

**MoMA CELEBRATES THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF PICASSO'S
*LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON***

**Single-Gallery Exhibition Reunites the Ground-Breaking Painting with
Preparatory Studies**

***Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon at 100*
The Estée and Joseph H. Lauder Gallery, fifth floor
May 9–August 27, 2007
Press Viewing: Wednesday, May 9, 9:30-10:30 a.m.**

NEW YORK, May 4, 2007—In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the creation of Pablo Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), the painting that marked a radical break from traditional artistic values of composition, perspective, harmony, and beauty, The Museum of Modern Art presents *Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon at 100*. On view from May 9 through August 27, 2007, the exhibition examines the genesis of the epoch-making painting by reuniting it with nine preparatory studies from public and private collections. The exhibition is complemented by an installation in The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building that features conservation materials and a timeline tracing the painting's fascinating 100-year history.

Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon at 100 is organized by Anna Swinbourne, Assistant Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art.

"In looking back over the past one hundred years, there has never been a work that so changed the course of modern or contemporary art," says John Elderfield, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art. "It became apparent to artists who had at first scoffed at it that this painting had changed everything, including the future progress of Picasso's art, which built on what the *Demoiselles* had achieved, and created what we now call Cubism."

Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973) began making sketches and preparatory studies for *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* in the winter of 1906–07, producing hundreds over the ensuing months before arriving at the final composition in the summer of 1907. Combining Picasso's interest in the classical nude and antique Iberian statuary with his newfound passion for African art, the composition's asymmetrical, angular figures and flat, splintered planes were rendered in clashes of color and style.

The eight-foot-square canvas created an enormous stir among visitors to Picasso's studio. Dealers, critics, friends, and fellow artists such as Henri Matisse and André Derain reacted to the painting with shock, incomprehension, anger, or laughter. Picasso did not title the painting; it was referred to as *The Philosophical Brothel* until a friend of the artist, the writer André Salmon,

entitled it *Les Femmes d'Alger* on the occasion of its first public exhibition, the 1916 Salon d'Antin in Paris.

With the exception of that exhibition, the painting was rarely seen, and details of its whereabouts are largely undocumented until its acquisition in 1924 by the French collector Jacques Doucet. In 1937, MoMA's founding director, Alfred H. Barr, who had seen the painting in Paris and had unsuccessfully tried to borrow it for the exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*, began the campaign to acquire it from the gallery to which it had been sold. The purchase was finalized in 1939, and the painting was exhibited that spring in the Museum's tenth anniversary exhibition *Art in Our Time*, which inaugurated the Museum's new building at 11 West 53 Street.

A cornerstone of the Museum's collection, which includes 54 other paintings by Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger* has seldom been lent by the Museum. It underwent extensive examination and conservation treatment during the Museum's renovation and expansion, and returned to view in the new building in November 2004.

**Picasso's *Femmes d'Alger* at 100
Conservation and Archival Installation
The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Building for Education and Research
May 30–August 6, 2007**

A display focusing on the conservation of *Les Femmes d'Alger* will be on view in the mezzanine of The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Building for Education and Research. The installation will feature X rays from 1950 that show significant changes in composition that Picasso made directly on the canvas during the work's development, a kiosk with the Web site created specifically to document the restoration of *Femmes d'Alger* in 2003–04, and a timeline illustrating the life of the painting from 1907 to 2007.

SPONSORSHIP:

Picasso's Femmes d'Alger at 100 is made possible by BNP Paribas.

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

1907/2007: Poets on *Les Femmes d'Alger*

Wednesday, May 23, 6:30 p.m., The Celeste Bartos Theater

This installment of Modern Poets reflects upon Pablo Picasso's masterpiece, other works in the Museum's collection made in 1907, and the year 1907 itself. Readings include works by Picasso's friends and acquaintances, including Guillaume Apollinaire, Gelett Burgess, André Salmon, and Gertrude Stein. Following in the tradition of the MoMA *Members Magazine*, which commissioned poets to respond to works in the collection and then published the results, the Museum also offers contemporary poets the opportunity to write new poetry about art made one hundred years ago. Participants include Mary Jo Bang, poet and Associate Professor of English and Director of the Creative Writing Program, Washington University, St. Louis; Mary Ann Caws, author, translator and Distinguished Professor of English, French, Comparative Literature, and Film Studies, The Graduate Center, City University of New York; Pierre Joris, poet, translator, essayist, and Professor Poetry and Poetics, State University of New York, Albany; and Jerome Rothenberg, poet and Professor of visual arts and literature, University of California, San Diego.

Revitalizing MoMA's historical commitment to poetry, the new series Modern Poets invites poets to bring the literary tradition to the Museum's collection. Poets read historical pieces and their own works that reflect on modern and contemporary art.

Tickets (\$10; members \$8; students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$5) can be purchased at the lobby information desk, the film desk, the Cullman Building lobby desk, or online at www.moma.org/thinkmodern

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Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under accompanied by an adult.
(Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)

Target Free Friday Nights 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

Subway: E train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.

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