



# Female Nude with Arms Raised

Pablo Picasso

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## Not on display

**Title/Description:** Female Nude with Arms Raised

**Artist/Maker:** Pablo Picasso

**Born:** 1907

**Object Type:** Drawing

**Materials:** Gouache, Paper

**Measurements:** Unframed: (h. 630 x w. 460 x d. 1mm) Framed: (h. 980 x w. 796 x d. 40 mm)

**Inscription:** Picasso 1907

**Accession Number:** 8

**Historic Period:** 20th century

**Production Place:** Europe, France

**Credit Line:** Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

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There are six works by Pablo Picasso in the Sainsbury Collection and this is the most important one. Looked at in isolation it is a puzzling piece: a nude in classic standing pose, arms behind her head, stark and staring, a face which is a mask, without hair and nipples in the manner of Victorian forerunners. But this is no Victorian: she is an icon of modernity, a symbol of the times in front of her. Her frightening demeanour is tempered by an underlying eroticism, and a contradictory tension between elegance and awkwardness marks her out as a woman of the new century.

Just twenty-six years old and living in Paris, Picasso had just emerged from his first mature phase of work, the Blue and Rose periods, and was struggling to radically develop his painterly language. One of the results was this deeply haunting and eclectic figure. She shows references to Africa, Iberia, European Classicism, Symbolism, and Paul Cézanne. The vitality of the piece and the medium, gouache on paper, tell us that she is a study rather than a freestanding work. She is, in fact, a study for the painting *Les Femmes d'Alger* of 1907, a work often identified as vital for the formation of Cubism, the movement invented by Picasso and Georges Braque that triggered the Golden Age of Modernism. So this figure stands in brooding silence in the middle of the most seminal body of work by Picasso, the single most important artist of the twentieth century.

Paul Greenhalgh, May 2021

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## **Exhibitions**

'Magdalene Odundo: The Journey of Things', The Hepworth Wakefield, 2/2019 - 6/2019

'Magdalene Odundo: The Journey of Things', Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, 8/2019 - 12/2019

'Pablo Picasso: The Legacy of Youth', Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, 13/3/2022 - 17/7/2022

London Art Fair, Business Design Centre, London - 22/01/25 - 26/01/25

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## **Provenance**

Acquired by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from Hugh Willoughby, Brighton in 1939.

Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.

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