WASHINGTON—The Phillips Collection is pleased to present an exhibition exploring two artists’ creative dialogue with gardens and nature: French Post-Impressionist painter Pierre Bonnard (b. 1867, Fontenay-aux-Roses; d. 1947, Le Cannet) and contemporary American artist Jennifer Bartlett (b. 1941, Long Beach, California). Both were avid gardeners, and gardens—especially the ones they created for themselves—had a lifelong influence on both artist’s works. This vibrant summer exhibition demonstrates how Bonnard and Bartlett’s gardens are connected across time and place. Bringing together 39 paintings, drawings, and prints, Jennifer Bartlett & Pierre Bonnard: In and Out of the Garden will be on view June 27—September 20, 2020.

“In and Out of the Garden explores the creative dialogue of Jennifer Bartlett and Pierre Bonnard. The subject of gardens is well represented in Bonnard’s works acquired by Duncan Phillips, beginning with one of the first works by Bonnard that entered his collection. Presented alongside Bartlett’s In the Garden series, this exhibition creates a juxtaposition of two painters for whom gardens not only evoke joy and domestic felicity but also possess a darker sensibility,” says Dr. Dorothy Kosinski, Vradenburg Director and CEO of The Phillips Collection.
Gardens are a recurrent theme throughout Bonnard’s work, and garden views from both inside the house and the outside became a defining subject. The unruly patterns of trees, shrubs, and flowers in Bonnard’s gardens, which he allowed to grow wild, is mirrored in his later painting style of “interconnected patches of color.”

Duncan Phillips bought his first two paintings by Bonnard in 1925, Woman with Dog and Early Spring, which was followed by another seven paintings purchased during the 1920s, and still more in the subsequent decades. Bonnard’s blend of intimate sensibility and personal expressiveness embodies Duncan Phillips’s vision of his museum as an “intimate” collection that promotes the “restorative” power of art. In and Out of the Garden includes major canvases and drawings by Bonnard from the Phillips’s collection as well as significant loans from other museums.

“Bonnard’s conceptual and experimental approach to painting, especially the profusion of various textures and colors in his garden scenes has a parallel in Jennifer Bartlett’s reinvention of figurative painting in the 1970s and 80s that was characterized by an unprecedented intellectual and visual acuity,” says Klaus Ottmann, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Academic Affairs.

Jennifer Bartlett emerged in the mid-1970s to become one of the leading American artists of her time, and was among the first female painters of her generation to be both commercially successful and critically acclaimed.

In winter 1979–80, Bartlett stayed in the home of British novelist Piers Paul Read, who had rented a house with a small garden in the south of France. Bartlett’s stay became the inspiration for a series of 200 drawings which she later titled In the Garden. She often drew several views of the same scene, using different techniques, styles, and media, including pencil, charcoal, ink, Conté crayon, watercolor, pastel, and gouache, evoking the styles of past artists, including those of Van Gogh, Monet, Renoir, and Bonnard. Most of the original set of 200 drawings was shown for the first time at Paula Cooper Gallery in New York in 1981.

Since the 1990s, Bartlett has spent her summers in a small cottage near the beach in Amagansett, on Long Island’s East End. In 2007, she began painting a series of diptychs on canvas, working, as she often does, from photographs taken in and around Amagansett. These richly layered scenes of ocean shores, marsh grasses, and houses display a new technique in which she freely paints crosshatched marks that obscure her imagery with veil-like gridlines, a style further developed in a series from 2010–11 of her garden in Brooklyn. In and Out of the Garden features a selection of works from these monumental series.

CATALOGUE
The Phillips Collection will publish a catalogue featuring paintings, drawings, and prints by both Pierre Bonnard and Jennifer Bartlett, accompanied by illuminating text from Klaus Ottmann, the Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Academic Affairs at The Phillips Collection. It will be published by GILES.

IMAGE GALLERY
High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact hbarton@phillipscollection.org or 202.387.2151 x235.

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION
The Phillips Collection, America’s first museum of Modern art, presents one of the world’s most distinguished Impressionist and American Modern art collections. Including paintings by Renoir and Rothko, Bonnard and O’Keeffe, van Gogh, Diebenkorn, Daumier and Lawrence, among others, the museum continues to actively collect new acquisitions, many by contemporary artists such as McArthur Binion, Wolfgang Laib, Simone Leigh, Whitfield Lovell, Aimé Mpane, Zilia Sánchez, and Leo Villareal. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips’s impact spreads nationally and internationally through its highly distinguished special exhibitions, programs, and events that catalyze dialogue surrounding the continuity between art of the past and the present. Among the Phillips’s esteemed programs are its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; well-established Phillips Music series; and sell-out Phillips after 5 events. The museum contributes to the art conversation on a global scale with events like Conversations with Artists and the International Forum. The Phillips Collection values its community partnerships with the University of Maryland—the museum’s nexus for academic work, scholarly exchange, and interdisciplinary collaborations—and THEARC—the museum’s new campus serving the Southeast DC community. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.


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