

OPERA GALLERY



Fernand 68

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*Bernard Buffet*

OPERA GALLERY

NEW YORK



Bernard Buffet in his Saint-Cast studio. © Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris, 2017.

A unique artist, both in terms of technical style and theoretical approach, French expressionist Bernard Buffet is one of the most discussed twentieth century's painters of the moment, following notably an exceptional retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris that attracted more than 150,000 visitors at the beginning of the year.

Consistently celebrated by the public, regularly depreciated by the Parisian elite, Bernard Buffet remained true to his unmistakable style throughout a long and prolific career that led him through changing and antagonistic times in post-war Europe.

Dry and straight lines combined with a narrow palette of grey, angular paintings with no shadow and no depth, the depiction of an unrestrained poverty: Buffet's painting reflects the French Existentialist philosophy from the mid-late 1940s all the while indicating a strong positioning against the ambiguousness of abstraction and in favor of a more representational art.

A growing global interest in Buffet's work has shed light on his illustrious career, revealing a provocative versatility and brutal creativity that resonate as much today as they did five decades ago.

As one of the largest supporters and promoters of the work of Bernard Buffet in Europe and Asia, Opera Gallery is proud and thrilled to hereby showcase a curated selection from the artist's broad oeuvre to the New York art collectors. Alongside some of his favorite subjects - still lifes, portraits - this exhibition will present other themes that Bernard Buffet treated in his extensive body of work, such as urban landscapes and bouquets of flowers.

Through five themes and with artworks ranging from the early 1950s up until the late 1990s and the tragic end of Buffet's life, it is our hope that this exhibition will participate to elevate the artist to the status he deserves as one of Europe's most fascinating, challenging and humanist post-war artists and let him stand once and for all in his full right in the contemporary art history.

**Gilles Dyan**  
Founder and Chairman  
Opera Gallery Group

# C R U C I F I E D

Bernard Buffet's art leaves no one indifferent.

Buffet painted the way Simenon or Zola wrote. A workaholic. "Memoirs of a Madman" by Flaubert could almost be the artist's epitaph... or epithet. Lucid, he called his profession "a vice, hard labor". Paintings by the thousands, without counting his engravings and sketches. At the least eight thousand pieces of art.

Genius? Like the inventor Thomas Edison, Buffet would probably respond: "1% of inspiration, 99% of perspiration".

To illness (Buffet suffered from Parkinson's), he said "go to hell and me with it". A suicide by suffocation in his studio, his head stuck in a black bag bearing his signature... Death by Self-(de)termination, signed by the perpetrator himself. And these are merely facts. Around that time, Buffet had just finished a series entirely devoted to death, the Grim Reaper: the artist only paints large-format skeletons.

Born in Batignolles, kicked out of school, Bernard Buffet started drawing at an early age. Precocious, the artist was admitted to the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris at the age of fifteen (like Picasso at the Real Academia). He didn't hang around long. Two years later, Buffet was living in an attic-room that would become his studio. Alone at last, he may have thought to himself.

We know the rest of the story: at not even twenty years old, Buffet's paintings were already getting attention at the Salon des Indépendants; he won the *Prix de la Critique* and the French State acquired one of his works. The art dealer Emmanuel David concluded an exclusive contract with him. Get to work, young man! And hard work sometimes led to alcohol and amphetamines. At the time, Buffet was living with Pierre Bergé. Jet set dinners, luxury cars and a swinger's lifestyle... Until his encounter, in 1958, with Annabel Schwob, known as a beautiful, androgynous man-eater... It was love at first sight and a wedding at Ramatuelle; portraits and tableaux galore. The resulting exhibition would be called *Portraits d'Annabel*.

The contract between Emmanuel David and Armand Drouant would also be shared with Maurice Garnier as of the fall 1948. An interesting story, and a successful business, too.

As of 1977, the Galerie Maurice Garnier is only dedicated to Bernard Buffet. The two men would always use the formal French *vous* but they grew extremely close and were always seen together. "I've met a genius. Why would I look elsewhere?" Garnier was known to say.

Maurice Garnier's eponymous gallery would exhibit the art of only one talent. No use asking, only Buffet was on the menu. Avenue Matignon: windows presenting one painting at a time; next to it, a small door. You enter a gallery with carpet, curtains covering every space of wall. Two matching small desks flock the entrance to the main hall from whence a diffused light seeps out: the epitome of chic in the fifties, according to the French decorator Jacques Adnet. Garnier is half-hidden, in retreat in a small, discreet office, its door always opened.

With the regularity of a metronome, the artist's series present themselves one by one. In no particular order: *Passion du Christ*, the Loire Valley Châteaux, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, beautiful cars, the ocean, the circus, Japan, his wife, *Horror of War*, the beauty of flowers, etc... In an attempt to define him, Buffet has sometimes been compared to Grüber and equated with "miserabilism", with the compassionate fervor of Rouault or the Existentialism of Sartre. Actually, the answer can be found within the man himself: there you'll find a sensitive adolescent waking up to art and life, right when Europe was putting its nightmares of war to rest. His fate was sealed.

Buffet is a primitive Christian witnessing modern misery. The solemnity of his characters, the razor-like strokes were Buffet's way of cutting straight to the essential. His signature, grandiloquent to say the least, should be taken for what it was meant to be: a scar clawed onto canvas. Remember how, in a humiliated country, many famous artists had so awkwardly warded off the burden of defeat with infatuations: Malraux, Cocteau, Guitry...

Success, money, no politics but lots of compassion and God to crown it all. A fatal potion: the critics had crucified him, the institutions had scorned him. Not without panache, Buffet responded: "The hatred surrounding me is the most beautiful gift I've ever been given".

I'll leave the last word to Annabel, his great love, his wife: "I understand completely that some people do not like his paintings; art is all about emotion, a spontaneous reaction. But I will not allow anyone to challenge his talent as a painter. His profession was his oxygen; he devoted his life to it with such unquestionable generosity and honesty".

That's just what the paintings exhibited here prove. Without a shadow of a doubt.

**David Rosenberg**

Paris, March 2017

As one of the twentieth century's most controversial artists, Bernard Buffet has often been referred to as an iconoclast for a disillusioned population suffering from the trauma of wartime France. This post-war generation struggled to come to grips with the superfluity of post-war life, which was largely embodied in the works of abstract artists of the time. Adored by collectors but often derided by his contemporaries and critics, he was undoubtedly an important new voice in French painting.

Born in Paris, France on 10 July 1928, Buffet had an extremely prolific career and left a tremendous legacy, painting over 8,000 works and gaining widespread popularity, honors and acclaim, including a large number of international exhibitions. During the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, the success of Bernard Buffet transformed the archetypal existentialist artist into a world-famous artist-celebrity. He became increasingly accustomed to luxuries like travelling by Rolls-Royce and owning a château in Provence.

F O R E W O R D

In the 1950s, two men would determine Buffet's future: one, a young gallerist named Maurice Garnier, the owner of the Galerie Visconti on Rue de Seine. Garnier would not only manage Buffet's business but would also take care of his personal expenses from restaurant bills to real estate purchases. The other man was a charming 19-year-old sales assistant at the bookstore just across the street from Galerie Visconti. His name was Pierre Bergé, and he would become Buffet's partner. They settled in a converted Shepherd's cottage in the Provincial French town of Nanse. It was there that Buffet enjoyed the calm of the mountains and a sense of security he'd lacked growing up. Pierre Bergé shared Bernard Buffet's life for eight years.

Buffet's emotional fragility then propelled him into a new relationship: in 1958, Bernard Buffet met Annabel Schwob in Saint-Tropez. At the time, Buffet was already a very famous painter, but this encounter marked a turning point in his art. Her androgynous aesthetic had seduced Buffet and he found in Annabel a muse for many of his paintings. The couple married at the end of 1958 and adopted two daughters, Virginie and Danielle, and one son, Nicolas. Annabel and Bernard emerged from Paris avant-garde scene with a troubled yet passionate relationship. In 1961, Bernard Buffet dedicated an entire exhibition to his wife called *Portraits d'Annabel*.

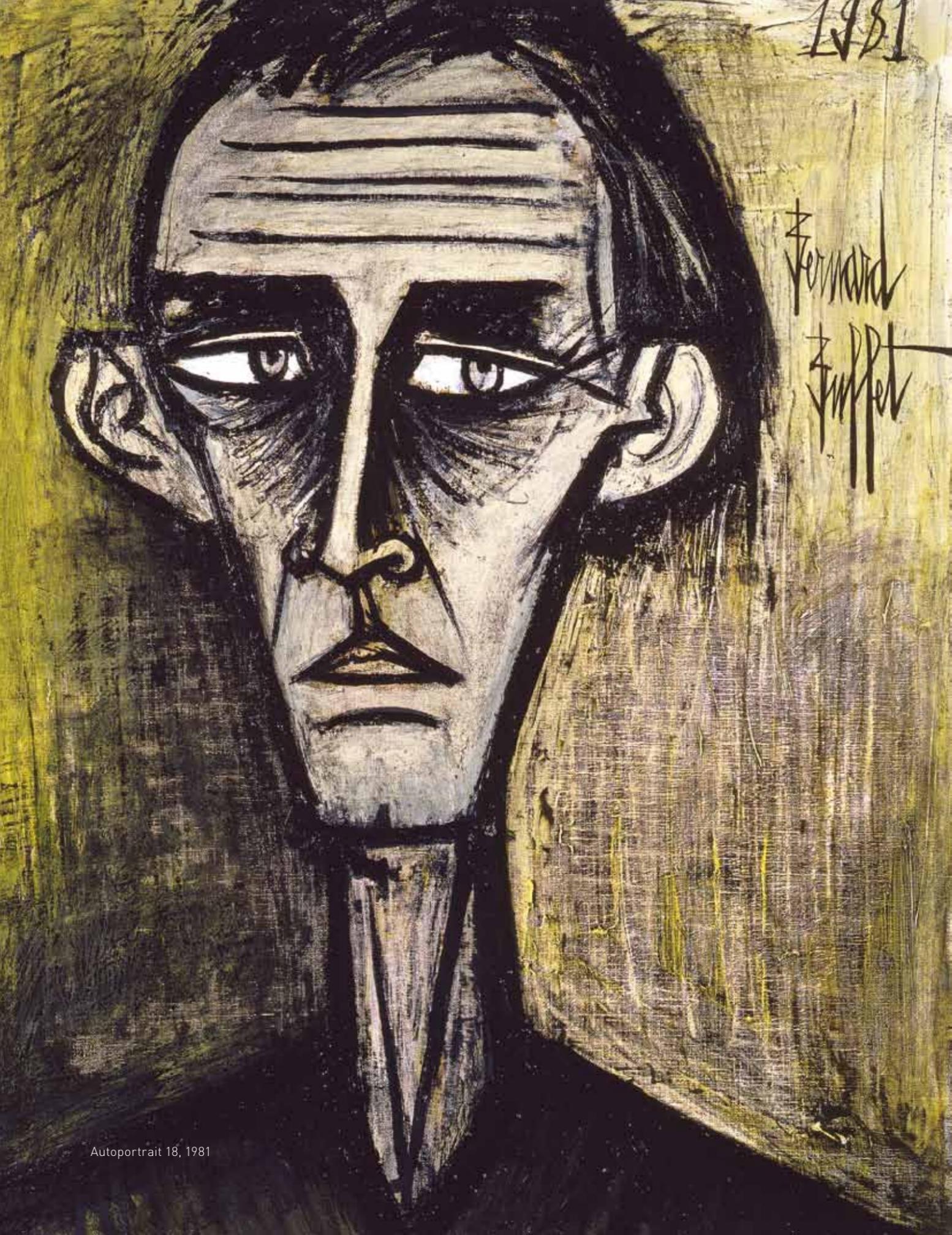
By the age of 18, Buffet had already shown an austere vision of the world that was not only evident in the subject matter of his works but also in his stylistic technique and command of materials. The atmosphere of post-war alienation is present throughout his works – a sentiment that was further championed by Existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre. His artwork has been considered taboo, challenging, transformative, at times, even kitsch. In a city where atheistic Existentialism was rife, as a response to the profound ambivalence left by five years of Nazi occupation, Buffet's grim, ascetic figures, landscapes and still lifes were greeted as a forthright reflection of their time. Buffet's paintings brought to light a private anguish that reflected, at the time, a population afflicted with the deprivations of an economy in crisis, and with a fragmented national identity.



Annabel and Bernard Buffet at the exhibition *Portraits d'Annabel* at the Galerie David et Garnier, 1961. © Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris, 2017.

In the aftermath of WWII, art supplies and materials became scarce and prices rose. Buffet was frugal in his use of materials. His works comprised a limited color palette, reduced to a combination of greys, blacks and greens. This is evident in many of his still-life paintings of that time.

As a strong opponent to Abstract art, Buffet soon became a member of the anti-abstract group *L'Homme Témoin* (The Witness-Man), which actively supported the importance of representational art at a time when abstraction began to increasingly dominate the critical conversation. Bernard Buffet's still lifes, portraits, nudes and landscapes work together to contradict the abstract lines and vivid hues of Henri Matisse, and even more so, the Cubist contortions of Pablo Picasso. Thanks to the support of French writer Pierre Descargues and peers, Buffet's work garnered great acclaim. They felt that as a political strategy, the realistic approach would bring art back to the disenfranchised French public, ultimately healing the rift they saw exacerbated by abstract painters



Autoportrait 18, 1981

whose works, in Buffet's opinion, were decoratively pared-down and devoid of humanity. Buffet's work therefore provided a viable model for a painting style in direct contrast to the allure of Abstract art, that, far from being suitable for representing historical experience, he saw as merely decorative.

The unique style of Bernard Buffet's work can be categorized by a combination of "dry" linear brushstrokes, muted tones, harsh dark outlines, and highly figurative imagery with sagging flesh, wrinkled foreheads, and scarce, lifeless hair – an almost unwavering social realism. At an early point in his career, Buffet took part in the *Jeune Peinture* movement, advocating realism. There, Buffet's paintings met with a favourable response, with a characteristically angular rendering of forms and a composition void of shadow and depth – his particular vision of modern realism all but eradicating shade and volume. Instead, Buffet delineated objects and figures by using precise black outlines and the representation of a kind of lavish poverty that became his trademark.

In 1948, at the age of 20, Buffet was awarded the reputable *Prix de la Critique*: as a result, public and private collectors rapidly bought up his work. Invitations to internationally renowned exhibitions, such as the Venice Biennale, led to the honor of presenting his work alongside Alberto Giacometti and Jacques Villon in 1956, where an entire room in the French Pavilion was dedicated to the artist. As a result, the price of his works rose dramatically. When Buffet began to work with Maurice Garnier in 1948, a life-long international enterprise was born. The following year, Buffet was awarded the top spot by the prestigious magazine *Connaissance des Arts*, in a list of the 10 best post-war artists of the time. In 1967, Buffet probably received his highest accolade: critics included him in a lineage of some of the most famous artists such as Nicolas Poussin, Antoine-Jean Gros, Gustave Courbet, Edgar Degas and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. This achievement proved "that his intervention [...] could be seen simultaneously as an innovation and a vital contribution to the essential tradition of French art."<sup>1</sup>

In 1958, a retrospective of his works was held at the Galerie Charpentier, drawing large crowds of over 8,000 people. The pandemonium created by the event saw visitors going so far as to push or force their way into his exhibition. However, Buffet's astronomical success was destined to waver as innovations in Contemporary art were leaving him behind. Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism sought to purge representation from the canvas, causing Buffet's continued repertoire of Expressionist figures and cityscapes to be exposed to accusations of quaintness. After being snubbed by museums for many years, it was during the last decade of his life that Buffet's intransigent realism experienced a real resurgence. Critics and curators alike were keen to demonstrate the potential for an end to the modernist paradigm of abstract, formal purity in art. All the while, Buffet remained popular and influential in Japan, where more than 2,000 pieces of his work are on display at the *Musée Bernard Buffet*, founded by Kiichiro Okano and was inaugurated in 1973.

Throughout his lifetime, a total of 53 themed exhibitions and 13 retrospectives of his work were held; his art appeared in the collections of more than 40 museums worldwide. Some observers, such as art critic Alexander Roob, did not hesitate to state that "the art of Modernism and Postmodernism has known only one real pop star, and his name was not Picasso, Dalí, or even Warhol, but Bernard Buffet." With such a prolific career and remarkable life, it was on 4 October 1999 that the artist committed suicide in Tourtour, France at the age of 71, after a prolonged battle with Parkinson's disease.

Dinair Castro and Suzanna Walter

<sup>1</sup> See R. Moulin, *Le Marché de la Peinture en France*, Paris, 1967, pp. 168-76.

“Painting, we do not talk about it, we do not analyze it, we feel it.”

**Bernard Buffet**



# C I R C U S

Around 1955, paintings of clowns appear in Buffet's work. Without a doubt, the artist's favourite subject, Buffet makes use of traditional circus imagery and always returns to the idea of performance, costumes and masks as a social commentary on the real people who hide beneath them. The clown can show his full range of emotions, often thoughtful, sometimes sad or even verging on exhaustion. In so doing, he makes the viewers take a deep look into themselves and contemplate the masks that they too wear throughout their lives.

Clowns can also be considered as a sort of self-portrait. These inward-looking faces with pallid skin may appear quite disconcerting and yet, in the 1960s, his clown heads are very successful and sell throughout the world.

LE CIRQUE, LE CLOWN MUSICIEN, 1966

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 1966' (center left); signed 'Bernard Buffet' (lower left);  
Numbered 'XVII / XV / 26' (upper left, upper right, lower right; respectively)  
Mixed media on paper laid down on canvas  
25.3 x 19.3 in. – 64,2 x 49 cm

PROVENANCE

Wally Findley Galleries, Inc., New York  
Private collection, Florida  
Sale: Sotheby's, New York, 6 May 2015, lot 144  
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

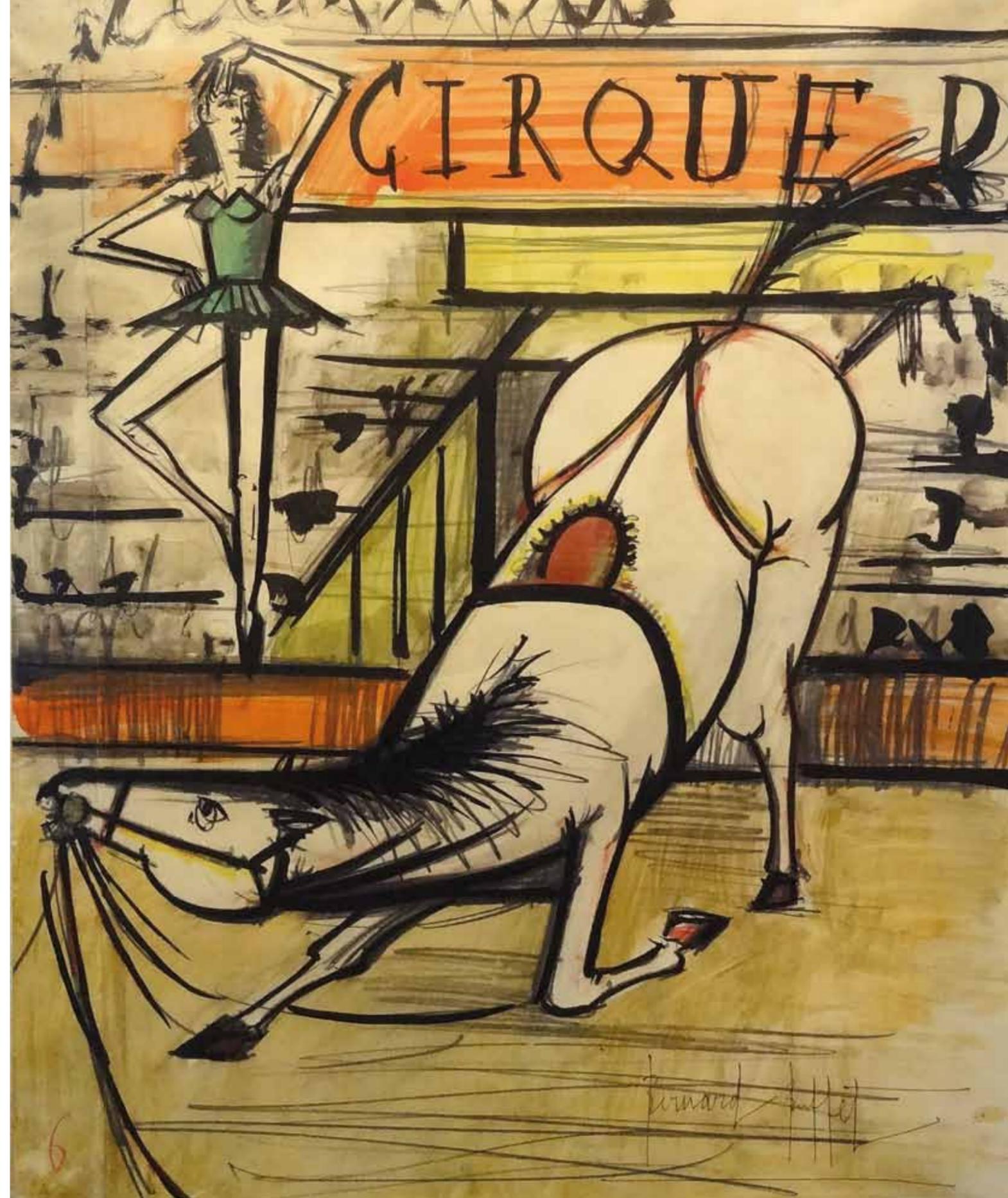
Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed the authenticity of this work



LE CIRQUE, L'ÉCUYÈRE, 1966  
Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (lower right)  
Mixed media on paper laid down on canvas  
25.6 x 19.7 in. – 65 x 50 cm

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, France  
Private collection, Middle East

CERTIFICATE  
Maurice Garnier has confirmed the authenticity of this work



CLOWN, 1968

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 68' (center right)

Oil on canvas

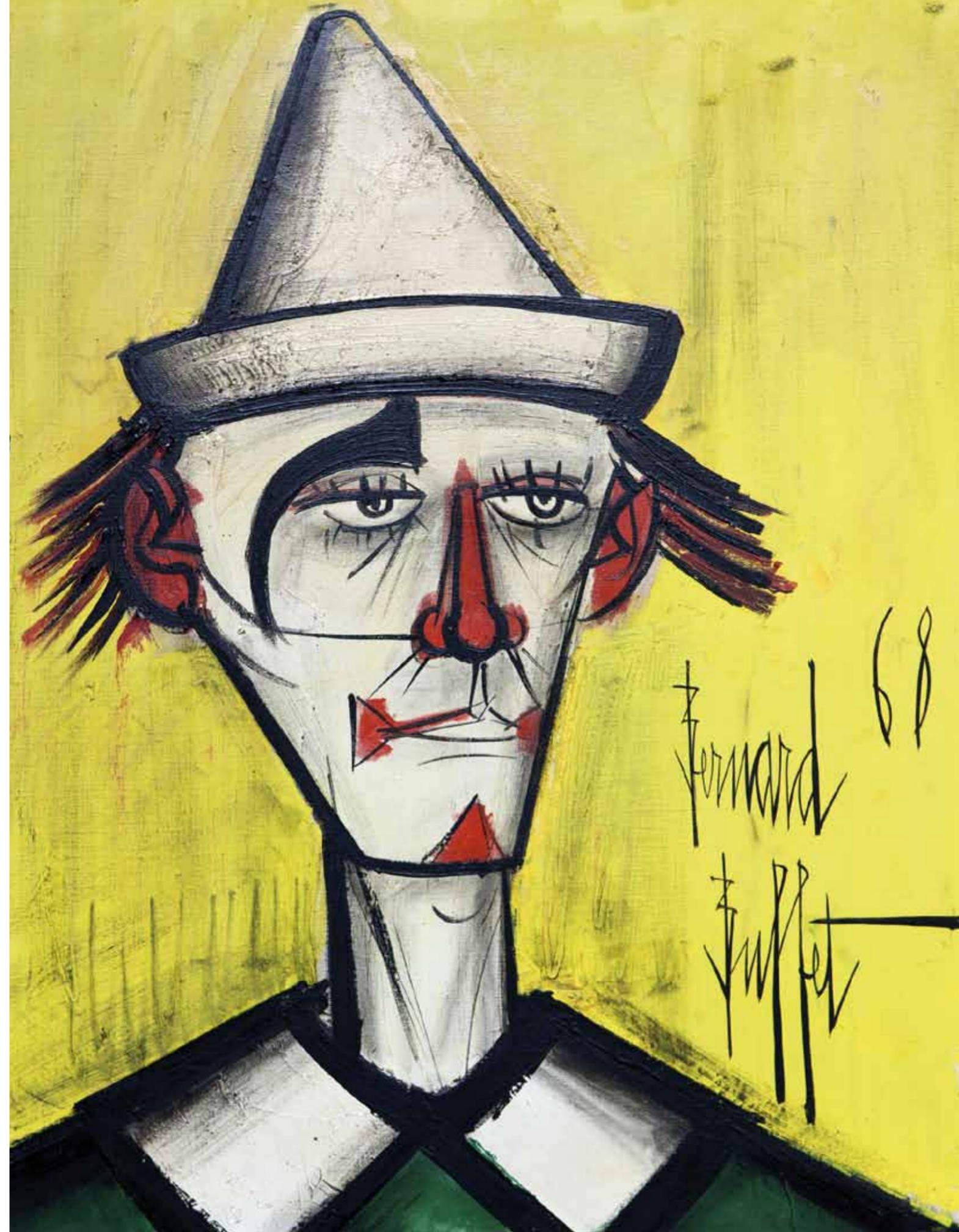
28.7 x 23.6 in. - 73 x 60 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie du Château, Auray, France  
Private collection, Italy

CERTIFICATE

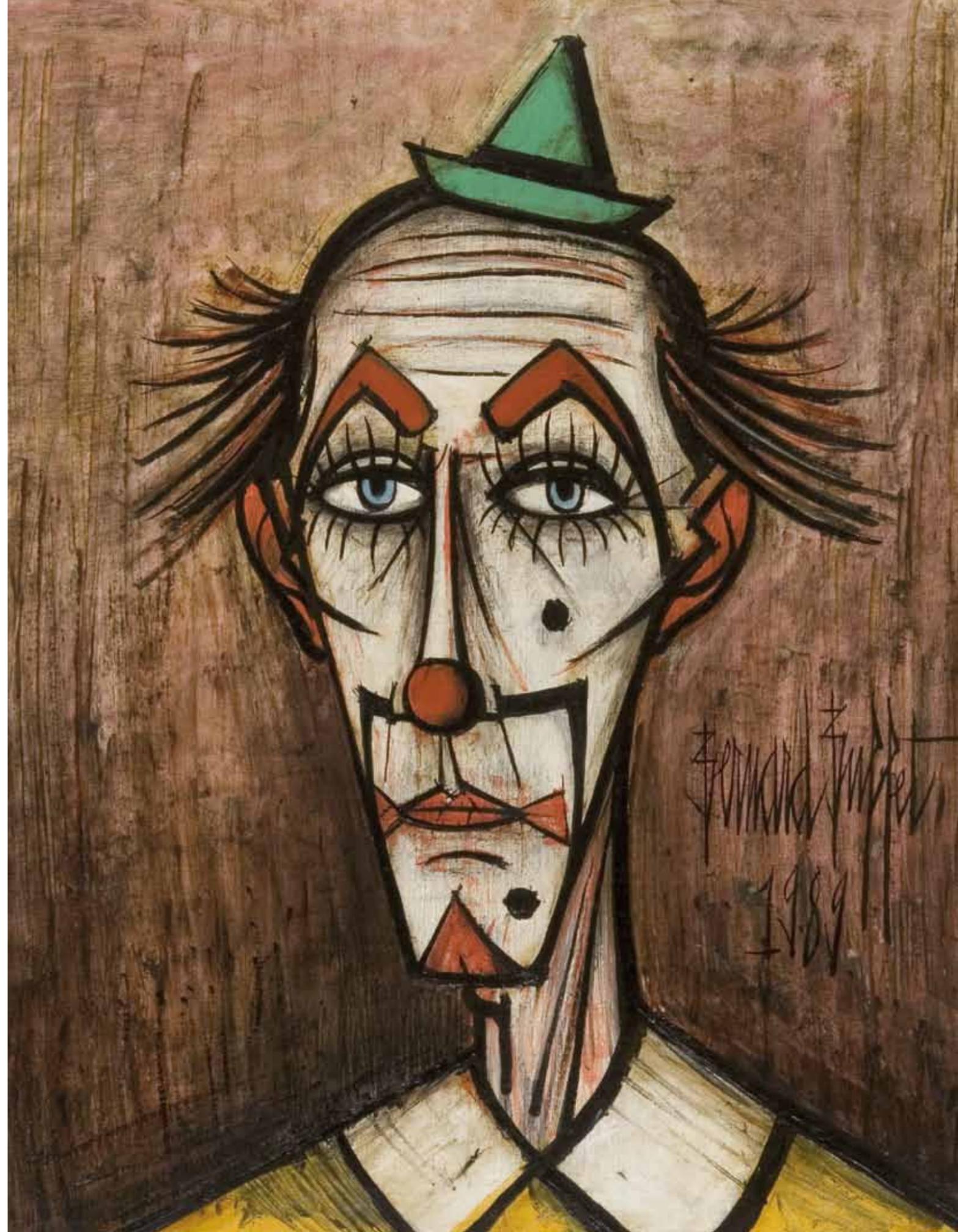
Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed the authenticity of this work



CLOWN AU PETIT CHAPEAU VERT, 1989  
Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 1989' (center right)  
Oil on canvas  
39.4 x 31.9 in. – 100 x 81 cm

PROVENANCE  
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris  
Opera Gallery  
Private collection  
Gallery Rienzo, New York  
Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE  
Maurice Garnier has confirmed the authenticity of this work



DEUX CLOWNS À LA GROSSE CAISSE, 1989  
Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper left) and dated '1989' (upper right)  
Oil on canvas  
51.2 x 63.8 in. – 130 x 162 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris  
Anonymous sale, Christie's, New York, 8 November 2000, lot 112  
Opera Gallery, London  
Private collection, Europe  
Sale: Christie's, London, 10 February 2011, lot 490  
Private collection, Europe

LITERATURE

Yann le Pichon, Bernard Buffet, vol. III, 1982-1999, Éditions  
Maurice Garnier, Lausanne, 2007, no. 1082, p. 285, ill. pp. 278-279

CERTIFICATE

A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier





# FACES

Bernard Buffet's portraits are often rendered with a decidedly simplified surrounding, the figures tall and slender; his very graphic portraits are presented to the viewer in a variety of attitudes. The directness and anguish with which he painted produced figures weighed down by folds of sagging flesh, an almost metaphysical manifestation of the existential torment that was pervasive throughout all of Buffet's work.

Buffet's nihilistic view of the world can be felt throughout his works, but particularly in his portraits. The artist's depiction of women tended to be cruel distortions of form and an undoubtedly nightmarish representation of femininity. He was hesitant to approach people in their attractive or graceful moods; his subjects are seemingly devoid of any semblance of gender, even humanity.

The value of these works lies in what they reveal about people's mental state, by offering such a befitting representation of the pervading unhappiness and extreme anxiety felt throughout post-war France.

TÊTE DE FEMME, 1958

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 58' (center right)

Color pencil on paper laid down on cardboard

30.1 x 22.4 in. – 76.5 x 57 cm

PROVENANCE

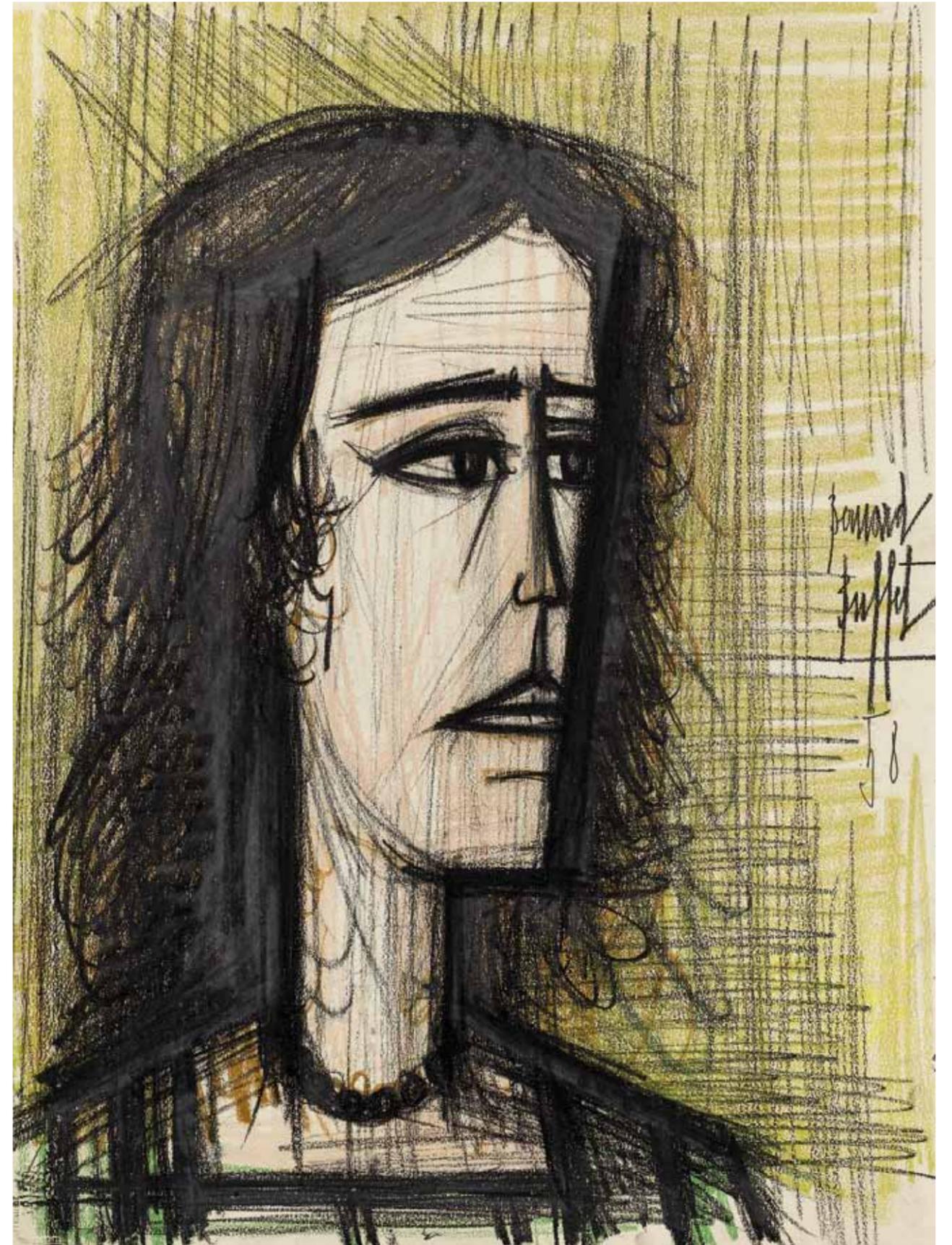
Findlay Galleries, Inc., Chicago  
Harry G. Sundheim Jr., Chicago  
Mr. & Mrs. Donald J. Erickson, Chicago  
Private collection, USA

EXHIBITED

New York, Wally Findlay Gallery, 1959

CERTIFICATE

Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed the authenticity of this work



TÊTE DE FEMME, 1980

Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper left)

Oil on isorel

16.1 x 13 in. – 41 x 33 cm



PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE

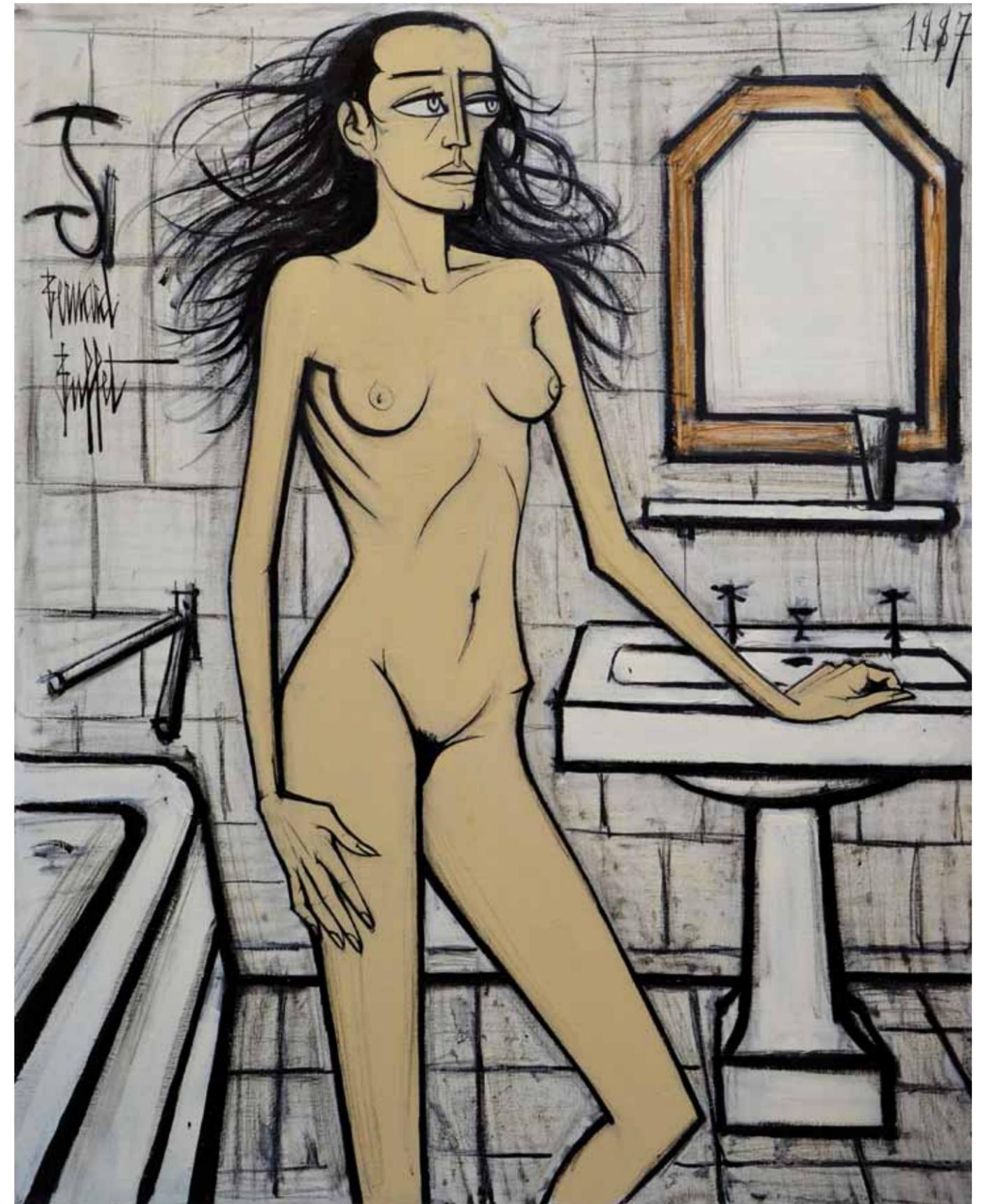
Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed the authenticity of this work

NU DANS LA SALLE DE BAIN, 1987

Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper left) and dated '1987' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

57.5 x 44.9 in. – 146 x 114 cm



PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection, France

Galerie des Remparts, Paris

Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE

Maurice Garnier has confirmed the authenticity of this work

NU AUX PERROQUETS, 1990

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 15 août 1990' (lower left)

Oil on canvas

44.9 x 57.5 in. – 114 x 146 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE

Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed  
the authenticity of this work



AUTOPORTRAIT 18, 1981

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 1981' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

45.7 x 35 in. – 116 x 89 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

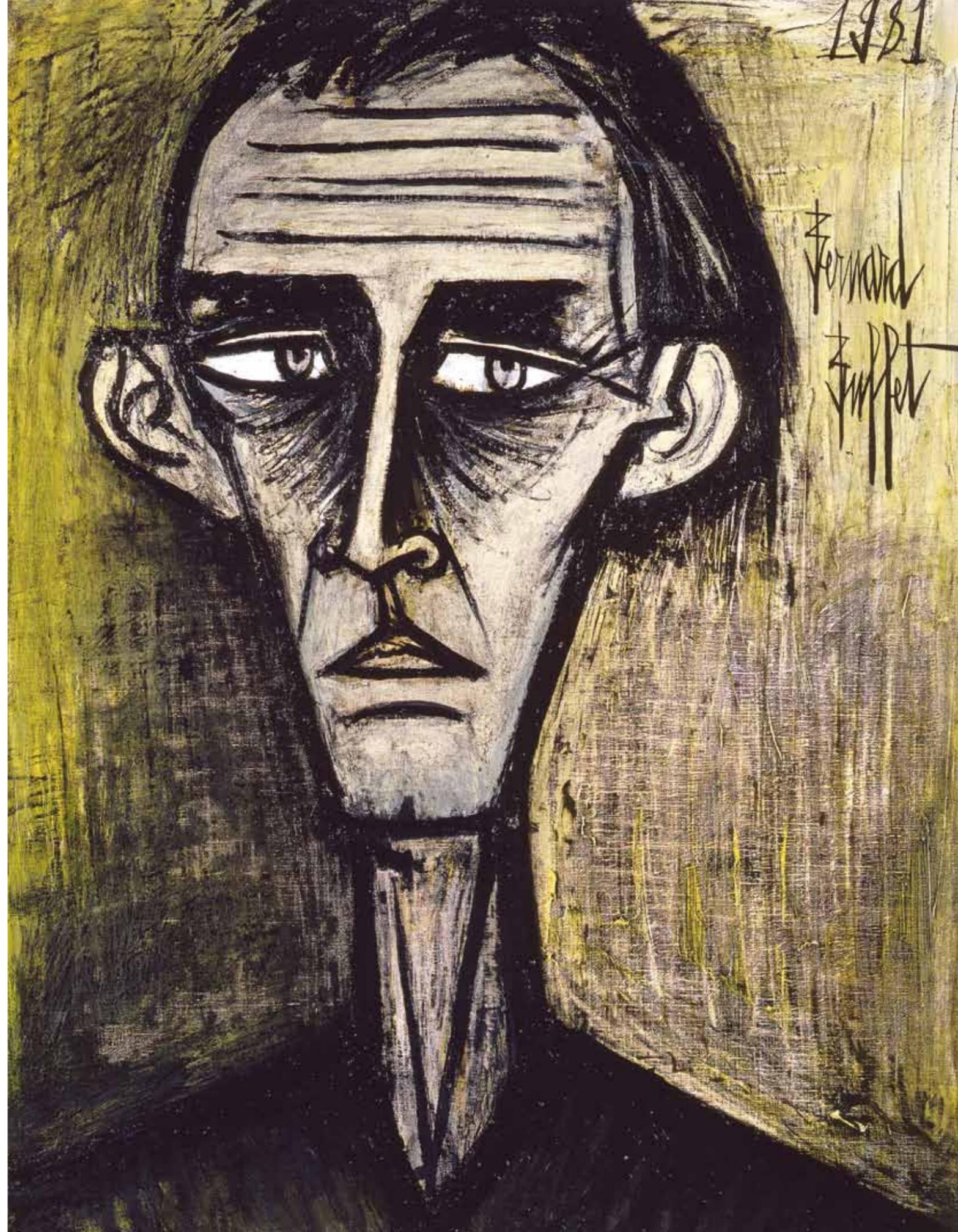
Private collection, Paris

LITERATURE

Yann le Pichon, Bernard Buffet, vol. II, 1962-1981, Éditions Maurice Garnier, Lausanne, 1990, no. 913, ill. p. 577

CERTIFICATE

A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier



# S I L E N T T H I N G S

The genre of still life proved to be a subject of predilection for the artist; throughout his career Buffet painted dozens of *natures mortes*, infusing a uniquely morbid exuberance into a subject that is most often thought of as a static, safe one to paint. The objects featured in Buffet's still-life paintings anchor each work of art into a specific period in time; he depicted the ordinary objects found in his home, as can be seen with his painting *Cafetière bleue*.

In the early years of his career, Buffet's still life paintings were composed of predominantly grey tones. Colored paint was very expensive after the end of WWII .

In his still life work, Buffet reduced the objects on the table to shriveled, desiccated scraps, which composition is drawn from a restricted and muted palette of colors, enlivened by Buffet's habitual scoring with long, straight brushstrokes zigzagging back and forth across the canvas, as if the painting had been scarred by the paint. This technique enhances the unified background into a single, flat surface. The hard, thick black contours of the figures ensure each is precisely delimited, as if each object held its position in an ordered, almost morbid stillness.



BOUTEILLE ET FEUILLE DE FIGUIER, 1950

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 50' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

19.7 x 25.6 in. – 50 x 65 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Drouant-David, Paris

Private collection

Sale: Freeman's, Philadelphia, 25 June 2006, lot 41

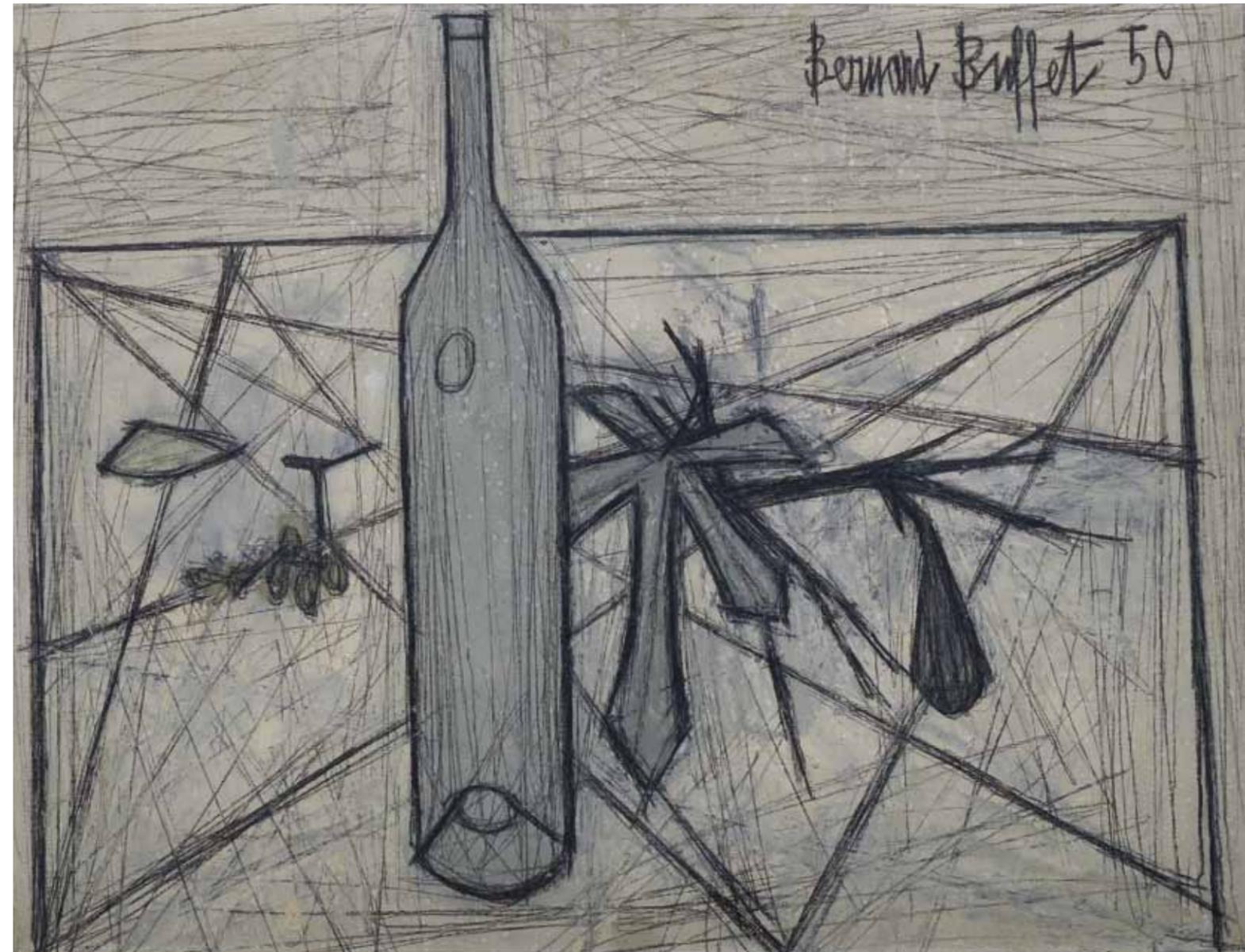
Private collection, London

Sale: Sotheby's, London, 4 February 2015, lot 202

Private collection, London

CERTIFICATE

Ida Garnier and Céline Lévy have confirmed the authenticity of this work



LE PÉTRIN, 1953

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 53' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

18.1 x 24 in. – 46 x 61 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris  
Sale: Mainichi Auction, June 2007  
Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE

Ida and Maurice Garnier have confirmed the authenticity of this work



NATURE MORTE AU COMPOTIER, 1955

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 55' (lower left)

Oil on canvas

19.7 x 25.6 in. – 50 x 65 cm



PROVENANCE

Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Pitt

Gift from the above to the previous owner, 1973

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College

Private collection, Europe

Sale: Matsart Auctioneers and Appraisers, 2 July 2013, lot 393

Private collection, Geneva

CERTIFICATE

Ida and Maurice Garnier have confirmed the authenticity of this work

NATURE MORTE À LA CAFETIÈRE BLEUE, 1961

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 61' (upper right)

Mixed media on paper

25.6 x 19.7 in. – 65 x 50 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie David et Garnier, Paris

Greer Gallery, Inc., New York

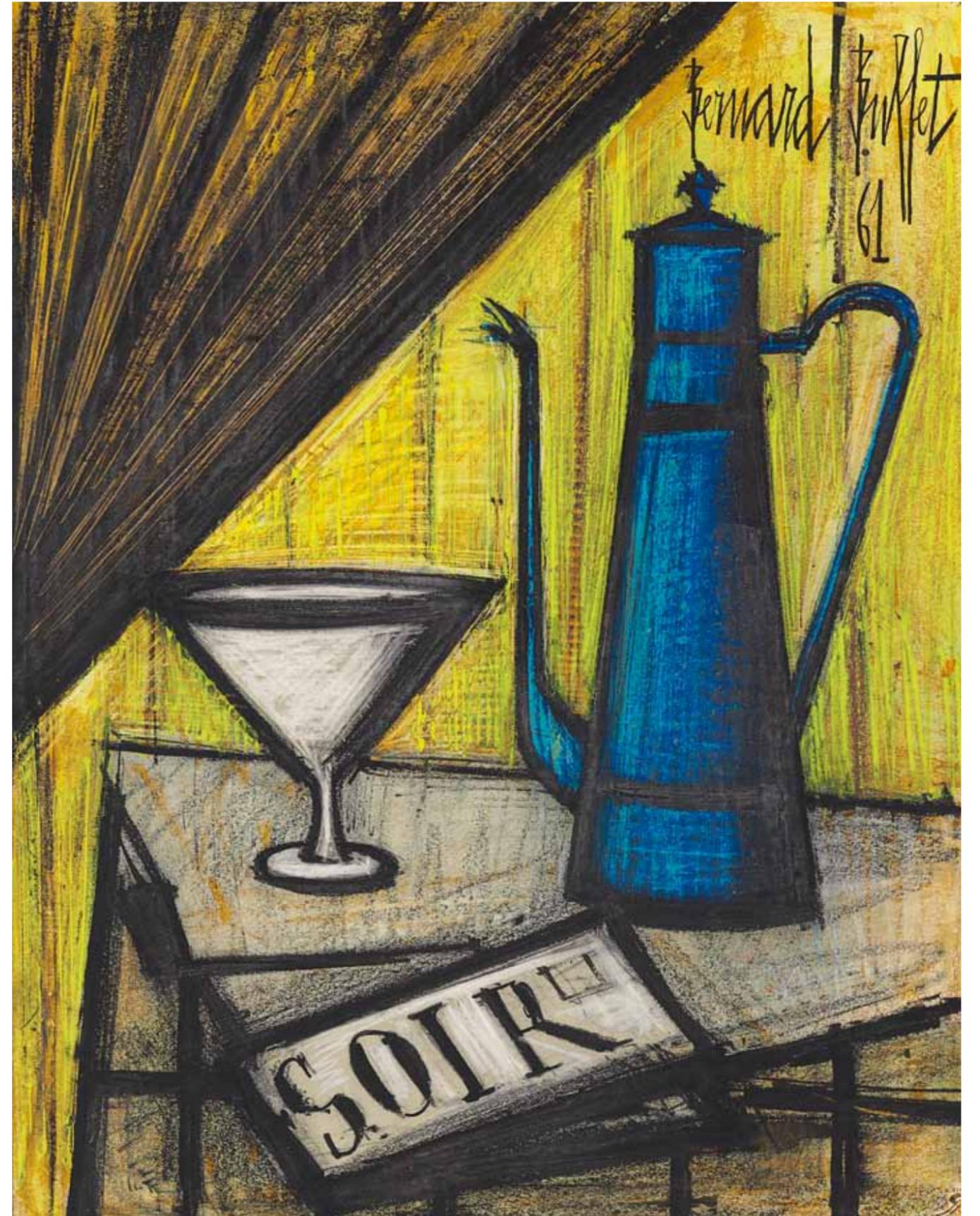
Estate of Edgar M. Bronfman, New York

Sale: Christie's, New York, 7 May 2014, lot 117

Private Collection, New York

CERTIFICATE

Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed the authenticity of this work



NATURE MORTE À LA CASSEROLE ROUGE, 1982

Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper center) and dated '1982' (lower left)

Oil on canvas

26.6 x 31.9 in. – 65 x 81 cm



PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection, South America

Sale: Christie's, New York, 9 May 2013, lot 331

Private collection, New York

CERTIFICATE

Maurice Garnier has confirmed the authenticity of this work



# BOUQUET DE FLEURS

Best known for his representational works, Buffet's paintings are often graphic, figurative and central in their compositions. Adamantly opposed to anything abstract, he fervently argued for the social importance of a more representational rendering of art, at a time when abstraction was increasingly dominating the critical conversation.

Buffet produced many variations on the theme of flowers in a vase, with the aim of testing his technical ability to paint the same subject with a different result as unique as flowers varied in their composition. The energy and vigor with which he depicted each floral scene reflect Buffet's evident delight in the beauty of the natural world, and perhaps a latent desire to escape the monotony of everyday urban life.

FLEURS DES CHAMPS DANS UN VERRE, 1951

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 51' (upper left)

Oil on canvas

25.6 x 19.7 in. – 65 x 50 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Drouant-David, Paris

Private collection, France

Sale: Sotheby's, London, 20 June 2013, lot 488

Private collection, Europe

CERTIFICATE

Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed the authenticity of this work



POT DE JACINTHES, 1952

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 52' (center right)

Oil on canvas

25.6 x 19.7 in. – 65 x 50 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Sale: Christie's, New York, 9 May 2000, lot 243

Private collection, USA

Sale: Christie's, New York, 10 May 2007, lot 385

Private collection, Europe

CERTIFICATE

Maurice Garnier has confirmed the authenticity of this work



BOUQUET DE FLEURS DANS UN POT À LAIT, 1954

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 54' (upper center)

Oil on canvas

39.4 x 21.7 in. – 100 x 55 cm

PROVENANCE

Arthur Tooth & Sons, London

Anonymous sale: Sotheby's, London, 30 June 1983, lot 400

Galerie Taménaga, Tokyo

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

Ida Garnier and Jacques Gasbarian have confirmed the authenticity of this work



LAURIERS BLANCS DANS UN VASE DE GALLÉ 1, 1990  
Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper left) and dated '1990' (upper right)  
Oil on canvas  
28.7 x 21.3 in. – 73 x 54 cm



PROVENANCE  
Private collection, Singapore

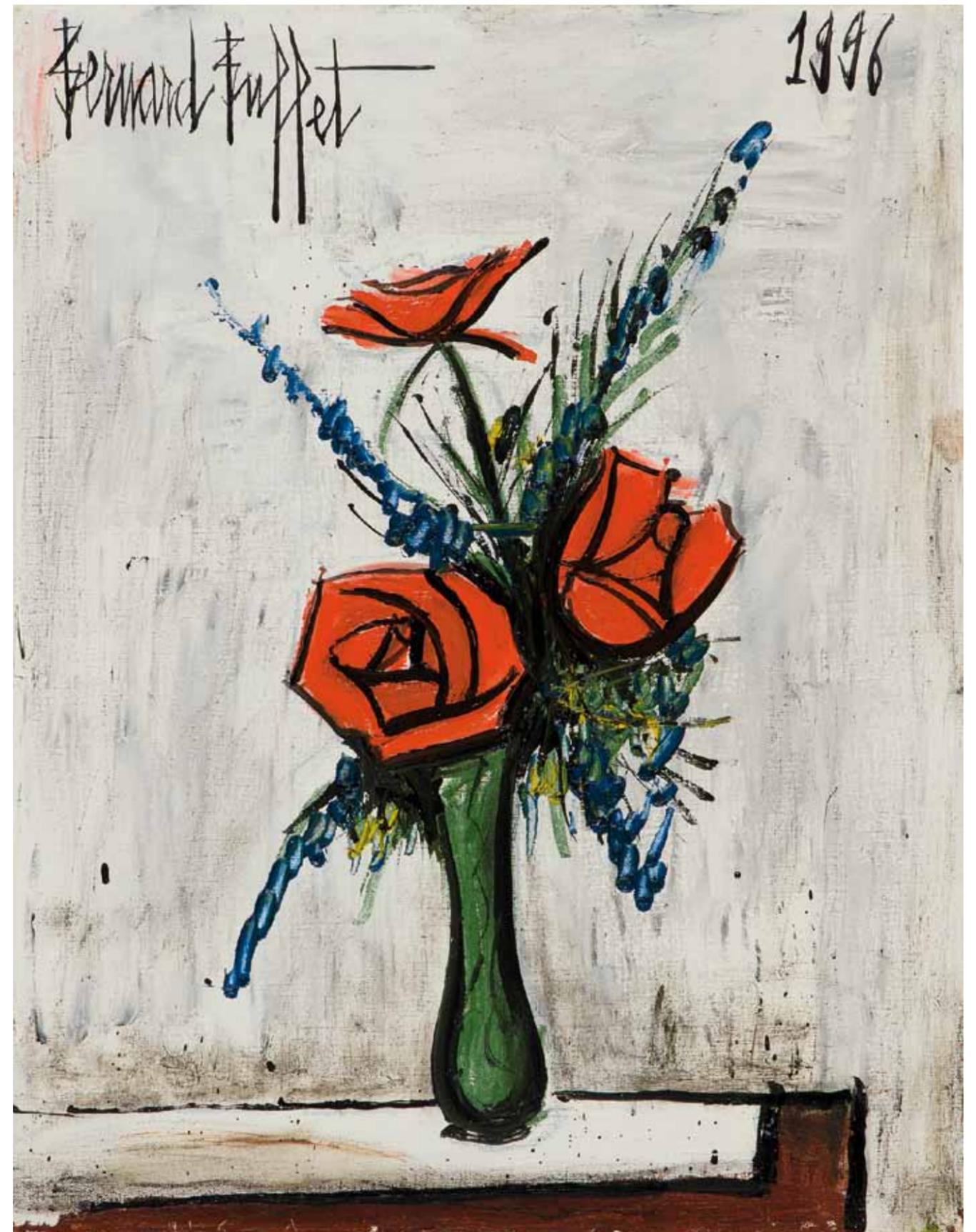
CERTIFICATE  
Maurice Garnier has confirmed the authenticity of this work

LES ROSES, 1996

Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper left) and dated '1996' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

25.6 x 19.7 in. – 65 x 50 cm

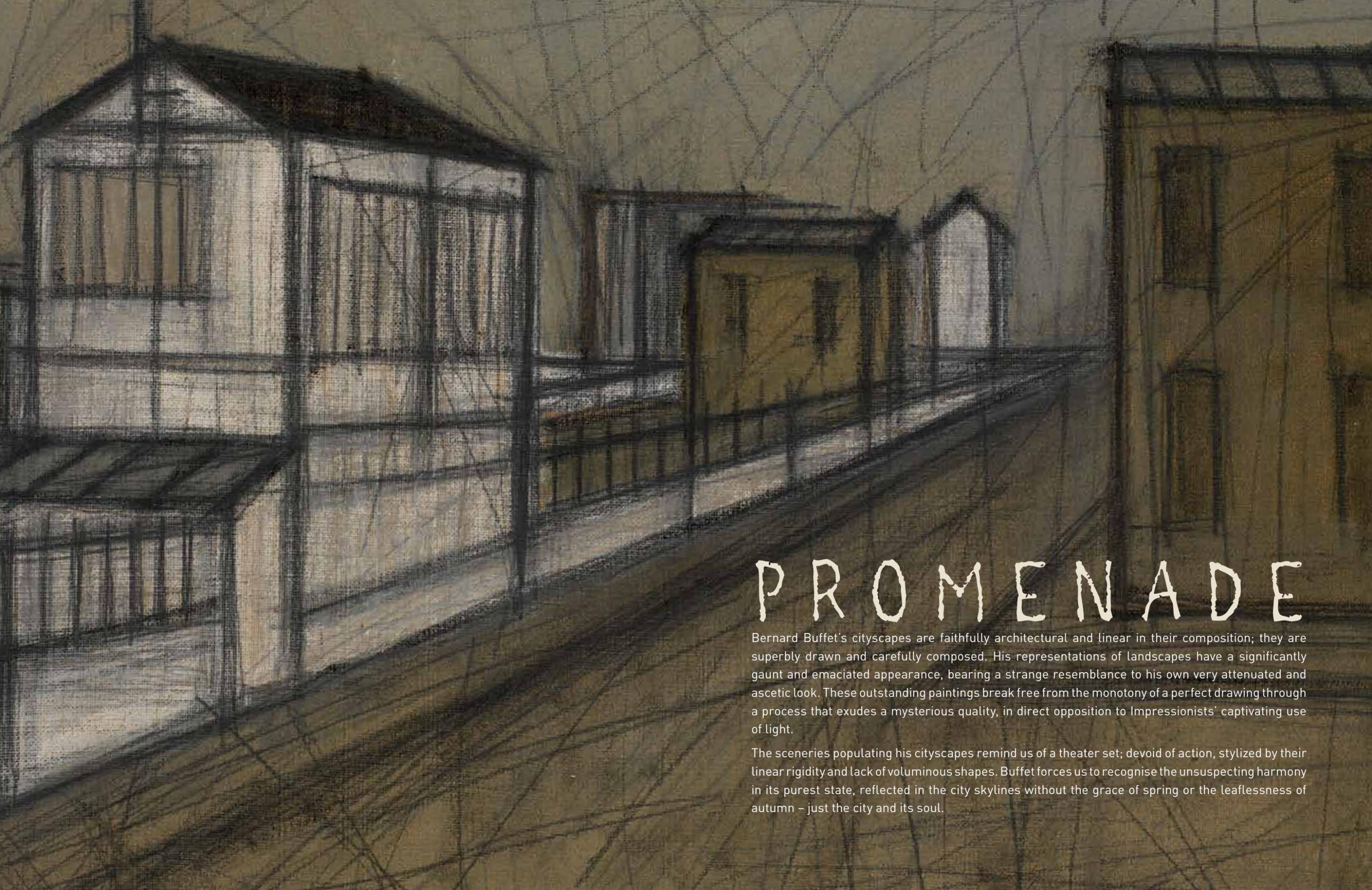


PROVENANCE

Private collection, Singapore

CERTIFICATE

A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier



# PROMENADE

Bernard Buffet's cityscapes are faithfully architectural and linear in their composition; they are superbly drawn and carefully composed. His representations of landscapes have a significantly gaunt and emaciated appearance, bearing a strange resemblance to his own very attenuated and ascetic look. These outstanding paintings break free from the monotony of a perfect drawing through a process that exudes a mysterious quality, in direct opposition to Impressionists' captivating use of light.

The sceneries populating his cityscapes remind us of a theater set; devoid of action, stylized by their linear rigidity and lack of voluminous shapes. Buffet forces us to recognise the unsuspecting harmony in its purest state, reflected in the city skylines without the grace of spring or the leaflessness of autumn – just the city and its soul.

BANLIEUE, 1949

Dated and signed '49 Bernard Buffet' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

21.3 x 28.7 in. – 54 x 73 cm



PROVENANCE

Anonymous sale: Hauswedell, Hamburg, 7 June 1969, lot 212

Private collection, USA

Sale: Christie's, London, 19 June 2007, lot 445

Private collection, London

CERTIFICATE

Ida and Maurice Garnier have confirmed the authenticity of this work

LA TOUR EIFFEL, 1955

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 55' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

57.5 x 38.2 in. – 146 x 97 cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Sale: Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, 14 December 2015, lot 83

Sale: Matsart Auctioneers and Appraisers, 16 February 2016, lot 91

Private collection, Israel

CERTIFICATE

A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier



MARSEILLE, LE VALLON DES AUFFES, 1957

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 57' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

38.2 x 51.2 in. – 97 x 130 cm



PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection, New York

Sale: Sotheby's, New York, 8 May 2014, lot 240

Private collection, Chicago

CERTIFICATE

A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier

L'ÉCLUSE, 1990

Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper right) and dated '1990' (upper left)

Oil on canvas

38.2 x 57.5 in. – 97 x 146 cm



PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE

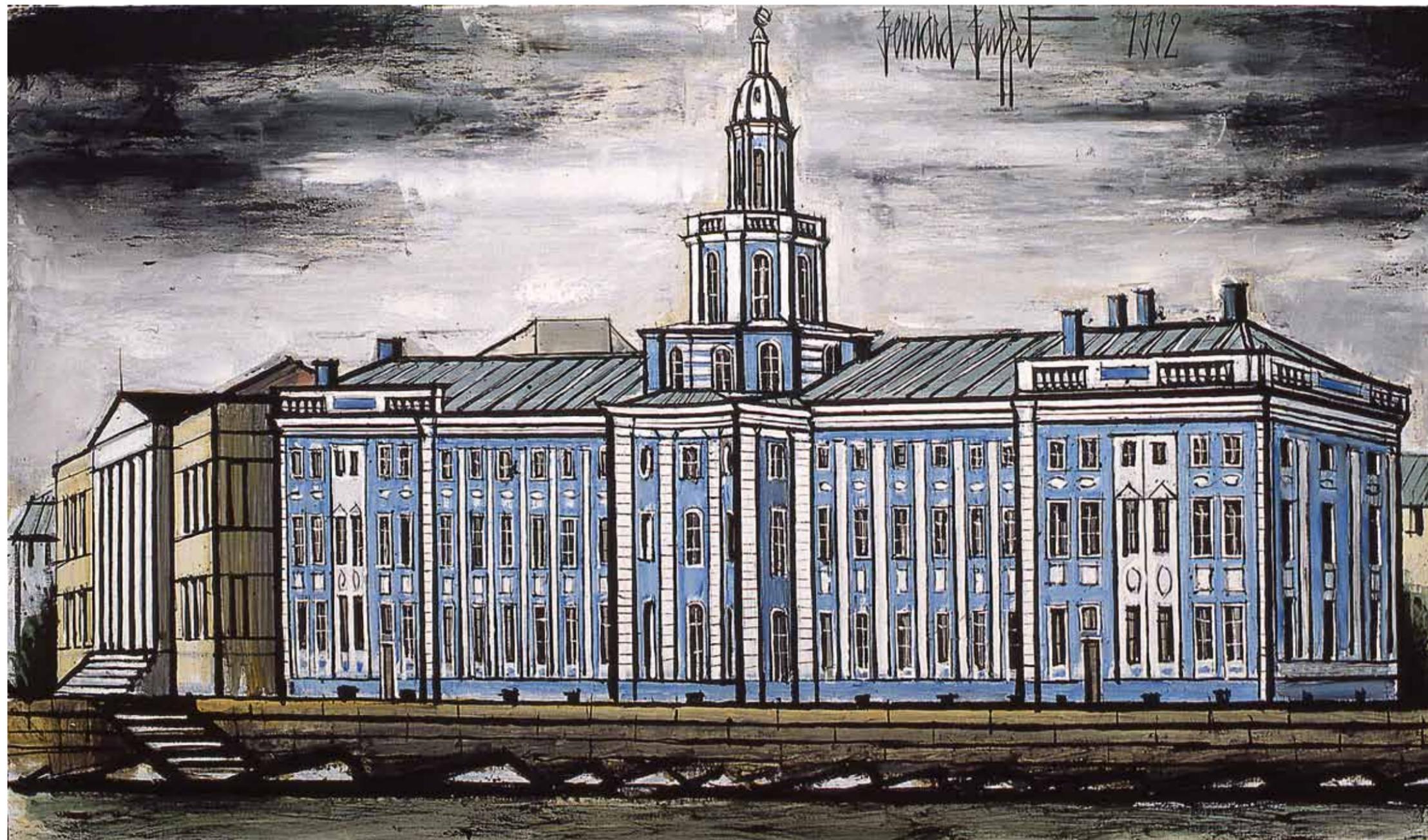
A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier

SAINT-PÉTERSBOURG, MUSÉE D'ANTHROPOLOGIE, 1992

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 1992' (upper right)

Oil on canvas

44.9 x 76.8 in. – 114 x 195 cm



PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE

A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier

LE CHÂTEAU-FORT ROSE, 1998

Signed 'Bernard Buffet' (upper right) and dated '1998' (upper left)

Oil on canvas

19.7 x 25.6 in. – 50 x 65 cm

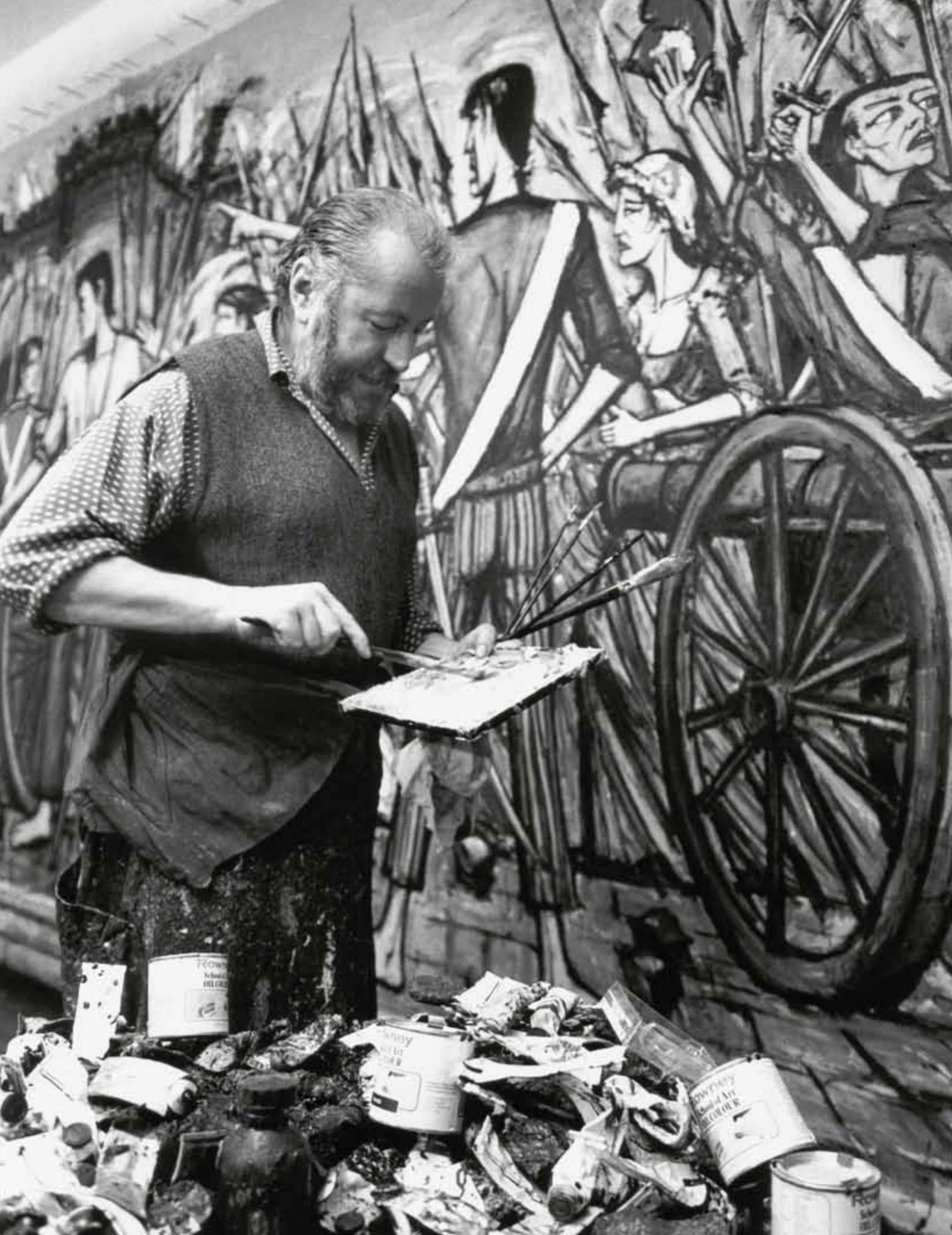


PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris  
Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE

A certificate can be provided by the Galerie Maurice Garnier



# Bernard Buffet

1928 / 1999

- 1928 July 10, born in Paris. Grows up in Batignolles, Northeast Paris.
- 1939 Studies at Lycée Carnot where he wins his first prize in natural science, the only subject that interests him at the time.  
After criticizing the academic system he leaves the school.  
Takes drawing classes at the Paris municipal evening school, place des Vosges.
- 1944 At the age of 16, admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts with a special dispensation on account of his age.
- 1945 Prefers to visit museums than to attend classes, still wins the Academy's prize for studio work.  
Mesmerized by Antoine-Jean Gros's painting *Bonaparte visiting the plague-stricken in Jaffa*.  
His first work contains hints of Maurice Utrillo and Alphonse Quizet and their Parisian street theme.  
While vacationing one summer in Brittany with his mother, she falls ill. Her death a few months later deeply affects Buffet.
- 1946 His self-portrait becomes the first work exhibited at the Salon des moins de trente ans at the Gallery des Beaux-Arts. Thereafter, his works are regularly shown at the Salon des Indépendants, the Salon d'Automne, the Salon de Mai and the Salon des Tuileries.
- 1947 *L'Homme accoudé* garners critical acclaim at the Salon d'Automne.  
Meets liberal writer and critic Pierre Descargues who becomes one of Buffet's most ardent supporters and writes the catalogue preface for his exhibition.  
First solo exhibition at the bookshop *Les Impressions d'Art*. Raymond Cogniat purchases his work *Le Coq Mort* for the French government.

1948 Exhibits *Le Buveur* for the Prix de la Jeune Peinture; even though he doesn't win, he gets the attention of influential art collector Dr. Maurice Girardin, who buys several of his works. At the same time he concludes an exclusive contract with the Galerie Emmanuel David.  
Wins the Prix de la Critique along with Bernard Lorjou, which kick-starts his career.

1949 His solo exhibition at the Galerie Drouant-David becomes an annual event. His works on paper are exhibited at the Galerie Visconti, run by Maurice Garnier.  
In support of a return to realism he signs Jean Bouret's *Second Manifeste de l'homme témoin*.

1950 Member of the organizing committee of the first Salon des Jeunes Peintres at the Galerie des Beaux Arts (re-baptized the Salon de la Jeune Peinture) dedicated to up-and-coming figurative painters. Numerous international exhibitions in New York, London, Basel, Copenhagen and Geneva.  
Meets Pierre Bergé, his partner until 1958.

1951 Takes part in the first *Les Peintres Témoins de leur Temps* exhibition.  
Bernard Buffet and Pierre Bergé spend the summer in Manosque, Provence; they rent a house in Nanse, near Reillanne, where Buffet will work until 1954.

1952 Begins to paint thematically for Galerie Drouant-David's annual show, then for the Galerie David et Garnier and the Galerie Maurice Garnier, for what becomes a tradition. The first exhibition is *La Passion du Christ*.  
Participates in the Venice Biennale with *La Crucifixion*.

1953 Louis Aragon writes an article in *Les Lettres Françaises* entitled "*Le Paysage Français a quatre siècles et Bernard Buffet 24 ans*" (Four Centuries of French Landscape Painting and Bernard Buffet is 24 Years Old).

1955 Tops the list of the Ten Best Post-war artists by the magazine *Connaissance des Arts*.  
Buys property in Domont, near Paris.

1956 *Paris Match* publishes an article on his luxurious lifestyle in his Manine property in Domont, triggering a public controversy towards Buffet's work.

1958 At the age of 30, the first retrospective of his work, held at Galerie Charpentier, establishes his reputation. *The New York Times* names Buffet as one of 'France's Fabulous Young Five', among peers such as Yves Saint Laurent.  
Meets Annabel Schwob and marries her in December. Around this time Buffet's technique changes drastically, incorporating more colors and depth, using the beautiful and slightly androgynous Annabel as his primary muse.  
At the Venice Biennale, a whole room is dedicated to Buffet's work.

1961 Creates a series of paintings depicting the life of Christ for his chapel at the Château l'Arc, Provence.

1962 Birth of first adopted daughter, Virginie.

1963 Birth of second adopted daughter, Danielle.

1964 The German magazine *Stern* commissions a portrait of Mao Zedong.  
He moves to Saint-Cast-le-Guildo, Brittany, where he works until 1970.

1971 Appointed Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.  
Buys the Château de Villiers-le-Mahieu.  
Birth of his adopted son, Nicolas.

1973 Influential Japanese collector Kiichiro Okano establishes a Bernard Buffet Museum in Shizuoka, Japan.

1974 Elected as member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, painting section.

1978 Designs a postage stamp depicting the Institute and the Pont des Arts, Paris.

1980 Visits his museum in Japan: this trip to Japan leaves a strong mark on him and became one of Buffet's main inspiration.  
Buys a manor in Normandy, which he left in 1986 to live at the Domaine de la Baume, in Tourtour, Haut-Var.

1986 Georges Durand publishes *La Divine Comédie* de Bernard Buffet at the Desclée de Brouwer publishing house.

1988 A large extension to the Bernard Buffet Museum is inaugurated in Japan.

1989 Art critic Alin Alexis Avila publishes *Bernard Buffet*, edited by Nouvelles Editions Françaises, Casterman.

1991 A major Russia retrospective of his work is held in the Puskhin State Museum, Moscow and the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg.

1993 Promoted to the rank of Knight of the French Order of the Legion of Honour.

1997 Diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

1999 No longer able to paint, 71-year-old Bernard Buffet takes his own life on 4 October in his Tourtour studio.

2000 Galerie Maurice Garnier organizes a major posthumous exhibition of his final works, on the theme of Death.



Bernard Buffet's studio in Château l'Arc – Venice, 1962. © Daniel Frasnay.

## SELECTED MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Tate Gallery, London, UK  
 The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA  
 The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA  
 Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, USA  
 Hirschhorn Museum and Sculptural Garden, Washington, USA  
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia  
 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France  
 Bernard Buffet Museum, Shizuoka, Japan  
 Museum of Art Roger-Quilliot, Clermont-Ferrand, France  
 National Gallery of Art, Washington, USA  
 The Smithsonian, Washington, USA  
 Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, Evanston, USA  
 Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA  
 Harvard University of Art Museums, Massachusetts, USA  
 Indiana State University Art Collection, Indiana, USA  
 Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, USA  
 Lille Metropole Museum of Modern Art, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France  
 National Gallery of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia  
 New Art Gallery, Walsall, UK  
 San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, USA  
 Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago, Chicago, USA  
 University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa, USA  
 National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, Japan  
 Ca' la Ghironda Modern Art Museum, Bologna, Italy  
 Museum of Modern Art, Paris, France  
 National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada



## MAJOR RETROSPECTIVES AND SOLO EXHIBITIONS

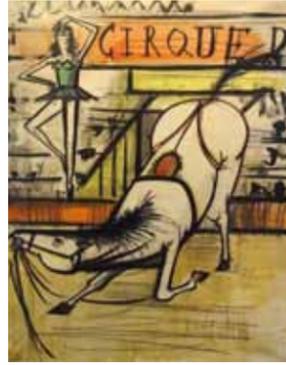
2016-17 Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, France  
 2015 *Bernard Buffet The Theory of Line*, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong  
 2014-15 *Bernard Buffet*, Heydar Aliyev Center, Baku, Azerbaijan  
 2014 *Post 1958 : une symphonie de couleur en plus*, Musée du Touquet-Paris-Plage, Le Touquet, France  
 2010 *Bernard Buffet*, Meguro Museum, Tokyo, Japan  
 Galerie DIL, Paris, France  
 Galerie Pascale Froessel, Strasbourg, France  
 2009 *Bernard Buffet*, Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseille, France  
*Bernard Buffet et Annabel*, Sogo Museum of Art in Yokohoma, Japan  
 2008 *Bernard Buffet Maler*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany  
 2007 *Bernard Buffet et la Bretagne*, Musée départemental breton, Quimper, France  
 2006 *Bernard Buffet: een omstreden oeuvre*, Gemeentemuseum den haag, La Haye, The Netherlands  
 2003 *Bernard Buffet*, Paul Valéry Museum, Sète, France  
 2000 Sogo Museum of Art, Yokohoma, Japan  
 1998 *Bernard Buffet*, Palais Bénédicte, Fécamp, France  
 1996 Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan  
 1995 *Bernard Buffet*, Odakyu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan  
 1994 *Bernard Buffet retrospective*, Documenta-Halle, Kassel, Germany  
 1993 *Bonjour Monsieur Buffet !*, Museum Gustave Courbet, Ornans, France  
*Bernard Buffet*, Château de Chenonceau, Chenonceau, France  
*Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, Departemental Museum of l'Oise, Beauvais, France  
 1991 The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia  
 The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia  
 Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, Korea  
 1987 Odakyu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan  
 1985 Réfectoire des Jacobins, Toulouse, France  
 1983 The Seedamm Cultural Centre, Pfäffikon, Switzerland  
 1978 *Bernard Buffet*, Museum of the French Postal Service, Paris, France  
 Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, Sapporo, Japan  
 1977 Museum de Wieger, Deurne, The Netherlands  
 1969 *Bernard Buffet*, Museum Unterlinden, Colmar, France  
 1963 The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan  
 1959 Knokke-Le-Zoute, Belgium  
 1958 The French Institute, Berlin, Germany  
*Cent tableaux de 1944 à 1958 par Bernard Buffet*, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, France  
*Les Voyages fantastiques de Cyrano de Bergerac*, Jacquemart-André Museum, Paris, France  
 1955 *Paintings by Bernard Buffet*, Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, USA

Annabel and Bernard Buffet in Château l'Arc in 1958. © Luc Fournol.

I N D E X



Le Cirque, le clown musicien P.16



Le Cirque, l'écuyère P.18



Clown P.20



Clown au petit chapeau vert P.22



Nature morte à la cafetière bleue P.46



Nature morte à la casserole rouge P.48



Fleurs des champs dans un verre P.52



Deux clowns à la grosse caisse P.24



Tête de femme P.28



Tête de femme P.30



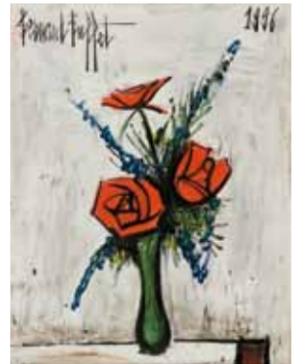
Pot de jacinthes P.54



Bouquet de fleurs dans un pot à lait P.56



Lauriers blancs dans un vase de Gallé 1 P.58



Les Roses P.60



Nu dans la salle de bain P.32



Nu aux perroquets P.34



Autoportrait 18 P.36



Banlieue P.64



La Tour Eiffel P.66



Marseille, Le Vallon des Auffes P.68



Bouteille et feuille de figuier P.40



Le Pétrin P.42



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L'Écluse P.70



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Le Château-fort rose P.74

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