



## **Gauguin, Cézanne, Matisse: Visions of Arcadia (Philadelphia Museum of Art)**

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The notion of a golden age set in an earthly paradise has long kindled the human imagination. Virgil envisioned such a place of bucolic pleasures—erotic and unsullied, sometimes shadowed by blunted desires and doubts—in his *Eclogues*, set in the valley of Arcadia in ancient Greece. His poems defined for Western art and literature a theme that continues to this day. Their resonance as a foundation for European painters around 1900 is the subject of this beautifully illustrated catalogue, which focuses on three monumental paintings—Paul Gauguin's *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* (1897-98), Paul Cézanne's *The Large Bathers* (1906), and Henri Matisse's *Bathers by a River* (1909-10, 1913, and 1916-17). Other masterpieces by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Nicolas Poussin, and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes establish the high value given to Arcadia in the history of French painting. These are joined by major works by Henri Edmond Cross, Robert Delaunay, André Derain, Pablo Picasso, Henri Rousseau, and Paul Signac, as well as paintings by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Franz Marc, and Natalia Goncharova to suggest the vitality of this subject outside the canonical French definitions. Distinguished scholars place these artists within the larger context of this inventive period in art history.

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