

France

**Topic:**
Intellectual Property

**Achievement:**
Resilience through Intellectual Property

**Sector:**
Visual Arts

# IP case study: Pablo Picasso's art

Pablo Ruiz Picasso, a pioneer of Cubism and one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, left behind not only a vast artistic legacy but also a complex intellectual property (IP) portfolio. Today, Succession Picasso manages related IP rights, ensuring that his name, works, and likeness are used lawfully while safeguarding the art market against counterfeits and unauthorised exploitation.

## Challenge

Picasso's fame made his art and name widely reproduced on souvenirs, garments, and digital platforms, often without permission. With counterfeiting believed to affect up to half of the art market, the challenge for his heirs was to prevent misuse, protect the integrity of the works, and fight parasitism in a market full of unauthorised reproductions.

## Solution

Upon Picasso's death, his five heirs established Succession Picasso under French law as the sole owner of his IP rights. Managed by Claude Ruiz Picasso through the Picasso Administration, the organisation authorises or prohibits use of Picasso's works, likeness, and name. It works directly or via international representatives to handle requests, enforce rights, and manage licensing, ensuring compliance with copyright, trademark, and moral rights.

## Impact

Succession Picasso has become a guardian of Picasso's artistic legacy. By securing IP rights, it funds efforts to combat counterfeiting, supports exhibitions by loaning original artworks, and ensures that reproductions respect the integrity of the originals. It also works with online platforms and databanks to address unauthorised or misleading reproductions, helping maintain authenticity in the global art market.

## Milestones & Learnings

**1973:** After Picasso's death, his heirs formed Succession Picasso to manage his IP rights.
**Claude Ruiz Picasso created** the Picasso Administration to oversee licensing and enforcement of the IP assets.
**Established procedures** to distinguish IP assets and related rights from physical ownership of artworks.
**Invested resources** into combating counterfeiting, securing exhibitions, and monitoring online art sales.
**Moral rights and IP** enforcement are essential for protecting an artist's reputation.

## Key Takeaways

- IP assets remain central to managing and protecting an artist's legacy long after their death.
- Effective administration ensures not only legal protection but also funding for preservation and public access.
- Combating counterfeiting requires sustained investment, global monitoring, and strict enforcement of rights.

This best practice example is an edited version and has been summarised from its original text developed by the Learn-IP project, an EU co-funded project under the Erasmus+ programme, which aims to provide IP information and training for the Cultural heritage and cultural tourism sector. You can find the full case study and Learn-IP's other inspiring best practice examples here.