

Portrait of an Unidentified Man

a one-man show written and performed by Pierre Brault
National Arts Centre English Theatre /
Sleeping Dog Theatre (Ottawa)
world premiere coproduction

Study Guide

THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ENGLISH THEATRE
PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENT AUDIENCES
2004-2005 SEASON

Marti Maraden
Artistic Director, English Theatre



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This Study Guide was written and researched by **Jim McNabb** for the National Arts Centre English Theatre, December 2004.

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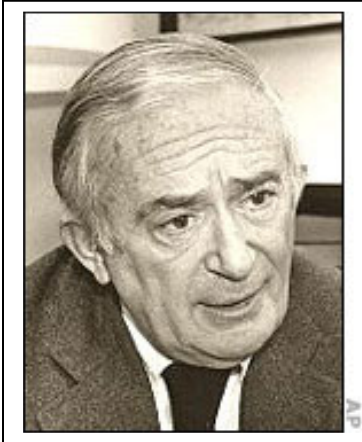
About this Study Guide

This Study Guide is formatted in easy-to-copy single pages. They may be used separately or in any combination that works for your classes. The colour pages are intended for classroom display, but may also be photocopied for students. Here is an outline of the contents of each page with suggestions as to its use.

Page(s)		May Be Used To
2	About The Play - plot synopsis, cast of characters	Aid students in appreciating the script and performance
3	-Who Helped Put this Production Together? -Selected biographies	Aid students in writing a review and help them relate to the production
4-7	An Interview with Pierre Brault	Provide students' enrichment
8-9	An Article by Pierre Brault with Biography of Elmyr de Hory	Provide students' enrichment
10	Movements in Modern Art (also see colour page 19)	Help students relate to the production; provide an activity
11-12	Artists Significant to the Play (also see colour pages 20-21)	Provide enrichment and basis for an activity
13	Activities Before and After Viewing	Foster students' active appreciation of the play and its issues
14-16	References and Characters in the Play	Provide a classroom activity
17	Books, Videos, and Websites of Interest	Provide reference material for an activity
18	Theatre Etiquette	Prepare the class for the theatre experience
19	Examples of Movements in Modern Art (colour page)	Display in the classroom
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About the Play

Plot Synopsis



Elmyr de Hory

At one of his cocktail parties on the Spanish Island of Ibiza, Elmyr de Hory is confronted by an arresting officer of the French government who has come to extradite him for trial as an art forger in France. Since they are to travel the next morning, Elmyr convinces the young officer to listen to his story to pass the time. Elmyr tells of his early bourgeoisie life in Hungary and his youthful days as a penniless art student in Paris, when by chance a society friend mistakes one of his paintings for a Picasso and buys it for a large sum. Elmyr realizes that he can make much more money selling paintings in other people's styles than he can working in his own. Elmyr continues his story of art forgery, impersonating the many characters in his life as he makes his way through Europe and America, selling his fake paintings and drawings for astronomical prices to galleries and celebrity collectors. We see the various painters whose styles he so successfully imitated, as well as the lovers and associates who swindled him leaving him almost destitute. As the morning approaches, Elmyr convinces the

officer to allow him some time to himself before he is escorted from his villa, whereupon Elmyr commits suicide. Or does he?

Characters in the Play (all played by Pierre Brault)

Elmyr de Hory – Hungarian art forger

French arresting officer – (non speaking)

Maurice de Vlaminck – French Fauves painter

Henri Matisse – French Fauves painter

Ursula Andress – Swiss actress who appeared in the first James Bond movie, *Dr. No*

Orson Welles – American director, actor, producer

Pablo Picasso – Spanish Cubist painter

Lady Malcolm Campbell – British art collector

Parisian art dealer

Jacques Chamberlain – Parisian gambler

Curator of the Stockholm Museum

George Sanders – Hollywood actor

Zsa Zsa, Eva, and Magda Gabor – Hungarian actresses and celebrities

Salvador Dali – Spanish Surrealist painter

Amedeo Modigliani – Italian Expressionist painter

Montgomery Clift – Hollywood actor

Frank – owner of Beverly Hills gallery

Fernand Legros – an Egyptian extortionist

Réal Lessard – French Canadian companion

Algur Hurtle Meadows – Texas millionaire art collector

Madame Vlaminck – Maurice de Vlaminck's widow

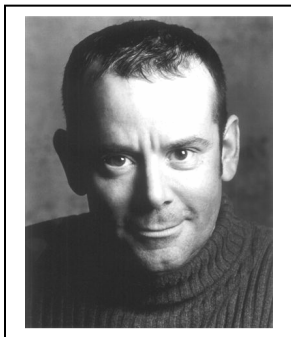
Group of Ibiza villagers

Who Helped Put this Production Together?

Portrait of an Unidentified Man was commissioned and developed by the National Arts Centre English Theatre in association with Sleeping Dog Theatre (Ottawa).

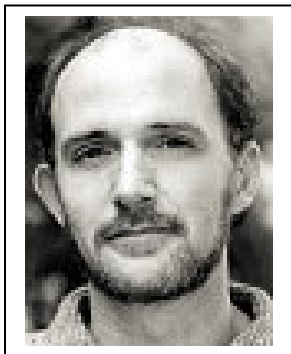
Playwright and Actor	Pierre Brault
Director	Brian Quirt
Lighting and Set Designer	Martin Conboy
Composer and Sound Designer	Justin Haynes
Visual Arts Consultant	Barbara Cuerden
Stage Manager	Judi Pearl
Apprentice Stage Manager	Dana Uzarevic

Selected Biographies



Playwright and Actor **Pierre Brault** was born and raised near Montreal. After graduating from John Abbott College in Theatre Studies he worked as a video maker and stand-up comedian before becoming a full-time actor. He is well known to Canadian theatre audiences for his roles in *An Acre of Time* (Tarragon Theatre (Toronto) / Great Canadian Theatre Company (Ottawa)), *Twelfth Night* (National Arts Centre), *Travels With My Aunt* (NAC/Grand Theatre (London, ON)), *The Secret Garden* (NAC), *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* (GCTC) and *Brothers of the Brush* (New Theatre of Ottawa). He is the recipient of Best Actor awards in Ottawa and Montreal for his performances in *Blood on the Moon*, another one-man show which he also wrote and performed at the NAC and on a tour across Canada and to

Ireland. Television audiences may remember his award winning children's show, *The Groovy Grotto*, which he wrote, produced and hosted. He has appeared in numerous films including *Two's a Mob*, *House of Luk* and *Punch & Judy*. Mr. Brault has also worked extensively as a comedian touring regularly with Yuk Yuk's across Canada and to Melbourne, Australia. He recently completed a new play about the mysterious death of Tom Thomson, as well as a drama for CBC Radio entitled *Capital Gains*.



Director **Brian Quirt** does much of his work in Toronto where he has directed extensively for Factory Theatre, Tarragon Theatre, Theatre Passe-Muraille, the Theatre Centre and Canadian Stage. In Ottawa he directed three shows at the Great Canadian Theatre Company: *Kicked*, *An Acre of Time*, and *Falling Back Home*. Brian is the founder and Artistic Director of Toronto's Nightswimming, which is a dramaturgical* theatre company which develops new plays, performance works and dance, but does not produce them itself. It is devoted, through the creation of these new works, to advancing play development in Canada. *(A dramaturg is the theatre professional primarily responsible for giving feedback and guidance to a playwright and managing the literary aspects of a play's production. This feedback on a new script may be given at any point in the process, from the first draft all the way through to first rehearsals, and often involves organizing a reading or workshop production of the script.)



Lighting and Set Designer **Martin Conboy** was born and raised in Dublin, but now makes his home in Ottawa. He has designed extensively throughout Canada in theatre, dance and special events. Martin also has a practice in architectural lighting and has received numerous design awards for his work on such projects as the Canadian National War Memorial / Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Notre-Dame Cathedral. More recently he has designed the lighting of the Library of Parliament, the New Ottawa Airport and the Canadian Vimy Memorial in Northern France.

An Interview with Pierre Brault (page 1 of 4)

Jim McNabb: Pierre, how did you get started as an actor?



Pierre Brault: *I started as an actor very young. In high school, I always performed; I always enjoyed being the class clown. I was born just outside of Montreal in a small town called Dorion and when I was very young I watched lots and lots of television. I hated school and sort of escaped from my childhood into a lot of characters that I clowned around in class with. And then later on in high school I performed a lot in general assemblies and did stand-up comedy, although I didn't recognize it as that at the time. Then after high school I went into the professional theatre program in CEGEP and that pretty well solidified it for me. I was not really convinced that I could make it as an actor until I got out of school. I worked behind a video camera for about eight years producing videos. After that I said, no, I've got to do what I want to do, which is act and write for the theatre. Doing stand-up comedy was also a dream of mine. So at about the age of 30 I really put all of my concentration into simply being an actor.*

JM: Which professional theatre program did you attend?

PB: *I went to school in Quebec at a CEGEP, which is a bit of a different system. It was a three-year professional theatre program at John Abbott College just outside of Montreal.*

JM: You mentioned doing stand-up comedy which you've performed at places like Yuk Yuks. What did you learn by doing that that can carry over into theatre?

PB: *It was a dream of mine ever since a kid to do stand-up comedy. I remember watching the Johnny Carson Show, watching comics, thinking I'd love to be able to do that. So I always knew I would do stand-up comedy. When I was 19 and finished school, I moved to Toronto, and one of the first things I did was go onto the stand-up stage. And I did fairly well for a few months. But it was very, very difficult. One of the things I realized was that at 19 years old I didn't know that much about the world. So when I decided to go back to the stage at 30 I knew a lot more about the world and I felt much more comfortable about going to do stand-up. For three years I did it straight as my sole income. But what I really learned from it was to be somewhat fearless on the stage. I turned a real corner in my career in stand-up and theatre when I realized that when you go out there the audience, for the most part, wants you to succeed. Very often when we performers are standing backstage we get an adversarial view. We think they're going to hate us, the critics are going to hate us. No, for the most part, they want us to succeed. And I learned to be somewhat fearless in theatre productions because the stand-up world can be rather wild. So although the show may not be going all that well at the NAC, it's unlikely that someone's going to throw a bottle at your head, whereas that's always a possibility at a stand-up club.*

JM: Back to your theatre training: what did you get in the way of physical training that helped you define the different characters you do? There's a physicality about each one which is really distinct.

PB: *I think a lot of that has to do with my own relationship with my own body. Growing up, I had a skin condition that made me rather shy and embarrassed. So [I hid myself] when I played characters. My body slipped into it as well making it very natural for me to use that in theatre. I had a lot of movement courses. I also took a lot of dance courses for my own personal sake because I really enjoyed dancing. So I came to appreciate what I could do with body to establish character.*

An Interview with Pierre Brault (page 2 of 4)

JM: So are a lot of those physical characterizations intuitive, or are you constantly observing people for physical traits?

PB: *You know it's funny, because I don't always know where it comes from. I wonder, did I get that hare-lip from somebody I saw, or that twitch from somebody else? For the most part it sort of grows organically from the character as I create the character on the page. Then when I bring the character to life in the rehearsal hall, that's when the character really starts to gel. But I'm always thinking about it. I'm always thinking how that person would carry himself.*

JM: Another of the remarkable aspects of the characters in your shows is the array of accents that you use. Did you get any training in that or do you just have a marvelous ear?

PB: *I think you really have to have an ear for it. I don't know how to tell you how to do an accent. It's a very difficult thing. But it's been my bread and butter for a very long time – my ability to capture accents. The reason that I do that is because I listen to them and I'm fascinated by them. It's always been second nature ever since I was a kid to imitate them. I remember in school yards pretending I was a butler and using a kind of upper class British accent. I just enjoy playing with them. Then I realized that there was a market out there for them. If you can do a really good accent, people want to use you for things. My ability to capture an Irish accent has really improved my career in Ottawa, because I've been in about eight shows where it was required. Although I was never trained in it, I love sitting and listening to people talk. Going overseas with Blood on the Moon I was quite terrified to do Irish accents for the Irish. My biggest fear was I had to do an Orangeman accent, a Northern Ireland accent. Our tour was finishing in Belfast and I was sweating bullets. But then I relaxed, because while I'd be in the pubs listening to accents I learned a good lesson. When most people think about accents they think about the words, how they say something. But that's not entirely the case. Instead, listen for the rhythm of the voice. So the Irish, for example, when they speak start up high at the beginning of a sentence and then go down. Whereas in the North, it's the complete opposite. They'll start low and then come up. I'd hear it in the pubs. So by the time I got to Belfast there was no problem. They loved the fact that there was this obviously non-Ulster man capturing the Ulster accent.*

JM: In *Portrait of an Unidentified Man* you have about 20 or more characters and each one has a different accent. How do you keep them all straight?

PB: *The secret there is to establish each of your characters in your mind so clearly that you can see them in front of you and slip them on like a hat. I think of that Bugs Bunny cartoon where the hats blow off in the wind and land on different heads which changes the characters. It's like that. You have to slip into the characters so quickly that you instantly become that person. That's always been a challenge but also one of the most enjoyable aspects of performance, being able to drop into those characters and lock into them. Not just fall into them, but keep them and maintain them and enjoy them. There are about 25 characters in this show and some of them only live for a few seconds. But each of them has to have a character to them. Each has to have a reason for speaking. It's not enough for me to prove that I can do Montgomery Clift. There has to be a reason that Montgomery Clift is in there, saying what he's saying. That's the great challenge in writing in this form – to make them not caricatures but to make them real people. I really try to focus in on that, their physicality, how they speak and what's going through their mind as they're speaking.*

JM: One of the treats is the three Gabor sisters who speak all at the same time and you've got them quite distinct. How did you achieve that?

An Interview with Pierre Brault (page 3 of 4)

PB: *Well, I thought there were only two Gabor sisters until I started doing my research. The possibility of doing three Gabor sisters together was really intriguing. I guess the important thing was to establish their sibling relationship, their voices and especially their physicality because they're conversing in quick succession; and mostly their attitude which carries so much in characterization. That's such a great scene in my own mind; I love playing it, but it's also frightening. It's like the moguls of theatre. You're just bouncing off each one because they're literally having an argument for two pages. They all have one line back and forth. If it works it will be amazing; if it doesn't I'll look like such an idiot.*

JM: *Blood on the Moon* was the first full length play that you wrote and performed, was it not?

PB: *Yes. I'd done a previous one-man show at the GCTC as part of their Night Howl series that used to be run by Barry Kaplan, called Maxwell's Spell. It was a one-act show about an hour long. It was a good intro to Blood on the Moon which was my basic first stab at real independent theatre. I put [Blood on the Moon] up at the Fringe, really wanted to make my four hundred bucks back, and obviously it had plans of its own far beyond anything I could have imagined.*

JM: Each of these pieces you've done has been highly acclaimed. How did you learn your writing craft?

PB: *I don't know. I certainly never learned it [in school]. Ironically, I've been teaching writing the last few months at Algonquin College. I've actually had to learn how to write in order to teach, if you understand what I mean. I'd never thought about how I wrote, but now I have a much better overall view of the craft. Now I can apply it to my own plays and can say, ok, I can see what I'm doing here, I'm creating a suspense plot here, the climax is coming, I see where the resolution is. I think it's just something that I do instinctively. But I also write with the audience in mind. I don't like to be bored when I watch a show. And how do I do that? Well, what makes it interesting for me is not so much the plot. The plot has to be good; you really have to have a good story. But much more important is character and its reaction. I mean, if I want to know what is happening next, I'll watch a movie. But if I want to know about people, about character, what's happening internally, then I go to the theatre. And that's really only one of the few places we can do that. It's exceptionally difficult to write it all down. But I just relax sometimes; I'm getting better at it. I'm starting to learn how to write.*

JM: What inspired you to spend such a long period of your life focusing on these two particular men, James Patrick Whelan, who is the central character of your first one-man show, *Blood on the Moon*, and Elmyr de Hory, the central character of *Portrait of an Unidentified Man*?

PB: *That's a good question. I guess I'm looking for characters who have a story that is so unique in its perspective that none of us would really even anticipate it. When I thought about the assassination of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, I thought elaborately about Sir John A. MacDonald, and about D'Arcy McGee's famous final speech, and the setting up of the murder. But the more I thought about it the more I felt tugged toward the fact that once the murder happens there's another story that begins, a really important story in Canadian history. Not that I felt that I had to justify or avenge the injustice that happened 135 years ago. Absolutely not. My only reason for writing the show was to profile myself as an actor. But I had to do it legitimately by writing a half decent show. So the more I wrote about it, the more I thought I'm just going to follow the characters I really want to know about, like James Whelan and the witnesses against him, the owner of the boarding house, the cops. What was going on then, what was justice like*

An Interview with Pierre Brault (page 4 of 4)

PB (continued): *in 1868? And I thought other people would be interested in that, not just me. I think these oddities of history are interesting. I think Elmyr de Hory is a great example. The most fascinating thing about Elmyr's story is that I'm not sure how much of it is actually just that, a story. That's what makes the story even more wonderfully rich and work on so many different levels. De Hory was one of those people where I read a brief bit about his life and said "that guy's next".*

JM: In both of these plays there are multiple characters. Why did you choose to write them as one-man shows?

PB: *The world of one-man shows is double-edged. If you're successful, it's all yours; if you fail, well, it's pretty well your fault. First of all, I don't choose to write only one-man shows. I actually write other shows. It's just that the only ones that get produced are the one-man shows. That's the reality of writing in Canada, I'm afraid. But it's important to write them well. I've seen a lot of one-man shows that have been, if you forgive the word, masturbatory in nature, where I really didn't feel they were telling me a story. They were more profiling themselves as actors - which I'm guilty of; but there's got to be a good story. Writing a one-man show is not so different from writing a multi-cast show because nobody's speaking at the same time. There are still character conversations going back and forth. But certainly as a solo performer, it requires a great deal of concentration.*

JM: What other one-man shows inspired you? Were there any on which you patterned your work?

PB: *Well, I guess I never really patterned on any one-man shows because I kind of let it grow out of me. One has to approach these things uniquely and let them grow organically. When I started writing Blood on the Moon I went to see a one-man show called Kicked by Michael Healey and directed by Brian Quirt. It was jaw-dropping amazing. It was one of the very few shows where I leapt to my feet in applause afterwards, and I don't do that easily. And then later when I worked with Brian Quirt on another show, I came to greatly admire him. I asked him to take on this one-man show at the Rhubarb Festival in Toronto a couple of years ago. While I was there I went to see another one-man show he was also directing called Through the Eyes by Don Druick with Richard McMillan in the leading role and that was absolutely spellbinding. It was one-man storytelling at its best. It was the finest I've ever seen. I've seen others that made me say, yes, that's the type of thing I want to do – tell a story with a single character. I would say that Through the Eyes is much closer to what I do. Both of these plays were directed by Brian Quirt. When Marti Maraden asked me, "What director would you like? You really have your choice." I said "Brian Quirt". She said "You have a lot of time to ...". I said "Brian Quirt, please."*

JM: After you finish with *Portrait of an Unidentified Man* here at the NAC, what's coming up for Pierre Brault?

PB: *The day after I close Portrait ... I get on a plane and go to Edmonton for seven weeks to do a new adaptation of Uncle Vanya. Bob Baker is directing. Then we come back here to finish the run in Ottawa. Right after that I'm doing The Odyssey which is going up in places unknown to me just yet - a tent, apparently, somewhere in Ottawa. So it's nice that I'm busy until about June.*

**An Article by Pierre Brault for NAC's *STAGES*
with Biography of Elmyr de Hory** (page 1 of 2)

"Pierre Brault. Actor/Playwright, Montreal, Quebec"

From that small bit of information, already I am creating an identity, by which consciously or not, you are already forming an opinion of me. Perhaps you dislike actors or Montreal or both. Maybe you love them. But let me ask you this: given that small bit of information... would you buy a Matisse from me?

Fair enough. What if my name were the Baron Hertzberg, professional art dealer, from Budapest? Would you take me a little more seriously? I think you may. You may even buy a small Renoir watercolour from me or perhaps a Modigliani sketch, authenticated by the leading experts, of course.

Identity is not something we think about constantly, but every once in a while, even the most secure of us wonders, "Who am I?" As an actor, answering this question can be doubly difficult since a great deal of my time is spent being other people with other identities, whether a condemned man awaiting execution, or a guy with a cold waiting for a bus. It is what I do every day of my life and is a subject that has always enthralled me.

So it was a couple of years ago that I chanced upon the story of Elmyr de Hory, art collector, dealer and expert. Friend to the celebrities of his day and later celebrated himself as one of the greatest art forgers of the 20th century, a flamboyant Hungarian who may have sold more than 1,000 fakes to distinguished galleries and museums around the world. Many believe some of them remain there today. It is a story that still sends shivers through the modern art market and one that many prestigious galleries only grudgingly acknowledge.

Elmyr Dory-Boutin was born into a prosperous family in Hungary in 1906. He moved to Paris in 1926 in the hopes of satisfying his artistic interests. He enrolled in the Académie la Grande Chaumière where he studied under Fernand Léger, whom he eventually befriended. Elmyr excelled in his studies and his creations began to receive recognition. But it was outside the studio that Elmyr did the real studying that would shape his life.

Paris before World War II was, as it had been for decades, the dominant centre of European artistic life and it was in the cafés and bistros on the Montparnasse that Elmyr rubbed shoulders with Picasso, Matisse, Léger, Vlaminck ... all the leading painters of the day. Young Elmyr, while not as successful as his contemporaries, simply enjoyed being part of the exciting milieu. Conveniently, his aristocratic parents in Hungary, closing their eyes to his flamboyant lifestyle, were content to fund his artistic endeavours, as long as he stayed away.

With the deluge of misery wrought by World War II, Elmyr returned to Budapest only to discover he had lost everything - his parents, his income and his dignity. He survived a Romanian concentration camp and escaped before the Russians brought the Iron Curtain down in Hungary. Elmyr had nothing. No family, no country, no identity. He was an empty canvas.

**An Article by Pierre Brault for NAC's *STAGES*
containing a Biography of Elmyr de Hory** (page 2 of 2)

Returning to Paris Elmyr concentrated on his art but sold very little. His original work seemed old and out of step with the fresh work of Picasso and Matisse. Worse, he had no income from his parents. Then one day, while doodling in the style of Picasso, a British friend dropped by and immediately offered Elmyr a handsome amount for the sketch. Desperate Elmyr accepted, and thereby began one of the most notorious careers in the history of art forgery.

Over the next three decades Elmyr travelled the world, assuming new identities and passing off hundreds of drawings and sketches that he had created in the styles of Matisse, Picasso, Modigliani, and Braque among untold others. Starting in America where his impeccable manners and European upbringing gave him instant credibility which he used to his advantage, he crossed paths with the likes of Zsa Zsa Gabor, Orson Welles, and Montgomery Clift. He operated under the radar, and made millions.

Yet Elmyr was a tortured man. Alone in his studio he could be any one of the great painters, but he longed to be recognized for himself. But the more he forged the more he lost his own identity. Other more unscrupulous people recognized this in Elmyr and took full advantage of it, using his talents for their own private gain and eventually destroying whatever was left of Elmyr.

At the end of the story we simply do not know the extent to which Elmyr has entered the present day's art market. Maybe two percent of the masterpieces in modern galleries emanated from his wizard's brush, as many suspect. Maybe the figure (at least for Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and early Cubism, Elmyr's specialities) runs as high as 25 per cent, or 50 per cent....

His fame as a forger is assured with de Hory fakes fetching tens of thousands of dollars. In an ultimate irony, some of those have turned out to be fake de Horys. Were could it end?

When I read this story I felt an immediate reaction, and an admittedly strange one. I felt a kinship with Elmyr. We are both actors: professional frauds, we both assume identities to survive. I felt such a strong affinity for Elmyr that I knew then and there that my next one-man show would be about identity, art and Elmyr de Hory.

Portrait of an Unidentified Man is the result and premieres at the National Arts Centre in February as part of English Theatre's Studio Series. I hope you can join Elmyr and a couple of dozen of his favourite characters for an amazing life filled with intrigue and adventure. An astounding story that will make you question the very nature of "who am I?".

Movements in Modern Art

(also see examples provided on page 19)

Impressionism was an art movement beginning in the 19th century starting as a private association of Paris-based artists who exhibited publicly in 1874. The movement was named after Claude Monet's *Impression, soleil levant*; the term being coined by an art critic. The Impressionist approach to painting is usually identified with a strong concern for light and its changing qualities, often with an emphasis on the effects of a particular passage of time. Well known Impressionist painters are Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Impressionism is still widely practiced today, and a variety of successive movements were influenced by it.

Cubism was an avant-garde art movement that revolutionized European painting and sculpture in the early 20th century. The essence of Cubism is that instead of viewing subjects from a single, fixed angle, the artist breaks them up into multiple facets, so that several different aspects/faces of the subject can be seen simultaneously. It began in 1906 with two artists –Georges Braque (French) and Pablo Picasso (Spanish) -- who were living in the Montmartre Quarter of Paris. Picasso and Braque were great innovative artists in search of new ways to express space and form in painting. They were influenced by Paul Cézanne, African tribal art and Iberian sculpture. The second phase of Cubism was called *Synthetic Cubism*. These works of art were composed of distinct superimposed parts - painted or often pasted onto the canvas. Cubism had a major impact on artists of the first decades of the 20th century and it gave rise to development of new trends in art, such as Futurism, Constructivism, and Expressionism. It remains one of the most famous art forms today.

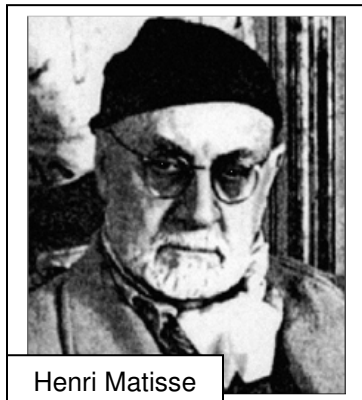
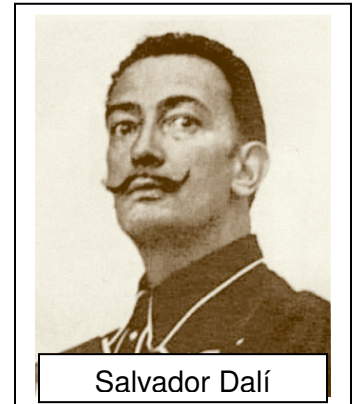
Les Fauves ("the wild beasts"), a short-lived movement of early Modernist art, emphasized paint itself and the use of deep color over the representational values retained by Impressionism, even with its focus on light and the moment. The painter Gustave Moreau was the movement's inspirational teacher, a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, who pushed his students to think outside of the lines of formality and to follow their visions. As stated by one of them, "*If the trees look yellow to the artist, then a bright yellow they must be.*" Artists of the group included Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck, Kees van Dongen, and Georges Braque.

Expressionism is, generally speaking, a tendency in any art form (painting, literature, film, architecture and so on) to distort reality for emotional effect. Additionally, the term often implies emotional angst - the number of cheerful expressionist works is relatively small. In this general sense, painters such as El Greco can be called Expressionist, though in practice, the term is applied mainly to 20th century works. Some of the movement's leading painters in the early 20th century were Oskar Kokoschka, Edvard Munch, and Amedeo Modigliani. Later in the 20th century, the movement influenced a large number of other artists, including the so-called Abstract Expressionists.

Surrealism is a style in which fantastic visual imagery from the subconscious mind is used with no intention of making the artwork logically comprehensible. Founded by André Breton in 1924, it was a primarily European movement which was deeply influenced by the psychoanalytic work of Freud and Jung. The Surrealist circle was made up of many of the great artists of the 20th century, including Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Joan Miró, and René Magritte. The Magic Realists were North American artists somewhat influenced by the Surrealists.

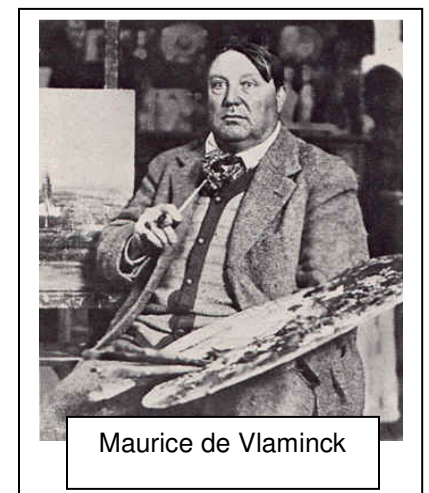
Artists Significant to the Play (page 1 of 2)
(examples of their work provided on pages 20-21)

Salvador Dalí – (1904-1989) Spanish painter, sculptor and film maker. Born into a middle-class family, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid, where he mastered academic techniques. After experimenting with Cubism and Futurism he became associated with the Surrealist movement in art. Over the next few years Dalí devoted himself with passionate intensity to developing his method, which he described as 'paranoiac-critical'. It enabled him to demonstrate his personal obsessions and fantasies featuring beach scenes, melting shapes, architectural elements, and decaying figures. His flair for getting publicity through scandal, his vivacity, his controversial political views and his lecherousness made him a particularly noteworthy figure. His most famous piece is *Persistence of Memory*.



Henri Matisse – (1869-1954) French Fauvist painter and sculptor. He was born in the North of France to parents who ran a general store. After studying to be a law clerk he took up painting as a pastime. He studied art in Paris with a number of masters until he was able at last to exhibit his work in successful salons. Painted in bright, bold colours, his subject matter ranged from townscapes to casual portraits and still-lives to decorative panels and stage sets. He lived much of his life in Paris and the South of France.

Maurice de Vlaminck (1876-1958) – French Fauvist painter born in Paris to parents who were bohemian musicians. As an adolescent, de Vlaminck planned to make a career as a professional cyclist. Like his parents, he had musical talent and earned a living through playing the violin. As a painter, he was largely self-taught except for the influence of Van Gogh and Gauguin. He later helped to establish the Fauvist movement along with André Derain and Henri Matisse. Beginning in 1908, de Vlaminck began painting realist landscapes in the style of Paul Cézanne. After serving in World War I, he retreated to a remote location and continued creating a more subdued and ominous style of Expressionism.



Artists Significant to the Play (page 2 of 2)

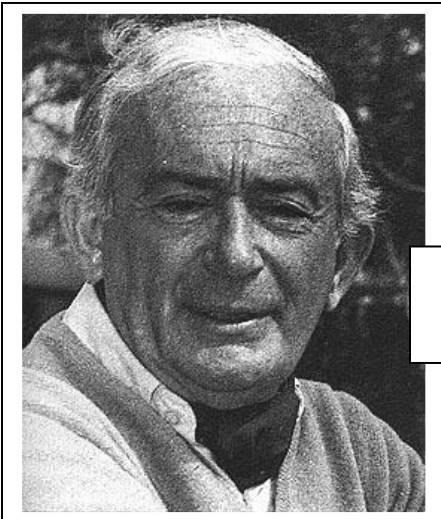
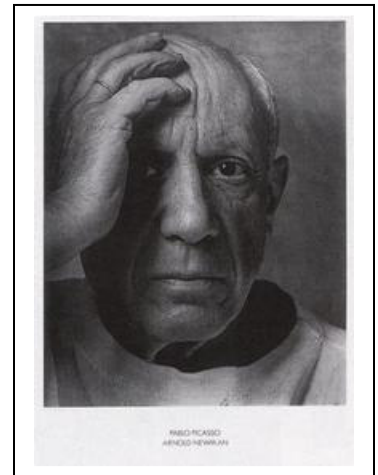
(examples of their work provided on pages 20-21)



Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920) – Italian painter who, after settling in Paris in 1906, was influenced by the work of Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Paul Cézanne, and by African masks. His unique style - the deliberate distortion of the figure and the free use of large, flat areas of colour – produces distinctive graceful portraits and lush nudes. His interest in African masks and sculpture is evident, especially in the treatment of the sitters' faces: flat and masklike, with almond eyes, twisted noses, pursed mouths, and elongated necks. Despite their extreme economy of composition and neutral backgrounds,

the portraits give us a strong sense of the sitter's personality. He died at age 35 in abject poverty of tuberculosis and excesses of alcohol and drugs.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) – A Spanish painter and sculptor, and probably the most important figure in 20th century art. Over the course of his 92 years he created a staggering 22,000 works of art in a variety of mediums, including sculpture, ceramics, mosaics, stage design, as well as an abundance of paintings and drawings. There was scarcely a 20th century movement that he didn't inspire, contribute to or, in the case of Cubism, invent along with his colleague Georges Braque. Picasso was admitted to the advanced classes at the Royal Academy of Art in Barcelona at the age of 15. His early life from 1904 to 1947 was spent in Paris, after which he moved to the South of France. Picasso's artistic production is usually described in terms of a series of periods – the "Blue Period", depicting the world of the poor with predominant tones of blue, then the "Rose Period", characterized by a lighter palette with subject matter often drawn from circus life. These were followed by his "Analytic Cubism" and "Synthetic Cubism" periods in which he radically departed from the work of other artists. *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1911-1914) was one of his landmark paintings which rocked the art world. His second landmark painting is considered to be *Guernica*, a large mural painted in 1937 as a protest to the misery created by war in the Northern Spanish town of Guernica.



Elmyr de Hory
the most prolific art forger of the 20th century

Activities Before and After Viewing the Play

Pre-performance activities

1. Elmyr de Hory was a notorious name-dropper. Throughout the play many early 20th century artists and personalities are discussed as well as important art movements. Students will enjoy these references more if they have at least an awareness of these people. Some of them are featured in the activity on pages 14-16 of this Study Guide. In order to complete the activity the students should have access to the internet for reference purposes. Students should match the names on page 14 with the descriptions found on pages 15 and 16.

The answers are as follows: 1-I, 2-H, 3-O, 4-C, 5-G, 6-T, 7-P, 8-B, 9-F, 10-M, 11-Q, 12-J, 13-R, 14-K, 15-A, 16-V, 17-D, 18-E, 19-U, 20-N, 21-S, 22-L.

2. Students will benefit from having a knowledge of the different Post-Impressionist art movements of the 20th century as well as some of the more well-known artists whose work was imitated by Elmyr de Hory. Have them read pages 10–12, and view colour pages 19-21 illustrating these movements and artists' work. There are many excellent websites that students can explore on the subject. Two of note are www.artchive.com and <http://www.artcyclopedia.com/general/alphabetic.html>

3. Elmyr de Hory is considered to have perpetrated one of the greatest art hoaxes of the 20th century but there have been many frauds, hoaxes, and imposters. Students will have fun discussing some of these after researching the internet. Modern investigative techniques such as carbon dating, x-rays, or neutron activation analysis are making it more difficult for fraud artists to pass off their work as authentic. Some sites are:

<http://www.factmonster.com/spot/hoax5.html>

<http://www.sniggle.net/artforg.php>

http://whyfiles.org/081art_sci/index.html

A Google search for “art frauds”, “art hoaxes”, “art forgery”, and “authenticating art” will deliver a multitude of websites to research.

4. If time permits, showing a video such as *Masterpiece or Forgery: the Story of Elmyr de Hory* found in the Ottawa Public Library would benefit the students' appreciation of the man and his work. There are several very good videos on the works of Picasso or Matisse. The art department of your school may be able to lend a slide presentation on the Post-Impressionist artists whose work de Hory imitated.

Post-performance Activity

5. While the play is still fresh in their minds, have your students write a review for Pierre Brault's *Portrait of an Unidentified Man*. A suggested outline for writing a review can also be found online on page 12 of http://www.nac-cna.ca/en/allaboutthenac/publications/chekhov_guide.pdf. Students may have received programs at the matinée or may refer to page 3 of this Study Guide for the correct information about the production in their reviews. The areas the review should cover all design elements (lighting, sound, set and costumes), the direction, the basic narrative and the central theme(s). In this case, however, particular focus should be given to the actor's ability to portray the multiple characters.

6. A variety of discussion topics may arise from the viewing of this play. Students might be interested in pursuing such things as the true value of a piece of art whether it be an authentic to a master or on its own merits; the willingness of a social climbing individual to be duped by an imposter; the attitudes held by society towards homosexuality during the 20th century; or the merits of creating a one-man show over a multi-cast show.

References and Characters in the Play – A Matching Activity

(page 1 of 3)

Using pages 15 and 16 of this Guide, find the description of each person, place, or event listed below and fill in the corresponding letter.

1. **Henri Matisse** ()
2. **The Louvre** ()
3. **Pablo Picasso** ()
4. **Fauvism** ()
5. **Michelangelo** ()
6. **David O. Selznick** ()
7. **Zsa Zsa, Eva and Magda Gabor** ()
8. **Salvador Dalí** ()
9. **Bela Lugosi** ()
10. **Marc Chagall** ()
11. **Pierre-Auguste Renoir** ()
12. **Cubism** ()
13. **Montgomery Clift** ()
14. **Ursula Andress** ()
15. **Montparnasse** ()
16. **Orson Welles** ()
17. **Peggy Guggenheim** ()
18. **Maurice de Vlaminck** ()
19. **George Sanders** ()
20. **Howard Hughes** ()
21. **Ernest Hemingway** ()
22. **École-Des-Beaux-Arts** ()

Many of these references can be found by accessing Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

References and Characters in the Play – A Matching Activity

(page 2 of 3)

- A.** An area of Paris on the Left Bank which became famous at the beginning of the 20th century, when it was the heart of intellectual and artistic life in Paris with its legendary cafés, artist studios and cheap rents.
- B.** An important Spanish painter, best known for his Surrealist works which combine bizarre dreamlike images with excellent draftsmanship. His subject matter sometimes involved beachscapes or melting clocks.
- C.** A short-lived movement of early Modernist art which emphasized the paint itself and the use of deep pure colors rather than the representational values retained by Impressionism.
- D.** An American art collector born into a very wealthy New York family. After living in the bohemian area of Paris she was friends with many avante-garde artists and advanced their careers.
- E.** French artist who worked to perfect the Fauve art movement along with Derain and Matisse. He was deeply influenced by Van Gogh's brilliant colours and energetic brushstrokes.
- F.** Actor born in the Transylvania region of Hungary who became famous for playing the title role in *Dracula* and various other horror movies. In later years he became a favourite in Ed Wood's B movies.
- G.** Italian Renaissance painter, sculptor and architect most famous for his fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican and the statue of David in Florence. He began his career making forgeries of other artists' work.
- H.** This Museum, located in Paris, is one of the largest and most famous museums in the world. The building, a former royal palace, lies in the centre of Paris and contains such famous works as the *Mona Lisa* and the *Venus de Milo*.
- I.** Considered to be one of the most important French painters of the 20th century, he was the leader in the Fauvist manner. He worked with other fauvists such as Derain and de Vlaminck.
- J.** The essence of this important 20th century art movement is that instead of viewing subjects from a single, fixed angle, the artist breaks them up into a multiplicity of facets, so that several different aspects/faces of the subject can be seen simultaneously.
- K.** Sexy European actress famous for her performance as the "Bond girl" in the first 007 movie.

References and Characters in the Play – A Matching Activity

(page 3 of 3)

- L.** Highly esteemed art school in Paris with a training regime based on the classical style where students progressed through rigorous lessons in realistic drawing before moving on to painting and finally on to their own style of work.
- M.** Jewish Russian painter who settled in Paris. His work shows a combination of Expressionism and Surrealism styles and resonate with fantasy legends and dreams.
- N.** This American was at times a pilot, a movie producer, a playboy, an eccentric, a recluse, and one of the wealthiest people in the world. His early life is the subject of a recent movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio.
- O.** Recognized as probably the most important painter/sculptor of the 20th century, this Spanish artist was the founder along with Georges Braque of Cubism. His artistic output ranged to approximately 22,000 pieces, not counting de Hory's.
- P.** These Hungarian sisters became famous in America not so much as actresses but for the celebrity status they achieved as wealthy and much married glamour icons.
- Q.** A preeminent 19th century French artist, he was one of the most famous Impressionist painters. His painting *Le Bal au Moulin de la Galette* recently sold for over \$78 million US.
- R.** This four-time Academy Award nominated Hollywood actor was noted for his matinée idol good looks until a car accident disfigured his face. His career ended later as a result of drug and alcohol abuse.
- S.** This macho adventurer was one of America's most important and influential writers of the 20th century. Some of his favourite topics were war, fishing, and bullfighting.
- T.** Multi-nominated and winner of Academy Awards, this Hollywood producer is most famous for producing the epic *Gone With The Wind*.
- U.** This suave, handsome, European-born, bisexual Hollywood actor was married to two Gabor sisters – at different times, of course.
- V.** Sometimes considered one of Hollywood's greatest director, he is famous for his 1941 *Citizen Kane* and his hoax broadcast *War of the Worlds*. He made a film about Elmyr de Hory.

Books, Videos and Websites of Interest

Websites of Interest



<http://www.tamu.edu/mocl/picasso/> - “Online Picasso Project”, an amazingly thorough compilation with hundreds of reproductions of Picasso’s works in colour and b/w arranged chronologically and described.

http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca/cybermuseum/search/artist_work_e.jsp?iartistid=4318 – a description of the National Gallery of Canada’s entire collection of Picasso’s works, some of which are reproduced here.

http://www.crimelibrary.com/criminal_mind/scams/elmyr_de_hory/ - a biography of Elmyr de Hory with bibliography.

<http://www.sniggle.net/elmyr.php> - a commentary on the authenticity of the Elmyr legend.

Movies of Interest



Masterpiece or Forgery? The Story of Elmyr de Hory – 1997, 52 min. Excellent documentary shot on location in Europe and America including interviews with such friends of Elmyr as Clifford Irving (author of his biography), Ursula Andres, a former lover, several curators of museums and footage of Elmyr himself. A wonderful introduction to the myth, life and works of Elmyr de Hory. Ottawa Public Library V709.439 H824.

F is For Fake – TV documentary directed and narrated by Orson Welles. A charming piece exploring fakery in the art world, that of Elmyr and of Clifford Irving, his biographer. Glebe Video.

Mystery of Picasso – 1956, 75 min., in French with English subtitles; documentary made in Picasso’s studio showing him drawing and painting various pieces. A valuable insight into his creative process. Glebe Video.

Montparnasse 19 – 1958, 120 min., B/W, French, no subtitles; a film by Jacques Becker dealing with the life of Amedeo Modigliani. Glebe Video.

Picasso: The Man and His Work, Parts 1 and 2 – 1986, 2X45min; a thorough video biography of Picasso showing the development of his work from his teenage years through to 1973. Ottawa Public Library V759.6 P586te.

Books

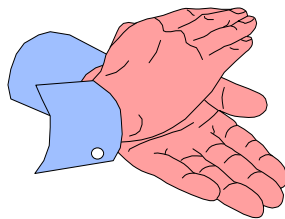


Irving, Clifford (1969). *Fake! The Story of Elmyr de Hory the Greatest Art Forger of Our Time*. McGraw-Hill Book Company. New York, USA. A biography of Elmyr which may or may not be the truth – Irving wrote a fake biography of Howard Hughes – but which contains a number of examples of Elmyr’s works – which again may be fake Elmyrs.

Theatre Etiquette

Please take a moment to prepare the students for their visit to the National Arts Centre by explaining good **Theatre Etiquette** which will enhance the enjoyment of the play by all audience members:

1. *Portrait of an Unidentified Artist* will be performed in the Studio of the NAC. Matinées at the NAC are for students and the general public. It is important for everyone to be quiet (no talking or rustling of materials) during the performance so others do not lose their immersion in the “world of the play”. Unlike movies, the actors in live theatre can hear disturbances in the audience and will give their best performances when they feel the positive involvement of the audience members. The appropriate way of showing approval for the actors’ performances is through laughter and applause. For the enjoyment of all, people who disturb others during the show may be asked to leave the Studio.
2. *Portrait of an Unidentified Man* is set in a part of the 20th century before phones and pagers. It is important that there be no electronic devices used in the Studio so that the atmosphere of the play is not interrupted. Cell phones, pagers, and anything that beeps must be turned off. Cameras and all other recording devices are likewise not permitted.
3. A trip to the washroom before the play starts is a good idea. Anyone leaving during the performance may unfortunately not be allowed back into the Studio. This play is performed without an intermission.



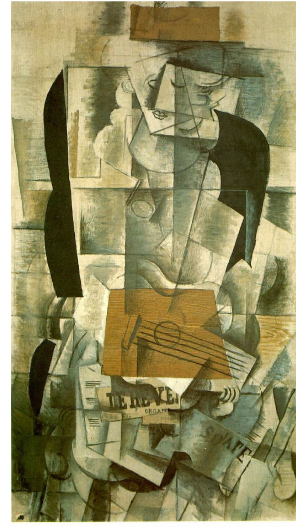
Examples of Movements in Modern Art

Impressionism



A Girl with a Watering Can
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1876

Cubism



Woman with a Guitar
Georges Braque, 1913

Fauvism



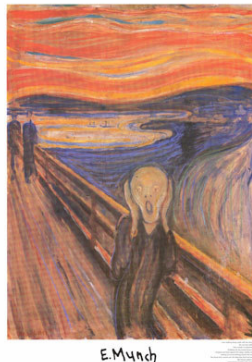
The Dessert: Harmony in Red
Henri Matisse, 1908

Surrealism



The Melancholic Singer
Joan Miró

Expressionism



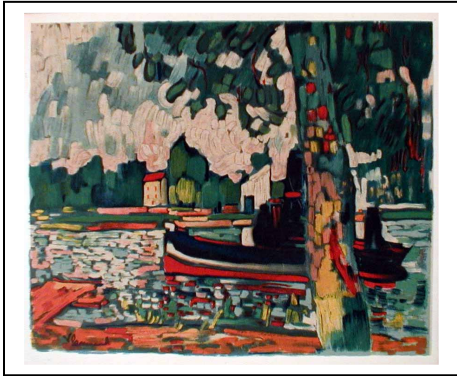
The Scream
Edvard Munch

Magic Realism

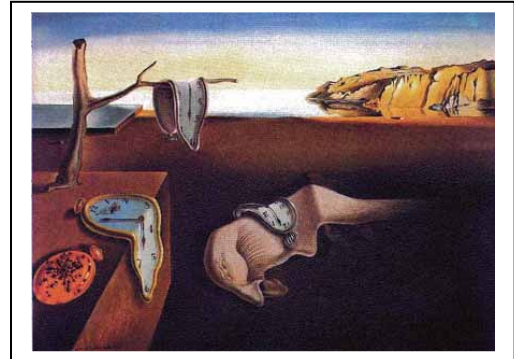


Horse and Train
Alex Colville, 1954

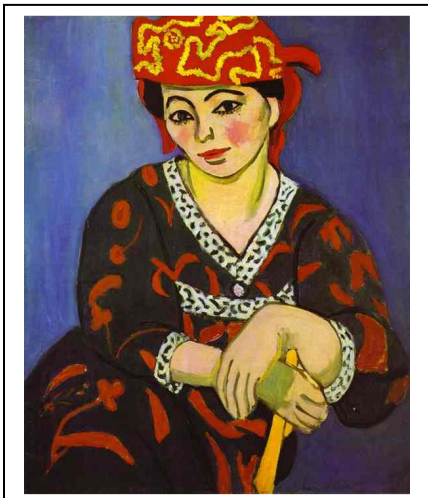
Samples of Work by Artists Significant to the Play (page 1 of 2)



Le Remorqueur
Maurice de Vlaminck, 1905



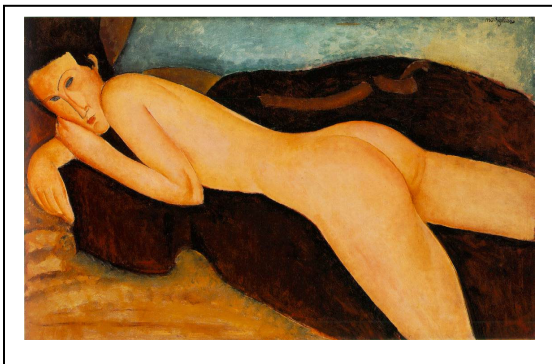
Persistence of Memory
Salvador Dalí, 1931



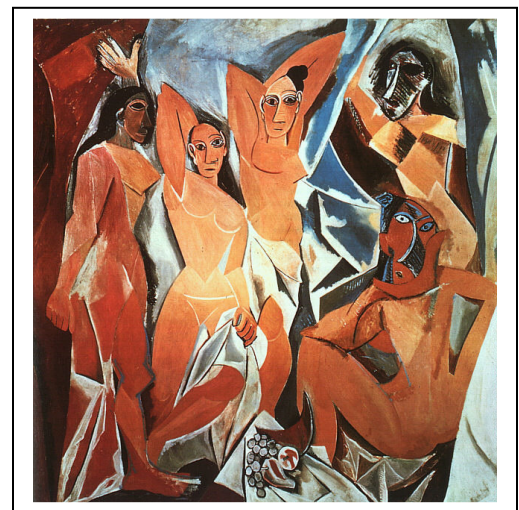
Mme. Matisse: Madras Rouge
Henri Matisse



Guernica
Pablo Picasso, 1937



Reclining Nude from the Back
Amedeo Modigliani, 1917

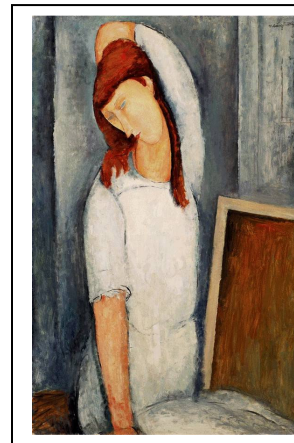


Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)
Pablo Picasso, 1907

Samples of Work by Artists Significant to the Play (page 2 of 2)



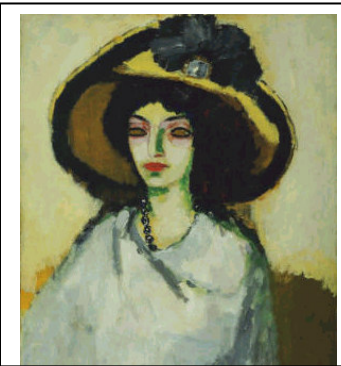
A fake Modigliani
by Elmyr de Hory



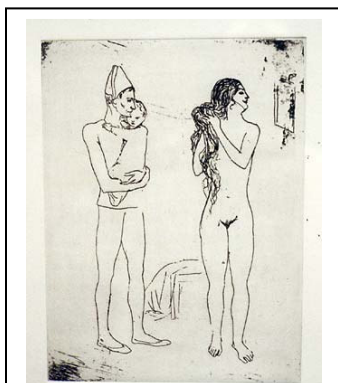
*Jeanne Hbuterne With Her Left Arm
Behind Her Head*
Amedeo Modigliani



A fake van Dongen
by Elmyr de Hory



Woman in a Large Hat
Kees van Dongen



A fake Picasso
by Elmyr de Hory



*Arlequin et Homme au
Chapeau*
Pablo Picasso



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