

Pablo Picasso spent much of the summer of 1921 in a garage in Fontainebleau, France. Inside this unlikely studio, he created—in two radically different styles—four enormous canvases within weeks and close proximity of each other: two versions of the late cubist *Three Musicians* and two of the classicizing *Three Women at the Spring*. He composed the first pair using colorful geometric shapes, the second using visual references to Greco-Roman antiquity. These four monumental works are reunited here for the first time with many related paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs the artist made that summer.

Picasso's stay in Fontainebleau marked a peaceful chapter in his personal and domestic life: he had recently married the former ballerina Olga Khokhlova and had become a father for the first time. The couple and their five-month-old son, Paul, lived there from early July through late September, renting a villa where they hosted visitors. The house was within walking distance of the Château de Fontainebleau, a former royal residence that is considered the birthplace of French classicism. In this setting steeped in academic tradition and French history, Picasso worked as a Spanish outsider, savvily manipulating the cultural codes of various styles, subjects, materials, and techniques.

More than any other aspect of his practice, Picasso's stylistic eclecticism stoked controversy among his contemporaries. Was he progressive or regressive? Aligned with the avant-garde or with the conservative “return to order”? Collectively, the works gathered here testify to Picasso's defiance of neat categorization and challenge linear notions of artistic development. They also offer present-day viewers an opportunity to consider his engagement with questions of sameness and difference, tradition and modernity in France after the First World War.

Organized by Anne Umland, The Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Senior Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, with Alexandra Morrison, Curatorial Assistant, and Francesca Ferrari, former Mellon-Marron Research Consortium Fellow, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the artist's death, MoMA's exhibition is included in the international Picasso Celebration 1973–2023, with the exceptional support of the Musée National Picasso–Paris.

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We invite you to explore the accompanying publication, *Picasso in Fontainebleau*, which is available in the Museum Store.