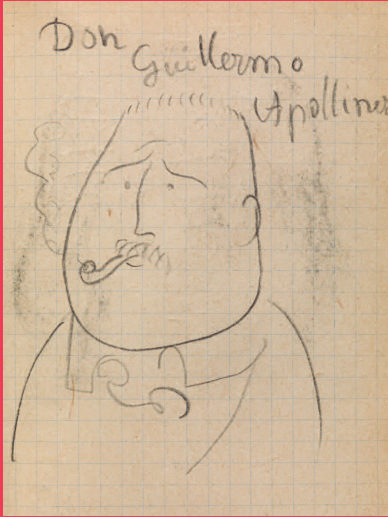


4

THE CARICATURE



Observe these works of Picasso. What catches your eye?



Pablo Picasso
Caricature of
Guillaume Apollinaire,
Gósol, 1906



Pablo Picasso,
Maya in a Sailor Suit,
1938



Pablo Picasso,
Balzac. VIII,
1952



Pablo Picasso,
Jaime Sabartés with Ruff
and Bonnet, 1939

You may have noticed that they are somewhat strange portraits, a bit of an attempt to make you laugh and with highly exaggerated parts.



**Do you know what
a caricature is?**

Let's do a little research to find the answer:

What is a caricature?

It comes from the Italian term *caricare*, which means to load, to exaggerate.

It is mainly used in portraits in which, with a sense of humour, distinctive features of the person are exaggerated: both the good and the not so good.



Leonardo da Vinci, *Grotesque Heads*, c. 1490

The caricature is used in different fields:

- In portraits that exaggerate the distinctive physical or facial features, clothing or aspects of behaviour or habits of the person to produce a grotesque effect.
- In scenes that want to ridicule political, social or religious situations and institutions, and the acts of social groups or classes. These caricatures usually have a satirical rather than humorous intention.



Henry Maximilian 'Max' Beerbohm,
The New English Art Club, 1907

Picasso: friends and caricature

Around 1900, Picasso used to frequent the *Quatre Gats* (Four Cats) tavern. Intellectuals and artists of the time, such as Santiago Rusiñol and Ramon Casas, met there. Humour and mockery were tools to consolidate the group and a form of protest against the status quo.

Humorous magazines were also very popular at the time, which illustrated characters and political or current situations with caricatures.



Ricard Opisso, *Interior of the Quatre Gats*, 1900

The young Picasso wanted to be one of them and joined in with their practice of doing caricatures.



Pablo Picasso, *Pere Romeu - 4 Gats*, 1902



Year and author unknown

In fact, the best way of making a caricature work is to practise it in a shared cultural context: you need to be able to identify the person being caricatured and assess the balance between truth and falsehood of the characterisation.

We find a Picasso who, from a very young age, made humorous caricatures, some dedicated to the people he knew:



Pablo Picasso, *Caricature of Joaquim Mir*, 1899-1900. Mir was a painter from the Colla del Safrà (Saffron Gang), so called because of their abundant use of yellow and orange to paint barren landscapes under an intense sun.

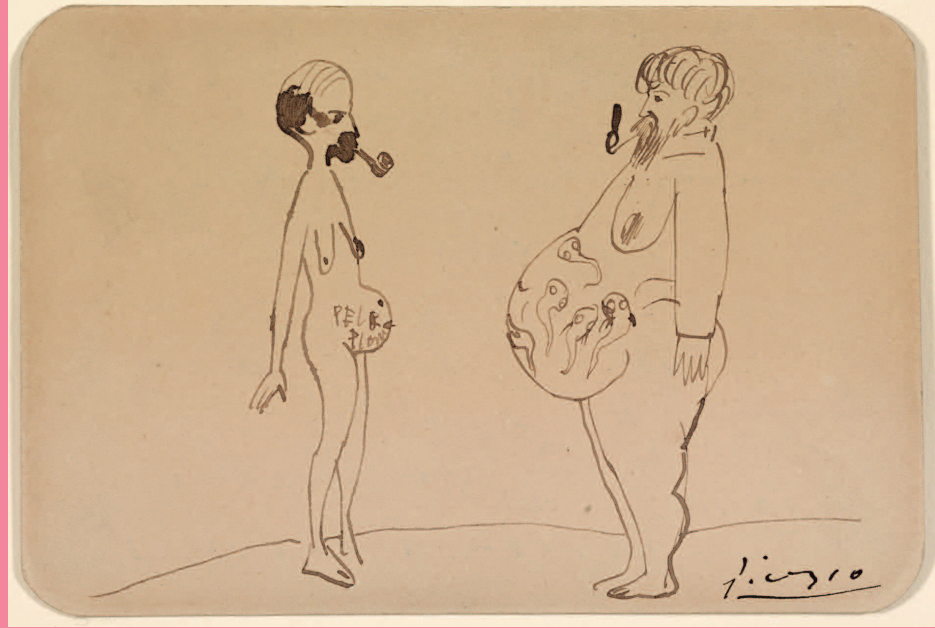


Pablo Picasso, *Pere Romeu in a Field of Lilies*, 1900. Romeu, owner of the Quatre Gats tavern, was a rather innocent dreamer, always 'going with a lily in his hand.'

And of others to make satire in a more critical tone of issues that concerned him:



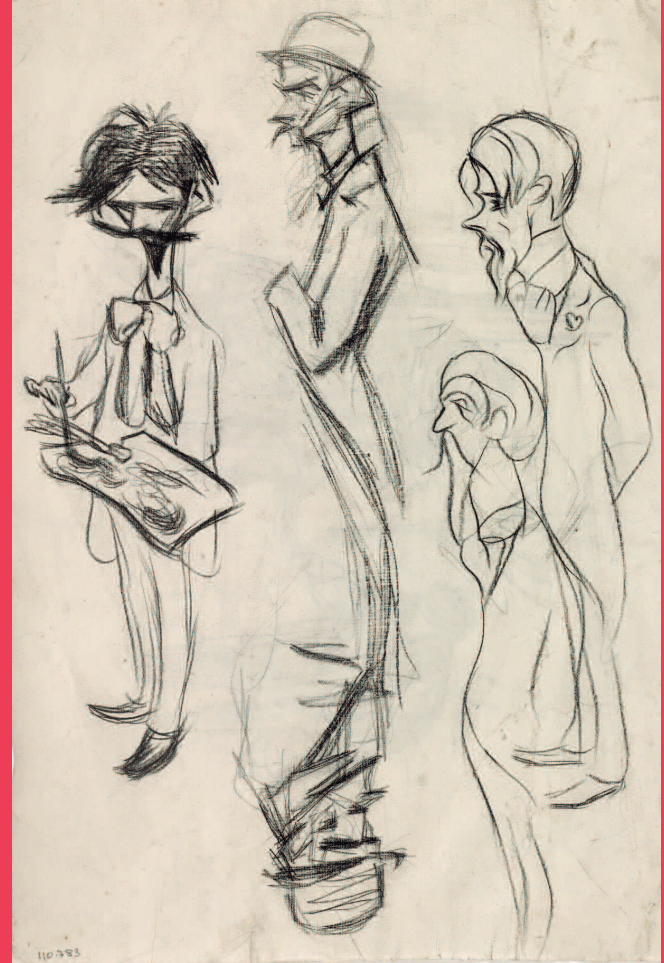
Pablo Picasso, 'A Sage', 1899-1900. Painting specialists at the time failed to understand anything of what contemporary artists were doing.



Pablo Picasso, *Miquel Utrillo and Santiago Rusiñol Smoking a Pipe*, 1903. Picasso mocks artists who had been a reference of his youth, and who, over time, had become bourgeois and stopped being progressive.

Spontaneous caricatures and drawings distracted him from more demanding projects and were a good escape valve for Picasso's irreverent humour. They also helped him to think and plan more accurate caricatures.

Pablo Picasso,
Caricatures of Various Characters,
Barcelona, c. 1899





Over time, Picasso would incorporate this idea of caricature into many of his portraits, in which he sought a kind of non-photographic resemblance and rather a more intense psychological depth.

Pablo Picasso,
*Portrait of Lee Miller
as L'Arlésienne*, 1937

Contemporary artists who use the idea of caricature in their works:



Jean-Michel Basquiat
Two Heads
1982



Martin Parr
Think of England
2000



Marina Capdevila
Marujas
2017

Challenge: Exquisite Portrait

It would be good if we did this portrait in a group of 4 or 5 people.
The steps to follow are:

Step 1: Each person draws on a piece of paper a part of the face of the other people in the group, for example, the profile of the face with the hair, the nose, the left eye, the right eye, the left ear, the right ear, mouth... We can put the parts together; someone paints their left eye and nose, and another, their right eye and right ear.



Step 2: Once everyone has drawn the part of the face that they had to do, including theirs, we will distribute each item to the person drawn.



Step 3: Assemble your portrait from the parts they have drawn of you



Competence proposals

- Choose a caricature of a famous person and describe which features have been exaggerated the most and which most closely resemble reality. Explain why you chose this person and research his or her biography.
- Explain why you think a feature of one person or another has been exaggerated in a caricature, and do something similar with someone you know: friends or family, movie or TV characters, etc.
- Reflect on the stereotypes of gender and diversity based on caricatures.

If you feel like sharing your ideas, send us an email to:
museupicasso_educacio@bcn.cat

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