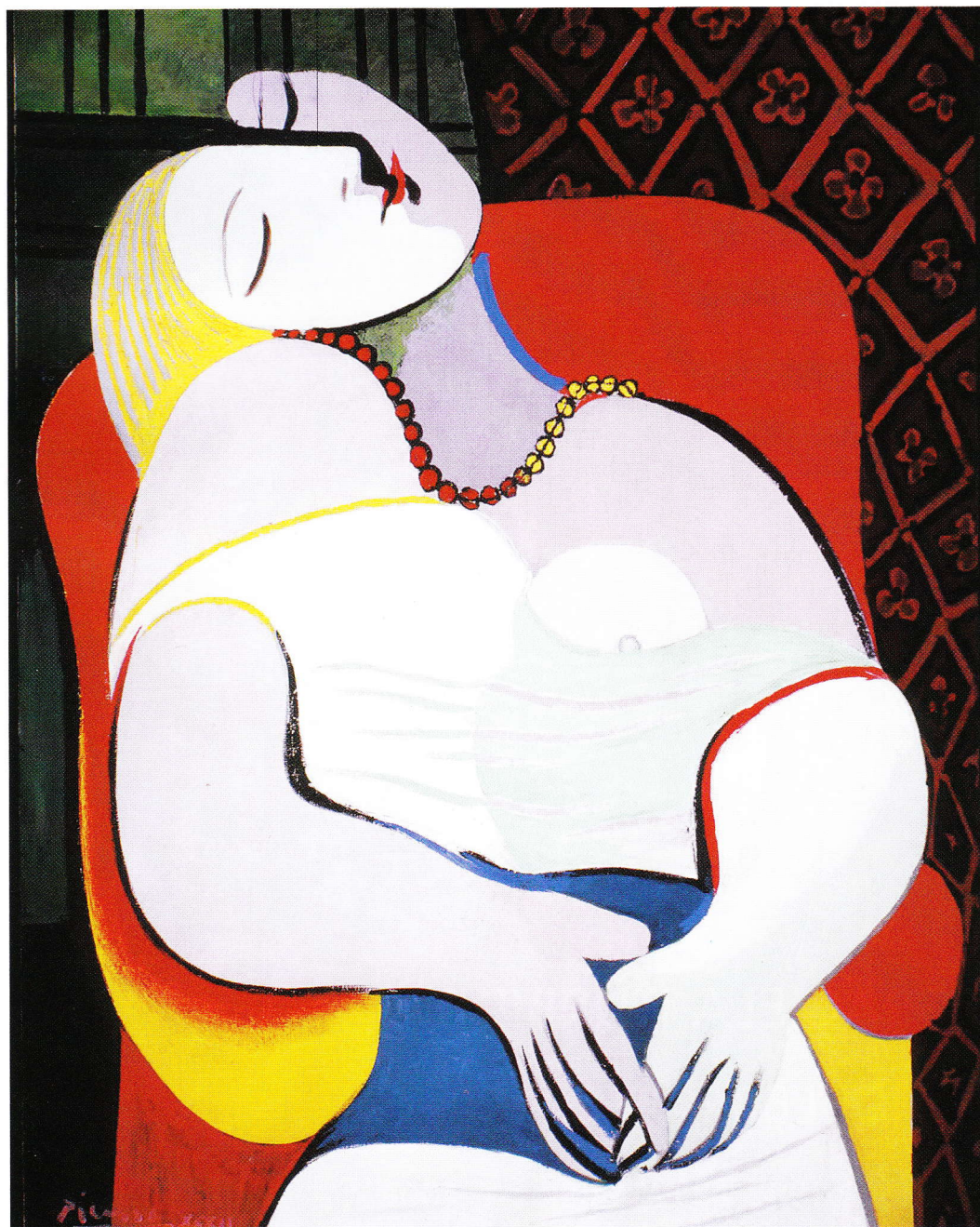


# The Painted Lady

PORTRAITS OF PICASSO'S BLONDE MUSE APPEAR TOGETHER IN THE U.S. FOR THE FIRST TIME.



**NEW YORK**—Was Marie-Thérèse Walter one of the most alluring muses in art history, or just one of the luckiest? Acquavella Galleries in Manhattan tackles the

question in its *Picasso's Marie-Thérèse* show, which runs Oct. 15–Nov. 29. The loan exhibition showcases 15 Picassos featuring Walter, a robust, sensual blonde who

encountered the artist on a Paris street in 1927. Shortly before her death in 1977, she recalled Picasso, then 45, telling her, “Miss, you have an interesting face. I would

like to do your portrait. I have a feeling we will do great things together... I am Picasso.” The pickup line failed to impress the 17-year-old, because she had never heard of the artist. But Picasso won her over and fulfilled his promise, using her as the model for *Reclining Female Nude* (1932) and *The Dream* (1932, shown left) among others. Both are in the Acquavella show, which will display these Walter-themed Picassos together in the U.S. for the first time.

Walter was not the sole cause of Picasso's creativity at that time. Michael Findlay, director of the gallery, notes that early in 1932, Picasso was also driven by his rivalry with Henri Matisse and the deadline for an upcoming gallery show in Paris. “I think if he had not met a person of her character and appearance,” he says, “the paintings done in 1932 would be as inventive as these, but they would not look like these.”

And as for *The Dream*, which was damaged in 2006 when owner Steve Wynn's elbow accidentally ripped a small hole in the canvas, Findlay claims that the restoration is impeccable. “Look as closely as you want,” he says, half-jokingly, “and if you can (successfully) mark on the catalogue where you think (the repair) is, I will give you lunch at any restaurant of your choice.”

—SHEILA GIBSON STOODLEY