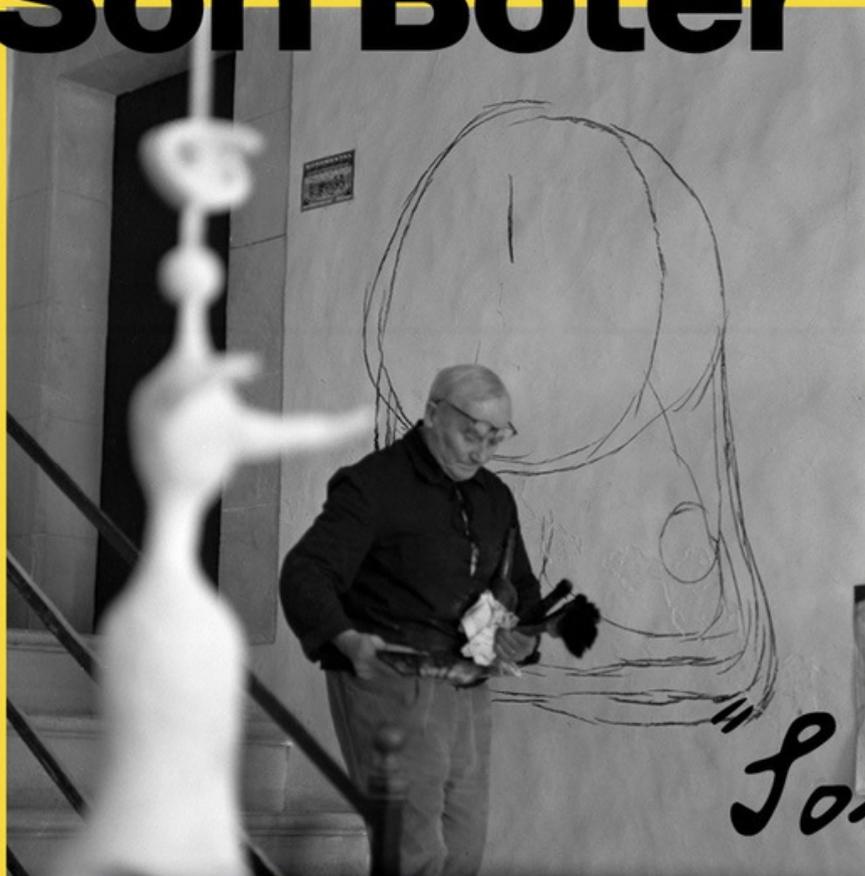


El Miró de Son Boter

Espai Estrella



"Son Boter"

Son Boter, a typical rural Mallorcan house dating back to the 18th century, is the oldest of the Fundació's buildings. It became Joan Miró's second Mallorcan studio, purchased by the artist in 1959 with the prize money of the Guggenheim International Award, given to him for the creation of the Mur du soleil and Mur de la lune for the Paris UNESCO building.

Thanks to this area next to his Son Abrines home, Miró had further space to work and to create and store large works of art, while also gaining extra privacy. As Miró remarked in a letter to his friend, architect Josep Lluís Sert: "I have just bought Son Boter, the magnificent house behind ours. As well as being a good investment, it provides shelter from bothersome neighbours".

Miró placed his own personal hallmark on the house through the highly original charcoal sketches he made on its walls in the style of graffiti, transforming it into a work of art in itself. The sketches are figures and personages associated with his sculptures. Just as he had done with the Sert Studio, Miró gradually created the right atmosphere for his work through postcards, drawings and objects of widely differing origins.

“Miró worked here too, but in a very different way from his work methods at the Sert Studio. He let off steam here, getting rid of all his excess energy. He described it as a ‘wild’ way of working in contrast with the Sert Studio, where he worked in a more attentive, contemplative way.

The Sert Studio as a kind of sanctuary for Miró, while Son Boter was a mysterious place where the artist’s behaviour was governed by discharged rage. It was a place for calling things into question and for conversing with the constant ghosts that surrounded him.

The painted walls reflect Miró’s unique irrepressible drive, his boundless vitality, and the frenzy and losing battle against time of a highly original artist who still had so much to offer, despite his age”.

David Fernández

Miró at Son Boter is very different from Miró at the Sert Studio. His work methods at Son Boter and the format of the work he produced were very different, as were his relations with the architecture. In Son Boter, Miró was teeped in history in rooms that still echoed with ghosts from the past. Son Boter was a cave, a return to the maternal womb, where Miró felt at ease right from the outset.

The artist revealed his true immensity at Son Boter, taking command of the building. In the Sert Studio, his approach was more surgical: the work of the artist and the architect coexisted with one another. At Son Boter, they become one and the same. When you enter Son Boter, it is Miró alone who surrounds you.

The Sert Studio’s impact on the artist is well known, as is the need he felt to put his own personal hallmark on it before starting to work there by creating an overlapping second skin on top of the architecture, without this affecting the independence of the latter. At Son

Boter, on the other hand, the artist and his work became one with the building: his traced sketches came to form part of the walls, splashes from his triptychs spattered the floor, and his found objects and sculptures colonized and transformed the space. **The whole building became a huge “notebook” where the artist’s creative process can be “read” and interpreted through the traces he left behind him.**

Son Boter was used to create his large-format works, sculptures and public art projects, and it also housed his printmaking studios, hence avoiding visits to Barcelona. It was here that Miró made the leap, once and for all, to the third dimension, going beyond the surface of the canvas and reaching out to that anonymous crowd that he had always aspired to forge links with, whether it was through the immersive experience of his triptychs, his large-format paintings, his sculptures for public spaces or the printed editions that were accessible to a wider public.

This temporary exhibition offers an insight into our collection from the perspective of his Son Boter studio. It is organized into groups, made up of selections of works associated with a particular project, accompanied in all cases by the visual reference that signals the artist's presence in the space with which they are all indivisibly united.



The exhibition rooms, like Son Boter itself, are thus a direct record of Miró's creative process, from the initial graffiti or drawing through to his objects, sketches and maquettes to the finished work.

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acabo d'adquirir "Son Boter"



Joan Miró at the entrance of Son Boter, 1966

© Josep Planas i Montanyà. PlanasArchive

I've just bought "Son Boter"

Joan Miró's move to Mallorca in the mid 1950s marked a turning point in the life and work of the artist. In this new stage, characterized by a reappraisal and renewal of his artistic language, there was a sharp rise in the output of his paintings and a growth in the scale of his work, coinciding with a desire to create monumental public artworks. The long-awaited studio that Sert had created for him was soon not big enough, and so he seized the opportunity to buy Son Boter, a neighbouring property. This became a refuge and an extension of his workspace, used for sculptures and large paintings. He left his charcoal graffiti and sketches of sculptures on its walls, splashes of paint on its floors, and unusual found objects scattered throughout in a reflection of the total symbiosis between the artist and his workspace. This is how Miró expressed it in a conversation with Georges Raillard in November 1975: **"The 'truth' is here, in Son Boter."**

Le retour à l'enfance et la naissance d'un nouveau monde



Joan Miró at Son Boter, 1973

© Successió Miró, 2022

© Fons Fotogràfic F. Català-Roca
Arxiu Històric del Col·legi d'Arquitectes
de Catalunya

The return to childhood and the birth of a new world

Miró internalized the landscapes of the places where he had lived and they would accompany him all lifelong: the land at Mont-roig, the sky at Varengeville and the sea in Mallorca. They were always present in his mind and he recreated them in his work. **Miró's pathway had been a long one, returning full circle to his origins**, to the places of his childhood and the silent horizons of his years as a pupil training under Modest Urgell. Although these works share the same chronology and space as his big triptychs, they are still awaiting completion: they have remained frozen at a peak point of maximum tension in which each individual painting and all of them as a whole still seek to find a balance. From Son Boter—his last creative workspace, set on a series of hillside terraces bathed by the island's light, with the silhouette of the Serra de Tramuntana mountains in the background—, Miró had views of the Mediterranean Sea. It was on the top floor of Son Boter, gazing out toward the horizon that stretched before him, that these paintings were made, inspired by the mental landscapes that were so fundamental for him, condensed into a dot, a line and the colour black.

com graffitis gratuïts, banals i anònims del carrer



Graffitis by Joan Miró on the walls at Son Boter, 2014

© Successió Miró, 2022

© Jean Marie del Moral

like gratuitous, trivial, anonymous graffiti found in the street

The hallmark that Joan Miró left on Son Boter's interiors is perceptible in the sketched lines on the surface of its walls, doors and windows and even on the floor; in the blotches of paint; in the found objects, cuttings, postcards and children's drawings fixed with pushpins; and, above all, in the charcoal graffiti that surrounds us, with images frozen and suspended on the plaster walls. The calligraphy of the titles, the thoughts tossed into the air and Miró's personages and projects for sculptures all form a second skin that merges with the building, transformed by the artist's strokes into a huge notebook that documents the first spark of inspiration and starting point for his radical creative process. Through it, evidence has been left of that initial inspirational instant, which he himself defines as "the moment of confrontation", "the magic spark" now visible to us. **Son Boter is in a state of suspension in which the artist's presence can still be noted.**

*monstres vivents
que viuen en el taller - man a part*



Joan Miró at Son Boter with the preparatory objects for the sculpture *Souvenir de la Tour Eiffel*, 1966

© Successió Miró, 2022

© Josep Planas i Montanyà. PlanasArchive.

living monsters that inhabit the studio – a world apart

From the 1950s onward, Joan Miró's sculptural activities picked up even greater speed, mainly due to his immersion in projects for architecture or urban spaces in cities through the creation of monumental artworks. One of the reasons why he bought the Son Boter house was this change in scale so that the property could be used as a second studio. Most of these sculptural projects—based on assemblages, often made up of unusual finds—would be cast in bronze. Inevitably, ties were forged between the works and the space in which they were conceived: the studios, filled with graffiti, cuttings and chance finds that might be incorporated in the creative process. Miró was not interested in the beauty of shapes, but in their evocative power. Instead of modifying the original object, **he turned the spotlight on it, drawing attention to objects so ordinary that they had become invisible.** The artist revealed the secret life of these inanimate, forgotten objects, transformed into the “living monsters” with which he loved to surround himself, thanks to chance discoveries, the magic of assemblage and the random element in bronze casting.

d'un esprit magique



Femme, oiseau in progress at Son Boter, 1973

© Successió Miró, 2022

© Fons Fotogràfic F. Català-Roca - Arxiu Històric del Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya
Arxiu Successió Miró

magical in spirit

This painting is part of a series that Miró worked on for an exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris in 1974. An exhibition initially envisaged as a retrospective, it marked a breakaway and a new approach to his work as an artist, with paintings that were virtually monochrome, denoting clear Oriental influences, inspired by his visits to Japan in 1966 and 1969. They stand out for the predominance of empty spaces and use of black, both a strong feature of his 1970s work, together with the emphasis on the eye, used to reveal the presence of the personage. During this final stage, as can be seen in the photographs that Català-Roca took at Son Boter, black steadily takes over the canvases until it comes to cover the whole surface, relegating the background white colour and use of signs to second place. Additionally, as in *Poème*, Miró once again leaves his handprint on the canvas: a primitive, impulsive gesture, using the same colours as another series of paintings in progress at Son Boter, which is also on show here. **This is an unpredictable Miró in his purest of states, going back to basics.**

Textos explicativos de sala

Fer com un mite
religiós
màgic



Joan Miró in the kitchen at Son Boter with the *Poème* painting in process, 1966

© Successió Miró, 2022

© Josep Planas i Montanyà. PlanasArchive.

As if it were a magical, religious ritual

Ancient signs of artistic expression always attracted Miró, since he saw them as having the same timeless spirit that he aspired to achieve with his shapes. Just as prehistoric man left his hallmark on the walls of caves, Miró incorporated handprints in his creative process, given the profound significance for him, particularly during his last years as an artist when he even painted directly with his fingers. In the photo of this work in progress, taken in the kitchen of Son Boter, Miró's fingerprints are the final gesture he makes to bring it to an end. His predilection for murals and for printing the marks of his body on walls link him in with primitive man and early artforms. The **canvas also grows in size, rounding off this immersive space by forming yet another surface of Miró's "cave"**. Miró's handprint began to appear in work produced in his two Mallorcan studios, going on to become a recurrent presence in his final stage as an artist.

servi-me de les coses Trobades pel diví afar



Model for the sculpture *Jeune fille* and plaster cast for the sculpture *Femme dans la nuit* at Son Boter, 1961

© Successió Miró, 2022

Joaquim Gomis © Hereus de Joaquim Gomis
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

using chance finds

In Miró's bid to go beyond painting, bronze sculptures helped him to take the leap from the canvas to three-dimensional works. Miró's sculptures exist thanks to an initial find and to the artist's decision to rescue the object from anonymity. **Recognizable forms took on an enigmatic quality through unexpected combinations of objects, transformed into personages when they were cast.** The photos in the studios reflect this process. The preliminary objects for the bronzes *Jeune fille* and *Femme dans la nuit*, both dating back to 1967, were photographed by Joaquim Gomis at Son Boter in 1961. In different notes by the artist, it can be inferred that he intended to enlarge these works: *Jeune fille* to 12 metres for Sert's *Porta Catalana* project at La Junquera and *Femme dans la nuit* as part of the *Labyrinth* at the Maeght Foundation. Through his sculptures, Miró paid tribute to the ephemeral, materialized through an unalterable material that would transform the work into a monument, hence ensuring its continuity.

Temple d'un esprit populaire



Joan Miró at Son Boter with the graffiti related to *Constellation*, 1973

© Successió Miró, 2022

Clovis Prévost © Photo Galerie Maeght, Paris
Arxiu Successió Miró

Always with a popular spirit

The most insignificant object could be transformed into a work of art when it was chosen by Miró and incorporated into his imaginary museum. His eyes detected the everyday beauty of all those things that we would miss. On this occasion, Mallorca's typical Quely biscuit has been transformed into a constellation of dots, framed by a circle. From Joan Miró's comments in his notebooks, a long period of reflection was needed before he decided to cast a work. The same shape reappears and evolves in different projects that he worked on over the years. Here, his preliminary thoughts even end up on the wall in the form of charcoal graffiti. Cast bronze, a technique associated with permanence, was applied by Miró to discarded, irrelevant objects. The contrast between the fragility and ephemeral nature of the original object and the nobility of the final work cast in bronze was emphasized. By casting insignificant objects in bronze, they acquire a monumental appeal. They are dramatically enlarged and eternalized through the material used to make the sculpture in keeping with Miró's aspiration to create public works of art.

Textos explicativos de sala

per tenir una referència universal



Son Boter upper floor room, 2014

© Jean Marie del Moral



Son Boter, 2012

© Successió Miró, 2022

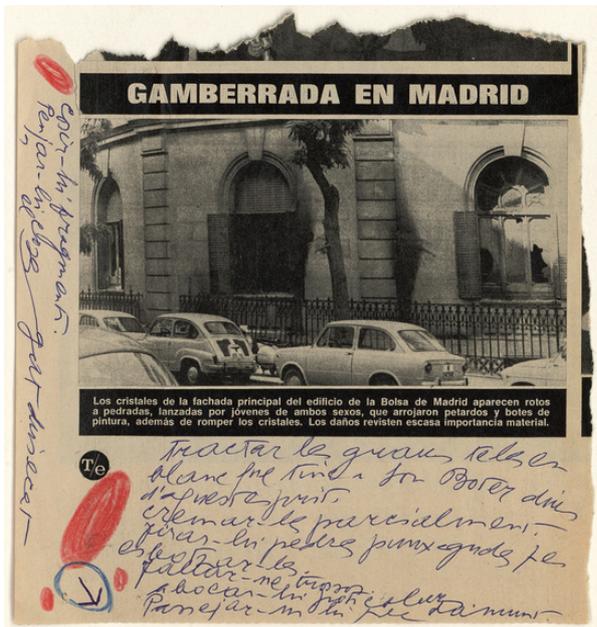
© Rif Spahni

it must make a universal impact

As also occurred with the Sert Studio, when Miró was first confronted with his new workspace at Son Boter, he felt compelled to cover its walls and to fill its nooks and crannies with a second skin of cuttings and objects of a wide variety of origins in order to transform the building and stamp his own hallmark on it. Mesopotamian culture, more specifically Sumerian art, is one of the most common iconographic references at Son Boter. Some of the images on display here were cut out of two copies of the French cultural magazine *Arts & Loisirs* published in February 1966. Miró's interest in Sumerian art was equalled by his attraction for popular craftwork, pre-Columbian art, Japanese culture and, in general, the primitive objects that inhabit his studios. **These testimonies to the artist's presence and passage, which once acted as catalysts and starting points for work, now allow us to reconstruct the creative process that he followed and to get to know the real Miró: a frenzied artist ahead of his time who also stopped to take a look back at the past and to recognize the universal value and evocative power of objects of the most unusual kinds, which took on huge proportions in his eyes.**

Textos explicativos de sala

Partir de la cosa viva de Son Boter



Frame of the film *Miró 73. Toiles brûlées* showing the canvases burned at Son Boter, 1973
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

© Successió Miró, 2022

Start from Son Boter as a living thing

From the moment he settled in Mallorca and started work his new studios, Miró embarked on a reappraisal of his work and process of self-criticism that led him to seek new pathways and to experiment with other techniques and disciplines. On March 29th 1973, Miró made a series of lacerated paintings, months before he worked on the burnt canvases displayed at the Grand Palais exhibition in Paris the following year, perforating, tearing and breaking the canvas. The artist sought physical contact with materials, channelling all his energies into the work of art, even at a physical level. Miró literally injured the canvas, "attacking" it with the tools of his trade: paint, a paintbrush, gestures, and sometimes with no intermediate tools but just his body. Although we have no graphic evidence to confirm where this series was made, Miró refers to Son Boter as the starting point. He even placed the burnt canvases against Son Boter, as a background, in the final scene of a process filmed by Català-Roca. Just as the lacerated and burnt canvases are not an example of destruction but a metamorphosis and a rebirth, so Miró's last Mallorcan works are a fight against time by an eternally young artist who, at the age of eighty, still had much to say, having found the perfect setting for his revolt at Son Boter.

