Portrait of the Artist's Father

Barcelona, 1896
Watercolour on paper
25.5 x 17.8 cm
Donated by the artist, 1970
MPB 110.331

The work

José Ruiz Blasco (1838-1913) was a teacher at the School of Fine Art and a painter, as well as one of young Picasso's preferred models until 1899. During this formative period, the relationship between father and son was very close, with his father encouraging his artistic vocation and overseeing the learning process. In fact, the personality of his father left a great mark on Picasso. In 1943, he confessed to Brassai that 'every time I draw a man, I think, inadvertently, of my father (...) for me, man is Don José and it will be like this all my life.'

When he painted this portrait, Picasso was fifteen years old. As John Richardson points out: 'The portraits Pablo produced of Don José are more than routine studies of a model. They show contradictory feelings such as a child's love, pride, pity and a mixture of guilt and redemption which any sensitive adolescent student feels for the beloved old teacher he surpasses.' (in Picasso. A Biography, vol I, 1881-1906, p.82)

The Museum houses many portraits of the artist's father: first drawings from Corunna in 1894-95 (MPB 111.419, 111.500R, 111.504, 111.508, 112.482); drawings from Malaga or Barcelona in 1895 (MPB 110.245, 111.181R, 111.187R, 111.188R); from Barcelona between 1895 and 96 (MPB 110.307, 111.127, 111.155, 111.160); portraits from Barcelona in 1896 and 97 (drawings MPB 111.048, 111.076, 111.102, 111.108, a watercolour in blue shades, MPB 110.281, and an oil painting, MPB 110.027) and drawings from 1898 and 1899 (MPB 110.026, 110.576, 110.726, 111.582R ), as well as many sketches and jottings.

His father was the model for the doctor figure in Science and Charity.

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**Location**

Room 1