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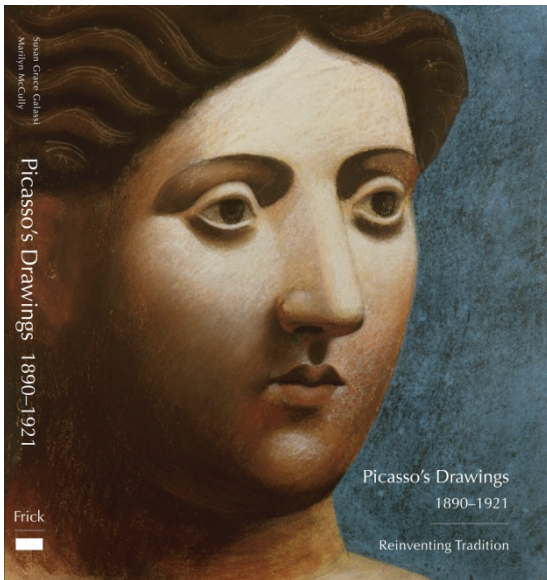
THE FRICK COLLECTION

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PICASSO'S DRAWINGS, 1890–1921: REINVENTING TRADITION

The Frick Collection, New York
October 4, 2011, through January 8, 2012

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
February 5, 2012, through May 6, 2012



Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) is generally acknowledged to be the greatest draftsman of the twentieth century. The Frick Collection, New York, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., have co-organized an exhibition for 2011–12 that will look at the dazzling development of Picasso's drawings, from the precocious academic exercises of his youth in the 1890s to the virtuoso classical works of the early 1920s. Through a selection of more than fifty works at each venue, the presentation will examine the artist's stylistic experiments and techniques in this roughly thirty-year period, which begins and ends in a classical mode and encompasses the radical innovations of Cubism and collage. The show will demonstrate how drawing served as an essential means

of invention and discovery in Picasso's multifaceted art, while its centrality in his vast oeuvre connects him deeply with the grand tradition of European masters. Indeed, the exhibition will bring to the fore his complex engagement with artists of the near and distant past and will explore the diverse ways he competed with the virtuoso techniques of his predecessors and perpetuated them in revitalized form. ***Picasso's Drawings, 1890–1921: Reinventing Tradition*** will feature loans from important public and private collections in Europe and the United States and will be accompanied by a full-length catalogue of the same name. It is being organized by Susan Grace Galassi, Senior

Curator, The Frick Collection, and Marilyn McCully, Picasso expert, in conjunction with Andrew Robison, Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery. Major funding for the exhibition is provided by Bill and Donna Acquavella, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and the late Melvin R. Seiden. Additional support is generously provided by Walter and Vera Eberstadt, Agnes Gund, the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, the Thaw Charitable Trust, and Mr. and Mrs. Julio Mario Santo Domingo. The project is also supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. The accompanying catalogue has been underwritten by the Center for Spain in America and The Christian Humann Foundation.

Comments Galassi, “Over the past decade several exhibitions organized both in the United States and abroad have explored Picasso’s art in relation to Western and non-Western traditions. The show focuses on this fundamental aspect of his work, specifically in relation to his drawings, where his interaction with artists of the past often first emerged. Our project aims to take a fresh look at Picasso’s drawing practice from his early training to maturity.”

A HABIT OF DRAWING, REMARKABLE LEAPS

The exhibition begins with Picasso’s childhood sketches and drawings he made from 1894 to 1897 as a student at the art academies of La Coruña, Barcelona, and Madrid. Drawing became a habit, and his rapid development through this period owes much to this constant practice. The remarkable leaps he made are demonstrated in prize-winning drawings after casts of ancient sculptures in which he mastered line, volume, perspective, and chiaroscuro and absorbed a love of classical beauty, as well as in drawings from live models. The lessons learned in this period of study as well as his exposure to the Spanish masters, whose work he first saw on a trip to the Prado with his father in 1895, stayed with Picasso throughout his life.

The exhibition next follows the young Picasso in his search for more expressive means as a graphic artist working in Barcelona. Early portraits of family and friends show the influence of Catalan Modernisme. From 1900 to 1904 Picasso divided his time between Barcelona and Paris, moving to the French capital permanently in 1904. During these years, he responded to such modern masters as Ingres, Puvis de Chavannes, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin, and Degas, among others, and absorbed ideas from the paintings and drawings of the Old Masters and Greek, Roman, and Egyptian antiquities in the Louvre. The variety of artists and periods that fascinated him is matched by his lively experimentation with diverse techniques and materials—pen and ink, charcoal, pastel, watercolor, and gouache. In these years, Picasso produced virtuoso drawings as independent works that feature his perennial themes—the couple, the mother and child, the *toilette*, the sleep watcher, the harlequin family—and he continued to make portraits of friends and lovers. Sheets crowded with figures, heads, and hands that reveal the impetuosity of his experimentation will be displayed alongside his finished drawings. Picasso’s development as a draftsman took place within an environment of rising public accessibility to Old Master and nineteenth-century drawings through permanent installations at the Louvre and temporary exhibitions at galleries and other museums. New methods of photographic reproduction, the publication of catalogues raisonnés on major artists, and the availability of luxury portfolios contributed to the visibility of masterpieces on paper. In the cultural milieu of Paris as well as

other European cities, an interest in drawings was in the air and spurred Picasso's ambition to absorb the grand tradition of draftsmanship into his art.

SIMULTANEOUSLY RADICAL AND CLASSICAL

Innovation is the keynote of the following section of the exhibition, which demonstrates how Picasso developed new approaches that culminated in Cubism, the most critical development in his career and, arguably, in all of twentieth-century art. In studies of individual figures, he revealed his thought processes as he submitted the body to more abstract modes of representation that draw from ancient Iberian and African art. In highly expressive figure drawings in watercolor and gouache, color emerged as a primary means of structuring space. A sequence of radical interpretations of the female figure—standing, reclining, and bust-length—shows Picasso synthesizing insights from non-Western art and Cézanne's analytic approach to form. These are followed by refined cubist figure drawings made from 1909 to 1912 in charcoal, pen and ink, and watercolor, in which Picasso pushed representation to the threshold of abstraction. Cézannesque landscape and still-life drawings from 1907 to 1910 are grouped with slightly later still-lives, in which Picasso employed *papier collé*, exploring issues of representation in yet more complex ways. The works in this part of the show affirm that traditional graphic techniques were essential to Picasso in his bold search for new means of conveying objects in space and space itself on two-dimensional surfaces. Picasso's proficiency in multiple modes of drawing led him to creative play with the formal language of classical drawing through dissection, reference, parody, and outright hijacking in ways that were both reverent and irreverent.

ALTERNATING MODES

In the years of and following the First World War, Picasso embraced classical modes and continued to explore the Cubist approach to representation. His shifts in style—a means of avoiding confinement to, as he described it, “the same vision, the same technique, the same formula”—are represented in the exhibition through the juxtaposition of richly colored Cubist works and delicate naturalistic drawings produced during the same years. The multifaceted work of this period was informed by Picasso's fresh encounters with the figural compositions of Cézanne in Avignon and the drawings of Ingres in Montauban, as well as by his first trip to Italy, in 1917. In his ongoing dialogue and rivalry with Ingres, Picasso appropriates and reinvents the neoclassical artist's graphic style in exquisite portrait drawings of friends. In these portraits and in representations of bathers and figures in repose, a variety of idioms appear: they range from spare contour drawings and boldly graphic sheets to finely worked-up sculptural renderings of the face and body.

The final ensemble of the exhibition is made up of sheets from Picasso's stay with his wife Olga Khokhlova and baby Paulo at Fontainebleau in the summer of 1921 and just afterward. The pastel and charcoal renderings of monumental female figures from this time reinterpret the ancient statuary and Renaissance nudes on view at the palace. Several large-scale studies for an unrealized painting project transposed the classical figures from Picasso's

Three Women at a Fountain to the modern world in which women and a girl in contemporary dress appear around a nineteenth-century fountain. These representations of classical art conclude the exhibition, which examines Picasso's style, sources, and techniques within the first thirty years of his career, revealing the extent to which he relied on drawing as a means of synthesizing past and present, tradition and innovation. As Picasso joined the ranks of the masters he admired, the practice of drawing continued to provide him with the means to give his own art a fresh and vigorous expression.

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BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: (212) 288-0700

Web site: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

Hours: open six days a week: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11am to 5pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11am to 5pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Admission: \$18; senior citizens \$12; students \$5; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11am to 1pm

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection.

Subway: #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

Tour Information: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

Museum Shop: the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

Group Visits: Please call (212) 288-0700 for details and to make reservations.

Public Programs: A calendar of events is published regularly and is available upon request.

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