ALMINE RECH

# Suzanne Valadon

## Jan 15 — May 26, 2025 | Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

The Centre Pompidou is devoting a monograph to Suzanne Valadon (1865-1938), a bold and iconic artist, and one of the most important of her generation. She was on the fringes of the dominant trends of her time - cubism and abstract art were in their infancy, while she ardently defended the need to paint reality - placing the nude, both female and male, at the centre of her work and depicting bodies without artifice or voyeurism.

Suzanne Valadon had not been the subject of a monograph since the one devoted to her by the Musée National d'Art Moderne in 1967. Presented at the Centre Pompidou-Metz in 2023 ('Suzanne Valadon. A World of Her Own'), then at the Musée des Beaux-arts de Nantes (2024) and the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (2024), the tribute to this ostensibly modern artist, free of the conventions of her time, continues at the Centre Pompidou in 2025, enhanced by new loans and new archives.

"*I have drawn like crazy so that when I no longer have eyes, I will have them at the end of my fingers*"
— Suzanne Valadon

The exhibition showcases this exceptional figure and highlights her pioneering, but often underestimated, role in the birth of artistic modernity. It reveals the great freedom of this artist, who did not really adhere to any particular movement, except perhaps her own. The exhibition of almost 200 works draws on a wealth of national collections, in particular the largest, that of the Centre Pompidou, but also from the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée de l'Orangerie.

Exceptional loans from the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Fondation de l'Hermitage and major private collections complete the exhibition. It focuses on the artist's two favourite media, drawing and painting, with particular emphasis on her graphic work, which is explored in depth through the presentation of a large number of drawings that have rarely been shown before.

It also provides an opportunity to explore an artistic moment at the heart of the transition between the collections of the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée National d'Art Moderne.

The 'Valadon' exhibition retraces this unique journey, from the artist's beginnings as the favourite model of all-Montmartre to her early artistic recognition by her peers and critics. Suzanne Valadon truly bridged one century to the next, embracing the Parisian fervour of the turn of the century, its cafés, bal-musettes and cabarets, and its many artistic, intellectual and societal revolutions. This unprecedented insight into her work reveals both her friendships and artistic connections with Bohemian painters, and her undeniable influence on the Parisian art scene thanks to the active support of her artist and gallery-owning friends.

This exhibition highlights the breadth, richness and complexity of her oeuvre, focusing on five thematic sections: Learning through observation, Family portraits, "I paint people to get to know them", "The real theory is imposed by nature", The nude: a feminine view. A selection of previously unpublished archives and works by her contemporaries with similar pictorial concerns, such as Juliette Roche, Georgette Agutte, Jacqueline Marval, Emilie Charmy and Hélène Delasalle, complement the exhibition.

The exceptional archive collection bequeathed to Centre Pompidou in 1974 by Dr Robert Le Masle, a doctor, art collector and close friend of the artist, containing many photographs, manuscripts and documents now housed in the Bibliothèque Kandinsky, provides a vital record of Valadon's rebellious personality and early artistic recognition.

Following on from exhibitions of works by Alice Neel, Georgia O'Keefe, Dora Maar and Germaine Richier, this monograph is part of Centre Pompidou's ongoing efforts to deepen our understanding of the work of women artists, and to increase the number of their works in the collection.

Curators:
Nathalie Ernoult, assistant curator
Chiara Parisi, director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz
Xavier Rey, director of Musée national d'art moderne