

**Francis Jourdain** • Robert Mallet  
–Stevens • **Joël et Jan Martel**  
• **Pierre Chareau** • René Herbst •  
Hélène Henry • **Jean Prouvé** •  
**Sonia Delaunay** • Fernand Léger  
• Robert Delaunay • **Félix Aublet**  
• **Jean Carlu** • Rose Adler •  
Charlotte Perriand • **Le Corbusier**  
• **Marcel Lods** • • •

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## PRESS RELEASE

### U.A.M

### UNION OF MODERN ARTISTS

### 30 MAY – 27 AUGUST 2018

### GALERIE 1, LEVEL 6

The Centre Pompidou is devoting a new exhibition to the UAM (*Union des Artistes Modernes – Union of Modern Artists*), one of the widest-reaching movements in the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century art. Bringing together architects, painters, sculptors, furniture designers, photographers, textile and jewellery designers, bookbinders, graphic artists and poster artists, this key movement in European modernism – a French-style «Bauhaus»– helped to make Paris a world capital of the avant-garde.

Although never as famous as the Bauhaus School or the De Stijl group, the UAM unquestionably embodied French modernity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It united all the leading creators known and recognised today, and, through a new, unequalled approach, combined artistic disciplines and spheres that had never been as resolutely amalgamated before.

The association's aim was to propose a new lifestyle and share it with a broad range of people. It was conceived as a weapon to attack the prevailing conservatism of the time. It had its ups and downs, suffered from the economic crisis, experienced a return to «stylistic» order at the same time as the rise of Fascism, hoped for better days with the arrival of the Front Populaire, and survived the Second World War through the exile, concealment and resistance of its members. It believed its moment had come with France's reconstruction, then had to abandon the field, and was finally dissolved.

The exhibition narrates its story through collective and individual works, pinpointing the French origins of this ideal where all the arts mingled and influenced each other.

The UAM was officially founded on 15 May 1929. Its members were men and a few women with a shared past: colleagues, friends and partners. They were figures with powerful personalities and a deep commitment to creation.

**Francis Jourdain** was a multi-faceted artist: a writer, painter, designer and producer of « combinable » furniture intended for unpretentious interiors, who wielded his pen and proclaimed his Communist beliefs. He was the son of the architect Frantz Jourdain, who designed the La Samaritaine, founded the Salon d'Automne, and was active on the political front as a libertarian. Like his father, Francis was a unifying force.

**Robert Mallet-Stevens** was an architect. In 1924, he organised an exhibition featuring artists, architects, interior designers and students at the École Spéciale d'Architecture, and lost his teaching post as a result. He gathered a team of creators around him for every project, including master glassmakers **Barillet, Le Chevallier** and **Hanssen**, and sculptors **Joel and Jan Martel**. If need be, he called on artist friends and interior designer colleagues. He extended this practice to exhibitions, which included the 1925 Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, and various annual events.

**Pierre Chareau** was an interior and furniture designer with a dazzling career, who made an arresting first appearance in 1919 and was firmly established by 1925. He continually refined the lines of his furniture, finally achieving a pure geometry. His partners were lighting designer **André Salomon**, who favoured indirect lighting, and **Hélène Henry**, a fabric designer whose patterns, colours and materials were strikingly original.

**René Herbst**, an interior and furniture designer, created the link with the industrial world and proved an unrivalled activist. **Jean Prouvé**, from Nancy, was inevitably involved. He exhibited his bent metal furniture and the industrialised door and window frames he designed especially for the buildings of architects in tune with his ideas.

Some of the artists involved were supporters of the movement from the outset: **Sonia Delaunay**, who developed her work in several spheres, such as furnishing fabrics, book bindings and clothing, and was loyal to the UAM throughout its life; **Fernand Léger**, a tireless fighter on all modernity's fronts, and **Robert Delaunay**, who, with **Félix Aublet**, designed the railway and air travel pavilions for the 1937 International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, held in Paris.

The army included a cohort of sculptors, a battalion of the leading poster artists of the time – **Jean Carlu, Paul Colin, A. M. Cassandre, Francis Bernard** and **Charles Loupot** – and bookbinders whose work was both delicate and revolutionary, like **Rose Adler** and **Pierre Legrain**. With ceramists, photographers, jewellers, silversmiths and typeface designers, the sheer scope of the creative forces involved was huge, all driven by the same goal of expressing the most resolute modernity. There were also several well-known architects: **Le Corbusier, Andre Lurcat, Eugene Beaudouin** and **Marcel Lods**, and **Georges-Henri Pingusson**.

The younger generation was represented by **Charlotte Perriand** (who was trained by Le Corbusier and Jeanneret), **Jean Burkhalter** with his skilful metal tubing furniture, produced by Chareau, and the architect **Gabriel Guevrekian**, who headed Mallet-Stevens' agency for a while. The UAM gave all of them a chance to show their individual work, as well the new generation who joined the Association after the war. And there were also its foreign members and guests – making no fewer than 350 names in all.

Though the UAM produced a manifesto in 1934, a few years after its founding, mainly in response to various attacks, it chiefly expressed itself through exhibitions. It laid on four annual exhibitions starting in 1930, took part in the 1935 and 1936 Salons de la Lumière, featured in exhibitions on the home, was well-represented at domestic art shows, and exhibited at competitions staged jointly with the OTUA (Technical Office for the Use of Steel), particularly those involving steamship cabins and school furniture. The aim of the UAM's shows was to illustrate a shared vision, claim the preeminence of the collective, assert the absence of a hierarchy between the arts, and display a determined modernity that was still little accepted or promoted by the public authorities. Only the arrival of the Front Populaire enabled UAM members to be included once more in the international exhibition of 1937. Some participated in various pavilions, and all of them were represented in the one devoted to the UAM, designed by **Georges-Henri Pingusson** with **Frantz-Philippe Jourdain** and **Andre Louis**. Its dynamic metal and glass architecture was one of the few examples of new architecture at the event.

After years of economic depression and a period marked by a losing fight on the style front, its members saw the exhibition as a great leap forward. In retrospect, we can see it as the high point of the UAM's action: after the gloomy years of war, its members were able to imagine that their moment had come, called on as they were to take part in the country's reconstruction on new foundations. This was certainly the case, but the association was running out of steam by then. Its members, old and new, continued to promote the spirit that had driven the UAM, putting it into practice in their work, but new structures came into being: *Formes Utiles*, which continued the fight for a new lifestyle, and the *Espace* group, bringing together architects, engineers and artists seeking a synthesis of the arts.

The exhibition provides an overview of the entire modern movement in France, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the late 1950s, illustrating the links that were uniting creators in all disciplines around powerful lines of force, even before the UAM was founded. These creators included architects, painters, sculptors, furniture designers, photographers, fabric and jewellery designers, bookbinders, graphic artists, and poster artists.

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**Opening hours**  
Exhibition open every day  
from 11 am to 9 pm  
except on Tuesday

**Price**  
€14  
concessions: €11  
Valid the same day for  
the musée national d'art moderne  
and all exhibitions  
Free admission for members  
of the Centre Pompidou  
(holders of the annual pass)

#### AT THE SAME TIME AT THE CENTRE

**CHAGALL, LISSITZKY, MALEVITCH  
L'AVANT-GARDE RUSSE À VITEBSK  
(1918-1922)**  
28 MARCH - 16 JULY 2018  
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#### MUTATIONS / CRÉATIONS 2

**CODER LE MONDE**  
15 JUNE - 27 AUGUST 2018  
Timothée Nicot  
01 44 78 45 79  
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#### MUTATIONS / CRÉATIONS 2

**RYOJI IKEDA**  
15 JUNE - 27 AUGUST 2018  
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