

PICASSO

Masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso, Paris

12 NOVEMBER 2011 – 25 MARCH 2012

The exhibition is co-organised by the Musée National Picasso, Paris,
the Art Gallery of NSW and Art Exhibitions Australia.



PICASSO

MASTERPIECES FROM THE MUSÉE NATIONAL PICASSO, PARIS

'I paint the way some people write an autobiography. The paintings, finished or not, are the pages from my diary, and as such they are valid. The future will choose the pages it prefers.'

Pablo Picasso, about 1946¹



(top) Pablo Picasso *Self-portrait in front of 'Homme accoude sur une table'* 1915–16, gelatin silver print, Archives Picasso, Musée National Picasso, Paris APPH11 © Succession Picasso 2011 © Paris, Reunion des Musees Nationaux © Archives Picasso, Musée National Picasso, Paris

(bottom) Frank Gellelt Burgess *Picasso in his studio* 1908, gelatin silver print, Archives Picasso, Musée National Picasso, Paris APPH002 © Succession Picasso 2011 © Paris, Reunion des Musees Nationaux, rights reserved © Archives Picasso, Musée National Picasso, Paris

With a career spanning seven decades of the 20th century, Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) was an integral part of the birth and development of modern art. Ceaselessly innovative and prolific, he embodies the creative spirit of the modern age, yet for all his modernity he was deeply connected with the art of the past. Although he was a pioneer of abstraction, he never abandoned the figure; although he experimented with new media, he remained a master of traditional oil painting and bronze sculpture. His work lays bare his personal passions, desires and fears, as well as the anxieties of his time, the horrors of war, and the fragility and resilience of human life.

Drawn from the collection of the Musée National Picasso in Paris, this exhibition shows a rare perspective on the life and work of this iconic yet still surprising artist. These are 'Picasso's Picassos' – the works he kept in his own possession, which only after his death in 1973 were given to the French State by his family in lieu of taxes. The exhibition represents every period of Picasso's long career and almost every medium to which he turned his hand. As he proclaimed: 'I am the greatest Picasso collector in the world'.²

ROOM 1

From Spain to Paris 1895–1905

Picasso's talent was evident from a young age, first recognised and nurtured by his art teacher father. Several early drawings in this room, made when he was around 13 years old, show his exceptional skills in figure drawing. During his teens, Picasso furthered his academic training at various art schools in Spain and at 19 took his first trip to Paris, when one of his works was selected for the Exposition Universelle. Over the next four years, Picasso moved restlessly between Paris and Barcelona, discovering the work of the post-impressionists and befriending fellow painter Carlos Casagemas, whose suicide in 1901 affected him deeply.

Picasso drew his subjects from the underbelly of modern city life: beggars, the homeless and prostitutes. Evoking the alienation of the disenfranchised in endless shades of blue and grey, this became known as his Blue Period. While these works were inspired by contemporary art and life, they were also rooted in history: the ashen features and elongated limbs of Picasso's figures recall paintings by his 16th-century compatriot El Greco.

Finally settling in Paris in 1904, Picasso took up a studio in the famed 'Bateau-Lavoir' – a complex of artists' studios in the bohemian quarter of Montmartre. His Rose Period paintings – so-called for their palette of dusty earth tones and pinkish reds – were largely inspired by the circus and theatre. *The jester* 1905, an early foray into bronze sculpture, was inspired by an evening at the Cirque Medrano, though it is also a 'portrait' of the poet Max Jacob, one of Picasso's broadening group of Parisian friends – a circle that included writers and artists who would come to define the modern era: Henri Matisse, André Derain, Gertrude Stein and Guillaume Apollinaire.

ROOM 2

'The enchantments of Oceania and Africa' 1906–1909

In 1907 Picasso painted the complex and now iconic *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* (Museum of Modern Art, New York). A dense and shallow composition of angular, contorted figures, it shocked and perplexed even his most avant-garde contemporaries. Matisse thought it an 'audacious hoax', a parody of the increasingly abstract treatment of figures in modern painting.³ Picasso himself called the painting an 'exorcism'.⁴

His studies for *Les Femmes d'Alger* on display in this room reveal the range of influences and approaches that went into producing this landmark work. They are not studies in the traditional sense but, typically for Picasso, explorations of possible types that may or may not be included in the final composition. Particularly evident is his growing fascination with tribal art, as seen in the mask-like, chiselled features and angular bodies that caused such extreme reactions to the final work.

Captivated by the Tahitian-inspired works of Paul Gauguin and the Pacific and African collections of the Louvre and the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (now the Musée de l'Homme), in 1907 Picasso acquired a carved tiki figure that influenced his first wood carving, the totemic oak *Figure* 1907. The sculpture's rough-hewn appearance captures the 'naïve' quality of so-called 'primitive' art that Picasso and several of his contemporaries found compelling. *Head of a woman (Fernande)* 1909, a bronze portrait of his lover Fernande Olivier, uses a more complex, rhythmic repetition of angular forms – a suggestion of the 'cubist' style that would dominate his work in the coming years.

ROOM 3

Cubism, collage and constructions 1910–1915

For Picasso and many of his contemporaries, no recent artist was more significant than Paul Cézanne. A retrospective of Cézanne's work, held after his death in 1906, galvanised his influence, and it was around this time that Picasso met Georges Braque. Over the following years the two artists worked in tandem, visiting each other's studios almost daily and sharing ideas about painting. Picasso's *Landscape with two figures* 1908 typifies their early shared style – a Cézannesque, jagged landscape with blocky, visible brushwork. Their collaboration ultimately produced perhaps the most significant innovation in modern painting: cubism, which combined several possible views of a three-dimensional object in the one image. Braque described their collaboration as 'like two mountaineers roped together', evoking at once their co-dependence and the pioneering exhilaration of their artistic endeavour.⁵

In the wake of their six-year collaboration, Picasso and Braque each took cubism in different directions. Picasso continued to work in collage, incorporating wallpaper, cut pieces of canvas, newsprint, lettering and other materials into his compositions. His innovative constructions in wood and sheet iron, painted and wall-mounted, combine the qualities of painting and sculpture. Dispensing with the time-honoured methods of carving or modelling, this was an entirely new way of creating sculpture.

Cubism opened up infinite possibilities for painting, including pure abstraction, and was developed in many forms by artists across Europe, America and Australia. However, the classical realism of the unfinished *The painter and his model* 1914 proves that even at the height of his cubism, Picasso was not constrained by it as a style.

ROOM 4

A return to classicism 1916–1924

While World War I sent many Parisian artists to the front, Picasso, as a foreign national, continued to work largely undisturbed. He travelled to the south of France and to Italy for the first time, and his experience of the art of ancient Rome and Pompeii brought a renewed emphasis on classical beauty and naturalism.

In 1916 Picasso befriended the writer Jean Cocteau, who introduced him to the founder and artistic director of the Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev. The three collaborated on the ballet *Parade*, composed by Eric Satie. *Parade's* avant-garde score and circus imagery called for a decorative use of pattern and colour that carried through to Picasso's work beyond the stage. Perhaps in accord with the postwar mood described by Cocteau as a 'call to order' – a desire for stability, introspection and contemplation after the shock and destruction of the war – Picasso returned to the classics. The heavy sculptural quality of his 1920s figures could hardly be further from the flattened planes and abstractions of cubism, though they often retain the jagged bulk of his Oceanic-inspired work. Yet again, Picasso's sources were eclectic: the influence of Renoir's late paintings of robust female figures can be seen in *The village dance* 1922, while domestic life inspired tender images of his new wife Olga and playful portraits of their first child, Paul.

ROOM 5

Brushes with surrealism 1925–1935

It was Jean Cocteau who introduced Picasso to André Breton and his surrealist circle. Picasso showed some of his cubist works at the first surrealist group exhibition in 1925 and designed the cover of the first issue of their journal, *Minotaure*. Revived by the surrealists, the half-man, half-bull minotaur of classical mythology also became a kind of alter-ego for Picasso, reappearing throughout his career.

The surrealists advocated no one style of art but operated with deliberate irrationality, evoking subconscious associations and dream states. This found a parallel in Picasso's expressive and sometimes extreme distortions of the figure, often into animal-like forms. However Picasso's involvement with the movement remained marginal: as in most of his artistic associations, he always remained strongly independent.

In the early 1930s, Picasso produced a number of spare landscapes peopled by extremely distorted nudes. Combining eroticism and violence, they leaned ever closer to surrealism, while a series of enormous bronze heads, cast at his new studio in Boisgeloup just outside Paris in 1931, brought their rotund, pebble-like shapes into three-dimensional form.

Picasso's distinctive 1937 paintings known as the 'weeping women' – two of which are included in this room, *Weeping woman* and *The suppliant* – grew out of his work on the

monumental mural *Guernica* 1937, which expressed the anguish of victims of the Spanish Civil War. In the 'weeping women', he transformed the angular features of *Guernica's* women with acidic, clashing colours to create more universal expressions of psychological turmoil. A series of women's heads from 1939 combine this emotive use of colour and line with the liquid distortion of earlier surrealist works. Here, Picasso pushes the distortion of faces to new extremes: some are forced into vase-like shapes and others into bizarre, contorted polygons.

ROOM 6

Dora Maar 1936–1939

The 1930s was a turbulent decade for Picasso. His marriage to Olga broke down when his lover Marie-Thérèse became pregnant, and in 1935 he began a relationship with the surrealist photographer and writer Dora Maar. For the only time in his career, he ceased to paint for some nine months in 1935–36, instead writing poetry in the manner of surrealist 'automatic writing'. The outbreak of civil war in Spain disturbed Picasso greatly and his monumental mural *Guernica*, commemorating the bombing of the Basque town by right-wing nationalists in 1937, remains a potent anti-war image to this day.

Maar photographed Picasso many times in his home and studio and famously documented the evolution of *Guernica* (these photos are displayed in room 9). In turn, using Maar as his subject, Picasso created some of his most complex portraits, combining aspects of cubism, surrealism and the expressive colours and angles of his weeping women to convey a distinctive psychological intensity.

Animal imagery was a significant part of Picasso's output at this time. *Guernica* was dominated by the bull and the horse and these symbolic animals reappear as symbols of male vigour in works such as the enigmatic *The Minotaure* 1938, where again Picasso casts himself as the minotaur.

ROOM 7

World War II and its aftermath 1940–1951

In 1940 the Nazis invaded Paris. During the occupation, Picasso continued to work, albeit under the watchful eye of the German authorities. Many of Picasso's friends fled or were driven from Paris, including the writer Max Jacob who was interned and eventually executed in a concentration camp.

Capturing this atmosphere of tension and uncertainty, symbols of death, particularly the skull, pervade Picasso's work. While such *mementos mori* have a long history in Western art as reminders of our fleeting existence, the bare honesty with which they are painted and sculpted by Picasso transforms them into poignant emblems of the death and destruction of the war.

Where many of Picasso's earlier works depict the bull in conflict with a horse or matador, he now shows the bull alone, cast simultaneously as a symbol of strength and vulnerability. In one of the more whimsical appearances of this favourite motif, an old bicycle seat and handle bars are combined to create a dada-like assemblage resembling a bull's head (1942). In contrast, *Man with sheep* 1943, one of Picasso's most ambitious bronze sculptures, is a powerful allegory of human fragility. It became one of only two sculptures by Picasso to appear in a public space in France (in Vallauris, near Cannes).

Throughout this period, Picasso's success continued to grow. Major retrospectives of his work were held in New York in 1939 and in 1944 at the first Salon d'Automne to occur following the liberation of Paris. Around this time he also met artist and writer Françoise Gilot, who later penned memoirs on her life with Picasso. Together, they had two children: Claude (born 1947) and Paloma (born 1949).

ROOMS 8 & 9

The joy of life 1952–1960

Picasso's work from the mid 1950s reflects a more cheerful outlook and time. In 1953 he fell in love with Jacqueline Roque and in 1955 they moved to the south of France. Picasso depicted Jacqueline more than any other woman in his lifetime, creating in one year alone over 70 portraits of her.

In his later decades, Picasso reworked some of the themes, methods and styles of earlier years, sometimes incorporating a mixture into one work, such as *Jacqueline with crossed hands* 1954. It was also around this time that he made a series of sculptures inspired by fellow bathers (displayed in room 9). Cast from assembled found objects – with picture frames turned into arms, parts of a bed into feet, a broom handle into a backbone – this series is one of his most striking and playful.

Also displayed in room 9 is a series of photographs by Dora Maar which document the evolution and production of Picasso's monumental composition *Guernica*. Picasso began making studies for the mural within weeks of the bombing of the Catalan town by nationalist forces in April 1937.

ROOM 10

Last decades 1961–1972

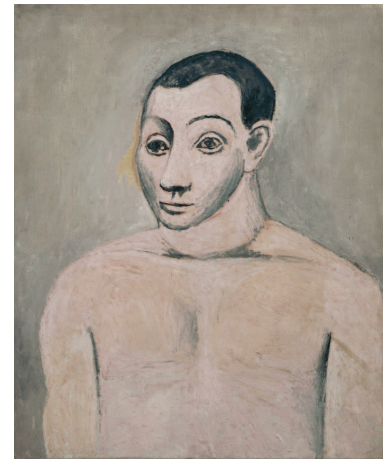
By now acclaimed as a master of modern art, Picasso worked with an urgent and defiant creativity. In printmaking, he collaborated with master printers Piero and Aldo Crommelynck. In sculpture, he produced new works in sheet metal based on cut and folded paper models, which also seemed to hark back to his cubist metal constructions – for example, *The chair* 1963. In his late self-portraits, Picasso cast himself in an array of roles: as a sword-wielding matador, an ageing artist with his young model and, most poignantly, as a wide-eyed, youthful artist, palette in hand.

At times, Picasso's late works drew criticism for being repetitive or derivative, including those inspired by iconic paintings from the history of European art by artists such as Velázquez, Goya, Poussin, Delacroix and Manet. Yet it was always Picasso's enduring bond with the history of painting that brought about innovation in his work, or as he put it: 'What does it mean for a painter to paint in the manner of So-and-So or to actually imitate someone else? What's wrong with that? On the contrary, it's a good idea ... And it's at the very moment you make a botch of it that you're yourself.'⁶

It is only more recently that the significance and innovation of Picasso's late works have come to be appreciated, with many art historians, critics and particularly artists acknowledging Picasso's continuing and insatiable creativity. As his close friend, the photographer Brassai said: 'He thought that if he stopped working, that was death'.⁷ In Picasso's words: 'I paint just as I breathe'.⁸

FOCUS WORK

Autoportrait (Self-portrait) 1906



‘Painting isn’t an aesthetic operation; it’s a form of magic designed as a mediator between this strange, hostile world and us, a way of seizing the power by giving form to our terrors as well as our desires. When I came to that realisation, I knew I had found my way.’

Pablo Picasso, 1960s⁹

K–6 ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS

Look closely at this portrait of the young Picasso. Notice the mask-like quality of the face. What other techniques does Picasso use to give the portrait a sculptural feel? Draw or paint your own self-portrait – simplify your features and consider the colours you will use to give the illusion that you are made of stone or clay.

HSIE

Picasso was fascinated by sculptures and masks from Africa and the Pacific Islands. Choose one of these areas and research its people, cultures and environment. Look in particular at the types of masks and sculptures made in traditional tribal cultures, and look for references to these artforms in Picasso’s work. Create a PowerPoint showing what you found out and present it in class.

ENGLISH

View the Art Gallery of NSW Pacific art collection and read the *Look* magazine article on the web page www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/pacific-art

Use this information as a starting point to create your own exhibition labels and wall text as if you are a curator.

7–12 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

What does Picasso offer the viewer in this self-portrait?

Does Picasso’s depiction of himself reveal more than his physical appearance and personality? Explain your initial response and describe the person behind the image. Consider the intensity of the gaze and the treatment of form.

In 1906, with an interest in art from other cultures, specifically tribal art from Africa and the Pacific islands, Picasso explored the relationship between subjective and objective approaches to artmaking. With reference to Picasso’s influences at the time and responding to *Self-portrait* discuss how Picasso has created a dialogue between these contradictions.

Picasso painted *Self-portrait* the year before he painted *Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* 1907, a work that revolutionised artistic thought and practice. Compare these artworks and develop a case study on their significance in modern art.

Autoportrait (Self-portrait) 1906

oil on canvas, 65 x 54 cm

Pablo Picasso Bequest, 1979, MP8

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© Musée National Picasso, Paris



FOCUS WORK

Deux femmes courant sur la plage (La course) Two women running on the beach (The race) 1922



'For me painting is a dramatic action in the course of which reality finds itself split apart.'

Pablo Picasso¹⁰

K–6 ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS

Imagine the sounds of the ocean and wind as these two giant-like women run along the beach. Can you see the horizon line? Do you think it is a hot day? Notice the roundness of the women's forms. Picasso was inspired by ancient Roman sculptures of goddesses and athletes and developed this sculptural painting style. Look at examples of ancient sculptures and sketch members of your class in statue-like poses. Make your own figure sculptures based on your drawings using clay or plasticine.

PDHPE

Do you like going to the beach? Debate the health benefits of going to the beach in Australia both positive and negative. Chart your results and survey how often you and your classmates go to the beach. Analyse what activities you do and the risks or benefits involved.

MATHS

In this painting, Picasso has simplified the figure shapes to geometric forms. List the types of shapes you can see. Create a simplified drawing of this painting on squared paper using only geometric forms. Calculate the area these figures fill on the picture. What is the proportion of sky to land in the background? What proportion of the picture surface is taken up by the figures?

7–12 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Are we viewing a leisurely stroll or two women determined to win a race?

Depicting the female form as both monumental and dynamic, Picasso has created a paradox. Discuss what this means in reference to *Two women running on the beach (The race)* 1922. Consider the scale, use of perspective and proportions of the women. Can the viewer clearly determine the body parts of each woman or has Picasso deliberately set out to confuse us?

In the early 1920s Picasso devised a personal approach to neo-classicism referencing art of the ancient world. How does this artwork depict the style of ancient Greece and Rome? In what way has Picasso embodied this approach in his art practice?

Carefully consider the structure and arrangement of this work and account for what you see. How do the figures move through the composition? Discuss how they relate to the landscape and the picture plane.

Deux femmes courant sur la plage (La course)

Two women running on the beach (The race) 1922

gouache on plywood 32.5 x 41.1 cm

Pablo Picasso Bequest, 1979, MP78

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© Musée National Picasso, Paris



FOCUS WORK

Portrait de Dora Maar (Portrait of Dora Maar) 1937



'I aim at deeper resemblance, more real than real, thus becoming surreal.'

Pablo Picasso, 1945¹¹

K-6 ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS

Picasso is well known for his portraits of the women in his life. Look at this portrait of Dora Maar, a photographer who lived with Picasso between 1936 and 1938. Notice how Picasso has painted her facial features. What is unusual about them? Describe Picasso's use of colour and pattern. Where are your eyes drawn to first? Experiment with painting or drawing your own portraits and consider showing multiple viewpoints in one image. Choose your favourite one and develop it into a finished painting filled with pattern and strong blocks of colour. Display your works in class.

HSIE

This portrait of Dora Maar was painted at the same time as Picasso was creating one of his most famous works *Guernica* 1937. *Guernica* was painted in response to the horrific bombing of the small town of Guernica in Spain in 1937, during the Spanish Civil War and has become a powerful anti-war symbol. It depicts the suffering of the town's innocent people and the fear and anguish they experienced. Find out more about this time in Spain's history. Find out where the painting *Guernica* is displayed today and look carefully at an image of it. Discuss the symbols Picasso has used and the power of art as a form of communication.

ENGLISH

Dora Maar documented Picasso's process of creating *Guernica* in a series of photographs and experienced first hand his passionate approach to painting. Imagine you are Dora Maar, as fiery and passionate as Picasso, upset by the tragic events shown in his painting. Write a journal entry describing Picasso's approach to the painting and the conversations you have about the civil war.

7-12 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The 1930s saw Picasso explore his personal world and the women of his life in his art.

This became a constant theme in Picasso's artmaking. Create a body of work that is influenced by the people in your personal world. How can the style of your work reflect the relationship you have with the people close to you?

Picasso met Dora Maar in 1935 and at this time there seemed to be a change in his approach to depicting women. Research Picasso's practice in the 1930s and account for his personal and social influences. Compare Picasso's previous portraits of women with the *Portrait of Dora Maar* 1937 with reference to your findings.

Surrealism was a continuing influence on Picasso's work at this time. He embraced irrationality and automatism (acting freely without conscious thought) in his artmaking. Look carefully at *Portrait of Dora Maar* and discuss how this painting reflects surrealist elements. What is Picasso trying to depict: the woman's physical appearance or something more?

Portrait de Dora Maar (Portrait of Dora Maar) 1937

oil on canvas, 92 x 65 cm

Pablo Picasso Bequest, 1979, MP158

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© Musée National Picasso, Paris



FOCUS WORK

L'atelier de La Californie (The studio of La Californie) 1956



**'When I paint I feel that all the artists
of the past are behind me.'**

Pablo Picasso¹²

K-6 ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS

Look at this painting of Picasso's studio and list all of the things you can see that tell you about his life and his interests. Describe how the picture is divided, and the use of tone, pattern and colour. Picasso described his studio as an interior landscape and painted and sketched the studio from many viewpoints. Create an artwork of your classroom as a large collaborative group painting and collage. Consider all of the objects and furniture around you and what makes your classroom a unique reflection of the daily activities and interests you have as a class.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Picasso's studio 'La Californie' was in Cannes on the Riviera, in the south of France. Observe the types of plants Picasso has depicted through the window of his studio. Find out more about this region of France: the styles of architecture, traditions, native plants and animals. What is this part of France famous for? Research what other artists also painted in this area and how they depicted the region. Why do you think so many artists were drawn to this area?

DRAMA

During his career as an artist, Picasso was invited to design costumes and stage sets. This painting has a stage-like quality. Imagine what stories could be told using this painting as a backdrop. Invent a story and write the dialogue for a play. Consider the mood of the story and how many characters there are. Act out your play and include props and costumes.

7-12 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

What makes this painting a Picasso?

In 1955 Picasso purchased a studio called 'La Californie' in Cannes on the south coast of France. The studio provided a theme for his interiors. Analyse this work with reference to its structural elements and historical influences. List the objects and colours you can see and how Picasso has determined a sense of space.

In the 1950s Picasso looked at history as subject matter or style and embraced his historical influences in his practice. Research his appropriations in the 1950s and 60s, collecting both the original work and Picasso's interpretation. How do they differ? How are they similar?

Using *The studio of La Californie* as your initial inspiration create a painting of an interior in your home. Include other elements that pay homage to artists who inspire you.

L'atelier de La Californie (The studio of La Californie) 1956

oil on canvas, 114 x 146 cm

Pablo Picasso Bequest, 1979, MP211

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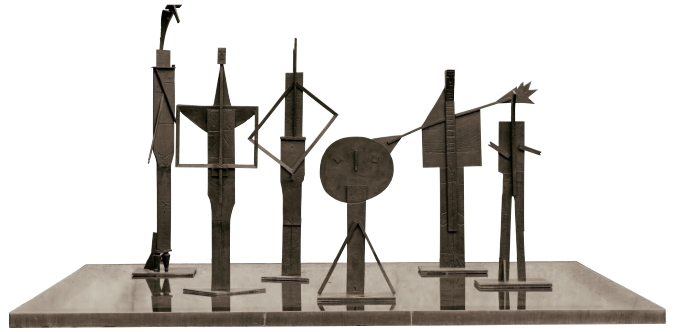
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© Musée National Picasso, Paris



FOCUS WORK

Les baigneurs (The bathers) 1956



'The inspiration for a sculpture often comes from a little sign he detects in a form or in a material. And, from that, something the size of a hand can become a larger-than-life piece...'

art historian Werner Spies, 2000¹³

K-6 ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS

Picasso loved to collect discarded objects, scraps of wood and metal, and assemble and transform them into works of art. This bronze sculpture started out as a wooden assemblage which he then cast in bronze. What shapes and forms can you recognise here? Find the picture frames, broom handle and the feet of a bed. What have they been turned into? Notice how Picasso has etched detail and patterns into the surface of the figures. Create your own figure sculpture out of discarded objects and etch or draw details onto the surface to give your figure personality. Display your individual sculptures as a class group.

ENGLISH

This group of figures was inspired by Picasso's many visits to the beach with his family. Compile a glossary of words (or word bank) that you associate with the beach and what these figures could be doing there. Write an expressive poem and use as many of your listed words as possible. Read your poems aloud in class.

MATHS

Imagine you have been asked to recreate one of these figure sculptures as a large monument for a public space. Choose your favourite figure and draw it on gridded paper. Calculate and measure how big each part of the figure will need to be if the final monument is 10 metres high. Consider the scale of each part and how big the base will need to be in order to support the monument.

7-12 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Why do these figures look like bathers?

Look carefully at the movement, pose and relationships between the sculptural figures. How do they work as individual forms and also as a group? What seems to bind them together? Recreate this scene with people using the same compositional elements and compare to the original sculptures.

Compare these sculptures with other works by Picasso based on the same theme. What is he trying to capture in these images? How has this theme evolved through his body of work? Research what the Mediterranean meant to Picasso and how these images reflect a certain sensibility.

Picasso worked in a number of sculptural materials including clay, wood and plaster, carving and then casting in bronze. Compare approaches to sculpture through time that have used similar techniques. How does Picasso's approach differ? Picasso treated sculpture in the same way as painting. What does this mean and how do these sculptures reflect this point of view?

Les baigneurs (The bathers) 1956

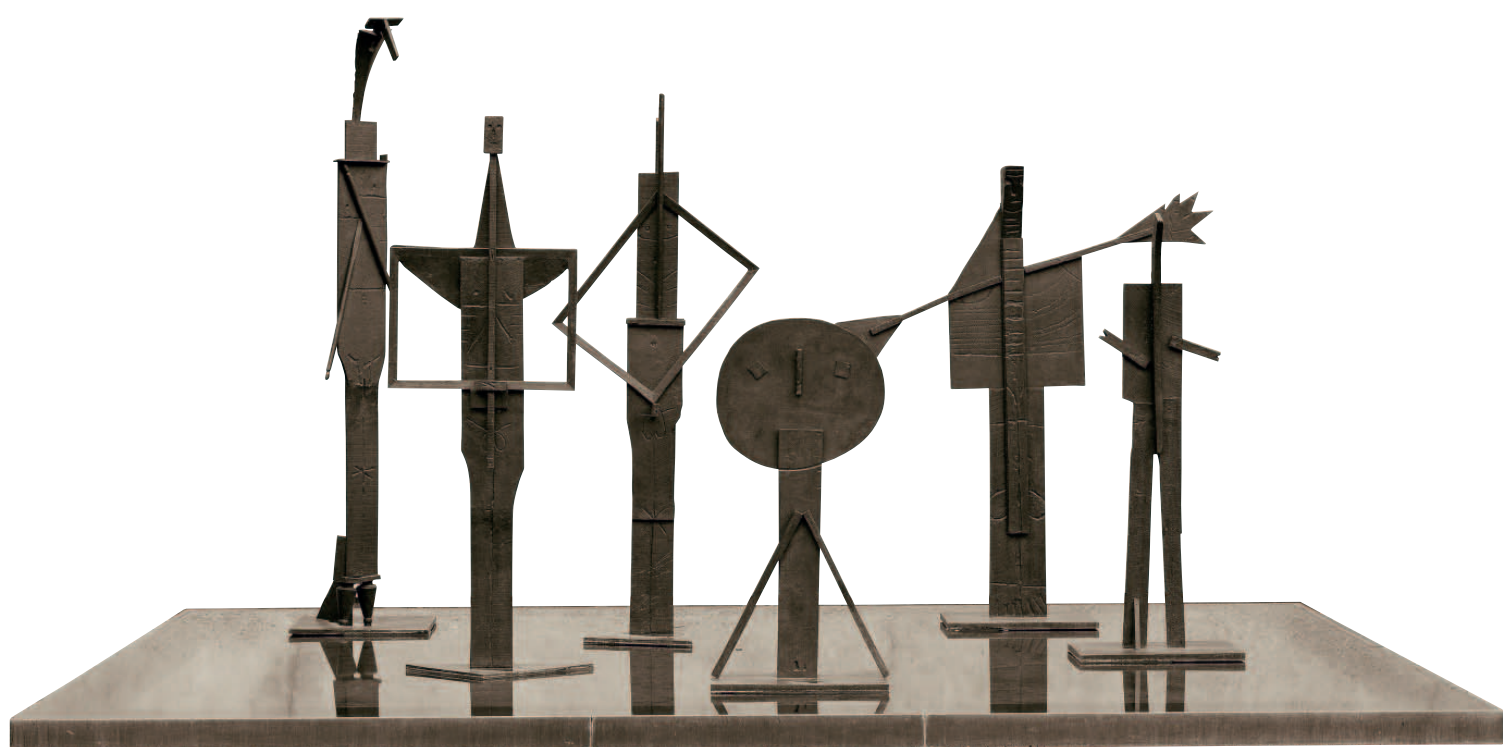
bronze, various dimensions

Pablo Picasso Bequest, 1979, MP352–357

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© Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux/ Thierry Le Mage

© Musée National Picasso, Paris



FOCUS WORK

Musicien (Musician) 1972



**'Art should not be a trompe-l'oeil,
but a trompe-l'esprit.'**

Pablo Picasso¹⁴

K-6 ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS

In the final years of his career, Picasso developed a sketchy style of painting with rapid brush marks. Even though he was in his 90s, this style was full of vitality and freedom as he continued to experiment and explore the qualities of paint. Look at *Musicien* 1972 and describe what you can see. Notice the surface quality of the paint and the direction of Picasso's brush marks. How quickly was this painted? Experiment with paint and try painting quickly and slowly with wet or dry paint. Which technique is most successful or enjoyable?

MUSIC

Even though Picasso spent most of his adult life in France he had a deep bond with Spain, the country of his birth. This musician is playing the guitar, a musical instrument often associated with Spain. Listen to examples of Spanish music and discuss what characteristics you hear. Clap the beats. Find music to go with the focus works in this education kit and consider the tempo and mood of the music.

HSIE

Picasso's Spanish roots often came through in the subject matter of his works of art. Bullfighting in particular was a recurring theme. Research the history and ritual of bullfighting – the associated clothing, character and spectacle of the event. Debate in class the pros and cons of this tradition and the changes that have occurred over time in light of animal welfare concerns.

7-12 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

How did Picasso change the way we see the world?

Research artists and styles of the 20th and 21st centuries and debate Picasso's importance in redefining the meaning of art.

Within his body of work, Picasso revolutionised approaches to painting. At times he would explore different styles at the same time, a radical move not attempted by artists before him. Using the focus works and other significant works in Picasso's oeuvre create a visual timeline to illustrate your point of view.

The musician in this painting has been merged with the foreground and background to form a narrative on a single picture plane. Carefully explore the composition and describe your initial response. How does this approach offer more to the viewer? What does it tell us about the sitter and the artist?

Musicien (Musician) 1972

oil on canvas, 194.5 x 129.5 cm

Pablo Picasso Bequest, 1979, MP229

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NOTES

1. Anne Baldassari (ed), *Picasso: masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso, Paris*, Flammarion, Paris 2011, p 23. Original source: Françoise Gilot & Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (1964), Virago, London 1997, p 118
2. Baldassari Paris 2011, p 249
3. Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: style and meaning*, Phaidon, London 2002, p 162
4. Cowling 2002, p 176
5. Cowling 2002, p 202
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8. Ashton 1972, p 49
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Picasso: masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso, Paris

12 November 2011 – 25 March 2012

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Education Kit

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Cover caption: *Portrait de Dora Maar (Portrait of Dora Maar)* 1937

oil on canvas, 92 x 65 cm

Pablo Picasso Bequest, 1979, MP158

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Further reading

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Exhibition book

A richly illustrated 296-page book is available from the Gallery Shop for \$45.