



Contact: Katrina Carl
(805) 884-6430
kcarl@sbma.net



Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Dora Maar* (Theodora Markovich), 1936.
Mourlot lithograph, ed. 214/350. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Anonymous Donor.

Pablo Picasso at SBMA
Exhibition ***Picasso on Paper*** Highlights Museum's Permanent Collection

September 6 – December 7, 2008

August 8, 2008 – By any reckoning, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) is one of the most important figures and influential artists in the last 100 years. In September, a handsome selection of 25 works by this influential artist will grace the walls of Von Romberg and Emmons galleries at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in the exhibition ***Picasso on Paper: Drawings and Prints from the Permanent Collection (1899-1967)***. While Picasso may be a household name, what may be less obvious is that SBMA owns an impressive collection of works by the artist that represent the entirety of his career. ***Picasso on Paper*** includes drawings and prints that span 68 years of Picasso's activity, ranging in media and subjects: portraits, classical legends, fantasies, some still-life and even the reworking of old master images.

The very young Picasso showed a passion and a skill for drawing from an early age. From the age of seven, he received formal artistic training from his father in figure drawing and oil painting. Picasso arrived in Paris, an unknown 23 year-old, in April 1904. He soon settled into his famous studio, the Bateau-Lavoir, and began to associate with members of the international avant-garde in the city, notably painters, the art dealer Ambroise Vollard, and Gertrude Stein and her circle.

His subject was humanity and its condition; his work was usually quite personal, and his skills in drawing were scarcely equaled in the history of Western art. He said that his images were his novels, but drawn rather than written. Picasso was indefatigable, reworking images again and again, not because they disappointed him, but because he was rarely satisfied that his agile mind had exhausted their possibilities.

He was ceaselessly inventive; not only in his numerous paintings – often one or more a day, but also in hundreds of prints and drawings and at least 314 posters.

Picasso's work is often categorized into periods. While the names of many of his later periods are debated, the most commonly accepted periods in his work are the Blue Period (1900–1904), the Rose Period (1905–1906), and Cubism (1908-1920).



Pablo Picasso, *The Frugal Repast* 1904-1913. Drypoint on a zinc plate, resurfaced in steel. From edition 250, after a painting of the same name of 1904. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of Wright S. Ludington.

Represented in the exhibition, *The Frugal Repast* 1904-1913, is the first print that Picasso completed. In 1904, just arrived in Paris, he acquired the zinc plate, cleaned off a landscape, and reused it for a first edition of 30 impressions, still haunted by faint traces of the previous landscape.

His dealer Ambroise Vollard acquired the plate, had it resurfaced in steel, and in 1913 published a second edition of 250 impressions, including the one featured in SBMA's collection. The emaciation of both figures, their melancholy, and the man's blindness reflect Picasso's paintings of his Blue and Pink periods. One critic has described it as "gaunt and cheerless... the downside of human suffering"; another sees "poetic charm and repose" in it. It surely evokes the loneliness of Picasso's first months in Paris.



Left: Pablo Picasso, *Italian Peasants* 1919. Pencil and smeared charcoal on paper. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of Wright S. Ludington. Right: Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Pitcher* 1919. Pencil over charcoal on paper. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of Wright S. Ludington.

Picasso's drawings *Italian Peasants* and *Woman with a Pitcher* were based on photographic postcards that he acquired in 1917 during a visit to Naples with his friend, Igor Stravinsky. When Picasso returned to Paris, he used the cards as models.

In *Italian Peasants* reminders of the original photographs are evident in the stiff poses and detachment of the picturesque young couple who have been rather questionably identified as a bride and groom. But the photograph has been transformed by Picasso's firm, even delineation of the contours. The more openly classical *Woman with a Pitcher* is based on an Egyptian photograph from circa 1860-1880. The pose and details are the same, but Picasso endowed the humble little woman with a monumental dignity.



Pablo Picasso, *Blind Minotaur Guided by a Little Girl in the Night*
December 1934 – January 1935. Aquatint. Santa Barbara
Museum of Art, Gift of Wright S. Ludington.

Illustrating the more personal nature of his work is the *Blind Minotaur Guided by a Little Girl in the Night* 1934 – 1935. The half-man, half-bull Minotaur may stand for Picasso himself. Tragically blind, the minotaur raises his powerful head in anguish; he is helplessly dependent on an innocent little girl to guide him.

Picasso made this at the age of 53 and at the height of his powers. However, the model for the young girl was his most recent companion, Marie-Therese, who was to give birth to his daughter Maya, in September 1935.

This exhibition has been guest curated by Professor Alfred Moir, SBMA's Consulting Curator of European Drawings.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is a privately funded, not-for-profit institution that presents internationally recognized collections and exhibitions and a broad array of cultural and educational activities as well as travel opportunities around the world.

***Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA.
Open Tuesday - Sunday 11 am to 5 pm. Closed Monday. Free every Sunday.
805.963.4364 www.sbmanet***