ALMINE RECH

Picasso: unique etchings from the Crommelynck studio

Dec 21, 2023 — Feb 3, 2024 | Gstaad

Following the opening of two new spaces in Tribeca, NY and Monaco this year, the Gstaad location continues Almine Rech international expansion.

For its inaugural exhibition 'Picasso: Unique etchings from the Crommelynck studio', Almine Rech Gstaad will showcase a rare selection of «Bon à Tirer» engravings by Pablo Picasso created while working with the renowned Crommelynck printers. This exhibition offers a unique insight into Picasso's mastery of the printmaking medium.

“Picasso began making engravings in 1899 when he was 18 years old. [...] Between 1960 and 1971, the artist continued to produce engravings using copper plates. The «Bon à Tirer» is the test print chosen by the artist from four tests directly from the engraved copper plate. It is the single, valid print which the entire numbered printing is based on and which took place after acierage. Acierage gives the copper plate the hardness of steel, which allows for 50 to 250 printings. This could not be done with an untreated copper plate, because copper is a soft metal that would have been crushed as more prints were made, warping the artist’s incisions."

The close personal relationship between the printers and the artist was such that Picasso, delighted with a successful test print, would distinctly write «Bon à Tirer» in a magnificent handwriting, making the already unique BAT even more astonishing.

Picasso met the Crommelynck brothers when they were training at the Lacourière workshop from 1947 to 1956, and soon established a close relationship with them. Aldo and Piero Crommelynck opened their first workshop in Paris in 1956. A second one followed in Mougins in 1963 in order to continue working with the artist. They became Picasso's exclusive printers until his death in 1973.

— François Bellet, conservator at the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz Picasso
Roquebrune, September 2023

Pablo Picasso and Piero Crommelynck. Signing "Beau gentilhomme espagnol et femme à barbe". Mas Notre-Dame-de-Vie, Mougins 1969. Photo: Edward Quinn, © edwardquinn.com / © Succession Picasso 2023