



Rainer Stamm In the Shade of the Wild Trees: Henri Manguin and the Vivid Colours of the South

Together with Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck, Charles Camoin, and Albert Marquet, Henri Manguin numbered among the artists whom the critic Louis Vauxcelles dubbed Les Fauves (The Wild Ones) in 1905 – which also happens to be the year that saw the formation of the artists' circle known as Die Brücke in Dresden. The French artists had just caused a stir during the 1905 Salon d'Automne in Paris with their pure, forceful colours and sweepingly gestural brushstrokes. Struck by the contrast created by exhibiting sculptural works by Maillol and others amidst the intensely colourful paintings of Matisse and his fellow artists, Vauxcelles had likened the scene to placing a work by Donatello in a cage of wild animals (chez les fauves). Ever since, the term has epitomized the wild and untamed approach to painting in French art of this period. Manguin certainly numbered among the most refined of this "wild bunch": He was able to keep the brilliant colours of his paintings in equipoise by carefully balancing out their composition and by adhering to the local colouration for each object depicted. Just like Matisse and Marquet, Manguin began his training under Gustave Moreau at the latter's Paris studio in 1894. Inspired by the works of Cézanne, he would go on to strive for harmony in the composition of all his images. In the summer of 1905, which he spent in Saint-Tropez in Southern France, he found the light and colour of the Mediterranean.



Henri Manguin, Olivenbäume in Cavalière.
1906. Oil/canvas. Sold in 2016 at
Sotheby's for EUR 1,000,000

It was during this sojourn that Manguin created his most important works one after the other in a euphoric burst of creativity. All the while, he was busily comparing notes with Marquet, who visited him in those early summer days at his St. Tropez home, the Villa Demièrre, and reported back to Henri Matisse, "Manguin, who has his wife pose as a model, works hours on end, day in and day out. He works the whole time and doesn't break for meals, but instead eats with the fork in one hand and the pencil in the other." (Matisse – Marquet. Correspondance 1898–1947, Lausanne 2008, p. 41, letter dated 15 June 1905).

It was, in fact, Manguin's breakthrough summer. "A huge step forward: an independent artist who has left colour sketches behind and now is making his way towards the big picture," was how the critic Vauxcelles' rapturously described the paintings Manguin had created in Saint-Tropez – to which the work on offer here also belongs. The leading collectors and the art market as a whole took notice of the artist's most recent images. The legendary Parisian gallery owner Ambroise Vollard snapped up 150 of them, almost Manguin's entire output. Meanwhile, his pictures were also showcased by the American collectors Leo and Gertrude Stein at their famous Salons in the Rue de Fleurus, as well as by the Russian collectors Ivan Morosov and Sergei Shchukin in their respective villas.

Our particular painting spent many decades in the collection of Julius Meier-Graefe, a respected writer on art and a leading exponent of the French Avant-Garde. In it, we see Manguin at the pinnacle of his craft. Shimmering with the coruscating colours of a Côte d'Azur summer, the painting depicts the painter's wife resting in the shade of trees in the villa's garden, with a dovescote visible the background. The coloured surfaces are arrayed side by side so breezily that the whole picture seems to breathe the air of summer in a manner that also clearly transcends Post-Impressionism. It is a work that marks the breakout of the French "Wild Ones" into the adventurous new realms of Modernism, in which Manguin stakes out his own place as a subtle and sensual colourist.

Henri and Jeanne Manguin. Circa 1900

From 2000 until 2010, Professor Dr. Rainer Stamm served as Director of the art collections of the Böttcherstrasse Museums and of the Paula Modersohn-Becker Museum in Bremen. He has been serving as Director of the Osthaus Museum Hagen since 2024.

8 Henri Manguin

Paris 1874 – 1949 Saint Tropez

“Jeanne près du pigeonnier de la ville Demièrre à Saint-Tropez”.
1905

Oil on canvas. 92 × 72.5 cm (36 ¼ × 28 ½ in.). Signed
lower right: Manguin. On the stretcher two labels of
the exhibition Munich 1906/07 (see below). Catalogue
raisonné: Not in the catalogue raisonné by Sainsau-
lieu. The painting will be included in the addendum of
the catalogue raisonné of paintings by Henri Manguin
of Claude Holstein-Manguin, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon.
[3029] Framed.

Provenance

Ambroise Vollard, Paris (1906 acquired from the artist) /
Julius Meier-Graefe, Berlin (presumably circa 1906/07) /
Annemarie Meier-Graefe Broch, Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer /
Private Collection, Hesse (gift from the previous owner)

EUR 200,000–300,000

USD 220,000–330,000

Exhibition

Ausstellung französischer Künstler. Munich, Kunstver-
ein; Frankfurt a. M., Kunstverein; Dresden, Kunst-
Salon Ernst Arnold; Karlsruhe, Kunstverein; Stuttgart,
Kunstverein, 1906/07, cat. no. 81 („Wald in Saint-Tro-
pez [Provence]“)

We would like to thank Claude Holstein-Manguin, Villeneuve-
lès-Avignon, for confirming the authenticity of the painting and
for providing additional information.

