

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

411 West Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91105 www.nortonsimon.org

Public Affairs Department 626.844.6941 media@nortonsimon.org

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Media Contacts:

Leslie C. Denk | ldenk@nortonsimon.org | (626) 844-6941

Emma Jacobson-Sive | emma@ejs-media.com | (323) 842-2064

States of Mind: Picasso Lithographs 1945–1960

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Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973), *Long-Haired Young Girl*, Nov 6 – 24, 1945, Lithographs, 1st state – 6th and final states, Norton Simon Art Foundation, Gift of Jennifer Jones Simon © 2016 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Pasadena, CA—The Norton Simon Museum presents *States of Mind: Picasso Lithographs 1945–1960*, a revelatory exhibition exploring Pablo Picasso’s prolific work in the medium of lithography. Drawing from the Norton Simon Museum’s holdings of more than 700 Picasso prints—among the deepest collections of its kind anywhere in the world—*States of Mind* traces the evolution of the artist’s individual compositions from the 1940s and 1950s through multiple states, subtle adjustments and radical revisions. The more than 80 prints on view, many presented for the first time in 40 years, give viewers a rare chance to encounter this groundbreaking body of work by one of history’s most celebrated artists.

By the end of the Second World War, Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973) had reached what he called “the moment... when the movement of my thought interests me more than the thought itself.” This new interest in “movement” found its most remarkable expression in Picasso’s practice as a printmaker. Whereas oil paintings inevitably covered their tracks, concealing the process of their making under layers of opaque color, prints—especially lithographs—promised to record their own development through sequential stages, charting the movement of their maker’s thoughts from state to state. Picasso

could work up a design, print it (in a first state), rework it and print it again (in a second state), repeating the process two or 10 or 20 times to chart the metamorphoses of a particular compositional idea.

On Nov. 2, 1945, with France still under a provisional government and groceries still rationed in Paris, Picasso walked into the Mourlot Frères print shop in the rue de Chabrol. “He arrived as though he were going to battle,” the firm’s director, Fernand Mourlot, later recalled, and indeed the demands Picasso would place on Mourlot’s master printers were without precedent. He had produced only a few dozen lithographs in the 1910s and 1920s—all more or less conventional in their approach—but the designs he brought to Mourlot’s shop were far more daring, incorporating grattage, collage and mixed media. “How could anyone possibly print from that?” demanded Gaston Tutin, one of Mourlot’s master printers, calling the artist’s disregard for proper lithographic technique “a monstrosity.” But, cajoling his reluctant collaborators, Picasso swiftly and decisively transformed the practice of lithography, producing 185 plates over the next three years and more than 400 by the end of the 1960s.

The subjects of Picasso’s early lithographs are often ordinary: a dish of fruit, a cup of tea, a boy in a striped shirt. There are experiments with lithographic ink and doodles of animals. The face of a beautiful woman, one eyebrow slightly cocked, gazing calmly back at the observer, appears again and again. The young painter Françoise Gilot, Picasso’s companion from 1946 to 1953, provided the inspiration for many of these compositions; through two or four or 10 printed states, her features metamorphose past likeness into abstraction in a process the artist also applied to various other motifs. Perhaps the most famous example is that of *The Bull*, which treats a subject close to the Spanish painter’s heart. From a simple brush and ink drawing to a glowering behemoth, to a schematic portrayal reminiscent of a butcher’s chart, to a playful outline, concise as a cave painting, Picasso transformed this creature over 11 states from Dec. 5, 1945, to Jan. 17, 1946. As for several of the artist’s most iconic lithographs of the 1940s, the exhibition includes all the editioned states of *The Bull* as well as a unique working proof of an unnumbered state.

Picasso at the Norton Simon Museum

Over the course of his collecting career, Norton Simon purchased 885 works by Picasso, more than by any other artist except Goya. These comprised some 20 paintings in oil and pastel, nine bronzes, six drawings and 850 prints (some of which were sold at a later date). His largest single acquisition of Picasso artworks occurred in 1977 with the purchase of 228 lithographs, dated from the 1940s and 1950s and originating from the collection of Fernand Mourlot himself. The group included trial proofs (sometimes printed just once or twice), artist’s proofs (printed in private editions of 18, often years before the larger commercial editions of 50) and 168 final proofs marked *Bon à tirer* (“O.K. to print”) in Picasso’s brisk, confident hand. Opening up this rare trove, the exhibition presents 86 prints that chart

Picasso's discovery of lithography and his continuing reliance upon the medium to record the movement of his thoughts.

Picasso and Lithography

Unlike intaglio printmaking techniques like engraving and etching, lithography is essentially a planographic (flat) process. It relies on the repulsion of grease and water to transfer a hand-drawn image from a smooth surface (originally a piece of limestone) onto a sheet of paper. In its most rudimentary form, the lithograph requires an artist to draw or paint with a greasy crayon or greasy ink (the *tusche*) directly on the stone, which is then chemically fixed, wet, inked and printed, producing an exact, reversed copy of the tusche drawing. Since the development of transfer papers in the 19th century, an artist has been able to work up his or her design in the studio and send it off to the printer's shop for chemical transfer, reversal and production. The result is an exactly reproducible image that captures all the tonal subtleties of even a pencil drawing, but requires no specialized printmaking skills on the artist's part.

As a printmaker, Picasso was most closely associated with intaglio techniques, particularly etching and aquatint, but lithography presented him with a new challenge and a new set of tools. What may have interested him most about the process seems to have been its flexibility: tusche applied in a liquid wash one day might be scraped off the next, mimicking the effect of a wood engraving, a child's drawing or a graffito. A paper cutout design, inked in various colors, might be printed on its own or layered with a crayon drawing, adding new dimension to each. A figure worked up in black on a white background could be incised, covered and drawn anew as a white figure on a black background. The possibilities were endless.

The 1950s and the *Women of Algiers*

By 1955 (10 years after his arrival at Mourlot's studio), Picasso was unquestionably the most celebrated living artist, for Henri Matisse, his only real rival, had died in 1954. The story of Picasso's lithographs is entwined from the beginning with that of his relationship to Matisse, for two designs of the first three Picasso brought to Mourlot's shop—white heads scraped into black tusche grounds—seem to have been inspired by white-on-black book illustrations Matisse had published the previous year. The older artist, moreover, shared Picasso's frustration with the "disappearance" in painting of earlier stages and had attempted to solve the problem as early as 1940 by having photographs taken of his work in progress. The display at a Parisian gallery in 1945 of a finished picture by Matisse surrounded by sequential photographs taken as it was painted may have inspired Picasso's most ambitious attempts at recording the "movement" of his own thoughts through lithography—*The Bull* and *Two Nude Women*, printed in 11 and 18 states, respectively, between November 1945 and February 1946. Both works are

represented in the exhibition, which includes a precious proof with *The Bull* on one side and *Two Nudes* on the other.

After the death of Matisse, Picasso plunged into a project still more explicitly inspired by the older artist's work, remarking, "When Matisse died, he left his odalisques to me." Picasso here referred to his own most-sustained experiment in seriality to date: the *Women of Algiers*, a series of 15 paintings (designated by the letters "A" to "O"), numerous drawings and intaglio prints, and two lithographs (one of them printed in four states) executed from late December 1954 through February 1955. With this project, Picasso measured himself not only against Matisse, the modern master of such imaginary harem scenes, but also against Eugène Delacroix, the 19th-century Romantic painter who had more or less invented the genre. When challenged for turning to an ostensibly old-fashioned subject, Picasso offered a second explanation for the series, citing the dark features and graceful profile of Jacqueline Roque, the artist's muse and companion from 1954 until the end of his life: "Besides, Delacroix had already met Jacqueline."

The exhibition concludes with Picasso's monumental lithographic portraits of Roque—most often captured in profile, in paired states (one light, the other dark)—and with the *Women of Algiers*, represented not only by the complete lithographic output, but by a large, brightly-colored canvas, letter "I" in the series, a painted trace of thought in motion.

States of Mind is organized by Emily A. Beeny, associate curator at the Norton Simon Museum. In conjunction with the exhibition, the Museum is organizing an extensive series of related events.

Special Events

A selection of exhibition-related events is listed below. For more information, and a complete list of events, visit nortonsimon.org/events. Please note all listed events are free with Museum admission.

Lectures

Picasso's Lithographs in Context

Charles Stuckey, Head of Research, Yves Tanguy Catalogue Raisonné project, Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, New York

Saturday, October 15, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

With relatively few exceptions, Picasso's lithographs are celebrations of the new love of his life, the art student Françoise Gilot. The novice and the veteran obliged one another to see themselves in unexpected ways, and the images in Picasso's lithographs provide countless insights related to his own earlier works, to his current paintings, sculptures and ceramics, and to works by other artists admired by

Gilot. An in-depth survey of the response of his lithographs to his work as a whole enhances our understanding of their place in Picasso's art and the exhilarating art of post-World War II France.

"A sum of destructions": Norton Simon Collects Picasso

Emily A. Beeny, Associate Curator, Norton Simon Museum

Saturday, October 29, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

"In my case," Picasso once remarked, "a painting is a sum of destructions." These words summarize the artist's relentless pursuit of change, progress, refinement. And, of Picasso's many aphorisms, this one was Norton Simon's favorite. He often quoted it in reference not only to the artist's work but also to his own career as a collector. Like Picasso in his studio, Mr. Simon built up and pared down, amassing vast holdings and then refining them to the extraordinary group of paintings, sculpture and works on paper today housed at the Museum. He acquired more works of art by Picasso than by any other artist except Goya—885 in all, of which 734 today belong to the Museum and Foundations. This lecture will explore Mr. Simon's Picassos and their role in the broader story of his collections.

Conversing with the Masters: Variation as an Artistic Process in Picasso's Work

Susan Grace Galassi, Senior Curator, The Frick Collection

Saturday, January 21, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Throughout his seven-decade career, Picasso conducted artistic dialogues with his predecessors, even as he continually innovated and invented new formal languages. The tension of this push and pull is made explicit in his variations on works of the past. Tracing this process from youth to old age in selected examples, Galassi considers the ways in which the collaborative nature of printmaking added new dimensions to Picasso's engagement with the past, opening the way to his final grand series.

FILM SERIES: French Films Noirs of the 1950s and 1960s

In conjunction with the exhibition *States of Mind: Picasso Lithographs 1945–1960*, the Museum presents essential French films noirs from the 1950s and 1960s. The featured films, made in postwar France, are contemporary to Picasso's lithographs, which were likewise made in France. All films are presented in French with English subtitles. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. No reservations are taken.

***Touchez Pas au Grisbi* (1954), NR**

Directed by Jacques Becker

Friday, November 4, 5:30–7:05 p.m.

After pulling off the heist of a lifetime, Max le Menteur (Jean Gabin) looks forward to spending his remaining days relaxing with his beautiful young girlfriend. But when Riton (René Dary), Max's hapless partner and best friend, lets word of the loot slip to loose-lipped, two-timing Josy (Jeanne Moreau), Max is reluctantly drawn back into the underworld.

Rififi (1955), NR

Directed by Jules Dassin

Friday, November 11, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Out of prison after a five-year stretch, jewel thief Tony (Jean Servais) turns down a quick job offered to him by his friend Jo (Carl Möhner). Then he discovers that his ex-girlfriend has become the lover of a local gangster during his absence. Tony and Jo pick up a crew and turn the minor smash-and-grab job into a full-scale jewel heist. Will Tony and his crew pull off the heist unscathed?

Elevator to the Gallows (1958), NR

Directed by Louis Malle

Friday, November 18, 5:30–7:00 p.m.

Scheming lovers Julien (Maurice Ronet) and Florence (Jeanne Moreau) engineer the “perfect murder” of her husband. But when Julien becomes trapped in the elevator mere floors away from his recent victim, the perfect murder quickly becomes imperfect.

Shoot the Piano Player (1960), NR

Directed by François Truffaut

Friday, December 2, 5:30–6:40 p.m.

Part thriller, part comedy, part tragedy, *Shoot the Piano Player* relates the adventures of mild-mannered piano player Charlie (Charles Aznavour) as he stumbles into the criminal underworld and a whirlwind love affair.

A NIGHT IN FOCUS

Picasso

Saturday, February 11, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Spend an evening exploring the exhibition *States of Mind: Picasso Lithographs 1945–1960* and works by Picasso on view in the permanent collection. Engage with Museum staff, enjoy art-making activities for all ages, listen to live music and more.

FAMILY FESTIVAL

Movement: Musical Explorations

Sunday, November 13, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Explore the development of a musical composition with the Jazz Marlonius Group, a quintet led by jazz/classical bassist and Colburn Conservatory of Music alumnus Marlon Martinez. Musicians perform French folk and postwar bebop showcasing the evolution of music in the era of Picasso and mirroring

the compositional “movement” found in his lithographs of the period. This concert complements the exhibition *States of Mind: Picasso Lithographs 1945–1960*.

AFTERNOON SALON

States of Mind: Picasso Lithographs 1945–1960

Sunday, November 13, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Picasso was enthralled by the printmaking process, as he was able to see the visual evidence of his thoughts. As a result, he transformed the practice of lithography in the late 1940s by incorporating the surrealist painting technique of grattage, collage and mixed media. Participate in an in-depth conversation about Picasso’s creative process.

About the Norton Simon Museum

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum’s collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. Two temporary exhibition spaces feature rotating installations of artworks not on permanent display.

Location: The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 W. Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena, Calif., at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit www.nortonsimon.org. **Hours:** The Museum is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from noon to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed on Tuesday. **Admission:** General admission is \$12 for adults and \$9 for seniors. Members, students with I.D., and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m. All public programs, unless stated otherwise, are free with admission. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free, and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** Pasadena Transit stops directly in front of the Museum. Please visit <http://pasadenatransit.net> for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line, the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, is located at 125 E. Holly St. at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit www.metro.net for schedules.

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