

MUSEUM BARBERINI

POTSDAM

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and the Museum Barberini, Potsdam,
by Christiane Lange and Ortrud Westheider
with Nathalie Lachmann, Michael Philipp,
and Daniel Zamani

Modern Gazes Modigliani

Exhibition:
Christiane Lange and
Ortrud Westheider
with Nathalie Lachmann and
Jens-Henning Ullner

Catalog:
Ortrud Westheider with
Christiane Lange,
Nathalie Lachmann, and
Jens-Henning Ullner

With contributions by
Flavio Fergonzi
Cécile Girardeau
Carolin Heinemann
Peter Kropmanns
Nathalie Lachmann
Christiane Lange
Victoria Noel-Johnson
Beate Söntgen
Jens-Henning Ullner
Ortrud Westheider



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Greeting

Amedeo Modigliani was a European artist in the broadest and most innovative sense. He came from a Jewish family in Livorno and was of French origin on his mother's side. His artistic training followed the tradition of the Italian academies, informed by classicism and the Renaissance. In the early twentieth century, he lived in the avant-garde milieu of bohemian Paris, at that time a magnet for progressive artists from Germany, Spain, Italy, modern-day Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and other Eastern European countries—many of whom were fleeing rampant anti-Semitism. He was acquainted with great masters of his time such as Pablo Picasso, and in turn exerted an influence on younger generations of artists such as the German Expressionists.

Today the artistic and intellectual appeal of Amedeo Modigliani is undiminished, and his works are exhibited in the most renowned international museums. In this regard, Germany is no exception. The most recent exhibition of his work took place at the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn in 2009; now, in 2023, Modigliani returns to Germany, thanks to a shared initiative of the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and the Museum Barberini in Potsdam. Italy will also serve as the “guest of honor” at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2024. These and many other examples bear witness to the extraordinary vitality of the cultural connections between our two countries.

I am grateful to the directors of both museums for initiating this exhibition. It sheds new light on Modigliani's work and reveals a previously unknown aspect of his extraordinary modernity. By taking a closer look at the role of the female body in his painting and sculpture, the exhibition demonstrates how the artist reacted to a new type of woman, with directness and a transformed gaze: with a masculine sensibility capable of reinventing itself and entering into an artistic dialogue with a more confrontational, less conventional femininity.

Modigliani may have inherited this openness from his mother, writer and entrepreneur Eugenia Garsin—or perhaps it was due to the influence of his fascinating cousins, Olga and Corinna Modigliani. The young Amedeo lived with these two women artists at their studio house on via Margutta in Rome. There he curiously observed their unconventional lifestyle, devoting themselves to creative endeavors free of the obligations of family. They earned their living with their art and participated in important exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and the 1911 world exposition in Turin.

The Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and the Museum Barberini in Potsdam have succeeded in capturing the hitherto largely unexplored, yet highly relevant sensibility of this great Livornese artist and in foregrounding his idiosyncratic thought. In the age of Futurism, which glorified the machine and war, the dissolution of form and misogyny, Modigliani focused his attention on the human image, corporeal presence, and self-confident femininity in the modern era.

My hope is that this exhibition will enjoy the success it deserves and that viewers will be able to enter into the illuminating gaze of Amedeo Modigliani, if only for the duration of their visit.

Armando Varricchio

Ambassador of the Italian Republic to Germany

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who wish to remain anonymous.

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Introduction

Christiane Lange and Ortrud Westheider

The development of modern art was long described as a path toward abstraction. The multiplicity of artists' groups, manifestos, and exhibitions in the early twentieth century, however, suggests that contemporaries were receptive to both figurative and nonfigurative styles. The exhibition *L'Art moderne en France*, mounted in Paris in July 1916, not only displayed Pablo Picasso's Cubist painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R.)* (fig. p. 50) to the public for the first time; it also showed works by Amedeo Modigliani, Moïse Kisling, and other figurative modernists, including thirteen women artists. Photographs taken that summer show the members of this avant-garde circle (figs. pp. 152, 162, 172, 284–85). Modigliani portrayed them in drawings and paintings, revealing relationships of friendship and mutual respect among protagonists that transcend later art-historical classification (cats. 35, 38, 44, 72).

Artists continued to work figuratively alongside the innovations of Cubism, not only in Paris but across Europe. Their intense interest in portraits and nudes accompanied and shaped the approach to the human figure among the younger generation. Like the artists whose work dismantled pictorial form, they too challenged their viewers, as evidenced by the oft-recounted scandal of Modigliani's nudes at Galerie Berthe Weill in 1917—a topic further explored in this catalog in essays by Beate Söntgen and Peter Kropmanns.

Like Modigliani, artists such as Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka in Vienna; Ludwig Meidner, Jeanne Mammen, and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in Berlin; and Paula Modersohn-Becker and Wilhelm Lehmbruck in Paris turned their attention to the representation of the human figure. All of them looked to artistic forerunners from the previous two generations, such as Auguste Rodin and Paul Cézanne or Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Gustav Klimt. This Modigliani exhibition is the first to extend its gaze beyond Paris, demonstrating that even before the 1920s—as early as World War I—artists in multiple European cities were reinventing figuration under the banner of a *retour à l'ordre*. This zeitgeist, later known as *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity), also impacted women writers, fashion designers, and painters. With their short hair and masculine

clothing, some of them were ahead of their time in their approach to fashion and in their emancipated lifestyle—years before the establishment of women’s suffrage in most European countries. Modigliani knew many of them and painted their portraits along with those of the male members of the Parisian avant-garde. Biographies of these *femmes garçonnes* are presented here for the first time, since—according to the thesis of a catalog essay of the same name—they make possible a new interpretation of Modigliani’s nudes.

For the young generation prior to World War I, the nude was a central motif. Like the Expressionists in Vienna, Berlin, and Dresden, Modigliani provoked viewers in Paris as well. In his series of nudes, which alluded to images of Venus from the Italian Renaissance, he intentionally drew a contrast between the latter tradition and the assertive personalities of his models, using cropping to bring the figures shockingly close to the viewer. Women artists such as Modersohn-Becker and Émilie Charmy also employed cropped compositions; accordingly, the close-up view typical of Modigliani does not represent an exclusively male gaze.

Modigliani: Modern Gazes disrupts the persistent image of Modigliani as a drug-addicted womanizer, an oft-repeated cliché derived from André Salmon’s biography of 1926. On the contrary, and in accord with recent scholarship, our exhibition shows that Modigliani did not degrade his models to the status of objects but related to them as equals. Moreover, our analyses of the works rely on findings from art-technological investigations published in the catalog of the Barnes Foundation (Philadelphia 2022) that prove Modigliani’s work process was not spontaneous but absolutely planned and deliberate.

Here we present figurative artists, both men and women, whose works either expressively depict human beings left to fend for themselves or anticipate the milieu studies of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Modigliani communicates a new image of humanity without expressive tendencies and shows emancipated women without the cold distance of *Neue Sachlichkeit* or the critical, dissecting view of the postwar period. In this respect, he is unique.

The show *Modigliani: Modern Gazes* explores the artist’s work from a European perspective, building on the results of research from the exhibitions at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo in 2002 and the Jewish Museum in New York in 2004 and 2017. Kenneth Wayne in Buffalo and Mason Klein, Tamar Garb, and Griselda Pollock in New York have already situated Modigliani as a Jewish artist within a European

network and have focused attention on his cosmopolitan outlook, shaped by his upbringing in a liberal, French-Italian family in the port of Livorno. For the first time, our exhibition presents his works alongside paintings, sculptures, and drawings by artists of his day from outside his circle of personal acquaintances in Paris.

The essay on Modigliani and Lehmbruck by Nathalie Lachmann shows the comparability of French and German visual languages. Until 1914 artists from many countries met in the cultural centers of Munich, Vienna, and Paris. With the outbreak of World War I, borders were abruptly drawn and new constellations emerged in the international art world, almost exclusively in Paris. The essay by Cécile Girardeau illuminates, among other things, the ways in which art dealer Paul Guillaume cultivated a market for Modigliani's work in the Anglo-Saxon world during those years. Notwithstanding political

fronts, however, artistic developments in German-speaking countries continued to attract the attention of artists in Paris, not least of all due to the many connections and personal contacts that had been formed in previous years. Modigliani's letters to Ludwig Meidner, published here for the first time, bear witness to this connection that had evolved over time.

As Meidner recalls, Modigliani made drawings of people wherever he went or stood, simplifying his images more and more. The entirety of his oeuvre was based on drawing. Facing the person, he always showed his subject frontally. Unlike the Futurists, who advocated the banning of nudes in their manifesto of 1910, Modigliani maintained a connection to the archetypes of Italian Renaissance painting. He continued to render his nudes in warm flesh tones, placing them against backgrounds of Venetian red. In her essay, Victoria Noel-Johnson explores the enticing relationship between Modigliani and the Futurists for the first time.

Two important paintings and a drawing by the artist in the collection of the Staatsgalerie provided the point of departure for the idea of a Modigliani exhibition in Stuttgart. Through collaboration with the Museum Barberini, the idea began to take shape, and a concept was developed to integrate *Reclining Nude on a White Cushion* (cat. 82) and the portrait of Chaïm Soutine (cat. 36) into the context presented here.

Among German museum collections, Modigliani's work is found only in the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf (cats. 34, 88, fig. p. 172), the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (cat. 66), the Museum Ludwig in Cologne (fig. p. 39), and the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. His paintings were reviewed by critics in German magazines in the 1920s and 1930s, but no dealers promoted him in Germany. Although the Italian Futurists, who were the same age as Modigliani, were represented by Herwarth Walden as early as 1913, Modigliani's name does not appear in the exhibition lists of Walden's gallery *Der Sturm*. The early reception of Modigliani in Germany thus revolves around a single purchase and its confiscation by the Nazi regime. In 1932 the Nationalgalerie in Berlin acquired a portrait of Modigliani's companion, artist Jeanne Hébuterne (fig. p. 27); the same year, Ludwig Justi, director of the museum from 1903 to 1933, displayed it at the Kronprinzenpalais. The work was classified by the Nazis as "internationally usable" and taken to Schönhausen Palace, and on June 30, 1939, it was sold in an auction at the Galerie Fischer in Lucerne. Today it belongs to a private collection.

Discovering the locations of nonpublic collections is one of the challenges of preparing a Modigliani exhibition. Moreover, it is alleged that no unfinished works were left behind when the artist died at a young age; this suggests that his works were "finished" by friends, thus opening the door to future forgeries, as Stephan Koldehoff surmised in 2009. To this day, counterfeit paintings, sculptures, and works on paper continue to be identified in Modigliani exhibitions, such as those in Bonn in 2009 and Genoa in 2017.

Pending the publication of new catalogues raisonnés for Modigliani, the one compiled by Ambrogio Ceroni in 1970 serves as a point of reference. It was used by the curators of the exhibitions at Tate Modern, London, in 2017 and the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia in 2022, which were very fruitful for Modigliani scholarship. For our project too, therefore, we decided to limit ourselves to paintings from Ceroni's list. In the exhibition catalog, they are identified with the letter "C" and the corresponding work number, as are the Modigliani paintings used as comparative examples, to the extent that they appear in Ceroni. Similarly, the designation "P" is used to refer to the catalog of works on paper compiled by Osvaldo Patani in 1992–94, if they are included there. Since there are gaps in both catalogues raisonnés, we researched the provenance of all works selected for the exhibition,

and although exhaustive information was not always available, we decided to publish the chains of ownership following the model of the most recent exhibition in Philadelphia. We are grateful to our provenance researchers Linda Hacka and Johanna Poltermann for their research, in cooperation with colleagues from the lending institutions and collections. We are also indebted to conservator Carolin Heinemann for her technological analysis of the Stuttgart nude, the results of which are summarized here for the first time.

Modigliani's paintings and sculptures are major works and are among the most popular in public collections. Our colleagues' willingness to let go of such prize pieces for the span of many months in order to implement our concept was encouraging and provided a basis upon which we were able to persuade many private collectors to entrust their precious works to us as well. We are deeply grateful to all of them. We likewise owe a great debt of thanks to all who helped us locate owners who wish to remain anonymous.

Here we would like to specifically express our gratitude to Susannah Nathanson as the representative of the descendants of Paul Alexandre, Modigliani's first collector. She continues the tradition of a family that has made groundbreaking contributions to research on the artist's drawings (see London 1994).

We would also like to thank the authors whose lectures from the Modigliani symposium in Potsdam on October 26, 2022, are now available in printed form, as well as Flavio Fergonzi, a specialist on Modigliani drawings whose analysis of the head study in the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (cat. 65) is published here for the first time. Nathalie Lachmann and Jens-Henning Ullner invested tremendous energy in the development of the project; together, we refined the concept in stimulating discussions and could always rely on their careful scholarly work. We are grateful to both of them for their efforts in this regard as well as for their contributions to the catalog.

The teams of the Staatsgalerie and the Museum Barberini have excelled in the accomplishment of this ambitious project. Each and every member of both teams deserves our recognition and thanks.

The mission of the Museum Barberini, supported by the Hasso Plattner Foundation, is to present exhibitions of international rank in Potsdam. This purpose can only be achieved with the help of strong partners like the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Cooperative exhibition projects can take many forms, but rarely have we experienced such focused and harmonious collaboration as on this occasion.

The Staatsgalerie, as the state museum of Baden-Württemberg, is grateful to Minister President Winfried Kretschmann for his greeting in the Stuttgart edition of the catalog as the representative of the state. The state of Baden-Württemberg supported the show with substantial funding for a major special exhibition, making the venue in Stuttgart possible. The Staatsgalerie would also like to thank all of the other supporters for their conceptual and financial assistance: Franziska and Götz Adriani for the ADRIANI STIFTUNG, Robert Mayr for the Eva Mayr-Stihl Stiftung, Birgit Sander and the board of trustees for the Rudolf-August Oetker-Stiftung, Markus Benz for the Friends of the Staatsgalerie, Peter Schneider and Helmut Schleweis for the Sparkassenverband, and Joachim E. Schielke for the Wüstenrot Stiftung.

Finally, we would like to thank our sponsor, His Excellency Armando Varricchio, Ambassador of the Italian Republic to Germany, who wrote a greeting for this catalog and made the patronage of the Embassy of the Italian Republic possible. We are delighted to present our exhibition as part of the 2024 Italian-German cultural year and are grateful to the staff of the embassy and the general consulate in Baden-Württemberg for their tireless support.

Modigliani, a European artist with global appeal, continues to inspire scholars and fascinate the public anew. We hope that all who visit us in Stuttgart and Potsdam will experience a stimulating and enriching encounter with Amedeo Modigliani.





Essays

La Garçonne: Modigliani's Androgynous Female Portraits

Ortrud Westheider

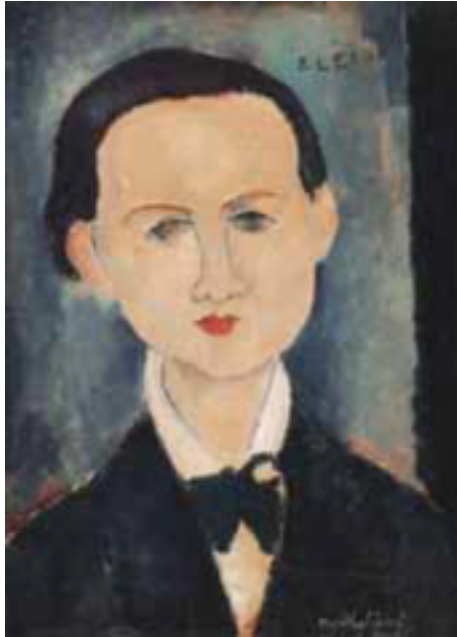
In the 1920s, Neoclassicism in France and *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) in Germany brought with them a return to the figure. After the abstraction of Futurism and Cubism, avant-garde artists once again began painting portraits and nudes. The cropped compositions of artists such as Jeanne Mammen, Max Beckmann, and Christian Schad depicted their subjects at close range with sculpturally modeled bodies. This development was the result not least of all of the experiences of World War I, in which devastation and bodily injury cast Cubo-Futurist fragmentation in a problematic light. The new painting also addressed the social status of its subjects: women, who had assumed public responsibility in the weapons industry and military hospitals during the war, were portrayed as self-confident, athletic, intellectual, and fashionably dressed. Bobbed hair and men's clothing often signaled their emancipation.

Amedeo Modigliani captured this development early on. During World War I, he portrayed women with short hair and masculine clothing and explored the new image of the *femme moderne* (figs. 1–8).¹ Some of his models are known and will be discussed in the following. Although Modigliani's portraits are not milieu studies, and

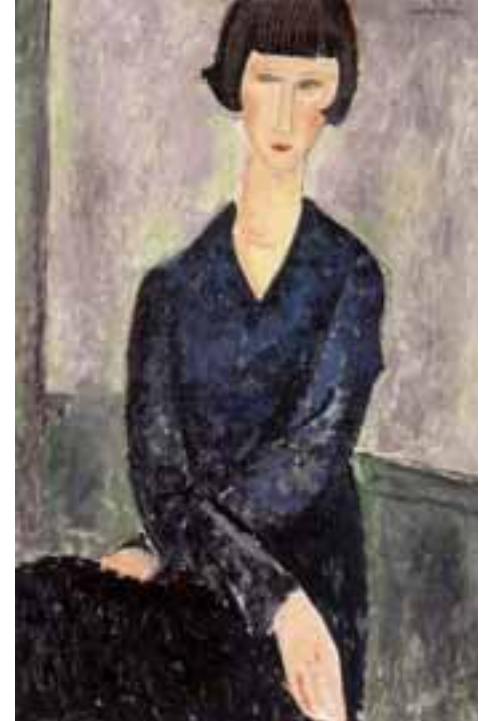
although he subsumed social questions into a vision of timeless elegance, the hairstyles and clothing nonetheless provide subtle indications of social status that can offer insight into the role of those women who have not yet been identified. Who were they? Why did Modigliani devote an entire series to them, in addition to portraits of his artist friends (see the chapter “Cosmopolitans: Modigliani's Circle in Montparnasse,” pp. 150–81)? How might the provocative content of this group of works be informed by his encounters with women intellectuals and artists, and do these considerations open up new perspectives on his paintings of nudes?² The following essay seeks answers to these questions.

Androgyny between Sculpture and Painting

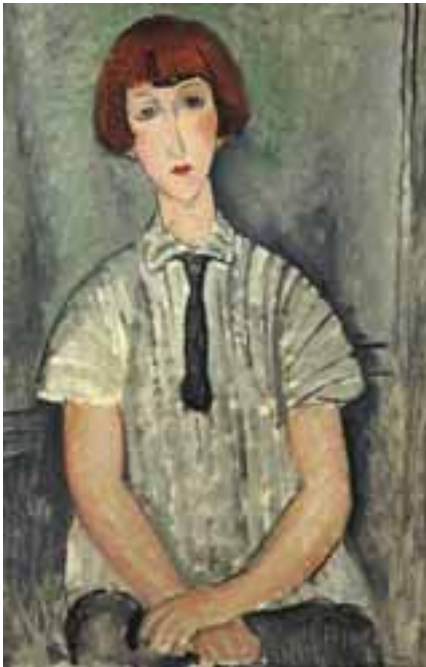
At the Salon d'Automne in 1912, Modigliani showed seven abstract female busts inspired by non-European models (fig. 9). They were exhibited together with Cubist paintings by František Kupka, Jean Metzinger, and Francis Picabia, a juxtaposition that suggested a Cubist reading of Modigliani's elongated heads with their abstracted, masklike faces (fig. 10). In the catalog, however, the sculptures were described as an “ensemble décoratif,” suggesting the idea of an architectural installation.³ Modigliani's sculptures show echoes of the various ancient cultures he had studied in the museums of Paris.⁴ There he gained inspiration for his elongated, stylized heads and drew his caryatids, female



1 Amedeo Modigliani,
Elena Povolozky, 1917,
private collection, C 167



3 Amedeo Modigliani,
The Black Dress, 1918,
private collection, C 235



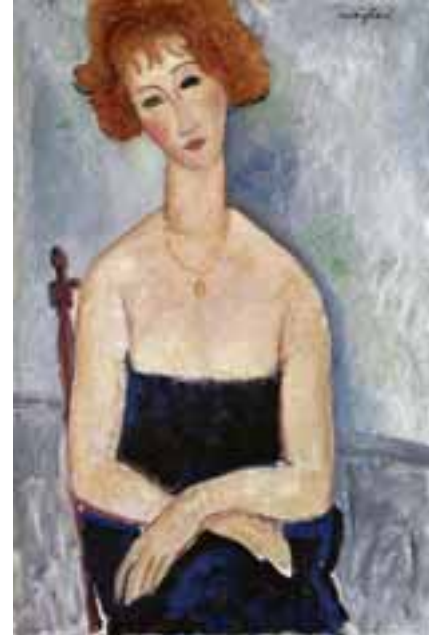
2 Amedeo Modigliani,
Young Girl with a Striped Blouse, 1917,
Nahmad Collection, C 214 (cat. 73)



4 Amedeo Modigliani,
Renée Kisling, 1917,
Pola Museum of Art,
Hakone, C 163



6 Amedeo Modigliani,
Woman with a Green Necklace
(*Madame Menier*), 1918,
private collection, C 233



7 Amedeo Modigliani,
Red-Headed Woman Wearing a Pendant, 1918,
Collection Alicia Koplowitz,
Grupo Omega Capital, Madrid, C 230



5 Amedeo Modigliani,
Rachel Osterlind, 1919,
private collection, C 284

8 Amedeo Modigliani,
Seated Algerian Woman (Almaïsa), 1916,
private collection, C 132



figures that were conceived as supporting elements for an architectural setting (cats. 49–50, 55, 64).⁵ Traces of wax from the candles he placed on the sculptures indicate that he viewed them as part of a spatial ensemble.⁶ Unlike the work of the Cubo-Futurists, the art of Modigliani soon found entrance into the world of fashion: Berlin-based fashion illustrator Gerd Hartung gave his design for evening apparel an avant-garde flair by including a Modiglianesque sculpture on the mantelpiece (fig. 11). The elegant linearity of Modigliani's work clearly resonated with the contemporary taste for Art Nouveau.

In 1914 Modigliani once again turned to painting. The first pictures show the relationship between his portraiture and his sculptural work.⁷ The painting *Head of a Young Lady (Beatrice Hastings)* (fig. 12) is based on the simplest of geometric forms, with a spherical head and cylindrical neck; the neckline is designed in such a way that the head could be interpreted as a bust standing on a table. Modigliani also used this ball-on-cone principle for his portrait of painter Chaïm Soutine from around the same time (fig. 13). For Modigliani, the geometric conception of portraiture seemed appropriate for both sexes—a continuation of the androgynous tendencies in his sculptural work and drawings. Along with his series of caryatids, he repeatedly made images of hermaphrodites (cat. 54).

One of Modigliani's first portraits of women after his new beginning in the medium of painting is *The Red Head* (1915, Centre Pompidou, Paris, C 50). The picture is dominated by the color vermilion; the background shows Cubist borrowings. The eyes lack pupils: one of them is white and the other black, the contrast

increasing the intensity of the image. In an anonymous female portrait painted shortly thereafter (Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, C 71), Modigliani arrived at the color scheme that would characterize his nudes from then on: warm tones of ocher, yellow, and red, here still articulated into Cubist segments.

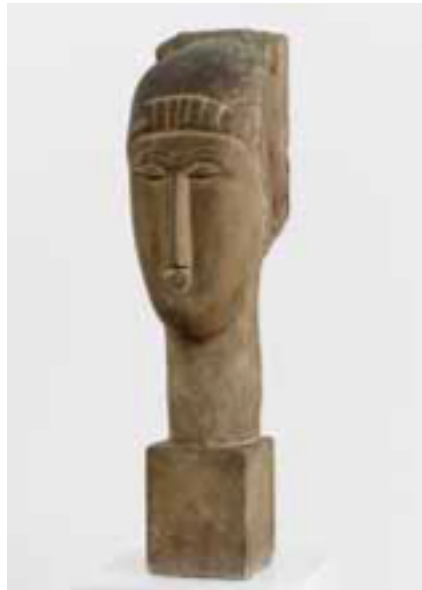
A new realism begins to emerge in *Head of a Girl (Louise)* from 1915 (cat. 68). The model is depicted in a headscarf knotted at the nape of the neck. It is not at all clear whether this accessory represents the latest fashion or signifies a precarious social status; the image of the still-unidentified Louise oscillates between “kitchen help” and “female pirate,” “beggar woman” and “model.” While Edgar Degas and Pablo Picasso had painted women in their everyday milieu and had studied the social realities of beggar women, prostitutes, and revue girls, Modigliani's female portraits provide almost no indication of social background. The painting *The Beggar Woman* (cat. 12) contains no allusion to the subject's vulnerable position. Unlike his artist role models and comrades in arms, Modigliani portrayed a new group of young women who had come to Paris from Great Britain, Eastern Europe, and the United States to become dancers or artists. Before turning our attention to the androgynous portraits Modigliani created after 1915, it will be helpful to first examine his friendships and amorous relationships with women artists, as well as their impact on his work.



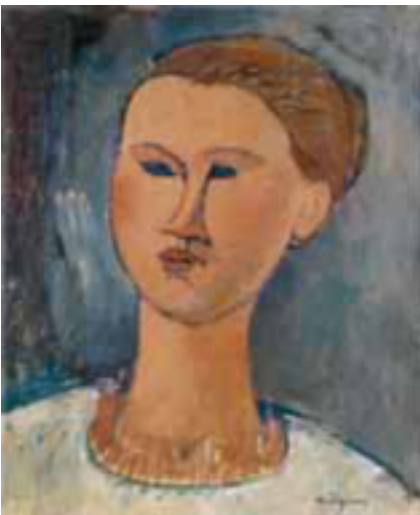
9 Room XI of the Salon d'Automne, 1912,
Grand Palais, Paris, in *L'illustration*, October 12, 1912



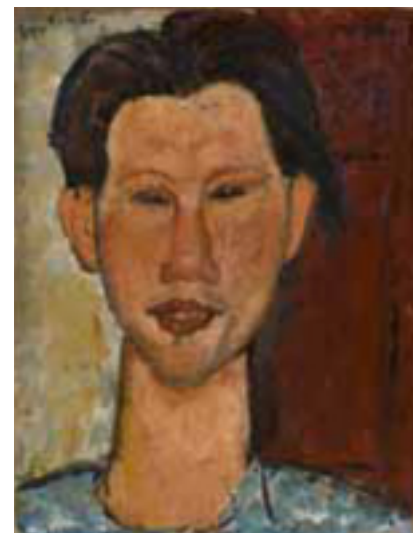
11 Gerd Hartung,
Couple in Evening Dress, 1932,
Stadtmuseum Berlin



10 Amedeo Modigliani,
Head (B), ca. 1909–12,
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe
(cat. 66)



12 Amedeo Modigliani,
Head of a Young Lady
(*Beatrice Hastings*), 1915,
Pinacoteca di Brera,
Milan, C 92 (cat. 67)



13 Amedeo Modigliani,
Chaim Soutine, 1915,
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, C 97 (cat. 36)

Relationships with Women Artists

The female partners of artists have often served as their muses. In Picasso's work, new relationships triggered a change in painting style, but even when the women in question were well known in their own careers—as with Olga Khokhlova, a dancer for the Ballets Russes—they remained in a passive role, like that of an artist's model. Modigliani chose a different kind of partner: in Paris, he formed liaisons with women writers and painters who were his artistic equals.

In late 1907, at the artists' commune in the studio house of his first collector, Paul Alexandre, on rue du Delta (see the chapter "Arrival in Paris: Artists in Montmartre," pp. 104–27), Modigliani met Leontine Phipps.⁸ The same age as Modigliani, she had grown up in Berlin and, like him, had been encouraged to pursue art. In Paris, she moved in American expatriate circles and had married a Viennese aristocrat. On the front of the portrait Modigliani made of her, a female nude is depicted (cat. 3). She also appears in preparatory watercolors (cats. 4, 6). Like her husband, Phipps was addicted to morphine; on rue du Delta, she assumed a new identity and from then on referred to herself as Maud Abrantès. When she embarked for the United States again in 1908, she listed "artist" as her profession. In Maud Abrantès, Modigliani encountered a woman attempting to give her life new direction in the liberal milieu of the Parisian art world.

In 1910–11 Modigliani befriended Anna Akhmatova, who shortly thereafter would become the most important Russian woman poet. During one of her stays in Paris, Modigliani showed her the Egyptian collection at the Louvre and drew her with the hair ornaments of Egyptian queens and dancers. According to Akhmatova, Modigliani created nude drawings of her from memory. Her athletic abilities probably inspired the theme of acrobatics and dance in Modigliani's drawings from this period (cat. 63). She recalled that they conversed about Charles Baudelaire and Paul Verlaine and asserted that for both of them, their encounter had served as an artistic incubator.⁹ Back in Saint Petersburg, Akhmatova published her first volume of poems, and a little later Modigliani began his sculptural work, based on sources that included Egyptian models.

In 1914 another independent, emancipated woman writer, Beatrice Hastings, came into the artist's life for a period of two years (cat. 67). They were introduced to each other by British painter and illustrator Nina Hamnett.¹⁰ Hastings had been publishing her own work since 1909, primarily in political magazines. Writing under numerous pseudonyms to conceal her identity and her sex, she explored a wide range of perspectives.¹¹

Modigliani's final partner before his premature death was a painter. He probably met Jeanne Hébuterne, who later became the mother of his daughter, in late 1916 when she was a student at the Académie Colarossi. Among Modigliani's more than twenty paintings of her (see cat. 48) is a portrait showing her with her hair down, a work that was acquired by Ludwig Justi for the Nationalgalerie in Berlin in a painting exchange in 1932 (fig. 14; now private collection).¹² A portrait from 1918 with a tall coiffure was interpreted as a reference to sixteenth-century Italian Mannerism (fig. 18).¹³ Comparison of these works with the self-portraits painted by Hébuterne around 1917, as well as with a photograph of her, shows many similarities (figs. 15–17). Although Modigliani did not depict her with the braids and headband she sported as a nineteen-year-old—a borrowing from American Indigenous tradition, popular around 1900—her luxuriant auburn hair features prominently in his portraits. Unlike emancipated women artists since Rosa Bonheur, who had famously worn short hair, Hébuterne did not cut hers off.¹⁴ Around the turn of the century, Bonheur's masculine coiffure and clothing even appeared on dolls in the nurseries of French children. Hébuterne was at least aware of Bonheur's activity as a painter, as evidenced by a postcard sent to her father in 1908.¹⁵ Modigliani's profile image of Jeanne Hébuterne with her hair piled high in what is now interpreted as the pompadour style popular before World War I likewise corresponds to her own self-portraits, although the differences are also informative: while Hébuterne shows herself in the kimono fashion of the day, Modigliani gave her wardrobe a timeless quality through simplicity of color and style.

A look at Modigliani's portraits of the women he loved shows his approach to their world between the poles of convention and liberation. Supported in childhood by his mother and aunt, who taught languages and were well-versed in literature, Modigliani sought the company of intellectual, aesthetically educated women who explored new opportunities in the Parisian art world before and during World War I.¹⁶ Reflections of these relationships are also found in the portraits Modigliani created during these years.

“Mode à la Garçonne”

In the 1920s—a decade known as the *années folles* (crazy years) in France, the “jazz age” in the United States, and the “golden twenties” in Germany—bobbed hair and masculine clothing were associated with the modern bourgeois woman of the postwar period. Yet even prior to this point, Modigliani encountered such women in avant-garde circles in Paris. Here, the fashion of the *femme moderne* signaled independence from paternalistic structures, the profession of free, even lesbian sexuality, and often the daring pursuit of an artistic career. Like Modigliani, Jeanne Mammen was among the early chroniclers of this emancipation (fig. 19).

The novel *La Garçonne* by French writer Victor Margueritte was published after the war in 1922.¹⁷ It was prohibited in France shortly after its publication, since it described a lesbian relationship in the socially marginalized milieu of the stage and literature; it was considered dangerous to conservative family and patriarchal values. Bourgeois society felt threatened by this questioning of the man as the focus of female emotional life.¹⁸



14 Amedeo Modigliani,
Head of Jeanne Hébuterne, Facing Front, 1918,
private collection, C 223

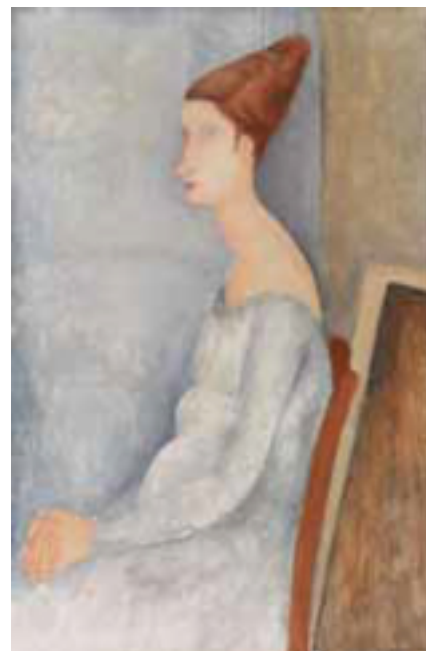


16 Jeanne Hébuterne at the age
of nineteen, 1917

15 Jeanne Hébuterne,
Self-Portrait, 1917,
private collection



17 Jeanne Hébuterne,
Self-Portrait, undated,
Petit Palais, Geneva



18 Amedeo Modigliani,
Portrait of Jeanne Hébuterne, 1918,
Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, C 261



19 Jeanne Mammen,
Untitled, in sketchbook, 1914,
private collection

21 Kees van Dongen,
Monique and Niquette, illustration
for the novel *La Garçonne*
by Victor Margueritte, 1925



20 Film still of France Dhélia
in the role of Monique from *La Garçonne*
by Armand Du Plessy, 1923

Margueritte's novel was made into a film by Armand Du Plessy in 1923. The protagonist's wardrobe was created by fashion designer Paul Poiret (fig. 20).¹⁹ From then on the clothing and accompanying lifestyle were described as *mode à la garçonne*. In the US, young women with neckties and cropped hair were called "flappers," while in Germany there was talk of the "modern woman." Kees van Dongen's illustrations for a new edition of Margueritte's book in 1925 show an androgynous, youthful physique as the ideal of beauty (fig. 21). The title of Van Dongen's 1924 painting *Madame Does Not Want Children* (private collection, Paris) was an allusion to Clément Vautel's eponymous novel. The ideal of childlessness it presented was a provocation to French society, while lesbian writers celebrated it as an expression of pure love. In his painting, Van Dongen also echoed the latest trends in headwear from fashion magazines. Modigliani, too, showed his partner with this fashionable accessory in the portrait *Jeanne Hébuterne with Hat* (private collection, C 174). But at the same time, he also created portraits of young women (figs. 22–23, cat. 81) that address adolescence and gender openness in the form of the sailor shirts frequently worn by children.

Paul Poiret and his fashion were already associated with the circle of artists around Modigliani before 1920.²⁰ Inspired by the modern dance of Isadora Duncan, he wanted to give expression to the natural form of the body. Since 1908 Poiret had presented his designs using models with short hair, and his wife, Denise, had worn a bob since 1905.²¹ At first, Poiret dresses were typically high-waisted in the antique style; later, they sported the characteristic dropped waist, always without a corset. Flesh-toned stockings now

replaced black ones. Poiret designed theater costumes such as "Orientalizing" harem pants for the actress Sarah Bernhardt. Designs for slim-cut ladies' trousers soon made their appearance both on the runway of Longchamp and in the emerging world of cycling sports. Their success was the result of the scandal, moral indignation, and efforts to suppress masculine women's fashion that they provoked.²²

Poiret also strategically took his designs to the streets, recruiting girls from the working class to wear his dresses in the city. He founded an experimental art school for interior design and taught his models to draw in the surrounding parks and gardens, turning their drawings into patterns for wallpaper and fabric.²³ Again and again, Poiret established connections between fashion and fine art.²⁴ In 1909 he visited the Wiener Werkstätte, building a bridge to the Viennese avant-garde.²⁵ In 1916, during World War I, Poiret made it possible for an exhibition on international art to be held in his rooms, where Picasso's painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. Version O)* (fig. p. 50) was shown for the first time and Modigliani was represented with two portraits.²⁶ He associated with the theater, enlisting famous actresses from his clientele for publicity and renting stages for fashion shows.²⁷ Jean Boussingault's drawings of his designs are abstractions reminiscent of Modigliani's work (fig. 24). Germaine Bongard, Poiret's sister, displayed the artist's drawings along with others in her fashion salon in March 1916.²⁸ Bongard also exhibited artists such as Léopold Survage (cat. 47), accompanied by a catalog with a foreword by Guillaume Apollinaire.²⁹