

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

500124-8b

STATEMENT BY ROBERT CAPA ACCOMPANYING HIS PHOTOGRAPHS OF PICASSO

"In the summer of 1948 I was on the French Riviera and driving by the seashore of Golfe Juan; I recognized Pablo on the terrace of a bistro. Pablo was brown and his eyes were shining, Françoise was beautiful, and the baby in the crib was making a lot of noise. That summer I had many lunches at the table; I took a few pictures here and there - it was a simple affair.

"I had a request from a New York editor to ask Pablo who he thought were the best living painters today. He said that there was once a famous bull fighter in Spain whose name was Garcia, and who was called by his fans El Gitano. He was asked who were the best toreros in his time. the bull fighter answered immediately that, first of all, it was El Gitano. Then, after thinking for a long time said that, after him, maybe Garcia.

"The summer after, I went back again, and this time I found an old New York friend, Gjon Mili. Mili looks and dresses like a scarecrow, which endeared him to the population of Golfe Juan. His problem was to endear himself to Picasso. In his many suitcases there were no dinner jackets, but there was an enormous amount of big and little lights. His idea was to get Picasso to draw in the air with a tiny light. If Mili could watch this procedure and use from time to time his stroboscopic lights, he thought he could explain something in pictures which many people have tried to explain in far too many words - the thinking process of an abstract artist. Picasso thought that Mili looked funny enough and talked well enough. He asked us to drive up to his little house on the mountainside the next afternoon. We carried up our cameras and lights. Pablo was waiting for us at his doorstep. We moved the furniture out from his largest room, darkened the windows and set up the lights. Everyone was working - Picasso, Françoise, Mili and I. Mili explained to Pablo how to switch on and off the little light which would serve him as a pencil. Pablo played with the instrument for half a minute and said he always wanted to draw in the air. Then we switched off the lights in the room and opened the cameras. The tiny light began to move in the darkness. Watching it move held the same enchantment as watching Toscanini's baton or listening to Marian Anderson's voice with closed eyes. The movements were unwavering, and after fifteen seconds he extinguished the light.

"Mili was dancing around like an Indian full of fire water, Pablo lit a cigarette, Françoise said it was very interesting."