

# PABLO PICASSO

**Born:** October 25, 1881 in Malaga, Spain

**In 1904:** At 23, Picasso had not yet achieved commercial success. He lived in Le Bateau-Lavoir, a rundown former piano factory in Paris, alongside other artists like Juan Gris and Amedeo Modigliani. The building famously stank and swayed, and it had neither electricity nor running water. Although his mistress Madeline was pregnant, he embarked on a high-profile affair with artist and model Fernande Olivier.

## **Breakthrough Work:**

In 1907, Picasso created *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)*, a large painting nearly eight feet square, that aggressively disregarded any sense of traditional artistic perspective. Instead, Picasso reduced its five nude figures to two-dimensional geometric forms. *Les Femmes d'Alger* planted the seeds for Cubism and was a foundational work of modern art.

## **Reception:**

Even Picasso's closest companions strongly disliked *Les Femmes d'Alger*. His fellow artist Henri Matisse at first thought the painting was Picasso's idea of a bad joke. Although Picasso saw the piece as a major advance in his work, he did not exhibit it again until 1916, and the painting received no recognition in the art world until the mid-1920s.

**"Picasso is so human. Almost all his paintings are very revealing about the human soul, because they're hostile, they're beautiful, they're loving, they're hateful. They have everything, and he spared us nothing. That's one of the reasons why I think he's a master." — Steve Martin**

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Pablo Picasso in Paris, 1904.