

# GUGGENHEIM BILBAO

Press release



The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents on February 11

## **From Fauvism to Surrealism** **Masterpieces from the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris**

Sponsored by

Fundación  
**BBVA**

**MAM** MUSÉE  
D'ART MODERNE  
DE PARIS

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MODERNE**

The Fundación BBVA is an expression of the BBVA Group's commitment to the community and of its determination to bring the opportunities of this new era within everyone's reach. With this goal, its activity is centered on generating and fostering scientific knowledge and artistic creativity of the highest standard and bringing awareness of it to society. The roots of this mission lie in the birth of BBVA 165 years ago and its development into one of the engines of growth for Bilbao and its surroundings, with a spirit of searching for innovative solutions to each successive challenge that has led today to its presence in more than 25 countries.

This character, which has left its mark on the civil society and institutions of the Basque Country, explains the designation of Bilbao in 2019 by the Board of Trustees of the Fundación BBVA as the permanent home of the Premios Fronteras del Conocimiento (Frontiers of Knowledge Prizes), a family of international awards that celebrate contributions to the transformation of the map of knowledge in the 20th and 21st centuries, and which are already becoming an additional factor in projecting the city to the world. The first contact of the award winners with the city takes place at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, of which the Fundación BBVA has been a Strategic Trustee since its creation in 1997.

Throughout our collaboration, we have helped to organize major annual exhibitions which help us to understand the past, offer a critical view of ourselves in the present, and shed light on the challenges awaiting us in the future. These shows also put Bilbao on the international cultural agenda and make the city into a powerful magnet, with a beneficial, ample, and extremely varied impact on its economic, cultural, and social life that has come to be called 'the Guggenheim effect' or 'Bilbao effect'.

It is an honor to join in the celebrations of the institution's 25th anniversary with the exhibition *From Fauvism to Surrealism: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris*, which brings together pieces fundamental for an understanding of how art modeled our culture from the beginning of the 20th century until the period following the Second World War. Fauvism and Cubism displayed a sense of audacity and liberty that overturned artistic representation, significantly modifying the traditional perception of landscape, figuration, and the still life. Their influence in terms of artistic effervescence was such that it drew artists from all over the world, who formed what we now know as the School of Paris between the wars. The city was also the cradle of Surrealism, to which the third section of this exhibition is dedicated.

The show opens a window onto the intense chromaticism of Louis Valtat's landscapes or the transformative use of color with which Robert Delaunay approaches the nude, the classicist Cubism of André Lhote or the unclassifiable palette of Amedeo Modigliani, and the dazzling versatility of Francis Picabia or the metaphysical art of Giorgio de Chirico, to mention only a few of the landmarks in this fascinating survey, curated by Fabrice Hergott with Hélène Leroy, director and curator respectively of the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, and Geanine Guimaraes, curator of the Guggenheim Bilbao.

Our congratulations go to them, as well as to Juan Ignacio Vidarte and all his team for admirably steering the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao through this voyage of a quarter of a century until it has become an international focal point receiving millions of visitors, 70% of them from abroad. This solid trajectory is the best guarantee for facing the future.

Carlos Torres Vila  
President of the BBVA Foundation

*From Fauvism to Surrealism:  
Masterpieces from the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris*

- Dates: February 11 – May 22, 2022
  - Curated by Fabrice Hergott, director of the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris in cooperation with Hélène Leroy, curator of the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, and Geanine Gutierrez-Guimarães, curator of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao
  - Exhibition organized by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris Musées
  - Sponsored by the BBVA Foundation
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- The audacious freedom of fauvist and cubist artists at the onset of these two movements in the early 20th century was considered scandalous as it revolutionized traditional representation of portraiture, landscape, and still-life.
  - The section entitled 'Rendezvous in Paris' features figurative painters and sculptors who actively contributed to the blossoming of a new artistic scene in Paris during the interwar period.
  - Surrealism championed the irrational, the revolutionary, and the liberation of the mind, and its ideas were integrated across all fields of artistic creation and heralded new artistic and technical inventions.

The Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (MAM) and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao present *From Fauvism to Surrealism: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris*, an exhibition sponsored by the BBVA Foundation that presents a selection of nearly seventy masterpieces by significant artists that illustrates the history of the MAM collection while offering an overview of the avant-garde artistic movements that flourished in Paris during the first decades of the 20th century.

The MAM was built on the occasion of the historic *Exposition Internationale (1937)* as a home to the collections of modern and contemporary art of the city of Paris, which expanded rapidly in the years following major acquisitions of works by important artists of the Parisian art scene, only later to become a formal museum in 1961. Patrons were an integral source of support for this project, especially Dr. Maurice Girardin, whose museum bequest of 1953 became the nucleus for the collection of modern masters, including the Fauves, Cubists and representatives of the School of Paris.

Organized chronologically over three successive sections, from the beginning of the 20th century to the period following World War II, the selection of works in this exhibition presents an historical perspective of the main protagonists involved in these pivotal artistic movements. The exhibition begins with representative works of Fauvism and Cubism, whose audacious freedom revolutionized art and changed traditional perception of landscape, human figure, and still life; followed by the generation of international

artists who gave birth to the School of Paris during the interwar period alongside several well-known French artists at the time; and finally a presentation of artists involved with Surrealism, which was led by the poet André Breton since its founding in 1924 in its historical home of Paris.

Through the present day, MAM continues its dynamic approach to the collection through its scientific and cultural policy of gathering exemplary representations of historical avant-garde movements. Many of these works are presented in Bilbao for the first time in this exhibition.

## THE EXHIBITION

### **Gallery 305. *Fauvism and Cubism: Scandalously Modern***

Fauvism and Cubism flourished in the city of Paris in the first decade of the 20th century. Before these movements became significant landmarks in art history, the names chosen by art critics to characterize them were meant to be unfavorable and to minimize the new artistic research presented in the Parisian Salons. Indeed, for the Fauves, their new form of pictorial expression employed bold, non-naturalistic colors and spontaneous brushwork, while the Cubists aimed to represent objects and figures in planes that showed simultaneously different viewpoints. This audacious freedom was considered scandalous as it revolutionized traditional representation of portraiture, landscape, and still-life.

After witnessing the works by Henri Matisse and André Derain at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1905, art critic Louis Vauxcelles labeled the artists "les fauves," or wild beasts, as a marker of their outrageous departure from traditional art. In fact, Fauvism embraced the dissolution of shapes into color inherited from Impressionism and Pointillism and used a lively palette of bright colors. In an effort to search for new formal ways to evoke intensely emotional reactions, these artists emphasized the expressive potential of color and adopted a radically new painterly approach to their subject matter. Among the artists included in this movement, which are featured in this section with important pieces, are Derain, Robert Delaunay, Matisse, Maurice de Vlaminck, and Louis Valtat.

At the turn of the century Cubism was born as a revolutionary approach to representing reality. Initially ridiculed by critics who criticized their paintings for consisting of small "cubes," Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque together pioneered the Cubist style, based on their analysis of Paul Cézanne's paintings, which were very highly regarded by young painters in the early 20th century. Other artists involved with Cubism created fragmented compositions as well as sculptures that represented simultaneous viewpoints of reality, thus revolutionizing the rules of perspective inherited from the Renaissance. Present in this section are artists involved in this movement, which include Braque, Albert Gleizes, Natalia Goncharova, Juan Gris, Fernand Léger, Andre Lhote, Jean Metzinger, and Picasso.

### **Gallery 306. *Rendezvous in Paris***

This section of the exhibition reunites figurative painters and sculptors who actively contributed to the blossoming of a new artistic scene in Paris during the interwar period. This selection of works highlights international artists whose residence in the French capital gave birth to the School of Paris—alongside

several well-known French artists at the time, including Henri Matisse, Suzanne Valadon, and Marie Laurencin.

Coined by the critic André Warnod in 1925, the term School of Paris does not refer to a movement, but rather encompasses a generation of artists with a wide range of nationalities who gravitated toward the intensity of the Parisian artistic scene in select neighborhoods at the turn of the century. From 1900 to World War I, Montmartre was the cradle of these avant-garde artists; then Montparnasse followed as the new center of the artistic *bohème* in the 1920s and 1930s; and later Saint-Germain-des-Prés became the locus of artistic activity after World War II.

In effect, the cafés, workshops, balls, and cabarets of these three districts became the new rendezvous of the cosmopolitan artistic community and city magnets for a robust Parisian social life. Among those émigré artists who frequented these centers of activities, who are also included in this section, are Marc Chagall, Chana Orloff, Chaim Soutine, and Ossip Zadkine from Russia; Jules Pascin from Bulgaria; Amedeo Modigliani from Italy; María Blanchard from Spain; Kees van Dongen from the Netherlands; and Leonard Foujita from Japan.

### **Gallery 307. *Evolutions of Surrealism***

Surrealism was born in Paris in the 1920s from the writings of the poets Guillaume Apollinaire, André Breton, Louis Aragon, Philippe Soupault, and Paul Éluard. In a postwar context, this artistic and literary movement was formed with the desire to overturn the values of order and reason, as well as illustrate the necessity of re-enchanting the world. Breton, the theorist of this group, laid the foundation of a new aesthetic statement drawing on new inspirations, including Freudian theories and psychoanalysis, myths and symbols, the unconscious, dreams and their manifestations, attraction for the marvelous, and chance and divination.

This movement was integrated across all fields of artistic creation and heralded new artistic and technical inventions. Artists such as Man Ray, Breton, and Max Ernst embraced fruitful interplays between reality and transfiguration as evident in their works in this section. Other Surrealist artists on view, such as Victor Brauner and Francis Picabia, fused different images together and new themes were developed that hovered between esotericism and symbolism, allowing artists such as Claude Cahun and Anton Prinner to experiment with notions of androgyny and gender fluidity.

Surrealism championed the irrational, the revolutionary, and the liberation of the mind. The ideas associated with the movement developed over several decades and were disseminated, embraced, and re-imagined through international networks of exchange. Artists on view like Wifredo Lam, Véra Pagava, and Leonor Fini, for example, investigated aspects of totemism, revived antiquity, and symbolism tinted with archaism in their works, respectively. Other artists in this section, like Breton, Ernst, André Masson, and Matta left Europe for New York, where they discovered the effects of Surrealism in the United States at Peggy Guggenheim's gallery, Art of This Century. After the end of World War II, Surrealism was still very much present in Paris, where artists from the group blended with new generations. Since its opening in

1961, the collections of the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris reflect the evolutions of this historical movement.

### **DIDAKTIKA. Art and Material: Modern Life**

The didactic space of the exhibition will include information about the origins of MAM, the connections between the artists in avant-garde Paris, and highlight Raoul Dufy's *La Fée Électricité* (*The Spirit of Electricity*) (1937), an iconic site-specific work in the MAM collection that presents a mythological and allegorical story around the concept of electricity, whose applications were key to modernizing life and art in Paris.

### **Public Programs**

#### Opening Talk (February 9)

An introduction to the show by exhibition curators Geanine Gutierrez-Guimarães, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (online), and Hélène Leroy, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris.

#### Shared Reflections\*

On site visits led by the Museum professionals offering different views on the exhibition:

- Curatorial Vision (February 16): Lucía Agirre, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Curator will offer a tour of the main works in the exhibition.
- Key Concepts (February 23): Luz Maguregui, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Education Coordinator, will talk with attendants about the didactic keys of the show.

\*Sponsored by Fundación Vizcaína Aguirre

### **Catalogue**

The exhibition catalogue immerses the reader in a vibrant atmosphere of a number of styles that flourished in the French capital—Fauvism, Cubism, the School of Paris, Surrealism—in the early decades of the 20th century. With introductory texts written by the exhibition curators, this volume explores the new trends and movements that departed from the mainstream conventions of the history of art and heralded aesthetic developments that would later be embraced by Europe and the USA, illustrated by extraordinary works from the MAM Collection.

### **Cover image:**

Maria BLANCHARD

*L'Espagnole*, circa 1910 - 1913

Oil paint on wood board

54 x 50 cm

Inv. : AMVP 393

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

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***From Fauvism to Surrealism: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris***

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

**Online press image service**

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For more information, you can get in touch with the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao press area at tel. +34 944 359 008 or email [media@guggenheim-bilbao.eus](mailto:media@guggenheim-bilbao.eus)

**Fauvism and Cubism**

André DERAIN

*The River (La rivière)*, winter 1904 - 1905

Oil on cardboard

74 x 90 cm

Inv. : AMVP 739

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

© André Derain, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



Emile Othon FRIESZ

*Autumn in Honfleur (Automne à Honfleur)*, 1906

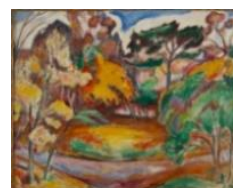
Oil on canvas

64 x 80 cm

Inv. : AMVP 2579

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© Othon Friesz, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022





André LHOTE

*Port of Call (Escale)*, 1913

Oil on canvas

210 x 185 cm

Inv. : AMVP 1113

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© André Lhote, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



Fernand LÉGER

*Man with Pipe (L'homme à la pipe)*, 1920

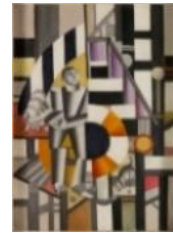
Oil on canvas

91 x 65 cm

Inv. : AMVP 1118

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© Fernand Léger, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



Georges BRAQUE (1882- 1963)

*Still Life with Sonata (Nature morte à la sonate)*, 1921

Oil on canvas

35,5 x 65cm

Inv. : AMVP 1684

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

© Georges Braque, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



Natalia GONTCHAROVA

*Two Spanish Women (Deux femmes espagnoles)*, 1920-1924

Oil on canvas, third of five panels

237 x 76 cm

Inv. : AMVP 1195

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

© Natalia Gontcharova, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



### Rendez-vous in Paris

Maria BLANCHARD

*The Spanish Woman (L'Espagnole)*, circa 1910 - 1913

Oil paint on wood board

54 x 50 cm

Inv. : AMVP 393

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris



Amedeo MODIGLIANI

*Woman with Blue Eyes (Femme aux yeux bleus)*, circa 1918

Oil on canvas

81 x 54 cm

Inv. : AMVP 1681

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris



Suzanne VALADON (Marie-Clémentine VALADON, dit)

*Nude (Nu)*, 1925

Oil on canvas

65 x 54 cm

Inv. : AMVP 1057

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Henri MATISSE

*Odalisque with a chair (Odalisque au fauteuil)*, 1928

Oil on canvas

60 x 73 cm

Inv. : AMVP 973

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Chana ORLOFF

*Parisian girl (Fillette de Paris)*, 1928

Stone

125 x 42 x 30 cm

Inv. : AMS 271

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

© Chana Orloff, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



## Evolutions of Surrealism

Giorgio DE CHIRICO

*Hermetic Melancholy (Mélancolie hermétique)*, 1919

Oil on canvas

62 x 49,5 cm

Inv. : AMVP 1888

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

© Giorgio De Chirico, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



Francis PICABIA (Francis MARTINEZ DE PICABIA)

*Optophone II*, 1922 / 1925

Oil and ©Ripolin paint on canvas

116 x 88,5 cm

AMVP 2442

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

© Francis Picabia, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



Claude CAHUN (Lucy SCHWOB)

*Autoportrait*, 1929

Gelatin silver overprint on paper

13,8 x 8,6 cm

Inv. : AMVP 2957

© Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

© Claude Cahun (Lucy Schwob)



Victor BRAUNER

*The Meeting at 2 bis rue Perrel (La rencontre du 2 bis rue Perrel)*, 1946

Oil on canvas

85 x 105 cm

Inv. : AMVP 2189

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