

# THE PICASSO CENTURY

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## The Picasso Century

Two years after Pablo Picasso's death in 1973, French biographer Pierre Cabanne published *Le Siècle de Picasso* (Picasso's Century), a book that placed Picasso's inventions at the origins of modern art. Further biographies, by authors such as Pierre Daix and John Richardson, have revealed that Picasso's long life and career were characterised by a close weaving of relationships, multiple exchanges and continuous dialogues with his peers, spanning decades from the Belle Époque to the Cold War.

Most retrospectives of Picasso's work have focused on the artist alone, suggesting that his extraordinary career of creative experiment and stylistic virtuosity was propelled by his singular genius, created without external influence. However, Picasso was an artist in and of his time, absorbing or reacting against the ideas and actions of artists and intellectuals around him.

Similarly, his geographical location and social standing, which changed throughout his career, all played a part. Whether in the run-down environs of Montmartre, where he began as a struggling artist among many, or on the glittering French Riviera, Picasso voraciously consumed his surroundings.

The Picasso Century places the artist in context: embedded within both the unprecedented and the

...continued overleaf

prosaic events of his time and alongside works by some of his many peers. Through this approach, we gain a unique glimpse into Picasso's life and career, revealing his constant confrontation and connection with the world in which his work evolved.

## Montmartre and Bohemian Life

Picasso was born in Andalusía in the south of Spain in 1881; his youth was spent in La Coruña, Barcelona and Madrid. His father, José Ruiz Blasco – a painter of middling talent – encouraged his precocious son by sending him to art school in his early teens, where he quickly mastered the academic principles of late-nineteenth-century painting. In 1898, Picasso moved alone to Barcelona, where he found a stimulating artistic circle centred around the modernist painter Isidre Nonell, whose realist images of poor and marginalised individuals were perhaps Picasso's first significant influence. When Picasso first travelled to Paris in 1900, he moved to a studio in Montmartre that Nonell had vacated.

Situated on a hill that rises steeply to become the highest point in Paris, Montmartre was like a village on the outskirts of the city, with a diverse population. Picasso soon moved into the ramshackle building known as the Bateau Lavoir (laundry boat), which was home to an astonishing roster of artists and poets. This was where Picasso lived from 1904 to 1909, where he painted his 'blue period' works and his 1907 proto-Cubist masterpiece *Les Femmes d'Alger*, and where he met important peers, including Georges Braque, André Derain, Kees van Dongen, Juan Gris, Maurice Utrillo and Marie Laurencin.

# **Brassaï (Gyula Halász)**

Hungarian 1899–1984,  
worked in France 1924–84

## **La Butte Montmartre staircase (Escalier de la Butte Montmartre)**

c. 1937, printed c. 1980  
gelatin silver print

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1983 AM 1988-1012

# Brassaï (Gyula Halász)

Hungarian 1899–1984,  
worked in France 1924–84

## La Butte Montmartre staircase, with white dog (Escalier de la Butte Montmartre au chien blanc)

c. 1932–33

gelatin silver print

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Mme Gilberte Brassaï, 2002

AM 2003-5 (118)

After studying at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in Budapest and then in Berlin, Gyula Halász arrived in Paris in 1924. He quickly gained work as a journalist. Concurrently, he began to photograph the many sights and subjects the city had to offer, adopting the pseudonym of Brassaï (from Brassó, his hometown).

Brassaï's 1932 publication, *Paris by Night* – which featured photographs of the city's deserted streets and busy cafes, nightclubs and brothels – brought him critical acclaim. He met Picasso soon after, and the two artists became friends, meeting frequently and sharing ideas, especially during the war years. Brassaï documented these meetings in *Conversations with Picasso* (1964). Picasso said to Brassaï, 'I love your photos precisely because they are true'.

# Louis Vivin

French 1861–1936

## The Moulin de la Galette cabaret (Le Moulin de la Galette)

1926

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1947

AM 2716 P

Louis Vivin did not become a painter until he was sixty-one years old, after retiring from his job as a postal clerk. In 1925, the German art collector, dealer and writer Wilhelm Uhde 'discovered' Vivin, promoting him as an exemplar of Naïve art (art produced by someone who has not undergone formal artistic training). Using bold colours and block-like forms, Vivin produced still lifes of everyday subjects, including scenes of Paris.

The Moulin de la Galette cabaret was located in an old windmill at the foot of the Butte Montmartre. The cabaret was a source of inspiration for many painters living and working in Montmartre, including Picasso, who painted the cabaret in 1900, following his first visit to Paris.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Sacré-Coeur (Le Sacré-Coeur)

winter 1909–10

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP30

Picasso left the Bateau Lavoir in September 1909, moving to a new studio at 11 boulevard de Clichy. From here, a large glass roof provided a view of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, or Sacré-Coeur, which sits atop the summit of the Butte Montmartre and occupies the highest point in Paris. The Basilica was under construction from 1875 to 1914, and photographs taken in the period before and during Picasso's time in Montmartre show the distinctive dome and surrounding cupolas rising out of a great shroud of timber scaffolding. The evolving forms of Sacré-Coeur provided Picasso with a valuable subject for experimentation, as this work from his Cubist period shows.



# Marie Laurencin

French 1883–1956

## Apollinaire and his friends (second version) (Apollinaire et ses amis [deuxième version])

1909

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1973

AM 1973-3

This painting is a unique document of the Bateau Lavoir crowd, gathered here around the seated central figure of the poet (and Marie Laurencin's then lover) Guillaume Apollinaire. Behind Apollinaire's left shoulder, a man with dark features glares directly ahead; this is Picasso, a magnetic personality in the Montmartre scene, and already celebrated for his radical 1907 painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*. Collector and writer Gertrude Stein is far left and beside her is Picasso's companion during his bohemian years, Fernande Olivier. Laurencin herself is seated at the front right of the scene.

## For kids

This painting was made before people could easily take photographs at parties. The artist, Marie Laurencin, spent a lot of time painting a group portrait of her friends. She has included a 'selfie' – she is wearing the blue dress. The man at the centre of the painting is Apollinaire. He was a poet who was considered a hero among this group of friends.

Pablo Picasso worked in a studio that had the words 'Meeting place of poets' written above the door. Pablo is in this painting too, sitting behind the poet.

If you were to draw a picture of yourself with your friends, who would you include?

# Maurice Utrillo

French 1883–1955

## The Lapin Agile cabaret (Le Lapin Agile)

1910

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by M. André Berthelémy, 1931

AM 2509 P

The name of this famed Montmartre cabaret can be translated as 'the frisky rabbit' or 'the agile rabbit'. The cabaret derives its name from André Gill (A. Gill, pronounced 'agile' in French) and his illustration of a rabbit leaping out of a saucepan, which was used as the cabaret's street signage. André Salmon, a close friend of Picasso, described the Lapin Agile as *l'auberge du village* (the village inn). Picasso and other residents of the Bateau Lavoir visited regularly, encouraged by its proprietor, who welcomed an array of bohemian characters.

Maurice Utrillo was the son of Suzanne Valadon, whose painting *Two figures* hangs nearby. Born in Montmartre, he became known for paintings of Montmartre executed in a Naïve, illustrative style.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Gustave Coquiot

1901  
oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased by the Musées nationaux, 1933 JP 652 P

The writer, art critic and collector Gustave Coquiot was known for his cultivation of scandal. Here, he is pictured enjoying Parisian nightlife, wearing a lascivious grin while showgirls perform behind him. This portrait evokes Picasso's and Coquiot's shared taste for 'modern life' as experienced in the Paris of 'the Belle Époque'.

In 1901, Coquiot helped organise Picasso's first Paris exhibition, at Galerie Vollard. In 1914, he published *Cubistes, futuristes, passéistes*, writing a chapter devoted to Picasso. Coquiot analysed the various sources of Picasso's inspiration, noting, '[W]e quickly realise that Picasso wants to see everything, wants to express everything. It is easy to imagine that the day is too short for this frantic lover of modern life [...]'.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Death of Casagemas (La Mort de Casagemas)

summer 1901

oil on wood

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP3

This painting is one of Picasso's few evocations of the death of his friend Carles Casagemas. Distraught following a young woman's rejection, the twenty-year-old Catalan painter shot himself in a Parisian restaurant. The wound to his temple is visible in this image of Casagemas wrapped in his burial shroud. It is an imagined scene, as Picasso was in Barcelona when Casagemas died.

When Picasso exhibited his Casagemas paintings at Ambroise Vollard's gallery, critic Félicien Fagus noted the influence of Vincent van Gogh on the young Spanish painter. Picasso emulates Van Gogh's painterly approach in his choice of colour and brushstrokes, particularly to depict the candle's halo. Picasso may have studied the works of the late Dutch painter in Vollard's stock room.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Portrait of a man (Portrait d'homme)

winter 1902–03

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP5

Saturated with the blue that characterised Picasso's paintings between late 1901 and 1904, this canvas is one of a number painted in the winter of 1902–03, in which single figures seem lost in profound melancholy. When asked about the model for this painting, the artist asserted, 'He was a kind of madman who roamed the streets. Everyone knew him in Barcelona'.

While this man's identity remains uncertain, his defeated bearing and weariness suggest he belongs in the working-class districts of Paris or in Barcelona's Barrio Chino. Picasso painted and sketched hundreds of such figures over these intensely creative years, known as his 'blue period', during which he moved back and forth between Barcelona and Paris.

# For kids

What do you notice about this painting that is different from the others in this room?

Pablo Picasso used a lot of blue in his paintings when he was a young artist, more than 100 years ago. He was not rich or famous, and he painted the people he saw every day who seemed to be sad and struggling. Life was hard for many people around him. Pablo did not know the man in this painting, but often saw him wandering through the streets of Barcelona.

How would you describe the mood of this painting?

# Suzanne Valadon

French 1865–1938

## Two figures (Deux figures)

1909

oil on cardboard

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Bequest of Dr Robert Le Masle, 1974

AM 1974-122

Between 1880 and 1893, while also working as a waitress and circus performer, Suzanne Valadon posed for artists including Puvis, Renoir, Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, simultaneously gaining an informal artistic education. At the age of thirty-one, she began to paint full-time and, in 1911, her first solo exhibition was held at the gallery of Clovis Sagot, Picasso's first regular patron. Valadon's works were regularly presented at the independent Paris salons, and were championed by Berthe Weill, who presented an exhibition of Picasso's blue canvases at her gallery near Montmartre in 1902.

Valadon painted domestic scenes and still lifes and is celebrated for her unidealised images of female nudes – often artist's models at rest or in repose, revealing a tender insight.



# Julio González

Spanish 1876–1942

## Woman with bowed head (Femme au profil penché)

1904–06

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of Mme Roberta González, 1964

AM 4234 P

Julio González studied alongside Picasso at Barcelona's School of Fine Arts in the 1890s, while working by day in his family's metalworking business. An aspiring painter, he frequented Els Quatres Gats, where Barcelona's modernists gathered, including Pablo Gargallo, Carles Casagemas, Manolo Hugué and Joaquín Torres-Garcia. Following his father's death, González and his siblings moved to Paris around 1900, establishing a metalworking studio in Montparnasse.

In Paris, González was a generous host to his compatriots, and often visited bohemian Montmartre. He painted scenes indebted to the Catalan realist Isidre Nonell, nineteenth-century muralist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and ancient frescoes. The death of his brother Joan in 1908 led González to abandon painting altogether and embark on a path towards sculpture.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The frugal repast (Le Repas frugal)

September 1904  
etching and scraper on zinc plate,  
second state

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP1889

Two figures sit with a simple meal of bread and wine before them. This scene is a naturalistic evocation of Picasso's bohemian life in Montmartre, and is heavy with symbolism linking it to allegorical painting traditions. This etching is perhaps the best known image from his 'blue period'.

This image was made before the zinc plate was coated with steel (known as 'steel-facing'), a process that, while yielding a more robust and durable plate, typically results in a loss of finely etched detail and texture. Here, we see the quality of Picasso's original etching and his attention to modelling the figures and tablecloth, which have an almost sculptural quality.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Woman combing her hair (La Coiffure)

1906, cast after 1910  
bronze

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Loti Smorgon AO through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2011

2011.20

This bronze was cast from a stoneware sculpture Picasso created in the studio of Basque sculptor (and great friend of Paul Gauguin), Paco Durrio. The female subject has been identified as Fernande Olivier. The motif of a woman combing her hair appears throughout art history, but was particularly favoured by Impressionist painters such as Edgar Degas and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Lacking the idealisation common to many treatments of this subject, Picasso's figure is both stylised and distorted. Picasso's awkward rendition of the female form in three dimensions embodies what Pierre Daix (a French writer and biographer of Picasso) has described as the 'dynamics of deformation'.

## Discovery of the 'Primitives'

By 1906, the Bateau Lavoir residents included André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck and Kees van Dongen, artists all associated with Fauvism. Henri Matisse, one of Fauvism's originators, attended gatherings at the home of collector and writer Gertrude Stein, where he met Picasso around March 1906. For these artists, pre-modern, non-European, Naïve or folk-art traditions were ascendent as sources of inspiration, and were often appropriated wholesale with scant regard to their original function or significance.

Like all who visited Paul Gauguin's posthumous exhibition in Paris in 1906, Picasso witnessed the creative power Gauguin generated from his appropriation of Polynesian culture. Likewise, when travelling or visiting museums, Picasso and his peers sought alternative inspiration to Western classical tradition: Derain sketched Māori sculptures at the British Museum; Matisse visited Algeria to immerse himself in 'the Orient'; Picasso explored displays of African and Oceanic art at the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, and 'discovered' his own ancestral traditions in Iberian sculpture (created in pre-Roman Spain) on display at the Louvre.

And finally, the death in late 1906 of the great 'primitivist' modern painter, Paul Cézanne, and the subsequent retrospective exhibitions of his work, announced the passing of a baton, demanding the deconstruction of aesthetic conventions.

# Henri Rousseau

French 1844–1910

## Painter and model (*Le Peintre et son modèle*)

1900–05

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Bequest of Nina Kandinsky, 1981

AM 81-6 5-861

Henri Rousseau was in his forties when he became an artist. A minor civil servant by day, Rousseau was affectionately called '*Le Douanier*' (The Customs Officer) by the artists and writers of the Bateau Lavoir. His paintings displayed the same simplicity and honesty he applied to his job at the Excise Office and he established himself as a Naïve or 'primitive' painter.

Rousseau met Picasso in 1908. Shortly after, Picasso acquired a full-length female portrait by Rousseau that Picasso described as possessing 'haunting power' and, with Guillaume Apollinaire's help, he organised a large banquet in honour of the artist. The celebration brought together their neighbourhood, with Fernande Olivier, Apollinaire and Marie Laurencin, Gertrude and Leo Stein, Max Jacob and André Salmon in attendance.

# Natalia Goncharova

Russian 1881–1962,  
worked in France 1921–62

## Planting potatoes (Plantation de pommes de terre)

1908–09  
oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by the Soviet Union, 1988 AM 1988-879

While her contemporaries were looking to so-called 'primitive' art beyond Europe, Natalia Goncharova celebrated Russia's indigenous culture. She spent the summers of 1908 and 1909 on her cousins' estate south-west of Moscow. This was a working estate, producing linen and paper from flax. Goncharova observed peasants at work and began depicting them in her paintings.

French avant-garde paintings were regularly exhibited in Moscow by the eminent Russian collector Sergei Shchukin soon after they were first shown in Paris. In 1913, Goncharova wrote, 'Modern French painters opened my eyes, and I grasped the great importance and value of the art of my native land, and through it, the value of the art of the East'.

## For kids

These women are carrying heavy sacks and planting potatoes in the ground, which would be very hard work. They are barefoot and wear headscarves traditionally worn by farm workers, or peasants, as they are often called. The artist, Natalia Goncharova, lived in the city, but one summer holiday she visited a country farm. She decided to make pictures of the farm activities carried out every year, depending on the season, such as sowing or harvesting crops. Natalia also became interested in the images in murals on village buildings or made into woodblock prints (also known as *loubki*), and was inspired by their simple, colourful forms.

# Natalia Goncharova

Russian 1881–1962,  
worked in France 1921–62

## The carriers (Les Porteuses)

1911

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by the Soviet Union, 1988 AM 1988-875

*The carriers* is one panel in a group of nine that originally formed Natalia Goncharova's monumental painting, *Grape harvest*. Referencing Byzantine Russian icons and frescos, the painting also reveals the influence of avant-garde ideas. Goncharova collected traditional Russian woodcuts (*lubki*) and their influence is echoed in the artwork's stencil-like depiction of peasant life.

*The carriers* was probably shown in Goncharova's first Paris exhibition, at Galerie Paul Guillaume in 1914. In its connection to traditional Russian art, which was at the centre of avant-garde debates between 1900 and 1915, the painting was part of the search for a new Russian national style, while also incorporating Western trends.



# Dogon peoples

Mali

## Statuette

1850–1900

wood

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Mme Susi Magnelli, 1984

AM 1984-338

This work presents a distinctive subject for the Dogon artists of West Africa: a single figure standing with raised arms. This posture is often interpreted as a gesture of prayer – an effort to link heaven and earth – and may also represent an appeal for rain.

Picasso's visit to the Trocadéro museum was a trigger for his radical 1907 painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*. The ethnographic museum's collection was formed from many artefacts from French colonies. Exposure to the diverse material cultures of Africa and Oceania was transformative for Picasso and many other modern artists. Removed from their original cultural context, the traditional function and meaning of sculptures such as this statuette were significantly reduced, instead often appealing to artists for their formal qualities or, in Picasso's case, for a perceived potential for spiritual power.

# Kota peoples, Mahongwe group

Gabon or Republic of the Congo

## Reliquary figure

1880–1920

wood covered with copper strips

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Mme Susi Magnelli, 1984

AM 1984-341

This reliquary figure has a distinctively abstract form that nevertheless evokes both a face and a leaf. Its figural elements include two brass eyes, a triangular nose and an elongated neck that also reads as the stem of the leaf. A small oval section in the wooden stem denotes a disproportionately small body. Traditionally, these figures were placed on top of woven baskets, or boxes made from bark, which formed part of a reliquary ensemble containing the crania of esteemed ancestors. Kota sculptures were collected by Europeans from the 1870s. The use of brass and copper – materials obtained through trade with Europeans – implies the high value placed on them by their original owners.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Female bust (Buste de femme)

winter 1909–10

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-625

Picasso and his companion Fernande Olivier spent the summer of 1909 in Horta, Spain. While there, Picasso created a major group of paintings that emphasised the head: portraits with faces in the foreground, women in armchairs and busts of men and women. *Female bust* is from this period, in which Picasso reinvented the conventional portrait by using a process of deconstruction and reconstruction to create the human body.

Guillaume Apollinaire welcomed this new idea of the portrait, based on an analysis of forms, rather than conventional portraiture's goal to capture the 'likeness' of the sitter: 'And besides, anatomy, for example, really no longer existed in art; it had to be reinvented, and everyone had to perform his own assassination with the methodical skill of a great surgeon'.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Bread (Les Pains)

spring 1909  
oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984 AM 1984-624

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Male bust (study for ‘Les Demoiselles d’Avignon’) (Buste d’homme [étude pour ‘Les Demoiselles d’Avignon’])

spring 1907

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP14

This study was executed in preparation for one of Picasso’s most renowned artworks, *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (MoMA, New York), a painting famous for both its scandalous subject matter (five naked women in a brothel) and its radical departure from traditional composition and perspective. The women’s bodies are rendered flat, composed of intersecting planes of warm, fleshy tones, while their faces – much like the man’s face in this study – were influenced by Iberian sculptures and African masks.

Picasso’s interest in ancient sculpture of the Iberian Peninsula was piqued by a display at the Louvre, which he saw in 1906. Two sculptures in this ‘Iberian cabinet’ were later stolen by an acquaintance of Guillaume

Apollinaire, Honoré-Joseph Géry Pieret, who sold them to Picasso. The works were returned to the museum in 1911.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Three figures under a tree (Trois figures sous un arbre)

winter 1907–08

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Gift of Mr William McCarty-Cooper, 1986

MP1986-2

This painting was created after two major exhibitions devoted to Paul Cézanne were presented in Paris. As if taking its cue from Cézanne's famous remark that the painter should 'treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone', three figures morph into the landscape, creating a united surface of convex or concave volumes. The limited palette encourages the viewer to pay attention to the painting's compositional structure.

A tension between tradition and its opposite is present in the three female nudes, who could represent the classical subject of the three graces. However, their faces, which bear similarities to the figures in *Les Femmes d'Alger*, also suggest the Iberian, African or Oceanic masks that Picasso and others collected.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Mother and child (*Mère et enfant*)

summer 1907

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP19

In 1906, while holidaying in the village of Gósol in the Catalanian Pyrenees, Picasso became fascinated by the Romanesque frescoes and the sculpture of the *Virgin and Child* in the village chapel (now in the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona). The 'primitive' quality of this twelfth-century religious iconography appeared refreshingly modern to Picasso's eyes.

This painting reflects Picasso's quest for a simplified visual language; the image's strong colours and graphically reduced forms connect it to Picasso's interest in African and Oceanic masks. John Richardson, one of Picasso's main biographers, aligns this painting to Picasso's and Fernande Olivier's temporary adoption of a child in 1907. This experiment in family life in the Bateau Lavoir was not successful, and the child was returned to the orphanage after a few months.



## Cubism: Picasso and Braque

Like many progressive young artists of the time, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso were fascinated by recent breakthroughs in scientific thought, from physics to psychology, and eager to reflect new understandings of the world in their art. When the two artists met in 1907 – introduced by Guillaume Apollinaire at the Bateau Lavoir – discoveries such as X-rays and radio waves, Sigmund Freud's theories of the unconscious, and Einstein's radical new theories about the interplay of time, space and matter, had all permeated public consciousness and were widely discussed in the Montmartre studios. In Braque, Picasso found a kindred inventive spirit, and both were inspired by the atmosphere of change: soon the two were engaged in a kind of bidding war of painterly experimentation that resulted in Cubism.

For Picasso and Braque, their experiment sought a more 'realistic' vision of the world, for which common painterly subjects, such as still lifes and seated figures, became their tools of investigation. Traditional visual devices such as linear perspective were eschewed, and in their place, dissected forms and fragmented surface planes reflected the complex and manifold nature of experience.

Later in life, Braque described Cubism as a mountaineering expedition, and Picasso as his climbing partner (*compagnon de cordée*). Roped together, each

man could only take one or two steps forward before the other followed or took the lead. Frequently, their work is indistinguishable, until one pivots to take a new direction.

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Musical instruments (*Les Instruments de musique*)

autumn 1908

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated in lieu of tax, 2004

AM 2004-464

While staying in L'Estaque in the summer of 1908, Georges Braque worked on a series of landscapes, with houses and trees transposed into geometrical volumes. These paintings directly inspired Louis Vauxcelles to coin the term, 'Cubism'.

At this time, Braque also painted eight still lifes, including *Musical instruments*. The still life's elements – mandolin, clarinet and bandoneon – are distorted, and yet the harmony of ochres and greens, and the malleability of space, creates an impression of fluidity.

A later photograph (c. 1910–11) shows Braque playing the bandoneon in front of a wall on which several stringed instruments and African masks are hung. These objects interested him for their form, volume, tactility, and ability to take on life when played or touched.

## For kids

There are three musical instruments in this painting. The artist, Georges Braque, was trained to play the flute, but he also played the concertina – similar to an accordion. This was an instrument that was played in many Paris restaurants and bars in the early 1900s. Georges often played it with his friends, and some of them sang songs.

Listen hard and you might hear some accordion music – it is playing with the film at the start of the exhibition.

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Five bananas and two pears (Cinq bananes et deux poires)

spring–summer 1908

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1992

AM 1992-145

Georges Braque and Picasso were both twenty-five years old when they met in 1907. Braque had grown up in Argenteuil, the riverside town favoured by the Impressionists, before moving with his family to Le Havre. His father and grandfather were amateur artists; his father painted houses for a living, including the villa of Gustave Caillebotte. Braque himself was apprenticed as a painter-decorator after school, learning skills such as sign writing and the decorative *trompe l'oeil* effects of marbling and *faux bois* (woodgrain effect). Braque also undertook fine art studies in Le Havre, and later in Paris. His earliest paintings show an interest in the Fauvist approach to colour. Grinding his own pigments to create paints, Braque's technical skills influenced Picasso's approach to colour.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Still life with razor strop (Nature morte au cuir à rasoir)

spring 1909  
oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris

Bequest of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, following his death on 11 January 1979, with  
consent of Mme Louise Leiris in execution of his wishes, 1980

MP1980-1

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Rio Tinto factories at L'Estaque (Les Usines du Rio Tinto à L'Estaque)

autumn 1910

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by M. and Mme André Lefèvre, 1952 AM 3973 P

Georges Braque first visited L'Estaque in 1906, when his painting was heavily influenced by the Fauves, whose vibrant-hued canvases had caused a sensation at the Salon d'Automne in 1905. Braque's approach to painting transformed over the following summers, so that by 1908, when he exhibited several L'Estaque landscapes, the critic Louis Vauxcelles remarked, 'Braque reduces everything, landscapes, figures, houses, to geometric figures, to cubes.'

After painting side by side with Picasso for a couple of years, in 1910, Braque returned to L'Estaque and painted this scene that exemplifies Analytical Cubism. Different elements of the composition are brought together under one organising principle, with buildings, chimneys and hillside transformed into partial geometric shapes with shading indicating volume, suspended within the flat visual plane.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The guitarist (Le Guitariste)

summer 1910

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by M. and Mme André Lefèvre, 1952 AM 3970 P

*The guitarist* was painted in Cadaqués, Spain, where Picasso spent July and August 1910. He left there with some dozen canvases, all of which display an increasing dissolution of form. The painting's French title *Le Guitariste* tells us its subject is a man playing a guitar. A few rhythmically repeated lines and the composition's vertical orientation visually prompt the recognition of a 'figure', although it is a far from coherent representation.

Volumes traditionally represented by outlining and modelling are instead broken into fragments, apparently flattened against the picture surface, one solid edge retained. Circular lines around the composition's centre suggest the body of the guitar, helping to visually locate other elements such as the guitarist's bent right arm, and tilted head.



# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Still life 'qui' (Nature morte 'qui')

spring 1912

charcoal on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Mme Marie Cuttoli, 1963

AM 4213 P

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Fruit dish, bottle and glass (Compotier, bouteille et verre)

August–September 1912

oil and sand on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-499

This small canvas is from the same period as Georges Braque's first collage, *Fruit dish and glass* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), painted in autumn 1912. At this time, Braque and Picasso were staying together in Sorgues, near Avignon. Just as his collages were created using pieces of paper stuck with glue (*papier collé*), Braque's paintings were created with sand added to the pigments.

From 1911, Braque and Picasso began to integrate fragments of words and letters into their compositions. These additions suggest a shared desire to reduce the gap between art and reality.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Guitar 'J'aime Eva' (Guitare 'J'aime Eva')

summer 1912

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP37

This canvas celebrates Picasso's love for Eva Gouel, whom he met in 1911. Picasso was still in a relationship with Fernande Olivier, so initially expressed his feelings for Gouel in code. In June 1912, Picasso declared in a letter to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, 'I love [Eva] very much and I will write this in my paintings'.

In addition to the anthropomorphic echoes detected in the sinuous forms of the guitar, an old photograph of this canvas shows that it originally had a gingerbread heart stuck to the bottom section, on which Picasso had written the words, '*J'aime Eva*' (I love Eva). Gouel became ill with cancer in 1913 and died in 1915. Compared with many of his intimate relationships, the one with Gouel is perhaps the least visible in Picasso's work, coinciding as it did with the lyrical abstraction of late Cubism.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Bottle of Bass beer, glass and newspaper** **(Bouteille de Bass, verre et journal)**

spring 1914

tin plate, paint, sand, wire and paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP249

During his summer sojourn in Avignon in 1914, on the eve of the First World War, Picasso created several small paintings and delicate assemblages. *Bottle of Bass beer, glass and newspaper* is one of these works, which are characterised by the gaiety of their colours and the boldness of their forms.

This sculpture has a lyrical quality exemplified by exuberantly rounded forms and saturated colour. The contrasting hues are painted not only in dense, flat areas, but also with a delicate pointillism that contrasts with large areas painted as imitation wallpaper or cut and pasted paper. It represents the last significant stage in the evolution of Cubism.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Still life with a bottle of marc (Nature morte à la bouteille de marc)

1911, printed 1912  
drypoint, ed. 51/100

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1988

P121-1988

This print was created during the summer months when Picasso and Georges Braque were living and working in Céret, in the French Pyrenees. The two artists saw each other daily as they were working on a commission from gallerist and collector Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler for a large intaglio print. Greatly interested in graphic arts, Kahnweiler commissioned several artists to illustrate books including Picasso, who illustrated Max Jacob's *Saint Matorel* in 1910–11.

This is considered Picasso's most important print of his Cubist years; Braque's print for Kahnweiler, *Fox*, is similarly celebrated. Both works dismantle traditional components of a café-bar still life (such as a bottle of spirits and playing cards), positioning them within an abstract scaffold that suggests a spatial relation but evades traditional perspective.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Man with a guitar (Homme à la guitare)

1912–13

pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1972

P9-1972

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Woman with a guitar (Femme à la guitare)

autumn 1913

oil and charcoal on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of M. Raoul La Roche, 1957

AM 3487 P

This work directly follows the first collages produced by Georges Braque and Picasso in 1912, which signalled the end of the first phase of Cubism. Called Analytical Cubism, this initial phase was defined by Carl Einstein in 1929 as 'the simple deformation, then the analysis and destruction of the motif'.

This painting belongs to the second phase of Cubism (Synthetic Cubism), in which visual perception, composition and signification contribute to a complex synthesis. From a still-visible grid, a female body emerges, marked out by curves that animate the composition. Lettering refers to a newspaper (*Le Réveil*), but only some letters are legible: *LE RÉVE*, meaning 'dream'. Multiple layers of meaning give this complex painting additional resonance.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The violin (Le Violon)

1914

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of M. Raoul La Roche, 1953

AM 3165 P

Picasso painted *The violin* towards the end of his intense period of artistic exchange with Georges Braque. Experimenting with representation and reality, Picasso has reduced an ordinary subject – a violin – to a series of intersecting and overlapping fragments. His integration of planes of colour and moments of pattern introduce a lyrical quality to the composition, which is characteristic of the last significant stage in the evolution of Cubism, known as Synthetic Cubism.



## For kids

Can you see a violin? Look closely. You might be able to find parts of a violin, like a scroll (the curled, carved part of the neck of a violin), or strings on a fingerboard.

Maybe you can find the violin's curved body. There are other things in the painting as well, such as letters and a playing card. It is a 'still life' that includes objects you might see arranged on a table – but the artist has only painted parts of the objects, as if they are being seen from different points of view, or at different times.

Like snapshots all piled on top of each other.

The style of this painting is called 'confetti' Cubism.

Can you see why?

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Guitar and glass (Guitare et verre)

1921

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by M. and Mme André Lefèvre, 1952

AM 3972 P

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Fruit dish and tobacco packet (Compotier et paquet de tabac)

1920

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-505

This small painting demonstrates how, in the early 1920s, Georges Braque transformed the lessons of Cubism to create his personal style and practice. At this time, Braque produced many close studies of intimate interiors. These works moderate the extreme abstraction of Cubism through the reintegration of figurative elements. They are also distinguished by bold colours and highly textured surfaces. Here we see these characteristics applied in the depiction of two everyday, domestic objects represented in many Cubist works by Braque and Picasso: a fruit bowl and a tobacco packet.

## The Salon Cubists

In the spring of 1911, the annual Salon des Indépendants exhibition featured a room dedicated to Cubism. Many exhibitors were part of the Puteaux Group, so named for the suburb near Montparnasse in which many members lived. They exhibited in successive salons and, in 1912, more than thirty artists were featured in the Salon de la Section d'Or (The Golden Section), an exhibition with a title implying the mathematical underpinnings of their approach.

Despite the generally conservative audience, this first public exhibition of Cubist works was largely positively received, and it helped to cement Cubism in the public consciousness. The paintings, with their fragmented and geometricised appearance, created a frisson of modernity as anticipated, but their subjects – portraits, landscapes and mythological scenes – were still recognisable and belonged to the ongoing tradition in European painting. Cubism was thus perceived as a style, rather than a more fundamental philosophical or scientific endeavour. Many Salon Cubists worked with brighter colours than Picasso and Georges Braque, resulting in decorative paintings that became popular with collectors.

For some artists and critics, Salon Cubism represented a deviation from Braque and Picasso's 'true' Cubism

(neither Picasso nor Braque exhibited in these salons). Picasso himself singled out only Fernand Léger for praise in the 1911 exhibition, while Braque described Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger and others as 'horrible stragglers'.

# Jean Metzinger

French 1883–1956

## Study for 'Afternoon tea' (Etude pour 'Le Goûter')

1911

graphite and ink on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1960

AM 2095 D (R)

Picasso's biographer John Richardson described the painting for which this is a study as 'a glib painting of a naked woman about to stir a bifurcated cup of tea', noting that in hindsight it appears as a 'traditional Salon subject genteelly geometrised'. However, when the painting was exhibited in the Salon d'Automne in 1911, the public hailed it as the *Mona Lisa* of Cubism. Juan Gris was sufficiently inspired by *Afternoon tea* that he sought to apply its reputed mathematical rigour (its spatial organisation is said to derive from the concept of the fourth dimension) to his own work.

# Jean Metzinger

French 1883–1956

## Study for a portrait of Albert Gleizes (Etude pour le portrait d'Albert Gleizes)

1911

graphite on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1960

AM 2097 D

This portrait study of Albert Gleizes (whose work is on display nearby) highlights Jean Metzinger's connection to the flourishing artistic scene in Montmartre in the early twentieth century. Metzinger was a frequent visitor to the Bateau Lavoir, becoming friends with Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire, and acquainting himself with Picasso's creative developments in his studio.

His introduction to Gleizes in 1910 led Metzinger to join the Salon Cubists who, from 1911, proposed to return to the traditional subjects of painting while maintaining a decorative style they aligned with Cubism. Distancing himself from the experiments of Georges Braque and Picasso, Metzinger showed paintings with anecdotal subjects – often in large formats with a decorative touch – at the Salon des Indépendants and Salon d'Automne.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Fruit dish and mandolin on a dresser (*Compotier et mandoline sur un buffet*)

11 March 1920

gouache on laid drawing paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP891

This is one of sixteen highly coloured drawings of this subject that Picasso created during February and March 1920, which are held in the collection of the Musée national Picasso-Paris. The series reveals varying degrees of abstraction and Cubist principles applied in the depiction of the subject. The use of the mandolin reflects the inspiration Picasso found in *commedia dell'arte*, the Italian theatre in which the harlequin – another frequent figure in his painting of this time – is a central character. Music and dance were central to the *commedia dell'arte*, and the mandolin was a characteristic instrument.



# Juan Gris

Spanish 1887–1927

## Breakfast (Le Petit Déjeuner)

October 1915

oil and charcoal on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1947

AM 2678 P

In January 1912, the picture dealer Clovis Sagot purchased some of Juan Gris' paintings and organised a solo show. In the spring, Gris presented a Cubist painting at the Salon des Indépendants. Modestly titled, *Hommage à Picasso* (it is now known as *Portrait of Pablo Picasso*, Art Institute Chicago), this painting caught the eye of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, who offered Gris a contract.

This 1915 canvas by Gris presents the domestic subject of the breakfast table as a series of fragmented perspectives. Everyday objects are presented from different angles; textures and bold colours convey the scene's three-dimensionality. These stylistic characteristics place Gris among the 'second generation' of Cubists (those who did not directly contribute to its genesis in 1907).

# Roger de La Fresnaye

French 1885–1925

## Still life with teapot (Nature morte à la théière)

1912

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Bequest of Mme Frédéric Lung, 1961

AM 3908 P

# Juan Gris

Spanish 1887–1927

## The book (Le Livre)

1911

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-518

When nineteen-year-old Juan Gris moved into the Bateau Lavoir in 1906, he found himself at the centre of the Cubist laboratory. Work and personal commitments prevented Gris from joining its experiments until 1911. This early painting demonstrates his use of volume, light and shade to depict a still life that includes a *botijo* (water jug), which evokes the artist's native Spain.

Picasso admired Gris' work, although his technical ease disconcerted him. Gris' habit of addressing Picasso as '*cher maître*' ('dear teacher') flattered and annoyed Picasso. Salvador Dalí reported that '[Picasso] was constantly tormented by the desire to understand how Gris' paintings were always technically accomplished, and perfectly homogenous'.

# Pablo Gargallo

Spanish 1881–1934

## Mask of Picasso (Masque de Picasso)

1913

lost wax bronze

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1954

AM 970 S

Pablo Gargallo met Picasso – his exact contemporary – through their shared patronage of the Barcelona café Els Quatre Gats, in 1898. In 1907, Gargallo visited Picasso's studio at the Bateau Lavoir and was captivated by the artist's studies for *Les Femmes d'Alger*. On his return to Catalonia, Gargallo created a mask in copper that incorporated the influences of both *Les Femmes d'Alger* and African masks.

Gargallo settled permanently in Paris in 1912; he was an important conduit between Picasso and his Catalan friends. The following year, Gargallo produced this sculpture of Picasso's head. Rather than capturing a physical resemblance, Gargallo sought to transpose his friend's temperament, resulting in this sardonic caricature.

# Raymond Duchamp-Villon

French 1876–1918

## Horse (Le Cheval)

1914, cast 1976

bronze, black patina

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased with the support of Mme Marcel Duchamp and  
Louis Carré, 1976

AM 1976-258

Raymond Duchamp-Villon and his artist-siblings were part of a loose association of artists known as the *Section d'Or* ('Golden Section') or the Puteaux Group, which (based on the suburb in which the Duchamp clan lived) was active in Paris between 1912 and 1914. The group is primarily associated with Cubism and its offshoots, including Orphism and Futurism.

*Horse* sits at the intersection of Cubist and Futurist aesthetics. For Duchamp-Villon, the horse was the ideal subject to express both the vigorous energy of the galloping animal and the force of the machine at full throttle. The sculpture manifests the concept of 'horse-power'.

Duchamp-Villon served in the First World War. While stationed in Champagne, he contracted typhoid fever, from which he died in 1918. This bronze version was cast after the war, based on Duchamp-Villon's 1914 plaster.

# Suzanne Duchamp

French 1889–1963

## Girl with a dog (Jeune fille au chien)

1912

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased by the State, 1957

AM 3529 P

This canvas is characteristic of Suzanne Duchamp's work during the period in which she briefly adopted the principles of Cubism. From 1911, she joined the meetings of the Puteaux Group – artists and thinkers associated with Cubism and Orphism – which her elder brothers, Marcel Duchamp, Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, held in their family home.

In this work, Duchamp refracts space in a multitude of facets, and reduces figure and composition into octagonal forms. While other members of the Puteaux Group adopted the sombre hues of Georges Braque's and Picasso's Analytical Cubism, *Girl with a dog* displays a greater freedom, with its fresh palette of audacious pinks, reds and blues.

## For kids

How many dogs can you find in this painting? This is a trick question! There is only one dog, but the artist, Suzanne Duchamp, has painted it four times. It is shown in different positions around the girl who is reading a book. Suzanne was interested in not only what she could see, but also how she sees things – and how the passage of time can be shown in a painting.

Look closer – can you also find a second girl, bending over to pat the dog? Who might that be?

# María Blanchard

Spanish 1881–1932

## Child with a hoop (L'Enfant au cerceau)

1917

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1951

AM 3096 P

In 1909, after studying in Madrid under academic painters, María Blanchard moved to Paris. Following a series of professional and financial setbacks, paired with the physical and psychological toll of several genetic health conditions, Blanchard established a studio in Montparnasse, and formed many vital creative connections with artists such as André Lhote, Juan Gris, Roger de La Fresnaye, Jean Metzinger and Picasso, as well as the influential art dealer Léonce Rosenberg. By 1916, she had become integrated into the Cubist movement, and quickly cultivated her own unique style, characterised by her use of soft pastels and ornate patterns, as is demonstrated in *Child with a hoop*.



# Serge Férat

Russian 1881–1958

## Still life (Nature morte)

1914

oil on oval cardboard

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased by the State, 1951

AM 3098 P

Born Sergueï Nikolaiévitch Yastrebov in Russia, Serge Férat settled in Paris in 1901. Shortly after his arrival, he met Picasso, Guillaume Apollinaire and other writers, artists and creative figures. It was at Apollinaire's suggestion that he adopt a French pseudonym: Serge Férat.

Férat experimented with several burgeoning artistic movements of the time, including Cubism. Favouring the more decorative style that emerged as the movement was broadly disseminated and departed from its conceptual origins, Férat produced dynamic still lifes characterised by their vibrant colours and *trompe l'oeil* effects, including this 1914 painting.

# Albert Gleizes

French 1881–1953,  
worked in the United States 1915–19

## Song of war (Le Chant de guerre)

1915

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the artist, 1951

AM 3028 P

Sharing an interest in the work of Cézanne with Delaunay, Le Fauconnier, Léger and Metzinger, Gleizes invited them all to exhibit at the 1911 Salon des Indépendants. This exhibition sensationally revealed Cubism to the public; neither Picasso nor Braque exhibited.

At the time, Gleizes declared he was unfamiliar with Picasso's experiments with Cubism. Gleizes used his 1912 text, *On Cubism* (co-authored with Metzinger), to assert his own leading role. His successive displays at the Paris salons showed his attempts to work within a figurative tradition far removed from the experimental dimension of Picasso's and Braque's Cubism. In this 1915 canvas, abstract shapes and bright colours are layered to produce a dynamic, cloud-like form, from which figurative elements can be deciphered.

# Robert Delaunay

French 1885–1941

## The city no. 2 (La Ville no. 2)

1910

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1947

AM 2766 P

Between 1909 and 1911, Robert Delaunay completed a series of eight paintings devoted to the theme of the city; the series includes this canvas, which was shown at the Société des Artistes Indépendants exhibition in 1911.

A bird's-eye view of city buildings is seen through a window, its edges softened by a semi-transparent curtain. While the pointillist silhouette of the Eiffel Tower in the background identifies Paris and ensures spatial depth, the Cubist lesson of Georges Braque and Picasso is perceptible in the overall construction of forms, whose volumes are broken down into planes of muted colours.

# Jacques Villon

French 1875–1963

## Marching soldiers (Soldats en marche)

1913

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1976

AM 1976-1057

This painting has its genesis in the sketches made by Jacques Villon during military manoeuvres. Here, he has reduced the movement of his subject to its principal lines of force, the length of the columns of soldiers marching to a series of planes scaled into the painting's distance.

The painting's subtle tonality affirms its relation to the strictest Analytical Cubism. Any apparent sympathy with the ideology of the Italian Futurists (who advocated the revolutionary power of dynamic force through mechanisation) suggested by the painting's title is denied by the harmony and symmetry of its composition. Far from the fevered elation of the movement of a crowd or a battalion, Villon's work delivers the anatomy of slow motion, dissected by the scalpel of reason.

## For kids

This painting was made during the First World War, much of which was fought on French soil. Many of the artists whose works are in this room, including Jacques Villon, joined the French army when war was declared in 1914. Jacques worked as a cartographer, helping to draw maps.

The lines in this painting look like they are moving. What might these lines represent?

# **Natalia Goncharova (attributed to)**

Russian 1881–1962

## **Abstract forms, brown and green (Formes abstraites brun et vert)**

1913–14

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of Mme Alexandra Tomilina-Larionov, 1974

AM 1974-4

## The Return to Order

In 1917, while working on the stage decor for *Parade* – a ballet written by Jean Cocteau and performed by Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes – Picasso met the dancer, Olga Khokhlova. A year later, they married. Thus began a new phase in Picasso's life, marking the end of his bohemian years.

Meanwhile, inspired by numerous imitators, Cubism was generating significant debate and controversy. Seeking to escape this suffocating atmosphere, Picasso looked to new – and ancient – sources for inspiration. In Naples, during the winter of 1917, Picasso discovered the gigantic Greek and Roman sculptures in the Farnese Collection. With very little to indicate his recent immersion in Cubism, Picasso began to paint in a Neoclassical style. Mythological subjects and monumental bathers populated his canvases.

Picasso was not alone in his return to a classical mode; it was a current running through poetry and music, as well as painting. Painter and writer André Lhote felt there could be a continuity between Cubism and Classicism, urging his fellow artists to re-examine French classical painting, in particular the works of Le Nain, Poussin and David. While Picasso's classically inspired paintings reveal the playful and irreverent nature of his relationship with any style he appropriated, the work of many contemporaries strayed seemingly into more aimless aesthetic territory.

# Carlo Carrà

Italian 1881–1966

## Caricatore Bridge (Ponte Caricatore)

1930

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of M. Frua de Angeli, 1932

JP 596 P

In 1917, amid the horrors of the First World War, Carlo Carrà, with Giorgio de Chirico, Alberto Savinio and Filippo de Pisis, invented a form of metaphysical painting with an archaic realism, emanating a sense of solitude and expectation. The paintings created by Carrà during this period and in the decades that followed capture this strange atmosphere.

Marked by shadow and solitude, *Caricatore Bridge* possesses the eerie quality reflected in many of Carrà's seaside paintings of the late 1920s and 1930s. Two figures peer out at heavy clouds and stormy waters, witnesses to a foreboding atmosphere laden with expectation.



# Giorgio de Chirico

Italian born Greece 1888–1978,  
worked in France 1911–15 and 1925–31,  
the United States 1935–38

## Portrait of the artist with his mother (Ritratto dell'artista con la madre)

1919

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased at public sale, 1992

AM 1992-58

In 1919, Giorgio de Chirico underwent what he described as a 'conversion', which led him to abandon metaphysics and modern art and adopt the style of Old Master painting. De Chirico made this 'return' to classical painting public (in articles for the magazine, *Valori plastici*), and he was subjected to virulent attacks from advocates for modern art, particularly the Surrealists, who would never forgive De Chirico for his renunciation.

This work, from the same year as his 'conversion', illustrates De Chirico's allegiance to classical models. De Chirico gives his mother the gesture of the Madonna and dresses her in a purple toga. He reduces his own face to a silhouette without depth, a medal profile, in the style of fifteenth century Florentine portraits.

# Mario Sironi

Italian 1885–1961

## Two figures (Due figure)

1926

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of M. Frua de Angeli, 1932

JP 602 P

Mario Sironi was a fellow student of Umberto Boccioni in Giacomo Balla's studio, through which he witnessed the birth of Futurism. However, in the early 1910s, unlike most of the movement's artists, he was more interested in Berlin than in Paris, manifesting his preference for painting imbued with formal solidity and expressive intensity. This interest in plastic, rigid forms led to a paradoxical Futurism, more static than dynamic, more concerned with form than its dissolution.

This 1926 painting has a melancholy tone that characterises much of Sironi's artistic practice. Two figures are presented, perhaps the artist's twin sides, that of the classicising Futurist and the traditionalist.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The reader (La Liseuse)

1920

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Former collection of Kojiro Matsukata, assigned in 1959  
to the Musée national d'art moderne, in accordance with  
the 1952 Peace Treaty with Japan

AM 3613 P

Picasso's first wife, Olga Khokhlova, grew up in St Petersburg, in a family with Ukrainian origins. Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, Khokhlova lost contact with her family. When she re-established contact in 1919, by letter, her mother informed her that her father was missing and her family was nearing destitution. Over the next ten years, Khokhlova received over 500 letters from her mother and sister, from whom she remained physically isolated.

The pensive, melancholic expression that characterises Picasso's portraits of Khokhlova reflects both her personal mood during a time of anxiety and sadness, and Picasso's pursuit of a calm monumentality, a classicism drawn from Ingres and Renoir among others, revisited in his own way.

# André Lhote

French 1885–1962

## Painter and model (Le Peintre et son modèle)

1920

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased by the State, 1954

AM 3305 P

Having been a leading exponent of Cubism before the First World War, André Lhote reoriented himself towards a more classical painting style in the post-war years, in which the human figure played a central role.

At the right of this composition, the painter is represented by a black silhouette, recalling the classical story of Dibutades, a daughter of a Corinthian potter who traced her sleeping lover's silhouette on the wall as a means of preserving his portrait. In a 1909 letter to his friend Jacques Rivière, Lhote evoked the ancient Greco-Roman myth, 'To explain the very simple idea behind why I made this painting ... we need to go back to the story of the potter's daughter'.

## For kids

Look at this painting by André Lhote. Can you find three figures? What do you think each of the figures is doing? One figure is a representation of the woman in the middle. You could say that this artwork shows a painting within a painting!

The figure on the right is holding something called a *palette*. Who do you think this is?

# André Derain

French 1880–1954

## Nude in front of a green curtain (Nu devant un rideau vert)

1923

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased by the State, 1936

AM 2101 P

André Derain was close friends with Picasso and Georges Braque during the period when he was most closely aligned to the Fauves, around 1906. All three were profoundly influenced by the Paul Cézanne memorial exhibitions of 1907, and all embarked on experiments that led Braque and Picasso to Cubism, although Derain did not proceed as far conceptually. They remained friends until the schism of war separated them; after 1918, Derain's increasing traditionalism meant he and Picasso maintained quite separate company.

Derain remained close to Braque, and both found inspiration in the example of the nineteenth-century painter Camille Corot, and the Italian Renaissance master Raphael. The influence of both can be seen in this painting, which combines the genres of nude and portrait.

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Canephora (Canéphore)

1922

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Bequest of Baronne Eva Gourgaud, 1965

AM 3714 P

Like the works by Picasso in this gallery, these large figure paintings by Georges Braque signal a shift away from the radical Cubist experiment that had occupied him for much of the previous two decades. Braque had sustained a serious head wound while fighting in northern France in 1915. It took him over two years to recover, during which time he was unable to paint.

In the early 1920s, Braque began to engage closely with the work of Corot, Chardin and other artists aligned with Classicism. These panels, with their architectural proportions, may have been decorative additions to the salon of the American collector Eva Gourgaud.

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Canephora (Canéphore)

1922

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Bequest of Baronne Eva Gourgaud, 1965

AM 3715 P

Georges Braque debuted his *Canephora* at the 1922 Salon d'Automne. The nude women depicted reference the *kanephoros* ('basket bearer') in ancient Greek culture. This honorific office was given to unmarried women, who led the procession to sacrifice at festivals carrying a basket filled with fresh fruits, a knife, and other items related to the ritual.



# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The spring (La Source)

summer 1921  
grease pencil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP75

Leaning on a rock with her left arm, the right arm of this imposing figure rests on an amphora from which water flows – the spring after which she is named and personifies.

A series of monumental figures appeared in Picasso's work between 1920 and 1921. These were inspired in part by the legend that gave its name to the Forest of Fontainebleau, south-east of Paris, where Picasso, his wife and baby son stayed in the summer of 1921. This legend of an eternal spring had inspired artists of the French Renaissance to create extraordinary sculptures that decorated the grounds of the Palace of Fontainebleau. Picasso seemingly saw in these expressions of nature's fecundity an echo of his wife Olga in her new maternal role.

## For kids

The woman in this picture is holding a large vase, known in Greek language as an amphora. She is an allegorical figure. This means that although she looks like a normal woman, she actually is standing in for something else; she has a special meaning. In this painting, she represents water that comes up from the earth, in a natural spring. In ancient times, a natural spring was so valuable it was often thought of as the source of life itself. This kind of figure was often created by sculptors to decorate fountains.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Still life on dresser (Nature morte sur la commode)

1919

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP63

Despite continuing to investigate a more abstract treatment of space in some works, Picasso also participated in the 'return to order' of the early 1920s. This was characterised by a re-evaluation of academic heritage and a more traditional approach to art in the wake of the avant-gardes' radical experiments at the beginning of the century.

This large still life is the perfect embodiment of the 'return to order' movement. With the timelessness of ancient fresco, the composition's simple forms – vase, bouquet of flowers and fruit bowl – soberly stand out against the strict architectural frame.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Portrait of Olga in an armchair (Portrait d'Olga dans un fauteuil)

spring 1918  
oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP55

Olga Khokhlova was born in 1891 in Imperial Russia (now Ukraine), although her family moved to St Petersburg when she was young. She left Russia in 1911 to join the Ballets Russes. While dancing for this company in Rome, she met Picasso in 1917. They married a year later. Khokhlova became Picasso's favourite model: she is the woman he depicted most in the late 1910s, and she holds a fundamental place in his work of the early 1920s.

In this painting, Olga is posed on an armchair, the embroidery of which is treated with great finesse, much like decorative wallpaper. Stylistic elements – her fan, embroidered dress and the seat itself – all evoke the neo-classicism of French painter Jean-August-Dominique Ingres.

# Roger de La Fresnaye

French 1885–1925

## Portrait of Guynemer (Portrait de Guynemer)

1922

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the Société des amis du Luxembourg, 1936

AM 2105 P

Roger de La Fresnaye painted this intimate portrait of the celebrated French aviator Georges Guynemer to commemorate his service during the First World War; Guynemer died in a combat mission in 1917. La Fresnaye's composition is based on a press photograph of Guynemer published in the French newspaper, *Le Miroir*.

In line with Guynemer's status as a national hero at the time of his death, La Fresnaye portrayed his subject in a highly patriotic manner, adopting a figurative style to transcribe the aviator's focused and worried expression. Deep and dark tones record and romanticise Guynemer's equipment, including his flying goggles and a red scarf.

# **Roger de La Fresnaye**

French 1885–1925

## **Portrait of Jean-Louis Gampert (Portrait de Jean-Louis Gampert)**

1920

gouache on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Gift of the Société des amis du Luxembourg, 1934

AM 1139 D

**Jean Metzinger**

French 1883–1956

**Portrait of Léonce Rosenberg in  
soldier's uniform (Portrait de Léonce  
Rosenberg en uniforme de soldat)**

1924

graphite on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Bequest of Mme Lucienne Rosenberg, 1995

AM 2000-195

# Juan Gris

Spanish 1887–1927

## Still life (Nature morte)

1920

graphite on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-528



## Surrealism

Picasso participated in most Surrealist exhibitions, including the first held in 1925. However, he declined to formally join the movement or participate in its 'demonstrations'. In later life, Picasso said he had never been influenced by the Surrealists except during a 'brief period of darkness and despair' in 1933, when his relationship with Khokhlova became acrimonious. However, the influence of André Breton (whom he met in 1923) – and other Surrealists exploring the creative potential of the unconscious – is evident from the mid 1920s, when Picasso's painting became intertwined with his fantasies and subconscious desires.

Affinities between Picasso and the Surrealists are many: they include a shared fascination for mythology and ancient rituals, including that of tauromachy (bullfighting). Minotaurs and labyrinths, toreadors (bullfighters) and bullfighting arenas proliferate in images by Salvador Dalí, André Masson, Picasso and others. These images foreground the dual forces of eroticism and violence that were understood (through familiarity with Sigmund Freud's writings on psychoanalysis) to drive human behaviour.

The Surrealist movement is characterised by considerable diversity among its membership in terms of gender, nationality and political association, by a

fluidity in its chronological span, and above all in the stylistic and conceptual approach taken by its adherents. Some of the Surrealist artists of the period were close to Picasso, and others extended Surrealism's reach in later years.

# Man Ray

American 1890–1976, worked in France 1921–39,  
1951–76

# Pablo Picasso

1932

gelatin silver print

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1982

AM 1982-174

# Remedios Varo

Spanish 1908–63

## The anatomy lesson (La Leçon d'anatomie)

1935

gouache and reproductions of magazines cut and pasted on cardboard

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Gift of M. and Mme Jean-Paul Kahn, 2002

AM 2002-96

After receiving academic training at the fine art academy in Madrid, Remedios Varo became involved with the Surrealist movement in Barcelona. Catalan-born Varo met the French Surrealist poet (and ardent communist) Benjamin Péret when he came to fight for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War in 1936. A year later, Varo followed him to Paris, where she lived until 1941. Then, faced with the threat of a Nazi invasion, she moved to Mexico (a refuge for many artists, poets and intellectuals who fled Europe), where she lived until her death in 1963.

Her method in this collage is aligned to the collective image-creation game popular among the Surrealists known as 'exquisite corpse', although this is the work of Varo alone.

# Judit Reigl

Hungarian 1923–2020

## Maldoror

1953

magazine illustrations cut and pasted on cardboard

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1999

AM 1999-14

Between 1948 and 1950, painter Judit Reigl made eight attempts to flee the politically repressive regime in Hungary, successfully arriving in Paris in 1950. Faced with a future of painting in the Socialist Realist style, defection to Western Europe seemed necessary for Reigl to maintain her artistic freedom.

The prose poem 'Les Chants de Maldoror' by the Comte de Lautréamont was central to the literary genealogy of Surrealism, influencing figures such as André Breton, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Salvador Dalí and René Magritte. Maldoror is the monstrous figure at the centre of the poem, challenging God, humanity and reason. In this collage, Reigl constructs Maldoror in a macabre fashion, piecing together cut-out images of a sloth head, ribcage and hands, over a cityscape.

# Dora Maar

French 1907–77

## Untitled (Hand-shell) (Sans titre [Main-coquillage])

c. 1934, printed 2009

gelatin silver photograph

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Acquisition

TEX 2004-164 (25N1)

Dora Maar was a central figure among the Surrealists in the 1930s. Apart from creating her own art photography, she worked as a commercial photographer and assisted Brassai in his studio. In her own creative practice, she used photomontage to explore Surrealist themes such as eroticism, sleep, the unconscious and the relationship between art and reality.

Maar created several iconic Surrealist images, including this photograph of a hand either emerging from or disappearing into a shell on a beach. This strange scene is juxtaposed against a dark, ominous sky, adding to the image's already unsettling tone. *Untitled (Hand-shell)* demonstrates how Maar deftly manipulated the subject matter and composition of her photographs to question the stability of perception and reality.

# Dorothea Tanning

American 1910–2012

## Family portrait

1954

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Purchased by the State, 1974

AM 1975-8

The subject for this painting was drawn from Dorothea Tanning's memories of her childhood in Galesburg, Illinois, where home life was governed by an extremely strict paternalistic hierarchy: 'There was a long dining room table that on Sunday, especially when the pastor came to dinner, got covered with, first a pad and then the great gleaming white tablecloth. They shook it out and laid it down, smoothing out the folds that made a gentle grid from end to end. The grid surely proved that order prevailed in this house'.

According to Tanning, *Family portrait*, which depicts the monumental and oppressive figure of the father crushing a smiling girl and a diminutive mother, is a 'comment on the hierarchy within the sacrosanct family'.

## For kids

The artist, Dorothea Tanning, remembered being a bit scared of the formal Sunday lunches her family had when she was a child. She has painted her parents and housekeeper at the dining room table with the 'good' tablecloth out. Dorothea has given us some clues about how they made her feel by making some bigger and some smaller.

Who is the most important person in this picture?  
Why do you think that?



# René Magritte

Belgian 1898–1967,  
worked in France 1927–30

## The murderous sky (Le Ciel meurtrier)

1927

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1979

AM 1979-105

The dead bird motif that repeats four times across this canvas appears in several of René Magritte's Surrealist works of the late 1920s. The motif was originally inspired by the incongruous and disturbing sight of his wife, Georgette, eating a chocolate moulded into the shape of an animal.

Similarly, the dead bird motif was designed to provoke an unsettling effect in the viewer. Creating scenes at once recognisable and otherworldly was the Belgian artist's primary artistic strategy, which he described as, 'creating new objects; transforming ordinary objects; changing the substance of some objects: a sky made of wood ... portraying certain visions of the half-awake state'.

# Joan Miró

Spanish 1893–1983

## The Catalan (Le Catalan)

1925

oil and pencil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1965

AM 4323 P

Joan Miró produced several paintings in 1924 and 1925 that reference the Catalan peasant, a figure with whom he identified. The peasant is represented in visual code, by the *barretina* (a red cap worn in Miró's native Catalonia) and a thick black moustache. In this painting, these elements float freely against a near-blank background, held in suspension with a finely drawn grid.

Miró was profoundly drawn to Surrealism. His paintings have a poetic quality that reflect his search for a dream-like vocabulary for painting. According to André Breton, 'Miró [...] leapt over the last obstacles still standing in the way of total spontaneous expression. [...] It can be argued that his influence on Picasso, who joined Surrealism two years later, was largely decisive'.

**André Masson**

French 1896–1987

**Man in an interior  
(Homme dans un intérieur)**

winter 1923–24

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-601

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Figure

c. 1927

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the artist, 1947

AM 2727 P

In his paintings of 1927 and 1928, Picasso's representation of faces and bodies became more formalised. In a series of works painted in Cannes, Picasso developed his formulation of a woman's head by reducing facial features to signs: straight lines for hair, the nose (and nostrils) at the top, with the eyes appearing on opposite cheeks; the vertical, tooth-lined mouth is placed between, while the outline of the head itself becomes an irregular geometric form.

This painting was one of ten canvases given by the artist to France for the inauguration of the Musée national d'art moderne in 1947.

# Luis Fernández

Spanish 1900–73

## Bull's head (Tête de taureau)

c. 1939

tempera on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift to the French State by M. Alexandre Iolas, 1972

AM 1979-423

Inspired by Picasso's 1937 anti-war painting *Guernica*, Luis Fernández produced many works addressing the Spanish Civil War, including this monumental canvas. The bull's head is a symbol of Spain, the large crucifix – formed by the bull's nose and brow – a symbol of the country's oppression under traditionalist forces within the Nationalist government.

The years from 1938 to 1944 have been called Fernández's 'Picasso period'. He met his famous compatriot in 1934, after several failed attempts to make his acquaintance. Eventually, they became friends. Once, Picasso visited Fernández in his studio. Fernández recalled, 'I showed him a picture of a bullfight, and I said, "See how I imitate you?" And [Picasso] said, "When you come into the world, everyone has a father and mother"'.

# Rita Kernn–Larsen

Danish 1904–98

## The dangerous walk (La Promenade dangereuse)

1936

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 2016

AM 2016-711

In 1934, after studying in Paris and working for Fernand Léger, Rita Kernn-Larsen returned to her native Denmark, where Surrealism was beginning to develop. There she met the main protagonists of the group, notably Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen, who organised the 1935 exhibition *Kubisme = Surrealisme*, in which Kernn-Larsen participated. *The dangerous walk* is representative of this period, with its dreamlike space and evocation of the woman-flower motif.

Kernn-Larsen's interest in construction, predominantly influenced by Léger, led journalists to call her a 'female Danish Picasso'. The artist objected, calling this idea 'nonsense', noting that her work was influenced by her reading of Sigmund Freud and the peaceful landscapes of Yves Tanguy.

# André Masson

French 1896–1987

## Gradiva

1938–39

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased with the support of the Fonds du Patrimoine and the Société des Amis du  
Musée national d'art  
moderne, 2011

AM 2011-6

This painting is a complex package of philosophy, myth and psychoanalytic theory, rendered in the motif of a reclining woman. Its starting point is the 1903 novella *Gradiva: A Pompeiian Fantasy* by Wilhelm Jensen. This is the story of an archaeologist who discovers, in a museum, an ancient statue of a beautiful young woman; he names her Gradiva.

Later, the archaeologist is working in Pompeii, where he encounters a young woman, whom he interprets as Gradiva come back to life. Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud was fascinated by Jensen's tale, writing the essay 'Delusion and dream in W. Jensen's "Gradiva"' in 1907. André Masson's reading of both texts fuelled his fascination with dream states and informed his painting's iconography.

# André Masson

French 1896–1987

## The labyrinth (Le Labyrinthe)

1938

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of Basil and Elisa Goulandris, 1982

AM 1982-46

The image of the labyrinth was revisited and reimagined by André Masson and others central to Surrealism, including Picasso. In Greek mythology, the labyrinth was a terrifying and perplexing maze-like structure that held the minotaur, a monstrous creature with the body of a man and the head and tail of a bull.

In this painting, the labyrinthine structure has been subsumed within the minotaur's body, with a complex topography of passages appearing in place of its internal organs. Other parts of the minotaur's anatomy take on the form of leaves, feathers, fish and webbed feet, apparently accepting the mythological creature within the elements of the natural world.



# Max Ernst

German–American–French 1891–1976

## Chimera (Chimère)

1928

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1983

AM 1983-47

Like many of the Surrealists, Max Ernst admired the classical, hybrid creature known as the chimera: a lion in front, a goat in the middle and a snake at the tail (as described by Homer in the 'The Iliad'). Descended from Gaia (Earth), the mythological monster was born in the age of the Titans, an era prior to the division of heaven and earth, when Chaos rendered the fusion of kingdoms and species possible. The chimera eventually came to signify the fruits of a 'vain imagination', the most extravagant reveries, offences to realism and the laws of reason.

The title of this fantastical canvas reveals the artist's reimagining of this classical creature in the form of an eagle with a female torso.

## For kids

Max Ernst was interested in stories from the ancient world, which he often reimagined in his artworks. This painting was inspired by a mythical creature known as the 'Chimera', an animal that was part-lion, part-goat and part-snake! Have a look around this room and see if you can find any other hybrid creatures.

If you could create your own hybrid animal, which animals would you choose to combine?

# Valentine Hugo

French 1887–1968

## Portrait of Pablo Picasso (Portrait de Pablo Picasso)

1934–48

oil on plywood

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the artist, 1951

AM 3023 P

Valentine Hugo met Picasso in 1916 through Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie, during the creation of the ballet *Parade*. This portrait was created between 1934 and 1948. Hugo chose to paint it only during October each year, the month of Picasso's birth and when Aldebaran, the largest star in the Taurean zodiac, was visible in the night sky.

Although Picasso was fifty-three when Hugo began the portrait, he appears as a young man with wide, jet-black eyes and shining lips, holding a stylised bull's head. Hugo regularly exhibited in Surrealist exhibitions in the early 1930s, including *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* at MoMA, New York, in 1936.

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Three-quarter portrait of André Breton (Portrait d'André Breton de trois quart)**

30 October 1923

drypoint, proof on Japanese paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP2086

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Portrait of André Breton with arms crossed (Portrait d'André Breton aux bras croisés)

October 1923

drypoint, proof on Japanese paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP2087

These prints (commissioned for the frontispiece of a book of André Breton's poems) portray Breton, a writer, poet and leader of the Surrealist movement. Picasso's meeting with Breton took place in the shadow of Guillaume Apollinaire. Indeed, Breton saw Picasso's works for the first time in Apollinaire's review, *Les Soirées de Paris* (1912–14) during the First World War.

The creative exchange between the two men grew over time, and Breton consistently defended Picasso's contributions to Surrealism. In his 1925 essay, 'Surrealism and painting', Breton wrote, 'We emphatically claim him as one of us, even while it is impossible and would be impudent to subject his methods to the rigorous system of criticism which we propose to institute'.

# Kay Sage

American 1898–1963

## Magic lantern

1947

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Gift of Mme Alice Mayoux, 2018

AM 2018-691

‘It is automatism ... that presides over the tender, stripped-down vision of Kay Sage.’ André Breton’s mention of the American-born member of the French Surrealist circle in his 1928 essay ‘Surrealism and painting’ may be brief but it captures the essence of this painting.

Katherine Linn Sage, better known as Kay Sage, was one of the most prominent American artists associated with the Surrealist movement. Like many of her peers, Sage often integrated imagery of landscapes into her other-worldly canvases to represent the inner workings of the mind. Painted in 1947, *Magic lantern* is an example of her work in the late 1940s, where the cloaked spectres that inhabited the bare terrain of Sage’s previous work became monumental.

# Salvador Dalí

Spanish 1904–89,  
worked in the United States 1940–48

## Invisible sleeping woman, horse, lion (Dormeuse, cheval, lion invisibles)

1930

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the Association Bourdon, 1993

In 1929, the success of the film *Un Chien Andalou*, written by Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel, established Dalí's reputation among the Surrealists. His theory of 'critical paranoia' provided a framework for understanding art's connection to the unconscious. This canvas embodies Dalí's interest in the multiple image: a woman reclining metamorphoses into a lion, the lion transforms into a horse. For Dalí, the more violent the artist's paranoiac intensity, the more the images multiply.

Dalí sought out Picasso during his first visit to Paris in 1927. He considered Picasso – twenty-three years his senior – the greatest living artist 'after Dalí' and declared him to be 'a genius of the type opposite to mine, that is to say a destructive genius, heterogeneous and anarchist while my genius is increasingly closer to that of the angels'.

# Joan Miró

Spanish 1893–1983

## Man's head (Tête d'homme)

2 January 1935

oil and varnish on cardboard mounted on wood panel

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated in lieu of tax by Pierre Matisse, 1991

AM 1991-303

Joan Miró's visually elegant *The Catalan* (nearby) has been supplanted, a decade later, by this grotesque figure: a roughly hewn profile of a head with lolling eyeball and protruding tongue. It appears like a distorted puppet, a gesticulating marionette in an absurdist play. Miró painted it in Barcelona when Spain was on the eve of civil war. It possesses a monstrosity – 'savagery' as Miró described it – that is unusual in his work as a whole, and was perhaps prompted by a visceral reaction to the threat posed by fascism in his homeland. Miró's biographer Jacques Dupin described his works of 1935–36 as acts of repulsion, pushing back 'the intrusion of monsters and the unleashing of eroticism and the death instinct'.



# Dorothea Tanning

American 1910–2012

## A very happy picture

1947

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Purchased by the State, 1968

AM 2009-65

This relatively early painting by Dorothea Tanning highlights what the artist described as the 'limitless expanse of possibility' associated with Surrealism. Abstract layers of transparent material overlap and unfurl, creating a vortex that engulfs two figures, including a nude woman, whose lower torso and legs can be glimpsed within the swirling fabric. Her body is further obscured by a large bouquet of red roses where her upper torso should be, and hovering above is a woman's smiling, open mouth. An easel bears a canvas painted with chimney stacks, vigorously billowing smoke. These central motifs have been interpreted as symbols of sexual pleasure and fantasy, and linked to Tanning's intimate relationship with Max Ernst, whom she married in 1946.

# André Masson

French 1896–1987

## Abduction (Enlèvement)

1931

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of Paul Rosenberg, 1947

AM 2647 P

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Figure

autumn 1927  
oil on plywood

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP101

This painting belongs to a series in which the figure of a bather on the beach is reimagined in exaggerated and abstracted forms. A tiny head is flanked by an enormous flipper-like arm, and two divergent breasts – one rising like a wave and the other extending below and silhouetted against a swollen belly-like form – are punctuated by a navel or other bodily orifice.

Picasso's exploration of ways to transform two-dimensional drawings into sculptural forms occupied him until the early 1930s, and he worked on various sculptural solutions with the help of Julio González.

## Picasso and Lam

Born in Cuba in 1902 to a Chinese father and a Congolese-Iberian mother, Wifredo Lam seemed predestined, according to French writer Michel Leiris, to create a 'deeply universalist' work where 'four worlds [were] united: Asia, Africa, Europe and, by his birthplace, America'. In May 1938, shortly after completing fine art studies in Madrid and relocating to Paris, Lam arrived at Picasso's studio with a letter of introduction from sculptor and mutual friend, Manolo. Lam had been fascinated by Picasso's work since first seeing it seven years earlier.

Mutual admiration and respect were quickly established between the two artists, who maintained an intense dialogue in person over several months. Picasso introduced Lam (whom he called his 'cousin') to friends including Braque, Matisse, Miró, Léger and Leiris. On the eve of the German occupation of Paris in June 1940, Lam fled to Marseille – temporarily sheltering with a group of Surrealists, including André Breton, Jacqueline Lamba, Max Ernst, André Masson, Benjamin Péret and Remedios Varo – before returning to Cuba in 1941. Lam then experienced a very productive period, during which his works in this room were created.

Lam's paintings synthesise his interests in Cubism and Surrealism, in ancestral cultures (particularly those of the African diaspora), and in concepts from Cuba's syncretic

religion Santería. The freedom with which Lam accessed and expressed these diverse elements in his paintings greatly appealed to Picasso.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Three women (Trois femmes)

1939

gouache on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of M. Pierre Gaut in memory of  
Marguerite Savary, 1969

AM 3764 D

# Wifredo Lam

Cuban 1902–82

## The meeting (La Réunion)

1945

oil and white chalk on paper mounted on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased with the support of Mme Pauline Parry-Karpidas  
and the Georges Pompidou Art and Culture  
Foundation, 1983

AM 1983-1

Painted in Cuba, Wifredo Lam's country of birth, *The meeting* presents fantastical, hieratic and aerial apparitions. Totemic figures or symbolic idols are borrowed from African art as well as from Picasso's 'primitivist' paintings. Lam greatly admired these works both prior to and after his 1938 meeting with the Spanish artist in Paris.

Lam's paintings evoke a submerged world, as André Breton noted in 1941, 'the scaffolding of totemic animals which one thought one had scared away but which are still prowling around'. The mysterious character of Lam's works, their dreamlike inspiration inflected by Surrealism, make it possible to classify him as one of Breton's explorers of the unconscious.

## For kids

Do you see the woman with a horse's head in this painting? Some say this woman is Wifredo's godmother, who was a powerful Santería priestess and taught Wifredo a lot about Afro-Cuban culture. Santería is a religion in Cuba, where Wifredo was born, which mixes Catholic traditions with a belief in animal spirits and was important to the enslaved people brought to Cuba from Africa. Some of Wifredo's relatives were enslaved people from Africa.

Wifredo was interested in his ancestor's cultures.  
Have you learnt about your ancestry?



# Wifredo Lam

Cuban 1902–82

## Canaima

1945

oil on paper mounted on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated in lieu of tax, 1985

AM 1985-100

A figure stands in a void, front on, the tight framing making it monumental, menacing and enigmatic. Bristling spikes evoke an animal's horns or a cactus' spines. The painting's jarring rhythm and muted colour suggest the wood of carved idols and give the image the magical force of a metaphor of the divine, or of primordial forces.

*Canaima* is the first in a series of thirteen paintings of the same name completed by Wifredo Lam between 1945 and 1947, all similar in hue and composition. While Lam may have taken the title of the series from a region in the south of Venezuela, it may also refer to a novel by Rómulo Gallegos (*Canaima*, 1935), in which Canaima is 'a frantic god, principle of evil and cause of all evils' for America's First Peoples.

# Wifredo Lam

Cuban 1902–82

## Untitled

1942

gouache on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1980

AM 1980-527

Wifredo Lam first met Picasso in May 1938, when he visited the artist's studio at 7 rue des Grands Augustins in Paris. The creative bond between the artists was immediate and following their introduction, they saw each other almost daily until Picasso left for Mougins in July 1938.

Following Lam's return to Cuba in 1941, the memory of Picasso's figures and his mingling of violence and eroticism continued to inspire Lam. Describing their intense artistic exchange, Lam reflected: 'My friendship with Picasso was not the affection of a father for a son: quite the opposite. It was the meeting of two individuals, where the generational distance between us was maintained, in the permanent fight for creative freedom'.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Portrait of a woman (Portrait de femme)

1938

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the artist, 1947

AM 2729 P

In 1936, Picasso met photographer Dora Maar, who had recently been romantically involved with Georges Bataille and continued to be close to him and other members of the Surrealist group. She was Spanish speaking, due to spending part of her childhood in Argentina, and politically active. Maar and Picasso soon became lovers and intellectual confidants. Maar was the inspiration for many portraits, including this 1938 canvas.

Art curator and historian William Rubin described Picasso's portraits as 'mirror-portraits', arguing that they reflected not only the personality of the model but also Picasso's own subjectivity before that model, and were a principal vehicle for his stylistic metamorphoses.

## Drawings in Space

Around 1927, Picasso's art underwent another great stylistic shift. This has often been linked to the start of his affair with Marie-Thérèse Walter, but his works of the late 1920s and early 1930s were also informed by his creative and intellectual dealings with Julio González and Alberto Giacometti.

In 1930, Picasso purchased the Château de Boisgeloup, in Normandy. He converted the chateau's stables into a studio, which he filled with large plaster sculptures expressing rounded, organic forms. Seeking to transform his two-dimensional experiments in painting into three-dimensions, Picasso enlisted the technical assistance of González, a skilled metalsmith who worked with iron to produce expressive sculptures. González masterfully cast bronze versions of sculptures that Picasso had moulded in plaster or assembled from found objects. In the early 1930s, González experienced his own creative revolution, creating minimal anthropomorphic forms from welded iron rods, which bear the mark of influence from Picasso's paintings of the late 1920s.

Picasso's friendship with Swiss sculptor Giacometti – which began in 1931 – was sparked by their mutual deep affinity with Surrealism. For Giacometti, art was a means of exploring the fundamental human fight for survival, expressed as an eternal struggle between man and

woman. Forms that merge human and insect anatomy represent the battle of desire and the death-drive, echoed in Picasso's paintings and sculptures from this period.

# Alberto Giacometti

Swiss 1901–66

## Man and woman (Homme et femme)

1928–29

bronze

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1984

AM 1984-355

*Man and woman* presents the hollowing of a compact mass, a characteristic of many of Alberto Giacometti's sculptures of this period, which pre-empt his most Surrealist work of the early 1930s. Explaining this development in technique and concept to his New York dealer Pierre Matisse, Giacometti described it as the translation of 'a kind of skeleton in space', resulting in a 'transparent construction'.

While the couple in *Man and woman* is reduced to simple concave and pointed shapes, Giacometti transposes them as active vectors, showing 'the penetrative side of things', as he noted in a sketchbook. The sculpture becomes a pictogram of the sexual act, showing desire's ambivalence and its unconscious, convulsive nature.

**Alberto Giacometti**

Swiss 1901–66

**Project for a sculpture  
(Projet pour une sculpture)**

1931

graphite on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Purchased at public sale, 1975

AM 1975-90

# Alberto Giacometti

Swiss 1901–66

## Study for 'Woman with her throat cut' (Etude pour 'Femme égorgée')

c. 1932

graphite and ink on cardboard

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased at public sale, 1975

AM 1975-92 (R)

These sketches were research for a sculpture, and show Alberto Giacometti resolving a clearly violent narrative into sculptural form. Encouraged to read Freud after being introduced to the Surrealists, Giacometti was drawn to psychoanalytic theories of libidinal forces such as the death drive, and the various theories that sought to explain a fear of women. This drawing, and its three-dimensional plaster (and eventually bronze) form, present the 'woman' of the work's title as an insect-like creature, bristling and writhing in pain and implying continued threat.

Many Surrealists, including André Breton, Max Ernst and Paul Éluard, linked the female praying mantis – famously prone to beheading her mate during sex – to the most negative and feared female archetype: the castrating woman.



# Alberto Giacometti

Swiss 1901–66

## Cage

1930–31

graphite on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Purchased at public sale, 1975

AM 1975-89

This pencil drawing, enclosed in a carefully drawn frame, represents Alberto Giacometti's engagement with Surrealism in the early 1930s. The forms depicted in this preparatory drawing were described by Giacometti in 1947 in a letter to his New York dealer Pierre Matisse as the initial example of the 'cages with open construction inside'. The intersecting forms 'trapped' inside assume a seemingly indeterminate number of menacing proliferations: clawed or spiked forms (the 'metal rake' of a hand); elements of organs gestating or decomposing; questionable filaments moving into disturbing proximity, as if drowned in the threadlike, shapeless network of limbs.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Woman with orange or Woman with apple (La Femme à l'orange ou La Femme à la pomme)

1934–43

bronze

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP327

This monumental sculpture of an abstracted female body was inspired by found materials, including a box used to model the figure's head, a metal cake mould from which a ruff has been formed, and a bed warmer to suggest a vase. Julio González worked meticulously to cast all the original elements in bronze, reassembling them to form the sculpture.

## For kids

This lady could be the most beautiful woman in the world! Pablo Picasso might have been thinking about the Classical Greek story, The Judgement of Paris, when he made this sculpture. In the story, three goddesses – Hera, Athena and Aphrodite – compete in a beauty contest. A man named Paris was the judge, and he gave the prize of a golden apple to Aphrodite, the goddess of Love.

Pablo made this sculpture using everyday objects. Look closely to see if you can spot the jelly mould!

# Julio González

Spanish 1876–1942

## Mane of hair (La Chevelure)

1934

bronze

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated in lieu of tax, 2000

AM 2000-156

Julio González had known Picasso since his early Barcelona days, but their working relationship only began around 1928, when González helped Picasso realise several bronze sculptures cast from Picasso's plaster or assembled forms. Picasso used González's skill as a metalworker, while González found Picasso's working process, and his paintings of the time, inspirational.

Echoes of Picasso's paintings from the late 1920s (such as those displayed nearby) are clear in González's sculptures of the early 1930s. Art historian and collector Christian Zervos – who owned one of González's linear sculptures – described Picasso's works made between summer 1926 and spring 1930 as 'magic paintings', combining a humour and interest in archaic forms, which Picasso shared with his fellow Spaniard.

# Julio González

Spanish 1876–1942

## Long-stemmed head (Tête longue tige)

1932, cast 17 October 1984

bronze

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Gift of Mme Roberta González, 1964

AM 1510 S

During the First World War, Julio González worked as an apprentice in the welding workshop of the Renault factory in Boulogne. Already a skilled metalworker, his discovery of the oxyacetylene welding technique provided a way to move beyond the traditional processes of the sculptor (dominated by moulding, carving and casting). The ability to weld individual metal elements led González to make 'linear sculptures' from iron, which were so fine and light that he described them as 'drawings in space'.

Over time, González gradually reduced the constituent elements that made up his forms, using metal more to define negative space. The result was highly abstract forms like this one, in which the human form is suggested through intersecting pieces of welded iron.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The kiss (Le Baiser)

25 August 1929  
oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP117

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The studio (L'Atelier)

1928–29

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP111

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The kiss (Le Baiser)

12 January 1931  
oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP132

This artwork, and another canvas of the same title nearby, depicts an erotic motif that Picasso returned to throughout his career: a couple passionately embracing and kissing. Despite their stylistic differences, these paintings are united by their intensity. In each work, abstracted figures are intertwined, to the point where they seem to merge and become one.

Picasso's repeated depiction of this motif is linked to his broader interest in physiology and in the organic functioning of the human body, which originated from his study of anatomist Andreas Vesalius's designs dating from 1543. Vesalius's flayed images, which mingle the body's insides with its external appearance, echo Picasso's distortion, deconstruction and reimagining of parts of the human form in such paintings as these.



# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Woman with stylus (La Femme au stylet)

19–25 December 1931

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP136

The iconography of this unusually violent painting is taken from history: the assassination, in his bath, of the French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat by Charlotte Corday in 1793. This event – which also inspired the revolutionary painter Jacques-Louis David – is the starting point for Picasso's visual expression of female aggression. Picasso's screeching assassin strikes the heart of a body pinned beneath her distorted body. Monstrous and threatening, her teeth bared, the woman embodies the primal threat and fear of castration.

Much has been written to indicate that the subject of this work was Picasso's estranged wife, Olga. The tumult of Picasso's personal life – largely a consequence of his infidelity and other egregious behaviour – generated chasms of psychological intensity, despair and rage, which Picasso exploited for his creative production.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Figures by the sea (Figures au bord de la mer)

12 January 1931

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP131

The volumetric figures of this large canvas are closely related to the sculptures made by Picasso around this time. The contrasts resulting from the restrained chromatic palette free the intertwined figures from the flat background. Structured like an arrangement of mineral forms, the bodies are captured in a balance of harmonious tension. The dramatic intensity of this monumental coupling is expressed in the figures' raw, brutal kiss.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Reclining woman (Femme couchée)

19 June 1932

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-631

This painting is inspired by the presence, physically and emotionally, of Marie-Thérèse Walter in Picasso's life. Their relationship began, in secret, in 1927, and continued for about a decade, faltering after the birth of their daughter Maya in 1935. The paintings of 1932 seem to vibrate with erotic tension and rapture. In this small canvas, Walter's figure has been reduced to a series of fluid curves, circles and bold colours, lending her body a dreamlike quality. This and other studies of Walter from this period represent Picasso's creative and emotional reinterpretation of the female nude, merging the figurative with the abstract.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973

## Woman's head (Tête de femme)

1931

bronze

Musée national Picasso-Paris

Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP292

After establishing his sculpture studio in the old stables of his Boisgeloup chateau, Picasso embarked on several plaster sculptures (later cast in bronze), including a series of heads that were at once figurative and abstract. These works bear witness, for the most part, to his desire for Marie-Thérèse Walter, who had been his lover since 1927. Her atypical physical features, particularly her nose, are amplified and strongly eroticised in the many sculptures she inspired Picasso to make during this time.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Bullfight: death of the female toreador (Corrida: la mort de la femme torero)**

6 September 1933

oil and pencil on wood

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP144

The bullfight was one of Picasso's personal passions. After first attending bullfights in Málaga, Spain, he went on to frequent arenas in Arles, Nîmes, Vallauris and elsewhere throughout the south of France. Picasso was transfixed by the theatrical brutality of what took place in the bullring, which he transcribed into many artworks throughout his lifetime.

In this small painting, Picasso recasts the defeated toreador (bullfighter, a position historically occupied by men) as a nude woman, linking the work to broader themes of love, desire, conflict and death. Picasso's delicate choice of colour and form contrasts with the energy and violence that characterise the action of the bullring.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Woman in an armchair (Femme dans un fauteuil)

summer 1927

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP99

*Woman in an armchair* is a compositional formula repeated by generations of painters since the Renaissance, but Picasso's treatment of it in his works of the late 1920s could not be further from tradition or from his own Neoclassical-inspired work, *Portrait of Olga in an armchair*, of barely a decade earlier.

Picasso's figure paintings of the late 1920s suggest violence and joy coexisting in an uneasy tension. Speaking of the motif of the armchair, Picasso said: 'A painter must create what he feels. [...] Women are machines of suffering. When I paint a woman in an armchair, the armchair is old age and death, isn't it? Too bad for her. Or is it to protect her'.

## Art in Wartime

*I did not paint war because I am not that kind of painter who goes, like a photographer, in search of a subject. But there is no doubt that war does exist in my paintings.*

– Pablo Picasso, 1944

The Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and the Second World War (1939–45) both had a profound impact on Picasso and his artistic community. Some argue that politics entered Picasso's art when the historic Basque town of Guernica was destroyed by incendiary bombs in 1937, an event that compelled him to create his great anti-war painting, Guernica.

Along with some of his peers, Picasso remained in Paris throughout the German occupation of the city. His work from this period is characterised by a sombre palette and symbolism pertaining to the horrors of war. A particularly powerful example is the series of drawings and paintings depicting the 'weeping woman', a laden symbol of suffering produced by Picasso between May and October 1937.

Similarly universal symbols of the grim reality of war were adopted by the other artists represented in this room, such as Georges Braque's stark still lifes, Pierre Bonnard's austere self-portrait and Maria Helena Vieira da Silva's exploration of the psychological implications of conflict.

**Dora Maar**

French 1907–77

**Portrait of Picasso, at his studio at 29  
rue d'Astorg (Portrait de Picasso,  
studio du 29 rue d'Astorg)**

winter 1935–36, printed 2011

digital print

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Acquisition

TEX 2004-163 (208N)



# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Dream and lie of Franco (plate I) (Sueño y mentira de Franco I)

1937

etching and aquatint, edition 439/850,  
second of two states

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of James Mollison AO, 1991

P179-1991

These two etchings were made in response to the onset of the Spanish Civil War the previous year. Referencing the format of popular Spanish strip cartoons (known as *aleluyas*), Picasso utilised caricature and dark humour to document the atrocities being committed by General Francisco Franco in the conflict. Instead of Spain, the setting depicted in these works is hell, and Franco is reimagined as a monstrous figure.

In 1937, Picasso exhibited his renowned painting *Guernica* (Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid) in the Spanish pavilion at the World's Fair in Paris. The etchings were sold at the fair to raise money for the Republican cause.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Dream and lie of Franco (plate II) (Sueño y mentira de Franco, II)

1937

etching and aquatint, edition 439/850,  
fifth of five states

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of James Mollison AO, 1991

P147-1991

Like the Spanish artist Francisco Goya in his early nineteenth-century etchings *The Disasters of War*, Picasso broaches the horrors of fighting and despotism with savage creativity.

Across the series, General Francisco Franco is portrayed as a monstrous, ridiculous polyp, a jackbooted phallus fighting under the banner of a flea and praying at the altar of money. He is shown as a phallic centaur sitting astride a pig, devouring the innards of his own horse and finally vanquished by a triumphant bull, the embodiment of Spain.

# Francis Picabia

French 1879–1953

## Adoration of the calf (L'Adoration du veau)

1941–42

oil on cardboard

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased with funds from the Fonds du Patrimoine, the Clarence Westbury Foundation  
and the Société des Amis du Musée national d'art moderne, 2007 AM 2007-198

Francis Picabia's *Adoration of the calf* is based on a photograph by Erwin Blumenfeld titled *The minotaur*, which was first published in the French journal *L'Amour de l'art*. Blumenfeld reproduced the photograph in his memoirs with the title, *The dictator*.

Painted during the occupation of France by the German army, *Adoration of the calf* carries a strong political message. While the outstretched arms in the painting's foreground refer to the Nazi salute, they also have a more timeless implication. These are the arms held up to the sky by the biblical worshippers of the Golden Calf, a symbol of idolatrous devotion and of the cult of wealth.

# Maria Helena Vieira da Silva

Portuguese 1908–92

## The chess game (La Partie d'échecs)

1943

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased by the State, 1947

AM 4014 P

Maria Helena Vieira da Silva used the checkerboard motif to create a hermetic world in several works of the 1940s. Here, two chess players are engulfed by the game they are playing, with the chess board extending to the edges of the painting. The result is an immersive, surreal matrix that manipulates space and perspective.

Like the other works in this room, *The chess game* was made during the Second World War. In 1939, Da Silva fled Paris for her native Portugal, before moving to Brazil for the duration of the war. Many of her works of the 1940s and 1950s address the consequences of war, from the artist's personal anguish, to the destruction of cities and natural environments.

## For kids

The painter Maria Viera da Silva loved playing board games when she was young. When she grew up, she liked to use checkerboard patterns and grids in her paintings. Maria often used visual devices, like the grid, to represent the effects of war and other major social and political events on her, her friends, her family and the places she lived.

This checkerboard pattern has escaped from the chessboard and taken over the whole picture!  
Can you find the players?

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The enamel saucepan (La Casserole émaillée)

16 February 1945  
oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the artist, 1947

AM 2734 P

Three elements representing everyday objects make up this powerful still life: a white pitcher, a candlestick with its candle and a blue saucepan, all sitting on a wooden table. Thick black painted contours accentuate their outlines while dense colours fill them, making the objects intensely present. The candle and candlestick seem momentarily to transform into a small feminine figure wearing a black headscarf.

Of the significance of the objects in his still life paintings, Picasso said, 'The most common object: for example, a saucepan, any old saucepan, the one everybody knows. For me it is a vessel in the metaphorical sense, just like Christ's use of parables'.

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## Vanitas

1939

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Mme Georges Braque, 1965

AM 4302 P

Georges Braque was seriously wounded in the First World War; he was shelled, trepanned and temporarily blinded. When the Second World War was unfolding, Braque's past trauma returned. His studio assistant recorded, '[Braque] was so shocked by the disaster that was looming. His sensitive soul couldn't bear what he had lived through personally during the First World War. It's that above all that traumatised him for over a year'.

Despite any personal meaning to his paintings' symbolism, Braque himself described his *memento mori* of 1938–39 in technical terms, 'I was fascinated by the tactile quality of the rosary and the formal problems of mass and composition posed by the skull'.

# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## The black fish (Les Poissons noirs)

1942

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the artist, 1947

AM 2762 P

In this canvas, two black fish are presented on a table alongside two apples; their appearance is sombre and stark. During the Second World War, Georges Braque produced many still lifes that symbolise the social upheaval caused by conflict, offering signs of perseverance in the face of adversity, including hunger after the introduction of food rationing in May 1941. Braque spent much of the war in occupied Paris, where, like Picasso, he joined a community of artists who engaged in quiet resistance.

The painting was shown in an exhibition called *Black is a Colour* at Galerie Maeght in 1946. This work was subsequently given by Braque to the nation at the inauguration of the Musée national d'art moderne.



# Georges Braque

French 1882–1963

## The living room (Le Salon)

1944

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1946

AM 2605 P

# Dora Maar

French 1907–77

## Still life with lamp (Nature morte à la lampe)

1941

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of the Galerie Makassar-France, 2019

AM 2019-738

Having worked with photography for much of her career, Dora Maar focused on painting in 1939, with Picasso's encouragement, and remained a painter for the rest of her life. In 1944, a couple of years after her relationship with Picasso ended, Maar exhibited her paintings at Galerie Jeanne Bucher in Montparnasse. Artist Françoise Gilot attended the exhibition and later reflected on Maar's works: 'They were almost all still lifes, very severe, most of them showing just one object ... She had taken the most ordinary objects – a lamp or an alarm-clock or a piece of bread – and made you feel she wasn't so much interested in them as in their solitude, the terrible solitude and void that surrounded everything in that penumbra'.

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Vase of flowers and fruit bowl (Vase de fleurs et compotier)**

14 September 1943

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of M. Pierre Gaut in memory of  
Marguerite Savary, 1969

AM 4485 P

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Weeping woman

1937

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased by donors of The Art Foundation of Victoria, with  
the assistance of the Jack and Genia Liberman family,  
Founder Benefactor, 1986

IC1-1986

This is one of nine canvases on the theme of the 'weeping woman' that Picasso painted in 1937. The motif is linked to the figure of a grieving mother in his painting *Guernica*, who clasps her dead child to her chest. These portraits of a grief-stricken woman are evidently emblems of the multiple tragedies of the Spanish Civil War; although, in many respects, the painting's meaning is as difficult to define as its subject is to identify. Simply interpreted, it is a portrait of Dora Maar, who posed for many of Picasso's paintings at this time and with whom he shared an emotionally and intellectually complex relationship. But Maar is also representing others, for example, the *Mater Dolorosa*, or weeping Madonna, of Christian visual tradition. She also represents the bereft women of Spain, whose husbands and children have been killed in the war.

...continued overleaf

*Weeping woman* was painted on 18 October, the culmination of an intense week in which Picasso drew and painted nothing but this subject. The figure's emotional torment is made manifest through several visual elements, including her fragmented features and the chrome green paint that creates her queasy pallor.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Cat seizing a bird (Chat saisissant un oiseau)

22 April 1939

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP178

Picasso often employed metaphorical and allegorical vehicles to reflect on the human condition, particularly during periods of broader social and political upheaval – in the case of this painting, the Second World War. An aggressive cat seizing a wounded bird in its mouth becomes a symbol for the conflict and violence of war.

The painting's flat, contoured brushwork is radical, with a foundation and background designed to highlight the clash. The cruel contrast of the wounded bird in red and black is matched by the hypnotic black and white of the cat's eyes, in chromatic harmony with the radiant claws.

# Julio González

Spanish 1876–1942

## Head of Montserrat, screaming (Tête de Montserrat criant)

1942

patinated bronze sealed on a stone plinth

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1953

AM 950 S

A Catalan woman's name, 'Montserrat' is also the name of the jagged mountain range located near Barcelona, while the Virgin of Montserrat is the patron saint of Catalonia. Julio González titled several of his drawings and sculptures depicting a woman in anguish and despair after Montserrat as General Franco's fascist forces gained supremacy in Spain. González's first Montserrat sculpture debuted at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris, alongside Picasso's painting *Guernica*.

González's expressively realistic sculpture is identified as Montserrat by her head scarf, which links her with the peasant women of Catalonia, who are also represented in *Guernica*. It was one of González's final works before his sudden death in March 1942.

# Ismaël de la Serna

Spanish 1898–1968

## Europe

c. 1935

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Purchased by the State, 1936

AM 5019 P



# Georges Rouault

French 1871–1958

## Fugitive (Fugitif)

1939–49

oil, gouache and ink on paper mounted on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Mme Rouault and her children, 1963

AM 4231 P (686)

# Georges Rouault

French 1871–1958

## Skeleton (blue background) (Squelette [fond bleu])

1929–45

gouache on an engraving mounted on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Mme Rouault and her children, 1963

AM 4231 P (652)

Georges Rouault was preoccupied with themes of suffering and religious salvation. Born into poverty, Rouault felt kinship with the dispossessed and often addressed Christian stories of suffering in his expressive works. While two world wars prompted many Christians to question their faith, Rouault's conviction became more steadfast, 'It is the spiritual or moral meaning that is wanting everywhere', he said. 'The lack of any spiritual directive ruins everything.'

The figure of the skeleton with one leg raised in a macabre dance, often set against the moon's wan light, represents death and misery but in the Christian context also promises resurrection. Rouault exhibited alongside the Fauvists and Expressionists early in his career, but his religious fervour eventually isolated him from his contemporaries.

# Pierre Bonnard

French 1867–1947

## Self-portrait in the bathroom mirror (Autoportrait dans la glace du cabinet de toilette)

1939–45

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1984.

Former collection of Florence Gould

AM 1984-698

In this late self-portrait, Pierre Bonnard is in his seventies, widowed and living in relative solitude in the south of France during the Second World War. He lived in Le Cannet, not far from Henri Matisse and Picasso, but fuel shortages meant he rarely left his village and, like many, was socially isolated.

A few colourful objects sit on the bathroom shelf in the foreground, almost more physically present than the shadowy figure reflected in the mirror. Before his own reflection, facing both himself and us, Bonnard reveals all his fragility, personifying the wider suffering experienced during the war years.

## Political Engagement

In late 1944, following the liberation of France from Nazi oppression, Picasso joined the French Communist Party (PCF). In a published statement, he said, 'I have become a Communist because our party strives more than any other to know and to build the world, to make men clearer thinkers, more free and more happy'.

Picasso's commitment to communist ideals was expressed in works directly related to contemporary events such as the Korean War and the Cold War. However, Picasso's growing mistrust of the idolatry surrounding Joseph Stalin in the years before his death in 1953 led him to create works that generated significant controversy within the PCF, after which he ceased producing overtly political art.

In this room, examples of Picasso's expressly political works appear alongside works by artists also affiliated with the PCF. The PCF's favoured artist was André Fougeron, whose paintings reveal his adoption of the principles of Socialist Realism introduced from Soviet Russia. Picasso's friend Édouard Pignon produced works that reflect a synthesis of gestural expressivity and representation of the heroism and sacrifice of the coal mining community from which he came.

From around 1954, Picasso's main political activity was his association with the International Peace Movement,

...continued overleaf

for which his drawing of a dove became the international emblem, appearing on posters, scarves, badges and in many editioned prints, sold to raise money for the cause.

# Édouard Pignon

French 1905–93

## Two miners (Deux mineurs)

1948

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of Mme Jeannette Thorez-Vermeersch, 1992

AM 1992-385

Édouard Pignon was the son of a miner and became a miner at the age of fourteen, later working as a stone mason and taking art classes by night. Here, Pignon has depicted two men wearing the boiled-leather helmets worn by miners in Belgium and France. Magnified by their frontal pose, these are two 'sons of the people', captured in their raw truth, as the French Communist Party, of which Pignon was a member, extolled at the time.

**Édouard Pignon**

French 1905–93

**The dead worker  
(L'Ouvrier mort)**

1952

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated in lieu of tax, 1997

AM 1997-143

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Abduction of the Sabines (L'Enlèvement des Sabines)**

4–8 November 1962

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Gift of M. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, 1964

AM 4248 P



# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **The dove of peace (La Colombe de la paix)**

1951

screenprinted cotton

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1954

3094-4

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Stalin, to your health (Staline à ta santé)

November 1949

pen, ink and wash on vellum drawing paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP1391

Picasso created this work to mark the seventieth birthday of the President of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin. A hand brandishes a glass, and words declare, 'Stalin, to your health!'. It was published in *Les Lettres françaises* (a publication sponsored by the French Communist Party), in an issue dedicated to 'Franco–Soviet friendship'.

The drawing's light-hearted tone was shocking to the Communist Party faithful, given the seriousness with which they regarded their 'dear leader'.

More scandal followed in 1953, when Picasso was invited by the publication to create a work commemorating Stalin's death on 12 March. Picasso provided a drawing executed in a Naïve style, depicting Stalin in the prime of youth. This generated outraged responses from many readers who felt it 'ignoble', 'ridiculous', 'disrespectful', 'hideous' and an 'indecent caricature'.

# André Fougeron

French 1913–98

## The judges (Les Juges, 'Le Pays des mines')

1950

from the *Mining Country*

(*Le Pays des mines*) series 1950

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Purchase, 1983

AM 1983-365

Like Picasso, André Fougeron was a member of the French Communist Party, but their approaches to art and politics were divergent. Fougeron adopted Socialist Realism – articulated in literary terms by the Soviet writer Maxim Gorky in 1934 – resulting in a 'realist' style of painting infused with socialist doctrine.

This painting is part of *Mining Country*, a series of forty paintings and drawings produced following Fougeron's stay in Pas-de-Calais in northern France, in 1950. The local miner's union invited Fougeron to document the conditions of the coal basin's workers. Fougeron chose to eschew everything picturesque; instead, he constructed symbols of the workers' martyrdom through quasi-religious imagery that indicated the mutilation and suffering of the miners and their families.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Massacre in Korea (Massacre en Corée)

18 January 1951  
oil on plywood

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP203

Picasso painted this work in reaction to the Korean War. Although, nothing in the scene seems to relate specifically to Korea: not the landscape, stripped back to the timeless setting of desolation, nor the group of naked women and children who could be from any time or place, nor the tight phalanx of faceless soldiers, half knights from ancient days, half robots foreshadowing a future of unending violence.

When discussing this work, and a series titled *War and Peace* executed in 1952, Picasso said, 'To call up the face of war I have never thought of any particular trait, only that of monstrosity. Still less of the helmet or uniform of the American army or any other army'.

# Édouard Pignon

French 1905–93

## Cock fight (Combat de coqs)

1960

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchased by the State, 1960

AM 3934 P

It was through his affiliation with communism, specifically the newspaper *Regards*, that Édouard Pignon met Picasso in the early 1950s. The two artists quickly formed a creative bond, with Picasso inviting his friend, in 1951, to share his studios at Fournas in Vallauris 'to lead a painter's life together'. Later reflecting on their artistic exchange, Pignon noted, 'I mostly saw Picasso again during the war. And, from 1952, all the time. His friendship is the gold of my life, his vitality is the source of life'.

## Studio of the South

From their first meeting in 1906, Picasso viewed Henri Matisse as his one true rival. The artists had remained in each other's orbit throughout their careers and were in frequent contact following Picasso's move to the south of France in 1946. When Matisse died in 1954, Picasso paid Matisse his finest tribute: he began to paint subjects characteristic of the work of his late friend – studio interiors, odalisques and reclining nudes and framed views. As with all his 'borrowings', Picasso transformed these in his own inimitable way. Picasso's grief resulted in a great surge in painting, but a pervasive sense of melancholy remained. 'No-one has ever looked at Matisse's painting more carefully than I', Picasso remarked, 'and no-one has looked at mine more carefully than he'.

The paintings in this room also signal a significant shift in Picasso's personal life: his separation from Françoise Gilot. The couple had met in 1943 and moved to Vallauris in 1948. Choosing her own painting practice over a tumultuous domestic life with Picasso, Gilot and the couple's two children returned to Paris in 1953. Soon after, Picasso met Jacqueline Roque, who became his final companion and inspiration for many paintings during this period.

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Big vase with veiled women**

1951

earthenware

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1955

1551-D4

# Françoise Gilot

French born 1921

## **Plate of cherries and a Spanish knife (Plat de cerises et couteau espagnol)**

1948

gouache, pencil, charcoal and coloured pencil on  
cardboard

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Gift of M. Henri Goetz, 1981

AM 1981-631

Françoise Gilot met Picasso in 1943. Picasso, still married to Olga (until her death in 1955), definitively ended his failing relationship with Dora Maar, and he and Gilot became a couple. They moved to the small village of Vallauris in 1948, and their children Claude and Paloma were born in 1947 and 1949 respectively. Gilot returned to Paris in 1953, ending their relationship.

This painting highlights Gilot's embrace of what she described as 'the most ordinary, mundane and non-poetic things'. Her choice of domestic subjects was intentional, representing her rebellion against any expectation she adopt the role of 'housewife'. According to the artist, 'I deliberately chose subjects that are not aesthetic, with a sense of humour'.



# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Nude in a Turkish cap (Femme nue au bonnet turc)

1 December 1955

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-637

Shortly after separating from Françoise Gilot in 1953, Picasso met Jacqueline Roque at the Madoura Pottery. Roque was Picasso's final companion, and the model for many works he produced during the final decades of his life, including *Nude in a Turkish cap*.

Beyond Roque, here Picasso also pays tribute to the paintings of Henri Matisse, Édouard Manet, Eugène Delacroix and others, specifically their engagement with the theme of the Odalisque. Like *Woman reclining on a blue sofa* (nearby), this canvas represents a modern and abstracted engagement with a historical motif. However, this canvas is stylistically aligned with Picasso's precursors through the integration of elaborate pattern in the form of the headscarf and Turkish cap worn by his subject.

# Henri Matisse

French 1869–1954

## Reclining nude on a pink couch (Nu couché sur canapé rose)

1919

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1952

2947-4

Picasso discovered Henri Matisse's work in the Paris apartment of writer and collector Gertrude Stein. It was through Stein that the two artists met in 1906. Throughout Picasso's life, Matisse kindled Picasso's competitive spirit; Picasso perceived Matisse as the most important among his peers, and his only true rival.

Matisse showed Picasso the possibility of painting free from academic technique and any strict reliance on realism. *Reclining nude on a pink couch* is an intimate study of his model, distinguished by its animated brushwork and decorative quality. The room is filled with elaborate furniture and an ornately patterned carpet. These compositional elements starkly contrast the fluid fields of warm pink flesh tones that Matisse has used to depict his model.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Woman reclining on a blue sofa (Femme couchée sur un divan bleu)

20 April 1960

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984 AM 1984-639

Following Matisse's death in 1954, Picasso began a series of fifteen works referencing the theme of the Odalisque. The artist was inspired by Eugène Delacroix's *Women of Algiers* (1834, Louvre, Paris); he never travelled to North Africa. Picasso is reported to have said to artist and historian Roland Penrose, 'When Matisse died, he left his Odalisques to me as a legacy, and this is my idea of the Orient, though I have never been there'.

Unlike Matisse's depictions of the Odalisque, elaborate patterns and arabesques are absent from *Woman reclining on a blue sofa*. Picasso has interpreted the scene in his own compressed, graphic style.

# Henri Matisse

French 1869–1954

## Reclining nude with drapery (Nu drapé étendu)

c. 1923–24

oil on canvas

Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris

Jean Walter and Paul Guillaume Collection

RF 1963-65

Between 1906 and 1913, Henri Matisse travelled to Algeria, Spain and Morocco. His travels furnished him with impressions and imagery that lasted him a lifetime, placing his paintings infused with 'orientalist' fantasy in the tradition of artists such as Eugène Delacroix and Auguste Renoir.

Matisse repeatedly returned to the visual motif of the Odalisque, or the reclining nude female figure, which became one of his principal subjects between 1917 and 1930. Reflecting on his interest in the Odalisque and articulating the projection of his colonial gaze, Matisse said: 'The Odalisques were the fruits of a happy nostalgia, of a lovely, lively dream, and of the almost ecstatic, enchanted, experiences of those days and nights, in the incantation of the Moroccan climate'.

# Françoise Gilot

French born 1921

## Sink and tomatoes (Evier et tomates)

May 1951

oil on plywood

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 1952

AM 3228 P

In the spring of 1951, Françoise Gilot began what she called her *Kitchen Period* series, in which she inventoried the objects in her kitchen at Vallauris by drawing them onto unprimed canvas. *Sink and tomatoes* demonstrates Gilot's personal style, in which the influence of Henri Matisse is discernible: it is freely hand-drawn, with distinct lines and colours and an absence of shadow, apart from a stylised black triangle. She explained, 'Each object should cast a shadow but that is very annoying because a shadow is not a distinct form [...] So the black triangle is there as shadow once and for all'.

# For kids

Françoise Gilot created many paintings of the things in her kitchen, to take stock of everything she owned. In this painting, we can see items that are common to most kitchens – pots and pans, a kettle and a knife.

Françoise was inspired in her work by the painter Henri Matisse. Some of his paintings are in this gallery. She liked how Henri painted his subjects simply and with bold colours.

If you were to create a painting of one of the rooms in your home, which items would you include?

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The studio (L'Atelier)

23 October 1955

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-636

In the years following Henri Matisse's death (on 3 November 1954), as his way of mourning, Picasso painted two series of studio interiors, producing new variations on a subject that the two artists had in common. Shortly after settling into his villa, La Californie, in 1955, Picasso produced eleven vertical-format canvases, all recording the space of the salon-studio.

Like this canvas, each iteration of this motif features the same simple elements: the window with palm-filled cut-outs, the plaster bust resting on a platform and the abandoned palette; these are all Matisse quotations, like a melancholic appropriation of his main rival's motifs.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The bay of Cannes (La Baie de Cannes)

19 April – 9 June 1958

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP212

This panoramic landscape follows a series of paintings Picasso created between 1954 and 1956, which presented decorative, ornamental compositions of the villa La Californie's grand interiors, examples of which are on display nearby. For this painting, Picasso looks outwards, recording the view of the ocean – glimpsed through palm trees and many buildings – from La Californie, which he shared with Jacqueline Roque from 1955 until 1961.



## For kids

Later in his life, Pablo Picasso moved into a beautiful house on a hill that overlooked the coastal town of Cannes, in the south of France. He would often paint the panoramic views. In this painting, Pablo has used blocks of bright colour to capture the palm trees, seaside buildings, boats and sparkling blue water that he could see from his balcony.

What is the name of the sea off the south of France – do you know?

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The studio at La Californie (L'Atelier de La Californie)

30 March 1956

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP211

This canvas documents the ornate interior of Picasso's studio at La Californie, the nineteenth-century villa in Cannes that Picasso purchased in 1955. Unlike many of the other studio scenes produced by Picasso around this time, *The studio at La Californie* is landscape in format, allowing him to capture the enormity of the large main salon. Picasso has also inscribed into this painting many of the unique details of the space, including the ornate arched window (centre right) and a Moroccan brazier (lower left). The work's highly decorative nature was also influenced by the interiors of Henri Matisse, whose practice Picasso followed closely.

## **Picasso's Ceramics**

In July 1946, Picasso visited an exhibition of local handcrafts in Vallauris and was introduced to Georges and Suzanne Ramié, the owners of the Madoura Pottery. Picasso was given the opportunity to model a couple of works, and upon returning the next year, he was delighted to find them successfully fired. Picasso was given his own working area and for the next twenty-five years, he returned annually to continue his ceramic production, which eventuated in some 4000 works.

Picasso worked closely with Suzanne Ramié and the Madoura potters, in particular their master craftsman Jules Agard, learning techniques of decorating and glazing. He used the Pottery's standard forms while also commissioning new forms and inventing his own unique models. Picasso's interest was focused as ever on the dialogue between invention and tradition.

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Bullfight in Vallauris 1955 (Toros en Vallauris 1955)**

1955  
colour linocut, edition 128/200

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2020

2020.708

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Exhibition 55 Vallauris (Exposition 55 Vallauris)**

1955

linocut printed in brown ink, edition of 600

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.597

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Vallauris 1953 – exhibition (Vallauris 1953 – exposition)**

1953

linocut on coloured paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family  
through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts  
Program, 2020

2020.596

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Exhibition, Vallauris 1963 (Exposition, Vallauris 1963)

1963

colour linocut, test proof before numbered edition

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.598

A prolific printmaker throughout his life, Picasso only seriously turned his attention to the linocut in the 1950s when he was living in Vallauris, where he met Hidalgo Arnéra, a talented local linocut printer. Picasso embraced the immediacy and simplicity of both the cutting and printing of linocuts. He began using the technique to make posters to advertise the annual ceramic exhibitions and bullfights held in Vallauris. This poster for the 1963 *Vallauris Exhibition* is a typical example of Picasso's linocuts, in which the simple design of text and image are seamlessly integrated.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Madoura Pottery, Vallauris

France 1938–2007

## Cogida

1959

from the *Service with Bullfighting Scenes* (*Service Scènes de Corrida*) series 1959

earthenware, edition 30/50

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds donated by

John and Cecily Adams, 2021

2021.145



# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

## **Jacqueline at the easel**

1960

earthenware, edition of 200

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.620

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Dove on straw bed**

1949

earthenware, edition of 300

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2019

2019.679

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Perched black owl**

1957

earthenware, edition 45/100

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2020

2020.725

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Landscape**

1953

earthenware, edition 40/200

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2020

2020.726

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Goat's head in profile**

1952

earthenware, edition 86/100

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2020

2019.210

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Three fish on grey ground**

1957

earthenware, edition 33/175

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2021

2022.11

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

# **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

# **Owl**

1955  
earthenware, edition of 450

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.74

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

# **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

# **Profile of Jacqueline**

1956

earthenware, edition 3/100

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.619



# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Face no. 179**

1963

earthenware, edition 97/150

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2019

2019.680

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Faun's head**

1955  
earthenware, edition of 150

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased by the NGV Foundation with the  
assistance of John and Cecily Adams, 2015

2015.418

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Madoura Pottery, Vallauris

France 1938–2007

### Still life

1953  
earthenware, edition of 400

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2021

2021.572

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Head with mask**

1956

earthenware, edition 112/200

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2021

2022.9

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Madoura Pottery, Vallauris

France 1938–2007

### Face

1960  
earthenware, edition 90/100

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2020

2020.221

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Face with grid**

1956

earthenware, edition 76/100

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2015

2015.419

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Hands with fish**

1953

earthenware, edition 176/250

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with funds donated by  
John and Cecily Adams, 2021

2021.32

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Madoura Pottery, Vallauris**

France 1938–2007

### **Goat's head in profile**

1950

earthenware, edition of 50

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

2020.724



## Musketeers and Matadors

In 1965, art critic and writer John Berger published *The Success and Failure of Picasso*. Berger's critical assessment of Picasso's life and career is symbolic of the broader reappraisal of the artist that took place in the final decades of his life. Reviewing a 1973 exhibition of Picasso's late works, art historian Douglas Cooper likened the works to 'incoherent scribbles performed by a terrified old man in the antechamber of death'. Critics and art historians began to label Picasso irrelevant and as belonging to another era.

In his last decade, Picasso studied the work of past masters such as Rembrandt, Goya and Velázquez, and referenced and reinterpreted their distinctive iconography. Picasso's engagement with these historical artists found expression in loosely executed paintings with transgressive and erotic imagery that rebelliously declare the vigour of their maker.

Within a decade of Picasso's death in 1973, younger artists were reclaiming Picasso as a kindred spirit, and his late, gestural paintings were perceived as expressive of a 'new spirit' that would reanimate art after the formalist program of modern art – that argued for abstraction as art's ultimate goal – had run its course. In 1981, at London's Royal Academy, Picasso's musketeers were included in the exhibition *A New Spirit in Painting*, alongside Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Willem

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de Kooning and younger artists who were similarly  
allegiant to painting's expressive potential.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Couple

1970–71

oil on plywood

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1990

MP1990-41, AM 1991-DEP4

Painted in a looser style than *Woman peeing* (on display nearby), of several years earlier, comes *Couple*, a striking late work that suggests Picasso's irrepressible energy in his last years.

Two crudely drawn figures, one feminine and one masculine, are entwined and enmeshed: a cartoon Adam and Eve. The man is nothing more than genitals surmounted by two round eyes, the woman is similarly reduced, her genitals constructed from a series of graffiti-like lines. The colour blue, a sardonic echo of Picasso's 'blue period', bathes the couple in a cold light.

Speaking of his late work, Picasso's biographer John Richardson described 'an amazing burst of volcanic activity ... He wanted somehow to assimilate the whole Western figurative tradition and Picassify it'.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Woman pissing (La Pisseuse)

16 April 1965  
oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984 AM 1984-641

*Woman pissing* references two works by Rembrandt: the Dutch master's 1654 painting, *Woman bathing in a stream* (National Gallery, London), and his 1631 etching, *Woman making water*, which is a crudely humorous print showing a woman urinating by a tree. While Rembrandt's two works seem to occupy opposite ends of a spectrum, Picasso has brought them together into a single image that is at once sacred and profane. According to curator David Sylvester, Picasso has enriched Rembrandt by uniting references: his sullied bather evokes the myth of Aphrodite/Venus, the classical goddess of love, who sprang from seafoam that contained the severed genitals of Ouranos, the personification of heaven.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## Bust of a man wearing a hat (Buste d'homme au chapeau)

26 January – 16 May 1969

charcoal, pastel, gouache, oil and chalk on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-661

In the years before his death, Picasso appraised his place within art history by engaging with canonical artists such as Rembrandt. The subject of this work references the theatrical and emblematic figure of the musketeer or cavalier, who appeared in the work of seventeenth-century Dutch artists. Equally influential were the writings of Alexandre Dumas, author of *The Three Musketeers*, and the 1961 film *Vengeance of the Three Musketeers*.

Drawn free-hand and merging multiple media, this tightly cropped portrait exhibits an uninhibited quality that unites many of Picasso's late works. Lines of charcoal, pastel, chalk and oil paint overlap and merge to form the long curly hair, goatee beard, feathered hat, frills and other characteristic elements of the musketeer's appearance and ensemble.

# Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## The matador (Le Matador)

4 October 1970

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Donated in lieu of tax, 1979

MP223

This figure – directly from the world of the Spanish Golden Age – with his hat, sword, jabot and lace sleeves, heir to the paintings of Diego Velázquez and Francisco Goya, sometimes a musketeer, sometimes a matador, is recognisable here by the net holding back his hair. This figure reappeared often in Picasso's paintings in the last years of the artist's life. For Picasso, a lover of bullfighting, this lustrous figure is a hero, a symbol of virility standing out against the vividly coloured background, stoically confronting death.

# **Pablo Picasso**

Spanish 1881–1973,  
worked in France 1904–73

## **Portrait of a young woman, after Cranach the Younger, II (Portrait de jeune fille, d'après Cranach le Jeune, II)**

1958  
colour linocut, printer's proof

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1996

1996.598

# For kids

Look around at the paintings by Pablo Picasso that are in this room. He was a very old man when he made them. Some of the people are in olden-day clothes, with hats with feathers, gloves and lace ruffs around their necks. Some of them aren't wearing clothes at all! Pablo looked at books, movies and other paintings, when he made these works, and imagined a lot of characters that appear in his paintings.

If this lady was in a story, what kind of character might she be?



# Willem de Kooning

Dutch–American 1904–97

## Woman

c. 1952

graphite and pastel on paper

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated in lieu of tax, 1995

AM 1995-176

At the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York in 1953, Willem de Kooning showed six paintings and drawings titled *Woman* that he had begun in 1950. De Kooning explained his new subject, 'They look vociferous and ferocious, and [...] it had to do with the idea of the idol, the oracle and above all the hilariousness of it'. De Kooning saw humour and irony as a way of avoiding sentimentality; although, for many viewers, his *Woman* series suggests violence and brutality rather than anything light-hearted.

Picasso was an important influence for the series. In 1939, De Kooning attended *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* at MoMA, New York, where he absorbed the destructive power and total freedom imbuing the elder artist's work.

# Antonio Saura

Spanish 1930–98

## Dora Maar 23.5.83 [1]

1983

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Bequest of the artist, 1998

AM 1998-248

This canvas is from a series of paintings by Antonio Saura titled *Dora Maar Visited* or *Dora Maar by Dora Maar: Portraits Raisonnés with Hat*. Like the other works in the series, this painting includes its date of completion in its title.

The inspiration for this work, and the series, is *Woman with blue hat*, a 1939 canvas by Picasso, for which Maar was the model. By revisiting a portrait of Maar, Saura opens a two-way relation, both aligned with and opposed to the painting and its history: he subjects Picasso to the same treatment that Picasso had applied to Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, 1656, which was the influence for a series of forty-four canvases by the elder artist in 1957.

# Francis Bacon

British 1909–92

## Self-portrait

1971

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-485

Francis Bacon painted several self-portraits in 1971, remarking to the art critic David Sylvester that 'people have been dying around me like flies and I've had nobody else left to paint but myself'. Bacon sought to capture the contingency, flux and transience of life in his painting. It was only his own face that could supply the required introspection, 'I loathe my own face, but I go on painting it only because I haven't got any other people to do ... [As Cocteau said], "Each day in the mirror I watch death at work"'.

The tight framing and deep black background in *Self-portrait* reflect the influence of Rembrandt and Picasso, preventing any escape and forcing the viewer's direct confrontation with the subject.

# Francis Bacon

British 1909–92

## Study of Isabel Rawsthorne

1966

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Donated by Louise and Michel Leiris, 1984

AM 1984-486

In 1963, Francis Bacon invited the photographer John Deakin to take several photographs of Isabel Rawsthorne, a fascinating painter and an artist's model who was part of Bacon's circle. From the photographs taken by Deakin, in which Rawsthorne is walking down a London street, Bacon painted twenty-two portraits between 1964 and 1971, including this small canvas.

As in his other portraits, Bacon reconciles physical appearance with a deeper resemblance that is based on presence and contained energy. Like Diego Velázquez, Vincent van Gogh and Picasso before him, Bacon was obsessed with the human figure in its most 'alive' dimension, tempered by an acute consciousness of its finitude, of the contingency and precarity of beings and of things.

**Antonio Saura**

Spanish 1930–98

**Imaginary portrait of Tintoretto (Portrait  
imaginaire du Tintoret)**

1967

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle

Purchased by the State, 1970

AM 2009-339

## I See a Woman Crying

*It's up to the public to see what it wants to see.*

– Pablo Picasso

Rineke Dijkstra's three-channel video was inspired by a residency at Tate Liverpool in 2008. Observing the ritual of the school art gallery trip and what she describes as the children's 'uninhibited quality', Dijkstra invited nine students, aged eleven to twelve years, to respond to Picasso's 1937 Weeping woman painting, in the Tate's collection. Her choice of this artwork was largely influenced by its emotive quality and interpretive potential.

With little information on the work's art historical content, the students offer their impressions of the grief-stricken woman before them. Responses range from the plausible to the nonsensical. As the process of interpretation unfolds, three cameras zoom in and out, shifting between the larger group and the faces of individual students. Eventually the children agree that Picasso 'paints how people feel' and that the abstract shapes and forms in the painting might represent 'inside emotions'.

Beyond illuminating the diversity of the interpretive process, which often remains silent and hidden during the gallery visit, this work provides an opportunity to reflect on Picasso's artistic legacy and relevance today.

# **Rineke Dijkstra**

Dutch born 1959

## **I see a woman crying**

2009

three-channel HD video installation, colour, sound, 12  
minutes

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle  
Purchase, 2011

AM 2011-105