the adjoining structure is slightly pitched. Both architectural elements convey a greater sense of three-dimensional space along rue Ravignan and simultaneously contrast with the two-

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<sup>5</sup> Warnod, *Washboat Days*, 14.

dimensional tree and lantern. Gris' chiaroscuro enhances the three-dimensionality of the building's façade. Contrasts of light and shadow do not clearly define specific objects in Gris' drawing, but instead become repeating geometric shapes that visually imply spatially ambiguous relationships between abstracted forms. Light shafts striking the middle and lower sections of the tree's trunk, for instance, are triangular shapes, which also reflect off of the building's façade. Gris' triangular forms also appear on the left-side of the building where diagonal lines extend through the building and into the fence and sidewalk.

Gris' visual re-interpretation of Montmartre's residential architecture in the *Place Ravignan* sketch was a significant first step in expressing his initial Cubist conceptions. The drawing was a visual means of articulating his Cubist inquiries. Gris' interest in defining the geometries and creating an inaccurate depiction of rue Ravignan parallel Picasso's 1909 experimental exercises. Gris' drawing is reminiscent of Picasso's landscape series of Horta de Ebro or Horta de San Juan in rural Catalonia. Gris was a frequent guest in Picasso's studio, and he may have observed these Horta landscapes after Picasso returned from Spain in September, 1909. In one painting from this series entitled *Houses on the Hill, Horta de Ebro, 1909* (fig.3), Picasso broke down the architectural setting into different groupings of elongated rectangular blocks rising above the hill-top. These buildings seem to recede away from the viewer into space and yet a single rooftop near the picture's lower edge appears to push forward by Picasso's use of reversed perspective. The exaggerated shapes of Picasso's buildings present further perceptual issues throughout the scene as various pitched rooftops imaginatively continue beyond the town, and thus mimic distant mountain slopes. In a less dramatic sense, the

rectangular form of Gris' single tenement structure resembles the jagged cubic design of Horta de Ebro. In Gris' scene the flattened chestnut tree and lantern confusingly appear three-dimensional against the building's façade through the artist's effective use of chiaroscuro. The visual confusion of these compositional elements enhances inconsistencies between the perceived spaces of two and three dimensional objects. Like Picasso's visual ambiguities, Gris created a similar perceptual dilemma in the shaded area left of the tree and façade where there is no clear spatial discrepancy between the sidewalk and the building's façade.

The pictorial links between Picasso's Horta landscape and Gris' earliest cityscape drawing are remarkably apparent despite each artist's singular technical approach and subject matter. Gris introduced Picasso's concepts into his preparatory sketch, but his methods also involved appropriating similar compositional techniques from Braque. Gris met Braque through Picasso at the Bateau-Lavoir in 1907, and admired the elder Frenchman's post-Fauvist paintings.<sup>6</sup> In mid-1908 Braque painted fifteen landscapes of L'Estaque, a Mediterranean coastal town near Marseille where Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) painted his earlier Post-Impressionist works. Like Picasso during this two-year period from 1908 to 1909, Braque took a serious interest in Cezanne's landscapes after observing fifty-six works by the late artist at the Salon d' Automne of 1907.<sup>7</sup> Each artist was interested not merely in the works themselves, but also in Cezanne's modernist approach.<sup>8</sup> The Cubists were intrigued by Cezanne's ability to paint from life based upon

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<sup>6</sup> Mark Rosenthal, *Juan Gris* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1983): 150.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 52.



his own “inner logic” and personal “sensations” of a specific scene from nature.<sup>9</sup> Through Cezanne’s concepts, an artist could “discover the logic of nature and express it” by first observing the underlying design of shapes and forms experienced in “visible reality”. Cezanne searched for the basic observable ‘cylinder, sphere, and cone’.<sup>10</sup> Braque experimented with Cezanne’s concepts in a Mediterranean landscape entitled *Houses at L’Estaque* (fig.4). In this picture he intentionally depicted the town as a condensed cluster of buildings in a forested setting. He simplified the rural stone houses as basic cubes with jagged pitched roofs tilting at varying angles and separated by vegetation. Rooflines and façades overlap each other in an ascending vertical orientation. Braque created an “elision of planes” by utilizing a painting technique known as *passage*.<sup>11</sup> *Passage* was invented by Cezanne to merge planes together ‘leaving one edge unpainted or light in tone’ that suggested spatial distance in a two-dimensional format.<sup>12</sup> The “light-refracting planes” in *Houses at L’ Estaque*, create spaces between building facades and surrounding vegetation. However, the landscape’s outlined forms and shaded “ochres and greens” negate Cezanne’s color theories.<sup>13</sup> As a means of avoiding perspective in his landscapes, Cezanne used “modulating” color combinations of closely valued hues that cause slight variations in the “relative spatial location” of objects throughout a particular setting.<sup>14</sup> In order to achieve this effect, Cezanne created “tangent strokes of warm and cool tones”

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<sup>9</sup> Sam Hunter and John Jacobus, *Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992): 30.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Also see Richard Shiff, *Cezanne and the End of Impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984). Shiff provides a more nuanced interpretation by suggesting that Cezanne never established a definitive painting technique that could be followed by other artists. Through his painting process, Cezanne made “negative decisions” that were intended to avoid utilizing academic methods for his own artistic purposes. Shiff states that Cezanne, “did one thing as if to escape doing another; he strove to deny all established academic principles”.

<sup>11</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 97.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Christine Poggi, “Cubist Faktura” in *Picasso and Braque: the Cubist Experiment 1910-1912*, ed. Charles Dibble (New Haven: Yale University, 2011): 94.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 92.

instead of defining the composition via outlines and shading.<sup>15</sup> Braque effectively contradicted Cezanne's modeling system by outlining his forms. As a means of articulating the shape of each object in a spatially ambiguous view, Braque structured the landscape by using outlines instead of pure color applications. Similarly, Picasso followed Braque's "creative misreading" of Cezanne's painting methods by darkly outlining several pitched rooftops and angular building formations in his Horta landscape.<sup>16</sup> The edges along his ascending rooftops are defined by lighting effects, and Picasso's use of *passage* created confusing visual relationships between rising buildings and pitched roof structures.

Cezanne's influence upon the early work of Gris is apparent in *Place Ravignan*. However, Gris' *Cezannesque* principles have been re-interpreted through Braque's L'Estaque landscape. As a neighbor, Gris not only observed Picasso's work including his Horta landscapes, but he probably viewed Braque's *Houses at L'Estaque* in Picasso's possession.<sup>17</sup> Like both Cubists emulating Cezanne, Gris used *passage* to suggest spatial distancing in *Place Ravignan*. As well, in violation of Cezanne's pictorial rules, Gris defined each architectural component by drawing dark outlines and applying lighting effects in pencil.<sup>18</sup> The rectilinear-cubic form of Gris' building references the geometric country houses from L'Estaque. In sketching the apartment building and the attached Bateau-Lavoir structure, for instance, he used broken lines thereby interrupting the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson states that after returning from the South-of-France in September, 1908 Braque frequented Picasso's studio regularly and left the canvas in the Spaniard's possession for a one month period before including the work in his first solo exhibition at Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's (1884-1979) Gallerie Kahnweiler by November 8<sup>th</sup>. Picasso requested the painting for further study, and Gris may have observed the work in the studio or possibly later at Braque's exhibition.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch* (London: Phaidon Press Limited: 1971): 196.

sequence of Cubist shapes. These broken contour lines are common in Braque's *Houses at L'Estaque* notably in the outlines of pitched roof tops, which disappear behind green foliage or merge with other shaded sections. Interestingly, Gris' lines and shadow evoke an expressive tactility that reveals the artists' working process in the drawing. His shading along the edges of the building and in the tree had been formed by quick repetitive strokes. Gris' gestural markings suggest that he is working intuitively, seeking to suggest his subject matter quickly rather than to replicate it. In this case, Gris may have imitated the "varied strokes" Braque made to define his cubic shapes and organic forms.<sup>19</sup> Braque applied shades of "opaque greens and ochres" with grayish pigment in different directions, following the edges of his geometric houses.<sup>20</sup> By defining his objects in this gestural manner and using specific pigments that mimic the region's local colors, Braque encouraged the viewer to experience the forms in his L'Estaque view. In a less dramatic sense, the coarseness of Gris' pencil markings suggest possible light sources as shadows cast on the building's façade and on the tree trunk and branches. Gris' lighting effects convey an imaginative luminosity of sunshine beaming through an unseen canopy of leaves and upon buildings along rue Ravignan and the park area below. The drawing's tactile qualities emphasize Place Ravignan's tranquil environment within Montmartre's urban landscape.

### **A contextual analysis of *Place Ravignan* via Gris' biography**

Gris' drawing *Place Ravignan* is a personal observation of his environs. I would argue that his study of the Bateau-Lavoir along rue Ravignan references his initial artistic

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<sup>19</sup> Poggi, 94-95.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

endeavor. The sketch is significant as an early example of Gris' Cubist experimentation. But the image is also important because it identifies a specific creative moment in Gris' life at the building. After establishing friendships and viewing the works of Picasso and Braque Gris participated in discussions with the artists, and he witnessed their Cubist images from 1908 to 1912.<sup>21</sup> Gris' *Place Ravignan* references the site of his relationship with the two Cubists. The drawing reveals Gris' interest in Cubism through his frequent interactions with Picasso and Braque at the building.

As a fellow Spaniard, Gris established a stronger bond with Picasso than with Braque. Gris first met Picasso at the building at the end of 1907.<sup>22</sup> During the first visit, Gris was accompanied by several Spanish friends including Daniel Vázquez-Díaz (1882-1969) an artist-friend and guide from Madrid. Picasso knew Díaz in Paris and welcomed the young nineteen-year-old into his immediate social circle.<sup>23</sup> Arguably, Gris' Spanish roots and émigré status in France encouraged Picasso to introduce him to Parisian life. The Bateau-Lavoir had been one of several gathering places for Montmartre's Spanish-immigrant population. Picasso himself, during previous visits to the city between 1900 and 1904 intermingled with a diverse group of artists, writers, and activists from Barcelona.<sup>24</sup> By mid-1904, Picasso acquired a spacious studio from Paco Durrio (1868-1940), a well-known ceramicist in the community and for a brief time shared the room with Sebastia

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<sup>21</sup> Cooper, 196.

<sup>22</sup> Rosenthal, 49. Rosenthal gives an earlier date of Gris' arrival to Bateau-Lavoir by stating Picasso prepared a basement studio for him several months after entering Paris in late September 1906. If correct, this timeline purports that he then moved into a second apartment on the top floor next to Picasso by 1908. Other published accounts only mention his 1908 move-assuming he lived at the Hotel Caulincourt with Díaz in Montmartre from roughly October, 1906 until early 1908? Rosenthal cites Kahnweiler and Cooper in his chronology with updated information (September 1982) provided by Georges Gonzalez-Gris (1909-2003), Louise Leiris, Josette Gris (1894-1983), and Maurice Jardot.

<sup>23</sup> Fernande Olivier, *Picasso and His Friends* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1964): 130.

<sup>24</sup> Patricia Leighton, *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1989): 51.

Junyer-Vidal (1878-1966), a Catalan artist and his traveling companion.<sup>25</sup> Gris' artistic aspirations and presence in Montmartre may have reminded Picasso of his own earlier experiences in Paris. Picasso's assistance to Gris reflects similar courtesies offered to him by various Spanish associates. Durrio, for instance, became an important Parisian contact for Spanish artists; attracting Picasso's friends, Ricardo Canals and Joaquim Sunyer (1874-1956), to the building by 1901.<sup>26</sup> In turn Picasso relied upon Canals, Durrio, and Manuel Martinez Hugue (1872-1945), an eccentric Catalan sculptor known as Manolo, for art-related support and companionship. Shortly after Gris moved to the building, Picasso politely opened his studio to the young artist. Interestingly, many Catalan artists residing in the building would gather on Place Ravignan, performing flamenco music together and socializing in the early evenings.<sup>27</sup> According to Fernande Olivier (1881-1966), Picasso would meet other residents on the square during most late afternoons before returning to his studio for the evening.<sup>28</sup> In an indirect sense, Gris' cityscape calls attention to the importance of Place Ravignan for Picasso and the Spanish enclave as a public setting for group activities outside of the building's restrictive quarters.

The square had been popular with local and visiting artists sketching in Montmartre since the turn-of-the-century. Kees Van Dongen (1877-1968), a Dutch painter living in Montmartre since 1897, produced a charcoal sketch of the square.<sup>29</sup> Van Dongen's version, also entitled *Place Ravignan*, 1901 (fig.5) captured the entire area of the square's

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<sup>25</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 293 and 295.

<sup>26</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume I: 1881-1906* (New York: Random House, 1991):300.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 302.

<sup>28</sup> Olivier, 26-27 and 33. Olivier was courted by Picasso on the square with Canals in August, 1904. After many engagements with Picasso between late 1906 or 1908, Gris may have learned of his new friends' relationship with Olivier. Throughout her entire romance with Picasso from late 1904-1911, she played a central role within his immediate social circle in the building.

<sup>29</sup> Stanley Appelbaum, *French Satirical Drawings from "L'Assiette au Beurre"* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1978): xiii.

enclosed space and beyond, showing rue Ravignan merge with rue d' Orchamp in the image's background. To capture the scene, presumably the artist was positioned near the short stairway leading uphill toward the benches, chestnut trees and fountain. The three-story building in the right half section of the image resembles the Hotel du Poirier, an apartment complex located across the square from the Bateau-Lavoir, which also housed local artists and writers.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Van Dongen was encouraged by Picasso to move into a neighboring studio with his family by 1905.<sup>31</sup> He had been one of Picasso's first non-Spanish friends in the building, and he stayed less than a year before relocating to a larger apartment on rue Lamarck.<sup>32</sup> Van Dongen's career in Paris began as an illustrator for humor magazines such as *Frou-Frou*, *Le Rire*, and *L'Assiette au Beurre*. Aside from his success with these magazines, and later as a colorist for *L'Assiette*, the artist drew from life throughout Montmartre in a Neo-Impressionist and Fauvist manner. He created portraits and figural compositions of entertainers employed at the Merano Circus.<sup>33</sup>

The nature of Gris' early relationship with Picasso is not fully known. Early monographs by Kahnweiler and Douglas Cooper (1911-1984), for instance, merely cite Picasso as Gris' "compatriot" artist-friend at the Bateau-Lavoir.<sup>34</sup> Beyond arranging a studio for Gris sometime between late 1906 and 1908, there is little documentation describing their art-related activities.<sup>35</sup> Throughout 1907, Gris would have visited Picasso at various times when the artist was not working. During Gris' first full year in Paris Picasso created "hundreds" of sketches and preliminary works in preparation for his masterpiece *Les*

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<sup>30</sup> Warnod, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Van Dongen's lived and worked in the studio with his wife Guus and their infant daughter Dolly.

<sup>33</sup> Appelbaum, xiii.

<sup>34</sup> Kahnweiler, *Juan Gris*, 7. Cooper's brief summary of Gris' career in Cubism follows Kahnweiler's biographical monograph, *Juan Gris: His Life and Works*, published in 1947.

<sup>35</sup> Rosenthal, 149

*Demoiselles d' Avignon*.<sup>36</sup> Picasso's self-imposed retreat from the building's communal affairs kept his closest friends away for months.<sup>37</sup> Unlike Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), Max Jacob (1876-1944), and Andre Salmon (1881-1969) Gris may not have viewed the painting in Picasso's studio. As an unknown artist Gris did not immediately partake in critiques of Picasso's recent work. By contrast, he lived quietly, mainly visiting with other neighbors in his studio.<sup>38</sup> Unlike Picasso, Gris did not immediately transform his living space into a painting atelier. Instead, like other struggling artists in the city, he earned a living by creating graphic illustrations for French satirical magazines.<sup>39</sup> In Madrid, Gris was a successful illustrator producing caricatures in the style of German Art Nouveau artists associated with Munich's *Simplicissimus* and *Jugend* publications.<sup>40</sup> By November 1907 Gris' first Parisian illustrations appeared in *Le Rire* and during the following year his drawings were printed in *Le Témoin*, *Cri de Paris*, *Le Charivari*, and *L'Assiette au Buerre*.<sup>41</sup> Gris' work may have reminded Picasso of his own caricatures created in Barcelona at the Catalan tavern-Els Quatre Gats. For roughly

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<sup>36</sup> Susan Grace Galassi and Marilyn McCully, *Picasso's Drawings: 1890-1921 Reinventing Tradition* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2011): 14.

<sup>37</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 17.

<sup>38</sup> Kahnweiler, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Pierre Assouline, *An Artful Life: A Biography of D.H. Kahnweiler, 1884-1979* (New York, Grove Weidenfeld, 1990): 98.

<sup>40</sup> Juan Antonio Gaya-Nun̄o, *Juan Gris* (New York, Rizzoli, 1986): 9. Kahnweiler claims a possible reason for Gris' interest in German Jugendstil imagery derives from a strong influence German science and philosophy had upon Spanish culture throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1900 Madrid-based modernistas like Gris were inspired by Munich's Art Nouveau designers. His social-artistic milieu included two foreign artists working in Madrid between 1905-06 such as Willy Geiger (1878-1971), a German painter and frequent contributor to the Munich-based *Jugend* magazine, and George Kars (1885-1945), an Impressionist painter from the Czech Republic. Specific accounts of Gris' personal interactions with Geiger and Kars is unknown from past scholarship, but in separate studies provided by Kahnweiler and Nun̄o, for instance, each author claims that Gris' brief association with Geiger introduced the young Spaniard to Art Nouveau imagery via the *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus* journals. In particular, Kahnweiler claims that Gris had been influenced by Bruno Paul's (1874-1968) caricatures in *Simplicissimus*. Paul was a frequent contributor to both satirical journals, and a significant German painter-illustrator in Munich's Judenstil art movement. Arguably, Gris' graphic works from 1906-1911 mimic the pre-Expressionistic stylizations of Paul. Applebaum claims that the "strong contour lines and flat color patches" in Paul's exaggerated figures, and domestic scenes are noticeable in Gris' drawings from 1906.

<sup>41</sup> Rosenthal, 150.

eighteen months between 1899 and 1900 Picasso lived away from his family for the first time in Barcelona where he became involved in the city's *modernista* movement, which centered in Els Quatre Gats before moving to Paris.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Gris' brief residence in a drafting studio with fellow caricaturist Enrique Echevarria (1884-1956) along the Calle de Martín de los Heros in Madrid became a transitional point before leaving his family for Paris.<sup>43</sup> After Díaz's assistance in establishing an editorial post at *L'Assiette au Buerre* in 1906, Gris was preoccupied with various commissions.<sup>44</sup>

Gris would have seen Picasso periodically throughout 1908 and during the first half of 1909. Picasso painted in Horta de Ebro over the summer of 1909 before leaving the Bateau-Lavoir by September for a larger apartment down the hill on Boulevard de Clichy.<sup>45</sup> However, by 1911 Picasso returned to his former building and leased a basement studio. The room had been an auxiliary space used for completing larger paintings and a way of reconnecting with his bohemian friends.<sup>46</sup> After leaving the Bateau Lavoir, Picasso received various commissions for work from international buyers. Through his dealer Kahnweiler, Picasso sold two Horta cityscapes to Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) and his painting, *Factory at Horta de Ebro* (fig.6) to Frank Burty Haviland

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<sup>42</sup>Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume I*, 109. Els Quatre Gats was a cabaret modeled after Montmartre's Le Chat Noir. The founder-owner Santiago Rusiñol (1861-1931) wanted to establish a cultural base for Barcelona's avant-garde community; sponsoring various art-themed events in the café space, and publishing a succession of journals such as *Quatre Gats* and *Pel & Ploma*. Richardson states that Picasso was drawn towards working in Paris after witnessing the successes of his Catalan friend Richardo Canals. Canals created picturesque images of "Iberian life" that were popular among Paris' younger art collectors. Picasso sought to exploit this art demand as a means of advancing his career in the city.

<sup>43</sup> Nuño, *Juan Gris*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Kahnweiler, 6-7.

<sup>45</sup> Christopher Green, *Juan Gris* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992): 16.

<sup>46</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 181. Since moving into his new apartment with Olivier, Picasso became increasingly agitated by a new group of admirers that visited him in the company of Gertrude Stein. Picasso's return to the building had been an assured way of continuing his work in private, and a temporary refuge away from Olivier-their relationship ended by late 1912.



(1886-1971), a French collector and artist intrigued by Cubism.<sup>47</sup> Gris kept in touch with Picasso and by 1911 became his assistant. Picasso, aware of Gris' drafting abilities, asked him to redraw earlier commissioned paintings.<sup>48</sup> Since creating the *Demoiselles* in 1907, Picasso produced numerous studies in rapid succession as ideas shared with Braque inspired more drawn and painted sketches. By working quickly, he incorporated earlier sketched ideas into new paintings making additional modifications.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, amid these requests, Picasso created a small-scale cityscape entitled *Rue d' Orchamp* 1911(fig.7) possibly to commemorate his temporary return to the Bateau-Lavoir. Unlike buildings in Gris' *Place Ravignan* drawing, Picasso's depiction of the street emphasizes the scene's architectural forms. As a lesser-known work from the artist's 'High Analytic' period with Braque (1911-12), he focuses on specific components of the scene imaginatively.<sup>50</sup>

Gris' brief employment in Picasso's studio from late 1911 to 1912 may have occurred due to his interest in Cubist experimentations with Braque. Despite their infrequent correspondence between 1907 and 1911, Picasso maintained an open dialogue with Gris regarding the direction of his painting projects. Picasso did not show the *Demoiselles* canvas to Gris in 1907, but he did not discourage him from observing other works he produced after Braque's return from L'Estaque. Also, between 1909 and 1911, Gris may have sought Picasso's critical input on his first pictures. Kahnweiler mentioned that Gris

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>48</sup> Claire Barry and Bart J.C. Devolder, "Surface and Format: Observations on the Materials, Process, and Condition of Cubist Paintings, 1910-1912" in *Picasso and Braque: The Cubist Experiment, 1910-1912*, ed. Charles Dibble (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2011): 117.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: Style and Meaning* (London, Phaidon Press Limited, 2002): 210.

<sup>50</sup> William Rubin, *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism* (New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1989): 26.

only allowed his “friends” to observe several still-life oil paintings in his studio.<sup>51</sup> Presumably, Picasso was present at this private showing before Gris exhibited fifteen of these works in Clovis Sagot’s Montmartre gallery in 1912.<sup>52</sup> At some point over a four to five year period, Gris recognized Picasso as his instructor or “maître”.<sup>53</sup> Gris sought to align his artistic ideas with Picasso’s innovative painting concepts. Gris thought of himself as a pupil working under Picasso’s influence rather than a usurper of his mentor’s work. Despite Gris’ innocent studying of Picasso’s methodologies, these initiatives were perceived with disdain, affecting Gris’ later relations with the Cubist. Picasso sublimated Gris and publically denounced his praise in social settings and private correspondence.<sup>54</sup> Needing an assistant, Picasso set aside his frustrations with Gris.<sup>55</sup> At the beginning of their relationship, Picasso did take a genuine interest in Gris’ artistic development, yet he never wanted a pupil working in a similar manner.<sup>56</sup> Gris’ continuous praise of Picasso strained their friendship after 1912, causing additional rifts in their increasingly distant friendship.

Gris’ steadfast praise of Picasso can be understood by reviewing the artist’s moral character and social behavior at the Bateau-Lavoir. Scholarship addressing this problematic situation in Gris’ early biography present mixed impressions of the young artist. Kahnweiler describes Gris as a highly modest, self-effacing individual and a “very

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<sup>51</sup> Kahnweiler, *Juan Gris*, 78.

<sup>52</sup> Green, 302.

<sup>53</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 176.

<sup>54</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume III, The Triumphant Years: 1917-1932* (New York: Random House, 2008): 336.

<sup>55</sup> Green, 16.

<sup>56</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume III*, 336. The author states that Picasso was upset with Gris’ intense involvement in Cubism because he feared his genius might “rub off” on the younger artist.

dear friend”.<sup>57</sup> He was shy with other avant-garde artists and sought to avoid the wit-filled antics of Picasso, Salmon, Jacob, and Apollinaire. Picasso’s studio often resembled a “private club” specializing in “satire and burlesque” humor.<sup>58</sup> The style of humor and joke making, derived from parody and “fast-moving wordplay,” helped solidify Picasso’s position in this literary group.<sup>59</sup> He was an accepted and interesting member, but according to Olivier’s published memoirs, the artist’s behavior was “cruel” and “malicious” towards outsiders.<sup>60</sup> In her memoir she claimed Apollinaire and Jacob encouraged Picasso’s disingenuousness and sarcasm, but in private they laughed behind his back.<sup>61</sup> As part of their underlying cynicism, the friends had a habit of insulting the person absent from the group. Gris had a difficult time interacting with Picasso and the poets. The poets took advantage of his seemingly gullible disposition and humorless personality. In Salmon’s memoirs he claimed that Gris’ studio was not a “fun” place to visit.<sup>62</sup> In conversations, Gris preferred to engage in deep theoretical discussions rather than share in the momentary hilarity of the group. He had a habit of taking a very serious tone regarding the development of his own works that, according to Manolo, resulted in lengthy and preposterous explanations.<sup>63</sup> Kahnweiler reflected that the artist was deeply intellectual and sought an audience with his avant-garde peers, but in certain intimate moments, Gris enjoyed casual talks and told humorous stories from his Castilian childhood.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Assouline, 98.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Read, *Picasso & Apollinaire: The Persistence of Memory* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008): 12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Olivier, 152.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 177.

<sup>63</sup> Kahnweiler, 8.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 5.

## Braque

Unlike Picasso, Braque distanced himself socially from Gris and other artists at the Bateau Lavoir. He met Gris through Picasso in 1907 and began visiting Picasso's studio several months later after viewing *Demoiselles* for the first time with Apollinaire.<sup>65</sup> Braque never lived in the building, but leased various studios near rue Ravignan from 1902 to 1914. In 1907 he occupied a studio in the rue d' Orsel, but he continued to paint outside of Paris from 1905 to 1911.<sup>66</sup> In 1911, he moved to the top floor of the Hotel Roma in rue Caulaincourt with Octavie Eugenie Lapre or Marcelle Voranne (Lapre) (1879-1965), a studio model and Braque's future wife.<sup>67</sup> The solace he sought by living away from the artist-writer communities off rue Ravignan reflect Braque's quiet demeanor. During his youth in Le Havre, Braque learned to paint *en plein aire* by studying alongside his father, Charles Braque (1855-1911), a house painter from Argenteuil and Le Havre.<sup>68</sup> These earlier outings were private engagements between father and son along the Seine River. Yet after working as a decorator's apprentice in Le Havre, and later painting in the company of Henri Matisse (1869-1954), Braque became accustomed to interacting with other artists. But his studio projects and painting excursions were primarily solitary activities allowing him time to contemplate the direction of his work.

Braque did not share his painting experiments and ideas. Even after viewing Picasso's *Demoiselles* and conversing with his new friends' poet-writer neighbors at the building, Braque did not fully disclose his ideas. Finally in 1908 after returning from the south of

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<sup>65</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 83.

<sup>66</sup> Alex Danchev, *Georges Braque: A Life* (New York, Arcade Publishing, Inc., 2005): 50.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>68</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 83.

France, Braque began conversing with Picasso. Braque's willingness to discuss his views with Picasso occurred as their individual artistic perspectives developed into a close working relationship. During Braque's interaction with Picasso, he did not recognize Gris as a compatriot in their painting endeavors. Instead, Gris was considered Picasso's pupil who, according to Braque, did not possess the necessary painting skills and artistic vision required to produce meaningful works in a modernist context. The connection Braque had with Picasso from their earliest conversations to subsequent painting exercises derived from a shared sense of purpose that each artist recognized in the other's pictures and methods, for example, by utilizing *passage* in their landscapes both sought to expose the *tableau-objet* or the picture-object that exists in reality.<sup>69</sup> Their early Cubist landscapes, still-lives, and portraits leading up to the first *papiers collés* of 1912 are dialogues between reality and pictorial artifice. Their novel approach challenged the Realist aestheticism associated with Impressionism. The naturalistic qualities in Impressionist paintings and the attempt to depict reality as it appears via sensory perception was, according to Picasso and Braque, ineffective in demonstrating the visual fallacies inherent in linear perspective. Both questioned how art itself can differ from reality. *Passage* was an effective means of causing perceptual breaks in the sequences of their landscapes. In this sense, academic methods were not completely abandoned but utilized subjectively to invent new forms. Braque and Picasso outlined buildings and used chiaroscuro as an intentional means of subverting these compositional principles. The singular spatial devices in Picasso's *Houses on the Hill*, *Horta de Ebro* and in Braque's *House in L'Estaque* question the perceived validity of their subject matter. Do the painted

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<sup>69</sup> Danchev, 86.

objects represent houses, mountains, and vegetation or simply a series of compositional lines?

Braque questioned both Gris' talent and understanding of the theoretical issues that he and Picasso were exploring in 1908 and 1909. Braque abhorred the graphic techniques Gris implemented to create his satirical drawings.<sup>70</sup> His criticism was mainly aimed against Gris' works from roughly 1911-1913. Braque disliked the precision of Gris' compositional lines and geometric shapes. In Cubist drawings such as *Head of Women*, 1911(fig.8) and *Still Life with Glass and Checkerboard*, 1913 (fig.9) Gris used a ruler and possibly a compass and protractor to establish precise transitions between his objects.<sup>71</sup> In a recent biography by Danchev on Braque it is noted that Braque admired Gris' ability to apply theoretical concepts in his artwork but he could not disassociate Gris' new work from his past career in graphic illustration.<sup>72</sup>

In light of Braque's criticisms, in 1907 Gris began painting. Dealer Kahnweiler recalled witnessing Gris "sitting at work" in his studio during the spring and summer of 1908.<sup>73</sup> Kahnweiler does not mention Gris' chosen medium, but after meeting the artist through Picasso in mid 1908 at the Bateau-Lavoir, he later stated, "I learnt that Gris was starting to paint and often used to call on him as I went past".<sup>74</sup> Within the same introductory passage, describing the "impoverished" appearance of Gris' studio, Kahnweiler remembered noticing "empty tubes of paint and brushes" placed upon several tables

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<sup>70</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 178. In regards of this claim Danchev mentions that Braque secretly collected pasted posters in Le Havre drawn by Steinlen and Henri Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 179. Richardson mentions that Braque shamed Gris into believing his use of a ruler, compass, protractor, and divider for preliminary drawings was a dishonest form of picture making.

<sup>72</sup> Danchev, 110.

<sup>73</sup> Kahnweiler, 4.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

among other scattered objects.<sup>75</sup> These works may have been charcoal drawings Gris created with gouache instead of oil pigments. In 1910, he produced a still-life entitled *Nature Morte a la Cruche* (fig.10) in charcoal and gouache on paper that may have led to his earliest known oil painting, *Siphon and Bottles* (fig.11) from the same year.

Kahnweiler does not mention these works, but instead referenced several still-lives in water color on paper that may have followed his charcoal and gouache drawings.<sup>76</sup> His still-life, *Three Lamps* (fig.12) a watercolor, was completed at the end of 1910. Building on Kahnweiler's memoirs, Rosenthal suggested that earlier works painted before 1910 may have been destroyed by Gris.<sup>77</sup> He destroyed most of his preparatory drawings for future paintings. Before his untimely death in 1927, Gris instructed his wife Josette and Kahnweiler to discard remaining drawings.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Houses in Paris Series: Place Ravignan from 1911**

After *Place Ravignan*, Gris painted three known cityscapes of Montmartre for his *Houses in Paris* series. Stylistically, his exploration of spatial relationships witnessed in Braque and Picasso's use of *Cezannesque* passage is obvious in these paintings from 1911. In one cityscape, entitled *Houses in Paris-Place Ravignan* (fig.13), Gris depicted a small house neighboring the Bateau Lavoir at the intersection of rue Ravignan and rue d'Orchampt. The private estate was owned by Madame Coudray, the Bateau Lavoir's owner and concierge.<sup>79</sup> The estate's facade is centrally positioned in a vertical orientation

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>77</sup> Rosenthal, 12.

<sup>78</sup> Assouline, *An Artful Life*, 217.

<sup>79</sup> Warnod, 12.

similar in placement to Gris' apartment building in the *Place Ravignan* sketch. The block-shaped barrier along the street in the bottom half of Gris' painting represents the house's gated entrance, which wraps around the property's front façade along rue Ravignan. Gris' stylized composition blurs the spatial distinctions between foreground near the street and the building's backside. The central building and neighboring structures seem unstable and in motion, moving with their natural environment. Shafts of light "from a single source at the upper left" corner of the canvas suggest movement diagonally downwards toward the buildings' roof and façade producing instances of two and three dimensionality.<sup>80</sup> Gris' circular forms in the estate's front yard and sky represent trees, cloud formations or possibly smoke.<sup>81</sup> These organic components enhance light and shadow on the building. Similar to his gestural markings in the *Place Ravignan* drawing, Gris sketchily applies paint to his canvas using a restricted palette of blue and gray on white. Passages of light along the rooftop of the concierge's house are represented by reddish hues, possibly a violet pigment in Gris' monochromatic color scheme.

Gris' multiple curved lines in the *Place Ravignan* painting, denoting trees, clouds, and plumes of smoke are inventive effects that enhance the atmospheric qualities surrounding the concierge's estate. As simple geometric forms, the circular foliage and clouds further articulate Gris' lighting effects by casting shadows in accordance with the compositions' rhythmic sequences. These dramatic forms seemingly identify Gris' immediate experience of environmental conditions amongst the buildings. These natural components in the picture become common motifs that reappear in his Cubist cityscapes.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>81</sup> Rosenthal, 19.



Contemporaneous with Gris' illustrative work from 1911, the cityscape's foliage repeats similar leaf formations for a drawing the artist submitted in 1912 to *L'Esquella de la Torratxa*, a Catalan journal. In this illustration entitled *Une rue a Montmartre* (fig.14), Gris articulated the tree's branch system as distinct canopies or plumes of leaves, which imaginatively bend or collapse inward. In the absence of a preliminary drawing for the *Place Ravignan* painting, the drawn canopy of leaves suggest Gris' proto-Cubist experimentations. The folding movements of his canopies are minimalistic half circles or domes that appear to sway along the wall's top edge, providing shade for Gris' two figures. Furthermore, the tree's position behind the wall, the meandering alleyway and building facades [in the illustration] pictorially correspond with the placement of the gate entrance and estate in the painting. The rectangular cut-out in the wall, which opens to the tree in the yard is present in both images. The wall's diagonal position along the street in the drawing's foreground is a similar compositional element in the painting.

Interestingly, the wall and tree in each image may originate from an earlier illustration published in 1910 in *L'Assiette au Beurre* (fig. 15). Through this drawing Gris showed three figures standing in the middle of a cobble-stoned street. The diagonal wall jutting from the left-hand side of the composition is present in the illustration. Unlike foliage in the *Une rue a Montmartre* drawing and *Place Ravignan* canvas, the tree's leaves in this scene are realistically depicted, appearing to flutter in the wind. Corresponding with the protruding tree branches in the *Une rue a Montmartre* drawing, Gris' wall in the *L'Assiette* image has been shortened thereby placing the tree near the bend in the alleyway. The entire composition is a condensed view focused on the actions of Gris' three figures.

## A Connection with Léger and Picabia

Gris' curvilinear shapes are reminiscent of smoke plumes created by Fernand Léger (1881-1955) in his *Les Fumées sur les toits* cityscape series from 1911. Léger, originally from Normandy, lived in a low-income section of Montparnasse and produced several cityscapes from the roof of his studio at 13, rue de l' Ancienne.<sup>82</sup> In two versions of his *Fumées* paintings in the Richard Weil collection, Léger incorporated billowing plumes of smoke in his city vistas, engulfing buildings and the Parisian skyline. Léger, like Picasso and Braque, utilized *Cezannesque* passage to depict multiple roofs negating perspectival views.<sup>83</sup> However, in one version of *Fumées sur les toits* (fig.16), at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the composition is less articulated than the faceted hilltop buildings in Picasso's *Horta* landscapes and Braque's Mediterranean houses from L'Estaque. Léger's view of the Ile de la Cité and Notre Dame Cathedral resemble a simple drawing with individual rooftops colored in blue, violet, and dark ochre hues.<sup>84</sup> The artist may have considered the painting as an exercise rather than a finished work. The outlines, for instance, are quickly sketched to form fractured buildings and pitched roofs that imaginatively release smoke plumes from multiple chimneys. The coarsely painted rooftops in the *Fumées* version from St. Louis (fig.17) dramatically contrast with the

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>83</sup> Christopher Green, *Léger and the Avant-Garde* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976): 10-11. The recognizable "tube shape" of Léger's designs acknowledge past inquiries addressed by Cezanne and Henri Rousseau (1844-1910), a late 19<sup>th</sup> century modern folk artist and French tollbooth inspector or 'douanier'. At different times throughout their careers, Cezanne and Rousseau believed in enlarging the volumes of their painted subjects as a direct means of idealizing nature. Idealize, in this sense, meant to create simple depictions-evoking an authentic artistic representation. According to Antliff and Leighten, each painter's earlier paintings demonstrate a return to primitive art practices that, once viewed in a modern sense, could enhance the artist's personal vision and creative processes in a given work. Léger's cylindrical figures in the *Nus dans un Paysage*, for instance, and his later balloon-like smoke billows in each *Fumées* cityscape are inventive representations of organic forms inspired by earlier theories from Cezanne and Rousseau.

<sup>84</sup> Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, *Cubism and Culture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001): 93.

illustrative quality of the Minneapolis canvas, which clearly defines buildings, smoke, and penetrating sunshine.<sup>85</sup> Léger's simplistic line-based composition accentuates the atmospheric effects of a recognizable Parisian view.

It remains unknown whether Gris viewed Léger's paintings in 1911. Léger was not a presence in Gris' life until later in 1911. Each artist's cityscapes were created in different parts of Paris. Léger did not visit Montmartre until after formally meeting Apollinaire and Jacob at his Montparnasse studio in late 1911.<sup>86</sup> They approached Léger after observing his first master work, *Nus dans un Paysage* (fig.18), at the 1911 Salon des Independants then referring him to Kahnweiler's gallery on rue Vignon.<sup>87</sup> In Montmartre, Kahnweiler showed examples of Picasso's Cubist still-life compositions and portraiture to Léger and Robert Delaunay (1885-1941). Kahnweiler's gallery pictures were, presumably, Léger's first glimpse of Picasso's Cubist imagery.<sup>88</sup>

The *Place Ravignan's* stylistic similarity to Léger's paintings is indirectly related to another avant-garde figure in Gris' career, Francis Picabia (1879-1953). Gris dedicated the *Place Ravignan* painting to Picabia, a painter working in numerous modern modes but becoming an innovative Dadaist at the start of the Great War.<sup>89</sup> Gris' specific view of Madame Coudray's estate does not have a direct association with Picabia's presence on Place Ravignan or the Bateau-Lavoir studios. Picabia did not visit Montmartre prior to

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<sup>85</sup> Green, *Léger*, 28.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>87</sup> Assouline, 75. Léger's *Nus dans un paysage* debuted at the Salon des Independants of 1910, receiving critical reviews but Picasso and Apollinaire recognized new geometric forms in the work that, by effect, caught the attention of Kahnweiler. Assouline's account suggests Kahnweiler's interest in Léger was mainly caused by Picasso's initial-positive reactions to the painting.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> William Camfield, *Francis Picabia* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1970): 15. Picabia was born in Paris but his father Francisco Vicente Martinez Picabia (1847-1929) was a Spanish-based farmer living in Havana, Cuba. He moved to Paris and married Marie Cecile Davanne, Picabia's French mother.

Gris' interactions with other artists involved in the 1911 Salon des Independants. In the canvas' lower left-hand corner Gris lightly painted the words, "*A mon cher ami Picabia avec toute l'admiration de Juan Gris*", apparently as a thankful gesture intended to acknowledge Picabia. Gris met Picabia outside of Montmartre at several planned gatherings for exhibiting artists involved in the *Salon* of 1911. Although an official meeting between both men is not recorded, Gris presumably greeted Picabia over the course of the *Salon's* exhibition beginning in March 1911. Picabia played a key role in the formation of a Cubist group by the end of 1912. These artists were intrigued by pictures created by Picasso and Braque, but individually they were working in separate theoretical directions from both painters.<sup>90</sup> In the company of Jean Metzinger (1881-1956) and Albert Gleizes (1881-1953), Picabia became an "ardent advocate" for abstracted forms inspired by "synesthetic theories and analogies to music". Gris did not partake in Picabia's fauvist interpretation of Cubist form, which evolved into Orphic experimentation by the end of 1912.<sup>91</sup>

As a special invitee to the studios of Raymond Duchamp-Villon at Puteaux and of Gleizes in Courbevoie, Gris may have tried to strengthen his personal alliances with the Cubist group by dedicating his painting to Picabia. After Gris' debut at the Independants exhibition in March, 1912, the cityscape was one of thirteen works included in the group's Salon de la Section'd Or. Picabia, a co-sponsor of the event with Metzinger,

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<sup>90</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Cubist Painters*, trans. by Peter Read (Berkeley: The University of California, 2002): 90-91. The Salon Cubists aligned their artistic concepts with current scientific and philosophical debates circulating throughout Continental Europe-specifically in France. As a loose group of mainly French-based painters and illustrators such as Metzinger, Gleizes, Henri Le Fauconnier (1881-1946), Roger de la Fresnaye (1885-1925), Jacques Duchamp-Villon (1875-1963), Raymond Duchamp-Villon (1876-1918), and Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), they used mathematical principles deriving from classical Euclidian geometry. These artists and Gris implemented the Golden Section into their Cubist compositions and through Maurice Princet (1875-1973), an amateur mathematician associated with Picasso in Montmartre the group transitioned their focus towards recent non-Euclidean concepts involving the theoretical notion of a fourth dimension in time and space.

<sup>91</sup> Camfield, 20.

Gleizes, and Apollinaire encouraged Gris' participation in the show. In light of Gris' public salutation to Picasso via the display of his *Homage a Picasso* portrait (fig.19) at the Independants show, his signed dedication may have been a "strategic gift" intended to thank Picabia, but simultaneously, evoke a sense of sincerity behind his enthusiasm about the Section d' Or event and group.<sup>92</sup> Although the status of their relationship is not known, Gris recognized Picabia's senior position among other Puteaux painters and poets. As mentioned, Picabia was a well-known Neo-Impressionist before Gris' arrival at the Bateau-Lavoir in 1907.<sup>93</sup> Picabia's success as an Impressionist was followed by further experimentation in Fauvism and Cubism, and his membership in the Société Normande de Peinture Moderne, an artist collective based in Rouen, made him a distinguished contributor to the theoretical initiatives of other Cubists in Salon exhibitions. Gris' association with Picabia represented a social and artistic move away from Picasso's influence at the Bateau-Lavoir, and it demonstrated a new alliance with other painters outside Montmartre.

Interestingly, dedicating works to friends and fellow artists had been a common practice in Gris' early career. At the time of the cityscape's completion, Gris created a single painted portrait of Maurice Raynal (1884-1954) and numerous drawn and painted portraits of his wife Germaine (figs. 20-22).<sup>94</sup> At the Bateau-Lavoir, Raynal had been a writer and early supporter of Picasso's pre-Cubist painting endeavors throughout his Rose Period (1904-05). As a young financier and contributing writer for the Symbolist

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<sup>92</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, pg. 177.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 16. After exhibiting at Berthe Weill's gallery Picabia became a contracted painter by the Galerie Haussman in 1905. This major exhibition led to additional international showings in Berlin and London, and his landscapes were purchased by distinguished collectors-most notably Raymond Poincare (1860-1934), the future President of France.

<sup>94</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, pg. 177.

magazine *Vers et Prose*, Raynal introduced Picasso to his literary friends in Montparnasse; accompanying the Spaniard to numerous soirees with Salmon that were hosted by the publication. His writings oriented towards art criticism; penning several reviews in support of the city's Cubists, which included exhibiting *Salon* artists in 1911-1912. Raynal was one of a few critics who remained Gris' life-long friend, and these portraits were gifts for him and Germaine.

Before producing his cityscape pictures Gris also designed a cover page for the December issue of *La Charivari* (fig.23) in 1910 that honored the work and renowned career of Adolphe Willette (1857-1926), a master caricaturist from Montmartre. Although the drawing had been a commissioned portrait for the publication, Gris choose to produce a distinctly sincere and contemplative depiction of Willette standing before a gathering of Montmartre's caricaturists near the district's iconic Le Sacre-Coeur church.<sup>95</sup> Gris' image pays homage to the artist by depicting him standing on Montmartre's le Butte as "Pierrot", the artist's favorite character in front of the magazine's readership.<sup>96</sup> Willette adapted Pierrot to comic strip form in the 1880s, using the 17<sup>th</sup> century *commedia dell'arte* character as a subversive personified "hero" representing Montmartre's avant-garde community.<sup>97</sup> To possibly enhance the honorific purpose behind this drawing, Gris chose to model Willette's beloved alter-ego after Antoine Watteau's (1684-1721) *Gilles*, 1718 (fig.24).<sup>98</sup> Willette helped to reincarnate the character as a sensitive bohemian that, in

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<sup>95</sup> Green, 120.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Julian Brigstocke, "Defiant Laughter: Humour and the Aesthetics of Place in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Montmartre," *United Kingdom, School of Geography, Politics & Sociology* (2011): 225-226.

<sup>98</sup> Donald Posner, *Antoine Watteau*, (New York, Cornell University Press, 1984): 266. Also see Brigstocke, 267. In Watteau's finely composed rendition the costumed figure stands in a "Christ-like" pose at an elevated position before the comedy's four central players. Watteau's *Gilles* references Pierrot from popular French theatre traditions. The dim-witted clown character became a dunce and a butt of jokes for the clever Harlequin, and during Watteau's lifetime Pierrot/Gilles used obscene language and acted immorally on stage.

published illustrations, frequently became a victim of the abuses caused by Paris' bourgeois.<sup>99</sup> In this regard, Willette changed Perrot's white costume to all-black clothing as a vindictive form of parody against the typical black dress of middle-class society.<sup>100</sup> The character moved elusively through different social classes in Willette's comics always siding with struggling artists and disenfranchised masses of Montmartre. Gris' portrait of Willette in traditional white, mimicking Watteau's representation symbolically, though in a slightly satirical sense, directed his artistic achievements and specifically his French identity on par with the canonical prestige associated with *Gilles*. These iconographic associations in Gris' drawing help address the central theme of the magazine's issue regarding a small conflict occurring between Montmartre's caricaturist community and the editorial staff of *Le Rire*.<sup>101</sup> The heading above Gris' illustrated portrait of Willette reads, "LA QUERELLE DES HUMORISTES" referring to the leading article's investigation of the corrupt practices of the publication, and the caricaturists' demand for their own magazine-*Les Humoristes*.<sup>102</sup> Like Willette, Gris sided with the aims of the caricaturists, and contributed work to an issue of *Les Humoristes* in 1911. In this regard, Willette appears to stand guard for the artistic rights and autonomy his fellow illustrators demanded. The magazine cover dually evokes Gris' deep respect for Montmartre's beloved illustrator, and yet by portraying his peers in the scene, he was also aligning with their shared artistic aspirations.<sup>103</sup> The components in

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<sup>99</sup> Brigstocke, 227.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Despite working in Paris for *Le Charivari*, *L'Assiette au Beurre*, and other publications for roughly four years, Gris did not have a distinguished career like Willette, Jean-Louis Forain (1852-1931), and Théophile Steinlen (1859-1923). He was particularly known by critics and dealers involved in the avant-garde-like Kahnweiler.

the drawing intend to elevate Gris' artistic reputation throughout the city and especially within the culturally autonomous confines of Montmartre.

### ***Houses in Paris, 1911: Sprengel and Guggenheim collections***

Gris painted two more cityscape views in 1911 for his *Houses in Paris* series. Like the *Place Ravignan* canvas, these paintings capture different locations in his Montmartre neighborhood with a particular focus upon Paris' diverse architectural landscape. In one work from the Bernard Sprengel collection (fig.25) in Hanover, Gris depicts a familiar scene near his studio apartment off rue Ravignan. Gris' title does not specify a location but the diagonal orientation of buildings and electric lanterns are similar to the *Place Ravignan* drawing. Stylistically, the image's simple geometric design and sketchy handling are similar to Gris' cityscape drawing. Gris transforms residential architecture into abstracted rectangular shapes with few details limited to a portion of a fence in the lower right corner, and two rows of windows with balconies on the top floors of a building in the top left corner of the picture. The façades and rooftops of these fractured forms are enhanced by Gris' chiaroscuro effects. Light seems to be emanating from the right-hand side creating alternating contrasts of light and shadow along each jagged façade. Gris defines architectural form by manipulating light, so that the general shape and placement of the forms are articulated via reflected light. Alternating patterns of dark and light emphasize the deep vertical recesses on each façade. The lighting effects are more pronounced by the monochromatic palette of white and dark brown pigments broadly applied throughout the image. The angularity of lines and prominent chiaroscuro represent a move away from *Cezannesque* passage. He uses traditional perspectival



devices to imaginatively express the cityscape's industrial skyline. Gris employs atmospheric perspective to capture two tall buildings rising above the Montmartre neighborhood. In a third cityscape from the *Houses in Paris* series (fig.26), located at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City, Gris again depicts Montmartre. The picture focuses on the top stories of two tenement buildings with chimney pipes. Like Gris' apartment building in the *Place Ravignan* drawing, the twin structures are centrally positioned. The viewer is forced to gaze at the ascending towers and pipes. Similar to both the *Place Ravignan* drawing and the *Sprengel* cityscape, shadows are confined to the sides of Gris' buildings.<sup>104</sup> Light appears to emanate off of the towers, casting shadows along various edges of the roofline and windowsills. Gris' blue and red hues define shadowed areas thereby enhancing the contrasts of light and shadow on different sides of the buildings.

### ***Place Ravignan, 1912***

After completing the *Houses in Paris* paintings, Gris produced a second drawn version of *Place Ravignan* (fig.27) in 1912. Gris' penciled sketch resembles the abstracted street scene in his first drawing. A partially abstracted tenement building and a single-story structure are depicted along rue Ravignan. The chestnut tree is vertically aligned with the building, but the lamppost is on the opposite side of the street from the tree. Unlike the first drawing, Gris composed this scene from a slightly higher elevation looking down toward the street and beyond the roofline of the lower building.<sup>105</sup> At this angle there is a clear distinction between the chestnut tree in the square and the building's changing

<sup>104</sup> Mark Rosenthal, *Juan Gris* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1983):12.

<sup>105</sup> Kahnweiler, *Juan Gris: His Life and Works*, 78.

façade. The sidewalk continues behind the tree establishing a clear spatial distance between Place Ravignan and the row of buildings. Thus the elevated perspective defines the space between objects in the foreground and background, despite the perspectival shifts in space that the tree's abstracted form conveys juxtaposed to the building's façade. In contrast to the flat, angular design of the tree in the earlier drawing, the later tree is abstracted so that interweaving organic forms interact within the building's façade. The tree's twisting triangular form is defined by variously shaded areas.

Gris' change of location in each successive work beginning with the *Place Ravignan* drawing from 1911 provides a visual record of Montmartre. His cityscapes demonstrate an interest in Parisian life outside of his apartment. Oddly, his reclusive working habits and numerous studio-based projects did not discourage Gris from capturing the city's modern architectural landscape from the late Haussmann era of 1880-1900.<sup>106</sup> As previously noted, prior to 1912 Gris lived in relative obscurity in his apartment, preferring to draw and read privately rather than partake in café life.<sup>107</sup> Before his debut at the Salon des Independants of 1912, Gris apparently kept his ideas and studies to himself. Kahnweiler remembered him as a determined youth who had been "content to work and reflect in silence" among Picasso and his friends.<sup>108</sup> The compositional components of these experimental works, however, elicit these emotive experiences encompassing Gris' self-imposed isolation and reclusive lifestyle in his studio apartment. His empty street scenes of Place Ravignan, devoid of human subjects, refrain from conveying an accurate depiction of daily life in the square. Instead, Gris' focus is placed

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Assouline, 99. From 1907-1911 Gris rarely frequented local businesses like Chez Avon and le Lapin Agile.

<sup>108</sup> Kahnweiler, 78.

upon Place Ravignan's architecture, which equally evokes this profound lifeless expression in each cityscape. The distinct light contrasts imaginatively created through Gris' chiaroscuro, particularly in shaded areas with dark shadows present a depressing representation of the square's public spaces. These large tenement structures off rue Ravignan were typically over crowded living quarters for Montmartre's working poor. The entrance ways of these buildings near the street within Place Ravignan were high traffic areas for residents, visitors, and children. Yet, Gris' empty balconies and windowless facades from the *Sprengel* cityscape demonstrate a lack of human occupancy in these buildings. His lightly outlined window frames and closed shutters in both drawn versions of Place Ravignan, for instance, offer a negative reading into Gris' subject matter that may reflect his own antisocial tendencies during extended periods in his room. Interestingly, his introverted demeanor at the Bateau-Lavoir may have coincided with the artist's difficulties adjusting to a new life in Paris. As a young émigré, Gris was forced to live in France permanently without an ability to travel abroad. Upon leaving Madrid in late September of 1906, he avoided Spain's military draft and after arriving to the Gare d'Orsay train station, his passport was invalid.<sup>109</sup> In Montmartre he was not only penniless and living off credited goods with Díaz, but also without a legal means of re-establishing his Spanish citizenship. By contrast, Picasso was able to pay a special "fine" of 1,200 pesetas to the Spanish government that exempted him from the draft.<sup>110</sup> Gris' family did not make this special payment and thus he was officially considered a

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<sup>109</sup> Nunño, 10.

<sup>110</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume I*, 174. Leighten also mentions that before Picasso's second visit to Paris in 1902 his uncle Salvador reluctantly paid for the exemption fines on behalf of the artist's mother. Picasso's uncle paid the taxes for nine years between 1897 and 1908.

“fugitive” after his departure to France.<sup>111</sup> Throughout Gris’ twenty years in France from 1907 to 1927, he never applied for citizenship, and lived in the country as an exiled foreigner. The artist made preparations for naturalization near the end of his life, but ongoing health issues involving the artist’s failing lungs kept him from obtaining citizenship.<sup>112</sup> Gris’ precarious immigration status in a foreign city may have initially discouraged him from venturing beyond Montmartre. Equally, his precarious financial situation bound the artist to his studio. His illustrative commissions provided little support and like other struggling occupants in the building, Gris received credit on goods from restaurant owners and merchants.<sup>113</sup> He painted the walls of Chez l’Ami Emile, a popular bistro of the Cubists on rue Ravignan, apparently in exchange for food.<sup>114</sup>

### **Illustrated cityscapes in *L’Assiette au Beurre***

As noted through his honorific depiction of Willette in *Le Charivari*, Gris incorporated drawn scenes of Montmartre into his illustrations before 1911. These earlier works are helpful in establishing a stylistic basis for the compositions of his later Cubist cityscapes. In many of his satirical drawings for *L’ Assiette au Beurre* in 1909 and 1910, for instance, Gris incorporated different architectural views that resemble locales near Place Ravignan. Gris’ illustrated backgrounds depict settings that, arguably, were reinterpreted for his later Cubist scenes. Interestingly, it remains unclear whether Gris composed his

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<sup>111</sup> Nunzio, 10.

<sup>112</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume III*, 335.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 7. In Kahnweiler’s description of Gris’ early life in Paris before the Great War, he mentions that artists in Montmartre were regularly given credit by landlords, grocers, wine merchants, and paint shops.

<sup>114</sup> Warnod, 77.

illustrated cityscapes from life, memory, or from various photographs.<sup>115</sup> In drawings from two issues published in August and October of 1909, Gris depicted similar views of apartment buildings in recognizable residential areas. The flat facades and pitched rooftops of buildings in the August issue (fig.28) resemble the buildings in the Guggenheim painting. Specifically, the recognizable facades with window bays and flat side walls in the Guggenheim cityscape are variations of the earlier tenement complexes depicted in *L'Assiette*. The composition does evince an accurate sense of expansive space at street level. The distance between the central figures in the foreground and the massive building facades flanking the street are reminiscent of a grand boulevard located outside of Montmartre's narrow road system. In the October *L'Assiette* illustration (fig.29), Gris produced a familiar scene of a public square surrounded by rows of three and four story buildings. The scene resembles Place Ravignan and specific features such as wooden window shutters and planted trees are recognizable elements from his drawing. The road behind both of Gris' male figures purportedly depicts the parks' intersection with rue d'Orchampt.

As images of Montmartre with distinct political purposes, the *L'Assiette* illustrations aid in identifying similar sociological themes imbued in Gris' Cubist cityscapes. In contrast to the experimental intent of Gris' Cubist cityscapes, his illustrated backgrounds serve as visual references for the accompanying text. *L'Assiette au Beurre* was the most popular "picture magazine" in Paris from 1901 to 1912, and its illustrations and content advocated for a progressive stance against widespread corruption by government

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<sup>115</sup> It is unclear whether Gris used a camera for his pre-War Cubist works. Richardson describes Picasso's method of composing his large Horta landscape paintings through the use of a camera. The camera enabled Picasso to "calculate" the lighting and perspective of his architectural views that were later rearranged through his Cubist forms.

officials.<sup>116</sup> The publication's commentary questioned the government's economic initiatives during the height of the Belle Époque by highlighting labor disputes, and the exploitation of women, children, and immigrants.<sup>117</sup> Through his illustrated cityscapes, Gris addressed common social issues that were afflicting Parisians living in poverty. His illustrated scene for the August edition of 1909 addressed the city's numerous suicides. The caption referenced a brief conversation between two indignant bourgeois men in top hats criticizing a deceased man for ending his life with a pistol referring to his actions as cowardly while two police men investigate the corpse in silence.<sup>118</sup> Gris' image portrayed the deceased as a victim of France's poor political and economic systems rather than a "wretched deserter".<sup>119</sup> Gris provoked the situation further by placing the dead man along a grand boulevard in an affluent section of Paris.<sup>120</sup> Both figures in top-hats personify a common upper middle-class response to the situation. The upper classes considered the corpse only as a public nuisance affecting the general aesthetics of their community. Gris' theme addressed an ongoing battle between Paris' well-to-do and the working-class community of Montmartre. Political leaders of the Third Republic and their middle class supporters opposed social delinquency and vice occurring on le Butte, viewing cabarets and taverns as obstacles in the way of socio-economic progress.<sup>121</sup> Suicide was, from

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<sup>116</sup> Stanley Appelbaum, *French Satirical Drawings*, vi.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Raymond Bachollet, *Juan Gris, Ilustrador 1904-1912 Collececció Emilio Ferré* (Girona: Fundació Caixa Girona, 2009): 174.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> In David Cottington's *Cubism and its histories*, the author describes Paris' mass commercialization and mercantilism as beginning with Baron Haussman's (1801-1891) urban renewal program of the 1860s and 1870s. In order to make the city more governable and "amenable" to commercial and residential interests by the bourgeoisie, Haussman's plan called for the further creation of "broad boulevards" moving across several miles in the city's center. This program included the destruction of aging buildings and slums that effected two generations of Parisians.

<sup>121</sup> John Kim Munholland, "Republican Order and Republican Tolerance: Montmartre as a Delinquent Community" in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2001): 17.

these people's perspective, an uncivilized act against the moral authority and democratic ideals of the nation.<sup>122</sup>

Similarly, Gris' park scene in the October issue addresses the poor state of health care and hygiene among working class Parisians. *L'Assiette* published a special report on the discovery of Arsphenamine or Preparation 606, a new medical treatment manufactured in Germany by 1910 that was used to combat syphilis. Dr. Paul Ehrlich (1854-1915) a German chemist working in Berlin with his Japanese colleague Dr. Sahashiro Hata (1873-1938) began implementing their new medication after successfully curing lab rabbits with syphilitic inflammation of the cornea.<sup>123</sup> In his visual commentary about the drugs' availability to French citizens, Gris depicts two males in advanced stages of the disease suffering from neurological effects. In the caption, one man greets the other and asks if he presently is working as a dry cleaner. The other man responds by saying "but no, pal...I manufacture canned vegetables".<sup>124</sup> This brief and intentionally awkward exchange may be a humorless reference about the degenerative effects caused by past medical treatments used to cure syphilis, which included high amounts of mercury. The caption suggests that Gris' figures have cognitive disorders and are suffering from dementia. Their haggard appearance and simple attire informs *L'Assiette's* readership that both men represent an entire class of misinformed Parisians who are forced to live with the diseases' debilitating symptoms. Alternatively, the caption may read as a witty play-on-words in French contrasting "dry cleaning" and "canned vegetables". The greeting man may be asking his friend if he has taken the preventive medicine thereby having

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ernst Baumler, *Paul Ehrlich: Scientist for Life* (New York, Holmes and Meier, 1984): 150.

<sup>124</sup> Bachollet, 176.

“dry” and “clean” pants or clothes. The other man responds negatively by making an euphemistic reference about manufacturing “canned vegetables” to describe the severity of his infected genitals. By 1900, the disease had a damaging effect on all Parisians causing an increase in mortality rates and simultaneously creating additional health risks for French families, particularly pregnant women.<sup>125</sup> In an attempt to enact new healthcare policies against the spread of syphilis and providing care for infected “syphilitics” the nation’s medical community promoted improved sex education practices for young adults that encouraged abstinence and the use of contraceptives.<sup>126</sup> Yet, these initiatives were intended for the well-being of “good” children from middle-class families and not Paris’ laborers and impoverished citizens.<sup>127</sup> In recent scholarship by Bachollet, the author argues that this particular caricature demonstrates a passionate interest in human relationships regarding a health topic deemed too controversial by French society.<sup>128</sup> With the approval of his *L’Assiette* editors, Gris was able to reveal his knowledge of modern scientific discoveries, which may have grown from his previous courses in mathematics, biology and mechanical drawing in Madrid.

### **Visions of poverty in Gris’ Cubist cityscapes**

In view of the political aims represented through Gris’ *L’Assiette* drawings, his *Sprengel* and *Guggenheim* canvases and second *Place Ravignan* drawing purport similar themes.

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<sup>125</sup> Virginie de Luca Barrusse, “The Concerns Underlying Sex Education for Young People in France during the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Morality, Demography, and Public Health,” *Hygiea Internationalis* (2011): 35.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. Barrusse’s article refers specifically to France’s depopulation crisis after 1900. France’s medical community recognized a link between low fertility rates connected with increasing cases of syphilis and other venereal diseases affecting the entire country. The sex education policies established by the Society for Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis in 1901, for instance, were intended to help their own families and upper-class associates.

<sup>128</sup> Bachollet, 176.



These scenes of Montmartre intentionally provide a context for the artist's socio-economic status during his residency at the Bateau-Lavoir between 1907 and 1922. Gris' abstracted depictions of each setting in the vicinity of rue Ravignan affirm this notion. As mentioned, a lack of human occupancy in Gris' vistas, and the barrenness of his buildings imaginatively connote the economic plight of Paris' lower classes. Gris' scenes depict various tenements, which typically housed low-income renters working in the city's industrial center. These unseen residents were general laborers or independent craft artisans from distant communities outside of the Ile de France region. French workers in Montmartre were deeply affected by Paris' new cosmopolitanism and mass media initiatives at the height of the Belle Epoque (1890-1914). New industrial practices in the production and marketing of consumer goods, for instance, elevated Paris' economic growth after the Exposition Universelle of 1900. The city's new consumerism attracted the wealth and tastes of a rising bourgeoisie that partook in the leisure activities of department store shopping, fine dining, and art collecting. Yet, as Paris' growth in retailing spread internationally, financial pressures were placed upon an entire population of laborers, artisans, and independent business owners.<sup>129</sup> The polarizing effects of these modern developments decreased the value of artisan crafts and mercantile practices, forcing Paris' "urban workforce" to relocate outside of the city limits into distant suburbs.<sup>130</sup> Gris was a part of this disenfranchised group isolated on the outskirts of the city's commercial sphere, and his Spanish nationality placed him within a diverse population of European émigrés.

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<sup>129</sup> Cottington, *Cubism and its histories*, 22.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

Furthermore, these Cubist pictures call attention to Gris' personal financial struggles at the Bateau-Lavoir. His depressing scenes describing life outside of the building may have also derived from his own economic challenges. His difficulties began in Spain before the young artist enrolled in scientific courses at the Escuela de Artes e Industrias from 1902-04. Gris' father Don Gregorio Gonzalez Perez (1849-1906) was a merchant selling stationary, leather goods, and various gifts in Madrid, but as Nun□o mentions, his business ended for unknown reasons by 1900.<sup>131</sup> In 1906, Gris' older sister Antonieta Sanchez-Lefler mentioned that the artist had to sell most of his personal possessions in order to afford a train ticket to France.<sup>132</sup> Despite having only "sixteen francs" upon arriving in Paris, Gris lived on credit for a month at the Hotel Caulaincourt before moving to the Bateau-Lavoir.<sup>133</sup> As mentioned, Díaz established a position for Gris on the editorial staff of *L'Assiette au Beurre* but his compensation for each drawing only covered basic living expenses. Gris' pay from the journal has never been verified, but Picasso's remarks regarding the publication's offer of \$800 francs per illustration is significantly higher than Gris' earnings.<sup>134</sup> During his first five years in France (1907-1911) Gris never revealed his financial situation to family members and, according to Antonieta, he never asked for assistance from his family.<sup>135</sup> The artist's father, according to Nun□o, tried to cover his son's travel expenses but Gris declined the offer possibly out of respect for the family's depleting finances.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Nun□o, 8.

<sup>132</sup> Kahnweiler, 6.

<sup>133</sup> Nun□o, 10.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 11-12.

<sup>135</sup> Kahnweiler, 7.

<sup>136</sup> Nun□o, 10.

## Bateau-Lavoir

In observance of Gris' impoverished lifestyle, the Bateau-Lavoir was a common living space for the poorest artists and writers. Gris' single room apartment with two central windows facing Place Ravignan adjoined Picasso's studio.<sup>137</sup> The space was furnished with shabby furniture that he acquired from the street or from neighbors. Kahnweiler recalled observing two used beds with "broken mattresses" amid "seatless chairs" and piles of papers, paint tubes and brushes placed on paint stained tables.<sup>138</sup> Gris disliked living in filthy conditions but the building's poor construction made cleaning a difficult task.<sup>139</sup> The Bateau-Lavoir, a cheaply built timber-framed building was used as an atelier workshop during the Belle Epoque.<sup>140</sup> Before Jacob famously referred to the building as a "laundry boat" in 1904, it was previously known as "La Maison du Trappeur" since it resembled the rickety cabin of a French Canadian fur trapper.<sup>141</sup> The building was originally a piano factory which became a locksmith workshop in the late 1860s.<sup>142</sup> By 1889 the structure's three floors and basement were converted into roughly 30 studio units. However, the landlord's renovations left various "oubliettes" or unnecessary spaces between the walls of each studio apartment and throughout the structure, which created a "labyrinth" of confusing passageways leading to each tenant.<sup>143</sup> Interestingly, The Bateau Lavoir's unstable foundation, built in the side of Montmartre's Butte, may have contributed to these faulty interior designs. Along rue Ravignan, The Bateau Lavoir's facade appears as a one-story structure with several skylights protruding from a low lying

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>138</sup> Kahnweiler, 4.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Roy Johnston, *Parisian Architecture of the Belle Epoque* (England, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2007): 60.

<sup>141</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume I*, 296.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Warnod, 5.

metal roof. Yet in fact the rear of the building has three floors parallel to the descending slope of the hill to rue Garreau.<sup>144</sup> The second floor and basement units could be reached from the main entrance by first walking down a staircase and through several “intersecting corridors” that led to each tenant’s doorway. On visits to the studios of Picasso, Jacob, and later Gris, Kahnweiler described his route:

after 1907 I often used to climb up to number 13 Rue Ravignan...the door was always ajar-the concierge lived in the house next door-and one went down stairs to reach the inhabitants of any but the two studios which faced the square. For, the house, which was hung on the very sheer side of the hill of Montmartre, was entered by its upper storey.<sup>145</sup>

Kahnweiler also remarked about the “impoverished” appearance of the apartments and the squalor-like conditions his avant-garde friends were forced into as low-income renters. In the biography he mentioned that the building did not have electricity or gas, and water was collected by residents from a single tap on the ground floor.<sup>146</sup> Tenants had the option of drinking from the tap or utilizing the public fountain outside on Place Ravignan.<sup>147</sup> The water tap and a single toilet were the building’s only amenities. Furthermore, water seeping through various oubliettes in the walls would either freeze or ooze “moisture” causing a discomforting stench of mildew throughout the building.<sup>148</sup> Gris poignantly described the severity of these conditions in his own studio in a brief letter addressed to Raynal on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917. With respect to the cold weather Gris wrote:

The cold here is terrible. The temperature has fallen to 16 degrees below zero. So you can imagine how cold it must be in my barrack of a studio, especially as my little stove, which is fine for cooking on, is useless for heating in such cold weather. I do nothing but shiver from morning till night, and alas from night till morning. During all the ten

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<sup>144</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume I*, 298.

<sup>145</sup> Kahnweiler, 3.

<sup>146</sup> Assouline, *An Artful Life*, 48-49.

<sup>147</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume I*, 298.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

years I have been in Paris I have never suffered so much from the winter.<sup>149</sup>

At the start of 1917 Raynal was stationed near France's defensive lines at Verdun.<sup>150</sup> In his letter, Gris tried to comfort his friend by describing his own suffering in the building. The unsanitary conditions, according to Kahnweiler, may have contributed to his failing health and premature death at the age of forty.<sup>151</sup> Gris' respiratory problems began in early May 1920 when he had pneumonia that developed into 'pleurisy'.<sup>152</sup> He spent two months at the Tenon hospital before "convalescing" with Josette's family in Beaulieu-les-Loches. He made another voyage to Bandol on the Mediterranean coast from late 1920 until the following summer.<sup>153</sup> In addition to poor hygienic conditions and ventilation, and toxic art supplies, Gris smoked cigarettes continuously even after recovering from respiratory illnesses and asthma attacks.<sup>154</sup> In Kahnweiler's description of Gris' studio, the dealer-biographer recalled becoming "accustomed" to noticing "cigarette stubs and spent matches" strewn across the floor among art supplies.<sup>155</sup>

Amid the lifeless expressions observed through Gris' *Houses in Paris* paintings and his second *Place Ravignan* drawing, there were two earlier illustrations for *L'Assiette* that capture the artist's impoverished tenement in the public square. For the May 1910 issue (fig.30), Gris created a Montmartre street scene with three boys of various ages standing near a narrow alleyway. Like the syphilitic men in Gris' 1909 drawing, these homeless boys are victims of the nations' economic initiatives. Gris depicted them wearing torn

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<sup>149</sup> Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler, *Letters of Juan Gris: 1913-1927* (London, Percy Lund, Humphries and Co, Ltd): 45.

<sup>150</sup> Danchev, 133.

<sup>151</sup> Kahnweiler, 4.

<sup>152</sup> Green, *Juan Gris*, 303.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. Kahnweiler describes Josette caring for Gris in their studio as early as December 1919. There was a sheet-possibly of paper or canvas placed across the room's skylight, which toned down the sunlight and prevented cold "draughts" of wind from entering the apartment.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>155</sup> Kahnweiler, 4.

clothing with uncombed hair. Gris' representation expressed the daily miseries suffered by Montmartre's children and their destitute parents. Middle-class Parisians perceived the area's "working poor" as "promiscuous drunkards".<sup>156</sup> By the 1880s state-sponsored health clinics and charitable centers were established for Montmartre's poorest families, providing basic medical care and food for poor mothers and their children.<sup>157</sup> For the *L'Assiette* October issue, Gris produced a similar scene of his neighborhood. In this illustration two male youths stand near an elderly woman on a curving cobblestone street. The woman's tattered plaid skirt, sweater, and clogs were typical attire for poor females. She appears to be a guardian overseeing their activities.

The depiction of young children, especially boys, in his early illustrations may have been inspired by the birth of the artist's only child Georges Gonzalez-Gris (1909-2003) on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1909.<sup>158</sup> Gris and his first French wife, Lucie Belin (1891-1942) raised the infant at the Bateau-Lavoir for a brief period from 1909 to 1911 before the artist's older sister Antonietta removed Georges to Madrid.<sup>159</sup> Like so many parents in the neighborhood, he and Lucie were unable to properly care for their son.<sup>160</sup> The couples' bohemian lifestyle and lack of privacy in the room made life unpleasant for the young family. Kahnweiler recalled observing Georges hanging from his diaper or "nappies" in the artists' window sill.<sup>161</sup> After 1911, the artist did not see Georges again until July of 1926, roughly ten months before his own death.<sup>162</sup> At the time of Georges' birth Lucie

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<sup>156</sup> Jill Miller, "Les enfants des ivrognes: Concern for the Children of Montmartre" in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, ed. by Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2001): 75.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

<sup>158</sup> Bachollet, 201.

<sup>159</sup> Green, 302.

<sup>160</sup> Bachollet, 212.

<sup>161</sup> Kahnweiler, 4.

<sup>162</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume III*, 335.

was not yet eighteen years of age and had been employed as a seamstress in Montmartre.<sup>163</sup> She was born in Ormoy-Villiers, a l'Oise and sought work in the city's garment district. Unable to cope with Gris' artistic intensity, meager earnings, and possibly the relocation of their son, Lucie left the Bateau Lavoir in 1912. After leaving Gris, she struggled financially and sought employment as a portrait model and an actress.<sup>164</sup> Her early biography in Montmartre seems to parallel the youthful life of Charlotte Augusta Fernande Herpin (1894-1983), known as Josette, Gris' second companion and unofficial wife.<sup>165</sup> Josette moved into Gris' studio at the end of 1913, but she may have begun a relationship with him earlier in the year. Lucie's marriage to Gris legally ended on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1913.<sup>166</sup> Josette met Gris before her twentieth birthday and worked as a salesperson in a clothing boutique.<sup>167</sup> She was born in Loches, a provincial town located within the Touraine region, and according to Green, may have spent part of her childhood in Paris.<sup>168</sup> Despite her employment and "petty-bourgeois" background, she shared in the artist's poverty, living with him at the Bateau-Lavoir for roughly nine years from 1913 to 1922.<sup>169</sup> In 1922 Josette and Gris moved out of Montmartre to a spacious flat in Boulogne-sur-Seine, near Kahnweiler's residence. The couple's relationship remained childless, and Josette became the artist's partner and muse.

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<sup>163</sup> Bachollet, 212.

<sup>164</sup> Belinda Thomson, *Vuillard* (Oxford, Phaidon Press Limited, 1988): 130. Lucie met the Post-Impressionist painter Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940) after the start of the Great War by 1915; becoming his model and young lover. Vuillard took a special interest in her acting career and secretly supported her for several years. Interestingly, Thomson refers to Lucie's last name as Ralph instead of Belin. This change to Ralph may have been a stage name-replacing her original surname? He created three known portraits in oils on canvas and a single pastel drawing from 1915. His image of her entitled, *Lucie Belin in the boulevard Maiesherbes Studio*, (fig.32) from this portrait series presents a close-up view of Lucie posing with a jovial smile while holding a small book in her hands.

<sup>165</sup> Green, 123.

<sup>166</sup> Bachollet, 202.

<sup>167</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, volume II*, 177.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>169</sup> Green, 123.

Behind the children in Gris' *L'Assiette* drawing 476, are tenement buildings with mansard roofs, which nestle tightly along a small cobblestone side street. In Paris properties having mansard roofs eventually signaled low income housing.<sup>170</sup> The buildings in the drawing are simple blocks with little exterior detail. A single gas lamppost and several chimney pipes break the rectangular facades. As noted in his *Place Ravignan* sketches and in the *Sprengel* cityscape, Gris' use of chiaroscuro established distinct contrasts between light and shadow, which effectively darkened the building's windowpanes. These stylistic techniques suggest that the buildings are abandoned. Similar methods were applied to four windows on the second and third floors of an apartment building in Gris' 1910 *L'Assiette* illustration.

### **Political observances in Gris' illustrated Montmartre scenes**

These depressing scenes in Gris' imagery voiced *L'Assiette's* specific anarchist agenda as visual commentary addressing the city's widening economic discrepancies. As mentioned, the publication took a stance against the political initiatives proposed by the Republican government against the impoverished citizenry of Montmartre. As a senior illustrator on the magazine's editor staff in 1909-1910, Gris may have had the authority to create images illuminating his personal experiences. The journal's general theme was conceived by *L'Assiette's* founder and first editor, Samuel Schwarz, but in special cases individual artists did plan entire themes for specific issues.<sup>171</sup> Gris' 1910 Montmartre scenes in issues 476 and 497 may have been submitted by the artist without following a pre-approved plan. In this position, Gris promoted a personal agenda highlighting the

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<sup>170</sup> Miller, 80.

<sup>171</sup> Applebaum, vii.



realities and ramifications of the government's abandonment of Montmartre and its occupants.

Amid the anarchist themes espoused by *L'Assiette au Beurre*, anarchist activities and sentiments were prevalent throughout Montmartre after 1900. The Bateau-Lavoir served as a central meeting place and refuge for Symbolist poets, Post-Impressionist artists, and various anarchist groups. These avant-garde artists and writers networked with other like-minded neighbors of Montmartre. Anarchists frequenting Place Ravignan socialized in the 1890s, and recruited artists and students who sided with their anti-government causes.<sup>172</sup> Picasso, for instance, was part of a Spanish anarchist faction from Barcelona that had a political counterpart in Montmartre.<sup>173</sup> As mentioned, several members of his Spanish enclave at the building were known activists and political ex patriots residing in Montmartre. He kept in contact with a Catalan anarchist Jaime Sabartes (1881-1968) after his permanent move to Paris in 1904.<sup>174</sup> Research by Leighton confirms that despite Picasso's romanticized interests in the movement, his public activism and behavior was "very real".<sup>175</sup> He would frequently hide his friends from the police at his Bateau-Lavoir studio. In the aftermath of a major revolt in Barcelona that coincided with Picasso's second trip to Horta in the summer of 1909 he wanted to participate in a counter demonstration in Paris against the execution of his Catalan friend Francisco Ferrer (1859-1909). Despite his concern over the execution, he reluctantly withdrew from the event for

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<sup>172</sup> Warnod, 43.

<sup>173</sup> Patricia Leighton, *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897-1914* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989): 52. Barcelona was the center of anarchist activities in Spain based upon the city's geographical and cultural orientation with northern Europe. The city's industrial expansion in the 1880s and a fervent Catalan population-seeking a cultural break with Madrid encouraged the development of a thriving anarchist movement.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, 76.

fear of being arrested and, possibly, deported back to Spain.<sup>176</sup> Through his later affiliations with Apollinaire and Salmon at the building, Picasso made additional contacts with older Symbolist writer/activists focusing upon the activities of Alfred Jarry (1873-1907) and Paul Fort (1872-1960).<sup>177</sup> As mentioned, by late 1904 Salmon, Jacob, and Raynal invited Picasso to their literary gatherings sponsored by Fort's *La Plume* and *Vers et Prose* publications at the Closerie des Lilas café. In contrast with Picasso's Spanish anarchist associates, the Symbolist-anarchists in Paris espoused their political ideals through individual artistic expression. Without acting violently in public, the group addressed their ideas through personal essays, poetry, and theatrical plays.<sup>178</sup>

Despite Picasso's anarchistic pursuits with other Spanish activists and his poet friends, Gris did not publically participate in organized activities or establish lasting bonds with wanted political agitators. Anarchist theories and rhetoric were not part of Gris' art-based relationship with Picasso; the elder Cubist kept his Spanish *tertulia* separate from his French friends including Braque and Gris.<sup>179</sup> The anti-government views evoked in Gris' illustrations of Montmartre were troubling issues to contemplate, but as Kahnweiler noted, he did not espouse an independent political agenda beyond his *L'Assiette* illustrations. Gris did side with the movement's antimilitaristic and antireligious aims.

Gris was raised in a Catholic household, and according to Kahnweiler, he later expressed

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>177</sup> Read, *Picasso and Apollinaire*, 12-13. Among this older avant-garde collective Picasso, Salmon, and Apollinaire were influenced by the absurdist mannerisms and "black humor" of Jarry. Picasso admired Jarry's ability to self-fashion his own political identity through dress, behavior, and artistic performance. The poet/dramatist's wit-filled diction, bicyclist clothing, and his fascination with firearms made Jarry an attractive anarchist personality in the minds of Picasso and his poet friends. Picasso adopted Jarry's abrasive social demeanor and sense of humor and he even possessed a similar Browning handgun like the French poet.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II*, 5-6. Picasso formed a special bond with his Spanish friends, which are referred to as his *tertulia*-a loose social group formed through nationalistic and cultural ties.

a deep hatred for not only this religion, but also all religious practices.<sup>180</sup> His avoidance of Spain's military draft reflects the artist's pacifistic beliefs against warfare and violence. By the start of World War I, Gris affirmed this in a letter addressed to Kahnweiler on August 16, 1914 by writing, "sometimes I wonder whether, in order to be fed, I shall not be forced to enlist for a war which does not concern me either by virtue of my nationality, character or ideas."<sup>181</sup> Despite his limited involvement with anarchism and the social issues he witnessed on le Butte, the artist was a sincere republican supporter.<sup>182</sup> Both Kahnweiler and Nun□o note that the causes for Gris' republicanism derive from his predominantly emotive attachment with French culture and the arts. Gris had a lasting hatred for Spain and once in France he made an effort not to live as an immigrant exiled in Montmartre but to become an authentic Francophile within Parisian society.<sup>183</sup> After 1906, Gris practiced speaking and writing in French. Through correspondence and conversation with French friends in the building, he improved his French, which enabled further access to media-based resources and social contacts.<sup>184</sup> Most of his letters from 1913-1927 and all of his writings on drawings and paintings are exclusively in French. In view of the artist's devoted allegiance to the multiculturalism of his host country, Gris never made a full emersion into French society. He was, according

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<sup>180</sup> Kahnweiler, *Juan Gris*, 9.

<sup>181</sup> Kahnweiler, *Letters of Juan Gris*, 8.

<sup>182</sup> Nun□o, 25.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>184</sup> Rubin calls into question Picasso's comprehension of contemporary philosophic and scientific theories written by Henri Bergson and Lucien Levy-Bruhl within the first decade of the new century by examining the painter's poor written French in part of a letter intended for Braque from July, 25<sup>th</sup> 1911. The author attempts to debunk earlier studies that claim Picasso read texts written in French by these major theoreticians and other mathematical and scientific sources penned by Jules-Henri Poincare and Albert Einstein (1879-1955). Instead, Rubin states that besides newspapers and dime store novels, Picasso read very little-mainly due to his poor French. Building off of Rubin's remarks, Green infers that Gris would have been able to read the complex French Bergson and Bruhl used to dictate their theories. Green's argument entails that Gris was in a better intellectual position to interpret and contemplate how these theories relate to Modern Art and Cubism. Unlike Picasso, Gris had an ability to converse with other French avant-garde figures and partake in scientific discussions that required a great understanding of the language, and thus establish better report with his French peers.

to Nun□o, one of several significant artists based in the *School of Paris* that lived in the “lowest” social order with Picasso and Modigliani.<sup>185</sup>

Arguably, Gris’ Cubist cityscape imagery does not provoke a direct anarchist theme in comparison with scenes from his *L’Assiette* drawings. The Cubist cityscapes were private works that pictorially call attention to a communal disconnectedness that existed throughout his working class slum in Place Ravignan. Indirectly, as studied observances composed through the artist’s unique vision, the dreary depiction of Montmartre’s tenements purport a sense of fear Gris felt outside of his studio. As a foreign artist in Paris, his Spanish nationality and non-labor based occupation made Gris a suspicious figure in Montmartre. His reclusive behavior in the building, for instance, was in part a defensive tactic against the possibility of being arrested by government agents and deported back to Spain. Before the First World War, Gris was misidentified as a French terrorist and arrested by local police in Montmartre. Initially, Montmartre’s police officials were suspicious of Gris based on previous surveillance reports on Picasso’s numerous associations with residents in the building.<sup>186</sup> As part of the Third Republic’s crack-down on known anarchist activities throughout the city, the Bateau-Lavoir was a popular refuge and headquarters for political dissidents fighting the state.<sup>187</sup>

## Conclusion

Gris’ five cityscapes from 1911 and 1912 are a part of a first group of Cubist works, which depict his residence on rue Ravignan. As discussed, these scenes reveal Gris’ early

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<sup>185</sup> Nun□o, 27.

<sup>186</sup> Leighten, 76.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. Leighten identifies that Paris’ Prefecture de Police was surveying Picasso’s movements from 1901 to 1905 in Montmartre and reporting on his numerous interactions with Catalan activists. His activities and frequent associations with other artists at the building may have including Gris in their surveillance tactics.

experiments in reducing architectural forms to essential geometric components. The structure of his buildings reveals an imaginative two-and-three dimensional format that was inspired by compositional techniques Braque and Picasso utilized for their Cubist landscape paintings from 1908-1909. His works were stylistic experimentations in Cubist forms that were shown and critiqued by close colleagues at the Bateau-Lavoir before Gris' participation in the Salon des Independants and the Salon de Section d' Or exhibitions of 1912.

This thesis attempts to explore Gris' artistic approach and each works' architectural subject matter as a means of revealing deeper sociological themes. Gris' various views of Place Ravignan reference particular experiences in his life at the studios. Gris' undeveloped Cubist depiction of the Bateau-Lavoir and other surrounding tenements from his first *Place Ravignan* cityscape reflects the artist's brief interaction with Picasso and later association with Braque, which respectfully calls attention to each painter's collective innovation in Cubism. Interestingly in *Houses in Paris-Place Ravignan*, Gris' developing Cubist forms purport a stylistic semblance with painted smoke or cloud objects in Fernand Léger's *Fumées* cityscapes from 1911. This comparison is currently unsupported in major primary and secondary source materials, but such a connection between Gris and Léger does, inadvertently, identify Gris' association with Francis Picabia. Léger and Picabia were avant-garde painters working outside of Montmartre, and in separate instances between 1910 and 1912, they became direct participates with the Salon Cubists. Before his debut at the Salon des Independants, Gris was a special invitee to various gatherings organized by Apollinaire, Metzinger, Gleizes, and Picabia. His dedication, as Richardson noted, was a strategic means of building rapport with

Picabia, and by extension, solidifying his social position with these exhibiting French painters.

The next section of this thesis presented formal analyses for Gris' *Houses in Paris* paintings from the Sprengel and Guggenheim collections and his second drawn version of *Place Ravignan* in an attempt to evaluate the contextual significance of the artist's similar locales for each scene. As noted, his cityscapes demonstrate an interest in Parisian life outside of his apartment and they evoke the artist's introverted behavior and reclusive artistic activities. In view of biographical accounts by Kahnweiler and Nuno, Gris' impoverished lifestyle and precarious immigration status between Spain and France may have bound the artist to his studio. Unlike Picasso and Braque during this early period in Gris' career (1906-1912), he rarely traveled beyond Montmartre and only visited new Salon colleagues in Montparnasse and Puteaux on special trips. The depressing representation of his multi-story tenements with windowless facades and closed wooden shutters near Place Ravignan demonstrate Gris' own antisocial tendencies at the building. Yet, as early accounts in his biography suggest, Gris' behavior may have been an initial reaction towards adjusting to life in a foreign city.

As mentioned, this thesis referenced two earlier illustrations with cityscape backgrounds of Montmartre that were published in *L'Assiette au Beurre* from 1909-1910. These previous images are helpful in establishing a stylistic and contextual basis for Gris' later architectural settings. Drawings in *L'Assiette* issues from August, 1909 and May, 1910 depict large tenement high-rises with flat facades, mansard-type rooftops, and protruding smoke pipes that resemble identical architectural components in Gris' *Guggenheim*, *Sprengel* cityscapes and his *Place Ravignan* drawings. The purpose of this contextual

examination intended to prove that a socio-political aim, evoked in Gris' *L'Assiette* illustrations, may have been present in his later Cubist cityscapes. As noted, the initial intent of his Cubist works was purely theoretical in observance of Gris' fascination with Picasso and Braque's earlier innovations. But, his imaginative use of chiaroscuro and abstracted tenements elicit an emotive response towards various hardships associated with life on Place Ravignan. This study established new critiques for two illustrations dealing with the issue of poverty in Montmartre. These images could be used to provide relevant contextual readings for Gris' *Sprengel* and *Guggenheim* cityscapes and his *Place Ravignan* drawings in place of missing information that is not present in past sources on Gris' early oeuvre. Gris' progressive themes in *L'Assiette au Beurre* coincide with the publication's profound anarchist perspective and political satire on domestic and international issues involving the nation's Republican government. As a senior illustrator on the journal's editorial staff, Gris may have been able to advocate his own views on Parisian society. As noted in his drawing for the August issue of 1909, Gris made a point of highlighting a major difference of opinion on the issue of suicide by the city's middle and lower classes. Similarly, his illustration for the publication's October issue addressing the discovery of Preparation 606, encouraged *L'Assiette's* readership to contemplate the economic difficulties and social disadvantages associated with syphilis. These themes were deeply troubling concerns for Gris because he was living in the same community as these fictitious figures, and he had a first-hand account of their struggles. These Cubist scenes of Place Ravignan intentionally provide a context for the artist's socio-economic status during his residency at the Bateau-Lavoir between 1907 and 1922. As mentioned, a lack of human occupancy in Gris' vistas, and the barrenness of his

buildings imaginatively connote the economic plight of Paris' lower classes. Gris' scenes depict various tenements, which typically housed low-income renters working in the city's industrial center. These unseen residents were general laborers or independent craft artisans from distant communities outside of the Ile de France region. Through this analysis of Gris' external observance of life in Montmartre, his Cubist pictures also call attention to his own financial struggles at the Bateau-Lavoir. He arrived in Paris penniless and was forced to live on a small wage provided by various French and Spanish journals for commissioned illustrations. In the studios he lived in a small room that did not have electricity or indoor plumbing. Kahnweiler notes that these unsanitary conditions and Gris' continuous cigarette smoking may have contributed to his failing health during the early nineteen twenties and eventual death in 1927. In correspondence with Gris' barren urban scenes in the *Sprengel* and *Guggenheim* paintings and the artist's *Place Ravignan* drawings, there were two *L'Assiette* illustrations, which capture his impoverished tenement in Montmartre. As this thesis identified, Gris' drawings focused on local children and youth living in poverty. His images call to mind the birth of Georges Gonzalez-Gris, the artist's only child in 1909.

Lastly, Gris' images of poverty examined in his illustrations and Cubist cityscapes were discussed within a political context emphasizing Montmartre's anarchist movement. The Bateau-Lavoir served as a central meeting place and refuge for Symbolist poets, Post-Impressionist artists, and various anarchist groups. Picasso, as noted, supported several Catalan anarchists at the building, but mainly espoused his views in the company of Apollinaire and Salmon through dramatic performances and by reciting poetry. Despite Picasso's artistic and social influence in the studios, Gris did not participate in anarchist



activities and only advocated such views through his commissioned satirical drawings.

His Cubist cityscapes were private works that visually reference an unseen population of disenfranchised artists, artisans, and laborers living in nearby tenements.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1: Juan Gris, *Place Ravignan*, 1911 (Private Collection)



Figure 2: Brassäi, photograph reproduction of the Bateau-Lavoir on Place Ravignan, Musée National Picasso, Paris.





Figure 3: Pablo Picasso, *Hill on Horta, Horta de Ebro*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



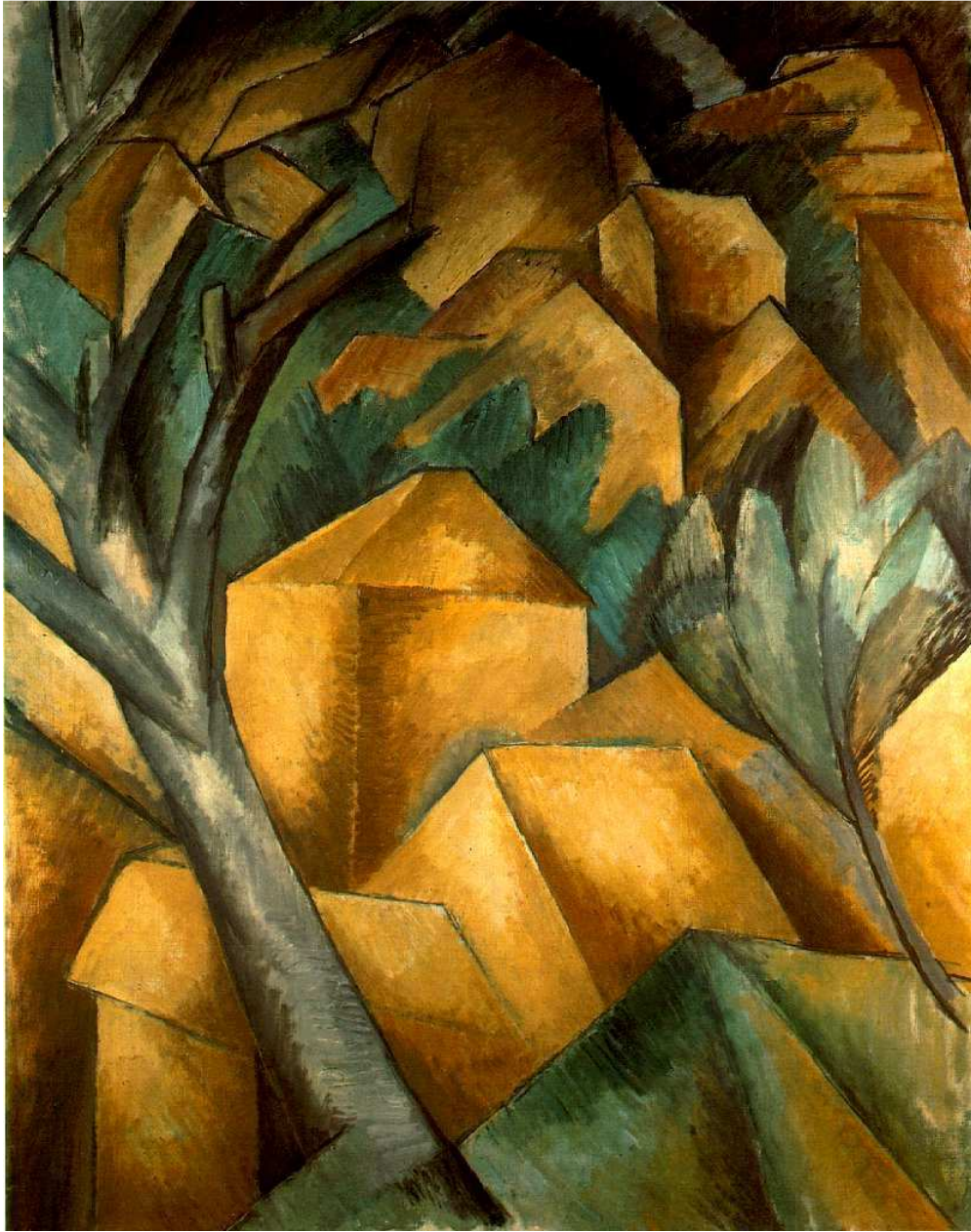


Figure 4: Georges Braque, *Houses at L'Estaque*, Kunstmuseum, Bern.



Figure 5: Kees Van Dongen, Place Ravignan (provenance unknown)



Figure 6: Pablo Picasso, *Factory at Horta de Ebro* , State Heritage Museum, St. Petersburg.



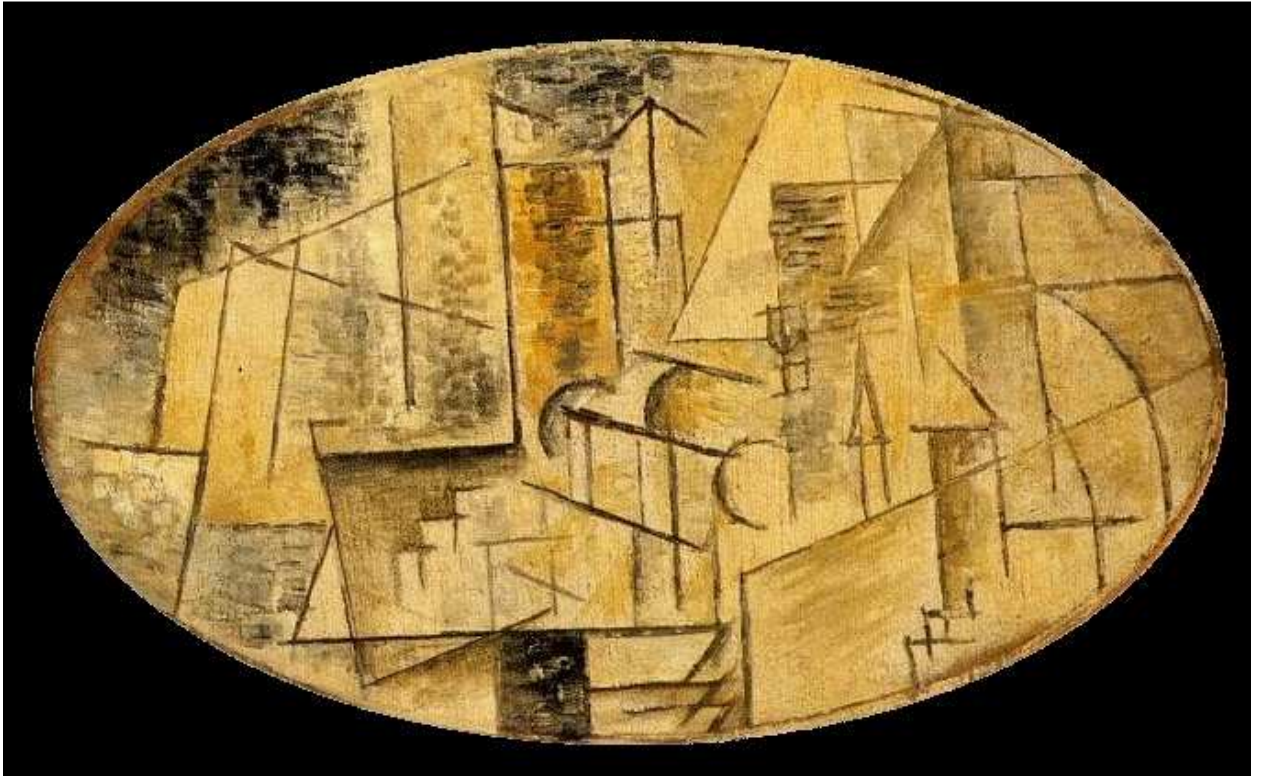


Figure 7: Pablo Picasso, *Rue d'Orchampt*, provenance unknown.





Figure 8: Juan Gris, *Head of a Woman*, Kunstmuseum, Basel.

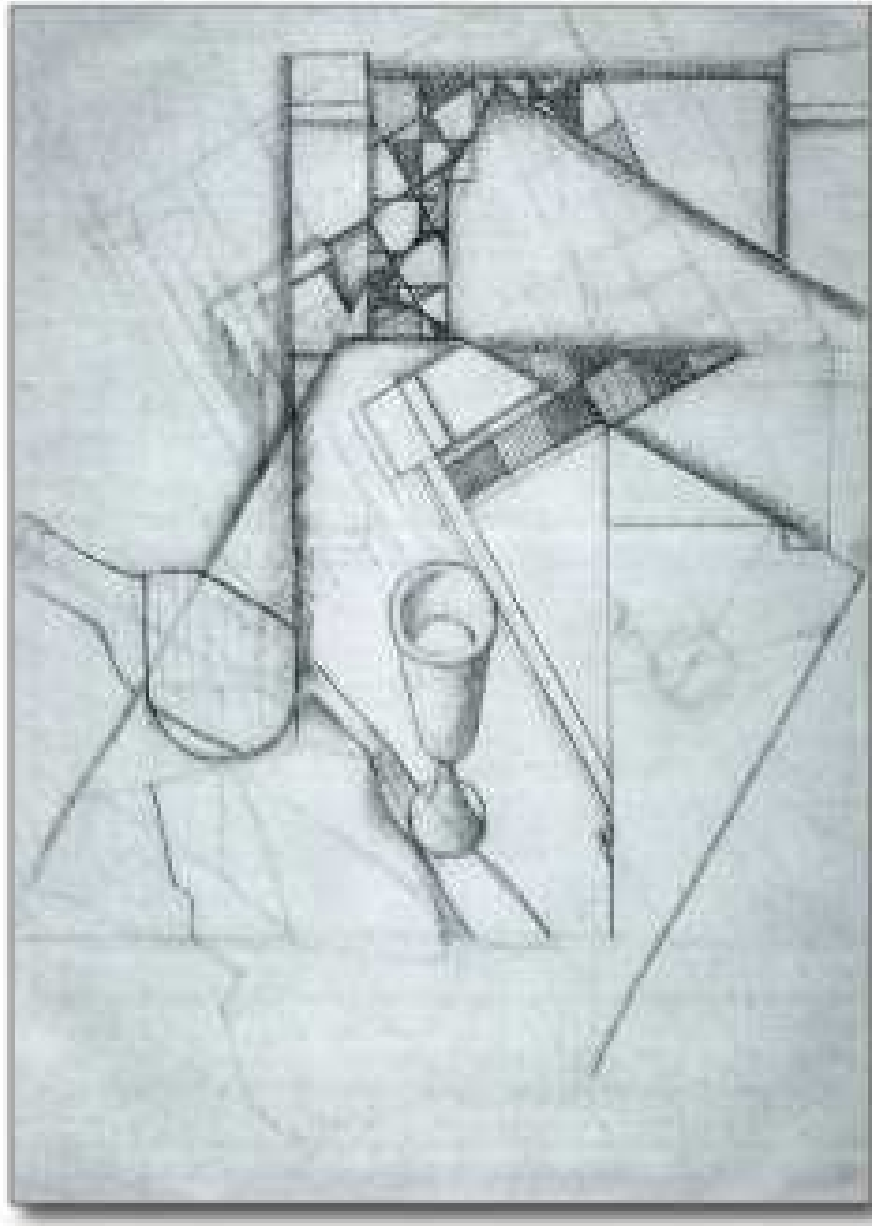


Figure 9: Juan Gris, *Still-Life with Glass and Checkerboard*, Graphische Sammlung, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.



Figure 10: Juan Gris, *Nature Morte a la Cruche*, private collection.



Figure 11: Juan Gris, *Siphon and Bottles*, Georges Gonzalez-Gris.



Figure 12: Juan Gris, *Three Lamps*, Kunstmuseum Bern, Hermann and Margrit Rupf Foundation, London and Stuttgart.



Figure 13: Juan Gris, *Houses in Paris-Place Ravignan*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Leonard A. Lauder Collection.

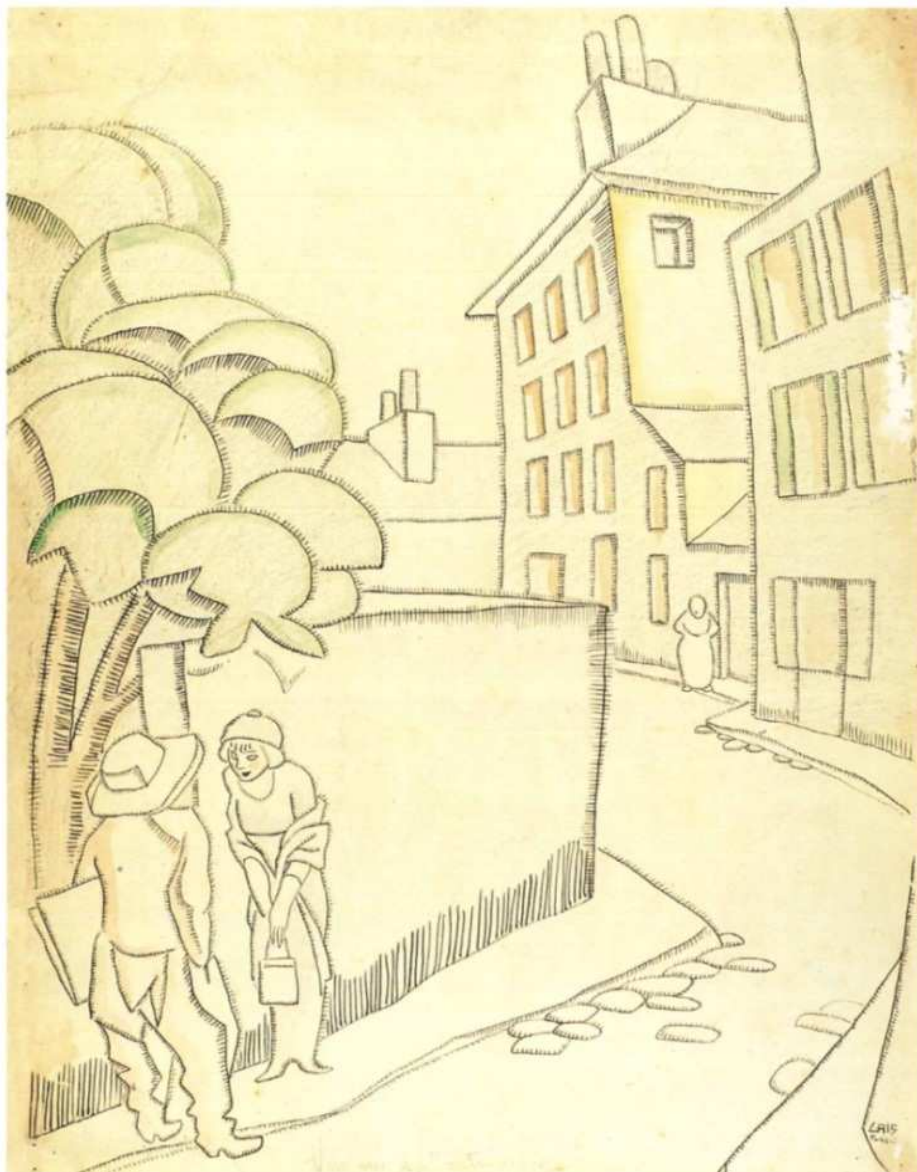


Figure 14: Juan Gris, *Une rue a Montmartre* (L'Esquelle de la Torratxa, no. 1739), Museu Nacional d' Art de Catalunya.



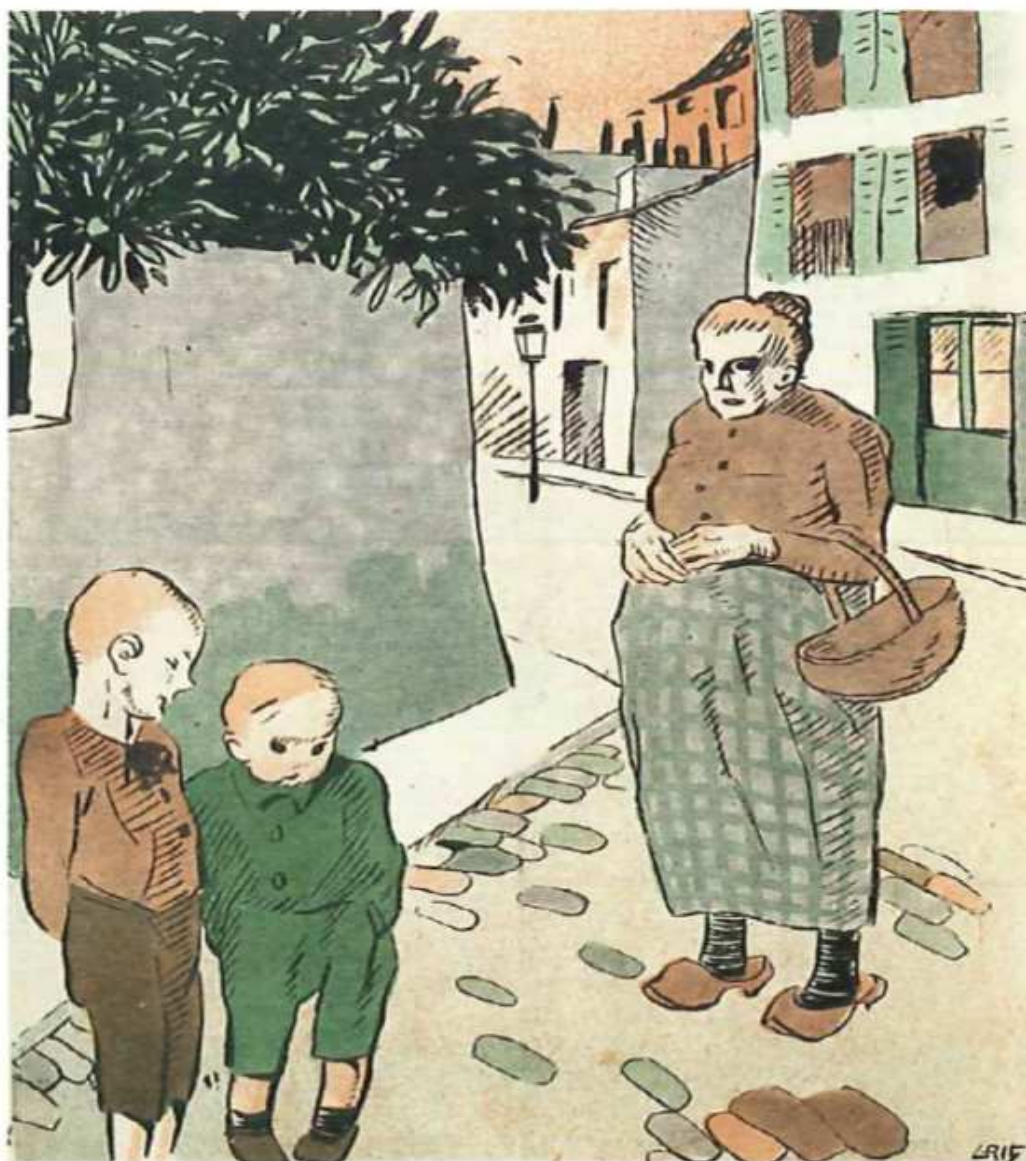


Figure 15: Juan Gris, no. 497 (edition theme: 606) published in *L'Assiette au Beurre*, Emilio Ferré Collection.





Figure 16: Fernand Léger, *Les Fumées sur les toits*, Minneapolis Museum of Art.



Figure 17: Fernand Léger, *Fumées sur les toits*, St. Louis, Richard Weil Collection.



Figure 18: Fernand Léger, *Nus dans un Paysage*, Rijkmuseum, Kroller-Muller, Otterlo.



Figure 19: Juan Gris, *Homage a Picasso*, The Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 20: Juan Gris, *Portrait of Maurice Raynal*, private collection.





Figure 21: Juan Gris, *Portrait of Germaine Raynal*, private collection.

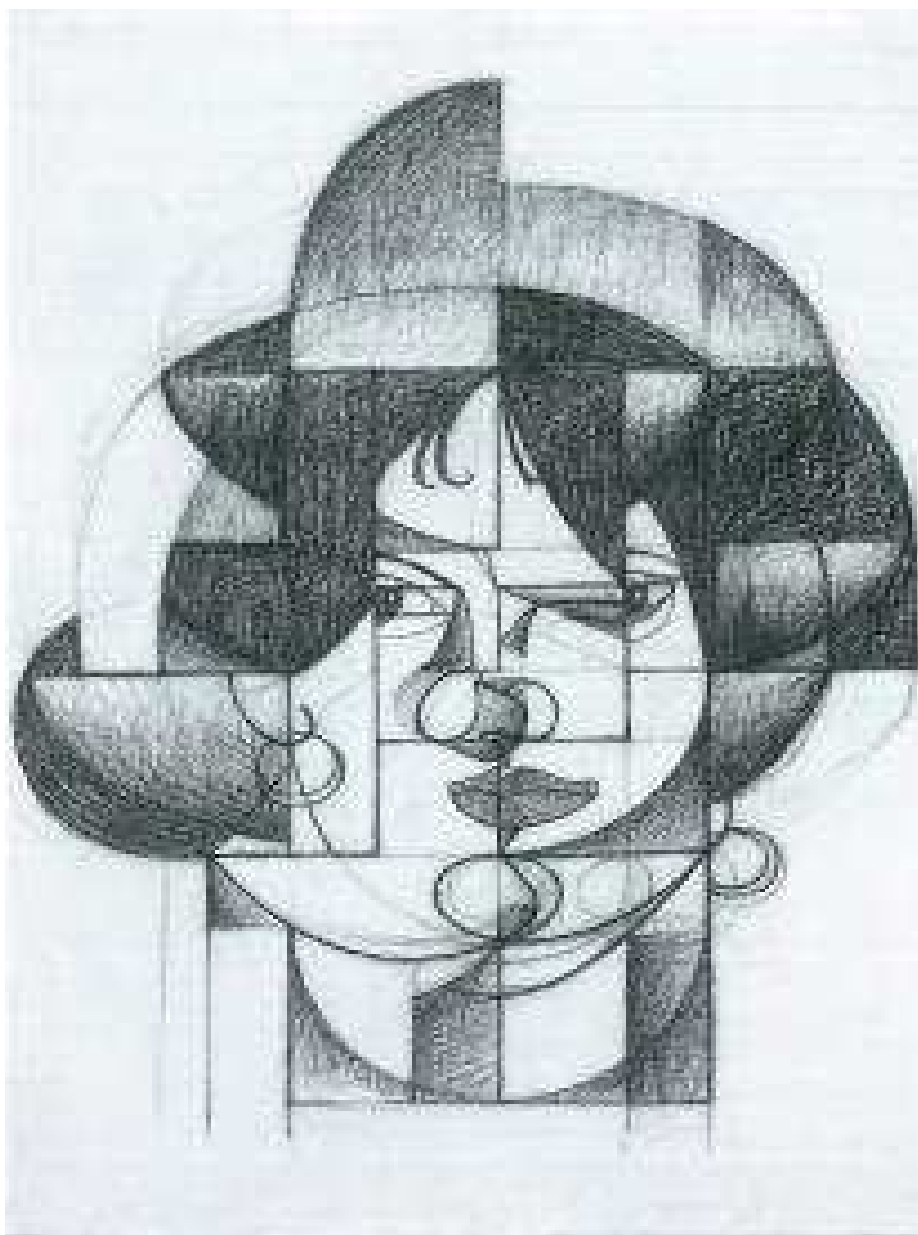


Figure 22: Juan Gris, *Head of Germaine Raynal*, R. Stanley and Ursula Johnson Family Collection.



Figure 23: Juan Gris, *To the Master with Respect*, published in *Le Charivari*, 1910, Emilio Ferré Collection.





Figure 24: Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Gilles*, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 25: Juan Gris, *Houses in Paris*, Bernard Sprengel Collection, Hanover.



Figure 26: Juan Gris, *Houses in Paris*, Guggenheim Museum, New York.



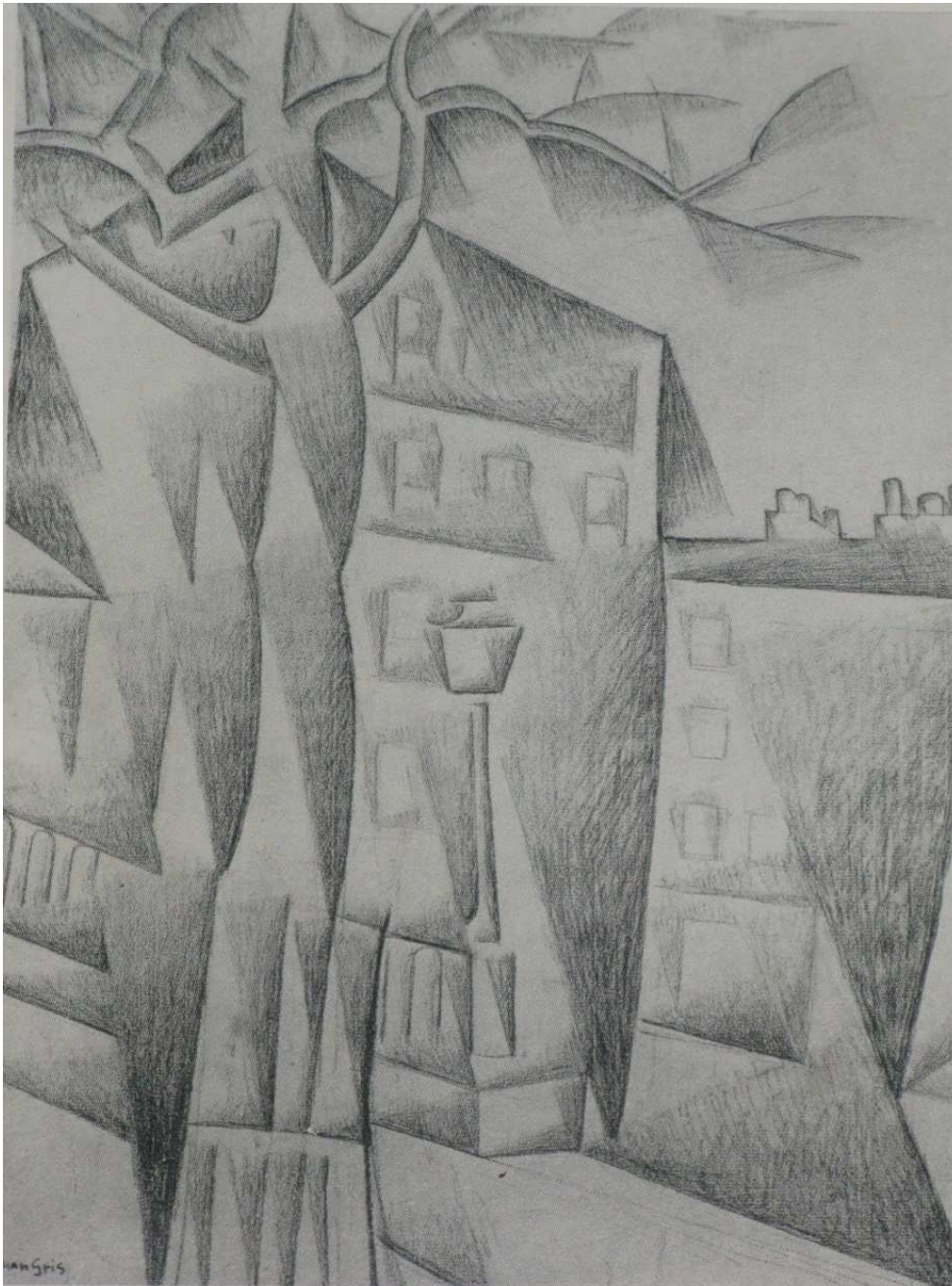


Figure 27: Juan Gris, *The Place Ravignan*, unknown provenance.



Figure 28: Juan Gris, no. 438 (*special edition: Els suicides*) published in *L'Assiette au Beurre*, 1909, Emilio Ferré Collection.





Figure 29: Juan Gris, *no. 447 (special edition: Els fraus)* published in *L'Assiette au Beurre*, Emilio Ferré Collection.



Figure 30: Juan Gris, no. 476 (edition theme *Els cometa liquidador*), published in *L'Assiette au Beurre*, Emilio Ferré Collection.



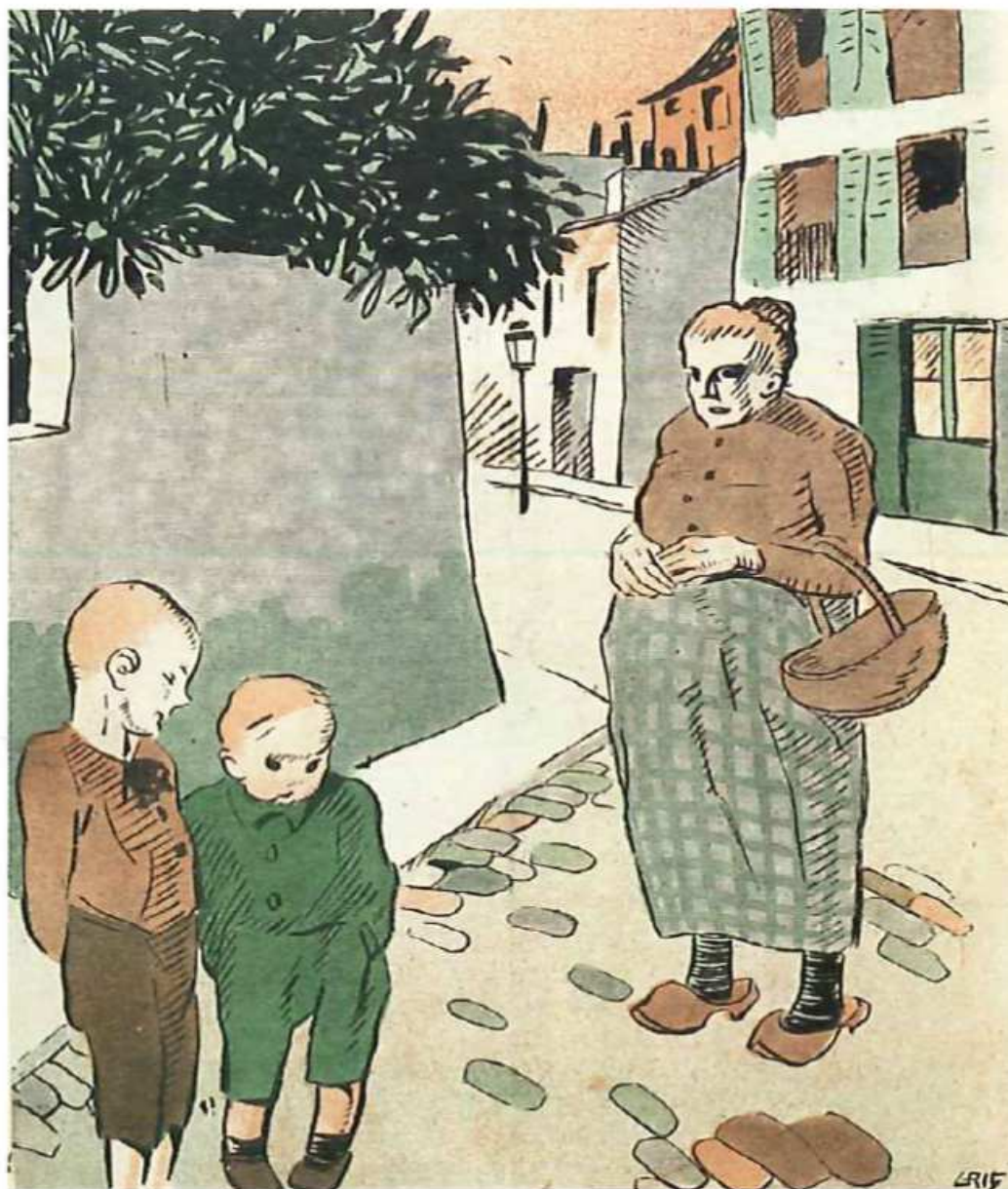


Figure 31: Juan Gris, no. 497 (edition theme: 606) published in *L'Assiette au Beurre*, Emilio Ferré Collection.





Figure 32: Edouard Vuillard, *Lucie Belin in the boulevard Malesherbes Studio*, private collection.

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