



# SMALL GREAT GESTURES

# ART

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# ART

Art is a language that helps us to express ideas and feelings to both ourselves and with others. Although it has always been a part of life, it appears in different forms, depending on the era and the culture in which it develops.

Not only has the concept of art changed over time, so too have artists. From being considered mere craftsmen to being celebrated as geniuses, and from the preserve of only men to the ever-more visible works of women.

This book aims to bring the history of art closer to young readers. Some artists in this book created art that was unlike anything that had been seen before, others approached daily subjects with a new perspective, turning them into something extraordinary. All of them were brave enough to defy the norms of their day and by doing so, changed history and our way of looking at the world.

FRANCISCO LLORCA





# Observe Nature

## GIOTTO

Italy, 1305

According to his biographers, even as a child Giotto di Bondone had a gift for painting. They say that his teacher, Cimabue, discovered him when he was just a boy, painting as he watched over his father's sheep. Giotto was so talented that Cimabue invited him to work with him.

In those days, the figures painted on the walls and wooden panels in churches looked stiff and lifeless. But Giotto could paint real life in a different way – he observed nature with a fresh look. The result was that his paintings were much more realistic, his characters looked more human and the spaces in which he painted his stories were more than just decorative.

His style soon became very popular and he was bombarded with commissions, like the one he painted in the chapel of the Scrovegni family, one of the richest families in Italy. The frescoes he painted there are still outstanding for their freshness and the profound emotion portrayed in the faces. Giotto had a decisive influence on the works of artists who came after him, who considered him to be the father of modern painting.











# *Take a Selfie*

## CLARA PEETERS

Belgium, 1611

In Clara Peeters' day, women who wanted to be painters had to overcome lots of obstacles. Because of social prejudices, they couldn't attend the same artists' workshops as their male peers. Many of them had to content themselves with painting small things like still lifes (flowers, fruit, household objects ...) or family portraits.

But this did not stop Clara from producing works of great detail and elegance and she became one of the best painters of her day. If you look closely, you will discover a secret hidden in many of her works: she painted her own reflection in metal objects and crystal glasses, just like a selfie. It was like a joke, but it was also a gesture of self-affirmation by an artist who was proud of her work.

Although she did not receive the recognition she deserved in her day because she was a woman, centuries later she became the first female painter the Prado museum dedicated an exhibition to, showing the world what a great artist she was.

