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**Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape**

Tate Modern  Level 4  
Thursday 14 April – Sunday 11 September 2011  
Admission £15.50 ( £13.50 concessions)  
Opening hours: Sunday to Thursday, 10.00–18.00. Friday and Saturday, 10.00–22.00. Last admission into exhibitions 17.15 (Friday and Saturday 21.15).   
Public information number: 020 7887 8888.   
Public information URL: <http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/joanmiro/default.shtm>

Press release: 9 September 2010

Tate Modern will present the first major retrospective of Joan Miró (1893–1983) to be held in London for almost 50 years. Opening on 14 April 2011, *Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape* will bring together over 150 paintings, works on paper and sculptures by one of the twentieth century’s greatest artists. The exhibition will draw on collections from around the world to represent the astonishing breadth of Miró’s output. It will also explore the wider context of his work, bringing to light the artist’s political engagement and examining the influence of his Catalan identity, the Spanish Civil War and the rise and fall of Franco’s regime.

Miró was among the most iconic of modern artists, evolving a Surrealist language of symbols that evokes a sense of freedom and energy in its fantastic imagery and direct colour. Often regarded as a forefather of Abstract Expressionism, his work is celebrated for its serene, colourful allure. However, from his earliest paintings onwards, there is also a more anxious and engaged side to Miró’s practice, reflecting the turbulent political times in which he lived. This exhibition will explore these responsive, passionate characteristics across six decades of his extraordinary career.

*Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape* will examine the artist’s varying degrees of engagement over his lifetime. These are rooted in the complex identity politics associated with Catalonia, as revealed through Miró’s representation of its landscape and traditions. These depictions range across images of rural life, such as *The Farm* 1921-2 which Ernest Hemmingway bought from the artist in Paris, to the masterly sequence of the *Head of a Catalan Peasant* 1924-5. The tensions that erupted with the Spanish Civil War in 1935-9 elicited Miró’s explicit protests in *Aidez l’Espagne* and *Le Faucheur* 1937, as well as more private and troubled responses disguised in the renowned *Constellation* paintings of 1940, made in the Second World War.

Under Franco’s regime, Miró worked in a kind of internal exile in Spain while cultivating a reputation abroad as a hero of post-war abstraction. *Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape* will showcase masterpieces from this era, including the sublime *The Hope of a Condemned Man* triptych 1973. The exhibition will also reveal how he captured the atmosphere of protest in the late 1960s. Whether blackening or setting fire to his works, such as *May 1968* and *Burnt Canvas II* 1973, or creating euphoric explosions of paint in *Fireworks* 1974, Miró continued to reflect the political mood in his radical and pioneering practice.

Joan Miró i Ferrà was born in Barcelona on 20 April 1893 and trained as an artist at the Galí Academy from 1912-15. From 1923, he spent part of each year in Paris and became a key figure in the Surrealist movement. With his young family he remained in France during the Spanish Civil War, but returned to Spain when the Germans invaded in 1940. Miró settled in Majorca and remained based there for much of the rest of his life, travelling for major commissions and exhibitions around the world. He died at home on 25 December 1983.

*Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape* is co-organised by Tate Modern and the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, where it will be seen in October 2011, before travelling to the National Gallery of Art, Washington in May 2012. The exhibition is conceived by Tate curators Matthew Gale, Marko Daniel and Kerryn Greenberg in collaboration with Teresa Montaner, curator at Fundació Joan Miró. Rosa Maria Malet, Director, Fundació Joan Miró, and Vicente Todolí, former Director, Tate Modern, are consultants.

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**Notes to Editors**

**Posted on website:**

http://www.tate.org.uk/images/transparent.gif

Miró

14 April  –  11 September 2011

About | [Visiting information](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/joanmiro/visitinginfo.shtm) | [Book tickets](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/joanmiro/tickets.shtm) | [Events & Education](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/joanmiro/eventseducation.shtm)

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| oan Miró, Head of a Catalan Peasant, 1925 |
| Joan Miró Head of a Catalan Peasant 1925 Tate © Succession Miro / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2008 |

Joan Miró's works come to London in the first major retrospective here for nearly 50 years. Renowned as one of the greatest Surrealist painters, filling his paintings with luxuriant colour, Miró worked in a rich variety of styles. This is a rare opportunity to enjoy more than 150 paintings, drawings, sculptures and prints from moments across the six decades of his extraordinary career.  
  
Miró is among the most iconic of modern artists, using a language of symbols that reflects his personal vision, sense of freedom, and energy. The exhibition includes many of the key works that we know and love. It also shows that, behind the engaging innocence of his imagery, lies a profound concern for humanity and a sense of personal and national identity. Extraordinary works from different moments of his career celebrate his roots in his native Catalonia.  
  
The exhibition also traces an anxious and politically engaged side to Miró’s work that reflects his passionate response to one of the most turbulent periods in European history. Working in Barcelona and Paris, Miró tracked the mood of the Spanish Civil War and the first months of the Second World War in France. Under the political restrictions of Franco's Spain, Miró remained a symbol of international culture, and his grand abstract paintings of the late 1960s and early 1970s became a mark of resistance and integrity in the dying years of the regime. Telling the story of Miró's life and the time he witnessed reveals a darker intensity to many of his works.  
  
This is a must-see exhibition for 2011, filled with astonishing, beautiful and striking paintings by one of the greats of modern art.