

**PICASSO SCULPTURE BRINGS TOGETHER PICASSO'S INNOVATIVE AND INFLUENTIAL WORK IN THREE DIMENSIONS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

**Exhibition Highlights Work the Artist Kept in His Own Collection During His Lifetime**

***Picasso Sculpture***

September 14, 2015–February 7, 2016

The Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Painting and Sculpture Galleries, fourth floor

**Press Preview:** Wednesday, September 9, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Remarks at 11:30 a.m.

**NEW YORK, September 1, 2015—*Picasso Sculpture***, on view at The Museum of Modern Art from September 14, 2015, to February 7, 2016, offers a broad survey of Pablo Picasso's work in three dimensions, spanning the years 1902 to 1964. The largest museum presentation of Picasso's sculptures to take place in the United States in nearly half a century, the exhibition brings together approximately 140 sculptures from Picasso's entire career via loans from major public and private collections in the U.S. and abroad, including 50 sculptures from the Musée national Picasso–Paris. With many works on view for the first time in the U.S., it provides an opportunity to explore a rarely seen aspect of Picasso's long and prolific career. The installation occupies the entirety of MoMA's fourth floor galleries, allowing sufficient space for the sculptures to be viewed fully in the round. *Picasso Sculpture* is presented by MoMA in collaboration with the Musée national Picasso–Paris, and is organized by Ann Temkin, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, and Anne Umland, The Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Curator of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA; with Virginie Perdrisot, Curator of Sculptures and Ceramics at the Musée national Picasso–Paris.

Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973) was trained as a painter but not as a sculptor; from the start, this facilitated a natural disregard for tradition in his sculptural work. Although Picasso's sculpture is a relatively unfamiliar aspect of his career, it is one that has been profoundly influential throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. It is characterized primarily by the sheer pleasure of invention and experimentation. Over the course of six decades, Picasso redefined the terms of sculpture again and again, setting himself apart not only from what his colleagues were doing but also from what he himself had previously done. Whether portraying humans, animals, or objects, he invested his sculptures with a powerful charisma that belies their inanimate status. Relative to painting, sculpture occupied a deeply personal place in the artist's work. During his lifetime, Picasso kept most of his sculptures, living among them as if they were family members. After his death, many became part of the founding collection of the Musée national Picasso–Paris.

Picasso's commitment to sculpture was episodic rather than continuous, and every gallery or pair of galleries in this exhibition represents a distinct chapter of his sculptural career. The passages from gallery to gallery parallel Picasso's moves from one studio to the next. Each new

phase brought with it a new set of tools, materials, and processes, and often a new muse and/or technical collaborator.

The initial gallery focuses on Picasso's earliest work in three dimensions, including his first sculpture, made in Barcelona in 1902 when he was 20. Known as *Seated Woman*, this small figure was modeled in clay in the studio of a local sculptor. Following his move to Paris in 1904, Picasso continued to rely on the tools and studios of friends and explore subjects parallel to those of his paintings. As with many of his works, *The Jester* (1905) began as a portrait of someone he knew, in this case the poet Max Jacob. *Head of a Woman (Fernande)* (1906) and *Kneeling Woman Combing Her Hair* (1906) are modeled on Picasso's lover Fernande Olivier. In 1907, Picasso visited the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in Paris at the urging of fellow artist André Derain. His powerful encounter with the African and Oceanic sculptures catalyzed a new way of seeing. The visit also encouraged Picasso's exploration of wood carving, and the largest of the surviving wood sculptures from this period is the unfinished standing *Figure* (1908), carved from an old oak beam. The angular shapes and faceted surfaces of *Head of a Woman* (1909) make tangible the fractured planes and sharp inclines of Picasso and Braque's Cubist paintings, and the work quickly became one of Picasso's best-known sculptures. This work once belonged to the American photographer Alfred Stieglitz and was included in the legendary 1913 Armory Show in New York City.

The following gallery continues with the fall of 1912, when Picasso returned to making sculpture after a hiatus of three years. Among the first works he realized was the cardboard *Guitar*, whose open structure allowed Picasso to introduce negative space into the solid forms customary to sculpture at that time. Its humble still-life subject was also a first, as was Picasso's decision to employ simple craft processes like cutting, folding, and threading. In early 1914, Picasso reiterated his *Guitar* in sheet metal. The hybrid character of these works is typical of works in this gallery. Picasso's ongoing project during these years was to upend categorical distinctions. *Still Life* (1914), with its distinctive upholstery fringe and protruding tabletop, displaying a particularly complex series of inversions. In spring 1914 Picasso created an edition of six unique versions of the sculpture *Glass of Absinthe*. All six are reunited here for the first time since leaving the artist's studio. Conventionally, works within a bronze edition are identical. However, working against tradition, Picasso decorated the surfaces of each of his six small sculptures differently. Each of the six actual absinthe spoons incorporated in the sculptures is different from the others.

Picasso's return to sculpture at the end of the 1920s had roots in a commission to create a monument for the tomb of the poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire, who had died in 1918. Picasso's acceptance of the task paid homage to a writer who had been not only a close friend but also an early and eloquent champion of Picasso's work. Despite several rounds of effort, none of the ideas that Picasso offered the memorial committee were accepted. The profoundly varied works on view in this and the adjacent gallery bear no obvious reference to Apollinaire. Picasso's

proposals included the thick, almost comically grotesque volumes of *Metamorphosis I* (1928) and *Metamorphosis II* (1928); diagrammatic wire constructions that Picasso's art dealer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, would christen "drawings in space"; and complex works in welded metal, realized in collaboration with the sculptor Julio González. Picasso's monumental *Woman in the Garden* (1929–30) was his final and most ambitious effort to create a memorial sculpture for Apollinaire. It is composed from a large number of salvaged metal elements, welded together and unified by an overall coating of white paint.

The subsequent gallery focuses on Picasso's work from the early 1930s, when Picasso purchased the Château de Boisgeloup, a property 45 miles northwest of Paris. There, for the first time, he had enough space to set up his own sculpture studio. The first sculptures Picasso made in Boisgeloup were delicately slender carved wood figures whittled from pieces of discarded painting stretchers and branches found on the forest floor. His signature Boisgeloup material, however, was luminous white plaster, which was relatively easy to obtain, dried quickly, and could be modeled, incised, carved, and added to over time. It was in Boisgeloup that Picasso produced his first truly monumental figures in the round, including an imposing series of simultaneously female and phallic heads. Noses, mouths, and eyes double as male and female sexual organs, and the sculptures' surfaces conjure both the softness of flesh and the unforgiving hardness of bone. Picasso's Boisgeloup busts were complemented by a host of smaller female bathers, strange creatures and birds, and anatomical fragments.

Beginning in 1933, Picasso started to explore the process of imprinting plaster using everyday objects and materials. The narrow ridges of corrugated cardboard, for example, served to articulate the drapery of *Woman with Leaves* (1934) and *The Orator* (1933–34). He also used plaster to bind together a variety of found items, combining the expedient solutions of bricolage with those of conventional modeling to create works such as *Head of a Warrior* (1933), whose eyes began as tennis balls. In February and March 1933, Picasso gave free rein to sculptural invention in a series of finely detailed pencil drawings collectively referred to as *An Anatomy*. Imaginary sculptures of freestanding figures are built from whimsical combinations of individual elements, with firmly drawn contours and smoothly modeled forms that cast shadows on the ground. Picasso was forced to leave the Château de Boisgeloup for good in 1936, as part of a separation agreement with his wife, Olga Ruiz-Picasso. Never sent off for exhibition or sale, the sculptures created there remained unseen by the public. Then, in spring 1937, coincident with the Nazis' saturation bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica, Picasso selected five of his Boisgeloup sculptures to accompany his antiwar mural *Guernica* as part of the Spanish Pavilion in that summer's World's Fair in Paris.

Picasso was one of the few artists designated by the Germans as "degenerate" to remain in occupied Paris during World War II. Nonetheless, this grim period brought with it Picasso's enthusiastic return to the enterprise of sculpture after a hiatus of several years. Picasso returned to modeling, somehow managing to obtain enough clay and plaster to produce an imposing

population of human and animal figures for his crowded studio spaces. All bronze casting was prohibited, as precious metal was reserved for wartime purposes; but Picasso had his sculptures secretly transported to and from the foundry by night. As exemplified by the harrowing *Death's Head* (1941), the spirit of these sculptures is understandably solemn. The largest work of this period is the seven-foot-tall *Man with a Lamb*, modeled in clay in early 1943. Although this sculpture was made in one day, frantically assembled on an armature that was too weak for the quantities of clay Picasso piled upon it, it was the product of months of reflection and sketches dating back to the previous summer. Picasso's fondness for witty assemblage did not altogether disappear during these somber times. *Bull's Head* (1942) is simply a strategic pairing of a leather bicycle seat and a pair of metal handlebars, a relatively instantaneous sculpture later cast in bronze. Even more reductive is *The Venus of Gas* (1945), which is nothing more than the iron burner of a gas stove that caught the artist's eye as a modern incarnation of an ancient fertility goddess.

The adjacent gallery features 25 photographs of Picasso's sculptures, taken by Brassai (French, 1899–1984). Picasso and Brassai first met in Paris in December 1932 at Picasso's studio at rue La Boétie. Brassai had been commissioned by the editors of the new Surrealist periodical *Minotaure* to photograph Picasso's studio in Paris and the sculpture studio at the Château de Boisgeloup. The Brassai photographs on view represent a selection of the many images he took of Picasso's sculptures between 1932 and 1946. From the *Minotaure* commission on, there was no one Picasso trusted more when it came to photographing his three-dimensional works.

Paris was liberated in August 1944, and the following summer Picasso visited the French Riviera for the first time in many years. This renewed contact with the Mediterranean's sun, sand, and light, along with its deep connections to classical Greek and Roman culture, brought about a new phase in Picasso's sculpture. During the summer of 1946 he visited the ceramics workshop of George and Suzanne Ramié in the town of Vallauris and began to experiment in a medium that dated back to ancient times but was new to him, learning and then pushing the limits of what could be done with the classic shapes of ceramic vessels, along with the range of surface effects obtainable using slips and glazes. In 1949 he bought an abandoned perfume factory, which he converted to a studio for the making of a series of assemblages created from a vast array of found objects held together by plaster and armatures of wood and metal. Ceramic vessels, or bits of them, made their way into many of his sculptures (for example, the breasts and belly of *Pregnant Woman* from 1950). Cake molds, spades, screws, and a watering can were used to make sculptures of birds and bouquets. Having become part of wholly new creations, these everyday items nevertheless retain their original identities. This remains true even when the assemblages were cast in bronze, and then in some cases vibrantly painted.

Picasso's work in assemblage intensified throughout the early 1950s, as he produced larger and ever more complex sculptures constructed from everyday objects. His renewed status as a family man also informs the subjects of many of these sculptures. *Baboon and Young* (1951),

with a head formed by his son's toy cars, reads convincingly as a self-portrait of this proud and exuberant parent. No matter how improbable the sculptures' components were, or how whimsical their subjects, naturalism was always Picasso's goal. *Little Girl Jumping Rope* (1950–54) seems to defy gravity like a real child in midair. Picasso happily declared that *She-Goat* (1950), with ribs provided by a wicker basket and udders from ceramic vessels, "seems more real than a real goat."

The next chapter of Picasso's sculptural work took an unpredictable turn away from the robustly modeled forms of the Vallauris ceramics and assemblages, toward constructions that were decidedly planar and frontal in nature. In 1955, the artist moved with his new partner Jacqueline Roque to the villa La Californie, outside Cannes. This elegant residential neighborhood had no junkyard readily at hand, as in Vallauris, but the artist found new ways to satisfy his passion for scavenging. Wood sculptures made from lumber scraps and other salvaged items took center stage in the years 1956–58. Bits of old furniture, crates, and tree branches from Picasso's garden now formed the basis for his playful transformations. A commanding group of six charismatic *Bathers* (1956) materialized from a variety of wooden planks and found objects, including painting stretchers from his studio. Arranged in a sequence devised by the artist, it is the only multi-figured sculptural ensemble of Picasso's career.

Picasso's final phase of making sculpture, on view on the fourth floor Sculpture Platform, centered on sheet metal, a popular material for both design objects and utilitarian purposes. In 1954, he became acquainted with the products of a commercial sheet metal workshop in Vallauris. That year, and again in 1957, he created a number of heads in cut and folded paper or cardboard, and had these templates fabricated as sheet metal sculptures at 1:1 scale. Picasso played with the possibilities of multiple perspectives through both the contours of the metal planes and the painted details he applied after the sculpture was assembled. This led to a phase of nonstop creativity that produced more than 120 sheet metal sculptures over the course of a year and a half. Many portray the striking profile of his wife Jacqueline, while bathers, mothers, and other friendly characters share a lightness of spirit that belies their complex conception and intricate execution. Picasso's longtime dreams of monumentally scaled work were finally realized during this final phase of his career. *Sylvette* was among the many sheet metal sculptures that became outdoor works; its 20-foot-tall concrete enlargement was erected in 1968 outside a New York University housing complex on Bleeker Street and La Guardia Place, where it remains today. The *Maquette for Richard J. Daley Center Sculpture*, the artist's last sculpture, was translated into a 50-foot-tall work of Cor-Ten steel that was unveiled in the plaza of the Chicago Civic Center in 1967 and quickly became a landmark of that city.

**SPONSORSHIP:**

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#### **PUBLICATION:**

##### *Picasso Sculpture*

By Ann Temkin and Anne Umland. With contributions by Luise Mahler and Virginie Perdrisot. Picasso's sculptures have long been regarded as the unknown side of his practice—a generalization based on their relative lack of visibility as compared to the paintings, and Picasso's decision to retain most of them in his own collection. This exhibition's accompanying catalogue takes a different perspective: it chronicles the vibrant lives of the sculptures throughout Picasso's life, demonstrating that they indeed were exhibited, published, and collected, and arguing that they played a fascinating role in Picasso's public reception. The catalogue features an introductory essay by Ms. Temkin and Ms. Umland, and an extensive narrative by Ms. Mahler and Ms. Perdrisot, tracing the sculptures' creation and subsequent histories. This narrative is presented in eight chapters, corresponding to the distinct phases of Picasso's profound engagement with the medium.

Hardcover. 9. x 12 in.; 352 pp.; 500 color ills. 978-0-87070-974-6. \$85

#### **AUDIO TOUR:**

The audio tour accompanying this exhibition features commentary by the exhibition curators, Ann Temkin and Anne Umland, and conservator Lynda Zycherman. Families can also have fun exploring the unexpected materials and processes Picasso used to make his sculptures on the family audio tour, with commentary by Ann Temkin, Lynda Zycherman, and curatorial assistant Nancy Lim. MoMA Audio+ is available for streaming and download on MoMA's free app on iTunes, at [moma.org/m](http://moma.org/m), and at [moma.org](http://moma.org), and is also available free of charge at the Museum.

#### **COURSES:**

##### **Invention, Improvisation, and Irreverence in Pablo Picasso's Sculpture**

Four Tuesdays (daytime), 10/6, 10/13, 10/20, 10/27, 11:00 a.m.–12:50 p.m.

Non-member \$325, member: \$275, student/educator: \$200

##### **Invention, Improvisation, and Irreverence in Pablo Picasso's Sculpture**

Four Mondays (evening), 10/19, 10/26, 11/2, 11/16 (No class 11/9), 8:00 p.m.–9:50 p.m.

Non-member \$325, Member: \$275, Student/Educator: \$200

During his lifetime, Pablo Picasso kept most of his sculptures in his private possession, and as a result these works are less familiar to the general public. However, these sculptures revolutionized modern sculptural practice—and modern art more broadly—with their constant reinvention of

form, material, and process. Taking full advantage of MoMA's sweeping *Picasso Sculpture* exhibition, as well additional works in MoMA's collection by Picasso and others, this four-week class covers the full span of the Spanish artist's career and investigates what the endlessly renewable language of sculpture meant to Picasso and to the world.

**Push/Pull: Material Practices and Pablo Picasso's Sculpture (studio class)**

Four Wednesdays, 10/14, 10/21, 10/28, 11/4, 6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

Non-member \$420, member: \$365, student/educator: \$310

Inspired by the exhibition *Picasso Sculpture*, this hands-on studio class is driven by experimentation and creative play. While Pablo Picasso was formally trained in painting, he was a self-taught sculptor; in this class, we approach simple, everyday materials as Picasso did, with the curiosity of the untrained artist. In order to explore questions such as, "what inaugurates freedom of expression?" and "how do artists come to feel this so-called freedom that is often taken for granted or seen as a given?," this workshop offers a series of activities that loosen inhibitions and generate ideas rapidly, while simultaneously introducing key sculptural concepts such as form, positive and negative space, line, plane, and surface. With a strong emphasis on process, we will seek new ways of thinking by using basic materials such as scrap wood, wire, and cardboard, challenging aesthetic boundaries, emphasizing discovery, and embracing uncertainty. No previous experience is necessary.

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