

## **PICASSO: THE ARTIST AND HIS MUSES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This exhibition features Pablo Ruiz y Picasso's work through an examination of the significant intimate relationships that were essential to his evolution as an artist. The six women in his life—Fernande Olivier (1881–1966), Olga Khokhlova (1891–1955), Marie-Thérèse Walter (1909–1977), Dora Maar (1907–1997), Françoise Gilot (b. 1921) and Jacqueline Roque (1927–1986)—provided Picasso with fundamental inspiration and support over the course of his career.

The six sections of the exhibition trace Picasso's ongoing exploration of the female figure, which he presented through a vast range of media in diverse styles—from Cubism to classicism and realism to abstraction. The most significant exhibition of Picasso's work held in Western Canada, *Picasso: The Artist and His Muses* brings together the largest group of Picasso's paintings ever seen in Vancouver. The artworks have been assembled from major collections around the world, and reveal the artist's extraordinary visual and compositional dexterity and innovation. Picasso, who lived from 1881 to 1973, continues to surprise and challenge viewers, even more than 40 years after his death.

Picasso depicted the women in his life obsessively, and these works reflect his feelings towards them that contributed profoundly to his artistic direction. The paintings, sculptures and works on paper also reveal the changing circumstances of his life: the beginnings of his family, parenthood and the shifts in his relationships, as well as the cultural, social and political contexts of the time. Inevitably, an element of autobiography is introduced into the exhibition, as it looks at the personalities of these very different women who shaped his stylistic innovations, which were among the most important in 20th-century art.

The concept of the muse—a person or personified force who is the source of inspiration for an artist—was central to the organization of this exhibition. These six women were all, without doubt, muses for Picasso's art, as well as creative individuals in their own right. Their pivotal role in shaping his artistic evolution is evident in the rich stylistic variation of his works and in the overall power of his oeuvre. Picasso stretched the limits of art like no other artist before him, and these women were as much a part of his imaginative process as he was.

The exhibition was created by Art Centre Basel, curated by Katharina Beisiegel and produced in collaboration with the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Exhibition design concept by [Measured](#)