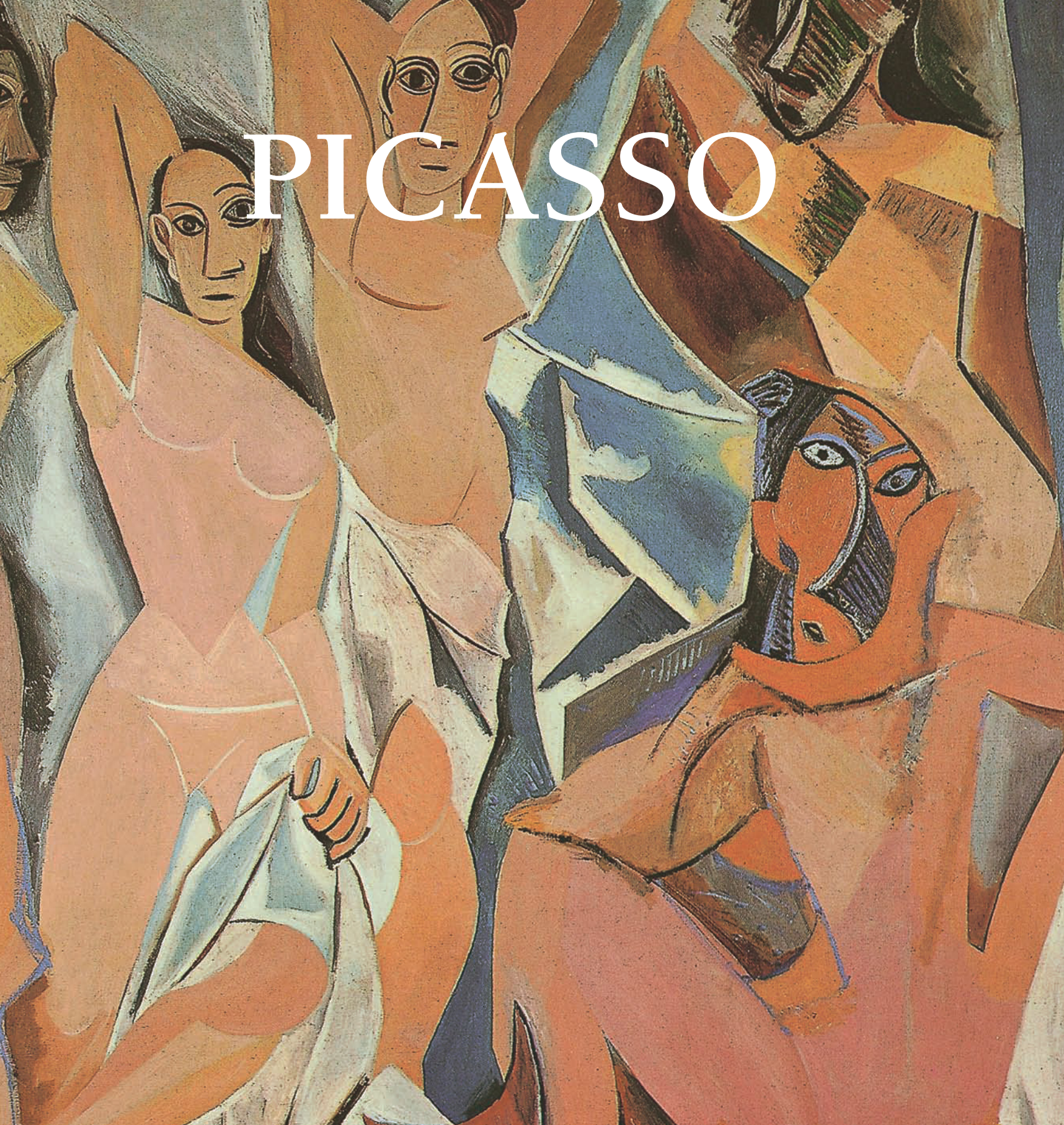
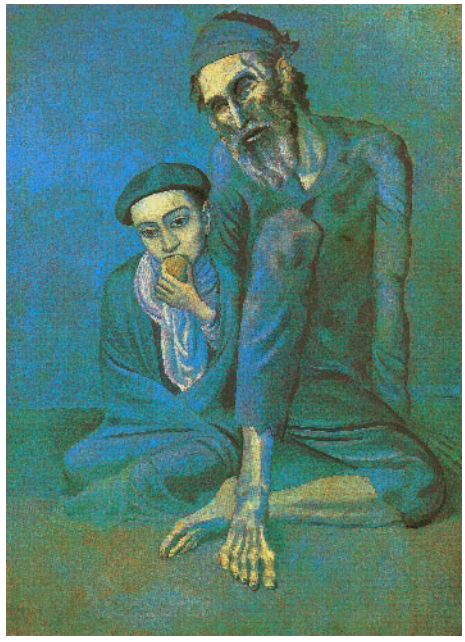
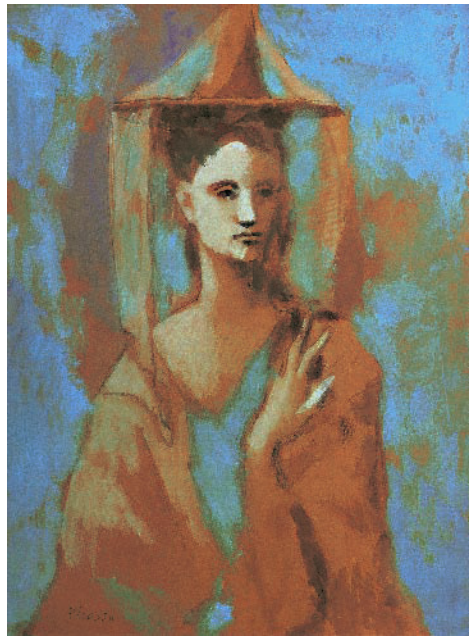

PICASSO









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Pablo

Picasso

1881 - 1914

PARKSTONE
INTERNATIONAL



From childhood to Cubism

The works of Picasso published in the present volume cover those early periods which, based on considerations of style, have been classified as Steinlenian (or Lautrecian), Stained Glass, Blue, Circus, Rose, Classic, «African», Proto-Cubist, Cubist... From the viewpoint of the "science of man", these periods correspond to the years 1900-1914, when Picasso was between nineteen and thirty-three, the time which saw the formation and flowering of his unique personality.

But a scientific approach to Picasso's œuvre has long been in use: his work has been divided into periods, explained both by creative contacts and reflections of biographical events. If Picasso's work has for us the general significance of universal human experience, this is due to the fact that it expresses, with the most exhaustive completeness, man's internal life and all the laws of its development. Only by approaching his œuvre in this way can we hope to understand its rules, the logic of its evolution, the transition from one putative period to another.

Picasso was born a Spaniard and, so they say, began to draw before he could speak. As an infant he was instinctively attracted to the artist's tools. In early childhood he could spend hours tracing his first pictures in the sand. This early self-expression held the promise of a rare gift.

Málaga must be mentioned, for it was there, on 25 October 1881, that Pablo Ruiz Picasso was born and there that he spent the first ten years of his life. Málaga was the cradle of his spirit, the land of his childhood, the soil in which many of the themes and images of his mature work are rooted. He first saw a picture of Hercules in Málaga's municipal museum, witnessed bullfights on the Plaza de Toros, and at home watched the cooing doves that served as models for his father. The young Pablo drew all of this and by the age of eight took up brush and oils to paint a bullfight. As for school, Pablo hated it from the first day and opposed it furiously.

In 1891, financial difficulties forced the Ruiz Picasso family to move to La Coruña, where Pablo's father was offered a position as teacher of drawing and painting in a secondary school. La Coruña had a School of Fine Arts. There the young Pablo Ruiz began his systematic studies of drawing and with prodigious speed completed (by the age of thirteen!) the academic Plaster Cast and Nature Drawing Classes.

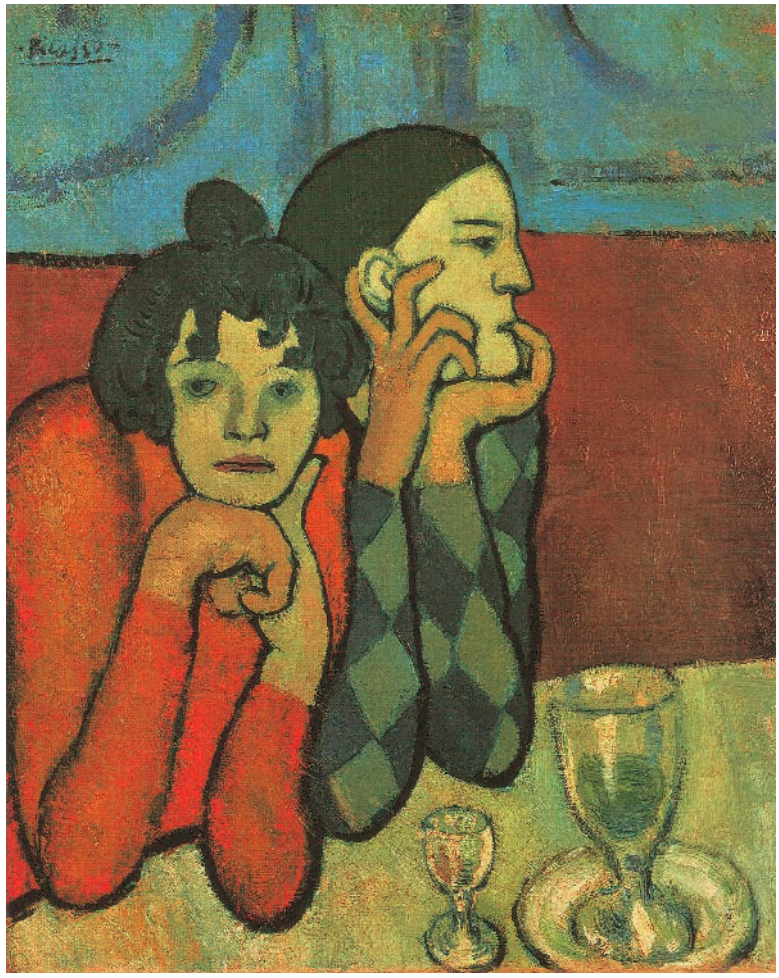
1. ***The Embrace***, 1900. Oil on cardboard, 52 x 56 cm. The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

What strikes one most in his works from this time is not so much the phenomenal accuracy and exactitude of execution as what the young artist introduced into this frankly boring material: a treatment of light and shade that transformed the plaster torsos, hands and feet into living images of bodily perfection overflowing with poetic mystery.
He did not, however, limit his drawing to the classroom; he drew at home, all the time, using whatever subject matter was out hand: portraits of the family, genre scenes, romantic subjects, animals. In keeping with the times, he "published" his own journals - *La Coruña* and *Azul y Blanco (Blue and White)* - writing them by hand and illustrating them with cartoons. At home, under his father's tutelage during his last year in La Coruña, Pablo began to paint live models in oils (see *Portrait of an Old Man* and *Beggar in a Cap*). These portraits and figures speak not only of the early maturity of the thirteen-year-old painter, but also of the purely Spanish nature of his gift: a preoccupation with human beings, whom he treated with profound seriousness and strict realism, uncovering the monolithic and "cubic" character of these images.
That is the way in which Picasso expressed how much his work was intertwined with his life; he also used the word "diary" with reference to his work. D.-H. Kahnweiler, who knew Picasso for over sixty-five years, wrote: "It is true that I have described his œuvre as "fanatically autobiographical". That is the same as saying that he depended only on himself, on his *Erlebnis*. He was always free, owing nothing to anyone but himself."[1]
Indeed, everything convincingly shows that if Picasso depended on anything at all in his art, it was the constant need to express his inner state with the utmost fullness.
One may compare Picasso's œuvre with therapy; one may, as Kahnweiler did, regard Picasso as a Romantic artist. Let it also be noted that Picasso looked upon his art in a somewhat impersonal manner, took pleasure in the thought that the works, which he dated meticulously and helped scholars to catalogue, could serve as material for some future science. Kahnweiler testifies that in his old age Picasso spoke with greater approval of these early paintings than of those done in Barcelona, where the Ruiz Picasso family moved in the autumn of 1895 and where Pablo immediately enrolled as a student of painting in the School of Fine Arts called La Lonja. So as not to upset his father, Picasso spent two more years in there, during which time he could not but fall, albeit temporarily, under the deadening influence of academism, inculcated by the official school along with certain professional skills. "…I hate the period of my training at Barcelona," Picasso confessed to Kahnweiler.[2]
However, the studio which his father rented for him, and which gave him a certain freedom from both school and the stifling atmosphere of family relations, was a real support for his independence.

2. ***Le Moulin de la Galette***, 1900. Oil on canvas, 90.2 x 117 cm. The Salomon R.Guggenheim Museum, Justin K. Thannhauser Foundation, New York.



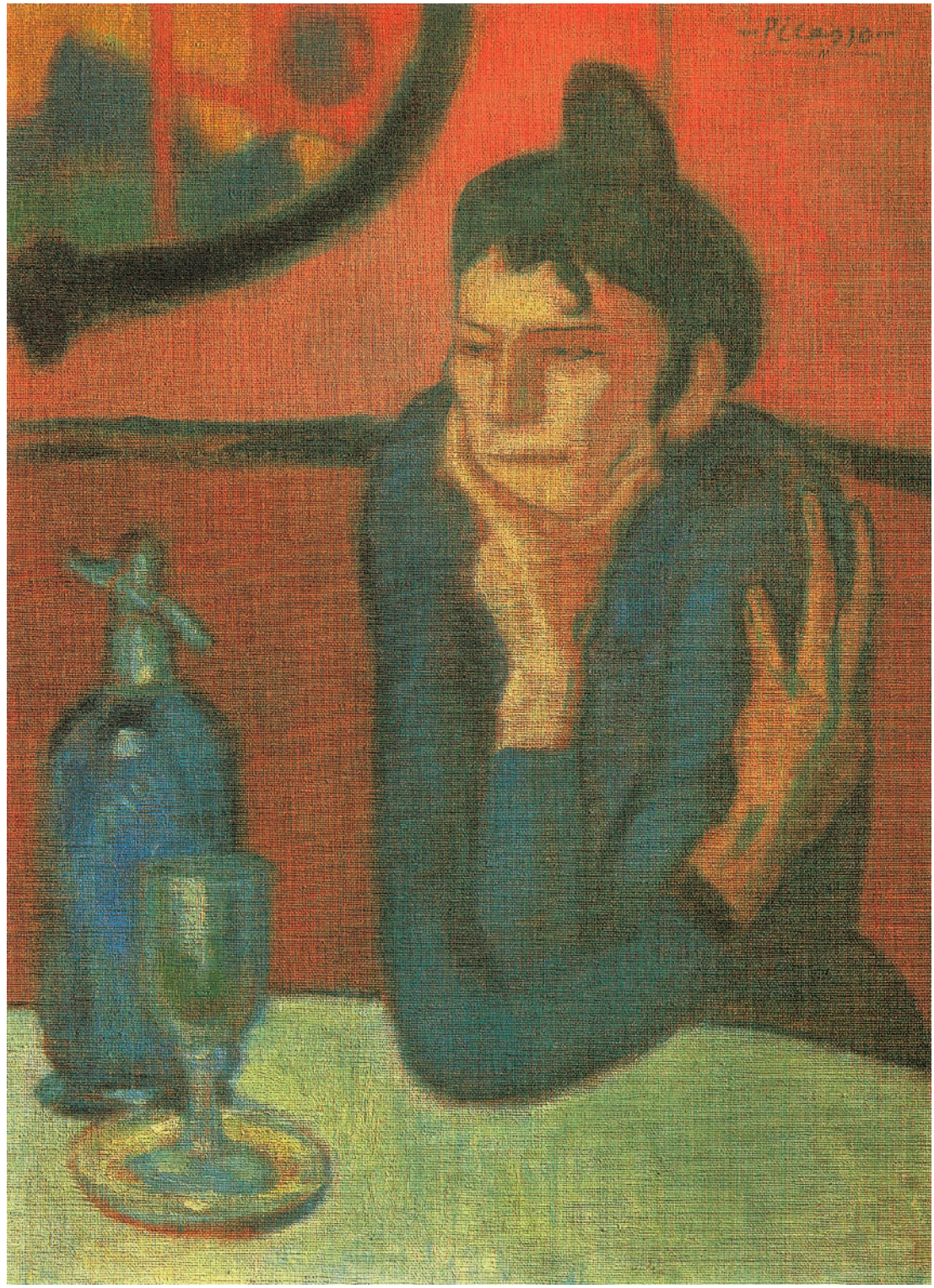




It was here that Picasso summarized the achievements of his school years by executing his first large canvases: *The First Communion* (winter of 1895-1896) and *Science and Charity* (beginning of 1897). The latter received honourable mention at the national exhibition of fine arts in Madrid and was later awarded a gold medal at an exhibition in Málaga.
His departure from home for Madrid in the autumn of 1897, supposedly to continue his formal education at the Royal Academy of San Fernando, in fact ushered in the period of post-study years - his years of wandering. Pablo Picasso's wander-years consisted of several phases within a seven year period, from his initial departure to Madrid in 1897, to his final settling in Paris, artistic capital of the world, in the spring of 1904.
To Picasso, Madrid meant first and foremost the Prado Museum, which he frequented more often than the Royal Academy of San Fernando in order to copy the Old Masters (he was particularly attracted by Velazquez).

3. ***Self-Portrait***, 1901.
   Oil on canvas,
   73.5 x 60.5 cm.
   Private collection.

4. ***Harlequin and his Companion***, 1901.
   Oil on canvas,
   73 x 60 cm.
   The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.



5. ***The Absinthe Drinker***, 1901. Oil on canvas, 73 x 54 cm. The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

6. ***The Absinthe Drinker,*** 1901. Oil on cardboard, 65.5 x 50.8 cm. Melville Hall Collection, New York.