

## Paula Modersohn-Becker *An Intensely Artistic Eye*

8 April – 21 August 2016

**Press Preview** : Thursday 7 April, 11 am – 2 pm

**Opening** : Thursday 7 April, 6 – 9 pm

The Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris is presenting France's first monographic exhibition of the work of Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876–1907). Little known to the French public, she is nonetheless a major modern art figure.

Despite a brief career – a mere ten years – this artist has left us an extremely rich legacy, revealed in this exhibition by some one hundred paintings and drawings. In addition, excerpts from letters and diaries provide an understanding of the intimate link between her art and her personal life.

After training in Berlin, Paula Modersohn-Becker joined the artists' colony at Worpswede in northern Germany, but soon left to seek inspiration elsewhere. Fascinated by Paris and the avant-garde movements of the early 20th century, she stayed there often and got to know the artists she admired, among them Rodin, Cézanne, Gauguin, Douanier Rousseau, Picasso and Matisse.

Uncompromisingly modern and ahead of her time, Modersohn-Becker displays a boldly personal aesthetic. If her subjects – including self-portraits, mothers and children, landscapes and still lifes – are typical of the period, her way of addressing them is eminently original. Her works stand out for a powerfully expressive use of colour, extreme sensitivity and an astonishing capacity to capture the very essence of her models. A number of her paintings considered excessively avant-garde were included in the "Degenerate Art" exhibition organised by the Nazis in Munich in 1937.

In numerous self-portraits Modersohn-Becker asserts her identity as a woman, portraying herself intimately and without complacency in an ongoing quest for her inner being.

All her life she was close to the poet Rainer Maria Rilke and their correspondence and a number of paintings are fascinating testimony to this friendship. Rilke paid tribute to her in the poem "Requiem for a Friend", written after the artist's death at the age of thirty-one.

Writer Marie Darrieussecq brings a literary eye to Modersohn-Becker's work with contributions to both the exhibition and the catalogue. She is also the author of the artist's first biography in French, *Être ici est une splendeur, Vie de Paula M. Becker* (Éditions P.O.L., 2016).



Self-portrait with a Camelia Branch, 1906/1907  
Oil on canvas, 61,5 x 30,5 cm  
Folkwang Museum, Essen

**Museum Director**  
Fabrice Hergott

**Exhibition curator**  
Julia Garimorth

**Advisors:**  
Marie Darrieussecq, writer,  
and Wolfgang Werner, Paula Modersohn-  
Becker Foundation

**Visitor information**  
Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris  
11 Avenue du Président Wilson  
75116 Paris  
Tel. 01 53 67 40 00  
[www.mam.paris.fr](http://www.mam.paris.fr)

Open Tuesday – Sunday  
10 am – 6 pm  
Late closing Thursday 10 pm

**Admission**  
**Full rate:** 10 €  
**Concessions:** 7 €

**Catalogue** published by Paris Musées, 39 €

**Cultural activities**  
Information and bookings  
Tel. 01 53 67 40 80

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