

Picasso drawing acquired for Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art



The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art has acquired a highly important drawing by Pablo Picasso, which went on display for the first time today. This landmark purchase was made thanks to an enormously generous legacy made by Henry and Sula Walton.

Dating from 1912, *Head* is a large charcoal drawing of exceptional quality. Drawings from this crucial period in Picasso's career are extremely rare and the larger works, such as *Head*, which measures 64.9 x 49.5 cm, are nearly all in museum collections.

Henry Walton (1924-2012) was Professor of Psychiatry and Professor of International Medical Education at the University of Edinburgh; Dr Sula Wolff (1924-2009) was an eminent Consultant Child Psychiatrist and the author of internationally acclaimed books on child psychiatry. Not only did they bequeath their art collection to the Gallery, but they also established the Henry and Sula Walton Charitable Fund, specifically to help the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art make new and important acquisitions.

Henry and Sula Walton were particularly passionate about Picasso's work, assembling a collection of more than a dozen prints by the artist. Picasso's cubist work dates from about 1907 to 1915. Rather than try to copy nature, Picasso was interested in recreating it by pulling it apart and recomposing it. Part of the impetus behind cubism comes from

the desire to view an object from different sides, and re-compose these different views in a single picture. Cubism is arguably the most important development in art since the Renaissance, and its influence on art and design can hardly be over-estimated.

Simon Groom, Director of the Gallery of Modern Art announced: *'I think Henry and Sula Walton would have been thrilled by this acquisition. They were passionate about art, passionate about the Gallery, and passionate that the very greatest artworks should be available for our visitors to see. This drawing lies right at the start of modern art. It is bold, dramatic and hugely inventive: with works such as this Picasso completely re-wrote the rules on art. There are comparable drawings in museums in Paris and New York, but nothing like it in any UK public collection. I think Henry and Sula would have been proud to change that.'*

Picasso hoarded huge numbers of his drawings, and at his death in 1973, most of them passed to the French state and in turn became part of the new Musée Picasso in Paris. This drawing belonged to Picasso's grand-daughter, Marina Picasso, from whom it was purchased by Jan Krugier (1924-2008), one of the world's leading dealers in modern art. He kept it for his own collection. His celebrated collection of drawings was offered for sale at a Sotheby's auction in London in February this year; the Gallery acquired it directly at auction.

The Gallery now boasts a world-class group of works by Picasso. The drawing relates to several works by Picasso already in the collection: a collage *Head*, 1913; and the large *Weeping Woman* etching of 1937.

Prof Elizabeth Cowling, a world-renowned expert on Picasso, will deliver a lunchtime talk on the work in the Studio, at the Gallery of Modern Art on 14 April at 12.45: admission free.

