

**“Picasso – Birth of a Genius,” Largest and Most Significant Exhibition of the Artist’s Work Ever Held in China, Opens at UCCA Center for Contemporary Art**

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**Exhibition Period:**

June 15, 2019 – September 1, 2019

Press material available at [ucca.org.cn/en/press](http://ucca.org.cn/en/press)

Between June 15 and September 1, 2019, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, presents “Picasso – Birth of a Genius,” the most significant exhibition of work by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) ever to take place in China. The exhibition, which offers a comprehensive overview of the first three decades of Picasso’s career, includes 103 works drawn entirely from the collection of the Musée national Picasso-Paris, which trace Picasso’s development from childhood to middle age. Curated by Emilia Philippot, Head of Collections, Musée national Picasso-Paris, the exhibition has been conceived and organized specifically for this presentation at UCCA and in China, and includes 34 paintings, 14 sculptures, and 55 works on paper. Taken together, this selection of works, predominantly realized between 1893 and 1921, tells the story of the creative formation and evolution of the most daring, original, and prolific talent in the history of modern art.

The three decades under consideration were a period of artistic discovery and ferment for the young Picasso, whose style underwent numerous changes: from the academic realism of his student days to his post-war return to classical style; from the alternately somber and carnivalesque motifs of the Blue and Rose periods to the primitivist explorations which ultimately led to the multiple phases of Cubism. Rather than rigidly separating Picasso’s work into different thematic sections, the exhibition seeks to reaffirm the coexistence of seemingly contradictory languages in his creative process, and to highlight the lived realities behind them.

“Picasso – Birth of a Genius” is organized in six chapters: “The First Picasso,” which accounts for the artist’s artistic upbringing, when he produced works such as *Man in a Cap* (1895) and *Study of a Torso, After a Plaster Cast* (1893-1894); “Picasso Blue and Rose,” during which he advanced from imitating Post-Impressionist masters to develop a truly original style, resulting in works like *The Jester* (1905) and *Two Brothers* (1906); “Picasso the Exorcist,” which saw his revolutionary experiments with form and space, producing artworks like *Self-portrait* (1906) and preparing his masterpiece, *Les Femmes d’Alger (O.J.)* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967); “Picasso the Cubist,” a period when he wrought an elaborate system of signs, producing works such as *Man with a Mandolin* (1911) and *Man with Fireplace* (1916);



“Picasso the Chameleon,” which marked the artist’s turn towards classical revivalism, creating works such as *The Lovers* (1919) and *Studies* (1920), as well as designing the sets, costumes, and curtain for the Ballets Russes production of *Le Tricorne* (1919); and a final section which includes several notable paintings and sculptures done between 1927 and 1972, giving a sense of how Picasso’s creative idiom, developed during the period under consideration in the exhibition, informed his later practice.

The exhibition unfolds throughout UCCA’s 1800-square-meter Great Hall, with exhibition design by Studio Adrien Gardère (SAG). This design features a set of monumental beveled and chamfered boxes, pacing and differentiating the diverse themes brought together in the show. Through a game of openings and slots revealing unexpected perspectives and surprises, the exhibition design invites the audience on a rhythmic journey through Picasso’s evolution as an artist, and fosters an infinite conversation in which the works are perpetually reinvented by visitors’ movements. Large-scale prints of Picasso’s portraits and images of his studios underscore each box as a reminder of the artist’s life and times.

This exhibition grows out of a recognition of the importance of cultural and artistic exchange between France and China at the highest levels, and constitutes an important component of the 2019 Festival Croisements. As French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has highlighted to Premier Li Keqiang during their meeting on June 25, 2018, the exhibition represents a significant contribution to the bilateral cultural dialogue between China and France. It echoes President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron’s wish, pronounced during his state visit to China in January 2018, to see more exhibitions from major French museums come to China, and from Chinese museums to France. On March 25, 2019, President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping met with Macron at the Élysée, and expressed the need for increasing cooperation between the citizens and governments of France and China in the field of art and culture. Xi stressed the need to promote extensive bilateral exchange in the humanities, and to increase dialogue with regard to culture, tourism, language, and region, reaching out to younger audiences in particular, and designated 2021 as the year of Sino-French cultural tourism.

President Macron added, “Our cooperation in the cultural field is experiencing an unprecedented dynamism... Great projects are being undertaken, such as the biggest exhibition of Picasso’s works in China this year, and the cooperation between

Versailles and the Forbidden City... We have decided that 2021 will be the year of cultural tourism between our two countries, and, I must say, all these initiatives, conceived in recent months and carried out together, are not a coincidence. They reflect a common state of mind, that of rediscovering the essence of our bond, and the bedrock on which our mutual understanding is built.”

For the Musée national Picasso-Paris, the exhibition marks the most substantive presentation of its collection—which includes 5,000 art works and more than 200,000 archival objects—in China to date, and the first since Laurent Le Bon assumed the directorship in 2014. “We are pleased with this new stage in the international cooperation policy led by the Musée national Picasso-Paris,” LeBon has noted.

UCCA Director and CEO Philip Tinari has said, “For UCCA, this exhibition marks the realization of a dream we have held since our opening in 2007, to present not only recent developments in contemporary art but to examine the underpinnings of the contemporary by showing modern masters. We believe that the story of Picasso is relevant to our audience in China, as individuals here continue to answer the challenges of creativity, originality, and innovation.”

#### **Visitor and Ticketing Information**

“Picasso – Birth of a Genius” is continuously on display from June 15 to September 1, 2019. Exhibition opening hours are Monday to Thursday, 10:00 – 19:00 with last entry at 18:30, and Friday to Sunday, 10:00 – 21:00, with last entry at 20:30. On June 15, 16, and 29, July 19 and 20, and August 24, opening hours will be 10:00 – 19:00, with last entry at 18:30.

Tickets are available at UCCA's front desk and official WeChat account. Adult tickets valid for one-time admission Monday to Sunday, including holidays, are available for RMB 188; adult tickets for one-time admission Monday to Friday, not including holidays, are available for RMB 158; and student tickets for one-time admission are available for RMB 138. UCCA Members are eligible for free admission and access to a Member's Lane for express entry during periods of high traffic.

#### **Sponsorship and Support**

“Picasso – Birth of a Genius” is made possible by generous sponsorship from Morgan



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Stanley, Sotheby's, artistic partner Marie Dalgard, and Shede Spirits Co., Ltd. UCCA thanks collaborators TMALL Culture, the China Women's Development Foundation "Mom Handmade" charity program, WILLIAMISM, and YLYK for their support. Children's educational programs for this exhibition are made possible by Asia Ying's Baby World Limited and YeeHoO Children Growth Foundation, with further generous support from TMALL. BenQ provides film projection support. Hongri Lighting provides exclusive lighting equipment support. Focus Media provides national advertising support. Accommodation and event support come from NUO Hotel Beijing. Transportation support comes from D-Lux Travel. Exclusive support for environmentally friendly wall solutions comes from Dulux. UCCA also thanks the members of the UCCA Foundation Council, the UCCA Contemporary Circle, the UCCA Young Associates, and Strategic Partners Bloomberg and Aranya for their support.

Online ticketing platform support for "Picasso – Birth of a Genius" is provided by Damai, Meituan, Maoyan, Dianping, and Moretickets. Thanks to Tencent Video Art Channel, Ergeng TV, and luckin coffee for their special support.

#### **Partners and Collaborators**

"Picasso – Birth of a Genius" is presented in collaboration with Musée national Picasso-Paris.

The exhibition is made possible through the support of the French Embassy in China. As an important part of Festival Croisements 2019, the exhibition has received support from numerous French and Chinese national institutions; by presenting a selection of important work by one of the twentieth century's preeminent artists, who spent much of his life in France, UCCA hopes to promote the cultural and artistic exchange between these two countries.

Festival Croisements is the major cultural event of the French Embassy in China. The first foreign festival in China, Festival Croisements has built up over the years a strong identity expressed in its artistic, ambitious and innovative choices. Its programming showcases singular works and artists, from France and China, in all artistic disciplines, including visual arts, performing arts, music, cinema, literature, and ideas. The recognition acquired from the general public and cultural partners over fourteen editions enables it today to make live and resound this intercultural dialogue



in more than thirty cities in China and on the international scene, within the framework of important collaborations.

[www.faguowenhua.com](http://www.faguowenhua.com)

The exhibition is organized with the support of the art and culture agency Doors 门艺. Founded in 2017 by Bérénice Angremy and Victoria Jonathan, Doors is a Franco-Chinese agency specialized in the production and promotion of art and culture. Through creative projects and innovative events, their goal is to open doors and facilitate cultural exchange between China and Europe. Doors has also contributed to the exhibition's supporting public programs, in particular the performance *PEPI*, specially commissioned from I Could Never Be A Dancer to pay tribute to Picasso's Mediterranean roots and the choreographic forms that inspired him. Recent Doors projects include Xiamen's Jimei x Arles photo festival, and collaborations with Centre Pompidou, Philharmonie de Paris, Jeu de Paume, Lille World Design Capital, and Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson.

[www.doors-agency.com](http://www.doors-agency.com)

The exhibition is designed by Studio Adrien Gardère (SAG). Founded in 2000, SAG has continually worked towards a comprehensive, integrated approach in its practice, and has been met with international success in projects ranging from permanent museum and temporary exhibition design to product design. SAG has collaborated and established long-lasting relationships with major institutions, architects, and private entities all around the world.

[www.studiogardere.com](http://www.studiogardere.com)

### Special Programs

In conjunction with the exhibition, UCCA presents four weekends of public programs including panel discussions along with performing arts and cinema events. This ongoing series, titled "Adventures with Picasso," seeks to introduce audiences to the life and work of the artist in a variety of different formats. Academics will introduce Picasso from every angle, including through the "Picasso in China" forum, which will analyze Picasso's relationship with China through lectures and discussions on June 15. Further academic programs include the panel "Picasso's South" on June 29, featuring José Lebrero Stals, the artistic director of Museo Picasso Málaga, and the poet Xi Chuan, amongst others, reflecting on the Mediterranean character of the artist's oeuvre. Pianist Gao Ping, choreographic duo I Could Never Be A Dancer, and 3C



(Creative Composers Collective) will present original works inspired by Picasso's paintings and his collaborations in the worlds of dance and theater, on June 29, July 20, and August 24, respectively. At the same time, a series of films related to Picasso will give audience members a glimpse of this artistic master's life story. For detailed information, please visit [www.ucca.org.cn/programs](http://www.ucca.org.cn/programs)

Throughout the run of the show, UCCA's philanthropic arm, UCCA Foundation, will offer a series of specially designed children's education programs. All proceeds from guided tours for young visitors and a special commemorative packet of art supplies will be used to support UCCA Foundation's projects bringing access to art and education to underserved populations around China.

Taking inspiration from Picasso's creative development, UCCA's renowned art-education initiative UCCA Kids will offer a series of five workshops. Structured around the themes "Happy Young Artists" (June 15 and 16), "The Colors of Emotion: Rose and Blue" (June 22 and 23), "Ancient Art" (June 29 and 30), "New Dimensions in Painting" (July 6 and 7), and "Picasso on Stage" (June 13 and 14), the workshops utilize the story of Picasso's personal growth as an artist to trace the journey from childhood innocence, to the explorations of youth, to maturity and an artistic breakthrough. Space is limited; please call +8610 5780 0202/03 ahead of time to book.

#### *Picasso - Birth of a Genius* Exhibition Catalogue

This bilingual (Chinese-English) book includes an original essay by curator Emilia Philippot which expands on the argument made in the exhibition, and another by art historian Wu Xueshan that explores Picasso's enduring legacy in China. Edited by UCCA and published by the Culture and Art Publishing House, it also includes caption information and full-color images of all 103 artworks exhibited, as well as an extensive chronology and bibliography. The catalogue can be purchased at UCCA or online at UCCA's store on JD.com. The retail price is RMB 268.

#### Exhibition Merchandise

To celebrate this exhibition, UCCA Store has launched a line of products to accompany "Picasso - Birth of a Genius," officially licensed by the Picasso Administration, the representative of the Picasso Estate. The range of products, which will be available in the newly renovated UCCA Store, includes canvas bags, notebooks, and t-shirts, as well as commemorative prints, posters, and notecards.



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### **UCCA Summer Party**

On July 19, UCCA will host the first edition of the UCCA Summer Party, a new annual fundraising event that serves as the summer counterpart to the UCCA Gala held each November. The Summer Party gathers art lovers from all fields to show their support for UCCA's mission and programs, while celebrating the individuals and corporations that have made significant contributions to UCCA. The evening program will include special access to the exhibition and the world premiere of the specially commissioned performance *PEPI* by the choreographic duo I Could Never Be A Dancer, which pays vivid homage to Picasso's Mediterranean roots, fusing flamenco and acrobatics. Featuring great food, drink, and music, the UCCA Summer Party is sure to be an evening to remember. For more information or to purchase tickets (RMB 888), please contact Li Lin at [lin.li@ucca.org.cn](mailto:lin.li@ucca.org.cn).

### **About UCCA**

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art is China's leading contemporary art institution. Committed to the belief that art can deepen lives and transcend boundaries, UCCA presents a wide range of exhibitions, public programs, and research initiatives to a public of more than one million visitors each year. UCCA Beijing sits at the heart of the 798 Art District, occupying 10,000 square meters of factory chambers built in 1957 and regenerated in 2019 by OMA. UCCA Dune, designed by Open Architecture, lies beneath the sand in the seaside enclave of Aranya in Beidaihe. Formally accredited as a museum by the Beijing Cultural Bureau in 2018, UCCA also operates non-profit foundations, licensed by the Beijing Bureau of Civil Affairs and the Hong Kong government. UCCA's commercial ventures include the retail platform UCCA Store, the children's education initiative UCCA Kids, and collaborations and projects under the rubric UCCA Lab. Opened in 2007 and revived by a committed group of Chinese and international patrons in 2017, UCCA works to bring China into global dialogue through contemporary art.

[www.ucca.org.cn/en](http://www.ucca.org.cn/en)

### **About Musée national Picasso-Paris**

Musée Picasso's considerable collection was established after two donations made through "acceptance in lieu," an alternative to inheritance tax, by Picasso's heirs in 1979, and later by the heirs of his widow, Jacqueline, in 1990. This is the first major endeavor that the Musée Picasso will have undertaken in China since its institutional

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revitalization in 2014, under the leadership of new director Laurent Le Bon, and his novel curatorial framework.

[www.museepicassoparis.fr](http://www.museepicassoparis.fr)

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