

## Fashion

Bérard's first fashion illustrations appeared in the April 1934 issue of Harper's Bazaar. Then in the January 1935 issue of Vogue. The two magazines were rivals. But as Bettina Ballard, the Parisian correspondent of American Vogue, remarked, "he helped Harper's Bazaar as much as us, even though we were paying him!"

Fashion designers such as Chanel, Ricci, Schiaparelli, Piguët and Dior called on Bérard for their advertising. He was, moreover, one of the most fervent advocates of the "New look". Hubert de Givenchy, who later dedicated a collection to him, recalled that for Robert Piguët, his boss when he started out as a designer, "Bérard's taste was the best".

It came as no surprise that in 1945 the Parisian Haute Couture world entrusted him with the artistic direction of the Théâtre de la Mode (Theatre of Fashion), a touring exhibit promoting Parisian design. After the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Museum of Decorative Arts), the 200 scale models made by 35 fashion designers and 25 milliners went on tour, first in Europe, then in America.

Model wearing a Schiaparelli dress, drawing by Christian Bérard for the "Cigarette" silhouette, autumn-winter 1940 collection, graphite gouache and ink on paper, 36.5 x 26 cm. Maison Schiaparelli collection.



Advertising project for Nina Ricci *Cœur joie*, 1946, gouache, 32 x 31 cm. Private collection.



Four-panel screen, tribute to Mozart, 1935, oil on canvas, 235 x 60 cm. Catherine Houard collection.

## Decoration / illustration

Bérard, who was called on to decorate apartments, developed a fruitful collaboration with Jean-Michel Frank. This interior designer for whom «less is more» had an influential client portfolio, from the Noailles couple to François Mauriac. Bérard would create carpets and fabrics for him. Together, they fitted out the Guerlain Institute on the Champs-Élysées (1939). He would create his first screen for Bourdet's play *La Fleur des pois* (1932). Others would follow, all masterpieces.

As early as 1926, Bérard offered René Crevel his portrait as a frontispiece to

the novel *Babylone*. The following year, it was the cover of *Opéra*, by Jean Cocteau. Then came the bibliophilic editions of Jean Giraudoux, Jean Galtier-Boissière, Julien Green, Colette, Elsa Triolet, André Gide and Joseph Kessel, in particular. "He was a young man, blond, beardless, slim, whose immense blue eyes had already perceived that the human face, the life of beings deserved more attention and honour than the simplified still life of the cubists or the geometric figures of the abstractionists. His name was Christian Bérard."

Christian Dior

## Useful information

Palais Lumière, quai Charles-Albert Besson.  
Open daily 10am - 6pm (Monday, Tuesday 2pm - 6pm) and public holidays.  
Open Tuesday morning during school holidays.  
Tel: +33 (0)4 50 83 15 90 / [www.palaislumiere.fr](http://www.palaislumiere.fr)

Commissaires de l'exposition:

Scientific Curator: **Jean Pierre Pastori**, journalist – writer, Christian Bérard's biographer  
Curator: **William Saadé**, honorary head curator for heritage, artistic advisor for the Palais Lumière

## Admission

- Standard: €8;
- Concessions: €6 (for details on discounts, visit [www.ville-evian.fr](http://www.ville-evian.fr));
- Free for under 16s;
- 50 % off admission fee (standard or discounted) on presentation of a City of Evian "family quotient" card;
- 30 % off admission fee for exhibitions on presentation of a ticket for the Pierre Gianadda Foundation in Martigny;
- Guided tours for the general public daily at 2.30pm: €4 in addition to admission fee.
- On Mondays and Tuesdays: buy 1 get 1 free.
- Exhibition catalog on sale at the boutique: €34

## Tickets:

- From the exhibition reception.
- On [ville-evian.tickeasy.com](http://ville-evian.tickeasy.com)
- From CGN outlets (boats and ticket offices)

Portrait of Queen Margot, former Pierre Le Tan collection, undated, watercolour and ink on paper, 14.8 x 10 cm. Catherine Houard collection.



## COMING SOON

At the Palais Lumière

• 25 June-1st November 2022

"Les Arpenteurs de rêves"

Exhibition organized with exceptional support from Orsay and Orangery museums

At the Pierre Gianadda Foundation in Martigny

• 3 December 2021 - 6 June 2022

Jean Dubuffet – Retrospective.

All photos Mirela Popa except otherwise stated



Drawing for Nina Ricci, pastel and watercolor on paper, 48 x 36 cm, collection Catherine Houard.

In his self-portraits, Christian Bérard (1902-1949) appears sombre, worried or melancholic. And, this is undoubtedly part of his personality. Yet, when he emerges from his painting, he enjoys witty improvisations with his friends, the fashion designer Christian Dior and the composer Henri Sauguet, as well as a host of unforgettable costume balls. At times, however, he shuts himself away in his apartment, totally withdrawing from the world. At other times, he can frequently be found at cocktail parties and flaunts a society lifestyle. In both cases, Christian Bérard, forever living on the edge, with his sloppy attire or evening dress, is a theatrical figure in his own right.



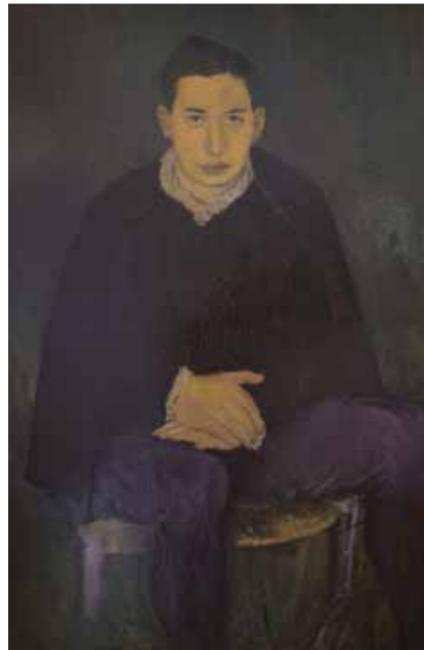
Self-portrait, 1932, oil on canvas, 74 x 58 cm. Jean-Hugo collection. Photo Jean Hugo.

These are the two facets of the artist that the Palais Lumière exhibition presents. As his illustrious English alter-ego Cecil Beaton wrote: "Many times during his frantic, overcrowded life, Bérard said that he would give up designing in the theatre, eschewing all his many other more frivolous activities in order to restrict himself to being a serious

painter. But fashion's deadly toxin had made serious inroads, and some irresistible offer would soon beguile him back to the footlights. He would then illustrate more books, design more dress materials, handkerchiefs or scarves (...) All of this work, even the most meretricious, was touched by a flicker of his genius."

Here, at the Palais Lumière, the painter echoes the set designer, who died at the end of a rehearsal, on stage, at the Théâtre Marigny; the illustrator meets the set designer; the uninhibited artist mingles with the man of the world and the master of taste.

Bérard, French painter and decorator during a rehearsal of *Les Bonnes* by Jean Genet, 1947, photography, collection by Roger-Viollet photo agency Photo Studio Lipnizki-Roger-Viollet.



Portrait of Pierre Colle, 1931, oil on canvas, 130 x 80 cm. Private collection.

### Painting

Bérard set out to spend his life painting. Yet, life's circumstances and financial constraints led him to turn his back on his easel.

From the age of 24, various promising exhibitions would see him associated with the "neo-humanist" group alongside the Berman brothers and Pavel Tchelitchew. But he would soon seek his independence. As the 1930s dawned, he became reputed as a painter. The Jacques Bonjean Gallery showcased him alongside Braque, Chirico, Dufy, Laurencin, Léger, Max Jacob, Picasso, etc.



Portrait of Froska Munster, undated, gouache, 50.8 x 35 cm. Private collection.

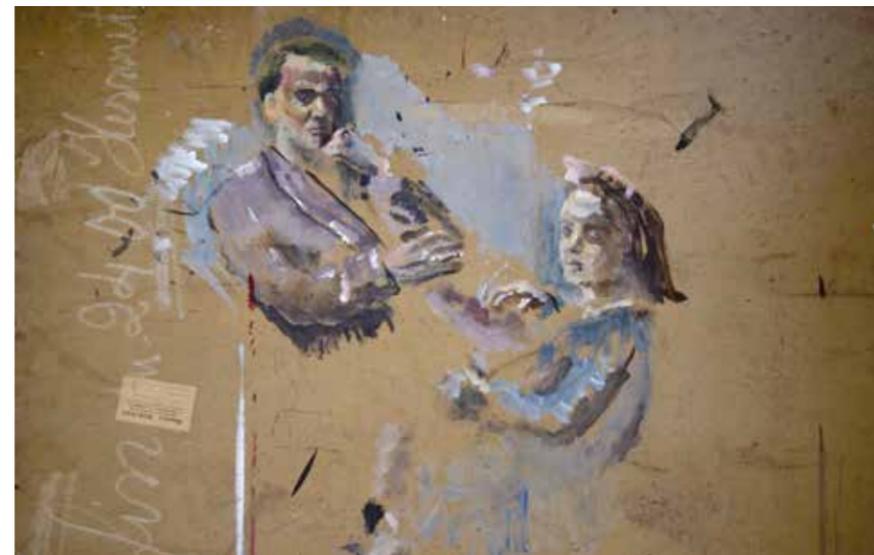
"As a portraitist he demonstrates his most precious gifts, states Vu (...) Mr Christian Bérard offers us art that is exclusively focused on life, on feelings, and one might even say on the soul. We were deprived of this for such a long time. His figures have an intensity of truth that captivates and enthralls."

### Stage

From 1930 onwards, Bérard responded to requests from directors, starting with Jean Cocteau. His first experience, *La Voix humaine*, enabled him to get a grasp of things. This was followed in particular by *La Machine infernale* (1934) and *Les Monstres sacrés* (1940). He was also the artistic director of several Cocteau films such as *Beauty and the Beast* (1945). And it was at Cocteau's insistence that Louis Jouvet commissioned Bérard to design the sets and costumes for *L'École des femmes* (1936). He could no longer do without Bérard, as shown by the dozen or so joint productions. Jouvet wrote that "his talent is characterized by his



A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare, (Titania), mixed media, 31 x 39 cm. Catherine Houard collection.



Le Grand modèle ou le comédien, 1947-1948, oil on cardboard, 103 x 77 cm, Mathias collection.



Juliette ou la clé des songes by Georges Neveu, a Marcel Carné film project, circa 1942, gouache, 23 x 19.5 cm. Catherine Houard collection.

dramatic power, the sense he has of performance and of theatrical gesture."

Christian Bérard also worked with Pierre Fresnay, Pierre Dux, as well as Jean-Louis Barrault and choreographers Serge Lifar, George Balanchine, Léonide Massine and Roland Petit. For Franco Zeffirelli, he was "the greatest set designer of his era".



Sodom and Gomorrah, Jean Giraudoux, directed by Douking, Théâtre Hébertot, watercolour, gouache, ink, 54 x 39 cm, Catherine Houard collection.