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THE PORTRAIT
What is a portrait?

When we look at a portrait, what can we find out about that person?

* Make a list of what we see when looking at a portrait
In these portraits, can you find anything that you put in the list?

- **Portrait of the artist's mother**
  - 1896
  - Picasso

- **Bust of a woman smiling**
  - 1901
  - Picasso

- **Man's head**
  - 1908
  - Picasso

- **Woman crying**
  - 1937
  - Picasso
What is a portrait?

- The image of a person and/or the description of the figure or character.
- It can be carried out through any artistic language (painting, sculpture, photography or literature).

- It could be an exact reproduction of the features.
- It could be an interpretation of the artist; according to his sensibility, his or her taste, and the art of the time.
What was the first portrait in the History of Art?

The first portraits we know of are from the 4th century BC, minted on Persian coins.

During ancient Egypt they portrayed the lower classes in a realistic way, while royalty was represented with figures and animals.

In Greece and Rome, portraits were based on models but styled to respond to an ideal of beauty.

Anonymous, Book of the Dead of Ani, c. 1275 BC

Anonymous, Portrait of the baker Terentius Neo and his wife. 20-30 AD
How has the portrait evolved throughout the History of Art?

In the Middle Ages, it was more important to portray one's position in society and religion than to portray the person faithfully.

The great masters practised it during the Renaissance, Baroque or Classicism, in which the portraits served to expose the wealth of the nobility and the new bourgeoisie.

Giovanni di Paolo, Crucifixion with donor Jacopo di Bartolomeo, c. 1455

Jacint Rigau, Portrait of Louis XIV, 1702
What role has it played in the History of Art over the last 100 years?

The avant-garde of the early twentieth century focused on expressiveness, breaking with the previous desire to faithfully represent the person portrayed.

In the mid-twentieth century, with the rise of abstract art, there was a time when the portrait was not a genre used to explore new art forms. Currently, contemporary artists have modernised the genre, opening it up to a lot of possibilities.

Henry Matisse, The Green Stripe (Madame Matisse), 1905

Andy Warhol, Shot Marilyn 1964
And what about us ...

When do we decide to do a portrait?

What use do we give to the portrait?

Where, or why, do we use it?

How do we share portraits?
Picasso and the portrait

- The portrait always occupied an important place in his art.
- He did not work by commission but portrayed the people in his inner circle and this gave him extraordinary freedom as a portrait artist.
- He did portraits with all the technical means and the whole range of styles he cultivated.
- He was always more concerned with portraying character than the exact physical features of models.
Unpredictability and innovation are the distinguishing features of his portraits:

1. Affectionate and voluptuous, with modelled and curved shapes that evoke their sensuality.

2. Sensations of translucency and weakness of the model's body, projected with pointed and angular shapes.

3. Tension given off by their firm posture, with over-sized dimensions and the intensity of black tones.

The reading (Marie-Thérèse Walter), 1932

Portrait of Nusch Éluard, 9th February 1938

Aunt Pepa, Malaga, 1896
Now, in your own words, define one of these four portraits we have seen before.
Let’s find out about other artists who do portraits

The princess
2016
Bisa Butler

Portrait of Lucian Freud
1965
Francis Bacon

Broken woman
2016
Lita Cabellut
Human photographic project (Iniciata 2012)
Angèlica Dass

Cecil Beaton
1926

Tanit Plana
2020
We propose a challenge:

Based on a black and white photograph of a face, and using any technique available (colour, collage, photographic programs, etc.), transform the portrait to convey at the same time how the person is physically and in character.

The proposal is to ensure that the portrait is not only a copy of the physiognomy, but also represents the character, beliefs, interests, etc.
1. Discuss gender issues in class based on portraits in the history of art.

2. Work based on digital competence https://www.photoscapeonline.com/

3. Video tutorial for 5th and 6th courses, with points that enable us to relate the drawing or a face with mathematics and the environment: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqA31tSsWtA

If you feel like sharing your ideas, send a mail to museupicasso_educacio@bcn.cat
Bibliography and references

- Website of the Museu Picasso: http://www.museupicasso.bcn.cat/

- Website of the exhibition «Picasso. Portraits»:
  http://www.bcn.cat/museupicasso/ca/exposicions/picasso-retrats/


- Discovering Picasso, https://pablo-picasso.space/
If you want to know more about Picasso and the Museum, you can visit our website www.museupicasso.bcn.cat

Museu Picasso of Barcelona

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