

GAGOSIAN

December 15, 2017



PICASSO AND MAYA

FATHER AND DAUGHTER
CURATED BY DIANA WIDMAIER
PICASSO

EXTENDED!
Through Saturday, February 24, 2018

4 rue de Ponthieu
75008 Paris

These pictures are unbelievably true to life. Everything's here: my little girl's clothes, my hair, even my toys and yet...
—Maya Ruiz-Picasso, 1996

Gagosian is pleased to present “Picasso and Maya: Father and Daughter,” the first exhibition dedicated to the artist’s diverse portrayals of his eldest daughter, Maya.

Maria de la Concepción, known as Maya, was born on September 5, 1935. During the first ten years of her life she was a constant subject in her father’s drawings and paintings, who observed with fascination and tenderness her physical and mental development. Her mother, Marie-Thérèse Walter, was the artist’s most iconic model. After meeting in 1927 at the Galeries Lafayette in Paris, Picasso and Marie-Thérèse began a long-lasting love affair, resulting in Picasso’s first daughter Maya. Following Maya’s birth, Picasso chronicled intimate details of their private life together *en famille*, exploring the archetypal theme of maternity. Maya’s portraits reflect the great joy that she brought into the artist's life, even in the looming shadow of World War II. Out of all of Picasso’s children Maya was most frequently depicted—a muse in the image of her mother.

This exhibition presents major works from the 1930s to the 1950s, including a collection of intimate portraits of Maya and Marie-Thérèse, sculptures and little paper cuts-out fashioned especially for his daughter. Like many of his favorite portraits of family members, most of the pieces remained in Picasso's personal collection until his death in 1973. Alongside the

artist's works, a selection of archival material—unpublished photographs, films, letters, and poems—will explore the relationship between father and daughter, while providing an invaluable testimony of this new-found happiness.

This collection of works and archival documents retraces the childhood and youth of Maya, spanning her birth to her coming of age. In the first months after Maya was born, Picasso captured moments of intimacy between a young mother and her daughter (*Marie-Thérèse allaitant Maya*, 1935; *Maya à dix mois avec Marie-Thérèse*, 1936), secretly living in an apartment rented for them by Picasso at 44 rue de La Boétie, only steps away from his own at number 23. Numerous drawings of Maya, lovingly composed, present realistic portraits in a classic style, similar to those of Marie-Thérèse realized by the artist during this time (*Maya à l'âge de trois mois*, 1935). His paintings of Maya stray from this academic style, reflecting rather a complex artistic analysis by the artist culminating in a Cubism that can only be qualified as “psychological”. In a vibrant series of portraits realized in 1938, Picasso reveals the energy and curiosity that animated his young daughter. We see Maya embracing her doll against her cheek (*Maya à la poupée et au cheval*, 1938) in a posture that recalls the Virgin and Child, or in the midst of playing with a boat (*Maya au tablier rouge*, 1938; *La fille de l'artiste à deux ans et demi avec un bateau (Maya)*, 1938). At the beginning of the 1950s, Maya's doll-faced visage transformed into the delicate profile of a young woman in a series of pencil drawings (*Maya, profil gauche*, 1951).

The relationship between father and daughter is one formed by a unique bond, as can be seen through Maya's active role during Henri-Georges Clouzot's filming of *Le Mystère Picasso* in 1955 at the Victorine Studios in Nice (photographs by Edward Quinn).

Maya's daughter, art historian Diana Widmaier Picasso, has curated the show. She is a Picasso sculpture expert and has organized several exhibitions including “Picasso's Picassos: A Selection from the Collection of Maya Ruiz-Picasso” (Gagosian, New York, 2016), “Picasso.mania” (Grand Palais, Paris, 2015) and “Picasso and Marie-Thérèse: L'amour fou” (Gagosian, New York, 2011). In 2005, she wrote a book about Picasso's erotic works called *Picasso: “Art Can Only Be Erotic”* (Munich, Prestel).

A fully illustrated catalogue, with an essay by Elizabeth Cowling, Professor Emeritus of the History of Art at the University of Edinburgh, will be produced for the exhibition.

“Picasso: By the Book” will run concurrently with the exhibition, in the Paris gallery. Curated by Douglas Flamm, Gagosian's rare-book specialist, this bookstore will be devoted solely to Picasso. Included will be an in-depth selection of significant Picasso publications, including Christian Zervos's thirty-three volume catalogue raisonné published by *Cahiers d'Art*, which remains the closest thing to a comprehensive cataloguing of Picasso's vast oeuvre for specialists and scholars. Other selections include a complete original set of the periodical *Minotaure*, published by Editions Skira 1933–39, Jean Cocteau's *Picasso de 1916 à 1961* (a special edition with two extra suites of prints), and Picasso's 1964 illustrated book, *Le Carmen des Carmen*, which includes three aquatints, one drypoint etching, and a lithograph. Rare monographs and noteworthy catalogues such as a 1932 exhibition at Galerie Georges Petit, and Picasso's last exhibition during his lifetime, in 1973 at the Palais des Papes, Avignon, will be available for sale, alongside contemporaneous art journals in which Picasso published his work, including early issues of *Verve*, and *Cahiers d'Art*. The shop will also feature prints and ceramics by Picasso as well as vintage exhibition posters and photographs of the artist by Arnold Newman, Lucien Clergue, and Edward Quinn. The store will be open within gallery hours, Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–7pm. For inquiries about available publications please contact Douglas Flamm at dflamm@gagosian.com.

Image: Pablo Picasso, *Portrait de Maya de profil*, 1943, graphite, chalk, and pastel on vellum paper from spiral notebook, 14 5/8 × 12 1/4 inches (37 × 31 cm) © Succession Picasso 2017

For further inquiries please contact the gallery at paris@gagosian.com or at +33.1.75.00.05.92. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

Please join the conversation with Gagosian on Twitter (@GagosianParis), Facebook (@GagosianGallery), Google+ (@+Gagosian), Instagram (@GagosianGallery), Tumblr (@GagosianGallery), and Artsy (@Gagosian-Gallery) via the hashtags #PabloPicasso #PicassoandMaya #PicassoetMaya #FatherandDaughter #PeretFille #GagosianParis.

PRESS ENQUIRIES

Karla Otto | T. +33.1.42.61.34.36 | www.karlaotto.com
Contact: Michel Hakimian, michel.hakimian@karlotto.com
Contact: Ottavia Palomba, ottavia.palomba@karlaotto.com

Claudine Colin Communication | T. +33.1.42.72.60.01 | www.claudinecolin.com
Contact: Dereen O'Sullivan, dereen@claudinecolin.com

Gagosian | T. +33.1.75.00.05.92
Contact: paris@gagosian.com