



MODERN & CONTEMPORARY  
ART GALLERY

**Félix LABISSE (1905 - 1982)**



TITEL: *Puma*  
YEAR: 1971  
TECHNIQUE: Oil on canvas  
DIMENSIONS: 27 x 22 cm

## PROVENANCE:

- The work is number 56 in Labisse's Sélénides list.
- Spinoye Collection, Brussels
- Listed in the catalog raisonné of painted works 1927 - 1979, n°565 pg 288
- Private collection

According to a list drawn up by Félix Labisse, there are 63 Sélénides in "3 figure" 27 x 22 cm format, produced between 1965 and 1976.

The story of « Les Sélénides » began in the summer of 1965 in Hyères, during Labisse's vacation at Marie-Laure de Noailles' Château Saint-Bernard.

An article by Maurice Guillot in the newspaper "La République", dated August 4, 1965, devoted a report to Labisse: "Félix Labisse a fait naître à Hyères ses merveilleuses femmes en bleu" ("Félix Labisse gave birth to his marvelous women in blue").

***"I had the idea, on a small three-figure format, of painting faces with only the mouth, eyes and nose in volume, everything else being flat. It's quite surprising.***

This is erotic fiction.

The first Selenides are the daughters of the moon:

"Macumbinha, Sunamite, Opale de lune, Chica da Silva" painted in 1965.

Four mysterious women whose faces we can only see in part, all alike and different, carnal and mystical, with a gaze open to infinity: that of Labisse's vision.

The origin of their name comes from a work that most fascinated him as a child, a novel in the realm of scientific wonder: "Les aventures extraordinaires d'un savant russe" by Georges Le Faure and Henry de Graffigny. The Russian scientist's daughter is named Sélena. The adventure ends on the moon, where the Selenites live...From Selenites, these lunar beings, to Selenides, there's only one step...

Another source is the March 28, 1956 issue of Fiction magazine, whose cover was illustrated with a photo montage showing a rather similar face.

Or, more probably, issue no. 1 of the Surrealist magazine "Le surréalisme, même", founded by André Breton and Jean Schuster, with a drawing by Man Ray showing a face without contours: eyes, nose and mouth...

At the request of Gustave Nellens, Patrick Waldberg published the first two major monographs on the artists Magritte in 1965 and Labisse in 1970.

.He wrote: *"In 1965, the blue women appear, those Labisse calls the Selenides, dreamy, obsessive portraits, in which his taste for Brazilian women and the memory of the lunar ladies who fascinated him as a child are interposed"*.