

Dallas Museum of Art and The Baltimore Museum of Art Co-Organize First Solo U.S. Exhibition of Cubist Juan Gris in Over Three Decades

Featuring More than 40 Paintings and Collages, *Cubism in Color: The Still Lifes of Juan Gris*
Explores Gris's Pivotal Role in Cubism and Innovative Approach to Still Life



Dallas, TX—Updated October 15, 2020—The Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) and The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announced the co-organization of the first U.S. exhibition in over 35 years dedicated to the Spanish artist Juan Gris. *Cubism in Color: The Still Lifes of Juan Gris* highlights the artist's pioneering and revolutionary contributions to the Cubist movement by focusing on his fascination with subjects drawn from everyday life. Through more than 40 paintings and collages that span all major periods of the artist's evolving practice, the exhibition reveals the transformation of Gris's innovative style and principal motifs from 1911 until 1926, one year before his tragically early death at age 40. His exquisite compositions explored the boundary between abstraction and representation, tension and stasis, color and form. As a thorough examination of Gris's still lifes, *Cubism in Color* provides an opportunity to reconsider the legacy of this important yet underappreciated modernist master.

Cubism in Color: The Still Lifes of Juan Gris is co-curated by Nicole R. Myers, The Barbara Thomas Lemmon Senior Curator of European Art at the DMA, and Katy Rothkopf, the BMA's Senior Curator and Department Head of European Painting and Sculpture. It will premiere in Dallas from March 14, 2021 through July 25, 2021, and then travel to Baltimore, where it will be presented from September 12, 2021 through January 9, 2022. The exhibition will include important loans from international collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Telefónica Cubist Collection and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, Spain, among others.

"It is extraordinarily rare to see so many works by Juan Gris together, particularly in the United States. We are pleased to bring them together for this exhibition to offer a rich and nuanced re-examination of the artist's important role in a defining art-historical movement," said Dr. Agustín Arteaga, the DMA's Eugene McDermott Director. "As the DMA aims to explore new or underrepresented narratives in art history through its exhibitions and programs, we're excited to introduce our audiences to the life and legacy of this principal figure within Cubism."

“Juan Gris’s incredible use of and experimentation with color and form reverberate across modern and contemporary art movements. The upcoming exhibition offers a fresh opportunity to examine a daring and deeply accomplished yet lesser-studied artist, providing new insights into the development of Cubism and the evolving narrative of art more broadly. We are delighted to collaborate with the DMA on the creation of this exhibition, and we look forward to engaging our many audiences in the brilliance of Gris’s practice,” said Christopher Bedford, the BMA’s Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director.

Born José Victoriano Carmelo Carlos González Pérez in Madrid, Juan Gris (1887–1927) was one of the primary contributors to the development of Cubism in the early 20th century. Though he was championed by art dealers Daniel Kahnweiler and Léonce Rosenberg and writer and art collector Gertrude Stein, who considered him “a perfect painter,” Gris’s pivotal role within the movement has often been overshadowed by his better-known cohorts Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Fernand Léger. His works are among the movement’s most distinctive and inventive, building upon early Cubist precedents with experimental and exquisite still-life compositions distinguished by their vibrant colors, bold patterns, and a constantly shifting approach. By bringing together more than 40 of Gris’s most distinctive still lifes from major European and American collections, *Cubism in Color* will reveal the virtuosic range of the artist’s short yet prolific career, illuminating his boundary-pushing contributions to Cubism and his assumption of the role of the movement’s leader in the aftermath of World War I.

Cubism in Color: The Still Lifes of Juan Gris begins with Gris’s early paintings, such as *Still Life with Flowers*, which exemplify Analytic Cubism with faceted shapes and simultaneous viewpoints yet are distinctive in their systematic geometry, crystalline structure, and bright monochromatic palettes. The exhibition then chronicles a series of subsequent stylistic changes in Gris’s practice, starting with his transition to Synthetic Cubism. From about 1913 to early 1916, Gris boldly experimented with *trompe-l’oeil*, collage, and pointillist techniques in increasingly abstract and dynamic compositions characterized by complex geometric patterns and dazzling colors applied in daring and novel combinations, as seen in *The Siphon; Guitar and Pipe; Still Life before an Open Window, Place Ravignan; Fantômas; and Newspaper and Fruit Dish*.

Gris drastically reinvented his style between 1916 and 1920, adopting a more somber palette, simplifying both his motifs and the geometric structure of his compositions, and seeking a greater fusion of subject and ground. This second phase of Cubism, often called Crystal or Classical Cubism, is characterized by its emphasis on the purity and stability of form and composition. Gris was hailed as the leader of this movement, and his work in this period, such as *Still Life with Newspaper; The Sideboard; and Guitar and Fruit Dish on a Table*, was crucial to the development of Purism by his friends and fellow artists Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, in addition to reflecting the general “return to order” among the avant-garde following World War I.

Gris’s late production from 1920 to 1927 demonstrates a renewed interest in rich, vibrant hues and the still life set before an open window, an innovative motif he first introduced to Cubism in 1915 and revisited in works such as *Le Canigou; The Painter’s Window; and Mandolin and Fruit Dish*. Notable for their harmonious, lyrical quality, these final works embody yet another revolutionary shift in Gris’s aesthetic and approach as he increasingly relied on the geometric, abstract structure of his compositions to determine the still-life components integrated seamlessly within them. A perfect union of what Gris called “flat, colored architecture,” these works are a lasting testament to his constant reinvention of Cubism and the deceptively simple concept of the still life.

“Gris was a prodigious talent, achieving an incredible body of work in the short period he was active as an artist. Just two years after he started painting, he emerged as a quintessential member of the Cubist group with a distinct style that is remarkable for its extraordinary refinement and rich color,” said Myers. “His great ability to grasp, adapt, and repeatedly transform the Cubist aesthetic makes worthy a deeper consideration not only of his production, but of the role he played in shaping modern art in the first quarter of the 20th century.”

“This exhibition gives us the wonderful opportunity to highlight major works by Gris in both the DMA’s and BMA’s collections, putting them into a new context for the first time in decades,” said Rothkopf. “Seeing how Gris took the same motifs of musical instruments, playing cards, newspapers, bottles, glasses, and table tops and used them in his still-life compositions in different and innovative ways throughout his brief but productive career is extraordinary.”

Cubism in Color: The Still Lifes of Juan Gris will be accompanied by a fully illustrated scholarly catalogue co-published by the DMA and BMA. The publication will include essays on Gris’s artistic process and legacy by co-curators Nicole R. Myers and Katy Rothkopf; Anna Katherine Brodbeck, the DMA’s Hoffman Family Senior Curator of Contemporary Art; Paloma Esteban Leal, Senior Curator of Painting and Drawing, 1881–1939, at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía; and Harry Cooper, Senior Curator and Head of Modern Art at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Images: Juan Gris, *Guitar and Pipe*, 1913, oil and charcoal on canvas, Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc.; Juan Gris, *Still Life before an Open Window, Place Ravignan*, 1915, oil on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950; Juan Gris, *Newspaper and Fruit Dish*, 1916, oil on canvas, Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Collection Société Anonyme. Photo © Yale University Art Gallery; Juan Gris, *The Painter’s Window*, 1925, oil on canvas, Baltimore Museum of Art: Bequest of Saidie A. May. Photography by Mitro Hood

About the Dallas Museum of Art

Established in 1903, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is among the 10 largest art museums in the country and is distinguished by its commitment to research, innovation, and public engagement. At the heart of the Museum and its programs is its global collection, which encompasses 25,000 works and spans 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Located in the nation’s largest arts district, the Museum acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary events, and dramatic and dance presentations. Since the Museum’s return to free general admission in 2013, the DMA has welcomed more than 4 million visitors, including more than 800,000 in 2018. The DMA is an Open Access institution, allowing all works believed to be in the public domain to be freely available for downloading, sharing, repurposing, and remixing without restriction. For more information, visit DMA.org.

The Dallas Museum of Art is supported, in part, by the generosity of DMA Members and donors, the citizens of Dallas through the City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

About The Baltimore Museum of Art

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA’s internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as some of the nation’s finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an

exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building, designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope, and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The museum is located three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor in a park-like setting in the heart of Charles Village, adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

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