

# Picasso

Pablo Picasso, one of the most recognized figures of the 20th century art who co-created such styles as Cubism and Surrealism, was also among most innovative, influential, and prolific artists of all time.

He was born Pablo Ruiz Picasso on October 6, 1881, in Malaga, Spain. He was the first child of Jose Ruiz y Blasco and Maria Picasso y Lopez. His father was an artist and professor of art at the School of Fine Arts, and also a curator of museum in Malaga, Spain. Picasso began studying art under his father's tutelage, continued at the Academy of Arts in Madrid for a year, and went on his ingenious explorations of the new horizons. He went to Paris in 1901 and found the environment conducive for his experiments with new art styles. [Gertrude Stein](#), [Guillaume Apollinaire](#), and [André Breton](#) were among his friends and collectors.

Constantly updating his style from the Blue Period, to the Rose Period, to the African-influenced Period, to Cubism, to Realism and Surrealism he was a pioneer with a hand in every art movement of the 20th century. He made some softer and neo-classic artworks during his cooperation with the Russian Ballet of [Sergei Diaghilev](#) in Paris. In 1917 Picasso joined the Russian Ballet on tour in Rome, Italy. There he fell in love with Olga Khokhlova, a classical ballerina from the Russian nobility (her father was a General to the Russian Tsar Nickolas II). Picasso painted Olga as a Spanish girl in his painting "Olga Khokhlova in Mantilla" to convince his parents for their blessing, and his idea worked. Picasso and Olga Khokhlova wed in Paris, in 1918, and had one son, Paolo. After their marriage, Olga's high society lifestyle clashed with Picasso's bohemian manners. They separated in 1935, but remained officially married until her death in 1954. Meanwhile, his most famous lovers, Marie Therese Walter and Dora Maar, were also his inspirational models for a series of experimental portraits.

Picasso was a pacifist. His outcry for peace was expressed in large-scale painting Guernica (1937), created after the German bombing of this Spanish city. This powerful composition, showing the brutal inhumanity of war, became his most famous work and turned him into a political celebrity. In 1940 Picasso applied for French citizenship, but was denied it, and remained Spanish. Protected by his fame, he was untouchable even to the Nazis in the occupied Paris. A skillful self-promoter, he used politics, eccentricity, and provocation as a selling tool. Sarcastic harlequin and dominating minotaur were his personal symbols, frequently used in his artworks. His life turned into a PR campaign, playing with scandals; viciousness to his own children, exaggerated virility and beastly treatment of his women. However, he was forgiven by the public. Even his membership in the Communist party and his controversial comments about [Joseph Stalin](#), who [awarded](#) Picasso the Stalin Prize for Peace in 1950, were ignored by his admirers. His life-long extraordinary artistic dialogue with [Henri Matisse](#) took a form of a "visual conversation" and exchange of their paintings with mutual respect. After WWII he returned to "classical" style and created the "Dove of Peace".

An innovator and a multi-faceted personality, Picasso dominated the 20th century Western Art, spreading his influence beyond art into many aspects of culture and life. In his several film appearances Picasso always played himself. His lifestyle remained as bohemian and vivacious as it was in his youth. Picasso

died in style while entertaining his guests at a dinner party, on April 8, 1973, in Mougins, in southeastern France. Picasso's last words were "Drink to me, drink to my health, you know I can't drink any more." He was interred at Castle Vauvenargues' park, in Vauvenargues, Bouches-du-Rhone, in the South of France.

Pablo Picasso's paintings rank among the most expensive artwork in the world, establishing a price record with \$104 million sale of "Garçon à la pipe" in 2004. Picasso produced over 13 thousand paintings or designs, 100,000 prints and engravings, 34 thousand book illustrations and 300 sculptures, becoming the most prolific artist ever.

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0681444/bio>

## **Pollock**

Jackson Pollock was born January 28, 1912 in Cody, Wyoming. He was the fifth and youngest son. When he was a year old his family moved to Arizona, and then to Chico, California. His dad started off as a farmer, but when that failed he became a land surveyor for the government. Since Jackson would go with his dad when he went land surveying, he was exposed to Native Americans and their art which would later influence his work. He attended the Los Angeles Manual Arts High School where he was persuaded to go into a career in art.

In 1930 he followed his eldest brother, Charles, to New York City and moved there. He studied under Thomas Hart Benton at the Art Students League of New York City with his brother. At the yearly school exhibit, he met his future wife, Lee Krasner, another fellow artist, while she was viewing his work. From 1935 to 1943, he worked for the Works Project Association (WPA) Federal Arts Project (FAP), which meant he was employed by the government.

Pollock was introduced to liquid paint in 1936 by Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros, but he didn't use it until his drip period. His early art is influenced by Picasso and Miro, as well as Surrealism and Native American art (particularly sand drawings). Jackson's work during the Great Depression has strong Native American tones and Surrealism mixed together, which happens to be a reoccurring theme in his art. In 1943, Jackson had his first solo exhibit. Peggy Guggenheim sponsored it and guaranteed him a salary of \$150 a month.

Jackson and Lee were married in October of 1945. Pollock's patron and art dealer, Peggy Guggenheim, lent them the down payment for their house in Springs on Long Island. Their house had a shed for Pollock to paint in, and a room in the house for Lee to paint in.

At last, Pollock hit gold. When he began to drip paint onto the canvas, it was deemed genius. His work became so famous in America during the 1950's he had a four page spread in Life Magazine that asked if he was the greatest painter alive. In an interview, he was asked how this came to be and he replied "The method of painting is the natural growth out of need. I want to express my feelings rather than illustrate them... I can control the flow of paint; there is no accident, just as there is no beginning and no end."

When asked about his painting technique, he stated "I prefer to tack the unstretched canvas to the hard wall or floor... On the floor, I am more at ease. I feel nearer, more a part of the painting,

since this way I can walk around it, and work from the four sides and literally be in the painting.” As for his tools, “I continue to get away from the usual painter’s tools such as an easel, palette, brushes, etc. I prefer sticks, trowels, knives, and dripping fluid paint or a heavy impasto with sand, broken glass, or other foreign matter added.”

He was most famous from 1947 to 1950. He produced artworks like *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, 1950. It is composed of, brown, black, and white—very basic colors. Like Pollock said in his quote, he tries to express feeling here by the motion of the work instead of conveying it through the colors. Many paintings by him don’t have names; instead, they are numbered so it doesn’t give the piece a symbolic meaning, just a feeling.

From 1950 to the end of his life, Jackson did not paint at all. He had been an alcoholic all his life, and now the liquor had totally taken control. His drunken escapades split Pollock’s marriage apart, especially when he got a mistress. To get away from the mess, Lee went to Europe to think about her marriage and where it was going, and what the next course of action would be. Pollock, on the other hand, stayed in town, and went out to bars with a few friends. When he was driving back home that fateful night, he flipped his convertible and killed his friend Edith Metzgen and himself. His mistress, Ruth Klingman, was the only one to survive the crash. Lee found out about the crash the next day. Jackson Pollock died on August 11, 1956 at 10:15 pm while driving under the influence. He was buried at the Green River Cemetery near Springs where they lived. Lee was buried there as well. Their house is now the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center. Pollock changed American art history by becoming the first abstract artist to be taken seriously by the European artists, and the first American artist to receive major national attention for his work

<http://totallyhistory.com/jackson-pollock/>

## Leonardo

Leonardo was born on April 15, 1452, "at the third hour of the night" in the Tuscan hill town of Vinci, in the lower valley of the Arno River in the territory of Florence. He was the illegitimate son of Messer Piero Fruosino di Antonio da Vinci, a Florentine notary, and Caterina, a peasant who may have been a slave from the Middle East. Leonardo had no surname in the modern sense, "da Vinci" simply meaning "of Vinci": his full birth name was "Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci", meaning "Leonardo, son of (Mes)ser Piero from Vinci."

Little is known about Leonardo's early life. He spent his first five years in the hamlet of Anchiano, then lived in the household of his father, grandparents and uncle, Francesco, in the small town of Vinci. His father had married a sixteen-year-old girl named Albiera, who loved Leonardo but died young. In later life, Leonardo only recorded two childhood incidents. One, which he regarded as an omen, was when a kite dropped from the sky and hovered over his cradle, its tail feathers brushing his face. The second occurred while exploring in the mountains. He discovered a cave and was both terrified that some great monster might lurk there, and driven by curiosity to find out what was inside.

Leonard's early life has been the subject of historical conjecture. Vasari, the 16th century biographer of Renaissance painters tells of how a local peasant requested that Ser Piero ask his talented son to paint a picture on a round plaque. Leonardo responded with a painting of snakes spitting fire which was so terrifying that Ser Piero sold it to a Florentine art dealer, who sold it to the Duke of Milan. Meanwhile, having made a profit, Ser Piero bought a plaque decorated with a heart pierced by an arrow, which he gave to the peasant.

## **Verrocchio's workshop, 1466–1476**

In 1466, at the age of fourteen, Leonardo was apprenticed to one of the most successful artists of his day, Andrea di Cione, known as Verrocchio. Verrocchio's workshop was at the centre of the intellectual currents of Florence, assuring the young Leonardo of an education in the humanities. Other famous painters apprenticed or associated with the workshop include Ghirlandaio, Perugino, Botticelli, and Lorenzo di Credi. Leonardo would have been exposed to a vast range of technical skills and had the opportunity to learn drafting, chemistry, metallurgy, metal working, plaster casting, leather working, mechanics and carpentry as well as the artistic skills of drawing, painting, sculpting and modelling.

Much of the painted production of Verrocchio's workshop was done by his employees. According to Vasari, Leonardo collaborated with Verrocchio on his Baptism of Christ, painting the young angel holding Jesus' robe in a manner that was so far superior to his master's that Verrocchio put down his brush and never painted again. This is probably an exaggeration. On close examination, the painting reveals much that has been painted or touched up over the tempera using the new technique of oil paint, the landscape, the rocks that can be seen through the brown mountain stream and much of the figure of Jesus bearing witness to the hand of Leonardo.

Leonardo himself may have been the model for two works by Verrocchio, including the bronze statue of David in the Bargello and the Archangel Michael in Tobias and the Angel.

By 1472, at the age of twenty, Leonardo qualified as a master in the Guild of St Luke, the guild of artists and doctors of medicine, but even after his father set him up in his own workshop, his attachment to Verrocchio was such that he continued to collaborate with him. Leonardo's earliest known dated work is a drawing in pen and ink of the Arno valley, drawn on 5 August 1473.

## ***Raphael***

**Born:** 6 April 1483

**Died:** 6 April 1520

**Birthplace:** Urbino, Duchy of Urbino (Italy)

**Best known as:** High Renaissance painter of *The School of Athens*

Raphael, like [Michelangelo](#) and [Leonardo da Vinci](#), is one of the most famous artists of Italy's High Renaissance and one of the greatest influences in the history of Western art. Immensely talented, he first studied with his father and then as an assistant to the great master Pietro Vannucci, known as Perugino. Raphael (also known as Raffaello Sanzio) worked in Florence (1504) and earned a reputation as a productive and much-admired painter before going to Rome sometime after 1508. In Rome he was commissioned by [Pope Julius II](#) to create the large-scale fresco *The School of Athens*, as well as other decorative work at the Vatican. Raphael also took over as architect of St. Peter's after the death of Donato Bramante (1514), contributed ten tapestries to the Sistine Chapel and painted some of the most prized and reproduced holy pictures of the era, including *The Sistine Madonna* and *Transfiguration*. His work is often cited for its harmony and balance of composition, and his early death (on his 37th birthday) is considered by many experts to be one of the great tragedies of art history.

**Extra credit:** The 19th century artists known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and including poet/painter [Dante Gabriel Rossetti](#), sought to advance the style of Italian art that preceded Raphael... Michelangelo was notoriously cranky and Raphael was famously amiable -- they did not associate with one another, even though they both worked in Rome at the same time... Raphael's famous signature, RVSM, stood for "Raphael Vrbinus Sua Mano" (Raphael of Urbino, His Hand).

Read more: [Raphael Biography \(Artist\) | Infoplease.com](#)  
<http://www.infoplease.com/biography/var/raphael.html#ixzz2Ms6LGWFQ>

## MIRO

Born April 20th, 1893, Joan Miro Ferra was a Spanish painter, sculptor and ceramist. Originally from Barcelona, Joan Miro moved to Paris at an early age, where he began to develop an unconventional style of work.

He soon became known in the community as a Surrealist because of his love for automatism and the use of sexual symbols in much of his work. Joan Miro was very much against the established painting methods of the time, and is often credited with being the founder of automatic drawing. Automatic drawing is the process of allowing the hand to move randomly on the canvas, leaving the artwork to chance. Many Surrealists believed that this form of drawing would reveal something about the subconscious human mind. For Joan Miro, automatic drawing was also a way to breaking free from conventional form. Miro was very much against bourgeois art, claiming that it was used for propaganda and the promotion of a wealthy culture. Miro referred to his work as the *assassination of painting*.

During the height of his career, Joan Miro experimented with many different types of art form, refusing to commit to one artistic movement. Later in his career he began experimenting

with tapestry. In 1974 he created *World Trade Center Tapestry* for the newly constructed Twin Towers. This work would later become the most expensive piece of art lost in the World Trade Center attacks of September 11th.

Joan Miro also began to delve into other aspects of media, including ceramics and window paintings. Some of his more radical ideas included four-dimensional art, and gas sculptures, though he was never able to put these ideas into practice.

Perhaps his most important work of art in the United States is a glass mural titled *Personnage Oiseaux*, which was made for the Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University in Kansas. Joan Miro began this large two-dimensional project at the age of 79, and it was not completely until he was 85 years old. The mural is made up of one million pieces of marble and Venetian glass, mounted on a special type of wood, and was attached to the concrete wall of the museum. It was the first glass mosaic ever attempted by Miro, and though he wanted to make more, his deteriorating health prevented any future attempts of another project.

At the time of his death, Joan Miro was bedridden from heart disease and respiratory complications. He died at his home in Palma, Mallorca on December 25th, 1983. He is buried in his home town of Barcelona, near a museum that is dedicated entirely to his work. Today, his works are displayed in museums and galleries all over the world, and sell for anywhere between \$250,000 and \$17 million.