

Girlfriends: Part One

Out from the Shadows

Camille Claudel (1864-1943)

Talented from youth, inspired by nature, and captivated by love, Camille Claudel unlocked the emotive power of sculpture after centuries of its subtleties having been obliterated by excessive polishing and focus on technique. Drawn intuitively to the innocence of children, the experience of old age, and the complexities of love and madness, Claudel exhibited great skill in the portrayal of raw and real emotions. Whilst sculpture until this point had typically dealt in hard and impenetrable subject matter akin to its materials, Claudel managed to peer beyond the surface and add transformative elusiveness to formulaic solidity.

Sadly, following the end of her long-standing affair with fellow sculptor, [Auguste Rodin](#), Claudel's own underlying delicacy unraveled and she experienced a psychological breakdown. As unsupported personally as she had been professionally, her own family placed her in an asylum. This action was the equivalent of caging a bird, and as Claudel could not fly in captivity, she instead became the living embodiment of her pain, a symbol of the destruction of love, existing only in her own despair. Although the woman herself died in relative obscurity, interest in her art grew organically and there is now a National Museum in France dedicated to Claudel's life's work.

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/the-genius-of-camille-claudel/>

- <http://www.museecamilleclaudel.fr/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkNN1Aq0Fu0> (long)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrWR6BN6qBo> (short)



















L'Abandon

Although also smooth-lined and romantic, this sculpture differs radically to those of her male contemporaries. Similar in composition to Rodin's *Eternal Idol* (1889), whilst in his sculpture we are confronted by highly polished sex and desire, here Claudel depicts love as a power of the mind, as well as an attraction between bodies. The lovers are connected as equals as they gracefully unite their heads. The title and subject of the piece originally comes from the legendary Indian tale by the poet Kalidasa, in which Sakuntala is reunited with her husband following a long magic spell. First modelled in 1886, Claudel repeatedly fought for a state commission for a marble version but was constantly refused. It was only in 1905, when the Countess of Maigret was still Claudel's financial sponsor that a version was finally carved in marble. At this point the sculpture was renamed *Vertumnus and Pomona* after the Roman God of metamorphosis who initially disguised himself as an old woman to gain the trust of the goddess of fruit. Indeed the sculpture is also sometimes known as *The Abandon*, and with these three different titles, moves from Hindu to Greek mythology, to personal experience.

Originally read as a surrender to love, the renaming in 1905 to introduce an aspect of disguise points towards Claudel's distrust of Rodin after their separation and complicates the meaning. According to the art historian, Angelo Caranfa, the piece expresses Claudel's worry that she can never detach herself entirely from Rodin. A letter written to Gustave Geffroy in 1905 indicates that the work had a particular personal and artistic significance for Claudel, "(...) I am still coughing and sneezing as I polish with rage the group destroying my tranquility: with tear-filled eyes and convulsive groans I finish the hair of Vertumnus and Pomona. Let's hope that despite different accidents, they shall be finished in a logical way, suiting two perfect lovers." The sculpture is Claudel's hopeful recounting of tender, real, and vulnerable love. It is not an idealized symbol of love as Rodin's *The Kiss* has come to represent, but instead reveals love, even if in time lost, that was actually experienced by two people, not an untouchable vision, but a momentary actual joy felt in the course of everyday life.

Gabriele Muntter (1877-1962)

Gabriele Muntter was a German expressionist painter who was at the forefront of the Munich avant-garde in the early 20th century. She studied and lived with the painter Wassily Kandinsky and was a founding member of the expressionist group Der Blaue Reiter.

https://www.schooltube.com/media/Gabriele+MuntterA+German+Expressionist/1_zrx1bv1a

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAHwpcbZUHY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0VlCP1PYj0>











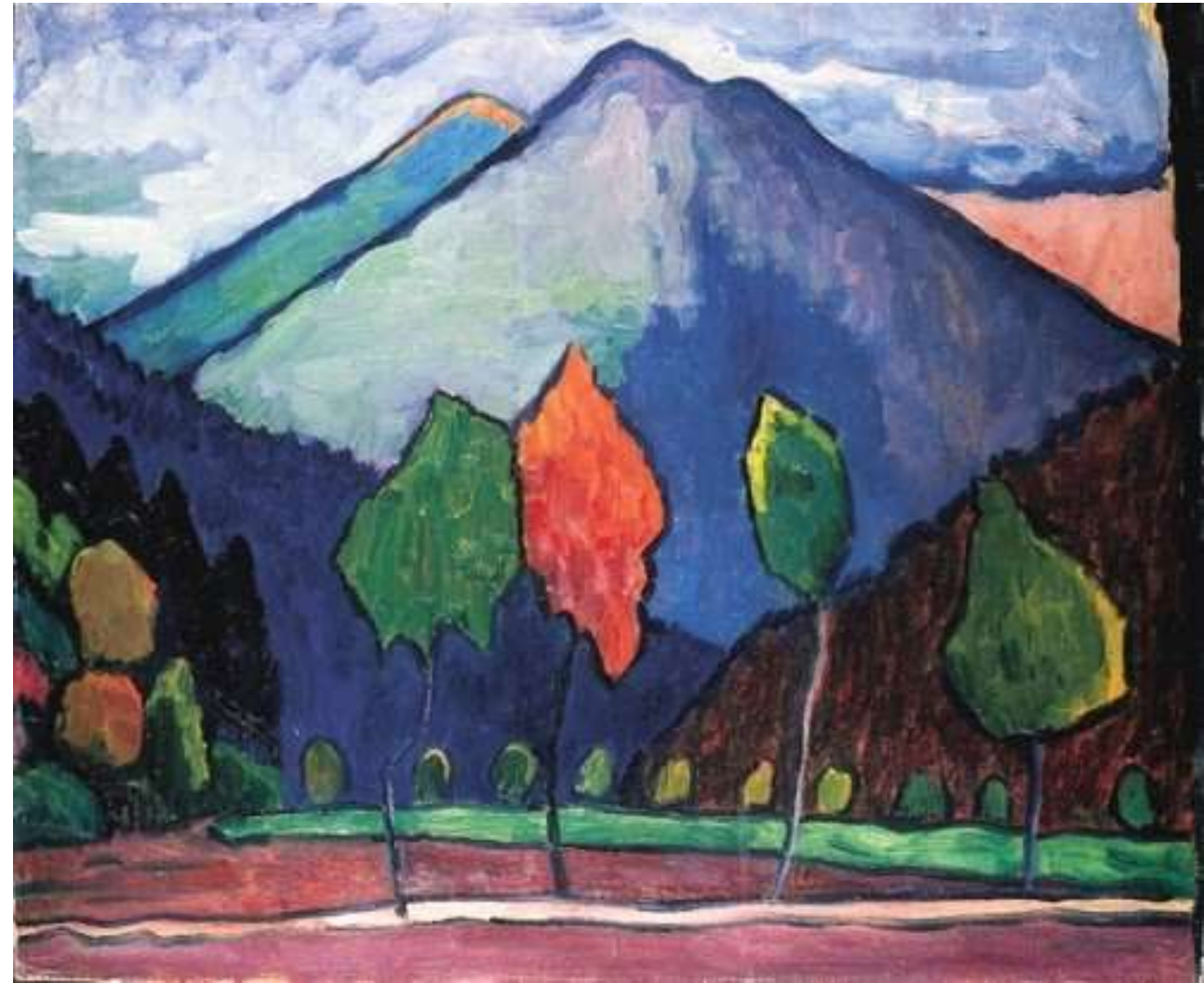
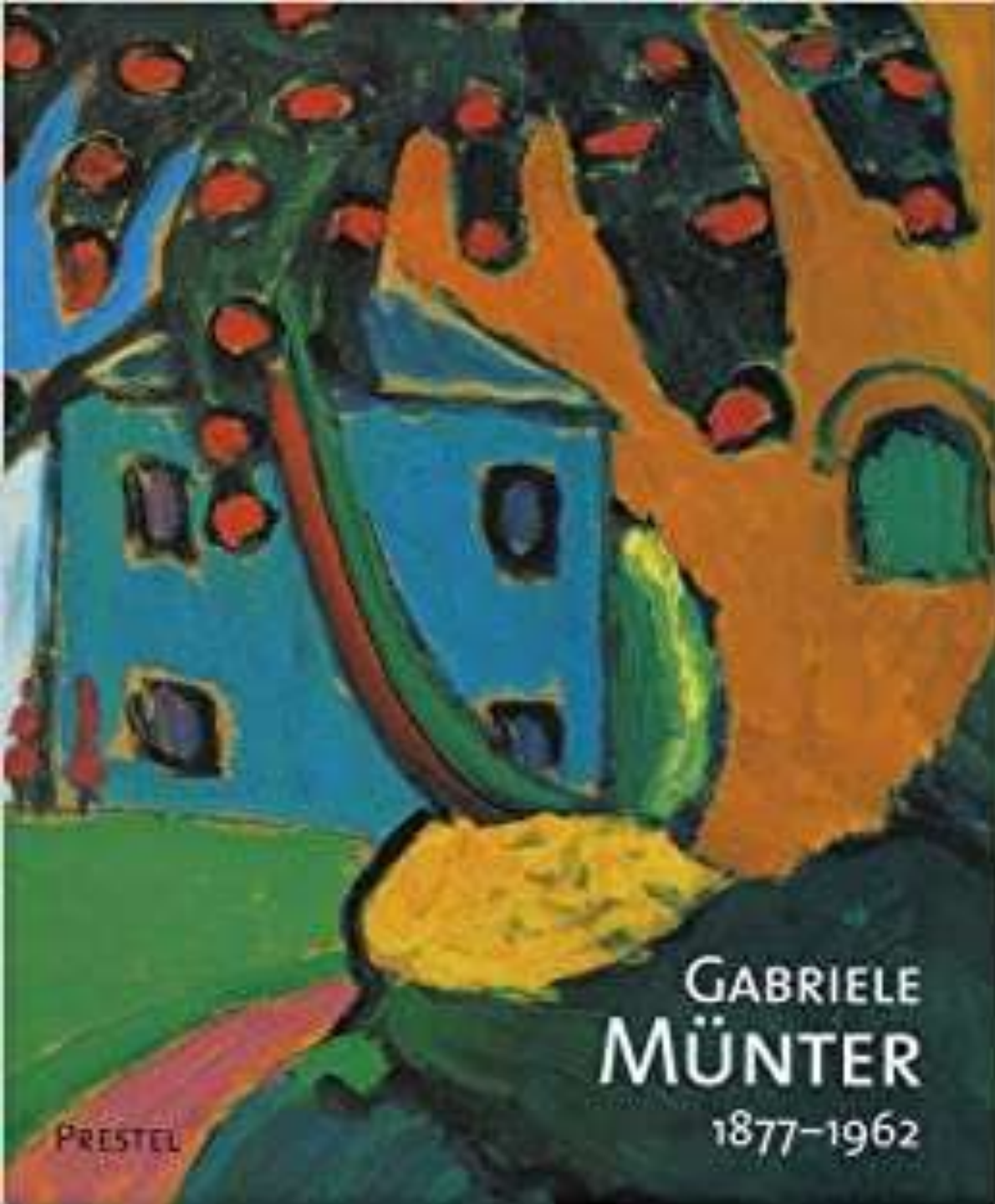






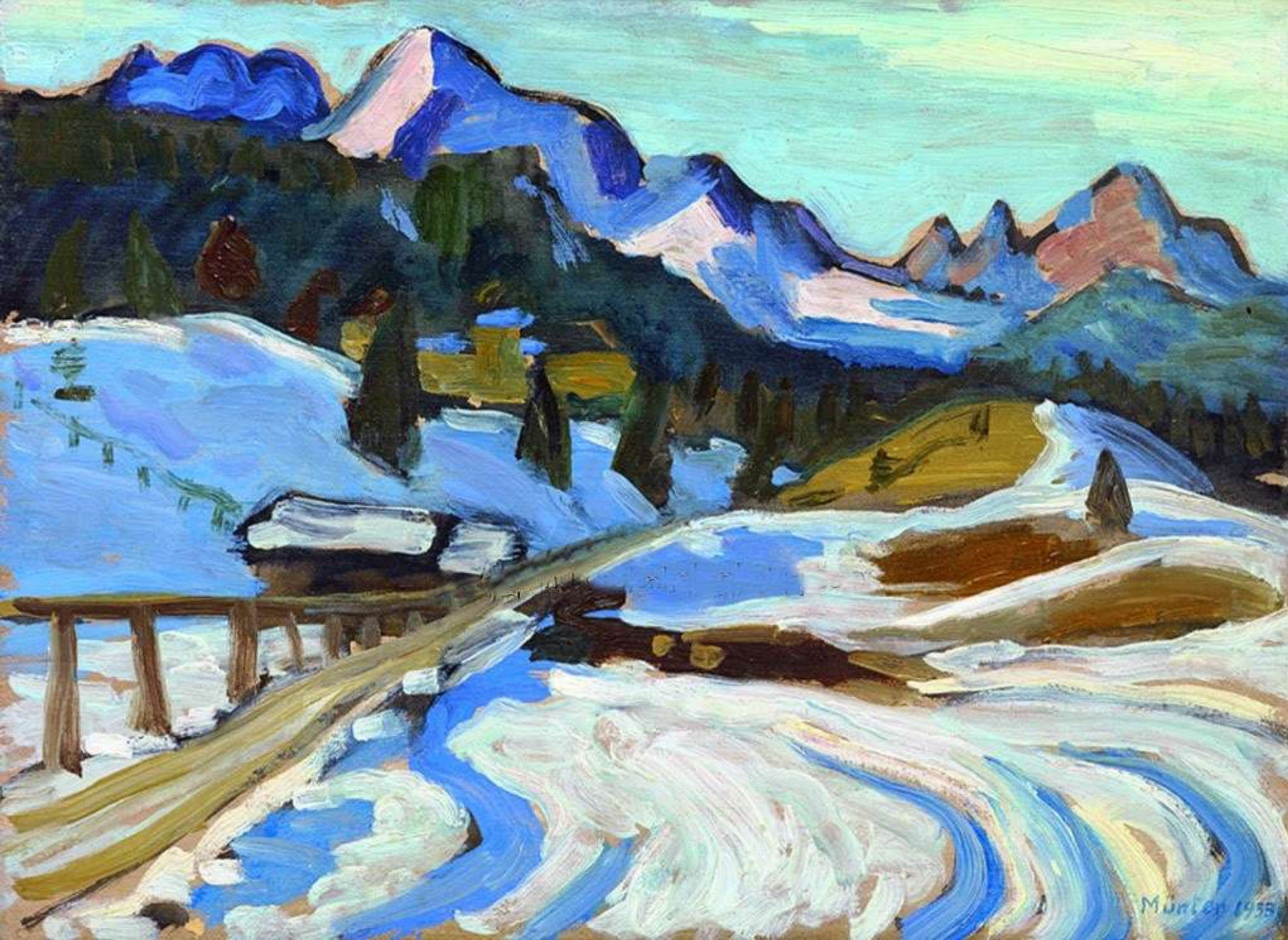
Münter 1934

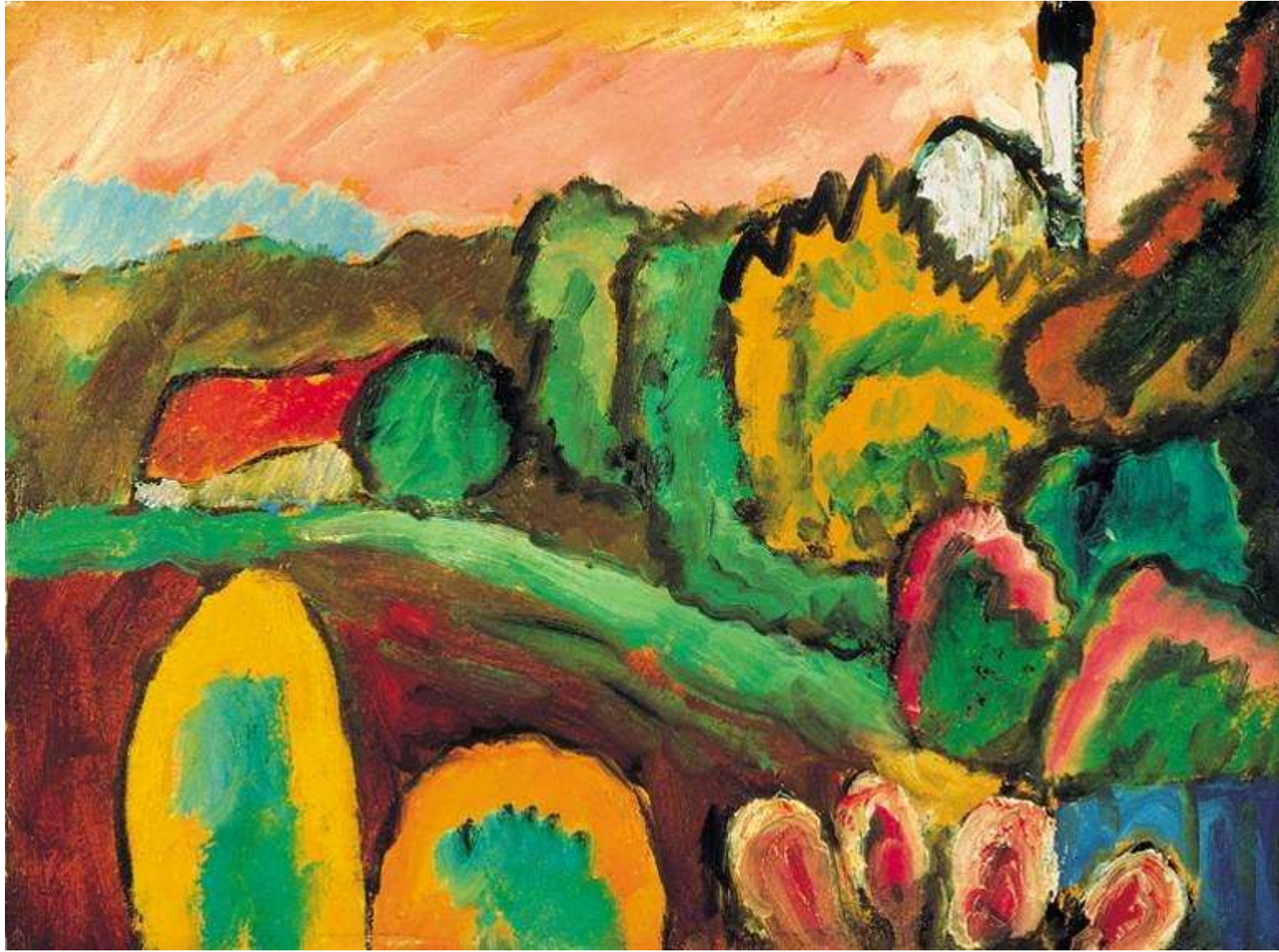












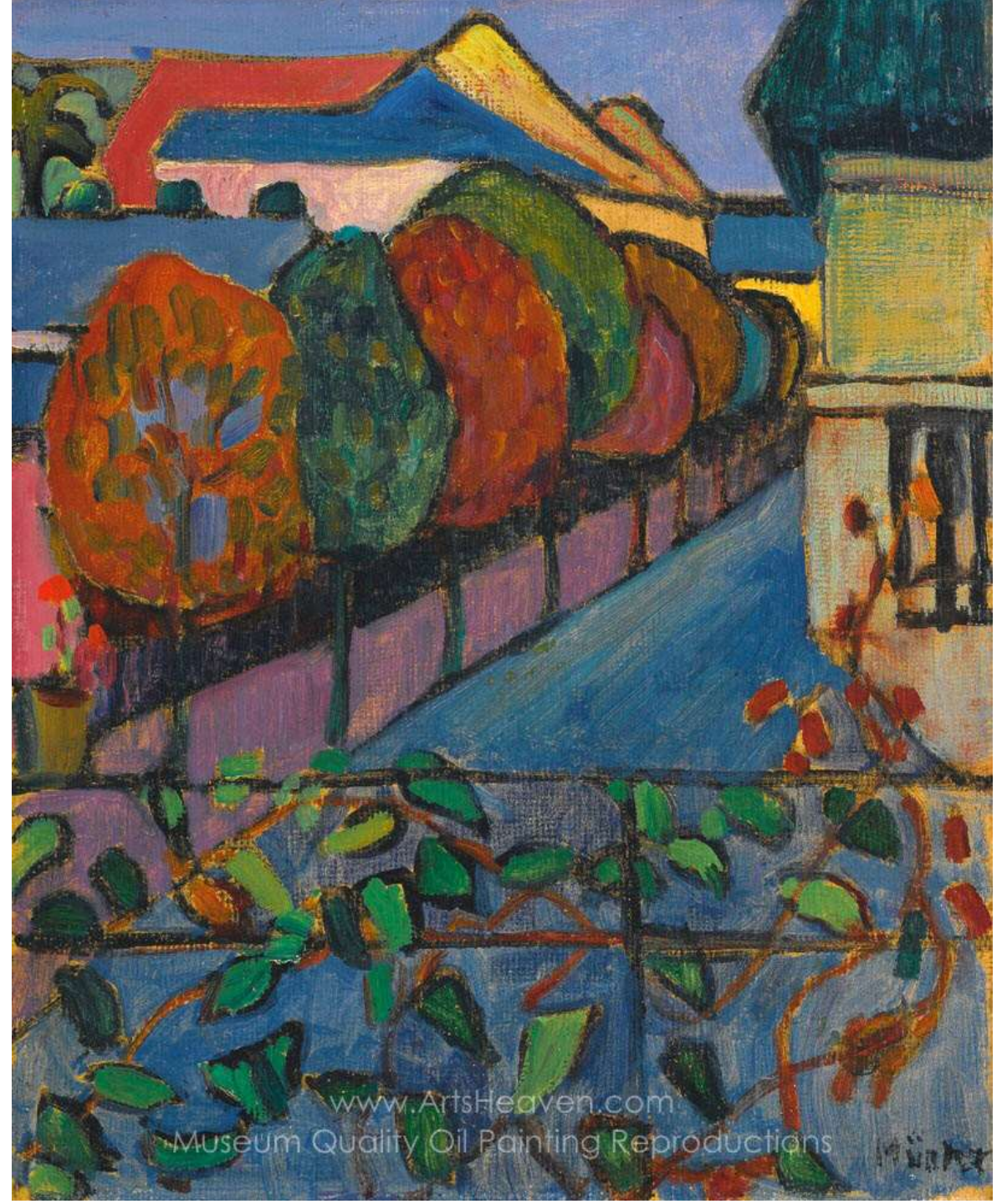




Painting on glass









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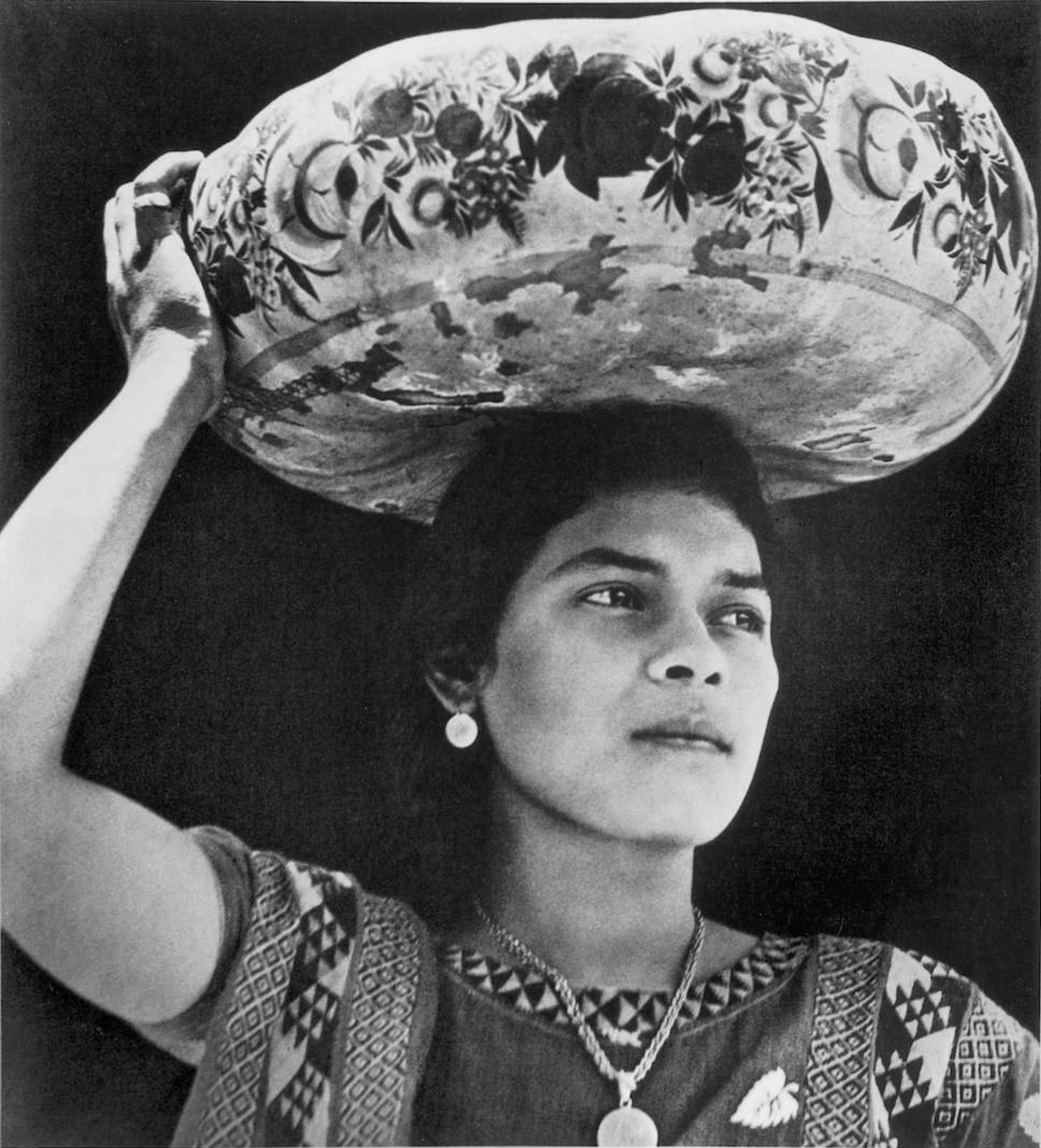


Tina Modotti (1896-1942)

Tina Modotti was an [Italian American](#) photographer, model, actor, and [revolutionary political activist](#) for the [Comintern](#). She left Italy in 1913 and moved to the USA, where she worked as a model and subsequently as a photographer. In 1922 she moved to Mexico, where she became an active Communist.

As a young girl in Italy her uncle, Pietro Modotti, maintained a photography studio. Later in the U.S., her father briefly ran a similar studio in San Francisco. While in Los Angeles, she met the photographer Edward Weston and his creative partner [Margrethe Mather](#). It was through her relationship with Weston that Modotti developed as an important fine art photographer and documentarian. By 1921, Modotti was Weston's lover. Ricardo Gómez Robelo became the head of Mexico's Ministry of Education's Fine Arts Department, and persuaded Robo to come to Mexico with a promise of a job and a studio.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NZonNPbsnU&list=LLYho4g65WEMNSKpuQr6x1fw&index=173>











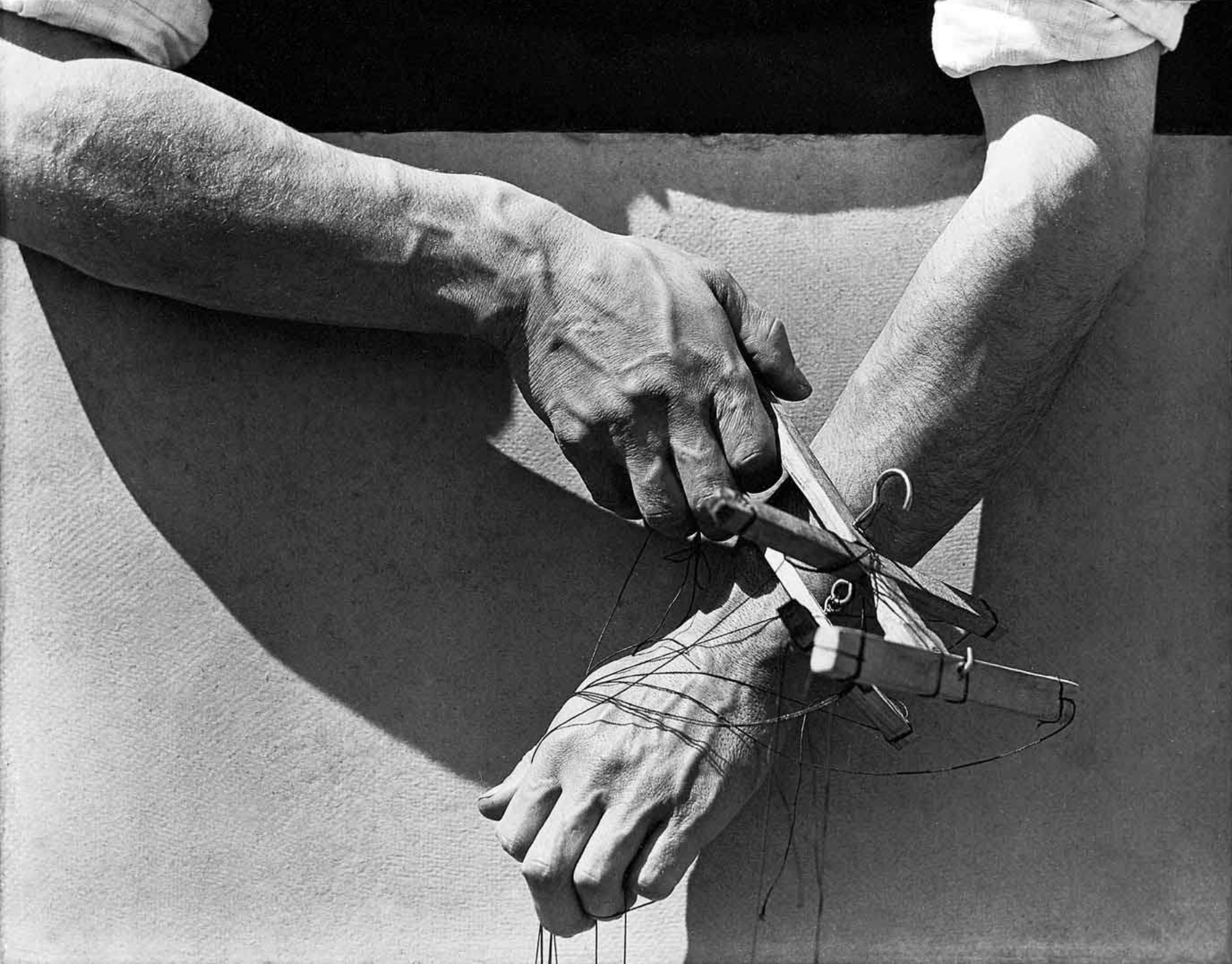


















Lee Krasner (1908-1984)

Lenore "Lee" Krasner was an American [abstract expressionist](#) painter, with a strong speciality in [collage](#), who was married to [Jackson Pollock](#). Although there was much cross-pollination between their two styles, the relationship somewhat overshadowed her contribution for some time. Krasner's training, influenced by [George Bridgman](#) and [Hans Hofmann](#), was the more formalized, especially in the depiction of [human anatomy](#), and this enriched Pollock's more intuitive and unstructured output.

Krasner is now seen as a key transitional figure within abstraction, who connected early-20th-century art with the new ideas of postwar America, and her work fetches high prices at auction. She is also one of the few female artists to have had a retrospective show at the [Museum of Modern Art](#).

<https://www.ft.com/content/7f0d13c8-812b-11e9-b592-5fe435b57a3b>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/06/lee-krasner-living-colour-barbican-retrospective-review/591499/>

<https://www.biography.com/artist/lee-krasner> (bio)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sD2U9NkspY> (her own words)









Lee Krasner



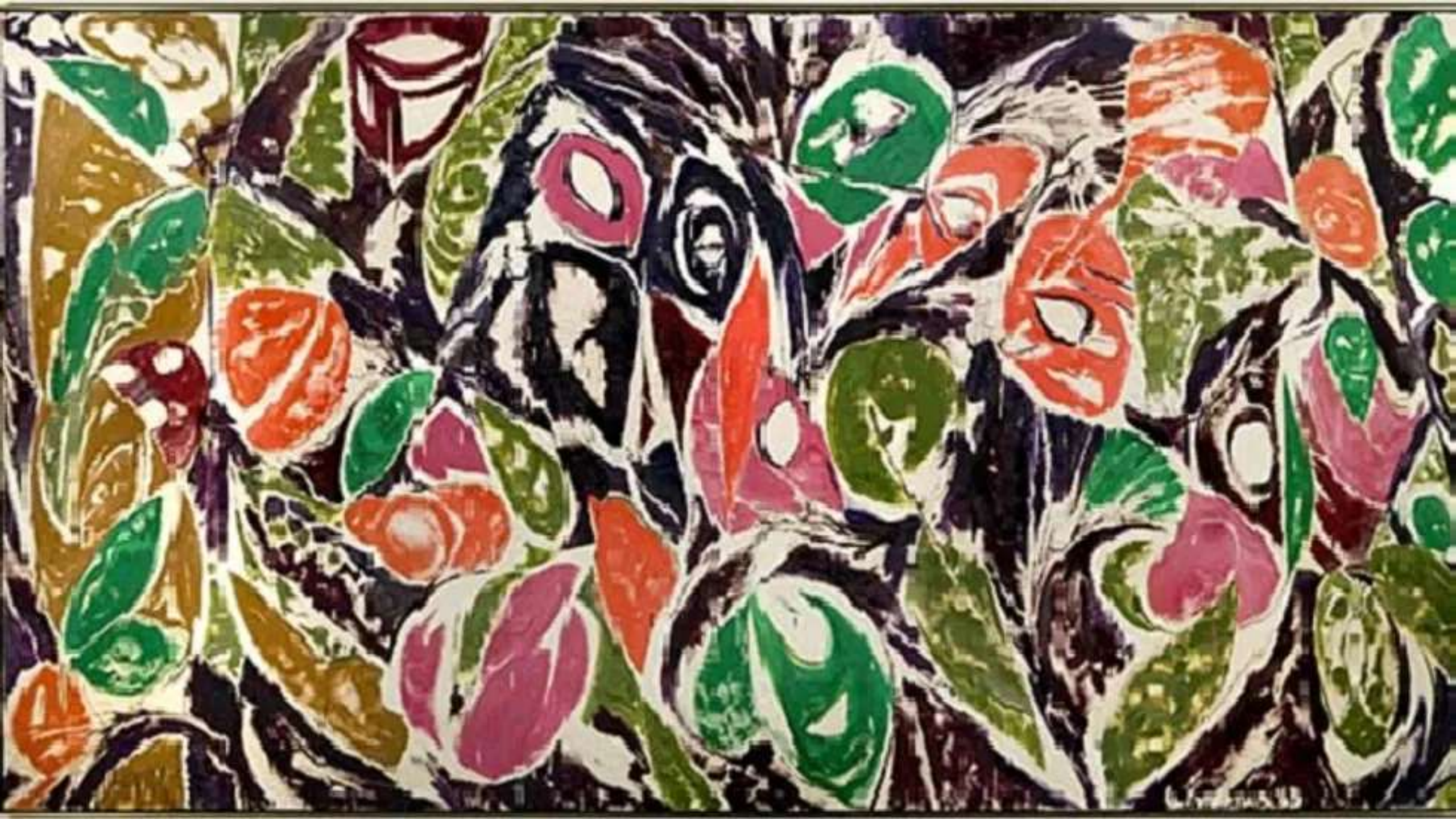
















Francoise Gilot (1921-

Françoise Gilot is a French painter of the Post-World War II School. At the age of 21 she met [Pablo Picasso](#), and the two embarked on a ten-year relationship. Gilot is considered by some to have been his muse, and though her work during this time was influenced by Picasso's Cubism, her paintings are characterized by a preference for organic forms over Picasso's use of sharp angles. In 1953, Gilot left Picasso, taking with her their two children, Claude and Paloma, and 11 years later, published the best-selling book *Life With Picasso* describing their intimate family life and artistic collaborations. Gilot went on to maintain studios in La Jolla, New York, and Paris, with her later paintings featuring saturated color relationships and structured compositions. Over time, her practice has expanded to include printmaking techniques such as monographs and aquatints. Born on November 26, 1921 in Neilly-sur-Seine, France, Gilot continues to exhibit her work internationally.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0mqaTOu1e4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9k2YeWqom8>











F. Gilot















F. Gilot





Fringie Gilt

Oceanic Women



Leonora Carrington (1917-2011)

Leonora Carrington was a [British](#)-born [Mexican](#) artist, [surrealist painter](#), and novelist. She lived most of her adult life in [Mexico City](#) and was one of the last surviving participants in the Surrealist movement of the 1930s. Carrington was also a founding member of the [women's liberation movement](#) in Mexico during the 1970s.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqXePrSE1R0&feature=emb_rel_end
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxEF1bjgt5Q> (long)







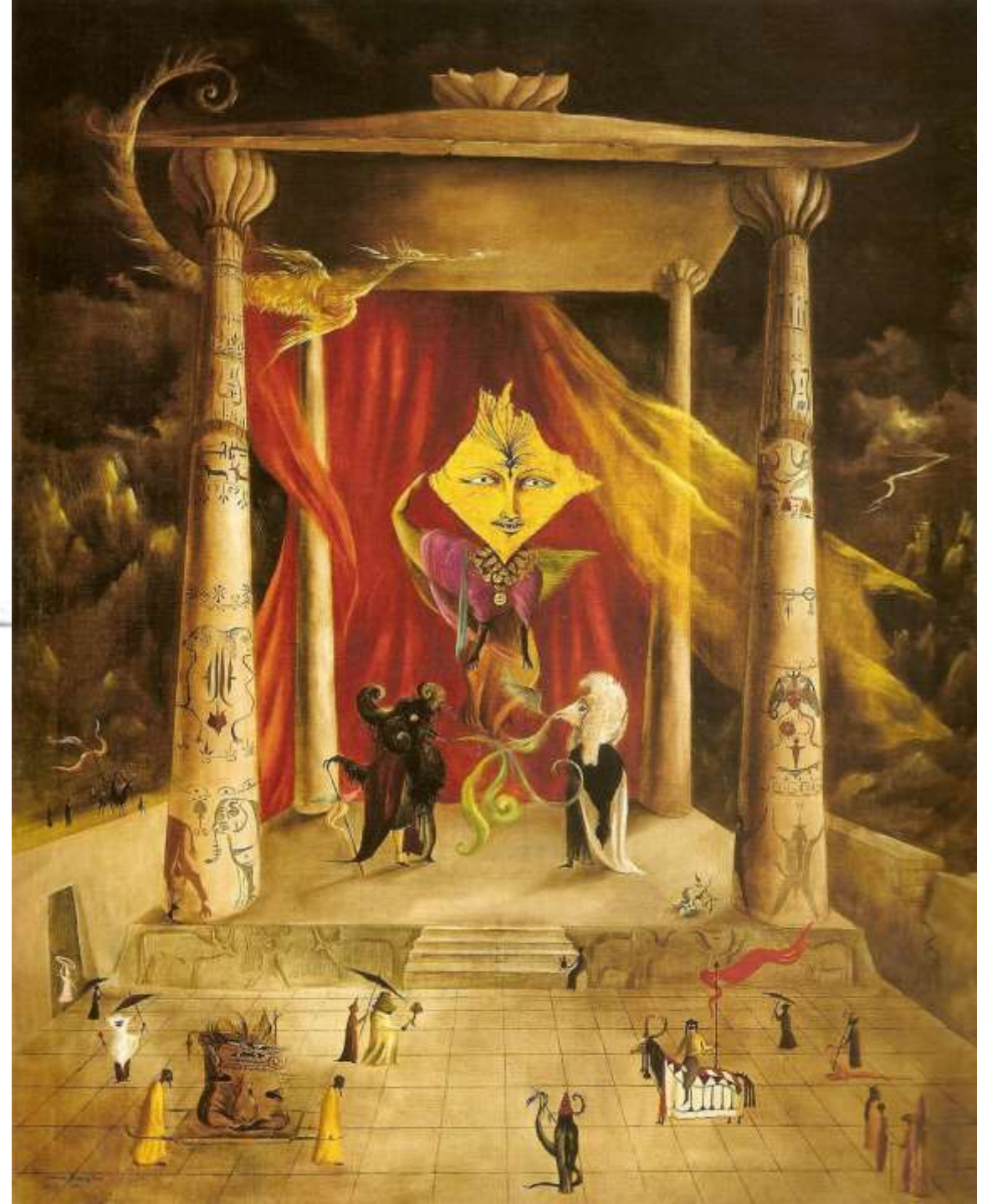






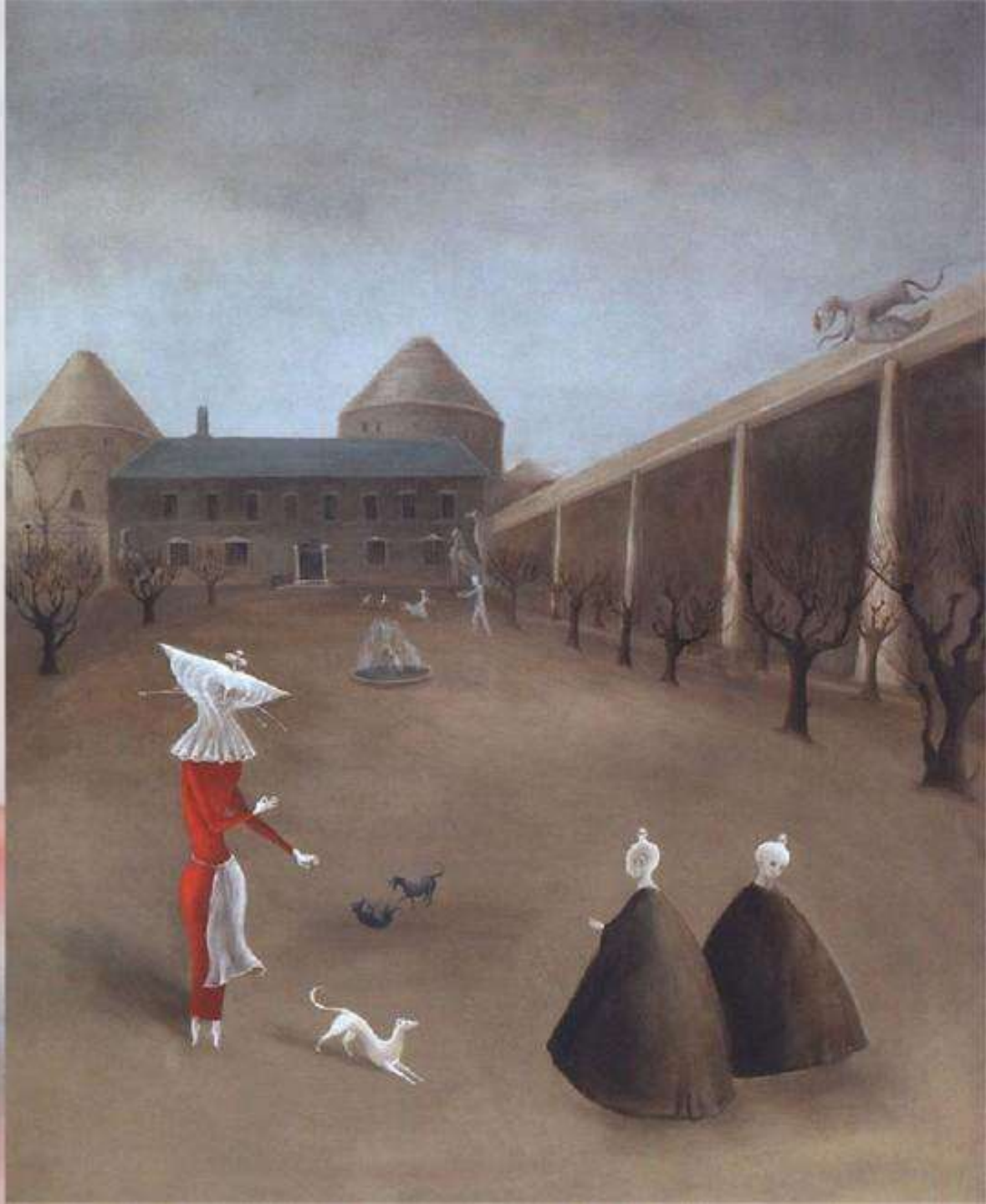


















Assignment Suggestions

- Create an homage to your favorite “girlfriend”
- Research another overlooked or undervalued artist that was overshadowed by someone more famous and create an homage to them.
- Create a study of light and shadows.