



## “Picasso, Lydia and Friends” at Les Yeux du Monde



[\(http://www.c-ville.com/picasso-lydia-and-friends-opens-at-les-yeux-du-monde/\)](http://www.c-ville.com/picasso-lydia-and-friends-opens-at-les-yeux-du-monde/)

UVA art history professor Lyn Gasman decoded and detailed the work of Pablo Picasso.

Photo: courtesy of Les Yeux du Monde

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Sarah  
Sargent

Friday's opening of “Picasso, Lydia and Friends,” features the work of Anne Chesnut, Dean Dass, David Summers, Rosemarie Fiore, Russ Warren, Sanda Iliescu, Lydia Gasman and last but not least, Picasso. The exhibition heralds the advent of the Lydia Csato Gasman Archives for Picasso and Modernist Studies under the leadership of

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Lyn Bolen Warren and Victoria Beck Newman. Gasman  
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was a beloved professor, teaching first at Vassar College and the University of Haifa before coming to UVA where she taught art history for two decades. Upon her death, Gasman left her papers to Warren and Newman who had been doctoral students of hers.

In addition to caring for and organizing Gasman’s work (160 boxes in all), the archives intend to publish Gasman’s seminal dissertation, “Magic, Mystery, and Love in Picasso, 1928-1938: Picasso and the Surrealist Poets,” which though influential and oft-quoted by every prominent Picasso scholar, has never been published. A densely packed examination of what Picasso read, his writings and his psyche, the dissertation, which was reviewed in “The New York Review of Books” by none other than John Richardson (Picasso’s preeminent biographer) and given a contract by Yale University Press, the work transformed Picasso scholarship. The archives also want to re-publish Gasman’s second book: “War and the Cosmos in Picasso’s Texts, 1936-40.” They also plan to offer fellowships to Picasso scholars as well as lectures and symposia.

Recently incorporated as a non-profit foundation (the archives’ board of directors includes, in addition to Warren and Newman, Richardson, David Summers—William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Art History at UVA and Gasman’s former husband and lifelong friend, Daniel Gasman. Last spring, the archives assisted curators at the prestigious Gagosian Gallery in New York with sourcing materials among the Gasman papers pertaining to a Picasso exhibit. An essay about Gasman’s invaluable contribution to the field of Picasso scholarship written by Richardson and illustrated with examples of her notes and drawings was included in the exhibition catalogue.

Romanian by birth, Gasman was a highly acclaimed social realist painter, with degrees from the University of Bucharest and the Academy of Fine Arts in Bucharest. She arrived in America from Israel in 1961. Although she would continue to paint throughout her life, she switched her focus to art history, attending Columbia University in the late ’60s. After years of exhaustive research, she finally received her doctorate in 1981.

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Rejecting the Clement Greenberg style formalistic  
approach, Gasman was after a deeper exploration of  
underlying meanings and looked beyond Picasso’s formal  
expression to his language of symbolism, the decoding of  
which became her life’s work. It’s clear she was on the  
right track. Picasso himself said of painting: “It is not an  
aesthetic process; it’s a form of magic that interposes  
itself between us and the hostile universe, a means of  
seizing power by imposing a form on our terrors as well as  
on our desires.”

Pages: 1 [2 \(http://www.c-ville.com/picasso-lydia-and-friends-opens-at-les-yeux-du-monde/2/\)](http://www.c-ville.com/picasso-lydia-and-friends-opens-at-les-yeux-du-monde/2/)