



The Met Acquires Juan Gris' "The Musician's Table" with Gift by Leonard A. Lauder

September 13, 2018

by Pat Rogers

The Metropolitan Museum of Art announced today the addition of Juan Gris's *The Musician's Table* (May–June 1914) to the museum's [Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection](#). Acquired with funds given by [Leonard A. Lauder](#), the painting is a major example of Gris's exploration in *papier collé*, according to the museum. It joins the Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection, now totaling 83 works by [Georges Braque](#), [Juan Gris](#), [Fernand Léger](#), and [Pablo Picasso](#).

"Since the landmark gift in 2013, Leonard A. Lauder has augmented the collection with five additional masterworks of modern art," Daniel H. Weiss, President and CEO of The Met, stated in the announcement. "His continued commitment and outstanding generosity to the museum is exemplary, and it continues a nearly 150-year tradition of support from donors and collectors that is critical to the success of The Met's mission."



"The Musician's Table" by Juan Gris, 1914. Charcoal, wax crayon, gouache, cut-and-pasted printed wallpaper, blue and white laid papers, transparentized paper, newsprint, and brown wrapping paper; selectively varnished on canvas. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection, Purchase, Leonard A. Lauder Gift, 2018.

Max Hollein, Director of The Met, added: "*The Musician's Table* deepens the rich holdings of the Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection, the most important of its kind. It joins six other collages from this pivotal moment of the artist's career, forming an unparalleled representation of his experimental forays into this medium. Combined with the critical contributions to scholarship made by the award-winning 2014 Leonard A. Lauder Cubism catalogue and the ongoing activities of the Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art, this gift further enables us to explore the depth of influence this transformative period had on modern art."

Juan Gris, *The Musician's Table* (1914)

[Georges Braque](#) and [Pablo Picasso](#) invented *papier collé* in 1912 as yet another avant-garde challenge to the traditional illusionism in painting and to embrace the realities of modern mass

culture. Juan Gris (Spanish, 1887–1927), however, was the first to exhibit a cubist collage in a public exhibition, drawing immediate notoriety and making his name as an avant-garde artist. Between December 1913 and October 1914, the artist moved away from painting to concentrate on this novel, hybrid technique, producing some 40 works with cut and pasted papers, oil paint, gouache, and various drawing media. Decorative wallpapers and allusions to the pulp fiction novels *Fantomas* particularly inspired him, and he carefully organized his compositions around the textural and symbolic properties of his materials. His works from 1914 have been praised as the summit of the artist's oeuvre by Cubist scholar John Golding, who wrote that they "represent the climax of Gris's exploration of the intellectual possibilities of Cubism and of the new techniques it has introduced."

Within the carefully cut and pasted layers of *The Musician's Table*, Gris inserted a clever message: the headline of the journal that rests on the table is made from newspaper mastheads from two different dates and refers to the mounting tensions of 1914 but also to rivalries between the Cubists. Along with the violin yet to be played and notation sheet awaiting a score, the composition suggests Gris's hope for peace and harmony with his fellow artists.

The painting is now on view in gallery 908, along with other hallmarks of The Met's modern art collection.

Lauder's gift coincides with The Met's looking forward to its 150th anniversary of its founding in 2020. The art museum also announced today that, as part of the celebration, it will focus on further evolvment its encyclopedic collection in a number of areas. "Our 150th anniversary offers an opportunity to celebrate, to thank our supporters and visitors, and importantly, to continue to expand the artistic excellence of our collections and the complex cultural narratives they tell," said Mr. Hollein. "And to help launch the Collections Initiative, there is no one who better exemplifies the spirit of giving that has fostered the growth of The Met and the benefits it provides to the public than Leonard A. Lauder with his continued support of the collections as well as curatorial positions, and the Research Center."

"It is an honor and a responsibility to help build the resources of a great public institution," noted Mr. Lauder. "I am inspired by previous generations of supporters who have contributed to making The Met's collections among the greatest in the world. As the Collections Initiative begins this autumn to mark the 150th anniversary of The Met, I am pleased to step forward to continue to build and deepen the Museum's holdings for generations to come."

BASIC FACTS: [The MET Fifth Avenue](https://www.metmuseum.org) is located at 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028. www.metmuseum.org.

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