

Pablo Picasso. I luoghi e i riti del mito/ Pablo Picasso. The places and rites of the myth

curated by Massimo Bignardi, Maria Lluïsa Borràs, Luigi Fiorletta
Historical structure of Santa Sofia - Salerno
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In the historical structure of Santa Sofia in Salerno the exhibition "Pablo Picasso. I luoghi e i riti del mito/Pablo Picasso. The places and rites of the myth" continues until 13 March.

"Salerno is the first stop of this important exhibition that later will arrive at Como, Valencia, Malaga", says the mayor of Salerno Mario De Biase. "Culture becomes more and more a daily need, an inherent fact of the city, of which the recent prestigious solo exhibitions of Caravaggio, Mirò and Warhol are testimonials". The exhibition is promoted by the Council of Salerno, with the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic and the patronage of the Campania Region, the Province of Salerno, the 'Chamber of Commerce, Manufacturing, Craftsmanship and Agriculture' of Salerno, the Superintendence of the Archeological Heritage of the Provinces of Salerno, Avellino, Benevento and the Sichelgaita Foundation.

The exhibition has been made thanks to the contribution and the loans of many important museums, such as the Picasso Museum of Barcelona and of Antibes / Es Baluard, Contemporary Art Museum of Palma de Mallorca / Centre Pompidou and National Museum of Modern Art of Paris / Picasso Foundation of Malaga / Bancaja Foundation of Valencia / National Archeological Museum of Paestum, and of French, Italian and Spanish private collectors.

On display there are about 300 works, with paintings, drawings, ceramics, incisions and photographs by great artists, such as Capa, Cartier-Bresson, List, Burri, Newman and Mili. It is a thread that connects imaginary dots on Picasso's Mediterranean: from the early paintings made in Malaga and Barcelona to the later ones, at the beginning of the 1900s, to some drawings - like the "Saltimbanco/Saltimbanque", 1923 - made under the influence of the "Italian journey" of 1917, to the paintings of Antibes soon after the end of the second World War, to a wide range of ceramics made in Vallauris from 1947 to 1969.

The exhibition goes through some of the moments that characterized the career of this great artist of the 20th Century: figures and themes linked by a *fil rouge/red thread* strongly influenced by the vividness of the Mediterranean sea. According to the idea of the curators Massimo Bignardi, Maria Lluïsa Borràs and Luigi Fiorletta, the exhibition develops within a subtle relationship between history and contemporaneity, among the signs of the Greek civilization, the main essence of the Mediterranean imaginative basis, and the powers that lit the creativity of the main interpreter of "modernism".

The novelty of this exhibition is represented by the early oil paintings: they are "scoutings" of the artist's gaze within the space of mankind, in the time of daily life, we encounter a repertoire of images that he makes his own. On display there are famous landscape paintings: among these, "Marina di Alicante/Seascape from Alicante" of 1895, "Giardino/Garden" and "Paesaggio urbano/Urban Landscape" both of 1896 from the Picasso Museum of Barcelona, never before exhibited in Italy, "Veduta delle terrazze e della chiesa di Santa Maria del Pi/View from the terraces and the Church of Saint Mary of Pi", Barcelona, of 1902, previously in the collection of Jaime Sabartés, his faithful secretary; works made during the years of study at the Academy, "Bambino nudo/Naked child" of 1896 and "Torso di adolescente/Bust of a teenager" of 1897; portraits, such as that of Tía Pepa of 1895, Manuele Pallarés of 1897, a naked Casagemas of 1902; indoors, among which there are "La finestra chiusa/Closed window" of 1899, and "Scena di bordello/Scene from a brothel" of 1900. A section of the exhibition is dedicated to the *rite* perceived as an elaboration of the symbol, but also of the artifice, from the magic of the face, which is that strength that finds in the art of "bullfighting"

the perfect key to reach deeply into Picasso's imaginary world. Bullfighting is seen as the rite and liturgy of sacrifice: as scene, show, drama and inebriation, which excited the artist since he was a kid. Tauromachy, intentionally placed at the beginning of the exhibition by the curators, hosts both the series of incisions by Picasso in 1957 and the incisions by Goya. Picasso's ones are the illustrations for the classic manual by José Delgado, known as Pepe Illo, "La Tauromaquia o arte de torear/Tauromachy or the art of bullfighting", published by Editorial Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, in 1959, while those by Goya represent a rare re-release from the collection of the Caja de Ahorros de la Inmaculada de Saragozza. These are two viewpoints to the "rite", placed in relation with a series of photographs of a bullfight by Francis Català-Roca of the 1940s.

The exhibition itinerary ends with the famous "Suite Vollard", presented in Italy for the first time in its entirety: it is the moment that identifies the link to the classic myth or, even better, with the renewed interest for the "classic", which is an important bond for Picasso. The "Suite Vollard" gathers 100 incisions made from 1930 to 1937, from which emerges the premise of a design, imaginative proof of a mythological awesomeness, especially in those at the very beginning of the 1930s. The great series of incisions, a galvanic repertoire of classic iconographies, is placed in comparison with some artifacts of the Greek culture, such as vases and kraters from the National Archeological Museum of Paestum, as well as from other archeological areas of the Campania Region, within a project of strong imaginative impact, curated through the scientific support of the Superintendence for the Archeological Heritage of the Provinces of Salerno, Avellino and Benevento. The aim is to build a spelling book of the narrative forms, the imaginative figures, of a tale which crosses the pages of the same story. As José Luis Olivas Martínez, president of the Bancaja Foundation of Valencia states, "the 'Suite Vollard' follows the guideline of the influence which the Mediterranean area exerted on Picasso's life. And Bancaja, taking this collection to Europe and Latin America, takes pride in offering his co-operation to an expository project of international interest".

A catalogue completes the exhibition, with a Foreword by Mario De Biase, Mayor of Salerno, introductory essays by Massimo Bignardi, Maria Lluïsa Borràs, Luigi Fiorletta, and historical-critic texts by Joan Gardy Artigas Enrico Crispolti, Domenico De Masi, Giovanni Guardia, Daniela Iorio, Maria Teresa Ocaña, Josep Palau i Fabre, Giuliana Tocco, André Verdet. Biography and bibliography by Marco Alfano.

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