

Françoise Gilot:

An Inventory of Her Collection in the Carlton Lake Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Gilot, Françoise, 1921-
Title:	Carlton Lake Collection of Françoise Gilot Papers
Dates:	1944-1965
Extent:	9 boxes (3.78 linear feet)
Abstract:	While the collection is primarily made up of the working drafts for Gilot's work <i>Life with Picasso</i> , a substantial portion is comprised of the correspondence received by Pablo Picasso during the years 1948-1951.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-04960
Language:	French, English, and Spanish.
Access:	Open for research.

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase, 1969
Processed by:	Kristen Davis and Elizabeth Garver
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Françoise Gilot (1921-)

Françoise Gilot was born November 26, 1921 in the chic Parisian suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, France. An only child, she is the daughter of Emile Gilot, an agronomist, and Madeline Renoult. Attracted by art from a young age, and influenced by her mother who was herself an amateur artist, Françoise ultimately rebelled against practicing law--her father's chosen occupation for her. In 1943, at the age of twenty-one, Gilot had her first exhibition, despite the ban on modern art by the Nazi occupiers. It was during this same period that she met Pablo Picasso. Eventually, she would become his muse, mistress, and mother of two of his children in a tumultuous relationship that would last ten years. Later, she summarized her feelings at the start of the liaison, "I knew that whatever came to pass--however wonderful or painful, or both mixed together--it would be tremendously important." She was to be the inspiration of many of Picasso's works, such as *La Femme-Fleur*, and he in turn singularly influenced her own artistic approach. After much hesitation, she finally broke off their relationship in 1953.

In February 1961, with the collaboration of Carlton Lake, Gilot began to write *Life with Picasso* (1964). While Lake was considerably impressed with her recall of events, and even her memory for dialogue, which he verified against documents and his own interviews with Picasso, the reviews for the book when it came out in 1963 were ambivalent, if not overwhelmingly negative. Although, Gilot was unusually frank about her life with Picasso, she also did not spare herself in the process, which perhaps is one reason why biographers have continued to rely on her work--albeit reluctantly. While she dedicated the book "to Pablo," he tried to prohibit its publication, losing all three lawsuits to that purpose.

In 1962, Gilot divorced Luc Simon, whom she had married in 1955, and with whom she had a daughter. In 1970, she married Dr. Jonas Salk, the discoverer of the polio vaccine. They remained together until his death in 1995. Gilot's artistic style continued to evolve after she broke with Picasso. Later, she would attribute Matisse's use of color as being the greater influence upon her creative process. She also authored *Matisse and Picasso: A Friendship in Art* (1990), among other works.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)

Considered one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century, Pablo Ruiz Picasso was born October 25, 1881 in Málaga, Spain. Son of the artist José Ruiz Blasco (1838-1913), Picasso went on to adopt his mother's maiden name, dropping Ruiz. Precociously gifted, at fourteen Picasso entered into the prestigious Escuela de Bellas Artes in Barcelona where his father was a teacher.

Around 1899, Picasso encountered his first important circle of artist and writer friends at the café Els Quatre Gats. Notably, his friendship with the poet and sculptor Jaime Sabartés, who later was to become his secretary, dates from this period. After his first exhibition in Barcelona, Picasso visited France for the first time, eventually settling there permanently in 1904.

In Paris, Picasso moved into a studio in the now infamous Bateau-Lavoir in Montmartre. The artists Juan Gris and Modigliani and the avant-garde writers Max Jacob, André Salmon, Pierre Reverdy, and Pierre MacOrlan also lived in the complex. His increasing circle of friends also included Guillaume Apollinaire, Gertrude and Leo Stein, Georges Braque, and Henri Matisse. Artistically, Picasso's style was evolving from his somber Blue Period (1901-1904) to his Rose Period (1904-1905). Then in 1907, he painted the critical work *Les Femmes d'Alger*, which was inspired by Primitivism, and presaged the advent of Cubism--the revolutionary artistic movement created by Picasso and Braque.

Picasso was simultaneously influenced by and a primary influence upon practically every artistic and intellectual movement of the twentieth century, particularly Surrealism. Gertrude Stein, Picasso's friend and patron, wrote of his work, "His drawings were not of things seen but of things expressed, in short they were words for him and drawing always was his only way of talking and he talks a great deal."

Aside from the Blue Period, where his work commonly depicted the poor and abandoned, Picasso's political statements in his art were rare, yet powerful. In 1937, provoked by the aerial bombing of the village of Guernica by Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War, Picasso created his antiwar masterpiece of the same name. While not a member of the French Resistance during World War II, Picasso did remain in Paris when many others chose safety elsewhere. He did join the Communist Party in 1944, however, which may have subsequently affected the market for his work; nevertheless, he remained a member the rest of his life.

Picasso's biographer John Richardson has noted, "Everything about Picasso is interesting. Even the most trifling facts of his personal life turn out to be valuable clues which explain his unpredictable changes of subject, style, or mood....If he acquires a new mistress, her presence will at once be reflected in his work." Picasso's personal life inspired so much of his art that connoisseurs cannot help but acquaint themselves with the vagaries of his romantic relationships. His comment on the subject was, "I paint the way some people write their autobiography. The paintings, finished or not, are the pages of my journal, and as such they are valid. The future will choose the pages it prefers."

Picasso's considerable artistic output continued practically unabated up to his death on April 8, 1973. While Picasso the public figure may have suffered from the stereotypes that come with our modern over-mediatization, some of which he encouraged, Picasso the artist's posthumous reputation remains intact, particularly considering the enormous impact his work has had on the development of twentieth century artistic movements.

Sources:

Daix, Pierre. *Picasso créateur : La vie intime et l'œuvre*. Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1987.

Gilot, Françoise and Carlton Lake. *Life with Picasso*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964.

Richardson, John. "Trompe l'oeil." Review of *Life with Picasso*, by Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake. *The New York Review of Books* 3, no. 8 (December 3, 1964): 3-4.

Stein, Gertrude. *Picasso*. London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1938.

Scope and Contents

The organization of the Françoise Gilot Collection respects the arrangement formally imposed upon it by Carlton Lake: I. Works, 1964-1965 (8 boxes); II. Correspondence, 1951-1957 (1 folder); and III. Pablo Picasso, 1944-1952 (2 boxes).

The bulk of the collection is comprised of drafts for the English and French editions of *Life with Picasso*. These include the earliest corrected typescript of the first draft, corrections primarily in the hand of Carlton Lake. In addition, an untitled play that Gilot apparently wrote near the beginning of her relationship with Picasso is also present.

Gilot and Lake used the documents present in the second and third series during the writing of their book. Gilot writes of her return from her honeymoon with Luc Simon in 1955 to find that Picasso had vacated their villa *La Galloise*, and none of her possessions remained--apart from "the beds and a few chairs, three boxes of papers stored in the attic--where no one, apparently, had thought of looking--and that's all." Some of the letters have identifying notations made in the hand of Carlton Lake. Several of them were recorded verbatim in the book, while others demonstrate Gilot's restraint in what she revealed about the family--notably concerning Paul Picasso's 1951 breakdown and family problems.

The second series is represented by one folder of correspondence to Gilot from the art dealers Louise Leiris and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. These letters document Gilot's personal relationship with the dealers, as well as the preparations for her 1952 one-woman exhibition at the Galerie Louise Leiris.

The third series is devoted primarily to correspondence written to Pablo Picasso during the years 1944-1952. While the letters are primarily arranged alphabetically by author, some are often grouped by subject. For example, the folder containing letters from Olga Picasso, also include letters written by third parties concerning her.

These were artistically rich years for Picasso, when he began to experiment with lithography and ceramics, and the letters from his secretary Jaime Sabartés partially record this process. In addition, Picasso's relations with various Communist organizations, as well as his 1948 trip to Poland, are documented by the letters of several correspondents--notably those from Paul Eluard.

Picasso's personal life is reflected in the letters written to him by his children Paul and Maya, by his first wife Olga, and his companions Marie-Thérèse Walter, Dora Maar, Geneviève Laporte, and Françoise Gilot. In addition, several family photos are included in the correspondence of Marie-Thérèse Walter.

Related Material

Index Terms

Correspondents

Aragon, 1897-1982.
Bloch, Henri.
Castel, André.
Eluard, Paul, 1895-1952.
Kahnweiler, Daniel Henry, 1884- .
Lake, Carlton.
Laporte, Geneviève.
Leiris, Michel, 1901-1990.
Matisse, Henri, 1869-1954.
Miró, Joan, 1893-1983.
Montand, Yves, 1921-1991.
Picasso, Emilyenne Lotte May.
Picasso, Olga.
Picasso, Pablo, 1881-1973.
Picasso, Paul.
Pichot, Germaine.
Roy, Claude, 1915.
Ruiz-Picasso, Maya.
Sabartés, Jaime, 1881-1968.
Toklas, Alice B.
Walter, Marie-Thérèse, 1909-1977.

Organizations

New Stages, Inc.
On-Stage Productions.

Subjects

Artists--Family relationships.

Artists--Political activity.

Painters--France--20th century.

Painters--France--Biography.

Document Types

Manuscripts.

Photographs.

Series I. Works, 1964-1965, undated*Life with Picasso* (English edition), 1964

First draft, corrected	Box 320 Folder 1-3
Second draft, unrevised	Folder 4-5
Second draft, revised	Box 321 Folder 1-3
Final typescript	Folder 4-6
Final galleys	Box 322 Folder 1-3
Galleys, edited	Folder 4-5
Galleys, edited, continued	Box 323 Folder 1-2
Photocopy of 2nd draft, 1964	Folder 3-6
Part 1, typescript 1	Folder 7-8
Part 1, typescript 2	Box 324 Folder 1-2
Intermediate draft with notes from Carlton Lake	Folder 3
Layout proofs and illustrations	Folder 4
Notes and miscellaneous	Folder 5
Final version, part 1	Folder 6
Final version, part 2	Box 325 Folder 1

Vivre avec Picasso (French edition), 1965

First and second parts	Box 325 Folder 2
Third and fourth parts	Folder 3-5
Fifth part	Folder 6
Fifth, sixth, and seventh parts	Box 326 Folder 1-2
Revised final draft	Folder 3

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Final draft

Folder 4

Untitled play, undated

Box 327 Folder 1

Series II. Correspondence, 1951-1957

Recipient

Box 327 Folder 2

Series III. Pablo Picasso, 1944-1952

Incoming Correspondence

A-L	Box 327 Folder 3
Aragon, 1948	Folder 4
Castel André, undated	Folder 5
Eluard, Paul, 1947-1951, undated	Folder 6
Gilot, Françoise, 1948-1951, undated	Folder 7
Kahnweiler, Daniel-Henry, 1948-1951	Folder 8
Laporte, Geneviève, 1947-1951	Folder 9
Leiris, Michel, 1948-1951	Folder 10
M-Z	Folder 11
Matisse, Henri, 1948-1951	Folder 12
Picasso, Olga, 1948-1952	Folder 13
Picasso, Paul and Emilyenne Lotte May Picasso, 1951	Folder 14
Pichot, Germaine, 1948, undated	Folder 15
Roy, Claude, 1951	Folder 16
Sabartés, Jaime, 1944-1951, undated	Box 328 Folder 1
Walter, Marie-Thérèse, 1947-1952, undated	Folder 2-6
Zervos, Christian, 1948-1949	Folder 7

Subject files

Exhibitions, 1948-1951, undated	Box 328 Folder 8
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Monument Apollinaire, 1951-1952

Folder 9

Touches, 1948-1951

Folder 10

Miscellaneous, 1947-1951

Folder 11