

# Henri Hayden's Cubism

*The cubist work "Bretonne" by the Polish-born Parisian artist Henri Hayden will be a welcomed guest at this summer's Live Auction in Copenhagen. The work has been owned by the English-born art collector and furniture manufacturer C.W.F. France. He immigrated to Denmark and played an important part in establishing the concept of "Danish Modern" within furniture design during the 1950s and 1960s.*

4 June 2019

The highlight of this summer's auction in Copenhagen is a **magnificent painting by Henri Hayden (1883-1970)** from 1920 entitled "Bretonne". With the painting's multi-perspective space and fragmented figure and instruments, it can rightly be called pure cubist and visually musical in its style. The painting originates from the artist's relatively short cubist period between 1915 to 1922, and paintings from this period are extremely rare on the art market.

**Watch the film "From a Melting Pot of Art – a Cubist Work by Henri Hayden"**

**Behind "Bretonne"**

In "Bretonne" the spatiality is distilled into a tight modernist focus on the formalities of the painting: surface, form and colour. The colour scheme moves across a refined scale, where shades of green leap into burnt tones with contrasts of cool blue and some accents of crimson. The figure is defined precisely by the fact that different elements in the image – both in and



Photograph of the artist Henri Hayden.

around the figure – dissolve and shift rhythmically as the planes of the image overlap and intertwine with each other.

The work has compositional, picturesque and colouristic similarities to the major contemporary work of Hayden, "Les Trois Musiciens" (1919-20), which depicts three figures with instruments in an equally fragmented visual space. Today, this painting belongs to the Musée National d'Art Moderne in the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

The title of "Bretonne" is likely a nod to one of Hayden's earliest sources of inspiration in relation to the surface-oriented, contoured and decorative painting style – namely the works of Paul Gauguin. Hayden spent several summers in Brittany, where Gauguin had established himself as a modernist in the encounter with the countryside and locals a couple of decades earlier.

## In the Melting Pot of Art

Born in Warsaw, Hayden left Poland in 1907 to permanently settle in the artistic melting pot of Paris. Here he came in direct contact with the new art movements. He was, in his earliest years in Paris, engrossed in Gauguin's surface-oriented "Synthetism" and the picturesque expression of Renoir. But it was especially the constructive element of Paul Cézanne, which had a lasting influence on Hayden and led him towards the avant-garde artists of the time.

Especially the friendship with Juan Gris became crucial as Gris introduced Hayden to the art dealer Léonce Rosenberg. The two signed a contract in 1915, and Hayden thereby became part of the circle around "Galerie de L'Effort Moderne" with artists such as Pablo Picasso, Gino Severini, Jean Metzinger and Henri Matisse.



Henri Hayden: "Bretonne". Signed Hayden.  
109 x 49.5 cm. Estimate: DKK 2-3 million.



Henri Hayden's main work "Les Trois Musiciens" from 1920, today owned by the Musée d'Art Moderne / Centre

*"You had to be one of the initiated before being allowed to enter the quiet Rue de la Baume and go up to the first floor, where Léonce Rosenberg, Paul Rosenberg's brother, hid his cubists. They were all there on the shelf, from Braque – the most famous – to Valmier – the least known. It was when I visited them here in their den or sanctuary that I became acquainted with Hayden's paintings."*

The description comes from the author Jean Selz' biography of Hayden from 1962 and it conjures up a 1920s image of discovering the artist's works located in their original Parisian gallery environment – surrounded by works of the most influential cubist artists.

## A British Pioneer Within Danish Furniture Art

"Bretonne" comes from the art collection of Charles William Fearnley France (1897-1972), who has been described as the epitome of a classic Englishman – always wearing immaculate suits from Savile Row and tailor-made shoes from Jermyn Street, smoking a cigarette from "Players No. 3" and carrying the international edition of "The Times" under his arm. Based on this description, one can easily imagine C.W.F. France walking through the door at Marlborough Fine Art in Old Bond Street and buying this offered cubist work by Hayden.

France had a background in the textile industry and already settled in Denmark before World War II. Initially, he founded the "Lama" mattress factory, but it was after the war that he truly established a name for himself as a furniture manufacturer with companies such as "France & Daverkosen" and "France & Son". France was a true European, and mastered, besides his mother tongue, both Danish, German and French. This ear for languages gave him a great advantage in terms of being able to do business effortlessly across

Georges Pompidou in Paris. In Jean Selz' 1962 biography "Hayden", the work is described as follows: "By its shaken construction, the articulation of the visual planes, the rhythm of the colour surfaces the canvas reminds you strongly of the jazz's syncopated rhythms and movements. When you see it, you think of Paul Claudel's expression: "The eye listens". Photo: RMN-Grand Palais / René-Gabriel Ojéda.



The former owner of "Bretonne", C.W.F. France, in his factory in Hillerød in 1966. Photograph: VITA Publishing House, from the book "France & Søn – British Pioneer of Danish Furniture".



national borders. When France started his furniture business in Denmark, the local design scene had the benefit of a good number of talented furniture architects. On the other hand, the prevailing carpentry tradition in Denmark placed natural limits on a wider international distribution.

France's success and importance for what has become known as "Danish Modern" was with a popular modern-day expression established through a "disruption". France connected furniture art with craftsmanship and made an investment in "knock-down furniture" that could be flat-packed and subsequently assembled whereby they became profitable for export. Particular attention should be paid to the relationship with the Danish architect Finn Juhl, for whom France produced designs such as the "Japan Chair" and the "Spade Chair". Through the years, it was not only Juhl but a large part of Kaare Klint's students who ended up designing furniture pieces for France, such as Ole Wanscher, Edvard Kindt-Larsen, Grete Jalk and Hvidt & Mølgaard.

Although France often placed the furniture together with modern art in advertisements, it is less well known that he himself was an art collector with a special interest in Cubism. This summer's auction will give you a glimpse of this interest with the formidable piece by Henri Hayden, which France most likely acquired in the early part of the 1960s.

**Auction:** Monday 3 June at 4pm (CET) at Bredgade 33 in Copenhagen

**Preview:** 23-26 May at the same address

Henri Hayden's painting "Bretonne", partly depicted in a catalogue from 1958 for "France & Søn". Photograph: VITA Publishing House, from the book "France & Søn – British Pioneer of Danish Furniture".

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For further information, please contact:

Niels Raben: +45 8818 1181 · [nr@bruun-rasmussen.dk](mailto:nr@bruun-rasmussen.dk)

Niels Boe Hauggaard: +45 8818 1182 · [nbh@bruun-rasmussen.dk](mailto:nbh@bruun-rasmussen.dk)





Henri Hayden: "Bretonne". Signed 1920. Oil on canvas. Estimate: DKK 2-3 million / € 270,000-400,000.

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## **Cubist Work up for Auction in Copenhagen**

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In "Bretonne" the spatiality is distilled into a tight modernist focus on the formalities of the painting: surface, form and colour. The colour scheme moves

across a refined scale, where shades of green leap into burnt tones with contrasts of cool blue and some accents in crimson. Through the style of Cubism, the figure is defined precisely by the fact that different elements in the image – both in and around the figure – dissolve and shift rhythmically as the planes of the image overlap and intertwine with each other.

The work has compositional, picturesque and colouristic similarities to Hayden's contemporary work, "Les Trois Musiciens" (1919-20), which depicts three figures with instruments in an equally fragmented visual space. Today, this painting belongs to the Musée National d'Art Moderne in the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

The title of "Bretonne" is most likely a nod to one of Hayden's earliest sources of inspiration in relation to the surface-oriented, contoured and decorative painting style, namely the works of Paul Gauguin. Hayden spent several summers in Brittany, where Gauguin had established himself as a modernist in the encounter with the countryside and locals a couple of decades earlier.

## **In the Melting Pot of Art**

Born in Warsaw, Hayden left Poland in 1907 to permanently settle in the artistic melting pot of Paris. Here he came in direct contact with the new trends within the art of painting. He was, in his earliest years in Paris, engrossed in Gauguin's surface-oriented "Synthetism" and the picturesque expression of Renoir. But it was especially the constructive element of Paul Cézanne, which had a lasting influence on Hayden and led him towards the avant-garde artists of the time.

Especially the friendship with Juan Gris became crucial since Gris introduced Hayden to the art dealer Léonce Rosenberg. The two signed a contract in 1915, and Hayden thereby became part of the circle around "Galerie de L'Effort Moderne" with artists such as Pablo Picasso, Gino Severini, Jean Metzinger and Henri Matisse.

"Bretonne" is a very special work of art because it takes us right into the centre of Paris' avant-garde scene during the first decades of the 20th century. At the same time, it is a rare painting, simply because Henri Hayden's cubist period was so relatively short," explains the Head of Bruun Rasmussen's Modern Art Department, Niels Raben.

"Bretonne" comes from the art collection of the furniture manufacturer Charles William Fearnley France (1897-1972), who immigrated to Denmark and from the 1950s became crucial for the concept of "Danish Modern" in the field of furniture design. [Read more about Charles William Fearnley France.](#)

**Auction:** Monday 3 June at 4 pm at Bredgade 33 in Copenhagen

**Preview:** 23-27 May at the same address

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*Bruun Rasmussen Auctioneers is one of Scandinavia's leading international auction houses, and one of Denmark's oldest. It all started on 6 October 1948, when Arne Bruun Rasmussen conducted the first traditional Live Auction in the saleroom at Bredgade 33 in Copenhagen. Today, Jesper Bruun Rasmussen stands at the helm of the family-run business together with the third generation of the family, his son Frederik and daughter Alexa, and the company's CEO Jakob Dupont.*



*In 2004, the first online auction was launched, and today the auction house has expanded to include departments in Copenhagen and Aarhus and*

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## Contacts



**Mathilde Rude**

**PRESS CONTACT**

Press officer

[mru@bruun-rasmussen.dk](mailto:mru@bruun-rasmussen.dk)

+45 60351062

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Henri

Hayden

(1883-1970)



Henri Hayden was born in Warsaw, but by the age of twenty he had already found his way to Paris. This would prove to be his real home and in time he became a French citizen. His own life, in many ways embodied the struggle and ultimate triumph of the École de Paris. Embracing Cubism in 1910 with exceptional competence, the following year he was awarded his first solo show at Galerie Druet. In 1914 he was taken on by the dealer Charles Malpel who also represented André Lhote and Roger de la Fresnaye. But after only a year Hayden was lured away to Léonce Rosenberg (who had taken over from Kahnweiler as the main Cubist dealer), at his famous Galerie de l'Effort Moderne. Here Hayden exhibited with Severini, Picasso, Valmier, Metzinger, Survage and Juan Gris; and held a high profile solo show in 1919. In 1920 Hayden contributed his seminal *Les Trois Musiciens* to the Salon des Indépendants Cubist exhibition, and it was subsequently acquired by the Musée National d'Art Moderne. By that time however Hayden was already gradually abandoning the Cubist aesthetic and had begun to paint in a more liberal manner, fearing that the style was becoming too formulaic. However he never completely discarded certain fundamental elements of Cubism and during the 1930's held successful exhibitions at leading galleries Bernheim, Barreiro and Drouant amongst others, and became associated with the *Peintres de ce Temps* group.

Leaving Paris during the Occupation, Hayden retreated to Roussillon where he encountered Samuel Beckett in similar circumstances and during this time they established a close friendship which would last their lifetimes. Upon his return to Paris, he found that his atelier had been looted and many important early works were lost forever. By now Hayden was a celebrated artist and entered a period of his life that was marked by international recognition and critical acclaim: he received many public commissions, and several works were purchased for the national collection. He was honoured at the Biennale of Menton, 1951 and 1953, at the Turin Biennale, 1959, and with numerous exhibitions throughout Europe, including Dublin 1952; Belgrade, Zagreb, 1958; London, Krakow, 1959; Amsterdam, 1960; London, 1961.

The importance of Hayden's mature period and its relation to the Cubism was underlined by a major retrospective held in Lyon in 1960, and further prestigious retrospectives in: Caen, Maison de la Culture, 1966; Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, *Henri Hayden - Soixante Ans de Peinture 1908-1968*, 1968; Bourges, Maison de la Culture, *Rétrospective Hayden*, 1970; Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de La Ville de Paris, *Henri Hayden, Paysages de La Marne*, 1977. Most recently in 2013 at the Museum Villa La Fleur in Warsaw.

The artist is represented in numerous major public collections including the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville, (Paris); Tate Gallery, (London); Art Institute (Chicago), Barnes Foundation (Philadelphia), Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam), Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), National Museum of Wales (Cardiff), Neue Pinakothek (Munich), Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts (Brussels), City Museums of Mannheim, Aberdeen, Adelaide, Auckland, Barcelona, Birmingham, Bucharest, Stuttgart, Sydney, Tel-Aviv, Montreal, Toronto, Turin, Dusseldorf, Glasgow, Kopenhagen, Grenoble, Manchester, Marseille, Nantes, Johannesburg, ....



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