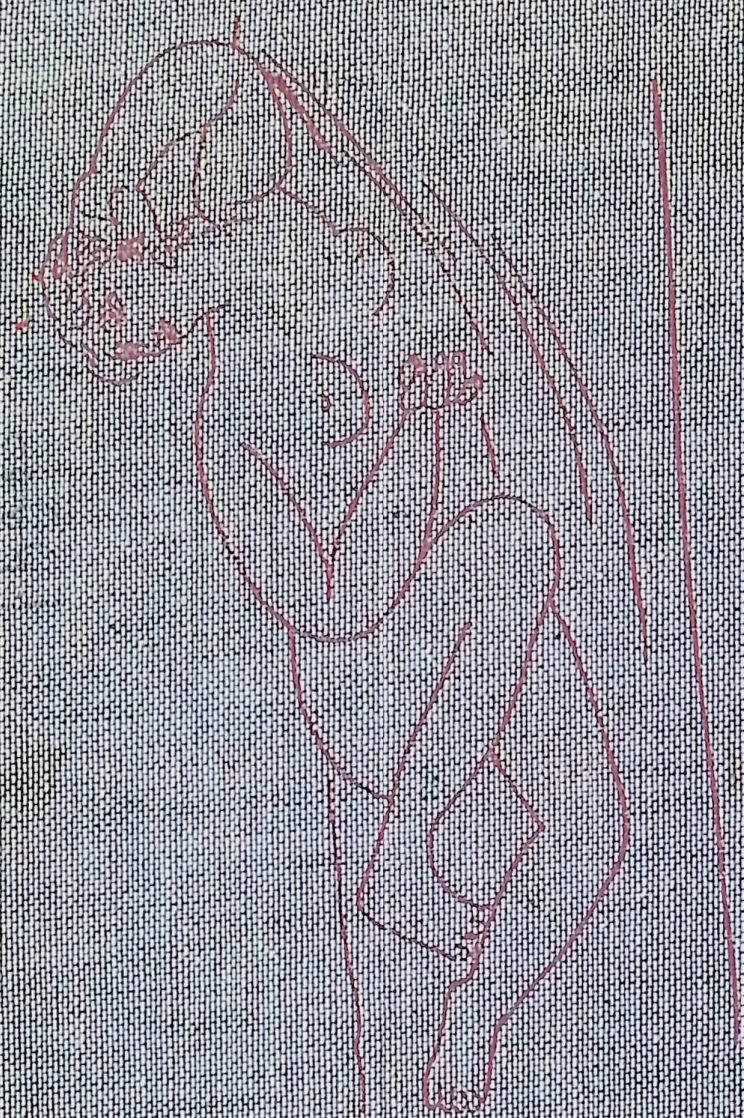
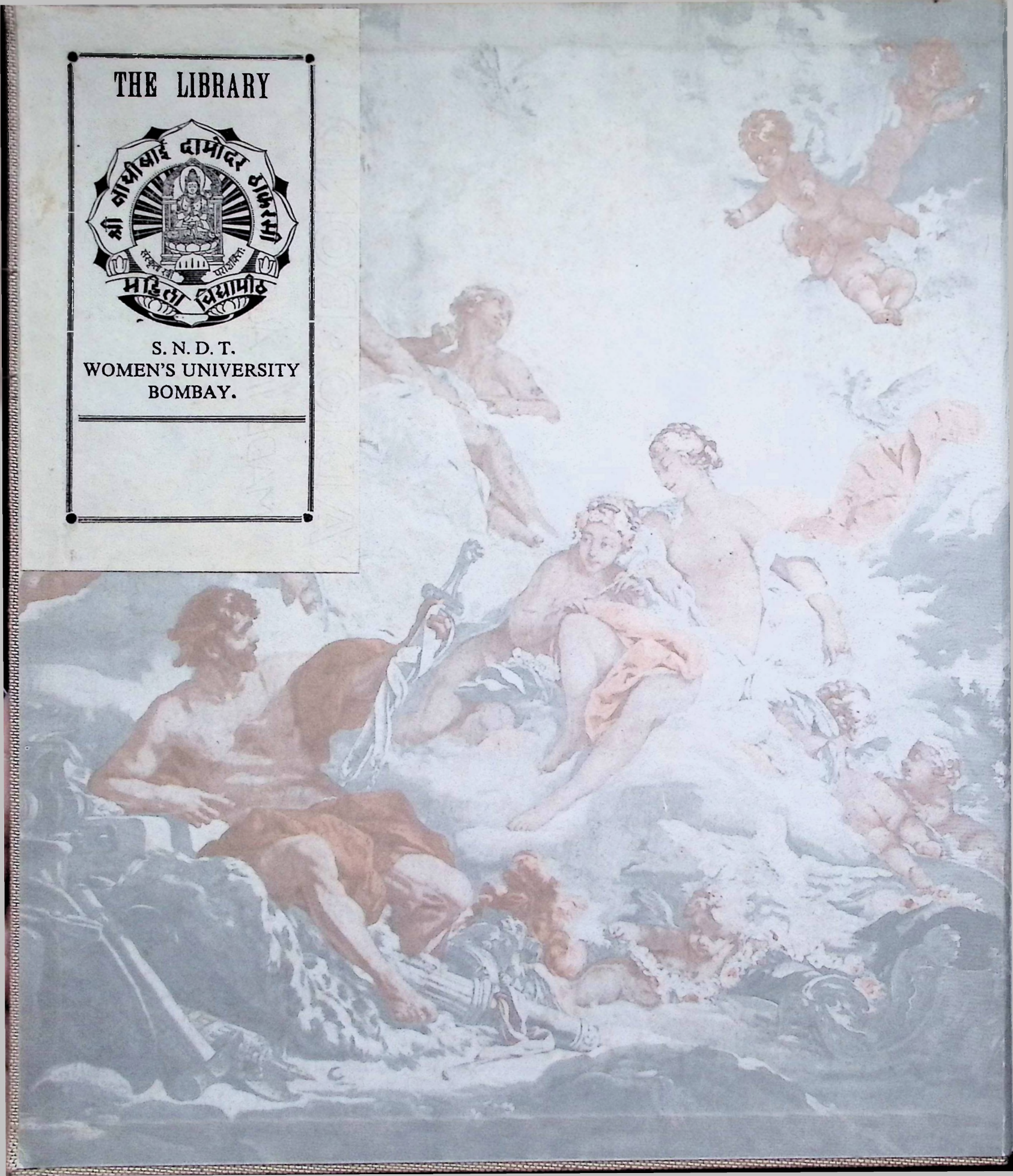




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THE NUDE IN ART

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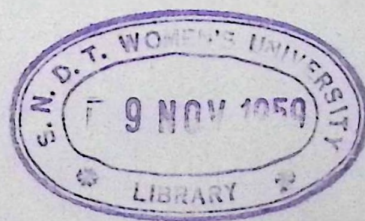
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THE NUDE IN ART

EDITED BY I. E. RELOUGE

INTRODUCTION BY BODO CICHY

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Table of Contents

I	BEAUTY AND THE FEMALE FIGURE IN ART	7
II	FEMALE BEAUTY IN THE PAINTING OF THE FAR EAST	12
	<i>INDIA</i>	12
	<i>PERSIA</i>	16
	<i>JAPAN</i>	16
III	THE BIRTH OF APHRODITE - GREECE AND ROME	20
	<i>THE ETRUSCANS</i>	25
	<i>ROME</i>	25
IV	THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE - THE MIDDLE AGES	27
V	THE REBIRTH OF VENUS - THE RENAISSANCE	35
VI	THE TRIUMPH OF EVE - BAROQUE	40
VII	THE RISE AND FALL OF THE COCOTTE - ROCOCO AND CLASSICISM	46
VIII	THE BANISHMENT OF VENUS - NINETEENTH CENTURY	50
IX	PARADISE LOST - TWENTIETH CENTURY	57
	LIST OF PLATES	59
	PLATES	65
	SOURCES OF THE PLATES	264

I • Beauty and the Female Figure in Art

Hardly any other concept is so elastic, so capable of transformation and so versatile as the concept of beauty. A cathedral, a range of colours, the rhythm of a movement and much besides can be beautiful. But the epitome of beauty itself and the ultimate possibility of portraying this visually has always been the human figure. When and wherever art — painting and sculpture — has applied itself to the depicting of beauty it has always turned to the human figure. Not to the figure of any specific human being, for ideal beauty conceived by the imagination can never be fulfilled in the case of a mortal whether he be man or woman. Each possesses some particle of it, to a greater or lesser degree, but none possesses the whole. It is a dream picture which man makes of himself, an imaginary truth born from the age-old, inexhaustible longing for perfection.

The need to portray imaginative ideal beauty, or even the earthly as it appears to man, is by no means so self-evident as a casual glance at the achievements of art would have us believe. In the art of many peoples and periods the human figure has found no place. Thoughts of human transitoriness have often forbidden the representation of man in either a natural or an idealised form. It is no coincidence that man first, and subsequently time after time, became a “theme” of art where belief in a life after death existed, and even more when the mighty hidden underworld powers have been condensed in the imagination to god-like beings with human features and gestures. From belief in an after life originated the ancestral portrait which we constantly meet with in the history of art. In it the dead man was to reside among the living as an ancestor worthy of reverence. This is an early, perhaps the earliest, form of the human portrait. The most ancient “genuine”, i. e. independent, portrayals of human beings as opposed to the depiction of a model, the female statuettes and pictures of women in relief of Palaeolithic man can be interpreted in this way. They were sometimes found near tombs, the artefacts of which prove that belief in an after life in the kingdom of the dead was widespread among men of this very early period. Nevertheless these Stone Age women are more than mere ancestral pictures. It is significant that they are always portrayed completely naked, as for example the well known “Venus” of Willendorf, and are the personification of femininity. All the typical features of the female body are grossly exaggerated. The sex is clearly marked and the breasts hang like bursting sacks on a belly which curves above huge thighs as though in pregnancy. On the other

hand the individual peculiarities are entirely ignored – there is seldom a face or at best the suggestion of a face, and there is often no head – so that these women cannot be identified as portraits of certain deceased persons and are not, therefore, true ancestor pictures. Even if the Stone Age artist saw them in this respect, a fact which cannot be proved, one thing is certain: in these first female portraits art was irrevocably bound up with the idea of fertility. For Stone Age man fertility must have been of overwhelming importance. Their life depended upon its effect in nature, but upon the fertility of woman depended the preservation of the species. This accounts for the great veneration of the woman, which reflects furthermore that she was constantly portrayed, while the absence of the man or the attributes of his sex is conspicuous. Hence, too, the stressing of the life-giving, preserving parts of the female body – the belly that conceived the child and the breasts that fed it.

Doubtless the Palaeolithic pictures of women were not portrayals of the Gods. It would probably never have entered the head of Stone Age man to compare his own feeble transitory body with the terrifying forces of nature before which he was defenceless. Nevertheless, these large-bellied matrons certainly ranked as models worthy of emulation: they are the oldest ideal of female beauty.

The representation of the supernatural powers in man's image during the following centuries, and above all after the introduction of cattle breeding and agriculture, must have been of fundamental importance to the portrayal of man and his own particular ideal of beauty. For every God is originally connected with the concept of perfection. If an artist modelled or painted the God, he was compelled to create a picture which could be recognised in its physical portrayal by particular attributes as superhuman or in his opinion as beautiful and perfect. It is not surprising then that the pictures of ideal human beauty were almost invariably identified with a deity – with Apollo, Aphrodite or Venus, for example, and that the portrayal of beauty above all developed with these pictures of the Gods. But they in turn were a basic premise for the pictorial worthiness of man himself. For at the moment when the deity assumed mortal guise, the idea was born that he was, at least outwardly, related to the immortal and therefore also worthy of being depicted.

It is of course a fact that man in his earliest art always related himself in some way to the supernatural, whether he appears as a venerable ancestor, as his servant or serf, as a suppliant or a sacrificer to the Divinity or – and this very much later – that he lent his own form to a Divine image. This intellectual orientation towards the supernatural would make it understandable that the portrayal of beauty could not have been the purpose of such early human portraits. We see, for example, in the painting of the Ancient Egyptians, which has mainly been

EGYPTIAN (ca. 1180 B.C.)
Dancing Girl
Painting on a limestone bowl



Plate
Page 65

preserved in the tombs from the 18th to the 20th dynasties (16–1300 B.C.), in addition to the portraits of the Gods and the deceased, a host of servants, dancers and musicians adorning the walls of the tombs. They are all in the service of the Gods or represent services to the dead man and earthly pleasures of which he should not be deprived in his life in the next world. It suffices to quote the stereotyped, almost monotonous figures devoid of individual peculiarities, who invariably served as a subject. The enchanting girl musicians are such types and one recognises that they obey a very definite Egyptian canon: the heads are shown in strict profile, the eyes well to the fore, the shoulders are also seen from the front and the legs placed in such a manner that they can both be clearly recognised. This angle of vision, opposed to all experience, aimed at uniting in a single picture the outstanding features of the individual parts of the body; not merely giving a glimpse but revealing at one glance the essentials of the human body. It is obvious that the painter was not primarily preoccupied with the beauty of these charming female figures. Nevertheless, even if with their tall slender bodies, their delicate long-fingered hands, large eyes and the pleasing cut of their lowly faces with the faintly arched chin, it gives a clue to the Egyptian idea of feminine grace and beauty, it was more a fortuitous necessity to which the painter subscribed for the sake of his art. In any case these girls had little to do with the subject of beauty and not until the Greeks did they become a decisive feature of art.

The portraiture of the human being was a very complicated process which we can only deal with here in a few simplified forms. It was no continuous process from the beginnings of art in the Palaeolithic age, reaching per-

fection in modern times. Time and time again the human portrait disappeared from art only to crop up again elsewhere. This happened spasmodically, not at the same time and usually only when the spiritual attitude to the things of this world and the beyond did not conflict with religion. Just as this tendency varied in time and space, as it still does today, so the portrait of man and with it beauty in art down the ages is hydra-headed. There has never been an invariable concept of beauty nor will there ever be one. Race, tradition and the spirit of the age constantly leave their imprint, at the same time transforming the ideal of beauty.

It is of course astonishing that earthly beauty has nearly always and everywhere been appreciated in the portrait of the woman and that ideal beauty has hardly ever been portrayed as a man (God). Only in the painting and sculpture of the Greeks did the female body for a long time take second place to that of the male, a phenomenon with which we shall deal later. Since then, however, beauty has always signified Aphrodite or Venus, while Apollo and Adonis are merely handsome men. There may have been many reasons for this anomaly. The most decisive perhaps is that the art of portraiture has always been a masculine domain into which woman has only recently intruded without any notable success. Had art been a feminine preoccupation, then instead of Aphrodite we should probably have had Apollo, and beauty would have been "masculine". Woman is by nature an important target for man, arousing his senses, awaking in him longings and desires and ennobling his thoughts. Man would not have been true to himself had he been satisfied merely with the earthly outlet of his feelings. Often he freed himself, at least intellectually, from the burdensome caprices of nature and strove to make a Venus out of Eve. He dreamed of a female creature of ideal beauty and transposed his visions into his art.

In the natural relationship between man and woman we must, therefore, see the most important impulse to the portrayal of woman in art. No artist can free himself entirely from the spiritual and physical sensations which the appearance of woman releases in him, nor can he do this when portraying his model as true to nature as possible. The nature of these sensations become crystal clear when, for example, we place an artistically valuable vase and the picture of a beautiful woman side by side and see the respective "impression" they give. To go further, let us show the female portrait to a man and a woman. Judgment and sensations will naturally be different: far stronger in the man and more physical in emphasis the more of her body the subject allows to be seen. We should not be surprised, therefore, that all art in which the woman is considered portrayable, either as Eve or Venus, eventually takes possession of the naked female body. Only by its disclosure will the truth be revealed in its whole or partial beauty. And if Venus is invariably and Eve more seldom portrayed completely

nude, it is because the Goddess as an ideal cannot disappoint in her physical appearance, while the less endowed mortal woman can very often do so. Venus has a great advantage over her human rival. As the personification of eternal youth she endures in the eyes of man. But Eve's youth, in which she most closely approaches the picture of ideal beauty, withers. On this account alone she will nearly always be portrayed in art as a young or mature woman.

We know that many important artists have preferred the portrayal of Eve to her heavenly counterpart and that, for example, Rubens or Rembrandt identified their feminine ideal with the body of their model and created imaginary figures in her likeness. This can be explained, because Venus always triumphed over Eve when the thoughts were focused more on the ideal than on the human earthly values. In very "materialistic" ages, such as Baroque, the advantage that Eve has over Venus is very significant: she is attainable!

One, therefore, realises what a decisive and fruitful influence the original experience between man and woman had on art or, to be more precise, on the portrayal of woman and beauty. The Venus of antiquity in whom we, too, see the ultimate embodiment of the female ideal was not by mere chance the Goddess of Love. Love, understood not as an arduous ambiguous concept but as a simple natural matter of course, was for the female portrait what Friedrich Rückert once said of it: "The oldest, newest, sole world event." And when we now deal with the beauty of woman in painting we shall constantly be referring to it.

II • Female Beauty in the Painting of the Far East

It would perhaps have been more obvious to begin our study with the art of the Greeks. Here for the first time the female body in the hands of the artists took on those forms which to modern Europeans still appear to be the ideal of beauty. We have decided, however, to begin with the painting of the Far East, not on account of the charm to be found in its strangeness and mystery, but because it is obvious how different are the standards of feminine beauty. India, Persia and Japan must suffice as examples because only in their painting does the oriental woman figure as an important subject. It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the grounds why she was considered worthy of portrayal. The reasons lie in religion and custom and, not least, in the Eastern attitude towards love. Despite their intrinsic variety, all Oriental portraits of women have one thing in common: the female body is never an aim in itself or the entire subject. The nude, which the Greeks created as an art form, freeing the body completely from all visible or intellectual relationship with the outside world, is unknown. On the contrary, the woman even when she is naked is a motive in the scene portrayed. She pleases as the toy or servant of the ruler or God; she waits for her lover in an arbour; washes herself or ties her hair. We seek in vain for a Venus, nor can we find an Eve reproduced entirely in accordance with nature. For in the last analysis both are mere bodies and thus alien to Oriental thought. The Eastern woman, as she appears in pictures, is not yet Venus and no longer Eve. Related alternately more to the one than to the other she is an idealised mortal, preserving the golden mean between the unattainable abstract picture of the Goddess and the perfectly conceivable concrete earthly woman.

INDIA

The female portrait in Indian painting has changed in the course of the centuries in the same way that a change occurred in Europe from the Grecian woman to the woman of the nineteenth century. A remarkable change took place after the early sixteenth century when the Moguls succumbed to Persian influence. It is obvious from the earliest examples of Indian painting which have been preserved in the temple caves of Ajanta, dating from the

Plate 67/69 6th and 7th centuries A.D., or in the Singhalese rock paintings, that woman has played an important role. They figure not as isolated figures but in their hosts – maidservants on intimate terms with their royal mistress, girls for the edification of a prince or a God. There is no parsimony as regards feminine charms. All the gifts that mother nature bestowed to make the woman attractive to man are offered generously. The women, however, are never portrayed completely naked. They always hide their sex with a skirt or with a close fitting richly embroidered apron. This may have been their everyday garb, but perhaps the veiling of the last secret was only devised to increase desire in the man. In any case this reserve had nothing to do with sexual modesty, at least not in India where the sculpture portrays the most intimate secrets of erotics and allows Eros to triumph particularly in the temples of the tenth century.

It would be completely to misinterpret Indian art to judge it as purely erotic, designed to arouse blind passion or – in the temple reliefs – to serve as a text book on *psychopathia sexualis*. We must never forget that the artists were Buddhists whose doctrine decreed the control and ultimate domination of all passion as a goal in life, in order to achieve perfect harmony. This could only be acquired once a person had experienced to the full these dangerous and frustrating passions, either in thought or deed. These artistic expressions must be understood in this sense: a challenge to be met. Only from this viewpoint is it comprehensible that Indian literature, too, dealt at an earlier age and more fully than that of any other land with the theme of love. Although it is beyond the scope of the present work, we must mention that the Indian writers did not stress passion but its subjugation.

Indian erotic literature reveals that the Indian man adopted a very devout attitude towards everything physical. Naturally he looked upon his partner as a prize to be coveted, and he held her body and his own to be far more sacred than we Europeans do. As the "City of the Nine Gates" in which all things decisive to existence are determined, he approached it with the deepest reverence and tenderness. It is no matter of chance that the same attributes hold good in the Ajanta paintings in which no coarse, aggressive, offensive movement can be found. Each gesture is measured, each movement is of the incomparable grace, the willowy liteness which we can observe in the Indian temple dancers. In European painting it is difficult to find a female portrait comparable in this respect with the Ajanta women or one of the Ceylonese beauties. Not even the slender-limbed dream women of Botticelli can surpass them. Take for example the snake-like flexibility of their figures. Is this mannered over-refinement? No, merely exaggeration. We know that in the Indian sacred dances the hand movements play a far greater part than the expression of the face. They mime the fluttering wings of the bird, caress the body of the

invisible lover, interpret the dialogue with the God... and in this way they are one of the ineradicable attributes of Indian beauty. One understands now why in many of these pictures only the hands are alive and active, while the faces in their almost photographic grace and reverie remain expressionless and passive. This, too, is a component part of female beauty, just as important as all the others – the softness of the muscle-less flesh, the rather full face with the small “gazelle eyes”, the gentle lift of the eyebrows, the slightly aquiline nose, the full sensual lips and the little dimples on the chin – as important as the full breasts, and the exaggeratedly slender waist which stresses the hips and the long small-boned legs.

It is striking that precedence is not given to the plastic medium of the painting, the modelling by light and shade, but the surrounding lines and their soft melodious harmony. That the early Indian painters also knew how to appreciate plasticity can be seen in the delicate shading in the built-up lines of the flesh tints, and how, for example, the magnificent pearl necklaces nestle in the hollows of the throat and breast or elsewhere.

The paintings of Ajanta must be considered as the classic unsurpassed interpretation of Indian female beauty. When, very much later in the sixteenth and the following centuries, the woman reappears in art she has basically changed. The refreshing paradisal unconcern with which she offered her body has disappeared. She still occasionally displays her full breasts, but far more often she partially or completely hides her charms beneath a flimsy veil. What has happened? Persian influences appeared with the Tartar Moguls who ruled over a large part of India from 1526. At the court of Humayun (1530 to 1556) lived the two Persian painters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd us-Samad, and from this centre developed the Mogul or Indo-Persian School with whose miniatures we shall now deal. Their spirit was that of Islam, their precepts the teaching of Mohammed who forbade the woman to unveil her face in public before a man. The Buddhist cult of love no longer had any validity and even if the woman is still shown without a veil, it is only in the intimacy of miniatures which were not designed for the public gaze – incidentally the only painted examples of the Islamic world which was hostile to images – and in situations where the veil could justifiably be removed: at the toilet, for sacrifice, among her handmaidens, in the harem, or – very seldom – in the arms of her lover. Everyone familiar with the erotic poetry of the Arabian world knows how deeply ingrained in the Islamite is the idea that Allah made woman for his pleasure. That deep gulf between sensuality and faith, which we encounter for example in Christianity, was unknown to him and also on the same score violent lust and brutal insatiability. He does not regard the pleasures of the senses as pure sensuality. For him it is an earthly attainable part of the Paradise promised by the Prophet. In consequence the

love poets bestow upon women all the Oriental wealth of their speech and praise Allah "who has created woman in her beauty, who has endowed her body with all the charms to arouse desire, who has made her hair so beautiful and formed her gracious neck and the beautiful curves of her bosom".

It is hardly surprising then that most of the Mogul miniatures portray the woman in some relationship to love.

Plate
Page 71

The lady we have chosen is a beauty filled with longing for her lover. Full of impatience, she destroys herself in unfulfilled love, to such an extent that she thrusts away the gifts handed to her by her maidservants. She will not be diverted, but surrenders to all the ardour of her hopes and desires, the carping longing which is increased by the silence of the sultry night. The anxiety of the loving woman is magnificently captured. It can be sensed in the contrast of the angular bent arms and the harmonious flow of the body outlines, the outstretched right arm and averted head, the animated central and calm statuesque attendant figures, and finally in the restless contours of the trees against a motionless pale blue starry sky, lending the grace of mighty shadows to the female group in the foreground.

This Mogul beauty has very little in common with early Indian female portraits, apart from the swelling curves and the racial similarity of her features. But she is no longer the simple, natural creature in all the innocence of her nakedness. She offers what she has with great calculation – her body, which she has made more attractive and seductive by the use of cosmetics and perfumes. Nevertheless she does not appear to us as an enthusiastic hymn to woman, but merely as a sober poem to female beauty. This ostentatious coolness, typical of all Mogul painting, is astounding when one recalls that the poets of the Islamic world could not extol the woman's beauty in too flowery a language.

The painting, as in Ajanta – and perhaps even more strongly – relies more on the expressiveness of the outlines rather than on the modelling power of *chiaroscuro*. The outline of the arms and naked bosom of this beauty is for example stressed by the flat cushion behind her. An even more striking feature is how the contours of the maidservant on the left are treated, being allowed to emerge into the flat corridor of trees in the background. A small strip of flimsy veil increases the effect, but most significant is that all the heads are presented in strict profile, a technique apparently unknown to the Ajanta painters but almost the rule in Mogul miniatures.

This preference for delineation cannot be explained solely by the peculiarity of nearly all miniature painting which, for many reasons, and not least because of the small format, has to count upon the lines for its effect. Nor is the fact that the Mogul artists usually work colouristically, in other words with contrasting surfaces of un-

broken or slightly shaded local colours without transition, an adequate explanation. Decisive above all was their capacity to find a mode of expression in the mobility, the soaring and breaking of the lines, which not only reveal what is obvious to the eye but also betray much that is invisible. In the case of the Mogul lady we have seen how her life has been laid bare by this line technique.

This fine sense for line strikes us in both the Ajanta frescoes and the Mogul miniatures. It is by no means a coincidence or even a local speciality. In both instances it exemplifies the whole of Oriental painting which can be seen at its most superb in the fantastic line drawing of the Chinese and Japanese.

PERSIA

As regards Persian painting, as far as the theme "woman" is concerned, the same characteristics apply as to the Indian Mogul painting upon which it exercised an influence. The spirit is the same and in the many variations of portraiture the woman is only shown in the secluded world of the harem, at her toilet or as a mistress with her lover.

Plate
Page 73

JAPAN

Japan is completely different. It is difficult to find portraits of women which have the same significance as those in Indo-Persian painting. Apart from the purely erotic pictures which exist here as everywhere else, the Japanese woman is almost invariably depicted in the familiar surroundings of her own home. This is her kingdom where, arrayed in the splendour of her bright-coloured kimono, she is alternately in a disciplined, strictly conventional attitude or in natural motion busied with some household duty or shedding her hampering garments to reveal her bodily charms and the gracefulness of her limbs at her toilet or in the bath.

For lack of the wealth of erotic poetry which can be produced in the case of the Arab world it would be wrong to conclude that the Japanese were any less susceptible to the charms of female beauty. Many important painters have given of their best in portraying woman and in Sukenobu's book: *Hiakumin Bijo* (A Hundred Beautiful Women) the attributes of beauty are not only portrayed superbly but purposely number thirty-two, conforming to the beauties of Buddha. Admittedly they have only this figure in common, but seen objectively they reveal a

great deal of what the Japanese considered to be female beauty. Her top knot is compared to the full moon, the forehead is a bright mirror, the eyebrows radiant crescent moons. The throat is curved like that of a crane, the neck loses itself like a jewel in the line of the back, the spine is as lithe as that of a tiger. The breasts are flat and snowy white and the hips are like a storm-lashed willow. The upper arm is round as the belly of a tadpole, the elbow like a chick in the egg, the wrist frail and soft as a baby's, and the fingers are compared with the petals of a flower.

These beauty marks correspond precisely to those we find in the painted Japanese. When Sukenobu, for example, speaks of the bright mirror of the forehead, the snowy breasts or the white flesh of the legs and the little snow heaps of the heels he is elucidating the most important attribute of Japanese beauty: the immaculate white skin. This was considered so desirable that the beautiful Japanese girl in an attempt to please covered her face with a thick coat of powder, preferring a mask-like rigidity to the charms of nature. Wherever they appear in the art of Utamaro, Harunobu, Koriusai, Hokusai and other important painters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, their skin shows the same chalky whiteness that had appealed to their mothers for centuries.

Plate
Page 19

It is significant that Sukenobu hardly mentions the softness of the flesh or finds comparisons for those swelling curves which appeal above all to Europeans. The throat is not slender as that of a crane but it curves in the same way; in the hair the wealth is less important than the moon-shaped wave above the brow. We miss the charming plasticity of the body and are left only with pictures which can be best appreciated by their lines. The line is the primitive element of Japanese painting, to such an extent in fact that nearly all their works appear to us to be somewhat sketchy and lacking in body. To the Japanese, however, the technique of the line even in the sparsest drawing means as much as the printed word or a Christian name does for Europeans. It enables him to experience the whole. One recalls the words of Su Tung-p'o: "When the outer form is there, the inner experience will certainly be present. The form must be preserved." Form for the Japanese invariably meant line, the concisest of all modes of expression in painting, and critics have rightly maintained that Japanese painting is the art of omission. The grounds for this peculiarity are to be found primarily in religion, in Zen Buddhism which spread to Japan from China in the thirteenth century. Dealing with the art of this decisive period for the future development of art, the famous sinologist, Werner Speiser, said: "The important goal, in an age which adopted so intensively the doctrine of meditation, now became the task of creating forms or, to be more specific, suggested fragmentary forms conducive to trance, evoking a genuine experience and the relative sensations."

The great art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is the last blossom of this painting, employing suggestive fragmentary forms to which must be added the studiously contrived coloured woodcut. What power of expression this painting possesses becomes clear in the pictures of women which are now very common. The bath house scene by Kiyonaga is less interesting in its disciplined colours than in the mastery with which a few lines capture the natural grace of these slender female bodies. Every detail which could distract the attention from the main subject is omitted. A single line suffices to form the face which, with its elongated form, tiny oblique eyes, the even smaller mouth and the lengthened nose are as much part and parcel of the Japanese ideal of beauty as the pallor of the skin and the stressed slenderness of the whole figure. Particularly significant are the lines of the back. Its gentle curve captures so perfectly the graceful nobility, the softness and suppleness of the body that it alone suffices to enchant the sensitive Japanese with the female body as a whole.

Plate
Page 75

KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI
Pen and Ink Wash



III · The Birth of Aphrodite – Greece and Rome

From the foam of the sea was born Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of Love, the ideal image of perfect feminine beauty: woman without childbearing and age, a body as ethereal as light and yet flesh and blood. It seems miraculous that these unique examples of Greek painting and sculpture, from the beginning of the 7th century B. C., and even in the Golden Age two hundred years later, should have been handled in a mother-in-law like fashion, the divine and mortal companions sharing the same fate. It is even more astounding when we consider that the main subject of these two arts since the beginning of portraiture was the naked human body. Not that the Goddess was a posthumously born child and only joined the immortals in Olympus at a much later date! She was there with them and, in the thoughts of men, dwelt in the presence of the father god Zeus, Apollo and all the others who enjoyed their own temples. Why then was she, with whom today we associate the idea of beauty more than with Apollo and Adonis, excluded from this art, the first to free the human body from any visible relationship with its surroundings and in complete nakedness elevating it to that art form which we know as the “nude”? Why until the 4th century was the man’s naked body alone considered worthy of portrayal whereas the woman, Goddess or mortal, was almost invariably hidden in flowing draperies?

Poetry and Philosophy demonstrate that among the Greeks lust and love were by no means alien but meant far more to them than we might imagine on observing the apparently un-erotic art of the “noble simplicity and silent grandeur” (Winckelmann). “Would the life of mortals be agreeable without the pleasure of the senses? Is not the life of the blessed Gods enviable enough without this?” said the classic poet, Simonides. The pleasures of the senses, therefore, were so important to the Greek that not even in the case of the immortal Olympians could he imagine them without this very earthly “property”. The Greek gods as a whole were a very human society. They knew love and all its consequences – covetousness, envy and jealousy. They bore children, were depicted in human shape and were superior to mortals only in their immortality. They were so strictly earth-bound that our planet became “their Paradise”, as Auguste Renoir once remarked. They bestowed their love on humans whose beauty aroused their desires. It must be apparent that it was always the Gods and not the Goddesses who were most active and successful in their courtship: Zeus (Jupiter) won Danaë in a rain of gold, seduced Leda in the

form of a swan; Dionysus consoled and married Ariadne after she had been abandoned by Theseus; Eros (Cupid) son of Aphrodite and God of Love carried off the beautiful Greek girl Psyche to Olympus.

Just as Greek mythology gave preference to the male god, his earthly counterpart in poetry also enjoyed astonishing preference. The beauty of women of course was also sung, but one has the feeling that this was not done for her own sake but merely as an object of male lust. The paean of praise was bestowed with far greater enthusiasm on the male body. The countless verses dedicated to it do not refer to the strength of the mature man but praise the supple slimness of adolescent youth. Here we come up against a phenomenon which was of the greatest importance to the whole of Greek life and Greek art. It is as a result of this that the portrayal of female beauty was so long delayed and that the Greek ideal of beauty, at least until the 4th century B.C., was satisfied above all by the youthful male. As to the causes of this phenomenon we can only mention here the most important, the fact that the erotics of the simple as well as the highly cultured Greek were directed to a degree hardly conceivable today on his own sex and solely on the adolescent youth. Even though the whole literary legacy of poetry and philosophy speak of this, to our mind, abnormal inclination, people are loth even to mention it. Without a knowledge of this aspect of Greek erotics their sculpture and painting would remain partially misunderstood in their development and choice of subject. Only from this viewpoint can one understand that the youth as a plastic or painted image from the 7th to the classical 5th century B.C. could energetically determine the face of art. So much so that when the woman was occasionally portrayed, her curves were ostentatiously disguised and took on the taut slimness of the sinewy boyish figure.

Plate
Page 79 Let us examine for example a girl who has shed her *chlamys* in readiness for the bath. Painted at the turn of the 4th century, this girlish body is strangely androgynous. The full breasts prove her to be a mature woman, but we look in vain for the powerful rounded hips, the characteristic curve of the female thigh, the white plentitude of the flesh. Instead we find a slim boyish figure, without an ounce of fat or solid flesh. The way the waist is set on the thighs, the way the slim thighs join the pelvis is as unfeminine as the masculine breadth of the shoulders and the powerful lines of the right arm. In fact, take away from the figure the only recognisable feminine attributes, the breasts, and we should be faced with a youth whose hair style would even be credible. That the girl in her movements has something of her own particular grace is immaterial for in Greek art the boy also knew how to exploit this grace. There remains the question, why did the Greeks make the naked human figure such a central theme of their



EUPHRONIOS • *Hetairai* • Attica, 5th Century B.C.

art? It is a burning question because later ages constantly reverted to the antique model and because woman underwent a Hellenistic resurrection of great brilliance in the 4th century, at the same time appearing in the nude which had previously been the prerogative of idolized youths.

We have spoken of the very earthly Olympic Gods, maintaining that only their immortality made them superior to men. This must have been almost a challenge to the Greeks to portray their own "godlike" bodies; and even more so since man thought himself so similar to the Gods that he could on a single occasion rise against the immortals, as Prometheus, or be accepted as was Psyche into their circle. Although at the beginning of the great pictorial art in the 7th century nakedness and male beauty were already considered worthy of portrayal, while the woman hid her body beneath heavy garments or showed it a little more freely in the case of a *hetaira*, this cannot be satisfactorily explained by an erotic preference for boys. It was no accident that these first male nudes were not pictures of Apollo, as was so long believed, but young athletes who had distinguished themselves and won fame in some athletic contest or before the Gods. Here and in the gymnasias they showed themselves in noble unconcerned nakedness away from the gaze of women. Is it any wonder then that they, who became more and more the object of erotic thoughts and the concept of beauty, should appear naked in art?

When after the late 5th century the female nude also became important in painting and sculpture, it hardly seems possible that this could have occurred without the relations between the sexes having become more nor-

cf. illus.
above

mal. It is striking how strongly feminine features dominate the male figures. They abandon their muscularity and boyish litheness and succumb more and more in their physical modelling and movements to a feminine softness. And now from the darkness in all her perfection, Aphrodite emerges not as a girl with boyish grace but as a full blown woman with swelling curves, soft flesh and gentle rhythmic movements.

It is an irremediable loss that the great wall paintings of the Greeks, the existence of which we know from literary sources, have been destroyed. The charming creations on the vase paintings are by any yardstick a pathetic substitute merely because they remain purely an art of line. We can only guess how the women of Polygnotus, Zeuxis or Apelles looked and we can only form some idea of the female ideal of beauty in the eternally valid creations of sculpture, the Aphrodite of Cnidus by Praxiteles or the Venus of Milo. Of great assistance are the countless Etruscan and Roman remains of wall painting, which stemmed from the Greek but are only pale reflections of them.

THE ETRUSCANS

The Etruscans as a race are strange and mysterious and so to a great extent is their art. It is certain that Greek art served as its basis. Many of the Etruscan figured vases are in subject and style almost entirely faithful to Greek models, such as those designed in the Magna Graecia colonies in lower Italy, and thus in the immediate neighbourhood of the Etruscans. For their greatest achievement, however, the frescoes in their tombs, the Etruscans only adopted the Greek style in order to portray with its aid scenes from their own life. In these pictures we do not find that world of pure untroubled love of life, peculiar to the Greeks. To some extent we can feel a dull tribulation even in the earliest paintings, even when to outward appearances they are gay and serene. We know little of the religion of the Etruscans but enough to realise that their outlook on life as reflected in their painting had very little in common with the Greek. The Greek did not fear death. Hades, into whose shadow he descended, had nothing threatening about it, because it was merely the void, without past, present or future. On this account he enjoyed the pleasures of his earthly life to the full and the basic note of his art is a serene relaxed optimism. The Etruscan, on the other hand, seems always to have stood under the threat of death. He thought of a beyond in which he would continue to live.

How strongly his senses were directed towards this aftermath is proved by the great care with which he decorated

his tombs. The walls of the great subterranean crypts are almost entirely covered with frescoes – works of great effect and beauty. Whether they stem from the lost Greek frescoes is not known. In any case their style is reminiscent of Greek vase painting, but the themes are purely Etruscan: burial dances, banquets, funeral feasts and scenes from everyday life. Here, too, we discovered the picture of a woman which we sought for our study. It is striking that she is never shown completely naked and in the later periods with only her bosom exposed. The girl in our plate, with her transparent veil, is the utmost in female nakedness to be found in Etruscan wall painting.

Plate
Page 83

The Etruscan had a different outlook from the Greek as regards the important things of life on earth and in the beyond, and also the human body. He never made it a means in itself in his art. The nude was alien to him and the countless naked figures of youths in the earliest painting and sculpture are imitations of Greek models, which have borrowed their form but not their significance. The portrayal of men was significant only in the ancestral portraits as we know them from the great clay sarcophagi of the late period or as a possibility of painting scenes inspired by their cult. As a result Etruscan art knows neither Aphrodite nor Apollo, nor any kind of personified beauty. The figures in the wall paintings of their tombs are in the last analysis only symbols for men and it was a matter of indifference whether they were physically perfect or not.

Perhaps this explains why Etruscan painting, despite its long and close contact with the Greek, clung to the style from which it originated, archaic in the 6th century; they did not subscribe to the classic style of the 5th century, which gave the human body complete freedom and motion. When the reader examines the pair of dancers in our illustration he will see at once why: about 520 B. C., painted therefore in the archaic period, without physical plastic modelling, completely flat, these figures have concentrated their power of expression on the mobility of the outlines. It is characteristic for their significance that the outline of the girl – later? – is overpainted with a powerful red brush to prevent the white body merging into the white background. Significantly enough the artist has refrained from outlining her breasts in red. In the case of the youth, painted as a man in brownish red and standing like a pair of scissors against the wall, such stress was unnecessary. If we wish then to speak of beauty it can only be the rhythm in the mobility of the outline. The Etruscan painting preserved this beauty until its decline.

ROME

"Conquered Hellas, subdued the barbarian victor and planted art in the land of the Latin peasants". These words of the poet, Horace, revealed the destiny of Roman art: Greece! The thoughts and aspirations of the Romans in the 300 years before the Christian era were too subjected to their political mission for them to be able to appreciate the importance of art. The aim of this mission was a united Italy and subsequently the conquering of the world. Both these aims were achieved and the highly cultured Hellenistic cities in the Eastern Mediterranean and Greece had to bow before the will to conquer of the barbarian Latins. The contempt which for centuries the latter had displayed for the great scientific and artistic achievements of other races subsided when their will to conquer the world had been satisfied and they could turn their thoughts to other matters. Now they "discovered" art, even if at first it was only a means of embellishing the outer framework of their earthly existence. Shiploads of works of art from Greece and the Hellenistic lands were transported to Rome. But these sources were not inexhaustible and the Romans soon found themselves in a curious situation: the desire to possess works of art had not died but had become a veritable passion! What was to be done? They possessed neither an artistic tradition nor artists capable of producing works of art to fulfil the mounting demands. Without a thought and in all awareness they took the only course which would lead them out of this dilemma: they availed themselves of the talents of Greek artists. Fortunately there were thousands of them in Rome, since after the collapse of the old art centres well-paid commissions could only be expected there. Their own and the works of the ancients pointed a way to Roman art, and as a result Hellas conquered the barbaric victor.

*Plate
Page 87*

It cannot therefore come as a surprise to us if in our search for portrayals of female beauty we discover almost faithful replicas of the Grecian Aphrodite or the Three Graces. The Goddess of course has now changed her name and is known as Venus, but she reveals the beauty of her body in the ancient manner.

This could not endure, for the spiritual background against which she and her companions now stood was quite different. It was Roman. The Roman attitude to the things of this world was sober and realistic and had little in common with the idealism of the Greeks. The Roman was nearer to the soil and to him the only thing that was valid was the concrete, the visible, the conceivable and the attainable. He realised the past and the future whereas the Greek envisaged only a timeless existence. The uniqueness of an event or the features of a certain man were important enough for him to "discover" two new art forms: the historical picture and the individual portrait.

This will to preserve the past, to capture the transitory and in place of an image to produce a copy, is of decisive importance for the portrayal of the human figure in Roman art. As a result Aphrodite, on becoming Venus, not only changed her name but at the same time her imagined reality for a very earthy one enhanced, nevertheless, on aesthetic grounds. To a greater extent this is to be found in her mortal companions who even in Greek vase painting possessed more truth than reality. For example women like those on the first century B. C. fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii would have been impossible for a Greek of the late Hellenistic era to envisage although by this time he had drawn closer to the earthly potential. The pictures are too materialistic and natural. They cling too closely to the transitory, to youth and age. If in their sensuality they recall Grecian beauty or strive for it, it is merely because the pure technique and aesthetic sensitivity of the painter equalled the Greek model. How powerful this Pompeian painting is in technical respects and in the way the physical is worked out by colour and *chiaroscuro* effects which probably they have inherited from the lost Greek wall paintings! Their mortal female figures are naturally intended to be of a typical Roman type. Behind these naked women one feels that there is a certain model, irrespective as to whether it was actually used or not. They, and the countless sculptured portraits of Roman women, prove that Eve had become a subject for painting.

Plate D

Page 85

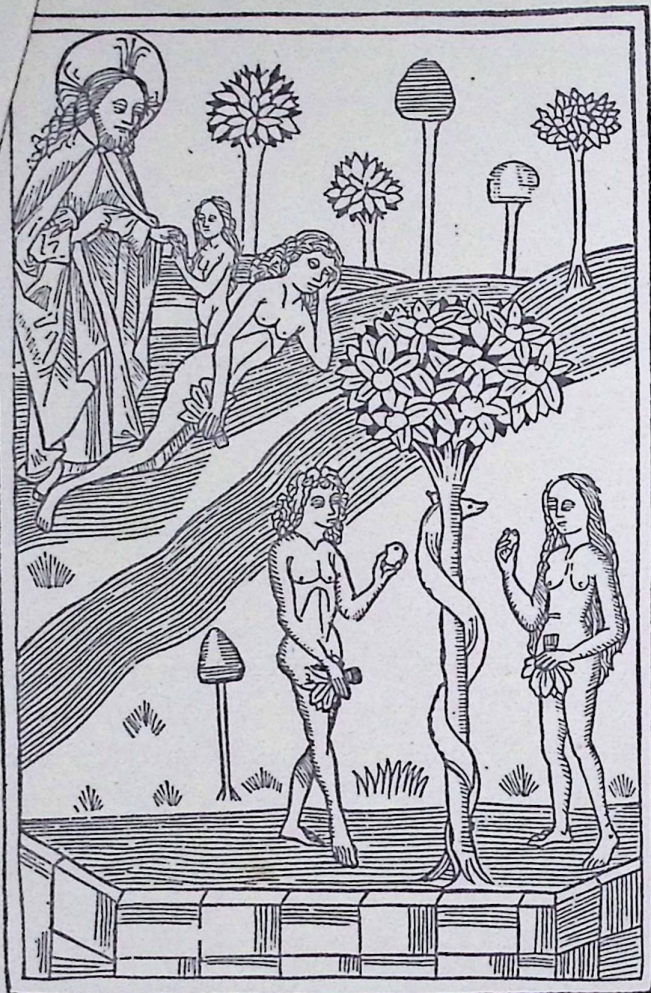
IV · The Expulsion from Paradise – The Middle Ages

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Gen. 3, 7). These words of the Biblical story of the creation were of categorical importance for the portrayal and sensual content of the naked body in the sculpture and painting of the Christian Middle Ages. Greeks and Romans, with all their differences of outlook, both looked upon nakedness as beautiful and recognised it as the ultimate possibility of portraying beauty. The Renaissance, originally in Italy, would revert to this interpretation. But until then, i. e. from the beginning of Christian Art in the 4th century to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries mankind writhed under the curse of original sin and in his carnal desires saw the wiles of Satan. In his eyes the naked body was not beautiful but the keenest weapon in the hands of the Devil. Beauty resided entirely in God. Wherever the naked body appears in medieval art – it did so from the beginning of the eleventh century – it was not intended to extol naked human beauty but was a symbol with a spiritual content: as Adam or Eve, sinners whom vanity in the guise of *hubris* had driven into the infernal jaws of the Devil.

This symbolism is a characteristic of all medieval art in which no intrinsic portraiture exists. Everything serves to illustrate religious thought. The fetters of religion were so tight that the now symbolised naked figures were not even allowed “special” freedom: they stood at the doors of the churches, appeared on painted or carved altars and in illuminated manuscripts.

Naturally not even medieval thought could entirely loose its earthly bonds. The Middle Ages also knew earthly love and the beauty of women. We have only to remember the troubadours and the knights of chivalry, both of whom vied passionately for the favour of women, extolled their beauty and saw the reward of their efforts in the final granting of their pleas. It is significant, however, that hardly once are the physical charms of the lady fair painted in the nude. She is almost invariably fully dressed, as she figures in the magnificent miniatures of the Manessa Book of Songs dating from about 1300 A. D. When for example Conrad of Würzburg sings the beauty of his Engeltrud, then he allows her *gefügen brüstelin* to be imagined beneath the flimsy veil of her silken dress. Complete nudity was therefore shameful and not worthy of being depicted.

Not until very late, and only when religiosity began to wane, particularly in the fourteenth century, did man and



DUTCH

The Creation of Eve and the Fall

Engraving from a book of woodcuts

woman begin to appear in Paradisal nudity without the Christian meaning obtruding itself: seldom enough in all conscience and then always in the intimacy of some illuminated manuscript which was rarely available to the public. Here they float as fragile, girlish, pagan Goddesses, or jostle each other, men and women together, in the baths and precincts of the Stews, the shrines of free love.

The French miniature reproduced in our plate is one of the most valuable of these artistic illustrations of morals.

Plate

Page 93

In the public baths they eat, gossip, flirt and from time to time a couple retires in search of privacy. But none of the little assembly in its nudity seems to feel comfortable. Even the girls who offer their service daily are ashamed of their sex and cover what there is to cover with their hand. They lack the serenity with which Eve in the miniature by the de Limbourg brothers (*circa* 1416) finds grace in Adam's eyes before the fall. They stand there like the first woman after her sin.

Plate
Page 95

Towards the end of the Middle Ages this feeling of shame vanishes and the naked beauties in the art of Hieronymus Bosch, Cranach, Lucas of Leyden and others are so aware of their physical charms that they began to make outrageous use of them for flirtation. It was a sign of the times: man had begun to discover himself and no longer saw in his beauty a curse to be hidden but a gift of God of which he had no need to feel ashamed. We are on the threshold of the Renaissance. Until then, however, at least pre-eminently in the great paintings, the woman whose body was the "gateway to hell" and the "way of unchastity" remained the symbol of sin.

We can understand that in an art thinking on these lines the Goddess Venus could find no place. Her portrait is a portrait of beauty painted for beauty's sake. What would it have meant to a world who considered human beauty a curse, as a corrupting lure, as the work of the devil? We can also understand why it sufficed the artist in the early Middle Ages to put human figures in the scene, which, compared with the natural image, are like the lines of a hieroglyphic script, laying no value on any perfection. It was perfectly adequate if one could see that they were men and women. Then what had to be expressed was clear enough.

It seems surprising that about 1400, in Gothic painting, images suddenly appear which are full of natural grace, replacing the more or less formal naked drawings. Whether one thinks of the magnificent Adam and Eve of the brothers Van Eyck on the Ghent altar or that of Hugo Van de Goes in Vienna, the Damned on Judgment Day of Roger Van de Weyden or the figures of the de Limbourg brothers, Dirk Bouts and many others, one has a feeling that they could hardly have been painted without models, as we see them today. They are humans down to their very skins and handsome humans at that! It would almost appear that the painter had an overpowering dislike of painting ugliness, for even the damned plunging into the abysses of hell are "beautiful". Their distorted faces, their wide open screaming mouths only wish to portray torture, pain and terror.

Plate
Page 99

The Gothic paintings of men and women are obviously not portraits. The forms of an Adam or an Eve are contrived, in the sense that they were not taken from a particular model but are the sum total of experience offered by nature. It was essential that they should be beautiful because otherwise the words of the Bible, that God made



HANS BALDUNG GRIEN

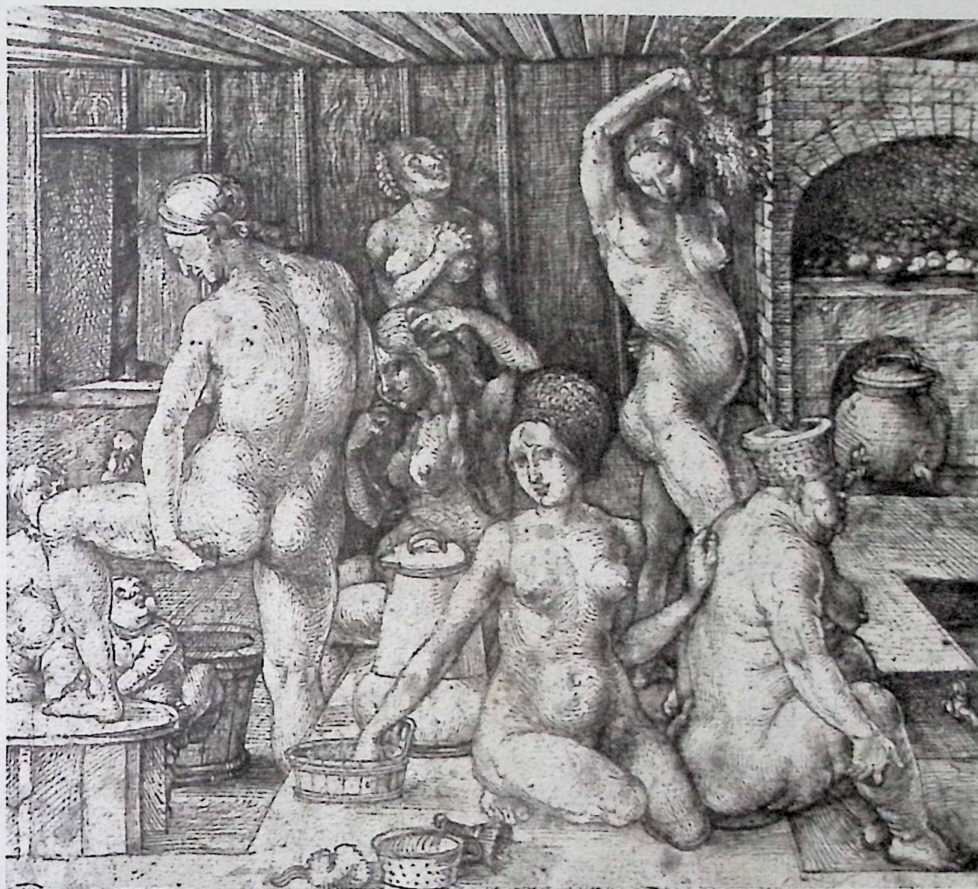
Venus with the apple of Paris

Pen and Ink drawing

man in his own image, would have been questioned. It is a fact that man in this age discovered — naturally — his ideal image. He did not succeed in discovering his ego and personality, with their irremediable peculiarities, until the Renaissance when, with the discovery of the world, he also discovered himself.

This is not the place to explore the change of spirit which brought the human figure in Medieval painting from its earliest formulas to this almost realistic approximation to nature. Nor can the question be discussed here whether in the early days unwillingness allied itself to technical incapacity, or whether the whole development did not very much depend upon whether the artist had to brush up his craftsmanship once more from the antique

ALBRECHT DÜRER
The Women's Bath
 Pen and Ink Drawing



models. One thing is certain: both the spiritual change and the perfection of technique were of decisive importance. The discovery of oil painting about 1400 must be mentioned. More than the fresco technique known to antiquity and the water-colour like possibilities of illumination, it allowed the finest gradations of the material to be realised and the reproduction of the shimmer of the blood through the delicate skin, the flattering play of light and shade on a body.

Plate Let us examine for example the magnificent Bathsheba of Memling. Beneath the milky white skin one can almost sense the shimmer of the blood, see how the light and shade nestle in the tender hollows giving the body
Page 101

its full three dimensions. We notice of course that this body has not yet the spatial grandeur and volume of the Rubens women, that the smooth skin devoid of wrinkles is somewhat unreal, lacking that flexibility and suppleness which a live woman's body possesses. It does, however, show us the ideal picture of the Gothic woman: a rather round face on which appears a resigned ghost of a smile but never conscious challenging coquetry; exaggeratedly small drooping shoulders; thin arms with small-boned hands; full but very small high placed breasts; a belly – the most striking of all – almost joined to her breasts without a waist, arching like that of a pregnant woman, the navel unusually low; and finally short, very skinny legs.

It is difficult to explain this feminine beauty distorted to our taste and when compared with a figure of antiquity. We cannot really seriously suppose that the anatomy of the human body had changed so radically during the Gothic period. One can accept the small shoulders, even the high placed breasts, but not the belly, even less so since it usually does not fit in with most young girls' even if one could explain it by the actual fashion of the period. But this cannot be done, for tight lacing was not the custom and for a long time women's costume had been flowing. We must accept, therefore, that these protruding bellies were a fictitious attribute of Eve, stressing her nature as the progenitress and original mother of the human race.

It must appear obvious that this Gothic type of woman was cultivated particularly in countries north of the Alps, and even at the time of the Renaissance was not entirely denied by painters like Albrecht Dürer who had returned so studiously to nature. In Italy, however, which, as opposed to the North, had not completely lost its ties with antiquity, even in the Gothic age, this Eve appears seldom, and then only in the Early Renaissance, to make way for the returning Venus at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Plate
Page 31

V · The Rebirth of Venus – The Renaissance

The Middle Ages expelled man from the earthly paradise and the Renaissance led him back again – and also to himself. The discovery of the Ego was for both thought and art almost as important as the rediscovery of the intellectual world and the art canons of antiquity. It is not within the scope of this book to discuss the grounds which led the Medieval spirit to overcome its complete renunciation of this world and replace it by a wholehearted acceptance, making man the centre of the microcosm. In any case, originating in Italy, man began to free himself from his mode of thought focused on the supernatural, which denied the human element and only recognised the pure spirit. Man's personality, individuality, and the problems it posed became the main preoccupation as well as the world in which he had been placed. The conquering of the world and the flesh as a task no longer had any meaning. In its place appeared the conquest of the world – both in thought and deed – and the desire to lead a full life on earth.

To this was joined an increasing interest and understanding for the outlook on life in antiquity as revealed in the art, philosophy and poetry of the ancient Greeks and Romans. These were rescued from oblivion with passionate eagerness by humanistic scholars and given a foremost place on the rostra. This world picture of antiquity, however, was not the original cause of their own but merely its confirmation and justification. The same applied to art. "The broad current of Italian art flowed on its way, and the *cinquecento* must have become what it became without all the trappings of antiquity." Heinrich Wölfflin's judgment is valid, although there is constant proof how strongly the art of the Renaissance moulded itself on classical statues and paintings.

It is comprehensible that the art of an age with this trend could not see its primary subject as the creation of religious pictures exhorting man to conquer the flesh and to concentrate upon the after life. Its highest aim had to be the portrayal of earthly values, the highest of which was naturally man and his physical beauty. This became such a main theme of Renaissance art that even works of a religious nature, for example Michelangelo's grandiose Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel, became a boisterous hymn to the human body.

The Renaissance signified above all masculine power, and yet it differed from the classical Grecian age for not the man but the beauty of the woman aroused the particular attention of the artist. Not a single one of the

at masters ignored this theme. Even Michelangelo, the great solitary meditative woman-hater, whose highest achievements were the portrayal of muscular male beauty, was not entirely free from this universal enthusiasm. And as with the Greeks, the portrayal of the naked body was recognised as the sole means of allowing everyone to participate in this beauty.

Venus rises from limbo as beautiful and radiant in her nakedness as though she had merely been asleep for the last thousand years. In fact she seems to have undergone a rejuvenation, for while we saw her at the end of her path in antique art as a mature woman, at her rebirth she appears as a shy maidenly creature with all the knowledge of an experienced Eve. This girlish Venus is the ideal of the early Renaissance and her greatest interpreter was Botticelli. Whether we recall his Venus rising from the foam of the sea as in the Greek myth, or the fairy-like figure of Primavera, his creation satisfy the canons laid down by Armenini in his *Treatise on the True Rules of Painting*: a girl must be painted as modest, moral, calm, with an angelic expression in her eyes; she must be healthy, fresh, soft and tender with unbound fair, gleaming, curls. Botticelli's girls have all this — only the full softness of the body demanded by Armenini is missing. Their flesh has an almost marmoreal smoothness and coolness and it is hard to believe that warm blood could ever flow beneath that tender transparent skin. When we compare them with the no less youthful Graces of Raphael we see at once how much of an earthly existence they lack. Here is life. The bloodstream warms, the soft curved body arouses in the observer sensual desires which the unapproachable iciness of Botticelli's girls had dispelled. Botticelli's women were the first-born of a new race, and it was not granted to them to achieve the frank humanity of their successors. The tradition of the recently conquered Gothic age was still too strong in the painter. We recognise this in many of the details: the exaggerated slimness of the body, the gracefulness of the long slender figures, the small sloping shoulders with the exaggerated counter swing which forces the figure into an almost impossible pose, and, above all, in the absolute mastery of line which outlines the body sharply, binding it together, enhancing the beauty of Botticelli's women far more than the plasticity of their forms.

Plate
Page 105

Plate
Page 107

Important is the line and, more important, the outline, too, in the sleeping Venus of Giorgione, but she no longer holds her belly as though encased in a corset; it is simply the natural confinement of a beautiful body and therefore beautiful in itself. And what a body that is! Soft, clinging, almost alive and full of warmth, the relaxed limbs lie there in sleep encased in their immaculate skin that now gives an effect of flowing blood and the velvet bloom of a peach. Venus has grown older and more experienced. She has lost all the attributes of

Plate
Page 109



ANTONIO PISANO, called PISANELLO • *Studies of Female Nudes* • Pen and Ink drawing on parchment

Gothic servitude as well as the maidenlike slimness and statuesque smoothness of Botticelli's bodies. She has more true life, is fuller, more feminine and expresses the ideal of the High Renaissance.

The "Reclining Venus" achieved an enormous success. Her children and grandchildren range from Goya's "Naked Maya" to Manet's "Olympia". But yet they appear most of all in the Renaissance, and particularly in the paintings of Titian, the pupil and perfecter of Giorgione, who constantly took this subject for his canvases. As a general rule he had a fondness for maturity and his work is vaguely reminiscent of Ruben's "Mountains of Flesh". Whether giving reign to her thoughts or listening to a lute player or an organist, she is always in

Plates

Pages

177/199



RAFFAELLO SANTI

Kneeling female figure

Red Crayon drawing

a half-sitting posture, the arm lying indolently on the cushion of her couch and the body turned so that her full hips and broad, rather flat breasts are turned to the spectator. She takes no trouble to disguise her fat, it is an indispensable part of her and epitomises the beauty of Titian.

Plates

Pages

111/113

Although voluptuous, fleshy forms and, for example, golden hair are typical of the ideal female beauty of the High Renaissance, yet most of the painters have dispensed with Titian's opulence. Far more than in any previous art period the individuality of the artist now enters the picture. Beauty now takes on a diversity of forms and what Titian painted appealed less to others. This certainly applies to Michelangelo. Not that he would have shrunk from physical volume, on the contrary, he was above all a sculptor and always thought as a sculptor when he painted. He, however, found his ideal in the male and when he painted the first human couple or the last Judgment and was forced to paint the woman he used a completely male technique. She is a heroine from some Titan race, almost athletic in her physique and full of untamed dormant strength.

Plate

Page 115

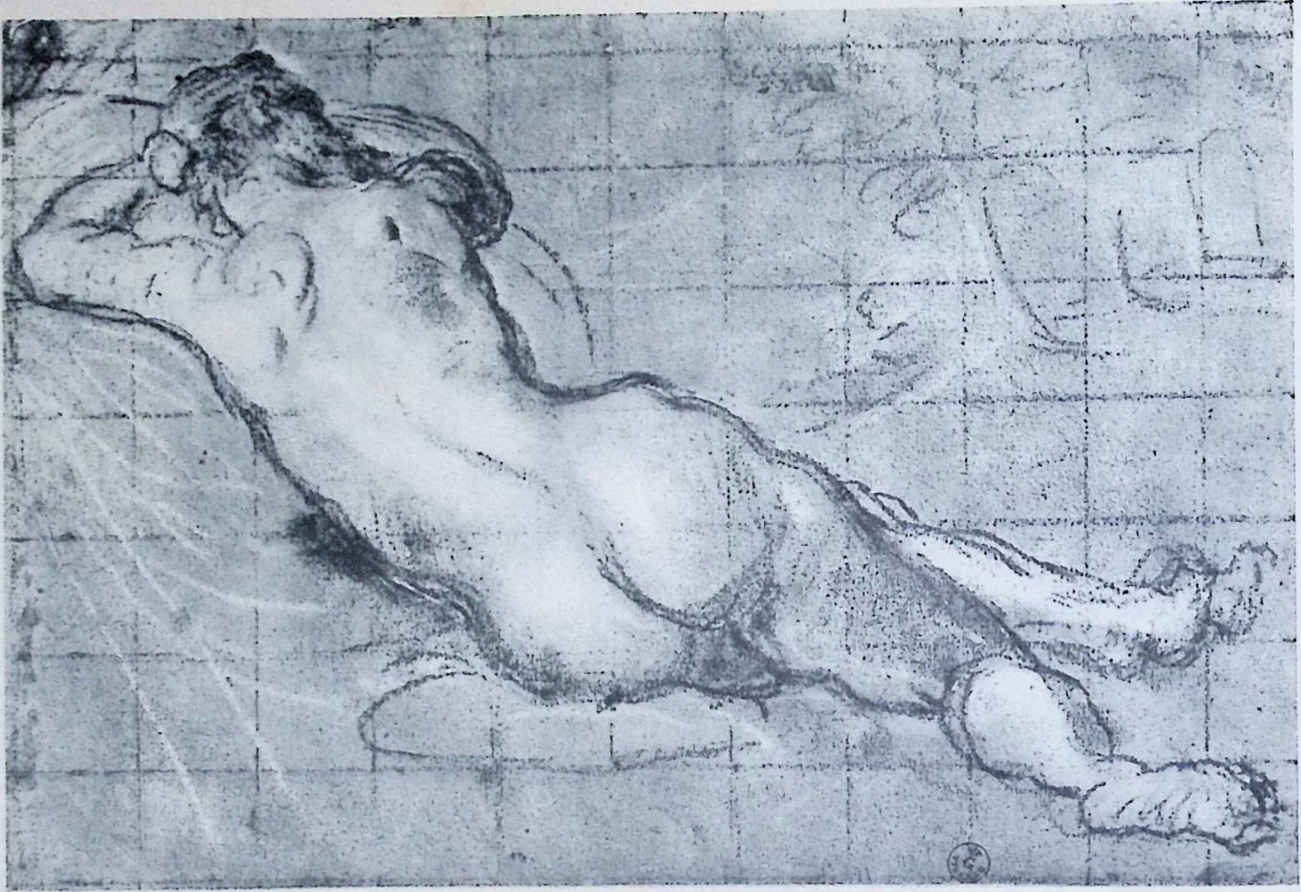
None of the great Florentines, Romans or Venetians of the early sixteenth century achieved what Correggio, one of the keenest poets of the naked female body, achieved. He gave his women something which we had looked for previously in vain: sensuality! Prior to this, beauty had appeared in many guises, sometimes attractive in its worldly burgeoning femininity but never challenging, aware of arousing the sensual desires of the man. And this is precisely what the enchanting creations of Correggio do.

Plate

Page 119

The painter purposely chose his subjects with a view to arousing these feelings. He preferred to paint Io, Antiope, Danaë or Leda, as beautiful mortals whom Jupiter had approached in some disguise. We see how Io nestles passionately in his embrace, how Antiope's young body relaxes in happy languor after his stormy assault, but we are convinced that the irresistible magic of this woman's body does not stem from the subject but more from the technique of the painting. The face too certainly plays a part. It conforms to classical beauty, and with the sensuous curved mouth, the finely chiselled nose, the challenging smile and look of coquetry give it a charm which might almost be compared with a Rococo painting. Nevertheless the strongest effect is achieved by the unique hazy gleam which plays over the skin and seems to allow the form to rise and fall gently. And stronger than before too are the *chiaroscuro* effects, not in the sense of the exciting contrasting black and white painting of a Caravaggio, but once more carried out with gentle caressing tenderness.

The painting of Correggio belongs to the future less on account of its art than for its stressing of sentiment which we shall find once more in Baroque art. But before we embark upon that subject we must cast a glance at



JACOPO TINTORETTO • *Reclining Female Nude* • Charcoal drawing

the painting north of the Alps, preferably the painting of Germany. There the Medieval outlook endured in unbroken strength until almost the end of the fifteenth century. Admittedly traces of a coarse, often exaggerated, realism can be observed, but it remains the medium of an art devoted to religious subjects. Realism in the North would perhaps have led to the discovery of man as the idealism of the Renaissance in Italy, and yet the pictures would necessarily have been different, in fact realistic. That this did not happen is due to the enormous expansion and creative power peculiar to the Renaissance, which could not in the long run exclude the North.

Plates Even more astonishing, therefore, are those female figures painted by Manuel Deutsch, Hans Baldung Grien,
Pages Lucas Cranach and even Dürer, who had visited Italy, when they chose as their subject Venus, Lucrezia, or
137-143 Vanity. Again and again – but least of all in Dürer – they appear as slender-limbed creatures with exaggerated legs, narrow drooping shoulders, tiny breasts and an ostentatiously swollen belly. Lack of knowledge in the technical sense is not the reason, for the works are executed with consummate skill. Decisive were the strong ties with tradition, which simply could not be broken by changing the subject or freeing the picture from its old servitude to an altar triptych. And this tradition was known as Gothic! All the above-mentioned peculiarities, which differentiate a German Venus from her Italian sister, stem from this, in addition to the undue importance attached to the surrounding line. Thus the German Venus with all its differences is closer to the Venus of Botticelli more than fifty years earlier, in fact to the beginning of the Italian Renaissance.

VI • The Triumph of Eve – Baroque

The Baroque age, which is covered more or less by the seventeenth century, if one includes its end-phase Rococo, stood under an unlucky star. The schism of the Reformation had robbed man of his inner peace which, despite his love for life during the Renaissance until the sixteenth century, he had found in the bosom of the church. This uncertainty was fostered by the bitterness with which the representatives of the old and the reformed church fought. When the terror of the Thirty Years War descended upon Central Europe, here at least, all the values which the Renaissance held dear were questioned: belief in humanity, a gay acceptance of life and the satisfying knowledge of one's own creative powers. Now the individual saw himself bereft of the belief in a beautiful full life on earth and faced with an issueless void. And yet a way was found out of this dilemma: self intoxication, orgy and pathos.

The fate of Renaissance man who, despite the joy in his earthly existence, was still enclosed in God's Paradise, began to be questioned with the beginning of the crisis of faith, i. e. already in the sixteenth century, because his hitherto untroubled relationship to the after life was disturbed. Not that it was completely lost. On the contrary, it was realised once more, in an almost Medieval sense, so much so in fact that man lost faith in himself and fulfilment in God appeared to him more important than fulfilment in this world. The religious ardour, which speaks from an El Greco canvas, is a testimony of this just as it stands out in the remarkable servitude, even spiritual agony, to be found in the figures of Parmeggianino, Bronzino or other "Mannerists". The elongated, almost spectrally bodiless figures of El Greco no longer offer the observer that beautiful naturalness and self-confidence common to all the creations of the Renaissance. They writhe and all their movements seem to come not from within but to be imposed from without – from the Beyond for which they long.

This longing for the next world was not assuaged by Baroque but in any case succumbed to its aggressive violence, which expressed itself in "Mannerism" and is finally a reflection of that uncompromising zeal with which the Catholic Church persecuted the Protestants in the Counter-Reformation. But at the beginning of the seventeenth century it became ever clearer that as the regions which had seceded from the old faith and had been forcibly brought back by the power of the Word into the fold of the Catholic Church, the tasks of art had also changed.

Plates
Pages 123,
127/129



PETER PAUL RUBENS • *Studies for a Female Nude* • Crayon drawing

Now with every means in its power it had to create an orgy of forms and colours. Art was to enchant man, to make him forget his everyday cares, the world and himself and to "lead him to God" in a boundless hymn of jubilation to the magnificence and grandeur of Heaven. That such an art, which was based entirely on the senses, could not use the dehumanised figure of an El Greco is quite understandable. It restored a sense of balance but not without allowing it to rise at the same time physically to a kind of superhumanity.

Art as "a seduction to the Beyond", however, shows only the evangelical aspect of the path which the men of



REMBRANDT

Female Nude, back view

Pen and Ink wash drawing

the Baroque Age discovered to overcome their inner duality. The other side reveals itself in an exaggeration of the Ego, a selfish, intoxicating over-estimation of human existence. This attitude reached its peak in absolutism – the crowned ruler by the grace of God. “*L’Etat, c’est moi*”, said Louis XIV, and in 1682 the French clergy proclaimed: “Kings are not only ordained by God, they are themselves Gods.”

We can understand that such an attitude was of great significance for art, and more so since it was recognised

in this the most apposite means of allowing an exaggerated self-consciousness to become a visible self-aggrandisement. This is not the place to assess all the possibilities which the creative spirit of the artist devised to satisfy this desire. But we can sense the new meaning in our own theme, which is the portrayal of woman in painting.

Plate
Page 147

No other painter in his personality, thought and art is more typical of the Baroque Age than Peter Paul Rubens, its great exponent. Woman and the beauty of her body were his primary preoccupation. But how far removed are his women from the ideals of the Renaissance! As they appear, as Venus at her Toilet, Susanna in the Bath, as Angelica with the Hermits, as Graces or as Mortals in the Garden of Love, they are invariably sensual representations of an exaggerated super-dimensional femininity. The body has become a mountain of flesh, soft, full of warm genuine life, the forms curving in more and more unbridled joy in their own nature. But this is not only a beautiful lustless existence as it was in Renaissance painting until Correggio, but an aware existence, a feast of sensuality. The artist will not only have it appear beautiful pictorially, he has to challenge, to arouse desire. The dreamy undemanding happiness of the certainly very feminine Venus of Titian no longer holds good. Every possible device is employed to portray Venus as an attainable earthly Eve. To this end the pathetic exaggeration of the physical takes second place to the manner in which the women of Rubens appear to the eye. Every effect which can stress the sensuous is used to the full, whether in the modelling of the body, by *chiaroscuro*, the exciting and intoxicating colour, the expression of the face or – and this above all – the great freedom with which the naked beauties flaunt themselves in their surroundings. Here the strict canons and hard and fast norms no longer rule as in the Renaissance; everything is done to achieve surprise, originality, the unique and the astounding. “Anyone who cannot bluff should be an ostler”, said the Italian Baroque poet, Marino.

It is no wonder that Baroque painting, which laid so much value on the inventive powers of the individual artist, was particularly pledged to human possibility. Exaggeration and pathos could only convince if their “reality” was credible. It is hardly a matter of chance that now, for the first time, not only the face was portrayed with all its individual peculiarities but the whole body. Together with his great antithesis, Rembrandt, Rubens was the first to dare to put on display without hiding anything the body of his young wife, Hélène Fourment. He deified it countless times and gave its features to many a Venus or Grace. The earthly Venus had conquered the imaginary Venus. Eve had become Venus.

To what extent Rubens remains a painter of beauty in the old sense becomes clearer when one observes the female portraits of his Dutch contemporary, Rembrandt. He too painted his wives, Saskia and Hendrickje Stofels in the complete nude. But if beautiful Saskia can still be interpreted as a hymn to female beauty when as Danaë she lies on her bed longing for the arrival of love-crazed Jupiter, so Hendrickje as Bathsheba at her Toilet is still only a mortal. This man is the first in the whole of art history who lives up to his name. Here it is not a question of charming beauty but of the inner feelings which Rembrandt retained towards this true companion of his years of misfortune. The body was not an end in itself, it was merely a pretext to bring to light the goodness, fidelity, in short, the humanity in this woman. Therefore, he can show the hands ravaged by everyday toil, the tired old body, the misshapen legs and the far from beautiful face with its resigned and melancholy expression, without them being found ugly.

Plate
Page 149

The art of Rubens and Rembrandt has by no means exhausted the possibilities of Baroque painting. In Italy the contact with the classical art of the Renaissance was not completely forgotten. When we examine the female nudes of Guido Reni, Domenichino or Cortona, and all the others until Tiepolo, they all show that characteristic fullness, sensuality and pathetic mobility which we observed in Rubens. But they still remain bound to imagined beauty and never entirely adopt earthly reality.

Plates
Pages
153/173

France, too, during the whole of the seventeenth century remained true to the classic ideal even more strongly than Italy. In the sixteenth century under the leadership of the Italians the School of Fontainebleau created an antique, smooth, sculpture-like painting. Nicolas Poussin was its greatest representative.

Plates
Pages
131-135/161

Spain, the centre of the Counter-Reformation and the last stronghold of absolutism, persisted in a strongly representative profane painting and one of passionate, religious feeling. In neither of these was there a place for the naked woman. And yet, for example, Velasquez' Rokeby Venus is one of the most beautiful nudes of the Baroque age. It is certainly no imagined beauty but the portrait of a young woman who takes her place in the ranks which lead from Giorgione via Titian and end in Spain with Goya's Naked Maya.

Plate
Page 163

Plate
Page 177



GIAMBATTISTA PIAZZETTA • *Female Nude in the Sunlight* • Crayon Drawing

VII · The Rise and Fall of the Cocotte –

Rococo and Classicism

The art of Baroque, true to the spirit of the age, had idealised human existence as a Bacchanalian orgy. It wished it to be a feast of the senses and was often enough sensual. But never did it become pure sensuality; it had always imposed certain limits and Eros only allowed a glimpse of himself through an overripe plump female body. This attitude changed completely around 1720, above all in France, the home of Rococo. The plumpness of the bodies softened to an almost fragile grace, the intoxicating power of winged gaiety. The mature woman gives place to a pretty doll-like creature with a retroussé nose, looking out on to the world as though there could be no distress, or with a purely challenging glance. The powerful colours of Baroque, which in themselves are a feast for the eyes, became velvety soft. Red becomes pink, indigo a powder blue and oils are replaced by pastels. No longer does heavy brocade envelop the bodies, but rustling silk. The striking feature, however, is with what refinement everything is displayed which could possibly arouse the desires of a man. These charming girls do not offer their charms openly. Nearly always a little piece of silk or a veil is there to conceal the last secret. This is not from modesty but an intentional challenge to solve this ultimate riddle. Attraction, enticement, coquetry wherever one looks. Bubbling champagne instead of heavy wine.

What had happened? The French king still ruled with absolutist power and autocracy, but the death of Louis XIV, the Sun King, had brought about the miracle of the transformation of the Baroque heroine into the fairy-like coquettish girl of the Rococo. Under his rule life at court had become more and more majestic: splendour and pomp stifled by stiff courtly manners. The pathetic dignity, the heroic gesture were the mode. His successor, however, the young Regent, Philippe d'Orléans, shed these pompous trappings like a hampering corset and opened the doors of his court to a gayer, more amorous life, as we can read in the letters of Liselotte. Other ages may have appreciated love just as much and deified it in their art but none of them actually transformed it into an art. And that is precisely what Rococo society did. It invented the rules of the game which led step by step to the quintessence of pleasure. No wonder that the woman's voice began to be heard more and more, for what



CHARLES-JOSEPH NATOIRE
Seated Female Nude
 Red chalk drawing

man could have been so inventive as she in this respect? It was the age of mistresses and it was not clear who ruled at the court of Louis XV, the King or the Pompadour.

It is difficult to know to whom we should give the palm as representative of French Rococo painting, to determine who best captured the atmosphere of the gallant love adventure, the grace and the physical allurements.

The girls of Fragonard or Boucher are too closely related, too similar in the way they wallow in a riot of shimmering silk, gleaming satin and exquisite lace.

Plates Pages
 167-171



JEAN-HONORÉ FRAGONARD • *The Toilet of Venus* • Coloured Pen and Ink wash

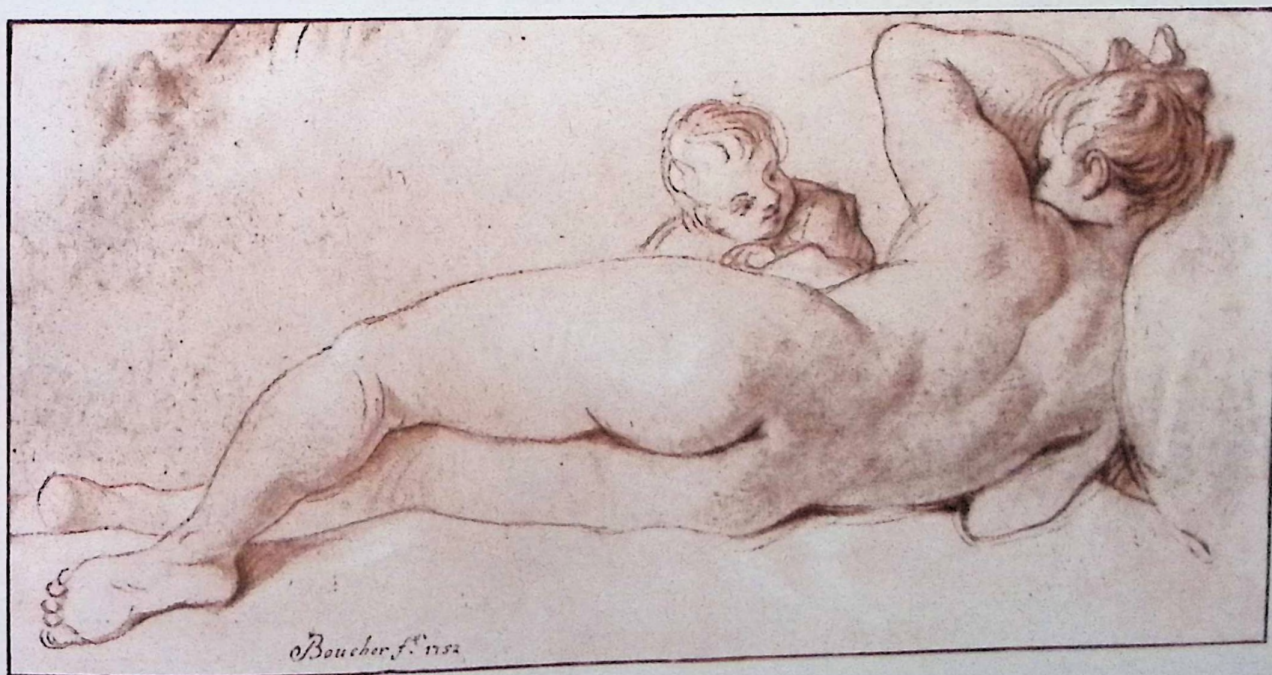
The rule of the *cocotte* was brief because only in court society was sensuous enjoyment appreciated and the people had to produce the means for making possible these *fêtes galantes*, *bergeries* and bucolic idylls of love. The unbridled way in which the élite devoted themselves to their expensive frivolities aroused the indignation of the moralists and the spirit of the Age of Reason soon made this ramshackle edifice topple. It did not, however, come to open rebellion until 1784, when Jacques-Louis David, the King's stipendiary, painted his "Horatio's Oath" and at the same time devised the slogan "literature and art must be renewed by a study of the morals of antiquity". What David had anticipated in painting, the estrangement from the immorality of the *Ancien Régime*, the French burghers achieved by the Revolution of 1789 which drowned the beautiful dream of gay self-enjoyment in a sea of blood and tears. The model for art now becomes classical antiquity, examples of which had

recently been excavated in a hitherto unknown beauty from the ruins of Pompeii. The Rococo cocotte transformed herself into a shy, modest Psyche sacrificing nearly all her vitality and frivolity.

Plate With Gérard she becomes a statuesque figure, which seems to have been chiselled out of cold marble. The gentle
Page 179 pastel shades, as ethereal as the featherlike creations they brought to life, gave place to a smooth compact brushwork with clear impeccable outlines.

Plates These academic figures are pale and bloodless and it would have been a miracle had the French been able to content themselves for very long with these classical poets of feminine beauty. Already with Ingres, Chassériau and
Pages Prud'hon the bodies began to live once more, to breathe, to give off warmth and to revel in their forms. From
181/189 classicism they retained their love of the beautiful outline and sometimes the smooth skin, but their spirit was already romantic.

FRANÇOIS BOUCHER • *Reclining Female Nude, back view* • Pen Drawing on parchment



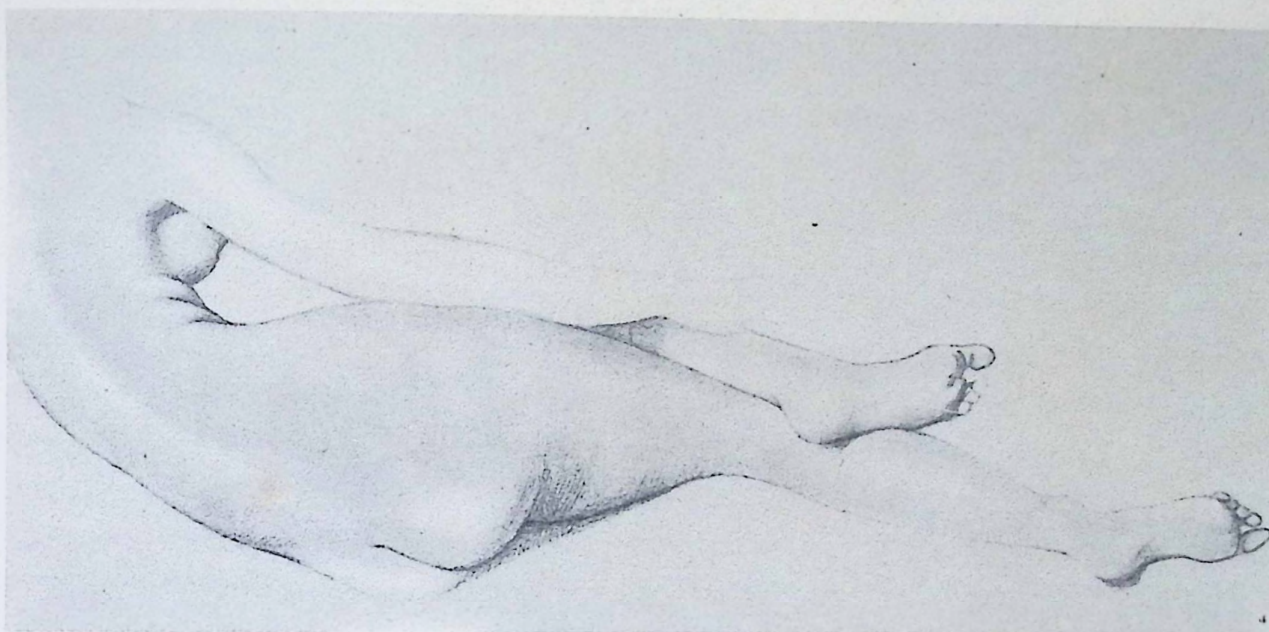
VIII • The Banishment of Venus – Nineteenth Century

The artistic revolution of the late eighteenth century was a fatal affair. Here for the first time painting did not develop out of the age but consciously opposed it. The Renaissance once looked back to antiquity, but only because it recognised in it the same art inherent in itself. It would have arrived even without antiquity. But now the artists protested against the corruption of the age, against loose morals, a detested society and its way of life. The "Back to Nature" movement of the Age of Reason meant for art "Back to Antiquity". Classicism was, therefore, imposed and not an art form, as all the others had been even in the Rococo. With this was broken the old unity, in which art, indifferent to whom it served, was a part of the whole existence.

This unity had to break simply because the spirit incorporating an age and the supporting pillars of art collapsed, whether they were called church, aristocracy or, as in the Renaissance, bourgeoisie. Previously they had grown organically as the "intellectual peak" and their representatives quite rightly determined the face of art. And this face, consciously or subconsciously, was recognised as the only possible one by the patrons, the artists and the great mass of the non-creative.

But now things had changed. The Age of Reason had questioned the rights of religion and the church, the claim to leadership of the aristocracy even in a political respect was no longer recognised as absolute, and the middle classes now on the throne brought with them no ideal which could have inspired any new art style. Admittedly the church, the court and the community continued to commission artists as before, but they were no longer commissions united in a single spirit. If and when the "loss of the golden mean" took place it was in the outgoing eighteenth century.

It is understandable that in this age it became possible for the first time to describe art as good or bad, referring not to the quality of the artist but only to the degree of his taste. And one can understand that there was suddenly a yardstick by which the value or lack of success of a work of art could be measured: the art of the academies. We have nothing against these. They were at the time and still are today, at least for craftsmanship, of indispensable significance. But the fantastic zeal with which their representatives in the eighteenth and even more so in the nineteenth centuries maintained that they were the only people capable of judging artists had the



JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES • *Study for the Odalisque* • Pencil Drawing

most devastating effect. They who, with grim earnestness, saw the highest goal of art to be the preservation of old master tradition, could sway the public and the patrons to their side and determine taste. Anyone who did not bow to their criticism was successfully outlawed and often starved for lack of commissions. Nearly all the artists whom we consider the really great men of the nineteenth century were among these outcasts.

The fault of this development in the last analysis was the lack of a common motivating spirit of the age. This is also the reason why since the Rococo no true art style can be developed — unless we are to see one in the modern art of our days — and only the technique of the portrayal has constantly been subject to change. Purely on account of this, the masters who create from their own true urge to create become lonelier and more flung-back upon themselves, until their work ignores the non-existent public taste and represents their own egos. We see this particularly clearly in the portrayal of a woman in painting. We have only to look at the brush technique and the

host of female nudes from Ingres and Delacroix through Corot, Courbet and Puvis de Chavannes to Manet, Renoir and Gauguin to recognise that there no longer exist any ties apart from sex. In the previous centuries women with all their physical differences had belonged to a large family and were imbued with a common spirit. From those of the nineteenth and eventually the twentieth century now speaks for the first time the spirit of the painter, however much he may be rooted in his age.

Venus, the absolute beauty, has no validity in such an age. Were she to have been portrayed by a painter then, he and no one else would have recognised her as Venus. She disappeared after classicism had forcibly brought her back to earth once more and since then she has never returned. Her place has been taken irrevocably by Eve. She shows herself as she is, beautiful or ugly, and invariably according to the artist's whim: in realistic, almost photographic fidelity, in curt all-embracing form or – already in the twentieth century – as a symbolically simplified sign.

Those most closely related to Venus are naturally the women of the artists who clung to the classicist tradition, like Ingres or Chassériau. In their bodies one can still see something of the serene beauty of antiquity. On closer inspection these creations, flaunting their soft, smooth, curved bodies in the sultry air of a harem, combing their hair as Esther, reclining indolently on a chaise-longue or listening to the gurgle of bath water, turn out to be beautiful mortals. The method of painting, the stressing of the outline, the tender colour of the flesh and their idleness relate them to the old masters.

Plates
Pages
181/189

It is characteristic that a nude could have been painted which had nothing in common with them: the reclining woman of Delacroix. Completely in the style of Baroque painting, strong in colour and *chiaroscuro* effects it is a true and realistic portrait of a beautiful young woman. Corot and Courbet rescue the female body from the imaginary darkness which veiled it in the case of Delacroix, banishing all reality, and bring it out into the bright sunlight, leaving no secret. But their women, too, remain in some way beautiful, despite the – to our taste – rather exaggerated plumpness, so that the Empress of France once described Courbet's "Bathing Girls" as *percheronnes*.

Plate
Page 183

Plates
Pages
193/195

Manet was forced to swallow even coarser insults over his "Olympia" and it was only thanks to a protective police order that in the salon of 1865 it did not fall a victim to the rage of the visitors. People saw in her "the bestial ugliness of a model taken out of the gutter". And one cannot call this impertinent creature beautiful either in face or in body, but that was a matter of indifference to the painter. He wanted to draw attention to things

Plate
Page 199



EDOUARD MANET • *Sketch for Olympia* • Red Chalk drawing

beyond the portrait of the girl, things which had hitherto remained unspoken, with particular reference to the social milieu. In this way a step had been taken pointing the way to the future. Now it was no longer a matter of portraying the body but of expressing intellectually some aspect of human problems. From now onwards we can understand why Toulouse-Lautrec took his models from the brothels of Paris, or Degas showed women at their toilette after their work.

But that the love of the body beautiful had not been completely lost is proved by the work of Auguste Renoir. His was the only – and the absolute last – hymn to female beauty. Not to Venus but to an Eve of fabricated reality, the ideal of Renoir: female youth in all its bloom. With an almost Rococo-like colour the artist allows these creations of his imagination to enjoy their indolence. They radiate an almost paradisaical calm. Eve has returned to the Garden of Eden, but only in the case of Renoir.

Only one of the later artists affords any comparison: Modigliani. He, too, devotes the greater part of his work to female nudity and finds in it a beauty valid for himself alone. But she is quite different, an elongated body with

Plates
Pages 217, 205

Plate
Page 209

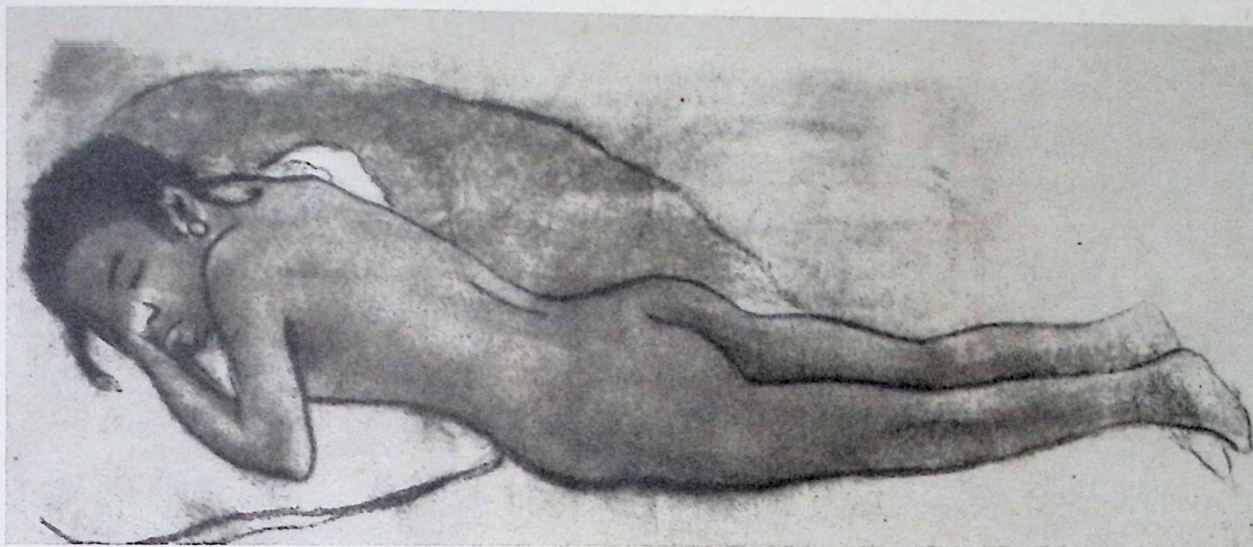
a wasp waist, stressed hips, powerful breasts and an incredible plasticity. Renoir girls have spiritual and bodily freedom. They are without desire. Modigliani's are under the compulsion of sensuality, are aware of their goal and recognise no frontiers. The *Sturm und Drang* of Modigliani, the never quite complete and tragically perfect, contrast with the serenity of the enlightened Renoir.

The need to use the portrayal of the feminine body merely as pretext and as means of expressing some spiritual or

Plate
Page 231



EDGAR DEGAS
Woman entering the Bath
Pastel



PAUL GAUGUIN • *Reclining Nude* • Gouache

Plates other value has survived since the end of the nineteenth century. A magnificent example of this is given by
Pages Gauguin, with his native women from Tahiti and the Marquesas. He yearned for the primitive life not yet cor-
 211/213 rupted by the achievements of civilisation. He sought for this in vain among the Breton peasants, but here among
 the natives of the South Sea Islands he believed that he had found it. He saw it in these people who in their
 paradisaical innocence were still in harmony with nature. He painted them again and again, nearly always the
 women, because with their soft full bodies they personified the inexhaustible fertility of this land. The heavy
 colours of his palette, almost devoid of all reflection, have captured both these aspects – fertility and the un-
 troubled origins of human destiny.

Plate Quite different appear the slim, angular long-legged figures of Otto Müller, the German expressionist. Their
Page 249 unplastic idol-like bodies lack the true primitiveness in the sense of Gauguin, and represent something contrived
 and aware. And yet they possess a great power of expression, something of the gazelle-like liteness and the
 strong sensuality of gipsy girls – which they actually are.

But that the female form could be used not only as a means of expressing some idea but also could be appreciated intrinsically, freed of any ballast, is proved by Henri Matisse.

He, as incidentally Picasso has done, renounced spatial desire arousing plastic effects and adopted the harmonic flow of the outlines alone. By so doing he joins the ranks of a long sequence of French artists for whom the beauty of the female body meant more than its other charms.

Plate
Page 221



GEORGE BRAQUE
Female Half-Nude
Pencil and Charcoal

IX · Paradise Lost – Twentieth Century

The nineteenth century banished Venus and the twentieth despatched Eve to join her. We have seen how the naked female body in painting visibly lost in beauty, tending more and more to the macabre side of its nature, finally renouncing all grace. Often enough it was no longer intended to be beautiful, but with stressed ugliness, as a hectic figure of misery or formal comparison, to arouse compassion and pity for the human being and a feeling of the graceless futility of life on earth. Even the superb pictures of women by Gauguin are no hymn to beauty but a warning, a reminder of a paradise which man lost by his own stupidity.

It is no wonder that the painting of our century, where it is really modern and not traditional, finally takes away from the female body even the value of its significance, or – and this more often – denies it together with the whole of earthly creation. What meaning would these have in an age which places all values in doubt, which in other centuries would have made them worthy of portrayal, in an age which recognises neither ethics nor Eros as valid ideas and lives from day to day under the appalling menace of war and nuclear destruction.

Art would have given up the struggle had it not complied with the spirit of our age and recognised the solution of the last secrets of the world by silence. Therefore – and clearest of all in painting – it had to retire completely into itself and become an absolute “art for art’s sake”, such as the art of a Kandinsky, Mondrian, Baumeister and many of their pupils. And here for the first time since the “loss of the golden mean” in the eighteenth century are we justified once more in speaking of a style, of an art born from the spirit of the age and not a return to ancient formulas or a change in the art of portrayal. It is a style of devastating inhumanity in which the question “whither” is clear but the destination must remain without answer.

We know that very few artists of the first half of our century have freed themselves entirely from objectivity.

We need only think of Picasso, who with all his versatility and modernity has not completely left this earth.

Periodically, as though wishing to ensure himself of his existence, he has returned to it and has painted pictures

of women to satisfy the most epicurean taste, and very often they are merely beautiful without any *arrière-*

pensée. We have lost the earthly paradise, but men like Picasso may make us believe and hope that we shall find

our way back to it one day and that woman, as Eve or as Venus and the personification of beauty, will emerge once more from her hiding place in the weekly magazines. The knowledge of immortal love between the sexes, the never-dying urge for the beautiful and the fathomless omnipotence of God are the greatest pillars to support this hope.



HENRI MATISSE

Reclining Nude

Pen Drawing

List of Plates

I	EGYPTIAN ART · <i>Three Dancing Girls</i>	64
II	THE PAINTING OF THE FAR EAST	
	INDIAN ART (AJANTA) · <i>Dancing Girls</i>	66
	INDIAN ART (CEYLON) · <i>The Golden-Skinned Maiden</i>	68
	INDIAN ART (MOGUL) · <i>Lady on the Terrace</i>	70
	PERSIAN ART · <i>Chosro and Shirin</i>	72
	TORII KIYONAGA · <i>Scene in a Women's Bath House</i>	74
III	GREEK AND ROME	
	GREEK ART · <i>Two Girls at Play (Vase)</i>	76
	GREEK ART · <i>Female Nude (Oil Flask)</i>	78
	GREEK ART · <i>Aphrodite and Eros (Mirror)</i>	80
	ETRUSCAN ART · <i>Sacred Burial Dance</i>	82
	ROMAN ART (POMPEII) · <i>Initiation through the Dance</i>	84
	ROMAN ART (POMPEII) · <i>The Three Graces</i>	86
IV	THE MIDDLE AGES	
	ITALIAN ART · <i>The Creation of Eve (Mosaic)</i>	88
	FRENCH ART · <i>Allegory from a Zodiacal Constellation</i>	90
	FRENCH ART · <i>Scene in a Bath House</i>	92
	PAUL OF LIMBOURG AND HIS BROTHERS · <i>The Earthly Paradise</i>	94
	FRENCH ART · <i>Female Nude "Ariane"</i>	96
	HUGO VAN DER GOES · <i>Adam and Eve in Paradise</i>	98
	HANS MEMLING · <i>Bathsheba in the Bath</i>	100
	HIERONYMUS OF AACHEN CALLED BOSCH · <i>The Garden of Earthly Delights</i>	102

V RENAISSANCE

SANDRO DI MARIANO FILIPEPI CALLED BOTTICELLI · <i>The Birth of Venus</i>	104
RAFFAELLO SANTI · <i>The Three Graces</i>	106
GIORGIO BARBARELLI CALLED GIORGIONE · <i>Sleeping Venus</i>	108
TIZIANO VECELLIO CALLED TITIAN · <i>Diana Discovers Callisto's Indiscretion</i>	110
TIZIANO VECELLIO CALLED TITIAN · <i>Angelica and Medor</i>	112
MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI · <i>The Fall</i>	114
LORENZO LOTTO · <i>The Triumph of Chastity</i>	116
ANTONIO ALLEGRI CALLED CORREGGIO · <i>The Education of Cupid</i>	118
PARIS BORDONE · <i>Venus and Cupid</i>	120
ANGELO BRONZINO · <i>Venus and Cupid, Cronus and Folly</i>	122
AFTER MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI · <i>Leda and the Swan</i>	124
JACOPO ROBUSTI CALLED TINTORETTO · <i>Mercury and the Three Graces</i>	126
JACOPO ROBUSTI CALLED TINTORETTO · <i>Lucrezia and Tarquinius</i>	128
SCHOOL OF FONTAINEBLEAU · <i>Mars with Venus and Cupid</i>	130
SCHOOL OF FONTAINEBLEAU · <i>Diana the Huntress</i>	132
SCHOOL OF FONTAINEBLEAU · <i>Gabrielle d'Estrées and her sister</i>	134
HANS BALDUNG GRIEN · <i>Vanity · The Allegory of Music</i>	136
ALBRECHT DÜRER · <i>The Suicide of Lucrezia</i>	138
LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER · <i>The Judgment of Paris</i>	140
NIKLAUS MANUEL · <i>The Judgment of Paris</i>	142
HANS VON AACHEN · <i>The Victory of Truth under the Protection of Justice</i>	144

VI BAROQUE

PETER PAUL RUBENS · <i>The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus</i>	146
REMBRANDT HARMENSZ VAN RIJN · <i>Danaë</i>	148
ANNIBALE CARRACCI · <i>Adonis discovers Venus</i>	150
DOMENICHINO · <i>Susanna in the Bath</i>	152
BERNARDO STROZZI · <i>The Expulsion from Paradise</i>	154
CAGNACCI · <i>The Death of Cleopatra</i>	156
SIMON VOUET · <i>Venus and Adonis</i>	158

NICOLAS POUSSIN · <i>Midas and Bacchus</i>	160
DIEGO DE SILVA Y VELASQUEZ · <i>Venus and Cupid</i>	162

VII ROCOCO AND CLASSICISM

ANTOINE WATTEAU · <i>The Judgment of Paris</i>	164
FRANÇOIS BOUCHER · <i>Diana Leaving her Bath</i>	166
FRANÇOIS BOUCHER · <i>Girl Reclining on a Couch</i>	168
JEAN-HONORÉ FRAGONARD · <i>Girls Bathing</i>	170
GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO · <i>Diana Discovers Callisto's Indiscretion</i>	172
THOMAS STOTHARD · <i>Scene from the Narcissus Myth</i>	174
FRANCISCO DE GOYA · <i>The Naked Maya</i>	176
FRANÇOIS GÉRARD · <i>Cupid and Psyche</i>	178
JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES · <i>Reclining Odalisque</i>	180

VIII THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

EUGÈNE DELACROIX · <i>The Woman with the Parrot</i>	182
GUILHELMINE DE BENOIST · <i>Negress</i>	184
DIAZ DE LA PENA · <i>Female Nude with Cupids</i>	186
THEODORE CHASSÉRIAU · <i>The Toilet of Esther</i>	188
JEAN-BAPTISTE REGNAULT · <i>The Three Graces</i>	190
JEAN-BAPTISTE CAMILLE COROT · <i>Marietta</i>	192
GUSTAVE COURBET · <i>Le Sommeil</i>	194
PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES · <i>L'Espoir</i>	196
EDOUARD MANET · <i>Olympia</i>	198
EDOUARD MANET · <i>La Blonde aux Seins Nus</i>	200
HANS VON MARÉES · <i>Diana at Rest</i>	202
EDGAR DEGAS · <i>Après le Bain</i>	204
PAUL CÉZANNE · <i>A New Olympia</i>	206
PIERRE AUGUSTE RENOIR · <i>Young Girl Bathing</i>	208
PAUL GAUGUIN · <i>"Iairumati"</i>	210

PAUL GAUGUIN · <i>"Aita Parari"</i>	212
VINCENT VAN GOGH · <i>Reclining Female Nude</i>	214
HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC · <i>l'Amitié</i>	216
PIERRE BONNARD · <i>Half-length Female Nude with Lamp</i>	218

IX TWENTIETH CENTURY

HENRI MATISSE · <i>Seated Female Nude with Red Background</i>	220
GEORGES ROUAULT · <i>Woman at the Mirror</i>	222
RAOUL DUFY · <i>Resting Odalisque</i>	224
PABLO PICASSO · <i>La Toilette</i>	226
GEORGES BRAQUE · <i>Female Nude, back view</i>	228
AMADEO MODIGLIANI · <i>Female Nude</i>	230
EMILE OTHON FRIESZ · <i>Female Nude, back view</i>	232
ANDRÉ DERAÎN · <i>Seated Female Nude</i>	234
MARCEL GROMAIRE · <i>Three Nudes in the Landscape</i>	236
MAURICE BRIANCHON · <i>Half-length Nude, A Seated Girl</i>	238
JEAN GABRIEL DOMERGUE · <i>Nude</i>	240
MARC CHAGALL · <i>Les Bords de la Seine</i>	242
EDVARD MUNCH · <i>Reclining Female Nude</i>	244
LOVIS CORINTH · <i>Female Nude in Bed</i>	246
OTTO MÜLLER · <i>Two Girls in the Country</i>	248
EMIL NOLDE · <i>Crouching Female Nude</i>	250
PAULA MODERSOHN-BECKER · <i>Self-Portrait as Half-length Nude</i>	252
PAUL KLEE · <i>Seated Nude</i>	254
FRANZ MARC · <i>Bathing Girls</i>	256
AUGUST MACKE · <i>Bathing Girls</i>	258
P.M. PADUA · <i>Nude</i>	260
OSKAR KOKOSCHKA · <i>Female Nude</i>	262

PLATES

EGYPTIAN ART · THREE DANCING GIRLS

At the peak of Egyptian Art in the New Kingdom, particularly during the 18th and 19th dynasties, which correspond to Egypt's period as a world power, the art of painting too, as decoration of the spacious tombs (Necropoles), was subject to a great expansion. The dead man was given pictures to accompany him on the path to eternity, so that the soul should not be without helpers in the next world, such as the lute-player, the harp-player and the dancing girl with the double flute, here taken from the portrayal of a banquet, powerfully drawn without perspective but realistic in the accuracy of detail.

Egyptian art of the 18th Dynasty (15th to 14th Century B.C.)

Three Dancing Girls playing musical instruments

From the tomb of Nakht, Thebes Necropolis.



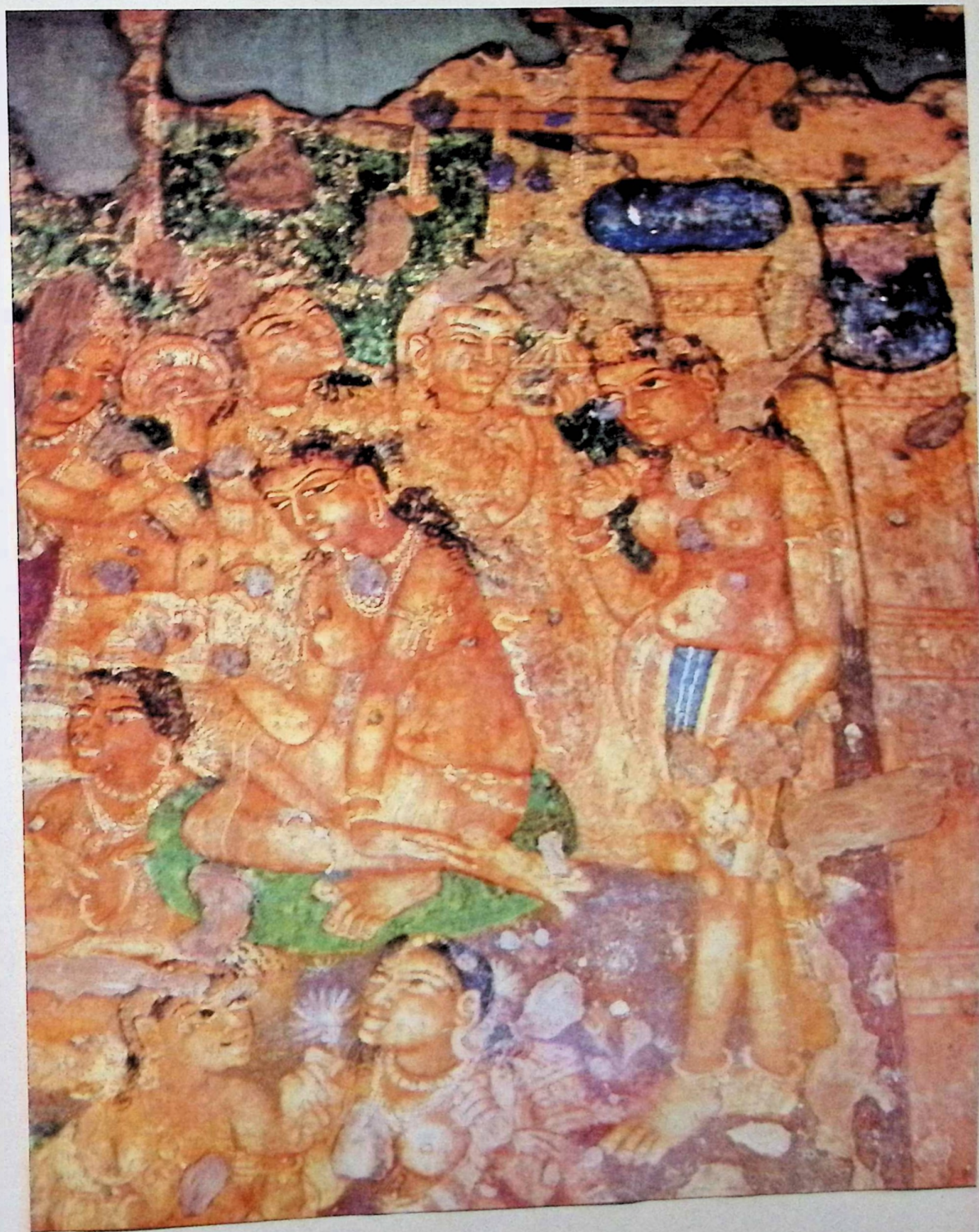
INDIAN ART • DANCING GIRLS

The Ajanta Caves are situated in the province of Hyderabad, South India. They were first discovered in 1819. The Ajanta painters in their frequently Dionysian representations exercised an enormous influence not only on the art concepts of India but of the whole of Asia. Although the caves have gradually succumbed to the ravages of changes in temperature, many parts of them are still well preserved and surprise by the brilliance of their colours. They are a picturesque testimony to the highly developed culture of the period.

Indian art, 2nd Century, B.C.—600 A.D.

Dancing Girls

Rock painting from Ajanta.



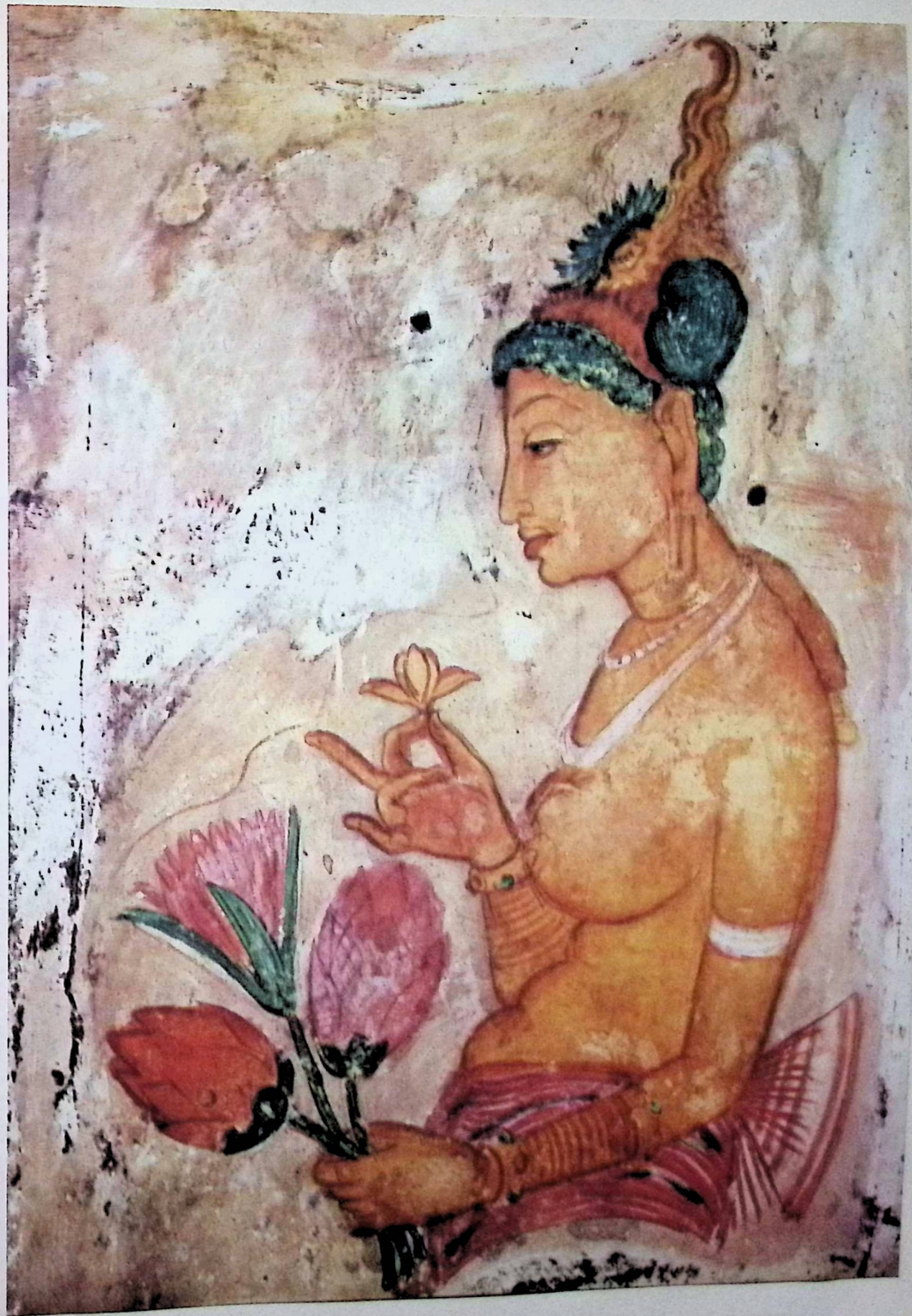
INDIAN ART • THE GOLDEN-SKINNED MAIDEN

Indian Art has depicted the human nude since the 2nd Century A.D. In Gandara, in the north of the country, Hellenism duly made its influence felt. In our illustration the "Golden-Skinned Maiden" appears in strict linear profile. She is absorbed in her examination of a sapu flower (Michelia Campaka) while holding three water lilies in her left hand.

Indian art of the 5th Century, A.D.

The Golden-Skinned Maiden

Rock painting from Ceylon (Sigiri).



INDIAN ART · LADY ON THE TERRACE

Under the Mohammedan Mogul rulers, nourished by Persian sources, a rich book illumination blossomed in India portraying for preference the national epics, fables and folk tales in an outspoken courtly style. The fairy-like element in the representation, together with a frankly precious grace, creates an unusual dream world, allowing the greatest latitude to the imagination of the spectator.

Indian art ca. 1700, Mogul (Aurangzeb) period

Lady on the Terrace

Miniature, 10³/₄" × 6³/₄"

Oxford, Bodleian Library.



PERSIAN ART · CHOSRO AND SHIRIN

In the miniatures of the illustrated books which enhance the wealth of Persian literature, Persian art, contemporary with European Baroque, underwent a late flowering of its national art. An unusual delight in telling stories and romances, together with a particular sense for colour balance and a subtle feeling for decoration, makes this book illumination agreeable to European eyes. It gives the effect of looking at a carpet.

Persian art of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries

Chosro and Shirin

Miniature

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.



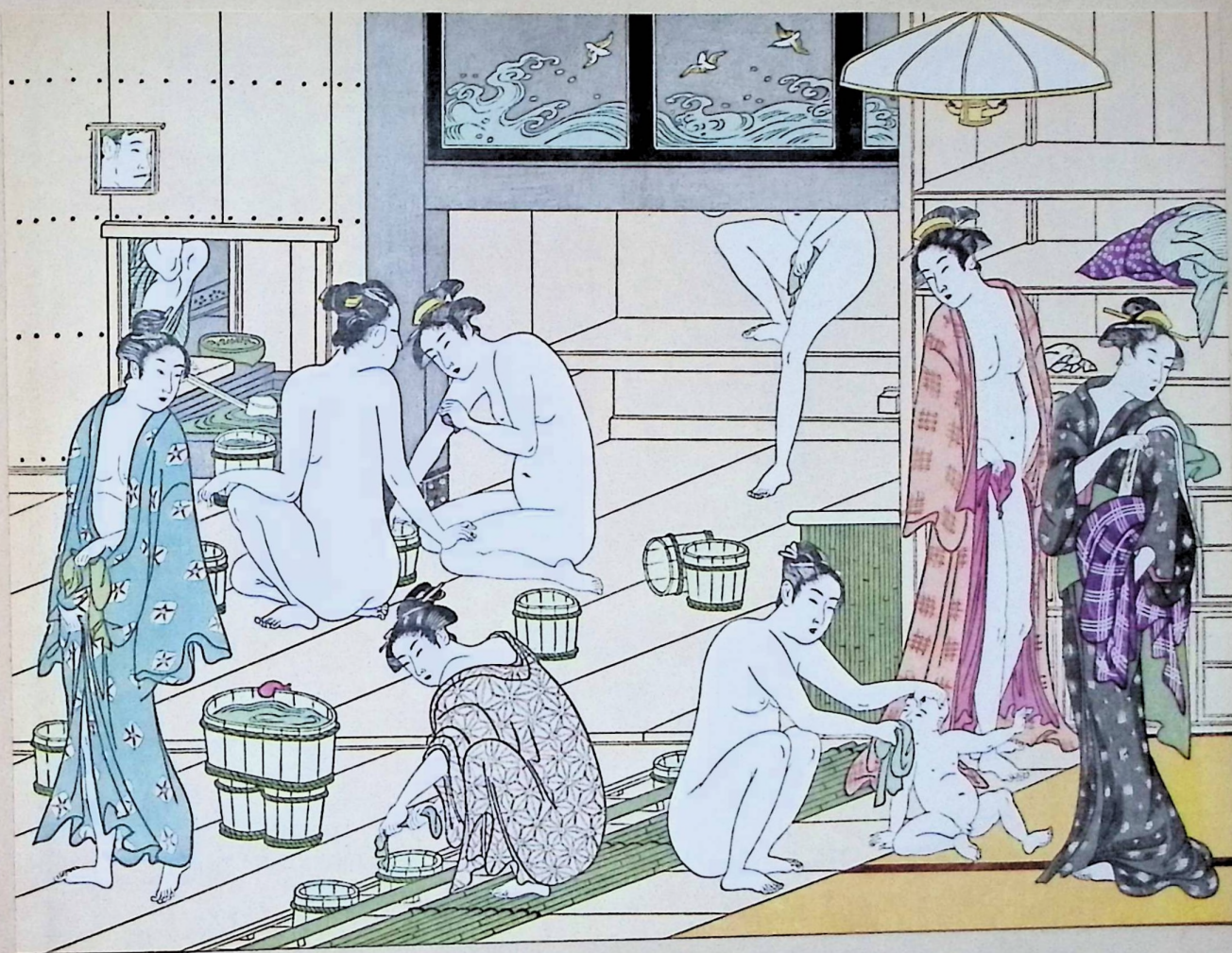
TORII KIYONAGA • SCENE IN A WOMEN'S BATH HOUSE

After a century of attempts at finding the desired dream picture of the naked female nude, Kiyonaga succeeded in portraying the ageless ideal figure of the Japanese woman: aristocratic women with fine oval faces and slender limbs, enchanting creations who move freely and lithely and who, with their noble bearing and traditional hairstyle, look like queens.

Torii Kiyonaga (Japan 1752–1815)

Scene in a Women's Bath House, ca. 1785

Coloured woodcut.



GREEK ART • TWO GIRLS AT PLAY

"The Greek artists strove to preserve the outline of their figures as clearly as possible and to exploit their knowledge of the human anatomy so that it should appear to some extent natural. They fostered a taste for strong clear outlines and well-balanced forms. Nothing was further from their minds than an attempt to portray nature as it appeared casually to their gaze. The old scheme, the type of human figure as it had developed down the centuries, remained their point of departure." (Gombrich)

Greek art, ca. 510 B.C. (Phintias)

Two Girls at Play

Vase from Vulci

Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlung.



GREEK ART • FEMALE NUDE ON AN OIL FLASK

Following the Egyptian pattern, this slender-limbed nude girl is caught in the flat surface with a greatly enhanced sense for rhythm and flow of line. Details are only sparsely suggested and the complete mastery of the human anatomy achieves the effect of movement. The Greek painters in this respect rank with the sculptors and the high repute in which they were already held at this time is comprehensible.

Greek art of the 5th and 4th Centuries, B.C.

Female Nude on an Oil Flask

Syracuse, Museo Nazionale.



GREEK ART · APHRODITE AND EROS

"It is not surprising, but conforming to its nature, that the mirror was not only an everyday article of the toilet but also a purveyor and mediator of mystical and religious rites. Both the sea and the mirror in the eyes of the Greeks were perquisites of foam-born Aphrodite, the personification of beauty. 'This is the domain of Hyria' sings the poetess Anyta of Tegea, 'she delights in looking at the spangled mirror of the sea from the mainland for she is well disposed to seamen and the foaming waves fear the divine power of her gaze'." (Fritz Endell)

Greek art, 5th to 4th Century, B.C.

Aphrodite and Eros

Engraving on a hand mirror

Paris, Louvre.



ETRUSCAN ART · SACRED BURIAL DANCE

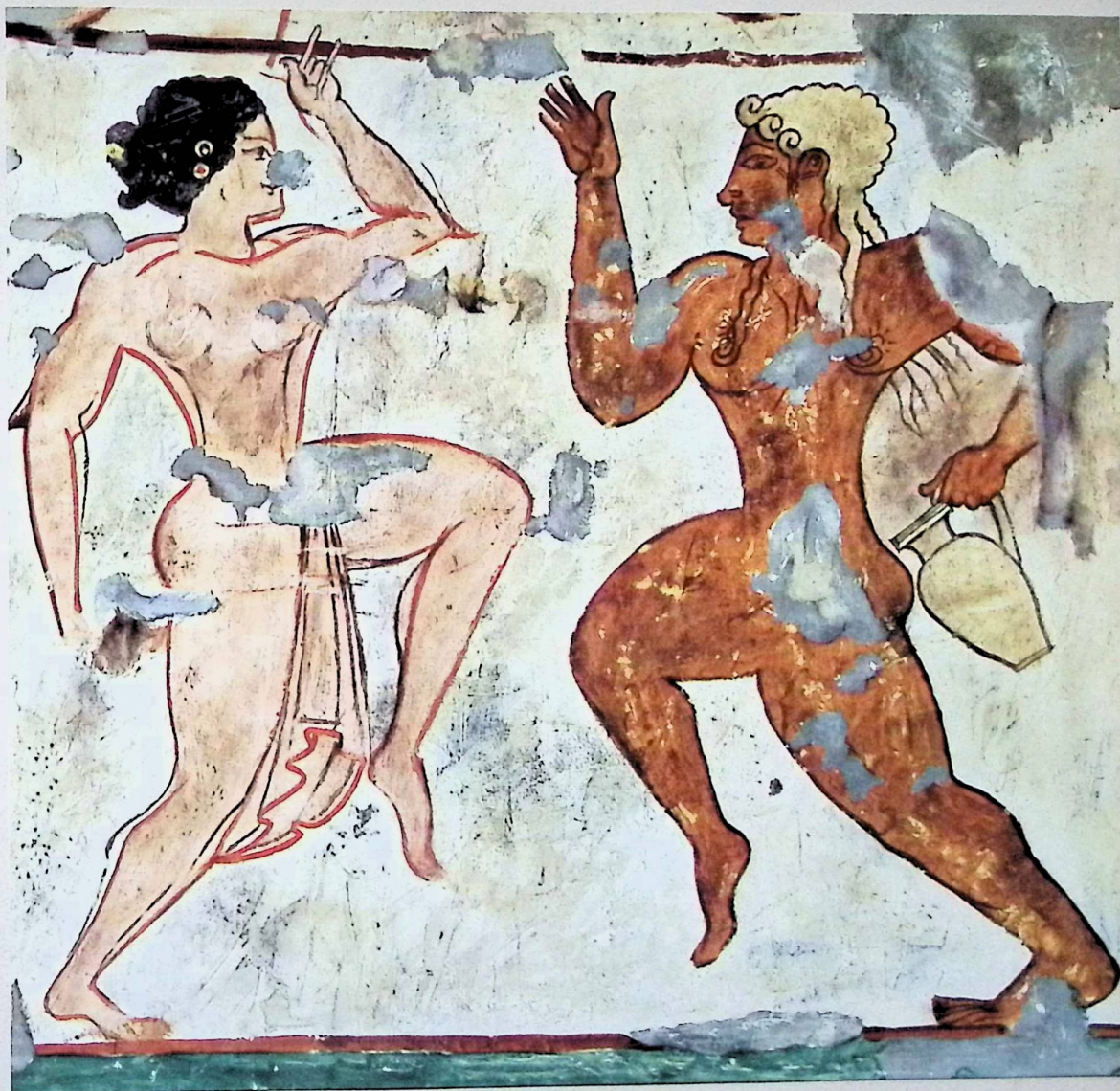
Compared with the bold, tender lines of the Greek vase paintings the Etruscan paintings of the Necropoles in their vital energy, simplification of forms and uniformity of colour and the stark rhythm of the movements appear as early forerunners of Expressionism. The origin of this Etruscan art is still an unsolved problem. It is unique, primitive, monumental and hardly comparable with the other early cultures of antiquity.

Etruscan art, ca. 520 B.C.

Sacred Burial Dance

Fresco from the Tomb of the Lionesses

Tarquinia (Italy) Necropolis.



ROMAN ART · INITIATION THROUGH THE DANCE

In Pompeii Roman painting celebrated its most enchanting Indian summer. Lightness, grace, a sense for rhythmic portraiture and a light colouring, almost reminiscent of Impressionism, characterise this already doomed civilising Late Art of a parvenu middle class. A convincing interpretation of the picture has not yet been found.

Roman art of the 1st Century, A.D.

Initiation through the Dance (detail)

Fresco

Pompeii, the Villa of the Mysteries.



ROMAN ART · THE THREE GRACES

One of the most attractive variations, popular from antiquity until the nineteenth century both in sculpture and painting, the constantly recurring theme of the Three Graces proves the perfect control of the movements of the body in an almost Rococo-like graceful manner. The playful lightness of the body movement does not over-emphasise the cunningly contrived and strongly executed composition.

Roman art of the 1st Century, A.D.

The Three Graces

Fresco from Pompeii

Naples, Museo Nazionale.

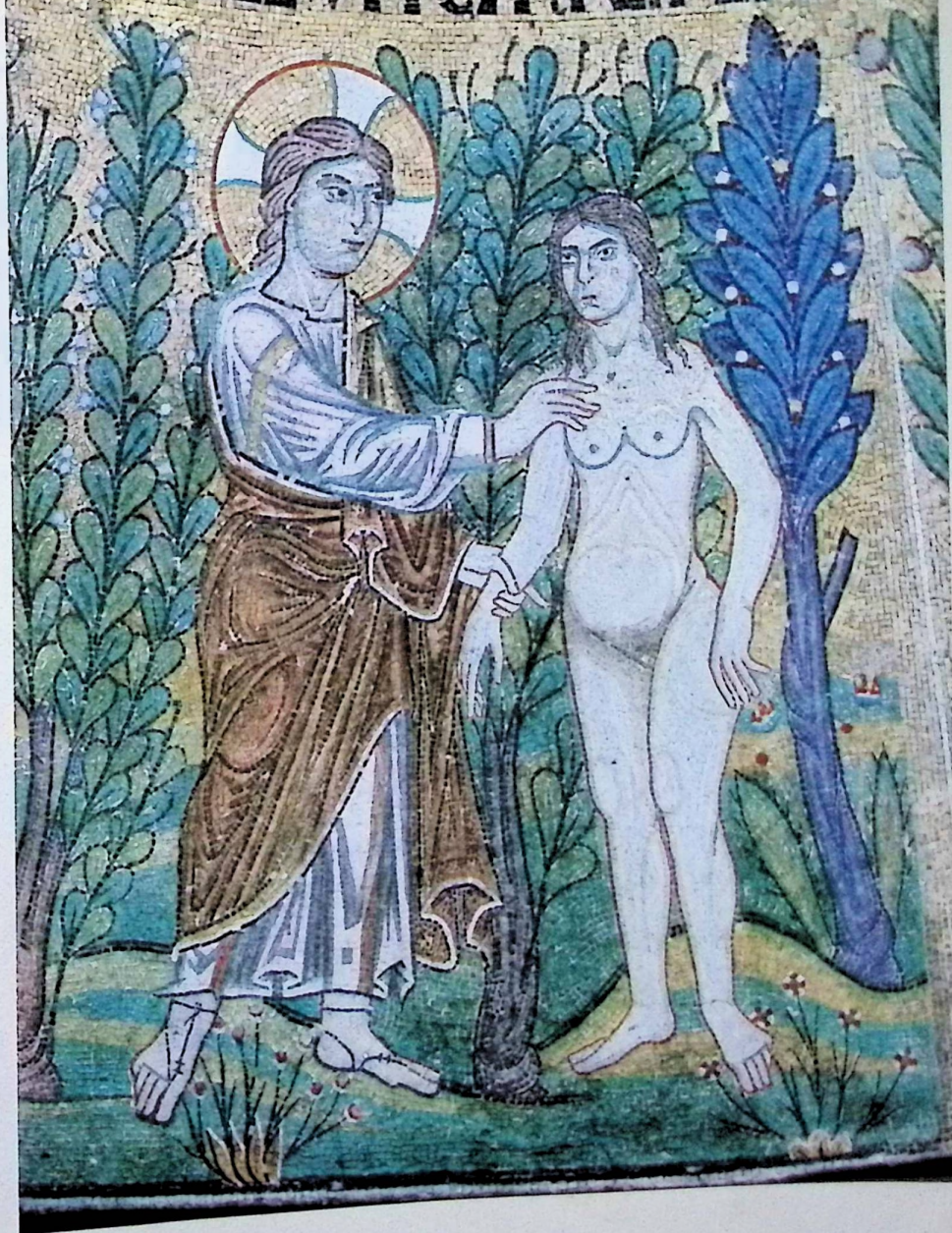


ITALIAN ART • THE CREATION OF EVE

The High Middle Ages was ignorant of the nude for its own sake: it was bound up with the portrayal of the holy script. Thus, this Eve is more a symbol of womanhood than an anatomical being of flesh and blood, the original mother of humanity and the concept of woman created by God.

*Italian art, twelfth century
The Creation of Eve (detail)
Mosaic
Venice, St. Mark's Cathedral*

ET REPLEVIT CARNE PE. ZA



FRENCH ART · ALLEGORY FROM A ZODIACAL CONSTELLATION

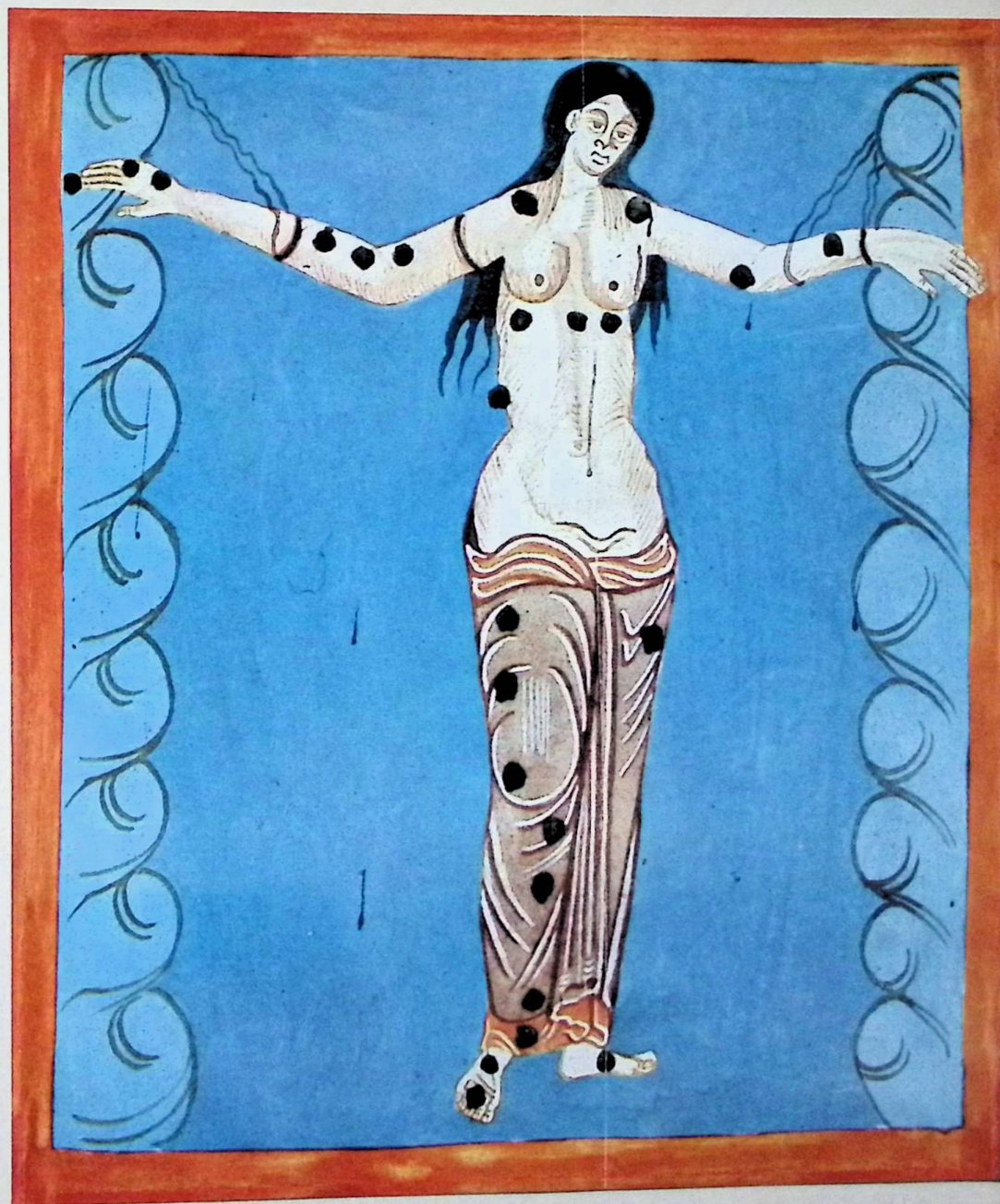
The Church's ban on depicting the naked human body except for the Last Judgment was strictly adhered to during the Early and High Middle Ages. Thus the illustration here, which can be considered more as an arabesque than as a natural nude, is an exception, incumbent upon the subject. Aratos, the Greek writer and astronomer, lived in the 3rd Century, B.C.

French art, tenth century

Allegory from a Zodiacal Constellation

From a manuscript of the "Phenomena" of Aratos

Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque Municipale.



FRENCH ART · SCENE IN A BATH HOUSE

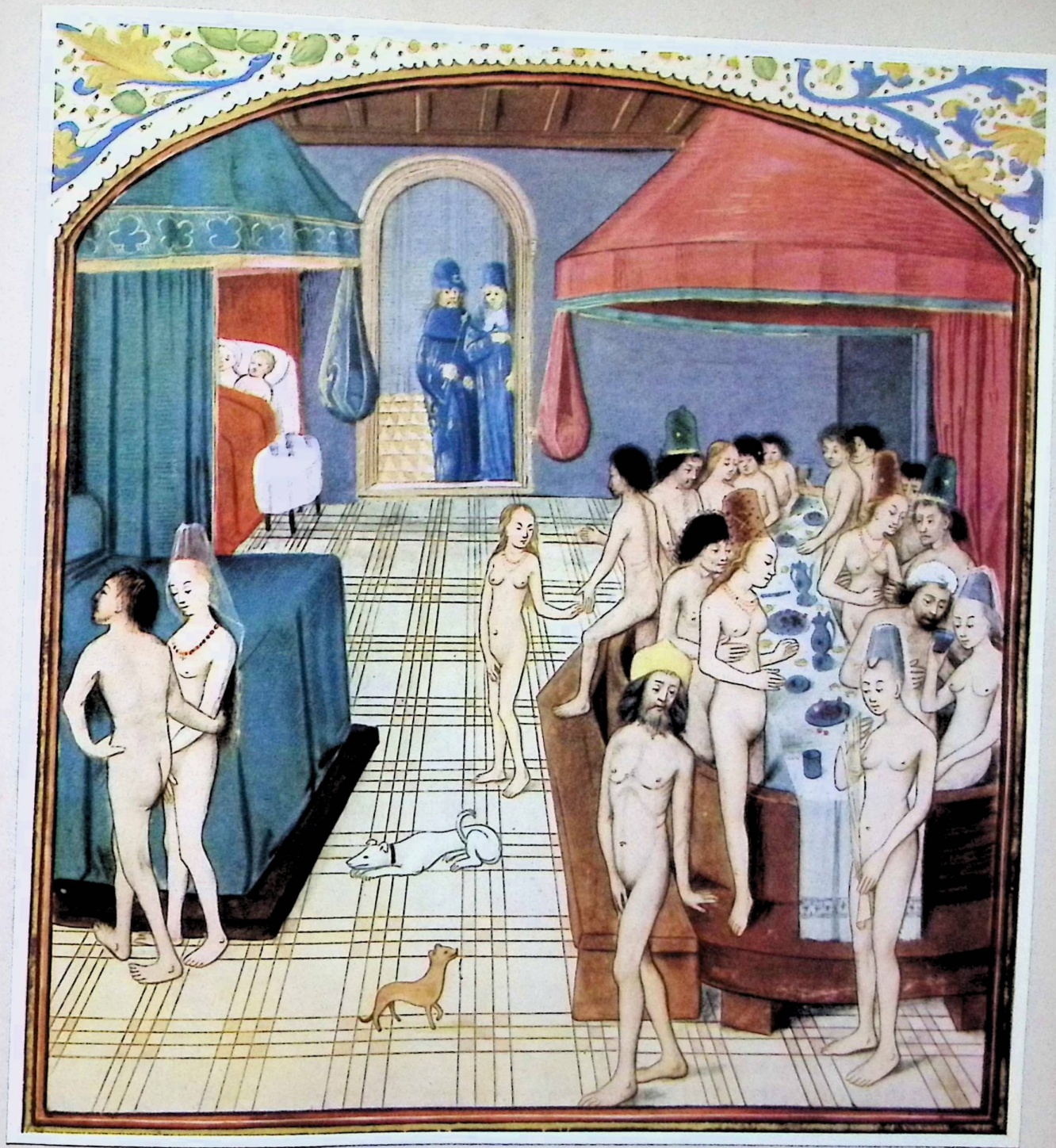
The medieval manuscripts of historical and profane content have bequeathed to us, particularly since the outbreak of Realism in the fifteenth century, a true and composite picture of the living conditions of the period. The important institution of the "stew" furnished an opportunity of portraying nudes of both sexes, a material which finds its main exponent in Albrecht Dürer.

French art, fifteenth century

Scene in a Bath House

Miniature on parchment from a manuscript of Valerius Maximus

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.



PAUL OF LIMBOURG AND HIS BROTHERS · THE EARTHLY PARADISE

One of the earliest nudes in European painting: four scenes from the story of Paradise which, with, for the Middle Ages, a surprisingly bold and free portrayal of the nude in its Gothic conception, has been captured in the most varied studies of movement. A contrast will be found in Italy in the contemporary nudes of Pisanello, the first painter of the naked body from nature.

Paul of Limbourg and his brothers (Active in Bourges between 1402 and 1416)

The Earthly Paradise

Miniature from the Book of Hours of the Duc de Berry

Chantilly, Musée Condé.



FRENCH ART · "ARIANE"

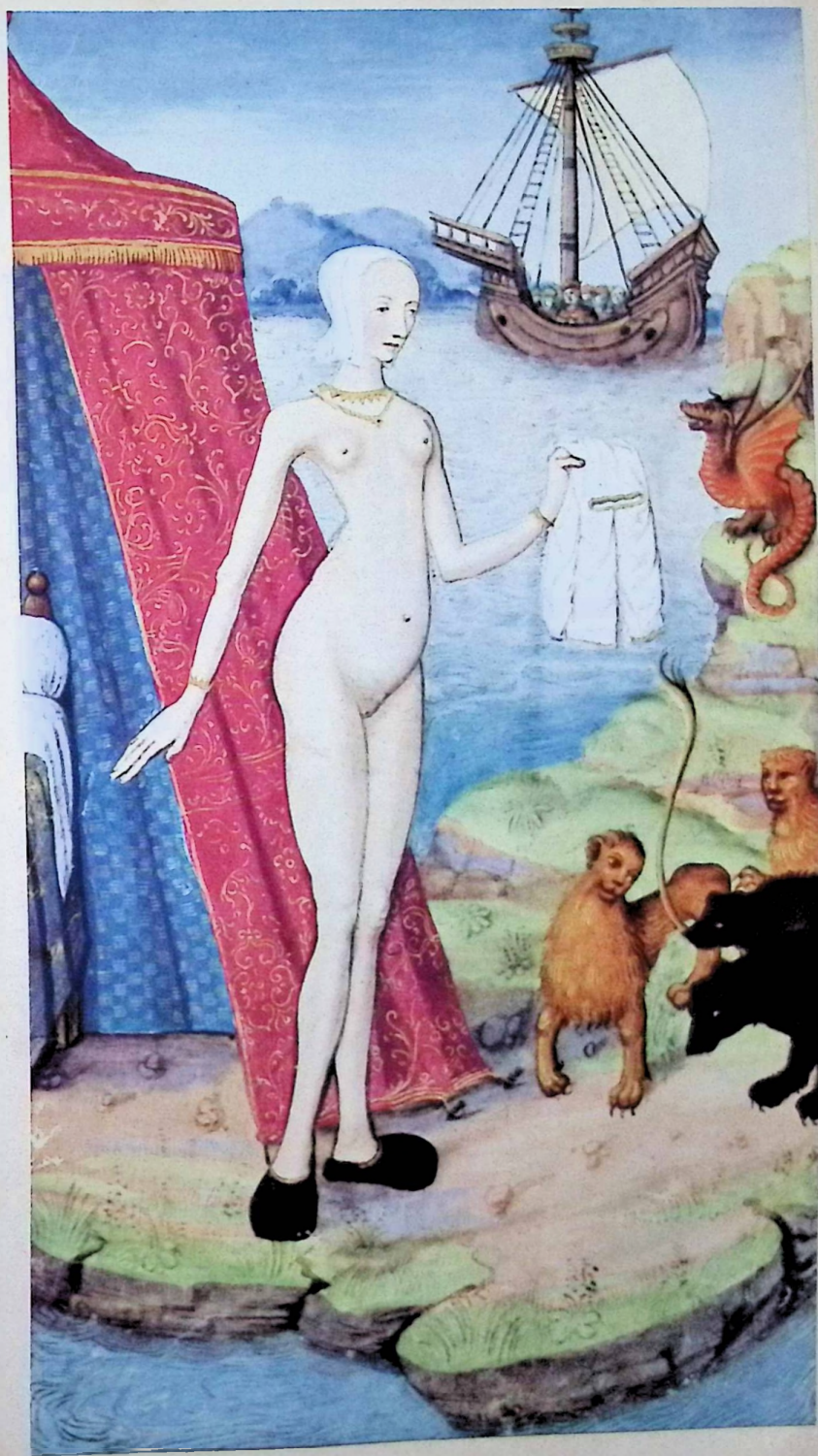
As opposed to Germany the French medieval painters already showed themselves to be more susceptible to the senses. In the manuscripts are to be found countless female nudes, typical examples of the Gothic ideal in its fragile immaturity, elongation of the body and almost abstract grace of outline.

French art, fifteenth century

Full length Female Nude, "Ariane"

Miniature on parchment, 16" × 11"

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.



HUGO VAN DER GOES · ADAM AND EVE IN PARADISE

In Gothic Art the nude is never freed from its religious bondage. The same applies to individual drawings of nudes since they are only studies of the human body to be used for clothed figures. In the wealth of detail and the attractive fairy-like nature of the painting even Van der Goes seems to a certain extent to shrink from the profanity of his little picture which forms one wing of a diptych.

Hugo Van der Goes (Goes/Zeland ca. 1440–1482 Rooden Clooster/Brussels)

Adam and Eve in Paradise, ca. 1480

Wood, 13" × 9"

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



HANS MEMLING · BATHSHEBA IN THE BATH

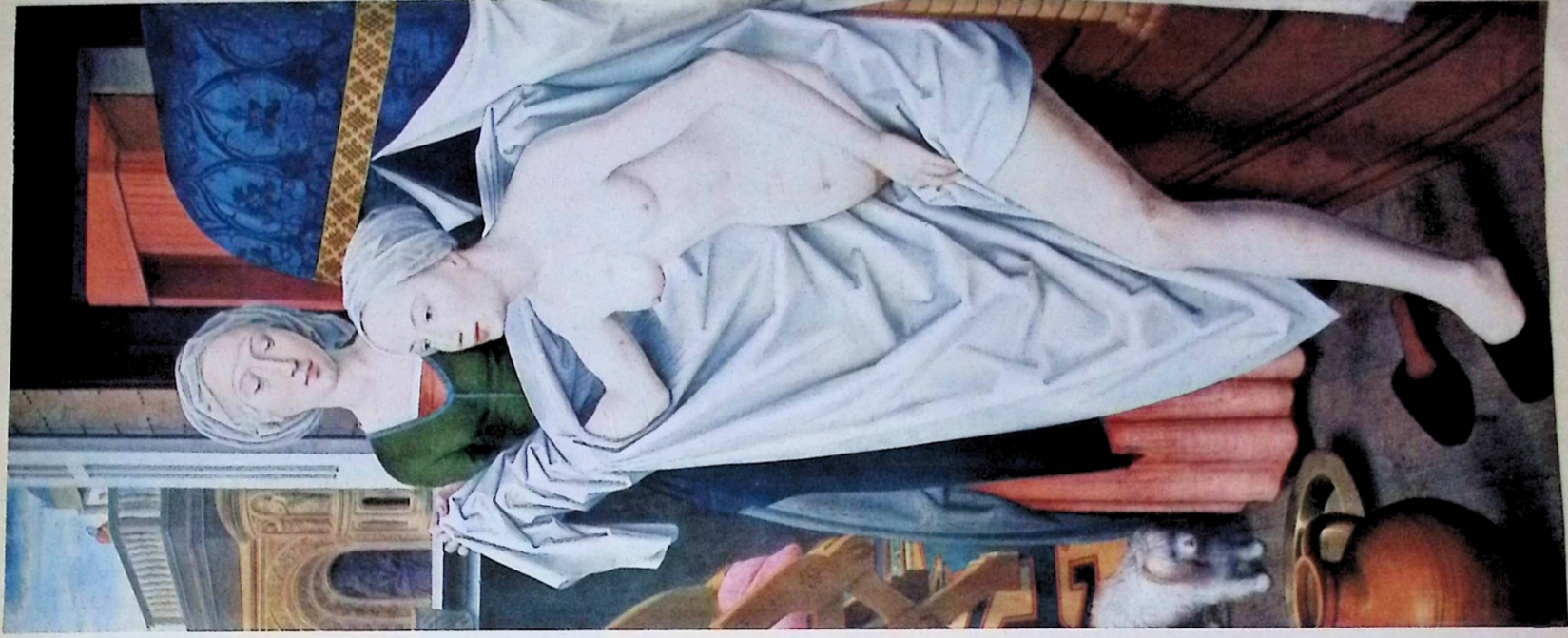
For the first life-size nude in Western painting we have to thank a master who, through his miniature-like detail, enamel-like brilliant colour technique – one only has to think of the famous Shrine of St. Ursula in Brussels – enters art history as the master of the miniature form. The forms in their rhythm of movement still bear the stamp of the outgoing Late Gothic.

Hans Memling (Seligenstadt ca. 1433–1494/Bruges)

Bathsheba in the Bath, ca. 1485

Oak panel, 76 $\frac{1}{2}$ " × 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie.



HIERONYMUS BOSCH · THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

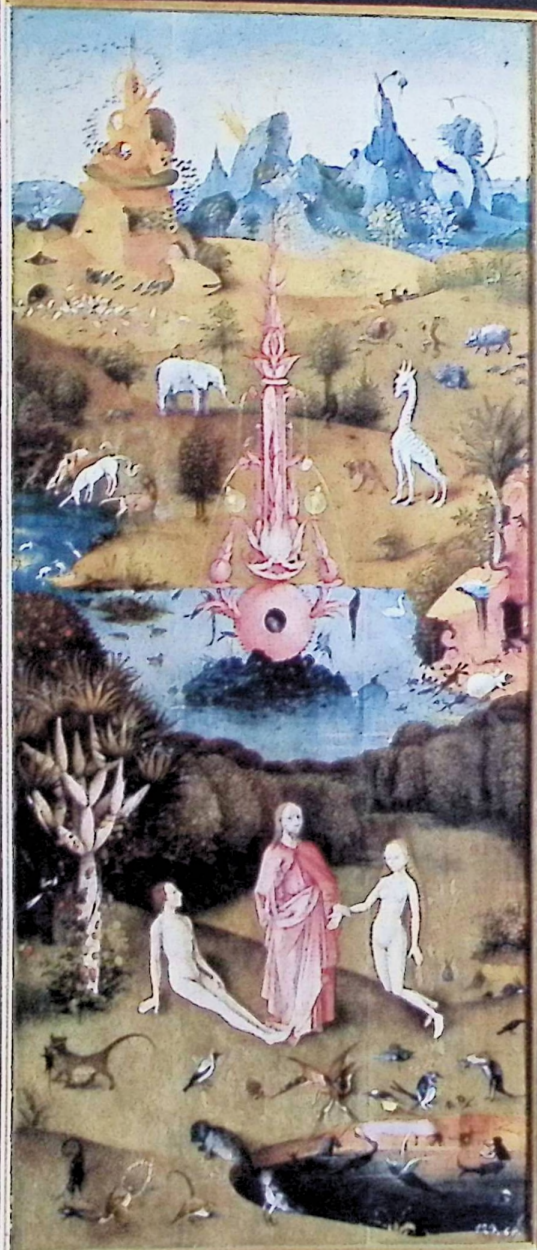
Bosch, like the younger Breughel, can hardly be incorporated stylistically in the normal category: he outstrips so to speak the Renaissance and in his exaggerated stylisation, the stressing of his lines and nervous sensitivity founds Nordic "Mannerism". His nudes are like symbols or runes betraying no knowledge of the human body.

Hieronymus of Aachen, called Bosch (Herzogenbosch ca. 1462–1516)

The Garden of Earthly Delights, ca. 1500

Wood, centre panel: 78" × 88"; side panel: 78" × 40"

Madrid, Prado.



SANDRO BOTTICELLI · THE BIRTH OF VENUS

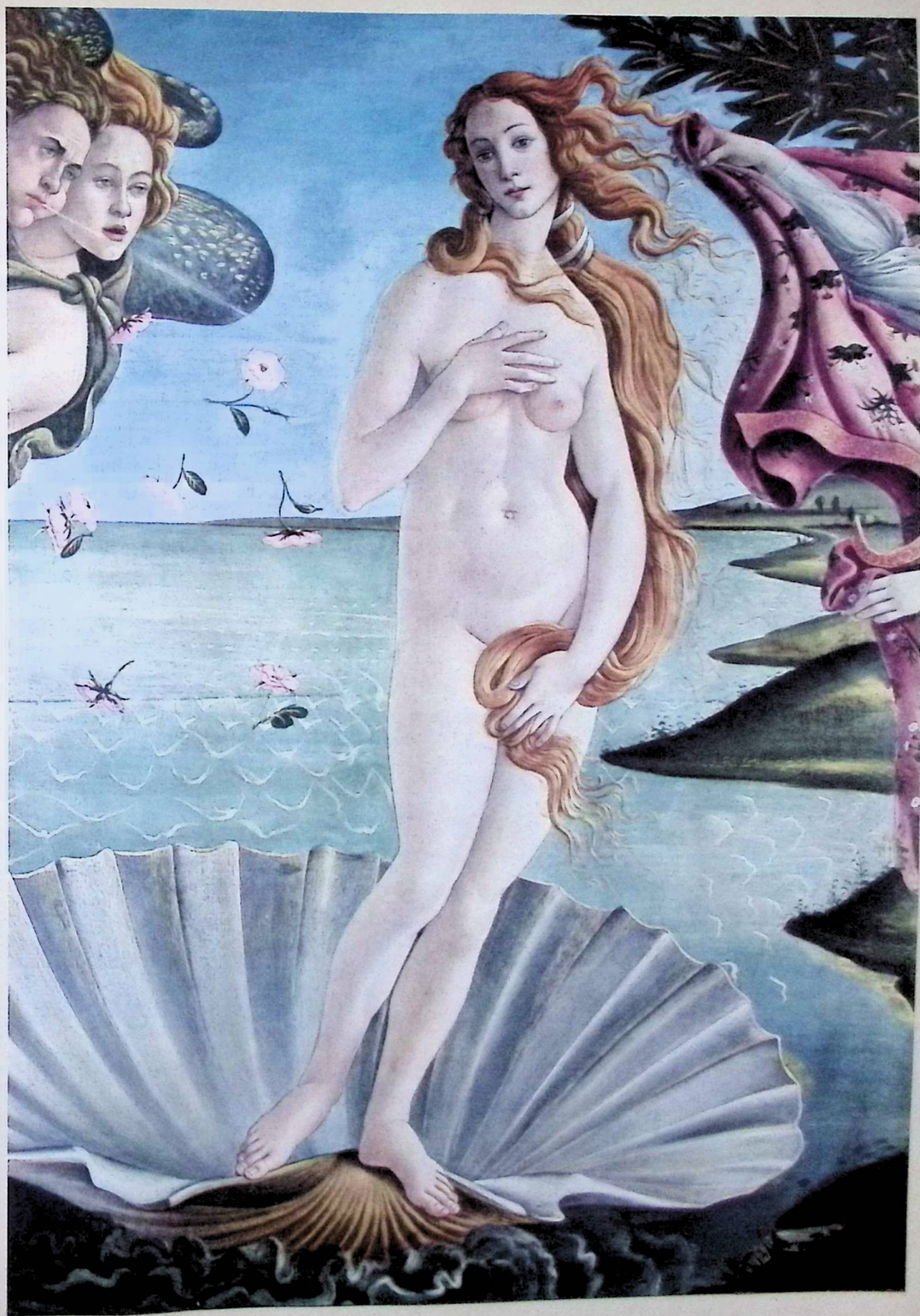
The subject of this picture, commissioned by a member of the Medici family, but not as a pair to the earlier "Primavera" in the same ownership, originates from a verse of the poet Poliziano. The movement, proportion and lines of the Venus, and of her companions, display the typical "re-gothicising" of the second half of the quattrocento, lending a particular magic to this nude.

Sandro di Mariano Filipepi called Botticelli (Florence 1444/5–1510)

The Birth of Venus (detail), ca. 1485

Canvas, 70" × 111½"

Florence, Uffizi Gallery.



RAFFAELLO SANTI · THE THREE GRACES

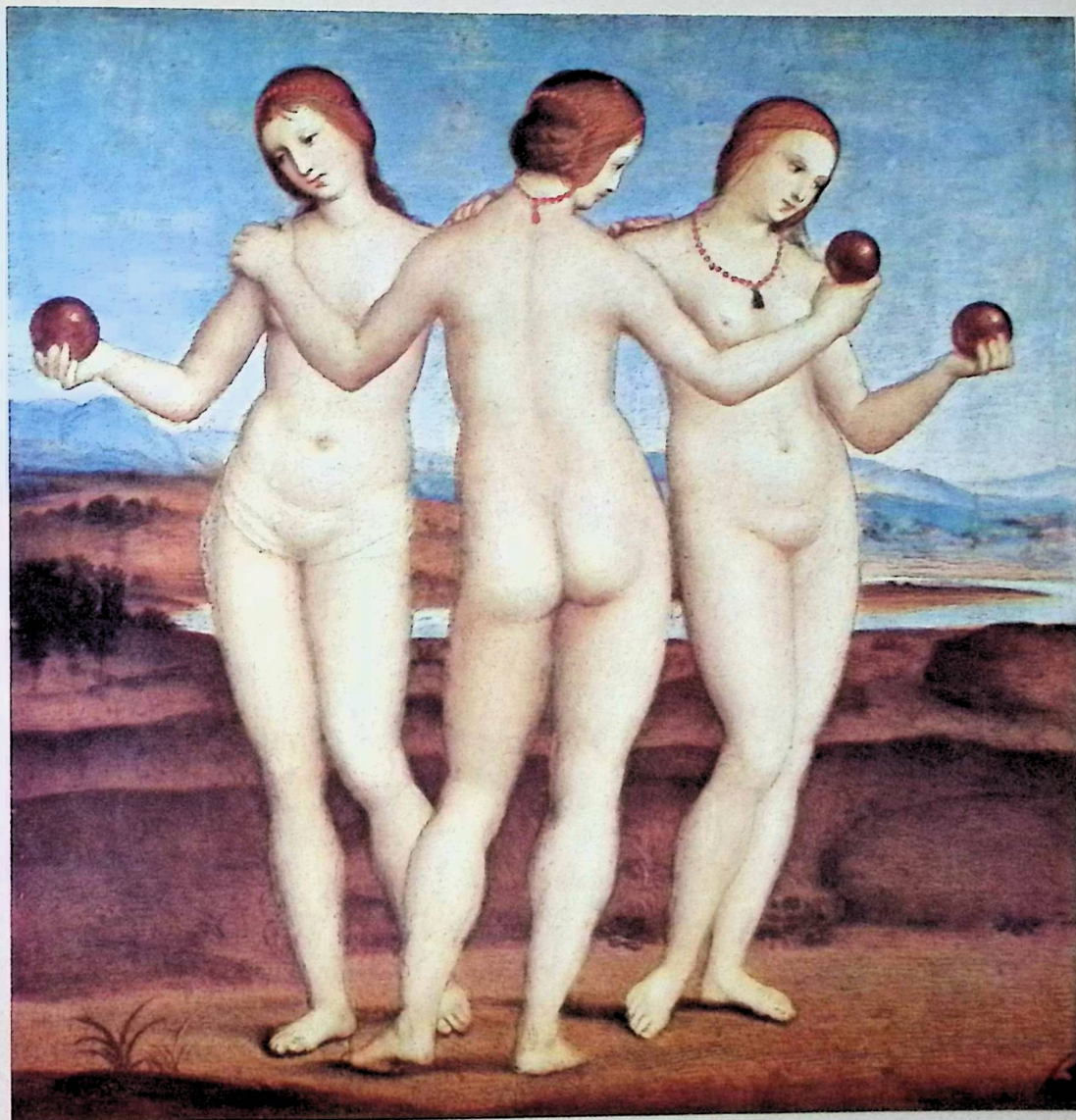
This delightful early work of the classic of the Italian High Renaissance reveals his close ties with the art of antiquity: either the famous group of The Three Graces in the Library of Sienna Cathedral or an antique gem served as model. Never has Raphael been closer to the spirit of antiquity than in this moment of happy inspiration.

Raffaello Santi (Urbino, 1483–1520, Rome)

The Three Graces, ca. 1500

Wood, 7" × 5"

Chantilly, Musée Condé.



GIORGIONE · SLEEPING VENUS

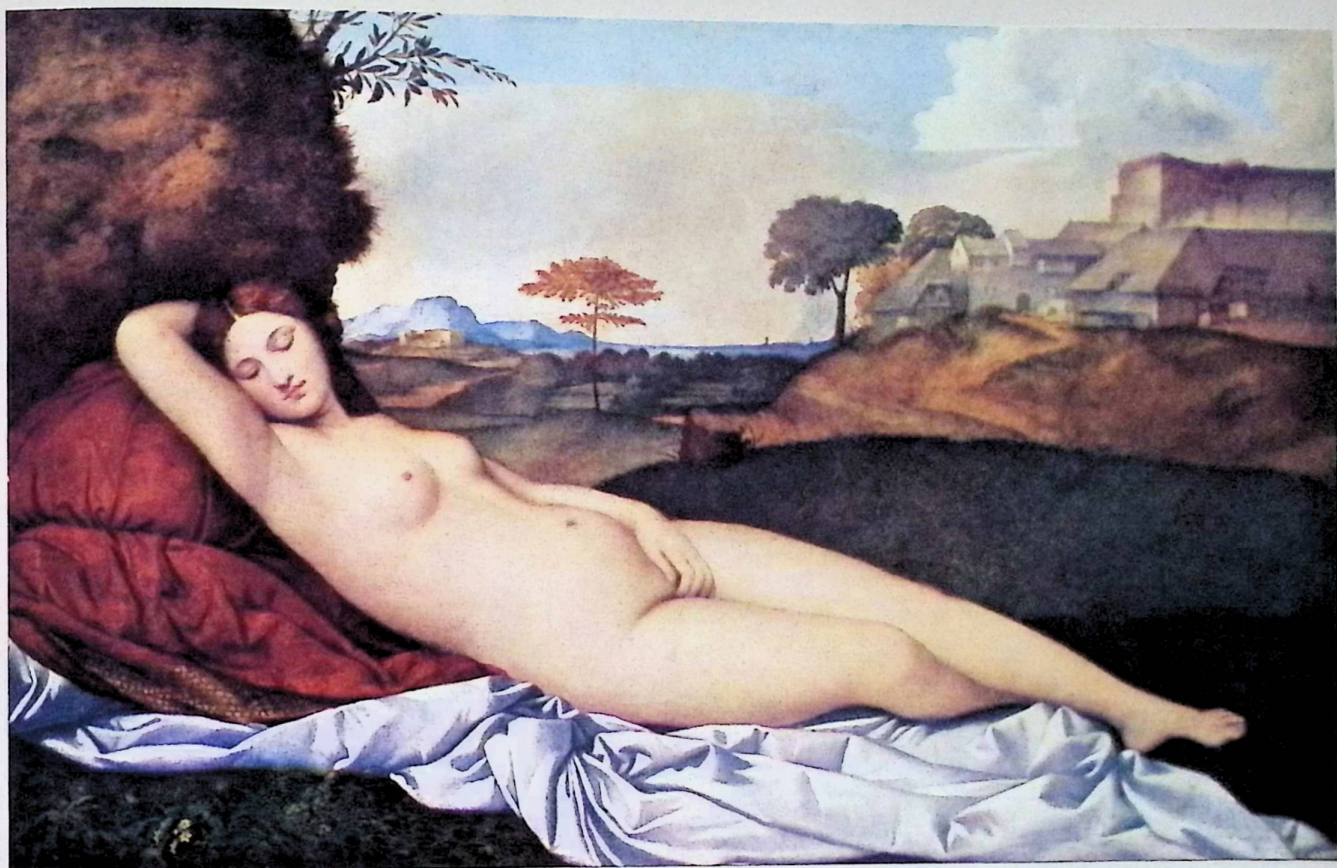
This Venus of the precocious idyllic painter of the Venetian Renaissance has remained for centuries the prototype for presentations of the Goddess of Love. Known and famous in literature since 1525, in the languor and elegance of her movement, the slender, elongated limbs, the purity of line and expression she has remained the ideal type of the nude until modern times. One of the less well authenticated works of the brilliant young genius, Giorgione.

Giorgio Barbarelli called Giorgione (Castelfranco ca. 1478–1510 Venice)

Sleeping Venus

Canvas, 43 1/4" × 70"

Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.



TITIAN · DIANA DISCOVERS CALLISTO'S INDISCRETION

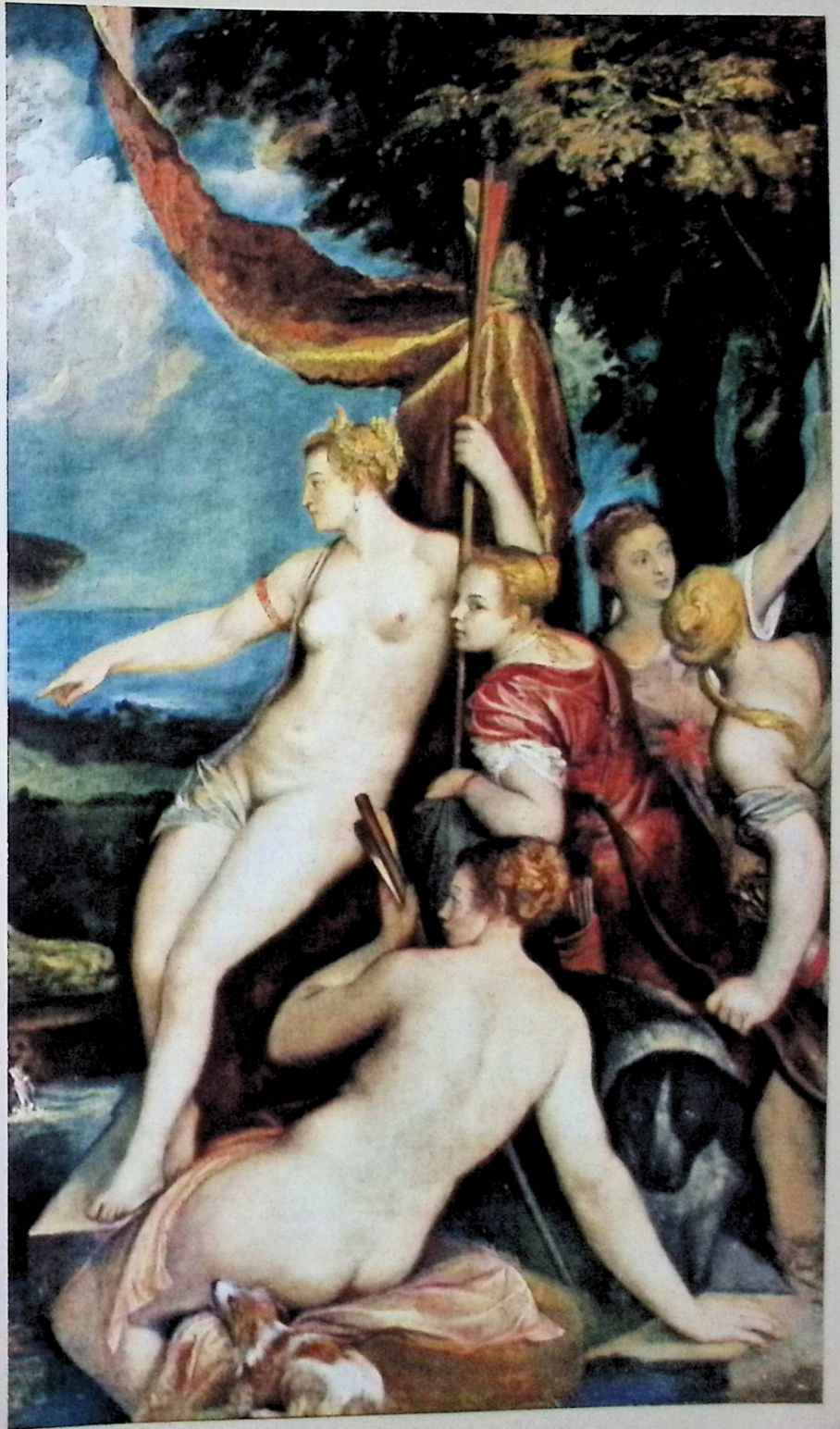
Together with his picture "Diana and Actaeon", painted for Philip II of Spain, both pictures were presented to France at the beginning of the eighteenth century on prudish grounds. The vivid colourful female nude of a Titian, the master of flesh tints and tender admirer of noble forms, could hardly fail to arouse anything but irritation at the bigoted court of Philip V.

Tiziano Vecellio called Titian (Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1476-77 to 1576, Venice)

Diana discovers Callisto's Indiscretion

Canvas, 72³/₄" × 80¹/₄"

Vienna, Gemäldegalerie.



TITIAN · ANGELICA AND MEDOR

Titian's bucolic idyll "Angelica and Medor", one of the master's late works, still seems to evoke the dreamy faces of his teacher Giorgione. But with Titian the spontaneous lust for life and the sense for ethereal beauty, the worth of existence, is greatly enhanced. "A triumph of life over the spirits of darkness and cold, which hate the sun." (B. Berenson)

Tiziano Vecellio called Titian (Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1476-77 to 1576, Venice)

Angelica and Medor, ca. 1566-1570

Canvas, 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ " $\times$ 72 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI · THE FALL

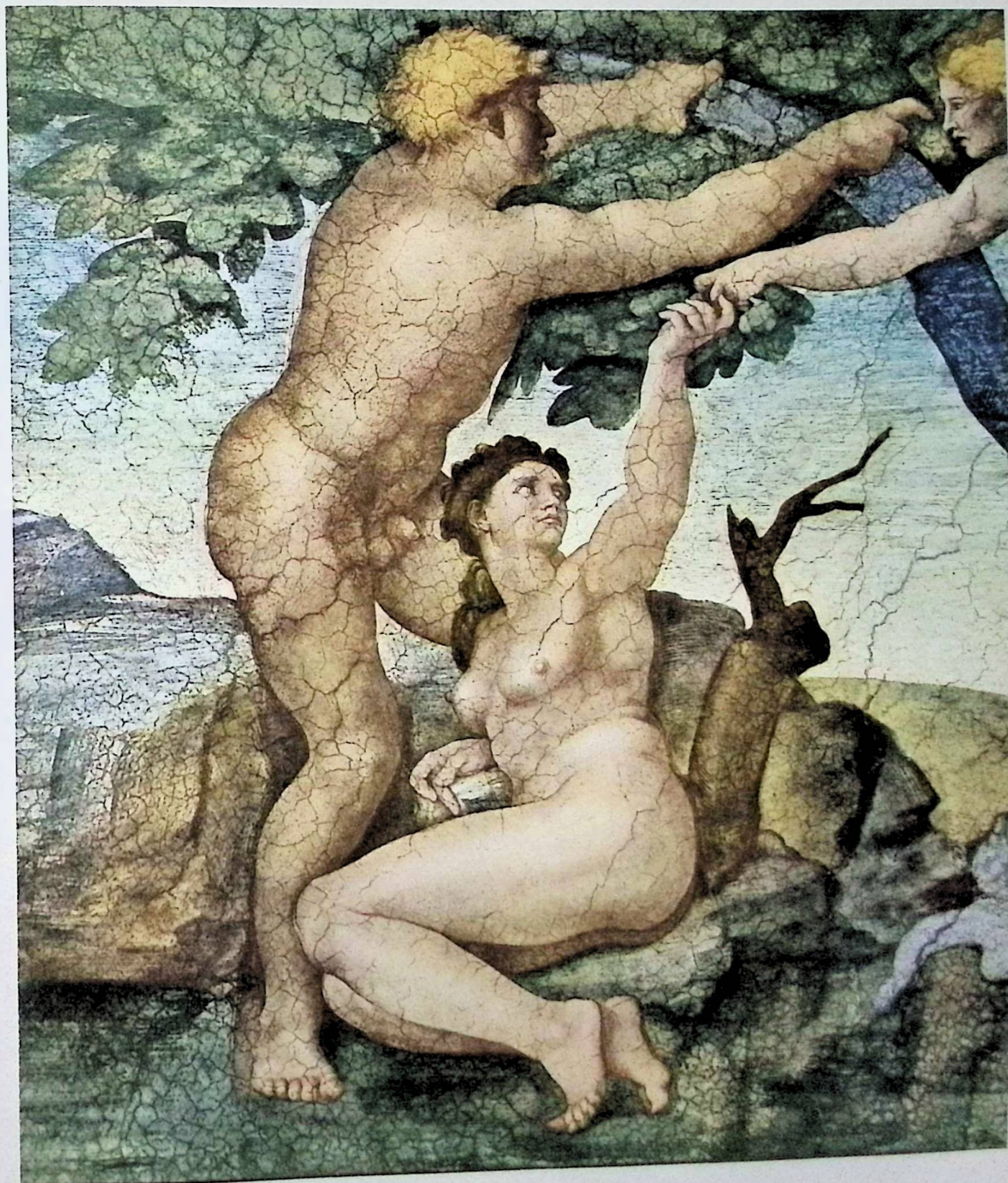
The human figures of Michelangelo, who as a painter never denies the sculptor, have preserved their validity far beyond his own century both in Mannerism and in Baroque. The powerful bodies filled with inner dynamism seem to be in constant motion: forerunners of the transcendental Baroque.

Michelangelo Buonarotti (Caprese 1475–1564 Rome)

The Fall, 1508–1512

Detail of a ceiling fresco

Rome, Sistine Chapel.



LORENZO LOTTO · THE TRIUMPH OF CHASTITY

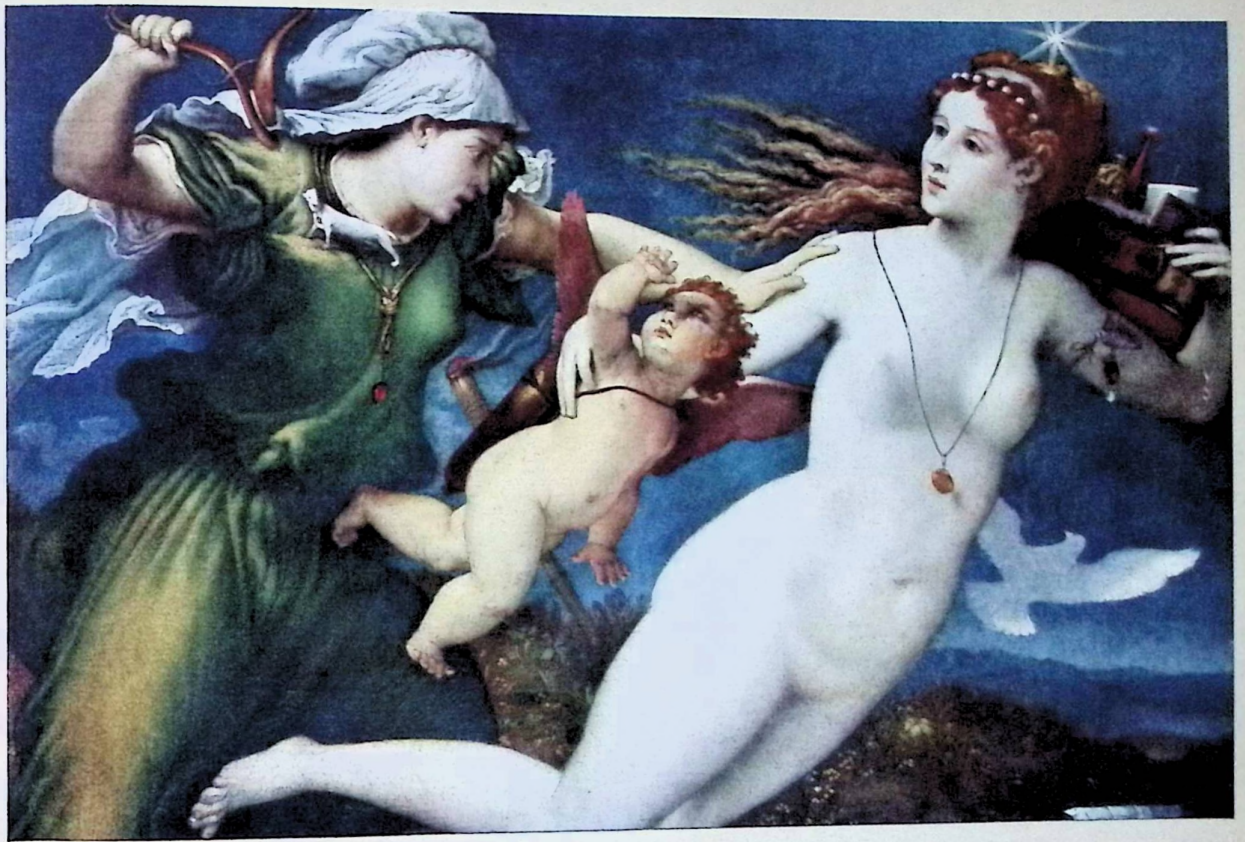
Titian's much travelled contemporary, a portrait artist of the highest grade, has only given us, as an exception in this allegory, the naked female body. Formal, he perpetuates the classical ideal of beauty of the High Renaissance, the plastic rounded, restful torso, although the strong urge for movement and the turning of the body all show the trends of the approaching Baroque.

Lorenzo Lotto (Venice, 1480-1556, Loreto)

The Triumph of Chastity, ca. 1530

Canvas, 30½" × 47"

Rome, Palazzo Pallavicini.



CORREGGIO · THE EDUCATION OF CUPID

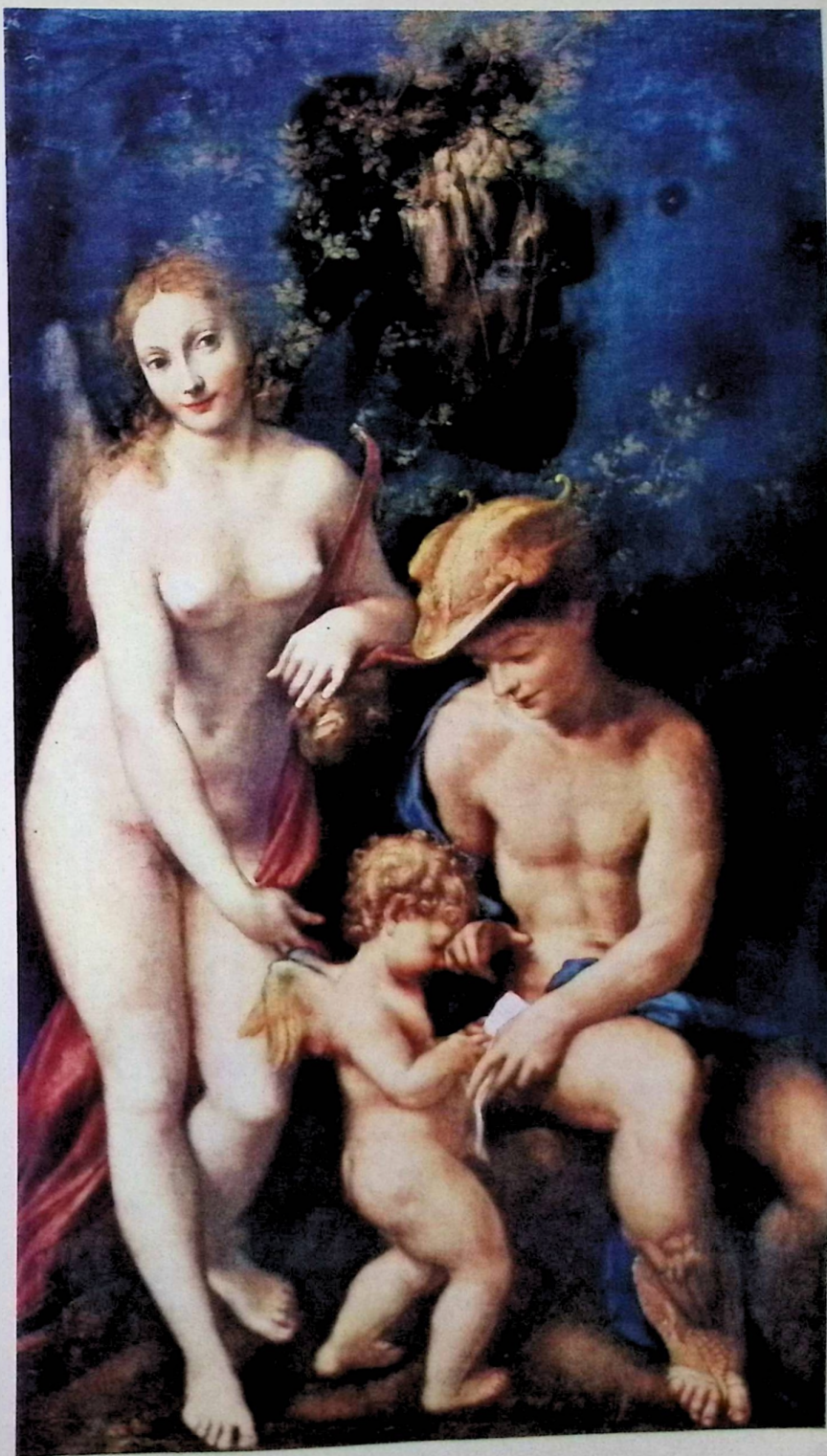
In addition to the gay, mundane, religious paintings of ceilings — for the first time in so intensive a mass — the figures of antique mythology above all inspired Correggio throughout his life to sing a hymn of praise to the beauty of the human body. Leda and Danaë, Antiope and Io, Cupid and Ganymede, with their chiaroscuro charms offer ever new contrasts of movement and anticipate a fragment of the Rococo within the Italian High Renaissance.

Antonio Allegri called Correggio (Correggio ca. 1494–1534)

The Education of Cupid, ca. 1523–25

Canvas, 62" × 36³/₄"

London, National Gallery.



PARIS BORDONE · VENUS AND CUPID

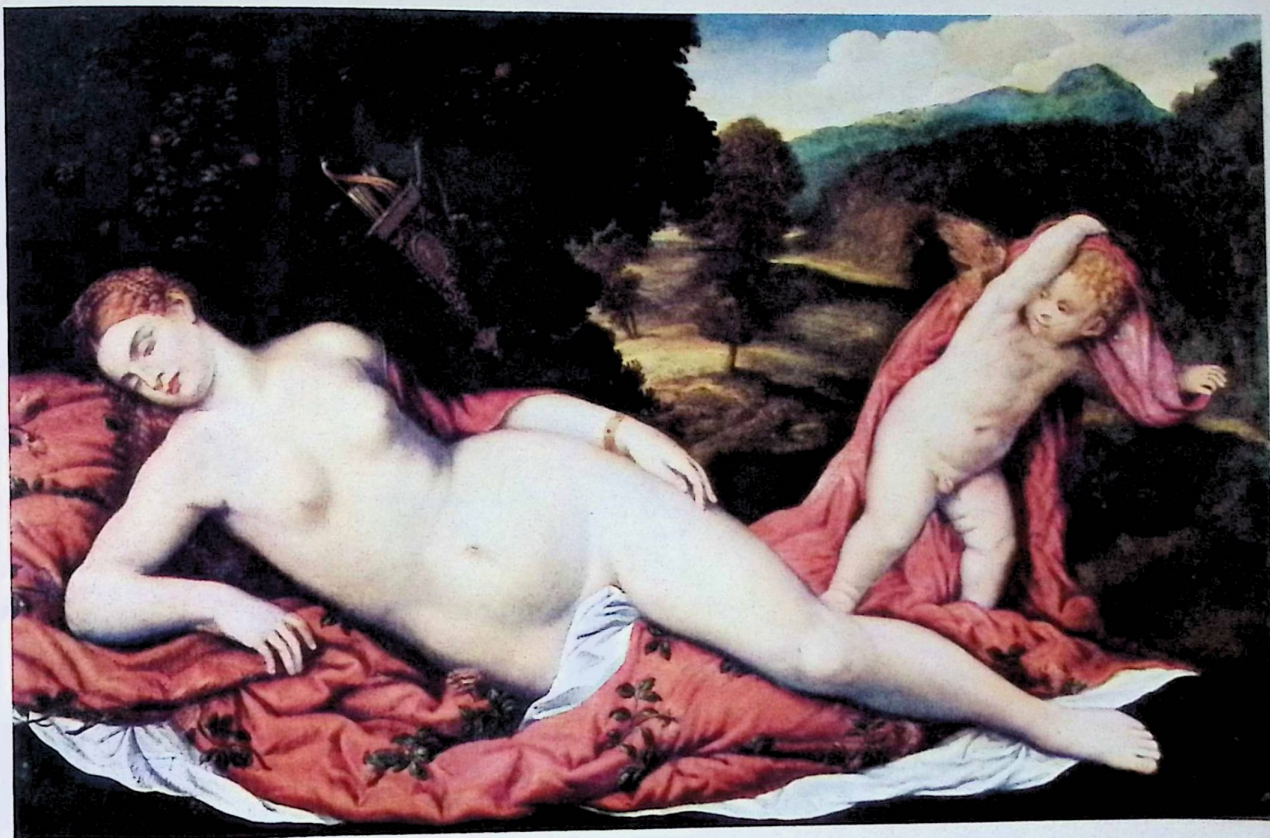
In his landscapes, as in his nudes and portraits, Bordone was an obedient pupil of his teacher, Titian. Grandeur, freedom of form, noble movements, a subtle sense for line, give his pictures that majesty which is characteristic of the Venetian High Renaissance. No loud tones, no abrupt movement, no garish colour contrast as in the case of Tintoretto to disturb the absolute pictorial harmony which gives our picture the character of an idyll of antiquity.

Paris Bordone (Treviso 1500–1571 Venice)

Venus and Cupid

Canvas

Venice, Ca' d'Oro.



ANGELO BRONZINO · VENUS AND CUPID, CRONUS AND FOLLY

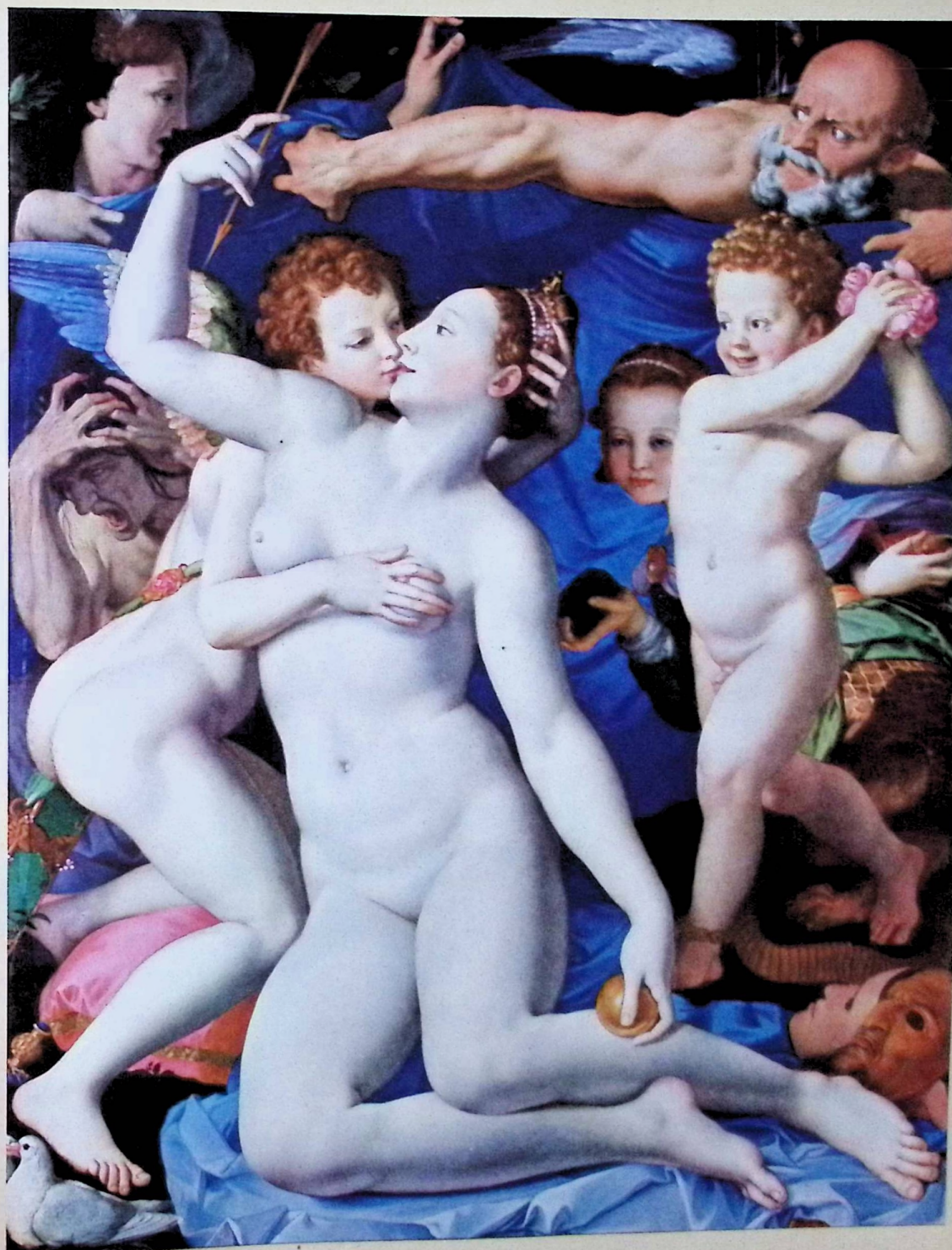
Bronzino, a typical representative of Florentine Mannerism, subjects the body and limbs strictly to the canvas as in an abstract decoration. He opposes a certain coolness of sensation to the sensual warmth of the High Renaissance, similar to Hans Baldung Grien in the north; the human body takes on a pseudo-intellectual pictorial concept divesting it of its naturalness.

Angelo Bronzino (Monticelli near Florence 1502-1572, Florence)

Venus and Cupid, Cronus and Folly (ca. 1550)

Canvas, 58" × 46½"

London, National Gallery.



MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI · LEDA AND THE SWAN

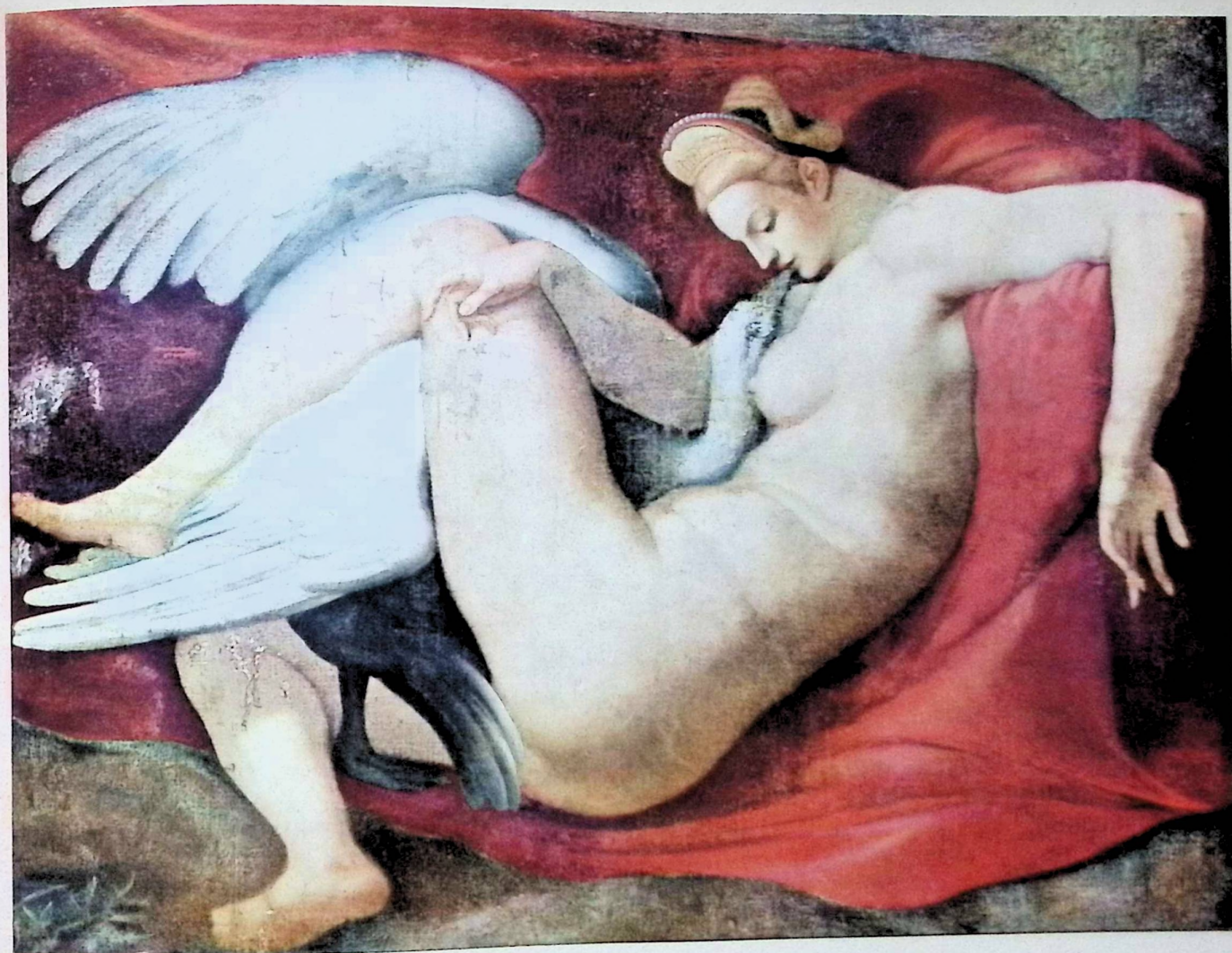
That Michelangelo turned his attention to the problem of a Leda portrait arises from the fact that in 1529 he painted a similar picture for Alfonso of Ferrara, of which this picture in London is probably a copy, but also from the close relationship of the recumbent female figure to the figure of "Night" on the Medici tombs.

After Michelangelo Buonarotti (Caprese 1475-1564 Rome)

Leda and the Swan, copy of 1529

Canvas, 42" × 52"

London, National Gallery.



TINTORETTO · MERCURY AND THE THREE GRACES

Titian's best pupil, influenced by Michelangelo's form ideal, represents the peak of Venetian Baroque. His large-size pictures excel in the resolution of the composition, a well-defined sense for the decorative and the indescribably artistic handling of the objects, which in his hands approaches the monumental.

Jacopo Robusti called Tintoretto (Venice, 1518-1594)

Mercury and the Three Graces

Canvas, 58½" × 62"

Venice, Doge's Palace, Atrio quadrato.



TINTORETTO · LUCREZIA AND TARQUINIUS

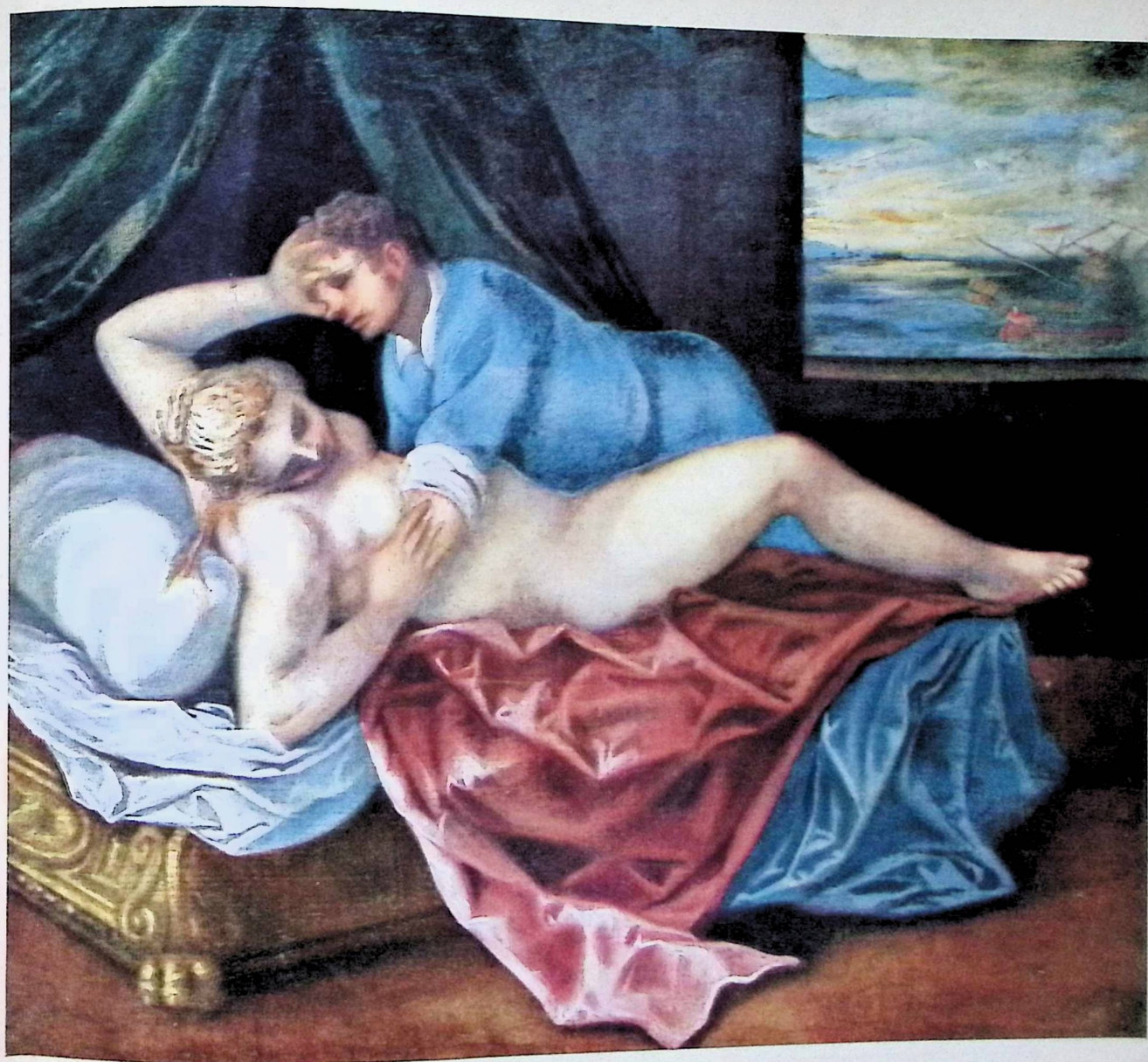
As opposed to the High Renaissance, to Giorgione, Titian or Bordone, who offered their nudes to the spectator in harmonious, majestic relaxation, Tintoretto's figures are disturbing in their complicated movements, conjured up out of light in space. They are filled with a spontaneous enduring mobility which is particularly stressed in our illustration by the voluminous, balanced, contrasting coloured draperies.

Jacopo Robusti called Tintoretto (Venice 1518-1594)

Lucrezia and Tarquinius

Canvas, 34½" × 40½"

Castagnola/Lugano, Schloß Rohoncz Collection.



SCHOOL OF FONTAINEBLEAU · MARS WITH VENUS AND CUPID

The School of Fontainebleau, the inspiration of the art-loving King François I, about 1530, founded by Italian Mannerists towards the end of the Century, underwent a second national Renaissance under Henri IV. Mostly in allegorical and mythological subjects, the portrayal of the human nude makes great progress; the goddesses, nymphs, fauns and heroes of antiquity are portrayed free and untrammelled in their natural beauty.

School of Fontainebleau, ca. 1590

Mars with Venus and Cupid.

Old Painting on Wood, 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ " × 32"

Paris, Petit Palais.



SCHOOL OF FONTAINEBLEAU · DIANA THE HUNTRESS

Typical of the Mannerism of the Second Fontainebleau School as opposed to the First, even though strongly influenced by Italian art, the flowing movement of the slender-limbed tall figure, with its facial expression already heralding the approach of the Rococo.

School of Fontainebleau (France, end of sixteenth century)

Diana the Huntress (Diane Chasseresse)

Canvas, 76³/₄" × 53"

Paris, Louvre.



SCHOOL OF FONTAINEBLEAU · GABRIELLE D'ESTRÉES AND HER SISTER

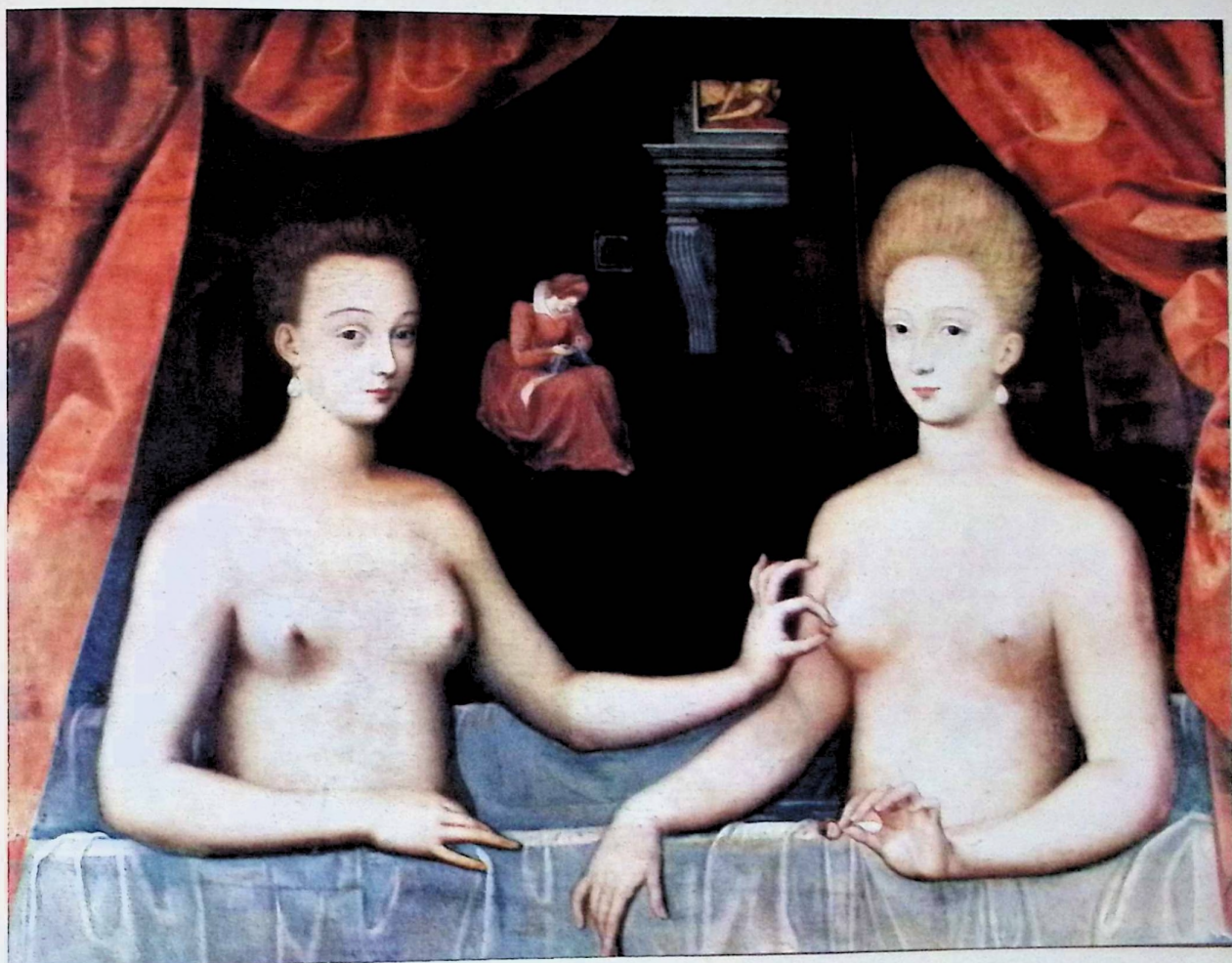
The ladies are seated in a bath hung with red silk draperies. Gabrielle is holding a sapphire ring in her left hand while her sister touches her breast, signifying the birth of the Duc de Vendome (Pictures of this type were common at this period).

School of Fontainebleau (France, ca. 1593)

Gabrielle d'Estrées, the Mistress of Henri IV of France, and her sister, the Duchesse de Villars. Half-length portrait

Wood, 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ " × 50"

Paris, Louvre.



HANS BALDUNG GRIEN · VANITY · THE ALLEGORY OF MUSIC

"The Allegory of Music with the White Cat is probably the most expressive of Baldung's inner ambitions: this man must have possessed a great feeling for the female body and the animal in its eloquent muteness" (Wilhelm Pinder). Baldung, the last representative of that period of genius which we have grown accustomed to term the age of Dürer, has preserved in countless portraits the slender beauty of the female body in all its cold reserve.

Hans Baldung Grien (Swäbisch-Gmund, ca. 1484/85–1545 Strasbourg)

Vanity, 1529

Allegory of Music, 1529

Wood, 33" × 14" respectively

Munich, Alte Pinakothek.



ALBRECHT DÜRER · THE SUICIDE OF LUCREZIA

"The painted Lucrezia in its subtle technique betrays great natural observation. Its execution in detail, the ethereal modelling with strong contrasts achieved by the transposition of the proportions, is the best feature of the picture. A frosty heroine, more a symbol than the expression of a personal experience. Dürer aimed at simplicity and weight of the upright naked body standing there calmly." (Friedrich Winkler)

Albrecht Dürer, Nuremberg, 1471-1528

The Suicide of Lucrezia, 1518

Wood, 67" × 30"

Munich, Alte Pinakothek.



LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER · THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

Court painter to the Kurfurst of Saxony, one of the great men of the so-called "Dürer age", the peak of German painting, Lucas Cranach was the first Nordic artist to exploit the mythology of antiquity in his work. In self-willed and at times bizarre forms, with incomparable frivolity the antique heritage is subjected to a typical late Gothic urge for form.

Lucas Cranach the Elder (Kronach 1472–1557, Weimar)

The Judgment of Paris, 1530

Wood, 14" × 9½"

Karlsruhe, Badische Kunsthalle.



NIKLAUS MANUEL • THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

Niklaus Manuel, painter, designer, poet and statesman is one of the most delightful phenomena of Swiss Renaissance painting in his humanity, poetic naivety, geniality and originality. He spent considerable time portraying the female nude – with astonishing modernity for that period. The small sketchbook which is preserved in the library at Basle bears testimony to this.

Niklaus Manuel, called Deutsch (Berne, ca. 1484–1530)

The Judgment of Paris, 1517–18

Canvas, 87" × 63"

Basle, Kunstmuseum.



HANS VON AACHEN ·

THE VICTORY OF TRUTH UNDER THE PROTECTION OF JUSTICE

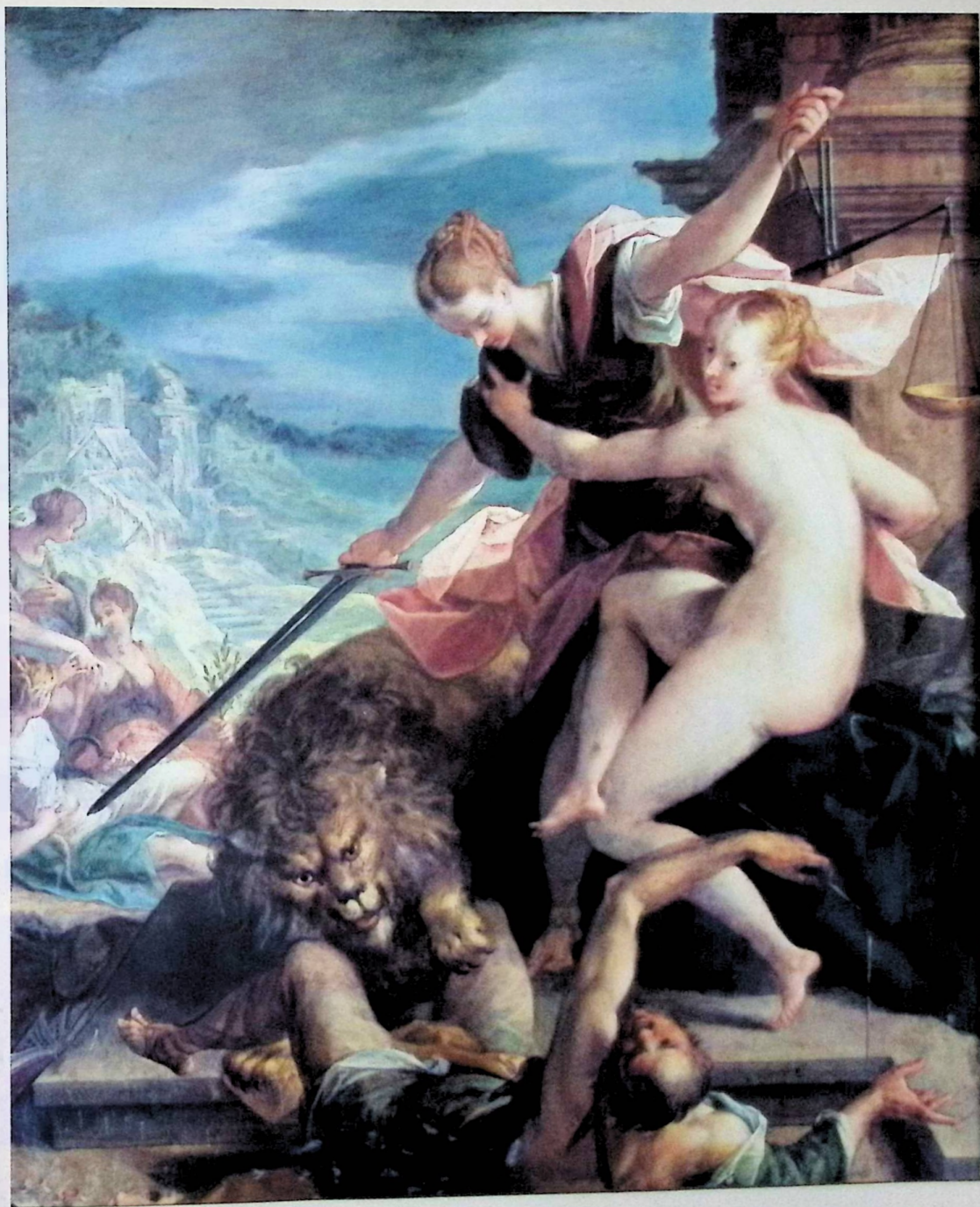
Nourished from southern sources in Venice, Rome and Florence Hans Von Aachen, active from 1597 at the court of Rudolph II in Prague, was one of the most important representatives of Mannerist thought in Nordic painting. His usually small pictures painted on copper exercised a strong influence on contemporary art.

Hans Von Aachen (Cologne, 1552-1615, Prague)

The Victory of Truth under the Protection of Justice, dated 1598

Copper, 22¹/₂" × 18³/₄"

Munich, Alte Pinakothek.



PETER PAUL RUBENS · THE RAPE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF LEUCIPPUS

Rembrandt's great rival in the north, fed from Italian sources (Michelangelo), is a true child of the Baroque: mighty, compositional structure with a lucid exploitation of the functions of the individual figures, free, generous treatment of light which streams in cascades, contrapuntal movement and a joy in the moulding of flesh are the main characteristics of the Leucippus picture, the design of which serves as a model for the whole pictorial art of the Flemish court painters.

Peter Paul Rubens (Siegen, Westphalia, 1577-1640, Antwerp)

The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus, ca. 1618

Canvas, 88³/₄" × 83¹/₂"

Munich, Alte Pinakothek.



REMBRANDT HARMENSZ VAN RIJN · DANAË

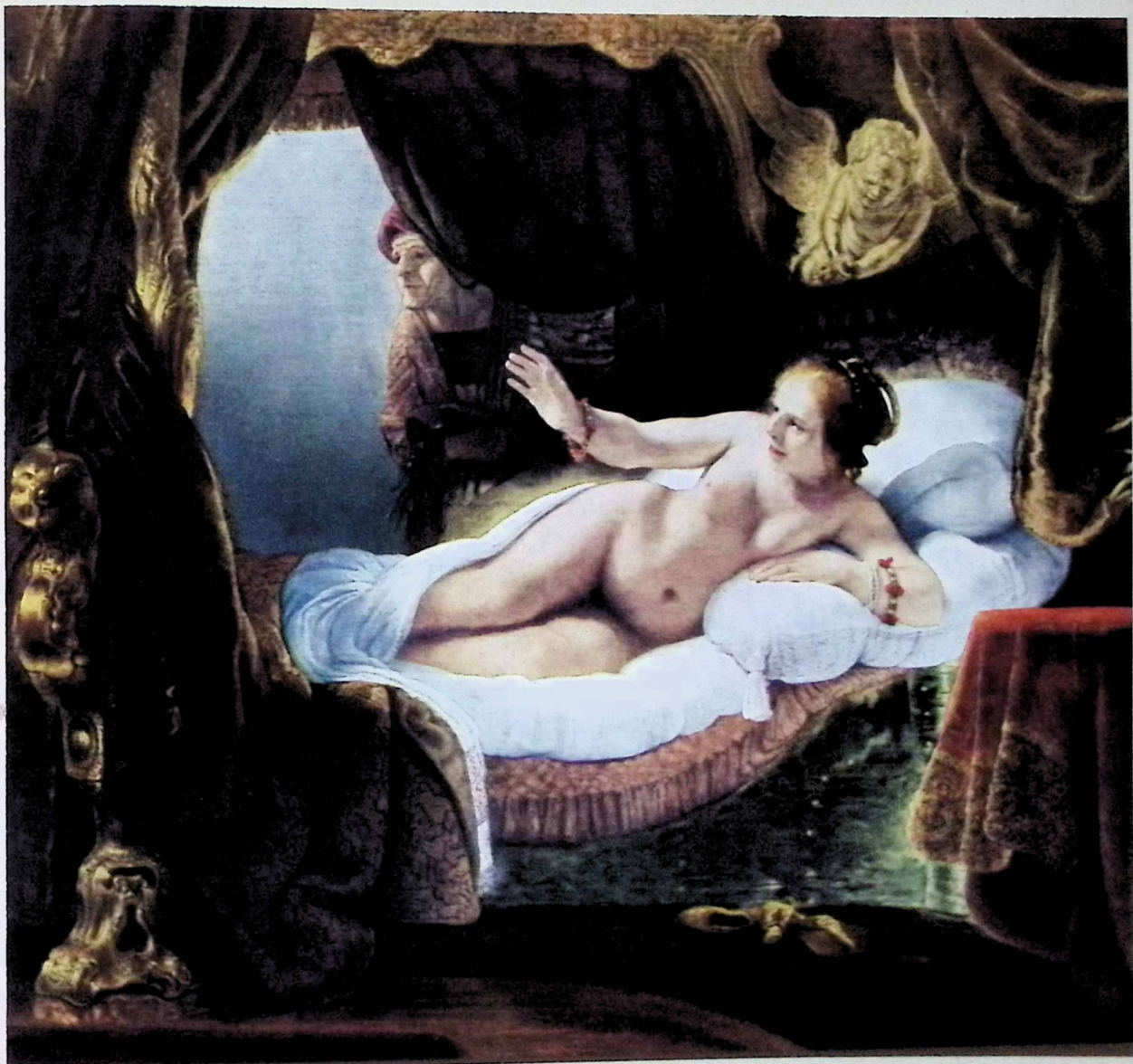
Rembrandt transformed the motive of gold rain, in which guise Zeus seduced Danaë, into a sublimated golden tone which illuminates the entire canvas and lingers on all the objects without detracting from the voluptuous naked body of the waiting woman. In this early work of his maturity it is not yet the chiaroscuro that produces its effect, but the shimmering light in the sense of the High Baroque which lends form to the plastic figure.

Rembrandt Harmensz Van Rijn (Leyden, 1606-1669, Amsterdam)

Danaë, 1636

Canvas, 74" × 81"

Leningrad, Hermitage.



ANNIBALE CARRACCI · ADONIS DISCOVERS VENUS

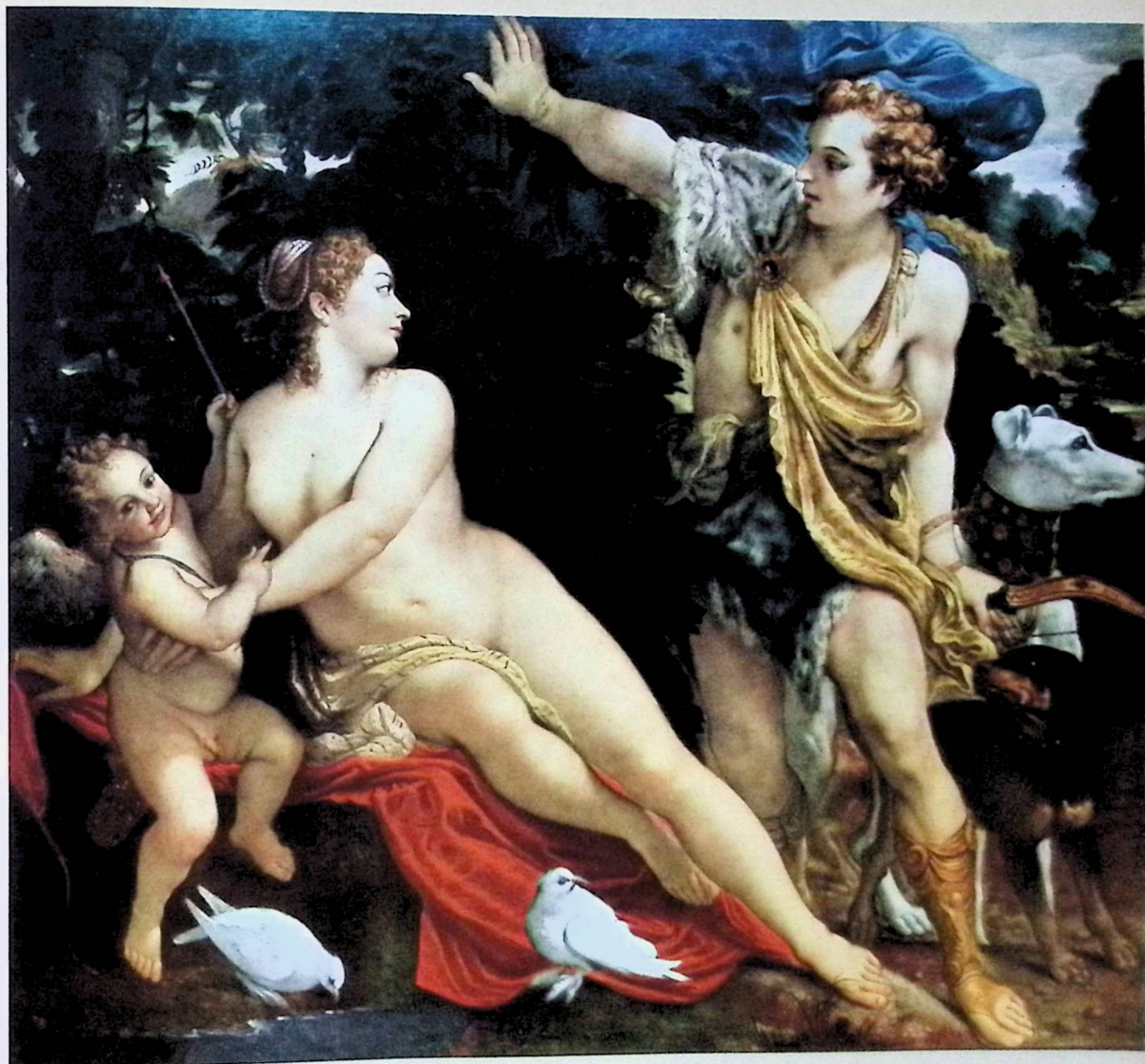
Three great masters of the High Renaissance are godfathers to the work of the three Carraccis, who as founders of the Accademia degli Incamminati in Bologna laid down hard-and-fast rules for the academies which held good for centuries: Correggio in the Little Cupid; Michelangelo in the figura serpentinata of the Venus, and Paolo Veronese in the decorative figure of Adonis. Nevertheless a work of original style resulted, characteristic of the Italian High Baroque around 1600.

Annibale Carracci (Bologna, 1560-1609, Rome)

Adonis discovers Venus, ca. 1590

Canvas, 87" × 98"

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



DOMENICHINO • SUSANNA IN THE BATH

The master of the frescoes in the Farnese Palace and the Naples Cathedral proves himself in his giant canvases to be a master of the decorative art. As a pupil and colleague of the Carracci Academy in Bologna he preserves in his beautifully controlled figures and nudes a cool, anti-Baroque Classicism.

Domenico Zampieri called Domenichino (Bologna 1581–1641, Naples)

Susanna in the Bath (detail), ca. 1604

Canvas, 106" × 132"

Munich, Alte Pinakothek.



BERNARDO STROZZI · THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE

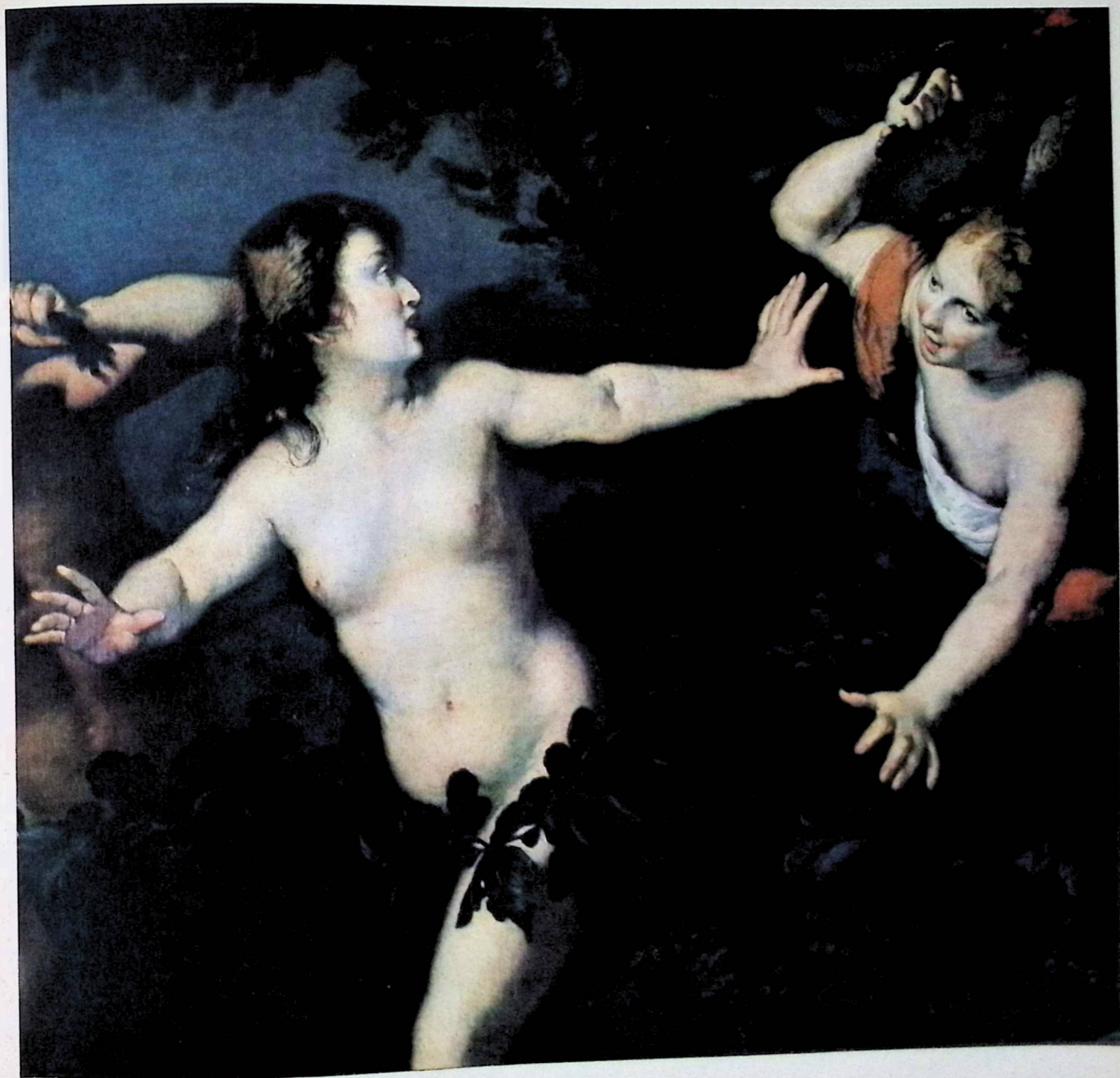
The Italian High Baroque of the pathetic gesture, the stressed contrasts of movement, and the satiated physical plumpness — not uninfluenced by Peter Paul Ruben's Italian journey — makes the figure of Bernardo Strozzi one of the typical representatives of the generation which strove to free itself from the academic corset of the Carraccis in the free painting of the seventeenth century.

Bernardo Strozzi, called Il Capuccino (Genoa 1581–1644 Venice)

The Expulsion from Paradise (detail)

Canvas

Verona Museum.



CAGNACCI • THE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA

Cagnacci, as representative of Italian High Baroque, cultivates the great plastic form with a strong accent on colour. The deadweight of the treatment lies in the dramatic event, an excuse for a rich, well-thought-out, virile composition of rhythmical movement which recalls similar figures in the Nordic painting of a Rubens or a Jordaens.

Guido Camlassi called Cagnacci (Castel S. Angelo near Rimini, 1601-1681, Vienna)

The Death of Cleopatra

Canvas, 56" x 76"

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



SIMON VOUET • VENUS AND ADONIS

The court painter to Louis XIII, famous for his decoration of the Louvre and the Luxembourg and head of an all-embracing school of painting, Vouet, in his monumental composition, by no means belies his Italian schooling (Rome, 1614-1627). The strength of his forms which still cling to the style of Louis XIV is in charming contrast to the frail softness of the modelling which with his "pale light" gives a particular magic to his nudes.

Simon Vouet (Paris, 1590-1649)

Venus and Adonis, ca. 1635-40

Canvas, 36" x 40"

Paris, François Baron collection.



NICOLAS POUSSIN • MIDAS AND BACCHUS

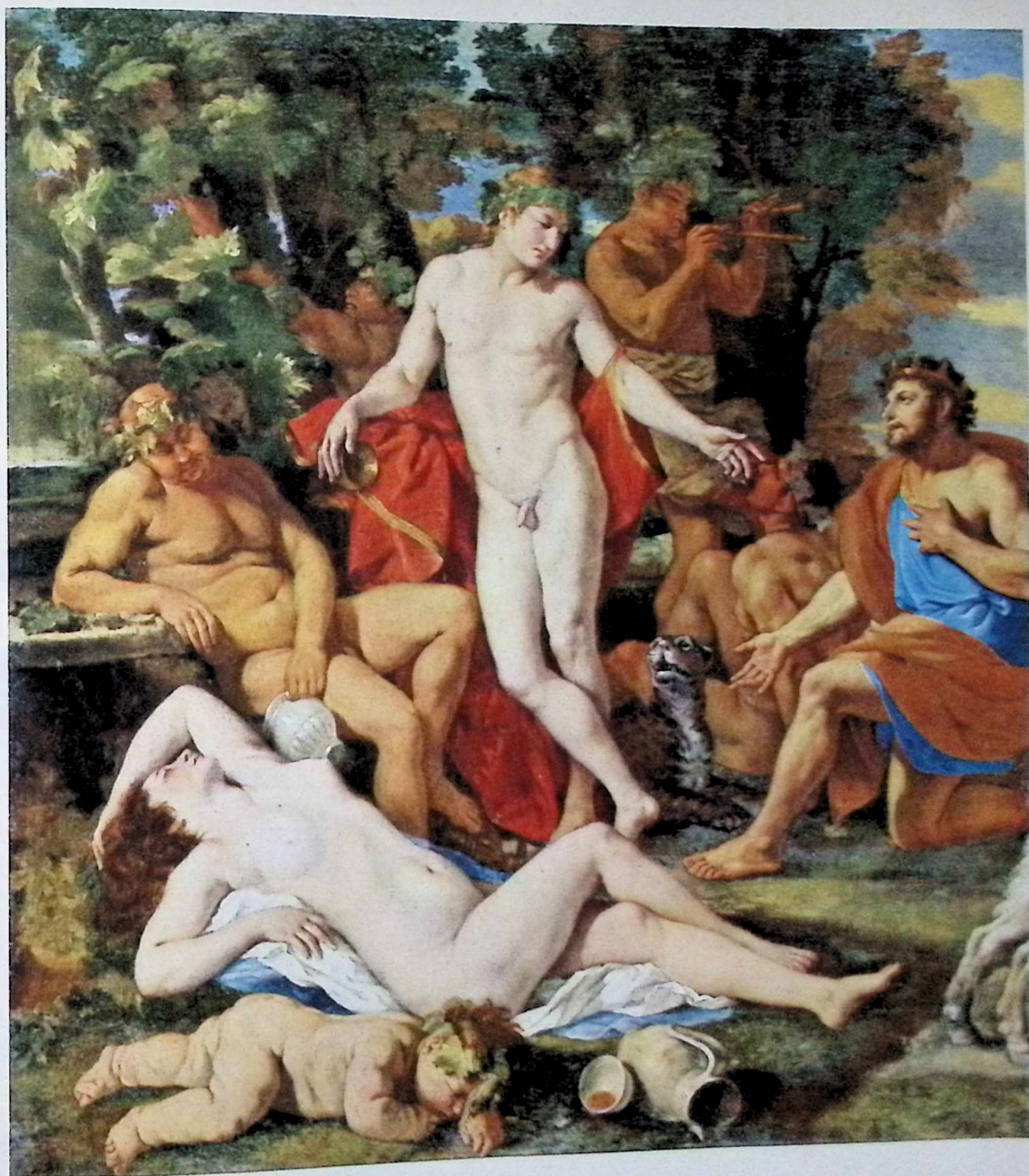
To amalgamate Raphael's drawing with the colour of Titian was Poussin's life-long dream. He aided the break-through of the imminent French classicism in the Rome of High Baroque and as a result set the course for French painting for generations. The female nude in our picture is Giorgione seen through the temperament of a Frenchman: a bridge between the Italian Renaissance and the French Impressionism of a Manet.

Nicolas Poussin (Villiers par Les Andelys, Normandy 1594–1655 Rome)

Midas and Bacchus (detail), ca. 1630

Canvas, 39" × 52"

Munich, Alte Pinakothek.



DIEGO DE SILVA Y VELASQUEZ · VENUS AND CUPID

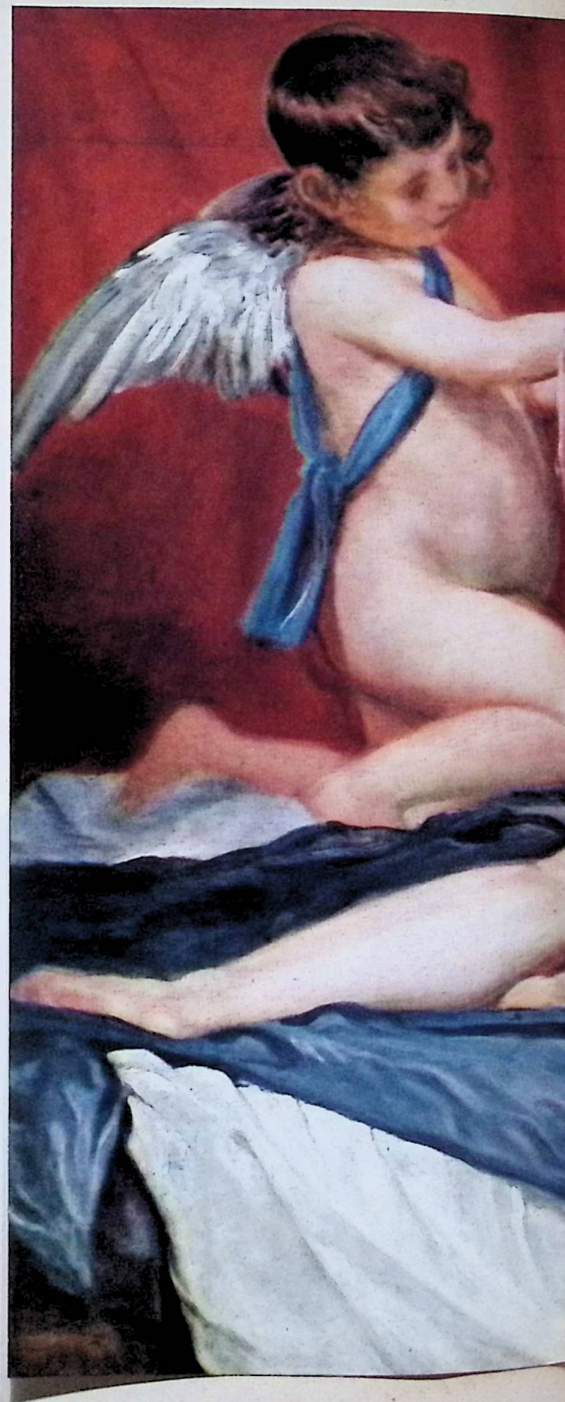
*It is interesting that this picture, originally in the possession of Goya's friend, the Duchess of Alba, who presumably served as model for his *Maya*, belongs in the ranks of the great portrayals of *Vénus* from Giorgione through Titian, Tintoretto, Tiepolo and Goya to Manet's *Olympia*. Velásquez's cool detachment from his subject can also be felt here. The Baroque can only be seen in the treatment of the outlines.*

Diego Rodriquez de Silva y Velásquez (Sevilla 1599–1660, Madrid)

Vénus and Cupid, ca. 1642

Canvas, 49" × 70"

London, National Gallery.





ANTOINE WATTEAU · THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

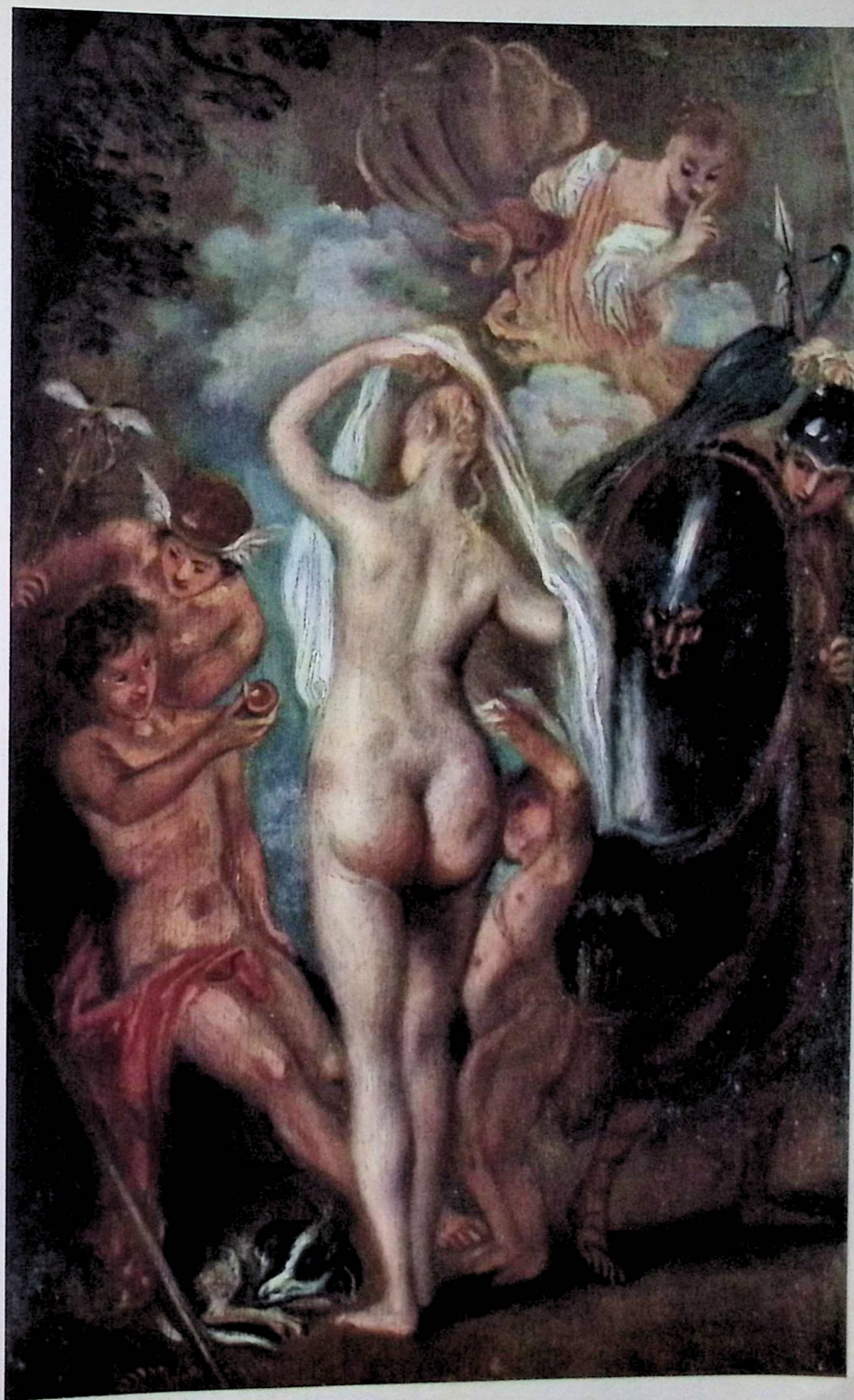
The painter of the Fêtes Galantes, a typical representative of the Regency period at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Grace and charm, poetry and enamelled colour, lasciviousness and guileless smiles, enchantment of the natural and elegance of a decadent culture form the features of the art which this facile genius imposed for a whole century.

Antoine Watteau (Valenciennes, 1684–1721, Nogent par Vincennes)

The Judgment of Paris, ca. 1720

Canvas, 19" × 12½"

Paris, Louvre.



FRANÇOIS BOUCHER · DIANA LEAVING HER BATH

Boucher, protégé and drawing master to Madame de Pompadour, is the incarnation of Louis XV style. He is the master of the epicurean enjoyments of life, the friend of earthly Dianas and Amidas, completely under the spell of feminine grace and hidden charms. "Boucher is one of those phenomena which reflect the taste of a whole century, expressing it, personifying it and symbolising it." (Goncourt)

François Boucher (Paris 1703–1770)

Diana leaving her Bath (detail) ca. 1742

Canvas, 57" × 45"

Paris, Louvre.



FRANÇOIS BOUCHER · GIRL RECLINING ON A COUCH

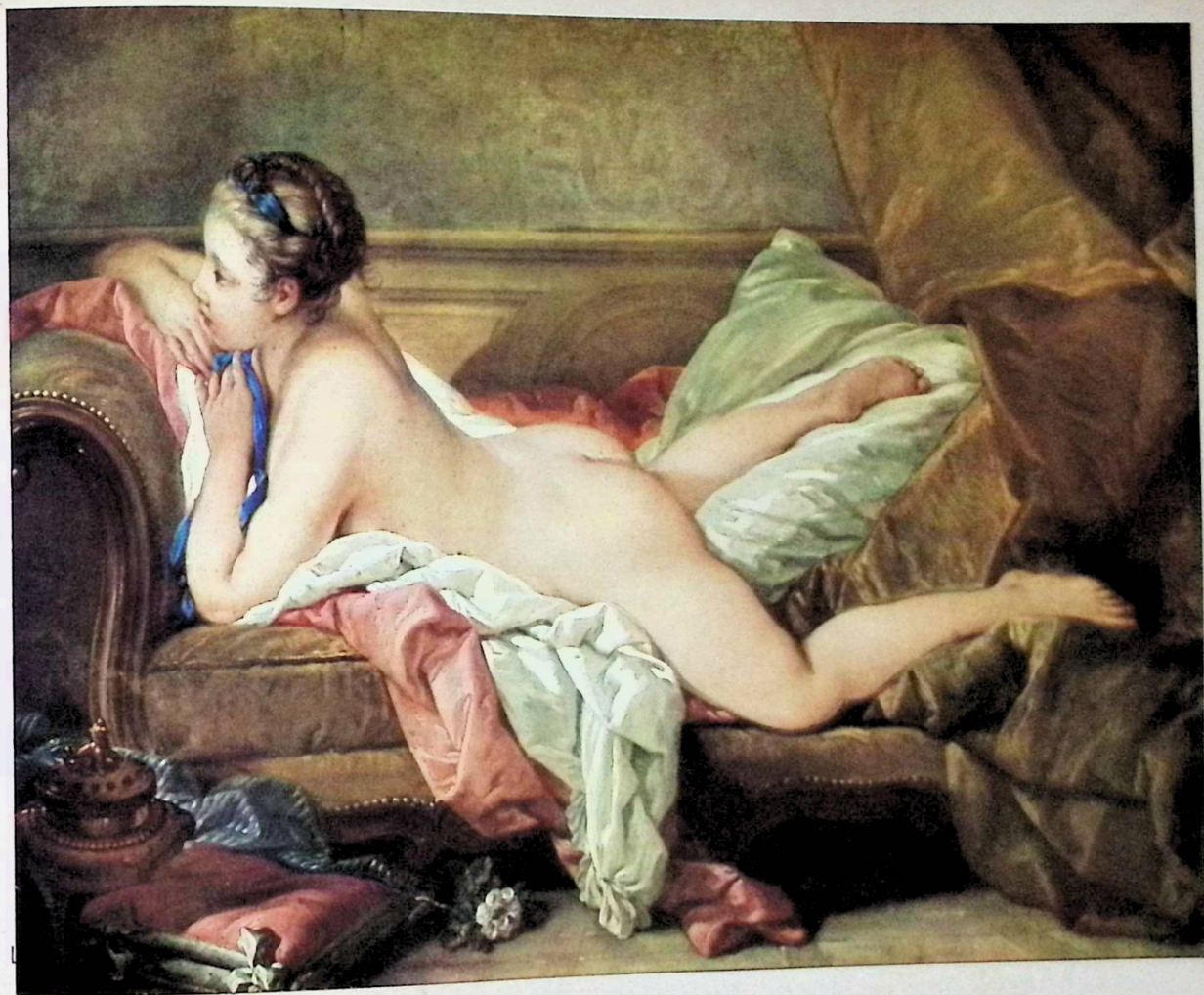
This model, known as Miss O'Murphy, inspired the tireless Boucher — according to his own statement more than ten thousand drawings up to his death, mostly nudes, had left his atelier — to paint several pictures of her. The grace of this adolescent girl, the ideal type of the Rococo, has found perfection of expression in his work.

François Boucher (Paris 1703–1770)

Girl Reclining on a Couch, dated 1752

Canvas, 23¹/₂" × 29¹/₄"

Munich, Alte Pinakothek.



JEAN-HONORÉ FRAGONARD · GIRLS BATHING

During the eighteenth century, according to the Goncourts, France possessed only two real poets: Watteau and Fragonard. The latter in his maturity was idolised as "le Divin Fraggo". In the second half of the century he devoted himself to enjoying life and with his refined brush to perpetuating the dissolute tradition of the Fêtes Galantes during the decline of a certain society, with superb mastery in the refinement of the inexpressible.

Jean-Honoré Fragonard (Grasse, 1730–1806, Paris)

Girls Bathing (detail), ca. 1770–80

Canvas, 34" × 42"

Paris, Louvre.



GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO ·

DIANA DISCOVERS CALLISTO'S INDISCRETION

The painter of the ceiling frescoes of the Bishop's Palace in Würzburg and countless wall decorations in the villas of the Venetian mainland, whose witty visions enchant by their ethereal quality and inexhaustible fantasy, achieves the undisputed peak of Venetian eighteenth-century art. The Christian and Pagan mythologies under his brush became a poem of refined charm and sensuality.

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (Venice, 1696–1770, Madrid)

Diana discovers Callisto's indiscretion (detail)

Canvas, 39³/₄" × 54"

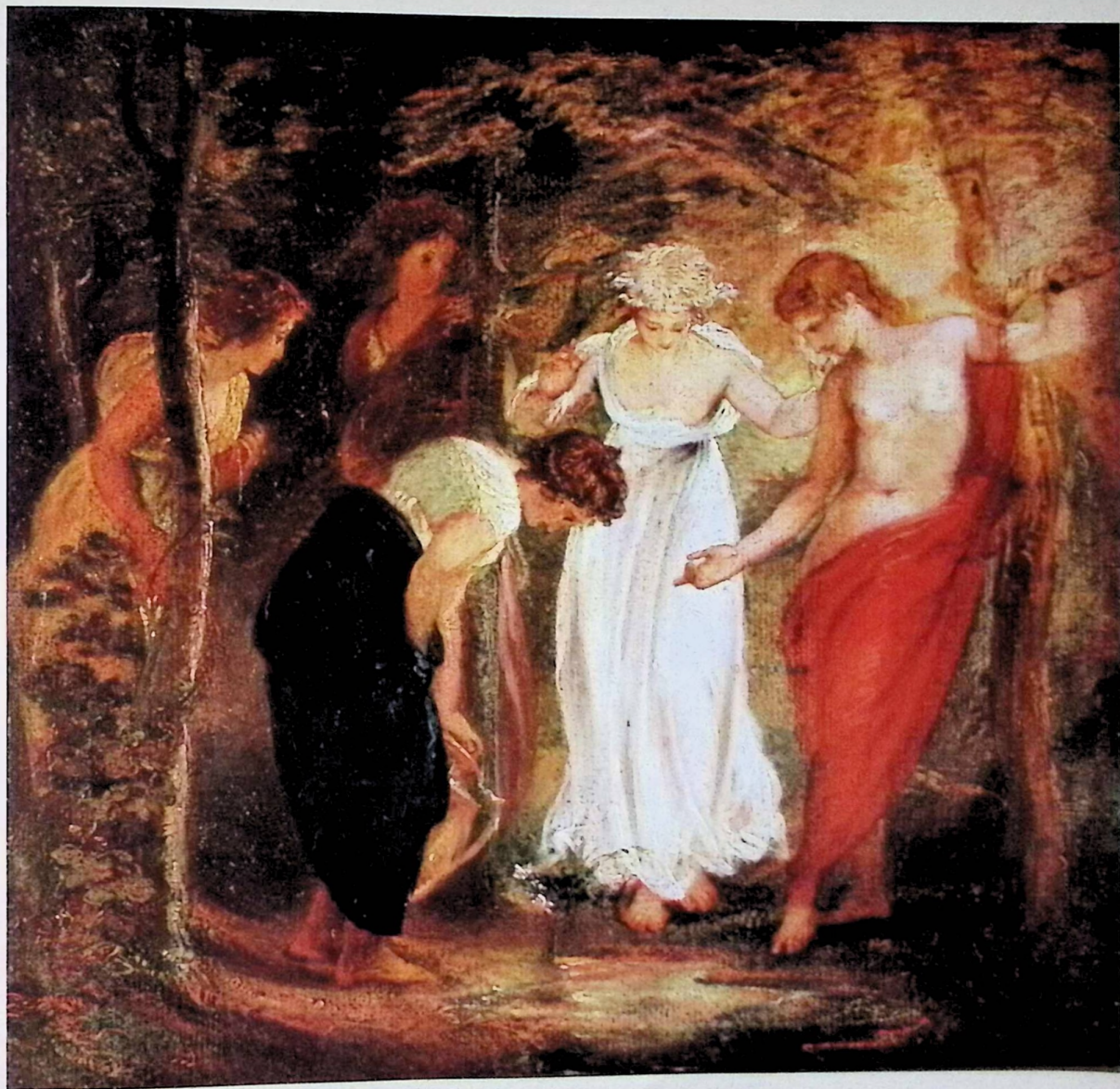
Venice, Academia.



THOMAS STOTHARD • SCENE FROM THE NARCISSUS MYTH

Witty in his inventions and colours, are the surviving pictures of the Englishman, Stothard, one of the most fertile artists of his time. Of his 5,000 drawings some 3,000 served for prints, some of them executed by famous artists like Blake. In his brilliant colouring Stothard in many respects anticipates the brush of a Delacroix.

*Thomas Stothard (London 1755–1834)
Scene from the Narcissus Myth, ca. 1810
Canvas
London, Tate Gallery.*



FRANCISCO DE GOYA · THE NAKED MAYA

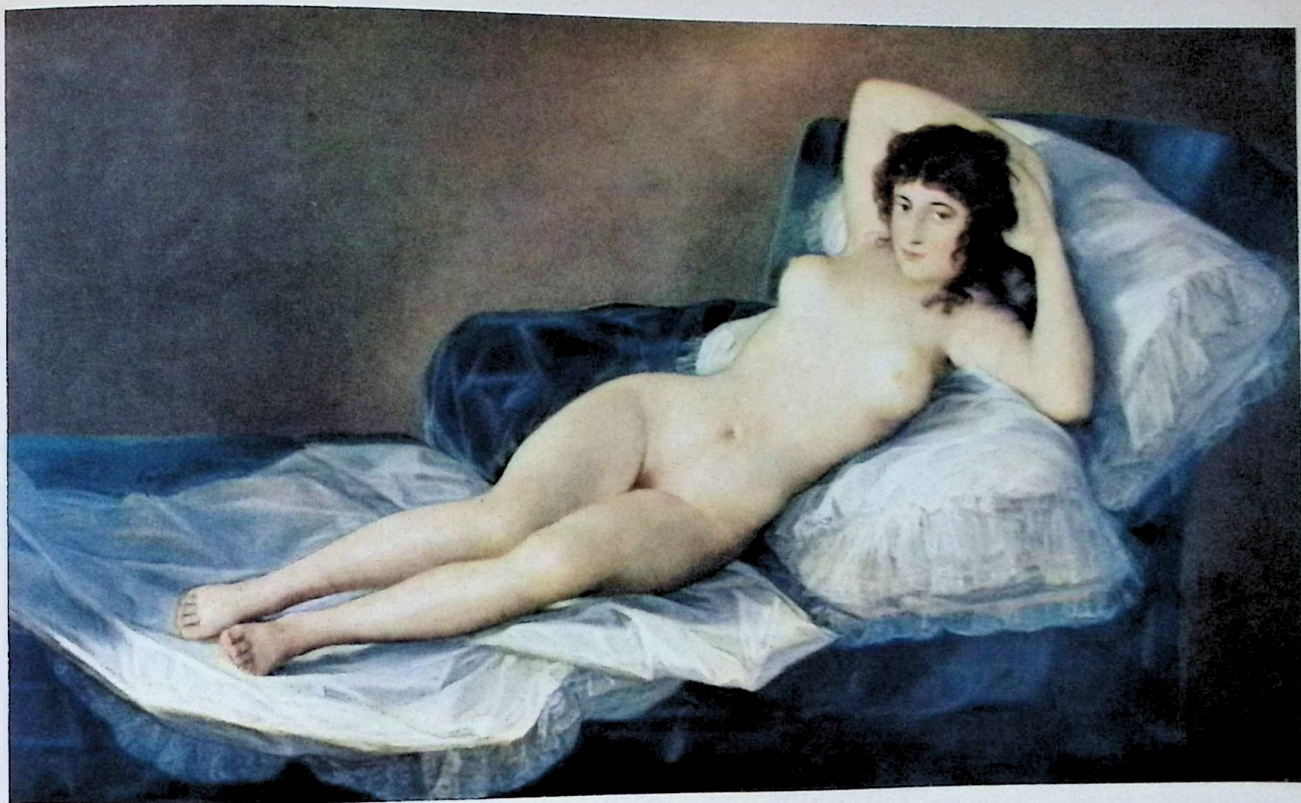
There has been great controversy about the meaning, nature and origin of the two Mayas, the latter-day sisters of the mysterious Mona Lisa. It will never be determined whether they are portraits of the Duchess of Alba, the mistress and life-long friend of the painter. Much, and above all the indiscreetly large format, speaks against it. Was it not merely the eternal feminine Eve-Venus as in all the huge unique nudes from Giorgione through Titian and Velasquez to Manet and Modigliani which aroused the inspiration of the artist?

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (Fuendctodos 1746–1828 Bordeaux)

The Naked Maya, ca. 1797

Canvas, 39" × 76"

Madrid, Prado.



FRANÇOIS GÉRARD · CUPID AND PSYCHE

The strong classicist composition form of Jacques Louis David, and the late eighteenth-century sentimentality of Prud'hon, sponsor the works of Gérard, who with Baron Gros were the most important representatives of Napoleonic art. His passionless, coldly intellectual pictures are the epitome of self-control and courtly etiquette.

François-Pascal-Simon Baron Gérard (Rome 1770–1837 Paris)

Cupid and Psyche, 1798

Canvas, 74 $\frac{1}{2}$ " $\times$ 52 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Paris, Louvre.



JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES • RECLINING ODALISQUE

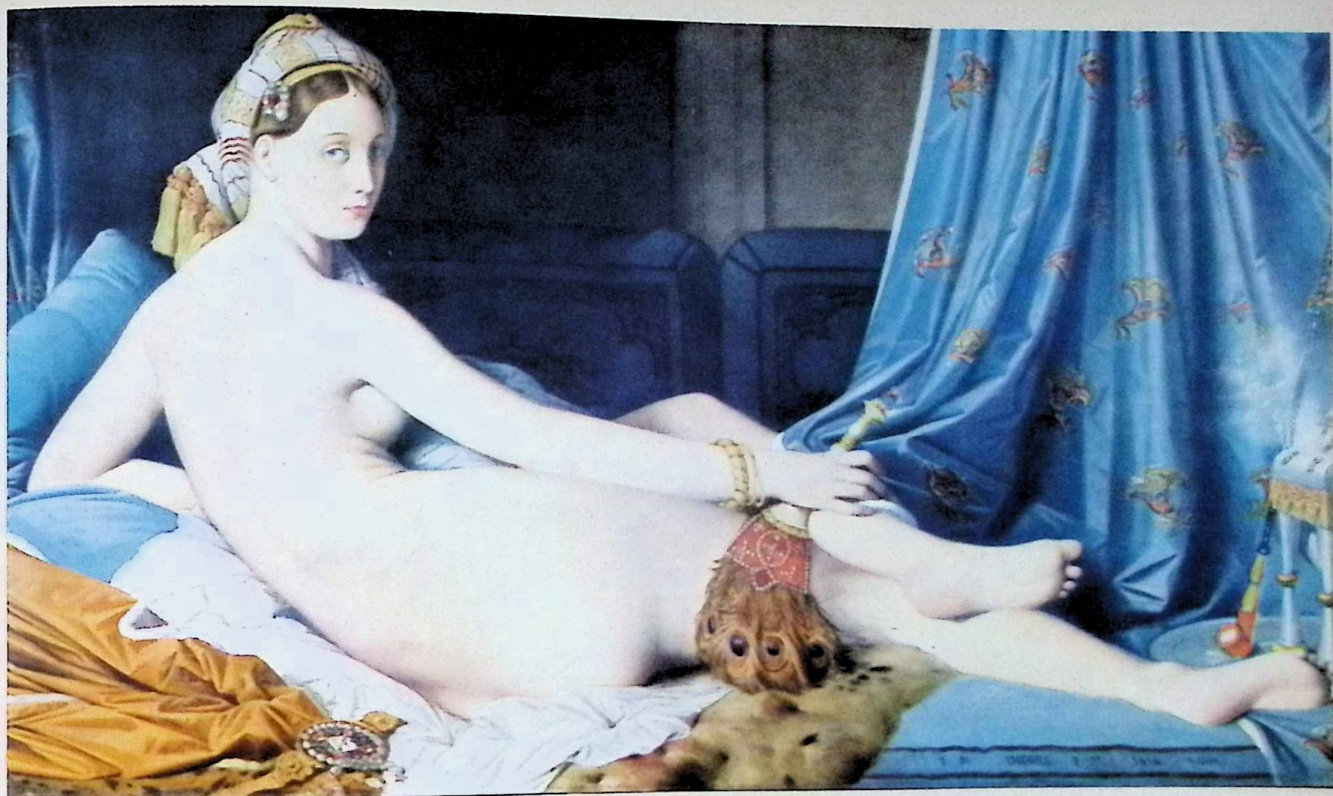
This portrait was painted in Rome in 1814, commissioned, by Caroline Murat, Queen of Naples, and exhibited in the 1819 Paris Salon. Strong conformity and an abstract use of colour lend the picture an unreal idealising coolness. The lofty, pure idealisation and monumental stabilisation give the figures of Ingres a statuesque quality as opposed to banality, a tone of aristocracy, dignity and inspiration: the great Classicist has created a divine race conceived in the spirit of antiquity.

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (Montauban, 1780–1867, Paris)

Reclining Odalisque, 1814

Canvas, 36½" × 65"

Paris, Louvre.



EUGÈNE DELACROIX • THE WOMAN WITH THE PARROT

This artist, distinguished by his passionate draughtsmanship, and who "could only work in the throes of creative fever" was the leader of the Romantic French School and a life-long rival of the Classicist, Ingres. Down to the smallest drawing or sketch in oils he is the painter par excellence, comparable with a genius such as Rubens, whom he revered. His technique and his colour have a strange tinge of the Baroque.

Eugène Delacroix (Charenton 1798–1863 Paris)

The Woman with the Parrot (La femme au Perroquet) 1827

Canvas, 9½" × 12"

Lyon, Musée de la Ville.



W. J. M. W. 1827.



GUILHELMINE DE BENOIST · NEGRESS

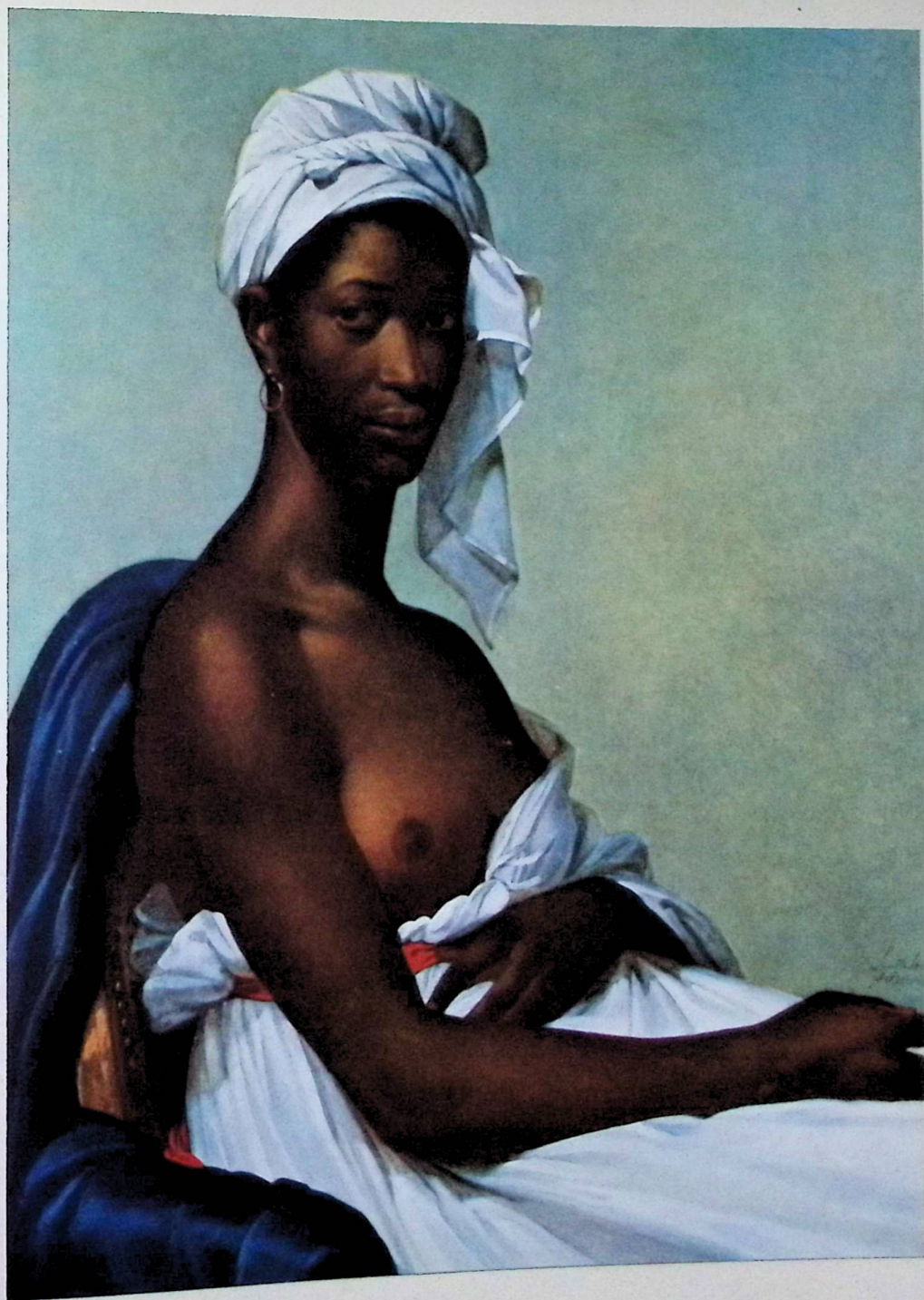
One of the earliest portraits of a negress, the beauty and originality of whom had been discovered in the course of the Classicist and the Romantic Movement – Ingres, Delacroix, Géricault, etc. Severe and dignified as in the portrait of an aristocrat, the melancholy eyes of the girl are turned on the spectator. The whole composition of the picture represents the hard-and-fast canons of Empire style laid down by David and others.

Comtesse Guilhelmine de Benoist (Paris, 1768–1826)

Negress, 1800

Canvas, 32½" × 26"

Paris, Louvre.



DIAZ DE LA PENA · FEMALE NUDE WITH CUPIDS

Like his countryman, Monticelli, a descendant of French Rococo to which he pays homage in romantic form, Diaz prolongs in his picture the dream of Fragonard or Prud'hon: carefree spirits of an unreal world surround the body of a beautiful woman in the Barbizon Forest, the beauties of which Diaz was one of the first to discover.

Narcisso Virgilio Diaz de la Pena (Bordeaux 1807-1876, Mentone)

Female Nude with Cupids

Lucerne, Private Collection.



THEODORE CHASSÉRIAU · THE TOILET OF ESTHER

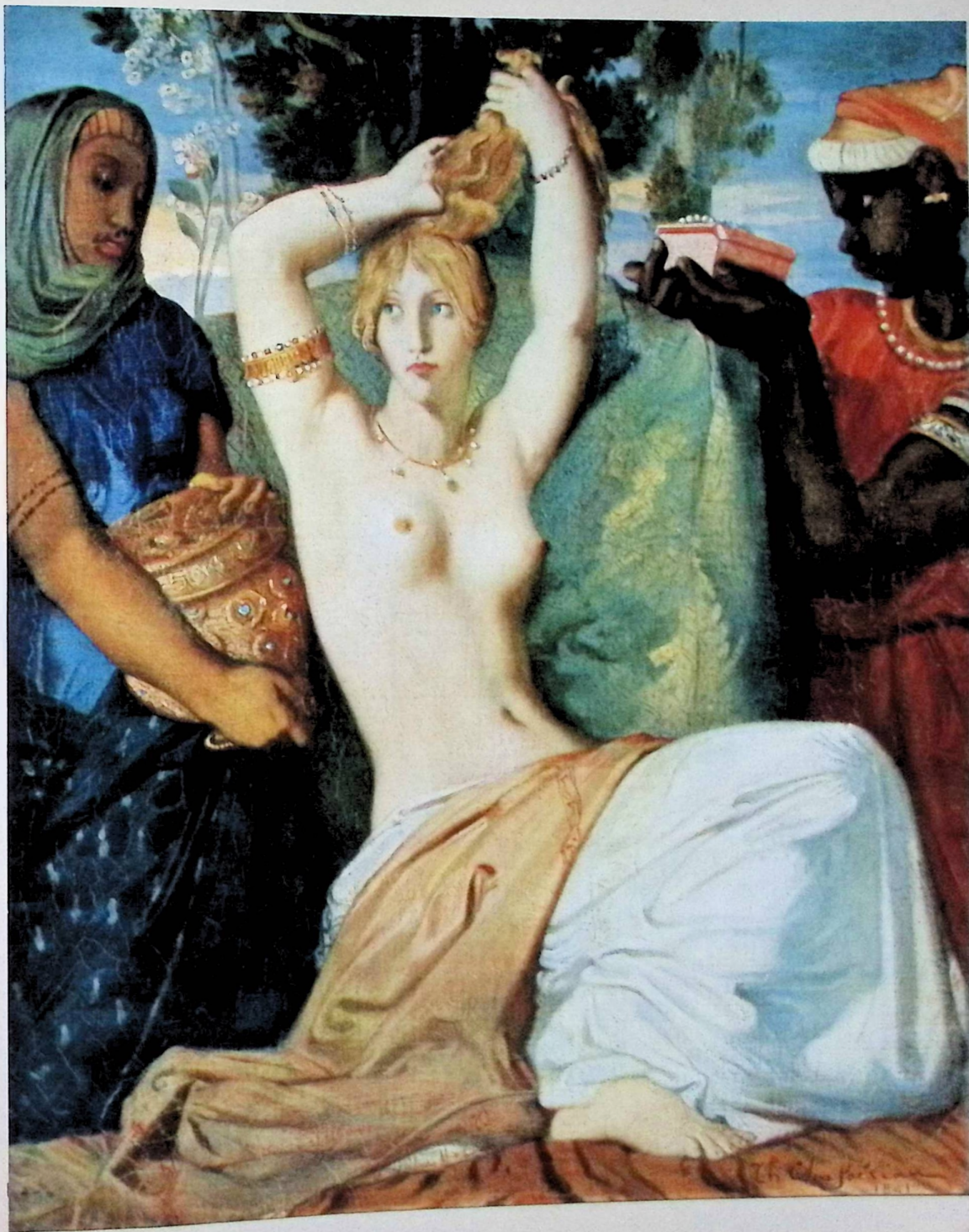
The pupil and admirer of Ingres betrays himself by his delight in subtle, sensitively stressed line drawing, while in the colours of his pictures, in the warmth of the flesh tints and the dark glow of the background can be felt the influence of his rival, Delacroix, which in later life – particularly after his visit to Algiers in 1848 – grew more pronounced.

Theodore Chassériau (Samana/San Domingo 1819–1856 Paris)

The Toilet of Esther, 1841

Canvas, 18" × 14"

Paris, Louvre.



JEAN-BAPTISTE REGNAULT · THE THREE GRACES

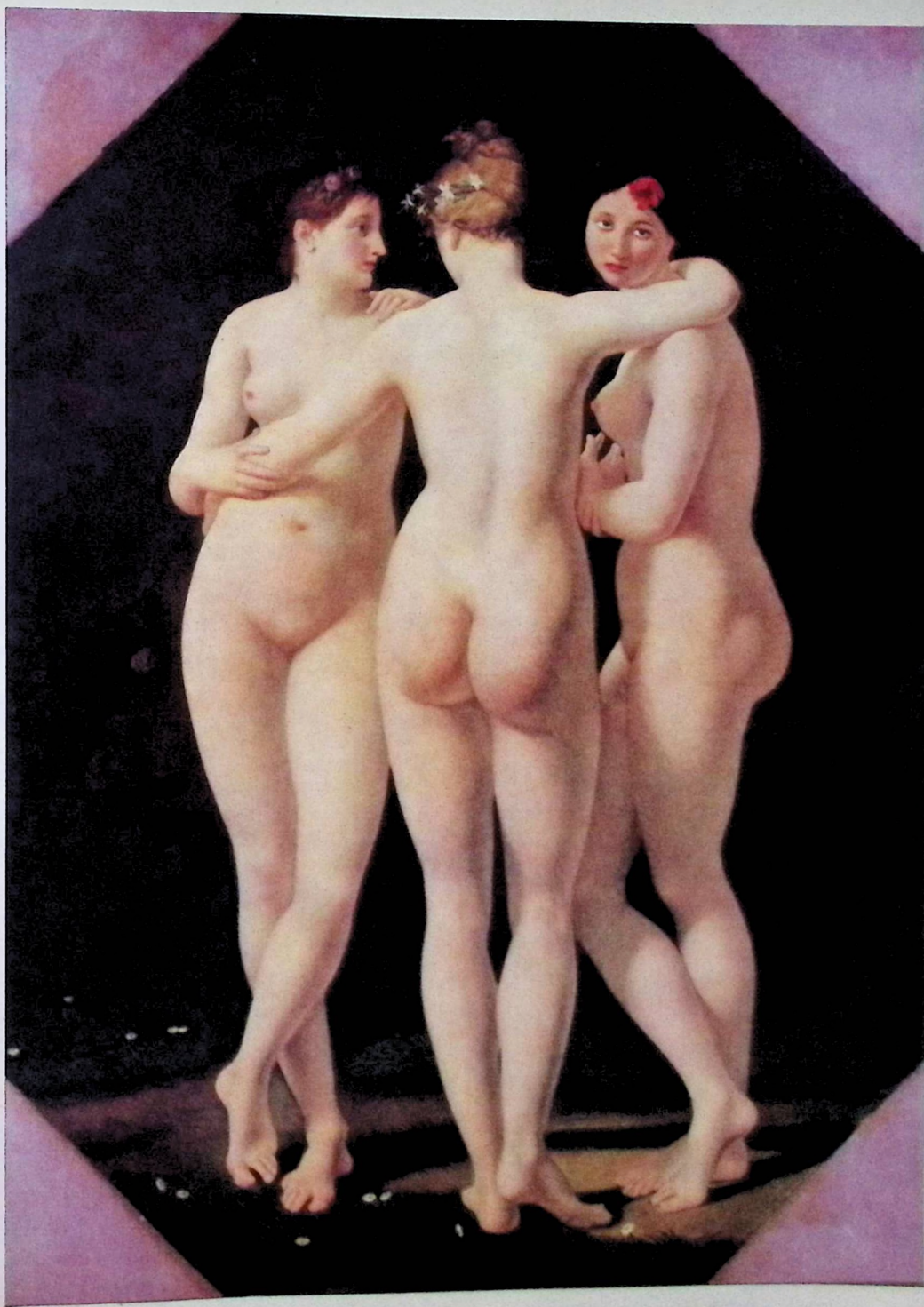
The hero of the 1870 Salon where, with Bastien-Lepage, he was acclaimed as "the new star of Realism". He had succeeded with seductive skill in amalgamating the recognised Realist achievements of a Courbet or the Barbizon School of that period with the Impressionists who were still out of favour with the public.

Jean-Baptiste-Regnault (Paris 1754-1829)

The Three Graces

Wood, 80" x 61"

Paris, Louvre.



JEAN-BAPTISTE CAMILLE COROT • MARIETTA

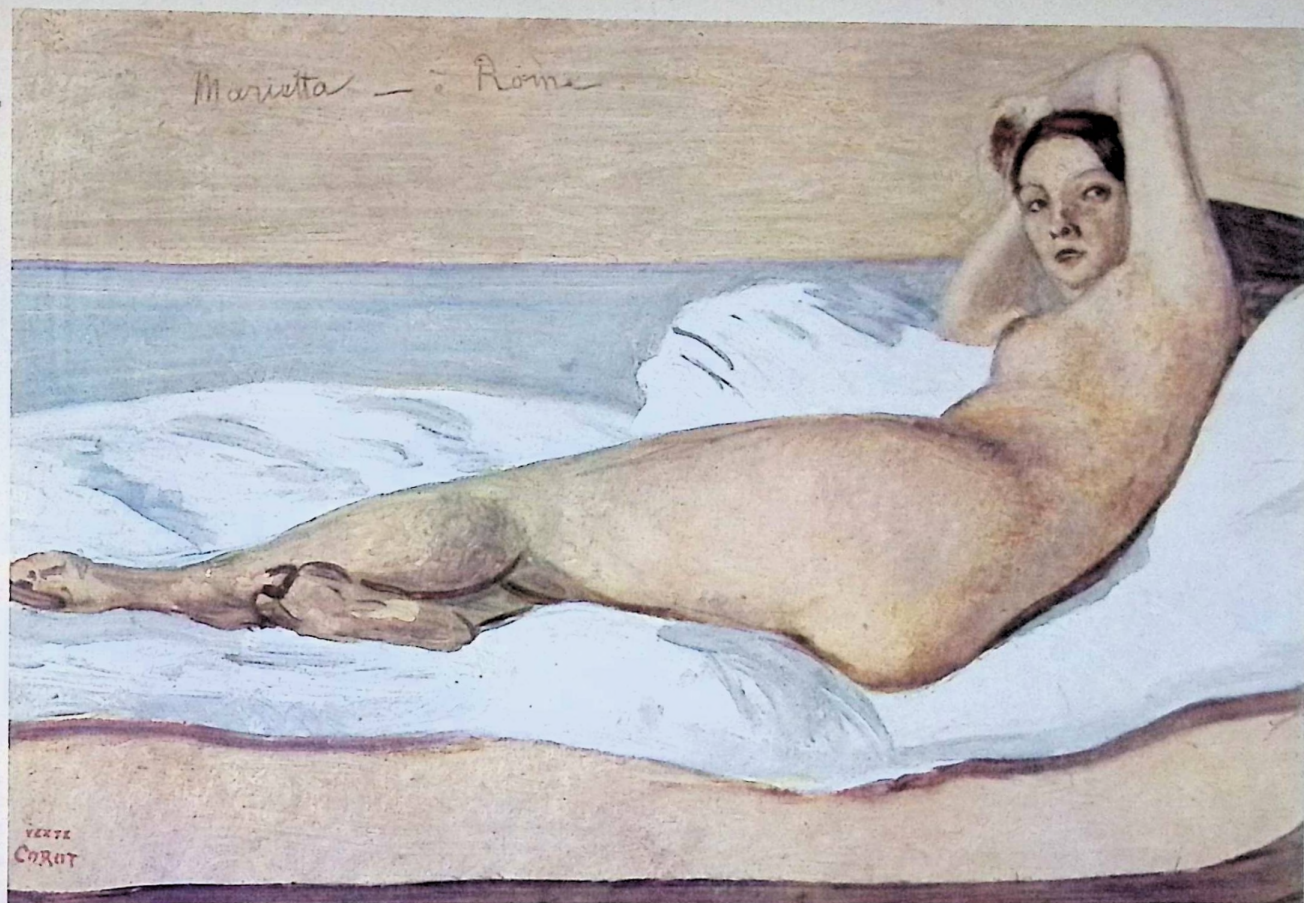
For a long time Corot, the painter of figures, was forgotten in favour of the landscape painter, and yet above all his Italian studies of women, of which he painted a great many, in the certainty of their composition, the highly developed feeling for subtle light effects and in their lyricism must be numbered among the most beautiful that French painting of the first half of the nineteenth century produced, in addition to Ingres, the doyen of our gallery of nudes.

Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot (Paris, 1796–1875)

Marietta, or the "Roman Odalisque", 1843

Canvas, 11¹/₂" × 17¹/₄"

Paris, Musée du Petit Palais.



GUSTAVE COURBET • LE SOMMEIL

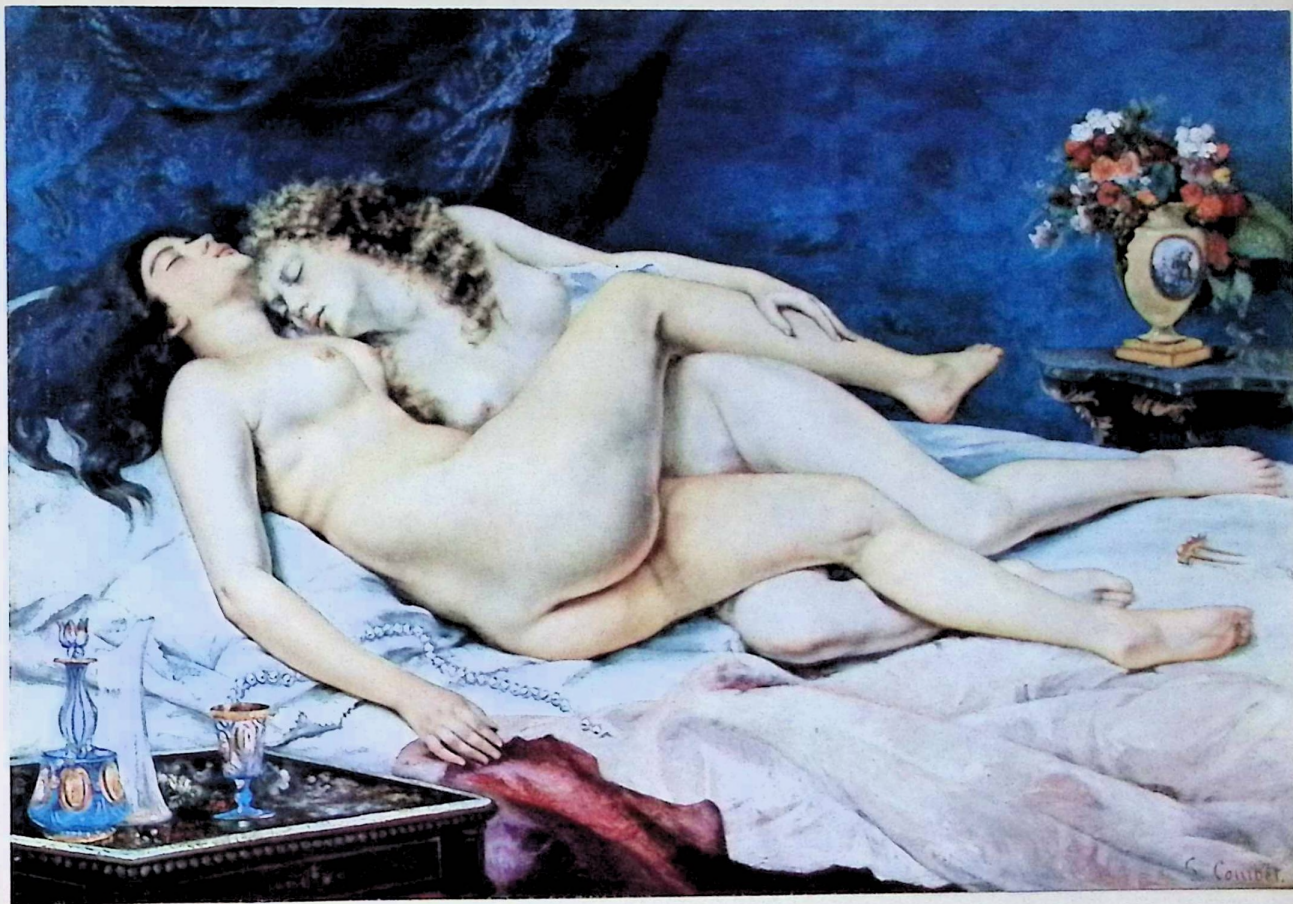
The great trail-blazer of Naturalism and the forerunner of the Impressionists, who with his subjects and his concessionless Realism caused a great scandal in the art world about 1850, is one of the most red-blooded painting geniuses of the nineteenth century. His influence extends far beyond the frontiers of France. His pictures have an inner weight, a technical perfection and a beauty of the compact, superbly used painting matter.

Gustave Courbet (Ornans, 1819–1877, La Tour de Peilz)

Le Sommeil, 1866

Canvas, 54" × 80"

Paris, Musée du Petit Palais.



PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES · L'ESPOIR

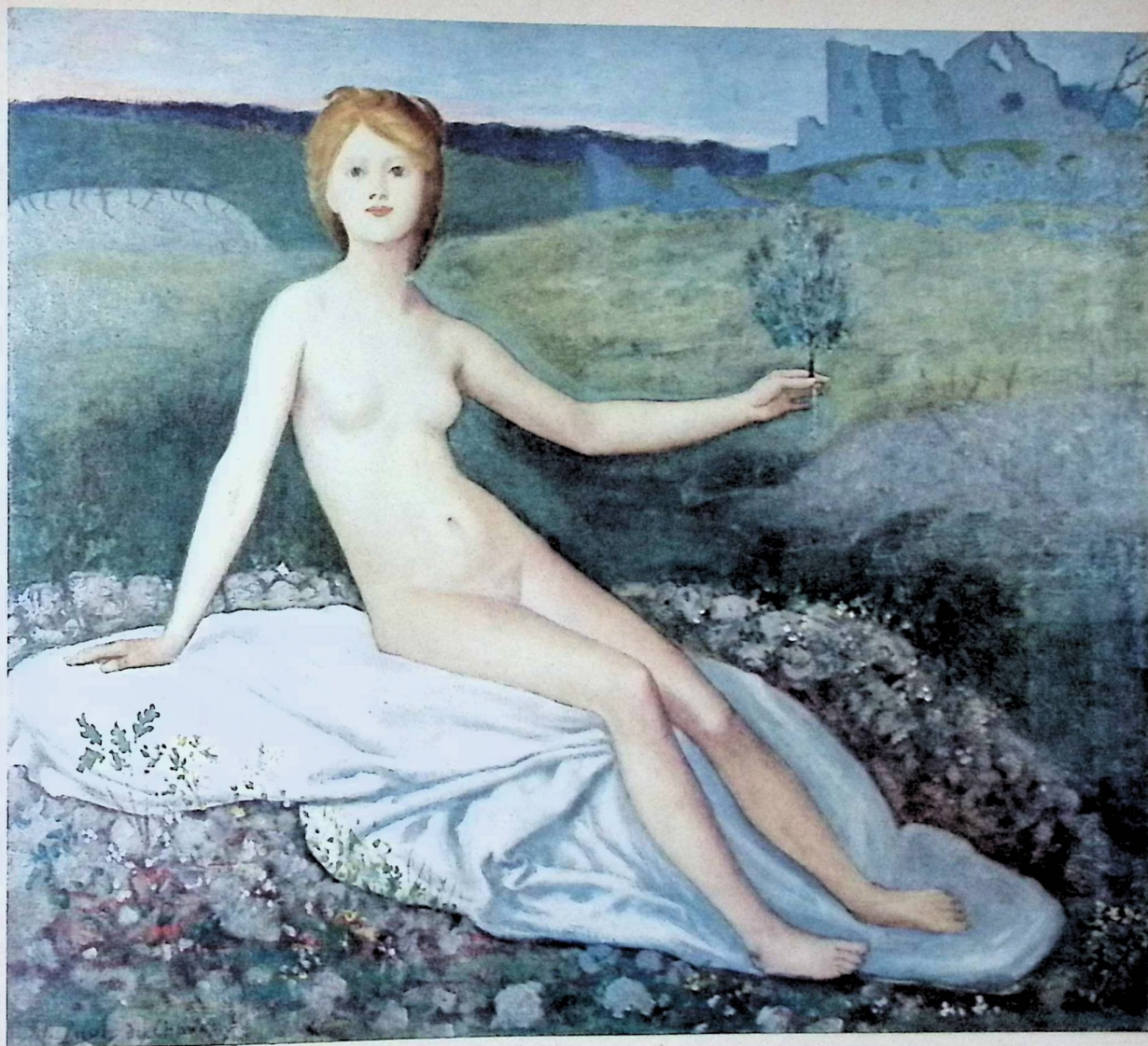
The last monumental painter of importance in nineteenth-century France preferred compositions of fragile balance and resigned calm. "In a peaceful landscape bathed in unreal light his figures are grouped according to the laws of clear, severe rhythm, each gesture possessing a symbolical value." (Roscline Bacou)

Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (Lyon 1824–1898, Paris)

L'Espoir

Canvas, 28" × 31½"

Paris, Louvre.



EDOUARD MANET • OLYMPIA

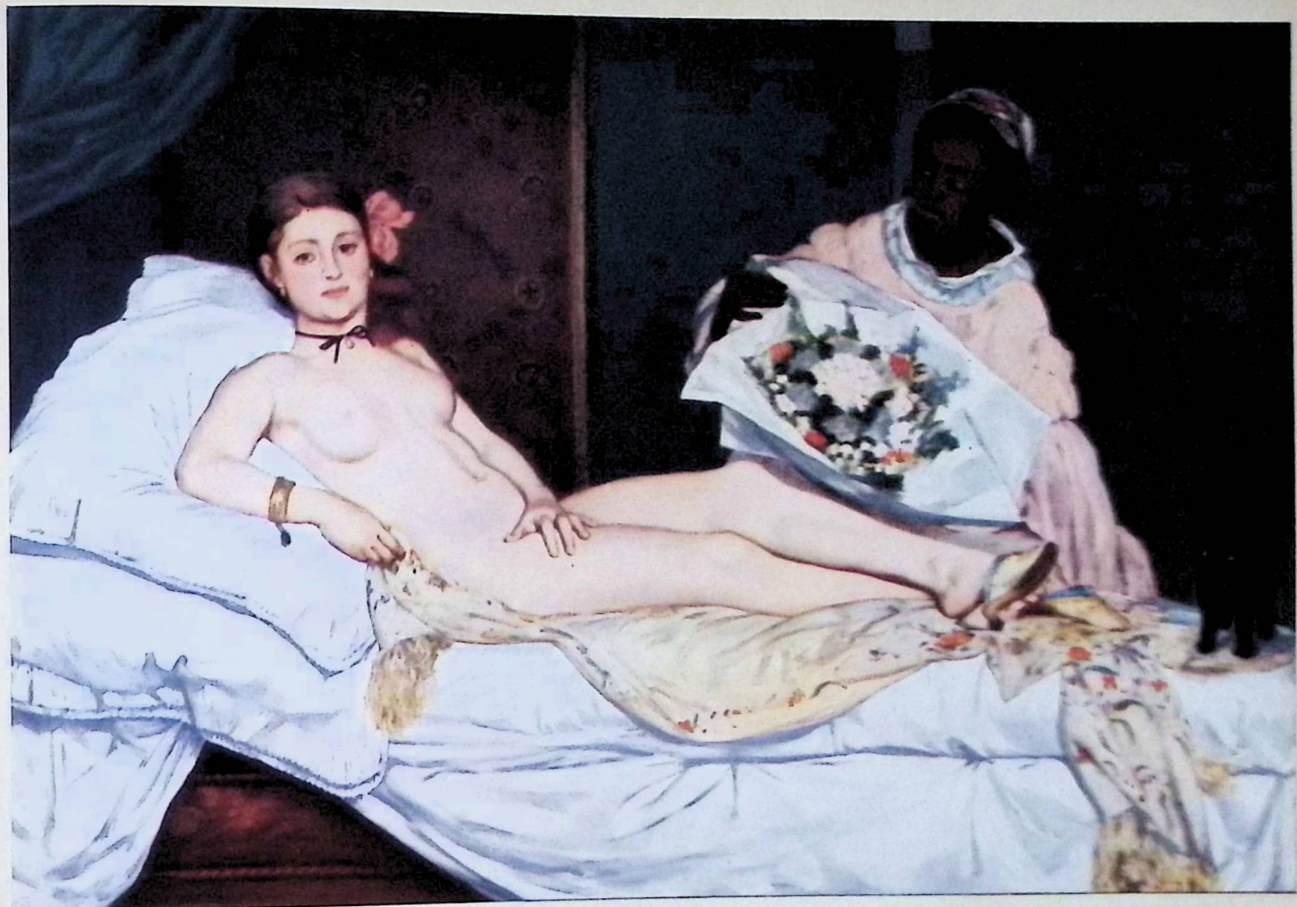
Manet's "Olympia", which aroused the fiercest indignation at its first hanging, is on the threshold of two periods. On the one hand it is the end of a sequence of Venus portrayals beginning with Giorgione, whom he so greatly admired, via Titian, Velasquez and Goya; on the other hand, in its realism it extends far beyond his age into the future. Like all the great Realists, Manet is a painter rather than a draughtsman, a colourist rather than a line artist.

Edouard Manet (Paris, 1832-1883)

Olympia, 1865

Canvas, 52" x 76"

Paris, Louvre.



EDOUARD MANET · LA BLONDE AUX SEINS NUS

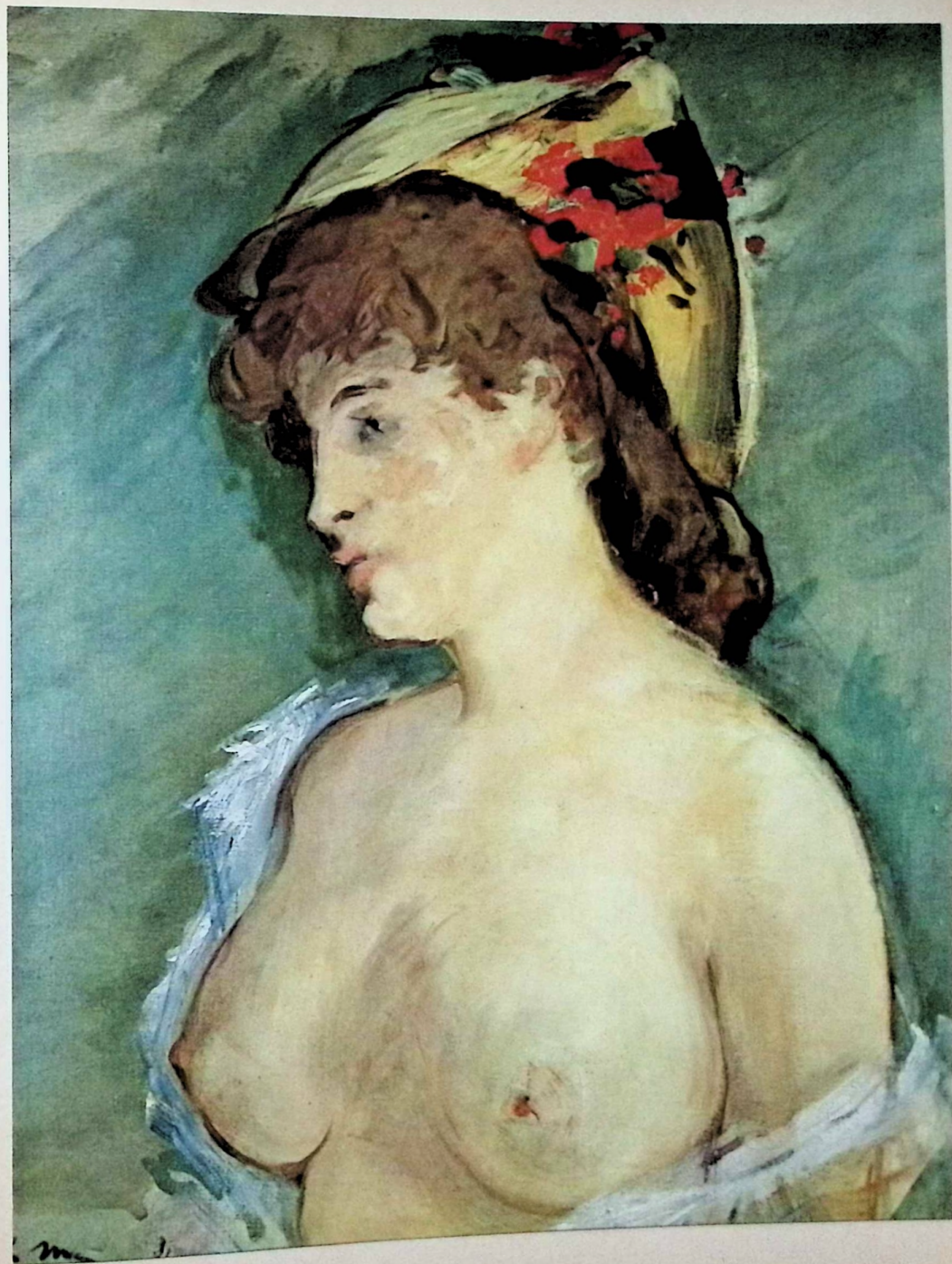
After 1870 Manet, on the advice of his Impressionist friends, painted for preference in the open air. His palette lightened considerably and lost the heavy dark content of his early work. In his portraits of women he now very often worked in pastels in order to achieve that looseness of the flesh surfaces as can be seen in "La Blonde aux Seins nus", one of the most beautiful half-nude portraits in French painting.

Edouard Manet (Paris, 1832-1883)

La Blonde aux Seins nus

Canvas, 25" × 20½"

Paris, Louvre.



HANS VON MARÉES · DIANA AT REST

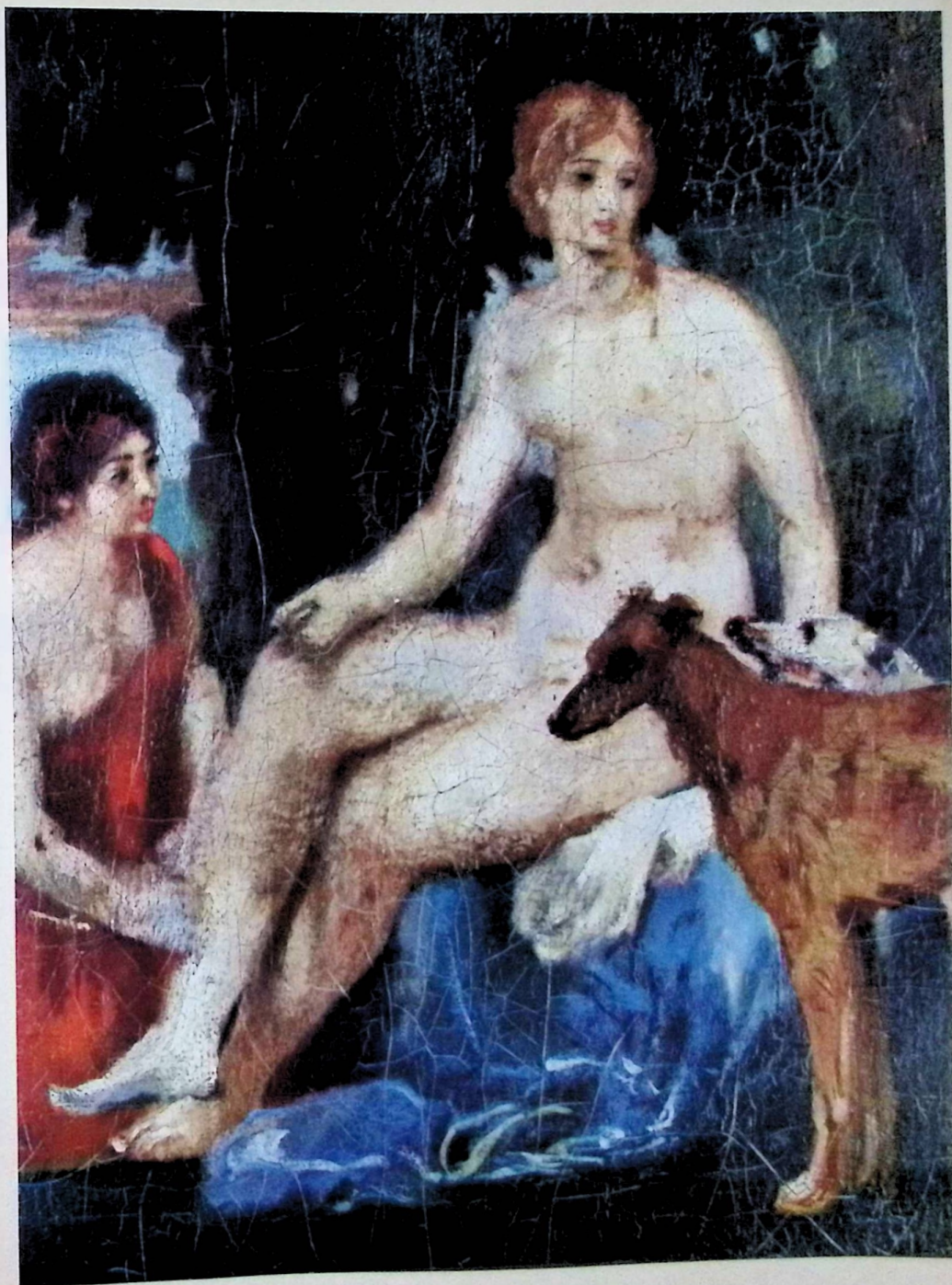
The mythological picture of Marées, painted during his Munich years in Italian Renaissance manner, could be termed "a dream of forgotten beauty". It conforms perfectly to the lonely wanderings of this neglected genius which led him to Italy, like his countryman, Feuerbach, "seeking with his spirit the land of the Greeks".

Hans von Marées (Elberfeld 1837-1887 Rome)

Diana at Rest, 1863

Canvas, 38" x 54"

Munich, Staatsgemäldesammlungen.



EDGAR DEGAS • APRÈS LE BAIN

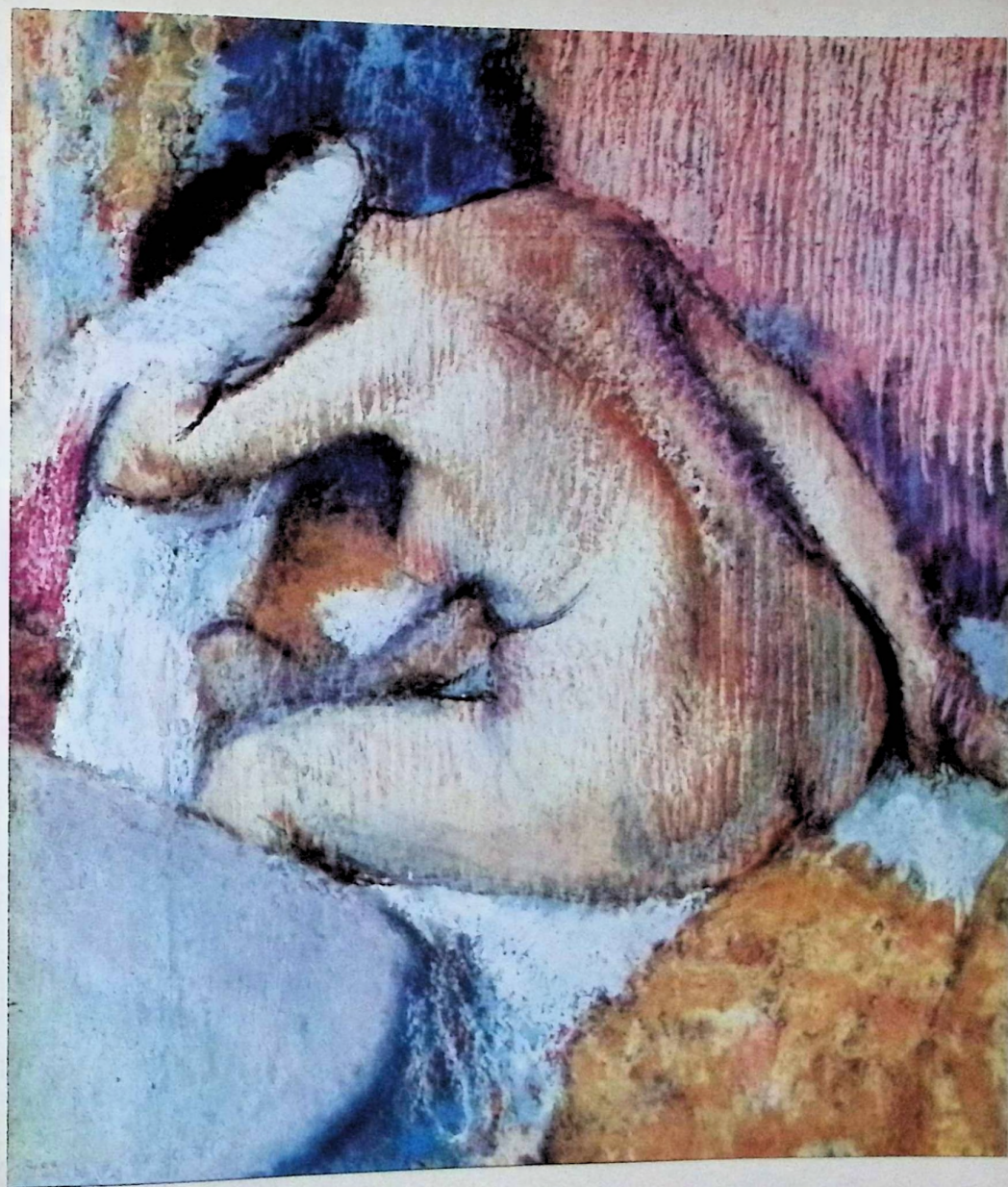
"From 1874 Degas painted a long series of studies of women at their toilette. They became almost a leit-motiv of his whole work and he contrived to find an infinite number of variations. The basic element of his art is the drawing. 'I was born a draughtsman', he used to say. A great personality, both as a man and as an artist, Degas is one of the most important figures of the second half of the nineteenth century."
(Roseline Bacou)

Edgar Degas (Paris 1834-1917)

Après le bain, ca. 1896-1898

Pastel, 25 1/2" x 23 1/2"

Privately owned.



PAUL CÉZANNE · A NEW OLYMPIA

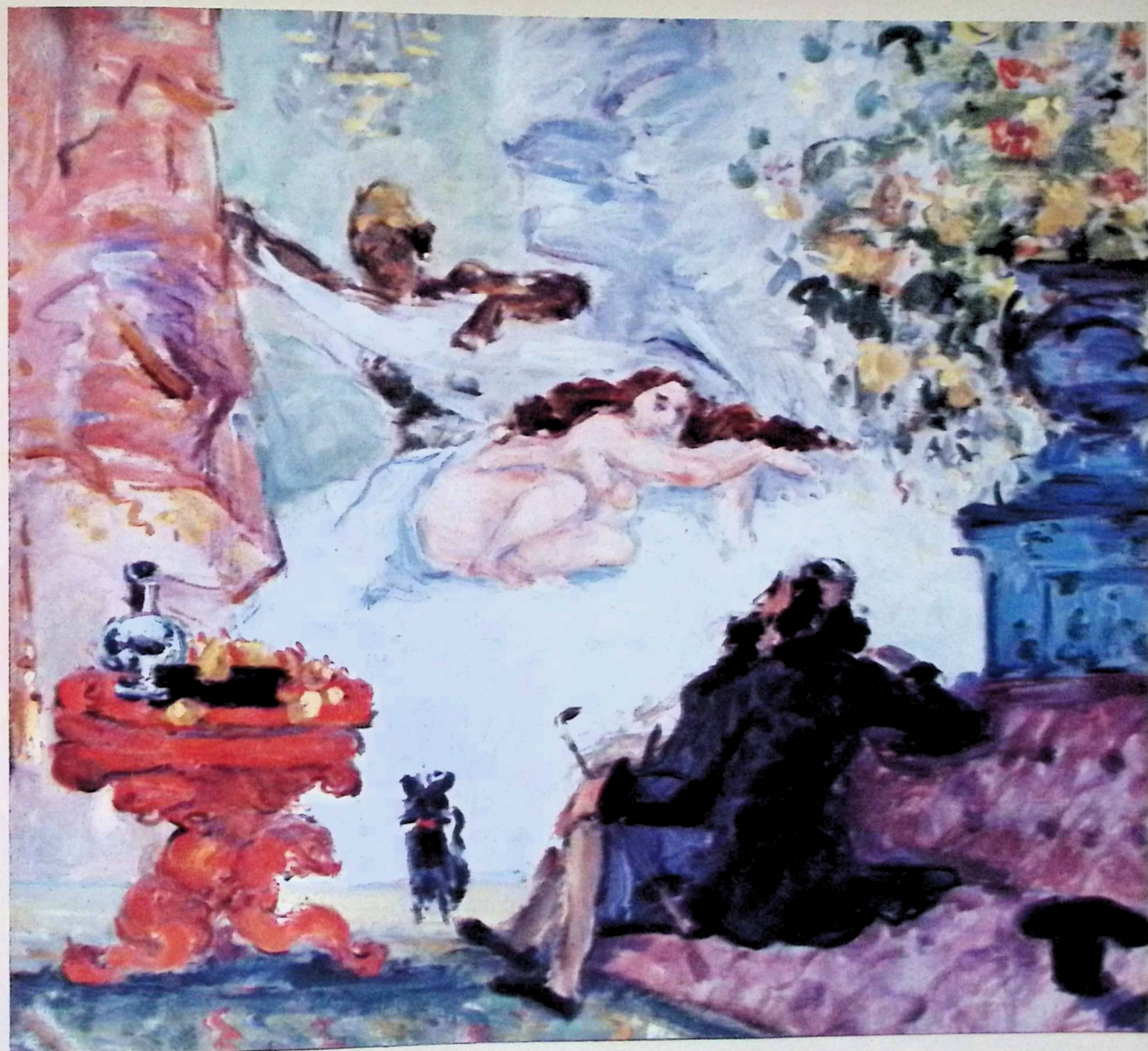
This early picture by the vanquisher of Impressionism pays homage to Edouard Manet, whom the young artist admired inordinately. Nevertheless, by the introduction of the wings of the theatre and a spectator, it is completely original and allows us to catch a glimpse of the later Cézanne. The brilliant colouring of the picture, the broad brushwork and the stark contrasts of the tones already show clearly at that period that he was on his victorious way to overcome Impressionism.

Paul Cézanne (Aix-en-Provence 1839–1906)

A New Olympia, ca. 1872–73

Canvas, 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ " × 22"

Paris, Louvre.



PIERRE AUGUSTE RENOIR · GIRL BATHING

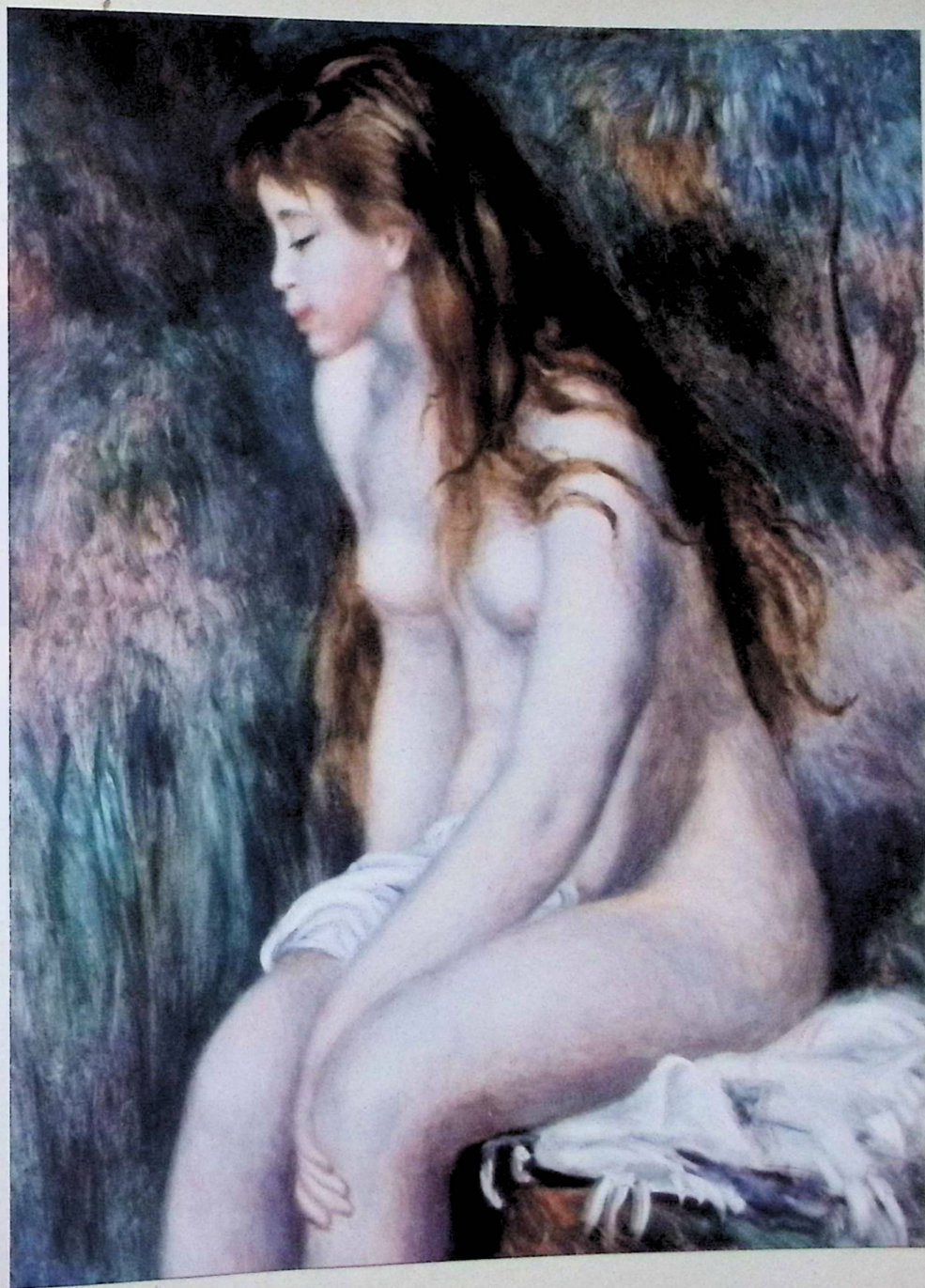
Renoir, particularly in his late landscape and female nudes, is the poet of the French Impressionists. With his refined brushwork and noble colouring he captures the finest shades of light on his subjects and preserves a seemingly uncomplicated joy of life which endured throughout his life even when, plagued by rheumatism, he could only continue to paint in a wheelchair and with the brush tied to his hands.

Pierre Auguste Renoir (Limoges 1841–1919 Cagnes)

Girl Bathing, 1892

Canvas, 33" × 26"

Los Angeles, George Gard de Sylva Collection.



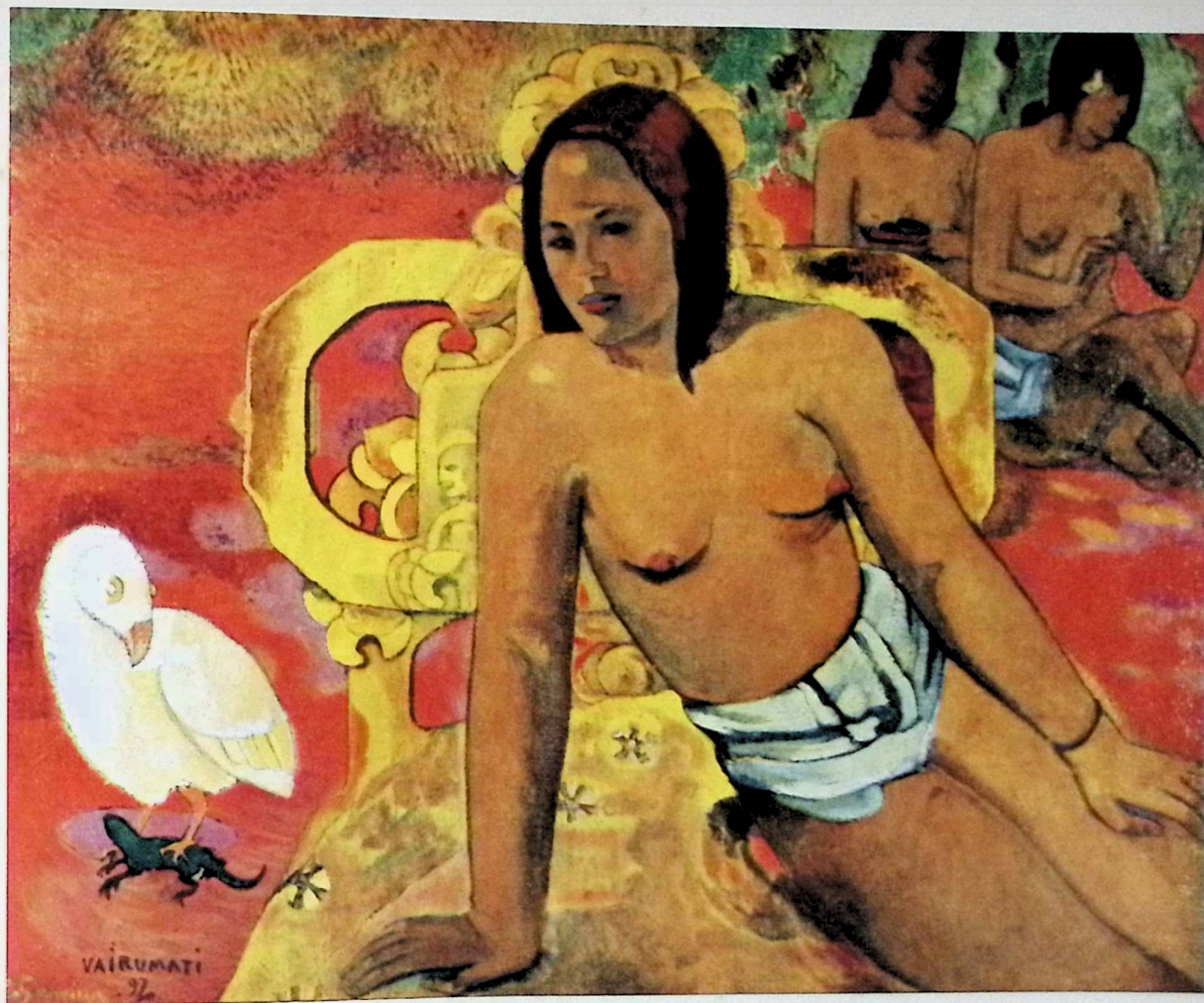
PAUL GAUGUIN · "VAIRUMATI"

"Before my chosen Eve whom I paint in the forms and harmonics of another world, the memories in its choice have perhaps invoked an unhappy past. Your civilised Eve makes almost everyone a misogynist; the genuine Eve whom you terrified in my studio could one day quite well smile at you less bitterly . . . The Eve I have painted (she alone) can logically remain naked before our eyes." (Gauguin to August Strindberg)

Eugène-Henri-Paul Gauguin (Paris 1848–1903 La Dominique)

"Vairumati", 1897

Paris, privately owned.



PAUL GAUGUIN · "AITA PARARI"

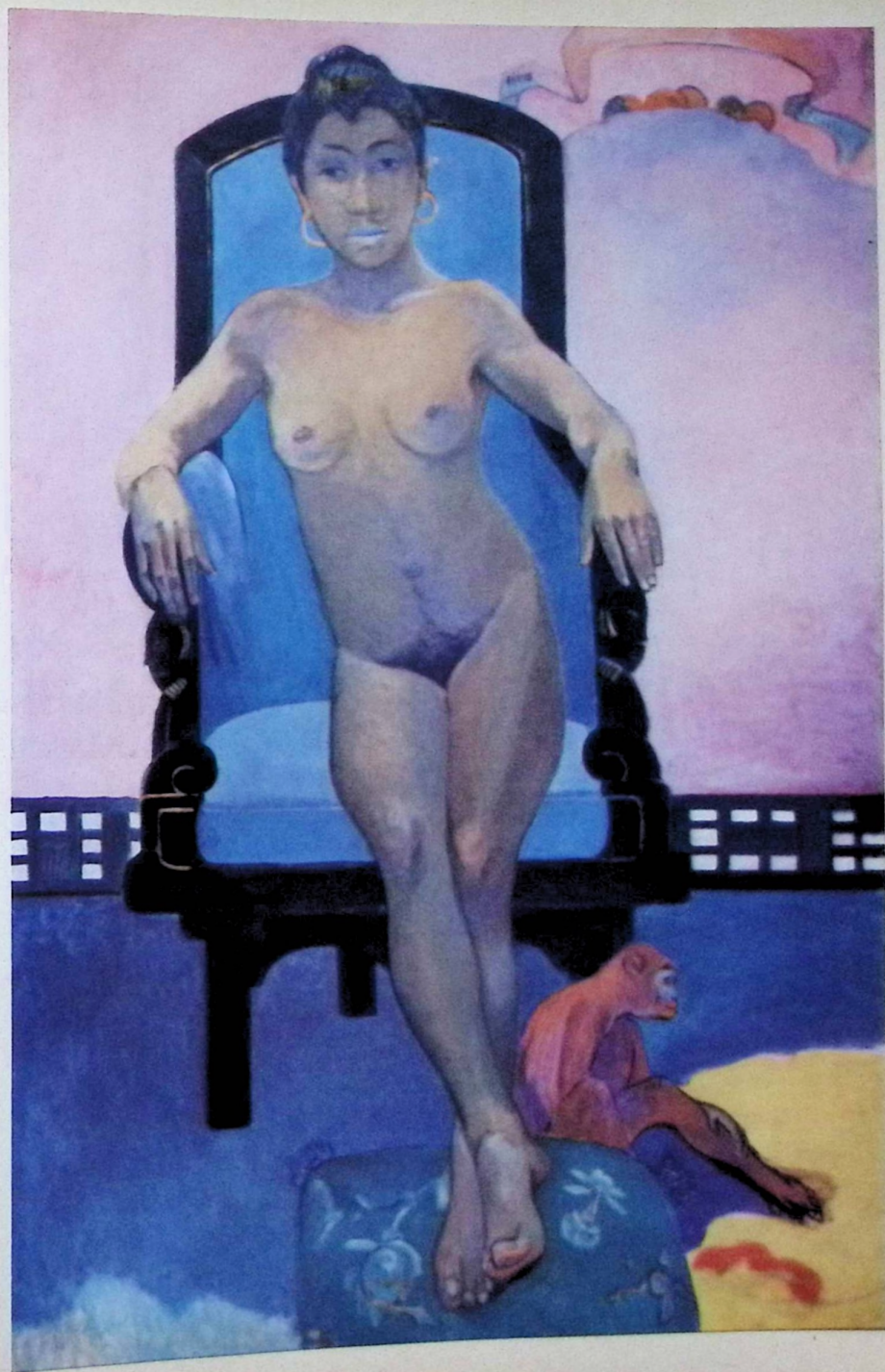
"The Tahitian Eve is sly and very cunning in her naïveté. I can never capture the mystery in her childish eyes. She is Eve after the Fall, who can still appear naked before our eyes with no feeling of shame, and has retained all the primitiveness of her animal beauty." (Extract from a letter written by the artist from Tahiti.)

Eugène-Henri-Paul Gauguin (Paris 1848–1903 La Dominique)

"Aita Parari" (Anna the Javanese), ca. 1891–93

Canvas, 42 $\frac{1}{2}$ " × 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Berne, Professor H. R. Hahnloser Collection.



VINCENT VAN GOGH · RECLINING FEMALE NUDE

This picture, one of the only three known nudes of Van Gogh, owes its creation presumably to his student days in the Cormon atelier in Paris, to which he moved from the Antwerp Academy in 1886 and where for the first time he came in contact with the Impressionists. The free light brushwork which characterises this picture clearly shows that already in Paris he had left his early work with the dark heavy colours far behind and was on the way to becoming that Van Gogh of the brilliant power of expression and the screaming colours which he became in Provence.

Vincent Van Gogh (Groot-Zundert 1853–1890 Auvers-sur-Oise)

Reclining Female Nude, 1887

Canvas, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " × 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Wassenaar, S. van Deventer Collection.



HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC · L'AMITIÉ

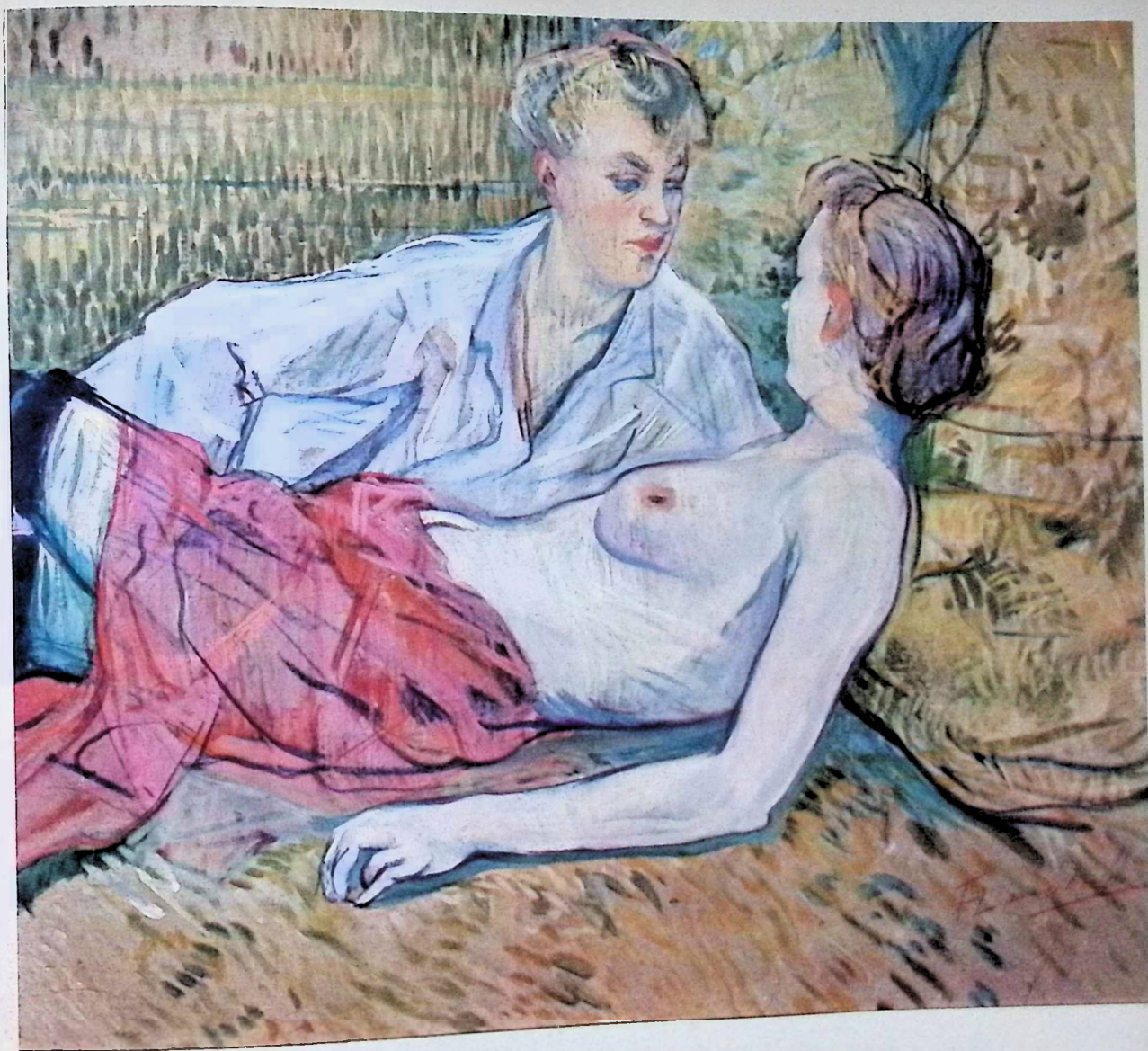
Scion of one of the oldest French aristocratic families, Lautrec sought the subjects for his ruthless and closely observed pictures, drawings and lithographs among the lower strata of life, in cafés and dance halls, on the streets and in brothels, without ever surpassing the bounds of decency. He is a typical representative of fin-de-siècle France and can be placed in the same category as poets like Verlaine or Mallarmé.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (Albi 1864–1901 Chateau de Malrome)

L'amitié

Cartoon, 26" × 33½"

Zürich, Bührle Collection.



PIERRE BONNARD · HALF-LENGTH FEMALE NUDE WITH LAMP

With Vuillard and Denis, Bonnard belongs to the group of the "Nabis" who correspond vaguely to the development stage of the Camden Town Group in England. Sober colour combinations and a subtle, never garish colouring characterise his painting, which with incredible tenderness achieves beauties of a kind unknown to the Impressionists.

Pierre Bonnard (Fontenay-aux-Rose 1867–1947 Le Cannet)

Half-length Nude with Lamp, 1912

Canvas, 30" × 30"

Berne, Professor H. R. Hahnloser Collection.



HENRI MATISSE · SEATED FEMALE NUDE WITH RED BACKGROUND

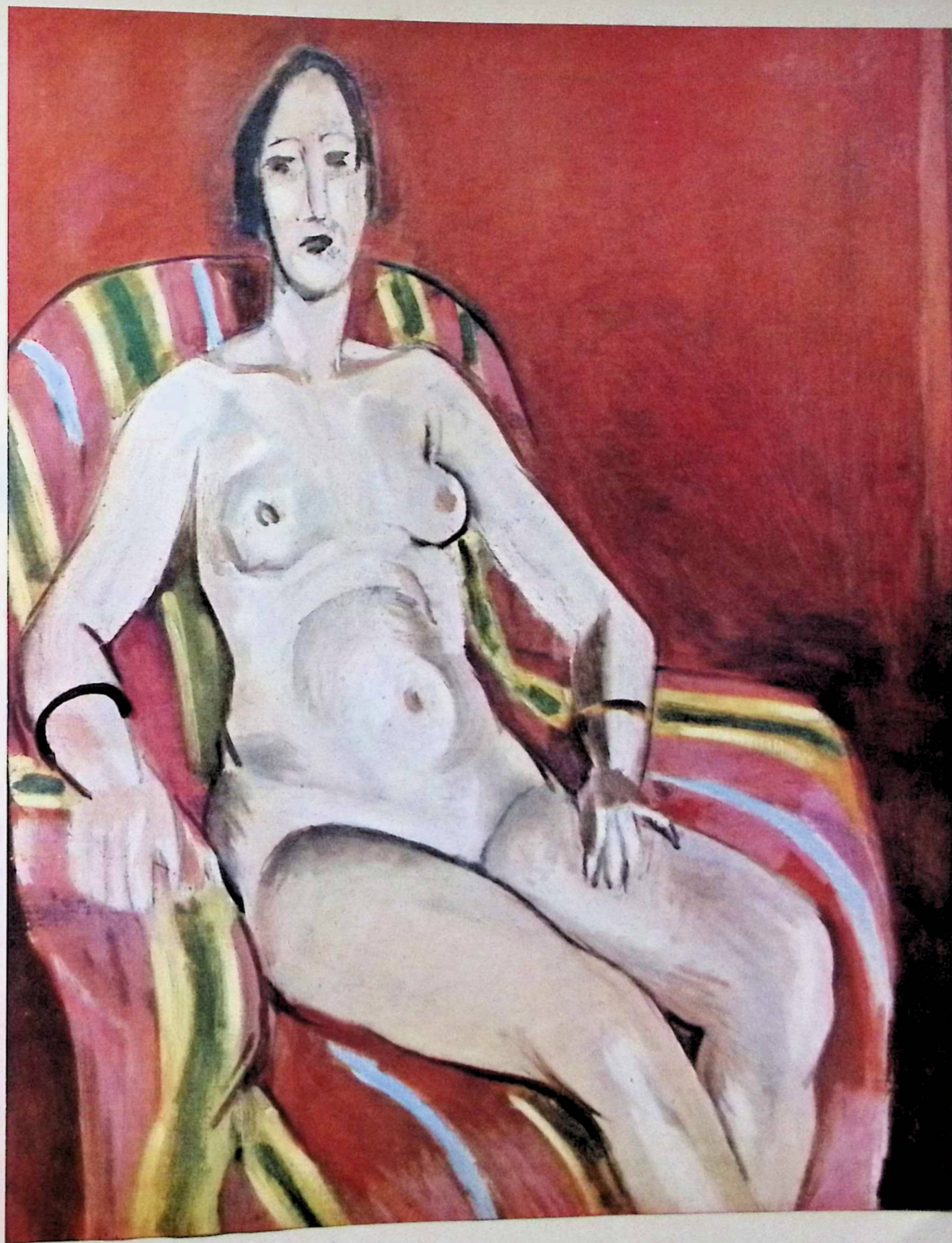
Matisse, the leader of the Fauves is, after Picasso, the most influential French painter of the first half of the twentieth century. His influences have not been confined to France, but extend in particular to Germany where painters like Purrmann, Moll or Levy can be considered as his pupils.

Henri Matisse (Cateau 1869–1954 Nice)

Seated Female Nude with Red Background, 1925

Canvas, 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " $\times$ 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne.



GEORGES ROUAULT · WOMAN AT THE MIRROR

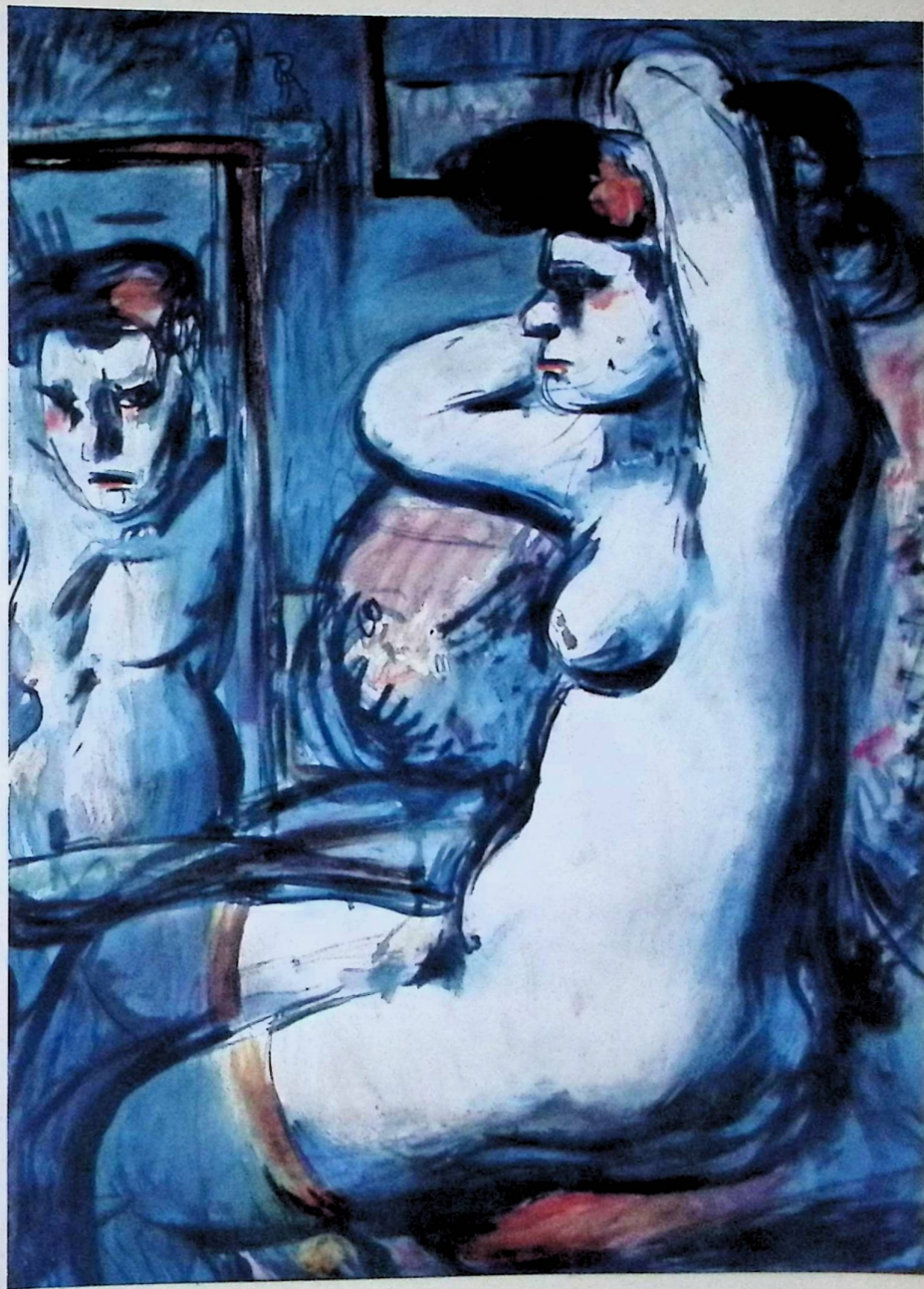
"A scream in the night! A stifled sob! A smile that strangles itself!" This is how Rouault himself described his passionate intentionally gloomy and abysmal painting. Later when he became the greatest and essentially the most religious painter of our age and for the first time in 1905 after his apprenticeship as a glazier produced his dark, gleaming pictures with their bitter content, he aroused a sensation. The demonism of unfathomable gruesomeness and utter mercilessness also radiates from this nude whore, one of his earliest works.

Georges Rouault (Paris 1871-1958)

Woman at the Mirror, 1906

Water colour, 28" × 21"

Privately owned.



RAOUL DUFY • RESTING ODALISQUE

Dufy, a friend of the dress designer, Poiret, was a magnificent decorator all his life. Talented, in the finest sense of French painting, with the sensitivity of an eighteenth-century erotic, a "mondain" who, with no individual creative talent, has brought a note of geniality into French art of our century.

Raoul Dufy (Le Havre 1877-1953 Forcalquier)

Resting Odalisque (L'Hindoue), 1928

Canvas, 18½" × 22"

Paris, Galerie Louis Carré.



PABLO PICASSO · LA TOILETTE

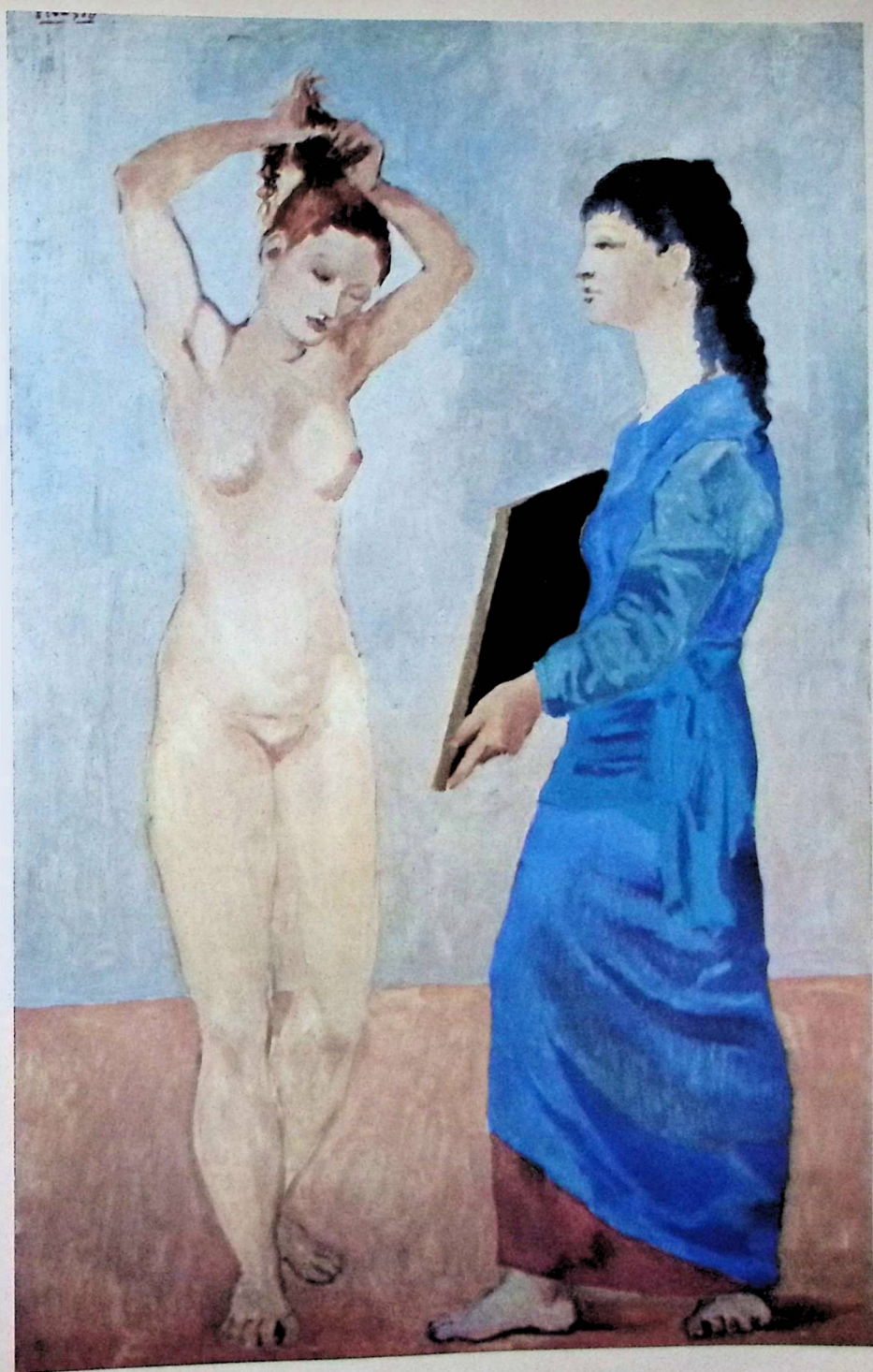
This picture is from Picasso's "blue period". "He now paints almost exclusively figure studies of great wealth of feeling. As subjects they depict the little lost existences of the great capital, the denizens of the Montmartre cafes. It is the world of Toulouse-Lautrec, but without the latter's idealisation — poorer, more naked, greatly stylised but sentimentalised in style by his youthful verve." (W. Haftmann)

Pablo Picasso (Malaga 1881 — Lives in Cannes)

La Toilette, 1905

Canvas, 50" × 40"

Buffalo, Albright Art Gallery.



GEORGES BRAQUE · FEMALE NUDE, BACK VIEW

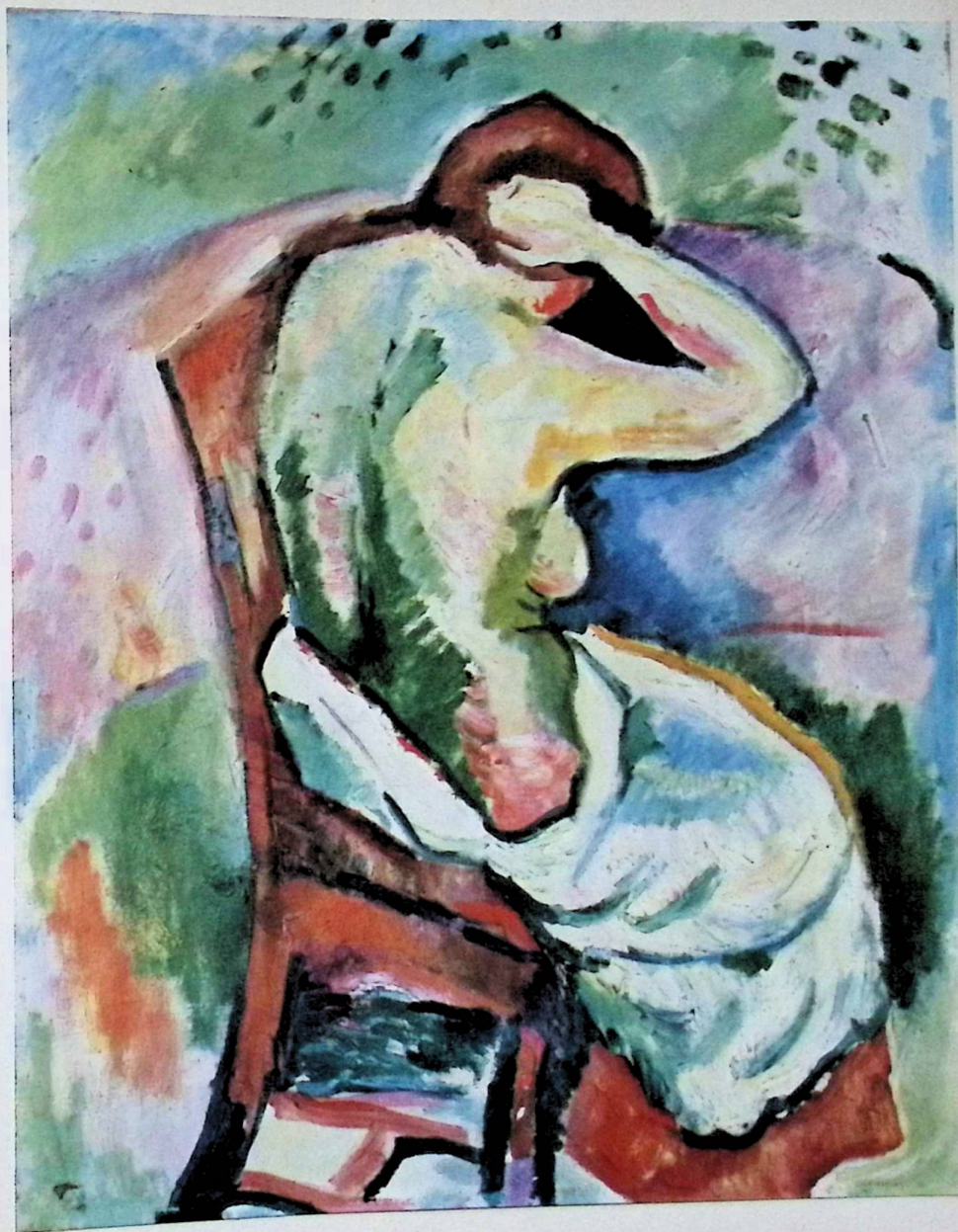
Braque, who about 1908 turned to Cubism under the influence of his friend, Picasso, in his early period stands near to Cézanne and the "Fauves". The composition is looser and strongly naturalistic, the outlines vague and weak, the colouring eloquent yet contrasted. But the whole form already shows his sense of Cubism and the urge to return to detail in favour of a strong picture structure.

Georges Braque (Argenteuil 1882–1958 Paris)

Female Nude on a chair, 1907

Canvas, 22" × 18¹/₂"

D.H. Kahnweiler, Paris Collection.



AMADEO MODIGLIANI · FEMALE NUDE

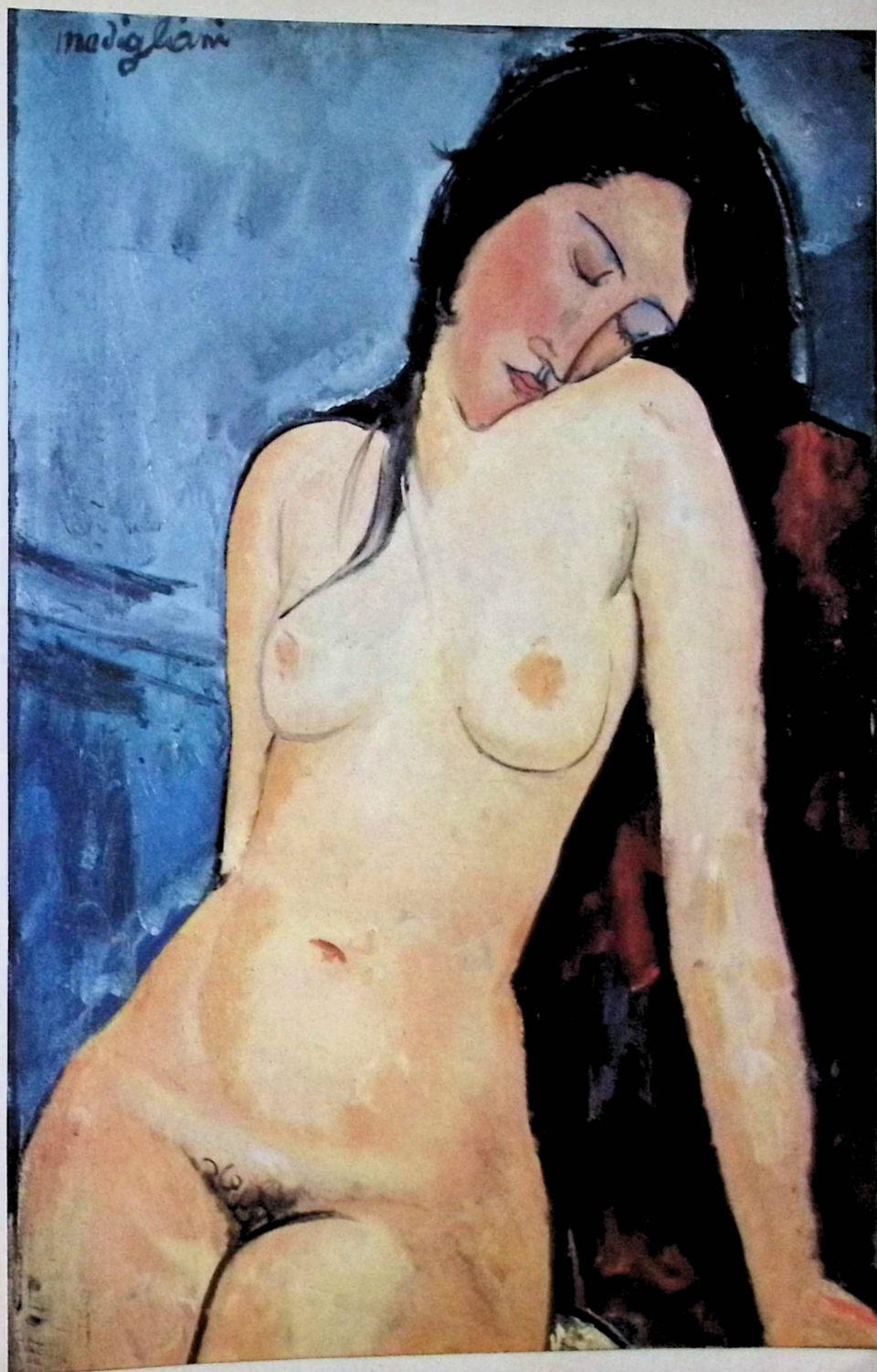
A Parisianised Italian, this descendant of Botticelli, conforming dutifully to the classic lines, born to joy and destined to melancholia, has experienced the heights and depths of life in Montmartre. A noble, precocious lone-wolf, an apostle of purity, broken by modern civilisation, whose true significance for modern European art will only be revealed in our times by more publicity.

Amadeo Modigliani (Leghorn 1884–1920 Paris)

Female Nude, 1917

Canvas, 37" × 24"

London, Samuel Courtauld Collection.



EMILE OTHON FRIESZ · FEMALE NUDE, BACK VIEW

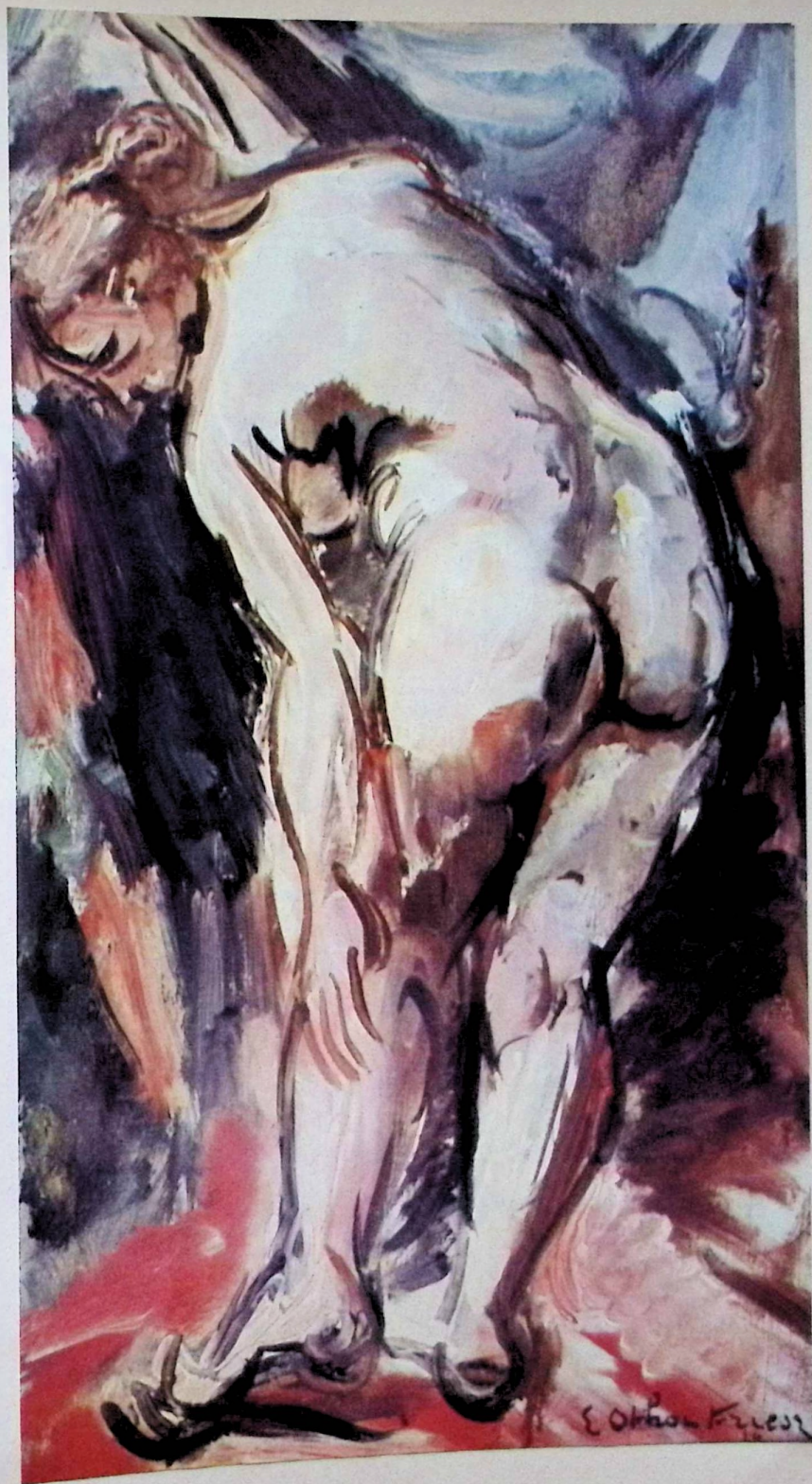
Othon Friesz, a boyhood friend of Dufy's and since 1904 closely connected with the group around Matisse, never denied his attachment to the "Fauves" movement. An explosive power of expression, stark strongly contrasting colours, a sense for rhythm and energetic movement characterise the work of this individual artist.

Emile Othon Friesz (Le Havre 1879–1949 Paris)

Female Nude, Back view

Canvas

Switzerland, Private collection.



ANDRÉ DERAÏN · SEATED FEMALE NUDE

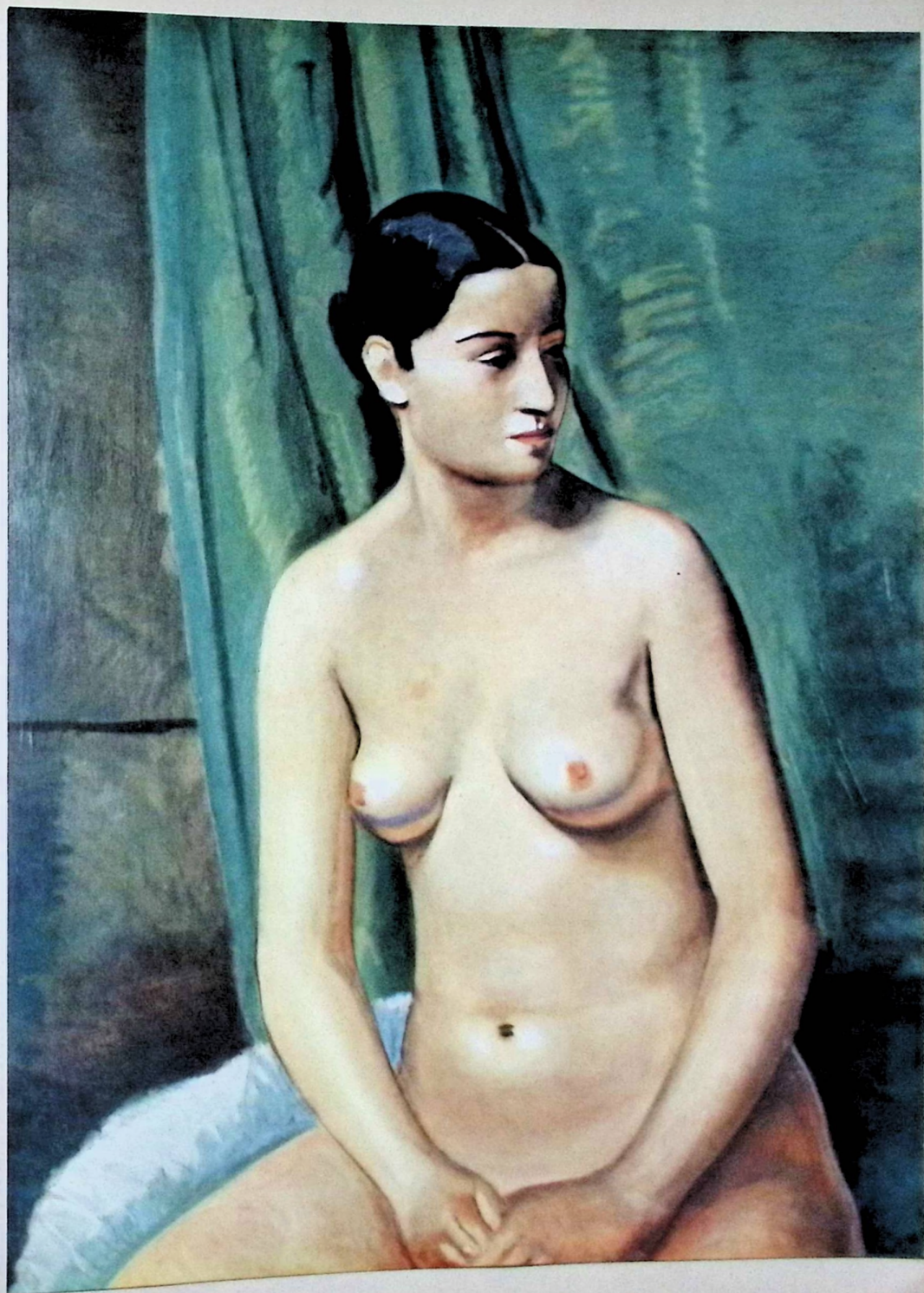
Derain in his early days, together with Vlaminck and Matisse, a leading representative of the Fauves, through his collaboration with Picasso (1910) momentarily fell under the spell of Cubism, the form-world of which he softened considerably after the First World War by heightened propensity for the visual, thus creating his own style in modern French painting. His subtle sense for the decorative value of colour, together with an accentuated plastic sense, makes his work original and monumental.

André Derain (Chatou 1880 – Lives in Paris)

Seated Female Nude ("La Femme au rideau vert")

Canvas, 36" × 29"

Paris, privately owned.



MARCEL GROMAIRE · THREE NUDES IN THE LANDSCAPE

Autodidactic, influenced by Cézanne and Matisse, Marcel Gromaire after the First World War, impressed by the art of Fernand Leger, developed an expressive and monumental style. His achievements in the decorations for the Paris Exhibition of 1937 and his designs for tapestries are far from inconsiderable. His figures are severely abstract and geometric without losing sight of the natural model.

Marcel Gromaire (Noyelles-sur-Sambre 1892 – Lives in Paris)

Three Nudes in the Landscape, 1953

Canvas, 40" × 32"

Paris, Galerie Louis Carré.



MAURICE BRIANCHON · HALF-LENGTH NUDE · A SEATED GIRL

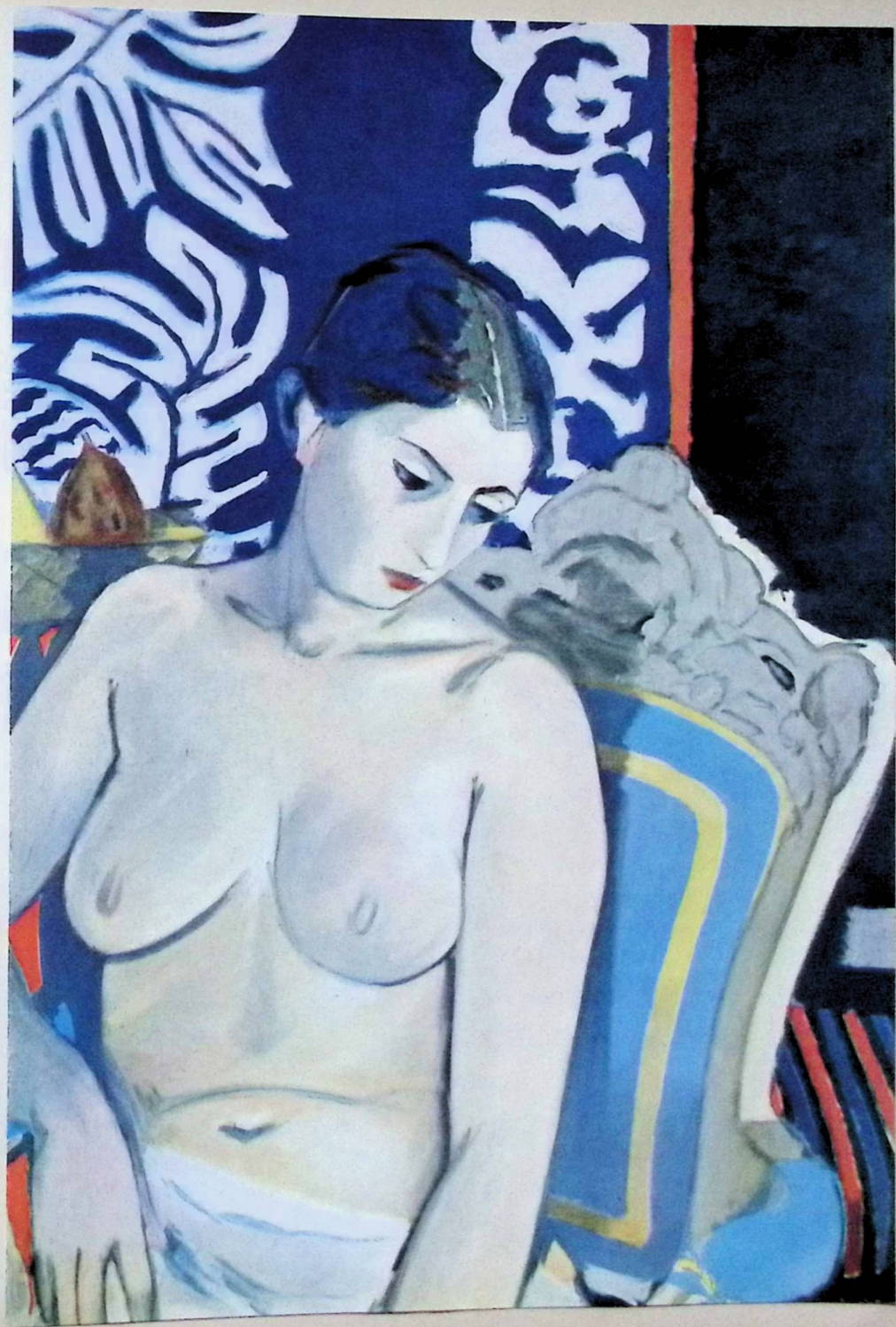
A non-abstract painter in a generation of abstract painters, Brianchon, developing from Matisse and his school, represents the best tradition of French painting: sensitivity, skilful brushwork, strength of form and a gentle lyricism.

Maurice Brianchon (Fresnay 1899 – Lives in Neuilly-sur-Seine)

Half-length Nude. A Seated Girl, 1946

Canvas, 37" × 26"

In the possession of the artist.



JEAN-GABRIEL DOMERGUE · NUDE

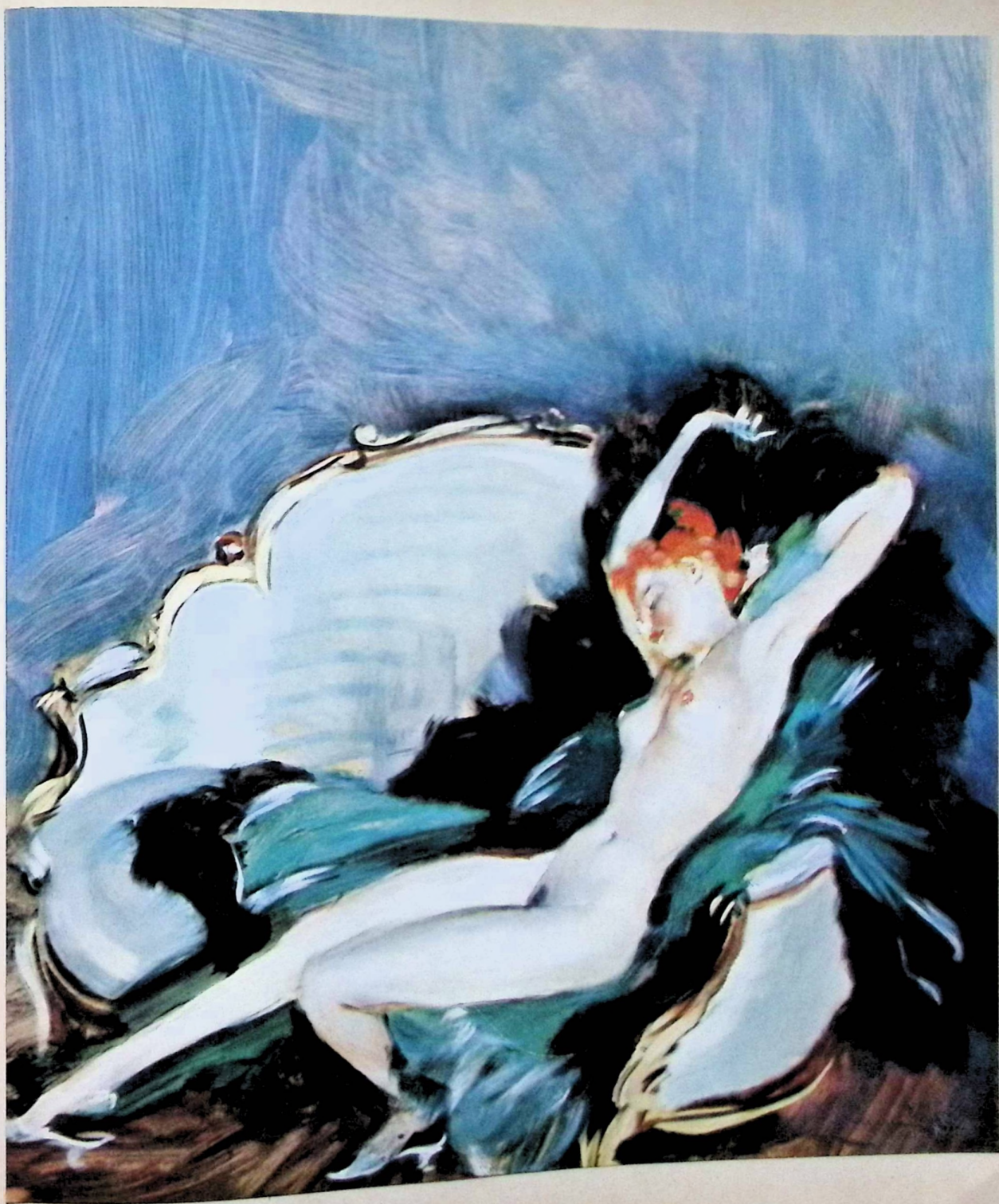
As the modern descendant of the master of the gallant eighteenth century, Domergue likes to portray festivals, serenades, Pierrots and Columbines or elegant mondaines. Our picture, in its easy technique and tasteful subtlety, betrays the busy fashion designer and versatile book illustrator.

Jean-Gabriel Domergue (Bordeaux 1889 – Lives in Paris)

Nude

Canvas, 32" × 24"

Privately owned.



MARC CHAGALL • LES BORDS DE LA SEINE

As a poet and mystic, a teller of fairy stories, the Russian painter, Chagall, a wanderer between two worlds, holds a unique place in modern European art. His expressionism is never pathetic, seductive or aggressive but inspires from an unending love for all creatures, both man and beast, from a geniality and artistic grace peculiar to this "outsider".

Marc Chagall (Vitebsk 1889 – Lives in Venice)

Les Bords de la Seine, 1953

Canvas, 31³/₄" × 27¹/₄"

Privately owned.



EDVARD MUNCH · RECLINING FEMALE NUDE

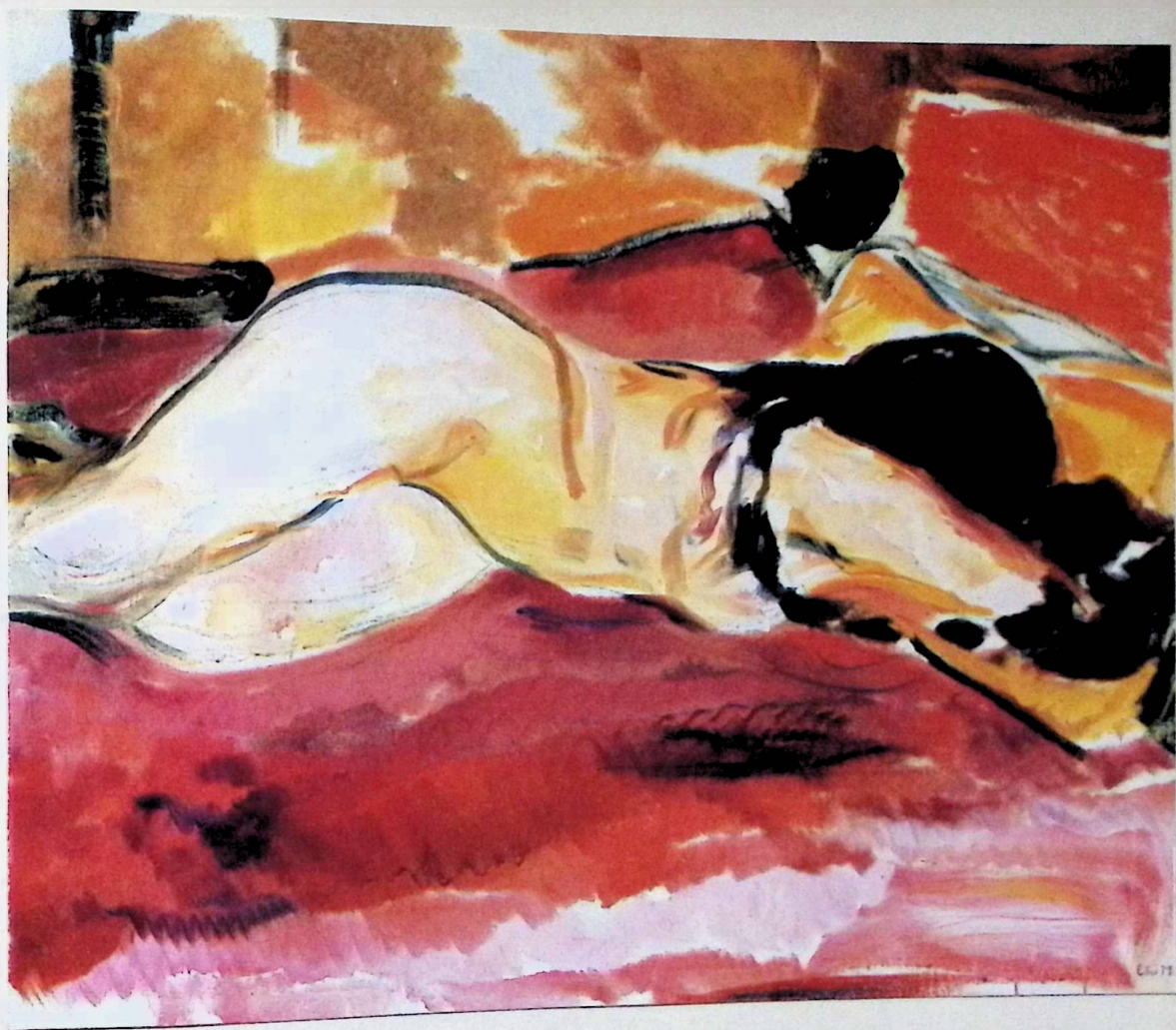
The Norwegian, Edvard Munch, torn between Paris and Munich at the turn of the century, is one of the key figures of modern painting. His influence, the will to break with all traditional styles, prepared the way for Expressionism, particularly in Germany. A milestone in the history of painting around 1900, his life-work petered out – comparable with that of his countryman Knut Hamsun – in the stress of the political development of the following decades.

Edvard Munch (Lodøen/Norway 1863–1944 Oslo)

Reclining Female Nude, 1905

Canvas, 32" × 40"

Hamburg, Kunsthalle.



LOVIS CORINTH · FEMALE NUDE IN BED

Baroque rhythmic movement and broad impressionist brushwork, which allows the physical to gleam through the transparently handled flesh, characterise this early bravura work of Corinth, whose creative art was devoted throughout his life to the robust female body.

Louis Corinth (Tapien 1858–1925 Zandvoort)

Female Nude in Bed, 1896

Canvas, 30" × 48"

Bremen, Kunsthalle.



OTTO MÜLLER · TWO GIRLS IN THE COUNTRY

The idyllic poet among the German Expressionists of the "Brücke" circle, Müller wins his way back to the lost paradise in the form of pointed-breasted gipsy girls. "Barely changing, after he has once found his medium he repeats the same subject with a host of variations. The melody recurs, the familiar note. Thus his pictures have the effect of a long shepherd lay." (L. G. Buchheim)

Otto Müller (Liebau/Silesia 1874–1930 Breslau)

Two Girls in the Country, 1925

Canvas, 35³/₄" × 24¹/₄"

Munich, Bayr. Staatsgemäldesammlungen.



EMIL NOLDE · FEMALE NUDE

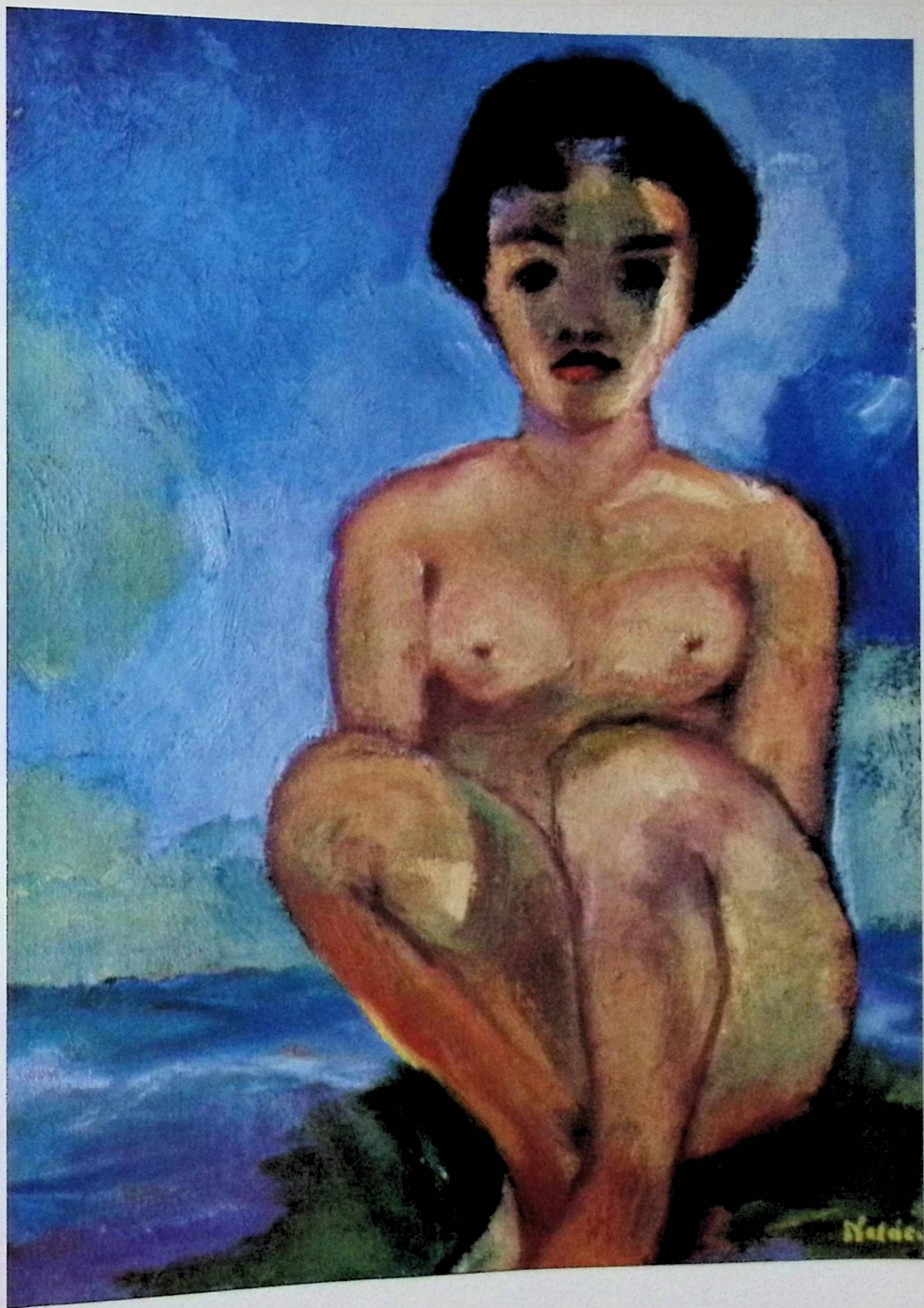
Nolde is the great individualist among the German Expressionists. Only for a short time was he a member of the "Brücke" circle and for a few years stood close to the "Blaue Reiter". "For him nature is no object for amiable interpretation but a challenge; using it as a medium, he tries to express something which represents not so much his sensual experiences or his intelligence as his spiritual nature and what he suspects lies behind things, the phenomena of which he experiences symbolically."
(G.F. Harilaub)

Emil Nolde (Nolde/Schleswig 1867-1956 Seebull)

Female Nude, 1930

Canvas

Seebull Foundation (Schleswig).



PAULA MODERSOHN-BECKER · SELF-PORTRAIT AS HALF LENGTH NUDE

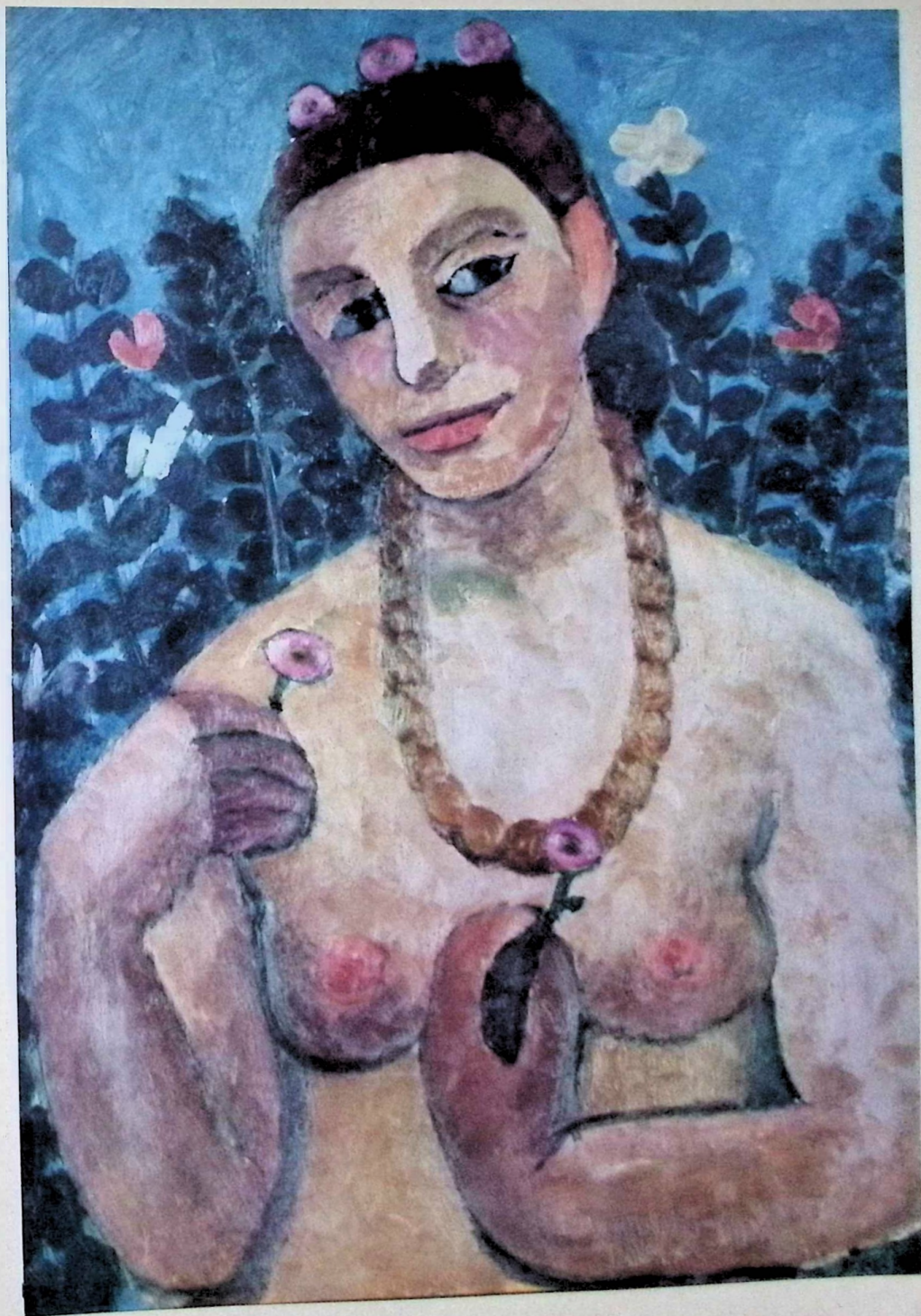
The turpid art of this individualist painter – comparable with Käthe Kollwitz as a typical expression of female creative art – has her counterparts in the Jugendstil and in her affinity to Gauguin. She remains, however, a phenomenon that can only be explained as an expression of protest against a form of society from which the artist herself originated and the end of which she envisaged.

Paula Modersohn-Becker (Dresden 1876–1907 Worpswede)

Self-Portrait as half-length Nude, 1906

Canvas, 32" × 24"

Basle, Kunstmuseum.



PAUL KLEE · SEATED NUDE

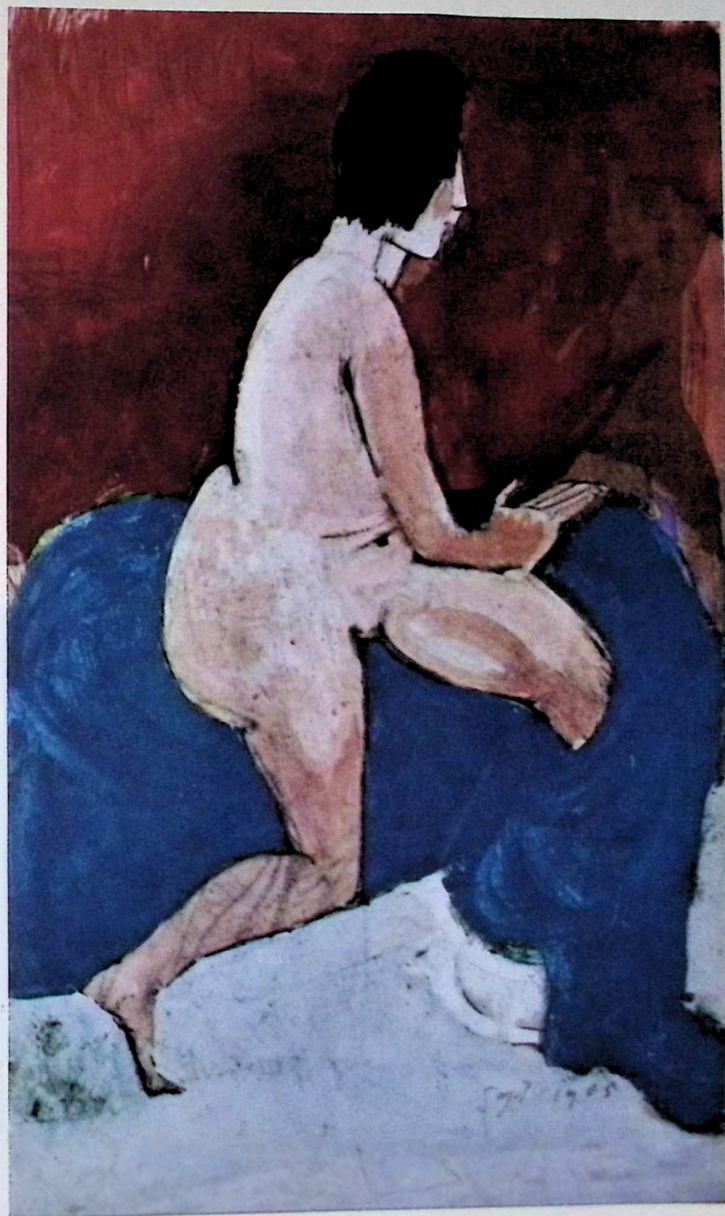
The son of a musician from Münchenbuchsee, born in Berne, Klee in his early nude approaches the naturalistic, as opposed to his later dreamlike creations, which always lurked in the background of his work. Elegant in composition and reticent in the choice of his palette he bestows delicate line work on this type of picture. In his early work Klee tried to make visible the transitory in life, in contrast with his later symbolic attitude.

Paul Klee (Münchenbuchsee 1879–1940 Muralto-Locarno)

Seated Nude

Water Colour, 9½" × 7½"

Munich, Lenbach Gallery.



FRANZ MARC • BATHING GIRLS

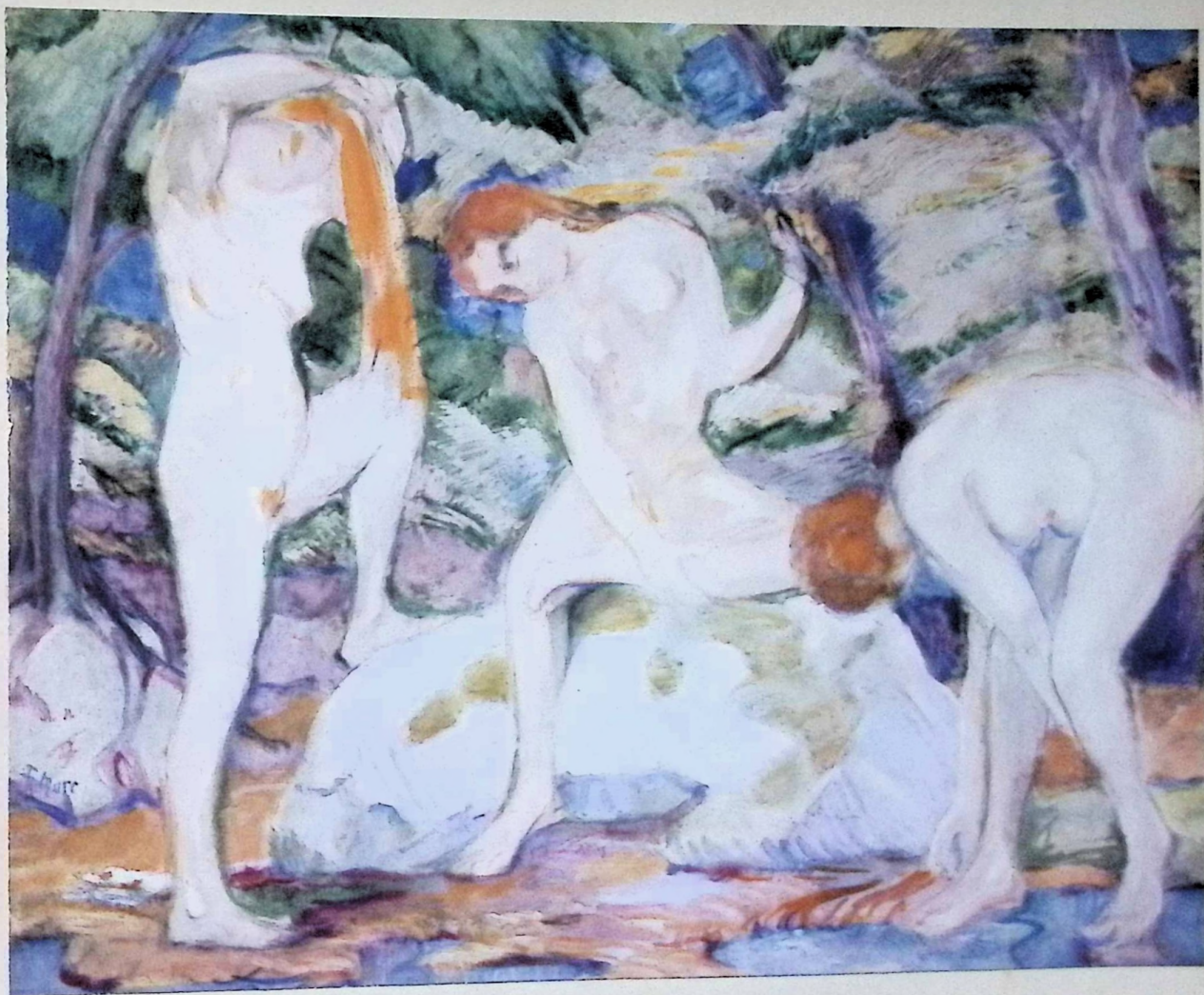
"My art is the only thing for which I can find neither words nor explanations. At the beginning I pondered a great deal over what I did and this lasted while I still felt myself in relationship to the art of others. Since then I have been free. I neither reflect about my work nor about anyone else's. I paint as I please: by instinct. Only when a work is finished do I become aware of my development." (Franz Marc to R. Delaunay. 1913)

Franz Marc (Munich 1880–1916 Verdun)

Bathing Girls, 1910

Canvas, 22" × 28"

Karlsruhe, Kunsthalle.



AUGUST MACKE · BATHING GIRLS

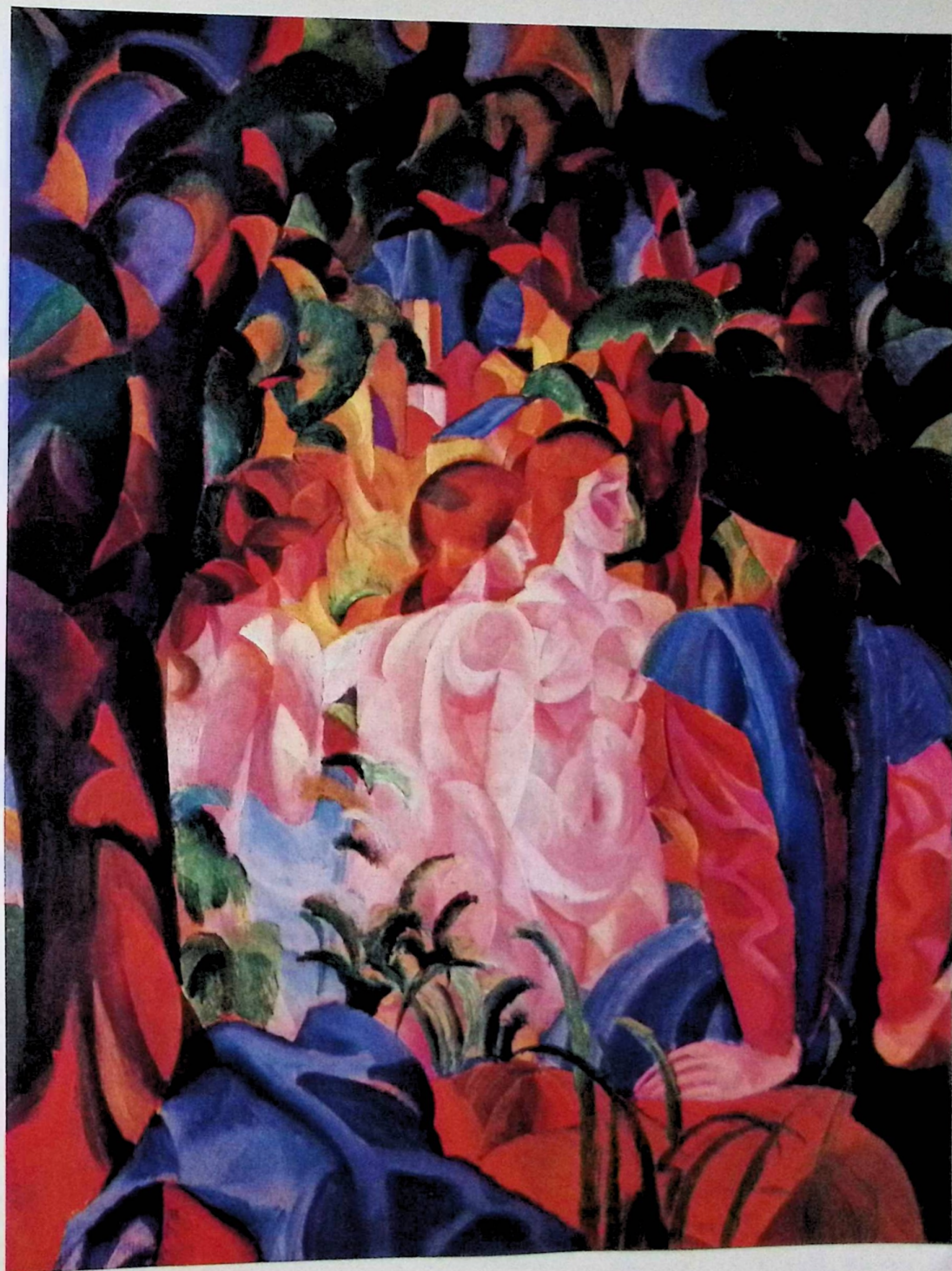
Light and serene, "gifted" with a light friendly brush, August Macke paints nature, which he understands in its beauty through Franz Marc on the one hand and on the other hand through the Frenchman, Delaunay. In one of the most favoured conjunctions of European painting, Macke's attractive canvases represent the bridge between Germany and France.

August Macke (Meschede/Westphalia 1887–1914 Phertes-les-Hurlus)

Bathing Girls, 1913

Canvas, 40" × 32"

Munich, Staatsgemäldesammlungen.



P. M. PADUA · NUDE

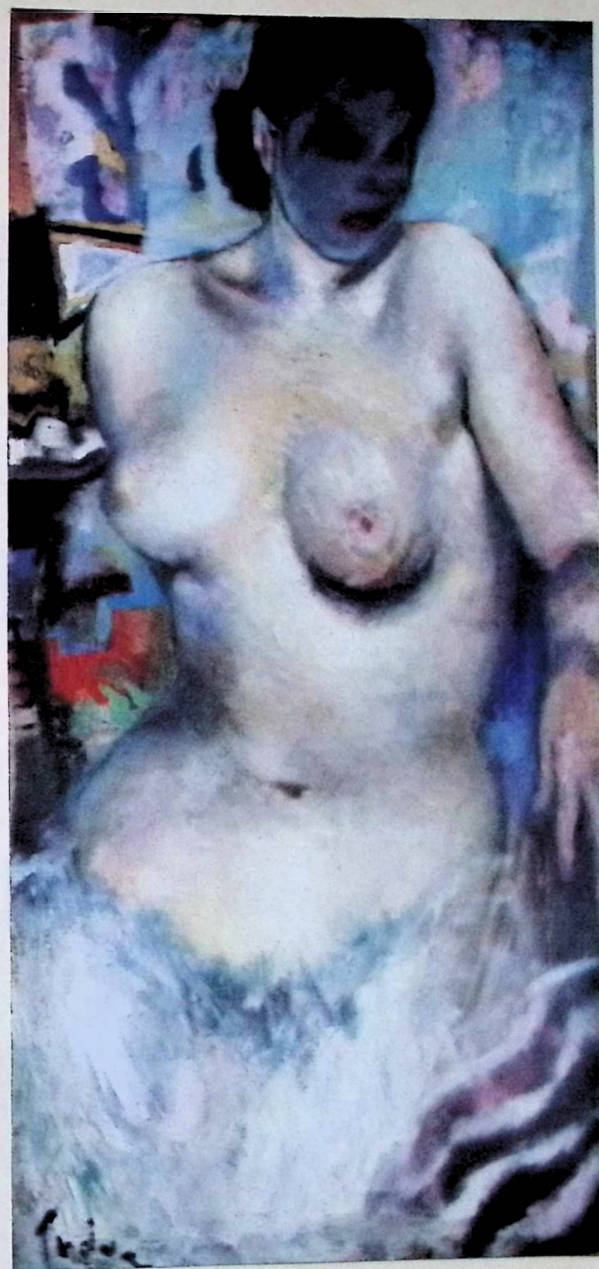
Padua, with his loose brushwork technique, is considered one of the most important modern painters who surprises by his independent temperament, wealth of fantasy, and cult for colour. Despite his enforced discipline there is something explosive in his pictures.

P.M. Padua (Salzburg 1903 – Lives in Rottach/Tegernsee)

Nude, 1957

Canvas, 42" × 22"

Privately owned.



OSKAR KOKOSCHKA • FEMALE NUDE

Kokoschka, after Lovis Corinth, the most talented painter in the transition from Impressionism to Subjective Expressionism, is a magician of colour and a fanatical observer. In his portraits, landscapes and nudes, the broad world of the visible is captured with a vitality and power of expression reminiscent of a Baroque artist and, apparently beyond all the "isms" and exploratory paths of the moderns, melts into a solid unchangeable element. The glowing wealth of colour is enhanced to an exquisite point of vitality.

Oskar Kokoschka (Pochlarn 1866 – Lives in Vevey)

Female Nude (Elisa Temary), 1926–27

Canvas, 38¹/₄" × 52"

Krefeld, privately owned.



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