

PABLO PICASSO

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*'Trois Comédiens avec Buste de Marie-Thérèse'*  
*from the 'Suite Vollard'*  
*Drypoint, 1933*

## Pablo Picasso. 1881 -1973

The world's favourite artist is also the most collected. The market for works by Picasso is highly liquid, buoyant and can be extremely rewarding. His desire to push the boundaries of printmaking produced many of the world's most historically important and technically accomplished works.

Picasso's graphic oeuvre spans more than seven decades, from 1899 to 1972. His published prints total approximately 2000 different images pulled from metal, stone, wood, linoleum and celluloid. His unpublished prints, perhaps 200 more, have yet to be exactly counted.

Picasso's prints demonstrate his intuitive and characteristic ability to recognize and exploit the possibilities inherent in any medium in which he chose to work. Once he had mastered the traditional methods of a print medium, like etching on metal, Picasso usually experimented further, pursuing, for example, scarcely known intaglio techniques such as sugar-lift aquatint. The printed graphic work of Picasso shows a clearly defined succession of periods in which certain techniques predominated.

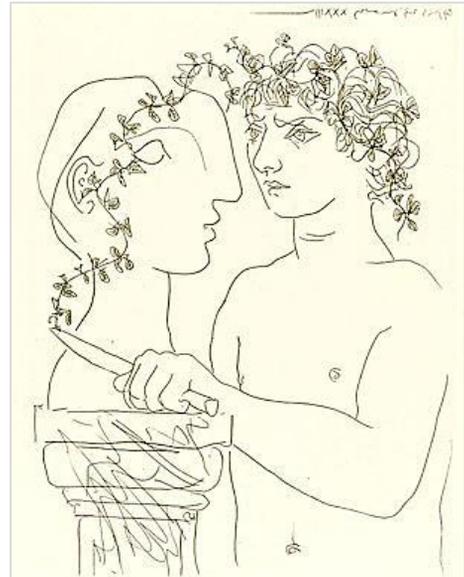
Picasso has astonished the ablest printmakers again and again. It is not only that he mastered the difficulties of new techniques with playful ease; he soon went on to obtain results that had hitherto been deemed impossible. A virtuoso craftsman in engraving, etching, lithography and linocut, he explored their secrets with patience and love and elicits from each medium the very subtlest effects the medium allows. It is hardly surprising that five, ten or even thirty states were sometimes necessary before a masterpiece emerged from his hands.

*Picasso*



The British Museum announced the major acquisition of a complete set of Picasso's Vollard Suite, which went on display at the Museum in the summer of 2012. The suite comprises 100 etchings produced by Picasso between 1930 and 1937 and is the most important cycle of etchings produced by arguably the 20th century's most important artist. This was the only complete Vollard Suite held by a public museum in the UK and only a handful of museums in the world are fortunate to hold a set. It is believed that this will be the first time a complete Vollard Suite has been shown in Britain in the past 50 years.

This landmark acquisition for the British Museum is made possible through the extraordinary generosity of the Hamish Parker Charitable Trust in memory of the donor's father, Major Horace Parker. This outstanding acquisition was exhibited from 3 May to 2 September 2012 in Room 90. The etchings show Picasso's developing interest in sculptural forms in the 1930s.



The predominant theme of the Vollard Suite is the Sculptor's Studio (46 etchings), which deals with Picasso's engagement with classical sculpture. The etchings reveal Picasso's neoclassicism of this period. At this point he was making sculpture at his new home and studio, the château Boisgeloup outside Paris. His model was his young lover Marie-Thérèse Walter who features in many of the etchings. They represent a dialogue alternating between the artist and his creation and between the artist and his model. Classical linearity and repose within the studio also alternate with darker, violent forces. The latter are represented by scenes of violation and by the Minotaur (15 etchings), the half-man, half-animal of classical myth which became central to Picasso's personal mythology. Picasso also tilts his cap to Rembrandt in a group of 4 etchings. The series concludes with three portraits of Vollard himself made in 1937.

Evident among all the prints in the Vollard Suite is a unity bound by the nod to neoclassicism, influenced by Picasso's earlier trips to art centres in Italy including Rome, Florence, Naples and Pompeii.

It was Roger Lacourière who was commissioned by Vollard to print the Picasso etching plates in 1939 although the etchings were not offered for sale until 1950. There were 313 etchings printed from each plate. On Montval paper were 260 copies watermarked either "Picasso" or "Vollard". There were also 50 copies printed on a Montval paper about 2" larger in both directions and those were watermarked "Papeterie Montgolfier à Montval". Finally, there were 3 signed copies on parchment, rarely found in the marketplace.

After World War II one of the worlds most important of Collectors Henry M Petiet, had Picasso sign a small number of sets of the Vollard Suite etchings, the rest of the suite remained unsigned.



Fuchs 10

'Trois Comédiens avec Buste de Marie-Thérèse' from the 'Suite Vollard'  
Drypoint, 1933  
Bloch 145; Baer 296 second state of two, II.B.c (of II.B.d); S.V. 77; HP 342

Signed in pencil.

An impression from the edition of 50, also called the deluxe edition.  
'342' in pencil lower left corner and '22' in lower right.

Watermark: Montgolfier.

Image Size : 27.8 x 18.4cm (10.9 x 7.2in)

Sheet Size : 50.1 x 38.5cm (19.7 x 15.2in)

***Provenance: Galerie Louise Leiris – carrying their inventory number on the back***