

PRESS PACK

# OLGA PICASSO

Exhibition 21 March to 3 September 2017

Musée Picasso Paris



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# 1. OLGA PICASSO

From 21 March to 3 September 2017, the Musée national Picasso-Paris presents the first exhibition dedicated to the years shared between Pablo Picasso and his first wife, Olga Khokhlova.

Through a rich selection of more than 350 works of art, paintings, drawings, unseen written and photographic archives, the exhibition attempts to understand the execution of Picasso's major artworks between 1917 and 1935 by recreating his artistic production filtered through the social and political history of the interwar period.

Olga Khokhlova was born to a colonel in 1891, in Nizhyn, a Ukrainian town located within the Russian Empire. In 1912, she entered the prestigious and innovative Russian Ballet directed by Sergei Diaghilev. It was in Rome, spring 1917, where she met Pablo Picasso while he was producing, upon invitation of Jean Cocteau, the decorations and costumes of the ballet *Parade* (music by Erik Satie, theme by Jean Cocteau, choreography by Léonide Massine). They got married on July 12, 1918, in the Russian Orthodox Cathedral at the Rue Daru, with Jean Cocteau, Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire as their witnesses.

As the perfect model during Picasso's classical period, Olga was first portrayed by thin, elegant lines characterized by the influence of the French neoclassical painter Ingres. Synonymous with a certain return to figuration, Olga is often represented as melancholic, sitting, while reading or writing, no doubt an allusion to the correspondence she maintained with her family that was going through a tragic moment in history. In fact, at the same time, in contrast to the couple's social ascent and the accruing artistic recognition of Picasso's works, the Russian Empire, severely destroyed by the Great War, suffered a major economic and food crisis while losing more than two million soldiers on the war front. Olga's family also suffered a tragedy, which was reflected in the letters she received: declining social status, the disappearance of her father, and finally, correspondence with her family was gradually interrupted. After the birth of their first child, Paul, on February 4, 1921, Olga became the inspiration for numerous maternity scenes, compositions bathed in innocent softness. The family scenes and portraits of the young boy show the serene happiness which flourishes notably in timeless shapes. These forms correspond to Picasso's new attention to antiquity and the renaissance discovered in Italy, which was reactivated by the family's summer holiday in Fontainebleau in 1921.

After the encounter in 1927 with Marie-Thérèse Walter, a 17-year-old woman who will become Picasso's mistress, Olga's figure metamorphoses. In *Le Grand nu au fauteuil rouge* (1929), Olga is nothing but pain and sorrow. Her form is flaccid with violent expression and translates the nature of the couple's profound crisis. Even though the spouses separate for good in 1935, the year that incidentally marks a temporary cessation of the painter's work, they will stay married until Olga's death in 1955.

## ENTRANCE HALL

### Dates & key figures

**17 June 1891:** Olga is born in Nizhyn, to Stepan Khokhlov, a colonel, and Lydia Khokhlova (born Vinchenko). The couple's children are Vladimir, Olga, Nina, Nikolai, and Evgeny. The family is of Ukrainian origin, but settles in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) at an unknown date, and then in the Kars region, circa 1910.

**1911:** Olga joins the Ballets Russes troupe and travels across Europe and the United States.

**1914-1915:** She pays her last visits to her family, before setting off on her tour in December.

**February 1917:** Russian Revolution. Emperor Nicolas II abdicates and a provisional government is established. Picasso and Cocteau travel to Rome to work on the ballet *Parade* with the Ballets Russes; the ballet premiered in the Théâtre du Châtelet, on 18 May in Paris. Pablo meets Olga. Picasso accompanies the troupe to Barcelona in the autumn.

**October 1917:** The Bolsheviks overthrow the provisional government. Olga's father and two of her brothers join the counter-revolutionary White Army that has assembled in the south. Olga loses contact with her family.

**Beginning of 1918:** Olga injures her leg, so she is temporarily unable to perform.

**12 July 1918:** Olga and Pablo get married in the Russian church in Rue Daru, in Paris.

They spend their honeymoon in Biarritz, in Eugenia Errázuriz's villa, La Mimoseiraie.

**Mid November 1918:** The young newly-weds move to 23, Rue La Boétie, near the gallery owned by Paul Rosenberg, who has become Picasso's art dealer.

**Mai-July 1919:** Sojourn in London to work on the scenery and costumes of the ballet *Tricorne*, set to music by Manuel de Falla. After a brief return to the stage, Olga leaves the Ballets Russes troupe and ends her dancing career.

**August 1919:** Sojourn at Saint-Raphaël.

**September-December 1919:** The White Army is defeated in the south of Russia. Olga's father and her two brothers who enlisted in the army disappear. Stepan dies, probably from typhus, in December, but his family never receive confirmation of this.

**1920:** She contacts her family in Russia. Olga discovers that her youngest brother, Yevgeny, died in September 1917, and that her mother and sister are living in increasingly precarious conditions in Tbilisi (Georgia). Her brother Nikolai takes refuge, like thousands of other Russians, in Serbia.

**15 May 1920:** Première of the ballet *Pulcinella* at the Opéra de Paris, set to the music of Igor Stravinski, after Pergolesi.

**Summer 1920:** Sojourn in Saint-Raphaël, then Juan-les-Pins.

**January 1921:** Vladimir, Olga's eldest brother, contacts his family. He is living in Kostroma.

**4 February 1921:** Birth of Paul Picasso, the couple's first and only child.

**April 1921:** First monograph devoted to Picasso, written by Maurice Raynal.

**22 May 1921:** First performance of the ballet *Cuadro Flamenco* in the Théâtre de la Gaîté-Lyrique, in Paris, set to traditional music adapted by Manuel de Falla.

**Summer 1921:** Trip to Fontainebleau.

**Beginning of 1922:** Olga traces Nikolai in Serbia and uses her contacts to ensure that he can move to Belgrade. Picasso creates a new stage curtain, replacing that of Léon Bakst, for *The Afternoon of a Faun*, a ballet by Vaslav Nijinsky set to music by Claude Debussy.

**Summer 1922:** Trip to Dinard.

**22 December 1922:** Birth of the Soviet Union.

**Summer 1923:** Trip to the Cap d'Antibes. Encounters with the Comte Étienne de Beaumont and the American painter Gerald Murphy and his wife, Sarah.

**15 June 1924:** Première of the ballet *Mercury* at the Théâtre de la Cigale, set to music by Erik Satie.

**20 June 1924:** Première of the ballet *The Blue Train* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, set to music by Darius Milhaud.

**Summer 1924:** Trip to Juan-les-Pins.

**Autumn 1924:** Encouraged by André Breton, the couturier and collector Jacques Doucet acquires *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* for 25,000 francs.

**January 1925:** Lydia, Olga's mother, suffers her first heart attack. A family reunion is seriously considered.

**Summer 1925:** Trip to Monte-Carlo during the Ballets Russes season, and to Juan-les-Pins.

**September 1925:** Lydia and Nina leave Tbilisi for Moscow.

**January 1927:** Picasso meets Marie-Thérèse Walter, who is seventeen years old.

**July 1927:** Lydia suffers from another heart attack; she becomes critically ill. She dies on 23 August 1927.

**Summer 1927:** Trip to Cannes.

**1 January 1928:** First emergence of the theme of the Minotaur in Picasso's work.

**Summer 1928:** Family trip to Dinard, although Marie-Thérèse is now present in the background.

**September 1928:** Nina and her son leave Moscow for Leningrad (Saint Petersburg). She encounters some of Olga's acquaintances from her youth.

**As of 1929:** Olga's relationship with her family seems to become more distant.

**Summer 1929:** Holiday in Dinard.

**June 1930:** Acquisition of the Château de Boisgeloup, near Gisors, where Picasso sets up a sculpture workshop.

**Summer 1930:** Trip to Juan-les-Pins.

**Autumn 1930:** Marie-Thérèse moves to 44, Rue La Boétie, Paris.

**Summer-autumn 1932:** First retrospective of Picasso's work in the Galerie Georges Petit, in Paris, and then at the Kunsthaus in Zurich.

**1932:** Christian Zervos publishes the first 33 volumes of his catalogue raisonné devoted to Picasso.

**18 April 1935-April 1936:** Picasso stops painting and starts to write.

**June 1935:** Picasso separates from Olga, who henceforth lives in one hotel after another.

**July 1935:** Picasso invites his friend Jaime Sabartès to join him in order to manage his affairs. He spends the summer in Paris and Boisgeloup.

**5 September 1935:** Birth of the daughter of Marie-Thérèse Walter and Picasso, Maria de la Concepción, nicknamed "Maya".

**November 1935:** Sabartès becomes Picasso's private secretary.

**Autumn 1936:** Picasso cedes the Château de Boisgeloup to Olga, who only lives there occasionally. Ambroise Vollard provides the artist with a new studio, in Tremblay-sur-Mauldre, where he moves with Marie-Thérèse and Maya.

**1940s:** Despite some periods of tranquillity, the relationship between Olga and Picasso is generally difficult.

**Beginning of 1952:** Olga enters the Beau-Soleil nursing home in Cannes, which she never leaves.

**11 February 1955:** Olga Picasso passes away in Cannes.



## GROUND FLOOR

### Room 1. The Olga period

Olga Khokhlova (1891-1955), the artist's first wife, lived with Pablo Picasso from 1917 to 1935. The artist's muse from their first encounter, she is the artist's most represented female figure from the end of the 1910s and a major focus in his work in the early 1920s.

Mirroring their marital relations, which from 1924 (the year of the *Surrealist Manifesto*), became increasingly strained, the representation of Olga in Picasso's work changed in the mid-1920s. Her presence became more remote, less apparent, but genuinely permeated the artist's production up until 1935, the year of their separation, and even after that.

This exhibition, the first focussing exclusively on the figure of Olga, marks the centenary of the meeting of Picasso and Olga. In the light of a significant selection of personal archives, some of which have never before been exhibited, it reassesses the "Olga period" and the works from this period by contextualising their creation and highlighting the difference that sometimes exists between the model and her image in the work of Picasso.



Pablo Picasso, *Olga in an Armchair*, Montrouge, spring 1918, oil on canvas, 130 x 88.8 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP55  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso, *Olga Khokhlova in a mantilla*, Barcelona, summer/autumn 1917, oil on canvas, 64 x 53 cm, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © Photo: Equipo Gasull



## Room 2. Melancholy

*You cannot imagine the delight the arrival of your letter brought us; picture that we are here staying in what feels to be an enchanted island, isolated from our kin...*

Nina Khokhlova to Olga, letter of 24 December 1919

*But where is father? What is he up to? This thought torments me, and leaves me restless.*

Lydia Khokhlova to Olga, letter of November 20th 1920

When Olga met Pablo Picasso in 1917, the country she had left a few years previously to join Serge de Diaghilev's Ballets Russes dancers was in the throes of major historical events: the February Revolution which brought about the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, followed by the October Revolution and the overthrow of the recently formed provisional government, followed by several years of civil war. The young ballerina lost all contact with her family between October 1917 and 1920, but when correspondence was finally resumed, the news from her mother Lydia and her sister Nina was alarming. While her father and brothers joined the counter-revolutionary forces as colonel and officers, the installation of the new Soviet society suddenly plunged her family into a precarious situation.

Olga is omnipresent in the work of Picasso. The numerous classic portraits by the artist of his wife portray her in an established, static and thoughtful manner. Her staring and often vacant look is perhaps the manifestation of her concern for her family. Picasso perfectly captures all the ambiguity of this woman whose beauty, underlined by the expressiveness of an Ingres line or an Antique roundness, is bathed in a soft and deep melancholy, a reflection of her tragic situation and powerlessness in the face of the dramas confronting her family.



Pablo Picasso, *Woman Reading*, 1920, oil on canvas, 100 x 81.2 cm, Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble, donated by the artist, 1921  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photograph: © Musée de Grenoble

### Room 3. The story of a life



Pablo Picasso, *Three Dancers: Olga Khokhlova, Lydia Lopoukova and Loubov Chernicheva*, from a photograph, early 1919, graphite and charcoal on laid drawing paper, 62.5 x 47.5 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, donation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP834  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau



Jean Cocteau, *Olga and Picasso*, Rome, 1917, graphite pencil on paper, 42 x 27.5 cm, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruíz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © FABA  
Photo: Marc Domage

*We the undersigned Olga Khokholova and Pablo Picasso (sic) agree to live in peace and love until death do us part. Whomever shall break this contract will be sentenced to death.*

Declaration of love from Olga and Pablo Picasso, 4 March 1918

Shortly after her death in 1955, Olga's son Paul retrieved his mother's personal cabin trunk, bearing her initials: this is one of the major – and magical – objects that help reveal the story of a life of which, for a long time, little was known. What emerges from the contents of this trunk – letters in French and Russian, old photographs, various objects such as ballet slippers, tutus, crucifix or almanacs – is the extraordinary destiny of a woman who left her family in 1915 not knowing that she would never see them again. Enhanced by a collection of archives and works by Pablo Picasso, this room evokes more especially Olga's career as a dancer, becoming a member of the Ballets Russes in 1911, her meeting with Picasso in Rome in February 1917 while preparing for the presentation of the ballet *Parade*, and their wedding in July 1918 at the Saint-Alexandre-Nevisky Russian orthodox church in rue Daru in Paris which, from 1917, was one of the main meeting places for the White Russian emigrant community.

#### Salle 4. Changement de décor

*Today I went to the Shchukin Museum and at last saw the paintings by your husband. His paintings occupy three rooms! (...) They come in droves to see the paintings of Picasso.*

Volodia Khokhlova to Olga, letter of 25 August 1925

While Russia was in the midst of a severe economic and food crisis that would have dramatic lasting effects on Olga's family, the newlyweds were experiencing a dizzying social rise which corresponded with the increasing recognition of the works of Pablo Picasso. The couple's circle of friends and their different dwellings, such as, from 1918, the apartment in rue La Boétie in Paris, the villa in Juan-les-Pins, or later, the château de Boisgeloup acquired in 1930, bear witness to this new social environment. Bohemian Montmartre, embodied by Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire, gave way to an unprecedented modernity of post-war intelligentsia. New faces appeared in the Picassos' immediate entourage: Eugenia Errazuriz, a rich Chilean who arranged the first meetings of Picasso with Serge de Diaghilev, as well as with Igor Stravinsky, Jean Cocteau and also Count Étienne de Beaumont, well known for regularly hosting those very grand balls that Olga loved.



Pablo Picasso, *The Artist's Dining Room, rue La Boétie, Paris, 1918-1919*, gouache and India ink over drawing in graphite on paper, Musée National Picasso-Paris, donation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP837  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau



Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky, dit), *Ricardo Vinés, Olga and Pablo Picasso and Manuel Angeles Ortiz at the Comte de Beaumont's ball, Hôtel de Masseran, Paris, 1924*, print not dated, gelatin silver print 20.5 x 17 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, bequeathed by Picasso, 1992. APPH1469bis  
Copyright: © Man Ray Trust/Adagp, Paris  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau



## Room 5. Maternity



Pablo Picasso, *Study for Woman and Child at the Seaside: child seated*, Paris, 23 December 1921, red chalk, charcoal and white chalk on prepared paper, 74 x 104 cm, Musée national Picasso-Paris, donation in payment, Jacqueline Picasso, 1990. MP1990-69, long-term loan to Musée des Beaux-arts, Rennes  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © MBA, Rennes, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Adélaïde Beaudoin

Pablo Picasso, *Mother and Child at the Seaside*, spring 1921, oil on canvas, 142.9 x 172.7 cm, The Art Institute of Chicago, restricted gift of Maymar Corporation, Mrs. Maurice L. Rothschild, and Mr and Mrs. Chauncey McCormick; Mary and Leigh Block Fund; Ada Turnbull Hertle Endowment; through prior gift of Mr and Mrs. Edwin E. Hokin, 1954.270  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo © Art Institute of Chicago, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/image The Art Institute of Chicago

*You have already chosen a pretty name should you have a girl: I like the name Tamara very much, but should you have a boy, let your husband choose. That is my wish, do you agree?*

Lydia Khokhlova to Olga, letter of 10 November 1920

*All I have left to say is that in me you shall have an affectionate mother who is at your disposition just like Pablo, Lola and Juan. Today I feel like I have gained another daughter.*

Dona Maria Ruiz Picasso to Olga, 12 September 1918

With the birth of the couple's first and only child, Paul, on the 4th February 1921, Olga became the inspiration for numerous maternity scenes, compositions that are suffused with a softness that was new in the work of Pablo Picasso. The family scenes reveal a serenity that comes to the fore in particular in the timeless figures which coincide with a new interest in Antiquity and the Renaissance that Picasso had rediscovered with Olga in Italy in 1917, and which was revived by a summer stay in Fontainebleau in 1921. This maternity brought the couple closer together but did nothing to relieve the latent melancholia of Olga who was constantly torn between the pleasures of her everyday life and the obvious distress she felt on reading the flow of alarming news from her family, whose fortunes were steadily worsening.

### Room 6. Paul

*I received your letter with the photo of my dear little Palo (sic). And I am over the moon. You are my beloved daughter. You know how wonderful it was that you write me (sic) through the hand of Palo (sic). I read it and cried happy tears.*

Lydia Khokhlova to Olga, letter of 5 May 1923

The arrival of Paul in the life of the couple brought about a new lifestyle that included a nurse, a cook and a chauffeur. Paul was the focus of all Olga's attentions. Their great complicity is revealed in numerous photographs and films. Picasso was also very proud of his son Paul. This filial relationship is asserted by Pablo in several portraits, in particular by transmitting to Paul the Harlequin costume with which the artist himself identified in his early years during the Rose Period. In another portrait he represents his little son drawing, perhaps trying to recapture the sensations that he himself, also the son of a painter, felt in his childhood. Paul did not know his Russian grandparents but received letters from them. The exchanges between the two families continued, with the Picassos providing support through money sent regularly and sometimes even a few works by Pablo, including a horse, no doubt similar to a *découpage* completed at the same time for Paul.



Two instant photos of Olga and Paul Picasso, circa 1928, original photograph, gelatin silver print, 10.8 x 3.8 cm  
© Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso, FABÀ



Pablo Picasso, *Paul on a Donkey*, Paris, 15 avril 1923, Paris, 15 April 1923, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
© FABÀ Photo: Éric Baudouin

## FIRST FLOOR



Pablo Picasso, *Large Nude in Red Armchair*, 5 May 1929, oil on canvas, 195 x 129 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, donation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP113  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau

### Room 7. Metamorphosis

*I cling to resemblance, to a deeper resemblance, more real than the real, attaining the surreal. That is how I understood surrealism, but the word was used in a completely different way.*  
Pablo Picasso tells us in *En peinture tout n'est que signe*, 1945

1925 probably marks the year when Pablo Picasso realised that his marriage with Olga was over. In April he joined Serge de Diaghilev in Monte Carlo and produced numerous drawings of dancers at work. This trip almost certainly increased Olga's bitterness as, for health reasons, she had been forced to give up her career as a dancer several years earlier. Henceforth and until the mid-1930s, the figure of the wife would be transformed in Picasso's painting. In 1929, in *Grand Nu au fauteuil rouge* (*Large Nude in a Red Armchair*), she was reduced to pain, in a flabby, monstrous shape, an expressive violence reflecting the nature of the couple's marital crisis. In 1931, it was clearly

another woman occupying the red armchair. The face remains undefined, partially erased, but the roundness and sensuality of the body shapes leave no doubt as to the existence of a new muse in the work of the artist.

### Room 8. On film

Contrasting with the representations of Olga in the painted, drawn and engraved works, the footage shot by the couple in their private life – in their apartment in rue La Boétie, on holiday in Dinard, Cannes and Juan-les-Pins, or in the Boisgeloup grounds – reveals a very different picture of Madame Picasso: here we see a woman in motion, extrovert and smiling, who captures the light and seeks to seduce the eye of the camera. This facet of Olga that Pablo Picasso shows us here is the more liberated and spontaneous secret side of the private life



Anonymous, *Olga and Pablo Picasso, Boisgeloup*, spring 1931, original black and white film 9,5 mm, 1'03", Fundación Almire y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
© Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso. Fundación Almire y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte



of an artist clearly enchanted by the magic of film and its dramatic drive. Regardless of the purpose of these documents, film footage, at the start of the 1930s, is where Olga stars and takes centre stage and seems willingly to reconnect with a certain taste for performance.

### Room 9. Bathers

*A painting is a machine for printing memories. The collector who buys it does not buy an object. He buys something intangible, and one fine day he wakes up with only a frame around an invisible space.*

Pablo Picasso, 1956



Pablo Picasso, *Woman*, 1927, oil on canvas, 136 x 103 cm, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © FABA  
Photo: Éric Baudouin



Pablo Picasso, *The Swimmer*, November 1929, oil on canvas, 130 x 162 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris, donation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP119  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Adrien Didierjean

The meeting in 1927 of Marie-Thérèse Walter and Pablo Picasso, whose mistress she became, deepened the crisis that the couple were going through. Even though the relationship between the lovers was kept secret, notably because of Marie-Thérèse's young age, it surfaces most explicitly in Pablo's painting. In the same way that Olga appears implicitly in numerous surrealist figures that, more often than not, are disturbing and brutal, Marie-Thérèse is the inspiration of a series of *Baigneuses* produced in Dinard, a small seaside resort in Brittany where the family – and Marie-Thérèse secretly – stayed for a number of weeks in 1928 and 1929. Whereas Olga is depicted in muted, greyish tones with heavy and sharp shapes, Marie-Thérèse is, on the contrary, represented in a fresher palette and in airborne and often highly erotic postures which are indicative of all the energy and joy that she inspired in the artist.

## Room 10. Circus



Pablo Picasso, *Travelling Circus*, December 1922, gouache on laid drawing paper, 11.1 x 14.6 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP981  
 Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
 Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Thierry Le Mage

*In the second part of the program that evening, there was a group of equilibrists (...). A few days later, when I visited Picasso, he pointed to a stack of canvases facing the wall and told me: "I'm going to show you something. Look!" There were our equilibrists from the other night!*  
 Brassai, *Conversations avec Picasso*, 1964



Pablo Picasso, *The Blue Acrobat*, November 1929, charcoal and oil on canvas 162 x 130 cm, Musée national Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Jacqueline Picasso, 1990. MP1990-15, on long-term loan to the Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle  
 Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
 Photo credit: © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. RMN-GP

Major themes during the Rose Period, circus and acrobats reappear in the work of Pablo Picasso at the beginning of the 1920s, and later in the 1930. No doubt reactivated by the birth of Paul, the representation of the circus in 1922, which from 1905 was associated with the Harlequin paternity cycle (the artist's double), continued to develop a wider iconography of the performing arts world. Picasso was less interested in the actual ring than in its fringes, this marginal and roving life, with women breast-feeding, tightrope walkers at rest and figures doing their hair. As before, Picasso continued to mix the sources of *commedia dell'arte* with the circus world, transposing his private life to the register of theatre. In 1930 his attention was caught by acrobatic feats and the anatomical liberties they allowed.

### Room 11. Studio

*In the past, I refused for many years to exhibit and even would not have my pictures photographed. But finally I realised I had to exhibit – to strip myself naked. It takes courage. Each picture is a phial with my blood. That is what has gone into it.*

Pablo Picasso in *Picasso, his life and work*, Roland Penrose, 1958



Pablo Picasso, *Painter and his model*, 1926, oil on canvas, 172 x 256 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP96  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/ Jean-Gilles Berizzi

Pablo Picasso, *Bust of Woman with Self-Portrait*, february 1929, oil on canvas, 71 x 60 cm, private collection (Courtesy McClain Gallery)  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: Private Collection, Courtesy of McClain Gallery.  
Photo: Alister Alexander, Camerarts



Traversed by a unitary pictorial script, all in arabesques, *Peintre et modèle* offers a view of the studio in which the artist, model and painting are inseparably linked and interdependent. This is true also in real life. If Olga is omnipresent in the portraits from the so-called classic period and though her face disappears little by little from Pablo Picasso's painting, this does not mean that she is absent from her husband's work after 1925. Her idealised and melancholic image gives way to female representations that are radically deformed and often representing violent or aggressive attitudes. Olga truly haunts Picasso's painting and engulfs the space of his studio, supposedly his refuge. Her image is transformed into a threatening, monstrous woman with a pointed nose like a dagger, grinning from ear to ear. In several paintings and drawings she even covers Picasso's self-portrait in profile, thereby clearly demonstrating the hold she continued to exert on the man and the artist. The *Baiser* from 1931, which portrays a figure with eyes closed, abandoned, and a figure looking away, symbolises the decline and ambiguity of this amorous relationship which cannibalised the relationship between the couple.



## Room 12. Crucifixions and corridas

*We in Spain go to mass in the morning, to the corrida in the afternoon and to the brothel in the evening. What do they have in common? Sadness.*

Pablo Picasso, in *La Tête d'obsidienne*, André Malraux, 1974

Powerful and central themes in the work of Pablo Picasso in the early 1930s, bull fights (corrida) and the crucifixion are, over and beyond their own symbolism, intimately linked with the artist's personal life. More especially, in the female bullfighter, we can identify the face of Marie-Thérèse Walter, while certain organic and threatening forms of the *Crucifixion* resemble, through their stylistic treatment, representations of Olga as they appear at the same period, especially in certain mineral bathers. At times reduced to a contest between the bull and the horse, the corrida, by evacuating the bullfighter (torero), increases the violence of the confrontation of two entities which, by extension, can be interpreted as the male and the female, Pablo and Olga. Here too Picasso appropriates a traditional iconography and revisits it from the perspective of his own personal history. His private life had an influence on his work and conveyed a tragic dimension which is both a reflection of a troubled historical period and a marital situation that Picasso was experiencing more and more as a painful test, for which corridas and crucifixions constitute poignant metaphors.



Pablo Picasso, *Crucifixion*, 7 February 1930, oil on plywood, 51.5 x 66.5 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979, MP122  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso, *Corrida*, April 1935, colour pencils, wax crayons, graphite, pen and India ink on laid drawing paper, 17.3 x 25.8 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979, MP1145  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau

### Room 13. Eros and Thanatos

*If all the ways I have been along were marked on a map and joined up with a line, it might represent a Minotaur.*  
Pablo Picasso, in *Picasso à Antibes*,  
Romuald Dor de la Souchères, 1960

Figure *par excellence* of the uniting of the forces of life and death, the Minotaur, the new alter ego of Pablo Picasso, symbolises the complexity and ambivalence of the relations that the artist maintained with women in the early 1930s. Torn between his passion for Marie-Thérèse, who gave birth to a daughter – Maya – in September 1935, and his duty as the husband of Olga, Picasso transposed his own story to ancient mythology. The violence of the amorous relations and the impetuosity of desire are personified in the depictions of abduction, scenes inspired by Dionysian antiquity. Picasso will even go so far as to create his own personal mythology, merging several iconographic sources (corrida, crucifixion and Minotaur) in the celebrated *Minotauromachy*, a tragic fable that crystallises the turmoil in his life at that time and which also saw a temporary halt in his painting in 1935. From that year, during which the married couple finally separated, the presence of Olga in Picasso's work becomes more discreet and less aggressive, reflecting the solitude and suffering of a woman who would continue to write daily to the man who – in the eyes of the law – would remain her husband up until her death in 1955.



Pablo Picasso, *Minotaur Raping a Woman*, 28 June 1933, Pen, Indian ink and wash on paper, 47.5 x 62 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP1115  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/ Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso, *Minotauromachy*, 23 March 1935, etching and engraving. 7th state. Print on vergé de Montval paper, after acierage of the sheet, printed in colours à la poupée by Lacourière, 57.1 x 77.1 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP2733  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/ Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso, *Interior with a Girl Drawing*, 1935, oil on canvas, 130 x 195 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 969.1979  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/ Scala, Florence

### Room 14. Olga Forever

An Italian artist born in Brescia in 1971, Francesco Vezzoli has always been fascinated by cultural icons, actresses, dancers and singers. His work incorporates images of stars and questions the way in which fame or talent can alter identity. It also reveals the gap that may sometimes exist between the public image and private reality. Completed in 2012, *Olga Forever* comprises a series of nineteen oil painting portraits of Olga Picasso inspired by photographs of her selected from the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte (FABA) private archives. Enlarged and reworked using collage and embroidery techniques that overlay patterns of tears and characters from the Ballets Russes, these portraits materialise the suffering and longing of this woman who was both rich and famous. “Olga weeps for all the ballets she never danced out of love for Picasso,” explains Vezzoli. “Through this work I am paying homage to Olga, who embodies my sensitivity and obsessions.”

### Palier Jupiter. Post-script

*Olga is the small gold crown I placed on your heads in the Russian church – and the woman with the fan and Paulo rue la Boétie dressed as a harlequin – and our entire life, annoying and admirable.*

Jean Cocteau to Pablo Picasso, 14 février 1955



Studio furniture, armchair,  
late 19th century, 75 x 60 x 90 cm  
Fundación Almine y Bernard  
Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.  
© Photo: Marc Domage



## Curators

**Emilia Philippot**, curator at the Musée national Picasso-Paris

Emilia Philippot is heritage curator since 2006. She was initially commissioned at the Réunion des musées nationaux where she is associate curator of the *Le Grand monde d'Andy Warhol* exhibition (National galleries of the Grand Palais 2009), then she was in charge of the design collections at the National Centre for Plastic Arts (Centre national des arts plastiques) and contributes to the Collector exhibition presented at the Tri postal in Lille (2011). She joined the Musée national Picasso-Paris in 2012 where she is in charge of the paintings (1895-1921) and the drawings; she also prepares the reopening of the museum. She takes part in the installation of the anniversary of *iPicasso!* (2015) and she is the curator in 2016 of the *Picasso: la main savante, l'œil sauvage* exhibition (Sao Paulo, Rio, Santiago de Chile). She also works as curator at the *Picasso Romanic* exhibition (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona) and *Pablo Picasso: Beyond similarities* (Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires). She is currently preparing an exhibition for the museum in partnership with the Musée d'Orsay, the *Picasso Blue and pink* exhibition (autumn 2018).

**Joachim Pissarro**, art historian, theoretician, educator, and director of the Hunter College Galleries

Joachim Pissarro is an historian of art and aesthetics and the author of many publications. After teaching and holding various posts as curator at Yale, then for the Department of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA (2003-07), Pissarro was appointed Bershad Professor of Art History and Director of the Hunter College Art Galleries (City University of New York) in 2007. His last publication (with David Carrier) is entitled *Wild Art* - and he is soon to publish his next book *On the Margins of Aesthetics* (also co-written with David Carrier).

**Bernard Ruiz-Picasso**, co-founder and co-president of the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz Picasso para el Arte (FABA)

Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, born on 3 September 1959, is the grandson of Pablo Picasso and son of Paul and Christine Ruiz-Picasso. He is the organizer of major Picasso exhibitions internationally. He lives and works in Brussels. With his mother Christine Ruiz-Picasso, he co-founded the Museo Picasso Málaga, a centre for Picasso studies which ensures that the work of Picasso is conserved, studied and exhibited. He is President of the Advisory

Council of the museum. He is the Co-Founder of Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso (FABA), an art foundation set up in 2002 which holds a collection of works by Picasso as well as by contemporary artists. The aims of the Foundation include the study the works by Picasso, support for contemporary art and participating in exhibitions.

**Project manager:** Audrey Gonzalez

**Scenographer:** Cécile Degos

**Graphic design:** Bernard Lagacé

**Lighting design:** Carlos Cruchinha

**Installation:** Axal - Artrans

**Mountmaking:** Aïnu

**Trainee:** Zoé Prieur

# 1.3 THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The catalogue accompanying the Olga Picasso exhibition presents the work produced by Picasso between 1917 and 1935 when he shared his life with Olga Khokhlova, a dancer with the Ballets Russes, whom he married in 1918.

Until her death in 1955, Olga preserved the memories of their life together in a large cabin trunk which contained souvenirs of her ballet career, hundreds of letters from the family she left behind in Russia, and dozens of photographs of the life she led: Olga with Picasso, Olga with their son Paul, society life, trips to Barcelona, Naples and Monte Carlo, and so forth. These documents, many of which have never been seen before, shine a fresh light on the extraordinary life of Olga, the painter's work during this period and the influence his first wife had on his work, even following their separation. From the classical representation of a pensive, melancholic woman absorbed in reading the sad news sent by her family to the brutal depictions which emerged in the late 1920s, paintings, drawings and etchings bear witness to the metamorphosis to which the artist subjected his model and his work through the changing course of their married life.

## EXCERPTS:

### OLGA ON SCREEN. THE OTHER FACE OF MADAME PICASSO

Émilia Philippot

The artist's preferred model since they met in 1917, Olga Khokhlova is, before becoming Madame Picasso in July 1918, naturally the most represented female figure in the artist's work in the late 1910s and through the 1920s. The manner in which she appears in his paintings, but also in his drawings and prints from this period, renders a serious and serene character. Until the mid-1920s, Picasso indeed produced many portraits of Olga, methodically representing his subject in a general pose and establishing, over the years, a venerable image of his wife. Save a handful of drawings based on photographs of his wife

in which she posed as a dancer,<sup>1</sup> Olga is almost always represented seated, standing or from the waist up, and strangely static. Her rigid and generally melancholic gaze addresses not so much the spectator - although in some pieces she directs her deep,

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<sup>1</sup> *Three dancers: Olga Khokhlova, Lydia Lopokova and Lubov Tchernicheva*, from a photograph, early 1919, graphite pencil and charcoal on laid drawing paper, 62.5 x 47.5 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP834; *Seven dancers including Olga Khokhlova in the foreground* from a photography by White, early 1919, graphite pencil over a charcoal sketch on laid drawing paper, 62.5 x 50.2 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP841.

dark eyes<sup>2</sup> at us – as the model herself. Picasso depicts an introverted wife, no doubt preoccupied with the news she received at fairly regular intervals from her family left behind in Russia<sup>3</sup> who were experiencing great difficulties. A woman who, separated from her loved ones, culture and native language, formed a new identity: that of the “first lady” of a Spanish artist living in France and his fame on the ascendant. Olga held her own thanks to her graceful bearing, impeccable presentation and Slavic beauty whose elegance and nobility were emphasised by her features which owe much to Ingres and her eloquent figure.<sup>4</sup> If you were only to take away two characteristics from these portraits, beyond the style or technique employed, we might say they convey a very contained and restrained image of their subject, a picture at once fixed and distant. Indeed, none of these portraits reveal anything of Olga’s vocation for dancing – no movement, no costume, as opposed to the many portraits of their son Paul dressed by Picasso in the attire of protagonists from the *commedia dell’arte*.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, here everything seems fixed and in place: the lace, the fur collar, the hairdo.

Nothing moves. Every detail reflects the polished image of a respected and respectable wife.<sup>6</sup> Olga literally posed for her husband (in photographs too), soon quit the Ballets Russes, abandoned dancing for good, moved to the posh parts of Paris and, in 1921, gave birth to Paul, the couple’s first and only child. This ballerina, however, familiar with body language and no doubt pleased and proud to have captured Picasso’s heart, conveys nothing but a cool and distant sensuality in his portraits. Paradoxically, Olga appears, despite the tightly cropped frames and extraordinary rendering of her delicate fabrics, impassive, seductive yet unobtainable, almost absent from the world. There in body but not in spirit. Did Picasso interpret an aspect of the personality of Olga, a reserved woman torn between two countries, or did he play a part in shaping this image of a woman he admired but of whom a part escaped him? A woman he imprisoned symbolically and visually in the role of wife, then mother,<sup>7</sup> little by little abandoning completely (or almost) any reference to her former career?

Obvious counterpoints to the classical portraits that reveal the early moments in

2 *Portrait of Woman in a Fur Collar* (Olga) 1922-1923, oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.

3 Cf. in the article by Thomas Chaineux, “Olga Picasso, entre France et Russie”.

4 *Olga in a Fur Collar*, 1923, oil on canvas, 116 x 80.5 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP1990-9.

5 *Paul as Harlequin*, 1924, oil on canvas, 130 x 97.5 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP83; *Paul as a Pierrot*, 28 February 1925, oil on canvas, 130 x 97 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP84.

6 *Portrait of the Artist’s Wife* (Olga), 1923, oil on canvas, 130 x 97 cm, Zervos V, 53, private collection.

7 As Pierre Daix noted: “The birth of Paulo on 4 February 1921 set in motion a proliferation of portraits of the baby and Olga, no hint of radiance in her, not even when breastfeeding her baby, on 2 March. It is the baby who conveys the joy of life. All these drawings were kept by Picasso and published only after his death in the 30th volume of Zervos”; cf. the article “Olga Picasso” in *Le Nouveau Dictionnaire Picasso*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 2012, p. 712.

the couple's life together, the films made several years later paint another face of Madame Picasso. They present an active, extrovert, smiling and joyful woman. A woman who attracts the camera and seeks to seduce the man behind it. Is this facet of Olga which Picasso shows us here – almost in conflict with the figure who appears in his paintings and drawings –, paradoxically one of the manifestations of the changing course of their marriage? Or is it rather, and more so, the secret side, one freer and more spontaneous, of the private life of an artist clearly seduced by the magic of film and the dramatic effects of this new art form from the time? Regardless of its purpose – amusement or family archives, film, at the start of the 1930s, is the medium in which Olga gets to star and appears to reconnect, willingly, with her penchant for performing. The image we discover here is the polar opposite of the image Picasso presented of his wife several years earlier. She is also just as equally distant from the monstrous image projected by the artist into his paintings in the late 1920s in which Olga, unrecognisable, morphs into a threatening and castrating figure with a mineralised body and back-to-front head, a vertical mouth and toothed vagina.<sup>8</sup> On the screen, however, Olga comes across as content and active, interacting with the various protagonists in these improvised playlets.

The three films made in spring 1931 in the garden at Boisgeloup, the Normandy property Picasso acquired in 1930 where he had an intense period of sculpture

– and not to mention produced the extraordinary heads and busts of Marie-Thérèse Walter, his mistress since 1927, portray a harmonious and loving married couple. The husband and wife film each other, alternating between being in front of and behind the camera. In the heart of the grounds, the fixed frame records a canine acrobatics routine followed by the couple posing with their faithful companion Bob. Picasso joins in: mindful of the general composition of the image and keen to be fully in shot, he crouches down beside his pet, raising his hat to greet the spectator and stroking his dog before standing up and moving, his attitude determined and theatrical, towards the camera.<sup>9</sup> That same day, this time outside the front of the château, Olga goes through the same routine their fox terrier merrily leaping all around. While the frame is still fixed, the *mise en scène* is more penetrating. The French window in the background, in addition to situating the action at the property, introduces a depth that Picasso exploits for effect. Emerging from her architectural backdrop, Olga makes her entrance in the manner of a light opera star, first pushing a child's tricycle before abandoning it mid-way and running, beaming, towards the cameraman. She stops running a moment and, in a graceful and tender gestures, calls over her dog out of shot to play a cavorting game of cat-and-mouse. Then she continues on her way to the camera, completely

8 *Woman in Red Armchair*, summer 1929, oil on canvas, 64.5 x 54 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP112.

9 Iga and Pablo Picasso with Bob, a Pyrenean mountain dog, and Noisette?, a fox terrier, Boisgeloup, spring 1931, original black and white 9.5 mm film, 1 min. 7 sec., Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.

radiant. Picasso appears next, serious looking, in suit and tie and holding a cigarette. He moves forward, looks left and right, then seems to inspect the place, scrutinising the land which is now his. Then a third figure enters the scene: Paul, aged 10, crosses in the background riding his scooter. He quickly returns, coming to the foreground to join in a pretend boxing match with his father. Swiftly “knocked out”, Picasso spits into his hands, ready to face his opponent as Paul, partly out of shot to the left, stays on the ground. His father puts his hat back on to signal the end of the match and victory. The film ends with the reappearance of Paul, to the right, along with Olga who teasingly removes the hat from Picasso, clearly determined for the match to continue.<sup>10</sup> The last part of this triptych filmed in a day,<sup>11</sup> is another sequence, strictly adopting the same frame as before, with the property in the background, that repeats the same scenes: Olga playing with the dog and Pablo smoking, moving towards the camera, then moving away to the left, to the right, turning away. Up close to camera, Picasso, his head partly cut off, comes even closer and bends down to stare into the lens – his profilmic ease suggestive of his awareness of the frame and his desire to seduce. Visibly amused by playing the role of both actor and director, which he takes to so

enthusiastically, Picasso leaves the stage, calmly, to continue on his way. Then we come to the last, and undoubtedly the most moving part of the film, in which Olga mimes, on two occasions in fact, an exaggerated farewell directed at the audience. Walking towards the camera, Olga raises her arms to the sky before folding them on her head in a sign of distress and approaches closer, covering her eyes completely. Second shot: the young woman, in a slower movement, comes towards the cameraman greeting him by waving just one hand up high in the air, and gazing into the distance, to the left, before lifting both arms into the air as she moves further forward, tipping her head back. Is she re-enacting the curtain call? Olga is radiant and obviously delighted to be taking part in this *mise en scène* which might have taken her back to her glorious days with the Ballets Russes. The final sequence of the film is on the theme of “rural melancholy”: we see Olga heading towards the camera, her gaze focused on a flower she is holding and depetalling as she walks. We can read the traditional verse that accompanies this romantic game on her lips: He loves me a little, a lot, passionately, etc. Completely absorbed in what she is doing, the young woman never looks up. And so she approaches the camera with her head lowered, therefore avoiding, obviously, meeting eyes with Picasso.

10 Olga, Pablo, Paul Picasso and a young girl (Germaine Lascaux?), Boisgeloup, spring 1931, original black and white 9.5 mm film, 1 min 3 s, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.

11 Olga and Pablo Picasso, Boisgeloup, spring 1931, original black and white 9.5 mm film, 1 min 3 s, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.

It's spring 1931. Pablo has been in a secret and adulterous relationship with Marie-Thérèse Walter for four years already: he celebrated the sensuality and expressed the violent desire she had aroused in him since 1927 in a series of etchings depicting



the motif of the passionate embrace and, the following year, a series of paintings of bathers in erotic poses. By this stage, Olga had fallen out of favour as Picasso's major source of inspiration – or rather, her image was defiled, subjected to vicious distortions that pushed her forever away from her classical embodiment. In *Seated Bather at the Seaside*,<sup>12</sup> her body, treated like an exploded skeleton, and her face, recalling the head of a praying mantis, put one instantly in mind of the *Crucifixion* pieces Picasso was executing at the same time.<sup>13</sup> Dislocation and extreme violence already permeate the *Bust of Woman and Self-portrait*<sup>14</sup> and *Large Nude in Red Armchair*<sup>15</sup> from the previous year. Here we are truly confronted with what William Rubin described as “transformed” and “autobiographical” portraits, i.e. portraits that “are radically removed from the truth of appearance”<sup>16</sup> and in which Picasso's mood at the moment he painted the work and his general attitude towards the model prevail. Henceforth, the image we have of Olga on screen provides a unique counterpart to that which concurrently saturated Picasso's works. The image of the young woman which, as we have seen, actively participated in these shots, seems to contradict the image of her depicted by

the artist in his paintings. We have no idea if Olga had the chance to see the works in which Picasso defiled her plastically – and symbolically. However, we do know that she was aware, probably from July 1928 and certainly from October 1929, of the existence of another woman in her husband's life.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, we also know that Olga was, during this period, ever further isolated from her family. In 1927, her sister Nina notified her of the death of their mother Lydia. From this point on, her correspondence with her family became less and less frequent. And yet ignoring, or pretending to ignore, the reasons of her distress, Olga conveys the image of happy and contented woman in these films. Admittedly, her husband was conducting an affair and she had no moral support from her family, but she remained married to the artist, kept the title of Madame Picasso, and presented here for all posterity the image of a good wife who, in their big, lovely house in Normandy, reaped the benefits of Picasso's social accomplishments. An attempt at maintaining the illusion of a happy family or an act of vengeance on the unilateral image that Picasso's painting sought to portray of her? These short films from the spring of 1931 reveal, from our point of view, the determination of a woman with a clear intention of keeping her position as the “first lady”, if not in her husband's heart, then at least in the making of the private images showing their life as a couple.

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12 February 1930, oil on canvas, 163.2 x 129.5 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

13 And in particular *Crucifixion*, 7 February 1930, oil on plywood, 51.5 x 66.5 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP122.

14 February 1929, oil on canvas, 61 x 60 cm, Reinhold Collection, Houston.

15 5 May 1929, oil on canvas, 195 x 129 cm, Musée National Picasso-Paris, MP113.

16 William Rubin, “Réflexions sur Picasso et le portrait”, in *Picasso et le portrait*, Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux – Flammarion, 1996, p. 15.

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17 On 27 October 1929, Olga wrote in her diary: “11, rue de Liège”, the address where Picasso moved in Marie-Thérèse Walter in 1928. Furthermore, his cabin trunk contained a postcard from the young woman addressed to Picasso in July 1928, probably intercepted by Olga.

## OLGA'S TRUNK

Bernard Ruiz-Picasso

The *Olga Picasso* exhibition is the fruit of a long period of research into the personal archives left to me by Olga Khokhlova (1891-1955), my paternal grandmother, and which have shed light onto the years she spent living with Pablo Picasso.

Here I am going to attempt to describe the experience of discovering their content and the various items and objects that influenced and marked Picasso's work during his life with Olga.

Olga was born in the city of Nizhyn (then in Russia, now in northern Ukraine), in the Chernihiv province, on 17 June 1891. She died in 1955, just a few months before I was born. So I never got to meet her. She had always been a "mysterious" grandmother, my father only speaking about her on rare occasions. Her existence filtered through to us in the respect he showed to Russian traditions, when he would make us sit in silence for several minutes in the living room before he went on holiday, in order to gather us together and have us think about what he might have forgotten. He also had a large red-chalk portrait of Olga drawn by Picasso which had pride of place in the living room of our Parisian apartment. On occasion my father would imitate her dancing: it was always rather comical to see his attempts at being as light and graceful as a ballerina!

For me, the property in Boisgeloup (Eure) – the "château" as it's called locally – that Olga and Picasso acquired in 1930 and which my grandfather gave to my father in the 1950s, is an important link with my grandmother.

I spent most of my holidays in this manor house; and in one of the uninhabited rooms – of which there were many – we found a large cabin trunk: "Olga's trunk".

It was much later, after the death of my father, who left us far too soon, that my mother opened the famous trunk for me. Some of the drawers contained objects such as photos still in their Kodak packets. These photos told the story of my grandmother's life: Olga with Picasso; Olga with my father; my father's childhood; trips to Barcelona, to Monte Carlo; the sculpture studio at Boisgeloup, etc. In other drawers there were stacks of letters in French and in Russian, tied up in pretty pink and blue silk ribbons. There were ballet shoes, tutus, a crucifix, an Orthodox Bible in Russian, calendars and ballet programmes. Almost all of the contents of this trunk dated from the time of Olga's life with Picasso. My father had saved it all. This trunk contained the personal belongings of his mother, after she died at the Beau-Soleil Hospital in Cannes on 11 February 1955.

I knew without a shadow of a doubt that this trunk was the only personal item she had been able to keep following her separation from Picasso in 1935. I knew instantly that by going through the trunk I would learn about her life in more precise detail.

### **Over six hundred letters from her family**

Olga, a dancer with the Ballets Russes company since 1911, met her future husband in Rome in 1917 when Picasso, Cocteau and Sergei Diaghilev were preparing the ballet *Parade*. They were married on 12 July 1918 at the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Paris (12, rue Daru, in

the 8th arrondissement) and my father was born on 4 February 1921. The photographs I discovered in the trunk showed me the life led by the Picassos. It was, I found, a fascinating experience to piece together, using actual keepsakes, the period when my grandparents lived together.

But who was Olga? The stories about her repeated by those close to Picasso did not seem to fit with the documents I had in my possession. Much of the information I heard about her seemed implausible. I thought that the written documents found in the trunk would shed some light on a large part of her life. Many years went by before I finally decided to study them in more depth. But then I set about translating into French her family correspondence – over 600 letters received between 1919 and 1933.

Furthermore, the Musée National Picasso had also given me the personal letters from Pablo Picasso's archival collection, donated by the family in 1981. These letters would provide me with the information I needed to complete gaps in the story of Olga's life.

Little by little, I learned of the existence of different members of my Russian family through this prolific correspondence. Olga's personal history and character traits slowly took shape in my mind. Stepan, Olga's father, a career officer in the Russian Imperial Army, disappeared in the early 1920s when fighting in the campaigns between the White forces and the Red Army. Lydia, her mother, had given birth to three sons – the last of whom, Evgeny, died young – and two daughters. Her husband's

disappearance took its toll on Lydia and she in fact never learned what became of him. Suffering from a weak constitution, she died in 1927. Nina, Olga's sister, a singer, mentally declined following the death of her mother; her husband, Vladimir, in the military, only returned to take care of her in 1923. The couple finally separated and gradually lost contact. It seems their son, Oleg, was also physically fragile. Vladimir, Olga's elder brother, a soldier in the Imperial Army in the early 1920s, went on to study medicine; after the death of his wife, Olessa, in 1920 or 1921, when he was off fighting, Arkadik, their son, went to live with his grandmother Lydia before joining Vladimir. Nikolaï, Olga's second-oldest brother and also enlisted in the White Army, fought in the disastrous campaigns in Kuban and the Crimea in 1919 and 1920. He was evacuated to Constantinople with thousands of White Russians. He lived in Belgrade from 1922 where he sought to join the Serbian army.

Olga was in a desperate situation. We can only imagine how she felt, powerless to do anything to help the tragic events her family was experiencing while she was living a comfortable life in France with Picasso. And despite the financial assistance she managed one way or another to get to Russia thanks to her contacts, no doubt Olga suffered terribly from her incapacity to take proper action.

In 2013, my wife introduced me to the artist Francesco Vezzoli. Based on photos that the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte passed onto her, the foundation organised an exhibition of portraits of Olga at my wife's gallery. It was on this occasion that Joachim

Pissarro (co-curator of the *Olga Picasso* exhibition) asked if he could have access to my grandmother's personal archives and the collection in the foundation's possession. He went through all these documents which, studied over several years, provided an account of the tragic fate of the Khokhlova family in Russia while Olga lived in the centre of French aristocratic society in the 1920s.

### THERE WAS NO NEOCLASSICAL PERIOD IN THE WORK OF PICASSO – ONLY AN OLGA PERIOD.

Joachim Pissarro

*“Such is life. Life is very hard.  
It is God's will.”*<sup>18</sup>

Now, 136 years since the birth of Pablo Picasso and 100 years since he met Olga Khokhlova – whom he married in 1918 –, a completely unexpected opportunity to bring a fresh perspective to the relationship between Picasso and Olga came about.

#### **An enigmatic muse with an unremarkable past**

Olga Khokhlova stands out as an exceptional figure in Picasso's romantic life. The daughter of Stepan Khokhlova, a colonel in the Imperial Army, and Lydia Vinchenko, she was his first official wife and the first

woman to bear him children with the birth of their son Paul on 4 February 1921. The young woman seemed to embody, from the moment they met in 1917, all the ambitions of an older man who aspired to lead a calm and peaceful romantic life since the death of Eva, his first companion, in 1915. What role did Olga play in Picasso's artistic trajectory? With few historians agreeing on the nature of her character, she remains one of the most enigmatic, yet iconic, figures in the life of the artist. Delicate and fragile, endowed with regular features in certain portraits, Olga's personality is unveiled through the course of her poses. Rarely shown as front-facing as in the singular *Portrait of Olga in an Armchair* (1918, [p.29]), Olga's face is generally evasive, almost reserved. The tilt, albeit slight, of her head, her gaze into the void and even the “contrapposto” pose adopted during her sitting sessions conceal the model's interior truth. Olga remains an absolute mystery and her successive representations in Picasso's work occasionally contradict some of the visual archives. In the different photographic collections we have seen, Olga seems to develop a taste for the bourgeois society life opened up to her thanks to Picasso's rise on the international art scene at the time and his unrivalled success on the nascent modern art scene. Whether in evening wear or in fancy dress, she attracts the photographer's gaze. These photographs reflect a vision of the artist's wife far removed, it seems, from the vivid and fascinating series of portraits of Olga imbued with melancholy produced by her husband during the years 1919-1922.

The profile of Olga drawn up by art historians is most often negative and sadly

<sup>18</sup> Letter from Lydia Khokhlova to her daughter Olga, 6 July, 1920, Olga Ruiz-Picasso archives, FABIA.

lacking any sympathy for the artist's wife. However, as brought to my attention by John Richardson, this conflicting and incomplete tableau is partly due to the fact that, until today, we have had very few direct testimonials from Olga herself.

Of the many mysteries surrounding the "Picasso phenomenon", nothing surpasses the gap which exists between the role of Olga in the history of art and the role she played in the artist's life. What place does the history of art reserve for her today in respect of Picasso's artistic development? Why is the portrait it has drawn of her so rudimentary? And how can it have remained so blind to the obvious and pervasive presence of Olga in the life of the painter for almost two decades? There are several reasons to explain the gaps that the recent discovery of new personal archives by the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte (FABA) can shed light on. Two of these reasons are obvious: the first is the relative absence of sources directly related to Olga's person; the second can be justified in relation to the historiography of Pablo Picasso. Indeed, when the generation of pioneers researching the history of Picasso, from Roland Penrose to John Richardson, via Douglas Cooper, John Golding and William Rubin, laid the first milestones, Olga had already left the picture. In other words, Picasso entered into history when Olga was no longer a part of his.

However, today we have been given the opportunity to revise our assessment of this curiously silent muse thanks to the discover of an important volume of

correspondence Olga Picasso received from her family in Russia, following the explosion of the Bolshevik Revolution. The main protagonists in these letters are: Lydia, her mother; Nina, her sister, and Volodia and Kola (an officer in the Russian White Army who fled to Serbia), her two brothers. This hitherto unseen correspondence gives us a window into the personality of this young woman who quit her native Russia at the age of 24 and never returned. In some instances up to several dozen pages long, these letters were exchanged for over ten years, but mainly between 1919 and 1927, the year when Lydia died, news of which Olga likely received that very day or the next by telegram. We know from this correspondence that the letters sent by Olga (which have been lost) were generally enclosed with other documents, typically photographs, mostly of Paul, Olga and Pablo's son, or drawings.

The archival collection in the FABA's possession contains all the correspondence sent to Olga from the end of the First World War to the late 1920s. These letters, which present previously unknown aspects of Olga's life, also provide us with essential information to understand both the life and work of Picasso during this crucial period of her lifetime. The images of Olga offered by Picasso alternate between being an expression of erotic euphoria, of family fulfilment and of deep maternal love. In parallel to this joyful images are a number of portraits depicting a woman imbued with unfathomable sadness and a strange and silent melancholy. Of course, we know that when Olga met and later married Picasso she abandoned her prestigious career as a

dancer with the Ballets Russes, but this by itself is not sufficient to explain the interruption that appeared in Picasso's representations of Olga. Imagining the agony Olga must have felt reading the letters from her family left behind in the USSR prompts us to look at this period of Picasso's work from a different perspective.

#### **The legacy of Soviet Russia**

The October Revolution of 1917 and the ensuing Civil War between the forces of the Red Army and the White Army stripped of power set in motion political and other changes that would reshape Russian society. Olga's family, wealthy under Tsar Nicholas II, fell in to abject poverty and experienced a series of unfortunate events, each more tragic than the last.

Having left to join the Ballets Russes company in Italy in 1912, Olga briefly saw her family again in Russia in 1914-1915 then lost contact with them until late 1919, the year in which she began this correspondence. The reality of the situation described in these letters is tough to read. All the letters are a testament to the incredibly harsh living conditions suffered by the family. Olga felt powerless, but did whatever she could to find solutions to resolve the problems of her family so geographically far away and now completely destitute. It is clear that the young woman was totally distraught on reading the tragic circumstances of her family in the newly formed Soviet Union. Not only did Lydia Khokhlova, Olga's mother, suffer material losses and physical difficulties, she also had to cope with tough, painful family tragedies: in 1919, her husband, Stepan,

a senior officer in the White Army, went off to war after a brief period of leave at the home of his daughter-in-law Odessa and then disappeared. Lydia never found out any of the details regarding the disappearance of her husband, who appears to have succumbed to typhoid towards the end of 1919. After losing her husband and never receiving confirmation of his death, she never had a chance to experience the relief that comes from a proper chance to mourn. This event sounded the death knell of a decade of tragedy and misfortune for Olga's family.

Anxious about the future of her family and keen to do as much as she could for them, Olga began sending parcels to the USSR, generously packed with food and other provisions. Often lost or stolen and systematically opened by customs officials, many of these packages never reached her family, or only after considerable delay. Her distress mounting, Olga went as far as using Red Cross convoys leaving France to try to ensure her shipments arrived safely. Here are the words of gratitude Lydia sent to Olga after receiving one such parcel: "My darling, my dear Oliouna, I have just received two letters and some money from you, which Hoppenot, the secretary of the French Military Mission, had sent to me, while he was on a trip to Persia. You cannot imagine how ineffably happy your letter made me. I also received the photo of you and your husband. I send my wishes and pray to God that God bestows health and happiness upon you both. I can tell from your letter that you are happy which puts my soul at ease. You know that all that matters to me is

that you, and all my children, are happy and healthy. And what counts most for me is whatever makes you happy. So be sure you tell your husband (who I have never seen) that I consider him to be my own son and I love him.”<sup>19</sup>

This correspondence also reveals that Picasso was not ignorant to the daily misfortunes experienced by his mother-in-law: he made notable contributions to Olga’s heroic efforts to help her family. From the content of the letters received by his wife, it is clear that he had a hand in sending large sums of money to the Khokhlova family, sometimes enclosing drawings too.

His interaction with his mother-in-law took different forms:

1. First, Picasso’s circle of friends showed compassion with regard to the tragic events Olga’s family was experiencing. Gertrude Stein, a close friend of the artist, put the couple in contact with William Cook, an American on mission with the Red Cross in Soviet territories, so that he could take money to Lydia Khokhlova.
2. Doña Maria Picasso y Lopez, Pablo’s mother, wrote a personal letter to Lydia, no doubt to express her sympathy for the painful challenges she was facing. Clearly very touched by her thoughtful gesture, Olga’s mother thanked Doña Maria in a letter to her daughter on 26 January 1922: “Say hello to your husband from me. The letter from your

husband’s mother touched me greatly. As soon as my health is fully restored, I will write to her. I feel so alone.”<sup>20</sup>

3. Picasso sent several drawings to Kola, one of Olga’s brothers who had fled to Serbia, so that he could give them to the wife of General Had ic’, the Serbian Minister of War, who supposedly admired the artist’s work, hoping that this gesture might prompt her to try to influence her husband. While Kola was enlisted in the reserve army, he hoped, by maintaining good relations with his superior, to keep the rank of officer that he had held in the revolutionary army.
4. In a letter dated 19 February, 1930, Nina, Olga’s sister, wrote how she was worried about the health of her son, young Oleg, who had come down with scarlet fever. Picasso sent the boy a drawing of a small horse. Nevertheless, while Olga informed her friends in France of the disastrous situation of her family in the USSR, her mother and her brother Vladimir occasionally complained about the scant information she shared about her own life and her relationship with Picasso. It is clear that while leading a comfortable life in Parisian high society, the polar opposite to her family in the USSR, Olga, out of modesty and restraint, chose to keep quiet on the subject, which no doubt would have caused her some distress.

A letter from Lydia sent in July 1920 sets the tone of the correspondence between a mother, keen to receive news, and a

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Lydia Khokhlova to her daughter Olga, 24 December 1919, Olga Ruiz-Picasso archives, FABA.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Lydia Khokhlova to her daughter Olga, 26 January 1922, Olga Ruiz-Picasso archives, FABA.

daughter, reduced to silence: “Although you tell me nothing about your life, I surmise from the tone of your letter that you are living well. Thank God. I always pray to God that He bestow health and happiness on you. Tell me a little about the character of your husband. Does he ever ask after me or take any general interest in us? Does he have family? Where? What kind of accommodation do you have? And how have you decorated? I try to imagine your living conditions. Do you have an upright piano or a grand? How do you spend your time?”<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, Olga’s family only knew of Picasso’s public profile, already established in Russian society before the First World War. From 1909, Sergei Shchukin invited the Moscow public to admire his private collection, unveiling the French avant-garde movement to a new audience.

In 1913, cubism took permanent hold in Russia, with Picasso as the de facto leader.<sup>22</sup> In 1917, the two major Russian collections of works by Matisse and Picasso, those owned by Shchukin and Morozov, were nationalised and opened to the public in 1919. Picasso’s work then garnered ever-increasing critical success. It was while visiting several museums in Moscow that the Khokhlova family had a privileged opportunity to discover his work. And this raises another interesting paradox: Picasso, Lydia’s son-in-law, was

well known to the Russian public, but remained a mystery to his wife’s family.

### **The challenge of difference**

Olga’s life in France was split between mixing in high society and holidaying between Biarritz, Juan-les-Pins and Dinard. Through the mail she received from Russia, she shared the painful and heartbreaking misfortunes of her family, remotely and internally. After leaving her native Ukraine in 1911 to join the Ballets Russes dance company, she was neither a witness to the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution nor the birth of the USSR. The gap that opened between her lifestyle in France and the lifestyle of her family in Russia after 1917 is indescribable.

Olga filled the silence she maintained on her own life – a kind of self-censorship – with an over-abundance of letters devoted to her son. Olga wrote about Paul and she sent photos of her son too. Paul became her world. As he did Picasso’s. The couple lived their relationship through their son Paul by osmosis.

In 1921, the profusion of representations of motherhood in Picasso’s work highlighted the devotion which united Olga and her child, just as much as the obvious affection the artist himself felt for little Paul. The films shot by Picasso portray Olga with a peaceful and joyful expression. And during the moments when she is with her son, she always bears a faint but beautiful smile.

Then, over time, the portraits of mother and child give way to series of paintings in which Paul is the subject. These

21 Letter from Lydia Khokhlova to her daughter Olga, 6 July 1920, Olga Ruiz-Picasso archives, FABA.

22 Jean-Claude Marcadé, “Picasso et la vie artistique russe des deux premières décennies du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle”, in Laurent Wolf (dir.), *Cahiers Picasso*, Paris, L’Herne, 2014.



works, which hold both an aesthetic and surprisingly emotional strength, offer a new perspective. They dovetail with the films, most never before seen, made by Picasso, which reflect Olga's love for her son, who is usually dressed in some kind of costume or other. Pablo and Olga's gazes cross and meet with Paul at their centre. For Picasso, these series of works express a certain sense of fulfilment, and even great joy, which makes this period a particularly special moment in the artist's life. The artist rediscovered, through his growing son, his own passions from his childhood, most notably those related to the circus and masquerades. Paul seems always game to play, to dress up in the costume of one of his father's favourite characters, which, either refer back to certain works from the artist's Pink period (Pierrot and Harlequin) or herald his fascination for the *corrida* (bullfighting). Whichever the case, when he appears in his father's paintings in costume, willing to pose in all kinds of way, or in the family films, Paul always seems to be "on show", combining his mother's fascination for the stage during her time with the Ballets Russes and his father's enthusiasm for the theatricality of *mise en scène*. Indeed, it was this world of performing that first brought his parents together, Pablo having been invited by Diaghilev to design the scenery for a ballet in which Olga was a dancer. This fascination which Pablo and Olga shared for performance found new scope for exploration through the clearly delighted cooperation of their son.

We might easily imagine that Olga always found something about her son to share in her letters to her mother.

Lydia worshipped her daughter and, through her, her grandson Paul, who she only got to know by way of photos, drawings and letters. These various testimonials were extremely important to her: they gave her a certain sense of peace and even genuine happiness, which seemed to help her forget the misfortunes of her daily life. These letters exude infinite motherly love. Lydia's sentiments are the ones you expect from a mother and grandmother: sincerely happy to read about her daughter's joy and to see, through photos and drawings, her grandson grow up, yet terribly unhappy to be kept at such a distance from this happiness. She pined for her daughter to return to the USSR, and asked again and again: "Do you think you shall return, my darling? I don't believe you shall. Can we hope for such happiness?"<sup>23</sup>

Sometimes, Olga's sister, Nina, added her tuppenceworth, such as in this letter from April 1926: "Mama is over the moon, crying with joy. What say you, Madame Picasso? Now, dear Olitchka, make sure you come home. They say Picasso promises to be a resounding success. The important thing for us is to see you. It's now been 14 years that we have been kept apart."<sup>24</sup> This hope, this dream – which was never fulfilled – to see her daughter return to Moscow, or to travel to Paris herself to visit the Picassos, rapidly turned into a veritable obsession. In 1926,

<sup>23</sup> Letter from Lydia Khokhlova to her daughter Olga, 8 September 1925, Olga Ruiz-Picasso archives, FABA.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Nina Khokhlova to her sister Olga, 15 April 1926, Olga Ruiz-Picasso archives, FABA.

when Nina and her mother left Tiflis to move to Moscow, Lydia made several attempts to join her daughter in Paris.

It is hard for us to understand today why her plan never came to fruition. However, on one, very telling, occasion, Lydia alludes to a part of a letter from Olga in which she hinted at Picasso's lack of enthusiasm about the idea of hosting his mother-in-law in France. While he was far from being unfeeling with regard to his family-in-law's circumstances – he demonstrated great and continuous generosity in their regard – the artist only ever prioritised his work and those closest to him, Olga and Paul, who were also, in a sense, connected with this work. The presence of Lydia amongst them would have been an unthinkable source of distraction for Picasso. At every moment of his career, his painting was nurtured by a very close relationship with his environment. His inspiration was drawn on familiar and intimate surroundings which left no place for anyone but his core family unit.

Lydia gradually lost all hope of ever seeing Olga again. Indeed, she never went to France and never did see her daughter before she died. Shortly before her death, she wrote these words to her still: "Yet, in spite of everything, I await confirmation from you. I ask you to write to me and tell me at which date, more or less, you intend to leave. I await your reply. God forbid you should tell me that you will not be coming. That would be a fatal blow."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Letter from Lydia Khokhlova to her daughter Olga, June 1926, Olga Ruiz-Picasso archives, FABA.

### **The singularity of a classically feminine face**

What impact might this correspondence have had on Picasso? Would he not have been the first eyewitness to these letters, these documents bearing distressing news from the East but conveyed through constant expressions of love and faith? History tells us very little with regard to Olga and any influence she might have borne on Picasso's working process. Yet she held a central place both in the artist's personal life and work and, consequently, she merits far more than being remembered simply as his preferred model. Picasso's many paintings, pastel and pencil drawings and engravings have preserved the memory of Olga's melancholy. The oil on canvas painting *Woman Reading (Olga)* (1920, [p. 52]) presents the image, widely published, of a young, pretty woman completely absorbed in reading a letter. Olga's sadness is tangible: this work tells us about the gravity – and here the word could almost be taken in its etymological sense, *gravitas*, heaviness, weight, solemnity – of what she is reading, even if until now (before the correspondence kept by the FABA was studied) we had no inkling about the content of the letters read by Olga. But perhaps the most remarkable feature in this piece is the treatment of the young woman's hands. It is the letter-reading rather than the model, whose robe is just crudely sketched, which captures the artist's full attention. The outline of her hands is strongly emphasised, creating a chiaroscuro effect that brings extraordinary volume to the simple action of reading. Picasso tries to render all the emotion that the hands can hold, recalling, like his

friend Jaime Sabartès, that the hand is just as precious for capturing the expression of a personality as the face. Indeed, quite significantly, the period 1918-1923 brought about the greatest number of studies of hands ever produced by the artist.<sup>26</sup> We can infer just how much Picasso was sensitive to the dramatic nature of the events affecting his family-in-law. The psychological impact of all this correspondence on Olga must have massively taken its toll. And it is simply this “massiveness” that Picasso depicted. The massive weight of the unspeakable. The massive weight of the silence to which Olga was confined in her own life, which she never felt able to share with her family. Picasso seems to have wanted, above all, to translate into painting the painful act of reading this letter, as if the emotion contained in Olga’s hands reflected, modestly and discreetly, the actual emotions felt by the young woman. And we do not know if she was ever able to express these emotions. It seems that, through these works, there is much more going on than a presumed return by Picasso to classical sources. We, of course, know about his great admiration for Ingres – magnified by his desire to emulate the neoclassical master. But the effect of this “neoclassical” label, somewhat simplistic, is to dismiss all the human substance, charged with meaning, that fuelled this fascinating period of the artist’s life. Olga features heavily in this not insignificant part of Picasso’s corpus, – as does Paul or the two of them together. We know just how swiftly the finest moments of Olga’s happiness in

the early 1920s were tarnished – from 1927, following the death of Lydia and the arrival of Marie-Thérèse Walter in Picasso’s life, giving way to a stream of representations that seem to illustrate with incredible force the psychoanalytic dialectic brought to light by Freud, between *eros* and *thanatos*: the final chapters in the common history of Pablo and Olga appear as a pure and simple illustration of this indissociable complex, as Freud sees it, between affection and aggression, love and hate. The works produced by Picasso during the final years of the life he shared with Olga are at times staggeringly powerful and violent, combining crucifixions and bullfighting scenes in which a horse is eviscerated by the horns of a bull.

Even so – and here I wish to congratulate the theory posited by Charles Stuckey in his text<sup>27</sup> –, representations of Olga continued, perhaps surprisingly, to emerge following the couple’s separation in 1935. One reason might explain Olga’s continued presence in Picasso’s work after this date. While Pablo and Olga were no longer a couple after 1935, the husband and wife never began divorce proceedings. Their separation was only made official in 1940 through a notarial deed. The profound violence of a split never properly consummated, or made official by divorce, would have roused unpredictable reactions in the wounded Olga. In a way, Olga shared the same experience as her mother: a grief that could not be consoled and which, for lack of closure, remained an unbearable pain. Years after their separation, Olga

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Daix, *Le Nouveau Dictionnaire Picasso*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 2012.

<sup>27</sup> See p. 249-255 of the catalogue.

continued to write Picasso many letters, on occasion enclosing photo montages showing their life as a happy family and which, whether welcome or not, made Picasso see, revisit and relive his former life with her. Olga never truly left the artist's life until her death in 1955. Her presence is still implicit in Picasso's work in the years following 1935, as suggested most notably by Michael C. FitzGerald.<sup>28</sup> In his opinion, the final distorted images of Olga can be seen in the aggressive treatment of the female form, with bristly hair and prominent teeth, as in *The Kiss* from 1931 [p. 229], or the angular face in *Woman with a Hat* from 1935 (Musée national d'art moderne, Paris). The features on Olga's face are composed of lines so frequently repeated that they went on to be associated with other faces by the end of their relationship, as if the artist was never able to completely break ties with her, as if the memory of Olga merged, even subconsciously, into the representations of women who succeeded her in Picasso's emotional arena.

The figure of Olga persisted in Picasso's work, in both physical and symbolic form. It is also to Michael C. FitzGerald I owe the fact that I understand why, or how, Olga never got to occupy a leading role in the history of art: his fine text in this publication presents the reasons for this long eclipse.<sup>29</sup> Too, to celebrate the efforts of the many others who have contributed to

giving Olga a fresh meaning and dimension in the life and work of Pablo Picasso, I wish to propose we abandon the term "neoclassicism", too often attached to the artist during his "Olga period". Fraught with academicism, this label muddies the waters by focusing on a generic and neutral (classical) image of the omnipresence of Olga. To my mind, it should quite simply be replaced by the term - far more expressive - the "Olga period".

*Throughout the entire process of working on this project, my collaboration with Claire Bergeal and Julie Dentzer was so valuable in so many respects: I am sincerely indebted to them both. In writing this text I was fortunate to have the extra pairs of eyes and critical support of Bernard Ruiz-Picasso and Émilie Philippot: I am grateful for their assistance and their remarks. I also owe a great deal to Isis Jourda who gave this text its shape and the final details: please accept all my gratitude.*

### **Olga Picasso**

Catalogue edited by Emilia Philippot, Joachim Pissarro and Bernard Ruiz-Picasso.

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<sup>28</sup> Michael C. FitzGerald, "Le dilemme des modernistes : le néoclassicisme et les portraits d'Olga Khokhlova", in William S. Rubin (dir.), *Picasso et le portrait*, Paris, RMN-Flammarion, 1996.

<sup>29</sup> See p. 287-293 of the catalogue.

# 1.4 A CULTURAL PROGRAMME AROUND THE EXHIBITION

## A CYCLE OF LECTURES

**Tuesday 28 March 2017 at 6.30 pm**

***Inaugural lecture of the Olga Picasso exhibition*** in the presence of the curators

**Emilia Philippot**, curator at the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**Joachim Pissarro**, historian of art, curator, director of the Hunter College Galleries

**Bernard Ruiz-Picasso**, co-founder and co-president of the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte (FABA)

**Tuesday 25 April 2017 at 6.30 pm**

***Olga Picasso correspondence***, in the presence of the curators **Hélène Carrère d'Encause**, historian and permanent secretary of Académie Française

**Thomas Chaineux**, Research Officer at the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso (FABA)

**Emilia Philippot**, curator at the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**Tuesday 30 May 2017 at 6.30 pm**

***Olga's portraits***

**Emilie Bouvard**, curator at the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**Caroline Eliacheff**, psychoanalyst and pedopsychiatre

**Francesco Vezzoli**, plastic artist

**Tuesday 27 June 2017 at 6.30 pm**

***Olga at Boisgeloup***

**Cécile Godefroy**, historian of art

**Virginie Perdrisot**, curator at the Musée national Picasso-Paris and associated curator at the "Boisgeloup: Picasso's studio in Normandy" exhibition at the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Rouen from 1st of April to 11 September 2017.

# 1.5 THE MEDIATION AROUND THE EXHIBITION

## AUDIO GUIDE

The audio guide is a way for visitors to explore the museum and its exhibitions at their leisure. Available in French, English, Spanish, German and French Sign Language.

A family tour is also available: a fun way of exploring Picasso's work together, stimulating the curiosity of both kids and grown-ups and sharing your impressions of your visit! Available in French and English.

**Full price:** €5

**Concessions:** €4

Information and bookings on our website, under the heading [Bookings/Individuals/Museum tickets and audio guide](#)

For information on our tours/workshops: visit our website under the heading [Visit/Bookings/Families/Tours-workshops](#) to:

- Find out available dates, on weekends and public holidays
- Book your visit

**Reservation required** either on line or at the museum, subject to available places.

# 1.6 ALSO INSPIRED BY THE EXHIBITION

## **PICASSO IN ROUEN SEASON**

**1 April-11 September 2017**

### **Boisgeloup: Picasso's studio in Normandy**

Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen

In June 1930, Picasso purchased Château de Boisgeloup near Gisors in the north of France. While Picasso continued to live in Paris, Boisgeloup became his holiday home and the location of his first sculpture studio. Secretly involved with Marie-Thérèse Walter, he entered into an intensely creative period which he also expressed through painting, drawing, engraving and even photography. This rare moment, when hidden love reawakened inspiration, will be revealed for the first time in France in an exhibition of almost two hundred works and documents supplied by the Musée National Picasso-Paris and private collections. This exhibition is the linchpin of an entire season dedicated to modern art held in the Rouen Normandy metropolitan area in partnership with the region's universities and the "art and history city and country" cultural label.

### **González/Picasso: an iron-clad friendship**

Musée Le Secq des Tournelles

Julio Gonzalez was the first sculptor to employ iron as a material in modern art. His friendship with Picasso was a significant episode in the career of both artists. Taking place at the museum of cast iron art in Le Secq des Tournelles, the exhibition seeks to trace the development of each artist's work and their aesthetic exchanges. A chance to see the works of both artists side by side, the show will receive some forty loans from France's national modern art museum and is one of the events organised to celebrate 40 years of the Centre Pompidou.

### **Picasso: ceramic sculptures**

Musée de la Céramique in Rouen

After experimenting with ceramics at the start of his career, Picasso took up this medium again in Vallauris from 1946. There he produced a vast body of work, in which his creative genius reanimated this time-honoured artistic practice to which he became especially attached. The exhibition at the Musée de la Céramique in Rouen hopes to shine a light on the sculptural dimension of this corpus and present some of his most brilliant innovations. Through ceramics, Picasso was able to develop new sculptural concepts and nurture his work generally.

**Château de Boisgeloup, Gisors, France**

The Fundación Almine y Bernard-Ruiz Picasso para el Arte (FABA) is delighted to announce the opening of Château de Boisgeloup to the public for the first time in April 2017. Château de Boisgeloup was purchased by Picasso on 10 June 1930. He stayed at the property regularly with his wife Olga and their son Paul. In this oasis of creativity, Picasso entertained his illustrious friends from the artistic scene at the time. Over the subsequent decades, the sculpture studio was used as storage until the day when Paul's son Bernard and his wife Almine invested in the place to bring it into the modern age.

One hundred years after the encounter between Picasso and the ballerina Olga Khokhlova, in 2017 Joe Bradley has been invited to present his works in the sculpture studio at Boisgeloup.

**In partnership with the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen**

Enjoy a discounted ticket to the exhibitions *Boisgeloup, Picasso's studio in Normandy* at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen and *Olga Picasso* at the Musée National Picasso-Paris on presentation of a ticket to either of the two exhibitions.



# 2. THE MUSÉE NATIONAL PICASSO-PARIS

## 2.1 EXHIBITIONS AT THE MUSEUM

### **Picasso 1932**

10 October 2017-11 February 2018

On the 15th of June 1932, Pablo Picasso makes the news: *Tériade* publishes an interview with the artist in the French newspaper *l'Intransigeant*, when the retrospective of his work was set to open at the Georges Petit gallery. As the critic introduces the artist by announcing "You will discover the expression of some of his ideas which are not only those of a painter, but also those of a man.", Picasso releases one of his most famous statements: "The art we make is a way of holding our newspaper."

Both statements refer to the human and biographic dimension of Picasso's work which will, indeed, become increasingly significant that year (1932). The artist, now face to face with thirty years of his own work, integrates the necessity to document his work day by day, by dating his paintings, sculptures, drawings and engravings. A procedure that leads to his capacity to keep a record of the most essential until the most modest traces of his exceptional life.

The first event dedicated to the work of an artist of the 1st of January until the 31st of December, the "Picasso 1932" exhibition thus reports a complete year of the life of the Spanish painter through the chronological presentation of his work and archives. The exhibition is organized in partnership with Tate Modern in London and attempts to grasp this existence which mixes, touches and attracts the big and small events and the main and secondary personalities.

It presents the essential masterpieces of the artist's career like *The Dream* and is also a tribute to the opulence that the painter rich, praised and famous enjoys, together with the paradoxical strength of his work which plays with his past by inventing new and "oppressiv" forms.

### **Picasso 1947. Un don majeur au Musée national d'art moderne**

24 October 2017-27 January 2018

### **Picasso & Guernica**

27 March-29 July 2018

## 2.2 EXCEPTIONAL EVENTS OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM

**“Picasso-Giacometti”, travelling to Doha-Fire Station, Qatar**

21st February-21st May 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“21 rue La Boétie” at the Musée Maillol, Paris**

8 March-23 July 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“Picasso portraits” at the Museu Picasso, Barcelone**

16 March 2017-25 June 2018 in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“Picasso Primitif” at the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris**

28 March-23 July 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“Une saison Picasso” at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, at the Musée de la Céramique, and at the Musée Le Secq des Tournelles in Rouen**

1st April-11 September 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“Piedad y terror en Picasso. El camino a Guernica” at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid**

5 April-4 September 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“Picasso\Parade. La sirena Partenope e il pittore cubista: Napoli 1917” at the Musée Capodimonte, Naples**

10 April-10 July 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris, in the context of “Picasso-Méditerranée”

**“Face à Picasso” at the Musée Mohammed VI, Rabat, Marocco**

19 April-31 July 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris, in the context of “Picasso-Méditerranée”

**“Picasso. Sculptures” at Baku, Azerbaïdjan**

7 April-20 August 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“Picasso and Rivyera” at the Museo del Palacio in Mexico**

31 May-10 September 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**“Picasso à Perpignan” at the Musée Hyacinthe Rigaud, Perpignan**

24 June-5 November 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris, in the context of “Picasso-Méditerranée”

**“Picasso et la maternité” at the Musée Crozatier, Le Puy-en-Velay**

10 July-11 October 2017, in partnership with the Musée national Picasso-Paris

**Picasso-Mediterranea an initiative of the Musée national Picasso-Paris**

“Picasso-Méditerranée” is an international cultural event which will be held from Spring 2017 through to Autumn 2019. Over sixty cultural institutions have come together to conjure up a programme around the work, “obstinément méditerranéenne” by Pablo Picasso. As an initiative from Musée national Picasso-Paris, this journey around the work by the artist and through the places which inspired him, bringing them together to offer an exceptional cultural experience.

## 2.3 THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF PICASSO'S WORK

For its quality and scope as well as the range of art forms it encompasses, the collection at the Musée national Picasso-Paris is the only one in the world to present both Picasso's complete painted, sculpted, engraved and illustrated œuvre, and a precise record — through sketches, studies, drafts, notebooks, etchings in various stages, photographs, illustrated books, films and documents — of the artist's creative process.

The Musée National Picasso-Paris collection was created from two donations made to the State through an "Acceptance in Lieu" by Pablo Picasso's heirs in 1979 and later Jacqueline Picasso's heirs in 1990.

### **It has been expanded over the years through outstanding acquisitions:**

- **Picasso's private collection** (Iberian statues, African and Oceanic masks, paintings by Le Nain, Corot, Vuillard, Cézanne, Gauguin, Matisse, Le Douanier Rousseau, Renoir, Braque, Modigliani and Miro, and drawings by Degas, Chirico and Giacometti) was donated to the State by his heirs in accordance with the artist's wishes. Initially, it comprised of 50 works by old and contemporary masters, which entered the collection thanks to a donation made in 1973 and finalized in 1978. The collection was enhanced through the "Pablo Picasso Acceptance in Lieu" in 1979.
- **Picasso's personal archives** were donated by his heirs in 1978, and were pre-classified before entering the national collections through a "Gift by Hand" in 1992 (it comprised about 200,000 pieces).
- In 1980, **with the intention to open the museum**, Picasso's family and friends **donated works they owned or inherited** from the artist.
- **The museum has regularly led an acquisition-by-purchase policy** since its creation in 1985. It has helped add over a thousand additional artworks to the national collections.

This remarkable collection has awarded the Musée national Picasso-Paris a critical, international role in presenting Picasso's works and continuing research about his life, his work, and modern art in general.

**An inestimable archival collection**

A few years after his death, Picasso's heirs decided to give the French State his personal archives, manuscripts, prints and photographs in order to facilitate the study of his works while ensuring the integrity of a collection that the artist had put together and conserved throughout his life. Combined with the works that entered the national collections in lieu of payment in 1979, these objects and documents formed the foundations of one of the most remarkable ensembles on Picasso ever assembled.

This archive collection was given to the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Communication physically in 1980, and then legally in 1991, via a "Gift by Hand". Scientific responsibility for the collection has been shared jointly, right from the start, by representatives of the Musée national Picasso-Paris and the National Archives. It was assigned to the Musée national Picasso-Paris by an order of February 1992 which required it to take charge of the final classification, inventory, management and scientific conservation within the framework of legislation on archives.

After setting up a nine-part classification plan, based on classification models used for archives, an "integrated inventory summary" conducted jointly by the Archives Nationales and the Musée national Picasso-Paris was put online in 2003.

The collection is estimated to contain almost 17,000 photographs and 200,000 archives, however, the systematic inventory of individual documents has not yet been completed. Even though the systematic inventory of photographs is almost complete, the systematic inventory of other pieces was only started in 2014.

## 2.4 THE HÔTEL SALÉ: A STUNNING SETTING

The Hôtel was built between 1656 and 1660 by the architect Jean Boullier for Pierre Aubert, Lord of Fontenay, a salt tax collector, which led to the building's current name "Hôtel Salé" (*salé* meaning salty in French). It was one of the most emblematic private residences built in the late seventeenth century on Rue de Thorigny, in the Marais district. It is one of the rare complete buildings that illustrates the Mazarin architecture of the time. From 1964 to 1966, after the City of Paris purchased the block containing the Hôtel Aubert de Fontenay, which was marked by a succession of occupants and rather dilapidated, the building was listed as a Historic Monument in 1968 (order of 29 October 1968) and renovated between 1974 and 1985.

Michel Guy, French Secretary of State for Culture, decided to house Picasso's collection of works in the Hôtel Aubert de Fontenay. Indeed, a prestigious and original place of character was needed to present the remarkable collection to the public. It contained almost 5,000 of the artist's works from the 1979 acceptance in lieu and was completed by other donations. In 1981, the State granted a 99-year lease to the City of Paris.

It was agreed that the State would carry out large-scale renovation work, ensure the maintenance of the building and take charge of running the future museum.

Between 1979 and 1985, the building was renovated, restructured and refitted to allow Roland Simounet to install the collections for the future museum. He created large white rooms which were integrated into the large historic rooms of the Hôtel. These modern boxes, surrounded by a series of concave cornices that provided light, were in line with the Le Corbusier tradition. The sculptor Diego Giacometti was asked to create the furniture, and the burnished bronze and white resin light fittings.

The Musée Picasso was inaugurated in October 1985 by the French President of the Republic, François Mitterrand.

Then, between 2009 and 2014, the Hôtel Salé was renovated, modernised, restored and extended. The construction, managed by architect Jean-François Bodin, tripled the surface area of the exhibition space and public reception space. It ensured compliance with new safety, security and accessibility regulations. Bodin carefully restored and standardized Roland Simounet's extensive fittings while respecting the spirit and form of his original project.

His work has reconciled the different languages that form the rich heritage of the initial architecture of Musée national Picasso-Paris while enhancing the spaces where the collection is presented. The listed section of Hôtel Salé has also undergone extensive restoration, particularly all the decorative elements and sculptures of the central staircase under the supervision of Stéphane Thouin, Chief Architect for Historic Monuments.

# 3. GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

## 3.1 CHRONOLOGY

### PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)

#### 1881

Pablo is born on 25 October, to Don José Ruiz Blasco (1838-1913) and Doña Maria Picasso y Lopez (1855-1939). José Ruiz Blasco teaches drawing at the Malaga School of Fine Arts and is curator at the municipal museum. Picasso is later joined by two sisters: Dolorès, nicknamed Lola (1884-1958), and Concepción or Conchita (1887-1895).

#### 1888-1889

Encouraged by his father, Pablo begins painting.

#### 1892-1895

Picasso studies at the Fine Arts School in La Coruña and practises illustration and drawing caricatures at home. Produces his first oil paintings.

#### 10 January 1895

Death of his sister Conchita from diphtheria. Pablo is deeply affected by the death. Pablo's first visit to the Prado museum, Madrid.

#### July 1895

Paints *The Barefoot Girl* (oil on canvas, MP2)  
September 1895: meets Manuel Pallarès, who would become a lifelong friend.

#### September 1895

Meets Manuel Pallarès, who would become a lifelong friend.

#### 1896-1897

Pablo studies at La Lonja in Barcelona. First major works, *The First Communion* (1896, oil on canvas, Barcelona, Museu Picasso) and *Science and Charity* (1897, oil on canvas, Barcelona, Museu Picasso), which wins a gold medal at the General Exhibition in Malaga. Picasso enrolls at the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid.

#### 1898

Visits the village of Horta de Ebro (today known as Horta de San Juan) for the first time. Landscape studies.

#### 1899

In Barcelona, the artist begins frequenting the Els Quatre Gats, a café in Barcelona known within the literary and artistic milieu as a place supporting modern art from France as well as Catalanian traditional and folk art.

#### 1900

First stay in Paris, with Casagemas: his painting *Last Moments* is presented at the Exposition Universelle in Paris.

#### 1901

17 February 1901: Casagemas commits suicide at a café in Paris.  
During the summer, first exhibition in Paris at the Galeries Vollard, organised by the dealer Pedro Mañach, a renowned anarchist. It was there that Picasso meets the poet Max Jacob. Start of Picasso's Blue period during which time he frequently visits Saint-Lazare Hospital to observe the sick. Paints *La Mort de Casagemas (The Death of Casagemas)* and *Autoportrait bleu (Self Portrait in Blue)*.

#### 1902

Produces his first clay sculpture, *Femme assise (Woman Seated)* (MP 230), and a series of erotic drawings. Meets the sculptor Julio Gonzalez. Shares lodgings rented by Max Jacob on Boulevard Voltaire, Paris. Exhibitions in April hosted by the gallerist Berthe Weill who is the first in France to sell works by Picasso, then in June with Henri Matisse: these two exhibitions reveal the blue period.



**1904**

Moves to the Bateau-Lavoir studio, in Montmartre. Meets André Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire; becomes a frequent visitor to the *Au lapin agile café* and the Circus Medrano. Meets Fernande Olivier, who modelled for him before becoming his partner for the next seven years. Late 1904, Picasso gradually moves into his Rose period.

**1905**

Travels to the Netherlands. Sculpts *Le Fou (The Madman)* (1905, bronze, MP231) inspired by Max Jacob. Meets Leo and then Gertrude Stein, and begins her portrait (*Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, 1906, New York, Metropolitan Museum).

**1906**

Visiting the Louvre, he discovers Iberian art (sites in Osuna and Cerro de Los Santos), then studies Gauguin. In summer he stays in Gósol, a remote village in Catalonia, where his Rose period flourished.

**1907**

Acquires two Iberian stone head sculptures from Géry Pieret, Apollinaire's secretary. They learn in August 1911 that they had been stolen from the Louvre. Introduced to Georges Braque by Apollinaire. Visits the Trocadéro Museum of Ethnography, in Paris, and finishes *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (The Young Ladies of Avignon)*.

**1908**

Peint des paysages et des figures où la forme se trouve simplifiée et schématisée.

**1909**

Spends the summer in Horta de Ebro and paints six landscapes. Moves onto the boulevard de Clichy upon his return to Paris.

**1910**

Develops towards a so-called "analytic" style of Cubism (1910-1912). Kahnweiler becomes his official dealer. Exhibition at the Galeries Vollard, then Picasso refuses to show his work in Paris until 1916.

**1911**

Picasso exhibition at the 291 Gallery in New York, followed by numerous publications in the American press. Exhibitions in Berlin, Germany (Cassirer Gallery, Secession).

**1912**

Exhibits with the Blaue Reiter in Munich and again in Berlin for Secession. First construction: a *Guitare en carton (Guitar made from cardboard)* (New York, The Museum of Modern Art). Begins introducing newspapers and other paper cut-outs into his paintings.

**1913**

Takes part in the "International Exhibition of Modern Art" at the Armory Show in New York and at the Moderne Galerie Tannhäuser in Munich. Develops into "synthetic" Cubism (*Homme à la guitare [Man and Guitar]*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art).

**1917**

Accompanies Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes to Italy. Meets the Russian ballerina Olga Kokhlova. In May, the ballet *Parade* (libretto by Jean Cocteau; music by Erik Satie; choreography by Léonide Massine; stage curtain, sets and costumes by Picasso; programme by Guillaume Apollinaire) premieres at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris. The ballet then transfers to Barcelona.

**1918**

Matisse-Picasso exhibition at the Galerie Paul Guillaume.

12 July: Picasso marries Olga Kokhlova at the Russian church on rue Daru. Max Jacob, Apollinaire and Cocteau are witnesses. Paul Rosenberg becomes his art dealer. Picasso moves to 23 rue La Boétie.

**1919-1920**

Meets Joan Miró.

**1921**

4 February: Paulo, son of Picasso and Olga, is born.

**1925**

Picasso reprises the aggressive style that characterises *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (*The Young Ladies of Avignon*), painting *La Danse* (*The Dance*), which breaks with the neo-classicism of previous years and brings him closer to the nascent Surrealist group.

**1927**

By chance, he meets Marie-Thérèse Walter in the street, who goes on to become his mistress for almost ten years and to give birth to a daughter, Maya, in 1935.

**1930**

At the Château de Boisgeloup in the Eure, which he has just bought, he creates a huge sculpture studio and produces a series of works for which Marie-Thérèse models.

**1936**

Paul Éluard, a very close friend of Picasso, introduces the photographer and artist Dora Maar to him. It is the start of a new affair which would last seven years. Their common stance against the fascism that was spreading throughout Europe would be at the source

of numerous works, especially *Guernica* in 1937, for which Dora Maar photographs the production stages.

**1937**

Picasso leaves the apartment on rue La Boétie, which has already been abandoned by Olga and her son Paul, and moves into a studio located in a private mansion on the rue des Grands-Augustins. He lives and works there between 1937 and 1955 when staying in Paris.

**1943**

He meets the young painter Françoise Gilot, who becomes his partner for ten years. Their son Claude is born in 1947, followed by daughter Paloma in 1949.

**1948**

The family moves into villa La Galloise in Vallauris, a town known for its pottery. Picasso dedicates himself to ceramics.

**1954**

After separating from Françoise, he meets Jacqueline Roque in Vallauris. The following year they move to villa *La Californie*, located in the hills overlooking the bay of Cannes. In the studio of this new house, he produces numerous monumental paintings that revisit famous compositions such as *Las Meninas* (*The Girls*) by Velázquez and *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (*Luncheon on the Grass*) by Manet.

**1958**

He and Jacqueline buy Château de Vauvenargues at the foot of Sainte-Victoire mountain. Picasso sets up a studio there between 1959 and 1962, but his principal place of work remains La Californie, followed by the Provençal farmhouse Notre-Dame-de-Vie in Mougins from 1961, his last studio.

**1961**

Picasso and Jacqueline marry in Vallauris.

**1963**

A Picasso Museum is opened in Barcelona, to which the artist donates almost all of the works from his youth.

**1966**

For Picasso's 85th birthday, a retrospective of his work is held in Paris at the Grand and Petit Palais.

**1967**

Picasso *Exhibition: Sculptures, Ceramics, Graphic Work* at the Tate Gallery in London, curated by Roland Penrose (June-August), subsequently presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (October 1967-January 1968).

**1969**

Picasso enters an intense sequence of paintings during which he produces 165 works in a year (between 5 January 1969 and 2 February 1970), with subjects including portraits, couples, nudes, men with swords, smokers and still lifes.

**1973**

8 April: Picasso dies at his farmhouse Notre-Dame-de-Vie in Mougins.

The exhibition *Pablo Picasso, 1970-1972* at the Palais des Papes in Avignon unveils the last works chosen by the artist.

## MUSÉE NATIONAL PICASSO-PARIS

### HISTORY

**1973** The artist's heirs donate to the State Picasso's private collection of works by old and contemporary masters.

**1979** Donation to the State through "Acceptance in Lieu" by the artist's heirs (5,000 works), which formed the Musée national Picasso-Paris collection.

**1985** Opening of the Musée National Picasso at the Hôtel Salé Paris.

**1990** Donation to the State through "Acceptance in Lieu" by Jacqueline Picasso's heirs.

**1992** Donation to the State of Picasso's Archives (over 200,000 items) by the artist's heirs.

**October 2011** Renovation at the Hôtel Salé starts.

**25 October 2014** The Musée national Picasso-Paris opens to the public.

**2015** The Musée national Picasso-Paris celebrates its 30th anniversary.

### THE COLLECTION

**4,755** of Picasso's artworks altogether, including **4,090** graphic artworks, **297** paintings, **368** sculptures.

Picasso's private collection incorporates **46** paintings, **20** sculptures and **64** graphic artworks.

Over **200,000** archive documents.

The museum library: **11,000** books and over **8,000** documentary files.

### THE SPACES

**3,700** sq. metres: area of exhibition space spread out over **37** rooms

An auditorium with **95** seats  
A workshop of approximately **120** sq. metres

A bookshop and shop inside the museum and a shop opposite the museum

A café: *Le Café sur le Toit*.

# 4. SPONSORS OF THE EXHIBITION

## WITH THE SUPPORT OF

### KUSMI TEA

Founded in 1867, Kusmi Tea is a tea house that has preserved tradition and welcomed innovation by creating inspiring wellness teas, great classics and legendary blends that are now iconic. A melting pot of flavours, cultures and colours, Kusmi Tea has embodied the beauty of blends since its inception.



### LVMH

[www.lvmh.fr](http://www.lvmh.fr)



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### UGC

UGC is one of Europe's leading cinema operators. The company also produces and distributes films through its subsidiary UGC Images which has produced films such as *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu? (Serial (Bad) Weddings)*, the most successful French film of 2014 and the 7th most successful French film of all time, *Les Profs 2*, and *Dheepan*, winner of the Palme d'or at Cannes in 2015.

Altogether there are 413 UGC cinemas in France and 73 in Belgium which in 2016 screened over 724 films and welcomed 28 million cinema goers.



### RATP

The RATP offers a cultural programme as part of an initiative: *Aimer la ville* (Love the city)



Beyond its mission as a transportation provider, the RATP seeks to enrich its transport services by making them more meaningful while inspiring positive emotions. Throughout the year, it organises entertainment on its networks to enhance passengers' journeys, surprise them, impress them and make them "love the city".

## MEDIA PARTNERS

### À NOUS PARIS

À NOUS PARIS, an urban activator, is the free weekly magazine for people from the Île-de-France region who love their cities.

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### ARTISTIK REZO

[www.artistikrezo.com](http://www.artistikrezo.com)




### CONNAISSANCE DES ARTS

Thanks to the diversity of its publications, *Connaissance des Arts* gives its readers all the useful landmarks with which to gain a greater understanding of art from every period, from archaeology to contemporary art, from landscaping to photography, from design to architecture. To complement its monthly issue (11 issues a year), *Connaissance des Arts* now exists in digital form thanks to its app, enriched with photos and videos.

Each month, *Connaissance des Arts* informs its readers on the latest international cultural affairs. Exhibitions, auctions, fairs and shows are reported on and reviewed by leading journalists and experts.



### LA CROIX

It is with great pleasure that *La Croix* has partnered up with the *Olga Picasso* exhibition.

*La Croix*, a French political and general-interest newspaper, attracts 474,000 daily readers (One 2015-16). It focuses especially on human, cultural and religious issues. Bringing a Christian perspective to current affairs, it voices its singular viewpoint, scrutinising the news in its occasionally unconventional way to help us understand the world in which we live more clearly. Without succumbing to the media frenzy, *La Croix* is constantly driven by the need to deliver quality, critical, responsive and relevant news for actively participating in today's world.

*La Croix* also has a [website www.la-croix.com](http://www.la-croix.com): 1,8 million unique visitors (Médiamétrie Netratings Oct. 2016) and 8,8 million page views (OJD Dec 2016) and smartphone and tablet apps.



### PSYCHOLOGIES

The values held by *Psychologies*: to be better acquainted, happier, and know how to live together, are more essential than ever. As an engaged media, *Psychologies* invites its audience and its internet users to live new and robust experiences. We have chosen to accompany the Musée national Picasso-Paris and its "Olga Picasso" exhibition in order to share a moment of beautiful and unique emotion.



### RADIO CLASSIQUE

For over 10 years, Radio Classique has focused its programming on major repertoire and quality news with shows presented by radio professionals. Our broadcasters – Guillaume Durand, Renaud Blanc, Nicolas Pierron, Eve Ruggieri, Christian Morin, Laure Mézan, Albina Belabiod, Alain Duault, Olivier Bellamy, PPDA, Claire Chazal, Francis Drésel and Elodie Fondacci – embody the station and its values. They share a passion for music, culture and information, champion elegance in their broadcasts and, above all, prioritise quality of content without neglecting accessibility and openness to all.





Radio Classique is a music but also cultural station with daily and weekly programmes promoting France's cultural news including *Le Journal du Classique* presented by Laure Mézan, *La Grande Galerie* by Guy Boyer, *Les Mots de la Philo* by Luc Ferry, and *L'Invité Culture* by Claire Chazal.

The editorial line at Radio Classique has been widely endorsed by its listeners, of which there are over a million each day. The quality of the content on Radio Classique attracts the biggest music lovers as well as those seeking the most authentic classical music.

Our ambition remains to broadcast classical music and attract more lovers of the genre by broadcasting outstanding music programmes. We tour all over France to broadcast live some sixty concerts featuring the most prestigious soloists and orchestras in France as well as young ensembles and young prodigies who will form the artistic scene of tomorrow.

## **TÉVA**

Téva was born 20 year ago with one ambition in mind: to be a station for women – all women.

By listening closely to their concerns, speaking to them about the world as it is, giving them the confidence in their capabilities to transcend their everyday lives and entertaining them with series led by female protagonists they can relate to, the station has become women's best ally. And the viewers are a testament to that: today Téva is the leading pay-TV channel! The top paid channel amongst women and the rest of the general public, nearly 11 million TV viewers tune in each month!

With original magazine programmes and strong female role models, Téva champions innovation, broadcasts shows with first exclusivity and discovers new talent across all genres.

In line with its objective to support major cultural events that fit with the station format, Téva is delighted to partner with the Musée Picasso for the Olga Picasso exhibition.

TEVA is available on satellite, cable, ADSL and mobiles.



# 5. AVAILABLE VISUALS

## FOR THE PRESS

### 5.1 DISPLAYED WORKS

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Contact : Christine Pinault / [cpinault@picasso.fr](mailto:cpinault@picasso.fr)



Pablo Picasso  
*Olga in an Armchair*  
Montrouge, spring 1918  
Oil on canvas  
130 x 88.8 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso,  
1979. MP55  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais  
(Musée National Picasso-Paris)/  
Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso  
*Olga Khokhlova in a mantilla*  
Barcelona, summer/autumn 1917  
Oil on canvas  
64 x 53 cm  
Fundación Almine y Bernard  
Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © Photo: Equipo Gasull



Pablo Picasso  
*Olga Pensive*  
Paris, winter 1923  
Pastel and black pencil on sanded  
vellum paper  
105 x 74 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso,  
1979. MP993  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais  
(Musée National Picasso-Paris)/  
Mathieu Rabeau



*Olga Pensive*, circa 1923  
Original negative, 10.9 x 6.9 cm  
© Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso,  
courtesy of Fundación Almine  
y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.  
Photographer unknown,  
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Pablo Picasso  
*Woman Reading*  
1920  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 81.2 cm  
Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble  
Donated by the artist, 1921  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photograph: © Musée de Grenoble



Pablo Picasso  
*Three Dancers: Olga Khokhlova, Lydia Lopoukova and Loubov Chernicheva, from a photograph, early 1919*  
Graphite and charcoal on laid drawing paper  
62.5 x 47.5 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP834  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/ Mathieu Rabeau



Jean Cocteau  
*Olga and Picasso*  
Rome, 1917  
Graphite pencil on paper  
42 x 27.5 cm  
Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © FABA  
Photo: Marc Domage



Pablo Picasso  
*The Artist's Dining Room, rue La Boétie Paris, 1918-1919*  
Gouache and India ink over drawing in graphite on paper  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP837  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris)/ Mathieu Rabeau



Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky, dit) Ricardo Vinès, *Olga and Pablo Picasso and Manuel Angeles Ortiz at the Comte de Beaumont's ball, Hôtel de Masseran, Paris, 1924*  
Print not dated  
Gelatin silver print  
20.5 x 17 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Bequeathed by Picasso, 1992. APPH1469bis  
Copyright: © Man Ray Trust/Adagp, Paris  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris)/ Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso  
*Mother and Child at the Seaside*  
Spring 1921  
Oil on canvas  
142.9 x 172.7 cm  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Restricted gift of Maymar Corporation, Mrs. Maurice L. Rothschild, and Mr and Mrs. Chauncey McCormick; Mary and Leigh Block Fund; Ada Turnbull Hertle Endowment; through prior gift of Mr and Mrs. Edwin E. Hokin 1954.270  
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Photo © Art Institute of Chicago, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/image The Art Institute of Chicago



Pablo Picasso  
*Study for Woman and Child at the Seaside: child seated*  
Paris, 23 December 1921  
Red chalk, charcoal and white chalk on prepared paper  
74 x 104 cm  
Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Jacqueline Picasso, 1990. MP1990-69  
Long-term loan to Musée des Beaux-arts, Rennes  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © MBA, Rennes, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Adélaïde Beaudoin



Pablo Picasso  
*Paul on a Donkey*  
Paris, 15 April 1923  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 81 cm  
Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
© FABA Photo: Éric Baudouin



Two instant photos of Olga and Paul Picasso, circa 1928  
Original photograph  
Gelatin silver print  
10.8 x 3.8 cm  
© Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso, FABA



Studio furniture, armchair  
Late 19th century  
75 x 60 x 90 cm  
Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte.  
© Photo: Marc Damage



Pablo Picasso  
*Large Nude in Red Armchair*  
5 May 1929  
Oil on canvas  
195 x 129 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP113  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris)/Mathieu Rabeau



Anonymous  
Olga and Pablo Picasso, Boisgeloup, spring 1931  
Original black and white film 9,5 mm, 1'03"  
Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
© Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso.  
Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte



Pablo Picasso  
*Woman*  
1927  
Oil on canvas  
136 x 103 cm  
Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © FABA  
Photo: Éric Baudouin



Pablo Picasso  
*The Swimmer*, November 1929  
Oil on canvas  
130 x 162 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP119  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Adrien Didierjean



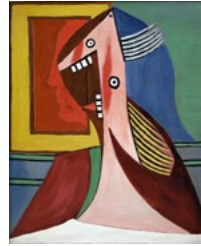
Pablo Picasso  
*Travelling Circus*  
December 1922  
Gouache on laid drawing paper  
11.1 x 14.6 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso, 1979. MP981  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Thierry Le Mage



Pablo Picasso  
*The Blue Acrobat*  
November 1929  
Charcoal and oil on canvas  
162 x 130 cm  
Musée national Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Jacqueline Picasso, 1990. MP1990-15  
On long-term loan to the Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. RMN-GP



Pablo Picasso  
*Painter and his model*,  
1926  
Oil on canvas  
172 x 256 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso,  
1979. MP96  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais  
(Musée National Picasso-Paris)/Jean-  
Gilles Berizzi



Pablo Picasso  
*Bust of Woman with Self-Portrait*  
February 1929  
Oil on canvas  
71 x 60 cm  
Private collection (Courtesy  
McClain Gallery)  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: Private Collection,  
Courtesy of McClain Gallery.  
Photo: Alistair Alexander, Camerarts



Pablo Picasso  
*Crucifixion*  
7 February 1930  
Oil on plywood  
51.5 x 66.5 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso,  
1979. MP122  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais  
(Musée National Picasso-Paris)/  
Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso  
*Corrida*, April 1935  
Colour pencils, wax crayons, graphite,  
pen and India ink on laid drawing  
paper  
17.3 x 25.8 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso,  
1979. MP1145  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais  
(Musée National Picasso-Paris)/  
Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso  
*Minotaur Raping a Woman*  
28 June 1933  
Pen, Indian ink and wash on paper  
47.5 x 62 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso,  
1979. MP1115  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais  
(Musée National Picasso-Paris)/  
Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso  
*Minotauremachy*  
23 March 1935  
Etching and engraving. 7th state.  
Print on vergé de Montval paper,  
after acierage of the sheet, printed  
in colours à la poupée by Lacourière  
57.1 x 77.1 cm  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Dation in payment, Pablo Picasso,  
1979. MP2733  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais  
(Musée National Picasso-Paris)/  
Mathieu Rabeau



Pablo Picasso  
*Interior with a Girl Drawing*  
1935  
Oil on canvas  
130 x 195 cm  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
969.1979  
Copyright: © Succession Picasso, 2017  
Photo credit: Digital image,  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York/  
Scala, Florence



# 5.2 VIEWS OF THE MUSÉE NATIONAL PICASSO-PARIS

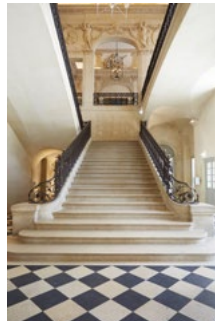
Visuals free from copyright

© Musée national Picasso-Paris, 2015/Fabien Campoverde

Façade of the Hôtel Salé



Main staircase



Jupiter room



# 6. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## TIMES, ACCESS AND PRICES

5 rue de Thorigny,  
75003 Paris

### Metro stations

Line 1 Saint-Paul  
Line 8 Saint-Sébastien-Froissart  
Line 8 Chemin Vert

### Buses

20 - 29 - 65 - 75 - 69 - 96

### Vélib'

#### Stop number 3008

22 rue de La Perle

#### Stop number 3002

26 rue Saint-Gilles

### Autolib'

Parking **18 rue de La Perle**  
Parking **46 rue de Turenne**

## OPENING HOURS

10.30 am-6 pm  
(9.30 am-6 pm during school  
holidays and weekend)  
Every day except Mondays,  
25 December, 1 January  
and 1 May.

## INFORMATION

+33 (0)1 85 56 00 36  
[contact@museepicassoparis.fr](mailto:contact@museepicassoparis.fr)

## ACCESSIBILITY

The museum is accessible  
to people with reduced mobility.  
Disabled visitors are  
entitled to a personalised  
welcome upon request to:  
[accessibilite@  
museepicassoparis.fr](mailto:accessibilite@museepicassoparis.fr)

## LE CAFÉ SUR LE TOIT

Open from Tuesday to Sunday,  
during museum opening hours

## MUSEUM SHOP

- Sales desk at the museum  
(museum opening hours)
- Book shop on 4 rue  
de Thorigny 75003 Paris,  
open from Tuesday to Sunday  
from 10 am to 6.30 pm  
[librairie-boutique.picasso@  
rmngp.fr](http://librairie-boutique.picasso@rmngp.fr)

## PRICES

### Admission ticket

To avoid queues,  
it is recommended  
that tickets are booked  
in advance at [billetterie.  
museepicassoparis.fr](http://billetterie.museepicassoparis.fr)

**Full price:** €12,50

**Concessions:** €11€

The Musée national  
Picasso-Paris is accessible to  
Paris Museum Pass card holders.

## Picasso Pass

To enjoy free and unlimited  
access to the Musée national  
Picasso-Paris for one year:

### Solo Picasso Pass:

**Full price:** €30/**concessions:** €27

### Duo Picasso Pass:

**Full price:** €50/**concessions:** €45

**Young Person's Picasso Pass:** €15

### Family Picasso Passport:

**Full price:** €70/**concessions:** €58

## Multimedia guide

The museum multimedia  
guide is available in French,  
English, Spanish and  
French Sign Language.

## For hire at the museum

**Full price:** €4/**concessions:** €3

The multimedia guide can be  
booked at:  
[billetterie.museepicassoparis.fr](http://billetterie.museepicassoparis.fr)

Available to download from  
Google Play and the App  
[www.museepicassoparis.fr](http://www.museepicassoparis.fr)





# 7. PRESS CONTACTS

## MEDIA RELATIONS

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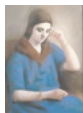
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### Crédit photo de couverture



*Olga Pensive*, Pablo Picasso, 1923, Musée national Picasso-Paris

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