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***Picasso, Braque and Léger: Twentieth Century Modern Masters***  
**At the Fort Wayne Museum of Art September 24-November 27**

**September 15, 2016 (Fort Wayne, IN)** – *Picasso, Braque and Léger: Twentieth Century Modern Masters* highlights an extraordinary collection of graphic works by three of the 20th century’s greatest modern masters: Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Fernand Léger. The ninety-two original prints on view cover a period of sixty years from 1904 to 1963. Among the highlights are Picasso’s first major etching “*The Frugal Meal*,” from his blue period 1904-1905; Braque’s last great series of color lithographs that he titled “*Lettera Amatorosa*,” dated 1963, the year of his death; and Léger’s series of lithographs with watercolor pigment or ‘Pochoir’ based on the writings of the French prodigy poet Arthur Rimbaud.

Both Picasso and Braque were founders of the *Cubist* movement in the early part of the century and lasted until World War I in 1914, though others followed their example including Fernand Léger who created his own personal form of cubism that he often called ‘*Tubism*’ since his interest was not in making ‘cube-like’ shapes but spheres and cylinders. Léger’s work is represented with a group of color lithographs that he made in the late 1940s.

The collection and exhibition is organized by Contemporary and Modern Print Exhibitions located in Laguna Niguel, California. The showing at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art is the first mid-west venue where the collection will be on view September 24 through November 27. The exhibition has traveled to the Forest Lawn Museum in Los Angeles and the Oglethorpe Museum in Atlanta. Because of the fragile nature of many of the prints, CMPE is limited to showing the collection to one venue each year.

Some of the more scarce prints include works that are almost never loaned to museums or for traveling exhibitions, but are kept in archival conditions in collections for study and preservation as well as for use in books and for scholarly publications. “Picasso has been the priority for most of the collectors that we have worked with, and the museums that wish to present the exhibitions that we circulate,” according to Reilly Rhodes, curator of the exhibition and director of Contemporary and Modern Print Exhibitions. Many of these prints are considered a prize to own or exhibit such as the nearly complete grouping of the *Minotaure* series that inspired Picasso to produce some of his most spectacular images. The series began in the 1930s when archaeologist uncovered the palace of King Minos on the Greek island of Crete. Greek mythology was front-page news throughout the world and Picasso grew very excited when it was told the story of the half-man-half-bull that was believed to have lived in a labyrinth below the palace, but no labyrinth was ever found. The myth and legends of ancient Greek culture was a strong influence in Picasso’s early life.

Other spectacular works focus on Picasso’s beautiful young mistress, the seventeen year old muse Marie-Thérèse Walter who he met standing in front of a Paris art gallery in 1927. She was thought to have been the love of his life and inspired him to create many of his finest paintings, sculpture and graphic works. Perhaps the most important image of her is a rare lithograph that he made in 1928 titled “*Visage*,” face of Marie-Thérèse that he was commissioned to make for his friend and book publisher André Level that was published in one of the first in depth studies of Picasso’s work that Level titled simply Picasso. The print in the exhibition is indeed extremely rare and important since it came directly

from Level's estate and was never exhibited before being included in this exhibition. The print is from a small edition of twenty-five *hors de commerce* prints (meaning 'outside of commerce'). The work is signed by Picasso and numbered 'HC 1/25'. A large portion of the Picasso collection is the *Vollard Suite* that was commissioned by the French publisher and art dealer Ambroise Vollard. For many art historians and collectors, the Vollard prints are the most popular and sought after prints in twentieth century art.

Another important grouping of prints are the late color lithographs by Georges Braque, in addition to the early cubist etchings on view. Braque worked seven years on the completion of his series titled "*Lettera Amatora*," 1963. After completion, Braque exhibited the series at the University of Paris but died before the exhibition closed. All of these prints are from the deluxe edition and have a small number of just twenty printed. With Braque's early examples in the exhibition, there are five cubist works that date 1911-1914.

The prints by Léger are also rare and attention getting in a very different way from most of his other work. Oddly enough, these prints were commissioned by Editions des Gaules in Zurich only after Picasso had turned down the proposal to do the series. Braque was busy on another project and it took some convincing to persuade Léger to take on the consignment. Léger was busy with his printer Moulrot in Paris to complete his series of sixty-three lithographs based on the Circus—his master graphic work that comprised of almost half of his entire graphic output.

These are but a few examples of what this exhibition has to offer the viewer. Much of the importance of the exhibition is found in the detailed information provided in the didactic wall labels and panels that explain the relationship of the artists and their work. *Picasso, Braque and Léger: Twentieth Century Modern Masters* is a perfect example of demonstrating the value of traveling exhibitions at local museums that bring masterful works of art to the reach of the general public and with all of the detailed information, it is bound to please and inspire visitors to engage the experience with family and friends.

Many of the works on exhibit were acquired over a period of the last twenty years and today it is considered one of the largest and most complete collections of Picasso, Braque and Léger print collections in the world.

**Educational programming for this exhibit includes a public lecture by exhibit curator Reilly Rhodes at 6:30pm at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art September 23. Admission is \$10 for FWMoA Members and \$15 for non-members. Appetizers and cash bar will be offered. Visit [fwmoa.org/events](http://fwmoa.org/events) to learn more.**

**On November 3 at 12:15pm, CEO and Chief Curator Charles Shepard will lead a gallery tour of the exhibition. The tour is free with gallery admission.**

This exhibition has been made possible with generous support from Lincoln Financial Foundation and is organized by Contemporary and Modern Print Exhibitions.

**About the Fort Wayne Museum of Art:** Beginning with art classes in 1888 given by J. Ottis Adams and later William Forsyth, the Fort Wayne Museum of Art has evolved into a center for the visual arts community in Northeast Indiana. Regularly exhibiting regional and nationally acclaimed artists, the FWMoA also boasts an extensive permanent collection of American Art, including the Steven Sorman Archives and more than 300 pieces of Brilliant Cut Glass. The Museum is committed to the collection, preservation, presentation and interpretation of American and related art to engage broad and diverse audiences throughout the community and region, and add value to their lives. The Fort Wayne Museum of Art is a funded partner of Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne. This activity made possible, in part, with support from the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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