

# A consideration of the reception of Pierre Bonnard through an analysis of exhibitions in Japan

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Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) was a French painter and printmaker influenced by Japanese art. He joined the French art collective *Les Nabis* at the end of the 19th century, and was considered one of the greatest colorists of the early 20th century.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth, the first major exhibition of Bonnard's works in Asia was successfully held in 1968 at the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo. The majority of the works in the exhibition were lent by private collectors and galleries, while 20 percent were lent by art museums in Europe and the United States.

After a half-century, another exhibition of Bonnard took place at the National Art Center, Tokyo in cooperation with the Orsay Museum. This exhibition included twenty-one paintings and prints in the collection of Japanese art museums—16 percent of the exhibited works. Only 3 percent of the works were lent by the private sector.

The evaluation of the artist has changed in France and Japan in the period between 1968 and 2018. This investigation shows that in 2018, the Orsay Museum and the National Museum of Modern Art together own about one hundred and fifty works of Bonnard, including oil paintings, watercolor paintings, gouaches, and sculptures. The number of his works in these two collections has trebled in a half-century. Japanese art museums now own about fifty paintings. By comparing two retrospective exhibitions of Bonnard in Japan, the change in his international acceptance can be demonstrated. Japanese art museums have certainly contributed in promoting the reputation of Bonnard.