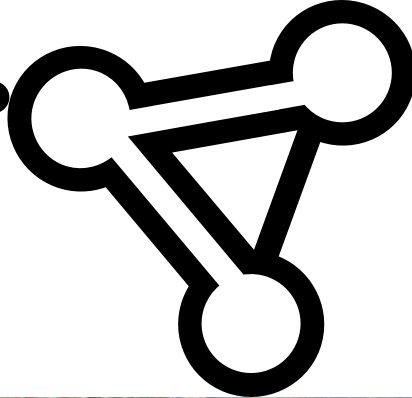


eac.



PICASSO-
MÉDITERRANÉE
2017-2019

Espace de l'Art Concret
Centre d'art contemporain
Donation Albers-Honegger
Château de Mouans
06370 Mouans-Sartoux
espacedelartconcret.fr



Pablo Picasso
& la Donation Albers-Honegger
Picasso on every level!

Exhibition 08.07 → 07.10.2018

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Donation Albers-Honegger

Curators : Alexandra Deslys et Claire Spada

The eac. continues its project of reinterpreting its collection with a summer exhibition in 2018 that presents a dialogue between the Donation Albers-Honegger with a selection of works by Picasso.

In the arts, the twentieth century was above all marked by a transformation of plastic language and the questioning of figuration.

This century, which regards itself as scientific and mathematic, re-examines the sensitive approach to the world.

The subject disappears when faced with the autonomy of the work, which therefore opens creation up to new territories. The Albers-Honegger collection offers a broad panorama of this very particular trend that emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century: abstraction, whose emergence was promoted through Picasso's participation in cubism. A new look at reality is possible.

The exhibition opens with a documentation and archive room which reveals the desire for some artists in the collection to reach out to the Spanish artist by letter or to honor him through literature.

Artistes : Bernard Aubertin, Joseph Beuys, Max Bill, Walter Bodmer, Brassai, Daniel Buren, Marcelle Cahn, César, Christo, Sonia Delaunay, David Douglas Duncan, Otto Freundlich, Augusto Giacometti, Paul Guillaume, Gottfried Honegger, Raphaël Julliard, Yves Klein, Imi Knoebel, František

Kupka, Le Corbusier, Renée Lévi, Tatiana Loguine, Manfred Mohr, François Morellet, Aurelie Nemours, Meret Oppenheim, Pablo Picasso, Sean Scully, George Sugarman, Cédric Teisseire, Théo Van Doesburg, Georges Vantongerloo, Claude Viallat, André Villers

in front page

Pablo Picasso, *L'Arbre*, 1907, Paris

MP21, Musée national Picasso-Paris

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Looking at reality • rooms 5 to 8

This first part focuses on the birth of abstraction through different artistic approaches conducted in Europe since the beginning of the twentieth century.

At that time, a number of artists chose to move away from traditional representation (imitation, perspective) in order to look at the world differently and offer a new interpretation.

The observation of nature, an interest in non-Western cultures such as African art (room 5) or more spiritual aspirations were very often at the origin of these innovative approaches.

Augusto Giacometti's ornamental studies (Room 5) and Frantisek Kupka's compositions exploring the plant and celestial worlds (Rooms 5 and 6) are examples of this early research that would lead to abstraction.

Picasso also played an important role in this approach. The painting *L'Arbre* (room 5) shows how cubism breaks free from the object's shape and appearance by a faceted bursting of the represented elements and a geometric interpretation of the forms.



André Villers
Les yeux de Picasso, 1956

MP1987-1, Musée national Picasso-Paris
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At the same time, artists like Georges Vantongerloo were doing similar research. In the study *Sans titre*, 1921 (room 6), the artist used one of his figurative sculptures as a starting point which he expressed in the form of an elementary geometry.

Later, in the 1950s, Gottfried Honegger collected abstract motifs from nature that were revealed by advances made in scientific imagery. Viewed in isolation, these motifs (room 6) became the starting point for abstract compositions where memories of the natural world and geometric constructions join together. The decomposition of objects and space led Picasso to express reality in the form of a grid as illustrated in the drawing *Maisons et palmier* (room 7).

Later, artists such as Aurelie Nemours and François Morellet (Room 7) explored this game of verticals and horizontals to make a system of autonomous composition.

The body or the human figure are also themes that are very present in the collection. Aurelie Nemours' engraved woods (rooms 5 and 8) show powerful figures where formal simplification and a search for rhythm recall Picasso's cubist compositions and the Spanish painter's attraction to African art.

The work *Maria* (Room 8), from a series of portraits by Imi Knoebel, echos Picasso's *Etude de tête* presented in the same room. Despite the reduction of forms and architectural composition in these two works, it is the memory of the human figure which is pursued.



Gottfried Honegger
Tête, 1939

Collection de l'artiste, Zurich
© Peter Schaelchli, Zurich

Taking from reality • rooms 9 to 12

Even though he came close to abstraction in his compositions from 1909-1910 (see *Maison et palmiers*, room 7), Picasso refused to commit to this approach. He chose to preserve a link with reality. In the beginning of synthetic cubism in 1912, Picasso introduced glued paper thus initiating the act of taking from reality.

Based on this notion, the exhibition raises the importance of action in creation and the life force that often presides over it. room 9 focuses on this "instrument" that represents the hand and the almost divinatory aspect that can be associated with it as well as on the vital energy that often presides over creation (Bernard Aubertin, Yves Klein, Claude Viallat).

Picasso's creative force led him to constantly experiment with materials and techniques without any hierarchy. He opened the way to the practice of collage and assemblage, redefined sculptural and pictorial space

and made the work a place to experiment with metamorphosis. The *Buste de femme* (room 10) is an example of an assemblage in which all of his creative audacity is revealed.

The Surrealists claim this act of taking from reality by introducing an unconscious and dreamlike energy by associating objects that belong to different realities, such as Meret Oppenheim with *Fleur Blue-may-Ode* (room 11). The New Realists abandon any descriptive approach, using industrialized objects as well as the waste from consumer society as seen with *Les Compressions* by César or Christo's packaged polyethylene magazine (room 11).

Claude Viallat's hoops are an example of what the Support-Surface movement contributed to assemblage. *Hommage à Picasso* (room 11) is situated between the object and the canvas.



César
Compression, 1981

Donation Albers-Honegger en 2001
Inv. FNAC 02-1178
Centre national des arts plastiques,
en dépôt à l'Espace de l'Art Concret
© SBJ / Adagp, Paris 2018

By choosing to introduce a piece of reality into the work (cut paper, cardboard, cutlery, hoops...), the artists modify the conception of the work of art. It is no longer a question of representing things as accurately as possible, but of using all available materials to create new forms.

The question then arises of the very subject of painting: should the work remain figurative or can it explore other fields?

Artists of abstraction are therefore freed from the figurative reference to make the work itself the only subject of the study. The surface, the material, the frame, the wall and the exhibition space are the new areas explored (room 12). Color and the free plan are at the heart of Renée Levi's pictorial approach, as shown with *Barney IV*. With his work *Saw City Destroyed ame*, Cédric Teisseire uses the physical laws of gravity to leave the illusionist world of images and to question the materialism of painting.

René Levi
***Barney IV*, 1998**

Donation Albers-Honegger en 2003/2004
Inv. : FNAC 03-1151 Centre national des arts plastiques
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Escape • rooms 13 to 14

Even if Picasso refused abstraction in his paintings and sculptures, he nevertheless seemed to confront it in the more intimate medium of the illustrated book, often a source of graphic experiences.

In *Le Chef d'oeuvre inconnu*¹ (room 13), Picasso's drawings build on Balzac's thoughts on creation, namely the gap between vision and the representation of reality. For this book, Picasso used drawings made in 1924 during a stay in Juan-les-Pins that consisted of constellations of dots, sometimes evoking figures or musical instruments. Coming close to abstraction, Picasso makes Balzac's artistic questions his own. The graphic elements that make up Picasso's constellations become a writing in the space of a sheet of paper.

Walter Bodmer's Drahtbild (room 13)

-metal constructions- explore three-dimensional writing in space where emptiness becomes substance.

This reflection on writing extends into the works of Gottfried Honegger and Manfred Mohr who explored the new and infinite possibilities of computer programming as early as the 1960s.

Room 14 continues this reflection on writing by addressing the question of the symbol. In the illustration for Pierre Reverdy's *Le chant des morts*², Picasso made three symbols on the pages of the book (the line, the curve, the circle or the dot) and used a single color, a blood red. Without any descriptive function, the red, thick irregular lines are placed in and around the thin, black, even handwriting.

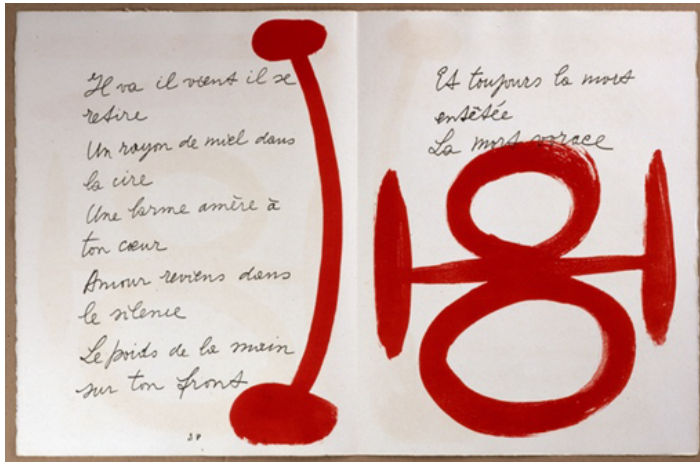
Pierre Reverdy, *Le chant des morts* Lithographies de Pablo Picasso, Paris, Tériade, 1948

N° inv. : 2003.9.37 / Legs de Maurice Jardot en 2003

LaM, Lille Métropole musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut, Villeneuve d'Ascq

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© Philip Bernard



¹ *The Chef d'oeuvre inconnu* is a work by Honoré de Balzac from 1831. The writer discusses the work of an artist who feeds on what was produced before him, and must progress by going much further than the simple representation of reality. In 1927, Ambroise Vollard asks Picasso to illustrate a special reissue of this short story.

² *The Chant des morts* brings together 43 very dark poems, written by Pierre Reverdy during the war. It was published in 1948, with 125 lithographs by Pablo Picasso, published by Tériade.

The multiple variations and combinations of these symbols resemble an alphabet whose code we do not have and constitute a kind of minimal, abstract, plastic writing, with strong visual power at the service of the human drama evoked by the text. Picasso's graphic symbols are echoed in the visual symbols of Claude Viallat and Daniel Buren.

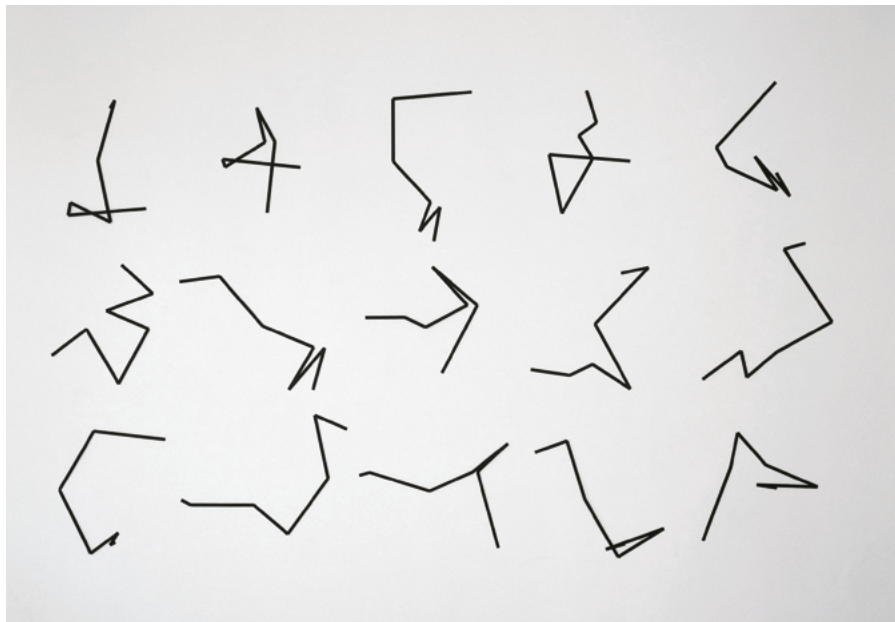
A genuine punctuation, the "Viallat form" in Untitled structures the space of the work. It organizes the surface, flows through it,

paces it and unifies it while emphasizing the diversity of the planes.

The "visual tool" put in place by Buren in 1965, (white stripes 8.7 cm wide, alternating with others of the same width, black or colored) is also a symbol that repeats itself, becoming a genuine motif that punctuates the space.

Manfred Mohr
P-499-A, 1993

Donation Albers-Honegger en 2001
Inv. : FNAC 02-1289 Centre national des arts plastiques
En dépôt à l'Espace de l'Art Concret
© François Fernandez



Getting involved • level -1

If the paths taken by Picasso and the artists in the collection often seem to cross, there is one point where they all come together: art is not considered a pleasure but a tool of reflection on the world.

The first room in this section focuses on the support that Picasso and the artists in the collection have always given to oppressed populations and examines their political commitment.

In *Songes et mensonges de Franco*, 1937 (room 1), Picasso gives a personal response to Franco's rebels in Spain. After the war, in 1949, Picasso's dove was chosen for the poster of the World Movement for Peace by the Communist Party which he had been a member of since 1944.

This defense of peace and the denunciation of injustices are also revealed through the works of Gottfried Honegger when he paid tribute in 1995 to Nigerian environmentalist writer and activist Ken Saro Wiwa who was executed by the

military junta a year earlier. In 1989, Aurelie Nemours participated in the publication of the portfolio *Hommage à Otto Freundlich*, a German Jewish painter executed in 1943.

The collective and civic vision inherent in the philosophy of concrete art essentially establishes links with the other arts such as architecture and the question of public space, which is addressed in room 2.

In France, Le Corbusier's architectural modernism in the 1940s echoed Picasso's desires in the visual arts. The painter and the architect both looked to break the conventional visions of the arts and architecture that had been maintained over several centuries. Le Corbusier built the Cité Radieuse in Marseille and took Picasso on a tour of the site in 1949.

Other artists in the collection have also sought to place their artistic practice in public spaces. Both Gottfried Honegger and Aurelie Nemours have responded to several public commissions.

Gottfried Honegger ***hommage à Ken Saro Wiwa, 1996***

Donation Albers-Honegger en 2002
Inv. : FNAC 02-1421 Centre national des arts plastiques
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With the concept of social sculpture, Joseph Beuys extended the production space of the work to society as a whole. The performance *7000 Eichen* which he created for Kassel Dokumenta 7 in 1982 was a real act of commitment to raise awareness about ecological and environmental issues.

Room 3 deals more precisely with the research carried out throughout the twentieth century to promote the modernist visions of art more broadly within society. Refusing the hierarchy of the arts is an essential consideration for the artists of concrete art who pay particular attention to everyday objects and their mode of production.

Sonia Delaunay is interested in integrating her artistic research into everyday objects, particularly clothing. The illustrated plates in the book *Sonia Delaunay, her paintings, her objects, her simultaneous fabrics* offer a new environment for the people of today which concerns fashion and advertising as well as theater and poetry.

Picasso fully embraced this desire of promotion in 1947 when he began to produce ceramics which he freely presented as editions to make his work accessible to a wider audience.

Picasso's collaboration with the journal *Le Patriote*³ in the early 1950s was another example of his desire to reconcile artistic and popular practices.

By producing the journal's front page for the Carnival of Nice (a reproduction of the front page made in 1951 can be found in this room), Picasso put his work at the service of a major popular cultural event.

To ensure the promotion of their ideas in society, artists of concrete art have often worked in design, a field that is particularly conducive to publishing and reproduction. Max Bill, for example, designed the *Ulmer Hocker* in 1955 for students at the Ulm School of Design, emphasizing functionality and stability. This stool is easily transportable and can become a coffee table or storage shelf.



Joseph Beuys
***7000 Eichen*, 1984**

Donation Albers-Honegger en 2001
Inv. : FNAC 02.1127 Centre national des arts plastiques
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More recently, Raphaël Julliard has broadened this reflection on artistic practice and reproduction. His *1000 tableaux chinois*, 2005 push the limits of serial production and the problem of uniqueness of a work of art.

By creating this original dialogue between the Albers-Honegger collection and works by Pablo Picasso, the exhibition offers a journey through the great artistic revolutions of the twentieth century.

The research initiated by the main actors of these avant-gardes have produced a multitude of developments which still feed present-day creation.

In connection with the exhibition, the eac. offers a cultural program for all audiences: workshops for children, teenagers and adults, yoga sessions in the exhibition rooms, guided tours for adults and parents with children.

Max Bill
Ulmer Hocker, 1993

Donation Albers-Honegger en 2003
Inv. : FNAC 03-004 Centre national des arts plastiques
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³ *The Patriote* was created as an underground journal during the Second World War. It became official after the Liberation and was led by Communist deputy Virgile Barel. This journal was called *Le Patriote Niçois*¹. In 1945, it became *Patriote de Nice et du Sud-Est* and remained a daily until 1967. A new journal was published on October 03, 2013 under the name *Patriote Côte d'Azur*.

eac. Around exhibitions

In connection with the exhibition, the eac. offers a cultural program for all audiences: workshops for children, teenagers and adults, yoga sessions in the exhibition rooms, guided tours for adults and parents with children.

For more information on these programs : www.espacedelartconcret.fr



July 1 – 31 August

open everyday
11 am – 7 pm

September 1 – June 30

wednesday – sunday
1 pm – 6 pm

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