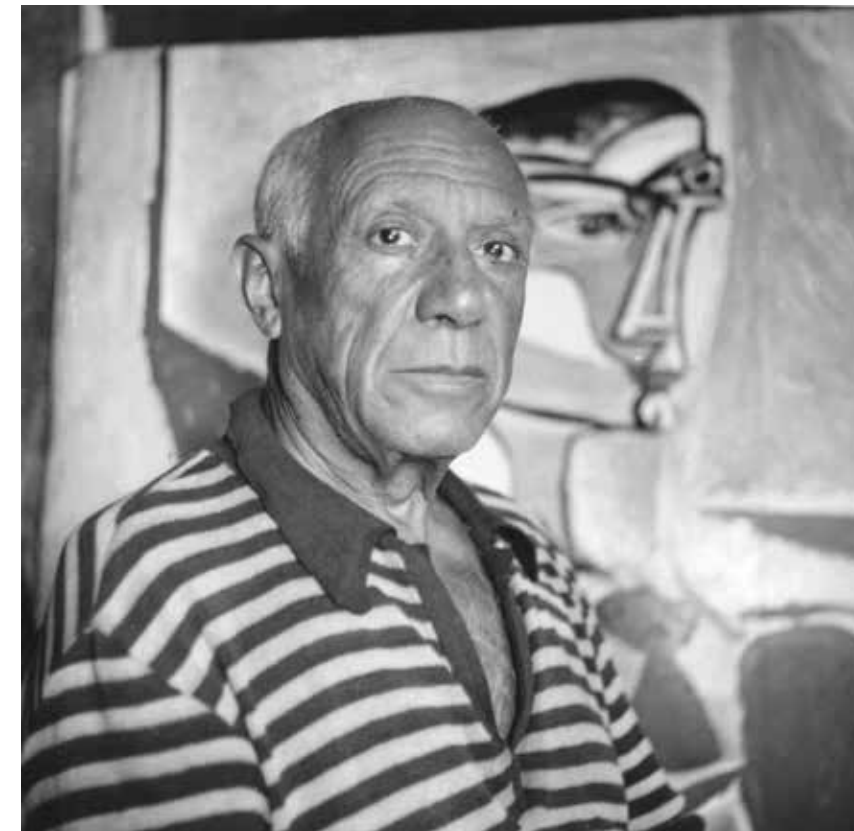




Opposite page: Girl Before a Mirror, 1932, 5' 4" x 4' 3". The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Right: Picasso in front of one of his paintings in Cannes, 1955.



Picasso: Torchbearer of Artistic Innovation

A billion-dollar gift to the Metropolitan Museum renews attention to the most recognized and influential artist of the modern era.

by JASON EDWARD KAUFMAN

Pablo Picasso is widely identified as the iconic visual artist of the 20th century. The legendary Spaniard (1881–1973) resides in our collective consciousness alongside da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, and Monet as his era's supreme exponent of artistic genius. A veritable eponym for modern art, Picasso is again at the forefront of the art scene. This season, four decades after his death, three concurrent Picasso exhibitions in New York present a welcome opportunity to experience his prolific oeuvre and learn about the modern master's storied life and career.

A billion-dollar gift made in 2013 to The Metropolitan Museum of Art includes 34 works by Picasso, all from the seminal period from 1906 to 1916, when the young artist and his colleague, Georges Braque, founded the cubist movement. The exhibition *Cubism: The Leonard*

A. Lauder Collection—on display through February 16, 2015—also includes 47 works by Braque, Juan Gris, and Fernand Léger, all part of a trove of 81 cubist paintings, works on paper, and sculpture donated by Leonard A. Lauder, chairman emeritus of Estée Lauder Companies. Meanwhile, the Pace Gallery explores the last two decades of Picasso's life in an exhibition titled *Picasso & Jacqueline: The Evolution of Style* (through January 10, 2015) devoted to his portrayals in paintings, drawings, sculptures, and prints of his second wife, Jacqueline Roque, with whom he lived from 1954 until his death. And through January 3, 2015, the Gagosian Gallery on West 21st Street examines Picasso's seldom studied relationship to photography in its *Picasso & the Camera* exhibit, which includes portraits, home movies, and snapshots, some by the artist himself, that record life in the studio and at home. ▷



Image: © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY. © Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society.

The Kitchen, 1948, 69" x 99.20".
Musée Picasso, Paris.

Prodigious, Prolific, and Protean

Born in Málaga, Spain, in 1881, Picasso, the eldest of three children in a middle-class family, was a prodigy endowed with astonishing gifts and fierce ambition. By his early teens he could draw academic figures with naturalistic precision that surpassed the skills of his father, a drawing teacher and curator of the municipal museum. Other artists might have been satisfied turning out portraits and genre scenes, but Picasso was compelled to invent new forms of expression. He developed cubism, which changed the course of art in the 20th century, and pioneered the use of paper and other materials in collaged compositions. He also popularized assemblage, the combination of found objects to create figurative statues, which expanded the range of sculpture.

The breadth of Picasso's creativity is daunting in its immensity and variety. An incessant worker, he produced tens of thousands of works, probably more than any other acclaimed artist. Scholar Christian Zervos catalogued some 16,000 paintings and drawings in a 33-volume illustrated chronology. Originally published between 1932 and 1978, *The Zervos catalogue* is available in a revised limited edition for the first time in English, through the MoMA Design Store, at \$20,000 a set, a relative bargain in that the rare first edition can fetch bids for as much as \$200,000 at auction. ▷

This page: The Accordionist, 1911, 51.25" x 35.25". Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Opposite top: The Milliner's Workshop, 1926, 67.75" x 101". Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle, Centre Pompidou, Paris, gift of the artist, 1947.

Opposite bottom: Guitar, 1914, 30.5" x 13.75" x 7.625". The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the artist.



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During his eight-decade career, Picasso also created an estimated 1,200 sculptures, 12,000 drawings, thousands of graphic works and ceramics, and dozens of tapestries, rugs, and ephemeral objects, not to mention more than 300 poems and two bizarre plays. His protean energy led him to perpetually reinvent himself, developing a series of radically original styles that he deployed in endless combinations and in various media. He shifted between cubism, naturalism, pointillism, surrealism, and near total abstraction, sometimes even within a single work.

Before he was 20 he joined a bohemian circle in Barcelona, painting blue-tinged images of the downtrodden reflecting the groups' progressive principles. This blue period (1900–1904) ended when he moved to Paris and commenced a rose period (1904–1906), employing a pink and orange palette in pictures of nudes, harlequins, and circus performers. At the salon of American expatriate art collector Gertrude Stein he met Henri Matisse, leader of the cutting-edge fauve movement. “That’s the moment when Picasso makes a successful bid to assume the reins of the new school,” says Rebecca Rabinow, curator in the Metropolitan Museum’s Department of Modern and Contemporary Art and co-curator of the exhibition. ▷





Guernica, 1937, 11' 5" x 25' 6".
Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid.

Image: John Bigelow Taylor/Art Resource, NY. © Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society.



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Left: Studio with Plaster Head, 1925, 38.625" x 51.625". The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Top: Bull's Head (Tête de taureau), 1942, created from the seat and handlebars of a bicycle. 13.2" x 17.3" x 7.5". Musée Picasso, Paris.

Cubism

In 1907 Picasso met Braque, a young French artist working in a style inspired by the planar brushwork of the late Paul Cézanne. Picasso had been developing an abstracted style based on ancient Iberian and African sculptures. For the next six years, until Braque was conscripted to fight in the First World War, the two worked virtually side by side, influencing one another's increasingly abstract styles. By 1908 they were painting landscapes and still lifes as faceted structures in shallow compressed space—geometrized images that prompted the use of the term "cubism."

But the style became more than geometry. Cubism disintegrated solid form into a sea of overlapping viewpoints, demolishing centuries-old rules of perspective. Instead of depicting an object as a stable form, Picasso represented the movement of the eye and the action of the mind in understanding a subject's properties. ▷



A bottle might appear in profile with an arc suggesting its rounded volume, an expanse of green representing its material, and floating letters indicating the label. The result was a kind of mental diagram that turned the visual field into a space-time continuum mimicking the act of perception. The development was appropriate to an age when Albert Einstein's relativity, Sigmund Freud's psychology, Henri Bergson's philosophy of consciousness, the invention of X-rays, and the fledgling field of aviation were changing the way people conceived of reality.

According to Rabinow, "Cubism is the most important radical influential movement of the early 20th century." Emily Braun, an art historian and the curator of Lauder's private collection, agrees. "Cubism is key because it's the first movement to make how we perceive things the subject of art itself," she says. "The cubists are looking at how we see rather than what we see. Secondly, they were the first to incorporate non-fine-art materials like wallpaper and matchbox covers. That was incredibly radical. Also they opened the fine arts to word-and-image play—how words and advertising could be brought into the pictures, relating fine art and modern commercial culture, and also moving toward pure abstraction."

Myriad Motifs and Lovers

Picasso painted still lifes, landscapes, and interiors, but his preferred subject was the human figure: portraits, nudes, mythological scenes, political caricatures, and

riffs on Old Masters such as Velazquez and Manet. He also made self-portraits as well as paintings of harlequins, Minotaurs, musketeers, and painters who serve as his surrogates. His romantic partners' features became the raw material for pictorial experiments, as evident in the *Jacqueline* show at the Pace, where she is portrayed with photographic realism, as a cubist subject, and as a distorted mass of expressionist color. In her 1964 memoir, *Life with Picasso*, Françoise Gilot, Picasso's second wife, recounts that he told her, "I paint how others write their autobiography. My canvases, finished or not, are the pages of my diary."

Those "pages" were sometimes fairly racy. Picasso married twice, but usually had lovers on the side, many of them decades his junior. His philandering has earned him a reputation as a misogynist. While his first wife, the ballerina Olga Khokhlova, was pregnant, he began seeing 17-year-old Marie-Thérèse Walter, the subject of his most voluptuous erotic paintings. He separated from Khokhlova, had a daughter with Walter, then became involved with painter and photographer Dora Maar, who became the "weeping woman" in his antiwar paintings. After the liberation of Paris, he began a relationship with Gilot, an art student 40 years his junior. She gave birth to Claude and Paloma Picasso, the noted fashion and jewelry designer. At age 72 he took his last lover, the awestruck 27-year-old divorcée Jacqueline Roque. She shot herself 13 years after his death, and nine years after Walter, who had hoped to marry Picasso, hanged herself. ▷

Images: (Left) Cameraphoto Arte, Venice / Art Resource, NY. (Right) Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY. Both © Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society.



Opposite: *Joie de Vivre*, 1946, 47.25" x 98.5". Musée Picasso, Antibes.

Above: *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.K. Version)*, 1907, 96" x 92". The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Museum Staple and Market Leader

Picasso's work can be found in every major museum. MoMA, the Centre Pompidou, and the Hermitage Museum have fine collections, but the largest belongs to the Musée Picasso in Paris—more than 5,000 items and the artist's personal archives and art collection, all conveyed to the French state in lieu of estate taxes. Founded in 1985, the museum has just reopened after a five-year renovation of the Hôtel Salé, its 17th-century home. The Museu Picasso in Barcelona opened in 1963 and has more than 4,000 works rich in early material.

Picasso's native city of Málaga is home to a more modest museum that opened in 2003, with work donated by the Picasso family.

Curators and scholars never tire of Picasso. The last decade alone has seen exhibitions about his relationship with the Old Masters, his influence on American art, his guitar sculptures, his black-and-white works, several of his muses, and now *Picasso TV* at the Picasso Museum in Málaga (through January 11, 2015) reveals the impact of French television on his work. ▷

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Opposite: Girl with a Mandolin, 1910, 39.5" x 29". The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Above: The Weeping Woman, 1937, 28.625" x 19.25". Tate Modern, London.



Goat's Skull, Bottle and Candle, 1952,
35.125" x 45.75". Tate Modern, London.

Picasso is also a mainstay of the international art market, as solid a brand as Coca-Cola or Microsoft. According to Artnet, he ranked first in total value of auction sales in the first half of 2014, with \$345.8 million, followed by Andy Warhol (\$299.2 million), Francis Bacon (\$236.5 million), and Claude Monet (\$177.6 million). His 2013 sales of \$422.8 million were just behind Warhol's \$427.1 million. And even though Bacon, Warhol, and Gerhard Richter have surpassed him in price for an individual work, 10 of the highest-priced 50 works have been Picassos, more than any other artist. (Warhol is next with five.)

His *Boy with a Pipe* (*The Young Apprentice*), a 1905 canvas from the artist's rose period, was the first artwork to break \$100 million at auction when it sold for \$104 million at Sotheby's New York in 2004. *Nude, Green Leaves and Bust* (1932) sold for \$106.5 million in 2010, another new world record for a work of art sold at auction; and *Le Rêve* (1932) reportedly went for \$155 million in a private sale from casino magnate Steve Wynn to hedge funder Steven A. Cohen in 2013. Fortunate as the private collectors are, most of Picasso's masterpieces are in museums, allowing his work to be enjoyed and appreciated by all. ♦

Image: Art Resource, NY. © Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society.



Four Seasons Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Photo: Peter Vitale.

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