Dora Maar whose real name was Henriette Théodora Markovitch, was born in Paris in 1907. Her mother was French and her father Joseph Markovitch was a Croatian architect. She spented her childhood in Buenos Aires where her father received many public orders of whom the Austria-Hungary embassy.

At the age of 20, she came back to France. In Paris, she followed lessons at the Central Union of Decorative Art, and also at the Julian Academy and the School of Photography. She chose the pseudonym Dora Maar at that time and began to work in André Lhote’s studio where she met Henri Cartier-Bresson. She was the assistant of Man Ray and became quickly a key figure of surrealist photography. She created her own studio in 1935 and took part in the international surrealist exhibitions. Her first solo show took place at the Vanderberg Gallery in 1932.

From the time her affair with Picasso began in 1936, she abandoned photography to painting. She inspired Picasso for many paintings like Woman crying and Picasso influenced her creation. She first turned to cubism, then pointillism and realism. She liked to say that she was not the mistress of Picasso but that he was his master. She exhibited her paintings at the Gallery Jeanne Bucher in 1944 and at Pierre Loeb's in 1946.

After her tormented break-up with Picasso in 1946, she suffered with psychological problems that forced her to be committed in psychiatric hospital. Her friend Paul Eluard asked Jacques Lacan to treat her in his clinic where she stayed for two years. At the end of the 1940's she changed her style and began to paint landscapes on the bank of the Seine and in South East French region named Lubéron.

Little by little, Dora Maar isolated herself from social life in 1950. She entered in a mysticism period and lived alone between her Parisian apartment and her house given by Picasso in Ménerbes. Her paintings realized after the 1950's were discovered after her death, during the dispersal of the goods of her Parisian apartment located on the Grands-Augustins Street. She painted some wonderful abstract landscapes influenced by Nicolas de Stael who was one of the only painter she still met in the South of France.

In 1995, a retrospective was organised by the Foundation Bancaixa in Valence. But this was in 2002, with the exhibition "Dora Maar, Bataille, Picasso and the surrealists” settled in Marseille that one has been able to discover her numerous talents.

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