



**THE SURREAL LOVES OF VALENTINE HUGO**



## THE SURREAL LOVES OF VALENTINE HUGO: TEN MONUMENTS OF AND TO HER LIFE, LOVE AND WORK FROM THE COLLECTION OF PIERRE SPIVAKOFF.

Valentine Hugo (1887–1968), née Gross, was born into a musical family in Boulogne-Sur-Mer. She was an adept pianist but trained in the visual arts and found her calling in drawing the performing arts; her sketches of Nijinsky for the Ballets Russes are in a great abundance at the V&A and she collaborated with Satie and Cocteau on *'Parade'*. Cocteau met Varèse through her and in turn Hugo met the brilliant young Raymond Radiguet through him. They both mentored him and pushed for him, Cocteau going so far as to read one of his manuscripts to Gaston Gallimard in its entirety. She also knew other members of *'Les Six'* and their circle besides Satie such as Georges Auric.

Her modernist illustration work appeared in *'La Gazette Bon Ton'* and many other fashion magazines. She ran a salon from her home that was focused around Gaston Gallimard and the NRF. She married *'well'* you might say into the family of the great French novelist Victor Hugo through his great grandson Jean. They grew apart from each other and she became obsessed with André Breton the person and his Surrealism. The love affair, ended by the younger and more famous Breton when she punched him, he broke her heart but she remained steadfastly loyal to his *'ism'*, even perhaps a bit orthodox.

Despite her break with Breton, she cultivated a lifelong and reciprocated Platonic love affair with the great Surrealist poet Paul Éluard (after a brief non-Platonic affair of course but the Surrealist poets were perhaps kinder than the artists). She illustrated many of Éluard's books.

She painted, drew and made prints on a black, night-sky like background dotted with stars and motifs from her encounter with Breton on. Her big influences were surrealistic – Rimbaud had an enduring effect on her life and work, she seemed to have as great a love for him in absentia as she did for Radiguet who died very young, and also Cocteau, Breton and Éluard. Above all, the material here depicts her as she would be seen or at least how an ardent collector believed she should be seen. She had a big influence on all of these famous *art-men*, whether they knew it or not. Yet, despite her haute-bourgeois origins and all of her accomplishments in art, design and writing, she died alone and in poverty in her Paris apartment.

These ten items come from the collection of the obsessive Hugo collector Pierre Spivakoff that was dispersed in an auction at Artcurial in 2006. The material was collected and re-assembled in the form which we see here, by him. Eight of the items are arranged in big *'caisses Américains'*, what the English call *'box frames'*, with seven echoing the dark night like background Hugo employed often in her paintings and just one (perhaps the most important) on red. Spivakoff even, almost slavishly, copied her use of drawing pins to fix art, manuscripts and realia to the frames that was derived from her 1931 untitled *'Object of Symbolic Function'*. The remaining two are portraits of Radiguet and Jean Hugo framed and matted in gold like Russian icons.

They were bought from that very large 2006 sale of Spivakoff's Hugos at Artcurial by Santo Domingo and put up on the walls of his funky farm near Boigneville. Santo Domingo had the means, the space and the appetite to buy all 242 items in the sale but he bought just these it seems (and also Duchamp's infamous rubber breast entitled *'Prière de toucher'* that sold at Christies in 2012).

In Artcurial's catalogue, Spivakoff claimed direct inspiration for his use of the boxes from a montage painting produced by Valentine Hugo entitled *'Homage to Erik Satie'*. Under these eight *'American boxes'* are gathered photographs, drawings, lithographs, objects, jewellery, most of which came directly from the apartment of Valentine Hugo on rue de Sontay in Paris. He developed an obsession with Hugo after discovering a notebook in a bookshop where she wrote of her poverty, ill-health and depression. In a *Le Figaro* interview in 2006, Spivakoff explained his great life's work as a collector:

*"During these twenty-five exciting years, I have striven to put order into this great fragmented work. I tried to reconstruct a portrait of the artist, putting together hundreds of pieces of this incredible puzzle, some of which were missing since they were hastily burned in a rubbish dump. Today I think I have restored parts of life unfairly doomed to oblivion, glued together historical poems torn to pieces, re-adorned with fine gold the masterful name of Valentine Hugo"*

(Béatrice de Rochebouët – Valentine Hugo, un univers surréaliste -Le Figaro, 02/21/2006).

They act like little galaxies in what the auctioneer termed *'The Universe of Valentine Hugo'*, reminding this cataloguer of a sort of Joseph Cornell on steroids or perhaps Joseph Cornell off steroids. They are a visual biography made out of realia and span her adult life as a young Valentine Gross, her marriage to Jean Hugo, her times as a Surrealist and her life after her brief love affair with Breton. As an ensemble they unpack her life both inside and outside of her head, on and off the canvas (minus perhaps her depictions of Nijinsky and commercial art). They also cover her early life and that of her family in the Channel port of Boulogne – Sur-Mer, her art education, engravings made for a socialist freemason, plus her relationship with Jean Cocteau and the tragic early death of Raymond Radiguet and her long creative relationship with a painting of Picasso. As well as, Arthur Rimbaud's long shadow on her art and her long brotherly relationship with her confidant Paul Éluard.

Spivakoff is known in France as an actor, teacher and pioneer of café-theatre and especially for his role as Sarah Bernhardt. Most memorably for this cataloguer he directed the first French production of *'The Rocky Horror Show'* also playing *'Frank-N-Furter'* on stage.

They are a tonic, a corrective to the historic neglect by the male Surrealists of the females in their *'men's club'* of a movement, what Mary Ann Caws termed: *"Headless. And also footless. Often armless too; and always unarmed, except with poetry and passion"* (p-11 -Seeing the Surrealist Women: We Are a Problem in -Dada/Surrealism, no.18, September 1990).

In a sort of reprise of his stage rôle as Frank-N.-Furter (sweet transvestite mad scientist from the planet Transylvania based on Shelley's *'Frankenstein'*), Spivakoff seems to have gathered up the missing head, feet, arms and placed them back on to the torso that remained and resurrected her as a powerful Creature of The Night with *"passion and poetry"*.

All of the items have auction numbers on printed labels on their frames or backs and some have yellow paper dots on them from when the LSD Library was being apportioned out. They are all in very sound condition apart from some mild scratching and bumping of the corners of the frames. The *'Rituale Masonique'* has had one of the sub-frames re-attached.

Provenance: all items appeared in *'Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine Hugo et à divers amateurs'*, Artcurial February 25, 2006. To The LSD Library where they were displayed privately at Ferme Des Carneaux, Boigneville, to Maggs Bros Ltd. then offered for the first time by Carl Williams Rare Books.



168. HUGO (Valentine).

A self-portrait in an assemblage.

Large b&w photo-portrait of Hugo, matted in dark green with two gilt borders within, a gilt and black wood box frame (81 x 67 cm.). The photograph signed and dated by the subject in white on the image, this surrounded by onlaid personal objects on red velvet, thus: 2 lucky charms of agate, an unusual bead, 2 long earrings in gold metal with semi-precious stones, a shark's tooth, a carved object, a travel chess set with box and pieces inside and placed around with the box lid with a laid in signed and inscribed note of provenance, opera glasses and a die sculpture on a base.

N.p. [Paris], n.d. £5,000.00

Small cracks in glazing, frame corners bumped.

Provenance: Valentine Hugo, from her apartment on Paris's Rue de Sontay to Ancienne collection Jean Petithory (the chess set at least), lot 103, the catalogue cover image for Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine Hugo et à divers amateurs.

The full holograph inscription in an attractive French hand within the chess lid, in dark ink, reads:

*"VÉbec de voyage de Valentine HUGO. Ancienne Collection J. PETITHORY. Nouvel le Collection P. SPIVAKOFF. Jean Petithory".*

A great origin story, from the source herself to Petithory the important publisher-gallerist-book-seller who, among other things, issued the series of 'Mains-Libres' avant-garde books that resurrected Man Ray's photos of resurrected mannequins in 1966.

A beautiful photograph of the then 62 year old Hugo with a neck so long and elegant that it is practically pre-Raphaelite, she was described by Cocteau in her youth as the "Swan of Boulogne". Here surrounded by magical and oneiric personal objects – just like her prints and paintings. A portrait that, to this cataloguer at least, resembles solarised profiles of André Breton made by Man Ray in 1930, but perhaps one combined with a similar sort of version of a 'Poem Object' done by Breton from the same period. Indeed, Mary Anne Caws has suggested that, after an intense, obsessive love affair with Breton, Hugo became an orthodox surrealist and that:

*"All of Valentine's graphic works and paintings after 1931 bear witness to the obsessive presence of André Breton and her association with the surrealists".*

(p-199 Jean-Marie Cauvin – Valentine, André, Paul et les Autres, The Surrealisation of Valentine Hugo in Mary Anne Caws et al – Surrealism and Women, 1991).

The opera glasses were no doubt a familiar object to Hugo, her father was a composer, she knew Satie and Cocteau and her numerous sketches of Stravinsky productions are held in the V&A's theatre collection. They might be seen symbolically as a means to look at dreams, the Unconscious, the spirit world and the past. The charming little chess set is firmly grounded in Surrealism's history from Breton to Duchamp and beyond. Commentators have suggested that games were often the only Surrealist activities that women were given equal status in by male artists. Other commentators have suggested that games represented the struggle of seduction and sex. The two golden jewels, though possibly 'costume', evoke Hugo's affluence and style in her youth and of course her former brother-in-law, the goldsmith François Hugo worked with Picasso and others to produce bijoux and sculptures. They are echoed by two similar ones that she wears in the photograph as pendants. The die reminds this cataloguer of Hugo's 1931 assemblage 'Object of Symbolic Function' with a gloved hand holding a gloved hand holding a similar, though white, six sided die that was published in 'La Révolution Surrealiste' 3. 243828

169. HUGO (Valentine).

[A "Pêle-Mêle" photomontage of Valentine Hugo portraits with other documents and photos].

Central rectangular montage of monochrome portraits in centre, mounted within a black gilt edged passepartout, in a gilt frame with 4 documents and 11 photos arranged around it, largely attached under thumb tacks, with three other photos in uniform frames, manuscript captions on black tape beneath each. The whole mounted on a black background and box framed and glazed (109 x 89 cm.), a cutaway in the back.

N.p. [Paris], n.d., £5,500.00

In very good condition.

Provenance: Jean Hugo, the cutaway in the back with his label, lot 101 Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine Hugo.

The documents from left to right include the 'livret' or family record book for Gross next to a manuscript Gross family tree, a portrait of Jean Hugo by Valentine, Hugo in her studio in a group photo at L'École des Beaux-Arts in Paris (this print published in de Margerie), Valentine Hugo's photo travel permit and passport, a full length portrait of her, a photo of her mother in Boulogne-Sur-Mer (also in de Margerie), another full length portrait of Valentine Hugo, 3 cabinet cards of ancestors, another of her with her mother, and photos of her father and grandfather. The central portrait has a slight touch of surrealist montages about it. Made even more so with a remarkable profile portrait of Hugo by Man Ray. 243836





170. [HUGO (Valentine)] née GROSS (Valentine).

“Rituale Maçonnique”. [Masonic Ritual].

A suit of five Masonic themed wood engravings. 25.5 x 32 cm. (image), in black with annotations in pencil on the back, one apiece on each corner of 11 x 13 cm. (image), in red, blue, black and green respectively, glazed and framed uniformly in white passepartout, edged in gilt, in gilt frames, box framed on a gold background in black wood, one inscribed, one signed and dated.

N.p. [Paris], Unpublished?, 1918. £3,700.00

One smaller frame has been placed back on to the frame after slippage. Crisp condition. Central wood engraving reproduced in de Margerie on page 4.

Provenance: Valentine Hugo, André Lebey then Spivakoff (his stamp and notes in pencil on the back of the central one) lot 9 Collection Pierre Spivakoff...

The full inscription in pencil reads: “Pour André Lebey”.

Spivakoff notes that the prints are in the colours of The Temple and the initials ‘B’ and ‘J’ in the print stand for “Boaz Jacques” (Jachin and Boaz the two mythical pillars in the Temple of Solomon). He also refers to the legend of “IRAM”, presumably the allegorical story of Hiram Abiff presented to candidates in the third degree and so on.

A very interesting association set, Lebey was a writer and poet and friend of Valéry and Louÿs. He was also an activist but joined freemasonry two years before he joined the Left and embarked on a career in socialist politics and the editing of ‘La Revue Socialiste’. Perhaps this was a commission, made in homage or a gift to him, or, all three. The Masonic symbols include four triangles and the rather decadent looking ritual ‘on the square’. Lebey was also a noted ‘Grand Orateur du Grand Collège des Rites’ who published ‘La Vérité sur la Franc-Maçonnerie par des documents, avec le Secret du Triangle’ [‘The Truth of Free-Masonry through its documents, with the Secret of The Triangle’]. A pre-Surrealist encounter with magical ritual and mystery. 243837

171. HUGO (Valentine).

Jean Hugo.

Original lithograph. 23.8 x 17.8 cm., in a gold passepartout, glazed and gilt crazed wood framed (62 x 47 cm.), signed and dated in the stone.

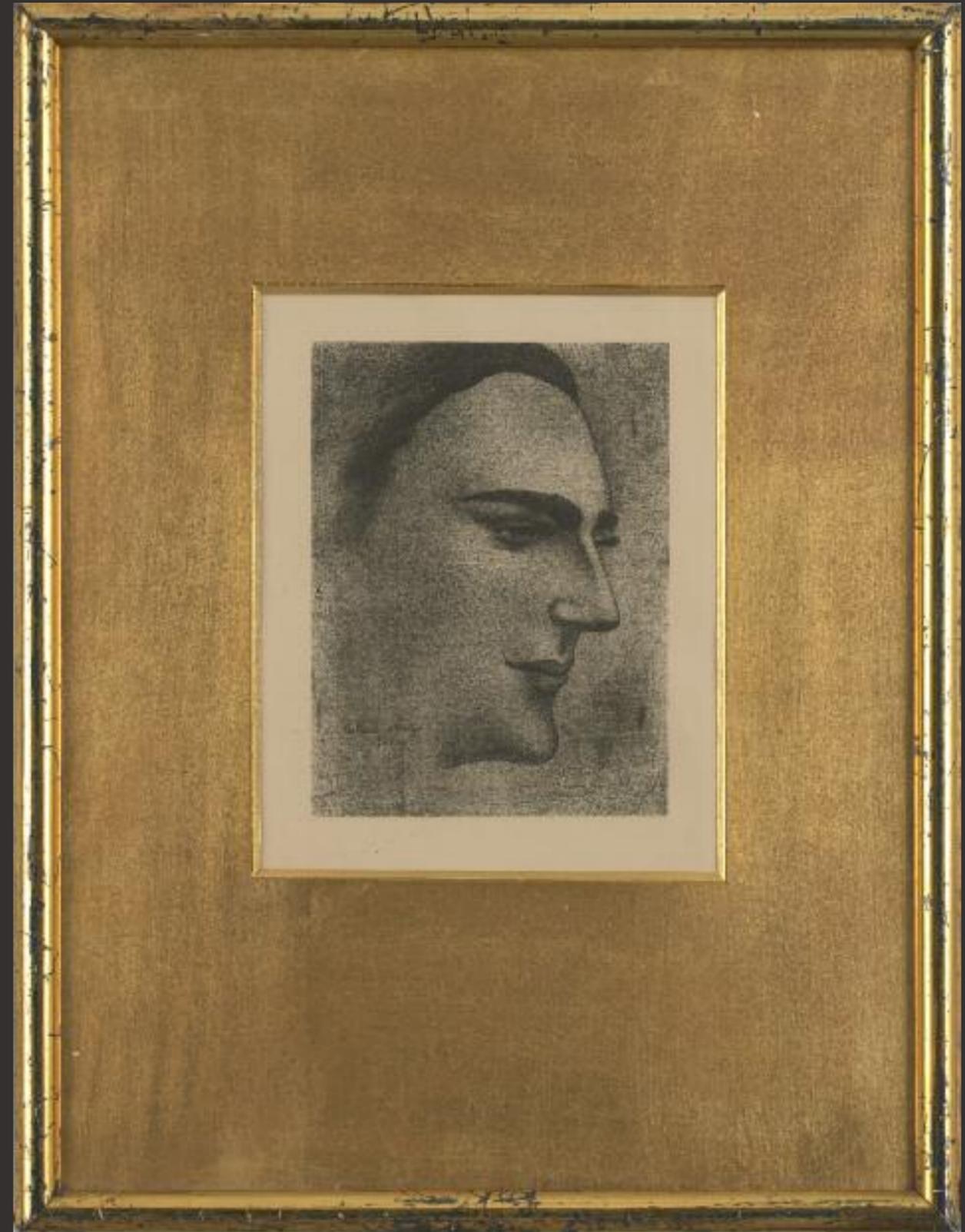
N.p. [Paris], 1929. £1,750.00

Seems fine, unexamined out of the frame which is chipped with loss on the bottom left corner. Seemingly uncommon and perhaps even quite rare.

Provenance: lot 11, Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine Hugo.

Artcurial labelled this *Portrait D'Un Homme*, the man depicted in the profile is Valentine Hugo's (née Gross) husband Jean Hugo who was Victor Hugo's great-grandson. She divorced him in 1932 but retained the family name. Obviously a work of great love and devotion that was replaced by her lifelong obsession with André Breton and surrealism, as Mark Polizzoli in *Revolution of The Mind: the Life of André Breton* (1995) observed:

*"At a time when Valentine was already beginning to rebel against the restrictive, passionless trappings of the Hugo lineage, the nascent Surrealist explosion left her dazzled and hungry for something new"* (p-371). 243831





172. HUGO (Valentine).

Raymond Radiguet.

Original lithograph. 24 x 18 cm. the image, the print within a white passepartout lined in gold with a uniform square cutaway for the pencilled print number, signed and dated in the stone, gilt framed and glazed (62 x 50.3 cm.).

29/58 copies numbered in pencil, with 26 on Chine appliqué.

N.p. [Paris], n.p., 1921. £1,750.00

Unexamined out of the frame, looks fine. Reproduced on p-36 Anne de Margerie – Valentine Hugo 1887-1968, 1983. Uncommon.

Provenance: the ticket of Beaussant-Lefèvre (3029) on back then on top of another (22), then lot 11, Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine Hugo.

The look of Radiguet in this print is described by de Margerie as having a “...slightly sulky pout..” and a “..distant gaze..” that is characteristic of Hugo’s portraits of him.

Hugo adored the writer Radiguet, the brilliant opium addict friend of Cocteau’s, and struck this print two years before his great first scandalous novel of adolescent amours and cuckoldry in wartime France entitled ‘*Le Diable au Corps*’ for which she provided a frontispiece for the 1958 edition. See 321 in this catalogue for a beautiful copy of Radiguet’s posthumous erotic work ‘*Vers Libres*’. 243838

173. HUGO (Valentine) & COCTEAU (Jean) (Drawings).

Raymond Radiguet, an assemblage dedicated to him.

Original lithograph in the centre, with a manuscript caption below, surrounded by from left: a page of manuscript, a drawing above, 2 and a half pages of manuscript, an original photograph, a group of two drawings and an inscription, a page of manuscript, a printed illustration with an original photograph above. The lithograph and caption, manuscript leaves (on blue paper and numbered in holograph) and printed illustration pinned to the black background with drawing pins, the rest framed and glazed uniformly with all but one photograph (which is in a thick gilt frame) in passepartouts, lined in gold, in thin gilt wood frames. Two of the drawings on tracing paper are signed, inscribed and dated on the image, the other is an unsigned sketch with an inscription below. The whole is box framed and glazed in black and gold painted wood (109 x 89 cm.), the back opened in three places with inscriptions.

N.p. [Paris], n.d., late 1940s early 1950s. £5,000.00

Unexamined out of the frame but, aside from the patina of age, the shadow box has conserved the elements, drawing pins are less than ideal mounts for paper but they have held fast.

Provenance: Valentine Hugo then lot 110, Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine Hugo.

Cocteau was enamoured with his 'Monsieur Bébé', the bisexual, hard drinking, opium smoking, literary wunderkind who died tragically young from typhoid contracted from oysters (a premature death 'foretold' in a seance at Hugo's (then Gross) apartment).

The large inscription by Hugo in sepia in a clear hand revealed by the cutaway on the back reads:

*"Le Piquèy, 1923 Radiguet corrige les épreuves du Bal du Comte d'orgel"  
1923 Visage de R. Radiguet Par Valentine Hugo".*

*["Le Piquèy, 1923 Radiguet corrects the proofs of Bal du Comte d'orgel"  
1923 Visage of R. Radiguet By Valentine Hugo"].*

The next cutaway on the back has a note in blue Biro in an unknown hand, and reads:

*"A Pramousquier  
Il était là après le Lavandou  
avec Auric – Cocteau –  
François de Gouy d'Arsty  
et Russell Greeley"*

*["Pramousquier  
He was there after Le Lavandou  
with Auric – Cocteau – François de Gouy d'Arsty  
and Russell Greeley "].*





The three Cocteau drawings include one at the top that is almost identical to another finished sketch of Radiguet by Cocteau out in the world. The two lower ones are inscribed thus

*“Jean [star] Piquëy 1922 Raymond Radiguet endormi”.*

*[“Jean Piquëy 1922 Raymond Radiguet sleeps”].*

And:

*“Pramousquier Avril 1921 le Lavandou”.*

The matted inscription below in an unknown hand, most possibly Cocteau’s, reads:

*“Le balancement du rocking chair  
Nous convie aux plaisirs de la chair”*

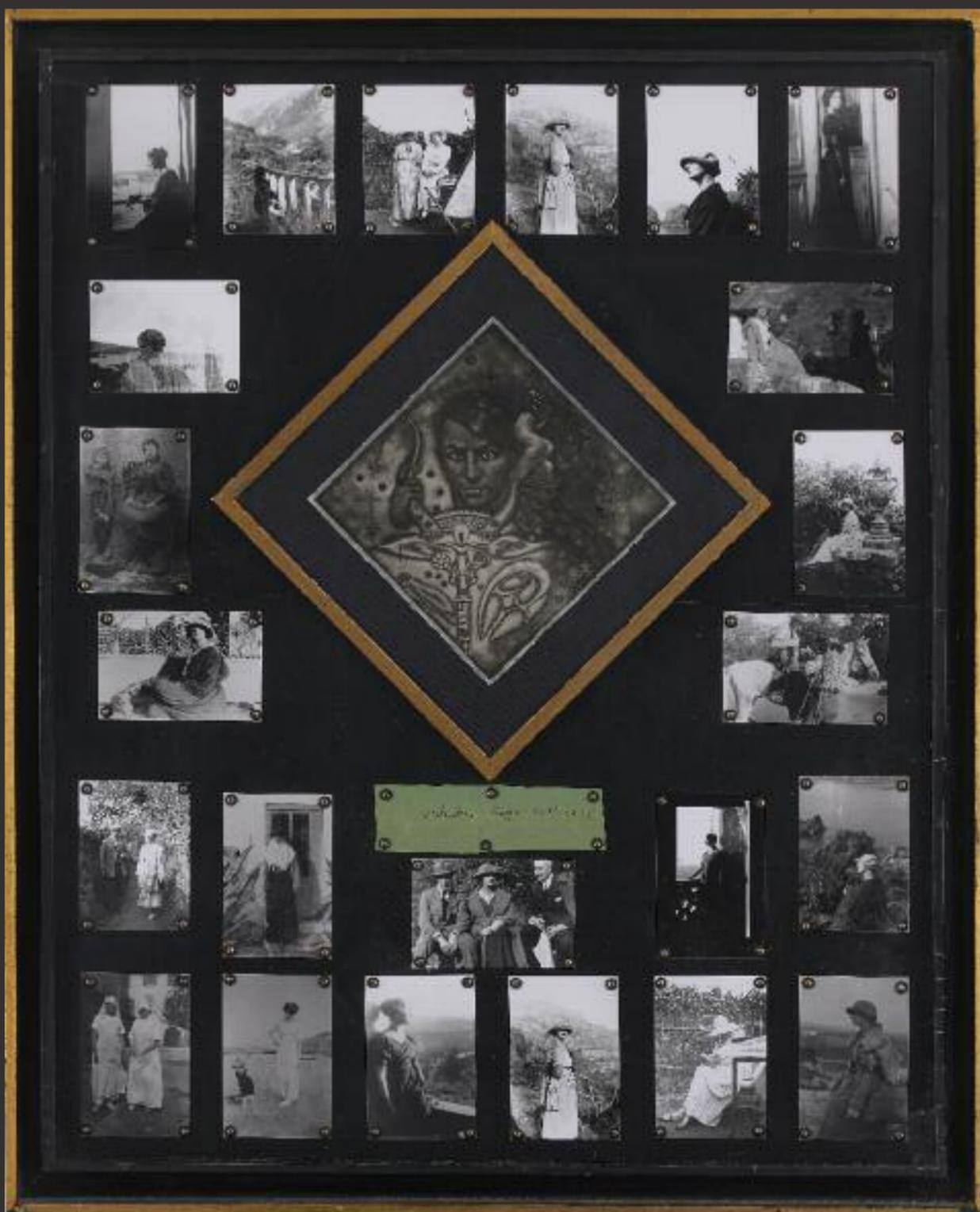
*[“The swinging movement of the rocking chair  
Invites us to the pleasures of the flesh”].*

A nice ensemble of drawings and text with a potent little holiday facetia by Cocteau.

The Hugos, Cocteau, Georges Auric and Raymond Radiguet spent summers holidaying on the beach and workshopping, drawing and writing together. In particular they worked on Radiguet’s, second and posthumously published novel *‘Le Bal du Comte d’orgel’*. He died after contracting typhoid from eating oysters on the beach with his bosom companions. The group naturally drew others to their orbit including the American painter Russell Greeley and his companion the aristocrat François de Gouy d’Arsy who lived near Piquëy. 243833



THIS PAGE AND PREVIOUS PAGE: DETAIL #173



174. HUGO (Valentine).

Picasso assemblage with photo-portraits of Hugo.

Central b&w photographic portrait of Hugo's oil portrait of Picasso, within a diamond shaped black passepartout lined in silver within a uniform gilt frame, manuscript label on green paper below "Valentine Hugo Portraits", with 23 original b&w photos largely of Hugo but also with others. All but the framed photo attached with drawing pins to a black backing. Box framed and glazed in gilt wood (110 x 89.5 cm.), the back cut open in a diamond revealing manuscript notes with two other cutaways.

N.p. [Paris], n.d., after 1948. £5,000.00

Unexamined out of frame, the photos are apparently near fine, the label showing the patina of age, corners of frame rubbed.

Unique photo of a representation of Picasso derived from her best known creation, she gave the original to the Centre Pompidou in 1951.

Provenance: Valentine Hugo then lot 104 Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine... The back inscribed by Hugo, thus:

*"Portrait de Pablo Picasso pour Henri Corbière. Valentine Hugo".*

A wonderful montage of original photos documenting Hugo's life with a beautiful portrait of Picasso that she started in October 1934 and completed in October 1948 – near contemporaneous to the elements in this assemblage. 243834

175. HUGO (Valentine) (Graphics) & ÉLUARD (Paul) (Manuscripts).

Paul Éluard Assemblage.

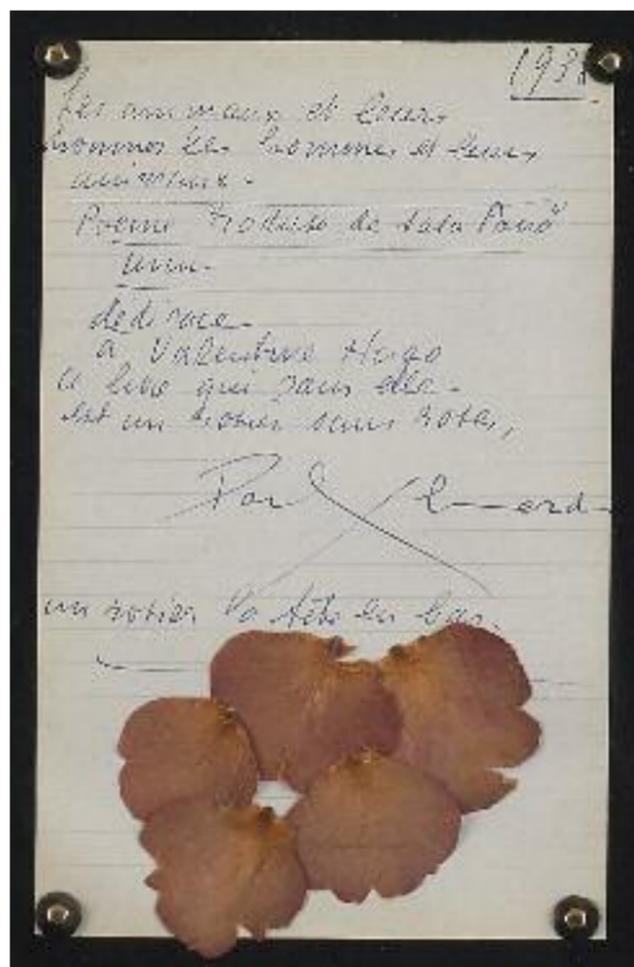
6 leaves of manuscript, two apparently by Éluard with his characteristic signature, the others in Hugo's hand but unsigned, three wood engravings/woodcuts; two of which are mounted on black passepartouts within gilt frames and glazed, one of Éluard's contributions is closely framed in gilt. All other manuscripts are held in place by drawing pins. The third floral woodblock is tipped on to the backing above the first Éluard manuscript itself decorated with flower petals. The whole is mounted on black cloth and box framed in gilt and under perspex (112 x 72 cm.).

N.p. [Paris], n.d., £5,000.00

Frame scratched, cloth backing lifting on lower part.

Provenance: Valentine Hugo then lot 106, Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l'Univers de Valentine Hugo.

The first dated and signed Éluard manuscript, is in a good hand that is largely legible and written on a leaf of lined white paper with rose petals attached below the text, the full inscription in French with a smattering of Romanian reads thus:



DETAIL #175



“ 1938

*Les animaux et leurs hommes les hommes et leurs animaux.*

*Poème traduso de Saşa Pană*

*unu*

*Dédicace à Valentine Hugo*

*ce livre qui sans elle est un rosier sans roses*

*Paul Éluard*

*un rosier la tête en bas”*

*[with rose petals attached to the leaf below the inscription].*

[“ 1938

*Les animaux et leurs hommes les hommes et leurs animaux.*

*Poem translated by Saşa Pană*

*unu*

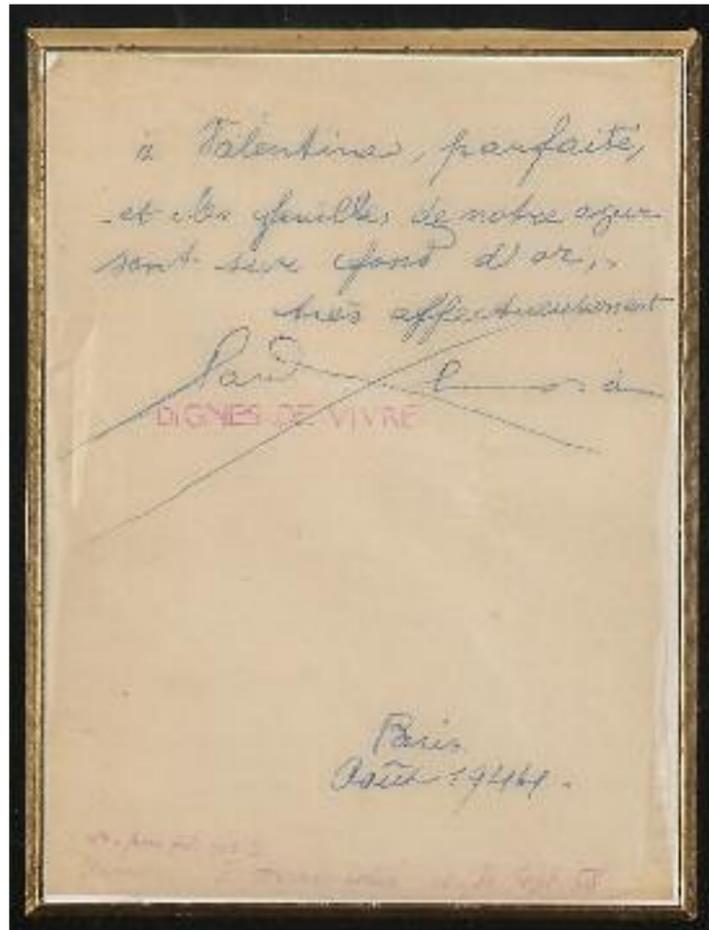
*Dedicated to Valentine Hugo*

*this book which without her is a rosebush without roses*

*Paul Éluard*

*a rosebush upside down”].*

A particularly poignant inscription, with a keepsake, as Éluard’s ‘*Les animaux et leurs hommes les hommes et leurs animaux*’ published in the year previous to this note was a major collaboration be-



tween the two and one for which Hugo provided 22 drypoints. In the same Artcurial sale where this box was purchased there was a self portrait drawing of Valentine Hugo with a rose. Pan was the editor of a Romanian periodical called ‘*unu: avantgardă literară*’ which, as well as printing indigenous avant-garde artists and writers also published Éluard and many others from France and Western Europe like Victor Brauner, André Breton and Robert Desnos.

The second Éluard contribution looks to be a proof or galley leaf stamped/printed “*Dignes De Vivre*” in red with a very emotional signed, inscribed and dated inscription in blue ink from Paul Éluard to the artist over the title, thus:

*“À Valentine, parfaite, et les feuilles de notre azur sont sur fond d’or, très affectueusement.*

*Paul Éluard*

*Paris, août 1944”.*

*[“To Valentine, perfect, and the leaves of our blue are on a golden background, very affectionately, Paris,*

*Paul Éluard*

*Paris, August 1944”].*

There is a faded inscription in red on the lower edge dated 1938 indicating perhaps that the item came from the collection of the Paris bookseller Marc Loliée. A copy of Éluard’s book ‘*Dignes de vivre*’ appeared in the recent sale of the Maurice Houdayer Library at Artcurial in which the inscription and the form it is presented on the page are duplicated within.

The notes seem to be largely Hugo’s memories of, evocations from and associations with “*Paul le donc tranquille..*” etc.. In places they resemble Surrealist automatic writings.

The small tipped on woodblock was the frontispiece for ‘*Blason des fleurs et des fruits*’ from 25 November 1940, the nosegay that accompanied a very rare numbered and signed edition of copy manuscripts produced by Éluard in a small run (one appeared in the recent October 2020 Kahn sale at Bergé). A desirable assemblage with an original poem-object type contribution from Éluard illustrating the deep connection that they had with each other, as strong in its way as the love she had for Breton. 243835



THIS PAGE AND PREVIOUS PAGE: DETAIL #175



176. HUGO (Valentine).

“Portrait d’Arthur Rimbaud à 17 ans d’après Étienne Carjat”. [“Portrait of Arthur Rimbaud at 17 after Étienne Carjat”]. I.

Original lithograph (22.9x17.8 cm) in a gilt and black wood box frame (109 x 89 cm.) and passepartout surrounded by 19 b&w photographs taken by the artist in Charleville, accompanied by a pencil note with the artist’s name and old Paris address in her hand. The print laid down and the photos and note pinned on to black cloth under the edges of drawing pins. The print is probably from 1954. £5,500.00

Very good condition indeed.

Provenance: assembled from Hugo’s personal effects in her apartment on Paris’s Rue de Sontay, lot 109 (part of), Collection Pierre Spivakoff: l’Univers de Valentine Hugo.

An assemblage of a great print, taken from the famous Etienne Carjat photo, with other photos all around dedicated to the poet’s youth in Charleville. Rimbaud had a massive creative influence on Hugo who had a long and enduring creative fascination with the ‘poète maudit’, who Éluard called the “guy from Charleville”. In 1933, she painted ‘Oui, j’ai les yeux fermés à votre lumière. Je suis une bête, un negre’ a large oneiric oil portrait of him entwined with a long necked swan (Cocteau called Hugo the “swan of Boulogne-sur-mer”), that was embedded with rhinestones and the seal of Menelik II of Ethiopia. Hugo produced an engraving for ‘Les sept visages d’Arthur Rimbaud’ that incorporated this motif from the painting in 1934.

Three years later she supplied studies for the prints ‘Aube’ and ‘Les Corbeaux’ for exhibition at Maggs Bros, Paris in June-July of 1937 and also produced seven wonderful drypoints for a 1938 edition of Rimbaud’s ‘Les Poètes de Sept Ans’ (with at least one image of him walking around Charleville). Her print ‘Ma Bobème’ was a frontispiece to Enid Starkie’s book on Rimbaud that was reproduced in Peter Quennell’s TLS review of the book in May 1938.

Charleville was Rimbaud’s childhood hometown and he returned to it regularly throughout his life. In a brief aside, de Margerie notes that Hugo was asked to work on a tribute Rimbaud that the municipality of Charleville put on, it is therefore likely that Hugo took these portraits for that homage. Indeed, a tinted version of this lithograph portrait appeared on the cover of a special edition of ‘La Grive’ in 1954, celebrating the centenary of Rimbaud’s birth in the provincial town of Charleville. 243829



BACK VIEW OF #177

177. HUGO (Valentine).

Paysage de la jeunesse d'Arthur Rimbaud. II. [Landscape of the Youth of Arthur Rimbaud].

46 b&w photos by Hugo, extensive captions in white on the black passepartout. The assemblage is glazed and box framed in black painted and gilded wood (100 x 83 cm.), the back exposed showing annotations and numbering by Hugo on versos of photos in pencil.

N.p. [Paris], n.d., £3,750.00

Near fine, the frame a bit scratched. Illustrated Watts, Volume 2, p-827.

The photos are very interesting in their obsessive dedication to Rimbaud the genius poet, they include some of his doctor, others of the old flour mill (now the Musée Rimbaud), his tomb, the bust of the poet in Square de la Gare and others. The asterisked notes on the border are from the 1925 memoir '*Souvenirs familiers à propos de Rimbaud*' by the poet's friend Ernest Delahaye (selected by Hugo). 243830



178. [ÉLUARD (Paul)].

“à René et à Renée Laporte ce double objet de mon assentiment Paul Eluard”.

Original pen drawing. 26.5 x 20.7 cm., in dark ink on an untrimmed leaf of off-white paper vélin, mounted within silver and a red passepartout, glazed and framed in a silver gilt wooden frame by Michel Claisse of Paris with their rubber stamp, old print dealer's word-processed note pasted on to back.

The drawing is a signed and inscribed example given to René and Renée Laporte.

N.p. [Paris], n.d., before 1954 possibly the 1940s. £7,500.00

Appears fine, unexamined out of the frame.

Éluard's distinctive signature accompanies the full inscription in dark ink in a bold and clear hand at the foot of the very good and large drawing, which reads:

*“à René et à Renée Laporte ce double objet de mon assentiment Paul Eluard”*

*[“to René and to Renée Laporte the double object of my consent Paul Eluard”].*

A heartfelt and vital inscription to comrades in the Resistance on a gift of a big Picassian style drawing of a biomorphic, sensuous figure sitting with a large bird unfolding its wings and facing its face. The Laportes, like Éluard, were part of the internal, intellectual Resistance of the Free French to Vichy and the German Occupation. From their base in Antibes, the Laportes carried on a life dedicated to art, literature and resistance. René Laporte was a publisher, writer and novelist who at the tender age of 19 co-founded ‘*éditions Cahiers Libres*’, a vehicle for many Surrealist texts. He died early in 1954 in a car accident but lived a full writerly life and under The Occupation he co-published for the banned Editions Kra and monitored German radio broadcasts. The street where he lived during the war was renamed Place René-Laporte. Éluard wrote to him from the psychiatric hospital of Saint Alban, where he was living the refugee life, that he would visit the Laportes in 1944, perhaps this was given to them on that visit. 243787

