

La France de
Bernard Buffet

OPERA GALLERY

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Bernard Buffet

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FOREWORD

Gilles Dyan
Founder and Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Giulia Lecchini
Deputy Director
Opera Gallery London

Opera Gallery welcomes *La France de Bernard Buffet* to London, the most significant exhibition of the artist's work in the city for more than fifty years. Bernard Buffet occupies a central place within our history, as the gallery has been committed to championing his innovative vision across its international network since the early 2000s. Occupying a distinguished place within its global program, Opera Gallery has consistently introduced new audiences to Buffet's art, sustaining his legacy and affirming his relevance within the history of post-war painting. With *La France de Bernard Buffet*, the gallery continues this trajectory, reaffirming its dedication to one of the most important French painters of the twentieth century.

By selecting more than twenty paintings spanning five decades, the exhibition explores Buffet's lifelong engagement with France, as both a subject and an idea, at the core of his identity. His landscapes, cityscapes, and seascapes were never mere depictions of places, but meditations on memory, tradition, and national history. Defined by stark black lines and bold planes of saturated colour, these works are a commentary on a country that is both austere and lyrical, monumental and intimate. The artist's career traces the evolving role of figuration in the second half of the century. Emerging in the late 1940s, he quickly established himself as a defining voice in European painting. At a time when abstraction appeared dominant, his severe, angular and almost violent style reasserted the urgency of representation, articulating with clarity the existential mood of the post-war years. His meteoric rise, followed by a decline in critical favour, mirrored the shifting tides of taste. Yet, his practice remained remarkably consistent, and his ability to fuse a deeply personal aesthetic with broader cultural and social reflections is what makes his work so compelling to revisit today.

Opera Gallery's commitment to Bernard Buffet sits within a broader momentum of reassessment that has gained renewed strength in recent years. A landmark retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris in 2016 reasserted the artist's central place in French cultural history and invited a new generation to reconsider his contribution. Building on this institutional recognition, Opera Gallery is pleased to bring together a collection of Buffet's key works, creating opportunities for audiences to engage directly with the art, and reaffirming Buffet's resonance within the international story of twentieth-century figuration.

At the heart of 'La France de Bernard Buffet' is our conviction that Buffet continues to raise questions which extend far beyond France. By focusing on the particular, whether a Parisian street, a village church, or the rocky coast of Brittany, Buffet opened his paintings to universal themes of belonging, memory, and identity.

With this exhibition, we reaffirm the gallery's role in sustaining and celebrating Buffet's legacy and its contribution to a long-term, artist-focused commitment: to present, preserve, and share the work of Bernard Buffet with audiences worldwide. For Opera Gallery, Buffet is not only an icon of post-war figuration, but a pillar of the gallery's program and a testament to our beloved France.

Bernard Buffet: The Last Great Painter of France

NICHOLAS FOULKES



Premiere of the play *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué*, 21 January 1958,
Bernard Buffet and Françoise Sagan

Born into middle-class respectability on the Rue des Batignolles in 1928, this angular young man with the triangular head and “hands like those of a crucified man painted by Grünewald”¹ would capture the grey existentialist misery of post-war France. By his thirtieth birthday, he would be one of the most celebrated—and subsequently most controversial—artists of his generation. His meteoric rise was nothing short of extraordinary: he entered the École des Beaux-Arts at just 15, so young that special dispensation needed to be sought. By twenty he had won the Prix de la Critique. By the time he was thirty, he owned a Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith, a château in Provence and his own island. Along with Brigitte Bardot, Yves Saint Laurent, Françoise Sagan, and Roger Vadim, he formed what *The New York Times* christened “France’s Fabulous Young Five”—that glittering constellation of talented youth who shaped French culture during the extraordinary years of *Les Trente Glorieuses*.

Following a disastrous early marriage the early years of Buffet’s career were marked (and the later years overshadowed) by a passionate eight-year relationship with fashion-mogul-to-be Pierre Bergé, then a young journalist, who would later abandon him for Yves Saint Laurent. Bergé became Buffet’s lover, guiding the artist’s career with the precision that would later make him legendary in the fashion world. When Bergé left him in 1958, Buffet’s response was dramatic: he married beautiful singer and writer Annabel Schwob, together they were one of the glamour couples of France in the fifties and sixties. The artist who had painted the emptiness of post-war France now filled his life with every luxury imaginable, creating a paradox that would haunt his reputation for decades to come.

In an interview, Andy Warhol, with characteristic contrariness, once declared that “the French do really have one good painter, Buffet... the last big artist in Paris... the last famous painter.... His work is good; his technique is really good.”²

1 Agnes Nanquette Paris Journal
December 5th, 1958
2 *I’ll Be Your Mirror: The Selected
Andy Warhol Interviews: 1962–1987*,
Kenneth Goldsmith, 2004

This pronouncement, made in 1985, when Buffet's reputation was at its nadir, captures something essential about the artist's singular position in the pantheon of French art. Picasso had revolutionised form, Matisse had liberated colour, Buffet had created a visual vocabulary capable of articulating the mood of an entire nation.

Buffet's France was never the sun-dappled impressionist landscape of tourist postcards, but rather a more truthful, often more melancholic vision that explored the nation's complex relationship with its own history and identity, transforming the grey desolation of occupied Paris into an aesthetic that spoke to millions.

His early still lifes, painted during the Occupation and post-war rationing, elevated the humble objects of French daily life into profound meditations on survival. Thus, a coffee pot can be seen as a monument to perseverance, a dried fish interpreted as a symbol of French resilience, while the empty wine bottles stand menhir-like as silent witnesses to both celebration and despair. These were not mere exercises in technique but anthropological studies of a civilisation rebuilding itself from rubble.

His cityscapes of Paris, particularly those eerily empty street scenes that became a signature, offered a vision of the capital that was both deeply personal and universally recognisable: unpeopled streets of occupied Paris, pregnant with an unseen menace. Unlike the generations who had been drawn to Paris as the city of light and flourishing culture, Buffet painted it as a stage set “before the play has started, naked like a house of crime after the tragedy is over”³. These paintings, with their stark architectural geometry sharpened by the absence of human warmth, created a new mythology of urban alienation that was indisputably his and equally indisputably French.

Buffet was the last in a tradition that stretched back through Delacroix to David—the artist as chronicler of national consciousness, the painter whose early work was capable of uniting the café intellectuals of Saint-Germain with the bourgeoisie of the sixteenth arrondissement. His technique, rooted in the academic training of the École des Beaux-Arts but mediated by the harsh realities of wartime experience, created a distinctly French form of figurative expressionism that owed nothing to German precedent and everything to national temperament.

His landscapes, were portraits of rural France that captured the nation during *Les Trente Glorieuses*, that miraculous period of reconstruction and prosperity when France transformed itself from a defeated and divided country into a modern European power. Buffet's landscapes of Brittany, with their Celtic melancholy, seemed to eulogise the eternal France that persisted beneath the surface of modernisation. His Breton women, angular and dignified, seemed to be visitors from another earlier, simpler France, the memory of which he dedicated himself to chronicling, as it disappeared beneath urban growth and industrial sprawl.



École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts,
Paris Ensba, Palais des études

³ *Bernard Buffet, Paris*,
Gerard Bauer Tudor Publishing, 1961

His election to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1974 and his status as an Officer of the Legion of Honour confirmed him as a national monument, as French as the monuments, landmarks and chateaux he delighted in painting. Yet while he accumulated honours and wealth, Buffet was disdained by those who saw themselves as the cultural vanguard. André Malraux, de Gaulle's Minister of Culture, reportedly detested his work, preferring the abstract movements that he believed would restore Paris's position as the world's art capital. Malraux may have been wrong about Paris reclaiming its lost crown, but the antipathy of his caste created a tension between popular success and critical disdain that would become the defining paradox of Buffet's career.



Bernard Buffet at Château l'Arc,
circa 1956–1958

The self-appointed intellectual elite may have its doubts about his work, but his deep love of France (French history and architecture were topics to which he often returned) was unquestioned and expressed itself not merely through his painting but the various grand historic houses he occupied throughout life. “We move house often, because we travel little. Moving house is our way of travelling”⁴ he would later explain.

His first château, in Provence, purchased when he was in his twenties, was a masterclass in austere luxury. The juxtaposition of the emaciated looking young artist with his aristocratic surroundings struck visitors to the chateau. “Picasso is the tramp in splendour” wrote Jean Cocteau of the 1958 purchase by Picasso of the Château de Vauvenargues on the other side of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire. “Buffet is the millionaire amidst poverty. The

more that Bernard organises and perfects, paints, adds linen cupboards and bathrooms, the more the spaces ‘resemble’ him becoming emaciated and shoeless taking on the air of a tormented soul that he has, this air of the scaffold or the gallows the victim and executioner looking alike”⁵. Here, in the landscape that had inspired Cézanne and Van Gogh, Buffet created his most ambitious religious works, including the cycle depicting the Life of Christ, now in the Vatican.

⁴ *Madame Figaro* February 21, 1981

⁵ *Cocteau, Journal*, Saturday July 13, 1958,
Le Passé Défini Tome V

His passion for Saint-Tropez, where he met Annabel and spent some of his happiest times, generated a remarkable series of harbour scenes that captured the glamorous resort during its golden age. These paintings, with their elegant yachts and pastel-coloured houses, revealed a more sensuous side of Buffet's vision—the painter of French post-war desolation could also celebrate French joie de vivre and his works depicting the South of France demonstrate his remarkable versatility, as he moved effortlessly from the existential angst of his early period to the sophisticated celebration of Mediterranean luxury that defined the prosperity of the 1960s and 1970s.

His final refuge, the sprawling Domaine de la Baume near Tourtour in Provence with its commanding views across the Var countryside, became both his sanctuary and prison during his later years. Here, surrounded by hundreds of acres of lavender and olive groves, he created some of his most powerful late works while battling Parkinson's disease and it was at La Baume that he ended his life.

The tragedy of Bernard Buffet lay in the very completeness of his early success. By the late 1950s, his signature had become so recognisable, his style so commercially viable, that he became a victim of his own achievement. Few could see beyond the signature and the art world, increasingly dominated by abstract expressionism and conceptual art, found his continued commitment to figuration both old-fashioned and suspiciously profitable.

The sight of the young millionaire, driven about in his Rolls-Royce bought with paintings of poverty and despair, struck some critics as the height of artistic hypocrisy and his increasing disinclination to engage with his critics only infuriated them further. As he grew older, his refusal to conform to the earnest archetype of the angst-wrecked artist further deepened and widened the gulf of misunderstanding between him and his detractors.

Yet this criticism missed something essential about Buffet's achievement. His wealth and celebrity, far from corrupting his vision, had freed him to explore the full range of French experience, from the existential despair of post-war recovery to the confident prosperity of the Gaullist years. His paintings of the 1960s and 1970s, often dismissed as mere commercial production, actually constitute a remarkable record of France during its most transformative period. The empty streets of his early Paris scenes gave way to more complex compositions that reflected the nation's growing confidence and international stature.

His portraits of French food and domestic life, often overlooked in favour of his clowns, bullfighters, flowers and cityscapes reveal an artist capable of seeing beauty in the most quotidian of places and objects. The frugality of those early works was forgotten in his depictions of simple abundance: it is hard for those living amongst the instantaneous plenty of the 21st century to appreciate the joy, in, say a fried egg, a bowl of fruit, a loaf of bread, or a cup of real coffee that the French people experienced after the probations of the second world war and the years following. Buffet's true subject was never despair itself but rather the specifically French experience.



Bernard Buffet and his wife Annabel Buffet
arriving in London on 11 October 1962

Jean Cocteau, one of Buffet's earliest champions, understood something that many of his critics missed. Leaving an exhibition of paintings of Parisian landmarks familiar from innumerable postcards, but rendered new and fresh by Buffet, Cocteau observed “I saw the town with Bernard's eyes”⁶; Buffet's France was never simply a geographical entity but rather a state of mind—a way of experiencing reality that emphasised both beauty and melancholy, both grandeur and intimacy, both tradition and transformation.

His influence extended far beyond the boundaries of the art world, shaping how an entire generation understood their relationship with French identity and culture. His paintings appeared not only in galleries and museums but on the walls of the bourgeoisie throughout France, creating a shared visual vocabulary that connected urban Parisian sophisticates with the provincials of rural France. This democratic reach, often cited as evidence of his commercial corruption, could also be construed as proof of his extraordinary achievement in creating art that could speak simultaneously to elite and popular taste.

The rehabilitation of Buffet's reputation, which began in earnest with the 2016/2017 retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, reflects a growing appreciation for his unique contribution to the visual culture of twentieth-century France. Contemporary viewers, no longer bound by the theoretical prejudices that once relegated figurative art to second-class status, can appreciate the remarkable consistency of his vision and the technical mastery that underlies even his most seemingly commercial works.

As we stand before his paintings today, more than two decades after his death, their power to move and surprise remains undiminished. Bernard Buffet succeeded in creating what every great artist dreams of achieving: a way of seeing that outlasts its historical moment and continues to reveal new meanings to successive generations.

Perhaps the ultimate test of Buffet's achievement lies not in critical opinion but in our own response to his vision of France. When we walk through the streets of Paris or along the beaches of the Côte d'Azur, when we encounter the monuments of French civilisation or the simple gustatory pleasures of French daily life, we inevitably see them through eyes that have been educated by his art. His angular geometries have become part of our visual grammar, his melancholy lyricism has enriched our emotional vocabulary, and his celebration of French identity has deepened our understanding of what it means to belong to a particular place and culture.

⁶ *Cocteau Passé Défini*,
Thursday February 14, 1957



Artworks

Cityscape
Seascape
Landscape
Characters

16
24
42
58



Cityscape

La Place des Vosges
1960

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 60'
on the upper left
81 x 130 cm | 31.9 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE

David et Garnier, Paris
Galerie Dresdnere, Inc., Montreal
Private collection, North America,
September 1960
Anon. sale; Christie's, New York,
7 November 2001, lot 308
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Montreal, Galerie Dresdnere Inc., 'Bernard
Buffet', 4–22 October 1960, exh. cat., No. 6, ill.

CERTIFICATE

The Galerie Maurice Garnier has confirmed
the authenticity of this work.





Au Lapin Agile
1988

Oil on canvas
Signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper left
and dated '1988' on the upper right
114 x 146 cm | 44.9 x 57.5 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection

LITERATURE
Yann le Pichon, *Bernard Buffet, 1982-1999, vol. 3*,
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris, 2007, No. 1036, p.
230, ill. in colour p. 203



La Voisin

1997

Oil on canvas
Signed 'Bernard Buffet'
on the upper right
89 x 130 cm | 35 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection



Seascape

Île de Port-Cros
1953

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard / Buffet / 53'
on the upper left
60 x 81 cm | 23.6 x 31.9 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection

EXHIBITED
Berlin, Institut Français, 1958
Knokke, Casino Communal, June 1959
Tokyo, Museum of Modern Art, 1963

LITERATURE
*Bernard Buffet. Catalogue raisonné de l'Œuvre
peint. Volume 2. 1954-1958*, Fonds de Dotation
Bernard Buffet, Paris, 2024, ill. p. 342





Plage 1956

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 56'
on the lower left
97 x 195 cm | 38.2 x 76.8 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection

LITERATURE
*Bernard Buffet. Catalogue raisonné de l'Œuvre
peint. Volume 2. 1954-1958, Fonds de Dotation
Bernard Buffet, Paris, 2024, ill. p. 342*

*Marseille,
Le Vallon des Auffes*
1957

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 57'
on the upper right
97 x 130 cm | 38.2 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection, New York, *circa* 1957
Anon. sale; Sotheby's New York, 8 May 2014, lot 240
Private collection, Chicago
Opera Gallery, Singapore
Private collection

LITERATURE

*Bernard Buffet. Catalogue raisonné de l'Œuvre
peint. Volume 2. 1954–1958, Fonds de Dotation
Bernard Buffet, Paris, 2024, ill. p. 222*





Hôtel du Bord de Mer
1960

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 60'
on the upper centre
81 x 130 cm | 31.9 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection, Milan
Private collection, Milan
Private collection

CERTIFICATE
The Galerie Maurice Garnier has confirmed the
authenticity of this work.

*Baie de la Fresnaye,
voilier trois mâts,
au fond le Fort la Latte*
1973

Oil on canvas
Dated '1973' on the upper left,
signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper right
89 x 130 cm | 35 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection





La Bretagne 7

1982

Oil on canvas
 Dated '1982' on the upper left,
 signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper right;
 titled 'La Bretagne 7' on the stretcher
 73 x 100 cm | 28.7 x 39.4 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
 Private collection, Montreal

Antibes, les remparts

1993

Oil on canvas

Dated '1993' on the upper left,
signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper right;
titled 'Antibes / Alpes-Maritime / Les Remparts'
on the reverse

130 x 195 cm | 51.2 x 76.8 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection

EXHIBITED

Paris, Galerie Maurice Garnier, 'Promenade
provençale', October–November 1993,
exh. cat., No. 5, p. 9

LITERATURE

Yann le Pichon, *Bernard Buffet. 1982–1999*,
Maurice Garnier, Paris, 2007, No. 1165, p. 439, ill.
in colour p. 430

Henry Périer, *Bernard Buffet et la Provence*,
Éditions Palantines, Quimper, 2007, p. 90

CERTIFICATE

Danielle Buffet has confirmed the authenticity
of this work.





Environs de La Rochepot
1973

Oil on canvas
Dated '1973' on the upper left,
signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper right
89 x 130 cm | 35 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection



Landscape



La Corrida, Le Picador
1958

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 58'
on the lower centre
240 x 400 cm | 94.5 x 157.5 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection

Les oiseaux, L'autruche

1959

Oil on canvas

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 59'
on the lower centre

240 x 280 cm | 94.5 x 110.2 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection

LITERATURE

Yann le Pichon, *Bernard Buffet, 1943-1961, vol. I*,
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris, 1986, No. 408,
p. 477, ill. in colour p. 461





*Forêt de Mormale,
lever de soleil en automne*
1974

Oil on canvas
Dated '1974' on the upper left,
signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper right
89 x 130 cm | 35 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection

LITERATURE
Yann le Pichon, *Bernard Buffet, 1962-1981, vol. 2*,
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris, 1986, No. 769,
p. 374, ill. in colour p. 357



Orage en moisson
1977

Oil on canvas
Dated '1977' on the upper left,
signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper right
89 x 130 cm | 35 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection



*Pommier en fleur
près de la route*
1990

Oil on canvas

Dated '1990' on the upper left, signed 'Bernard
Buffet' on the upper right

81 x 116 cm | 31.9 x 45.7 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection



*Château de Plisson,
Montceau-les-Mines*

1997

Oil on canvas

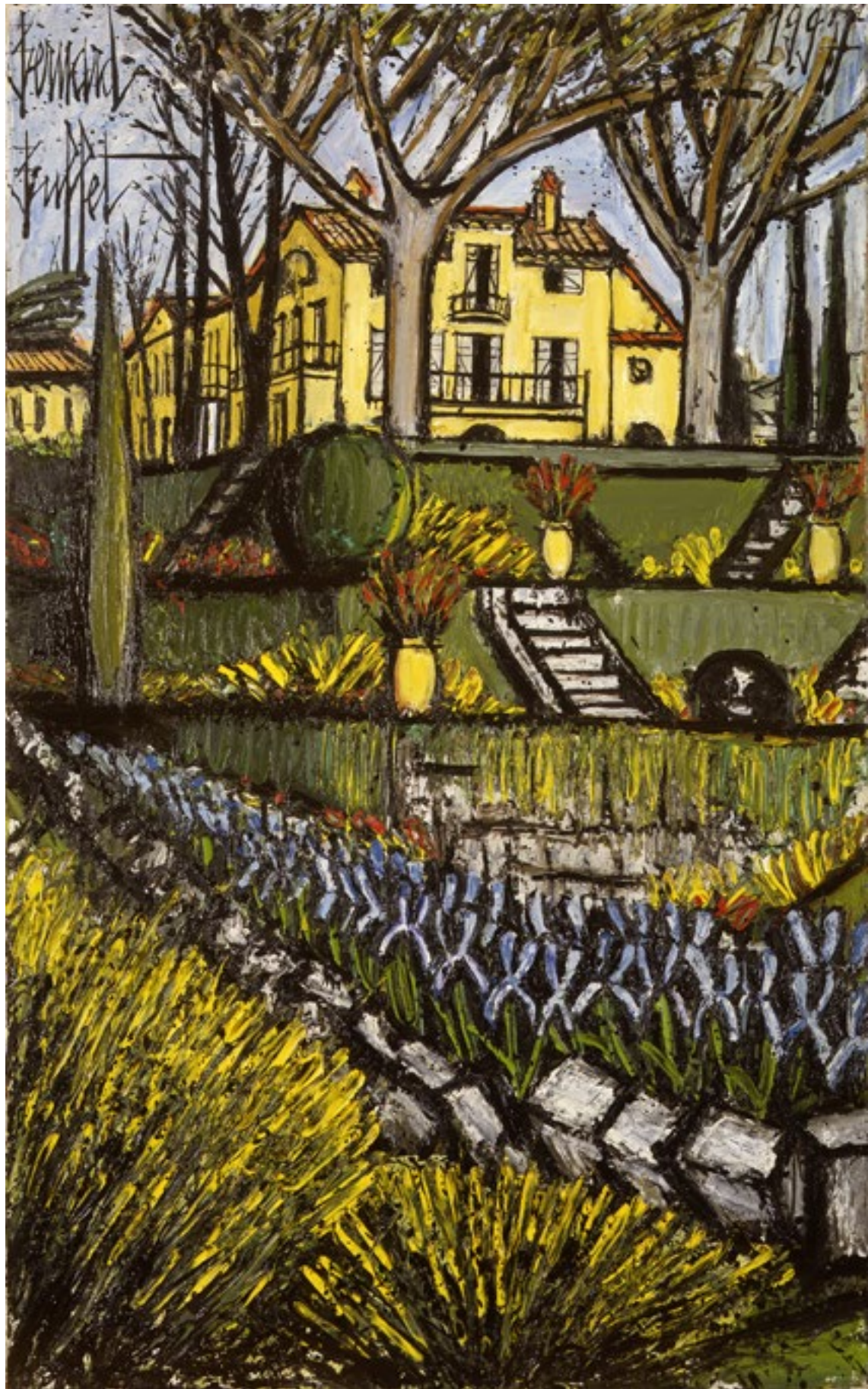
Signed 'Bernard Buffet 1997' on the upper centre

89 x 130 cm | 35 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection



*La Baume, les iris,
la maison et les genêts*
1997

Oil on canvas
Signed 'Bernard / Buffet' on the upper left,
dated '1997' on the upper right
130 x 81 cm | 51.2 x 31.9 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection

EXHIBITED
Paris, Galerie Maurice Garnier, 'La maison',
February-March 1998, exh. cat., No. 4, p. 9



Characters

Bigoudi 1951

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 51'
on the upper right
200 x 120 cm | 78.8 x 47.2 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Switzerland
Anon. sale; Piguet, Geneva,
8 December 2021, lot 188
Private collection

LITERATURE

Yann le Pichon, *Catalogue raisonné de Bernard Buffet*, 1943-1961, vol. I, Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris, 1986, No. 164, p. 207, ill. in colour p. 195
John Sillevs, *Bernard Buffet, 1928-1999*, Éditions Palantines, Quimper, 2008, ill. in colour p. 62
Bernard Buffet. Catalogue raisonné de l'Œuvre peint. Volume 1. 1941-1953, Fonds de Dotation Bernard Buffet, Paris, 2019, ill. p. 255





Femme nue debout
1953

Oil on canvas

Signed and dated 'Bernard Buffet 53'
on the centre right

195 x 100 cm | 76.8 x 39.4 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris

Private collection

LITERATURE

Bernard Buffet. Catalogue raisonné de l'Œuvre peint.
Volume 1. 1941-1953, Fonds de Dotation Bernard
Buffet, Paris, 2019, ill. p. 382

*Le Cirque – Clown
au chapeau pointu*
1955

Oil on canvas
Signed and dated 'Bernard / 55 / Buffet'
on the upper left
150 x 100 cm | 59.1 x 39.4 in

PROVENANCE
Private collection

LITERATURE
Yann le Pichon, *Bernard Buffet, 1943–1961*,
Maurice Garnier, Paris, No. 297, ill. p. 315
Bernard Buffet. Catalogue raisonné de l'Œuvre peint.
Volume 2. 1954–1958, Fonds de Dotation Bernard
Buffet, Paris, 2024, ill. p. 150

CERTIFICATE
The Galerie Maurice Garnier has confirmed
the authenticity of this work.





*Portrait de
Jean-Paul Berger*
1964

Oil on canvas
Dedicated, titled, signed and dated
'Pour Luc / Jean-Paul / Bernard Buffet / 1964'
on the upper left; dedicated, titled, signed and
dated again 'Ce Portrait / de Jean-Paul appartient
B. / a Luc Fournol / Pour B.B Noël / Luc /
Fournol 1964' on the reverse
130 x 81 cm | 51.2 x 31.9 in

PROVENANCE
Luc Fournol collection, gift from the artist
Private collection, Paris

CERTIFICATE
The Galerie Maurice Garnier has confirmed
the authenticity of this work.

Officier d'Empire I
1987

Oil on canvas
Signed 'Bernard Buffet' on the upper left,
dated '1987' on the upper right
116 x 73 cm | 45.7 x 28.7 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maurice Garnier, Paris
Private collection





Charles IX

1998

Oil on canvas

Signed 'Bernard / Buffet' on the upper left,
dated '1998' on the upper right

130 x 89 cm | 51.2 x 35 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Galerie Maurice Garnier has confirmed
the authenticity of this work.



Biography



BERNARD BUFFET (1928 – 1999)

Bernard Buffet is known for his graphic figurative work, defined by a sharp, spidery hand and hard-edged geometry. In this style, Buffet chronicled the glamorous lives of the French upper classes, depicting street scenes, still lifes, landscapes and figures from his unique perspective as an outsider with privileged access. Born to a middle-class family in Paris, Bernard Buffet's talent as a painter brought him into the bosom of French high society as an adult, both as participant and documentor. Nicholas Foulkes, his biographer, suggests that an argument might be made that Buffet was the art-historical conduit linking Picasso and Warhol. One of the first artists to blur the line between celebrity and practitioner, he experienced the full force of the shifting tides of public opinion during his lifetime, often identified more closely with his famously lavish lifestyle than with his work itself. His work has since undergone a critical re-evaluation and today, he is understood as a leading voice in 20th century painting.

Born in 1928, Buffet's vocation was clear from a young age. "Young Bernard is gifted in no subject whatever ... except perhaps drawing," read a note from his school headmaster to his mother. Growing up during the Nazi occupation of Paris, he regularly broke the curfew in order to attend drawing classes, and went on to study at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts before taking a job in the studio of his professor Eugène Narbonne. As he entered adulthood in post-war Paris, his country welcomed a period of economic prosperity that became known as *Les Trente Glorieuses*. Within this new world, his paintings quickly earned him a place in high society as something of an artist-star.

In this time, using his own straight-lined, sharp-edged and sober visual language, he painted scenes from his homes in Paris and Provence, portraits of friends and acquaintances including Jean Cocteau and Charles de Gaulle, and images of himself in the studio. He also painted subjects that might be read as more allegorical, such as clowns and bullfighters. As economic growth in France slowed in the 1970s, Buffet — the unofficial artist of *Les Trente Glorieuses* — fell out of favour. Some have argued that the disconnect between his lavish lifestyle and austere paintings made the works feel disingenuous. Certainly, he found himself answerable to a public whose conception of the "starving artist" he simply didn't line up with.

Since then, his work has found its proper place in art history. He was the subject of a major retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris in 2016, and has a museum dedicated to his work in Nagaizumi, Japan. His work is also held in public collections worldwide including the Centre Pompidou in Paris, National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo and the Tate in London, among others.

SELECTED FRENCH MUSEUM
COLLECTIONS

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Museum of Art Roger-Quilliot,
Clermont-Ferrand, France
Museum of Modern Art, Paris, France
Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon, Lyon, France
Unterlinden Museum, Colmar, France
Calvet Museum, Avignon, France
Musée de l'Abbaye, Saint-Claude, France
Musée Gustave Courbet, Ornans, France
Museum of Fine Arts and Lace, Alençon, France
MUDO, Oise Museum, Beauvais, France
Breton County Museum, Quimper, France
Musée Estrine, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France
Rouen Museum of Fine Arts, Rouen, France
Musée d'Art Moderne of Troyes, Troyes, France
Musée d'Art moderne, Fontevraud, France
Lille Metropole Museum of Modern Art,
Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France
Lille Museum of Fine Arts, Lille, France

SELECTED INTERNATIONAL
MUSEUM COLLECTION

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 D.C., USA
National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne, Australia
Bernard Buffet Museum, Shizuoka, Japan
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA
The Smithsonian, Washington D.C., 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
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
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany
Petit Palais de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland
State Hermitage Museum,
Saint Petersburg, Russia
The Pushkin State Museum of
Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia
Musée d'art contemporain de
Montréal, Montreal, Canada
Fondation Valentin, São Paulo, Brasil
Nagashima Museum, Kagoshima, Japan
Menard Art Museum, Komaki, Japan
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada
New Otani Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
Matsuoka Museum, Tokyo, Japan
McClung Museum of Natural History &
Culture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA
Ōhara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan
National Art Gallery, Sofia, Bulgaria

MAJOR RETROSPECTIVES
AND SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024	'Bernard Buffet The Painter', Seoul Arts Center, South Korea 'Bernard Buffet médiéval et pop', Musée d'Art Moderne de Fontevraud, France	1995	'Bernard Buffet', Odakyu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan
2019	'Bernard Buffet', Seoul Arts Center, South Korea	1994	'Bernard Buffet retrospective', Documenta-Halle, Kassel, Germany
2016-17	Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, France	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
2015-16	'Post 1958 : une symphonie de couleurs en plus', Principality of Andorra, Andorra	1991	The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, Korea
2015	'Bernard Buffet The Theory of Line', Opera Gallery, Hong Kong	1987	Odakyu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan
2014-15	'Bernard Buffet', Heydar Aliyev Center, Baku, Azerbaijan	1985	Réfectoire des Jacobins, Toulouse, France
2014	'Post 1958 : une symphonie de couleur en plus', Musée du Touquet-Paris-Plage, Le Touquet, France	1983	The Seedamm Cultural Centre, Pfäffikon, Switzerland
2010	'Bernard Buffet', Meguro Museum, Tokyo, Japan Galerie DIL, Paris, France Galerie Pascale Froessel, Strasbourg, France	1978	'Bernard Buffet', Museum of the French Postal Service, Paris, France Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, Sapporo, Japan
2009	'Bernard Buffet', Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseille, France 'Bernard Buffet et Annabel', Sogo Museum of Art, Yokohoma, Japan	1977	Museum de Wieger, Deurne, The Netherlands
2008	'Bernard Buffet Maler', MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany	1969	'Bernard Buffet', Museum Unterlinden, Colmar, France
2007	'Bernard Buffet et la Bretagne', Musée Départemental Breton, Quimper, France	1963	The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan
2006	'Bernard Buffet: een omstreden oeuvre', Gemeentemuseum den haag, The Hague, Netherlands	1959	Knokke-Le-Zoute, Belgium
2003	'Bernard Buffet', Paul Valéry Museum, Sète, France	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
2000	Sogo Museum of Art, Yokohoma, Japan	1955	'Paintings by Bernard Buffet', Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, USA
1998	'Bernard Buffet', Palais Bénédictine, Fécamp, France		
1996	Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan		



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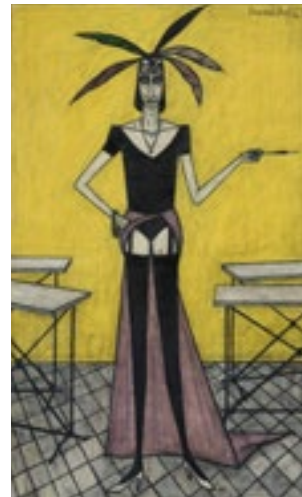
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COVER
Detail of Bernard Buffet, *Forêt de Mormale, lever de soleil en automne*, 1974
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