

The Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea is generously supporting the National Gallery in London in the celebration of its Bicentenary with the loan of Vincent van Gogh's *L'Arlesienne (Portrait of Madame Ginoux)*. The painting features in the exhibition *Van Gogh: Poets and Lovers* which runs from 14 September 2024 to 19 January 2025.

In gratitude, the National Gallery has lent the only painting by Pablo Picasso in its collection, *Fruit, Dish, Bottle and Violin* of 1914.

A significant document in Picasso's development of the Cubist aesthetic, the painting appears at first sight to be entirely abstract. On closer inspection, parts of several recognisable objects become apparent. From the bottom of the painting, these include a table (the outline of one leg is just to the right of Picasso's signature), a tablecloth with grey tassels, the strings and neck of a violin, part of a newspaper (including the letters 'AL' of 'JOURNAL') and, at the very top, a dish of fruit.

Beginning in 1908, Picasso and his friend Georges Braque (1882-1963), began to develop a new mode of painting that became known as 'analytical' Cubism. Objects were broken down into faceted surfaces that combined multiple points of view. They chose familiar motifs, typically still lifes and portraits that could be easily recognised. Colours were reduced to neutral browns and greys, and the light could come from multiple sources. By around 1912–13 Picasso was adopting new approaches to picture-making, such as the incorporation of different materials and objects – including fabric, paper and newspapers - directly into his canvases. Here, Picasso has added sand to the areas of dark paint to create texture. These new approaches ushered in the next stage of Cubism that is often referred to as 'synthetic' Cubism – of which this painting is an example. Picasso has created a decorative design that holds the composition together. By repeating and counter-balancing various pictorial elements – for example, the even distribution across the canvas of areas of blackish brown (often adjacent to areas of white) and the echoing of particular shapes and patterns (such as the curves of the violin or the vertical legs of the table) – the picture acquires an almost classical symmetry.

To mark 200 years of bringing people and great paintings together, in 2024-25 the National Gallery is organizing exhibitions, special picture displays in Britain and abroad and new online initiatives (www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/ng200-programme). In May 2025 a newly-refurbished Sainsbury Wing will open to provide a world-class welcome for visitors and the Gallery will present a complete redisplay of its collections of European painting from the thirteenth to the early twentieth century.

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