



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
CANNES PREMIÈRE  
SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE 2023

François Kraus and Denis Pineau-Valencienne  
present

# BONNARD

## PIERRE and MARTHE

A film by Martin Provost  
with Cécile de France, Vincent Macaigne, Stacy Martin, Anouk Grinberg, André Marcon



France, Belgium - 123min – 1,85 – 5.1

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## SYNOPSIS

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Pierre Bonnard wouldn't be the famous painter everybody knows without the enigmatic Marthe appearing on more than a third of his work...

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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When I was a child, my mother brought me from an exhibition in Paris a poster representing Marthe painted by Bonnard, sitting at the Roulotte's table in front of a luxuriant landscape, vibrant of light and colour. I had pinned it on the wall of my bedroom so that I could look at it while falling asleep at night. I was too young to understand it but something in this image fascinated me, its sensuality and the strangeness that came out of it. As if it was a window opening onto another world.

I found out later on that the Roulotte was the small house on the banks of the Seine in Normandy where the couple lived in symbiosis but also in reclusion for many years. That place where Bonnard reached his self-fulfillment as an artist. Over the years I naturally forgot this poster and the fascination I had for it, but this memory came back to haunt me a long time after. By the merest chance I settled here in Vexin very close to the Roulotte, a place where I still live today in the same landscapes magnified by Bonnard's eye.

One day, Pierrette Vernon, the great niece of Marthe, contacted me. She wanted me to make a film about her great-aunt, as she felt her fundamental role in her husband's work was not sufficiently appreciated. We could say Marthe became the emblem and fetish of it, appearing in more than a third of his work. But she remained a troubled and manipulative woman in the public opinion, while Pierrette saw Marthe as a woman who sacrificed herself for the sake of Pierre's work.

There is a mystery around Bonnard. A mystery illustrated throughout his life in the obsessional representation of Marthe's body, his companion and muse. From the beginning, Marthe is omnipresent, offered, enigmatic and impudent. And then slowly, while becoming sick, she starts shutting herself, often in her bathtub, eternally young and eternally elusive. Bonnard's work is totally bound to her presence, it wouldn't be the same without her. It's in this indissoluble link that I immediately felt a need to get a deeper understanding. I saw this as a sign. Since my childhood, Marthe, pinned on the wall of my room, was also part of my life.

While starting to work on the script I realized it was a heartbreaking love story, hiding behind the legend of their intimate and falsely secluded relationship. With Pierre and Marthe, nothing was simple. Neither the sweetness and egoism of Pierre, nor the mythomania of Marthe, nor the decisive role that she seemed to have played at his side, and not even Pierre's paintings, where behind an apparent representation of happiness, every detail is used to disorient the spectator even more.

They were united by a Faustian pact, a strange alchemy, making everybody wonder who was vampirizing the other.

Under the splendor of the landscapes one can guess the underlying tragedy. Among his close relatives, Bonnard was considered as Marthe's prisoner until the end, creating a void around him, knowingly cutting him off from the world. But many claimed the opposite after the artist's death: that Marthe was actually Pierre's willing "victim", his prisoner, broken down because of their relationship...

In any case, it seemed obvious to me that reducing Marthe to the strict role of a muse would be a mistake. As it would be misleading and just as downgrading to reduce her to a powerless victim, devoured by a genius predator and joining the long list of famous artists' companions, objectified by a male gaze in societies still fundamentally patriarchal.

Marthe had a strong personality, she hid from Pierre significant parts of her past life, and made a name and a character for herself. She lived in a lie but at the same time was fleeing the false pretenses: it was a disturbing combination of sincerity and mythomania. By withdrawing herself from the social game she took Pierre with her, revealing him to himself by sharing her love of loneliness and nature. Marthe could have been a painter. At Pierre's side, her desire to paint grew and one day she went for it, under a third identity, Marthe Solange.

But it was too late. After her first exhibition Marthe stopped painting and fell gradually into madness. Only about fifty paintings remain of her. A work worthy of a student coming out of the Beaux-Arts. Born poor, Marthe didn't get the time to fully reveal the painter living inside her.

Despite her madness, Pierre never abandoned her. To the very end, he showed his absolute dedication to her. Initially strong and hard as a diamond, time eventually made her fragile like glass. Pierre participated fully in the artistic bubbling of his time at the beginning of their relationship, full of freedom and love experiments. But when he gradually isolated himself with her to be entirely dedicated to his work, he seemed to be plagued by a creative fever fueled by guilt and violent impulses. It's in this non-anecdotal space that I chose to position the film, far from the ordinary biopic or historical reconstitution, in that secret transformation of a couple.

Martin Provost

## MARTIN PROVOST - Selected filmography

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- 2023    **BONNARD, PIERRE AND MARTHE**  
Directed by Martin Provost, co-written with Marc Abdelnour  
Cannes Official Selection 2023 - Cannes Premiere
- 2020    **HOW TO BE A GOOD WIFE**  
Directed by Martin Provost, co-written with Severine Werba  
César 2021 - Winner for Best costume design, Nominee for Best supporting Actress,  
Nominee for best supporting Actor, Best set design
- 2017    **THE MIDWIFE**  
Written and directed by Martin Provost  
Berlinale Official Selection
- 2013    **VIOLETTE**  
Directed by Martin Provost, co-written with Marc Abdelnour and René de Ceccatty  
Audience Award – Cinemaniac festival of Montreal  
Selected at Toronto International Film Festival, BFI (London), Tübingen (Stuttgart),  
Tallinn, French film Week (Berlin)
- 2011    **WHERE THE NIGHT GOES ?**  
Directed by Martin Provost, co-written with Marc Abdelnour  
Selected at festivals of Montreal, City of Lights (Los Angeles)  
Rendez-vous with French Cinema (New York), Bienne (Suisse), Mumbai
- 2008    **SERAPHINE**  
Directed by Martin Provost, co-written with Marc Abdelnour  
César 2009 - Winner for Best Actress (Yolande Moreau), Best film, Best original script, Best  
original music, Best photography, Best costume design, Best set design  
Nominee for best director and best sound design
- 2003    **SONG FROM WITHIN**  
Directed by Martin Provost, co-written with Philippe Lasry and Marc Abdelnour  
Selected at Namur festival
- 1997    **TORTILLA Y CINEMA**  
Written and directed by Martin Provost

## VINCENT MACAIGNE - Selected Filmography

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- 2023    **BONNARD PIERRE AND MARTHE** - Martin PROVOST
- 2022    **BIG KIDS** - Andrea BESCOND and Eric METAYER
- 2022    **DIARY OF A FLEETING AFFAIR** - Emmanuel MOURET
- 2021    **LOVE SONGS FOR TOUGH GUYS** - Samuel BENCHETRIT
- 2020    **LOVE AFFAIR(S)** - Emmanuel MOURET  
*Nominee for Best Supporting Actor - César 2021*
- 2019    **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** - Cedric KAHN
- 2018    **NON FICTION** - Olivier ASSAYAS
- 2017    **C'EST LA VIE !** - Eric TOLEDANO et Olivier NAKACHE  
*Nominee for Best Supporting Actor - César 2018*
- 2015    **NEWS FROM PLANET MARS** - Dominik MOLL
- 2015    **TWO FRIENDS** - Louis GARREL
- 2014    **EDEN** - Mia HANSEN-LØVE
- 2013    **AGE OF PANIC** - Justine TRIET
- 2013    **THE RENDEZ-VOUS OF DÉJÀ-VU** - Antonin PERETJATKO  
*Nominee for Best Actor Hopeful - César 2014*
- 2011    **A BURNING HOT SUMMER** - Philippe GARREL
- 2008    **ON WAR** - Bertrand BONELLO

## CÉCILE DE FRANCE - Selected filmography

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- 2023    **BONNARD, PIERRE AND MARTHE** - Martin Provost
- 2022    **WILD SEAS** - Héloïse Pelloquet
- 2023    **SECOND TOUR** - Albert DUPONTEL
- 2021    **LOST ILLUSIONS** - Xavier GIANNOLI
- 2021    **THE FRENCH DISPATCH** - Wes ANDERSON
- 2018    **MADemoiselle de JONCQUIERES** - Emmanuel MOURET  
*Nominee for Best Actress - César 2019*
- 2015    **SUMMERTIME** - Catherine CORSINI
- 2013    **CHINESE PUZZLE** - Cédric KLAPISCH
- 2010    **THE KID WITH A BIKE** - Jean-Pierre and Luc DARDENNE  
*Grand Prix - Cannes Film Festival 2011*
- 2009    **HEREAFTER** - Clint EASTWOOD
- 2005    **ORCHESTRA SEATS** - Danièle THOMPSON
- 2004    **THE RUSSIAN DOLLS** - Cédric KLAPISCH  
*Winner for Best Supporting Actress - César 2006*
- 2002    **POT LUCK** - Cédric KLAPISCH  
*Winner for Best Actress Hopeful - César 2003*

## LES FILMS DU KIOSQUE - Selected filmography

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- 2023    **LA PETITE** - Guillaume Nicloux  
          **BONNARD PIERRE AND MARTHE** - Martin Provost
- 2022    **BIG KIDS** - Andrea Bescond, Eric Metayer  
          **MASCARADE** - Nicolas Bedos
- 2021    **PEACEFUL** - Emmanuelle Bercot  
          **FAMILY BUSINESS - SAISON 3** - Igor Gotesman
- 2020    **HOW TO BE A GOOD WIFE** - Martin Provost  
          **FAMILY BUSINESS - SAISON 2** - Igor Gotesman
- 2019    **LA BELLE EPOQUE** - Nicolas Bedos  
          **FAMILY BUSINESS - SAISON 1** - Igor Gotesman
- 2018    **LITTLE TICKLES** - Andréa Bescond and Eric Metayer
- 2017    **MR & MRS ADELMAN** - Nicolas Bedos
- 2016    **FIVE** - Igor Gotesman
- 2015    **STANDING TALL** - Emmanuelle Bercot
- 2011    **YOU DON'T CHOOSE YOUR FAMILY** - Christian Clavier
- 2010    **WHAT LOVE MAY BRING** - Claude Lelouch
- 2009    **ALL ABOUT ACTRESSES** - Maïwenn



## CAST

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Marthe	Cécile de France
Pierre	Vincent Macaigne
Renée	Stacy Martin
Misia	Anouk Grinberg
Claude Monet	André Marcon
Edouard Vuillard	Grégoire Leprince-Ringuet
Alice	Hélène Alexandridis
Alfred Edwards	Peter Van Den Begin
Honorine	Yveline Hamon
Charles	César Domboy

## CREW

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Director	Martin Provost
Scriptwriters	Martin Provost, in collaboration with Marc Abdelnour
Production	Les Films du Kiosque
Producers	François Kraus and Denis Pineau-Valencienne
Director of photography	Guillaume Schiffman, AFC
Sound designer	Ivan Dumas, Ingrid Ralet, Olivier
Editing	Tina Baz
Set designer	Jérémie Duchier
Costume designer	Pierre-Jean Larroque
Casting director	Brigitte Moidon
First assistant director	Juliette Maillard
Executive producer	Sylvain Monod
Music	Michael Galasso
Script supervisor	Céline Breuil-Japy
Set-manager	Arnaud Foeller
Historical adviser	Françoise Cloarec

In co production with	France 3 Cinema, Volapuk, UMedia
International sales	Memento International
French distribution	Memento Distribution
TV Mandate	Orange Studio
With the participation of	Canal+, Ciné+, France Télévisions
In association with	Cinécap 6, Sofitvciné 10, Cineaxe 4, Indéfilms 11 Cofimage 34, Palatine Étoile 20 - Cinémage 17, SG Image 2021, Cofinova 19
In association with	UFund
In association with	Région Île-de-France, Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Métropole Toulon Provence Méditerranée
In partnership with	CNC