Picasso and Cubism

Pablo Picasso: 1881-1973
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Spanish painter, sculptor, graphic artist, and ceramist, who worked in France. He is generally considered in his technical virtuosity, enormous versatility, and incredible originality and prolificity to have been the foremost figure in 20th-century art.
Gertrude Stein was an American writer and art collector who was a catalyst in the development of modern art and literature. She spent most of her life in France, where she met Picasso and other painters.

Pablo Picasso, *Gertrude Stein*, 1906. Oil on canvas, 39 3/8" x 32". The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Cubism: 1907-1914

Movement in the visual arts created by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Cubist work emphasized the flat, two-dimensional, fragmented surface of the picture plane, rejecting perspective, foreshortening, modeling, and chiaroscuro in favor of geometric forms.
Abstract Art: Art that distorts, exaggerates or simplifies the natural world to provide essence or universal generalized form.

PABLO PICASSO, 
Les Demoiselles d’Avignon

June–July 1907. Oil on canvas, 8’ x 7’ 8”. Museum of Modern Art, New York
African masks
Paul Cezanne, *The Bathers*, c.1875-77
Iberian and Archaic Greek influence.

Perseus, attended by Athene, slaying the Gorgon Medusa. Selinus, Sicily, ca 560-550 BC

Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (the Young Women of Avignon) 1907. Oil on Canvas, 8’x7’8”
Compare and contrast these two paintings. Discuss the theme, size, level of naturalism/abstraction, the use of color, the depiction of light and space, the relationship between figures and ground, the texture, point of view, shapes and lines (repetitive shapes, geometric or organic).
Georges Braque (1882-1963). French artist. His most important contribution to the history of art was his role in the development of what became known as Cubism. In this Braque's work is intertwined with that of his collaborator Pablo Picasso.
George Braque, *Houses at L’Estaque*, 1908. Oil on Canvas, 28x23”

The name Cubism came from this painting. When the critic Vauxcelles saw this painting he said the houses "look like a bunch of little cubes."
“Treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone... “

Paul Cezanne, 1904

'The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing‘

George Braque, 
*Houses at L’Estaque*, 1908.


Paintings executed during this period show the breaking down, or analysis, of form. Artists favored right-angle and straight-line construction and color schemes that were nearly monochromatic.
Braque, *Violin and Palette*, 1909. Oil on Canvas. 36x16”.

https://youtu.be/QAVi-sjeVwA 21:00

Picasso. *Girl with a Mandolin*, 1910. Oil on canvas 39 1/2 x 29 in. (100.3 x 73.6 cm.)
The Key Characteristics of Cubism:

• **Geometricity**, a simplification of figures and objects into geometrical components and planes.

• **Distortion** and deformation of known figures and forms in the natural world.

• **Simultaneity** or multiple views, different points of view made visible on one plane. Used in order to capture the Fourth Dimension: Time. (The idea of time as a fourth dimension is attributed to the "Theory of Special Relativity" proposed in 1905 by Albert Einstein.)

• **Conceptual**, instead of perceptual, reality.

• **Passage**, the overlapping and interpenetration of planes.

Braque, *Violin and Palette*, 1909. Oil on Canvas. 36x16".
The letters D BAL may derive from *Grand Bal* - a common dance hall poster.

It is the first time that stenciled letters were used in a work of art.

GEORGES BRAQUE

*The Portuguese (The Emigrant)*

1911. Oil on canvas, 3’ 10 1/8” x 2’ 8”. Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum, Basel
Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon*
1907. Oil on canvas, 8’ x 7’ 8”.

Pablo Picasso, *Ma Jolie*, (my pretty one) 1911-1912, Oil on Canvas
Works from this phase emphasize the combination, or synthesis, of forms in the picture. Color assumes a strong role in the work; shapes, while remaining fragmented and flat, are larger and more decorative; and collage is often used.
Collage:
A French word for pasting or gluing. It refers to the practice of pasting shapes cut from such real world sources as magazines, newspapers, wallpaper, and fabric onto a surface. Also, a work of art made in this way.

PABLO PICASSO,
*Still Life with Chair-Caning*
1912. Oil and oilcloth on canvas, 10 5/8” x 1’ 1 3/4”. Musée Picasso, Paris.
Can you find these objects?

- Glass
- Slice of lemon
- Newspaper
- Pipe
- Scallop shell

PABLO PICASSO, *Still Life with Chair-Caning*

1912. Oil and oilcloth on canvas, 10 5/8” x 1’ 1 3/4”. Musée Picasso, Paris.
PAUL CÉZANNE, *The Basket of Apples*
ca. 1895. Oil on canvas, 2’ 3/8” x 2’ 7”. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Still life: A painting or other two-dimensional work in which the subject matter is an arrangement of objects. Also, the arrangement of objects itself.

PABLO PICASSO, *Still Life with Chair-Caning*. 1912. Oil and oilcloth on canvas.
Pablo Picasso, *Guitar and Wine Glass*, 1912. Pasted paper, gouache, and charcoal, 18 7/8" x 14 3/4"
Pablo Picasso. *Guitar Collage*. 1913
Like collage, constructed sculpture, (invented by Braque and developed by Picasso) is assembled from disparate, often unconventional material. Unlike traditional sculpture, its forms are penetrated by void and create volume not by mass, but by containing space.
PABLO PICASSO,
*Maquette for Guitar*

1912. Cardboard, string, and wire (restored), 25 1/4” x 13” x 7 1/2”. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Pablo Picasso, *Glass of Absinthe*, 1914. Painted bronze with silver absinth spoon. 8 ½ “ high, base diameter 2 ½ “. Museum of Modern Art. NY
Constantin Brâncuși, *Sleeping Muse*, bronze, marble 1909-1910

Pablo Picasso, *Glass of Absinthe*, 1914. Painted bronze with silver absinth spoon. 8 ½ “ high, base diameter 2 ½ “.

Pablo Picasso, *Mandolin and Clarinet*, 1913. Painted wood construction with cardboard, paper, and pencil marks. 58x36x23 cm.

Constantin Brâncuși - *The Kiss*, Stone. 1912

Constantin Brancusi, *Sleeping Muse*, bronze, marble 1909-1910
Guernica, Spain, April, 1937
The town was bombed by the Nazis who supported General Franco during the Spanish Civil War. It was the first aerial bombardment in history in which a civilian population was attacked with the apparent intent of producing total destruction.

https://youtu.be/Q1eDytursrE
Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937. Oil on Canvas, 11’5X25’6”.
Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

(commissioned from Picasso by the Spanish Republican government to decorate the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition)
Pablo Picasso, *Guernica.*
Detail 1937. Oil on Canvas, 11’5X25’6”.
Pablo Picasso Quotes

“Are we to paint what's on the face, what's inside the face, or what's behind it?”

“Art is the elimination of the unnecessary.”

“Bad artists copy. Good artists steal.”

“I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them.”

“It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.”

“The world today doesn't make sense, so why should I paint pictures that do?”

“Art is not the application of a canon of beauty but what the instinct and the brain can conceive beyond any canon.”

Discuss Picasso’s works based on his statements above.

Guernica, 1937