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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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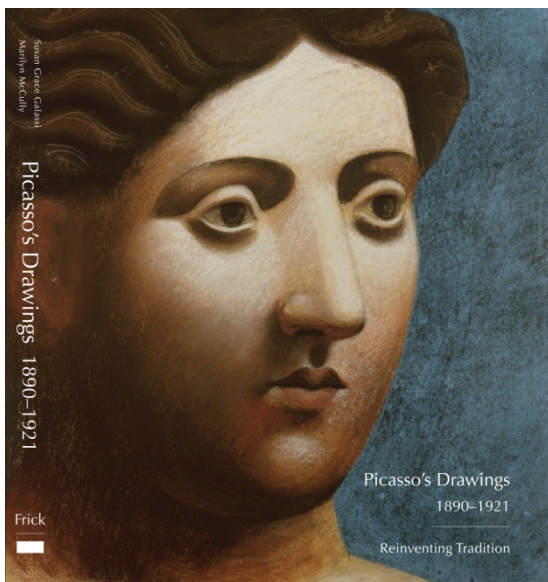
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***TRAVELING EXHIBITION OPENS AT THE FRICK COLLECTION***  
***Picasso's Drawings, 1890–1921: Reinventing Tradition***

October 4, 2011, through January 8, 2012

*Publishable exhibition ticketing information is found on page 6*



Pablo Picasso was one of the world's greatest draftsmen. Drawing was his primary medium for thinking, problem solving, invention, and personal expression. It was the link that connected his work in a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, printmaking, theater design, and ceramics, and was a direct tie to his predecessors. Picasso's diverse body of original work on paper broke new ground, while also consciously incorporating aspects of the tradition from which it sprang. This autumn, The Frick Collection presents an exhibition of more than sixty drawings (works in pencil, ink, watercolor, gouache, pastel, and chalk) spanning the first thirty years of Picasso's career, from his first signed drawing to works from the early 1920s. During these same

years, museum founder Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919) was acquiring masterpieces from the early Renaissance through the end of the nineteenth century. Frick and Picasso shared an appreciation of the same artistic heritage, the former as collector, the latter as creator. An innovator who both challenged and continued the grand European tradition celebrated at the Frick, Picasso belongs to the Collection as its most irrepressible offspring, although not actually represented in its holdings. The many references to the works of El Greco, Goya, Ingres, Renoir and others that run through his drawings link them indirectly with the museum's permanent holdings, while the sheets exude the radical new spirit of the early twentieth century.

Beginning and ending in a classical mode, this period encompasses some of the most important steps in his career: his traditional academic training, his early encounters with works by modern and Old Master artists, his creative interaction with pre-classical and tribal art, his invention with Georges Braque of cubism and *papier collé*, and his postwar alternation between cubism and classicism—the groundwork for all the developments in his later career. **This major exhibition also travels to Washington D.C. and will be shown at the National Gallery of Art from January 29 through May 6, 2012.** It was organized by Susan Grace Galassi, Senior Curator, The Frick Collection, and Marilyn McCully, an independent scholar and authority on Picasso, in collaboration with Andrew Robison, the Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Major funding for the presentation in New York is provided by Bill and Donna Acquavella, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and the late Melvin R. Seiden. Additional support is generously provided by Walter and Vera Eberstadt, Agnes Gund, the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, the Thaw Charitable Trust, Mr. and Mrs. Julio Mario Santo Domingo, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The exhibition is also supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The accompanying catalogue has been underwritten by the Center for Spain in America and The Christian Humann Foundation.

Comments Galassi, “The past decade has witnessed a spurt of activity focusing on Picasso’s relationship with the Old Masters and his nineteenth-century predecessors, as well as with non-Western arts. However, this topic has not been examined specifically in terms of his drawing, where many of these references and relationships first appear. As drawing is a common language passed down and embellished by artists over generations, this particular area of the art of Picasso seemed ready-made for exploration. We have not tried to make direct comparisons between Picasso’s drawings and those of other artists, but to show the breadth and range of references on both a technical and stylistic level that give an historical grounding to his remarkable innovations and inventions—as well as his awareness of coming at the end of a great chain of artists.”

## **A YOUNG IN TRAINING**

As the son of a drawing instructor and provincial painter, José Ruiz Blasco, Picasso started to draw at a very young age. His formal academic education began in 1892 and continued over a period of five-and-a-half years. His *Study of a Torso* of 1895, rendered in pencil after a cast of a figure from the pediment of the Parthenon, shows the fifteen-year-old’s thorough working knowledge of rules of proportion, linear perspective, and chiaroscuro. Through such exercises, he learned the conventions for rendering the illusion of three-dimensional objects on a flat surface and absorbed principles of form handed down from antiquity and the Renaissance. Academic drawings such as this one are considered a means to an end, rather than independent artworks, conduits for transmitting the common language of classical art through an approved canon of models. Picasso would undoubtedly have also grasped through these exercises a sense of the endless possibility of formal and technical variation that connect generations of artists. At sixteen, Picasso entered the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. After a few months, however, he felt he had absorbed what was useful to him from academic training and left. He spent his days making copies after works by the Spanish masters in the Prado, drew from life with an informal group of artists, and filled sketchbooks with observations from his everyday surroundings. His rebellion extended beyond the

academy, and he rejected the conventional career path his father had envisioned for him: climbing the ladder to a professorship through juried exhibitions. Returning to Barcelona, Picasso immersed himself in the thriving Catalan fin-de-siècle movement of *Modernisme* and worked briefly as an illustrator and designer of posters. Following his debut in February 1900 in his first solo exhibition at a local tavern, Picasso drew the *Self-Portrait* of 1901–2. The sheet, shown above, captures the energy and searching quality of a young artist attempting to establish himself in both modernist circles and in the grand tradition. Allusions to self-portraits by Poussin and Delacroix in the Louvre give a sense of his expanded horizons and of the place he sought to claim in his new milieu. In technique, the black chalk strokes form a force field around the head, recalling portraits by Van Gogh. The combination of references to Old Master and modern art would remain a feature of his drawing.

## **MOVE TO PARIS**

In Paris, where he settled permanently in 1904 and where he would spend most of his career, Picasso was uniquely situated in time and place to create his combusive mix of traditional means and new formulations. Available to him were the Louvre's extraordinary collections of painting and sculpture from antiquity to the mid-nineteenth century, and also an abundance of work by the revolutionary artists of the preceding generation—Cézanne, Degas, Monet, Renoir, and Gauguin—many of whom were still active. More to the point for his development as a draftsman, he also had access to the sweep of Western European drawing from the medieval period to the present. From the mid-nineteenth century onward, Paris was a major center for the display and sale of historic drawings. Paradoxically, as the emphasis on training in the classical manner diminished with the decline of the academic system and the rise of modern art, Old Master and nineteenth-century drawings were being more widely shown in exhibitions than they had been at any other time in the past. At the Exposition Universelle of 1900, Roger Marx, a critic and passionate advocate for drawing, helped to organize a temporary exhibition on an unprecedented scale, featuring 1,400 sheets from public and private sources. A 1900 handbook of the Louvre lists 2,500 works on display on two floors. Original works by Pisanello, Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Dürer, Correggio, Rembrandt, and Ingres, to name only a few, were accessible to the public in Paris in the early twentieth century in greater quantity than at any previous point. At the same time, new developments in photographic methods of reproduction were bringing master drawings out of the connoisseur's cabinet and making them available to a broader public through both luxury editions and more widely mass-produced portfolios.

Picasso's academic training connected him to generations of artists who were formed through the same methods. His discerning eye would have quickly picked up ideas from his predecessors wherever he saw them. Although this kind of theft is part of the normal process for every artist, the wealth and breadth of direct and indirect references in his work to motifs, manners, and techniques of earlier artists strongly suggest that Picasso envisioned from the outset a place for himself in the grand tradition of drawing, which he aimed to perpetuate in reinvented form. Drawing was both a deeply serious and a playful pursuit for Picasso, and he took enormous pride in it. Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, he made use of drawing in the traditional way as preparatory studies leading to multi-figure compositions in oil, and as independent works in pastel, watercolor, and gouache, examples of which are included in the show. Driven by his own expressive imperatives and responding to the general

zeitgeist, he experimented with a variety of manners of representation. Some works in the exhibition show him weaving together disparate manners of different eras into a new, complex entity. His large-scale gouache on cardboard, *Acrobat in Blue* of 1905, depicting a brooding adolescent in worker's overalls, shows his awareness of Cézanne's pared-down portraits. It has affinities as well with the simple and direct manner of early Renaissance artists, such as the Italian and French primitives, whose works were then the subjects of an important publication and a ground-breaking exhibition. While the head of the acrobat is delicately modeled with touches of pink and white, the outlines of the body are pronounced, emphasizing the hybrid nature of this work as a drawn painting.

## **REWORKING THE HUMAN BODY, EXPERIMENTS IN FORM AND SPACE**

In *Yellow Nude* of 1907, at right, a figure study related to his landmark painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R.)* of the same year, Picasso, like his Spanish forebears Jusepe Ribera and Francisco de Goya, found an outlet for his prodigious imagination through radical reworkings of the human body. The aggressiveness of the posture, ferocity of the masklike head, vibrant color, and bold brushwork encapsulate in one full-scale study of a single figure Picasso's violent breaking away from the accepted norms of representation. In the final painting, he confronted head-on the concept of mimetic depiction that underlies Western European art from the Renaissance onward; in the study, however, aspects of traditional draftsmanship remain. The figure, seen from below, stands in contrapposto and strikes a pose with hands behind the back, like a live model on a dais. The slashing red and black parallel lines suggest the striations often found on tribal masks.

During the years between 1909 and 1914, Picasso worked in a close creative collaboration with Georges Braque. The two artists embarked on a series of exhilarating formal experiments that changed the course of twentieth-century art. Picasso's 1909 drawing *Still Life with Chocolate Pot* partakes of a long tradition by Spanish masters of austere still lifes depicting a few everyday objects but shows Picasso's movement toward a more structural language, building on the example of Cézanne's constructive brushstroke and the loosening of linear perspective. Here, the objects rest on a radically upturned tabletop that pushes them to the surface of the sheet, and he creates tension between the sleek planes and sharp angles. Such experiments with form and space led to cubism, which we see here in its early stages.

## **PAPIER COLLÉ AND BEYOND**

In his *Cup of Coffee* of 1912, Picasso takes inventive aim at the underlying methods and assumptions of naturalistic representation. This work and several other *papiers collés* form a climactic endpoint to a suite of works in various media on the time-honored theme of the still life with a musical instrument. Here, a guitar and a cup of coffee rest on a table with a fringed covering in an interior setting (referred to through a scrap of actual wallpaper). The drawing is an exhilarating battleground for dominance between different modes and methods of representation, and between the real and the represented. Hand-drawn parts of the guitar work with and against cutout shapes of paper that stand for other parts of the instrument. Picasso challenges the viewer to assemble the whole made of disparate parts that collide spatially and conceptually. The *papier collé* challenges previously held concepts of what constitutes a drawing and enlarges the field on multiple levels. While bursting boundaries, literally and

figuratively, in their intrinsic beauty and grandeur, works such as the *Cup of Coffee*, at right, also appear to be homages to the grand tradition of drawing. The blue and gray pieces of pasted paper and the tan ground are all standard colors of fine art paper used as drawing supports by artists for centuries. They lend to this radical work the look of an Old Master sheet, as if Picasso had literally cut up the past—the methods, materials, techniques, and supports of the rich history of drawings—and reassembled them to form a new order that literally incorporates into itself the history against which they are to be read.

By the onset of World War I, cubism was becoming the lingua franca of the avant-garde, and Picasso chose to distance himself from any semblance of a “school.” He worked instead in a variety of manners simultaneously. For example, he made occasional drawings in a meticulous style inspired by Ingres, as seen at left in his *Portrait of Madame Georges Wildenstein* of 1918. Such delicately rendered portraits showcase his graphic skills as on a par with Ingres. Here he renders the heavy volumes of the chair and figure of the subject in pure line, depicting her head and neck in a contrasting sculptural, illusionistic mode. Yet, Picasso introduces disjunctions in his drawing that carry his cubist sensibility back into the realm of naturalism and which mark this portrait as distinctly his own creation. An invitation from the poet Jean Cocteau to collaborate on a ballet that was to be produced by Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes opened new vistas to Picasso through his working with avant-garde musicians and choreographers. The experience also renewed his longstanding love of the commedia dell’arte, which had featured prominently in his art in the early years of the century. Following the premiere of the Ballets Russes’s production of *Pulcinella*, for which Picasso made set and curtain designs and one costume design, he created his dazzling gouache *Pierrot and Harlequin*, illustrated on page one, in a flattened cubist manner. Here he continues to play with representational modes, juxtaposing realistically and diagrammatically defined hands.

## **INSPIRED BY THE ART OF ANTIQUITY**

Picasso’s work with the ballet took him to Rome in the spring of 1917, his first direct contact with the art of antiquity and the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods. He traveled to the sites and museums of Florence, Naples, Herculaneum, and Pompeii, and renewed his powerful ties to the classical Mediterranean heritage of his homeland. Picasso returned to a sculptural mode in many of his drawings of the early 1920s. In 1921 he spent the summer in the village of Fontainebleau, in close proximity to the Renaissance château with its frescoes by Italian mannerist artists and gardens with fountains and statuary. During this exceptionally fruitful period and in the months following his return to Paris, Picasso produced a group of works in a variety of media featuring robust, monumental female figures, both contemporary and classical. In the one of these drawings, *Head of a Woman* (illustrated on the front of this press release), the chalky surface and chiseled features evoke a generic Greco-Roman head with its smooth surface, deep-set blank eyes, and simplified form, as seen in the continuous line of the arc of the brow and the straight line of the nose. This sheet recalls the drawings Picasso made from prints and casts after classical sculpture during his first years at the academy to learn the conventions of classical draftsmanship. Like the most disembodied of his cubist figure drawings, this monumental work is about the artifice of art—particularly of drawing. With equal affinity to both painting and sculpture, this tour-de-force of

draftsmanship takes a place in a long line of variations on classical forms and themes with a contemporary twist: the close-up view and cropping of the image are also evocative of photography.

## PUBLICATION

Accompanying the exhibition is a richly illustrated catalogue published by The Frick Collection in association with Yale University Press. Like the exhibition, the book brings to the fore the significance of drawing to Picasso's engagement with artists of the past during the first thirty years of his career. It explores the diverse ways in which he perpetuated, competed with, and ultimately reinvented the practices of his artistic mentors on his own terms. The book includes an essay by Susan Grace Galassi providing an overview of Picasso's drawing practice and interest in Old Masters and nineteenth-century art. It also features an in-depth essay by Marilyn McCully in which she analyzes the critical responses to Picasso's drawings from 1900 through the early 1920s. Following these essays are full-length entries on all of the works in the exhibition. The catalogue (304 pages, 200 color illustrations) is available in hardcover (\$60, member price \$54) and softcover (\$45, member price \$40.50) in the Museum Shop, on the Frick's Web site ([www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)), and by phone at (212) 547-6848.

## TICKETING INFORMATION

*Picasso's Drawings, 1890–1921: Reinventing Tradition* is included with paid museum admission. Timed tickets will be issued for this special exhibition, and reserving them in advance is strongly recommended. Beginning in September, timed tickets (a maximum of four per order) may be reserved online for a small processing fee at [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org) or by calling Telecharge at 212.239.6200. Online tickets must be purchased at least 24 hours in advance. Subject to availability, same day and advance timed tickets may also be obtained—without a processing fee—at the Frick's admission desk. For more information about reserving tickets, please visit the Frick's Web site.

Museum Members may view the special exhibition without advance reservations. To join, please contact the Membership Department at 212.547.0709 or visit <http://www.shopfrick.org/support/membership.htm>.

Group visits must be booked a minimum of two weeks in advance. To arrange a group visit, please call 212.288.0700 or e-mail [groupvisits@frick.org](mailto:groupvisits@frick.org).

## RELATED EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### Gallery Talks

Saturdays, October 29, November 19, and December 17, at 12:00 noon

Join curators for an overview of the special exhibition. *Seating in the Music Room will be on a first come, first served basis. This program is free with museum admission, and reservations are not required.*

### Special Exhibition Lectures

*Wednesday evening lectures are free and do not require reservations. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. (if those planning to attend arrive earlier, they are expected to pay the regular museum admission fee). The Saturday afternoon lecture in this group is free with museum admission; doors for that program open at 1:45 p.m.*

**Date:** Wednesday, October 5, 6:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Marilyn McCully, special exhibition co-curator

**Title:** *Drawing at Fontainebleau*

The twelve weeks that Picasso spent in Fontainebleau during the summer of 1921 brought him into close contact with a period of French art that was embodied in the architecture of the château and park, as well as in its decoration and, as it happened, in a large exhibition of Mannerist drawings. The lecturer will discuss the work Picasso produced during this time and the way he

responded to a different artistic environment, which sparked new directions, particularly in the approach, techniques, and materials of his drawings. The talk will conclude with a discussion of his unrealized plan for a major composition, a modern-dress version of his *Three Women at the Spring*.

**Date:** Wednesday, November 2, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Natasha Staller, Professor of the History of Art, Amherst College  
**Title:** *Picasso, His Father, and the End of Illusion*

With a master's sleight of hand, Picasso exposed illusions that had hoodwinked others for centuries, from *trompe l'oeil* paintings to séances in Paris. With the creation of cubism, he exposed the con of 'realistic' art that had bamboozled his father, a failed provincial painter and drawing instructor. He debunked the dream of replicating a god-given world, as he called into question the very existence of a creator-god. In surprising, deep, and not yet recognized ways—in his work and through his acts from childhood to the end of his life—Picasso performed a conflicted dance of connection to and revolt against his father.

**Date:** Wednesday, November 16, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Andrew Robison, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

**Title:** *Picasso as Thief: The Case of Purloined Drawings?*

Picasso denied that tradition and earlier artists influenced him. Instead, he said, if he saw something he liked he simply used it. Focusing on drawings featured in the special exhibition, this lecture asks what did Picasso steal and was it important?

**Date:** Wednesday, December 14, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Jeffrey Weiss, Adjunct Professor of Fine Arts, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University  
**Title:** *Picasso's Contingent Cubism*

With the invention of *papier collé* and constructed sculpture Picasso's work took a fundamental turn. This lecture will address the artist's cubism of 1912–13, when conventions of craft were replaced by a series of mechanical operations. By producing work from attached (at times detachable) parts that were cut, pasted, pinned, and stitched together, Picasso brought radical instability to the material constitution of the esthetic object.

**Date:** Saturday, January 7, 2:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Susan Grace Galassi, Senior Curator, The Frick Collection  
**Title:** *Picasso Early and Late*

Through his drawings, paintings, and sculptures, Picasso carried on a lifelong dialogue with his artistic predecessors. In this talk, the co-curator of the current special exhibition will examine the different forms this dialogue took, from the fresh discoveries of his youth to his obsessive focus on past achievement—that of others and his own—which became the leitmotif of his final decades.

**Seminars** *Limited to 20 participants. Register online or call 212.547.0704. Fee: \$100 (\$90 for Members)*

**Date:** Monday, December 5, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Susan Grace Galassi, Senior Curator and co-curator of the exhibition, The Frick Collection  
**Title:** *Picasso's Drawing Odyssey*

Picasso began to draw at a very young age, and his prodigious gifts were recognized early. Through the drawings selected for the special exhibition, the co-curator explores Picasso's drawing odyssey over the first thirty years of his lengthy career, during which time he created some of his most inventive and beautiful works on paper. Learn how he subverted and reinvented the traditions of the past, ultimately keeping them alive while breaking new ground.

**Date:** Thursday, December 8, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Jack Flam, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Art and Art History at Brooklyn College and Graduate Center of the City University of New York

**Title:** *Picasso as Draftsman: Reinventing the World*

Picasso was one the most skilled and versatile draftsmen who ever lived. Throughout his life he invented a number of imaginative ways to depict the world around him, creating a broad-ranging formal vocabulary and forging a variety of pictorial styles. He insisted that the truth took many different forms. "Art is a lie," he famously said, "that allows us to understand the truth." Participants will study and explore Picasso's radically original inventions through the works presented in the current special exhibition.

## Course

The Frick Collection is pleased to offer an array of afterschool, evening, and weekend programs for middle school, high school, and university students as well as educators. Classes are free, but registration is required. To register and learn about the full schedule of course offerings, please visit our Web site or call 212.547.0704.

### Art Club for Middle School Students: Old Masters, New Eyes

Tuesdays, October 11, 18, & 25 and November 1, 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

The Frick Collection is renowned for its paintings by great European masters, including Rembrandt, Vermeer, Goya, and Velázquez. Participants will discover how Picasso simultaneously subverted, yet carried on, the traditions of these Old Master artists. They will use their own perspective to bring meaning to these treasured works of art.

## BASIC INFORMATION

**General Information Phone:** 212.288.0700

**Web site:** [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto:info@frick.org)

**Where:** 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

**Hours: open six days a week:** 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11am to 5pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11am to 5pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

**Admission:** \$18; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11am to 1pm; see above for special ticketing information for this special exhibition

**PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection.**

**Subway:** #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

**Tour Information:** included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

**Museum Shop:** the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

**Group Visits:** Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

**Public Programs:** A calendar of events is published regularly and is available upon request.

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For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Head of Media Relations & Marketing or Alexis Light, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing

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