



## A Life of Picasso, Volume I: 1881-1906

By John Richardson

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This first volume of the definitive four-volume biography by one of the world's leading Picasso experts. This first volume takes Picasso from his earliest years in Catalonia through his beginning as an artist to his discovery of Cubism and his involvement with the artistic and literary life of Paris.

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Remarkably intimate yet epic in sweep, this astonishing, continually engaging biography (first installment of a four-volume opus) neither glorifies Picasso nor paints him as an ogre. Richardson, who was the artist's close friend in France for a decade, attributes to Picasso's "demonic Andalusian birthright" his jolting oscillations between tenderness and cruelty, his self-dramatization, his harnessing of sexuality to his art. Like his much-maligned father, Jose Ruiz Blasco, an easy-going art teacher, Pablo, in Barcelona and Montmartre, was the star of a tertulia, a circle of cronies, who met regularly at a cafe to gossip and exchange views. As we watch the maternally overprotected prodigy transform himself into the daring, confident bohemian who took Paris by storm, Richardson ably untangles the skein of friendships and love affairs that Picasso transmuted into the personal mythology overflowing his canvases. Crammed with new insights, this synthesis wed an irresistible narrative to hundreds of wonderfully apposite photographs and art reproductions. It's one of the few books truly indispensable to understanding Picasso's artistic and spiritual growth.

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From the Inside Flap

As he magnificently combines meticulous scholarship with irresistible narrative appeal, Richardson draws on his close friendship with Picasso, his own diaries, the collaboration of Picasso's widow Jacqueline, and unprecedented access to Picasso's studio and papers to arrive at a profound understanding of the artist and his work. 800 photos.

About the Author

John Richardson was born in 1924. He studied art at the Slade School but soon gave up painting for art criticism. In 1949 he moved to Provence, where he helped the collector Douglas Cooper transform the Château de Castille near Avignon into a private museum of cubist painting. For the next twelve years he lived in France where he became friends with Picasso, Braque, Léger, and Cocteau. With Picasso's encouragement he embarked on an analytic study of the artist's portraits, part of which is incorporated in the present biography.

In the early 1960s Richardson went to live in New York City where he was appointed head of Christie's U.S. operation. Besides having organized various exhibitions, he has written books on Manet and Braque and is a contributor to **The New York Review of Books**, **The New Yorker** and **Vanity Fair**. The first volume of his **Life of Picasso** was published to wide acclaim in 1991 and won England's prestigious Whitbread Prize. In 1993 he was made a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. In 1994-95 he served as the Slade Professor of Art at Oxford University. Currently he divides his time between Connecticut and New York City, where he is working on the third and fourth volumes of this biography.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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