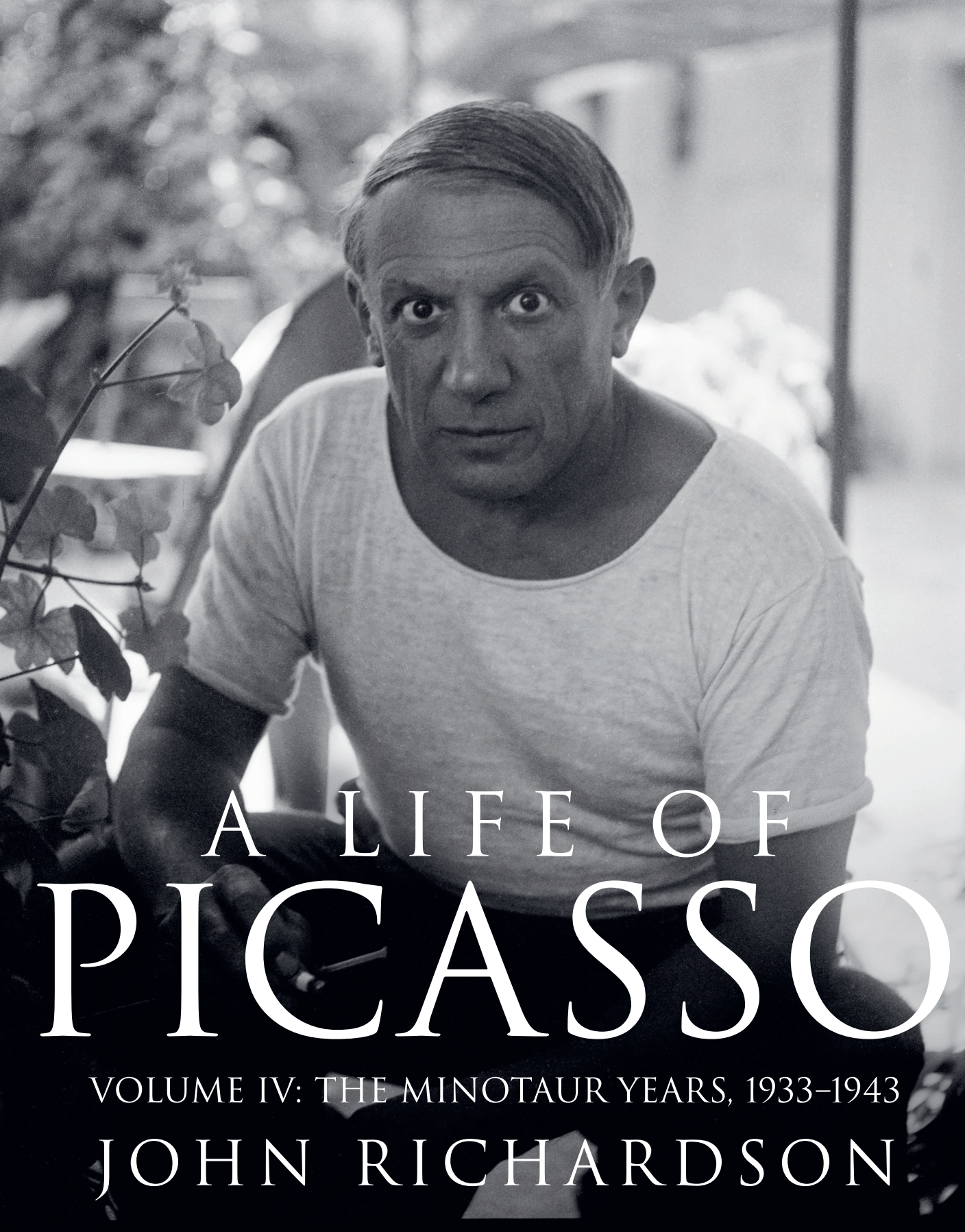

A LIFE OF PICASSO

VOLUME IV: THE MINOTAUR YEARS, 1933–1943

JOHN RICHARDSON

ALSO BY JOHN RICHARDSON

Manet

Georges Braque

Braque

A Life of Picasso: The Prodigy, 1881–1906

A Life of Picasso: The Cubist Rebel, 1907–1916

A Life of Picasso: The Triumphant Years, 1917–1932

The Sorcerer's Apprentice: A Decade of Picasso, Provence and Douglas Cooper

Sacred Monsters, Sacred Masters: Beaton, Capote, Dalí, Picasso, Freud, Warhol, and More

A LIFE OF PICASSO

The Minotaur Years
1933–1943

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The Minotaur Years
1933–1943

John Richardson
with the collaboration of Ross Finocchio and Delphine Huisinga

JONATHAN CAPE
LONDON

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Frontispiece: Lee Miller. Picasso at Hôtel Vaste Horizon, Mougins, 1937. Lee Miller Archives.

For Sonny Mehta

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Brassaï. Picasso in front of the portrait *Yadwigha* by Henri Rousseau in his studio at rue la Boétie, Paris, December 1932. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

1

The Home Front

Of all the problems besetting Picasso in late 1932, foremost was the misery of married life with his Russian wife, Olga. As recounted in volume III, the former ballerina, who had prided herself, to Picasso's ever-increasing dismay, on being an impeccably ladylike consort and hostess, had become a termagant at home. The reasons were numerous, some dating back to the time of their wedding, in 1918. In April of that year, an injury and operation on her left leg had forced Olga to abandon her dream of balletic stardom.[1] Never again would she dance in public. Nor would she ever again see her parents and siblings after her marriage to Picasso. The Soviet Revolution had torn Olga's tsarist family apart. The disappearance of her father in 1919 and the absence of her two brothers in the military put her mother and sister in dire circumstances, detailed in the troubling letters they sent to Olga in Paris. On December 24, 1919, Olga's sister, Nina, wrote that they were facing sickness, scarcity of food, risk of eviction, and the brutally cold Russian winter.[2] Their elderly mother, Lydia, who would die in 1927, was reduced to peddling her belongings to survive. Olga and Picasso regularly sent money and other necessities to ease their suffering, but this did little to alleviate Olga's guilt at knowing that her loved ones lived in poverty.[3]

In 1922, Olga had to undergo yet another surgery, this time to treat a serious illness, the nature of which has never been divulged.[4] Stabilizing her condition required years of painful procedures in hospital. Olga's delicate health further alienated her from the superstitious husband, who blamed her for her own misfortune. As the artist once told me, he believed "women's illnesses are women's fault." Picasso's extramarital affair(s) and his violence contributed to Olga's physical and mental debacle. Since 1929, Olga had known of Picasso's relationship with Marie-Thérèse Walter—the very young woman he had met outside the Galeries Lafayette in 1927—from whom she had intercepted a postcard.[5] She kept the address of her husband's mistress in her agenda but seems to have told no one. Nor did she act upon it.

Another element in Picasso's loathing of Olga: the heavy Russian cloud of refugee resentment, grief, and nostalgia that permeated her entourage. Olga's rooms in their

Paulo, Olga, and Picasso, Boisgeloup, c. 1933. Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso.

apartment on the rue la Boétie resounded with Russian rather than French chatter. So much of this had rubbed off on him, Picasso told me, that a barber had even asked him, "Monsieur est russe?" And indeed, thirty years later he could still mimic Russian to perfection. This most superstitious of men had even adopted many Russian rituals. For instance, before embarking on a journey he insisted that those with him sit in silence for several minutes.

References to Olga in Picasso's work often turn out to be mockeries of balletic artifice. In one of his cruelest images, he depicts her with her hands clasped above her head in a travesty of the fifth position. He sometimes portrays his mistress Marie-Thérèse looking very much at ease in the same position. Olga has also been identified with the monstrous, horselike women that appeared in his painting since the 1920s. The link becomes more explicit in his corrida images of the 1930s, which often depict a hysterical horse raging against the charging bull or minotaur that stands for Picasso.

Despite these indignities, the thought of leaving Picasso seems never to have crossed Olga's mind. Her husband, on the other hand, had probably begun thinking about divorce. Until recently it had been illegal in Spain. However, as Picasso must have known, the liberal government that came to power in 1931 was in the process

Picasso and Paulo, Boisgeloup, c. 1933. Archives Olga Ruiz-Picasso.

of legalizing it. Indeed, a law was passed in 1932 allowing divorce for the first time in Spain. Since divorces for foreigners married in France had to follow statutes of the husband's native country, one can only imagine that Picasso's visit to Spain in summer 1933 was not only to see his family but also to check out how the new regime might help him get free of Olga.

Complicating the couple's domestic problems was the news that Fernande Olivier, Picasso's mistress from 1904 to 1911—years during which he and Georges Braque masterminded the cubist revolution—was publishing a memoir about her affair with the artist.[6] Fernande turned out to be a natural writer. Her account of bohemian life in Montmartre is far more down-to-earth and convincing than Henri Murger's celebrated, if novelettish, *Scènes de la vie de bohème* of 1851. She wrote it, Fernande

said, because she was broke. Also, she had never received the settlement that Picasso had promised when he left her. In the summer of 1930, Fernande had arranged to have her story serialized in the evening newspaper *Le Soir*.

Fernande's articles infuriated Picasso, who would try, not always successfully, to keep his multifaceted love life out of the press. This was the first time that intimate details of his hitherto very private life had appeared in a popular newspaper. He tried and failed to stop the publication; but Olga, more aware than ever of the sheer scale of Picasso's infidelities, reacted as ferociously as if Fernande still shared her husband's bed. It was probably Olga, rather than Picasso, who pressed his lawyers to take legal action. Six installments of Fernande's memoirs would appear before their efforts prevailed. Meanwhile, Paul Léautaud, editor of the literary journal *Mercure de France*, had been so impressed by the vividness of Fernande's story that he asked to publish it, and an agreement was reached to print three more excerpts in three consecutive issues of the *Mercure*.

In 1933, Picasso once again tried to stop publication when Stock printed Fernande's memoirs in book form, with a preface by Léautaud. Once again he failed. *Picasso et ses amis* came out to considerable success. Thirty years later, Picasso told me that, much as he resented the invasion of his privacy, Fernande's book described things the way they had been: "the only true picture of the Bateau Lavoir years," he said.

In April 1931, two years before the publication of her book in France, Fernande had reached out to her old friend Gertrude Stein to help find an American publisher for the memoir. This, wrote Fernande, would "rescue me from material difficulties that have left me at the end of my strength." Gertrude referred Fernande to her American agent, William Aspenwall Bradley, who agreed to represent her in finding a translator and a publisher. It would be a great inducement, he said, if a celebrated writer, such as Gertrude, could be persuaded to write a preface introducing Fernande to the American public. Gertrude declined. She could not, she said, write anything that did not correspond to her "ideal." Fernande was hurt. "Don't forget me, I beg of you," she implored Gertrude. "This book is the last card in my hand. If it doesn't succeed, I'll stop struggling for an existence, whose poetic meaning eludes me."[7]

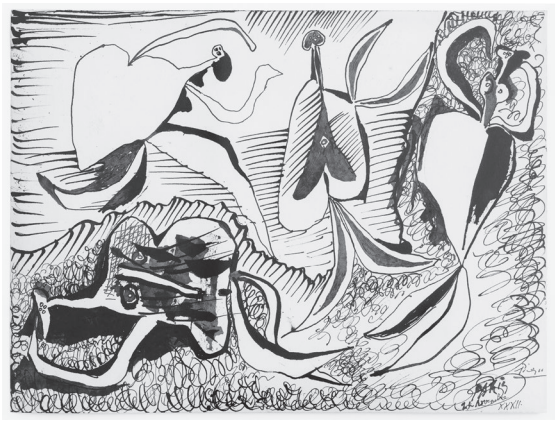
Fernande heard nothing from Bradley or Gertrude for two years. The reason became abundantly clear when friends in America informed her that Gertrude was coming out with *her* memoirs. And instead of finding a publisher for *Nine Years with Picasso*, as Fernande wanted to call her book, Bradley had arranged for Harcourt, Brace to take Gertrude's *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas.* This turned out to cover much of the same ground as Fernande's book and to have once had a very similar title (*My Twenty-Five Years with Gertrude Stein*). It was also written, albeit with more art, in the same vivid, snapshot style—a totally new departure for this usually arcane writer. Bradley had arranged for extracts from Gertrude's entertaining book

to appear in *The Atlantic Monthly*, and it was these extracts that friends brought to Fernande's attention. Fernande had always regarded Gertrude as a mentor, someone to whom she could turn when things went wrong. Now, rightly or wrongly, she felt deceived as well as betrayed. Fernande accused Stein of plagiarism and went so far as to threaten a lawsuit, which she never carried out.[8]

In November 1932, shortly before publication of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Stein invited Picasso and Olga to her celebrated studio—whose walls boasted some of his finest cubist works, not least the great portrait of Gertrude—to hear her read from the manuscript. Olga was appalled by the bits about Picasso's sacrosanct private life, not least the story of his breakup with Fernande: "She and Pablo have decided to separate forever. . . . You know Pablo says if you love a woman you give her money. Well now it is when you want to leave a woman you have to wait until you have enough money to give her. Vollard has just bought out his atelier and so he can afford to separate from her by giving her half."[9] Humiliated by passages like this, Olga walked out of the room in the middle of Gertrude's reading. Gertrude recalled the incident in the book she published five years later, *Everybody's Autobiography*: "I was reading [Picasso] was listening and his eyes were wide open and suddenly his wife Olga got up and she said she would not listen she would go away she said. What's the matter, we said, I do not know that woman she said and left. Pablo said go on reading, I said no you must go after your wife, he said oh I said oh, and he left . . ."[10] After this evening, Picasso would not speak to Gertrude for the next two years.

Picasso. *Le Sauvetage* (*The Rescue*), November 20, 1932. Oil on canvas, 35.5 x 27.5 cm. Private collection.

Marie-Thérèse fell seriously ill toward the end of 1932. While swimming or, more likely, kayaking in the Marne, she contracted a spirochetal disease from the rats in the river.[11] She was hospitalized with a high fever for several weeks, and most of her hair fell out. This was the second time that Marie-Thérèse had nearly died in the water. Françoise Gilot told me of an earlier incident that seemingly occurred in summer 1928, when Picasso and Olga were staying at Dinard on Brittany's Emerald Coast. Marie-Thérèse had been hidden away in a nearby *colonie de vacances*. What perverse, surreal pleasure Picasso must have derived from having



LEFT Picasso. *Women at the Seashore,* November 25, 1932. India ink on paper, 24.8 x 34.8 cm. Collection Gail and Tony Ganz, Los Angeles. RIGHT Picasso. *Female Bathers with Ball,* December 4, 1932. Oil on canvas, 81 x 100 cm. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

his teenage mistress concealed from his wife in a summer camp for children. In the course of their fun and games, Marie-Thérèse, who was an excellent swimmer, rescued one of the other girls in the camp from drowning. In doing so, she was nearly drowned herself.

Marie-Thérèse's aquatic accidents of 1928 and 1932 would haunt Picasso's art for years. In the *Sauvetage* of November 20, 1932, he envisioned Marie-Thérèse's lifesaver as a naked hulk of man—presumably self-referential—who appears to be embracing rather than resuscitating the girl's backward-bending body.[12] Drawings done five days later depict her underwater, entangled in weeds, while her sisters prance around.[13] On December 4, Picasso painted a grisaille beach scene on the *Sauvetage* theme in which two athletic girls play ball while another is seemingly trampled. The lack of color lends a deadly meaning to the image.

As we shall see, the distress triggered by Marie-Thérèse's accidents prompted Picasso's turn to votive magic: ex-votos—vows to gods, be they Mithraic or Christian—in the face of sickness, accident, or death. A sequence of votive works, paintings as well as sculptures, would dominate Picasso's imagery for the next four months and reappear sporadically over the next four years.[14]

Picasso's principal ex-voto work takes the form of a masterpiece. In the spring and summer of 1933, he would devote himself to making what is widely perceived as one of his finest sculptures, *Woman with a Lamp,* traditionally called *Woman with Vase.* This would materialize in the secrecy of his Boisgeloup studio. Why did Picasso choose this sculpture for his grave at Vauvenargues, his château on the slopes of Mont Sainte-Victoire (Cézanne's favorite subject)? Hitherto, no one has identified

Picasso. Conchita, the artist's sister, and other sketches; page of a sketchbook. A Coruña, 1894–1895. Pencil on paper, 19.5 x 13.5 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.

the figure holding a lamp, though various guesses have been made, including a misguided one in volume III. Here, I propose a new identification of the girl who presides over the artist's grave. It is no less than his long-dead sister, Conchita.

The turbulence of Picasso's life and work in the early 1930s harks back to his adolescence. In 1891, the Picasso family had moved from their Mediterranean hometown of Málaga to the Atlantic seaport of La Coruña. The artist's father had been appointed principal of this city's art school. During Christmas 1894, Pablo's seven-year-old sister, Conchita, for whom he had developed an obsessive adoration, was struck down with diphtheria. Paris was the only source for serum. Weeks would pass before it arrived. In the throes of adolescent piety imposed by his once priestly family, thirteen-year-old Pablo had vowed to God that he would never paint again if his sister's life was spared. He did paint again. The serum failed to arrive in time, and Conchita died on January 10, 1895.

Picasso. *Woman with Vase,* summer 1933. Bronze, lost-wax casting and patinated, 220 x 122 x 110 cm. Edition: 1/2. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

Besides commemorating Marie-Thérèse's mishap, *Woman with a Lamp* honors his little sister Conchita, whose death would haunt him for life. True, the figure over his grave does not represent a seven-year-old; he preferred to immortalize her as a grown woman. The beloved child's early death would cast an inescapable shadow over virtually all of Picasso's relationships with women, especially that with Marie-Thérèse. According to Jacqueline Roque, half a century later, the secret of the broken

vow had never been divulged to anyone else but the women in his life.[15] Fernande Olivier was lucky: she was abandoned, seemingly unscathed by Picasso's psychic demands. His wife Olga spent the last thirty years of her life in self-destructive devotion. By virtue of being a substitute for Conchita, Marie-Thérèse survived her affair with the artist, but she took her own life four years after his death. Her successor, Dora Maar, would suffer a mental collapse, from which Dr. Jacques Lacan rescued her by transforming her from a surrealist rebel into a devout Catholic conservative. Françoise Gilot (whose reign lasted from 1943 to 1952) survived, fought back, and thrived after leaving the artist. Jacqueline Roque, however, Picasso's second wife, would sacrifice herself on the altar of his art. Thanks largely to her, the last decade of his life was enormously productive. Thirteen years after his death, Jacqueline, too, would commit suicide.[16]

Brassaï. Picasso and Tériade in front of the sculpture studio, Boisgeloup, c. winter 1932–33. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

2

Brassaï at Boisgeloup

On December 21, 1932, the young Hungarian-born photographer Gyula Halász—called Brassaï, after Braşşov, his Transylvanian birthplace—spent the day at Picasso's Paris apartment. Brassaï had studied painting and sculpture in Budapest and Berlin, but in 1929, having worked in Paris for five years as a journalist, he took up a new career in photography, "the medium specific to our time," as he would later state, "capable of capturing the beauty of the Parisian night (that beauty with which I had fallen passionately in love during my Bohemian adventures . . .").[1]

Brassaï poured this passion into his first photographic book project, *Paris by Night*, which pictured the city's bars, dance halls, and brothels with a cool and detached eye. The book's immediate success thrilled Brassaï, who wrote to his parents, "I'm bound to get plenty of new offers. . . . Many people have bought it. A lot of bookstores sold all their copies the very first day."[2] The Swiss publisher Albert Skira and the Greek art critic Efstratios Eleftheriades, called Tériade, had both been so impressed by *Paris by Night* that they commissioned Brassaï to document Picasso's recent sculptures for the inaugural issue of *Minotaure*, the luxurious art magazine they were planning to launch in spring 1933.

The thirty-three-year-old Brassaï was anxious about meeting the legendary fifty-year-old Picasso, but he was put at ease by the artist's friendly welcome into his studio. The photographer, who took copious notes that would become the basis of his later memoirs, described the scene: "I set the word 'studio' in quotation marks because in the rue la Boétie apartment a suite of four or five rooms had been transformed into a combination junk shop and old-curiosity shop rather than into an atelier. The rooms, each with a fireplace surmounted by a mirror, were totally empty of furniture and were filled with piles of pictures, reams of paper, stacks of books, packages, wrapped models for sculptures, all lying helter-skelter on the floor, everything covered with a thick coating of dust." The chaos of Picasso's work space was in sharp contrast to the elegance and order of the rooms on the floor below, where Olga "reigned as the perfect *maîtresse de maison*." She was determined, Brassaï remembered, "to preserve an elegant and chic atmosphere" against the incursions of Picasso's "eternal disorder."[3]

Brassaï. Olga, Picasso, and Tériade reflected in the mirror at Boisgeloup, 1932. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

The following day Picasso arranged for Brassaï and Tériade to drive down to Boisgeloup, the Norman château near the town of Gisors that he had purchased in June 1930 and where he had set up his sculpture studio. They were joined by Olga and eleven-year-old Paulo. They drove to the château in Picasso's Hispano-Suiza. Although ever more secretive about his private life, Picasso relished the attention his car attracted. Wherever it stopped, admirers gathered to inspect the coachwork without and within—not least the mirrored interior, with its crystal vases of flowers—as well as the impeccable white-gloved chauffeur.

Brassaï. Plaster sculptures by Picasso in the Boisgeloup studio, December 1932. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

Picasso never, ever drove. He was adamant: "An artist should never put his hands at risk." He held André Derain's love of Bugattis against him, and later upbraided Braque, who had bought a house in Normandy and liked to drive there in his Rolls-Royce with stacks of canvases on the roof. Hadn't Picasso, I once asked him, as the inventor of welded sculpture, been obliged to put his hands at risk by using a welding machine? Of course not, he said; that was the job of Julio González, the Spanish artist whose innovative use of iron as a medium made him one of modernism's greatest sculptors.[4]

On entering Picasso's property, the car passed a deserted chapel covered in ivy

Brassaï. Façade of the Château de Boisgeloup lit by a car's headlights, 1932. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

before stopping in front of the château. Once inside, Brassaï observed "vast dilapidated rooms, all totally empty save for some of Picasso's huge canvases of the 'giants' period. A tiny apartment under the mansard roof had been furnished for the painter and his family."[5] By the time they opened the sculpture studio, a former stable, the light was fading. Nonetheless, Brassaï was dazzled by the brilliant whiteness of Picasso's plaster busts of Marie-Thérèse. Like most in Picasso's circle, Brassaï knew nothing of Marie-Thérèse's existence, let alone that the works he had come to photograph were inspired by her image. One wonders, however, if Olga, well aware of Picasso's affair, suspected as much. If so, how heartbreaking to see her domain populated by tributes to her husband's young mistress.

"You've got your work cut out for you, Brassaï," Picasso said, "and it gets dark very quickly here." The studio had never been electrified. Night was falling so, *faute de mieux*, Picasso took down the hanging hurricane lamp that he used when working at night. Placed on the floor and shaded from the photographer by a watering can, the lamp provided a source of light. Typical of Picasso to improvise a lighting system, and typical of Brassaï to use the improvisation to heighten the chiaroscuro. Brassaï had brought along twenty-four *clichés-verres*—glass photographic plates—permitting forty-eight exposures. The imaginative use of the kerosene lamp resulted in a series of memorable art photographs. "For a sculpture to achieve its full round

shape," Picasso said, "its lit parts have to be brighter than the background and its dark parts darker. It's so simple."[6] Before leaving the château around midnight, Brassaï used his last *cliché-verre* to capture a dramatic image of the building's façade illuminated by the headlights of the Hispano-Suiza. [7]

As Brassaï and Tériade took their leave after their triumphant but exhausting trip, Picasso suggested they meet again the following evening. "Where could it be . . . the Moulin Rouge? The Bal Tabarin? Why don't we go to the Cirque Medrano? I love it, and I haven't been for ages. And it would certainly amuse Paulo."[8] And so, the following evening, Brassaï, Tériade, Olga, and Paulo reassembled at the Cirque Medrano, where Picasso had taken a box. He hooted with laughter at the clowns, while Paulo scarcely smiled. Nor did Olga: she looked taciturn and distant—and no wonder. As yet there had been no talk of divorce, but Olga's "moodiness and bad temper," in Brassaï's words, had made everything more fraught.[9]

At intermission they toured the circus's stables, and Picasso reminisced about his early days at the Bateau Lavoir and visits to the old Cirque Medrano, where he had made friends with the clowns, who taught him tricks. He rambled on about the fourteen-year-old girl who used to sell flowers, as well as herself, outside the circus. This girl had inspired one of his finest Rose Period paintings, snapped up by Gertrude and Leo Stein.

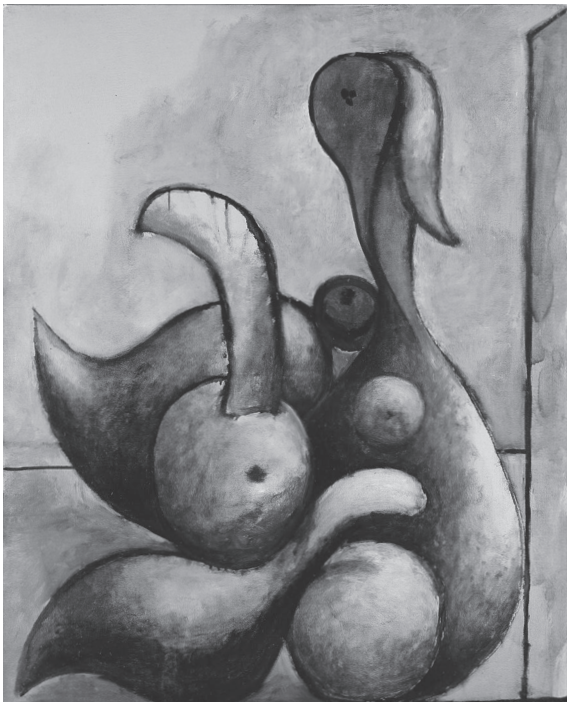
Besides the usual circus acts, the Medrano had recently added an exciting new spectacle, *Le Cirque sous l'eau*—The Underwater Circus. Described by circus historian Dominque Jando as a "water pantomime," it involved "an army of clowns, beautiful naiades in an aquatic ballet, and a battalion of sixteen showgirls. The pool equipment had been rented from the famous lion trainer Alfred Schneider's circus in Germany. . . . The legendary equestrienne Therese Renz (who was seventy-three and had not been seen in Paris since 1900!), the superlative Russian juggler Massimiliano Truzzi, and the Australian tightrope walker Con Colleano were among the 1932–33 season's highlights."[10] Six weeks later, Picasso organized a return visit to *Le Cirque sous l'eau* to celebrate Paulo's twelfth birthday, February 4.[11] It would be much happier than the previous outing. This second visit inspired several

Picasso. *The Circus,* February 5, 1933. Oil on canvas, 33 x 41 cm. Private collection.

paintings of wired trapezists splashing like flying fish in and out of the spotlights in an element that is both aqueous and aerial.[12]

The day spent with Brassaï at Boisgeloup would resonate in Picasso's work for months to come. Seeing his busts of Marie-Thérèse through the photographer's lens imprinted her sculptural likeness on the artist's mind and revived the impulse that had generated these works in the spring and summer of 1931. Josep Palau i Fabre puts it well: "The sculptural adventure with Marie-Thérèse had been a moment of euphoria, of plenitude, and he wanted to perpetuate it."[13] Picasso's obsession with his mistress's body found expression in a group of paintings, drawings, and etchings of sculptural subjects executed between January and May 1933. Brassaï wrote, "Sculpture was lurking like a virtuality deep within his paintings themselves, betraying nostalgia for art in the round."[14]

Consider the large still life of January 29, *Plaster Head and Fruit Dish*,[15] in which the artist opposes a strongly modeled bust of Marie-Thérèse on the left with a flattened compotier on the right—the symbolic motif used to stand for her in many subsequent paintings. Three weeks later, he again presents two- and three-dimensional visions of Marie-Thérèse in a pencil drawing of an artist's studio.[16] With its wide-open windows onto the sea and sky, the setting harks back to the still lifes Picasso made in his hotel room at Saint-Raphaël in summer 1919. On the left, he has set an easel with a painting of his sleeping mistress. On the right she appears as a bulbous, balloon-like sculpture on a pedestal.



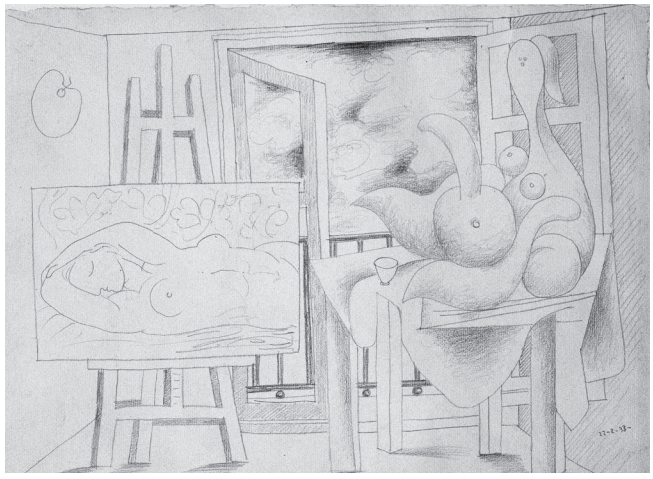
Picasso. *Seated Nude,* February 20, 1933. Oil on canvas, 130 x 97.3 cm. Kunstsammlung Nordhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

This nude figure also provided the subject of a monochromatic painting done a day or two prior, in which the flippered form of Marie-Thérèse sits on a simplified seashore.[17] The vertical element on the far right recalls the beach cabanas where she and the artist would meet in the first summers of their affair.

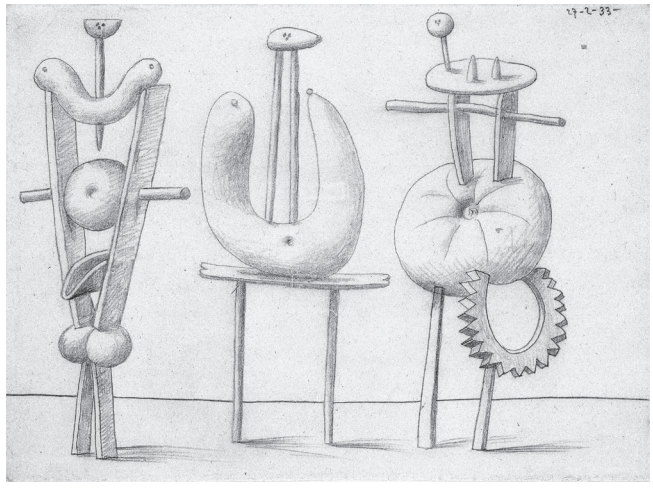
In the last week of February Picasso's experimentation with sculptural imagery turned toward found objects. In the space of a week he did the *Anatomies*: ten impeccably rendered

pencil drawings of pinheaded female figures in groups of three.[18] The bodies are composed of basic household elements: cups and saucers, cog wheels, planks, a coat hanger, cushions, picture frames, hoops, potatoes, a ball and chain, a funnel, and, exceptionally, a chalice. Despite their surreal contrivance, the figures are so three-dimensionally detailed that they cast consistent shadows on the ground.

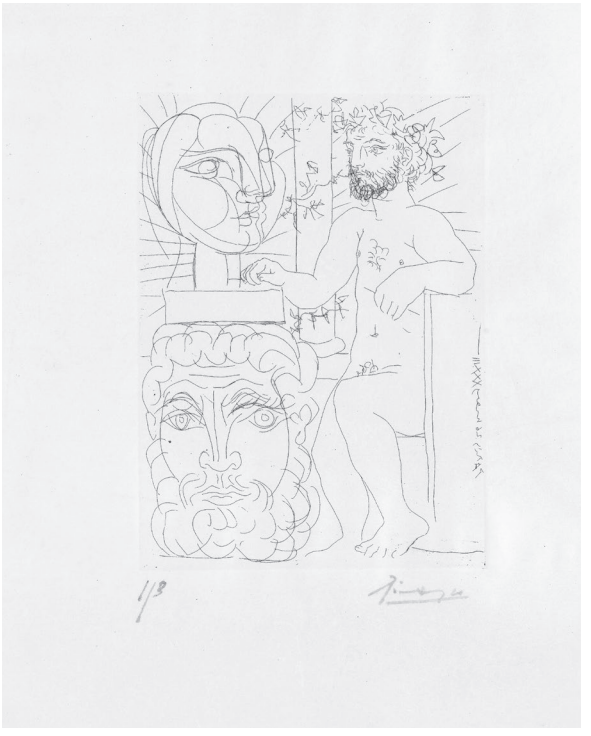
We must also take Picasso's prints of sculptural subjects into consideration. In six weeks between late March and early May Picasso executed some forty etchings on the theme of the artist and his model. Later dubbed the *Sculptor's Studio* series, this group would form a crucial part of the so-called *Vollard Suite* of one hundred copper plates acquired from Picasso in 1937 by his first Parisian dealer, Ambroise Vollard, and printed by Roger Lacourière for the first time two years later. Unlike Picasso's two previous print series, made for deluxe editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Balzac's *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* (*The Unknown Masterpiece*), both published in 1931, this body of work has no literary inspiration. Instead, it was born of Picasso's renewed fascination with his own sculptures of Marie-Thérèse as well as his long-standing interest in the art of the classical world. A decade or so earlier, he had ventured into classicism after the revelation of the monumental Farnese sculptures which had bowled him over on his visit to the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples in 1917.[19] Picasso, a native of southern Spain, was very aware of his classical Mediterranean heritage; hence his fascination with the subject matter and styles of antiquity; hence, too, his perverse impatience with it. As he said, "Les beautés du Parthénon, les Vénus, les Nymphes, les Narcisses, sont autant de mensonges" ("The beauties of the Parthenon, the Venuses, the Nymphs, the Narcissuses, are so many lies").[20]



Picasso. *The Studio,* February 22, 1933. Pencil on paper, 26.2 x 34.3 cm. Musée National Picasso, Paris.



Picasso. *An Anatomy: Three Women,* February 27, 1933. Graphite, 20 x 27 cm. Musée National Picasso, Paris.



LEFT Picasso. *Sculptor and His Self-Portrait Serving as a Pedestal for the Head of Marie-Thérèse, Vollard Suite,* March 26, 1933. Etching on parchment, 44.5 x 36 cm. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. RIGHT Picasso. *Sculptor in Repose with Marie-Thérèse and Her Representation as the Chaste Venus, Vollard Suite,* March 27, 1933; printed 1939. Etching, plate: 26.8 x 19.4 cm; sheet: 44 x 33.7 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund.

And so in these prints he chose to portray himself as a shaggy-haired and bearded sculptor of Greek antiquity, taking his ease in an Aegean studio "on a hilly island in the Mediterranean, like Crete," as he would tell his future mistress Françoise Gilot.[21] Marie-Thérèse is in attendance as both mistress and model. In many of the prints in the series, huge self-portrait heads charge the studio with Praxitelean energy, while the sculptor works away on variants of the phallic-nosed heads of Marie-Thérèse that Picasso had done two years earlier.[22] In the context of antiquity, they look idyllically at home.

He made no secret of his familiarity with the Louvre's Roman copy of Praxiteles's *Aphrodite of Cnidos*—one of the first female nudes in history (c. 400 BC). What better role for Marie-Thérèse than Aphrodite, goddess of love? The *Sculptor's Studio* prints are more tender and wistful than erotic, as if Picasso's bearded stand-in had arrived at a peaceful setting where he and Marie-Thérèse could live out their destinies in neoclassical bliss. Hence the air of wishful thinking.

In summer 1933, Picasso's ruminations on sculpture, triggered by his photographic

Picasso. *Head of a Warrior.* Boisgeloup, 1933. Plaster, metal, and wood, 120.7 x 24.9 x 68.8 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Jacqueline Picasso.

outing with Brassaï in December, would culminate in real, three-dimensional figures on a monumental scale. Back in his Boisgeloup studio, the artist would complete the first version of his *Woman with a Lamp*, discussed in the previous chapter, as well as *Head of a Warrior*, both in white plaster. Note particularly the ferocity of the latter figure's eyes, which were fabricated from two tennis balls—a testicular pun. This disconcerting masterpiece—ironical, comical, and sublimely ugly—derives partly from the hieratic noses he had devised for his busts of Marie-Thérèse in 1931. But this new monster stands for Picasso himself. The huge penile nose hints of self-portraiture. Its protuberant eyes, according to Gijs van Hensbergen, seem to refer to Saint Lucy, the patron saint of the blind (her emblem: two eyes on a dish), whom Picasso held in superstitious reverence.