GEORGES ROUAULT

Independent 20th Century | September 4–7, 2025
Casa Cipriani at the Battery Maritime Building | 10 South Street, New York, NY 10004

New York, NY—Nahmad Contemporary and **Skarstedt** are pleased to present a focused retrospective of **Georges Rouault** (1871–1958) for the **Independent 20th Century**, on view **September 4–7, 2025**, at Casa Cipriani in the historic Battery Maritime Building. Spanning nearly half a century, from 1908 to 1953, the presentation brings together twenty paintings by the French modernist, offering a rare opportunity to experience the full arc of Rouault's singular career and uncompromising vision.

A pivotal yet often overlooked figure, Rouault occupies a distinct place in the history of twentieth-century art. Trained by Symbolist master Gustave Moreau and initially associated with Expressionism and Fauvism, Rouault ultimately forged his own path, developing an inimitable style marked by bold, black contours, radiant color, and a profound reverence for the spiritual and the dispossessed. His work quickly drew the attention of influential dealers Ambroise Vollard in Paris and Pierre Matisse in New York, both of whom played key roles in shaping the global reception of modern art. Though Rouault's practice resisted easy classification, these alliances brought his vision to an international stage, where his fusion of painterly innovation and empathy for the human condition could fully resonate.

Known for his fervent spirituality and humanist vision, Rouault centered his practice on society's margins—elevating the poor, the pained, and the outcast with reverence and raw emotional intensity. The exhibition foregrounds the powerful archetypes that define Rouault's oeuvre: mournful clowns and circus performers, spectral prostitutes, stoic judges, and meditative religious figures. Seeking to reveal the souls behind the masks, Rouault imbued his subjects with dignity and emotional depth. At once illuminated and confined, they emerged as symbols of endurance, suffering, and redemption in an era marked by war and disillusionment.

The presentation invites viewers to experience the full range of Rouault's emotional and formal vocabulary, from the somber theatricality of his early works to the luminous, mosaic-like surfaces of his later paintings. His subject matter evolved in parallel. By the 1940s, Rouault moved away from the brothel scenes and depictions of prostitutes that had defined his earlier output, turning instead to imagery that embodied a quiet spirituality—solitary heads and sacred figures rendered with intensity. Neither fully expressionist nor strictly religious, Rouault infused modern painting with both spiritual gravitas and moral conviction.

Though celebrated in his lifetime and collected by major institutions—including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Tate, London—Rouault has remained an enigmatic presence in the canon of twentieth-century art. Nahmad Contemporary and Skarstedt share a long-standing commitment to the emotional intensity, moral conviction, and formal innovation that define Rouault's work, and are dedicated to advancing his legacy. This exhibition offers a timely reconsideration of his place in modern art history, positioning him as a painter of conscience whose relevance endures today.