

Picasso's portraits of Isabel Rawsthorne

by CAROL JACOBI

PABLO PICASSO'S PICTURES of the painter Isabel Rawsthorne (1912–92), who was also portrayed by Jacob Epstein, André Derain, Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon, have remained unidentified for sixty years. This article discusses three portraits that arose from Rawsthorne's friendship with Picasso.

The first published clue that such pictures existed was a passage in James Lord's 1985 biography of Alberto Giacometti relating an encounter in pre-war Paris:

Alberto and Isabel went often to the Brasserie Lipp at Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Picasso and Dora Maar also were regular customers. Picasso formed the habit of staring intently at Isabel. He was a famous admirer of beautiful women and it seemed clear that his stare was intended to annoy. To prove it he stopped at their table one day and said, 'I know how to make her!'¹

The anecdote was based on a conversation Lord had with Rawsthorne on 15th November 1972 while researching his book.² This was well after Giacometti's death (1966) and a few months before Picasso's (April 1973). Although Lord records that he had seen 'several portraits' of Rawsthorne by Picasso, he provided no dates or details and was ambivalent about their 'likeness', describing them as 'more life-like than a photograph', yet 'unrecognizable, only the slant of her eyes survives as an approximate reminder of the real person'.³

Rawsthorne was dissatisfied with Lord's biography,⁴ and the account of the episode at Brasserie Lipp in her draft unpublished autobiography, written in 1985, contained revealing differences:

Alberto always worked at night but at five every day we used to go and drink at Lipp. Picasso used to sit at the table opposite, and one day after staring at me particularly hard he jumped up and said to Alberto, 'Now I know how to do it.' Then he dashed back to his studio and started my portrait right away.⁵

Later in the manuscript Rawsthorne identified and dated three pictures. She recounted returning to Paris after the War and

visiting Picasso's studio with Balthus. Picasso greeted her with the words:

'I have something to show you' [. . . and] went to the next room and came back with three paintings, turned them round and, fancy, myself. They were dated 1940. He had, indeed, when he made that remark to Alberto – 'I know how to do it' – gone away to prove it. I was so surprised that I forgot to ask for one. I am sure that if I had he would have given me one.⁶

According to Rawsthorne's manuscript, she, Giacometti, Picasso and Maar were briefly together in Paris between February and May 1940, and she was the first civilian English artist to return there in May 1945.⁷ Rawsthorne's memory accords with other sources; Balthus's arrival in Paris from Switzerland is generally dated 1946, but a letter written to his wife, Antoinette, on a short visit in June 1945 described an emotional reunion with Rawsthorne.⁸ Further corroboration comes from a letter sent by Giacometti from Switzerland to Rawsthorne the following month; he had heard about the meeting from Balthus and Antoinette, who lived nearby, and asked if she would see Picasso on his behalf, 'as Balthus asked you to?'.⁹

Rawsthorne's text, more accurate and detailed than Lord's, shifts focus from the Brasserie Lipp to Picasso's studio and invites us to think further about the implications of Lord's *double-entendre*, 'I know how to make her'. Picasso had no English and so would have spoken in French, the language shared by the four people present: either '*Je sais comment le faire*', or '*Je sais comment faire*'. Lord's translation of the statement as an artistic and sexual taunt aligned Picasso's prolific reputation 'as an artist and a lover' with one of the major claims of his book, that for several years Giacometti had been unable satisfactorily to represent Rawsthorne or make love to her.¹⁰ Rawsthorne's alternative translation, 'I know how to do it', implies a serious artistic intention.

Rawsthorne owned two black-and-white photographs showing a Picasso portrait. One, torn from an unidentified catalogue, is captioned 'Portrait of Isabel 1936 [4]', the second is

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¹ J. Lord: *Giacometti: A Biography*, London 1985, p.207.

² *Idem*: 'Sudbury Cottage', *A Gift for Admiration: Further Memoirs*, New York 1998, pp.70–71.

³ *Idem*, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.207–08.

⁴ N. Shakespeare: 'Masterpiece or travesty?', *The Times* (28th June 1986), p.10.

⁵ I. Rawsthorne: draft unpublished autobiography, c.1985, private collection,

pp.75–76. This episode was quoted in V. Wiesinger and M. Harrison: exh. cat. *Alberto Giacometti, Francis Bacon: Isabel Rawsthorne and Other Intimate Strangers*, New York (Gagosian) 2008, p.224.

⁶ Rawsthorne, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp.75–76.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.71.

⁸ Balthasar Klossowski de Rola to Antoinette Klossowski de Rola, 17th June 1945, private collection.

⁹ Alberto Giacometti to Isabel Rawsthorne, 30th July 1945, Tate Gallery Archive, London (hereafter cited as TGA), 9612.1.2.5.

¹⁰ Lord, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.194; V. Wiesinger places these kinds of comments in the context of Giacometti's rivalry and relationship with Picasso: 'Introduction', in *idem*, ed.: *Alberto Giacometti, Isabel Nicholas, Correspondances*, Paris 2006, p.43.



44. *The hat with flowers (Bust of a woman)*, by Pablo Picasso. 10th April 1940. Canvas, 72 by 60 cm. (Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; courtesy RMN-Grand Palais and Bertrand Prévost; © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2017).



45. *Bust of a woman*, by Pablo Picasso. 11th April 1940. Canvas, 72 by 60 cm. (Private collection; © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2017).

slightly creased and stamped 'Galerie Louise Leiris, 29 bis, rue d'Astorg'.¹¹ In Lord's memoir of Rawsthorne, 'Sudbury Cottage' (1998), he recollected her telling him about the portraits of her in Picasso's studio and that one of them had been given to the writer and anthropologist Michel Leiris.¹² Leiris and his wife, the art dealer Louise Leiris, were close friends of Picasso, especially during and after the War, and Rawsthorne was intimate with them from 1947. A Picasso portrait *The hat with flowers* (*Bust of a woman*) of the right date, 10th April 1940, entered their collection in 1953 and was donated to the Musée de l'Art Moderne, Paris, in 1984 (Fig.44).¹³ The work was illustrated in Christian Zervos's catalogue raisonné and titled *Buste de femme*, but it was recognised that the sitter was not Maar, Picasso's main subject at the time. In 2012 Valentina Castellani suggested to Véronique Wiesinger that it might depict Rawsthorne.¹⁴ A comparison with the clipping confirms that 'Portrait of Isabel 1936 [4]' is *The hat with flowers*, misdated, and the two identically sized paintings titled *Bust of a woman* that followed it on the 11th and 14th April 1940 (Figs.45 and 46) make a good fit for the other two of the Rawsthorne trio.¹⁵

The three works were part of a long series of seated women made mainly between 1937 and 1940 in Picasso's sketchbooks and paintings and were, as Brigitte Léal describes them, 'composites', incorporating many sources.¹⁶ Although they are dominated by the features of Maar, in the 1950s Picasso told his future biographer John Richardson that there were sometimes as many as three women in a single image.¹⁷ This accounts for Rawsthorne's diffidence in her memoir about naming the works. She side-stepped Lord's over-literal difficulties with 'likeness', recognising that the paintings she had inspired were not portraits in any simple sense.

Rawsthorne's identity can, nonetheless, be clearly traced. The hat and central parting in *The hat with flowers* derive from Maar, who sports hats of a similar shape in *Woman in a straw hat* (*Dora Maar*) (1937; private collection) and *Dora Maar in a wicker chair* (1938; Museum of Modern Art, New York), and of a similar colour in *Dora Maar in an armchair* (1939; Museum of Modern Art, New York) and *Dora Maar with a cat* (1941; private collection). However, the journalist Alix Coleman, a friend of Rawsthorne's, recorded that this particular hat was Rawsthorne's, made by Robert Piguet, a designer she favoured.¹⁸ The asymmetry, fly-away hair, v-shaped chin and long neck are all more characteristic of Rawsthorne, as can be seen in a contemporary photograph of her by Balthus (Fig.47), and in portraits such as Jacob Epstein's *First portrait of Isabel* (1932; private collection) and Giacometti's *Head of Isabel I* (1936; Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, Paris) and *II* (Fig.48). The neat, pip-like nostrils of *The hat with flowers* are different from the wider, sometimes arabesque notation of Maar's, and their



46. *Bust of a woman*, by Pablo Picasso. 14th April 1940. Canvas, 74 by 60 cm. (Private collection; © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2017).

close alignment efficiently suggests Rawsthorne's pointed nose. The angled, outlined eyes with piercing russet pupils suggest Rawsthorne's appearance, and are different from Maar's more open gaze. Both Epstein's and Giacometti's sculptures feature the slight strabismus, or non-alignment of one pupil, that exaggerated Rawsthorne's intent expression; Picasso went further, dramatically converging the pupils to create a gaze that pinions the viewer, while suggesting also a sideways look seen in Rawsthorne's self-portraits, such as her sketch *Seated figure* (Fig.49). These features became diluted and integrated in the two *Bust of a woman* paintings of 11th and 14th April. The latter repeated the form of the face but reverted to Maar's diamond shaped, double-rimmed eyes. A week later, on 21st April, another *Bust of a woman* combined elements of all the previous canvases.¹⁹ The portraits were a dialogue within a longer scheme of work.

The hat with flowers captured distinctive attributes of Rawsthorne's manner as well as her appearance. The rectangular

¹¹ S. Doyle: exh. cat. *Isabel Rawsthorne 1912–1992: Paintings, Drawings and Designs*, Harrogate (Mercer Art Gallery) and London (October Gallery) 1997, p.9; photograph of a portrait of Rawsthorne by Picasso, TGA 9612/4/3/3.

¹² Lord, *op. cit.* (note 2), p.71. Daniel Farson recalled a very similar conversation with Rawsthorne, adding that the picture was one of five, rather than three, and showed her with 'little red eyes, wild hair and a vertical mouth', D. Farson: *The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon*, London 1993, p.165.

¹³ I. Monod-Fontaine: *Donation Louise et Michel Leiris: Collection Kahnweiler-Leiris*, Paris 1984, p.178.

¹⁴ C. Zervos: *Pablo Picasso, Oeuvres de 1939 et 1940*, Paris 1959, X, pl.127, no.383; V. Wiesinger: 'Giacometti and Picasso', in *idem*: exh. cat. *Alberto Giacometti. Una Retrospectiva*, Málaga (Museo Picasso Málaga) 2012, p.74.

¹⁵ For the second *Bust of a woman* (11th April) see sale, Sotheby's, London, 5th

February 2001, lot 27; Zervos, *op. cit.* (note 14), pl.127, no.384. It was reproduced in M. Gayford: 'More than a face to remember', *The Daily Telegraph* (25th July 1998), p.7, there described as the portrait mentioned in Farson, *op. cit.* (note 12). For the third *Bust of a woman* (14th April) see sale, Sotheby's, New York, 10th May 2001, lot 25; Zervos, *op. cit.* (note 14), pl.129, no.386.

¹⁶ B. Léal: *Collection art moderne: la collection du Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne*, Paris 2006, p.132.

¹⁷ J. Richardson interviewed in C. Stephens: 'Cooper's Capers and their consequences for Picasso, Penrose and the Tate', in *idem* and J. Beechey, eds.: exh. cat. *Picasso and Modern British Art*, London (Tate Britain) 2012, p.44.

¹⁸ A. Coleman: 'More than muse material', *The Guardian* (30th January 1992), p.69.

¹⁹ *Bust of a woman*, by Pablo Picasso. 21st April 1940. Canvas, 72 by 60 cm. (Private collection); Zervos, *op. cit.* (note 14), pl.128, no.385.



47. *Isabel in Venice*, by Balthus. 1937. Photograph, dimensions unknown. (Private collection).

'museau' (muzzle), as Léal describes it, accentuates the vectored quality of her demeanour.²⁰ This distinctive, energetic, forward posture can be seen in Epstein's, Giacometti's and Derain's portraits of her and in Balthus's photograph. Léal's detection of animal attributes in the picture, '*fortement sexualisée*', fits contemporary descriptions of Rawsthorne's sexual charisma.²¹ Picasso introduced the 'museau' in 1939, inspired in part by his dog, an Afghan hound called Kazbek. As he later told Richardson, this was a 'comment on the animal nature of women'.²² Lord characterised Picasso's pictures of Rawsthorne as 'a series of savage representations [. . .] ominous, predatory creatures'.²³ The predatory femme fatale was a familiar stereotype: Lord reported Giacometti calling Rawsthorne 'A tigress. No. More like a panther, a real devourer of men'.²⁴ In Rawsthorne's case it had a subtler relevance, however. She was a passionate naturalist;

she identified with animals and birds whose existence she saw (unsentimentally) as continuous with that of human beings, and they were the subject of much of her work.²⁵

Picasso described the seated women series as 'the deep reality not the superficial one'.²⁶ His pictorial treatment of Rawsthorne reveals more about what he meant by this, that Picasso was as interested in Rawsthorne's activities as in her famous beauty. When Picasso met Rawsthorne, she was an experienced professional artist. Entering the Liverpool College of Art at sixteen, she had graduated via a life-drawing scholarship to the Royal Academy Schools in London in 1930, had been studio assistant to Epstein in 1932–34 and had shown at the Valenza and Redfern Galleries in London.²⁷ She worked in Paris from 1934 to 1947, excepting the period of the Second World War. Although intimate with the London and Paris avant-garde, Rawsthorne rejected abstraction and Surrealism in favour of an observational, realist approach. She associated with André Derain and others, but her ideas brought her closest to Giacometti. They shared an interest in the phenomenological and existential implications of representing bodies that would become more mainstream after the War. Between 1935 and 1947 Rawsthorne's likeness became Giacometti's primary focus.²⁸ Picasso had known Derain since they shared a studio in 1906 and Giacometti since the early 1930s, but it was Balthus who introduced Rawsthorne to him in 1937, just after Picasso moved in January that year to a Left Bank studio at 7 rue des Grands-Augustins, a few steps away from Balthus's studio at



48. *Head of Isabel II*, by Alberto Giacometti. 1938–39. Plaster with pencil, height 21 cm. (Collection Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, Paris; © Estate of Alberto Giacometti / ACS and DACS, London 2017).

²⁰ Léal, *op. cit.* (note 16), p.132.

²¹ E. Paolozzi: foreword, in exh. cat. *Isabel Lambert, Painting the Ballet*, London (October Gallery) 1986, n.p.

²² J. Richardson: *A Life of Picasso, 1907–1917*, London 1996, II, p.33.

²³ Lord, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.208.

²⁴ A. Giacometti, quoted in Lord, *op. cit.* (note 2), p.69.

²⁵ For example, Rawsthorne's bird themes are surveyed in C. Jacobi and B. Noakes: *Migrations: Isabel Rawsthorne 1912–1992*, Oxford 2011.

²⁶ Picasso, quoted in Léal, *op. cit.* (note 16), p.395.

²⁷ *Isabel Nicholas: Animal Studies*, London (Valenza Gallery) 23rd May–10th June 1933; *Watercolours by Paul Nash, Frank Dobson, P.H Jowett, Adrian Allinson, Isabel Nicholas*, London (Redfern Gallery) January–February 1934.

²⁸ Wiesinger and Harrison, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp.218–19. The relationship is tracked in the letters that passed between the two artists, see Wiesinger, *op. cit.* (note 10).

Cour du Rohan. Rawsthorne remembered Picasso as 'amusing, full of chatter and curiosity'. She also visited Maar around the corner in 6 rue de Savoie; she came to consider her 'a singular person, a mature artist', and was impressed by the 'clarity and balance' of her work. Rawsthorne, Giacometti, Picasso and Maar met often in each other's studios, and in restaurants and cafés.²⁹ Lord's impression that the 1940 encounter at Lipp was a fleeting one is misleading; the four knew each other well.

Rawsthorne wrote that she was not introduced to Picasso as an artist, thanks to Balthus's prejudice that a woman working was 'silly'.³⁰ Instead, he assumed Picasso would want to paint her. Rawsthorne was not a professional model; she posed for Epstein, Derain and Giacometti as a friend and colleague, a practice preferred by these artists. Picasso's representations of her were painted without sittings: like many of Giacometti's, and all twenty or so of the later portraits of her by Francis Bacon, they were made from memory. Rawsthorne was wary of the dependent roles of student, model, mistress or muse traditionally expected of women in the circle. Although she painted in Derain's studio in her early days in Paris, she refused his offers to continue the arrangement and never received financial support from Giacometti. From 1935 she lived with and worked alongside Sefton Delmer, Foreign Correspondent for the *Daily Express*. Her memoir records that they married in 1936 to gain a passport that gave her a more secure status. From this date, Delmer was based in Spain and Rawsthorne in Paris, but she continued to travel occasionally on his behalf, couriering information, money and supplies.³¹ By 1937 she was homeless, living in a small hotel. She recalled that she was sure that had she asked Picasso to find her a studio 'the matter would have been settled at once', but she did not.³² Neither is it likely that she and Picasso were ever lovers, as has been suggested.³³ Rawsthorne told friends that she turned down his advances, including a bold approach in a post office queue.³⁴

Léal describes Picasso's seated women and *The hat with flowers* as an exploration of 'the dark continent of femininity'.³⁵ Rawsthorne's likeness brought to the series a particular variety of femininity that Picasso associated with Englishness. In 1958, Roland Penrose (also a friend of Rawsthorne) recalled Picasso declaring his fascination for a spirited kind of English woman, 'a type so different from any he had ever met, who had conquered her own liberty and the hearts of men'.³⁶ Picasso told him that as a young man he had become infatuated with the early nineteenth-century archaeologist Lady Hester Stanhope and longed to meet someone like her. Stanhope was an adventurous, unconventional figure, and tales of her shipwreck en route to Egypt and adoption of Turkish male dress were published in the orientalist memoir of Alphonse de



49. *Seated figure*, by Isabel Rawsthorne. c.1936. Pencil on paper, 13 by 21 cm. (Tate Archive, London; © Estate of Isabel Rawsthorne, DACS).

Lamartine, *Notes d'un voyageur* (1835), translated into Spanish in 1846.³⁷ Richardson has suggested that Picasso may have been embellishing his past with the tale of this youthful infatuation, but it was clearly on his mind in middle-age when the conversation took place.³⁸ The story may have been prompted by Picasso's friendships with Penrose and a British circle from 1937. Rawsthorne's disdain for conventional feminine roles epitomised Picasso's 'bold, beautiful and emancipated' ideal of 'beauty, strength and courage'.³⁹ The androgynous 'sporting' cuts and cloth which she sometimes wore, as seen in Balthus's photograph, were an English style, made fashionable by Coco Chanel as the *garçonne* look in the 1920s.⁴⁰

There was more than exotic and erotic significance to the English heroine. As Sarah Symmons has pointed out, English art, particularly the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century realism of Hogarth and others, was associated in Spain with progressive British politics and social attitudes.⁴¹ Picasso's friendships with

²⁹ Rawsthorne, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp.32–33; confirmed by R. Hohl: *Giacometti: A Biography in Pictures*, Bonn 1998, p.89; and Balthus: *Balthus: Works and Interviews*, ed. C. Costanzini and M. Bal, Barcelona 2008, pp.148–49.

³⁰ Rawsthorne, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.32.

³¹ *Idem*: autobiographical notes, TGA 9612.2.1.scrap 1A.

³² *Idem*: 'Autobiographical notes', in exh. cat. *Isabel Lambert*, London (Hanover Gallery) 1968, n.p.; *idem*, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp.13 and 32.

³³ M. Peppiatt: *In Giacometti's Studio*, London 2011, p.91.

³⁴ B. (Biddy) Noakes in conversation with the author, Pateley Bridge, November 2007.

³⁵ Léal, *op. cit.* (note 16), p.132.

³⁶ R. Penrose: *Picasso: His Life and Work*, Oakland CA 1981, p.56; Rawsthorne was close to Penrose in London after the War and Penrose curated *Isabel Lambert Drawings*, London (Institute of Contemporary Arts) November 1965–January 1966.

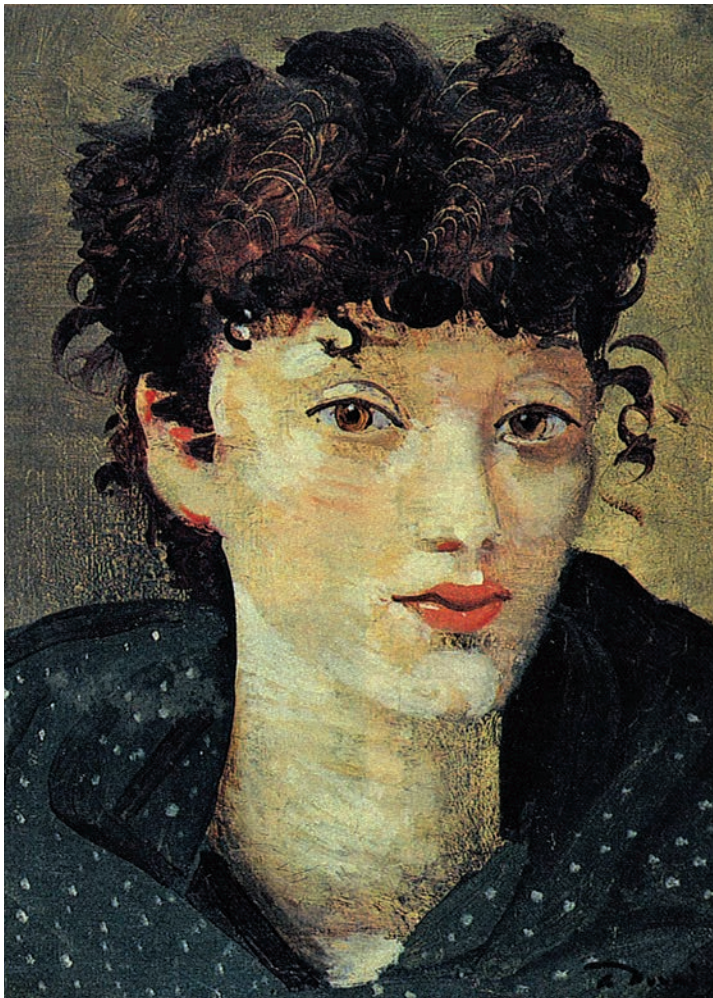
³⁷ A. de Lamartine: *Impressions, souvenirs, pensées et paysages pendant un voyage en Orient, 1832–1833, ou Notes d'un voyageur*, Paris 1835; Spanish edition: *Viaje al oriente*, Madrid 1846, pp.466–573.

³⁸ J. Richardson and M. McCully: *A Life of Picasso: Volume 1, 1881–1906*, New York 1991, p.159.

³⁹ Penrose, *op. cit.* (note 36), pp.56 and 228.

⁴⁰ Rawsthorne, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.34; Rawsthorne was accompanying Antoinette and Balthus on their honeymoon, Nicholas Fox Weber in conversation with the author, London, September 2012; for the 'English style', see C. Beaton: *The Glass of Fashion*, London 1951, p.165; M. Stewart: *Dressing Modern Frenchwomen: Marketing Haute Couture, 1919–1939*, Baltimore 2008, p.188.

⁴¹ S. Symmons: 'A new people and a limited society: British art and the Spanish spectator', in C. Payne and W. Vaughan, eds.: *English Accents: Interactions with British Art, c.1776–1855*, Farnham 2004, pp.103–04.



50. *Portrait of Madame Isabel Delmer*, by André Derain. 1936. Canvas, 35 by 30 cm. (Private collection).

left-wing English artists coincided with the Spanish Civil War and his painting of *Guernica* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid) for the Republican government's display at the Paris Exposition Internationale in 1937, and its exhibition in Britain, organised by Penrose. Rawsthorne was one of very few Left Bank artists to visit Spain during the Civil War. She and Delmer went over the border in disguise in the first days of the war and were captured by rebels in July 1936, and she was caught in the bombardment of Barcelona in 1938.⁴² She also aided Republican fighters and refugees in Paris, an act punishable by French law with imprisonment.⁴³

A more precise pointer to Rawsthorne's political and pictorial significance for Picasso is the timing of his paintings, which do not appear to have been begun until three years

after they had met. That moment, April 1940, coincided with a greater Fascist threat, that of Nazi Germany, and a temporary recuperation of the depleted Left Bank community between the declaration of war in September 1939 and the Germans arriving in Paris in mid-June 1940. On 1st September 1939, the day Germany invaded Poland, Rawsthorne and Delmer were in Warsaw.⁴⁴ She caught the last plane out and made her way to London. Many artists left Paris, but Picasso, his family and Maar retreated only as far as the coastal town of Royan and he returned to the studio in the rue des Grand-Augustins between 5th and 29th February and 15th March and 16th May 1940. Giacometti was in Switzerland but he and Rawsthorne were reunited in Paris by February 1940.⁴⁵ Giacometti recalled that during this period he saw Picasso 'practically every day'.⁴⁶ The Germans invaded France on 10th May, Picasso left six days later and Rawsthorne fled on 10th June.⁴⁷ It was in very specific circumstances, then, that Picasso turned to the 'deep reality' that he associated with the English 'type'.

Lord's assertion that Rawsthorne's portrait was a retort to male artists of Picasso's time prompts a comparison of his portraits of her with those by other artists. She was the subject of portraits by Epstein between 1932 and 1934 and by Derain between 1935 and 1937, as well as by Giacometti. *The hat with flowers* was a challenge to all three. Yve-Alain Bois argues that the three-quarter length seated women in hats were from the outset in dialogue with Matisse's Fauvist canvas *Woman with a hat* (1905; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art).⁴⁸ Introducing the likeness of Rawsthorne into the series addressed a second veteran Fauve, Derain, who Richardson has shown had been an important figure for Picasso since 1906.⁴⁹ In 1940 Rawsthorne had spent a brief period working from Derain's model in his studio, as Picasso had done at a similar age thirty years before.⁵⁰ Of the dozen or so images that Derain made of Rawsthorne, Picasso almost certainly knew the exquisite *Madame Isabel Delmer* (Fig.50), which the artist gave to Rawsthorne on the occasion of her marriage to Delmer, and an earlier half-length, which Derain kept in his studio, now called *Isabel Lambert* (c.1936; North Carolina Museum of Art; her name following her marriage to the composer and conductor Constant Lambert in 1947).⁵¹ The elongated marmalade-coloured eyes, dark hair and light skin of *The hat with flowers* respond most directly to Derain's head of Rawsthorne, but the parted lipsticked lips are more like those in his half-length work. Picasso's green background and palette of turquoises, greens and pinks echo Derain's post-Fauvist colour scheme.

The short interlude between the reconvening of the Left Bank community in February 1940 after the declaration of war and the personal and professional separations brought about by the German occupation of Paris the following June gave extra

⁴² S. Delmer: *Trail Sinister: An Autobiography*, London 1961, pp.263–68; Rawsthorne, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp.26, 38 and 41–42.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Letter from Rawsthorne to Giacometti, Hôtel Europeski, Warsaw, August 1939, Wiesinger, *op. cit.* (note 10), pp.60–61; letter from Giacometti to Rawsthorne, Geneva, August 1939, TGA 9612.1.2.7, Wiesinger, *op. cit.* (note 10), pp.62–63.

⁴⁵ Rawsthorne, autobiographical notes, TGA 9612.2.2.1.3; Rawsthorne, letter to Giacometti, 8th January 1940, Wiesinger, *op. cit.* (note 10), p.71.

⁴⁶ Giacometti in conversation with Igor Stravinsky, 1957, in the film *Igor Stravinsky: Composer*, directed by J. Darvas, Munich 2001.

⁴⁷ Letter from Rawsthorne to Giacometti, 10th June 1940, Wiesinger, *op. cit.* (note 10), p.77.

⁴⁸ Y.-A. Bois: *Matisse and Picasso*, Paris 1999, p.161.

⁴⁹ Richardson and McCully, *op. cit.* (note 38), p.77.

⁵⁰ Rawsthorne, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.13.

⁵¹ Rawsthorne described seeing it in Derain's studio in 1952, in a letter to Peter Rose Pulham, March 1952, TGA 9612.1.3.76. For a complete list of Derain's portraits of Rawsthorne, see C. Jacobi: 'Isabel' in J. Munck, ed.: *Derain, Balthus, Giacometti. Une amitié artistique*, Paris 2017, p.167.

⁵² R. Hohl: *Alberto Giacometti: Sculpture, Painting, Drawing*, London 1972, p.273;

significance to portraiture. In 1934 Giacometti had placed the genre at the centre of a newly observational practice that alienated him from the Surrealists and kept him from exhibiting anything new for a decade: 'I lost all my friends and the interest of the dealers in the process', he recalled.⁵² During Rawsthorne's absence in the winter of 1939–40, Giacometti experimented in depicting her from memory. Ardent letters described him summoning her up: 'I feel as though you are sitting next to me, and I see your face like that night at the beginning of summer', but he worked without success, lamenting: 'Why aren't you here working in your studio?'⁵³ Their temporary reunion in February made the task yet more urgent. Giacometti's struggle intrigued Picasso: Rawsthorne recalled that he 'would sneak round to Giacometti's at 46 rue Hippolyte-Maindron to see what he was up to'. It was perhaps this that prompted Picasso to show his hand, and claim 'I know how to do it'.⁵⁴

The hat with flowers acknowledged the slight asymmetry, fly-away hair, v-shaped chin and long neck of Giacometti's most recent *Head of Isabel II*, which, along with *Head of Isabel I (The Egyptian)*, could be seen in his studio, but Picasso's bravura alternative figuration challenged Giacometti's dependence on the model. 'You didn't sit for Picasso', Rawsthorne recalled, 'he painted me from memory. He was the most controlled person I have ever known, extremely intelligent with passionate convictions'. Picasso's gambit could be construed as personal, a taunt from a famous lover to a failed one, or from an older artist to a younger one, as Lord suggested, but it was more importantly artistic, a challenge to sculpture itself. The tussle between painting and sculpture had been a preoccupation of Picasso's since his period of Cubism and is evident, as Penrose notes, in his wartime seated women.⁵⁵ Picasso's belated engagement with Rawsthorne could be seen in part as an engagement with Giacometti and with sculpture at the moment of crisis for both.

Did Picasso's *The hat with flowers* also address Epstein? The sculptor had begun a long friendship with Derain while working in Paris between 1902 and 1906; Picasso met him at about the same time and the pair renewed their acquaintance in London in 1919.⁵⁶ A cast of Epstein's *First portrait of Isabel* was in the Delmers' collection in Paris, but Picasso never saw the more famous over-life-size second portrait, a half-figure called *Isabel* (1933; Ferens Art Gallery, Hull), which was shown in the Tate Gallery, London, from 1934.⁵⁷ The sculpture was, however, illustrated in Epstein's autobiography *Let There Be Sculpture*, published in January 1940 (Fig.51), which Picasso may have known.⁵⁸ *Isabel*, the most celebrated of the semi-naked portraits that became Epstein's signature format between the wars, was the book's culminating image, a provocation, perhaps, to any artist attempting to address Rawsthorne's likeness.



51. *Isabel*, by Jacob Epstein. 1933. Bronze, 70.6 by 67.1 by 45.6 cm. (Ferens Art Gallery, Hull; photograph from J. Epstein: *Let There Be Sculpture*, London 1940, p.323).

Picasso did not lack 'beautiful women' to paint, and his belated incorporation of Rawsthorne's likeness into his *Bust of a woman* series was more than a macho retort. Rawsthorne provided a model of a young woman artist, 'liberated' femininity and political daring that interested Picasso. Furthermore, she had close ties with leading sculptors and painters of Picasso's generation, Epstein and Derain, and of the next, Giacometti. This vital intersection of relationships has been largely overlooked, partly due to Picasso's break with Derain in 1944 and the conclusion of his partnership with Maar.⁵⁹ Rawsthorne had lost touch with Picasso by 1947, when she returned to London and he moved to Vallauris in the south of France, but she continued to see Maar until 1952.⁶⁰ In 1940, however, like Epstein, Derain and Giacometti before him and Bacon and others after him, Picasso employed Rawsthorne in a lively dialogue with and about art – present, past and future.⁶¹ Hence his pride in fetching the paintings when they were reunited in 1945, 'I have something to show you'.

A. Giacometti, quoted in J. Clay: 'Alberto Giacometti: Le Dialogue avec la mort d'un très grand sculpteur de notre temps', *Réalités* 215 (December 1963), pp.135–36.

⁵³ Letter from Giacometti to Rawsthorne, 18th January 1940, TGA 9612.1.2.3; also Thursday, January 1940, TGA 9612.1.2.9.

⁵⁴ Rawsthorne, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.32.

⁵⁵ Penrose, *op. cit.* (note 36), pp.430–31.

⁵⁶ J. Epstein: *Let There Be Sculpture: The autobiography of Jacob Epstein*, London and New York 1940, p.60; Epstein visited Picasso's studio in 1912, Stephens and Beechey, *op. cit.* (note 17), pp.53 and 83.

⁵⁷ The descendants of Sefton Delmer sold a bronze described as 'Jacob Epstein

First Portrait of Isabel, modelled and cast in 1932', at Christie's, London, Twentieth Century British Art, 2nd November 2001, lot 10.

⁵⁸ Epstein, *op. cit.* (note 56), p.323. International bookshops such as Shakespeare & Company, then on rue de l'Odéon, stocked both British and American publications.

⁵⁹ I. Monod-Fontaine: *André Derain: An Outsider in French Art*, Copenhagen 2007, pp.42–45.

⁶⁰ Rawsthorne mentions exchanging telephone numbers with Maar in a letter to Rose Pulham, spring 1952, TGA 9612.1.3.78.

⁶¹ This concatenation is investigated by Harrison and Wiesinger, *op. cit.* (note 5).