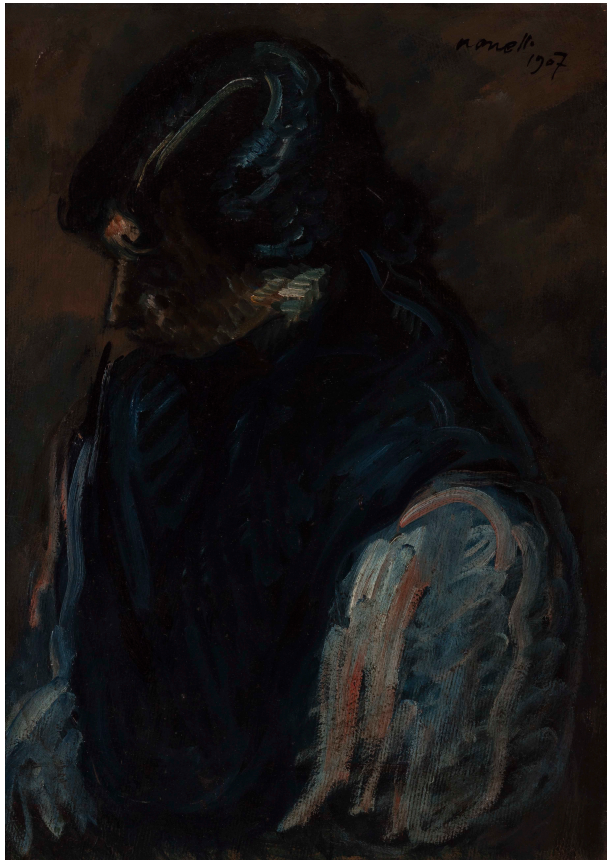


COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Isidre Nonell

(Barcelona 1872 - 1911)

Bust Portrait of a Gypsy Woman

1907

oil on cardboard

73.5 x 52.5 cm.;

29 x 20 5/8 in.

signed and dated in the upper right corner:

nonell. / 1907

Provenance

Josep Barbey Collection, Barcelona.

Literature

Art, July 1934, no. 10, fig. [p. 307] (special issue on Nonell);

Exposición de cien pinturas de la colección Barbey, Galerías San Jorge, Barcelona 1952, cat. without number;

C. Nonell, *Isidro Nonell y su obra*, Madrid 1963, p. 224, cat. without number;

M. Doñate, *Isidre Nonell, 1872-1911*, MNAC, Barcelona 2000, cat. no. 67, p. 192.

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Exhibited

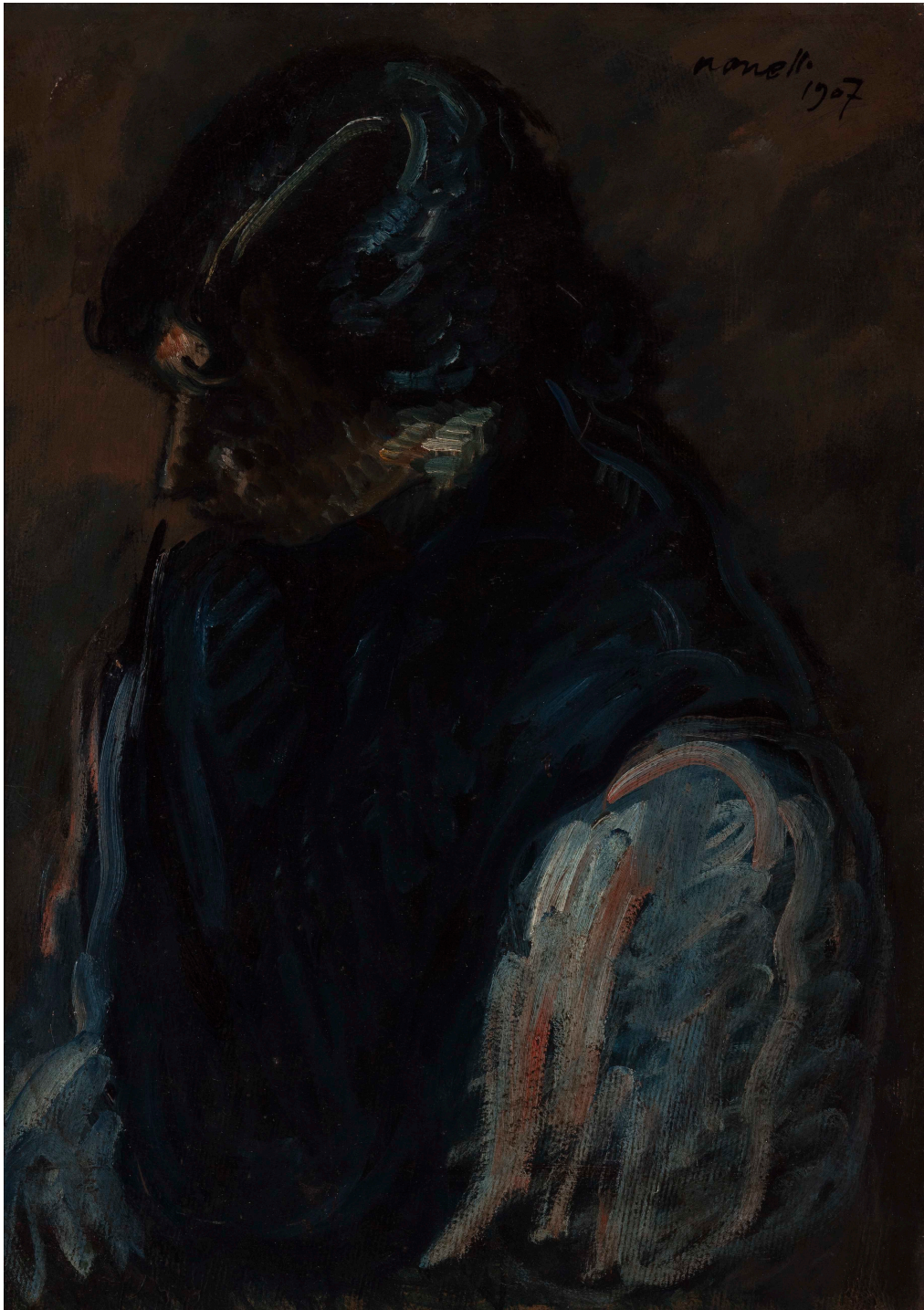
Barcelona, Fianç Català, *Exposició d'una gran part de les obres pintades i dibuixades desde'l 1900 per En Nonell*, 1910;

Barcelona, Galerías San Jorge, *Exposición de cien pinturas de la colección Barbey*, 1952;

Barcelona, MNAC, *Isidre Nonell, 1872 – 1911*, February - April 2000.

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The son of a small manufacturer, Nonell managed to free himself from the obligations of the family business to devote himself to painting. At the age of twelve he entered the drawing academy of Josep Mirabent, and later the painting school of Gabriel Martínez Altés. In 1889 he enrolled in the private classes of Lluís Graner, an artist well known for his works on social themes, which undoubtedly had a profound influence on the young artist.

In 1893 Nonell embarked on a new stage in his life when he entered the Escola d'Arts i Oficis de Barcelona (Barcelona Arts and Crafts School), popularly known as the Llotja, where he coincided with future artists Ramon Canals, Juli Vallmitjana, Ramon Pichot and his old friends Joaquim Mir and Xavier Nogués. Dissatisfied with the academicism of the courses, these artists organised trips to the countryside on the outskirts of Barcelona in search of uncontaminated landscapes to paint from life.

Between 1897 and 1900, Nonell made two long stays in Paris to become acquainted with modern painting, of which he particularly appreciated the works of Puvis de Chavannes, Whistler and the Impressionists. During his first stay, he exhibited several drawings at the Salon du Champ de Mars, and some paintings in the group exhibition at Le Barc de Boutteville gallery, which also included works by Gauguin and Toulouse-Lautrec. Nonell's most important presence in Paris, however, came in January 1898, when the same gallery presented more than a hundred works by Nonell and his friend and artist Ricard Canals.

Nonell gradually abandoned Luminism and landscapes because of his strong interest in the human figure, which eventually played a predominant role in his painting. In particular, he was interested in ordinary people, the most humble, disadvantaged or marginalised members of society. When he returned to Barcelona for good at the beginning of the new century, his interest turned to portraits of gypsy women, the series of paintings that made him most famous, characterised by his small vermicular brushstrokes. Between 1901 and 1906 dark, greenish and reddish colours prevailed in his work, while from 1907 onwards he devoted himself to a new vision of women with softer tones. During those years Nonell continued to send works to the salons of the Champ de Mars in Paris and to exhibit at the Sala Parés, the Ateneo Barcelonés and the Galerías Dalmau in Barcelona.

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This work was executed in 1907 just at that turning point when the artist began to use warmer tones, offering a somewhat different vision of women. It features the more typical blue tones of his earlier work, but breaks with the chromatic sobriety of these blue tones by means of the luminous reflections on the gypsy woman's face and the colourful sleeves. It is worth noting that this painting was part of Nonell's most important solo exhibition in his lifetime, held at the Fianç Català in Barcelona in 1910. A few months later, in 1911, he died prematurely of typhus at the age of 38.