



**Moïse Kisling**  
(Polish, 1891 - 1953)

## Biography

Kisling was born in Krakow, Austria-Hungary (now Poland) and began drawing in early childhood. He enrolled at the Krakow Academy of fine arts – 15 years old – where he studied under professor Józef Pankiewicz. Afterwards, at the age of 19, he moved to Paris, which was the international centre for artistic creativity at that time.

Soon Kisling found himself in the Parisian artistic community. For a while the talented artist lived in the Bateau-Lavoir (literally 'washing boat', referring to the messy interior and the creaking sounds during stormy days), a renowned building in Montmartre in the 18th arrondissement, where small studios were rented out and which served as an artistic meeting place. Artists such as Matisse, Picasso, Modigliani and Van Dongen had taken residence in Le Bateau-Lavoir as well. Together with his friends Picasso and Max Jacob, Kisling travelled to the southern French village Céret in 1911, where Fauvism originated when Henri Matisse and André Derain had worked there in 1905.

During the First World War Kisling served in the Légion Étrangère (the French Foreign Legion), consisting of foreign nationals who volunteered for the front. After being seriously wounded during the so-called Battle of the Somme, Kisling was granted French citizenship in 1915.

Kisling's first great success took place in 1919, when he exhibited his work at Galerie Druet in Paris. The American collector Albert Barnes – founder of the Barnes Foundation in Pennsylvania, which houses an immense collection of modern art – purchased several works by Kisling during his visit in 1923. Kisling worked hard and became a famous artist whose works sold well. He even started to arrange weekly lunches at his studio, to which he invited artists, writers, actors, musicians, politicians and lawyers.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Kisling and his family moved to the United States, where he would stay until 1946. He successfully continued exhibiting his work, in New York and Washington, and received many commissions. After the war he returned to France and settled in Sanary-sur-Mer in the Provence, where he passed away in 1953. The street where Kisling and his family lived has been named after him. The eldest son Guy still lives in the family house, the younger son, Jean, lives in Paris and published a catalogue raisonné of Moïse Kisling's works. Nowadays, the largest collection of Kisling's pictures is to be found at the Musée du Petit Palais in Geneva.

#### Selected Collections

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA  
The Jewish Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden  
The Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France  
Musée du Petit Palais, Geneva, Switzerland



Moïse Kisling with fashion model Paquerette and Pablo Picasso, photographed by Jean Cocteau in 1916 at Café de la Rotonde

#### Selected Exhibitions

2019

*Kisling, Grande Figure de l'École de Paris*, Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

2000

*Painters in Paris: 1895–1950*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

1995

*Recent Acquisitions: 1993–1995*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

1993

*Around George Gershwin*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

1953

*The Last Works of Kisling*, Museum of Old Marseille, Marseille, France

1936

*Summer Exhibition: The Museum Collection and a Private Collection on Loan*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

1934

*Moïse Kisling*, Galerie Jean Pascaud, Paris, France  
*Modern Works of Art: Fifth Anniversary Exhibition*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

1933

*Exhibition of the George Gershwin Collection of Modern Paintings*, Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, USA

1932

*Summer Exhibition: Painting and Sculpture*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

1930

*Painting in Paris*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA