

## TRACING THE TRANSFORMATION OF ART THROUGH THE WORKS OF PABLO PICASSO

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the transformation of modern art through the prolific and boundary-pushing career of Pablo Picasso, one of the most influential figures in 20th-century art. Picasso's artistic journey—spanning over seven decades—mirrors the evolution of art from traditional representation to abstract expression, from personal introspection to political commentary. By analyzing the distinct phases of Picasso's work, this study traces how he continuously broke artistic conventions and reshaped the language of visual art.

Picasso began his career with extraordinary skill in classical realism, but it was his emotional expression during the Blue Period (1901–1904) that first marked his break from tradition. Dominated by melancholic tones and somber themes, these works reflected personal grief and social awareness. His transition into the Rose Period (1904–1906) brought warmth and softness to his palette and subject matter, revealing his ability to explore different emotional states through color and form.

The true revolution in Picasso's career came with the creation of Cubism, developed alongside Georges Braque. Initiated by the radical 1907 painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)*, Cubism deconstructed form and perspective, allowing multiple viewpoints to coexist within a single image. This movement not only disrupted the traditional way of seeing but also laid the foundation for modern abstract art. Analytical Cubism, with its monochromatic, fragmented compositions, and later Synthetic Cubism, with its use of collage and mixed media, demonstrated Picasso's role in redefining what materials and methods could be used in art.

In his later years, Picasso continued to experiment with styles, techniques, and mediums, revisiting and reinterpreting the work of classical masters with playful freedom. His late works, once overlooked, are now recognized for their expressive power and unrestrained creativity. They reflect a return to childlike imagination, an embrace of spontaneity, and a rejection of rigid form.

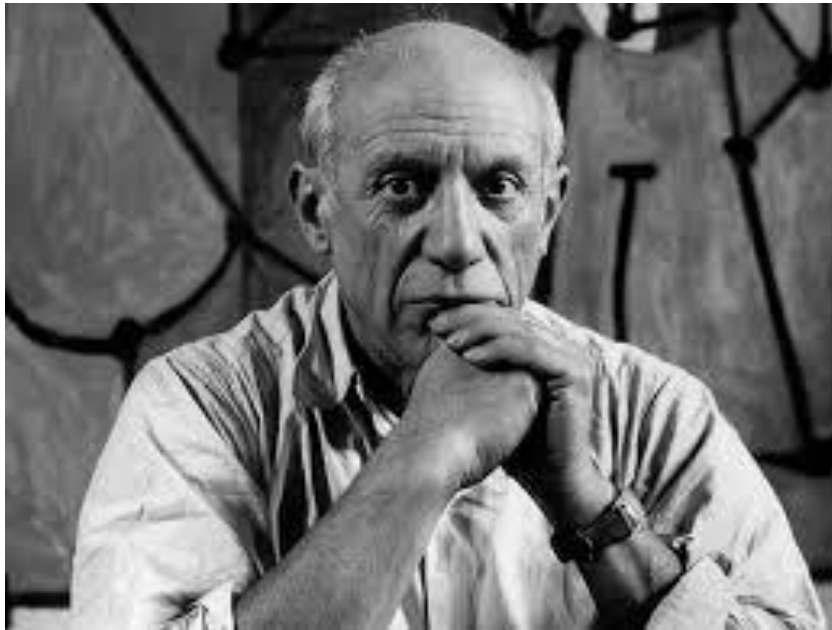
This paper argues that Picasso's career is not just a personal journey but a reflection of the broader shifts in modern art. His constant reinvention paralleled the move away from academic traditions toward a more liberated, experimental, and expressive form of artmaking. Through an in-depth analysis of his key periods and artworks, the study concludes that Picasso played a central role in transforming the purpose, meaning, and practice of art in the modern era.

**Keywords:** Pablo Picasso, Blue period, Cubism, Modern Art, European Art, Art Movements.

## INTRODUCTION

### How Pablo Picasso Changed Art Forever

When we talk about artists who changed the world, Pablo Picasso is always near the top of the list. He wasn't just a painter—he was a creative force who shaped how we see and understand art today. Over his long life, Picasso didn't stick to one style. Instead, he constantly reinvented himself. He went from realistic portraits to wild, abstract shapes and even used art to speak out against war and injustice. By looking at Picasso's life and the art he made, we can understand how art itself changed during the 20th century. His journey shows us how art broke away from tradition and became something much more personal, emotional, and even political. Let's take a closer look at how Picasso's work reflects the transformation of modern art.



Picture 1.1 Pablo Picasso

### Starting Out: A Young Genius with Big Emotions

Picasso was born in 1881 in Spain and showed incredible talent from a very young age. His father was an artist and art teacher who quickly realized Picasso was gifted—some say Picasso could draw better than his father by age 13. As a teenager, Picasso was already painting in a realistic, classical style that most artists take years to master.

But Picasso didn't want to just copy reality. He wanted to express feelings. In the early 1900s, he went through a tough time emotionally, especially after the suicide of his close friend. This led to what's now called the Blue Period—a few years where Picasso's paintings were mostly done in shades of blue and showed sad, lonely people like beggars, the elderly, and the poor. These paintings weren't meant to look pretty—they were about sadness, pain, and being human.

Soon after, Picasso's mood and art changed again. He entered what's known as the Rose Period, where his work became warmer and more playful. He used more pinks and oranges and painted circus performers, clowns, and lovers. Even though the subjects were still people on the margins of society, the tone was gentler and more hopeful. You could already see how Picasso used color and style to express emotion, not just to show what something looked like.

### **Breaking the Rules: Inventing Cubism**

Everything changed in 1907 when Picasso painted a strange, shocking piece called "Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)". It showed five women with sharp, angular faces and bodies, influenced by African masks and Iberian art. The painting didn't look like anything people had seen before—it was harsh, raw, and confusing. But it was also brilliant. It broke all the rules of traditional art.

This painting led to the birth of Cubism, which Picasso developed with another artist, Georges Braque. In Cubism, instead of painting something from one point of view, the artist shows different angles at once, almost like a puzzle. Imagine seeing the front, back, and side of a guitar all at the same time! Cubism made people question what art should look like. Should it be realistic? Or should it show deeper truths in a new way?

Later, Picasso and Braque created Synthetic Cubism, where they used simpler shapes and even pasted everyday materials like newspapers or fabric into their art—this was the beginning of collage. They were saying, "Art doesn't have to be painted on a canvas. It can be anything."

This movement changed art forever. Cubism inspired future artists to explore abstract and non-traditional styles, and helped lead to the rise of modern art.

### **Trying New Things: No Limits**

Picasso never stood still. Just when people thought they had figured him out, he would change his style again. In the 1920s, he began painting big, powerful figures that looked like statues from ancient Greece or Rome. At the same time, he was also influenced by Surrealism, a movement that focused on dreams, the unconscious mind, and strange, emotional images.

Even though he never officially joined the Surrealist movement, Picasso made artworks that felt dreamlike and dramatic. Some were even disturbing. But this was all part of how he worked—he used his art to explore every part of being human, from love and joy to fear and anger.

He also didn't limit himself to just painting. Picasso was a sculptor, a printmaker, a ceramic artist, and more. He created thousands of pieces in his lifetime, always experimenting, always trying something new.

### **Art With a Voice: Picasso Takes a Stand**

One of Picasso's most famous and powerful paintings is "Guernica," created in 1937. This giant black-and-white mural was a response to the bombing of the small Spanish town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. The painting is filled with screaming people, crying mothers, dying animals, and broken shapes. It's chaotic and heart-wrenching.

Picasso painted "Guernica" to protest war and violence. It wasn't meant to be beautiful. It was meant to make people feel something, to wake them up to the horrors of what was happening. The painting quickly became a symbol of peace and anti-war resistance all over the world.

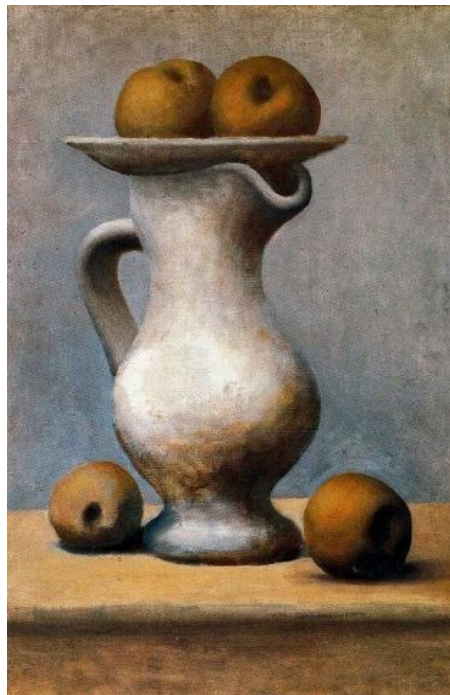
With "Guernica," Picasso showed that art could be a form of protest—a way to speak out about real-world problems. He wasn't just painting for fun anymore. He was using his art to make a difference.

### **The Later Years: Freedom and Fun**

In his later years, Picasso kept creating constantly. Even in his 80s and 90s, he was painting, drawing, and sculpting every day. His work from this time was full of color and energy. He revisited famous paintings from artists like Velázquez and turned them into his own playful, abstract versions. Critics didn't always love these works at first, but now they're seen as some of his most joyful and experimental pieces.

Even at the end of his life, Picasso stayed curious. He believed that art should never stop growing. He once said, "It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child." That childlike wonder stayed with him to the very end.

### **Why Picasso Still Matters?**



Picture 1.2 Pitcher with Apples

### **So why is Picasso still so important today?**

Because he changed what art could be. Before Picasso, most art was about copying what the world looked like. After Picasso, art became about what the artist felt, believed, and imagined. He showed that it was okay to break the rules, to be bold, and to speak your truth through art.

He inspired thousands of artists, painters, sculptors, filmmakers, and designers to take risks and find their voice. Without Picasso, we probably wouldn't have many of the modern styles and movements we see in museums today.

But maybe the most amazing thing about Picasso is how human his work feels. He didn't hide his feelings or try to be perfect. His art shows joy, sadness, love, anger, confusion, curiosity—all the things we feel too. That's why his work still connects with people around the world.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study looks at how art changed over time by following the life and work of Pablo Picasso. It aims to show how his different styles—like his blue and rose periods, cubism, and later works—reflect the big changes that happened in the art world during the 20th century. The goal is to understand how Picasso's personal experiences, the world around him, and his constant desire to try new things helped shape modern art into what it is today.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For completing this research paper, the researcher has used secondary sources of data. In the secondary source, the researcher has gone through a deep study from various sources like web links, YouTube, and online available articles as well.

## CONCLUSION

Pablo Picasso's journey as an artist is the story of how art changed in the 20th century. He started as a gifted realist painter, moved through emotional expression, revolutionized art with Cubism, protested war with powerful political pieces, and ended his life creating joyful, playful works full of freedom. He never got stuck. He never stopped growing. And in doing so, he taught the world that art is not just about looking—it's about feeling, thinking, and daring to be different. Picasso didn't just make great art. He gave art new meaning. And for that, the world of creativity will always owe him a huge thank you.

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