

Bonnard's Worlds

March 2–June 2, 2024

[Press Release](#)

[Press Images](#)

[Checklist](#)

[Wall Text](#)

[Bonnard Salon Wall Text](#)

[Bonnard Salon &
Public Programs](#)

[Sydney Vernon:
Interior Lives](#)

[Upcoming Exhibitions](#)



Pierre Bonnard, *The Open Window*, 1921, Oil on canvas, 46 1/2 x 37 3/4 in., The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1930 © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

UPDATED RELEASE
February 28, 2024

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Third Eye

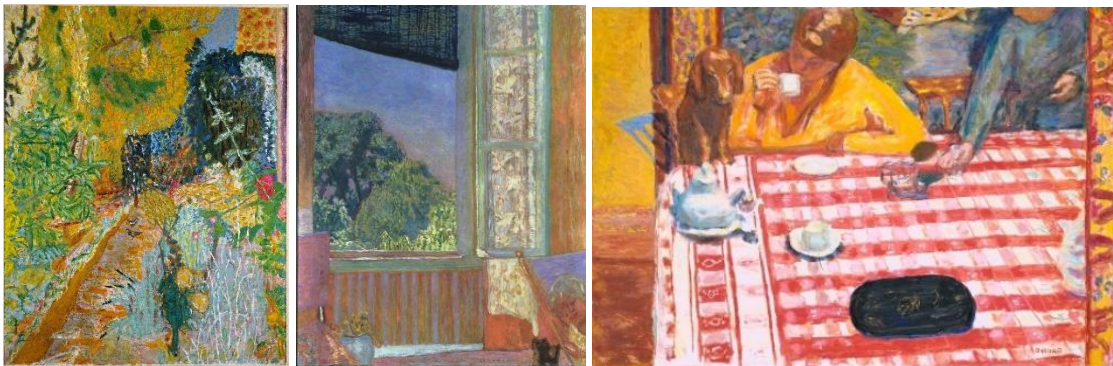
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www.phillipscollection.org/press

The Phillips Collection Presents *Bonnard's Worlds*

An early champion of French artist Pierre Bonnard, The Phillips Collection hosts a major exhibition that explores how the painter's quiet and private life fueled his creative practice.



WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection presents *Bonnard's Worlds*, the first major exhibition on French artist Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) in Washington, DC, in 20 years. Co-organized by The Phillips Collection and the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, *Bonnard's Worlds* brings together 60 of the artist's celebrated paintings throughout his career from museums and private collections across the world, including several rarely seen by the public. Governed neither by chronology nor geography but by measures of intimacy, *Bonnard's Worlds* examines the larger domains in which Bonnard lived to the most private interior spaces of his dwellings and his thoughts. The Phillips Collection's presentation echoes the personal spaces depicted in Bonnard's paintings, encouraging guests to explore the sensory realms of the artist's experiences. ***Bonnard's Worlds* is on view from March 2–June 2.**

"The Phillips Collection, an early champion of Bonnard in the United States, is delighted to present this landmark exhibition. Bonnard's sensuously colored, expressive paintings have long held a special place at the Phillips, where they have and continue to serve as an inspiration to generations of artists. We can't help but be seduced by his quiet, intimate paintings, which invite us to find beauty in the details of our everyday lives," says **Vradenburg Director & CEO Jonathan P. Binstock**. "The intimate setting of the Phillips creates a special ambiance to linger with Bonnard. Our founder Duncan Phillips aptly declared, 'With us Bonnard is at home.' We're immensely excited for guests to experience the joy of looking at Bonnard's pictures in a space where he was welcomed and felt at home."

As a painter, Bonnard did not develop along a linear path, nor did he fit within a given movement or style. A founding member of the Post-Impressionist group of avant-garde painters Les Nabis, Bonnard is known for the decorative qualities of his paintings and his bold use of color, which served as a vehicle for emotional expression. Bonnard was a contemporary and close friend of Claude Monet and Henri Matisse and is viewed as a bridge between Impressionism and Modernism. He often suggested the world beyond the edge of the frame by painting scenes in which people and objects appear on the periphery of the composition. In this way, Bonnard activated his surfaces with dynamic all-over patterns of color that sought to capture the immediacy of what he called the “first sensation.” He created a mobile vision that flows organically from one scene to the next, in which viewers are reminded of where the artist has been—both physically and stylistically—and how he would return to those moments.

Representing the full breadth of Bonnard's long career, the exhibition features views of the places Bonnard lived in Paris, Normandy, and the French Riviera, painted between the 1890s and the 1940s. Moving from the landscape to the garden, paintings from Bonnard's decorative beginnings prelude his poetic and increasingly expressionist vision of nature. In this presentation, scenes depicting terraces near his dwellings give way to verdant landscapes inspired by his daily walks. In several of the painted interiors, Bonnard includes a view of the outdoor world through a window or door, suggesting the symbiotic relationship between his internal and external worlds.

Bonnard also explored spaces devoted to social encounters, from the dining room to the parlor, where a sense of stillness is punctuated by an intensity of feeling. Most private are the images of the artist's bedroom and bath, often featuring Bonnard's longtime partner and muse, Marthe de Mélny Bonnard, with whom Bonnard lived for most of 50 years. In these carefully constructed compositions, Marthe is seen sleeping, at her toilette, or bathing; the artist's presence implied. A series of paintings of her in the bathtub from 1936–1946 are featured in the exhibition, which are some of Bonnard's most celebrated depictions of the subject.

“The Phillips Collection has been a leader in the presentation of Bonnard's work, including a recent exhibition drawn from the collection of Roger and the late Vicki Sant that explored the artist's relationship with the Nabi. *Bonnard's Worlds* draws us into the artist's expressive artistic language through which he translates his sentient responses to the world,” says **Phillips Chief Curator Elsa Smithgall**. “Like a moving picture, his compositions unfold before your eyes, surprising and awakening you with each new detail. The poetry of Bonnard's worlds calls forth its interior sounds.”

Bonnard would revisit his paintings and subjects over the years, deriving compositions from his imagination and memories. He began working on *Young Women in the Garden* in 1921 but did not finish it until 1946. The painting shows two women, identified as Marthe de Mélny and Renée Monchaty, a young woman who was the subject of many of Bonnard's paintings during their affair. Bonnard married Marthe in August 1925, and less than a month later, Renée Monchaty took her own life. Bonnard retouched *Young Women in the Garden* after Marthe's death in 1942, revisiting the composition and his relationships with Marthe and Renée, whose smiling face is turned toward the viewer (and to the painter), as he neared the end of his life. Bonnard's contemplations on his private existence are also reflected in a group of self-portraits that conclude the exhibition. Later self-portraits, depicting the artist through mirrors in his bath or dressing room, are powerful renderings of the artist's psyche.

Museum founder Duncan Phillips was an early advocate of Bonnard, having bought his first two paintings by Bonnard in 1925, *Woman with Dog* (1922) and *Early Spring* (1908), and hosting the artist's

first solo museum exhibition in 1930. This launched a major collection that grew to over 30 works by the 1950s and what now stands as one of the largest, most diverse collections of Bonnard's work in a museum outside of France. The Phillips's promised gift of [The Nabi Collection of Vicki and Roger Sant](#), which includes 13 works by Bonnard, will further expand the museum's holdings. Bonnard's sensibility and personal expressiveness embody Phillips's vision of his museum as an "intimate" collection that promotes art's "restorative" power.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

The exhibition is co-organized by The Phillips Collection and the Kimbell Art Museum and curated by Elsa Smithgall, Chief Curator of The Phillips Collection, and George Shackelford, Deputy Director of the Kimbell Art Museum.

Made possible by major support from The Exhibitions Endowment Fund, Roger Sant and Doris Matsui, and a lead contribution from The Richard C. von Hess Foundation

Presented with generous support from the Ednah Root Foundation, The Marion F. Goldin Charitable Fund, and Dina and George Perry

Support for this exhibition is provided by The Kristina and Will Catto Foundation, Anne and Gus Edwards, Martha R. Johnston and Robert Coonrod, Paul Killian and Carole Goodson, The Robert Lehman Foundation, Ken and Dorothy Woodcock, and Alan and Irene Wurtzel.



Additional support is provided by Robert Berish and Barbara Brown, Robert and Debra Drumheller, Barbara and Bob Hall, Dan Hamilton, Susan Larimer, and Susan Lee and Stephen A. Saltzburg.

This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue co-published by the Kimbell Art Museum and The Phillips Collection in association with Yale University Press. The catalogue features contributions by the exhibition curators Elsa Smithgall and George Shackelford, as well as noted international Bonnard scholars: Isabelle Cahn, Curator Emeritus Musée d'Orsay, Paris; Cyrille Sciamia, Director, Musée des Impressionismes Giverny; and Véronique Serrano, Chief Curator, Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet. Available at the museum gift shop and online at shopphillipscollection.org.

THE BONNARD SALON & COMPLEMENTARY EXHIBITIONS

To accompany *Bonnard's Worlds*, The Phillips Collection presents the Bonnard Salon, an intimate space where guests can more deeply engage with artist Pierre Bonnard. Archival materials, including written correspondence, historic photographs, posters, newspaper clippings, and other ephemera showcase The Phillips Collection's special relationship with Bonnard and give insight into how Bonnard paintings were acquired and exhibited over time. The salon will host workshops inspired by the artist, such as journaling with Jenni Bick Custom Journals, making paper flowers with Massallery Design, exploring the Dupont

Circle neighborhood with Building Bridges Across the River THEARC Farm, and engaging with Post-Impressionist painting techniques with artist Sydney Vernon. Bonnard Salons take place Friday, March 8 through Friday, May 31, 2024, from 12–1 pm. Reservations required. Space is limited.

The Phillips will also host events centered around the exhibition, including Phillips after 5 takeovers and a special film screening in partnership with the Embassy of France in Washington, DC. Two complementary exhibitions will be on view: [Jennifer Bartlett: In and Out of the Garden](#) (February 10–April 30) at The Phillips Collection and [Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives](#) at Phillips@THEARC. In *Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives*, artist Sydney Vernon draws from familial relationships that explore the shared histories, identities, and interior thoughts of the Black femme experience through a personal lens. Vernon's multilayered works integrate family photographs with painting, drawing, and collage to capture universal community experiences. *Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives* is on view from March 6–June 6.

IMAGES: Pierre Bonnard, *The Garden*, 1937, Oil on canvas, 50 x 39 3/8 in., Musée d'art moderne de Paris, Purchased from the artist, 1937, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Pierre Bonnard, *The Open Window*, 1921, Oil on canvas, 46 1/2 x 37 3/4 in., The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1930, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Pierre Bonnard, *Coffee*, 1915, Oil on canvas, 28 3/4 x 41 7/8 in., Tate, London, Presented by Sir Michael Sadler through the Art Fund, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

IMAGE GALLERY

High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact lcantrell@phillipscollection.org.

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, was founded in 1921. The museum houses one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist and American modern art collections and continues to grow its collection with important contemporary voices. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips's impact spreads nationally and internationally through its diverse and experimental special exhibitions and events, including its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; renowned Phillips Music series; and dynamic art and wellness and Phillips after 5 events. The Phillips Collection's extensive community partnerships include Phillips@THEARC, the museum's satellite campus in Southeast DC. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

###

PRESS IMAGES***Bonnard's Worlds*****March 2–June 2, 2024**

Pierre Bonnard*Southern Landscape with Two Children*

1916–18

Oil on canvas

54 3/4 x 77 7/8 in.

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks, 1970

Photo Courtesy of AGO, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

**Pierre Bonnard***The Palm*

1926

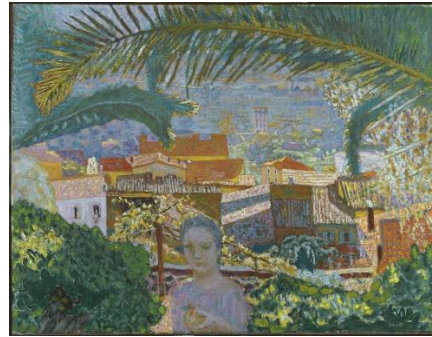
Oil on canvas

45 x 57 7/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1928

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

**Pierre Bonnard***The Garden*

c. 1936–37

Oil on canvas

50 x 39 3/8 in.

Musée d'art moderne de Paris

Purchased from the artist, 1937

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

**Pierre Bonnard***The Open Window*

1921

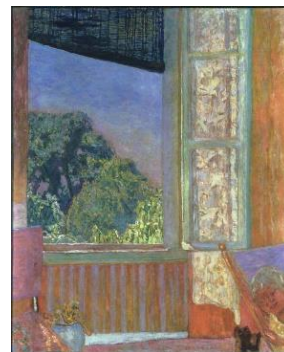
Oil on canvas

46 1/2 x 37 3/4 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1930

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Pierre Bonnard

Dining Room on the Garden

1935

Oil on canvas

50 x 53 1/4 in.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY

Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, By

gift

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Pierre Bonnard

Coffee

1915

Oil on canvas

28 3/4 x 41 7/8 in.

Tate, London

Presented by Sir Michael Sadler through the Art

Fund, 1941

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Pierre Bonnard

Woman with Dog

1922

Oil on canvas

27 1/4 x 15 3/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1925

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Pierre Bonnard

Two Baskets of Fruit

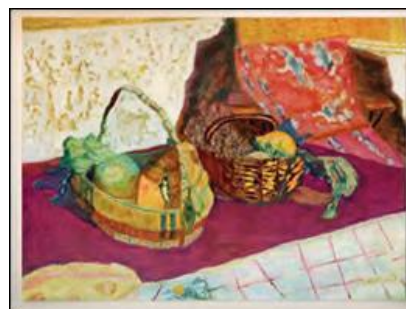
1935

Oil on canvas

23 7/8 x 32 in.

Collection of Anne and Chris Flowers

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Pierre Bonnard

Self-Portrait (The Boxer)

1931

Oil on canvas

21 1/4 x 29 1/4 in.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Gift of Philippe Meyer, 2000

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Pierre Bonnard

Nude in an Interior

c. 1935

Oil on canvas

52 3/4 x 27 1/4 in.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Pierre Bonnard

Nude in the Bath

1936

Oil on canvas

36 5/8 x 57 7/8 in.

Musée d'art moderne de Paris

Purchased from the artist, 1937, for the Universal

Exposition of 1937

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



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CHECKLIST***Bonnard's Worlds*****March 2–June 2, 2024**

LANDSCAPE**Pierre Bonnard***Southern Landscape with Two Children*

1916–18

Oil on canvas

54 3/4 x 77 7/8 in.

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks, 1970

**Pierre Bonnard***Earthly Paradise*

1916–20

Oil on canvas

51 1/4 x 63 in.

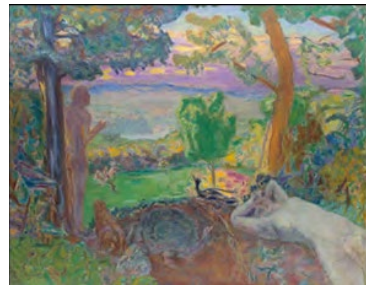
The Art Institute of Chicago

Estate of Joanne Toor Cummings; Bette and

Neison Harris and Searle Family Trust

endowments; through prior gifts of Mrs. Henry C.

Woods

**Pierre Bonnard***The Riviera*

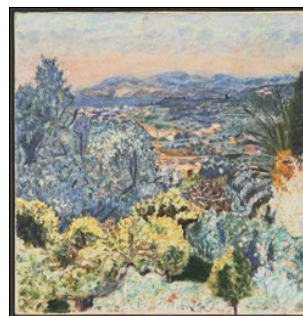
c. 1923

Oil on canvas

31 1/8 x 30 3/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1928

**Pierre Bonnard***Landscape at Le Cannet*

1928

Oil on canvas

50 3/8 x 109 1/2 in.

Kimbell Art Museum

Acquired in 2018, in honor of Kay Fortson,

President of the Kimbell Art Foundation, 1975–

2017



Page 2—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

Steep Path at Le Cannet

1945

Oil on canvas

23 5/8 x 28 3/4 in.

Private collection



GARDEN

Pierre Bonnard

Afternoon in the Garden

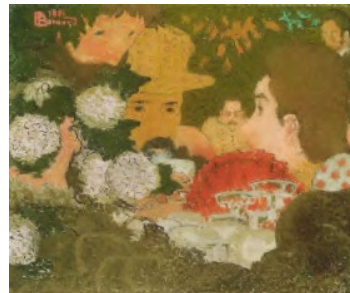
1891

Oil and pen and ink on canvas

14 3/4 x 17 3/4 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Promised gift from the Roger and Vicki Sant
Collection



Pierre Bonnard

Women with a Dog

1891

Oil and ink on canvas

16 1/8 x 12 13/16 in.

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Acquired 1979



Pierre Bonnard

Twilight (The Game of Croquet)

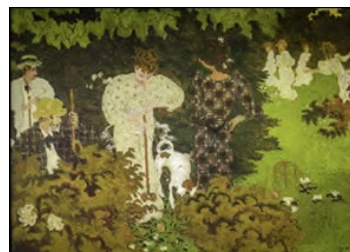
1892

Oil on canvas

51 1/4 x 63 3/4 in.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Gift of Daniel Wildenstein through the Société
des amis du Musée d'Orsay, 1985



Page 3—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

The Family in the Garden

1901

Oil on canvas

43 1/8 x 50 1/4 in.

Kunsthaus Zürich

Acquired 1985



Pierre Bonnard

Early Spring

1908

Oil on canvas

34 1/4 x 52 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1925



Pierre Bonnard

The Garden

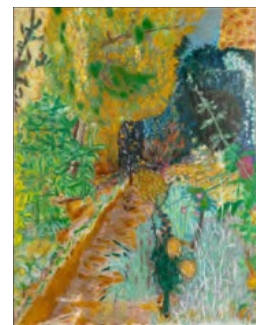
c. 1936–37

Oil on canvas

50 x 39 3/8 in.

Musée d'art moderne de Paris

Purchased from the artist, 1937



TERRACE

Pierre Bonnard

The Terrace Family

c. 1902

Oil on canvas

57 7/8 x 81 7/8 in.

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany

Acquired in 1959



Pierre Bonnard

The Terrace

1918

Oil on canvas

62 3/4 x 98 1/4 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1935



Page 4—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

The Palm

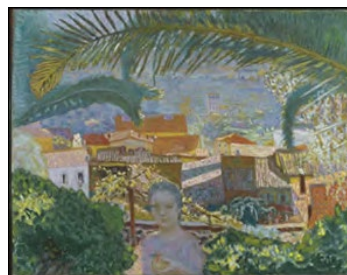
1926

Oil on canvas

45 x 57 7/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1928



WINDOW

Pierre Bonnard

The Open Window

1921

Oil on canvas

46 1/2 x 37 3/4 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1930



Pierre Bonnard

The French Window with a Dog

1927

Oil on canvas

42 1/4 x 24 7/8 in.

Private collection, Dallas



Pierre Bonnard

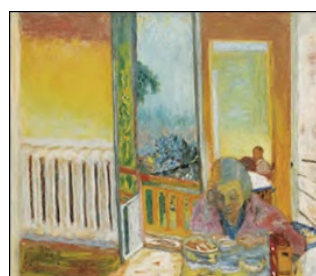
Breakfast at Le Cannet (or Breakfast, Radiator)

1930

Oil on canvas

28 1/2 x 33 in.

Private collection



Page 5—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

The Breakfast Room (Dining Room Overlooking the Garden)

1930–31

Oil on canvas

62 7/8 x 44 7/8 in.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Given anonymously, 1941



Pierre Bonnard

The French Window (Morning at Le Cannet)

1932

Oil on canvas

34 7/8 x 44 3/4 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

Dining Room on the Garden

1935

Oil on canvas

50 x 53 1/4 in.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, By

gift



Pierre Bonnard

Before Noon

1940/1946

Oil on canvas

49 1/2 x 28 in.

Private collection



Page 6—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

Studio with Mimosa, Le Cannet

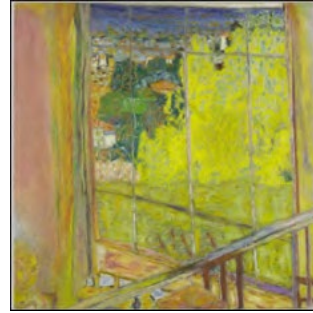
1939/1946

Oil on canvas

50 3/16 x 50 3/16 in.

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art
modern-Centre de création industrielle

Purchased from Charles Terrasse, 1979



TABLE

Pierre Bonnard

The Lamp

c. 1899

Oil on academy board mounted on panel

22 1/4 x 27 1/2 in.

Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan

Gift of The Whiting Foundation and Mr. and Mrs.
Donald E. Johnson



Pierre Bonnard

Faïence from Normandy (The Pot from Rouen)

1910

Oil on canvas

34 7/8 x 35 7/8 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

Coffee

1915

Oil on canvas

28 3/4 x 41 7/8 in.

Tate, London

Presented by Sir Michael Sadler through the Art
Fund, 1941



Page 7—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

The Bowl of Milk

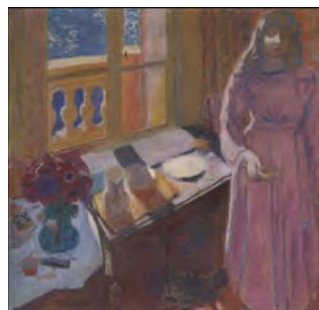
1919

Oil on canvas

45 3/4 x 47 5/8 in.

Tate, London

Bequeathed by Edward Le Bas, 1967



Pierre Bonnard

Young Women in the Garden

1921–22/1945–46

Oil on canvas

23 7/8 x 30 3/8 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

Woman with Dog

1922

Oil on canvas

27 1/4 x 15 3/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Acquired 1925



Pierre Bonnard

The Work Table

1926

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon



Pierre Bonnard

Fruit and Fruit Dishes

c. 1930

Oil on canvas

23 9/16 x 27 5/8 in.

The Cleveland Museum of Art

Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley Collection Gift



Pierre Bonnard

The White Cupboard

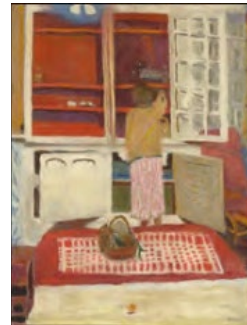
1931

Oil on canvas

49 3/8 x 36 3/4 in.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City,
Missouri

Gift of Henry W. and Marion H. Bloch



Pierre Bonnard

The Red Cupboard

1933

Oil on canvas

32 x 25 1/2 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

Corner of a Table

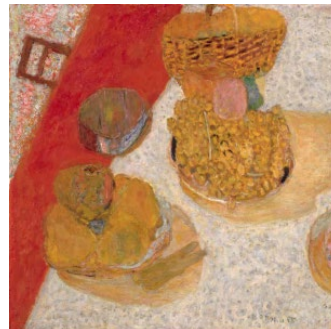
c. 1935

Oil on canvas

26 3/8 x 25 in.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

State purchase, 1936. Acquired by the Musée
d'Orsay in 1977. On deposit at the Centre
Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne -
Centre de creation industrielle



Pierre Bonnard

Two Baskets of Fruit

1935

Oil on canvas

23 7/8 x 32 in.

Collection of Anne and Chris Flowers



Page 9—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

Bouquet of Mimosas

1945

Oil on canvas

24 5/8 x 26 3/4 in.

Private collection, New England



Pierre Bonnard

Basket of Fruit in a Cupboard

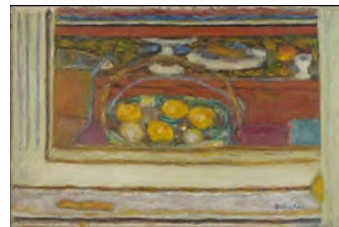
1944–46

Oil on canvas

18 5/8 x 28 1/8 in.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David Rockefeller, 1984



Pierre Bonnard

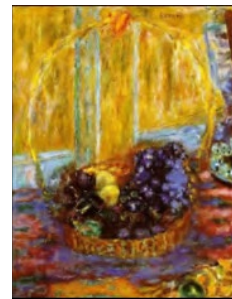
Basket of Fruit

c. 1946

Oil on canvas

23 3/4 x 18 3/4 in.

Private collection



LIVING

Pierre Bonnard

The Lessons

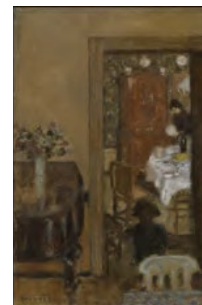
1898

Oil on canvas

20 1/4 x 13 1/4 in.

North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh

Purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina



Pierre Bonnard

The Artist's Studio

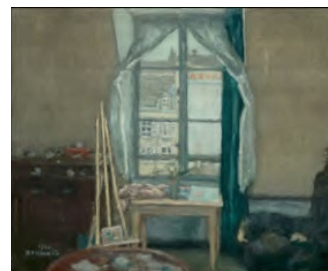
1900

Oil on canvas

24 3/16 x 29 7/16 in.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon



Page 10—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Pierre Bonnard

Homage to Maillol

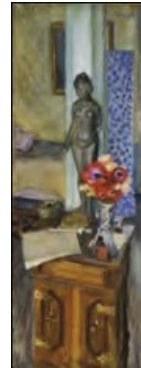
1917

Oil on canvas

48 x 18 1/2 in.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963



Pierre Bonnard

After the Shower

1914

Oil on canvas

37 3/8 x 26 3/16 in.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963



Pierre Bonnard

Flowers on the Mantelpiece at Le Cannet

1927

Oil on canvas

41 13/16 x 28 3/4 in.

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, France

Bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Léon Bouchut in 1974



BED

Pierre Bonnard

Young Girl with Black Stockings

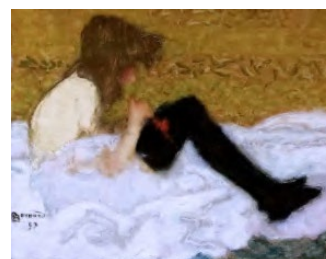
1893

Oil on wood

9 1/2 x 6 3/4 in.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Gift of Zeineb and Jean-Pierre Marci-Rivière, 2011



Pierre Bonnard

Man and Woman

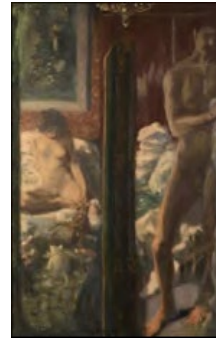
1900

Oil on canvas

45 1/4 x 28 9/16 in.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Acquired 1948



Pierre Bonnard

Marthe on a Divan

c. 1900

Oil on canvas

17 3/8 x 16 1/8 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

The Mirror in the Green Room

1909

Oil on canvas

19 3/4 x 25 3/4 in.

Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields

James E. Roberts Fund



Pierre Bonnard

Nude Rising from Bed

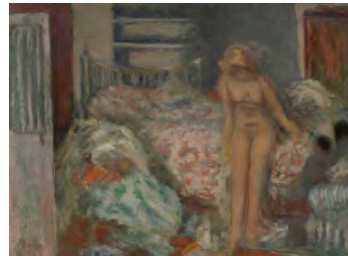
c. 1912

Oil on canvas

29 1/2 x 40 7/16 in.

The Cleveland Museum of Art

Promised Gift of Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley



BATH

Pierre Bonnard

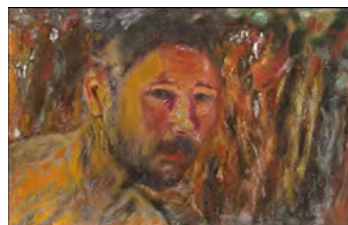
Self-Portrait with Beard

c. 1920

Oil on canvas

11 5/8 x 18 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

Large Nude in the Bathtub

1924

Oil on canvas

44 5/8 x 32 3/8 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

Self-Portrait (The Boxer)

1931

Oil on canvas

21 1/4 x 29 1/4 in.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Gift of Philippe Meyer, 2000



Pierre Bonnard

The Bathroom

1932

Oil on canvas

47 5/8 x 46 1/2 in.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Florene May Schoenborn Bequest, 1996



Pierre Bonnard

Nude in an Interior

c. 1935

Oil on canvas

52 3/4 x 27 1/4 in.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon



Pierre Bonnard

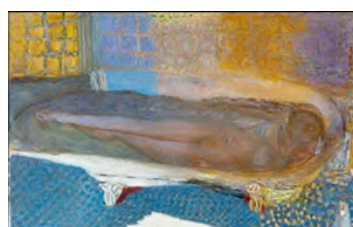
Nude in the Bath

1936

Oil on canvas

36 5/8 x 57 7/8 in.

Musée d'art moderne de Paris



Page 13—Checklist: *Bonnard's Worlds*

Purchased from the artist, 1937, for the Universal Exposition of 1937

Pierre Bonnard

In the Bathroom (Sketch)

c. 1940

Oil on canvas

36 1/4 x 24 in.

Private collection



Pierre Bonnard

Nude in Bathtub

1941–46

Oil on canvas

48 x 59 1/2 in.

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh

Acquired through the generosity of the Sarah Mellon Scaife Family



Pierre Bonnard

Portrait of the Artist in the Dressing Room Mirror

1945

Oil on canvas

52 3/4 x 27 1/4 in.

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne—Centre de création industrielle, Donation, 1984, Formerly Collection of Florence Gould



CITYSCAPE

Pierre Bonnard

Paris Boulevard at Night

1900

Oil on paperboard

17 3/4 x 22 7/8 in.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Bequest of John T. Spaulding



Pierre Bonnard

The Outer Boulevard

1904

Oil on canvas

38 1/2 x 30 in.

Nahmad Collection



ARCHIVAL

Paul Verlaine

Parallèlement

Paris, 1900

Illustrated with 109 lithographs and 9 wood-cuts
(engraved after drawings by Pierre Bonnard)

Ambrose Vollard, editor

Rare Book and Special Collections Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, DC



The Pastoral of Longus or Daphnis and Chloé

Paris, 1902

Illustrated with 156 lithographs printed in black
by Pierre Bonnard

Translation by J. Amyot

Ambrose Vollard, editor

Rare Book and Special Collections Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, DC



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WALL TEXT

Bonnard's Worlds

March 2–June 2, 2024

Bonnard's Worlds

Immerse yourself in the artistic worlds of Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947), one of the most esteemed painters of the 20th century. Born near Paris, he grew up between the capital and his family's country house, Le Clos, in southeastern France. Over his long career, Bonnard moved between Paris, Normandy, and the French Riviera, before retreating, in 1939, to his home, Le Bosquet, a modest hillside villa near the Mediterranean in Le Cannet.

Bonnard first became known in the 1890s as a leading member of the Nabis (Hebrew for prophet), a group of artists who sought to make art a language of personal expression rather than a transcription of the external world. While admiring the work of the Impressionists, Bonnard developed his own unique style, balancing sophisticated compositions with luminous treatments of color and light. Activating his surfaces with dynamic all-over patterns of color, the artist sought to express the immediacy of his "first sensation."

Almost every work Bonnard made was inspired by the world in which he lived. In the exhibition, you will see works from all periods of Bonnard's career, painted in all the places he most loved and all the genres in which he excelled, including landscape, still life, and figure painting. In 1893, Bonnard met Marthe de Méligny who became his lifelong companion and muse; Marthe's quiet presence, both seen and unseen, fills the spaces of Bonnard's painting.

Rather than the usual chronological presentation, this exhibition groups works loosely by the settings in which Bonnard found inspiration. Beginning with the artist's expansive views of the landscape, the exhibition transports us into the garden and onto the terrace, at times embracing both interior and exterior worlds as seen through an open window or door; then Bonnard invites us indoors to experience quiet domestic spaces—from dining and living rooms to the most private of all, the bedroom, dressing room, and bath. Whatever the subject, each work presents a world unto itself that grows richer and more seductive the closer and longer you look.

Paris Boulevard at Night

1900

Oil on paperboard

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Bequest of John T. Spaulding

This painting shows the view from Bonnard's apartment at 65 Rue de Douai, close to the corner of the Boulevard de Clichy, at the foot of Montmartre. For most of Bonnard's adult life, this part of Paris was an ordinary, working-class neighborhood bustling with life and home to a flourishing artistic community.

The Outer Boulevard

1904

Oil on canvas

Nahmad Collection

By day, and at a time of year when the trees are leafless, the view Bonnard had painted at night (on view nearby) is transformed. Here the artist frames a bird's eye view of the lively activity outside his home on the corner of Boulevard de Clichy and Rue de Douai. Bonnard evokes a sense of movement in his dynamic asymmetrical composition accented with touches of vibrant color throughout. He captures many modes of transport: a horse-drawn omnibus at lower right, a bright white pushcart, a cyclist, a buggy with a prancing white horse, a horse-drawn cab at far left, and an automobile on the boulevard.

Earthly Paradise

1916–20

Oil on canvas

The Art Institute of Chicago, Estate of Joanne Toor Cummings; Bette and Neison Harris and Searle Family Trust endowments; through prior gifts of Mrs. Henry C. Woods

The view from Bonnard's garden at his home Ma Roulotte (*My Caravan*) served as the inspiration for the background of *Earthly Paradise*, painted some six years after he had been living on the banks of the Seine at Vernonnet in Normandy. The painting alludes to the story of Adam and Eve—casting a slender Bonnard, standing beside a tree at left, as the first man and his wife, Marthe, at lower right, as the voluptuous first woman. They co-exist in a garden of Eden filled with various creatures—birds, rabbits, a monkey, and a garden snake.

Bouquet of Mimosas

1945

Oil on canvas

Private collection, New England

Bonnard's passion for the color yellow is celebrated. "One cannot have too much yellow," he said. For him, yellow was the color of light. Preparing this still life, Bonnard must have gathered flowers and foliage from the trees behind his house Le Bosquet—the subject of *Studio with Mimosas* (on view nearby). By bringing them into the house, it is as if he brought the intense light of the southern sun with him.

Landscape at Le Cannet

1928

Oil on canvas

Kimbell Art Museum, Acquired in 2018, in honor of Kay Fortson, President of the Kimbell Art Foundation, 1975–2017

The panoramic view of the landscape shown here, with the village below and mountains in the distance, is the one that Bonnard saw from a vantage point just above his house Le Bosquet (*The Grove*), perched above the hills in the seaside resort town of Cannes. Bonnard had purchased the home two years earlier. At right is Bonnard himself who blends in with the surroundings as if to suggest the close ties he felt with the natural world.

Woods in Summer

1927

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1927

We know that Bonnard painted in the studio, working from minimal sketches, his memory, and imagination. But many of his landscapes, like *Woods in Summer*, give the impression of having been painted outdoors, following the method of Claude Monet or Paul Cézanne—both of whom depended on direct observation of the landscape.

The Riviera

c. 1923

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1928

Bonnard painted this view many times. Working at Le Cannet several years before purchasing a home and settling there, he walked the hills above the village. From above, he observed the view of the Esterel Mountains and the Bay of Cannes. For the artist, the familiarity of the view never lessened its impact.

Steep Path at Le Cannet

1945

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Every morning before breakfast, Bonnard went out for a walk. *Steep Path at Le Cannet* was inspired by the last steps of the walk, as he neared the back of his house, its windows and red roof seen at left, partially obscured by trees.

Twilight (The Game of Croquet)

1892

Oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gift of Daniel Wildenstein through the Société des amis du Musée d'Orsay, 1985

In this painting, Bonnard welcomes us to his familial world—specifically the garden of Le Clos, the family's country house in southeastern France where he spent much of his childhood. The artist's sister Andrée prepares to strike a croquet ball with her mallet, accompanied by their father, in a straw hat, and another woman—perhaps their cousin, Berthe Schaedlin. Andrée's husband, composer Claude Terrasse, stands further back. The decorative shapes and flattened patterns the artist uses here were inspired by the Japanese woodblock prints he loved.

Afternoon in the Garden

1891

Oil and pen and ink on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Promised gift from the Roger and Vicki Sant Collection

This painting, like *Twilight* (on view nearby), is inspired by the many summers Bonnard spent at the family home in southeastern France. Within the dense green foliage and white blossoming hydrangeas the faces of several figures emerge: the artist's grandmother, mother, father, and brother (in the straw hat), sister Andrée (with red fan), and the artist himself (at upper right). The painting is characteristic of

Bonnard's early Nabis style, reflecting his love of decorative patterns and flattened perspective, aspects borrowed from his and his fellow Nabis's assimilation of techniques from Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints.

Women with a Dog

1891

Oil and ink on canvas

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, Acquired 1979

In works like *Women with a Dog*, Bonnard establishes the garden as a setting for domestic harmony, as it had been for him in his youth. The garden was a gathering place for family and friends, their children, and their menageries: cats, rabbits, hens, and roosters, but above all, dogs. The shaggy hound shown here so affectionately was Ravageau, Bonnard's sister Andrée's pet.

Early Spring

1908

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1925

Early Spring is set in the garden surrounding a house in the country not far from Paris, near where the Impressionists had lived a generation earlier. "When my friends and I decided to pick up the research of the Impressionists and try to take it further, we wanted to outshine them in their naturalistic impressions of color," Bonnard said. Here, fresh green colors and passages of light alternating with shadow are inspired by Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro, while the arrangement of horizontal bands reflects Bonnard's claim that he and his friends "were stricter in composition."

The Family in the Garden

1901

Oil on canvas

Kunsthaus Zürich, Acquired 1985

In this painting, Bonnard revisited the world of his childhood, specifically the garden surrounding his family's country home at Le Clos. From a window, he invites us to look down on his mother, carrying a basket of fruit that she has picked on the property. In the distance, a man is seated on a garden chair at the edge of a gravel path, while eight children—some of them his nieces and nephews—are scattered across the foreground and into the background of the composition.

The Garden

c. 1936–37

Oil on canvas

Musée d'art moderne de Paris, Purchased from the artist, 1937

This flattened, abstract view of a garden shows one of the most spectacular views of the plantings surrounding Le Bosquet, Bonnard's Riviera home. Bonnard breaks the rules of landscape painting, as writer André Fermigier noted: "The forms are difficult to identify, merging one into another and becoming confused masses hatched with patches and strings of color . . . The painting has no center, seems but barely composed, goes off in all directions, and what is perhaps most remarkable, the canvas is entirely covered with spots and shapes through which no air circulates."

The Terrasse Family

c. 1902

Oil on canvas

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany, Acquired in 1959

On the lawn beside his family's country house, Bonnard shows at right his sister Andrée in pink and white. Her husband, Claude, reclines on a sofa at left beside their son, Jean. The painter's mother appears in a doorway beyond them. Scattered around the lawn close to the house are a host of children and pets. For all the seeming informality of the scene, it is carefully arranged, the figures aligned full-face or in profile, in planes that parallel the background building. With humor and tenderness, Bonnard portrays the chaotic domestic life of his family.

The Terrace

1918

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1935

This scene is set on the terrace above the garden at Ma Roulotte, Bonnard's small home in Vernonnet near Vernon which he purchased six years earlier. The painting was also known by the title *Savage Garden*, aptly describing the overgrown garden full of wild plants and flowers that Bonnard favored in contrast to the cultivated gardens at Monet's Giverny, located just across the river from Vernon. Just beyond the terrace, nestled between two thin tree trunks, Bonnard includes a male figure in black seated beside a crouching woman in orange; their diminutive presence is overshadowed by the majestic forces of nature.

Southern Landscape with Two Children

1916–18

Oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks, 1970

Bonnard may have begun this painting at Grasse, a hill town in the South of France. Exuberant foliage is suffused with turquoise, yellow, and orange, suggesting the intense light that made Bonnard feel, on his first encounters with the Mediterranean, "As if I were in the palace of *A Thousand and One Nights*," enchanted by "the sea, the yellow walls, reflections as colorful as the lights themselves."

The Palm

1926

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1928

The Palm was painted in 1926, the year in which Pierre and Marthe Bonnard purchased their home, Le Bosquet, in Southern France. The masses of foliage above and below frame the rooftops of the town, their sundrenched tiles rendered in tones of orange and pink against patches of blue and violet shadow. These colors define the lone figure in the composition, a woman—Marthe—who faces us and holds what seems to be an apple in her outstretched hand, like Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruits and orchards.

Before Noon

1940/1946

Oil on canvas

Private collection

In *Before Noon*, Bonnard uses color at maximum intensity. The view is from inside his home Le Bosquet, through the doorway leading onto the gravel terrace. The stripe of hot pink at left is the door frame, and the irregular brown stripe at right is the door with a dark brown handle. Bonnard attempts to render the garden light through patches of yellow and white paint layered with blue, green, and pink. This shimmering cloud almost absorbs the shapes it encounters—the back of a garden chair or the figure entering the composition from behind the door jamb at left.

Young Women in the Garden

1921–22/1945–46

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Marthe Bonnard appears in the corner at right, almost unnoticed, while a much younger blonde woman, Renée Monchaty, looks pensively towards the painter. Bonnard met Monchaty, more than 30 years his junior, around 1920. Marthe's anger over their affair was likely the decisive factor leading to the couple's marriage in August 1925, more than 30 years after they started living together. In turn, it is thought that Renée's death a few weeks later must have been a suicide. When Bonnard began the painting, it probably showed the terrace of Ma Roulotte, but when it was finished more than 20 years later—after Marthe's death in 1942, when Bonnard could bring the painting out once more to be retouched, from memory—it became suffused with the light that fell on the terrace at Le Bosquet: yellow, white, pink, and blue.

The Open Window

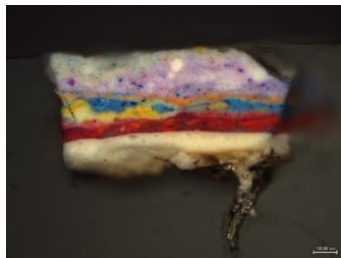
1921

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1930

When Duncan Phillips purchased *The Open Window* in 1930, the paint surface was unvarnished (clear varnishes are often applied to protect paintings from dirt accumulation). Bonnard disliked varnishes because varnishes discolor over time and would alter his carefully considered color relationships. However, in the early 1980s, when *The Open Window* was cleaned as part of a conservation treatment, a modern synthetic varnish was applied. Forty years later, the varnish had turned dull and gray, flattening the painting's subtle color contrasts and obscuring Bonnard's energetic brushwork.

In 2023, conservators at The Phillips Collection removed the degraded varnish to reveal once more the vibrant colors and intended matte surface of the painting. Through examination with an infrared camera, conservators also determined that Bonnard used little if any black pigment in *The Open Window*. Instead, darker passages seen in the painting, even the “black” cat at lower right, are created with mixtures of blue and red paint, which appear transparent in an infrared image (black pigments appear black). Dark areas in the infrared image correspond with blue, lavender, or blue-green brushstrokes.



A cross-section of a microscopic paint sample from the lower left edge of the painting shows Bonnard's technique of layering complementary hues brushstroke by brushstroke to create a shimmering optical effect.



The lack of black in the infrared image suggests that Bonnard did not use black pigment in the work.

The French Window with a Dog

1927

Oil on canvas

Private collection, Dallas

This painting shows the upstairs sitting room at Le Bosquet and its large window. In this painting, we spy the red tile rooftops of nearby houses through the branches of the palm tree. Their zig-zagging forms are confined within a rectangle at the upper center of the composition, one of several geometric shapes made from the door frames, their mullioned windows, the outside balcony, and its balusters—a calculated geometrical arrangement.

Breakfast at Le Cannet (or Breakfast, Radiator)

1930

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Here the open window reveals a blue and green landscape, with only a few buildings visible in the hazy distance. Marthe Bonnard is seated in the foreground. Behind her, the outside wall of the room is bracketed at left and right by white borders that represent the doors to her bathroom and bedroom. At right, in parallel with the landscape view, is a mirror, which reflects the opposite wall of the room. In it we see a slice of the frame around the opposite door, Marthe's back, and Bonnard himself.

The French Window (Morning at Le Cannet)

1932

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Through the glass of the closed window, Bonnard shows a distant view of the Esterel Mountains and the Bay of Cannes. He does not show us much of the room, concentrating on the image of Marthe. Her blue dress echoes the colors of the landscape, while her hair is suffused with gold. Morning light enters the composition from the left, perhaps through the open door of the east-facing bathroom, and bounces onto the back of Marthe's chair, which we see reflected in the mirror behind her, along with the painter's face.

The Artist's Studio

1900

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Bonnard often used windows, doors, and mirrors to frame and call attention to elements within a composition, sometimes composing "pictures within pictures." Bonnard places the viewer directly opposite the window of his Montmartre studio, located on Rue Tholozé.

Studio with Mimosa, Le Cannet

1939/1946

Oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne—Centre de création industrielle, Purchased from Charles Terrasse, 1979

The window between the world inside and the world outside was a subject Bonnard turned to frequently and with mastery, exploring its literal and metaphorical dimensions. *Studio with Mimosa* is one of his greatest paintings of the theme, showing mimosa trees in bloom outside his studio at Le Bosquet. The enormous window almost fills the canvas; a band of pink at left represents the wall where Bonnard tacked his canvases to paint. Begun around 1939, the painting was only finished in the last months of the artist's life.

The Bowl of Milk

1919

Oil on canvas

Tate, London, Bequeathed by Edward Le Bas, 1967

This atmospheric painting shows the room in a hotel overlooking the sea in Antibes, where Pierre and Marthe stayed in the months after the end of the First World War. Scholars have not been able to determine whether the model is Marthe or another woman. It is also not clear what time of day is represented. Is the shadow cast over the tabletop by sunlight, moonlight, or is it entirely imagined? Out of the light and shadow appears a woman at right. Her hair, face, and hand, as well as the edge of her pink dress, are brightly lit in contrast to the rest of her body. The black cat that emerges from the luminous darkness beneath the table might be a playful embodiment of the very idea of shadow.

The Breakfast Room (Dining Room Overlooking the Garden)

1930–31

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Given anonymously, 1941

In this painting, Bonnard studies the way light comes into a room, falling on a tabletop and casting deep shadows beneath the objects placed there. Through the glass, across the balustrade of a terrace, we see a verdant lawn, flanked by sun-struck trees. On either side of the window, patterned wallpaper is thrown into shadow. Marthe is there at left, cropped by the painting's edge.

Dining Room on the Garden

1935

Oil on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, By gift

In this painting nearly every effect of atmospheric light and shadow has been eliminated. Objects—even the footed dishes of fruit and the cylindrical jug and pitcher—become tinted silhouettes without volume. Colors are applied at maximum intensity, virtually without shading. Only one detail—the reflection of the window frame and blue sky on the far side of the table not covered by a cloth—suggests the effect of natural light streaming in through the window.

The Lessons

1898

Oil on canvas

North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, Purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina

The Lessons seems to show, through a doorway, the dining room at the Bonnard family's country house. In the doorway, a small boy engages the painter and the viewer with a quizzical, wondering look.

The Lamp

c. 1899

Oil on academy board mounted on panel

Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan, Gift of The Whiting Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Donald E. Johnson

Bonnard had what he called “the taste for everyday spectacle, the faculty for drawing emotion out of the most modest acts of life.” In this painting, he uses an everyday object in an unexpected way to intrigue the viewer. Drawn close to the table, the shiny brass lamp blocks our view of the other diners. In its central sphere we see our own distorted reflection, distant and diminished.

Coffee

1915

Oil on canvas

Tate, London, Presented by Sir Michael Sadler through the Art Fund, 1941

The dachshund was the favored dog of Pierre and Marthe. Over several decades, they had six of these small dogs, all with the same name: Poucette (meaning “Thumbelina” in French). Here, the dog is a focal point, placed at the edge of the table, aligned with the border of the checkered cloth and the border of the hanging on the wall behind Marthe and her housemaid. A second coffee cup suggests Bonnard's presence at the table.

Woman with Dog

1922

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1925

Woman with Dog was the first of over 20 works acquired by museum founder Duncan Phillips, who became one of the artist's foremost champions in the United States. In his tender portrayal, Bonnard shows the affectionate bond between Marthe and the dog cradled in her lap. The figure of Marthe is rendered in warm hues, her striped dress—one she is often seen wearing in paintings—a brilliant scarlet red, her hair rich orange-brown with accents of deep magenta. To her left Bonnard includes a stripe of black laid over violet, suggesting an open door.

The White Cupboard

1931

Oil on canvas

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Gift of Henry W. and Marion H. Bloch

When the Bonnards acquired Le Bosquet in 1926, there were alterations and renovations to be made. One of the most important of these was to convert two small rooms on the ground floor into one large room that served as a space for living and dining. At one end of the room, white wooden cupboards were installed on either side of the fireplace. This painting shows the three cabinets to the right of the fireplace. Marthe is busy in front of the middle cupboard, while the left-hand cupboard stands open. Glowing lightbulbs on the ceiling cast the shadow of the glass-paned central door onto the closed cupboard at right.

The Red Cupboard

1933

Oil on canvas

Private collection

This is a view inside the left-hand cupboard shown open in the large painting *The White Cupboard* (on view nearby). The foreshortened cupboard door projects into our space and casts its shadow onto the interior, where pieces of fruit are placed on the shelves. Bonnard also peers obliquely and to the right into the much deeper center cabinet, where, on corresponding shelves, even more objects are arranged. Under artificial light, the brilliant red color permeates the composition, changing even the white interior of the projecting door to deep mauve.

Basket of Fruit in a Cupboard

1944–46

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David Rockefeller, 1984

A basket filled with fruit rests on the floor of the cupboard. On the raised step behind it, we see three ceramic items: an egg cup, a flat plate, and the foot of a fruit dish. The white cabinetry acts like a frame around the colorful central motif.

Faience from Normandy (The Pot from Rouen)

1910

Oil on canvas

Private collection

At the center of the composition, atop a journal on the littered table, Bonnard has placed a small faience (tin-glazed earthenware) pitcher brimming with *fleurs des champs*—flowers of the field. Gathered in a neighboring meadow or in one of the wilder parts of the garden, by Marthe or by the painter himself, the flowers have been barely arranged, if at all; simple and fresh, they bring the outside world indoors. On the back wall, Bonnard has tacked one of his earliest views of the side of Ma Roulotte, with characteristic white, unpainted margins.

Homage to Maillol

1917

Oil on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963

Red and pink anemones in a blue and white vase stand on a small cabinet placed beside a column or post in Bonnard's Paris apartment. Also standing on the cabinet is a bronze cast of *Standing Bather*, modeled around 1900 by Bonnard's friend Aristide Maillol. The composition emphasizes verticality: the statue and its cabinet-base, the pillar, the blue screen in the distance—all are narrow and tall, like the painting itself.

Flowers on the Mantelpiece at Le Cannet

1927

Oil on canvas

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, France, Bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Léon Bouchut in 1974

In the upstairs sitting room at Le Bosquet, Marthe approaches a vase of anemones on the mantelpiece. Almost everything in the painting is some shade of yellow, from the painted wall to Marthe's yellow dress. Even the white cupboard glows with borrowed hues. Our attention is captured by the shiny blue vase filled with anemones, blue, white, and red—the *tricolore* of the French flag—and their curvaceous green stems.

The Work Table

1926

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

The Work Table is remarkable for its experimentation with broad patches of relatively unmodulated color, the gold chair and the blue rug painted flatly, perhaps in homage to Bonnard's good friend Henri Matisse. On a sofa behind the table and its still life of books and papers, a white cat, wide awake beside a sleeping dachshund, surveys the room and scrutinizes the viewer.

Fruit and Fruit Dishes

c. 1930

Oil on canvas

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley Collection Gift

The artist's close point of view means that the painting is almost entirely white—though Bonnard's whites contain myriad colors. Here, the careful arrangement of the blue-ringed bowls and plates with yellow, orange, and red fruits recalls the still lifes of Paul Cézanne, or of another of Bonnard's heroes, 18th-century painter Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin. The harmony of the objects on the tabletop is disrupted first by the slivers of orange, yellow, and pink beyond the table and then by the cropped heads of a genial cat and a dog, cautiously watching each other.

Two Baskets of Fruit

1935

Oil on canvas

Collection of Anne and Chris Flowers

The setting for this ambitious still life is the dining room at Le Bosquet, where the plaster wall and its wainscot, at right, meet the wall of white cupboards, at left. A wicker garden chair with two brightly patterned cushions is in the corner. The source of light in the room is overhead; the baskets cast minimal shadows while the chair creates a deep shadow that seems almost tangible.

Corner of a Table

c. 1935

Oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, State purchase, 1936. Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay in 1977. On deposit at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne—Centre de création industrielle

In *Corner of a Table*, the eye is forced to look downwards—everything around the table has been reduced to insignificance—and the result is a kind of perceptual vertigo. Baskets and boxes cast irregular and perplexing shadows. All laws of perspective are ignored; the line of the tablecloth first recedes in a gentle arc, then takes an abrupt upward turn under the basket at the top of the composition. Against a triangle of floor or wall in the upper left, the artist places lines that we read as a tiny chair. The result is one of Bonnard's most innovative compositions.

Basket of Fruit

c. 1946

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Basket of Fruit is among the artist's last still lifes. The perception of color is the underlying theme, as Bonnard balances warm colors—yellow to orange—with their cool complementary hues—violet to blue. In May 1946, Bonnard borrowed two paintings from Henri Matisse specifically so that he could study their colors in his dining room at Le Bosquet. He sent *Basket of Fruit* to his old friend in return. Matisse was full of praise: "I am still cohabiting with your painting, so mysterious and alluring."

Young Girl with Black Stockings

1893

Oil on wood

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gift of Zeïneb and Jean-Pierre Marcie-Rivière, 2011

Page 13—Wall Text: *Bonnard's Worlds*

In 1893, Marthe de Méligny met Pierre Bonnard. Bonnard, smitten, soon began to make paintings, drawings, and prints inspired by her. Among the earliest paintings devoted to Marthe is *Young Girl with Black Stockings*, painted the year they met, when Marthe was 24 years old. It announces the direction that the artist's early depictions of his lover would take; though here only the skin of her back is visible and her gaze is averted, her stockinged legs smolder with erotic intent.

Marthe on a Divan

c. 1900

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Bonnard gave this painting of Marthe to his closest friend, painter Edouard Vuillard. Here she is fully clothed, her skirt falling to the right as she curls inward to the left, her face half in shadow. Is the glimpse of her thigh meant to be titillating? Or is it purely accidental and innocent, something seen when entering a darkened room to encounter an intimate companion napping there?

Man and Woman

1900

Oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Acquired 1948

Although we recognize Pierre and Marthe in this painting, its title, *Man and Woman*, suggests that it is meant to be read as a story, a fable, even. Separated by a folding screen, the man, his shadowed body thin and angular, has risen from the bed and is dressing. The woman, her voluptuous body glowing like ivory in the light and her cheek flushed pink, remains in bed playing with her cat.

Nude Rising from Bed

c. 1912

Oil on canvas

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Promised Gift of Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley

Nude Rising from Bed depicts an “everyday spectacle,” as Bonnard would refer to the “modest acts of life” that he portrayed again and again—a woman at her toilette, or bathing, or drinking coffee, or speaking to a pet. Painted about a decade after *Man and Woman* (on view nearby), it indicates the direction that Bonnard's later paintings of the nude would take—though still sensual, no longer coupled with lust.

The Mirror in the Green Room

1909

Oil on canvas

Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, James E. Roberts Fund

Set in the same space as *The Bathroom* (on view nearby), *The Mirror in the Green Room* brings the viewer close to the dressing table—so close that the objects resting on its surface are cropped by the picture's edge. Bonnard calls on the viewer to look closely and attentively at his composition. He simplifies the mirror frame's design, thus making the image it encloses a bit more noticeable. Were it

not for the discreet reflection of the inside of the basin and the opening of the pitcher, the mirror might be mistaken for a framed painting, hanging against the patterned wallpaper.

In the Bathroom (Sketch)

c. 1940

Oil on canvas

Private collection

After purchasing the villa Le Bosquet in February 1926, the Bonnards carried out extensive renovations, including the creation of a bathroom for Marthe. *In the Bathroom* shows the result. A large enameled bathtub is in one corner, a sink and a slender radiator in another. French doors are centered on the far wall. On the walls, white-glazed ceramic tiles are capped by a dark blue-green border, which seems to continue into the mirror over the sink. Bonnard depicts the room from below, the view from the bather's vantage point, which becomes our own.

Large Nude in the Bathtub

1924

Oil on canvas

Private collection

In this painting, the careful arrangement of Marthe's body—the complexity of the pose—suggests the artist's collaboration as sculptor-choreographer. He gathers the figure's most expressive elements together in one zone—her head and shoulders, hands and feet. Tender and personal, the image comes from the world of Bonnard's existence, every detail drawn from his life with Marthe.

After the Shower

1914

Oil on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963

After the Shower is thought to have been painted in Saint-Tropez. The artist stands away from his model, permitting a view of a yellow-painted room with an open window in the background. His elevated viewpoint causes the tabletop and the floor to tip upwards. A variety of objects allude to the rituals of breakfast and bath: a place setting is laid at the end of the table; a copious towel is draped to dry on a rack in the foreground at left.

Nude in an Interior

c. 1935

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Bonnard understood that he could inspire his viewers to closer looking by grabbing their attention with a subtle visual puzzle. In *Nude in an Interior*, he creates a complex space that is difficult to interpret. Though his compositional strategies might initially seem baffling, Bonnard presents a domestic view as he might have encountered it, the model seen by accident, unaware.

The Bathroom

1932

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Florene May Schoenborn Bequest, 1996

Within the Bonnard's bathroom, light seems to be in motion. Marthe's body glows pink, her bent arm and her belly lit from beneath, light bouncing off the upended floor, which is blue and gray, then blue and white, then blue and yellow. On the far wall, the white ceramic tiles glow icy blue at left, while those on the right are a smoldering blue-violet. Above the sink is a slash of white, a vivid reflection, but where it originates, we are not told.

Nude in the Bath

1936

Oil on canvas

Musée d'art moderne de Paris, Purchased from the artist, 1937, for the Universal Exposition of 1937

By 1928, Bonnard had already formulated the idea of a composition in which the bathtub would be shown in its entirety, the recumbent figure inscribed within the irregular oblong of its rim, her body submerged in water, an idea that took form in this majestic canvas. A few straight lines—the edge of the bathtub and the delineation between Marthe's legs—underscore the geometry of part of the tiled background wall. Elsewhere, all semblance of perspective is abandoned, all contours subsumed by the radiant light, visible in the shimmering patches of saturated color that describe the gleaming tiles.

Nude in Bathtub

1941–46

Oil on canvas

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Acquired through the generosity of the Sarah Mellon Scaife Family

This visionary work, the last of Bonnard's paintings of Marthe soaking in the bath, is also the last of the artist's depictions of the woman who was his closest companion for 50 years. Although Marthe was still living when the painting was begun around 1940 or 1941, her death in 1942 left Bonnard without a model; the painting was completed from memory and imagination. Amid the challenges of the ongoing war and the anguish of loneliness, in his last years Bonnard painted some of his most expressive and inventive works.

Self-Portrait with Beard

c. 1920

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Over the course of his career, from the late 1880s until the year before his death, Bonnard painted more than a dozen self-portraits. (He made many more drawings of himself, and he placed himself in many works with other figures and themes.) In this portrait, his expression is wary, his eyes slightly narrowed, though his gaze is direct. The likeness is roughly drawn in black paint, wiped into the ground beneath patches of red, orange, and yellow that give it a mysterious glowing quality, as if it were seen in firelight.

Self-Portrait (The Boxer)

1931

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gift of Philippe Meyer, 2000

A self-portrait painted when the artist was in his early sixties, this painting was titled *The Boxer* when first exhibited. Bonnard stands before the mirror, indicated by the dark line at the right. The wall behind him is lit by a harsh electric bulb. His right shoulder and bicep are in the light, as is his upraised, clenched fist at left, and everything else is thrown into moody shadow. Bonnard's body is lean and wiry, but his gestures and facial expression exude a deep sadness. Bonnard is not afraid to expose his emotional wounds to the public, a boxer more brave than strong, a man aware of his frailties and flaws.

Portrait of the Artist in the Dressing Room Mirror

1945

Oil on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne—Centre de création industrielle, Donation, 1984, Formerly Collection of Florence Gould

Here, Bonnard shows us a mirror, making sure we notice its edges, below and at right. We look into the mirror to find Bonnard there, placing us where he should be. We are faced with philosophical questions posed by the painter's nephew, Charles Terrasse, who wrote in 1943: "*What relationship does Bonnard himself establish between the world and his art?*" Perhaps the answer is that Bonnard's art is about the world—his world—and it would be impossible to understand, or even to imagine, the one without the other.

Paul Verlaine

Parallèlement

Paris, 1900

Illustrated with 109 lithographs and 9 wood-cuts (engraved after drawings by Pierre Bonnard)

Ambroise Vollard, editor

Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC

The Pastoral of Longus or Daphnis and Chloé

Paris, 1902

Illustrated with 156 lithographs printed in black by Pierre Bonnard

Translation by J. Amyot

Ambroise Vollard, editor

Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC

Early in his career, Bonnard earned acclaim for his work as a graphic artist. This case features two examples of his illustrations, offering a glimpse into how the painter-poet translated his ideas across media, incorporating the classical alongside the contemporary.

In 1900, Ambroise Vollard commissioned Bonnard to make illustrations for two literary publications. Bonnard's dreamy lithographs in *Parallèlement*, a book of erotic poems by Paul Verlaine, were based on snapshots he took of Marthe. Freely drawn and often sprawling out into the margins of each page, the lithographs were reproduced in pink, at Bonnard's request, to evoke the "poetic atmosphere of Verlaine."

Page 17—Wall Text: *Bonnard's Worlds*

In 1902, Vollard commissioned the artist to illustrate *Daphnis and Chloé*, a popular ancient Greek pastoral romance. In sensuous drawings with a light and fluid touch, Bonnard encapsulates the feeling of unbridled love between Daphnis and Chloe. The process of bringing the story to life consumed Bonnard with a “happy intoxication.”

BONNARD SALON WALL TEXT

Bonnard's Worlds

March 2–June 2, 2024

Welcome to the Bonnard Salon, an intimate space that echoes the rooms depicted in Bonnard's Worlds and showcases Pierre Bonnard's special relationship with The Phillips Collection and his supporters Duncan and Marjorie Phillips. As a guest, you are invited to develop your own relationship with Bonnard by attending Friday afternoon programs and by spending time with specially selected reproductions of materials from The Phillips Collection Library and Archives.

Take time to read Duncan Phillips's correspondence and records of business transactions to uncover the private details of his acquisitions of Bonnard's work. Look closely at historic photographs and exhibition ephemera to journey through nearly a century of Bonnard paintings on view at the Phillips's family home. Attend a program that foregrounds these relationships and interests.

Make yourself at home as you dive into the world of Pierre Bonnard.

Furniture and accessories for the Bonnard Salon are generously provided by **Room&Board**

PIERRE BONNARD

b. 1867, Fontenay-aux-Roses, France; d. 1947, Le Cannet, France

The Lesson

1926

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1927

The paintings in the Bonnard Salon were among Duncan Phillips's earliest acquisitions by the artist. Phillips favored examples of interiors with figures and animals that showcased Bonnard's signature combination of vivid color and detailed pattern.

In 1927, Phillips acquired *The Lesson* through New York gallerist F. Valentine Dudensing. While Phillips was deciding whether to make the purchase, he received the letter from Dudensing reproduced here. Dudensing assured Phillips he would be pleased, noting that Bonnard was "taking a firmer and firmer position as one of the best of the moderns."

PIERRE BONNARD

b. 1867, Fontenay-aux-Roses, France; d. 1947, Le Cannet, France

Children and Cat

1909

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1927

Marjorie and Duncan Phillips found joy in exhibiting works by Pierre Bonnard in their home and in welcoming others to visit them. Marjorie wrote to Bonnard's nephew, "In our Gallery his beautiful paintings are at home."

Page 2—Bonnard Salon Wall Text

Although they found it difficult to part with works by Duncan’s “favorite living artist,” they generously promised eleven paintings including *The Lesson and Children and Cat* to Smith College Museum of Art in 1932. In a letter to Smith College’s Director Jere Smith Abbott, Duncan wrote, “I realize how much the American public needs to wake up to the importance of Bonnard and, as we have the largest collection of his pictures in the country, I am aware of a certain responsibility in the matter of making him better known to our people.”

UPPER LEFT: Phillips House, East Parlor with Bonnard’s *Woman with Dog*, 1931

UPPER RIGHT: Phillips House, second floor with Bonnard’s *The Open Window* and *Children and Cat*, c.1953-55

LOWER LEFT: Annex, second floor with Bonnard’s *Woman with Dog*, *The Riviera*, and *The Open Window*, c. 1960s, James R. Dunlop Photography

LOWER RIGHT: Annex, second floor with Bonnard’s *Woman with Dog*, *The Palm*, and *The Lesson*, 1985, Lautman Photography

The Historic Photographs collection from The Phillips Collection Library and Archives document special exhibitions and permanent collection installations at the museum. The photographs here begin in 1931 with Bonnard’s first solo exhibition in the United States. Explore how the galleries have changed and how Bonnard’s paintings have been displayed over the years.

Bonnard’s intimate viewpoints often found a home in the furnished interiors of the Phillips House galleries until the 1960s, when a gallery on the second floor of the Annex was dedicated to the study and appreciation of Bonnard. Today, Bonnard’s works hang throughout the museum.

Pierre Bonnard first met Duncan and Marjorie Phillips in late 1926, when the artist visited Washington, DC on a jury trip for the 25th International Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Institute. Bonnard’s visit to the museum was a source of “happy memories” and the start of a lasting relationship between The Phillips Collection, Bonnard, and his family, the Terrasses.

The letters shown here include the artist’s August 1931 letter to Duncan Phillips, thanking him for “the interest you take in my painting despite the many great faults that I myself find in them,” and admiring Marjorie’s talent as a painter. A letter from Marjorie Phillips to Bonnard’s nephew, Charles Terrasse, in 1967, mirrors the same fondness. She wrote, “It was such a pleasure to meet you that day at The Phillips Collection. As you know among the few that we prize most are the paintings by your uncle.”

Pierre Bonnard to Duncan Phillips (Translation)

August 1931

“Dear Mr. Phillips,

Today I received your book through the kind attention of Mr. de Hauke who personally brought it to me, in which you describe and characterize your collection. In it I see again with great pleasure reproductions of many of the paintings which I had admired so much in your gallery. I am touched by the interest you take in my painting despite the many great faults that I myself find in them. I always

Page 3—Bonnard Salon Wall Text

work with the hope of correcting my style or way of painting, and I am not at all indifferent to the knowledge that certain (kindred) souls follow me in this effort.

I keep happy memories of my visit to your gallery and often think of the enjoyable painting of your charming wife [Marjorie Phillips], who, it seems to me, should continue to cultivate her gift.

With kind regards,
P. Bonnard”

Translation from *Duncan Phillips and His Collection*, 1970, Marjorie Phillips, W. W. Norton & Company and The Phillips Collection, p. 82.

Marjorie Phillips to Charles Terrasse

December 9, 1967

F. Valentine Dudensing to Duncan Phillips

March 15, 1927

BONNARD SALON & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Bonnard's Worlds

March 2–June 2, 2024

The information below was updated February 2024 and is subject to change.

Please visit PhillipsCollection.org/events for the most up-to-date programming information.

BONNARD SALON

The Phillips Collection presents the [Bonnard Salon](#), an intimate space where guests can more deeply engage with artist Pierre Bonnard. Archival materials, including written correspondence, historic photographs, posters, newspaper clippings, and other ephemera showcase The Phillips Collection's special relationship with Bonnard and give insight into how Bonnard paintings were acquired and exhibited over time.

Bonnard Salons take place on Fridays from 12-1 pm, in Phillips House, Floor 2U unless otherwise noted. *Free with general admission. Space is limited, reservations required, including members.*
PhillipsCollection.org/events

[March 8: Bonnard's Le Cannet and Vernon](#)

Bonnard found inspiration in the French countryside. **Phillips Educator Nadinne Ronquillo** invites you to explore the picturesque scenes of Le Cannet and the serene landscapes of Vernon that Bonnard witnessed at the turn of the century. Compare his timeless paintings with real images of these vibrant landscapes.

[March 15: Bonnard in the Archives](#)

Phillips Digital Archivist Amanda Acosta leads a conversation on the remarkable relationship between the Phillips and Pierre Bonnard. Learn about the historical documents unearthed for the Bonnard Salon and gain an in-depth view of primary source materials on Bonnard in The Phillips Collection's Library and Archives.

[March 22: Focus on Photography](#)

Photography played a significant role in Pierre Bonnard's compositions. While he only took around 200 photographs with his Kodak pocket camera during his lifetime, a small number compared to his contemporaries, these images allowed Bonnard to capture places and people meaningful to him. Tour *Bonnard's Worlds* with **Phillips Educator Katie Klein** and consider how he translated these personal moments and compositions onto canvas.

[March 29: Contemporary Compositions](#)

Location: Art Workshop LL2

Artist Sydney Vernon (whose works are on view at Phillips@THEARC) leads a workshop on observational drawing. Learn about constructing dynamic compositions with unconventional perspectives inspired by Bonnard. Engage with various drawing techniques and enhance your skills in crafting visual narratives.

[April 5: Framing Bonnard](#)

Frames have a prominent place in the display of paintings. So why do conversations often end at the edge of the canvas? Step into the salon with **Phillips Educator Kelly Richman-Abdou** for a talk on these overlooked objects. Pay a visit to Bonnard exhibitor Bernheim Jeune—a Parisian art gallery founded by a family of frame manufacturers—and dive into primary source documents that reveal Duncan Phillips's desire to custom frame *The Palm*, a painting he praised as “one of Bonnard's most important canvases.”

[April 12: Conserving Bonnard](#)

Phillips Conservator Patricia Favero discusses the conservation of Pierre Bonnard's paintings at The Phillips Collection. This session will provide insight into the work of preserving the Phillips's collection for generations to come.

[April 19: Bonnard and Creative Writing](#)

Celebrate National Poetry Month with the art of Pierre Bonnard. Join **Phillips Educator Kathleen Foster** for a close look at Bonnard's works alongside the writings of Duncan Phillips to inspire your own creative writing process.

[April 26: Bonnard's Journals](#)

Location: Art Workshop, LL2

Inspired by Bonnard's intensive note-taking practice, join **Jenni Bick, founder of Jenni Bick Custom Journals** in Dupont Circle, for a hands-on introduction to basic bookbinding techniques. Make your own small blank book for note-taking or sketching.

[May 3: Exploring The Phillips Collection Library & Archives](#)

Phillips Head of Archives, Library, and Digital Resources Juli Folk shares the process of preserving correspondence on the acquisition of Pierre Bonnard's paintings. Learn more about the role of the archives at The Phillips Collection and maintaining records on Bonnard.

[May 17: Coloring Bonnard's Window Scenes](#)

Join **Phillips Educator Monica Cohen Lenoff** in making artwork about your own inside and outside world inspired by *Bonnard's Worlds*. Use colored pencils to create our own ornate and patterned window scene.

[May 24: Dupont Nature Walk](#)

Location: Meet at The Phillips Collection main entrance

Channeling Bonnard's eye for color and wild beauty, join us for a Dupont Circle neighborhood walk with **Carrie Vaughn, Farm Director of the THEARC Building Bridges Across the River**. Learn to spot the joy of unmanicured gardens.

[May 31: Wildflower Floral Arrangements](#)

Location: Art Workshop, LL2

Drawing on the wildflowers that inspired Pierre Bonnard's paintings, join **Massalley Design founder Karen Massalley** for a workshop on floral arrangement techniques.

PROGRAMS

[Phillips after 5: Bonjour, Bonnard!](#)

Thursday, March 7, 5-8:30 pm

In partnership with the Embassy of France, celebrate *Bonnard's Worlds*. Sip on French wines while enjoying jazz by Federico Peña, Mark Prince, Michael Bowie, and Marshall Keys. Design French provincial tiles and use ribbon to make bows for hair barrettes or lapel pins.

\$20; free for members

[Drop-In Family Program: The Phillips Plays](#)

Saturday, March 9, 10 am-1 pm

Take a tour of *Bonnard's Worlds* and *Jennifer Bartlett: In and Out of the Garden* to get inspired by the colorful gardens. In the studio, arrange flowers into artful bouquets and sketch them with ink and watercolor.

Included with general admission; free for members

[Curator's Perspective](#)

Thursday, March 21, 6:30 pm

Exhibition co-curator and Phillips Collection Chief Curator Elsa Smithgall gives a tour of *Bonnard's Worlds*.

Free, reservation required, space limited

[Phillips after 5: Garden Party](#)

Thursday, April 4, 5-8:30 pm

In partnership with the Embassy of France, celebrate spring! Enjoy the lush garden scenes by Pierre Bonnard and Jennifer Bartlett. Listen to jazz, blues, funk, folk, and rock with the Dave Kline Band and special guest Lynn Veronneau.

\$20; free for members

[Drop-In Family Program: The Phillips Plays](#)

Saturday, April 13, 10 am-1 pm

After exploring windows and mirrors in *Bonnard's Worlds*, create a sculptural book with moveable parts. What will be revealed when you lift the flaps or open the windows?

Included with general admission; free for members

[Member Morning](#)

Thursday, April 18, 10-11 am

Presentation by co-curator Elsa Smithgall in the Mansbach Auditorium, along with light breakfast fare.

Free, reservation required

[Book Launch: Jennifer Bartlett & Pierre Bonnard](#)

Thursday, April 18, 6:30 pm

Join us for the book launch of *Jennifer Bartlett & Pierre Bonnard: In and Out of the Garden* with author and Chief Curator Emeritus Klaus Ottmann. Learn about the two artists' creative dialogue with gardens and nature.

Free, reservation required

Guided Meditation

Wednesday, May 8, 12:45-1:15 pm, on Zoom

DC yoga teacher Aparna Sadananda leads a 30-minute guided meditation inspired by *Bonnard's Worlds*. Practice techniques for mindful looking and thinking. No experience needed. Following the meditation, LA-based artist Whitney Bedford will give a talk about how Bonnard has inspired her work.

Free, reservation required

Film Screening: Pierre Bonnard

Thursday, May 16, 7 pm, La Maison Française (4101 Reservoir Rd, NW)

Pierre Bonnard: The Greatest Painters of the World delves into Bonnard's timeless artistic contributions, offering a glimpse into his journey to becoming one of the greatest painters of his era and ours.

Introduced by Elsa Smithgall.

\$10, \$5 for students, reservation required

Member Morning

Tuesday, May 21, 2-3 pm, on Zoom

Presentation on Zoom by co-curator George Shackelford, Deputy Director of the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

Free, reservation required

Artist Talk

Sunday, June 2, 2 pm

Join us for an artist-led conversation about Pierre Bonnard and his enduring influence on modern and contemporary art. Artist(s) to be announced.

Free, reservation required. Visit PhillipsCollection.org for more information.

SYDNEY VERNON: INTERIOR LIVES

March 6–June 6, 2024

On view at Phillips@THEARC (1801 Mississippi, Ave, SE, Washington, DC)

In [Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives](#), artist Sydney Vernon draws from familial relationships that explore the shared histories, identities, and interior thoughts of the Black femme experience through a personal lens. Vernon’s multilayered works integrate family photographs with painting, drawing, and collage to capture universal community experiences. *Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives* is presented at Phillips@THEARC in conjunction with *Bonnard’s Worlds* at The Phillips Collection.



Featuring new and recent works that combine elements of painting, drawing, collage, and printmaking, this exhibition invites viewers into Sydney Vernon’s world. Since 2018, Vernon has been superimposing and altering personal family photographs with both real and imagined histories from Black American culture to explore the Black femme experience. After a period of researching and sketching, Vernon projects the images onto paper to create an underdrawings, silkscreens selected areas of patterns, then uses pastels and charcoal to render faces and other details. By reinterpreting the poses and postures of her family members in vintage photographs in her own style, Vernon blends memory and history in new forms.

Vernon’s depictions of intimate interior scenes and familiar spaces complement the paintings by Pierre Bonnard on view at The Phillips Collection. Vernon’s discovery of Bonnard and the other Nabis artists led her to explore more inventive ways of creating painterly marks. “My connection to Bonnard is as a seer and looker, interpreting things that appear as banal, such as how light shines through a window,” she explains.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

As a native of the DC region, Sydney Vernon (b. 1995, Prince George’s County, Maryland) has grown up visiting museums in the nation’s capital. She studied at the Cooper Union in New York and has shown her work at Sargent’s Daughters, Los Angeles; Kapp Kapp, New York; Luce Gallery, Turin, Italy; and Galerie LJ, Paris France.

PHILLIPS@THEARC

[The Phillips Collection’s workshop and gallery at the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus \(THEARC\)](#) provides a space to view, discuss, make, and exhibit art. Our programs are co-created with our partners and participants to encourage authentic community dialogue, community planning, and community action. Our work is about making friends, sustaining relationships, and bringing joy.

IMAGE: Sydney Vernon, Photo: Daniel Diasgranados

CHECKLIST

Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives

Sydney Vernon
Vacation
2024
52 x 48 in.
Pastel and silkscreen on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Kapp Kapp



Sydney Vernon
Hide and Seek
2024
48 x 36 in.
Pastel and silkscreen on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Kapp Kapp



Sydney Vernon
Untitled
2024
70 x 49 in.
Pastel and silkscreen on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Kapp Kapp



Sydney Vernon
Ava
2023
Charcoal on paper
24 x 18 in.
Courtesy of the artist and Kapp Kapp



Page 3—Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives

Sydney Vernon
Coastal Ride
2023
18 x 24 in.
Charcoal on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Kapp Kapp



Sydney Vernon
The Real Thing Strange
2023
42 x 49 in.
Pastel on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Kapp Kapp



Sydney Vernon
PRINITA IN PARK SLOPE APT
2020
7 1/2 x 7 in.
Pencil on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Kapp Kapp



To request access to images please contact Lauryn Cantrell at lcantrell@phillipscollection.org.

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PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Sydney Vernon: Interior Lives

[Opening Reception](#)

Thursday, March 14, 6-8 pm (at THEARC)

Celebrate the opening of the exhibition. Hear from the artist and enjoy light refreshments.

[Contemporary Compositions](#)

Friday, March 29, 12-1 pm (at The Phillips Collection, 1600 21st Street, NW)

Sydney Vernon leads a workshop on observational drawing. Learn about constructing dynamic compositions with unconventional perspectives inspired by artist Pierre Bonnard and experiment with a variety of drawing tools.

[Hands-On: Drawing from Light I](#)

Wednesday, April 17, 12-1 pm (at THEARC)

Join Sydney Vernon for a lightbox tracing workshop to elevate your composition-building skills. Delve into your personal photo collection and discover new perspectives as cherished moments come to life. Bring your own photo, all additional materials provided.

[Hands-On: Drawing from Light II](#)

Wednesday, May 15, 6-8 pm (at THEARC)

Sydney Vernon guides participants in the co-creation of a work of art that reflects our collective creativity. Work with fellow artists to create a masterpiece, while learning about Vernon's artistic practice. All materials provided.

Reservations: PhillipsCollection.org/events

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

The information below was updated in **February 2024** and is subject to change.

[Up Close with Paul Cezanne](#)

April 17—July 14, 2024

The exhibition will unveil two recently conserved works by French Post-Impressionist Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (1886-87) and *Self-Portrait* (1878-80), major paintings that are part of The Phillips Collection's world-renowned holdings by the revered artist. These paintings, together with five other works in the museum's Cezanne "unit," will be exhibited together for the first time in decades. The conservation of *Mont Sainte-Victoire* and *Self-Portrait* will reveal details previously obscured by aged, discolored varnishes while also providing visitors with new insight into the artist's process.

This installation is organized by The Phillips Collection and sponsored by the Bank of America Art Conservation Project.

[Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage](#)

July 6—September 22, 2024

Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage is the first large-scale exhibition dedicated to exploring collage by Black artists such as Mark Bradford, Kerry James Marshall, Tschabalala Self, and Kara Walker. Featuring more than 60 works by 50 artists, this exhibition celebrates the broad variety and complexity of Black identity. Building on a technique that has roots in European and American traditions, the diverse, intergenerational group of artists have created innovative works with pieces of paper, photographs, fabrics, and/or other salvaged materials. The bold compositions, created with an array of experimental techniques, offer poignant expressions of human experience, including fragmentation and reconstruction, shared history and memory, cultural hybridity, gender fluidity, and notions of beauty.

This exhibition is organized by The Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN.

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