



Suzanne Valadon: a modern epic

Organised and produced by: the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou-Metz and the Musée d'Arts de Nantes

Curated by: Eduard Vallès, head of Collections of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, and Philip Dennis Cate, independent curator

Dates: from April 18 to September 1, 2024

For the first time in Spain, this anthological exhibition presents the work of Suzanne Valadon, one of the most important French artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Suzanne Valadon was the pseudonym of Marie-Clémentine Valadon (1865-1938), a painter, drafter and engraver. She practised all artistic genres, but stood out in portraiture, with a special interest in female nudes and odalisques, which became the peak of her production. In all likelihood, she was the first female artist to represent a male nude, a milestone that shows a very defined personality. Though attempts have been made to ascribe her to various movements, her work is totally unique, containing explicit influences from other artists alongside pictorial codes that are personal and identifiable, the prerogative of a great artist.

This anthological exhibition displays works from throughout her career, mainly paintings and drawings that belong to various institutions and individuals. A large part of the works come from the Centre Pompidou in Paris, but others come from the Museu Nacional. In total there are 109 works, many of which can only be seen in Barcelona: oils on canvas and cardboard, drawings and engravings, sculptures in plaster and bronze and different kinds of documentary material that allow us to show a retrospective and contextualised vision of the

career of a woman artist who played a major role in the Paris of the avant-garde.

This vision is complemented by works by contemporary French and Catalan artists such as Matisse, Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Casas and Rusiñol, whom Valadon knew and which give a good idea of the richness of the art scene at the time, while also explaining the various interactions that occur in avant-garde environments and, above all, a woman's social conquest of the status of an artist.

A self-taught artist, Valadon arrived at Montmartre when she was 15, when it was emerging as a benchmark of modernity. She trained by closely watching how some of the most eminent artists of her time worked, such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Renoir and many others, for whom she served as a model. The word "epic" refers to her remarkable transition from model to established artist, an extraordinarily rare path in art history. Her career lasted from the late 19th century until just before the Second World War.

The exhibition in Barcelona has its own distribution and museography, as well as a catalogue that especially emphasises the connection between Valadon and the rich and powerful settlement of Catalan artists in Montmartre in the late 19th century, like Santiago Rusiñol, Ramon Casas and Miquel Utrillo, who was Valadon's partner and assumed the paternity of her son, the future painter Maurice Utrillo.

Today, Suzanne Valadon's works can be found in the most important museums in the world, such as the Centre Pompidou, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and others. The strength and vitality of her creations, as well as her ability to chronicle her own life and the famous Paris of the Belle Époque, make this exhibition an extraordinary event.

Sponsored by:

PRONOVIAS