

Kimbell Art Museum Presents *Bonnard's Worlds*, November 5, 2023–January 28, 2024

Exhibition includes seventy paintings by French artist Pierre Bonnard from major museums and private collections in the US and around the world, offering a rare look at how the painter's interpretation of his surroundings evolved.

Tickets On Sale Monday, October 9

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2023

FORT WORTH, TX—This fall, the Kimbell Art Museum is pleased to present *Bonnard's Worlds*, its first exhibition dedicated to the work of French painter Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) and the first major exhibition of Bonnard's paintings in Texas in nearly forty years. Inspired by the museum's 2018 acquisition of Bonnard's *Landscape at Le Cannet* (1928), the exhibition will explore the sensory realms of experience that fueled the painter's creative practice—from the most public spaces to the most private. Governed neither by chronology nor geography, but by measures of intimacy, the exhibition will transport the visitor from the landscapes of Paris, Normandy, and the South of France, where Bonnard lived at different times in his life, to the most private interior spaces of his dwellings and of his thoughts. Organized with The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, *Bonnard's Worlds* will be on view in the Kimbell's Piano Pavilion from November 5, 2023, through January 28, 2024, before traveling to The Phillips Collection in March.

"The general public is often unaware of Pierre Bonnard and his influence on the trajectory of twentieth century painting," said Eric Lee, director of the Kimbell Art Museum. "A friend of both Monet and Matisse, Bonnard is not only a bridge between Impressionism and the post-Impressionist movements that followed; he is a painter who forged his own visual style, marked by a uniquely nuanced mastery of color, shaped by complex and evocative compositions, and built around representations of the natural spaces, intimate interiors, and people that comprised his world."

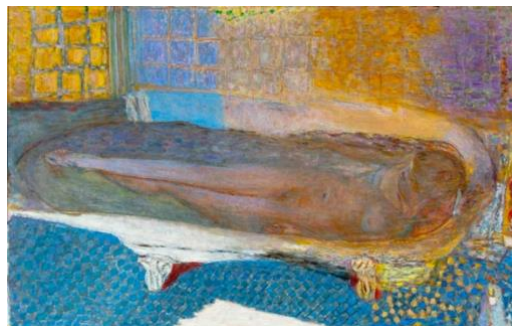
Organized by the Kimbell Art Museum in collaboration with The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, *Bonnard's Worlds* brings together seventy paintings, including some of the artist's most celebrated works from museums in Europe and the United States, as well as many that are unfamiliar to the public from private collections around the world. Representing all periods from Bonnard's long career, the exhibition leads visitors from wide views of the places Bonnard lived in Paris, Normandy, and the French Riviera through successively more intimate spaces in loosely defined thematic sections: landscapes, gardens and terraces, windows, dining and living spaces, bedrooms and bathrooms, and self-portraits. Flowing organically from one to the next, each section includes paintings that span the artist's career, juxtaposed to provoke thought about the artist's body of work and how it developed via these common themes, from his beginnings in the 1890s through some of the last works he created before his death in 1947. Kimbell deputy director George Shackelford is the curator of the exhibition, in conjunction with The Phillips Collection's chief curator, Elsa Smithgall.

In the introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Shackelford notes, "Bonnard's work, without any desire to be autobiographical, nonetheless both chronicles and exposes his life, because almost every work of art he ever made was in large part inspired by the world in which he lived, and by his place in that world."

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As opposed to the more sweeping chronological arrangement of a traditional retrospective exhibition, *Bonnard's Worlds* creates a series of smaller thematic vignettes in which visitors may experience the subtleties of style and approach throughout the artist's life. Exhibition didactics are nonobtrusive, allowing visitors to experience the themes largely through looking. As they move through the spaces, visitors are reminded of where the artist has been—both physically and stylistically—giving them the tools to make their own discoveries and reach their own conclusions about the artist and his work.

In the section of the exhibition devoted to the intimate world of bedrooms and baths, for instance, visitors will see several paintings of the artist's wife and model Marthe from the early twentieth century, when the influence of Impressionist artists Claude Monet and Edgar Degas was still quite evident in the artist's work. In *The Bathroom (The Dressing Room with Pink Sofa)* (1908), for example, the figure is

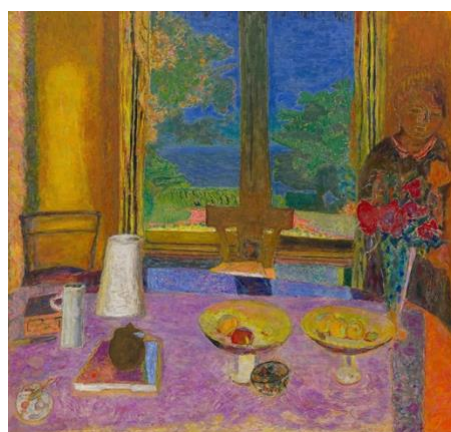


representational and set within a naturalistic room colored with soft pastels. Next to these, three celebrated paintings of Marthe in the bath from 1936–46—last shown together in the United States a generation ago—stand out. In these imposing works, the figures are more stylized, and the artist's careful manipulation of highly saturated color is at its height. Together, intense color, radiant light, and carefully constructed compositions produce pictures fraught with emotional intensity.

A similar scheme plays out through each section. Visitors will come to recognize characteristics of the artist's style and point of view, from the darker palette and flattened perspective in early works like *Twilight (The Game of Croquet)* (1892) to the manipulated spaces, intense colors, and enigmatic figures in later works like *Dining Room on the Garden* (1935). Among the many discoveries in the exhibition will be the artist's self-portraits, which offer, in the solitary world of the mirror, powerful intimations of the artist's psyche.



"I am pleased to introduce Pierre Bonnard to new audiences in a way that is so deeply engaging," said George Shackelford. "*Bonnard's Worlds* gives us the opportunity to do what a museum does best: gather an artist's most significant artworks from around the world, consider them outside of their original time and place, and arrange them in ways that broaden our understanding of not only an artist, but our own personal experiences of life, art, history, and ourselves. I think visitors will learn a great deal, just by looking, and will enjoy the journey through the worlds of this influential painter."



The exhibition will be accompanied by a full-color illustrated catalogue by Shackelford with contributions by Elsa Smithgall, chief curator, The

Phillips Collection, Washington, DC; Isabelle Cahn, chief curator of paintings (ret.), Musée d'Orsay, Paris; Cyrille Sciamia, director, Musée des impressionnismes Giverny; and Véronique Serrano, chief curator, Musée Bonnard, Le Cannet.

DATES

November 5, 2023–January 28, 2024

EXHIBITION CREDITS AND SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by the Kimbell Art Museum and The Phillips Collection. It is supported in part by Frost, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. Promotional support for the Kimbell Art Museum and its exhibitions is provided by American Airlines, PaperCity, and NBC 5. Additional support is provided by Arts Fort Worth and the National Endowment for the Arts.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission to *Bonnard's Worlds* is \$18 for adults, \$16 for seniors, K–12 educators, students, and military personnel, \$14 for ages 6–11, free for children under 6 and \$3 for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. Admission is half-price all day on Tuesdays and after 5 p.m. on Fridays. Admission to the museum's permanent collection is always free.

The Kimbell Art Museum is open Tuesdays through Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Fridays, noon–8 p.m.; Sundays, noon–5 p.m.; closed Mondays, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving and Christmas. For general information, call 817-332-8451.

ABOUT THE KIMBELL ART MUSEUM

The Kimbell Art Museum, owned and operated by the Kimbell Art Foundation, is internationally renowned for both its collections and its architecture. The Kimbell's collections range in period from antiquity to the 20th century and include European masterpieces by artists such as Fra Angelico, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Bernini, Velázquez, Vigée Le Brun, Monet, Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse; important collections of Egyptian and classical antiquities; and the art of Asia, Africa, and the Ancient Americas.

The museum's 1972 building, designed by the American architect Louis I. Kahn, is widely regarded as one of the outstanding architectural achievements of the modern era. A second building, designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, opened in 2013 and now provides space for special exhibitions, dedicated classrooms, and a 289-seat auditorium with excellent acoustics for music. For more information, visit kimbellart.org.

IMAGES

Pierre Bonnard, *The Bathroom (The Dressing Room with Pink Sofa)*, 1908, oil on canvas. Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, Inv. 6519 © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Pierre Bonnard, *Nude in the Bath*, 1936, oil on canvas. Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris. Purchased from the artist for the 1937 International Exposition in 1937 © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Pierre Bonnard, *Twilight (The Game of Croquet)*, 1892, oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Pierre Bonnard, *Dining Room on the Garden*, 1935, oil on canvas. Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, By gift 38.432 © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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