

# Art in America

March 1993

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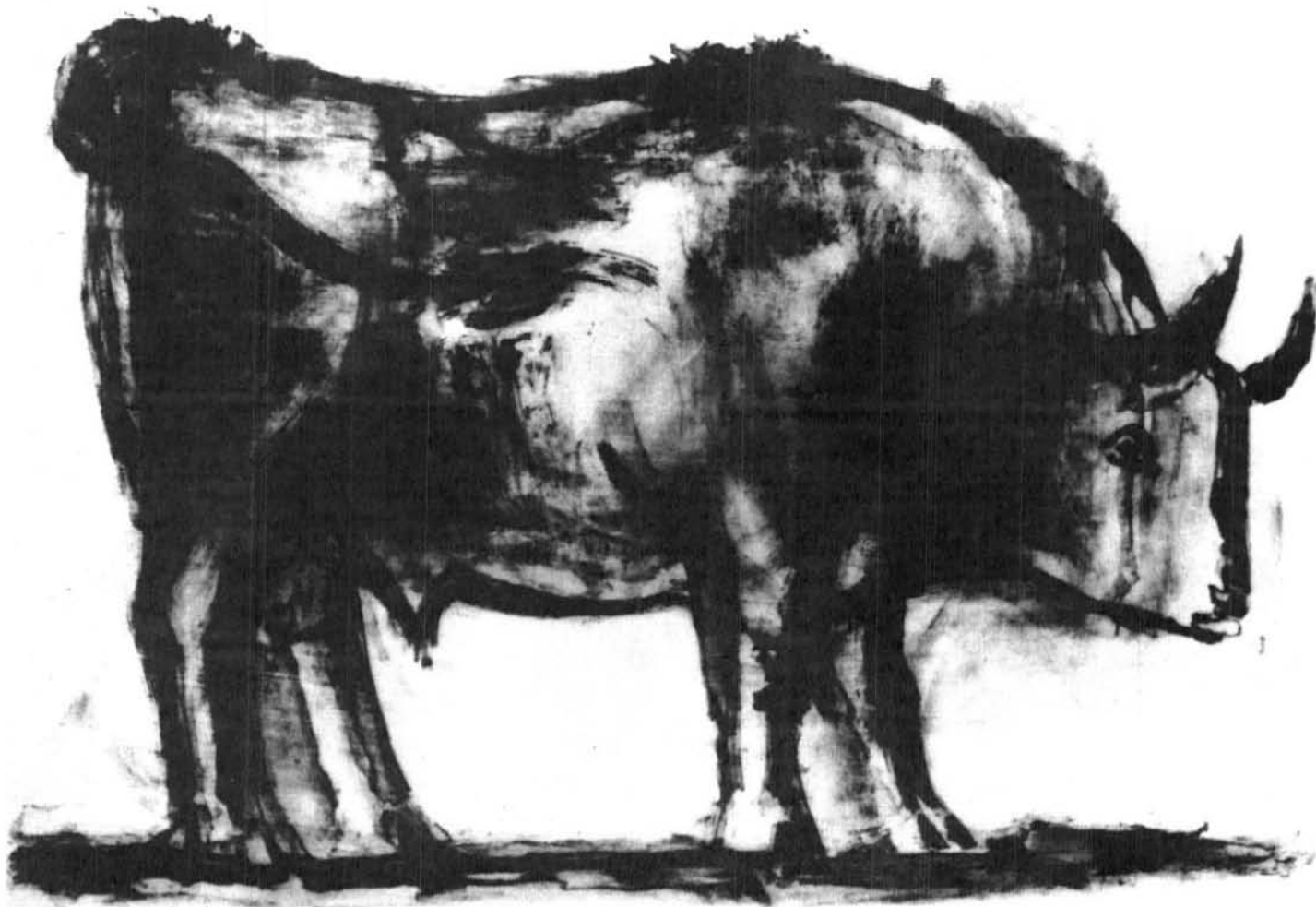
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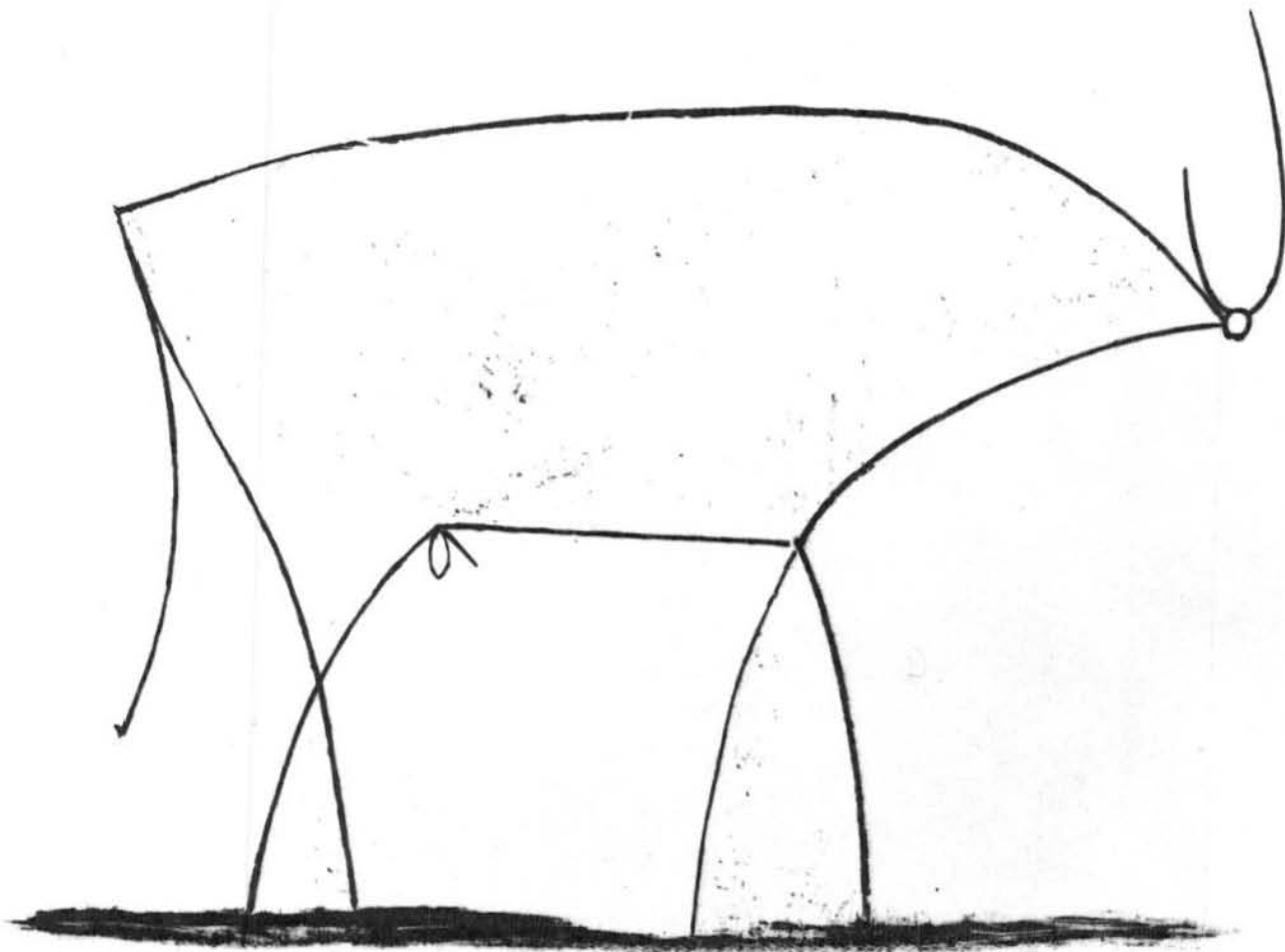


*Pablo Picasso: The Bull, first of 11 progressive states, Dec. 5, 1945, lithograph (see pages 82-83 for full series).*

# Picasso's Bull(s): Art History in Reverse

*In a burst of creative activity after World War II, Picasso produced four series of lithographs—most notably the well-known group of prints in which he deconstructed the image of a bull. Picasso's metamorphic process is here seen as an instance of modernist abstraction, but also as an exorcising of the accumulated legacy of the Western tradition and a quasi-pedagogical evocation of “the idea of a timeless graphic naïveté.”*

**BY IRVING LAVIN**



*The Bull, last of 11 progressive states, Jan. 17, 1946, lithograph.*

On Nov. 2, 1945, when Picasso entered the lithographic workshop of Fernand Mourlot in the rue de Chabrol in Paris, he took up a medium he had practiced before only rarely, and never assiduously. On that day, however—as if to celebrate the liberation of Paris and the end of the war—Picasso began a veritable orgy of lithographic creativity that lasted four months.<sup>1</sup> He worked at least 12-hour days, almost without interruption; the hectic activity was described by Jean Célestin, one of the craftsmen who participated:

“We gave him a stone and two minutes later he was at work with crayon and brush. And there was no stopping him. As lithographers we were astounded by him. When you make a lithograph, the stone has been prepared, and if you have to make a correction the stone has to be retouched. . . . Right. We run off twelve to fifteen proofs for him and return the stone to him in good order. Then he makes his

second state. On a stone like that, normally when it has been retouched twice, the original preparation becomes somewhat spoilt. . . . And he would scrape and add ink and crayon and change everything! After this sort of treatment the design generally becomes indecipherable and is destroyed. But, with him! Each time it would turn out very well. Why? That’s a mystery. [Picasso is] a real hard worker. . . . We used to leave at 8 at night and he would be there at 8:30 in the morning. Sometimes I would suggest that we should call it a day. . . . He would look at the stone, light up a Gauloise and give me one, and then we were off again . . . and in the morning we would start again.”<sup>2</sup>

We know everything Picasso did during that period and we can follow his progress day by day. The chief results of this frenzied activity were four series of images: two of female heads, a third of a pair of nudes, and the fourth of a bull. Picasso took up the themes in that order, producing respectively 6, 10, 18



Picasso: *The Minotauremachie*, 1935, etching, scraper and burin on copper, 19 3/4 by 27 1/4 inches. From top to bottom: 1st, 3rd and 7th of 7 states.

and 11 versions; of every variant a number of prints—I hesitate to say proofs—were pulled, reserved for the artist. In each case the suite was made not from separate lithographic stones but from successive reworkings of the same stone.<sup>3</sup>

Célestin's description confirms the evidence of the actual prints—that what possessed Picasso was the process itself, the sequence of states and their cumulative effect as a series. Indeed, Picasso seems to have put into practice here an idea he had expressed a few months earlier when speaking of one of his paintings: "If it were possible, I would leave it as it is, while I began over and carried it to a more advanced state on another canvas. Then I would do the same thing with that one. There would never be a 'finished' canvas, but just the different 'states' of a single painting, which normally disappear in the course of work."<sup>4</sup>

As far as I can discover, nothing quite like it had ever been seen before. There was certainly nothing new about works in series on a single theme—Monet's church facades and grain stacks spring to mind; and there was certainly nothing new about multiple states of a single print—Impressionist printmakers achieved varied effects comparable to Monet's through multiple modifications of the same plate.<sup>5</sup> Picasso had subjected some of his own etched plates to 30 or more reworkings.<sup>6</sup>

Three main points, taken together, distinguish the lithographic series. First, the states acquire a new self-sufficiency, with the separate reworkings treated quite differently. Instead of pulling a small number of trial proofs before a much larger run from the final version, Picasso ordered a fixed and usually large number of prints—18 or 19—to be made from each state, including the last, which was then given an additional, final, run of its own. Clearly neither the states nor the multiple prints made from them were trials in the ordinary sense; they were conceived as a unified, if not wholly predetermined, series and were meant to be compared with one another. Second, the designs were not simply variations but consistently progressive transformations of a basic theme; it is as if Picasso had set out to tell a story, an epic narrative that recounted the life history of a work of art. Third, the formal and conceptual sequence moved in the opposite direction from that of earlier suites. Normally, the successive states of prints, including Picasso's own, become richer and more complex. The bull starts out that way, with the second state darker and weightier than the first. Thereafter, however, the compositions become ever more simple and schematic—more "abstract," if that word has any sense in this context.



**In the four lithographic series Picasso began towards the end of 1945, it is as if he has set out to tell a story—an epic narrative that recounts the life history of a work of art.**

**W**hile they might seem coincidental, I believe these innovations were interdependent and complementary; if so, the lithographs could even be conscious, programmatic illustrations of the trenchant self-revelations Picasso made in an interview with Christian Zervos in 1935. "In the old days," he said,

pictures went forward toward completion by stages. Every day brought something new. A picture used to be a sum of additions. In my case a picture is a sum of destructions. I do a picture—then I destroy it. In the end, though, nothing is lost. . . It would be very interesting to preserve photographically, not the stages, but the metamorphoses of a picture. Possibly one might then discover the path followed by the brain in materializing a dream. But there is one very odd thing—to notice that basically a picture doesn't change, that the first "vision" remains almost intact, in spite of appearances.<sup>7</sup>

Matisse, who used photographs to record the evolution of his paintings, often toward greater abstraction, offers a striking parallel and contrast. His purpose was not to docu-



Picasso: Long-haired Young Girl, lithograph, 15 by 12 1/4 inches. Left, 1st of 6 states, Nov. 6, 1945; right, 6th state, Nov. 24, 1945.

ment the process as such, however, but to enable him to judge the progress of the work: "The photos taken in the course of execution of the work permit me to know if the last conception conforms more [to his mental conception] than the preceding ones; whether I have advanced or regressed."<sup>8</sup> Matisse referred to the succeeding conceptions as stages (*étapes*), a notion which, as we have just seen, Picasso specifically rejected.<sup>9</sup> Matisse elsewhere described the multiple permutations portrayed in his *Themes and Variations* suite of drawings as "a motion-

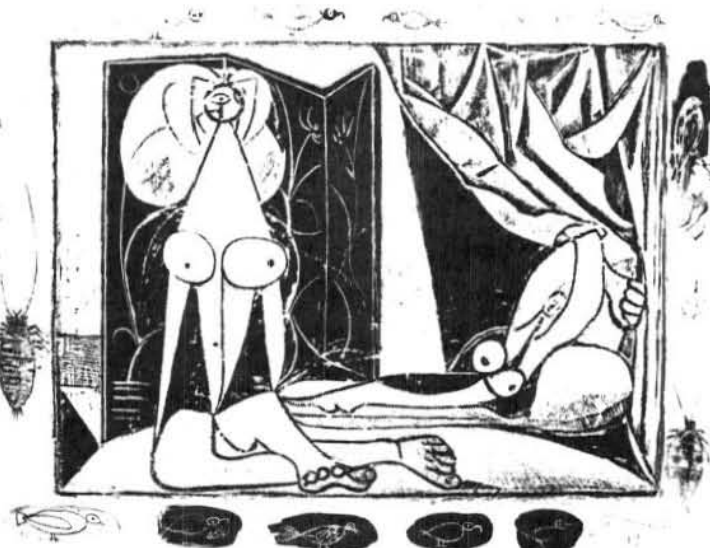
picture film of the feelings of an artist."<sup>10</sup> The cinema metaphor refers to Matisse's variations on a motif, however, not to a consistent formal progression. And, in fact, while some of the themes start with a shaded drawing, all the other sketches are purely linear and betray neither a tendency toward abstraction nor any other idea of progression.

In engraving and etching, the normal sequence of states is from relative simplicity to relative complexity; this development is consonant with the technique because expunging the marks made in a metal plate is extremely difficult. Erasures are much easier in lithography, though Picasso evidently now also pushed this medium much farther than the experts thought possible,<sup>11</sup> whence the plot of the creation drama enacted in Moulrot's workshop begins to emerge. Only on the lithographic stone was it possible to tell the particular story Picasso had in mind—the retrogressive destruction of a single work of art back to its original state; or, what amounts to the same thing, the progressive evolution of a single work to its ideal state.

The process of simplification and abstraction had been inherent in the modernist enterprise and on occasion had approached a quasi-seriality. A case in point, which Picasso certainly knew, is Matisse's successive variations of the same sculpture. It is doubtful that Matisse conceived of sculptures such as *The Back* as a series, however, since he made them only intermittently, sometimes at intervals of many years, and almost never exhibited them together.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the progression consists in reorganizing, rather than eliminating, modeled form. Modeled form is progressively eliminated in another case,



Picasso: Head of Young Girl, lithograph, 12 1/4 by 10 1/4 inches. Left, 1st of 10 states, Nov. 7, 1945; right, 10th state, Feb. 19, 1946.



Picasso: *Two Nude Women*, lithograph, 9 1/2 by 13 inches. Left, 1st of 18 states, Nov. 10, 1945; right, 18th state, Feb. 12, 1946.

which I suspect Picasso also knew, a sequence of cows by the Dutch De Stijl painter Theo van Doesburg, who published a selection in a treatise on esthetics in 1925;<sup>13</sup> Doesburg's cows are not variations of the same work, however, but begin with a photograph and pass through a number of preparatory drawings to a final, completely nonobjective, painting. In Picasso's lithographs, the process becomes coherent, unified, objectified, and the subject of an object lesson, not in art theory but in art history. The lesson, moreover, is conceived in a special way, which can best be learned from the history of Picasso's bull.

Several factors suggest that the bull was, in fact, the main offspring of Picasso's lithographic orgy. The four series were conceived in relation to one another and form a coherent group, personally and psychologically no less than formally. The women evidently refer to Dora Maar and Françoise Gilot, with whom Picasso was then deeply involved, and the bull served, here as elsewhere in his work, as a self-image and a symbol of bestiality in general.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Picasso started the bull series after the other three but then worked on it with particular intensity. In the case of the bull, Picasso actually studied the solutions he would then commit to the tortured stone: he produced concurrently several sketches, a watercolor and a number of intermediate states (of which evidently only single proofs were taken) and independent lithographs.<sup>15</sup> For a time, he even dropped everything else to pursue the bull to its end—or should one say its beginning?

The bull thus forms the centerpiece, both thematically and chronologically, in this complex group of interlocking sequences of

quasi-autobiographical images. The bull also has a special place in the recollections of those who worked with Picasso at Mourlot's:

One day . . . he started work on the famous bull. It was a superb, well-rounded bull. I thought myself that that was that. But not at all. A second state and a third, still well-rounded, followed. And so it went on. But the bull was no longer the same. It began to get smaller and to lose weight. . . . Picasso was taking away rather than adding to his composition. . . . He was carving away slices of his bull at the same time. And after each change we pulled a proof. He could see that we were puzzled. He made a joke, he went on working, and then he produced another bull. And each time less and less of the bull remained. He used to look at me and laugh. "Look . . .," he would say, "we ought to give this bit to the butcher. The housewife could say: I want

that piece, or this one. . . ." In the end, the bull's head was like that of an ant. . . . At the last proof there remained only a few lines. I had watched him at work, reducing, always reducing. I still remembered the first bull and I said to myself: What I don't understand is that he has ended up where really he should have started! But he, Picasso, was seeking his own bull. And to achieve his one line bull he had gone in successive stages through all the other bulls. And when you look at that line you cannot imagine how much work it involved. . . .<sup>16</sup>

Picasso's joke about the butcher and the housewife reveals part of what he had in mind: to retrieve the bull's constituent parts, to recover and reduce the *dissecta membra* of his dream bull—bred of pure lines—to an elemental, disembodied, quintessential bulliness.

Another insight is suggested by one of the



most striking aspects of the animal's metamorphosis—duly observed, at least in part, by the perspicacious craftsman—the progressive diminution in the relative size of the head and the genitalia, surely metaphors for rationality and brutishness. Picasso's bull was headed toward a preternatural state of illuminated absent-mindedness and incorporeality—before it had acquired the bulky accretions of sophisticated European culture.

References to sophisticated European culture are both numerous and essential to the import of Picasso's image. The animal's mythological and sporting associations, the Minotaur and the *corrida*, had long been part of the fauna of Picasso's visionary landscape, and in this tradition the suite is certainly related to Goya's etched cycle of floating dream bulls, provocatively titled "Folly of Fools." Since the Middle Ages, when St. Luke, who painted the first portrait of Christ and the Virgin, became the patron of the artists' guilds and the early academies of art, the evangelist's ox had been the very emblem of the art of painting. As such, it often served to introduce books of instruction on academic drawing, a genre of publication that held special significance for Picasso, as we shall see presently.<sup>17</sup> Even Picasso's joke about the butcher is relevant here, since his remark, and the intermediate stages of the design itself, insistently recall those sectioned images of bovine anatomy that adorn the walls of butcher shops and the chapters on meat in elementary cookbooks.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from such serio-comic references to traditional and familiar themes, Picasso's process of thought might be defined as a genetic historicism in which, to borrow a pair

of biological concepts, ontogeny repeats phylogeny—that is, the history of the individual recapitulates the history of the species. Picasso's bull really does have a binary genealogy. The grandiose, primordial beasts of Paleolithic art must also have figured vividly in Picasso's imagination. The final state of the lithographic bull has been aptly likened to such Ice Age depictions.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the whole series seems to echo the great thundering procession of weightless animals at Lascaux, the noblest of all prehistoric bull pens; or, more specifically perhaps, the Black and White Chamber at Niaux, where the monochrome figures are shown in varying degrees of articulation, from modeled form to outlined shape.

**P**icasso defined his attitude to this art in two remarkable statements, one made quite spontaneously to his secretary, Jaime Sabartés, who reported it as follows:

I cannot recall why nor on what occasion . . .

**Describing the multiple permutations on a motif in his "Themes and Variations" suite, Matisse once called those drawings "a motion-picture film of the feelings of an artist."**

[Picasso] decided to pass on to me, as if he were tired of thinking, this idea which he seems to have been meditating for the longest time: "Primitive sculpture has never been surpassed. Have you noticed the precision of the lines engraved in the caverns? . . . You have seen reproductions. . . The Assyrian bas-reliefs still keep a similar purity of expression." "How do you explain to yourself," I asked, "the disappearance of this marvelous simplicity?" "This is due to the fact that man ceased to be simple. He wanted to see farther and so he lost

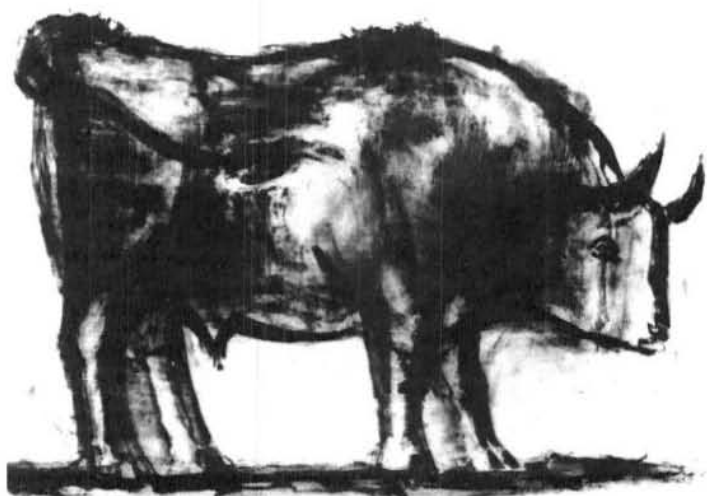


Above, Henri Matisse: *The Rumanian Blouse*, 1937, oil on canvas. Private collection. Photographs during work taken on Nov. 8, Nov. 9 and Nov. 11, and the final version, Nov. 12.

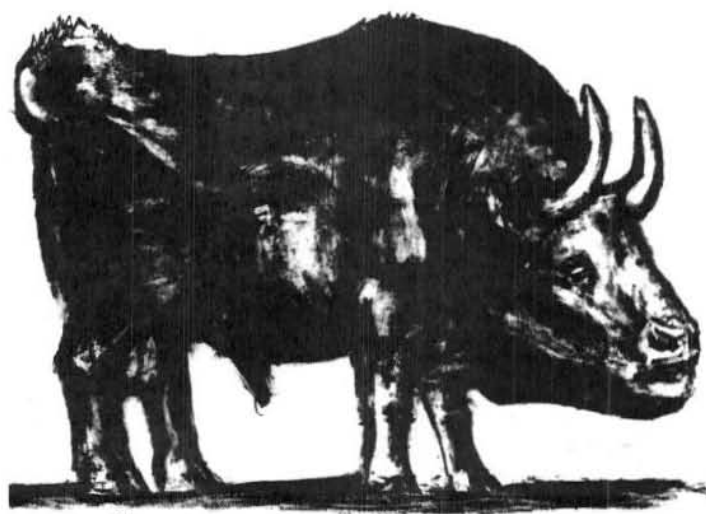
Left, Matisse: Three drawings of 18 from *Themes and Variations*, Series "O," 1942. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris. From left to right, numbers 1, 2 and 18.



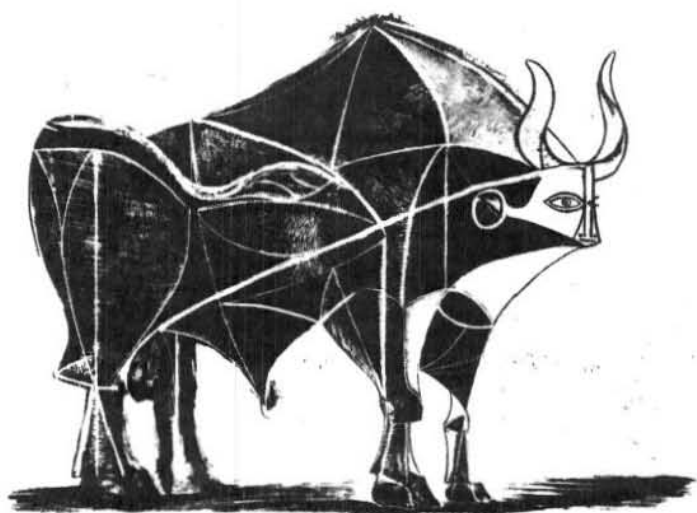




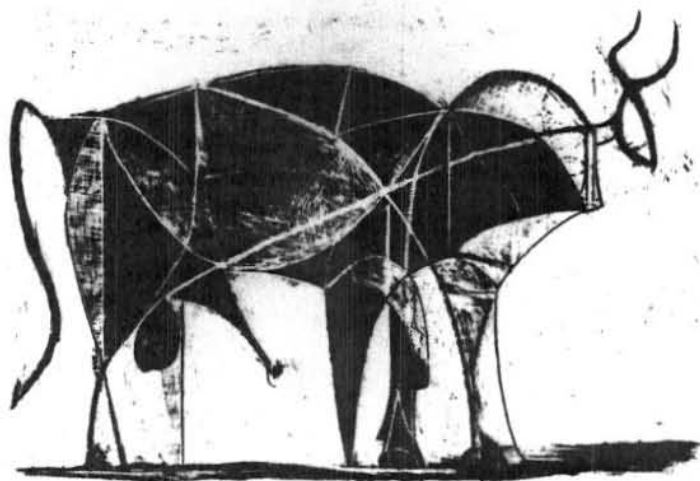
December 5, 1945



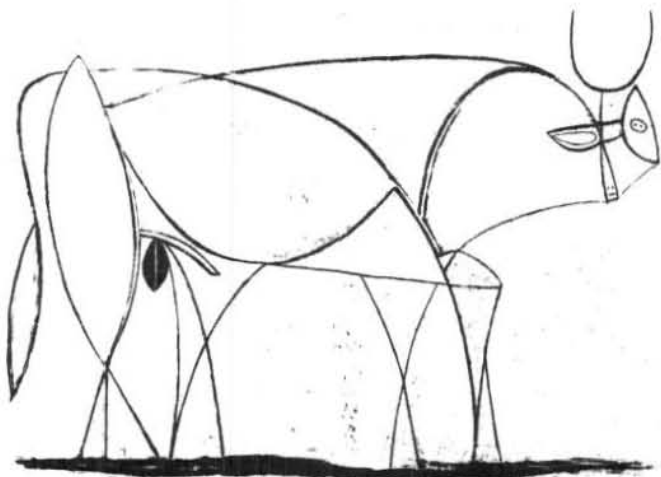
December 12, 1945



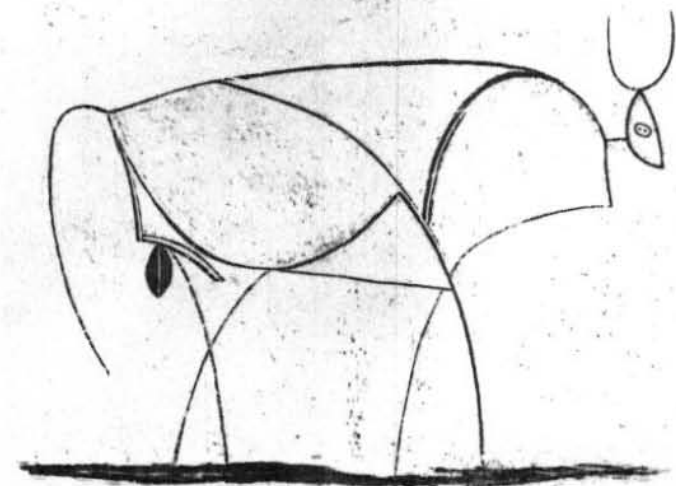
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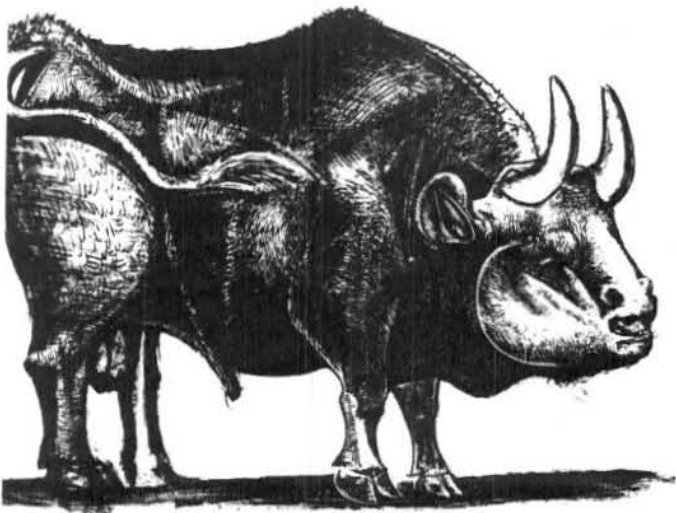


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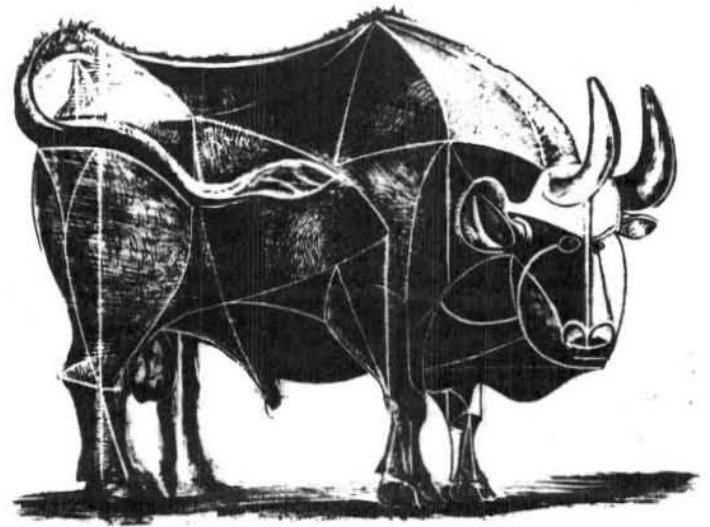


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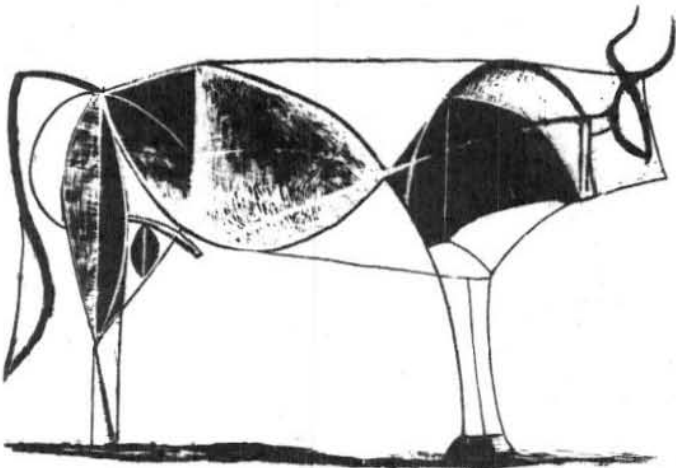




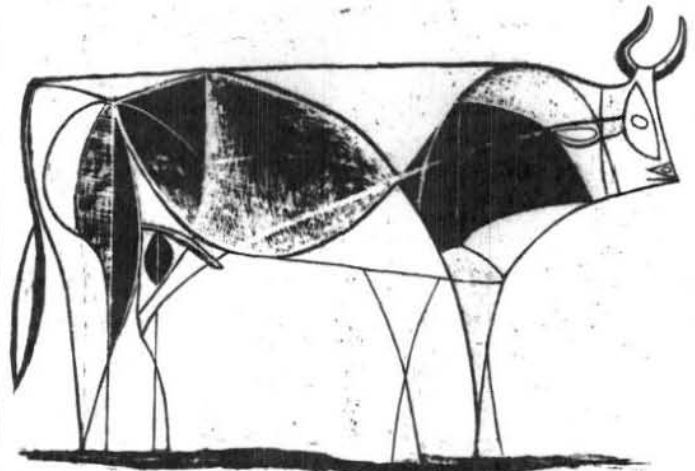
November 18, 1945



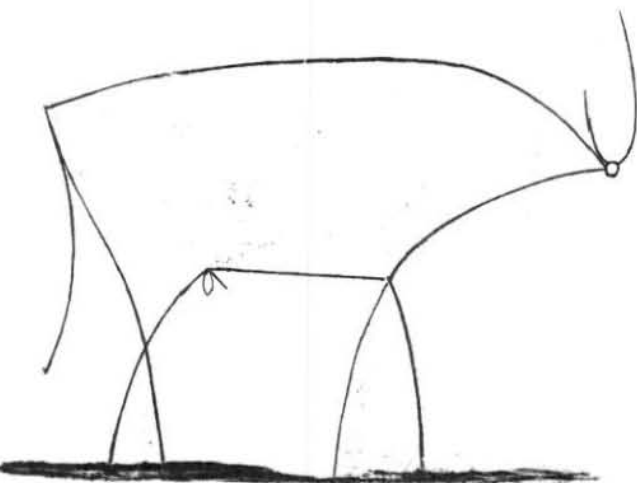
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November 28, 1945



January 2, 1946



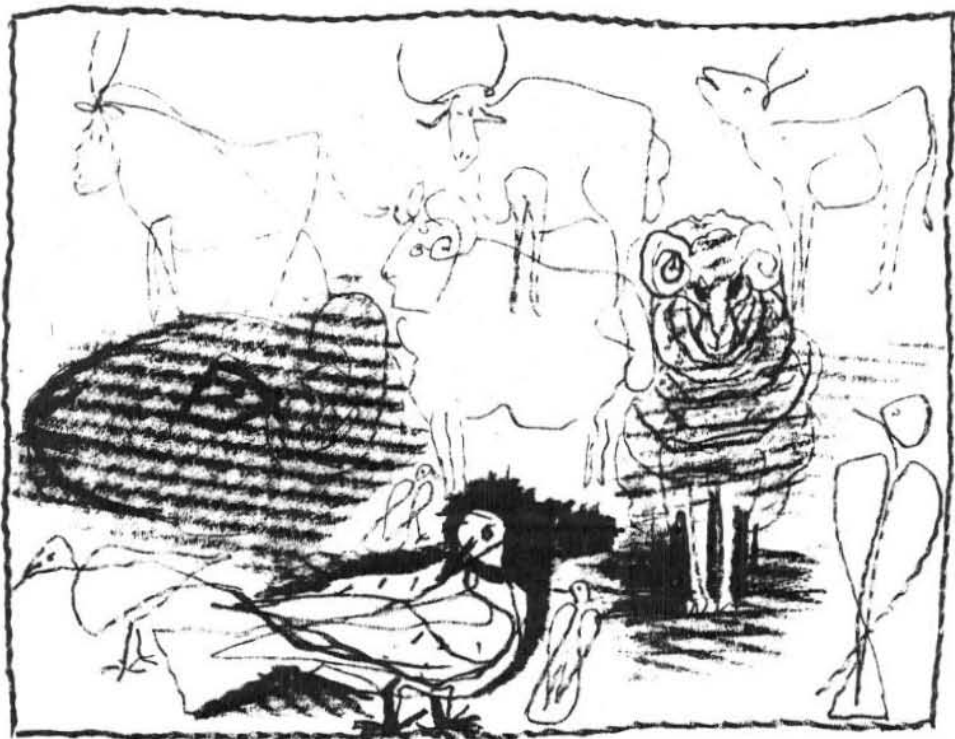
January 17, 1946

*Eleven progressive states of Picasso's The Bull, Dec. 5, 1945- Jan. 17, 1946, lithograph on stone. The dimensions of these lithographs are approximately 11 1/4 by 16 1/4 inches, but vary slightly in each state. Picasso worked the stone with ink wash, pen and ink, and a scraper. In addition to these 11 main states, there were a number of intermediary states as well (see page 85).*

**In a number of drawings and collateral works, the bull is a linear wraith. The once threatening enemy has become Picasso's pet, executing witty tricks, like a tame circus animal commanded by its handler.**

the faculty of understanding that which he had within reach of his vision. . . . The same happens with a watch: it will go more or less well; but if it goes at all it is not so bad. The worst begins the moment it falls into the hands of a watchmaker. . . . His manipulations will rob it of its purity, and this will never return. It may preserve the same external appearance, just as the idea of art subsists; but we already know what has been done to it by the schools. . . . Its essence has evaporated, and I make you a present of what remains."<sup>20</sup>

The marvel of this pristine purity of expression had deep meaning for Picasso. A similar response underlay the explanation he gave André Malraux of the difference between his own early interest and that of Matisse and Braque in African sculpture—*les Nègres*, "the Blacks," to use his term. The Blacks, he said, were not primitive, as were Egyptian and Chaldean sculpture, and his interest, unlike Matisse's and Braque's, was not merely formal, as if these works were no different from

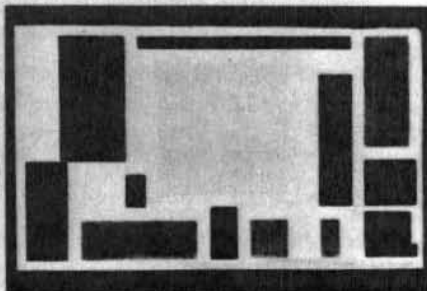
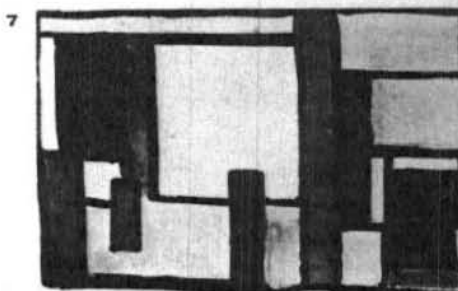
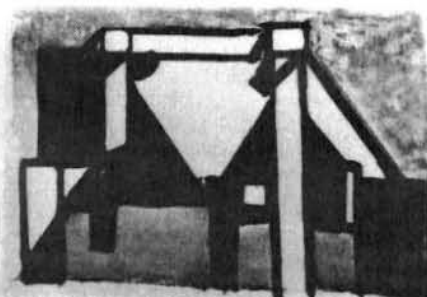


Picasso: bulls, rams and birds, Dec. 22, 1945, lithograph.

any other good sculpture. He realized instead that they were magic things, intercessors, mediators, fetishes, weapons; and he described *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* as his

first exorcism painting. In this link between what he called "the spirits," "the unconscious," "emotion," and the exorcism of the accumulated legacy of Western tradition, Picasso's enterprise is phylogenetic.<sup>21</sup>

One might say with equal aptness that as Picasso's lithographic bulls become increasingly simple and simpleminded, they also seem to become increasingly childish. This is the ontogenetic aspect of the enterprise. It is best understood from another of Picasso's notorious pronouncements, that in his youth he drew like Raphael, and it took him many years to learn to draw like a child. This dictum itself has a revealing history. The first part alone was printed in an anonymous article in the *London Times* of Oct. 25, 1956, on the occasion of Picasso's 75th birthday. It was reported that on visiting an exhibition of children's art, Picasso had remarked that at their age he drew like Raphael. The writer comments that such personal arrogance would be worthy only of a man of Picasso's greatness.<sup>22</sup> Two days later Herbert Read, the English art critic, wrote a corrective letter to the editor of the *Times* explaining that the remark, which he now quoted in full, was made to him during a visit he and the artist made to the exhibition. Taking the comment metaphorically, Read thought it showed "the humility that is a characteristic of all true genius."<sup>23</sup> In my view, the observation was neither arrogant (he did not claim that he drew as well as Raphael!)



ÄSTHETISCHE TRANSFIGURATION EINES GEGENSTANDES  
Abb. 5: Photographische Darstellung. Abb. 6: Formgebundene Akzentuierung von Verhältnissen.  
Abb. 7: Aufhebung der Form. Abb. 8: Bild

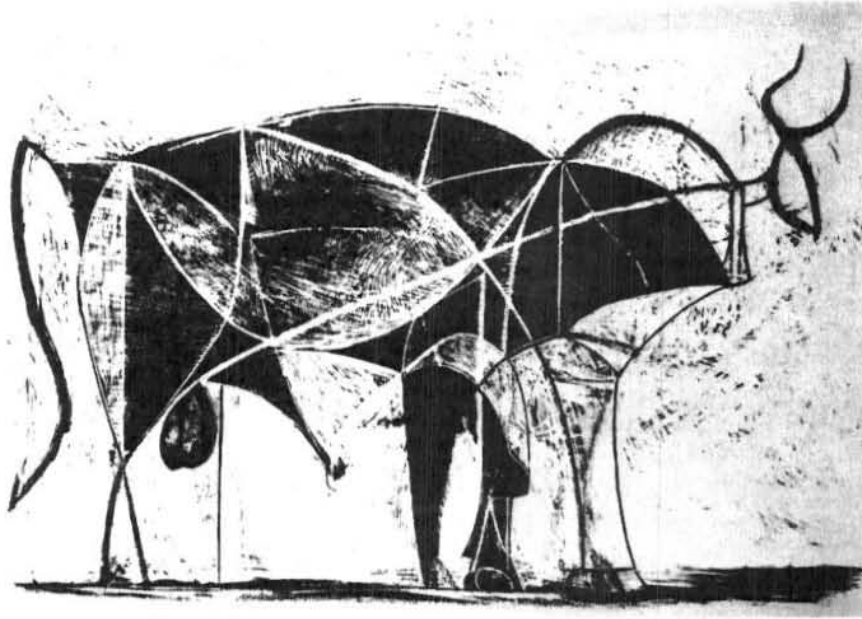
Theo van Doesburg's illustration of the process of abstraction, in which a photograph of a cow is transformed into an abstract composition. (From van Doesburg's *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst*, Frankfurt, 1925, page 18, figures 5-8.)

nor humble nor metaphorical but a simple—and perhaps somewhat rueful—statement of fact.

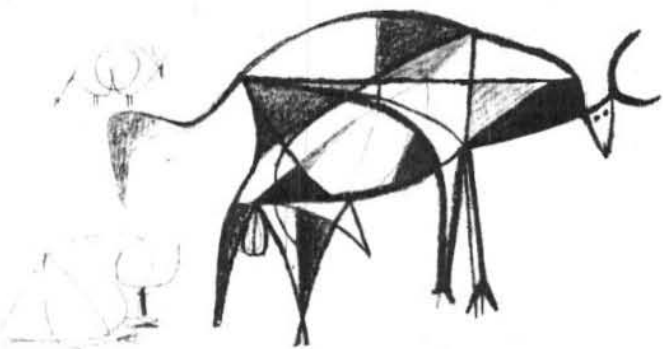
In another context, discussing a young boy's drawings, which he greatly admired, Picasso spoke of "the genius of childhood":

Contrary to what sometimes happens in music, miracle children do not exist in painting. What might be taken for a precocious genius is *the genius of childhood*. When the child grows up, it disappears without a trace. . . . As for me, I didn't have this genius. My first drawings could never be exhibited in an exposition of children's drawings. The awkwardness and naïveté of childhood were almost absent from them. I outgrew the period of that marvelous vision very rapidly. At that boy's age I was making drawings that were completely academic. Their precision, their exactitude, frightens me. My father was a professor of drawing, and it was probably he who pushed me prematurely in that direction. . . .<sup>24</sup>

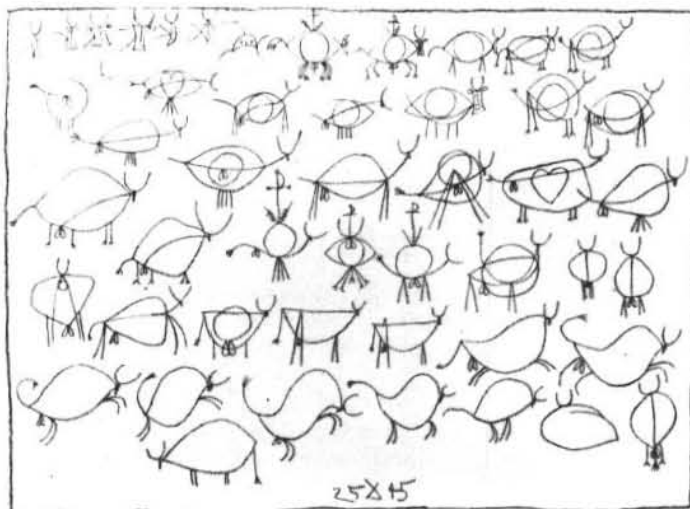
For Picasso the fragile genius of childhood



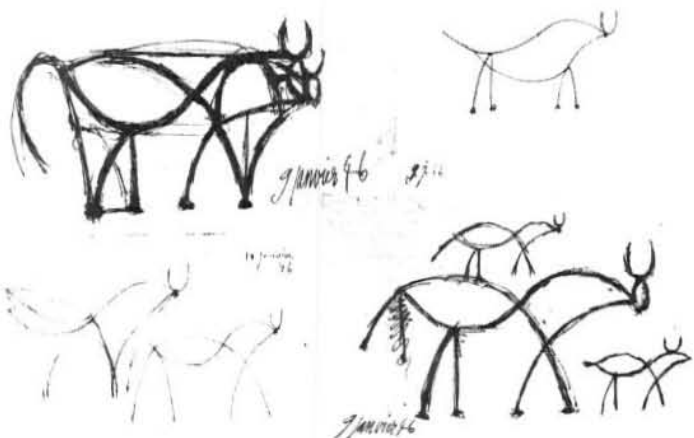
Picasso: intermediate state between states 5 and 6 of *The Bull*, Dec. 24-26, 1945, lithograph.



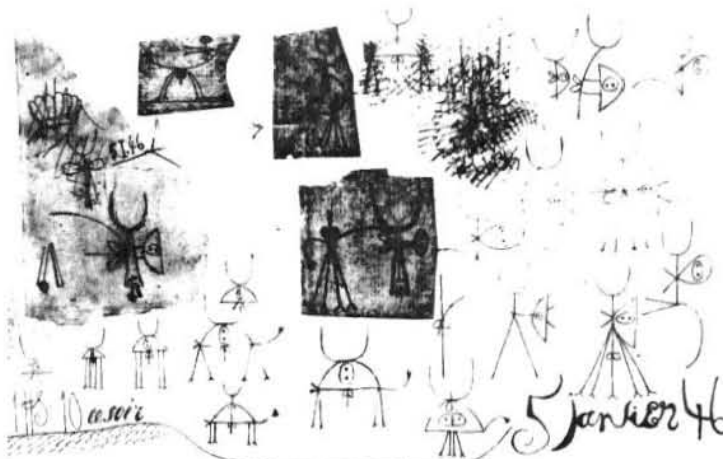
Picasso: *Side View of Bull*, Dec. 25, 1945, lithograph, 11 1/4 by 16 1/4 inches.



Picasso: *Page of Bulls*, Dec. 25, 1945, lithograph, 12 1/4 by 17 inches.

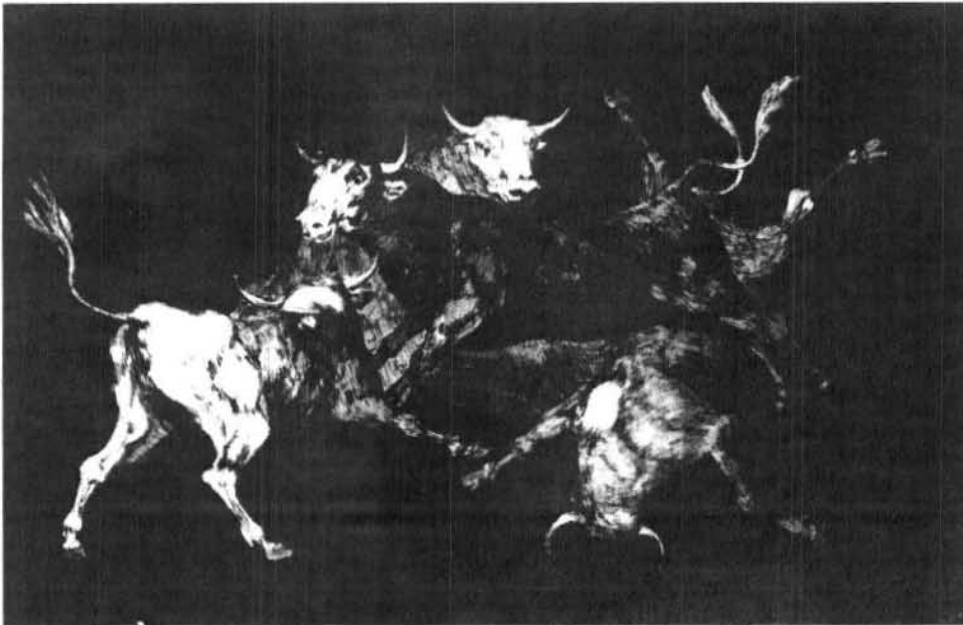


Picasso: *studies of bulls*, Jan. 9 and 10, 1946, ink drawings, 8 1/4 by 13 1/4 inches. Ex-collection Marie-Thérèse Walter.



Picasso: *studies of bulls*, Jan. 5, 1946, ink drawings and collage, 8 1/4 by 13 1/4 inches. Ex-collection Marie-Thérèse Walter.





Left, Francisco Goya: *Disparate de Tontos (Folly of Fools)*, ca. 1816, etching, aquatint, fine scratches, 9 1/2 by 13 1/2 inches.



Right, Abraham Bloemaert's drawing of the ox of St. Luke as the symbol of painting, etched and published by Frederick Bloemaert as plate 21 of his drawing manual, *Artis Apellae liber*, Utrecht, n.d. (ca. 1650).

could be subverted in the name of freedom. On another occasion he said,

They tell you that you have to give children freedom. In reality they make them do children's drawings. They teach them to do it. They have even taught them to do children's drawings which are abstract. . .

In reality, as usual, on the pretext of giving them complete freedom and above all not tying them down, they shut them up in their own special style, with all their chains.

An odd thing . . . is that I have never done children's drawings. Never. Even when I was very small. I remember one of my first drawings. I was perhaps six, or even less. In my father's house there was a statue of Hercules with his club in the corridor, and I drew Hercules. But it wasn't a child's drawing. It was a real drawing representing Hercules with his club.<sup>25</sup>

This drawing of Hercules is actually preserved, inscribed with Picasso's signature and the date November 1890, when he was nine; it confirms his youthful academic ability. In fact, we have many drawings by Picasso from this early period. They are often playful and deliberately crude, but they are never really childish.<sup>26</sup> In complete contrast to the childhood works are the astonishing counterfeits of children's drawings and cutouts made by Picasso for his daughter Maïa about 1937-40; some of these seem uncannily like childish versions of Picasso's own early (ca. 1890) "art-toys."<sup>27</sup> In any case, it may not be coincidental that the children's exhibition mentioned in the *Times*, which had been arranged by Herbert Read himself, was shown in Paris in 1945, shortly before the

lithographic series began.<sup>28</sup>

The lithographic process enabled Picasso to merge, in the evolution of his serial bull, two conceptions of history—one cultural and rooted in a prerationalistic spiritual state of society, the other psychological and rooted in the presophisticated mental state of the child. In a way, Picasso was taking up an old theme that had been illustrated a century before—for example, by the American painter Thomas Cole in the second of a set of five historical paintings representing "The Course of Empire" from the *Savage State* through the *Consummation of Empire* to the final *Desolation*.<sup>29</sup> *The Arcadian or Pastoral State* includes the invention of the practical and the fine arts; Cole shows the invention of painting as a young boy drawing a childish stick figure on a stone that bears Cole's own initials. The difference is that Picasso was not motivated by a romantic historicism but by the search for a new and universally valid expressive idiom.

In a curious way, however, Cole's image focuses on the tertium quid that conjoins phylogeny and ontogeny in the history of Picasso's bull(s), namely, the idea of a timeless graphic naïveté. This concept is most sharply perceived in Picasso's affinity for popular graffiti, which underlay his friendship with the photographer Brassai. During the very period that concerns us Brassai was preparing his book on graffiti (published in 1961) and the subject was a leitmotif of his conversations with Picasso.<sup>30</sup> From the disparate remarks Brassai recorded it is clear

that Picasso was intensely affected by graffiti: "A wall is a wonderful thing, isn't it? I've always paid close attention to what happens on them. When I was young, I often used to copy the graffiti I saw." And he engaged in the practice himself: "I left a lot of them on the walls of Montmartre." He recognized the potentiality as works of art, both of his own graffiti—he told of a banker who had one removed from the wall of a building under renovation and installed on the wall of his apartment—and those of others: "They are really astonishing. What fantastic invention you sometimes find in them." Some graffiti are "absolutely splendid. . . They are little masterpieces." He applied the technique to his own work: "Now I myself am making graffiti. But they are engraved in cement, instead of on a wall . . . enlarged, and cut out with electric chisels . . . for a building in Barcelona . . . each of them . . . two to three stories high." And he saw the influence of graffiti on other artists: "This is a Rouault!" "That one is a Klee!"

Picasso recognized local and regional "styles" of graffiti: "Italian and Spanish graffiti—I know them very well—do not resemble the Parisian graffiti. The phallic symbols you see on the walls of Rome, for instance, are specifically Italian. Rome is very rich in graffiti, as a matter of fact." At the same time, he grasped their universality, even in the physical sense: "Graffiti belong to everyone and no one." Most important in our context is that Picasso associated graffiti both with the art of children ("I always stop when I see children drawing in the street, on the sidewalk or on a



**Allusions to European culture are both numerous and essential to the meaning of Picasso's bull. The series is certainly related to Goya's "Folly of Fools," an etched cycle of floating dream bulls.**

wall. It's surprising—the things that come from their hands. They often teach me something") and with primitive art: "That [head] is as rich as the façade of a cathedral! . . . Your book links art with the primitive arts." His comments to Brassai show that he found in graffiti evidence of an ultimate abstract graphic distillation of reality:

To arrive at abstraction, it is always necessary to begin with a concrete reality. . . . I have often done faces like this myself. The people who scratch them out like this naturally gravitate to symbols. Art is a language of symbols. . . . Two holes—that's the symbol for the face, enough to evoke it without representing it. . . . But isn't it strange that it can be done through such simple means? Two holes; that's abstract enough if you consider the complexity of man. . . . Whatever is most abstract may perhaps be the summit of reality. . . . abstract art is not far removed from the random brushstrokes or carvings in a wall. No matter what anyone thinks or says, we always imitate something, even when we don't know we are doing it.

The history of art thus leads to an art without history that seeks to exorcise the past and discover, or rather rediscover, the magic, the fetish—the will-o'-the-wisp, if you will—of our common humanity.

**F**inally, it must be said that in its deliberateness and coherence the lithographic series seems distinctly pedagogical; the prints have the consequential, demonstrative quality of scholastic exercises. Picasso was not just finding implicit meaning but also, as I suggested earlier, imparting that meaning in an explicit lesson—a lesson not only in genetic

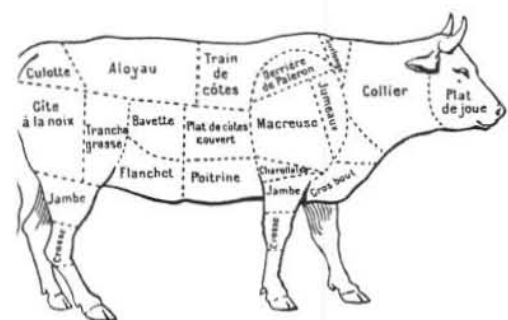


*Paleolithic bulls, Niaux. Photo Jean Vertut, Paris.*

*Butcher's diagram, from Larousse Ménager, Paris, 1926, page 201.*

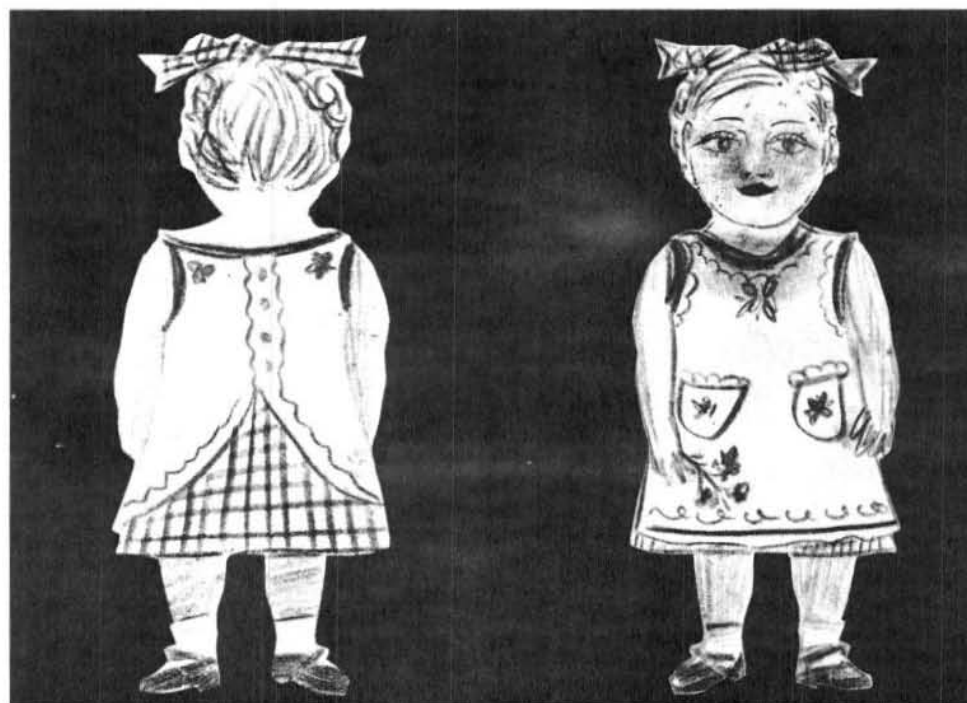
history but also in formal as well as graphic method. Indeed, the series strikes me as an ironic but serious shift into reverse of two classic vehicles of European visual sophistication with which Picasso felt he had been made all too familiar in his youth. One of these preeminently academic systems was theoretical, the other practical, and both involved specific correlations between nature

and abstraction. Since the 15th century the study of harmonic proportions and geometric figure construction had preoccupied artists, who sought to retrieve the classical ideal of demonstrably perfect form. Only recently has Picasso's own preoccupation with this subject emerged—a preoccupation crucial for our understanding of the genesis of modern art. We now know that at the birth of Cubism,





Picasso, age 11: bullfight and six doves, 1892, pencil on paper. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.



Picasso: cutout of Maïa, back and front, 1937-40, colored pencil. Ex-collection Marie-Thérèse Walter.

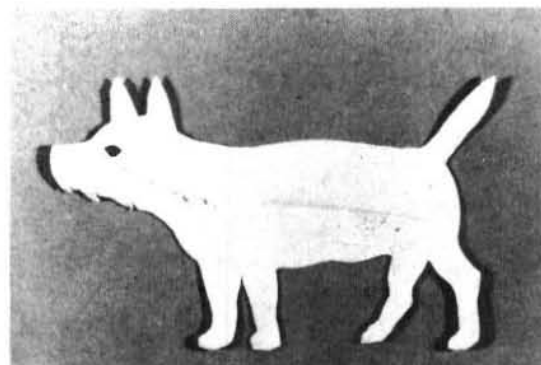
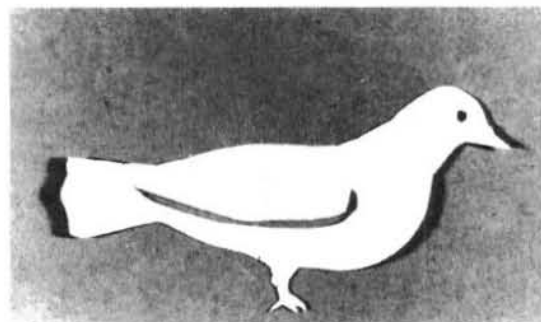
while creating a new, measured canon of beauty based on "primitive" sculpture, Picasso recalled the theoretical investigations of Albrecht Dürer. Picasso studied Dürer in the spring of 1907 while working on *Les Femmes d'Alger*. He was evidently inspired by Dürer's Dresden sketchbook, which had been published for the first time in 1905.<sup>31</sup> The German artist's effort to reconcile

the sometimes crass realism of his native tradition with the norms of antiquity must have seemed singularly appropriate to Picasso in his own search for an unclassical, or rather a proto-classical, ideal.

In the domain of practical pedagogy the drawing manual—the academic course in draftsmanship—aspired, through a series of increasingly complex exercises, to change the

**Picasso's early drawings are often playful and deliberately crude, but never really childish. In complete contrast are the astonishing counterfeits of childish works he made for his daughter Maïa.**

simple and perhaps mystified neophyte into the divine Raphael.<sup>32</sup> Publications illustrating the method begin in 1608 with Odoardo Fialetti's *Il vero modo et ordine per diseg-nare tutte le parti et membra del corpo humano*, and in 1753 William Hogarth anticipated Picasso's reversal of the sequence in one of the plates of his *Analysis of Beauty*. To be sure, Hogarth's purpose was not to undermine the system but, ironically, to exalt it by starting from an antique head admired by Raphael (no. 97) and showing "the reverse in several degrees, down to the most contemptible meanness that lines can be formed into . . . composed merely of such plain lines as children make" (no. 105).<sup>33</sup> By the mid-19th century, in a French journalistic cartoon with political overtones (from a mock exhibition of fine arts), there is a veritable collision of childishness, caricature and the academic tradition.<sup>34</sup> The image portrays the cultural state of the "anonymous Republic" in the



Picasso, age 9: cutout of dove (top) and dog (bottom), both 1890. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.

"noble genre." An armored Marianne, enthroned on her lion, holds a lance and a schoolchild's tablet displaying a nose, an eye, and a whole figure drawn with evident ineptitude. The lampoon suggests the immense symbolic and practical importance drawing manuals achieved from the mid-19th century on, with the development and dissemination of art education as a means of elevating popular culture. Van Gogh taught himself to draw by copying no fewer than three times the schematized exemplars in an important series of albums published by Charles Bargue in 1868-71.<sup>35</sup>

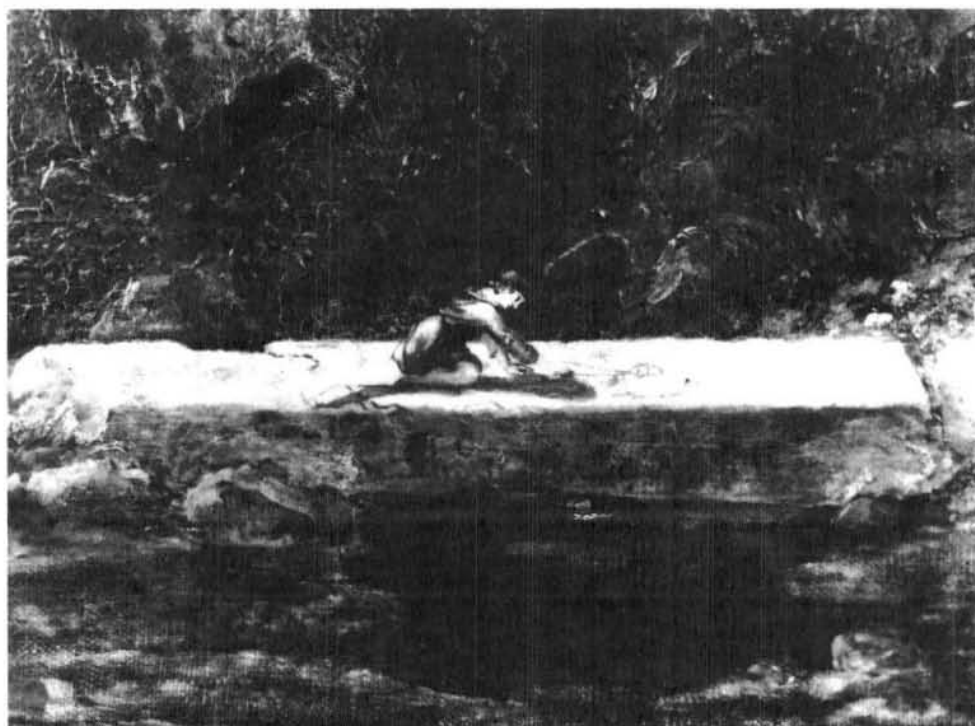
One of Picasso's early art school drawings (1892-93) shows him following precisely the same method, progressing from abstraction to illusion, from simplicity to sophistication. Indeed, the sheet is also copied from one of



Picasso: drawing of Maïa, 1937-40, colored crayon. Ex-collection Marie-Thérèse Walter.



Brassai: photograph of a graffiti, fig. 22 from *Graffiti de Brassai*, Paris, 1961.



Detail of Thomas Cole's *The Arcadian or Pastoral State*, from the series *"The Course of Empire,"* 1836. New-York Historical Society, New York.

Bargue's plates, as is Picasso's contemporaneous drawing of a seated nude.<sup>36</sup> Here we see Picasso laboriously learning what he later took years to unlearn. Lithography—which demonstrated, especially through the technique of stumping, the transition from line to modeling—was the process of choice for illustrating such publications; perhaps it was this very association that motivated Picasso's disdain for the lithographic medium before the period with Mourlot.<sup>37</sup>

The academic system in general comprised three basic elements, all of which have counterparts in Picasso's attitude. The method progressed in stages with respect to form, technique and subject: (1) from simple geometric shapes to complex curved and undulating surfaces; (2) from linear definition to interior modeling and cross-hatching; (3) from parts or fragments of the anatomy to the complete body. Picasso's bull progresses in exactly the opposite way and arrives at a coherent and unified design of a whole new figure.

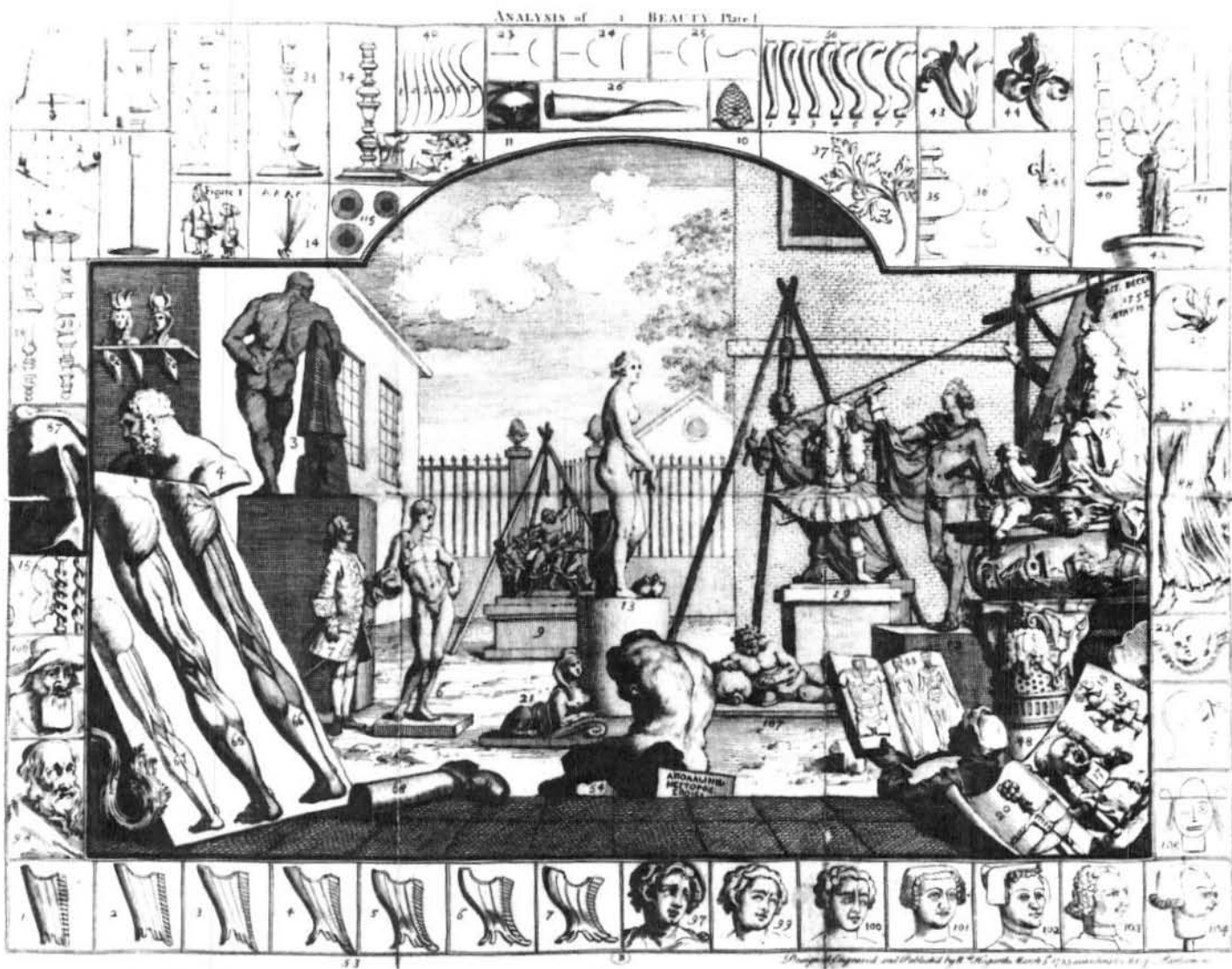
**S**een in this light, Picasso's graphic method in the lithographs becomes crucial: it is not merely a progressive simplification and abstraction; in each series *contour* tends increasingly to predominate, until ultimately the ferocious bull is subdued by one continuous outline of quite enchanting grace. The modeling of brute form is metamorphosed into the delineation of pure spirit—there is no other way to describe the

simultaneous degeneration of the bull and regeneration of this ethereal and apocalyptic beast. By his ironically serious reversal of tradition and evocation of "artlessness," Picasso seems to have given shape at last to that mystical ideal of *disegno interno* (inner design) artists had been dreaming of since the Renaissance.

These considerations, in turn, help to illuminate specific stages in Picasso's lithographic bullfight. I believe he conceived the series as a graphic *corrida*, with the lithographic stone as the arena.<sup>38</sup> The confrontation at first progresses in the traditional way, with the forms becoming denser and more richly modeled, while the bull becomes heavier and more aggressive. Then Picasso begins his attack: the forms coagulate and break into gruff, rhinoceroslike sections. On one momentous day, Picasso made two crucial "passes": in one, a sort of sketch-lithograph, he drew a delicate, purely linear bull, along with a menagerie of much less intimidating animals—rams, a cow, and doves; in the primary bull itself he introduced lines that delimit its constituent parts and change its dumb, brutish expression into an almost caricatured scowl.

The dual principle implicit in these parallel works continues thereafter. In the monumental isolated bull the preponderance of dark and modeled areas tends to diminish step by step in a relentless ritual of decimation and dismemberment. In a number of drawings and collateral lithographic "spin-offs" the bull is already conceived as a purely linear wraith,





William Hogarth, Plate I from *The Analysis of Beauty*, London, 1753. In nos. 97 through 105 (bottom right corner), Hogarth anticipates Picasso's movement in *The Bull* series from complexity to a childlike simplicity.

not in grandiose isolation but in small, multiple guises. Here the bull's awesome power is "exorcised" in a humorous and playful game of hide-and-seek. The once threatening enemy becomes Picasso's pet, executing a repertory of witty tricks and permutations like a tame circus animal commanded by its handler. Only in the eleventh and final state are the lessons learned in the practice pen, as it were, applied unflinchingly in the main arena. The coup de grace to the earthly academic bull is elegantly delivered by the reduction of his entire body to a simple continuous outline.

Even in his own working procedure, therefore, Picasso transferred to the realm of "high" art the qualities achieved in a domain of informal, spontaneous creativity. It can hardly be coincidental that during the same period Picasso also produced lithographs of bulls and actual *corrida* scenes; moreover, he invented for these works a radical collage technique employing crudely cut out paper figures like those he had made both as a child and, later, for his infant daughter.<sup>39</sup>



Exercises for drawing the nose from Odoardo Fialetti's manual, *Il vero modo et ordine per disegnare tutte le parti et membra del corpo humano*, Venice, 1608.

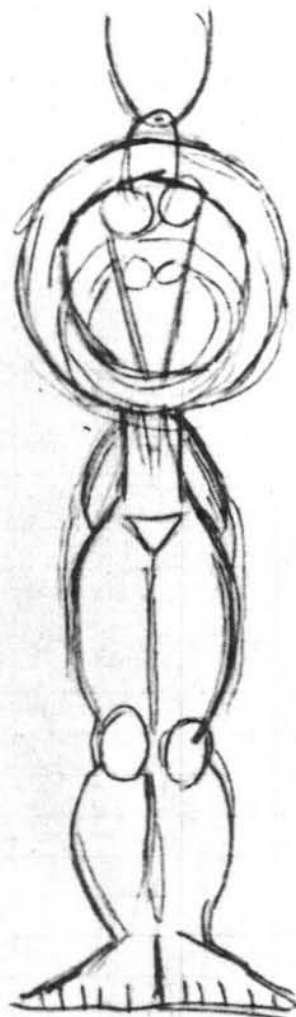
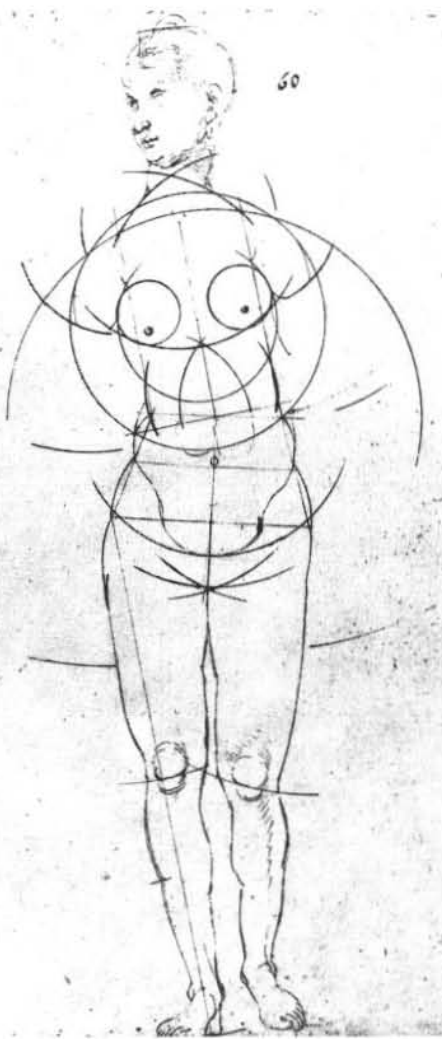


**The Bull series is an ironic reversal of two classic academic systems for producing visual sophistication—systems with which Picasso felt he had been made all too familiar in his youth.**

If this view of Picasso's lithographic series is correct, it implies an absolute historicism from whose all-encompassing scrutiny nothing escapes, not even the artist himself. In this context one of the most salient manifestations of Picasso's conception of his own work may be understood. I refer to his practice—obsession, one is tempted to say—from his earliest childhood of signing his works, however slight and ephemeral, and to date them to the very day they were executed; when several versions of the same work were done on the same day, he would often number them in sequence. No other artist has left such a complete record of his production. It might be tempting to attribute this preoccupation to megalomania; no doubt pride played a role, and certainly Picasso in this way fixed his own place in history with unprecedented precision.



"République anonyme (genre noble)," from *Le Pamphlet: Provisoire illustré*, Oct. 19-22, 1848. In this French cartoon, satirizing the cultural state of the republic, an armored Marianne holds a tablet displaying a childish drawing nose, eye and figure.



Left, Albrecht Dürer: nude figure constructed with annular torso, ca. 1500, drawing, manuscript R-147, folio 163, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Dresden. Right, Picasso: study of nude with annular torso arms, 1907, drawing from *Carnet* no. 7, folio 59. Private collection.

More to the point, in my view, is the implicit identification, through the historical process, of the individual self with human nature at large. This seems to me the ultimate meaning of Picasso's luminous notion, in the statement quoted earlier, that the record of the metamorphoses of a work of art might help to "discover the path followed by the brain in materializing a dream." Picasso made this point explicit in explaining why he dated his work, paradoxically linking—through the history of art, particularly his own—human creativity and science, subjectivity and objectivity, personal and collective awareness:

Why do you think I date everything I do? Because it is not sufficient to know an artist's works—it is also necessary to know when he did them, why, how, under what circumstances. . . . Some day there will undoubtedly be a science—it may be called the science of man—which will seek to learn more about man in general through the study of the creative man. I often think about such a science, and I want to leave to posterity a documentation that will

be as complete as possible. That's why I put a date on everything I do. . . .<sup>40</sup> □

1. The basic catalogue of Picasso's lithographs is F. Mourlot, *Picasso lithographe*, Paris, 1970; trans. J. Didry, *Picasso Lithographs*, Boston, 1970.

Brief but illuminating comments on the bull series may be found in two relatively rare publications: *Picasso: The Bull*, National Gallery of Art, facsimile edition, introduction by Andrew Robinson, Washington, D.C., n.d.; F. Deuchler, *Picasso: Thèmes et variations, 1945-46, Une Collection Picasso II*, Geneva, 1974 (an unpaginated, partial catalogue of the collection of Marie-Thérèse Walter, including three intermediate states and two reverse impressions of the bull not listed by Mourlot, of which evidently only single trial proofs were made). Deuchler notes [24 fn. 8] that Picasso produced only 27 lithographs from 1919 to 1930 and none thereafter until the series with Mourlot. Indeed, Picasso seems previously to have disliked lithography; see p. 89 below.

2. Picasso's work at Mourlot's is vividly described in Hélène Parmelin's introduction (unpaginated) to Mourlot's catalogue; for the passage given here, in which she quotes the printer Jean Célestin, see p. [3].

Mourlot himself gave an account in his *Gravés dans ma mémoire*, Paris, 1979, 11-37; see also the preface by Sabartés to vol. I of the first edition of F. Mourlot,

**Picasso's early academic drawings show him moving via increasingly complex exercises from simplicity to sophistication. Here we see him laboriously learning what he later took years to unlearn.**

*Picasso lithographe*, 4 vols., Monte Carlo, 1947-64; F. Gilot and C. Lake, *Life with Picasso*, London, 1964, 88ff.; F. Mourlot, *Souvenirs and portraits d'artistes*, Paris, 1973, 104ff. All convey Picasso's passionate involvement with the lithographic process and his revolutionary breaks with the traditional limitations of the medium.

3. The fruits of Picasso's affair with lithography are gathered in Mourlot, 1970, 15-44; important emendations by B. Baer, *Picasso the Printmaker: Graphics from the Marina Picasso Collection*, exhib. cat., Dallas, Texas, 1983, 127-31.

4. Brassai, *Conversations avec Picasso*, Paris, 1964; trans. F. Price, *Picasso and Company*, New York, 1966, 182 (July 10, 1945); *idem*, 1964, 224.

5. There is no comprehensive study of the development of seriality in modern art, but see generally, J. Coplans, *Serial Imagery*, exhib. cat., Pasadena, Calif., and New York, 1968, 7-30, and the introductory chapters of G. Seiberling's study of the series paintings of Monet, *Monet's Series*, New York and London, 1981, 1-38; on the latter, see further P. H. Tucker, *Monet in the 90's*, exhib. cat., New Haven, Conn., and London, 1989. Deuchler, 1974, also emphasized the novelty of Picasso's lithographic series, contrasting them with Monet's cathedrals, where only the color changes, not the forms, and with Mondrian's trees, where the forms become completely abstract. (Further to this point below, p. 79).

6. For Picasso's graphic works generally, see B. Geiser, *Picasso: Peintre-graveur*, 4 vols., Bern, 1933-86; G.

Block, *Pablo Picasso: Catalogue de l'oeuvre gravé et lithographié, 1904-67*, Bern, 1968.

7. Quoted in A.H. Barr, *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*, New York, 1939, 13f.; cf. C. Zervos, "Conversation avec Picasso," *Cahiers d'art*, X, 1935, 173.

The development of the bull would seem to contradict Picasso's criticism of Matisse's serial drawings: "Matisse fait un dessin, puis il le recopie. . . Il le recopie cinq fois, dix fois, toujours en épurant son trait. . . Il est persuadé que le dernier, le plus dépouillé, est le meilleur, le plus pur, le définitif; or, le plus souvent, c'était le premier. . . En matière de dessin, rien n'est meilleur que le premier jet" (Brassai, 1964, 71, early October 1943).

Picasso's lithographic bull did not start life as a "drawing," however.

8. Interview with Léon Degand, published Oct. 5, 1945 (translation, with slight modifications, from J.D. Flam, *Matisse on Art*, London, 1973, 103). Many photographic sequences are reproduced in L. Delectorskaya, . . . *l'apparente facilité . . . Henri Matisse: Peintures de 1935-1939*, n.p., 1986.

9. Cf. D. Fourcade, *Henri Matisse: Ecrits et propos sur l'art*, Paris, 1972, index, under *étapes*.

10. H. Matisse, *Dessins: Thèmes et variations*, Paris, 1943. Cf. letter to Pierre Matisse, February 1945, 165 fn. 13; A.H. Barr, *Matisse: His Art and His Public*, New York, 1951, 268. See the perceptive observations on Matisse's temporal sequences by P. Schneider, *Matisse*, New York, 1984, 374-78, 578-80, who also describes in this connection the artist's habit of superimposing drawings on a single sheet. Matisse's method of photographing his works-in-progress, and his *Thèmes et variations* suite, are discussed in a suggestive essay by J. Flam, "Matisse's Subjects: Themes and Variations," forthcoming in the *Cahiers* of the Musée Matisse, Nice-Cimiez, who also notes that Matisse often made pairs (not sequential series) of images, the first reflecting the "shock of recognition of nature," the second a more abstracted interpretation.

11. On this point, with respect to the states of the lithograph after Lucas Cranach's *David and Bathsheba*, see R. Castleman, in W. Rubin, ed., *Picasso in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art*, New York, 1972, 170.

12. The five *Jeanette* heads (1910-13) were shown as a complete series only in 1950; the four *Backs* were never exhibited together in Matisse's lifetime. This point, and the nature of Matisse's sculpture as "a private medium of study," are emphasized by M.P. Mezzatesta, *Henri Matisse: Sculpture/Painter*, exhib. cat., Fort Worth, Tex., 1984, 14.

13. T. van Doesburg, *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst*, Frankfurt am Main, 1925, 18, figs. 5-8; cf. D. McNamee, "Van Doesburg's Cow: A Crucial Translation," *The Structurist*, no. 8, 1968; A. Doig, *Theo van Doesburg: Painting into Architecture, Theory and Practice*, Cambridge, 1986, 15-17. So far as I know, Picasso's bulls and Doesburg's cows were first mentioned together by J. Cowart, *Roy Lichtenstein, 1970-1980*, exhib. cat., New York, 1981, 64, who further regards



**Charles Bargue: studies after a sculpture by Germain Pilon, lithograph, plate 35 from *Cours de dessin: Première partie*, the first of Bargue's pedagogical albums, published in Paris, 1868.**



**Picasso: profile heads after Bargue, 1892-93, drawing.**



Picasso: bullfight, Jan. 7, 1946, lithograph.

Lichtenstein's bull series as a reversal of how-to-draw books, a relationship which, as will be seen, I believe also applies to Picasso's concept.

14. According to Françoise Gilot (Gilot and Lake, 1964, 85), the two nudes represented her and Dora Maar; cf. on this point L. Steinberg, *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art*, New York, 1972, 105ff. I suspect that the contemporary head of a youth, Mourlot, 1970, no. 8, is a rejuvenated self-portrait.

15. C. Zervos, *Pablo Picasso: Catalogue des peintures et dessins*, 33 vols., Paris, 1932-78, XIV, nos. 130, 132, 133, 136; Mourlot, 1970, nos. 21, 27, 28; Deuchler, 1974, nos. 49, 50, 55, 58, 61.

16. Mourlot, 1970, [4]. The enchanting history of the bull is recounted by Mourlot himself in *Gravé dans ma mémoire*, Paris, 1979, 26-29.

17. On the bull in the drawing books, see F. Bolten, *Method and Practice: Dutch and Flemish Drawing Books, 1600-1750*, Landau, 1985, 50ff., 102f., 142f., 152f., 278f.

18. I am indebted to Professor William Jordy for adding this splendid "connection" to my collection.

19. Picasso's bull seems first to have been related to Paleolithic painting in a brief essay by J. Palau i Fabre, *Child and Caveman: Elements of Picasso's Creativity*,



Picasso: bulls, Dec. 15, 1945, lithograph.

continued on page 121



# Picasso's Bull(s)

continued from page 93

New York, 1978, who also perceived the relevance of Picasso's interest in children's art.

20. J. Sabartès, *Picasso: An Intimate Portrait*, New York, 1948, 213f. The Spanish original was published later in Sabartès, 1953, 235.

21. A. Malraux, *La Tête d'obsidienne*, Paris, 1974, 17-19. "On parle toujours de l'influence des Nègres sur moi. Comment faire? Tous, nous aimions les fétiches. Van Gogh dit: l'art japonais, on avait tous ça en commun. Nous, c'est les Nègres. Leurs formes n'ont pas eu plus d'influence sur moi que sur Matisse. Ou sur Derain. Mais pour eux, les masques étaient des sculptures comme les autres. Quand Matisse m'a montré sa première tête nègre il m'a parlé d'art égyptien. . . Les masques, ils n'étaient pas des sculptures comme les autres. Pas du tout. Ils étaient des choses magiques. Et pourquoi pas les Égyptiens, les Chaldéens? Nous ne nous en étions pas aperçu. Des primitifs, pas des magiques. Les Nègres, ils étaient des intercesseurs, je sais le mot en français depuis ce temps-là. Contre tout; contre des esprits inconnus, menaçants. Je regardais toujours les fétiches. J'ai compris: moi aussi, je suis contre tout. Moi aussi, je pense que tout, c'est inconnu, c'est ennemi! Tout! pas les détails! les femmes, les enfants, les bêtes, le tabac, jouer. . . Mais le tout! J'ai compris à quoi elle servait leur sculpture, aux Nègres. Pourquoi sculpter comme ça, et pas autrement. Ils étaient pas cubistes, tout de même! Puisque le cubisme, il n'existait pas. Sûrement, des types avaient inventé les modèles, et des types les avaient imités, la tradition, non? Mais tous les fétiches, ils servaient à la même chose. Ils étaient des armes. Pour aider les gens à ne plus être les sujets des esprits, à devenir indépendants. Des outils. Si nous donnons une forme aux esprits, nous devenons indépendants. Les esprits, l'inconscient (on n'en parlait pas encore beaucoup), l'émotion, c'est la même chose. J'ai compris pourquoi j'étais peintre. Tout seul dans ce musée affreux, avec des masques, des poupées peaux-rouges, des mannequins poussiéreux. Les *Demoiselles d'Avignon* ont dû arriver ce jour-là mais pas du tout à cause des formes: parce que c'était ma première toile d'exorcisme, oui! . . . C'est aussi ça qui m'a séparé de Braque. Il aimait les Nègres, mais, je vous ai dit: Parce qu'ils étaient des bonnes sculptures. Il n'en a jamais eu un peu peur."

22. *London Times*, Oct. 25, 1956, 11: "Perhaps more than any other living artist, Pablo Picasso, who celebrates today his seventy-fifth birthday, has become a legend. It is reported of him that he was once taken to an exhibition of children's art, and asked his opinion. He swept the gallery with eyes as brown and deep and wise as those of one of his own pet owls, and murmured 'À son âge, moi, je dessinais comme Raphaël.' The personal arrogance implied in such a remark would be worthy only of a man who has for half a century been the undisputed dictator of artistic fashion, who has baffled prediction so often and yet so easily retained his influence at every turn that he has been accused—primarily by such as could not stand the pace—of that cardinal sin, a lack of high seriousness. And yet that claim to equality with the prince of draughtsmen while he was yet a child would only be a slight exaggeration of fact. Whatever the final rating of posterity may be on the significance and value of his life's work, that one supreme gift will never be denied him. Picasso is among the greatest draughtsmen to have appeared in the history of European art."

23. *London Times*, Oct. 27, 1956, 27: "Since the remark you attribute to Picasso in your leading article to-day was made in my presence, and since it has gained currency in several distorted forms, perhaps you would allow me to put on record what Picasso actually did say. I had been showing him round an exhibition of children's drawings sent to Paris by the British Council. He looked at them

very carefully, and when he had finished he turned to me and said (I will not pretend to remember the French words he used): 'When I was the age of these children I could draw like Raphael: it took me many years to learn how to draw like these children.'

"It will be seen that, far from implying 'personal arrogance,' as your leading article suggests, the remark shows rather the humility that is a characteristic of all true genius." Read's letter is referred to by R. Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work*, New York, 1973, 315f.

24. Brassai, 1966, 86 (Nov. 17, 1943); *idem*, 1964, 106f.

25. H. Parmelin, *Picasso dit. . .*, Paris, 1966; trans. C. Trollope, *Picasso Says. . .*, London, 1969, 73; *idem*, *Picasso dit. . .*, 1966, 86.

26. Picasso's early drawings may be studied in Zervos, 1932-78, VI; J.-E. Cirlot, *Picasso: Birth of a Genius*, New York and Washington D.C., 1972; J. Palau i Fabre, *Picasso: The Early Years, 1881-1907*, New York, 1981; *Museo Picasso: Catálogo de pintura y dibujo*, Barcelona, 1986. For a particularly stimulating discussion, see N. Staller, "Early Picasso and the Origins of Cubism," *Arts Magazine*, LXI, 1986, 80-91. Recently, John Richardson with M. McCully, *A Life of Picasso: Volume I, 1881-1906*, New York, 1991, 28f., 33, 42, 46f., has been at pains to discredit Picasso's accounts of his early development, seeing them in the conventional way as self-aggrandizement, rather than as expressing Picasso's disenchantment with the laborious academic training he had received; to counter the evidence of the extant drawings, Richardson even resorts to the unfounded suggestion (following Palau i Fabre, 1981, 32) that early drawings were deliberately destroyed to preserve the legend that the artist never drew like a child! See also fn. 36 below.

27. The later drawings and paper cutouts are reproduced in F. Deuchler, *Une collection Picasso*, Geneva, 1973, and in Palau i Fabre, 1978; for the early cutouts, see *Museo Picasso*, 1986, 33, with references. Richardson, 1991, 31, notes the analogy between Picasso's early cutouts and those he made later. Matisse also began using cutouts in the 1930s, but, unlike Picasso, never with a childlike intent or in a reproductive process (see p. 90 below); for Matisse's cutouts see J. Cowart, J. D. Flam, D. Fourcade and J. H. Neff, *Henri Matisse: Paper Cut-Outs*, New York, 1977, and Flam, 1989.

28. A catalogue, with a preface by Herbert Read, was printed; see *Peintures d'enfants anglais: Exposition organisée par le British Council*, 28 Avenue des Champs Élysées, London and Beccles, 1945. (Barbara Put of the fine arts department of the British Council, London, was kind enough to provide me with a copy of this rare publication, for which I am most grateful.) The exhibition was briefly reviewed in *Le Monde*, Apr. 12, 1945, 2. Picasso evidently saw the exhibition again later that summer at Antibes, cf. P. O'Brian, *Picasso: Pablo Ruiz Picasso*, New York, 1976, 385; also *Musée Picasso: Château d'Antibes, Juillet-Novembre 1972, Peinture d'enfants*, exhib. cat., 1972, unpaginated but cf. p. [1] (catalogue kindly supplied by Danièle Giraudy).

29. *American Landscape and Genre Paintings in the New-York Historical Society*, 3 vols., Boston, 1982, I, 192-203. Cole's series has been fully discussed in a dissertation by E.C. Parry, *Thomas Cole's "The Course of Empire": A Study in Serial Imagery*, Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1970; for the nascent artist, see 93ff.

30. Brassai, *Graffiti de Brassai*, Paris, 1961. The citations in the text are extracted from Brassai, *Conversations avec Picasso*, Paris, 1964, 226, 247f., 290f.; trans. F. Price, *Picasso and Company*, New York, 1966, 184f. (July 10, 1945), 202f. (Nov. 27, 1946), 241f. (May 18, 1960).

**Usually, successive states of engravings and etchings become richer and more complex. Impressionist printmakers like Pissarro achieved a variety of effects through multiple changes of the same plate.**



Camille Pissarro: Effet de pluie (*Rain Effects*), 1879, aquatint and drypoint. From top to bottom, 2nd, 4th and 6th of 6 states.

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# Picasso's Bull(s)

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31. R. Bruck, *Das Skizzenbuch von Albrecht Dürer*, Strassburg, 1905. The relationship to Dürer was first observed by W. Spies, ed., *Pablo Picasso: Eine Ausstellung zum hundertsten Geburtstag, Werke aus der Sammlung Marina Picasso*, exhib. cat., Munich, 1981, 27ff. (I have chosen slightly different examples; all the relevant sketches are reproduced in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, exhib. cat., 2 vols., Paris, 1988, I, 94, 184, 224.) Spies's contribution was brought to my attention by Brigitte Baer, who made the same observation independently and is preparing a detailed study of the subject. The observation seems to me of fundamental importance since by implication it challenges the reading of the *Demoiselles* as a "degradation" of female form and suggests instead that Picasso was seeking a new canon of beauty. Moreover, we must now take seriously the striking analogies between the faceted forms Picasso adopted in the subsequent phase of Cubism, and the prismatic shapes Dürer often employed in his theoretical studies (compare especially the 1909 heads of Fernande with those in the Dresden sketchbook: E. Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, Princeton, 1955, 201ff., fig. 312; also 260ff. on Dürer's theory of proportions). Significantly, Dürer's "cubist" studies also have a sculptural corollary, in the characteristically faceted forms of contemporary wood sculpture in an unfinished state (cf. H. Huth, *Künstler und Werkstatt der Spätgotik*, Darmstadt, 1977, figs. 6, 9).

32. The classic study of the academic system of drawing instruction is L.J. van Peteghem, *Histoire de l'enseignement du dessin*, Brussels, 1868. Notable recent contributions are, for the early period, E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, Princeton, 1972, 156-72; D. Rosand, "The Crisis of the Venetian Renaissance Tradition," *L'arte*, X, 1970, 5-53; W. Kemp, "... einen wahrhaft bildenden Zeichenunterricht überall einzu führen," *Zeichen und Zeichenunterricht der Laien 1500-1870, Ein Handbuch*, Frankfurt am Main, 1979; E.J. Olszewski, *The Draftsman's Eye: Late Italian Renaissance Schools and Styles*, Bloomington, Ind., 1981, 2-7; C. Amorinichetkul, "Seventeenth-Century Italian Drawing Books: Their Origin and Development," in *Children of Mercury: The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, exhib. cat., Providence, R.I., 1984, 108-18; Bolton, 1985.

The academic method in 19th-century France was the subject of an invaluable thesis by D. Harlé, "Les Cours de dessin gravés et lithographiés du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle conservés au Cabinet des Estampes de la Bibliothèque Nationale: Essai critique et catalogue," thesis, Ecole de Louvre, 1975, unfortunately unpublished, which includes a comprehensive catalogue of instruction manuals preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Important further studies: A. Boime, "The Teaching Reforms of 1863 and the Origins of Modernism in France," *The Art Quarterly*, I, 1977, 1-39, and "The Teaching of Fine Arts and the Avant-Garde in France during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Arts Magazine*, LX, 1985, 46-57; A.M. Wagner, *Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux: Sculptor of the Second Empire*, New Haven, Conn., and London, 1986, 29-62; M. Nesbit, "The Language of Industry," paper presented at the Davis Center Seminar, Princeton University, 1987. Boime and Nesbit, in particular, view the simplification and abstraction employed in these pedagogical works as germane to the development of Cubism—quite different from Picasso's explicit, ironic and historical reversal of academic principles.

33. Cf. J. Burk, *William Hogarth: The Analysis of Beauty*, Oxford, 1955, 134ff.

34. The cartoon is published in M.-C. Chardonneret, *La Figure de la république: Le concours de 1848*, Paris, 1987, 97, fig. 122.



Picasso, age 9: Hercules, 1890, blue pen on paper. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.



Portrait by April Harbour, age 12, from the catalogue for a 1945 British Council exhibition of art by children, held in Paris.

35. C. Bargue, *Cours de dessin...avec le concours de J.-L. Gérôme: Première partie, modèles d'après la bosse*, Paris, 1868, *Deuxième partie, modèles d'après les maîtres de toutes les époques et de toutes les écoles*, Paris, 1869; C. Bargue, *Exercices au fusain*, Paris, 1871. On van Gogh's copies after Bargue, see C. Chetham, *The Role of Vincent van Gogh's Copies in the Development of His Art*, New York and London, 1976, 12f.; A.S. Wylie, "An Investigation of the Vocabulary of Line in Vincent van Gogh's Expression of Space," *Oud Holland*, LXXXV, 1970, 211f.; J. van Crimpen, "Drawings by Vincent, Not Included in De la Faille," *Vincent*, III, 1974, 2-5; S. Koslow, "Two Sources for

**Picasso: "My first drawings could never be exhibited in an exposition of children's drawings. The awkwardness and naïveté of childhood were almost absent from them. I outgrew the period of that marvelous vision very rapidly."**

Vincent van Gogh's 'Portrait of Armand Roulin': A Character Likeness and a Portrait Schema," *Arts Magazine*, LVI, 1981, 159, 161f.; J. van der Wolk, *The Seven Sketchbooks of Vincent Van Gogh*, New York, 1987, 267-69, 284.

36. Zervos, 1932-78, VI, nos. 10, 13. The number 88 inscribed below Picasso's signature on both sheets refers to his matriculation in his father's drawing class of 1892-93 (Palau i Fabre, 1981, 42). So far as I know, the relation of these drawings to Bargue's plates has not been noted heretofore. Richardson, 1991, 45, intuitively that the profile heads were related to drawing manuals, but finds the seated nude, although he also recognizes it as a copy, too assured for its date and suspects it was reworked later; Palau i Fabre, 1981, 518, is also astonished by its precocity, but acknowledges the unavailability of the date.

37. As reported by Gilt and Lake, 1964, 86.

38. Though less explicitly, Deuchler perceived this metaphorical aspect of the bull series (1974, [15]).

39. Mourlot, 1970, nos. 10, 11 (Dec. 5, 1945); 24 (Dec. 20, 1945); 25, 26 (Jan. 7, 1946); also no. 29 (Jan. 13, 1946). The technique is described by Gilt and Lake, 1964, 86.

40. Brassaï, 1966, 100 (Dec. 6, 1943); 1964, 123.

In the passage that follows Brassaï recognizes the deliberateness and auto-historicism of Picasso's custom, but not the universality of the motive: "Un jour, quand nous parlions avec Sabartés de cette habitude de Picasso de dater ses moindres oeuvres ou écrits en indiquant non seulement l'année, le mois et le jour, mais parfois aussi l'heure, Sabartés haussa les épaules: 'A quoi ça rime? me dit-il. C'est une pure fantaisie, une manie... En quoi cela peut intéresser quelqu'un si Picasso a exécuté tel ou tel dessin à dix heures ou à onze heures du soir?' Mais, d'après ce que vient de me révéler Picasso, la minutie de ses datations n'est ni caprice, ni manie, mais un acte prémédité, réfléchi. Il veut conférer à tous ses faits et gestes une valeur historique dans son histoire d'homme-créateur, les insérer lui-même—avant les autres—dans les grandes annales de sa prodigieuse vie..."

Picasso associated prehistoric art with his passion for chronology, in a comment concerning his own "ages of stone," i.e., engraved pebbles, the "style" of which changed (Brassaï, 1964, 238 [Nov. 26, 1946]): "Mais on change tout le temps... Vous n'avez qu'à regarder le changement de ma signature... Ce sont mes différents 'âges de pierre'. Il faudrait publier tout ça dans l'album. J'aime les oeuvres complètes... On ne peut vraiment suivre l'acte créateur qu'à travers la série de toutes les variations."

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