

Joan Miró

1893 – 1983

Introduction Slide

Born in 1893, Joan Miró i Ferrà was a Spanish painter, sculptor, and ceramicist from Barcelona, Spain. “Earning international acclaim, his work has been interpreted as Surrealism, a sandbox of the subconscious mind, a re-creation of the childlike, and a manifestation of Catalan pride.”

Joan Miró is pronounced “Juan” or “Hw-an” “mee-ROH”.

World Map: Spain

Here is where Spain is located; it would take approximately 11.5 hours to fly from Oregon to Spain.

Q: Has anyone visited Spain?

Self-Portrait of Miró, 1917 and 1919

Joan Miró was raised in Catalan Spain. He and his family often took trips to their farm in Montroig (“Mount-rudge”), a village about sixty miles from Barcelona, Spain. There, Miró enjoyed the peace of country life and the beauty of nature. The plants, animals, insects, stars, moon, and seaside of the country are often shown in his artworks.

Miró studied what he saw in nature and painted it as a world filled with imagination. In his paintings, colorful creatures float and faces appear in the night sky. You might even see a dog with elephant ears or a fish that seems to fly.

The Farm, 1921-22

When Miró was seventeen, he first visited his parents’ new summer house, a farm in Montroig, near the Mediterranean Sea. Miró said of *The Farm*: *The painting was absolutely realistic. Everything that’s in the painting was actually there. I didn’t invent anything. I only eliminated the fencing on the front of the chicken coop because it kept you from seeing the animals.*

Miró says that the painting is realistic, but it seems to have pieces of reality along with more dreamlike images. We see a sun, but no shadows and the sun is a greyish white, more like a moon. Everything has space, making it seem like pieces of a puzzle rather than blending together as a single landscape.

Q: How many animals can you spot?

Tilled Field, 1923-24

Here is another painting of a farm scene. Here you see Miró use geometric shapes to create a scene filled with objects which have some of the characteristics and shapes we regard to as animals, insects, trees and a house.

Q: What do you notice about this painting compared to the last painting we saw of a farm?

The Garden, 1925

The Garden looks like an imaginary, magical place filled with bright colors and playful shapes. The creatures and plants don't look exactly real, but they feel alive, like they're moving or telling a story. It's more like a dream garden from someone's imagination than a real one.

Q: How is this different from a real garden you've seen?

The Beautiful Bird, 1941

In the midst of producing this series, Miró was forced to flee with his family from France to Mallorca to escape advancing German troops during WWII. It's believed that his family took little else with them aside from these paintings. *The Beautiful Bird* shows a bright, colorful bird made of simple shapes, surrounded by playful lines and patterns.

Nocturne, 1940

Using simple shapes, Miró creates a world of fantasy. On the far right, he creates what looks like the basic structure of a stick person, which he fills in with some small details - eyes, nose, and antennas protruding from its head.

Q: How many faces do you see?

Sculptures

Pair of Lovers Playing with Almond Blossoms (1976):

This sculpture uses bright colors and playful, curvy shapes to show two figures together, almost like they're dancing among flowers. It feels cheerful and full of movement, celebrating love and nature.

The Sun, the Moon, and One Star (1968):

Nicknamed "Miss Chicago", this sculpture shows simple, bold shapes representing the sun, moon, and a single star. This was the first large sculpture Miro designed.

Q: What shapes do you see in these sculptures?