

From 19 May 2023 to 7 January 2024



Picasso: Untitled. La Casa Encendida / ImagenSubliminal (Miguel de Guzman + Rocio Romero).

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Picasso: Untitled

50 years since the death of Picasso, 50 works by the artist, 50 artists who *retitle* and re-signify them.

"Picasso almost never titled his works; his friends, agents and curators did it for him."
Bernard Ruiz-Picasso

From 19 May 2023, the exhibition ***Picasso: Untitled*** at La Casa Encendida of Fundación Montemadrid presents fifty works from the artist's last period (1963-1973). Of these, twelve had not been shown to the public until now and twenty-three are being displayed in Spain for the first time. All of them have a title and a new description, proposed by each of the fifty guest artists. This – as Bernard Ruiz-Picasso tells us – is in line with the practice of Picasso's friends and associates during the artist's own life.

In this way, Picasso's work is transformed, interrogated and re-signified through parallel histories that offer a radically contemporary perspective of the work of an artist who died fifty years ago in 2023. The new titles and descriptions, some produced through speculative processes and others through poetic or political interpretations, collectively construct a composite portrait of our current perceptions and of Picasso's legacy and influence.

50 works by the last Picasso

In 1963 Picasso turned 82. He was probably the best-known artist in the world and had dominated the art scene for more than half a century. In those last years he drew and painted as he had never done before. Between March and October 1968, he produced 347 etchings; between December 1969 and January 1971 – in two months – 194 drawings. When Picasso was already a nonagenarian, between September 1970 and June 1972 – less than two years – more than 200 paintings came out of his hands. As the art historian Werner Spies reminds us, Picasso, aware of his age, “paints against time”.

A large part of these works, some of them exhibited in *Picasso: Untitled*, were put on display in the successive exhibitions that took place during those years: *Pablo Picasso. Le peintre et son modèle. 44 original gravures. 1963-1965* [Pablo Picasso. The Painter and His Model. 44 Original Engravings. 1963-1965], at the Gérald Cramer Gallery (Geneva, 1966-1967); *Picasso aujourd'hui. Oeuvres récentes* [Picasso Today. Recent Works], at the Rosengart Gallery (Lucerne, 1969); *Pablo Picasso. 1969-1970*, at the Palais des Papes (Avignon, 1970); and *Homage to Picasso for his 90th Birthday*, at the Saitenberg Gallery (New York, 1971).

This is his most prolific period, the one closest to us and yet probably the most unknown.

Eva Franch i Gilabert, curator of the exhibition, says: “What I have discovered by studying Picasso's work over the course of his life is that his late period – as is the case with late periods – was a convergence of moments from the past, offering a transverse reading of almost his entire oeuvre. The last Picasso encompasses almost all the ‘Picassos’ we come to know through a reductionist and essentialist search of his own legacy. Picasso created a ‘productive retrospective’ during those last ten years”.

In the same vein, Bernard Ruiz-Picasso notes: “From the 1960s onwards, Picasso embarked on the final artistic impulse of his career. With nothing left to prove, he offers us an autobiographical series of works in which he affirms his belief in the essential function of art and paints with alacrity some of the emotions that nourish our daily lives”.

“Picasso was the artist of the century of psychoanalysis,” Bernard Ruiz-Picasso continues, “but he was also the first pop artist.” As was the case from the beginning of his career, Picasso was influenced by what was happening in those turbulent 1960s, marked by conflict, social movements, and the growing influence of advertising and the media.

At this time, Picasso began the final transformation of his work, and it was under the influence of this vital and simultaneously global phase that the works in the present show came to life.

“Exhibitions and projects are usually made up of restrictions, but those restrictions usually afford certain freedoms,” says Eva Franch. The starting point of this exhibition, and its restriction as well, was precisely the obligation to only cover works produced during Picasso's last ten years.

“When I was building the conceptual framework for the show, going through the archives and catalogues of that period in the library of the Picasso Museum in Barcelona, I sent Bernard Ruiz-Picasso and his team at the FABA, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, a list of works – with a special focus on types and taxonomies – that I considered of interest for the exhibition. My aim was to concentrate on as broad and diverse a sample as possible, which would subsequently make up the show, reflecting the multiplicity of formats of Picasso’s production during this period. We then collated this list with the collections at the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, and that led to the final selection of works,” says the curator.

Of the fifty works by Picasso that the exhibition comprises, twelve had never been shown to the public before and a total of twenty-three are on display in Spain for the first time. The fifty works range from ceramics to drawings, and also include large-format paintings. “Most of them are – literally speaking – ‘portraits’, but each of them is a journey to a different period of his creative production, a historiographical reference, a biographical portrait, but also a world in itself,” says Eva Franch.

About La Casa Encendida and the meaning of the exhibition

In 2021, the recently deceased José Guirao – former Minister for Culture, former director of the Fundación Montemadrid and commissioner, at the time, of the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Picasso’s death – suggested that La Casa Encendida should participate in the Commemoration’s events.

“We had lots of doubts about how to approach Picasso’s work in the 21st century. We weren’t even sure if La Casa Encendida was the right space for an exhibition of this kind. Our commitment in recent years to a contemporary programme, with a gender perspective and an inclusive, decolonial outlook, was far removed from the figure of the total artist, typical of another era. But Guirao was clear and insisted that La Casa Encendida had to be part of the Year of Picasso, together with national museums and other institutions that had a much longer history of housing projects devoted to leading artists of the last century,” write Lucía Casani and Mónica Carroquino – director and deputy director of La Casa Encendida, respectively – in the exhibition’s catalogue.

“We had to find a way to deconstruct the myth and offer a new reading of Picasso’s work that was in keeping with the present time and also proposed other narratives with which to face society’s current challenges. From the beginning, it was clear to us that we wanted to establish a dialogue with contemporary artists and that an element of play would have to be part of it. We had to confront Picasso without fear or embarrassment,” they point out.

It was then that the project was handed over to Eva Franch i Gilabert, who began a series of conversations with archivists, experts and the Fundación Almine y Albert Ruiz-Picasso (FABA), giving rise to the comment by Bernard Picasso that is quoted at the head of the present press release and to the emergence of a new approach, based on the fact that Picasso almost never titled his works in that period, but let his friends, agents and curators do it for him. On this basis, it was decided to invite fifty contemporary artists to *re-title* fifty works from Picasso’s last period (1963-1973).

50 contemporary artists

“As for the fifty artists selected to *re-title* and re-signify the fifty displayed works by Picasso, they represent a cross-sectional and global topography in terms of artistic expression, cultural background, identity and the generation they belong to,” says the curator. “Each of the 50 artists,” she continues, “has been randomly assigned to a work

by Picasso, which each artist has then renamed. Through this encounter between Picasso and the different guest artists, the visitor is offered a way of understanding, a perspective, a gaze. We are given a title and a text as a new path, an approach, a new reading [of Picasso], but also of ourselves and our contemporaneity.”

“Renaming something is an act of love, and it is also a political act,” the curator says. “The curatorship of the exhibition has involved designing an encounter that allows for critique, analysis, discussion, confrontation, or even the possibility of a dialogue between Picasso and the fifty selected artists. Thus, we render tribute to the works while opening the door to difficult conversations about power, gender, or race, which have been gaining momentum in the last fifty years since Picasso’s death and are now at the centre of artistic and cultural debates.”

Picasso was a truly global painter, and so the guest artists hail from different parts of the planet and are engaged in very diverse forms of practice and understanding. Of different ages and with different gender identities, they have been gathered together in an attempt to open up contemporary perspectives and points of view that are as variegated as an artistic and creative space will allow.

In the same vein, Lucía Casani and Mónica Carroquino write: “The selection of artists was approached as an exercise in mapping current creative activity, in its broadest sense. It was designed to include individual and collective practices and human and technological collaborations from all over the world, encompassing more than twenty different nationalities and an extensive generational range, with participants born between 1945 and 2002. A good constellation, in our opinion, to rename Picasso with humour, a critical spirit, thoroughness and courage”.

The fifty artists that were invited to take part in the show are: Adrián Villar Rojas, Agnieszka Kurant, Ahmet Ögüt, Albert Serra, Alejandro Cesarco, Antoni Muntadas, Asunción Molinos Gordo, Black Quantum Futurism, Cabello/Carceller, Camille Henrot, Christine Sun Kim, Christopher Kulendran Thomas, DIS, El Conde de Torrefiel, Emilie Baltz, Erwin Wurm, Esther Ferrer, Frida Orupabo, Holly Herndon, Isabel Coixet, Iván Argote, Janaina Tschäpe, Jill Magid, Joy Harjo, Johanna Hedva, Jumana Manna, Klára Hosnedlová, Leonor Serrano Rivas, Lydia Ourahmane, Maria Hassabi, Mercedes Azpilicueta, Niño de Elche, Omsk Social Club, ORLAN, Pauline Curnier Jardin, Pedro Neves Marques, Pol Taburet, Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen, Roméo Mivekannin, Ryan Gander, Sara Ramo, Simon Denny, Simon Fujiwara, Sissel Tolaas, Tala Madani, Taryn Simon, The Otolith Group, Trevor Paglen, Tuan Andrew Nguyen and Tyra Tingleff.

The show, which will occupy four rooms in La Casa Encendida, invites visitors to develop a proactive attitude and to question aspects of our perception of Picasso’s work, and at the same time of ourselves, our values and our contemporaneity.

This exhibition is a project of La Casa Encendida and the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso (FABA). It has been curated by Eva Franch i Gilabert as part of the 50th anniversary of Pablo Picasso's death.

Picasso: Untitled / With

The public programme *Picasso: Untitled / With* invites different artists to work with the written pieces that were generated for the show and to transfer them to other languages through music, performance or spoken delivery. The idea is to create a polyphony that overflows the exhibition hall and proposes a multidisciplinary re-reading of Picasso and his work through specific artistic commissions.

The programme kicks off on 20 May with a concert/soundtrack by artists Sofie Birch and Antonina Nowacka and a performance by Maria Hassabi – *Performing Picasso Paintings* – on 21 and 22 May. A special programme created for schools will run from September to December.

In October, an academic seminar jointly organised with the Fundación Almine y Bernard-Ruiz Picasso (FABA) will convene researchers at La Casa Encendida to discuss the last ten years of Picasso's work. A detailed programme of activities will be posted on the LCE website.

To complement the exhibition, a bilingual catalogue will be available, reproducing the fifty displayed works with the new titles assigned to them by the fifty contemporary artists, as well as the latter's written descriptions and reflections on the works and their meaning from a present-day point of view. The catalogue will also contain reflections by Elvira Dyangani Ose, Juan José Lahuerta and Andrea Lissoni.

About *Picasso Celebration 1973-2023*

Picasso Celebration 1973-2023 commemorates the 50th anniversary of Pablo Picasso's death, which falls on 8 April 2023 and will be celebrated with some fifty exhibitions and events in Europe and the United States. The initiative involves a historiographical analysis of Picasso's work and highlights the career of an artist who created such universal symbols as *Guernica*, today a collective emblem in the defence of human rights.

The Celebration is promoted by the governments of Spain and France, who have agreed to join forces through a binational commission that brings together the cultural and diplomatic administrations of the two countries, as well as other renowned cultural institutions in Europe and the United States.

The Celebration's programme has been designed by the Comisión Nacional Española para la Conmemoración del 50 aniversario de la muerte de Pablo Picasso [Spanish National Commission for the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the death of Pablo Picasso] and the Musée National Picasso-Paris [National Picasso Museum in Paris]. Telefónica is part of the Commission as a collaborating institution.

***Picasso: Untitled*, a project of La Casa Encendida and the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso (FABA), has been curated by Eva Franch i Gilibert.**

The exhibition has been organised with the support of the Comisión Nacional Española para la Conmemoración del 50 aniversario de la muerte de Pablo Picasso [National Commission for the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the death of Pablo Picasso] and the collaboration of the Comunidad de Madrid [Regional Government of Madrid], within the framework of *Picasso Celebration 1973-2023*, and has been joined by Telefónica as a collaborating company in Spain.

**La Casa
Encendida**
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FABA
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Almine y Bernard
Ruiz-Picasso



Picasso
Celebración
— 1973.2023



Picasso: Untitled

From 19 May 2023 to 7 January 2024

Rooms B, C, D and E

General Admission €5 / Special Reduced Price €4

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