

Picasso's Sculpture

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Contents

- | | |
|--|---|
| 3 <i>The Jester</i> (1905)
Marci Kwon | 52 <i>Head of a Woman</i> (1932)
Sam Sackeroff |
| 8 <i>Woman's Head (Fernande)</i> (1909)
Nicole Demby | 57 <i>Head of a Warrior</i> (1933)
Hannah Yohalem |
| 11 <i>Head of a Woman</i> (1909)
Julia Bozer | 61 <i>Two Figures on a Beach</i> (1933)
Lauren Rosati |
| 16 <i>Casket, Cup and Apple</i> (1909)
Caitlin Woolsey | 66 <i>She-Goat</i> (1950, cast 1952)
Leah Pires |
| 21 <i>Guitar</i> (1912)
Courtney Fiske | 71 <i>Pregnant Woman</i> (1950)
Amy Raffel |
| 25 <i>Glass of Absinthe</i> (1914)
Rachel Silveri | 74 <i>Goat Skull and Bottle</i> (1951, cast 1954)
Kristin Poor |
| 31 <i>Green Still Life</i> (1914)
Benjamin Clifford | 78 <i>Baboon and Young</i> (1951, cast 1955)
Rebecca Lowery |
| 35 <i>Guitar</i> (1914)
Ashley Lazevnick | 83 <i>Bull</i> (c. 1958)
Matilde Guidelli-Guidi |
| 40 <i>Vollard Suite</i> (1930-1937)
Lucy Hunter | 86 <i>Head</i> (1958)
Natalie Dupêcher |
| 47 <i>Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu</i> (1931)
Alex Weintraub | 91 <i>Project for a Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire</i> (1962)
Joseph Henry |

The Jester (1905)

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According to an oft-cited anecdote, Pablo Picasso's *The Jester* (pl.1) began as a clay bust of Max Jacob.¹ By the time the sculpture was cast in bronze five years later, its features retained only a faint resemblance to the poet.² The figure's jaunty cap instead signals its place among the motley crew of performers that populated Picasso's dusky landscapes and empty stages of 1904-05.

Renowned dealer Ambroise Vollard acquired *The Jester* along with four other sculptures from Picasso in 1910, and included bronze casts of all five in his December exhibition devoted to the artist.³ Valerie J. Fletcher and Diana Widmaier Picasso have detailed Picasso's involvement in the initial casting process of these sculptures, including the artist's adjustment of plasters before casting and his preference for dark patinas.⁴ According to them, Vollard continued to issue casts of *The Jester* on demand until his death in 1939 using a variety of foundries, each with its own unique casting method and formulas for bronze and patination.⁵ As a result, even proven Vollard casts of *The Jester* range in color and degree of crispness (figs. 1.1 and 1.2).⁶

By providing proof of the artist's hand and approval of these early casts, Fletcher and Widmaier Picasso's research aligns with the accepted view of "Vollard casts" as the standard of originality for Picasso sculpture.⁷ Yet close examination of *The Jester*'s murky casting history complicates this simple association of Vollard provenance with artist's approval. In addition to the aforementioned range within Vollard casts, there is also a question of the status of *surmoulages*, or secondary casts made from a mold of an existing bronze.⁸ Sources familiar with Picasso's sculpture told Fletcher that the artist authorized additional casts of *The Jester* sometime in the 1950s, although no documentation has come to light proving this claim.⁹

MoMA's cast of *The Jester* is unmistakably a *surmoulage*. While MoMA's *Jester* is demonstrably blurrier in detail than a documented Vollard cast such as the one included in the MoMA exhibition, simple connoisseurship is not sufficient to distinguish Vollard casts from *surmoulages*.¹⁰ The MoMA *Jester*'s status is instead cemented by its misspelled signature, which reads "Piicasso" [*sic*] (figs. 1.3 and 1.4).¹¹ Thus far, I have identified sixteen distinct casts of *The Jester* in public and private collections, three of which bear the misspelled signature.¹² Perhaps unsurprisingly, the provenances of the three confirmed "double i" casts remain sketchy at best.



Fig. 1.1 *The Jester*. 1905. Bronze, cast 1910-37, 16 5/16 x 14 9/16 x 9" (41.5 x 37 x 22.8 cm). Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris. Gift of Ambroise Vollard



Fig. 1.2 *Jester*. 1905. Bronze, 16 1/2 x 14 3/4 x 7 3/4" (41.9 x 37.5 x 19.7 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. Kate L. Brewster Collection



Pl. 1 *The Jester*. 1905, cast 1950s. Bronze, 15 1/4 x 13 3/4 x 8 5/8" (38.7 x 34.8 x 21.9 cm). Louise Reinhardt Smith Bequest. 789.1995

In 1995 MoMA acquired its *Jester* by bequest from Louise Reinhardt Smith, who had it in her possession by 1957.¹³ The Walker acquired its *Jester* from Berggruen & Cie in 1956, a notable history given Picasso's proven trust of dealer Heinz Berggruen.¹⁴ Even more striking are the internal museum records that claim that the Philadelphia *Jester* was cast in 1939 at Valsuani Foundry in Paris.¹⁵ If this claim can be verified, this means that the first surmoulage of *The Jester* was cast a full decade before Fletcher's source has claimed, and even more significantly, could possibly have been cast by Vollard himself.



Fig. 1.3 Detail of signature, Head of a Jester. 1905. Bronze, 15 3/4 x 14 1/2 x 9 1/2" (40.0 x 36.8 x 24.1 cm). Edition unnumbered, likely Vollard cast. Norton Simon Art Foundation

This conjecture is lent credence by a wax-covered clay fragment of *the Jester's* head that appeared in a 1956 sale of Édouard Jonas.¹⁶ Upon examining the photograph, conservator Lynda Zycherman hypothesized that it could have been a failed fragment of an attempted surmoulage. Of course, verifying this hypothesis would require locating the lost fragment, and examining both verified Vollard casts and surmoulages.¹⁷ Yet if this can be verified, it would complicate the notion of Vollard casts as "closest" to the original artist's intention.



Fig. 1.4 Detail of signature, *The Jester*. 1905. Bronze, 16 x 14 x 9" (40.6 x 35.6 x 22.9 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art. Bequest of Lisa Norris Elkins, 1950

Moreover, as Rosalind Krauss reminds us in her seminal essay "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," "authenticity empties out as a notion as one approaches those mediums which are inherently multiple."¹⁸ While Krauss was addressing the posthumous casts of Auguste Rodin's *Gates of Hell*, the questions attending *The Jester* only underscore Krauss's trenchant observation. Are these surmoulages second-rate copies of copies, or authorized reproductions cast by Picasso's revered dealer, or even by the artist himself? These unanswered questions suggest that even documentation of the artist's hand or intention, two guarantors of a sculpture's "authenticity," cannot halt the medium's reproductive capacities. Like the saltimbanques and harlequins stranded in the margins of Paris, *The Jester* resides in a liminal zone between clay and bronze, between the ramshackle studios of the Bateau Lavoir and the galleries of modern Paris.¹⁹

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NOTES

1. Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 116.

2. Ibid. Penrose notes that this resemblance is limited to the sculpture's jaw and mouth. In her memoir, Fernande Olivier noted the special affection between Picasso and Jacob, who was among the artist's first friends in Paris. See Fernande Olivier, *Picasso and Friends*, trans. by Jane Miller (New York: Appleton-Century, 1964; first published Paris, 1933), 24-25, 29-32, and 56-61.

3. Vollard's purchase also included *Woman Combing Her Hair* (1906; Spies 7), *Head of a Man* (1906; Spies 9), *Head of Fernande* (1906; Spies 6), and *Woman's Head (Fernande)* (1909; Spies 24). See Valerie J. Fletcher, "Process and Technique in Picasso's Head of a Woman (Fernande)," in *The Cubist Portraits of Fernande Olivier*, exhibition catalogue. (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2004), 172.

4. According to Widmaier Picasso, "Contrary to widely held belief, Picasso was interested in bronzes, as he was in every medium, and he was surely open to the variety of possibilities the material offered and to the effects of patina, which he preferred dark. That he ordered work from the Godard foundry suggests that he had seen casts of his works commissioned by Vollard. Fletcher's essay details Picasso's alterations to the plaster for the Cubist *Woman's Head (Fernande)* (1909). Fletcher, 175-79. Diana Widmaier Picasso, "Vollard and the Sculptures of Picasso," in *Ambroise Vollard: Patron of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Rebecca Rabinow exhibition catalogue (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 184-85.

5. Judging from photographs, the colors of known casts include

dark bronze, light brown with golden highlights, and brown with a tinge of green. Widmaier Picasso's research has revealed that Vollard worked with the Bingen et Constenoble, Florentin Godard, and Claude Valsuani foundries, although in the absence of Vollard's stockbooks from 1912-26 it is impossible to know definitively how many casts of *The Jester* were made during the dealer's lifetime. Conservator Francesca Casadio at the Art Institute of Chicago has begun analyzing the composition of several of the museum's bronzes using an x-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometer. Her findings indicate that the AIC's cast of *The Jester* has the same chemical composition of sculptures known to be cast by Bingen and Constenoble. See <http://blog.artic.edu/blog/2013/05/10/art-scene-investigation-testing-the-dna-of-sculptures/>. I am grateful to Dr. Casadio for generously fielding my questions.

6. According to Luise Mahler, MoMA chose to borrow the Musée d'art moderne's cast of *The Jester* because of its impeccable Vollard provenance. I am grateful to Ms. Mahler for this information.

7. A surmoulage can only be definitively proven by comparing the volumes of a known original cast with the volume of a surmoulage. A surmoulage will always display a slight (around 2%) decrease in volume from the original bronze because of shrinkage. The only way to measure the volume of a sculpture with the degree of accuracy needed to ascertain this information is with a laser scanner, which is why these assessments are so rare. For a comprehensive discussion of this process, upon which my own summary is based, see Fletcher, 191.

8. Fletcher, 191. In addition, an internal MoMA memo by curator Alicia Legg asserted that Heinz

Berggruen was casting *Jesters* in the 1950s, although I have not been able to find concrete documentation of this claim. Alicia Legg, "Joan Washburn's Picasso *Head of a Jester*," internal MoMA memo, May 23, 1980, provided by the MoMA MRC website.

9. The impeccable Vollard provenance of the Musée d'art moderne's *Jester* is the reason it, and not MoMA's cast, will be included in the upcoming exhibition. It is important to note that one must be cautious in making assertions about a sculpture based solely on photographic representations. Variations in light, color, and angle can create a great deal of variation even within images of the same cast.

10. Prior to my research, these misspelled signatures were commonly thought to read "Picasso" [sic]. Photographs of the backs of five separate casts, including two with the anomalous signature, reveal that all the signatures are in the same position: slightly diagonal, at the center-back of the cast. In comparing the signature of the (likely Vollard) Norton Simon *Jester* alongside the Philadelphia *Jester*, it becomes apparent that the signatures are identical—including their positioning, distinctive double "s" shape, and emphatically capitalized "A"—save for the addition of an extra "i." I would propose that whoever cast the Philadelphia *Jester* (and presumably the MoMA and Walker's casts), mistook the "i" in the original signature for another "c." Given the large gap between the "P" and the "icasso" in the original signature, it is not difficult to see why they made this mistake. So in fact, the signature in the Philadelphia, MoMA, and Walker casts are in fact spelled "Plicasso" rather than "Picasso." Further conservation analysis is necessary to verify this hypothesis. I am enormously grateful to the registrar's office

at the Philadelphia Museum and the Norton Simon Museum for providing me with photographs of their casts.

11. The three casts with misspelled signatures are currently at MoMA, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Walker Art Center. Of the sixteen casts, five have provenances that can be definitively traced back to Vollard. These include casts in the Phillips Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Musée d'art moderne, Musée Picasso, and the Hirshhorn Museum. Three more claim Vollard provenances, and while they may well be Vollard casts, I have not been able to establish this definitively. These include casts at the Norton Simon Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Technical analysis of the bronze cast in the Art Institute of Chicago by conservator Francesca Casadio suggests that this work was likely a Vollard cast. There is simply not enough information on five of the casts to say for certain whether they are *surmoulages* or made by Vollard. These include casts at the Musée d'art moderne, Troyes, Winterthur Kunstverein, Galerie Pinakothek der Moderne, the Bridgestone Museum, Tokyo, and the Collection of Isabelle and Scott Black. I have also documented the existence of nine casts whose locations are currently unknown, including four Vollard casts. The Vollard casts include those previously owned by Janice Levin, a private Swiss Collector, Gottlieb Friedrich Reber, and Walter Chrysler, while the others include Gottlieb Friedrich Reber, O'Hana Gallery, London, the Reader's Digest Collection, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Hermanos, Walter Chrysler, a private Swiss Collector, and Othmar Huber. It is likely that some of these unknown casts are in fact duplicates of each other, or the aforementioned known casts.

12. Loan correspondence between Alfred Barr and Louise Smith, dated February 27, 1957. Museum of Modern Art Archives. After repeated inquiries, it seems that there is no further information on the provenance of *The Jester* prior to 1957 in the Museum's records.

13. Indeed, Picasso trusted Berggruen so much that he allowed the dealer to issue another edition of his cubist *Woman's Head (Fernande)* in 1959. Each of these editions was clearly documented, dated, and marked, a process that stands in marked contrast with the unmarked surmoulages of *The Jester*. See Fletcher, 189-90.

14. Author's email correspondence with Ashley McKeown, May 8, 2015.

15. Galerie Charpentier, Paris, March 30, 1954, no. 69. I am grateful to Luise Mahler for drawing my attention to this sale, which was first noted in Widmaier Picasso, 186. According to her, Jonas inherited many things from the Vollard estate.

16. Author's conversation with Lynda Zyberman. I am enormously grateful to Lynda for her generosity in sharing her knowledge of Vollard and Picasso's casting methods with me. Thanks also to Metropolitan Museum of Art conservator Kendra Roth, who first drew my attention to the anomalous nature of this fragment.

17. Rosalind Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," reprinted in *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 152. My thanks to Hal Foster for suggesting that I return to Krauss's essay.

18. For an excellent discussion of Picasso's early work as responding to the death of bohemia, see T.J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 16-17.

Woman's Head (Fernande) (1909)

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Picasso made *Woman's Head (Fernande)* (pl. 2) in the fall of 1909 upon returning to Paris after a four month stay in the Catalan town of Horta de Ebro. In the years after making the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), Picasso was increasingly seeking a formal idiom in painting that was reconciled with both the nature of perception and the flatness of the canvas. In depicting the provincial Spanish landscape, he arrived at a heavily geometric style composed of faceted planes—a conception indebted to Picasso's careful study at the time of the work of Cézanne. Beginning in the spring of 1909 and through the fall, Picasso also produced over sixty portraits of a female who bears a distinct resemblance to the artist's then lover, Fernande Olivier, a series intimately related to *Woman's Head* (Fernande). This sculptural work is considered an important foundational instance of Cubist sculpture, one that would inspire sculptors such as Jacques Lipchitz, Umberto Boccioni, and Naum Gabo.

Picasso created the original bust in the studio of his friend, sculptor Manolo (Manuel Hugué). Visual evidence such as indexical finger marks, the visible addition of small pieces of material, and the appearance of the artist's signature (evidently inscribed before casting) strongly suggest that Picasso sculpted this figure in clay. Later, in the Paris foundry where *Woman's Head* was cast after its purchase by dealer Ambroise Vollard, Picasso sharpened the plaster cast with a knife, giving special attention to the neck, where one can see the greater angularity produced by this sharpening. Vollard then had the sculpture cast into bronze, producing an uneditioned, though modest number of reproductions.

Scholars of Picasso have long discussed the significance and merits of *Woman's Head* in light of the more radical sculptural developments that would follow in its wake. Despite the extreme nature of the former's faceted planes, with its insistence on being seen in the round, its play of surface effect, and its concerted manipulation of light, the bust seems an extension of, rather than a rupture with, developments in earlier modernist sculpture.¹ This continuity is offset by the paradigm shifting nature of Picasso's concomitant pursuit of questions of mass and space in two dimensions, as well as the rupture caused by his later paper and sculptural collage works. Yet, while less of a departure from western sculptural tradition than the *Guitars* (1912-14), *Woman's Head* nonetheless contains moments of daring inspiration, and manifests the working through of

formal attributes that were essential to both the painting and sculpture of Picasso that followed.

The ridges that define the face of the figure and the protuberant lumps of braid that radiate out from the widow's peak are part of a complex rhythmic geometry that alters dramatically on every side, and the torsion of the neck and head compel the viewer to circumnavigate the sculpture to obtain these views. Yet the protruding ridges are not purely sculptural eruptions of mass; not only do areas such as the neck and the doubled left cheek suggest synchronically rendered movement, but the facets also operate pictorially given both the optical compression of depth in space and the reflectivity of even the original plaster. Yet unlike a work such as sculptor Medardo Rosso's *Sick Child (Enfant malade)* (1895-98), in which a vacuum of material creates a deep shadow that adds expressive effect to the ailing youth, in *Woman's Head*, the relationship between sculptural form and pictorial effect is more ambiguous—the two sometimes even appear to work against each other.²

As part of an immense proliferation of meditations on the same theme, *Woman's Head* also suggests an extended negotiation between form and content that troubles rigidly formalist and narrowly teleological accounts of Cubism's development. In the almost obsessive focus with which Picasso pursued the series, as well as in his provisional preservation of the unitary integrity of the figure in relation to its surrounding environs, we can see the artist grappling with the question—at once formal and affective—of the nature of the human subject in its relationship to other objects—its identity or non-identity with other forms of renderable mass. The soft, malleable material would have provided Picasso with a uniquely tactile experience of shaping the figure. The affective resonance of such an engagement is suggested in the tenderly modeled features of an ehytal neck—that serve to distance the reality of the subject herself. That it is only after sculpting the bust of Fernande that Picasso would “break open” the closed form (including the form of the human figure) suggests a complex interplay between form and content, subject and object, affect and analysis operative in the artist's work.

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Pl. 2 *Woman's Head (Fernande)*. Fall 1909. Bronze, 16 1/4 x 9 3/4 x 10 1/2" (41.3 x 24.7 x 26.6 cm). Purchase. 1632.1940

NOTES

1. Decades after making *Woman's Head (Fernande)*, Picasso remarked of the sculpture to Roland Penrose, "I thought that the curves you see on the surface should continue into the interior. I had the idea of doing them in wire." The thought evokes Picasso's later wire sculptures and invites speculation about the aspirations and limitations of the 1909 sculpture, which ultimately remains a closed, unitary form. Referring to the wire idea, Penrose notes that ultimately "this solution did not please him," because it was "too intellectual, too much like painting." Penrose, "The Sculpture of Picasso," in *The Sculpture of Picasso* exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 19.

2. Take, for instance, the flange of the proper-left eye and cheek, which not only suggests the reification of multiple views, but also decisively capture light where there should be shadow given the incline of the head. Here we can see the sculpture working against, rather than with modernist sculptural conventions. Likewise, the positivity of the proper-right eye and the negativity of the left, harken not only to earlier mask-like visages, but also to the semiotic nature of later works.

Variations on a Theme: Picasso's *Head of a Woman* (1909)

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Picasso spent the late spring and summer of 1909 traveling with his companion Fernande Olivier, voyaging first from Paris to Barcelona in May and then to the village of Horta de Ebro, in Catalonia, in June.¹ Concurrent with these journeys was a period of intense experimentation, as Picasso's work became consumed by a series of Fernande "portraits," notable for their analytical, proto-Cubist form. In total, over fifty related drawings and paintings of the Fernande "type" were created in the latter half of the year.² An early gouache drawing from the spring, entitled simply *Head of a Woman* (pl. 3) appears to portend this productive and transitional phase.



Fig. 3.1 *Woman with Pears*. Summer 1909. Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 x 27 7/8" (92.1 x 70.8 cm). Florene May Schoenborn Bequest. 827.1996

It is difficult to consider the drawing outside of the extensive "Fernande" series it precedes. Indeed, it is often considered contingently, as an embryonic version of more standalone compositions, such as the oil on canvas *Woman with Pears* (fig. 3. 1), painted in Horta that summer, or

the sculpture *Head of a Woman (Fernande)* (fig. 3.2), first modeled from clay in Paris that fall. Certainly, the gouache shares formal and compositional strategies with these later



Fig. 3.2 *Woman's Head (Fernande)*. Fall 1909. Bronze, 16 1/4 x 9 3/4 x 10 1/2" (41.3 x 24.7 x 26.6 cm). Purchase. 1632.1940

works, including the geometric treatment of the eyes, neck, and hair—which are drawn as ridges and hollows of light and dark earth tones, respectively—and the downcast angling of the head. In the most basic terms, the drawing facilitates the translation of its (real and present) subject into a Cubist network of solid, geometric blocks of light and shadow, effectively sculpting her on paper. The limited background information (an ill-defined shoulder and breast sketched at bottom right provide the basic grounding) advances the illusion of a figure emerging, as a sculpture would, in a vacant exhibition space.

While it is thus difficult to consider the drawing as an autonomous two-dimensional work, it is equally problematic to label it a primarily preparatory study for Picasso's fall



Pl. 3 *Head of a Woman*. Spring 1909. Gouache on paper, 24 1/2 x 18 7/8" (62.2 x 48 cm). Gift of Mrs. Saidie A. May. 12.1930



Fig. 3.3 *Woman with a Helmet of Hair*. 1904. Gouache on wood pulp board, 16 3/4 x 9 3/4 x 12 1/4" (42.7 x 31.3 cm). Art Institute of Chicago. 1950.128

sculpture. Rather than prefiguring a specific compositional end, the work seems to anticipate not only the obsessive theme, but also the variation inherent in Picasso's late 1909 activity. Notably, the darkest areas of gouache—comprising the recesses of the mouth, eyes, hair, and neck—become defined but undefining shapes, basic forms which signify physiognomy in context alone; as they depict the figure's most variable parts (those facial attributes that most move and change), they become transient features as well as transient signs. Indeed, the drawing seems to celebrate its material and formal ability to describe a subject while evading definition, to render it immobile but changeable. Consider the nebulous patch of blue-gray pigment at the top left of the figure, the identity of which is ambiguous. From one perspective, it is a hazy background shadow, planting the figure in a determined space. From another, it belongs to the figure herself as an extension of her hair, which then shifts suddenly from "sculptural" form—the parallel stripes projecting and receding atop the head—to the imprecise, translucent blur only suggesting the shape of Fernande's distinctive coiffure.³

The latter possibility opens a number of points. Exploring the tension between fluid and solid form, the variable and the fixed, is an ongoing and diverse process for

Picasso, but one that frequently finds expression through a woman's hair.⁴ In 1904, significantly the year he first met Fernande, Picasso painted *Woman with a Helmet of Hair* (fig. 3.3), another gouache similarly treating the most fluctuating element of a woman's appearance in both textural and tactile terms. Conceived of as a "helmet," the hair becomes an appendage at once linked and detached.⁵ Perhaps this model for the variability of description, focused so intently on the most unstable elements of likeness (and thus portraiture), becomes useful in considering Picasso's occasional transitions to sculpture—not only in his *Head of a Woman (Fernande)*, but also in later Boisgeloup works (figs. 3.4–3.5), where the hair (or decoration of the head) helps to illustrate the figure but also transforms into an independent and metamorphosing entity.⁶ Picasso's 1909 gouache is possibly the first finished drawing to place such questions of difference, resemblance, and space (not only in composition and form, but in texture and material, as well) at the forefront of Picasso's artistic practice.⁷



Fig. 3.4 *Head of a Woman*. 1932. Plaster, 52 1/2 x 25 5/8 x 28" (133.4 x 65 x 71.1 cm). Gift of Jacqueline Picasso in honor of the Museum's continuous commitment to Pablo Picasso's art. 210.1982

As Gertrude Stein writes, the effort "to create human beings in cubes" exhausted Picasso, who after "emptying himself" in pictorial studies "calmed himself by doing sculpture."⁸ The instability of his many drawn and painted forms likely necessitated the materiality of a later sculpture to

“calm” the mutations of Fernande—a soothing of the imprecise and the mutable by the tangible and the fixed. Still, Picasso’s spring 1909 drawings contribute to his sculpture certain elements of fluctuation which—though they are the very antithesis of sculpture—enable a flexible approach to form, surface, and resemblance. With these, Picasso paved the way for a tactile medium at once solid and geometric, but organic and changing with each distinct view.⁹

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Fig. 3.5 Head of a Warrior. 1933. Plaster, metal, and wood, 47 1/2 x 9 3/4 x 27" (120.7 x 24.9 x 68.8 cm). Gift of Jacqueline Picasso in honor of the Museum's continuous commitment to Pablo Picasso's art. 268.1984

NOTES

1. The respective arrival dates of May 13 and June 5 are noted in Fernande's journal and also in letters to Leo and Gertrude Stein. See Fernande Olivier, *Loving Picasso: The Private Journal of Fernande Olivier* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001) and Laurence Madeline, ed., *Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein: Correspondence* (New York: Seagull, 2008), 49-50.

2. Jeffrey Weiss estimates the number to be "some five dozen objects" spanning "every medium but printmaking: oil, gouache and watercolor, charcoal and graphite, sculpture, and photography." See Weiss, *Picasso: The Cubist Portraits of Fernande Olivier* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5.

3. This emblematic Fernande hairstyle is described by Weiss as consisting of "a coil and a topknot, although hair sometimes spills down the back, loose or in a long braid." See Weiss, 6. The hairstyle, as described here, is visible in more monochromatic form in *Woman with Pears* (fig. 3.1).

4. As an interesting aside, consider Gertrude Stein's dialogue with Picasso concerning her change in hairstyle: "Only a few years ago when Gertrude Stein had had her hair cut short, she had always up to that time worn it as a crown on top of her head as Picasso has painted it, when she had had her hair cut, a day or so later she happened to come into a room and Picasso was several rooms away. She had a hat on but he caught sight of her through two doorways and approaching her quickly called out, Gertrude, what is it, what is it. What is what, Pablo, she said. Let me see, he said. She let him see. And my portrait, said he sternly. Then his face softening he added, *mais, quand même tout y est*, all the same it is all there." Or, in another instance: "After a while I murmured to Picasso that I liked his portrait

of Gertrude Stein. Yes, he said, everybody says she does not look like it but that does not make any difference, she will." Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Random House, 2000).

5. See Olivier, *Loving Picasso*, 137-139.

6. Also notable are two earlier sculptures of Fernande from 1906, *Head of Fernande* and *Woman Combing Her Hair*, which use the woman's hair as a space of experimentation with texture and form.

7. A series of related "Fernande" drawings in gouache, watercolor, pen, ink, and charcoal on paper appear in the spring of 1909. While these all share similar "mask-like" features, long parallel brushstrokes, and high levels of contrast, no other drawing includes such a drastic shift in texture as seen here. The other drawings from the time consist of a series of nine busts sketched in ink and occasionally shaded with gouache, charcoal, and watercolor, also rendered in earth tones. More than experimenting with texture, the other drawings present studies of form, primarily through geometric permutations of facial features and highlights/shadows. At that time, all other drawings which include color (with the exception of the one analyzed in this essay) include a certain background space or the hint of a background context; the black-and-white ink on paper sketches are presented against a plain/white background. In terms of composition and saturation alone, MoMA's gouache appears much more "finished" than other spring 1909 drawings, and is one of only two that Picasso signed.

8. Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (New York: Dover, 1984), 23.

9. As Valerie J. Fletcher notes, the "tactile modeling" of Picasso's fall 1909 sculpture *Head of a*

Woman (Fernande) results in forms that are "fluid, organic, and somewhat irregular"—an observation granted to viewers who examine the work "by feeling the surfaces rather than by merely looking." Observation alone yields a Cubist object that is hard and closed in its "reduction of natural physiognomy to geometric shapes." Fletcher emphasizes the organic qualities of the original sculpture by noting how Picasso later "improved" the plaster cast by flattening certain features, slicing off convex areas, and generally rendering it "less volumetric and more hermetic" to reflect his recent and more abstract style. See Fletcher, "Process and Technique in Picasso's *Head of a Woman (Fernande)*" in Weiss, 168, 175. Also, as Weiss notes, in its organic irregularity, *Head of a Woman (Fernande)* is able to exploit or even "abet" the perceived weakness of sculpture (its variation at different distances and from different vantage points) precisely to create an "experience of instability." Weiss, 21.

Casket, Cup and Apple (1909)

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Pablo Picasso painted the spare ink wash drawing *Casket, Cup and Apple* (pl. 4) in the final months of 1909, following his breakthrough work in Horta de Ebro the previous summer.¹ In Horta, influenced by the Spanish landscape, light, and traditional architecture, Picasso had begun to depart from the more rigidly cubic constructions he and Georges Braque had developed in 1908. In works like *Casket, Cup and Apple*, Picasso shaves off geometric edges and instead builds up the objects from faceted strokes that define and amplify the forms' surface as well as their tactility. This work is somewhat unusual in that the artist foregrounds three discrete objects, rather than presenting an explicitly unified scene. Most of his other still life drawings from this period, a number of which depict the same objects, employ compositional devices like a tabletop to contextualize the pictorial space.²

In *Casket, Cup and Apple*, Picasso devoted the most attention to his rendering of the apple, a favored subject of Paul Cézanne, whom he admired greatly (Horta, moreover, means "orchard" in Catalan). Departing from the soft, brushy mark-making of Cézanne, Picasso here skewers the sphere with angular strokes that seem to radiate around the dark central mark that denotes the cleft of the stem. The object at left has been identified in the English title as a casket, but it seems likely that it is in fact a salt box, as identified in an oil painting made during the same period: *Fan, Salt Box, Melon* (fig. 4.1).³ In this painting, the salt box looms at the upper edge of the tilted tabletop composition; its lid yawns open, and dark shading contrasts the interior cavity from the warmer exterior hues. In another still life painting from around the same time (fig. 4.2), the facets on the box are more stridently geometric than in *Casket, Cup and Apple*, but the characteristic vertical dash that suggests a keyhole is consistent, and the apple in the painting, while torqued upright and retaining its stem, exhibits a similar use of dark strokes to demarcate the supple contours.

The light, gestural faceting of *Casket, Cup and Apple* reveals the residual playfulness in Picasso's execution, which is suppressed at times in the oil paintings under layers of pigment. Moreover, the delicacy of the ink wash reveals Picasso's seamless technique for transitioning between discrete elements and the sustained spatial continuity he so admired in Cézanne's work. A few stray marks at the base and to the left of the box signal that the object sits on a firm surface. The apple, meanwhile, is surrounded in an

atmospheric halo of ink wash, with a darker passage at the left that may suggest the differentiated shades of a table edge and a wall, as well as the hint a cast shadow. The cup is squeezed into the center, hovering above the salt box



Fig. 4.1 *Fan, Salt Box, Melon*. 1909. Oil on canvas; framed: 39 1/2 x 32 13/16 x 2 13/16" (100.3 x 83.5 x 7.3 cm); unframed: 32 x 25 1/4" (81.3 x 64.2 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art. Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund. 1969.22

and apple; it appears suspended against the white background of the page, disengaged from any milieu. Yet the rigidity of the horizontal line that forms the base of the cup is rather unusual. At first glance, *Casket, Cup and Apple* gives the impression of presenting informal studies of three objects that simply happen to be depicted on a single sheet of paper, akin to two loose watercolor sketches from the autumn of 1909, *Apple* (fig. 4.3) and *Polyhedron* (fig. 4.4),⁴ which likely served as preparatory investigations, perhaps even for *Casket, Cup and Apple*, and almost certainly for the more detailed and comprehensive paintings from this period (see figs. 4.1 and 4.2). But might this hard-edged contour of the foot of the cup in *Casket, Cup and Apple* act as a subtle indication that the cup is indeed located on a surface, despite the absence of any surrounding pictorial representation?



Pl. 4 *Casket, Cup and Apple*. Winter 1909. Ink wash on paper, 9 1/2 x 12 3/8" (24.1 x 31.4 cm). Gift of Justin K. Thannhauser. 691.1949.



Fig. 4.2 *Still Life. Casket, Cup, Apples and Glass*. 1909. Oil on canvas. Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy

Rather than understanding this work as three separate object studies, we might instead read it as a unified composition in its own right, despite the absence of any overt rendering of pictorial unity. For while he experimented with representing dimensionality, Picasso never abandoned his subject matter. His work always retains some sense of the body in space. This proclivity is manifested tangibly in a plaster sculpture of an apple, made in Paris at the studio of Manuel Hugué following Picasso's return from Horta (fig. 4.5). In the sculpted apple, Picasso employs rectilinear faceting even as he incorporates swooping curves at the top and bottom of the sphere. When displayed, the apple must sit on a plinth, and is thus located within a stable spatial context. Yet within its internal tensions—the blocky facets cleaving to and away from the gestural arcs—the apple perpetually coheres and fractures.



Fig. 4.3 *Apple*. Fall 1909. Watercolor on envelope. Private collection

While materially and morphologically divergent from the plaster apple, *Casket, Cup and Apple* activates a similar ocular movement, and thereby divulges Picasso's interest in vision, in particular the stroboscopic vision that so bewitched the general public at this time.⁵ The ambiguous spatial relations among these objects is amplified as well by a vertiginous loss of scale. The pared-down polyhedron resonates as much with a hillside house in Horta as with a salt box perched on a tabletop, huddled beside a cup, which presumably fits into the curve of a person's palm. *The Reservoir, Horta de Ebro*, 1909, also in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art (fig. 4.6), illustrates this ambiguous interplay between diminutive salt box and distant building. For Husserl, to perceive an object is always to see it within a perceptual



Fig. 4.4 *Polyhedron*. Fall 1909. Watercolor on envelope. Private collection

field, both an internal horizon—the multiplicity of possible perceptions the viewer can have of that particular thing—as well as an external horizon—the perceived object is a “thing within a *field of things*.”⁶ Similarly, in *Casket, Cup and Apple*, the unified space of the image is not represented pictorially on the page, but rather is constructed within the viewer's ocular imagination, through the act of looking itself.

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Fig. 4.5 *Apple*. Fall 1909. Plaster, 4 1/8 x 3 15/16 x 2 15/16" (10.5 x 10 x 7.5 cm). Musée National Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso



Fig. 4.6 *The Reservoir, Horta de Ebro*. Summer 1909. Oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 20 1/8" (61.5 x 51.1 cm). Fractional and promised gift of Mr. and Mrs. David Rockefeller. 81.1991

NOTES

1. Gertrude Stein, among others, saw in the Horta works the true beginnings of Cubism. Referenced by Anne Baldessari in “Horta de Ebro, 1909: Genetics of Cubism,” in *Cubist Picasso* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008).

2. See also *Apples, Casket, Wineglass* (autumn 1909), watercolor and ink on paper, private collection, New York [JR 308], and *Casket, Cup, Apples, and Wineglass* (autumn 1909), oil on canvas, National Gallery, Prague [Z.II, 186], both referenced in Pierre Daix’s catalogue raisonné as being part of the same series as *Casket, Cup, and Apple*.

3. According to the Museum of Modern Art’s records, the French title listed on the back of the sheet is *Pomme et Tasse*, thereby omitting the third depicted object altogether. When the drawing was exhibited at the Kunsthau in Zürich in 1932, the work was identified in German as *Apfel, Tasse, und Schachtel*—or *Apple, Cup, and Box*. See object entry in Pierre Daix, *Picasso: The Cubist Years, 1907–1916, A Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings and Related Works*, trans. Joan Rosselet (New York: Bulfinch Press, 1988).

4. *Apple* is catalogued in the Daix volume [305], and listed as “watercolor on the back of envelope,” in the collection of The Picasso Estate; it is accompanied by another, more geometric watercolor of an apple from the same months [306], Collection Roger Dutilleul, Paris, which is linked to the plaster sculpture of an apple, and also bears a resemblance in its mode of representation to both the apple and the cup from *Casket, Cup, and Apple*. *Polyhedron* is not catalogued by Daix, but is reproduced in color (along with *Apple*) in the 2009 exhibition catalogue *Picasso à Cézanne*, from Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence. *Apple* is Zervos VI, 1100; *Polyhedron* is Zervos VI, 1108.

5. For a more complex discussion of these phenomena and cultural attitudes, see Jonathan Crary’s book *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990).

6. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970): 162–63.

Guitar (October-December 1912)

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In 1912, sometime in the beat between October and November, Picasso made *Guitar* (pl. 5). Comprised of eighteen discrete units cut from paperboard, the construction coheres through a conjunction of connective hardware—twine, string, tape, glue, wire, and (at points in its history) tacks—with gravity. There's a casualness and *sachlich* quality to its realization, such that its form seems less congealed than cobbled, as if apt to decompose at any moment. Fragile and banal, its materials hail from outside the margins of artistic practice. (At the time, paperboard was the stuff of box-making and advertising signage.)¹ The logic of its facture—scissor, attach, pin—departs from the skilled sculptural operations of carving, modeling, and casting, which tend to insist on the art object as a fixed, finished thing. Possessed, it seems, of a very real capacity to fall apart, *Guitar* resists formal resolution, insisting instead on its own contingency.²

The guitar's appeal to Picasso inhered in its status as a thing both culturally familiar and morphologically strange. Aligned with café culture and the folk tradition of flamenco, the guitar indexes the contemporary as much as it relays to the past. Like its analogue in paperboard, the guitar avails itself to manipulation. Here handheld and upright, there arrayed on the horizontal, the instrument lacks a necessary orientation.³ Always apt to be positioned otherwise, it exists as an open structure whose central hole incorporates space as a positive, plastic element. Transposed into sculpture, *Guitar* disallows the medium's conventional properties of weight, mass, and closed volume. Space here functions as a material to be shaped rather than a neutral substance to be occupied.⁴

The frontality of *Guitar*'s foremost element (its only to be derived from a thinner, less saturated brand of beige paper) heightens its ambivalent position between planarity and dimensionality: an irresolution which Picasso consciously courted. Photographs from his studio on Paris's boulevard Raspail, likely taken by the artist at the close of 1912, show the *Guitar* hung on the wall, its perimeter hedged by a constellation of *papiers collés* and related drawings.⁵ The images reveal the closeness with which Picasso conceived his assemblage and collage practices. The techniques of cutting and affixing that constitute *Guitar* open onto those of *papiers collés*, whose discovery it primed.⁶ *Guitar*'s conspicuously scissored edges call attention to their status as cut, thus aligning the object's means of production with

its physical manifestation.⁷ The cut is an operation that articulates a plane as a line, delineating its edge in a manner comparable to drawing.⁸ Pinned to the wall, the collages, like *Guitar*, exist in a state of suspension, their arrangement provisional and readied for reconfiguration.⁹ Together, they announce the beginning of Synthetic Cubism: the movement's second, more radical stage wherein the fixity of iconic resemblance ceded to symbol's ceaseless, unmotivated play of meaning.¹⁰

In this shift, *Guitar* was pivotal. As Yve-Alain Bois has demonstrated, *Guitar* marks Picasso's "full comprehension" of the sign's arbitrariness. Figured by *Guitar*'s isolable, intersecting planes, the sign emerges as a nonspecific entity that is defined not positively, through a changeless essence, but negatively, through operations of difference.¹¹ This radical contingency, *Guitar* encodes on the level of form. As Jeffrey Weiss has recently argued, *Guitar*'s fabrication history and material afterlife literalize the sign's circulatory condition: its constitutive incompleteness, conditioned by its ability to assume meaning only in relation to other signs.¹² The 1912 photographs from the boulevard Raspail imagine *Guitar* not as a self-contained object, autonomous and whole, but as a component of a shifting system. Another photograph, published in the avant-garde journal *Les Soirées de Paris* the following year, likewise implicates *Guitar* in a larger compositional field. A mock tabletop, fashioned from a found cardboard box and balanced on a pedestal of folded paper, subtends its bottom edge. To the construction's left hang two sheets of mass-produced *faux bois*; to its right, a piece of paper stenciled with a bottle of liqueur laminates the wall. Captioned as a "*nature morte*," the image portrays *Guitar* as a contextual object articulated in and through the objects that surround it.¹³

In the fall of 1916, Picasso moved his studio from Montparnasse to Montrouge.¹⁴ In the process, he disassembled *Guitar* and packed it in a box, where it would remain for several decades. When the work acceded to MoMA's collection in 1975, it was conceived as an interim object: a study for *Guitar*'s realization in the more durable medium of sheet metal in 1914.¹⁵ It was not shown publicly at the museum until 1980, where it was hung alongside the sheet-metal variant. Wall text labeled it a "maquette."¹⁶ This designation and display, however, obscure the ways in which the later *Guitar* does not realize but rather reinfects its earlier



Pl. 5 *Guitar*. October-December 1912. Paperboard, paper, thread, string, twine, and coated wire, 25 3/4 x 13 x 7 1/2" (65.4 x 33 x 19 cm). Gift of the artist. 640.1973

materialization. Subtler than understanding the 1912 *Guitar* as a template or model is recognizing that it only retrospectively served as one.¹⁷ Remade in sheet metal, the paperboard *Guitar* emerges not as an achieved artwork but as a composite of parts to be disjoined and otherwise permuted. Its arrival at MoMA in six pieces substantiates its otherness to the concluded sculptural object. Tenuous and ephemeral, Picasso's 1912 *Guitar* poses form against dissolution. At once contained and contingent, determinate and iterable, the paperboard *Guitar* holds finish at asymptotic remove, existing always in a state of in-between.

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NOTES

1. Scott Gerson, "Guitar: Conservation Notes," in *Picasso: The Making of Cubism, 1912-1914* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 3.23-3.27.
2. Jeffrey Weiss, "Contingent Cubism," *Grey Room* 58 (Winter 2015), 32.
3. Anne Umland, "The Process of Imagining a Guitar," in Umland, ed., *Picasso Guitars: 1912-1914*, exhibition catalogue. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2011), 21.
4. Yve-Alain Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 91.
5. Umland, ed., 44-45.
6. Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 77.
7. Richard Shiff, "Picasso's Touch: Collage, 'Papier Collé, Ace of Clubs,'" *Yale University Art Bulletin* (1990), 40-41.
8. Richard Serra, "Notes on Drawing," in *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 177.
9. Weiss, 35-36.
10. Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 79.
11. Ibid., "The Semiology of Cubism," in *Picasso and Braque: A Symposium*, ed. William Rubin and Lynn Zelevansky (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 174-75.
12. Weiss, 27; Rosalind Krauss, "The Circulation of the Sign," in *The Picasso Papers* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 26-28.
13. Ibid. 39; Blair Hartzell, "Guitar," in *Picasso: The Making of Cubism*, 3.9-3.10.
14. Breton, "Crise de l'objet," *Les Cahiers d'Art*, n. 1-2 ([May] 1936), 21-26.
15. Christine Poggi, "Picasso's First Constructed Sculpture: A Tale of Two Guitars," *Art Bulletin* 94.2 (June 2012), 277.
16. Umland, "The Process of Imagining a Guitar," 29-33; Gerson, 3.23-3.27.
17. Weiss, 34-35.

Être-objets and objets-êtres: *Picasso's Le Verre d'absinthe (1914) and Surrealism*¹

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At some point during the spring of 1936, André Breton was at his desk drafting a list of works to be included in the *Exposition surréaliste d'objets*, scheduled at the Galerie Charles Ratton for a span of ten days, May 22-31, 1936. In the pages of his draft, we see a list of found objects, ready-mades and assisted ready-mades, the categories of mathematical objects, natural objects, objects that were called "perturbed."¹ Under an account of the so-called *objets sauvages*, Breton began a checklist of the *objets surréalistes*.² Forgoing alphabetical order, he listed Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Man Ray, and then, fourth on the list, "Picasso – Le Verre d'Absinthe," belonging within the collection of Paul Rosenberg.³



Fig. 6.1 View of *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* (Surrealist exhibition of objects) at the Galerie Charles Ratton, Paris, May 22-29, 1936, with Picasso's *Glass of Absinthe* inside the vitrine on the middle shelf to the right (spring 1914). Photograph by Man Ray. Guy Ladière Archives, Paris

On the occasion of the *Picasso Sculpture* exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art and the curated presentation of Picasso's sculptural oeuvre, I would like to use this paper to pose a series of curatorial-historical questions: what motivated André Breton's interest in *Le Verre d'absinthe* (pl. 6.)? How are we to understand the categorization of Picasso's 1914 sculpture as a Surrealist object, included in a Surrealist exhibition? And in what ways, if any, can the Surrealist reception of this work alter our approach to it today?

To account for the long history between Breton and Picasso is a task that is well beyond the confines of this essay.⁴ To be brief: the two met in November 1918; by 1921

Breton had started collecting Picasso's work and during the subsequent year he visited the artist's studio frequently.⁵ In June 1924, Breton along with a group of Surrealists publicly declared in *Paris-Journal* their "profound and total admiration for Picasso."⁶ Throughout the early development of Surrealism, this admiration and affinity for Picasso's work was continually made present by discussions in Breton's writings, particularly *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1928), where Picasso was hailed a "genius," through reproductions in various issues of *La Révolution surréaliste*, and through



Fig. 6.2 *Glass of Absinthe*. Spring 1914. Bronze, painted in oil, and perforated white absinthe, 8 11/16 x 5 7/8 x 2 15/16" (22 x 15 x 7.5 cm). 1 of an edition of 6 bronzes cast spring 1914. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie, Museum Berggruen

his inclusion in exhibitions such as *La Peinture surréaliste* at the Galerie Pierre in November 1925.⁷

From 1922 to 1936, Breton would repeatedly historicize and theorize the visual practices of Surrealism as stemming from Picasso's work, particularly the ways in which Picasso broke with representational conventions and the imitation of apparent reality.⁸ With Surrealism, according to Breton in 1928, "the plastic work of art...will either refer to a *purely internal model* or will not exist" and he declared



Pl. 6 *Glass of Absinthe*. Spring 1914. Painted bronze with absinthe spoon, 8 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 3 3/8" (21.6 x 16.4 x 8.5 cm). Gift of Louise Reinhardt Smith. 292.1956



Fig. 6.4 Brassai. The vitrine in the artist's studio. Paris, 7, rue des Grands-Augustins, on or after October 25, 1943. Gelatin silver print, printed c. 1950, 9 1/4 x 6 7/8" (23.5 x 17.5 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Purchase, 1996

Picasso the forerunner of this practice.⁹ In the 1933 essay "Picasso dans son élément," the Surrealist argued that Picasso's oeuvre stands as a "reconstitution of the world."¹⁰ Breton used the word *excretion* to describe this dialectical process, a type of creation in which the artist's fantasies are rendered material in an external object, suggesting "man's revolutionary power to make the world conform to his desires."¹¹

Breton's considerations of Picasso continued in texts that were crucial for the theorization of the Surrealist object. In the March 1935 lecture "Situation surréaliste de l'objet," Breton called for artists to make objects, as Picasso had done, from "the inner world of consciousness" and asserted in terms quite similar to those of "Picasso dans son élément" that the success of Surrealism was to be found in the ways by which the movement was attempting to resolve (internal) perception and (external) representation.¹² And when Breton called for a "total revolution of the object" the subsequent year, his article was followed by reproductions of the absinthe glass several pages later.¹³ In short, based on Breton's own theorizations in the 1920s and mid-1930s, there was little differentiation from Picasso's visual practice and the stated goals of Surrealism. Whether he liked it or not, Picasso was an artist that Breton looked up to and esteemed. Surrealism was theorized in and through his work.

So back to the *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* (fig. 6.1), and the inclusion of *Le Verre d'absinthe*.¹⁴ Once installed in the gallery, Picasso's absinthe glass (currently in the collection of the Museum Berggruen) (fig. 6.2) was placed in a vitrine alongside a wall. Nearby on the same shelf were Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* (1914) and *Why Not Sneeze, Rose Sélavy?* (1921), below was Meret Oppenheim's fur-covered *Objet* (1936), conceived, according to legend, while at Café de Flore with Picasso and Dora Maar. Throughout the vitrine were mathematical objects from the Institut Henri-Poincaré and American and Oceanic objects as they were eventually classified in the catalogue. In proximity on the wall, continuing the drinking theme, were Salvador Dalí's *Le Veston aphrodisiaque* (1936) as well as Picasso's own *Still Life* (1914). Another display case featured a bottle and glass disfigured from the Mont Pelée volcanic eruption in May 1902 and discovered afterward in their disturbed state. In addition to the *Le Verre d'Absinthe*, Picasso was represented with five other works spread throughout the gallery. Significantly, he was one of the most represented artists in the exhibition, alongside Oscar Dominguez and S. W. Hayter, who each like-wise had six works on display.¹⁵

How, then, can we read *Le Verre d'Absinthe* as a Surrealist object?¹⁶ In a way that would likely appeal to Breton, there are at least three representational modes operating within the work.¹⁷ The glass itself is a bronze cast of an original wax model, painted in white oil paint with black and dark blue details and red and blue stippling. It is similar to the one within MoMA's collection, though the stippling is more spaced, appearing also on the rim of the open interior, as well as on the top rather than the sides of the sugar cube, and the blue-black details throughout are thinner and more



Fig. 6.3 Marcel Duchamp (American, born France, 1887–1968). *Why Not Sneeze, Rose Sélavy?* 1964 (replica of 1921 original). Painted metal birdcage containing marble blocks, thermometer, and piece of cuttlebone, 4 7/8 x 8 3/4 x 6 3/8" (12.3 x 22.1 x 16 cm). Gift of Galleria Schwarz. 1123.1964.a-e

frequent, adding to the spiral quality that keeps the viewer's eyes winding up and down its form (fig. 6.2). The slumped quality of the bronze; its suggestion towards deformation, as if it is perturbed in its own right; the delirious, hallucinogenic, and inebriated connotations of a stippling that is repetitive, drifting, wandering; its exposed

interior and hence outright negation of possible use all offer the glass as if it has been produced from artistic invention, produced from, borrowing the words of Breton, “inner perception” rather than the realistic modeling of an actual café glass.¹⁸ The contrast of the metal spoon provides a second representational mode, that of the readymade.¹⁹ For Breton, the selection of the ready-made “*détourne* the object [here the spoon] from its own ends.”²⁰ Its pairing with the bronze evoked, perhaps, for some Surrealists “the coupling of two realities which apparently cannot be coupled.”²¹ And a third mode, imitation, comes in the form of the sugar cube—its size and scale a direct reference to a real sugar cube, offering in its own way, sans stippling, something perversely akin to the marble sugar cubes in Duchamp’s nearby *Why Not Sneeze?* (fig. 6.3), much admired by Breton.²²

Contrasting inventive, imitative, and readymade models all at once—*Le Verre d’Absinthe* offers a series of continual slippages, a breakdown of binaries and categorical terms: it is a wax original, cast in bronze, painted white so as to give the appearance of plaster though it is an object that should be made of glass. From the singular model was created a series of six multiples, each painted uniquely. Offering a view of its interior and exterior simultaneously, its drooping form suggests a softness foreign to bronze. The glass is a sculpture in-the-round, yet it is also painted and with visible brushstroke and shading. It contains the craftsmanship of a work of art yet predominantly features a readymade; it is a work of fantasy with an element of reality; a work of art though it is also just an *objet*, and not just any *objet* but a drinking glass, a work of design, of applied art, of function and utility, or perhaps even of decoration.²³ Its intimate scale and three-dimensional form offer an existence on par with the world of commodities and other daily objects; its subject a common bohemian staple before the war, though its display comes much after. Finished in 1914, but shown in 1936, discovered in a storage-room or gallery in a manner perhaps akin to the objects Breton found at the Marché de Saint-Ouen, “*démodés*, fragmented, unusable, almost incomprehensible, even perverse.”²⁴ It is the cohabitation of all these terms—representation, imitation, readymade, commodity, painting, sculpture, design—and the impossibility of singular categorization, the constant eluding of definition that make *Le Verre d’absinthe* unique and amenable to a Surrealist reception.

In closing, I would like to ask if there is a way in which the Surrealist reading of *Le Verre d’Absinthe* can change our approach to it today. The vitrine case in which Picasso’s work was displayed is at once a space that is museological, anthropological, and rational—isolating (perhaps paradoxically) the objects inside from the external reality that Breton so wanted to change. And yet the vitrine serves its purpose as a space of combining and equalizing, of de-hierarchizing incredibly disparate material, from sculptures to minerals to flea

market junk.²⁵ To follow the Surrealist gesture is to unmoor *Le Verre d’absinthe* from a sculpture, a work of high art, autonomous and pure, to a mere *objet* in the world. For the Surrealists, *Le Verre d’absinthe* was something that could be seen alongside a rock, a relic, a piece of refuse, a ruin. Something to be kept on a shelf, in the world, not a pedestal. It was not to be immediately used, but stood as an invitation to contemplate alternative uses, a creation of an object in revolt against use. In the preface to the exhibition, Breton called what was on display as “*êtres-objets* (ou *objets-êtres*).”²⁶ Being-objects, object-beings, they were something that maintained a “continual transformation.” It was the exact opposite of how Julio Gonzalez described Picasso’s work that same year, glorious “Sculpture,” with a capital “S.”²⁷



Fig. 6.5 Mantelpiece in Picasso’s studio at 23, rue La Boétie. Photograph by Brassai printed in “Picasso dans son élément,” *Minotaure* 1, no. 1 (June 1933). The Museum of Modern Art Library

Perhaps Picasso himself had sympathy for this Surrealist mode of viewing. When Brassai visited his studio in 1943, he found Picasso’s own artist copy of *Le Verre d’absinthe* sitting inside a cluttered vitrine, mixed with *objets* of disparate origins and means (fig. 6.4).²⁸

To return to “Picasso dans son élément,” consider Breton’s praise for Picasso’s “*extra-pictorial* production,” the “pile of abandoned cigarette packs on a mantelpiece,” sitting alongside a plaster figure and a multicolored vase (fig. 6.5).³⁰ Can we envision *Le Verre d’absinthe* sitting on that shelf, mixed somewhere within the continuum of the cigarette packs and the vase of the artist’s lived-in studio? To follow the Surrealist affinity to its fullest is to try and see *Le Verre d’absinthe* as something other—an object, a being-object, a fantasy, a thing, something that was in constant transformation, but never exactly a Sculpture.

NOTES

I would like to extend thanks to the curatorial and conservation team of the 2015-2016 *Picasso Sculpture* exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art. At different points in time, Luise Mahler, Nancy Lim, Lynda Zycherman, Silvia Loreti, Anne Umland, and Ann Temkin very generously shared their research and expertise on Picasso's absinthe glasses. My paper is informed by their work and I'm grateful for their collaborative spirit. In particular, I have benefited from Luise Mahler and Lynda Zycherman's presentation, "Glass of Absinthe," at the *First MRC Study Session on Picasso's Sculpture*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, February 6, 2015.

1. See reproductions of Breton's manuscript notes on the list of objects for the *Exposition surréaliste d'objets*, Archives galerie Charles Ratton in Agnès de la Beaumelle and Isabelle Monod-Fontaine, eds., *André Breton: La beauté convulsive* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991), 231.

2. For more on the inclusion of such "objets sauvages" in Surrealist exhibitions, see among other works: Hal Foster, "The 'Primitive' Unconscious of Modern Art," *October* 34 (Autumn 1985): 45-70; and James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Surrealism," *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 117-51.

3. It is unclear precisely how Breton chose *Le Verre d'absinthe* in Rosenberg's collection. Breton would have first seen the entire *Le Verre d'absinthe* series at the first Hôtel Drouot sale of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's sequestered collection in June 1921. The absinthe glasses were listed as a single lot (n. 139) but sold individually from

55-100 francs each. From this sale, Breton purchased Picasso's *Tête* (1913). He would also have seen various absinthe glasses reproduced in Maurice Raynal's 1922 Picasso monograph and in Christian Zervos's "Sculptures des peintres d'aujourd'hui" in *Les Cahiers d'Art*, n. 7 (1928): 227-90; and perhaps Breton even saw Picasso's own artist edition in the numerous studio visits throughout the 1920s and early 30s. In March of 1936, just two months before the Surrealist exhibition, a show of recent work by Picasso was held at the Galerie Paul Rosenberg. Breton attended and could have potentially seen the absinthe glass in Rosenberg's collection though it was not on the exhibition checklist. Lastly, once the *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* opened, Breton released a press announcement in *Le Semaine de Paris* promising several works directly from the atelier of Picasso. See André Breton, "Objets surréalistes," *Le Semaine de Paris*, 22-26 May 1936.

4. For more information on the relationship between Breton and Picasso, see Elizabeth Cowling, "'Proudly We Claim Him as One of Us': Breton, Picasso, and The Surrealist Movement," *Art History* 8:1 (March 1985): 82-104; as well as Anne Baldassari, ed., *Picasso surréaliste* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005); Marie-Laure Bernadac, "André Breton et Pablo Picasso: 'tout le sang du possible vers le cœur,'" *André Breton: La beauté convulsive*, eds. Agnès de la Beaumelle and Isabelle Monod-Fontaine (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991), 210-213.

5. Cowling 1985, 82, 84, 102.

6. "Hommage à Picasso," *Paris-Journal*, 20 June 1924. In addition to Breton, the article was signed by Louis Aragon, Georges Auric, Jacques-André Boiffard, Robert Desnos, Joseph Delteil, Max Ernst, Francis Gérard,

Max Morise, Pierre Naville, Benjamin Péret, Francis Poulenc, Philippe Soupault, and Roger Vitrac. See discussion in Cowling 1985, 86; De la Beaumelle and Monod-Fontaine 1991, 170; and Baldassari 2005, 61.

7. André Breton, *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1928/1965, Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 9. For a detailing of the reproductions of Picasso's work in *La Révolution surréaliste*, see Cowling 1985, 92-99.

8. To track Breton's discussions of Picasso in his writings, see: André Breton, "Clairement" (1922), *Œuvres complètes: Tome I* [hereafter cited as *Œ I*], ed. Marguerite Bonnet (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 265; Breton, "Caractères de l'évolution moderne" (1922), *Œ I*, 297; Breton, "Manifeste du surréalisme" (1924), *Œ I*, 321-322 and 330; Breton, *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1928/1965), 4-9; André Breton, "Picasso dans son élément" (1933), *Œuvres complètes: Tome II* [hereafter cited as *Œ II*], ed. Marguerite Bonnet (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 361-372; Breton, "Situation surréaliste de l'objet: Situation de l'objet surréaliste" (1935), *Œ II*, 472-496; Breton, "Picasso Poète" (1935), *Œ II*, 565-576. For after 1936, see especially André Breton and Benjamin Péret, "La Vie imagée de Pablo Picasso" (1951), *Œuvres complètes: Tome III* [hereafter cited as *Œ III*], ed. Marguerite Bonnet (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 1057-1066; and André Breton, "Pablo Picasso: 80 carats...mais une ombre" (1961), translated and reprinted as "Pablo Picasso: 80 carats... with a single flaw," *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 116-18.

9. Breton, *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*, 4. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

10. Breton, "Picasso dans son élément," 362.

11. Breton, "Picasso dans son élément," 364-365. For further discussion of this essay, see Adam Jolles, *The Curatorial Avant-Garde: Surrealism and Exhibition Practice in France, 1925-1941* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2014), 146-48.

12. Breton, "Situation surréaliste de l'objet," 477 and 495.

13. Breton, "Crise de l'objet," *Les Cahiers d'Art*, n. 1-2 ([May] 1936): 21-26.

14. For a selection of essays on the 1936 *Exposition surréaliste d'objets*, see De la Beaumelle and Monod-Fontaine 1991; Laurence Madeline, "The Crisis of the Object/Objects in Crisis: *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* at the Charles Ratton Gallery, 1936," *Surrealist Objects: Three-Dimensional Works from Dali to Man Ray*, eds. Ingrid Pfeiffer and Max Hollein (Frankfurt: Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 2011), 165-73; Didier Ottinger, ed., *Dictionnaire de l'objet surréaliste* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2013); and Jolles 2014.

15. See the catalogue *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* (Paris: Charles Ratton, 1936).

16. Werner Spies has also commented on the three modes in operation here, which he refers to as *representation, reality, and imitation*. My purpose is simply to resituate their overlapping presence as something that would have been readily embraced by the Surrealists. See Werner Spies, *Les Sculptures de Picasso* (Lausanne: Clairefontaine, 1971), 48; as well as Roland Penrose, *The Sculpture of Picasso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 20.

17. With regards to an inebriated stippling: for a reading of *Le Verre d'absinthe* series in relation to the social history of absinthe, see Brooks Adams, "Picasso's Absinthe Glasses: Six Drinks to the End of an Era," *Artforum* 18:8 (April 1980): 30-33. For an alternative reading, see Sylvie Coëllier, "Picasso : pointillisme et cubisme," *La Revue de l'art* 92 (1991): 64-71. For a more recent reading that discusses the stippling in relation to the history of confetti, see Rebecca Rabinow, "Confetti Cubism," *Cubism: The Leonard A. Lauder Collection*, eds. Emily Braun and Rebecca Rabinow (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014), 156-163.
18. For a broader discussion of the relation between (everyday) objects and Picasso's sculpture, see Elizabeth Cowling, "Objects into Sculpture," *Picasso: Sculpture/ Painter*, eds. Elizabeth Cowling and John Golding (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), 229-240.
19. Breton, "Crise de l'objet," 24-25. He is speaking of Duchamp's readymades in particular.
20. Breton, quoting Max Ernst, in "Situation surréaliste de l'objet," 493.
21. Breton much admired the faux sugar cubes in *Why not sneeze, Rose Sélavy?*, see his extended discussion of it in Breton, "Caractères de l'évolution moderne" (1922), *Œ I*, 300.
22. I am grateful to Emily Braun, who served as a panel moderator during the Second Museum Research Consortium Study Session on Picasso's Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, May 14, 2015, and first suggested to me the importance of the work's ties to the applied and decorative arts.
23. Breton, *Nadja* (1928), *Œ I*, 676.
24. See Isabelle Monod-Fontaine, "Le tour des objets," *André Breton: La beauté convulsive*, eds. Agnès de la Beaumelle and Isabelle Monod-Fontaine (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991), 65 for a discussion of this principle in relation to Breton's atelier.
25. Breton, untitled preface, *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* (Paris: Charles Ratton, 1936), not paginated.
26. J[ulio]. Gonzalez, "Picasso Sculpteur," *Les Cahiers d'Art*, n. 1-2, special issue on *L'Objet* (1936): 189.
27. See the discussion in Brassai, *Conversations avec Picasso* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 91-92. Brassai writes: "*Monday, 25 October 1943*. Picasso wants to show me the vitrine, or, as Sabarté calls it, the 'museum.' It is a large metallic and glass armoire, locked, placed in a small room next to the studio. In order to open it, he takes out a voluminous set of keys. About fifty of his bronze statues are stockpiled there along with wood he has sculpted, stones he has engraved, and other curious and rare objects like this agglomeration of contorted and deformed glasses, piled one on top of another, which I stare at wide-eyed! Could this be one of Picasso's 'experiments'? ...Then I notice the *Verre d'absinthe*, such a brazen work in its time."
28. Breton, "Picasso dans son élément," 365, 367. In raising these questions, I am indebted to Adam Jolles's reading of Breton's essay in Jolles 2014, 146-148.

Green Still Life (1914)

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In June of 1914 Pablo Picasso relocated from Paris to Avignon, where he and his mistress Eva Gouel would remain until November. It has long been recognized that Picasso's work during this period—a painting such as *Green Still Life* (pl. 7) is in many ways characteristic—partakes of a distinctive formal lyricism and exuberance of color. The work of summer 1914 also continues a period of trans-medium experimentation carried out over the past year in Paris and Céret. In the distinctive array of textural, representational, and optical effects which Picasso coordinates in *Green Still Life*, this dialogue between various materials and methods of working takes on a new character and complexity.



Fig. 7.1 Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906). *Still Life with Ginger Jar, Sugar Bowl, and Oranges*. 1902–06. Oil on canvas, 23 7/8 x 28 7/8" (60.6 x 73.3 cm). Lillie P. Bliss Collection. 18.1934

Since early 1913 Picasso had been engaged in testing on canvas formal solutions suggested by his seminal work in *papier collé*. These recent paintings—conventionally known as “synthetic” as opposed to earlier “analytic” Cubism—reproduce in oil the shallow pictorial space, relatively broad superimposed planes, and generous visual punning Picasso explored in his pasted paper works.¹ Likewise, in spring 1914, a series of bronzes were cast from a small modeled wax *Glass of Absinthe* in which Picasso aimed to discover an analogue for the ambiguous effects of transparency

achieved in various *papiers collés* and constructed sculptures.² Picasso undertook to translate into the language of traditional painting and sculpture the yield of his work with novel artistic materials.

Green Still Life largely departs from the spatial syntax of so-called Synthetic Cubism, the compositional mode most closely associated with paintings partaking of this exchange. The still life is composed of various objects familiar from Picasso's work—a *compotier*, a stippled glass, a bottle, a journal, fruit—and like many contemporaneous works dramatic textural contrasts are introduced. In particular, a lozenge-shaped passage of thick and assertively textured paint mixed with sand plays a central role: it encompasses the *compotier* and glass while intersecting the folded newspaper between them and the bottle which dominates the painting's central axis. Nevertheless, in the construction of a more clearly legible, although still fundamentally ambiguous, pictorial space and organization of objects Picasso looks to sources outside his own oeuvre. The aggressively tilted surface of the table supporting Picasso's still life arrangement immediately suggests the work of Paul Cézanne (fig. 7.1), while the monochromatic and relatively unmodulated color field extending across background and furniture is likely an echo of Henri Matisse's 1911 *Red Studio* (fig. 7.2).³

What, then, is the relation of the *Green Still Life* to Picasso's trans-medium experiments of the preceding months? The manner in which the glass at the center of the still life is rendered provides a point of entry. This especially baroque and curvilinear figuration is distinctive to work of the Avignon period and is most likely derived from the modeled *Glass of Absinthe* conceived in the spring.⁴ Indeed, the dialogue between this sculpture and *Green Still Life* is extensive: beyond the formal parallel in the rendering of the glass, the pointillist stippling employed in the painting also appears prominently on four of the six casts of *Glass of Absinthe*. Most importantly, however, in *Green Still Life* Picasso demonstrates a concern with the same effects of transparency that he had explored in the *Glass of Absinthe*. Here we detect a double transference: from the radical *papiers collés* and constructed sculptures to a more traditional modeled sculptural idiom, and from there to the canvas. Moreover, *Green Still Life* represents not only a translation of sculptural ideas into paint, but also a self-conscious meditation on the operations of the process of transference.



Pl. 7 *Green Still Life*. Summer 1914. Oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 31 1/4" (59.7 x 79.4 cm).
Lillie P. Bliss Collection. 92.1934



Fig. 7.2 Henri Matisse (French, 1869–1954). *The Red Studio*. Fall 1911. Oil on canvas, 71 1/4" x 7' 2 1/4" (181 x 219.1 cm). Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. 8.1949

In conversation with the fields of stippled color surrounding it on four sides and covering the central glass, the highly tactile lozenge-shaped central passage suggests the construction of a dialogue between two different modes of sensory perception. On the one hand, the pointillist dots serve as a nonfunctional sign for the optical and illusive practices upon which modernist painting is often understood to depend.⁵ On the other, the extreme tactile interest of the lozenge-shaped passage, the comparatively legible pictorial space of the work, and the source for the figuration of the glass suggest a heightened consciousness of the sculptural at work. Moreover, where the textured lozenge intersects the newspaper and bottle, it seems to enact a kind of transparency on the objects it traverses: the newspaper's colored surface gives way to the green of the background, and the contours of the bottle are erased, revealing an amorphous form that could make reference to the bottle's liquid contents. As such, *Green Still Life* not only testifies to the exchange of effects between mediums, it also contains a self-conscious notation of the dialogue between sculpture and painting—or put more broadly, between the optical and the haptic—which lies at the root of that transference.

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NOTES

1. This understanding of Picasso's painting c. 1913-14 is by no means uncommon in the literature. For one treatment see Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: Style and Meaning* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2002), 262-65. For another slightly different take see Brigitte Léal, Christine Piot, and Marie-Laure Bernadac, *Picasso: The Monograph 1881-1973* (Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009), 162-64.

2. Carolyn Lanchner, *Pablo Picasso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 24-26.

3. Picasso engaged in an intensive study of Cézanne during the first half of 1914. See Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow, *The Essential Cubism: Braque, Picasso & Their Friends* (London: The Tate Gallery Publications, 1983), 302. The connection between *Green Still Life* and *The Red Studio* has been recognized frequently over the years. See Yve-Alain Bois, *Matisse and Picasso* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 11. Kirk Varnedoe concurs: see Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel, *Picasso: Masterworks from The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1997), 74.

4. Pierre Daix and Joan Rosselet, *Picasso: The Cubist Years 1907-1916: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings and Related Works* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979), 159-160.

5. Like many of the forms and devices used by Picasso, the pointillist dots which appear frequently between 1913 and 1916 serve multiple ends simultaneously. I have focused on one particular aspect of their significance, but it should be noted that they also have more straightforward representational functions: their description of fringed textiles in *Green Still Life*, as well as their evocation of confetti more generally. See Rebecca

Rabinow, "Confetti Cubism," in *Cubism: The Leonard A. Lauder Collection*, eds. Emily Braun and Rebecca Rabinow (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 156-63.

Accordion-Time in Picasso's Sheet Metal *Guitar* (1914)

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Picasso's sheet metal *Guitar* is two things at once. It is a "breakthrough" sculpture, celebrated as one of the first open constructions in twentieth-century art. And it is an epiphany in painting. Related to a set of experimental collages and assemblages from 1912 to 1914, the *Guitar* is insistently inscribed within the micro-history of Cubist chronology. Of course, the sculpture assumes this double identity with a winking modesty. Constructed from thin and flexible sheets of ferrous metal that were cut with scissors, folded, and then tied into place with wire, it perches like a

shadowbox on the wall. Viewed from the front, it is a relief in reverse, stamping itself out from the background wall. Its forms emerge as though squeezed through a stencil, with the *guitar's* body and the lip of a hollow stovepipe (turned sound-hole) protruding out of a recessed interior section.¹ Viewed from any other position—whether askance, profile, or below—the sculpture's provisional unity breaks down into partial views, yielding different depths, hidden segments, and changing patterns of cast shadows. Such coquettish play of perception is the key to understanding how the *Guitar* has continued to hold together its double character.

In its Cubist guise, the *Guitar* has been recognized as an "epistemological break."² This occurred when Picasso recognized that meaning could be formed through the shifting or substitution of relational signs, rather than strict mimesis.³ For decades, the cardboard *Guitar* was considered a *maquette* for the "final" version, ostensibly completed within the same year as its model. Indeed, in one account given by Yve-Alain Bois, no distinction is made between the two: it is the form alone that counts as an "epiphany." Recent discoveries about the date of *Guitar* have complicated this narrative, however, since most scholars now recognize that the sheet metal *Guitar* was made at least a year and a half after an earlier version, constructed in cardboard.⁴ This revelation—of a significant interval of time between the two sculptures—has shifted the discourse on this period of Picasso's career. An increasing attention is now being paid to the processes of folding, cutting, sewing that were involved in the creation of both *Guitars*. Jeffery Weiss and Christine Poggi have argued that the material difference truly matters, either because it gives testament to Picasso's technique of "deskilling" or because it insists on the (real or virtual) possibility of assembly by an active viewer.⁵ Their research has exposed this question: if the sheet metal *Guitar* was made well after the cardboard version, then what happened in between? Since there is ultimately no morphological change from one sculpture to another, how do we account for that period of time, at the end of which Picasso arrives at a nearly identical form?⁶ Does the sheet metal *Guitar* "preserve" its earlier version?⁷ Does it "represent" it?⁸ Or does it "memorialize" its decidedly more ephemeral brother?⁹ These questions raise a radically new possibility. Instead of announcing the beginning of revolution in Picasso's development, the *Guitar* may, in fact, mark a definitive end.

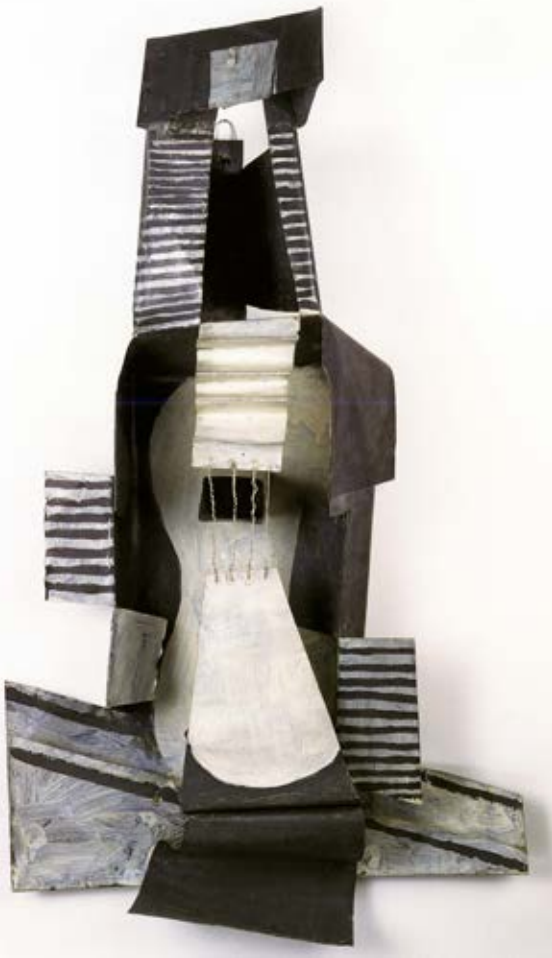


Fig. 8.1 *Guitar*. 1924. Painted sheet metal, painted tin box, and iron wire, 43 11/16 x 25 x 10 1/2" (11 x 63.5 x 26.6 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso



Pl. 8 *Guitar*. Guitar. January-February 1914. Ferrous sheet metal and wire, 30 1/2 x 13 3/4 x 7 5/8" (77.5 x 35 x 19.3 cm). Gift of the artist. 94.1971



Fig. 8.2 *Chair*. 1961. Painted sheet metal, 45 1/2 x 45 1/16 x 35 1/16" (115.5 x 114.5 x 89 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso

It is instructive, now more than ever, to consider the *Guitar*'s other identity: as a sculptural construction. By demarcating space through lines and planes, the *Guitar* has informed artists from Vladimir Tatlin to David Smith and Richard Serra. And it was no less important for Picasso himself. In 1924, he made another sheet metal *Guitar*, this time painted and adorned with black and white stripes that mimic ribbed cardboard (fig. 8.1). In 1926, he executed six other *Guitar* assemblages from tulle, string, canvas, and paper, and, in paintings and drawings, the *Guitar* remained a dominant trope throughout the 1920s.¹⁰ While it reappeared thematically and structurally, the *Guitar* also made significant returns as a material. First, in several of Picasso's 1930s collaborations with Julio González, and then again in the 1950s, when he once again took up the process of cutting and folding sheet metal to form dozens of figural sculptures, often with the assistance of the metalworker Lionel Prejger (fig. 8.2). During this period, he was in close contact with Matisse, who had been creating *papiers découpés* for more than a decade. Such circumstances make Picasso's return to sheet metal both auspicious and perplexing.¹¹ Compared to the sparse appearance of the material in Picasso's work up until that point, the use

of cut and bent prefabricated metal was only fully enacted (with an almost fanatic zeal) in the 1950s.

How does this longer history of dormancy and re-emergence relate to the compressed temporality of the Cubist moment? To visualize these two periods together, it helps to consider the *Guitar* as a kind of accordion—not unlike the shape suggested by the corrugated necks of Picasso's other *Guitar* sculptures (figs. 8.3 and 8.4). We can pull it apart so as to reveal the internal complexities and the innumerable drawings, collages, and assemblages crammed in between its two symmetrical ends. Or we can compress it: to look at the cardboard and sheet metal as two sides of a single form. In *The Shape of Time*, art historian George Kubler traces the morphology of forms at different speeds and durations of historical time, applying the mathematical

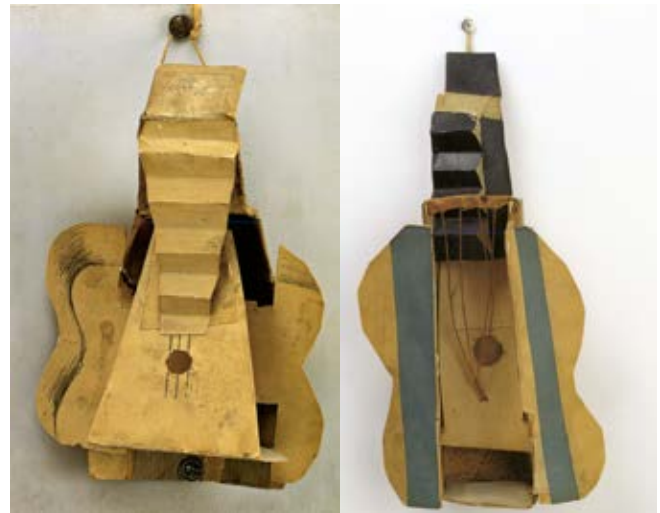


Fig. 8.3 [Left] *Guitar*. December 3, 1912, or later. Paperboard, cut-and-pasted newspaper, and canvas, string, and pencil, 8 11/16 x 5 11/16 x 2 3/4" (22 x 14.5 x 7 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso

Fig. 8.4 [Right] *Guitar*. December 3, 1912, or later. Paperboard, cut-and-pasted newspaper, colored paper, and canvas, string, ink, and pencil, 13 x 7 1/16 x 3 3/4" (33 x 18 x 9.5 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso

distinction between a closed series and an open sequence to the history of art.¹² In effect, the sheet metal *Guitar* marks the end to a series and the beginning of an open sequence. The difference is the scale of time, with the *Guitar* poised within two different systematic ages. Where it closes off and, at least conceptually, concludes a period of Cubism, it simultaneously makes an entrance into a sequence, still open, of possible forms for sculpture.

This entrance is thematized in the earliest photograph we have of the sheet metal *Guitar* (fig. 8.5). Hung high on the wall of Picasso's home in rue LaBoétie, we catch a glimpse of the *Guitar* in the upper left. Because our view is cantilevered, we see multiple aspects of the *Guitar* together. Its depth is evidence by the actual length of the

sound hole and inferred by different shades of sheet metal, but it is simultaneously shallow: with separate sections appearing as two-dimensional planes. Like the woman it resembles, the *Guitar* is here, undeniably, an item of display. Even the way it is hung, hemmed-in by other paintings and by the wooden wainscoting beneath it, is a quotation of the cardboard *Guitar* which the artist surrounded by pinned-up *papiers collés* in his studio. And, in this sense, the logic of the cardboard *Guitar* remains embedded within the sheet metal version. In Kubler's parlance, the sheet metal *Guitar* is both a prime object *and* its replication.¹³ *Guitar* was the true epiphany, than the sheet metal *Guitar* packages that epiphany; it gives it a public face and delivers it into an open sequence of future possibilities.

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Fig. 8.5 Olga Picasso in 23, rue La Boétie, with sheet metal *Guitar* at upper left, ca. 1923-24. Photographer unknown. Modern print from original negative. Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso, Madrid

NOTES

1. For detailed notes on the material construction of the *Guitar*, see Christine Poggi, "Picasso's First Constructed Sculpture: A Tale of Two *Guitars*," *Art Bulletin*, Vol. XCIV, no. 2 (June 2012): [274-298] 281-2; and Scott Gerson, "Guitar: Conservation Notes," in *Picasso: The Making of Cubism*, 1912-1914, ed. Anne Umland and Blair Hartzell (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 15.10-15.11.
2. Yve-Alain Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," *Representations*, no.18 (Spring 1987): [33-68], 43.
3. Bois's assessment follows the criticism of Kahnweiler, who, as early as 1948, credited the discovery of the "Wobe" as the locus of a "total revolution" in Picasso's work. (Kahnweiler, *The Sculptures of Picasso*, photographs by Brassai (New York: Assouline Publishing, [1948] 2005), X). Bois builds on Kahnweiler, by claiming that the collusion of the Grebo mask and the *Guitar* inaugurated synthetic cubism, for "Picasso realized for the first time that a sign, because it has a value, can be entirely virtual, or nonsubstantial," that is, Picasso understood that emptiness could be "a positive term" (Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 53). In Poggi's most recent account—following the work of Monni Adams—the object that Picasso encountered was specifically a Kru mask (Poggi, "A Tale of Two *Guitars*" ft. 1, p. 295).
4. When *Guitar* was accessioned by MoMA, it was simply given the date of 1912, the same as the cardboard version (labeled a "maquette"). It should be noted that the two are within centimeters of one another. Conservator Scott Gerson currently believes that they were traced from the same template (whereas Edward Fry had claimed that the cardboard version was the stencil for the sheet metal version, see ft.78 in *Picasso Sculpture*, 1912-1914, p. 39).
5. See Poggi, "A Tale of Two *Guitars*" and Weiss, "Contingent Cubism," *Grey Room* 58 (Winter 2015): 26-49.
6. In contrast, for instance, to his *Fernand* series. See Weiss's analysis of this serial logic in "Fleeting and Fixed: Picasso's *Fernandes*," in *Picasso: The Cubist Portraits of Fernand Olivier*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2004), 2-48.
7. Poggi, "A Tale of Two *Guitars*," 289-90.
8. Weiss, "Contingent Cubism," 43.
9. Blair Hartzell calls it a "memorializing" act (*Picasso: The Making of Cubism*, 1912-1914, 15.4).
10. The reappearance of the *guitar* in the 1920s assemblages, and the reappearance of bent metal works in the 1950s might fit Rosalind Krauss's paradigm of pastiche; they at least require us to ask about the nature of their own repetition of the sheet metal *Guitar*. If they are indeed returning to this object, what kind of return is it? Do they elaborate an extended parody of the *Guitar* in its first appearance? Why do these metal sculptures reappear with such profusion in Picasso's late career? See Krauss, "Picasso/Pastiche," in *The Picasso Papers* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 89-212.
11. For a succinct treatment of the later metal works, see "Drawing with the Scissors: Folded Sheet metal Sculptures" in Werner Spies, *Picasso: The Sculptures*, catalogue raisonné of the Sculptures in collaboration with Christine Piot (Ostfildern-Suttgart: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2000), 286-296; and "Cutting and Folding the Figure," in the Introduction to Elizabeth Cowling and John Golding, *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter* (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), 34-36.
12. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962,) 30.
13. Kubler, *The Shape of Time*, 35.

Selections from the *Vollard Suite* (1930-37)

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This selection of five etchings from Picasso's *Vollard Suite* (1930-37, printed 1939; pls. 9.1-9.5) might well be called "the temptation of self-reference." The viewer—particularly if that viewer is an art historian—is inclined to ruminate on the webs of signification that connect the figures in these prints to their biographical referents. In *Model and Sculptor with His Sculpture* (pl. 9.1), an intense and hirsute artist is absorbed in (and handsy with) not the nude life-model to his right, but a parallel figuration: a gigantic and swooping bust, elevated on a Doric pedestal with snaking ivy. Of course, we recognize this sculpture as *Head of a Woman*, the model as Marie Thérèse Walter, and the sculptor—who else?—the master Picasso himself.

The plot thickens. These etchings belong to a 46-print subseries of the *Vollard Suite* known as "The Sculptor's Studio," executed mainly between March and May of 1933 when the artist was engrossed in sculpture-making at his Boisgeloup estate. These 46 images cohere around a neo-Classical conceit and the amorous—if fraught, as all good affairs are—relationships of artist, muse, and creation. Take *Sculptor in Repose with Marie Thérèse and Her Representation* (pl. 9.2), with its reclining and lusty protagonist flanked by twin profiles of model and modeled, the gulf between art and life flattened onto the page amid so many curls of body hair and folds of fabric, a vision of neo-Classical excess.

Much has been written on this interplay of reality and representation. Roland Penrose writes of a print dated March 11th, "We feel a contrast between the transitory life and ephemeral beauty of the model and the more lasting quality of a stone carving. But there is no rapt look of reverence for the work of the master in her eyes; instead there is a puzzled, contemplative scrutiny of this new intrusion into their lives."¹ A wall text from the 1998 MoMA exhibition *Artists and Subjects: Picasso to Stella* states that the series "reflects aspects of Picasso's life and reveals his feelings about the creative process . . . The deeper meaning of these prints lies in the implied interrelationship between love and creativity."²

At the risk of spoiling all the fun, I would introduce a couple observations that deflate, just a little, the semiotic reading. First, the medium: etching is an unlikely staging ground for the big questions of signification, a topic to which the artist, first and foremost a painter, devoted

intense periods of his career. He liked the medium for its verisimilitude to drawing; it was unburdened from the incumbent pressure of an empty canvas. Formal analysis supports an assertion of ease: for an artist whose draughtsmanship is characteristically considered and often heavily worked, these five etchings feature more casual, no-strings-attached kinds of gestures. Second, I would be remiss to overlook Ambroise Vollard, the eponym and *raison d'être* of this print portfolio. Vollard, a Parisian publisher and art collector, commissioned these works in 1927, and waited a full decade for their consummation. Vollard met Picasso in Paris in 1901, and within a year exhibited some of the artist's first works from the Blue Period. It was a fruitful patronage for nearly a decade, though inevitably the relationship cooled. The turning point came around 1910, when the artist's forays into African art, and especially Cubism—the semiotic gauntlet par excellence—were simply too far out for Vollard's Impressionist predilections. Their bond remained amicable, but both men's attentions wandered, Picasso notably toward Kahnweiler, with whom he was exclusive from 1912 to 1914. The men became collaborators again around 1923, with the commission of etchings for Vollard's printed publications, including Balzac's *Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*.

Consider "The Sculptor's Studio" through the lens of a leisurely commission—would that we all were guaranteed payment and given a decade for our assignments—and this work seems to resist, rather than invite, agitation. This studio is a neo-Classical projection of a world suspended outside of time, freed from the burdens of context, changing styles, and troubling avant-gardes. Rather than tension or angst, we see tenderness—a tenderness, perhaps, for the slightly older, slightly more conservative Mr. Vollard.

Within an oeuvre marked by definitive, epochal shifts, the *Vollard Suite*'s visual coherence over seven years places it outside the narrative arc of Picasso's painterly career. This series, like a French countryside estate, offers pleasure in stability, a sameness that withstands habitual visitation. Of course, "The Sculptor's Studio" is not without the slightest provocation. For in these dense triangles of artist, model, and work, with all their metaphorical and biographical tethers, one reads a gentle nudge toward those heady, semiotic enigmas that so baffled Vollard, couched gracefully and with ease in Picasso's languid lines.

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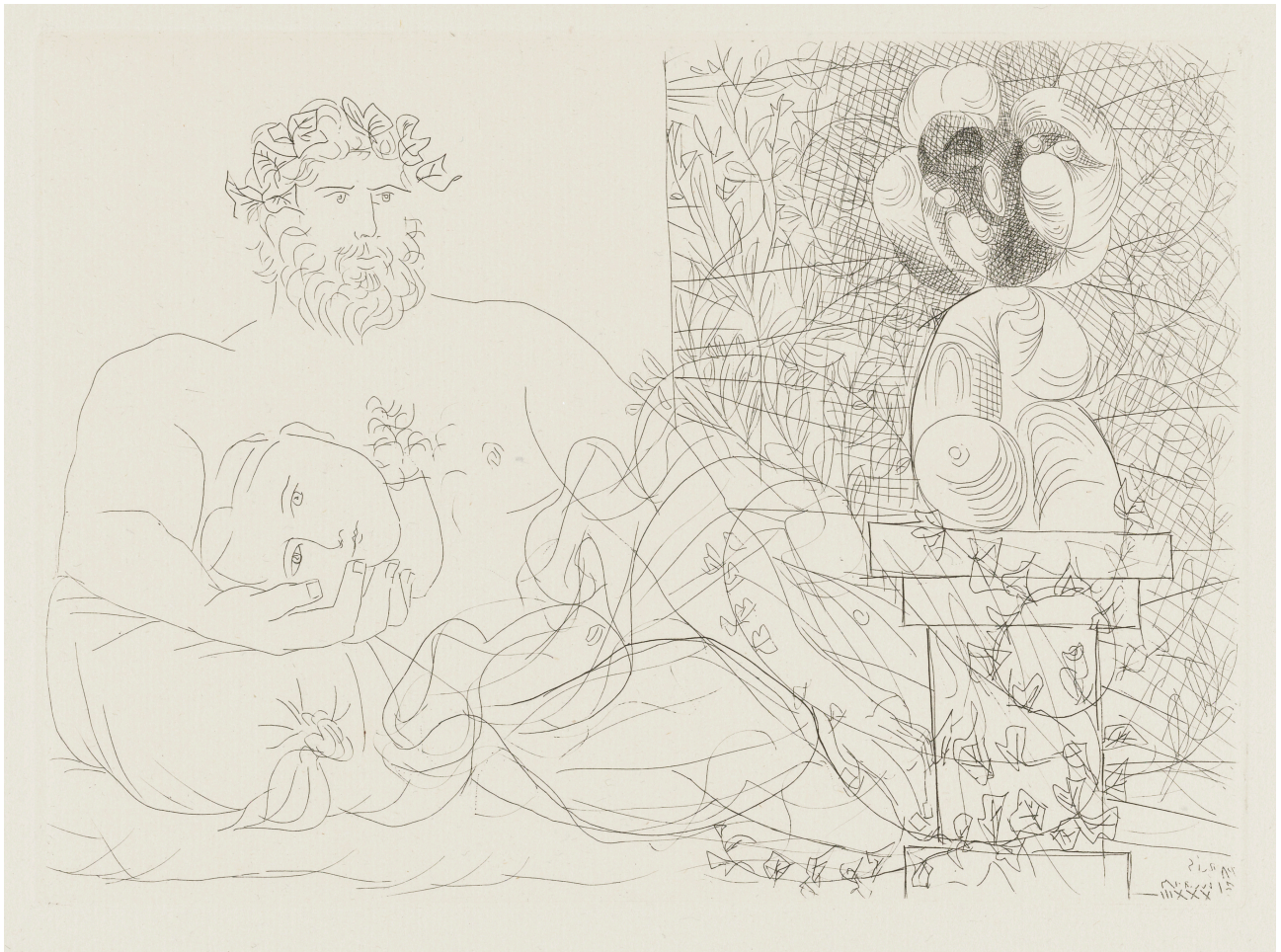
Pl. 9.1 *Model and Sculptor with His Sculpture* from the *Volland Suite*. 1933, published 1939. Etching; plate: 10 1/2 x 7 5/8" (26.7 x 19.3 cm); sheet: 17 1/2 x 13 3/8" (44.4 x 33.9 cm). Publisher: Volland, Paris. Printer: Lacourière, Paris. Edition: 260. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. 258.1949



Pl. 9.2 *Sculptor in Repose with Marie Thérèse and Her Representation as the Chase*
Venus from the Vollard Suite. 1933, published 1939. Etching; plate: 10 9/16 x 7
 5/8" (26.8 x 19.4 cm); sheet: 17 5/16 x 13 1/4" (44 x 33.7 cm). Publisher: Vollard, Paris.
 Printer: Lacourière, Paris. Edition: 260. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. 197.1949



Pl. 9.3 *Old Sculptor at Work II* from the *Vollard Suite*. 1933, published 1939.
Etching; plate: 10 1/2 x 7 5/8" (26.7 x 19.4 cm); sheet: 17 5/16 x 13 3/8" (44 x 34 cm). Publisher: Vollard, Paris. Printer: Lacourière, Paris. Edition: 260. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. 194.1949



Pl. 9.4 *Sculptor and His Model with a Bust on a Column* from the *Vollard Suite*. 1933, published 1939. Etching; plate: 7 5/8 x 10 1/2" (19.4 x 26.7 cm); sheet: 13 x 17 1/2" (33 x 44.5 cm). Publisher: Vollard, Paris. Printer: Lacourière, Paris. Edition: 260. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. 204.1949



Pl. 9.5 *Sculptor with a Sculpted Group (Homage to Carpeaux)* from the *Vollard Suite*. 1934, published 1939. Etching; plate: 8 3/4 x 12 5/16" (22.3 x 31.3 cm); sheet: 13 3/8 x 17 3/8" (34 x 44.2 cm). Publisher: Vollard, Paris. Printer: Lacourière, Paris. Edition: 260. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. 250.1949

NOTES

1. Roland Penrose, *The Sculpture of Picasso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 13.

2. Wall text from *Artists and Subjects: Picasso to Stella*, exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1998.

Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu (1931)

Alex Weintraub
Columbia University

In 1927, Ambroise Vollard approached Picasso to invite him to illustrate Honoré de Balzac's influential novella, *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* (pl. 10). The finished *livre d'artiste* was first issued in 1931 and comprised 13 original etchings, one of which served as a table of etchings (fig. 10.1), 67 wood engravings cut by George Aubert after drawings by Picasso (fig. 10.2), and 16 pages of lineblock reproductions of dot and line drawings penned by Picasso between 1924 and 1925 in Juan-les-Pins (fig. 10.3). Also accompanying Balzac's text, the painter and printmaker Albert Besnard was commissioned to write an "Avant-Propos" in which he advises against the self-defeating pursuit of aesthetic perfection. The book was sold unbound, as was typical for many of Vollard's most ambitious publications.

Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu, which by the early 20th century had come to be understood as a myth of the modern artist, tells the story of three 17th-century painters: the young and ambitious Nicolas Poussin, the mid-career Porbus, and the fictional master Frenhofer. All three artists grapple with the tensions between art and life, which crystallize around the artist-model relationship and the pursuit of painterly perfection, understood to be an art capable of surpassing mere illusionism. These problematics reach their climactic conclusion in the studio of Frenhofer, where Porbus and Poussin visit to catch a glimpse of the older artist's purported masterpiece, a nude of the courtesan Catherine Lescault, or *La Belle Noiseuse*. The two younger artists are shocked and disappointed to discover that the finished



Fig. 10.1 Table of etchings from *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. 1931. Etching from an illustrated book of 13 etchings; plate: 10 7/8 x 7 3/4" (27.7 x 19.7 cm); page: 13 x 9 15/16" (33 x 25.2 cm). The Louis E. Stern Collection. 967.1964.13

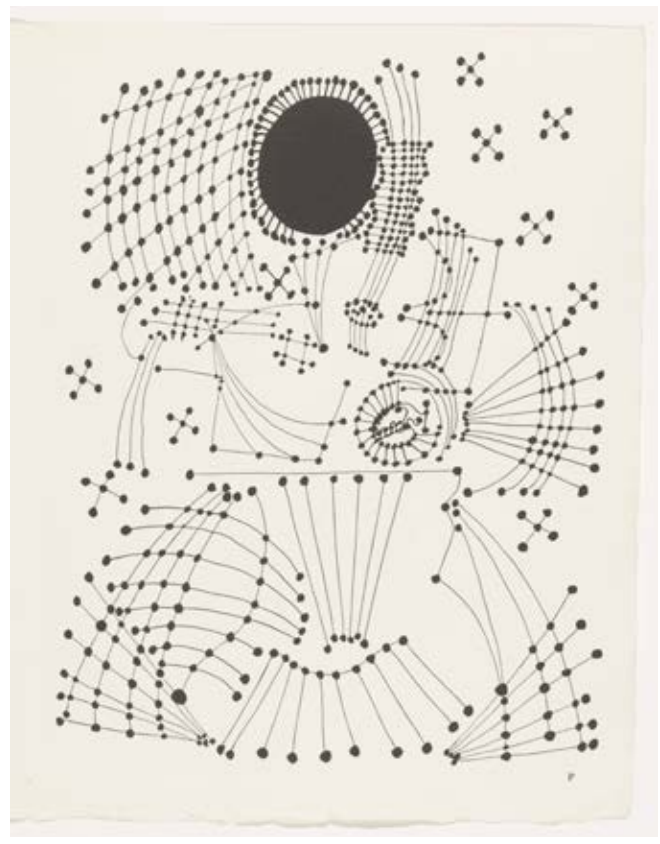


Fig. 10.2 Page P, from *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. 1924–31, published 1931. Lineblock reproduction of dot and line drawing by Picasso

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

LE CHEF-D'ŒUVRE
INCONNU



PARIS
AMBROISE VOLLARD, ÉDITEUR
28, RUE DE MARTIGNAC, 28
MCMXXXI

Pl. 10 *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*. 1924–31, published 1931. Illustrated book with 13 etchings (including table of etchings); 67 wood engravings (cut by George Aubert after Picasso drawings); and 16 pages reproducing (lineblock) dot and line drawings. Page: 12 15/16 x 9 15/16" (33 x 25.2 cm); prints: dimensions vary. Publisher: Vollard, Paris. Printer: Louis Fort. Edition: 340. The Louis E. Stern Collection. 967.1964.1-13

painting is an indecipherable field of colored marks with only a beautiful and lively foot emerging as the sole vestige of recognizable form. Upon realizing his failure, Frenhofer burns his paintings and is found dead the next morning.

While Picasso's etchings (particularly plate IV) resonate thematically with the source text, none of the pictorial accompaniments offer literal illustrations of Balzac's narrative (fig. 10.3). As Picasso himself recalled in 1961, "they are works



Fig. 10.3 *Painter and Model Knitting* from *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*. 1927, published 1931. Etching from an illustrated book of 13 etchings; plate: 7 5/8 × 10 15/16" (19.3 × 27.8 cm); page: 13 × 9 15/16" (33 × 25.2 cm). The Louis E. Stern Collection. 967.1964.12

of mine that we added to a text, to which they resembled more or less. Vollard already had etchings of mine and then he searched with Blaise Cendrars and Cendrars told him "Why don't you place these with Balzac's *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*, and there you have it, we included them. But in the end, it isn't a true illustration (*une véritable illustration*)."⁹ The participation of the poet Blaise Cendrars, an innovator in experimental book design, opens up the possibility of reading Vollard's edition of *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* differently than it has been in the past, by treating it as an object with an expanded set of plastic possibilities. This departure from more conventional practices of book illustration is further demonstrated by the diversity of print procedures and visual styles (classicism and Cubism) included within the volume, and by the discrepancy between the order of prints as laid out in the table of etchings and their interspersal within the text, which are said to be governed by two different systems of harmony. Encountered successively as one reads the story or separately as an internally coherent set of images, the two orders of the etchings resist the subordination of Picasso's contributions to the source

narrative and provide the reader with greater flexibility to pattern new and personal relationships between text and image. As Vollard would remark, it was his publication "that most puzzled the bibliophiles."¹²

Perhaps most puzzling of all, are the 16 pages of reproduced dot and line drawings, placed "En Manière d'Introduction" between Besnard's "Avant-Propos" and Balzac's text. This series of enigmatic figures, which are composed almost entirely of the two basic geometric elements, bear no apparent relationship to Balzac's text and hold very little stylistic correspondence to Picasso's other illustrations. Most of the constellations are arranged in groups of three or four per page, are composed around a primary structuring axis and demonstrate Picasso's seemingly limitless capacity for formal invention with his subtle breaks in bilateral symmetry, utilization of lines and dots of varying weights, and coordination of networks and lattices of varying densities (fig. 10.4). In his book *Picasso: Architecture and Vertigo*, the art historian Christopher Green argues that these drawings are "late developments" of still-lives made in Dinard in 1922 and his 1924 painted guitar sculpture. Before becoming independent formal exercises in the Juan-les-Pins notebooks, the simplified graphic language emerged within the space of a 1923 painting depicting Picasso's son drawing.³

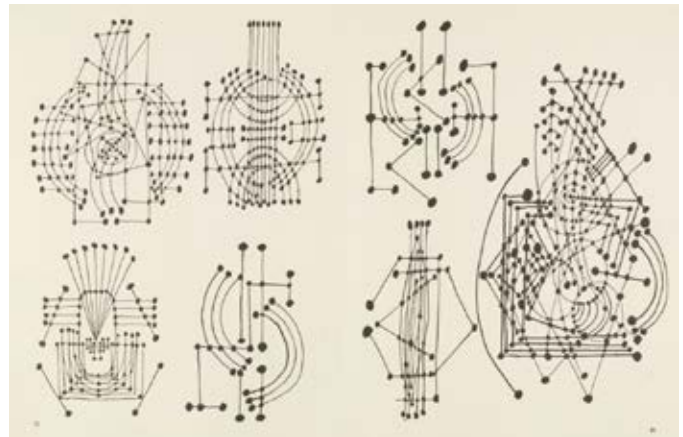


Fig. 10.4 Pages G and H, from *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*. 1924–31, published 1931. Lineblock reproductions of dot and line drawings by Picasso

Prior to their publication in *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*, two pages of different dot and line drawings by Picasso were included in the second issue of *La Révolution surréaliste*, where they may have been understood as exercises in automatism or as expressions of the operations of the artist's unconscious mind. However, by 1931, the drawings would have also been seen in relation to Picasso's rejected designs for a monument to the poet Apollinaire. The critic E. Tériade had already alluded to them in this capacity in his 1928 article for *L'Intransigeant*, "Une Visite à Picasso."¹⁴



Fig. 10.5 *Sculptor Before His Sculpture, with Young Girl in a Turban and Sculpted Head* from *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu*. 1927–28, published 1931. Etching from an illustrated book of 13 etchings; plate: 7 5/8 x 10 15/16" (19.4 x 27.8 cm); page: 12 15/16 x 9 15/16" (32.8 x 25.2 cm). The Louis E. Stern Collection. 967.1964.8

Four other drawings dating from 1926, which have also been related to a later development in the designs for Apollinaire's monuments through their introduction of signs of projective depth, are reproduced as wood engravings within the text on pages 36 and 37.⁵ These offer a possible stylistic bridge between the two sections of the book and point to the ways in which this particular commission might have piqued Picasso's sculptural imagination. One of the etchings included in the publication (plate I) deals with a sculptor-model relationship (fig. 10.5), and Picasso's contemporaneous printed work for the *Vollard Suite* includes an entire sub-section devoted to The Sculptor's Studio. While these etchings seem stylistically apart from the dot and line drawings that introduce them, their execution coincided with several of Picasso's paintings tackling the same subject of the artist's studio, which retained and transformed the graphic, linear language developed in the earlier drawings. This aspect of the painter's reception of Balzac may tap into the story's deeper mythic foundations, as many have likened Frenhofer to a modern Pygmalion figure.⁶

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NOTES

1. Pablo Picasso, *Propos sur l'art*, eds. M.-L. Bernadac and A. Michael (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), 100-01. Cited in Lebensztejn, Jean-Claude. "Picasso, Balzac, Frenhofer." *Les Cahiers Du Musée national d'art moderne*, no. 124 (2013): 39.

2. Ambroise Vollard, *Souvenirs d'un marchand de tableaux* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1937), 224. Cited in Rebecca A. Rabinow, and N.Y. York. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006).

3. Christopher Green, and Pablo Picasso. *Picasso: Architecture and Vertigo*. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005).

4. E. Tériade, "Une visite à Picasso," *Tériade: écrits sur l'art* (Paris: A. Biro, 1996), 159-62.

5. For analysis of the graphic development of the Monument project, see Christa Lichtenstern, *Pablo Picasso: Denkmal für Apollinaire: Entwurf zur Humanisierung des Raumes* Berlin: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998

6. Thomas Crow has suggested, more specifically, that Anne-Louis Girodet's obsessional execution of his 1819 *Pygmalion and Galatea* was a source for Balzac's novella. See Crow, "B/G," in *Vision and Textuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 316.

The Figure-Matter Problem: *Head of a Woman* (1932)

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When it comes to *Head of a Woman* the phrase “sculpture in the round” is as convenient as it is misleading. Presuming an even distribution of interest among all aspects of a three-dimensional form, the phrase occurs a little too easily to be of use and, once spoken, tends to hang between us and the work, obscuring the latter from view.

For, when it comes to *Head of a Woman* interest is not distributed evenly. It is, rather, divided between two contending views: one frontal, the other profile. This is apparent when one does attempt to circle the work and discovers just how readily things snap into place when it

is seen from either vantage. From the side things balance out, forming a plane complete with a centrally placed almond eye (pl. 11). This profile view is, however, not enough. The eye is seen not from the side but head on, suggesting the prospect of a frontal view. And so we circle another ninety degrees (fig. 11.1). Here things balance out again with the nose forming a sturdy central axis. But now the eyes are seen as if from the side, recalling (without providing) the view we just had—a view that the lobed cheeks, palm sized as if perfect for pulling, suggest we might have again.

This sort of thing is not unique to *Head of a Woman*. The conflation of views is a mainstay of Picasso's repertoire and belongs, as Leo Steinberg showed, to a long history that arcs back to ancient precedents like the *Venus respiciens* and persists through Mannerist and Baroque iterations



Fig. 11.1 *Head of a Woman*. 1932. Plaster, 52 1/2 x 25 5/8 x 28" (133.4 x 65 x 71.1 cm)

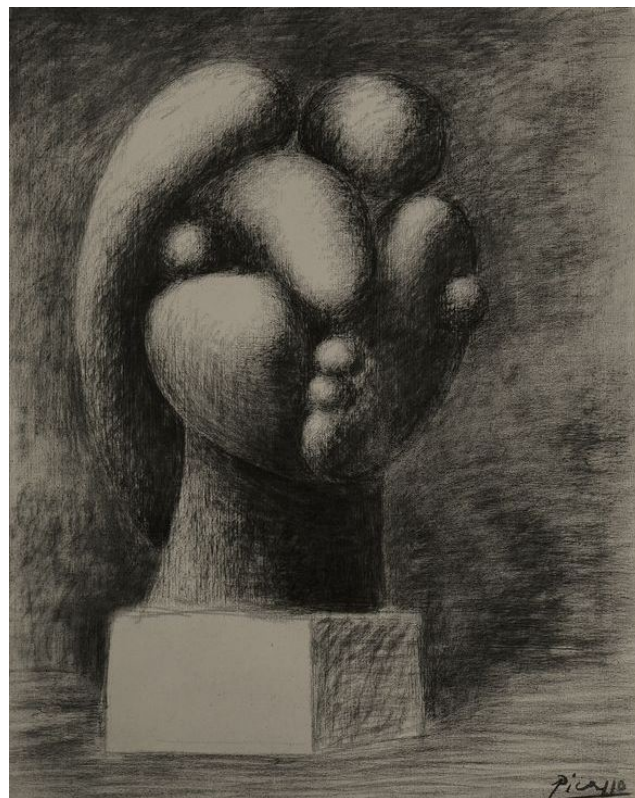


Fig. 11.4 *Sculpture of a Head (Marie Thérèse)*. 1932. Charcoal on prepared fabric, 36 1/4 x 28 3/4" (92 x 73 cm). Fondation Beyeler, Basel.



Pl. 11 *Head of a Woman*. 1932. Plaster, 52 1/2 x 25 5/8 x 28" (133.4 x 65 x 71.1 cm). Gift of Jacqueline Picasso in honor of the Museum's continuous commitment to Pablo Picasso's art. 210.1982

of the *figura serpentinata* which, through twists and turns, strove to show figures simultaneously from multiple, often contradictory angles.¹

What is unique to *Head of a Woman*, and to the other works that Picasso made in the early 1930s in the château shed in Boisgeloup (among them four additional heads), is that in those works Picasso attempted to get simultaneous views to occur materially in a sculpture.² Up to this point the pursuit of simultaneous views had been a distinctly pictorial concern, one that he never dared extend to real volumes (indeed, it is striking just how dutifully his earlier sculptures avoid precisely this already career-defining theme). We can see him struggling with the transition in a series of drawings made during the Boisgeloup years (figs. 11.2 and 11.3.) What is remarkable in these is the determination with which Picasso resists the urge to draw on his stock of pictorial inventions to resolve what had clearly become a uniquely sculptural issue. The lobed forms are pushed and pulled but to no effect. Stand-ins for real volumes, they can go only so far.

The result is the introduction of a new class of material into Picasso's art—a class of material we might



Fig. 11.3 Study for *Head of a Woman*. December 5, 1931. Charcoal and Chinese ink on vellum paper, 12 13/16 x 10 1/8" (32.5 x 25.7 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris

call "figure-matter." The term can be used to mark the moment when the sculptor's stuff (clay, rock, or in this case plaster) becomes a figure's flesh. With this new class of material comes a new class of problem, what we might call the "figure-matter problem," for when the sculptor's stuff becomes a figure's flesh it is strictly speaking no longer his. When a lobed mass becomes a cheek it can no longer be pushed or pulled past a certain point without ceasing to be a cheek.

The figure-matter problem played out across different mediums during the Boisgeloup years. It is, as we have seen,

The figure-matter problem played out across different mediums during the Boisgeloup years. It is, as we have seen, there in the drawings, and it also shows up in paintings like *Visage sculptural* from January 1931 (fig. 11.4), paintings that employ a concrete palette of greys, browns and blues. It is also, of course, there in the sculptures themselves. In *Head of a Woman* the problem is made local and explicit by the shift from "base" to "head," a shift that is marked by a boundary line some inches below the chin where a malleable trunk of plaster smooths and hardens to become a neck. (Practically speaking, the figure-matter problem is also posed by plaster's short setting time, which is less than 30 minutes.)



Fig. 11.4 *Visage sculptural*. January 9, 1931. Oil and charcoal on canvas, 24 x 19 3/4" (61 x 50 cm). Private collection

So, how far does *Head of a Woman* go in solving the figure-matter problem? Circling the work again, the problem seems intractable. Simultaneous views may simply be too tall an order for sculpture—or, at least for sculpture as Picasso understood it in the thirties. At moments *Head of a Woman* confesses as much. Those almond eyes are drawn-in, after all. Incised lines, they are graphic rather than plastic, pictorial rather than sculptural. But if the figure-matter problem could not be solved by any one sculpture seen alone, perhaps it could be solved by multiple sculptures seen together, all at once. If any one sculpture proved incapable of providing simultaneous views, perhaps the answer was to view many sculptures simultaneously.



Fig. 11.5 Brassai, *Atelier de Boisgeloup avec des sculptures de Picasso, la nuit*, December 1932 (1932). Photograph by Brassai printed in "Picasso dans son élément," *Minotaure* 1, no. 1 (June 1933). The Museum of Modern Art Library

This might explain two other factors that defined the Boisgeloup years: a fresh and, it seems, linked emphasis on photography and plaster. Picasso had always photographed his works, often curating the objects in his studio as if that studio were itself a work. Gertrude Stein recalled how during the Cubist years Picasso would arrange objects so as to "make a photograph" of them.³ In his 1940's conversations with the Brassai, Picasso insisted on just that point. Responding to Brassai's moving a pair of slippers in preparation for a shot, he remarked, "It'll be an amusing photo, but it won't be a 'document.' . . . It's your arrangement, not mine. The way an artist arranges the objects around him is as revealing as the artworks."⁴

The way Picasso arranged the objects in the Boisgeloup shed was by staggering them so that frontal and profile views of his sculptures would be captured in a single frame. Brassai's "documentary" photographs (fig. 11.5), the initial set of which were made for the first issue of the journal *Minotaure*, fixed these studio compositions, consolidating their elements beneath sweeping fields of shadow and light, lending each studio composition an object-like status.

Plaster seems to have played a crucial role in this. Offering a matt surface, it reacted well to being photographed. Unlike bronze, the polished surfaces of which would have generated highlights too specific to be resolved into general forms, plaster permitted light to play evenly across it, allowing multiple sculptures to merge into composite shapes while retaining a claim to material density.⁵

If it is true that Picasso accepted this solution to the figure-matter problem, several implications follow, some of which bear on MoMA's *Head of a Woman* in particular. Among these is the implication that rather than privileging any one sculpture Picasso may have adopted a more general approach in which each work became a functional element in a multi-part whole. This may be relevant for MoMA's *Head of a Woman*, which, as Elizabeth Cowling has confirmed citing bills from the M. Renucci foundry, is an intermediate made from Picasso's 1932 plaster original in preparation for the cement cast of the work that Picasso showed in the pavilion of the Spanish Republic at the 1937 World Exposition in Paris (a bronze cast was also made at some point before 1944).⁶ Though its status as an intermediary plaster—an object worked by foundry technicians rather than the artist himself—may cause some to discount MoMA's *Head of a Woman*, a broader view of Picasso's sculptural project during the thirties as I have laid it out here might be reason enough to reconsider. Indeed, a case for MoMA's *Head of a Woman* is bolstered by Picasso's habit, documented by Valerie J. Fletcher, of re-incorporating foundry plasters into his oeuvre, continuing to sculpt them as if they were his own.⁷ In some cases intermediate plasters were even signed.⁸ A continued role for MoMA's *Head of a Woman* beyond the contingencies of casting might also explain why Picasso allowed the work to survive for so many years in his personal collection.

Solved or not, the figure-matter problem did not linger long. Picasso would, of course, move on to other problems and other solutions. Nevertheless, *Head of a Woman* remains a monument to the urgency with which he turned to sculpture during those years in Boisgeloup as a medium in which he might, with the help of photography and plaster, come to grips with seeing.

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NOTES

1. Leo Steinberg, "The Algerian Woman and Picasso at Large" in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 125–35.

2. Werner Spies describes the four women's heads or *Frauenköpfe* that Picasso made in Boisgeloup as a distinct group, all of which were completed by September 1931. Spies also mentions a fifth and slightly later work that could be added to the group, which Picasso had begun exploring in drawings by December 1931. See Werner Spies, *Picasso: Das Plastische Werk* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1983), 149. Although Spies's dating likely needs revising, failing as it does to take into account Brassai's December 1932 photographs in which *Head of a Woman* appears incomplete, his grouping of the works remains thematically convincing.

3. Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (New York: Dover, 1984), 18.

4. Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 133.

5. Brassai notes Picasso's preference for plaster, recalling that the artist initially resisted having his works cast in bronze. When asked by Picasso what he thought of the bronze works, Brassai singles out the play of light as a liability, particularly for the Boisgeloup heads, noting, "Some have lost something in the bargain. Especially your monumental heads. Their big, curved, smooth white surfaces seem to have been eaten up by the shine and bumpiness of bronze." See *Ibid.*, 59.

6. Spies, 378. On the casting of the 1937 plaster proof, see Elizabeth Cowling in Picasso and Marie-Thérèse: *L'amour fou* (New York: Gagosian Gallery, distributed by Rizzoli International Publications, 2011), 291, n. 46.

7. Valerie J. Fletcher. "Process and Technique in Picasso's *Head of a Woman (Fernande)*" in *Picasso: The Cubist Portraits of Fernande Olivier*, ed. Jeffrey Weiss (Washington: National Gallery of Art; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 165–91. Fletcher notes Picasso's having continued working the foundry plaster of *Head of a Woman (Fernande)* (1908), sharpening its forms so as to introduce effects not present in the clay original, in effect turning the "master" or "model" plaster into a "working plaster" (175).

8. Spies mentions many instances in which foundry plasters and plaster proofs, which he referred to without differentiation as "intermediate plasters," were signed. Although in some cases signatures do not reappear on successive casts, suggesting that they may have been added by foundry technicians for their own purposes after the fact, in other cases signatures not present in clay or plaster originals are added to the foundry copies that also appear in the final casts. One such example is *Masque de femme* (1908). In this case the clay original is unsigned, but the intermediate plaster and bronze cast are both signed and dated "PICASSO 1908." See Spies, 373.

For and Against: *Head of a Warrior* (1933) as a Statement of Practice

Hannah Yohalem
Princeton University

The plaster in Pablo Picasso's figural assemblage entitled *Head of a Warrior* (pl. 12) not only visually unifies but also literally holds together tennis ball eyes, a chicken wire crest, a spine made of twisted wire and piping, a crowbar at the back of the neck, and nails that support the top curve of the nose (fig. 12.2).¹ Made in 1933 at the Boisgeloup studio, this figural amalgamation, brought together and held in stasis, can be seen, for all its goofy demeanor, as a statement in defense of Picasso's incorporative sculptural practice in the early 1930s.²



Fig. 12.1 Alberto Giacometti (Swiss, 1901-1966). *Suspended Ball*. 1930. Iron and plaster.

It is defensive because it legibly responds to the onslaught of Surrealism, particularly as represented by Alberto Giacometti's plaster sculpture of 1930, *Suspended Ball* (fig. 12.1).³ *Suspended Ball* couples a sphere hanging from the top of a metal cage-like space with a larger crescent-shaped reclining form; contact between the two is continuously held on the edge of fulfillment. The sphere, with its darkly shadowed crescent cutout, hovers over the wedge

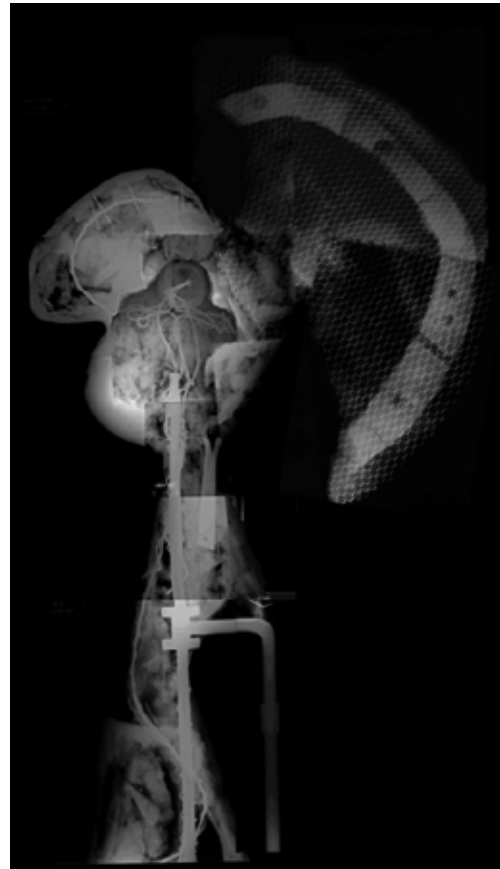


Fig. 12.2 *Head of a Warrior*. 1933. Conservation x-ray photograph. The Museum of Modern Art

form; it is both testicular and feminine, actively biting and passively being cut, moving with gravity and air and symbolically isolated from the surrounding space through the metal armature.⁴ *Head of a Warrior*, in turn, unites the two abstract elements and internalizes the support structure. Picasso transforms crescent into crest; he collapses the sphere's cutout into the thin, smirking mouth; he distorts the clarity of Giacometti's two forms into a misshapen head, leaving the tennis ball eyes as duplicated, caricatured echoes of the elegant suspended sphere, freezing the gender play and literal movement of Giacometti's forms.⁵ Writing in *Documents* in 1930, Carl Einstein argued that Picasso's "answer to the fatality of the unconscious is a prodigious wish for clearly intelligible figuration."⁶ While this



Pl. 12 *Head of a Warrior*. 1933. Plaster, metal, and wood, 47 1/2 x 9 3/4 x 27" (120.7 x 24.9 x 68.8 cm). Gift of Jacqueline Picasso in honor of the Museum's continuous commitment to Pablo Picasso's art. 268.1984

statement may be applied to the 1931-32 Boisgeloup heads as more direct, timely responses to *Suspended Ball*, *Head of a Warrior* moves beyond the merely figural towards the more profound unity and stasis of the profile, the relief, and the generic character.

No matter the angle from which a viewer approaches, it is in profile that *Head of a Warrior*—with the wide, flat plane of the *Warrior's* crest, the protruding left eye, and the arc of the bulbous nose—snaps into a figural unity. Its less finished right side further emphasizes the priority of the singular side view.⁷ Indeed, taken together, the crest and the triangular, corrugated section at the base of the neck describe a flat plane that bisects the head vertically such that *Head of a Warrior* can best be understood as a profile in relief built out from this suggested ground plane. Picasso distinguishes between the various degrees of relief and enumerates them alongside one another: from the straight cut of the mouth to the pupil's shallow indentation, from the deeper holes and ridge of the crest's decoration all the way to the intricate, petal-like folds of the ear and the eyeball's



Fig. 12.3 *Bust of a Bearded Man*. 1933. Plaster, 33 2/3 x 18 1/2 x 12 1/5" (85.5 x 47 x 31 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris

absurd protuberance. He makes depth always visible in relation to a series of parallel planes. Even the bulge of the cheek and nose read as if they were built out from the common ground plane.⁸

The relief, as traditionally understood and discussed in the 19th-century aesthetic theories of Adolf Von Hildebrand, unifies through its pictorial address. "The thousand-fold judgments and movements of our observation find in this mode of presentation their stability and clearness," he writes, "...In this way the visual content is universally arranged, bound together and put in repose."⁹ Picasso's use of plaster further allows this type of unification to take place by subsuming *Head of a Warrior's* diverse construction materials in the same way that the coatings of sand homogenize the collage elements in his earlier sand-reliefs.¹⁰

Even on a figural level, *Head of a Warrior* emphasizes clarity and stability. A single attribute—the helmet that is in fact just a fanning crest connected directly to the figure's head—defines him as a generic "warrior." The character has neither backstory nor developmental potential, and the usual indirect translation of the French title *Tête casquée* (helmeted head) into the English *Head of a Warrior* makes this equation between attribute and identity all the more apparent.

If the head and crest of *Head of a Warrior* halt *Suspended Ball's* literal and metaphorically ungrounded movement, compressing it into the pictorial univocality of the profile, the relief, and the generic character, the relationship between the top and bottom sections of the sculpture asserts Picasso's own power of material transformation.¹¹ The face of the imprinted cardboard box at the bottom of the work juts out at just enough of a diagonal to break away from the relief's ground. This slight torque brings the base into the real three-dimensional space opened up between the metal pipe and the pseudopod-like plaster "column." Split between bottom and top, *Head of a Warrior* thus displays the transition that Picasso facilitates from the raw space and materials of life into the unified, constructed forms of art. And plaster here, with the imprint of the corrugated cardboard and the box, functions as the prime material in which Picasso can literally embed his transformational process. Within the year, this transformation from raw material texture into figural representation facilitated by plaster would be the central concern of his plaster-work, as with the *Bust of a Bearded Man* (1933) (fig. 12.3).¹² Picasso made this procedural statement at a moment when, on the one hand, he was exploring the thematic of the definition of sculpture and sculptor in the etchings for the *Vollard Suite* and, on the other, when André Breton was working hard to fully inscribe the earlier Boisgeloup heads into the Surrealist lineage.¹³ By inserting *Head of a Warrior* into the series begun two years earlier with these other heads, Picasso situated them and it in opposition to Giacometti's sculpture, reclaiming them from Breton's interpretation and asserting his own transformational and incorporative process in its place.¹⁴

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NOTES

1. Museum of Modern Art conservation notes (August 2008). http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=81260. Last accessed May 22, 2015. Also author's conversation with MoMA sculpture conservator Lynda Zycherman. First Museum Research Consortium Study Session. February 5, 2015.

2. Werner Spies argues that if figural distortion cannot be equated with caricature in Picasso's work, but that *Head of a Warrior* is caricatural because of the juxtaposition of the distorted face with the undistorted headdress. See Spies with Christine Piot, *Picasso: The Sculptures, Catalogue Raisonné of the Sculptures* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 195. I read the less-than-seriousness of this sculpture as yet another response to the utter seriousness of Giacometti's work from this period. See below.

3. This is speculative, but Rosalind Krauss, citing Georges Sadoul, describes *Suspended Ball* as hugely important for the Surrealists beginning when it was first displayed in the autumn of 1930 at the Galerie Pierre in Paris, "set[ting] off the whole surrealist vogue for creating erotically charged objects." Krauss, "No More Play" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1985), 57. Reinhold Hohl also argues that Picasso's club and sphere forms from his *Projet pour un monument* informed *Suspended Ball*, so it is tempting to see first the 1931 Boisgeloup heads and then *Head of a Warrior* as a series of counter-responses. Hohl, *Alberto Giacometti* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), 249, cited in Krauss, 57.

4. Yve-Alain Bois describes these last two characteristics—the incorporation of literal movement and thus literal time and the ambivalence about literal space as inherently Surrealist. See Bois, "The Sculptural Opaque," 36.

5. In discussion during the second MRC session on May 15, 2015, at MoMA, Pepe Karmel commented on the phallic nature of the Boisgeloup heads' features. While I certainly agree, the shift to the male *Head of a Warrior* marks a definitive turn toward the masculine in which the phallic nose matches the gender of the sculpture overall.

6. Carl Einstein in *Documents* 11.2 (1930). Quoted in Markus Müller, "The Work in the Age of its Stylistic Convertibility; Pablo Picasso Between Classicism and Surrealism" in *Pablo Picasso and Marie-Thérèse Walter: Between Classicism and Surrealism*, Müller ed. (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2004), 14.

7. See Sam Sackeroff's essay in this volume on the *Head of a Woman* (1932) as having two definitive viewing angles—straight on and in profile. *Head of a Warrior* can be seen as moving one step further to the single profile view. Also, in the vast majority of the sculptor's studio scenes from the *Vollard Suite* made at the same time as *Head of a Warrior*, Picasso depicts the sculptures as linear profiles, so in some sense, the profile in Picasso's work from this time can be seen as shorthand for sculpture more generally.

8. In the midst of sculpting the larger heads in 1931-32, Picasso also made two bas-reliefs, each of a woman's profile. He then also returned to the relief-profile after completing *Head of a Warrior*.

9. Adolf Von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*, trans. Max Meyer and Robert Morris Ogden (New York: G.E. Strechert & Co., 1907), 83. Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois have each discussed Picasso in relation to Hildebrand, arguing that his early guitar reliefs engaged real space in direct opposition to Hildebrand's bas-relief model. Bois's argument depends in large part on period opposition to the traditional relief, finding it in David-Henry Kahnweiler and Carl Einstein's writings. See Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1977), 30-51 and Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson" in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1990). Also see Bois, "The Sculptural Opaque," trans. Kimball Lockhart and Douglas Crimp in *SubStance* 10.2.31 (1981), 23-48 for a synthetic overview of some of the same arguments. Here, Picasso seems to be citing bas-reliefs, inventorying its techniques as a claim to clarity and control over his materials. His use of relief must not be thought alone, but in dialogue with Giacometti on the one hand and the bottom portion of *Head of a Warrior* on the other. (More on this below.)

10. Although the *character* remains unchanged, Picasso does put the *figure* into circulation through his work. The iconic headdress appears in earlier drawings and later in his illustrations of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*. See Gilbert Seides, trans., *Lysistrata by Aristophanes* (New York: The Limited Editions Club, 1934). Bringing the warrior figure with the planar crest and the Boisgeloup-style head together allowed Picasso to best respond to the challenge posed by *Suspended Ball*. Spies also discusses the use of attributes in this work, but in order to characterize the mood of the piece.

He argues that it is the contrast between the undistorted headdress and the distorted face that allows us to interpret him "as a clown condemned to war." See Spies, 206.

11. Rosalind Krauss describes the means of ungrounding as a metaphoric of sexual difference entirely structured by *Suspended Ball*'s two elements like in Bataille's *Story of the Eye* in which the intersecting chains of metaphors are "deprived of a point of origin in the real world, a moment that would be anterior to the metaphorical transformations." Krauss, "No More Play" in *Originality*, 63. In contrast, Picasso's shifts like that of tennis ball to eye in *Head of a Warrior* and in the plaster works that followed it are entirely grounded in the material world. See note 14 below.

12. Picasso also allows for transformation across works, which is apparent in the close formal relationship between *Head of a Warrior* and the preceding *Head of a Woman* (1932) in MoMA's collection.

13. Breton discusses the plaster heads in his essay "Picasso dans son élément," *Minotaure* no. 1 (1933): 4-27, accompanied by five pages of Brassai's photographs of them (14, 17, 25-27).

14. Spies describes *Head of a Warrior* as embodying "the transition from a freely modeled sculpture of plaster or clay to one that includes material quotations" particularly of textures. See Spies, 195.

Two Figures on a Beach (1933)

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Between 1925 and 1927, André Breton published a series of columns titled “Surrealism and Painting” in the magazine *La Révolution surréaliste*, crediting Picasso’s radical experiments of the 1910s as the source for his own concept of art: “We loudly claim him to be one of us... Surrealism, if it wants to assign itself a line of moral conduct, need merely follow where Picasso has gone before and will go again.”¹ While this text would precipitate a series of interactions between Picasso and Surrealism over the next decade, the artist would only admit to being directly influenced by Surrealism in 1933.² That year the inaugural issue of *Minotaure*, a publication with Surrealist leanings edited by Breton, featured one of Picasso’s assemblages on its cover; the magazine also reproduced *An Anatomy*, a series of thirty drawings in which the human figure is reimagined as an accumulation of household objects and tumescent forms (figs. 13.1-13.2).

This series formed the basis for a suite of drawings executed in July and August 1933 in Cannes, where Picasso traveled with his wife Olga and young son Paulo from his studio in Boisgeloup. Each drawing depicts two composite figures jumblingly assembled from furniture, food, home goods, and dismembered limbs and set against an undistinguished beachscape. Unlike the figures of *An Anatomy*, which possess a morphological and compositional unity, the drawings produced in Cannes only cohere as a group because of the hurried lines in which they are rendered.

The most resolved drawing, titled *Two Figures on a Beach* (pl. 13), replaces the geometric limbs and undefined shapes of *An Anatomy* with muscular extremities and recognizable objects. To the left, what appears to be a schematic head (with four holes indicating the eyes, nose, and mouth) balances on the top of a tree stump. A pillow is slung over the back of a shabby rush chair, comprising the torso. One twiggy arm is tied to a fork, representing its hand; the other arm reaches through a broken door, holding a miniature bust of Picasso’s mistress, Marie-Thérèse (fig. 13.3).³ On the right, a shutter props up a sculptural head to which is tied a mirror that reflects the tiny statue it faces. A limp glove dangles from a twig and is opposed by a flattened arm held in place by an urn.⁴ A well-defined leg protrudes from the construction while another leg lies on the ground below, its hollowness revealing that the body parts depicted are not human but sculptural casts.⁵ Each figure is propped up by a rectangular or spherical form which acts as a sculptural

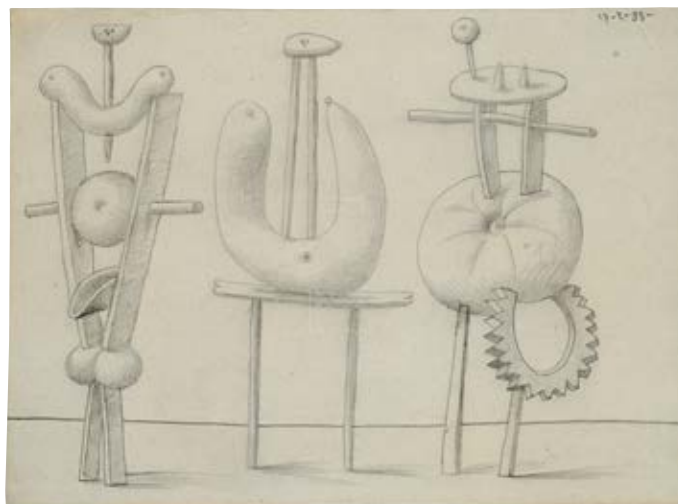


Fig. 13.1 *An Anatomy: Three Women*. February 27, 1933. Graphite on fine-textured wove paper, 7 7/8 x 10 5/8" (20 x 27 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso

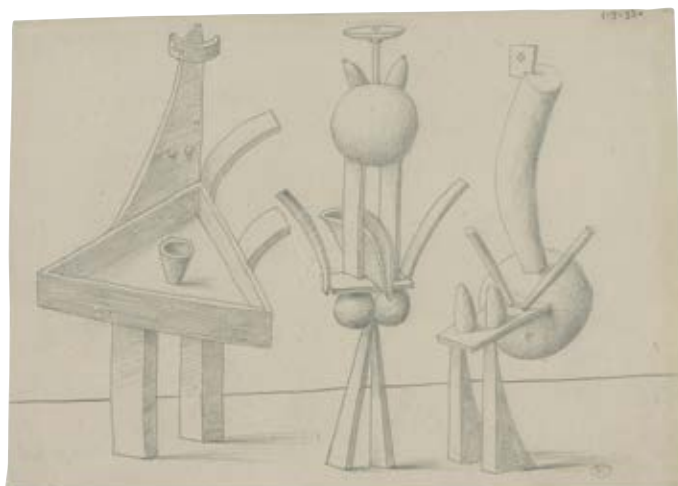


Fig. 13.2 *An Anatomy: Three Women*. March 1, 1933. Graphite on fine-textured wove paper, 7 11/16 x 10 3/4" (19.5 x 27.3 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso



Pl. 13 *Two Figures on a Beach*. 1933. Ink on paper, 15 3/4 x 20" (40 x 50.8 cm).
Purchase. 655.1939



Fig. 13.3 Brassai (French, born Hungary, 1899–1984). *Head of a Woman* (1931) and other plaster sculptures. December 1932. Gelatin silver print, printed c. 1960, 11 5/8 x 9" (29.5 x 22.8 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris



Fig. 13.4 Giorgio de Chirico (Italian, born Greece, 1888–1978). *The Song of Love*. June–July 1914. Oil on canvas, 28 3/4 x 23 3/8" (73 x 59.1 cm). Nelson A. Rockefeller Bequest. 950.1979

"base." Three sailboats, listing on the horizon, situate the figures on the shore.

The coincidence of these disparate objects and sculptural extremities, displaced from their conventional environments, recalls the enigmatic work of Giorgio de Chirico, an Italian artist who greatly impacted orthodox Surrealism and who worked near Picasso in a neighboring atelier in France after October 1913, as the former artist was at the height of his metaphysical period.⁶ (The artists became reacquainted in November 1925, when both participated in the First International Surrealist Exhibition held at the Galerie Pierre). There is an undeniable echo between the limp glove that comprises one of the arms in *Two Figures on a Beach* and the rubber glove tacked to a wall in de Chirico's famous *Song of Love* (1914) (fig. 13.4). De Chirico's early paintings are also populated with classical marbles, plaster busts, dissembled furniture, and household wares that collide the present with the distant past; the classical anatomies of Picasso's drawing, coupled with a rendering of his recently completed bust of Marie-Thérèse, reveal this patrimony.

Yet Picasso's understanding of classical sculpture, and sculpture in general, at this point was decidedly more pernicious. His conception of the body as an assemblage

of severed body parts seems to draw on the prior achievements of his countrymen, Salvador Dalí and Francisco de Goya. Picasso took "an extraordinary interest" in Dalí, whom he had the occasion to meet in 1927, and whose collapsed forms and tumorous bodies may have impacted Picasso's own conception of the Surrealist figure.⁷ Moreover, the grotesque political works of Goya—particularly his famed series of etchings *The Disasters of War* (1810–20)—may have provided historical inspiration for the dismembered bodies of *Two Figures on Beach* (1933) (fig. 13.5). Working on the precipice of the Spanish Civil War, Picasso had a motive to revisit Goya's disturbing works of the early 19th century, which were created in protest against the Peninsular War and local conflicts in Spain.⁸

William Rubin has traced Picasso's depiction of broken classical sculptures as an index of violence to his painting *Studio with Plaster Head* (1925) (fig. 13.6), suggesting that the picture foreshadowed the more cruelly rendered motifs in Picasso's later work, including the gruesome deaths depicted in *Guernica* (1937), and revealed the artist's discernment of the savagery underpinning the classical world.⁹ Here, the well-proportioned figures of Picasso's "classical period" are replaced by ruins. If *Studio*



Fig. 13.5 Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (Spanish, 1746–1828). Plate 39 from *The Disasters of War*: "An heroic feat! With dead men!" 1810, published 1863. Etching, lavis, and drypoint; plate: 6 1/8 × 8 1/16" (15.5 × 20.5 cm); sheet: 9 7/8 × 13 1/2" (25.1 × 34.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Jacob H. Schiff Bequest, 1922. 22.60.25(39)



Fig. 13.6 *Studio with Plaster Head*. Summer 1925. Oil on canvas, 38 5/8 x 51 5/8" (97.9 x 131.1 cm). Purchase. 116.1964*.

with *Plaster Head* heralded an end to Picasso's "return to order," *Two Figures on a Beach* represents the endgame of Neoclassicism. Statues cast, violently delimbed, and reassembled in a Surrealist idiom, the figures in Picasso's drawing both recall and actively dismantle the Neoclassical sculptural tradition.

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NOTES

The author wishes to thank Leah Dickerman, Noam Elcott, Hal Foster, Pepe Karmel, and Rebecca Lowery for their perceptive comments on an early version of this essay.

1. André Breton, *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 7.

2. "Picasso himself admitted to being influenced by Surrealism only in 1933, 'at the moment when he was suffering from matrimonial difficulties which were soon to culminate in a separation from his wife Olga,' and he added that this was mostly in his drawings." John Golding, *Visions of the Modern* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1994), 235.

3. The original French title of this work, *Le Buste*, or "The Bust," identifies the drawing's true subject.

4. Another of the drawings executed in Cannes repeats the limp glove, rush seat, muscular leg, and urn found in *Two Figures on a Beach* (1933), and the glove recurs again in the drawing *Surrealist Figures II* (1933) from the same series.

5. "Picasso could have remembered his drawings from plaster casts of dismembered parts of the body as a thirteen-year-old student at La Coruña in 1894, or fragments of Roman sculpture he might have seen at Pompeii or Herculaneum in 1917." Jean Sutherland Boggs, *Picasso & Things* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1992), 218.

6. Paolo Baldacci, *De Chirico: The Metaphysical Period, 1888-1919* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), 164.

7. "The writer Francesc Trabal, just back from a trip to Paris, mentioned in an interview the interest of Picasso and his dealer, Paul Rosenberg, in the work of the young Catalan: 'Picasso... takes an extraordinary interest in Dalí, in whom he does not hesitate to proclaim an absolute faith.'" Fèlix Fanés, *Salvador Dalí: The Construction of the Image 1925-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 76. The limp clock hanging over a tree branch in Dalí's famous *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) also bears a remarkable resemblance to the glove in Picasso's later drawing.

8. An article in the leftist, illustrated, intellectual journal *Marianne*, published from 1932 – 1940, proclaimed Goya, not Picasso, as the most potent commentator on the present political situation, stating that there was "no better reporter on the Spanish Civil War than Goya." See "Pas de meilleur reporter sur la guerre civile en Espagne que Francesco Goya," *Marianne*, August 19, 1936.

9. William Rubin, *Picasso in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1972), 120-21.

She-Goat (1950, cast 1952)

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A black-and-white photograph captures a comical duo: a live goat with a glossy, speckled coat straining against a taut chain anchored to the tail of its obstinate, backwards-facing bronze double (fig. 14.1). They stand in a garden populated by other bronze sculptures against the backdrop of an ornate villa. This photograph, taken in 1957 by David Douglas Duncan, documents Picasso's pet Esmeralda tethered to his bronze *She-Goat* in the eucalyptus- and palm-shaded garden of La Californie, the sprawling estate overlooking Cannes where the artist had resided since 1955.¹ It seems to test Picasso's claim, upon finishing the sculpture, that "She's more like a goat than a goat—don't you agree?"²



Fig. 14.1 The goat Esmeralda and *She-Goat* at La Californie, Cannes, 1957. Photograph by David Duncan Douglas. Photography Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

If the bronze sculpture anchors the animate creature spatially, then Esmeralda anchors *She-Goat* (pl. 14) reciprocally in the realm of figuration, dragging the sculpture away from unresolvable reversibility of *Bull's Head* (1942) and underscoring its comparatively stable representational status.³ In this sense, *She-Goat* is emblematic of the found-object assemblage sculptures of Picasso's Vallauris period (*Pregnant Woman*, 1950; *Little Girl Skipping Rope*, 1950; *Woman with Baby Carriage*, 1950; *Goat Skull and Bottle*, 1951; *Baboon and Young*, 1951; *The Crane*, 1951-52), all of which subsume their heterogeneous constituent elements into easily recognizable figures, a compositional effect that is underscored through their eventual casting in bronze.⁴ They take as their precedent the welded metal constructions made in collaboration with Julio González between 1928 and 1932. For Picasso, the use of found materials was most importantly an expedient method for achieving the certain results.⁵ It was a playful "shorthand" that "satisfied his impatience," his son Claude Ruiz-Picasso recalls.⁶ Unsurprisingly, some have remarked that these comparatively conservative sculptures "suffer" and "lose" their clever assemblage quality through the material's unifying effects.⁷

Yet *She-Goat* stands apart from the aforementioned Vallauris sculptures, as well as *Bull's Head*, in its genesis. While the former arose from serendipitous encounters with suggestive cast-off materials that inspired their eventual forms, *She-Goat* arose from Picasso's decision to sculpt a



Fig. 14.2 *She-Goat* in progress in Picasso's rue du Fournas studio, Vallauris, 1950. Picasso Archives, Musée national Picasso—Paris.



Pl. 14 *She-Goat*. 1950, cast 1952. Bronze, 46 3/8 x 56 3/8 x 28 1/8" (117.7 x 143.1 x 71.4 cm). 1 of 2 proofs cast at Valsuani in 1952. Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. 611.1959



Fig. 14.3 *She-Goat* plaster assemblage in Picasso's rue du Four studio, Vallauris, 1950. Picasso Archives, Musée national Picasso—Paris.



Fig. 14.4 *She-Goat*. 1950, cast 1952. Bronze, 46 3/8 x 56 3/8 x 28 1/8" (117.7 x 143.1 x 71.4 cm). Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. 611.1959

goat and his concomitant search for serviceable materials.⁸ While goats had long appeared in Picasso's work, this particular sculpture was likely inspired by a male goat he won in a lottery in Vallauris in the summer of 1949.⁹ The assemblage was inaugurated when he found a wicker wastepaper basket to serve as its ribcage (an object whose intricate structure preoccupied Picasso already in his 1909 painting *Pottery Basket*, though *Cock and Wicker Basket*, painted in Vallauris in early 1950, renders the same basket in painted form. The mold for *Little Girl Skipping Rope*, a bronze of the same year, also features a wicker basket torso).¹⁰ He then collected two ceramic milk pitchers from Madame Ramié's ceramics studio, broke off the handles and bottoms, and adopted them as her teats. To construct the goat's head and back, Picasso delved into his immense hoard of found materials for a palm frond found on the beach two years prior; he modified it slightly to achieve the contours of the mouth and nose. (Picasso's accumulative impulse is well documented, and he relished his reputation as "king of the ragpickers," insisting on the artful quality of everyday objects and their limitless potential as elements of yet-to-be-conceived sculptures.¹¹) The legs were rendered from tree branches whose knots formed the goat's knees, while the curly stalk of a vine formed her horns. Cardboard cutouts sufficed for ears, a tail was furnished from braided copper wire, and an embedded pipe rendered the anus (figs. 14.2-14.3 represent the sculpture in progress). A small rubber balloon in the goat's belly achieved its bloated size and (comically) emitted a loud noise through its rear when squeezed.¹² Scrap metal added a hint of a skeletal structure to the haunches, and plaster filled in the gaps in the found objects' scaffolding.

"Picasso never liked to overlook any anatomical detail, especially a sexual one," Gilot confided in *Life with Picasso*.¹³ In addition to the goat's bulging pregnant stomach and heavy teats, the bent tin can that stands for the goat's vulva is its most prominent marker of sexual difference (fig. 14.4). Despite their explicit rendering, anatomical correctness doesn't seem to have been Picasso's main aim, as the size of the goat's sexual organs are disproportionate to the sculpture's otherwise life-size features. This can perhaps be attributed to the readymade proportions of the found materials, though Gilot interprets the preponderance of imagery relating to fertility and pregnancy in Picasso's works of the period as "a form of wish fulfillment on his part."¹⁴ Within Picasso's oeuvre, goats had long been linked to lust and lasciviousness, from *Girl and Goat* from his Rose Period (fig. 14.5) to the fauns populating his work of 1946.¹⁵

The sculptures and ceramics created by Picasso in the South of France in the late 1940s and early 1950s after the end of the Second World War have been characterized as a more lighthearted and pleasure-driven period in Picasso's production. His life with Françoise Gilot, their two young children Paloma and Claude, and a menagerie of

animals coincided with an emergent interest in Greek myth, ceramics, and Mediterranean life.¹⁶ The still life *Goat Skull and Bottle* marks a notable exception to a body of work otherwise populated by animals, children, and maternal figures; it's difficult to imagine the straining Esmeralda tethered to the horns of this *memento mori*.¹⁷ Overall, *She-Goat* is representative of Picasso's work in the Vallauris period through its found object assemblage construction, its relatively coherent figurative representation, and its benign subject matter.

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Fig. 14.5 *Girl with a Goat*. 1906. Oil on canvas, 54 7/8 x 40 1/4" (139.4 x 102.2 cm). Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia

NOTES

1. John Golding, Introduction to *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter*, ed. Elizabeth Cowling and John Golding (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), 33. Jane Fluegel, "Chronology" in *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective*, ed. William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980), 416.
2. From an account by the potter Robert Picault, who made a film about Picasso and his sculpture in Vallauris in 1951 (MP Archive. Fonds Picault, Album 2, Picault MS, p. 38). Quoted in Cowling, "Objects into Sculpture," in *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter*, 235.
3. Picasso's telling underscores the chance aspect of the encounter that led to the creation of *Bull's Head*: "One day, in a pile of objects all jumbled up together, I found an old bicycle seat right next to a rusty set of handlebars. In a flash, they joined together in my head. The idea of the *Tête de taureau* came to me before I had a chance to think. All I did was weld them together." Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 61. Françoise Gilot recounts Picasso explaining its unstable status as follows: "Everybody who looks at it after I assemble it says 'Well, there's a bull' until a cyclist comes along and says, 'Well, there's a bicycle seat' and he makes a seat and a pair of handlebars out of it again. And that can go on, back and forth, for an eternity, according to the needs of the mind and the body." Gilot, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 321. However, Elizabeth Cowling has noted that there are varied and inconsistent accounts of how the configuration of bicycle seat and handlebars came to Picasso ("Objects into Sculpture," 235).
4. Picasso began to make ceramics in Vallauris at the Madoura pottery, the workshop of Georges Ramié in August 1947. Beginning the summer of 1948, Gilot and Picasso moved to La Galloise, a villa in the hills above Vallauris, where they would spend several subsequent summers. Picasso returned the following spring, at which time he rented an old perfumery on rue du Fournas to serve as his studio and storage facility. From the fall of 1949 through the summer of 1951, Picasso produced many sculptures derived from objects found in the surrounding area, which would eventually be cast in bronze (Fluegel, "Chronology," 381-83). Alicia Legg, "Chronology" in *The Sculpture of Picasso*, ed. by Roland Penrose (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 45.
5. Cowling, "Objects into Sculpture," 233.
6. Claude Ruiz-Picasso, "The Valley of Gold: Picasso as Potter," in *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter*, 226. Gilot, "Life with Picasso," 321.
7. Golding, Introduction, 33. Hilton Kramer, "Art: First Major Show of Picasso Sculptures Opens," *New York Times*, October 12, 1967, 55.
8. In *Life with Picasso*, Françoise Gilot describes Picasso's habitual scavenging in Vallauris: "Next to his new atelier [in the rue du Fournas in Vallauris] was a field where some potters threw debris. It wasn't exactly a dump but it served as an excuse for one. In addition to their odds and ends of pottery, there were occasionally pieces of scrap metal. Often on his way to work, Pablo would stop by the dump to see what might have been added since his last inspection.... [A]n old fork or a broken shovel or a cracked pot or something equally unprepossessing... was often the beginning of a creative adventure for Pablo. The object he found became the mainspring of a new sculpture.... He searched the dump daily and before he even got there, he rummaged around in any rubbish barrels we passed on our walk to the studio. I walked along with him, pushing an old baby carriage into which he threw whatever likely looking pieces of junk he found on the way." She also describes the anomalous genesis of *She-Goat* in this passage (Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, 317-18). Cowling adds that Lionel Prejger's metal scrapyard and the nearby fields offered further fodder for Picasso's pickings. (Cowling, "Objects into Sculpture," 238). See also the interview between Lionel Prejger, Elizabeth Cowling, and Christine Piot, "Picasso's Sheet-Metal Sculptures: The Story of a Collaboration," 251-52.
9. Boris Friedewald, "Goats," in *Picasso's Animals* (Munich: Prestel Art, 2014), 98.
10. The account of the constituent elements of the sculpture and their sources that follows is based on Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, 318. Golding, Introduction, 33, points out connection between the basket in sculpture and painting.
11. "King of the ragpickers" was originally Jean Cocteau's term for Picasso (Cowling, "Objects into Sculpture," 240 n4). Cowling gives a general account of Picasso's collecting habits and transformative capacity ("Objects into Sculpture," 229-30).
12. Friedewald, "Goats," 101.
13. Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, 318.
14. "He wanted me to have a third child, I didn't want to because I was still feeling very weakened even though a year had passed since Paloma was born. I think [*Pregnant Woman*] was a form of wish fulfillment on his part." Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, 320.
15. Friedewald, "Goats," 96.
16. Ruiz-Picasso, "The Valley of Gold," 224; Cowling, "Objects into Sculpture," 233.
17. Nevertheless, Cowling has read the appearance of a skeletal structure in *She-Goat*, *Little Owl*, and *The Crane* as a kind of memento mori in their own right ("Objects into Sculpture," 238).

Pregnant Woman (1950)

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At the time when Picasso created the ceramic sculpture *Pregnant Woman* (pl. 15), his partner, Françoise Gilot, who lived with him from 1946-53, refused to have another child. This life event has been attributed as the inspiration for this small, half life-sized figure, with its prominent belly and breasts. Picasso's sculptures are often described as intensely personal since he held onto many of them throughout his life and rarely exhibited them. Evoking this highly personal episode, this figure perhaps served Picasso as a symbolic, and private, substitution for the child he wished to have.

Pregnant Woman can be related to two different groups of sculptures by Picasso. It is the first in a series of sculptures with the subject of the pregnant woman, including a bronze cast of the same figure, and another *Pregnant Woman* the following year. It is also exemplary of the group of sculptures Picasso made while at Vallauris, France, from 1948-55 in which he utilized ceramics and recycled material—often everyday objects widely used at the time. Like *She-Goat* (1950) and *Baboon and Young* (1951), which were also formed from found objects, and put together with plaster, nails, and wood, *Pregnant Woman* sees Picasso giving “birth” to a work of art by re-purposing discarded, everyday materials. And even though these three sculptures take on vastly different subjects, they all deal with the themes of fertility, pregnancy, and motherhood.

Since *Pregnant Woman* is associated with these animal figures through time period, theme, and process, the sculpture can be read as an insult towards Gilot—rather than as wish fulfillment—reducing his partner to a creature made from lowly materials and only valued for her reproductive capabilities. Picasso created *Pregnant Woman* from terracotta vases, which references the relatively common metaphor of woman as a vessel or her body as vase-shaped. Here, Picasso literalizes the metaphor, using vessels as his base material, pushing the association even further by replacing her breasts—vessels for milk—and her belly—vessel for a baby—with actual, hollow vases.¹ However, the woman's posture is not seductively curved or beautiful like a vase. Rather, the bulbous shapes and the unfinished, rough surface make her look ugly and un-feminine. Her feet, in fact, are “truncated” so that she seems “bound to the earth” as an inanimate, de-humanized object.²

Picasso began employing discarded materials early in his career, incorporating newspapers, ropes, and wall-papers in his Synthetic Cubist collages, and in his sculpture made with Julio González in the late 1920s. By the 1950s, *She-Goat*, *Baboon*, and *Pregnant Woman* show a more sophisticated use of everyday objects in his work, where they come to act as the main support and are more fully integrated into the whole composition. In other words, the original forms of the found objects become secondary to the new unified figurative portrayal—especially since Picasso would then cast these three figures into a singular material like bronze. The bronzes help to solidify the original, fragile object into something more permanent. Additionally, the transformation erases the seams and varying surfaces of the disparate materials and parts. The Museum of Modern Art originally owned the bronze version of *Pregnant Woman*, but it was sold privately in 2003 in order to purchase the plaster version—which is closer to the artist's hand and the point of conception.³ According to Picasso's dealer Henry Kahnweiler, Picasso's ceramics forged a link between sculpture and painting, mixing the handmade with the three-dimensional, and could therefore provide insight into his transition between the two media.⁴ Indeed, the *Pregnant Woman* takes on a hybrid form between the hand modeling of the plaster and the collaging of already existing materials.

The interior of *Pregnant Woman* is held together with a variety of materials including nails, metal armatures, wood, and terracotta pots. Some of the pots are obvious fragments, such as two that form the back of the neck and extend into the head. These fragments support the theory that Picasso found these objects in a trash heap or on the side of the road.⁵ The other pots that form the breasts and the belly are almost whole, and could have been bought cheaply from vendors who made and sold hundreds of these kinds of pots every day.⁶ Void of decoration or flourishes, they were made for pure functionality. The belly pot in the *Pregnant Woman*, for example, has turning ridges—meaning that the potter did not bother to smooth its sides. This pot was created fast, without frills, revealing the incredibly common nature of the materials Picasso used to challenge traditional conceptions of art making.

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Pl. 15 *Pregnant Woman*. 1950. Plaster with metal armature, wood, ceramic vessel, and pottery jars, 43 1/4 x 8 5/8 x 12 1/2" (110 x 22 x 32 cm). Gift of Louise Reinhardt Smith and gift of Jacqueline Picasso (both by exchange). 376.2003

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Cowling, "Objects into Sculpture," in *Picasso: Sculptor/ Painter*, ed. Elizabeth Cowling and John Golding (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), 236.

2. John Golding, "Introduction," in *Picasso: Sculptor/ Painter*, 31.

3. Lee Rosenbaum, "The Lost Museum: MoMA's Distressing Disposals," *The Wall Street Journal* (May 13, 2004), <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB108440027514109933>>.

4. Quoted in Golding, 34.

5. Golding, 32.

6. In conversation with Museum of Modern Art sculpture conservator Lynda Zycherman.

Goat Skull and Bottle (1951)

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One of several large tabletop still life sculptures from the early 1950s, Picasso's *Goat Skull and Bottle* (pl. 16) is startling in its unwieldy scale. Larger than life, the titular goat skull is less a skull than a partially flayed, severed head, having retained hair between the horns as well as its eye whose horizontal pupil luridly stares. The goat seems to grin, teeth comically askance, when viewed from some angles (fig. 16.1). Rather than the porous cavities of a skull, the corrugated textured planes of the head render it emphatically opaque. The sculpture is not domestically scaled. When installed on a pedestal, the candle's rays of light emanate threateningly near eye-level. Indeed, a small, upright screw and bolt representing the wick of the candle addresses the viewer's gaze, an alert counterpart to the larger screw of the goat's staring eye.



Fig. 16.1 *Goat Skull and Bottle*. 1951. Alternate view

The *Goat Skull and Bottle* in MoMA's collection is one of at least two painted bronze casts of an original sculpture made in 1951 and extant in a private (Picasso family) collection.¹ Based on the appearance of the bronze cast and descriptions of the original sculpture, it seems likely that Picasso assembled the bottle from terracotta roof tiles and scrap metal, and the candle's rays from two sizes of large carpentry nails; the sculpture's horizontal base from a piece of plywood with modeled clay (or plaster) relief, perhaps further shaped by folded paper or foil; the goat's horns from

bicycle handlebars, the face from plaster impressed with corrugated board, and the hair from smaller nails embedded in plaster.²

As had been his practice with the earlier absinthe glass and other painted bronzes from the 1950s³, Picasso treated each of the two known casts of *Goat Skull and Bottle* with a unique application of black, gray, and white paint. *Goat Skull and Bottle's* grisaille adapts techniques used to describe sculptural volume in two-dimensions in order to amplify the sculpture's curved and textured surfaces. A light gray gradient on the outside face of the goat head transitions from a darker gray below to lighter above. The white eye is rimmed in gray. The opposite plane of the face, facing the light of the candle, is painted black with dark gray below; the eye is also blacked out, unseeing. The supporting base is black with three distinct white forms and a band of white along the back edge. The relief form on the base closest to the bottle is jointed, leaf-like, and the objects reside in their own white pools, like reversed shadows.

The sculpture shares its large scale and awkward format with *Still Life with Bouquet*, 1951 (fig. 16.3). Picasso made a few sculptures such as these in Vallauris, incorporating found objects into multipartite still life sculptures, unified on horizontal bases. The mismatched scale of the objects



Fig. 16.2 Alexander Liberman (American, born Russia, 1912-99). *Picasso*. 1957-58. Gelatin silver print, 13 1/2 x 16 1/4" (34.2 x 41.3 cm). Gift of the photographer, 269.1959. Pictured is the Musée Picasso cast, M.P. 341



Pl. 16 *Goat Skull and Bottle*. Vallauris, 1951 (cast 1954). Painted bronze. 31 x 37 5/8 x 21 1/2" (78.8 x 95.3 x 54.5 cm). (cast 1954; one of 3 casts unmarked, and each painted differently.). Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. 272.1956



Fig. 16.3 *Still Life with Bouquet*. 1951. Bronze, 31 9/10 x 23 1/4 x 12 3/5" (81 x 59 x 32 cm)

brought together on these bases gives a sense of imbalance, as if the horizontal bases ought to teeter one way or the other under the weight. In *Still Life with Bouquet*, the spiky petals of the bouquet tower above the lumpen food on the cake stand. In these uneasy couplings, the horizontal base becomes a stage for potential conflict.

The considerably smaller painted bronze *Still Life: Pitcher and Figs*, 1951–53⁴ also has a horizontal base uniting the disparate sculptural elements. The base of the Chicago collection cast is painted with serpentine black and white forms, some of which appear to continue over and on top of the sculpted objects (Spies 460II). On the pitcher, black outlines articulate the joining of handle and container; a swath of black is interrupted by a panel of white with black stripes, a sign for shading and recession. The painted black and white stripes echo the corrugated texture imprinted into the reverse side of the jug. The articulated outlines are reminiscent of the outlines on the candle of the Musée Picasso cast of *Goat Skull and Bottle* (visible in fig. 16.2), which similarly describe spatial contours that are not present in the sculpted surface.

Unlike *Still life with Bouquet* and *Still Life: Pitcher and Figs*, the objects uneasily paired on the base of *Goat Skull and Bottle* also appear in a number of related works from the early 1950s. The sculpture's *memento mori* motif of the brightly burning candle juxtaposed with the goat's skull/head

also appear in a group of related paintings from March and April 1952. All titled *Crâne de Chèvre, bouteille et bougie*, the paintings are variously dated March–April 1952.⁵ Cowling and others situate these works within the context of the Korean War and the Cold War.⁶ In these paintings, the candle and skull are more equally scaled; the opposition of disparate heights is seemingly reserved for the confrontation on the sculptural base.

Newly ubiquitous in Picasso's work beginning around 1950⁷, the goat is a sacrificial animal and, as Cowling notes, with *Goat Skull and Bottle* Picasso returned to earlier wartime motifs of the sacrificial animal as symbolic of the "suffering of the innocent populace."⁸ The goat as sacrifice had ap-



Fig. 16.4 *Woman Sacrificing a Goat*. (Femme sacrifiant une chèvre). 1938. Pencil on paper, 9 1/2 x 17 9/10" (24.2 x 45.5 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris

peared earlier, in a remarkable 1938 drawing of a woman sacrificing a goat by slitting its throat (fig. 16.4). Here, the tabletop is a tottering altar, and the confrontation between the standing woman—darkly silhouetted with frenetic marks—and limp, bound, yet staring goat, recalls the unsettled encounter in *Goat Skull and Bottle*.

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NOTES

1. Jane Fleugel dates the original sculpture to summer 1951. Cowling securely dates the sculpture to before December 21, 1951, with a wash drawing in which Picasso clearly articulated the sculptural composition, including tiles, handle bars, and board (Estate Inv. 6354, image in MoMA Object file.) See Fleugel, "Chronology," in *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective* (New York: MoMA, 1980), 383 and Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: Painter/Sculptor* (London: Tate, 1994), 281. There are a number of other drawings depicting goat heads/skulls from October and December 1951, see *Tête de chèvre*, October 29, 1951, Vallauris, M.P. 1406; *Crâne de chèvre*, October 29, 1951, Vallauris, M.P. 1990-90; *Crâne de chèvre*, December 20, 1951, Zervos XV 192; *Crâne de chèvre*, 1951, Zervos XV 193; *Crâne de chèvre*, December 20, 1951, Charcoal and pencil on paper, 50.7 x 66 cm, Private collection (illus. Gagosian, 2012, cat. no. 110).

2. For a description of the making of the sculpture, see Françoise Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 321. Spies gives the medium of the original sculpture as plaster, fired clay, and metal.

3. The painted bronzes of the 1950s include *The Crane*, 1951–52, which was cast 1952–53 in an edition of four, each painted with unique patterns of black and white marks (28 ½ inches; 72.4 cm high, Spies 461). Picasso told Spies that he also wanted to paint the other large bronzes from this period: (*Woman with Baby Carriage*, *Little Girl Skipping Rope*, *Goat*, and *Baboon and Young*). See Spies, *Picasso: The Sculpture* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 277–78).

4. Cast 1953, painted bronze, edition of three, of which two are painted in black, gray, and white, 29 x 48 x 21.3 cm, Spies 460.

5. April 16, 1952, Zervos XV 198, Tate Collection; 1952, Zervos XV 199; March 30, 1952, Zervos XV 200; March 25, 1952, Zervos XV 201, M.P. 206, Musée Picasso, Paris. The date of one painting (March 30, 1952) is that of the execution of Greek patriot and Communist Nikos Beloyannis, suspected of Soviet spying. See Gertje Utley, *Picasso: The Communist Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 179–80.

6. Other related works critical of war include the *Jeux des pages* series, *Execution in Korea* (1951), and *War and Peace* (1952). See Robert Rosenblum, "Notes on Picasso's Sculptures" (New York: Pace, 1982), np, and Cowling, "An Intensive, Concentrated Form of Play: Picasso's Postwar Sculpture and Ceramics." In *Picasso and the Mediterranean Years* (London: Gagosian, 2010), p. 310.

7. Beginning around 1950 Picasso made a number of works dealing with the goat, including the well-known *She Goat*, 1950, emblematic of the Vallauris years. While several goats had appeared in works made prior to 1950, there was renewed focus on the animal in drawings, paintings, and ceramics. A goat had recently joined the Picasso-Gilot household in Vallauris after Picasso won the animal in a local lottery in 1949. Given free reign of the house, the goat terrorized the young Claude but was beloved by Picasso. Françoise Gilot gave the goat away while Picasso was out of the house. Other pet goats followed in 1956–57, including Esmeralda, a gift from Jacqueline Roque, and "the Communist Goat," a 75th birthday gift from the town of Vallauris. Depending on the source, Gilot gave the goat to a group of gypsies or some animal control experts. See Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, pp. 216–17, and Boris Friedewald, *Picasso's Animals* (Munich: Prestel, 2014), 95–105.

6. During the Spanish Civil War and World War II. Cowling, "An Intensive, Concentrated form of Play," 310.

Picasso's *Baboon and Young* (1951, cast 1955)

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Baboon and Young (pl. 17) is a signature work in the group of sculptures made during Pablo Picasso's time living with his partner, Françoise Gilot, in Vallauris, the pottery region in southeast France near Cannes. While working in a studio on rue du Fournas next to a field used by local potters to throw away unwanted pieces, he developed a habit of picking through this ad hoc dump for debris that either sparked his imagination or fit the already imagined figment of a sculpture yet to be created. For *Baboon and Young*, Picasso made use of several salvaged elements to evoke a lumbering yet tender vision of parenthood. However, while the animal is typically understood to be a mother—its French title, *La Guenon et son petit* (fig. 17.1), specifies a female monkey—its association with motherhood is driven by a widespread stereotype that conflates parenting, particularly of young children, with womanhood.



Fig. 17.1 Original plaster with ceramics, two small cars, and metal additions outside Picasso's rue du Fournas studio, Vallauris, 1951. Photograph by Robert Picault. Picasso Archives. Musée national Picasso—Paris

Baboon and Young is justly renowned for its inventive repurposing of two mechanical toy cars to form a distinctively simian face. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler had visited and given Claude, Picasso's son with Françoise, toy versions of a Panhard Dyna X and a Renault 4CV. Gilot explains that Claude, then around four years old, was fonder of break-ing toys than playing with them, and Picasso, seeing new possibilities in them, decided to claim them for himself.¹ The remainder of the *Baboon's* form is created with similar



Fig. 17.2 AA Family of Acrobats with Monkey. Spring 1905. Gouache, watercolor, pastel, and ink on cardboard, 40 15/16 x 29 1/2" (104 x 75 cm). Kunstmuseum, Göteborg, Sweden

imaginative alchemy: the rotund body is a pot Picasso carved with a knife to indicate the animal's breast, the shoulders are formed from the handles of a large bowl common to the area, the ears are pitcher handles, and the tail—in keeping with the automotive theme—from a type of spring found in some car engines.²

The *Baboon* is not a particularly lovely animal—indeed, Picasso utterly obscured the then cutting-edge, sensual lines of the cars in his composition, creating instead a mildly silly character with an inviting gentleness of expression, an effect of the smile-like curve of the Panhard. Picasso completed the sculpture by adding a small child composed of rudimentary plaster forms, clinging to the animal's



Pl. 17 Baboon and Young. October 1951, cast 1955. Bronze, 21 x 13 1/4 x 20 3/4" (53.3 x 33.3 x 52.7 cm). Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. 196.1956



Fig. 17.3 *The Monkey* from *Eaux fortes originale pour des textes de Buffon (Histoire naturelle)*. 1936, published 1942. Aquatint and drypoint from an illustrated book; composition (irregular): 10 13/16 x 8 11/16" (27.5 x 22 cm); sheet: 14 3/16 x 11 1/4" (36 x 28.5 cm). Publisher: Fabiani, Paris. Printer: Lacourrière, Paris. Edition: 226. The Louis E. Stern Collection. 976.1964.12

rounded body. Though it marked the first time Picasso had rendered a monkey in three dimensions, he had long been fond of depicting them in paintings and drawings (fig. 17.2). The artist's affection for animals of all types is well known: a menagerie of animals was usually present in his life. The entourage in his early days in Paris, in the Bateau Lavoir studio in Montmartre, included two dogs, a mouse, Siamese cats, a turtle, and a monkey named Monina. Fernande Olivier, his companion in those days, recalled that Monina "had taken a great fancy to him, used to eat all her meals with Picasso and pester him incessantly; he bore with this and even enjoyed it. He would let her take his cigarette or the fruit he was eating. She would nestle up to his chest, where she felt quite at home. He loved to see this animal being so trusting and was delighted by the tricks she used to play . . ."³

The French title assigned to *Baboon and Young* is *La guenon et son petit*; "une guenon" is a female monkey, and colloquially an ugly—often old—woman. Yet we have ample evidence that Picasso tends to see—even identify with—the monkey as a male figure. As Gilot wrote, "Picasso never

the monkey as a male figure. As Gilot wrote, "Picasso never liked to overlook any anatomical detail, especially a sexual one." (figs. 17.2 and 17.3) In Picasso's depictions of monkeys in sketches, paintings, and prints, they are alone or they are the companions of women. They are often, and increasingly from the 1950s, caricatures of artists, sometimes painting nude models.

Baboon and Young is unique among these examples—the monkey is neither a companion nor a winking nod to the trickster artist. It also lacks the genitals that feature so conspicuously elsewhere in Picasso's depictions of monkeys. At the same time, particularly as compared with contemporaneous, evidently female figures such as the pneumatic *Pregnant Woman* (1950) and the *She-Goat* (1950) with its ceramic jug udders and tin can sex, the monkey has no signs of feminine anatomy. Instead, Picasso's focus is on the animal as a loving caretaker, proudly holding its young; its generative capacity is indicated not by proudly displayed genitals but instead by the child in its arms.

In the Vallauris years, young Claude Picasso was a treasured child; photographs by Robert Capa, Lee Miller, and others capturing the family's life there show the boy in his father's arms constantly, far more than in his mother's; often father and son swim together in the sea (fig. 17.4). Though fit and vital at 70, Picasso was by far closer in shape



Fig. 17.4 Robert Capa. Pablo Picasso playing in the water with his son, Claude. Vallauris. 1948. International Center of Photography/Magnum Photos

to the *Baboon* than the trim, young Gilot. Thus descriptions of the *Baboon* as a mother with her young miss a key point: whereas in the early years in Paris it was Monina the monkey

the monkey who nestled up to Picasso the artist's chest,
in Vallauris it was Claude the boy who clung to Picasso, the
monkey father.

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NOTES

1. Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 319.

2. I thank Elizabeth Cowling for her identification of the material used to make the tail.

3. Fernande Olivier, *Picasso and His Friends*, trans. Jane Miller (New York: Appleton-Century, 1965), 145.

Bull (1958)

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After a series of works in which Picasso integrated modeled clay and items co-opted from his daily environment into freestanding sculptures, starting in 1954 the artist tackled the genre of planar sculpture in a variety of ways. April 1958 stands out as a one-of-a-kind experiment, executed after Picasso's sheet-metal portrait busts of *Sylvette* (1954) and the wooden group of *Bathers* (1956), and before the artist would exclusively dedicate himself to works in sheet iron and betongravure.¹ Likely because it eschews sculptural categories and it does not fit easily into any of its coeval bodies of works, *Bull* (pl. 18) has been written about only in passing.² At once a standing bull, a silhouette of a "bull" coming out of Picasso's archive of forms, and its compressed, double-sided presentation, *Bull* is indeed an ambiguous object, oscillating as it does between two- and three-dimensions. It is immediately recognizable when encountered frontally, yet it sets the viewer in circular motion around it and finally contradicts expected flatness. Its materiality is crucial to the effect: Picasso plays with a series of formal operations—linear attraction, planar contiguity, and material oppositions—to expand volume in space and time out of an otherwise planar construction. Counter-intuitively, in *Bull* concrete competition is at once collaboration and animation.

Bull is composed of five main planes cut from plywood, branches, scrap wood, and a canvas stretcher, collapsed onto the same axis and held together by grapples and nails. Each plywood plane acts as both a section of the body of the animal and the surface for its front-and-back depiction. Nails at once serve a structural function, punctuate selected areas to suggest bristly hair, and articulate volume through material contrasts. Similarly, salvaged wood elements bind the figure together while lending it textural variety, draw spatial coordinates, and metonymically refer to *Bull*'s site of production, between the garden and the *bric-à-brac* studio at La Californie in Cannes where Picasso lived and worked at the time. The collective referentiality marks a shift from the way Picasso used materials in his earlier assembled sculptures, in which borrowed objects were rendered alien to their initial purpose. In *Bull*, chosen materials are at once internally motivated and collectively evoke a specific site, thus taming the metaphoric play all the while domesticating the animal.

In the translation from preparatory drawings to sculpture a further plywood piece, likely the negative remain from another plywood cut, was added at the lower right of the

bull's frontal view.³ The addition at once visually balances the object and, although it contradicts anatomical logic (the bull appears as having five legs), it gets integrated into the whole by defining a linear continuum that gently slides from the right contour of the bull's head down to the ground. Moreover, the interposition of three pieces of wood at the intersection between the outermost leg and the body projects the leg ahead in real space, a volumetric effect that is emphasized by contrasting materials, and that unfolds in time in the apprehension of the work. The same dynamic effect is at work in the *Bull*'s back. The palm stem rising from the lower left to the top right of the animal oscillates between diagrammatic line and actual backbone of the animal. It flattens out the different positive and negative planes into a unified image, all the while allowing those planes to open up and rearrange in space.

By sustaining dimensional ambiguity, such seemingly effortless composition allows Picasso to shift back and forth from the silhouette to the dense body of the animal, as well as from an iconic to a narrative object. To be sure, the synthesis of multiple views into a single plane is the recurring feature of Picasso's oeuvre, as is the conflation of the haptic and the optical. In *Bull*, however, the artist solves the problem in a singular way. Differently from the anamorphic logic of the contemporary sheet-metal *Sylvettes*, or the simultaneous conflated views that Picasso revived in his mid-1950s paintings, in *Bull* the front-back synthesis is actual—the same plywood plane serves as front and back—yet the labor of separation is done in the abstract by the viewer.⁴

In spite of its complex functioning in space, *Bull* is not self-standing. As such, it may be asked whether *Bull* is a "presentational sculpture," a conversation piece that Picasso flipped in his hand when visitors came to see him. Indeed, period photographs show the permeability of Picasso's everyday and work, and are telling of his economy of materials while in Cannes. Bronzes would sojourn outdoors, while the wide rooms of La Californie abounded with paintings, drawings, and various constructions, accumulated against the walls. The artist would pick from the pile and show off for visitors. Similarly, he would pick scrap from his environment and fasten it together in firmly structured wholes, such as *Bull*.⁵ As a magnet tightening and slackening the hold on its component parts, *Bull* oscillates between flat and embodied, iconic and narrative, representation and presence, yet is itself subject to gravity.



Pl. 18 *Bull*. c. 1958. Plywood, tree branch, nails, and screws, 46 1/8 x 56 3/4 x 4 1/8" (117.2 x 144.1 x 10.5 cm). Gift of Jacqueline Picasso in honor of the Museum's continuous commitment to Pablo Picasso's art. 649.1983

NOTES

1. Werner Spies, *Picasso: The Sculptures* (Stuttgart: Hatje Kantz, 2000), 250 ff.
2. Spies sees *Bull* as a by-product of the 1956 group of *Bathers* Spies, 314. Pepe Karmel notes that *Bull*'s formal vocabulary looks back to Picasso's 1912 *papiers collés*. *Picasso: Masterworks from the Museum of Modern Art*, edited by Kirk Varnedoe (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1997), 136.
3. Preparatory drawings in Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso*, XVIII, n 84-94 (Paris: Cahiers d'Art, 1964). After hesitating on a seated or standing bull, Picasso opted for the latter and described its volume through orthogonal sections, from the outset defining the frontal plane as the principal one, upon which all others would collapse (n 85, April 26, 1958). In drawing n 90 (April 27) nails appear, in section. Drawing n 93 is a palimpsest of several views dominated by the familiar bull-horns and a multitude of staring eyes. Finally drawing n 94 sums up the figure in three main planes that Picasso would subsequently cut in plywood, notably one for head, neck, and fore legs, one for the bull's rear, and one for the central portion of the animal.
4. On the sheet-metal *Sylvettes*, see Richard Schiff, "Turn," in *Picasso Black and White* (New York: Guggenheim, 2011), 41-58. On simultaneous views in late paintings, see Leo Steinberg, "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," in *Other Criteria* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 124-234.
5. More than before, the Cannes sculptures required collaboration with craftsmen thus marking an expansion of Picasso's practice beyond the atelier and the villa into the village. For his wooden constructions Picasso regularly worked with Paul Massier, a carpenter in Vallauris who also provided him with salvaged wood or pre-cut wooden planks. Diana Widmaier-Picasso, "Pablo Picasso's Sheet-metal Sculptures: Vallauris 1954-1965: Design, Materials, and Experimentation" in *Sylvette, Sylvette, Sylvette: Picasso and the Model* (Munich: Prestel, 2014), 167.

Head (1958)

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In April 1944, Pablo Picasso proclaimed, “Do you know what nickname Cocteau gave me one day? ‘The King of the Ragpickers!’”¹ More than ten years later, when he moved into a Belle Époque-style villa above Cannes, called La Californie, the house quickly assumed the chaos and clutter worthy of that appellation.² Picasso's friend and biographer, Roland Penrose, described it as an “alchemist's den,” in which “incongruous objects, crowded together, became more deeply hedged in by a forest of new arrivals [...], which] piled up on top of each other like the crusts of the earth.”³ It was in this sprawling and chaotic house-cum-workshop that Picasso embarked upon his fullest engagement with a sculptural medium that he had employed sporadically since the 1930s, but now adopted with renewed vigor: wood assemblage.⁴

Head, executed at La Californie in 1958, stands as a remarkable exemplar of this medial experimentation (pl. 19). Its ramshackle construction bears out Picasso's “ragpicker” identity, seemingly cobbled together from whatever discarded objects suggested themselves to his imagination. The assemblage consists of an open wooden box balanced vertically upon an overturned ceramic dish. Yellowed synthetic resin pools inside the box along its central axis, widening and narrowing in a beguiling, if rough, echo of a human body. Two slats of wood jut out from the resin, forming the structural armature for the head's facial features. A blonde, trapezoidal nub of wood forms a mouth, joined to the lower slat with nails that, given the context, also read as teeth. A longer, thinner piece of wood forms the nose and brow. Two stacks of mismatched buttons become a pair of eyes, tilted endearingly askew. (*Head* was also cast in bronze, in an edition of two. One is in the collection of the Musée Picasso, Paris.)

A set of related drawings suggests that Picasso elaborated *Head* alongside three other wood assemblages during the first half of 1958: *Young Man*, *Man with Javelin*, and *Figure*. The first of four pages in his sketchbook depicts *Young Man* in long, simple rectangles, with a caption at top right that reads *bois fait* 6.6.58 (fig. 19.1). Next comes *Man with Javelin*, with the caption *bois fait le* 8.6.58 (fig. 19.2). That figure reappears on the next page, the trunk of his body replaced by a schematic bird and accompanied by the caption *aplée* [sic] *la colombe le* 8.6.58 (fig. 19.3). Finally, the fourth page contains both *Figure*, including a roughed-in

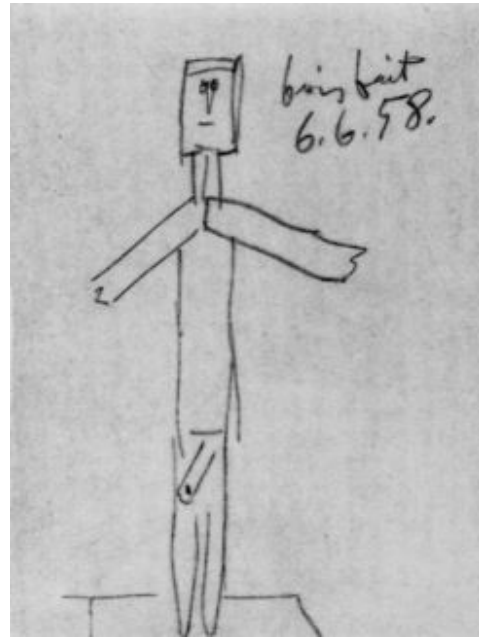


Fig. 19.1 Study for a Wooden Sculpture. June 6, 1958. Ink on paper, 12 9/16 x 9 7/16" (32 x 24 cm)



Fig. 19.2 Study for a Wooden Sculpture. June 8, 1958. Pencil on paper, 12 9/16 x 9 7/16" (32 x 24 cm)



Pl. 19 *Head*. 1958. Wood box, nails, buttons, painted plaster, and painted synthetic resin mounted on ceramic dish, 19 7/8 x 8 3/4 x 8" (50.5 x 22.2 x 20.3 cm). Gift of Jacqueline Picasso in honor of the Museum's continuous commitment to Pablo Picasso's art. 267.1984

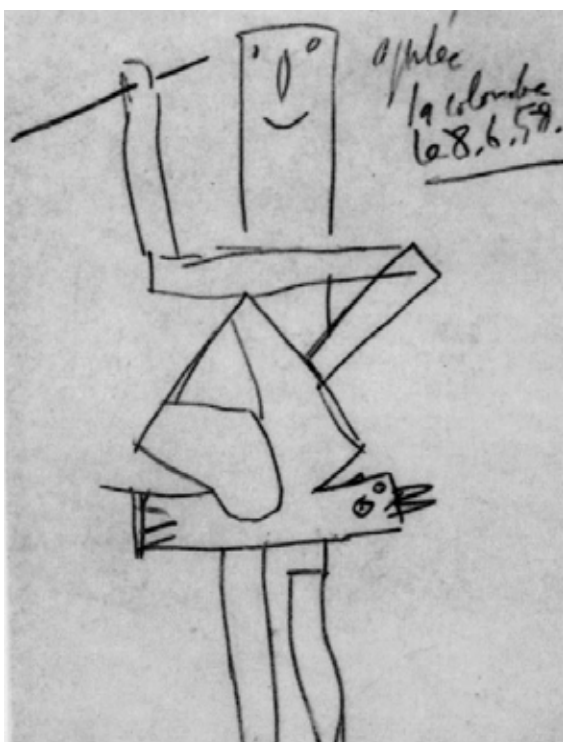


Fig. 19.3 Study for a Wooden Sculpture. June 8, 1958. Pencil on paper, 12 9/16 x 9 7/16\" (32 x 24 cm)

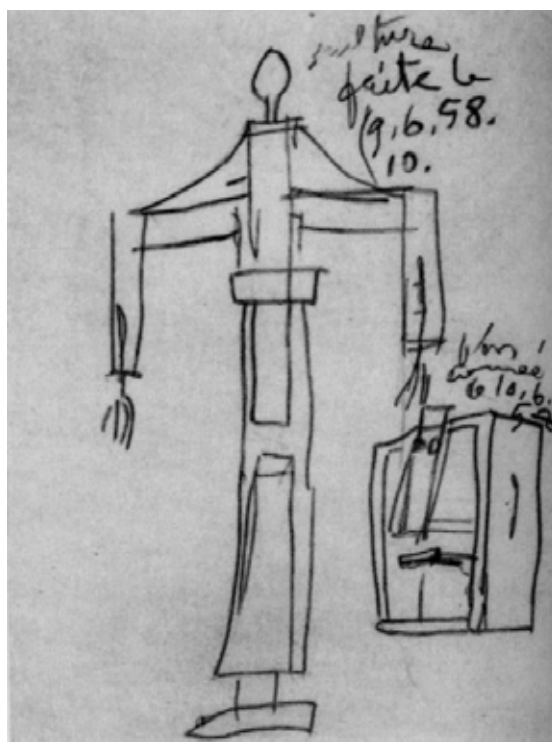


Fig. 19.4 Study for a Wooden Sculpture. June 9-10, 1958. Pencil on paper, 12 9/16 x 9 7/16\" (32 x 24 cm)

indication of the forks and spoon that form its hands and head (*sculture* [sic] *faite le 9 10.6.58*), and *Head* itself (fig. 19.4).⁵ It is widely accepted that these drawings were not preliminary studies, but done after the assemblages' completion. Still unclear, however, is whether the handwritten dates indicate when the objects were made, or the date of the drawings themselves.⁶ Even if the assemblages were not executed in such tight succession or in that sequence, however, their conjunction in Picasso's notebook indicates that he considered them linked.

In this comparative context, the singularity of *Head* comes to the fore. Unique among its drawn fellows, it is the only one depicted at three-quarter angle. As opposed to the strict frontality of the sketches of *Young Man*, *Man with Javelin*, and *Figure*, *Head* addresses itself to the viewer obliquely, as though in sly accordance with historic conventions of portraiture. Moreover, the drawing's allusion to three-dimensionality is borne out in its wooden counterpart: that is, again unlike the frontal address of the *Young Man*, *Man with Javelin*, and *Figure* sculptures, *Head* exists in the round, with the sloping arc of two ears carved into the side of the box and a protruding profile. The eyes are unevenly leveled, as though to suggest the head turning to the left (fig. 19.5). It suggests movement, just as certain construction elements solicit a mobile viewer.

Finally, the structural principles that underlie *Head*'s construction further distinguish it from those three other wood assemblages from early 1958. *Young Man*, *Man with*



Fig. 19.5 *Head*. 1958. Alternate view

Javelin, and *Figure* are generally organized along a single plane, and they follow the convention of representing positive space with positive matter, such that head, trunk, arms, and legs become pieces of wood.⁷ *Head* betrays both principles. Rather than being organized along a single plane, it recedes nearly a foot into space. Most obviously of all, it delivers the space-consuming bulk of a human head—everything behind the eyes—as empty space. Picasso applied this exploration of the void to the core of a human figure that same year, with *Man* (fig. 19.6).

This substitution of mass for volume had a long history in Picasso's oeuvre. The void of *Head* returns us, most notably, to the paper-and-cardboard *Guitar* of 1912, which famously turned the instrument's sound hole into a protruding cylinder, jutting into the vacuum of space left by a partially absented body (fig. 19.7). The comparison may be extended. From a certain distance, the facial features of *Head* rearrange themselves to suggest the form of a guitar: the mouth becomes a bridge; the nose, a fretboard (with the wood slat's horizontal striations a near-perfect replica of the frets); the swelling bulge of resin, an appropriately recessed and approximately circular sound hole.⁸ This morphological instability confers a further level of play on *Head*, underscoring the spirit of imagination and experimentation so characteristic of Picasso's later sculptures, when his ragpicker tendencies found a home in the practice of wood assemblage.

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Fig. 19.6 *Man*. 1958. Wood and nails, 46 1/8 x 29 7/8 x 9 7/8" (117 x 76 x 25 cm). Private collection



Fig. 19.7 *Guitar*. October-December 1912. Paperboard, paper, thread, string, twine, and coated wire, 25 3/4 x 13 x 7 1/2" (65.4 x 33 x 19 cm). Gift of the artist. 640.1973

NOTES

1. Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 173. The original French exclamation is “Le roi des chiffonniers!” See Brassai, *Conversations avec Picasso* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 155.
2. Picasso purchased La Californie in June 1955.
3. Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 413.
4. In 1935, Picasso assembled a doll out of painted wood, string and wire for his daughter Maya. He returned to that practice in 1953, with the creation of seven wooden dolls for his daughter Paloma. Also that year, he made the large wood assemblage, *Woman Carrying a Child*. See Werner Spies and Christine Piot, *Picasso, The Sculptures: Catalogue Raisonné of the Sculptures* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000), catalogue numbers 164, 481-487, and 478. A large sculptural group from 1955, *The Bathers*, represents his major project in this medium. For more on its history, see Werner Spies and Christine Piot, “Life and Play on the Beach: The Group of Bathers,” in *Picasso, The Sculptures: Catalogue Raisonné of the Sculptures*, 310–14.
5. The caption related to *Head* is considerably more difficult to read, but it clearly indicates the date, le 10.6.58.
6. In the catalogue raisonné, Werner Spies argues for the former, writing, “Picasso made drawings of these four pieces after their completion, noting the dates on which each of the sculptures had been made.” Spies and Piot, *Picasso, The Sculptures: Catalogue Raisonné of the Sculptures*, 314. A photograph of Picasso’s studio at La Californie, taken on April 29, 1958, however, challenges this assertion. At the back of the room, in between the painted wood sculpture *Head of a Bull* (1958) and *Man with Folded Hands* from *The Bathers* (1955), stand *Young Man* and *Man with Javelin*, despite the fact that, according to the logic that Spies discerned, they ought not have been made until early June. Photograph dated in *Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints 1953-1972* (London: Tate Gallery, 1988), 292. See also Jacques Prévert and André Villers, *Portraits de Picasso* (Paris: Ramsay, 1981).
7. Of course, the horizontally extruding phallus of *Young Man* and the javelin of *Man with Javelin* break with this otherwise planar organization.
8. I am grateful to Julia Bozer for having pointed this out to me during the MRC Study Session on February 13, 2015.

Project for a Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire (1962)

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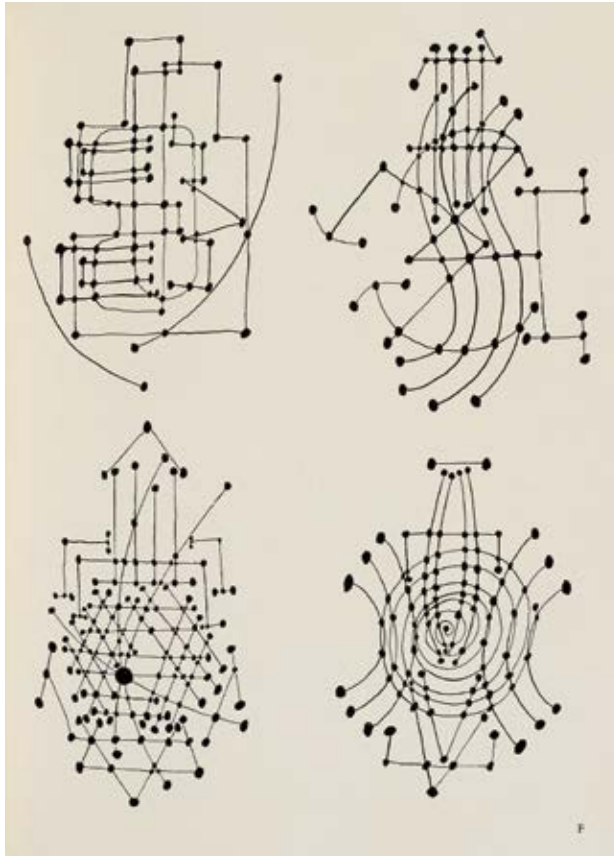


Fig. 20.1 Sketchbook no. 004, sheet 25 recto: Four studies of a guitar. Summer 1924. Pen and india ink on paper, 12 3/8 x 9 1/4" (31.5 x 23.5 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris

The 1962 iteration of Picasso's monument to Guillaume Apollinaire, the modernist poet, close friend, and major supporter of Cubism, represents the intermediate phase in a series of experiments that occupied nearly 50 years of the artist's life. Embodying what Picasso's dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler famously called "drawing in space" (*dessiner dans l'espace*), the artist explored through the monument project formal questions of negative space, implied volume, and geometric linearity in sculpture.¹ Although the monument was never realized in its original incarnation, Picasso consistently returned to its premises until the year preceding his death. The 1962 steel sculpture (pl. 20), standing at 198 centimeters tall, epitomizes Picasso's sculpture at perhaps its most abstract.

The monument's linear geometric design dates back to a series of sketchbooks completed in the 1920s. In one volume completed in the summer of 1924 in Juans-les-Pins (Carnet 004) (fig. 20.1), Picasso composed abstract shapes and musical instruments from bounded line segments, inspired by astronomical charts. He eventually adopted the designs into anthropomorphic figures in October of that year before rendering them in three-dimensional perspective while summering in Cannes in 1927 (Carnet 011) (fig. 20.2). Following Apollinaire's death by influenza in 1918, a committee led by the conservative writer André Billy formed two years later, with a resulting announcement in the newspaper *L'Action* of the committee's formation and Picasso's assistance in designing a proposal for a monument at Apollinaire's grave in Paris's Père Lachaise cemetery.² Picasso took seven years before offering sample ideas from the Cannes notebooks—the linear geometric designs and organic, androgynous figures, as seen in the bronze sculpture *Metamorphosis I* from 1928. Anticipating a neoclassical bust, the committee rejected Picasso's initial proposal.³ Picasso further developed the drawings at Dinard in 1928 (Carnet 1044) (fig. 20.3), employing them as models for four metal wire maquettes made in collaboration in October of that year with the Spanish sculptor and ironworker, Julio González, at the latter's studio on rue de Médéah.⁴ The monument committee rejected the maquettes yet again; they would finally accept a bust of Dora Maar by Picasso in 1959 for a monument located at a street corner in Saint-Germain-des-Près.⁵

Compelled to complete his original design for the monument, Picasso in 1962 enlisted the help of the



Pl. 20 Project for a Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire. 1962, enlarged version after 1928 original maquette. Painted steel, 6'6" x 29 7/8" x 62 7/8" (198.1 x 74.8 x 159.8 cm) including base. Gift of the artist. 72.1979

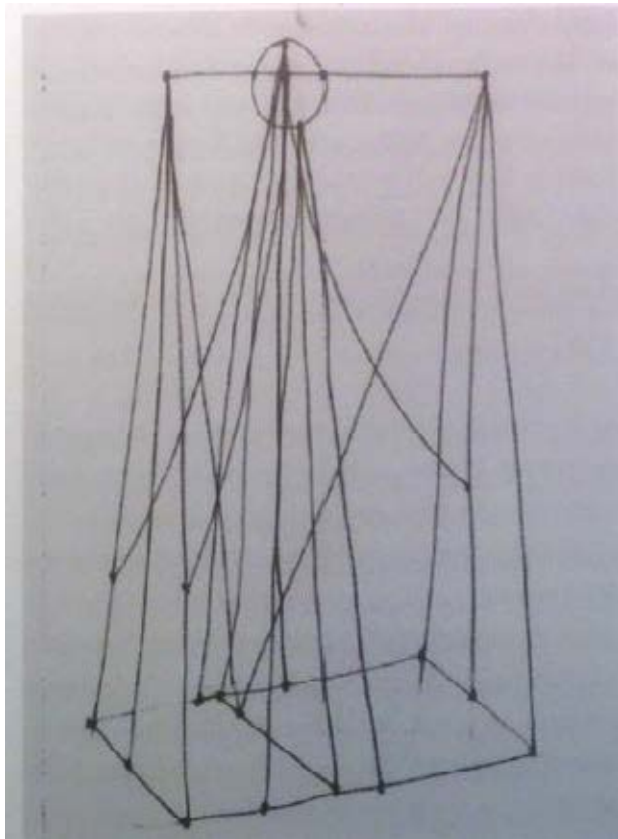


Fig. 20.2 Sketchbook no. 011, sheet 10 recto. 1927. Musée national Picasso—Paris

locksmith and craftsman Joseph-Marius Tiola, who lived near the artist in Vallauris.⁶ With one of the 1928 maquettes as a prototype,⁷ Picasso and Tiola expanded the sculpture in the artist's studio twice from 20 centimeters to 95 centimeters and then to 198 centimeters tall. The new versions were fabricated with steel tubing and painted in the light red hue of minium (another expansion of a separate maquette was made as well).⁸ By only soldering and not applying torsion to the sculpture's joints, Picasso and Tiola managed to smooth traces of the hand from the 1928 model and accentuate its geometric symmetry.⁹

In 1971, MoMA chief curator William Rubin approached Picasso in his studio at Mougins with the intention to realize the artist's original monument to Apollinaire from almost fifty years prior. Picasso gave Rubin one of the steel models as an example, and measuring against his body, Picasso marked the final sculpture's ideal height at thirteen feet by tracing a line on an adjacent wall.¹⁰ With Picasso's supervision and the assistance of New York artist Maurice Brouha, Rubin had the final monument fabricated in Corten steel (fig. 20.4), a material typically designated for public sculpture, and installed it in the museum's sculpture garden in 1972 in Corten steel (fig. 20.5), a material typically designated for public sculpture.¹¹ Picasso died the

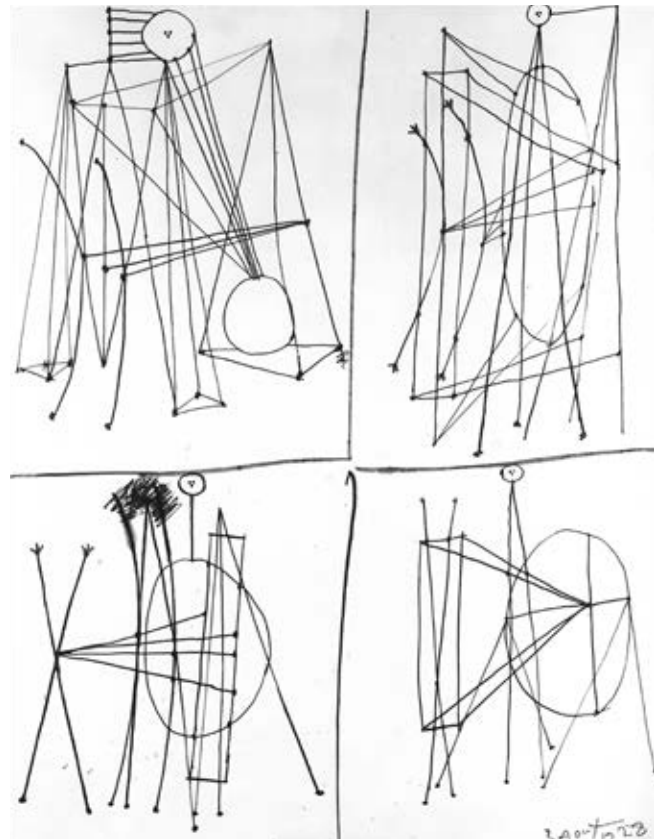


Fig. 20.3 Sketchbook no. 1044, sheet 18: Plans for a sculpture. August 3, 1928. Pen and india ink and pencil on paper, 15 x 12 3/16" (38 x 31 cm). Private collection

following year, having seen the nascent concepts from his sketchbooks finally actualized in monumental form. In the artist's relatively mercurial career, the Apollinaire monument represents one of Picasso's most sustained endeavors.

With its play between tightly motivated lines and grounding central forms, the 1962 monument betrays stable pictoriality in favor of dynamic fields of depth and movement. As vectors intersect the central circle and move between the bracketing rectangle and longer triangle, the eye oscillates between the sculpture's two visual poles. Though the work's reductive abstraction and mobile foci of attention hinder figurative recognition, Picasso implies representational qualities. The anthropomorphic head capping the establishing central triangle consists of three holes assembled in an inverted triangle, an expressive facial device borrowed from Picasso's 1924 set and costume designs for the ballet *Mercure*.¹² The thin, concave arms flanking the border rectangle evoke figurative modeling from Picasso's 1927 *Girl in an Armchair*.¹³ To this end, Picasso's painting consistently explored the monument's type of linear figuration: *The Studio* (1927) shows a further reduction of the cephalic motif by interlaying a trapezoidal plane with three irises on top of an oval head. *The Painter in His Studio* from the following year features an explicit example

of the monument's triangular scaffolding, as seen in the abstract figure of the painter. *The Kitchen* (1948) continues Picasso's interest in linearity in a more abstracted, flattened composition.

Scholarly interpretations of the monument's subject matter have differed, suggesting a parodic take on the classical bronze sculpture *The Charioteer of Delphi*, another iteration of Picasso's figures with balls from a painting of the same period, a woman pushing a swing, or an artist painting the portrait of a sitter, as referenced above.¹⁴ Yet in Apollinaire's 1923 prose work *The Poet Assassinated* (*Le Poète assassiné*), with characters based on Apollinaire and Picasso, a sunken monument to the fallen poet is described with the phrase "the void had the form of Croniamantal," (*"la vide avait la forme de Croniamantal"*).¹⁵ As stated by Billy, Picasso explicitly drew on the reference for the monument.¹⁶ In this quotation, it is emptiness that contradictorily suggests the presence of the monument's subject matter, as much as the sculpture formally renders negative space into positive volume. In Picasso's consistent efforts to produce the monument from his original proposal in 1927, to the second rejection to 1928, and to the efforts with Rubin in 1972, the desire to commemorate Apollinaire persisted throughout the artist's career. Understanding the sculpture as a monument without any one specific reference, it may alternatively depict loss itself, a consistent oscillation between recognition of subject matter and that identification's collapse within a geometric abstract schema. The viewer's inability to fully capture the structural integrity of the work necessitates a consistent phenomenological and semiotic negotiation of the work.

Pertinent to the presentation of loss is the monument's continuous displacement of its status as sculpture. As the eye moves around the sculpture in the round, its dimensionality perpetually threatens to collapse: a frontal view from one side, for example, reduces the central circle to one of its sides in a matrix of intersecting lines (Fig. 20.5). Picasso's monument discloses the dialectic between the haptic and optic long investigated in the artist's work. The eye follows Picasso's lines like the hand follows a graphic gesture, appropriately so given the monument's development through sketchbooks, wire maquettes, steel sculpture, painting, and monumental sculpture. Additionally, other media encroach: in photographic representation, the monument is virtually identical to its 1928 model; the monument betrays no inherent sense of its scale. In a 1933 spread from the Surrealist journal *Minotaure*, the photographer Brassai juxtaposes the four maquettes in Picasso's studio with Paris's rooftop architecture and the latticed Eiffel Tour in the background (fig. 20.6). The monument transposes across scale and media in a play with intangibility that recalls the monument's earliest origins as musical instruments in the 1924 Juan-les-Pins designs. Along these lines, the role



Fig. 20.4 Monument. 1972. Cor-Ten steel, 12' 11 5/8" x 58 3/4" x 10' 5 3/4" (395.3 x 149.2 x 319.3 cm), including base. Gift of the artist. 152.1973

of sculptor, painter, and poet are confounded to begin with in the work's literary genesis: Picasso is referred to as a sculptor called the Bird of Benin in *The Poet Assassinated*, while Picasso utilized the formal motifs in the monument for images depicting a painter with a model, even though the monument overall stands dedicated to a poet. In place of a strict delineation between spatial, virtual, and textual arts, Picasso articulates the memorial to Apollinaire through a capacious definition of formal poetry that shifts between structure and emptiness, line and volume, presence and absence.

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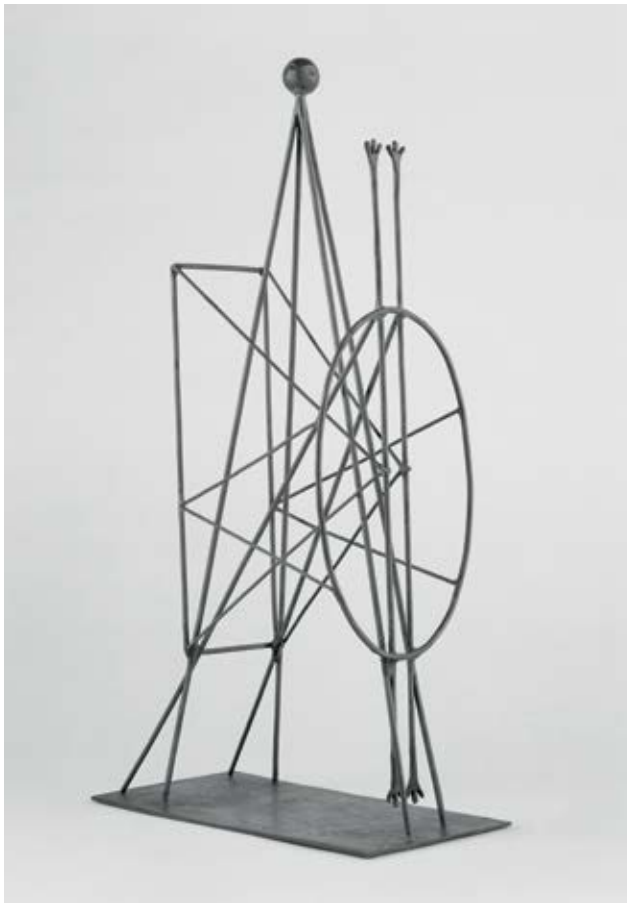


Fig. 20.5 *Figure*, October 1928, iron wire and sheet metal, 14 3/4 x 3 15/16 x 7 11/16 in. (37.5 x 10 x 19.6 cm). Musée national Picasso—Paris. Dation Pablo Picasso; on long-term loan to the Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle

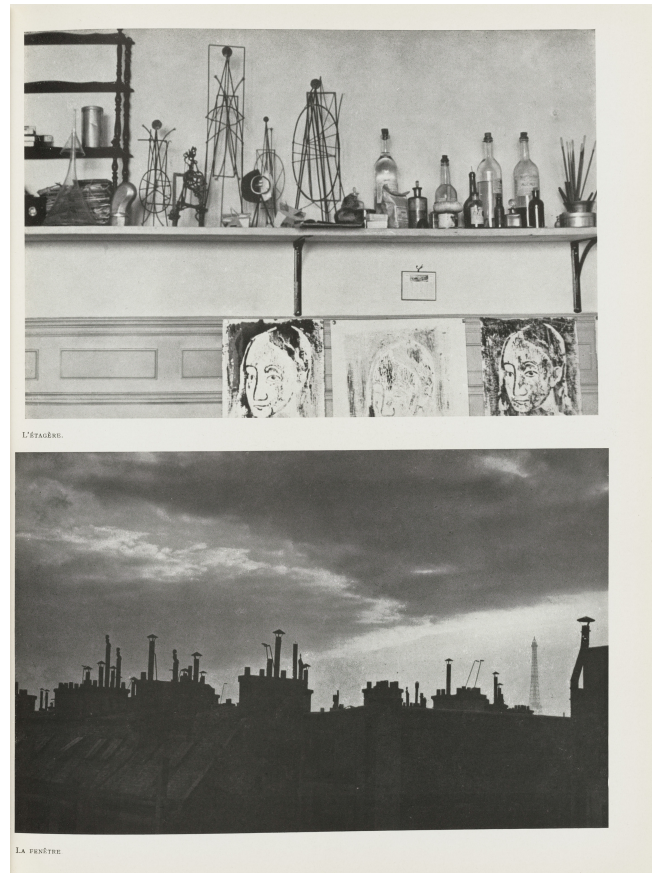


Fig. 20.6 Photographs by Brassai. Printed in André Breton, "Picasso dans son élément," *Minotaure* 1, no. 1 (June 1933). The Museum of Modern Art Library

NOTES

1. Daniel Henry-Kahnweiler, *The Sculptures of Picasso* (Paris: Assouline, 2005), 12.
2. Peter Read, *Picasso & Apollinaire: The Persistence of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 140.
3. For the political and aesthetic differences between Picasso and the monument committee, see C.F.B. Miller, "'Mad' Memorials: Picasso's 1927 Apollinaire Monument Designs and the Politics of Commemoration," *Immediations* 1 (2004): 37-59.
4. Peter Read, "From Sketchbook to Sculpture in the Work of Picasso, 1924-32," in *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter*, ed. Elizabeth Cowling and John Golding (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), 199-201. According to Christa Lichtenstern, the Musée Picasso holds two of the maquettes, the Centre Pompidou one, and the other has not been since being photographed by Brassai. Christa Lichtenstern, *Pablo Picasso: Denkmal für Apollinaire: Entwurf zur Humanisierung des Raumes* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988), 35.
5. Michael Cowan Fitzgerald, "Pablo Picasso's Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire: Surrealism and Monumental Sculpture in France, 1918-1959" (PhD diss, Columbia University, 1987), 371.
6. Diana Widmaier Picasso, "Pablo Picasso's Sheet-Metal Sculptures, Vallauris 1954-1965: Design, Materials, and Experimentation," in *Sylvette, Sylvette, Sylvette: Picasso and the Model* (Bremen: Kunsthalle Bremen, 2014), 163. According to Widmaier, the 1962 date is still unconfirmed.
7. In his 1983 catalogue raisonné, Werner Spies designated the maquettes and their enlargements with numerical labels. SP 68 represents a 1928 maquette, SP 68A its smaller enlargement, and SP 68B the object under discussion here. SP 69A is another of the postwar enlargements. See *Pablo Picasso: Das Plastische Werk* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1983), 331.
8. Lichtenstern, 201. According to Read, SP 68A, a smaller version of the object discussed here, eventually went to Picasso's daughter Marina and 69A once belonged to the collection of Claude Picasso. See his *Picasso et Apollinaire: Les métamorphoses de la mémoire, 1905/1973* (Paris: J.M. Place, 1995), 290, and its later English translation, *Picasso & Apollinaire: The Persistence of Memory*, 244.
9. Peter Read, *Picasso et Apollinaire: Les métamorphoses de la mémoire*, 291.
10. Fitzgerald, "Pablo Picasso's Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire," 378. See also Milton Esterow and William S. Rubin, "Visit with Picasso at Mougins," *Art News* 72, no. 6 (1973): 46.
11. Press Releases, 152.1973, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. According to Lichtenstern, another monumental version of the sculpture was erected directly based on a 1928 maquette. Lichtenstern, 38.
12. Read, "From Sketchbook to Sculpture in the Work of Picasso, 1924-32," 201.
13. Lichtenstern, 32.
14. Rosalind E. Krauss, "A Game Plan: The Terms of Surrealism," in *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), 134; Fitzgerald, "Pablo Picasso's Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire," 217; Alan Bowness, "Picasso's Sculpture," in *Picasso in Retrospect*, ed. Roland Penrose and John Golding (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 89. Sebastian Zeidler suggested the portrait depiction at the February 2015 MRC Study Sessions held at The Museum of Modern Art.
15. Guillaume Apollinaire, *Le Poète assassiné* (Paris: L'Édition, 1916), 141.
16. Fitzgerald, "Pablo Picasso's Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire," 225.



View of the exhibition *The Sculpture of Picasso*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967-68. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York



View of the exhibition *Picasso Sculpture*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2015-16. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York