

## Artist Biographies

### Pablo Picasso

Spanish, 1881–1973

Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain. His father was a painter and teacher who encouraged Picasso to be an artist. As a teenager, Picasso went to art school and painted all day. He showed amazing talent.

In 1904, Picasso moved to Paris, where he met other artists. He worked with his close friend Georges Braque who was also a painter. They created a new kind of art called Cubism. In their abstract paintings, people and places seem to be broken apart and things seem to move and shift. Instead of painting people the way they really look, Picasso painted imaginative people to show strong emotions. For example, a sad person was painted entirely blue! A calm girl might be painted pink and yellow. During the 1930s and 1940s, Picasso expressed his feelings about World War II and the Spanish civil war. His great masterpiece *Guernica* shows crying women and animals suffering during wartime.

After World War II, Picasso moved to the south of France. He continued to invent unusual ways of making art. He collected scrap materials, newspapers, toys, and junk and used them to make playful collages and sculptures. He also created ceramics, prints, book illustrations, and set designs. A creative genius, Picasso is considered one of the greatest modern artists worldwide.

### Fernand Léger

French, 1881–1955

Fernand Léger was born in Normandy, France, the son of a cattle breeder. As a teenager, he showed creative talent, so his family sent him to study and work with an architect. A few years later, he moved to Paris and earned a living as an architectural draftsman. He decided to attend art school there.

Inspired by Pablo Picasso, Léger painted abstract pictures in a Cubist style. In Léger's paintings, everything was broken up into lines and shapes that seem to move. Later, Léger began painting abstract pictures that captured the bright colors, lively shapes, and patterns he saw on city streets.

During World War I, Léger served in the army. When he returned to Paris, he showed the excitement of modern life in his art. In his pictures, you can see imaginary machines and people who look like robots! He also painted objects such as cups and bottles in his own unique style.

During World War II, Léger was forced to leave his country. He settled in New York City. Life in America inspired abstract paintings filled with color and energy. After the war, he returned home. He painted lively pictures of people at work and at play. He also made set designs, stained glass windows, and murals. He died on his farm in France in 1955. Today, Léger is remembered as one of the most important modern painters.

### Henri Matisse

French, 1869–1954

Henri Matisse grew up in a village in France. Matisse did not realize he had a talent for art until he was a young man. He studied law and worked in an office. Bored with his job, he attended drawing classes. When he was twenty, he was recovering from an illness and he began to paint. About a year later, he went to Paris to study painting.

Soon, Matisse began experimenting with new ways of painting. He led a group of artists who painted with bright, bold colors. In Matisse's paintings, you'll see blue dancers, pink landscapes, and a woman with a green face! Some people were shocked by his unusual art. Matisse and his group were called *les fauves*, French for "the wild beasts."

Matisse believed art should be happy. He painted beautiful women, colorful flowers, dancers, and nature. Everywhere he went he painted the beauty around him. He traveled to Spain, Algeria, Morocco, Germany, and the south of France. His pictures are filled with bright colors, patterns, and lively decorations.

In 1909, Matisse bought a house in Nice, France. There he made prints, sculptures, and books, and designed a chapel. In his old age, Matisse became bedridden. Unable to paint, he made colorful cutouts. Today Matisse is one of the most popular artists in the world.