IRON DIALOGUE: THE ARTISTIC COLLABORATION OF PABLO PICASSO AND JULIO GONZÁLEZ

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This thesis entitled

IRON DIALOGUE: THE ARTISTIC COLLABORATION OF PABLO PICASSO
AND JULIO GONZÁLEZ

by

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has been approved

for the School of Art

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This paper analyzes the sculptural collaboration between Pablo Picasso and Julio González. It will examine each of the works born of the collaborative project at length, and discuss the major stylistic and thematic precursors to these works, both within each artist’s oeuvre and art history in general. During the collaboration, each artist’s unique sensibilities, skills, and styles merged to create just under a dozen works that have since resonated throughout the fields of art and art history. Also discussed will be the fact that these sculptures were created during the interwar period in Europe, which was a time of industrial, societal, and political upheaval. Each of these broad paradigm shifts is reflected within the works, and these works can, in fact, help to further our understanding of this tumultuous time period.

While a good amount of important scholarship on the Picasso-González collaboration exists, much of it is spread across a number of years and a number of sources. This paper will bring together and discuss this scholarship, and attempt to rectify any inconsistencies. Additionally, this paper will posit several new points born of the author’s research and attempt to show that the process between the two artists was, indeed, collaborative and not a project solely guided by Picasso.

Approved: Joseph Lamb
Associate Professor of Art History
In grateful acknowledgement of the faculty and students of the 2003 Ohio University Art History Graduate Symposium for their help and input in the development of many of the key points of this thesis.
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INTRODUCTION

From the spring of 1928 until the end of 1933, Pablo Picasso and Julio González were involved in a collaborative process that yielded fewer than a dozen works, yet radically changed modern conceptions of sculpture. Their work together rekindled Picasso’s latent interest in the medium and led to his considerable exploration of it. Until this point in his career, Picasso’s three-dimensional works had always been heavily influenced by his own innovations in painting. After working with González, Picasso’s sculptural process was altered significantly. The collaboration was also crucial to the development of Julio González as a fine artist. González always considered himself a craftsman due to his expertise at smithing and welding techniques, but he also strove towards establishing a career as a fine artist in the traditional medium of painting. After sharing a studio with Picasso, González’s perception of what constituted ‘fine’ art changed as completely as his work did.

Picasso and González had been friends since their early careers spent among the Barcelona avant-garde in 1899. They frequented the café-tavern Els Quatre Gats (often translated as ‘The Four Cats,’ but meaning “only a few people” in colloquial Catalan¹), the meeting place for the Spanish modernistas of that time. Picasso was the younger of the two but had already developed a significant artistic reputation among their friends and supporters, while González toiled in his family’s metal shop and attended classes at the local art academy. Influenced by his inherited profession, the majority of González’s

¹ The Picasso Project: Picasso’s Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings, and Sculpture. Surrealism 1930-1936 (San Francisco: Alan Wolfsy Fine Arts, 1996), x. This volume was mainly a fantastic source for images. It covered most, if not all, of Picasso’s works in any given period. The editors also did a wonderful job providing a comprehensive biography and discussion of styles at the beginning of each volume.
drawings were precise, mechanical schematics that could be directly translated into intricate metal works, such as decorative and architectural highlights. Other early drawings reveal a strong element of the *Arte nouveau* (as in Picasso’s drawings of the time), and later, the sentimentalized style utilized by Picasso during his Blue Period. These early works reveal that González was very keen to follow the prevailing currents of the avant-garde, as were the other members of the *Els Quatre Gats* group.

In 1900, the González family moved to Paris and established their metalworking business there. After some lengthy initial visits to Paris, Picasso also settled there permanently in 1904. He and González were once again frequently in contact and moving in the same circle of friends. However, sometime around 1907-8 the two had a falling out. Marilyn McCully notes,

Nothing has been found to explain the cause of the rift between Picasso and the González brothers [Julio and Joan, the elder brother], but it is clear that there was a break in the friendship. If, as it appears, the quarrel was with Joan, his death in 1908 may have made a reconciliation with Julio and Picasso more difficult. Julio suffered a breakdown after his brother died (and the quarrel with Picasso has usually been dated to that period)…

González subsequently returned to Spain and spent some time in Barcelona coping with his brother’s death, as well as working with Paco Durrio on the Echevarrieta family mausoleum in Bilbao. Sometime between 1915 and 1920, he returned to Paris, where he associated with other Spanish-Catalan artists in the city, notably Pablo Gargallo. Not

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2 Marilyn McCully “Julio González and Pablo Picasso: A Documentary Chronology of a Working Relationship.” *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter*, Cowling, Elizabeth and John Golding, ed. (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1994), 213-14. She also relates some additional information that “[a]ccording to the artist’s daughter [Roberta González], certain drawings of Joan’s were given to Picasso’s family in Barcelona for safekeeping: ‘The drawings, so the story goes, disappeared rather mysteriously, and since Picasso was known to have liked Joan’s work, Julio suspected that they had found their way into Picasso’s collection, and became quite upset over this.’”

3 Ibid.
until 1921 did a chance meeting lead to a reconciliation with Picasso. González’s
daughter, Roberta, recalled that “One day my father and aunts were walking down the
Boulevard Raspail when they suddenly met Picasso, who threw open his arms and
exclaimed, ‘Come now, we can’t stay angry all our lives! Let’s make up!’”

By this time, Picasso had become one of the most celebrated artists on the
continent, and thanks to an increasing number of exhibitions in America, his
international fame was steadily growing. By contrast, González lived a far more modest
life and was still largely unknown in contemporary art circles, though he was able to
provide for his family (including his mother, two sisters, mistress, and daughter)
exclusively through his great skill in decorative metalworking – no mean feat in the
Paris of the 1920s. Indeed, retail metalworking was to be González’s only source of
steady income for his entire life. Documentation also exists suggesting Picasso helped
González with some business connections after the reconciliation, though the works that
resulted from this are unknown.

Later, during March, April, and May of 1928, while Picasso filled his notebooks
with drawings of sculptural constructions, he realized how beneficial González’s help in
fabricating these ideas would be and approached González with a proposal to work on a
project with him. The chance meeting with Picasso eight years earlier resulted in a
collaboration that would radically alter both González and history’s vision of
sculpture’s possibilities.

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5 Ibid.
6 Josephine Withers Julio González: Sculpture in Iron (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 22-3. The collaboration was put on hold soon after the completion of the sculpture of a Head, as González’s mother passed away around May 14th. Several letters exist documenting Picasso’s sympathy and concern for González. The collaboration resumed in the fall of that year, after Picasso returned from vacationing in Dinard.
The foundation for their innovations had been formulated earlier in the century. Indeed, Picasso’s early Cubist sculptures inspired artists such as Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Jacques Lipchitz, and the Russian Constructivists. Albert Elsen, introducing an exhibition of modern sculpture held at the Albright-Knox Gallery in 1979, summed up the changing nature of sculpture during the interwar period, by stating:

[Naum] Gabo asked himself how sculpture could aid in the comprehension of the universe, and [Alexander] Calder speculated on how the systems of the universe could be made the basis of sculpture. Many sculptors searched for the means of making space more integral to sculpture and even be its subject. The Constructivists sought alternatives to inspiration and feeling as the basis of art. They and others, such as [Jean] Arp, questioned whether individuality was still defensible in the new postwar era…Lipchitz and Picasso sought to make sculpture more responsive to their processes of thought, to be thought’s medium.7

The exploration of space and depth, free from the emphasis on weight and mass that figurative sculpture implies, was an idea born out of Cubism. Artists adopted the Cubist idiom in their conceptions of three-dimensional space as groups of surface planes and ‘negative’ spaces. Joaquin Torres-Garcia (another frequenter of Els Quatre Gats, who shared González’s and Picasso’s Catalan bloodlines) and Pablo Gargallo, in particular, were drawn towards this manipulation of planar surfaces in their work – an idea with which González would have been familiar considering his friendships with both artists. His own artwork had also used the flat planes that hammering and cutting metal facilitates, but it was about to undergo a profound change. From the beginning, the sculptural dialogue with Picasso seemed to have a motivational effect on González’s work. According to the research of Josephine Withers, the preeminent González

In 1929, González completed an impressive number of sculptures, exhibited his iron constructions for the first time – in the Salon d’Automne – and signed a three-year contract (his first) with the Galerie d’France.\textsuperscript{8} González refreshed his working methods by loosening his tendency towards realism, and incorporating and surrounding negative space with his ironwork.

The motivational effect on Picasso was dramatic as well, and long lasting. For nearly a decade, his work had focused on painting and two-dimensional media. After the start of this collaboration, Picasso divided his prodigious energies equally between painting and sculpture, and continued to do so well into the 1930s. His plastic conceptions began to suggest the transformation from one medium into the other, just as they later played with the transformation from real-life object into objet d’art and back again.

THESIS STATEMENT

Considering the conflicting nature of much of the scholarly texts on the Picasso – González projects, this thesis will first reconcile imprecise, or incomplete, facts, and then present a stylistic analysis of the relevant works in order to create a more complete view of the collaboration and a more thorough and historically accurate picture. By examining each work in detail in terms of its formal qualities, this thesis will present a clearer picture of the collaboration at work, and the characteristics and strengths each artist brought to the projects. An article by Peter Read (“From Sketchbook to Sculpture in the Work of Picasso, 1924-32”) will be considered paramount when examining the existing body of knowledge. Read’s insights into the fundamental differences in the welding technique of the two artists can be utilized to resolve issues that have long been obscured.

This thesis places special emphasis on the two versions of Woman in the Garden as the most important and intriguing result of the collaboration, as well as the verbal and visual dialogue born of the artists’ sharing of the same studio space. The iconography of Woman in the Garden is examined and presented as an early manifestation of Picasso’s later “Weeping Woman” motif – a motif that has an historical element relevant to the time period in which it appears. Both the motif and the formal characteristics of this work are extremely prescient. Stylistically, González learned much during his fabrication of a bronze replica of Woman in the Garden in the early thirties, and echoes of this are evident in his work for the remainder of his (brief) career. The Woman in the Garden is also shown to have a near parallel in one of Picasso’s paintings of the time,
Nude in an Armchair. By placing these works side by side, this thesis aims to create a revised interpretation of the sculpture that is so far missing from recent scholarship.

Indeed, by emphasizing a formal overview of Picasso’s works from the period together with updated research from various points of view, this thesis will suggest new readings of the collaborative works, and reinsert some of the interpretive ambiguity intended by Picasso back into the scholarship.

This thesis concludes that in the studio an equal footing existed between the two artists, and that this same equality be given to the artists within art historical scholarship. Currently, scholarly accounts give a privileged position to Picasso, presumably because of his extraordinary legacy and influence. However, each artist made a profound impact on the work of the other, in terms of style, working methods, and conceptualization. While understandable that Picasso’s fame overshadowed the participation of his lesser-known comrade initially, several recent exhibitions have begun to illustrate the importance of González’s influence on later generations of sculptors, and a re-evaluation of the works from 1928 and 1933 is therefore timely.
THE STATE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship concerning the collaboration of Picasso and González faces some unique problems. Since there are so few works and very little documentation, the exact nature of the working relationship is still a matter for debate. Was González only a technician implementing the designs of Picasso? Or was he also an instructor who gave Picasso the expertise necessary for the technique of oxyacetylene welding? If we knew more about the true nature of the partnership during the long hours spent in González’s studio, scholars would more commonly view it as a truly collaborative process, as I believe it was.

Their work together in a single studio certainly differs considerably from the far more famous collaboration embarked upon by Picasso with Georges Braque. Picasso and Braque clearly worked together to create a new style of painting, but they kept separate studios and (as far as we know) never worked on the same canvas. The efforts with González are also much different than the later collaborative efforts for Picasso’s prints, casts, and large-scale sculptural designs. These works were designed exclusively by Picasso, generally with a full understanding of the future stages of production they would undergo. Expert craftsmen were then hired to carry out these projects for various reasons, either due to the scale or volume of works created.\(^9\) In a sense, the unique relationship between Picasso and González was a dialogue – González’s voice was that

\(^9\) A pertinent example of this type of ‘collaboration’ being the enormous freestanding Head of 1967 at the Chicago Civic Center. Picasso designed this and created a welded maquette (Figure 1), not dissimilar to some of the welded works created with González, though more concisely designed. Picasso worked closely with the architects and engineers who implemented his design, though he never traveled to the United States to see the result firsthand.
of technique and craftsmanship while Picasso’s was that of style and artistic experimentation.

Much of the scholarship on this issue of artistic influence and collaboration therefore tends to view the sculpture created in the context of the individual author’s own interests. It is worth noting that nearly all scholarship privileges Picasso’s role in the creation of the works and that every photo reproduction of their efforts is annotated as a work by Picasso. If one only viewed the photos and their captions, González’s role would never be suspected. Additionally, most writings tend to view these works as solely Picasso’s. None of the sculptures has ever been credited to both artists, not even the bronze *Woman in the Garden* fabricated solely by González after Picasso’s original.

In general, the works are placed within the larger context of Picasso’s sculpture as a whole, within an examination of Surrealist aspects in Picasso’s works, or as part of an examination of his interwar period artwork. Some scholarship ignores González entirely, while documenting other possible influences on Picasso at the time, such as literary sources or African sculpture, and how they relate to his sculpture. These approaches continue investigations into areas where a precedent had already been established –literature and ethnic art were early influences on Picasso’s art to be sure. By contrast, if Picasso in actuality took a junior role in his collaboration with González (at least as far as technical prowess is concerned), it would be the first time in his career he acted as a near apprentice to another artist, and a complete reorientation of the scholarship in this area would be warranted. This possibility has not been approached.

In 1971, Werner Spies produced the most valuable and comprehensive *catalogue raisonné* of Picasso’s sculptural development ever published. It covered the
full scope of the artist’s output and published photographs of every known work up to that time. Spies did critical research regarding the stylistic development of Picasso’s interwar sculpture, and the volume includes several reproductions from his sketchbooks as well. In addition, Spies suggested the link between the collaborative works with González and two African sources, a link that has been written about many times since.

First, Spies notes similarities to several Dogon and Gu sculptures in medium, metal, and perhaps function – commemoration of the dead (Woman in the Garden was originally commissioned as a memorial to the poet, Guillaume Apollinaire). Additionally, he points to the clay architecture of some African tribes as a possible influence for the large biomorphic figures seen in Picasso’s sketchbooks. These images appeared around the same time as the development of the styles and motifs that informed his work with González (Figure 2). Spies notes that Picasso was certainly familiar with both of these African styles, as Christian Zervos published reproductions of them in his Cahiers d’Art magazine in early 1928 and, indeed, gave him copies of the magazine before Picasso left to summer in Cannes. Contemporaneous with the sketchbooks, the publication of these pictures perhaps establishes an historical starting point for Picasso’s sculptural developments, and could exclude any possible influence by González on the initial stylistic development of the works from the collaborative period.

Also in the 1970s, scholarship finally emerged exploring González’s part in the collaborative process. Josephine Withers paved the way with her research, which remains critically important in examining González as a partner in the collaboration and as an important artist in his own right. Prior to her investigations into that period, this
type of information was dispersed throughout biographies and accounts by Picasso’s contemporaries. Her research reached its culmination with the 1978 publication Julio González: Sculpture In Iron. This study constructed González’s biography, the relationship he had with Picasso, and included a catalogue raisonné of his works. Perhaps most notably, she translated into English González’s unpublished manuscript inspired by his months with Picasso, “Picasso sculpteur et les cathédrales,” from its original mix of Spanish-Catalan and French.

Unfortunately, few scholars have followed up on Withers’ research, and most current scholarship on the collaboration has been published in the form of articles, often taking issue with a particular point of earlier research or reorienting research toward a different end. An important development in Picasso-González scholarship was Peter Read’s brief article in an exhibition catalog detailing the welds on each of the collaborative works in order to determine which of the artists was responsible for its creation. However, Read’s analysis can be confusing. For example, his stylistic interpretation of Woman in the Garden seems based upon González’s replica, as he emphasizes its vertical “energy.” (Figure 3) Picasso’s original design, which is mounted on a triangular base, demands one’s eye take in each side and contains strong diagonal elements (Figure 4). Later, Read’s comments seem to be referring not to the replica, but specifically to the original creation. In his stylistic analysis of Woman in the Garden, Read suggests a kinship to early Cubist Guitars (Figure 5), “which were made

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10 “Picasso[,] Sculptor and the Cathedrals” – Most, if not all, scholars of this subject quote it liberally. It is from this essay that the famous description of González’s sculpture as “drawing in space” comes. This phrase has been the title of many exhibitions at galleries and museums and is almost always mentioned in articles about González.

to hang on a wall, viewed only from the front and sides, challenging generic classification, straddling the frontier between painting and sculpture.”¹² Read’s assertion opposes that of Withers, who noted almost twenty years earlier that, “the whole sculpture is transparent, and the spatial relationship of the parts is exceptionally complex. One is constantly beset with unsettling … paradoxes in regarding the sculpture from different points of view.”¹³ Ultimately, while Read’s stylistic analysis can be debated, his detailed examination of the welds on each work shows how great the contrast is between González’s professional and efficient welds and Picasso’s intuitive and sometimes clumsy welds.

Marilyn McCully’s impeccable research for the article, “Julio González and Pablo Picasso: A Documentary Chronology of a Working Relationship,” firmly established a timeline for the collaboration. Given unfettered access to the González estate and the archives of the Musée Picasso, she pulled together information from over thirty letters and notes exchanged between Picasso and González, and produced a long overdue review of primary source materials. This chronology is an immensely helpful overview of the collaboration that aids any rethinking of the artists’ work.

Several other articles present scholarship on the career of González, many published relatively recently and in conjunction with or following a retrospective exhibition. Oftentimes they take González’s works and place them in the broader context of the French avant-garde, an approach hardly novel or critical to continuing scholarship. To find unique research and new points of view, one must turn to the articles that examine his work in a different context, remain relevant to the issues at

¹² Peter Read “From Sketchbook to Sculpture” 204.
hand and illuminate those issues in unexpected and helpful ways. For instance, “Virgins and Totems” by A. Kirili examines the differing impact religious upbringings had for González and David Smith (a contemporary artist who has often expressed his indebtedness to and admiration for González). Here Kirili explores the notion of a ‘black’ (or, expressly devout) Spanish Catholic faith, and uses it to rewrite a section of González’s biography, arguing that faith was an applicable force throughout his mature artistic career. “González’s Catholic nature allowed him to produce work that, though modernist in principle, was largely religious in feeling,” Kirili noted. He examines the predominant subject in González’s art – woman – and sees it as a manifestation of Mariolatry, the veneration of the Virgin Mary that was so widespread throughout Spain.

Kirili’s article reminds us that the history of Picasso’s and González’s homeland greatly affected their art, and should be appreciated to understand fully their works of the 1920s and 1930s, especially given the centrality of Spain as the first country to fall into chaos before the outbreak of the Second World War and as such, presage it. Even before conflict spread across the continent, Spain collapsed from the weight of forces that affected the whole of Europe – a tired and bloated monarchy, economic turmoil, and the rending asunder of society along ideological lines, especially Anarchism and Communism.

GONZÁLEZ, THE ARTIST

González’s work always held a special appeal to Picasso and others, but the collaboration loosened González’s working approach and produced a more organic sensibility in the finished pieces, thereby increasing their influence and appeal. Withers sums up the allure of González’s post-collaborative work best, writing:

In contrast to other sculptors in metal, González consistently shaped his materials at white heat, which allowed a greater plasticity in both the large forms as well as the surface detail. Rather than regarding metal as hard and unyielding González treated it as a soft, ductile and malleable material responsive to the most subtle modulations and inflections. Instead of Pevsner’s or Brancusi’s gleaming bronze or Calder’s flat painted discs, one finds pitted, rusted, and oxidized surfaces embellished with odd bits of solder and scrap.\(^{15}\)

González’s craftsmanship before his work with Picasso already had a natural feeling for surface texture. So what prompted him to travel further stylistically in this direction? The turning point was his fabrication of the bronze version of Woman in the Garden (Figure 3). In his article, Peter Read stressed the differences in welding techniques between Picasso’s original and the bronze version. Picasso’s welds tended to be sloppier and more obvious in their intentional incorporation of scrap metals into the final design. González had to meticulously incorporate these ‘scrap’ elements into the bronze by creating them anew. However, the final welds are cleaner and less noticeable in his finished work – a sign of González’s craftsmanship as well as his respect for the materials’ nature. Still, it seems this project was an inspiration to González’s conception of what avenues were open to a modern sculptor.

The oxyacetylene welding method favored by González is generally used to create clean joints, but in his works after 1928, González seldom used the technique for this purpose. Indeed, even after the joints were welded, he would return to them, forging and hammering a unique textural feel. We can see this in a number of works, notably Don Quixote (Figure 6) and Woman Combing Her Hair (Figure 7), both circa 1931, where the rough feel of the works is as apparent and obvious as their association with ‘drawing in space.’ The figures are largely linear constructions that guide the eye and create a frame around negative spaces, thereby emphasizing them. In many of these works, we can see specific iconographic references to Picasso; notice the stylized hair in Woman Combing Her Hair and the subject of a sketch by Gonzalez from 1940, Frightened Woman (Figure 8). This sketch is reminiscent of Picasso’s Weeping Woman motif, and while there is no documentation concerning the relationship between the two artists at this time, for González to use the icon at the end of the Spanish Civil War suggests he was aware of Picasso’s use of the imagery and its contextual meaning. Previously, in 1935, he created a work – Head called ‘the Snail’ (Figure 9), which is also thematically similar and created during the same period Picasso was using the Weeping Woman. What makes González’s work his own is the reduction of forms into simple shapes and curves almost to the point of complete abstraction, as in Dancer with Palette (Figure 10). Picasso generally avoided this throughout his career, except during the time of the collaboration with González when both inspired each other to explore new directions in their art.
THE WEEPING WOMAN

One proposal born specifically out of my historical research is that Woman in the Garden is a precursor to Picasso’s Weeping Woman icon of the late thirties, both stylistically and thematically.

The Weeping Woman motif was proposed as a series of bust drawings of a woman whose face is twisted in agony and distorted (Figure 11). She is often crying and holding a handkerchief, but her mouth is always open in a silent wail. The formal characteristics, such as the open mouth with lashing tongue, the lines culminating in large dots (representing tears), and sharp blades of hair, all evolved in Picasso’s sketchbooks between 1925 and 1928. These sketchbooks established a course for the next decade of work in both painting and sculpture. They were absolutely critical to the development of Woman in the Garden.

The Weeping Woman must also be seen in its specific historical context. Though conceived a few years earlier, it emerged as a critical part of Picasso’s repertoire of iconic devices in his Guernica of 1937. After he painted this seminal masterpiece, Picasso went on to do an extensive series of paintings based on the Weeping Woman icon. These were painted during the years of the Spanish Civil War, and, appropriately, the agony and distortion of this figure reflect and increase with the ferocity and depravity of the war. The Spanish Civil War was especially distressing for a native Catalan like González and Picasso, who adopted the region as his homeland.

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16 Judi Freeman Picasso and the Weeping Women: The Years of Marie-Thérèse Walter and Dora Maar (New York: Rizzoli Publications and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1994). This exhibition brought together the first show on the motif and established its breadth and importance.
after spending six months in Horta de Ebro with his good friend Pallarés in 1898. While several competing ideologies were grafted onto it, the real war ran along older lines. It is not coincidental that traditionally independent regions like Catalonia and the Basque country, where the town of Guernica is located, saw the most vicious fighting. The people in these areas had wanted to throw off the rule of the centralized monarchy for generations.

The roots of the Spanish Civil War had similarities in countries across the continent. The end of the Great War left many wounds on the land, the people and the collective psyche. Though the war shattered the old alliances, it did not end the old traditions and suspicions. It also opened new wounds and created new fears. France suffered the greatest population loss of all in the Great War, and its actual and political landscapes were forever altered. A lack of manpower coupled with the still deep suspicion of German motives led the French leaders to look for new means of containment. It is not disputed that the crippling debt with which Germany was saddled, and the insistence on placing the entire blame for the war on German shoulders created a pressure cooker of resentment and poverty. The desire to avoid another war at all costs led to a series of actions whose consequences assured one.

Picasso was torn between two countries; where he was born and where he made a career and reputation for himself – both of them corroding away before his eyes. Having studied this period in European history, I cannot help but see the *Woman in the Garden* as the first prominent manifestation of a Weeping Woman in the first throes of Picasso’s grief.
France in the early 1930s was engulfed by corruption, inefficiency and political fragmentation. Suspicion of the political system became widespread and culminated in a nearly successful coup attempt in February 1934. Discontent was plain to see everyday in the papers and in the streets of Paris. France had yet to fully industrialize after the devastation of the war and it was already decades into the new century.\footnote{For a complete discussion of the topic, see Charles S. Maier’s \textit{Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). This is the best and most comprehensive analysis of the myriad problems facing the great European powers in the fallout of the First World War. Maier is exacting and poetic in his summation of life in all its aspects in urban and rural environments alike. The differences that had existed between the ‘country’ in France and the city of Paris became even stronger in the 1920s.}

It is in this historical context that we must view Picasso’s months in the studio, heating, hammering, and welding the most ambitious ironwork of his career. As an industrial and artistic medium, iron is the great metaphor for this time in European history. Two quotes sum up the vast importance of iron in an art historical sense. Kirili remarks, “iron … breaks the traditional concept of the monolith as a totemic mass and substitutes for it a vocabulary of lines, spaces, surfaces and hollowed-out solids. As the sculpture takes on transparency, the void can assume the role of solid mass.”\footnote{A. Kirili “Virgins and Totems,” 156.} González himself had the utility and nature of iron much on his mind at the time. Margit Rowell highlights his comment that,

[t]he age of iron began many centuries ago, by producing (unhappily) arms – some very beautiful. Today it makes possible the building of bridges, railroads. It is high time that this metal cease to be a murderer and the simple instrument of an overly mechanical science. Today, the door is opened wide to this material to be at last! forged and hammered by the peaceful hands of artists.\footnote{Margit Rowell \textit{Julio González: A Retrospective} (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1983), 15. This quote is reprinted in a wide variety of González texts.}
This was an age of industrial production and industrial politics, both rusting away with corruption. And Picasso was there, shaping its likeness and its texture as it writhed in a medium being used by artists as a conscious suggestion of the larger changes taking place around them. This metaphor is bitterly ironic in the context of the French Third Republic. Iron is wrought in great heat, but the politicians of the time never took that central metaphor to heart – to strike while the iron was hot and enact meaningful legislative changes. This was especially true at the beginning of the thirties, as the Great Depression spread across the globe and France’s financial leaders and politicians refused to consider the necessary economic reforms.

Many scholars and observers comment upon how Picasso’s lovers influenced his art and point out their many different depictions. But, with *Woman in the Garden* these biographic analogies fall short, and it is difficult not to see the woman as Marianne\(^{20}\) – symbol of French independence and enlightenment, now grievously abused and betrayed. The political overtones of *Woman in the Garden* are also different than the almost wry political commentaries in Picasso’s Cubist works from the period of the First World War. As befits their place in the Cubist idiom, many of these collages play with puns that are alternately playful and scathing. While they collectively show Picasso’s disdain for the politics of the day, and for the war, many remain analytical. By 1929, Picasso was personally involved in the politics of France. *Woman in the Garden* is the first work to embody such feelings as he observes the collapse of the political system of his adopted homeland. And this is the key to seeing it as an early form of the

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\(^{20}\) Stephen F. Eisenman *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1994), 76. “… ‘Marianne,’ the female symbol of the Republic adopted by the Jacobins in the immediate wake of Louis XVI’s overthrow in 1792.” Within art history, the figure of Marianne, or Liberty, is perhaps most familiar in Eugène Delacroix’s painting, *The 28\(^{th}\) of July: Liberty Leading the People* from 1830.
Weeping Woman, for Picasso used the motif most eloquently when expressing the pain of social turmoil.

It is documented that Picasso (and González as well) also viewed the woman in the work in a humorously grim light. A note written from González to Picasso on April 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1931 states, “Yesterday I went to the ironmongers fair to buy an even bigger pair of hammers because the ‘casserole’ is turning out to be a job of Titanesque proportions.” The Spies text translates the French term literally as ‘casserole,’ and has notated it as such in every edition of the work since the seventies, but Read notes that there is a more colloquial meaning. He informs us that “‘[c]asserole,’ meaning ‘saucepan’ is French slang for a subservient female partner, and is used here perhaps as a wry term of affection for Woman in [the] Garden.”\textsuperscript{21} France herself was being ‘used’ by her political masters during these years, and it is in keeping with Picasso’s personality that he expressed such a debasement with sexual undertones.

\textsuperscript{21} Peter Read “From Sketchbook ,” 207.
THE COLLABORATION AND ITS WORKS

During this historically tumultuous period from 1928 to 1933, we can establish ten works that constitute the combined output of the Picasso and González collaboration. This is slightly complicated by multiple versions of some of the sculptures. The works are: a painted iron Head (1928) (Figure 12); four maquettes each titled Construction in Wire (all 1928) (Figures 14 – 16); Figure of a Woman (c. 1929 – this work has also been listed as Figurine or Christmas Tree) (Figure 18); [Male] Head (1930 – first published as Detail of a Monument) (Figure 19); Head of a Woman (1930) (Figure 20); and two versions of the Woman in the Garden (original 1930-31, bronze replica created by González from 1931 until 1933). Their places within the context of this collaboration can be roughly divided into three phases.

The first, brief phase covers the Head and Constructions created in 1928 that involved González’s fabrication of sculptures based on designs by Picasso. Indeed, these works are exact in their reproduction of motifs from specific paintings or sketches, and their executions triggered further collaborative efforts.

For the Figure of a Woman and the two Heads of 1930 a new working method evolved, as both artists worked in the studio concurrently. It seems these projects were a sort of classroom of experimentation for Picasso, as this quote from Peter Read confirms:

González had learned the oxyacetylene welding techniques in an armaments factory during the First World War and he now passed this skill on to Picasso, who was able to take an active role in the construction of the new series of sculptures, which are welded montages of disparate pieces of metal. Picasso may have tried his
hand by first assembling the simple ‘Figurine’ [Figure of a Woman] made from fifteen or so metal oddments roughly welded together. This would have given him the confidence to work on the more complex metal sculptures, freely improvising around ideas previously worked out in the more preparatory drawings.22

Read goes on to analyze these works by focusing on the metal welds as a guide to which artist executed each section. For instance, he notes that the lozenge-shaped mouth on the Head of a Woman had been “cut and joined with such clean precision that this element must be the work of González.”23 Read examines each piece meticulously and his research has gone a long way towards answering the tricky question of the exact nature of this collaboration, in a technical sense if not a stylistic one. Even in photographs, an examination of these works supports Read’s point. The welds on the back of Head of a Woman and at the joins of its neck and head show large areas where the metal was melted and joined, far more than would have been necessary to hold the pieces together. These welds could not be those of González. At this point in his career, his joins and solders would have been clean and professional. Only after the collaboration with Picasso does he show a strong interest in deliberately rough and textured welds. Similarly, the clean joins are probably not Picasso’s, as they are few and limited to where they are most needed. Picasso was just beginning to learn the methods of oxyacetylene welding, a technique that had taken González, an experienced smithy, some time to learn.24 I would suggest this indicates Picasso was attracted to the look and

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22 Peter Read “From Sketchbook to Sculpture,” 202.
23 Peter Read “From Sketchbook to Sculpture,” 203.
24 Josephine Withers Julio González: Sculpture in Iron (New York University Press, 1978), 11-12. Withers also seems to suggest that González performed all the labor in the fabrications of the works. Read’s article, almost twenty years later, makes a strong case in refuting such a claim, which, at any rate, had fallen out of favor in the scholarship by the mid-1990s.
feel of the rougher welds and called on González only for specific areas in need of sharp welds and delineations.

González does provide some documentation regarding this collaborative studio work. He tells us that while they were working on the Head of a Woman, Picasso instructed him to go and find some colanders (strainers). González promptly went out and bought a pair, which were used to make up the central ‘skull’ behind the face of the woman. Sometimes this use of ‘found’ materials was more spontaneous – Withers relays information from Mme. González that Picasso and González would go on ‘rummaging’ expeditions through junkyards and back streets. Certainly this was no strange behavior for Picasso – assemblage had been part of his style since Cubism and would continue to inspire him throughout his career. Indeed, many artists of the period, notably the Surrealists, made similar forays into assemblage and the use of found objects during the 1930s.

In addition, extensive preparations and study for a large-scale work was also part of Picasso’s usual working method. We can see that the nature of both of the Heads comes from Picasso’s sketchbook studies, but they are not merely recreated. There is freedom in their execution. Picasso was always sensitive to the use of materials and how the process of physical creation shaped the final outcome. In fact, the use of metal planes in the sculpted works – partially dictated by the nature of the medium, but also a hallmark of González’s style – shifted Picasso’s thinking away from ‘classical’ sculptural techniques, such as the use of armatures and realistic modeling. The results can be seen in his sketchbooks, where the biomorphic depictions of a few years earlier give way to ideas, like the Heads, more realistically executed in welded metals.

We also find in the sketchbooks examples of studies for larger scale works that were never attempted. Indeed, the two Heads were conceived of as faces to statues that certainly would have been monumental if created. Each Head measures a not insubstantial three feet high,\(^{26}\) so if they were mounted to a body, the full height would probably be over twelve feet tall, twice the height of the *Woman in the Garden*.

The final phase of their partnership is perhaps the most unique. Due to the iconography of the work, Read’s analysis of its welded joints, and statements by González, it is believed that Picasso alone was responsible for the actual fabrication of *Woman in the Garden*. González was certainly in the studio to witness Picasso’s working methods, but he was primarily involved in making a bronze replica of the work that allowed him to gain a very detailed understanding of Picasso’s creative process.

While most of the iconography had been worked out in advance, Picasso still kept a loose approach to the actual construction of the work, which took some weeks to complete. He often would incorporate scraps of metal that were found around the studio. When González welded the replica, he frequently needed to fabricate bronze pieces that looked like the found scraps used in the original. In a sense, González became the first scholar of this work and the knowledge he gained from it encouraged a new sense of freedom in his sculpture.

\(^{26}\) In fact, [Male] Head measures 83.5 x 40.5 x 36 cm (32.87 x 15.95 x 14.17 in) and the Head of a Woman measures 100 x 37 x 59 cm (39.37 x 14.57 x 23.23 in). This information comes from Werner Spies *Picasso: The Sculptures* (Ostfilden/Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2000) 397-8.
ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS

As so few works exist from the artists’ partnership, an analysis of each one individually is highly revealing. Just as the collaborative process can be divided into phases, so can the style of the sculptures. Some are taken directly from sketchbook sources, others created in a truly collaborative way, with the Woman in the Garden the most ambitious and monumental culmination of the period.

The first work created during this period was the painted Head (Figure 12).27 Spies notes that three versions of this brass and iron construction were made, differing only slightly in the manner they were painted. The work itself is rather small, measuring only 18 x 11 x 7.5 cm.28 While all sources list it as a Head, it would be more accurate to list the work as a Kiss, as that is the motif depicted. One side of the work is painted black, the other white. Where the heads meet in the center, we can see two different noses pointing away from each other towards the outside. The center is cut away so that the area of negative space forms an arrow-like opening pointing upward. The circle of metal ringing the facial features balances this rectilinear element that otherwise would lead the eye upward and outward. Additionally, on the right side on the back of the white ‘head’ there exists a small section of linear metal strips seemingly bolted to the metal underneath. This is meant to indicate hair, an iconic device that first came into use in Picasso’s oeuvre in 1927. The face is only recognizable by the nose and the two

27 Spies and Withers are in disagreement over the exact date this work was created. Withers states that it is dated March 20th, 1928 (“The Artistic Collaboration of Pablo Picasso and Julio González.”), while Spies lists it as being completed in October 1928.
28 Werner Spies Picasso: The Sculptures, 397 gives the measurement as (7 x 4.3 x 3 in). Indeed, the Head is so small that in a photo of Picasso’s mantle from the fifties, it is practically dwarfed by the other sculptures present (including all four of the wire constructions). The Spies catalogue also notes that one of the Heads was in the collection of Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein.
eyes, one on top of the other, at the center. These eyes are significant as they also suggest (and possibly are) nails. We will see Picasso use nails as eyes again in the Woman in the Garden. Withers makes note of this as well, stating, “by using such metaphors as nails for eyes … Picasso drew attention to their essential formal and tactile qualities.”

The depiction of this motif had existed in Picasso’s repertoire for a few years and had been used regularly in his paintings, notably the Painter and Model of 1928 in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art (Figure 13). It can have a more poetic application to the collaborative process, as Spies illustrates:

Again and again Picasso returned to this motif, which he had first used in this expressive, deforming style in the summer of 1925 in Juan-les-Pins. Yet the new technical reality of welding, soldering, and smelting, the use of iron wire and metal planes, transformed the kiss into a veritable symbol of the new sculptural technique. The concern was for a technical, formal fusion. In one of González’s first iron sculptures inspired by the work of Picasso – the Kiss of 1930 – he likewise invoked this symbolism of metalworking.

While the Head is a stand-alone work, sketches indicate it was originally conceived of as either the crown to a larger freestanding sculpture, or on top of a hemisphere that would add a sense of movement to the work. As it exists now, the work is supported by a tripod (with two black legs and one white) that provides another technical link to the Woman in the Garden – a triangular base mounting. This device enables the work to exist and be seen fully in the round.

29 Josephine Withers Julio González, 26.
30 Werner Spies Picasso: The Sculptures, 133. Spies deserves credit not only for his groundbreaking research, but also his fluid and entertaining writing style – both in his original German and in the translation (by Christine Piot in the 2000 edition).
The next works completed were the four iron maquettes, generally titled *Construction in Wire* (Figures 14 - 16 [two different maquettes on the far left and far right are displayed in Figure 16]), though Spies lists them simply as Figures. These works have been fabricated in the many versions, including a monumental thirteen-foot high version outside of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. However, the original soldered versions are all approximately a foot and a half square.\(^{31}\)

These works from the first phase of the collaboration are purely linear in nature, except for a small circular head (including two concave dots for eyes) on each. As with the Head, they can be linked exactly to sketchbook designs. González exhibited an extraordinarily deft touch in the exactitude of his fabrications. The formal traits show an interest not only in defining a three-dimensional area made up of negative space, but also in creating a tension between the ‘front’ and ‘back’ of each work. Throughout the sketches and maquettes, there exist divisions of planes, often made up of simple geometric shapes, such as a circle or square. Connecting these planes together are multiple thin wires, mostly straight but occasionally with a curvilinear element included. These work to give structure to the pieces as well as eliciting the ‘push/pull’ dynamic through space. Also, the maquettes all have the vertical element that would be expected from an object attached to a solid square base.

The Wire Constructions suggest another idea from Picasso’s sketchbooks – the ‘bone sculptures,’ to coin a phrase. These sketches are similar to the biomorphic bathers, but are even more distant from a recognizable figure. They show hovering

\(^{31}\) The approximate measurements are taken from Spies’ *Picasso: The Sculptures*. The point that the Wire Constructions are soldered rather than welded is taken from Josephine Withers “The Artistic Collaboration of Pablo Picasso and Julio González,” *Art Journal* 35, no. 2 (Winter 1975-76), 110. She notes, “the wires [of the maquettes] appear to be soldered, rather than welded together,” an analysis confirmed by all later scholars.
spheres, curved elements suggestive of a hip bone, and thicker linear areas all in white, heavily shaded. They seem to reveal Picasso ‘flipping’ from a linear method of sketching his ideas to a concern with mass, but still delineated by forms and curves similar to before. Several scholars have noted the similarity the wire frame sketches and constructions bear to armatures used in more classical sculptural techniques (Figure 17). Either way it is clear that Picasso became more focused on developing ideas that could be expressed purely through sculpture and that he was beginning to concern himself more specifically with the process of welding.

In fact, it has been speculated that the Figure of a Woman (Figure 18) of 1929 represents Picasso’s first solo attempt at welding. It is a work of moderate scale and technical achievement to be sure, measuring 80.5 x 32 x 25 cm and consisting of small lengths of iron welded together in a largely vertical construction. In fact, the main axis of its body is completely upright, with two arms branching off on either side. One arm is merely two small pieces welded at a near right angle, while the other is a curvilinear element that is difficult not to read as a sickle. However, it is too early in Picasso’s career to see an explicit Communist element in his work, so it is most likely a formal device to add visual interest. The neck is elongated and juts back down the body for a few inches before veering up at a forty-five degree angle that culminates, again, in a circular or spherical head with three small dots inscribed as facial features. Figure of a Woman is unique at this point in the collaboration, as it does not seem to be directly taken from a preliminary sketch – though there are sketches that exhibit the same

32 Peter Read “From Sketchbook to Sculpture,” 202.
33 Werner Spies Picasso: The Sculptures, 397. approx. 32 x 12.5 x 10 inches. It has been titled Christmas Tree because in several photographs of the time it is seen decorated with small toys, tinsel, and an elf figure as a hat.
concern with the specifics of constructing a welded object. Its importance lies in its spontaneity and its creation at Picasso’s hand alone.

It was in 1930 that both Picasso and González came into their own. Picasso became more adept at technical matters, while González had taken the master’s lead and branched out into a more experimental and abstract style of his own. As for the collaborative works, “[t]he sculptures are considerably larger than [the] wire and iron constructions from the previous year, but the abstract shapes of the forms are similar to those in [Picasso’s] recent paintings.”\textsuperscript{34} Regarding the changing nature of the collaboration circa 1930, Withers opines, “[m]ore importantly, [Picasso’s] technical assistant of little more than a year before had himself become an accomplished master, and was able to contribute more than his expert craft.”\textsuperscript{35}

Reflecting these advances, the first completed work of the partnership’s second phase was the [Male] Head (Figure 19). This work is related to several sketches also dating from 1930. The formal characteristic shared most regularly between the finished work and the sketches is the large protruding lozenge shaped mouth. It is also this segment that most suggests the hand of González, as it consists of sharp, clean welds and well shaped components. All the other welds are overly expansive, perhaps deliberately loose. This is not to suggest Picasso lacked the skill or patience to execute technically proficient welds, only that it seems he choose not to do so. The texture given by these welds does add to the work.

In every other respect, the [Male] Head is pure Picasso. The mouth is pronounced and witty, as it can be seen as a wry commentary on those who speak

\textsuperscript{35} Josephine Withers Julio González, 28.
instead of doing.\textsuperscript{36} It also can be seen as a sexual allusion, since it is tilted toward the vertical and therefore echoes the female sexual organ. Again, this suggestion of double meanings runs throughout Picasso’s works. He has reduced the eyes to two holes at the top of the rectangular face and in the center placed a sharp cutout nose. It is this feature that seems to have presented Picasso with the most difficulty in the preliminary sketches, which indicate indecisiveness on the scale of the nose. In between the nose and mouth is a mustache composed of welded (and shaped?) bits of metal. I would suggest that here too González’s work is evident, for though the humor is Picasso’s, the details and execution seem confident and crisp. The \textit{Head of a Woman} construction (\textit{Figure 20}) from the same year increases the level of technical accomplishment and stylistic wit to a level not yet achieved by the previous collaborative works.

The incorporation of ‘found’ objects, either deliberately discovered or actually stumbled upon adds multiple layers of meaning to the work. The colanders that Picasso specifically requested work in this sense as the actual and visual skull of the woman, and also wryly suggests vacuousness in this woman – she literally has a sieve for a head! Read, however, views the colanders and the sphere they create as “represent[ing] not themselves but the curve of a woman’s stomach, or an abstract symbol of feminine fertility.”\textsuperscript{37} This reading does not negate my own, especially with an artist like Picasso.

The hair is suggested in different ways. First, from the front and sides, by springs hanging to either side and attached at the center of the top. The implication of

\textsuperscript{36} Margit Rowell sees the mouth on the [Male] Head as suggestive of African motifs with which Picasso would already have been familiar. She notes, “For example, the superposition of a lozenge shape over a rectangle is a traditional Ibo motif, as is the conic neck. Pursuing this line of inquiry, one might compare the elongated proportions of the \textit{Figure of a Woman} as it was finally realized – particularly in the tiny head and long neck – to Dogon or Senufo figurines. This is not to say that Picasso was trying to reproduce African models, but that his familiarity with African art made certain motifs and proportions acceptable.” \textit{Julio Gonzalez: A Retrospective}, 22.

\textsuperscript{37} Peter Read “From Sketchbook to Sculpture,” 203.
curly hair seems straightforward enough. There are also the streamers of sharp strands protruding from the back. This motif of wind blown hair is found in Picasso’s paintings of the time (Figure 21) and will be seen again in the Woman in the Garden. The suggestion here is less clear – is it a ponytail, or is the hair to be seen as both falling straight down on the sides and blown back from the head? Possibly, it is meant most as a visual clue, for the sculpture works best when seen in profile. Viewed from the front, it no doubt still reads as a bust, but from the side one can see the triangular elements working to create a nose, and the arch delineating the edge of the face. The protruding lips and solid square ‘eye’ (linking the nose and the edge of the face) would be scarcely visible when seen straight on. However, there is further ambiguity created by the cavities in the faceplate, which could either be hollow eye sockets or nostrils. As the cones on the reverse side of the plate (itself representing the face and a painter’s palette) extend back to the skull, nostrils appear to be a safe conjecture. The whole of the style again balances the rectilinear with the curvilinear elements and creates tension between all sides of the work. The complicated head with its spherical central element is balanced on a tripod of ‘legs,’ which again seem sexually suggestive. The danger in analyzing Picasso’s works is that one begins to see elements of gender in most every aspect of his work, though it is hard not to believe many were intentional. Finally, the sculpture is unified through a coating of silver paint.

Technically, the work is so balanced and so finely wrought that González surely must be the dominant welder. No grossly visible seams are visible, and in the case of the angular nose in particular the welds are sharp and professional. Strangely, Read
does not examine the welds of this work, though he does wax eloquent for some time on
the use of the ‘found’ object – again, hardly uncommon scholarly terrain.

The last ‘phase’ of the collaboration is a single work, albeit one that exists in
two versions, one by each artist. **Woman in the Garden (Figure 4)** is in the same vein as
the ‘angry surrealist’ depictions of women from earlier in the year. We see this most in
the violently distorted head. The mouth on the left opens to reveal sharp, jagged teeth
evoking the pincers of a praying mantis. On the right, the distorted nose sweeps out at
an angle that balances the lances of hair being blown perhaps to the left – as we have
seen, this particular hair motif was developed early on in the sketchbooks. Other aspects
of the sculpture also come from the earlier Surrealist idiom. The central, ‘interior’ of the
woman shows a bean-shaped curvature that could be seen both as representing the
breasts of the woman, and perhaps a painter’s palette. This shape is echoed in the
negative space on the rhododendron leaves. The circular shape below that appears at
first glance to be a found object, perhaps part of a gas canister; however, González says
this was shaped by Picasso. It could be read as either a womb or the rear of the woman.

After the head, perhaps the most significant Cubist section is the s-curve shape running
up through the central axis. How one interprets this can subtly change the subject matter
of the work as a whole. Generally, the literature refers to it as a large surrealist leaf
growing out of the body – suggesting the fertility of a woman. This is indeed to become
a common motif in Picasso’s surrealist inspired works within a year’s time. However,
as is so often the case with Picasso’s work, there are alternate readings. Peter Read sees
this shape as representing the curvature of the woman’s spine as seen in profile. He
therefore sees it as indicating the woman is standing in the garden. For myself, I see it
as the back of a chair, mainly because of the linear element that wraps behind it and then down to the front. Especially when placed side by side with the painting *Nude in an Armchair* (*Figure 22*), also from 1929 (completed in May, and therefore possibly contemporaneous to *Woman in the Garden*), we see similarities between the loose, twisted and draped figure in the painting with the array of appendages on the sculpture. Also, by simply counting the feet, or supports, on the bottom of the work, we see suggestions of a chair (and table). Additionally in the painting, as the red chair envelops the woman, the arm on the right echoes the shape of the ‘leaf’ and there are two small four leaf flowers in the background, suggesting (though not identical to) the rhododendron leaves in the sculpture. The similarities between the two works are such that the sculpture might be titled ‘Seated Woman in a Garden’ to more accurately reflect the multiple interpretations.

It is appropriate that two artists who had worked so closely for several years should create two distinct, unique, and excellent works based on the same motif. Stylistically, González’s version is a more compact and vertical work – none of the appendages break the plane of upright movement. The only exception is the stem of the outermost rhododendron leaf that seemingly broke at some point and was given additional means of support. The stem had a second bronze section welded on to it and was then wrapped in a length of metal wiring (whether the wiring is also bronze is impossible to determine from photographs). The welds are clean and professionally done which, along with the use of bronze, gives a much different – almost classical – feel to this version. Why the use of bronze? Rowell notes:

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38 Strangely, it is the bronze replica most often reproduced photographically. Of course, it is always attributed solely to Picasso, even though the broken rhododendron stem is an obvious giveaway that it is González’s version.
Picasso told Spies he was unhappy his sculpture could not be placed out-of-doors because it was sheet iron and would rust. Therefore, in 1930 he commissioned González to make a replica – not by casting but by cutting and assembling bronze components and mounting the piece to scale … According to … accounts, Picasso regularly visited the studio on the rue Médéah to view the work in progress, but González executed the sculpture alone. The bronze was subsequently placed in Picasso’s garden at Boisegeloup. 39

It is no small compliment to González that Picasso chose to hold onto the work, as it was his habit to keep works that he most appreciated, or that had special significance to him. I believe this indicates the importance of the collaboration with González held for Picasso. González’s art and proficiency inspired him to think beyond the strictly linear constructions of the first phase of the collaboration and renewed the interest in planar conceptions of sculpture from his early Cubist years, which subsequently affected his paintings. Contemporaries, such as Alexander Calder, and later artists, such as David Smith, would acknowledge a similar appreciation for González’s influence.

39 Margit Rowell Julio González, 22.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that the projects embarked upon by Picasso and González were collaborative in the truest sense of the term. Not only did they work together on specific sculptures, but the knowledge and ideas that they exchanged were pivotal to the future course that each would take. González came into his own as a sculptor, and consequently influenced succeeding generations not only because of his skilled handling of materials, but also the tensions he created between linear and planar elements, and his organic approach to surface textures. Picasso would continue to divide his energy between painting and sculpture for the next several years, producing some of his most iconic works ever – those inspired by Marie-Thérèse Waltier. In both mediums he wrapped sensual, classical forms around the armature of ideas he developed while collaborating with González. Flowing lines and dramatically distorted surface planes were used to create such masterpieces as The Dream of 1932 (Figure 23).

Picasso’s fame and massive output overshadowed not only González, but indeed every other artist of the 20th century. As we move further away from the time the two artists inhabited, it will be easier for scholars, students, and casual viewers to better appreciate each artist individually. Picasso will remain a ‘giant among equals’ for many more years to come, and González’s work will continue to be solidified within the scholarship of art history and to inspire other artists. Working together for just a few years, Picasso and González created works that will resonate for generations to come.


Figure 1. Pablo Picasso, *Maquette for the Chicago Civic Center*, welded iron, 1964. 104.7 x 69.9 x 48.3 cm, (40.8 x 27.3 x 18.8 in).
Figure 2. Pablo Picasso, *Biomorphic sketch*, graphite on paper, 1928.
Figure 3. Julio González, *Woman in the Garden*, welded bronze, replica of original, c. 1933. 210 x 117 x 82 cm, (81.9 x 45.6 x 33.2 in).
Figure 4. Pablo Picasso, *Woman in the Garden*, welded and painted iron, 1930-31. 206 x 117 x 85 cm, (80.3 x 45.6 x 33.2 in).
Figure 5. Pablo Picasso, *Guitar*, iron wire and sheet metal, c. 1912. 77.5 x 35 x 19.3 cm, (30.2 x 13.7 x 7.5 in).
Figure 6. Julio González, *Don Quixote*, bronze, 1929-30.
Figure 7. Julio González, *Woman Combing her Hair*, welded iron, 1934.
Figure 8. Julio González, *Frightened Woman*, pencil and graphite on paper, 1940.
Figure 9. Julio González, *Head called ‘the Snail,’* welded iron, 1935.
Figure 10. Julio González, *Dancer with palette*, bronze, 1934.
Figure 11. Pablo Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, pencil and gouache on paper, 1937.
Figure 12. Pablo Picasso and Julio González, *Head*, welded and painted iron, 1928. 18 x 11 x 7.5 cm, (7 x 4.3 x 3 in.).
Figure 13. Pablo Picasso, *Painter and Model*, oil on canvas, 1928.
Figure 14. Pablo Picasso and Julio González, *Construction in Wire*, welded iron maquette, 1928. 60.5 x 15 x 34 cm, (23.6 x 5.9 x 13.3 in).
Figure 15. Pablo Picasso and Julio González, *Construction in Wire*, welded iron maquette, 1928.
Figure 16. Pablo Picasso and Julio González, *Constructions in Wire*, welded iron maquettes, 1928.
Figure 17. Pablo Picasso, *page from sketchbook*, pencil on paper, c. 1928.
Figure 18. Pablo Picasso, *Figure of a Woman*, welded metal and iron, 1928. 80.5 x 32 x 25 cm, (32 x 12.5 x 10 in.).
Figure 19. Pablo Picasso and Julio González, [Male] *Head or Detail of a Monument*, welded iron, 1930. 83.5 x 40.5 x 36 cm (32.87 x 15.95 x 14.17 in).
Figure 20. Pablo Picasso and Julio González, *Head of a Woman*, welded iron and found objects, 1930. 100 x 37 x 59 cm (39.37 x 14.57 x 23.23 in).
Figure 21. Pablo Picasso, *The Artist’s Studio*, oil on canvas, 1928.
Figure 22. Pablo Picasso, *Nude in an Armchair*, oil on canvas, 1929.
Figure 23. Pablo Picasso, *The Dream*, oil on canvas, 1932.