

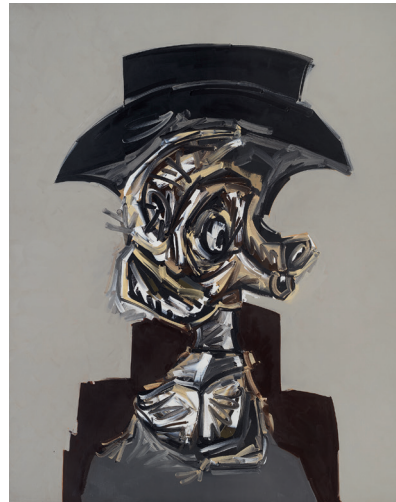
SAURA & PICASSO THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY 09.01 – 28.02.2024

Under the curatorship of Kosme de Bara, we are presenting an exhibition in Paris dedicated to the artist Antonio Saura (Huesca, 1930 - Cuenca, 1998), underlining the importance of Pablo Picasso (Málaga, 1881 – Mougins, 1973) in his preferred field of experimentation: figuration. A selection of six works executed between 1939 and 1985 reveals the virtuosity with which these two artists represented human nature through their revolutionary treatment of the figure.

This exhibition illustrates how Saura has drawn from Picasso's work to create a singular and remarkable body of images. Saura, at times substituting his brush for his pen, has written extensively on Picasso. His analysis is both critical and original. Saura is one of the artists who most confronted Picasso's art, and who accepted the challenges the Master laid down both during and after his lifetime. In his *Lettre imaginaire à Pablo Picasso*, he expresses his admiration and how his work "bewitched" his own and that of all the artists who came after him.

In 1954, Saura turned away from abstract art in favour of figuration and reappropriated the human figure. He sought to disintegrate volumetric planes and staging to reveal another, that of the gaze without perspective, frozen; he sought to represent, and above all to "synthesize a vision of reality". His images seem devoid of meaning, without structure, without the intelligibility of a figurative narrative, but his voice, his charm, remain engraved on our retina, helping us to understand and see other phenomena of our existence.

Portraiture is the genre of choice for Pablo Picasso who, throughout his career, represented the members of his inner circle. Dora Maar, identifiable by her almond-shaped eyes, and angular hat in this *Buste de femme au chapeau* (Bust of Woman with Hat) (1939), was the painter's muse during their tumultuous eight-year relationship. Fascinated by *Femme au chapeau bleu* (Woman with Blue Hat) (1939, musée Picasso, Paris), another portrait of Dora Maar painted by Picasso, Saura took up this subject in 1983 in an eponymous series of paintings and lithographs.



Antonio Saura
H. F. dans son fauteuil
(1985)
Oil on canvas 96 1/2 x 76 3/4 in.
© Succession Antonio Saura /
www.antoniosaura.org/
VEGAP, Barcelona, 2024



Pablo Picasso
Buste de femme au chapeau
(c. 1939)
Ink on paper 4 5/8 x 6 7/8 in.
© Sucesión Pablo Picasso,
VEGAP, Madrid, 2024

Similar elements can be found in another of the exhibition's key works, *H. F. dans son fauteuil* (H. F. in his Armchair) (1985), typical of Antonio Saura's portraits, in which the emphasis is on the emotions and psychology of the person depicted. The use of bold, expressive brushstrokes coupled with a dark, restrained palette adds to the overall feeling of introspection of introspection and existentialism.