



## Art Masterpiece

Kindergarten

**Core knowledge Topics:** Science (Shapes and colors), Science (Animals)

**Painting:** People and Dogs Under the Sun by Joan Miro

**About the Artist:** Joan (pronounced Juan) Miro was a modern abstract painter, graphic artist and sculptor. Born in Spain in 1893, he died in 1993, living long enough to celebrate his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Miro grew up on a farm in Barcelona, but he also spent time in Paris and the United States in his later years. In addition to his paintings, Miro created terracotta and bronze sculptures, and was hired to paint large public murals for Harvard University and a Hilton hotel in Cincinnati. Have you ever seen a painting so huge it covers an entire wall or the side of a building? That's a mural. Murals are a great way for artists to share their work with lots of people.

Miro's work is most often associated with an art movement called **Surrealism**. Surrealist paintings have a dreamlike quality; they contain objects that look familiar but are different from what you'd see in real life. Most of the images in Surrealist paintings are positive and happy, but sometimes they can get a little creepy, too. More like a nightmare.

**It's a "biomorphic abstract" painting.** Biomorph is a fancy word that means the painting has shapes that resemble living creatures. "Abstract," in this case, means that the people and dogs are twisted, funky versions of the real thing. Can you point out the people in the painting? In what ways do they look different to you? How about a dog? Does Miro's dog look like the kind you'd see in a pet shop?

**It combines bold colors, geometric shapes, and thin lines.** Miro used this technique in most of his paintings; it's probably why his work has been described as childlike and playful. What colors do you see in this painting? What shapes? How did Miro mix colors, shapes and lines to create the images?

**It's interesting at any angle.** Although there's a right way to position *People*

and *Dogs Under the Sun*, the cool thing about this painting (and other abstract works of art) is that you can turn it different ways to see new, fresh images. What happens when we turn Miro's painting upside down? Are there people? Dogs? A sun? This is a fun exercise that you can try at home with other artwork.

**Project Idea:**

Have children make their own "biomorphic abstract" art using black magic markers with red, blue and yellow construction paper cut into geometric shapes. Shapes can be glued together to form the body of an animal (just as Miro used paint). A marker can be used to create eyes, tails, legs and other body parts. Children can create an animal that can be recognized at different angles. Have them turn their artwork in different angles and ask them what they see.

