

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Georges Braque
Title: *Les Soleils* (1963)
Medium: etching
Notes: purchased: Galerie Maeght, Paris

b. 1882, Seine-et-Oise, France d. 1963, Paris

The painter, collagist, printmaker, sculptor and draughtsman, Georges Braque, is synonymous with the Cubist movement, and therefore with Picasso. Although he went to Paris for training, the academic style of instruction held no interest for him. Instead, he taught himself through experimentation and the study of fellow avant-garde artists. The Fauvists and Cézanne were important influences on his early work. In 1914 he was called up to war, and a year later was temporarily blinded, only being able to paint again in 1916. Unlike Picasso, he could spend time without being artistically active, and as a result, is not as prolific an artist. Later in life he became chronically ill, and this unfortunately meant from 1959 onwards, he could not create, leaving his last canvas *Weeding Machine* unfinished.

Braque's importance in terms of modern art is conveyed by the fact that he was the first to experiment with paper sculpture and collage, which was an important development in Synthetic Cubism (1912-14); this was a period of questioning the boundaries of illusion and reality. During the years of 1911-2, Braque began experimenting with new mediums and methods. He started adding sand to his paint and used a painter-decorator's comb to add a woodgrain effect, techniques which emphasised the value of the painting as an object and an unreality, rather than as representation of reality.

After Cubism, Braque returned to figurative works, the work of the recent Masters (Ingres, Renoir, etc.) and to more elaborate colour palettes. The Greek vase paintings in the Louvre prompted his interest in Classicism, which led to a period of successful graphic work and a commission from Ambroise Vollard to illustrate a publication of Hesiod's *Theogony* with sixteen etchings. However, he never fully lost touch with the Cubist aesthetic, and played with innovations like the false frame and false title plaque.

Other works can be found in the Tate Gallery, London; National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid; Harvard University Art Museums, Massachusetts; Museum of Modern Art, New York and at the Art Institute of Chicago.

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