

“You and all my writer friends have given me much help and improved my understanding of many things,” Joan Miró told the French poet Michel Leiris in the summer of 1924, writing from his family’s farm in Montroig, a small village nestled between the mountains and the sea in his native Catalonia. The next year, Miró’s intense engagement with poetry, the creative process, and material experimentation inspired him to paint *The Birth of the World*.

In this signature work, Miró covered the ground of the oversize canvas by applying paint in an astonishing variety of ways that recall poetic chance procedures. He then added a series of pictographic signs that seem as much drawn as painted, transforming the broken syntax, constellated space, and dreamlike imagery of avant-garde poetry into a radiantly imaginative form of painting. He would later describe this work as “a sort of genesis,” and his Surrealist poet friends titled it *The Birth of the World*.

This exhibition is drawn from MoMA’s peerless collection of Miró’s work, augmented by several extraordinary loans. It situates *The Birth of the World* in relation to other works by the artist to shed new light on the development of his poetic process and pictorial universe. Some sixty paintings, collages, works on paper, prints, illustrated books, objects, and ceramics are presented, made primarily between 1920, the year of Miró’s first, catalytic trip to Paris, and the early 1950s, when his unique visual language became internationally renowned. Collectively they testify to Miró’s ongoing quest to express “that moving poetry which exists in the most humble things.”

Organized by Anne Umland, The Blanche Hooker Rockefeller Senior Curator, with Laura Braverman, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

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#JoanMiró

For a playlist from Miró’s record collection, selected by the artist’s grandson, Joan Punyet Miró, go to [mo.ma/miro-playlist](https://www.moma.org/miro-playlist).

Opposite wall: Joan Miró, c. 1930. Photograph by Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky). Photographic Archives Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. © Man Ray 2015 Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris