

# The Museum of Modern Art

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Pablo Picasso has made a gift to The Museum of Modern Art of a 15-foot steel-rod construction sculpture it was announced yesterday by William Rubin, Chief Curator of the Painting and Sculpture Collection, to whom the generous gesture was made at the artist's home in Mougins, France early this month. Fabrication of this work in Cor-ten steel is beginning now -- based upon a 6-1/2-foot model provided by Picasso -- and the sculpture will be placed in the Museum's Garden in early fall.

The original model, "Construction in Wire," from which Picasso had the 6-1/2-foot version made some ten years ago, dates from 1928-29 and is 19" high. It was shown at the Museum in the exhibition of Picasso's sculpture in 1967, and is one of only four such linear, metal-rod sculptures he has executed. None has ever before been released to any dealer, collector or museum. The first "drawing in air" sculptures, these works represented Picasso's second dramatic and radical re-orientation of the art of sculpture -- which he had earlier redirected with his first sheet-metal construction, Guitar of 1912 (also a gift to the Museum). Though known only through photographs, the metal-rod sculptures exerted an enormous influence on post-World War II artists, especially in America.

The four models made in 1928-29 were always intended to serve as maquettes for monumental sculptures, but until now none has been realized in that scale. At the time he executed them, Picasso offered the sculptures to a committee which had gathered funds for a memorial to Picasso's friend, the poet Guillaume Apollinaire. The committee, taken aback by the radical character of the sculptures, refused them and no monument to Apollinaire was erected then. "What did they expect me to make," Picasso said later to his friend and biographer Roland Penrose, "a Muse holding a torch?"

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"In these [pieces]," Penrose says, "space has been enclosed by lines, and the three-dimensional form they draw in the air is based on a human figure surrounded by planes that create walls or windows around it. A central transparent, ovoid form is enclosed by its transparent environment, giving an architectural homogeneity that it would be impossible to create in any other way."

According to Mr. Rubin the constructions in metal, wood and cardboard made by Picasso between 1912 and 1916 and again between 1928 and 1934 are not only among the finest works in the history of sculpture, but they have had an immense influence on the development of that art; even more than the work of Donatello, Bernini or Rodin, they have changed its nature and direction. "These Picassos may be said to have formed the basis of a veritable second history of sculpture. An art which from the time of the Egyptians and Greeks to that of Brancusi and Arp had remained essentially one of modeling and carving has since become predominantly one of construction -- an innovation of Picasso. Sculpture's heretofore primarily monolithic configurations have become increasingly varied and open, and the way opened to new materials."

Picasso has, with few exceptions, readily parted with the most important of his paintings; he has refused to sell many of his most important sculptures. This is particularly true of the great Cubist constructions (1912-18) and the metal sculptures of 1928-32. Only one small Cubist construction has ever been sold (to Roland Penrose); none of the key metal sculptures of 1928-32 has ever been sold. Hence with the exception of the Penrose construction, the Guitar which Picasso gave the Museum in 1971 and now the construction, none of these key works are in private or public collections anywhere in the world.

The Museum of Modern Art's collection of Picasso's work is unsurpassed in range and number of key works, including a number of his unique and unrivaled

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masterpieces. It was on view at The Museum of Modern Art from February 3 through April 2 as a birthday tribute, consisting of 84 paintings and sculptures, 23 drawings and a selection of prints.

Picasso in the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art was the 30th show prepared by the Museum since its founding either devoted entirely to Picasso or in which a significant number of his works were shown.

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