

## Evaluation

This investigation was planned to explore:

“Miró’s Use of Abstract - Surrealistic Forms, Colour and Compositions within his Pieces”

I began my investigation by firstly researching Miró as an artist, in which I discovered his ‘personal links’ to his works. Also how the time, place, (established in the biography) and who influenced him. As in the beginnings of his career he dabbled in different painting styles that were fashionable at the turn of the century like Fauvism and Cubism.

I chose this topic because I was very intrigued by Miró’s work, especially his use of abstract forms and the vibrant shades of colour that he used in a variety of different ways. Miró himself called it his ‘poetry and music’ within many of his paintings and sculptures as in *Woman* (1949) “Femme” and “Le corps de ma brune...” (Picture Poem) (1925). I find his painting techniques rather dramatic in some works yet subtle in others. He has an extraordinary way of creating these strange surreal forms, which Miró said came “almost entirely from hallucination”.

By 1930 the artist had developed his own style. Miró’s art is hard to describe. It is characterized by brilliant colours combined with simplified forms that remind you of drawings made by children at the age of five, by using basic forms, the use of irregular forms and vibrant colours. Also Joan Miró used elements of Catalan folk art and liked to compare his visual arts to poetry. However I feel that these elements produce an intricate and detailed composition, in that the forms Miró used seemed simplistic but they were painted in very detailed techniques.

I now understand how the forms and colours used affect the entire composition of the painting as Miró believed Surrealism was supposed to be a fusion of reality and the dream, a sort-of “super” reality. Therefore he used sign-like forms (i.e., like hieroglyphs) and geometric shapes to produce a rhythm toward a more overall composition. I discovered how his work progressed over his lifetime using these themes.

I visited galleries to see his work first hand, such as in the Tate Galleries - especially the Tate Modern, the British Museum and the National Gallery in London. Furthermore reading books and articles, Miró (1998) written by Walter Erben published by Benedikt Taschen and Miró (1993) written by Julia Mink also published by Benedikt Taschen when visiting Libraries to find biographical information on Miró and analyses and images of his works.

I concentrated mainly on a selection of his paintings relevant to the themes Abstraction, Surrealism, Colour and Compositions in which I carried out close analyses and made comparisons between them to find any similarities or even differences. Moreover I made my own comments and observations about his works, resulting in experimentations using these themes to produce my own paintings, which I completed in the style of Miró.

All through my study I used a variety of materials such as chalk pastels, acrylic and oil paints, watercolour, graphite pencils, coloured pencils, water-soluble pencils and a variety of boards ranging from thin card to chipboards. As a result for my copies and pieces it was essential that used a variety of mediums and for my background textured papers and boards, as Miró’s most common materials were oil, acrylic and pencil.

Looking at Miró was influential to me as I had an enhanced feel to the investigation by studying Miró as an artists and examining his techniques, which I therefore, incorporated in my studies. I had many varied feelings whilst doing my work, as I really did not prefer working with paints at first; however I gradually grew confident using them. In spite of this my studies suggested that I should develop my paintings by incorporating the effects, which I favoured most. These included Miró's use of texture, tone and refined appearance of different materials, his use of detailed brushwork and the elements - colour, emotion, direction, power and light which I developed throughout the time of the project.

I was pleased with my personal study, as I was able to conclude and find relevant answers to my question. I felt that I incorporated many effects that Miró used, as a result I have learned a great deal about his different techniques and styles, using the main themes Abstraction, Surrealism, Colour and Compositions. By studying him I found out about his influences, background and a little about him as a person and how he has influenced many future artists minds and their works.

## Conclusion

Joan Miró was an influential 20th century painter, sculptor, ceramicist and printmaker, who was born in 1893 in the Catalan region of Spain, near Barcelona. He began drawing as a young boy, and during his school life he was encouraged to revive the spirit of primitive Catalan art, combining it with modern discoveries and techniques. (This was in the beginning of the 20th century, at the time modern art was just beginning in Europe.) He was exposed to the rich folklore of Catalonia, which later influenced his images, such as how he saw all natural forms as beings, including pebbles and trees. He was also exposed to complete interiors of ninth to twelfth century frescoed churches in visits to the Museum of Catalonia in Barcelona, with their simple, flat and cartoon-like imagery. They also used primary colours and all were heavily outlined in black, which were prominent themes in Miró's work.

The use of differences of scale, where one form is disproportionately larger than others, which is a method often used by children when they make the objects most important to them the biggest objects in the image, which became characteristic of Miró's work. It can be seen that he was greatly influenced by prehistoric art, as in many of his paintings it feels as though these large animal like forms are dark and mysterious creatures that he believed "invaded into...dreams", which are prominent themes in *Dancer* (1925), *Painting* (1927) "Peinture" and the *Matador* (1969). Thus, this is shown in his use of colour as well as form, drawing attention to specific details such as the animal figures and small markings. The key to understanding the great harmony of his paintings lies in the interrelationship between the forms and the colours.

He was one of the first Surrealist painters to create imagery using 'automatic' techniques. I believe that Miró developed his own personal sign language, in that he repeated the same symbols in a series of his paintings, such as stars, large forms and in particular the use of the colour blue which Miró associated with dreams and sleep. He used sign-like forms (i.e., like hieroglyphs), geometric shapes and an overall rhythm. There was also a move toward a more overall composition. His forms included cats, butterflies, mannequins, and Catalan peasants, and there was visual movement in his images. Surrealism was supposed to be a fusion of reality and the dream, a sort-of "super" reality.

Miró showed his work in Surrealist exhibitions, and was influenced especially by the Surrealist poets, who in their quest to tap the unconscious mind played games like the "Exquisite Corpse" in order to compose poems. Exquisite corpse was a technique where a dictionary was passed around in a group of poets, who would each choose a word randomly from it. Whatever words came up, they would organize into a poem; this is how the phrase "exquisite corpse" was created. This technique can be seen in "Le corps de ma brune..." (Picture Poem) (1925) also in "A Star Caresses the Breast of a Negress" (Painting Poem) (1938) "Une étoile caresse le sein d'une négresse (peinture - poème)".

Miró's influence on the art of the later 20th century is great; some artists who were influenced by him include Robert Motherwell, Alexander Calder, Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Roberto Matta, Mark Rothko, Alexander Calder, and expressive abstract painters. Perhaps the original colour field painter was Matisse, and perhaps Miró's use of a large field of colour was due to Matisse's influence. Painters who came afterward who use the colour field include Helen Frankenthaler, Jules Olitski and Morris Louis. Miró's vast fields of colour also introduced the idea of "empty" space being as valuable as occupied space in painting. Miró said on many occasions that:

"The spectacle of the sky overwhelms me. I'm overwhelmed when I see, in an immense sky, the crescent of the moon, or the sun. There, in my pictures, tiny forms in huge empty spaces. Empty spaces, empty horizons, empty plains - everything which is bare has always greatly impressed me."