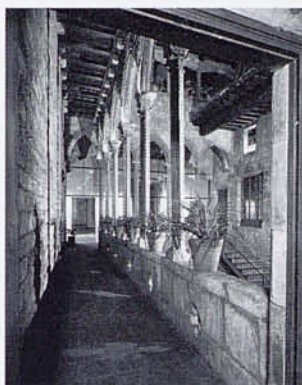


THE PICASSO MUSEUM



A MUST FOR ALL ART-LOVERS, THIS MUSEUM HOUSES, IN A BEAUTIFUL SETTING, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COLLECTIONS OF PICASSO'S WORK IN THE WORLD.

M. TERESA OCAÑA I GOMÀ DIRECTOR OF PICASSO MUSEUM

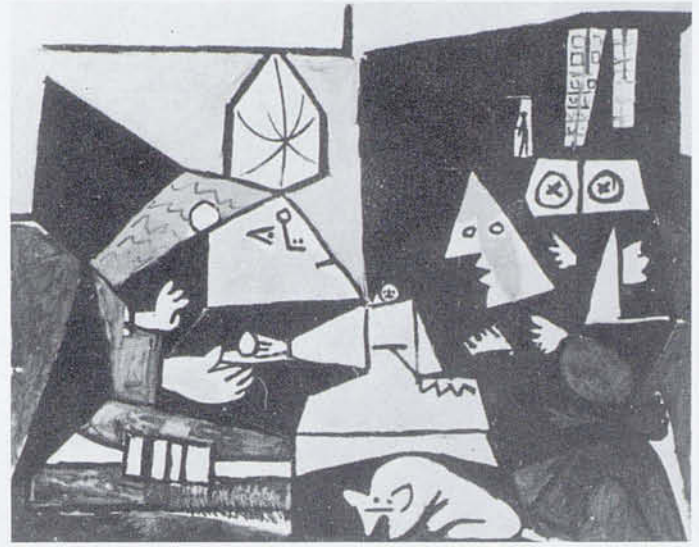
The Picasso Museum, in Barcelona, housed in three beautiful medieval palaces, is an important centre for the study and contemplation of the work of one of the leading innovators of artistic language of the twentieth century. The fact that the Ruiz Picasso family settled in our city towards the end of last century was the key that opened the way to the present museum. In 1970, Pablo Picasso, who had spent his youth in Barcelona and maintained links with Catalonia throughout his life, made known his wish that all the artistic work that had been deposited in his sister's house should be added to the collection at the incipient Picasso Museum, founded in 1963 thanks to an agreement with his friend and secretary Jaume Sabartés and with the municipal authorities.

This museum, then, houses a unique and extremely important sample of Picasso's work from the formative years of his youth. The bullfight scenes and the doves, which he produced in Malaga in 1889 and 1890, represent Picasso's first steps as a child in artistic terrain attempting to dominate line, and are a foretaste of the artistically mature Picasso who used these doves as his symbol and whose bullfight scenes became one of the most important artistic legacies in the history of twentieth century art.

The exercises carried out in Corunna and Barcelona between 1891 and 1896, along with the free, spontaneous drawings, show a gradual move away from academic teaching and the concentration of all his creative energy in a series of portraits and landscape sketches

created in total freedom and in which his artistic personality begins to be seen. Canvasses such as *Primera Comuni3n* (1896), *La Tia Pepa* (1896) and *Ciencia y Caridad* (1897) are the main evidence of this part of the artist's production. Later on, his connection with the tavern "Els Quatre Gats", which between 1897 and 1903 became the epicentre of the Catalan artistic avant-garde, is clearly depicted in the series of paintings of his various Catalan friends and in the sketches for the illustration he did for the establishment's menu.

The varied colours of the paintings he produced during his first visits to Paris reach a culminating point with *La Nana* and *Margot* in 1901, clear examples of the Impressionist style although the dazzling brightness of the colours places them



in what could be called a Prefauvist line. The museum's collections also contain an ample selection from the artist's "Blue Period". Between 1901 and 1904, Picasso produced a series of paintings in which the polychromy of the preceding period was replaced by an almost total monochromy based on the combination of blue tones, and his subjects take on a markedly symbolic nature. The most important of these paintings are *Desemparats* (1902), *La dona del foc de cabells* (1903) and *El Foll* (1904).

On the other hand, Picasso's classicism,

glimpsed in the splendid portrait of *La Señora Canals* (1905), leads up to *Arlequín* (1917), one of a series of Postcubist works all painted the same year, during his stay in Barcelona.

As well as this early work by the artist, which makes the *Museu Picasso de Barcelona* unique in its field, special mention should be made of the fifty-seven oil paintings which make up the *Las Meninas* series (1958), improvisations on the painting by Velázquez, in which Picasso shows an overwhelming creative and analytical capacity, as in the extensive

collection of graphic work carried out by the artist.

Nevertheless, the Picasso Museum, whose initial nucleus has grown into an important institution, does not only exhibit its own collections, but has also established a programme of exhibitions on the work of Picasso and his contemporaries, which, as well as producing a delightful harmonious contrast between the three medieval buildings and the work exhibited in them, is at the same time on the way to becoming a mouthpiece for the artistic trends in Barcelona in the present century. ●

Picasso