



Press conference- Presentation of the *Science and Charity* restoration project  
04/12/2017 Museu Picasso, Barcelona. Fotografia: Paul Mac Manus © Succession Pablo Picasso, VEGAP, Madrid 2017

# PRESENTATION OF THE *SCIENCE AND CHARITY* RESTORATION PROJECT



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## CREDITS

Director

**Emmanuel Guigon**

Head of the Department of Restoration and Preventative Conservation

**Reyes Jiménez**

Restoration and Prevention Conservation Team

**Sònia Berrocal** and

**Anna Vélez**

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**With the collaboration of the team of the Museu Picasso: Margarida Cortadella** (Library), **Sílvia Domènech** (Knowledge and Research Centre), **Anna Fàbregas** and **Anna Anglès** (Registry), **Clara Fort** and **Raquel Revuelta** (Archive and Digital Image), **Yolanda Granel** (Maintenance), **Malén Gual** (Curator of Painting and Drawing), **Anna Guarro** and **Mireia Llorella** (Digital Content), **Deirdre Haughey** (Visitor Management) and **Assun Pinillos** (General Manager).

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## PUBLICATION

Title: ***Science and Charity Revealed***

Authors: **Reyes Jiménez** and **Malén Gual**

Year: 2010

Pages: 160

Languages: Catalan and Spanish

Publisher: Museu Picasso, *Focus* collection

ISBN: Catalan, 978-84-9850-227-0; Spanish, 978-84-9850-278-7

Legal Deposit: B-4356-2010

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## PROJECTED CALENDAR

### JULY 2017

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
*						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

\* Scientific documentation for multispectral images and chemical studies.

### NOVEMBER 2017

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
*						
27	28	29	30			

\* Beginning of restoration work and removal of painting from frame.

### DECEMBER 2018

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
*						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

\* Cleaning phase.

### JANUARY 2018

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
*						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

\* Fixation process in the studio.



### FEBRUARY 2018

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 *	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

\* Fixation process in the studio.

\* Return of the painting to exhibition space and colour retouching.

### MARCH 2018

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

\* Color retouching.

### APRIL 2018

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

\* Colour retouching.

### MAY 2018

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 *	29	30	31			

\* Termination of the restoration.



## PRESENTATION OF THE WORK: *SCIENCE AND CHARITY*

In early 1897 Picasso began work on *Science and Charity*, with the goal of acquiring a greater presence in the Spanish national art press. The Museu Picasso has begun the restoration process of this emblematic work, a large canvas that this year celebrates its 120th anniversary. Painted in the style of social realism, which was highly popular in the late 19th century, the work is the culminating piece of his youth. The oil on canvas was presented to the General Exhibition of Fine Arts held in Madrid that same year, where it was awarded one of the 125 honorary mentions.

The motif was a carefully meditated and calculated choice on the part of Picasso's father. Not given to taking risks, José Ruiz analysed the jury's preferences when it came to deciding on awards, and chose a subject that would connect modern medicine, personified in the doctor, and care for the needy, symbolised by the nun. Following his father's advice, Picasso embarked on a painting with thematic and compositional similitudes to other paintings dedicated to medical subject matter, as done by painters who were successful in official exhibitions. Besides choosing the subject matter, José Ruiz was the model for the main figure. So that his son could work in optimal conditions, he found him a studio on Carrer de la Plata, half-way between the family home on Carrer de la Mercè and the Llotja art school.

In painting this ambitious canvas, Picasso kept strictly within the precepts and strictly-defined techniques of academic painting in his search of greater realism, although the authenticity of what was depicted would end up being questioned due to the artificial character of the setting and the figures' forced poses.

In a series of small-scale sketches—the museum has six of the eight known to us in its collection—we can see the compositional variations and difficulties faced by the young artist, who in applying the oil directly onto the canvas without preparatory drawing had to adjust the positioning and gestures of the figures as he went, in his efforts to acquire the desired effect. Despite this, the doctor's face, done directly without previous preparation, demonstrates his advanced technical level and psychological perceptiveness, previously acquired and perfected through the many portraits he had done of his father.

Despite its effectivity, in this work there are several determining details that set it apart from the pulchritude of the social realist movement. The brown drips marking the wall beneath the shutters are highly eloquent; evoking as they do the poverty of the scene, they distance it from more fictionalized types of decoration. Likewise, the baroque frame that substitutes the crucifix seen in the first sketches, which is also seen in the work *The Choirboy* (Museu de Montserrat, Barcelona), contrasts sharply with the room's overall austerity.



## PRESENTATION OF THE RESTORATION PROJECT

### Historical Precedents

In 1970 Pablo Picasso donated *Science and Charity* to the Museu Picasso. It is a work from the artist's learning period, and was painted in a studio on the top floor of a building on Carrer de la Plata, a space that had been expressly rented by his father for the purpose; the building now houses a hotel. The work was presented to the exhibition of 1897 in Madrid, and after being shown remained in the house of his uncle Salvador Ruiz in Malaga until 1918. When his uncle died his widow returned the painting to Barcelona, where it was kept in the family home on Passeig de Gràcia.

The image shown here features the painting in its final location at the family home in Barcelona, before becoming part of the museum collection. It has been nailed directly to the wall, with the canvas surrounded by an outer border, as if it were a damask.

### First restoration, 1970

The first restoration of the painting was done in the year of the donation, in 1970. The painting was in a delicate state of conservation, as demonstrated by period photographs and various testimonies from the time. Work on it was done under pressure, as the idea was to show it at the opening of the museum enlargement. The restoration done at the time was detailed, with full treatment of the support and the pictorial layer, using the criteria and materials available at the time. After half a century, some of the materials applied in this restoration have aged. The pigments applied in the colour retouching and the varnishes have altered and modified the painting's appearance.

### First scientific-technical study, 2008–2010

In 2008, the first scientific–technical study of the painting *Science and Charity* was carried out. The goal of the study was to learn more about Pablo Picasso's painting technique and properly evaluate the painting's state of conservation. The study was done with the scientific support of Patrimoni UB (the heritage organization of the University of Barcelona) with the collaboration of the MNAC. The study was able to determine what the various pigments Pablo Picasso used were, identified *pentimenti* or modifications in the composition, and was able to more effectively explore the artist's creative processes, revealing some of the difficulties he came across in doing the work. While the painting has been dated from March 1897, the technical reports demonstrated that it had been worked on earlier, and that most probably it had been started in late 1896. The result of this study was shown in the exhibition *Science and Charity Revealed*, inaugurated at the Museu Picasso on 29 November 2010. The exhibition was open to the public until 20 February 2011 in galleries 3 and 4 of the collection space



## Second scientific–technical study, 2017

The Museu Picasso has no interest in altering the work's overall appearance. The goal is to ensure its physical stability, as it has become unstable. The documentation derived from this study will give the Museu Picasso the advanced tools the Department of Restoration and Preventative Conservation needs to pursue its daily research tasks.

### [Documentation by means of multispectral images: obtaining the gigaphoto or gigapixel](#)

An external expert visited the museum in July 2017 to take images of the painting using robotic automation. Using a digital format, high resolution multi-images were obtained using a computerised system with various light sources, including ultraviolet, infrared and x-rays. Each of the images has a resolution of 1.7 gigapixels and is made up of 130 photos of 21 megapixels. The result of this photographic study gives the museum a thorough set of documentation of the current state of the work's conservation. Furthermore, this documentation makes all studies of the painting more viable.

From now on, the Museu Picasso will have an application available to allow for high-resolution images of the pictorial surface to be visualized on screen, allowing for comparisons with various light sources (ultraviolet, infrared, x-rays). This will result in definitive documentation for identifying non-visible retouching, emerging cracks and the technique the colour was applied with. When this intervention is finished, the gigaphoto will be taken again using the same procedure, to obtain a visual record of the restoration process.

### [Scientific-technical documentation](#)

To carry out this study the museum relied on the scientific-technical support of a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from the ProMeSA<sup>1</sup> project, which the Museu Picasso participates in. Featured were several physical-chemical studies where the experts were able to define the procedure Picasso used, along with the materials he employed.

Furthermore, in this second phase the study focused on the small supporting sketches to explore the thesis presented in 2010, which suggested that they were pictorial records Pablo Picasso kept of his working method, rather than preparatory pieces.



1. Study of the mechanical and dimensional properties of commercially manufactured paint films and their influence in the physical and chemical degradation of modern and contemporary paintings (2017–2019). Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad (MICINN). Programa Estatal de Fomento de la Investigación Científica y Técnica de Excelencia.





These small sketches are highly important for understanding the outcome of the work and its complex result. They are not simply preparatory pieces, but are evidence of his creative process and the various stages the work went through, as confirmed by the Head of Restoration at the Museu Picasso, Reyes Jiménez.

Meanwhile, the sketches allow for technical correspondences with other related paintings, especially as various portraits of his father and the series of small drawn studies for the anatomy of a hand.



## Phases of the Restoration Project

### 1. Preliminary Studies

The analytic phase for the restoration of *Science and Charity* began by drawing from the conclusions of the first scientific–technical study, done in 2010. It should be kept in mind, as has already been stated, that *Science and Charity* was restored fifty years ago using the criteria, material and circumstances of that time. On this occasion, images from the photographic archive of 1970 (when the work became part of the museum collection) were consulted, with the aim of establishing the basis for comparative analysis and evaluating any changes having taken place over the period.

It has been possible to confirm the ageing of applied materials, which has caused alterations to the pigments used in colour retouching and to the varnish, making it difficult to view the work correctly. Already in the 2010 study, adhesive remains were detected on the pictorial surface, which were not correctly removed during the 1970 restoration. Over time, these remains have crystallized and the resultant shrinking of the adhesive layer on the surface has caused stretching and the pictorial layer to be lifted, a factor of great concern.

### 2. High-resolution Image-taking with the Mechanical Robotic System

In the summer of 2017 a new study was begun with the support of various technicians. A high-resolution image was taken using a mechanical robotic system that moves along Cartesian lines and keeps the camera at a constant distance from the work. This made it possible to take images with different light sources: visible light; lateral visible light; ultraviolet light; infrared light, and x-rays. The cameras used were the following: a Canon EOS 5D Mark II (21.1 MP) with 48-bit resolution, for the photographs with visible incident light and lateral light; and a Fujifilm IS PRO (12.9 MP) with 24-bit resolution, with a spectral range of 380–1000 nm, for infrared digital photography.



### **3. Documentation Processing**

Finally, with the various images taken a mosaic was created to constitute the final gigapixel image. A pyramidal software viewer allows the museum's restoration team to visualise the surface of the work and navigate over it, adjusting the zoom. This makes it possible to precisely compare the images obtained by means of various study techniques. The resultant high resolution facilitates improved vision and examination of the work's surfaces and their internal layers, further enabling subsequent technical studies.

### **4. Preparation of the Working Space**

The museum's goal is to minimise the impact that could be caused by taking the painting out of the visit to the permanent collection. Instead, visitors will participate in the restoration process by connecting with the life of the museum as an institution. An attempt will be made to do most of the restoration work in the gallery where the painting is habitually found. The work will only be removed to ensure the fixation of the pictorial layer, since it will be necessary to use tools and machinery that cannot be moved, as well as when working on the painting in a flat position.

The painting has been removed from its frame and has been placed on a large format easel to make it easier to move it.

### **5. Cleaning Phase**

During December, the technicians of the Department of Restoration and Preventative Conservation of the Museu Picasso will work on the cleaning phase of the painting. This process can be viewed as it takes place in situ. The stretcher frame and the reverse side of the painting will also be cleaned.



## **6. Physical Studies**

In January 2018, once the cleaning phase has been finished, the work will be moved to the restoration studio where the process of fixation will take place, and a new infrared reflectography study will be done.

## **7. Colour Retouching**

Once the process of fixation has taken place, in mid-February the painting will return to the gallery, where the colour retouching will continue. The restoration is expected to be finished by the end of May, when the painting will be formally on display again at the Museu Picasso.

## **8. Parallel Studies to the Restoration**

At the same time the restoration is taking place, material studies of the painting *Science and Charity*, as well as small preparatory sketches for it, will be carried out. This will make it possible to learn more about Picasso's painting technique during his educational phase.

## **9. Publication of the study**

All scientific and technical documentation related to this study will be brought together in a publication.



## EXHIBITION AT THE MUSÉE PICASSO PARIS

In the autumn of 2018 the work will travel to the Musée Picasso Paris to be exhibited in the show entitled *Chefs-d'oeuvre* [Masterworks]. The exhibition will feature various masterworks by Pablo Picasso, and will explain Picasso's place in the history of art and society. The Museu Picasso of Barcelona is responsible for the section dedicated to *Science and Charity*. The show will be open to the public from 4 September 2018 to 13 January 2019.

Together with *Science and Charity*, six preparatory studies will be shown, along with the portrait of his father, *Father of the Artist*, the x-ray image of *Science and Charity* and the results and full documentation of the scientific-technical studies of the restoration process.

## EXHIBITION CREDITS

### **Project Director and Head of the Paris Presentation**

Reyes Jiménez (Head of Restoration and Preventative Conservation, Museu Picasso)

### **Technical Coordinator**

Émilie Bouvard

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