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The  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***Through the Eyes of Picasso* Opens Oct. 20 at Nelson-Atkins**

### ***Major Exhibition Explores Dialogue between Picasso and African Works***

Kansas City, MO. May 1, 2017 – The groundbreaking exhibition *Through the Eyes of Picasso* will explore Pablo Picasso’s life-long fascination with African and Oceanic art, uniting his paintings and sculpture with art that had a seminal impact on his own creative exploration. The exhibition opens Oct. 20 at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, the only United States venue in a limited tour. Many works in the exhibition will be on view in America for the first time.

*Through the Eyes of Picasso* also will feature a selection of intimate, personal photographs of the artist at work and play, including images by David Douglas Duncan. The Duncan images were a recent gift to the Nelson-Atkins.

“From his initial encounter with African art in 1907, Picasso’s view of the world

was fundamentally altered,” said Julián Zugazagoitia, Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell CEO & Director of the Nelson-Atkins. “He became an avid collector of non-western art and lived with these masterpieces throughout his entire life in his studios. They were a constant source of exploration and inspiration, which manifested itself in the reinvention of his work throughout his career. As a result of that influence, modern art was radically transformed.”



The exhibition will feature 170 works of art, including more than 60 paintings, sculptures, and ceramics by Picasso alongside more than 20 works of African and Oceanic art that were part of his personal collection – pieces that he collected, lived with and kept with him in his studios, many of them featured for the first time in the Americas. *Through the Eyes of Picasso* also will showcase the works of art – African, Oceanic, and American – that transformed his artistic vision when he encountered them at the Musée d' Ethnographie du Trocadéro (now in the collections of the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris) during the early part of the 20th century. For Picasso, the power of these masks and sculptures was in the artists' exploration of line, abstraction of the human body, and its constant transformation.



The exhibition was curated by Yves Le Fur of Quai Branly, in partnership with Musée national Picasso-Paris. Zugazagoitia is organizing and adapting *Through the Eyes of Picasso* for the Nelson-Atkins. The exhibition is now open at Musée du Quai Branly in Paris through July 23, 2017, will be on view at the Nelson-Atkins from Oct. 20 to April 8, 2018, and in Montreal from May 7 to Sept. 16, 2018.

“Organizing this exhibition with Musée du Quai Branly allows us to see many of the masterpieces that Picasso saw as a young artist,” Zugazagoitia said. “Virtually all the works in the show come from our collaboration with Quai Branly, the Musée national Picasso-Paris, and Picasso family members.”

Picasso was a gifted artist who, as a child prodigy, mastered representation in the classic sense. While he did not formally study the African, Oceanic or American cultures, his encounters with non-western art influenced him tremendously and allowed him to free himself from western traditions and reinvent modern art, despite the fact that he never left Europe.

“He was working inside the tension that existed between the Classicism in which he was trained as a child and the abstraction and directness he saw in African art,” said Zugazagoitia. “He was seeking the ‘essence’ of art, which he felt in the iconic status of those works. Seeing his art side by side with the richness and complexities of African art



will be a revelatory moment for our visitors.”

At the Nelson-Atkins, the exhibition will be celebrated with special events and programming. A fully illustrated catalogue will be produced by Musée du Quai Branly and will serve as a lasting legacy of this important project.

The exhibition was conceived by musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac in partnership with Musée national Picasso-Paris and adapted by The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and The Montreal Museum of Fine Art/Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal.

★ MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY  
JACQUES CHIRAC



### Image Captions

**(Front page, left image)** *Masque*, Otomi, Mexico, State of Hidalgo, San Bartolo Tutotepec, Piedra Ancha, 1900s. Wood, fur, horns, 15 x 10 x 8 ½ inches. © musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, photo Claude Germain.

**(Front page, right image)** *Large Still Life on a Pedastle Table*, 1931, Pablo Ruiz y Picasso, Spanish (1881-1973). Oil on canvas, 82 ¼ x 57 x 3 1/8 inches. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

**(Second page, upper image)** David Douglas Duncan, American (born 1916). *Picasso painting plates at the dining table, with Jacqueline reading*, 1958, printed 2013. Inkjet print, 13 7/8 x 20 7/8 inches. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of David Douglas Duncan, 2014.11.81.

**(Second page, lower left image)** *Fang Mask*, African, Gabon, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bronze, 11 ¼ x 15 ½ x 5 7/8 inches. Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris. © musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, photo Patrick Gries, Bruno Descoings.

**(Second page, lower right image)** *Female Bust, or Bust of Marine (study for “Les Demoiselles d’Avignon”)*, 1907. Pablo Ruiz y Picasso, Spanish (1881-1973). Oil on cardboard, 26 1/8 x 19 ½ x 3 3/8 inches. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

### The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America’s finest art museums. The museum, which strives to be the place *where the power of art engages the spirit of community*, opens its doors free of charge to people of all backgrounds. The museum is an institution that both challenges and comforts, that both inspires and soothes, and it is a destination for expansion, reflection, self discovery, and connecting with others.

The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access to its renowned collection of nearly 40,000 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the

region. In 2017, the Nelson-Atkins celebrates the 10-year anniversary of the Bloch Building, a critically acclaimed addition to the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building.

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45<sup>th</sup> and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. Hours are Wednesday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Thursday/Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Admission to the museum is free to everyone. For museum information, phone 816.751.1ART (1278) or visit [nelson-atkins.org](http://nelson-atkins.org).

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