

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



ALBERT GLEIZES

1881 Paris - Avignon 1953

Cirque [*Une écuyère de cirque*]

Pen and brown ink, white gouache on brown paper, mounted on card; 1914.

Titled *Cirque* in pen and brown ink, signed and dated *Alb. Gl. / 1914* in pencil lower right.

240 x 202 mm

PROVENANCE: B. C. Holland Gallery, Chicago – Jerrold Wexler – Private collection, California – Private collection, Chicago

This early Cubist composition by Albert Gleizes draws on a theme which had also appealed to the Impressionists. The subject is a floodlit circus ring with a performer balancing bareback on a galloping horse. A clown is depicted at the left of the image and a top-hatted figure at the right.

Gleizes's first depictions of circus artists date from 1914. Further variations were to follow in the years between 1914 and 1929, and some even in the 1940s. Anne Varichon's catalogue raisonné¹ lists a body of twenty-one drawings and paintings focusing on the circus theme. This sheet belongs to a small group of drawings executed in 1914. It is preparatory to an etching of the same year [Fig. 1] and prefigures three paintings completed in 1916.² It is a highly developed, meticulously worked Cubist composition. In terms of design it is very close to the published etching. The contrast between dense areas of hatching in pen and brownish-black ink and brilliant white highlights, offset against a light-brown background, achieves a powerful colouristic effect.

In 1908-9, influenced by the work of Henri Le Fauconnier and Jean Metzinger, Gleizes adopted a simplified, geometric approach to painting. In 1910 he began to work in a Cubist style close to that of Robert Delaunay and Fernand Léger. He quickly developed his own distinctive pictorial language, deconstructing objects, splitting forms up and rhythmically reordering their individual elements. In 1912 he wrote, with Metzinger, the influential theoretical work titled *Du "Cubisme"* which laid the foundations of Synthetic Cubism.

Anne Varichon (Fondation Albert Gleizes, Paris) has confirmed the authenticity of this work in a letter dated 21 October 2014.

¹ Anne Varichon, *Catalogue raisonné d'Albert Gleizes*, 2 vols., Paris 1998, I, pp. 168-71.

² Varichon, op. cit., pp. 168-9 and 252-3, nos. 474-7 and 480 (drawings); no. 478 (etching); nos. 479 and 731-3 (paintings).

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST

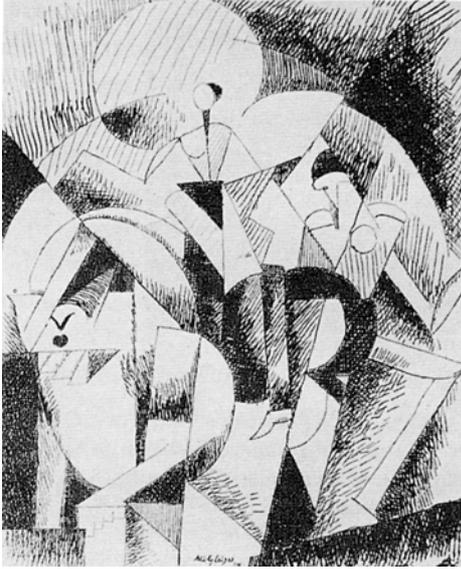


Fig. 1: *Sur une écuylère de cirque*, etching, 1914;
239 x 189 mm