

Representing the Body in 1906 (Capítulo del catálogo “Picasso: the early years, 1892-1906”). Margaret Werth.

### Representing the Body in 1906

Picasso's *Two Nudes* stands at the nexus of a diverse set of pictorial investigations the artist undertook in 1906-1907. Emerging out of a series of studies of two female figures that had their origins in studies of peasant girls at Gósol in the summer of 1906 — with roots as far back as *Two Sisters* of 1902 — the depiction of two female nudes in a shallow interior, standing before a curtain, also foreshadowed the brothel space of *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. Version O)* of 1907 [1]. In Gósol *The Harem* and *Three Nudes* were the most recent precedents for the subject of nudes in an interior, but Picasso was also actively exploring the representation of the body in nude studies devoted to traditional themes such as *La Toilette* and *Nude Combing Her Hair* and in works that evoked a classical or Mediterranean sensibility such as *Two Youths* or *Woman with Child and Goat* [2]. These nude studies were developed in tandem with a series of self-representations (both overt and disguised)—such as *Self-Portrait with Palette and Man, Woman, and Child* (Kunstmuseum, Basel)—a dialogue that anticipated the artist's concurrent exploration of male figures and female nudes in the winter and spring of 1907. This essay will also consider *Two Nudes* in relation to other major works completed in Paris in the late summer and autumn of 1906: from *La Coiffure* and *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* —both begun before the trip to Gósol and completed after Picasso's return to Paris—to the monumental *Seated Nude*.

While *Two Nudes* constitutes a high point in Picasso's strictly pictorial investigation of the possibilities and limits of figuration in 1906— with resonances connecting it to figure paintings by Puvis de Chavannes, Cézanne, and Gauguin as well as to Hellenistic, classical Greek, archaic Iberian, and Spanish Romanesque art—it is certainly more than a formal exercise [3]. Like the pictorial space Picasso represents, the work itself is liminal, marking the threshold between the transformations at Gósol during the summer of 1906 and those of the *Femmes d'Alger* in the spring and summer of 1907 [4]. The painting is also liminal in that it situates itself between formal investigation and allegorical or narrative subject; between the classical and the archaic or primitive; between materialization and dematerialization of the body; between figuration and defiguration; and between masculine and feminine.

Two massive figures are crammed into the space of the picture, their cone-shaped breasts, the abbreviated bas-relief modeling of their legs, torsos, and arms, and their massive breadth locating them in a world of physical extension, volume, and, to some degree, mass. Both figures flex their arms, gesturing toward themselves, touching themselves, and displaying muscular forearms. Their masculine muscularity recalls earlier studies like *The Two Giants* of 1905, in which Picasso explored in a caricatural drawing style the charms of gigantism and physical culture. The masklike schematization of the faces, stubby calves, enlarged thighs and hips, extended chests, and cylindrical necks of *Two Nudes* had already been manifest in several works produced in Gósol, such as *Standing Nude*.

In *Two Nudes* the figures stand in a shallow space marked out with great economy by a curtain that materializes only at the top center as it is grasped by the nude on the left, after which it dissolves into the nearly monochromatic background. Entry into the picture—and also any imagined entry through the curtain into the potential space beyond—is blocked by the massive, squat bodies that push against the four sides of the picture, pressing its limits. The two figures bear down on the viewer, confrontational rather than seductive. The freely opening curtain in *Woman with Child and Goat* through which the emergence of the figures has been gracefully choreographed is replaced in *Two Nudes* with a claustrophobic, pressurized space with no exit. Access to the space behind the curtain is further compromised by the ambiguous folds bunched together at the top center—more of a pocket than an opening—and by the fading of the curtain elsewhere into the flat pictorial field [5]. This curtain will not, cannot, open, Picasso seems to say: it can be grasped, gestured toward, offered as a possibility, but in the end we will not pass through it [6]. If it opens, it will not open onto a space beyond—the bedroom space that most interpreters have imagined in the background of both *Two Nudes* and *Les Femmes d'Alger*—but rather into the nonspace of the mottled, diffuse monochrome of the picture's Surface [7]. If this is a threshold, it is an ornery one: it will not let us in or out. *Two Nudes* has often been described as “sculptural” in contrast to the flat, weightless figures of the Blue and Rose periods [8]. But close study of the picture reveals that Picasso suggests both sculpturality and flatness, materiality and immateriality in this work. The painting is certainly sculptural in comparison with the flat handling of *Two Youths*, painted in Gósol only a few months earlier, a precedent for the later work with its two nudes and right-hand figure in *profil perdu* [9]. In addition, materiality—as both volume and raw material—is represented through the gesture of the hand that grasps the curtain. The left nude's embodiment is figured further by the self-directed gesture of her other arm as she flexes to touch her shoulder. But the massiveness of her form and the activity of her gesture are counterbalanced by the extreme spatial compression of her body, further exaggerated by her outstretched left hand, protruding like a flipper from her left breast [10]. Similar contradictions appear in the figure on the right, in the contrast of her bulky presence, thick neck, and conical breast with the turn of her head back into *profil perdu*, and in the contrast between her two legs: the left one, a massive pillar modeled in basrelief, overlaps a twin back leg that is a flat ribbon with no claims to solidity or volume [11].

*Two Nudes* also represents an important stage in Picasso's experimentation with obscure gestures signifying both touch and communication [12]. The pointing finger of the figure on the right exemplifies the ambiguities and overdetermination of gesture in his work [13]. The hand raised to the hair is a convention that Picasso explored repeatedly in 1906: in *Woman with Child and Goat*, *Nude on a Red Background*, and *Nude Combing Her Hair*, for example. It is a gesture common to the toilette or coiffure motif and to classical subjects like the *Venus Anadyomene*, where an idealized nude wrings her hair as she emerges from the sea. By the end of the summer the gesture appeared in a series of small sketches of an increasingly voluptuous and massive female nude accompanied by a satyr, her left hand brought up to her head and her fingers crooked over her hair, that would eventually be developed into a series of drawings of two nudes standing together in either frontal or profile view [14]. The

conventional narcissistic gesture is wedded in the final studies for *Two Nudes* to an all-too-emphatic finger that points toward the head and the curtain beyond. Several sketches for the painting isolate the hand and head and test the possible relations between pointing hand and *profil perdu*.

In the final composition Picasso draws the arm back behind the head and overlaps the hand and finger over the hair. The figure both touches herself and points to herself, to her own absent countenance, and to the curtain folds held by her partner. The gesture suggests a degree of identification with the activity of the artist, represented in one of the studies for *Self-Portrait with Palette*, where Picasso depicts his free-floating right hand, the brush hand, not as seen in the mirror, but as he saw it directly before him and bounded by a linear frame, sketching his bowed head, seen in mirror reflection. This dialogue of hand and head articulates the heightened opposition between subject/object and activity/passivity in the self-portrait [15]. The hands are altered in the final painting, however: there the left hand is truncated and deformed by the palette—an indistinct smear of white paint indicating the thumb—while the brush hand is gathered into a fist quite unlike the poised and precise tool that appears in the study, the force of the artist's gesture magnified but also latent, incomplete, and bound to the torso [16]. The artist no longer needs the brush, it seems: his body is his instrument. But this broad body—hieratic, inert, fragmented, insubstantial, and deformed—is as equivocal a construction as the *Two Nudes*.

The odd pointing gesture of the figure on the right in *Two Nudes* is made more extreme by the positioning of the arm and shoulder. Wrenched backward, they open up an area between the breast and back, hip and neck that is expanded far beyond any plausible anatomy [17]. A terrain vague opens up at the center of the torso, not belonging to front, side, or back. In the area bounded by the prosthesis-like pro-tuberant breast, the muscularly flexed and seemingly detached arm, and the rounded buttocks—prime examples of Picasso's sculptural passages—figuration comes to a halt. The figure is assimilated to the "curtain," to arbitrary modulations that do not adhere to any bodily anatomy. The two bodies rendered sculptural by the modeling of their forms are confronted with the anti- or pre-figurative. As the form dissolves, the mottled, matte surface asserts itself. An area of marks and modulations that expands coextensively with the overall pictorial field, it affirms the body of the painting as material object. The relation of figurative and nonfigurative here suggests opposed versions of materiality: fictions of volume and mass versus mere paint-matter on a surface.

The left-hand figure—grasping the curtain/ canvas with one hand and touching her own body with the other—supports the fiction of the body's materiality and presence, and, metaphorically, the painter's activity and the materiality of painting itself. The gesture of the figure on the right both supports that materiality, presence, and activity and produces the "space of lack" in the picture. The pointing finger, motivated in part by the narcissistic coiffure gesture, directs the viewer to "look this way." It points to the curtain that materializes momentarily at the center and that veils the space beyond, without allowing imaginary passage through it; it also points to the profile, disappearing from view; and it produces the dissolution of figuration in the torso. This self- and outward-directed gesture subverts the assertion of bodily presence suggested

by the massive inflation and muscularity of the two nudes. The monumentality and sculptural modeling of the figures, coupled with the unifying terracotta monochrome, compensate only partially for the pull to defiguration, weightlessness, and invisibility. Picasso's use of the emphatic and obscure gesture of the right-hand figure in *Two Nudes* ends up pointing to the picture's high degree of irresolution, to its own processes of negation.

The signifiers of sex and gender in *Two Nudes* are equally ambiguous and contradictory. The figure on the left retains something of the seductive femininity of the *Gósol* nudes, a seductiveness enhanced by the promise of unveiling. But the gigantism, muscularity, and aggressive spatial presence of *Two Nudes* can also be read as signs of masculinity, linking it to the physical culture drawings of a year earlier, and also to the portrait of the lesbian writer Gertrude Stein, with its imposing presence and indeterminate gendering [18]. The sexed and gendered body is also represented in the phallic arm and pointing finger, the vaginal curtain opening, and the breast conveniently detaching itself from the torso on the right. But these vividly realized and familiar signifiers appear as displaced body parts, juxtaposed to an image of the body that is at points formless and derealized, within a pictorial space that repeatedly resists the viewer's imaginary access. The viewer's difficulties are exemplified by the characterization of *Two Nudes* as virginal by one writer and as lesbians by another [19]. Such characterizations register Picasso's subversion of the normative accessibility of the eroticized female nude to the (male) viewer's imagination. But what is at work in *Two Nudes* is less the elimination of one set of sexual signifiers than the conjunction of several. Multiple genders and sexualities are offered, and both sexual difference and indifference structure this representation of the body. The figure of narcissism and seduction on the left invites us in, while her twin both emphatically asserts the materiality and legibility of the body and displays its disembodiment and illegibility. If the two figures "mirror" one another at all, it is a doubling based on metamorphosis, not duplication. The body appears as a compelling physical presence that nonetheless dissolves, as a generalized totality that breaks up into fragments, and as a sexuality that unfixes the orders of sexual difference. The residual beauty and sensuality of the *Gósol* nudes is transformed here into something altogether more primal, more disturbing, and more contradictory—a representation of the body that is on the verge of the incoherent and even the grotesque. The painting equivocates between embodiment and disembodiment, presence and absence, figuration and defiguration, masculinity and femininity [20].

The fluctuating morphology of the body and testing of the limits of figuration in *Two Nudes* cannot be fully understood apart from the other works Picasso produced in Paris during the critical months after his return from *Gósol*. The uncanny quality of Picasso's figuration is evident again in *La Coiffure*, which most scholars now agree was probably reworked during the summer or autumn of 1906 [21]. Three figures—a seated woman having her hair combed, a standing maidservant, and a young child—occupy an undefined, empty space. The maidservant's roughly sketched, grotesque, masklike face contrasts sharply with the smooth curves of faceless Beauty's *profil perdu*. The unnaturally high hairline at the nape of the latter's neck creates the unsettling impression that the maid is peeling her mistress' hair away from her head as she grooms it: the coiffure is dangerously close to unmasking Beauty [22]. The length

of hair at the center of the canvas that the maid holds in her dissolving right hand disintegrates into fluid brush strokes and marks the point of maximum disembodiment. Meanwhile, seated Beauty, her face averted and masked by the blankness of her profil perdu, gazes into an empty mirror that echoes the shape of her head without reflecting her features. Something of the disturbance caused by the “flipper” of the figure on the left in *Two Nudes* is produced by the hand holding the left side of the mirror in *La Coiffure*: protruding from Beauty’s neck, it could belong to either woman [23]. The child, reminiscent of the boys painted at Gósol, lounges in the lower left, complicating the themes of beauty and vanity with those of childhood and maternity [24]. Functioning as a witness and surrogate for the viewer, he is disconnected from the women but reconnected materially to the scene of femininity and to Beauty’s (the Mother’s) tresses by the hairlike facture and brown color of the broad band of parallel brush strokes that marks him off from the women. The conventional meanings of the coiffure—femininity, vanity, artifice, sensuality, eroticism—are still in circulation in Picasso’s painting, but sensuality is now associated with disintegration, the female body with fragmentation and loss, the act of representation with blindness and invisibility, the pleasures of the masquerade with the dread of unmasking [25].

The masking of the figure is a critical component of Picasso’s figuration in late 1906—whether this masking is understood as the schematization of the facial features alone or as the production of a complex, unstable image of the body that holds in tension, often to the point of incoherence, differing degrees of reduction, stylization, and embodiment as well as oppositions of gender and sexuality [26]. The mask doubles and obscures, simplifies and stylizes, abstracts and depersonalizes. It fosters layered, mobile, unstable identities and articulates oppositions between inner and outer, true and false, self and other, presence and absence, order and disorder, protection and threat. The mask both exaggerates and undermines the legibility of representation; it both dramatizes voyeurism and obstructs the gaze; it both simplifies and defamiliarizes. Picasso characteristically explores the myriad possibilities of masking—formal, expressive, and conceptual—long before the infamous repainting of *Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* [27].

*Portrait of Gertrude Stein and Self-Portrait with Palette* exemplify the range of Picasso’s masking in the autumn of 1906. Stein’s head was effaced when Picasso declared “I can’t see you any longer” after some eighty or ninety sittings in the *Bateau-Lavoir* studio, and was repainted without further consultation of the model after the artist’s return to Paris from Gósol [28]. *Self-Portrait with Palette* is the most important and overt of a series of self-representations produced in late 1906 [29]. There are a number of similarities between these two portraits: the impenetrability of the mask-face, the splitting of the head from the torso, and the immense expanse of the figure that is contradicted by the absence of signs of volume or mass [30]. But there are also important differences. The mask in *Self-Portrait with Palette* is blank, rigid, and childlike—effects that are reinforced by the contrast of the overlarge torso and small head, the prominent high forehead, the ear that sticks out on the right, the stiff and silhouetted pose, the simple studio clothing, and the clumsy suturing of the head onto the body [31]. The mask in *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* elicits different associations: obscurity, remoteness, obdurateness, implacability [32]. In *Self-Portrait with Palette* the eyes are wide open but unfocused: the usually penetrating, mesmerizing eyes of the artist no longer see.

Picasso represents himself as a fixated visionary whose interior hallucination has imprinted itself rigidly on his features. Stein's mask is much more sculptural: dark angular wedges define the brow area as if it had been carved; deep grooves mark either side of the sharply delineated mouth and prominent nose; and a precise outline marks off the right side of the face from the background. Stein's hooded eyes are arrayed at different heights, the right eye larger than the recessive left eye, and Picasso has carefully differentiated between them by coloring the white area of the smaller left eye a subtle gray blue that contrasts with the flesh tone he uses in the right eye and the face itself, thereby increasing the effect of dissymmetry and distance. The emphasis in Gertrude Stein is on the dissembling power of the mask: the "real" eyes lie behind the mask, unreadable, a property of the "true" self in distinction to the "false" mask that both shields and blocks. Despite the depersonalizing effect of the mask, the oscillating oppositions it generates animate the portrait and create a vivid and disturbing psychological presence. In *Self-Portrait with Palette*, on the other hand, there is no suggestion of a "true" self behind the mask. The artist presents himself fully objectified, inert, and devoid of consciousness: the body a flimsy monument, the self an effigy. Here the double has fully effaced the original [33].

Picasso expanded on his study of the nude in the autumn and winter of 1906. In the extraordinary and highly finished drawing *Woman Seated and Woman Standing*, for example, a work that postdates *Two Nudes*, two figures in a curtained interior signal enigmatically toward one another with mirroring hand gestures that suggest some obscure form of address. These figures are more restrained in their balanced proportions, more stiff in their hieratic postures, more abstract and sculptural in their geometric forms and masked faces than in *Two Nudes* [34]. *Seated Nude* moves in a very different direction [35]. A large painting of a single giantess presented facing the viewer, the figure is all the more imposing in that, although seated, she is the same height as the standing figures of *Two Nudes*. Like the strongman in the foreground of *Young Acrobat on a Ball* of 1905, she occupies a cubic throne, her massive silhouette set off against the blue gray background. She tests her swelling volumes against the fixed geometry of her seat.

The inflation of the torso, geometric simplification of the breasts, abrupt suturing of the head, neck, and chest, and schematic mask with its blank expression—all characteristic of *Two Nudes*—reappear in exaggerated form in *Seated Nude*. While the gigantism of *Two Nudes* prevails, there is little emphasis on muscularity, and sculptural bas-relief is activated only in discrete areas like the breasts and legs. The figure is somewhat pneumatic in character, the left hip and thigh bulging ominously [36]. The broad left shoulder descends brokenly to the right, its contour marked off by the dark cascades of hair, while the two arms are stiff, insubstantial, and pinned to the sides [37]. The absence of gesturing hands seems programmatic. The torso is rigidly upright, the abdomen undefined, and the crossing of the legs achieved with a brutal twisting of the hips that wrenches the figure into position, a manipulation equal in violence to the contorted arm of the figure on the right in *Two Nudes*. The bulging surface of the figure stretches against the disproportionate anatomy and inconsistent posture, accommodating itself to the strains of expansion, contraction, and distortion. The scratchy modeling and blurred contours contain the body's boundaries incompletely. The spherical breasts, widely separated and tentatively joined to the torso, are cursory

markers of gender that simulate the female body without naturalizing it [38]. As in *Two Nudes*, the figure in *Seated Nude* has itself become a mask: splitting, obscuring, and distorting the body and binding oppositions within a single form [39].

Picasso's figuration in late 1906 was unprecedented in the rapidity and complexity of its transformations. He expanded on the compositional experiments, figural distortions, gender ambiguities, and sexual tensions of his Blue and Rose period works in a pictorial language that was increasingly purged of symboliste personas, attributes, settings, and atmosphere [40]. In works like *Two Nudes*, *La Coiffure*, *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, *Self-Portrait with Palette*, and *Seated Nude*. Picasso represented the body as an unstable entity, its mass, volume, materiality, integrity, unity, sex, and gender affirmed in one way only to be negated in another. The contradictory liminality of the curtained interior of *Two Nudes* is an apt figure for the representation of the body in Picasso's work in late 1906. Full or empty, unified or fragmented, animated or entropic, monumental or slight, masculine or feminine: such oppositions are alternately articulated, eroded, and conflated in Picasso's image of the body.

[1] The Gósol studies of two figures standing side by side begin as a clothed male/female couple (with the larger male figure on the right) and develop into two clothed peasant women, then two female nudes (Palau 1985, 465, 470-471). Postscripts to *Two Nudes*, like *Woman Seated* and *Woman Standing* (cat. 181), merge with the first studies for *Les Femmes d'Alger* (see Rubin 1994, 69-71). In addition, there is a sheet of nude studies (D.XVI.20) that includes the *Two Nudes* on the left but expands the number of figures to four and places them within a more articulated interior space that anticipates the brothel of *Les Femmes d'Alger*.

[2] The latter work locates the girl arranging her hair, the boy elegantly balancing his vase, and the alert goat on the left in front of a curtained, tent-like interior reminiscent of Picasso's circus pictures of the previous year, and also within the general atmosphere of Mediterranean classicism by virtue of the classical poses, the soft ochre coloring, the unspecific temporality, and the evocation of the beauty and sensuality of the body.

[3] Unraveling the multiplicity and contradictions of the sources for Picasso's stylistic transformations in 1906 is not the aim of this essay. Suffice it to say that "classicism" in 1906 was inseparable from diverse forms of "primitivism" and that Picasso was reading both with and against the grain of his artistic precursors and sources. The starting point for any examination of the Iberian component is James Johnson Sweeney's "Picasso and Iberian Sculpture," *Art Bulletin* (September 1941), 190-198.

[4] Steinberg 1988, 47-52, interprets this to mean that it is the *demoiselles d'Alger* who are on the other side of the curtain depicted in *Two Nudes*. The *Two Nudes* stand on the "sheltered side of the curtain, antecedent to the strains of experience." He has also described the picture as of "a person on the threshold of an encounter, about to pass through the curtain that screens the unmated self." The idea that *Two Nudes* represents "a condition of woman alone," as Steinberg puts it, is one I will counter below.

[5] The shardlike shape that extends upward from this pocket adumbrates the drapery facets of *Les Femmes d'Alger*.

[6] In the studies for the *Demoiselles* in Sketchbook 42 (pp. 27-36) Picasso would imagine a childlike male figure parting the curtains that roughly matches the generic self-portraits produced in late 1906. See Robert Rosenblum, "The *Demoiselles* Sketchbook No. 42, 1907," *Je suis le cahier: The Sketchbooks of Picasso* [exh. cat., Pace Gallery] (New York, 1986), 76-77. In the final painting the Africanized *demoiselle* on the right performs this role.

[7] See, for example, Ron Johnson, "The *Demoiselles d'Avignon* and Dionysian Destruction," *Arts Magazine* 55 (October 1980), 95. Johnson also points to the impenetrability of the space.

[8] Rubin 1994, 41, for example, characterizes *Two Nudes* as "Picasso's Iberianism at its most sculptural." See also Daix and Boudaille 1967, 102.

[9] *Two Youths* also manifests the mirroring relation and indeterminate gendering of *Two Nudes*.

[10] Steinberg 1988, 50, points to the spatial compression and the "disconnection" motif of the hand of the figure on the left.

[11] The *profil perdu* was a solution arrived at in the final stages of work on the painting; all of the drawings and sketches that include both figures present the righthand figure either in profile or frontally (see cat. 175). The *profil perdu*, however, appears in several studies done at Gósol (and after): see Palau 1985, 460, no. 1301, and D.XV.24.

[12] The most striking early example would be the gesturing hand and pointing finger of the male figure in *La Vie* of 1903.

[13] For several examples of Picasso's preoccupation with the position and gesture of hands see D.XV.4, 19, 22, D.XVI.7, and 9.

[14] See the discussion in Palau 1985, 466-467.

[15] In *Two Nudes*, however, it is the left hand that points (i.e., the palette hand). Given the distortion of the figure and in particular the detachment of the arm and twisting of the hand itself, this reversal from right to left, from mirror to direct vision, is not irreconcilable with my suggestion that the hand can be interpreted metaphorically as the artist's own. In both *Two Nudes* and the study for *Self-Portrait with Palette* the active hand is matched with a deflected countenance. To complicate matters, in one of the studies for *Two Nudes* (fig. 7) Picasso isolates the pointing hand in the lower left as a right hand, with the two figures above in the same orientation as in the final painting.

[16] See Kirk Varnedoe, "Picasso's Self-Portraits," in exh. cat. New York 1996, 132-136. I disagree with his interpretation of the thumb of the palette hand as a "displaced surrogate phallus": the palette hand is too deformed by the palette and, in the context of this kind of reading, would be a better candidate for an image of castration. The smudged white thumb only emerges through the palette indistinctly, hardly registering as part of Picasso's body (although it does appear distinctly in many of the sketches for the painting). The arms of the self-portrait are programmatically differentiated: the thinly painted arm on the right is rigidly straight and aligned with the torso, pinned to it, while on the left the arm is marked off from the torso by a dark curve and the sleeve itself is heavily worked and actively modelled with an abstract faceting that does not



register volume or mass. As Varnedoe points out, Picasso aligns the edge of the sleeve on the right with the palette edge, arranging forms autonomously. On the left he produces a clumsy broadening of the torso by extending the blue fabric of the trousers out too far, increasing the impression of the figure as broad, flat, and insubstantial. The forearm and fist hang at the waist, with no sense of potential force or movement. See text for further discussion of *Self-Portrait with Palette*.

[17] The degree of distortion and willful manipulation of the body is close to the deformations to come in *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. Version O)* (fig. 2)—particularly the squatting figure on the right, shown from both front and back.

[18] Robert Lubar explores the question of identity in his unpublished paper on *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, “Unmasking Pablo’s Gertrude: Queer Desire and the Origins of Cubism.”

[19] See Steinberg 1988, 47; and Richardson 1991, 469.

[20] For a related discussion of Matisse’s *Le Bonheur de vivre*—a work Picasso would have seen in the spring of 1906 at the Salon des Indépendants—in terms of the breakdown of normative oppositions of gender and sexuality, see my “Engendering Imaginary Modernism: Henri Matisse’s *Le Bonheur de vivre*,” *Genders* 9 (Fall 1990), 49-74-

[21] The reworking is visible on the surface of the painting. The coiffure subject originates in the circus studies of 1905 and was first dated to that year. On the dating see Alfred H. Barr, *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art* [exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art] (New York, 1946), 43; Daix and Boudaille 1967, 102; Richardson 1991, 428; and exh. cat. Barcelona 1992, 364-367.

[22] A comparison of this passage in *La Coiffure* with the gesture of the right-hand figure *Two Nudes* suggests “unmasking” as another layer of meaning for the latter.

[23] In one of the preparatory sketches in the Barnes Foundation, the left hand on the mirror is clearly that of the maid.

[24] A child, often an infant, sometimes accompanies the coiffure motif in the circus studies of 1905, but I know of no composition studies with a child like the one in the final canvas.

[25] *Man, Woman, and Child* (Kunstmuseum, Basel), probably painted in late 1906 or early 1907, includes a similarly charged triangle, one that is more explicitly oedipal. The child is rejoined to the mother and looks directly out at the viewer, while the father (one of the disguised self-portraits) looks down at the seated mother, seen in profile.

[26] Picasso’s masking of the figure begins in earnest at Gósol, with the studies after *Fernande* and the innkeeper *Josep Fontdevila*. A recent discussion of the impact of the Gósol masking appears in William Rubin, “Reflections on Picasso and Portraiture,” in exh. cat. New York 1996, 28-29.

[27] On the masking of *Les Femmes d'Alger* see Rubin 1994, 91-95, 103-116.

[28] For Stein’s account see Stein 1961, 53, 57.

[29] Other examples include *Self-Portrait* (Musée Picasso, Paris), *Nude Boy* (fig. 16 in Rosenblum essay), and *Man, Woman, and Child* (Kunstmuseum, Basel).

[30] In *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* the sitter's imposing presence is certainly a match for the monumentality of the *Two Nudes*, and it has been suggested that there may be a connection between Gertrude and the expanding girth of Picasso's figures in late 1906. Johnson 1980, 94, suggests the bodies of *Two Nudes* are in part a composite of Gertrude and Fernande. See also Richardson 1991, 469. The monumental breadth of the figure in *Gertrude Stein* is contradicted, however, by the absence of any sense of the weight, mass, or anatomy of the body underneath the all-consuming brown robe. There is no "sculptural" treatment of the figure apart from the mask itself.

[31] Both Palau 1985, 477, and Richardson 1991, 452 and 519 n. 45, suggest that the flat mask, hieratic posture, and unfocused eyes of Picasso's figures in the summer and autumn may owe more to the twelfth-century *Gósol Madonna* than to Iberian stone sculpture.

[32] Several authors have associated the Stein mask with Picasso's studies of the old innkeeper Josep Fontdevila (see Palau 1985, 469). Richardson 1991, 453, 456, adds Ingres' *Tu Marcellus Eris* and the sculpture *Bust of Josep Fontdevila* as sources possibly as important as the Iberian reliefs Picasso would have seen in the Louvre in the spring of 1906. See also Pierre Daix, "Portraiture in Picasso's Primitivism and Cubism," in exh. cat. New York 1996, 266-268.

[33] Varnedoe's characterization of the *Self-Portrait with Palette* (in exh. cat. New York 1996, 135) comes closest to my own. His emphasis on "blankness" and "stoniness" is appropriate, but my reading also seeks to register the morbidity of this self-portrait, due to the petrification, insubstantiality, and passivity of the figure.

[34] See Gary Tinterow in exh. cat. Cambridge [MA], 1981, 76-77.

[35] While *Seated Nude* was most likely painted before the drawing just mentioned, its exact dating is uncertain. I would date it to the period just after *Two Nudes*.

[36] See John Golding and Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter* [exh. cat., Tate Gallery] (London, 1994), 18.

[37] The latter feature links *Seated Nude* to *Bust of a Woman* (cat. 179), *Self-Portrait with Palette* (fig. 9), and *Self-Portrait* (Musée Picasso, Paris).

[38] Picasso explores this androgynous handling of the chest again in a related work, *Bust of a Woman* (cat. 179), as well as in two studies entitled *Bust of a Woman* (D.XVI.23, 24). *Seated Male Nude* (Barnes Foundation, Merion, PA), presenting in a pose similar to that seen in *Seated Nude*, also attests to the mobility of gender in Picasso's figuration at this time.

[39] Perhaps the most explicit manifestation of the latter tendency is the study for the seated demoiselle on the right in *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. Version O)* that conflates the mask-face with the "masked" torso. See Rubin 1994, 88, figs. 182-184.

[40] The gender ambiguities of Picasso's figuration seem to have undergone a reversal, from the feminized male figures of the Rose period to the masculinized female figures of 1906.