19 December 2009

PRESS RELEASE
GAGOSIAN GALLERY
3 MERLIN STREET
ATHENS 10671
GALLERY HOURS:
Tue – Sat: 11:00am– 6:00pm

PABLO PICASSO: *Experiments in Linogravure*
Thursday, 28 January – Saturday, 1 May 2010

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of linocuts made by Pablo Picasso between 1959 and 1963.

Throughout his life, Picasso restlessly explored the medium of the print, employing many techniques including lithography, etching, drypoint, and monotype. By the late 1950s he was spending most of his time in the south of France and the distance between him and his Parisian printers became increasingly difficult for smooth production. Increasingly he turned his attention to lino-cutting, a very direct way of working whereby a design is cut into a sheet of linoleum using a knife, chisel, or gouge. His first lino-cut *Toros en Vallauris* (1954) was a simple black-and-white print, but by 1959 he was using the technique as a complete means of expression, becoming totally absorbed in the process and his daily collaboration with the local printer Hidalgo Arnera.

The time-consuming production of Picasso’s first traditional color linocut *The Portrait of a Girl after Cranach* (1958) prompted him to develop a new, simpler approach to the technique. Rather than using a separate linoleum block for each color, he began re-cutting the same block. He would progressively cut and re-print, depending on the number of colors he wanted in each linocut. Between 1959 and 1962 Picasso made about 100 linocuts using this new approach. Subjects ranged from Jacqueline Roque, his muse, wife, and constant companion in the gaily colored *Portrait de Jacqueline au chapeau de paille multicolore* to old master portraits such as the series *Portrait d’homme à la fraise (Variation d’après el Greco)* in which Picasso pays homage to El Greco, retaining the original composition of his predecessor’s self-portrait while variously accentuating facial features and clothes to assert his own presence in the work.

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In 1963, he briefly experimented with another unconventional linocut technique, typified by *L’Etreinte 1 (Embrace)*, which depicts a man and woman locked in tumultuous embrace. This technique involved printing a linocut in cream ink onto white paper, and then painting the same sheet of paper with black China ink. The paper was then rinsed in the shower, which Picasso claimed to have enjoyed doing himself. The black ink was absorbed into the unprinted areas, but otherwise repelled by the greasy cream ink. This technique produced an image which looks as if it has been painted as much as printed.


For further inquiries please contact the gallery at athens@gagosian.com or at +30.210.36.40.215.