

**Handout EN**

# Picasso 347

## Jan 25–Jun 8, 2025

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) was a master of graphic art. He experimented with different techniques throughout his life, combining them to satisfy his exuberant imagination, his creative potency and the expressive needs of his swift hand. From March to October 1968, he created no less than 347 engravings using the techniques of etching, aquatint, sugar aquatint, drypoint and mezzotinto, either separately or combined, all without any regard for reigning norms. Precise, quickly drawn lines alternate with deep black surfaces and are mixed with carefully lined hatching. The observer is immersed in a stream of images: from one sheet to the next we see a parade of circus performers, courtesans, musketeers, artists and models, and the artist himself. These figures gossip, fight, paint, or are entwined in the intimate discourse of passion. Some wear costumes and revel in the comedy of existence, displaying the humour and melancholy of the ageing artist.

The relationship between words and images played a major role for Picasso. His works celebrate the art of staging and the stage itself—whether in the circus, the cabaret or the theatre. Even though the individual leaves of his “347 Suite” do not follow any narrative logic, we can nevertheless discern in them an overarching theme: the narrator and his observers, the audience. These works offer a veritable panorama of illustrious pictorial motifs.

This exhibition presents 85 works from this important series “347 Suite”, on loan from a private collection in Zug. No such comprehensive selection of these works has ever been shown in German-speaking Switzerland.

Curated by Matthias Haldemann

# Kunsthhaus Zug

### General information

The supplementary sheet provided at the reception offers detailed information on Picasso's specific printing techniques.

The reception also has a list of the work titles of the individual engravings of the "347 Suite" that was drawn up after the fact by Brigitte Baer (without the artist's knowledge).

### S2

The very first print in the series, N° 1, presented in the centre of the room, marks the beginning of the exhibition. We see a woman acrobat in the circus ring, performing on horseback while everyone else looks on – the clown, with Picasso himself seated next to him, then the audience in the background, though we can only see their innumerable eyes. Or are they perhaps looking at us? We, the observers, look back at them. This motif of observing, of watching and telling a story, runs through the entire "Suite".

The individual works of the "347 Suite" bear no titles, but were meticulously dated and numbered by Picasso himself, rather as if they were a diary. He worked intensively for seven months just on this series, often producing one work a day, sometimes even several. His creative urge remained undimmed despite his advanced age of 86, though such intense fecundity is unusual, even for him.

The works in the "347 Suite" do not adhere to any logic of form, technique or content. Instead, we see here a sensual game with leaps, surprises, irritation, humour, and a willingness to laugh at oneself. These works offer a panorama of illustrious pictorial motifs including circus performers, men going to a brothel who appear to be noblemen, monks, historical figures, clowns, artistes, courtesans, and artists and their models. Nor did Picasso follow any particular pattern when choosing his technique, but his mastery of different printing techniques here comes into its own in impressive fashion. This series also bears witness to Picasso's friendship and close bond of confidence with the master printers Piero and Aldo Crommelynck. These two brothers played a significant role in ensuring the exceptional production quality of these graphic works. This was because intaglio printing techniques such as drypoint etching and aquatint are technically highly demanding. If the printer misses the crucial moment in the process, he can ruin the result. The relationship between the artist and his printers thus becomes a matter of trust.

### S3

Picasso spent days drawing his characters, observing them and thinking about them. This was his way of writing fiction. But he was also grappling with actual literary models at the same time. A total of 66 of the 347 engravings in the "Suite" deal with scenes from the novel "La Célestine" by Fernando de Rojas dating from 1499 – such as Nos. 95 and 147. Artists including Rembrandt (N° 260) and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (N° 290) also appear in these engravings. The final sheet (N° 347) recalls Édouard Manet's iconic "Déjeuner sur l'herbe".

A further motif here is Picasso himself. His self-portrait appears time and again in different works, such as in N° 160, where he is a little boy standing next to a fool, or in N° 8 (on display in S2 in our exhibition), where he is a small old man who is excluded from the action. Picasso doesn't just laugh at others, but also at himself.

The principal topic is manifestly eroticism and the voyeuristic gaze. We are observers, but are also being observed at the same time. Our gaze is reciprocated, as in N° 196, for example. Just how closely eroticism and carnal desire were bound up with Picasso's creative process – with his delight in creating and bringing into being – is revealed in works such as N° 308 and N° 311. The engravings in the "347 Suite" also bear eloquent witness to Picasso's draughtsmanship. Every one of these sheets offers a renewed invitation to the observer to follow his lines and discover his forms and figures. Just a few strokes suffice to create bodies, while lines become ornaments, either flowing into each other or setting each other apart. Here, the ageing artist once again demonstrates his mastery.

### This exhibition is being generously supported by:

- ⊕ Glencore International AG
- ⊕ Zuger Kantonalbank

Upper floor

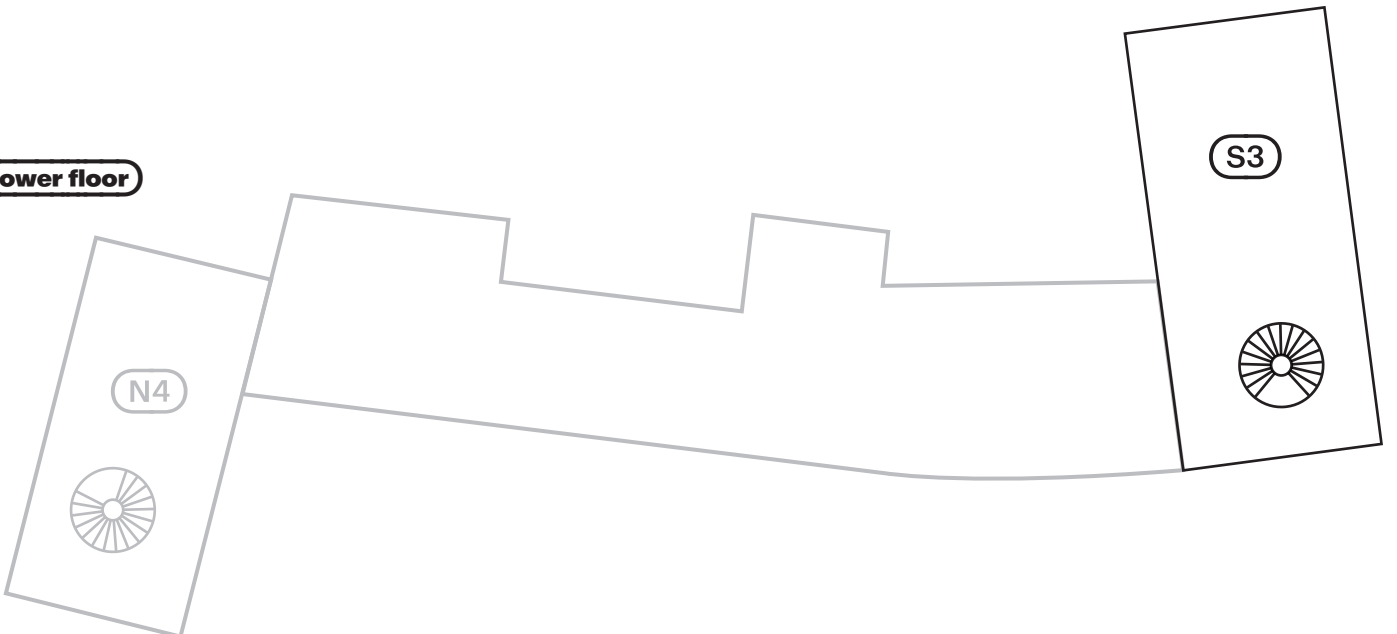
# Floor plan



Ground floor



Lower floor



## **S1 Kunsthaus Bar**

A self-service station offering coffee, tea and further drinks is available where you can help yourself. You can pay directly at the desk using card, cash or Twint. Enjoy your visit.

## **The Kunsthaus Zug extension**

Right next to the Bar, you can view the architects' model of the pre-project for the Kunsthaus Zug. Come and discover more about the vision propelling this pre-project and its background. You can also find all the information on our website:



## **Publications**

Publications relevant to our exhibitions are available at the reception, offering deeper insights into the works of our collection. You can also buy these publications at the reception in order to expand your knowledge, or as a souvenir of the exhibition. All the publications of Kunsthaus Zug are also listed on our website and can be ordered direct from the publishers.



## **Events**

There is a multifaceted accompanying programme for this dual exhibition. It includes "Art at Lunchtime" events, guided tours and family workshops in German and English, plus the newly introduced format "Art at Evening" that offers extended opening hours until 20:00 on the last Thursday of every month.

Our new trimester flyer (covering January to April) is available at the reception. It offers a comprehensive overview of all our exhibitions, events and art education program. Alternatively, you can find out more by consulting our online events calendar. You can plan your visit and enter your favourites directly into your own online calendar.



## **Art education**

Why not come and discover the art education programme at Kunsthaus Zug and engage creatively with art yourself. In our level-specific workshops, children and young people alike can explore our exhibition together with our art education experts and record their impressions in our workshop in a creative fashion. These offers are free of charge to classes from state schools of Canton Zug. If you are interested, please contact our art education experts directly, or book online.



## **Voice Collection**

What moved you in our exhibition? Why did a particular work appeal to you? – or perhaps it didn't? What did you see? Why not share your personal viewpoint and impressions of selected artworks with other visitors? You can record your audio commentary by simply using the "Voice Memo" app on your smartphone, then send us the audio file by e-mail. Please ask at the reception for more information.

This feature invites you to enter into a participatory dialogue. Come and discover art from a personal perspective, engage with others in doing so, and become a participant in this special project. You can hear the voices of other visitors here:

