A SELECTION OF WORKS BY TWENTIETH CENTURY ARTISTS

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO JUNE 20 TO AUGUST 20, 1934
CATALOGUE OF THE SUMMER EXHIBITION
JUNE 20 TO AUGUST 20 1934

OPEN DAILY INCLUDING SUNDAY FROM 2 TO 5 AND WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 7:30 TO 10

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
205 WIEBOLDT HALL
1050 EAST 59TH STREET
A SELECTION OF WORKS BY TWENTIETH CENTURY ARTISTS

HANS ARP
CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI
GEORGES BRAQUE
ALEXANDER CALDER
JUAN GRIS
JEAN HÉLION
FERNAND LÉGER
JOAN MIRO
PIET MONDRIAN
PABLO PICASSO

THE SELECTION AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE EXHIBITION WAS MADE FOR THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

BY

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THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY MAKE
GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
TO
MR. JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY
WHO HAS ARRANGED THE EXHIBITION
AND TO
THOSE WHO HAVE LOANED THE WORKS
OF ART SELECTED

LENDING TO THE EXHIBITION

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AIMS OF THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY AND THE RELATION OF THE SOCIETY TO THE UNIVERSITY

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN ART

"AN ACCOMPLISHED WORK OF ART AS SUCH IS MORE COMPLETE AND PRECISE EVIDENCE OF ITS MEANING THAN COULD BE ANY OTHER EXPRESSION, EVEN BY THE AUTHOR HIMSELF AT ANOTHER TIME OR PLACE OR IN ANOTHER LESS CREATIVE STATE OF MIND."

THE MODE OF THOUGHT BY WHICH A WORK OF ART IS CREATED OR UNDERSTOOD IS "AN ULTIMATE OF ABSTRACT RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND EXPRESSION. . . . ITS OBJECT IS THE CREATION, UNDERSTANDING, AND COMMUNICATION OF INTEGRAL CLOSED UNITIES OF INTELLIGENT EXPERIENCE.

"THE ULTIMATE EVIDENCE OF MEANING IN LETTERS AND THE ARTS IS THE COMPLETE LITERARY OR ARTISTIC UTTERANCE ITSELF.

"THE LEGITIMATE MEANING OF A WORK OF LETTERS AND OF ART IS ONLY THAT AND ALL THAT WHICH CAN BE FAIRLY WON THROUGH AN INTIMATE AND DISCRIMINATING STUDY OF ITS UTTERANCE."

*Academic Illusions, by Martin Schütze, The University of Chicago Press.

THE CONVICTION THAT THIS SEARCH MUST BE A DIRECT ONE, AS IS EXPRESSED IN THE STATEMENTS QUOTED ABOVE (IDEAS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAUGHT ON THE CAMPUS FOR MANY YEARS) HAS LED TO THE ARRANGEMENT OF A SERIES OF RELATED EXHIBITIONS, NOT LARGE, BUT SELECTED FROM THE BEST EXAMPLES OBTAINABLE FROM MUSEUMS, PRIVATE COLLECTIONS, AND ART DEALERS, WHO HAVE MOST GENEROUSLY ASSISTED IN THE REALIZATION OF SUCH A PLAN.

WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PLAN FOLLOWED CONSISTENTLY (AND UNCOMPROMISINGLY, AS TO THE QUALITY OF EXHIBITS) HAS PROVED FOR US THAT THE METHOD OF MAKING CONTACTS AND ESTABLISHING RELATIONS DIRECTLY WITH THE ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART IS THE ONLY SOUND ONE.

EXHIBITIONS HAVE BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY LECTURES, "CASE EXHIBITS" OF RELATED MATERIAL IN PHOTOGRAPHS AND REPRODUCTIONS; BY EXHIBITS OF STANDARD AND "MODERN" ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS—EVEN THE FILMS HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR PART: "LA BALLETT MÉCANIQUE," BY LÉGER, SHOWN BY THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY, AND A SERIES OF MODERN FOREIGN TALKING MOTION PICTURES GIVEN BY THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL HOUSE.

THE PUBLICATION, THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OF A SERIES OF BRIEF STUDIES ON "MEANING IN ART" HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN RESPONSE TO EXPRESSED WISHES THAT SOME OF THE LECTURES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR READING, AND IT HAS BEEN ARRANGED THAT THE FIRST AND PERHAPS THE SECOND VOLUME SHOULD COME OFF THE PRESS AT THE TIME OF THE PRESENT EXHIBITION—THE THIRD TO FOLLOW LATER, WITH AN EXHIBITION OF APPROPRIATE MATERIAL, IN THE LATE AUTUMN.

ONE OF THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY IS TO COLLECT ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART FOR THE USE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, INITIATED BY MR. ROBERT ALLERTON A FINE COLLECTION OF PRINTS IS BEING MADE.

E. W. S.
FOREWORD

THE INTENTION IN THIS EXHIBITION WAS THE SELECTION OF A FEW SIGNIFICANT WORKS BY CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS THAT SHOULD GIVE A SENSE OF THE VARIOUS AND FRESH REACTION OF IMAGINATIVE INSIGHT IN TERMS OF PLASTIC EXPRESSION TO THE “MIND” OR DISPOSITION OF THE PRESENT TIME.

IT IS CERTAIN THAT THE EXHIBITION IN CONNECTION WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THE SERIES OF BRIEF STUDIES IN "MEANING IN ART" WILL HELP TO ILLUMINE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE TIME THAT HAVE PERPLEXED MOST OF US, AND WILL RELEASE FOR US MORE FULLY A SENSE OF THE VIGOR AND BEAUTY INHERENT IN THE PRESENT.

THE SOCIETY IS FORTUNATE IN HAVING HAD THE RARE SERVICES OF MR. JAMES J. SWEENEY IN SELECTING AND INSTALLING THE EXHIBITION. AS IS HIS CONVICTION AS WELL AS OURS THAT ALL A WORK OF PLASTIC ART ASKS "IS TO BE LOOKED AT" WE SHALL QUOTE AS AN INTRODUCTION MAINLY SOME WORDS ABOUT AND BY THE TWO ARTISTS MOST PROMINENT IN THE EXHIBITION.

BUT FIRST, WHAT MR. SWEENEY HAS SAID ABOUT PICASSO IN THE SPECIAL NUMBER OF "CAHIERS D’ART," 1932, NO. 3-5: "TO THOSE WHO LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE FOR A EUROPEAN PICTORIAL ART WHICH WILL TAKE ITS PLACE BESIDE THE GREAT DECORATIVE TRADITIONS OF THE WORLD RATHER THAN LUMPED AS IT HAS BEEN FOR HALF A DOZEN CENTURIES IN THE PAROCHIAL NATURALISM OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN, PICASSO STANDS AN AVATAR. HIS PLASTIC MYTHS HAVE ALREADY CUT A PATH BACK TO

THE PICTURE WHICH IS PRIMARILY A DECORATIVE UNIT, RATHER THAN AN IDEATIONAL COMPOST OF THE ILLUSTRATIONAL.


"TODAY WE ARE THE INHERITORS OF SIX HUNDRED YEARS OF MISDIRECTION IN THE PLASTIC ARTS. BASICALLY NATURALISTIC— AT TIMES EVEN COMPASSING 'REALISM'—ALWAYS A 'COPTING,' AND NATURE, AS NIETZSCHE WARNED US SHE WOULD, HAS TAKEN HER REVENGE ON US FOR DISREGARDING THE MYTH, FOR ALLOWING IT TO DECLINE TO A 'FAIRYTALE,' FOR NOT BRINGING IT BACK TO VIRILITY. IN SHORT FOR 'THE ABSTRACT CHARACTER OF OUR MYTHLESS EXISTENCE.' ESTHETICALLY WE HAVE BECOME A DRY, COLORLESS PEOPLE. . . . OUR ART HAS DECAYED EITHER INTO A HACKNEYED ACADEMISM, OR AN ILLUSTRATIONAL ATTITUiginz, BOTH FINALLY DEPENDENT ON TECHNICAL VIRTUOSITIES.

"IT IS, PERHAPS, IN THE YOUNGER COMMUNITIES (WHICH IF ANY SHOULD BE COLORFUL AND FRESH-VISIONED) THAT THESE GRAY, DECADENT CHARACTERISTICS ARE MOST ASSERTIVE. . . . TO COMPASS AN ART OF VITALITY THEY MUST FORGET THE SOPHISTICATION OF DECADENCE, AND LEARN TO SEE WITH YOUNG EYES TO RESPECT THE INTENSITY OF INTUITIONS.

"THE OBJECT OF THEIR ART MUST BECOME THE STATEMENT, INTENSELY AS POSSIBLE, OF AN INTUITION. THIS NECESSitates A REPRESENTATION OF FORMS ADAPTED FROM NATURE. BUT NATURE
ONLY AS A MEANS TO AN END: A SOURCE OF FORMS. NATURALISM, OR THE MEANS THAT OUTGROW THE END, MUST BE AVOIDED. HENCE THEY MUST REFINE THE ‘FICTIONAL FORM’ AND THE ‘PLASTIC MYTH.’

"PICASSO HAS ALREADY SHOWN THE WAY."


"LÉGER’S LATEST WORKS ARE NOT TO BE SEEN AS PART OF A ROOM ['DECORATION'], BUT AS COMPOSITIONS OF VOLUME, LIGHT, LINE AND COLOR, AND ENJOYED FOR THEMSELVES, AS WE ENJOY A SONATA OR A FUGUE. HIS ART IS AN ‘ART OF SPACE.’ . . . . HIS OBJECT IS THE SUGGESTION OF A THIRD DIMENSION THAT WILL REMAIN WITHIN THE PLANE OF A PICTURE’S COMPOSITION, AND THROUGH IT, A FRESH INTEGRATION OF LINE, SPACE, LIGHT AND COLOR TOWARD THE CREATION OF A PLASTIC UNIT."

"ERNAND LÉGER SAID," CONTINUES MR. SWEENEY: "‘WE HAVE PROJECTORS WHICH PLY INTO THE MOST REMOTE CORNERS WITH THEIR BEAMS; WE CAN ACTUALLY SEE THROUGH BODIES. THESE NEW INSTRUMENTS HAVE GIVEN US A NEW OUTLOOK. WE WANT TO SEE THE THING CLEARLY; WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND ITS MECHANISM, ITS FUNCTIONS, THE SOURCE OF ITS ENERGY IN THE MOST MINUTE DETAIL. THE WHOLE NO LONGER SUFFFICES; WE WISH TO FEEL AND GRASP EACH DETAIL THAT MAKES UP THE WHOLE—AND WE HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT THESE DETAILS, THESE FRAGMENTS, IF WE ISOLATE THEM, HAVE ALL INTEGRAL AND INDIVIDUAL LIVES OF THEIR OWN. . . . ."

"SOME YEARS AGO ONE THOUGHT ONLY OF A FACE OR A BODY, THEN GRADUALLY ONE GREW INTERESTED IN [INFLUENCE OF THE

"CLOSE UPS" OF THE MOVIES] AND BEGAN TO EXAMINE WITH CURIO-

OSITY THE EYE OR THE EAR RELATED TO THAT FACE. IT IS THIS AT-

TUDE THAT MARKS THE ADVENT OF MODERNISM. THE OBJECT AND THE FRAGMENTS OF AN OBJECT HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED—

MORE, WE HAVE RECOGNIZED IN THEM THEIR BEAUTY, FOR THEY

ALL HAVE IN THEM A BEAUTY ENTIRELY THEIR OWN, INHERENT, INDIVIDUAL. . . .

"OBJECTS PLAY THEIR PART IN THE PAGEANT OF THE STREETS;

FOR THE DISPLAY WINDOWS AND IN THE SHOPS WE SET THEM APART, WE PERSONIFY THEM. . . .

"WE PRODUCE THE USEFUL AND WE PRODUCE THE BEAUTIFUL.

IT IS NOT BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE IT IS USEFUL, THAT WOULD BE TOO SIMPLE. BUT WE FORCE OURSELVES TO MAKE THE OBJECT “BEAUTI-

FUL IN ITSELF” AND NOW BY OVERLARDING IT WITH DECORATION—

AGAIN “THE SPIRIT OF OUR AGE.” . . . ."

"THE ORIENTAL, MEDITERRANEAN AND LATIN CIVILIZATIONS

HAVE LEFT US SOME REMARKABLE WORKS OF THEIR CREATION,

WORKS OF SUCH POWER AND QUALITY THAT IT MIGHT SEEM IM-

POSSIBLE EVER TO FREE OURSELVES FROM THEM. HOWEVER, CERTAIN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE, I BELIEVE, BEEN CALLED INTO EXISTENCE TO RENEW THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD. . . . .’"

[PERHAPS THE BEST STATEMENT ABOUT THE CONTENT OR ELEMENTS IN A WORK OF PLASTIC ART IS THE SEEMINGLY SIMPLE PROPOSITION OF LÉGER’S IN REGARD TO REVOLUTION (THE STATE OF TENDENCY) AND EQUILIBRIUM (THE STATE IN WHICH A “FULL LIVING” IS POSSIBLE)]:

"LIFE, IN THE FULL MEANING OF THE WORD, DOES NOT FUNCTION IN A STATE OF TENSION, IN A STATE OF REVOLUTION. . . .

"ONE CAN ONLY LIVE IN A STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM."
"'In art the same holds good: there has always been the state of 'tendency' which is a style of revolution (a state of reaction against something), but this state of incompleteness is never satisfactory."

"'A plastic fact, whatever its specific nature may be, ought always to be valuable in itself and not because it reacts against something. . . . ."

"'I hold that a picture despite all the genius of its author, cannot be realized merely by the recipe: a round and a square, a vertical and a horizontal. It has more likelihood of being realized through a round, a square and perhaps an oval, or . . . through a vertical, a horizontal and perhaps an oblique."

"'Then, arrived at this nicety, this critical point, this perhaps, I find myself faced by the total incompetence of rational and explanatory expedients to bring me any further."

"'Logic and the analytic spirit can penetrate a work of art to a certain depth, but never to the roots. . . . ."

"'The indeterminate quantum, which we have symbolized by the figure 3, represents this difference between the analyzable elements and the complete work. This symbol (expressed in the figures) swells to a prodigious importance and hovers mysteriously over all creative work. It assumes the leading rôle in that elusive, impalpable drama. Modern rationalism which would explain all, understand all, . . . stumbles here, stops, and will always stop before the phenomenon of creation. . . . ."

"'Every new civilization, every work of art ought to keep the figure 3 before it [the inexplicable, the unforeseeable]; that is maturity's symbol."

"'The danger for young civilizations is that of stopping at figure 2 in the belief that equilibrium can be established there. That it frequently finds itself halted at the figure 2 is the prime difficulty with which the present moment confronts the nascent Nordic civilization—notably in America. . . . ."

"'There is a second danger—the culture attitude. A young race has a tendency to depend on compassing its equilibrium by leaning on the older neighboring civilizations. In art such an attitude is usually sterile. . . . spontaneity and instinct should be the basis of all artistic creation. We create in 'heat'—culture is cold, it is analytic. . . . ."

"'When this civilization will have come to its fulness, to its equilibrium, one will be able to discern, I hope . . . the cult of the beautiful in which we are now living, which we are creating, but which so few recognize. . . . ."

"'Alone, isolated amid all this desire of luminous scrutiny, the work of art unfathomable by the modern projectors, is perfecting itself in the half light, in the unknown. For it is daughter of the instinct, of the sensibility, and a higher unconscious order of things that will shelter it always from the indiscreet pryings of analysis."

E. W. S.
CATALOGUE

HANS ARP

1. RELIEF*  
PAINTED WOOD  WHITE
COLLECTION OF MR. ALEXANDER CALDER  
ROXBURY, CONNECTICUT

2. RELIEF 1929  
PAINTED WOOD  POLYCHROME
REPRODUCED: "CAHIERS D'ART," 1930, P. 8
COLLECTION OF THE SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME, NEW YORK

CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI

3. "FLIGHT OF BIRD" 1919  
POLISHED BRASS 38"  
(CEMENT BASE 9", WOOD PEDESTAL 39", IN RECTANGLES,  
CONTRASTING WITH ROUNDED FORMS OF BRASS FIGURE).  
IN THE BRANCUSI EXHIBIT AT THE BRUMMER GALLERY, NEW  
YORK, AND AT THE ARTS CLUB, CHICAGO, IN 1926  
SEE "THE ARTS," "BRANCUSI," 1926, P. 143
COLLECTION OF THE ARTS CLUB, CHICAGO

4. "SLEEPING MUSE" 1909  
BRONZE 10"  
SHOWN AT THE EXHIBITION OF FRENCH ART AT THE ARMORY, NEW YORK, AND  
The Art Institute, Chicago, 1912
COLLECTION OF THE ART INSTITUTE, CHICAGO
ARTHUR J. EDDY MEMORIAL

5. "SLEEPING MUSE" 1909  
ALABASTER 12"  
FROM THE JOHN QUINN COLLECTION  
SHOWN AT THE ART CENTRE, NEW YORK, JANUARY, 1925  
(SEE CATALOGUE EDITED BY FORBES WATSON, PUBLISHED BY  
THE PHILEMON HILL PRESS)
COLLECTION OF MISS ALICE ROULLIER, CHICAGO

* Reproduced in Catalogue.
GEORGES BRAQUE  
BORN 1881, ARGENTEUIL, S. ET O., FRANCE

6. STILL LIFE*  1914  25"x36"  OIL ON CANVAS
REPRODUCED IN "CAHIERS D’ART," BRAQUE NUMBER, 1933
ESTATE OF CORNELIUS SULLIVAN, NEW YORK

7. STILL LIFE*  1924  25½"x30"  OIL ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF MRS. CORNELIUS SULLIVAN, NEW YORK

8. STILL LIFE  1924  9"x18"  OIL ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF KNOEDLER & CO., NEW YORK

ALEXANDER CALDER  
BORN 1898, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

9. OBJECT WITH RED DISKS*  1931  WIRE, ETC.
REPRODUCED: ANATOLE JAKOVSKI.
"SIX ESSAYS," PARIS, 1933
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

10. OBJECT WITH RED BALL*  1931  WIRE, WOOD, ETC.
REPRODUCED: "CAHIERS D’ART," 1933, P. 244
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

JUAN GRIS  
BORN MADRID, SPAIN, 1887;
DIED BOULOGNE-SUR-SEINE, FRANCE, 1927

11. STILL LIFE*  1916  38"x28"  OIL ON CANVAS
REPRODUCED: "CAHIERS D’ART," 1933, P. 193
COLLECTION OF MISS KATHERINE DREHER
WEST REDDING, CONNECTICUT

12. STILL LIFE*  1916  29"x23½"  OIL ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF MR. ALANSON HARTFENCE, NEW YORK

13. STILL LIFE  1929  36½"x28½"  OIL ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF THE MARIE HARRIMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

JEAN HÉLION  
BORN 1904, COUTERNE (ORNE), FRANCE

14. COMPOSITION  1933  39½"x32"  OIL ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF ALEXANDER CALDER

15. COMPOSITION*  1933  26½"x23½"  OIL ON CANVAS
REPRODUCED: ANATOLE JAKOVSKI,
"SIX ESSAYS," PARIS, 1933
HERBERT READ, "ART NOW,"
FABER & FABER, LONDON, 1933
COLLECTION OF THE JOHN BECKER GALLERY, NEW YORK

16. COMPOSITION  1933  25½"x32"  OIL ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF THE JOHN BECKER GALLERY, NEW YORK

FERNAND LÉGER  
BORN 1881, ARGENTAN (ORNÉ), FRANCE

17. COMPOSITION  1925  51½"x38½"  OIL ON CANVAS
REPRODUCED: "CAHIERS D’ART," 1927, P. 98
"CAHIERS D’ART," 1933, LÉGER NUMBER E. TÉRIADE, "FERNAND LÉGER," PARIS
PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

18. COMPOSITION*  1925  51½"x38½"  OIL ON CANVAS
REPRODUCED: "BULLETIN DE L’EFFORT MODERNE," NO. 25, PARIS, MAY, 1926
"SELECTION," NO. 5, P. 43
E. TÉRIADE, "FERNAND LÉGER," PARIS
PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

19. COMPOSITION  1926  57½"x38½"  OIL ON CANVAS
REPRODUCED: "L’AMOUR DE L’ART," PARIS
"CAHIERS D’ART," LÉGER NUMBER, 1933
E. TÉRIADE, "FERNAND LÉGER," PARIS
PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

JOAN MIRÓ  
BORN 1893, MONTROIG, SPAIN

20. COMPOSITION*  MAY, 1933  57½"x45½"  OIL ON CANVAS
REPRODUCED: "CAHIERS D’ART," 1934, P. 54
COLLECTION OF THE PIERRE MATISSE GALLERY, NEW YORK

21. COMPOSITION  JUNE, 1933  57½"x45½"  OIL ON CANVAS
COLLECTION OF MR. ALEXANDER CALDER,
ROXBURY, CONNECTICUT

1 See Frontispiece left of center.
PIET MONDRIAN  
BORN 1872, AMERSFOORT, HOLLAND

22. COMPOSITION 1929  
23"×31 1/2"  OIL ON CANVAS  
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

23. COMPOSITION 1933  
16 1/4"×13"  OIL ON CANVAS  
COLLECTION OF MR. SIDNEY JANOWITZ, NEW YORK

PABLO RUIZ PICASSO  
BORN 1881, MALAGA, SPAIN

24. STILL LIFE* 1927–1929  
51"×38"  OIL ON CANVAS  
REPRODUCED: FIRST STATE, "CAHIERS D'ART," 1927, P. 189  
SECOND STATE, "CAHIERS D'ART," 1929, P. 449  
"CAHIERS D'ART," 1930, P. 294  
COLLECTION OF MR. AND MRS. W. AVERILL HARRIMAN,  
NEW YORK

25. STILL LIFE 1927–1928  
90 1/2"×59"  OIL ON CANVAS  
COLLECTION OF THE VALENTINE GALLERY, NEW YORK

26. "METAMORPHOSE" MAY 13, 1929 36 1/2"×28 1/2"  OIL ON CANVAS  
REPRODUCED: "CAHIERS D'ART," 1929, P. 243  
EUGENIO D'ORS, "PICASSO," PLATE 44  
JAMES J. SWEENY, "PLASTIC REDIRECTION IN 20TH  
CENTURY PAINTING," THE RENAISSANCE  
SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, 1934  
COLLECTION OF MR. PAUL ROSENBERG, PARIS

27. COMPOSITION* FEBRUARY 1, 1930 26"×19 1/2"  OIL ON CANVAS  
COLLECTION OF THE VALENTINE GALLERY, NEW YORK

CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI  
FLIGHT OF BIRD  
COLLECTION OF THE ARTS CLUB OF CHICAGO
FABLO PICASSO

COLLECTION OF PAUL ROSENBERG, PARIS