

## Becoming a painter: the formative years

Denise Ferrier's aptitude for drawing, which she displayed from an early age, was encouraged by her father, for whom painting was a favourite pastime. Wishing to build a career as an artist, she decided to pursue her education in Paris. After moving to the French capital, she attended classes given by Jean Souverbie (1891-1981). Souverbie was influenced by cubism, a movement he experimented with in the wake of Picasso, Metzinger and Gleizes. He formed friendships with these artists and, in 1925, began exhibiting at the Vavin-Raspail gallery. He developed a personal style reflecting his interests in ancient history and mural painting. The notes taken by Denise Ferrier at the studio, accompanying the study of the nude form, reveal the approach taken by her teacher, for whom drawing and colour were crucial. Then there were the relationships between the various shapes: "seeing that the torso is a cylinder, as are the thighs, which hang forwards; that we have a chest which leans forward on a vertical shape." The importance given to geometric composition, to the relationship between lines on the canvas, also brings to mind the approach of André Lhote, another major figure on the art scene, whose influence on Denise Ferrier's work is visible during this period.

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