

HOTEL DE  
**CAUMONT**  
CENTRE D'ART  
AIX-EN-PROVENCE

PRESS RELEASE

# BONNARD ET LE JAPON

FROM 30 APRIL TO 6 OCTOBER 2024

Bonnard

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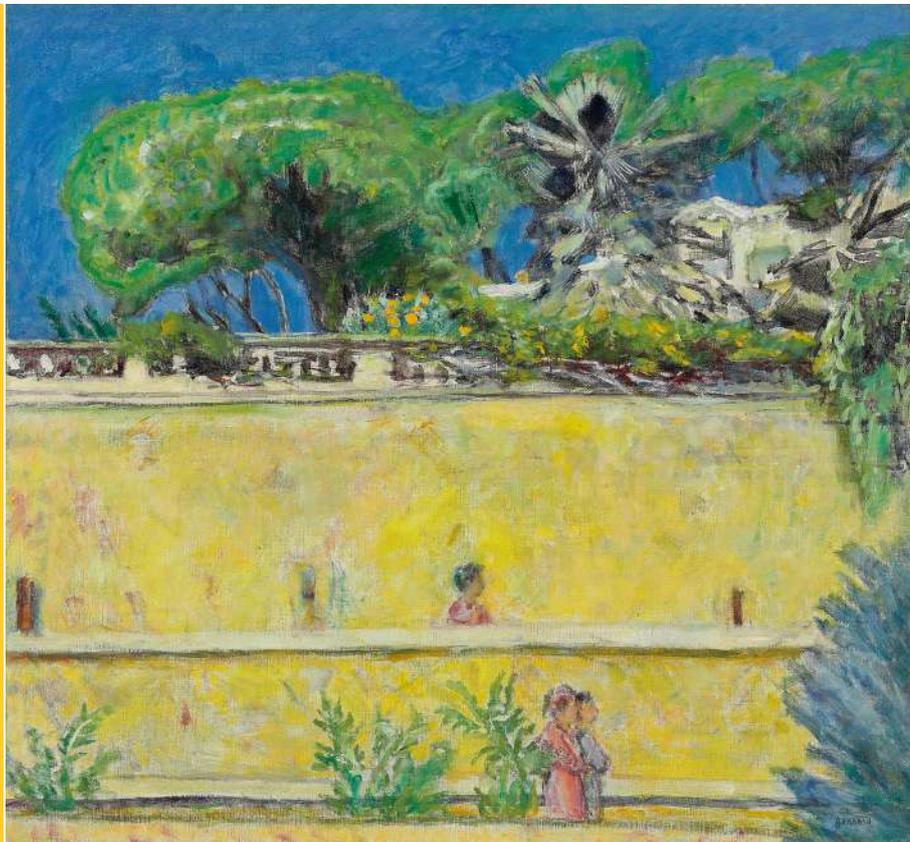
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In 2024, the Hôtel de Caumont will dedicate its summer exhibition to the genius of Pierre Bonnard and the influence on him of Japanese art. This will be the first exhibition on the subject, showing how Bonnard – once known as the “Nabi très japonard” (very Japanese Nabi) – assimilated the aesthetics of Japanese art into his treatment of space, time and movement, creating works that renounced naturalism and impressionism. Works by the French painter will be exhibited alongside Japanese prints to illustrate the similarities and formal affinities between them, and the importance for Bonnard of this source of inspiration.



Pierre Bonnard, *L'Amandier en fleurs*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 51,1 x 34,9 cm, Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet, donation from Meyer fondation © musée Bonnard, Le Cannet

Pierre Bonnard, *Terrasse dans le Midi*, c. 1925, Oil on canvas, 68 x 73 cm, Fondation Glénat, Grenoble, Photo: akg-images / Fine Art Images / Heritage Images

A member of the Nabi group, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) shook up the development of artistic modernity with the subtlety of his representation of visual sensations. Bonnard divided his time between the Paris region, Normandy and Isère, as well as the Côte d’Azur, where he bought a house in Le Cannet, near Aix-en-Provence. The bustling life of cities, the pleasures of country life, and landscapes bathed by the golden light of the Midi were all pretexts for the artist to develop a new manner of depicting movement, and for far-reaching reflection on the treatment of colour, the fleeting feelings of everyday life, and the beauty of nature. His vibrant works reveal an unmatched understanding of colour and its infinite variations.

Beginning in the 1860s, for a period of almost half a century, a vogue for all things Japanese spread through France and then England, in particular as a result of Japan's participation in the 1867 World's Fair. Bonnard was interested very early on by the characteristics of *Ukiyo-e* prints, a Japanese term meaning "image of the floating world". The exhibition of Japanese prints at the École des Beaux-arts in the spring of 1890 was a true revelation for him, marking the moment when he turned his attention away from the representation of reality and embraced new aesthetic principles, such as the fluidity of movement, contrasting colours, sinuous lines, a pronounced fondness for decoration and stylised elements, and the flattening of space. From that time on, his style was truly marked by japonisme, a term coined in 1872 by Philippe Burty to refer to the influence of Japan on Western art.

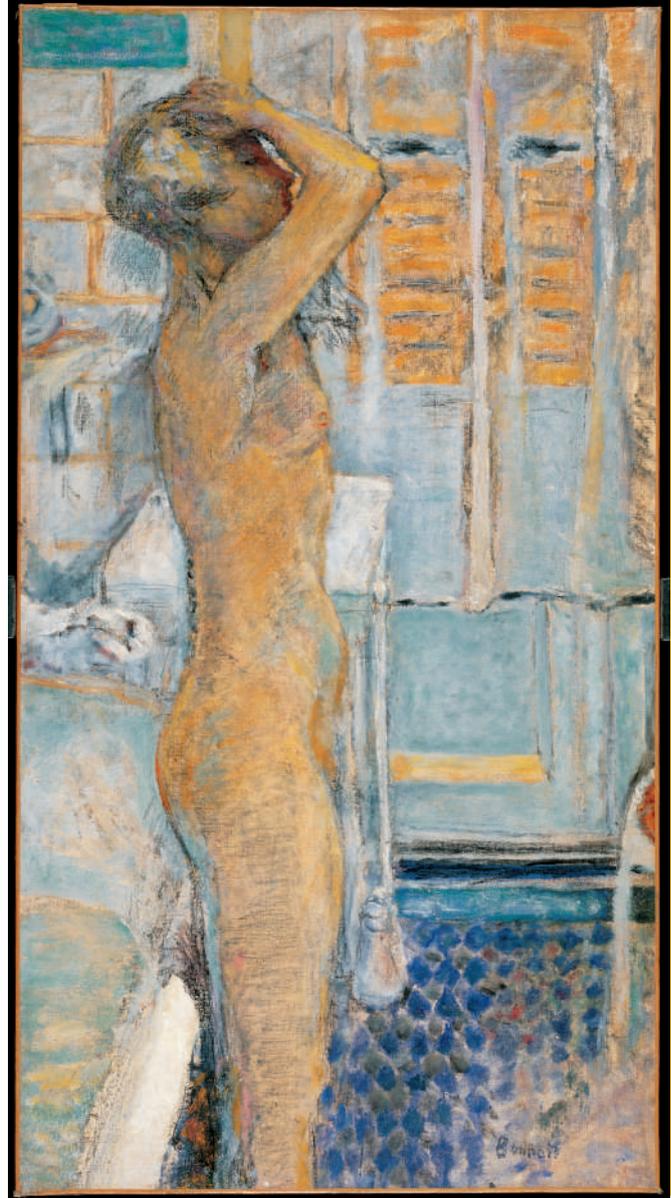
Bonnard, the master of colour, was also inspired by the estrangement from reality of Japanese art, which gave artists great freedom in the construction of their images, allowing the coexistence of several spaces and temporalities. But what really enraptured Bonnard was the vividness of the colours used in Japanese prints, especially in those hung up in his bedroom: "I understood from my contact with these crude popular images that colour could express anything, like here, without the need for relief or modelling. It seemed to me that it was possible to convey light, form and character with colour alone".



Pierre Bonnard, *La nappe blanche*, 1925, Oil on canvas, 100 x 112 cm, Wuppertal, musée Von der Heydt, Foto: Medienzentrum Wuppertal

Through this exhibition, the public will have the opportunity to (re)discover Bonnard's works and a selection of Japanese prints from the prestigious Leskowicz Collection, to understand how Bonnard's style remains always strongly influenced by Japanese concepts and aesthetics. A dynamic presentation will illustrate how works by artists, though remote from one another in time, space and culture, raise similar aesthetic questions and express ideas, emotions and situations that display many common characteristics. Very quickly, Japan put Bonnard on the path of colour, light, the instantaneous and the expression of transient feelings.

Conceived by Isabelle Cahn, the exhibition catalogue will complement the exhibition with scholarly articles on Japonism and Japanese prints.



Pierre Bonnard, *Nu gris de profil*, c. 1933, Oil on canvas, 114 x 61 cm, Vienne, Musée Albertina, La Collection Batliner, ALBERTINA, Wien - Sammlung Batliner

**This exhibition benefits from exceptional loans from the Georges Leskowicz collection and the Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet.**

## **INTERVIEW WITH THE EXHIBITION CURATOR ISABELLE CAHN**

### **How did this exhibition project come about?**

A Bonnard exhibition has never been held in Aix-en-Provence, so the idea of presenting the oeuvre of the master of colour and light in this city in the south of France became evident. As for the more specific theme of Bonnard's relation with Japan, it is an entirely novel approach for an exhibition. Bonnard's love of Japan, which began in his youth, had already been analysed but limited to his work produced in the years 1890–1900. My hypothesis is that his love of Japanese art and culture went well beyond this period and right up until the end of his life.

### **What defines Pierre Bonnard's links with Japanese prints?**

We do not know the exact date of Bonnard's first viewing of Japanese prints. It seems that this occurred early on, before his visit to the major exhibition on Japanese engraving held in the spring of 1890 at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where there was an exhibition of ancient prints of engravers dating from the seventeenth to nineteenth century. Initially, Bonnard was interested in the inexpensive prints with bright colours. 'In my youth I was enthralled by the magnificent mix of colours in the Japanese crépons', he told Hedy Hahnloser in January 1936. He bought the engravings in specialised shops and in Parisian department stores. He was fascinated by the 'unrefined and naive' nature of these images. Thus, Bonnard began to compile a major collection that was gradually enriched with good quality prints. Unfortunately, the extent of the collection is now unknown, as it was dispersed after his death, but Bonnard did have access to Japanese prints pinned to the wall of his studio.

### **Of the works presented in the exhibition, which are the most remarkable or rarely exhibited? Could you talk about a specific work?**

Thanks to the generosity of French and foreign museums and to loans from private collectors, the exhibition comprises many exceptional works by Bonnard, which have never or rarely been seen in France, such as *Les deux chiens*, *Le Bar*, *L'Omnibus*, *La Place Clichy*, *Le Jardin de Paris*, *Conversation Provençale*, *La Nappe Blanche*, *Le Dessert*, *Le Nu Gris de Profil* and many others. All of them further highlight the theme of the exhibition while illustrating the many facets of Bonnard's talent, as a painter of intimate scenes, landscapes, portraits, and decors, and as an exceptional draughtsman and a talented engraver.

The exhibition also includes many Japanese prints held in the Georges Leskowicz Collection, which are masterpieces, such as Hokusai's *The Great Wave*, along with many other sheets executed by Hiroshige, Utamaro, Kuniyoshi, and Eisen.

Amongst the exhibition's many important works is *Les femmes au Jardin* from the collection of the Musée d'Orsay, a decorative ensemble comprising four panels that Bonnard had originally designed as a folding screen intended to be displayed at the 1891 Salon des Indépendants. He was inspired by Japanese aesthetic formulae for the painting of the screen: the lengthening of the female outlines, arabesque lines, perspective without depth, and the decorative treatment of the motifs. His models were his cousin Berthe Schaedlin, with whom he was secretly in love, and his sister Andrée Terrasse. Here they are represented as Japanese-style figures over a ground of stylised plants that evoke the seasons, except for winter. Also noteworthy is the presence of familiar animals, with a leaping dog and a black cat lying at his mistress's feet. Several days before the opening of the Salon, Bonnard took the screen apart to present it in the form of an ensemble of separate panels, which were fixed to the wall rather than placed in a zigzag on the floor, as he explained to his mother in a letter: 'They are much better when they are presented on a wall. They are too much like paintings to be used for a screen.'

**Apart from the artistic principles of the prints that influenced Bonnard, would you say that Japanese philosophy also had an impact on his approach?**

Indeed, this is an important subject that is at the core of the exhibition. Bonnard was not only drawn to Japanese aesthetics but also the thinking of the ukiyo-e artists. The Japanese term ukiyo refers to a floating world that reflects the Buddhist principle of impermanence, as ukiyo-e means images of the floating world. This painting expresses the ephemeral nature of phenomena, the mysterious beauty of nature and living beings, the subtle charm of things. This sensitive approach resonates perfectly with the Japanese term wabi-sabi the guiding principle of the tea ceremony in the fifteenth century, which refers to an aesthetic ideal and a philosophical principle that consists of paying attention to all the details of daily existence.

Like the Japanese artists, Bonnard used all kinds of devices to depict movement in space. His way of capturing the gait of the passers-by in the streets, the motions of the ice skaters on the ice, and the acrobatics of a circus horse have similarities with Hokusai's manga drawings representing the deconstructed movements of dance and wrestling. Bonnard also adopted a Japanese approach when he painted nature at its zenith, in the spring time with the blossoming of the almond trees and mimosas and in the summer when the light transcends the landscape.

**On a more personal note, what was your main discovery when you worked on this exhibition?**

That the influence of Japan on Bonnard was not limited to the formal correspondence of the 1890s, but was more deeply rooted in his approach and work right up until the end of his life; this was confirmed by the discovery of a document in the archives of the Musée Bonnard brought to our attention by the museum's director Véronique Serrano. The item in question was a note in one of the artist's account books relating to the acquisition in 1946 of rolls of Japanese prints.

This exhibition also prompted fascinating encounters with many collectors, researchers, and lovers of Bonnard's oeuvre who have generously supported the project.

## CHRONOLOGICAL MARKERS

### 1867

3 October: Pierre Bonnard is born in Fontenay-aux-Roses (Hauts-de-Seine). Pierre's brother, Charles, is born in 1864. His sister, Andrée, is born in 1872.

**Japan is represented for the first time in the Exposition Universelle in Paris, which contributes to the launch of the vogue for 'Japonisme'.**

### 1872

**Philippe Burty coins the term Japonisme to refer to the impact of Japan on the Western arts, in an article published in *Renaissance littéraire et artistique*.**

### 1887

While studying law, Bonnard enrolls at the Académie Julian to prepare his admission to the École des Beaux-Arts. Here, he meets Paul Sérusier, Maurice Denis, Henri-Gabriel Ibels, and Paul-Élie Ranson.

### 1888

Bonnard is one of the founding members of the Nabis Movement.

### 1889

He is admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts; he becomes a friend of Ker-Xavier Roussel and Édouard Vuillard. He rents an apartment that he uses as a studio in the Batignolles district; he stays here for around ten years.

### 1890

He visits the exhibition 'La Gravure Japonaise' held by Siegfried Bing in the École des Beaux-Arts (25 April–22 May). **The complete history of Japanese prints is featured via the presentation of 760 woodcuts and 400 illustrated books, most of which originate from private Parisian collections.** This exhibition is a veritable aesthetic revelation for the artist.

### 1891

He paints *Femmes au Jardin*, largely inspired by the aesthetic principles of Japanese prints. Success of his first poster: *France-Champagne*. He definitively abandons his idea of pursuing a legal career to devote himself entirely to painting.

### 1892

March: He presents seven pictures at the Salon des Indépendants. On this occasion, Félix Fénéon describes him as a 'Nabi très Japonard'.

### 1893

Stepping off a tramway, he comes across young woman whom he asks to pose for him. Her name is Marthe de Méigny. They move in together in the autumn.

**1904**

He meets up with Vuillard and Roussel in Saint-Tropez. He meets Signac and Valtat.

**1909**

He visits Matisse's studio in Issy-les-Moulineaux, where he discovers Matisse's *La Danse*.

3 December: Bonnard, accompanied by Vuillard, visits Monet in Giverny for the first time.

**1911**

May: Bonnard purchases '*Ma Roulotte*', a house in Vernonnet (in the Eure *département*).

**1914**

After the outbreak of the First World War, Pierre and Marthe move to *Ma Roulotte*.

**1921**

March: he travels to Italy, where he meets up with his nephew Charles Terrasse. He meets up with his mistress, Renée Monchaty, with whom he stays a couple of weeks.

**1925**

13 August: Pierre and Marthe get married in a private wedding ceremony in the Mairie of the 18th arrondissement in Paris, in the presence of two witnesses: their concierge and her husband.

9 September: after finding out about Bonnard's marriage, Renée Monchaty commits suicide

**1926**

27 February: Bonnard buys a villa located on Avenue Victoria at Le Cannet, which he calls '*Le Bosquet*'.

**1927**

Bonnard begins to keep a diary, which is filled with sketches, notes, and observations.

He makes many journeys back and forth between Vernon and Le Cannet.

**1933**

4-25 October: he takes part in the exhibition Modern European Art at the MoMA in New York.

**1941**

End of spring: he visits Maillol in Le Cannet in the company of Dina Vierny.

**1942**

26 January: Marthe passes away in Le Cannet. She is buried on 28 January, without a religious ceremony.

**1947**

Sick and bedridden, Bonnard asks his nephew Charles to add the finishing touches to his last painting, *L'Amandier*.

Right up to the eve of his death, his nephew Charles sends him, at his request, Japanese prints that are pinned onto his wall of images in his studio in the Midi.

23 January: Bonnard passes away at Le Bosquet. He is buried in the communal cemetery Notre-Dame-des-Anges du Cannet alongside Marthe.

## EXHIBITION TOUR

### The gaze revolution

The extent to which the influence of Japan was instrumental in changing art at the turn of the twentieth century cannot be emphasised enough, as it led Western artists to adopt a more autonomous approach with regard to the subject matter. Bonnard discovered Japanese prints at around the age of twenty-three, when he visited the exhibition of Japanese engraving held by S. Bing at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the spring of 1890. The young painter then continued his artistic training at the Académie Julian and, along with Paul Sérusier, Édouard Vuillard, Maurice Denis, and Paul-Élie Ranson, he formed the core of the Nabis, a word derived from Neviim, a Hebrew word meaning 'prophets'. The Nabis sought to overturn the constraints of academic certitudes and met on a weekly basis to discuss the theories and principles of a new art form.



The discovery of Japanese prints revealed a new and strikingly different approach to the representation of reality. For Pierre Bonnard these images, comprising flat areas of colour without shadows or modelling and stripped of details, highlighted the power of colour as a means of expression. 'When I came across these somewhat crude popular pictures, I realised that colour could express anything without resort to relief or modelling. It seemed to me that one could render light, shape, typical properties by colour alone'<sup>1</sup>. The prints inspired him to free himself from modelling, to shift away from precise forms, and develop a new way of representing space and movement. Also influenced by the calligraphic style and its fluid arabesque lines, Bonnard adopted a decorative stylisation that would become one of the principle characteristics of his painting.

Bonnard shared with the great masters of Japanese prints a sensibility for living beings, nature, and animals, along with an interest in the representation of daily life and hedonism. Far from being influenced merely during a brief phase, he applied these Japanese influences until the end of his life, adopting the fundamental principles of Nippon philosophy, such as an interest in observing the world and reflection on the brevity of human existence, in opposition to the constantly renewed cycle of nature.

Pierre Bonnard, *Femmes au jardin : Femme à la robe à pois blancs* ; 1890-1891,  
Glue tempera on canvas, decorative panels, 160,5 x 48 cm, Paris, musée d'Orsay,  
Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

1. Gaston Diehl, « Pierre Bonnard dans son univers enchanté », Comœdia, July 10 1943, p.6.

### The Japanese prints

In the 1860s, after the opening of trade between Japan and France, the *ukiyo-e* engravings, scorned by the Japanese for the superficiality of their subject matter, were used to pack out manufactured products in their shipping crates. Yet, these prints were the result of several decades of research in Japan.

It was the painter Hishikawa Moronobu (?–1694), who, in the seventeenth century, developed these impressions on wood, which until that point had been created to illustrate works. He came up with the idea of printing them on a separate sheet. He was also the first artist to describe himself as a *ukiyo-e* painter.

The term *ukiyo-e* comprises two words: 'ukiyo', which is generally translated by the expression 'floating world', but which means more simply the world in which people live, and 'e' which means 'image', print, or painting. The expression 'image of the floating world' refers to an artistic movement of the Edo epoch (1603–1868).

While the very first polychrome prints were quite expensive, they soon became cheap. These prints were a commercial product. They had to be printed and sold rapidly to meet the demands of fashion and the clients. The projects began with the publisher who selected his painter according to the subject he wished to make prints of. Once the artist's drawing had been validated by the publisher and censorship, it was handed to the engraver, and finally the printer, who applied each colour in turn by placing the paper on engraved plates.

Utamaro's portraits of women, the landscapes of Hokusai and Hiroshige, and Sharaku's actors were given the status of masterpieces in the West and many artists were fascinated with them at the turn of the twentieth century.

Thanks to the use of aesthetic processes, such as



Utagawa Hiroshige, *Fireworks of Ryōgoku*, «Famous Edo views-Five elements» series, Signed: Hiroshige ga, Editeur: Sanoya Kihei, c.1851-52, Xylogravure polychrome, Format: oban tate-e, 36,3 x 25 cm, Collection Georges Leskowitz, Rights reserved

### A roving eye

In 1889, Bonnard definitively launched himself into an artistic career and rented a studio in Paris in the Batignolles district. He liked the liveliness of the working-class districts he explored day and night, taking his walks to the Place Clichy. The rapid pulse of the capital city stimulated his creativity: cabs, busy bourgeois, children, and passers-by are all the protagonists of Bonnard's Paris, where he observed the traffic and movements of the crowds. Bonnard also savoured the city's nocturnal life and took great pleasure in frequenting the cabarets of Montmartre, the circuses, and the avant-garde theatre.

Transposing the lessons learned from the masters of the *ukiyo-e*, Bonnard adopted their style in his representations of movement. He used different effects to depict the dynamism of these urban scenes, such as close-ups, series of full and empty areas, and the absence of a middle ground that obliges the viewer's eye to constantly shift over the composition.



Pierre Bonnard, *Les Grands Boulevards*, c.1895, India ink with gouache highlights, 32,3 x 49,2 cm, Le Cannet, musée Bonnard © Musée Bonnard/Jean-Michel Drouet

The motifs cut off by the edge of the picture, which are evident in the prints, were also often used by Bonnard as they suggested that the narrative continued beyond the bounds of the support. These unusual compositions were to some extent influenced by cinematography, which Bonnard experienced thanks to the films of the genre's pioneers, Auguste and Louis Lumière, and by preceding innovations such as Jules Marey's chronophotograph, invented in 1889. Deconstructed movement radically changed the artist's perception of the world and its representation. In addition, the Japanese prints, sometimes taking the form of polyptychs, suggested this continuity in the discontinuity of the narrative, with scenes that occurred in simultaneous timeframes.

All these techniques enabled Bonnard to express the unpredictability and frenzied activities of city life. Fin-de-siècle Paris was in a state of effervescence and the mischievous Bonnard benevolently represented scenes of streets filled with intriguing or amusing details, such as small dogs wandering freely and whose behaviour contrasts with that of the busy figures rushing about their business. He hastily captured their movements and expressions, thereby creating a powerful depiction of the impermanence of the urban landscape.

### Scenes of everyday life: natural histories and Kodomo

Japanese prints illustrated charming and tender scenes that featured children or animals. Scenes of motherhood, engraved early on by Utamaro and Kuniyoshi, were observed by Bonnard who, having had no children of his own, developed a passion for representing his six nephews and nieces, born between 1892 and 1899 from the marriage of his sister Andrée and the composer Claude Terrasse. The artist endlessly drew, painted, and photographed this world of familial harmony that he shared with the couple; the constantly renewed energy of youth always characterised the afternoons spent at Grand Lemps, the central gathering place of the Bonnards, where all the generations of the family came together; lamplit evenings, meals, sessions of studious homework, and musical interludes were moments of perfect happiness.

Bonnard, who was very shy, admitted that he suffered greatly from his inability to express his emotions and moods, unless it was to his dog or his cat, because, as he said, 'animals are not judgemental'. This direct and tender relation featured in many interior scenes in which he depicted his family during a meal. The appearance of the nose of the dog or cat of the house asking for food upset the codes of decency and added a touching note of charm to the representation of everyday life in Bonnard's pictures.



Pierre Bonnard, *L'Omnibus*, c.1895 Oil on canvas, 59 x 41 cm, Particular collection, photo : Bridgeman Images

The Japanese masters of the *ukiyo-e* also represented the complicity with animals often associated with tales and legends. Bonnard expressed the interaction between humans and animals via gazes and gestures in which he created an apposition between a certain rigidity in the human behaviour with the flexibility of the animals. The cats and dogs seems to be lordly in his paintings. They have taken possession of the house while the masters are away, invading the table or the couch. Merging into the motif, they are almost invisible at first sight. Sometimes one has to look at a Bonnard work for a while before spotting them and they are an unexpected surprise. The facetious *bonhomie* of the animals adds an innocent tenderness to this familial Arcadia depicted by Bonnard.

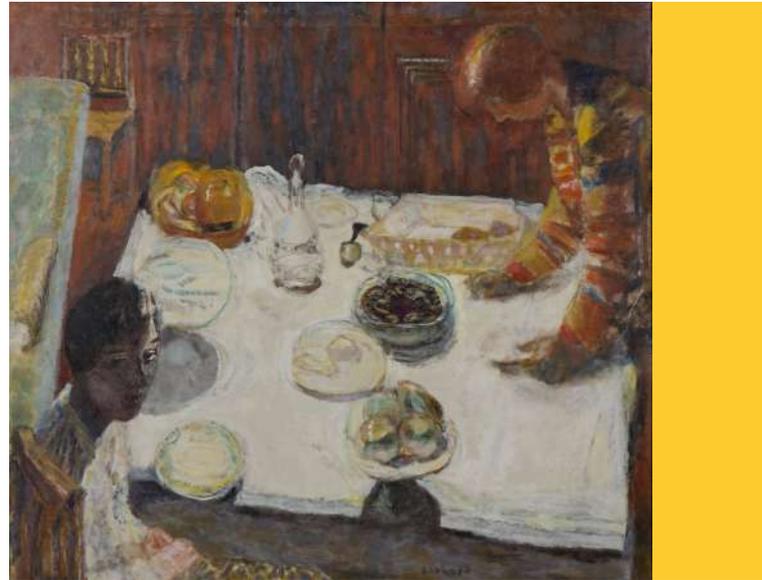
**A work of art is time suspended**

When Bonnard wrote in 1936, 'A work of art is time suspended', he was almost seventy and had the wisdom of age. Aside from his attraction to the aesthetic qualities of the prints, he shared with the Japanese a sensibility for the succession of the seasons and climatic variations. Every day, the artist noted down the weather in his small pocket diaries, in order to record the impact of the light on colours. Thus, he was entirely aware of the passage of time and the present instant, and the desire to suspend it as though fixing the memory of his initial feelings when viewing nature or a simple bunch of flowers.

As of 1910, Bonnard regularly stayed—preferably in the winter—in a number of towns and villages on the *Côte d'Azur*: Saint-Tropez, Grasse, Cannes, Antibes, and Le Cannet. In 1926, he bought a chalet on the heights of

Le Cannet, which he named 'Le Bosquet'. He was inspired by the South of France to introduce new light into his works and a fresh approach to the use of colour. His scenes are saturated by a powerful sunlight that sometimes dissolves forms and materials. The outlines or figures seem to be ghostlike, as though fixed in hieratic postures. The colour and light of his palette express the plenitude of suspended time.

Hence, Bonnard integrated the Buddhist idea of the impermanence of the world into his work. In the East, the relation with the ephemeral was fundamental. The eternal renewal of nature, through the cycle of the seasons, prompts reflection about our own finiteness. Based on his observations and analyses, Bonnard represented the world through strong and contrasting colour harmonies, in which the yellows and orange hues of his landscapes are counterbalanced by blues and violets.



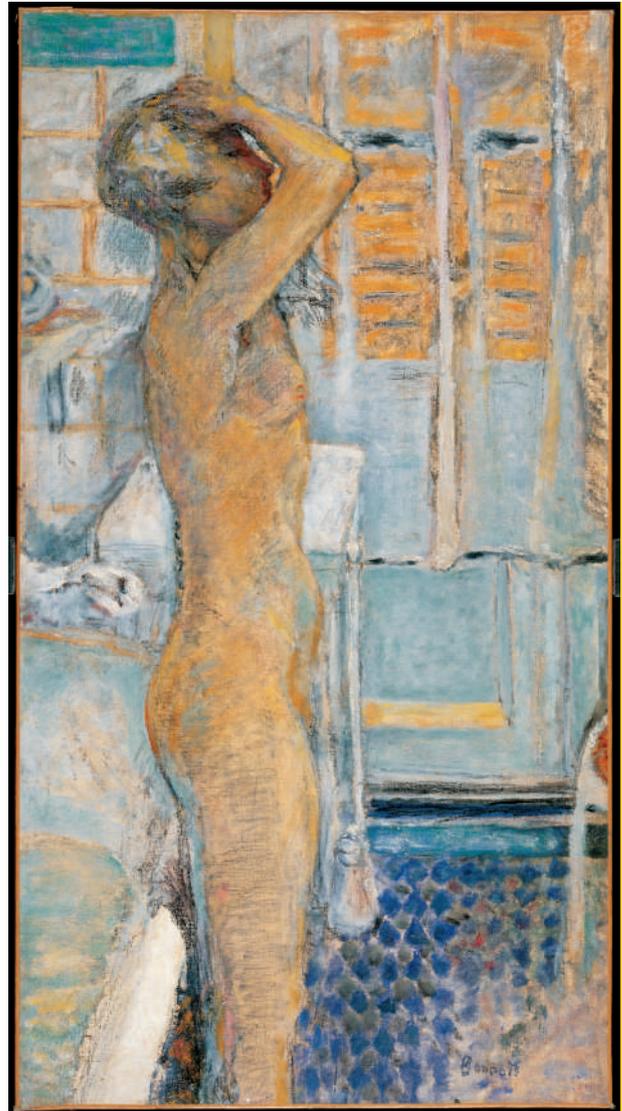
Pierre Bonnard, *La nappe blanche*. 1925, Oil on canvas, 100 x 112 cm, Wuppertal, musée Von der Heydt Foto: Medienzentrum Wuppertal

### The Hour of the Tiger

The female nude was represented by the Japanese masters through their representation of courtesans, in particular from the famous pleasure district of brothels that opened in 1617 in the capital of Edo and was given the name Yoshiwara. In Japan, 'The hour of the tiger' evokes the time between three and five in the morning, when the clients leave the geishas. Considered the most beautiful women of the epoch, they were worshipped and sought after as models by the painters of the time, such as Utamaro.

Bonnard was fascinated by femininity. He executed few male portraits, but produced an impressive number of drawings and paintings of female nudes. The first were almost exclusively posed by Marthe. But other models soon emerged in his pictures: professional sitters, friends, and even lovers. Bodies were represented in every fashion in a choreography of everyday life: standing, bent at the waist, and even in equilibrium when the model was straddling the edge of a bathtub. To break away from a classical formula of the nude placed in the middle of the picture, Bonnard created original compositions and used a perspective from above that deformed the lines and flattened the volumes.

Bonnard did not paint merely for the sensual pleasure of representing the nude. He saw this subject as one of the most demanding due to the fascination it provoked and its interaction with the environment. His models were represented decoratively in complex spaces, which enabled him to transform reality. Bonnard unified all the elements in his composition—both living beings and objects—through light. He materialised this in the form of filaments of light colour affixed to the skin of his models, the lines of the furniture, and the bathroom tiles. Their outlines merged with the fluid matter of the walls around them and each part of the picture seems to have been treated as an autonomous decorative surface.

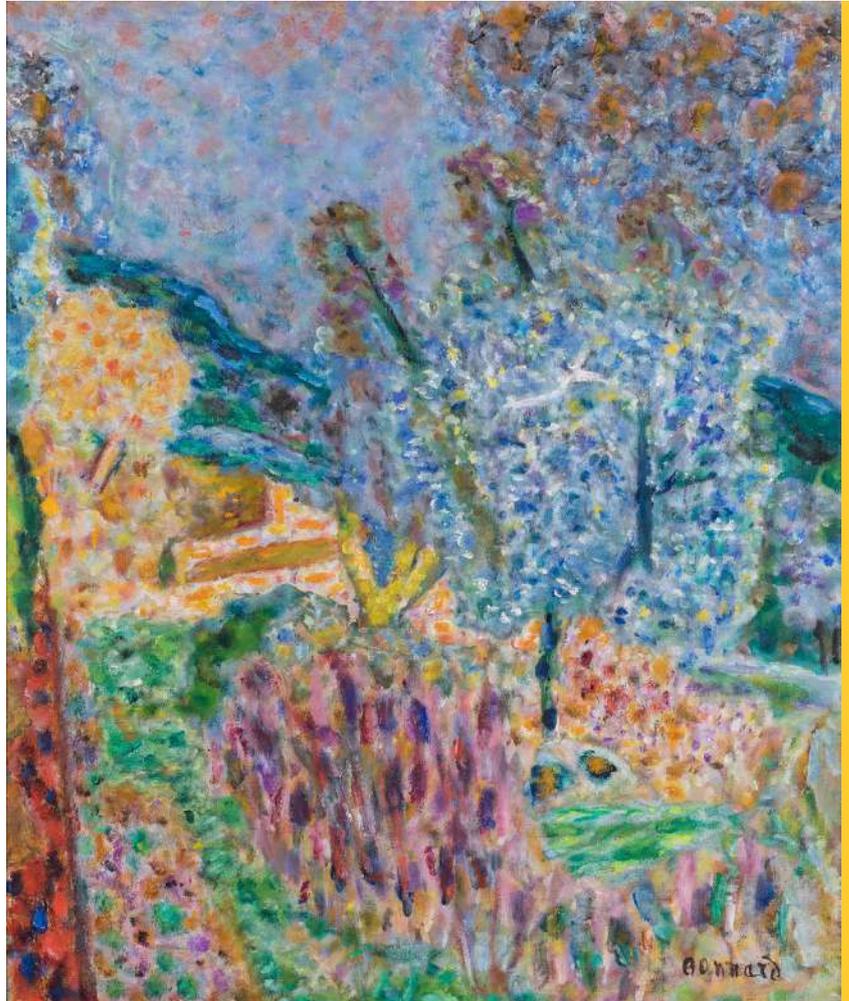


Pierre Bonnard, *Nu gris de profil*, vers 1933, Huile sur toile, 114 x 61 cm, Vienne, Musée Albertina, La Collection Batliner, ALBERTINA, Wien - Sammlung Batliner

## Hanami

The seasons played a pivotal role in Japanese life, which was punctuated with the many religious and secular celebrations that were associated with them. The beauty of nature, from the blooming of the plum trees and cherry trees, followed by the azaleas, and irises, as well as that of the maple trees, whose leaves change to deep red in the autumn, was one of the major subjects of the *ukiyo-e* painters in the prints of landscapes, of which Hokusai and Hiroshige were the undisputed masters.

In perfect resonance with this vision of nature at its zenith, Bonnard's painting exalted the ephemeral radiance of the flowers, poppies, mimosas, irises, and buttercups, echoing the Japanese *hanami* philosophy, a term that literally means 'flower viewing', and by extension also referring to the decorative dimension of the flower and its efflorescence, the symbol of its vitality.



Pierre Bonnard, *Le jardin au Canet*, 1945, Oil on canvas, 63,5 x 53 cm, Musée de l'Abbaye / donation Guy Bardone – René Genis, Saint-Claude © musée de l'Abbaye / crédit photo : Jean-Marc Baudet

Throughout his life the artist painted rich floral compositions, which were essentially sensorial experiments with colour. Right up until the eve of his death, his nephew Charles sent him, at his request, rolls of Japanese prints that were pinned onto his wall of images in his studio in the *Midi*.

In his marvellous garden in Le Cannet, the almond tree outside his bedroom window, 'forcing him to paint' during each season, was the symbolic representation of a renaissance, like Hiroshige's landscapes, *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*. The almond tree is also the first tree to bloom after winter, a symbolic tree, as is the cherry tree in springtime in Nippon culture, each representing the metaphor for life force and *hanami*.

### CURATORSHIP

Isabelle Cahn, is an art historian, Emeritus Chief Curator of Paintings at the Musée d'Orsay and specialist in the art of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The curator of numerous exhibitions in Paris and abroad, she is an expert on the Post-Impressionist movement, the Nabis in particular, and Van Gogh. She has also organised exhibitions devoted to such outstanding personalities as Lugné-Poe, Misia Godebska, Félix Fénéon and Marcel Proust. She is also a scientific editor of exhibition catalogues and the author of books, essays and articles on the art of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. She recently published a monograph on Bonnard (Citadelles & Mazenod, 2023).

### PRODUCTION AND CREATION

Emmanuelle Lussiez, Director of Exhibitions at Culturespaces; Milly Passigli, Deputy Director of Exhibition Programming; Madeleine Balansino, Head of Exhibitions at the Hôtel de Caumont-Art Centre; Livia Lérés and Domitille Sechet responsible for iconography at Culturespaces.

### SCENOGRAPHY

Hubert Le Gall is a French designer, artist, and contemporary art sculptor. He has created original set designs for numerous exhibitions, notably at the Hôtel de Caumont - Art Centre and the Jacquemart-André Museum.

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## L'HÔTEL DE CAUMONT - CENTRE D'ART

### A CULTURAL INSTITUTION WITH A MISSION OF GENERAL INTEREST

Classified as a historical monument, the Hôtel de Caumont is one of Aix-en-Provence's finest 18th-century private mansions. Located just a stone's throw from the Cours Mirabeau, in the Mazarin district, it has been completely restored to house a new Art Center since May 2015. Open to all art forms, its vocation is to present two temporary exhibitions a year, dedicated to the great names in art history, from ancient art to the present day. Restoring the atmosphere and aesthetics characteristic of the 18th century, the Hôtel de Caumont - Centre d'Art is a major venue in the cultural life of Aix, where art is discovered and shared with passion.

### CEZANNE IN AIX

This twenty-minute film is shown daily in the auditorium, and presents the life of this great Impressionist painter and precursor of Cubism, and his passion for Aix-en-Provence and the surrounding region, through the major events that marked his life and artistic creation.

### CONFERENCES AND ARTISTIC EVENTS

The Hôtel de Caumont - Centre d'Art is a place for exchange and sharing between different types of artistic expression. As such, it hosts readings, lectures and musical events to broaden artistic horizons.

### THE CAFÉ CAUMONT

Housed in the historic salons on the first floor, with a terrace overlooking the gardens, the Café Caumont offers a wide range of culinary delights. For a quiet lunch, brunch, tea-time pastry or hot chocolate, Le Café offers an elegant setting in the heart of the Mazarin district.



© Culturespaces / Christian Michel

## THE MUSÉE BONNARD

### THE FIRST MUSEUM DEDICATED TO PIERRE BONNARD

Since its opening in 2011, the Musée Bonnard, the world's first museum dedicated to this artist, has welcomed almost 500,000 visitors and built up a collection of over 200 works. Widely recognized, the Bonnard museum, which has municipal status, acquired the Musée de France label in 2006 and in May 2012 signed a partnership agreement with the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Like Giverny for Monet, Nice for Matisse, Le Cannet was a significant place for Bonnard. In 1926, he bought the Villa Le Bosquet and spent over twenty years there. A true source of inspiration, a place of artistic contemplation... the town and the surroundings of his home inspired him to such an extent that he produced some of his finest works. It is this connection and identity between Bonnard and Le Cannet that gives the museum, housed in a splendidly restored and enlarged «Belle Époque» house, its profound legitimacy.

#### Exhibitions

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC TÊTE D’AFFICHE

March 16 to June 9, 2024

BONNARD ET LA POÉSIE D’UN OBJET ORDINAIRE

*Variations around a vase* June 29 to November 3, 2024



#### CONTACTS

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Chief Curator assisted by Carole LENGLET

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Communication, patronage and partnership

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16 bd Sadi Carnot

Le Cannet / Côte d’Azur

## CULTURESPACES

With over **30 years' experience and 6 million visitors a year**, Culturespaces, founded in 1990 by Bruno Monnier, is the **leading private operator** in the complete management of monuments, museums and art centers. Since 2012, Culturespaces has also been a pioneer in the creation of digital art centers and immersive digital exhibitions.

Sites promoted and managed by Culturespaces :

- **Musée Jacquemart-André** in Paris (since 1996)
- **Carrières des Lumières** in Les Baux-de-Provence (since 2012)
- **Hôtel de Caumont - Centre d'Art** in Aix-en-Provence (since 2015)
- **Atelier des Lumières** in Paris (since 2018)
- **Bunker des Lumières**, Jeju (since 2018)
- **Bassins des Lumières**, Bordeaux (since 2020)
- **Fabrique des Lumières** in Amsterdam (since 2022)
- **Théâtre des Lumières** in Seoul (since 2022)
- **Hall of Lights**, New York (since 2022)
- **Phoenix des Lumières** in Dortmund (since 2023)
- **Port des Lumières** in Hamburg (opening in 2024)

Culturespaces is responsible for enhancing the spaces and collections, welcoming visitors, managing staff and all services, providing cultural events, organizing temporary exhibitions, and communicating the sites nationally and internationally.

Aware that our heritage must be preserved for future generations, Culturespaces also contributes in financing restoration programs for the monuments and collections entrusted to it. Culturespaces, whose objective is to focus on the visitor experience in order to develop cultural democratization, is implementing a **policy of excellence in welcoming visitors**: open 7 days a week, audioguides and tour applications, free game books and wifi, reduced rates for families, young people and senior citizens.

## CULTURE POUR L'ENFANCE

In 2023, Culture pour l'Enfance is continuing its work at the Hôtel de Caumont, offering 4 free educational and artistic projects for 2,500 children aged 5 to 12 who are far from cultural activities.

- The « *À la découverte de l'Hôtel Caumont* » program introduces children to the history and heritage of their region, immersing them in the daily life of two 18th-century children. Conceived in 4 stages, the program includes an off-site educational workshop, a guided tour of the mansion, an off-site creative workshop and finally an exhibition of the works created.
- « *À la découverte de Caumont : Theater and Heritage* » enables students in priority education zones (REP / REP +) to discover the evolution of 18th-century thought through theater, thanks to an artistic and cultural education program comprising 15 hours of workshops. After visiting the center and discovering its various workshops, the students took part in 10 hours of theater workshops led by ERACM actors.
- The « *Entre Cour et Jardin* » (Between the Courtyard and the Garden) tour introduced children to the art of gardening, following in the footsteps of Baron de La Tour d'Aigues, the former owner of the estate and a keen student of the natural sciences, botany and zoology.

### ABOUT CULTURE POUR L'ENFANCE

To promote access to art and heritage, Culture pour l'Enfance (formerly Fondation Culturespaces) has been designing and implementing artistic and cultural education programs (EAC) since 2009 for children in situations of social disadvantage, disability and illness, enabling them to enjoy unique experiences to awaken, develop and reveal themselves. Every year, more than 13,000 children aged 5 to 18 (from disadvantaged urban neighborhoods, schoolchildren in priority education networks, beneficiaries of social or medico-social structures) take part in its artistic and cultural education programs, deployed in partnership with exceptional cultural venues and players in the social, educational and medical fields. By raising awareness of culture, art and heritage in an inclusive and engaging way, Culture pour l'Enfance combines solidarity with creativity. Today, Culture pour l'Enfance is the leading French organization dedicated to providing access to cultural education and the arts for young people and children who are ill, socially excluded or disabled.

#### Contact

Nadège Béglé, Managing Director - [nadege.begle@culturespaces.com](mailto:nadege.begle@culturespaces.com) - 01 56 59 01 70



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## **BRUNO MONNIER, PRESIDENT OF CULTURESPACES**

A graduate of Sciences-Po Paris, Université Paris II Assas and HEC MBA, Bruno Monnier has a passion for art history. In 1986, he joined the French Ministry of Culture as a project manager, collaborating on the Heritage 2000 commission and reorganizing the Château de Versailles.

In 1988, he left the Ministry of Culture to set up Culturespaces, a company inspired by the Anglo-Saxon model, where most monuments and museums are managed by private organizations. Initially, Culturespaces advised local authorities, private owners and public institutions on the development and management of their monuments and museums.

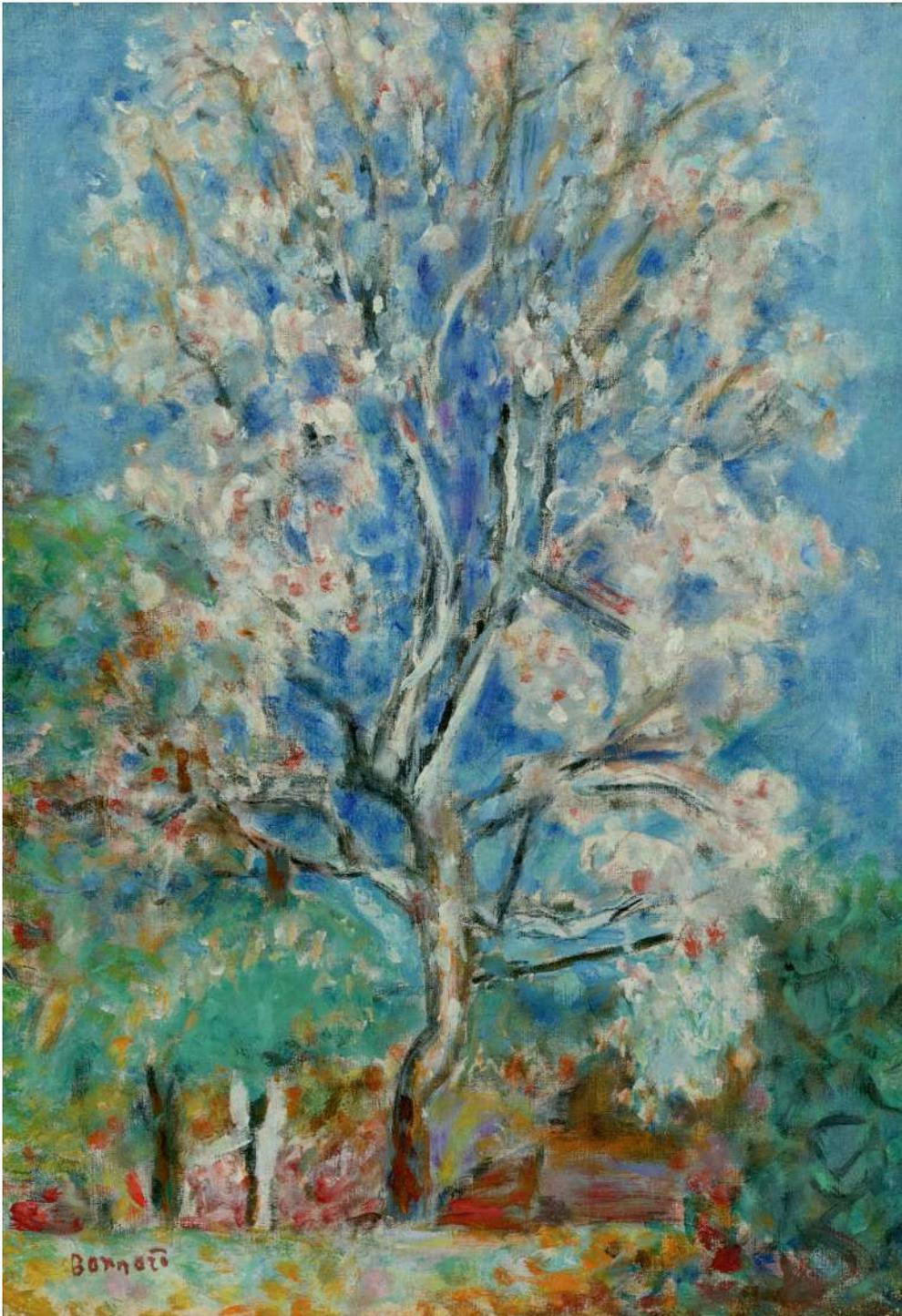
In 1992, the Académie des Beaux-Arts entrusted Culturespaces with the complete management of the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, and the restoration of its gardens. In 1996, the Institut de France entrusted him with the Jacquemart-André Museum in Paris and its exhibitions. Subsequently, local authorities entrusted him with monuments, museums and exhibitions, within the framework of public service delegations. He currently manages 11 establishments with 450 employees, directs major temporary exhibitions, and organizes major live shows and concerts.

In 2009, Bruno Monnier created the Fondation Culturespaces, now known as Culture pour l'enfance, which welcomes over 13,000 children a year to the establishments managed by Culturespaces.

In 2012, Bruno Monnier opened Les Carrières des Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence for Culturespaces, making it the region's most visited cultural site. In 2013, he created a new cultural venue in Aix-en-Provence: the Hôtel de Caumont. After an exemplary restoration and the creation of new gardens, he turned it into an art center organizing renowned temporary exhibitions.

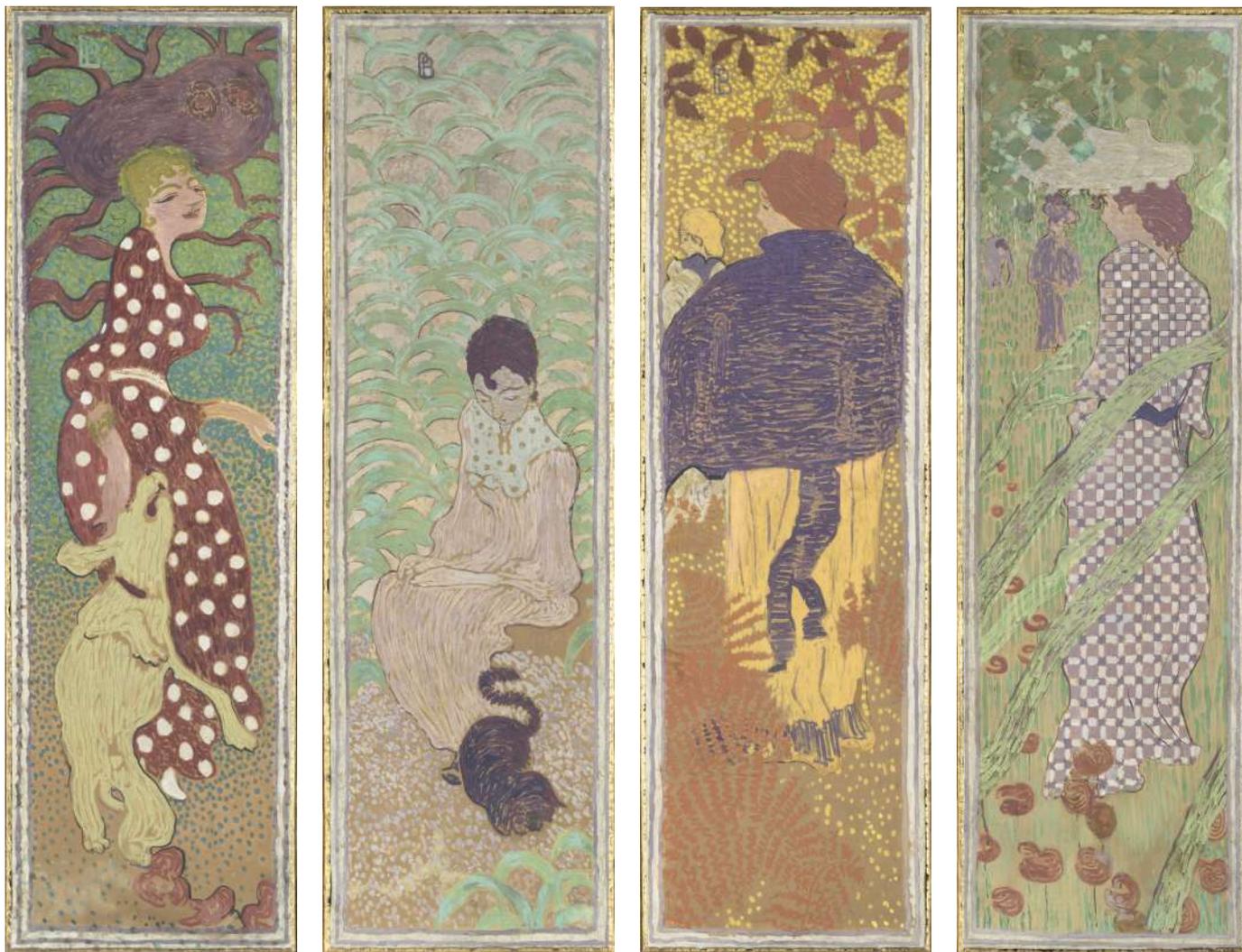
In 2015, for Culturespaces, he imagined the museum of the 21st century, using works of art and music supported by digital technology. He decided to create Atelier des Lumières, his first digital art center, in a former foundry in the 11th arrondissement. Inaugurated in 2018, the Atelier des Lumières welcomed over a million visitors in its first year. Then, in 2020, he creates Bassins des Lumières in the Bordeaux submarine base, the world's largest immersive digital art center. International expansion continues with the opening of Bunker des Lumières in Jeju (South Korea) in 2018, and Infinity des Lumières in Dubai in 2021. Four new digital art centers open in 2022 in Amsterdam, New York and Seoul. Culturespaces opens two digital art centers in Germany, in 2023 in Dortmund and in 2024 in Hamburg.

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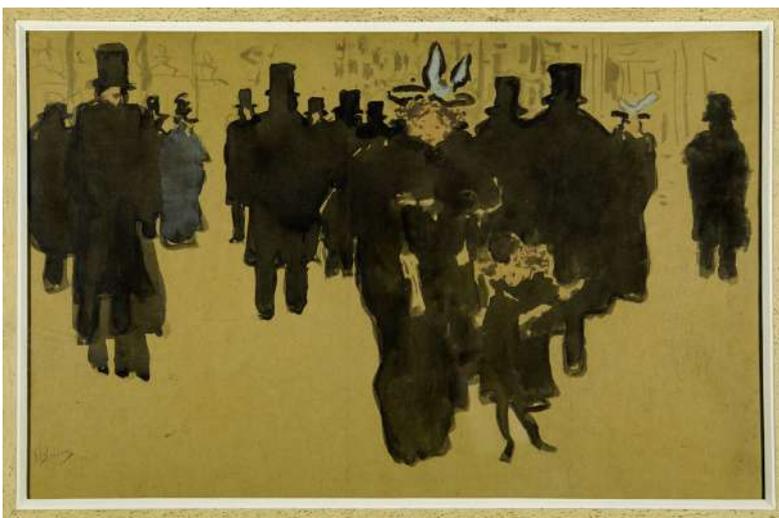


Pierre Bonnard, *L'Amandier en fleurs*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 51,1 x 34,9 cm, Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet, donation from Meyer fondation© musée Bonnard, Le Cannet

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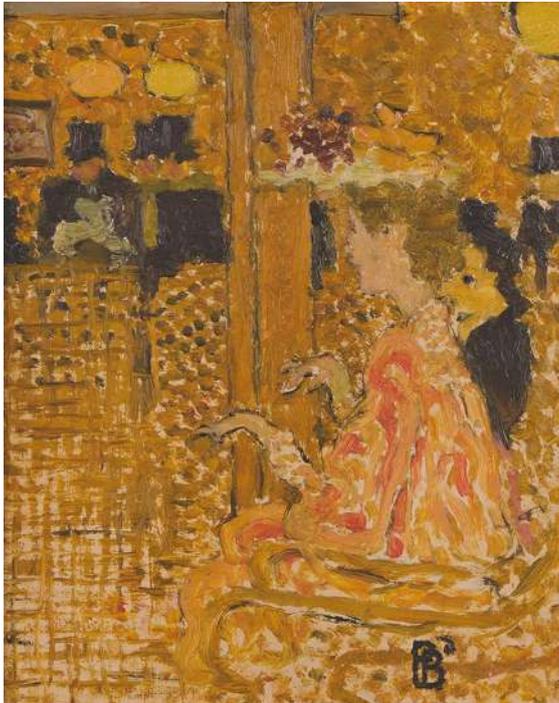


Pierre Bonnard, *Femmes au jardin : Femme à la robe à pois blancs ; Femme assise au chat ; Femme à la pèlerine ; Femme à la robe quadrillée*, 1890-1891, Tempera on paper mounted on canvas, decorative pannels, 160.5 x 48 cm each pannel, Paris, musée d'Orsay, Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski



Pierre Bonnard, *Les Grands Boulevards*, c.1895, India ink with gouache highlights, 32,3 x 49,2 cm  
Le Cannet, musée Bonnard © Musée Bonnard/Jean-Michel Drouet

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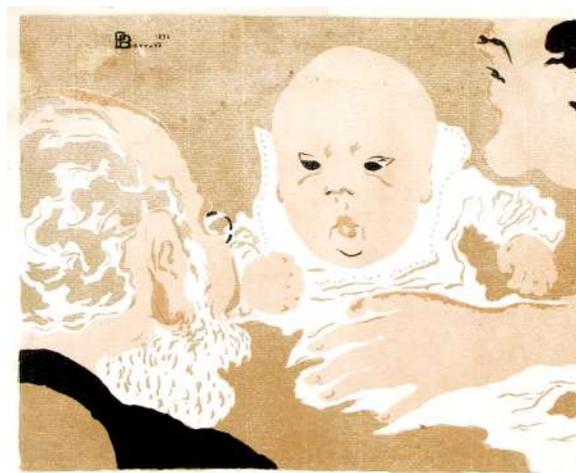
Pierre Bonnard, *Au Bar*, 1892, Oil on cardboard mounted on panel, 23 x 19 cm, Collection particulière © Studio Sébert / Culturespaces



Pierre Bonnard, *Deux chiens*, 1891 Oil on canvas, 36,3 x 39,7 cm Southampton, City Art Gallery photo: Southampton City Art Gallery / Bridgeman Images

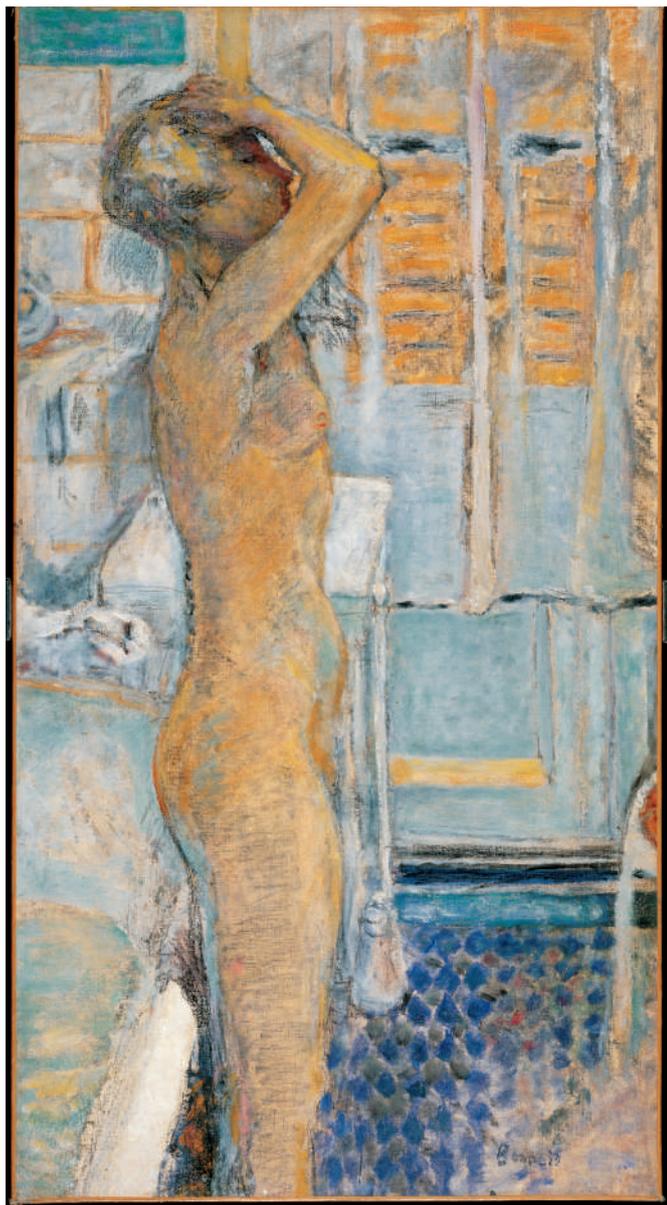


Pierre Bonnard, *L'Omnibus* c.1895 Oil on canvas, 59 x 41 cm, Particular collection, photo: Bridgeman Images

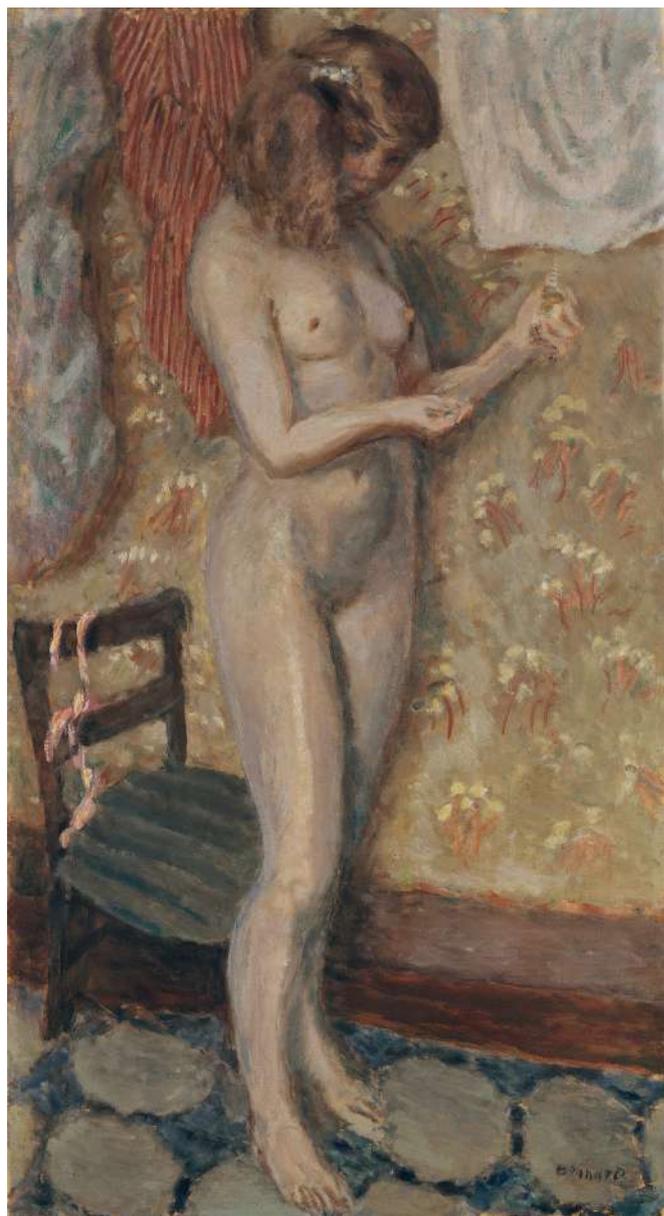


Pierre Bonnard *Scène de famille*, 1892, Engraving, lithograph in three colors, 28,2 x 37,8 cm Le Cannet, musée Bonnard © Frédéric Aubert

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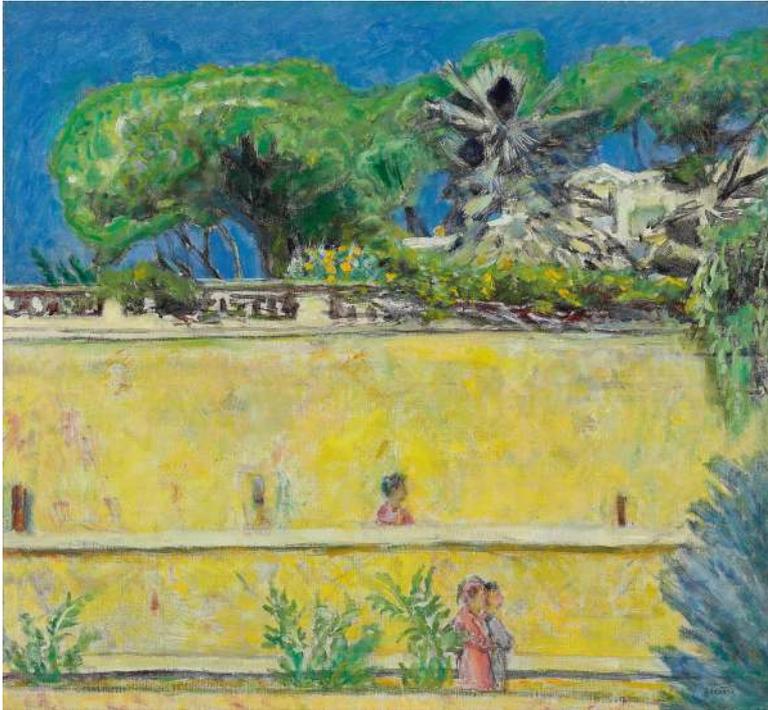


Pierre Bonnard, *Nu gris de profil*, c.1933, Oil on canvas, 114 x 61 cm, Musée Albertina, Vienne, La collection Batliner, ALBERTINA, Wien - Sammlung Batliner

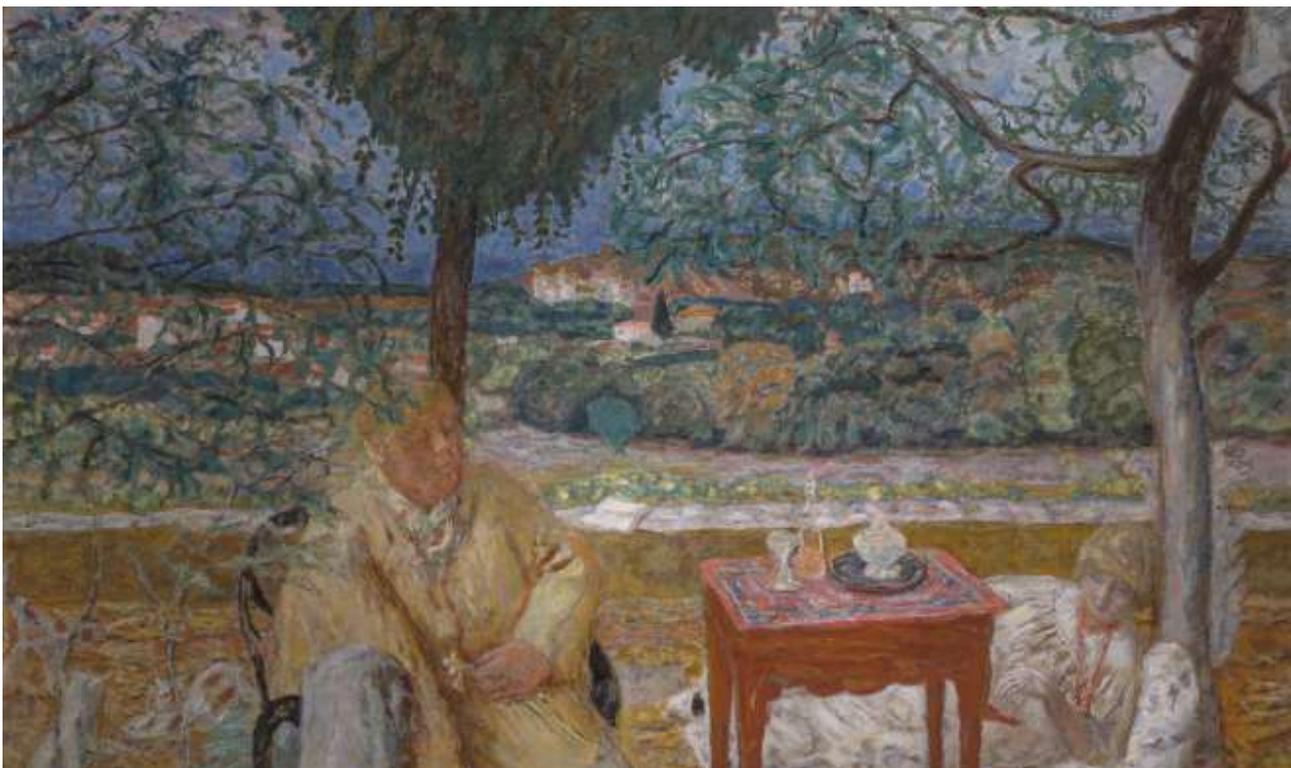


Pierre Bonnard, *Nu à la lumière*, 1908, Oil on canvas, 115,5 x 63,2 cm, MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève. Legs Vassily Photiadès, Lausanne, 1977© Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, photographer : Bettina Jacot - Descombes

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Pierre Bonnard, *Terrasse dans le Midi*, c.1925, Oil on canvas, 68 x 73 cm, Fondation Glénat, Grenoble,  
Photo : akg-images / Fine Art Images / Heritage Images



Pierre Bonnard, *Conversation provençale*, reworked in 1927, Oil on canvas, 129 x 201 cm, 153 x 229 cm (with frame), Prague,  
National Gallery Photo © National Gallery Prague 2024

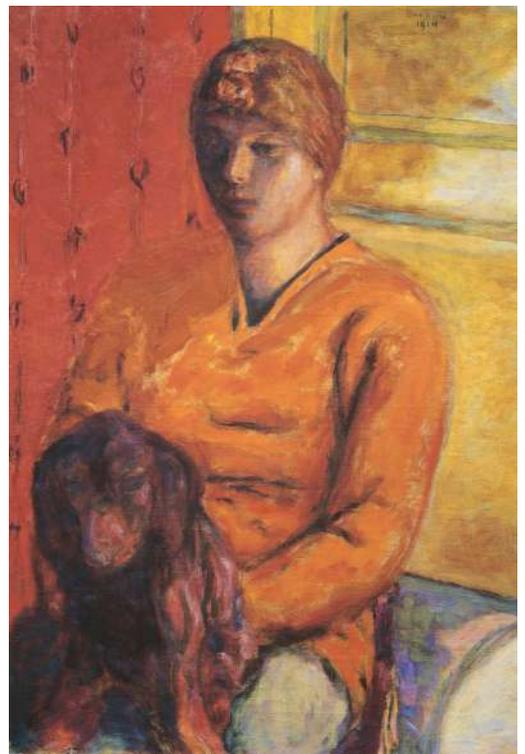
**VISUALS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESS**



Pierre Bonnard, *Baigneurs à la fin du jour*, c.1945, Oil on canvas, 48 x 69 cm Le Cannet, musée Bonnard © musée Bonnard, Le Cannet

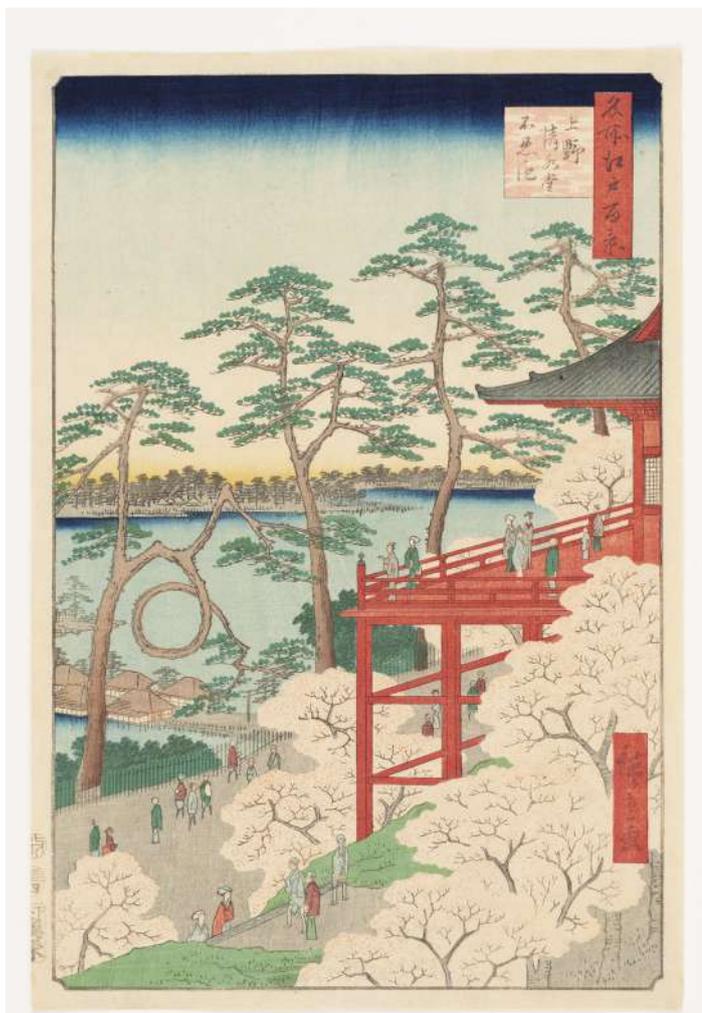


Pierre Bonnard, *La nappe blanche*, 1925, Oil on canvas, 100 x 112 cm, Von der Heydt-Museum Wuppertal, Foto: Medienzentrum Wuppertal



Pierre Bonnard, *Femme tenant un chien sur ses genoux*, 1914, Oil on canvas, 68 x 50,2 cm, FNAC 5170 Centre national des arts plastiques, Dépôt au musée de Grenoble, Domaine public / CnapCrédi photo : Ville de Grenoble / Musée de Grenoble - J.L. Lacroix

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Utagawa Hiroshige, *Ueno Kiyomizudô Shinobazu no ike* (Shinobazu pond seen from the pavilion Kiyomizu Kannon in Ueno , series : One hundred Edo views », n° 11 : april 1856 Collection Georges Leskowicz © photo Christian Moutarde / © Fundacja Jerzego Leskowicza



Katsushika Hokusai, *Sous la vague au large de Kanagawa*,  
Serie « Trente-Six Vues du Fuji », c.1831, Engraving, 26,1 x 38,8 cm,  
Collection Georges Leskowicz, © photo Thierry Ollivier / © Fundacja Jerzego Leskowicza

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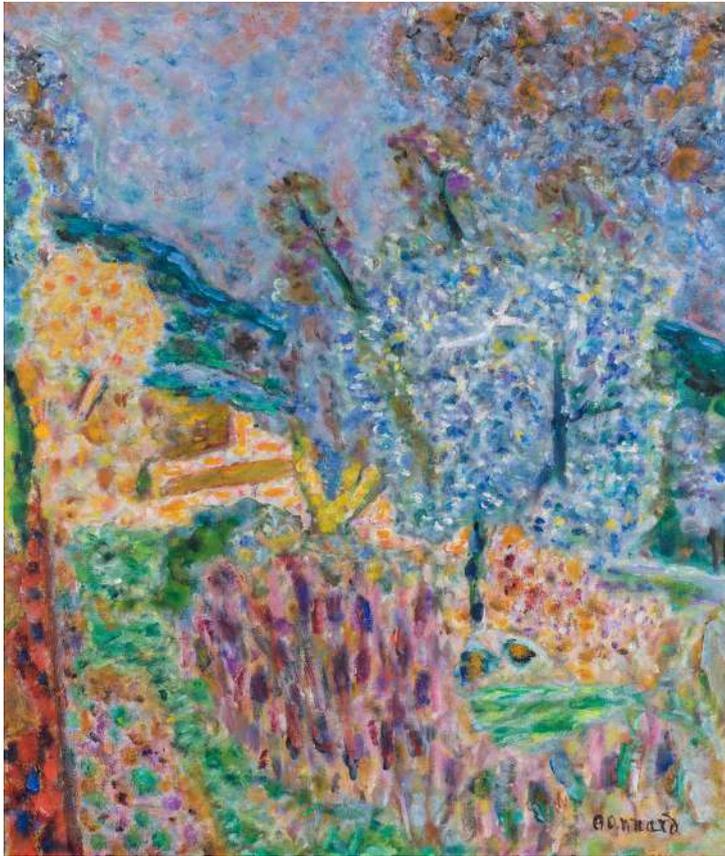


Utagawa Hiroshige et Utagawa Toyokuni III (Kunisada), *Verger de pruniers*, de la série «L'Élegant prince du Genji», Signé: Hiroshige hitsum Toyokuni ga Editeur: Iseya Kanekichi, vers 1853  
Xylogravure polychrome, Format: triptyque, oban tate-e, 37,6 x 25,2 cm, 37,6 x 25,2 cm, 37,5 x 25,4 cm, Collection Georges Leskowicz © Fundacja Jerzego Leskowicza



Utagawa Hiroshige, *Feu d'artifice de Ryôgoku*, série « Vues célèbres d'Edo-Cinq éléments »  
Signé: Hiroshige ga, Editeur: Sanoya Kihei, vers 1851-52, Xylogravure polychrome, Format: oban tate-e, 36,3 x 25 cm, Collection Leskowicz, Rights reserved

**VISUALS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESS**



*Pierre Bonnard, Le jardin au Cannet 1945 Huile sur toile 63,5 x 53 cm*  
Musée de l'Abbaye / donation Guy Bardone – René Genis, Saint-Claude © musée de l'Abbaye /  
crédit photo : Jean-Marc Baudet



*Pierre Bonnard, La Promenade des nourrices, frise des fiacres*  
1897, Paravent constitué d'une suite de quatre feuilles lithographiées en cinq couleurs  
45,3 x 114,3 (chaque panneau) Le Cannet, musée Bonnard © Musée Bonnard/Yves Inchierman

**VISUALS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESS**



Rogi André (Rosa Klein, dite), *Pierre Bonnard dans la salle à manger du Cannet*, 1937, Epreuve gélatino - argentique, 4x3cm, Paris, Centre Pompidou – Musée national d'art moderne © Centre Pompidou, MNAM - CCI, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Georges Meguerditchian



Pierre Bonnard, *Pierre Bonnard fumant la pipe dans le jardin du Grand-Lemps*, c.1906. Albumen print from a soft gelatin silver bromide film negative H. 6,5 ; L. 9,0 cm. Donation sous réserve d'usufruit de l'indivision Terrasse, Antoine, Jean-Jacques et Michel Terrasse et Mme Françoise Vasiljevic-Terrasse, 1992 © GrandPalaisRmn (musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski



Pierre Bonnard *Pierre Bonnard assis sur le seuil de sa maison avec Renée, Charles, Jean et Robert* Vers 1899, Epreuve sur papier albuminé à partir d'un négatif sur film souple au gélatino - bromure d'argent H. 6,5 ; L. 9,0 cm. Musée d'Orsay © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Patrice Schmidt

## ALONGSIDE THE EXHIBITION

### THE CATALOGUE

Published by Éditions In Fine - Éditions d'Art and on sale in the museum's cultural gift shop and on [www.boutique-culturespaces.com](http://www.boutique-culturespaces.com)

### A SPECIAL EDITION OF CONNAISSANCE DES ARTS

On sale in the art centre's cultural gift shop and online at: [www.boutique-culturespaces.com](http://www.boutique-culturespaces.com)

### TOURS

Guided tours for groups and individuals are available for the entire duration of the exhibition. Workshop tours for children between the ages of 6 and 12 are available during the school holidays. Reservations: [groupe@caumont-centredart.com](mailto:groupe@caumont-centredart.com)/[www.caumont-centredart.com](http://www.caumont-centredart.com)  
Contact Sophie Guérinet

### GUIDED TOUR USING AN APPLICATION

This application, available in French and English, enables the visitors to discover the finest works in the exhibition thanks to twenty audio commentaries on works and the exhibition preview.

### ACTIVITY BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Given freely to each child who visits the exhibition, this activity book provides a guide that enables youngsters to observe, in an entertaining way, the major works in the exhibition by solving various puzzles.

### RECEPTIONS AND EVENTS

The exceptional setting of the Hôtel de Caumont, with its salons and gardens, makes it a superb place for private receptions to complement the exhibition (breakfasts, cocktails, dinners, and private tours of the exhibition).

Contact : [receptions@caumont-centredart.com](mailto:receptions@caumont-centredart.com)

HOTEL DE  
**CAUMONT**  
CENTRE D'ART  
AIX-EN-PROVENCE

**Address**

Hôtel de Caumont-Art Centre  
3, rue Joseph Cabassol - 13 100 Aix-en-Provence  
Tel: + 33 (0)4 42 20 70 01

**Opening times**

The Hôtel de Caumont is open every day.  
From 30 April to 6 October 2024 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Last admission 30 minutes before closing time.  
The cultural gift shop and the Café Caumont are open during the art centre's opening times.

**Admission**

Full price: €15.50  
Senior rate (over 65): €14.50  
Reduced rate (students, jobseekers, disability card holders,  
Education pass holders - on presentation of valid proof): €12.50  
Youth rate (7 to 25 years old): €10  
Family rate (for 2 adults and 2 young people aged 7 to 25): €45  
Free admission for children under 7, ICOM, ICOMOS or SNELAC cardholders, tour guides and  
journalists (on presentation of valid proof).

**Press Contact**

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