

Santa Barbara Museum of Art

Picasso and Braque: The Cubist Experiment

By Jeannette Casillas / CASA

FRAGMENTED FACETS IN GRAYS AND BROWNS in the works of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque relate the dialogue between the artists during an experimental period when they explored Cubism. For a closer look at this influential movement in art history, The Santa Barbara Museum of Art recently opened an international loan exhibit, *Picasso and Braque, The Cubist Experiment, 1910-1912*, featuring 16 paintings and 20 etchings and drypoints by Picasso and Braque. The exhibit will be on view through January 8th, 2012.

"It's great to have you here on this very special evening. The opening of this exhibition which is one of the most important and intriguing exhibitions this museum has ever organized," said Larry Fineberg, SBMA Director as he addressed patrons and supporters in the Mary Craig Auditorium. "This is one of the few presentations anywhere and the first presentations ever in the west coast of this critical period of work of these artists."

Due to the overwhelming response to the exhibition, Eik Kahng, organizing curator and SBMA Chief Curator, made a brief power point presentation about the exhibition rather than a walk through before allowing guests to see the paintings for themselves in the gallery.

The exhibit was organized by Kahng from the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Malcolm Warner from the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth. Paintings in the exhibition were selected from distinguished collections around the world including the private collection of Robert B. and Mercedes H. Eichholz from Santa Barbara.

"The real point of stimulation for this exhibition is this beautiful oval," shared Kahng as she pointed out *Bottles and Glasses* by Georges Braque, on loan from the Eichholz Collection. "It is one of the first paintings that I got to see when I came to Santa Barbara. It became my source of inspiration for this show."



Glass on a Table, 1909-10, oil on canvas by **Georges Braque**. Tate, London. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

During the years 1910 through 1912, Picasso and Braque invented a new style that took the basics of traditional European art—modeling in light and shade to suggest roundedness, perspective lines to suggest space, indeed the very idea of making a recognizable description of the real world—and toyed with them irreverently.

They collaborated so closely and like-mindedly ("roped together like mountain climbers," in Braque's own phrase) that their works of this period are sometimes difficult to tell apart. Their radical experiment in picture-making, which came to be known as Analytic Cubism, has been as far-reaching in its implications for art as the theories of Einstein for science.

"You get a clear sense of the difference between their distinctive temperaments and personalities. However, it was a period when they were deliberately attempting to efface individual difference and enjoy the fact that no one could distinguish between their canvases," noted Kahng.

The most significant difference between this installation and other cubism installations, according to Kahng, is the departure from the minimalist approach where "the object is left to speak on its own" when it's installed on a white wall.

"What I love the most [about this installation] is our departure from the clinical feeling of the so-called "white-cube" installation that you normally associate with this material," explained Kahng. "This is literally the first time that I have

ever seen analytic cubist paintings by Picasso and Braque anywhere near any wall color at all, let alone a deep claret and azure. I think the tension between the deeper hues and decorative patterns of bourgeois décor at the turn of the last century and these latte-colored, ascetic, nearly abstract paintings helps communicate just how radical analytic cubism really was."

Museum's iPad App – iCubist

This exhibit will also allow guests to gain intimate knowledge of the artists' work methods and their work through the visual wall labels, audio guides, and a new educational focus, and via the new technology of the iPad.

An iPad application, *iCubist*, was written specifically for this exhibit by a UCSB student. The application will showcase the spectral images along with three other original activities and will be made available to exhibition visitors, free of charge, on pre loaded iPads.

"I am enjoying watching our visitors absorb the content of this show, not only through the exhibition design itself, but through the didactics – the conventional



Gwen Baker, Past President of SBMA Women's Board; **Mary Garton**, Past President of SMA Women's Board; **Eik Kahng**, organizing curator and SBMA Chief Curator; and **Mary Maxwell**, SBMA Women's Board President



Larry J. Fineberg, SBMA Director; **Malcolm Warner**, Kimbell Art Museum Deputy Director; and **Michael Armand Hammer**, SBMA Trustee and exhibition sponsor



Claire Parent, **Gerald Parent**, **Christine Emmons**, and **Robert Emmons**



Sylvia Cockrum and **Mercedes Eichholz**



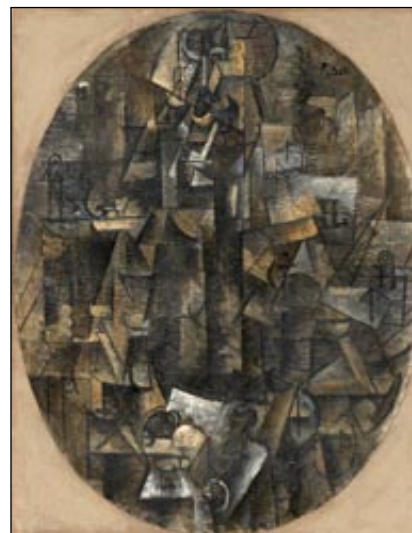
David Winitzky and **Leinie Bard**



Mary Williams and **Barbara Woods**



Dan Herlinger; **Stan Nelson**; **Lil Nelson**; **Joan Rosenberg-Dent** and **Thomas Dent**



Man with a Pipe, 1911, oil on canvas by **Pablo Picasso**. Kimbell Art Museum. Photo © MegaVision. © 2011 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

object labels, the Guide by Cell commentary, and not least of all, our App," shared Kahng. "The App is going to get a lot of attention... We are very proud to be the innovators of this platform for meaningful content delivery in a complex exhibition such as this one."

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The Museum is located at 1130 State Street and open Tues - Sun 11am to 5pm. For more information call 805-963-4364 or visit www.sbma.net.



Georgia McDermott, SBMA Retail and Visitor Services Manager; **Margaret Arvey**; and **Karen Sinsheimer**, SBMA Curator of Photography