Biography Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso (1881 – 1973) Spanish painter, sculptor, ceramist and poet. One of the founders of cubism and one of the most influential artists of the Twentieth Century.

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”

– Pablo Picasso

Short bio of Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain in 1881 to a conventional artistic family. From an early age he displayed great talent for painting and began displaying his work from the age of 14. To further his artistic aspiration he left Spain for Paris where he became part of a new avant-garde movement of art.

“When I was a child my mother said to me, ‘If you become a soldier, you’ll be a general. If you become a monk, you’ll be the pope.’ Instead I became a painter and wound up as Picasso.”

– Pablo Picasso

His early artistic career went through various states. One of the first states was known as the ‘Blue Period.’ In his late teens his paintings were dominated by different shades of blue; they were also often melancholic. This included a famous self portrait where Picasso looked much older than his 20 years.

By 1907, Picasso had developed a new form of painting known as ‘cubism’ This involved capturing the essence of the subject on the canvas but exaggerating certain features; typical of this period is the painting ‘Les Demoiselles d’Avignon’ – it is a picture depicting five prostitutes in a brothel. It is an eye catching and an original exploration of modernism in art.
In the 1920s and 30s Picasso concentrated on more classical works of art. He became interested in depicting the human form in the style of neo-classical. To some extent, he was influenced by artists such as Renoir and Ingres, although he always retained a very unique and individual expression.

Picasso had an instinctive and natural compassion for those exposed to suffering, especially if it was as a result of injustice. His natural sympathy and desire for equality led him to join the French Communist party. During the Spanish civil war he supported the Republicans and nursed a fierce hatred of Franco and what he did to Spain.

**Pablo Picasso and Guernica**

One of Picasso’s most famous paintings was his mural of the Guernica bombing (1937). The Guernica bombing was carried out by Italian and German planes and involved the carpet bombing of civil areas. The bombing of Guernica was a significant development in modern warfare as it showed a new capacity for extending the horrors of warfare to the civilian population. The bombing became international news through the English journalist George Steer. Picasso’s painting helped to immortalize the tragedy as a key event in the Twentieth Century. (See: [Events that changed the world](#))

Picasso was so enraged with Franco that he never allowed the painting to go to Spain during Franco’s lifetime. It eventually reached Spain in 1981.

Picasso was well aware of a political dimension to art.

“What do you think an artist is? …he is a political being, constantly aware of the heart breaking, passionate, or delightful things that happen in the world, shaping himself completely in their image. Painting is not done to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war.”

— Pablo Picasso
The Dove of Peace by Picasso

Another key painting of Picasso was his simple bird drawing a symbol of peace. Picasso donated it the Soviet backed World Peace Congress of 1949. It was telling of a new phase in Picasso’s art – the power of simplicity.

Abundant in artistic inspiration, Picasso enjoyed worldly life to the full. He enjoyed a string of mistresses, good food and wine. He died at the age of 91.