

Hidden Treasures: A Second Look at Undervalued Modernists



Paul Vogler, "Regatta on the Seine," c. 1885. Oil on canvas.

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By: Carole Pinto

At the turn of the 20th century, Paris was the epicenter of the artistic and cultural world. Choreographer Serge Diaghilev broke with traditional dance techniques by introducing Les Ballets Russes to a highly critical French audience, setting the program to the revolutionary music of Igor Stravinsky. Novel stage sets and exotic costumes designed by [Henri Matisse](#), [Georges Rouault](#), and [Sonia Delaunay](#) were integrated into what would become "Gesamkunstwerk," or a total synthesis of diverse art forms and disciplines.

Cross-Pollination of Creatives

Painters like [Chaim Soutine](#) and [Marc Chagall](#) escaped religious and political persecution in their native Russia to join other expats such as [Amedeo Modigliani](#), Pablo Picasso, and [Tsuguharu Foujita](#) in adopting Paris as their new home. They enrolled in studio classes in the city's prestigious art academies to perfect their technique, and spent hours [copying the masters](#) at the Louvre. Gertrude Stein's animated evenings at her salon/apartment, steps from the artists' Montparnasse studios, attracted writers, musicians and painters. This cross-pollination of creatives would give birth to the great artistic movements of the 20th century such as Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, and Futurism.



Chaim Soutine, "[Paysage arbreux](#)." Oil on canvas, 18 1/8 x 24 inches (Sotheby's, March 2017).

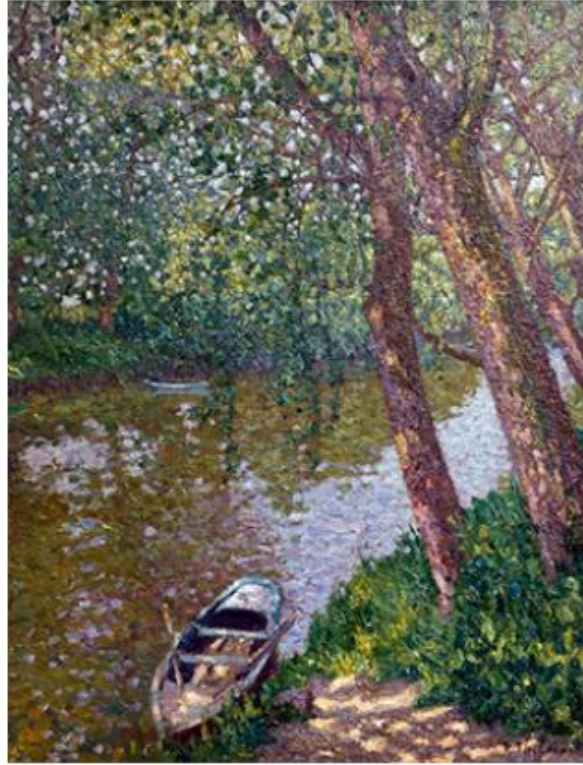
The proliferation of exhibitions by these iconoclasts was met with derision as well as delight among the French bourgeoisie, who had always been avid collectors of contemporary art. Major dealers such as Paul Rosenberg, Bernheim-Jeune and Nathan Wildenstein championed the new artists, providing them with food and lodging while encouraging their exploration of structure and matter. This exploration laid the foundation for modern aesthetics.

A Radical Shift

Many of these artists were featured in the “Degenerate Art” exhibition that took place in Paul Rosenberg’s Paris gallery, which was seized in the early 1940s by the Nazis and used for administrative purposes. This radical departure from “classical” to “modernism” shattered traditional aesthetic conventions, and was proliferated by painters who would continue to flatten the pictorial surface and adapt more painterly, fluid brushwork. Although most collectors will retain but twenty names of important artists from this period, there are still opportunities to acquire museum-quality work by artists who worked alongside the great masters of the period.

Plein Air Practitioners

The exceptionally prescient art dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, singled out [Paul Vogler](#), a colleague of Impressionist Alfred Sisley, as a promising talent. Despite being entirely self-trained, he was taken under the wing of Sisley and taught technique by the Impressionist master.



Raymond Thibesart, "Along the Banks of the Seine," c. 1910. Oil on canvas.

[Raymond Thibesart](#), a plein air painter, became a close friend of Claude Monet, and they would exchange paintings on each other's birthday. He depicted the lush countryside around Giverny, infusing color and form with light and transparency that was at the heart of the [Impressionist](#) movement.

The Rise of Fauvism

Elisee Maclet worked alongside [Maurice Utrillo](#) in experimenting with pigment and form in renderings of iconic Parisian architecture. [Pierre Dumont](#), along with Henri Matisse, Andre Derain, and Maurice de Vlaminck co-founded the Fauvist movement, which valued painterly qualities and strong color use over the representational or realistic values maintained by the Impressionists.



*Pierre Dumont, "Bouquet of Flowers," c. 1910.
Oil on canvas.*

Dumont's earlier works are particularly significant for representing some of the most exquisite examples of 'painting with color' (applying pigment directly from the tube onto the canvas and sculpting it with a palette knife in order to add texture and depth to the composition). Unfortunately, Dumont later fell into a depression from which he never recovered, and his later works reflect his despondency and gloom.



Maurice Brianchon, "In the Park." Oil on canvas, 16.14 x 16.14 inches.

Raymond Feuilleate experimented with analytic Cubism, breaking down form in geometric compositions without slipping into abstraction. [Maurice Brianchon](#) was inspired by Nabis painters Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard, and created compositions that were highly intimate with a touch of nostalgia, combining color and form in a highly expressive manner.

Collecting Today

Collectors today do not have to choose between paying top dollar for museum-quality paintings and selecting second-rate artwork. A vast array of modernist works is attainable if one prioritizes technical excellence over name recognition, knowing that there are a limited number of outstanding works in the marketplace whose value will only increase over time. One can build a beautiful and rewarding art collection commensurate with one's budget, which will pave the way for a lifetime of pleasure and fulfillment.

Looking for more modernist works? Explore [Carole Pinto Fine Arts](#) now on Invaluable.



Image: Carole Pinto. Courtesy Carole Pinto Fine Arts.

About Carole Pinto

[Carole Pinto](#) received her B.A. in Architecture and Fine Arts from the University of Pennsylvania, followed by an M.B.A. from Columbia University. She worked in Corporate Finance at Salomon Brothers and was hired by Sotheby's to launch their Art Investment Department, publishing monthly newsletters that analyzed various sectors of the art market. She was a consultant for the New York State Council on the Arts and was a regular contributor to "Art and Auction" magazine, examining legal and financial

aspects of the art market. She has worked in a curatorial capacity at the Metropolitan and Brooklyn Museums in New York, and is currently an art adviser and private dealer specializing in late 19th and 20th century paintings.