

	Object:	The Little Laundry Girl
	Museum:	Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de
	Collection:	Kupferstichkabinett
	Inventory number:	1919/22

Description

In 1889, Pierre Bonnard was a founding member of the Nabis, a group of artists who saw themselves as painter-engravers (peintregraveurs) with the goal of reviving graphic art. In deliberate contrast to illusionistic-naturalistic academic art, they propagated a type of art that was subjective and introspective. In doing so, they did not regard a picture's possibilities as primarily lying in the picture object. Rather, for them, as Maurice Denis, the theoretician in the group, was to state programmatically in 1890, the picture was "first and foremost merely a flat surface [. . .] covered with colors assembled in a certain order." Bonnard celebrated his artistic breakthrough with the poster France-Champagne. The three-color lithograph advertises the champagne of E. Debray's in Reims. It features in curving outlines the silhouette of a young woman standing out from a bright yellow background. Shown as a half-length figure in a flowing dress with a low neckline and cascading curls, she toasts the viewer with a glass of champagne overflowing with cascading bubbles of froth. Using only a few details that speak for themselves, Bonnard manages to characterize the figure as a fashionable and exuberantly cheerful woman. Also with *La Petite Blanchisseuse*, most likely Bonnard's most famous lithograph, he dispensed with any modeling. The figure has been strongly foreshortened in the space, and projected into the flat plane in such a way that the surface of the street fills the picture, compressing the space. The unusual perspective from above imbues the black silhouette of the girl with depth. Because we are made to look down upon the girl, the dog appears to be at the same height as the girl's head. These two works by Bonnard reflect the particular influence that Japonism had upon him, earning him the nickname "le Nabi japonard." This was shown by the unusual vantage points, the way the close-up motifs seem like excerpted details, the flat surface arrangement of the picture, as well as by the highly expressive lines and the disregard for naturalistic detail.

Basic data

Material/Technique:

Color lithograph

Measurements:

Events

Printed

When

1896

Who

Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947)

Where

Keywords

- Graphics