

**A self-proclaimed “Funny Guy” and “artist of many genres,” Francis Picabia was born in Paris in 1879. His father was a Cuban-born Spaniard; his mother was French. He embraced this mixed lineage and occasionally extended it, declaring, “I was born in Paris to a Cuban, Spanish, French, Italian, American family, and . . . I have the very clear impression of being all these nationalities at once!”**

**Picabia is an artist with a strong New York connection. It was in this city that he first achieved fame as a leader of the European avant-garde. Today he is best known as an irreverent Dadaist who, like no other artist before him, created a body of work that defies consistency and categorization, ranging as it does from Impressionist landscapes to abstraction, from paintings of machines to photo-based nudes, and from performance and film to poetry and publishing.**

**Picabia lived through the devastation of two world wars, which fueled his persistent nihilism and profound sense of the absurd. It is against this backdrop of repeated historical trauma that his aversion to rational thinking and fixed positions—whether national, political, social, or cultural—and his ongoing shape-shifting are best understood.**

**“Our heads are round so our thoughts can change direction” is an aphorism Picabia coined in 1922. It encapsulates the non-linear character of his five-decade career. This exhibition is the first in the United States to present that career in full, with the aim of advancing appreciation of Picabia’s unruly genius and its vital place in the history of modern art.**

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*Francis Picabia: Our Heads Are Round so Our Thoughts Can Change Direction* is organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Kunsthaus Zürich.

Organized by Anne Umland, The Blanche Hooker Rockefeller Curator of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, and Cathérine Hug, Curator, Kunsthaus Zürich; with Talia Kwartler, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art.

 **650** English only

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At the entrance to the exhibition, visitors can hear excerpts from live recordings that Picabia made for French radio between 1945 and 1949. To listen to an English translation, press  **6501**.

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Works throughout the exhibition have been paired with music selected by WQXR radio host Terrance McKnight. To listen, go to the Web address listed on the corresponding label.

To hear McKnight’s full playlist inspired by Picabia’s works and musical preferences, go to [mo.ma/picabiaplaylist](https://mo.ma/picabiaplaylist).

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Paint provided by Farrow & Ball.

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