

PICASSO

MARKING THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

Exhibition Facts

Duration	17. March – 18. June 2023
Venue	Column Hall ALBERTINA
Curators	Klaus Albrecht Schröder Constanze Malissa
Works	ca. 60
Catalogue	Available English & German onsite at the Museum Shop as well as via www.albertina.at
Contact	Albertinaplatz 1 1010 Vienna T +43 (0)1 534 83 0 info@albertina.at www.albertina.at
Opening Hours	Daily 10 am – 6 pm Except Wednesday and Friday open until 9 pm
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Picasso

MARKING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

17.03.2023 – 18.06.2023

With Pablo Picasso's death 50 years ago, the 20th century had lost its artist.

Picasso's oeuvre encompasses 50,000 works that reflect the enormous political upheavals of the times through which he lived: turbulent war years, the ban on his works' exhibition by German occupiers, the Spanish Civil War. Through all of it, he championed freedom with his brush and pen. And his fascination with bullfighting, his relationships with women, his longing for bacchanalian pleasures and love of eroticism captivated him throughout his life.

This is the ALBERTINA Museum's third Picasso exhibition: following the presentation of his late oeuvre in *Painting Against Time* (2006) and the focus on the political Picasso in *Peace and Freedom* (2010), the ALBERTINA Museum now presents works by Pablo Picasso from its own collection. This exhibition shows once again why Picasso has been called a "continent": he truly was the artist of his century.

Every phase, every period of his creative activity touched off a broad international movement that the Spanish genius himself would disclaim the very next moment, only to then usher in yet another new period, another new style. He reinvented himself every decade: his melancholy *Blue Period* brought symbolism into the 20th century, he overcame the crisis of painting—together with his friend Georges Braque—as the inventor of cubism, and ceramic objects were elevated to sculptures, to canvases, to art in his hands.

The present ALBERTINA Museum exhibition follows this motor of 20th century art's transformation from the central *Blue Period* masterpiece of *The Sleepy Drinker*, an image of lonely melancholy with which Picasso processed the suicide of his friend Casagemas, to the 1911 analytic cubist pièce de résistance of the *Étagère* in which Picasso approaches abstraction and on to the 1929 surrealist masterpiece *Femme, sculpture et vase de fleurs*, in which he deals with the separation from his wife Olga and his relationship with Marie-Thérèse Walter.

The ALBERTINA Museum is also showing Picasso's lament upon the defeat of Republican Spain at the hands of Franco's fascist dictatorship in *Still Life with Broken Mirror*, while other

works address the many separations from the women who played such an important role in his life—thereby also centrally influencing his art.

This exhibition surveys the entire oeuvre of the Spanish artistic genius, including around 60 masterpieces of painting, drawing, etching, lithography, and ceramics.

Picasso's art does not distinguish between painting with a brush, drawing with a pencil, lining with a pen, cutting into linoleum, scratching a copper plate, or shaping a mass with one's bare hands. His touch could elevate anything to the status of art, and his oeuvre defies all logic and predictability. With Picasso, the history of art's development disintegrates. The parameters that define art are cast aside with him and through his work. And the entire world agrees: without him, the course taken by art would have been a different one.

Picasso continued creating works of immeasurable power at a very advanced age. The final part of this exhibition hence not only features the hymn to life embodied by Picasso's dionysian fantasies and arcadian utopias but also documents his attempts to paint and create against the passage of time: every single work is dated right down to the very day, as if to bear witness to living for the moment. In 1973, the artist—after years of battling life's transience—himself passed into the realm of immortality, whereupon he was mourned the world over ... and 50 years after his death, our world still celebrates the man who had become the archetype of the modern artist even during his own lifetime.

This exhibition focuses on the great Spanish artist upon the anniversary of his death with its selection of 60 paintings, drawings, prints, and ceramics drawn from a total of nearly 150 works owned by the ALBERTINA Museum.

Exhibition Texts

INTRODUCTION

"It took me four years to draw like Raphael, but a lifetime to draw like a child." Pablo Picasso

Picasso was born in Málaga in 1881.

Being of clearly exceptional talent, he was admitted to Barcelona's Academy of Art at age 14.

Picasso first set foot in Paris in 1900. One year later, he was devastated by the suicide of his friend Carlos Casagemas: The *Blue Period* following that event saw Picasso produce paintings of infinite sadness that show lonely, forlorn figures living at the margins of society.

From 1903 to 1909, Picasso lived in Montmartre subject to conditions of severe poverty. Fernande Olivier (1881 to 1966) became his intimate partner and frequent model until 1912.

Together with his friend Georges Braque, Picasso went on to originate cubism – the 20th century's most revolutionary art movement. Illusionism, perspective, and lending shape to the human body were replaced by a crystalline pictorial structure. Motifs portrayed in monotone ochre hues were broken apart in the interest of formal rhythm. Later on, Picasso also began "synthetically" recomposing these motifs by combining materials such as newspaper clippings, wallpaper, and artificial wood veneers in a collage-like fashion.

Following a subsequent phase of classicist output while in Italy, Picasso went on in the 1920s to become a figure regarded by surrealists as a symbol of modernism.

In 1918, Picasso married the prima ballerina Olga Khokhlova (1891–1955), whose son Paulo was born in 1921. Picasso then met Marie-Thérèse Walter (1909–1977) in 1927, whose daughter Maya was born in 1935.

In 1937, Picasso became acquainted with surrealist photographer Dora Maar (1907–1997).

During the 1930s, Picasso threw his artistic support behind the Spanish Republic's fight against the fascist dictatorial ambitions of General Franco. After the inception of Franco's dictatorship, Picasso never again returned to his Spanish homeland.

During France's occupation by Nazi German troops, Picasso was forbidden to show his works in Paris. However, he took the side of peace and against repression and dictatorship in symbolic still lifes.

Later on, with his 1949 lithograph of a dove, Picasso created the globally famous symbol of the World Peace Council.

It was while the Second World War still raged that Picasso became acquainted with Françoise Gilot (*1921). He and Françoise had two children, Claude and Paloma Picasso, and they eventually moved from Paris to the French Riviera.

There, in the town of Vallauris, Picasso discovered linocut printmaking and experimented in a ceramics workshop with clay and glazes. There, he ended up painting 4,000 plates and vases that were then fired.

Vallauris was also where Picasso got to know Jacqueline Roque (1927–1986), his second and final wife, who was also to become his most-portrayed model.

Picasso brought copious wit to bear in his late-oeuvre competition with Old Masters such as Lucas Cranach. He also turned to mythology and the ancient world, to themes arcadian and bucolic. With this period's references to his 1920s classicism as well as to his cubist phase and his tendency toward expressive deformation combined with his newfound love for midnight-blue, Picasso ultimately became a harbinger of the neo-expressionism of the 1980s and '90s.

In 1973, Picasso died in Mougins at the age of 91.

With his diversity of styles, his wide variety of expressive possibilities, and his creative power, Picasso represents the art of the 20th century like no other can.

BLUE MONOCHROMY – AT THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY

On the occasion of the World's Fair in 1900 Picasso is in Paris for the first time. Picasso's Blue Period, which lasted from 1901 to 1907, is characterized by monochrome blue hues as well as by depictions of nocturnal loneliness and melancholia, of outsiders and people who inhabit society's margins. This was Picasso's first period of stylistically independent work and marked his departure from the academic tradition. The catalyst for this development was the suicide of his friend Carlos Casagemas, whom lovesickness drove to shoot himself at a Parisian café in 1901. Picasso, shaken by this turn of events, began producing paintings and etchings that reflected his deep sadness not just in terms of their colors but also thematically.

One Blue Period masterpiece, the painting *The Sleepy Drinker*, becomes an allegory of loneliness and abandonment. The depicted figure's physiognomy recalls the one of Picasso's close friend Carlos Casagemas, whose death he sought to process in this painting. *The Frugal Meal*, Picasso's first etching, was to become an icon of printed graphics. Its figures' strict

frontality transforms the original bar scene in this image into a metaphor for poverty and despair. No gaze is returned, here: the emaciated woman, clung to tightly by her blind companion, simply stares into the emptiness. The two turn away from each other. Their angular bodies, sunken facial features, and elongated limbs – oriented on the style of El Greco – bear witness to hunger and cold, to the fragility of life.

CUBISM

Picasso's activities from 1906 to 1908, years spent under the impression of African and Oceanian art, marked a turning point in his career. It was in 1907 that Picasso laid the cornerstone for cubism, an approach that was to guide his artistic thinking until 1914.

Cubism – 20th-century art's most revolutionary innovation – takes its name from the angular, often cube-like shapes that it employs. It is typified by its fragmentation of shapes and motifs in the interest of creating a formal rhythm that exists independently of the pictorial subject. The crystalline structure of such images violated centuries-old rules relating to the illusionism of central perspective and to modeling with light and shadows. Their unnaturalistic colors likewise broke with the notion of art as an imitation of nature.

Analytic cubism involved an approach in which artists would view their selected objects from various perspectives, analyze them, split them into multiple facets, and then integrate certain significant facets into perspectiveless geometric spaces.

Beginning in 1912, this initial analytic approach was reversed to result in synthesis: Picasso now began synthetically recomposing his motifs by combining various elements such as pieces of paper, newspaper clippings, and pieces of wallpaper in a collage-like fashion. This transformation was accompanied by a new degree of chromatic intensity.

BULLFIGHTING: PICASSO AT THE ARENA

In Picasso's oeuvre, the bull with whose power, strength and impulsiveness Picasso identifies plays a recurring role both in countless bullfighting depictions and as a motif unto itself.

The *corrida* had captivated him ever since he first attended one together with his father in his hometown of Málaga at age nine. His fascination is continuing all the way to his death.

Following Franco's victory in Spain, Picasso lived in voluntary exile in France. For him, the bullfight and its protagonists become the symbol of his homeland. To the artist, the bullfight embodies a sacrificial ritual that he perceives as a continuation of the Cult of Mithras.

THE BACCHANAL

Depictions of Arcadia, Greek mythology's paradisiacal utopian landscape based on a pastoral idyll, make repeated appearances in Picasso's oeuvre. The Arcadian myth is the idea of peaceful human coexistence in harmony with nature and liberated from all societal compulsions. In his works, the artist repeatedly associated this theme with depictions of bacchanals – orgiastic festivals in honor of the ancient wine-god Bacchus. These Arcadian scenes are populated by dancing and music-making figures.

THE LINOLCUT

It was in Vallauris that Picasso discovered the genre of linocut printmaking. The editor of the leading communist daily paper in the south of France runs a small linocut printing shop in Vallauris, where Picasso is allowed to work. The employment of linoleum, a robust modern flooring material, permits larger print runs. Cutting into its soft surface requires less physical effort than cutting into wood.

However, what Picasso loved above all was the fact that printing with linoleum plates results in uniformly opaque layers of color. In contrast to lithography, which produces colors of a generally duller appearance due to the ink's absorption by the wet paper, Picasso stated that he viewed linocut as predestined for the creation of vividly colored images. Picasso's linocuts are masterpieces of this printing technique.

PICTURES IN CERAMIC: PICASSO IN VALLAURIS

Following the liberation of Paris by the Allies in 1944 and the end of the Second World War, Picasso felt increasingly drawn to the south of France. 1946 saw him become acquainted with the family, who owned the Madoura Pottery. One year later, Picasso started working in the Madoura workshop. Jacqueline Roque, a saleswoman at the pottery, became Picasso's final companion. In 1961 the painter marries the thirty-three-year-old woman. Jacqueline became his most portrayed model.

By the time of his death, and in parallel with his paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures, the artist had also created 4,000 ceramic works in Vallauris. Picasso was fascinated with ceramic materials and by experimentation with technical processes, with oxides and glazes.

The Madoura Pottery was also a place where he renewed his artistic dialogue with the classical antiquity: bacchanal scenes with mythical creatures as well as animals such as bulls, fish, owls and Picasso's pet, the goat Esmeralda, occupy central positions in his expressively painted ceramic plates.

Press images

The following images are available free of charge in the Press section of www.albertina.at:



Pablo Picasso
Still Life with Guitar, 1942
 Oil on canvas
 100,5 × 81 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The Batliner Collection
 © Succession Picasso/ Bildrecht, Vienna 2023



Pablo Picasso
The Sleepy Drinker, 1902
 Oil on canvas
 80 × 60,5 cm
 ALBERTINA, Wien – Permanent Loan Collection
 Stiftung Othmar Huber
 © Succession Picasso/ Bildrecht, Wien 2023



Pablo Picasso
Woman with Green Hat, 1947
 Oil on canvas
 92 × 73 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The Batliner Collection
 © Succession Picasso/ Bildrecht, Vienna 2023



Pablo Picasso
The Frugal Meal, 1904
 Etching
 63 × 48 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna
 © Succession Picasso/ Bildrecht, Vienna 2023



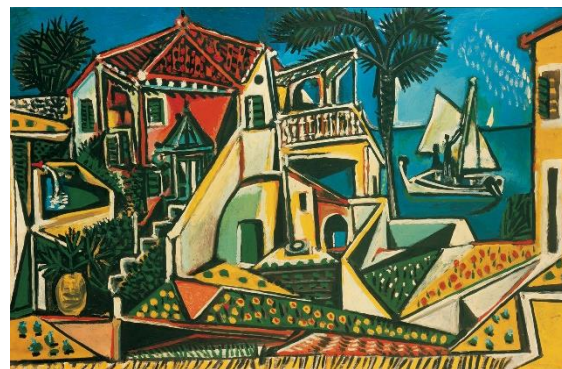
Pablo Picasso
Pots and Lemon, 1907
 Oil on canvas
 55 × 46 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The Batliner Collection
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Pablo Picasso
Nude Woman with Bird and Flute Player, 1967
 Oil on canvas
 130 × 162 cm
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Pablo Picasso
The Flying Dove, 1950
 Lithograph
 56,4 × 76,5 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna
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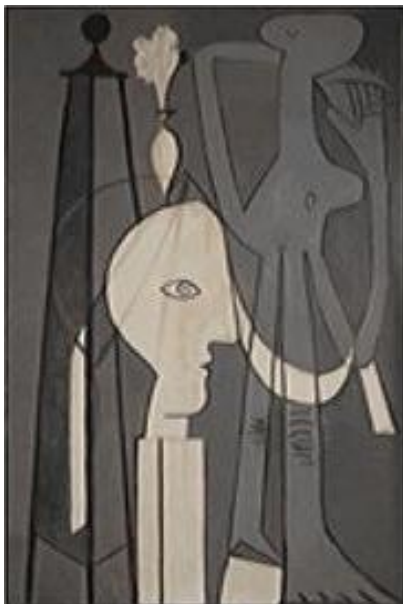
Pablo Picasso
Mediterranean Landscape, 1952
 Oil on wood
 81 × 125 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The Batliner Collection
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Pablo Picasso
The Playing Cards, 1912
 Oil on canvas
 33 × 19 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The Batliner Collection
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Pablo Picasso
Sylvette, 1954
 Oil on canvas
 81 × 65 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The Batliner Collection
 © Succession Picasso/ Bildrecht, Vienna 2023



Pablo Picasso
Woman, sculpture and flower vase, 1929
 Oil on canvas
 195 × 130 cm
 The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – Private collection, in memory of Monique Barbier-Mueller, Switzerland
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Pablo Picasso
L'étagère, 1911-1912
 Oil on canvas
 63 × 49,5 cm
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