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Picasso (Dover Fine Art, History Of Art)



Synopsis

For more than a generation, Gertrude Stein's Paris home at 27 rue de Fleurus was the center of a glittering coterie of artists and writers, one of whom was Pablo Picasso. In this intimate and revealing memoir, Stein tells us much about the great man (and herself) and offers many insights into the life and art of the 20th century's greatest painter. Mixing biological fact with artistic and aesthetic comments, she limns a unique portrait of Picasso as a founder of Cubism, an intimate of Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Braque, Derain, and others, and a genius driven by a ceaseless quest to convey his vision of the 20th century. We learn, for example, of the importance of his native Spain in shaping Picasso's approach to art; of the influence of calligraphy and African sculpture; of his profound struggle to remain true to his own vision; of the overriding need to empty himself of the forms and ideas that welled up within him. Stein's close relationship with Picasso furnishes her with a unique vantage point in composing this perceptive and provocative reminiscence. It will delight any admirer of Picasso or Gertrude Stein; it is indispensable to an understanding of modern art.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As has been written elsewhere (Try Hemingway's A MOVEABLE FEAST, for instance) Gertrude Stein possessed a tremendous ego. She did not express opinions, she stated facts even when the basis for her facts existed only in her head. She also had the irksome habit of repeating the same information many times, often approaching it from slightly different directions. Again, I am certainly not the first to comment on this peculiarity of her writing. That this book is filled with examples of

both of the above does not take away from its excellence in revealing much about Picasso and his art. Stein's fame comes more from her position in the intellectual and artistic community of early to mid twentieth century Paris than from her ability as a writer or poet. It was because of this position that she came to know Picasso so well, and it was as an outgrowth of this personal relationship that this book came to be written. One area that I found very informative in PICASSO was Stein's analysis of the alternating influences of Picasso's Spanish soul, Paris, and Spain itself, on the various periods of Picasso's artistic development. In this respect, Stein contrasts Spain and France in the following manner: Spain was a sad country with a monotony of coloring while France was the country of Toulouse-Lautrec with vivid colors and images. With that as a background, she introduced Picasso, as a young man in Spain, painting realistic works in the late nineteenth century manner. This was followed by his first visit to Paris during which he was influenced by the paintings of Toulouse-Lautrec. (See illustration #3, "In the Cafe") He then returned to Spain in 1902, staying until 1904.

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