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| Picasso, Pablo (1881-1973) |
| *Painting as an Instrument for Attack and Defence against the Enemy* |
| Born in Malaga, it was in Barcelona that Picasso first identified himself as a subversive Modernist with a critical, contestatory and transgressive praxis exposing the savagery underlying civilization and the brutality of warfare alongside the paradoxical contradictions of modernity. Living in Paris from 1901, Picasso excoriated the deprivations of *La belle époque* by portraying the outcasts of Montmartre in his Blue period and circus performers in his Rose Period. Drawing upon African indigenous cultures, from 1906 he revealed how prostitutes from France's African colonies became ravaged with venereal diseases in his 1907 painting, *Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon.* Inspired by new scientific discoveries, sensory aesthetics and the detritus of everyday life, from 1908 he depicted bodies and objects in fragments seen, felt, heard, tasted and smelt from different positions over time producing, by 1912, Cubist Collages and Assemblages. Retreating into Ingreseque Neo-Classicism and Crystal Cubism after World War One, from 1927 his Cubistic fragments resurfaced into metamorphoses of the body during orgasmic ecstasy. To expose the barbarity of Fascism, particularly during the Spanish Civil War, Picasso produced *Minotauromachy* in 1935and, after Fascist bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in 1937, prepared his mural with that name. Despite risks to his life and artwork, Picasso refused to leave Paris during the Nazi Occupation. Long an Anarchist, Catalan nationalist and fervent Spanish Republican, Picasso joined the French Communist Party after the Liberation of Paris and remained a lifelong member. Intrepidly revealing the torture, mutilations and decimations of World War Two, especially in *The Charnel House,* Picasso exposed the chilling horrors committed during the Cold War, particularly the rape and execution of pregnant women and their children in *Massacre in Korea* and *Rape of the Sabine Women.* Continually producing peace posters and his Doves of Peace, particularly after the inaugural World Peace Conference in 1949, Picasso remained a deeply committed pacifist and political activist until his death in 1973. This is why it was not until civil liberties were restored to Spain eight years after his death – and six years after that of Franco – that Picasso’s *Guernica* was finally able to leave America for its rightful home. |
| **Introduction**  Born in Malaga, it was in Barcelona that Picasso first identified himself as a subversive Modernist with a critical, contestatory and transgressive praxis exposing the savagery underlying civilization alongside the paradoxical contradictions of modernity. Living in Paris from 1901, Picasso excoriated the deprivations of *La belle époque* by portraying the outcasts of Montmartre in his Blue period and circus performers in his Rose Period. Drawing upon African indigenous cultures, from 1906 he revealed how prostitutes from France's African colonies became ravaged with venereal diseases in his 1907 painting, *Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon.*  File: demoiselles.jpg  Figure 1Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Paris, June-July 1907, oil on canvas, 8 ft x 7 ft 8 in (243.9 x 233.7 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York, 333.1939, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest; © 2014 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artist  Source: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-Tvt1YhXNHGU/T7h8ZnPQ1_I/AAAAAAAABDQ/QrYtqT0_d6g/s1600/Pablo+Picasso,+Les+demoiselles+d'Avignon,+1907,+Huile,+243x233+cm,+N.-Y.+Moma.JPG>  Inspired by new scientific discoveries, sensory aesthetics and the detritus of everyday life, from 1908 he depicted bodies and objects in fragments seen, felt, heard, tasted and smelt from different positions over time producing, by 1912, Cubist Collages and Assemblages. Retreating into Ingreseque Neo-Classicism and Crystal Cubism after World War One, from 1927 his Cubistic fragments resurfaced into metamorphoses of the body during orgasmic ecstasy. To expose the barbarity of Fascism, particularly during the Spanish Civil War, in 1935 Picasso produced *Minotauromachy* and, after Fascist bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in 1937, prepared his mural with that name.  File: Guernica.jpg  Figure 2Pablo Picasso, Guernica, 1937, oil on canvas, 349 cm × 776 cm (137.4 × 305.5 in) Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.  Source: <http://yareah.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/guernica.jpg>  Refusing to leave Paris during Nazi Occupation, Picasso created symbols of torture, mutilation and death*.* After the liberation of Paris, Picasso joined the French Communist Party and began paintings of *The Charnel House (Le Charnier)* (1944-45)to expose where Fascist mass slaughters lay concealed. Creating a dove for the French Communist Party as an international symbol of peace, Picasso was horrified when the Korean War erupted, painting *Massacre in Korea (Massacre en Corée)* in 1951 and, following the Cuban missile crisis, *The Rape of the Sabines (L’enlèvement des Sabines)* in 1963 to expose how rape remained an undeclared weapon of warfare.  Through his Modernism, Picasso illuminated how modern life entailed reconciling peace with war, technologies of mass production with mass destruction, Communism with Fascism, Apollonian with Dionysian cultures, comedy with tragedy, sex with death, bestial monsters like the minotauromachy with tender lovers like Marie-Thérèse Walter. Creating forms that seem in states of constant metamorphoses, Picasso conveyed how the experience of modernity was perpetually fraught with bewildering contradictions, in a world spinning out of control with two world wars and a Cold War that seemed never-ending. His exposure of this experience was, as he indicated at poignant moments throughout his life, always a political act in which painting became an ‘instrument of war for attack and defence against the enemy’.  (Simone Téry, “Picasso n’est pas officier dans l’armée Française”, *Les Lettres françaises,* vol. V, iss. 48, 24 March 1945, p. 6, as trans. by Alfred H. Barr, *Picasso: Fifty Years of his Art,* New York: the Museum of Modern Art, 1946.) Anarchism, Calalan Nationalism and the Blue Period Catalan nationalism was at its peak when fourteen-year old Picasso moved with his family to the capital of the ancient province of Catalonia in 1895. Initially trained by his father, the painter and art teacher, Don José Ruiz y Blasco, at sixteen Picasso was enrolled at the Fernando Academy of Fine Art in Madrid but spent more time at The Prado studying Goya before returning to Barcelona in 1898. Absorbed in Anarchist daily newspapers, periodicals and art journals while frequenting *Els Quatre Gats*, Picasso's drawings and paintings of the oppressed, inspired by Isidre Nonell, were first published in *Joventut*. Consistent with Peter Kropotkin's Anarcho-Communist ‘propaganda of the deed’, he pictured social inequalities. Far from this concern abating on moving to Paris, it intensified.  To visit the 1900 Exposition Universelle where one of his paintings was on display, Picasso set off for Paris with his close friend Carlos Casagemas. Bowled over by the ‘modern art centre’, Picasso settled there in 1901, devoured Toulouse-Lautrec and Van Gogh and had his debut exhibition with Ambroise Vollard. (Fae Brauer, *Rivals and Conspirators: The Paris Salons and the Modern Art Centre* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, p. 247.) After the suicide of Casagemas, Picasso's joy turned to grief, his art appearing shrouded in melancholy. Filled with the blind, emaciated beggars, alcoholics, deranged neurasthenics and other outcasts of Montmartre enveloped by a mournful azure light, Picasso's Blue Period was what his friend Jaime Sarbartés calls ‘a testimony of conscience’. (Jaime Sabartés, *Picasso, Portraits et Souvenirs* (Paris: Louis Carré and Maximilien Vox, 1946). During this ‘golden age of venereal peril’, far from shying away from such polemical issues as the venereal disease of syphilis, suffered by Casagemas, Picasso negotiated with Saint-Lazare Prison Hospital to canvas its afflicted prostitutes and their babies that would be, following Albert Fournier's thesis, heredo-syphilitic. Rose Period, Tribal Art and *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* During his Rose period starting in 1905, Picasso explored ‘primitivism’ as a form of devolution from western civilization through animality and Kropotkin’s concept of ‘mutualism’ amongst those who performed on the social margins and who lived with animals, particularly in the circus. *Family of Acrobats with Monkey (Famille au Singe)* 1905. (Fae Brauer, “Becoming Simian: Devolution as Evolution in Transformist Modernism”, Chapter Seven, *Picturing Evolution and Extinction: Regeneration and Degeneration in Modern Visual Culture* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) pp. 145-147.) Captivated by African tribal masks, Picasso visited the Trocadéro collection and was bowled over. ‘When I went to the old Trocadéro, it was disgusting’, he recalled. ‘I wanted to get away. But I didn’t leave. I stayed. I understood how important this was; something was happening to me ... The masks weren’t just like any other pieces of sculpture. Not at all. They were magic things. ... These Negros were intercessors ... against everything, against unknown menacing spirits. ... I understood; I too am against everything.’(André Malraux, *La Tête d’obsidienne* (Paris:Éditions Gallimard, 1974); *Picasso’s Mask* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976) pp. 10-11 (my translation): Quand je suis allé au Trocadéro, c’était dégoûtant. ... Je voulais m’en aller. Je restais. Je restais. J’ai compris que c’était très important : il m’arrivait quelque chose, non? Les masques, ils n’étaient pas des sculptures comme les autres. Pas du tout. Ils étaient des choses magiques ... . Les Nègres, ils étaient des intercesseurs ... contre tout ; contre des esprits inconnus, menaçants. ... J’ai compris : moi aussi, je suis contre tout ... .) Drawing upon the art language of African indigenous people, Picasso began to depict in geometricized facets the prostitutes from France's North African colonies and the Congo exploited in French brothels and contaminated with syphilis. (*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* 1906-1907) Illuminating why France's ‘civilizing mission’ became better known as the ‘syphilizing mission’ in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* André Salmon recalls that ‘it froze with horror the half-converted’ while Georges Braque likened it to drinking petrol and eating a flaming fuse; i.e. an anarchist bomb. (André Salmon, “Histoire anécdotique du cubisme”, *Le Jeune Peinture Française* (Paris: Société des Trente, 1912, p. 43) The Fourth Dimension, Cubism and Collage Excited by reports of the fourth dimension, X-rays, electromagnetic waves, radioactivity and chronophotography, as well as the relativist philosophies of Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche, Picasso joined Braque from 1908-9 in depicting bodies and forms in fragments from many different perspectives over time recalled in sensory memory, as captured by Picasso’s Cubist portrait of his lover, Eva Gouel. Nicknamed after the popular song, *Ma Jolie,* he included these words in his painting to evoke aural memory of lingering melodies that triggered the sight, feel, taste and smell of his lover’s body. (*Ma Jolie,* Paris Winter, 1911-1912). ‘All its forms cannot be rationalized’, Picasso explained about this epoque of his Cubism. ‘It’s not a reality you can take in your hand. It’s more like a perfume – in front of you, behind you, to the sides. The scent is everywhere, but you don’t quite know where it came from.’ (William S. Rubin, *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1972) p. 72.)  File: majolie.jpg  Figure 3Pablo Picasso, Ma Jolie, Paris Winter, 1911-1912. oil on canvas, 39 3/8 x 25 3/4 in (100 x 64.5 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York, 176.1945, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest; © 2014 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society  Source: <https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/pablo-picaso-ma-jolie-paris-winter-1911-12>  When France entered the First Balkans War in support of the Balkan League, Picasso used fragments of newspaper headlines and articles of this war to make three-dozen Cubist collages and assemblages. In *Guitar, Sheet Music and Wine Glass (*Guitare, partition et verre de vin)*,* his juxtaposition of a wine glass, guitar and sheet music about love with a newspaper saying ‘The Battle has begun’ signal how the everyday pleasures of wine, sex and music could not remain immune from this all-encompassing crisis. (*Guitar, Sheet Music and Wine Glass (*Guitare, partition et verre de vin)*,* November 1912)  File: guitar.jpg  Figure 4Pablo Picasso, Guitar, Sheet Music and Wine Glass, Paris, November 1912, wallpaper, blue paper, simulated wood graining, newspaper, Le Journal and charcoal; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas: Bequest of Marion Koogler McNay.  Source: <http://www.wikiart.org/en/pablo-picasso/guitar-sheet-music-and-wine-glass-1912>  Through his upright placement of reports of the Pacifist Demonstration by 50,000 at Pré-St-Gervais in his Balkans war collage, *Glass and Bottle of Suze (La Bouteille de Suze),* and his inversion of newspaper texts reporting French victories and espousing militarist patriotism, Picasso also revealed how war and French militarism were spurred on by the conservative nationalist press while pacifist challenges to it were marginalized.   Rubbish and Cubist Assemblages Receiving an exclusive contract during the Balkans War from his German-born Paris-based art dealer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Picasso wallowed in such everyday detritus as cardboard boxes, wooden crates, wallpaper, simulated wood graining, advertising, packaging and labels to make Assemblages confounding classification. Although Picasso never exhibited them publicly and refused to join other Cubists at the Salons, he was still mythologized as the leader of Cubism. Hailed as innovatory by his friends, the poet critics Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire, Picasso's Cubism was denounced by other critics as alien to the French temperament and comparable to decomposing syphilitics. (Fay Brauer, “Commercial Spies and Cultural Invaders: The French Press, *Pénétration Pacifique* and Xenophobic Nationalism in the Shadow of War”*,**Printed Matters: Printing, Publishing and Urban Culture in Europe in the Modern Period,* eds. Malcolm Gee and Tim Kirk (Hampshire, UK and Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2002) pp. 105-132.) During the First World War when Picasso produced costumes and sets for Sergei Diaghilev's ballets, *Parade* and *Le Tricorne*, its Cubist deconstructions were even likened to “Krout painting” and compared by Fauve painter, Maurice de Vlaminck, to the destructions of the War itself. (Fae Brauer, “Dealing with Cubism: Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler’s Perilous Internationalism”, *The Art of the Deal: Dealers and the Global Art Market from 1860 to 1940,* eds. Lynn Catterton and Charlotte Vignon (Leiden, Boston and Tokyo: Brill International Publishing, 2016). Ingreseque Neo-Classicism, Crystal Cubism and Surrealism In the ‘straightening up’ following the War when Picasso married Ballet Russe dancer, Olga Khokhlova, he appeared to retreat from subversive Modernism into Ingreseque Neo-Classicism and Crystal Cubism. After his son, Paolo, was born, Picasso's pasted-papers gave way to conspicuously well-made easel paintings. With his pre-war signifiers of cheap mass-produced commodities displaced by privileged signs of leisure, ‘nicely combed and curled’, Francis Picabia observed, ‘Cubism smiles courteously at monsieur and no longer picks its nose.’ (Christopher Green, *Cubism and its Enemies: Modern Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916-1928* (Yale University Press, 1987.) After publication of La Révolution Surrealiste, André Breton's purchase of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and his appropriation of Picasso as a Surrealist painter, Picasso's transfigurations seemed to culminate in monsters and Dionysian frenzy. ‘I would love to paint like a blind man’, he told his dealer, ‘who pictures an arse by the way it feels.’ (*Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler : marchand, éditeur, écrivain* (Paris:Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d’Art Moderne, 1984, p. 147: *Je voudrais peindre comme un aveugle ... qui ferait une fesse à tâtons.)* To capture orgasmic ecstasy, arms and fingers become erections in Le baiser (The Embrace), noses and toes morph into phalluses, navels into anuses while mouths and eyes twist into vagina dentatas. (Le Baiser (The Embrace), 1925)  File: baiser.jpg  Figure 5Pablo Picasso, Le Baiser (The Embrace), Paris, 1925, oil on canvas, 130x97.7 cm., Musée National Picasso; © Succession Picasso 2011.  Source: <http://www.mtdemocrat.com/files/2011/06/Picasso-Le-Baiser.jpg>  ‘When I love a woman’, Picasso explained with a hint of the sexual violence stirred by his eighteen-year old lover, Marie-Thérèse Walter, ‘that tears everything apart - especially my painting.’ (Paul Éluard, *À Pablo Picasso* (Genève et Paris: Trois Collines, 1944; trans. Joseph T. Shipley, New York: Philosophical Library, 1947). Fascism, Minotauromachy and Guernica Amidst rampant Fascism when demonstrations against the French government continually erupted in Paris, Picasso began his etchings of *Minotaurs,* printing them just before the February 1934 riots when the French Fascist League tried to burn down the National Assembly. After Stalin's launch of the Popular Front against Fascism when the Spanish Republican Popular Front came to power, Picasso was appointed Honorary Director of the Prado. Following election of the French Popular Front, Picasso illuminated in his *Minotauromachy* how the light of liberty burned brightly amidst the blackness of ferocious Fascism. (*La Minotauromachie (Minotauromachy),* 23 March 1935)  File: minotauromachy.jpg  Figure 6Pablo Picasso, La Minotauromachie (Minotauromachy), 23 March 1935, etching and engraving, plate: 19 1/2 x 27 3/8 in (49.6 x 69.6 cm); sheet (irreg.): 22 5/8 x 29 3/16 in (57.4 x 74.2 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York, 20.1947; Abby Aldrich Rockefeller  Source: <http://www.lacma.org/sites/default/files/styles/Exhibition_Main/public/image/state_7color_100.jpg?itok=pId7Jaz3>  An ardent supporter of both the Spanish Republican and French Popular Front Governments, Picasso was devastated when General Franco declared war, as was his new lover, the Spanish-speaking photographer and French Communist Party member, Dora Maar. In his etchings, *The* Dream and Lie of Franco, designed for publication as postcards, this staunch Catalan nationalist demonized Franco as a phallic jackbooted meglomaniac, murdering women and children as ruthlessly as he destroyed art. When Hitler’s Luftwaffes and Mussolini’s Avazione Legionaria relentlessly bombed the resistant and defenceless Basque town of Guernica on a market day in April 1937, Picasso added four more plates to this series and his prose poem:    **cries of children cries of women cries of birds cries of flowers cries of wood and of stones cries of bricks**  **cries of furniture of beds of chairs of curtains of casseroles of cats and paper cries of smells that claw themselves**  **of smoke that gnaws the neck of cries that boil in the cauldron**  and the rain of birds that floods the sea that eats into the bone and breaks the teeth biting  the cotton that the sun wipes on its plate that bourse and bank hide in the footprint left imbedded in the rock.(Pablo Picasso, *The Dream and Lie of Franco,* two sheets containing 18 etchings and aquatints in two parts accompanied by prose poem; signed and dated 9 janvier-7 juin 1937; etchings and acquatints first published, *Cahiers d’Art,* 1937; subsequently published as a portfolio with the prose poem, without numbered pages).  Commissioned by the Spanish Republican Government to create a mural for their Pavilion at the Paris World Fair, Picasso began drawings of weeping women that evolved, as Maar's photographs testify, into *Guernica.* (*Guernica,* 1937)Horrified to find that after ‘terror bombing’ this city symbolising Basque liberties, Hitler's and Mussolini's planes had flown low enough to machine gun fleeing women, children and animals, Picasso depicted their mutilated bodies in fragments, their mouths shrieking in pain and the agony of a mother cradling the body of her dead child amidst the burning city and omnipresent bull. Painted in the grays of newspapers that communicated this atrocity served *Guernica* well, postcards of it being sold to buttress the Republican plight. In response to the escalation of violence, Picasso painted a series of weeping Spanish women, looking like Dora Maar (who suffered from a crying disorder), so overwhelmed by their torrent of tears that their eyes seem to pop out of their sockets.  For as long as Franco lived, Picasso vowed never again to set foot in Spain although he never relinquished his nationality: ‘I am a Spaniard’, he maintained, ‘and I shall die a Spaniard’. (Jean Rikhoff, *Earth, Air, Fir and Water: A Memoir* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011), p. 115.) Yet fearful of internment after Franco’s victory, Picasso sought French citizenship in April 1940, as attested by French police files kept on him from 1901-1940. Due to his long identification with Anarchism and what French police called his ‘extremist ideas evolving towards Communism’, his application remained unresolved when Germany invaded France.(Pierre Daix and Armand Israël, *Pablo Picasso : Dossiers de la Préfecture de police 1901-1940* (Paris: Acatos, 2003). Nazi Occupation, Resistance and Communism With his artwork condemned as ‘entartete kunst’ (degenerate art) and removed from German public collections, Picasso was endangered from the moment Nazi soldiers occupied Paris. Initially retreating to Renan, when overrun by Nazis Picasso did not flee like other Modernist ‘degenerates’. Despite immigration offers from Mexico and the United States, he returned to Paris. Unlike other Modernists, he refused to collude with Vichy and the Nazis while discretely supporting the Resistance. “He was one of the rare painters who have behaved well”, recalled his friend, the poet Paul Eluard. “Picasso had always been willing to help the resistance movement by sheltering anyone sent to him by his friends, whether he knew them or not”. (Roland Penrose, *Picasso, His Life and Work* (London: Gollancz, 1958) pp. 310-311.) Although his studio was under constant surveillance by the Gestapo, often searched while Picasso was forbidden to show his work, by no means did this deter him from making art. With whatever scraps of material he could find, feverishly Picasso painted and sculpted symbols of torture, mutilation and death while writing poetry and the play, *Desire Caught by the Tail.* Upon Liberation, Picasso was honoured with a special exhibition at the 1944 Salon d'Automne – Salon de la Libération. Incensed by ‘artistes-collaborateurs’, Picasso presided over the purge meetings conducted by the Comité Directeur du Front National des Arts from which artists who had collaborated with Vichy and the Nazi regime were identified for arrest and trial. With many of his Spanish friends and family prisoners of Francoist Spain, Picasso defied Franco’s Anti-Communism by openly declaring his support for the Spanish Communist Party and by joining the French Communist Party. On the front page of the French Communist newspaper, *L’Humanité,* Picasso proudly announced why he had done so and why he had long regarded himself as a Communist.  ‘My membership of the Communist Party is the logical outcome of my whole life, my entire work. For I am proud to say, I have never considered painting as an art of simple pleasure [or] of distraction. I wanted, through design and colour, because they were my weapons, to penetrate more deeply into the awareness of the world and of men so that this knowledge might liberate us more every day. I have tried to say in my own way what I considered as the truest, fairest and best ... . I am conscious of having always struggled for my painting, like a true revolutionary. But I understood now that even that is not enough: These years of terrible oppression convinced me that I must fight not only with my art but with also my whole being. ... And so I went to the Communist Party without the least hesitation, for deep inside I was always with it; Aragon, Eluard, Cassou, Fougeron, all my friends really knew it. If I had not yet officially joined, this was through “innocence” of some kind, because I believed that my work and heart-felt commitment were sufficient, but it was already my Party. Isn’t it the one that strives more than any other to know and to build a better world, to make men clearer thinkers, freer and happier? Weren’t the Communists the most courageous in France as much as in the Soviet Union and in my Spain? Why would I have hesitated? Fear of involvement? But on the contrary, I have never felt freer or more complete! ... I have always been an exile but now I am no more. While waiting for Spain to be finally able to accept me, the Communist Party has opened its arms to me. I have found there all those that I most cherish, the greatest minds, the greatest poets and all these faces of Parisian insurgents were so beautiful that I thought, during the days of August, I am once again amongst my brothers.’    (Pablo Picasso, ‘Pourquoi j’ai adhéré au Parti Communiste : Une Interview de Picasso à la revue americaine ‘New Masses’*, L’Humanité,* No. 64, 29-30 October1944, pp. 1-2 (my translation): *Mon adhésion au parti communiste est la suite logique de toute ma vie, de toute mon oeuvre. Car, je suis fier de le dire, je n'ai jamais considéré la peinture comme un art de simple agrément, de distraction ; j'ai voulu, par le dessin et la couleur, puisque c'étaient là mes armes, pénétrer toujours plus avant dans la connaissance des hommes et du monde afin que cette connaissance nous libère tous chaque jour davantage ; j'ai essayé de dire, à ma façon, ce que je considérais comme le plus vrai, le plus juste, le meilleur, et c'était naturellement toujours le plus beau, les plus grands artistes le savent bien. « Oui, j'ai conscience d'avoir toujours lutté par ma 'peinture en véritable révolutionnaire. Mais j'ai compris maintenant que cela même ne suffit pas; ces années d'oppression terrible m'ont démontré que je devais non seulement combattre par mon art, mais de tout moi-même... « Et alors je suis allé vers le parti communiste sans la moindre hésitation, car au fond j'étais avec lui depuis toujours. Aragon, Eluard, Cassou, Fougeron, tous mes amis le savent bien; si je n'avais pas encore adhéré officiellement, c'était par e innocence » en quelque sorte, parce que je croyais que mon oeuvre, mon adhésion de cœur étaient suffisantes, mais c'était déjà mon parti. N'est-ce pas lui qui travaille-le plus à connaître et à construire le monde, à rendre les hommes d'aujourd'hui et de demain plus lucides, plus libres, plus heureux? N'est-ce pas les communistes qui ont été les plus courageux aussi bien en France qu'en U.R.S.S. ou dans mon Espagne ? Comment aurais-je pu hésiter ? La peur de m'engager ? Mais je ne me suis jamais senti aussi libre au contraire, plus complet ! Et puis, j'avais tellement hâte de retrouver une patrie : j'ai toujours été un exilé, maintenant je ne le suis plus ; en attendant que l'Espagne puisse enfin m'accueillir, le parti communiste français m'a ouvert les bras, j'y ai trouvé tous ceux que j'estime le plus, les plus grands savants, les plus grands poètes et tous ces visages d'insurgés parisiens si beaux, que j'ai vus pendant les journées d'août. Je suis de nouveau parmi mes frères.)*   *The Charnel House,* *Massacre in Korea* and *Rape of the Sabines* At the Communist sponsored *Art and Resistance* exhibition, Picasso unveiled *Le Charnier (The Charnel House)* to expose the extent of genocide committed throughout the Second World War and the Spanish Civil War alongside the concealment of slaughtered bodies*.* (*Le Charnier (The Charnel House)* 1944-1946) Two years later he commemorated the sacrifice made by Republican Spaniards for the French Resistance in his paintings, *Memorial for the Spaniards who Gave their Lives for France.* After creating a white frill-back dove as an international symbol of peace for the French Communist Party and the inaugural World Peace Congress in Paris in 1949, which fronted the first East German train after the Berlin Blockade, Picasso was horrified when the Korean War erupted.  File: charnier.jpg  Figure 7Pablo Picasso, Le Charnier (The Charnel House) 1944-1946, oil on canvas, Musée national d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris.  Source: <http://www.berbec.com/rberbec/images/Picasso963works/Picasso%201940-49/Picasso%201944/Picasso%20Le%20charnier.%201944-45.%20199.8%20x%20250.1%20cm.%20Oil%20&%20charco.jpg>  Enraged by reports of American atrocities, particularly the slaughter of 35,000 civilians during the Sinchon Massacre, in 1951 Picasso depicted pregnant mothers with their children standing by a mass grave and cowering before a firing squad in *Massacre in Korea*. Initially commissioned as a mural by the French Communist Party, like Francisco Goya's *The Third of May,* Picasso draws upon the iconography of *Massacre of the Innocence.* Yet as the bodies of Picasso's soldiers are rigidly phallicized, their huge rifles pointing at their female prey like erect penises, Picasso fuses this iconography with that of *The Rape of the Sabine Women.*  File: massacre.jpg  Figure 8Pablo Picasso, Massacre à Korea (Massacre in Korea), 1951, oil on plywood, 110 cm × 210 cm (43.3 in × 82.7 in), Musée National Picasso; © Succession Picasso 2011.  Source: <http://www.pablopicasso.org/images/paintings/massacre-in-korea.jpg>  Like his series of that name producedat the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis in which he shows women and children ruthlessly trampled, Picasso does not just convey the suffering of the victims. He exposes the hidden atrocity of war – rape – one that he was all too aware had been committed by Franco's Nationalists from the beginning of the ‘White Terror’. Jointly awarded the Stalin Peace Prize in 1950 and on Stalin’s death, paying tribute to the Soviet leader in a charcoal portrait published on the front page of the French Communist Party newspaper, human and animal skulls persisted in Picasso’s artwork throughout the Cold War. Horrified by nuclear espionage and the prospect of global decimation, Picasso continually produced posters, paintings and sculptures of peace culminating in his two murals on war and peace installed in the Vallauris Chapel of Peace by 1954 in which the four races of the world are shown unified by an orb radiating with the Dove of Peace. With his 1955 series, *Women of Algiers,* followed by *The Rape of the Sabine Women* in1962, these murals were amongst his last artworks produced as ‘instrument[s] of war for attack and defence against the enemy’.  (Simone Téry, “Picasso n’est pas officier dans l’armée Française”, *Les Lettres françaises,* vol. V, iss. 48, 24 March 1945, p. 6, as trans. by Alfred H. Barr, *Picasso: Fifty Years of his Art,* New York: the Museum of Modern Art, 1946.)  Although Picasso signed a petition against the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, one year later he reaffirmed his loyalty to Communism. Despite his horror of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he never discontinued his financial support of the French Communist Party and never ceased to donate generously to the children of war victims and the Committee for Peace. Continually producing peace posters and his Doves of Peace, Picasso remained a deeply committed pacifist and activist artist until his death in 1973. This is why it was not until civil liberties were restored to Spain eight years after his death – and six years after that of Franco – that Picasso’s *Guernica* was, following his Will, finally able to leave America for its rightful home in Spain. Yet it was in the face of a world perpetually torn apart with conflict during the Post Liberation Purge Trials (*Épuration légale)* when 40,000 French were assassinated or executed by French that Picasso most clearly explained why he believed an artist could not be anything other than a political activist.  ‘What do think an artist is?’ he asked. ‘An imbecile who has nothing but eyes if he is a painter ...? Quite the contrary, he is at the same time a political being, constantly on guard in the face of harrowing, passionate or humane events in the world, moulding him completely in their image. How would it be possible to disengage yourself from others and, by virtue of some lofty indifference, detach yourself from life that they expose you to so copiously? No, painting is not made for interior decoration. It is an instrument of war for attack and defence against the enemy. (Simone Téry, “Picasso n’est pas officier dans l’armée Française”, *Les Lettres françaises,* vol. V, iss. 48, 24 March 1945, p. 6 (my translation): *Que croyez-vous que soit un artiste? Un imbécile qui n'a que des yeux s'il est peintre ...? Bien au contraire, il est en même temps un être politique, constamment en éveil devant les déchirants, ardents ou doux événements du monde, se façonnant de toute pièce à leur image. Comment serait-il possible de se désintéresser des autres hommes et, en vertu de quelle nonchalance ivoirine, de se détacher d'une vie qu'ils vous apportent si copieusement? Non, la peinture n'est pas faite pour décorer les appartements. C'est un instrument de guerre offensive et défensive contre l'ennemi.)*  Once Georges Bataille likened looking at Picasso's bestial monstrosities to beholding the blinding sun or undergoing sacrifice. In conveying atrocity and bestial monstrosity alongside ecstasy and pacifism throughout ‘the century of violence’, Picasso's Modernism was like ‘an instrument of war’ with the force of a blinding sun and the emotive punch of sacrifice. Selected List of Works Three Musicians (1921)  Girl Before a Mirror (1932)  The Old Guitarist (1903)  Seated Woman (Marie-Therese) (1937)  Dora Maar au Chat (1941)  Blue Nude (1902)  La Rêve (1932)  Asleep (1932)  Nude, Green Leaves and Bust (1932)  Les Demoiselles D’Avignon (1907)  Still Life with a Bottle of Rum (1911)  Woman in White (1923)  Guernica (1937)  Le Charnier (1944-46)  Minotauromachy (1935)  Le Baiser (1925)  Guitar, Sheet Music, and Wine Glass (1912) |
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