

Robert et Sonia Delaunay, Donation Sonia et Charles Delaunay

1 OCTOBER 2003 - 5 JANUARY 2004

MUSÉE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE
GALERIE DU MUSÉE, LEVEL 4

Direction
de la communication
75 191 Paris cedex 04
attachée de presse
Emilia Stocchi
téléphone
00 33 (0)1 44 78 42 00
télécopie
00 33 (0)1 44 78 13 02
e-mail
emilia.stocchi@cnac-gp.fr

assistée de
Lumi Fermon
téléphone
00 33 (0)1 44 78 12 49
télécopie
00 33 (0)1 44 78 13 02
e-mail
lumi.fermon@cnac-gp.fr

Almost forty years after the donation made to the Musée national d'art moderne in 1964 by Sonia Delaunay and her son Charles, the Centre Pompidou is presenting one of its finest historical ensembles.

The exhibition comprises some ninety works by Robert and Sonia Delaunay, chosen from the donation which itself totals one hundred and fourteen paintings, drawings, bound books, reliefs and mosaics.

Prior to the donation the two artists were already represented at the Museum by State purchases dating from the period 1935-58: Robert's *Les Tours de Laon* (1912), *La Verseuse* (1916), *La Ville* (1910), *La Ville de Paris* (1910-1912), *Une fenêtre. Etude pour les trois fenêtres* (1913) and *Prismes électriques* (1914), together with Sonia's *Le Bal Bullier*. These acquisitions had been complemented by gifts from Sonia Delaunay in 1955: *Coffret*, *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* (1913) and *Manège de cochons* (1922).

Robert et Sonia Delaunay

The careers of Robert (1885-1941) and Sonia (1885-1979) Delaunay are inextricably entwined, yet each œuvre bears the stamp of their different personalities, backgrounds and artistic evolution.

Robert began with Impressionist landscapes and Breton scenes, painted between 1903 and 1905 and betraying the dual influence of Monet and Gauguin. With their fiercely distinct areas of colour, the large Fauvist portraits of Sonia's early period (*Jeune Finlandaise*, 1907) show that the lessons of Gauguin and Van Gogh had not overridden the primitivism characteristic of the Russian painting of the time. One manifesto-work – a canvas with *Autoportrait* (1906), the last masterpiece of Robert's Fauve period on one side and a Divisionist Paysage au disque on the other – embodies the turn to an approach founded entirely on colour and the law of simultaneous contrasts earlier applied by Seurat and Signac.

The phase dubbed "Orphic Cubism" by poet Guillaume Apollinaire saw the Delaunays move from Cézanne-style geometrical deconstruction to the reconstruction of form through colour alone: by 1912 their painting had achieved an abstract purity in which colour was both form and subject (Sonia Delaunay, *Contrastes simultanés*, 1912). Sonia extended this approach to the whole gamut of fashion and the decorative arts in her creation of vividly coloured objects (*Couverture*, 1911) for her son Charles. Her bookbindings, posters, advertisements and fabrics gave concrete expression to an aesthetics of artistic synthesis. During World War I the couple left for Spain and Portugal, bringing back picturesque renderings of everyday life

(Sonia Delaunay, *Marché au Minho*, 1916), transcribed as simultaneous discs that expressed, Sonia said, "the light, the richness and the power" of the colours they discovered there.

In the 1930s they joined the Abstraction-Création group – Herbin, Van Doesburg and Héliou – in its combat for non-figurative art: this was the period of the *Rythmes* and their infinite development of the simultaneous disc formula. In 1937 the International Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Paris gave these crusaders for total art the chance to put abstraction to work on a monumentally public scale: simultaneously foremen, painters and decorators, the Delaunays plunged into the great adventure of collective street art advocated by the Popular Front, working directly on the wooden walls of the railway and air transport pavilions to produce the painted and carved discs that would later be transferred to the Palais de Tokyo.

Exhibition curator

Brigitte Léal, curator at the Musée national d'art moderne

Exhibition catalogue

ROBERT ET SONIA DELAUNAY DONATION SONIA ET CHARLES DELAUNAY

Editions du Centre Pompidou
Text by Brigitte Léal in French and English

22 x 28 cm
approx. 190 pages
approx. 130 illustrations in colour

Useful information

The exhibition Robert et Sonia Delaunay: Donation Sonia et Charles Delaunay will be on show from 1 October 2003 to 5 January 2004 at the Centre Pompidou Galerie du Musée, Level 4.

Exhibition open daily except Tuesdays
11:00 – 21:00
Tickets on sale until 20:00

Admission: 5.50 euros
Concessions: 3.50 euros

Admission free to holders of the Centre Pompidou annual pass.

For further the informations :
www.centrepompidou.fr

List of visuals available for the press

1 Robert Delaunay

Autoportrait, 1905-1906

Oil on canvas

54 x 46 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Jacqueline Hyde

2 Robert Delaunay

Paysage au disque solaire, 1906

Oil on canvas

54 x 46 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

© L & M Services B.V Amsterdam

Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Jacqueline Hyde

3 Robert Delaunay

La Tour, 1910

Indian ink on paper

64.2 x 47.8 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

4 Robert Delaunay

Football, 1918

Watercolour, paper glued to card

46 x 47 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Philippe Migeat

5 Robert Delaunay

Le Baiser, 1922

Pencil and pastel, paper glued to plywood

40.5 x 30.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Philippe Migeat

6 Robert Delaunay

Joueurs de football, 1924

a Indian ink on tracing paper

20.5 x 7.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

b Indian ink on tracing paper

18.5 x 12.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

© L & M Services B.V Amsterdam

Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

c Indian ink on tracing paper

19.5 x 12.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

7 Robert Delaunay

Portrait de Madame Heim, 1927

Oil on canvas

130 x 97 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Jacqueline Hyde

8 Robert Delaunay

Joie de vivre, 1930

Oil on canvas

200 x 228 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Philippe Migeat

9 Robert Delaunay

Rythme, 1934

Oil on canvas

145 x 113 cm

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Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Jacqueline Hyde

10 Robert Delaunay

Relief gris, 1935

Plaster and casein on metal screen

226 x 180 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

11 Sonia Delaunay

Jeune fille endormie, 1907

Oil on canvas backed with wood

46 x 55 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

12 Sonia Delaunay

Philomène, 1907

Oil on canvas

55 x 46.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

13 Sonia Delaunay

Contrastes simultanés, 1912

Coloured inks on paper

14 x 20.8 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Philippe Migeat

14 Sonia Delaunay

Les Montres Zénith, 1914

Coloured paper cut-outs glued on paper

66 x 81.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

15 Sonia Delaunay

Cover sketches for *Vogue*, 1916

Watercolour, pencil and coloured pencil on 2 joined sheets of paper

33 x 45.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Christian Bahier and
Philippe Migeat

16 Sonia Delaunay

Binding for "De nos oiseaux" by Tristan Tzara, 1923

Sewn coloured leather

15.4 x 12.7 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Christian Bahier and

Philippe Migeat

17 Sonia Delaunay

Pierrot Eclair, 1926

Watercolour and pencil on paper

22.8 x 19.4 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Jacqueline Hyde

18 Sonia Delaunay

Rythme, 1938

Oil on canvas

182 x 149 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN, Bertrand Prévost

19 Sonia Delaunay

Composition, 1955

Oil on canvas

160 x 215.5 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN

20 Sonia Delaunay

Rythme couleur, 1958

Oil on canvas

100 x 143 cm

Centre Pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne

Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay Donation, 1964

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Photo: CNAC-MNAM Dist. RMN