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**Diana Widmaier-Picasso on Paintings by Her Grandfather in a New Show**  
*Two works rarely in the public eye are part of a new show that opens this month*

DIANA WIDMAIER-PICASSO



*FAMILY RESEMBLANCE | Clockwise from left: Pablo Picasso's Marie-Thérèse in a Red Beret (1937), a portrait of his partner Marie-Thérèse Walter; Marie-Thérèse and Picasso's daughter, Maya Widmaier-Picasso and granddaughter, Diana Widmaier-Picasso; Picasso's 1938 portrait of his daughter, Maya With Doll and Horse; Picasso, Maya and their dog Riki on the balcony of their Paris apartment, August 1944; Picasso's The Kiss (1931); Maya with Marie-Thérèse, circa 1944. PHOTO: © 2016 ESTATE OF PABLO PICASSO/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK. COURTESY OF GAGOSIAN; BERTRAND RINDOFF, COURTESY OF GAGOSIAN; © 2016 ESTATE OF PABLO PICASSO/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK. COURTESY OF GAGOSIAN; © ARCHIVES MAYA WIDMAIER PICASSO; © 2016 ESTATE OF PABLO PICASSO/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK. COURTESY OF GAGOSIAN; © ARCHIVES MAYA WIDMAIER PICASSO*

**THIS MONTH**, a show organized under the stewardship of French art historian Diana Widmaier-Picasso, the granddaughter of Pablo Picasso, opens in New York at Gagosian's Madison Avenue gallery. It features 22 paintings and one sculpture, some of which have never been exhibited in the U.S., from the personal collection of Diana's mother, Maya Widmaier-Picasso. The second of the artist's four children, Maya, now 81, was his daughter with Marie-Thérèse Walter, whom he met in 1927 when he was 45 and she was just 17. "This exhibition is very intimate," says Diana, 42. "It's about Picasso's Picasso, the Picassos from Picasso." Of particular note are two works, *Maya With Doll and Horse* (1938), a portrait of Maya as a young girl, and *Portrait of Jacqueline* (1961), a painting of Picasso's second wife, Jacqueline Roque; both were stolen from Diana's Paris home one night in 2007. (The heist occurred while Diana

*and her mother were there, fast asleep.) The Gagosian show presents an opportunity to examine a group of Picassos, dating from 1931 to 1972, that are rarely in the public eye. “When I was growing up, I didn’t necessarily realize the importance of Picasso’s work,” says Diana. “It’s very modern—it gives you an aesthetic for the rest of your life.” —Thessaly La Force*

**MY MOTHER, MAYA**, was born in Paris in 1935, meaning she went through the war. It was a difficult time. She also lived through Paris’s liberation, so there was joy, too. She has many memories of visiting her father in the studio and seeing him working on *Guernica*—she witnessed a lot. She saw Picasso as someone full of passion. She realized that the attraction between my grandmother and my grandfather was very strong.

Maya was his first daughter. He met her mother, Marie-Thérèse, in 1927, when he was married to Olga [Khokhlova]. What’s amazing is that a few years before they met, he was already drawing a woman who looked just like Marie-Thérèse. He spotted her not only because she was so different from him—she was blonde, with blue eyes and pale skin—but he [felt he was] looking at the Greek goddess he had been drawing. It was almost like fate. She was very young to absorb all of this. Of course, being painted by Picasso when you are 17 is going to have a huge impact on your life. She always said he was very kind and very protective.

Maya was unexpected, which was the beginning of a huge crisis in Picasso’s life. He was still married to Olga but he wanted a divorce. [He and Khokhlova could not agree on the terms and remained married until her death in 1955.] During the period he was with Marie-Thérèse, he chose colors like red, purple, yellow—everything that is sun and passion and love. In *Maya With Doll and Horse*, you sense that this joy has been changed both by the war and the fact that he had met Dora Maar, so he’s now spending his life between two women. In the painting, the little girl is playing with a doll, but the doll looks like a little boy, who might almost be Picasso. It’s a very powerful and intriguing picture. He probably drew my mother more than any of his other children.

I was there in the house when both *Maya With Doll and Horse* and *Portrait of Jacqueline* were stolen. I was scared that the thieves might destroy the paintings for fear of getting caught. But six months later the paintings were recovered. People focus on the name of the artist and the value of the work, but the truth is that it was more than that. It was more like someone stealing your grandmother’s ring. It hurts your heart. I have good friends who are also descendants of famous artists, like Calder’s grandson and Miró’s grandson, and they understood it’s traumatic—someone has taken something that is part of your identity, that is part of your heritage.