Picasso and Spanish Art History (Berlin, 19 Oct 23)

Berlin, Bode-Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Oct 19, 2023
Deadline: Aug 31, 2023

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On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the death of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), the Bode-Museum has invited Museum Berggruen to collaborate in a special temporary presentation of the Spanish collections: A selection of Picasso works from Museum Berggruen will be shown alongside Spanish sculptures and paintings from the 14th to 18th centuries. The resulting dialogues highlight the continuities and ruptures of Picasso's own artistic practice in relation to Spanish art history.

In connection with this exhibition, both institutions are jointly organizing an open study day with panels and a keynote with the working title "Picasso as Masquerade" by Professor Estrella de Diego (Universidad Complutense Madrid and Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando) on Thursday, 19 October 2023. The study day will be conducted in-person only and will be held at the Bode-Museum in Berlin. The languages of the event will be Spanish and English.

We are inviting university and museum scholars as well as independent researchers to participate in the panels with a 20 minutes presentation on the topic of Picasso and Spanish art history.

More specifically, we encourage contributions to or related to the following subjects:
- iconographical takeovers in Picasso's works from predecessor works from Spanish art history
- heritage and tradition in Spanish and Catalan Modernism or in Picasso's oeuvre
- representations of gender in Picasso's work: continuity or break with Spanish tradition?
- historiography and reception of Picasso and Modernism in Spain during Francoism and in democracy
- national identity and exile (El Greco, Goya, Picasso et al.)
- Picasso polyglot: which language(s) to use when talking about Picasso, his identities and his work?

Please send an abstract of maximum 250 words / 1.500 characters (including spaces) and a short CV to l.matyok-engel@smb.spk-berlin.de until 31 August 2023.

Travel and accommodation costs will be partially covered for speakers.

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Keynote "Picasso as Masquerade" by Professor Estrella de Diego (Universidad Complutense Madrid and Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando)

In 1929, Joan Riviere published an article crucial to the very idea of womanliness as an "essential"

concept. Her text, “Womanliness as Masquerade”, has been often quoted during the past thirty years in discussions about what we would call “liquid identities” today. This article will be the theoretical starting point for the discussing about Picasso fifty years after his death.

In fact, Picasso – a Spanish exile first for artistic reasons and later for political reasons – has often posed a question about his very “nationality”. Is he global due to his “genius” quality? Is he French? Is he Spanish? Is he both? Or is he simply a political “construction”, a vernacular desire, a representative of Spanishness as masquerade, following Riviere discussion. In fact, all his biographers – from Gertrude Stein to John Berger – emphasize Picasso’s Spanishness in an often quite close to cliché way. Even though, at times traditional Art History (re)presents him as a French artist, due to the development of his career in that country. Yet Picasso never loses a certain “exoticism” related to his Spanish origins. He is always related to bullfight, to Spanish old masters, to Spanish passion –whatever ever that may mean.

Now the open question is to what extent Picasso contributed to the “invention” of Picasso as masquerade. To what extent Picasso – an artist of perfectly designed choreographies of Picasso himself – contributed to those slippery territories for strategical reasons, in order to stress the “exoticism” which history of culture required from him in order to narrate his life and production. In other words, which language(s) – understanding the concept in a very broad sense – should be used to address Picasso and his work in 2023?

The study day is made possible by the Embassy of Spain in Germany and the Instituto Cervantes Berlin.

The study day and the exhibition are part of “Picasso Celebration 1973–2023: 50 exhibitions and events to celebrate Picasso.”

Reference:

CFP: Picasso and Spanish Art History (Berlin, 19 Oct 23). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 7, 2023 (accessed Nov 17, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/39484>.