

P I C A S S O

B L A C K A N D W H I T E

OCTOBER 5, 2012–JANUARY 23, 2013

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Teacher Resource Unit

A NOTE TO TEACHERS

Few artists have exerted as great an influence over subsequent generations as Pablo Picasso, who is renowned for his innovative explorations in a prodigious variety of styles and techniques. *Picasso Black and White* is the first exhibition in a major museum setting to explore the artist's recurrent use of black and white across his prolific career. Organized chronologically, the exhibition traces his continued return to this deceptively simple palette in his Rose and Blue period paintings, investigations into Cubism, neoclassical and Surrealist-inspired figure paintings, forceful scenes of war, allegorical still lifes, homages to old master canvases, novel interpretations of historical subjects, and the highly charged works of his twilight years. Comprising 118 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, the exhibition is drawn from museums across Europe and the United States, as well as private collections, including those of the Picasso family. The exhibition is organized by Carmen Giménez, Stephen and Nan Swid Curator of Twentieth-Century Art, with assistance from Karole Vail, Associate Curator, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

This Resource Unit focuses on various aspects of Picasso's work and provides techniques for exploring both the visual arts and other areas of the curriculum. Before bringing your class to the Guggenheim, we invite you to visit the exhibition, read the guide, and decide which aspects of the exhibition are most relevant to your students. For more information, and to schedule a visit for your class, please call 212 423 3637.

For the educator, *Picasso Black and White* provides a perfect opportunity to invite students of all ages to join an exciting and meaningful journey into a visually rich and stimulating world.

This exhibition is sponsored by Bank of America.

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Pablo Picasso in front of *The Kitchen* (*La cuisine*, 1948) in his rue des Grands-Augustins studio, Paris.
© Herbert List/Magnum Photos

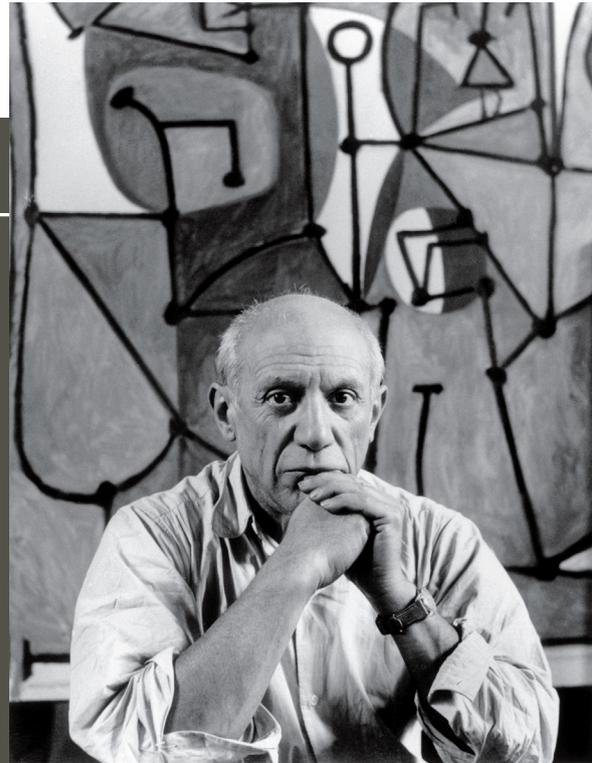
< ABOUT THE ARTIST >

Pablo Picasso is widely considered the most influential artist of the twentieth century, and his lifelong creative invention repeatedly changed the course of visual thinking and art history. He was born in 1881 into a middle-class family in Málaga, Spain. His father, a painter, teacher, and museum curator, was a major influence in Picasso's formative years as an artist. In September 1891 his family settled in La Coruña, Galicia, where his father taught drawing at the Instituto Da Guarda; Picasso also studied at the school. When Picasso was still a boy his father handed him his own paint brushes, stating that his son—who had demonstrated a remarkable talent for drawing and painting—was the better artist.

Moving to Barcelona in 1895, Picasso enrolled in the city's Escuela de Bellas Artes (School of Fine Arts). He began frequenting a new cafe, Els Quatre Gats (The Four Cats), where forward-thinking artists and writers gathered. There he met painters who introduced him to the work of the French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901). On February 1, 1900, Picasso's first exhibition opened in the cafe.¹

In 1900 Picasso visited Paris for the first time, soaking up the cafe culture and nightlife of the bohemian arts capital. He settled in Paris soon after, quickly becoming part of a circle of writers, actors, musicians, and artists. Here Picasso began a lifelong process of experimentation and innovation.

His style developed from the Blue period (1901–04), characterized by its predominantly



blue tones, melancholy themes, and forlorn characters, to the Rose period (1905) with a brighter, more naturalistic palette and scenes of circus and carnival performers in intimate settings. In 1907, after he painted *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, his pioneering investigations into Cubism introduced a revolutionary system of painting—one showing multiple views of the same object simultaneously in deconstructed, geometric compositions using austere, predominantly gray tones. During World War I (1914–18) Picasso created his first work for the theater. He designed the scenery and costumes for the ballet *Parade*, directed by the founder of the Ballets Russes, Sergei Diaghilev (1872–1929). In the years after the war, Picasso's style changed again. He produced figures that harkened back to the classical traditions of Greece and Rome.

By 1924 Picasso was a highly successful artist. He became interested in the new ideas developed by the Surrealist movement,

which sought to fuse the world of the subconscious with reality. He collaborated with the Surrealists but would never become an official member of the movement. In the midst of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), warplanes supporting General Francisco Franco’s Nationalist forces carried out a devastating aerial attack on the Basque town of Guernica. Outraged by the bombing and the inhumanity of war, Picasso painted *Guernica* (1937), a testament to the horrors of war conveyed in black, white, and grays. *Guernica* remains one of the most moving and powerful antiwar paintings in history.

In adopting this restricted palette, Picasso was also faithful to a centuries-long Spanish tradition, following in the footsteps of earlier masters whose use of the color black was predominant in their canvases—artists such as El Greco, Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán, José de Ribera, and Francisco de Goya (who made black paintings in his old age, as did Picasso until the very end of his life).

Picasso’s subject matter was far-reaching, ranging from historical and political subjects to common, everyday objects. The human figure was a central theme in many of his works. His numerous portraits of women include those of his companions, who were always a source of inspiration.

During World War II, while German forces occupied Paris, Picasso remained in the city. Because his artistic style did not conform to the Nazi ideal, he did not exhibit during this time. Instead he retreated to his studio and continued to paint and sculpt.

The postwar years for Picasso marked a period of daring experimentation in lithography and ceramics. Although he had made prints throughout his career, he did not concentrate on printmaking until the late 1940s, when he developed new techniques. He brought a similar energy to ceramics, and his unconventional handling of the medium opened up new possibilities. During the 1950s and 1960s Picasso continued to build upon earlier themes and styles and never stopped exploring new materials and forms of expression.

During his later years Picasso continued to produce paintings at a prodigious pace. He devoted particular attention to reinterpreting masterpieces from the history of art. He was now the old master of his day and found inspiration in the works of great masters of the past, including Velázquez, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and Eugène Delacroix.

During his long career, Picasso produced roughly one hundred thousand works of art, ranging from paintings and sculptures to ceramics, prints, and drawings. Although he is perhaps best known for his paintings, sculpture was similarly an important lifelong pursuit, and his three dimensional works—in mediums including bronze, plaster, cement, metal, and found objects—represent some of his most radical and personal oeuvre. More than any other artist of his time, Picasso made viewers and critics alike question traditional approaches to creating works of art. He continued to work prolifically until his death in Mougins, France, in 1973 at the age of ninety-one.

Colors, like features, follow the changes of the emotions.²

< WOMAN IRONING >

This work was created fairly early in Picasso's career, during what would come to be known as his *blue period*. At this time Picasso was living in poverty and struggling to survive as an artist. As he looked at the city life around him in Barcelona and Paris, he saw many unhappy and poor people who were outcasts from society. They became the subjects of his art, painted in a palette of blues, greens, and grays to add to the somber mood.

The woman depicted here is bent over her ironing. She uses a heavy, old-fashioned iron, which would require constant reheating at an open fireplace nearby. A bowl on the table holds water; beside it is a cloth for sprinkling water on the fabric as she irons. She is agonizingly thin and hunched over with the effort of placing pressure on the iron. Paintings of women ironing were not uncommon at the time, as more and more artists had begun to depict the working class. But unlike other variations on this theme, *Woman Ironing* presents an icon rather than a scene: Picasso shows us a single figure, focused on her task, against a background that is nearly erased.

Ironing and washing clothes in laundries was a common occupation of women in late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Europe. It was a difficult job, physically demanding, performed in a hot, crowded room, and poorly paid. Picasso spent a number of years early in his career painting the poor, including hungry children, street musicians, and circus families. These paintings provide

glimpses into the world of the impoverished more than one hundred years ago. Picasso may have felt that, as a poor artist, he was showing his own world. He may also have found suffering and endurance in the face of hardship to be inspiring. His good friend Jaime Sabartés once wrote, "Picasso believes that art emanates from sadness and pain."³

Art historians suggest that Picasso was more interested in the romantic agony of this woman's situation than in offering a social critique, believing that her situation, which she faces without complaint, ennobled her. *Woman Ironing* is sometimes compared with El Greco's images of martyrs, with their elongated bodies and faces and clear outlines, in paintings Picasso first saw as a fourteen-year-old boy visiting the Museo del Prado in Madrid with his father.



Woman Ironing (La repasseuse), Bateau-Lavoir, Paris, spring 1904. Oil on canvas, 116.2 x 73 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Thannhauser Collection, Gift, Justin K. Thannhauser 78.2514.41. © 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Kristopher McKay © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Woman Ironing*, 1904

- ▶ Pose like the woman in this painting. Hold your pose and notice where the tension is in your body. Describe your sensations.
- ▶ How might this woman feel? If she could speak, what might she tell you about her work? About her life? About her hopes for the future?
- ▶ There has been much speculation as to why Picasso so persistently painted in blue from 1901 to 1904. One theory is that he was simply too poor to buy a variety of colors, but it is more probable that he was using color to show emotion. Describe how Picasso's use of color adds to the impact of this work.

EXPLORATIONS

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- *Woman Ironing* was made during an era of great social change: as a result of the Industrial Revolution, people had moved to the cities in droves, resulting in great poverty and a low standard of living. What types of social changes are happening now, more than one hundred years later? What type of person would you choose to represent these changes? Paint a portrait or write a poem about this character, capturing their daily experience.
- As the turn of the twentieth century approached, several artists explored the theme of women ironing, including Edgar Degas and Édouard Manet. Look at Degas's *Women Ironing* (ca. 1884–86)—you will be able to find a reproduction of it online—and compare and contrast it with Picasso's interpretation.⁴
- The electric irons of today are very different from the iron in Picasso's time. Research how ironing was accomplished before electricity and permanent-press fabrics.
- During the 1880s in the United States, photographer Jacob Riis (1849–1914) documented the plight of poor children, immigrants, and tenement dwellers on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. His book *How the Other Half Lives* became a pivotal work that precipitated much-needed reforms. It is still in print and also available on the Internet. Compare Picasso's *Woman Ironing* with Riis's photographs. Which images do you find most sympathetic? Why?

*In my opinion to search means nothing in painting. To find is the thing.*⁵

< ACCORDIONIST >

During his long career, Picasso experimented with many different artistic styles. Among his groundbreaking innovations was the introduction of Cubism with his pivotal painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), which forged the way toward a new mode of artistic representation. Cubism is widely regarded as the most influential artistic style of the twentieth century because it took bold steps toward abstraction and appeared so extreme in its time that it became the prime example for revolutionary art movements that followed. Inspired by the volumetric treatment of form by the French Post-Impressionist artist Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), who is often described as the “father” of modern art,⁶ Picasso and Georges Braque (1882–1963) embarked on Cubism’s first stage of development around 1909–10. Although both artists worked independently in their own studios, they met frequently to discuss their progress and learn from each other. During the summer of 1911 they spent time together in the south of France, in Céret, a popular artists’ colony. They compared their work and debated new possibilities, furthering the new style together. Some of their paintings are so similar that many critics find it difficult to tell them apart. As Braque would recall, “Picasso is Spanish and I’m French: we know all the differences that entails, but during those years the differences didn’t count.”⁷ The Cubist style emphasized the flat, two-dimensional surface of the picture plane, rejecting the traditional techniques of perspective, foreshortening, and modeling, as well as time-honored theories of art as imitation of nature. Cubist painters were not bound to copying form, texture, color, and space; instead, they presented a new reality in paintings that



Accordionist (L'accordéoniste), Céret, summer 1911. Oil on canvas, 130.2 x 89.5 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, By gift 37.537. © 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Kristopher McKay © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York

depicted radically fragmented objects whose several sides were seen simultaneously. The monochromatic color scheme was suited to the presentation of complex, multiple views of the object, which was now reduced to overlapping opaque and transparent planes.

At its climax, Braque and Picasso brought Analytic Cubism almost to the point of complete abstraction. *Accordionist*, painted during that summer of 1911, is a baffling composition that one of its former owners mistook for a landscape because of the inscription “Céret” on the reverse. With diligence, one can distinguish the general outlines of the seated accordionist, the indication of the musician’s head in the upper center of the canvas, and the centrally located folds of the accordion and its keys. For this painting, as with all Cubist works, the total image must be “thought” as much as “seen.”

VIEW + DISCUSS

Before showing students *Accordionist*, tell them that they are going to see a work by the artist Pablo Picasso that he painted while staying in a town in southern France during the summer of 1911—more than a hundred years ago. On the Internet, browse photos of musicians playing the accordion. Ask students to imagine and perhaps create a list or sketch of what they expect to see in the painting *Accordionist*.

Show: *Accordionist*, 1911

- ▶ What do you notice?
- ▶ How is the painting different from what you imagined? Is it similar to what you expected in any way?
- ▶ How is this painting different from traditional portraits?
- ▶ What clues does Picasso provide to let us know that the subject of this painting is a musician playing the accordion?

EXPLORATIONS

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- The Cubists developed a new way of depicting space from multiple and mixed perspectives. They believed that there was no single fixed view of nature, and that objects and the spaces surrounding them (figure and ground) should be given equal importance and broken into geometric components or facets.

To make your own Cubist work, set up a still life composed of everyday objects. Bowls, bottles, jugs, fruits, and musical instruments are common subjects in Cubist works. Draw the still life from several different perspectives, overlapping the various views on a single sheet of paper. You may want to move to the left or right, or vary your perspective by raising or lowering your viewpoint. You will now have a layered drawing reflecting multiple perspectives. Then, using shades and tints of a single color, emphasize the portions of the drawing that appeal to you most. Although your drawing was based on observation, the finished drawing may bear little resemblance to its original inspiration; nevertheless your work is a record of your multiple perceptions.

- In order to “see” *Accordionist*, the viewer must piece together the fragments and clues that Picasso provides into a vision of a person. The total image must be “thought” in order to be “seen,” and each person will see it differently.

To demonstrate this, place a piece of tracing paper over an 8 1/2 x 11 inch photocopy of Picasso’s *Accordionist*. “Find” the accordionist and create your own portrait in pencil on the tracing paper, using the photocopy as a starting point. When done, remove the photocopy and replace it with a white sheet of paper underneath so that only your work can be seen. Discuss the varied interpretations with your classmates.

- Some of the paintings that Braque and Picasso created are so similar that even critics and art historians have difficulty telling them apart. In 1911 Braque painted *The Portuguese*.⁸ You will be able to find a reproduction of it online. Compare the two paintings. There are many similarities; are there differences as well?

This bull is a bull and this horse is a horse. . . . If you give a meaning to certain things in my paintings it may be very true, but it is not my idea to give this meaning. What ideas and conclusions you have got I obtained too, but instinctively, unconsciously. I make the painting for the painting. I paint the objects for what they are.⁹

< HEAD OF A HORSE >

On April 26, 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, warplanes acting in support of General Francisco Franco bombed and almost completely destroyed the defenseless city of Guernica on a crowded market day. This early example of modern mass bombing was a grim forecast of what would happen on a larger scale in World War II.

Six days later Picasso, intensely moved by this disastrous event in the land of his youth, began work on his huge painting *Guernica*.¹⁰ The finished work was shown at the Spanish Pavilion of the Paris Exposition that same year, and it was then housed in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, on extended loan from the artist. It is now on view at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, where it permanently resides.

Guernica is Picasso's major statement on the horrors of war, and a masterpiece of the twentieth century. It is a complex painting, but our understanding of it is helped by the preservation of forty-five preliminary studies, together with seven photographs of the painting at various stages of its realization.

Head of a Horse, Sketch for Guernica was one of the many preliminary works created in preparation for *Guernica*. The horse would figure prominently as the central figure in *Guernica*, run through with a javelin and wrenched in agony. Some have interpreted the horse as Franco's Nationalism, with Picasso predicting its downfall. But another interpretation has also been proposed—that the horse represents the bombing victims as a helpless animal dying a senseless death. Picasso has heightened the effect of agony by turning the animal's tongue into a sort of dagger protruding from its jaws.

Picasso repeatedly returned to black and white when he had an urgent message to convey, removing color from his painting to avoid distraction.¹¹ In *Guernica*, his stark and somber depiction of the disasters of war resembles the grainy images found in newspaper reports of the attack.¹² *Guernica* has become a universal and powerful symbol warning humanity against the suffering and devastation of war.



Head of a Horse, Sketch for Guernica (Tête de cheval, étude pour Guernica), Grands-Augustins, Paris, May 2, 1937. Oil on canvas, 65 x 92 cm. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Bequest of the artist. © 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © Archivo fotográfico Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Head of a Horse, Sketch for Guernica*, 1937

- ▶ Describe Picasso's use of black and white in this work.
- ▶ Find a photograph of a horse's head. Compare Picasso's *Head of a Horse, Sketch for Guernica* with the photograph. How has Picasso distorted reality to create emotion? Try to articulate the emotions that this image is conveying to you.
- ▶ View the reproduction of Picasso's grand painting *Guernica* at <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/coleccion/coleccion-1/sala-206/guernica500.jpg>. Compare *Head of a Horse, Sketch for Guernica* with the horse in *Guernica*. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

EXPLORATIONS

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- *Guernica* has become an emblem warning of the dangers and devastation of war. Picasso used paint to express his protest against brutality, but in the ensuing decades new communication methods have been perfected. If you wanted to protest an injustice, what medium would you use? Create a work that protests something that you see as unjust. Use either traditional methods, or newer forms such as video, digital imaging, or social media to share your views.
- Although for much of his life Picasso remained outside political debates, in 1945 he stated:
*[The artist] is also a political being, constantly aware of the heartbreaking, passionate, or delightful things that happen in the world, shaping himself completely in their image. How could it be possible to feel no interest in other people, and with a cool indifference to detach yourself from the very life which they bring to you so abundantly? No, painting is not done to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war for attack and defense against the enemy.*¹³

Do you agree or disagree that it is the artist's responsibility to speak out against injustice? Explain. Do you agree or disagree that art can be a powerful force for shaping and influencing political attitudes? Explain.

- In the quote that opens this section, Picasso states his unwillingness to define the symbols used in his work. Why might an artist not reveal the meaning of the symbols used in his/her art? Do you agree or disagree with this stance? Explain.
- The conflict between bull and horse is one that interested Picasso throughout his life. At the age of nine, he watched a bullfight with his father and recorded his impressions in a drawing. In bullfighting, Picasso saw a mythological symbol embodying dramatic suffering, grief, and rage. The drama of ferocious struggle became a recurring theme in his work.

Create your own work that uses an animal or animals to symbolize forces and emotions. First discuss what qualities you associate with different animals, then make your own work—a drawing, poem, story, or any form you choose—that uses an animal or animals as metaphorical symbols.

*I'm going to make a canvas out of that—that is, out of nothing.*¹⁴

< THE KITCHEN >

Sometimes a work of art “percolates” within an artist for many years. The relationship between Picasso and Guillaume Apollinaire (1880–1918), a poet, writer, and supporter of Cubism, provides such an example. Early in the twentieth century, Picasso, one of the inventors of Cubism, and Apollinaire, who wrote *Les peintres cubistes* and coined the term *Surrealism*, met, forged a close friendship, and between them laid the foundations of modernism in twentieth-century art and literature. Apollinaire’s death in the 1918 flu epidemic did not diminish his importance to Picasso, who continued to draw on the poet for inspiration.

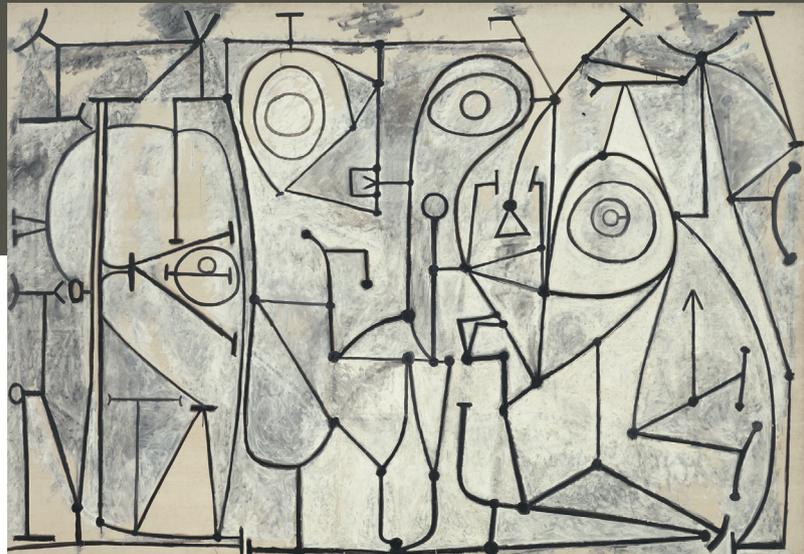
On the ten-year anniversary of Apollinaire’s death, Picasso was invited to design a monument to the poet. He composed a series of simple line drawings on white paper, inspired by his interest in astronomical charts.¹⁵ His friend, the sculptor Julio González (1876–1942), transposed these drawings into four welded metal sculptures, using iron rods to replicate the drawings’ black lines.¹⁶ However, Picasso’s design for his monument to Apollinaire was

rejected because it was deemed too abstract to be the basis for a suitable memorial.

Picasso painted *The Kitchen* in November 1948, on the thirty-year anniversary of the death of Apollinaire and just seven days after Apollinaire’s widow asked Picasso to revisit this earlier memorial project. *The Kitchen*’s wiry linearity evokes Picasso’s drawings for the monument to Apollinaire. Picasso used his kitchen, a large, white, empty room as a subject in order to make a painting, he reported, “out of nothing.” Looking at the lines set against a flat gray background, we can imagine a variety of utensils and furniture. Spanish tiles, bird cages, plates, and stove hotplates have all been identified in the painting.¹⁷

The Kitchen completes a path begun much earlier. Over a period of many years, Picasso had worked with extraordinary dedication to explore, in various mediums, the full potential of the dot-and-line graphic style that reached a high point in this large, predominantly monochromatic work.

The Kitchen (La cuisine), Grands-Augustins, Paris, November 9, 1948. Oil on canvas, 175.3 x 250 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Nelson A. Rockefeller Bequest, 1980. © 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY



VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *The Kitchen*, 1948

- ▶ [Educators: Show this work to your class, but do not divulge the title.] What do you notice about this large composition? If you were to choose a title for this work, what would it be? What do you see in the work that supports your idea for a title.
- ▶ [Educators: Tell students that Picasso titled this work *The Kitchen*.] What connections can you make between this abstract work and the artist's title for it? In looking at the work, can you find forms that might be associated with a kitchen?
- ▶ Some of Picasso's dot-and-line works have been realized as sculpture. You can view Picasso's *Project for a Monument to Guillaume Apollinaire* (1962, after a 1928 original) on the website of the Museum of Modern Art, New York (www.moma.org). What similarities are there between *The Kitchen* and this maquette? What are the differences?
- ▶ *The Kitchen* uses a dot-and-line style that Picasso likened to astronomical charts. Find images of astronomical charts in books or on the Internet. What do you think Picasso might have found appealing or interesting about them? In what ways are they similar to or different from Picasso's painting?

EXPLORATIONS

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- Guillaume Apollinaire, one of the foremost poets of the early twentieth century, formed a close friendship with Picasso. Research Apollinaire's contributions and biography. What character traits did he share with Picasso? What common interests and philosophies might have led them to become good friends?
- Three years after the death of Apollinaire, Picasso was invited by a committee of friends of the poet to design a monument to be erected at his gravesite. Although Picasso prepared and presented several ideas, the committee rejected them all as unsuitable.¹⁸

Discuss the different types of memorials and commemorations that help us to remember those who have died. A memorial can range from the offering of a single flower to erecting a large-scale permanent monument. It can honor an event, a person, a group of people, or even a beloved pet. Think about something or someone you would like to pay tribute to. Sketch the design and consider:

- What material(s) will it be made from?
- How large or small will it be?
- Will it be permanent or last for only a short time?
- Where is the best site for it?
- What inscription would you add?

When you are done, share your plan with your classmates and compare the various possibilities.

- Create your own work of art titled *The Kitchen*. Choose a style and materials that support your unique and personal feelings about the subject.

If someone set out to copy *Las Meninas* . . . I would try to do it in my way, forgetting Velázquez. . . . So, little by little, I would paint my *Meninas* which would appear detestable to the professional copyist; they wouldn't be the ones he would believe he had seen in Velázquez's canvas, but they would be "my" *Meninas*.¹⁹

< THE MAIDS OF HONOR >

Some of Picasso's most brilliant work of the 1950s came as a result of interpreting masterpieces by other painters, carefully studying and dissecting them, and then coming up with his own totally original works. In 1957 Picasso began a series of paintings based on Diego Velázquez's 1656 masterpiece *Las Meninas*, a work he had admired since his first visit to the Museo del Prado in Madrid when he was just fourteen years old. In order to fully focus on Velázquez's composition and subjects, he moved his studio to an unused third-floor room in his home, where he could lock the door for greater privacy.²⁰ He worked there for nearly four months, examining every aspect of Velázquez's painting and producing more than forty works, in an "exhaustive study of form, rhythm, color and movement."²¹ The version in this exhibition is the first, largest, and most complete of the variations.

When asked about his interest in Velázquez's masterpiece, Picasso emphasized the paradoxes in it, noting that it is both a self-portrait of

the artist at work, standing next to the canvas in his studio, and a portrait of Spain's royal family, King Philip IV (1605–1665), Queen Mariana, and their five-year-old daughter Margarita.²² Velázquez's prominent depiction of himself, paused in the act of painting, suggests that the creation of art requires not only great skill, but also thoughtfulness.²³

In Picasso's *The Maids of Honor*, new characters take the place of those in Velázquez's canvas. The original dog, a Spanish Mastiff, is replaced by a Basset Hound, similar to the one that was part of the Picasso household. Picasso has opened the windows, allowing light to flood in, and has included the shadows of pigeons that lived on the terrace just outside his studio. Picasso has made himself at home in the Velázquez painting, refurbishing the place to make it cozier and more congenial to his own tastes, hanging up family mementos, rearranging things, and most of all exerting his own unique approach and style.²⁴



The Maids of Honor (Las Meninas, after Velázquez)
(*Les Ménines, vue d'ensemble, d'après Velázquez*),
La Californie, August 17, 1957. Oil on canvas,
194 x 260 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of
the artist, 1968. © 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/
Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.
Photo: Gassull Fotografia

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *The Maids of Honor (Las Meninas, after Velázquez)*, 1957

- ▶ This is a complicated painting, with lots going on. What things can you decipher? What parts are puzzling?

Show: Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656:
<http://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/galeria-on-line/galeria-on-line/zoom/2/obra/la-familia-de-felipe-iv-o-las-meninas/oimg/0/>

- ▶ Picasso based his *The Maids of Honor* on this 1656 masterwork by the Spanish artist Diego Velázquez (1599–1660). Compare these two works and create a list of all the similarities you find. Then create another list that elaborates on the differences. Read the quote that begins this section. How has Picasso made this work *his*?
- ▶ What about Velázquez’s painting might have appealed to Picasso as a basis for new work?
- ▶ How do you think Velázquez would have felt about Picasso’s interpretation of his work? Imagine a conversation between the two great artists and create a dialogue between them.

EXPLORATIONS

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- In *The Maids of Honor*, Picasso used a full range of values, from bright white to the darkest black. How many grays can you find? Go through discarded newspapers, magazines, junk mail, and wrappers, harvesting a collection of “found” grays, and create a collage assembled from the materials you have amassed. On a separate piece of paper, draw your collage using only pencils, trying to replicate the full range of grays in your collage.
- Although the choice of painting in only black, white, and gray may at first seem limiting, the options are actually infinite. Gray can be produced by mixing various proportions of black and white paint, but there are also blue-grays, green-grays, brown-grays, and even grays tinged with yellow or red. Rich grays can also be obtained by mixing complementary colors (those that oppose each other on the color wheel, such as green and red) and then creating shades (by adding black) or tints (by adding white).

Explore how many different grays you can produce. On a sheet of 18 x 24 inch paper, create grays by mixing only black and white paint. On a second sheet, try adding a small amount of a color to your grays and notice the variations you can create. On a third sheet, create grays by mixing complementary colors. Notice the similarities and differences between all your experiments.

Now that you have explored how many grays you can produce, try creating an abstract work, or like Picasso, an interior—perhaps your own room—but limit yourself to using only grays.

- Velázquez is not the only artist to have inspired Picasso. Picasso also used works by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), and Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), among many others, as springboards for his own work. Choose a work of art that you admire. What drew you to it? What more would you like to know? First research your selection, then create your own responses in any art form.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

- Barr, Alfred H., Jr. *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1946.
- Giménez, Carmen, ed. *Picasso Black and White*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum and DelMonico Books•Prestel, 2012.
- Karmel, Pepe. *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Jaffé, Hans L. C. *Pablo Picasso*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.
- Léal, Brigitte, et al. *The Ultimate Picasso*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000.
- Richardson, John. *A Life of Picasso, Volume 1: 1881–1906*. New York: Random House, 1991.
- Richardson, John. *A Life of Picasso, Volume 2: 1907–1917*. New York: Random House, 1996.
- Rubin, William. *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective*. Exh. cat. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1946.

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS

- Heslewood, Juliet. *Introducing Picasso*. Toronto: Little, Brown, 1993.
- Hodge, Susie. *Pablo Picasso*. Lives of the Artists. Milwaukee, Wis.: World Almanac Library, 2004.
- Kelley, True. *Pablo Picasso: Breaking All the Rules*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 2002.
- Loria, Stefano. *Picasso*. Masters of Art. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1995.
- Meadow, Matthew. *Art for Young People: Pablo Picasso*. New York: Sterling, 1996.
- Raboff, Ernest. *Pablo Picasso*. New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1982.

VIDEOS

- The Mystery of Picasso (Le Mystère Picasso)*. Directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot. New York: Milestone Film and Video, 2003.
- Pablo Picasso*. Directed by Didier Baussy-Oulianoff. West Long Branch, N.J.: Kultur, 1985.
- Picasso: Magic Sex Death*. Directed by Waldemar Januszczak. Ontario: American Home Treasures, 2003.

WEBSITES

- Picasso: Love & War 1935–1945* Education Resource, National Gallery of Victoria
http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/picasso/education/ed_JTE_ITG.html
- El Museu Picasso, Barcelona
<http://www.bcn.cat/museupicasso>

NOTES

- 1 Susie Hodge, *Pablo Picasso*, Lives of the Artists (Milwaukee, Wis.: World Almanac Library, 2004), p. 11.
- 2 Picasso, in Dore Ashton, *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), p. 8.
- 3 Quoted in Ariella Budick, “Picasso, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Museum of Modern Art, New York,” *Financial Times*, April 29, 2010, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/f02cc45a-53a8-11df-aba0-00144feab49a.html#axzz24OPdSnP7>.

- 4 Edgar Degas, *Women Ironing (Repasseuses)*, ca. 1884–86. Oil on canvas, 76 x 81.5 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
- 5 Picasso, in Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 263.
- 6 See Karen Rosenberg, “Maverick, You Cast a Giant Shadow,” review of *Cézanne and Beyond* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, *New York Times*, March 5, 2009, Art and Design section.
- 7 Quoted in Alex Danchev, *Georges Braque: A Life* (New York: Arcade, 2005), p. 117.
- 8 Georges Braque, *The Portuguese (Le Portugais)*, 1911. Oil on canvas, 116.8 x 81 cm. Kunstmuseum Basel.
- 9 Picasso, quoted in “Guernica: Testimony of War,” in the “Treasures of the World” series on PBS.org, www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/a_nav/guernica_nav/gnav_level_1/5meaning_guerfrm.html.
- 10 The following discussion of *Guernica* draws on Anthony Blunt, *Picasso's Guernica* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 7–38.
- 11 See Dore Ashton, “If the Lines and Forms Rhyme . . .,” in *Picasso Black and White*, exh. cat. (New York: Guggenheim Museum and DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2012), pp. 61–62.
- 12 See Olivier Berggruen, “Picasso Monochrome,” in *Picasso Black and White*, p. 67.
- 13 Quoted in Blunt, *Picasso's Guernica*, pp. 56–57.
- 14 Picasso, quoted in Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 220.
- 15 *Picasso: Sculptor Painter*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), p. 201.
- 16 Gallery label text for *Focus: Picasso Sculpture*, July 3–November 3, 2008, www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3ATA%3AE%3Aex4620&page_number=12&template_id=1&sort_order=1.
- 17 “Politics and Art, 1943–1953,” in Carsten-Peter Warncke, “Pablo Picasso,” www.all-art.org/art_20th_century/picasso13.html.
- 18 Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work, 1914–18* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 221–22.
- 19 Picasso, quoted in *Museu Picasso Guide* (Barcelona: Museu Picasso, 1998), p. 94.
- 20 James C. Harris, “Las Meninas (The Maids of Honor),” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 68, no. 2 (February 2011), <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=211013#ref-yai05009-1>.
- 21 See www.bcn.cat/museupicasso/en/visiting/permanent-collection-flash.html.
- 22 Harris, “Las Meninas (The Maids of Honor).”
- 23 *Artist's Work/Artist's Voice: Picasso, A Guide for Educators* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006), http://www.moma.org/modernteachers/files/Picasso_Full.pdf.
- 24 Michel Leiris, “Picasso and *Las Meninas* by Velázquez” (1959), in Marilyn McCully, ed., *A Picasso Anthology: Documents, Criticism, Reminiscences* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), pp. 255–56.

BLUE PERIOD

The period between 1901 and 1904 when Picasso painted essentially monochromatic paintings in shades of blue and blue-green, only occasionally warmed by other colors. They frequently depict people living in poverty and infirmity.

CUBISM

A style of painting invented by Picasso with *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* in 1907. From 1908 to 1914 Picasso collaborated with Georges Braque to develop the style in which objects are represented as a series of flat geometric forms seen from multiple points of view.

MONOCHROMATIC

Having tones of one color.

SHADE

A color to which black or another dark hue has been added to make it darker.

SURREALISM

A twentieth-century art movement in art and literature that sought to express what is in the subconscious mind.

TINT

A color to which white has been added.

VALUE

The lightness or darkness of a color.