

PICASSO

SUITE VOLLARD

1 MARCH - 4 MAY 2014

OPENING: 28 FEBRUARY 2014, 6 - 8 PM

The *Vollard Suite* encompasses a hundred printed graphic works that Picasso created in the years 1930 to 1937 using different etching techniques. It is considered the central graphic series in the work of the artist. The creation of the *Vollard Suite* traces back to a suggestion of the art dealer and publisher Ambroise Vollard (1867-1939), who in 1901 staged the first Parisian exhibition of the still unknown young artist in his gallery. In the following years Vollard acquires many of Picasso's works from the Blue and Rose Period, but keeps his distance from Cubism.

In the late 1920's the collaboration between Picasso and Vollard intensifies again, when Vollard is publishing a series of exceptional artist books and graphic editions. In 1927 Picasso illustrates for Vollard Honoré de Balzac's novella, *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* (*The Unknown Masterpiece*).

The *Suite Vollard* reflects Picasso's perception of a period characterized by both extensive changes in his private life and imminent political revolutions. Picasso and his first wife Olga Khokhlowa separate. Marie-Thérèse Walter, the artist's lover and model, gives birth to their daughter Maya. Pablo Picasso acquires Boisgeloup castle in Normandy, where he establishes a studio to concentrate on his sculptural and graphical work. The development of Europe is strained by the increasing fascist menace emanating from Hitler and Franco.

The sculptor's studio becomes the central site and motif of the *Vollard Suite*. Picasso studies the relation between sculptor, model and sculpture. The Minotaur serves as a role model, whose exuberant lifestyle finally leads to his loss of sight and death in the arena. The artist depicts the relation of men and women as a play of crude, animalistic forces. Picasso pays homage to Rembrandt as printmaker par excellence and Vollard as initiator of the suite.

The creation period of the *Vollard Suite*, starting from the first etchings up to the sale of the first sheets, encompasses nearly two decades. Nowadays we may assume that the *Suite* was not commissioned by Vollard, but accompanied by him during the creation process. Finally Vollard got the *Suite* from Picasso in exchange for a work by Cézanne and one by Renoir. In 1937 the renowned Parisian printer Roger Lacourière begins with the print of the copperplates and produces an edition of 313. After Vollard's death in a car accident in 1939 the *Vollard Suites* get sold to the print-dealer Henri Petiet as part of Vollard's estate in the course of the 1940's. Petiet divides the suites and sells individual sheets to various collectors.

We are pleased to present the *Vollard Suite*, one of the essential graphic cycles of the 20th century. As a consequence of its eventful history there are only very few complete suites in major public and private collections. A complete *Vollard Suite* was exhibited in the Altes Museum, Berlin in 1978-79 as loan from the Ludwig collection. For the first time after more than 35 years the *Suite* is shown in close vicinity of Museum Island, Berlin.

A comprehensive, fully illustrated publication will be available (German/English).

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