**Art before WW1:**

**Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Paris, June-July 1907**

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (The Young Ladies of Avignon, and originally titled The Brothel of Avignon) is a large [oil painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_painting) created in 1907 by the Spanish artist [Pablo Picasso](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pablo_Picasso). The work portrays five nude female [prostitutes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prostitution) from a [brothel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brothel) on Carrer d'Avinyó (Avignon Street) in Barcelona.

Cubism was one of the most influential visual art styles of the early twentieth century. It was created by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. The French art critic Luis Vauxcelles coined the term Cubism after seeing the landscapes Braque had painted in 1908 at L'Estaque. Other influences on early Cubism have been linked to Primitivism and non - Western sources. The stylization and disortion of Picasso's ground-breaking Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, painted in 1907, came from African art.

Les Demoiselles d’Avignon marks a radical break from traditional composition and perspective in painting. It depicts five naked prostitutes with figures composed of flat, splintered planes and faces inspired by Iberian sculpture and African masks. The compressed space the figures inhabit appears to project forward in jagged shards; a fiercely pointed slice of melon in the still life of fruit at the bottom of the composition teeters on an impossibly upturned tabletop. These strategies would be significant in Picasso’s subsequent development of Cubism, charted in this gallery with a selection of the increasingly fragmented compositions he created in this period. Depictions of prostitutes and the theme of sexuality had been the subject of paintings in the past, but Les Demoiselles left an impact because of Picasso. He had portrayed the prostitutes in erotic poses with their arms recognizable positioned above their heads in order to show off their feminine, but offensively distorted female framework. Picasso's choice to use five figures in his work was to multiply the penetration of the bitter gaze created.

