

## Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain, in 1881 and he was the son of an art teacher. As a young boy he showed a great talent for drawing, in fact he said of himself that he could draw like Raphael. He was admitted to the Royal Academy of art at the age of 15. Eight years later, in 1904, he moved to Paris where he soon became a member of a group of avant-garde artists and writers. As a result, he entered into his *Rose Period* (1905–1906).

By 1906 his work reflected the influence of Cézanne along with the African and Oceanic art movement. An example from this period is the painting called *Les Femmes d'Alger*.

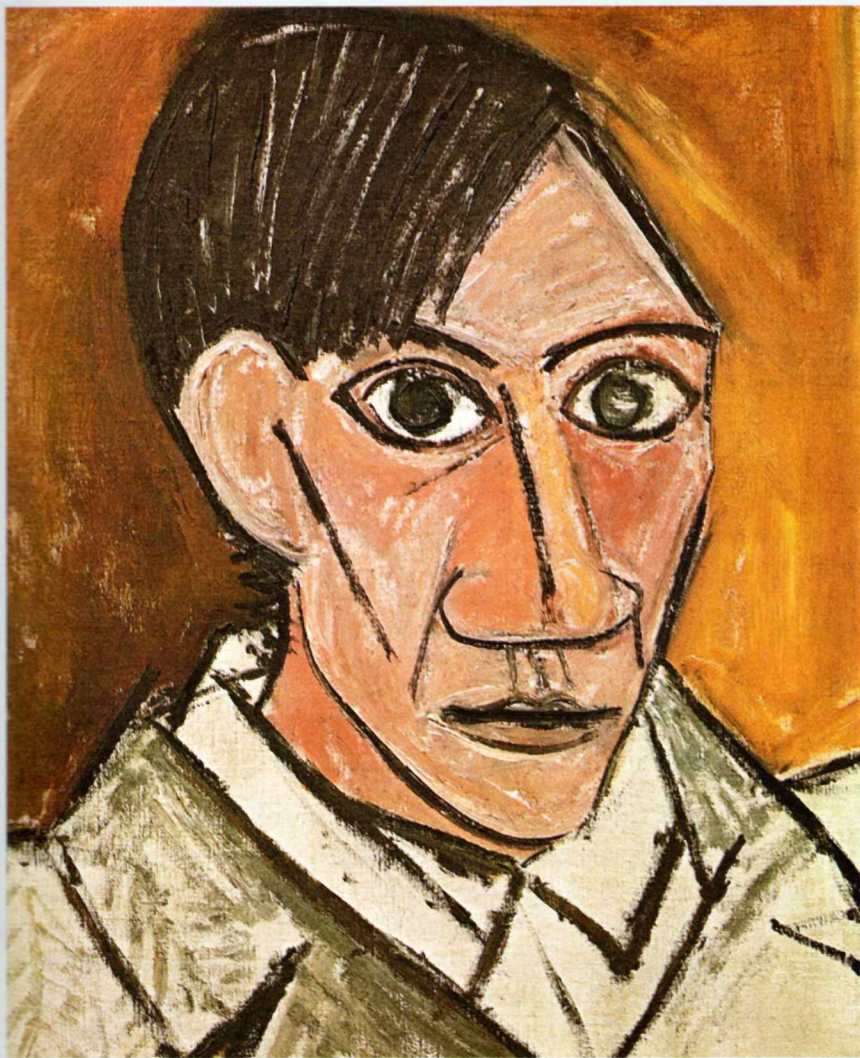
At the end of 1907 he met Braque, the two collaborated and together began the period commonly known as Cubism.

Picasso was a jack of all trades. He successfully experimented with a variety of media. From 1917 to 1924 he designed numerous sets, scenography and costumes for some of the Diaghilev Ballets. He also did the curtain and set design for the ballet *Parade* by Jean Cocteau. He exhibited with the Surrealists in Paris. Picasso saw Pablo Gargallo's (1881–1934) wrought iron masks; as a result, over the years 1928 to 1934, he created a number of metal structures and sculptures. His print making found its most intense expression when he drew illustrations for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In these illustrations Picasso shows the classical mythological story as it unfolds in the narrative of the death of Orpheus. In 1942 he illustrated the *Histoire Naturelle* by Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–1788). The illustrations were achieved by the sugar-lift **aquatint** technique.

He preferred this technique because he could use a brush and create with more fluidity; as a result, his work showed a spontaneity of conception.

He lived in Paris during World War II. In 1946 he moved to the South of France. He stayed in various towns: Antibes, where there is a museum dedicated to him, Vallauris, then Cannes. In 1958 he moved near Aix-en-Provence where he continued to paint, sculpt in marble, clay and metal, create lithographs, etchings and engravings.

**Aquatint** is similar to etching, but uses grains of heated resin instead of varnish for the ground. Aquatint creates fields of tone, not line. The 'sugar-lift' technique used by Picasso allowed him to paint or draw freely and swiftly directly on the metal plate.



Pablo Picasso, *Self-Portrait*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 50×46 cm. Prague, Národní galerie.