

THE
TRAVELS
OF
GUERNICA

MUSEO NACIONAL
CENTRO DE ARTE
REINA SOFIA





Installation of *Guernica*, Exercishallen, Stockholm, 1956





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Index

I

- 13 Visions of *Guernica*
Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró
- 49 Exhibition Essays and Itineraries (2008 to 2019)

II

- 147 “Extended loan from the artist”:
Guernica at the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Rocío Robles Tardío
- 171 Furies and Sufferings:
Guernica and the 1939 Republican Exile
José-Ramón López García
- 195 Picasso and the Cold War:
European Exhibitions of *Guernica*, 1953–1956
Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez
- 221 Artists’ Protests: *Guernica* and the Vietnam War
Francis Frascina
- 241 The Great “Trophy” of the Transition
Ignacio Echevarría

* * *

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 266 | Alfred H. Barr, Jr.
<i>Notes for the screenplay of the film
Guernica by Robert Flaberty
(1945)</i> | 280 | Eugenio Reale
<i>Letter to Pablo Picasso (1954)</i> |
| 268 | William S. Lieberman
<i>Screenplay of the film Guernica
by Robert Flaberty (1945)</i> | 281 | Art Workers’ Coalition
<i>Press Release of the open
letter to Pablo Picasso
(1970)</i> |
| 275 | Juan Larrea
<i>Picasso in New York (1940)</i> | 285 | Guerrilla Art Action Group
<i>Release for Guerrilla Art
Action in Front of Guernica
(1970)</i> |
| 278 | Unknown
<i>Letter from the National
Assembly of France
to Pablo Picasso (1953)</i> | 288 | José Bergamín
<i>Be Careful with Guernica!
(Picasso Betrayed) (1981)</i> |
| 279 | Fernanda Wittgens
<i>Letter to Willem Sandberg
(1953)</i> | 290 | José Bergamín
<i>The Scandal of Guernica
(1981)</i> |

I

Guernica gallery, Museo Reina Sofía



Visions of *Guernica*

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

In 1983, Rudi Fuchs, director of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and one of Europe's star curators at the time, organized a new presentation of the museum's permanent collection. Although the title, *Zomeropstelling van de eigen collectie* (Summer Display of the Museum's Collection), did not seem controversial, the show turned out to be widely debated. Instead of organizing the collection around particular artists, movements, or periods, Fuchs broke away from the restrictions of traditional art history, connecting pieces made in very different ways and at very different times. Believing that the essential thing was "dialogue" between works, he linked, for example, Marc Chagall's *Hommage à Apollinaire* (Homage to Apollinaire, 1913) and Luciano Fabro's *Il giudizio di Paride* (The Judgment of Paris, 1979), two works that appear to have nothing in common. One is expressionist, the other falls within Arte Povera. To Fuchs, the connection between the two was the artists' shared interest in Greek mythology.

Although the persistent ruptures and changes in styles and techniques over the centuries suggested the opposite, Fuchs believed that art history is homogeneous and continuous. He defended the specificity of the art object, but with the understanding that the objects are interchangeable and located in an abstract space, detached from social realities: history is always the same, and class divisions, revolutions, and counterrevolutions reflect mere formal variations. According to this view, differences of opinion are settled through the only valid verdict, that of the curator, who prevails over all others and interprets the facts in line with his or her own intuition and sensibility.

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

At the time, the connections established by Fuchs were presented as a means of liberating modern museography from the limitations of a historicist methodology, despite its many similarities with the ideas of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and Edward Steichen, two of the founders of modern museography. Modernity was based on the supposed autonomy of art and the alleged universality and naturalness of its proposals. When Barr exhibited a chair, a table, or a lamp, for example, he considered the object's stylistic characteristics, but he did not take into account the fact that it was an industrial object, and as such part of a larger system of production. The expert's aim was unraveling the essence of art, which was thought to be obscured by its social and political conditions. In other words, the perception of artistic activity was immanent, and all mediation, including the curator's work, was supposed to disappear or at least become invisible.

Museums and exhibitions underwent a process of defetishization as a result of institutional critique in the 1960s and 1970s. When artworks were displayed, the system of construction of meaning was also revealed, along with the underlying exhibition apparatus. However, as in other moments in history, the rupture resulting from institutional critique carried the seeds of its own counterrevolution, and in the early 1980s, the star curator replaced the figure of the artist-genius. The device had been demythologized, but only at the cost of idealizing the mediator. In the end, the fetishization of the creative process remained intact, although the actors had changed. There was thus continuity between modern canonical museography and the museography of the transavantgarde, exemplified by Rudi Fuchs: in both cases, artistic practice was dehistoricized and took up residence in the realm of myth.

The new internationalism in a neo-Romantic vein that spread through Europe and the United States in the early 1980s, and that was accurately criticized by figures such as Benjamin Buchloh¹

¹ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh et al., *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

Visions of *Guernica*

and Craig Owens,² took on particular overtones in Spain. It coincided with the consolidation of representative democracy and the country's opening up to Europe, and it became the dominant aesthetic. Novelty in art was associated with the new politics, and, as Rafael Sánchez-Ferlosio complained in a famous 1984 article entitled "La cultura, ese invento del gobierno" (Culture, that Government Invention), official bodies promoted cultural events in which "festive" and "refreshing" aspects prevailed.³ The conceptual practices of the preceding years were either questioned or ignored, and a certain type of painting was joyfully championed. What was termed "progressive" was in fact a genuine cultural and political restoration. While at the political level a myth was constructed of an exemplary transition to democracy that had broken with the country's authoritarian path, in the art world what was being sold as innovative was, in fact, continuism.

The Museo Reina Sofía opened as an art center in 1986 and its first exhibitions reflected the prevailing trends of the time. For example, the exhibition *Referencias* organized in the recently refurbished rooms of the former Hospital San Carlos that same year presented a selection of paintings and sculptures by major figures like Georg Baselitz, Antonio Saura, Antoni Tàpies, Cy Twombly, Eduardo Chillida, and Richard Serra.⁴ The show was not structured according to any specific artistic reasoning. Instead, the works interacted with each other on the basis of general aesthetic principles that had to do with the audacity of gesture, the monumentality of scale, or the artists' interest in materials. No information was provided about the genealogy

² Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1992).

³ Rafael Sánchez-Ferlosio, "La cultura, ese invento del gobierno," *El País*, November 22, 1984, https://elpais.com/diario/1984/11/22/opinion/469926007_850215.html.

⁴ Curated by Carmen Giménez, *Referencias: un encuentro artístico en el tiempo* (References: An Artistic Encounter in Time) was held at the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, now the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, from May to September 1986.

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró



Referencias: un encuentro artístico en el tiempo,
exhibition views, 1986



Visions of *Guernica*

of the pieces or about the selection criteria used; what mattered was the authority of their presence.

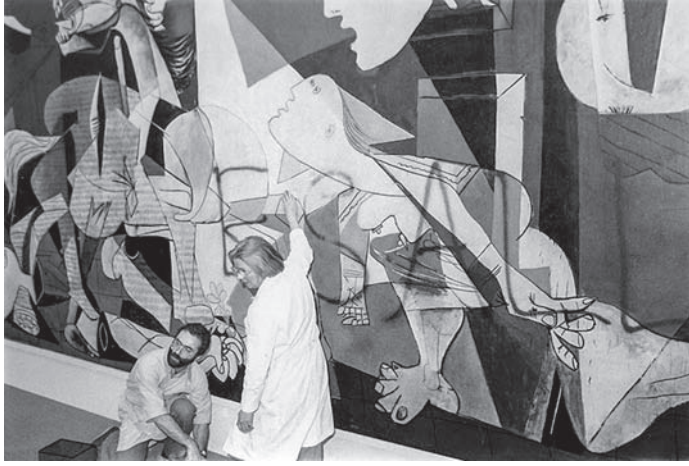
The first two presentations of the Museo Reina Sofía Collection, in 1992 and 1995, were based on a linear account of movements and names: the realism of the 1960s followed the informalism of the 1950s, which itself followed Surrealism, etcetera. All of these styles were formal variations of a single narrative that aspired to be both local and cosmopolitan. For each trend, the important male artists had their own rooms, like chapels, without taking into account the period or the impulse of the works. They were, after all, embodiments of a unique identity. The exceptionality of the individual artists was glorified. The relationship between art and life was emphasized, but there was no explanation as to why an artist worked in a certain way, or of the conditions in which a particular painting or sculpture was interpreted.

The different ways in which *Guernica*—political icon par excellence—has been “protected” from its spectators show how devices prescribe meanings. At the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, it was displayed without barriers. It made sense: although Spanish intellectuals in exile had tried to keep its political flame alive, the theses of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. ended up prevailing, and *Guernica* was gradually depoliticized. The world the mural referred to was circumscribed to the creative realm, and no protection was necessary.⁵ This was also the case in the 1960s and 1970s when artists linked to the Arts Workers’ Coalition (AWC) spoke out in defense of the political content of *Guernica*. Through protest actions in front of the painting and by taking an image of it to the streets, they drew attention to the museum’s contradictions: while its board members supported US participation in the war in Vietnam,

⁵ Sometimes accompanied by a larger or smaller number of preparatory drawings, displayed as a kind of panel of characters in the main story, the presentation of *Guernica* at MoMA also had an educational side, which revolved around one of the museum’s emblematic projects: “What Is Modern Art?”

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

MoMA restorers clean *Guernica* after it was
graffitied by Tony Shafrazi on February 28, 1974



antiwar art was exhibited in its rooms. The 1974 attack on *Guernica*, when Tony Shafrazi sprayed the words “Kill Lies All” on the painting, was a response to this situation. But even in these circumstances, special security measures were not considered necessary.

In 1992, *Guernica* was moved from the Casón del Buen Retiro to the Collection of the Museo Reina Sofía.⁶ In order

⁶ The controversy over where *Guernica* should be housed was constant from the moment the painting was deposited at MoMA. In the late 1950s, after a successful tour through Europe, a group of European artists and intellectuals suggested to Picasso that the mural should not go back to the United States. In 1971, a group of American artists also addressed Picasso, requesting that *Guernica* be removed from MoMA. When the painting arrived in Spain, the debates on which city should host the mural continued: Guernica, Barcelona, Málaga, and Madrid vied for it. What mattered to Picasso, however, was that the painting should be housed at the “great national museum.” This was his opinion according to those who spoke with him on the subject, including Semprún and William Rubin, the director of the Painting and Sculpture Department at MoMA, who conveyed Picasso’s wishes in a note to the museum in 1973. The only institution that matched the description of a “great national museum” during Picasso’s lifetime was the Museo del Prado, so he could not have been speculating over any other option.

Visions of *Guernica*



Lines for the presentation of *Guernica* at the Casón del Buen Retiro, October 1981

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

to avoid the impact of the recent heated discussions over where the painting should be housed, the transfer took place in late July, the day after the opening ceremony of the Barcelona Olympic Games. *Guernica* was set up in its new location without incident and a few months after the move a decision was made to remove the protective glass. It was no longer necessary. Aside from the fact that the painting and its preparatory studies were flanked by *La femme au vase* (Woman with Vase, 1933), one of the sculptures that welcomed visitors to the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic in 1937, and *L'homme au mouton* (Man with Ram, 1943), which Picasso had made during the German occupation of France, the photographs of the first presentations of the Collection show that almost all of the museum's Picassos had been grouped around *Guernica*. It would appear that its role was to express the artist's singularity while at the same time proving that the Museo Reina Sofía was a great repository of his work. The project of the transition was complete and *Guernica* was once again incorporated into a depoliticized narrative. It was displayed with minimal protection, designed to stem the flow of visitors rather than prevent possible attacks.

This configuration remained, with a few variations, until 2008. What was probably the only attempt to reflect a historical perspective before then came from the pen of Jorge Semprún. During his visits to the Museo del Prado as Minister of Culture in Felipe González's Socialist government in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Semprún had imagined setting aside several rooms to display Diego Velázquez's *La rendición de Breda* (The Surrender of Breda, 1634–35), Francisco de Goya's *El 3 de mayo en Madrid* (The 3rd of May 1808 in Madrid, 1814), and Picasso's

This is not the place to make arguments in support of *Guernica* being at the Museo Reina Sofía, which was conceived to house this legacy and everything that it implies: the Spanish avant-garde, the social advances promoted by the Republic, the censorship of the Civil War, etc. In any case, it is worth noting the importance of its rehistoricization at the Museo Reina Sofía.

Visions of *Guernica*



Guernica arrives at the Museo Reina Sofía,
July 26, 1992

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró



Guernica rooms, installation and views,
Museo Reina Sofía, 1995



Visions of *Guernica*



Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró



Visions of *Guernica*



Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró



Visions of *Guernica*

Guernica together. Semprún wanted to draw attention to the fragility of Spain's modernizing process, its fratricidal struggles, and the stubborn resistance to the country's enlightenment.⁷ This project was, in a sense, carried out years later, in 2006, when the Museo Reina Sofía and the Museo del Prado organized the temporary exhibition *Picasso: Tradition and Avant-Garde*, curated by Carmen Giménez and Francisco Calvo Serraller, which allowed visitors to see works by Velázquez, Goya, and Picasso in the same show. However, even on that occasion, although there was an attempt to situate *Guernica* within a long-term narrative, the project failed to take into account the museographic devices, the singularities of the various historiographic methodologies, and *Guernica*'s place in a globalized world, which is very different from the world in which it was created in 1937.

Semprún's idea perpetuated a kind of art history based on famous names, founded on the great masters. This was the hegemonic trend in Spain during the 1950s and 1960s, and it was strongly internalized by the artists who were Semprún's contemporaries: Antoni Tàpies, Carlos Saura, and Eduardo Chillida, to name just three. Spanish artists of the mid-twentieth century saw themselves as the latest exponents of a long tradition interrupted by the Civil War. They considered themselves the successors of Joan Miró and Picasso, and bearers of a poetic impulse dating back to Goya and Velázquez. The problem with this interpretation was not what was said, but what was left unsaid. This version of history applauded the persistence of identity. Expressions that broke away or deviated were ignored. There was no place for unclassifiable filmmakers like José Val del Omar, collectives like Grup de Treball, popular art forms like flamenco, or hybrid and transversal practices. By emphasizing similarities and disregarding differences, this approach prevented, or at least hindered, any radical alteration.

⁷ Jorge Semprún, "Modern Painting Begins Here," in *Picasso: Tradition and Avant-Garde*, exh. cat. Museo del Prado and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid, 2006), 21-25.

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

Picasso: *Tradition and Avant-Garde*,
exhibition views, Museo Reina Sofía, 2006



Its exponents ended up adopting the same authoritarian, apolitical patterns that they simultaneously denounced. This was the contradiction of a generation that opposed Francoism with all their might, to the point of risking their freedom (Jorge Semprún's biography testifies to this), but lacked the tools to understand social change in late Francoism.

The current restructuring of the Collection took place in 2010, but changes began to be made in the rooms dedicated to *Guernica* in spring 2008 as part of a process that is, naturally, still active. The setup of these rooms is modified on a more or less annual basis, sometimes focusing on specific aspects like the importance of the union of professional designers in the way the war was seen, sometimes on more generic issues such as the international promotion of avant-garde art during the Republic. But more significant changes were made on three occasions. In 2012, the museum's Collections Department, working with an associated group of researchers led by Jordana Mendelson, organized the exhibition *Encounters with the 1930s*, which critically revisited a key decade in the twentieth century and which also led to a major reordering of the international artistic expressions in the rooms linked to *Guernica*. Another significant change was made in conjunction

Visions of *Guernica*

with the exhibition *Campo Cerrado: Spanish Art, 1939–1953*, curated by Dolores Jiménez-Blanco in 2015, which was the result of a study of the Spanish exile and postwar period carried out by the Museo Reina Sofía over a period of almost ten years. Lastly, a further turning point came with the 2017 exhibition *Pity and Terror: Picasso's Path to Guernica*, organized in collaboration with Timothy J. Clark and Anne Wagner. The research on the evolution of Picasso's work in the 1930s made it possible to reorganize the preparatory studies from the perspective of a different iconography, such as for example drawing attention to the way in which the female body in these studies becomes a weapon of war and a site of resistance.

This museological process has been governed by one constant aim: to return *Guernica* to history. This does not mean restoring the painting to some “original” state, however, but examining its relationship with the place it was created for and the debates it was part of. In the face of interpretations that reduce *Guernica* to a singular element in Picasso's formal development, or to a more or less exact reflection of his life, or even to an effect of the bombing of the Basque city that its title refers to, this process presents a complex narrative that involves many overlapping actors, ideas, and accounts. In this exercise, there is no objective time that we can draw from the past, because history takes place in memory, where present, past, and future merge and intertwine. Similarly, the Collection explores various readings and distributions that place importance on the conditions in which the various materials were created as well as on how they are presented and how they generate constant interactions over time and in different contexts, including the present. The result, ever-changing and open-ended, is a web of visions that give rise to a multiple history.

In contrast with the aesthetic homogeneity favored by André Malraux and Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the principles underlying the 2010 presentation of the Collection were in line with the concept of *Pathosformel* coined by Aby Warburg. As in an atlas, the works and documents were connected through their differences rather than their similarities. In this sense, it is

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró



The Sculpture of Picasso, exhibition view, MoMA, 1967
View of La femme au vase (Woman with Vase),
Museo Reina Sofia, 2009



Visions of *Guernica*

interesting to compare the display of the sculptures from the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic in the rooms of the Museo Reina Sofía with the setup designed by René d'Harnoncourt when they were exhibited at MoMA in 1967.⁸ Following the ideas of Barr, d'Harnoncourt placed Picasso's "monstrous" busts from the 1930s on pedestals, so that they were all at the same height, leveled, and even anthropomorphized, in a large, evenly lit space. The monstrousness dissolved and the sculptures appeared to obey universal laws of reason and nature. Conversely, at the Museo Reina Sofía, *La femme au vase* is placed directly on the ground—or at most, on a low base designed only to protect it—in order to emphasize its exaggerated presence. It is also displayed alongside a range of very different works, such as the maquettes for Alberto Sánchez's *El pueblo español tiene un camino que conduce a una estrella* (The Spanish People Have a Path that Leads to a Star, 1937) and Alexander Calder's *Mercury Fountain* (1937), and Julio González's *Masque de Montserrat criant* (Mask of Montserrat Screaming, 1937), generating tension between the more conceptual nature of the maquettes, Montserrat's unfinished state, and the power of Picasso's piece.⁹

Historical visions are always anachronistic. There can be no return to the past and no total knowledge of the present because, as Giorgio Agamben reminds us, a certain exteriority is required to allow us to understand our own time and its relationship with other historical cycles. It is thus futile to reconstruct the past or to grasp the present. This is why despite our desire to anchor *Guernica* in its context, the Museo Reina Sofía avoids the conventions of exhibitions based on "the artist and

⁸ *The Sculpture of Picasso*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 1967 to January 1968.

⁹ Given that it was impossible to reconstruct a version of the original fountain, Alexander Calder's grandson Sandy Rower enthusiastically agreed to the loan of the maquette that his grandfather had made, so that it could be displayed near *Guernica*. By denouncing fascist brutality, this piece reveals Nazi Germany's interests in the exploitation of mercury from the mines of Almadén.

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

his period” in favor of examining the painting through the complexities of history.

History is recounted through the signs that appear and disappear in time, and as such there is always something fragmentary or non-definitive about the Collection. This is also why the rooms surrounding *Guernica* are, like the rest of the Collection, structured in the form of microstories that are mutually antagonistic, suggesting many shifts and lines of flight. For instance, after the area focusing on the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, we find a room dedicated to the Republican exile and a monographic space on the war drawings produced by André Masson in 1936–38, without any attempt to create a sense of continuity between them.

In its various presentations, the Collection seeks to make visitors question their assumptions, both political (Was there really a break with Franco’s regime? Has justice been rendered to those who lost the war? Is a new transition necessary?) and historiographical (What are the links between the fascisms of the 1930s and today’s fascisms? How can we identify long cycles of history?). As Michel Foucault wrote, “Knowledge, even under the banner of history, does not depend on ‘rediscovery,’ and it emphatically excludes the ‘rediscovery of ourselves.’ History becomes ‘effective’ to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being.”¹⁰ Accordingly, the *Guernica* journey could not fail to include the museum’s biography, or the fate that appears to await any work of art in times like ours, when everything is susceptible to becoming a commodity and exchanged at any time or place.

Guernica is the cornerstone of the Museo Reina Sofía Collection: its jewel, the most sought after piece. The danger of falling into a one-way narrative that necessarily ends with the “masterpiece” and all the idealism and fetishization of artistic

¹⁰ Michael Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” (1971), in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 153–54.

Visions of *Guernica*

practices that this notion implies is evident. To avoid this, from 2008 onward, the museum decided to decenter the narrative and avoid making the painting the main focus of attention. In some cases this shift creates an outward expansion of the painting, which is very enriching because of the variety and transversality of stories that emerge. In other cases, an inward contraction toward the painting favors the perception of different nuances in supposedly familiar aspects. This two-way street gives rise to multiple readings that replace hegemonic history with an alternative version, one that is deliberately unresolved. This story is adjusted through occasional changes and restructures based on four fundamental, unchanging gestures: (a) from the painting to its materials; (b) from *Guernica* to the Pavilion; (c) from the national to the international; and (d) from the artwork to its history.

a. From the Painting to Its Materials

Picasso never explained the meaning of *Guernica*. Nor did he take much interest in the various analyses of the painting over the course of time. Naturally, this has not prevented a considerable number of historians and curators from aspiring to decipher its metaphoric meaning, usually opting for mythological interpretations and highlighting the role of the main figures in the painting. Elements like the bull, the horse, the soldier, and the mother holding a child have been variously interpreted, in successive analyses, as representing the Nationalist side in the war, the Republic, the victims, and even Picasso himself. Today, many publications continue to focus on the “real” meaning of the mural. Since 2008, however, the presentations of the Collection do not emphasize this aspect. Instead, they are put together from the perspective of process, in terms of both the conception of the painting and its execution.

We know that Picasso was aware of how important the mass media had become in the 1930s. Many artists, including Josep Renau, believed that the media were essential in all art that wished to reflect and actively participate in society.

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

But Picasso turned to a medium that was already somewhat anachronistic: painting. *Guernica* can be understood through the lens of that anachronism. Its gray tones relate not only to the black and white of film and photography but also to the grisaille murals in palaces of centuries past. Picasso was conscious of his place in history, but he may have also realized that his time had passed. As we shall see, the domestic world portrayed in his Cubist paintings, in which all elements could be owned and touched, disappeared from his repertoire in the 1930s. His paintings from that period express not only the terror of a society in crisis but also Picasso's attempts to grasp a world that he did not understand and found frightening, and to do so through the technique of painting, which was no longer current.

Archival documents demonumentalize and contextualize *Guernica*, and thus defetishize it. For this reason, the restructuring of the rooms in 2008 and 2009 emphasized the importance of the archive. The display included pamphlets and various printed materials that the government of the Republic undoubtedly sent Picasso, who was considered a key contact for spreading information about the conflict outside of Spain. Subsequent reorganizations incorporated other magazines, posters, and visual information from the war that circulated profusely in Paris and that Picasso had access to. This material shows that he saw the war largely through the media, in particular photography and film. This is why it also made sense to display Renau's posters in the *Guernica* rooms, and to set them up against Luis Buñuel's film *España 1936*, commissioned by the Republican government in Madrid.¹¹

¹¹ Given that the Museo Reina Sofía houses the archive of José Luis Fernández del Amo, it was also possible to illustrate the institutional side of the commission, including the first stages of the construction of the Pavilion. The photos the Republic commissioned from Dora Maar are also key to understanding the structure and evolution of the mural, and contribute to reinstating the role of photography in its creation.

Visions of *Guernica*

The contrast between the documents and the painting shows that Picasso's vision was not pornographic. If, for example, we compare the photographs of mutilated soldiers found among his papers after his death with some of his drawings from the late 1930s (*Scène de décollation* [Scene of Decapitation, 1926–27] and *Intérieur aux hirondelles I* and *II* [Interior with Swallows I and II, 1934]), the formal similarities are obvious. And yet, although Picasso took these images into account, his work was never merely anecdotal. He was familiar with the propaganda images (dead children, houses destroyed by the bombs of the rebel forces, and so on), but he drew on historical references such as Jacques-Louis David's *Les Sabines* (The Intervention of the Sabine Women, 1799) and Goya's *El 3 de mayo en Madrid*. Picasso examined the present and responded to its necessities, but he did so with the weapons of an artist looking at his own time through the lens of history.

In addition, the horror that Picasso sought to portray is the twentieth-century tragedy that Osip Mandelstam wrote about,¹² and that has no precise equivalent in another period, which led Picasso to question art's capacity to represent it. So it comes as no surprise to find a grotesque and ironic aspect in his work from this time. *Retrato de la marquesa de culo cristiano echándole un duro a los soldados moros defensores de la Virgen* (Portrait of the marchioness of Christian arse tossing a coin to the Moorish soldiers defenders of the Virgin) and *Sueño y mentira de Franco* (Dream and Lie of Franco), both dating from early 1937, are paradigmatic works that unexpectedly evoke Francis Picabia's paintings from the same period, although they sprang from very different political and artistic circumstances. In the 2010 presentation, this tension was expressed by placing Picabia's 1937 painting *La Révolution espagnole* (The Spanish Revolution) in dialogue with *Guernica*.

¹² Osip Mandelstam, "My Time" (1922), in *Complete Poetry of Osip Emilievich Mandelstam*, trans. Burton Raffel and Alla Burago (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973) 130–31.

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

The preparatory drawings and postscripts provide a record of Picasso's doubts and second thoughts, offering an accurate picture of his artistic and political stance. Historically, these materials have been shown as an indivisible group, which was how Picasso conceived them. Proof of this is the fact that all of them were deposited at MoMA along with *Guernica*, and when the idea of returning the painting to Spain came up, Picasso always referred to moving the entire set. The chronological structure allows visitors to study the complex path that led Picasso to *Guernica*.

As noted earlier, the news reaching Picasso from Spain made a strong impression on him. So much so that he abandoned the “painter and model” theme that he had initially chosen for the Republican government's commission in favor of a collective representation of the suffering of the people. The original subject was too personal. Nevertheless, the drawings made prior to the bombing of the town provide a clear record of how Picasso tried out ways of representing a common space that was unlike the domestic space of the studio, juxtaposing, for example, the unmistakable political symbol of the raised fist—which would later appear in the initial stages of *Guernica*—with a representation of a female body rising in rebellion.

This interest in space was not limited to the composition of the painting; it also extended to the design of the actual mural with regard to its position in the part of the Pavilion that was set aside for it. The drawing *L'atelier: le peintre et son modèle* (The Painter and His Model [Arm Holding a Sickle and a Hammer], 1937) shows that Picasso wanted to give the painting a theatrical frame, creating a kind of stage presided over by two sculptures. This and other drawings portray an intermediate space between the public and private spheres, which Picasso had been exploring for the last decade, as we can see in *Figures au bord de la mer* (Figures by the Sea, 1931) and *Figures au bord de la mer I* (Figures by the Sea I, 1932). The enclosed spaces of the studio and the home that had prevailed in his Cubist paintings were replaced by open areas, as esplanades, in which monstrous figures roam or interact. *Guernica* is the culmination of

Visions of *Guernica*

that exploration: the violent distortion destroys private space, generating a particular realism, not of the objects, people, or stories, but of the place that they occupy.

b. From *Guernica* to the Pavilion

Another of the foundational ideas for the restructuring of the Collection in 2008 consisted in giving a prominent place in the room before *Guernica* to a model of the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic designed by Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa for the 1937 International Exposition in Paris, which thus became the backbone of this part of the Collection and a focus of attention for visitors. In this way, the presentation broke with the centrality of painting, which had been a characteristic of the previous exhibition discourses, and expanded the frame of reference, opening up to the artistic, social, and political debates of the period.

The Pavilion of the Spanish Republic was the building for which *Guernica* was painted. Above all, it was a multidisciplinary project that relied on the collaboration of various political and cultural agents. Its aim was to show the world the achievements of the democratic regime and to denounce the brutality of the Civil War. As in previous official representations, such as the Poble Espanyol open-air museum built for the 1929 International Exposition in Barcelona, the organizers of the Pavilion aspired to capture the identity of Spain, its history and tradition, as well as the advances in education, science, and health implemented by the Republic. The Pavilion also served as a showcase for how Spanish art had incorporated the avant-garde, as well as offering a space for reflection in times of emergency. Its open, Mediterranean architecture, both modern and popular, was a true artistic and political manifesto, expressing the position that the government of the Republic wished to take in the complicated cultural fabric of the 1930s.

Debates about realism and abstraction, or about different kinds of realism and abstraction, were common in the Western world in the 1930s, becoming more frequent as political and

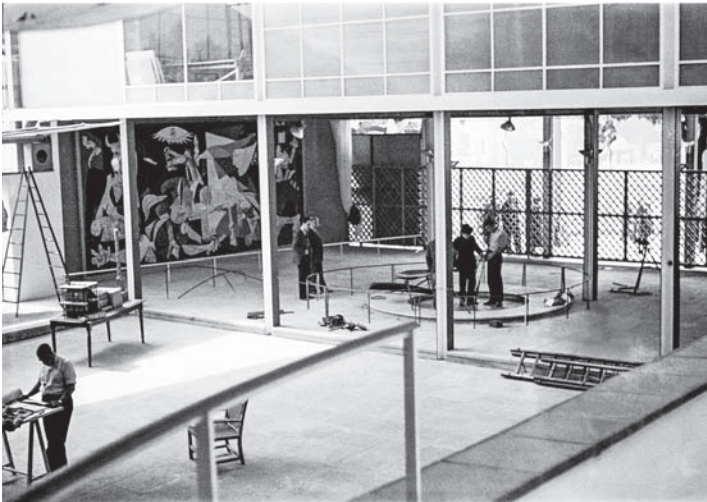
Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

military conflicts intensified. Spain was no exception, and the controversies became increasingly numerous and heated, as can be seen in the articles written by Alberto Sánchez, Josep Renau, and Ramón Gaya for *Nueva Cultura* magazine. The Pavilion of the Spanish Republic was an exceptional arena in which these concepts could compete. For example, Alberto Sánchez's oneiric forms vied with Renau's photomontages in the Pavilion. For Sánchez, the representation of a telluric, abstract world was an important engine for change, while Renau believed that all social change required photomontage and the mass media.

Since 2010, these works are displayed together in the rooms of the Museo Reina Sofía along with others that were also in the Pavilion, such as Horacio Ferrer's *Madrid 1937 (Aviones negros)* (Madrid 1937 [Black Planes], 1937) and José Luis Bardasano's *Evacuación* (Evacuation, 1937), both by artists who were exponents of social realism. These paintings are interspersed with works by artists who advocated an expressionist style derived from Goya, such as *Bombardeo de Colmenar Viejo* (Air Raid on Colmenar Viejo, 1937) by Antonio Rodríguez Luna and *Procesión de la muerte* (Procession of Death, 1930) by José Gutiérrez Solana, which has roots in the Spanish Baroque. The differences between Solana's painting and the artistic and political positions of the rest of the works cannot be explained in merely formal terms. Solana's presence among the more orthodox socialist realisms reflected the Republican government's desire to distance itself from the Soviets and to make it clear that its artistic ideas followed its own path.

Visitors to the Pavilion could buy a portfolio of Goya's etchings *Desastres de la guerra* (Disasters of War, 1810–15), reissued by the Republican government for the occasion. The edition was intended to raise funds, but it also became a historical source through which to interpret the war and Spanish history. The museum has exhibited this edition several times since 2014, juxtaposing it with *Guernica* and with works by the group of artists—including Rodríguez Luna and Arturo Souto Feijoo—who painted the Civil War emphasizing the influence of Goya, the Enlightenment, and caricature in the art of the time.

Visions of *Guernica*



Spanish Pavilion, International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, Paris, 1937

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

The Museo Reina Sofía recovered Sert and Lacasa's Pavilion in the literal sense, prominently displaying it as an architectural structure, and also in a symbolic sense, as an element discussed in the cultural feuds of the time, which extended to the exhibition device. We know that the exhibition apparatus was a core aspect of the work of artists like Frederick Kiesler, El Lissitzky, and Herbert Bayer, who designed influential structures in Vienna, New York, Hannover, and Paris. The museography of the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic was dictated by Josep Renau, who would certainly have been familiar with these earlier artists. Like them, he sought interaction between the arts, connected through the architecture, and public participation in an activity that could no longer be merely contemplative. Renau was the conceptual architect of the Pavilion, and conceived his photomontages as its unifying thread. In a series of compositions in which he used materials from various archives—including those of the Second Republic's Misiones Pedagógicas (Pedagogical Missions)—to portray the urban and rural world, Renau sought to prove that in Spain there were no differences between the disruptive avant-garde arts and the enduring cultural tradition of the people, because both embodied Republican ideas of progress. The contradictions between this discourse and the ideas Renau himself had defended before the war were also present in the Pavilion in the form of José Ortiz Echagüe's photographs portraying an idealized, ahistorical vision of traditional, rural Spain, which later became the aesthetic basis of National Catholicism during the dictatorship. These divergent positions allow us to think about this period, and about *Guernica*, from different perspectives. As for Picasso, although he did not participate in these debates, he was aware of them through the Spanish press that he received in Paris, as his papers show.

c. From the National to the International

In the 1930s, many eyes were on Spain. Before the Civil War, a considerable number of Spanish artists had traveled and exhibited abroad thanks to the support of the Republic's cultural

Visions of *Guernica*

promotion programs through bodies such as the Junta para Ampliación de Estudios (Board for Advanced Studies), and to contact with artists based in Paris, including Miró, Picasso, Pablo Gargallo, Pancho Cossío, Julio González, Óscar Domínguez, and Manuel Ángeles Ortiz. Similarly, a group of foreign writers came to Spain during the war, supporting the Republican cause and becoming involved with the International Brigades. The best known include George Orwell, Carl Einstein, and André Malraux. Many others remained in their own countries and avidly read the news from Spain, adopting the war as the subject of their work. The Museo Reina Sofía considered it essential to include these works in the Collection, and in 2012 a selection of major works by artists including Philip Guston, David Smith, and René Magritte was presented in one of the rooms. “España en el corazón” (“Spain in Our Hearts”), the title of a 1937 poem by Pablo Neruda, was the overall theme of the presentation.¹³

A specific area was set aside for André Masson, who lived in Spain for two years before the outbreak of the war and produced a forceful body of work that sometimes seems to refer to Goya, and sometimes to Picasso. These works show that an archaic, mythical Spain, in which death and sacrifice are inherent, played a significant role in the radical Surrealism led by Georges Bataille. Tossa de Mar was the town where Masson lived, and it was also the birthplace of the magazine *Acéphale*, whose members used to meet in a building on rue des Grands-Augustins in Paris, where Dora Maar found the studio in which Picasso would paint *Guernica*.

In addition to examining the work of these artists, another important aspect was the work of the international correspondents who covered the Spanish conflict, and the major newspapers and magazines that published their work. After considerable efforts, Museo Reina Sofía secured for its collection the 1937–39 issues of *Regards*, *Vu*, and *AIZ* magazines, whose covers and

¹³ Pablo Neruda, *España en el corazón. Himno a las glorias del pueblo en la guerra* (Santiago de Chile: Ercilla, 1937).

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

features include the best examples of the photojournalism of the time. Displaying photographs in their original medium instead of photographic prints has made it possible to study the circulation of images and the strategies used by the Popular Front to promote a particular vision of the war, a vision so powerful that it still prevails today. Comparing the material intended for international audiences with that produced for domestic use also allows a more complex understanding of the chronicles of war, even more so in the case of Picasso, who had access to both.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the debate on cultural hegemony as a precursor to political supremacy was the order of the day. Antonio Gramsci was in prison writing his notes on subalternity and power.¹⁴ The most powerful states invested substantial resources in propaganda with a view to building national narratives to unite their countries, which were always presented as being under threat from an external enemy. At the 1937 International Exposition, for example, the German and Soviet pavilions presided over the main entrance: through their imposing, colossal appearance, the two world powers sought to convey the solidity of their ideas. Boris Iofan, the architect of the Soviet structure, and Albert Speer, who oversaw the German Pavilion, spied on each other and competed to make their own pavilion more impressive than that of their adversary. In contrast, the Spanish Pavilion was anti-monumental in nature. It reflected the Republic's desire to present to the world an image of a state that promoted social reforms and respected individual freedoms, in the hope that it would attract the sympathies of the public and, above all, the involvement of international regimes in the Spanish conflict.

However, although Germany and Italy supported the military rebels, other world powers, with the exception of the Soviet Union, opted to maintain a neutral position, which in reality

¹⁴ Compiled in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1929–37), ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

Visions of *Guernica*

favored the fascist army. This decision took on dramatic overtones at the time Picasso painted *Guernica*. In an attempt to attract other forces to the Republican cause, the organizers of the Pavilion tried to avoid possible associations between their ideas and those of the Soviet Union. They decided to present the most international, avant-garde Spanish artists (Miró, González, and, of course, Picasso) at strategic points in the building, and, as noted above, they gave an important role to Solana, whose depth of feeling for the Republic was perhaps less than they would have wished. Solana's work, presented on the first floor of the Pavilion, clashed with all the ideals of progress and modernity that Renau championed in his posters and photomontages, and instead invoked a traditional, conservative Spain.

The pro-Franco side was not uninvolved in these culture wars, and secured the support of the Pontifical Pavilion to export its own version of the Civil War. The preparatory study for the work commissioned from José María Sert, *Intercesión de Santa Teresa de Jesús en la Guerra Civil española* (An Intercession by Saint Teresa of Jesus in the Spanish Civil War, 1937) is interesting in this sense. A comparison between the Pontifical and Republican pavilions shows that both sides used photomontage and other poetic avant-garde strategies, from opposite perspectives.

Some political quarters warned against using images of folk culture, based on the belief that they conjured up the worst stereotypes of Spain. Nevertheless, both the left and the right used the iconography of rural Spain and popular themes to present to the world a strong, public-spirited country. This was a general impulse, not exclusive to Spain. In light of this, in another partial restructuring of this part of the Collection carried out in 2014, the panels produced by Renau for the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic were linked to the mural designed by Charlotte Perriand and Fernand Léger for the Pavilion of Agriculture, *Joies essentielles, plaisirs nouveaux* (Essential Happiness, New Pleasures, 1937). The size of this mural is similar to that of *Guernica*, and the sense of its belonging to a historical

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

Entrance to the French Ministry of Agriculture Pavilion, International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, Paris, 1937



moment is strengthened. By avoiding the instrumental nature of many of the works exhibited at the International Exposition in Paris, *Guernica* broke with the false unity that folklore offered, and moved away from what Theodor Adorno called fascism's attraction to the artificial.¹⁵ In *Guernica*, there is no identification of the spectator with an authoritarian leader or with a supposed national spirit, but rather a connection based on empathy with the victims. The painting is, first and foremost, a representation. It does not seek artificial veracity as other documents of the time do.

d. From the Artwork to Its History

There is a natural correspondence between the terms “nation” and “narration.” The first cannot exist without the second. Without a shared story that brings together a community or various communities around a set of shared values, there is no nation. It is also true that each nation is associated with a territory.

¹⁵ Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950).

Visions of *Guernica*

So much so that those who have been expelled or forced to flee their countries have often disappeared from collective history. To a large extent, this is what happened to Spanish exiles after the war. The story of the poets and artists of the diaspora is a matter as yet unresolved. In an effort to help to remedy this neglect, the Museo Reina Sofía has incorporated documents such as the Miguel Prieto archive and works by artists such as Remedios Varo and Esteban Francés.

The history of *Guernica*, with its physical, critical, and political vicissitudes, has come to reflect the evolution of the Spanish people after the Civil War, and of the geopolitical tensions between the United States and Europe during the Cold War. Extending the chronology of *Guernica* from its creation up to the present, and following its journey through the various countries in which it was exhibited, is not merely a means of opening up the possibilities of its discourse. It also creates a parallel between the mural and the figure of the exile, a metaphor that was used with political intent when the painting arrived in Spain, and that still persists today.

Since 2010, visitors to the Collection, after having contemplated *Guernica*, enter a room dominated by another Picasso painting, *Monument aux espagnols morts pour la France* (Monument to the Spaniards Who Died for France, 1946–47), which pays homage to the role of the losers of the Spanish Civil War in World War II. Conceived, like *Guernica*, as a history painting, both murals are anti-monumental in nature, present a theatrical space, and are based on a critical reading of genres in art history. The other paintings and sculptures in this room share a tendency to idealize the past and dream of invented landscapes, despite their apparent formal dissimilarity. A prominent position is given to a large display case containing a significant number of publications produced by the expatriates, as it is their texts that unified a community scattered throughout the world. The works are not grouped according to geographic criteria. Rather, they follow the same premises as the previous areas—the popular, the political, documents—and reflect a vision of exile in which it is not an exceptional stage, separated from history,

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

but directly linked to the crisis of the modern state in Spain and its cultural production.¹⁶

Once the 1937 International Exposition had ended, *Guernica* embarked on a journey that lasted several decades and took it to a total of eleven countries. By emphasizing the painting's creation by Picasso and its links to the Pavilion, the Museo Reina Sofía had brought process into the foreground. Here, by looking at the venues where *Guernica* was shown, the focus shifts away from production to the construction of its myth. The photographs and press clippings relating to the display of *Guernica* at the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, show a clear sacralization of the painting, while its participation in an exhibition in Milan sheds light on the political stance of Picasso and of *Guernica* during the Cold War.¹⁷ In some cases, *Guernica* did not make it to its destination, but its absence was as eloquent as its presence. The mural was never exhibited in Mexico, for example, despite the wishes of the large community of Spanish exiles. It was impossible for *Guernica* to travel to Mexico due to the tactics of appropriation used by the directors of MoMA, for which the canvas is a milestone in its canonical history.

As a form of chronological displacement, and in a more familiar framework, the installation of this part of the Collection closes on various occasions with Basilio Martín Patino's film *Canciones para después de una guerra* (Songs for After a War). In 1971, Patino created a collage of images and sounds taken from the media and popular songs from postwar Spain. Exiles,

¹⁶ Mari Paz Balibrea, *Tiempo de exilio. Una mirada crítica a la modernidad española desde el pensamiento republicano en el exilio* (Barcelona: Montecinos, 2007); Mari Paz Balibrea, "Exilio republicano: construir desde la ausencia," in *Carta(s). Exilio/refugio* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2018), 7–13.

¹⁷ *Guernica* was included in the exhibition *Picasso: 40 Years of His Art*, Art Institute of Chicago, February to March 1940; at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1941; and in the exhibition *Picasso*, Palazzo Reale, Milan, September to November 1953, although *Guernica* did not arrive until October.

Visions of *Guernica*

migrants, and survivors are presented together in a work that offers a critical, cathartic perspective. From different places and circumstances, both *Guernica* and *Canciones para después de una guerra* emphasize the possible reconstruction of the collective memory of a country divided since 1937.

If an artwork can be said to have endured over time and given rise to multiple interpretations, it is *Guernica*, which was a symbol for Spanish exiles and remains an inconvenient witness to unfinished business in Spain: historical memory. *Guernica* speaks of the persistence (latency) of modes, forms, and desires, of its reinterpretation during the long night of Francoism, and of its disproportionate acceptance by the generation that was to live through, and create, the “Culture of the Transition.” Posters or photographic prints of the painting had been present in the homes of those who resisted the dictatorship, or who simply opposed all kinds of violence. In the last few years, however, these uses of *Guernica* have become blurred. Its image abounds in souvenirs, on fridge magnets, mugs, and umbrellas. As a reminder of having being there and as an imprint of the feverish activity of tourists, *Guernica* is framed within a system based on a suffocating proximity between art and the cultural industry, tourism, and even property speculation.

Rogelio López Cuenca’s work on Picasso’s mutation into a brand, particularly in the context of the city of Málaga (*Casi de todo Picasso* [Almost All About Picasso], 2011), is pertinent here. Through irony and displacement, López Cuenca manipulates slogans and symbols in order to make us see a reality in which culture has become a commodity. As part of the touring exhibition *Picasso. El viaje del Guernica* (Picasso: The Journey of *Guernica*, 2018), organized in collaboration with Obra Social “la Caixa”, the Museo Reina Sofía produced an open-ended video in which López Cuenca mixes images taken from *Guernica* with others from the world of advertising, sport, and our immediate political reality. A figure from Picasso’s painting merges with the body of a model or with a gesture of impotence from a sub-Saharan African refugee. In another work produced by the museum (*Sistema operativo* [Operating System], 2015),

Manuel Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

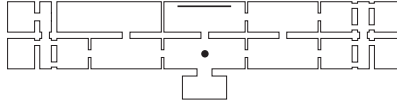
Detail of Daniel García Andújar's
CCTV Guernica at the Museo Reina Sofía,
Madrid, 2015



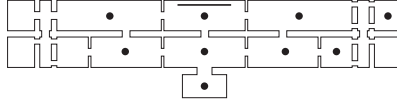
Daniel García Andújar places *Guernica* in an iconosphere in which—like the William Hogarth engraving (*The Battle of the Pictures*, 1744) that Andújar often includes in his installations—a true battle of images breaks out, incited by the flood of consumer images and the ease with which they are manipulated and distributed.

Guernica thus becomes inseparable from the present, from the role of culture today, and from the museum that houses it. Any reflection on the painting must necessarily give rise to an act of interpellation, which takes place inside the institution through the analysis of the exhibition and mediation devices, but also through the political and social outside, as in the case of Daniel Andújar and Rogelio López Cuenca.

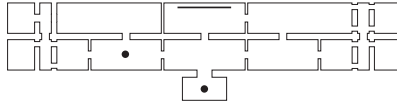
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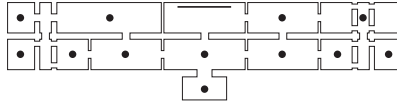
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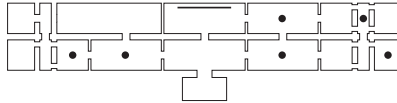
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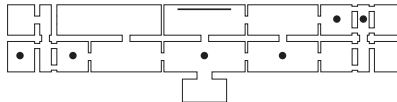
2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*



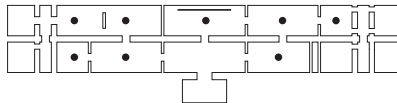
2013-2015



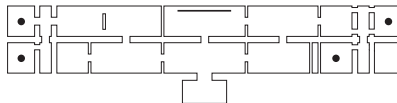
2016



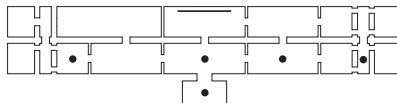
2017: *Pity and Terror*



2017: *Guernica's Archive*

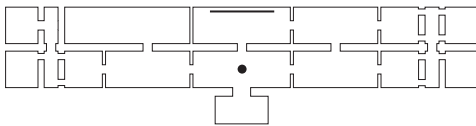


2017-2019



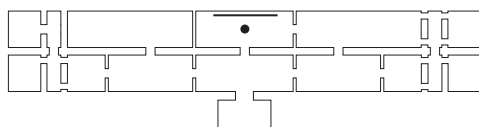
2008

Guernica, 1937



2009

Guernica, 1937





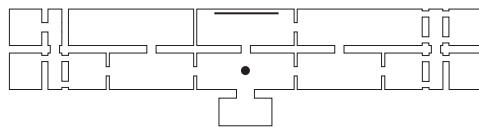
Dora Maar, *Reportage sur l'évolution de "Guernica"*
(Photo Report of the Evolution of *Guernica*), 1937





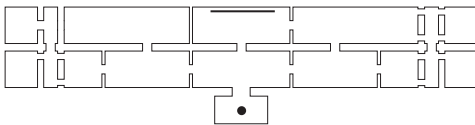
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Guernica, 1937



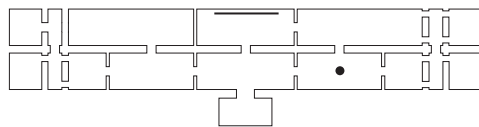
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Guernica, 1937



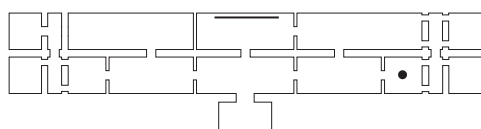
2009

Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, 1937



2009

War Drawings: The Association of Revolutionary Artists



Francisco Mateos González, *El sitio de Madrid* (The Siege of Madrid), 1936: *Los vaticanistas* (The Vaticanists), *Los requetés* (The Requetés), *La guardia civil* (The Civil Guard), and *Los jefes prusianos* (The Prussians Chiefs)

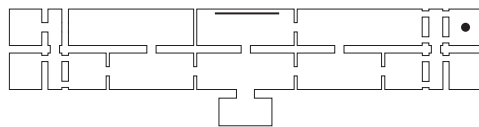




Francisco Mateos González, *El sitio de Madrid* (The Siege of Madrid), 1936: *La morisma* (The Moorism), *El estado mayor* (The Military Chiefs), *La justicia* (The Justice), and *Los legionarios* (The Legionnaires)

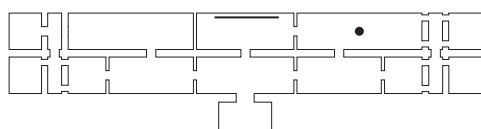
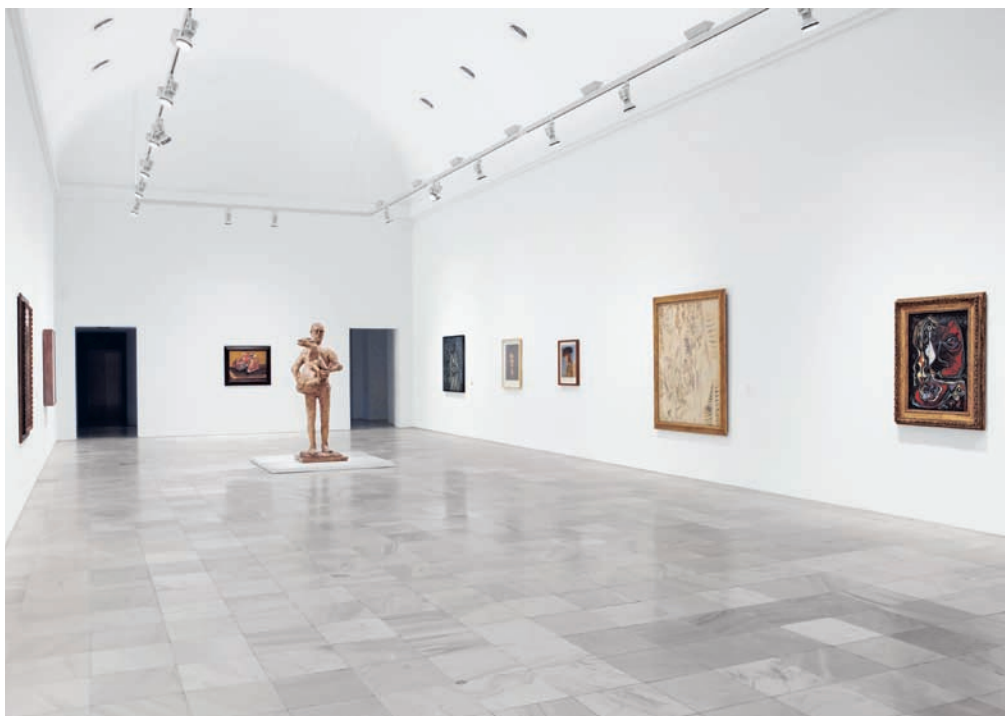
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Luis Buñuel, *Las Hurdes: Tierra sin pan* (*Land Without Bread*), 1933

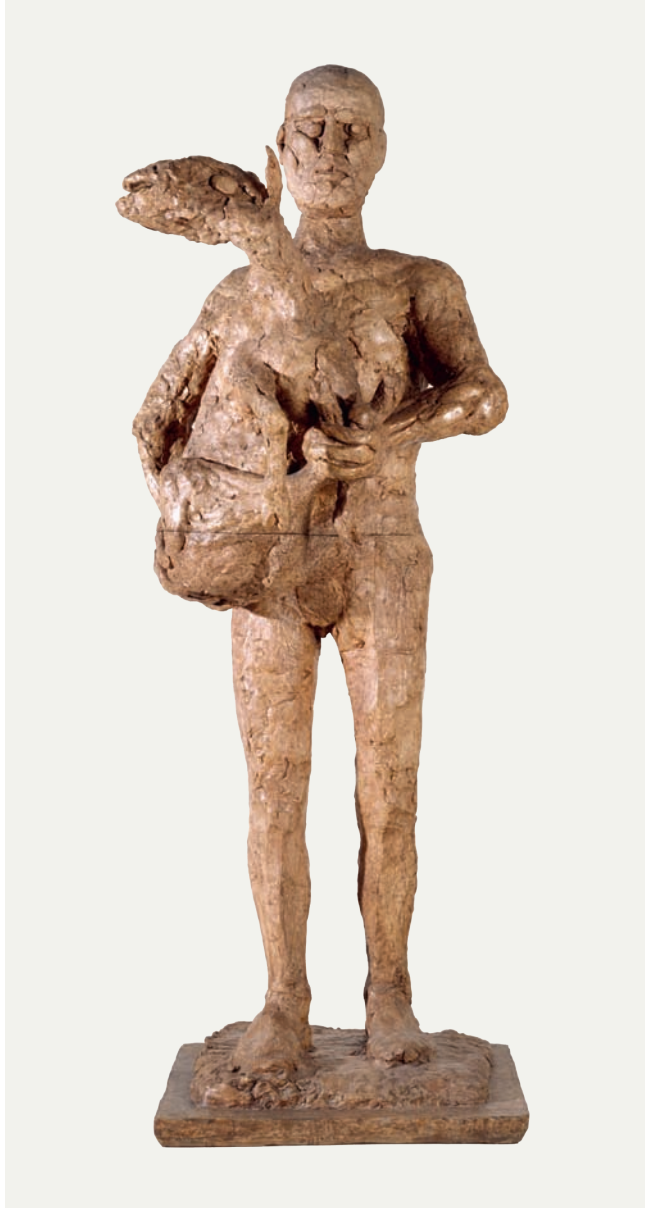


2009

Europe at War: The End of the Utopias



Pablo Picasso, *L'homme au mouton* (Man with Ram), 1943

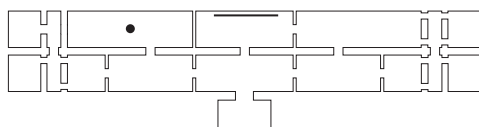
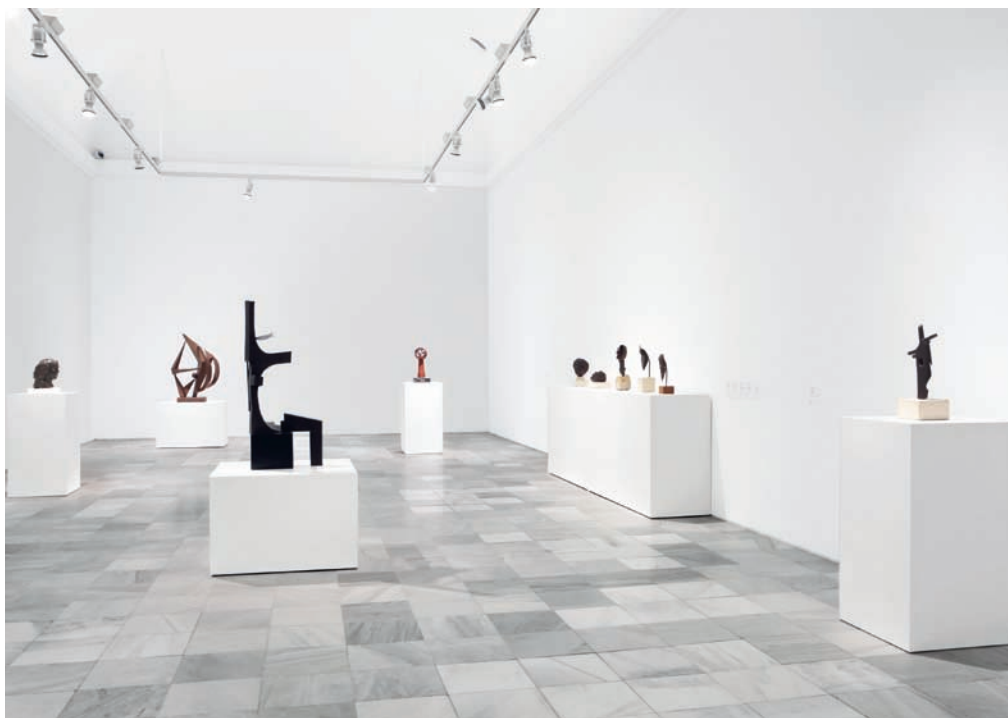




Francis Picabia, *Torero (Bullfighter)*, 1941,
and *Imperio Argentina*, 1940-41

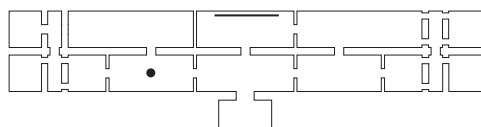
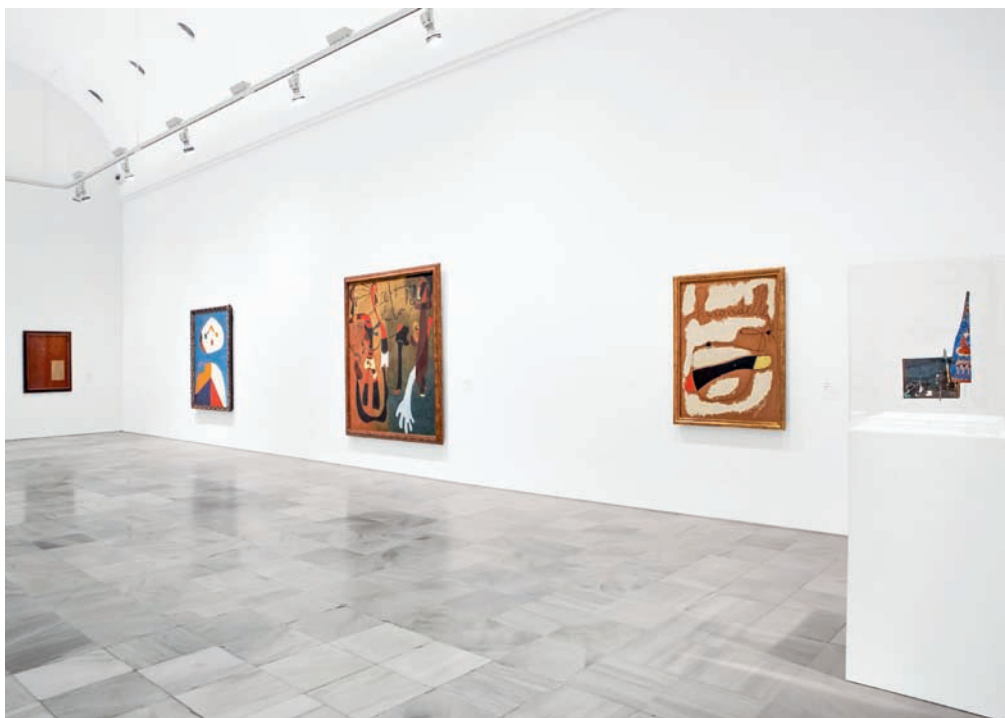
2009

Julio González: Drawing in Space



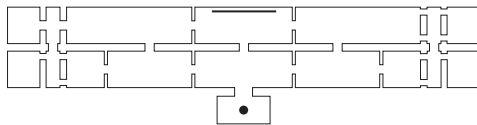
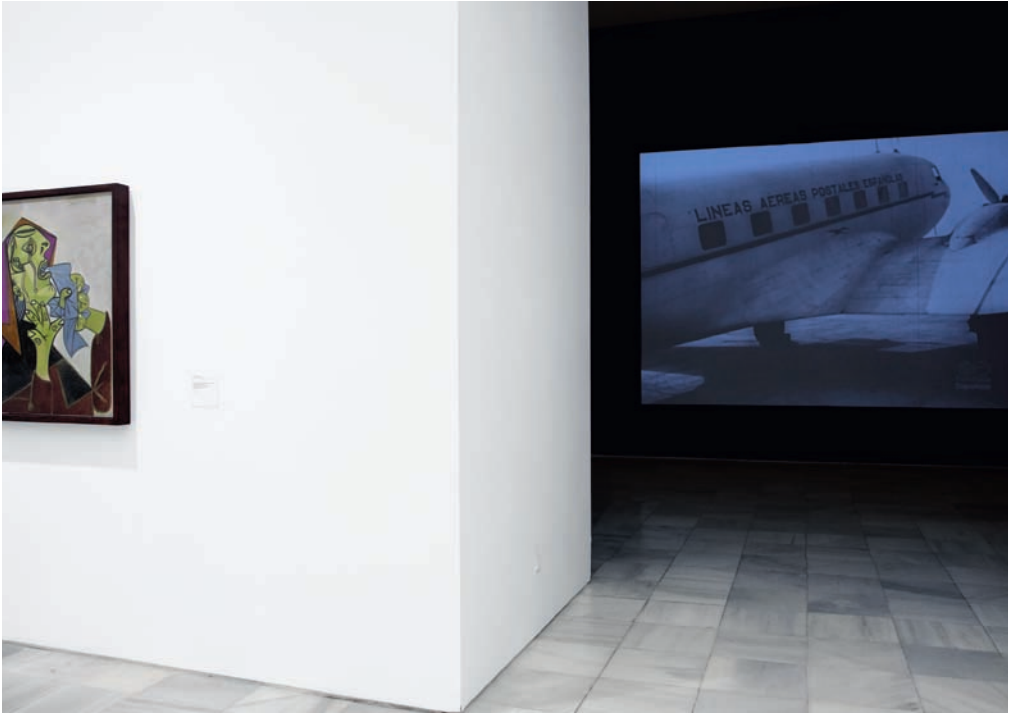
2009

Miró: Painting and Anti-Painting



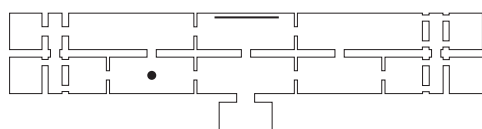
2010-2011

Luis Buñuel and Jean-Paul Le Chanois, *Espagne* 1936, 1937



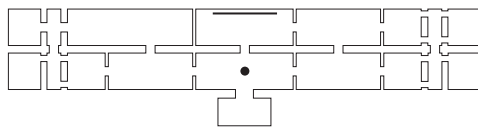
2010-2011

Picasso: Black and White



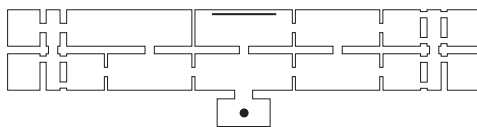
2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

The Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, 1937



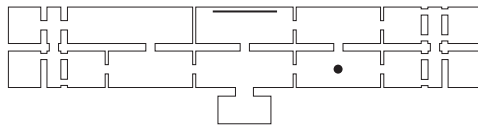
2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

Francisco de Goya, 1746–1828



2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

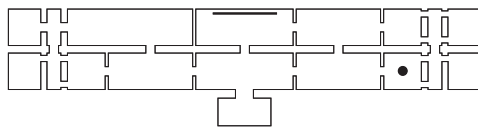
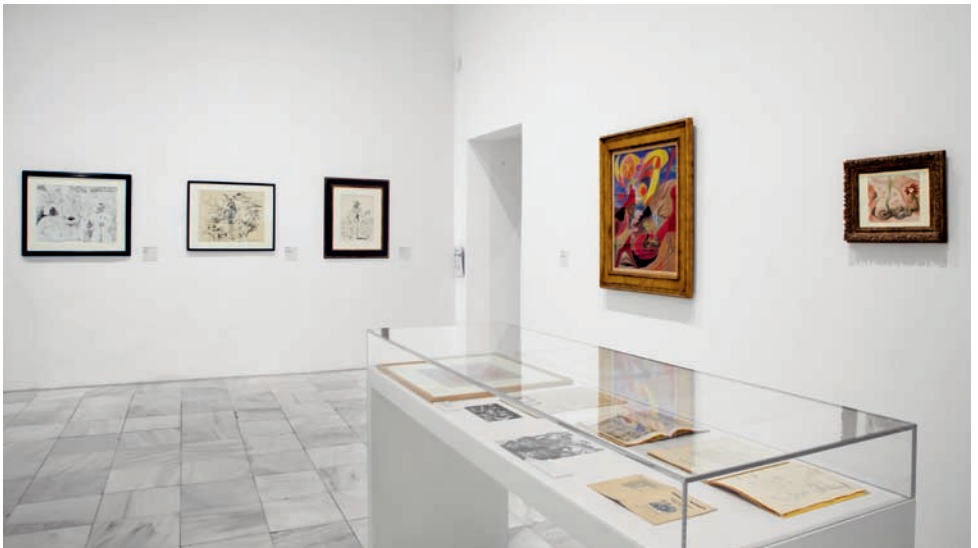
¡Aidez l'Espagne!





2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

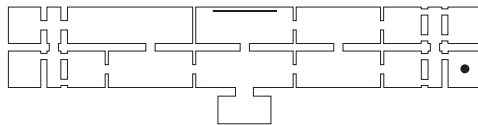
André Masson, 1896-1987





2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

The Spanish Conflict in the International Press





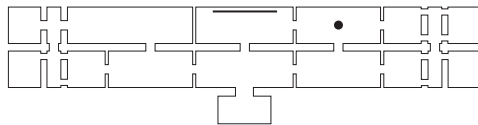


Regards, 1936-37



2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

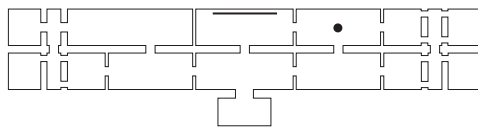
Surrealism in the Art of Spanish Exiles

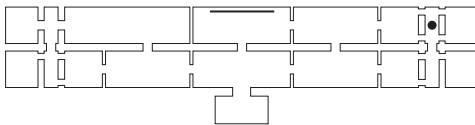




2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

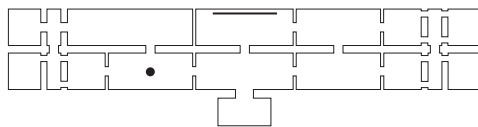
Surrealism in the Art of Spanish Exiles





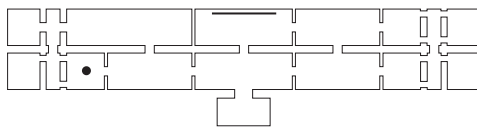
2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

Visions of War and the Home Front



2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

Satirical War Drawings



Juan Antonio Morales Ruiz, *Los Nacionales*.
Ministerio de Propaganda (The Nationals:
The Propaganda Ministry), ca. 1937–39

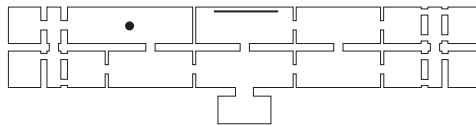




Pitti (Francisca Bartolozzi Sánchez), from the *Pesadillas infantiles* (Childhood Nightmares) series, 1937: *Guerra* (War), *El nuevo dragón* (The New Dragon), *Gases* (Gases), and *El ogro* (The Ogre)

2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

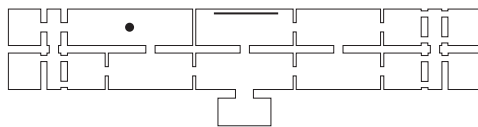
Eclectic Modernity: Spanish Art During the Second Republic





2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

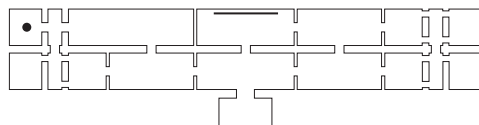
Eclectic Modernity: Spanish Art During the Second Republic





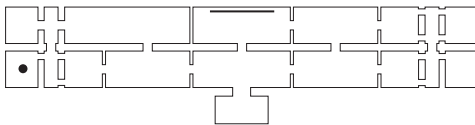
2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

Scenography and the Visual Arts During the Second Republic



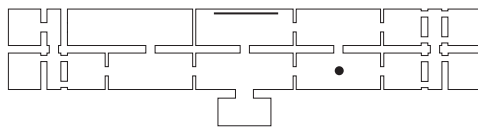
2012: *Encounters with the 1930s*

Theatre and the Public Sphere in Times of War



2013-2015

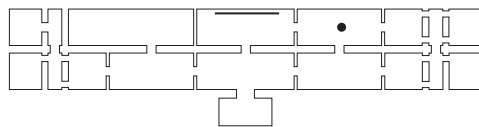
Architecture and Propaganda: The Paris International Exhibition, 1937





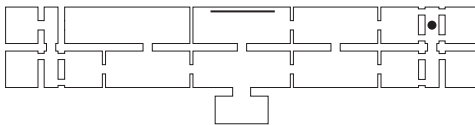
2013-2015

Surrealism in the Art of Spanish Exiles



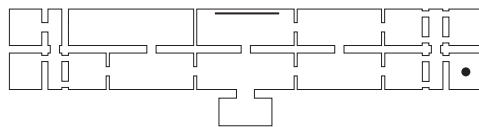


Walter Rosenblum, *Spanish Refugees*, 1947



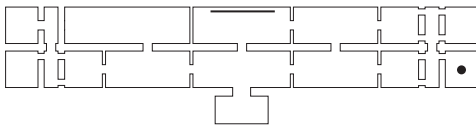
2013-2015

¡Aidez l'Espagne!



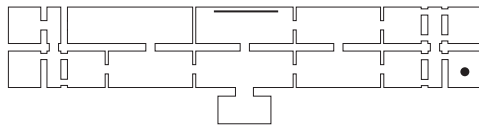
2013-2015

Luis Quintanilla: War Drawings



2013-2015

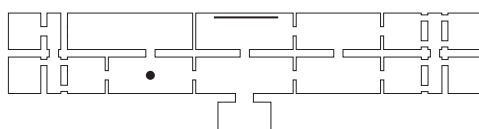
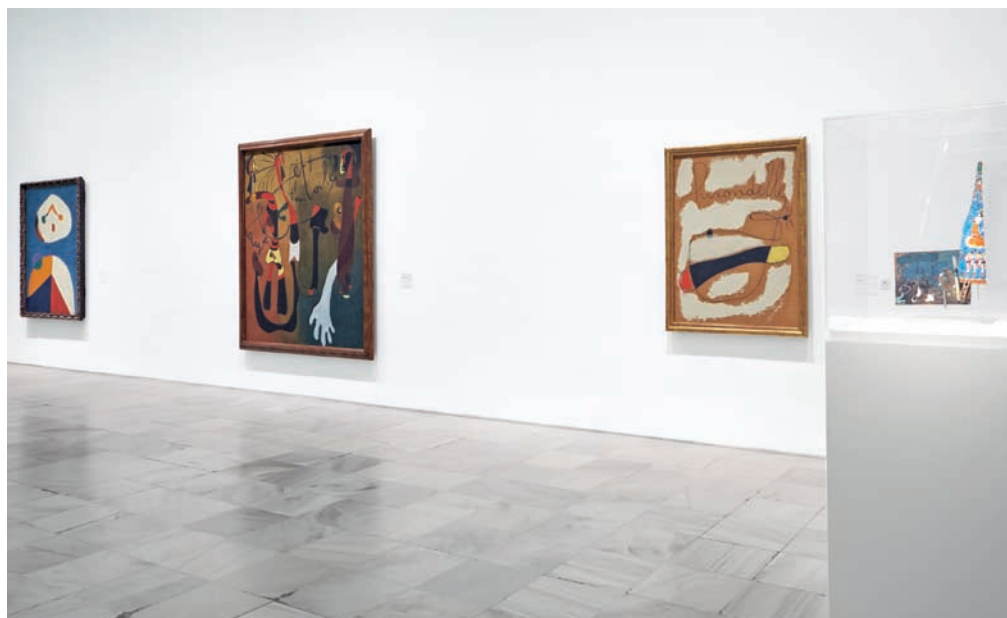
Luis Quintanilla: War Drawings





2013-2015

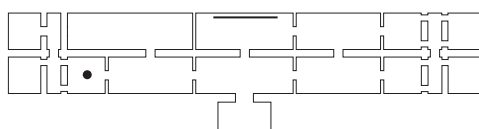
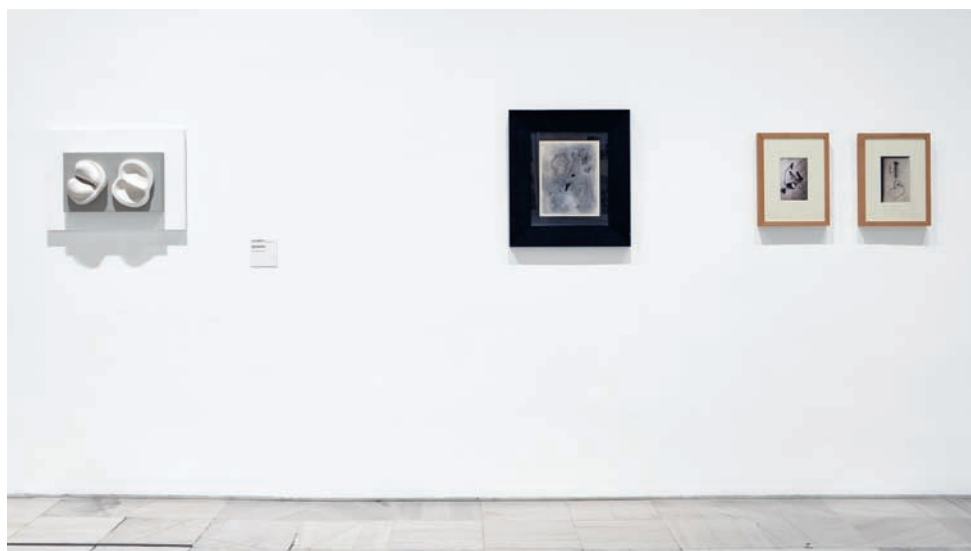
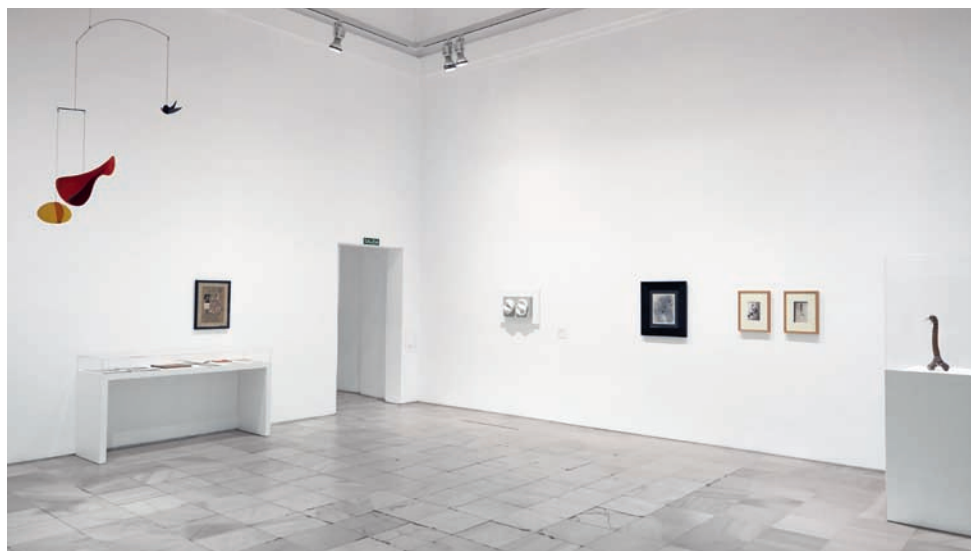
Picasso and Miró: Painting and Anti-Painting





2013-2015

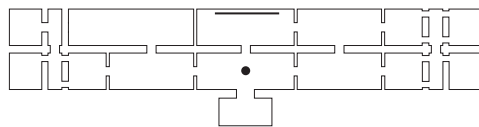
Cultural Modernity: ADLAN (Amics de l'Art Nou)





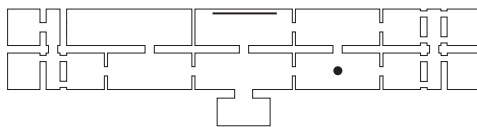
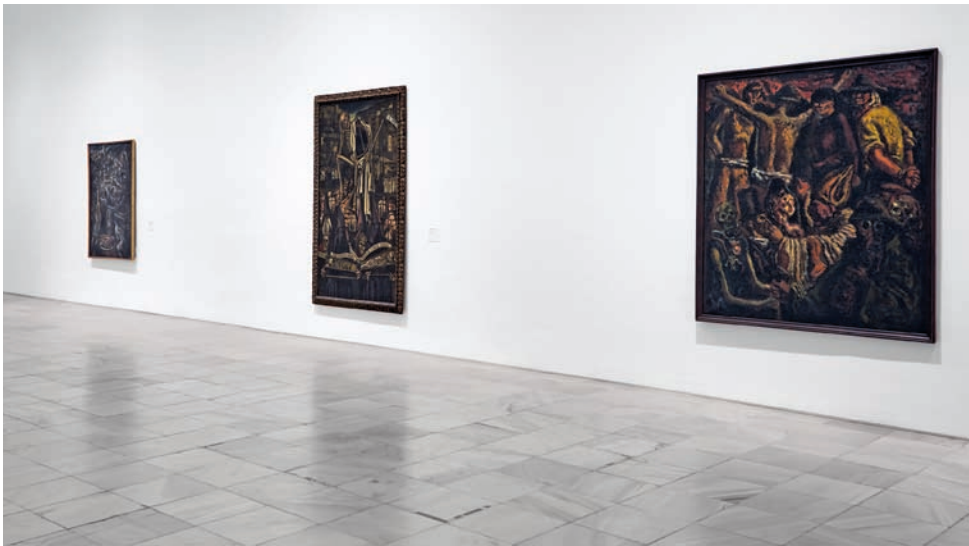
2016

The Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, 1937



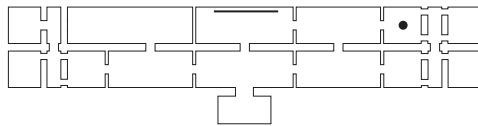
2016

The Image of Spain in Crisis: Conflict, Death, and Exile



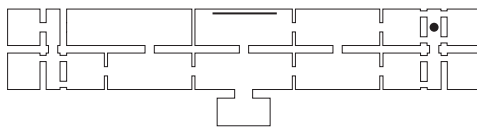
2016

Luis Buñuel, *Los olvidados* (*The Young and the Damned*), 1950



2016

Surrealism in the Art of Spanish Exiles



Antonio Rodríguez Luna, *Espanoles en el campo de concentración de Argelès-sur-Mer* (Spaniards in the Argelès-sur-Mer Concentration Camp) and *Espanoles en el campo de concentración* (Spaniards in the Concentration Camp), ca. 1939

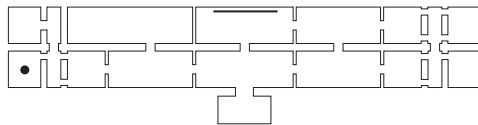




Jesús Martí Martín, *Exodo 6-Campo de concentración* (Exodus 6 – Concentration Camp): (*Exodo 1* (Exodus 1) and *Exodo 2* (Exodus 2), 1950

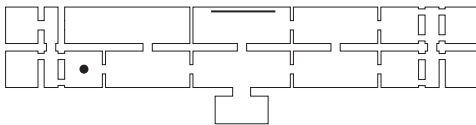
2016

Luis Buñuel, *Las Hurdes: Tierra sin pan* (*Land Without Bread*), 1933



2016

Exposició Logicofobista, May 1936



Views, invitation, and catalogue-manifesto of the first exhibition of the group Logicofovista organized by ADLAN, Galeries Catalònia, Barcelona, May 1936



ADLAN - INVITA
a la 1.^a Exposició del Grup
Logicofovista
Galeries Catalònia
Del 5 al 15 Maig 1936
d'onze a una i de tres a set

Per a explicar amb tota l'amplitud volguda el programa essencial del Logicisme, n'hi hauria prou amb la simple transcripció d'aquells auris passatges del "Fedre", on Plató exalta, amb mítica simplicitat, la inspiració poètica o mania enfront i per sobre la raó i la lògica.

Aquestes són precisament aquelles facultats per les quals sentim més aversió. L'ur empremta en la producció artística s'inicia en aquella tendència programada per Courbet que culminà en l'impressionisme i que elimina tot allò que, despassant la vulgaritat, suggereixi o recordi els abims cap a dalt o cap a baix, puix que, com escrivi justíssimament Joris Karl Huysmans: "per a ésser superaguda, tota obra hauria d'ésser satànica o mística per tal com fora d'aquests punts extrems, no hi ha més que obres de clima temperat, de purgatori, obres sortides d'assumptes humans més o menys menyspreables".

Ultra, però, aquests extrems indespassables que són el Cel i l'Infern, encara hi ha, creiem, un punt superior i transcendental que els unifica, tot situant-los: l'ekentris. És així, doncs, que per a classificar jeràrquicament els diversos aspectes presentats per les produccions reveladores de la vida més profunda de la "resique" humana —aquesta és precisament la missió que es proposa el moviment Logicifob—, hem emprat un sistema total i unitari en el qual aquelles puguin encabir-se sense esforç ni arbitrariedad.

¿Quin sistema més adequat per a això que el desenvolupament dialèctic hegel·lià? Emprant aquest sistema dialèctic, podríem dir, doncs, que al moment de la tesi, corresponen dins la teoria de la Logicifobia, aquelles produccions artístiques arrelades en la Litúrgia, o dit d'una altra manera, que tenen per base la Religió, això és la Consciència moral d'un "més enllà". Al moment oposat i complementari o "Antítesi", per contra, totes les obres que són filles de les alucinacions oníriques o altres, l'origen de les quals cal cercar en les tèrboles regions de l'ànima on dominen els tan variats aspectes de la Líbido.

El "Surrealisme", aspecte dialècticament antitètic dins la concepció sintèticament ghegal que és el Logicifobisme, s'oposa a tota expressió artística i considera la Poesia com a activitat de l'esperit. En la seva recerca del meravellós, sorprenent i excepcional, no és pas evasionista en si, sinó que, tot abas-

Mentre que les obres que corresponen a la "tesi" les trobaríem en tots els períodes de la Història de l'Art —començant per Egipte i Caldea, passant per Grècia, l'Índia i el període Gòtic, sense deixar de banda l'Art dit "negre"—, En allò que concerneix l'Antítesi, s'esdevé precisament el contrari, puix que aquestes són forja recent, car si bé és veritat que tant Goya com Rops poden passar com els seus precursors, el seu aspecte negatiu i destructor trobe la seva expressió més íntegra en el "Surrealisme". Quant al moment final del desenvolupament dialèctic, la "Síntesi", podem incloure-hi les creacions d'aquelles individualitats excepcionals que manifesten les concepcions pures de l'Esperit: "Metafísica". Exemples: Blake i Runge, Cornelius i Wiertz, Watts i Moreau, Böcklin i Klingner, Redon i Fidus.

Actualment hom encabeix a tot arreu l'epítet "social". ¿Què té de sorprenent que també s'hagi pretès encabir-lo en els dominis de l'Art estètic? En aquest particular, nosaltres creiem que, basant-nos en la classificació jeràrquica de les activitats de l'Esperit d'Hegel, l'Art ha de servir, sí, però solament a allò que està per sobre d'ell: la Religió i la Filosofia. Mai, però, a allò que està per sota, com la Política o la Sociologia. En aquest particular repetim els mots escrits pel gran i subtil Odilon Redon: "Hom ha emprat molt el qualificatiu "social" durant tota la meua vida. Avui en desconfito molt".

Acabarem proclamant obertament que la Logicifobia o, en la seva manifestació artística, el logicifobisme, és una tendència neta i metafísica. ¿Es que és possible unir l'art i la metafísica? Creiem que sí sempre que donem a aquest mot la significació que li dona el gran liric anglès Percy Bysshe Shelley en aquells sorprenents "Fragments" que són com una mena de presentiment programàtic de les recerques i experimentacions psicològiques que avui ens preocupen i en els quals podem llegir que: "La metafísica pot ésser definida com la recerca de les coses que depenen de la natura interna de l'home o que hi són relatives".

M. A. CASSANYES

tant el concretament poètic, tendeix a precipitar l'actual crisi de consciència, mostrant-se essencialment com a expressió de la revolució permanent de l'esperit.

El "Surrealisme" és a la vegada nova noció de la poesia i un mètode nou de coneixença.

J. VIOLA GAMON

ARTUR CARBONELL

- 1 Interior
- 2 Paisatge assassinat
- 3 Òrbita

LEANDRE CRISTÓFOL

- 4 Preix damunt la platja
- 5 Nit de lluna
- 6 L'aureola astral i impassible està a punt de sortir
- 7 Finestra

ANGEL FERRANT

- 8 Composició
- 9 Dibuix

ESTEVE FRANCÉS

- 10 Maria és cassadora
- 11 De la mar sorgeix un mal son
- 12 Chipre-remei o el complex del dictador

A. GAMBOA-ROTHWOSS

- 14 Pensaments claustrals de Josafat Jokey
- 15 Records dels ocells sentimentals
- 16 Enterrament

A. G. LAMOLLA

- 16 L'espectre de les tres gràcies dins l'aura subtil
- 17 Madrepòra oníric-plàcida
- 18 Tubercul icúbic tot esperant l'hora seca
- 19 Per la planície implacable passa alguna cosa
- 20 Carícia oviforme
- 21 Abraçada aeti-plàstica sense perifrasi

RAMON MARINEL·LO

- 22 Cap crepuscular
- 23 Els meus records d'adolescent
- 24 Noies que es besen
- 25 Les dues amigues (crystalització)

JOAN MASSANET

- 26 Rastre fatidic del simulacre solid

MARUJA MALLO

- 27 L'empremta
- 28 Granotes i excrements

ANGEL PLANELLS

- 29 Natura morta (el silenci s'ha fet concret)
- 30 La dona impúdica
- 31 L'arpa de Napoleó

JAUME SANS

- 32 Camagüey

NÀDIA SOKALOVA

- 33 La boira

REMEDIOS VARO

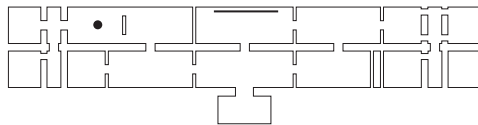
- 34 Lliçons de costura
- 35 Accidentalitat de la dona—violència
- 36 La cama alliberadora de les amibes gegants.

JOAN ISMAEL

- 37 L'arpista tot improvisant
- 38 En arribar Clotilde
- 39 Va arribar quan jo l'esperaba

2017: *Pity and Terror*

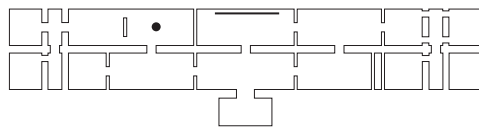
The World is a Room





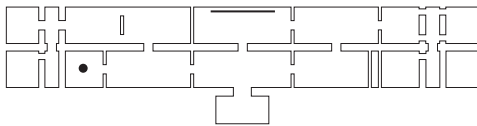
2017: *Pity and Terror*

Beauty and Terror



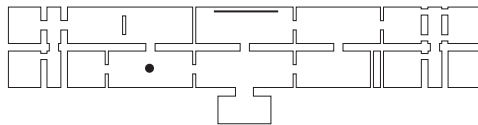
2017: *Pity and Terror*

Faces and Phantoms



2017: *Pity and Terror*

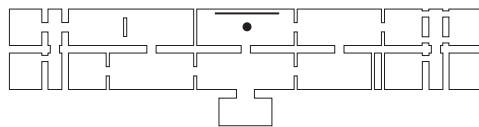
Monsters and Monuments





2017: *Pity and Terror*

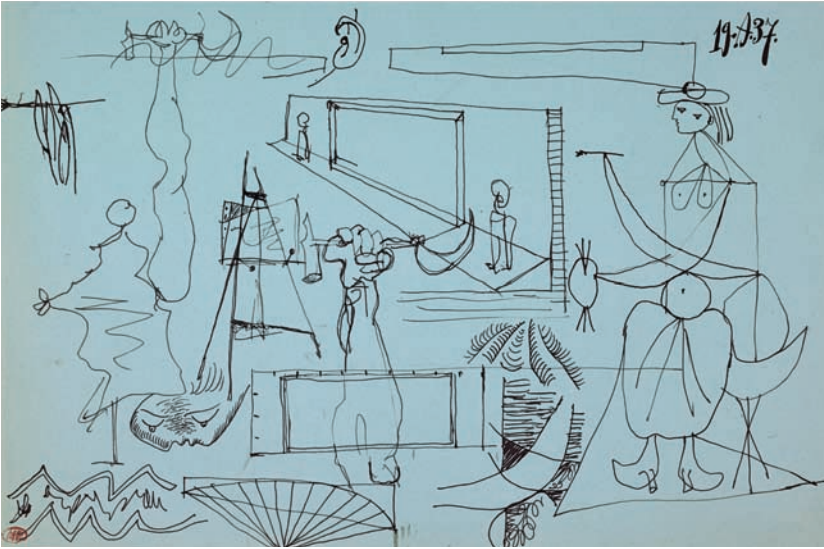
Things Fall Apart





Pablo Picasso, *Le crayon qui parle*
(The Speaking Pencil), 1936

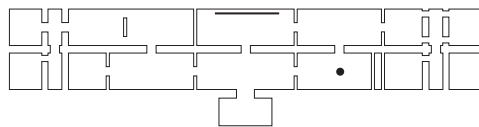




Pablo Picasso, Studies for *Liatelier: le peintre et son modèle* (The Studio: The Painter and His Model), 1937

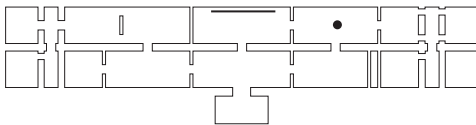
2017: *Pity and Terror*

Memento Mori

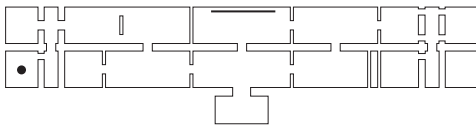
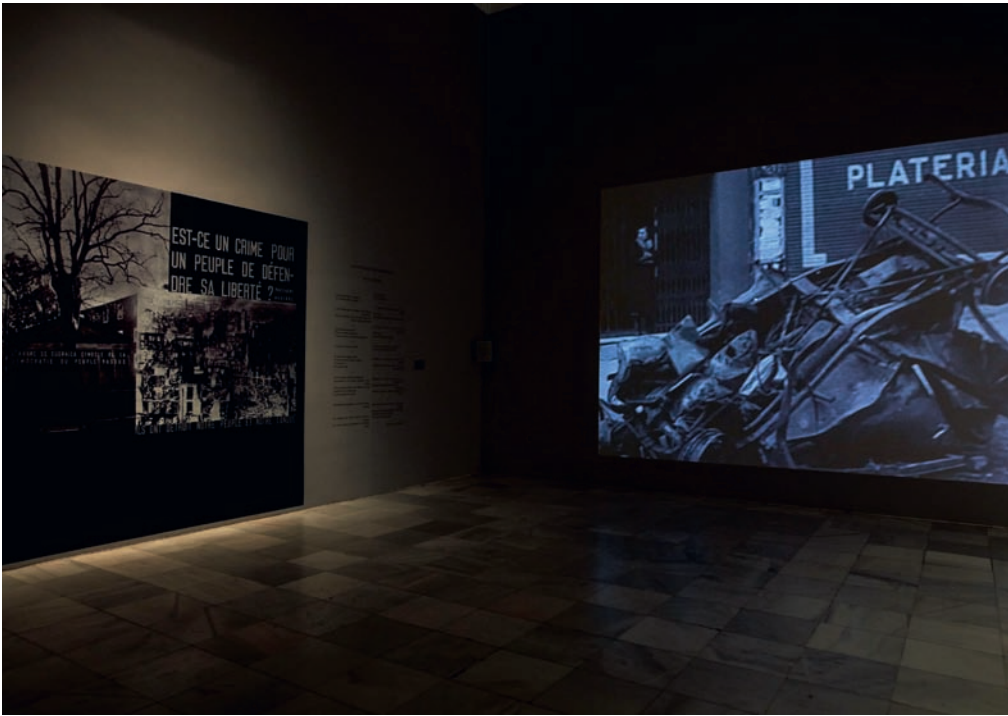


2017: *Pity and Terror*

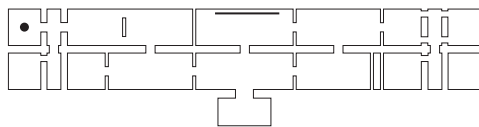
Machines for Suffering



2017: *Guernica's Archive*

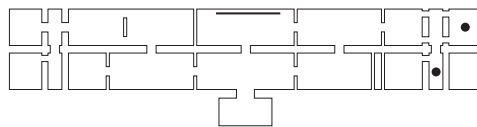


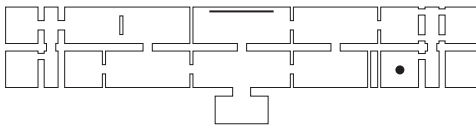
2017: *Guernica's Archive*





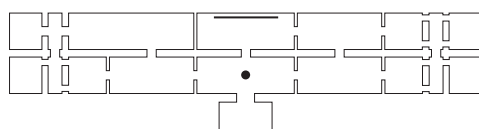
2017: *Guernica's Archive*





2017-2019

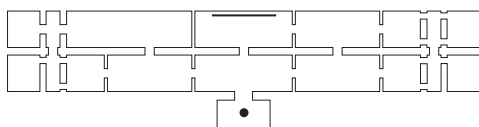
War Photography: The Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, 1937





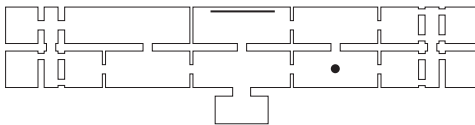
2017-2019

¡Aidez l'Espagne!

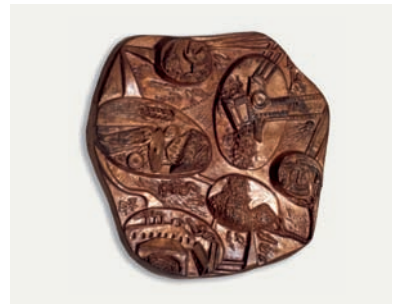
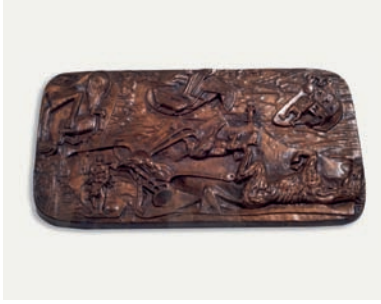


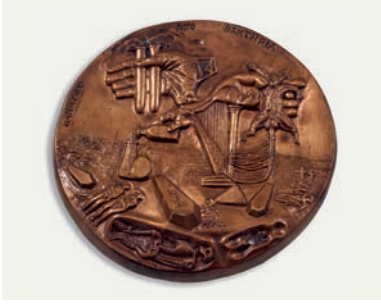
2017-2019

Julio González/ David Smith: The 1930s



David Smith, *Medals for Dishonor, 1938-40: Food Trust, Diplomats: Fascist and Fascist Tending, Munition Makers, Private Law and Order Leagues, Cooperation of the Clergy, and Scientific Body Disposal*

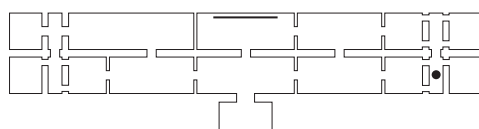




David Smith, *Medals for Disbonor, 1938-40: Death by Bacteria, Bombing Civilian Populations, Elements Which Cause Prostitution, Propaganda for War, Fourth Estate, and Reaction in Medicine*

2017-2019

Identities and Settings for a New Regime





Jalón Ángel (Ángel Hilario García de Jalón). *Los artifices de la victoria en cielo mar y tierra* (The Architects of Victory in the Air, at Sea, and on Land), 1937-40

2017-2019

Premonition of the Civil War





II

Postcard from Janice Loeb, Paris,
to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., September 8, 1937



Piencro pic

PAVILLON ESPAGNOL
A L'EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE
1937.

Guernica
Le grand peintre espagnol PABLO PICASSO, créateur du Cubisme, et qui influence si puissamment l'art plastique contemporain, a voulu exprimer dans cette œuvre la désagrégation du monde en proie aux horreurs de la guerre.

Janice Loeb f.

*Paris envoie
quelq chose de moment
de la 1a Guerre Mon
Bataille, Duster, Nouvema
de l'indien. Kenning
Pommes etc. L'indian
Skons Good - high happish -
dag love + beam wife -
vite write soon -*

Édité par le Commissariat du Gouvernement Espagnol
à l'Exposition Internationale de Paris 1937.

PARIS-115
15 20
8 - IX
1937
SAINTS-PIERRES

Mr. Alfred Barr
2 Beekman Place
New York City
Etats Unis

“Extended loan from the artist”:
Guernica at the Museum
of Modern Art, New York*

Rocío Robles Tardío

In September 1937, when the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life in Paris was halfway through its run, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. received a postcard with an image of the completed *Guernica*,¹ photographed by Dora Maar at the studio in the rue des Grands-Augustins. The image that had found its way to the director of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York was Pablo Picasso’s latest work, commissioned by the Spanish Republican government. According to the description printed on the back, it “sought to express the disintegration of the world in the grip of the horrors of war.” In Barr’s hands, this postcard issued for propaganda purposes by the organizers of the Spanish Pavilion and the Spanish Republican government was *Guernica*’s first symbolic journey to the United States. It was also a revelation: *Guernica* would culminate Barr’s long-cherished curatorial project based on Picasso, which finally took the form of the exhibition *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*, on show at MoMA from November 15, 1939. Nevertheless, between its first public showing at the Paris Exposition and Barr’s MoMA show, *Guernica* was regularly exhibited in numerous political, fundraising, and artistic contexts.

* This essay is the fruit of a research project carried out in the Collections Department, Museo Reina Sofía, from October 2015 to October 2017. I would like to thank the department and the museum as well as Inés Plasencia Camps for her invaluable help.

¹ Janice Loeb, postcard to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., September 8, 1937, MoMA Archives, AHB 12.II.F.2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/en/document/denise-loeb-postcard-alfred-h-barr-jr>.

Rocío Robles Tardío

Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Laurens, exhibition
view, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo, 1938



In early December 1937, soon after the closing of the Paris Exposition, the press reported that *Guernica* would be part of the touring exhibition *Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Laurens*, propagated by Norwegian painter Walther Halvorsen, which would travel to Oslo, Copenhagen, and Stockholm in the spring of 1938.² It was either Picasso or the organizers of the exhibition who arranged for the painting to be collected, although the sculptures he had loaned remained, as we know from a letter dated February 5, 1938 asking him to urgently specify where they should be sent because the pavilion was about to be demolished.³ By removing *Guernica* himself or authorizing a third party to do so, Picasso acted as the painting's owner and manager.

² “‘Guernica’ de Picasso figurera dans une exposition a Oslo, Copenhague et Stockholm,” *Alga* (section “Echos d’ici et d’ailleurs”), December 3, 1937, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/guernica-de-picasso-incluido-en-una-exposicion-de-oslo-copenhague-y-estocolmo>. In addition to *Guernica*, the exhibition included a selection of works from 1900 to 1937.

³ MPP-Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/19/Espagne.

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Picasso's *Guernica*, exhibition view,
San Francisco Museum of Art, 1939

Guernica traveled to Scandinavia as a work of art, but the press and the public in the cities it visited saw it as a political weapon.⁴ As such, Picasso's *Guernica* and Picasso via *Guernica* worked hard beyond Spain's physical and geographical borders, taking advantage of its widely recognized representative power and symbolic capital. Almost immediately, the painting was used to channel international aid to refugees, women and children, the infirm, intellectuals, and the hungry and needy Spanish people in general. This was confirmed by Juan Larrea in a letter to Roland Penrose in February 1938, as part of the negotiations to present the painting in London: "We [the Government of the Second Republic] and Picasso are interested in getting as much out of the painting, for art and propaganda, as its exceptional nature would have us hope.... Today, matters stand like

⁴ Press clippings for the exhibition *Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Laurens* at the Liljevalchs konsthall, Liljevalchs konsthall Archive, Stockholm, "Book of Press Clippings," F3a:35, 1937-1938, <http://guernica.museoreina.sofia.es/documento/recortes-de-prensa-de-la-exposicion-henri-matisse-picasso-g-braque-laurens-en-el-liljevalchs-konsthall>.

89

FORENINGEN FÖR NUTIDA KONST

**MATISSE
PICASSO
BRAQUE
LAURENS**

VERNISAGE TISDAGEN DEN 8 MARS KL. 1.30-5

LILJEVALCHS KONSTHALL

GALLER FÖR 2 PERSONER

Lomb. 4/3.

Fransk fläkt på Liljevalchs.



På tisdag i nästa vecka få vi beskåda den berömda fransyska kvartetten Matisse-Picasso-Braque-Laurens på Liljevalchs och i morse började man packa upp de stora lärnarna med 400 dukar och skulpturer, som just anlånt från Oslo, där utställningen senast visats. T. h. ovan plöckas Picasso fram i dagalluset, t. v. "Sittande kvinna" av Laurens och övertvå Picassodukar.

Svenska Dagsbl. 8/3

Omstridda revolutionärer i Liljevalchs.

I dag tisdag kl. 1.30 e. m. öppnas den med stort intresse inredda utställningen av modern fransk konst i Liljevalchs konsthall. Kl. 3 håller stadsrådet Engberg ett anförande och därefter komma representanter för franska legationen med minister Maugras i spetsen, m. m. Marguerite Dutuit, dotter till Matisse, och den franska målaren Albert Marquet att närvara vid öppnandet.

På måndagen lade man sista hand vid konstverken ordnade ut i Liljevalchs och initiativtagaren till utställningen, den norske konstnären Walter Halvorsen, gick omkring i salarna och såg till att allt blev som det skulle.

— Det här blir väl en magnifik utställning, säger hr Halvorsen och visar på en av salarna där väggarna strålar av färg och ljus från Picassos surrealistiska drömbilder och brutala formkonstraster. Jag är glad att vi ha lyckats så bra med hängningen här. I Statens Museum for Kunst i Köpenhamn, varifrån utställningen närmast kommer, hade särskilt Picasso fått en mycket olämplig placering och dessutom tyckas köpenhamnarne på förband ha fått en avog inställning till utställningen. Lokalerne där voro också olämpliga och fräga och konstverken kommo lite till sin rätt. Här i Stockholm ha vi fria utrymmen och kunna placera tavlor och skulpturer så att sårbära möjliga rättvisa vederläses dem. Denna franska konst, särskilt då Matisse, har ju varit betydelsefull för det nordiska måleriet och jag tror att utställningen, som vi sökt göra så representativ som möjligt, skall väcka stort intresse. Underhandlingar pågå också om att visa den i Göteborg och Helsingfors.

“Extended loan from the artist”

this: we want the exhibition to happen with the maximum force and solemnity, both for Picasso himself, since the more admired he is the more useful he will be to our cause, and for our cause itself, since this is one of the rare means we have to reach that sector of the public for whom this kind of argument may prove convincing.”⁵ In the letter, Larrea told Penrose that they had also received a proposal to exhibit *Guernica* in New York, confirming its power to attract international attention and interest.

In late March 1939, after the exhibitions in England (two in London, and one in Manchester),⁶ Picasso wrote to Penrose with instructions for sending the painting and the associated works to Paris. On May 1, *Guernica* and the preliminary drawings and postscript studies arrived in the port of New York. The painting had left Europe mainly because of its exceptional nature (its large size and its political dimension), and its journey was symbolically and metaphorically portrayed as an exile. Nevertheless, examining the shipping invoices and the names of those who covered the expenses suggests that it may also have been an artistic and aesthetic rescue operation. The Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign (SRRC)—coordinated through the American Medical Bureau and the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy—forwarded the transportation company receipts to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., asking him to confirm that MoMA would cover the expenses as agreed.⁷ From May 4 to October 15, 1939, *Guernica* participated in a total of four exhibitions in the United States as part of the activities of the SRRC, and was delivered to MoMA in time for the exhibition *Picasso*:

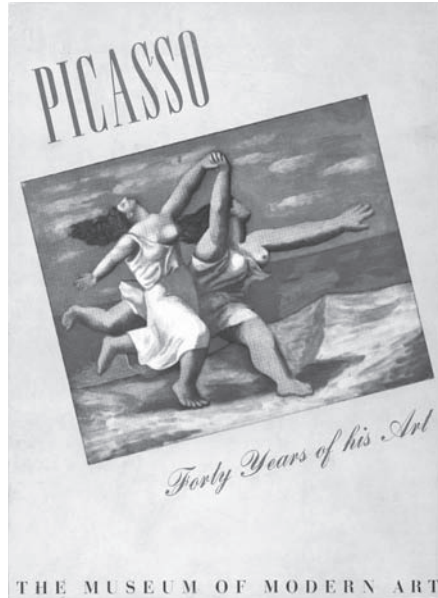
⁵ Juan Larrea, letter to Roland Penrose, February 12, 1938, National Galleries Scotland, Roland Penrose Archive, GMAA35/1/1/RPA717, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-juan-larrea-roland-penrose>.

⁶ The exhibition was organized by the Manchester Foodship for Spain campaign, February 1–15, 1939. Working Class Movement Library, EVT/SPAIN/4/10, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/anuncio-de-exposicion-de-guernica-en-manchester>.

⁷ Blanche Mahler, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., May 25, 1939, MoMA Archives, P&S “Guernica” Records Corresp. 50s “Confidential,” <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-blanche-mahler-alfred-h-barr-jr>.

Rocío Robles Tardío

Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Picasso: Forty Years of his Art*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939



Forty Years of His Art. In other words, Picasso allowed the SRRC to use the painting as a fundraising tool and lent it to MoMA for the exhibition that rounded off a year of activities to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the museum.

* * *

In May 1939, the MoMA Board of Trustees was photographed in front of the recently acquired *Les Femmes d'Avignon* (The Young Ladies of Avignon, 1907). The painting was included in the exhibition *Art in Our Time*, celebrating the start of the museum's tenth anniversary year and the opening of its new building on West 53rd Street. This show was followed in November by Barr's survey of his ten years at the helm of the museum, Picasso's forty-year career, and modern art and the avant-gardes. *Guernica* was presented as a point of no return (or of overcoming) requiring a new set of formal categories and criteria to replace the duality between "geometrical abstract art" and "non-geometrical

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RADIO LETTER	RADIO LETTER				

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PICASSO, 25 RUE BOETIE, PARIS (France)

EXPOSITION SUCCES COLOSSAL SOIXANTE MILLE VISITEURS SURPASSANT EXPOSITION VANOGGH STOP PUISQUE
 GUERRE EMPÊCHE RENVOI VOS TABLEAUX ESPERE VOTRE CONSENTEMENT LEUR INCLUSION TOUR TRIOMPHAL GRANDS
 CENTRES CULTURAUX ÉTATS UNIS STOP PRIÈRE CABLER PRIX POUR AMATEURS PAYSAGE 1920 NUMERO CATALOGUE
 149 RAINEUSE DEBOUT 1929 CATALOGUE 230 NAGEUSE 1929 CATALOGUE 235 STOP PRIX POUR MUSÉE PORTRAIT
 DIAGHILEV 1917 CATALOGUE 130 COURSE 1922 CATALOGUE 167 TÊTE 1927 CATALOGUE 217 FIGURE 1927
 CATALOGUE 210 ÉTUDES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON CATALOGUE 68-69 ENVOYANT COUPURES JOURNAUX SERIONS
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BARR - MODERNART

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FULL-RATE MESSAGE UNLESS MARKED OTHERWISE FOR MESSENGER CALL

Sender's Name and Address: **The Museum Of Modern Art, New York** Circle 7-5525 chg. Picasso show

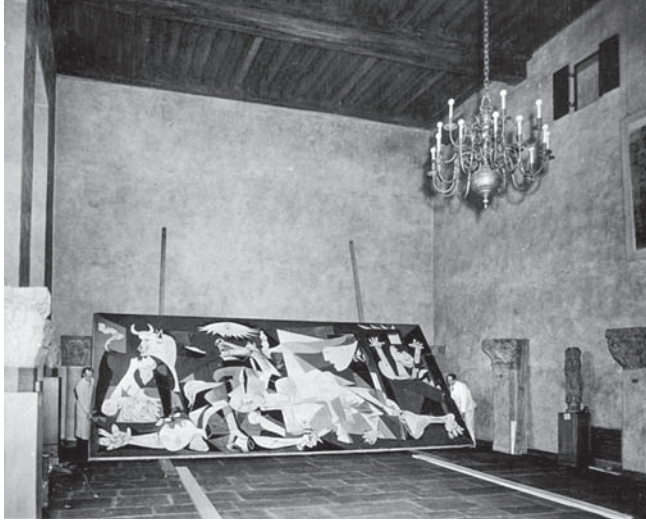
(Not to be transmitted) Form 109-10-24-398

Telegram from Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Pablo Picasso, December 15, 1939

abstract art” that Barr himself had established in his famous 1936 diagram.⁸ Yet the two paintings were Barr’s two big trophies for MoMA: *Les Femmes d’Alger* had opened the floodgates for the irrevocable breakdown of the system of representation, and *Guernica* was the swan song of the European avant-garde. The presence—or, rather, the management and exhibition—of *Guernica* at MoMA not only called into question the principles of modern painting that had prevailed thus far but also became a personal crusade for Barr, who used it as an object of study, analysis, and interpretation over the next few years. In a semantic reversal, he used the painting’s military origins and the vision of the horror that it symbolized to turn it into an icon of peace. In December 1939, given the inability to guarantee the safe return of the paintings to France, where a military rearmament program

⁸ The diagram on the origins and evolution of modern art (MoMA Archives, AHB Papers, 10.34) that became the cover of the exhibition catalogue *Cubism and Abstract Art* (MoMA, 1936).

Rocío Robles Tardío



Installation of *Guernica*, Fogg Art Museum,
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1941



“Extended loan from the artist”

was underway, Barr asked Picasso to agree to their inclusion in the tour of *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* to several American cities,⁹ and then entrust them to the museum for the duration of the war. There were a total of thirty-three paintings in addition to the works associated with *Guernica*, which Picasso always regarded as an indivisible whole. The loan went ahead, and from then on MoMA referred to the group as “war loans.” During this tour, as an exception, between September 1941 and September 1942 *Guernica* was exhibited twice at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, for an “art course,” according to Barr’s worksheets,¹⁰ that is, for both academic and instructional purposes. The correspondence concerning this request, between Paul Sachs, director of the Fogg Art Museum and founding member and later honorary trustee of MoMA, and his disciple and protégé Barr, reveal the institutional links between the two museums as well as the Fogg Art Museum’s interest in presenting modern art at Harvard.¹¹ In that modernizing, educational spirit, *Guernica* was displayed high above the ground like an altarpiece, flanked by Romanesque capitals. This staging illustrates the desire to “normalize” Picasso’s work and, more generally, modern art produced in a particular political context. In other words, it was part of an operation to control the painting’s symbolic capital and its status as art. Aside from displaying the “great power and beauty” that had impressed Sachs when he saw *Guernica* at MoMA in 1939, the chapel-like effect created by the capitals and the position of the painting allowed it to be recognized and admired as a sacred symbol of the values of freedom and democracy: pillars of American politics

⁹ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., telegram to Pablo Picasso, December 15, 1939, MoMA Archives, MoMA Exhs. 91.3, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/telegrama-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-pablo-picasso-del-15-de-diciembre-de-1939>.

¹⁰ Alfred H. Barr, Jr. worksheets containing a chronology of the exhibitions in which *Guernica* was exhibited (1937–64), MoMA Archives, AHB 12II.F.2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/fichas-de-trabajo-de-alfred-h-barr-jr>.

¹¹ Paul Sachs, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., January 29, 1940, MoMA Archives, MoMA Exhs. 91.7, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/cartadel-fogg-art-museum-al-moma>.

Rocío Robles Tardío

that appeared to be under threat in 1941. On the other hand, in the midst of an extremely violent war waged outside its borders, three months before the United States joined World War II and around the time of the launch of the Manhattan Project—a military and scientific research undertaking that produced the first nuclear weapons—*Guernica* was presented as the visual equivalent of the official rallying cry of “support the war to win peace.”

* * *

The Alfred H. Barr, Jr. papers in the MoMA archive concerning Picasso (and above all, *Guernica*) show that they were central to much of Barr’s work at the museum: lists of works for touring exhibitions, worksheets, lecture notes, and museum labels to accompany the drawings and sketches, postscripts, and Dora Maar’s photographs. And the texts on *Guernica* itself, in which barely a single word changed between 1939 and 1955. In his “mission” to conserve *Guernica*, Barr reserved certain rights. For example, he suggested which of Picasso’s works could travel to the exhibition that inaugurated the new building of the Sociedad de Arte Moderno in Mexico in 1944. This is noted in a letter sent by Monroe Wheeler, director of the Department of Publications and Exhibitions at MoMA, to Jere Abbott, director of the Smith College Museum of Art, on November 23, 1943, passing on a request from Inés Amor and Jorge Enciso “regarding a Picasso exhibition which they would like to borrow from us.... It is their hope that their gallery will become for Mexico City what the Museum of Modern Art is for New York and they are very eager to have our collaboration. Mr. Barr, Mr. Soby and I all feel that Picasso would be glad to have his own pictures, which have been entrusted to our care during the war, appear in this exhibition and Mr. Barr has compiled a list of works which might be included.”¹² The “Picasso exhibition” that Monroe refers to is the long-running

¹² Monroe Wheeler, letter to Jere Abbott, November 23, 1943, MoMA Archives, MoMA Exhs. 258.j.3, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-monroe-wheeler-jere-abbott>.

“Extended loan from the artist”

show that still maintained the spirit of the original project, *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*, despite four editions, name changes, and adaptations between 1939 and 1943. The lists of works for each edition show that the third (*Picasso: Epochs of His Art*, 1942) and fourth (*Picasso*, 1942–43) presented a photographic enlargement of *Guernica* rather than the painting itself. And not just *Guernica*: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, *Portrait d'Ángel Fernández de Soto. Buveur d'Absinthe* (Portrait of Ángel Fernández de Soto: The Absinthe Drinker, 1903), and a Cubist sculpture were also reduced to mechanical reproductions, mere images. Very early on, Barr came up with the perfect formula combining conservation and pedagogy, so that *Guernica* could leave the museum in the form of a photographic print.¹³ Comparing the works included in the second edition of *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (September 1940 – April 1941) and the list that Barr prepared for the Sociedad de Arte Moderno (with which MoMA corresponded until April 1944) shows that only fourteen works (mostly from the MoMA collection and the Picasso loan) from the 1940–41 show traveled to Mexico. There were also graphic works and a set of fifteen studies for *Guernica*,¹⁴ although the painting itself is not mentioned. On the other hand, it was included in Barr's wish list of acquisitions around the time he was dismissed as director. Just after the announcement that Picasso had joined the French Communist Party, Barr wrote to him with a clear objective: to acquire *Guernica* and its related works for MoMA.¹⁵ While the painting's relevance was starting

¹³ For example, the exhibition that toured to several museums in the United States from 1952 to 1956 under the title *Studies for Guernica*. See MoMA Archives, CEII.1.105.2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/listado-de-obras-de-la-exposicion-studies-guernica>.

¹⁴ Dossier of the exhibition at the Sociedad de Arte Moderno in Mexico, including list of works, budgets, lenders, etc., MoMA Archives, MoMA Exhs. 258.j.1, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/dossier-de-la-exposicion-de-la-sociedad-de-arte-moderno-de-mexico-con-la-relacion-de-obras-costes-prestadores-etc>.

¹⁵ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter/postcard to Pablo Picasso, October 31, 1944, MPP-Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/16/14/4(2), <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/tarjetas-postales-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-pablo-picasso>.

Rocío Robles Tardío

to be urgent and necessary in bomb-ravaged Europe, Barr argued that in the United States *Guernica* played a redemptive role: in the military sense and in the narrative of art history.

Pedagogy and propaganda. For example, Barr's 1943 book *What Is Modern Painting?*, which soon became one of the best-selling titles in MoMA's publishing history, was, according to the prologue, "written for people who have had little experience in looking at paintings, particularly those modern paintings which are sometimes considered puzzling, difficult, incompetent or crazy." Its purpose, it went on, was to "undermine prejudice, disturb indifference and awaken interest so that some greater understanding and love of the more adventurous painting of our day may follow."¹⁶ The missionary tone of these words coincided with the recognition of the political, economic, and arms hegemony of the United States, as it prepared to take on the—also missionary—role of saving the governments and people of Europe in the war. Dismissed as director, Barr focused on research, completing his PhD thesis *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art* in 1946. He thereby confirmed MoMA's scholarly authority and turned Picasso and the painting into a subject and an image for the mass media and consumer culture.

It was against this background that Barr proposed making a documentary on *Guernica* for the museum, keeping in mind that the lessons of Picasso and his painting had already been absorbed by a new generation of American artists and critics such as Elizabeth McCausland, Sidney Janis, and Clement Greenberg. Barr proposed his assistant William Lieberman as the most suitable person to write the script. They wanted a neutral, objective film, so they turned to the most acclaimed documentary filmmaker of the time, Robert Flaherty. In comments dated October 25, 1945, on Lieberman's first draft, Barr suggested several changes, emphasizing the removal of all references to art history, in particular a mention of Hubert and Jan van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* (1432).

¹⁶ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *What Is Modern Painting?* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1943), 6.

“Extended loan from the artist”

He recommended focusing on and taking full “narrative” advantage of Picasso’s genius and creative process, particularly the studies and paintings he worked on around the same time as *Guernica*, the posterior studies, and Dora Maar’s photographs. In other words, he urged Lieberman to get rid of any reference to possible influences or external formal and aesthetic comparisons. He also suggested including photographs of *Guernica* at the 1937 Spanish Pavilion as well as visual references to other works produced by Picasso over the previous thirty years containing elements that eventually appeared in *Guernica*, particularly *La Minotaure* (*Minotaure*, 1935). Looking back three decades meant starting with *Les Femmes d’Alger*, or, in other words, opening and closing the circle of the crisis of representation in art with two works displayed on the walls of MoMA. The documentary that Barr hoped to make was clearly a film version of his two monographs on Picasso: the 1939 catalogue and the 1946 revised edition (and PhD thesis), in which *Guernica* was the culmination of his interpretation of modern art. In short, Picasso was essential to Barr, both in his books and in the planned film on *Guernica*. In point nine of his notes to the script, he wrote “we would be justified not only in emphasizing the *Guernica* bombing as the first ‘total air raid’ but as the most powerful and famous Twentieth Century prophesy of the horror of aerial war which since has come to a climax with the atom bomb.”¹⁷ The United States had bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki two months before these notes were written, and Barr saw the destruction, rubble, and ruins—in short, the Cubism¹⁸—in Picasso’s works, particularly *Guernica*, as the consummation and expiration of the promises of the avant-garde. Through the museum and art history, Barr added a new

¹⁷ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., internal memo to Jere Abbott, October 25, 1945, MoMA Archives, AHB. 12.II.F6, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-john-e-dick-abbott>.

¹⁸ For more on this, see Ángel González García, “Conjeturas sobre el cubismo,” in *Economía: Picasso*, exh. cat. Museu Picasso (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2012), i-1-i-48.

Rocío Robles Tardío

political significance to the painting's symbolic capital: *Guernica* as a visual synthesis and an epiphany of its time.

All that remains of Lieberman's work is a final script incorporating Barr's comments, which Flaherty worked with.¹⁹ The script was divided into two columns, with the visuals on one side and the voice-over text on the other.²⁰ The film was to start with images of cities being bombed during the Spanish Civil War and move on to the preparatory drawings and studies, the notes on the composition, Dora Maar's photographs, *Guernica* itself (with the camera returning to it repeatedly, lingering on its main elements and details), and its installation in the Spanish Pavilion at the International Exposition in Paris. Then, touching on the painting's long life and redemptive role, it was to end with an image of *Guernica* at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, and a few shots of it at MoMA, its then refuge. What remains of the project, aside from the exchange of notes and the draft and final scripts, is nine minutes of footage of the painting at MoMA, filmed by Flaherty in 1949. Records show that seven years later, in July 1956, Lieberman, who was then director of the Department of Drawings, refused to allow it to be screened, arguing that he was not satisfied with the result.²¹ He considered it an unfinished work, based on a four-handed script, which merely showed details of the painting as the camera moved over its surface. Rubble, surface, ruins, the disappearance of pigments: this was its immediate prophecy

¹⁹ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., notes on the script for the film *Guernica* by Robert Flaherty. Robert Flaherty Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, Box 41, "Guernica" folder, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/notas-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-al-guion-de-la-pelicula-guernica-de-robert-flaherty>.

²⁰ See Robert Flaherty Papers, Box 41, "Guernica" folder, "Scenario" file, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/guion-de-la-pelicula-guernica-de-robert-flaherty>.

²¹ William S. Lieberman, internal note to Richard Griffith, July 5, 1956, MoMA Archives, P&S Guernica Records. Correspondence 1950s, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-william-s-lieberman-richard-griffith>.

“Extended loan from the artist”

of the disasters of war, and it was also the poetics of Flaherty's documentary. Perhaps another reason why the project did not go ahead is the fact that for viewers in 1949 (and until 1956), Flaherty's images were more emotional than educational, and the museum could not use them to explain what *Guernica* meant or represented. Instead, the film contributed to the painting's "being," showing it as it was, starting with its material nature. The museum did not abandon its plan, however, collaborating with Felix Brentano's 1948 film *What Is Modern Art?*, whose title suggests that this time it may indeed have been the film version of Barr's book *What Is Modern Painting?* The project was based on an excellent educational exercise: a teacher and a student, played by professional actors, engage in dialogue in the exhibition rooms. By means of the classic method of learning and knowledge acquisition of questions and answers, they address and examine the main avant-garde movements and artists. Picasso features prominently in this modern art lesson filmed at MoMA, in which four of his works are discussed. *Guernica* is presented as an example of political art by a socially committed artist. Each of the figures in the painting is mentioned individually, as is the fact that it was painted in black, white, and gray. The brief discussion of *Guernica* in Brentano's film minimized the universe that had been constructed around the painting in just ten years: uses, management, loan requests, purchase intent, and conservation status. A good illustration of this can be found in Barr's worksheets, where the only references concerning *Guernica* are the catalogue for the 1939 exhibition, Barr's own 1943 book *What Is Modern Painting?* and the revised 1952 edition, and the catalogue for the exhibition *Joan Miró* (MoMA, 1957), written by James Thrall Soby and published two years later (which includes a photograph of *Guernica* on page 88 in conjunction with Miró's *Payés catalán en rebeldía* (Catalan Peasant in Revolt), which was also produced for the 1937 Spanish Pavilion). Clearly, Barr thought that the only valid references with respect to *Guernica* came out of his museum.

* * *

Rocío Robles Tardío

A recurring motif in the history of and literature on *Guernica* is the persistent interest in unraveling its meaning, as though it were a set of signifying signs, or even a hieroglyph. The best example of this is the symposium organized by Barr at MoMA on November 25, 1947, bringing together people who had seen *Guernica* being painted, experts, critics, and artists: Juan Larrea, Jerome Seckler, Josep Lluís Sert, Jacques Lipchitz, and Stuart Davies, who were joined by Monroe Wheeler, the artist Ben Shahn, and others for the question time and discussions that followed.²² The speakers addressed *Guernica* as a work of art, as propaganda, and as a series of elements to be analyzed, revealing their ambiguity and polysemy (bull, horse, soldier, light bulb, oil lamp, bird, and so on). As Barr had already surmised, the painting embraced a double and seemingly arbitrary approach: “a combination of literalness (the mother and child, the woman in the building, the wounded bird, the weeping woman) versus symbolism (the bull, the horse, the woman with the lamp, the fallen soldier).”²³ The symposium was preceded by the publication of Juan Larrea’s book on *Guernica*,²⁴ and by a dialectical, epistolary battle between Barr, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (speaking for himself and for Picasso), and Larrea, which revolved around clarifying the meaning of the painting and its symbolic, aesthetic, and political value. On May 21, 1947, determined to fix a symbolic interpretation of the painting, Barr wrote to Kahnweiler asking him to pass on some questions to Picasso, because, “as you perhaps know there is real confusion about the symbolism of *Guernica*. Picasso himself seems to have increased the confusion by apparently confirming contradictory interpretations of the symbolism of the bull and the horse.”²⁵

²² “Symposium on *Guernica*,” The Museum of Modern Art, November 25, 1947, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/actas-del-simposio-guernica>.

²³ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., handwritten notes on *Guernica*, n.d., MoMA Archives, AHB. 12.II.F6.

²⁴ Juan Larrea, *Guernica: Picasso*, introduction by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (New York: Curt Valentine, 1947).

²⁵ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter (copy) to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, May 21, 1947, MoMA Archives, AHB. 12. II. F2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/>

“Extended loan from the artist”

Picasso’s answer came a week later, through Kahnweiler: “this bull is a bull and this horse is a horse. There is also a sort of bird, a chicken, or a pigeon, I no longer remember, on the table. This chicken is a chicken. Of course, the symbols ... But it isn’t necessary for the painter to create these symbols, otherwise it would be better to directly write what we want to say, instead of painting it.... There are animals: they are animals, massacred animals. That is all for me. Let the public see what it wants to see.”²⁶ Leaving aside the fact that, ten years on, Picasso could not remember what animals appeared in his painting, it would seem that he did not want to “stop” the life of the painting by saying the words that everybody wanted to hear, indulging in an imaginary memory exercise regarding what he had painted or represented.²⁷ Picasso maintained its literalness: instead of “representing”—there was no attempt at mimesis, no referent in the physical world—he “presented.” As such, *Guernica* is not a historical painting in the academic sense of the term but a war painting, belligerent in at least two senses: its subject matter and the purpose for which it was originally conceived in 1937. And this is why, once the contingency factor had been removed, its validity as an icon has continued into our time. As its history shows, and as can be seen in hundreds of images of demonstrations, protests, record covers, stickers, and posters, *Guernica*’s life did not stop in 1937, or with its incorporation into a museological narrative in 1939. On the contrary, the ensuing copies continued to share in this dichotomy between the symbolic and the literal, the museological and the sociopolitical. Examples include the *Guernica* tapestry commissioned by Nelson Rockefeller

documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-daniel-henry-kahnweiler-del-21-de-mayo-de-1947.

²⁶ Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., May 29, 1947, MoMA Archives, AHB. 12. II. F2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-daniel-henry-kahnweiler-alfred-h-barr-jr-del-29-de-mayo-de-1947>.

²⁷ Picasso always avoided giving explanations of *Guernica*, as can also be seen in a 1966 interview for the French television program *Panorama*. Institut national du patrimoine, Paris, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/picasso-y-su-tiempo>.

Rocío Robles Tardío

from the studio of René Dürrbach and Jacqueline de la Baume Dürrbach in Vallauris in fall 1955,²⁸ the twin ceramic murals of *Guernica* in the cities of Guernica and Bogotá, and the hundreds of murals—many of them anonymous or displaying the names of political parties or neighborhood associations—that appeared beginning in the late 1970s all over Spain (as documented by the photographer Heinz Hebeisen) and around the world. In short, the story of *Guernica* is told through the painting (its materiality, its management, its author, and its custodians), and the painting transformed into image.

* * *

MoMA's plan to create and museumize a "genius" Picasso went through several stages, based on the chronological presentation of his work and organized according to themes and styles. The museum explored the artist's versatility and "variety of languages used," an aspect highlighted by critics and historians of the 1940s and later decades, right up to the present. Picasso organized. MoMA became a laboratory for the study, categorization, and systematization of Picasso's work. The enormous effort that went into the catalogue raisonné compiled by Christian Zervos, and systematically published in thirty-three volumes from 1932 until 1978, was eclipsed at the time by MoMA's operations. The museum's prototype was established in 1939, with the *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* exhibition and catalogue, which was revised and expanded in 1957 with *Picasso: 75th Anniversary Exhibition*. The process culminated in 1980 with *Picasso: A Retrospective* and the accompanying catalogue, which was conceived by William Rubin as the definitive Picasso catalogue raisonné, full of technical specifications of his works. Meanwhile, as

²⁸ John French, memo and draft purchase agreement, to Louise A. Boyer, Nelson Rockefeller's secretary, April 6, 1955. See Rockefeller Archive Center, Collection RFam NAR, RG4, Series C: Art, B28-F239 "La Guernica." <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-john-french-louise-boyer>.

“Extended loan from the artist”

early as 1930, while preparing its third exhibition *Painting in Paris*, MoMA declared that it would seek maximum autonomy from Europe insofar as loans. In other words, its temporary exhibitions would be based, as far as possible, on the ordering of its own collection chronologically, thematically, or by artist. This policy worked, as can be seen in the example of *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art: 80th Birthday Exhibition*, curated by Dorothy Miller and William Lieberman and held between May and September 1962. The more than seventy works in the show were drawn from the MoMA collection (both acquisitions and loans) in addition to *Guernica* and fifty-three associated works. Five years after returning all the “war loans” except *Guernica* and its preparatory studies and drawings, MoMA showed that its collection was as outstanding as Picasso’s own.

* * *

From November 1939 to September 1981, MoMA included *Guernica* in more than ten of its own exhibitions, as well as incorporating it into the narrative of its permanent collection. The painting’s museum label and the catalogue for the exhibition *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* stated that it was “Lent by the artist,” but in 1947 the status of the painting changed to “Extended loan from the artist.”²⁹ The museum and the artist thus avoided any possible controversy over its symbolic ownership, whether de facto or de jure. Corroborating this, Elizabeth McCausland’s monograph *Picasso*, published in 1944, specified “Collection of the artist” as the source of *Guernica*. Also in 1944, after the liberation of Paris and prior to Germany’s imminent defeat, Picasso declared his political affiliation within the new international framework. As mentioned above, immediately after this announcement Barr informed Picasso of MoMA’s interest in acquiring *Guernica* and the associated works. As the painting’s history shows, Picasso

²⁹ “Exhibition of Large-Scale Modern Painting opens at the Museum of Modern Art,” MoMA Press Release Archives 1929–97, ref. 47401-13, https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_325560.pdf.

Rocío Robles Tardío

Picasso: 75th Anniversary, exhibition views,
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1957



did not respond to this request, and continued to manage the painting himself: he cancelled its loan for an exhibition in Caracas in 1948,³⁰ and agreed to its inclusion in the Palazzo Reale exhibition in Milan in autumn 1953, and in the second Bienal de São Paulo (1953–54). The void left by *Guernica* during the period of this double loan upset the museological order that Barr had established at MoMA. This disruption was exacerbated by the request—accepted by Picasso—to show *Guernica* at the retrospective exhibition in Paris in 1955, and its two-stage tour, first to Munich, Cologne, and Hamburg, then to Brussels, Amsterdam, and Stockholm. This meant a year and a half without *Guernica*, and although Barr could not oppose Picasso's decision, taking down the painting necessitated reorganizing the rooms and, as he wrote to the artist, depriving visitors of an essential work and one of the great attractions of the museum.³¹ Moreover, he was

³⁰ Pablo Picasso, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., November 26, 1948, Musée national Picasso, Paris, 515AP/E/16/14/6, <http://guernica.museoreina-sofia.es/documento/carta-de-pablo-picasso-alfred-h-barr-jr-del-26-de-noviembre-de-1948>.

³¹ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter to Pablo Picasso, March 10, 1955, MPP-Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/16/14/7(1), <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-pablo-picasso-del-10-de-marzo-1955>.

“Extended loan from the artist”

already thinking about the exhibition he wanted to organize in 1957, coinciding with Picasso’s seventy-fifth birthday, and he was concerned that the works would not make it back on time.

The exhibition *Picasso: 75th Anniversary* opened in late May 1957. It was Barr’s last curatorial exercise with Picasso, in which *Guernica*—as an “extended loan from the artist”—played a key role for at least three reasons. First of all, Barr wanted to introduce visitors to the post-*Guernica* Picasso, starting where his 1939 exhibition had left off. Secondly, it was agreed that once the exhibition had toured to the Art Institute of Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Guernica* would no longer leave MoMA, given its conservation status and the physical damage caused by rolling up the canvas and stretching it onto the frame at each venue. Thirdly and finally, in July 1956, Picasso, as owner, had requested the return of all the works he had entrusted to MoMA in 1939, except *Guernica* and the associated drawings and studies. After a copious exchange of letters with Kahnweiler on behalf of Picasso, Barr agreed to return the loans in February 1958. Interestingly, Picasso’s request came eight months after he had visited the recently completed *Guernica* tapestry in Antibes,³² and a month before Jackson Pollock’s death. Picasso wanted to resume active management of his oeuvre, and to recover, exhibit, and disseminate his works from prior to 1939, when he dominated art history. Meanwhile, the dual nature of *Guernica* had become apparent: it was an important work but difficult due to its size; and its standing as a relic was starting to be challenged by its status as a fetish, which reached its peak when it was handed over to the Spanish government in September 1981. In October 1967, the Art Workers’ Coalition (AWC) called for the

³² Petro (Nelly) van Doesburg, letter to Louise A. Boyer, secretary to Nelson Rockefeller, November 19, 1955, Rockefeller Archive Center, Collection RFam NAR, RG4, Series C: Art, B28-F239 “La Guernica,” <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-nelly-van-doesburg-louise-boyer-del-19-de-noviembre-de-1955>. See also the photographs of Picasso’s visit to the museum at Antibes, where the recently completed tapestry was exhibited, in MPP-Fonds Picasso, APPH5113, APPH5114, APPH5115, and APPH13599.

removal of *Guernica* from MoMA in protest against the Vietnam War.³³ The group repeated its protest in 1970 in response to the My Lai massacre, staging the action *And babies?* in front of *Guernica*, showing that MoMA was willing to respect the physical and spatial relationship between the public and the artworks. On the other hand, while the AWC sought to address a political problem through art history, the museum, by locating the painting's political value on its surface, had reduced *Guernica* to mere representation, an image... and to marketing. Months earlier, in spring 1967, MoMA's Department of Publications had worked with a copy of *Guernica* photographed by Ansel Adams in 1942, creating posters (large format, up to 100 × 90 cm) to be sold in the museum lobby.³⁴ In autumn 1967, Picasso rejected the Art Workers' Collective's request to remove *Guernica* from the museum. With no physical or visual barriers to protect it, on February 28, 1974, Tony Shafrazi, a member of the AWC, spray-painted in red letters the words "Kill Lies All" on the painting, in an action intended to "free *Guernica* from its chains of ownership" and return "its revolutionary nature."³⁵ Considering the action an attack against a work of art and against the museum, MoMA became a field hospital for a day. Photographs of the two restorers at work on the canvas and of Shafrazi under arrest show the quick response of MoMA staff and the police, and contributed greatly to increasing the media coverage of this cleaning and salvage operation.

³³ See essay by Francis Frascina in the present volume, pp. 221–239, and also his article "Meyer Schapiro's Choice: My Lai, *Guernica*, MoMA and the Art Left, 1969–70" (Parts 1 and 2), *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, no. 3 (July 1995): 481–511 and vol. 30, no. 4 (October 1995): 705–28; also in Francis Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 160–208.

³⁴ Sara Mazo, internal note to Eric Rowlison, May 10, 1967, MoMA Archives, P&S *Guernica* Records: Correspondence 1960s.

³⁵ Karl Denim, S. S. Kush, and Joshua Jericho, letter in defense of Tony Shafrazi, March 2, 1974, MoMA Archives, PI II.B.1637, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-karl-denim-s-s-kush-y-joshua-gericho-en-defensa-de-tony-shafrazi>.

“Extended loan from the artist”

Continuing with the painting’s history by tracing the story of its management (of the artwork itself but also of its public image), Picasso’s death on April 8, 1973, Franco’s death on November 20, 1975, and the formation of a government presided by Adolfo Suárez following the Spanish general elections in 1977, sparked off the process leading to the definitive request for the return of *Guernica* through official and diplomatic channels. After long, intense negotiations with the Spanish government, MoMA agreed to hand over the painting, along with the associated drawings and studies, once the exhibition *Picasso: A Retrospective* (1980) had ended. Under the supervision of the museum’s restorers, all necessary measures were put in place to protect the works during the dismantling of the exhibition and the subsequent journey to Spain. The exhibition in summer 1980 drew more visitors than any previous exhibition at MoMA, as evidenced by the long lines to get into the museum, the crowds jostling to see *Guernica*, and the frustration involved in choosing and purchasing postcards of works (including *Guernica*) as a copy and souvenir of the painting that was taking its leave from the American public. On October 16, 1981, a month after *Guernica* had ceased to be on extended loan to MoMA in New York and had become part of the “legado Picasso” (Picasso bequest) in Madrid, John Koegel, general counsel and secretary at MoMA, wrote to Javier Tusell, director general of fine arts in Spain, to confirm, as agreed between the parties, that MoMA would continue to use and reproduce for its own ends the Picasso works that it had just handed over.³⁶ Throughout that whole period, from the rise of the mass media to the birth of blockbuster exhibitions, MoMA showed a perfect understanding of the importance and the necessity to create this de facto identity between having the work and controlling its image.

³⁶ John Koegel, letter to Javier Tusell, October 16, 1981, MoMA Archives, PI II.B.1637, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-john-koegel-javier-tusell-del-16-de-octubre-de-1981-0>.

Clement Attlee, leader of the British Labour Party, gives a speech at the opening of *Guernica*: Pictures by Picasso, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1939



Furies and Sufferings: *Guernica* and the 1939 Republican Exile

José-Ramón López García

As with other categories used in the study of Pablo Picasso, assigning him to the 1939 Republican exile is problematic. There is, however, no doubt that *Guernica* was key to establishing him as an icon of the cultures of exile, even though he and his painting ended up taking on very different symbolic connotations. While Picasso's absence from Spain despite repeated attempts by Franco's regime to bring him into the fold made him "the most important symbol of exile,"¹ the history of *Guernica* and the depoliticization of its values beginning in 1945 reflect the broader depoliticization that increasingly afflicted the Republican exile as a whole. At any rate, the Civil War allowed Picasso to resolve two previously conflicting aspects of his journey thus far: his national identity and his political identity. These two factors merged with the armed conflict, resulting in a Spanishness that was bound up with a strong republicanism and anti-fascism. Picasso's loyalty to the Republic, openly displayed at public events and more discreetly embodied in his generous material assistance to his exiled compatriots,² was reinforced by his high-profile joining of the French Communist Party (PCF) in 1944. His firm commitment to Republican Spain gave rise to some of his most famous works, such as the aquatint series *Sueño*

¹ Julián Díaz Sánchez, "Sobre la presencia de los artistas del exilio en la historiografía española reciente," *Iberoamericana*, no. 47 (2012): 145.

² Miguel Cabañas Bravo, "Picasso y su ayuda a los artistas españoles de los campos de concentración franceses," in *La Guerra Civil Española, 1936–1939*, ed. Santos Juliá (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2006), 1–34.

José-Ramón López García

Juan Negrín at the opening of Picasso's
Guernica, Valentine Gallery, New York, 1939



y mentira de Franco (Dream and Lie of Franco, 1937), *Monument aux espagnols morts pour la France* (Monument to the Spaniards Who Died for France, 1946–47), and, of course, *Guernica* (1937).

The Republican government enlisted Picasso in its campaign to denounce the situation and seek international support, appointing him honorary director of the Museo del Prado in September 1936. Some months later, it commissioned him to paint *Guernica* for the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris organized with the participation of prominent intellectuals who would later go into exile (Juan Larrea, José Bergamín, Max Aub, Josep Renau, Josep Lluís Sert, José Gaos, et al.).³ *Guernica* was not well received in certain quarters, where

³ Josefina Alix Trueba, *Pabellón Español: Exposición Internacional de París 1937* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1987).

Furies and Sufferings



Guernica in the exhibition *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939

it was considered insufficiently close to reality, with a dubious ability to reach the masses, and out of touch with the urgent circumstances that called for belligerent art. They accused Picasso of a lack of realism, of resorting to a dark, allegorical approach, and of an excessive dependence on Cubism, which they interpreted as a form of dehumanized, antisocial, decadent, and bourgeois art. The public reception of the mural gradually silenced those critical voices, although they continued to be heard in the aesthetic debates that continued throughout the Cold War.

After the close of the Paris Exposition, *Guernica* traveled to various European cities on a tour to raise funds for the Republican cause. In May 1939, the painting traveled to New York for the same purpose, accompanied by a delegation led by Juan Negrín. The Republican government almost certainly wanted to repeat the success of the Spanish Pavilion in Paris at the New York World's Fair, but its plans were thwarted by the outcome of the Civil War.⁴

⁴ Idoia Murga, "El Pabellón Español de 1939: Un proyecto frustrado para la Exposición Internacional de Nueva York," *Archivo Español de Arte*, no. 331 (2010): 213–34.

José-Ramón López García

On its arrival in the United States and throughout the Cold War, the meanings of *Guernica* changed.⁵ On one hand, the painting was considered the epitome of modern art, an essentially Cubist work that legitimized the legacy of the avant-garde. The 1939 retrospective *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (its first public showing without a direct connection to the Second Republic) and the 1947 symposium on *Guernica*, both programmed by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, laid the foundation for the canonization of the painting and its confinement within self-referential readings.⁶ At the same time, after joining the French Communist Party, Picasso played a paradoxical role on the Soviet side, with a double discourse that made his “exploitation” for promotional purposes possible despite his lack of realist orthodoxy.⁷ In both cases, *Guernica* lost some of its status as a symbol of a particular war and of the anti-fascist spirit of the Spanish exiles, but it generated other synergies that challenged nonpolitical interpretations, becoming an all-purpose transnational antiwar icon (Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, Korea, Vietnam, etc.).⁸ Picasso was happy to support the rhetoric of peace adopted by the USSR during the cultural Cold War, contributing the simplicity and effectiveness of the iconic *La Colombe* (The Dove, 1949) and *Massacre en Corée*

⁵ Herschel B. Chipp, *Picasso's "Guernica": History, Transformations, Meanings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

⁶ See Andrea Giunta, ed., *El Guernica de Picasso: el poder de la representación. Europa, Estados Unidos y América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2009); and Isabel Tejada Martín, “*Guernica* de Pablo Picasso. Del pabellón parisino de 1937 a su articulación como obra maestra del arte contemporáneo internacional,” in *Patrimonio, Guerra Civil y posguerra*, ed. Arturo Colorado Castellary (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2010), 475–86.

⁷ Gertje Utlej, *Picasso: The Communist Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 134–45.

⁸ There is ample literature on the subject; see, for example, Jutta Held, “How Do the Political Effects of Pictures Come About? The Case of Picasso's *Guernica*,” *Oxford Art Journal* 11, no. 1 (1988): 33–39; and Francis Frascina, “My Lai, *Guernica*, MoMA and the Art Left,” in *Art, Politics, and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 160–208.

Furies and Sufferings

(Massacre in Korea, 1951), a clear extension of *Guernica*. Having come to represent all wars and all victims, *Guernica* gradually lost its primary anti-fascist and Republican meaning and became the common property of assorted political projects (anarchism, socialism, nationalism, the counterculture, pacifism, etc.). In the years that followed, *Guernica* also became a canonical example of leftist aesthetics, endorsed by the readings of Jean-Paul Sartre, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Roger Garaudy, in a process of legitimation that also drew an uncrossable line.⁹

The Spanish “Realism” of a Furious Picasso

Since 1937, before *Guernica* went through these changes, Picasso had become one of the most prominent names in the Republican cultural imaginary. The opinions of Max Aub and José Bergamín in the context of the 1937 International Exposition anticipated the arguments that established *Guernica* as a site of memory of exile, while also encouraging fruitful reflection on realism and on art as political representation.¹⁰ Both writers emphasized the painting’s “realism” (insofar as it expressed an authentic, higher “truth” that they linked to Spanish idiosyncrasy) and its “furious,” critical nature. In his seminal essay “Le Mystère tremble. Picasso furioso,” published in *Cahiers d’art*, Bergamín drew parallels between Picasso and Goya, speaking of “a painting in which thought explodes like fireworks or dynamite”—a “Spanish rage” with which *Guernica*

⁹ Andrea Giunta, “Introducción. El *Guernica* y el extraño poder de las imágenes,” in *El Guernica de Picasso*, ed. Giunta, 15.

¹⁰ Max Aub, cultural and propaganda attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Paris and assistant curator of the Pavilion, provided the first interpretation of *Guernica* in a speech on July 11, 1937. The text was published in 1967 from his exile in Mexico as “Palabras dichas (en francés) en la inauguración del Pabellón español de la exposición de París, en la primavera de 1937,” which opened his book of essays *Hablo como hombre* (Segorbe: Fundación Max Aub, 2002), 13–16.

José-Ramón López García

transmits “the living language of the independent, revolutionary ... Spanish people.”¹¹

A symbol of the Civil War and anti-Franco resistance, *Guernica* was endlessly reproduced. The artist and his work merged into a single, legendary whole, with *Guernica* as the culmination of a process of “Spanishization” and politicization linked to Republicanism. Through the mural, Picasso joined the pantheon of illustrious figures of cultural exile, from its great historical symbols (see the photomontage of *Guernica* and the iconography of Don Quixote that Pedro Salinas used in “La última victoria de don Quijote,” published in *Las Españas* in 1947),¹² to the recent past (see the February 1940 cover of *Romance* commemorating the first anniversary of Antonio Machado’s death). Texts soon appeared in which Picasso, a paradigm of Spanish and international painting, consolidated an image that ran counter to Franco’s Spain: a universal, “authentic” Spanishness capable of integrating the various Iberian identities.¹³ In these essays, *Guernica* was not just Picasso’s pinnacle, it was also an epic, symbolic embodiment of the sacrifice of the Spanish people, testifying to fascist cruelty and heralding the time of reparation.¹⁴

¹¹ José Bergamín, “Le Mystère tremble. Picasso furioso,” *Cahiers d’art* (monograph dedicated to *Guernica*), nos. 4–5 (1937): 135–39, translated to Spanish in *Picasso y sus críticos*, vol. 1: *La recepción del Guernica, 1937–1947*, ed. Rocío Robles Tardío (Barcelona and Madrid: Ediciones de La Central, 2011), 63–68.

¹² The link to Don Quixote was established by Larrea in “Liberación de Prometeo,” *Cuadernos Americanos*, no. 1 (January–February 1942): 178, in which he merges Prometheus, Don Quixote, and the mural’s “unknown militiaman.”

¹³ In the first Spanish-language biography of Pablo Picasso, published in 1942, Juan Merli emphasizes the importance of Catalonia in Picasso’s work, and describes *Guernica* as the “masterpiece” that crowns the “pyramid” erected “over the art of our times”; in *Picasso: el artista y la obra de nuestro tiempo*, exp. 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires, Poseidón, 1948), 155.

¹⁴ The most eulogistic texts on Picasso revolved around these issues, as in the case of Juan Rejano, who considered the Spanish spirit and the fusion with the people embodied in *Guernica* (the destructive, anarchist, individualistic drive of a supposed Iberian idiosyncrasy) to be the base

LA ÚLTIMA VICTORIA DE DON QUIJOTE

por Pedro Salinas

QUEDAN los magno héroes eternos... Quedan los magno héroes eternos desde que siempre con la pluma virata de aquí sumando a las victorias que se ganan en vida otra y otras más...

digano por último entre Am Quijote y el Senador. En ella, venía ya incluída esta segunda...

¡Y no es cosa de ver, visto ya esto de sorprendentes paradas, un terreno que se nos presenta con descubierta evidencia...

Presum al siguiente parentesis. Se adierte al fijarse en las armas y arcos que cuelgan... Casita y otros arcos para las largas empresas, por mucho que la temple y estire...



PICASSO. Guernica - 1937

(Para o sin la pág. 18)

Castilla, en el Panorama de las Españas

por Antonio Carrotero Jiménez

"Nada es más que nada" decía don Quijote... "Nada es más que nada" decía don Quijote...

Amplias praderas, castellano que abarca de modo en la corte de León... Amplias praderas, castellano que abarca de modo en la corte de León...

La España, una castilla e imperio, un antipolítico y extranjero, de gales, Asturias, Berberon y Idrogozeta... La España, una castilla e imperio, un antipolítico y extranjero...

En toda la tierra castellana se desarrolla vigorosa, en la Edad media... En toda la tierra castellana se desarrolla vigorosa, en la Edad media...

Hay en sí misma Castilla un Gobierno, entre el mar y el río... Hay en sí misma Castilla un Gobierno, entre el mar y el río...

Es tan notoria la naturaleza popular y democrática del Estado castellano... Es tan notoria la naturaleza popular y democrática del Estado castellano...

No fue, pues, Castilla, sino León, el primer foco de la idea unitaria... No fue, pues, Castilla, sino León, el primer foco de la idea unitaria...

Este tema de los reanudados, este tema de los reanudados, este tema de los reanudados... Este tema de los reanudados, este tema de los reanudados...

(Para o sin la pág. 6)

Article by Pedro Salinas, "La última victoria de don Quijote," Las Españas, January 1947

Furies and Sufferings

In his comments on the 1939 MoMA retrospective, Juan Larrea—Picasso’s friend and a protagonist and privileged witness of the whole creative process of *Guernica*—was among the first to argue the republicanism of Picasso and his mural.¹⁵ Appropriating the destructive, revolutionary gesture magnificently captured in *Guernica*, its success was extrapolated to the entire exiled community (“we consider his current success our own”). And, in Larrea’s words, it encouraged the hope of one day seeing Picasso disembark “on any of the admirable beaches in this New World.”¹⁶

of a “transcendent” universality; in “Genio y duende de España (Goya y Picasso),” in *Retablo hispánico* (Mexico City: Ed. Clavileño, 1946; repr. Seville: Renacimiento, 2007), 101–12.

¹⁵ Juan Larrea, “Picasso en Nueva York,” *España Peregrina* 1, no. 1 (February 1940): 35–36 (translated in this volume, pp. 275–277). The anonymous review of the exhibition published in *Romance* illustrates the differences of opinion regarding Picasso’s art: “And finally the destruction of *Guernica*, a desperate return to the desperate reality of his people, and to the reality of painting, which cried out to him, really cried out, from the cell of the Cubist warden, from the cave of the Surrealist Cerberus. Whence the brilliant Picasso could not free it or himself, thus confirming his fate as the creator of the freest painting of his age and as the most captive artist of his time,” “Hispanidad, invención y genio de Pablo Picasso. Comentario con motivo de su gran exposición en Nueva York,” *Romance. Revista popular hispanoamericana* 1, no. 2 (February 15, 1940): 13.

¹⁶ Larrea, “Picasso en Nueva York,” 36 (see p. 277 in this volume). Larrea repeatedly urged Picasso, from one “militiaman” to another, to travel to Mexico and join his peculiar panhispanic project, of which he considered *Guernica* a prophecy (see letters from Larrea dated October 4 [Musée National Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, Série C. Classeur 80. Larrea] and December 21, 1939 [Musée National Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515/AP/C/80/22/6], available online at <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-juan-larrea-pablo-picasso-del-4-de-octubre-de-1939>, and <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-juan-larrea-pablo-picasso-del-21-de-diciembre-de-1939>). See also Juan Marinello, who invoked the assassination of Federico García Lorca and the need to protect Picasso from Nazism, claiming that “America must grant Pablo Picasso asylum”: “Picasso sin tiempo,” *Cuadernos Americanos*, no. 6 (November–December 1942): 189. Among the many offers of political asylum extended to Picasso, Diego Rivera and Clemente Orozco obtained a visa for him to enter Mexico, as recounted by Gijs

José-Ramón López García

Between Latin America and Europe: Absences and Representations

From the outset, *Guernica* was included in the initiatives organized by the exiles, even though it was often not possible to actually exhibit the painting at the events. In March 1949, when the Junta de Cultura Española, which had been established in Paris in 1939 with Picasso as a member, had relocated to Mexico, two exhibitions opened simultaneously at La Casa de la Cultura Española, one devoted to Picasso (its catalogue included *Sueño y mentira de Franco* and several works linked to *Guernica*) and the other featuring numerous Spanish artists who had recently arrived in Mexico (Ramón Gaya, José Moreno Villa, Miguel Prieto, Antonio Rodríguez Luna, Elvira Gascón, et al.), confirming Picasso's mentoring role and his new Spanish and Republican focus.¹⁷ On European soil, following World War II and after a controversial association with the French postwar "Renaissance," Picasso played a similar role in various exhibitions, in particular *The Art of Republican Spain: Spanish Artists of the School of Paris*, which took place in Prague and Brno in early 1946. The other participating artists (Honorio García Condoy, Antoni Clavé, Baltasar Lobo, Pedro Flores, Joaquín Peinado, et al.) were supported by Picasso, who was strongly committed to the show and whose political dimension was once again expressed through *Sueño y mentira de Franco*.¹⁸

van Hensbergen in *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 134.

¹⁷ In the summer of 1942, the *Sueño y mentira de Franco* aquatints were included in two exhibitions organized in Havana, with the participation of Manuel Altolaguirre. See Alejo Carpentier, *A puertas abiertas. Textos críticos sobre arte español*, ed. José Antonio Baujín and Luz Merino (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela), 2004.

¹⁸ See *Artistas españoles de París: Praga 1946*, exh. cat. Caja de Madrid (Madrid: Turner, 1993). For information on Picasso's links to the exiles from the School of Paris, see the biography by the exiled activist Mercedes Guillén, *Picasso* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1975), and her *Conversaciones con los artistas españoles de la Escuela de París* (Madrid: Taurus, 1960).

Furies and Sufferings



Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Picasso*,
Sociedad de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, June 1944

As noted earlier, the exhibition of *Guernica* in numerous countries is key to understanding the extent of its meanings. Something of a paradox, perhaps, given that it never had the opportunity to be shown in some of the Latin American countries that welcomed Spanish exiles, such as Mexico. The first exhibition of the Sociedad de Arte Moderno held in Mexico City in June 1944 did make a serious attempt, but as MoMA curator John McAndrew said, “*Guernica* has been safe in the United States, where it has been seen and admired by millions of people. Due to its size, the original does not appear in this exhibition, which instead includes sixteen of Picasso’s studies on the subject.”¹⁹ It also seems plausible that moving the painting in the midst of World War II was considered inadvisable, especially to a country with a large community of exiled politicians and intellectuals protected by the Mexican authorities,

¹⁹ “Picasso. 1ª Exposición de la Sociedad de Arte Moderno. México, junio de 1944” (exh. cat. essay), in *La recepción del Guernica*, ed. Robles Tardío, 212.

José-Ramón López García

which had never ceased to recognize the legitimacy of the Republican government, and where it could conceivably be claimed and held. In fact, after the 1940s, *Guernica* only traveled beyond the borders of the United States by Picasso's express wishes and despite the reluctance of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., who was always afraid that *Guernica* would end up somewhere other than the MoMA.²⁰ Even so, the catalogue of this 1944 exhibition contained diverse appraisals by the exiles. Taking stock of Picasso's career, José Moreno Villa advocated an "intellectual" reading of an artist who, above all, "paints what he thinks, not what he sees," and whose images are never subordinated to nature. On the other hand, Josep Renau pointed out Picasso's desire to actively participate in reality, coming to "the defense of his threatened homeland" when he heard "the cry of its murdered mother," and emphasized the "disintegrative weapon" of his "sentimental, anarchist humanism" over his Cubist "pure geometry." His return to Spanishness was embodied in *Sueño y mentira de Franco* and *Guernica* through the epic of human tragedy: "the pain, the heartbreaking cry, death, and the supreme will to live."²¹

²⁰ Although not much research has been done in this area, there were other requests by the Mexican government in conjunction with the exiles. For example, it was requested for the 1968 Olympic Games, where in the end neither *Guernica* nor the tapestry of the painting were authorized to travel. The same occurred with a subsequent request in 1972 by the Republican government in exile, which wanted to exhibit the mural or have it form part of a new museum of modern art. Genoveva Tusell, *El Guernica recobrado. Picasso, el franquismo y la llegada de la obra a España* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2017), 145-47.

²¹ Later, in his criticism of "capitalist art" and of "its falsely revolutionary tendencies," Renau pointed out the contradiction between Picasso's irreproachable commitment to communism and his individualistic artistic practice, unconnected to social reality; the "grand production" of *Guernica* "put the question of ideology in art back on the agenda. Once again, there were passionate arguments about form and content, about painting's political and social mission. But that's as far as it went." José [Josep] Renau, "Abstracción y realismo. Comentarios sobre la ideología en las artes plásticas," *Nuestro Tiempo*, no. 1 (July 1949): 39.

Furies and Sufferings

The transnational status of exiled art can be illustrated by the example of the counter-biennials organized in Paris, Mexico, and Caracas, following a call for action by Picasso, Baltasar Lobo, Antonio Aparicio, and Arturo Serrano Plaja in response to the first Spanish-American Art Biennial organized by Franco's regime in 1951, an initiative that proved the continuity of republicanism and of the social conception of art at the heart of *Guernica*.²² Nevertheless, as the extreme conditions of deterritorialization and bad timing continued for the Republicans, while Franco's regime achieved international legitimacy and gradually monopolized the representation of Spanish culture, the 1950s confirmed the failure of the political strategies of the exiles. In a revealing letter to Pablo Picasso dated April 3, 1953, Luis Araquistáin speculates on the fate and ownership of *Guernica* if an "alternative historical alternative" emerges after Franco's death and "our own," not the "resurrected Republic of 1936," but "a democratic, constitutional monarchy" that "we would be forced to comply with," thereby anticipating what actually did happen when the mural was brought to Spain in 1981.²³

In spite of the decline of the Republican political institutions in exile, *Guernica* conserved its status as a site of memory. In 1950, Alain Resnais and Robert Hessens, with the participation of Maria Casarès (French stage legend and daughter of Santiago Casares Quiroga, a minister in Manuel Azaña's government), made the remarkable short film *Guernica*, in which Casarès gave a spine-chilling reading of a text by Paul Éluard. But the best example of this complex map of back-and-forth geographical, political, and emotional connections may be Max Aub's account of seeing *Guernica* again when he passed through

²² Miguel Cabañas Bravo, *La política artística del franquismo. El hito de la Bienal Hispano-Americana de Arte* (Madrid: CSIC, 1996).

²³ Luis Araquistáin, letter to Pablo Picasso, April 3, 1953, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo Histórico Nacional, DIVERSOS-ARAQUISTAIN, Car.1, N.1, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-luis-araquistain-pablo-picasso>.

José-Ramón López García

Picasso: "Guernica" met 60 studies en varianten, exhibition view, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1956



Amsterdam in 1956 on his first trip to Europe since his Mexican exile. Aub notes that, at the Stedelijk Museum, it still preserves the raging, fierce, furious gesture that corroborates his own belief in maintaining a critical memory of the past:

Suddenly, *Guernica*. Picasso's *Guernica* like a blow to the solar plexus ... All those people sitting there looking at it, what do they feel? What do they expect? What do they understand? What do they see? There is only fury. As clear as it was on the first day: firstly, the rage. The rest may or may not be painting.... *Guernica*, black and white, ferocious.... All that moving around, for this? After twenty years of being recklessly dragged outside of Europe—in shreds: *Guernica*, seemingly there so I would not forget, when everybody reneges: “forget it, that doesn't interest others any more.” And the first day, when I go back where I never thought I would: *Guernica*.... An expression of the most ferocious violence, the opposite of oblivion: the unforgivable.²⁴

²⁴ Max Aub, *Nuevos diarios inéditos, 1939-1972*, ed. Manuel Aznar Soler (Seville: Renacimiento, 2003), 167-68.

Furies and Sufferings

The Spanish exiled writers did not forget *Guernica*, which, in addition to its constant physical travels during those years, also embarked on an extensive literary journey.²⁵ While it is widely known that during the dictatorship and democracy the painting was mentioned in the work of several playwrights who had remained in Spain (Fernando Arrabal, Jerónimo López Mozo, Ignacio Amestoy, etc.), the exile community excelled in its treatment of the mural, both tangentially, as in Rafael Alberti's *Noche de guerra en el Museo del Prado* (A Night of War in the Prado Museum, 1956), and directly, as in the ongoing, experimental works by José Martín Elizondo, particularly *El otro Pablo y el Minotauro* (The Other Pablo and the Minotaur, 1980), which condemned the canonical appropriations of the painting and its commercialization by the bourgeoisie. Prose writers who were knowledgeable about Picasso also explored the subject of *Guernica*. For example, Ramón J. Sender, who gave the painting a central place in *Ver o no ver. Reflexiones sobre la pintura española* (1980); Max Aub, who ironically analyzed the legacy of the avant-garde in his "cubist novel" *Jusep Torres Campalans* (1958), and explicitly mentioned *Guernica* in *Campo de los almendros* (1968); and Arturo Barea, who used it in ekphrastic form to describe the 1921 Battle of Annual in *La ruta* (*The Track*), which was part of the trilogy *La forja de un rebelde* (*The Forging of a Rebel*, 1941-46). Spanish poetry also incorporated *Guernica*, beyond ekphrasis and political empathy. The long relationship between Rafael Alberti and Pablo Picasso, for example, was expressed in Alberti's *Los ocho nombres de Picasso y no digo más que lo que no digo* (*The Eight Names of Picasso*, 1966-70), an apparent *laudatio* that suggests a profound personal, political, and aesthetic crisis overcome through Picasso. Meanwhile, in *Galope de la suerte, 1946-1956* (1958), Arturo Serrano Plaja adapted the expressive codes he had learned from *Guernica*, linking them to the mechanisms of manipulation and erasure that were applied to the memory and victims of the Civil War. And in

²⁵ Luis Antonio Esteve Juárez and Gemma Mañá Delgado, "El viaje literario del *Guernica*," *Anthropos*, no. 6 (1994): 65-75.

José-Ramón López García

188

Dimensión Imaginaria

*Esta fuente es mía. . . y no la explota nadie.
Nadie me engañará ya nunca:
mi llanto mueve los molinos
y la correa de la gran planta eléctrica.*

*De mi sudor vivió el rey,
de mi canción, el pregonero
y de mi llanto, el arzobispo.
Sin embargo, mi sangre es para el altar.
Sacad de los museos esa gran piedra azteca y molinera,
afilad otra vez el navajón de pedernal,
rasgadme el pecho de la sombra
y dad mi sangre al sol. . .
Que hay algo que los dioses no pueden hacer solos.*



Furies and Sufferings

the posthumous *Rocinante* (1968), León Felipe drew parallels between Picasso and Don Quixote and between *Rocinante* and *Guernica*, in a melancholy reflection from the perspective of old age in the face of the death inextricable from the Spanish tragedy.²⁶

A Visionary *Guernica*:

Juan Larrea and Eugenio F. Granell

In *Guernica*, Picasso chose to represent suffering through figures with complex personal roots, in dialogue with the history of painting and with his own body of work. Moreover, his ambiguous declarations sparked studies that sought to clear up the painting's supposed symbolic and political values. The first great expression of this concern was the aforementioned symposium on *Guernica* organized by MoMA, with Juan Larrea and Josep Lluís Sert as special guests. As the art historian Andrea Giunta points out, the symposium had to do with a broader cultural conflict in the context of the Cold War. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. immediately understood the need to refute the interpretations given by somebody as authoritative as Larrea, for the sake of his main goal: to neutralize *Guernica* by assigning a unilateral meaning that downplayed political readings.²⁷ Larrea perfectly understood the terms of the dispute, having been among the first to notice the historical distortions that the painting was subjected to, and the consequences of this on the cultures of exile.²⁸

²⁶ See José-Ramón López García, "Picasso, el comunismo y los poetas del exilio republicano," *Puentes de Crítica Literaria y Cultural*, no. 1 (2014): 35-44.

²⁷ Andrea Giunta, "The Power of Interpretation (or How MoMA Explained *Guernica* to its audience)," *Artelogie*, no. 10 (2017), <http://artelogie.revues.org/953>.

²⁸ Larrea recounted his repeated requests to Picasso ("from one militiaman to another") to clear up the true meaning of the horse as a symbol of fascism, a violent action that he hoped would explode "like a bomb at the public session" at the MoMA. By his silence, Picasso contributed to *Guernica* becoming a "museum piece" that gradually "lost its status as

José-Ramón López García



In the first monograph on the painting, in “The Vision of Guernica” (1947) Larrea gave an itemized symbolic interpretation rooted in Surrealism and psychoanalysis. The painting’s “vision” consisted of its being “the decisive step in bridging the gulf between appearance and essence, between myth and the logos.”²⁹ A vision expressed in the form of a series of symbolic and archetypal parallels (e.g., bull: the Spanish people; horse: nationalist Spain; grieving mother: Madrid) that were incorporated into the mystical, prophetic worldview of Larrea’s panhispanism. Essentially, Larrea put forth an interpretation that went against the hegemonic discourse of modernity constructed from New York. It was a legitimate protest against the

a weapon in the war against the anti-Republican aggression of Franco’s regime, to turn instead into a spectacular gesture of horror in the face of destructive violence”; *Guernica. Pablo Picasso* (Madrid: Cuadernos para el Diálogo; Alejandro Finisterre, 1977), 19.

²⁹ Juan Larrea, “The Vision of Guernica,” in *Guernica: Pablo Picasso* (New York: Curt Valentin, 1947).

Furies and Sufferings



Furies and Sufferings

political-historical distortions of the mural, and a denunciation of the domestication of a referential framework in which violence, brutality, and rage—as expressions arising from emancipatory actions of the people—were totally unrelated to purely aesthetic discourses or petit-bourgeois vindications of pacifism.

Although he shared Larrea's views on the importance of Surrealism, Eugenio F. Granell, a Trotskyist and member of the POUM, took a different and also very personal approach. In *Picasso's "Guernica": The End of a Spanish Era* (1967), based on his doctoral thesis "Sociological Perspectives of 'Guernica'" (1965) and an interest in Picasso dating back to his first essays in exile (*Arte y artistas en Guatemala*, 1949), Granell brought together two of his key ideas, "the crisis of reason and the problem of Spain,"³⁰ to argue that *Guernica* depicted a civil war that put an end to an era in the country. To do so, he argued, Picasso demythologized two collective myths—one sacred, the other profane—by way of his painting: the epiphany and the bullfight. According to Granell, both of these elements, which had influenced the country's social, economic, and cultural life for centuries, came to an end with the victors and their "modern crusade" linked to industrialization and international capitalism.³¹ Without succumbing to the pacifism that had started to take hold by the 1960s, Granell defended a pessimistic, politicized perspective in an interpretation that transcended the boundaries of art.

The Last "Exile"?

Guernica in the Transition and in Democracy

In a letter dated November 14, 1970, Picasso reminded MoMA staff that *Guernica* and its accompanying works were to be sent "to the qualified representatives of the Spanish government

³⁰ Arturo Casas, "Improbabilidad del ensayo surrealista. Sus derivaciones discursivas en la obra de Eugenio F. Granell," *Bulletin hispanique* III, no. 2 (2009): 545.

³¹ Eugenio F. Granell, *Picasso's "Guernica": The End of a Spanish Era* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), 73.

José-Ramón López García

when public liberties are re-established in Spain.” However, his last explicit statement on the subject was signed on April 14, 1971, the fortieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Second Republic, and specified that the bequest was intended for “the government of the Spanish Republic.”³² Although this last document was brought up at certain points during the complex negotiations leading to the arrival of *Guernica* in Madrid in 1981, the norm was to refer to the 1970 letter with its more flexible formulation, which defused the Republican component.

Spanish intellectuals in exile were divided in their views, although the protests were minor both at home and abroad. From his position of opposition to the transition, José Bergamín expressed his discontent. He criticized the fact that *Guernica* had moved between the principles of “explosion” (its authentically Spanish rage and protest) and “exploitation” (its depoliticized, commercial exploitation at MoMA, and the opportunism of post-Franco authorities), comparing its arrival to that of another “caged” Don Quixote, a “betrayal” of Picasso and of the Spanish people.³³ Along similar lines, Alberti said that *Guernica* was a “cry” and an accusation, and that it was in danger in the Spain of the time, which lacked sufficient democratic maturity.³⁴ On the other hand, Josep Lluís Sert and Josep Renau participated in negotiations and commemorations that readjusted the painting’s original values, aligning it with a different kind of Spanishness.³⁵

³² “aux représentants qualifiés du Gouvernement Espagnol lorsque les libertés publiques seront rétablies en Espagne.” “au gouvernement de la République Espagnole.” Cited in van Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography*, 265.

³³ Before and after *Guernica* arrived in Spain, José Bergamín wrote several highly critical articles on the subject, such as “¡Cuidado con el *Guernica*!” *Punto y Hora de Euskal Herria*, no. 213, February 12–19, 1981, 32; and “Escándalo del *Guernica*,” *Egin*, November 8, 1981, 19, included in José Bergamín, *Escritos en Euskal Herria*, ed. Javier Sánchez Erauskin (Tafalla: Txalaparta, 1995), 67–69 and 75–77.

³⁴ “Gente. Rafael Alberti,” *El País*, October 17, 1980.

³⁵ The opinions and memories of Renau (“Connotaciones testimoniales sobre el *Guernica*”) and Sert (“La victoria del *Guernica*”) were included in

Furies and Sufferings

Greeted by headlines such as “The War is Over” and “The Return of the Last Exile,” the mural’s arrival in Spain revealed a paradox: *Guernica* helped the fledgling democracy to hide, or play down, the importance of the Republican exile in the closed narrative of false harmony that would become the foundation of the new transition myth. Nevertheless, even though it had been stripped of history, and despite its difficult interpretation, it was clear that *Guernica* preserved an irrevocable political, Republican quality, a meaning that now withdrew into a state of latent spectrality. Protected and at the same time imprisoned behind bulletproof glass until the 1990s, the furious *Guernica* of 1937 had finally been appeased.

Picasso had wanted *Guernica* to be displayed in the Museo del Prado alongside the great masters of painting, a controversial idea that several exiles took an active interest in, particularly Jorge Semprún. In *Federico Sánchez se despide de ustedes* (1993), Semprún remembers his official visits to the Museo del Prado during his term as Minister of Culture from 1988 to 1991, when he hoped to be able to bring Velázquez, Goya, and Picasso together at the Prado, following the expressed wishes conveyed to him by Picasso in person. Semprún did not want the Prado to be a bureaucratic entity, but a space of confrontation between the aesthetics that chart the path of modernity. And from the perspective of this organic, progressive view, this confrontation was not visible in Picasso’s case. Following André Malraux’s ideas on Goya and modernity, Semprún defended *Guernica* as a key work in Spain’s difficult modernity, and above all as a universal expression of the “naked horror of history,” which guarantees its future relevance.³⁶ In 2006, the exhibition *Picasso: Tradition and Avant-Garde*, jointly organized by the Museo del

Guernica. *Legado Picasso*, exh. cat. Casón del Buen Retiro, Museo del Prado, Madrid (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1981), 8–22 and 24–30. For more on Renau, see Miguel Cabañas Bravo, “El recuerdo de José Renau y de su actuación ante el *Guernica*,” *Laberintos*, nos. 8–9 (2007): 207–35.

³⁶ Jorge Semprún, *Federico Sánchez se despide de ustedes* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1993), 175–203. “Federico Sánchez” was Semprún’s pseudonym while participating in clandestine activities during the Franco dictatorship.—Ed.

José-Ramón López García

Prado and the Museo Reina Sofía to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the painting's arrival in Spain, allowed Semprún to fulfill his wish of seeing *Guernica* and *El 3 de mayo de 1808. Los fusilamientos de la Moncloa* (The Third of May 1808) together. Although his essay on this occasion focused on the mural's artistic independence from Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianisms, Semprún also wrote about the importance of another perspective that was not political: Dora Maar's grieving, human vision in her "dream and truth of Pablo Picasso," the photographic series that embodied "the gaze of amorous passion, playfulness and complicity," crystallized in the weeping lover.³⁷ Intimate, tragic Eros overruns the private sphere and achieves a collective impact, so that "Dora Maar's tears will forever remain as the tears of *Guernica*." With these impressions set down by Semprún, *Guernica* closed its constant, almost seventy-year appeal to the 1939 Republican exile.

³⁷ Jorge Semprún, "Modern Painting Begins Here," in *Picasso: Tradition and Avant-Garde*, exh. cat. Museo Nacional del Prado and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid, 2006), 24.

Picasso and the Cold War: European Exhibitions of *Guernica*, 1953–1956

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

Picassoisms in Dispute

In June 1953, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of collections at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, wrote a disgruntled letter to Picasso discussing details of the sudden removal of *Guernica* from MoMA for a retrospective at the Bienal de São Paulo later that year. “I am somewhat surprised,” he writes, “after the conversation of the summer of 1952 to learn that you are willing to have us lend *Guernica*, though of course we are very willing to do so, even though it means dismantling the permanent installation which we had set up last fall in the belief that you would not wish to move the picture for a good many years.”¹ Barr did not mention that the painting was to be exhibited in Milan for a month before Brazil, but he did remind Picasso of the delicate condition of the canvas after its tour of twenty-eight exhibitions between 1936 and 1942. He ended the letter enthusing about Picasso’s retrospective at the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna in Rome, in May and June 1953, which did not include *Guernica* because Picasso had refused permission.²

¹ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter to Pablo Picasso, June 15, 1953, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-pablo-picasso-del-15-de-junio-de-1953>. See also Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, June 15, 1953, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-daniel-henry-kahnweiler-del-15-de-junio-de-1953>.

² Pablo Rossi, “Così ‘Guernica’ venne in Italia,” *Il sole 24 Ore*, September 16, 2012, <http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/cultura/2012-09-17/cosi-guernica-venne-italia-163351.shtml?uuid=Abp7ECfG>.

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

The Rome exhibition, which was to travel to Milan with substantial changes (including the incorporation of *Guernica*), was curated by Lionello Venturi and officially opened by the president of the Republic, Luigi Einaudi, with a strong institutional emphasis.³ A prominent figure in Italy's finest liberal academic tradition, Venturi had signed the Manifesto of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals in 1931 and was subsequently forced into exile. He lived in Paris and then New York, where he lectured from 1939 to 1944, precisely when Barr was consolidating the MoMA collection in which Picasso featured strongly. The groundbreaking exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936) positioned Picasso as a cornerstone of the history of twentieth-century art, based on the criteria of "modernity" established by American formalist art criticism of the time: from Post-Impressionism to abstract art, guided by a telos of purification. In other words, freeing art from "a wide range of values, such as the connotations of subject matter;... the pleasures of easy recognition; and the enjoyment of technical dexterity."⁴ *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (1939) essentially continued to develop that approach. The catalogue included two "anti-realist" declarations by Picasso from 1923 and 1935, which included statements such as "Through art we express our conception of what nature is not."⁵

Venturi had introduced these criteria of formalism and autonomy into Italy, where they were soon taken up by public art institutions, displacing the nationalism of the interwar

³ The organizers included Palma Bucarelli ("Venturian" director of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna) and prominent members of the Communist Party: Senator Eugenio Reale, the painter Renato Guttuso, and the art critic Giulio Carlo Argan, who substantially modified the exhibition project for Milan.

⁴ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Introduction to *Cubism and Abstract Art*, exh. cat. The Museum of Modern Art (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 13; also in the press release for the exhibition, 4, https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_325049.pdf.

⁵ Pablo Picasso (1923), cited in *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1939), 10.

Picasso and the Cold War

period. This new approach was at odds with much of the politicized scene in Italy (and France), which was dominated by the Communist Party and favored “realist” art with content that explicitly addressed fundamental aspects of its relationship with society and history, even if it was not always successful in aesthetic or formal terms. Venturi coined the notion of “abstract-concrete” art (1952) as a means to “elude this antinomy” and welcome “the inspiration from any occasion,” accepting all things “not artistic” in art as indifferent or simply as motivation, rather than a defect to be fixed. He did point out, however, the importance of the “the formal coherence of the work with respect to any ideological constraint.”⁶

As for Picasso, he had joined the French Communist Party (PCF) in 1944, and in 1955 he traveled to Italy as international standard-bearer of the movement of activist artists who saw *Guernica* as a starting point from which to repair the rift between modern art and social commitment. This painting, they thought, was proof that avant-garde movements would be able to “overcome” their banal pure forms without compromising aesthetic quality, thus inaugurating a new socialist period in the arts.⁷ Given the Communist Party’s hegemony over artists in France and Italy, this discourse had to incorporate the thesis of Soviet Socialist Realism, which held that true “progressive art” must be organized around the party’s program and transmitted in a simple, unambiguous way to a mass audience. The result was the proliferation in Europe of a didactic, socially committed painting style that used cubist strategies to achieve its goals with maximum expressive intensity. This can be seen in Picasso’s own work, which had evolved from the symbolic

⁶ Lionello Venturi, *Otto pittori italiani* (Milan: De Luca, 1952), 7–8.

⁷ See Mario De Micheli, *Le avanguardie artistiche del Novecento* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1996), 231; and manifestos from the late 1940s, such as Ennio Morlotti and Ernesto Treccani, “Oltre Guernica” (1947), in *Storia moderna dell’arte in Italia*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 42; Mario De Micheli, “Realismo e poesia,” *Il 45*, no. 1 (February 1946), reprinted in Nicoletta Misler, *La via italiana al realismo: la politica culturale artistica del P.C.I. dal 1944–1956* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1976), 240–42.

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

ambiguity of *Guernica* in the 1930s to the journalistic social criticism of *Massacre en Corée* (Massacre in Korea, 1951) and the creation of symbols—such as the peace dove—for social and political organizations in the 1950s.

However, attempts to reconcile art and political activism became more difficult for communist “Picassoism” as the euphoria of the postwar period gave way to the Cold War. In the early 1950s, no European nation could avoid political, economic, and military subordination to the superpowers, although the continent did maintain a certain independence and shared identity based on a supposed intellectual leadership. This is borne out, for example, by the zeal with which Western Communist Parties strove to overcome their isolation and champion their respective national cultures, preparing projects and speeches that were constantly jeopardized by their links to the crude Soviet cultural apparatus. In fact, the French and Italian Communist Parties were not as unconditional in their support of the Soviet Union in cultural matters as they were in other fields, particularly given Soviet attempts to purge those who were considered too independent or complex, in an attempt to create a more disciplined cultural front subject to its foreign policy.

Guernica left MoMA to tour abroad in 1953, the year of Stalin’s death and of the signing of the Pact of Madrid between Spain and the United States that definitively stabilized Franco’s regime, whose cultural policies Picasso openly fought. That year, Picasso also seemed to be more involved than ever in debates on political art, judging by his scandalous portrait of Stalin printed in *Les Lettres françaises*, completely unlike the Socialist Realist style in which the Soviet leader was usually portrayed.⁸ Under these circumstances, Picasso’s artistic influence beyond France and his active political commitment were interpreted as a threat by the bureaucracy in Moscow. After all, postwar “Picassoism” was not just a style of painting but also a cultural politics that brought together left-wing intellectuals

⁸ *Les Lettres françaises*, March 12–19, 1953, I.

Picasso and the Cold War

who disagreed with Socialist Realism. In the September 7, 1947 issue, *Les Lettres françaises* published a French translation of an article by Aleksandr Gerasimov accusing Picasso of “poisoning the pure air of Soviet art.”⁹ These were the first in a long line of attacks that culminated in 1953 with a resolution by the Secretariat of the PCF categorically “disapproving” of the publication of the portrait and chastising Picasso and the magazine’s editor, Louis Aragon.¹⁰ Nevertheless, in practice, Picasso’s political-intellectual circle was well beyond reach of Soviet and French Stalinists, and continued to have an enormous influence. In the meantime, the decline of Stalin before his death was mirrored in the decline of his cultural bureaucracy, and gave way to the period that came to be known by the title of Ilya Ehrenburg’s novel *The Thaw* (1954). Picasso’s first exhibition in the Soviet Union, where he had previously been banned, was organized by Ehrenburg in Moscow and Leningrad in 1956, the year of Nikita Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin’s crimes. The historian Eleonory Gilburd has described the exhibition as a multitudinous event at which Picasso was synonymous with “modern” and “European” culture, with passionate defenders and detractors shouting each other down at the museum gates. Gilburd also draws attention to the work of Ehrenburg and other Soviet intellectuals who “embodied a profound belief in the cultural unity of the European continent” and worked zealously to build bridges between their divided countries.¹¹ Beyond the respectability conferred on the various communist parties

⁹ Aleksandr Gerasimov, “The Russian Painters and the School of Paris” [in Russian], *Pravda*, August 11, 1947; cited in Gertje Utley, *Pablo Picasso: The Communist Years* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 136.

¹⁰ Utley, *Pablo Picasso*, 186–87.

¹¹ Eleonory Gilburd, “Picasso in Thaw Culture,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 47, nos. 1–2 (2006): 5. See also Susan E. Reid, “Picasso, the Thaw and the ‘New Realism’ in Soviet Art,” presented at the “Colloque Revoir Picasso,” March 26, 2015, Musée national Picasso-Paris, available at http://revoirpicasso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/RevoirPicasso-2015_J2_S.E.Reid_.pdf.

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

by the presence of important cultural figures, the joint initiatives and shared arguments suggest that Picasso was also an active member of a European political-cultural movement that stretched from Paris to Moscow and fought against the logic of blocs.

Milan, 1953: The Exhibition-Manifesto

The idea of organizing a big exhibition in Italy first came up when Picasso visited Rome in 1949 to attend an executive meeting of the World Committee of Partisans for Peace. The initial proposal, according to the art critic Antonello Trombadori, was to organize an event that would be “fully and programmatically indicative of our intentions ... as intellectuals and members of the Communist Party.”¹² In January 1953, Picasso received a letter from the communist group in the National Assembly of France asking him to collaborate with the Italian Communist Party (PCI) on the project, which was to be of “great political and artistic significance.”¹³ The organizers originally suggested that the exhibition should start with the artist’s youth in Spain, but Picasso himself narrowed down the time frame to the period between 1929 and 1953. He also selected the 249 works, some from MoMA and many others from his studio and from Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler’s Galerie Louise Leiris, including the murals *La Guerre et La Paix* (War and Peace, 1952). The 1951 painting *Massacre en Corée* was not approved by the Italian government, which feared a possible complaint from the US Embassy.

¹² Antonello Trombadori, “1949. Il secondo viaggio italiano di Picasso,” in *Picasso in Italia*, exh. cat. Galleria d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Palazzo Forti, Verona (Milan: Mazzotta, 1990), cited in Elena Scquizzato, “Picasso e l’Italia. Un itinerario attraverso le mostre (1905-1970)” (MA thesis, Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia, 2015), 82.

¹³ Assemblée nationale de France, Paris, letter to Pablo Picasso, January 5, 1953, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, Série E/19, Italy, Exposition Picasso à Rome et Milan, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-la-asamblea-nacional-de-francia-pablo-picasso>.

Picasso and the Cold War



Picasso, exhibition view, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 1953

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

Picasso, exhibition view, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 1953



At the Palazzo Reale in Milan, the organizers proposed a more explicit exhibition-manifesto with *Guernica* as its centerpiece and a new catalogue with a prologue that was to be written by Franco Russoli, given Venturi's refusal to participate.¹⁴ In this case, the retrospective began in 1901 and presented nine

¹⁴ Eugenio Reale, Rome, letter to Pablo Picasso, August 7, 1953, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/15/14/24, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-eugenio-reale-pablo-picasso-del-7-de-agosto-de-1953>.

Picasso and the Cold War

paintings from the period between 1903 and 1912 from the State Museum of New Western Art, in Moscow—including *El viejo judío* (The Old Jew, 1903), *La acróbata de la bola* (Acrobat on a Ball, 1905), and *El violín* (Violin, 1912)—then unfolded chronologically to end with the political paintings of the 1950s.¹⁵ According to the exhibition narrative, Picasso's figurative, socially committed humanist work of the early twentieth century shaped his later Cubism insofar as it was an exercise in dismantling the conventions of bourgeois representation. Synthesis was accomplished through the classicism of the interwar period, in which Picasso presented himself as both artist and citizen. A dramatic effect was produced in the Hall of Caryatids, with *Guernica*, *L'Ossuaire* (The Ossuary, 1944), *Massacre en Corée*, and *La Guerre et La Paix* showing how the 1937 manifesto against violence had gradually taken on concrete political content. The ruinous condition of the hall itself, which was still being restored after the bombings of 1943, bore witness to the consequences of human brutality. Nevertheless, the underlying concept was much more than a politicized "popularization" of modern art in protest against the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the Korean War. Until then, *Guernica* (with the studies) had been presented as the result of the artistic distillation of a political passion. This new exhibition concept, however, proposed a historical sequence—from the start (*Guernica*) to the finish (*La Guerre et La Paix*)—in the dialogue between *Guernica* and the other works in the Hall of Caryatids that seemed to take stock of the status of painting at the dawn of a new era of sectarianism and unlimited destructive power. The exhibition also highlighted the dilemmas that Picasso faced in those years of Cold War and mass propaganda, when taking sides seemed to mean abandoning all intellectual subtlety and producing "great art" could imply ignoring one's political commitment.

¹⁵ According to Franco Russoli, this would also allow a better "historical appraisal." See Franco Russoli, *Pablo Picasso*, exh. cat. Palazzo Reale (Milan: Silvana, 1953), 15. See also Caio Mario Cattabeni, in *ibid.*, 11–12.

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

Taken together, *Guernica* and *La Guerre et La Paix* (with *Massacre en Corée* and *L'Ossuaire* between them) must have transmitted a very powerful dialectic tension, in which the more recent works could recontextualize the earlier ones and alter established interpretations. In *La Guerre et La Paix*, the division into two panels reproduces the good/evil duality implicit in the chromatic contrast of *Guernica* and *L'Ossuaire* and the compositional contrast of *Massacre en Corée*. But the symmetrical clarity of *Massacre en Corée* has in fact become as unstable as the kind of painting that began with *Guernica*. In other words, the semantic broadening of the figure-symbols and the resulting loss of certainty as to the status of victim and executioner in certain key details of the iconography and the composition were also the artistic and political heart of the work. And its message cannot be separated from its form, except provisionally for the purposes of art criticism.¹⁶ In the case of *La Guerre et La Paix*, the progress of the war chariot, full of bugs like those in the germ bombs used by the United States in Korea, is blocked by a massive warrior with a dove on his shield, guardian of the idyllic landscape of *La Paix*. The luminous, static verticality of the white warrior counteracts the dark, dynamic diagonal of the soldiers that accompany the chariot, so that the oppositions set up between the two are, apparently, obvious. Nevertheless, as far as it is admissible to speculate on Picasso's compositional strategies, the impetus of the figures in the war panel, the soldiers with their arms raised threateningly, and the height and width ratio of the two groups suggest stylistic associations that complicate the relationship between these figures and the specific historical and political realities that they supposedly refer to. This can be seen in the fact that the heroic "wall" that wards off evil had already been

¹⁶ The horse, the bull, the lamp, etc., as timeless ideograms, abstractions of violence and suffering. Other critics, like Juan Larrea—with whom Barr had an intense debate—assigned them a particular historical meaning: fascism, the Spanish people, etc. See the correspondence between Barr, Larrea, and Kahnweiler in 1947, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York, AHB 12.II.F.2, P&S "Guernica" Records Corresp. 1930 & 1940s and Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/C/80/22/8, in

Picasso and the Cold War

used to convey a very different message, in the German Pavilion at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris that stood opposite the Soviet Pavilion on the main avenue. As in *La Guerre*, Albert Speer had built a large white marble tower, crowned with an eagle (rather than a dove) perched on a swastika, keeping a severe eye on the dynamism of Konstantin Melnikov's Constructivist pavilion, which served as a pedestal for Vera Mukhina's *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*. As for *La Paix*, a version of the dancing woman covering her face with her hand in the center of the panel was featured on the poster for the Milan exhibition. According to Gertje Utley,¹⁷ this woman was a reference to the figure fleeing in terror in Nicolas Poussin's *Le Massacre des innocents* (Massacre of the Innocents, ca. 1630–31), inserted into a beautiful Matisse-like dance. The idyllic innocence of the scene, threatened by a terrible premonition, suddenly seemed extremely fragile. In the poster, a disjointed, expressionist version of the figure was printed repeatedly, as though it contained the interpretive key to the exhibition in the most massive, emphatic way possible. In both cases, rather than (or as well as) glorifying anti-militarism and criticizing the American intervention in Korea, Picasso seemed to be drawing attention to the ambiguity of appearances in light of the historical imperative to take sides and act accordingly. It was a defense of the role of art in making people aware of this interplay of contradictions in order to enable more lucid political action. It was probably in this sense that Fernanda Wittgens, the director of the Pinacoteca di Brera at the time, said that, in her view, for Italian visitors Picasso's exhibition in Milan represented "liberation, at the cultural level, from all the dregs of obscurantism."¹⁸

http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documentos/ano/1947?items_per_page=24&key=juan%20olarrea.

¹⁷ Utley, *Pablo Picasso*, 166–68.

¹⁸ Fernanda Wittgens, Milan, letter to Willem Sandberg, October 7, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-fernanda-wittgens-willem-sandberg-del-7-de-octubre-de-1953>.

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

Cover of the catalogue of the 2nd Bienal
de São Paulo, 1953



The importance that Picasso attached to the presence of *Guernica* in the exhibitions during the 1950s is borne out by the painting's next destination: the retrospective of his work at the second Bienal de São Paulo in December 1953. The biennial was an important cultural event, but that alone would not have justified the presence of the battered canvas. In Brazil, in the same year in which Spain signed a bilateral agreement with the United States, Spain was presenting a pavilion that did not conform to the figurative nationalist stereotype (with artists such as Daniel Vázquez Díaz, José Caballero, Manolo Millares, Antoni Tàpies, and Benjamín Palencia). Since 1951, the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica had been going to great pains to promote a “modern” image of Spain, of openness and affinity with the art of the “free world.” This strategy was strongly challenged by Picasso through exhibitions supported by Latin American artists and Spanish exiles. On this occasion, the eclectic room dedicated to Picasso in the French Pavilion did not

Picasso and the Cold War



View of *Guernica*, 2nd Bienal de São Paulo, 1953

allow direct confrontation. Nevertheless, *Guernica* was there, as a democratic, Republican manifesto against what Picasso viewed as a perverse sham.¹⁹

The European Tour, 1955–1956

In March 1955, Picasso once again asked Barr to release *Guernica* for a European tour: “Mr. Jardot has forwarded your letter of February 9 with a list of the twelve paintings you wish to include in your upcoming exhibition in Paris.... I will particularly regret the long absence of *Guernica* and *La Dance*.... I hope I understood after our conversations in Vallauris that you were aware of the active and moderating role of your treasured paintings here.”²⁰ Barr was referring to the exhibition *Picasso*.

¹⁹ See Miguel Cabañas, *Artistas contra Franco* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1996).

²⁰ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., New York, letter to Pablo Picasso, March 10, 1955, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/16/14/7(1), <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr->

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

Peintures 1900–1955, curated by Maurice Jardot, which toured to Paris, Munich, Cologne, and Hamburg until mid-1956, with paintings from Galerie Louise Leiris, MoMA, Picasso's studio, and other collections. Later, in Brussels, Amsterdam, and Stockholm, *Guernica* was presented on its own with the studies and a few additions in the exhibition *Guernica, avec 60 études*.

Jardot, who was also in charge of the Picasso exhibition in São Paulo, had lectured at the École supérieure des Arts Décoratifs and held various political positions in postwar France, including head of culture in French-occupied Germany from 1944 to 1949. From 1956 on he was director of the gallery of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, who was also closely involved in organizing the two exhibitions and wrote the preface to *Guernica, avec 60 études*.²¹ Picasso had officially represented France at the biennial, while the Paris exhibition was organized by the Union centrale des Arts Décoratifs, a private organization with strong institutional ties. Yet the artist's status remained controversial in France, and Jardot may have tried to counteract this with a restrained but extensive show. In June 1954, the Shchukin collection of Soviet art had already been exhibited, along with some other works, at the Maison de la Pensée Française, with an emphasis on the figurative and social content.²² Jardot, on the

pablo-picasso-del-10-de-marzo-1955. See also Alfred H. Barr, Jr., New York, letter to Maurice Jardot, March 4, 1955, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York, P&S GUE-0519 Guernica Records. Correspondence 50s, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-maurice-jardot-del-4-de-marzo-de-1955>.

²¹ It is not surprising that the exhibition had a special meaning for Kahnweiler, who was born in Baden-Baden (seat of the French military government since 1945) and was persecuted by France in World War I as a German, and during World War II as a Jew.

²² See Gertje Utley, *Pablo Picasso*, 193; Eugenio Reale, Rome, letter to Pablo Picasso, September 15, 1954, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/15/14/47, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-eugenio-reale-pablo-picasso-del-15-de-septiembre-de-1954>; and the press release on the inauguration of the exhibition *Picasso* at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, May 23, 1955, Les Arts Décoratifs, Archives, Paris, D1/296 article 5 Expo. Picasso, <http://guernica>.

Picasso and the Cold War



Installation of *Guernica*, Exercishallen,
Stockholm, 1956

other hand, presented an “untheatrical” and “disinterested” exhibition with few works from Picasso’s early periods. This was partly because the Soviet Union did not loan its works (Russian émigrés had filed a lawsuit in France over their ownership), and partly because Jardot wanted to concentrate on the Cubist “rupture” in 1911, which he considered to be Picasso’s most original contribution. Accordingly, he structured the show around three main themes: Cubist works dating from 1910 to 1913, still lifes

museoreinasofia.es/documento/nota-de-prensa-sobre-la-inauguracion-de-la-exposicion-picasso-del-musee-des-arts-decoratifs-de-paris.

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

from 1922 to 1925, and the works produced during the war and occupation that included *Guernica* and the studies; this was in addition to the fourteen paintings and drawings from the recent series *Les Femmes d'Alger* (Women of Algiers, 1955).²³ *Guernica, avec 60 études* was a smaller exhibition, apparently improvised from *Picasso. Peintures*, because numerous European museums insisted on exhibiting the painting.²⁴

²³ Maurice Jardot, "A propos de l'exposition," a series of articles published in *Combat*, July 11, 1955, Les Arts Décoratifs, Archives, Paris, D1/296 article 1 Expo. Picasso, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/serie-de-articulos-publicados-en-combat>.

²⁴ Brussels and Amsterdam had already tried to exhibit *Guernica* in 1951 and 1953, respectively, but its presence in these cities and in Stockholm was not confirmed until September 1955. See Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Paris, letter to Willem Sandberg, September 29, 1955, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-daniel-henry-kahnweiler-willem-sandberg>. For information relating to the exhibitions at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels and Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, see Robert Giron, Brussels, letter to Pablo Picasso, February 19, 1951, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/19/4/3, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-robert-giron-pablo-picasso>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Fernanda Wittgens, September 11, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-fernanda-wittgens>; Fernanda Wittgens, Milan, letter to Willem Sandberg, August 4, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-fernanda-wittgens-willem-sandberg-del-4-de-agosto-de-1953>; Fernanda Wittgens, letter to Willem Sandberg, Milan, October 7, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-fernanda-wittgens-willem-sandberg-del-7-de-octubre-de-1953>; Fernanda Wittgens, Milan, letter to Willem Sandberg, August 12, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-fernanda-wittgens-willem-sandberg-del-12-de-agosto-de-1953>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Eugenio Reale, Amsterdam, May 5, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-eugenio-reale-del-5-de-mayo-de-1953>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Eugenio Reale, August 18, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-eugenio-reale-del-18-de-agosto-de-1953>.

Picasso and the Cold War

The year 1955 was a crucial one for Europe: the Bonn-Paris Conventions came into effect in May and the Federal Republic of Germany thereby regained full sovereignty, joined NATO, and settled its disputes with France.²⁵ Given the rapid political and economic integration of the former enemies, the European Union seemed irreversible once the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) had been set up in 1950. These factors offer an insight into how Europe could be expected to receive a cultural event that revolved around *Guernica* and that, with all its references to war, would mark the dawn of a new era. Also significant is the fact that the first German exhibition of the mural was to take place at the Haus der Kunst (1937) in Munich, which had been designed by Paul Ludwig Troost to showcase the art of the Third Reich and also “degenerate art”—which was what the Nazis called modern art and was also the title of the shameful 1937 “*Entartete Kunst*” exhibition of modernist artworks, including, incidentally, some by Picasso. Modernity seemed to have a natural role in the cultural policy of the new Federal Republic of Germany, and *Guernica* could be its emblem. As a hybrid between grand historical painting and the formal radicalism of the avant-garde, it was both a people’s plea and an open, internationalist, cosmopolitan image.²⁶

²⁵ In 1947, the Saar Protectorate had partitioned from Germany and was annexed by France. The Paris Agreements in 1954 offered the possibility of an independent “Saarland” with an important role in the incipient European institutions, but the proposal was rejected in the 1955 referendum and the Saar rejoined West Germany in 1958.

²⁶ In spite of the collaboration of the embassy and Jardot’s contacts in the government of the occupied zone, the organizers refused to present the exhibition in the capital, Baden-Baden, due to concerns that it may have seemed an overly “French” cultural event. See Klaus Fischer, Baden-Baden, letter to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, July 1, 1955, Les Arts Décoratifs, Archives, Paris, DI/296 article 4 Expo. Picasso, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-klaus-fischer-al-musee-des-arts-decoratifs>; and François Mathey, Paris, letter to the director of the Gesellschaft der Freunde junger Kunst, Baden-Baden, July 5, 1955, Les Arts Décoratifs, Archives, Paris, DI/296 article 4 Expo. Picasso, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/>

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

Spain also kept a close watch on this tour of *Guernica*, given the impact of the earlier tour in 1938 and the painting's participation in São Paulo and Milan. This interest is reflected in the reports prepared by the diplomatic service for the minister of foreign affairs, Alberto Martín-Artajo (responsible for normalizing relations with France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden in 1951), in which it is clear that efforts were made to take credit as far as possible for the European triumph of the "Spanish artist." Spain's ambassadors spoke more highly of *Picasso. Peintures* than of the smaller *Guernica, avec 60 études*, which more openly drew attention to Spanish political issues. José Rojas, the ambassador in France, emphasized "the great critical response in Paris," while his counterpart in Bonn, Antonio María Aguirre, mentioned it only to acknowledge its high quality and public acclaim. The ambassador in Belgium, Carlos Miranda y Quartín, on the other hand, reported on the conspiratorial tone of the Brussels show, which, he said, was "prepared almost in secrecy," as would be expected of "a painting like *Guernica*, which is pure painted politics." It gave art critics a pretext, he said, "to make countless references to the stale cliché of the interpretation of this incident of war that our enemies have managed to impose." Ernesto de Zulueta, the ambassador in Stockholm, also mentioned the critical declarations against the Spanish "war of liberation" provoked by *Guernica* in Sweden, where the exhibition was accompanied by a program of films by Luis Buñuel and other pro-Republican artists like André Malraux, Ernest Hemingway, and John Dos Passos. In Oslo, Spanish diplomats were anxious about the arrival of *Guernica*,

carta-de-francoismathey-al-director-del-geellschaft-der-freunde-junger-kunst-baden-baden; see also J. Mougin, letter to Jacques Guerin, July 20, 1955, Les Arts Décoratifs, Archives, Paris, DI/296 article 2 Expo. Picasso, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-j-mougin-jacques-guerin-del-20-de-julio-de-1955>; and the note from the General Secretary of the Union centrale des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, October 18, 1955, Les Arts Décoratifs, Archives, Paris, DI/296 article 5 Expo. Picasso, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-j-mougin-jacques-guerin-del-18-de-octubre-de-1955>.

Picasso and the Cold War

fearing that “the left-wing press may take advantage of the opportunity to campaign against the Spanish regime.” In the end, there was only a modest exhibition presented by Kahnweiler, without *Guernica*,²⁷ which could not be shown in Denmark, either. Even so, as the director of the National Gallery of Denmark, Lars Rostrup Bøyesen, wrote to Picasso, the project as a whole was reminiscent of the Scandinavian tour of 1938.²⁸

Amsterdam was the most dangerous venue in the eyes of the Francoist diplomacy due to the “extremist ideas verging on communism” of Willem Sandberg, the charismatic director of the Stedelijk Museum, and press coverage by the socialist newspaper *Het Vrije Volk*.²⁹ During the Civil War, the Republican party

²⁷ José Rojas Moreno, ambassador to France, Paris, letter to Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, June–July 1955, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter cited as “MECD-AHN”), FC-M°_CULTURA, 2, N. 2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/cartas-de-jose-rojas-moreno-alberto-martin-artajo-alvarez>; Antonio María Aguirre, ambassador to West Germany, Bonn, letter to Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, February 16, 1956, MECD-AHN, FC-M°_CULTURA, 2, N. 2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/cartas-de-jose-rojas-moreno-alberto-martin-artajo-alvarez>; Spanish ambassador to Belgium, Brussels, letter to Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, May 14, 1956, MECD-AHN, FC-M°_CULTURA, 2, N. 4, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-del-embajador-de-espana-en-belgica-alberto-martin-artajo-alvarez>; Ernesto de Zulueta, Stockholm, letter to Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, October 23, 1956, MECD-AHN, FC-M°_CULTURA, 2, N. 6, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-ernesto-de-zulueta-alberto-martin-artajo-alvarez>; and Miguel de Aldasoro, Oslo, letter to Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, November 27, 1956, MECD-AHN, FC-M°_CULTURA, 2, N. 7, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-miguel-de-aldasoro-alberto-martin-artajo-alvarez>.

²⁸ Lars Rostrup Bøyesen, Copenhagen, letter to Pablo Picasso, October 31, 1956, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/15/10/1, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-lars-rostrup-boyesen-pablo-picasso>.

²⁹ According to a subsequent report from the consul in Amsterdam, the threat was unfounded given that *Guernica, avec 60 études* was part of the commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the birth of Rembrandt and was presented alongside a Rodin exhibition as an act of French-Dutch cultural cooperation, in which the “primary characteristic is

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

had invited Sandberg to visit Spain as an official observer to safeguard the conservation of artistic heritage, and he was also well known as a former member of the Dutch resistance against the Nazi occupation. Immediately after the war he was vice chairman of the Dutch Arts Council and became an innovative museologist. Under his stewardship, the Stedelijk Museum developed a strong public and social spirit, committed to the democratization of modern art.³⁰ Since the early 1950s, both Sandberg and Robert Giron, director of the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, had written to Picasso asking to exhibit *Guernica* along with the studies (Giron in 1951), or in the same format as the Milan show (Sandberg in 1953). For the Amsterdam exhibition, Sandberg tried to recreate as far as possible the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exposition; with Julio González's *La Montserrat* (which was owned by the Stedelijk Museum), photographs by Dora Maar, and architectural drawings and other documents loaned by Josep Lluís Sert,³¹ *Guernica*

moderation,” and references to Franco's regime were not appropriate. Sandberg may have been pressured to downplay the political tone of the presence of *Guernica* in the Netherlands, judging from his letter to Robert Giron concerning sketch 55 of *Sueño y mentira de Franco*: “aren't we risking problems if we mention in this exhibition the name of the head of a friendly state?” See J. M. Trias de Bes, Amsterdam, letter to Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, July 6, 1956, MECD-AHN, FC-M°_CULTURA, 2, N. 5, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-j-m-trias-de-bes-alberto-martin-artajo-alvarez>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Robert Giron, April 4, 1956, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-robert-giron-willem-sandberg-del-4-de-abril-de-1956>.

³⁰ See Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius, *National Museums and Nation-building in Europe 1750–2010: Mobilization and Legitimacy, Continuity and Change* (London: Routledge, 2014), 109; and Jesús Pedro Lorente, *The Museums of Contemporary Art: Notion and Development* (London: Routledge, 2016), 217ff.

³¹ See Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Fernanda Wittgens, September 11, 1953, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-fernanda-wittgens>. Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Josep Lluís Sert, November 8, 1955, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem->

Picasso and the Cold War

was displayed in the 1954 museum extension, at one end of a longitudinal space with large side windows that opened up Adriaan Willem Weissman's dark, nineteenth-century architecture and let in natural light, as in the original pavilion. It was large enough to allow visitors to contemplate the whole painting and to move around.³² The catalogue published jointly by the Amsterdam and Brussels museums included an introductory text by Emile Langui, director general of Fine Arts and Letters in the Belgian Ministry of Education. In it, he gave a detailed account of the brutality of the bombing of Guernica and criticized the European powers' failure to react to Franco's uprising, likening the Spanish Republic to the postwar European parliamentary systems, which originated in broad democratic coalitions.³³ Even so, Max Aub, a notable visitor to the show in Amsterdam, compared the elaborate presentation at the Stedelijk Museum and its impact on the peaceable Dutch audience of the 1950s with the turbulent, radical exhibition that he himself had helped to organize in Paris twenty years earlier. And

sandberg-josep-lluis-sert; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Alexander Calder, November 8, 1955, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-alexander-calder-del-8-de-noviembre-de-1955>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Alexander Calder, Amsterdam, November 30, 1955, Stedelijk Museum Library, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-alexander-calder-del-30-de-noviembre-de-1955>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Maurice Lefebvre-Foinet, December 2, 1955, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-maurice-lefebvre-foinet-del-2-de-diciembre-de-1955>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Dora Maar, December 3, 1955, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-dora-maar-del-3-de-diciembre-de-1955>.

³² Isabel Tejada Martín, "Guernica de Pablo Picasso. Del pabellón parisino de 1937 a su articulación como obra maestra del arte contemporáneo internacional," in *Patrimonio, Guerra Civil y posguerra: congreso internacional*, ed. Arturo Colorado Castellary (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2010), 475-86.

³³ Rostrup Bøyesen, letter to Picasso, October 31, 1956.

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

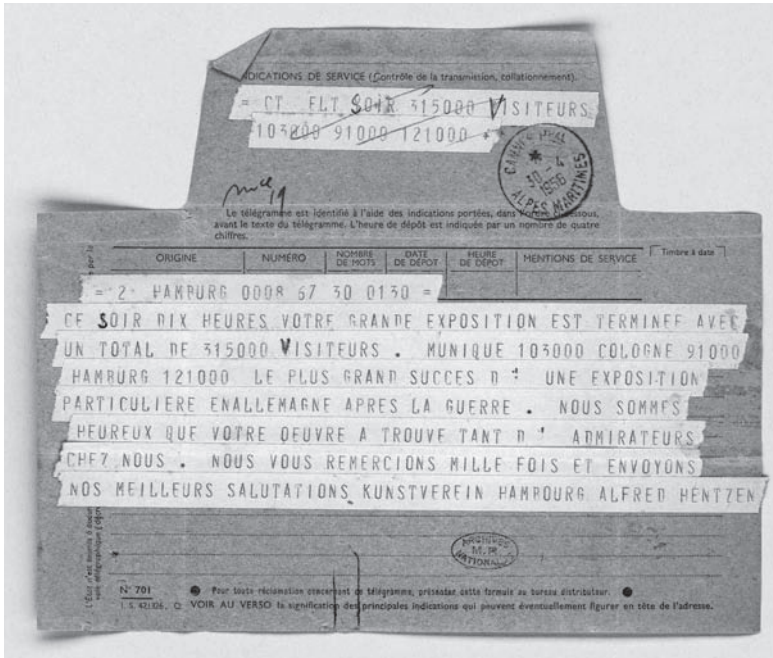
he wondered, “all these people sitting and looking at it, what do they feel? What do they hope? What do they understand? What do they see?... On the benches, people of all kinds—priests and nuns!—arguing. What would they know?”³⁴

The European exhibitions of *Guernica* in the 1950s were an unprecedented success. Picasso had become a pop culture icon on a par with Rita Hayworth in *Gilda*, as Claude Roy quipped to the artist in 1953, and his market value increased exponentially apace with his popularity.³⁵ *Guernica* as a socialist, democratic, or Spanish work, as a masterpiece of modern art, was at the center of debates about the Europe that no longer existed, about Europe as it was, and Europe as it could one day become. This accounts for the enormous preoccupation, particularly from the Left, with reclaiming the mural for the European public.

³⁴ Max Aub, *Nuevos diarios inéditos, 1939–1972*, ed. Manuel Aznar Soler (Seville: Renacimiento, 2003), 168.

³⁵ According to the data available, the exhibition drew around 2,000 visitors per day in Milan, a total of 110,000 in Paris, 315,000 in Germany, 60,000 in Amsterdam, and 35,000 in Stockholm. See the aforementioned letter from Wittgens to Sandberg, October 7, 1953; GUE-0632-; Alfred Hentzen, Hamburg, telegram to Pablo Picasso, April 30, 1956, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/E/15/1/3, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/telegrama-de-alfred-hentzen-pablo-picasso>; “La exposición *Picasso* cerrará sus puertas el 16 de octubre,” *Airpress*, 1955, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/la-exposicion-picasso-cerrara-sus-puertas-el-16-de-octubre>; Willem Sandberg, Amsterdam, letter to Bo Wennberg, October 9, 1956, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1300, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-willem-sandberg-bo-wennberg-del-9-de-octubre-de-1956>; and Bo Wennberg, Stockholm, letter to Willem Sandberg, December 7, 1956, Stedelijk Museum Library, Amsterdam, 1299, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-bo-wennberg-willem-sandberg-del-7-de-diciembre-de-1956>. See also Claude Roy, Jarnac, letter to Pablo Picasso, October 12, 1953, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Fonds Picasso, 515AP/C/144/22/2, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-claude-roy-pablo-picasso-del-12-de-octubre-de-1953>. Proof of his commercial success at the time is the sale of *L'Ossuaire* to Walter P. Chrysler in 1955 for \$47,000 and the series *Les Femmes d'Alger* to Victor and Sally Ganz, in 1956, for \$212,500 (see Utley, *Pablo Picasso*, 195).

Picasso and the Cold War



Telegram from Alfred Hentzen, director of the Hamburg Kunststhalte, to Pablo Picasso informing him of the success of the *Guernica* exhibitions in Germany, April 30, 1956

Consciously or not, the intention was to physically or symbolically restore *Guernica* to its rightful place in the mind and heart of Europe in that crucial decade. Barr's letter to Picasso about the 1955 tour clearly transmits his concern that the painting may never make its way back to MoMA: "Can I expect that after the exhibition in Paris you will wish to continue your generous practice of entrusting these works to us?" The question is, where could it return to? Postwar Europeans appeared to have little in common with the anti-fascist generation of the 1930s and their aspirations. Peace had given rise to a political architecture supposedly based on victory in those struggles, backed by an unprecedented concentration of power that was expanding around the world through violence and propaganda. In 1956, as *Guernica* made its way back from Sweden to its tranquil museum life in the United States, there was no longer any hope of democracy in Spain, and socialist aspirations in France and Italy had also

Juan José Gómez Gutiérrez

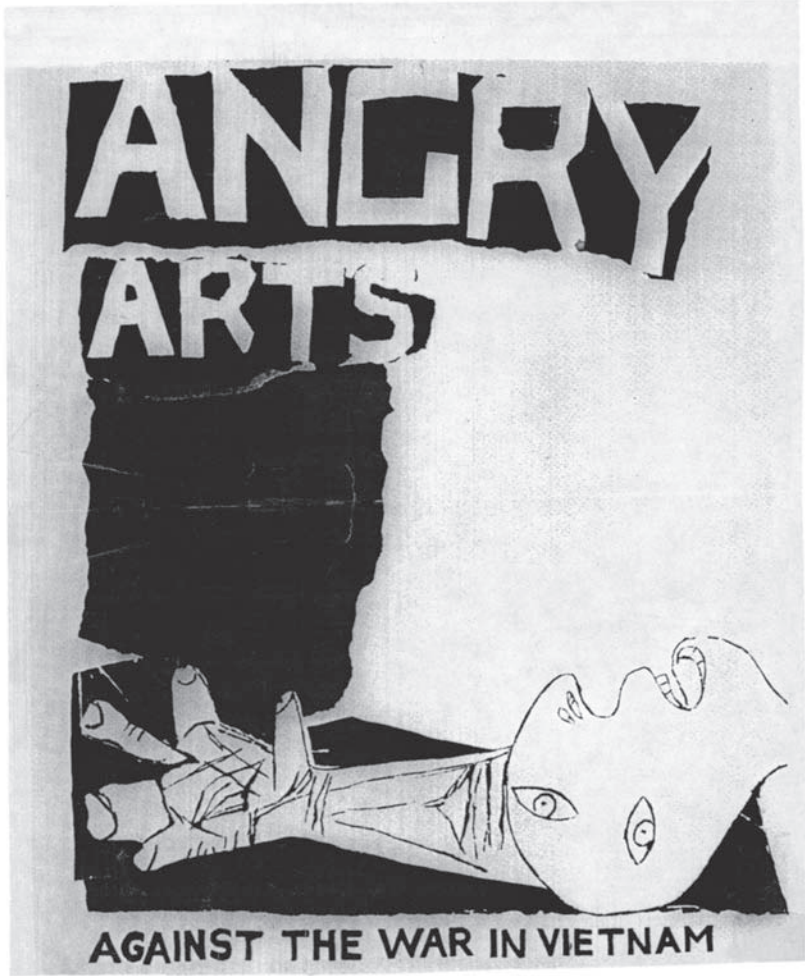
come to nothing. The killing continued in the Algerian war of independence and was starting in Vietnam. Soviet troops occupied Hungary in response to its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, and France, the United Kingdom, and Israel invaded Sinai to prevent Egypt from nationalizing the Suez Canal. Against this background, *Guernica's* triumph, its universal acclaim, could be viewed as a spectacular surrogate for a victory that was actually a defeat. In a sense, the *Guernica* exhibitions in the 1950s were a celebration of the last possible work of political art. From then on, the debate would no longer concern itself with painting returning to its original path, but with vying over future interpretations of *Guernica*.

Picasso and the Cold War



View of *Guernica* in the exhibition *Picasso*,
Rheinisches Museum, Cologne, 1956

Rudolf Baranik, Artists' Poster Committee of Art Workers' Coalition, *Angry Arts Against the War in Vietnam*, 1967



Artists' Protests: *Guernica* and the Vietnam War

Francis Frascina

Between 1967 and 1970, the political significance of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* as a representation of a war crime perpetrated by aerial bombing had a renewed relevance for Americans protesting against their country's military atrocities in the Vietnam War. For many antiwar artists and intellectuals, American culture and media were complicit with what President Eisenhower described, in January 1961, as "the military-industrial complex" in the United States: the enormous growth since World War II of a "permanent armaments industry of vast proportions" and the consequent risk of the "potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power."¹ Only the products and processes of counter-culture seemed viable resources to resist the oppressive threats of their own nation. Sites for activist interventions included established institutions of corporate modernity like the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, whose trustees such as the Rockefeller family had fortunes inseparable from "the military industrial complex." MoMA was then the custodian of *Guernica*. Its curators and directors coveted Picasso and his artworks for their narrative of modernism, which asserted that after 1945 the center of avant-garde practice shifted from a war-torn Europe to an industrially ascendant United States, more specifically from Paris to New York. By the 1970s, revisionist publications addressed implications of the Left's view that Cold War American

¹ Press release of farewell address by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, January 17, 1961, https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/farewell_address/1961_01_17_Press_Release.pdf.

Francis Frascina

culture was a form of imperialism mirroring the country's militarized foreign policies.²

Guernica was on a similar scale to recent Abstract Expressionist, or "New York School," paintings that were institutionally promoted as embodiments of individualism synonymous with "the American way" in state-sponsored or supported exhibitions, activities, and broadcasts.³ However, as *Guernica* offered a distinctly different symbolic resource of radical resistance, antiwar artists regarded it as a potential "Trojan horse" within one of the most influential institutions of post-1945 American cultural hegemony. The art Left were acutely aware of what Jutta Held later described when writing about the political effects of pictures, particularly *Guernica*: "The political significance of a work of art is never given once and for all, it does not have a fixed ontological status, but must be reaffirmed and fought for over and over again."⁴

Many antiwar artists had participated in the *Collage of Indignation*, which was part of "Angry Arts Week" in New York in late January and early February 1967.⁵ The participants' immediate anger was prompted by "The Children of Vietnam," which was published in *Ramparts* magazine, dated January 1967 and available in December 1966.⁶ It included William F. Pepper's text and photographs of disfigured mothers and babies horrifically burned by napalm dropped from American planes. *Ramparts* had already reported on the source for this weapon in, for example,

² See Francis Frascina, *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate Second Edition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

³ See Francis Frascina, "Institutions, Culture and America's 'Cold War Years': The Making of Greenberg's 'Modernist Painting,'" *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (2003): 69-97; and "Revision, Revisionism, and Rehabilitation, 1959/1999: *The American Century, ModernStarts*, and Cultural Memory," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 1 (2004): 93-116.

⁴ Jutta Held, "How Do the Political Effects of Pictures Come About? The Case of Picasso's *Guernica*," *Oxford Art Journal* 11, no. 1 (1988): 38-39.

⁵ See chapter 3 of Francis Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999).

⁶ *Ramparts* 5, no. 7 (January 1967): 44-68.

Artists' Protests



Rudolf Baranik, Artists' Poster: Committee of Art Workers' Coalition, *Stop the War in Vietnam Now*, 1967

James Colaianni's "Napalm: Made in the USA," August 1966. The article detailed protests against the sublease by Standard Oil Corporation of California, a Rockefeller family concern, of one of their plants to United Technology Center (UTC) for the specific purpose of manufacturing 100 million pounds of napalm under a contract with the Department of Defense.⁷

Protestors regarded American aerial bombing of Vietnam, which produced indiscriminate death and injury through the use of chemical weapons, as a militarized development of what happened at Guernica in 1937. Pepper's photographs of napalm burns on human bodies exploded like a bomb in the minds of those used to media-saturated representations of American power and global ambitions. To establish a critical difference from these representations, Rudolf Baranik used images from *Guernica* in posters, such as for "Angry Arts" and in demonstrations, to express protest against a war that burned mothers and babies, and to reveal the historical roots of current dissent. The struggle over the political significance of *Guernica* within institutional legacies came together in the Angry Arts petition

⁷ James F. Colaianni, "Napalm: Made in the USA. A Small Town Diary," *Ramparts* 5, no. 3 (August 1966): 46-50.

Francis Frascina

Protest rally with *Guernica* banner,
Central Park, New York, 1967



organized in April 1967: “1000 American Artists Petition to Picasso Urging Him to Withdraw *Guernica* as an Act of Protest Against United States Bombing in Viet Nam.”⁸ They wanted to withdraw *Guernica* both from MoMA’s imposition of a depoliticized meaning for the work and from the museum as a cultural institution run by trustees whose fortunes they regarded as extended by financial interests in war industries.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr.’s Cold War attempt to claim a depoliticized meaning for *Guernica* is exemplified in his catalogue entry on the painting in MoMA’s *Picasso: 75th Anniversary Exhibition* (1957), which received 100,000 visitors in the first month: “There have been many and often contradictory interpretations

⁸ Copy of blank petition in Rudolf Baranik Papers, Political Art Documentation and Distribution (PAD/D) Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. See full document at <http://guernica.museoreina-sofia.es/documento/peticion-de-angry-arts>.

Artists' Protests

of the *Guernica*. Picasso himself has denied it any political significance stating simply that the mural expresses his abhorrence of war and brutality.⁹

Within MoMA's account of modernism, Picasso's politics and membership of the French Communist Party were facts to be marginalized if not systematically denied.¹⁰ This process was embedded in dilemmas encountered by Barr and others in the United States whose careers and cultural beliefs were inseparable from commitments to what they perceived as the liberal and progressive character of modernism in an era of rabid anti-communism. For example, Picasso was refused entry to the United States in 1950 as head of a twelve-member European peace delegation of the World Congress of Partisans of Peace. The State Department regarded the latter as the "leading Communist front organization in the world" and claimed that its twelve members "are either known Communists or fellow travelers and are therefore subject to exclusion."¹¹ Among the extensive FBI files on Picasso, a memorandum commenting upon

⁹ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Picasso: 75th Anniversary Exhibition*, exh. cat. The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1957), 75, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/catalogo-de-la-exposicion-picasso-75th-anniversary-exhibition>.

¹⁰ Barr's concern with "art and Communism" during the Cold War, especially Picasso's politics, can be found in the Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Papers, "Picasso Papers," Box II.C: "Communists and Picasso 1950s." The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. This reference is to the pre-2016 reprocessing project of the Barr papers. The post-2016 finding aid lists relevant materials under XI.B.3 and XI.B.4 with the title "Communists and Pablo Picasso," and dates of ca. 1950–59 on both; see <https://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/EAD/Barrb.html#series37>, MoMA Archives, NY. For the FBI's secret dossier on Picasso, see Herbert Mitgang, "When Picasso Spooked the F.B.I.," *New York Times*, November 11, 1990, sec. 2.

¹¹ From Picasso's FBI files as quoted by Mitgang, "When Picasso Spooked the F.B.I.," 39. Until a few years ago, files on Picasso could be viewed freely at the FBI "Electronic Reading Room" (<http://foia.fbi.gov/picasso.html>). At the time of writing, the scanned documents have been removed from the FBI website and researchers must purchase copies; a for-profit website also sells copies of the documents on a CD-ROM.

Francis Frascina

MoMA's Picasso exhibition in the summer of 1957 quotes Barr as saying, "We do not want to put Picasso in an embarrassing position by inviting him only to have his entry questioned by our Government."¹²

Ten years later Barr acted directly to prevent the success of the Angry Arts petition to Picasso. He wrote to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler on April 14, 1967, enclosing a copy of the Angry Arts petition, which "is organized by a number of serious but perhaps naive artists who did not think twice about the importance of *Guernica*, which Picasso painted as a demonstration against 'brutality and war.'"¹³ Barr used the word "naive" over a decade earlier, in 1955, to describe Picasso's politics. In a memo to Elizabeth Shaw about a right-wing article in the *American Legion Magazine*, Barr referred to Picasso's *Femme assise* (Seated Woman), which "was painted 17 years before Picasso became a Communist. Picasso is politically naive and foolish, but the Soviet authorities have not accepted his art."¹⁴

Although Kahnweiler's reply, dated April 18, makes clear his opposition to the war in Vietnam, he was against the petition and advised Barr to write to Picasso, stating that he intended to do the same.¹⁵ Barr did, immediately, saying, "As you know, millions of American people are profoundly disturbed and anxious about the Vietnam War. However, ... [*Guernica's*] withdrawal would, I believe, appear to be a misunderstood

¹² Quoted in *ibid.*, 39.

¹³ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, April 14, 1967, copy in *Guernica* file, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, PI II.B.556, <http://guernica.museoreina-sofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-daniel-henry-kahnweiler-del-14-de-abril-de-1967>.

¹⁴ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., memorandum to Elizabeth Shaw, October 8, 1955. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers [Archives of American Art (AAA): 3155; 1239]. MoMA Archives, NY.

¹⁵ Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., April 18, 1967, copy in *Guernica* file, Dept. of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA, NY, PI II.B.556/cod SCALA: 0156383, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-daniel-henry-kahnweiler-alfred-h-barr-jr-del-20-de-abril-de-1967>.

Artists' Protests

retreat.”¹⁶ One reason has to be art market considerations and the role of MoMA in not only maintaining a nonpolitical artistic status for Picasso but also for other artists connected with the Galerie Kahnweiler/Leiris. Unlike Kahnweiler, Barr did not state whether he was for or against the war, but his metaphorical rhetoric was consistent with many “disturbed and anxious” supporters of American military interventions in its global campaign against communism. For them, America’s withdrawal from Vietnam would appear to be “a misunderstood retreat.”

Artists also disagreed about the political significance of *Guernica* and the antiwar petition to Picasso. On August 10, 1967, Jeanne Siegel chaired a radio panel discussion between four artists who had participated in *The Collage of Indignation*. Her question “How effective is social protest art?” produced a heated exchange between Ad Reinhardt and Leon Golub.¹⁷ For Reinhardt, and so he claimed for Barnett Newman, the Angry Arts’ request to remove *Guernica* from MoMA was “ridiculous.”¹⁸ For him, the painting “doesn’t tell you anything about the Spanish war and doesn’t say anything about war.” He likened the work to cartoons that “have no effectiveness at all,” confirmed, for him, by the fact that the Civil War in Spain was “lost.”¹⁹ For Golub, on the other hand, the purpose of the request to Picasso to remove *Guernica* from MoMA as a protest against the war in Vietnam was to “make the painting work

¹⁶ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter to Pablo Picasso, April 21, 1967, in *Guernica* file, Dept. of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA, NY, MA2384, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-pablo-picasso-del-21-de-abril-de-1967>.

¹⁷ Edited version in Jeanne Siegel, “How Effective is Social Protest Art? (Vietnam),” in *Artwords: Discourse on the 60s and 70s* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 102–19. Extract with slightly different edit in “Guernica in America, 1939–1974,” subsection on “Guernica and the Anti-Vietnam Protests in the 1960s and 1970s,” in *Picasso’s Guernica*, ed. Ellen C. Oppler (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1988), 236–38.

¹⁸ Ad Reinhardt, in *Picasso’s Guernica*, ed. Oppler, 237.

¹⁹ Reinhardt, in Siegel, “Social Protest Art,” 105–6; Oppler, ed., *Picasso’s Guernica*, 237.

Francis Frascina

again like it once worked.”²⁰ Within the MoMA it had become an object of holy veneration with visitors unaware of the painting’s history. In 1969 and 1970, the Art Workers’ Coalition (AWC) and the Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) attempted to rekindle its history and transform *Guernica* from a “holy relic” into a “Trojan horse.”

Members of the GAAG entered MoMA on October 31, 1969, carefully removed Malevich’s painting *White on White* from the gallery walls, and replaced it with the group’s manifesto of demands to the museum and affidavit of intent of action.²¹ On November 10, the group delivered to the museum “A Call for the Immediate Resignation of all the Rockefellers from the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art.” The document claimed that a “group of extremely wealthy people” who have controlled the museum’s policies since its founding “use art as a disguise, a cover for their brutal involvement in all spheres of the war machine.”²² The group’s “Call” went on to make specific sourced connections between the Rockefeller’s business interests and the war: the manufacture of napalm; aircraft production and chemical and biological warfare research; arms manufacture and the interests of those at the Pentagon. They followed this up with a communiqué and protest performance in the museum lobby on November 18, which included tearing at each others’ clothes, bursting bags of beef blood hidden under their clothes, and yelling and screaming gibberish with an occasional cry of “rape.”

A few days earlier, on November 13, 1969, Seymour Hersh’s newspaper article appeared detailing the My Lai massacre of Vietnamese civilians by American troops on March 16, 1968.²³

²⁰ Leon Golub, in *Picasso’s Guernica*, ed. Oppler, 237.

²¹ See texts and images in Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche, *GAAG: The Guerrilla Art Action Group, 1969–1976: A Selection* (New York: Printed Matter, 1978), “Number 2,” n.p. See also manifesto at <http://guernica.museoreina-sofia.es/documento/manifiesto-del-colectivo-art-workers-coalition>.

²² *Ibid.*, “Number 3,” n.p.

²³ My references are to “Lieutenant Accused of Murdering 109 Civilians,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 13, 1969. The *Alabama Journal* had its own story the previous afternoon.

Artists' Protests

There was shock not only at the revelations but also about a possible government cover-up because the date of the massacre was over a year earlier.²⁴ On November 19, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* published eight black-and-white images taken from Sergeant Ron Haerberle's color slides of the terrified villagers and murdered bodies that he took at My Lai as an army photographer. Haerberle had handed over to the military black-and-white photographs taken with his Army-issue Leica camera but had kept the color slide film taken on his own Nikon. On the evening of November 20, Walter Cronkite on CBS's nightly news program introduced television audiences to the front page of the newspaper with its images of the horror of My Lai. Even more stunning was Mike Wallace's interview on CBS News, on November 24, with Private Paul Meadlo, who had personally killed dozens of Vietnamese under Lieutenant William L. Calley's orders. Next day, the interview was reported on the front page of the *New York Times*, dwarfed by the lead headline and photos of Apollo 12's splashdown in the Pacific, with a full transcription on the inside pages.²⁵

Seeing direct parallels with the Guernica atrocity and Picasso's desire for immediate newspaper reports and witness accounts in 1937, the AWC quickly discussed a double-edged response to the news and its media coverage.²⁶ Coalition members realized that it had become imperative to develop strategies that would be critical of both high-art expectations, institutionally and practically, and those of the "mass media." They agreed, therefore, on a poster to engage with contemporary techniques of mass reproduction and to seek ways to subvert normal systems of appropriation whereby the establishment revealed

²⁴ President Nixon's appeal to a so-called silent majority in a television address to the nation on November 3, 1969, made no mention of My Lai or similar atrocities.

²⁵ *New York Times*, November 25, 1969.

²⁶ See Francis Frascina, "Picasso, Surrealism and Politics in 1937," in *Surrealism: Surrealist Visuality*, ed. Silvano Levy (Keele: Keele University Press, 1996; repr. New York: New York University Press, 1997), 125-47.

Francis Frascina

contradictions in assumptions about power. An opportunity came on November 25, at a scheduled meeting between the AWC and the MoMA's Executive Staff Committee, many of whom were outraged by the My Lai massacre.²⁷ A motion that the AWC pay for the poster with MoMA handling distribution via other museums in the United States and abroad was, according to the AWC press release, "voted in."²⁸ According to the MoMA press release, the "possibility" was to be pursued. Both documents agreed that a poster committee was to be formed to oversee the need for rapid execution of the project: three members from the AWC (Frazer Dougherty, Jon Hendricks, and Irving Petlin) and two from the museum (Arthur Drexler, director of the Department of Architecture and Design, and Elizabeth Shaw, director of Public Information).

For the AWC, the immediate visual provocation was "The Massacre at My Lai," which featured eyewitness accounts and ten pages of Haerberle's color photographs, in *Life* magazine, dated December 5, 1969, but on the newsstands by December 1.²⁹ They decided to propose using one of the most disturbing photographs of the dead strewn along a dirt road. Although at the poster committee's first meeting on December 3, MoMA representatives—particularly Drexler—were apprehensive about "the

²⁷ Major sources for what follows are: author's interviews with Irving Petlin, October 27, 1992 and June 7, 1993, and Jon Hendricks, October 10, 1992; "The Museum and the Protest Poster," MoMA press release, January 8, 1970, AWC file, MoMA Library, NY; "Does MoMA Approve of the Song MY [My Lai] Massacre?," undated AWC press release (soon after December 26, 1969), copy in John B. Hightower Papers, "Series III. Art Workers Coalition and Protest Groups": "Art Workers Coalition II & Artists Relations Committee," folder III.I.II.a. MoMA Archives, NY, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/actas-del-colectivo-art-workers-coalition>. For further sources and references, see Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent*, esp. ch. 4.

²⁸ See minutes from an Art Workers' Coalition meeting, at <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/en/document/minutes-art-workers-coalition-meeting>.

²⁹ "The Massacre at Mylai [*sic*]: Exclusive Pictures, Eyewitness Accounts," *Life*, vol. 67, no. 23, December 5, 1969, 36–45.

Artists' Protests

documentary nature” of Haeberle’s photograph, they agreed to use it in a large-scale lithographic poster with a print run of 50,000, and to overprint the image with the literal typeface of a specific question and answer from the televised Wallace interview with Meadlo as transcribed in the *New York Times*. When Meadlo confirmed that American troops had massacred babies as well as men, women, and children, Wallace asked, “And babies?” Meadlo replied, “And babies.” The Committee also agreed to transform the black of the newspaper typeface into blood red.

On December 18, the color plate for the poster was completed and the printers awaited MoMA’s approval of the final credit line: the poster as jointly sponsored by the AWC and the Museum of Modern Art. Museum staff still supported MoMA’s participation, but Drexler along with Wilder Green, from the administrative staff, decided that they had better seek the approval of the museum trustees. Both of the press releases make clear that they took the final mock-up of the poster to Walter S. Paley, president of the Board of Trustees and head of CBS. The Rockefellers were also involved. Drexler returned “white faced” after a few minutes with the trustees saying that the joint project was called off and asked everyone from the AWC to leave. Nelson Rockefeller, then Republican governor of New York, and Paley had “hit the ceiling.” Paley insisted that, as the primary function of the museum was “art,” the use of the museum’s name on the poster was a “policy issue” that had to be decided by a full Board of Trustees at its next meeting on January 8, but there was “little likelihood of the proposal being accepted.”³⁰ The AWC’s subsequent press release questioned whether MoMA’s withdrawal of support for the poster demonstrated that it approved of the massacre and described

³⁰ “The Museum and the Protest Poster,” MoMA press release, January 8, 1970. See also from that same day “A Petition from the Art Workers’ Coalition to Remove *Guernica* from the Galleries of the Museum,” <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/folleto-del-colectivo-art-workers-coalition>.

Francis Frascina

Irving Petlin, Jon Hendricks, and Frazer Dougherty,
Artists' Poster Committee of Art Workers'
Coalition, *Q. And babies? A. And babies.*, 1970



the trustees' actions as a "bitter confirmation of this institution's decadence and/or impotence."

On December 26, the poster was published, sponsored by the AWC alone and distributed through an informal network of artists, students, and peace movement workers throughout the world. The antiwar artists were not finished with MoMA. On Saturday, January 3, 1970, performers, witnesses, and members of the GAAG and the AWC gathered on the third floor of the Museum of Modern Art in front of Picasso's *Guernica*. The GAAG placed four wreaths against the wall underneath *Guernica*, and Joyce Kozloff, carrying her eight-month-old baby, sat on the floor in front of the wreaths. Father Stephen Garmey read a memorial service for dead babies, interposing extracts from the Bible with those from the My Lai article in *Life* magazine, and finished with a poem by Denise Levertov. Supporters held copies of the *Q. And babies? A. And babies.* poster.³¹ On January 8, the date of the full Board of Trustees meeting, the AWC staged a "lie-in" before *Guernica* and asked to speak with the trustees. They were refused.

³¹ See texts and photographs in Hendricks and Toche, *GAAG*, "Number 6," n.p. See also <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/en/document/art-workers-coalition-and-guerrilla-art-action-group-protest-front-guernica>.

Artists' Protests

In February 1970, the AWC and Artists and Writers Protest Against the War in Vietnam (AWP) decided to petition Picasso again. On March 13, Petlin carried a package of 265 signed letters to Paris to seek the assistance of those close to the artist to guarantee safe delivery. The letter argued that what the US government was doing in Vietnam far exceeded the atrocities at Guernica, Oradour-sur-Glane (1944), and Lidice (1942):

Tell the directors and trustees of the Museum of Modern Art in New York that *Guernica* cannot remain on public view there as long as American troops are committing genocide in Vietnam. Renew the outcry of *Guernica* by telling those who remain silent in the face of Mylai [*sic*] that you remove from them the moral trust as guardians of your painting.³²

Meyer Schapiro, the celebrated art historian and one-time Marxist, was a major and unexpected absentee from the package of signed letters. On February 27, he replied to the AWC/AWP invitation from Sarasota, Florida, with a statement reminiscent of Reinhardt's objections to Golub in 1967:

To ask Picasso to withdraw his painting from the Museum because of the massacre at Mylai [*sic*] is to charge the Museum with moral complicity in the crimes of the military. This I cannot do. Though I share your feelings about the government's whole action in Vietnam, I will not sign your letter to Picasso.³³

³² "265 Letters to Picasso Request Removal of *Guernica* as War Protest," AWC/AWP press release (March 13, 1970), in Lucy R. Lippard Papers, PAD/D Archive. MoMA Library, NY. The press release without the accompanying "list of those who have signed," published in *Picasso's Guernica*, ed. Oppler, 239-40.

³³ Meyer Schapiro, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., February 27, 1970, copy in Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers [AAA: 2196; 247-248]. MoMA Archives, NY; and in the *Guernica* file, Dept. of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA, NY. Letter reprinted, almost in full, in *Picasso's Guernica*, ed. Oppler, 242-43.

Francis Frascina



Art Workers' Coalition protest outside MoMA and in front of *Guernica*, New York, January 8, 1970

Schapiro's refusal, which was rooted in differences between the Old Left and the New Left in the United States, prompted a critical letter, dated March 3, from Baranik for the AWC. The letter ends, "you believe that we protested against the Museum of Modern Art, while our protest was against the *Guernica* in Vietnam—My Lai."³⁴ When he returned to his home in New York, Schapiro sent a copy of this refusal, with a covering letter

See full letter at <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-meyer-schapiro-al-colectivo-art-workers-coalition>.

³⁴ Rudolf Baranik, unpublished letter to Meyer Schapiro, March 3, 1970. Copy of the letter given to the author by Baranik.

Artists' Protests



Art Workers' Coalition protest in front of *Guernica*, New York, January 9, 1970

dated March 16, to Barr at MoMA. Barr sent an approving reply on April 7.³⁵

Petlin was surprised to receive a phone call from Barr a few days before he was due to leave for Paris on March 13, especially as few people knew of his journey. To maintain secrecy, the official

³⁵ Meyer Schapiro, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., March 16, 1970; Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter to Meyer Schapiro, April 7, 1970, in Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers [AAA: 2196; 245-246]. MoMA Archives, NY; and *Guernica* file, Dept. of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA, NY, <http://guernica.museo-reinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-meyer-schapiro-alfred-h-barr-jr> and <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-alfred-h-barr-jr-meyer-schapiro-o>.

Francis Frascina



Guerrilla Art Action Group protest with wreaths of flowers in front of *Guernica*, MoMA, New York, January 3, 1970

Artists' Protests

AWC/AWP press release, issued on the same day, states that the package was mailed to Picasso's home in the south of France. Petlin recalls Barr saying that "we may all agree with the sentiment involved here and with the sense that there is something terrible going on [in Vietnam]," but we think it wrong to petition Picasso to remove *Guernica* "because it would have such terrible ramifications, for both the Museum of Modern Art and for Picasso himself."³⁶ When Petlin said that he did not understand why it would cause such a reaction, Barr's response was, "People who normally contribute large sums of money to the museum would shy away from doing so because the museum has been identified with an anti-government gesture."³⁷ For Barr the potential financial punishment for the museum was the most important issue. Trustees at MoMA also believed that the AWC/AWP petition threatened them. For instance, on February 24, 1970, Walter Bareiss, a trustee, wrote to Green at MoMA from Germany, where he had business interests. Bareiss alerted Green to an article that he had recently seen in a German newspaper detailing the AWC's petition about *Guernica*. He described the AWC as "completely irresponsible or rather the extremist storm troops are, you never know to what length they might go."³⁸

Petlin subsequently discovered that his phone had been tapped and believes that this explains why Barr knew to phone him before he left for Paris: "Alfred Barr was informed whether directly or indirectly. And not only was Alfred Barr informed but Roland Penrose was informed and not only was Roland Penrose informed but Michel Leiris was informed."³⁹ Petlin believed that by the time he was on his journey to Paris, Penrose had contacted Leiris to persuade him to sabotage the delivery of

³⁶ Petlin, interview, June 7, 1993.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Walter Bareiss, letter to Wilder Green, February 24, 1970; Robert von Berg, "Entfernt Guernica aus dem Museum! Eine Aktion der amerikanischen Art Worker's Coalition," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Münchener Kulturberichte). All materials can be found in the *Guernica* File, Dept. of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA, NY.

³⁹ Petlin, interview, June 7, 1993.

Francis Frascina

the package of letters to Picasso. Petlin had arranged to entrust Leiris with the task of handing over the package to Picasso, which he never did. Leiris, who was Kahnweiler's son-in-law and partner in their art dealership, shared the views expressed by Barr and MoMA's trustees about the relationship between politics and the art market.

The following weeks saw an intensification of antiwar protests, demonstrations, and strikes, especially after President Nixon announced the bombing of neutral Cambodia in a televised address to the nation on April 30, 1970. Long-range carpet-bombing of Cambodia by B-52s had in fact been secretly going on since March 18, 1969. Resultant outrage led to mass protests and strikes, including on university campuses, where students were killed: three at Kent State University by the Ohio National Guard on May 4, and two at Jackson State University by the police just after midnight on May 15.

As a continuation of AWC-type action, a New York "Art Strike Against Racism, Sexism, Repression and War" closed museums on May 22.⁴⁰ By the time the *Information* exhibition opened at MoMA on July 2, the trustees were intensely aware that the pressure of radical protest could not be contained. They had to accept the exhibition's uncomfortable contents, including the AWC's *Q. And babies? A. And babies.*, which was also reproduced in the catalogue, and AWC member Hans Haacke's interactive *MoMA Poll*, which asked visitors to vote in response to the question: "Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?" Rockefeller was seeking re-election in 1970. The AWC's representation of "the Guernica in Vietnam—My Lai," to quote Baranik's letter to Schapiro, had passed through the museum's curatorial portals to claim a double-coding function: it was both a subversive artwork in a MoMA exhibition and a mass-produced poster pasted on thousands of walls and placards protesting against the Vietnam War and all those who profited from

⁴⁰ See <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/en/document/petition-art-workers-coalition>.

Artists' Protests

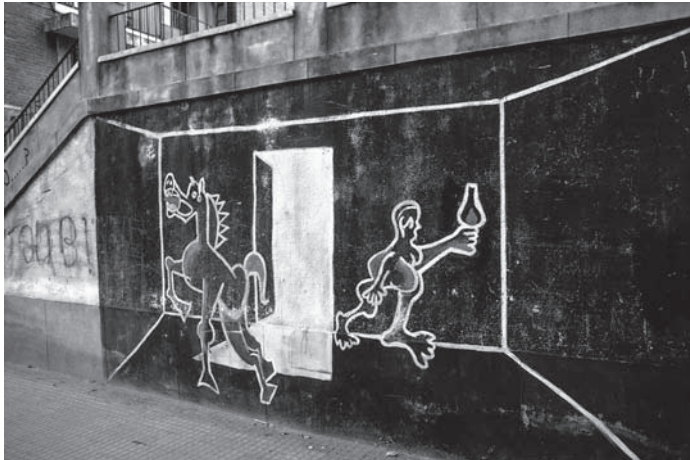


A protester with an anti-Vietnam War placard, Washington, DC, Spring 1970

it economically and culturally. The AWC's *Q. And babies? A. And babies.* and antiwar artists' activities demonstrated that the political significance of artworks, including *Guernica*, do not have a fixed ontological status but must, in Held's words, "be reaffirmed and fought for over and over again."⁴¹

⁴¹ See note 4.

Book stand with a reproduction of *Guernica*.
Guernica graffiti in the El Pilar neighborhood,
Madrid, January 1979



The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

Ignacio Echevarría

In July 1979—two years before *Guernica* traveled to Spain but when its transfer was already accepted as more or less imminent—Francisco Umbral wrote a column on the subject. It started like this: “Picasso’s *Guernica* is to come to Madrid. Those of polite society are very pleased, because they thrive on the belated assimilation of the Left’s cultural values, but for ‘the Reds’ [*rojerío*] it is a blow.”¹

At the time, Umbral was one of the leading and most brilliant columnists at *El País*, the newspaper that had been playing a key role in the transition to democracy since its founding in 1976. *El País* embraced a broad spectrum of ideological orientations and positions that coexisted in a publication variously accused, depending on the detractor’s point of view, of “leaning toward the PSOE [Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party], favoring the social democratic faction of the UCD [Union of the Democratic Center], or, incredible as it may seem, being crypto-communist.” Or at least that was how José Luis López Aranguren put it in a much-discussed opinion piece published in *El País* around the time *Guernica* arrived in Spain, in which he also referred to the newspaper as “the *business-collective intellectual* of post-Franco Spain.”²

¹ Francisco Umbral, “El *Guernica*,” *El País*, July 25, 1979, https://elpais.com/diario/1979/07/25/ultima/301701601_850215.html. The term *rojerío* refers colloquially to the Spanish Left in its entirety, but here one could assume Umbral is referring to the more committed, radical Left. Ed.

² José Luis López Aranguren, “*El País* como empresa e ‘intelectual colectivo,’” *El País*, June 7, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/06/07/opinion/360712807_850215.html. Italics in the original.

Ignacio Echevarría

In his column on *Guernica*, Umbral ironically speculated that Picasso's painting would lose much of its value as a symbol of anti-Franco resistance and a leftist "badge" as a result of its move to Spain. "What I mean," he continued, "is that Madrid's 'Reds' are already removing the thumbtacks from the *Guernica* print pinned to their—to our—walls. If *Guernica* is going to be for tetchy tourists, and for school groups, free on Thursdays, it no longer makes sense to mark our homes, the safe houses of the resistance, with a stationary-store/commercial print of *Guernica*."³

Indeed, there was a time in the twentieth century—from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s—when reproductions of *Guernica* could be found hanging on the walls of Spanish homes everywhere, or at least the homes of those who more or less explicitly supported "the Left's cultural values," whatever that may have been taken to mean at the time. And not just homes, but also the offices and workplaces of liberal professionals imbued with those values. So yes, *Guernica* functioned as a kind of secret sign by which "the Reds"—as Umbral put it—identified themselves and each other.

Following Franco's death, before the great pacts of the transition were in place, *Guernica* had been a symbol of the struggle against fascism and, more generally, of struggles for liberties and for civil and labor rights. Beyond the circumstances in which the painting was produced, Picasso's membership of the French Communist Party and his unequivocal opposition to Franco's regime warranted its status. The work of the photographer Heinz Hebeisen on graffiti murals inspired by *Guernica* documented its political instrumentalization. Around the time Umbral was writing his column, Heinz Hebeisen and Enrique Calduch published a photo-reportage entitled "El *Guernica* en la calle" (*Guernica* on the Streets). In the text accompanying the photographs, Calduch rhetorically asked whether *Guernica* was really at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), then answered

³ Umbral, "El *Guernica*."

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition



Mural of *Guernica* with the acronym E.M.K.
(Communist Movement of Euskadi), ca. 1975

that, no matter where it was, “it is already in the squares and on the streets, it has always been, painted on walls and buildings, on posters displayed in hundreds of homes, in the hearts and minds of thousands of people in this country. Because it is a cry of freedom, a cry of protest, and as such it has been and will remain at the heart of struggles.”⁴

As we have seen, Umbral believed that moving *Guernica* to Madrid would change all of this. It makes sense to think that a “secret sign”—particularly one linked to a sense of clandestine struggle—will lose some of its meaning if it becomes a commonplace tourist attraction, as did indeed happen in the case of *Guernica*. But while there is no doubt that the painting’s popularity was largely due to its symbolic value—over and above its value as a work of art per se, however great that may be—what we are interested in exploring here is whether “the Reds” removed the “stationary-store/commercial prints” of *Guernica*

⁴ Enrique Calduch and Heinz Hebeisen (photography), “El *Guernica* en la calle,” *El País Semanal*, November 2, 1980, 16–19, <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/el-pais-semanal>.

Ignacio Echevarría

from their walls as a result of the painting's popularization and banalization as a symbol, as Umbral claimed. Or whether what actually happened was that the painting had by then come to symbolize something other than it had when "the Reds" pinned it to their walls.

It appears that this second option was in fact what transpired, tacitly but not by accident. In a book on *Guernica's* presence on the streets during the transition and the early years of the democracy, Isabel García García noted that the painting, previously associated with communist or progressive ideology, quickly became "the symbol of the future democracy, which faced new challenges such as the introduction of nuclear power plants and admission to NATO. The image of *Guernica* often presided over the many protests and demonstrations that took place at the time."⁵ In fact, the shift in the "symbolic content" of *Guernica* is the best all-around example of how the transition to democracy, as it actually played out in Spain, entailed the complete elimination and replacement of the "cultural values"—as Umbral called them—endorsed by the Left until well into the 1960s. The indifference of "the Reds" to the high-profile presentation of *Guernica* in its new home at the Casón del Buen Retiro in Madrid, the docile participation of some of its representatives in the institutional euphoria that welcomed the painting's arrival, and the failure to question the political narrative and significance of the move, can all be seen as clear signs of the by then almost total dissolution of the inquiring, critical, rebellious attitude—not just resistance—that had characterized anti-Franco leftist culture, and the almost complete dismantling of any aspirations of a radical break.

The "resignification" of *Guernica* in the years prior to its move to Spain took place with the explicit help of the country's

⁵ Isabel García García, "El *Guernica* en la calle durante los años de la transición y los primeros años de la democracia," *Archivo Español de Arte* 87, no. 347 (July–September 2014), 296. See <http://guernica.museoreina-sofia.es/documento/el-guernica-en-la-calle-durante-la-transicion-y-los-primeros-anos-de-la-democracia>.

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition



Guernica installation and guards at the Casón del Buen Retiro, Madrid, 1981

Ignacio Echevarría



Guernica at the Casón del Buen Retiro,
Madrid, 1981

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

main cultural and political forces—most of which had gradually come to support the reform process that Adolfo Suárez had embarked on in 1976—and entailed neutralizing many of the painting’s earlier connotations. By the time it reached Madrid in September 1981, *Guernica* had ceased to be a symbol of republicanism and social struggle, and stood instead as a symbol of peace. More specifically, in Spain it had become a symbol of “national reconciliation,” constantly cited by all sides to the point of becoming a kind of mantra in the political vocabulary of the time.

Much has been speculated and written about Picasso’s intentions in painting *Guernica*. We know that in January 1937 he received the commission to produce a large painting for the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition, but he did not start working on it until four months later, on May 1, soon after seeing the shocking photographs published by the newspapers *Ce Soir* and *L’Humanité* following the bombing of the Basque village of Guernica on April 26. These dates suggest that the outrage, anger, and pain he felt on seeing these images were the catalyst that moved him to paint the mural. The interpretation of *Guernica* at the time (and for the following two decades, at the very least) was unambiguous as to its political meaning: while it was certainly a wrenching cry against war, it remained primarily an indictment of fascism, and specifically of Franco. Moreover, Picasso’s series of satirical etchings *Sueño y mentira de Franco* (Dream and Lie of Franco) date from the same period. While he was working on the painting, Picasso issued a statement in which he declared, “In the panel on which I am working, which I shall call ‘Guernica,’ and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death.”⁶

⁶ Statement made by Picasso in May 1937 for a US newspaper linked to the Republican Party, and quoted by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., in “*Guernica: Pro and Con*,” in *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1939), 202.

Ignacio Echevarría

Later, in 1945, he even said that *Guernica* was in part “a deliberate appeal to people, a deliberate sense of propaganda.”⁷

Although it may have turned into a “universal” symbol—as the vapid commonplace goes—*Guernica* was no abstract protest: from the very title, it refers to a specific historical circumstance with particular political connotations. This is the aspect that began to disappear in the interpretation of the painting that prevailed during the transition. In an interview published in *El País* on September 16, 1981, when *Guernica* arrived in Madrid, the Spanish diplomat Rafael Fernández Quintanilla, who had played a key role in bringing the painting to Spain, said, “Unfortunately, people have tried to overpoliticize Picasso.... I don’t think he was thinking about Guernica as he painted the mural, because the meaning of the painting goes well beyond the local bombing of the Basque town. It has become an important symbol for humanity, something universal.”⁸ A rather surprising claim, at least in light of what we know about the painting’s origins.

But that was precisely the idea during the “epic” period of the transition: to depoliticize the painting. And the process had already started much earlier, during its extended stay at MoMA in New York, where the information sheet on *Guernica* stated, in part, “There have been many, and often contradictory, interpretations of the *Guernica*. Picasso himself has denied it any explicit political significance stating simply that the mural expresses his abhorrence of war and brutality.”⁹ As a result, a politically “aseptic” reading gradually took hold and appeared to be justified by Picasso’s active commitment to peace, clearly

⁷ Pablo Picasso, from an interview with Jerome Seckler, “Picasso Explains,” *New Masses* 54, no. 11 (March 13, 1945): 7.

⁸ Rafael Fernández Quintanilla, interviewed by Fernando Becerra, “El ‘Guernica’ ha sido politizado tanto a favor como en contra,” *El País*, September 6, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/09/16/cultura/369439205_850215.html.

⁹ The Museum of Modern Art, Press Release, No. 59, June 8, 1967, available online at https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_326512.pdf.

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

evident in his countless drawings for posters, newspapers, and magazine covers, including the famous dove featured on the poster for the first World Congress of Partisans for Peace, held in Paris in April 1949.

But Picasso’s pacifist stance was never without a political edge. After all, his most active period in this regard was during the Cold War, and coincided with his membership of the Communist Party. Around this time, in 1950, the USSR awarded Picasso the Stalin Peace Prize (renamed the Lenin Peace Prize in 1956). The repudiation of war that can be gleaned from *Guernica* is both a cry in solidarity with the victims’ suffering and a condemnation of those responsible for it. This is also borne out by some of Picasso’s other works, such as *Massacre en Corée* (Massacre in Korea, 1951), which is often linked to *Guernica*, by Rudolf Baranik’s use of *Guernica* in his poster *Stop the War in Vietnam Now!* (1967), and by the fact that a few years later in, 1970, the Art Workers’ Coalition (AWC) unfurled copies of the poster *Q. And babies? A. And babies.* in front of *Guernica* at MoMA, in an action entitled *My Lai Massacre and babies?* in protest to the attacks on civilians in the Vietnam War.

Unlike the well-known “dove”—which can indeed be considered a straightforward symbol of peace—*Guernica* is a combative, polemic call for peace, and this makes it an “uncomfortable” painting even today. This was clearly illustrated when the tapestry representing *Guernica* outside the United Nations Security Council chamber room was covered by blue curtains during the February 2003 press conference at which US Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that Iraq had not complied with its international obligations. It was also illustrated by the repeated use of the mural at demonstrations and actions against the Iraq War around the world. And, more vitriolically, it was illustrated in ETA’s staging of the arms handover to the International Verification Commission, with two hooded figures before Picasso’s *Guernica*, which replaced the traditional *ikurriña* (the Basque flag) that would ordinarily have hung on the wall.

Ignacio Echevarría

In light of these and many other examples, it is even more remarkable that in just five years, *Guernica*, which had been a symbol of the fight against fascism for four decades, became a symbol of harmony and reconciliation. This could not have happened without the tacit “erasing” of many of the ideological associations that *Guernica* had conjured up until Franco’s death. First and foremost: Picasso’s communist affiliation.

It is widely known that Picasso joined the French Communist Party after the liberation of Paris in 1944. The news caused a stir around the world, augmented by Picasso’s declarations on the subject (“My membership of the Communist Party is the logical consequence of my whole life, of my whole work.”¹⁰) In response, Franco’s intelligence services and the FBI opened files on Picasso, filling them with abominations of all kinds, particularly concerning his relations with the Soviet Union. His increasingly high profile, however, made it more advisable to play down the extent of his political convictions. As early as 1948, in an article entitled “Picasso, el aldeano listo” (Picasso: The Clever Villager), the journalist and writer César González Ruano suggested that Picasso had become involved in politics that “he probably had no feeling for.”¹¹ This set the tone for subsequent interpretations of Picasso’s political “commitment,” which was often dismissed as frivolous, ignoring its influence on his work after *Guernica* (an aspect that was highlighted quite recently in the exhibition *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* at the Tate Liverpool in 2010).

In November 1968, Spain’s director general of fine arts, Florentino Pérez Embid, had convinced the vice president of the government Luis Carrero Blanco to start taking steps to bring *Guernica* to Spain and turn it into the star attraction at the new Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo that was to be built in

¹⁰ Pablo Picasso, interview with Paul Gaillard, *New Masses* 53, no. 4 (October 24, 1944): 11.

¹¹ César González Ruano, “Picasso, el aldeano listo,” *Arriba*, May 18, 1948; reprinted in *Campo cerrado. Arte y poder en la posguerra española, 1939–1953* (Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2016), 254.

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

Madrid. The report justifying the move started by explaining that Picasso “has, at times, as is frequent among artists, embraced bizarre political attitudes, though they have never been consistent or sustained for long.”¹²

The same dismissive tone comes through in a letter that Minister of Culture Ricardo de la Cierva addressed to Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez on June 28, 1980, expressing his fears that the Communist Party could try to use “Pablo Picasso’s absurd but real membership in its ranks” to score political points from the painting’s move to Spain.¹³ But although the risk that he nervously referred to had been very real in the years before Franco’s death, by then it was negligible. As were the electoral prospects of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), which had struggled to obtain 10 percent of the vote in 1979 and would drop below 4 percent in the 1982 elections. The communists themselves would not have dreamed of taking advantage of Picasso’s political affiliation, let alone of suggesting a partisan reading of

¹² Florentino Pérez Embid, cited in Javier Tusell, “Franco, Picasso y el histórico cuadro,” *El País*, September 28, 1981. The report appears in a book published by his daughter, Genoveva Tusell, *El “Guernica” recobrado. Picasso, el franquismo y la llegada de la obra a España* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2017), 115–16. This downplaying of Picasso’s communist affiliation is belied by incidents such as the 1971 attack on Galería Theo in Madrid during an exhibition of the twenty-eight etchings in the *Suite Vollard*, most of which were destroyed; the banning of the homage to Picasso that was to take place at Librería Antonio Machado in Madrid that same year, with works by a hundred artists from the Asociación de los Plásticos, and, above all, the fact that, as late as 1974, José María Moreno Galván was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment for having drawn attention to Picasso’s membership of the Communist Party during a lecture at the Faculty of Science, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, leading some people in the audience to unfurl a large banner with the hammer and sickle and shout slogans. Carrero Blanco’s letter to Pérez Embid, FC-M^o_CULTURA, 3, no. 5, folio 2, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo Histórico Nacional, is available online at <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-luis-carrero-blanco-florentino-perez-embid>.

¹³ Ricardo de la Cierva Hoces, Madrid, letter to Javier Tusell, June 28, 1980, <https://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-ricardo-de-la-cierva-hoces-javier-tusell>.

Ignacio Echevarría

Guernica, which had by then lost its status as an icon of the Left and had become the great “poster” of the transition, as Antonio Saura put it.¹⁴

In November 1977, well before de la Cierva confessed his fears to Suárez, the general secretary of the PCE, Santiago Carrillo, had been to MoMA to see *Guernica*. A few days earlier, Felipe González, general secretary of the PSOE, had visited the museum for the same purpose.¹⁵ In his statement following his visit, Carrillo dispelled the qualms that remained in some quarters regarding Picasso’s wish that *Guernica* should not travel to Spain until the Republic had been restored. Carrillo said that he was “certain that Picasso was referring to the restoration of democracy, which at the time could only be conceived in the form of a republic.”¹⁶ He said this just six months after the recently legalized PCE had agreed to put aside its republicanism and accept the monarchy and the Spanish flag, in one of the milestones of the transition.

The leader of the Spanish communists was thus instrumental to removing another part of the ideological “baggage” that weighed down *Guernica*: its identification with the Republican cause, a particularly controversial issue when it came to arranging for the return of the painting once Franco had died.

As we have seen, Florentino Pérez Embid, through Carrero Blanco, had already taken steps to secure Franco’s approval to set those wheels in motion for the first time. When the news was leaked to the international press, Picasso, alarmed by its immediate impact, went out of his way to make it clear through his lawyer Roland Dumas that *Guernica* could not enter Spain until

¹⁴ Antonio Saura, *Contra el “Guernica”* (Madrid: Turner, 1982; repr. Barcelona: La Central and Madrid: MNCARS, 2009).

¹⁵ See the photographs by Manel Armengol at <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/santiago-carrillo-y-jesus-hermida-ante-guernica>; <http://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/felipe-gonzalez-ante-guernica>.

¹⁶ Juan González Yuste, “Carrillo también visitó el ‘Guernica’ en Nueva York,” *El País*, November 25, 1977, https://elpais.com/diario/1977/11/25/espana/249260407_850215.html.

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

the Republic was “restored.” An initial statement in November 1970 mentioned only the restoration of “public liberties.”¹⁷ But Picasso remained apprehensive, and in a second declaration (released, significantly, on April 14, 1971, the fortieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Second Republic), he specified, “I confirm anew that since 1939 I have entrusted *Guernica* and the studies that accompany it to the Museum of Modern Art in New York for safekeeping and that they are intended for the government of the Spanish Republic.”¹⁸

In the years following Franco’s death, the debate over whether Spain should be a monarchy or a republic intensified. The two major left-wing political parties—the PCE and the PSOE—were rooted in the Republican tradition (the cry “España, mañana, será republicana” [Tomorrow, Spain will be a Republic!] was often heard at meetings). On the other hand, many sectors of Spanish society considered monarchy to be the price imposed by Franco, who had named Prince Juan Carlos his successor by virtue of the 1947 Law of Succession.

The choice between monarchy and republic polarized the dispute over reform or rupture, and it does not seem far-fetched to argue that the acceptance of the monarchy by the PSOE and the PCE was a turning point in the transition led by Adolfo Suárez. From that point on, through a “pact of forgetting,” the transition followed a path of consensus, political possibilism, and pragmatism.

In order to get around Picasso’s stipulation that *Guernica* be returned to the Spanish people only when the Republic was restored, great efforts went into shifting the focus of the debate from the form of the state, with its dramatic historical background, to the much less controversial issue of the political system by which the country was to be governed. And while it was relatively easy to persuade all sides that by “Republic” Picasso meant democracy and civil liberties, it was more difficult to

¹⁷ Cited in Gijs van Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), 265.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Ignacio Echevarría

convince the international community that the Spanish democracy offered sufficient guarantees of stability and continuity.

In fact, the story of the return of *Guernica* after Franco's death mirrors the story of Spain's longed-for recognition as a full-fledged democracy. Picasso's painting quickly became the trophy coveted by Spanish society and the political class in order to earn democratic credentials in the eyes of the outside world. As the painting's exchange value in this regard became increasingly clear, all the forces committed to the reform process led by Suárez worked together in an effort to ensure its move. As Máximo Cajal, who was consul general of Spain at the time the painting traveled to Madrid, remembered years later, "the painting was the key to whether our country was democratic or not."¹⁹

The retracing of the steps taken to recover *Guernica*, of the correspondence it gave rise to, the declarations of those who took part in the process, and the way the entire process was reported in the press, offers a blow-by-blow insight into the development and standardization of the phraseology that prevailed during the transition. It allows us to see how in the race to consolidate liberal democracy in Spain—despite the reluctance of the powers that be and of parts of the more radical Left—the political vocabulary in Spain was colonized by an ecumenical terminology determined not to dwell on the legacy of the past, and particularly prone to using universal ideologemes.

When William Rubin, director of the Painting and Sculpture Department at MoMA, and the Picasso family's lawyer Roland Dumas raised objections to the first unofficial attempts to recover the painting, the lawyer and journalist José Mario Armero, one of the great supporters of the recovery of *Guernica*, wrote a letter to the *New York Times* in which he said, "I think

¹⁹ Máximo Cajal, cited in Javier Hernández, "El cuadro era la llave que indicaba si nuestro país era democrático o no," *ABC*, September 10, 2006, http://www.abc.es/hemeroteca/historico-10-09-2006/abc/Cultura/el-cuadro-era-la-llave-que-indicaba-si-nuestro-pais-era-democratico-o-no_1423235032814.html#.

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

that if Spain becomes a democracy in the near future, as most Spanish people hope it will, the condition stipulated by Pablo Picasso will have been met even if the form of government is a monarchy.”²⁰

Armero played a prominent role in the lead-up to the legalization of the PCE in April 1977. Shortly after that, he requested a meeting with Rubin, who agreed that Spain sufficiently fulfilled the political conditions stipulated by Picasso, but he cautioned that they should still bide their time and confirm that the country would continue on this path, that there would be no going back. His opinion was shared by Roland Dumas, who released a statement that same month in which he said that “while I recognize the progress made in Spain and the substantial change that has taken place since General Franco’s death, I do not believe that this process has run its course. Nor can we consider the conditions stipulated by Picasso regarding the safety of the work and the stability of a new, fully democratic regime to be in place.”²¹

This further moratorium was deemed “surprising and unacceptable”²² by Armero, who wrote a letter to the newspaper *Ya* on August 10, 1977, calling for Spaniards to see the return of *Guernica* as a “grand national effort.”²³ And that was certainly how it was seen by most of Spain’s political forces, as was made clear by the motion approved by the Senate and Parliament in October 1977 to officially claim the painting. Immediately after

²⁰ José Mario Armero, letter to A. M. Rosenthal, managing editor, *New York Times*, December 12, 1975, <https://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/carta-de-jose-mario-armero-m-rosenthal>.

²¹ Roland Dumas, “Communiqué,” 1977, <https://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/comunicado-de-roland-dumas>.

²² As per a letter written in Madrid, May 2, 1977, to Marcelino Oreja, Minister of Foreign Affairs, FC M^o. CULTURA, caja 4, carp. 14, nos. 2 and 3; Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo Histórico Nacional; cited in Tusell, *El “Guernica” recobrado*, 152.

²³ José Mario Armero, letter headed “El *Guernica* de Picasso: Una labor colectiva para su recuperación,” August 10, 1977, to *Ya*, <https://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/documento/articulo-de-jose-mario-armero>.

Ignacio Echevarría

this, a procession of politicians traveled to New York, went to MoMA, had themselves photographed in front of *Guernica*, called for the “return” of the painting, and made speeches, in almost interchangeable terms, using the phraseology that by then already surrounded the painting.

And so the political content of *Guernica* was first tendentially cut back, and then transmuted. Concepts like “resistance,” “social justice,” and “republic” disappeared from its interpretative horizon, and by 1977 the only sense in which the painting still sparked discord was the matter of its relocation. In retrospect, this can be seen as another sign that the territorial organization of Spain and the satisfaction of the claims of the other historical nationalisms were the “Achilles heel” of the transition, which had been in jeopardy from the start, under the threat of ETA terrorism.

The linking of *Guernica* with the demands of Basque nationalism can be traced back to the 1960s. At the first sign of a possibility of the painting being turned over to Spain, various institutions in the Basque Country formally requested that it be housed in the town that gave it its name. From the start, one of the most active proponents of the arguments justifying this aspiration was the Basque artist Agustín Ibarrola, who had been jailed several times during the Franco years for his openly communist activities. As late as October 1979, when the prospects of this happening were increasingly remote, Ibarrola continued waging battle in an opinion piece in *El País*:

The UCD government and its officials, forged in the crucible of the Franco era, do not seem to be the most historically appropriate or morally accredited candidates to manage this chapter in the recovery of historical memory, the return of Picasso’s *Guernica*. Perhaps *Guernica* will end up at the Prado. But if it does, it must be clear that the decision was not made on the grounds given, but was instead imposed by centralism.... We must not forget that, like many of us, Picasso, the communist, envisaged that freedom would be won in conditions quite unlike those that

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

actually came about in practice.... The last issue of *La Calle* includes declarations by Santiago Carrillo that as a communist fill me with dismay. “I think,” says Carrillo, “that claiming *Guernica* on the grounds that the city that inspired it exists, or taking it to Málaga because Picasso was born there, and arguing over this, is a somewhat provincial dispute.” Without histrionics but firmly, I must remind Carrillo that the Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Basque Country, and, later, the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Spain, passed resolutions demanding that the painting be returned and taken to Guernica. Furthermore, I would like to remind him that the many reasons—historical (bombing), moral (reparation), artistic (appropriate context), sociocultural (focal point of a cultural center for the recovery of Basque identity), and economic—on which the Basque Country grounds its claim are by no means “provincial.”²⁴

In the declarations quoted by Ibarrola, Carrillo was referring to the fact that in the years prior to its return to Spain, the cities of Málaga and Barcelona (where Picasso had lived and worked, and where the first museum dedicated to him opened in 1963) had both expressed their hopes of receiving the painting. But the force and insistence of their claims cannot be compared to those that are still regularly made by the Basque Country—despite all refusals, including those based on conservation criteria—in the hope that *Guernica* will finish its journey in the town whose bombing inspired it.

Although Ibarrola’s reservations about the UCD government’s fitness to legitimately manage the return of *Guernica* were shared by some sectors of society, by this time they were very much residual concerns compared to the enormous momentum that had built up around the goal of getting the painting to Spain.

²⁴ Agustín Ibarrola, “El bombardeo del *Guernica*,” *El País*, October 4, 1979, https://elpais.com/diario/1979/10/04/opinion/307839609_850215.html.

Ignacio Echevarría

Only occasionally would someone speak up to question the way things were going. One of the most authoritative of these voices was Picasso's friend José Bergamín, who had been very close to the artist around the time *Guernica* was painted. In an article for the magazine *Punto y Hora de Euskal Herria* in December 1980, he wrote, "We still don't know, as I write this, whether Picasso's *Guernica* will or will not end up coming to this self-styled, democratizing Spain, where it will have to be received and protected by the very people it was painted against. And that is something that we all know, even if those who are bringing it here pretend not to.... I can already imagine it arriving in a cage, like Don Quixote returning to his village; and surrounded by the state police to protect it and protect us from its splendid explosive violence. That is if they don't manage to extinguish it first. Not an easy thing to do. Because it is by no means easy to cage its piercing cry, even by locking it in a museum."²⁵

But the committee charged with managing the return of *Guernica* was not nearly as bothered by Bergamín's ongoing dissent as it was by Picasso's heirs, who continued to hamper the negotiations with their demands and their reproaches up until the very last moment. The most recalcitrant was Maya Picasso, who opposed the painting's return to Spain right to the end. She made it clear that the decision had not been unanimous, that she had voted against it because, in her opinion, the fundamental condition—the restoration of the Republic—had not been met. As to whether there was a democracy, in an interview with *El País* in Geneva on July 2, 1981, soon after the family's consent for the return of the painting had been announced, Maya said, "You can see for yourself what's happening in Spain. The same police, the stench of the past, and, as far as civil liberties go, the persecution of those who fight for abortion, and a divorce law based on mutual consent that does not look like a divorce law. I am Catholic, but divorce and abortion are basic social needs, not luxuries." She added, "My father would have

²⁵ José Bergamín, "Guernica es Gernika," *Punto y Hora de Euskal Herria*, no. 198, October 23–30, 1980.

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

kept waiting for the Republic before moving one of his most significant and cherished works. And as he is dead, I have to defend it all the more.”²⁶

Months before Maya made these statements, in spring 1978, Spain’s interests had been boosted by a US Senate resolution to release *Guernica*, recognizing the “remarkable progress of the people and the leaders of Spain in the construction of democracy.”²⁷ This development, along with the ratification of the Spanish Constitution in a popular referendum held on December 6 that same year, had practically cleared the way for the transfer of *Guernica* to Spain. But the process would still take two more years, which were not without obstacles, and during this period the return of the painting came to be seen as something like the “acid test” of a democracy that had to endure such upheavals as the resignation of Adolfo Suárez in January 1981 and the attempted military coup on February 23 that same year, when Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Tejero burst into the Congress of Deputies.

In the end, the outcome of the “Tejerazo” (as the failed coup is known) boosted the status of the country’s still incipient democracy, adding almost epic overtones to the by then almost unanimous phraseology of the transition. As Álvaro Martínez-Novillo, deputy director general of fine arts at the time the painting was moved to Madrid, recalled many years later, *Guernica* was “the culmination of a plan to restore normality.”²⁸ Juan Manuel Bonet had voiced the general feeling in an article published in 1979: “Hopefully it will not be long before Picasso is

²⁶ Maya Picasso, interviewed by Alejandro Fusch, “Maya Picasso acepta con reticencias el acuerdo familiar sobre el traslado del *Guernica* a España,” *El País*, July 3, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/07/03/cultura/362959203_850215.html.

²⁷ Cited (in Spanish) in Tusell, *El “Guernica” recobrado*, 173.

²⁸ Álvaro Martínez-Novillo, cited in Natividad Pulido, “Suárez fraguó la llegada a España del *Guernica*, el último exiliado,” *ABC*, March 24, 2014, <https://www.abc.es/cultura/arte/20140324/abci-suarez-guernica-llegada-espana-201403232206.html>.

Ignacio Echevarría

no longer either a scandalous official oversight or a ‘progressive,’ mythological relic of the time of resistance.”²⁹

A glance through the front page headlines on the day after the painting’s actual arrival in Madrid—on September 10, 1981—shows that it was unanimously hailed by the Spanish press in terms that essentially repeated and expanded on the words of the then minister of culture, Íñigo Cavero, who welcomed it as “the return of the last exile.”³⁰

The editorial in *El País* on September 11, entitled “La guerra ha terminado” (The War is Over), perfectly illustrates the ideological mindset in which the painting was received: “In a hypothetical certificate of peace, the incorporation of *Guernica* into our daily lives could be seen as a sign that the war is over.... As is widely known, Pablo Picasso stipulated that *Guernica*, which was originally paid for by the government of the Republic, was to be handed over to the Spanish state only once democracy had been restored in our country. The minority of voices that question whether this condition has in fact been met, either because they confuse the forms of government (monarchy or republic) with its content or because they take it upon themselves to define the term ‘democracy’—either because of a fear of the future or a dissatisfaction with the present—cannot stifle the opinion of millions of citizens, freely expressed at the polls, or the motions passed by the Spanish Parliament.”³¹

Several members of government, high-ranking parliamentary officials, presidents of political parties, diplomatic representatives, and people connected to Picasso’s life and work attended the official public presentation of *Guernica* at the Casón del Buen Retiro in Madrid on October 23. Dignitaries included Enrique Tierno Galván, mayor of Madrid and

²⁹ Juan Manuel Bonet, “Picasso: objetivo 1981,” *La Calle*, no. 76, September 4–10, 1979, 40.

³⁰ Íñigo Cavero, cited in Ramón Vilaro, “El Guernica de Picasso, llega hoy, por fin, a España,” *El País*, September 10, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/09/10/cultura/368920801_850215.html.

³¹ Editorial, “La guerra ha terminado,” *El País*, September 11, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/09/11/opinion/369007207_850215.html.

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

honorary president of the PSOE, and Dolores Ibárruri, honorary president of the PCE. But even so, reporters drew attention to the relatively small presence of “progressive and left-wing groups.”³²

“Operation Guernica” had been accomplished. As Javier Tusell, the director general of fine arts who had overseen the negotiations, proclaimed in an opinion piece in *El País*, its completion marked “the end of the transition.”³³ And perhaps because it was indeed so, and because finally securing the coveted trophy shed new light on the situation, it was not long before signs of a kind of backlash began to appear.

In addition to the protests of those who continued to claim “*Guernica* for Guernica,” other cultural sectors started making openly critical declarations. Soon after the arrival of the painting, Luis García Montero wrote a strongly worded opinion piece entitled “¡Bienvenido, *mister Guernica!*” in which he said, “*Guernica* has finally arrived in Spain, although perhaps more vulnerable than ever and at the expense of losing its true original meaning, which had already been undermined as it hung on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Paradoxically, the government that brought it here is simultaneously negotiating Spain’s entry into NATO. It follows that the painting’s arrival can only mean one of two things to the government: it is either a strange ornament valued at four billion pesetas, increasing our artistic heritage even further; or a symbol of a romantic idea of peace, without content, which is nothing but a sticky veil over the eyes of those who want to look at reality.”³⁴

³² See, for example, “La exhibición pública del *Guernica* coincide hoy con el centenario de Pablo Picasso,” *El País*, October 25, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/10/25/cultura/372812401_850215.html.

³³ Javier Tusell, “El final de la transición,” *El País*, September 11, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/09/11/cultura/369007210_850215.html.

³⁴ Luis García Montero, “¡Bienvenido, *mister Guernica!*,” *El País*, September 16, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/09/16/opinion/369439214_850215.html. The title “¡Bienvenido, *Mister Guernica!*” is an ironic reference to Luis García Berlanga’s famous film *¡Bienvenido Mister Marshall!*

Ignacio Echevarría



Visitors to *Guernica* at the Casón del Buen Retiro, Madrid, 1981

The Great “Trophy” of the Transition

A few months after the painting had been presented at the Casón del Buen Retiro, Antonio Saura published a vehement satire stridently entitled *Contra el “Guernica,”* in which he declared things such as, “I detest *Guernica* because it is a big poster and like any mediocre poster its image can be copied and multiplied ad infinitum”; “I hate *Guernica* because when it landed in Madrid on the *Lope de Vega* jumbo jet at 8:35 a.m., after a forty-four-year wait, it was escorted by state security forces”; “I hate the bones of *Guernica* that return to the homeland with military honors to ‘fill their niche in the cemetery of the Spain’s unremembering proboscises’”; “I hate *Guernica*, ambassador of harmony”; “I hate *Guernica*’s new exile.”³⁵

A year after its arrival, nearly a million people had gone to see *Guernica* in Madrid. In an article published to mark the anniversary, Francisco Calvo Serraller wrote, “Exactly one year after its move to Spain, the uproar around *Guernica* has ceased.... If we go to the Casón, we no longer find mayhem or endless queues. The floods of humans have gradually subsided into a constant trickle of visitors who no longer look tense, eager, and excited, but rather, in most cases, bewildered, incredulous, disenchanted. Even the provocateurs are gone! In fact, I’m quite sure that some of them have taken down their *Guernica* poster and hidden it away in the cupboard.”³⁶

The coming to power of the socialists, just over two months later, ushered in a new era of hope and rekindled the desire for change, leading many Spanish intellectuals to side with the new government. Five years earlier, in December 1977, at the launch of Juan Larrea’s book *Guernica*, the leader of the PSOE—now the new president of the Spanish government—Felipe González had wondered aloud, “When will there be a government that feels

(Welcome, Mister Marshall!, 1953), clearly commenting on the behavior of the political class in response to arrival of the painting.

³⁵ Saura, *Contra el “Guernica,”* 46–48.

³⁶ Francisco Calvo Serraller, “Cómo se enfría una obra de arte,” *El País*, September 10, 1982, https://elpais.com/diario/1982/09/10/cultura/400456803_850215.html.

Ignacio Echevarría

it represents the values embodied by *Guernica*?”³⁷ Some people may have thought that González’s own government would be the one to represent those values. But if it was so, it was only insofar as those values radically changed.

In 1993, in an article that shared more than a few similarities with the much earlier column by Francisco Umbral mentioned at the start of this text, Manuel Vicent wrote, “For many years, Picasso’s *Guernica* has been the crucifix presiding over the catacombs of the Reds during the time of the dictatorship.... Now the painting has lost its magic. It has become a bad poster. One could even argue that the picture hanging at the Museo Reina Sofía is a fake *Guernica*: an enormous enlargement of the authentic painting, which was the small reproduction on cardboard pinned to our bedroom walls.”³⁸

³⁷ Felipe González, cited in “Presentación del libro ‘Guernica,’ de Juan Larrea,” *El País*, December 28, 1977, https://elpais.com/diario/1977/12/28/cultura/252111604_850215.html.

³⁸ Manuel Vicent, “El *Guernica*,” *El País*, November 7, 1993, https://elpais.com/diario/1993/11/07/ultima/752626801_850215.html.

Selection of the documents referred
to in the texts (transcriptions), 1940-1981

Here are some of the suggestions which I made the other day about the possible *Guernica* film, with a few others.

1. *Guernica* and the *Ghent Altarpiece*.

These are extremely different in technique. The close-up which reveals the marvelous detail of the Van Eyck could scarcely be used in *Guernica* which is very coarsely painted and intended to be seen at a considerable distance.

2. To compensate for this we have two kinds of extremely useful and interesting material.

- a. Studies.
- b. Photographs of the mural at different stages.

3. The studies are three kinds.

- a. Composition studies which record step by step the development of the idea.
- b. Studies for detail which often have extraordinary quality and power.
- c. "Proscrits." Certain details, particularly heads which Picasso continued to develop long after he had finished the canvas.

4. The Dora Maar photographs of the work in progress.

There are at least eight of these and they are particularly fascinating because Picasso made radical changes in composition during the actual painting. There are also two or three good shots of Picasso at work on the canvas.

5. Installation Photographs.

Besides photographs of the mural in the artist's studio, there are good views taken in the Spanish Pavilion with the Sandy Calder *Mercury Fountain* in the foreground. (Does a movie of the Calder exist?) Other views of the mural installed in London, Scandinavia (?), New York, Harvard (beautifully shown flanked by Romanesque capitals), Chicago, etc.

6. Retrospective selection of Picasso's art to point out some of the important motives which eventually appear, sometimes 30 years later in the *Guernica*. Special reference to the *Minotauromachy* etching.
7. The question of Picasso's symbolism in relation to war and the bullfight.
8. The political implications of the *Guernica*.
 - a. In the narrow sense it was a powerful blow struck on behalf of the Spanish Republic against Franco and this German allies.
 - b. In the broad sense which Picasso says concerned him far more than the immediate event: a blow struck against power of darkness and brutality.
9. We would be justified not only in emphasizing the Guernica bombing as the first "total air raid" but as the most powerful and famous Twentieth Century prophesy of the horror of aerial war which since has come to a climax with the atom bomb.

I have not mentioned here the extremely interesting critical problem of the *Guernica* raised by the question as to whether Picasso has really painted a work which effectively carries out his avowed purpose. This might lie outside the field of a movie.

In any case, we have a very big subject here which could be worked into a wonderful scenario beginning perhaps with shots of the town, followed by your suggestion of German military movies of the bombing, etc. which, as you know, occurred just a couple of days before Picasso started work on the mural, so quick was his reaction.

It so happens that the person who in my opinion has most closely and systematically studied the *Guernica* is Bill Lieberman who has written an extended essay upon it.

GUERNICA

Stock footage of town being bombed during Spanish Civil War with shots that will recreate scene. Explosion.

(Description of Guernica bombing)

WIPE WITH OPTICAL EXPLOSION
EFFECT INTO:

1. Guernica mural

NARRATOR: Two days after news of the bombing had been released, Picasso prepared to take an artist's revenge. He began work on a mural commissioned for the Spanish Republic's Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937.

LONG LAP DISSOLVE TO:

2. MS: Man at round café table, CAMERA behind and looking over his shoulder at four shorthand studies.

The initial studies are stenographic notes on small sheets of paper.

CAMERA moves forward showing first study, and the man, following the commentary, points out the characters. Man leafs through to second study. Man leafs through third and fourth studies.

In the rapid scribbles we can distinguish: a bull, a horse, and, from a window, a figure holding a lamp.

CUT TO:

From the beginning the theme of the horse stimulates Picasso's imagination,

3. Two sketches on horse's head on table.

and he makes preparatory drawings for a study in oil of the horse's head.

CUT TO:

4. PCU: Oil painting of horse's head.

The painting itself is in black and white, the first indication that no color will be used in the mural.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON:

5. CU: First composition study

Here appear four symbolic themes which can be traced through to the final version,

CUT TO:

6. CU: The horse

the dying horse,

CUT TO:

7. CU: The bull

the bull,

CUT TO:

8. CU: Woman at window

the woman at the window,

CUT TO:

9. CU: The warrior. CAMERA moves back to take in whole sketch again
- HORIZONTAL WIPE,
TOP TO BOTTOM:
10. CU: Second composition study
- HORIZONTAL WIPE,
TOP TO BOTTOM:
11. CU: Third composition study.
CAMERA moves RT and in to woman with child
12. CU: Pencil sketch of woman with child
- DISSOLVE TO:
13. CU: Ink sketch of woman with child.
CAMERA moves in close on head of woman.
- DISSOLVE TO:
14. CU: Head of a woman in sketch of woman on ladder, seen in same position as head in previous sketch. CAMERA revolves sketch to horizontal position, then moves back to reveal entire sketch.
- CUT TO:
15. CU: Fourth composition study
- CAMERA pans RT and in close to woman with baby;
- CAMERA backs away to reveal entire picture;
- CAMERA moves slowly up to the head of the bull
- DISSOLVE TO:
16. CU: Sketch of human-like head of bull
- CUT TO:
- and the dead warrior, whose ineffectual helmet and spear indicate, perhaps, the inadequate weapons he had to defend himself. A pegasus springs from the horse's side suggesting some promise of rebirth.
- The woman is a witness and holds the lamp of Truth.
- Another sketch introduces victims of the bombing, a mother dragging herself and clutching her baby,
- the subject of several drawings done during the following days,
- and the first human motif which Picasso develops.
- How limp is the body of the dead child, how heavy the mother's leg, how fumbling the clustered fingers, as she tries to escape.
- In the most detailed composition study, the action occurs at night. To the original themes have been added casualties of the raid: a building in flames, the mother carrying her baby, the human debris of war. Notice the arm, extended in the defiant, anti-fascist salute of the Popular Front, the wheel—a symbol of torture—emphasizing the twisted convulsions of the horse,—and the bull who stands unmoved, unaffected by the disaster,
- the bull whose features at times assume a human likeness.

17. CU: Sketch No. 1, May 1

QUICK WIPE, UPPER LEFT
TO LOWER RIGHT:

18. CU: Sketch No. 1, May 2

QUICK WIPE,
TOP TO BOTTOM:

19. CU: Sketch No. 2, May 2

QUICK WIPE,
TOP TO BOTTOM:

20. CU: Composition, May 8

QUICK WIPE,
RIGHT TO LEFT:

21. CU: Composition, May 9

FADE OUT.
FADE IN SLOWLY ON:

22. FS: First mural photo

CAMERA moves in toward the bull, pans
RT to include horse and tilt down for
warrior

CUT TO:

23. MS: Woman with lamp

CUT TO:

24. MS: Woman falling from building

CUT TO:

25. MS: Woman with young girl

CUT TO:

26. MS: Woman lamenting over a baby

CUT TO:

27. MS: Warrior's upraised arm

DISSOLVE TO:

28. MS: Identical part of second mural photo
showing upraised arm with blades of grain
clenched in fist.

These preliminary studies were done during a period of ten days. They are variations rather than revisions. Picasso expands his subject, plays one theme against another.

On the eleventh day he began work on the mural itself.

Here the composition is outlined on the canvas. Picasso repeats the four symbolic themes: the bull, the horse, the fallen warrior,

and the woman with the lamp. Picasso also shows victims of the bombing:

a figure falls from a building,

a woman carries a young girl,

a mother grieves over her baby.

The warrior raises an arm in the Popular Front salute.

His fist, framed by the sun, holds blades of grain.

- CAMERA trucks back quickly to reveal entire mural photo
DISSOLVE TO:
29. FS: Third mural photo
CAMERA moves in toward center of photo for the gash
CAMERA tilts up and close to sun
CUT TO:
30. MS: Left half of fifth mural photo
CAMERA moves in toward horse
CAMERA moves back and to the RT to reveal entire mural photo
DISSOLVE TO:
31. FS: Seventh mural photo
CUT TO:
32. MS: Lower left hand part of mural, with warrior's outstretched hand
CUT TO:
33. CU: Warrior's head. CAMERA rotates head to upright position, the backs off to include outstretched arm and hand.
34. CU: Hand holding broken sword and flower

CUT TO:
35. CU: Head of screaming woman
CAMERA pans L to wall of Museum gallery showing several of weeping heads series framed and moves in on first

DISSOLVE TO:
- As Picasso begins to block out the composition in terms of black and white, he makes several revisions.
- The warrior's position is completely altered. His upheld arm is eliminated. The diamond-shaped wound, now a gash in the horse's side, suggests that the horse has been gored by the bull.
Above, an eye-like oval replaces the sun.
- Now drastic changes are made in the figures of the horse and bull. The bull's body is swung around to the left, enabling Picasso to raise the horse's head. A spear transfixes the horse and emerges from its side.
- Picasso recasts the location of the scene, and places the action upon a stage with a squared floor.
- A radical change is made in the figure of the warrior. He lies broken like a fallen statue.
- His head is turned upwards, his eyes do not focus, and on his hand appear lifelines, markings of fate.
- From the hand which holds the broken sword, springs a small flower. Like the winged horse and upraised arms, which Picasso introduced and then abandoned, the flower is now the only hope for rebirth, the only growing thing amidst chaos and destruction.
- The image of the screaming woman haunted Picasso.
- While painting the mural, he began a series of weeping women's heads. The theme so obsessed his imagination that after the mural had been finished, he continued these studies, postscripts to the mural.

36. CU: Same sketch, very close.
Hold momentarily, then a quick series of wipes through 12 of the women's heads.

QUICK FADE TO
SLOW FADE IN ON:

37. FS: The *Guernica* mural

CUT TO:

38. MS: Door at extreme RT
CAMERA pans L to shrieking woman and tilts down quickly
CAMERA backs away to reveal woman rushing in from RT

CUT TO:

39. MS: Woman crying over baby
CAMERA tilts up and backs away to include the head of the bull

CUT TO:

40. MS: The horse

CUT TO:

41. MS: Warrior's head and upraised arms.
CAMERA pans RT to include all the pieces.

CUT TO:

The penmanship is vivid and intense, and Picasso pays great attention to linear detail. Eyes are beaded and dislocated, eyelashes and eyebrows appear as scattered tufts of hair.

Teeth and tongues protrude from open mouths, and tears resembling nails furrow lines in the cheeks. The women are victims of overwhelming anguish and despair. The whole inner organism, convulsed by grief and pain, seems to be revealed.

Picasso worked with tremendous energy and speed, completing the mural in June, only five weeks after the first studies were begun.

The mural's size suggests a huge screen upon which the kaleidoscopic action is projected. Angular transparent planes shatter the surface, describe shadows, signify direction. Black, grey and white, shades of mourning, darkness and tragedy fitting the disaster, are the only colors. The scene suggests great confusion, an explosion, a terrific upheaval. The squared floor, ceiling and walls indicate an enclosed space.

AT the extreme right a door opens into the scene.

From a burning building falls a shrieking woman. Her arms are rigid and straight, her dress on fire.

Bewildered and dazed, another woman rushes in, her arms flung apart.

At the left, a mother cries aloud over the limp, lifeless body of her baby.

Above hovers ominously the head of the implacable, bristling bull.

The horse screams and falls to its knees.

On the ground lie hollow fragments of the sculptured warrior.

42. CU: Wounded bird, CAMERA moves in for detail.
CUT TO:
43. MS: Woman in window
CAMERA pans L, tilts up, and moves in on electric light
CAMERA starts to draw back very slowly to reveal entire mural, then holds on mural
- VERY SLOW FADE OUT
FADE IN:
44. CU: Paris installation photo; CAMERA close to mural; CAMERA backs away and down to show paving and Calder sculpture
CUT TO:
45. CU: Fogg installation photo
CUT TO:
46. S: Other installation shots if possible ending with mural hanging in Museum of Modern Art gallery
- In the background on a table is a wounded bird, its wings spread, its beak open.
- From a window a woman, aghast at what she sees, holds the lamp of Truth. Over all shines a radiant eye with an electric light bulb for a pupil, symbolizing night. The human characters play an almost subordinate role to the horse and bull. "The bull," Picasso says, "represents... brutality, the horse the people... the bull is brutality and darkness." "The Guernica mural is symbolic... allegoric," Picasso explains. "That's the reason I've used the horse, the bull... The mural is for the definite expression and solution of a problem and that is why I used symbolism."
- The mural was commissioned for the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937. Notice the squares in the pavement repeated in the mural, and, in the foreground, the fountain designed by the American sculptor, Alexander Calder.
- After the Paris World's Fair, the mural was shown in England, New York and Los Angeles.
- Later on it was exhibited in the principal cities and museums of the United States, under the auspices of the M.O.M.A. Wherever shown the mural aroused controversy and discussion. It has been argued, attacked and defended. There is no doubt that Picasso felt strongly, that he was deeply moved. But the mural was painted for a public building. It was intended as a public statement to arouse public feeling. Picasso, however, speaks of world catastrophe in a language not easily understood by the ordinary man. Taking the destruction of Guernica as a specific manifestation, Picasso, as an individual, expresses his personal indignation against the man made disaster of our time.

SLOW FADE OUT
DARK SCREEN

SLOW FADE IN:

47. First pencil sketch, May 1

DISSOLVE TO:

48. First composition sketch, May 2

CUT TO:

49. Second composition sketch, May 2

DISSOLVE TO:

50. Final composition sketch, May 9

DISSOLVE TO:

51. First mural photo

DISSOLVE TO:

52. Third mural photo

DISSOLVE TO:

53. Fifth mural photo

DISSOLVE TO:

54. *Guernica* mural.

CAMERA backs away slowly to show installation in the Museum gallery and people looking at the mural. As CAMERA backs away the spectators are dwarfed by the mural.

The painting is not a journalistic description of the bombing of a Spanish town. It is a protest against the horror of war, an apocalyptic warning. If this version of death, ruin and shock seems fatalistic, remember that it was also prophetic.

When we recall the various studies and revisions as the painting developed, it is surprising how faithful the final version remains to Picasso's original concept.

As Picasso has said: "It would be very interesting to preserve photographically not the stages, but the metamorphoses of a picture.

Possibly one might then discover the path

followed by the brain in materializing a dream.

But there is one very odd thing—to notice that basically a picture doesn't change, that the first 'vision' remains almost intact...

A picture is not thought out and settled beforehand.

While it is being done, it changes as one's thought change [*sic*].

And when it is finished, it still goes on changing according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it."

PICASSO IN NEW YORK

Juan Larrea

A month and a half after its opening, the great Picasso exhibition currently on show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York is still basking in the roaring success that it has enjoyed since the very first day. The huge crowds have made it necessary to limit the number of visitors per day, many of whom are forced to return three or four times before they finally manage to cross the threshold of the museum. This painter, this city, this enthusiasm, are made for each other. Rarely in history has there been such creative power. Nor is it easy to imagine a better backdrop than this marvelous Manhattan, in which the upward yearnings of our age become steel and concrete. Picasso's inexorable proverbial dynamism is, above all, an ascending dynamism informed by the feverish need for constant improvement. With unflinching perseverance he has added floor after floor to his work, turning it into what is unquestionably—on this point and many others the American press is unanimous—the most colossal artistic phenomenon in modern times. This is why it is in the air of New York—this air full of freedom, where guitar and skyscraper naturally unite—that Picasso's paintings throw open their content. One needs to have seen them displaying their concentrated, stately essence in the Fifth Avenue shop windows, like wonderful clocks that have stopped, each at an unforgettable moment, in the midst of the rushed, servile bustle, in order to unravel their profound truth and to understand the nature of the motives that prevailed in the artist. If it were not for the need

to conquer freedom each day, Picasso would not exist. His work is the mystical exaltation of that freedom: its projection into the world of colors and shapes. It is remarkable that the need to constantly break chains and shackles is most urgently expressed in none other than the most famous modern artist. And that this artist is Spanish, in other words, that he was born in the land that has felt the historical urgency to forge true men.

Being a man: in my view, that is the secret of Picasso's personality. In painting, he has never sought to resolve the trivial aesthetic problems of the day with gushing eloquence and selective smiles. Picasso is simply a man who paints. In each of his works, precisely because he is a man, because he paints, he solves problems that had not even been perceived by aesthetic means. Instead of stunting his human condition and confining him to a kind of intellectualizing social class, his art exalts that human condition and promotes its unfettered development, in a process of feedback between his work and his personality that has resulted in the constant growth of both. Proof? None could be better than that of his own radiant poems, rich and dense, raw expressions of his inner movement, the flowing imaginative lifeblood organically flooding the spiritual centers of his being.

Yes, Picasso is a passionate man who paints. And the more he paints, the more he feels a man. The genius of painting manifests when he—an extraordinary machine for transforming impressions—chromatically expresses the incidents of his inner life, his reactions to the spectacle

of the world. Shapes, colors, and other artistic elements take on personality, arranging themselves dramatically according to their complex affinities and repulsions, so that an unlimited number of utterly new states of mind find their expression amidst the soaring of a language stripped of all false rhetoric. Comparing his work to that of any traditional painter reveals the decisive difference between the inner worlds they express.

These aspects clearly come through in the exhibition in New York, his most important so far in terms of the number of paintings (350) and of their selection. It is a seminal exhibition in that it offers an overview of Picasso's entire body of work. In a case as unusual as his, such an overview is absolutely essential. How else could we grasp the precise meaning of his artistic personality? How could we appreciate his overall logic, an essentially human logic that lends coherence to the development of his work, establishing the formation of one image after another? Picasso cannot be understood by randomly looking at one, ten, or fifty of his works, just as one of those enormous skyscrapers cannot be understood by peering out of some of its windows. He must be confronted squarely, the drop of his bulk from sky to ground, his atmosphere, and the play of infinite relativities by which his oeuvre becomes an organic whole. As can be seen in the exhibition in New York, an easily discernible essence is present in all the paintings under different guises, unifying the whole. From the early paintings from his Blue Period, in which Picasso, then a youth, draws near to the misery of his subjects with celestial sympathy, to the much later works that express his most strident outrage, by way of the many others

in which he displays the whole range of discrepancies that set him at odds with the world around him. In all of them, Picasso is always, whether directly or indirectly, the mirror that exposes the human environment in which he lives. Confronted by today's world, Picasso has dedicated himself body and soul to destroying it in images. By doing so, he reflects the state of decay of this world, its profound monstrosity, while also revealing the need for its total and radical transformation. His early compassion toward human misfortune has gradually veered toward an increasingly open and virulent expression of aggression against the cause of that misfortune, against that which thwarts the splendor of human nature. That is how, in him, this nature loves the perfection and development of individual man. To arrive at this result, Picasso systematically denies himself. He denies his extraordinary pictorial talent, his gift, which can only be fully grasped when you have seen him handle his pencil and paintbrushes: the inherently graceful execution that swiftly sublimates whatever it touches. Instead of these, for him, too easy satisfactions, Picasso rises up purposefully, heroically, revolutionary, refusing himself in them in favor of a thornier, more arduous path. No position is more difficult than his. It is a precarious equilibrium that requires constant rapid movement in order to avoid the disaster that is always looming. But the existence of this threat gives his work the supreme calories that fuel this dazzle of disintegrating matter that is so peculiarly his. Nobody has taken to the same extent as Picasso *le chemin le plus court, celui des monstres*, as Éluard wrote. And so it must surely be, always.

Picasso's human attitude over the last few years is easily explained in this sense. With what keen anguish he actively took part in the war in Spain from the first day! Nothing in the conflict could personally affect somebody who, like him, lived abroad, independent, famous, and wealthy. But it affected his human, non-personal idea of justice; that profound reality that joined him in solidarity with the Spanish people, confirming that, as Edgar Allan Poe said, a stronger sense of justice sets the poet apart from the ordinary man—all poets, all creators, Spanish and American. That unbearable sting of distress gave rise to the extraordinary *Guernica* that now holds the place of honor as the masthead of the New York exhibition as the most famous painting in the world, in which the familiar figures—the bull, the horse, the women, the broken hero—are expressed in a delirious vortex that seizes the spectator like a raging wave, buffets them, and dumps them in a corner with his soul bruised forever.

Is it generally known that right from the start of the war, Picasso—unlike that sorry bunch of pretentious mediocrities so lacking in human values that they could not or did not take sides when Spain broke—did all he could to ensure

that the Spanish people would not lack weapons with which to defend their lives from unjust aggression? Is it generally known that when the rebel troops entered Madrid, they found, in the undefeated capital (as they had earlier in Barcelona), four soup kitchens for children financed with hundreds of thousands of francs donated by Picasso, and openly displaying his name? Is it not moving to see him like this, bent over the pure source of life and lovingly holding the flame that threatens to go out, trying to close with his hands the poor, humble wounds, lending his name and his fame, giving himself as bread does, as mothers do, as creation does when it partakes of the generous essence of truth and of love that characterizes life?

For these and other unforgettable things Picasso will always be a crucial symbol for us on this brink on which we stand. We consider his current success our own. When we are pleased with him we are also pleased that much of his work is in America. And we continue to hope that one day we will see him disembarking with his magic paintbrushes on any of the admirable beaches in this New World that, because of his human qualities, he is so strongly connected to.

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
LIBERTÉ - ÉGALITÉ - FRATERNITÉ

PARIS, LE _____

Monday, January 5

On my return from Vienna, I received the visit of Comrade Gornat. He told me about the problems that have arisen in the organization of the exhibition of your works in Italy.

I told him that, in my opinion, the organization was still possible on the condition that things were done in my own way and that they did not steal too much time, that they did not force you to go to Paris more often, and, above all, that they do not distract you from your work.

In my opinion, it is still feasible.

That is why I recommended that he visit you in the company of Comrade Reale.

But I also did it for another reason.

In fact, we attach great political and artistic importance to the celebration of this event in Italy. We believe that the organization would be considered a success. Discuss with our comrades what should be done, in what form and with what means. Forgive me for insisting, but I think it is necessary.

I will soon have the opportunity to pay you a visit. I'm impatient, you know how excited I am.

I send you a big hug, and please be sure to give Françoise and the children another from me.

Greetings,
Cossy [illegible]

PINACOTECA DI BRERA
MILANO

Milan, October 7, 1953

Dear friend,

Thank you very much for your kind letter: I am very sad because you really deserved, more than anyone else, to have Picasso's exhibition, but I also understand the difficulties.

It is true that the interest is enormous: we have five thousand visitors on Sundays, daily around two thousand, and that makes me think that the exhibition will have to be extended. But *Guernica*, which we can finally exhibit in public, will remain only until November 10, and then will leave for São Paulo.

Eight paintings from Moscow from the Blue and Pink Period will be expected. I really believe that you will have to come and see this exhibition.

I'll advise you when everything comes together, but I think that the paintings from Moscow will take quite some time, and that only at the end of October will the exhibition be complete.

Warm regards also to your wife and many thanks to you for your admirable ...

Letter from Fernanda Wittgens, Milan,
to Willem Sandberg, October 7, 1953

Paris, 9/15/54

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AU CAPITAL DE 15.370.000 FRANCS
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Paris 7^e

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(7 LIGNES GROUPÉES)
R.C.SEINE N°: 325.331

My dear Pablo:

I just arrived from your exhibition at the Maison de la Pensée. It is extraordinary, it is magnificent. And it is touching. A woman next to me said to her husband, "What a pity that this great painter, perhaps the greatest of our days, is a communist!" We are proud that you are! By continuing to work as you do, you do us a great favor, to communists all over the world.

Too bad I did not find you in Vallauris the last time I went. I hope to be able to go at the end of October, now I'm leaving on a rather long trip.

So, dear Pablo, see you soon. Work well (the portraits of the girl are magnificent) and be healthy.

Love,
Eugenio Reale

ARTWORKERS COALITION ARTISTS AND WRITERS PROTEST

AWG/AWP Box 553, Old Chelsea Station, New York, New York 10011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS CONTACT:
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265 LETTERS TO PICASSO REQUEST REMOVAL
OF *GUERNICA* AS WAR PROTEST

A package containing 265 signed letters to Pablo Picasso, requesting that he remove *Guernica* from the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was mailed to his home in the south of France on March 13. This open letter, which has been signed by many leading American artists and writers, states that in view of the Songmy massacre this nation and this museum no longer have the right to hold for safekeeping this monumental cry against the slaughter of innocents.

The petition for support of this request to Picasso is also circulating among artists and writers in France, Spain and other countries.

The open letter, which was initiated by Art Workers Coalition and Artists and Writers Protest, reads:

Dear Pablo Picasso, When the France government of Spain recently invited you to return and to bring *Guernica* to Madrid, you said no: only when Spain is again a democratic republic will *Guernica* hang in the Prado.

American artists have always been proud of the fact that your great painting, an outcry against injustice, hangs in our leading museum, in temporary refuge on the way to your freed homeland.

But things have changed. What the U.S. government is doing in Vietnam far exceeds *Guernica*, Oradour and Lidice. The continuous housing of *Guernica* in The Museum of Modern Art, New York, implies that our establishment has the moral right to be indignant about the crimes of others—and ignore our own crimes.

American artists want to raise their voices against the hundreds of *Guernicas* and Oradours which are taking place in Vietnam. We cannot remain silent in the face of Mylai.

Art Workers' Coalition's press release
of the open letter to Pablo Picasso to request
removal of *Guernica*, March 12, 1970

We are asking your help. Tell the directors and trustees of The Museum of Modern Art in New York that *Guernica* cannot remain on public view there as long as American troops are committing genocide in Vietnam. Renew the outcry of *Guernica* by telling those who remain silent in the face of Mylai that you remove from them the moral trust as guardians of your painting.

American artists and art students will miss *Guernica* but will also know that by removing it you are bringing back to life the message you gave three decades ago.

Enclosed is a list of those who have signed.

March 11, 1970

U.S. artists and writers signatures to the open letter
to Pablo Picasso received to date:

Virginia Admiral	Allen Churchill	Lou Gilbert
Abe Ajay	Minna Citron	Lloyd Glasson
Bill Alpert	Shirley Clarke	Noah Goldowsky
Emile de Antonio	Harold Cohen	Leon Golub
Benjamin Appel	George Constant	Paul Good
Elise Asher	Martin Craig	Mitch Goodman
Irene Astrahan	M. Jean Craig	Joseph M. Gordon
Richard Avedon	Allan D'Arcangelo	Jean Gould
Jane Barker	Ossie Davis	Lawrence Grauman, Jr.
Bill Barnell	Salvatore Del Deo	Antonio Gronowicz
Rudolf Baranik	Barbara Deming	Carol Grosberg
Robert H. Barlow	David Diao	Alexander Grosi
Jose Bartoli	Joseph DiGiorgio	Chaim Gross
Gregory Battcock	Patricia de Gogorza	Renee Gross
Dan Bauch	Vincent D. Prima	Robert Gwathmey
Jack Beal	Jose de Rivera	Thomas Hannan
Sondra Beal	Terry Dintenfass	Al Hansen
Carleton Beals	Robert Disch	Hananiah Harari
Wolfgang Behl	Alexander Dobkin	James Harvey
Richard Bellamy	Katherine Dobkin	Gerald Hayes
Lynda Benglis	Frazer Dougherty	Kay Harris
Ben Bennis	Thomas Downing	Deborah Hay
Leah Bennis	Rosalyn Drexler	Joseph Heller
Bill Berkson	Loretta Dunkelman	Ouida Helm
Alan Bermowitz	Joe Early	Jon Hendricks
Donald Bernshouse	Margaret L. Eberbach	Nat Hentoff
Robert Bly	Ira Einhorn	Robert Henry
Jean Boudin	Sylvette Engel	James Leo Herlihy
Hans Van de Bovenkamp	Mary Elting	Miguel Herrera
Kay Boyle	Beverly Eschenburg	Dick Higgins
Louise Bourgeois	John Evans	Lawrence Hill
David Bradshaw	Carl Fernbach-Flarsheim	Alexander Himenko
Jane Braswell	Tully Filmus	Joseph Hirsch
Bruce Brown	Larry Fink	Gavin Hockney
Peter Briggs	Franklin Folsom	Marla Hoffman
Jo Butler	Hollis Frampton	Arthur Hughes
Paul Cadmus	Antonio Frasconi	Robert Huot
Charles Cajori	Anne Fremantle	Les T. Hurwitz
Hayden Carruth	Paul Frazier	Ward Jackson
Norman Carton	Howard Fussiner	Paul Jacobs
Rosemarie Castoro	James Gahagan	Poppy Johnson
Joseph Chaikin	Maxwell Geismar	Donald Judd
Betty Chamberlain	Jan Gelb	Mervin Jules
Herman Cherry	Peter Gessner	Gary L. Jurysta
Rachel Chodorov	Ruth Gikow	Reuben Kadish

Stephen Kaltenbach
Bernard Kassoy
Hortense Kassoy
Alex Katz
Beth Katz
Jon Katz
Jane A. Kaufman
Irving Kaufman
Klaus Kertess
Alan Kessler
Galway Kinnell
Karl Knaths
Alison Knowles
Philip Koch
Kiki Kokelnik
Hans Koningsberger
Constance Kosuda
Joseph Kosuth
Max Kozloff
Michael Lacroix
Jacob Landau
Denise Levertov
Jack Levine
Les Levine
Naomi Levine
Norman Lewis
Iris Lezak
Mon Levenson
Lucy R. Lippard
Andre Lord-Wood
Walter Lowenfels
Boris Lurie
Conrad Lynn
Judith Mage
Norman Mailer
Saul Maloof
Robert Mangold
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GUERRILLA ART ACTION IN FRONT
OF *GUERNICA* ON JANUARY 3, 1970

OBJECTIVES

To hold, in front of Picasso's painting *Guernica*, a memorial service for dead babies murdered at Songmy and all Songmys, the service to be conducted by a priest or a member of the clergy. This included the placing of flowers and wreaths in front of the painting and the participation of a live baby, symbolic of all babies.

DESCRIPTION

Just before 1 pm Saturday January 3, 1970, performers, witnesses and members of G.A.A.G., D.I.A.S., and A.W.C. infiltrated the Museum of Modern Art of New York, gathering on the third floor in front of Picasso's *Guernica*.

Some artists had smuggled wreaths and flowers in. At 1 p.m., members of the Guerrilla Art Action Group quietly went up to the painting, *Guernica*, and placed four wreaths against the wall underneath the painting. At this moment, Joyce Kozloff, carrying her 8-month-old-baby, Nikolas, sat on the floor in front of the wreaths. Father Stephen Garmey came forward and began reading a memorial service for dead babies (see text which follows).

During the reading, a guard who was standing next to the painting came up to Mrs. Kozloff and the baby Nikolas, and told her she and the baby could not remain on the floor. The mother continued being busy with the baby. After continuous prodding by the guard, who finally put his hand on Mrs. Kozloff's arm, she picked up the baby and stood quietly in front of the painting during the remainder of the service.

When father Garmey had finished his readings a number of people, including children, came forward and placed flowers and wreaths under the painting. Throughout the Service for Dead Babies, people remained quiet and reverent.

Joyce Kozloff is an artist. Steve Garmey, an Episcopalian minister, was at the time a chaplain at Columbia University of New York.

SERVICE READ AND PREPARED BY FATHER STEPHEN GARMY

Jesus called them unto him and said, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God.

(Prayer Book P. 338)

There was a little boy walking toward us in a daze. He'd been shot in the arm and leg. He wasn't crying or making any noise. A G.I. knelt down next to him and fired three shots into the child. The first shot knocked him back, the second shot lifted him into the air. The third shot put him down and the body fluids came out. The G.I. just simply got up and walked away.

(*Life* Dec. 5, 1969)

The Lord Himself is thy keeper; the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; so that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea, it is even He that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.

(PS. 121:5)

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

(Matt. 18)

There was a small boy about three or four years old clutching his wounded arm with his other hand while blood trickled between his fingers. He just stood there with big eyes staring around like he didn't understand. Then the radio operator put a burst of M-16 fire into him

(*Life* Dec. 5, 1969)

The Lord Himself is thy keeper... (see above)

Then Herod, when he saw he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying, in Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

(Matt. 2)

Just outside the village there was this big pile of bodies. This really tiny kid/he only had a shirt on/nothing else/he came over to the pile and held the hand of one of the dead. One of the G.I.'s dropped into a kneeling position and killed him with a single shot. (*Life* Dec. 5, 1969)

The Lord Himself is thy keeper... (see above)

We have breathed the grits of it in, all our lives,
Our lungs are pocked with it,
The mucous membrane of our dreams
Coated with it, the imagination
Filmed over with the gray filth of it:

The knowledge that humankind,
Delicate man, whose flesh
Responds to a caress, whose eyes
Are flowers that perceive the stars,

Whose music excels the music of birds,
Whose laughter matches the laughter of dogs,
Whose understanding manifests designs
Fairer than the spider's most intricate web,

Still turns without surprise, with mere regret
To turn scheduled breaking open of breasts whose milk
Runs out over the entrails of still alive babies,
Transformation of witnessing eyes to pulp-fragments,
Implosion of skinned penises into carcass-gulleys.

(Denise Levertov)

Lord have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy.

GUERRILLA ART GROUP

JON HENDRICKS

POPPY JOHNSON

JEAN TOCHE

January 3, 1970: Virginia Toche's name should have also appeared as a signator of the action.

BE CAREFUL WITH *GUERNICA!*
(PICASSO BETRAYED)

José Bergamín

"I bring a bomb with me," the poet Juan Larrea said when he came to Madrid after his long exile. And it was his wonderful book on Picasso's *Guernica*. A bomb that did not explode, and was not *exploded* or exploited either, fortunately for Larrea.

We know that Picasso's *Guernica* is an explosive and exploitable painting. That there is an extremely powerful charge of explosive violence in its terrifying tragic expression; that it carries a rage, a fury, that is so Spanish, so of the people, that, as Malraux said, no other painting can compare; not even, I venture, some of Goya's works.

I say that *Guernica* is not only explosive but also exploitable to refer, with this term, to the fact that it has been subject to commercial and political exploitation, not just explosion. It is curious, the effective relationship between these two divergent and corresponding terms: explosion and exploitation. The commercial, rather than political, exploitation of *Guernica* at the museum in New York where it was on loan for many years is so well known that I do not need to go into it here. But now it appears to be coming here, at last, to continue to be exploited, above all politically, by those who are bringing it. And not just exploited, but exploded first, in prudent prevention, so that it will not explode of its own accord. You can never be too careful.

Quite recently, in a piece entitled "Señales de alarma" (Warning Signs), I wrote:

If Picasso's *Guernica* were to come to Spain now, his wishes would not just be disregarded, they would be betrayed, and

this would be an affront to his memory. Worse and more grievous: the affront extends to the Spanish people; to all the peoples of Spain, whose anger, rage, and *pitiful force* exploded in this painting. It extends to all of us who will see it arrive ridiculously caged, like Don Quixote returning to his village, by barbers, priests, and arrogant students, supposed tamers afraid of its fury, of its fierce, tragic accusation; of its truth; of its powerful scream. As Lope de Vega might say, "the truth tends to scream from silent paintings." More dangerously now, when this scream is the scream of the blood from the wound opened accusingly before those who spilt it and now receive the painting in order to stifle its scream; silencing it so that it will not echo through all of Spain; and above all, so that it will not be heard in the historical *Guernica*, from where Picasso tore his painting.

Because Picasso's famous *Guernica* is a historical painting in the same sense as Goya's *Los fusilamientos de la Moncloa* (The Third of May 1808), Velázquez's *La rendición de Breda* (The Surrender of Breda), and many others. They differ in the motives that inspired them: in the cases of *Guernica* and *Los fusilamientos de la Moncloa*, we are terrifyingly moved by the powerful and violent expression of the tragic incidents that gave rise to them.

Remember that the plan is to uproot this tragic, still-living painting by Picasso, to separate it from its historical roots, from its horrifying source, in order to put out its flame, to silence it, so it will not be seen or heard for what it is: first and

foremost, a terrible accusatory testimony. They want to defuse its violent rage, its explosive, generating fury, to separate it from itself, illusorily, in an aesthetic asepsis, reducing it to a false timelessness, a mere inoffensive “work of art,” stowed away in any Spanish museum that will imprison it. To humiliate it, crushing it under the sheeplike false piety of thousands of spectators who will come without eyes to see it, without ears to hear its silent scream. As though it were still in New York. Worse still, because here it would gradually fall apart in the hands of its careless custodians, of its indifferent, forgetful guards, by dint of being civilized guards.

I have often thought back to that memorable scene when Picasso, before our very eyes, tried to color his canvas. Because, he said, it was not painted, it was more like an etching, an engraving, a lithograph, without color. Placing colored paper over the figures, he was

quickly persuaded that this falsified it; it disguised its truth, harlequinizing it. And he desisted. *Guernica* is indeed, as its author thought, an enlarged, enormous lithograph, and this only deepens and strengthens the “marvelous violence” of its truth. A violence that is pictorial, poetic, and creative, because it truly expresses and sublimates the living reality of its fiction. Like the lithographs in the *Sueño y mentira de Franco* (Dream and Lie of Franco) series, which were inseparable from *Guernica* in Picasso’s creating mind. I think that these lithographs should also come to Spain now, if *Guernica* does, to complete and corroborate it and to emphasize it all the more. They should be added to the gracious, though misguided, “donation” of the terrifying *Guernica* to the Spanish monarchical state by Picasso’s legal (juridically legitimate) heirs. And they should come together, prisoners in the same “cultural” cage protecting them from the law of terrorism.

THE SCANDAL OF *GUERNICA*

José Bergamín

No. *Guernica* has not returned to Spain; it has come for the first time. It has not returned because it could not return, having never been here. It gives that impression because of its similarity to other returns organized by Franco's regime, with a deceptive political significance, a misleading semblance of recovery. The returns—involuntary, of course—of the mummified corpses of certain illustrious Spaniards who had not chosen to return when they were alive. I am thinking of Manuel de Falla and Juan Ramón Jiménez, universal Andalusians like Pablo Picasso. Some of Picasso's friends think, believe, that he would not have wanted or allowed *Guernica* to come to Spain as it has. Because we also think and believe that *Guernica* is still alive even though Picasso is dead.

These other dead men (Manuel de Falla and Juan Ramón Jiménez, and even Ramón Gómez de la Serna, who, as he was dying, also chose not to come back altogether) did not require, for the macabre, pompous funerals organized on their return, the kind of terrifying, sinister political-security apparatus that has just been so outrageously squandered on the arrival of *Guernica*. Those desecrated bodies were not dangerous. There were no security concerns over the possibility of their being alive or able to return to life. With *Guernica*, there were. Even though it has been irrevocably severed from the hand that created it, and from the will that moved that hand.

The danger that *Guernica* may be alive (or dead, but able to return to life) could be suspected and averted by emphasizing

it, and even provoking it. As has indeed been done under the pretext of protecting it, with an outrageous, spectacular display of terrifying force. A horrific exhibitionism that I have contemplated with stupefaction, if not fear.

I once said that if *Guernica* were to come to Spain now (a "now" long and difficult to secure by deceitful scheming), it would do so like Don Quixote returning to his village after his first adventures: in a cage. Symbolically incarcerated. And that it would arrive imprisoned, or in order to be imprisoned, by anti-Quixotic barbers, priests, and students. And so it has been. A spectacular, theatrical charade: so outrageously tragic-grotesque-caricaturesque in its exaggerated, misguided, colossal stupidity that it has paradoxically exposed their horrifying intention to turn it into an innocuous and entirely unthreatening artistic fossil. Because they do not seek to protect it from Spaniards (that would be unnecessary) but to protect Spaniards from its extremely dangerous, explosive reality.

They have not brought *Guernica* to Spain so that Spaniards can contemplate its dreadful and marvelous violence (its anger, its fury, its rage...) and hear its terrible truth; its frightful accusatory cry that is inextricable from the historical incident that prompted it and that it represents. On the contrary, their goal is to nullify, silence, and confuse it: to stifle its voice in a distant echo and its revelatory (apocalyptic-historical and prophetic) vision in a phantom, in a nonexistent shadow. In order to dissociate it, separate it, isolate it; to disarm it, stripping it of

its soul and its testimony: the unforgettable (or memorable) historical event that still throbs in it (in its intrahistorical “auguring bloody entrails,” as Unamuno would say, which are vital for feeling and understanding it). In order to dispossess it of itself, to uproot it, leaving it without sap or blood, like Spain itself, leaving it, as the great Rubén Darío would say, “sapped out, without but, / without soul, without life, without light, without Quixote, / without feet and without wings, without Sancho and without God.”¹ Or without all the demons it contains. Like the historical event and place that it perpetuates, reaffirming it in its visionary image. No, you hypocritical intriguers (anti-Quixotic philistines, pharisees, students, priests, barbers). No: *Guernica* is not yet a timeless “work of art” (perhaps it never will be). It is graffiti that is very much alive, on the “white wall of Spain,” as Federico García Lorca would

say. A popular poster, a “source of scandal.” *Guernica* can only be Guernica. Not only because it sprang from the blood of the heroic, suffering (then as now) Basque people, but because the tragic cry that was conveyed to us by Picasso’s genius still echoes in all of Spain’s dying towns.

Some jesting scoundrels have frivolously commented on the outrageous appearance and exploitation of *Guernica* protected by its see-through funerary urn, comparing it to a ballot box containing a single vote: Picasso’s. That is not true. What it contains is a stifled voice, gagged by those who have stolen and seized its cry of truth. As Lope de Vega might say, “the truth tends to scream from silent paintings.”

¹ Rubén Darío, *Songs of Life and Hope / Cantos de vida y esperanza*, trans. Will Derusha and Alberto Acereda (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 225.

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188-190, 206

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234, 236 (photos: Jan Van Raay)

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Centro de Arte Reina Sofía: 154

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San Francisco: 149

Stadt Köln-Rheinisches
Bildarchiv, Cologne: 219

Stedelijk Museum,
Amsterdam: 184

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in Fred Halstead, *Out Now!:
A Participant's Account of the
Movement in the United States
Against the Vietnam War*, New
York: Pathfinder, 1978: 239

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220, 223

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