

# People and Dog in the Sun Project Joan Miró

**Volunteer:**

**Date:**

**Grade Level:**

**Artist:** Joan Miró

**Print/Sculpture:** People and Dog in the Sun

**Art Vocabulary:** Surrealism, Cubism, Expressionist, Impressionist



## I The Artist: Joan Miró

Joan Miró (1893–1983) was born in Barcelona, Spain. He was interested in art, but his father had wanted him to become a businessman. Finally in 1919 Miró was permitted to go to Paris and study art. His first exhibition of pictures was a failure. Six years later he had his second Paris show and it was a success. Miró slowly tired of being away from his homeland and gradually returned to Spain.

- ◆ He is one of the great artists of the 20th century.
- ◆ Miró's work is largely an exercise in shorthand – symbols and squiggles, his own abbreviation of reality.
- ◆ Miró was associated with the Abstract Surrealism movement.
- ◆ His work develops a combination of reality and fantasy that evoked the quality of dream experience. Some figures are recognizable, but often Miró's paintings have no meaning at all but are a spontaneous expression of a whimsical, charming dream world full of gaiety.
- ◆ Working with vaguely suggestive shapes in space, he produced pictures with formal unity, elegance and visual freshness.
- ◆ He was a good friend of Picasso.
- ◆ An exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1941-42, brought Miró's work before a wide American public for the first time.
- ◆ He was commissioned to do a mural for Harvard University in 1950-51.



## II The Painting: People and Dog in the Sun

What is your opinion of the picture shown today?

Symbols: Man = pipe, beret, moustache

Woman = triangle

Round blob = tree

Bold primary colors, background lonely and dull.

### **III Composition of Artwork**

#### **IV Artist's Materials or Techniques**

Miro used Impressionist ideas; Expressionist emotions; Abstract emotions and patterns. He worked with astronomy. He used symbols: ladder, bladders, wings, ribbons, man, pipe, beret, moustache, woman = triangle, round blob = tree, large naked foot = farm woman; jack-in-the-box. No foreground or background. Starts from a real object. Sometimes as seen in a dream: floating in space, shadows of objects.

Treats objects like people: give house a face. Uses primary colors independently. Brushwork was quick dabs, flexible strokes, squiggles. Balance: works out to fraction of an inch.

Fantasy and fun: Shapes and figures into people: adds hair, eyes; Started with small shapes, flat color, connected lines, shapes grew bigger and fewer.

Other media Miro used: Pottery, ceramic, sculpture, tapestry, murals.

#### **V Students' Self-Expression: Guided Activity**

##### **A) Face Drawing**

Use 1 color glitter glue to draw half a face (only) on white drawing paper. Art helper should pre-crease the sheets before handing out. When everyone has drawn half a face, have kids fold paper and "smoosh" the glue inside to see how the design changes. Some will look like faces, some not, but it goes over well. Project can be done in 10-15 minutes.

## B) Dream Story:

After briefly telling about Miro and discussing the picture we discussed dreams. Then gave the children a dream-story outline to fill in (see attached). They worked in groups of 6 to complete the story. After we read each story (4 in all), each child was given paper and told to draw a surrealistic picture of his dream-story.

Dream story:

# Children at the Zoo

On Wednesday, we were going to the zoo. As I lay in bed the night before I thought about seeing

the \_\_\_\_\_ (animals) again. They are so \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) and

\_\_\_\_\_ (adjective). I started to fall asleep and my head began to spin with pictures of

children and \_\_\_\_\_ (animals) and \_\_\_\_\_ (animals).

I saw the \_\_\_\_\_ (noun) in their cages and the next thing I knew it was me in that

cage! I was \_\_\_\_\_ (verb). I started to \_\_\_\_\_ (verb). I looked at all the

people and I felt \_\_\_\_\_ (adverb).

Then I heard a voice say, "Wake up, dear!" I opened my eyes and once more I was me.

### **C) Sculptures using found objects:**

#### **Dough Recipe** (3 batches for 20 kids):

3	cups	flour
1½	cups	salt
3	cups	water
1	Tbs	cooking oil
1	Tbs	Cream of Tartar

Combine over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture becomes stiff and comes away from sides of pot. Store in refrigerator.

#### **Supplies/Costs:**

5 pounds flour	(approx. \$2.00)
Salt	(Buy 1 or 2 at Aldi – under \$1.00)
Cooking oil	
Cream of Tartar	(\$10.50/lb. at Home Economist – you need about \$1.00)
Plastic sandwich bags	(\$1.00 at Dollar Store)
Aluminum foil	(\$0.50 at Dollar Store)

Assorted “found objects”: macaroni, rotini, beads, buttons, plastic ware (forks/spoons), nails, paperclips, etc.

#### **Project:**

Each student was given a lump of play dough. A bag of “found objects” was placed on each table. When finished, let the sculptures dry on foil over the weekend. Students can carry them home in the plastic bags.

Some samples were made before hand and brought to class. As examples:

- Bottle with straw
- snowman with buttons
- car with a straw for a tailpipe
- alligator with macaroni scales
- dog with a spoon for a tail.