

TAMARA DE LEMPICKA  
BEHIND THE SCENES

ANNIE PADDY



**BOSZ**

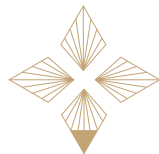




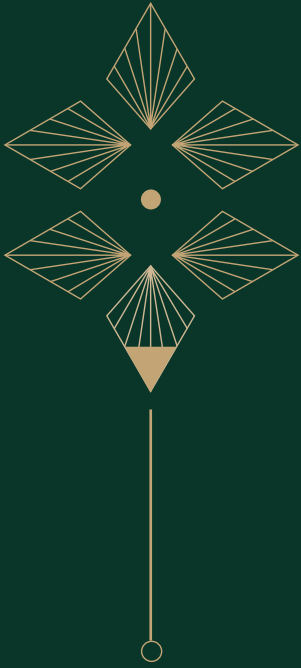
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# INTRODUCTION



Tamara de Lempicka lived her life with passion, ambition, and determination. It is with these same feelings that I start my first project as an author and historian of Tamara de Lempicka. I first discovered her when Barbra Streisand sold the painting *Adam and Eve* in 1994. Little did I know that being introduced to the work of this artist would send me on a life-changing journey which has already lasted more than twenty-nine years. With the knowledge, assistance, and the friendship of her granddaughter Victoria de Lempicka and great-granddaughters Marisa and Cristina, Alain and Michèle Blondel, Barry Friedman, Gioia Mori, Laura Claridge, Marilyn Goldberg, and countless others, I have been graciously accepted as part of what I now call “Team Tamara”. I am honored and privileged to be able to learn, share and discover new information about her incredible art, her life, and her legacy.

Since the retrospective exhibition at the 2004 Royal Academy in London, I have been involved with seventeen exhibitions in more than ten countries. Ongoing research, analysis, and new discoveries are adding to what we know about Tamara. This continues to increase the awareness we have about this woman who was a force to be reckoned with and ahead of her time. Tamara defied the world she was born into to become a personal survivor, an international personality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and one of the most influential artists ever.

Like everyone, there was a time in my life when I did not know anything about Tamara de Lempicka. While pursuing my love for Art Nouveau and Art Deco, I discovered that Barbra Streisand (another one of my loves) was selling some of her art collection. I bought the catalogs (which were an



◆ *Girl with Pansies*, ca. 1945, oil on canvas, 10 × 8 in. (25.4 × 20.3 cm)

◆ *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Johannes Vermeer, 1665, oil on canvas, 17.5 × 15.4 in. (44.5 × 39 cm)

astounding \$75!) and I started to look through them. I turned the page, and there it was... *Adam and Eve*. I was speechless.

This was well before auctions on the Internet, and I was waiting on the phone with Christie's to bid on something coming up later. I was listening when it sold for \$1.98 million. All the woman at Christie's could say was "Oh, my God!!!".

Of course, I could not afford to bid on it, but that small chapter changed my life. And so began my journey with Tamara. I had so much to learn, and almost thirty years later I still do.

My husband Richard and I bought our first painting by Tamara de Lempicka, *Portrait of Kizette as an Adult I*, in 1999. Since that time, the collection has now grown to over thirty paintings, drawings, etchings, and original photographs from every decade of Tamara's life. It also contains an extensive archive of the oldest and most rare exhibition catalogs and published

documentation, and the largest collection of original exhibition posters. We are very honored to have been designated as one of Tamara de Lempicka's greatest collectors by Forbes Poland in the November 2022 issue.

Every piece of the collection has been bought for a specific and unique reason. In 2001, we were offered the *Girl with Pansies*. She was beautiful, innocent, and captivating. I was contacted in 2009 by Nippon TV to loan some paintings for the Japanese exhibitions at the Bunkamura Museum of Art in Tokyo and the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art in Kobe. The curator asked for this particular painting because it reminded her of Vermeer. Vermeer? I had never taken an art history course or traveled to Europe, so I had little knowledge about important Dutch Master artists, not to mention Johannes Vermeer and his famous *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. This made me start to think that there was more to Tamara's paintings than just the image. It became apparent that there were a lot of reasons and inspirations behind the wide variety of sitters and subjects. So, it is with this new vision and insight, coupled with my "Nancy Drew" instincts as a detective, that I set out to discover and share the stories *Behind the Scenes*.

I wish to give special thanks to my husband Richard, who also shares my love for Tamara, and has supported my sometimes obsession with "everything Lempicka." I also want to thank both our families and friends who listen patiently to all the stories, even when they may have already heard them before. And finally, I want to say that I could not have done this without the help of "Team Tamara" and all the others that have taken their time to share their knowledge and information with me, so that I can share it with you.

◆ *The Straw Hat*, 1930, oil on panel,  
13.8 × 10.6 in. (35 × 27 cm)



question. Tamara's always adorable daughter Kizette, a mirror of her mother's beauty, would become the focus of her painting and one of her favorite subjects.

On a walk through the Bois de Boulogne she encountered and became infatuated with a model that would come to be known as Rafaëla. It would be the turning point in her life, as well as her career. Her passionate and artistic portraits of Rafaëla are considered some of the finest nudes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the next year, her family life would change, and her artistic life would attract much more attention.

In 1928, with her marriage in shambles, Rafaëla gone, Tamara had to artistically vent her emotions. She created a portrait of her husband, his hat in his hand, and perhaps on his way out of her life too. Tamara continued on. Commissions from other patrons who had previously purchased her artwork, Doctor Pierre Boucard and Baron Raoul Kuffner, ensured her





◆ *The Girls*, ca. 1930, oil on panel,  
13.8 × 10.6 in. (35 × 27 cm)

independent financial success. Baron Kuffner proved to be an admirer of more than her artwork.

Another commission from American Rufus T. Bush would catapult Tamara into an entirely different arena. Her international notoriety continued to grow and in 1929 she was invited to exhibit for the first time in her homeland of Poland, and also at the prestigious International Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh.

Tamara was no stranger to publicity, and she always took every opportunity to take advantage of the press. After all, it was the social media of the time.

As the late 1930s approached and the political climate started changing, Tamara became nervous. She had already experienced this feeling before and she knew it would not end well. Telling friends and family that together with her second husband Baron Raoul Kuffner they were going for a short vacation, they left with no plans to return.

# IRA PERROT



Tamara's first canvases were very large and virtually lifesize. Painting from models was a reflection of her studies with André Lhote at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière.

Ira Perrot was a neighbor of Tamara's on rue Guy de Maupassant and an excellent candidate for a model, with her dark reddish-black hair, sculptured facial features, stunning brown eyes, and porcelain skin. She would become a very close friend of Tamara's and perhaps her first female lover. She was the subject or inspiration of more portraits than any other person including Tamara's daughter Kizette. This portrait is one of the first two Tamara completed with the intention of selling or exhibiting her work to support her family.

It is rare to see one of her sitters alongside their portrait, as the accompanying photo shows Ira Perrot with hers. Notably, the work on Tamara's easel is considerably larger than the finished portrait as we know it today. At some point Tamara revisited this portrait, centering her model and reducing the size of the painting so that the subject commanded the surface of the canvas, a classic trait of her developing style. According to Kizette's book *Passion by Design* published in 1987, Tamara said that in 1930 she abruptly severed her relationship with Ira Perrot and spoke very little about it. We now know this not to be true. This painting is probably the first one that Tamara exhibited in the Salon d'Automne in 1922 and was the first glimmer of her future success. It was purchased by Blanche Cheyrou, Tamara's first collector, and stayed with her family until it was sold along with the rest of her collection in 1993. The last time it was exhibited in public was at the Pinacothèque de Paris in 2013.



*Woman in a Black Dress* shows an entirely different look, which is reflected in the photograph from Studio V. Henry in Paris. It is interesting that *Portrait of a Young Lady in a Blue Dress* was exhibited at the Salon d'Automne in 1925 and *Woman in a Black Dress* was exhibited in the same salon the following year. Both paintings feature a very different depiction of Ira Perrot.

Ira was not only beautiful and fashionable, but she came from a wealthy family. Although the two women were very close, the portraits that Ira appears in do not obviously suggest a personal or emotional relationship between the artist and her model as with some of Tamara's other paintings. The photograph by Arnal sets up the facial features, hairstyle, and expression for *The Musician*. There is also a parallel between Ira's long slim fingers and those of Tamara's other subjects.

Little is known about Ira's husband, including his name or how long they were married. The only record of him is a photograph of the couple with Tamara, Tadeusz and Kizette taken at a restaurant in Paris. We also know that

◆ Ira Perrot in front of her portrait, 1922

◆ *Portrait of a Young Lady in a Blue Dress*, 1922, oil on canvas, 24.8 × 20.9 in. (63 × 53 cm)

# RUSSIAN DANCER



Tamara's early portraits were generally very colorful and inspired by people and events surrounding her. In 1910, while visiting her aunt Stefa Stifter in St. Petersburg, she was treated to cultural outings such as the ballet and the theater. Costumes for the Russian Ballet were the most opulent and grandest of the time and were created by some of the most well-known and revered designers in the world. Often featuring extravagant headpieces and intricate detailed designs with jewels, they were dazzling from the front row on the floor to the last row of the balcony. This portrait was unknown until approximately 2006. It is unsigned, as were many of Tamara's first paintings, and is not dated, although it can definitely be placed between 1922 and 1925. It was purchased by a French private collector who sold it in 2022. The painting now resides in the permanent collection of Polish businessman and collector Marek Roefler at the Museum Villa la Fleur in Konstancin-Jeziorna in Poland.



◆ *Russian Dancer*, ca. 1924, oil on canvas,  
31.9 × 23.6 in. (81 × 60 cm)



# WOMEN BATHING



*Women Bathing* (1929) is one of Tamara de Lempicka's largest and most complex multiple nudes. Her previous painting *Rhythm* (1924) draws from a well-known classical theme depicted in *The Turkish Bath* by Jean-Auguste-

Dominique Ingres, created between 1852 and 1862. This later interpretation

by Tamara features an impressive seven models. None of them seem identifiable except the one in the foreground lower right. She is depicted in the earlier *Portrait of a Young Lady* (1928). Her pronounced profile and bare shoulders strongly suggest that it is a study for one of the models in *Rhythm*. At this time, Tamara was painting prolifically and it was easy for her to become distracted with a commission or other inspiration. This would explain why the massive scene remained partially unfinished and unsigned. Both the study and the final painting were not sold or exhibited until after Tamara's death, at which time the Estate stamp was added.



◆ *Portrait of a Young Lady*, ca. 1928, oil on canvas, 10.6 × 8.6 in. (27 × 22 cm)



◆ *Women Bathing*, 1929, oil on canvas,  
35 × 39 in. (89 × 99 cm)

# RAFAËLA



Tamara de Lempicka's portraits are iconic. One of the most striking nudes is *The Dream*. Originally titled *Rafaëla on a Green Ground* it was painted in 1927 and inspired by her model and lover of the same name. She discovered Rafaëla in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris and asked if she would model for her.



The five paintings Tamara completed with Rafaëla as a model are considered some of her most important works. *The Pink Tunic*, *La Belle Rafaëla*, *La Belle Rafaëla in Green*, *Reclining Nude with a Book*, and *The Dream* all demonstrate Tamara's skill of portraying the female body beautifully. Her personal passion for Rafaëla as a model is obvious. Other nudes of unknown models do not share the intense attention to the shading and smoothness of the skin. In paintings of her other lover, Ira Perrot, the portraits always show her

◆ *The Dream*, 1927, oil on canvas,  
31.9 × 23.6 in. (81 × 60 cm)





◆ *The Pink Tunic*, 1927, oil on canvas, 28.8 × 45.6 in. (73 × 116 cm)

clothed. All of the paintings of Rafaëla were sold to clients, unlike many of the paintings Tamara felt a personal connection to and kept. Perhaps it was her way of letting her feelings for Rafaëla go.

Tamara always stated that she never knew Rafaëla's last name, although this is widely reported incorrectly. The only reference to a last name appears in a fictional novel. Through conversations Tamara had with her model, we can surmise that she was a prostitute, but her past and future after her affair with Tamara are unknown. She came into Tamara's life as mysteriously as she left, opting for a more conventional and stable relationship than Tamara could offer. Rafaëla's place in history was immortalized by Tamara and she will always be considered as the model for some of the greatest nude paintings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



◆ *Portrait of a Young Lady with a Square Column*,  
ca. 1931, oil on canvas, 39.4 x 20.1 in. (100 x 51 cm)

# ARLETTE BOUCARD WITH ARUMS



A picture is worth a thousand words, and a picture in a picture is worth even more. Few artists pay as close attention to detail as Tamara de Lempicka did. In many cases she used in-person models, but once she had painted a subject, it was immortalized in her memory, and could be conjured up for future use at any time. She had already completed a full portrait of Arlette Boucard, commissioned by her father, Doctor Pierre Boucard. Arlette was a beautiful young blond and extremely photogenic.

Tamara also loved calla lilies. They were commonly in her home and often in her still lifes. In the painting *Arlette Boucard with Arums* (1931), she takes a simple flower arrangement and combines it with a black and white photograph on the table. Arlette peeks out from behind the flowers with a coy look as if she is hiding. Once again, Tamara uses only black and white shades to accurately depict her picture. It is matted and framed with a label below the left corner.



◆ Tamara de Lempicka by Studio Lorelle,  
1928, black and white photograph



◆ *Portrait of Madame M.*, 1932,  
oil on canvas, 39.4 × 25.6 in. (100 × 65 cm)



# BROTHERS AND ARTISTS



The architect Robert Mallet-Stevens was one of the most in-demand designers of the 1930s. Tamara's sister Adrienne was one of the first licensed architects in Paris and the first woman to work for him. The multiple residence building at 7 rue Méchain was not just a cutting-edge Art Deco accomplishment, but it was one of the most fashionable addresses in Montparnasse. The open two-floor layout with large windows of each apartment made it perfect for bohemian artists to use as a residence and a studio.

Artists in Paris all knew each other. Painters did not just associate with other painters, they mingled with all the creative personalities of the time. Writers, sculptors, musicians, fashion designers, and actors all shared their ideas as the world's



◆ *Double Profile Portrait of a Man*  
(Portrait of Jan and Joël Martel), ca. 1931,  
charcoal on paper, 31.5 × 23.5 in. (80 × 59.6 cm)

# THE BRILLIANCE



The 1930s was one of Tamara's most prolific periods. Commission requests were coming in and her agreement to provide covers for "Die Dame" was just the icing on the cake. She exhibited in two or three Salons each year, was highly recognized and financially comfortable. Beginning in this period, some evolving trends and themes appear. Her paintings became more symbolic than realistic. One of the new elements is a futuristic hairstyle characterized by tightly curled flat ringlets cascading around the face. Every feature of the model's face is more pronounced and distinct.

Originally titled *Bacchante* for the Salon des Indépendants in 1933, it was listed for sale at 3000 francs. Clearly the title is derived from the mythical theme of the women or *Bacchantes* who worshipped Bacchus, the Roman God of agriculture, wine, and fertility. The bunches of grapes in her hair are crystalline and as realistic as the fruit in her classical still lifes of later years. They shimmer with the same translucent green color as her eyes, which could be where the later title *The Brilliance* was conceived.

It has only been publicly exhibited once in 1933 before its sale to a private collection. Most recently it was owned by Sandra Moss, former wife of music producer, Jerry Moss, who is also an ardent admirer of Tamara's work. It was sold again in 2020 at Sotheby's New York and now belongs to the collection of Rowland Weinstein of Weinstein Gallery in San Francisco. This rarely seen work was the featured painting for the exhibition *Tamara Łempicka* at the National Museum in Krakow in 2022.



◆ *The Brilliance*, ca. 1932, oil on panel,  
13.8 × 10.6 in. (35 × 27 cm)

# PITTSBURGH EXHIBITION



The reason for Tamara de Lempicka's trip to the United States in 1929 was two-fold. Her recent commission from Rufus T. Bush to paint his fiancée was definitely a major financial motivation. Her other reason was an invitation to exhibit at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual International Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Institute. This would be her first official exhibition in the United States.

She was listed in the country section designated "Poland" and was allotted three places. She carefully selected the works to be shown, and chose *Portrait of Doctor Boucard*, *The Dream* and *Kizette on the Balcony*. The jury did not award her any prizes and the art critics were ruthless with their criticism

that the artists chosen to participate lacked many of the major names.

"Time" magazine published an article in their art section shortly after the opening of the exhibition and did give a specific favorable mention to Tamara in its closing paragraph.



◆ The exhibition at the Carnegie Institute, 1929, black and white photograph





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

“Many of the painters are hitherto unknown to the U.S. One of them – Mme. Tamara de Lempicka – attracted much attention with her monotone grey *Portrait of Doctor Boucard*, as meticulously drawn as a machine design. Mme. de Lempicka is a Polish woman who lives in Paris.”<sup>15</sup>

Doctor Pierre Boucard, one of Tamara’s most prolific collectors, would go on to commission portraits of his wife and his daughter Arlette, along with the many other paintings that he purchased directly from Tamara.



15 *Pittsburgh's 28<sup>th</sup>*,  
“Time”, October 28,  
1929.



◆ *Composition in the Studio, 1941,*  
oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in. (50.8 x 61 cm)

In 2011, she was asked, along with Jack Nicholson and many other private collectors and museums, to lend her two paintings to the exhibition *Tamara de Lempicka – Regina del Moderno* at the Complesso del Vittoriano in Rome. This exhibition was many years in the making and the largest to date of any of Tamara's solo exhibitions, with over one hundred and fifty works shown at one time. It is the only time these two paintings have been shown in public. Shortly thereafter in 2012, she sold them at Sotheby's London, where they garnered quite a bit more than Jack Nicholson paid for them twenty-seven years earlier. Anjelica may not still own the paintings, but she does own and treasure a pair of earrings which used to belong to Tamara.

# SIR TIM RICE



The history of an artwork can take unpredictable twists and turns on its journey. The transition from owner to owner is similar to a changing of the guard. Collectors can search a lifetime for a specific painting, and other times, fate makes one magically appear.

In the mid-1990s, Sir Tim Rice, author and lyricist of many of the greatest musicals written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was not familiar with the work of



◆ *La Belle Raffaella*, 1927, oil on canvas,  
25.6 × 36.3 in. (65 × 92 cm)

other art of the era. The exhibition also displayed a rare Bugatti T40, loaned from the Jan & Maciej Peda Automobile Museum, which is similar to the one in the famous *Autoportrait in the Green Bugatti* painting from 1929.

In September, the collection from the Museum Villa la Fleur returned home and was showcased in its new display space in Villa Granke, with the exhibition *Tamara de Lempicka and Art Déco*. The private museum, owned by Marek Roefler, has also acquired loans from European museums and private collections from Poland and the United States. Artur Winiarski and Katarzyna Mieczkowska authored the book *Tamara de Lempicka and Art Deco – Tradition and Modernity*, written to accompany all three exhibitions.

At the same time, the National Museum in Krakow exhibited many works, including the paintings from the French museums, previously on view in Lublin. In addition, several major loans from private collections in Europe and the United States joined the exhibition. It was curated by Światosław Lenartowicz and for the first time since 1933, *The Brilliance* was on public display.

The two September concurrent exhibitions were the largest display of Tamara's work since Rome in 2011. 2022 is certainly the year of Tamara.

◆ The exhibition at the National Museum in Krakow, 2022







◆ The exhibition at the National Museum in Lublin, 2022

Between the three exhibitions almost 300,000 visitors had the opportunity to see 115 original works, 20 photographs and personal belongings, many never seen before in public.

Tamara always considered Poland her homeland. Her dreams to return there and to have her work featured in famous museums next to the great masters both came to fruition in June of 2023. In an unprecedented and historic turn of events, the National Museum of Lublin acquired the former collection of Victor Manuel Contreras. The twelve paintings and six works on paper have been in his collection since Tamara's death in 1980. This is the single largest acquisition of the artist's work in history. Negotiations were arranged with funds of the general reserve of the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki through the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage with the assistance of Director Katarzyna Mieczkowska.

The permanent display of the new collection was inaugurated with the exhibition *Tamara Łempicka – Beyond Borders* which opened June 23, 2023 and also includes loans from the Tamara de Lempicka Estate and other Polish museums.



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*Tamara de Lempicka, Behind the Scenes* will take you through the fascinating story behind many of the most renowned paintings by my great grandmother, who, as of today, has become the third highest-selling female painter in history. Who did Tamara paint? What motivated her? What happened to the sitters and to the paintings themselves? Many mysteries are uncovered in this book, written by one of Tamara's most fervent collectors, admirers and archivists, Anne Paddy. She has become a crucial member of "Team Tamara", always happy to lend her diverse Lempicka collection to important exhibitions around the world and helping to share Tamara's art and legacy with her fans as well as new generations that are just discovering her. This book is highly recommended to any Tamara de Lempicka fan, or anyone that would like to learn more about this iconic artist.

Marisa de Lempicka, founder/CEO of Tamara de Lempicka Estate

As the saying goes, "A picture speaks a thousand words". In this rich tapestry of essays, discover the context, secrets, and revelations of some of the more than 500 paintings by Tamara de Lempicka. Exciting new developments complete the volume.

Told by collector, researcher, and social media writer Anne Paddy, this juicy, entertaining and beautiful book is sure to delight.

Victoria de Lempicka, granddaughter of Tamara de Lempicka

