

## Picasso: The Vollard Suite

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### Hood Museum of Art Revisits Influential Picasso Print Series alongside the Works That Inspired It



Recognized as one of the most innovative and influential artists of the twentieth century, Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) was at his most ferociously inventive between 1930 and 1937, when he created a dazzling series of etchings that are known today as the *Vollard Suite*. The Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, one of the few museums in the world to own the complete series, is delighted to present the entire *Vollard Suite* in the upstairs galleries from August 17 to December 20, 2013, with an opening celebration scheduled for Wednesday, October 2nd, at 5:30 P.M.

“The *Vollard Suite* etchings are among the most extraordinary prints ever created and reveal the Spanish artist’s mastery of the printmaking process,” explained Michael Taylor, the Director of the Hood Museum of Art. “The *Vollard Suite* functions as a visual diary of the artist’s creative thinking and preoccupations during a pivotal moment in his career. These works illustrate the two worlds to which Picasso owed allegiance at this time, namely the harmony and order of classical art and the surrealist world of dreams and the imagination.”

Named after Ambroise Vollard, the famed French art dealer who gave Picasso his first exhibition in Paris in 1901, these etchings enter into a fascinating dialogue with surrealism and the art of the past. The exhibition will showcase the one hundred prints that make up this celebrated edition, alongside works by Rembrandt and Goya that inspired Picasso during their making, including Goya’s magnificent, rarely seen series of four *Bulls of Bordeaux* prints.

The dominant motif of the *Vollard Suite* is the sculptor in his studio, a theme that had biographical overtones for the artist, who in 1932 established a sculpture workshop in the stables of the Château du Boisgeloup, situated about forty-five miles northwest of Paris. Many of these etchings were inspired by the sculptures he completed at his country house between 1932 and 1934, which present an idealized image of Picasso’s studio life. The artist appears in the guise of a classical hero—bearded, nude, and crowned with an ivy wreath—often accompanied by a beautiful young girl who resembles Picasso’s lover, Marie-Thérèse Walter, as they relax together and gaze at his recent sculptural creations, including a composite furniture-figure inspired by the surrealist assemblages of fellow Spanish artists Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró.

Another important theme is that of the Minotaur, the threatening half-man, half-bull from Greek mythology. The remarkable images of the Minotaur in the *Vollard Suite* build upon Picasso’s earlier iconography of the bullfight to create a rich, personal, and political allegory. The four prints representing a pitiful, sightless, and impotent Minotaur guided by a young girl holding

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flowers or a dove are the most anguished and moving works in the entire *Vollard Suite*. Redolent of tragedy and suffering, they were informed by the darkening political situation in Europe during the 1930s, as well as Picasso's fear of blindness, which haunted him from his earliest days as an artist. The exhibition will also include the final and most important state of Picasso's 1935 etching *Minotauremarchy*, on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which has long been regarded as the most important of all his graphic works and arguably the greatest print made in the twentieth century. In this remarkable work, Picasso portrayed, with great tenderness and empathy, the bison-headed creature as a helpless, blind figure who is being led by a young girl holding a candle. Picasso originally intended this print to be part of the *Vollard Suite*, but it was determined by Ambroise Vollard to be too large for the series.

At the same time as *Picasso: The Vollard Suite*, the Hood will also present the complementary exhibition *Cubism and Its Legacy*. In the first few decades of the twentieth century, avant-garde artists sought to challenge traditional notions about pictorial representation by creating art that responded to the rapidly changing modern world that surrounded them. The most far-reaching and radical of these artistic movements was cubism, developed between 1908 and 1914 by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Their artistic collaboration produced works that defied the Renaissance convention that painting should represent an illusionistic window into the world. Instead, cubism shattered preconceived notions about vision, asserted the flatness of the picture plane and the materiality of paint, and presented subjects from various perspectives and planes at the same time. *Cubism and Its Legacy*, drawn from the Hood Museum of Art's extensive collection of modern and contemporary art, presents the vast range of work made possible by the redefinition of art that followed cubism, starting with some of the earliest experimental works by Picasso and Braque themselves.

*Picasso: The Vollard Suite* was organized by the Hood Museum of Art and made possible by Claire Foerster and Daniel Bernstein, Dartmouth College Class of 1987, the Marie-Louise and Samuel R. Rosenthal Fund, the Ray Winfield Smith 1918 Fund, and the Bernard R. Siskind 1955 Fund. *Cubism and Its Legacy* was organized by the Hood Museum of Art and made possible by the Marie-Louise and Samuel R. Rosenthal Fund, the Ray Winfield Smith 1918 Fund, and the Bernard R. Siskind 1955 Fund.

### About the Hood Museum of Art

The mission of the Hood Museum of Art, as a teaching museum, is to create an ideal learning environment that fosters transformative encounters with works of art. This dynamic educational and cultural facility houses one of the oldest and largest college collections in the country, with more than 70,000 objects acquired since 1772. Among its most important works are six Assyrian stone reliefs that date from around 900 BCE. The collection also presents art from other ancient cultures, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Papua New Guinea, and many more regions of the world. The Hood seeks to inspire and educate through direct engagement with original works of art and offers access to the rich diversity of its collections through ongoing highlights displays, special exhibitions, an online collections database, and a wide array of programs and events.

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MUSEUM OF ART  
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### **About Dartmouth**

Founded in 1769, Dartmouth is a member of the Ivy League and consistently ranks among the world's greatest colleges and universities. Dartmouth has forged a singular identity for combining its deep commitment to outstanding undergraduate liberal arts and graduate and professional education with distinguished research and scholarship in the arts and sciences and its three leading professional schools—the Geisel School of Medicine, Thayer School of Engineering, and the Tuck School of Business.

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### **Image Caption**

Pablo Picasso, *Blind Minotaur Guided by a Young Girl through the Night* (*Minotaure aveugle guide par une fillette dans la nuit*), from the *Vollard Suite*, November 1934, etching and aquatint on Montval laid paper. Gift of Ellen and Wallace K. Harrison, Class of 1950H, in honor of Nelson A. Rockefeller, Class of 1930; PR.965.23.93. © 2013 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York