YOUNG PICASSO
THE BLUE AND ROSE PERIODS

At the age of twenty Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) began searching for new pictorial themes and forms of expression. During this time, his styles and visuals changed, as one artistic revolution followed the next. The exhibition *Picasso: The Blue and Rose Periods* and its eponymous catalogue focus on the six years of the young artist’s life that comprise the central phase of his entire body of work.

Berlin, January 25, 2019 – The intimate works of the Blue and Rose periods were produced in Spain and France. As a young, ambitious artist, Picasso painted existential topics: life, love, sexuality, fate, and death. These themes were embodied by young women and men, children, and old folks ravaged by time, all of whom carried within them happiness, as well as loneliness and melancholy.

“The compelling images of the Blue and Rose periods, characterized by a unique emotional power and depth, show the artist from an exceptionally sensitive side and thus offer a nuanced picture of his work and personality,” writes Sam Keller, Director of the Fondation Beyeler.

In 1901, in memory of the suicide of Picasso’s friend, the artist Carles Casagemas, Picasso began painting pictures dominated by the color blue. Most of the subjects are socially marginalized people in need: beggars, the disabled, prostitutes, and prisoners suffering in poverty and misery. Despite their desperate straits, they all radiate dignity and sublimity. The paintings also reflect Picasso’s own precarious situation before his breakthrough.

Picasso produced these wistful, remote images up until 1904, as he moved back and forth between Paris and Barcelona. He discovered inspiration in Symbolism and the Mannerist paintings of El Greco. In 1904 he met his first long-term lover and muse Fernande Olivier. He turned away from the blue palette in favor of more cheerful rose and ocher hues, although the basic melancholy atmosphere remained.

In his so-called Rose period, he gave dignity to the hopes of circus people—jugglers, acrobats, and clowns. They embody the anti-bourgeois, bohemian lives of circus people and artists. On the search for new authenticity in his art, Picasso spent several weeks of 1906 in the village of Gósol in the Spanish Pyrenees, where he produced numerous paintings and sculptures that unite classical and archaic physical ideals. Picasso progressively anatomized his figures. When he returned to Paris, the deconstruction of his figures became obvious, especially in his depictions of female nudes; this anticipated the Cubist vocabulary that began to unfold in 1907.

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THE COMPREHENSIVE CATALOGUE ACCOMPANYING THE EXHIBITION

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PRESS CONTACT

Jennifer Berndt
Press Director
presse@hatjecantz.de
Tel. +49 30 3464678-23
Picasso’s rose period. Love how the addition of the rose hue makes those blues pop. Georges Braque
The Crow
Boy Leading a Horse-The Rose Period signifies the time when the style of Pablo Picasso’s painting used cheerful orange and pink colours in contrast to the cool, somber tones of the previous Blue Period. The Rose Period lasted from 1904 to 1906. Picasso was happy in his relationship with Fernande Olivier whom he had met in 1904 and this has been suggested as one of the possible reasons he changed his style of painting. The Blue Period of Picasso is the period between 1900 and 1904, when he painted essentially monochromatic paintings in shades of blue and blue-green, only occasionally warmed by other colors. These somber works, inspired by Spain but painted in Paris, are now some of his most popular works, although he had difficulty selling them at the time. Picasso settled in Paris in 1904, having spent a few difficult years with no fixed studio and little artistic success. Picasso’s contemporaries didn’t even distinguish between a blue and a rose period but regarded the two as one single period. Starting in the latter part of 1901 he painted several posthumous portraits of Casagemas, culminating in the gloomy allegorical painting La Vie, painted in 1903 and now in the Cleveland Museum of Art. The Fondation Beyeler in Switzerland has launched a comprehensive exhibition surrounding Pablo Picasso’s earliest paintings. Entitled “The Young Picasso – Blue and Rose Periods,” the presentation is currently displaying works from the legendary artist made between 1901-1906. A total of 80 pieces loaned by acclaimed national and international collections are spotlighted in the show. Collectively, the institution aims to spotlight a pivotal era in Picasso’s prolific career that defined his representational works and sparked global recognition from the fine art world at the time. At the age of j