

Amedeo Modigliani

*Portrait of a Boy* (also known as *Portrait d'Un Jeune Homme*; or *Boy in a Green Suit*)

1918 or 1919

Oil on canvas

24 x 18 inches

Signed upper right "Modigliani"

## **Provenance**

(possibly) Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, Paris

Sacha Guitry (he was a childhood and lifelong friend of Josse and Gaston Bernheim who introduced him to the work of Modigliani. Guitry and his father both acquired a substantial number of paintings from Bernheim-Jeune)

Gladys Lloyd Robinson (Mrs. Edward G. Robinson), acquired c.1957

Parke-Bernet, New York, October 26, 1960 (sale of the Gladys Lloyd Robinson collection), p.44

Private collection

According to scholar Malcolm Gee, Guitry started buying School of Paris paintings around 1925 (Malcolm Gee, *Dealers, Critics, and Collectors of Modern Painting: Aspects of the Parisian Art Market between 1910 and 1930*, New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1981, p.194).

There are undated installation photographs of Sacha Guitry's homes, both published and unpublished, where this painting is visible in various locations. Two unpublished photos in the Sacha Guitry archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale show Guitry seated below the painting. There are photographs of Guitry's library by the Montparnasse photographer Emile Savitry with the painting clearly visible, one of which is dated "vers 1940."

## **Exhibition History**

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Art Center, *Inaugural Exhibition*, December 5, 1958 to January 31, 1959, exhibition catalogue, listed at no.136: Amedeo Modigliani, *Portrait of a Boy*, from the collection of Gladys Lloyd Robinson.

New York, Hammer Galleries, *Gladys Lloyd Robinson Collection*, October 19-31, 1959, exhibition catalogue, illustrated in color on the cover and inside as plate 16.

New York, Perls Galleries, *Modigliani*, October 29-December 7, 1963. Not illustrated in the catalogue but its presence in the show is confirmed by a letter from Klaus Perls.

## Published References

Sacha Guitry, *18, Elisée Reclus*, Raoul Solar, Editeur, [1952], full page reproduction in back.

Privately published inventory of Sacha Guitry's collection at Bibliothèque Nationale [1952]: "Dans le Cabinet de Travail à Droit en Entrant." No. 35: Modigliani, Portrait d'un Jeune Homme.

Alain Amiel, *Le Dernier Modigliani: A Nice et Cagnes*, Nice: Editions Gilletta, 2020 (forthcoming). The author plans to illustrate Portrait of a Boy in the book.

## Description

This is one of a series of red-haired boys painted by Modigliani in and around Cagnes, next to Nice, in the South of France, from 1918 to 1919. There is a larger version of this painting from 1919 (three quarters view) with the same sitter wearing the same jacket in the collection of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris titled *Petit Garçon roux*, (now on loan to LaM, Villeneuve d'Ascq, near Lille). The figure has slightly shorter hair in the larger version. Two other paintings by Modigliani also show boys with reddish hair wearing the same jacket, tying them all together: *The Boy (Youth in Blue Jacket)*, also of 1918 or 1919 from the Indianapolis Museum of Art; and *Boy in Blue Jacket*, 1918 from a private collection. The series of red-haired boys also includes *Le Jeune Apprenti* at the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris.

One of the reasons that Modigliani often painted young children at this time is that finding professional models during the war, especially on the Riviera, would have been difficult. In addition, his girlfriend Jeanne Hébuterne was pregnant with his daughter, so children were on his mind. (The daughter was born in November 1918 and a few months later she was pregnant again.) Modigliani gives his young subjects great majesty and nobility, not to mention tenderness and poignancy, which explains why they are among his most coveted paintings.