

The Form-Giver

**What does Picasso mean today?
Anticipating the landmark exhibition of his sculptures
opening at MoMA this month, nine artists reveal
the master's impact on their work, thoughts,
memories and dreams.**

A Picasso Symposium

PARTICIPANTS:

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Adrián Villar Rojas

A visual reponse to Picasso:

A drawing from Adrián Villar Rojas's series "Return the World," 2012, graphite, colored pencil and watercolor on paper, 11½ by 8¼ inches. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York and Paris, and kurimanzutto, Mexico City.



Opposite, Picasso: *Glass of Absinthe*, 1914, painted bronze and absinthe spoon, 8½ by 6½ by 3¾ inches. Museum of Modern Art.

30 years. Granny had lots of art books. One of her favorites was of Picasso's drawings and prints. Her excitement was palpable every time we leafed through those plates. I would look in wonder as she talked about his *line*.

Maybe more impactful than the art I saw with Granny was the art I made with her. Every summer my brother and I would spend a few weeks with her. For days on end, we did craft projects together. We made tissue-paper flowers, their colors achingly bright, and then made decoupage bottles with newspaper and magazine clippings to put the flowers in. We made string art with embroidery floss, scraps of wood and nails. We slathered tempera paint on cardboard and cut and fitted the pieces together with slats and tape to make animals and trees, cubist figures and heads. I don't think we ever made instruments, but later in art school when I saw slides of Picasso's cardboard guitar, I understood in a tactile way how it was constructed. I felt like *I made that thing*. I now wonder what it will feel like to see it again, not in a slide or a book but this time in real life. I wish my Granny Kate were here to come with me. ○

Sarah Braman

I haven't seen a lot of Picasso's sculptures in person. The ones that knock me over, even in photos, are planar. Flat sheets of cardboard, metal and wood, and later massive slabs of concrete, come together to create volumes. Cubism invited air in to be part of the sculpture in a new way.

My first experience with Picasso was through my Granny. Kathleen Butler was born along with Cubism in the early 1900s. She was a schoolteacher, a stay-at-home mother and a hobby painter. Granny was old-fashioned about some things, but she was enthralled with modernism. She took me to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Conn., and occasionally we would venture down to New York to visit the Met and see Picassos and Matisse's at MoMA. We bought stacks of postcards at the museum shops, and once or twice she chose a poster to have mounted and framed. She gave my mother Picasso's *Blue Nude* for her birthday, and it hung in our bathroom in Ashfield, Mass., for

Sarah Braman: *Let's Stay Desperate*, 2006, cardboard, wood, plexiglass, mirror and paint, 66 by 48 by 52 inches. Courtesy Canada, New York.

