

1926

Oil on canvas

28 ¾ x 36 ¼ inches (73 x 92.1 cm)

JOAN MIRÓ
Spanish, 1893–1983

LET'S LOOK

Describe what you think is happening in the picture.

When and where do you think this is taking place? What do you see that tells you so?

LET'S LOOK AGAIN

What is the **mood** or feeling of the painting? What do you see that creates that feeling?

What do you think the dog will do next? What about the moon and bird?

If you could write a conversation between the dog, moon, bird, and ladder, what would they say?

DOG BARKING AT THE MOON

In this sparse **landscape,** a ladder reaches up toward the black night sky. Nearby, a colorful dog stands on the brown earth, looking up to the half moon and bird above him. The bright colors and humorous **subject matter** create a fun, playful **mood.** The title of the painting, *Dog Barking at the Moon,* adds to this lighthearted feeling. However, the dark **background** and the vast empty spaces between the dog, ladder, and moon also produce a sense of loneliness and mystery.

Although he spent each winter in Paris, Joan Miró (j'wahn mee-ROE) found inspiration for his art in his home in Catalonia (cat-ah-LONE-ee-ah), Spain, where he made sketches on his family farm. He based many of his paintings on these drawings and his memories of the farm, including this one. In Paris, he was influenced by **Surrealist** artists and poets, who were inspired by dreams and the unconscious.

While his art was always based on actual places and objects, Miró thought of reality as "a point of departure, never as a stopping place." In *Dog Barking at the Moon,* he provided a recognizable landscape, but the exact **setting** remains unclear. The dog, moon, and bird are also identifiable, but they are **distorted.** The ladder reaches toward empty space, resting on nothing. The original sketch for the painting included words, with the moon telling the dog that he does not care about his barking. Miró omitted these words in the final painting, leaving it up to the viewer to imagine the story taking place.

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