

Pablo Picasso, *Histoire Naturelle*

28 March – 22 April 2005

*The Ostrich*



*The Horse*



Picasso, *Histoire Naturelle* is a National Touring Exhibition from the Hayward Gallery. The exhibition began its tour at Leyhill Prison in Gloucestershire in 1993, and comes to the Gibberd Gallery in March.

This set of 31 prints is considered by many to be one of Picasso's most important graphic productions. In them, the artist depicts animals, birds, insects and other creatures. Begun in 1936 for the picture dealer and publisher, Ambroise Vollard, Picasso created these images to accompany the classic 18th century text, *Histoire Naturelle*, by the eminent French naturalist, George-Louis Leclerc de Buffon. Combining a wide variety of techniques, including lift-ground aquatint, etching and drypoint, Picasso produced images of great clarity, immediacy and beauty.

The prints, accompanied by extracts from Buffon's text, were eventually published in 1942 by Martin Fabiana (following Vollard's death in 1939).

Animals appear frequently in Picasso's work - most importantly the bull, horse and pigeon, all of which had great personal significance for him and are evident in his powerful *Guernica* painting of 1937, executed at the same time as his illustrations for *Histoire Naturelle* were underway. Of the many creatures drawn by Picasso in *Histoire Naturelle*, the bull, his favourite, is the only animal to occur twice.

Picasso, *Histoire Naturelle* is one of an extensive range of exhibitions in the National Touring Exhibitions programme bringing the highest quality art within reach of communities throughout Britain and striving to open new doors and enable even more people to experience and appreciate art.