

DOLF D. VAN OMME 19TH-21ST CENTURY
EUROPEAN FINE ARTS



Woman in a Devout Posture, circa 1908-1911 (earlier?)

Unsigned
Black chalk on paper
78 x 56.8 cm.

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist by Dr J.F.S. Esser
Collection of Dr J.F.S. Esser
Collection of the heirs of Dr J.F.S. Esser

I would like to thank Wietse Coppes for his assistance in describing this drawing.
The updated dating will be included in the Piet Mondrian: Digital Catalogue Raisonné, number A132.

Literature:

- Els Hoek, 'De Passiebloem, Een dateringsprobleem bij Mondriaan', Metropolis M, vol. 3, no. 2 (December 1981), p. 33, fig. 2 (illustrated as Vrouw met biddende handen / Woman with Hands in Prayer, 1908, dimensions unknown).
- Carel Blotkamp, Mondriaan – Deconstructie als kunst, Zwolle, 1984, p. 37, no. 20 (illustrated as Vrouw in devote houding / Woman in a Devout Posture, c. 1908, with incorrect dimensions).
- R. P. Welsh, Piet Mondrian: Catalogue Raisonné of the Naturalistic Works (until early 1911), New York, 1998, pp.

207–208, no. A131 (illustrated on p. 207 as Female torso with folded hands, c. 1898–1900 or Later?, with incorrect dimensions).

- RKD Studies, Piet Mondrian: Digital Catalogue Raisonné, no. A132 (as Female torso with folded hands, circa 1908–1911 (earlier?)).

Exhibitions:

- The Hague, Haags Gemeentemuseum, Mondriaan: Tekeningen, aquarellen, New Yorkse schilderijen, 20 March – 31 May 1981.
- Baltimore (USA), The Baltimore Museum of Art, Mondrian: Drawings and Watercolors, 12 July – 20 September 1981, cat. no. [insert if applicable], (exhibited as Praying Girl, 1908).
- Winterswijk, Galerie 't Mondriaanhuis, Mondriaan, Sluijters, Gestel: La vibration des couleurs, 30 November 1985 – 6 January 1986, p. 20, illustrated (exhibited as Meisje met gevouwen handen / Girl with Folded Hands, 1908, with incorrect dimensions).
- Madrid, Sala de Exposiciones de la Fundación “la Caixa”, Kandinsky, Mondrian: Dos caminos hacia la abstracción, 16 September – 13 November 1994, p. 93, no. 35 (illustrated as Girl Meditating, 1909, with incorrect dimensions).
 - Barcelona, Centro Cultural de la Fundación “la Caixa”, Kandinsky, Mondrian: Dos caminos hacia la abstracción, 25 November 1994 – 22 January 1995, p. 93, no. 35 (illustrated as Girl Meditating, 1909, with incorrect dimensions).
 - Winterswijk, Villa Mondriaan, La vibration des couleurs: Mondriaan, Sluijters, Gestel, 20 April 2024 – 3 November 2024.

This large chalk drawing (78 x 56.8 cm), together with the watercolor 'Passiebloem' ('Passion Flower'), presumably forms an unfinished theosophical diptych in which Mondrian sought to depict human spiritual development. The composition, featuring a frontal pose and symbolic sunflowers flanking the shoulders, served as the direct visual and conceptual blueprint for his later masterpiece, the Evolution triptych of 1911 (Kunstmuseum Den Haag). While he laid the foundations for the physical form and floral symbolism in this intriguing chalk drawing, he transformed these elements into tightly stylized, theosophical symbols in his 1911 Evolution triptych. This makes this rare drawing a crucial key work that uniquely documents the birth of Mondrian's radical drive for renewal and abstraction.