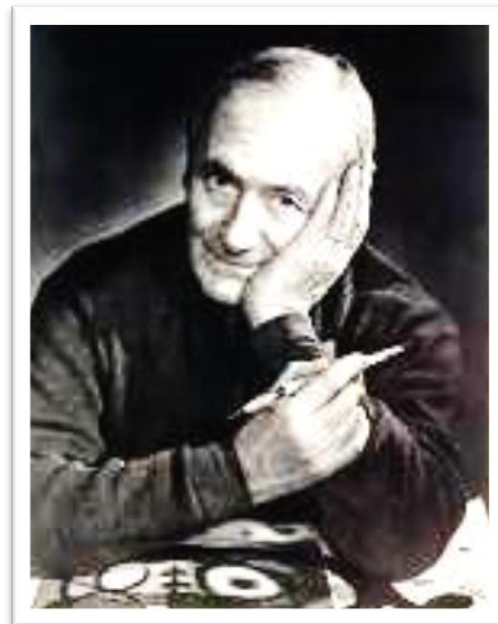



# JOAN MIRÓ

1893 - 1983

## Spanish Surrealist Painter



 2005, updated 2010. Created by Connie Robbins-Brady, property of Mesa County Valley School District #51, Grand Junction, CO. This article was written for educational purposes only. No part may be copied in part or in whole without permission. Certain materials are included under the fair use exemption of the U.S. Copyright Law and have been prepared according to the multimedia fair use guidelines and are restricted from further use. The information contained within this artist unit is a compilation of information gleaned from several sources, some unknown. If credit has not been properly given, please contact our office so this can be corrected.

### The Art Heritage Program's Joan Miró unit meets the following Colorado Department of Education-Visual Arts Standards (2009)

1. Observe and Learn to Comprehend
2. Envision and Critique to Transfer
3. Invent and Discover to Create
4. Reflect and Connect to Transfer



### LEARNING TARGET:

- **I know two important facts about Miró.** *(Where he lived, what kind of art he made, etc.)*
- **I can create a picture using line and shape.** *(Describe a line using words, body movements, or identify it in their art.)*

### SUMMARY

- Joan Miró (pronounced **JO-wan MEE-ro**) was one of the most versatile masters of twentieth century art. He is often described as a “Spanish Surrealist”, but he was actually an artist of many different techniques and medium. Miró used painting, sculpture, textiles, pottery, theater, and enormous public monuments to express his ideas, which have a lasting, influence and show him to be a truly international artist.
- Joan Miró was poet and magician, storyteller and seer. His creativity never failed him. He could do anything, and he could start from anywhere. The stars could set him off. So could what he called “the preposterous heads of mushrooms and the 77 shapes of the calabash” (a type of gourd).

- Miró's personal style was labeled "Biomorphic Abstraction", because his designs were curved, fluid, and more organic than geometric formations. Many critics have suggested Miró's paintings have their own vigorous life.
- Miró began his painting career as a cubist, sharing ideas with fellow artist and Spaniard, Pablo Picasso. It is believed that Miró's biomorphic abstractions influenced Picasso's famous mural "Guernica".
- Painting, as Joan Miró thought it, was a way of life. Known for depriving himself of sleep for days, to have more time to paint the images of hallucinations creeping through his head and on the walls of his studio, he produced abstract formations of real people and animals as well as fantastic creatures and objects.
- Miró was a stand-alone painter in many ways. He rejected much of the political attitude employed by many of the surrealists. His work tended toward the abstract, but was never non-representational: *"For me a form is never something abstract; it is always a sign of something. It is always a man, a bird, or something else. For me form is never form for form's sake."*
- He packed his paintings with these "signs," developing a unique visual language based on playful interpretations of the people, places, and things of his immediate environment and his childhood memories.

Miró lived in Spain and France during an important period in history. Two world wars and, especially the Spanish Civil War, had their impact upon his life and his art.

Fundacio Joan Miró was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1893. His father worked as a goldsmith and his mother was the daughter of a cabinetmaker. Miró had a younger sister, Dolores. The family lived on a farm in a region called Catalonia, in northwestern Spain. As a child, he was shy and did not have many friends. He lived in his own little dream world. Miró did many paintings and drawings as a child, and with time, became very skilled. Miró stated when he was a child, there were stars painted on the ceiling of his bedroom and they inspired his work. Miró spent his childhood among the farms and rural landscapes near Barcelona. Images of his childhood, the sun-beaten farm equipment, the harried dogs and sheep, the villas and marketplaces, were a part of his work from the beginning.

As a teenager, Miró attended classes at the Escuela del Bellas Artes, the official academy of fine arts in Barcelona. Accurate drawing won high praise at the Escuela and abstraction was regarded as an inferior style. The unique nature of Pablo Picasso's great talent had shocked the school twelve years earlier. Within the traditional atmosphere of the academy, Miró's expressive use of color was hardly recognized and, as Miró said himself, he gained a reputation as a "phenomenon of clumsiness."

Miró told his father he wanted to be a painter, but his father refused to listen. At the age of 17, he was sent to work as a clerk in a business. The work did not suit him, and he became

dangerously ill a year later. He was sent to recover at his family's farm in the wild Catalan countryside, near the town of Montroig, or "Red Mountain". There he fell in love with the spacious landscape and vivid colors, and felt at home.

Upon Miró's return to Barcelona after his recovery, he joined an art school run by Francisco Galí, a painter whose powers of imagination suited Miró much better than the academy. Galí greatly appreciated the beauty of the surrounding landscape and encouraged his students to see more than simply what lay in front of them. He would take them on long trips into the Catalan mountains, where he would encourage them to wear "a crown of eyes around their heads." By this he meant that they should be constantly aware of the scenery and events taking place all around them.

In 1915, Miró became a member of the Cercle Artistic de Sant Lluç, founded in 1893. With his lifelong friends, Prats, Artigas, Ràfols, and Ricart, Miró painted at Vilanova (31 miles from Barcelona) and met artists like Antonio Gaudí. Of all the artists and architects of the period, Gaudí best showed Catalan pride – he never left Barcelona. His imaginative buildings were modern and unique, with no reference to the past. Such nationalism coincided with the founding in 1901 of the Conservative Nationalist Party, and a decree by the government in 1913 that Catalonia should have more independence within Spain.

World War I was raging in Europe. This prevented easy travel to Paris, which was a center of avant-garde thinking. But culture from Paris did reach Spain, thanks to the art dealer Josep Dalmau. He put together exhibitions of artists such as Matisse, Redon, and Cezanne, which introduced Miró and his friends to the ideas of cubism and fauvism.

Miró and his friends aimed for the "mystical dimension of the Catalan temperament." They wanted to paint in such a way as to include the "lived experience" of a place – both its history and the artist's memory of a scene. Common features of the Catalan landscape appeared regularly in these pictures. Carob and eucalyptus trees, snails, and snakes were used as symbols to suggest the atmosphere of the local landscape rather than representing one particular object. Miró believed there were two sides to the Catalan nature – passion and a down-to-earth approach to life.

By 1919, Miró was 26 and the war in Europe was over. Miró made his first journey to Paris and met Picasso as well as other great artists. Picasso was also a native Catalan and Miró was acquainted with Picasso's mother. In her lecture series on great artists, Rosamond Bernier describes the meeting between the two artists.

*"Miró was acquainted with Picasso's mother and frequently visited her. One day, during a visit, she invited Miró to come see something. She took him into the family's bathroom and gestured at the mirror, where her son, Picasso had created a work of art in shaving cream. Miró asked the mother if there was something she would like to send to her son in Paris. She stated, there was, and made a Spanish cake for Miró to take. Miró went to Paris to Picasso's door, and knocked. When Picasso answered, Miró held out the cake and stated "this is from your mother". Thus began a friendship, which would last for over 50 years.*

Miró stated that while he was in Paris, he was fortunate to view many wonderful artworks and was deeply influenced by Van Gogh and Cézanne and Picasso's works. He also viewed some Monet landscapes and was so deeply moved that he waited until the guard's back was turned and kissed the landscape! The many avant-garde ideas in Paris and the enormous range of great artists in the Louvre museum may have overwhelmed Miró, and he returned home without painting a single canvas.

Miró returned to Montroig, the family's farm, and began to search for a new reality in his painting. He painted every detail of his subjects, including aspects that could not be seen but were known to be there. For example, he might include details of the drainage system beneath a town or include a bright sun to represent the climate, but leave out the shadows it cast, because they would hide objects. This style of painting was completely new, and went against many popular ideas of the time, such as impressionism. Where other artists tried to focus on just one aspect of their surroundings, Miró tried to include everything that he knew to be real. There was no hint of the styles or techniques of the past in Miró's new work.

In 1920, Miró returned to Paris and found a studio in which to live and work. He passed the winters in Paris and the summers in his beloved Catalonia. Throughout this time, he lived in a state of near poverty, eating only one proper lunch a week. In 1921, the faithful art dealer Dalmau organized a solo exhibition, at which Miró was unable to sell one painting. Yet he did not lose hope and continued to paint. His next painting, *The Farm* (1922) showed his recent ideas and technique clearly. (It was purchased by Ernest Hemingway, and remains in the family's possession.)

At this time a new art movement was being created, Dada. The Dada movement fought against reason, logic and traditional methods of artistic expression. It included theater, poetry, political theory, and art, and it emerged from the social and physical destruction caused by the First World War. It had no respect for the ways of thinking of the past. The artists of the Dada movement aimed for imaginative and unique ways of expressing themselves. Their style had no traditional structure or meanings, and so was independent.

In 1924, the poet André Breton published a *Surrealist Manifesto*, in which he wrote, "I believe in the future resolution of these two states...which are dreams and reality, a sort of absolute reality, or surreality." Surrealism, like the Dada movement, was made up largely of poets and writers who wanted to break away from traditional art forms. Many Surrealists began to write in a way similar to Miró's style of painting. Breton later declared: "Miró is the most surreal of us all."

In 1925, an exhibition was staged in Paris at which the work of both poets and painters was shown. Miró showed *Harlequin's Carnival* with two other pictures, and at the age of 32, he was universally acclaimed. *Harlequin's Carnival* was the last, most surreal picture of this period in Miró's career. There was no specific meaning to this picture, and no traditional rules of painting are observed. It is a random choice of images in an illogical arrangement. Miró made no attempt to explore the workings of the mind. He simply tried to paint the bizarre yet creative nature of our dreams.

The Surrealist movement had grown stronger after 1925, but cracks had begun to appear within it. Miró left the group because of political arguments and the risk of offending Andre Breton. He was treated with growing suspicion for holding his own views, which he tended to keep to himself.

Miró traveled to the Netherlands, where his style began to change once again. He aimed to combine the accurate detail used by the Dutch master painters with his own abstract style. This seems to be a contradiction: How can a detail be recognized as a detail once it is abstracted?

In 1929, when he was 36 years old, Miró married Pilar Juncosa in Paris. They had a daughter in 1931, Maria Dolores. The family continued to live in Paris, but they had to move to a cheaper area of the city because a fall in the demand for modern art had left Miró short of money. Every summer the family went to Catalonia or to Palma on Majorca, where Miró's mother owned some property.

In 1933 Miró and his family returned to Barcelona to spend some time working on his paintings, but his stay was cut short. Spanish politics were forced to dangerous extremes in the 1930's with the growth of the opposing Fascist and Communist movements. In July 1936, a grueling civil war broke out in Spain, between the Fascists under General Franco and the Communist-led Republicans. Miró was a Republican, like many people in Catalonia, and the war forced him and his family to leave Barcelona for Paris again.

Economic depression had damaged the art market in Europe, leading to several years of poverty for Miró and his family. This difficult life and the cruel nature of the war in Spain affected Miró greatly. What he described as his "wild paintings" was produced during this period. These pictures featured large, monstrous beings formed by harsh lines and ugly colors. In an exhibition in Paris in 1937, one of these paintings, *The Reaper*, was shown next to *Picasso's Guernica*. They covered a whole wall of the large Spanish Pavilion. The main image of *The Reaper* is a peasant from Catalonia shouting violently, as if voicing his rage about the war and his determination not to be downtrodden. Despite the picture's vast size, it mysteriously disappeared during the journey back from the exhibition.

Miró's sympathy for the Spanish Republican movement inspired him to create a poster that was sold across Europe for one French franc per copy to raise money. In his works of this period, Miró captured the moods of all the people of Spain. His paintings were reflections of the hopes, fears, and dreams of everybody in the country; they were not intended to deliver his personal intellectual or political message.

In 1939, the rise of the German Nazi Party threatened another major war in Europe. Miró moved his family from Paris to Varengeville, Normandy, in the following year. The stormy skies and dramatic beaches of Normandy restored his faith in nature and inspired yet another change in his artistic style. Miró said later of his time in Normandy, "I felt a deep desire to escape. I deliberately shut up my mind. The night, music, and the stars began to play an increasingly important role in my pictures." He began a series of pictures known as the *Constellations*. However, in the middle of his work he was forced to escape the advancing

German army by moving his family to Barcelona. The family raced to Paris, where they boarded the last train to leave for Barcelona before the Nazi's overran the city. Miró could not stay in Barcelona, his poster he'd created had displayed his feelings too strongly and the new Fascist government refused to accept him. He moved his family to Palma, on Majorca.

Miró completed his Constellations series in Palma. These pictures showed none of the harsh lines of his "wild paintings" and were not aggressive but showed compositions evenly spread with balanced colors. He composed the Constellations by first drawing a random line on the paper. He then allowed himself to find shapes and figures within the line, which he filled in and decorated with paint. By the time Miró and his family were able to move back to Barcelona in 1942, he was using a unique visual language.

For the first two years after the war, Miró remained relatively unknown while he continued to experiment with a variety of styles. In 1947, he traveled to New York and was received there enthusiastically. Several of his old Surrealist friends had settled there, and they eagerly greeted him. Almost immediately he was commissioned to paint a mural, 99 feet square in the dining room of the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati.

Miró's paintings now comprised of two categories. He described the first as his "slow paintings," in which he took care to make his lines perfect, as in his earlier works. The second type of painting was completely spontaneous. In both types he paid great attention to the painting's background. This could be made up of almost anything: Burlap, board, brown wrapping paper, or canvas, under which might be laid wire or plaster that stuck through the painted surface. One of Miró's favorite devices was to poke string through from the back and knot it at the front of the picture. There was almost no material or medium that Miró did not explore – he even used black currant jam to create a picture on one occasion. He did not want to control this vast range of materials and styles, to make them a permanent feature of his work, or to perfect the use of them. He simply explored their potential as ways of creating new, exciting forms of art that could be groundbreaking and accessible at the same time.

In 1947, Miró traveled to Paris, where he received a warm welcome after his long absence. He then returned to Barcelona where he entered into a period of enormous artistic output. He produced 55 paintings and more than 150 finished drawings between 1949 and 1950, as well as numerous uncompleted sketches and designs.

Not just a painter, Miro worked with other forms of art, including ceramics, sculpture, and lithography, a type of print making. In his mature works, he portrayed a world of fantasy, which he captured in brightly colored shapes and lively expressive lines. Miró saw sculpture as a way of taking art to all people, saying: "I want to try...to go beyond easel painting...and get nearer to the masses of whom I have never ceased to be aware." In his sculpture he was always very keen to experiment with the space occupied by each piece, and how its appearance and meaning were affected by placing it in different surroundings and next to a variety of objects.

In 1956 Miró saw the fulfillment of a dream he had held for over twenty years. His good friend, the architect Jose` Luis Sert, designed a large studio for him outside Palma. Miró stated he

was overwhelmed and intimidated by the size of the studio when he first encountered it. He soon filled the wide-open spaces with hundreds of his works that had been stored for many years. He felt it was easier to be creative when surrounded by items to inspire him.

Simple things inspired Miró; the flight of a bird across the horizon, a small stain on a tablecloth, the shape of a knothole in a piece of wood. By nature, he was a modest man who liked teamwork. He therefore greatly enjoyed making set and costume designs for plays and ballets, which closely complemented the script or music. He also worked as part of a team when making his monumental tapestries, which were always carefully designed to match and enhance the surrounding architecture. Miró's last work in the theater, in 1981, was almost autobiographical. He designed the costumes for a dance called *Miró, l'Uccello Luce* ("*Miró, the Bird of Light*"). The music and the script described the three main stages in Miró's career: his search for an artistic identity; his imaginative "dream world" period; and his final discovery of a versatile, unique artistic language.

Miró continued to create new works throughout the final years of his life. Miró's interest in tapestry came from the idea of three-dimensional pictures. In the early 1970's he would thread wool and other materials through loosely woven backgrounds like jute or sackcloth. Various "found objects" could then be stitched or tied to the picture. Blemishes or makes on the cloth were included in Miró's tapestries, and he sometimes burnt the work, and then stamped out the flames to see what patterns were left. In the last decade of his life, Miró designed some huge, shaggy tapestries with imaginative, bold colors and lines that recall his paintings.

Miró died in Majorca, Spain, on December 25, 1983. Today Miro's works can be found in the world's finest cultural institutions and museums. Most of his works have remained in Catalonia, in the Joan Miró foundation in Barcelona.

It would be a mistake to look deeply for lots of meaning or messages in the work of Miró. He wanted people to be able to interpret his work in their own way. Miró's paintings, tapestries, and sculptures were for everyone – nobody needed a particular intellectual background to enjoy his work, just eyes with which to see – making it truly democratic art. This does not mean Miró was not a skilled artist; it took him decades to make his images so clear, unique, and immediate.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

The Miro information is from several sites including:

1. *Miró*, Ross, Nicholas, 1995, Aladdin Books, Ltd. London.
2. "The Fantastic Images of Joan Miró," *Scholastic Art Magazine*, Dec. 1994/Jan. 1995. Vol. 25, No. 3. Published in cooperation with the National Gallery of Art.
3. Video: *The Miró I Knew*, Rosamond Bernier's lecture series. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

# POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Observe and Learn to Comprehend & Envision and Critique to Transfer (VA 1 & 2)



## **Do a warm-up with the students:**

- **Draw several kinds of lines on the white board, curvy, straight, dotted, zigzagged, overlapping lines, etc.**
- **Direct the students: “Stand up and space yourselves so you don’t bump into one another when your arms are stretched wide.**
- **If your body is showing me a straight, horizontal line, what would it look like (arms stretched straight to sides.)**
- **What if your body were a straight, vertical line? (Arms reaching high overhead)**
- **So how would you show me a circle?**
- **A curve? A triangle? A wavy line? A zigzag? An angled line?”**



- 1) **Juan Miró, photograph.** (Pronounced **JO-wan MEE-ro**) Miró was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1893. His father was a goldsmith; (a person who makes jewelry and items from gold) and his mother was the daughter of a cabinetmaker. Joan had a younger sister. The family lived on a farm in a region called Catalonia, in northwestern Spain.

As a child, Miró was shy and did not have many friends. His mother painted stars on the ceiling of his bedroom and these inspired his later work. Miró lived in his own little dream world. He did many paintings and drawings, and with time, became very skilled.

- 2) **Portrait of B.C. Ricart, The Man in Pajamas.** (1917) oil & pastel/canvas. Private Collection. This is one of Miró’s early works. As a teenager, Miró attended art classes, but his work was different and not appreciated. His drawings must have seemed rough and simple to his parents. He told his father he wanted to be a painter, but his father refused to listen.

At the age of 17, Miró was sent to work as a clerk in a business. The work did not suit the young man and he became dangerously ill a year later. He went back to recover at his family’s farm. There he fell in love with the spacious landscape and vivid colors. Upon Miró’s return to Barcelona after his recovery, he joined another art school. The teacher greatly appreciated the beauty of their surrounding landscape and encouraged his students to see more than simply what lay in front of them. He would take them on long trips into the Catalan mountains, where he would encourage them to wear “a crown of eyes around their heads.” By this he meant they should be constantly aware of the scenery and events taking place all around them.

- 3) **Self-Portrait of Miro.** 1919. Oil. Picasso Museum, Paris. Miró knew the famous artist, Picasso, because they came from the same part of the country. Picasso liked Miró's work so much that he bought this painting and kept it with him throughout his life. Picasso often did portraits of people showing the many angles and lines in their faces and clothing. Miró seems to have been influenced by Picasso in the painting he made of himself here.
- 4) **The Farm.** 1921-22. Oil. 48 1/4" x 55 1/4", National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. In this painting Miró paints things more realistically than he does in later works. What details do you see? (*e.g., rocky, sun-drenched landscape, a woman washing clothes, a barking dog, a chicken standing on a ladder, snails and insects crawling beside blades of grass.*) The artist uses one of his favorite shapes, the circle to unify and tie the painting together.
- 5) **Catalan Landscape, The Hunter.** 1923-24 o/c, (25.5" x 39.5"), Museum of Modern Art, NYC. Miró lived most of his life in Spain and in Paris. He was a quiet, humble man who liked teamwork. He married and had a daughter. In this painting, we begin to see the kind of work Miró became famous for, his surrealistic art. Surrealism is art created from dreams or imagination. It is different from abstract art because it portrays realistic things in a "dream-like" way. Can you find the hunter in the painting? (*Look for his mustache and pipe*) What is he hunting?
- 6) **The Harlequin's Carnival.** 1924-25 o/c, (26" x 36 5/8"), Albright Knox Gallery, NY. In many of his paintings, Miró developed his own "visual language", his own way of talking to us. Can you see the shapes his vocabulary included? (*e.g., stars, circles, spirals, squares, triangles, the sun, and the crescent moon.*) The focal point of this work is the Harlequin, a character who plays the part of an unhappy clown in theatrical productions. (*Note a sad-looking Harlequin clown with a red/blue face wearing a diamond-patterned costume, a beard, mustache, and a feathered hat.*) He is surrounded by a number of playful creatures. A tiny, guitar-playing figure divides the painting in half; insects, butterflies, cats, and other creatures play games.
- 7) **Dog Barking at the Moon.** 1926 Oil, (29" x 36 1/4"), Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA. Miró wanted to paint a picture that felt magic. In this painting a ladder leads up into an empty, black sky. Surrounded by the vast, silent and mysterious night, a weird shaped dog howls at the moon. Why is the dog barking? Where does the ladder lead? Is it a means of escape? What is the mysterious bird-like shape above the ladder?
- 8) **Dutch Interior I.** 1928, o/c, (36 1/8" x 28 3/4"), Mus. Mod. Art, NYC. In 1928, Miró visited Holland and became interested in the paintings of Dutch artists. When he returned to Paris, he

brought back postcards to remind him of the paintings. Miró created his version of one of these works.

Miró's painting was based on this one named *The Lute Player* by Henrik Sorgh. It features a couple—a woman sitting at a table listening to a man, singing and playing the lute (a stringed instrument similar to a guitar). In Miró's you can probably find the lute player, the dog and cat on the floor, and the large window on the left. But do you find the musician's foot, the table, and the figure of the woman?

Miró picked out the things he felt were most important and then changed them. He left out the things he felt were not important. (*The walls and floor, the dog and cat have been changed but they are still recognizable. He combined the musician's head and body and the tablecloth into a single large white shape that fills the center of the painting. The man's face was transformed into a red balloon-like mask, with an open mouth and sharp teeth. Can you locate the man's mustache, hair and velvet hat? Some forms, such as the woman have almost completely disappeared. Other objects, like the tiles on the floor, and the triangles of the leaded window are still there, but have been changed into imaginative geometric shapes.*)

- 9) **Composition.** 1933, o/c, (51 1/4" x 63 1/2"), Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. Miró and his family were living in Spain when the Spanish civil war began. They moved to France but had to move again when the German Nazi army took over the country. They moved to an island off the coast of Spain (Majorca) until World War II was over.

This painting contains several human-like figures, which appear to be floating in the air. What do you think they are doing? Miró said he never liked to work on a fresh empty canvas, it didn't inspire him. So he would "dirty" the canvas by cleaning his brushes on it, driving over it in his car, whatever it took. He felt that a dirty canvas had much more to say.

- 10) **Head of a Woman.** 1938, o/c, (18" x 21 5/8"), Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN. Miró's work changed through the years. There were three main stages in his career: first, his search for an artistic identity; then his imaginative "dream world" period; and finally his discovery of a changeable, original artistic language.

- 11) **The Escape Ladder.** 1940, Gouache & oil/paper, (15" x 18"), Private Collection, NY. In this painting, can you find the ladder that Miro` created to symbolize escape from the real world into the world of imagination?

12) **Woman and Bird by Moonlight.** 1949, o/c, (81.5cm x 66cm), Tate Gallery, London. Miró's began making different kinds of paintings. Some were called his "slow paintings" in which he took care to make his lines perfect, as in his earlier works. The second type of painting was completely spontaneous.

In both types he paid great attention to the painting's background. This could be made up of almost anything: Burlap, board, brown wrapping paper, or canvas, under which might be laid wire or plaster that stuck through the painted surface. There was almost no material or medium that Miró did not explore – he even used black currant jam to create a picture on one occasion!

13)

14) **Personages and Bird.** 1963, (29 1/4" x 41 3/4"), painted on cardboard, Private Collection. Many of Miró's works have the word "bird" in the title. He felt the bird described himself and how he approached his art. Simple things often inspired him; the flight of a bird across the horizon, a small stain on a tablecloth, the shape of a knothole in a piece of wood.

Not just a painter, Miró worked with other forms of art, including ceramics, sculpture, and lithography (a type of print making.) In the work he created in his later years, he portrayed a world of fantasy, which he captured in brightly colored shapes and lively expressive lines. He worked throughout his life and his works are recognized all over the world. He died on Christmas day in 1983.

**REFLECT AND CONNECT TO TRANSFER** (VA Standard #4)

***During the last 5 minutes with your students, perhaps as they are cleaning up or while they are creating, take a moment to encourage the students to discuss and review their understanding of Miró:***

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

1. ***What are two things you learned about Miro?***
2. ***How did Miró use line and shape to create a picture?***
3. ***How will you (did you) use words and images to create your picture?***
4. ***What do you wonder?***

## FEATURED ART PROJECT

*Invent and Discover to Create (VA Standard #3)*



Your school is provided with paper, broad-tipped colored markers and permanent black markers. You will need to cut the paper into approximately 8" X 11". Your students will need to use their own pencils.

### Drawing by Chance

Students will use their pencil to draw a bold but random, curving line that closes to form a shape (the ends meet). Demonstrate by drawing a curvy line on the white board, and then connect the line so that it becomes a shape. Curving shapes are called "organic" shapes.

The volunteer can also discuss and illustrate some of the head shapes that Miró was known for: big oval head, small triangle head or wiggly, squishy round head. Suggest students may copy these shapes or try their own version. Do the same for the body, giving lots of options.

Have the students sit back and look at the lines and shapes they've made. Tell them to allow their imaginations to see pictures within the shapes their lines have made. Have them use the markers to fill in shapes, using different colors and adding features such as faces, arms, hair and such.

Students should go over the pencil lines with black markers, and add dots, spirals, zigzags and other lines, using Miró as an inspiration. Note how he uses simple curving lines to delineate a face, and he puts an emphatic dot at the end of many of his lines.

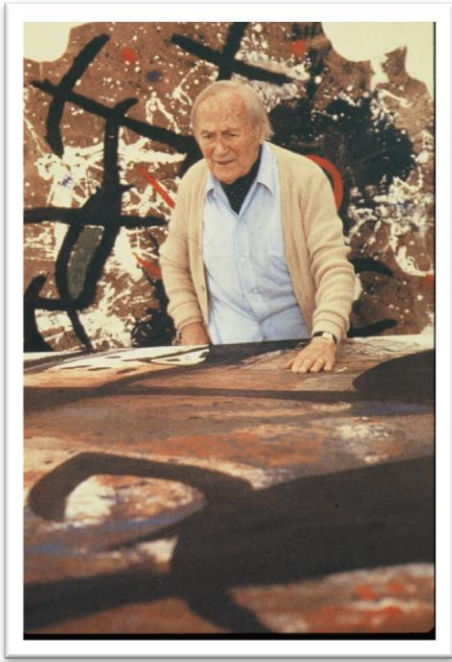


### ALTERNATIVE ART OPTIONS:

- Do Miró as a collage: (Need colored construction paper in red, yellow, white, black, and green, scissors, glue and black markers.) This is good practice for cutting circles, triangles and other shapes found in Miró paintings. Glue the shapes randomly about the main piece of construction paper then connect the lines with a black marker.

>> *An adaption to the above lesson that is very successful with younger children is to do a sponge-painted paper, using primary colors plus white. Then, with Q-tips, craft sticks, toothpicks, or whatever, make abstract designs in black. Focus on color and organic shapes.*

- One art instructor suggests doing Miró as an integrated art and math lesson: *“Look at Miró and identify basic geometric figures. We talked about organic figures (art), and finally open and closed figures. We also demonstrated the concept of open and closed shapes through some movement (dance) activities. Then we talked about Miro's subject matter (Dog and people with the Sun), use of color, etc. The studio portion of the lesson was a drawing/painting activity. First students drew themselves and pets (or pets they would like to have) in black marker (I've also used black acrylic paint), using basic geometric shapes, as well as open and closed figures. Then we used tempera paint (primary colors) to fill in the shapes. Any students who wanted secondary colors were allowed to mix them on the paper. It was a great success.”*
- Feel and Draw: Miró's teacher Gali` made his students do this exercise to show the young artists that accurate technical drawing was not the only way to portray what they saw. Find an object with an unusual shape, such as a pinecone or a crushed plastic bottle. Put the object into a cardboard box and feel it without looking at it, drawing it as you do so. Try not to draw what you know your object looks like, but what you feel it to be, including its textures and shapes.
- Paint in Color Alone: The Fauvists, whose style greatly influenced Miró, used color to make shapes, rather than “filling in” a drawn outline. Make a painting of the buildings around your home or school without using one line to enclose any shape. Build your picture with bold colors. Darker colors are better for the foreground and lighter ones give a sense of depth. Red “jumps out” at you, while blue “sinks” into the depths of the picture. Be bold and imaginative with your choice of colors. For example, we know that a road is made of black tar, but in some sorts of light it may look purple or blue.
- Abstract a Picture: Find a famous picture by a master painter and make your own version by replacing the main details of the picture with symbols or exaggerated details. Decide which elements of the original picture are the most important or interesting to you, and make them prominent in your version with exaggeration or bold colors.
- Create Art on a Strange Surface: Explore the effects of drawing or making a collage on an unusual background. Use anything you can find: a supermarket bag, a stone, an old record or cd, a tile, or a piece of textured wallpaper, for example. Each background will affect the look and atmosphere of your picture, and may influence the subject you choose.



We learned about **Joan Miró** in Art Heritage.

Miró was a Spanish artist who lived from 1893 to 1983. He created paintings that use unusual lines and bold colors.



**How to Spot a Miró:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_