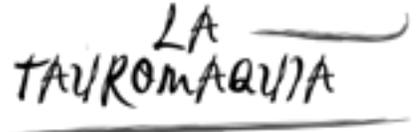


## PABLO PICASSO: LA TAUROMAQUIA TO OPEN AT MANA CONTEMPORARY



Mana Contemporary, in collaboration with Barcelona gallery Sala Gaspar, presents *Pablo Picasso: La Tauromaquia*, on view from March 7 to August 1, 2014. The rare exhibition of all 26 of Picasso's *La Tauromaquia* etchings also includes an original ink drawing never before seen in public that Picasso dedicated to Miguel Gaspar on the cover of the book.

In 1957, the Barcelona-based publishing house Gustavo Gili commissioned Pablo Picasso to illustrate the 18th-century book *La Tauromaquia o arte de torear* ("Tauromachy or the Art of Bullfighting"), by José Delgado, known colloquially as "Pepe Illo." In the span of a few weeks that summer, Picasso etched 26 plates for the book, each depicting different moments in the bullfight. Picasso created this portfolio with a technique that was unusual for him, the sugar-lift aquatint, which allowed him to paint directly on the copper plates with a brush. His use of this process proved incredibly successful, evoking the tension, action, and choreography of the bullring through suggestive shapes and lines.

Picasso's life-long fascination with bullfighting—at once a performance and a ritual—began during his childhood, when he would frequently accompany his father to the bullfights hosted in Málaga, his native city. Picasso's preoccupation with the bullfight remained a recurring theme in his work, exploring dualities such as: love-and-eroticism; violence-and-purity; executioner-and-victim; and light-and-shadow, amongst others.

Picasso's series of aquatints sets out the sequence of steps in a bullfight, from the picture of the bulls lying down in a meadow to the bullfighter being gored in the bullring. In each illustration, the artist reduces the drama of the spectacle by stylizing the figures of the bulls, picadors and bullfighters with extremely subtle dynamic movement; and his fast, tense hand testifies to the swift action of the bullring.

The process for publishing *La Tauromaquia* originally got underway in 1926, when Gustavo Gili Sr. contacted Picasso with the opportunity to illustrate one of the new books in his *Ediciones de la Cometa* collection. After a flurry of letters and a series of interviews, Picasso agreed to illustrate Delgado's book, which had also inspired the bullfighting etchings by Goya, whom Picasso deeply admired. The publishing process came to a halt in 1930 for no apparent reason, and it was nearly 30 years later, in 1956, that Gustavo Gili Jr. revisited the conversation with Picasso to complete the project begun by his father.

The woven paper for the book was specially made by Guarro and brought to Paris from Barcelona, bearing a distinctive bull's head watermark, which Picasso designed himself. The printing of the plates was performed in the Lacourière workshops in Paris under the artist's strict supervision. For the cover, Picasso made a dry point, printed at Jaume Pla's presses in Barcelona, featuring a kite, the symbol of Gili's *Ediciones de la Cometa* collection. The book was published at the Sociedad Alianza de Artes Gráficas (SADAG) presses in Barcelona on October 25, 1959.

### ABOUT MANA CONTEMPORARY

Mana Contemporary is a ground-breaking cultural institution with locations in Jersey City and Chicago. Based on an integrated philosophy, its facilities provide services, spaces, and programming for artists, collectors, curators, performers, students, and the greater community within single locations. For more information about Mana Contemporary, please visit [www.manacontemporary.com](http://www.manacontemporary.com).

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