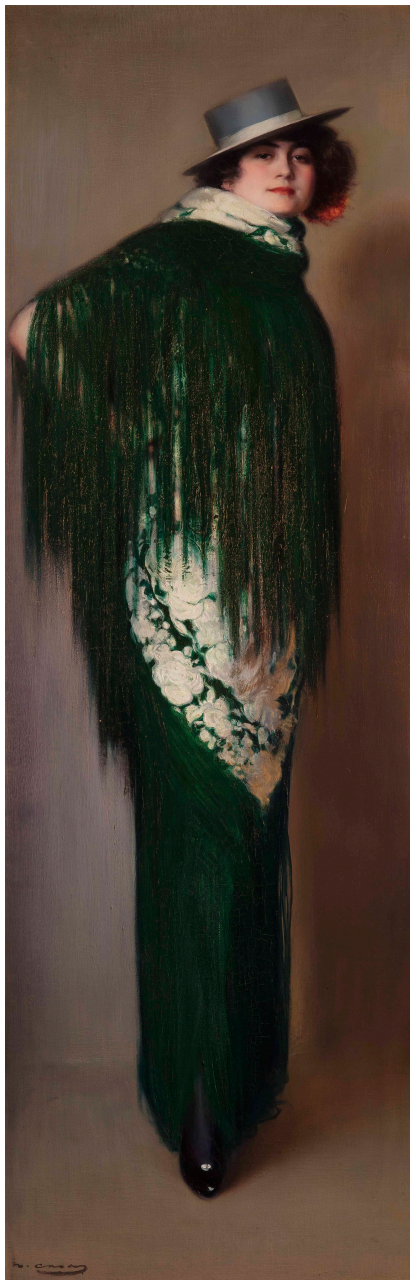


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Ramon Casas

(Barcelona 1866 - 1932)

La Parisienne (Júlia Peraire)

c. 1914 - 1915

oil on canvas

182 x 60 cm.;

71 5/8 x 23 5/8 in.

signed lower left: *R. Casas*

Provenance

Private collection, Spain.

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Literature

Vell i Nou, II, 21, 15 March 1916, reproduced on p. 11;

A. Sánchez de Larragoiti, *El pintor Ramon Casas*, Impr. Ramos, Alfonso & Moitia, Barcelona 1959, reproduced;

S. Alcolea, *Ramon Casas*, Sabadell 1990, reproduced on p. 184;

I. Coll, *Ramon Casas. Catàleg raonat*, Barcelona 1999, reproduced on p. 383, cat. no. 591;

I. Coll, *Ramon Casas. Catálogo razonado*, Murcia 2002, reproduced on p. 393, cat. no. 533;

I. Coll, *Júlia, el desig. Ramon Casas*, exh. cat., Cercle del Liceu, Barcelona 2016, reproduced on p. 157;

Memòria 140 anys, exh. cat., Establiments Maragall, Barcelona 2017, reproduced p. 23.

Exhibited

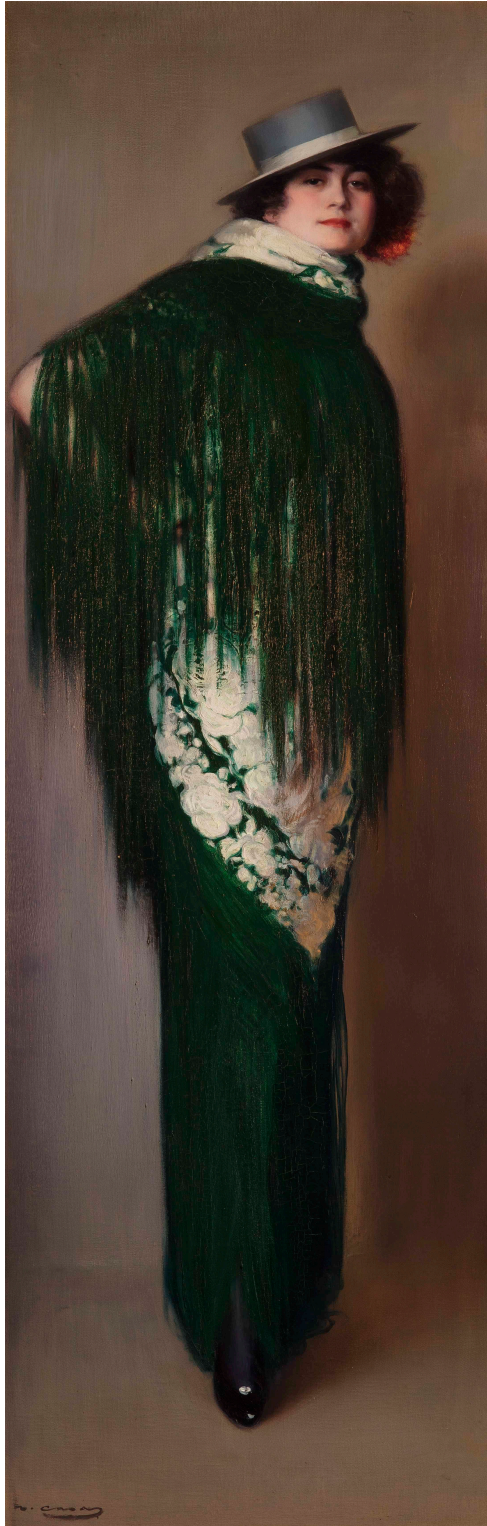
Barcelona, Cercle del Liceu, *Júlia, el desig. Ramon Casas*, 2016 (without cat. no.);

Barcelona, Sala Parés, *Memòria 140 anys*, 2017 (without cat. no.);

Barcelona, Sala Parés, *Salons a Can Parés, 1884-1930*, 2019 (without cat. no.).

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Ramon Casas i Carbó (1866 - 1932) was one of the leading modern painters in fin-de-siècle Spain. His relationship with Paris was constant and intense, as well as essential in the evolution of his work. He made his first trip to the French capital when he was only sixteen and settled there to train in the studio of the celebrated portraitist Carolus-Duran. He became fascinated by Velázquez and Spanish fashion in Paris at the time, making it a recurring motif of his own works. In 1883 Casas exhibited for the first time at the Salon des Champs Élysées and between 1890 and 1892 he lived in Montmartre with other renowned Catalan artists such as Santiago Rusiñol. Bohemian life was the central theme of his new works, as well as the everyday life of the Moulin de la Galette, where he lived. He exhibited regularly at Parisian painting salons such as the Salon des Indépendants, the Salon des Beaux-Arts and the Salon de l'Académie, among others, where he achieved recognition and good reviews.

The experiences and influences of the *Ville Lumière* are evident in his painting from the 1880s onwards and led to a pictorial renewal in the Catalan and Spanish art scene thanks to his frequent exhibitions at the Sala Parés in Barcelona. This renewal came to be known as “the grey revolution” due to Casas’ use of a palette of colours based on the whites, blacks and greys typical of Paris and of artists who influenced him, like James Abbott McNeill Whistler.

La Parisienne, also known as *La Cordobesa* or *Consuelo*, is one of the most outstanding portraits that Ramon Casas painted of his muse and lover Júlia Peraire (1888 - 1941). Despite its Spanish look, it is directly connected with the lessons Carolus-Duran taught Casas in Paris. Casas had met Júlia in 1905 and she soon became his muse and main inspiration, the protagonist of his most passionate works. Júlia’s portraits are one of the pillars of Casas’ œuvre. Despite the age difference between the two, they began an intense relationship which they formalised in 1922, when they got married.

This work is also a perfect example of how Ramon Casas incorporated the ideas of European aestheticism into his painting. Casas’ scholar Isabel Coll comments on this in her discussion of this work in the catalogue of the exhibition *Júlia, el desig* (Júlia, Desire)

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(2016).¹ Ramon Casas – who was always interested in fashion and influenced by American painters such as Cecilia Beaux (1855 - 1942) and John White Alexander (1856 - 1915) – was more concerned with the beauty of sensible forms than with abstract ideas, and developed them through clothing and accessories.² To this end, he often resorted to Spanish fashion and folklore, especially from 1913 onwards, using bullfighter jackets and Manila shawls that reveal the models' sensual beauty. Her body is half hidden, half revealed through the folds and tightly woven fabrics, worked in different textures to accentuate contrasts and make them more appealing.

The vertical canvas presents Júlia Peraire life-size, wearing an emerald green Manila shawl, a Cordovan hat and a red carnation. She is depicted almost as a decorative object that engages the viewer with a defiant gaze in which Casas masterfully captures desire and sensuality. Both in theme and approach, it is very similar to some of the works of the Mexican painter Saturnino Herrán (1887 - 1918) and the French painter Robert Henri (1865 - 1929). Júlia's haughty, cocky attitude is reminiscent of the character of the *chulapas* from Madrid in the *zarzuelas* that Casas was so fond of. To emphasise this effect, the artist uses a very pronounced *contrapposto* and cuts out the model's beautiful face in the composition, framed between the end of the shawl and the Cordovan hat, against a plain background that is absolutely theatrical. The space is only hinted at by a faint horizontal line in which Casas works with infinite nuances and gradations, imitating the indeterminate and theatrical backgrounds found in Velázquez's portrait painting. In order to accentuate the spatial illusion and make the figure fit into an environment, Casas masterfully projects its shadow to the right, as if cast by a spotlight.

The different effects of Júlia's clothing are made credible by a combination of textures and brush techniques. Thus, the white vegetal motifs of the '*floreao*' shawl are rendered with a thick, dense impasto, quite different from the rest of the painting, bursting out against the emerald green, only to be partly hidden under the long fringes that fall like a curtain over the

¹ I. Coll, *Júlia, el desig. Ramon Casas*, exh. cat., Cercle del Liceu, Barcelona 2016, p. 156.

² I. Coll, 'Ramon Casas y los pintores americanos del Aesthetic Movement', in *Casas-Rusiñol: dos visiones modernistas*, exh. cat., Museo Carmen Thyssen, Malaga 2014.

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figure. On the other hand, the green dress, which flows down to the sitter's feet, is rendered with a much lighter brushstroke and lacks impasto. Likewise, part of the face, the hair and the carnation, are simply captured by means of blurs that once again recall Velázquez, in contrast to the virtuoso detail with which Casas defines the facial features and the hat tilted in grey.

This painting was presented for the first time in the *Rusiñol-Casas-Clarasó* exhibition held in January 1915 at the Sala Parés, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first joint exhibition that brought together works by the three artist friends.