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| **Gris, Juan (1887-1927)** |
| José Victoriano Carmelo Carlos González Pérez |
| The Spanish artist Juan Gris, born José Victoriano Carmelo Carlos González Pérez, is widely recognized, alongside Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, as one of the key pioneers of Cubism. Despite a career overshadowed by Picasso and Braque, Gris developed a style of Analytic and Synthetic Cubism quite unique among his contemporaries. |
| The Spanish artist Juan Gris, born José Victoriano Carmelo Carlos González Pérez, is widely recognized, alongside Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, as one of the key pioneers of Cubism. Despite a career overshadowed by Picasso and Braque, Gris developed a style of Analytic and Synthetic Cubism quite unique among his contemporaries.  Born in Madrid, Gris studied at the *Escuela de Artes e Industrias* between 1902 and 1904, where he is believed to have studied mathematics, the natural sciences and engineering. Deciding to devote himself to art, he cut short his university education to study with the academic painter José Moreno Carbonero. In 1906, he moved to Paris and there became acquainted with the artistic and literary ideas of the French avant-garde. During 1907-14, he earned a living, and then an extra income, as an illustrator and caricaturist for popular French magazines such as *L’Assiette au beurre*. In 1910 he began to paint seriously, and in works such as *The Eggs* of 1911 (Staatsgalerie Stuttgart) the influences of academic art and of Cézanne can be seen. In 1912, he showed his work in important exhibitions such as *La Section d’Or,* where he exhibited *Man in the Café* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia) and *The Watch* (Private Collection). Gris was never to lose his scientific and logical temperament and both qualities are especially evident in his works from this time. He signed a contract with the art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler in 1913 and subsequently became a full-time artist, working principally at this time in the medium of *papier collé*. Rich in colour and detail, his collages contain the contradictions and puns so common to Cubist collage as well as an inventive incorporation of texts. Excellent examples include *The Table* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia) and *The Bottle of Anis del Mono* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid).  1916 saw the beginning of his ‘architectural’ period. In paintings such as *Portrait of Madame Josette Gris* (Museo del Prado, Madrid), a portrait of his wife, we see Gris’s forms become larger and flatter with fewer viewpoints. The clarity of line, construction and form that was evident in works such as this made Gris very attractive to the emergent Purists, who celebrated his work in their journal *L’esprit nouveau*. Over the course of the next few years, however, his style became more intuitive and fluid and in paintings such as *Guitar with Sheet of Music* (Saidenburg Gallery, New York), completed just before the artist’s death in 1926-27*,* we seean emphasis on correspondences between colours and shapes.  During 1922-24 Gris worked as a stage and costume designer. He designed the sets and costumes for Gounod’s opera *La colombe*, for Chabrier’s *L’éducation manquée* and for Michel de Montéclair’s ballet *Les Tentations de la Bergėre*, the latter produced by Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in Monte Carlo in January 1924. It was in this year that Gris delivered his famous lecture *Des Possibilités de la Peinture* at the Sorbonne, giving a crucial insight into his life and thoughts towards art. In 1927, following a long string of illnesses spanning seven years, he was diagnosed with uremia. He died on 11 May 1927 and was buried two days later in the cemetery of Boulogne-sur-Seine, where he and Josette had lived during the latter years of his life. |
| Further reading:  (Antiff)  (Green)  (Gris)  (Kahnweiler)  (Moss)  (Poggi) |