

Each room starts with the summary panel then lists the labels clockwise, starting from the left.

Page breaks indicate the start of a new room.

Picasso: Painting the Blue Period

Around the time of his 20th birthday, Pablo Picasso commenced what we now call his Blue Period (1901–1904)—a point in his career when the young artist reflected on the struggles of marginalized individuals and those living in poverty. Recent groundbreaking scientific and art-historical investigations have allowed us to retell the story of this celebrated episode in the trajectory of modern art.

The Art Gallery of Ontario and the Phillips Collection own three major works from the Blue Period: *The Blue Room* (1901), *Crouching Beggarwoman* (1902), and *The Soup* (1903). These masterpieces mark key points of transition in Picasso’s artistic development as he moved between Paris and Barcelona during those early years. By analyzing the visible and underlying layers of these three pictures, this exhibition shows how Picasso creatively synthesized his French, Catalan, and Spanish artistic sources at a very young age to create a unique and socially engaged style of painting.

All works in the exhibition are by Pablo Picasso unless otherwise indicated.

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Becoming Modern: Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, 1901

1901 was a pivotal year for the nineteen-year-old Picasso. He cofounded the artistic and literary journal *Arte Joven* [Young Art] in Madrid that February. After a brief visit to Barcelona in late April, he moved to Paris in May to prepare for his first Parisian exhibition at the progressive Galerie Vollard. His paintings and drawings from early in the year show the influence of French artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Edgar Degas, whose works he saw when he first visited Paris in 1900.

Picasso lived in a bedroom studio in the heart of Montmartre, Paris's entertainment district, which was home to many of France's most famous painters and poets. Upon arriving in the city, the artist worked swiftly to create a body of work in which his representations of street scenes, café-concerts, and sex workers positioned him as Paris's new "painter of modern life." It was there, in the autumn of 1901, that Picasso's Blue Period officially began.

Woman with a Plumed Hat

Madrid, 1901

oil on canvas

Collection of the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas,

Bequest of Marion Koogler McNay

1950.113

Woman with a Plumed Hat is one of several paintings of sex workers Picasso made in Madrid during the first few months of 1901. This work challenged the snobbery and conservatism of

Madrid's high society with its ennobling representation of a courtesan wearing an outrageous hat and gaudy collar. Picasso's attempt here to challenge middle-class propriety echoes the youthful radicalism of the art and literary journal *Arte Joven* [*Young Art*], which he helped launch that February.

On Stage [En scène]

Paris, around 1901

pastel on brown paper

Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York,

Bequest of A. Conger Goodyear, 1966

1966:9.16

Spanish Dancer

Paris (?), 1901

oil on cardboard

David and Ezra Nahmad

Spanish Dancer, which was exhibited as "El tango" in Picasso's first Parisian show in the summer of 1901, depicts a theatrically costumed and made-up woman crouching under the harsh glare of electrical lights. The bright colours, broken brushwork, and spatially compressed composition show that Picasso was engaging with the work of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Edgar Degas. The influence of those two French artists can also be seen in the bold colours and dramatically cropped architectural environment in *On Stage*, a view of a performer in a music hall.

Woman with a Cape

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of Leonard C. Hanna, Jr.
1958.44

This portrait of a model named Jeanne exemplifies the artist's desire to present himself to his French audience as a painter of modern life. Picasso made energetic strokes using brushes loaded with paint to produce this picture, one of many works he quickly produced in the weeks leading up to the Galerie Vollard show.

At the Café

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

The Kreeger Museum, Washington, DC
1961.8

Made in the summer of 1901, this work captures the stylistic changes Picasso was exploring at that time, having absorbed the influence of contemporary French painting. The dramatically cropped composition and striking palette of dark blues, yellows, and reds in this scene of two sex workers and a waiter in a café reveal the strong influences of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Edgar Degas, two of the French artists Picasso most admired.

Portrait of Lola, Sister of the Artist

Barcelona, 1901

oil on panel

Private collection

María Dolores Ruiz Picasso, also known as Lola, was Picasso's younger sister. Born in Málaga, Spain, in 1884, she frequently modelled for the young artist. In this solemn portrait, painted during Picasso's short stay in Barcelona in late April and early May 1901, Lola casts a serious gaze toward the viewer. The dark colours and melancholy mood of this work are very different from the livelier, more colourful works Picasso painted in Paris in preparation for his first Parisian exhibition in June and July 1901.

Self-Portrait in Top Hat

Paris, 1901

oil on paper

Private collection

In this painting made around May and June of 1901, Picasso presents himself as a wealthy, fashionable socialite enjoying the spectacles in Paris's Montmartre entertainment district. The artist, who wears a top hat and a long overcoat, is surrounded by topless women in a scene that evokes the work of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, the famous "painter of Montmartre," who was known for his racy depictions of café-concerts, bars, and brothels. Picasso embraced both the content and the style of Toulouse-Lautrec, using broken brushstrokes to apply vibrant colours.

from left to right:

Catcalls and Capers [Beuglant et Chahut]

Paris, 1901

printed paper

Printed in *Le Frou-Frou*, September 14, 1901

Private collection, London

Lures for Men [Appâts pour hommes]

Paris, 1901

printed paper

Printed in *Le Frou-Frou*, August 31, 1901

Private collection, London

During the summer of 1901, Picasso took on side jobs to make pocket money, including producing illustrations for the humorous French magazine *Le Frou Frou*. In these pen-and-ink drawings from the August 31 and September 14 issues, he depicts Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's favourite entertainer, Jane Avril. Picasso also drew other Montmartre personalities, such as the actor Polaire and the aging singer Marie Derval. He used a bold, graphic style to capture the signature physical features and costumes of these performers, such as Avril's thin build and jerky movements.

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Painting the Female Nude: Paris, 1901

The woman at her toilette who bathes and does her hair is a subject from the French tradition that began to appear in Picasso's art between 1899 and 1900. It was after engaging with the works of Edgar Degas and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec that Picasso really began exploring this theme, which he fully realized in *The Blue Room*, one of his first Blue Period paintings.

While living in Paris in May and June of 1901, Picasso first included nude female figures in his paintings. At the time, he was also paying visits to Montmartre's brothels. He represented his subjects in a range of poses, adapting the artistic techniques of Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, and Auguste Rodin, whose influences can be seen in *The Blue Room* and other early Blue Period pictures. Some of the works that inspired Picasso are exhibited in this gallery.

The Coiffure [La Coiffure]

Barcelona, around 1899–1900
pastel and watercolour on paper
Private collection, NYC

La Coiffure is one of Picasso's first fully realized representations of a woman bathing and doing her hair. A popular subject in French art, the theme of the woman at her toilette is one Picasso revisited throughout his career. Here, as in *The Blue Room* (also in this gallery), Picasso clearly defines the intimate space of the bedroom as the place where a woman performs these tasks. Unlike in *The Blue Room*, however, this model wears a skirt and corset. Picasso did not paint female nude figures until his second visit to Paris in May 1901.

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

born Albi, France, 1864
died Saint-André-du-Bois, France, 1901

Woman at the Tub [Femme au tub]

1896

from the portfolio *Elles*
colour crayon, tusche, and spatter lithograph
The Baltimore Museum of Art, Bequest of Frederick
Lawrence Jones, Fredericksburg, Virginia
BMA 2003.87

Jeanne (Femme couchée)

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne /
Centre de création industrielle, Bequest of Baroness
Eva Gourgaud in 1965
Inv. #: AM 3723 P

Picasso's agent hired Jeanne, a professional model, before the artist's show at Galerie Vollard, where he exhibited this work. In this staged representation of the nude in the brothel, Jeanne, who reclines with eyes closed and legs drawn up to her abdomen, appears lost in her own thoughts. Picasso used a naturalistic palette and expressive brushwork to emphasize the fleshiness of her body. The cropping and the close-up view situate the viewer at the foot of Jeanne's bed, creating a more intimate relationship between spectator and nude.

on wall:

Nude with Cats

Paris, 1901

oil on cardboard

The Art Institute of Chicago, Amy McCormick Memorial Collection

1942.464

on pedestal:

AUGUSTE RODIN

born Paris, France, 1840

died Meudon, France, 1917

Crouching Woman (small version)

modelled 1880–1882; cast 1953

bronze

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966
66.4331

Picasso exhibited *Nude with Cats* in his show at Galerie Vollard in June and July of 1901. To emphasize the animalistic nature of the sitter's sexuality, Picasso places her on a bed in a brothel with two black cats. The woman wraps her right arm around her leg to grab her ankle and rests her pointy elbow on her left knee. Picasso adopted this strange pose from Auguste Rodin's *Crouching Woman*, a plaster of which he saw in 1900. The sculpture, which elicited shock because it showed the nude's genitalia, was described as having a "melancholic bestiality" in the 1900 exhibition catalogue.

EDGAR DEGAS

born and died Paris, France, 1834–1917

Nude Woman Standing, Drying Herself

1891–1892

lithograph

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Dudley P. Allen Fund
1954.361

It is possible an impression of this Degas lithograph from 1891–1892 inspired the pose of the nude bather in *The Blue Room*, who twists and bends to sponge her thigh. In *The Blue Room*, however, Picasso reverses the view of the body, showing the back rather than the front. By changing the orientation of a source, Picasso was able to both acknowledge and establish independence from his artistic predecessors. However, he also followed Degas in deciding to show the nude bather entirely absorbed in her task, unaware of the gaze of the spectator.

The Blue Room (Le Tub)

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1927

Inv #: 1554

In this early Blue Period work, Picasso paints his bedroom/studio at 130 ter, boulevard de Clichy, in Montmartre. This top-floor apartment was around the corner from the famous cabaret Moulin Rouge, and the artist lived there with his agent and dealer, Pere Mañach. Painted around his twentieth birthday on October 25, 1901, this representation of the artist's studio references the French artists he admired at the same time as it serves as an unveiling of his new Blue Period style. The woman at left who sponges her thigh in the zinc tub is a nod to images of nudes and women bathing by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Edgar Degas,

and Auguste Rodin. On the back wall above the bed, Picasso pays homage to Toulouse-Lautrec, who had died earlier that year, by including his 1895 poster of a woman dancing. Next to that poster is a work resembling one of Picasso's own recent Barcelona seascapes; in this way, he boldly positions himself and his Spanish background alongside his French artistic heroes. To learn more about this painting and to discover the hidden portrait underneath its visible surface, visit the conservation laboratory in the next room.

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

born Albi, France, 1864

died Saint-André-du-Bois, France, 1901

Woman at her Toilette, Washing Herself [Femme qui se lave, la toilette]

1896

from the portfolio Elles

colour crayon lithograph

The Baltimore Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Nelson Gutman

BMA 1961.158

AUGUSTE RODIN

born Paris, France, 1840

died Meudon, France, 1917

Eve

around 1881

marble

Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. Wood, 1928

898

When Picasso first visited Paris in 1900, he saw work by Rodin, including a plaster of this sculpture. Rodin created *Eve* for the monumental commission *The Gates of Hell* (1880–1917), which presents the story of Adam and Eve, from the Christian Bible. Rodin captures Eve’s psychological complexity by lowering her head in sorrow and hiding her breasts in shame. To evoke similar qualities in *The Blue Room*, the bathing subject is shown with her back bent and head bowed. Interestingly, the legs of Picasso’s nude figure are in the same pose as those of Rodin’s *Eve*.

Woman in a Bathrobe [Femme au peignoir de bain]

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

Private collection, USA

This robed bather is related both to the nude in Picasso’s *The Blue Room* and to Rodin’s *Eve*. Like those figures, she bows her head in a gesture that evokes melancholy and, perhaps, shame. Similar to Rodin’s *Eve*, she wraps her arms around her body, distancing herself from the viewer’s gaze in an act of self-concealment. By isolating this figure and silhouetting her against a plain blue background, Picasso removes all narrative details in this painting. As the Blue Period progressed, Picasso increasingly banished contextual details from his work.

Woman with Blue Stockings [Femme aux bas bleus]

Paris, 1901

oil on board laid down on canvas

Private collection

Nude with Red Stockings [Nu aux bas rouges]

Paris, 1901

oil on board mounted on wood

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, France

Inv. #:1997-44

These two paintings of brothel workers appeared in Picasso's 1901 Galerie Vollard exhibition. *Woman with Blue Stockings* shows a young woman coyly crossing her hands over her genitalia, while *Nude with Red Stockings* depicts a more confident and garishly made-up woman who stares directly at the viewer as she opens her feathery robe. In addition to experimenting with poses and attitudes in these early nudes, Picasso used a range of innovative painting techniques, such as the yellow and red dots and dabs he applied in the stockings and robes of these two figures.

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The Blue Room

In 1954, a conservator examining *The Blue Room (Le Tub)* noted that "the canvas is supporting two compositions, with the outlines of the first showing clearly on the present paint surface." A later X-radiograph of the painting confirmed this observation, and subsequent infrared imaging revealed a portrait of a man hidden beneath *The Blue Room*. This discovery, along with interest in Picasso's early artistic process, led to an in-depth technical study of both paintings.

During the study, which began in 2012, researchers used state-of-the-art imaging and analytical technologies to render the hidden portrait in high definition while uncovering additional details about both paintings. This analysis allowed Picasso scholars to understand the hidden portrait within the context of the artist's early work, and also provided new insight into how the artist painted *The Blue Room*.

This multi-institutional study of The Blue Room was conducted by the following group of collaborators:

Patricia Favero

Associate Conservator, The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Susan Behrends Frank

Curator, The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

John K. Delaney

Senior Imaging Scientist, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Kathryn A. Dooley

Imaging Scientist, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Jennifer Mass and Alyssa M. Hull

Scientific Research and Analysis Laboratory, Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, Winterthur, DE

Arthur R. Woll

Cornell High Energy Synchrotron Source (CHESS), Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Imaging Techniques

Conservators and scientists used a variety of imaging techniques to study *The Blue Room* and the hidden picture on the canvas.

Imaging the portrait hidden beneath *The Blue Room*:

Raking Light

When raking light shines across the paint surface from one side at a sharp angle, it highlights surface textures which do not follow the visible composition. This can offer clues about changes that may have been made by the artist.

X-radiography

X-radiography reveals a ghostly image under *The Blue Room*, which hints at a hidden composition.

Infrared Reflectography (IRR)

Examination with a camera sensitive to infrared energy (900-1650nm) suggests a composition beneath *The Blue Room*, but details are obscured by surface elements.

When filters were used to narrow down the detectable infrared spectrum (1500–1650 nm), surface colours became more transparent and the portrait of an unknown man beneath *The Blue Room* was first revealed.

Infrared Reflectance Imaging Spectroscopy

This infrared reflectance image manipulates spectroscopic data to emphasize the textured brushstrokes and other details within the portrait. Rotated 90 degrees clockwise, it shows a man with a crooked nose wearing a dark jacket and white bowtie.

A false-colour infrared reflectance image shows the positioning of *The Blue Room* over the hidden portrait, revealing the relationship between the two paintings on the same canvas.

***The Blue Room* and a New, Unique Style: Paris, Autumn 1901**

The portrait of the man underneath *The Blue Room* and the painting's visible surface together show Picasso becoming an independent artist with a unique style in the late summer and autumn of 1901. Although the subject matter and bright, colourful pigments in the underlying portrait relate this work to paintings the young artist made for his exhibition at Galerie Vollard in June and July, it also has certain stylistic qualities that resemble early Blue Period paintings.

Painted around Picasso's twentieth birthday, *The Blue Room* and its blue palette signal a major shift. With its references to works by Toulouse-Lautrec and to the still lifes on display in this room that Picasso exhibited at Galerie Vollard, this painting is a key transitional work. For approximately the next three years, Picasso would continue making paintings using predominantly blue

pigments, developing a new, independent style we now call the Blue Period.

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

born Albi, France, 1864

died Saint-André-du-Bois, France, 1901

May Milton

1895

crayon, brush, spatter, and transferred screen lithograph,
printed in five colours on paper

Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of the Donald R. Muller/Ross R.
Scott Collection, 2010

2010/96

The poster of the Irish dancer May Milton above the bed in *The Blue Room* highlights the significance Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec held for Picasso at the beginning of the Blue Period. Although the two never met, Picasso referenced Lautrec's premature death on September 9, 1901 when he painted *The Blue Room* the following month, honouring his predecessor through the repetition of the blue, yellow, and white hues of Lautrec's poster.

Blue Roofs, Paris

Paris, 1901

oil on millboard

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford,
Bequeathed by Frank Hindley Smith, 1939

WA1940.1.16

Picasso documented each new studio by painting views from these spaces. Here he paints the rooftops and chimneys seen through the window of his studio in Montmartre—which you can see on the left side of *The Blue Room*. Picasso made the many wet-on-wet passages in this painting using short, lively brushstrokes laden with pigments of blue, yellow, green, and white. These colours anticipate his preferred palette at the beginning of the Blue Period.

from left to right:

Peonies

Paris, 1901

oil on hardboard mounted on plywood

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mrs. Gilbert

W. Chapman

1981.41.1

Chrysanthemums

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Mrs. John Wintersteen, 1964

1964-46-1

Flowers

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

Tate: Purchased with assistance from the Contemporary

Art Society, 1933

Inv. #: N04683

Picasso created these three works to make money. He used bright, vibrant colours applied with unblended brushstrokes, drawing inspiration from still lifes by Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, whose works he probably saw at the Galerie Vollard. On the side table of *The Blue Room* is a bouquet of flowers similar to the five still-life paintings Picasso exhibited in his Vollard show. By referencing his own work in a painting that also cites contemporary French artists, Picasso presents himself as equal to his predecessors.

from top to bottom:

Stuffed Shirts [Les Plastrons]

Paris, 1900

oil on panel

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mrs. Charles Sumner Bird
(Julia Appleton Bird)

1970.475

The Diners [Les Soupeurs]

Paris, 1901

oil on cardboard

Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence,
Rhode Island, Bequest of George Pierce Metcalf

57.237

These paintings help us to understand the identity of the unknown man hidden beneath *The Blue Room*. The bearded and balding

figure slouched against a cushion or banquette under *The Blue Room* wears the same formal dinner costume as the patrons in these paintings of Parisian café-concerts and restaurants. He also shares their rounded, compact silhouettes, which are notable for how the heads of these figures are sunken into their shoulders. The balding male subject in *The Diners*, who rests his chin on his hand, assumes a contemplative, psychologically charged pose similar to that of the man under *The Blue Room*.

from right to left:

Woman with Necklace

Paris, 1901

oil on cardboard

The Sam and Ayala Zacks Collection in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, on permanent loan from the Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks, 1970

71/294

Seated Woman (Femme au chignon)

Paris, 1901

conté crayon on textured wove paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP438 (recto)

Painted in the late summer of 1901, *Woman with Necklace* features a courtesan who wears a feathered hat and a bejewelled collar. In this early Blue Period work, Picasso moves away from loose brushwork and bright colours, using mainly blue, black, and white pigments to create large, outlined, curvilinear shapes.

The courtesan in *Woman with Necklace* shares features with the man under *The Blue Room*: both have thick outlines; both have rounded, compact silhouettes; and both assume a thinker's pose. Drawn around the same time, the figure in *Seated Woman* holds her left hand in a gesture similar to the one made by the man under *The Blue Room*.

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The Paris Blue Period: Late 1901

In autumn of 1901, at the beginning of the Blue Period, Picasso began visiting Saint-Lazare, the hospital-prison near Montmartre that mainly housed sex workers, many of whom suffered from venereal diseases. Dr. Jullien, the venereologist who worked there, knew Picasso and provided him with a medical alias so he could visit and make drawings. Picasso acknowledged Saint-Lazare as a source of inspiration for his early Blue Period paintings.

To capture the tragic plight of the women of Saint-Lazare, Picasso used a largely blue palette. Artists working in Barcelona and Paris at the turn of the century associated blue with loneliness and solitude. In the Christian tradition, the hue is also connected with the Virgin Mary, whom Picasso evokes in these works to elicit respect and empathy from his viewers. Another influence at this time was the suicide of Picasso's close friend Carles Casagemas, whom the artist memorialized in four Blue Period canvases.

Melancholy Woman [Femme assise au fichu]

Paris, 1901–1902

oil on canvas

Detroit Institute of Arts, Bequest of Robert H. Tannahill

70.190

This woman who sits alone in the isolation of a cell on a moonlit night is an inmate of Paris's infamous Saint-Lazare hospital-prison. She looks down, her arms folded tightly across her chest, and appears to be absorbed in her own thoughts. The cold evening light pours down over her shoulders and onto the back of her head in a way that emphasizes her hardship, which is also suggested by the range of cool and dark blues in the painting. Conveying his empathy for her troubles, Picasso monumentalizes this incarcerated woman in a composition marked by curvilinear and geometric forms.

Mother and Child by a Fountain

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

Bequest of Scofield Thayer, 1982

1984.433.23

The women sent to Saint-Lazare were sometimes pregnant, which meant that children also lived in the hospital-prison. Picasso, who was disturbed by this occurrence, began a series of paintings about motherhood that are quite different from his earlier paintings of women and children. These works are compassionate and full of sadness. Here he transforms an inmate and her child into a tender image of the Christian icon Mary, wearing a robe and shawl and holding her son, Jesus, next to a

fountain. Picasso invokes these religious motifs to ennoble his dishonoured subjects, while the blue tones create a melancholic mood.

Evocation (The Burial of Casagemas)

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas

Musée d'Art moderne de Paris, Gift from the Vollard Estate to the City of Paris 1950, transferred 1961

AMVP1133

An early Blue Period work, *Evocation* shows two episodes from the life of Picasso's late friend Carles Casagemas, who had committed suicide earlier that year. The two had travelled to Paris together in 1900 and shared a studio in the city. In the lower portion of the painting, plainly dressed mourners stand around Casagemas's body, which is about to be buried in a large tomb. Above them, Casagemas ascends to heaven, travelling by horse in the company of sex workers and a robed Madonna-like figure with children.

Woman Ironing [La Repasseuse]

Paris, 1901

oil on canvas, mounted on cardboard

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949

49.70.2

“Picasso believes that art emanates from sadness and pain,” wrote the artist’s friend and long-time secretary Jaime Sabartés in 1948. In his commentary on the Blue Period, Sabartés also noted that “sadness lends itself to meditation,” and that “grief is at the basis of life.” Focusing on the labour of an incarcerated woman who has been forced to iron linens as part of her imprisonment at Saint-Lazare, Picasso invites us to contemplate and empathize with her misery. The figure is frozen in her task, her face expressionless; Picasso used a largely blue palette and placed the woman in a tightly cropped, shallow space to convey her melancholy state.

Self Portrait (Yo)

Paris, 1901

oil on cardboard mounted on wood

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. John Hay

Whitney Bequest, 1998

587.1998

This psychologically charged self-portrait is one of four Picasso painted in Paris in 1901, at the age of 19. Here, the artist represents himself as an intense, introspective visionary: he looks directly at the viewer, his head and torso seeming to emerge from the darkness. His agitated brushstrokes create a sense of vibration and emphasize the hypnotic, probing quality of his gaze. Inscribing a declamatory “Yo” [“I”] in the top left-hand corner, Picasso announces the arrival of his newly formed, more accomplished self.

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The Barcelona Blue Period: 1902

When Picasso returned to Barcelona in January 1902, the city was in crisis. The number of homeless people in the city had increased significantly, and between February 17 and 24, 20 percent of Barcelona's population mounted a general strike, which led to fights in the streets and martial law being instituted. At one point, workers erected a barricade near Picasso's studio.

Already preoccupied with the plight of destitute women as a result of his visits to the Saint-Lazare hospital-prison, Picasso continued to explore ways to represent suffering. Referencing Catholic devotional images, he imbued his representations of women living in poverty with visual elements that his devout Catalan audience would associate with the suffering of the Virgin Mary. He also included art-historical references in these works to lend an air of dignity to his subjects.

Christ on the Cross [Christ en croix]

Barcelona, 1902

graphite pencil on wove paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP451 (verso)

Annunciation

Barcelona, 1896

oil on wood

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso 1970

MPB 110.211

Picasso was raised in an environment in which the Catholic Church and its devotional imagery were a constant presence. As a budding artist, he painted a number of traditional religious scenes, including this Annunciation, which he made at age 15. Even in 1902, after his second visit to Paris, he drew Jesus on the cross. Picasso borrowed from these Christian images of the Virgin Mary in his portraits of Barcelona's downtrodden women, infusing his subjects with a spiritual energy so that the viewer would view them as religious figures.

LUIS DE MORALES

born and died Badajoz, Spain, 1509–1586

Our Lady of Sorrows [La Virgen de los Dolores]

1560–1570

oil on panel

Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

P000942

Hoping to cultivate empathy within his largely Catholic Catalan audience, Picasso in his 1902 paintings referenced representations of the Virgin Mary common in Spain. This *Our Lady of Sorrows*, which the artist saw during many visits to the Prado in Madrid, bears a likeness to the subjects of his paintings in this room. This Virgin Mary, who bows her head to gaze solemnly downward, wears a robe, a shawl, and a white scarf, much like the women of Picasso's 1902 Barcelona paintings. By comparing impoverished women to the suffering Virgin, Picasso was imploring his audience to regard the poor with respect.

from right to left:

Woman with Bangs

Barcelona, 1902

oil on canvas

The Baltimore Museum of Art, The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland
BMA 1950.268

Woman in a Blue Shawl

Barcelona, 1902

oil on canvas

Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan

Painted in Barcelona in 1902, *Woman in a Blue Shawl* and *Woman with Bangs* are part of a series of powerful paintings of impoverished women. The subjects all have slumped backs and solemn facial expressions. These paintings show a shift from his previous Saint-Lazare pictures: narrative elements are minimized, and the figures are situated in indistinct spaces; here, Picasso evokes traditional Christian images of the Madonna. While *Woman in a Blue Shawl* has a timeless appearance, *Woman with Bangs* has more modern, naturalistic features such as painted lips and a jaded facial expression.

Crouching Beggarwoman [La Miséreuse accroupie]

Barcelona, 1902

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ontario, Anonymous gift, 1963

63/1

Picasso used many artistic devices to encourage his audience—primarily Catholic Catalans—to experience this crouching beggarwoman as a miracle. The thick Prussian blue contours outlining the figure invite the viewer to establish visual contact. The shadows of her downturned face evoke her pain and suffering. The viewer’s eye then travels to her bright white scarf, which has the appearance of a halo. It is as though she is a Virgin Mary draped in a sacred shawl and robe. The blue that surrounds her seems to expand and engulf the viewer, evoking a religious realm in which this poor woman becomes a figure of devotion.

To learn more about this painting and to discover the elements underneath, visit the conservation laboratory in the next room.

The Dead Woman

Barcelona, 1903

oil on canvas

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Ceded by the Picasso-Reventós Foundation, 1983

MPB 112.109

In 1903, concerned about the harsh realities faced by women living in poverty in Barcelona, Picasso visited the morgue at the Hospital de Santa Creu i Sant Pau, where his friend Dr. Jacint Reventós worked as an intern. Picasso later recalled, “There I saw a dead woman, who had undergone a gynecological operation; her face made a great impression on me, and when I went home I painted her from memory.” The stillness of this close-up painting and its blue tonality create a chilling image.

on wall:

Two Women at a Bar

Barcelona, 1902

oil on canvas

Hiroshima Museum of Art, Japan

Inv. #: B055

on pedestal:

AUGUSTE RODIN

born Paris, France, 1840

died Meudon, France, 1917

The Thinker [Le Penseur]

conceived 1880; cast early 1920s

bronze

Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Mrs. O.D. Vaughan, 1977

77/74

The sex workers in *Two Women at a Bar* turn away from us. Picasso adds volume and sculptural mass to their backs to make them monumental and intimidating. The only element that seems to draw the viewer into this picture, visually and psychologically, is the glass of absinthe on the bar between the pair. A 1902 photograph of Picasso's studio shows this painting alongside a postcard of Rodin's *The Thinker*. The heavy modelling of the back of Rodin's sculpture likely inspired *Two Women at a Bar*.

on wall:

Crouching Woman

Barcelona, 1902

oil on canvas

Asahi Beer Oyamazaki Villa Museum of Art, Kyoto, Japan

8801-1724

on pedestal:

Seated Woman

Barcelona, modelled 1902; cast after 1902

bronze

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Memorial gift from
Dr. T. Edward and Tullah Hanley, Bradford, Pennsylvania

69.30.160

In 1902, Picasso experimented with different ways to elicit empathy through his representations of downtrodden women. In *Crouching Woman*, Picasso wraps the head of this figure in a white shawl, referencing nuns and the Virgin Mary. Through her hands gestures, he places her in an art-historical tradition of meditative thinkers. This figure is rendered as compact and closed in, deep in thought—much like Picasso's first sculpture, *Seated Woman*. The intense mood and visual remoteness of both subjects push the viewer away, requiring us to be patient and empathetic to gain access.

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Crouching Beggarwoman

In 1992, X-radiography revealed a landscape painting beneath Picasso's *Crouching Beggarwoman* [*La Miséreuse accroupie*]. State-of-the-art imaging and analysis provided further details not only about this reused canvas but also about hidden changes in the composition of the woman depicted.

Conservators and conservation scientists employ various techniques to analyze paintings. Experts in the field have developed new technologies that reveal, with unprecedented precision, information about the painting's structure beneath the surface layer. These specialized techniques allow us to better understand Picasso's use of materials, his creative process, and his artistic development in response to influences in both Paris and Barcelona.

This new research on *Crouching Beggarwoman* was produced by the following international group of collaborators:

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Crouching Beggarwoman and Barcelona: 1900–1902

During his time in Barcelona, Picasso was influenced by the work of local Catalan painters, particularly Isidre Nonell, an expressive realist, and Santiago Rusiñol, the founder of Catalan

modernisme. When Picasso arrived in 1902, artists such as Nonell, who made politically explicit representations of the poor, rejected the poetic style of older painters such as Rusiñol.

The content of *Crouching Beggarwoman* echoes the socially engaged works of Nonell and other younger painters, but its style is closer to Rusiñol. Picasso painted this work over a landscape captured in two of the older Catalan *modernista*'s works. He also referenced the Mary Magdalene in Rusiñol's El Greco painting and relied on a palette that evokes Rusiñol's poetic use of the colour blue.

Barcelona Rooftops

Barcelona, 1902

oil on canvas

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.020

This twilight view from Picasso's 1902 studio transforms Barcelona's rooftops into a composition of simplified shapes. Picasso's long-time friend and secretary Jaime Sabartés refers to this and other paintings from 1902 as "the Barcelona Blues" due to the richness and intensity of the colour, probably resulting from the light in the Catalan city. A cityscape organized around a rooftop hatch, this sombre picture can be viewed as a modernized, urban version of *modernista* landscapes of gardens such as the one under *Crouching Beggarwoman*.

from left to right:

CLAUDI CARBONELL FLO

born and died Barcelona, Spain, 1891–1970

Untitled (Labyrinth of Horta [Barcelona])

undated (early 20th century)

gelatin silver print

Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Permanent loan
from the Agrupació Fotogràfica de Catalunya, 2003

MNAC 209522

Pèl & Ploma

July 1903 (vol. 4, no. 95)

printed paper

Art Gallery of Ontario, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives,
Purchase 2021

Carbonell's photograph of a temple above the reflecting pool of the Park of the Labyrinth of Horta provides another view of the landscape under *Crouching Beggarwoman*. The Marqués de Alfarrás, a descendant of aristocrats, owned this private park on the outskirts of Barcelona. A 1903 article published in the progressive art and literary journal *Pèl & Ploma* celebrated this park as an enduring reminder of Spain before industrialization. The artist who made the landscape under *Crouching Beggarwoman* painted this site to capture a glimpse of nature untouched by industrial progress. Many Catalan artists around 1900 shared this romantic view, including Santiago Rusiñol, who painted this site on two separate occasions.

DOMÉNIKOS THEOTOKÓPULOS (EL GRECO)

born Heraklion, Greece, 1541

died Toledo, Spain, 1614

Penitent Magdalene with the Cross [Magdalena penitente con la cruz]

around 1585–1590

oil on canvas

Museu del Cau Ferrat, Sitges, Collection Santiago Rusiñol
32.004

Picasso's admiration of El Greco began during his time in Madrid, when as a student, he copied works by the Greek-born Spanish master. *Crouching Beggarwoman* adopts the bowed head, pensive mood, and compact silhouette of Mary Magdalene. Representing a poor beggarwoman as if she were a saint from an El Greco painting is a provocative synthesis of poverty and piety. This painting was owned by Santiago Rusiñol, the father of Catalan *modernisme*, who produced two paintings of the Labyrinth of Horta. By referencing Penitent Magdalene with the Cross in *Crouching Beggarwoman*, Picasso is also paying homage to Rusiñol and El Greco.

clockwise from left:

Gypsy Woman in Front of the Bar, La Musclera (La Bohémienne)

Barcelona, 1900

pastel and oil on board

Mie Prefectural Art Museum, Tsu, Japan, Deposition
of Mie Prefectural Public Utilities Agency

Seated Woman

Paris or Barcelona, around 1902

pen and ink on laid paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.461

Sketches

Barcelona, 1902

pen and sepia ink on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.545

In the pastel and oil on display here, Picasso uses Isidre Nonell's signature jagged edges and broken contours to render a woman and swaddled child outside a bar on the shores of Barcelona. He also adopted Nonell's palette of bright, acid colours. The pen-and-ink and pencil drawings on display here show how Picasso responded to works by Nonell that had been reproduced in the January 1902 issue of *Pèl & Ploma*, Barcelona's progressive art and literary journal.

Pèl & Ploma

January 1902 (vol. 3, no. 84)

printed paper

Art Gallery of Ontario, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives,

Purchase 2021

When Picasso returned to Spain in late January of 1902, critics considered Isidre Nonell the leading painter in Barcelona. That month's issue of *Pèl & Ploma*, a progressive art and literature

journal, was dedicated to Nonell's recent exhibition, which featured paintings of poor women from the streets of Barcelona. The editors of *Pèl & Ploma* reproduced 30 of Nonell's drawings, celebrating his expressive realist approach, which he used to confront the middle class with the realities of poverty. While Picasso's final treatment of the women in *Crouching Beggarwoman* lacks the narrative content and grittiness of those drawings, his engagement with Nonell's work can be seen in the exposed arm and circular object he initially painted under the figure's shawl.

The Soup's Monument to Charity: Paris and Barcelona, 1902–1903

Picasso began making sketches for *The Soup* before he departed for his third trip to Paris on October 19, 1902. His three-month visit to the French capital was disastrous. Picasso sold nothing at his November–December exhibition at Galerie Berthe Weill and was penniless as a result. Because he could not afford canvases and paints, he resorted to sketching on random scraps of paper.

During this time, Picasso studied and copied the murals of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes in Paris's city hall and the Panthéon. He worked simultaneously on drawings for *The Soup*, adapting the form and the content of the French painter's monumental scenes to create a timeless and dignified representation of the daily struggles of a poor woman and child. One of the first paintings Picasso completed upon returning to Barcelona in January 1903, *The Soup* took four months to finalize.

Mother and Child by the Sea

Paris, 1901–1902

oil on canvas

Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, Japan

P08-0032

Enlarged and made monumental, this young mother tenderly rests her chin on the head of her child, whom she holds closely to her chest as she stands alone on an empty seashore. While her white scarf, green shawl, and blue robe recall the clothing of a saint, the red flower she holds signifies the loss of her virginity. Significantly, she resembles a woman who holds a flower in a 1900 poster advertising medical services to treat syphilis in Barcelona. The stillness of this painting and the boat in its middle ground are adapted from Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's famous painting *The Poor Fisherman* (1881; Musée d'Orsay, Paris), a version of which is on the wall to your right.

Man, Woman and Infant in a Boat [Homme, femme et enfant dans un barque]

Barcelona, 1902

pen, sepia-coloured black ink, grey wash and charcoal highlights on drawing paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP475

Farewell to the Fishermen [Les Adieux aux pêcheurs]

Barcelona, 1903

pen and iron gall ink, scraping and rubbing on textured wove paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979
MP449

PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

born Lyon, France, 1824

died Paris, France, 1898

The Poor Fisher [Le Pauvre pêcheur]

1897

lithograph in purple on China paper

published by Ambroise Vollard in the second Album des
Peintres-Graveurs

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Print Purchase Fund
(Rosenwald Collection), 1975

1975.16.1

1. Study for “The Meeting” [Étude pour “L’entrevue”]

Paris or Barcelona, 1901–1902

pen and sepia-coloured ink and traces of pastel on calendared
wove paper on the verso of a reproduction of a painting by
Michel-Lévy, “Le couvert,” published in *L’Art Français*

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979
MP448

2. Mother and Child on the Quay

Paris, 1903

sepia ink on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970
MPB 110.481

3. Woman and Boy near a Sailing Ship

Barcelona, 1903

pen and ink and wash on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Acquisition, 2000

MPB 113.037

4. Man Carrying a Sack

Paris, 1903

conté crayon on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.439

5. Man Carrying a Sack (after Puvis de Chavannes)

Paris, 1902

graphite pencil on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.531

These drawings show Picasso combining and reusing poses of different figures from Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's paintings (including the mural *Sainte Geneviève Provisioning Paris*, a smaller version of which is to your right). The figure in the drawing (no. 5) of a man with a rounded back and bowed head, his feet planted firmly on the ground as he carries a sack, has a posture similar to that of the woman in *The Soup*. The women who stand upright in profile in drawings 2 and 3, and to the right in drawing 1, share the stance and posture of the woman in *Mother and Child by the Sea*. Picasso makes the impoverished women in the two

Blue Period paintings in this gallery dignified and monumental by arresting their actions and representing them as calm and restrained.

1. Figure Imploring

Paris, 1902

pen and sepia ink on laid paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.463

2. AFTER PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

Saint Geneviève Provisioning Paris [Sainte Geneviève ravitaillant Paris]

(reduced variant version)

around 1897 or later

oil on canvas over traces of pen and black ink, gold in the borders

Courtesy of Galerie de Bayser, Paris

3. Study for “The Soup”

Paris, 1902

pen and ink on paper

Private collection

4. PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

**Sketch of “Saint Geneviève Feeding a Starving Paris,”
in the Pantheon Paris**

1903

pen and sepia ink on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.468

This painting (2) is a small version of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's *Sainte Geneviève Provisioning Paris*, a large mural in the Panthéon that depicts the patron saint of Paris arriving with food for starving citizens during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871). Picasso, who was penniless while living in Paris in late 1902 and early 1903, related to the narrative content in the mural.

Two preliminary drawings for *The Soup* (3 and 4) show Picasso incorporating the collapsed figure and the woman who revives her in the mural's lower-left corner. Although slightly different, the pose of *Figure Imploring* (1) resembles the pose of the nude boy in the right panel of Puvis's mural. Picasso borrowed this pose when painting the girl in *The Soup*.

from left to right:

Woman Carrying a Bowl; or, Study for “The Soup”
[Femme portant un plat]

Paris, 1902

India ink with smearing on paper (recto)

Private collection

Study for “La Soupe”

Paris, 1902

brown ink on wove paper glued fully onto wove paper

Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el

Arte, Madrid

The Soup [La Soupe]

Barcelona, 1903

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Margaret Dunlap Crang, 1983
83/316

Even though it is a small painting, *The Soup* elevates the ordinary exchange of food between a destitute woman and child to a universal gesture of charity. Picasso clothes these figures in plain, somewhat religious costumes and situates them in an unidentifiable, empty space. The stiff, artificial poses of the pair give the impression that they are engaged in ritualistic activity. Picasso deliberately removed all references to time and place, as he wanted to equate the everyday struggles of this woman and child with the grand historical events memorialized in Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's murals.

To learn more about this painting and to discover the elements underneath, visit the conservation laboratory in the next room.

from left to right:

The Studio

Barcelona, 1902

pen and sepia ink on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.446

Study for “The Soup”

Barcelona or Paris, 1902

pencil on paper
R. Carver Collection

These drawings offer us a view into Picasso's creative process. Both reveal Picasso initially considered representing a man performing the act of charity. His decision to portray a female subject in *The Soup* is probably due to Puvis, who featured women helping others in the two murals Picasso studied in 1902 and 1903. *The Studio* suggests that Picasso at some point wanted to create a painting of charity on a large, vertical canvas. That he chose to paint *The Soup* on a horizontal canvas is likely related to the horizontal format of Puvis de Chavannes's mural in Paris's city hall.

Study for "The Soup" and Other Sketches

Barcelona, 1902

pen and sepia ink on paper

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.550

Near the centre of this torn sheet, Picasso has drawn an adult female figure offering a bowl of soup to two children. As he was developing the composition of *The Soup*, the artist increasingly simplified his drawings to create a clear representation of the act of charity. In the finished version, Picasso combines the two children into one figure to place more focus on the offering of the bowl.

from left to right:

Nursing Woman Begging and Other Sketches; Studies for “The Soup”

Paris, 1902

pen and ink on paper

Private collection

PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

born Lyon, France, 1824

died Paris, France, 1898

Charity [La Charité]

1894

oil on canvas

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University
in St. Louis, Missouri, University purchase, Bixby Fund, 1908

Picasso studied Pierre Puvis de Chavannes’s mural *Charity* in Paris’s city hall in late 1902 and early 1903. Although this version is smaller than that monumental representation of charity as a civic virtue, it contains the same figures. Drawing on Puvis’s work, Picasso transforms the mother who reaches outward, holding her child, into a woman who begs while nursing an infant. In the upper left corner of his drawing, he places this breastfeeding figure in a composition with a man offering a bowl of soup.

Charity [Charité]

1897–1899

black pencil on vellum drawing paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP412 (recto)

This early drawing by the teenaged Picasso shows a passerby handing money to a child in the streets of Barcelona. The child is accompanied by his mother and father, who plays the violin. Raised in Catholic Spain, Picasso understood the stranger's generosity as an act of charity. As this drawing demonstrates, Picasso had a longstanding preoccupation with everyday acts of charity, which he revisits and monumentalizes in *The Soup*.

.....

The Soup

Conservators deduced, from close visual observation and radiography, that Picasso's painting *The Soup* [*La Soupe*] was completed on a reused canvas. State-of-the-art imaging and analysis provided details about the underlying painting as well as information about hidden changes in the composition of the woman and child visible on the surface.

Conservators and conservation scientists use various techniques to analyze paintings. Experts in the field have developed new technologies that reveal, with unprecedented precision, information about the painting's structure beneath the surface layer. These specialized methods allow us to better understand Picasso's use of materials, his creative process, and his artistic development in response to influences in both Paris and Barcelona.

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Labs

Infrared Reflectance Imaging Spectroscopy

This imaging method uses infrared light that passes through the painting's surface, scatters throughout the paint layers, and exits back through the surface. The resulting spectral data provides information about molecular composition that can be used to identify pigments on the surface or below. Scientists also use computer algorithms to create images from the data, which may show features hidden below the paint surface.

Paint Sample Microanalysis

Microanalysis of paint samples provides information about pigment mixtures and paint layering. Tiny samples are usually taken from an area where paint has cracked or worn away. Samples are prepared and examined in cross-section under the microscope to reveal the sequence of paint application and characteristics of the pigment mixtures. Each layer can be further analyzed to precisely define its composition.

Macro X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) Scanning

This technique helps to identify pigments and pigment mixtures in paintings. A focused X-ray beam with a diameter of less than 1 millimetre produces a characteristic fluorescence in an area of an

artwork. The chemical elements detected can help to identify the artist's pigments based on the paint colour.

X-radiography

X-radiography uses X-rays to create images of the relative radiological densities of materials in an artwork. Variations in density depend on the chemical elements present. X-radiographs show all the layers of a painting superimposed and may reveal changes in composition below the surface.

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Sources under *The Soup*: Barcelona and Paris, 1900–1902

Picasso's empathy for the downtrodden, particularly lone women with children, was partially inspired by the French realist Honoré Daumier. Picasso saw Daumier's art in Paris at the World's Fair in 1900 and at a major exhibition at the School of Fine Arts the following year. The 1901 show presented Daumier as a keen observer who had compassion for common people.

Technical studies of *The Soup* confirm Picasso's interest in Daumier. The tabletop still life and the mother and child hidden under that painting relate to known works by the French artist. Before and during the Blue Period, Picasso also created a series of paintings and drawings with subject matter similar to Daumier's painting *The Laundress*. Picasso's interest in Daumier suggests there was a political element involved in his representations of the poor.

Street Scene [Scène de rue]

Paris, 1900

oil on canvas

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,

Bequest of Harriet Lane Levy

50.6097

Picasso painted this picture after he saw Daumier's *The Laundress* at the World's Fair in late 1900. Here he shows the mother and child from behind. Made small and vulnerable by their urban surroundings, they pass a tall man who menacingly looms over them. To emphasize the dreariness of the city, Picasso and Daumier both illuminate the buildings in the background planes of their pictures.

HONORÉ DAUMIER

born Marseille, France, 1808

died Valmondois, France, 1879

The Soup [La Soupe]

around 1862–1865

charcoal, black chalk, pen and ink, wash, watercolour, and conté crayon on two joined sheets of laid paper

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gift of Jacques-Michel de Zoubaloff, 1920

RF 5188 recto

Hidden under Picasso's *The Soup* are a rectangle and vessel that resemble the table and pot in Daumier's drawing of the same title, which Picasso saw at the artist's exhibition in Paris in 1901.

Daumier's work is notable for the ferocity with which the woman

slurps her food as she nurses her child. This mother, selflessly offering her breast to her infant, can be interpreted as a figure of charity.

from left to right:

Family at Supper [Famille au souper]

Barcelona, 1903

pen and ink with watercolour on paper

Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York,

Room of Contemporary Art Fund, 1941

RCA1941:3

The Poor Man's Meal [Le Repas du pauvre]

Barcelona, 1903–1904

watercolour on paper

Collection Pérez Simón, Mexico

Made in Barcelona for Parisian art buyers in 1903, *Family at Supper* shows a Spanish family enjoying dinner. The mother bends as she sets food on the table, adopting a pose that relates this watercolour to Picasso's *The Soup* (although the humble interior recalls Daumier's work of the same title). More closely related to Daumier's *The Soup* is *The Poor Man's Meal*. Wearing tattered clothes, a bearded man seated at a table scrapes his bowl to collect a last morsel of food. Looking on are two hungry children and a dog. Just as the grittiness of Daumier's drawing shocks the viewer, this watercolour elicits our pity.

from left to right:

ÉDOUARD VUILLARD

born Cuiseaux, France, 1868

died La Baule-Escoublac, France, 1940

On the Bridge of Europe [Sur le pont de l'Europe]

1899

lithograph from the portfolio *Landscapes and Interiors* [*Paysages et intérieurs*], published by Ambroise Vollard

The Museum of Modern Art, New York,

Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

599.1940.10

The Mother

Paris, 1901

oil on cardboard mounted on panel

Saint Louis Art Museum, Museum Purchase

10:1939

Paying homage to Daumier's *The Laundress*, Picasso enlarges the figures of the mother and child in the older artist's painting to fill the foreground of his brightly coloured picture. He exaggerates the laundress's gesture by elongating the mother's thumb and index finger, outlining the digits with thick black and Prussian blue lines. Picasso further updates Daumier's figure by situating her on an empty road in the outskirts of Paris and giving her a swaddled infant in place of the bundle of laundry. He also clothes her and her child in patterned garments similar to those found in Vuillard's 1899 lithograph.

HONORÉ DAUMIER

born Marseille, France, 1808

died Valmondois, France, 1879

The Laundress

around 1863

oil on oak

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

Bequest of Lillie P. Bliss, 1931

47.122

Picasso was impressed by this painting, which he saw in Paris in 1900 and 1901. He reused its figural group in many of his 1901–1902 works. For Picasso, this image of a working woman holding a bundle of laundry who braves a gloomy cityscape as she clasps the hand of her young child represented maternal resilience.

Mother and Children by the Sea

Barcelona, 1902

pastel on paper

Private collection, Courtesy of Richard Gray Gallery

Café in Montmartre [Brasserie à Montmartre]

Paris, 1901

oil on cardboard

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig 2001

Inv.#: ML 01584

Even in the upbeat paintings of Paris he made for his exhibition at Galerie Vollard in June and July 1901, Picasso references the figures from *The Laundress* to evoke the struggles of working

women. In this café scene, they appear as a forlorn flower seller whose child stands at her side. To emphasize the challenges faced by poor and single women in Paris, Picasso includes a sombre mother holding a swaddled infant in the painting's lower right.

Woman and Child by the Sea

Barcelona, 1902

oil on wood

Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1970

MPB 110.037

Inspired by Daumier's *The Laundress*, the figures in this painting recall the mother and child hidden under *The Soup* who stand with their backs toward the viewer. In this composition painted in Barcelona in 1902, Picasso places his figures on a seashore. Clothed in humble, timeless garments similar to those worn by the characters in Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's paintings, the anonymous mother and child are painted in muted colours. In the pastel at the other end of this wall, Picasso turns these figures to face the viewer. The mother's direct, mildly confrontational gaze forces the viewer to recognize their poverty and struggle.

.....

Men and Misery: Barcelona and Paris, 1903–1904

Picasso finished *The Soup* in early 1903. The works he made later that year and in 1904 appear very different. In addition to including men in these compositions, Picasso was more direct in his representations of loneliness and poverty. His figures became

emaciated, grew elongated limbs, and were clothed in tattered and torn garments.

Picasso's heightening of the pain and suffering of the poor in these works stems from his interest in the religious imagery of El Greco, particularly the Greco-Spanish master's *The Repentant St. Peter*, another work owned by Catalan *modernista* Santiago Rusiñol. Referencing the sorrow and anguish of religious figures in these late Blue Period works, Picasso asks his largely Catholic audience not only to feel sorry for his subjects, but to be angry on their behalf.

from left to right:

Beggar with Crutch

Barcelona, 1904

pen and brown ink and coloured crayons on tan wove paper

The Art Institute of Chicago, Bequest of Mrs. Gordon Palmer

1985.466

Figures by the Sea

Barcelona, 1903

oil on canvas

Gift of Jere Abbott, Smith College Museum of Art,

Northampton, Massachusetts

SC 1965.33

In *Beggar with Crutch*, Picasso shows a maimed figure, perhaps a soldier wounded in the Cuban War of Independence (1895–1898), who limps along the seashore. Bearded, barefoot, and

dressed in threadbare clothing, this gaunt, elongated figure shares many of the features of the blind man accompanied by a woman, infant, and child in *Figures by the Sea*. Picasso includes the empty sea to symbolize the misery of his subjects' lives—a subtle device from his earlier Blue Period works.

from left to right:

Bearded Man with Crossed Arms [Homme barbu, les bras croisés]

Barcelona, 1903

pen, brown ink, and wash on squared paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP472

DOMÉNIKOS THEOTOKÓPULOS (EL GRECO)

born Heraklion, Greece, 1541

died Toledo, Spain, 1614

The Repentant St. Peter

around 1600–1606 or later

oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1922

Inv. #: 0851

Head of a Beggar

Barcelona, around 1903

ink on mounted paper

Private collection

One source for the bearded, gaunt, and dramatically modelled men that appear in Blue Period works between 1903 and 1904 is El Greco's *The Tears of Saint Peter* (around 1600; Museu del Cau Ferrat, Sitges, Spain), a painting Picasso studied. The painting here is a version of that work. Picasso renders the dishevelled man with folded arms in the drawing at left with patches of brown ink that resemble the bold areas of light and shadow in the El Greco work. The figure in profile in the drawing at right is like El Greco's *St. Peter*: both exhibit agony in their strained facial expressions and tense necks.

Portrait of a Man [Portrait d'homme]

Paris or Barcelona, 1902–1903

oil on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP5

Picasso described the sitter in this portrait as “a sort of madman who was a well-known figure in Barcelona.” To evoke the man's sadness and loneliness, he employs many of the same devices he used when painting downtrodden women in 1901 and 1902. The bearded subject folds his arms and looks downward, his thoughts distant and unavailable to the viewer. Picasso also places him against an indistinct blue backdrop, although the wainscoting and the painting on the wall suggest he might be in a café.

Portrait of a Bearded Man [Portrait d'homme barbu]

Paris or Barcelona, 1902–1903

pen and iron gall ink on wove paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979
MP453

The Poor [Les Pauvres]

Paris, 1905

from the suite The Saltimbanques

etching on beveled zinc plate, second state, proof on laid,

Arches paper, before steel and copper facing of plate

printed by Eugène Delâtre

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP1891

The Frugal Repast [Le Repas frugal]

Paris, 1904

etching before steel facing of plate

Printed by Eugène Delâtre

Dedication inscribed at lower right: "A mi buen amigo /

Sebastian Junyent / Picasso / Paris Septiembre 1904"

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Thomas T. Solley

with Mary Ellen Meehan, and purchase through the Vincent

d'Aquila and Harry Saviak Bequest, and with contributions from

Lily Auchincloss, The Associates Fund, The Philip and Lynn

Straus

Foundation Fund, and John S. Newberry (by exchange)

683.1993

Fernande Olivier, an artist who was also Picasso's lover, described this etching as "showing an emaciated man and woman seated at a table in a wine shop, who convey an intense feeling of misery and alcoholism with terrifying realism." Olivier noted the

long, spindly fingers of the couple's giant hands, but she must also have been thinking about the blind man's missing eye and strained neck muscles, as well as the gnarled shoulders and skeletal bodies of the two figures. Picasso created this etching for the purpose of making money. He dedicated this print to his friend Sebastià Junyent and sent it from Paris to Barcelona hoping that Junyent could urge potential buyers to buy impressions.

Study for "The Couple" [Étude pour "Le couple"]

Paris, 1904

lithographic crayon and watercolour wash on yellow-washed wove paper

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift of Pablo Picasso, 1979

MP481

Flowers

Paris, 1904

gouache and watercolour on cardboard

Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, New York,

Gift of Emily Sibley Watson

A drooping bouquet with yellowing leaves, limp stems, and wilting flowers threatens to tip over a dramatically lit vase. One of only four still lifes Picasso made during the second half of 1904, this representation of decaying matter is as disorienting and depressing as the impression created by the gaunt, threadbare subjects who populate the works on display in this gallery.

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Into the Rose Period: Paris and Gósol, Spain, 1905–1906

Not long after Picasso returned to Paris from Barcelona in May 1904, he began to move out of his Blue Period. Colours other than blue appeared in his work, a shift that continued into 1905. In the spring and summer of 1906, while working in Gósol, Spain, a small village on the southern slope of the Pyrenees Mountains, Picasso began using predominantly warm terracotta hues in his paintings.

The figure of the nude, which had almost disappeared from Picasso's paintings after he completed *The Blue Room* in the autumn of 1901, re-emerged in 1904. The artist also returned to the ceremonial poses he explored in *The Soup*, exaggerating them in his massive Gósol paintings of Fernande Olivier in 1906. In works he made in Paris later that year, Picasso revisited the theme of the nude at her toilette (as seen in *The Blue Room*) as well as the enclosed figures he depicted in 1902 works such as *Crouching Beggarwoman*.

from left to right:

Nude with Crossed Legs [Nu aux jambes croisées]

Paris, 1905

pencil and charcoal on canvas

Musée national Picasso-Paris, Gift, 1990, on permanent loan to the Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne

Métropole

MP1990-5

Boy Holding a Blue Vase

Paris, 1905

oil on canvas

The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York, The Hyde Collection Trust

1971.34

Lady with a Fan

Paris, 1905

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the W. Averell Harriman Foundation in memory of Marie N. Harriman

1972.9.19

These works, painted in Paris in 1905, mark a shift toward the powerful and iconic figures that Picassorefined in his Gósol Rose Period works in 1906. At once dynamic and statuesque, the young girl in *Lady with a Fan* raises her right hand; her left hand points downward, holding a closed fan. This ritualistic gesture recalls the woman from *The Soup. Nude with Crossed Legs* has a crisp silhouette, much like *Lady with a Fan*. In both works, Picasso presents the figures' bodies, particularly their limbs, in a highly structured arrangement.

The Toilette [La Toilette]

Gósol, 1906

oil on canvas

Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Fellows for Life Fund, 1926

1926:9

Picasso revisits aspects of *The Blue Room* and *The Soup* in this monumental 1906 picture. The sensuous figure at left, probably Fernande Olivier, is a nude at her toilette, a theme Picasso explored in *The Blue Room*. She braids her auburn hair and gracefully encircles her head with bent arms before a maidservant who holds a mirror. The maidservant, who might also be Olivier, has dark hair and stands stiffly in profile. Her body and attitude recall the figures in Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's murals, which inspired the pose of the woman in *The Soup*.

from left to right:

Nude with Clasped Hands [Nu aux mains serrées]

Gósol, 1906

gum tempura on canvas

Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks, 1970

71/297

Head of a Woman (Fernande Olivier)

Paris, modelled 1906; cast around 1910

bronze

Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin,

OH, R. T. Miller Jr. Fund

1955.35

Nude with Joined Hands

Gósol, 1906

oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The William S. Paley
Collection
SPC27.1990

In these works, Picasso idolizes his lover Fernande Olivier. In *Nude with Joined Hands*, Picasso positions her monumental body against an ochre and red background that signifies the earth of Gósol. Olivier's facial features are simplified and depersonalized; she appears timeless and statuesque. In *Nude with Clasped Hands*, Picasso makes Olivier more approachable, with more naturalistic facial features. While the placement of her cropped body in the foreground situates her in the viewer's space, her pose is still quite formal. In *Head of a Woman (Fernande Olivier)*, Picasso used ridges and gouges formed with his fingers to represent his lover's hair and applied a fine tulle into the surface of the moist clay to evoke the porous texture of her delicate skin.

Houses in Gósol

Gósol, around 1906

oil on canvas

Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark

KMSr92

In keeping with his habit of documenting his surroundings the moment he moved into a new studio, Picasso paints the court of the farm across the street from his hotel room in Gósol, Spain. Fernande Olivier described the rural Catalan town as “a marvel ... under the sun which gilds the houses with an ochre tinge, the stony soil, the sand absolutely white, under a sky of a smooth blue, so pure, so new for me.”

Woman with Loaves

Gósol, 1906

oil on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Charles E. Ingersoll, 1931
1931-7-1

Like the *Crouching Beggarwoman*, this woman wears a scarf and a shawl. Unlike the subject of the 1902 picture, she stands upright and faces frontward, contently balancing two loaves on her head. Gósol, Spain, where Picasso painted this work, operated as a matriarchy when he and Fernande Olivier visited in 1906. Women managed the farms and provided for families, while men came and went. Placing this dignified local woman against a ground of ochres and pink forms reminiscent of prehistoric cave paintings, Picasso proudly roots himself and his Rose Period works in rural Spain.

Still Life: Flowers in a Vase

Gósol, 1906

gouache on cardboard

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Thannhauser
Collection, Gift, Justin K. Thannhauser, 1978
78.2514.44

Just as the bouquet of flowers on the side table in *The Blue Room* referred to the still lifes Picasso exhibited in 1901 at Galerie Vollard, this work is also autobiographical. Here, the table holds a green earthenware bowl, a white vase, and a pinkish chocolate pot. The bowl, handmade in Spain, refers to Picasso. The glazed chocolate pot, made in a French factory, symbolizes his lover, the

artist Fernande Olivier, whom he met in Paris in 1904. The union Picasso stages on the table is repeated in the flower arrangement: the local wildflowers are a reference to Picasso, while the cultivated roses represent the sophisticated Olivier.

from left to right:

Nude Combing Her Hair

Paris, 1906

oil on canvas

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

AP 1982.06

Kneeling Woman Combing Her Hair

Paris, modelled 1906; cast by 1939

bronze

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian

Institution, Washington, DC, Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1972

72.234

Woman with Comb [Femme au peigne]

Paris, 1906

distemper on paper

Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris,

Jean Walter and Paul Guillaume Collection

RF1963-75

In these works made in Paris after he and Fernande Olivier left Gósol in August 1906, Picasso begins to reject the monumental

forms he refined earlier that summer. In *Nude Combing Her Hair*, he models the figure's flesh with distinct patches of light and dark, making her body appear simultaneously flat, volumetric, curvy, and geometric. The nude in *Woman with Comb* is even more dramatically modelled and appears to be dissolving into a white ground. This play between flatness and volume is one Picasso also explores in his backless sculpture *Kneeling Woman Combing Her Hair*, a compact, self-enclosed figure reminiscent of *Crouching Beggarwoman*.