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Publication Date

2020

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

“Something More Real than Reality”:

Picasso’s Material Pursuit of the *Sur-Réal* (1926-1933)

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Art History

by

Lidia Ruth Ferrara

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“Something More Real than Reality”:

Picasso’s Material Pursuit of the *Sur-Réal* (1926-1933)

by

Lidia Ruth Ferrara

Master of Arts in Art History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Miwon Kwon, Chair

This paper examines an artwork produced by Pablo Picasso in 1933 to be photographed and reproduced on the inaugural cover of the important surrealist-oriented luxury art revue *Minotaure*. In the format of a maquette, the work is the culmination of a little-discussed period of intense material exploration and experimentation for the artist. Through a close study of the work, including the artist’s engagement with his own past cubist collage strategies of the 1910s, this paper unpacks Picasso’s ambiguous identification with the surrealist movement in the 1920s and 30s. In addition to analyzing the work in relation to André Breton’s messianic espousal of revelatory chance operations and the dissident surrealist Georges Bataille’s insurgent theories of base materialism and the *informe*, this paper shows how Picasso’s work problematizes these aesthetic models in order to articulate, through a series of formal contradictions and material idiosyncrasies, the possibilities of the “*sur-réal*,” a term coined by Picasso to describe “something more real than reality.”

The thesis of Lidia Ruth Ferrara is approved.

George Baker

Lamia Balafrej

Miwon Kwon, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

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Introduction: Picasso, *Minotaure*, and the “*Sur-Réal*”

*If all the ways I have been along were marked on a map
and joined up with a line, it might represent a minotaur.*¹
—Pablo Picasso

In 1933, Pablo Picasso affixed a ribbon, a doily, a strip of decorated paper, scraps of tin foil, artificial leaves, and corrugated cardboard to a piece of plywood, and bordered the rectangular composition with a crude charcoal line (Fig. 1). At the center of this assemblage sits an irregularly-shaped piece of paper bearing a pencil drawing of a minotaur, the mythological part-man, part-bull creature of ancient Greek legend. A makeshift paper nameplate at the bottom edge of the composition announces the name of the monster in child-like capital letters. The hybrid being at the center of this idiosyncratic collection of materials shares its name with the luxury art revue *Minotaure*, founded the same year Picasso produced this object. This is no coincidence: the revue’s publisher, Albert Skira, and its artistic director, E. Tériade, commissioned Picasso to design the cover of *Minotaure*’s inaugural June 1933 issue, which features a color photograph of Picasso’s eponymous maquette (Fig. 2). Skira and Tériade promoted the revue as a sophisticated and multi-disciplinary publication involving literature, fine art, music, ethnography, and psychoanalysis. Though initially established as an “*organe universel*”²—an eclectic and apolitical exploration of the intellectual activity of the present-day—the revue quickly saw itself aligned with the ideologies of the surrealist movement, as André Breton, Paul Éluard, and surrealist dissident Georges Bataille became increasingly involved with the publication during its nine-year run.

¹ Picasso made this statement to Dor de la Souchère, former curator at the Musée Picasso in Antibes, France, in 1960. Quoted in Dore Ashton, ed., *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 159.

² See *Minotaure*, no. 5 (December 1934): n.p.

Picasso's contribution to the publication for its first issue coincided with his own near-obsessive pre-occupation with the mythological creature. Beginning with the minotaur's first appearance in a large collage of 1928, Picasso incessantly rendered the mythological figure in paintings, drawings, and etchings. The presence of the minotaur in Picasso's work of the 1930s has commonly been understood alongside the artist's own claims of self-identification with the part-man, part-bull creature, as this paper's epigraph reveals. Almost unanimously described by art historians as his "personal icon" or "alter-ego," the striking recurrence of the minotaur in the artist's work of this period is commonly discussed alongside the tumultuous developments of Picasso's personal life. The minotaur is consistently thought to be a cipher for the monstrous carnality and human vulnerability between which Picasso ostensibly felt himself divided during the late 1920s and 1930s.³

The emergence of the publication *Minotaure* attests to the hybrid monster's equal appeal to surrealists' preoccupation with the recesses of the unconscious and the destructive nature of the creative act. Founded in 1933, *Minotaure* was a site of shared and synchronous interest in the mythological creature, yet also a locus of opposing surrealist paradigms. By the time of *Minotaure*'s formation, four years after the publication of Breton's second surrealist manifesto in the periodical *La révolution surréaliste*, interest in Breton's messianic surrealist ideology had become fractured as tensions developed surrounding the possibility of a unified surrealist politics.⁴ Over the course of its existence, *Minotaure* was seized upon by Breton as a platform for

³ For examples of these art historical discussions, see Elinor W. Gadon, "Picasso and the Minotaur," *India International Centre Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2003): 20–29; *Picasso: Minotauro* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2000); and John Richardson, ed., *Picasso: Minotaurs and Matadors* (London: Gagosian, 2017).

⁴ William Rubin describes the year 1929 as a moment of crisis for the movement. See "The Surrealism of the Thirties," in *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, Conn, 1968), 107. For an in-depth account of surrealism's developing factions and tensions during this period, see Raymond Spiteri, "Surrealism and Its Discontents: Georges Bataille, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, and the 1929 Crisis of Surrealism," *French History and Civilization* 4 (2011): 145–56.

his vision of surrealism, even as the publication aligned at times with the theories of Bataille, whose dissident views had by 1933 created a rift with the movement.

Given Picasso's existing relationships with Breton, Skira, and Tériade, the prominence of the artist's work in the first issue is perhaps unsurprising, even inevitable, given Picasso's proximity to surrealism (which is generally thought to have been at its height during the decade in which the *Minotaure* collage was produced).⁵ As a unique artwork, however, the maquette has received little sustained attention in existing Picasso scholarship.⁶ Most cursory mentions of the work situate it within the context of the artist's so-called "surrealist phase," or simply as one of many recurrences of the minotaur figure in the work of this decade. While the maquette cannot, of course, be severed from Picasso's alignment with surrealist practitioners, a close reading of the object both deepens and complicates existing accounts of his association with the movement. In fact, Picasso claimed to have coined the initial concept "*sur-réal*," the first public use of which (by Guillaume Apollinaire) was in direct relation to Picasso's pioneering work for the 1917 ballet *Parade*.⁷ Yet Picasso's initial, instrumental role in surrealism's origin story is accompanied, in most accounts, by discussion of Breton's ultimately futile attempts to recruit

⁵ Lisa Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis: Picasso's Classical Prints of the 1930s* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 140.

⁶ The work is now housed in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In his lifetime, Picasso gifted the work to his dealer, Paul Rosenberg (the year is unknown). The maquette was then gifted to MoMA by Rosenberg's son, Alexandre P. Rosenberg, in 1978. See the press release for the announcement of the acquisition: "Recent Acquisitions of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art" (The Museum of Modern Art, March 14, 1974), https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_326878.pdf.

⁷ The term was first published in the program notes for *Parade*. Anne Baldassari, "The *sur*-realist Picasso," in *The Surrealist Picasso*, edited by Anne Baldassari (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), 11. Picasso claimed the term and emphasized the surrealists' misunderstanding of the word in a 1933 discussion with Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler: "That's why surrealism has done so much damage... They didn't understand what I meant by 'surrealism' when I coined the term, which Apollinaire then used in print: something more real than reality." Quoted in Baldassari, "The *sur*-realist Picasso," 35.

him to the surrealist movement and the artist's conscious detachment from surrealism as it developed in subsequent years.⁸

The *Minotaure* maquette presents its beholder with a series of aesthetic choices and material realities that, once unraveled, both augment and clarify these accounts of Picasso's relationship to the surrealist movement. Here, I will attend to the maquette as a multi-layered artwork that collapses the mechanics of collage, the elaboration of classical drawing, the tactile immediacy of the sculptural found object, and the two-dimensional photographic print, all within the context of a luxury art journal.⁹ Importantly, out of the revue's twelve unique artist-designed covers, Picasso's *Minotaure* cover is the only one to take the form of a photograph of an art object. Subsequent covers designed by artists Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Henri Matisse, and Joan Miró, among other artists, are two-dimensional illustrations rendered through the medium of print. Neither Ernst's gruesome illustration of the head of a monster (Fig. 3), nor Miró's semi-abstract tri-tone design (Fig. 4) offers its viewer the same sense of dimensionality, tactility, or material presence as Picasso's cover. As such, a careful analysis of the anomalistic maquette in relation to each of the mediums it engages reveals both the complexities of Picasso's recurrent exploration of collage strategies and the nature of his elusive entanglement with surrealism.

Picasso's 1933 maquette for *Minotaure* is the culmination of several years of rigorous material exploration and presents us with an artwork that is a site of accumulation and heterogeneity. This paper unpacks and clarifies Picasso's own ambiguous identification with the

⁸ Rubin, "The Surrealism of the Thirties," 124; Baldassari, "The *sur*-realist Picasso," 10-11.

⁹ Throughout this paper, I will refer to the work produced by Picasso for the cover of the 1933 issue of *Minotaure* as a "maquette." Though it incorporates the strategies of collage—the assemblage of disparate elements to produce a new whole—established connotations of the medium of collage as a two-dimensional image-making technique are inadequate for accounting for the sculptural facture of the 1933 maquette. I consider the maquette to be a sculptural object, made to be photographed, which also incorporates collage procedures.

surrealist movement by examining the materiality of the *Minotaure* maquette in relation to the artist's own cubist collage practice of the 1910s, Breton's espousal of revelatory chance operations, and Bataille's insurgent theories of base materialism and the *informe*—the “declassing” of categories and the transgressive lowering of matter.¹⁰ Close examination of the 1933 maquette and related works indicates that Picasso was, in this period, both re-thinking the possibilities of his own image-making strategies of decades prior *and* intervening in the surrealist debates surrounding him in the 1920s and 30s. Picasso's material experiments negotiate both Bretonian and Bataillean surrealist frameworks while resisting wholesale assimilation to either. The quasi-encyclopedic *Minotaure* maquette rests at the apex of a group of works that articulate the representational limitations of Picasso's own cubist collage strategies, Breton's psychic automatism, and Bataille's formless lowering, all in pursuit of a distinct “*sur-réalisme*”—in the artist's words, “something more real than reality.”¹¹ During this period of intense and tactile investigation, the formal contradictions and material idiosyncrasies of Picasso's art objects intervene into surrealism's limitations and articulate the possibilities of the ultra-real.

The *Minotaure* Paradox

In order to understand the conditions under which Picasso contributed to the inaugural issue of *Minotaure*, it is necessary to trace the luxury art revue's genesis and clarify the nature of its surrealist underpinnings. Picasso's involvement in *Minotaure*'s first issue occurred under fraught socio-political and intellectual conditions—both for a high-end publishing venture like Skira's, and for proponents of the surrealist movement. Throughout its nine-year run, *Minotaure*

¹⁰ Yve Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, “Base Materialism,” in *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 53.

¹¹ Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 35.

claimed to be a non-partisan index of the era's sophisticated intellectual machinations. The magazine's ninth issue includes a short text that encapsulates this mission:

When, in a certain number of years, one wants to be aware of the underpinnings of our time, that is to say, the concerns, the research, the curiosities of these semi-secret groups which form the least outward opinion of the era, the one that works in the shadows, that prepares the movements, influences the snobbery, showcases the new men, it will be necessary to consult *Minotaure*.¹²

Knowing the elevated cultural position that the founders of *Minotaure* imagined for their project makes the irony and humor of Picasso's 1933 cover impossible to ignore. That the artist decided to include scraps of refuse and discarded material on the inaugural cover of an expensive publication seems to almost ridicule Skira and Tériade's decision to begin a costly publishing venture during the worldwide economic recession that was then beginning to take hold in France.¹³ Further entrenching the irony that scraps of detritus would appear on such an expensive publication, Tériade reflected in 1982 that commissioning the inaugural cover from Picasso was so costly that it destabilized the publication's budget.¹⁴ But as Skira and Tériade wrote in the double issue of *Minotaure* in 1934, inaugurating the revue's second year, "The luxury of *Minotaure* should only be considered as an organic necessity."¹⁵

¹² Edmond Jaloux, *Minotaure*, no. 9 (October 1936): n.p. Translation from original French by the author. Unless otherwise noted, all French sources presented in English have been translated by the author.

¹³ In 1933, the cost of one issue of *Minotaure* was 25 francs. For a brief discussion of the impact of the interwar economic recession on Parisian art revues, see "Les 'Belles Revues'" in Yves Chevretil Desbiolles, *Les revues d'art à Paris, 1905-1940* (Paris: Ent'revues, 1993), 145.

¹⁴ Tériade's full statement: "Cette couverture de Picasso couta horriblement cher et déséquilibrait notre budget, mais elle était nécessaire pour le lancement de *Minotaure*." See Jeanine Warnod, "Visite à Tériade en hiver 1982," in *Regards sur Minotaure: la revue à tête de bête* (Genève: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1987), 245. The financial difficulties of *Minotaure* also reveal themselves in Éluard's letters to Gala Dalí between January and May, 1937. A letter of May 1937 is particularly pessimistic: "I don't think that *Minotaure* will rise again from its ashes. It's a real shame." See Paul Éluard and Gala Dalí, *Letters to Gala*, 1st American ed, European Sources (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 223-230.

¹⁵ "Le luxe de *Minotaure* ne doit être considéré que comme une nécessité organique." Albert Skira and E. Tériade, *Minotaure*, no. 6 (January 1935): n.p.

Evidence shows that Tériade was entirely aware of the financial hazards of his and Skira's project. In a letter written shortly before *Minotaure*'s official launch, Tériade conveyed to Bettina Bedwell, likely a wealthy investor in the publication: "It is probably crazy to launch a review right now but I truly believe that a beautiful thing can succeed, at any time, and I hope this revue will be good."¹⁶ As this note suggests, the rich visual impact of the journal was of key import to its artistic director and distinguished *Minotaure* from the other predominant fine art publications of the time. Neither Zervos's *Cahiers d'Arts* (printed in black and white until 1934), nor Bataille's relatively visually austere *Documents* (which published fifteen issues between the years 1929 and 1930) aspired to the same levels of aesthetic opulence.¹⁷ Tériade sought to make *Minotaure* an all-encompassing visual and intellectual experience, and once described the interaction between image and text using the term *encadrement*—self-reflexively aligning his own text with the "framing" of painting or even the "setting" of a jewel.¹⁸ Tériade envisioned the issues of *Minotaure* as total and immersive works of art.

The economic conditions surrounding *Minotaure*'s founding are also linked to the publication's perceived impact on the surrealist movement with which it was contemporaneous. Brassai's reflections on the publication emphasize the negative ramifications of its costliness and luxury. As he has written, "inaccessible to proletarian pocketbooks, [*Minotaure*] could be addressed only to the despised bourgeoisie, to a milieu of titled and monied arbiters of taste, the

¹⁶ Letter from E. Tériade to Bettina Bedwell, May 10, 1933. Box 11, Archives Tériade, Musée départemental Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis. "C'est sans doute une folie de lancer une revue en ce moment mais je crois vraiment qu'une très belle chose peut réussir, n'importe quand et j'espère que cette revue sera bien."

¹⁷ Danièle Schneider-Barry, "Minotaure: Une revue Surréaliste?," *Mélusine: Amour-Humour*, Cahiers du Centre de Recherches sur le Surréalisme (Paris III), no. 10 (1988): 227.

¹⁸ E. Tériade, "Aspects Actuels de l'Expression Plastique," *Minotaure*, no. 5 (May 1934): 33. For additional discussion of Tériade's language and aesthetic approach toward the creative direction of *Minotaure*, see Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendren, "Setting a Surrealist Stage for Picasso: Framing 'The Genius,'" in *The Surrealist Picasso*, edited by Anne Baldassari, 216.

first patrons and collectors of surrealist works.”¹⁹ To Brassai, this amounts to hypocrisy, to “selling out.” Commonly thought to be “surrealist-oriented,” what effect did *Minotaure* really have on the anti-establishment avant-garde that surrealism promised? The seeming inaccessibility of *Minotaure* to the layperson appears to directly contradict both Breton’s austere and morally elevated brand of surrealism and Bataille’s interest in heterological slippage. In 1985, Swiss painter Roger Montadon offered a decisive answer to the question of *Minotaure*’s ideological impact by calling the publication a “magnificent mausoleum of surrealism.” In his estimation, “*Minotaure* buries [surrealism] in the very world that it refused in the beginning, it buries it on the shelves of libraries and in the galleries of museums.”²⁰

The social conditions under which Picasso produced the inaugural cover for *Minotaure* offer us a crucial entry point for confronting surrealism’s dissonances and limitations in 1930s Paris. Correspondence from the time of the revue’s formation and launch reveals a clear conceptual schism between the publication’s founders. Paul Éluard, then a close friend and associate of Breton’s, noted in a letter of February 1933 that Skira offered Breton “the directorship of a ‘high class’ review.”²¹ Yet contemporaneous correspondence suggests that Tériade also offered Bataille, Breton’s critic and rival, a leadership role at the publication. Bataille ultimately refused to join the publication’s editorial board, apparently for financial reasons, having stated “It was not so long ago that I refused to accept the direction of *Documents*

¹⁹ Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso*, 11

²⁰ “Avec le recul des ans, je dirais que *Minotaure* se présente comme un magnifique mausolée du surréalisme, où se conjugent heureusement son baroquisme nocturne et le classicisme scolaire de Skira.” Roger Montadon at Conférence de Roger Montadon, Club 44, La Chaux-de-Fonds, November 18, 1985. Quoted in Hendel Teicher, “Du Minotaure Au Labyrinthe,” in *Alberto Giacometti, Retour à La Figuration, 1933-1947* (Paris: Paris : Centre Georges Pompidou, 1986., 1986), 18.

²¹ Letter from Paul Éluard to Gala Dalí, Passy, February 21, 1933, in *Letters to Gala*, 157.

under much more interesting conditions.”²² Éluard’s letters from the period surrounding *Minotaure*’s launch further voice explicit concerns regarding his and Breton’s collaboration with their rivals and hints at the waning support that surrealism was experiencing in these years:

I believe that our collaboration with those scoundrels, our worst enemies ... would be fatal to the group we constitute... If in reality we are forced to make more and more concessions, we should avoid the arbitrary and make them all.²³

Minotaure was the site of an exceptional coming-together of opposing surrealist positions. Texts by Breton and Éluard appeared alongside contributions by the movement’s defectors—Bataille, Michel Leiris, and André Masson. This convergence of surrealisms is indicative of the cultural conditions in which the movement found itself at the time.

After all, the revue was not entirely the polished and seamless organization it outwardly claimed to be. In keeping with the fraught economic and social conditions under which the revue was borne, *Minotaure*’s nine-years of publication also saw an unfolding of some of surrealism’s most notable philosophical and interpersonal tensions. *Minotaure* was a site of ideological contention—not a site of aesthetic revolution. While it may have provided a much-needed platform for Breton’s surrealist orthodoxy (Breton took even more control over the magazine in the years following Tériade’s departure from the venture in 1936), it also bore witness to the limitations and challenges experienced by the movement. Given Picasso’s somewhat inscrutable relation to surrealism, it is fitting, in retrospect, that he intervened within a space of surrealist paradox, contention, and opposition. As sites of the exceptional comingling of conflicting

²² Letter from Georges Bataille to E. Tériade, n.d. Box 11, Archives Tériade, Musée départemental Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis. “Il n’y a pas si longtemps que j’ai refusé de confirmer la direction de *Documents* dans les conditions beaucoup plus intéressantes.” This statement is somewhat misleading, however, as Bataille was one of the founders of *Documents* and the general secretary of the editorial team during the publication’s tenure from 1929-1930. Despite the hesitance exhibited in his correspondence with Tériade, Bataille remained involved with the first several issues of *Minotaure*. He contributed his first text to the publication in 1936.

²³ Letter from Paul Éluard to Gala Dalí, Passy, February 21, 1933, in *Letters to Gala*, 157.

ideologies, both the mythological figure of the minotaur and the eponymous fine art revue call the tenets of surrealism into question. And this seems to be a question that Picasso's *Minotaure* maquette, and the artist's recurring presence within the first issue more generally, also asks.

Neither *Table* nor *Tableau*: Cubist Collage's Other

Confronting the material presence of the 1933 maquette and related works of the period requires that we first examine the artist's earlier model of cubist collage (and the art historical claims made for it), which the *Minotaure* maquette both clearly invokes and actively problematizes. The collage strategies at work in Picasso's maquette harken to a modernist formal revolution that predates the emergence of Breton's surrealist doctrine or Bataille's base materialism. The 1933 arrangement of cast-off materials recalls the earliest intrusions of found material in his experiments with pasted paper in 1912 and 1913. For Yve-Alain Bois, the *Minotaure* maquette is an "homage" to the artist's earlier *papiers collés*. He has noted that the 1933 assemblage "directly borrows a few elements" from Picasso's initial investigation of collage two decades earlier.²⁴ Picasso and Georges Braque's storied experiments with cutting, arranging, and pasting found materials begins in 1912, with their aesthetic manipulations of printed wallpaper, newsprint, and sand (among other materials) on the picture surface. Established art historical narratives have positioned canonical works like *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912) as continuations of the formal possibilities initiated by Picasso's analytic cubism of several years prior, and landmark achievements in the context of modernism's aesthetic revolution (Fig. 5).²⁵ According to critic Clement Greenberg's landmark interpretation of the

²⁴ Yve-Alain Bois, "The Semiology of Cubism," in *Picasso and Braque: A Symposium*, ed. Lynn Zelevansky (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 170.

²⁵ *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912) is famously thought to be the first instance that found material makes its way into the cubist composition. In his landmark essay "The Pasted-Paper Revolution," Clement Greenberg writes: "The

papiers collés, the works are a crucial step in modernism's breakdown of illusionistic representation. In Greenberg's analysis, a work like *Violin* (1912) (Fig. 6) negotiates the flatness of the collage surface against the perceived threat of abstraction, giving way to the "literalness" and three-dimensionality of Picasso's subsequent experiments with constructed sculptures, like his famous *Guitar* (1912) (Fig. 7).²⁶ Yet just as quickly as art history has elevated this moment of formal exploration within the context of modernism, scholars have dismissed the notion that collage plays any significant role in Picasso's oeuvre after the 1910s.²⁷ So what can we make of the "return" of collage strategies nearly twenty years later, within the *Minotaure* maquette?

To understand the nature of the relationship between Picasso's 1933 maquette and the artist's earlier pasted paper experiments, turning to established structuralist art historical readings of cubist collage is crucial. Interpretations put forth by art historians Bois and Rosalind Krauss make use of semiotic theory and structural linguistics to foreground the multiple operations of newspaper, wallpaper, and sheet music within the "script," or linguistic sign-system, of Braque and Picasso's dialogic *papiers collés*.²⁸ In *Violin* (1912), for example, which is central to Krauss's analysis, two halves of the same sheet of newspaper alternately signify the solid, wood-grain surface of the instrument and its ultimate negation: the transparent luminosity of the space behind it (Fig. 6). Each collage element is thus "diacritical" and exemplifies the relational

collage played a pivotal role in the evolution of Cubism, and Cubism had, of course, a pivotal role in the evolution of modern painting and sculpture." See Clement Greenberg, "The Pasted-Paper Revolution," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 61.

²⁶ See Clement Greenberg, "Collage," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 70-83; and "The Pasted-Paper Revolution," 61-66.

²⁷ Greenberg, "Collage," 80. Greenberg writes: "Neither Picasso nor Braque ever really returned to collage after 1914."

²⁸ See Bois, "The Semiology of Cubism," 169-208; and Rosalind Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," *October* 16 (1981): 5-22.

dependence of signification on the surrounding representational system.²⁹ As Bois has noted, the cubist *papiers collés* test the flexibility of visual signs (faux-bois wallpaper, for example) and their multiple “metaphoric displacements”—the ability for one type of found material to stand in for a multitude of different, often opposing, referents.³⁰

According to Krauss, the oval-shaped *Still Life with Chair Caning* signifies both a flat tabletop and an upright easel painting (Fig. 5).³¹ In keeping with Krauss’s reading of the work, art historian Christine Poggi has differentiated between the artwork acting as *table*—within the horizontal space of the object—and as *tableau*—inhabiting the vertically-oriented realm of the picture (or the window).³² According to Bois (and building on Poggi’s reading), by negotiating this slippage between the vertical and the horizontal, Picasso is inscribing “the very possibility of the transformation of painting into writing.”³³ The found material in this work (a length of coarse rope framing the composition and a piece of oil-cloth printed with a chair-caning pattern) thus transmutes the “empirical space of vision” into the semiological, “possibly horizontal space of reading.”³⁴ In Bois’s and Krauss’s semiological analyses, the artwork-turned-*table* through the inclusion of found material becomes the locus of text and writing—a linguistic system. Such an assertion engages with early writings of Walter Benjamin, who in the short 1917 essay “Malerei und Graphik” conjectured:

²⁹ Krauss, “In the Name of Picasso,” 19.

³⁰ Bois, “The Semiology of Cubism,” 174.

³¹ See Rosalind Krauss, “The Cubist Epoch,” *Artforum International* 9, no. 6 (February 1971). Reprinted in *Perpetual Inventory* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2010), 129–30.

³² See Christine Poggi, “Frames of Reference: ‘Table’ and ‘Tableau’ in Picasso’s Collages and Constructions,” *Art Journal* 47, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 311–22.

³³ Bois, “The Semiology of Cubism,” 186.

³⁴ Bois, “The Semiology of Cubism,” 186.

We could speak of two cuts in the substance of the world: the longitudinal section of the painting, and the transversal of certain drawings. The longitudinal cut could be that of representation, in a certain way it contains things, the cross-section is symbolic, it contains the signs.³⁵

The *Minotaure* maquette, in its unabashed offering of emphatically “real” three-dimensional objects—ribbon, cardboard, artificial leaves—could operate as a horizontal *table* too. Yet the composition’s crude charcoal line frame and paper nameplate also self-consciously propel the collage into the space of the vertical, the pictorial, the *tableau* (Fig. 8). In many ways, the 1933 work continues, and exacerbates, the oscillation between horizontal and vertical first initiated by the canonical *Still Life with Chair Caning*.

The maquette’s charcoal frame and Picasso’s treatment of the journal’s title along its bottom edge are both evocative of the framing and signing motifs found in several specific collages and paintings of 1914 (see Figs. 9-10). *Glass and Bottle of Bass* (spring 1914) presents a still-life framed by strips of cut paper that mimic an ornate gilded frame—a picture of a picture (Fig. 11). Krauss has described the inclusion of a depicted nameplate as “a signature so long banished from the front of Picasso’s works now making its return in the form of the triumphant tag of the Old Master.”³⁶ The presence of the decorated frame surrounding the uninterrupted expanse of wallpaper “ground” enables this work to function as a mirror showing the reflection of a collage hanging on the decorated wall behind the viewer.³⁷ The compositional treatment of

³⁵ As Yve-Alain Bois notes in his introduction to the French translation of Benjamin’s text, this short essay was originally written in reply to a letter (now lost) by Gershom Scholem on the cubism of Picasso. See Walter Benjamin, “Peinture et Graphisme,” trans. Pierre Péron, *La Part de l’Oeil*, no. 6 (1990): 10–15. For the original German publication, see Walter Benjamin, “Malerei und Graphik,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 602–7.

³⁶ Rosalind E. Krauss, “Picasso/Pastiche,” in *The Picasso Papers*, 1st ed (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 161.

³⁷ Krauss, “Picasso/Pastiche,” 161. Thanks to a surviving photograph of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler’s apartment, which was taken around the time the 1914 collage was produced, we have evidence that Kahnweiler hung works on walls decorated with wallpaper closely matching the striated wallpaper of Picasso’s collage. See Poggi, “Frames of Reference,” 319.

Glass and Bottle of Bass is not just visually reminiscent of an Old Master painting; it also invokes the traditional ontological status of the artwork (or *tableau*) as a site of realism—a mirror image of the world. These pictorial strategies of 1914 are jointly echoed in the 1933 maquette, with its uninterrupted striation of corrugated cardboard, placement of the word “Minotaure,” and stylized penmanship. The faux-gilded leaf motif decorating the vertical paper strip in the *Minotaure* collage even rhymes with the vine pattern of the “frame” in *Glass and Bottle of Bass* (Fig. 12). Picasso catapults us into the vertical realm of the *tableau*.

Allusions to reflectivity within the work continue to reference the early modern legacy of artwork as mirror. The scraps of tinfoil on the surface of the maquette have an undeniably metallic gleam that rhymes with the imagined metal blade of the minotaur’s dagger. The creature even holds the knife up to its face like a mirror, as if considering its own beastly reflection (Fig. 13). These elements appear to deepen the maquette’s association with the vertical *tableau*, or the upright mirror of Krauss’s analysis. Picasso’s conflation of the journal’s title with his own signature further thrusts the maquette into a possible realm of self-recognition, perhaps even self-portraiture. But much like the crinkled and creased tinfoil tacked to the collage surface, this mirror is broken, the image discontinuous, the reflection unfamiliar and unrecognizable. The 1933 maquette ultimately refuses Krauss’s reading. Unlike the 1914 collage, the found materials of the *Minotaure* maquette do not amalgamate into a unified reflection. Each element asserts its unique tactility in the space right before us, and not on the wall behind.

Just as the maquette resists functioning as vertical mirror/*tableau*, the embodied materiality of the artwork presents us with a mode of horizontality that is not entirely accounted for in collage’s semiotic readings. The inclusion of found material does not, in the case of the 1933 work, produce the same symbolic “space of reading” conjured by the earlier *papiers collés*.

There is no single linguistic system that gives meaning to the maquette's ribbons, leaves, foil, doily, cardboard, and drawing. The diversely textured materials in Picasso's creation for *Minotaure* are notably distinct from the newsprint cuttings, lengths of rope, and wallpaper scraps found in the earlier collages. Whereas Braque described the invention of the *papier collé* as being in the service of "certitude," the unifying principle of the *Minotaure* maquette seems to be its resistance to any such certainty.³⁸ If the collage did inhabit Benjamin's cross-sectional plane of the "symbolic," if it were like a script, it would function much more like the work of Stéphane Mallarmé, whose poetic spatialization of language insists on the material autonomy of letterforms and words rather than their transcendence in service of signification: poetry becomes "mute plasticity and objecthood."³⁹

Try as one might, the constitutive elements of the *Minotaure* maquette refuse to coalesce into a tabletop still life, a landscape, or the space of a room.⁴⁰ They instead insist upon the fact of their own tactility and non-representational material presence. The 1933 maquette denies reading and destroys mimetic realism. It is neither *table* nor *tableau*, neither vertical nor horizontal. A third spatial field must be accounted for—one that accommodates the heterogeneous materiality, illegibility, and anti-illusionism at work on the surface of Picasso's maquette. We can thus complicate Bois's claim that the *Minotaure* maquette pays "homage" to the *papiers collés* of the teens, or is one of the many "returns" structuring Picasso's oeuvre. The maquette's material immediacy and riotous tactility are not assimilable to the established structuralist readings of the

³⁸ Louis Aragon, "The Challenge to Painting," in *The Ends of Collage*, edited by Yuval Etgar (London: Luxembourg & Dyan, 2017), 102. Aragon's essay was first published in French in 1930 as the introduction to the catalogue of an exhibition of collages at Galerie Goemans, Paris.

³⁹ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Open Letters, Industrial Poems," *October* 42 (1987): 74.

⁴⁰ Despite Rubin's brief interpretation of the *Minotaure* maquette as depicting "a minotaur rampant on a field of paper doilies, tin foil, ribbons, and corrugated cardboard." In Rubin, "The Surrealism of the Thirties," 127.

artist's 1912 and 1913 *papiers collés* as either upright mirror or horizontal script. Therefore, in addition to disrupting the canonical establishment of collage within the historical narrative of Picasso's cubism, the 1933 maquette complicates collage's role within the broader history of modernism. Picasso's re-engagement with collage techniques in the 1930s demands that we move beyond the parameters of cubism, and instead consider the *Minotaure* maquette alongside the surrealist discourse with which it was contemporaneous.

Exceeding Automatism's Limits: Beyond Surrealist Collage and the *Objet d'Hasard*

In 1930, surrealist writer Louis Aragon said of the relationship between surrealist collage and the cubist *papiers collés*: “the latter already posed certain questions which the former still asks.”⁴¹ Indeed, the inadequacy of structural analysis for grappling with the found object in the *Minotaure* maquette deposits us in the irrational, subversive realm of surrealist collage. A unified ideology of surrealism crystallized in 1924 with the publication of Breton's “Manifesto of Surrealism.” In it, Breton famously defines surrealism as “psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express...the actual functioning of thought...in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.”⁴² As Breton and his followers established the parameters of their avant-garde movement, they carefully positioned themselves within a lineage of aesthetic experimentation that, importantly, includes Picasso's cubist experiments of the 1910s. This self-ascribed indebtedness to Picasso is clear in Breton's article “Surrealism and Painting,” published one year after his 1924 manifesto, which states that surrealism, “if it wants to assign itself a line of moral conduct, need merely follow where Picasso

⁴¹ Aragon, “The Challenge to Painting,” 101.

⁴² André Breton, “First Manifesto of Surrealism,” in *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 26.

has gone before and will go again.”⁴³ The cubist *papiers collés* of the 1910s were especially influential for the artists aligned with surrealism in the 1930s, such as Ernst, Hans Arp, or Joan Miró. The liquidation and sale of the artwork holdings of the Parisian Galerie Kahnweiler between the years 1921 and 1923 made examples of Picasso’s earlier experiments in pasted paper visible and accessible to surrealists.⁴⁴ The Parisian public was also exposed to Picasso’s *papiers collés* by way of multiple gallery exhibitions in the 1930s, including a 1930 group exhibition of collages at Galerie Goemans and, five years later, an exhibition of Picasso’s *papiers collés* from 1912-1914 at Galerie Pierre.⁴⁵ This renewed access to Picasso and Braque’s pasted paper experiments of nearly two decades prior inspired the surrealist collage strategy of haphazardly arranging newspaper fragments or scraps of paper into disjointed compositions.⁴⁶

And yet, the surrealists were careful to make clear distinctions between their collage practices and Picasso’s earlier formal experiments with cut paper and found material. In 1935, surrealist Tristan Tzara wrote that the *papiers collés* produce “a system that, while establishing the temporal character of a powerful present, transgresses the framework of the unconscious, constitutes the very issue of reality as consciousness.”⁴⁷ This purported “realism” or “powerful presence” of the *papiers collés* stands in direct opposition to the transcendence and revelation

⁴³ André Breton, *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 7. Quoted and translated in Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 29.

⁴⁴ Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 32.

⁴⁵ Importantly, each exhibition also had an accompanying publication. See Louis Aragon, *La peinture au défi : exposition de collages : Arp, Braque, Dali, Duchamp, Ernst, Gris, Mirò, Magritte, Man-Ray, Picabia, Picasso, Tanguy* (Paris: Galerie Goemans, 1930); and Tristan Tzara, *Papiers collés, 1912-1914 de Picasso* (Paris: Galerie Pierre, 1935). Tzara contributed a short text on Picasso’s *papiers collés* for the Galerie Pierre exhibition pamphlet.

⁴⁶ Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 32.

⁴⁷ See Tzara, *Papiers collés, 1912-1914 de Picasso*, 2. Translated and quoted in Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 32.

promised by surrealist collage practices. Distinct from the deconstructions of representation at work in the cubist *papiers collés*, collage in the context of Breton's surrealism was thought to refuse any link to mimesis in favor of a visual language of combined, dislocated fragments that mined the irrational impulses of the unconscious mind.⁴⁸ Aragon's 1930 essay "In Defiance of Painting," aligns surrealist collage, and the work of Ernst in particular, with the pursuit of the *merveilleux*: the miraculous transcendence "born from the refusal of a reality, but also from the emergence...of a new reality which this refusal has liberated."⁴⁹ The essay praises Ernst and his assemblages of fragmented photographs and illustrations which are, according to Aragon, the two forms of collage most distinct from the ideologies of the *papiers collés*.⁵⁰ Works like Ernst's *Rêves et hallucinations* (1926), for example, derive their intended hallucinatory effect through their irrational bringing together or (as Ernst describes) "systematic displacement" of pre-formed images like an outstretched hand or an illustrated advertisement for *pâte dentifrice* (Fig. 14).⁵¹ Despite seeming to mine the same formal possibilities of visual disjuncture as proposed by cubist collage, the dominant mode of surrealist collage was far more interested in poetic and psychological affect, rather than formal exploration. The sought-after effect of a work like *Rêves et hallucinations* was thoroughly literary in nature—or in the words of art historian Elza Adamowicz, in the interest of "semantic incoherence, iconographic anomalies or narrative non

⁴⁸ For discussions and definitions of surrealist collage, see Elza Adamowicz, "Beyond Painting," in *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 1-25; and Aragon, "The Challenge to Painting," 97-117.

⁴⁹ Aragon, "The Challenge to Painting," 98.

⁵⁰ Max Ernst, "Beyond Painting," in *The Ends of Collage*, edited by Yuval Etgar (London: Luxembourg & Dayan, 2017), 128. Ernst's essay was first published in Paris in 1936 under the title "Au delà de la peinture" in *Cahiers d'Art* 12 no. 6-7 (1937).

⁵¹ Ernst, "Beyond Painting," 128.

sequiturs.”⁵² Aragon himself described the *merveilleux*, or marvelous, in these literary and poetic terms: as “the intervention within the poem of supernatural beings.”⁵³

At the height of surrealist collage experimentation in the late 1920s and 1930s (also the time of the *Minotaure* maquette’s making) Picasso was engaged with surrealist writing and was likewise exposed to the psychoanalytic theory underpinning Breton’s literary project.⁵⁴ Given these social conditions, it is tempting to read Picasso’s *Minotaure* maquette as an adoption of the surrealist interest in the transcendent, poetic possibilities of accessing the unconscious mind through chance operations and dislocated image-fragments. Though the *Minotaure* maquette and Ernst’s *Rêves et hallucinations* traffic in heterogeneity, they do so to varying degrees and to disparate ends. The ethos of surrealism, as evidenced in Ernst’s collage practice, is to resolve the binary between “dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a surreality.”⁵⁵ The textural, near-sculptural diversity of found materials on the surface of Picasso’s maquette exceeds surrealist collage’s use of two-dimensional image and text fragments to form a language of the unconscious. The *Minotaure* maquette refuses language and signification, and its cast-off detritus and riotous material diversity resist the revelatory

⁵² Adamowicz, “Towards a Definition of Surrealist Collage,” in *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse*, 89-90. As Adamowicz writes, surrealist collage relocates the pictorial strategies of cubist collage into a “literary field.” Rubin affirms this distinction when he writes: “The collage, as Ernst re-created it, had little in common either technically or plastically with the *papiers collés* of the Cubists... To Ernst, who wanted to go ‘beyond painting’... plasticity was of secondary interest.” Rubin, “Dada,” in *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, 49-50.

⁵³ Aragon, “The Challenge to Painting,” 97. Quoted in Rosalind Krauss, “Life with Picasso: Sketchbook No. 92, 1926,” in *Je Suis Le Cahier: The Sketchbooks of Pablo Picasso*, edited by Arnold B. Glimcher and Marc Glimcher (New York: Pace Gallery, 1986), 114.

⁵⁴For discussion of Picasso’s engagement with surrealism in this period, see Rubin, “The Surrealism of the Thirties,” 127. See Lydia Gasman, “Mystery, Magic and Love in Picasso, 1925-1938: Picasso and the Surrealist Poets” (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1981) for an in-depth analysis of the influences of surrealist writing on Picasso’s work between 1925 and 1938.

⁵⁵ Breton, “First Manifesto of Surrealism,” 15.

transformations sought by surrealist collage. Picasso's formal and material choices were also far from haphazard or left to chance. According to Anne Baldassari, rather than letting the irrational impulses of the unconscious fully direct him, "he carefully sustained a dichotomy, maintained a state of maximum tension between creative act and productive unconscious, between mastery and drive."⁵⁶

Given that the *Minotaure* maquette emerged during the height of Picasso's experimentation with surrealist-oriented object-making, the work might be more productively associated with the explorations of surrealist sculpture rather than two-dimensional image. The principles of psychic automatism and dislocation at the core of surrealist collage similarly underpin the operation of the surrealist object and Breton's concept of objective chance—the uncanny encounter with an external sign that aligns with an unconscious, internal desire.⁵⁷ Just as the *Minotaure* maquette's collage strategies resist adhering to the idealist orthodoxy of surrealist collage practice, so do Picasso's 1930s sculptural explorations sustain a friction with the Bretonian idealism of the *objet d'hasard*—the surrealist operation of externalizing and making material the objects of one's dreams and fantasies. Partially facilitated by his purchase of the Boisgeloup sculpture studio in 1930, Picasso, in this period, employed the same strategies of disjointed agglomeration populating the *Minotaure* collage to produce idiosyncratic sculptures of found studio detritus and natural materials. Rather than adopting the surrealist frameworks of chance operations or the unconscious drive to characterize Picasso's use of found objects and material in this period, Baldassari has described Picasso's 1930s sculptural assemblages as

⁵⁶ Baldassari, "The *sur*-realist Picasso," 31.

⁵⁷ See Hal Foster, "Compulsive Beauty," in *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993), 19-56; and Adamowicz, "Beyond Painting," 1-25.

having a “subterranean logic.”⁵⁸ In dialogic tension with Breton’s aims at transcendence through irrational juxtaposition, a comparatively low, underground operation forms the “logic” underpinning Picasso’s constructed montage of a feather duster, a ram’s horn, and the gnarled roots of a tree in *Untitled* (1930-32) (Fig. 15), or a cobbler’s last, a doll, and a toy airplane in *Woman* (1930-32) (Fig. 16). Despite his interest in annexing Picasso as a surrealist forefather, Breton himself was sensitive to Picasso’s resistance toward fully aligning himself with surrealism’s messianic ideologies. In “Surrealism and Painting,” Breton writes: “I will never let a label* [*even the label ‘surrealist’] impose an absurdly restrictive character on the activity of the man from whom we still expect the most.”⁵⁹ We are thus confronted with the possibility that, like the collage strategies of the *Minotaure* maquette, the base material operations of Picasso’s found object constructions of the period exceed the parameters of Breton’s transcendent “objective chance.” Instead, these sculptural experiments approach a *sur-* or ultra-realism by way of conscious construction and “subterranean” material exploration.

The base operations of Picasso’s material and sculptural forays surface at numerous points within the body of the inaugural issue of *Minotaure*. The tension between Bretonian surrealism and Picasso’s works of the 1930s is most notable within Breton’s essay “Picasso in His Element,” which Picasso himself requested that Breton write (Fig. 17).⁶⁰ Striking black-and-white images of Picasso’s studios in Paris and Boisgeloup, taken by Brassai in 1932, punctuate an essay that finds Breton almost entirely preoccupied with the status of the found object in Picasso’s most recent works and the space of his atelier more generally. The essay begins with a

⁵⁸ Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 33.

⁵⁹ Breton, “Le surréalisme et la peinture,” 7. Quoted in Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 30.

⁶⁰ In a 1982 interview with Jeanine Warnod, Tériade confirmed: “Picasso avait exigé que l’article le concernant soit écrit par Breton.” See “Visite à Tériade en hiver 1982,” in *Regards sur Minotaure: la revue à tête de bête* (Genève: Musée d’art et d’histoire, 1987), 251.

discussion of *Composition with Butterfly* (September 15, 1932), wherein Breton attempts to grapple with the presence of the “common butterfly” on the surface of Picasso’s canvas (Fig. 18).⁶¹ Breton wonders how “the very perfection of the butterfly’s incorporation into the picture should inspire suddenly the kind of unique emotion which, when it grips us, provides unassailable evidence that we have just been granted a revelation.”⁶² Similarly laudatory language recurs throughout the article, in keeping with orthodox surrealism’s preoccupation with the transcendent *merveilleux*. At other points in the essay, Breton remarks on Picasso’s use of the “humble” fig tree as a sculptural support, the presence of an excremental “impasted lump” at the center of an in-process painting, even the pile of empty cigarette boxes on the mantle and the dirtiness of the studio’s floorboards (Figs. 19-20). And yet, according to Breton, all this decay, disintegration, and dilapidation is, in Picasso’s hands, a means to a higher unity—to reach a “hitherto unscaled peak.”⁶³⁶⁴ Rather than being in service of a revelation, what Breton has described instead seems to approach the territory of Georges Bataille, surrealism’s defector and dissident.

The Matter of Classical Mythology: Contending with Bataille’s *Informe*

The base qualities of decomposition and decay that animate Picasso’s sculptural experiments and atelier align with Bataille’s concept of the *informe*, or formless—the act of

⁶¹ André Breton, “Picasso in His Element,” in *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston: MFA Publications, 2002), 101.

⁶² Breton, “Picasso in His Element,” 101.

⁶³ Breton, “Picasso in His Element,” 102-103. Bois and Krauss note the essay’s irony, as despite its entrenchment within Breton’s emancipatory surrealist vocabulary, the text and its accompanying images trespass into the realm of the heterological and the scatological. See Bois and Krauss, “Figure,” in *Formless: A User’s Guide*, 83.

⁶⁴ Bois and Krauss, “Figure,” in *Formless: A User’s Guide*, 83.

“bring[ing] things down in the world.”⁶⁵ This transgressive operation, which suspends meaning in a perpetual state of irresolution and undoing, is at the core of Bataille’s philosophy of base materialism. The detritus on the surface of Picasso’s maquette, the “subterranean logic” of his found object assemblages, even the filth and clutter of his studio, seem in keeping with the processes of lowering and slippage at the heart of the *informe*. Like Breton, Aragon paid tribute to these qualities of Picasso’s project with his 1930 essay “The Challenge to Painting,” yet the text’s language is more closely allied with Bataille’s understandings of formlessness. In Aragon’s words:

I heard him complaining because everyone who came to visit and who saw him bringing to life old scraps of embroidery, cardboard, bits of string and corrugated iron, rags found in the garbage, thought they were doing the right thing by bringing him remnants of magnificent fabrics *to make paintings from*. He wanted none of it, desiring instead the true waste products of human life, poor, soiled, and scorned.⁶⁶

The “waste products of human life” of Aragon’s description litter the floor and fireplace mantle in Brassai’s images of Picasso’s studio, yet they also find themselves within Picasso’s *Minotaure* maquette in the form of crumpled tin foil, torn cardboard, and visible traces of glue. Brassai’s own description of the 1933 collage, which he saw being made in Picasso’s studio, informs us that the artist in fact sourced the artificial leaves on the right side of the composition from one of Olga Picasso’s discarded hats—they are literally trash.⁶⁷ Collage elements belonging to the realms of fashion and bourgeois commodity consumption (ribbons and decorative leaves), are cast-off and lowered—brought into contact with garbage like scraps of foil and cardboard.

⁶⁵ Georges Bataille, “Formless,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 31. For discussion and analysis of the term and its many possible applications to visual art, see Yve Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User’s Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997).

⁶⁶ Aragon, “The Challenge to Painting,” 112.

⁶⁷ Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 9.

Bataille offers us a means to address this collision of disparate materials: “When in a dream a diamond signifies excrement, it is not only a question of association by contrast; in the unconscious, jewels, like excrement, are cursed matter that flows from a wound.”⁶⁸ Indeed, in keeping with Bataille’s language, the *Minotaure* maquette appears to break down oppositions between the sacred and the profane, jewels and excrement. However, a closer look at the object—particularly the pencil drawing at its center—shows it to challenge even a Bataillean reading of Picasso’s work as “bringing things down in the world.”

Many of the found-object experiments of the 1930s described in Breton’s article for *Minotaure* are no longer extant. These sculptural forays survive only in Brassai’s photographs and as depicted sculptural forms in Picasso’s drawings of the period. In addition to Breton’s “Picasso in His Element,” the first issue of *Minotaure* published a series of drawings titled “Une Anatomie,” and described by Brassai as potentially being the work of Picasso most surrealist in spirit (Fig. 21).⁶⁹ The volumetric imaginary assemblages of “Une Anatomie” also surface in the series of etchings “The Sculptor’s Studio” (Fig. 22). Components of the group of 100 etchings known as the *Vollard Suite*, produced by Picasso between 1931 and 1933 and published in 1939 by Ambroise Vollard, this body of work is emblematic of the centrality of drawing, and indeed classical line drawing, to this period of Picasso’s production. In these prints (and in the *Minotaure* maquette), we see classical line drawing returning to the artist’s repertoire five years after the so-called end of Picasso’s designated classical or *rappel à l’ordre* period in 1925.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Georges Bataille, “The Notion of Expenditure,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 119. For additional discussion of Bataille’s theories of expenditure, see Bois, “Base Materialism,” in *Formless: A User’s Guide*, 51-62.

⁶⁹ Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso*, 36-7. The drawings comprising “Une Anatomie” are also the only works that Picasso allowed to carry the decisive mantle of being “surrealist.” Krauss, “Life with Picasso,” 114.

⁷⁰ Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis*, 2.

Drawing's seemingly anomalous reemergence within Picasso's practice of the 1930s, and its centrality to both Picasso's *Minotaure* cover and his other contributions to the magazine's first issue, offers a valuable opportunity to parse the potential workings of Bataille's base materialism in Picasso's work of this period.

The drawing at the center of the *Minotaure* cover emerged from Picasso's preparations of the *Vollard Suite* in 1932 and 1933. Picasso's composition for the 1933 cover, along with his contribution of four etchings of the minotaur figure for the frontispiece of this first issue, are in fact likely to have precipitated the minotaur's appearance as a character within the larger series of etchings for Vollard (Fig. 23).⁷¹ The drawing we see on the cover of the journal was quite clearly a study or preparatory image for the etchings published within the review. This engagement with mythological subject matter in a "classicizing mode" came in the wake of Picasso's series of thirty etchings begun in 1930 and commissioned by Albert Skira to illustrate Skira's publication of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. As Lisa Florman has noted, Picasso's re-engagement with classicism and antiquity in this period may at first seem surprising, given, as we have seen, his contemporaneous foray into collage and object-making seemingly aligned with surrealism.⁷²

However, classical mythology and the figure of the minotaur also captivated the surrealists, and Bataille perhaps most of all. Indeed, it was likely Bataille himself who suggested that Skira's luxurious new review carry *Minotaure* as its title.⁷³ As we have seen, the figure of

⁷¹ Yve-Alain Bois, *Matisse and Picasso* (Paris: Flammarion/Kimbell Art Museum, 1998), 92. The first appearance of the minotaur within the *Vollard Suite* is dated to May 1933.

⁷² Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis*, 14.

⁷³ Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis*, 140-42. The conclusive attribution of the publication's name remains uncertain. Though Skira claims the journal's title was chosen by Roger Vitrac, Brassai and Masson both assert that

the minotaur and the eponymous journal are the sites of some of surrealism's most stark inconsistencies and internal oppositions. Like so many aspects of surrealism, mythology and the figure of the minotaur held different meanings within Breton's messianic surrealism and Bataille's theories of knowledge and humanity. The ferocity and cannibalism of the half-man half-bull creature, for Breton and his followers, closely aligned with the involuntariness of automatism and the animalistic, erotic drive of the human unconscious.⁷⁴ For Bataille, the labyrinth—the minotaur's dark, winding prison—reflected the irrational, convoluted structure of human existence itself. In his words, "One need only follow, for a short time, the traces of the repeated circuits of words to discover, in a disconcerting vision, the labyrinthine structure of the human being."⁷⁵ Bataille's writings also align the destructive impulses of the minotaur with the implicit violence of mark-making embedded within humanity's creative drive.⁷⁶

Beyond the minotaur's binary identification within mainstream surrealism as a symbol of the human unconscious, the creature is also a figure of formless hybridity. The creature might be said to enact Bataille's "dualism," described by Denis Hollier as "a resistance to system and homogeneity."⁷⁷ The concept of the minotaur performs the ceaseless uncertainty and liminality of this condition both spatially (as it shifts from vertical to horizontal, human to animal) and temporally (the creature stands for the very *process* of sustaining this state of "pure

the name was authored by Bataille. See Véronique Yersin, "Génèse d'un Mythe," in *Chants exploratoires : Minotaure, la revue d'Albert Skira, 1933-1939* (Genève: Cabinet des estampes, 2008), 18.

⁷⁴ Records indicate that Breton was aware of the myth of Theseus and Daedalus's labyrinth as early as 1924. Ambre Gauthier, "Les Mille Visages du Minotaure 1933-1939," in *Picasso, l'atelier du Minotaure*, ed. Olivier Le Bihan (Paris: Somogy éditions d'art, 2018), 144.

⁷⁵ Bataille, "The Labyrinth," in *Visions of Excess*, 174.

⁷⁶ Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis*, 142; "Bataille's Dissident Surrealism," in *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, 2nd ed, vol. 2 (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 263.

⁷⁷ Denis Hollier and Hilari Allred, "The Dualist Materialism of Georges Bataille," *Yale French Studies*, no. 78 (1990): 127.

interval...pure disjointed *in-between*").⁷⁸ Thus, rather than aligning the mythological figure with Breton's idealistic privileging of the unconscious, we might more productively emphasize the creature's alliance with Bataille's understandings of metamorphosis. Bataille's theory of "metamorphosis" relates closely to the states of change and transformation and the high/low collapse of luxury and waste that formlessness describes. In Bataille's words: "The obsession with metamorphosis can be defined as a violent need—identical, furthermore, with all our animal needs—that suddenly impels us to cast off the gestures and attitudes requisite to human nature."⁷⁹

Though the symbolic alignment of the minotaur figure with both mainstream and dissident surrealist ideologies is now clear, the question remains: how does the minotaur sitting at the center of Picasso's 1933 maquette operate? Given its material surrounds—it is fitting that the minotaur drawing might stand in for the same formless processes as seem to be enacted by the collage's other constituent parts. However, if the other material elements of Picasso's maquette—its collage strategies, its incorporation of found detritus—exceed illusionistic legibility and poetic association, why should the drawing at the maquette's center be any different? The so-called "classicizing mode" of the figure of the minotaur at the center of the maquette falls short of accounting for the multivalence of Picasso's drawing practice in the late 1920s and 1930s. When considered in relation to the central importance of drawing to Picasso's work of this period, the minotaur figure on the cover of the eponymous magazine's first issue exceeds its function as a mimetic (and thus iconic) image of the classical creature, and proves to be more than a mere symbol of the minotaur's irrational bestiality.

⁷⁸ Hollier and Allred, "The Dualist Materialism of Georges Bataille," 128.

⁷⁹ Georges Bataille, "Metamorphosis," trans. Annette Michelson, *October* 36 (Spring 1986): 22.

The inclusion of Picasso's drawing series "Une Anatomie" within the first issue of *Minotaure* attests to drawing's inextricability from sculpture and three-dimensional volume in this phase of the artist's output. Art historian Philippe Büttner has remarked on the "special potential" demarcated by these drawn, imaginary sculptures. According to Büttner, the nature of Picasso's line in these works "consists in working with the dimension of reality which is associated with illusory spatiality, but also saving the motif from its definitive realizability and thus leaving it a more utopian, more cerebral concept."⁸⁰ If distanced from their "neo-classical" function as merely mimetic, the drawn contours within Picasso's *Vollard Suite* or Picasso's *Minotaure* frontispiece etchings might open onto the hallucinatory possibilities of André Masson's surrealist automatic drawings (Fig. 24).

And yet, despite their formal similarities, art historian Sebastian Zeidler notes how "by absorbing and surpassing the lesson of Masson's automatic drawings, Picasso extended the purview of line in such a way that it could now serve as foreshortened contour, now as surface ornament, now as the transition in between."⁸¹ In other words, in addition to deploying line as volumetric contour for imagined, unrecognizable forms as in "Une Anatomie," single lines *themselves* are three-dimensional in Picasso's numerous 1928 studies for his wire and sheet metal sculptures of the same year (Figs. 25-26). Zeidler calls this dialectic operation of line "linear antagonism": the relationship between "line as the *boundary* of a body and line as *itself* a kind of body."⁸² The minotaur drawing at the center of Picasso's 1933 assemblage thus emerges

⁸⁰ Philippe Büttner, "Drawn to Surrealism: The Importance of Drawing in the 'Surrealist' Work of Picasso," in *The Surrealist Picasso*, edited by Anne Baldassari (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), 181.

⁸¹ Sebastian Zeidler, "The Double Style," in *Form as Revolt: Carl Einstein and the Ground of Modern Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 170.

⁸² Zeidler, "The Double Style," 194.

from a period in which the artist's drawing practice relates closely to the plasticity of his sculptural experiments. The 1933 pencil drawing is the byproduct of this period of experimentation with the aesthetic potential of *line's materiality*. At the time of the *Minotaure* maquette's production, drawing was, for Picasso, a process of mark-making that attested to its *own* material nature, thereby opening a range of possibilities in excess of iconicity, symbolism, and two-dimensionality. The drawing at the center of the *Minotaure* maquette exceeds symbolic association with surrealist understandings of the minotaur's unconscious drive or bestial violence.

Assemblage and Excavation: A Material Rethinking of Collage

Given how Picasso's drawing practice aligns with his explorations of plasticity in this period, we might now consider the line drawing at the center of the *Minotaure* maquette as a material fragment of equivalent status to the surrounding tin foil, discarded leaves, ribbon, and decorated paper.⁸³ The material treatment of the minotaur drawing supports this claim: its edges are untidy, and they even interrupt Picasso's pencil line in some places (note how in the bottom left corner, the minotaur's fingers are cropped by the irregular edge of the drawing) (Fig. 13). The drawing might have been just one scrap among the many littering the table at Picasso's studio. The earliest noted appearance of the minotaur figure in Picasso's oeuvre, in 1928, further attests to the inextricability of the drawn creature from the artist's experiments with collage. The monstrous creature first emerges in a collage study made from "kraft paper and powdery charcoal," and later realized as a tapestry, in which the head of a bull is superimposed on two

⁸³ In keeping with this reading of the material status of the *Minotaure* maquette drawing, and important to acknowledge here, is Krauss's interpretation of Picasso's "return" to classicism during World War I as a mode of pastiche, or a continuation of the same collage logic governing the work of the 1910s and early 1920s. For more on this analysis of Picasso's *rappel à l'ordre* period, see Krauss, "Picasso/Pastiche," 97.

galloping human legs (Fig. 27).⁸⁴ The 1933 *Minotaure* maquette is thus the culminating product of a period that saw Picasso's negotiation and re-negotiation of his own past forays into pasted paper and classical drawing, by rethinking both in relation to objecthood and materiality.

Yet tracing the 1933 maquette's origins to the earlier pasted paper experiment of 1928 does not adequately account for the full range of Picasso's preceding assemblages of decaying detritus and discarded flotsam. The underground material presence and "subterranean logic" of Picasso's found object experiments of the 1930s, the *Minotaure* maquette among them, confronts us with a seemingly excavated material presence—an unearthing of a site of disintegration. As Breton has written: "Brushing aside everything which generally forms the object of artistic delight and vanity, Picasso has gone out of his way to seek out the perishable and the ephemeral for their own sake."⁸⁵ Picasso's disinterment of these cast-off materials refutes the operations of burial and effacement that Krauss has identified with the artist's earlier cubist *papiers collés*: "the forced absence of the original plane by the superimposition of another plane."⁸⁶ Therefore, rather than reading the *Minotaure* maquette as a late "return to Cubism,"⁸⁷ as Bois has proposed, we might more productively align the work's tactile engagement with an earlier aspect of Picasso's collage experimentation. Indeed, the 1933 work's tactile engagement with the "poor, soiled, and scorned" traces back to Picasso's addition of sand and coffee grounds to the pasted

⁸⁴ "The collage of two striding legs surmounted by a bull's head was realized as a tapestry cartoon for Marie Cuttoli, who in 1927 began ordering works from Picasso, Georges Braque, Joan Miro, and Fernand Léger for her designs." John Richardson, ed., *Picasso: Minotaurs and Matadors* (London: Gagosian, 2017), 13.

⁸⁵ Breton, "Picasso in His Element," 109.

⁸⁶ Krauss continues by writing that this effacement of the collage ground problematizes the systems of modernism by "setting up discourse in place of presence, a discourse founded on a buried origin, a discourse fueled by that absence." Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," 20.

⁸⁷ Bois, "The Semiology of Cubism," 196. Bois also contends that the collage work *Guitar on a Table* (Céret, spring 1913) "seems to have functioned as a reminiscence for the elaboration of the cover of *Minotaure*."

papers and paintings of the 1910s, a form of earthen experimentation that continues in the subsequent decades (Figs. 28-29).

Picasso himself associated the addition of these heterogeneous textural elements with acts of undoing and decomposition when he wrote in a 1912 letter to Braque: “I’m using a bit of earth against our awful canvas.”⁸⁸ This type of collage experimentation, which, as we know, is commonly thought to have been abandoned by Picasso and Braque before the start of the First World War, surfaces in later works of the 1920s. From 1926 to 1927, Picasso created a series of *Guitar* collages that take the earthly associations of sand and coffee grounds even further. Operations of destruction and disintegration are viscerally at work in relief-paintings like Picasso’s *Guitar* of May 1926, which presents us with an uneven, wrinkled, flesh-like scrap of cloth crudely affixed to a canvas ground by irregular stitches and nails (Fig. 30). The piece of detritus affixed to his canvas surface is, like the materials of the *Minotaure* maquette, a worn and used bit of stuff—in this case, the artist’s own cast-off clothing, “an irregular length of the artist’s shirttail.”⁸⁹ Another work from this year has an even more profoundly embodied, skin-like quality, and presents a fraying rag pierced with nails evocative of skin grafts or medical sutures (Fig. 31). Deepening the visceral, even violent associations of this work, the approximately twenty nails affixing the soiled rag to the image surface are “stuck through its underside, their points projecting outward toward the viewer.”⁹⁰ These are works that emit a “mortuary smell,” as they hint at the decay of human flesh and the body.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Letter from Picasso to Braque, October 9, 1912. Quoted in Bois, “The Semiology of Cubism,” 188. Bois cites William Rubin, *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 31.

⁸⁹ Krauss, “Life with Picasso,” 113.

⁹⁰ Krauss, “Life with Picasso,” 113.

⁹¹ Bois, “Figure,” in *Formless: A User’s Guide*, 83.

Though less immediately or violently visceral, other guitar constructions from this moment of exceptional production perform similarly base material operations. In these, crumpled scraps of aging tulle and other bits of cloth weave under and over arrangements of taught twine and string that pierce their cardboard support (Figs. 32-33). These are the “old scraps of embroidery, cardboard, bits of string and corrugated iron, rags found in the garbage” of Aragon’s description.⁹² Certain works of this moment have a particularly soiled and scatological feel as well: smeared black paint, discolored glue, and punctured and torn cardboard help proclaim these collage-like assemblages to be things, perhaps formless things, in the midst of a slow process of decay. Casting our gaze backward from the moment of the 1933 *Minotaure* maquette also aids us in contending with another seemingly exceptional group of works from just three years before the inaugural issue of the magazine. In 1930, while vacationing in Juan-les-Pins, a small beach town in Antibes, France, Picasso produced a group of relief-paintings made from found material and ocean debris like twigs, string, cardboard, and in one case, an eerily-arranged glove. These constructions elaborate upon the “bit of earth” that found itself applied to the *papiers collés* of the 1910s. Recessed within the stretcher bars on the underside of canvases and entirely coated with sand, constructions like *Baigneuse couchée* (1930) and *Composition au gant* (1930) have the feel of a decaying subaquatic shipwreck, or the dusty, dirt-covered site of an archaeological excavation (Figs. 34-35).

We might return here to our previous discussion of the fluctuations between horizontality and verticality performed by Bataille’s *informe* and the mythological figure of the minotaur. The material nature of the sand reliefs could be said to operate within this horizontal-vertical dialectic. The works are clearly and self-consciously framed by the wooden stretcher bars of

⁹² Aragon, “The Challenge to Painting,” 112.

their inverted supports, just as the *Minotaure* maquette is by its charcoal outline. And to produce these experiments in texture, Picasso has burrowed, literally, underneath the surface of his “awful canvas,” and has brought the vertical *tableau* down so low as to be underground. Just as the illegibility of the *Minotaure* maquette refuses both the horizontality of reading and the verticality of the mimetic mirror/image, so does *Composition au gant* disrupt the horizontal and vertical shifts narrated by the *informe*. The work, and the others of this period, exceed the planar bounds of collage by operating within a third, non-planar field that can only be achieved in three dimensions. The turgid glove animating the composition is uncannily evocative of the arm of a corpse, reaching out from under the earth and into the space of the viewer. These works are sites of decomposition and decay that also transform familiar materials into the physical, material stuff of another, underground world.

Krauss has defined the “fetish” *Guitar* collages of 1926 as being in alignment with surrealism’s interest in “the revolutionary potential of collage as an assembly of real things” within which could be found “that otherwise invisible force, the marvelous.”⁹³ According to Krauss, the magical surreality of these works is affirmed by the writings of Pierre Cabanne, which state that in this period, Picasso plunged into an “unrecognizable reality” and “when pricked by his creative drive, was spurred by deep and unacknowledged instincts.”⁹⁴ However, the “unacknowledged” impulse and irrationality that Krauss identifies within Picasso’s flesh-like collages runs counter to the consciously negotiated plasticity we’ve identified in the artist’s strategic assemblages of found detritus and experiments with drawing and the multivalence of line. Indeed, Picasso’s “fetish” collages reappear in a 1926 sketchbook of Picasso’s, where their

⁹³ Krauss, “Life with Picasso,” 114.

⁹⁴ Pierre Cabanne, *Le Siècle de Picasso*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Denoël, 1975), 404. Quoted in Krauss, “Life with Picasso,” 115.

contours are rendered in simple line drawings not dissimilar in quality from the galloping minotaur collage/drawing of two years later (Fig. 36). The carefully articulated dimensional, material equivalence between drawing and found detritus we've identified within the 1933 *Minotaure* maquette was thus foreshadowed seven years prior. By situating the *Minotaure* maquette in relation to the seven preceding years of experimentation with the discarded leavings of everyday life, we arrive at a mode of image/object construction that enacts neither the purely destructive lowering of Bataille's *informe*, nor the poetic, incantatory "marvelous" of surrealist automatism. Between 1926 and 1933, propelled by the idiosyncrasies of found detritus, Picasso pursued a mode of art-making that was both a conscious process of formal, plastic creation that also approached its inverse—the negative operations of decay and disintegration. This is creation by way of excavation. Picasso himself attested to this simultaneously additive and subtractive model of production, when he said to Christian Zervos in 1935: "A picture used to be a sum of additions. In my case a picture is a sum of destructions. I do a picture—then I destroy it."⁹⁵

"Tectonic Hallucinations" in Print

The dynamism of opposing simultaneous processes of becoming and undoing, which Picasso's 1926 guitar collages, 1930 sand reliefs, and 1933 *Minotaure* maquette perform, also takes hold within the pages of the magazine's first issue. Here, the intermediary steps of Picasso's creative processes are on display, mediated through photography and print. The minotaur drawing on the magazine's cover reveals a preparatory step in producing the etchings reproduced in the magazine's frontispiece. In a similar mode, the drawn sculptural forms in "Une Anatomie" could be studies for the sculptures animating Brassai's photographs. Brassai's images in turn document the artist's studio, itself a space of change and transformation. As has been said

⁹⁵ Alfred H. Barr, ed., *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1939), 13.

in relation to these studio photographs, “The studio, laboratory of forms, becomes the theater of metamorphosis...”⁹⁶ Brassai’s photographs, many of which include Picasso’s sculptures in process, offer us an opportunity to envisage the material and formal transformations that must have taken place in the studios at Boisgeloup and Rue de Boetie. By offering us a series of images, constructions, and objects in simultaneous states of becoming and dilapidation, the mechanically reproduced mediums of photography and print within *Minotaure* are in service of the same meditations on materiality that the 1933 maquette itself performs. As Picasso is said to have stated to critic and publisher Christian Zervos around this time: “It would be very curious to fix photographically, not the stages of a painting, but its metamorphoses.”⁹⁷

Subsequent *Minotaure* covers by artists like Ernst or Henri Matisse, which feature printed reproductions of two-dimensional illustrations, do not allow for the same plays of light and dark, highlight and shadow, that Picasso’s photographed object offers. The work retains its peculiar tactility and three-dimensionality in its photographic form. The folds, channels, and tears within the piece of corrugated cardboard stand out in high relief. Light glints off of the surface of the metal tacks puncturing the maquette’s surface. Picasso was sensitive to the object’s eventual remediation as a photographic reproduction. According to Brassai, whose account of the maquette’s making suggests he may himself have photographed the object for the cover, “When this montage was to be reproduced, [Picasso] was very insistent that the thumbtacks appear on it.”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ “L’atelier, laboratoire de formes, devient le théâtre des metamorphoses.” See Ambre Gauthier, “Les Mille Visages du Minotaure 1933-1939,” in *Picasso, l’atelier du Minotaure*, 147.

⁹⁷ “Il serait très curieux de fixer photographiquement, non pas les étapes d’un tableau, mais ses métamorphoses.” Christian Zervos, “Conversation avec Picasso,” in *Picasso 1930-1935* (Paris: Editions Cahiers d’art, 1936), 173.

⁹⁸ Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso*, 9.

The circumstances surrounding Picasso's inaugural *Minotaure* cover suggest an attitude towards photography that complicates existing art historical readings of his relationship with the medium. Krauss has described Picasso's return to classical drawing in 1915 as a "reaction formation," a phobic response to the threat of photography and automated vision. Picasso's stylistic shift during the First World War thus functions, according to Krauss, as a repression of mechanized vision while also precipitating its subliminal enactment.⁹⁹ Picasso's "Ingresque" portraits of this period present a "hardening" of line that "now imbibes the robotic character of a mark made in the course of tracing, a line that is so slavishly indebted to the model lying below it that it has lost any connection to the draftsman's own distinctive hand."¹⁰⁰ The "depersonalized" line one finds in Picasso's *Portrait of Igor Stravinsky* (May 4, 1920) appears similar in style to the drawing at the center of the *Minotaure* maquette (Fig. 37). Yet in direct opposition to Krauss's claims of Picasso's disdain for, and denial of, art's automation, the *Minotaure* maquette presents us with the artist's readiness to accommodate technologies of mechanized vision.

The striking differences in color between the printed photograph of the maquette on *Minotaure*'s cover and the material object of the maquette itself are difficult to ignore. While the maquette now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art is rather subdued in tone, the magazine cover presents a rich field of vivid green, deep red, and stark white. These tones, likely registered on the photographic print through its initial emulsion process and subsequently remediated through the magazine's printing process, attest to the maquette's transformation from object to photographic print. Perhaps even more fittingly, the color differential between the

⁹⁹ Krauss, "Picasso/Pastiche," 154.

¹⁰⁰ Krauss, "Picasso/Pastiche," 142.

maquette in print form and Picasso's original object also alludes to the continuous process of fading and decay undergone by the maquette since its initial creation.

The vibrant immediacy communicated photographically by the *Minotaure* cover is compounded by the specificity of the industrially-produced materials constituting the work. Indeed, photography is not the only mechanized mode of reproduction contained within Picasso's *Minotaure* cover. The selection of machine-made foil, cardboard, and synthetic leaves attests to the historical temporality of the work's construction under the capitalist conditions of industrial production.¹⁰¹ The disposable paper doily at the center of the maquette, for example, is an inexpensive, industrially-produced piece of decorative material. However, its pattern of perforations, the rhythmic variation between positive and negative space, also alludes to the mechanics of the medium of photography itself. We are reminded of Henry Fox Talbot's early photogram experiment of 1845, in which he affixed a piece of lace to light-sensitized paper and produced the fabric's exact negative image (Fig. 38). The negative image of Talbot's lace operates the same way a photographic negative might, as an intermediary stage in which light and dark are reversed. As Douglas Crimp has said of lace's photographic material associations: "In its double nature as presence and absence, black and white, lace is already resolved into photographic language."¹⁰² As it translates Picasso's maquette into a photograph, which is remediated again in the form of the mass-produced color print, Picasso's *Minotaure* cover inhabits an intermedial zone between three-dimensional object and two-dimensional image. Picasso's attention to how the work would exist photographically—the fact that the artist

¹⁰¹ For a valuable Marxist social art historical reading of the uses of "exotically low-brow goods and protocols within the preserve of high art" in the context of cubist collage, see Thomas E. Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," in *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 26-28, 32-33.

¹⁰² Douglas Crimp, "Positive/Negative: A Note on Degas's Photographs," *October* 5 (Summer 1978): 100.

produced this object *to be photographed*—reveals his 1933 *Minotaure* cover to be an exploration of both the possibilities and limitations of photography and print in rendering the non-planar materiality of his sculptural maquette. Far from a phobic relation to photography, yet not quite a wholesale embrace of the medium, the maquette in its print form resumes Picasso’s material investigation of a hyper- or *sur*-reality.

Let us now return to Picasso’s storied dismissal of mainstream surrealism’s attachment to a term and concept that he himself claimed to invent. It is worth repeating his words, stated to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler in 1933, here: “They didn’t understand what I meant by ‘surrealism’ when I coined the term, which Apollinaire then used in print: something more real than reality.”¹⁰³ I contend that Picasso’s *Minotaure* maquette performs the “*sur-réalisme*” that Picasso described, and that “something more real than reality” was also at work in his related material experiments of the preceding decade. It is surprising that Breton, likely one of the targets of Picasso’s criticism, invoked this very notion when he composed the essay “Picasso in His Element.” Commenting on the ephemerality of Picasso’s fading and disintegrating *papiers collés*, Breton has written: “It is as though...his aim had been to coax forth, to bring to terms in advance all that is precious, because ultra-real, in the process of their gradual dilapidation.”¹⁰⁴ Breton is ultimately (though perhaps unintentionally) the one to suggest that the “*sur-*” or “ultra-real” for Picasso has little to do with established surrealist doctrine, and everything to do with orchestrated and synchronized processes of creation and “dilapidation.”

The *Minotaure* maquette, a culminating example of a little-discussed interval within Picasso’s production, engages with found material and the strategies of collage in a mode that

¹⁰³ Baldassari, “The *sur*-realist Picasso,” 35.

¹⁰⁴ Breton, “Picasso in his Element,” 109.

exceeds the linguistic operations of Picasso's *papiers collés*, remains distinct from the poetic automatism of Bretonian surrealism, and resists plunging entirely into the bestial realms of the Bataillean *informe*. Rather than a rejection of, or ambivalence toward, mainstream or dissident surrealism, Picasso's material explorations of the late 1920s and 1930s perform a careful negotiation of their principles. In 1930, the dissident surrealist writer Carl Einstein, in a kind of defection from Bataille's base materialism, wrote that Picasso's images oscillate between "the pole of unconscious vision and the pole of conscious construction."¹⁰⁵ Picasso's simultaneously willed and phantasmal mode of creation is, in the words of Einstein, "tectonic hallucination." As a philosophy of image-making, Picasso's *sur-réalisme* contains this same operational contradiction. The elevated positionality that *sur* (meaning on or above) connotes runs counter to the earthly processes of excavation and decay at the core of Picasso's 1930s project. His "tectonic hallucinations" of this period—objects that are consciously constructed yet defy language and mimeticism—test the possibilities and limitations of a surrealist aesthetics. The *sur-réal* thus takes shape as a mode of materiality that maneuvers between additive creation and subtractive decay, willed construction and delirious juxtaposition. Picasso's *sur-réalisme* is active in its irresolution and productive in its unmitigated material difference and decay.

¹⁰⁵ Carl Einstein, "Picasso," *Documents* 3 (1930): 157. Quoted and translated in Zeidler, "The Double Style," 167. For a sustained and detailed study of German writer and critic Carl Einstein's contributions to the history of modern art, surrealism, and the work of Picasso in particular, see Zeidler's book, *Form as Revolt: Carl Einstein and the Ground of Modern Art*.

Figures

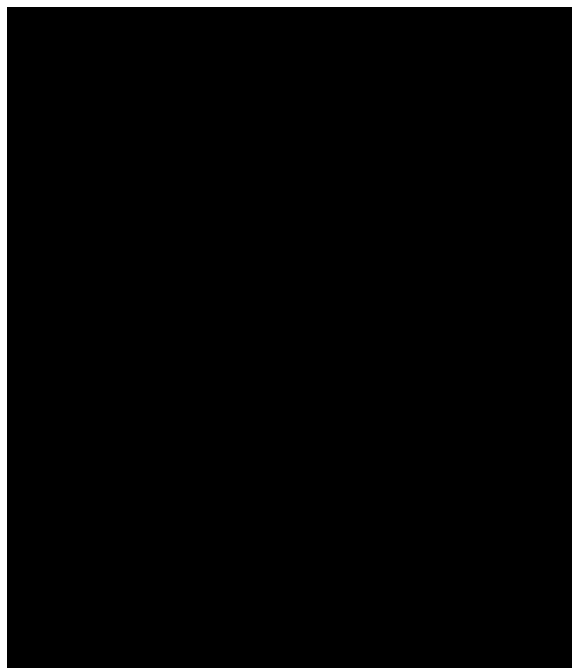


Figure 1. Pablo Picasso, *Maquette for the cover of the journal Minotaure*, 1933

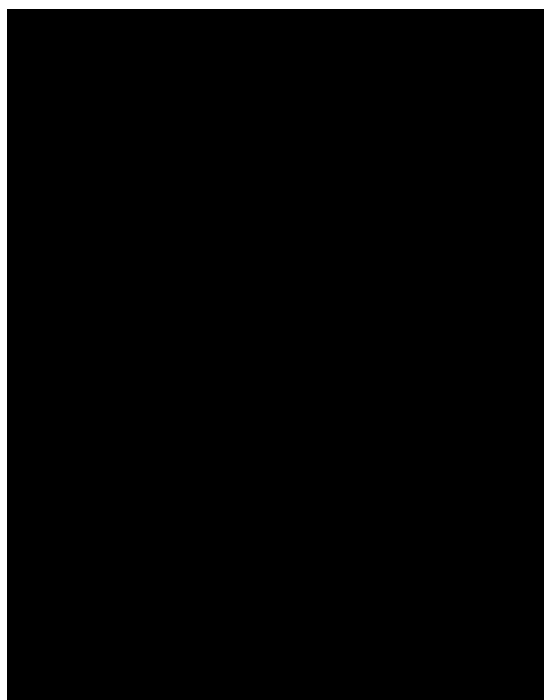


Figure 2. *Minotaure* no. 1, June 1933

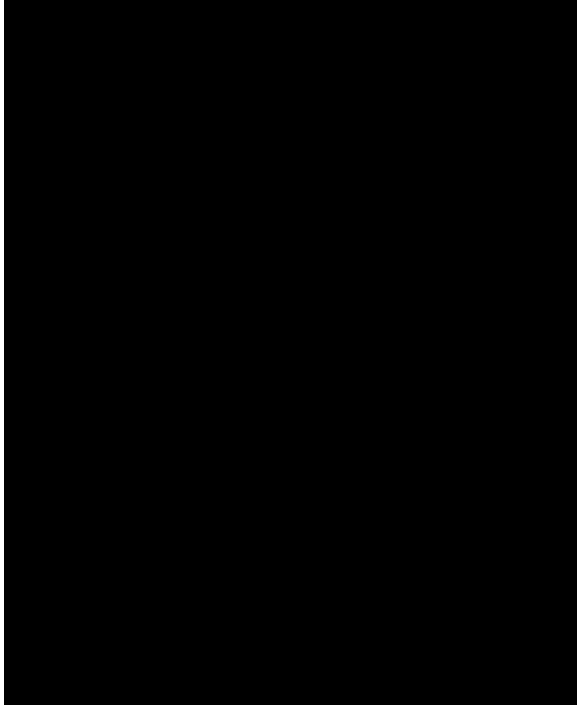


Figure 3. Max Ernst, *Minotaure* no. 11, 1938

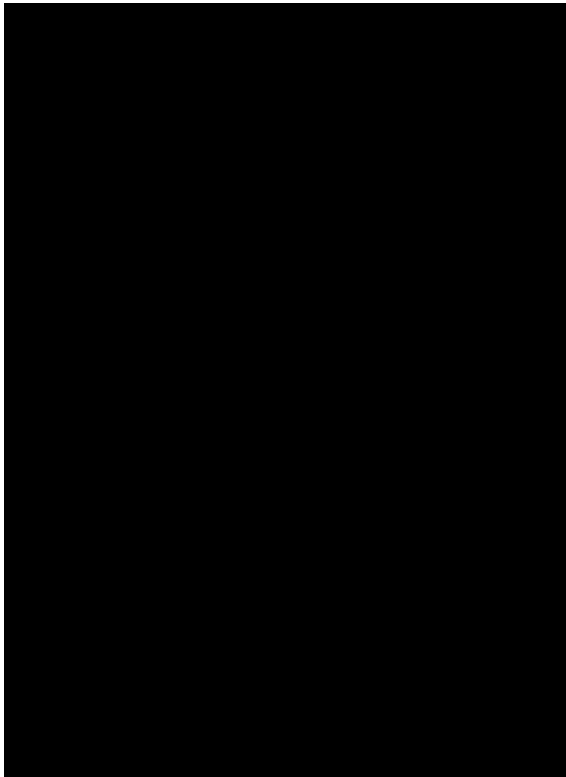


Figure 4. Joan Miró, *Minotaure* no. 7, June 10, 1935

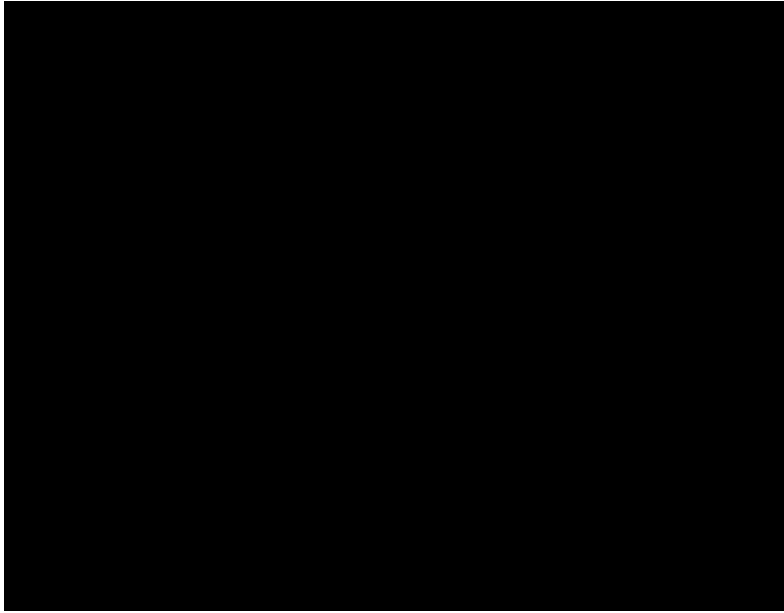


Figure 5. *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912

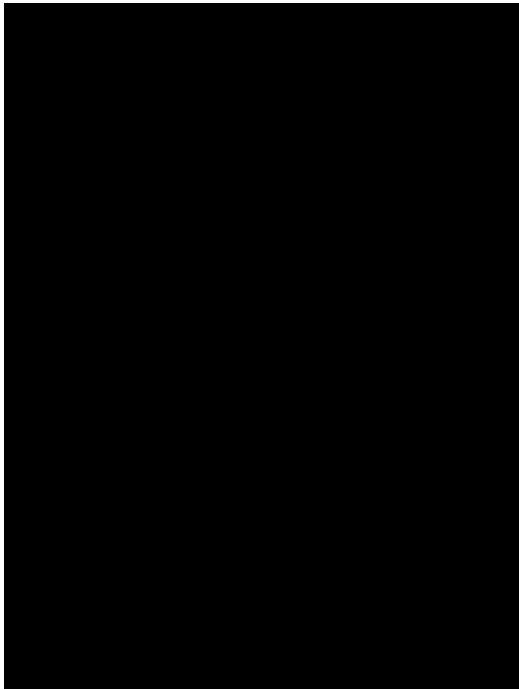


Figure 6. *Violin*, 1912

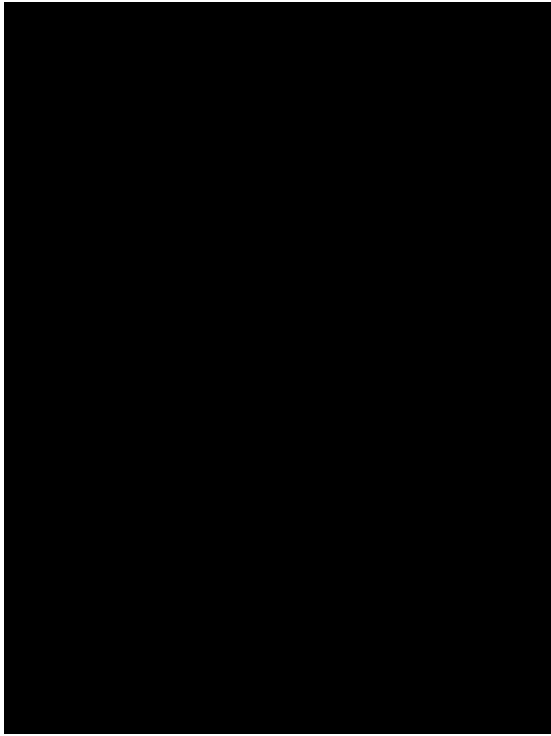


Figure 7. *Guitar*, October-December, 1912

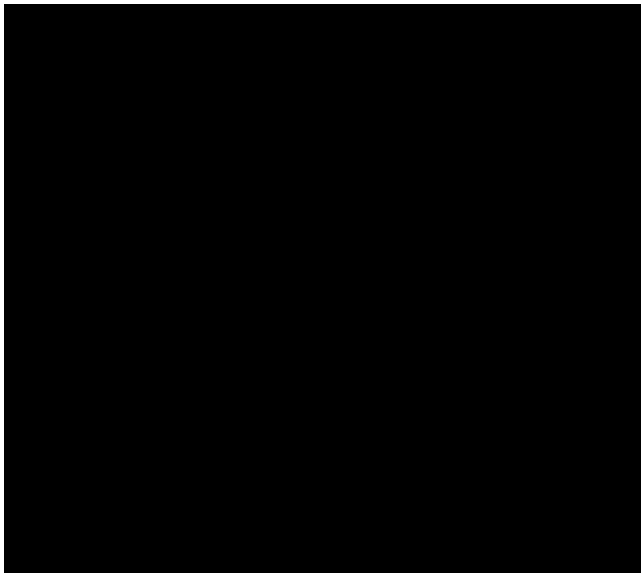


Figure 8. *Maquette for the cover of the journal Minotaure*, 1933 (detail)



Figure 9. *Pipe and Sheet Music*, spring 1914



Figure 10. *Bottle of Anís del Mono, Wine Glass and Playing Card*, 1915

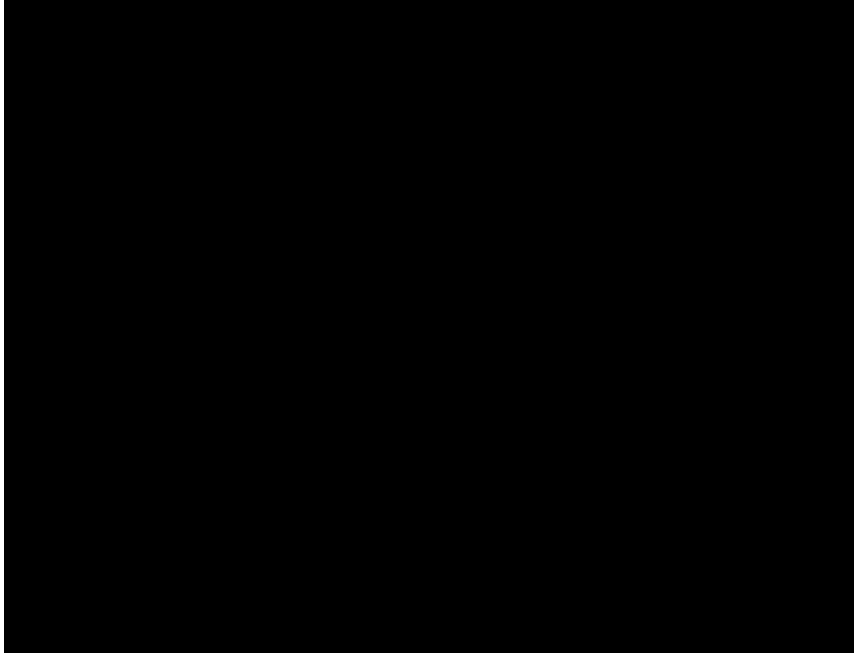


Figure 11. *Glass and Bottle of Bass*, spring 1914

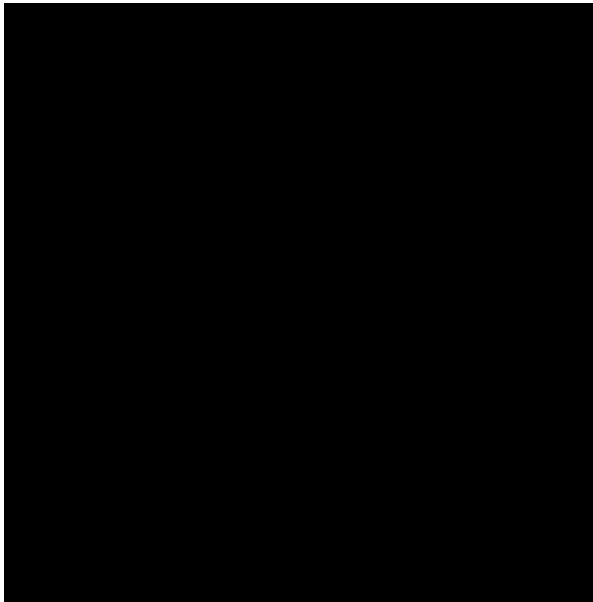


Figure 12. *Maquette for the cover of the journal Minotaure*, 1933 (detail)

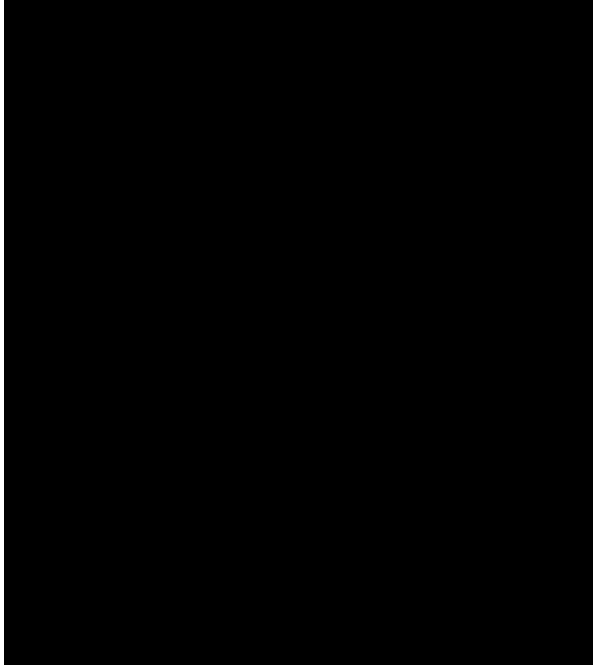


Figure 13. *Maquette for the cover of the journal Minotaure*, 1933 (detail)

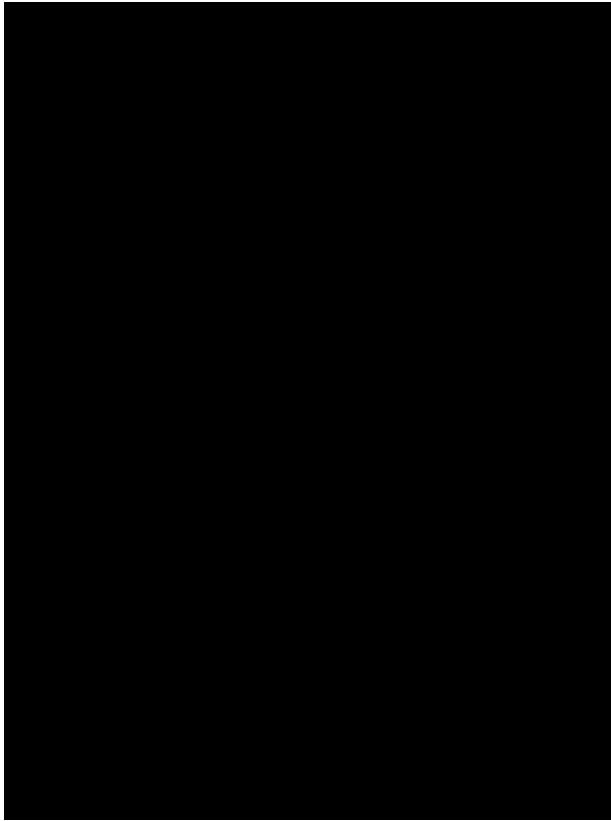


Figure 14. Max Ernst, *Rêves et hallucinations*, 1926

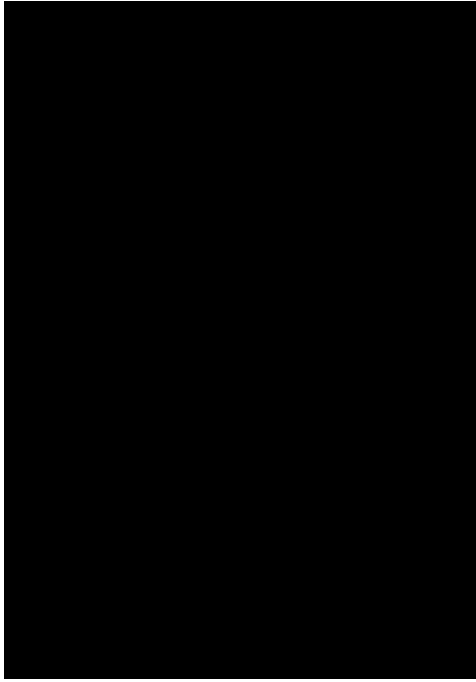


Figure 15. *Untitled*, 1930-32. Photograph by Brassai, 1932

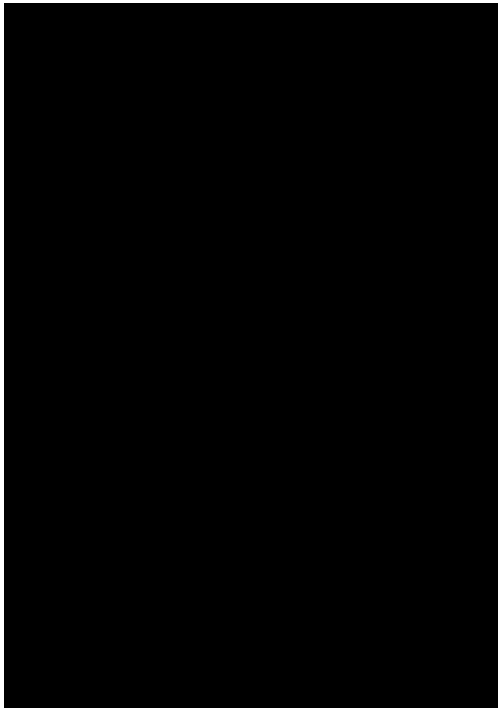


Figure 16. *Woman*, 1930-32. Photograph by Brassai, 1932

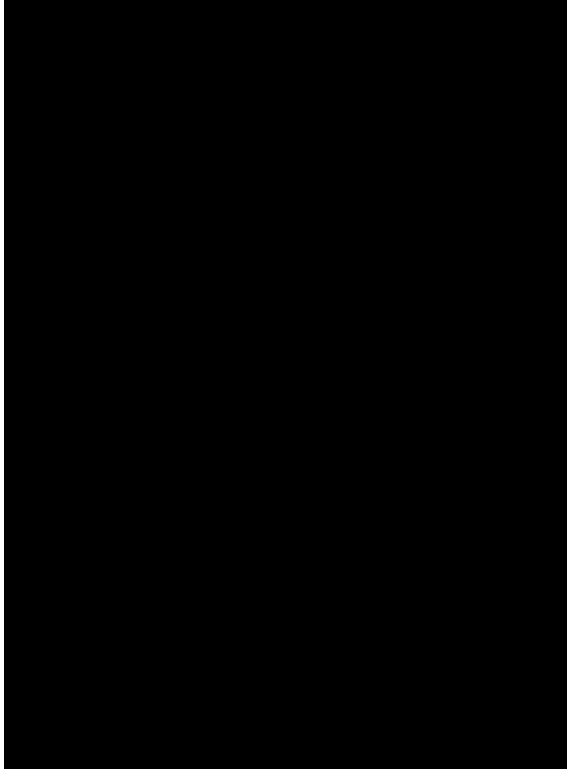


Figure 17. André Breton, "Picasso dans son élément," in *Minotaure* no. 1, June 1933

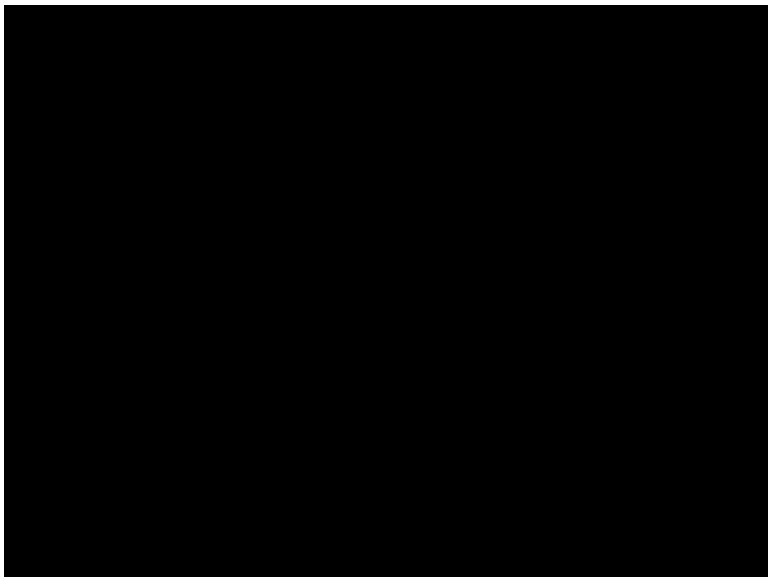


Figure 18. *Composition with Butterfly*, September 15, 1932



Figure 19. Photograph by Brassai. Published in “Picasso in His Element,” in *Minotaure* no. 1, June 1933

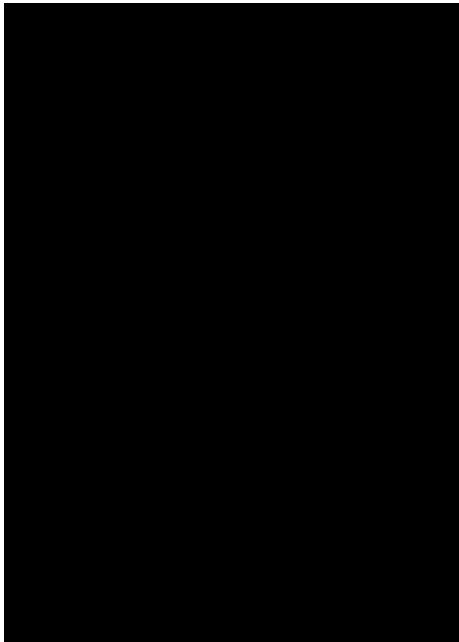


Figure 20. Photograph by Brassai. Published in “Picasso in His Element,” in *Minotaure* no. 1, June 1933

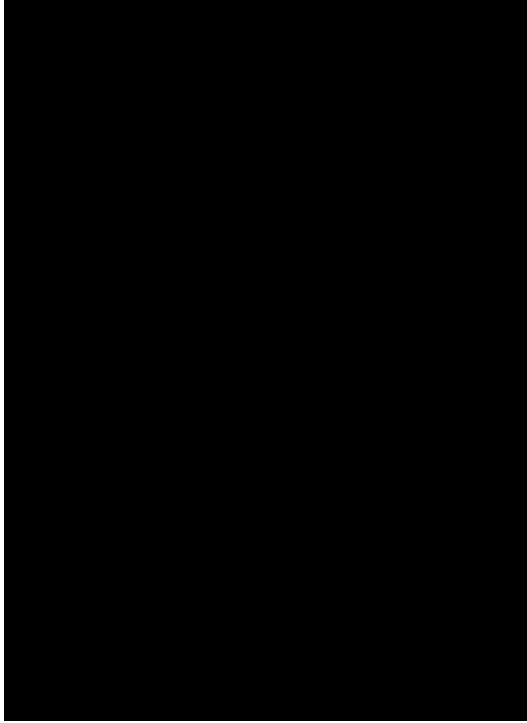


Figure 21. *Une Anatomie*, in *Minotaure* no. 1, June 1933

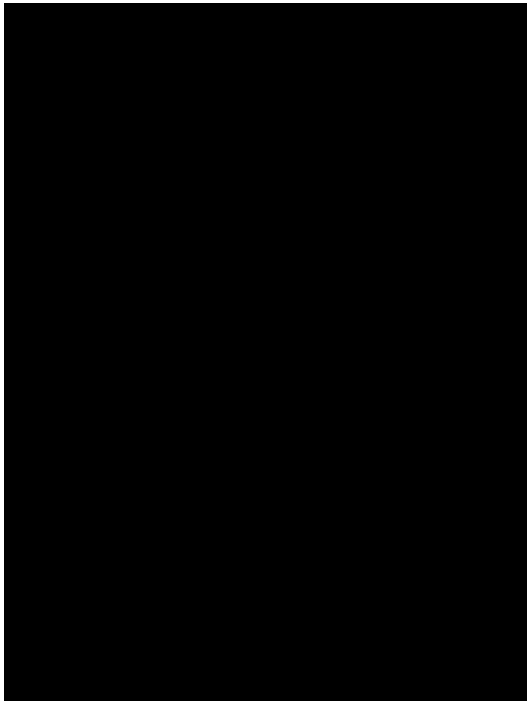


Figure 22. *Marie-Thérèse Considering Her Sculpted Surrealist Effigy*, 1933, from the *Vollard Suite*, published 1939



Figure 23. Frontispiece, *Minotaure* no. 1, June 1933



Figure 24. André Masson, *Automatic Drawing*, 1924



Figure 25. Carnet no. 37, Design for a sculpture, March 20-May 8, 1928

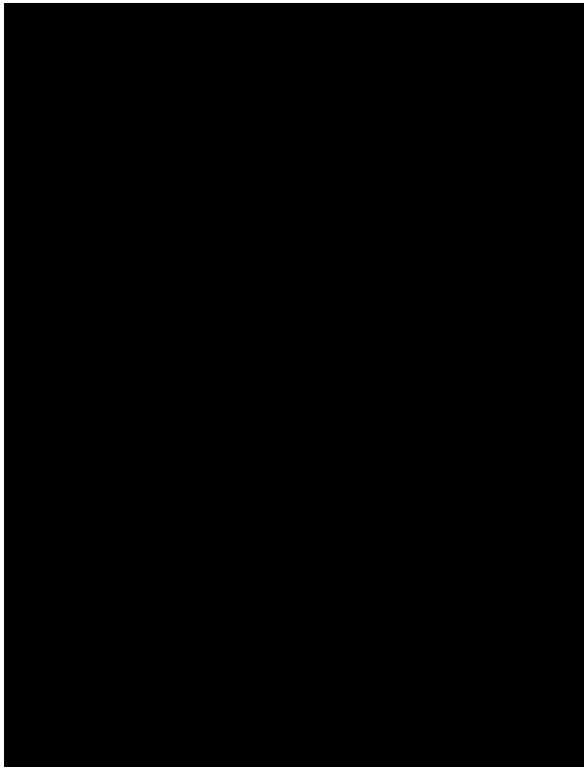


Figure 26. *Figure*, October 1928

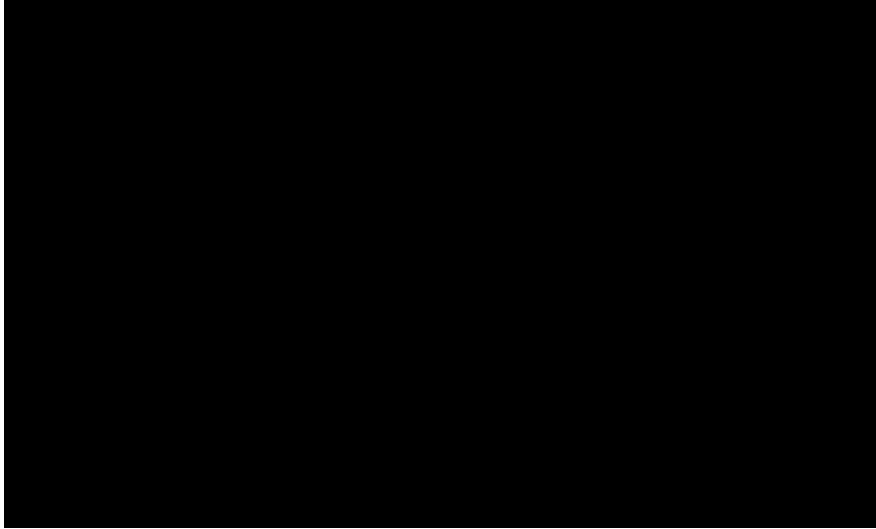


Figure 27. *Minotaur*, 1928

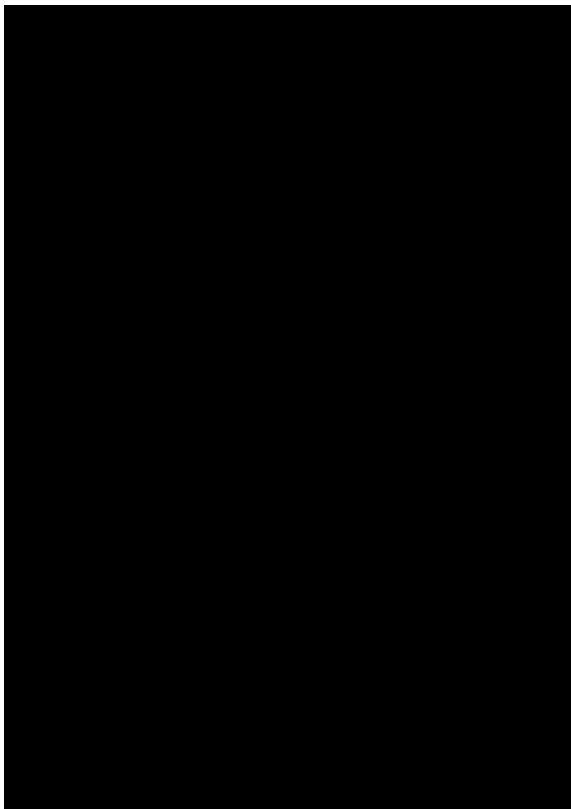


Figure 28. *Violin*, 1913

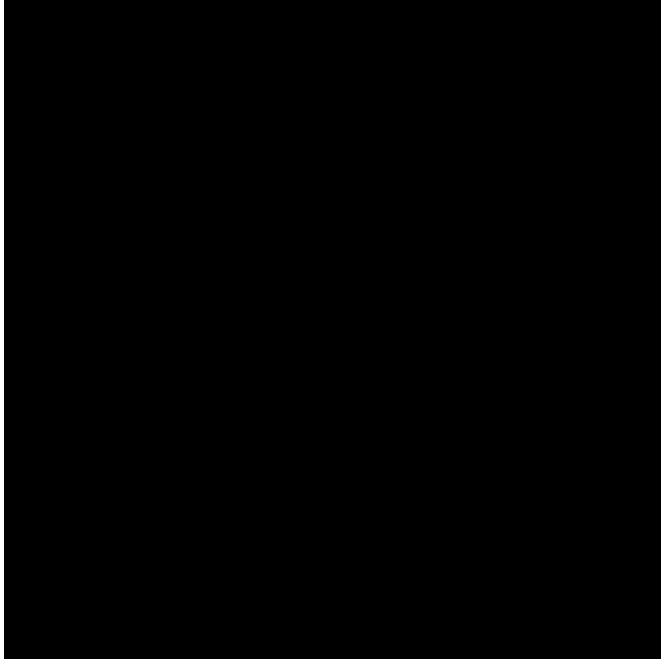


Figure 29. *Verre sur un table*, 1914

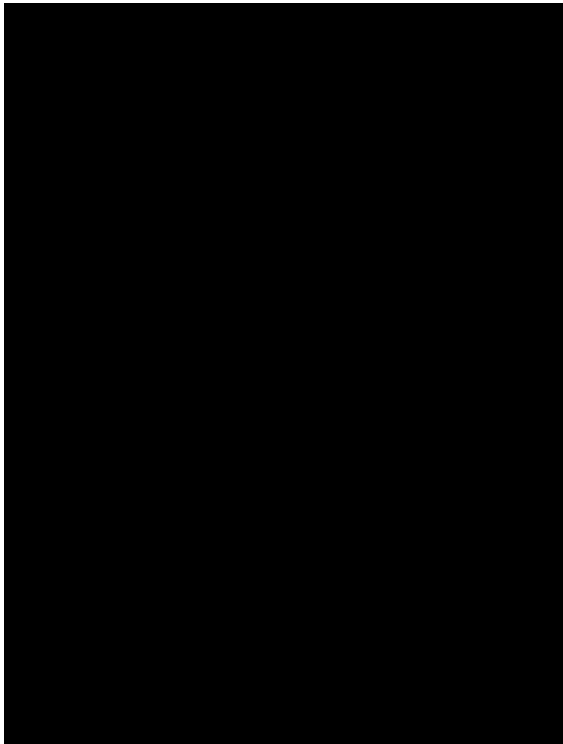


Figure 30. *Guitar*, 1926

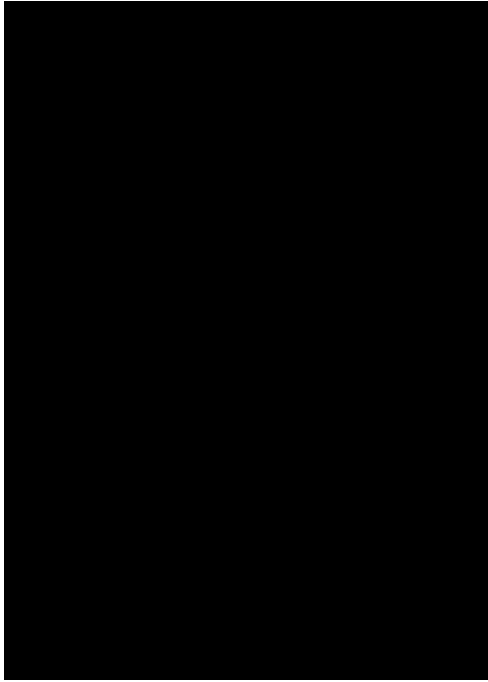


Figure 31. *Guitar*, 1926

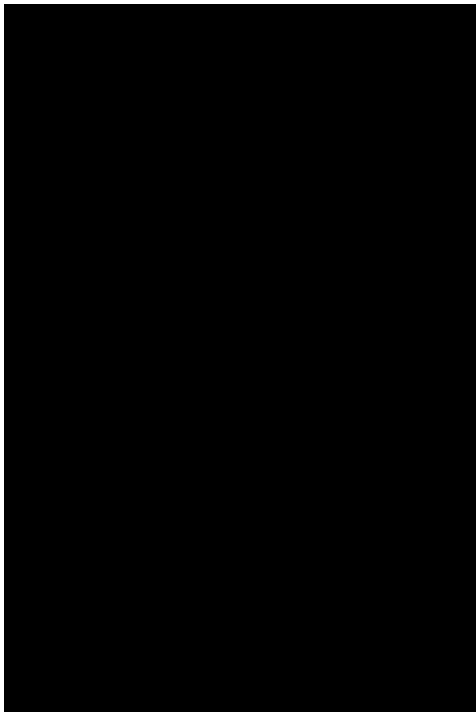


Figure 32. *Guitar*, 1926



Figure 33. *Guitar*, Paris, May 1926

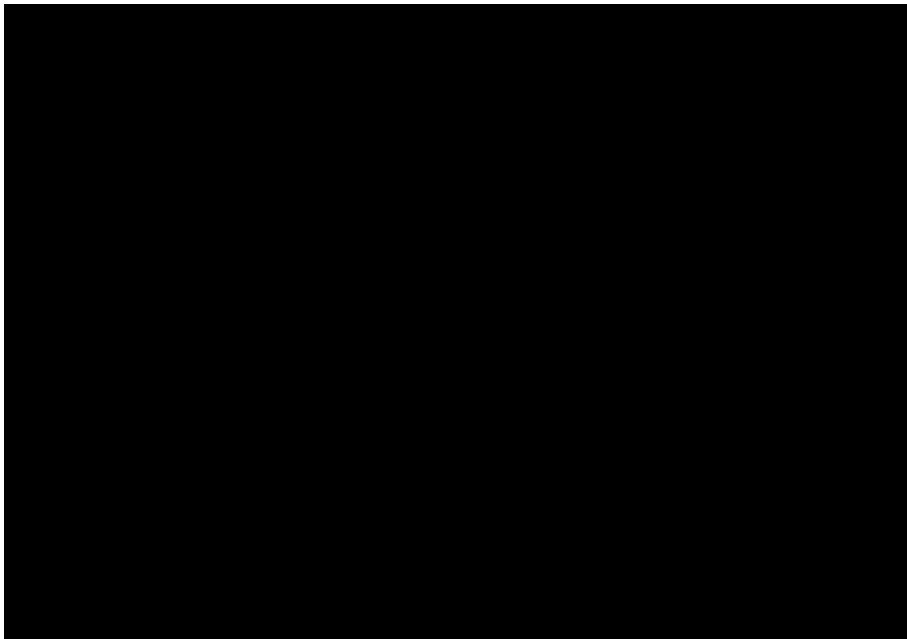


Figure 34. *Baigneuse couchée*, 1930

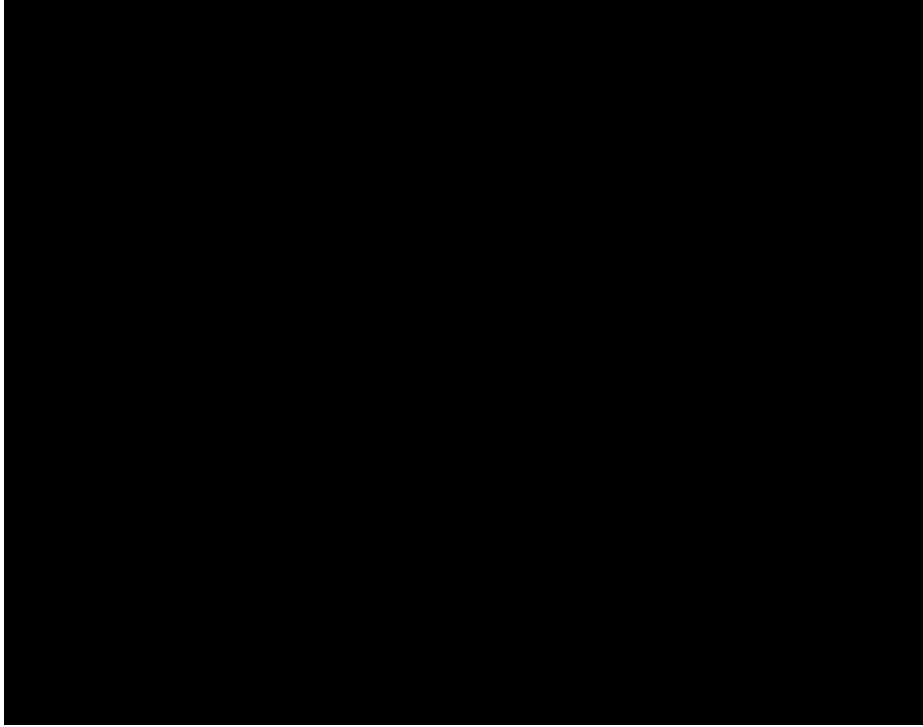


Figure 35. *Composition au gant*, 1930

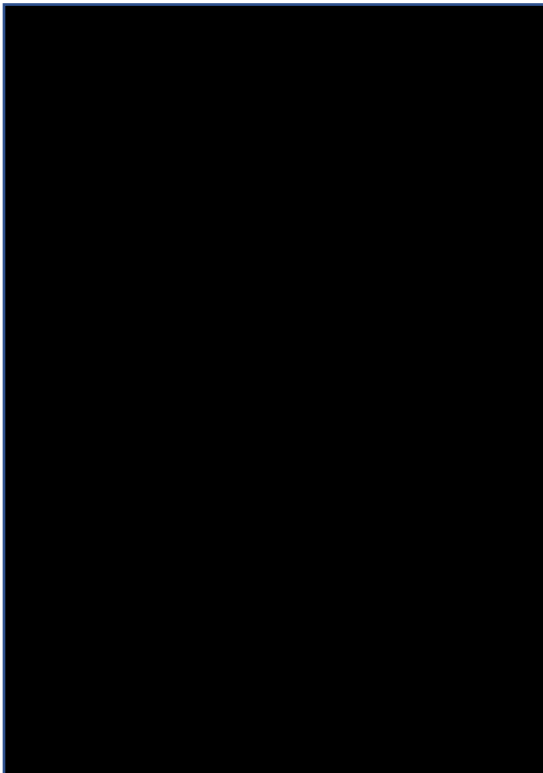


Figure 36. Sketchbook no. 92, 1926

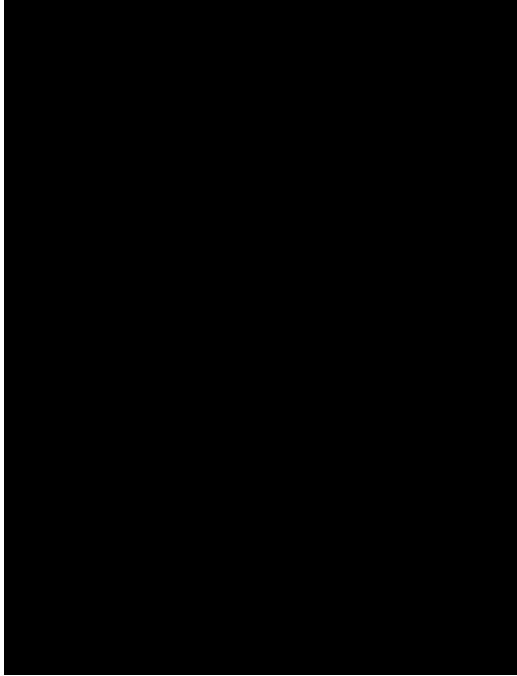


Figure 37. *Portrait of Igor Stravinsky*, May 4, 1920

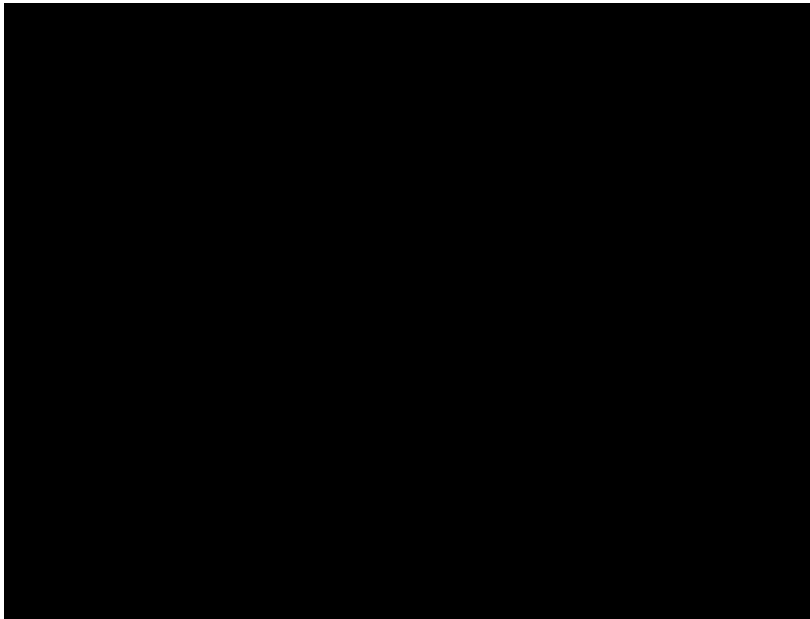


Figure 38. William Henry Fox Talbot, *Lace*, 1845

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