ALMINE RECH

Pablo Picasso
Still Life

May 1 — Jul 18, 2025 | New York, Upper East Side

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Over forty examples from Picasso's private collection of his own work—including several never before seen by the public—are brought together for the first time in a selective survey of his still life production between 1908 and 1962. The exhibition opens with a group of paintings and drawings that demonstrate the crucial role of still life in the birth and evolution of cubism between 1908 and 1914, centered around the motifs that preoccupied Picasso during this period: the guitar, the bottle and drinking glass, and the table. The extraordinary stylistic diversity and experimentation that characterize the artist's oeuvre overall is demonstrated by flower, fruit, and fish compositions that alternate between classical and conceptual modes of representation.

Picasso's lifelong friend and secretary, Jaime Sabartés, described his still lifes as "a kind of narrative of the intimate life of the man in terms of familiar objects, of what he ate and drank, and loved to keep before his eyes and could not part with." A special feature of the exhibition presents precious pieces of furniture that the artist preserved throughout his life. These include a tasseled guéridon from his Paris studio on Boulevard de Clichy, one of the cradles of cubism, together with paintings that reflect its unique form and decorative details, as well as an embroidered chair and painted screen from the apartments that Picasso shared with his first wife, Olga Khokhlova, during the late teens and early 1920s. These rarely exhibited objects from the artist's estate, seen beside some of the still lifes they inspired, bring us to the intersection of his domestic and creative worlds.

Picasso's obsession with still life during the turbulent years of the Spanish Civil War and Second World War is exemplified by a series of surrealist paintings and prints, distinguished by both their biomorphic symbolism and their autobiographical references to the artist's personal and political affairs. A final passage of the exhibition focuses on the theme of darkness and light that connects much of Picasso's still life work from its earliest to its latest manifestations.

As the artist once revealed to the dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, "I have never painted an object without an unconfessed sentimental attachment and never marked simply by an aesthetic imperative." 'Picasso: Still Life' explores the passionate sentiments and the aesthetic impulses behind his ever-changing approach to this time-honored genre.

— Ross Finocchio & Delphine Huisinga, Founders of Castille Art Research