



Julio González

Pablo Picasso

the dematerialisation of sculpture

Front cover

Pablo Picasso

Figure: project for a monument

to Guillaume Apollinaire

Paris, autumn 1928

Musée National Picasso-Paris

Wire and sheet metal

59.5 × 13 × 32 cm

© Sucesión Pablo Picasso. VEGAP, Madrid, 2022.

Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national
Picasso-Paris) / Adrien Didierjean

Julio González

Large Mother and Child, 1934

Iron and stone

40.6 × 13.1 × 23.5 cm

Tate

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In the years between 1928 and 1932 Julio González and Pablo Picasso collaborated on the project for the creation of a funerary monument to Guillaume Apollinaire, who had died in 1918. Picasso received the commission from a committee that included the poet's widow Jacqueline Apollinaire and the writers André Billy and André Salmon. This collaborative project, which Picasso did not embark on until nearly ten years after the death of his friend and which never materialised in the envisaged form, has traditionally been seen as the origin of a new type of sculptural expression, namely iron sculpture. This unprecedented manner of working metal would subsequently play a key role in mid-20th-century art and would come to be considered the sculptural equivalent of Abstract Expressionism and Informalism, in other words representing the birth of abstract sculpture. The second art-historical opinion regarding this episode is that it can be limited to the small group of works produced during the course of the collaboration between Picasso and González – eleven sculptures, seven of them small-format, preliminary studies – created in around fifteen to twenty sessions over the course of four years. *Julio González, Pablo Picasso and the dematerialisation of sculpture*, now presented by Fundación MAPFRE, reveals that the question is considerably more complex, and the exhibition's approach allows for a better understanding of the relationship between the two artists while analysing issues that are fundamental for a comprehension of modern sculpture.



Pablo Picasso
Woman in the Garden, Paris, spring 1930
Iron, soldered and painted white
206 × 117 × 85 cm
Musée National Picasso-Paris
© Sucesión Pablo Picasso. VEGAP, Madrid, 2022
Foto © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) /
Adrien Didierjean / Mathieu Rabeau

Julio González
Woman arranging her Hair I, 1931
Wrought and soldered iron
168.5 × 54 × 27 cm
Centre Pompidou. Musée National d'Art Moderne /
Centre de Création Industrielle, Paris
Photo © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais /
Philippe Migeat

As the exhibition's curator Tomás Llorens observed: "When studied at close hand, it is evident that the works arising from the collaboration between Picasso and González reflected the concerns of the time in which they were made rather than responding to any anticipatory intent." While these creations can in effect be located within the artistic and cultural context of their time and while they relate to the Cubism of artists working after Picasso as a response to the interest in transparency and dematerialisation also practised by Juan Gris, Henri Laurens, Jacques Lipchitz and Alexander Archipenko, it should also be remembered, according to Llorens, that a profound change in the attitude to the decorative arts had already emerged in *modernista* Barcelona of the fin-de-siècle. That viewpoint saw the decorative arts as comparable to the fine arts, resulting in a renaissance of the former and thus in the medium of wrought iron.

Picasso and González's careers were relatively different although culturally close. Friends from a very young age, both lived in the *modernista* Barcelona of the early 20th century, worked in Paris in the first three decades of the century and always remained in contact until González's death in 1942. This exhibition's analysis of their artistic collaboration takes those early years and shared artistic concerns into account, as well as the influence this collaboration had on their respective works. In the case of González the joint endeavour gave rise to a series of dematerialised sculptures, a creative direction which "allowed him to develop fantasy and imagination as key aspects of his personal aesthetic", in the words of Tomàs Llorens. For Picasso, it implied the chance to learn about the potential of wrought iron and of iron soldering while also leading to the creation of one of the most important sculptures of the 20th century: *Woman in the Garden*.

Julio González, Pablo Picasso and the dematerialisation of sculpture was the last major project undertaken by Tomàs Llorens: one of the most lucid and eminent of Spain's art historians, who died in June 2021. Jointly curated with his son Boye Llorens, this exhibition concludes a line of research to which he devoted a central part of his work throughout his career.

Rogi André
Julio González in his Arcueil studio
with "Woman with Mirror", c. 1937
Biblioteca i Centre de Documentació IVAM
Generalitat Valenciana, Fondo Julio González
Foto: Rogi André

Anonymous
Picasso before the sculpture "Woman in the Garden" during
the exhibition held at Galerie Georges Petit, Paris,
from 16 June to 30 July 1932
Musée national Picasso-Paris
© Sucesión Pablo Picasso. VEGAP, Madrid, 2022. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais
(Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Mathieu Rabeau



Curators

Tomàs Llorens Serra (†)

Boye Llorens Peters

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Dates

23 September 2022 to 8 January 2023

Opening times

Mondays (except public holidays):

2 pm to 8 pm

Tuesdays to Saturdays: 11 am to 8 pm

Sundays and public holidays: 11 am to 7 pm

Last entry 30 minutes before closing time.

Visitors must leave the galleries 10 minutes before closing

Ticket prices

Standard: 5 €

Reduced: 3 €

Free entry: Mondays (except public holidays)

Guided tours

7 €

Times and booking:

<https://www.fundacionmapfre.org/arte-y-cultura/>

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Audio guide

Spanish and English: 4 €



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#ExpoGonzálezPicasso

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Exhibition organized by Fundación MAPFRE with the collaboration of the Musée national Picasso-Paris, the Spanish National Commission for the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Death of Spanish Artist Pablo Picasso, and the González Administration

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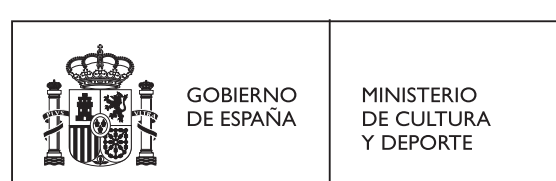
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