

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Françoise Gilot
(Neuilly-sur-Seine 1921 – 2023 New York)

Portrait of Inès Sassier

Signed lower right: *F. Gilot*

Dedicated, signed and dated on the reverse: *Pour André Verdet / Françoise 50*

Charcoal on paper

65 x 49.4 cm. (25 ½ x 19 ½ in.)

Numbered in the artist's archives as SG.0842.

Provenance:

André Verdet (1913-2004), Nice, by 1950;

Private Collection, Paris;

Sotheby's Paris, 20th April 2023, lot 311;

Colnaghi Elliott Master Drawings;

Private Collection, London.



Inès Sassier was Picasso's housekeeper, trusted friend and confidante. Françoise Gilot came to know Inès well during the ten years she was in a relationship with Picasso, from 1943 to 1953. Her children with Picasso, Paloma and Claude, were also very close to Inès. In *Life with Picasso*, Gilot described Inès as 'very pretty...She had an oval face with a small black nose, black hair and eyes, and olive brown skin'.¹

Sassier was a constant in Picasso's life for over three decades. They first met in the summer of 1936 when the artist was holidaying in Mougins with Dora Maar. Inès was a sixteen-year-old chambermaid at the Hôtel Vaste Horizon where the couple were staying. Picasso asked her to return to Paris to work for him and she agreed, moving into his apartment on the rue des Grands-Augustins. When the war broke out, Inès returned to the south of France, meeting Gustave Sassier, who she married. She returned to Paris in the Spring of 1942 with her husband, moving into a small apartment below Picasso's. Inès soon played a fundamental role in Picasso's life, gaining his total confidence and affection in a way very few others would do (fig. 1).



Fig. 1, Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Inès Sassier*, 1953, pencil on paper, 31.8 x 23.7 cm, Private Collection

When Picasso moved to Cannes in 1955 and then Mougins in 1961, Inès stayed in Paris, watching over his studio, but visiting the south in the school holidays with Paloma and Claude. She said of Picasso 'As far as I was concerned, there was only him...Picasso was first and foremost before the whole world'.²

¹ F. Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, New York 1964, p. 164.

² A. Huffington, *Picasso – Creator and Destroyer*, London 1988, p. 409.

Over the years, Inès was portrayed repeatedly by Picasso. According to Gilot, 'Every year, for her birthday, around Christmas time, Pablo had her come to pose one afternoon for a portrait sketch and gave it to her, so that by now she must have twenty or more portraits by Picasso.'³ Clearly Gilot also took pleasure in depicting Inès. In this drawing of 1949, Gilot shows Inès, with her distinctive wave of her hair, in a patterned dress with an apron over the top. A related drawing by Gilot from the same year was also recently on the art market (fig. 2).



Fig. 2, Françoise Gilot, *Portrait of Inès Sassier*, 1949, pencil on paper, 63.5 x 23.7 cm, Private Collection

Gilot gifted the portrait in 1950 to André Verdier, an artist, writer and Resistance fighter from Saint-Paul de Vence, who met the couple around this time.

³ F. Gilot, *op. cit.*, p. 164.