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Ajuntament d'Altea

# Navarro-Román

The story of a painter from Altea

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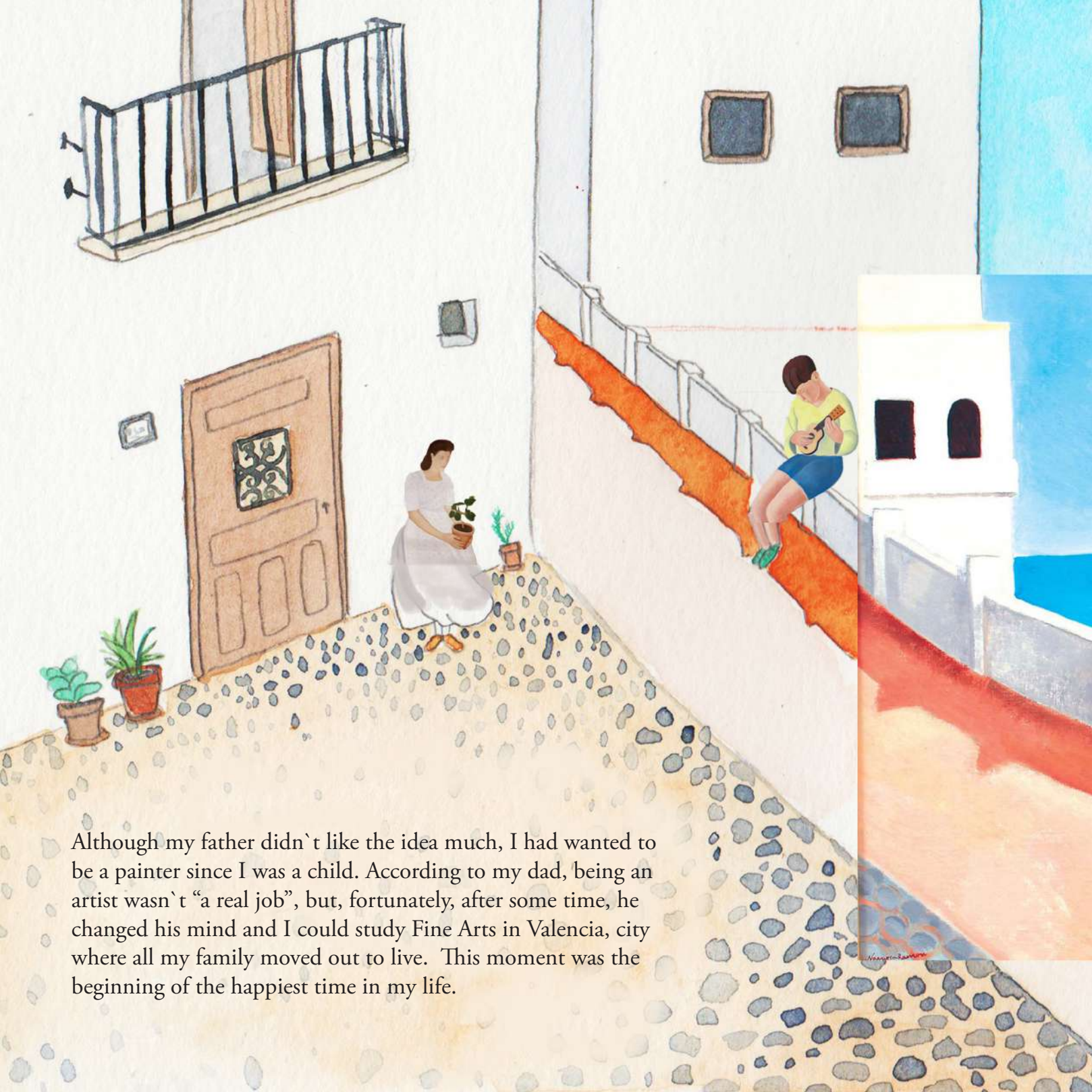


Hello! My name is Juan Navarro Ramón. Perhaps many of you don't know me, so, if you let me, I'd like to tell you a bit about my life.



Loads of years ago, concretely in 1903, I was born in Altea, a coastal town in Alicante. At that moment Altea had nothing to do with the town you know nowadays. There were less buildings and roads, but there was a lot of field and an old town as beautiful as the one today.





Although my father didn't like the idea much, I had wanted to be a painter since I was a child. According to my dad, being an artist wasn't "a real job", but, fortunately, after some time, he changed his mind and I could study Fine Arts in Valencia, city where all my family moved out to live. This moment was the beginning of the happiest time in my life.



Little by little, I became educated in the artistic field of painting and, either in my mind or in my works of art my beloved Altea was always present, its white houses and such a blue sea that it could melt with the sky.



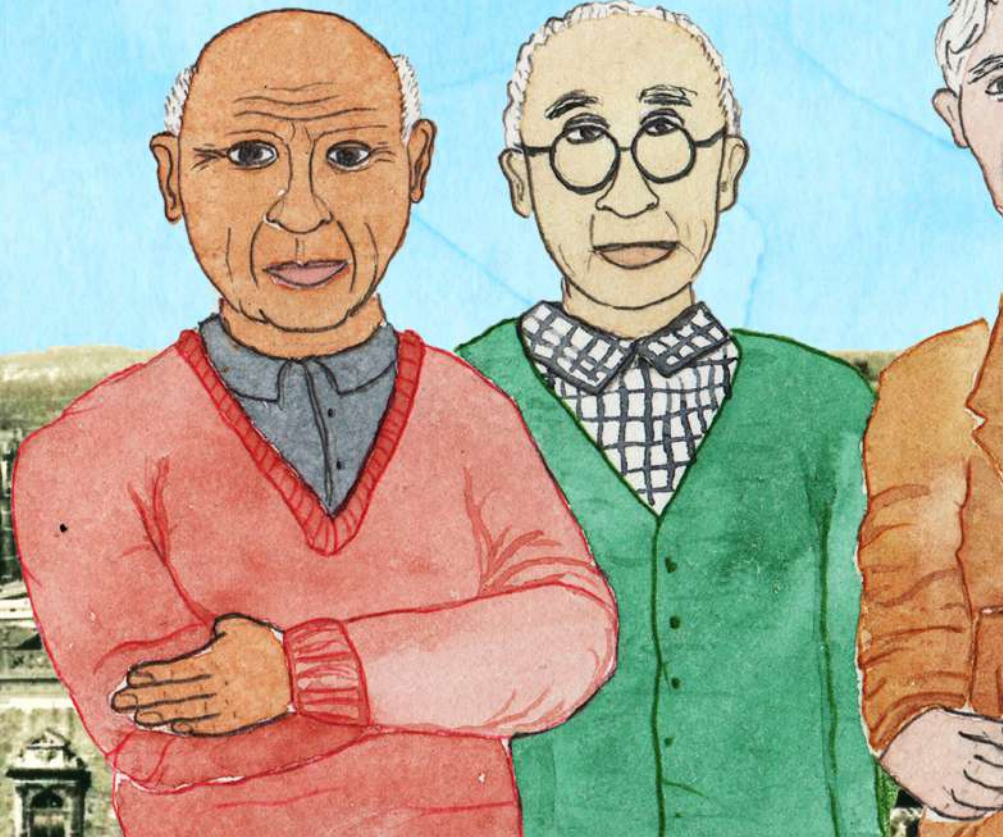
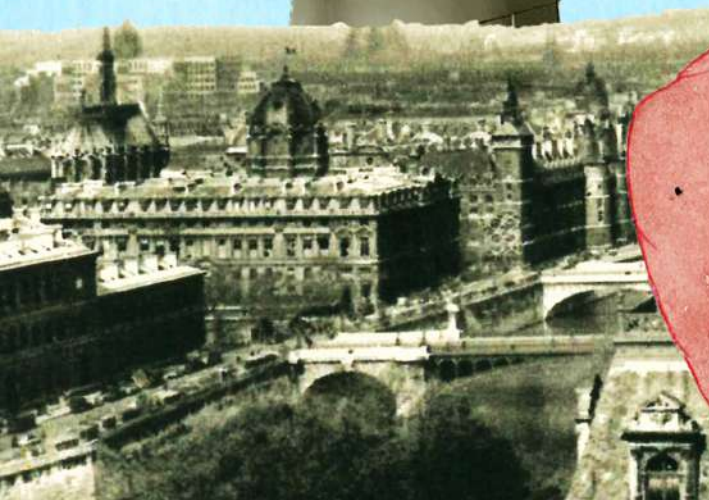
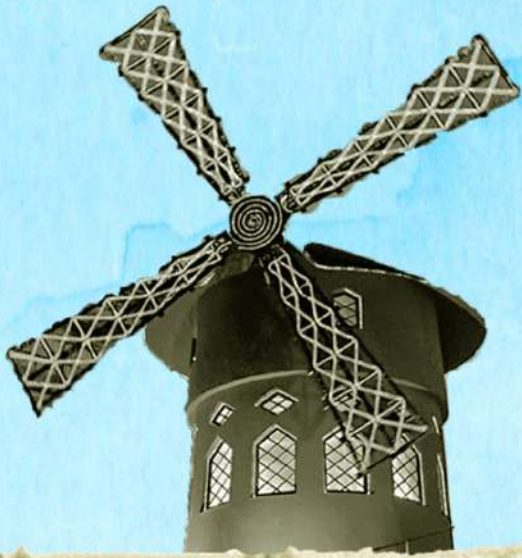
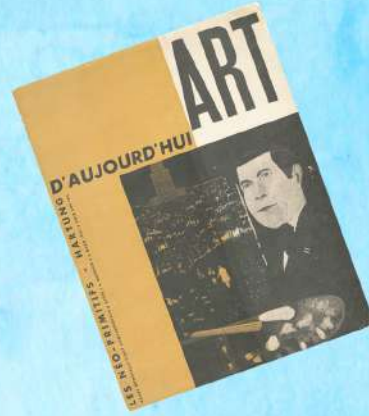
When I was 18 I met Josefina Fisac, “Pepita”, the love of my life, in Madrid. We were so madly in love that, after a little time, we got married and we moved out to live in Barcelona.



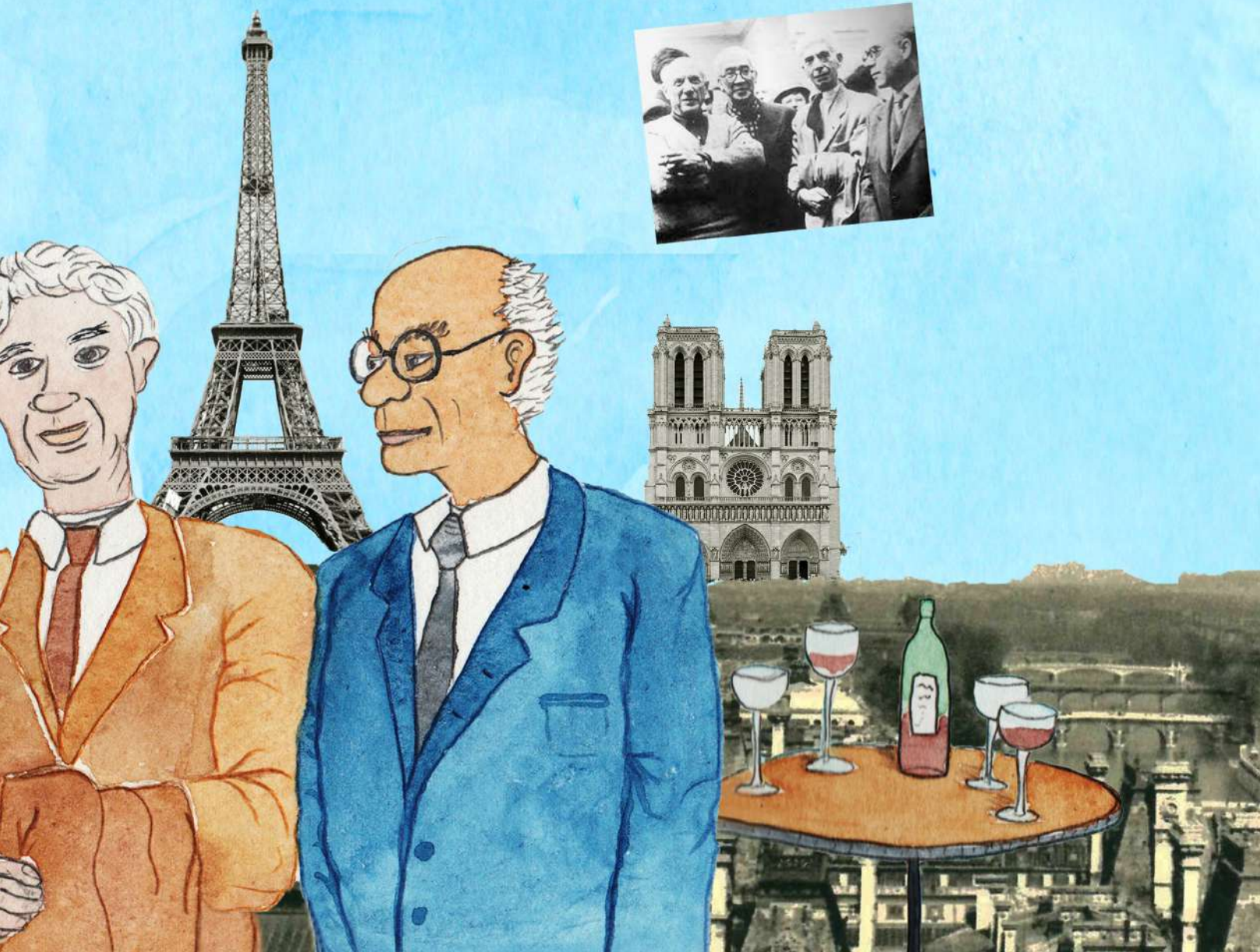


Since that moment I had to combine my two loves, Altea and Pepita, in my works of art. She was a very important part of my life, the best colleague and my greatest support.

Although I was very happy in Barcelona, my dream was to travel to Paris.



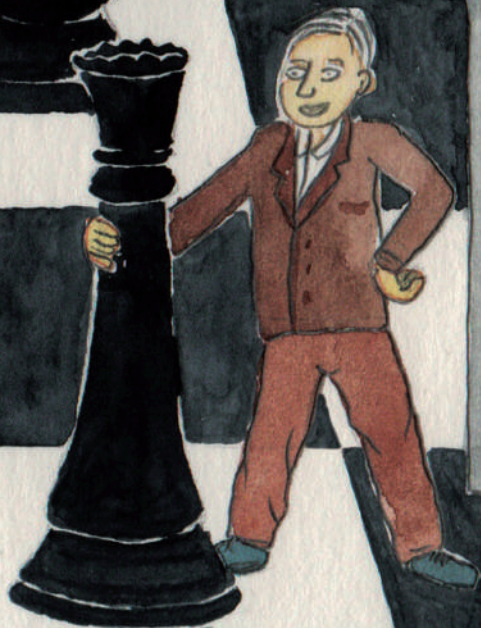
The best artists at that moment from all over the world were there; the Spanish Pablo Picasso and Juan Gris, the Russian Ossip Zadkine or the Japanese Tsuguharu Foujita, among others. I wanted to go there, I wanted to meet these painters, learn and move around the world. Therefore, in 1934 I went on my first trip to the light city.





These were intensive years of a lot of learning and new friendship like the Japanese painter Foujita or the Catalonian Joan Miró, whom I had a warm-hearted friendship with.

Joan and I were friends, sent each other letters, shared common interests and had a similar way of understanding art as well.



The 16<sup>th</sup> of July of 1936 the terrible Spanish Civil War burst out. They were years of hard confrontation between siblings that only caused death, hunger and misery in our country.

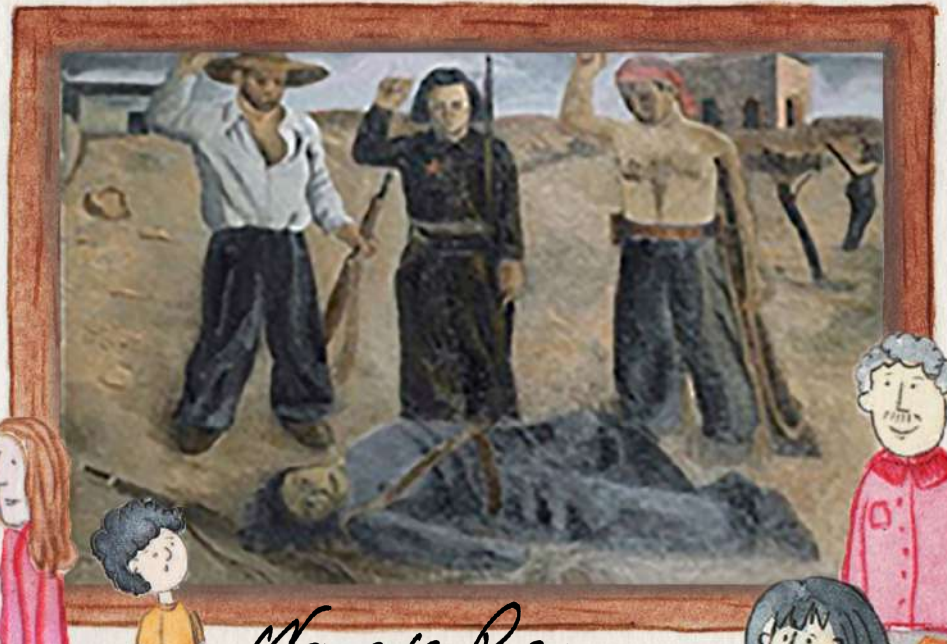






I enlisted in the Intellectual Alliance for the Defense of Culture, but a bit later, in 1938, like many other people, Pepita and I had to leave the country and we settled in the French town of Colliure. Europe progressed whereas Spain fell behind.

Miró.



Navarro-Román



In 1937 Paris hosted the Universal Exposition of “Arts and techniques of modern life”, where all the countries’ latest cultural and technological advances were shown.

Despite the situation Spain was going through, the Spanish Republic Government was willing to show that it was modernising too. The artists Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Julio González and I myself took part in the Spanish pavilion.

i.g.



Picasso

Surely some of you know the Guernica by Pablo Picasso, don't you?

Although it may seem beautiful, it is a painting that shows the horrors of the war bombing.



Once the war ended, my life and my pictorial style changed. Up to that moment I had created paintings that were very similar to what I could see; I painted reality, but in my own way.



1940



1950



1960





1970



1980

However, now, I got close to the world of dreams; I drew abstract shapes away from the real world.

Vivid colours, simple shapes and a few elements. Can you see it? Can you differentiate the paintings from the past from the current ones?

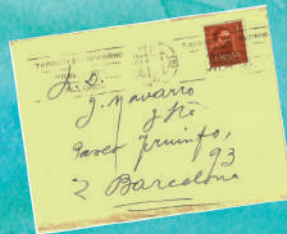
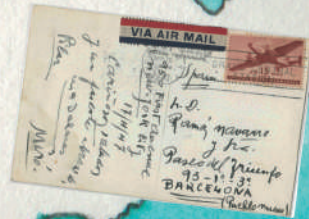


Belgium

FRANCE

GERMANY

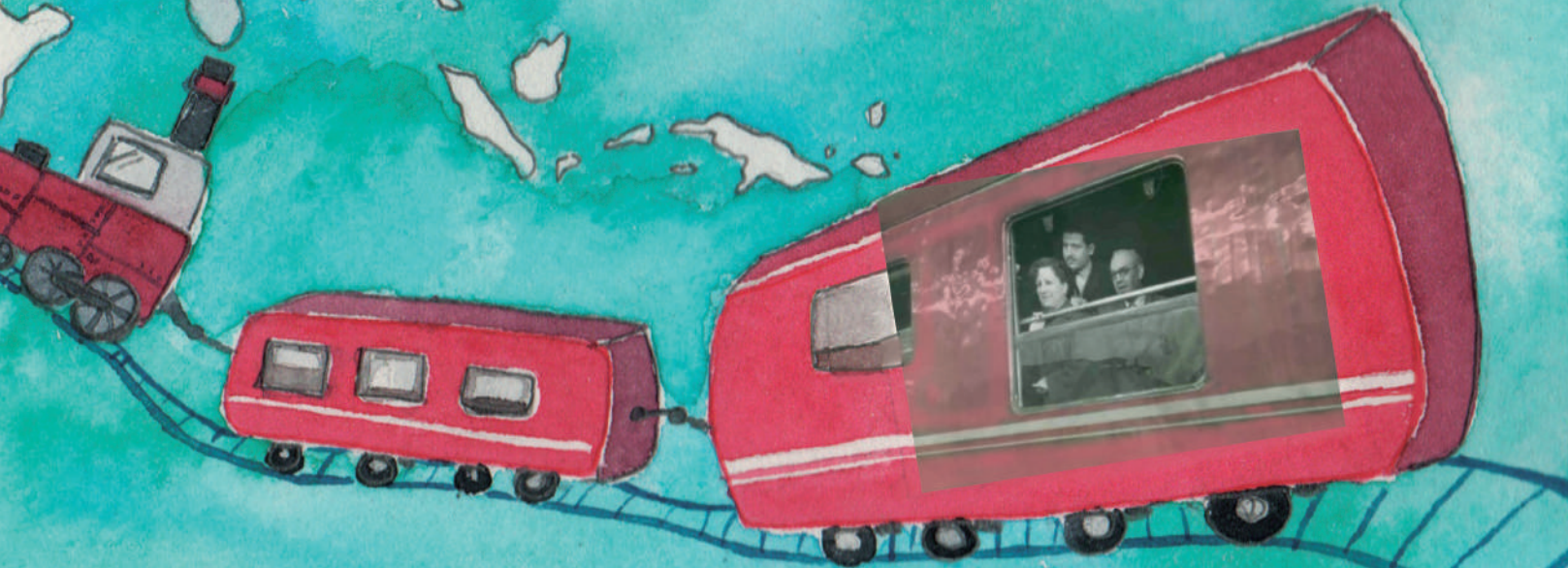
SPAIN





I had managed to get people to know my work.  
At last I was an artist from head to toe.

I was called from loads of countries to make  
exhibitions, so Pepita and I always had our  
luggage ready to travel and show my paintings  
all around Spain. , France, Belgium, Germany,  
Argentina...

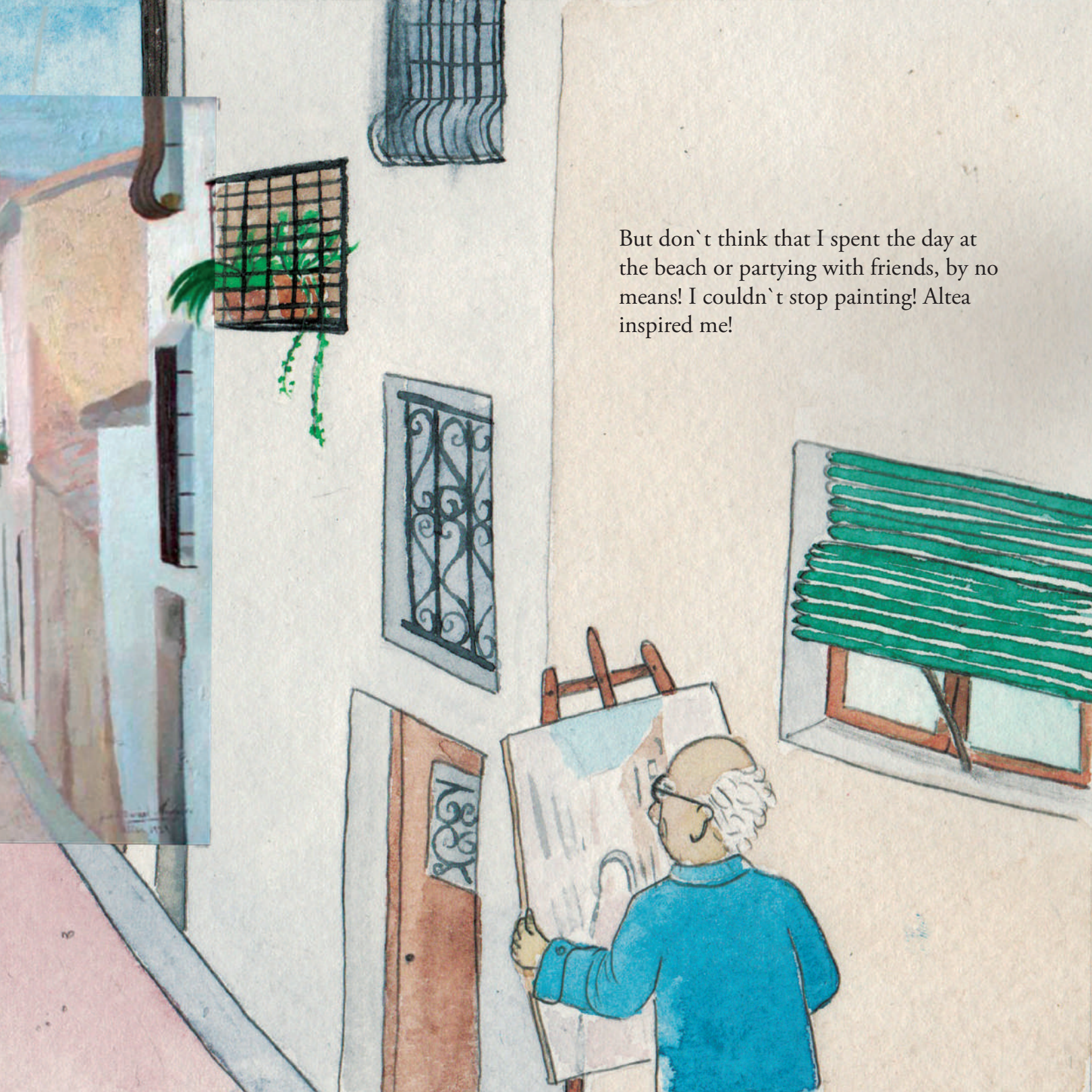


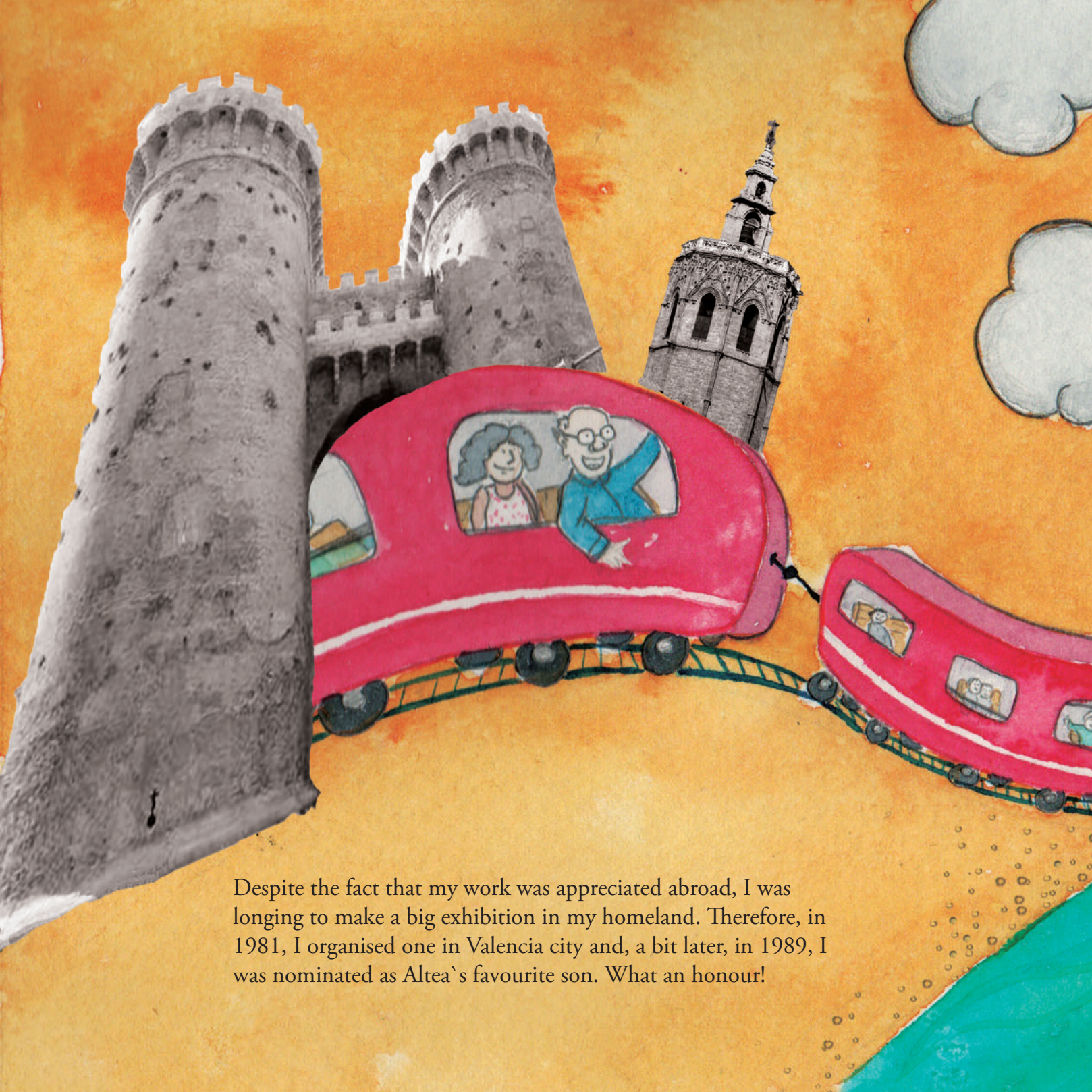


Despite living abroad, what Pepita and I liked best was coming back to Altea. We loved our home at El Portal Vell and we spent the summers with our family and friends there.



But don't think that I spent the day at the beach or partying with friends, by no means! I couldn't stop painting! Altea inspired me!





Despite the fact that my work was appreciated abroad, I was longing to make a big exhibition in my homeland. Therefore, in 1981, I organised one in Valencia city and, a bit later, in 1989, I was nominated as Altea's favourite son. What an honour!



Pepita and I got older and we set our place of residence in Sitges, Catalonia. I went on painting and my beloved Altea was always in my mind. That`s the reason why, in 1985, I decided to give away a big bunch of my paintings to the town so that everybody could enjoy my work.

The years go by, but art remains and I hope that nowadays, adults and children, people from Altea can get to know my story and my legacy a bit more, which, to a large extent, is yours too.

With affection,

*Navarro-Román*









