

THE MENIL COLLECTION © 2016 ESTATE OF PABLO PICASSO / A/R/S, NYC.

# Modern-Master Feast: A PICASSO FALL IN TEXAS

A **BLOCKBUSTER** AT THE MENIL COLLECTION AND A MUSEUM-CALIBER SURVEY AT McCLAIN GALLERY FEATURE NEARLY 150 WORKS ON PAPER — DRAWINGS, PRINTS, AND COLLAGES — BY THE **20TH CENTURY'S** MOST CELEBRATED PAINTER. HOUSTON BECOMES PICASSO CENTRAL THIS MONTH. CATHERINE D. ANSPON INVESTIGATES.

**P**ablo Picasso, a titan of modern art, is often considered the definitive talent of the first half of the 20th century. In recent years, Texas has been destination Picasso, starting with the blockbuster “Picasso Black and White,” which touched down at Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in 2012; Houston was the only tour stop outside Manhattan for the Guggenheim-organized exhibition. This month, the brilliant curator of “Black and White,” Carmen Giménez, mounts a follow-up: The Menil Collection’s “Picasso The Line,” an in-depth look into the larder of art history, specifically the maestro’s drawings.

Giménez has been curator at the Guggenheim since 1989 and was founding director of the Museo Picasso Málaga and first director of Madrid’s Reina Sofía. For the Menil, she places Picasso’s drawings in an art historical context, then zeroes in on the line: “This exhibition will explore how Picasso followed up on the groundbreaking lesson of Ingres, trying to resolve the three dimensions of form with merely a linear arrangement, thus relinquishing perspective,” she says. “The

first exhibition to fully examine Picasso’s line drawings, it will convey the critical position that these powerful works hold within his oeuvre.” The exhibition also foreshadows the opening of the Menil Drawing Institute (MDI), America’s first freestanding space designed for the presentation and study of modern and contemporary drawings. (ETA on the MDI, designed by L.A.-based boutique architecture firm Johnston Marklee, is Fall 2017.)

“Picasso The Line” spans 1901/1902, when the Spanish painter was settling into Paris, through 1970, at the end of his life. Many works never before exhibited in Amer-

COLLECTION MUSEE NATIONAL PICASSO, PARIS © MENIL COLLECTION OF PABLO PICASSO / A/R/S, NYC. PHOTO: GREGG DE PUECO / RESOURCE, NYC.



European collections, augmented by U.S. hold-

ings including the Menil's trove of 14 drawings.

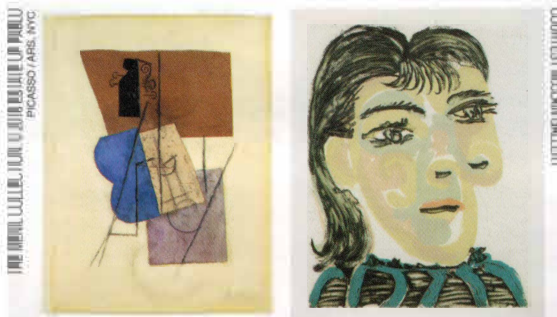
Meanwhile, McClain Gallery mounts "Imagining Backwards: Seven Decades of Picasso Master Prints." The show explores printmaking techniques ranging from color aquatint and linocuts to lithographs, drypoint, engraving, and etching — media that became inventive and technically challenging in Picasso's hands — through 50-plus examples spanning 1905 to 1970. MFAH director Gary Tinterow penned the foreword for the McClain show catalog. One of the foremost Picasso scholars of his generation, he spent nearly 30 years at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as curator of modern European paintings. Tinterow's essay plunges the viewer into the painter's kingdom: "Indeed, in times of distress, Picasso worked through his demons by working on prints and drawings."

The McClain catalog's liner notes come from another luminary: Charles Stuckey, who has held plum curatorial posts at the Kimbell Art Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the National Gallery of Art. In 2012, Stuckey co-authored the volume *Picasso and Françoise Gilot: Paris-Vallauris, 1943–1953*, along with fellow authors John Richardson, the world's Picasso authority; Françoise Gilot, former Picasso partner and muse; and Michael Cary of Gagosian Gallery.

Stuckey's prose enlivens works from periods that traditionally have not been considered the master's strongest suits but are being reprised today. Here's Stuckey's insider take on muse Dora Maar (shown in a 1939 aquatint on this page, *Tete de Femme II*): "A left-wing activist and participant in the surrealist group, Maar lived around the corner from Picasso, whom she famously intrigued by quickly stabbing a knife between her fingers at a cafe table for effect. She immediately became the principal woman in his life and art until the advent of Françoise Gilot." The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, directs a program at the house of Dora Maar in the South of France; it's used as a residency for visiting artists and writers. *For more Picasso, visit [papercitymag.com](http://papercitymag.com).*

**"PICASSO THE LINE" AT THE MENIL COLLECTION, SEPTEMBER 16 – JANUARY 8; MENIL.ORG**

**"IMAGINING BACKWARDS: SEVEN DECADES OF PICASSO MASTER PRINTS" AT McCLAIN GALLERY, SEPTEMBER 13 – OCTOBER 29; MCCLAINGALLERY.COM**



Top: Pablo Picasso's *Bottle and Glass on a Table (Bouteille et verre sur une table)*, 1912, at The Menil Collection

Above, from left:  
Pablo Picasso's *Violin on a Table (Violon sur une table)*, 1912, at The Menil Collection

Pablo Picasso's *Tete de Femme IV, Portrait de Dora Maar*, 1939 (20 April), at McClain Gallery

Left: Pablo Picasso's *Self-Portrait (Autoportrait)*, 1918, at The Menil Collection