

Inside Art | Carol Vogel

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With Picasso, More Is More

Does the world need another Picasso exhibition? In the last few years, there have been several important Picasso shows in the United States, including the Museum of Modern Art's "Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation," which closed in September; "Picasso and Weeping Women: The Years of Marie-Thérèse and Dora Maar," which opened in 1993 at the Los Angeles County Museum and then went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and "Picasso and Things," which started at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1992 and made stops at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as well as the Grand Palais in Paris.

"The world needs this Picasso show," said Earl A. Powell Jr., director of the National Gallery in Washington, as he announced that the Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston had organized yet another Picasso blockbuster. "Picasso: The Early Years, 1892-1906" will open at the National Gallery on March 30 and then travel to Boston for a Sept. 10 opening.

The two museums say it will be the most comprehensive survey ever of the works the artist created between the ages of 11 and 25, years that include his Blue and Rose periods.

"As Yogi Berra once said, 'You can never have too many homers,'" Mr. Powell said. "This show is both timely and badly needed: it's the one area that has never been done in depth, yet it's the central foundation of the artist's work." The show will have about 151 paintings, drawings, pastels, prints and sculpture, beginning with the artist's academic studies of plaster casts, nudes and early portraits like "Girl With Bare Feet" (1895) from the Musée Picasso in Paris, "Spanish Couple Before an Inn" (1900) from the Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art in Chiba, Japan, and "Moulin de la Galette" (1900) from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

While both the National Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts have early Picassos in their collections, loans are coming from all over the world. The Hiroshima Museum of Art is lending "Two Women at a Bar" (1902), from the artist's Blue period. The Göteborgs Konstmuse-

um in Sweden is parting with "Harlequin's Family With an Ape" (1905). The Philadelphia Museum is lending the well-known "Self-Portrait With Palette" (1906).

The reason the exhibition will be seen in just two places, Mr. Powell said, is the difficulty of arranging the loans. The show will fill the upper-level galleries of the National Gallery's East Building. As is usual with

Picasso blockbusters, crowd control is a concern. "Since all our exhibitions are free, we won't be selling tickets like other museums," Mr. Powell said. "But we will be implementing a system of timed allocation."

New Museum and an Art Fair

For the contemporary art world, this is the week to be in Berlin. First, the state-run Museum of the Contemporary Age opens to the public on Sunday. It is housed in a former railway station, the Hamburger Bahnhof, connected to a new building designed by Josef Paul Kleihues, the architect of the new Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

Berlin's new museum, which is close to its historic center, is forming its own permanent collection, in addition to showing contemporary artworks from the National Gallery of Art in Berlin. (Dr. Dieter Honisch, the director of the National Gallery, is in charge of the new museum.) The Museum of the Contemporary Age will also exhibit the Marx collection, a group of about 180 works by artists including Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg, Josef Beuys and Anselm Kiefer that was formed by Erich Marx, a doctor who has collected art since the early 1970's. He has put the collection on permanent loan to the museum.

The other big event in Berlin is a new art fair, "The European Art Forum Berlin," on view through Monday. The fair was started by dealers who were dissatisfied with the Cologne art fair, which they said had grown too big. The new event, in the Messe Berlin Trade Fair and Exhibition Complex, includes 135 galleries — 70 from Germany and 65 from other parts of Europe and the United States.

"Berlin is the new art metropolis in Europe, next to Paris," said Rudolf Kicken, a Cologne-based dealer who helped organize the fair. He said about half the participants were showing 1990's art; 30 percent specialized in works from 1945 to the present, 10 percent were dealers in modern art and another 10 percent were exhibiting photography.

Choir Loft 600 Years Young

The J. Paul Getty Grant Program recently gave \$222,000 to the cathedral in Aachen, Germany, in the first phase of a conservation project for its Gothic choir stalls.

"There are a lot of buildings all over the world in need of restoration, but we look for projects that will provide some kind of model for other such undertakings," said Deborah Marrow, the program's director. While \$222,000 might seem like a small sum for an organization with

the Getty's assets, Ms. Marrow said the grant was one of the largest under the program. Most are under \$50,000, she said, and the largest is \$250,000. Originally constructed by Charlemagne in the eighth century, the Aachen Cathedral is the first domed building to be built north of the Alps after the Roman era. Its Gothic choir stalls, completed in 1414, have suffered six centuries of wear, from hailstorms and fires to World War II bombings. Now the choir pillars, which were built of small stones, sand and mortar, are deteriorating.

The grant will help replace the weakened stone, using the original 14th-century quarry, which has just been reopened for this project. On-site training will be given to architecture students as well as masons, carpenters and roofers, so that the project can be a guide for future restorations.