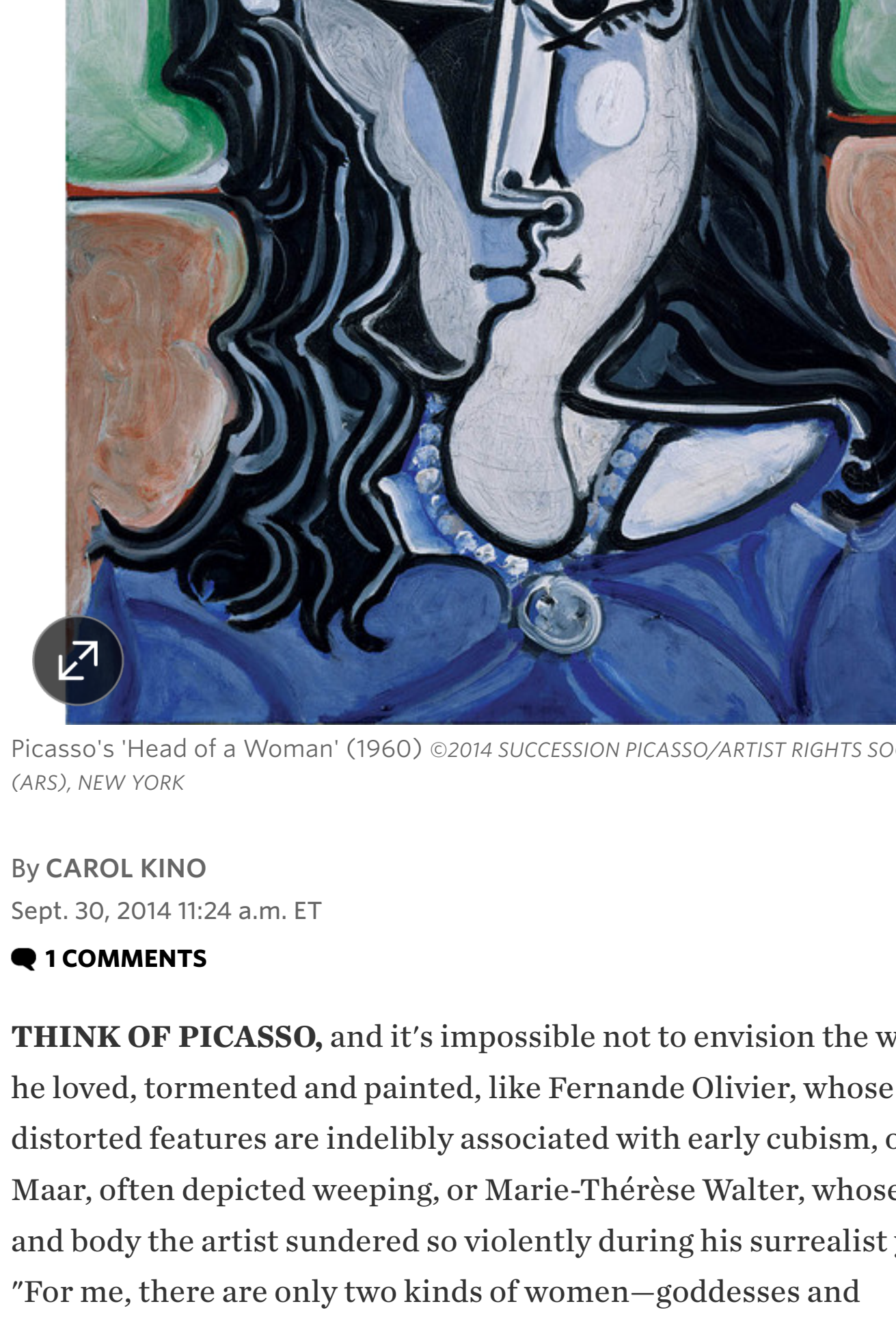


## FEATURE

# Jacqueline Roque: Picasso's Wife, Love & Muse

Cubist artist Pablo Picasso's most painted subject was his controversial wife, Jacqueline Roque. Now an exhibition at Pace Gallery explores their relationship and the works it inspired



Picasso's 'Head of a Woman' (1960) ©2014 SUCCESSION PICASSO/ARTIST RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

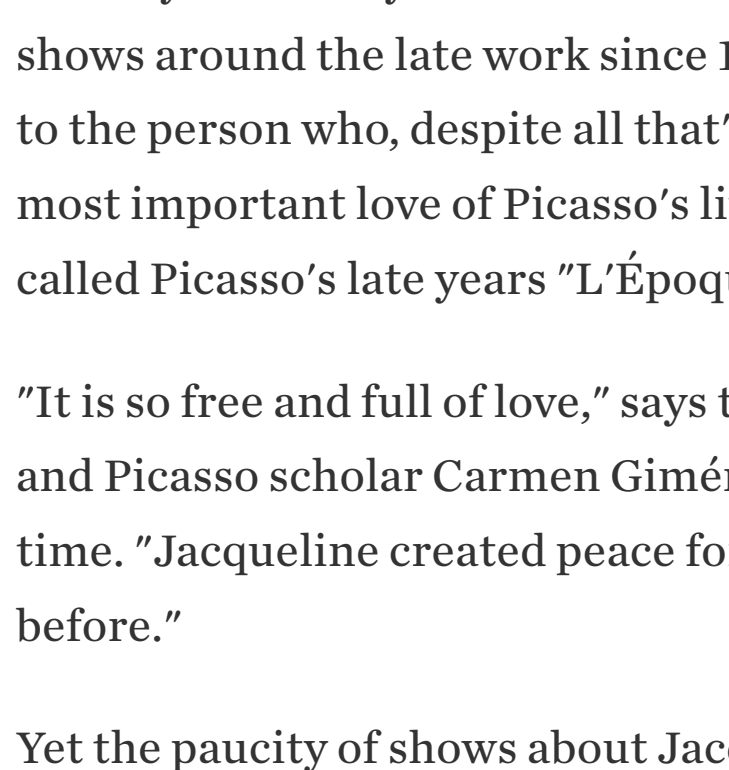
By CAROL KINO  
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1 COMMENTS

**THINK OF PICASSO**, and it's impossible not to envision the women he loved, tormented and painted, like Fernande Olivier, whose distorted features are indelibly associated with early cubism, or Dora Maar, often depicted weeping, or Marie-Thérèse Walter, whose face and body the artist sundered so violently during his surrealist years. "For me, there are only two kinds of women—goddesses and doormats," he told his postwar partner, Françoise Gilot, as she recounted in *Life with Picasso*, her 1964 memoir.

Since Picasso's death in 1973, the works emerging from these liaisons—and the gripping tales behind them—have provided fodder for countless museum and gallery shows. In the past three years alone, Gagosian Gallery, in conjunction with the Picasso biographer John Richardson, mounted two well-received New York exhibitions, *Picasso and Marie-Thérèse: L'Amour Fou* in 2011, and *Picasso and Françoise Gilot* in 2012. (On October 28, the gallery will open *Picasso & the Camera*, curated, like the others, by Richardson.)

### PHOTOS: MASTER AND MUSE



Now Pace Gallery, which has presented many Picasso shows of its own, will focus an extensive, two-gallery exhibition around the least celebrated and most controversial of the artist's amours, Jacqueline Roque, a dark-haired divorcée 45 years

the artist's junior, who became his second wife in 1961. Their relationship endured for more than 20 years, until Picasso's death at 91, making Jacqueline, who took his name when they married, his longest-lasting consort and most persistent muse. Yet she has inspired only a few exhibitions. The last was in 2006, at the Kunst Museum Pablo Picasso in Münster, Germany.

In part that's because Picasso's late work has often been dismissed as irrelevant and kitschy. But decades have elapsed since his death, and the work he produced while he was with Jacqueline is beginning to be hotly desired by collectors. Pace, which has organized seven shows around the late work since 1981, hopes to introduce audiences to the person who, despite all that's said of her, was arguably the most important love of Picasso's life. In a 1988 essay, Richardson called Picasso's late years "L'Époque Jacqueline."

"It is so free and full of love," says the Guggenheim Museum curator and Picasso scholar Carmen Giménez of the master's work from this time. "Jacqueline created peace for him. That did not happen before."

Yet the paucity of shows about Jacqueline may also be related to the ambiguous role she played for Picasso's family and friends. Early on, she developed a reputation for being manipulative, avaricious and conniving, initially because she came between Picasso and Gilot. Once installed at La Californie, the artist's grand Cannes villa, she guarded his privacy jealously, shutting out even his children and grandchildren so he could focus on work. After his death, Jacqueline disappeared into seclusion for three years, emerging only to battle with his heirs over the disposition of his estate.

And in 1986, still racked with grief over the loss of *Monseigneur*, as she called him, Jacqueline killed herself with a pistol at Notre-Dame de Vie, their castle in Mougins, becoming one of many Picasso intimates to die tragically. (Others include Walter, who hanged himself in 1977; Picasso's son Paolo by his first wife, the dancer Olga Khokhlova, who drank himself to death in 1975; and Paolo's son Pablito, who downed bleach after Jacqueline barred him from Picasso's funeral.)

Their relationship—and Jacqueline's sphinxlike demeanor, as rendered in more than 125 artworks—will live again in Pace's *Picasso & Jacqueline: The Evolution of Style*, from October 31 through January 10, 2015. Nearly half of the work is drawn from the holdings of Picasso's heirs, and the rest from other private collections and museums, including the Centre Pompidou and the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibitions will include every sort of medium, from painting and sculpture to drawings, ceramics and prints. Only a handful will be for sale.

"There are more portraits of Jacqueline than any other woman in Picasso's life," says Arne Glimcher, Pace's founder. "The range of interpretation of her image is quite extraordinary. We've selected works representing all of these moments, from the time he meets her and draws her like Ingres, till the end of his life, when his work was marked by wild expressionism. So you see the transformation of his late style only through these portraits of Jacqueline."

Glimcher worked on the show for five years with Catherine Hutin, Jacqueline's daughter, now in her late 60s and based in Paris. Hutin lived with the couple and, after her mother's death, inherited a large portion of Picasso's estate. Although Hutin was not Picasso's child, Glimcher notes, "she lived longer with him than any of the other children and saw more work being made than anybody else, besides Jacqueline. She really knows the work inside out."

Most of the paintings and sculptures will be downtown, at Pace's Chelsea outpost at 534 West 25th St., with the bulk of the works on paper at 32 East 57th St. Also included are photographs by the *Life* photojournalist David Douglas Duncan, who began shooting the couple in 1956, when he stopped by La Californie on a whim, snapped Picasso in the bathtub and soon won carte blanche to show them for the rest of the artist's life. The prints, 56 in all, show the couple together—walking, talking and even holding hands just after marrying in secret. The photographs offer a glimpse into their unguarded private life at a time when they had closed so many out. Many depict Jacqueline in the shadows, watching Picasso work, a dynamic both evidently enjoyed.

"She thought he was God and he thought he was God," Duncan recalls he couldn't stay away for long, even though his docket was full of assignments. "It was a hell of a story," he says.

It began in 1952 when the 72-year-old artist, one of the most famous people in France, met the 27-year-old Roque at a pottery studio in Vallauris. He was making ceramics there, and she was a salesgirl. Although he was still entangled with Gilot, he wooed Roque by chalking a white dove on the wall of her house and sending her single red roses. His friends viewed her as "not up to the job," Richardson recounts one of them saying in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, his 1999 memoir of his years in Picasso's inner circle.

When Gilot, seemingly unaware of the new attachment, left Picasso a year after it began, Jacqueline suffered through their attempts to reconcile, as well as his dalliances with others. But she eventually won out, largely because she was slavishly reverent of him. Patrick O'Brian, another Picasso biographer, observed in 1976 that the artist recognized in her "the devotion of a lifetime." The art historian Barbara Rose, a contributor to Pace's catalog, puts it somewhat differently: "She thought he was God and he thought he was God," Rose says. "The two of them were in love with him."

Perhaps that's why, during their years together, Picasso became even more prolific than usual, as Jacqueline blithely neglected her daughter to run the household, monitor his social life and spend hours in the studio. Moved in turn by her clerical profile, her almond-shaped eyes and her exotic features, Picasso cast her in his reworkings of French and Spanish masters like Manet and Velázquez, which so obsessed him during his final years.

One painting from 1954, *Jacqueline avec une Écharpe Noire*, shows her draped in a black scarf that suggests a hijab, smiling enigmatically—a modern, Orientalist-inspired interpretation of El Greco's *Lady in a Fur Wrap*. Later that year, Jacqueline's habit of crouching on the floor, like an idealized odalisque, moved him to incorporate her form in a series of 15 paintings that deconstruct Eugène Delacroix's 1834 *Femmes d'Alger*. (The Chelsea show will include a roomful of the many drawings, etchings and paintings Picasso made on this subject.)

Jacqueline also appears in other homages, such as the cubist-style, sexualized rendering of Manet's 1863 *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* (1961), and the erotic 1968 etchings known as Suite 347, in which Picasso depicts Raphael and his model, la Fornarina, making love. But he also represented Jacqueline as herself, sculpting her likeness in bronze and painted sheet metal, and drawing her reading, playing with his children, petting her cat and just gazing into space. Duncan, in his 1988 book *Picasso and Jacqueline*, describes the artist's messy, crowded studio as being full of images of Jacqueline, "who often appeared to be stepping out of one canvas into another of herself."

Overall, however sexualized or aggressive Picasso's characterization, there is also a serene, joyful quality to the work. Perhaps that's because, as Duncan recalls today, the couple's love for each other was abundantly evident. "Absolutely, one hundred percent, no mention of anybody else ever," he insists. "They loved each other from the first time they met, until they both died."

And today a depiction of that love lies with them in their joint grave at Vauvenargues, their château in Provence. At Jacqueline's funeral, Duncan tackled a photograph into her coffin: Taken in 1962, it shows her sitting with Picasso on the steps of La Californie with his portrait of her behind him. They snuggle together, laughing, waiting for the paint to dry.

"She thought he was God and he thought he was God. The two of them were in love with him."

—Barbara Rose

Now 98 and still living near Cannes, Duncan, who tends to irascibility, has little patience for Jacqueline's critics. "To hell with that noise!" he snaps. "She closed the goddamn door to keep people out. She probably added 15 years to his life."

As one of a lucky few regularly welcomed, Duncan recalls he couldn't stay away for long, even though his docket was full of assignments. "It was a hell of a story," he says.

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