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# PRESS KIT

DAMIEN DEROUBAIX . PICASSO ET MOI  
20/02/2016 – 29/05/2016

## Press release

# DAMIEN DEROUBAIX PICASSO ET MOI

**Exhibition from February 20 to May 29, 2016**

**Curator** Enrico Lunghi

**Associate curator** Émilie Bouvard

*"You have to awaken people. To revolutionize the way they identify things. You've got to create images they won't accept. You have to exasperate people, force them to understand that they are living in a weird world. A world that's not reassuring. A world which is not what they think it is..."*

Pablo Picasso

Damien Deroubaix's artistic practice features a great diversity of forms and techniques: oil painting, watercolour, engraving, tapestry, wooden panel carving, but also sculpture and installation. This variety combines with highly eclectic references, often cohabiting in his works in a spirit that is reminiscent of iconoclastic Dada montages. Motifs from medieval *danses macabres* mingle with evocations of tragic chapters from modern history; topical images are juxtaposed with mythology and folklore; the history of art and the metal music scene collide.

His paintings are openly expressionist, often making reference to apocalyptic themes, and perhaps this is what makes them so timeless.

Pablo Picasso plays a singular role within these disparate ingredients: Deroubaix describes discovering the tapestry of *Guernica*, at the age of nineteen, as a defining experience, one which even instigated his artist vocation. He has not ceased to "converse" with the Spanish master, appropriating some of his motifs and themes and finding a model for his own work in the allegorical approach and commitment present in certain pieces. The *Picasso et moi* (Picasso and Me) project arose directly from this dialogue across time. It was presented for the first time at the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence in 2014-2015, and is extended here in an expanded version.

The exhibition at Mudam Luxembourg brings together fifteen works by Picasso, from the collections of the Musée national Picasso-Paris, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), the Ministry of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, and forty works by Deroubaix in a presentation that highlights the convergence of two ways of looking at the world. It also gave rise to the production of an ambitious engraved and inked panel produced in response to *Guernica*, a way for Deroubaix both to pay tribute to the work that awakened his vocation and to "reactivate" it in contemporary space.

Damien Deroubaix was born in Lille in 1972. He lives and works in Meisenthal (France).



## WORKS PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION - PABLO PICASSO



*Sueño y mentira de Franco I*, 8 January 1937

*Sueño y mentira de Franco II*, 8 January 1937 – 7 June 1937

Éd. 448/850

Eau-forte et aquatinte

39 x 58 cm chacune

31,7 x 42,2 cm (hors marge) chacune

Propriété de la Communauté française de Belgique, dépôt au centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée, La Louvière, APC 21156/1 et 21156/2

*Sueño y mentira de Franco* (The Dream and Lie of Franco) was Picasso's first reaction to the Spanish Civil War. The first pictures were drawn spontaneously onto the etching plate in January 1937. They depict General Franco in a satirical manner, not without alluding to the figure of *King Ubu* and Goya's *Caprichos*. After the attack on the Basque city of Guernica on 26 April of the same year, Picasso took up the series again. He reworked the pictures using the aquatint technique to make them clearer, and completed the group with pictures that now told vividly of the brutality of war. The artist, who originally intended to circulate the caricatures as postcards, finally ended up publishing them in a portfolio accompanied by a satirical poem.



© Photos: Courtesy Communauté française de Belgique and Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée, La Louvière ; © Succession Picasso 2016

### 7 engravings from from the « 60 » of 1966, 1966-1968

*Au théâtre : femme nue entre un jeune homme et un barbu*, 12 novembre 1966

*Sous les feux de la rampe : femme nue entre deux hommes*, 12 novembre 1966

*Sous les feux de la rampe : au viol !*, 12 novembre 1966

*Sur la scène : roi et couple-phallus*, 15 novembre 1966

*Sous les feux de la rampe : jeune fille et barbu phallus*, 15 novembre 1966

*Au théâtre : couple avec un flûtiste et un petit chien*, 3 décembre 1966

*Au théâtre : vieil homme couronné de fleurs par des femmes et des fées*, 2 décembre 1966

Aquatinte, eau-forte et pointe sèche

22 x 32 et 32 x 47 cm

Collection Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)



*Au théâtre : femme nue entre un jeune homme et un barbu*, 12 novembre 1966

© Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) ;

© Succession Picasso 2016

It was not just as a painter that Picasso was exceptionally productive. Among his some 2,000 engravings are almost 700 etchings that were mostly made in his final years from 1966 onwards, including the *Suite* 347 (1968), which is the most impressive in terms of numbers. The series of the "60" of 1966, in which Picasso combined the drawing quality of the drypoint with the painterly quality of the aquatint technique, was created between 1966 and 1968. Erotic subject matter played an important role right up to the end of his life, as is shown by the seven prints from the series of the "60" of 1966 that are on display, in which figures are depicted on large phallic forms or even merge into them completely.



© Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Thierry Le Mage ; © Succession Picasso 2016

### *Le Cirque de la vie observé par une petite fille*, 15 February 1970

Eau-forte sur cuivre, 1<sup>er</sup> état  
Épreuve sur papier vélin de Rives filigrané « BFK Rives »,  
tirée par Crommelynck, annotée « État I »  
42 x 50 cm  
31,3 x 41,5 cm (hors marge)  
MP3108  
Collection Musée national Picasso-Paris

Between 1970 and 1972, Picasso made a series of 156 drawings with which he underlined his predilection for the image of the female body. Here, one finds the motif of the “painter with his model”, but also themes from the circus world, which had already engaged his interest at the start of the century. In this copper engraving, the circus, a metaphor for the “theatre of life”, serves as a pretext for depicting extremely acrobatic contortions in the mass of human bodies.



© Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Béatrice Hatala ; © Succession Picasso 2016

### *« Ecce Homo », d'après Rembrandt*, 4 February 1970

Aquatinte et pointe sèche sur cuivre, 1<sup>er</sup> état  
Épreuve sur papier vélin de Rives filigrané « BFK Rives »,  
tirée par Crommelynck, annotée « État I »  
57,9 x 50 cm  
48,7 x 41,5 cm (hors marge)  
MP3092  
Collection Musée national Picasso-Paris

This engraving clearly reveals the impact Rembrandt had on Picasso, who, like the Dutch master, worked almost obsessively in the field of engraving. Rembrandt, who had printed the plate of his copper engraving *Ecce Homo* in eight different “states”, went so far in the sixth one as to almost completely burnish out the crowd of people. Picasso took the opposite path. In his first state, we see the arches that Rembrandt added instead of the crowd; only then was he to add the people. Picasso’s etching is primarily a burlesque interpretation of this biblical moment and a reaction to the earnestness of Rembrandt’s engraving.



© Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Thierry Le Mage ; © Succession Picasso 2016

### *« David et Bethsabée », d'après Lucas Cranach*, 30 March 1947

Plume et lavis sur zinc avec reprises au grattoir et à la plume, III<sup>e</sup> état  
Épreuve d'artiste sur papier vélin, tirée par Mourlot  
65,5 x 49,8 cm  
64 x 49 cm (hors marge)  
90,5 x 75,5 x 3 cm (avec cadre)  
Collection Musée national Picasso-Paris

In this biblical scene of David watching Bathsheba at her bath, Picasso refers to a work by Lucas Cranach the Elder, a theme that was to occupy him intensively between 1947 and 1949. In this work, he uses pen and ink on a zinc plate so as to depict the figures in strong contrasts of light and dark. The voyeur that repeatedly appears in Picasso’s works here takes the guise of King David, who is placed above the whole scene.



© Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Thierry Le Mage ; © Succession Picasso 2016

« Femmes d'Alger », d'après Delacroix. Deuxième variation.

5 February 1955

Pointe et frottis de crayon lithographique sur pierre mise au noir, II<sup>e</sup> état  
Épreuve sur papier vélin, tirée par Mourlot, annotée « 2<sup>e</sup> premier (raturé) état »  
33 x 44,8 cm  
23,2 x 33,6 cm (hors marge)  
MP3454  
Collection Musée national Picasso-Paris

In the years 1954 and 1955, Picasso was to produce a series of fifteen paintings and numerous drawings based on Eugène Delacroix's painting *Women of Algiers in their Apartment* (1834, Paris, Louvre). In his drawings, he gradually dissociates himself from this model, developing an ever-increasing freedom of expression. With these works, Picasso also pays homage to Matisse, who died in 1954, by adding an odalisque to his pictures. In addition to the "women of Algiers", the drawing also contains other elements that he took from his early major work, the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907).



© Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Jean-Gilles Berizzi ; © Succession Picasso 2016

*Le Buffet de Vauvenargues*, 23 March 1959 - 23 January 1960

Huile sur toile  
195 x 280 cm  
MP214  
Collection Musée national Picasso-Paris

In the autumn of 1958, Picasso had bought the Château of Vauvenargues at the foot of "Cézanne's mountain", the Montagne Sainte-Victoire. The buffet from the 16th century that he found there, "a piece of junk in Henry II style, but so beautiful!" as Picasso said, was depicted in altogether seven paintings. The one on display here is the most intensive treatment of this subject; Picasso repeatedly reworked it between March 1959 and January 1960.



© Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (Musée national Picasso-Paris) / Thierry Le Mage ; © Succession Picasso 2016

*Crâne de chèvre sur la table*, 16 January 1953 - 17 January 1953

Aquatinte au sucre et au grattoir sur cuivre, I<sup>er</sup> état  
Épreuve sur papier vélin de Rives filigrané « BFK Rives », tirée par Lacourrière, annotée « le 17.1.53 (seule épreuve/tirée/du premier état) sur la... »  
55,9 x 75,9 cm, 51,5 x 65,8 cm (hors marge)  
Collection Musée national Picasso-Paris

Vanitas had an important place in Picasso's work. Whether as the skull of a sheep, a goat or a bull, or as a still life recalling the brevity of human life – there are often echoes of Spanish, Flemish, Dutch or French masters from art history. The skinned sheep's heads and the skulls of the late 1930s give an indication of the artist's mood amid the threat of war and the situation in Spain under Franco's regime. The etching *Crâne de chèvre sur la table* *Goat's Skull on the Table*, which Picasso was to make more than ten years later, shows the artist's continued interest in this subject.



## WORKS PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION - DAMIEN DEROUBAIX



© Photo: Roland Michaud

### *World Downfall*, 2014

Tapisserie en 3 panneaux assemblés :  
fils de laine, broderie, cuir, dentelle  
268 x 410 cm  
Courtesy l'artiste et galerie Nosbaum & Reding

This tapestry, made in collaboration with the Ateliers Neolice in Aubusson (France), is the same size as its model, a watercolour of 2007. In it, Damien Deroubaix combines two influences that are important for him: the picture is to be understood as a modern interpretation of Picasso's *Guernica*, translated into the context of the Holocaust and the catastrophes of the present day. The apt title was taken from that of one of the most influential grindcore albums by the band Terrorizer. Some motifs from the album cover are also cited.



Detail of the work in progress at the artists studio  
© Photo: Guy Rebmeister

### *Garage Days Re-visited*, 2016

Bois gravé et encre  
349 x 776 cm  
Courtesy l'artiste et galerie Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg

*Guernica*, painted in 1937 in response to the destruction of the Basque city of that name by the German air force during the Spanish Civil War, was one of the first politically motivated works by Pablo Picasso. It metaphorically depicted the horrors of war in a large-scale and complex composition. In 1955, Picasso had three tapestries produced of *Guernica*, one of which made such a strong impression on Damien Deroubaix when visiting an exhibition in Arles in 1991 that he decided to become an artist. "At that moment, I knew what I wanted to do with my life." In *Garage Days Re-visited*, Damien Deroubaix builds on a technique that he learnt from printmaking: the large wooden boards blackened with printing ink correspond to the printing block that was normally used to make the copies and here constitutes the work itself. More than a homage, this large work, which can be seen as a "copy after" the work of a master, attests to the artist's wish to physically confront with *Guernica*, while at the same time examining the topicality of this masterpiece.



© Photo: Roland Michaud

### *Homo Bulla*, 2011

Sculpture en verre sur socle en bois  
230 x 131 x 131 cm  
Produit au Centre International d'Art Verrier / Meisenthal, France, avec le soutien du Ministère de la Culture (DRAC Lorraine), du Conseil Régional de Lorraine et de la Communauté de Communes du Pays de Bitche  
Courtesy l'artiste, galerie Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg et galerie In Situ – fabienne leclerc, Paris  
Courtesy l'artiste et galerie Nosbaum Reding

« Homo bulla (est) » – « Man is a bubble »: Damien Deroubaix takes this Latin *vanitas* proverb as the title for his large sculptural installation created in collaboration with the master glaziers and glass blowers of the Centre International d'Art Verrier (CIAV) in Meisenthal in Lorraine. The artist has engraved motifs from the *Heidelberg Dance of Death* of 1488 on the fragile glass bubbles. The ouroboros, the snake biting itself in its own tail, that is lying on the ground is a symbol of the cyclical transformation process affecting everything material: a symbol of life, death and rebirth.

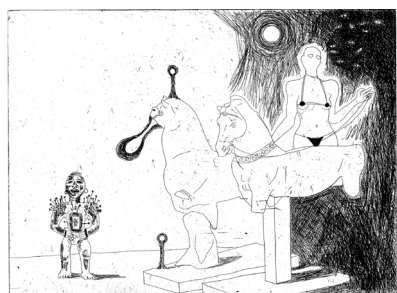


© Photo: Le lieu unique, Nantes

### *Fall from Grace, 2010*

Aquarelle, encre, acrylique et collage sur papier  
Collection Colette et Michel Poitevin, Deulemont  
268 x 410 cm

The title *Fall from Grace* refers not only to a song of the death metal band Morbid Angels, but also to the Fall of Man and the consumption of the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. This large watercolour with the tree in the centre belongs to the artistic tradition of depictions of the Fall of Man since the Middle Ages. The tree becomes a threat for the figures and creatures around. In its abundance of iconographic quotes, *Fall from Grace* is an exemplary demonstration of Damien Deroubaix's method of combining and collaging individual motifs.



Eye of the Beholder, 2014  
Issue de *El origen del Mundo*, 2014  
© Photo: Item éditions, Paris

### *El origen del mundo, 2014*

Série de 25 eau-fortes  
42 x 50 cm  
Courtesy l'artiste et galerie Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg  
Item éditions, 2014

The series of twenty-five etchings with the title *El origen del mundo* (The Origin of the World) once more clearly shows the propinquity of the two artists represented in this exhibition. Like Picasso, Damien Deroubaix belongs to the tradition of "painters and engravers". In the etchings of this series, Deroubaix quotes motifs from his usual repertoire, from his own works and also from *Guernica*, achieving painterly light-dark contrasts through the combination of etching and aquatint. The often evocative titles lend the drawings further levels of meaning.



© Photo: Courtesy galerie In Situ – fabienne leclerc, Paris

### *The Mermaid, 2010*

Bois et résine  
66 x 135 x 40 cm  
Collection Ramus del Rondeaux, Paris

Since Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* (1837), mermaids have been the object of romantic glorification. In Greek mythology, these hybrid creatures, known there as Sirens, were feared as demons of death and for their song. In this work, Damien Deroubaix also draws on the Japanese version of the "human fish", the *Ningyo*, which can cause storms and misfortune, but the eating of which also promises immortality.



© Photo: Stefan Rohner

### *Der neue Mensch, 2007*

Aquarelle, encre, acrylique et collage sur papier  
150 x 200 cm  
Collection privée  
Dépôt Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

The slogan of the "New Man" is an empty formula of modernity that was celebrated and abused by dictators, revolutionaries and idealists. It crops up occasionally even today, for example in the fields of religion or biotechnology. For Damien Deroubaix, the skeleton of an ape stands for the "New Man". It is surrounded by in speech bubbles in which is shown the apparently sole interest of people today: money.

This watercolour is a sarcastic comment on the hopes that were associated with this idea. The skeleton executes a *danse macabre* under observation from a watchtower (a quote from a famous photo by Raymond Depardon), which evokes one of the most barbaric results of this perverted ideal: the concentration camp.



© Photo: Courtesy galerie In Situ – fabienne leclerc, Paris

### *Sous les feux de la rampe 1 : l'austérité, 2013*

Aquarelle, encre, acrylique et collage sur papier  
330 x 450 cm  
Courtesy l'artiste et galerie In Situ – fabienne leclerc, Paris

The references that Damien Deroubaix collects in this large-scale work are numerous: biblical symbols, satyrs, hybrid beings, nocturnal monsters, all closely connected with the macabre. Different scenes are shown in individual picture bubbles emanating from a human head, in which drawings replace the writings that the artist used in earlier works. Deroubaix named this watercolour after several engravings by Picasso from the series of the “60” of 1966. However, unlike with Picasso, for whom spotlights were still directly connected with the world of theatre, for Deroubaix they have to do with the present economic situation.



© Photo: Courtesy galerie Nosbaum Reding

### *The Artist, 2015*

Huile et collage sur toile  
200 x 150 cm

Damien Deroubaix here depicts the figure of the artist in the guise of a skinned orangutan. The dull colour evokes the state of decay of this creature, torn between life and death, which is staring, mesmerized, at a constellation. The light radiating from the stars breathes new life into it, perhaps by means of the descending banknote. The picture attests to an ambivalent esteem for the existence of the artist – either on his own part or that of his contemporaries – who, if he is not hit by lightning, is led by his ambition and his greed. The soap bubbles, the tulip and the bouquet of flowers all of the same colour are a symbol for the ephemerality of his existence, like a *memento mori*.



*Life, 2014*  
© Photo: Aurélien Mole

### *Life, 2014*

### *Death, 2014*

Huile sur toile marouflée sur toile  
229 x 178 cm encadrés  
Courtesy l'artiste et galerie In Situ – fabienne leclerc

*Life* and *Death* show the special relationship of Damien Deroubaix to death. The symbols representing life and death are so similar, especially their respective backgrounds, in which looms a sombre coloured dark form that resembles the phallus from Picasso's etchings from the series of the “60” of 1966, that it seems well possible to interchange them. Life, symbolised by a skeleton, appears to be performing a *danse macabre* or leaving its grave. Death, in its turn, is represented by a woman, reduced to a trunk, which recalls the figure of a “polymastos” goddess with its many breasts. But instead of giving life, as the seeming symbol of fertility suggests, it gives birth to death.





© Photo: Courtesy galerie Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg

### *Éros*, 2013

Aquarelle, acrylique et encre sur papier  
150 x 200 cm  
Collection Serge Allard, Luxembourg

Despite the undeniable influence of Picasso's etchings from the series '60' of 1966, the watercolour of *Éros* presents itself very differently. Although it has a form similar to that found in Picasso's works, i.e. the picture motifs are found within a phallic shape, the content in Damien Deroubaix's work is remote from the eroticism suggested by the title. Over the skeleton of a ribcage, the typical hand sign from the metal scene, the "sign of the horns", can be seen instead of a face, while two ants are below it (as an allusion to one of the tasks that Psyche solves with the help of ants before she wins back Éros?).



© Photo: Rémi Villaggi, Metz / Mudam Luxembourg

### *Gott mit uns*, 2011

Bois gravé et peint, crânes de chèvre et mâchoire de vache  
245 x 360 cm  
Collection Mudam Luxembourg  
Acquisition 2011

The title of this work, *Gott mit uns* ("God with us"), was not only the motto of the Prussian royal family, which as such, adopted by the Wehrmacht, more or less became the symbol of German militarism, but also the title of a portfolio with anti-militaristic lithographies by George Grosz (1919), as well as the title of songs by the Polish thrash metal band Damage Inc. and the Swedish power metal band Sabaton. It has also been reappropriated by the far-right milieu. This, along with the mushroom cloud, the sometimes real skulls, the zombie-like monster, the shark that often appears in his works and the initials of the American grindcore band Anal Cunt, combined by Damien Deroubaix on a board treated like a printing block in an implied spatial arrangement in an almost literally woodcut-like and eye-catching manner, gives the work an aggressive, apocalyptic atmosphere.

# DAMIEN DEROUBAIX PICASSO ET MOI

**Exhibition** from February 20 to May 29, 2016

With the exceptional support of



Partner of the exhibition



## Address and information

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## Opening hours

Wednesday - Friday: 11am-8pm  
Saturday - Monday: 11am-6pm  
Public holidays: 11am-6pm  
Closed on Tuesday and 25.12

## Entrance fee

Adults	7 €
Under 26 years old, groups	5 €
Mudami card (valid 1 year for 2 persons)	50 €
Under 21 years old	free
Students under 26 years old	free
Wednesday, 6pm-8pm	free

## Images

Available on request

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## MUDAM THANKS

Mudam thanks all the donors and the sponsors, and particularly



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## THE PARTNER'S MESSAGE

### KBL EUROPEAN PRIVATE BANKERS

For many years, through cultural and artistic events for which it provides sponsorship in the eight European countries where it is present, KBL European Private Bankers has been committed to defending culture as a personal or collective vector of development in the various forms it can take. KBL is thus very active in Luxembourg with its support for concerts at the Philharmonie, theatrical events, operas and classical and modern dance performances at the Grand Theatre, plays performed in theaters and exhibitions in the city's museums. For many years following the opening of Mudam, KBL was one of its major sponsors and helped it to acquire certain artworks for its collection.

KBL's interest in modern and contemporary art has never diminished, as evidenced by its own collection. This interest, as manifested today in its association with the *Picasso et moi* exhibition, demonstrates the willingness of KBL to continue to participate effectively in the evolution of a changing world and an art which progresses. And what more striking demonstration of this than the confrontation of the work of Picasso (if not the most important, then at least one of the most important artists of the twentieth century) who went beyond all the boundaries of his contemporary era, with the work of Damien Deroubaix who, through his art in constant motion, often illustrating harsh but current topics, perfectly fulfills the role of the artist he is in order to help the viewer to understand the transition from one society to another.

The dialogue presented here between Picasso and Deroubaix is something of a starting point. Damien Deroubaix came across the woven version of *Guernica* and, dazzled by the drama of the subject and Picasso's treatment of it, decided to become an artist. That's quite something! Damien Deroubaix was then nineteen years old.

The first of his works on paper – collages and paintings – highlight the confrontation he seeks between past and present. This is also true of his sculptures in various materials, his engravings, and his oil paintings that demonstrate his impressive technical capacity. Through these media, he depicts his vision of the world and constructs his universe. Picasso did the same thing in the troubled times he lived through. The confrontation between these artists highlights the filiation of the younger with his glorious mentor.

Thus, Mudam's proposal to KBL to be associated with the *Picasso et moi* exhibition is naturally inscribed in this supportive approach to art that evolves with the times and was immediately accepted. The fact that this exhibition, which follows the eponymous one held at the Fondation Maeght from November 2014 to March 2015, is today being held at Luxembourg's main museum only increased our enthusiasm. KBL European Private Bankers is thus particularly happy and proud of the opportunity to invite you to (re)discover these artists and the dialogue established between their works.

Yves Stein,  
CEO  
KBL European Private Bankers S.A.