

“Don Quijote y Sancho”, drawing from 1955



Since childhood, one of the literary figures that Picasso was most drawn to was Don Quijote. Even in his school books while studying in La Coruña and in his first oil paintings and drawings in Barcelona, references to this character and the author appear. These references would once again be found in other works of the Renaissance Period, such as *La Celestina*. Picasso was no stranger to such writings and always showed a special interest in the Spanish tradition,

novels and legends.

Of all of the artist's works, one of special consideration is the wash drawing entitled *Don Quijote y Sancho*. The original piece is currently situated in the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Saint-Denis, near Paris. The drawing is dated August 10th, 1955.

On that day, at his residence in La Californie (Cannes), Picasso received the visit of his friend and biographer Pierre Daix who mentioned to Picasso that the weekly *Les Lettres Françaises* wanted to reproduce one of his pieces in recognition of the 350th anniversary of “Don Quijote de la Mancha”. The outcome of this conversation was ***Don Quijote y Sancho*** which was published on the 18th of August, in the 581th edition of *Les Lettres*.

Subsequently, a special printing in offset – which Picasso demanded in order to improve circulation – was available for sale in Vincennes on the *Les Lettres Françaises* stand, on the 4th of September during the “Fête de la Humanité” (Humanity Celebration) ceremony, as well as in “Six heures du livre” (Six hours of lecture) which was organized by the National Board of Writers of the French Communist Party with which Picasso identified himself for quite some time, as he was a member of the party since 1944.

Reproductions were available in various formats and in 1961 the drawing was used as a poster for the first time for the *Picasso. Lithographies. Estampes. Reproductions. Festival* which took place from November 19th, 1960 to January 14th, 1961 at the Librairie Saint-Germain and L'Art et la Paix in Paris.