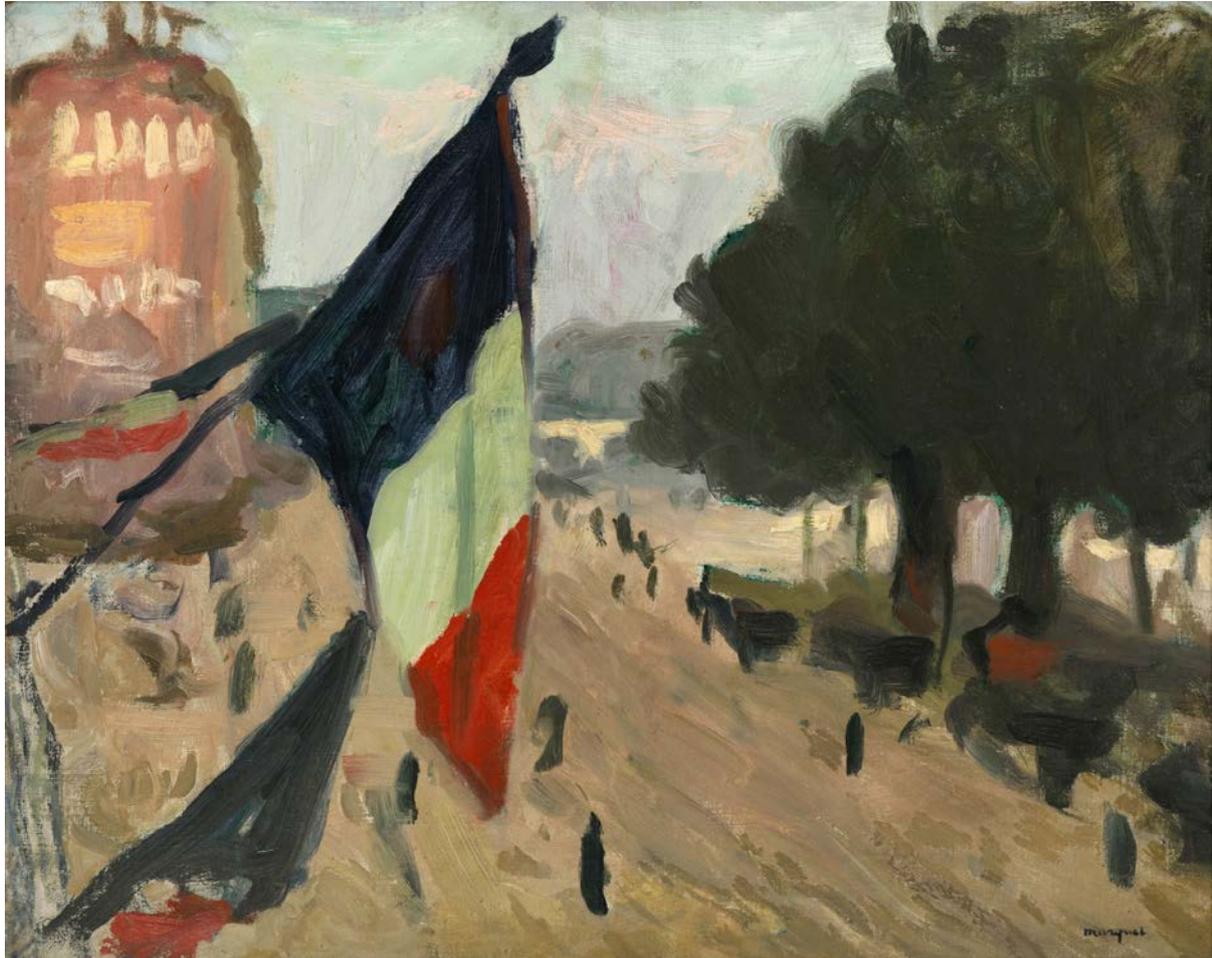


# LE CLAIRE

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ALBERT MARQUET

1875 Bordeaux - Paris 1947

*Le Drapeau tricolore / 14 juillet 1902 / Quai de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, Paris*

Oil on canvas; 1902.

Signed lower right: *marquet*

50.3 x 61.3 cm

PROVENANCE: Auction sale Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 23 February 1925, lot 109 – Galerie Druet, Paris – René Keller, Switzerland, 1926 (acquired from the above) – Private collection, Solothurn – Private collection, Switzerland (acquired through inheritance)

LITERATURE: Marius-Ary Leblond, 'Figures d'Indépendants: Albert Marquet', in *La Grande France*, Paris/Algiers, 15 May 1903, p. 271 – François Fosca, *A. Marquet, 'Les Peintres Français Nouveaux'*, XII, Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, Paris 1922, p. 17 (full-page b/w illus. titled *14 Juillet 1902*) – Dominique Lobstein, *Dictionnaire des Indépendants 1884-1914*, repr. L'Échelle de Jacob, Dijon 2003, II, pp. 1156-2019

EXHIBITION: '19e exposition', Salon des indépendants, Grandes Serres de la Ville (Cours-la-Reine), Paris, 20 March-25 April 1903, no. 1629 (titled *Quai de l'Hôtel de Ville*)

Albert Marquet left his home town of Bordeaux at the age of fifteen to begin his artistic training in Paris. He enrolled at the École des Beaux Arts, where he met Henri Matisse in 1890. The two artists enjoyed a close, life-long friendship. In 1893, Marquet was admitted to the painting class of the Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau, where Matisse was a guest pupil. Other students with whom he struck up friendships included Henri Manguin, Georges Rouault and Jules Flandrin. Like them, Marquet was one of the circle of painters who founded Fauvism, the name given to a bold new style of painting characterized by strident colour and apparently 'wild' brushwork.

Painted in 1902, *Le Drapeau tricolore* is a path breaking work that anticipates many stylistic qualities of Marquet's future work. On the one hand, the examination of the colors and shapes of Henri Matisse shows as a step towards Fauvism; on the other hand, we can already see the simple and restrained painting of the artist's later works.

The present painting is one of the earliest works belonging to the artist's great series of cityscapes in which he captured panoramic vistas of the French capital. The plunging perspective and elevated viewpoint that Marquet has utilised in the present composition was an abiding characteristic of his work. He was especially fascinated by the views of the Seine in the centre of Paris. In 1905, he rented an apartment on the quai du Louvre, a stretch of road along the Right Bank of the Seine, between the Pont Neuf and the Louvre. From his rooms on the seventh floor, he had a sweeping view of the river, the tip of the Île de la Cité, the Left Bank and the Eiffel Tower beyond, providing him an endlessly changing subject to which he continued to return over the course of his career.

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Formerly titled *14 juillet 1902*, this painting fits seamlessly into the tradition of urban scenes that capture the atmosphere of the streets and squares of Paris on 14 July, the French national holiday.<sup>1</sup> Both Édouard Manet [Fig. 1] and Claude Monet [Fig. 2] depicted their version of the motif in one and the same year, 1878. Marquet was to return to the same subject in 1906 in a canvas titled *14 juillet au Havre* [Fig. 3].

In this painting Marquet has selected a high viewpoint, evidently on an upper floor balcony overlooking the quai de l'Hôtel-de-Ville in Paris. The *fête nationale* festivities are over. Calligraphic touches of dark paint indicate scattered figures wending their way along the street after the celebrations. The French flag is prominently displayed in the left foreground. Beyond it is a distant glimpse of a Seine bridge. Behind are the dark shapes of buildings on the île de la cité.

Marquet's objective is to pull the observer into instant engagement with the subject, to share its striking visual impact. Nothing lies between him and the subject. The complete absence of foreground projects the viewer's eye deep into the pictorial space. Sharp diagonals cut into the picture plane from the right, but the recession effect is abruptly halted at the centre of the image – blocked out by bold blocks of colour representing the French flag. The flag seems almost within grasping distance. Projecting into the image from the left, its presence heightens the overall sense of physical immediacy. Marquet's early mastery of this striking compositional device is particularly evident in his views of Paris.

*Sophie Krebs notes: Marquet's images of the city are far more varied than their more-or-less identical compositional structures might suggest - a diagonal runs parallel to the flow of water, is blocked by the horizontal of a bridge or by the vertical forms of buildings. In his views Marquet summarizes and distils. He achieves this by dispensing with detail and using delicate, economical touches of the brush to evoke the hectic pace of urban life with its passers-by, carriages and cars.<sup>2</sup>*

The painting will be included in the forthcoming digital catalogue raisonné of Marquet's work compiled by the Wildenstein Plattner Institute.

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<sup>1</sup> The French national holiday is celebrated on 14 July every year. It commemorates the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789, an event which marked a turning point in the Revolution. It also commemorates the inaugural Fête de la Fédération [festival of the federation] which was set for 14 July 1790 to coincide with the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. The Fête was intended to provide a nationwide expression of unity, celebrating the Revolution and events of 1789 that had culminated in a new form of national government.

<sup>2</sup> Sophie Krebs et al., *Albert Marquet : Peintre du temps suspendu*, exhib. cat., Musée d'Art moderne de la ville de Paris, 25 March-21 August 2016, p. 118.

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Fig.1: Édouard Manet, *La rue Mosnier aux drapeaux*, 1878, oil on canvas, 65.5 x 80 cm, signed and dated lower left. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



Fig.2: Claude Monet, *La rue Montorgueil*, 1878, oil on canvas, 81 x 50 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Fig.3: Albert Marquet, *Le 14 juillet au Havre*, 1906, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm, signed lower left. Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Paris