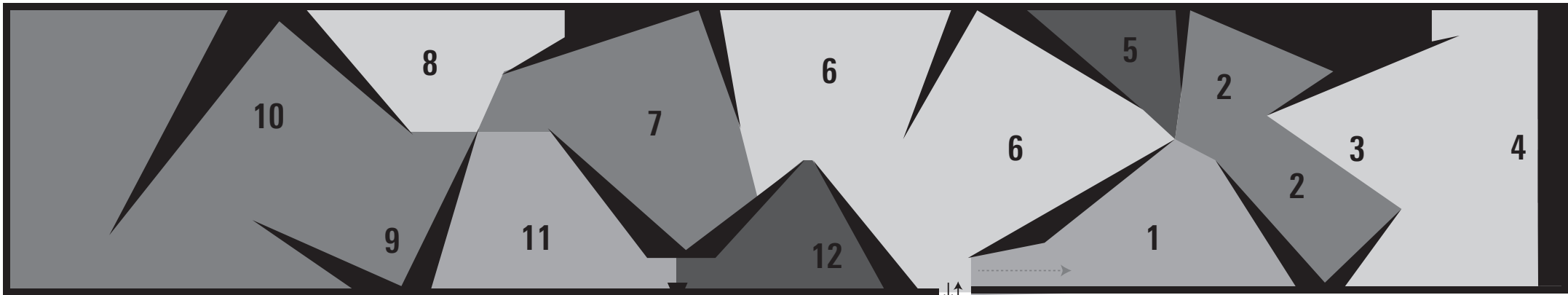


EN

ANDRÉ MASSON

THERE IS NO FINISHED WORLD





GALLERY 3

André Masson. There is no finished world

29.03.24 → 02.09.24

Exhibition curator: Chiara Parisi

Engaged and sensitive to the upheavals of his century, whether historical or intellectual, André Masson (1896-1987) is one of the greatest painters of the XX Century. His non-doctrinarian presence among the surrealists, the invention of automatic drawing and sand paintings, his fruitful association with the artists and thinkers of his time, the influence of his drawings and canvases on the beginnings of abstract American expressionism form the best known part of an œuvre that calls to be read in the power of its entirety.

On the occasion of the centenary of the Manifeste du surréalisme [Surrealist Manifesto], the Centre Pompidou-Metz is paying tribute to the exceptional figure, André Masson, whose emancipatory thinking remains powerfully contemporary. The exhibition retraces his journey, painting the portrait of a protean artist, open to collaborations and to the world, in search of incessant experimentation guided by the dictates of the subconscious and desire for the infinite.

ENTRANCE
EXIT

- 1 - The early 1920s
- 2 - The automatism revolution
- 3 - The first sand paintings
- 4 - A world in a grain of sand: André Masson's library
- 5 - The resurgence of violence
- 6 - Spain
- 7 - The second surrealist period
- 8 - Martinique
- 9 - The American period
- 10 - The second sand period
- 11 - The Liberation and calligraphic inspiration
- 12 - Epilogue: Desire

Facing the cathedral: installation by contemporary artists
Allora & Calzadilla in tribute to André Masson

In 1936, André Masson sent notes to his friend Michel Leiris in the form of a collection of words, concepts, proper nouns and ideas constituting his mental universe, inspirations and cultural cosmology: six archive documents which are presented in the exhibition to introduce André Masson's œuvre, and which served as "supports" for Michel Leiris to write the biographical journey of the painter. Writer, poet, ethnologist and great traveller, Michel Leiris wrote, in 1940, "Éléments pour une biographie" [Elements for a Biography] which he dedicated to the painter André Masson, and of which extracts are reproduced on the following pages to understand the painter's life in literature.



Do you have a question
or just want to chat?
Our mediators
are at your disposal.

ANDRÉ MASSON IN 18 CHAPTERS

by Michel Leiris

LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

After the first literary shock he received from René de Chateaubriand (« ... La foule, vaste désert d'hommes » [The crowd, vast desert of men]), Masson discovered, in poetical order: Baudelaire, Poe, Mallarmé; in philosophical order: Nietzsche and Heraclitus. If the sonnet of *Correspondances* can be regarded as one of the keys to his art and if, in *Le Cottage Landor*, he found expressed what were for him the three conditions of happiness (outdoor life, love of a woman, search for new beauty), it was from Heraclitus and Nietzsche that he drew the crucial words:

"You cannot step into the same river twice."

"All things are an exchange for fire and fire for all things"

"In spite of fear and pity, we are the happy living beings, not as individuals, but as one living being, with whose creative joy we are united."

[...] Through Aragon, Masson became acquainted with the writings of the great English mystic [William Blake], whose verses:

"To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour..."

struck him for the way they coincided with his own aspiration.

HISTORY OF PAINTING

His enthusiasm for Poussin and Delacroix was quickly joined by his enthusiasm for Mantegna (remarkable, according to Masson, for his concentration, the stony appearance of his subjects, who seem in the grip of some deep inner pain, tense and loaded with dynamite) and for Uccello (the painter who "holds the secrets" [...] appreciating his abundance of broken lines, of violent contrasts suggesting conflict). Among the painters of the end of the XIX Century, those whom Masson most admired were Cézanne and Van Gogh. What struck him the most about them was the way the lines unravel on their own, in a sort of "tremor" which is a "tremor of the mind, not the retina as with the impressionists". This reaction already marked what would be his lifelong fear of immobility, hence the importance he would give to "cadence", to rhythm, and the care he would take, in almost all his works, to introduce at least one element that expressed change (such as the photos of clouds in some of his first still lifes).

INFLUENCE OF THE WAR

War broke out and Masson fought as an infantry soldier. He returned from this ordeal very affected, both physically and nervously. But he was ripe for the endeavour he was about to set himself: renovate painting, by going beyond cubism, but "breaking down the door", and "avoiding no obstacle". [...]

Out of the immediate post-war period (1919-1921) came Masson's first erotic drawings and watercolours, a free expression of this Blakean love of life which, even when not made explicit, always underlies his works. It was about these drawings that, in 1922, before taking me to his friend Masson's place for the first time, Roland Tual said to me something to the effect of: "Masson, a man who paints mouths that look like genitals feet that are hands, hands that are plants".

45 RUE BLOMET

The studio Masson occupied at 45 rue Blomet became the meeting place for a fervent group of friends (Tual, Limbour, Salacrou, myself, sometimes Antonin Artaud, as well as Joan Miró who, living in the studio next door, frequented Masson as a neighbour). Rimbaud, Lautréamont (with whom Masson always felt less affinity than with Rimbaud), Dostoyevsky, romantics from various countries, the Elizabethans, the "precious" poets were among the main readings; to add to these – among many other books –, alongside works of low magic such as *Le Petit Albert* [The Little Albert], great occultists such as Paracelsus, as well as the *Ars Brevis* by Raymond Lulle and *Traité de la peinture* by Leonardo da Vinci. Among the men of the Cubist generation, there was one we saw often: Juan Gris, with whom Masson debated on the "laws" of painting. It was this atmosphere of 45 rue Blomet, that gave birth to the fiction of the "homme-plume" [feather man] (mythical transposition of one of the characters painted by Masson and of Masson himself), a fiction which led to its inventor Georges Limbour writing *Histoire de l'homme-plume* [Story of the Feather Man], as the preface to the catalogue of the first Masson exhibition, at Galerie Simon.

APPEARANCE OF THE ELEMENTS

Between 1922 and 1924 (date of this first exhibition), various series of the elements appeared in Masson's painting. From nature, there are the forests (with trees like "dream explosions"), the fish, the dead birds, the clouds, as well as the bread, the wine, the sliced open or gaping pomegranate, things closer to the human environment in that they are eaten or drunk, inserted here into hands that hold them as if they were not so much food as offerings.

From the realm of manufactured objects, there are the glass, the lighted candle, the knife and all the instruments of play: cards, dice, dominos. With these last elements, there would gradually be, in nature and in man, the intervention of something extra-natural and at the same time extra-human. For Masson, the characters handling them, would essentially become magicians, and these objects signs, talismans in which all the dark forces of the future and chance are condensed.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The latest of the paintings gathered in this exhibition, *Les Quatre Éléments*, [The Four Elements], responded to what would from then on be a constant desire for Masson: to bring together in the same work the four elements, as well as the four realms (if we assume with Novalis that "beneath the stones, celestial bodies form a fourth natural realm"), to produce "a philosophy in a painting", and for the painting to be not only a "magic operation" but an "explanation of the universe."

EROTICISM

In 1922, he discovered Sade (far more important, in his eyes, than Sigmund Freud, for whom he felt scarcely more than "curiosity"), and this admiration for the Divin Marquis [Divine Marquis] the book and the man himself, an admiration he shared with the surrealists, certainly counted for a lot in the bond that tied him to them. In 1928, he began a series of drawings intended to illustrate *Justine*, but material circumstances forced him to abandon this project, and it would be one of his regrets (along with, subsequently, that of having to give up illustrating *The Prince*, by Machiavelli, or similar reasons).

TOMBS

At the end of this same period, the "tombs" appeared, great mineral solids reminiscent of tombstones – inspired in Masson by the idea he had formed about Chateaubriand's tomb on the rock of Grand Bé, which he had never seen. In 1937, something of these tombs would reappear in the megalith paintings he did after a stay in Karnak, when Masson discovered one of his "favourite places", on the Quiberon peninsula: the Portivy promontory at sunset.

SURREALISM

This work, which its creator intended to be "total", is the one that particularly attracted the attention of André Breton, at the time about to publish his *Manifeste du surréalisme* [Manifesto of Surrealism] (printed in October 1924). Adding to the list of friends of Masson already involved with the group that had formed around Breton, Éluard and Aragon (Artaud, recently; Limbour, for longer but rather distantly), Tual and I joined, after Masson himself, who also introduced Miró into the new movement. From 1924 to around 1939 Masson participated directly in surrealist activity, then withdrew and remained separate from it until 1936, when he became closer to Breton on the occasion of the surrealist exhibition in London.

THE WANDERING LINE

Masson's adherence to the surrealist movement is, above all, the mark of a desire for liberation. This search for a more immediate mode of expression, capable of bringing deeper elements to light, is perceptible in the painting and especially the drawings he did at the time. Among the latter (where the "wandering line" Gertrude Stein spoke of, plays in its purest form), there is a series of portraits. Two of them, *Le Dormeur* [The Sleeper], portrait of the painter, and a portrait of André Breton which is, like the first, a representation of sleep, associate two important elements with this theme: A spinning sun and a hand placed on a female breast.

METAMORPHOSIS

The use of different quality sands, of glued feathers, meets a frenzied need for direct dealing with nature (or for a « totemistic identification » as Carl Einstein wrote), in the same way as underwater butcher's shops and the « nudes » of the time, combinations of lines reduced to the simplicity of pentacles or characters made of lineaments who at times seem to copulate with the buildings they form part of, or at times to melt into the natural setting. This osmosis relationship between the individual and the surrounding environment, the subject and the object, is only one example of the general theme of transmutation, the clearest expression of which is without doubt the sculpture known as *La Métamorphose* [Metamorphosis] (1927), where Masson's long-standing idea to "show the thing without beginning or end" takes shape in a character devouring himself.

MASSACRE – BLOOD – VIOLENCE

During Masson's first surrealist period (late 1924, early 1929), new themes and processes were born, objectified in the works that were brought together in the April 1929 exhibition at Galerie Simon. With the battles of fishes, the wounded animals, the birds in skeletal state or caught in a trap and the representation of bloodshed, the sacrificial theme is expressed, and will later flourish in the paintings and drawings of massacres, as well as in the bullfights which (taking up one of Limbour's remarks on animal combat) can be said to be the "eternal representation of murder and death". The fragments of matter Masson once gathered simply to feel connected to the outside world during his work, he now introduces into a series of paintings.

SUN

The sun, already expressed in many of his works, for André Masson reflects a kind of compulsion that he himself does not hesitate to call an "obsession" and which, before leading him to settle in Spain (among other reasons), led him from 1925 to spend time in the French Mediterranean every year. While in Masson's art (in which we must see essentially an "expression of the day", a "refusal" of the night), the solar theme appears as one of the most constant, the lunar theme occurring only very late and in few paintings.

INSECTS

Always determined to get to the heart of things, to express the movement of life as seen from the inside or taken by surprise by watching at ground level, Masson, now based in Tossa (where he lived in a former butcher's shop), painted his pictures of insects, works in which the precision of natural history plates is brought to life by a breath of magic, and where one might well detect, at least something of a trace of the impression left on him by reading Kafka's short story *The Burrow*.

MYTHOLOGY

In May-June 1934, a third exhibition at Henry Kahnweiler's brought together, alongside paintings notably featuring harvests (in which the solar theme is linked to the idea of death), representations of classical myths, such as the Mares of Diomedes, Narcissus and Echo, Apollo and Daphne. Attracted by the "dark side" of Greek mythology, Masson would now repeatedly endeavour to take up some of the great themes of antiquity, illuminating them with real-life experience in the manner of the phenomenologists. This spir inspired by Frazer (*Mithra, Orpheus, Christ Crucified, Minotaur, Osiris: various aspects of the dying god*) published in December 1936 under the title *Sacrifices*, with a text by Georges Bataille; the illustrations of the review *Acéphale* (1936-1937); and among the most recent works, the various representations of Pasiphaë, the Minotaur, the Labyrinth, Theseus and Ariadne.

LABYRINTH

Even more signs were born [...]: the paper spiral (which is part of the flame), the rope (sinuousness, one of the most recent avatars of which being Ariadne's thread, the underworld, prefiguring current labyrinths which, today, for Masson represent both the Universe and the Life of man (prenatal life, eroticism, murder and death).

FUSION

From a letter he sent me last summer, following the interviews which provided their material for these "Éléments pour une biographie" [Elements for a biography], I will quote the following passage, a note on the "support words" indicative of what Masson always proposed to do, before [...] having consciously undertaken to make his painting equivalent to a revelation of truth: "A forgotten word?"

FUSION (possible interpretation: search for the whole being, for its links with the universe; alchemical transmutation).

Do not separate:

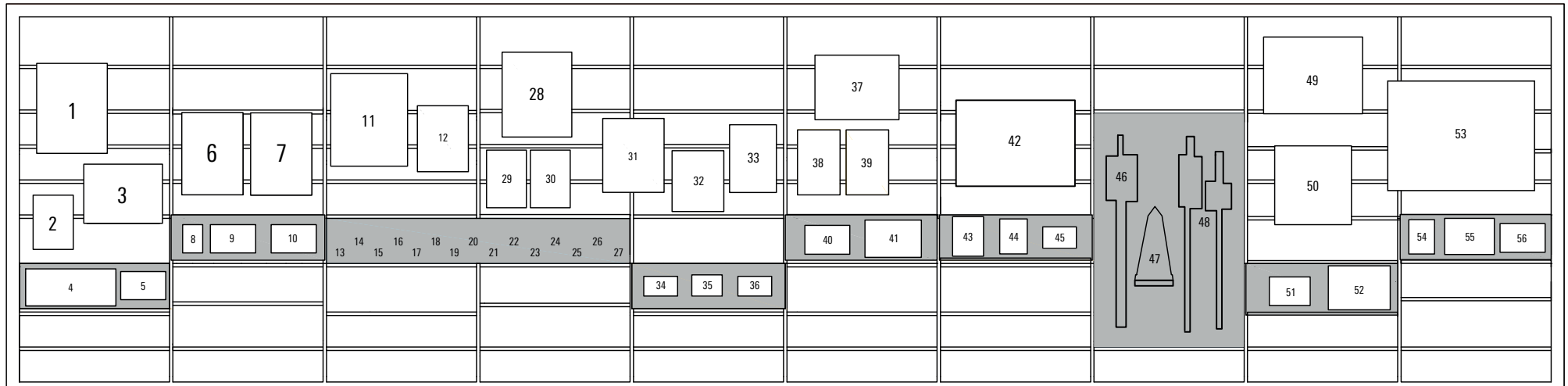
inanimate from animate
man from the elements and realms
conscious from subconscious
good from evil
"beautiful" from "ugly."

Michel Leiris

ALLORA & CALZADILLA

The artist duo Allora & Calzadilla (Jennifer Allora, born in Philadelphia in 1974, and Guillermo Calzadilla, born in Cuba in 1971) pays tribute to André Masson's legendary voyage to Martinique through two works inspired by the Caribbean where they live and work. In *Graft*, an abundance of yellow flowers, modelled on species native to the region, *Tabebuia aurea*, and hand painted, are strewn across the space. It alludes to the combined effects of colonial exploitation and climate change on the flora and fauna of the Caribbean. This work is accompanied by *Penumbra* (2020), a soundscape inspired by the land trodden by André Masson and his Surrealist companions. David Lang's composition for violin is based on recordings of insects of the Absalon valley in Martinique, dating from 1941, and relies on the principle of shadow tones, a psychoacoustic phenomenon that occurs when two tones produce the sensation of hearing a third tone.

ANDRÉ MASSON'S LIBRARY



André Masson Heritage Fund
2 080 books
Montreuil, Bibliothèque Robert Desnos
Bequest of part of the André Masson
Library, 1988

Books from the André Masson Library
Paris, private collection

1

Portrait de Goethe, 1940
Charcoal on paper, 58 × 47 cm
Éric Fitoussi Collection

2

**Sacrifices, André Masson,
Georges Bataille**
Mithra, 1936

G.L.M., Etching, 46 × 35,5 cm
Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
Jacques Doucet, LRS III 16

3

L'Univers dionysiaque, 1937
Ink on paper, 49,5 × 64 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
d'art moderne, AM 1984-610
Donation of Louise and Michel Leiris,
1984

4

**Le Mort, André Masson,
Georges Bataille, 1964**

Au Vent d'Arles, colour etching,
30 × 40 cm
Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
Jacques Doucet, LRS III 24

5

**Le Con d'Irène, Louis Aragon,
André Masson, 1928**

Ed. S.I., (René Bonnell), 25 × 19,8 cm
Paris, Chancellerie des Universités de
Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques
Doucet, LRS III 98 bis
Gift of Maurice Jardot

6

Dionysos, 1936

India ink on paper, 48 × 35,5 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
d'art moderne, AM 1981-602 (R)
Purchase from the galerie Leiris, 1982
This work will be presented until
11 June 2024.

7

Dessin pour Justine, 1929

Ink and gouache, collage,
48,5 × 37,5 cm
Private collection

8

**Acéphale. Religion, sociologie,
philosophie, n° 1, 24 June 1936**

25,1 × 17,8 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
d'art moderne, bibliothèque Kandinsky,
fonds Destribats, RP 197
This work will be presented
until 11 June 2024.

**Acéphale. Religion, sociologie,
philosophie, nos 3-4, July 1937**

27 × 18,3 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
d'art moderne, bibliothèque Kandinsky,
RP 197
This work will be presented
from 12 June 2024.

9

**L'Anus solaire, Georges
Bataille, André Masson, 1931**

Ed. de la Galerie Simon, 25,4 × 20 cm
Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
Jacques Doucet, LRS III 24

10

**Histoire de l'œil par
Lord Auch, Georges Bataille,
André Masson, 1928**

Ed. René Bonnell, Lithographie,
25 × 20 cm
Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
Jacques Doucet, LRS III 99

11

Maldoror, 1937

Ink on paper, 63 × 43 cm
Courtesy galerie Natalie Seroussi

12

**Le Poulpe aux yeux séparés
pour Les Chants de Maldoror,
1937**

Ink on paper, 40 × 31,7 cm
Isabelle and David Lévy Collection

13

Bacchantes, 1965

Bronze, 11,5 × 11,9 × 4,4 cm
Valsuani studios, Paris
(first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
Private collection

14

Hybris, 1974

Bronze, 22,5 × 10,8 × 8,1 cm
Valsuani Studios, Paris (first edition,
proof 3, publisher Galerie Leiris)
Paris, Leiris Gallery

15

**Femme à la chaise ou Femme
enlevant sa chemise, 1974**

Bronze, 16 × 13,8 × 6,5 cm
Valsuani Studios, Paris (first edition,
proof 6, publisher Galerie Leiris)
Paris, Leiris Gallery

16

Frère et sœur, 1942

Bronze, 15,3 × 10,7 × 11,8 cm
Publisher Buchholz Gallery, New York
(first edition)
Venice, Peggy Guggenheim Collection
(Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation,
New York), 76.2553 PG 107

17

La Chrysalide, 1974

Bronze, 15,8 × 10,5 × 8,6 cm
Valsuani Studios, Paris (first edition,
proof 3, publisher Galerie Leiris)

18

Femme-feuille, 1965

Bronze, 6,3 × 15,6 × 8,8 cm
Valsuani Studios, Paris (first edition,
proof 2, publisher Galerie Leiris)
Paris, galerie Leiris

19

Répulsion, 1965

Bronze, 7,5 × 14 × 5,5 cm
Valsuani Studios, Paris
(first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
Private collection

20

Le Minotaure, 1965

Bronze, 11,5 × 14 × 9 cm
Valsuani Studios, Paris
(first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
Galerie Jacques Bailly
Purchase from the Galerie Leiris

21***Dans la forêt, 1965***

Bronze, 12,8 × 17,4 × 9,1 cm
 Valsuani Studios, Paris
 (first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
 Private collection

22***Hybris, [1965-1974]***

Bronze, 22,5 × 10,8 × 8,1 cm
 Valsuani Studios, Paris
 (first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
 Private collection

23***Femme tourmentée, 1965***

Bronze, 25,2 × 16 × 13,4 cm
 Valsuani Studios, Paris
 (first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
 Private collection

24***Écllosion, 1965***

Bronze, 17 × 11,1 × 10,8 cm
 Valsuani Studios, Paris
 (first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
 Private collection

25***Minotaure II, 1986***

Argent, 6 × 6 × 7 cm
 O. Brustolin Studios, Verona
 (second edition)
 Private collection

26***Saturne, 1974***

Bronze, 15,1 × 8,3 × 7,2 cm
 Valsuani Studios, Paris (first edition,
 proof 3, publisher Galerie Leiris)
 Paris, galerie Leiris

27***Femme servant de table, 1965***

Bronze, 16,8 × 11,1 × 15,9 cm
 Valsuani Studios, Paris
 (first edition, publisher Galerie Leiris)
 Private collection

28***Ville crânienne, 1939***

Ink on paper, 63 × 48 cm
 Private collection

29***Portrait de Georges Bataille, 1937***

Pencil on paper, 30 × 25 cm
 Private collection

30***Portrait de Michel Leiris, 1925***

India ink on paper, 31,8 × 24 cm
 Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
 d'art moderne, AM 1984-609
 Donation of Louise and Michel Leiris,
 1984
 This work will be presented until
 11 June 2024.

31***Hommage à Saint-Pol-Roux, 1925***

Ink on paper, 40 × 29 cm
 Private collection

32***Portrait de Benjamin Péret. Dessin automatique, circa 1924-1925***

India ink on paper, 31,7 × 23,2 cm
 Courtesy galerie de la Béraudière

33***Louis Aragon, 1924***

Ink drawing on paper, 43 × 34,5 cm
 Courtesy galerie Natalie Seroussi

34***L'Ombilic des limbes, Antonin Artaud, André Masson, 1925***

Nouvelle Revue Française, 17,5 × 14,6 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, L VI 35

35***Les Térébinte, Marcel Jouhandeau, André Masson, 1926***

Nouvelle Revue Française, 18,7 × 13,4 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, LRS 1138

36***Le Pèse-Nerfs ; suivi des fragments d'un Journal d'Enfer, Antonin Artaud, André Masson, 1927***

Les Cahiers du Sud, 17,5 × 14,5 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, K V 778

37***Signe céleste, 1938***

Graphite and India ink on paper,
 50,3 × 65,6 cm
 Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
 d'art moderne, AM 1981-604
 Purchase, 1982

38 / 39***Deux dessins pour Miroir de la taumachie de Michel Leiris, 1938***

Ink on paper, 50 × 32 cm (each)
 Mony Vibescu Collection, MAS1-019 ;
 MAS1-018

40***Les Sans Cou, Robert Desnos, André Masson, 1934***

Impr. J.A.D., 25,5 × 20 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, LRS III 102

41***C'est les bottes de 7 lieues Cette phrase « Je me vois », Robert Desnos, André Masson, 1926***

Ed. de la Galerie Simon, 33 × 25 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, LRS III 186

42***Le Coquillage, 1940***

Oil on canvas, 65 × 81 cm
 Künzelsau, Museum Würth, 6601

43***Essai de couverture pour Glossaire, 1938***

Engraving and ink on paper,
 35 × 27,5 cm
 Courtesy Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris

44***Minotaure : revue artistique et littéraire, nos 12-13, 1939***

31 × 24,4 cm
 Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
 d'art moderne, bibliothèque Kandinsky,
 RP 30

45***Les Disciples à Saïs, Novalis, trad. [et préf.] par Armel Guerne ; portrait par André Masson, 1939***

G.L.M., 19 × 14,5 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, LRS 1154

46 / 47 / 48***Paddles from the Marquesas Islands, n.d.***

Pirogue prow, n.d.
 Four objects from André
 Masson's studio
 Wood
 170 × 22 × 7,8 cm
 173 × 16 × 8,2 cm
 164,5 × 13 × 7 cm
 19 × 63 × 34 cm
 Paris, galerie Leiris

49***Le Fleuve Héraclite, 1940***

Oil on canvas, 54 × 81 cm
 Paris, Private collection,
 courtesy Applicat-Prazan

50***Bison, 1944***

Ink on blue paper, 59 × 51 cm
 Courtesy galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger,
 Paris-Lisbonne

51***Terre sur terre, André Masson, Tristan Tzara, 1946***

Ed. des Trois Collines, 22,5 × 16 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, LRS 2140

52***Une saison en enfer, Arthur Rimbaud ; eau-forte originale d'André Masson, 1961***

Les Cent-Une, 37,7 × 56 cm (print)
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, 14022
 Gift of Guy de Brantes

53***La Prison, 1961***

Oil on canvas, 97 × 130 cm
 Private collection

54***Clé. Bulletin mensuel de la FIARI (Fédération internationale de l'art révolutionnaire indépendant), n° 2, February 1939***

31,9 × 24 cm
 Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national
 d'art moderne, bibliothèque Kandinsky,
 RP 223

55***Collection L'Âge d'or Mythologies, 1946***

Ed. de la Revue Fontaine, 32 × 22,5 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, LRS 2212

56***Crâne sans lois, André Masson, Guy Lévis Mano, 1939***

G.L.M., 25,4 × 19,5 cm
 Paris, Chancellerie des Universités
 de Paris – Bibliothèque littéraire
 Jacques Doucet, LRS 1308

André Masson's library has been recreated for the occasion of the exhibition, bringing together some of the books that belonged to him. These works, sometimes signed, bear witness to his eclectic tastes, reveal his abundant universe, and constitute his imaginary horizon of inspirations and passions. The objects from the Marquesas Islands in his studio, the magazines he contributed to and the books he illustrated, from the donation made by Michel Leiris to the Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet*, are in dialogue with a selection of major works produced throughout his life and offer multiple fragments of André Masson's world.

*All works bearing an inventory number beginning with LRS come from this bequest.

SURREALIST AFFINITIES

"The Surrealist would therefore like all that had been neglected, forbidden or unloved: the dark English novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the philosophy of Sade, the humor of Swift and Jarry, the wickedness of *The Songs of Maldoror*, Arthur Rimbaud's call to poetic enlightenment. They would admire the automatic drawings of children and mediums, the fetishes of distant isles, and be enchanted at the sight of the naïve paintings of 'the customs officer' Rousseau."

André Masson, lecture, 1941.

46 / 47 / 48

"Jacques Doucet asked me, through Aragon, to do surrealist portraits of his poet friends whose autographs and manuscripts he has. I have accepted and the first to date is that of Antonin Artaud. Other portraits will follow (But I can't remember why, they'll no longer be for Jacques Doucet). Some will appear in the *Revue européenne*, illustrating Aragon's *Peasant of Paris*. Among these portraits, those of Aragon, Desnos, Éluard, Michel Leiris, Benjamin Péret, and Roger Vitrac."

André Masson, in *Mythologie d'André Masson*, Clément Jean-Paul, 1971

30 / 31 / 32 / 33 / 34 / 35 / 36 / 40 / 41 / 51

TUTELARY FIGURES

DIONYSUS

"All Antiquity regarded Dionysus as the dispenser of wine. But it also knew him as the Frenetic who caused men to become possessed, turned them to savagery, even made them shed blood. Dionysus was the friend and companion of the souls of the dead, and mysterious consecrations named him their master. It was to his cult that dramatic arts belonged. It was he who made the spring flowers bloom. Dionysus was the god of blissful intoxication and ecstatic love. But he was also the Persecuted, the Suffering and the Dying, and all those he loved and who accompanied him had to share in his tragic fate."

Walter Otto, *Dionysos*, 1933, quoted in *Acéphale*, n° 3-4, July 1937.

3 / 6

SADE

"Sade with the whip reminded us constantly — watchman in flames — that man is the cruelest of all animals."

André Masson, *Atoll*, n° 2, September-October-November 1968.

5 / 7

LAUTRÉAMONT

"I learned of the meteor in 1922. The messenger was Roland Tual. And with regard to our today, how much weight does the poetry of *The Songs of Maldoror* have for me? How does it resonate with events, with the Plague? — are its sumptuous bestiary, its sardonic mythology more than art for art's sake — or have they taken on a meaning? The poet, the artist can, far more than other men, perceive the shocks heralding falls and disasters."

André Masson, *Les Cahiers du Sud*, n° 275, January 1946.

11 / 12

RIMBAUD

"As for poets, we preferred them to be seers rather than simple singers of the wonder or the melancholy of living. Rimbaud above all others was the exemplary poet."

André Masson, *Atoll*, n° 2, September-October-November 1968.

52

GOETHE

"I was re-reading Goethe a lot at that time, especially the secret Goethe, the erotic Goethe of *Roman Elegies* and the Goethe of *The Green Snake*, this alchemical tale. So I did some portraits of Goethe. Goethe analyzing the metamorphoses of the plant, Goethe and the theory of colors."

André Masson, in *Mythologie d'André Masson*, Clément Jean-Paul, 1971

1 / 45

MASSON-BATAILLE

"These two men, Georges Bataille and André Masson, met towards the end of 1924 through Michel Leiris. Their meeting of minds was such that, for the next fifteen years, not a single work by Bataille was not accompanied by Masson: lithographs in *History of the Eye* (1928), drypoints in *The Solar Anus* (1931); etchings in *Sacrifices* (1936); drawings in *Acephalus* (1936-1937). It is not a matter of illustrations but of a mutual desire to make visible, in an act of laying bare, the projections that thought keeps secret beneath words."

Bernard Noël, "A Friendship", "Masson and Bataille" Exhibition Catalogue, Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans, 1993.

2 / 4 / 9 / 10 / 29

ACEPHALUS

"The man has escaped from his head like a convict from prison. He has found, beyond himself, not God who is the prohibition of crime, but a being unaware of prohibition. Beyond what I am, I meet a being who makes me laugh because he is headless, who fills me with anguish because he is made of innocence and crime: he has an iron weapon in his left hand, flames like a sacred heart in his right. He unites Birth and Death in the same eruption. He is not a man. He is not a god either. He is not me, but he is more than me: his belly is the maze where he got lost, lost me with him and in which I find myself being him, that is to say a monster."

Georges Bataille, *Acéphale*, n° 1, 24 June 1936.

8

MINOTAUR

"With Dionysus, it was the Minotaur and everything surrounding the myth of the Labyrinth that became familiar to us [Georges Bataille and myself], to the point where we both turned out winners, in the choice of a new magazine, *Minotaur*, primarily for use by dissident Surrealists."

André Masson, *La Mémoire du monde*, 1974.

44

MASSON-LEIRIS

"My studio [rue Blomet, Paris] became a meeting place. [Georges Limbour] was, from the start, along with Antonin Artaud, Michel Leiris, Roland Tual, among those whose almost daily presence left its mark on the rest of our days. With Limbour, with Artaud, with Leiris, one of our delights was to read aloud over and over the prodigious Elizabethans. A word or two on reading travellers' books. This remark is not so futile if we consider that most of us became eminent travellers. In 1925, Michel Leiris wrote *Simulacrum* in the studio and the first illustrations in this book were my first lithographs."

André Masson, *Atoll*, n° 2, September-October-November 1968.

38 / 39 / 43

SCULPTURES

"Continuing my research, the idea came to me that automatism could develop out of hands simply kneading the earth. This led me to sculpture. But certain shapes that were too thin and elongated had no stability and fell over after my rapid manipulations. It was then that Giacometti, whom I had just met and for whom I felt an immediate affinity, taught me one or two technical solutions, like the armature, as my first attempts had been very loose — I was looking for movement but in the line — the plaster didn't hold. Using wire or tow, I threw the plaster on top, kneaded it and it held."

André Masson, in Roger Passeron, *André Masson. Catalogue général des sculptures*, 1987.

13 > 27

These sculptures were modelled in terracotta between 1942 and 1944 in the United States, then cast in bronze from 1965. Only the two versions of *Hybris*, *Saturne* and the *Bacchantes* were made at the end of 1964.

PRISON

"And again war. The Algerian War. I was involved in a serious way because one of my own [his son Diego, member of the Jeanson network, an F.L.N. militants support group] got caught up in this affair and served two years in prison. Out of this came paintings (one was donated to the Museum of Algiers). They are all paintings of prisoners."

André Masson, in *Mythologie d'André Masson*, Clément Jean-Paul, 1971

53

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

OPENING HOURS

Daily, except Tuesdays and 1 May

OPENING HOURS

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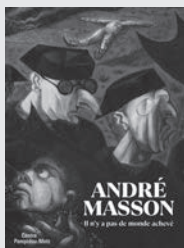
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