

## PICASSO. HORSES

17 May – 5 September 2010

- The very first painting by Pablo Picasso that was ever conserved was painted in Malaga when he was just eight years old, and there is a horse in it. Ever since then, and right into his old age, the horse appears again and again in Picasso's work. He depicted everything symbolic, noble, grotesque, human and mythological about the beast.
- In *Picasso. Horses*, the Museo Picasso Málaga provides a new look at the presence and meaning of these creatures in Picasso's work, with over fifty artworks on display. Oil paintings, drawings and engravings, amongst other works, show the unique way the artist dealt with this subject and the various different forms in which he portrayed it.
- Curated by Picasso expert Dominique Dupuis-Labbé, the exhibition also includes two illustrated books, one of which dates from the 16<sup>th</sup>-century and contains drawings by Jan Straet, and the other by Francisco de Goya. An engraving by Goya is also on display. Visitors will also be able to see a selection of photographs showing the horses that were always present in the cities where Picasso spent his childhood and youth.
- The MPM has published a book that examines the symbolism of horses in Picasso's oeuvre, and which contains contributions from leading experts on the subject.

## museo**PICASSO**málaga

Pack-animal, weapon of warfare, element of the bullfight, graceful circus acrobat, fighting stud, harmless wooden toy, winged Pegasus... The horse appears constantly in the work of Pablo Picasso, from the time he painted *The Little Yellow Picador* after attending a bullfight in Malaga's *La Malagueta* bullring in 1889, right up to his latter years in the 1960s, in Mougins (France), where he died in 1973.

The *Picasso. Horses* exhibition brings together over fifty works: oil paintings, drawings and engravings are displayed alongside ceramics, a delicate paper cut-out silhouette, and a copy of the stage costume designed by the artist for the famous production *Parade*, by the Ballets Russes. The collection enables viewers to discover the symbolic importance of the horse in Picasso's work, as well as the many meanings he gave to its figure and the wide range of techniques he employed.

The works are grouped together according to different themes, such as the sketches he made in his youth, bullfighting, the circus, the horse as a mythological creature, and war, amongst others. Visitors will have the chance to view a fine selection of works which include outstanding drawings such as *Boy leading a Horse* (1906), *Naked Horseman* (1919), *The Rape* (1920, courtesy MoMA), and *Bullfight* (1934). As the curator Dominique Dupuis-Labbé explains, the highlights of the exhibition are Picasso's works on paper, as most of the oeuvre in which he depicted horses was produced on this support.

Many of the artworks on display belong to private collections and have rarely been shown in public. Works from public collections have been lent by the Picasso Museum in Barcelona; the Musée Picasso and Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris; the Tate Gallery, London; the University of Edinburgh Fine Art Collection; MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, and The Phillips Collection, Washington, amongst others.

### **Classical tradition and the everyday context**

The *Picasso. Horses* exhibition also includes the illustrated book *Los proverbios* (The Proverbs), by Francisco de **Goya**, whose engraving *Una reina del circo* (A Queen of the Circus), is also on show. Alongside these is the illustrated book *La caballeriza de Don Juan de Austria*, (The Stables of Don John of Austria), based on 16th-century drawings by Jan **Straet**. This juxtaposition of classical art, with which Picasso was well acquainted, and modern art, allows visitors to establish interesting connections between the two ways of depicting the same figure.

The exhibition also contains photographs of the cities in which the artist spent his childhood and youth, such as Malaga, Barcelona and Paris, where horses were an everyday part of life at a time when motorcars were not yet in widespread use and villages and cities were entirely dependent on the work of the thousands of horses that walked the streets alongside humans.

### **A specialist publication**

The curator of the exhibition, **Dominique Duppuis-Labbé** is Chief Conservator of the Collections Department of the Directorate of French Museums and a teacher at the École du Louvre. She is also the author of one of the essays in the book that MPM has produced on this subject. Published in both Spanish and English the book also contains a brief selection of writings by Pablo Picasso, and contributions from Laurence Madeline, conservator at the Musée d'Orsay, and Jean-Louis Gouraud, the renowned French historian and publisher.

Dupuis-Labbé asserts in the book that: "Except for the works devoted to the women he loved, Picasso never celebrated the partnership between emotion and creation better than when he dealt with the subject of the horse (...). He produced an infinite variety of images of an animal which, in his oeuvre, combines both male and female symbolism, sun and darkness, playfulness and drama, desire and prudence".

**Picasso. Horses** will be the subject of Gallery Talks, the guided tour that take place every Thursday at 6.00pm at MPM. To join the tour, simply register at the ticket office. The tour is free with the price of admission.

**More info and images:**

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