

## EXHIBITION STATEMENT

This virtual exhibition is a departure for us in featuring one work only, *Les Deux Saltimbanques*, by Pablo Picasso. It is our conviction that as a true masterpiece, it can occupy center stage on its own.

Picasso and poet Guillaume Apollinaire together regularly visited the famous Cirque Médrano in the center of Paris, where the two young bohemians observed the performers on stage and backstage. The vagrant lives of the acrobats, animal tamers, clowns, and dancers resonated with the two artists, both recent and impoverished arrivals in the bustling capital of France. Picasso's 1905 *Les Deux Saltimbanques* (above) and Apollinaire's poem *Crépuscule* (below) effectively convey an intimate, yet lonely melancholy of a class of *artistes* with which they could identify.

The medium is also a message. Picasso makes the print unique by his careful wiping of gray and black on the surface of the plate and by the rich "burr", the textured effect resulting from ink spilling literally outside the incised, drypoint lines. The work is in a sense a combination print and drawing, which he reserved for Apollinaire. (There is one other such early impression as rich and extraordinary, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)