

Pablo Picasso: The Legacy of Youth

13 March – 17 July 2022

Large Print Text

INTRODUCTION

“We all know that art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realise truth.” Picasso, 1923

This exhibition traces the early progress of one of the most astonishingly skilled artists in human history.

Between 1880 and 1914, a generation of artists emerged who defined themselves as Modernists. Pablo Picasso can be considered the most prominent among them, as he transformed the ways in which the world could be depicted. He was quintessentially of the modern age.

Yet Picasso grew up with the outlook and values of a previous age, both in his understanding of art and his view of society. Additionally, he absorbed the heritage of old Spain and never left this behind. In this sense, he was formed ‘between ages’ and his art and life reveal this complex, even

contrary combination of values. Past and present, tradition and modernity were fused in his person.

Picasso was precocious. He produced competent drawings from the age of nine, and he was a fully professional artist in his teens. The earliest work in this exhibition was made when he was thirteen. Before he was thirty, he had turned the international art scene upside down. He remained spectacularly productive through a long life and became one of the most famous cultural personalities in the world to his death in 1973.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Academic Study

17 January 1896

Production place: Barcelona, Spain

Charcoal and Conté crayon on laid paper

Museu Picasso Barcelona (Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970)

Picasso's observational drawing skills were already highly developed by his early teens, greatly helped by his father's teaching. Regardless

of this intense parental coaching, however, the young artist demonstrates a very unusual, and potent, raw talent. This example was drawn when he was fifteen.

BEGINNINGS

“There are no child prodigies in painting, as there are in music (...) My very first drawings could never have appeared in an exhibition of children’s drawings. The child’s awkwardness and naïveté were almost completely absent from them. I very quickly moved beyond the stage of that marvellous vision. When I was that kid’s age, I was doing academic drawings. The attention to detail, the precision in them frighten me.” Picasso, 1943

Picasso was born in Malaga in 1881, into a tight-knit middle class family. He had two younger sisters, Lola and Concepción (who died when she was eight years old) and a proud and supportive mother, María Picasso y López, who carefully kept and preserved virtually every piece of art her son produced. His father, José Ruiz y Blasco was a teacher in the local School of Arts and Crafts. He pushed his son hard to develop his talent for drawing.

The family moved to Barcelona in 1896, where the teenage Picasso studied at the School of Fine Arts. Barcelona suited him: it had deep roots as the vibrant capital of Catalonia, along with timeless historical continuity as a former metropolitan hub of the Roman Empire. Now, at the dawn of the twentieth century, Barcelona was a hive of modernisation and a growing industrial powerhouse. Combining ancient tradition, strong and distinct local customs, and a thrusting modernity, it perfectly complemented the young artist's outlook.

Around 1900, as his career took off, the artist started using his mother's maiden name professionally. Perhaps 'Picasso' had a more prestigious tone than the more commonplace 'Ruiz'.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Portrait of Mateu Fernandez de Soto
c.1898
Production place: Spain
Crayon on paper
Sainsbury Centre Collection

Picasso made a number of drawings and paintings of his friend Fernandez de Soto. This one shows de Soto as a dapper (if slightly provincial) young Spaniard. The powerful, confident pencil strokes reveal a knowledge of Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, and perhaps also of Monet's draftsmanship.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
The Artist's Father, Joaquim Mir, Carles
Casagemas and Various Caricatures
1899–1900
Production place: Barcelona, Spain
Conté crayon on paper
Museu Picasso Barcelona (Gift of Pablo Picasso,
1970)

While the young Picasso had been pushed hard by his father, he rarely talked about him in later life. Perhaps this was because Picasso's father was very much a traditionalist – and unlikely to have approved of his son's experimentation and move into Impressionism. This means that while the father was perhaps vital in developing the powerful technical skills that underlay his son's career, his influence ended there. From early adolescence, Picasso moved decisively away from his father's artistic world.

Francisco Goya (1746–1828)

Mariano Ceballos, also known as "The Indian",
kills the Bull while riding his Horse, from La
Tauromaquia

1815–1816

Production Place: Spain

Etching and aquatint

Private Collection

Goya, like Picasso after him, was a prolific printmaker. La Tauromaquia is a series of thirty-three etchings that captures the drama and danger

of bull fighting. Picasso shared this interest in the bullfight and was greatly inspired by Goya's work after first encountering it on a trip to The Prado Museum in 1895. The two artists shared an affinity for the spectacle of the Spanish tradition and the bull became a recurrent symbol in their work. Goya even dressed in bull fighting attire for a self-portrait and signed a letter as Francisco de los Toros (Francisco of the Bulls).

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Corrida [Bullfight]

2 September 1894

Production place: A Coruña, Spain

Ink and graphite pencil on paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris

Pablo Picasso Acceptance in lieu, 1979. MP401

Like many Spaniards of his generation, the young Picasso attended bull fights with his father from an early age. As this work shows, he remained interested in everything it symbolised in Spanish culture. His use of the bull, and the mythic Minotaur, was a frequent element within his

symbolism. Earlier artists had also shown an interest in the bull fight – not least Goya, one of Picasso's early role models.

THE IMPRESSIONIST WORLD

“A picture is not thought out and settled beforehand. While it is being done it changes as one’s thoughts change. And when it is finished, it still goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it.” Picasso, 1935.

At the turn of the century, Picasso lived between Barcelona and Paris (then the unchallenged centre of the art world) before finally settling in the French capital in 1903. Searching for his own mode of expression, he absorbed every art movement around him. First and foremost, he engaged with the French Impressionists and the various groups they gave birth to.

The Impressionists were hugely important. The first Impressionist exhibition, in 1874, caused a sensation. Not only was the work radical, the exhibition itself broke the rules. It was organised directly by the artists, bypassing the supposedly all-powerful Salon - the annual exhibition staged by the Paris Académie des Beaux-Arts.

Seven more Impressionist exhibitions followed in the years until 1886. Leading artists included Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Auguste Pierre Renoir, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Berthe Morisot. Then, moving into the 1890s, other artists built on Impressionist ideas. Later known as the Post-Impressionists, they included Georges Seurat, Paul Gauguin, Pierre Bonnard, and Édouard Vuillard.

Picasso's style was deeply influenced by many of these artists. He responded especially to their spontaneity of technique, which allowed each painting to develop and change as the artist worked. He also loved their commitment to contemporary life and personal experience.

Berthe Morisot (1841–1895)

Portrait of a Young Girl: Isabelle Lambert

1885

Production place: France

Pastel on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Berthe Morisot exhibited in all but one of the eight Impressionist exhibitions held between 1874 and 1886. In line with the Impressionist ethos, this head is not only bathed in light, but imbued with life. The spontaneity and contemporaneity of Picasso's work of this period owes much to Impressionism.

Edgar Degas (1834–1917)

Portrait of René Degas

c.1859

Production place: France

Graphite on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

This drawing of Degas's brother was one of a number of early portraits of his family. While Degas embraced Impressionism with a passion, especially in his depiction of modern life, he always maintained his interest in Classicism. In this way, he combined a deep understanding of the history of art with a love of everyday urban life – providing a powerful model for Picasso.

Édouard Vuillard (1868–1940)

Landscape – House on the Left

1900

Production place: L'Etang-la-Ville, Île-de-France

Oil on board

Tate: Purchased 1931

Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard's 'Intimist' movement was a 'spin-off' from Impressionism. The two had both been involved with French Symbolism. Their importance for Picasso was that they brought together elements from Impressionism and Symbolism, and they were keen to experiment with form, space, and colour. They were not by temperament interested in the mythology, spiritual or religious issues of the other Symbolists. Consequently, they depicted scenes from contemporary life, especially their own lives, and infused these with a quiet concentration on the domestic. Picasso was deeply affected by this way of treating the world.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Jardin Public [Public Garden]
1901
Production place: Paris, France
Oil on board
Private Collection

Picasso began to fuse his interest in the French Symbolists (notably Paul Gauguin and the Nabis group) with the realism of the Impressionists. He was especially affected by Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard, and their movement 'Intimism'. Their vision of domestic life and the urban environment carried a misty, poetic ambivalence; Picasso responded enthusiastically to the complex but quiet mystery, perhaps melancholia, of their work. Partly through Vuillard and Bonnard, Picasso was able to reconcile the realism of Impressionism with the imaginary worlds of Symbolism.

Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947)
Paris – Les Grands Boulevards
c.1898
Production place: Paris, France
Oil on canvas
Private Collection

Bonnard and his friend and collaborator Vuillard led the 'Intimist' movement. Scenes of urban and domestic life were imbued with a mysterious and enigmatic ambivalence. The works often have a biographical intent.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Portrait of a Young Woman (The Madrilenian)
c.1901
Production place: Paris, France
Oil on panel
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

The influence of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was seminal in the years around 1900, and his harsh, caricature-like depictions of night life were especially important to Picasso. Montmartre,

where Toulouse-Lautrec lived and where Picasso settled, was a relatively new housing complex: a centre of bohemian nightlife, full of émigrés.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Theatre Balcony

Before 1900

Production place: Barcelona or Madrid, Spain

Chalk and paint on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

Like the Impressionists, Picasso loved to depict scenes from everyday life – notably the theatre, street life, cafés, bars, and brothels. There was also a social and political agenda at play, as Impressionist art contained a gentle egalitarianism that made real people the subject of art. Picasso never forgot this commitment to reality. Edgar Degas in particular was a powerful model for the young artist.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Various Female Figures and other Sketches

1899–1900

Production place: Barcelona, Spain

Pen and ink and Conté crayon on paper

Museu Picasso Barcelona (Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970)

These figures show that Picasso was deeply influenced by the French Realist Impressionists, notably Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Edgar Degas. The lively drawing also demonstrates knowledge of the German and British traditions of caricature.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901)

Portfolio cover: Le Café Concert

1893

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901)

A Spectator

1893

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901)

Edmée Lescot

1893

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901)

Yvette Guilbert

1893

Production place: Paris, France

Lithograph

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

Lautrec was a master printmaker, and his medium was lithography. These prints are from the portfolio *Le Café Concert*, an ode to the metropolitan Parisian nightlife. Performers and spectators are seen enjoying modern life. They oppose suggestions that the *Café Concert* was a place of sin and vice. Depicted here are French dancer, Edmée Lescot, shown in a Spanish costume, and Yvette Guilbert, a famous French singer, who became a frequent muse of Lautrec's.

Edgar Degas (1834–1917)
Little Dancer aged Fourteen
1880–1881, cast in 1922
Production place: Paris, France
Bronze and fabric
Sainsbury Centre Collection

The only sculpture exhibited by Degas in his lifetime, the original Little Dancer Aged Fourteen in wax was first shown in an Impressionist exhibition in 1881. Using textile – real clothing – sets an interesting precedent for Picasso and Braque, who would add found materials to their paintings and drawings during their Cubist years.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)
The Thames at London
1871
Production place: London, England
Oil on canvas
Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum
Wales

With his friend and colleague Pierre Auguste Renoir, Monet is credited with the full development of the Impressionist style. At the end of the 1860s the two of them were to be seen working together in the new manner – in the open air – and they were central to the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874.

This early Impressionist work displays the spontaneity, brushwork, and colour that characterises the new approach to nature. Through the 1880s and 1890s, such works dominated the advanced art world in which Picasso was keen to play a part.

NO PHOTOGRAPHY

THE SYMBOLIST ENVIRONMENT

“The inner ‘I’ is inevitably in my painting, since it is I who make it. I needn’t worry about that. Whatever I do, it will be there (...) It’s the rest that is the problem.” Picasso, 1965

Picasso was strongly eclectic. From his earliest days he loved to blend contrasting styles, periods, and different types of art. As he grew more confident, absorbing the international art scene, he began to combine diverse approaches and subjects that many might have considered incompatible.

For example: while celebrating the discovery of everyday life underpinning Impressionism, he was equally interested in Symbolism, and the potent imagery that it took from myth and religion. This seemingly impossible combination – the realist component of Impressionism, and the mythic aspect of Symbolism – recurred in his work throughout his life.

At this point it’s worth considering the nature of nineteenth century Symbolism.

Whereas Impressionism was, at its core, a group of artists who worked closely together – a clearly defined movement - Symbolism was more of a general tendency in art. Indeed, it began in the 1860s in literature, before spreading into painting in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Painters had, of course, dealt with mythology and religious symbolism for centuries; but Symbolist art was different as it enfolded a commitment to personal issues, brought together with archaic and self-consciously exotic imagery.

Odilon Redon and Paul Gauguin were arguably the two leading Symbolists, while the Nabis group in Paris provided the most consistent Symbolist presence. It's also relevant that painting and poetry were closely connected in the Symbolist world - Picasso spent much of his time in the company of poets.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Portrait of the Artist Seated

1904

Production place: Barcelona, Spain or Paris,
France

Ink, wash and gouache on paper

Private Collection

Picasso's work had a diaristic aspect in his early years, and he depicted himself frequently. Later, he would say 'I paint the way some people write their autobiography'. This slightly comical self-portrait touches on a crucial underlying idea in his art: the fusion of objective values with personal, subjective concerns. Going forward, Picasso would use the history of art and various traditional themes to root his practice in the wider world. Invariably personal and intimate themes would be present.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Sick Woman in Bed

1899–1900

Production place: Barcelona, Spain

Oil on canvas

Museu Picasso Barcelona (Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970)

The theme of the sick woman might draw on both the death of Picasso's youngest sister Concepción in 1895, and also a treatment of the subject by Edvard Munch. The overall mood, however, reveals Picasso still very much under the influence of Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard. These two artists, who developed 'Intimism', had a Symbolist background. In a similar spirit, this little work has the feel of Intimism, but also has a strange and dark atmosphere about it, redolent of Symbolism.

Paul Gauguin (1848–1903)
Te Po (Eternal Night), from Noa Noa
1893–4
Production place: Paris, France
Woodcut on paper
Sainsbury Centre Collection

This woodcut is one of ten images executed by Gauguin after his return to Paris from Tahiti in 1893, intended as illustrations for a book he planned to publish about his experiences in the South Seas. Gauguin was by then an influential figure among the next generation of Post-Impressionists. His use of flat patterning (and, in his paintings, blocks of colour) is formal and symbolic, rather than a direct depiction of reality.

Odilon Redon (1840–1916)
The Chariot of Apollo
1907–10
Production place: Paris, France
Oil on panel
The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Redon was a major figure in French and European Symbolism from the later 1800s until his death in 1916. While his reputation faded in later decades, he was a dominant figure in his own time and widely recognised as a leader of advanced practice. Picasso felt his influence at the turn of the century, as is apparent in works like 'Parody of Ex voto' (1901). Especially in the Inter-War period, when Picasso came close to the Surrealists, he would habitually combine mythology and reality in his work. Perhaps most famously, Guernica (1937) shows the horror of modern warfare through the imagery of the Classical past.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Parody of "Ex voto"

c.1901

Production place: Barcelona, Spain

Oil on canvas

Museu Picasso Barcelona (Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970)

This strange little work shows Picasso using a range of models that he would have encountered by 1901 in Barcelona and Paris. For example, he had been exposed to the Spanish Renaissance artist El Greco, and would have been aware of Odilon Redon and Paul Gauguin.

This work also has the feel of Baroque religious art, ubiquitous in Spain. Picasso used the Baroque in works about his immediate personal life, most devastatingly in his paintings about the suicide of his friend Carles Casagemas in February 1901.

Georges Seurat (1859–1891)

Repairing her Cloak (Woman on a Bench)

1880–1881

Production place: France

Graphite on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Georges Seurat's short career – he died aged thirty-two – influenced several generations up to the First World War. Seurat had developed a rational, scientific approach to painting that

became known as Pointillism or Divisionism. This was a system of painting that involved placing dots of pure colour onto canvas, which mingled optically in the eye of the observer. Unlike many Cubists, Picasso never embraced Seurat's rationalism. What was important for him was the unequivocal commitment to the Modern, the use of archaic Classical composition, and the depiction of the world around him.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Woman Combing her Hair

1906

Production Place: France

Crayon and charcoal on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

This masterly drawing exemplifies Picasso's eclecticism in tandem with his insistence on the autobiographical. The subject has recently been identified as Fernande Olivier, his first long-term partner; they met in 1904 and lived together from 1905 until 1912. The drawing has a tenderness that reveals Picasso's unrivalled ability to

empathise with his subjects, while also showing his grasp of academic technique and Neo-Classical styling. New sources are also evident in the composition: Oceanic art (perhaps filtered through Gauguin) influences the mood and modelling. An interest in African and Iberian sculpture is already clear, and this would become more significant in later work.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)

Figures en noir sur une place plantée d'arbres
[Figures in black on a square planted with trees]
1899–1900

Production place: Barcelona, Spain

Black pencil on paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris

Pablo Picasso Acceptance in lieu, 1979. MP422

This little sketch shows a young artist in the throes of Impressionism, while also perhaps looking to other avant garde movements in Paris, such as George Seurat's Pointillism and Bonnard and Vuillard's Intimism. The urban park was a core theme of early Modern practice.

BLUE AND ROSE PERIODS: AN INDEPENDENT EYE

“There is no abstract art. You must always start with something. Afterwards you can remove all traces of reality. There’s no danger then, anyway, because the idea of the object will have left an indelible mark.” Picasso, 1935

Picasso arrived at what many consider his first sustained, independent style at the start of the twentieth century. The first - his Blue period - was followed closely by his Rose period. Both were part of the same artistic drive, differentiated principally by a shift in colour range.

Much of this work has a melancholic feel to it, emphasised by the shared monochrome treatment. There is a grim realism, with an atmosphere of poverty; people seem unhappy and underfed. And, although the imagery of the Rose period includes entertainers such as harlequins and circus people, their demeanour is frequently tragic.

Perhaps this is because Picasso's first years in Paris were personally difficult. The taut, angular misery of some of his Blue and Rose period characters might reflect his own struggles and doubts.

The worldview in Blue and Rose is mythological, positioned firmly in the Symbolist universe. As for the archaic feel of many works, this may be attributed to Picasso's interest in the English Pre-Raphaelites, and particularly Edward Burne Jones.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

The Frugal Meal

1904

Production place: Paris, France

Printer: Eugène Delâtre, Paris, France

Etching on paper

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

Picasso had no formal training in printmaking, but compensated by working with a number of master printmakers. In 1904 he collaborated with Auguste and Eugène Delâtre who made the copper plates

for 'The Frugal Meal'. He would continue to use this strategy in the future. When he made ceramic, for example, he worked with master potter Georges Ramiés to oversee the technical process.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Les Pauvres [The Poor]

1904–5

Production place: Paris, France

Etching on paper

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

Poverty and depravation are powerful themes in the Blue and Rose periods. There is a universal approach to both, an attempt to characterise these blights on the world generally rather than specifically.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Two Acrobats

1905

Production place: Paris, France

Drypoint on paper

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

‘Saltimbanque’, loosely translated as acrobat, became a major theme in the Rose period. The saltimbanque world is one in which a small community puts itself at risk for the entertainment of others; where the superficial brightness of the circus environment and costumes masks an unsmiling darkness.

Master printer Paul Fort was responsible for reproducing much of what became ‘The Saltimbanque Suite’, and went on to print various Cubist and neoclassical etchings of the 1920s and early 1930s.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Head of a Woman in Profile
February 1905 (printed 1913)
Production place: Paris, France
Printer: Louis Fort, Vollard Edition
Etching on paper
Sainsbury Centre Collection

This etching is from the Rose period. The terse, almost angular spirit suggests melancholy, even tragedy. The subject perhaps represents physical and spiritual hunger, both of which Picasso experienced in the demi-monde of Paris.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Circus Artist and Child
1905
Production place: Paris, France
Ink and watercolour on paper
Tate: Bequeathed by Mrs A.F. Kessler 1983

Picasso depicts a performer feeding her child between shows. The ink and watercolour technique allows the artist to work quickly, as with

a drawing, but incorporates a use of colour that brings it closer to painting.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Horse with a Youth in Blue

1905–6

Production place: Paris, France

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Tate: Bequeathed by C. Frank Stoop 1933

The circus became a major theme in Picasso's work into the Rose period, as he used circus entertainers to explore a range of moods.

Overwhelmingly, these figures have a sense of otherness and alienation: outsiders from mainstream society, using their talents to survive. Picasso, at this time a struggling émigré, undoubtedly identified with the outsider aspect of circus culture.

THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD

“... the hieratic Egyptians ... the voluptuous Cambodians, the works of the ancient Peruvians, the African statuettes, proportioned accordingly to the passions which have inspired them – can influence an artist and help him to develop his personality.” Guillaume Apollinaire, 1907

Not least because of the French empire, Paris had become a major centre for the arts of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. After 1890 there were increasing numbers of dealers in African and Oceanic art in Paris, and several museums and galleries were dedicated to it.

The most spectacular presentations came through the vast Paris Expositions Universelles (world's fairs). The Expositions of 1878, 1889 and 1900 saw the arrival of art and artefacts from around the world. Common at the time was the degrading and horrific practice of forcibly including Indigenous peoples in these displays. Indigenous peoples from East Asia, Oceania, the Middle East, and the Americas, were present alongside examples of their extraordinary art and architecture. These

international displays were how most Parisians first experienced Africa.

Picasso visited the Exposition of 1900 on his first visit to Paris. Like many artists, he was then exposed to the world of African art through private dealers. He spent time in the Ethnography Museum, known as the Musée du Trocadéro, housed in a building erected for the Exposition of 1878. The African masks especially captivated him: “the masks weren’t just like any other pieces of sculpture. Not at all. They were magic things”.

This concept of anima or life force within a work of ‘art’ was a powerful idea for Picasso. By 1907 his work showed a reflective influence of Africa, alongside Oceanic art, and ancient Iberian sculpture.

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Mask

After 1945

Cultural group: Fang

Production place: Gabon

Wood and pigment

Sainsbury Centre Collection

This type of Dance mask is associated with masquerades called ngontang (meaning young girl or daughter of a European), which evolved in Fang communities across present day northern Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and southern Cameroon. The masquerade was based on the disruptive presence of Europeans in the region. Carved from a single piece of wood with remnants of kaolin on its surface and characteristic coiffure, this example has no costume attachments, so it was likely made for export. It is stylistically related to one known as the 'Derain' mask at the Centre Georges Pompidou, which painter Maurice de Vlaminck sold to artist André Derain in 1904, at a pivotal moment for the development of European art.

Mask

19th century to late 20th century

Cultural group: Kwele

Production place: Republic of the Congo

Wood and pigment

Sainsbury Centre Collection

This Kwele mask closely resembles a very famous one owned by Christophe Tzara (son of the Dada artist Tristan Tzara) and previously owned by André Derain, who advised Picasso on African masks and encouraged him to study them. Kwele art had a powerful impact on European modernism.

Canoe Shield Mask

19th century to mid 20th century

Cultural group: Iatmul

Production place: Middle Sepik River, New Guinea

Wood and pigment

Sainsbury Centre Collection

While Oceanic art had enjoyed a presence in Paris from the last decade of the 1800s, its influence on European artists became more pronounced in the early twentieth century.

MIDDLE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Reliquary Guardian Head

(Añgokh-Nlô-Byeri)

19th century

Cultural group: Fang

Production place: Gabon

Wood and brass

Sainsbury Centre Collection

This figurative reliquary guardian head (Añgokh-Nlô-Byeri) is one of the masterworks of the Sainsbury Centre collection. It was made by the Fang (Nzaman-Betsi group), located in the valleys of the Okano, Ogowe and Abanga rivers of present-day Gabon. It was carved in hardwood and anointed with palm oil, used to purify these sacred sculptures. The wood is so impregnated with oil that it continues to exude it to the present

day. In the twentieth century, Fang sculptures were acquired by European artists, art critics and collectors. This example was bought from the art dealer Paul Guillaume.

Mask

c.1880

Production place: Northern New Ireland,
Melanesia

Wood, pigment and fibre

Sainsbury Centre Collection

This extraordinary mask reveals how the face can be deconstructed, and then reconstructed, for symbolic and emotional effect.

Pendant Mask

20th century

Cultural group: We

Production place: Côte d'Ivoire

Wood, fibre and metal

Sainsbury Centre Collection

The prominent facial features and forehead on this sculpture are characteristic of the masks of the We, an Indigenous group from eastern Liberia and western Côte d'Ivoire. This sort of amplified form is familiar in many of Picasso's cubist faces. The top loop suggests it may have been worn by a dancer or hung in a significant place during rituals.

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Double faced head

c. 1200 – 900 BCE

Production place: Tlatilco, Mexico

Earthenware and pigment

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Pre-Columbian art was first presented publicly in significant quantities at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889. From that point, its presence slowly grew. While artists were aware of it in the first decade of the new century, its most powerful influence in Europe and North America came

between the World Wars, especially with regard to architecture and design.

Standing Man

c.400–300 BCE

Production place: Iberia, Spain

Bronze

Sainsbury Centre Collection

From 1905, ancient sculptures found on the Spanish peninsula gave Picasso major inspiration. Sources like these allowed him to break free from the most strongly established conventions of Western academic art – the modelling and perspectival space that were at the heart of the post-Renaissance tradition.

This bronze figure is connected to worship. Picasso may have responded to Iberian sculpture because of his interest in mythology and religion.

THE CUBIST REVOLUTION

Picasso on his aim for Cubism... “to paint and nothing more. And to paint seeking a new expression, divested of useless realism, with a method linked only to my thought (...) It is my will that takes form outside of all extrinsic schemes, without considering what the public or the critics will say.” Picasso, 1932

Cubism was developed by Picasso between 1907 and 1914, with his friend and collaborator Georges Braque. Little by little, they drove one another into increasingly radical terrain. They were also influenced by the later work of Paul Cézanne, a powerful presence among younger artists up to his death in 1906.

Picasso and Braque at this point worked closely with another Spanish artist, Juan Gris. All three were represented by the innovative art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler.

At first, the Cubist style caused anger and confusion in the art world. As was often the case with the early Modern Movements, the name itself

was initially derogatory, coined when the critic Louis Vauxcelles referred to Braque's work - in his 1908 exhibition at Kahnweiler's gallery – as being composed of 'little cubes'. By 1910 the name 'Cubism' was embraced by the artists themselves. In 1912, the painters Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger published their book *On Cubism*. Organised groups began to promote the style in salons and publications.

Across the arts, Cubism came to be seen as the most important development in the evolution of Modernism. By 1912 it was a growing presence in major cities around the world, spawning multiple off-shoot movements, including Futurism, Orphism, Vorticism, Purism, Synchronism, Constructivism, and Suprematism. It became the mainspring for the rise of abstract art, and stimulated the radical experimentation of Dada and Surrealism, while also driving a vibrant revolution in architecture and design.

LEFT OF TEXT PANEL

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Female Nude with Arms Raised

1907

Production place: France

Gouache on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

This extraordinary work in gouache is an early study for the central figure in Picasso's seminal painting of 1907, 'Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)'. The painting was clearly of great significance to the artist himself, who filled sixteen sketchbooks with preparatory studies for the work. The influence of African sculpture emerges in the sketchbooks and is a powerful presence in 'Female nude with arms raised'. Picasso's work of 1907 to 1909, alongside that of Georges Braque, initiated the first phase of Cubism.

RIGHT OF TEXT PANEL

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Pots and Lemon

1907

Production place: Paris, France

Oil on canvas

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

This early Cubist work shows Picasso taking the elements of a scene – lemon, pots and the tabletop – and breaking them down into an informal geometry. In a sense, he is taking the lessons of Cézanne and Gauguin to a logical conclusion. As abstracted as this image is, it is important that Picasso rejected the idea of abstraction in the sense of an art that dispenses with subject matter. This is clearly an exercise with informal geometric shapes, but it is – equally clearly – a painting of a lemon and pots.

The art critic Clive Bell bought this painting in 1911, becoming one of the first people in the UK to own a work by Picasso.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Seated Female Nude

1909

Production place: France

Crayon on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Picasso was interested in developing new conventions to suggest space and form. His struggle to achieve this led to complex and sometimes quite brutal images, in which figures are drastically distorted and deconstructed.

‘Seated Female Nude’ and ‘Two Nude Figures’ offer examples of Picasso pushing up against the barriers of representation.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Study of a Woman’s Head (Fernande Olivier)

1909

Production place: Barcelona, Spain or Paris, France

Black chalk

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

This study of Picasso's lover Fernande was for a bronze sculpture. Despite the breaking down of Fernande's features into crystalline forms, she remains recognisable. It is a typical work in the Analytical Cubist style, an early phase of Cubism which deconstructed images by viewpoint. Analytical Cubism came before Synthetic Cubism, which flattened the image but incorporated texture and colour.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Maisons [Houses]

April–May 1909

Production place: Barcelona, Spain

Pen and ink on laid paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris

Pablo Picasso Acceptance in lieu, 1979. MP632

In the first phase of Cubism both Picasso and Braque produced landscapes, often featuring buildings. This work is transitional in the sense that it has simplified, powerful angular volumes; but we

can see the more crystalline, fragmented approach of Analytical Cubism taking shape.

Robert Delaunay (1885–1941)

Still life

c.1909

Production place: France

Charcoal on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Delaunay was a major figure within Cubist circles who went on to found Orphism with, among others, his wife Sonia Delaunay and Czech artist František Kupka. (Many regard Kupka as having made the first wholly non-objective abstract painting.) Robert Delaunay met Sonia in 1908 and they married in 1910. As pioneers of abstract art, they often collaborated on large-scale projects, as well as having major individual careers.

This work shows Robert Delaunay pushing towards his own very particular approach to Cubism.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Two Nude Figures

1909

Production place: Paris, France

Drypoint on paper

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

This fascinating drawing shows the artist organising a pair of human figures into a structure that one might use for landscape or natural forms. It strongly suggests that Picasso had been contemplating the late figure compositions of Paul Cézanne.

Juan Gris (1887–1927)

Glass and Bottles

1912

Production place: Paris, France

Oil on canvas

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

Juan Gris, Picasso's friend and fellow Spaniard, developed a very concise approach to still life. His early (Analytical) Cubist works, such as this one, have a sharpness to them which is achieved by a dramatic use of light and shadow. The forms appear to be cut or carved out of the background, while the whole inhabits a shallow, relief-like space. Sadly, Gris's career was cut short by an early death at age forty.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Verre et Journal [Glass and Newspaper]

Summer 1914

Production place: Avignon, France

Wood pencil and oil paint

Musée national Picasso-Paris

Pablo Picasso Acceptance in lieu, 1979. MP47

This superbly lyrical composition, in which the idiom of painting has acquired a third dimension through collage, shows Picasso fully in control of Cubism and its implications. Such works were to prove vital for the rise of Modern sculpture, and especially Constructivism; they also provided an

idiom to open up painting. The still-life with a glass and a newspaper is broken into patterns and shapes, and then reconstituted into a table-top scene.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Head of a Woman

20 March 1926

Production place: France

Gouache on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Picasso's youth provided him with a grand legacy, laying the foundation for a long and unfailing career. The multiplicity of early influences meant that his artistic outlook was always subject to transformation, as he explored fresh experiences and rejected ideas that he felt were exhausted. Before he was thirty, he had moved through a spectacular range of approaches and outlooks – Classicism, Realism, Impressionism, Intimism, Symbolism, Cubism. As the civilisation drifted towards the First World War, he arrived at the borders of Dada and Surrealism.

What, in summary, is the legacy of Picasso's youth? This beautiful, delicate and whimsical image of a woman gives us something of an answer: an amazing fusion of both classical and Cubist vision.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Cubist Head (Portrait of Fernande)

c.1909–10

Production place: Paris, France

Oil on canvas

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

In this prime example of Analytical Cubism, Picasso has treated the head in the same manner as the space around it. The solid forms have been melted into their surroundings; the whole has the feel of crystalline scaffolding.

Ossip Zadkine (1888–1967)

The Accordion Player

1918

Production place: France

Bronze

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Ossip Zadkine was an émigré, like Picasso himself and many of the early Modernists connected to Cubism. Zadkine moved from his native Belarus to Paris in 1909, just as Cubism was being established. While he was also a painter and printmaker, we tend to think of him, alongside Jacques Lipchitz, Henri Laurens, and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, as a pioneer Cubist sculptor.

Jean Metzinger (1883–1956)

Woman with a Coffee Pot

1919

Production place: Paris, France

Oil on canvas

Presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1959

Jean Metzinger was a leading Cubist painter and theorist. He was also a prominent figure in the Section D'Or, also known as the Puteaux group of Cubists. Section D'Or (Golden Section) drew on the composition system developed by the ancient Greeks, which underpinned all classical art and architecture. In 1912, working with Albert Gleizes, Metzinger published *Du Cubisme* to set out a vision of the new style. It connected Cubism to previous trends and periods in art, while positioning it as the definitive style for the twentieth century. These artists were consciously reinventing classicism for their own times.

Henri Laurens (1885–1954)

Bottle and Glass

1917

Production place: Paris

Printed paper, graphite, oil paint and chalk on millboard

Tate: Presented by Gustav and Elly Kahnweiler
1974, accessioned 1994

Laurens is known principally as a sculptor, but during the Cubist years he produced an important body of work in collage. Typically, colour is drastically reduced: the main materials are brown and white paper, newsprint, chalk and charcoal. Following Picasso and Braque's lead, collage became the vehicle of expression for a number of Cubist artists.

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920)
Head of a Woman (Anna Zborowska)
1918–19
Production place: France
Oil on canvas
Sainsbury Centre Collection

Modigliani was never a member of any Cubist group, but his work reveals the influence of Cubist aesthetics. He was an associate of Picasso's, and very clearly worked his way through a range of Cubist sources, not least African sculpture. Modigliani encountered Africa – and particularly Fang sculptures – in Paul Guillaume's Paris gallery.

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920)

Caryatid

c.1913

Production place: France

Crayon on paper

Sainsbury Centre Collection

Modigliani made a number of works on the Caryatid theme around 1913. Mainly studies for sculptures, these works were influenced by Constantin Brâncuși, whom he had met in Paris in 1909. Created in the Cubist environment, the drawing shows a knowledge of African and various ancient European cultures.

"Everyone wants to understand art. Why not try to understand the songs of a bird? Why does one love the night, flowers, everything around one, without trying to understand them? But in the case of painting, people have to understand (...) People who try to explain pictures are usually barking up the wrong tree." Picasso, 1935

Yinka Shonibare CBE RA (b. 1962)

Hybrid Mask (Baule/Yaure)

2021

Production place: London, England

Painted wood

Courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery

Shonibare's Hybrid Masks respond to Picasso's appropriation of African culture. He describes the series as 'Picasso in reverse'. This work is based on a ceremonial mask in Picasso's collection from the Baule or Yaure peoples of Côte d'Ivoire.

Shonibare's distinctive patterning references batik, an Indonesian fabric mass-produced by the Dutch to sell in West Africa. His work often explores the multiculturalism bound-up in colonialism.