



DE JENNIPICKVA

ART

BOSZ



DE LEMPICKA

ART







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What I have learned from my great-grandmother, Tamara de Lempicka and the women who influenced her life

Marisa de Lempicka, Founder of Tamara de Lempicka Estate



time my sister Cristina and I traveled to Poland was six years ago. Our goal on this journey was to learn more about our heritage. We are connected to Poland not only through our great-grandmother, Tamara de Lempicka, and our grandmother, Kizette de Lempicka-Foxhall, but also by our grandmother on our father's side, who was Polish, too! Her name was Elisa Medveski, but we called her Mamima. Her family had emigrated from Poland to Argentina, where my father was born. 🏡

As soon as we landed in Warsaw, we felt right at home. We found the people in this country to be kind, educated, cultured, hardworking, and warmer than we had expected. One quality that stood out in the Polish character, once we had learned more about their history, however, was their resilience, a quality that Tamara certainly had. 🏡

She survived and then thrived through the First World War, the Russian Revolution, the loss of friends and possessions, and the Second World War, during which she had to leave her beloved Paris and emigrate to the USA. She experienced many heartaches and disappointments, but through all this, she was able to maintain her strength and reach her goals, one of which was to become the most sought-after portrait painter of her day. 🏡

I think that one of the reasons why Tamara had this strong belief in herself and was such a fearless woman was that her grandmother, Klementina Dekler, had instilled these qualities in her. Klementina was a formidable woman, quite independent for her time. She loved gambling almost as much as she loved her granddaughter. They both convinced Tamara's mother Malvina that Tamara needed to go to a warmer climate to recover from a bad cough, an illness which was most probably faked by Tamara in order to convince her mother to allow her to accompany Klementina on her annual trip to Monte Carlo and Italy.

Tamara was about thirteen years old at the time but gained her mother's permission to set out on this wonderful journey. ❖

Klementina took her granddaughter to every museum she could find in Florence, Rome, and Venice. She would instruct Tamara on Italian Renaissance art, explaining composition, chiaroscuro, how lighting was used in these masterpieces, and drawing Tamara's attention to the models' expressions, their gestures, and the artists' use of colors. ❖

While in Monte Carlo, Klementina would spend hours at the casino. To keep Tamara entertained, she hired an art teacher who trained the young girl in watercolor painting. ❖

Tamara would never forget this trip. In many ways, I believe it changed her life. It was most probably after this trip that she started to entertain the idea that she could become a painter. Years later, Tamara would return to these same museums for inspiration. ❖

Tamara knew that her grandmother believed in her; Klementina made her feel special. I have the impression that this support and encouragement was paramount to Tamara's success. The lesson here is that we need to encourage our loved ones, empower them to reach their dreams, their goals, and be supportive. In this way, they will have a strong belief in themselves, they will be fearless, just like Tamara was. ❖

Another story Tamara would tell that shows her fearlessness and determination was about an incident that took place when she was about 25 years old, in Florence, where she was studying and copying the Renaissance masters she loved so much, such as Botticelli, Michelangelo, and the Mannerist Pontorno. She learned from a friend that Count Emanuele di Castelbarco was opening a new gallery in Milan, the Bottega di Poesia. She decided to write him a letter introducing herself and





Portrait of Arlette Boucard,
1928, oil on canvas, 27.5 × 51.1 in.
(70 × 130 cm)

Portrait of Doctor Boucard,
1928, oil on canvas, 53.1 × 29.5 in.
(135 × 75 cm)

to visit the gallery in person. She wrote to him saying that she wanted to show him a few photographs of her work and copies of the reviews she had been receiving in the newspapers and art publications. 🌟

During that first visit with Castelbarco, she had her portfolio tucked under her arm and had styled her blonde hair leaving a whisp peaking out from under her little French beret. She was beautiful, she was sure of herself and of her talent. She went to the gallery, knocked on the door, and asked to speak to the Count. Castelbarco agreed to see her. 🌟

When he saw the photos of her work, he was taken aback – “Who is the artist?” he exclaimed. Since the paintings were signed Lempitzky, the masculine form of Lempicka, he was expecting a man. “Well,” she said, “I am.” She then proceeded to show him the portfolio of the paintings she had been working on. 🌟

The Count was extremely enthusiastic about her work. He immediately told her he would paint the walls grey and pointed out locations where each of the paintings he had seen in the photographs would hang. 🌟

He wanted to exhibit 30 of Tamara’s paintings and the exhibition was to take place in six months. This was a great opportunity for Tamara, her first solo exhibition, so she accepted the proposal. But Tamara also knew very well that she did not have the thirty paintings, having completed perhaps only a handful of works, but this was a once in a lifetime opportunity, so she decided that somehow, she would make it work. 🌟

Back in Paris, she painted day and night. She worked nonstop and forced all her friends to sit for her paintings. In six months, she finished 28 new pieces and the show opened on time. The exhibition was a success and it catapulted Tamara into the limelight. 🌟

It is my impression that this was the time at which Tamara established her motto: “There are no miracles, there is only what one does oneself.” 🌟

She always felt that one must work hard for what one wants. It will not be easy, but hard work and courage will pay off in the end. 🌟

Here is how Tamara taught me this precious lesson:

On one of our first visits to her villa in Cuernavaca, Mexico, during our summer holidays, as many little girls do, I decided to make a drawing for my dear *Chérie*. This is what we called Tamara, not grandma or granny, but *Chérie*, which means ‘dear one’ in French. I knew Tamara had been a renowned artist, a famous painter. I grew up looking at the pictures of her iconic paintings in the Franco Maria Ricci book mom kept at our home in Buenos Aires. So, when I finished my ‘master-piece,’ I showed it to *Chérie*. I wanted to know what she thought of my ‘art.’ She looked intently at my drawing and showed me all the things that needed to be corrected; the head was too big, my coloring was outside of the lines, and many more things. My mother was mortified, she thought my feelings would be hurt, but I was pleased that Tamara had taken the time to critique my drawing in such detail. I understood then, at a very young age, that if I wanted things to be the best they could be, it would take hard work and determination on my part to achieve my goals. 🌟




The exhibition at the Bottega di Poesia
by Mario Castagneri, 1925

Forms and Contexts

Katarzyna Nowakowska-Sito



no doubt that the art by Tamara de Lempicka is strongly connected to the age of its creation and the artist's biography, which has been the object of academic studies, literary texts, theater plays, music videos, and comic strips, which in itself is a phenomenon worthy of attention and critical reflection. De Lempicka became – in fact posthumously – an icon of pop culture, which was fast-tracked by the publication of a book in 1977 by Franco Maria Ricci, including the diary of Gabriele d'Annunzio's housekeeper revealing a number of saucy details of the painter's stay in his residence in 1927.¹ 

A decade earlier, towards the end of the 1960s, a young art dealer, Alain Blondel, began his search for the author of intriguing paintings that he had seen in pre-war archive reproductions.² The 1972 exhibition in the Galerie du Luxembourg in Paris opened a new chapter in de Lempicka's life, providing her with even more publicity than in her youth.³ Would it have been possible without the fixation on art and design of the 1920s and 30s that was born at that time? Would Tamara's paintings have hung on the walls of Barbra Streisand's, Jack Nicholson's or Madonna's mansions, had it not been for the craze for prohibition and *The Great Gatsby*, whose character was so flawlessly mirrored in her voluptuous canvases sleek

¹ P. Chiara, F. Roncoroni, intr. G. Marmorì, *Tamara de Lempicka. Con il diario di Aélis Mazoyer, governante di Gabriele d'Annunzio*, Parma 1977. Although Franco Maria Ricci's publishing maneuver outraged the painter, paradoxically it added to her fame and served, among others, as the basis for John Krizanc's play *Tamara* (1981).

² Later, he would catalogue de Lempicka's art – cf. A. Blondel, *Tamara de Lempicka. Catalogue raisonné 1921–1979*, trad. M. Mournier, Lausanne 1999.

³ Cf. J. Réau, *Tamara de Lempicka de 1925 à 1935* – exhibition catalogue, Galerie du Luxembourg, Paris 1972.





PAINTING

1922-1939

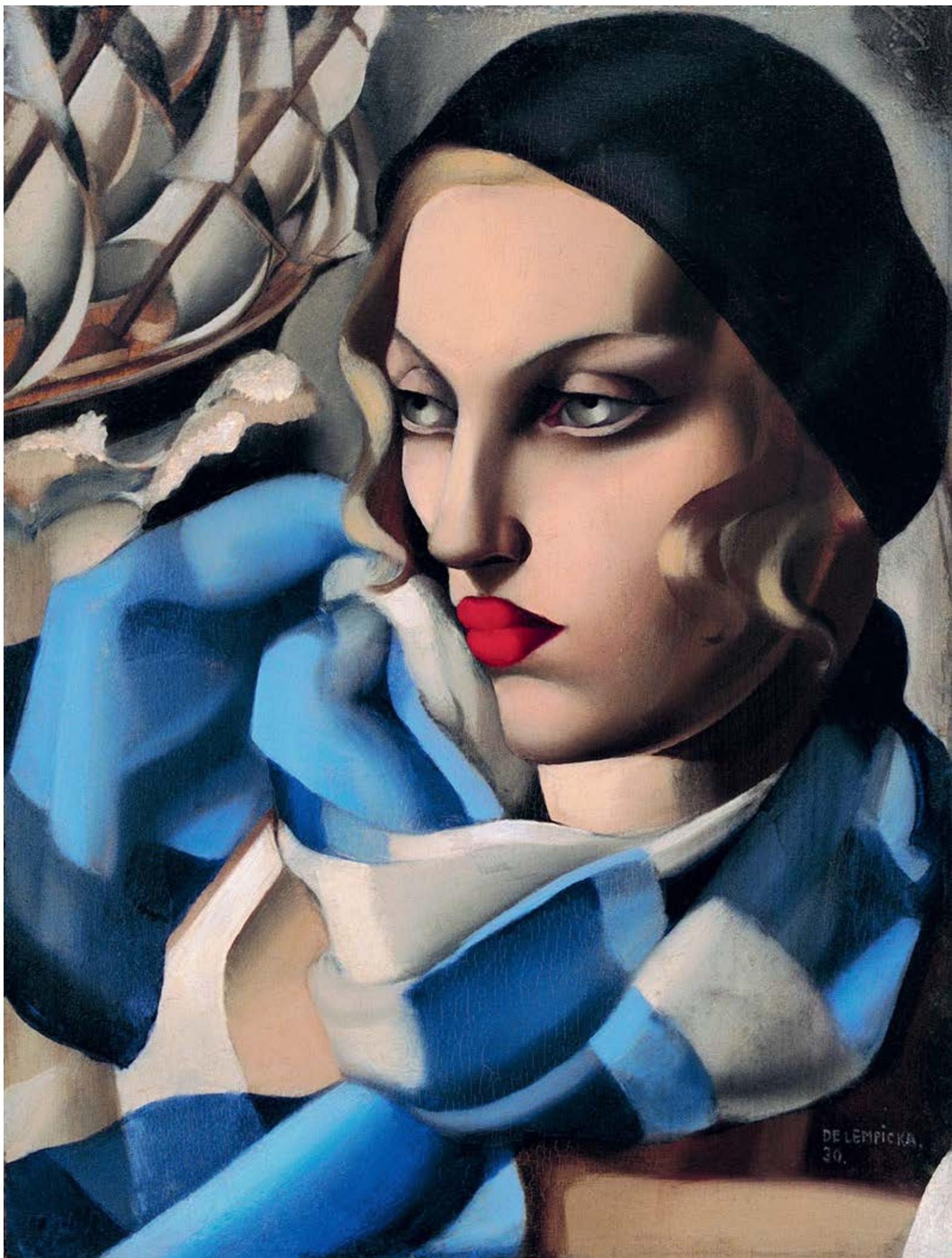


Card Players,
ca. 1926, oil on canvas, 13.8 × 10.6 in. (35 × 27 cm)



Two Little Girls with Ribbons,
1925, oil on canvas, 39.4 × 28.8 in. (100 × 73 cm)





The Blue Scarf,
1930, oil on panel, 13.8 × 10.6 in. (35 × 27 cm)



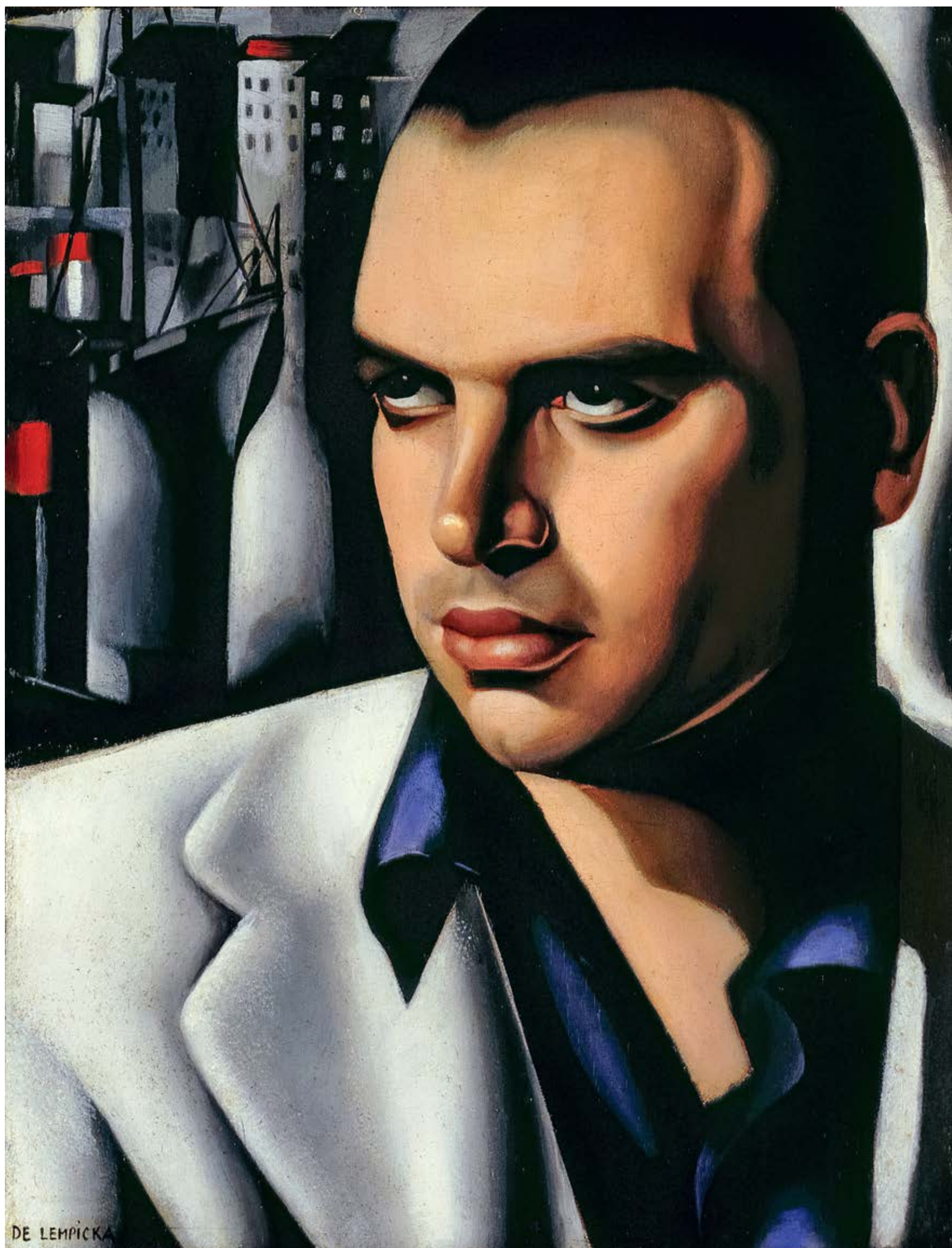
Mother and Child,
1931, oil on panel, 13 × 9.5 in. (33 × 24 cm)



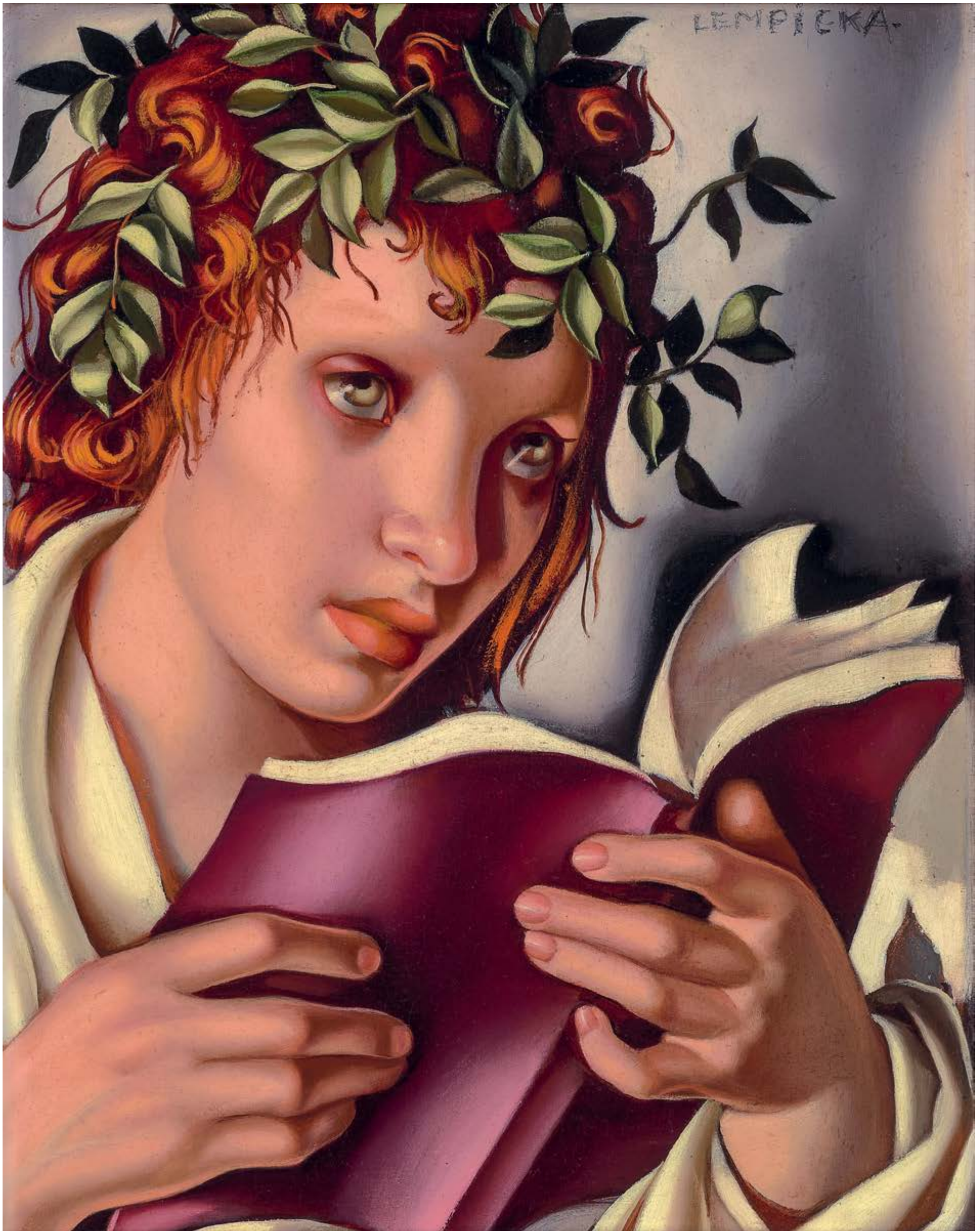
The Telephone II,
1930, oil on panel, 13.8 × 10.6 in. (35 × 27 cm)



Idyll,
1931, oil on panel, 16.1 × 13 in. (41 × 33 cm)



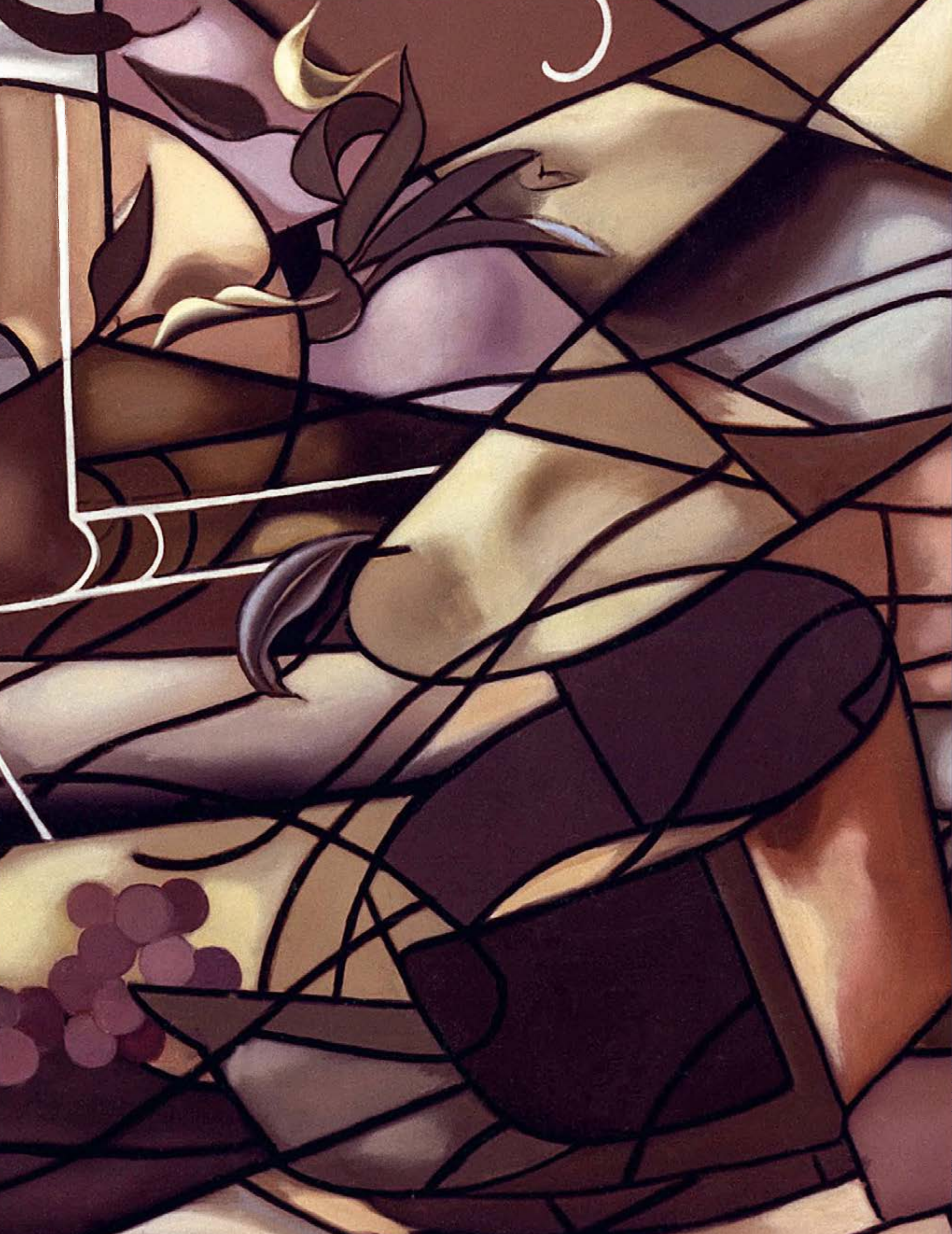
Portrait of Count Vettor Marcello,
ca. 1933, oil on panel, 13.8 × 10.6 in. (35 × 27 cm)



Graziella,
1937, oil on wood panel, 13.7 × 9.5 in. (35 × 24 cm)



Portrait of a Red Haired Girl,
ca. 1939, n.d.



PAINTING

1940-1975

Tamara and Pompeii

Victoria de Lempicka, granddaughter of Tamara de Lempicka



I WANT TO

thank Bogdan Szymanik for giving me the opportunity to make a few personal comments in this beautiful Deluxe Edition. We are so honored that his company BoSz has taken on the challenging task of publishing books of Tamara de Lempicka's art with new texts for Polish readers and people who are interested worldwide. 🏹

I knew Tamara as well as I knew my mother and am one of the last living links to her real life. In the context of the fabulous exhibitions that took place in Poland in 2022 and 2023, first at the National Museum in Lublin, then at Villa La Fleur, and then at the National Museum in Krakow, I am thankful to have learned so much more about her country and my ancestors from Poland. I am so thrilled and proud that more than 300,000 visitors came to see her art. In conjunction with the exhibitions, the National Museum in Lublin has acquired 18 de Lempicka paintings from the Fundación Víctor Manuel Contreras for permanent exhibition. 🏹

Since Tamara died 43 years ago in 1980, 17 major solo exhibitions have been held in Asia, Europe, and Mexico. I have been traveling the globe to museums and institutions to enjoy and participate in these fascinating and scholarly exhibitions of her work. Many interesting catalogs have been published. Each venue has been a new adventure, a new prism through which I learn more about Tamara's true legacy to the world of art and culture. Each exhibit has been a unique and extraordinary *tour de force* of the efforts of all the dedicated people who made it possible. I wish each exhibit could last forever, but sadly the paintings, drawings, and photographs must return to their owners and institutions until the next exhibition. 🏹

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco will host the first retrospective of Tamara de Lempicka in the United

The Lempicka family dedicates this book to Kizette de Lempicka Foxhall, who, despite her Oxford and Stanford education, cheerfully devoted her life to maintaining her mother Tamara's correspondence and archives. Tamara would say, in her usual imperative husky voice, "Write it down, Kizette! And underline it in red!"

States. *Tamara de Lempicka* will be presented at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco and then travel to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. The exhibits will run from October 2024 through May 2025. There will be a new focus on her drawings and the science behind her paintings. 🏠

Each exhibit in Poland had its highlights and its surprises for me. In Lublin, the loan of a real Bugatti, the innovation of the installation itself with the hanging beaded curtains in Kraków and the luxurious setting and gardens in the private museum of Villa La Fleur as well as furniture acquired from her apartment in Paris designed by my great-aunt, the architect Adrienne Gorska de Montaut, were a delight. 🏠

In Villa La Fleur, I was astounded to see Tamara de Lempicka's palette knife paintings of the 1960s come to life and sparkle as I had never seen them before thanks to an innovative lighting technology especially commissioned by the museum owner and collector, Marek Roefler. 🏠

I always had a special love for these paintings, which Tamara referred to as her "terra cotta period". In 1959, she took me to Capri. This may explain the secret of why she put so much passion into this new technique, where she practically abandoned her brushes. It was completely opposite to her Art Deco technique of the 20s and 30s which had made her famous. In Pompeii, she quickly and thickly applied the paints with the same tool, a palette knife, she had used to mix them on her palette. She built up layers of color which created texture and reflected light. This technique was used in the Renaissance and the Italians called it impasto. She wanted to express and transmit her deep emotions as she was standing in front of those nearly 2000 year old crumbling frescoes on the walls of Pompeii. In a period covering almost

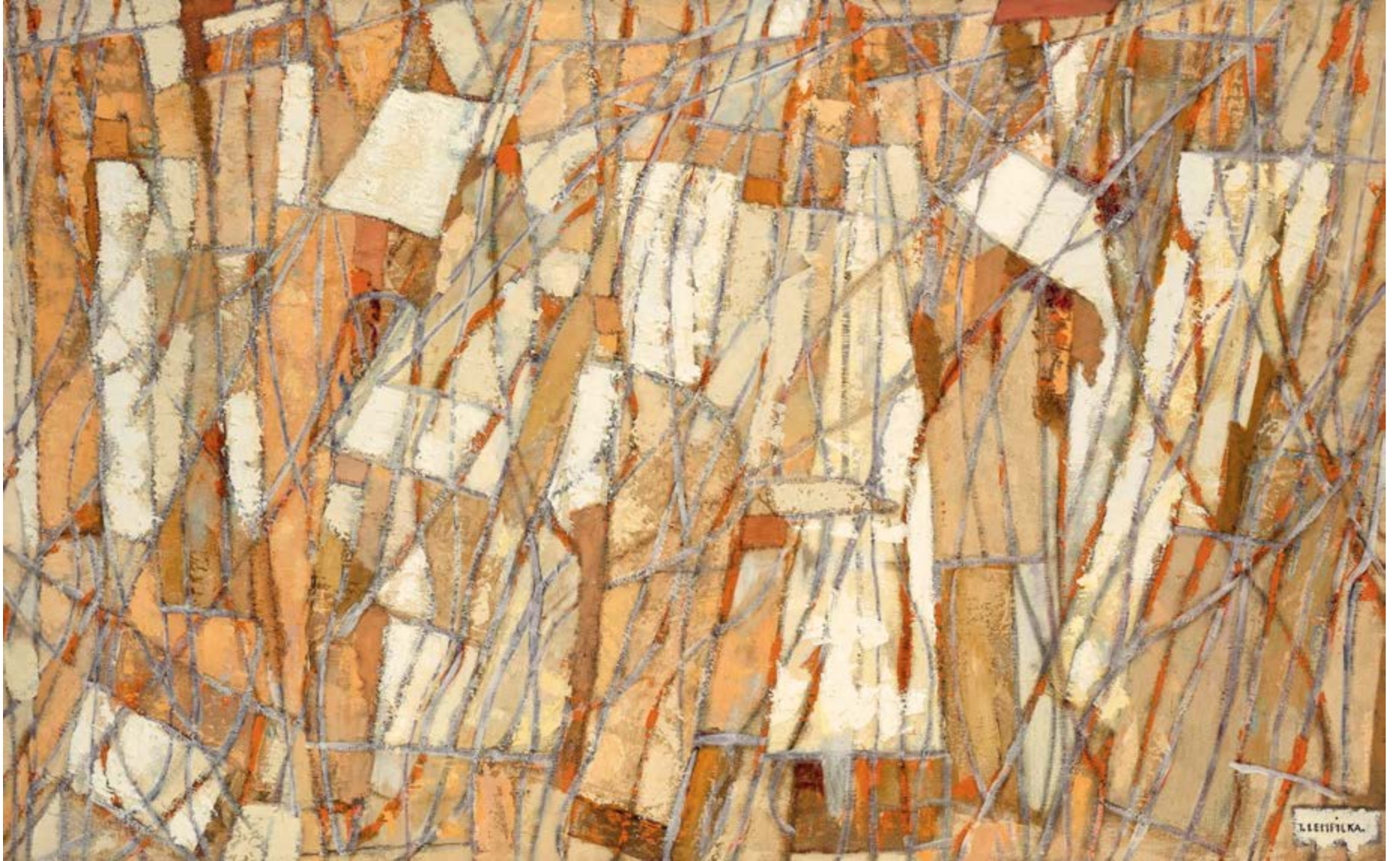




At the Opera,
1941, oil on canvas, 30 × 20 in. (76.2 × 50.8 cm)



Wisdom,
1940–1941, oil on canvas, 28 × 20 in. (71.1 × 50.8 cm)



The Earth, 1963,
oil on canvas, 31.9 × 51.1 in. (81 × 130 cm)



The Ocean,
1963, oil on canvas, 31.9 × 51.1 in. (81 × 130 cm)

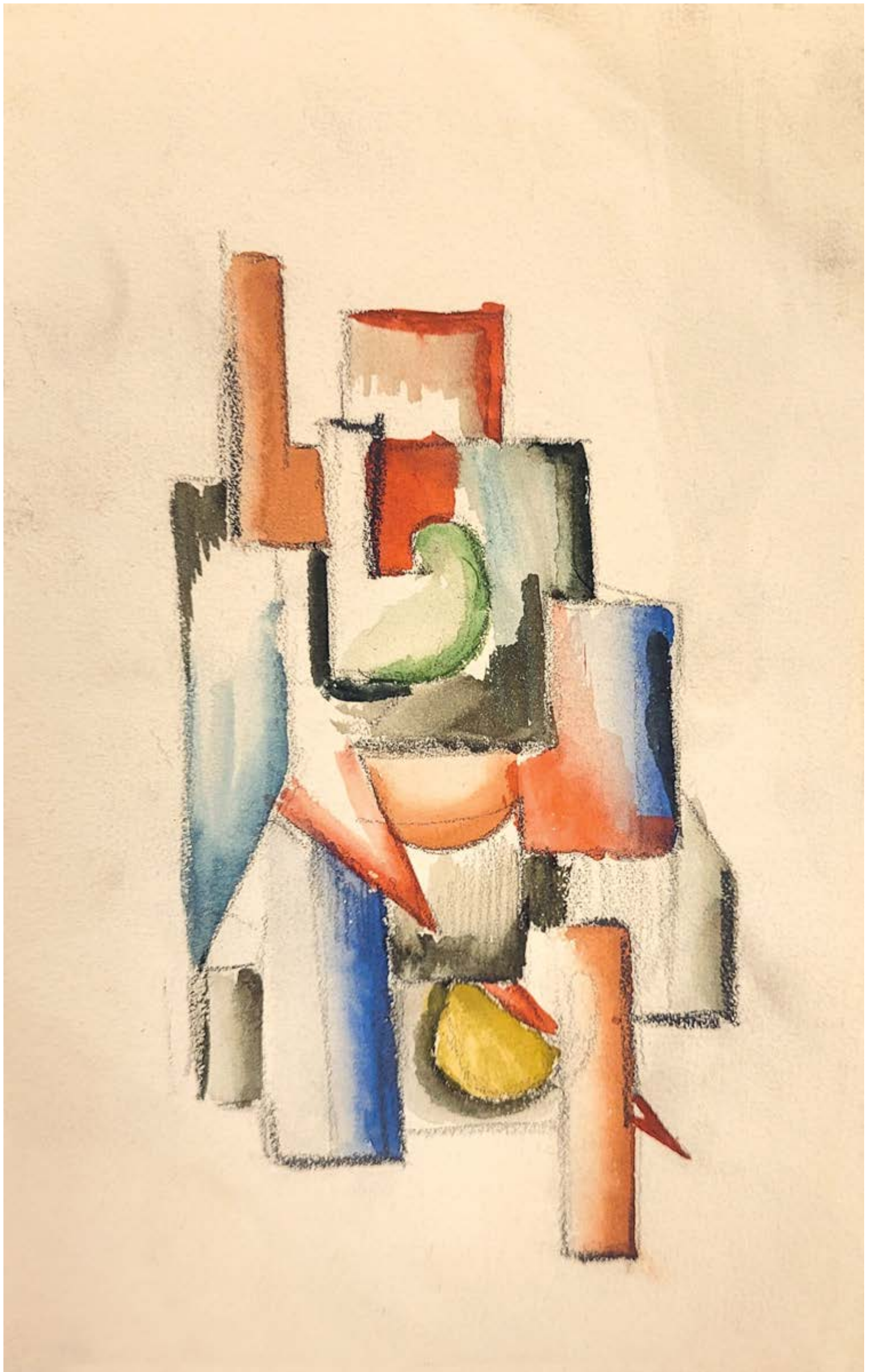


	DRAWING	

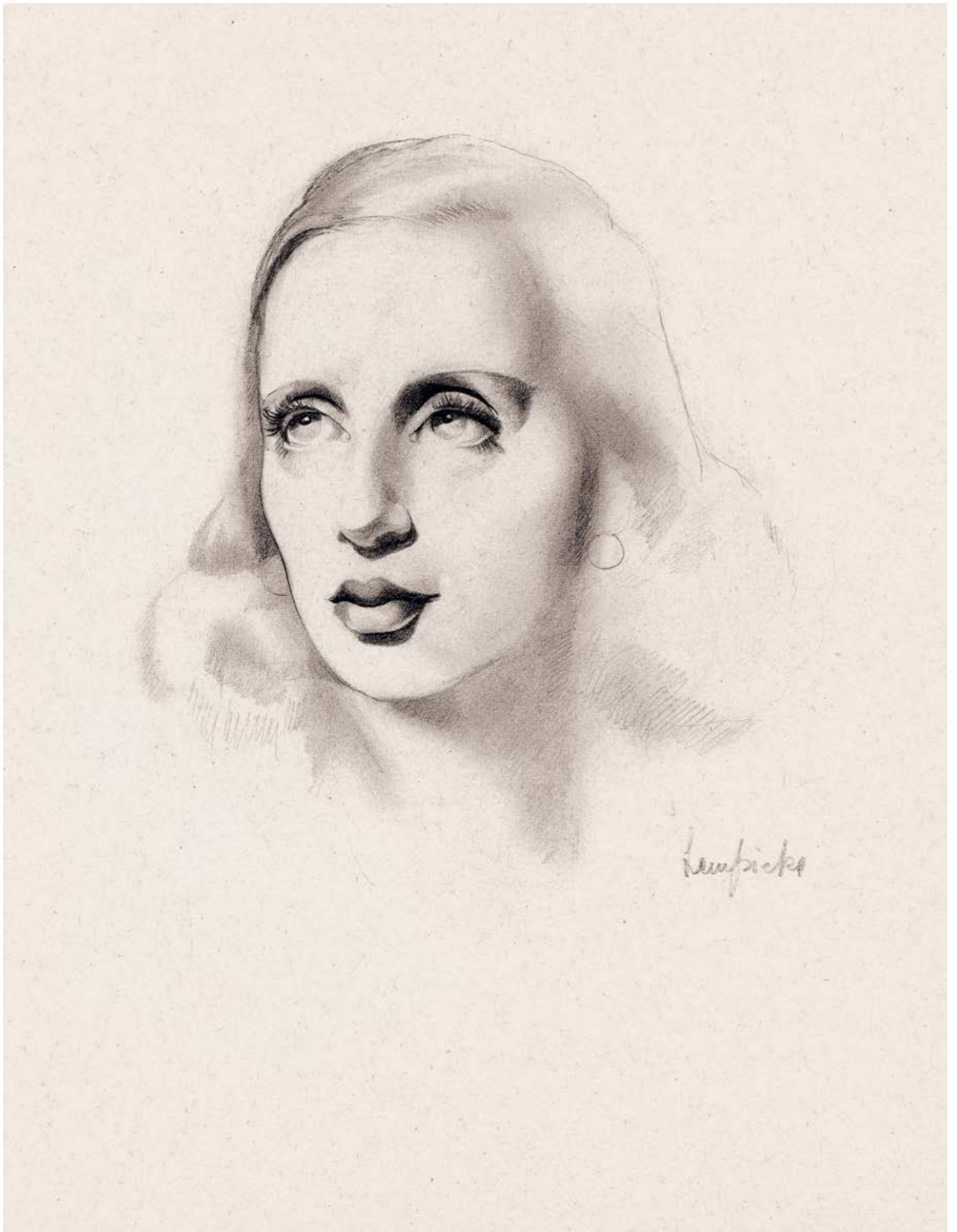


The Kiss,

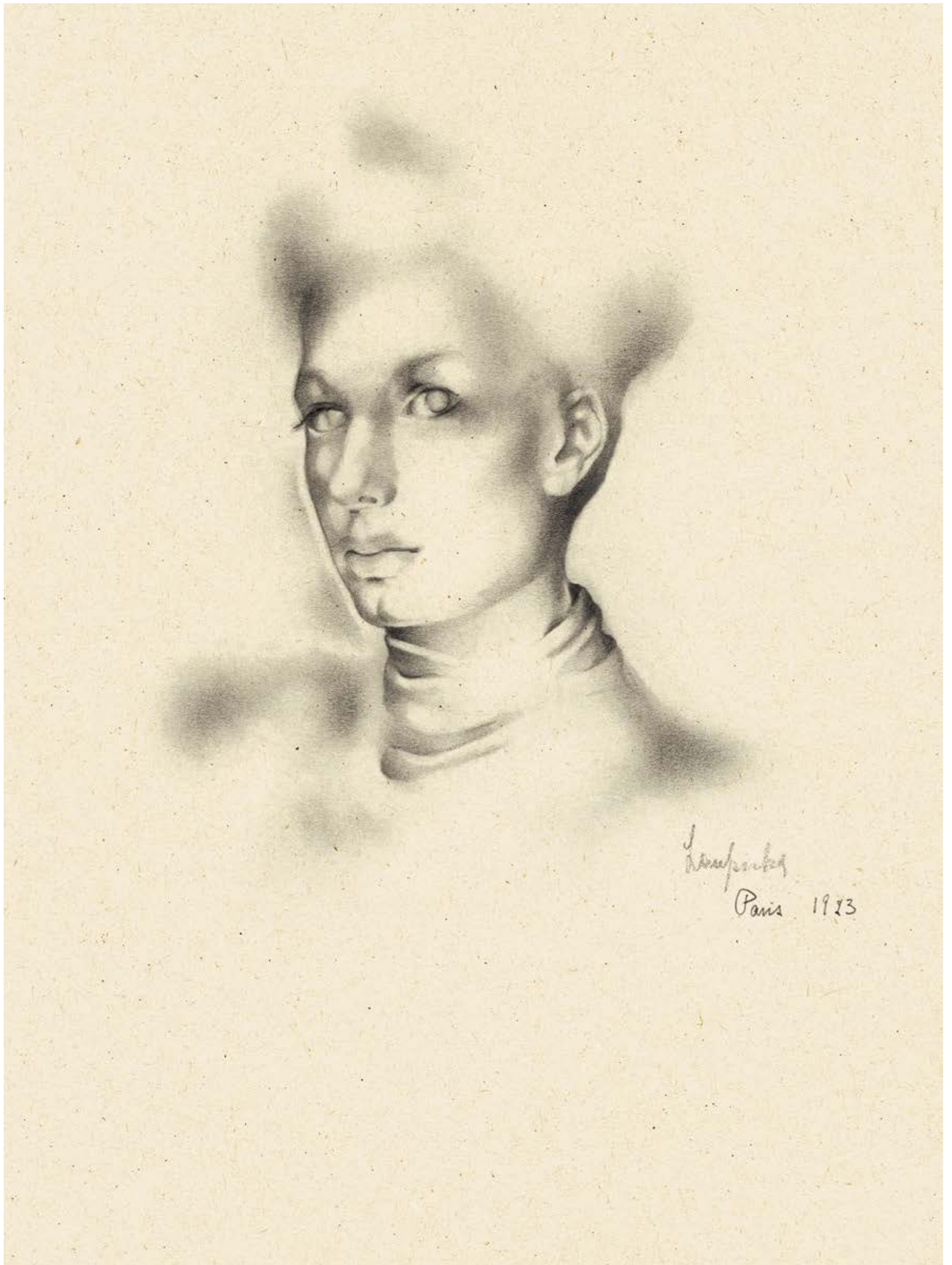
ca. 1908, watercolor, pencil on paper, 8 × 7 in. (20.3 × 17.8 cm)



Abstract Composition,
ca. 1923, watercolor on paper, 7.1 × 3.1 in. (18 × 8 cm)



Self-Portrait (Autoportrait),
ca. 1939, pencil on paper, 12.6 × 9.3 in. (32 × 23.5 cm)



Portrait of a Woman,
1923, pencil on paper, 15 × 10.9 in. (38 × 27.7 cm)



	PHOTOGRAPHS	



Tamara by Thérèse Bonney in her Parisian apartment at rue Méchain with a small table of her own design

The artist's bedroom in the apartment on rue Guy de Maupassant by Jacques Henri Lartigue



Tamara wearing a fox fur stole by Madame d'Ora,
ca. 1929





Tamara against *The Arums*,
ca. 1945



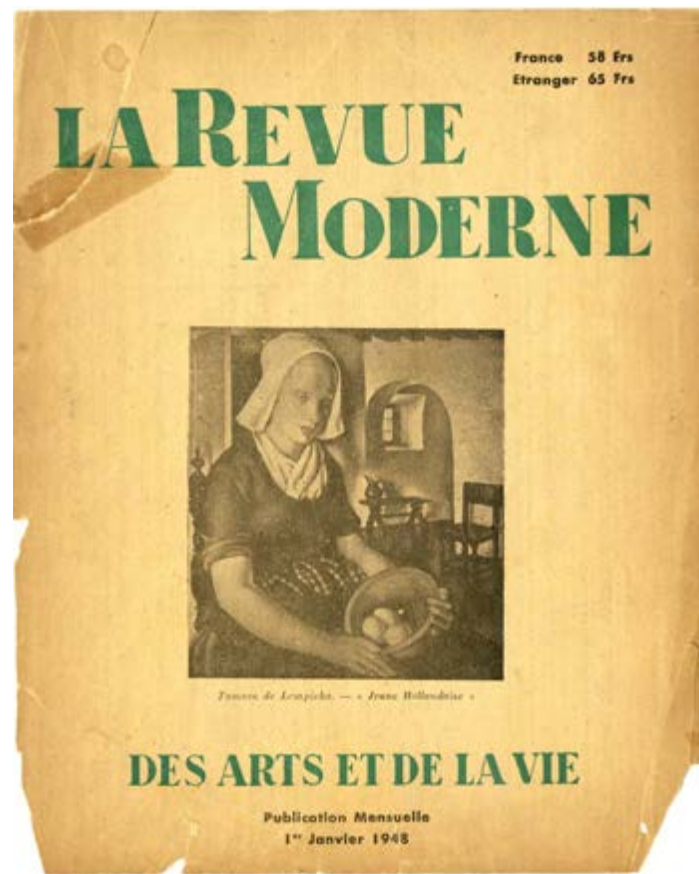
Princess Orloff with the painting *The Arums*,
1941



With George Sanders and Walter Pidgeon
on the set of *Man Hunt*,
1941



Tamara in her atelier on rue Méchain
by Willy Maywald, ca. 1949



The Dutch Girl on the cover
of "La Revue Moderne des Arts et de la Vie"

1936

She painted *Saint Anthony*, which was modeled on the artist's psychiatrist who treated her in Zürich. She started to dream of going to the United States. She contacted the local galleries and again took part in the annual international exhibition at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh.

1939

Fearing another war, she left Paris and together with her husband moved to the United States, taking her precious art collection with her. The Kuffners settled in Beverly Hills, California. Enthralled by the movie world, de Lempicka quickly fitted in with Hollywood – soon the baroness hosted such celebrities as: Walter Pidgeon, Lorna Hearst, Vicki Baum. The exhibition of her works on 2 May at the Paul Reinhardt Galleries in New York was received very warmly.

1941

A new exhibition was organized with 22 works by the artist, this time in the Julien Levy Gallery in New York. The exhibition turned out to be a huge success, and Julien Levy decided that the opening of a new gallery in Los Angeles would be inaugurated by an exhibition of de Lempicka's works. Despite the fact that he sold several paintings in New York, he showcased the rest in a new spectacular way. He purposefully illuminated only the images, leaving the room dark. This amazing and unprecedented way of presentation at that time caused a great sensation, but the specter of war lurked everywhere, and such events were pushed into the shadows. Thereafter, the artist went home to Connecticut and focused on painting still lifes.

1942

Tamara de Lempicka and her husband moved to New York. She kept busy furnishing the new apartment. She abandoned the out-of-date Art Deco, and followed the theatrical style, setting the light so that it illuminated her Rococo furniture brought from Europe. Completely absorbed with decorating her apartment, social life and charity work, she spent little time painting, which was a huge lifestyle change compared to the Paris period.

1948

The couple decided to sell their prestigious collection of works of art, but did not get as much money as they expected.

1949–1954

She spent six months in Italy, where she went for the first time since the war looking for inspiration for her art. In the following years she traveled extensively.

1955

She presented her Italian style paintings in the Galerie André Weil in Paris, however her new canvases did not garner attention. She took to abstraction experiments and new versions of the most famous 1930s paintings. She completely rearranged the apartment on the rue Méchain, repainted the walls and removed the paintings hanging in it. The new decor was not applauded, and even received criticism.

1957

She showed her paintings in the Galerie Sagittarius in Rome, but due to the time-consuming travel between the two continents she was not able to work regularly. Within one day following the



Roman exhibition, she completely changed her style, abandoning the unmistakable sharp edges, smooth surface and glossy finish so characteristic of her painting. She chose a different path of simple and almost rustic topics. She painted a series of still lifes in stylized compositions. She became interested in new subjects, such as landscapes, animals, but mostly still lifes.

1961

She participated in a retrospective exhibition in the Galerie Ror-Volmar in Paris, where she presented neo-Cubist, abstract and figurative paintings. However, the paintings did not arouse the attention of the public. Another exhibition at the Iolas Gallery in New York likewise was unsuccessful. De Lempicka was deeply disappointed and refused to take part in other exhibitions. Another blow came when Kuffner died during the return trip from Paris to New York. De Lempicka sold the New York apartment and moved to Houston, where her daughter Kizette lived. She also started to visit Cuernavaca more often. Painting was still a joy to her, but she considered her career over.

1967

She was staying in Paris, when one day a young and unknown art dealer, Alain Blondel, called and offered to organize an exhibition. Discouraged by her previous failures, the artist was not interested and refused. Hypnotized by de Lempicka's art, Blondel did not give up so easily. Ultimately, after three years of discussions, the artist was convinced.

1972

A retrospective exhibition of de Lempicka's works was organized at the Galerie du Luxembourg in Paris, featuring mostly her por-



traits from the 1930s. The artist, until the very last moment, was skeptical about this project, because she considered the selected paintings outdated and out of fashion. The exhibition turned out to be a great success and de Lempicka was famous once again.

1977

A monograph by Franco Maria Ricci was published, describing the portraitist's stay at the house of Gabriel d'Annunzio, thanks to which de Lempicka became the talk of the town once again.

1978

She bought the Tres Bambús villa and moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico. For her friends she painted new versions of her most famous paintings including *La Belle Rafaëla* and *Saint Anthony*.

1980

She passed away in her sleep on 18 March at her home in Cuernavaca. The artist's ashes, were scattered over the volcano Popocatepetl. according to her last will. ❖

From a hundred pictures,
mine would always stand out.
And so, the galleries began to
hang my work in their best
rooms, always in the middle,
because my painting was
attractive. It was precise,
it was polished.

Tamara de Lempicka