



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

# Past and Future of Modern Sculpture

9 AND 10 MAY 2023

AUDITORIUM MUSEO PICASSO MÁLAGA / ONLINE

museo**PICASSO**málaga



## PRESENTATION

The historian and fundamental scholar in cataloguing systematically Picasso's sculpture, Werner Spies, who came to enjoy Picasso's confidence, recounts that, in 1971, when the painter saw a first draft of his book with the images of the sculptures organized in his studio in Mougins, he expressed his emotion exclaiming: "One gets the impression to have discovered an unknown civilization".

The exhibition *Picasso sculptor. Matter and body*, that frames this seminar, is revealing of the above. It consists of a selection of artworks created along six decades in the trajectory of the artist, that suppose a clear testimony of the well-known and studied Picassian dialectical dynamism, crossing with inexhaustible audacity and proven creative rebellion the conventional classifications of tradition and avant-garde or classicism and anticlassicism. This is an exhibition in which, like the unknown civilization to which Picasso himself referred, the tension of the ever-changing balance between the past and the future of the art of a precise historical moment is evident.

In the early twentieth century, classic statuary ceased being the exclusive reference for European sculptors, who learned how to appreciate new artistic, formal and conceptual possibilities in other cultures which were considered primitive at the time. The development of this new sensibility came upon the massive call to the front in the First World War and the death of Auguste Rodin in 1917. These factors prompted a shift in the aesthetics of sculpture. Forgetting Rodin—*oublier Rodin*, as it was known among the artists of that period—was a radical reaction to his way of envisioning sculpture.

However, the revolution of modern sculpture was brought about not by conventional sculptors but by painters. Once nineteenth-century finished, it started years of experimenting with new languages and meanings. Gauguin, Matisse and, of course, Pablo Picasso, among many others, liberated from the academy, felt capable of dictating the rules of the new sculpture in real time.

Subsequent generations of artists took the baton from those pioneers in modern sculpture, putting into practice alternative ways of formalising the artistic object until arriving at sculpture as we know it today, a conceptually and formally expanded field in which the ambition to "give physical life" to the human spirit does not seem to keep much attention.

As part of the exhibition *Picasso Sculptor. Matter and Body*, this seminar offers a survey of the genealogy of twentieth-century sculpture from its ancient sources until today.

## PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, MAY 9

6:00 p.m. **Presentation**

José Lebrero Stals. Artistic director, Museo Picasso Málaga

6:15 p.m. **Dialogue: Picasso Sculptor. Matter and Body**

Carmen Giménez. Curator of the exhibition

José Lebrero Stals. Artistic director, Museo Picasso Málaga

7:00 p.m. **Ancient Statuary and Modern Sculpture. The Reception of Egyptian Art in early 20th Century Sculpture**

Astrid Nielsen. Curator, Albertinum, Skulpturensammlung, Dresden

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10

6:00 p.m. **Apartness: Modern Sculpture after Rodin**

Jonathan Vernon. Associate Lecturer, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

6:45 p.m. **Performing Sculpture. Embodiment in Public Space**

Marianne Wagner. Curator of Contemporary Art, LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur - Westfaelisches Landesmuseum -, Münster

The contents and the order of talks shown in the programme may be subject to change.  
The seminar combines online and face to face presentations.  
English and Spanish translations are incorporated.

## SPEAKERS

### CARMEN GIMÉNEZ

#### *PICASSO SCULPTOR. MATTER AND BODY*



For Pablo Picasso sculpture was conceived as a form of expression comparable to painting, drawing, printmaking or ceramics. In order to explore and broaden formats and genres in the three-dimensional representation of the human body, Picasso used all the materials at his disposal: wood, bronze, iron, cement, steel and plaster. This dialogue between Carmen Giménez and José Lebrero Stals presents the keys and raises the questions surrounding the figure of Picasso as a sculptor.

### ASTRID NIELSEN

#### *ANCIENT STATUARY AND MODERN SCULPTURE. THE RECEPTION OF EGYPTIAN ART IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY SCULPTURE*

The great impression of Rodin's work, which Bernhard Hoetger admired at the 1900 World Exhibition, made the young German sculptor stay in Paris. But during that time, he also developed a fascination for the monumental effect of Egyptian sculpture and its formal rigor, which affected not just Hoetger. It seems that the conscious turning away from the great paragon Rodin and the search for new forms led the sculptors to increasingly draw inspiration from the old cultures and especially from Egyptian art.



### JONATHAN VERNON

#### *APARTNESS: MODERN SCULPTURE AFTER RODIN*



By examining how the processes of sculpture have been understood at key junctures in the writing of twentieth-century art histories, it establishes the medium as a site of contradictions a space in which antagonisms at the heart of modernity were played out, analysed and exacerbated. Above all, it suggests that the condition of 'apartness' —of belonging to and alienation from the human body— was intrinsic to how modern sculpture represented and occupied the world.

### MARIANNE WAGNER

#### *PERFORMING SCULPTURE. EMBODIMENT IN PUBLIC SPACE*

In the medium of sculpture, artists have always negotiated the human body. Rediscovered, fragmented, and deconstructed, after 1945 the relationship between subject and object became central above all in performance art. In the context of the exhibition *Skulptur Projekte* in Münster, which has been taking place since 1977, artists have repeatedly explored performative embodiment in public space as a sculptural practice. This lecture examines how the sculptural quality and materiality of the body is deployed.



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