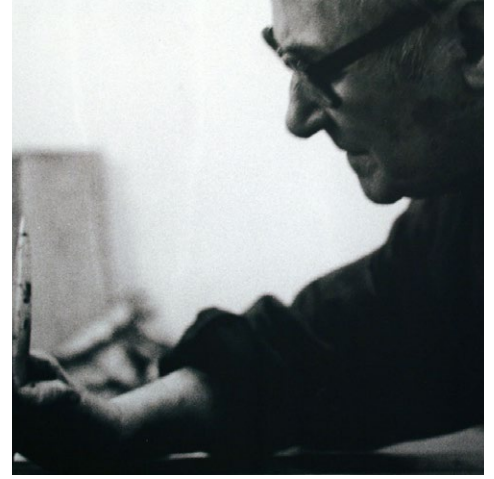


Joan Miro

1893 - 1983



Joan Miró was a famous Spanish Catalan artist, born in Barcelona in 1893. Miró had lots of skilled craft makers in his family. His father was a goldsmith, and his grandfather was a blacksmith. His mother was from Majorca, and her father (Miró's grandfather) was a cabinetmaker. Being surrounded by family members making beautiful things inspired Miró to want to become an artist.

Aged seven, Miró attended drawing classes after school, and was already showing his artistic talent. He wanted to pursue a career in art, but his parents were keen for him to get a more reliable job. At 14, Miró studied at a business school and an art school at the same time. Although encouraged to continue with his art by his professors, Miró felt pressure from his family to leave it behind. He started a new job as a business clerk in Barcelona.

Miró was not very satisfied working in the business world. He suffered a nervous breakdown and then became ill with typhoid fever. It took him 2 years to fully recover, while living at his parents' farm. When he was well, Miró began studying at a different art school. Here he flourished and felt more at home. He learned lots of skills at Francisco Gali's Escola d'Art, such as drawing from touch and painting with oils. While studying at his new art school, Miró was inspired by lots of the art that he saw. He visited exhibitions of Impressionist, Fauvist and Cubist art. He met lots of other young artists that became his friends, and some of whom he later worked with.

Miró graduated in 1915, and had his first solo exhibition in 1918. In 1919, he travelled to Paris and met the famous artist, Pablo Picasso. By 1920, Miró was living in Paris,

and was becoming more interested in Surrealist art. The Surrealist idea of drawing and painting from your subconscious helped to fuel his imagination. Miró began painting organic forms and creating dream-like paintings. He was inspired by Surrealist poets and enjoyed illustrating poetry in his artist's books. Miró painted his first Surrealist painting, *The Tilled Field*, in 1924. Other Surrealists admired Miró and he had a successful Surrealist exhibition in Paris in 1925.

In 1928, Miró began to experiment with more unusual materials, making simple collages using found items such as wire, leather, nails, string and sandpaper. He then explored printmaking. In 1929, Miró created his first prints: lithographs made up of big simple shapes and lines. In 1933, he used etching to create abstract prints. Miró enjoyed printmaking and felt that it inspired him with new ideas.

In 1940, Nazi troops occupied France, and Miró moved several times before finally settling in Majorca, his ancestral home. Although it was harder to find materials, Miró continued to create artworks.

In the 1960s, Miró began to spend more of his time making sculpture and exploring printmaking. He enjoyed working with other people to create new artworks, learning from people who were highly skilled. Towards the end of his life, Miró began to focus almost exclusively on printmaking, spending his time etching. Miró died in 1983, although his huge body of artwork is still enjoyed and admired by people all over the world.