



# P. A day with Picasso

The exhibition Picasso & His Collection offers a surreal listening post to the master's dialogue with other artists.

**Consider the Gallery of Modern Art in** Brisbane as your time machine. Its latest blockbuster exhibition will take you back in time to the 20th Century and deep into the work trenches of one very famous Spanish painter. His name is Pablo Picasso.

In the modern, industrial-zen building that houses Brisbane's GOMA, over 100 key works from Picasso's personal art collection — once held by the great master of Cubism — are mounted, as you would expect, neatly on white large walls. Though, very unlike how it used to be ordered in Picasso's own studios.

"He rarely took the trouble to hang paintings on walls but rather placed them unceremoniously on the floor, amid the dust and creative clutter of his successive studios," writes Musee national Picasso curator Philippe Saunier in the exhibition catalogue.

At GOMA's Picasso & His Collection, however, his artworks are perfectly lined up according to stylistic genres, helping us to see and understand Picasso, his collection and some of his works even more clearly. Here, Picasso's collection of works by famous artists including Renoir, Cezanne, Rousseau and Degas are interspersed with some 80 artworks by the Spanish master: reflecting the correlations between various pieces. In doing so, exhibition curator Anne Baldassari, who is also the director of Musee national Picasso in Paris, manages to cleverly tease out and showcase the artist's discourse with his peers and the great masters before him.

Picasso didn't collect art for the same reasons as most collectors — mostly to either profit from it or to dress up some dreary, bland dining wall. Instead, his personal collection was more of a resource for his artistic endeavours — some of which he could not work

without. In fact, these artworks facilitated an internal discourse between him and various artists that would at times elicit a response from him manifested through his own art.

For the first time, Picasso's personal art collection is being displayed outside of Europe. An exhibition of Picasso's collection has only ever been previously showcased in Paris, Munich and Barcelona.

During the 1930s to the 1950s, Picasso began acquiring works of Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), the famous French painter who came to have a strong influence on Picasso's work

as he broke into the Cubist era. So smitten by Cezanne was Picasso that he once made the bold declaration of being "Cezanne's grandson." Viewing Cezanne's artwork alongside Picasso's cubist works between



1909 and 1912 at the exhibition makes it quite clear where Picasso had drawn his influences.

Throughout the exhibition, one is able to make not one but many of these artistic connections, or continuity in art forms from elsewhere that lingered in Picasso's works. Though, one shouldn't go as far as to label this is an outright "copying" of work, but rather Picasso's interpretation of an older masterpiece. In his own words: "I am interested in expressing the metamorphoses of forms into new bodies, from the furthest origins of the works up until my time."

Similarly, Picasso's series of black and white etchings of brothel scenes in 1971 was reminiscent of Edgar Degas' 1879 ink monotypes depicting similar brothel scenes. In 1958, Picasso bought most of the 12 rare Degas monotypes that came into his collection.

The love-hate friendship between Henri Matisse and Picasso needs no primer. Both artists were stars of the 20th century and both



Picasso's *Erotic Scene* (1971) was reminiscent of Degas's work; (opposite page) Picasso putting up a portrait of Marguerite by Henri Matisse





## BRISBANE: GET CULTURAL

If you're in town for the Picasso & His Collection exhibition, you might want to seek out some of Brisbane's other unique cultural delights.

### **Sidney Nolan – A New Retrospective Exhibition at the Queensland Art Gallery; Until 28 September**

Touted by some as Australia's greatest painter of the 20th century, Sidney Nolan's works – some 117 of them – from all over the world will be displayed at the Queensland Art Gallery till September 28. This will be Nolan's first major retrospective since his death in 1992. The artist is famous for his artwork inspired by landscapes, myths or historical events. His output was prolific, ranging across various techniques and media.

### **Montville – A taste of the Queensland Countryside**

Just under a two hour drive from Brisbane city is Montville – a quaint little village nestled in the mountains off Queensland's Sunshine Coast. This is a perfect place to spend a day or two in the countryside, where life is slower and the air is fresher. Montville offers plenty of cottage B&Bs and great shopping. Here, you'll find a cute little strip of cafes and shops that sell unique arts and crafts. Also, a great place to buy quirky home decor pieces and shabby chic jewellery. At Montville, make time for lunch at The Terrace of Maleny (<http://terraceofmaleny.com.au>). Enjoy fantastic views of the Sunshine Coast and Glass House Mountains as you dine on fine seafood.