

***Still Life in a Landscape***  
**Pablo Picasso, Spanish, 1881-1973**  
**1915, Oil on canvas, 24 1/2 x 29 1/4 inches**  
**The Algor Meadows Collection, Meadows Museum, Southern Methodist**  
**University, Dallas, Texas**

### **About the Artist**

Few artists have lived as long as Pablo Picasso, and probably none have produced as many works in as many styles. He enjoyed success early in his lifetime, and, except for periods of time when he was short of money, he lived well, enjoying travel and friends. He produced works in painting, sculpture, prints, murals, and ceramics. Picasso's paintings are often classified into periods. The Blue period often showed images that expressed poverty and sorrow, and the Rose period included paintings of circus performers and acrobats.

During his Cubist period, Picasso and his friend Georges Braque produced works that impacted on many of the artists who were a part of their circle of friends in Paris. Picasso's work not only influenced the artists of his time but also each generation of artists who came after him. Art historians often state that Picasso did more than any other artist to change the course of art in the 20th century.

### **About the Art**

In *Still Life in a Landscape*, we see a stylized table-top on which are arranged a fruit bowl, a mandolin, and a glass. Behind the table and seen between the objects is a landscape with areas of green mottled foliage, buildings, blue sky, and white clouds. A geometrically stylized bunch of grapes rests in the fruit bowl. Some of the shapes are areas of pure color, and others have dots of color. The viewer feels as if the mandolin can be seen from top, side, and bottom simultaneously. As one studies this work, portions of the painting may appear to fold out or bend back into space.

In 1989, before this work was to be exhibited in a show at the Dallas Museum of Art, it was examined by a conservator at the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth. She discovered that this painting had been executed over another Cubist painting Picasso had done earlier. X-ray devices used by conservators can often tell us if artists have painted on top of previously painted works.

### **Additional Information**

Cubism is a form of abstraction in which objects are broken up into angular facets and these facets are then methodically arranged into a composition. Cubism presents objects to the viewer as if they are being seen from a number of different angles all at the same time. Cubist paintings are organizations of shapes and colors, sometimes in large, flat areas. Shapes seem to fit together like the pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle. Picasso and

Georges Braque collaborated so closely for a time on works using this particular type of organization that one may have difficulty telling their work apart.

Picasso and Braque sometimes glued paper to the surfaces of their canvases. These types of works are called "papier collé" (French for "pasted paper"). One can see pieces of newspaper, tobacco wrappers, playing cards, and wallpaper that have been glued into place as parts of the painting. Works that include materials other than paper glued to the surface are called collages. Depth was indicated in these works and in Cubist paintings by overlapping shapes to show which objects or figures are in-front-of or in-back-of others. Cubism influenced not only painting, but also sculpture and architecture throughout the world.

The work of Picasso and Braque up to 1912 is usually called Analytical Cubism because the forms were analyzed into geometrical facets with subdued colors. The second stage is called Synthetic Cubism when colors became stronger and the shapes more decorative. This phase grew out of the early papier-collé works. Rococo Cubism is the third stage, and works in this style are even more decorative with pointillist dots painted on some of the shapes.

### **About the Time and Place**

The year that *Still Life in a Landscape* was completed, 1915, was a turbulent one in most of Europe. World War I was affecting the lives of most people as Germany staged attacks on several ports and cities. The Germans began a blockade of Great Britain in February and used chlorine gas for the first time in April. A German submarine torpedoed the S.S. Lusitania in May, sinking the huge vessel in 18 minutes killing 1,198 people. The United States would not enter the war until 1917, but Henry Ford chartered a ship, calling it the Peace Ship, and sailed for Europe on December 4 with a party of advisers in an attempt to get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas.

Literary events of that year included the publication of W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, Edgar Lee Masters' *A Spoon River Anthology*, and Joseph Conrad's *Victory*.

The world's citizens were witnessing advances in science and technology as Albert Einstein presented his General Theory of Relativity. Henry Ford developed a farm tractor and produced his one-millionth automobile. The first transcontinental telephone call was made between Alexander Graham Bell in New York and Dr. Thomas A. Watson in San Francisco. The call took 23 minutes to go through and cost \$20.70.