

Suzanne Valadon

The Abandoned Doll



NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

The Abandoned Doll, 1921

Growing Pains

Before picking up a paintbrush, **Suzanne Valadon (1865–1938)** was a trapeze performer and artists' model. The latter connected her to Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Though largely self-taught, Valadon also learned techniques by watching these artists.

Take a closer look

Fiercely independent, Valadon never fully embraced the artistic trends favored by her contemporaries. Rather, she developed her own distinctive style. Note her unidealized figures, compressed space, bold colors and patterns, and heavy black outlines that differentiate forms.

Something to talk about

The sitters are Valadon's relatives but she chose to keep them anonymous. Therefore, this painting speaks to universal human experiences, such as adolescence. What evidence does Valadon provide to suggest that the girl depicted is still a child? Almost an adult?

Who knew?

Passionate about animals, Valadon supposedly kept a goat in her studio to eat artwork she did not like and fed caviar to her cats.

Suzanne Valadon, *The Abandoned Doll*, 1921; Oil on canvas, 51 x 32 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth

