

# Picasso and Catalonia. An international corpus

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Received 13 June 2023 · Accepted 20 September 2023

## ABSTRACT

Picasso's relationship with Catalonia is a well-known and widely discussed topic, though it has often been approached primarily from a biographical or even sentimental perspective. While this approach is valid and aligns with the available evidence, we aim to highlight the artistic outcomes of this connection. Picasso's stays in Catalonia resulted in an extraordinarily unique body of work, with some of the pieces created in Catalonia corresponding to the most brilliant periods of his career. For example, the finest works of his Blue Period were produced in Barcelona, and his Cubist creations in Horta, Cadaqués, and Ceret mark the pinnacle of the most revolutionary avant-garde movement in 20th-century art. Therefore, beyond Picasso's emotional ties to Catalonia, which the artist himself acknowledged, it is essential to emphasize the international significance of the works that emerged from these stays, many of which are now housed in the world's leading art galleries.

**KEYWORDS:** Picasso, Academy, Barcelona, Blue Period, cubism

Picasso's connection with Catalonia is one of the core episodes in both his career as an artist and his life. He completed his fine arts studies, which he had started in Málaga and continued in La Coruña, in Catalonia, specifically in Barcelona. Therefore, Catalonia was also where he got his start as an artist, under the influence of the entire art scene in Barcelona, which was embarking on one of the most extraordinary periods in its history after the 1888 Universal Exposition. This young Picasso drew from what was known as Modernisme in Catalonia, whose different variations are called *Art Nouveau* or *Jugendstil* elsewhere in Europe.

After that, he transitioned into what we know as his Blue Period, unquestionably his first completely individual period, a far cry from his eclectic beginnings. From then on, Picasso began to make some of his most important works, even though they were not recognised until many years later, given that international historiography denied their importance for many years. The fact that the years when he regularly lived in Catalonia predated cubism meant that they were barely taken into account when Picasso's oeuvre was beginning to be studied; it was considered his formative period and was mostly obscure. Even the first serious examination by a Catalan historiographer (albeit in Spanish), Alexandre Cirici Pellicer, was

called *Picasso antes de Picasso* (Picasso before Picasso, 1946). That is, this early output was considered distant from the international Picasso canon which was gaining a foothold at that time.<sup>1</sup>

The first book to examine this period on its own was not published until 1966, namely Josep Palau i Fabre's *Picasso en Catalunya*, which was issued in Catalan years later as *Picasso a Catalunya* (1975).<sup>2</sup> These publications were the first to systematically reproduce the most important works that Picasso made during his years in Catalonia, some of which are masterpieces from his Blue Period (*La Vie*, 1903) and his Rose Period (*The Harem*, 1906). Though this was not their sole focus, some French and English historians like Pierre Daix, Pierre Cabanne and John Richardson were among the first to study Picasso's years in Catalonia in their respective biographies of the artist.<sup>3</sup>

This article aims to highlight the most important episodes in the connection between Picasso and Catalonia in parallel and chronological order, while also citing the most prominent works from each period. Ultimately, his sojourns in Catalonia may have been brief, but for varied reasons they all ended up having an important specific weight in his career. Given that Picasso's life and work correlate almost exactly, the pages below will help to sketch a very complete picture of the connections between Picasso and Catalonia.

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## CATALONIA, A PRIME SPACE OF CREATION

Even though he was not born in Catalonia, Picasso was very closely associated with it, and more specifically with Barcelona, especially during his youth. Picasso arrived in the city in 1895, and apart from several forays elsewhere, he mainly lived here until 1904. In April of that year, he left Barcelona for good and moved to Paris, where he found success and spent the bulk of his career as an artist. Picasso and his family had come from La Coruña to Barcelona when he was 13, following his father, who had secured a teaching position at the Fine Arts School of Barcelona. Picasso enrolled in that school for two years, resuming the training he had started in Galicia. Until then, he had been within the family fold, but that period marked his first years testing the scene in Catalonia. He gradually started to join the intellectual artistic circles, as well as the city's everyday life, in a formative process that was simultaneously artistic and human. Picasso interacted with the most prominent artists in Catalan culture, and he held his first major individual exhibition in Barcelona. This city was also where Picasso developed his first clearly personal body of work, his Blue Period.

Yet Barcelona's importance in Picasso's life extends beyond the years he lived here, as he remained in touch with his friends and acquaintances in the city until the end of his life. Indeed, his way of expressing the gratitude he had always felt towards his Catalan friends was his huge donation of more than 1,000 works to the city of Barcelona in 1970 (a gesture he did not make in France), arranged through his personal secretary and close friend, Jaume Sabartés. He made his first close friends, was trained at the Llotja school, held his first major exhibition and learned how to work in sculpture and engraving in Catalonia. He also received his first criticism and had his first patrons. Even his first dealer, Pere Mañach, was Catalan.

The works Picasso made in Catalonia are found in museums and foundations all over the world, as well as in an array of private collections, including those of the artist's heirs, given that Picasso himself held onto many of his works his entire life. Many of his very early works (from his formative years) are in Catalan collections, specifically the collection of the Museu Picasso of Barcelona, most of whose holdings come from the artist's major donation in 1970. Picasso's works made in Catalonia can also be found in other Catalan institutions, albeit to a lesser extent, such as the Fundació Palau in Caldes d'Estrac, founded by the poet and Picasso expert Josep Palau i Fabre; the Museu de Montserrat; Cau Ferrat in Sitges; and the Fundación Francisco Godia, among others. Regarding private collections, they mainly hold drawings, with paintings only on an exceptional basis given the diaspora of works made in Catalonia that were acquired by collectors and museums abroad. Currently, the majority of his Catalan works—especially the most famous ones—are found in collections and especially museums around the world, particularly in

the United States, Europe and Japan. For example, with the exception of a few works at the Museu Picasso of Barcelona, the works from his Blue Period are scattered around international museums. The most unfortunate case is the cubist works he made in Horta, Cadaqués and Céret, not one of which is in a Catalan public collection, primarily because Picasso no longer lived in Catalonia during his cubist years, even though he made several sojourns here, and that distanced him from Catalan collectors and critics. However, the main reason is that with a handful of exceptions, neither critics nor collectors ever managed to grasp the importance of cubist works in general and Picasso's in particular. This was true as it was happening, but it also lasted many years and gave rise to the dearth of cubist works in public and private Catalan collections.

Even though Catalonia was the place where he was trained and made many of his early works, Picasso also made many important works here throughout his career, and even a few masterpieces. He executed his most important academic works in Barcelona, invaluable documents that provide in-depth insight into the artist's training. But these works from when he was a student at the Fine Arts School are joined by the first large pieces he made to compete in national exhibitions, a common pursuit in a young artist whose father wanted to place him in an official career. The two most important works conserved from this period are from Barcelona, namely *Science and Charity* and *First Communion*, which should be joined by *The Altar Boy*, at the Museu de Montserrat, because of its importance. But from a very young age, Picasso was not interested in official contests and saw that his path would be an alternative route, at that time embodied by venues like *Els Quatre Gats*. Later, he took his first journey to Paris and alternated between living there and Barcelona from 1900 to 1904, when he finally moved to the French city. During those years, he went through what is known as his Blue Period, which started in Paris but was mostly produced in Barcelona. This Catalan city was where he made his most prominent works from that period, some of which are true global icons, including *Mother and Child by the Sea*, *The Old Guitarist* and *La Vie (The Life)*, considered the Blue Period masterpiece.

After his years living in Barcelona, Picasso returned to Catalonia several times. They were not brief sojourns but signalled major advances in his oeuvre, and he even made works of keen interest here. In Gósol, he left an important corpus of classical-leaning works hybridised with rural life and painted *The Harem* (1906), one of his most important works ever that foreshadowed *Les Femmes d'Alger*, which he made the following year. In 1909, he painted two of the most iconic cubist works, *The Reservoir* and *Brick Factory at Tortosa*, in Horta—currently known as Horta de Sant Joan—which are formally considered geometric cubism. The next year, he clinched the key to cubism in Cadaqués, rendering it so cryptic that it

verged on abstraction, and yielding such important pieces as *The Port of Cadaqués* and *The Rower*. Equally important were his three consecutive stays in Céret during his 1911, 1912 and 1913 summer campaigns, all of which yielded milestones in the evolution of cubism, from the most brilliant expressions of synthetic cubism to the modernity of *papiers collés*. In short, we could conclude that for a plethora of reasons, Picasso's works made in Catalonia have an importance in his career that exceeds what they should have given the number of years he lived here. In fact, Catalonia played a crucial role in no fewer than three important periods or times in Picasso's artistic life: his formative years (and by extension, his academic training), his Blue Period and—to a lesser extent but with major milestones—his cubist period.

Because of the extraordinary dispersion of Picasso's works made in Catalonia, both when he lived here and in subsequent campaigns, we believe that it is worthwhile to break them down into different periods. The sections below follow mixed criteria arranged along a timeline that will occasionally point to classic themes in his oeuvre. For this reason, it begins with Picasso's family—his preferred models when he arrived in Catalonia—and continues with the works from his formative years (most of them academic), which are crucial to understand the solidity of his training. Next, we examine the young artist's first forays into the art scene (other artists, *Els Quatre Gats*, exhibitions, etc.), and then the focus shifts to the new city, Barcelona, as a place where the artist could experiment and grow (urban geography, everyday life, etc.). The fifth section reports on his first stay in Horta using chronological and thematic criteria, describing everything that sojourn meant in terms of distancing himself from the urban environment and his family, but most importantly from the Academy. Next, we address one of the most systematic themes in Picasso's oeuvre, eroticism, here partly associated with Barcelona's nightlife, a theme that was pioneering in Picasso's work and permeated his entire career. The seventh section primarily focuses on his Blue Period, miserabilism and all its derivations, as we believe that the criterion for this set of works should not be colour-based (blue), as has been common, but conceptual, given that his Blue Period cannot be explained by a single theme. The eighth section is devoted solely to his sojourn in Gósol, and the ninth, the longest, is actually three in one, given that it encompasses his consecutive stays in Horta, Cadaqués and Céret (even though Céret is in France, historically it was a Catalan land and that is how Picasso saw it). The reason behind this grouping is that these are different points in the evolution of cubism, each of which is unique yet yielded works that were all visibly inspired by the same region. The last section focuses on his last major stay in Catalonia, in 1917. Although he returned later, those subsequent sojourns shall not be covered in this article because of the brief time he stayed and the minor importance of the works he made then.

## THE EARLY YEARS. PICASSO'S FAMILY MILIEU

When Picasso arrived in Barcelona in 1895, he was still a thirteen-year-old boy, so his work revolved around his family and, as we shall see below, the landscapes near his home. In those early years, his favourite models were his family, especially his parents and sister. He also portrayed several friends, but they did not become systematic in his work until 1899, when he fully joined Barcelona's social and cultural life after his return from Horta. Therefore, his main settings in his early years were the Llotja Fine Arts School and his family home. His Barcelona portraits were a continuation of the iconography of the nuclear family that Picasso had begun in La Coruña several years earlier, although they did not last very long. In fact, his artistic interest in his parents and sister ended in this city in around 1900.

The two people Picasso depicted the most were his father, José Ruiz Blasco, and his sister Lola. His mother, Maria Picasso López, just appeared occasionally and was the only of the three family members of whom there is not a single oil painting from his Barcelona period. Obviously, we should not forget depictions of Picasso himself, who immortalised himself in a plethora of self-portraits made in Catalonia. Several oil paintings are known, but the majority of his self-portraits are drawings with some degree of narrativity, unlike the oil paintings, which are more aseptic and do not have a biographical correlate.<sup>4</sup> Generally speaking, Picasso veered away from the model in these early portraits and constructed his own image, often via a kind of psychological introspection. This is why it can be difficult to identify Picasso in some portraits, given that he soon established codes of self-representation which verged on the cryptic at certain points in his career.

The entire family moved from La Coruña to Barcelona for José Ruiz Blasco's work. The iconography of his father that Picasso created followed a very similar pattern to Picasso's analytical method. A considerable group of portraits show a melancholy, devastated man holding his head in his hands, poses that signal exhaustion or boredom. This image of his father started in La Coruña and was likely the result of his life problems which were aggravated for several reasons, the most important being the death of his other daughter, Maria de la Concepción Ruiz Picasso, or Conchita, the same year the family moved to Barcelona. Conchita, the youngest of the children and genetically the one who resembled their father the most, died of diphtheria in January 1895, one of the factors that accelerated the family's arrival in Barcelona. The other was José's acceptance of his failure as an artist; although he was an art teacher, his exhibitions were never successful and this was a source of frustration. Indeed, the devastating critiques he received in Galicia after some shows contrasted with the praise that his twelve-year-old son was garnering. Picasso's portraits of his father drew from a range of techniques, including oil, pencil, ink and san-

guine. In fact, one of the best portraits is a sanguine drawing at the Museu Picasso of Barcelona, where he wielded the chalk masterfully in a bust of his father. The other line of iconography was portraits of his father standing, full-body, dressed in a trench coat and cap. This series, which includes several drawings, culminates with an oil painting that is notably modern, especially compared to the previous drawings.

Regarding his mother, Maria Picasso López, there are few portraits of her in Picasso's oeuvre, although they were prominent in Barcelona. Unlike the portraits of his father, they are more neutral and do not delve into the psychological dimension as he did with his father. The most noteworthy piece is a pastel portrait from 1896, where she is shown frontally in the conventional way, in what seems like a portrait to please his mother. The other portraits are divided among small drawings, some of which appear on a card where he portrayed her in pastel from different perspectives. Despite her scant presence in her son's oeuvre, his mother was crucial in conserving his early works which would have otherwise disappeared, especially the family portraits, which naturally have an emotional, intimate dimension that other works did not.

Far and away the richest figure from the standpoint of his portraits is Picasso's sister Lola. He made his first portraits of her in La Coruña, but Barcelona was where they began to proliferate. In fact, we could say that Lola was the first model Picasso used systematically with the aim of experimenting with the genre of portraiture. Picasso immortalised Lola like no other family member, and his portraits of her foreshadow different veins that would become structural in Picasso's future work, such as playing with the model's age and dressing them up. Picasso turned Lola into an elderly lady, draping her with large shawls, umbrellas or grandiose hats, and he even portrayed her as a folkloric girl, with flowers and headpieces. But technically speaking, the most important portraits are those in which he experimented with the effects of light, such as a pair of oil paintings in which he sought to capture the effect of indoor and outdoor light, *Lola in the Moonlight* and *Lola before the Window*. The portraits of Lola did not last beyond 1901, when we find a portrait of her with the signature 'Picasso', which he definitively adopted that year. His use of the new signature dovetailed precisely—and symbolically—with the disappearance of his family from his works.

### HIS YEARS AT THE LLOTJA. THE ACADEMIC PICASSO

As soon as Picasso arrived in Barcelona in 1895, he enrolled in the Fine Arts School that occupied the Llotja building. The decision was ultimately taken by his father, an art teacher who taught classes in the same building. Picasso's solid academic training was the outcome of several convergent factors. The first was the 'home' training

from his father at all hours of the day, parallel to but pre-dating the classes at the fine arts academies. In fact, we are aware of several academic works from Málaga, before Picasso attended classes, no doubt instigated by his father. But he really started his formal academic training at the Fine Arts School in La Coruña, where he was enrolled between 1892 and 1895. In Barcelona, for two full years Picasso attended the Fine Arts school, which at that time was on the second floor of the Llotja de Mar building in the Pla de Palau; this is why the expression 'Llotja' often refers to the Fine Arts School in that period. His father requested a transfer to Barcelona precisely to teach at the Llotja, where his colleagues could keep track of his son's progress. As soon as he got to Barcelona, Picasso took the entrance exam, which he passed with flying colours given his prior training. Many of his academic studies from school years 1895-1896 and 1897-1898, both oil paintings and drawings, still survive in his family today. The majority of these formative projects are part of the holdings of the Museu Picasso of Barcelona, although some of them are owned by his heirs. They are extraordinarily important documents that perfectly convey what lay behind the formation of an artist like Picasso: the self-denying, repetitive work that enabled him to gather the resources, techniques and secrets of artistic training. In Barcelona, he painted and drew using life models, sculptures or copies of plasters or illustrated plates, that is, the full panoply of exercises that any student in training had to do.<sup>5</sup>

His father's goal was for his son to make a career for himself in the academic world, in a bid for recognition from the official art world, that is, medals, honourable mentions, etc. With this goal in sight, José encouraged his son to submit his works to different fine arts exhibitions, which meant having to vie with large compositions or academic machines to which Picasso was not accustomed, due to their large format. This is why his choice of topic and his execution—and even the main figures in his works—showed glimpses of his father's influence. The first large work he submitted was *First Communion* to the 1896 Barcelona Fine Arts Exhibition, during his first school year in Barcelona, shortly after he arrived in the city. He submitted the next work, *Science and Charity*, to the National Fine Arts Exhibition in Madrid the following year, 1897. Both of these paintings depict subjects that were 'successful' at this kind of event, the first religious and the second appealing to the idea of charity, which was fashionable at the time. And in both works the main male figure was his father, which reveals to what extent he was involved in his son's career. Sketches and preparatory drawings of both works still survive, especially for *Science and Charity*, which required a considerable amount of preparatory work. However, the work he submitted to the 1899 National Fine Arts Exhibition in Madrid, *Aragonese Customs* or *Courtyard of an Aragonese Home*, does not survive and its whereabouts are unknown, although we do know that he painted it in Horta during his stay there between 1898 and 1899.



Other derivations inherent in the training of any young artist like Picasso included grappling with certain themes like history or religious painting, along with still lifes to a lesser degree. Many sketches but no major works from the former still survive, but religious themes were virtually hegemonic in his early years, with images of chaplains, church interiors, processions, apparitions and biblical passages in general. One of the most important pieces is *The Altar Boy*, at the Museu de Montserrat, the twin of *First Communion*. The academy also meant having to copy the works of other artists, and several examples of these have also survived, with both classic models (the Venus de Milo, works by Velázquez and Goya, etc.) and more recent artists, such as Arcadi Mas i Fondevila. Yet in contrast to his schoolwork—or perhaps parallel to it—Picasso also created another body of work, usually on a smaller scale, where he threw off the shackles of the stifling Academy. In these works, Picasso showed more creative freedom and extraordinary technical boldness, but more importantly these works hint at future lines he would repeat throughout his entire career. The Llotja is also where he made his first friends among his classmates, including Joaquim Bas and Manuel Pallarès. He shared the first studio in his artistic life with the latter in 1897 and forged a relationship with him beyond the classroom, to such an extent that Pallarès became a kind of chaperone in his early years, before he had fully joined Barcelona's artistic and cultural life.<sup>6</sup>

Picasso continued his training in Madrid at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in academic year 1897-1898, but he soon tired of the classes and only attended them occasionally. The prolongation of what was supposed to be a brief stay in Horta meant that he was unable to start academic year 1888-1889 back in Barcelona, much to his parents' chagrin. However, Picasso had reached a level that outstripped that of his teachers, so he did not have the least incentive to continue his training at the Llotja. When he returned from Horta, he only attended a few classes at the Cercle Artístic, more to enhance his drawing skills and have models at hand than because he missed academic training, which he found antiquated and inefficient. That same year, he finally broke off from academic training and fully pursued his friendships in the unofficial art world, the artistic context that truly interested him and where he ultimately succeeded in the future.

### A NEW SCENE. BARCELONA'S BOHEMIANS

It is worth noting that even though Picasso found fault with academic training later on, he is one of the modern artists with the most solid training. However, this did not stop him from deciding at some point that he had nothing more to learn from it, counter to his father's opinion. By 1899, Picasso had officially joined Barcelona's elite art circles. After years of academic training, he began to systematically, not occasionally, interact with the most re-

nowned painters and literati of Barcelona. He gradually joined the intellectual milieu, so his integration into Barcelona's art scene took place on two levels: cross-generationally and interprofessionally. Despite his youth, Picasso interacted with artists both obscure and celebrated, most of whom were considerably older than him, including Santiago Rusiñol, Sebastià Junyent, Ramon Casas and Miquel Utrillo. Yet he associated not only with artists but also with people in other professions, with a particular predilection—which would stay with him his entire life—for writers, specifically poets. In addition to the aforementioned authors, he was also in touch with Frederic Pujulà i Vallès, Pompeu Gener *Peius*, Eduard Marquina and many others. This contact with different personalities, generations and interests was extraordinarily enriching not only for his own intellectual training but also for its effects on his artistic development. For example, his knowledge of the techniques of both engraving and sculpture—which in the future would become essential in Picasso's creations—originated from his years living in Catalonia. Picasso himself acknowledged that he learned the technique of engraving from his friend, the artist Ricard Canals. And he made the first sculpture in his career with the guidance of the sculptor Emili Fontbona at the summer home that his family owned on Barcelona's Carrer de Pàdua.

The process of immersing himself in the art world took place in different locations where we know that Picasso associated with other artists, such as the Cafè Continental in Plaça de Catalunya and El Guayaba in the Gothic Quarter, two venues which no longer exist. But the most iconic venue associated with Picasso more than any other was *Els Quatre Gats*. *Els Quatre Gats* figures prominently in Picasso's biography for several reasons, first and foremost because it was where he held the first major exhibitions in his career.<sup>7</sup> It was also where he engaged with the intellectuals of the day and where all kinds of activities were held, including poetry recitals, puppet shows, shadow puppet shows and of course *tertulias*, social gatherings where a full range of topics were discussed. But most importantly, *Els Quatre Gats* was the place where artists coming from or going to Paris gathered—the venue's name was borrowed from Paris' *Le Chat Noir*—which not only accelerated Picasso's immersion in the art world but also gave him a tiny, early hint of the modernity he would later encounter in the capital of France, at that time the nerve centre of the art universe.

His association with the venue was not as intense at first: Picasso hardly spent any time in Barcelona the first few years after it opened because he was alternating between Horta and Madrid. The first exhibition he held in the main hall there in February 1900 was monographic. There is no list of works, but we do know that he displayed more than 100 drawings and an oil painting. The sitters in those works included personalities that were not very well known at the time but would later become more famous, like Eveli Torent, Joan Vidal Ventosa and Josep Maria

Folch i Torres. On the occasion of the exhibition, Picasso met other more celebrated personalities, which gave rise to a series of small watercolour portraits in a black Modernista frame. In this second series, he portrayed personalities who were already preeminent in the art world, like Santiago Rusiñol, Ramon Casas, Ramon Pichot and Juli Vallmitjana. His second exhibition at *Els Quatre Gats*, probably in conjunction with other artists like Carles Casagemas, was held in July of the same year, and that time he only displayed pastels on bullfighting themes. His relationship with the tavern kept getting closer over time; he painted a portrait of the owner Pere Romeu and his family, set several portraits inside it and became a regular there whenever he was in Barcelona. Romeu even commissioned him to create the restaurant's advertising, both on the menu and for the puppet shows. Several copies of the prints survive today, and even an original copy of a poster with the legend 'Plat del dia' (today's special), now owned by The Hunt Museum in Limerick, Ireland.

Those portraits from the first exhibition, which were made in a style similar to that of Ramon Casas, who had held a successful show at the Sala Parès, were just a foretaste of the many portraits Picasso would make of artists, literati and other personalities from the time he lived in Catalonia. Many of these portraits still survive and are scattered among museums, private collections and even the artist's heirs. Picasso never stopped making portraits during his Barcelona years, and he continued them during his Blue Period. Many wonderful blue-hued oil paintings of his best friends at the time still survive, including Jaume Sabartés and Sebastià Junyent, as well as the celebrated portrait of Àngel Fernández de Soto, also known as *The Absinthe Drinker*. In this sense, we can assert that beyond their heritage value, the gallery of figures Picasso bequeathed to us is one of the most invaluable—and probably the largest—testimonies of the *fin-de-siècle* Catalan art world.

## BARCELONA, MAP OF A MODERN CITY. THE LANDSCAPE

Unlike Málaga or La Coruña, the two cities where Picasso had lived before, late nineteenth-century Barcelona was a cosmopolitan city with a direct line to Paris, in art as well. This proved crucial not only in Picasso's training, as outlined above, but also in his art: Barcelona became one of the motifs or themes in his artistic creations based on a variety of extraordinarily unique approaches in the landscape genre.<sup>8</sup>

Landscapes were one of the oldest genres in Picasso's works, dating from his early days in Málaga, but those were primarily rural or semi-rural landscapes. In contrast, after he arrived in Catalonia, and specifically in Barcelona, cityscapes became hegemonic. His landscapes as chronicles of the modern city focused more on buildings, primarily rooftops and religious buildings, but some also

have a strictly human focus, with images of the domestic lives of Barcelona residents at the turn of the century.

Rooftops became a legendary theme in Picasso's oeuvre, perennially associated with his years in Barcelona. The first ones date from 1895 and were made on the rooftop of his family home, most likely the place where a boy who did not yet have a social life and was stuck inside his closed family circle could go to be alone and reflect. The rooftop allowed him both a degree of freedom and the ability to gain a new and original vantage point of a city that was nothing like Málaga or La Coruña, Barcelona being far and away the most forward-looking city in Spain at the time. These works were not made to be sold but were merely exercises that reflected inner urges that had little to do with the strict academic classes at the Llotja. Importantly, these works depict a theme that was not considered prestigious and thus stood in contrast to the themes imposed on young artists of his age, like history and religion. In fact, perhaps his most celebrated Barcelona cityscapes are a pair of oil paintings of rooftops from 1902 and 1903, respectively, where he played with the different effects of light, like moonlight. He repeated similar experiments with the oil painting *Barcelona by Night*, at the Emil G. Bührle Foundation in Zurich, a wonderful top-down view in blue made from his studio on Carrer Riera de Sant Joan in 1903. Three years earlier, he had made a very modern oil painting from the same perspective but in a different tone, which perfectly conveyed the vitality of that city artery that no longer exists today.

The views of Barcelona's skyline went beyond rooftops and included religious buildings, another recurring theme in his early years. We are aware of oil paintings and drawings of churches like Santa Marta, La Mercè and Santa Maria del Pi, for example. But Picasso's interest extended to the insides of buildings, and he left exceptional testimonies of some of them, such as the cloister of Sant Pau del Camp and especially the Barcelona cathedral. He must have visited it regularly, given that several oil paintings of it exist, one of them of the cloister, currently at the Musée de Vevey in Switzerland.

Furthermore, Picasso was always an eminently maritime artist, and this is visible in his Barcelona works. After his arrival in the city, he left priceless testimony of its maritime area at the turn of the century, facilitated by the fact that his house was by the sea. Thus, we have oil paintings of Barceloneta beach, the port and even a pair of views of the rocky coast, rendered with syncopated impasto brushstrokes in the style of Joaquim Mir.

The young Picasso was also interested in urban life in the strict sense, with a particular predilection for any spaces with a personality of their own, sometimes openly drawing from archetypes. Of course, his love of bullfighting was immortalised in many paintings and drawings, especially one oil painting which depicts the now-vanished bullring on Barceloneta known as El Torín, which was near his home. This painting is currently at the Prefectural Museum of Modern Art in Toyama, Japan. Regarding

bullfights themselves, we are aware of a vast number of works on the theme, two of which are worth highlighting: a luminist pastel at Cau Ferrat in Sitges and *The Left-Handed Man*, his very first engraving, both made in Barcelona. Incidentally, *The Left-Handed Man* seems to have stemmed from a mistake, because Picasso was not aware of the inversion process in the technique of engraving. The sheer number of bullfighting scenes is extraordinary, and Picasso even depicted the participants in a *corrida* like the *monosabios*, the audience, the matador and the *picador*. But like any bullfighting fan, he also captured all the moments in a fully staged show: the bull coming into the ring, the *picadors* weakening the bulls with their spears, the gored horse and the dying bull, among many others.

As the years went by and he gained more freedom, Picasso moved in other circles that provided provocative new images of a city replete with contrasts. A pair of pastels, *Gypsy Woman in Front of La Musclera* and *Spanish Couple in Front of an Inn*, are paradigmatic examples of Picasso's interest in more archetypal settings. In a similar urban register, Picasso made several works of *merenderos* or picnic areas, parks and especially people walking along the streets, proof that he was interested in the energy of Barcelona's city life. With works like these, Picasso bequeathed a wonderful testimony of *fin-de-siècle* Barcelona from both the architectural and ethnological vantage points to the world—given that some of his most important oil paintings are scattered around museums on different continents.

## HORTA, THE PARADISE LOST

Even in his old age, Picasso often repeated the mantra: 'Everything I know I learned in Horta'. This is clearly hyperbolic license, common to such an excessive personality, but truth is concealed in that anecdote. With this phrase, he was saying that he owed nobody anything and that he always needed to go back to the primitive to find the essence of life, and of art, to refresh himself, at least as an artist—in his case an avant-garde artist. Somehow, that sojourn in Horta proved regenerative in Picasso's work, similar to the way so many artists, like Gauguin, took exotic journeys as a step prior to plunging into the avant-garde.

Picasso met Manuel Pallarès, a student five years older than he from Horta, on the first day of classes in academic year 1895-1896. They were united by a lifelong friendship, but besides those first few academic years their relationship congealed over their long stay in Pallarès' village between 1898 and 1899. In June 1898, Picasso fell ill in Madrid—where he had gone to study at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando—and Pallarès invited him to his village to convalesce. At first it was going to be a brief stay, but Picasso unexpectedly prolonged his sojourn there to eight months. This meant that he did not start his third year of school in Barcelona, and therefore

Horta signalled the end of his official training. In fact, when Picasso went back to Barcelona, he only attended a few classes at the Cercle Artístic and never again returned to fine arts school.

During his time in Horta, Picasso lived at Can Tafetans, his friend Pallarès' country estate, and fully integrated into rural life. Different works with varied themes, though predominantly landscapes and, to a lesser extent, human figures, still survive from that stay. Several life sketches that Picasso made of different trades and jobs, such as farmers, millers and shepherds, are particularly interesting from the ethnological standpoint. These works reveal his keen observational acumen and a notably streamlined style. On their first few days in Horta, the two friends visited the outskirts of the village, including Santa Bàrbara mountain, which he immortalised in several drawings and especially oil paintings like *Procession to the Convent*. In this painting, several villagers in a procession are heading to Sant Salvador convent, and humans and landscape melt together, a constant feature of his works from this first sojourn in Horta. He must have also painted *Tafetans Country House*, owned by the Pallarès family, at the beginning of his stay, whose foreground features the bright yellow of the crops that were being harvested around that time, in June or July. Within this series of works on jobs and trades he also made *Three Washerwomen*, which depicts a common woman's chore at a time when there was no running water in the village. Generally speaking, his oil paintings show bolder and more expressionistic brushstrokes, unlike most of his drawings, which are considerably more painstakingly rendered and academic. Picasso always took an interest in the village's urban geography, so several oil paintings still survive showing geometricising perspectives of the streets, either with a vanishing point or individual elements of the buildings. Prominent among them is the oil painting *La Costereta* due to the interest of the buildings, which he depicted piled atop one another, foreshadowing his first forays in cubism in 1909, during his second stay in the village. Also of particular interest is his oil painting on wood called *Partial View of Horta*, whose composition shows not only the Montsagre mountains in the background but also the silhouette of the old hospital with its bell gable, currently the headquarters of the Centre Picasso in Horta.

In the summer, Picasso and Pallarès moved to a cave in the Els Ports region, twelve kilometres from the village, a virtually uninhabited area where they lived in a semi-wild state.<sup>9</sup> Several naturalistic drawings and a few oil paintings remain from that time, the most emblematic being *Quiquet's Farmhouse*, at the Museu Picasso of Barcelona, in the same luminist vein as *Saffron Harvest*. His stay in Els Ports was interrupted by a severe storm that destroyed the two large compositions on which both men were working. Picasso was working on a large oil painting that he wanted to call *Idyll*, which depicted a shepherd and a shepherdess flirting in the foreground before secluded valley shown in the background of the composition.



Towards the end of that summer, they moved back to Can Tafetans, where Picasso made his most important work from that sojourn, *Aragonese Customs*, a large oil painting whose whereabouts is unknown today which earned Picasso an honourable mention at the National Fine Arts Exhibition in Madrid in 1899, where it was called *Courtyard of a House from Aragon*. Different sketches of it still survive which give us a sense of the definitive composition, Costumbrist in style, with a peasant man cutting firewood with an axe and a woman cleaning pots. Picasso left Horta in January 1899 and did not go back until the summer of 1909. However, several scenes of rural life appeared in his 1903 works which experts were unsure how to account for, given that he was only in Barcelona and Paris around that time. When asked by Pau i Fabre, Picasso told him that they were evocations of that first sojourn in Horta. Specifically, it is a group of drawings on paper, almost all of them with touches of watercolour, once again ethnological in nature, with scenes of *jota* dances or farm interiors which recreated a reality that Picasso had experienced in his friend's village a few years earlier. They are painted in an idealised, idyllic tone that confirms the importance Picasso attached to this first stay in Horta his entire life.

### THE PLEASURES OF THE NIGHT

Because of his age—Picasso lived in Catalonia between the ages of 13 and 22—Barcelona was where he had his first contact with the world of entertainment and the nightlife. In fact, Picasso's proverbial work ethic was counterbalanced by episodes of amusement, which, of course, is common in a young person in training who was seeking to experience all facets of life. This section focuses on the iconography of nocturnal expeditions, concert-café, brothels and even their interiors, which Picasso was able to accurately immortalise because he was a regular patron. Even though sex would come to permeate Picasso's oeuvre—even shortly before he died—nightlife as a theme was primarily limited to his youth, particularly Barcelona's nightlife, a scene from which he gradually distanced himself as the years went by. Just like other contemporary artists, Picasso left a splendid chronicle of the night, especially the taverns and locales where all sorts of shows were held. One of these spaces was Edén Concert, which he visited often and where we know he started associating with some of his best friends from that period. In fact, in 1902 he even had a studio just a few minutes from it, on Carrer Nou de la Rambla. One of the most representative works from that time is the oil painting *Cafè-Concert*, which was owned by the Barbey collection for many years and is now part of the holdings of the Musée Picasso in Paris.

Images of women engaged in different activities and in an array of different poses are legendary in Picasso's oeuvre, but they were seldom as explicitly depicted, in

terms of their intimacy or sexuality, as in this stage of his career.<sup>10</sup> In his works from Barcelona, we find women dressing themselves or in sensual or even openly sexual poses. Eroticism is present in these works at different levels. The first level, which we could call subtle eroticism, is where we find works that provide glimpses of a kind of erotic impulse, such as *Self-Portrait with Reclining Nude* and *Woman with Green Stockings*. Secondly, we have many examples of works that are explicitly erotic. But what stands out are the works we could consider a sub-genre of Picasso's oeuvre: brothel scenes. This is an iconography that Picasso analysed from all angles: prostitutes, sex scenes and especially procuresses. One of his early pieces is *The Divan*, where the procuress appears in the background, a figure and a theme that Picasso occasionally revisited in his oeuvre and painted the most intensely in the last years of his life, especially when illustrating Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* with 66 engravings. This work, just like so many erotic or sexual works from his youth, evokes his experience in Barcelona, where he started visiting brothels. One that stands out over all the others is his celebrated *La Celestina* at the Musée Picasso in Paris, a real procuress whom Picasso met in one of the brothels he often visited on Barcelona's Carrer Nou de la Rambla. One of his best friends, Sebastià Junyer-Vidal, appears in numerous drawings as his companion on these calls, and in fact he is featured in one of Picasso's most important oil paintings on this theme, today at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where he appears seated next to a prostitute.

Regardless of whether or not they are set inside a brothel, several of Picasso's explicitly erotic works from Barcelona show openly sexual scenes, including penetration, fellatio, masturbation and cunnilingus, either alone or with a woman. Many of these more striking scenes are part of an important set of erotic works that stand out for their uniqueness, which came from the donation by the Barcelona collector Lluís Garriga Roig. Garriga Roig bequeathed a total of thirteen drawings which joined the city collections in 1953, most of them watercolour-retouched drawings from 1902 to 1903, which are currently conserved at the Museu Picasso. The main characters in these works are not always anonymous; sometimes the artist himself appears, as do his friends, like the brothers Mateu and Àngel Fernández de Soto and Isidre Nonell. This leads to the theme of scatology, in which the museum holds several unusual pieces, in addition to the theme of bestiality. This group of works, most of them small, are the seeds of the theme of sexuality which came to permeate Picasso's oeuvre not only as a theme in the strict sense but also as an element inherent to the creative act.

### THE BARCELONA BLUES

The Blue Period is unquestionably one of the most emblematic periods in Picasso's oeuvre, and even though it



spanned both Barcelona and Paris, the fact is that its best artistic expressions were made during Picasso's stay in Barcelona. What we call the Blue Period could actually be considered the first of Picasso's clearly individual artistic periods. Several themes converge in the works from this stage, but despite the label they are not uniform, given that it was a long and highly prolific period that spanned from 1901 to 1904. In the autumn of 1900, Picasso took his first journey to Paris with his friend, the artist Carles Casagemas. During his second stay in Paris in June 1901, his first exhibition in France opened at the Vollard gallery, where he presented works in a bright, raucous colour palette depicting worldly, carefree themes. In contrast, shortly thereafter, during the autumn-winter of 1901, blueish tones began to seep into his works until they became hegemonic. The blue monochrome was nuanced by browns, ochres, greens and yellows, but these other hues were also always subordinate to the blue. This change signalled one of the most sudden and unique shifts in Picasso's artistic career.

To justify his use of blue, Picasso mentioned the suicide of his friend Casagemas: 'It was thinking about Casagemas's death that started me painting in blue'. In fact, some of the earliest manifestations of blue were a pair of portraits of the dead Casagemas with the gunshot mark on his temple. By late 1901, Picasso had made several portraits of the female inmates in Paris' Saint-Lazare prison-hospital. However, he painted most of the works from his Blue Period in Catalonia, and the core themes that he drew from paralleled the artistic and social concerns of contemporary Catalan artists from the post-Modernista generation, especially Isidre Nonell. In terms of influences, the technical and iconographic resources of many artists from different periods converge in Picasso's Blue Period creations, including El Greco, Carrière, Puvis de Chavanne and Gauguin.

When Picasso went back to Barcelona in early 1902, he shared a studio at number 10 Carrer Conde del Asalto (now Nou de la Rambla) with his friends Josep Rocarol and Àngel Fernández de Soto. In Barcelona, his blue gained an intensity that it did not have in Paris, and the range of themes expanded. This is why many experts have situated the virtual start of his Blue Period in Barcelona. His use of blue encompasses themes like the landscape, as we have seen in the section above entitled 'Barcelona, map of a modern city. The landscape', especially with top-down views of rooftops. There are also a few still lifes, including *The Blue Glass*, now at the Museu Picasso of Barcelona, where the bright blue contrasts with a touch of red, a technique that became a hallmark of other works from this period, especially *Mother and Child by the Sea*—also known as *La fleur du mal*—at the Pola Museum of Art in Japan. But the hegemonic genre in his Blue Period was the portrait, albeit with a plethora of different registers and intentionalities. A first more mundane series is comprised of portraits of his friends and acquaintances, as we saw above when talking about the Barcelona art

scene; they included Sebatia Junyent, Jaume Sabartès and *La Celestina*, all of them figures from his immediate milieu. In contrast, Picasso's proverbial duality, combining actual reality with a sublimated reality, gave rise to a much more celebrated series of works from this period, compositions that sought to portray not so much people as concepts or ideas, taking references that could be either real or allegorical as models. Picasso was uninterested in identity in the strict sense when he conveyed concepts like old age, loneliness, melancholy, illness or vulnerability, in short, the themes that have become the hallmarks of his Blue Period over the years. If we focus on his largest set of works from that period, the dominant theme is figures on society's margins, or who project an immense sense of weakness, or who fall fully within *miserabilisme*. Individual human figures tend to predominate, with several exceptions like small family clusters, couples or mothers with children.

Many of his oil paintings reveal experimentation with volumetrics and a desire to break the pictorial space with the help of blue, a colour that helps to cloister off spaces. Almost as a natural process in line with some of his oil paintings from that time, in 1902 he made his first sculpture as an artist, *Seated Woman*, with the guidance of the sculptor Emili Fontbona. His start in this technique was slow, and sculpture did not become somewhat systematic in his oeuvre until years later. Yet he did make several other sculptures in Barcelona, like *Blind Singer* and *Head of Picador with Broken Nose*, both from 1903. That same year, after a brief sojourn in Paris, Picasso went back to Barcelona and did not leave again until April 1904. He returned to his studio at number 17 Riera de Sant Joan, which he shared with Àngel Fernández de Soto, and later moved to number 28 Carrer Comerç, his last studio in the city. In fact, his work took another turn in 1903, when he combined influences from Spanish mannerist and Romanesque painting, as well as Egyptian and Greco-Roman art. We could even claim that some of those compositions have a para-religious tone, almost like altarpieces, which some authors have called 'contemporary martyrdoms'. They include large pieces like *Old Jew and a Boy*, at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, and *The Old Guitarist*, at the Art Institute of Chicago. Picasso also painted *La Vie* in 1903, currently at the Cleveland Museum of Art, which would become his greatest work from the Blue Period and the most important one he made in Catalonia. Even though he continued to use blue until 1904, it reached its zenith in this work, which synthesises many of the features that characterised the period, like the couple, loneliness, motherhood and death.

## GÓSOL AND THE ATTACK ON THE AVANT-GARDE

The Catalan landscape as a place of respite and creation had been imprinted on Picasso since his first stay in Horta, so he went back multiple times years later. Just two

years after he permanently left Barcelona as his place of residence in 1904, Picasso chose to spend some time there, specifically between May and August of 1906, when he decided to leave Paris for a stay in Gósol, a village in the foothills of the Pyrenees of Lleida.<sup>11</sup> He was accompanied by his French partner for the past few years, Fernande Olivier. They stayed at an inn called Can Tempanada in the centre of the village. This was his first Catalan sojourn, a habit he resumed in 1909 in Horta and which lasted until 1913 in Céret. The change from Paris was drastic, primarily because he went from an urban area to an incredibly primitive rural one, as Gósol was in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, some of his works from Gósol were in harmony—and even showed some degree of continuity—with the Parisian works he made in the first few months of 1906. Gósol somehow embodied the normal process of an artist who had evolved towards primitivist formal solutions.

Broadly speaking, his works from Gósol evolved along two main iconographic lines, which actually reflected Picasso's classic urges. The first was a more naturalistic line focused on the local life and landscape, which maintained a kind of sublimated realism. The second line, totally outside reality, drew from two sources: classical iconography—especially Greek or Mediterranean—and the iconography from more recent art history, which showed influences from artists like Gauguin and Ingres. From the standpoint of colour, this sojourn was characterised by the use of a warm palette dominated by ochres, browns and pinks, which he was using before he went to Gósol but became accentuated in contact with its landscape.

At times, this neoclassicist bent brought his works to the verge of the Noucentista vein that was gradually becoming predominant in Catalonia, but this was more due to the convergence of the period than the influence of Catalan art, given that Picasso spent only about a week in Barcelona on his way to Gósol. Nonetheless, it was enough time for him to receive the literary influence from the Joan Maragall poem *Enllà*, which was published around that time. This was late May 1906, when after a few days in Barcelona Picasso and Fernande made the journey to Gósol, where they remained for the next few months. Picasso hand-copied the Mediterranean-influenced poems from the 'Vistes al mar' collection in a sketchbook. Later, he translated them into French on another piece of paper so Fernande could read them. This paper has become known across the globe as the 'Carnet Catalan', and in 1958 a facsimile print of it was made.

Regarding Picasso's more realistic line of work, he made a vast number of portraits of the villagers of Gósol, including oil paintings like *Woman with Loaves*, now at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and *Youth from Gósol*, at the Göteborgs Konstmuseum, both of them heavily ethnological. Many of his pure landscapes from Gósol are halfway between realism and idealisation, revealing an interest in the cubic arrangement of the houses, which he went on to develop in Horta three years later. The por-

traits of folks from Gósol include a series of the elderly man Josep Fondevila, whom Picasso befriended. In addition to Fernande, Fondevila became his favourite model, and Picasso made a considerable number of portraits of him, both oil paintings and drawings, in what became a process of experimenting with the human face in all its variations. In one of them, he somewhat masked the elderly Fondevila's face, which became the foundation of later experiments, especially during cubism. In this same experimental vein, he used a new material in his oeuvre, boxwood, in the only sculptures he made in Gósol, with notable pieces like *Woman with Her Arms Raised* at the Musée Picasso in Paris.

Regarding his more classical works, this was seen in both formal aspects associated with the treatment of the human figure (faces, profiles, postures, etc.) and the recreation of the classical world and its archetypes. What stand out in the former are works like *Female Torso* and *Two Brothers*, at the Musée Picasso in Paris. The iconography of the classical world can also be seen in male figures that evoke the image of the Greek *Kouros*, more explicitly in two works with the same name, *Two Youths*, one at the National Gallery of Art in Washington—indebted to the classic Spinario—and the other at the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris. But the pieces that truly stand out from this sojourn include *Three Nudes* and especially *The Harem*, at the Cleveland Museum of Art. These two pieces somehow anticipated what some historiography—with significant exceptions—has considered the first work of cubism, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. Version O)*, which was made in 1907, although the first sketches date from late 1906. On the other hand, as Picasso himself said, that work also stemmed from his visits to the brothels of Barcelona, like the ones on Carrer Avinyó.

### THE CATALAN LANDSCAPES OF CUBISM: HORTA, CADAQUÉS AND CÉRET

The historiography of art has concurred that cubism is unquestionably the most important artistic shift that took place in the twentieth century. And it so happens that Picasso's sojourns in Catalonia birthed the most important creations in cubism. Although cubism would last longer in time as a canonical period—and go through different phases—according to many experts, its purest vein came to an end in 1914. This perspective would give Picasso's cubist works made in Catalonia even more importance. Picasso stayed in Catalonia five times over five consecutive years which were absolutely crucial for cubism, specifically between 1909 and 1913. They were his usual summer campaigns, just like so many artists who sought to get away from the competitive, all-absorbing dynamic of Paris. Yet he was not intending to seek free time but quite the opposite: his goal was to work and especially to experiment. Indeed, these five stays yielded major advances within the evolution of cubism itself. Regarding

his output in the strict sense, all these campaigns were especially prolific for the simple reason that Picasso had already become so prestigious that many of the works either had been commissioned or were certain to sell easily. In fact, based on his correspondence with dealers like Kahnweiler and Gertrude Stein, we know that Picasso kept them informed about his new creations and even sent them photographs.

His first cubist stay was in Horta, his friend Pallarès' village, where he had not returned since 1899. He went there with his partner, Fernande Olivier, between the months of May and September 1909. They stayed at the Hostal del Trompet, and Picasso set up his studio in a nearby flat and soon filled it with works. His works from Horta are characterised by the onset of what is known as geometric cubism, which tended to reduce natural forms to geometric structures, basically straight and curved. It is an evolution within cubism which had started with a kind of Cézanne-like cubism that he took to its extreme during this stay. In fact, Cézanne's influence can still be seen in his early works from Horta, where Picasso paraphrased the artist's celebrated landscapes of Saint-Victoire del Mestre d'Aix when he painted Santa Bàrbara mountain, as in the oil painting at the Denver Art Museum. Also within the landscape genre, his cubist works from Horta became iconic based on two oil paintings that synthesised geometric cubism: *The Reservoir*, on deposit at MoMA, and *Brick Factory at Tortosa*, at the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. Picasso took geometric cubism to its extreme by breaking the volumes down into facets, which he had already begun to do in Paris. Classic spatial perspective gave way to the creation of simultaneous vantage points which nonetheless comprised a unified whole. Picasso played with perspectives and counter-perspectives and used colour, contrasting light and dark tones and different hues of grey and ochre in his bid to compose timeless spaces.

In addition to landscapes, the two other core themes from Horta are portraits and still lifes, the latter to a lesser extent. Several portraits he made of his friends from Horta stand out, like Manuel Pallarès (this one was made in Barcelona) and *The Athlete*, a portrait of the café owner Joaquim-Antoni Vives, at the Sao Paulo Art Museum. However, most of the portraits he painted were of Fernande, either alone or with still lifes. Worth particular note are those in which Picasso blurs or fuses his companion with Santa Bàrbara mountain; the portraits at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt and at the Pola Museum of Art are prime examples of this, albeit in different ways.

His second stay in Catalonia was in the summer of the following year, and the place he chose was Cadaqués. Picasso and Fernande—with the Derains—were invited by his friend Ramon Pichot, and they made the journey from Barcelona to Cadaqués with Pichot's family.<sup>12</sup> That stay mainly fell between July and late August 1910, and they were visited by several Barcelona friends, including Àngel Fernández de Soto. Once again, it was an extraordinarily

profitable sojourn, and even though the seaside environment was completely different from Horta, Picasso was an eminently Mediterranean artist and this comes through clearly in his works from Cadaqués. The most emblematic pieces include those with maritime themes, like *The Port of Cadaqués*, at the Narodni Gallery in Prague, and *The Rower*, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He also made several important still lifes, like *Fruit Bowl*, at the Museo Nacional-Centro de Arte Reina Sofia. In Cadaqués, Picasso began a commission for the dealer Kahnweiler, namely the illustrations for the book *Saint Matorel* by his friend Max Jacob, although he did not finish them until he was back in Paris. The most unique feature of his cubism from Cadaqués is that it signalled a turning point in his approach to abstraction, in what has become known as a new phase in cubism, 'analytic cubism', where the connection to reality is virtually non-existent and the volumes are shattered by intermeshing open planes. Unlike in Horta or subsequent periods in Céret, in Cadaqués real references were reduced to their minimal expression, which is unusual in Picasso, who always tried to avoid venturing into abstraction and only did so in an occasional, experimental fashion. Picasso and Fernande left Cadaqués in the late summer.

To conclude the story of cubism in Catalonia, we should mention Picasso's three consecutive stays in Céret in 1911, 1912 and 1913, along with his stay in Sorgues in 1912.<sup>13</sup> The reason he chose Céret was his friendship with Manolo and Frank Burty Havilland, both of whom lived in the town. His first stay was between July and early September 1911, and Picasso was there by himself for around a month. His relationship with Fernande was on the rocks, and she arrived later with the painter Georges Braque and his wife. Picasso's work in Céret shows a figurative evolution from his Cadaqués work from the previous year. They include large oil paintings, many of them vertical and using a new pyramidal structure, which coexisted with a recurring iconography from this stay, the fan. The most important pieces include *Landscape at Céret* and *The Accordionist*, both at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Just as the cubic shapes of houses prevailed in Horta and maritime scenes did in Cadaqués, in addition to other formal aspects and thematic effects, his works from Céret were influenced by the theme of music. The town had a band in which one of Picasso's good friends, the musician Déodat de Severac, played, and this led different musical instruments to appear in his works from Céret. Notably, during those months an extraordinary formal osmosis developed between Picasso's and Braque's works, to such an extent that their respective works are clearly imitative, a unique case within art history.

His second stay was in 1912, when Picasso was no longer with Fernande, with whom he had ended the relationship, but instead with his new partner Eva Gouel. They stayed there one month, between May and June (with a brief stay in December), when he made such prominent



works as *Spanish Still Life* and the celebrated works with inscriptions referring to his new partner, 'Ma Jolie'. From there they went to Avignon and later to Sorgues, where they spent a few months before returning to Paris. During this period, Picasso experimented with new techniques like the effects of fake wood and marble and a range of *trompe-l'oeil*. The most important works he made in Sorgues include *The Amateur* or *The Poet*.

His last stay in Céret, between March and August 1913 (with a few brief jaunts elsewhere), was the longest of all and primarily stands out for his *papiers collés* made with clippings from newspapers or placemats, yielding works like *The Guitar*, at New York's MoMA, in which he used a clipping from the newspaper *El Diluvio*. In a different register, one of his boldest works from this stay was *Houses at Céret*, at the Musée Picasso in Paris, which depicts the building currently occupied by the Musée d'Art Moderne. He also made several *papiers épingleés*, a variation of *papier collé* but secured with pins, like *Landscape at Céret*, at the Musée Picasso in Paris. In short, based on his output and new developments, some of which he had initiated in Paris, his stays in Céret were extraordinarily important in the evolution of Picasso's works specifically and cubism in general.

### HIS LAST GREAT CREATIONS IN CATALONIA

The works Picasso made in Catalonia ended at an early date compared to the number of years he was in contact with the country. He made his last truly important works there in 1917. He came back to both Barcelona and Céret on subsequent sojourns, and even to Perpignan in the 1950s, but the works he created then do not figure importantly within his oeuvre. After he left Barcelona in 1904, he ventured back several times but never again stayed for such a long period of time. He was there between late 1916 and early 1917, but his most important stay was between June and November of 1917. Picasso had made an important shift in his career: around that time he had started partnering with Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. He was in charge of designing the costumes and curtains of some of their most celebrated dances, including *Parade*. Precisely on the occasion of this ballet's premiere at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Picasso had travelled to Barcelona from Rome accompanied by his most recent partner, Olga Kokhlova, who moved into the Hotel Ranzini with the other ballet corps members. Olga was one of the company's young dancers, and Picasso wanted her to meet his family in Barcelona; in fact, they married in Paris the next year.

The Ballets Russes performed twice, once in June and once in November, and Picasso lived steadily in Barcelona between these two dates. This long period gave him the chance to rekindle his personal relationships in the city, which gave rise to a series of tributes, given that by then he was an internationally renowned personality. Regard-

ing his oeuvre, this became the last major set of works he made in Barcelona, many of which fortunately ended up in the family home and were later bequeathed to the Museu Picasso in Barcelona. They include a set of oil paintings which depict two of the constant features of Picasso's works in 1917: classicism and late cubism. Immersed in cubism for years, shortly before this journey Picasso had started to shift towards a kind of neoclassicism, which that year turned professional after he partnered with the Ballets Russes. This signalled an extraordinary turn in his career at a time when cubism—now far from the heroics of incomprehension and the avant-garde in the strictest sense—was witnessing the appearance of vast number of followers and imitators. Picasso's eclecticism became explicit at a time when personal changes (meeting Olga and later marrying her) merged with professional changes (Ballets Russes), leading to a convergence of a wide variety of different themes and registers in his works seldom seen in his career. Works associated with his Rose Period, like *Harlequin*—a portrait of the dancer Leónide Massine—coexisted with oil paintings that seem like reminiscences of early cubism, specifically geometric cubism, such as *Seated Man* or *Woman in an Armchair*. This convergence between formal cubist and neoclassicist proposals reached its peak in the ballet *Parade*, which was ultimately a cubist ballet, that is, a classical and conventional genre run through the filter of the uttermost modernity. Beyond a few exceptional critiques, this contributed to its failure in Barcelona, a city where the cubist works from the previous years had seldom been warmly received among the majority of critics, much less among collectors. Picasso also made several works associated with more domestic and less conceptual subjects, including more archetypal portraits like *Olga in a Mantilla* or *Woman in a Mantilla* and *Blanquita Suárez*, at the Museu Picasso in Barcelona. One of the most emblematic works was the oil painting *Passeig de Colom*, actually the only landscape from this stay, to our knowledge. He painted it from the balcony of the Hotel Ranzini across from Passeig de Colom using an amalgam of pointillism, realism and cubism.

Picasso returned to Catalonia, and more specifically to Barcelona, several times in the 1920s and 1930s, specifically until 1934, when he made what is officially considered his last stay. The occasion was the opening of the future Museu d'Art de Catalunya (currently the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya), which Picasso had the privilege of visiting with its director Joaquim Folch i Torres shortly before it opened. The new museum was being launched with an important monographic room devoted his work, including the 1917 *Harlequin* and the pieces recently acquired from the collector Lluís Plandiura. These works are currently conserved at the Museu Picasso and are the most solid and highest quality set of Picasso's works in Catalan museums. The Spanish Civil War broke out two years later, in July 1936, giving rise to a military dictatorship that Picasso opposed, which signalled the



cessation of his stays in Catalonia and consequently his Catalan works.

The association between Picasso and Catalonia continued beyond the strictly physical relationship described thus far, but from the artistic standpoint, which is what truly defines an artist, it would go no further. Henceforth, the relationship would be more sentimental, with stories of friendships, journeys, anecdotes and the countless gifts that the artist gave his Catalan friends and acquaintances. But the most specific manifestation of his sentimental bond with Catalonia was the creation of the Museu Picasso in Barcelona. In 1963, his friend from his youth and later his personal secretary, Jaume Sabartés, donated his entire collection of Picasso works to the city of Barcelona. Along with the Picasso works in municipal museums, including the aforementioned set from Plandiura, this formed the foundation of the current Museu Picasso. After Sabartés' death, Picasso donated the 50 paintings in the *Las Meninas* series and an oil portrait of Sabartés. This was only the prelude to the huge donation of more than 1,000 works he made in 1970, a veritable treasure trove that completes the initial donation by Sabartés. Today, this museum serves as the main symbolic bond not only between the artist and Barcelona but also between him and Catalonia, given that the majority of works conserved there, some of which we have cited in this article, were made in Catalonia.

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