

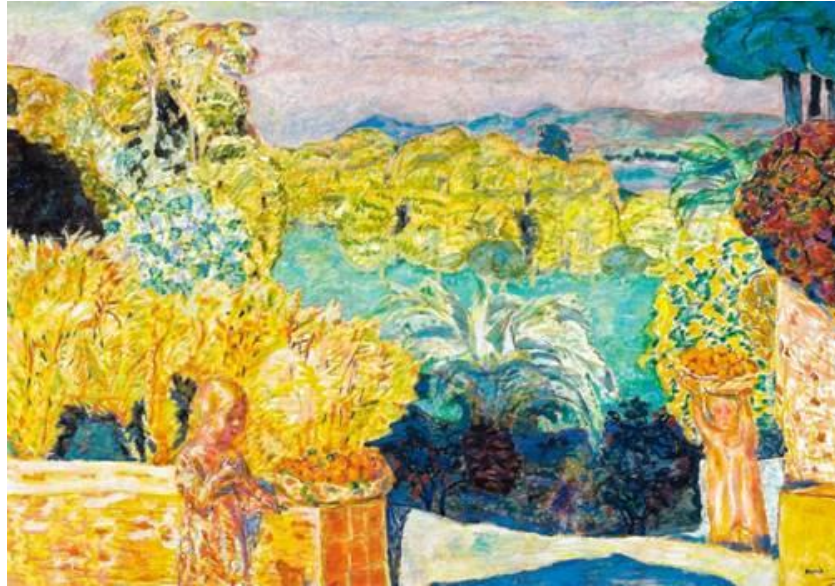
Press Release

New Exhibition

From 6 October 2016 to 15 January 2017

Pierre Bonnard

Radiant Colour



Parc des Champs-de-Bataille
Québec (Québec) G1R 5H3

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mnbaq.org

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Québec City, Wednesday 5 October 2016 ✕ Organized and co-produced by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) and Arthemisia Group (Italy), *Pierre Bonnard. Radiant Colour*, an exhibition devoted to the uncontested master of modern art Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), will be on view at the MNBAQ from October 6, 2016 to January 15, 2017. Presented by Desjardins, this first international exhibition in the temporary exhibition galleries of the Pierre Lassonde pavilion, which opened its doors in June 2016, will highlight the work of this French painter, engraver and poster artist, a founding member of the Nabis avant-garde movement who is widely known for the originality of his brilliant compositions and his unusual handling of the paint.

Curated by Jacqueline Munck, chief curator of artistic heritage at the Musée d'art moderne in Paris, the exhibition brings together some forty paintings along with a wide selection of prints and photographs. The artworks come from several prestigious European and North American museums and collections, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery



(Buffalo), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet (Côte d’Azur), the Musée d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Musée d’Orsay (Paris), to name just a few.

The exhibition traces Bonnard’s fascinating career, from the 1890s to the 1940s, taking up several themes in turn: life in Paris, domestic interiors, female nudes, gardens and landscapes in Normandy and the Côte d’Azur, and self-portraits of a rare intensity.

Thanks to an inventive exhibition design, the work of the set designer Guillaume Lord, visitors will be able to truly plunge into the artist’s creative process and private world, including a long sequence of works devoted to his companion Marthe, a constant subject of his work for nearly fifty years. The exhibition will enable visitors to better understand Bonnard’s life and the deeply personal quality of his work, developed in an atmosphere of subjectivity and sensation, a profoundly lyrical world which testifies to Bonnard’s extraordinary sensibility. Throughout his life, he strove to alter reality, once declaring that “the object is not to paint life, but to make painting come alive.”

This remarkable survey at the heart of the oeuvre of a major European artist of the first half of the twentieth century will be accompanied by a film by Aimé and Adrien Maeght made between 1937 and 1946. This short film shows Bonnard in the garden of his home in Normandy, on the Midi beach at Cannes and while sailing off the coast of the Côte d’Azur.

Pierre Bonnard, time line

1867 Pierre Bonnard is born on October 3 in Fontenay-aux-Roses (Hauts-de-Seine).

1885-1888 Studies law.

1887-1889 At Académie Julian, makes the acquaintance of Paul Sérusier, Maurice Denis and Paul Ranson, with whom he founds the Nabis in 1888. At the École des beaux-arts de Paris, he meets Ker-Xavier Roussel and Édouard Vuillard.



- 1891 First showing at the Salon des indépendants, where his work would figure regularly.
- 1893 Meets Maria Boursin (1869-1942), who went by the name Marthe, and who became his companion and model.
- 1896 First solo exhibition, at Galerie Durand-Ruel, in Paris.
- 1898 Paints naturalistic nudes, urbanscapes and personal scenes. Takes a series of photographs of Marthe at the family home at Grand-Lemps, in Isère.
- 1900 Ambroise Vollard publishes Paul Verlaine's *Parallèlement*, illustrated by Bonnard.
- 1903 Is part of the Vienna Secession, the Berlin Secession and the first Salon d'automne.
- 1910 Creates *La Méditerranée* triptych, commissioned by Russian collector Ivan Morozov for the grand staircase at his home.
- 1912 Buys Ma Roulotte villa in Vernon, Normandy. Monet is his neighbour.
- 1913 Exhibits at the Armory Show in New York City and at the Art Institute of Chicago.
- 1917 In May, is part of the fourth mission of war artists to the Somme front.
- 1918 Paints a series of large-scale landscapes seen from terraces. Bonnard and Renoir are the honorary chairs of the Jeune Peinture française group.
- 1919 François Fosca and Léon Werth publish two studies on Bonnard.
- 1920 Due to Marthe's health, the couple visits spas regularly.
- 1924 Retrospective consisting of 68 paintings at Galerie Druet, in Paris.
- 1925 Marries Marthe. Begins his famous series of nudes bathing.



1926 Buys Le Bosquet villa in Cannet, on the Côte d’Azur. Member of the Carnegie Prize jury, travels to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago and Washington, where he meets collectors Duncan and Marjorie Phillips, and to New York City.

1928 First major solo exhibition in New York City, at the De Hauke Gallery.

1934 Exposes 44 paintings at the Wildenstein Gallery in New York City.

1935 Matisse visits Bonnard regularly in Cannet.

1937 Presents 33 works at *Les Maîtres de l’art indépendant, 1895-1937* exhibition at the Petit Palais, in Paris.

1938 The Art Institute of Chicago devotes a major exhibition to Bonnard and Vuillard.

1939 Sells his Vernon house and leaves Paris for Le Cannet. Paints landscapes and self-portraits.

1942 Marthe Bonnard dies on January 26.

1947 Pierre Bonnard dies at Cannet on January 23. The Musée de l’Orangerie presents a retrospective exhibition of his work. A special edition of *Verve* magazine is published, as planned by Bonnard and publisher Tériade as early as 1941.

1948 Retrospective at New York City’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

Credits

The exhibition *Pierre Bonnard. Radiant Colour* is co-produced by the Musée des beaux-arts du Québec and Arthemisia Group (Italy).

Curator

Jacqueline Munck
Chief Curator, Artistic Heritage,
Musée d’Art moderne de la Ville
de Paris

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Exhibition Design
Guillaume Lord

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Tabasko

30 -

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Une exposition présentée par



Québec

ARHEMISIA
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Pierre Bonnard. Radiant Colour
MNBAQ's Pierre Lassonde pavilion
From 6 October 6 2016 to 15 January 15 2017

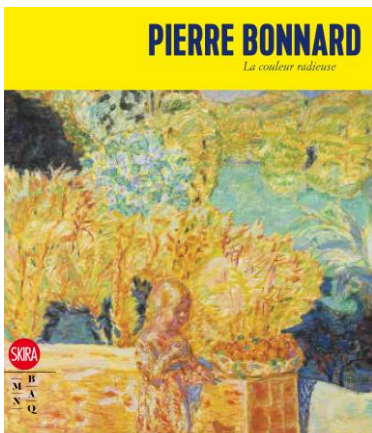
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Page 1 - Pierre Bonnard, *Paysage du Midi et deux enfants*, 1916-1918 (Art Gallery of Ontario) // Portrait de Pierre Bonnard

Page 2 - Pierre Bonnard, *La Porte du jardin de la villa Le Bosquet, au Cannet*, 1944. Huile sur toile, 52,7 x 64,2 cm. Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan

Page 3 - Pierre Bonnard

Page 4 - Pierre Bonnard, *Marthe à la nappe blanche*, 1926. Huile sur toile, 69 x 54 cm. Collection Winter



The Catalogue

Edited by Jacqueline Munck, chief curator of artistic heritage at the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, the catalogue *Pierre Bonnard: La couleur radieuse* takes the reader inside the artist's personal world and his creative process. Various dimensions of Bonnard's status as a singular figure in the art of the first half of the twentieth century are introduced through a selection of a hundred of his works: his Nabis years and time in Paris; street scenes and domestic interiors; family and more intimate

scenes, including a sequence devoted to his companion, Marthe; and the landscapes of Le Cannet in the 1930s and 40s.

Five highly-regarded specialists – Dita Amory, Emmanuelle de l’Ecotais, Itzhak Goldbert, Isabelle Monod-Fontaine and Véronique Serrano – have contributed texts alongside Jacqueline Munck for this volume, which sets a standard in the field. The 184-page volume includes 148 colour illustrations, plunging the reader as never before into the world of this “painter who travelled around his house,” as Maurice Denis, a French artist and art historian, once remarked.

Published by Skira, this book is distributed by Dimédia and is available for purchase at the Musée gift shop and in numerous bookstores throughout Québec.

Complements : the exhibition themes

Paris, Its Streets and Its Life



Painter, printmaker, and illustrator, Bonnard was at the very heart of what it meant to be modern in Paris in the 1890s and was an attentive observer of city life. As a member of the avant-garde Nabis (“prophets” in Hebrew) with Maurice Denis, Paul Sérusier, Édouard Vuillard and several others, he was also part of the joyous eclecticism of *La Revue blanche*, which was very receptive to new trends and contributed to the emergence of numerous writers, musicians and artists.

Sourcing his themes from the spectacle of the bustling city, and with an avowed desire to go beyond Impressionism and to overhaul the visual vernacular, Bonnard explored subjects of daily life eminently on the move—omnibuses, the market and merchants peddling their wares, people crossing a bridge, Parisians hurrying to get out of the rain, games and strolls.

The young artist earned considerable success as a poster designer. Drawing inspiration from the compositional advances achieved in Japanese prints, he crafted a visual syntax in which flowing lines, solid colour, and striking formatting combine to create bold decorative stylization.



Interiors

At the end of the 1890s, Bonnard gradually moved away from the Nabi aesthetic and produced more intimate compositions featuring his family within domestic interiors. His loved ones, whom he paints familiarly, are bathed in a dramatic light.

The images reveal unsuspected details which are often invisible at first glance, hidden by the filtered light of the room. These interiors were the artist's pretext for a layout that he would use time and time again—a plunging view of a table where dinner guests have gathered, with a blurry background and no visible ceiling.

However, these works are somewhat severe and the palette relatively dark, very different from the bloom of colour that would enliven his variations on the same theme over the years.

A Man and a Woman (Naked in the Studio)

Bonnard met Maria Boursin (who went by the name Marthe) in 1893 and took up with her immediately. She remained his favourite model throughout her life. This encounter would be pivotal for the artist. New themes appeared in his work, especially numerous nudes, often infused with a murky sensuality.

The subjects are shown close up in a relatively undetermined spatial context, the artist caring more about conveying the atmosphere and the mood of surrender. In so doing, he brings the pose of the academic model out of the studio and into the intimacy of everyday life.

Marthe's body would become an irreplaceable archetype, Bonnard continuing to depict her as a young woman despite the passing years.

Bonnard and Photography

Between 1897 and 1916, Bonnard took some 200 photographs with a Pocket Kodak which widened access to photography and allowed amateur photography to emerge.

Bonnard never considered these small (3.8 × 5 cm) photographs fully fledged works of art. Several of them are family photos and were taken on the spur of the moment. Cases in point are the many photos of the Terrasse children, snapshots of summer holidays spent at the family estate at Grand-Lemps, in Isère.

On the other hand, some photographs seem to have been taken with a specific artistic purpose in mind and have a direct connection to certain paintings and other works the artist produced at the same point in time. The series of Marthe naked on the bed (1899-1900) and that of Marthe and Bonnard in the Montval garden (1900-1901), for example, form a repertory of compositions and postures that were grist for the artist's mill.

In fact, several of Bonnard's artistic cues seem to stem from the new perception of reality afforded by photography: in his still lifes or interiors, he regularly uses foreshortening, tight cropping and plunging views.



Drawing as Part of the Process

Bonnard drew copiously throughout his career. His quick pencil drawings show that the artist was in the habit of sketching from life. These first impressions—a vast inventory of forms and motifs—could inspire future paintings.

Turning the classical theory of art topsy-turvy, Bonnard considered colour as belonging to the realm of reason, whereas drawing was connected to immediate sensation.

Marthe



Bonnard did paintings of Marthe unrelentingly for nearly 50 years in multiple permutations on the private life they shared in family settings and everyday activities. Over time, the couple withdrew more and more into the shell of their intimacy. Marthe remained omnipresent in this world, eating, reading, napping or bathing.

Marthe et son chien Black (1906) launches this masterly suite of compositions, the prototype for many future paintings. Set in the hushed atmosphere of a middle-class home, these works, with their silent characters wearing pensive expressions as in a daydream, tell a simple story.

Bonnard worked from memory, never from life, and his paintings describe an emotional space that blends memories and sensations indistinctly. Familiar everyday rituals are transposed to a melancholic place beyond time that is also the hallmark of the painter.

Spatial Dialogues: Interiors and Still Lifes



The interiors from Bonnard's mature period are among the artist's most interesting and creative. Some paintings reference the couple's vacation spots, but for most of them, the setting is the Vernon house, in Normandy, and later, the house in Cанны, on the Côte d'Azur.

In 1926, Bonnard and his wife bought Villa Le Bosquet, in Cанны. In this serene environment, the artist produced highly balanced work dominated by the theme of interiors with openings. Luncheon scenes in the dining room proliferate, the painter creating practically cinematographic sequences with no concern for realism or chronology.

With a very keen sense of observation, Bonnard, "a house traveller" (Maurice Denis), composed paintings of astonishing spatial complexity, fooling the eye and bidding the viewer to look closely.

Often including a window, door or other exit, these interiors open to a patio, garden or distant landscape. Similarly, several of them contain mirrors which provide an array of spatial modulations, reversing forms and blurring proportions. Different spaces combine to dissolve the boundaries between inside and outside and between near and far.

Mediterranean Landscapes and Seascapes

In 1909, Bonnard discovered the brilliant light of the Mediterranean, and he experienced an amazement that forever influenced his work. Eventually he settled permanently on the Côte d’Azur, whose horizons bewitched him and inspired his most luminous paintings.

There, he developed a lyrical interpretation of nature featuring lush landscapes, and in his last years, his increasingly radical work reached its height, the references to the real gradually dissolving.

Doing away with the intrinsic colour of objects and the usual appearance of forms, Bonnard employs free brushwork—the contours of figures becoming less and less crisp—and his palette, favouring subtle harmonies of sensual and effervescent colour, was one of dizzying virtuosity. While never losing sight of people and objects, he exploited the expressive qualities of colour to the fullest, colour “that acts,” as his nephew Antoine Terrasse so aptly put it.

The late landscapes are typical of the artist’s quest for the absolute and abstraction of a kind. Prefiguring the approach of young post-war artists, Bonnard suggests an intensified vision, culminating in a wonderful transfiguration of what is real, transformed by blinding light.

“I hope my painting will hold up, and not crack. I’d like to be seen by the young painters of the year 2000 with butterflies’ wings.”

– Pierre Bonnard



Autoportraits

Bonnard dies in 1947. Two years earlier, he runs three iconic self-portraits, motionless, without gesture, it offers images stripped and with no complacency of himself. In this table, the artist, the gaunt face and tense features, fixed the ice, but the blind orbits seem to announce a future without future.

Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947)

Pierre Bonnard, *Femme au parapluie*, 1895. Lithographie, 25,1 x 15,5 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, achat (1956.04). Crédit photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Pierre Bonnard, *Pont du Carrousel*, 1903. Huile sur toile, 72,39 x 99,38 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, don de M. et Mme Sidney F. Brody (M.67.3)

Pierre Bonnard, *Personnages dans la rue avec tramway vert*, 1905. Huile sur papier marouflé sur toile, 48 x 55 cm. Collection particulière, Genève (D01862)

Pierre Bonnard, *La Lampe à huile*, 1898-1900. Huile sur panneau. 55,3 x 51,8 cm. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (PDP PD. 28-1998)

Pierre Bonnard, *Nu de profil*, vers 1917. Huile sur toile, 103 x 52,5 cm. Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet - Côte d'Azur

Pierre Bonnard, *Marthe à la nappe blanche*, 1926. Huile sur toile, 69 x 54 cm. Collection Winter

Pierre Bonnard, *Le Déjeuner, Marthe et Jean Terrasse*, 1916. Huile sur toile, 67 x 122 cm. Collection particulière

Pierre Bonnard, *Intérieur au balcon*, 1919. Huile sur toile, 52 x 77 cm. Musée d'art moderne André Malraux, Le Havre, collection Olivier Senn, donation Hélène Senn-Foulds, 2004 (2004.3.1)

Pierre Bonnard, *Le Déjeuner*, 1932. Huile sur toile, 68 x 84 cm. Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris

Pierre Bonnard, *Coin de table*, vers 1911. Huile sur toile, 125 x 111 cm. Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris La Défense (FNAC 21037)

Pierre Bonnard, *La Porte du jardin de la villa Le Bosquet au Cannet*, 1944. Huile sur toile, 64,2 x 52,7 cm. Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan, don de la Fondation L.C. et Margaret Walker (1975.25)

Pierre Bonnard, *Paysage du Midi et deux enfants*, 1916-1918. Huile sur toile, 139,1 x 198,1 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, don de Sam et Ayala Zacks, 1970 (71/62)

Pierre Bonnard, *Autoportrait*, 1945. Huile sur toile, 56 x 44 cm. Fondation Bemberg, Toulouse

General Information

OPENING HOURS OF THE MUSÉE

**September 6, 2016
to June 1, 2017**
Tuesday to Sunday,
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Wednesdays till 9:00 p.m.

Closed Mondays (except October
10, 2016, March 6, April 16 and
May 22, 2017)

ADMISSION

Adults : 18 \$
Seniors (65 and Over) : 16 \$
Ages 18 to 30 ans : 10 \$
Ages 13 to 17 ans : 5 \$
Children 12 and under: Free
**Families : 40 \$ (2 adults and 3
children 13 to 17)**
Members : Free
Wednesdays from,
5:00 to 9:00 p.m.: **Half-price**
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