

Press Release

## **Picasso and Guernica. Genesis of a masterpiece. Against all wars**

**Nuoro, Museo MAN**

**18 November 2022 – 19 February 2023**

Opening: Friday, 18 November, 7 p.m.

**curated by Michele Tavola**

Coordination by Rita Moro and Myrtille Montaud

Video animation by Manuelle Mureddu

*Dora pro nobis* performance/reading with Federica Fracassi, cello Lamberto Curtoni, from the book *Malamore* by Concita De Gregorio

**Seventy years after the historic exhibition at the Palazzo Reale in Milan in 1953, the MAN in Nuoro pays tribute to a work that bears witness to an era, conveying a universal message that is still tragically relevant today. An ode against the horror of all wars.**

**The show also celebrates the first Picasso exhibition that saw the complete Vollard Suite series presented at the MAN in Nuoro twenty years ago, in collaboration with the Reina Sofía in Madrid, which is once again a partner in this important new project.**

From 23 September to 31 December 1953, *Guernica* was exhibited in the Sala delle Cariatidi at the Palazzo Reale in Milan, together with more than 300 other works by the Spanish master, forming the largest Picasso retrospective ever held in Italy. The exhibition later moved to Rome, but on a smaller scale and above all without *Guernica*, which has never again returned to Italy.

The Sala delle Cariatidi, which still bore signs of Second World War bombings when it hosted Picasso's masterpiece, thus amplifying the work's significance, also hosted other dramatic compositions that explicitly denounced the disasters of war, such as the *Massacre in Korea* and *The Charnel House*.



*Guernica* no longer travels today, never leaving Spain and its room at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. It will never again return to Paris, where it was created, commissioned by the Spanish Republican government for the 1937 Universal Exhibition, it will never again return to the MoMa in New York, where it spent much of its exile before returning to its homeland, and it will certainly never again return to Italy.

**Seventy years on from the historic exhibition at the Palazzo Reale in Milan**, the MAN in Nuoro is celebrating the time spent in Italy by *Guernica*, a work that is both symbolically and artistically fundamental for a generation of Italian artists, art critics and citizens.

The Nuoro tribute is divided into two main sections: *Guernica*'s echo in Picasso's artistic production and the story of the **genesis of the work through the visual narrative produced by Dora Maar**, a photographer and the Spanish artist's partner at the time.

**The first section** finds its main focus in the extraordinary diptych of engravings entitled *Sueño y mentira de Franco*, which acts as a graphic counterpart to the large painting. Picasso began engraving the first plate in January 1937 but soon abandoned the work. In May, just after the tragic bombing of the Basque town, he completed both matrices while he was working on the monumental canvas, using the same studies and ideas. However, it is by no means a smaller version of the painting, but an original invention in its own right, based on the same idea and the same creative impetus. A small but significant series of engravings, drawings and paintings would form around *Sueño y mentira de Franco*, either directly related to the development of *Guernica* or, because they were produced during the same period, closely recalling the style and themes of the famous painting.

**The second section of the exhibition** revolves around the extraordinary testimony of Dora Maar, who documented Picasso's work day by day with her photographs. She took a **series of shots that are both moving and fundamental to the philological reconstruction of *Guernica*'s creation**. Alongside the photographs, the exhibition will also feature Picasso's splendid engraving *Portrait de Dora Maar au chignon* produced in 1936, just a year after *Guernica*, and which in some ways echoes the synthetic style of *Guernica*. There will also be images taken by Mario Perroti during the Milan exhibition in 1953, in the touching venue of the Sala delle Cariatidi scarred by bombing raids, a tragic situation that convinced Picasso to exhibit his masterpiece in that setting so close to the meaning of the painting.

**Interlinea catalogue**, Italian-English, with texts by Michele Tavola, Gioxe De Micheli, Victoria Combalía and Jean-Louis Andral, and annotated bibliography on *Guernica* edited by Erica Rompani.

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Winter opening hours: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Summer opening hours: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

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