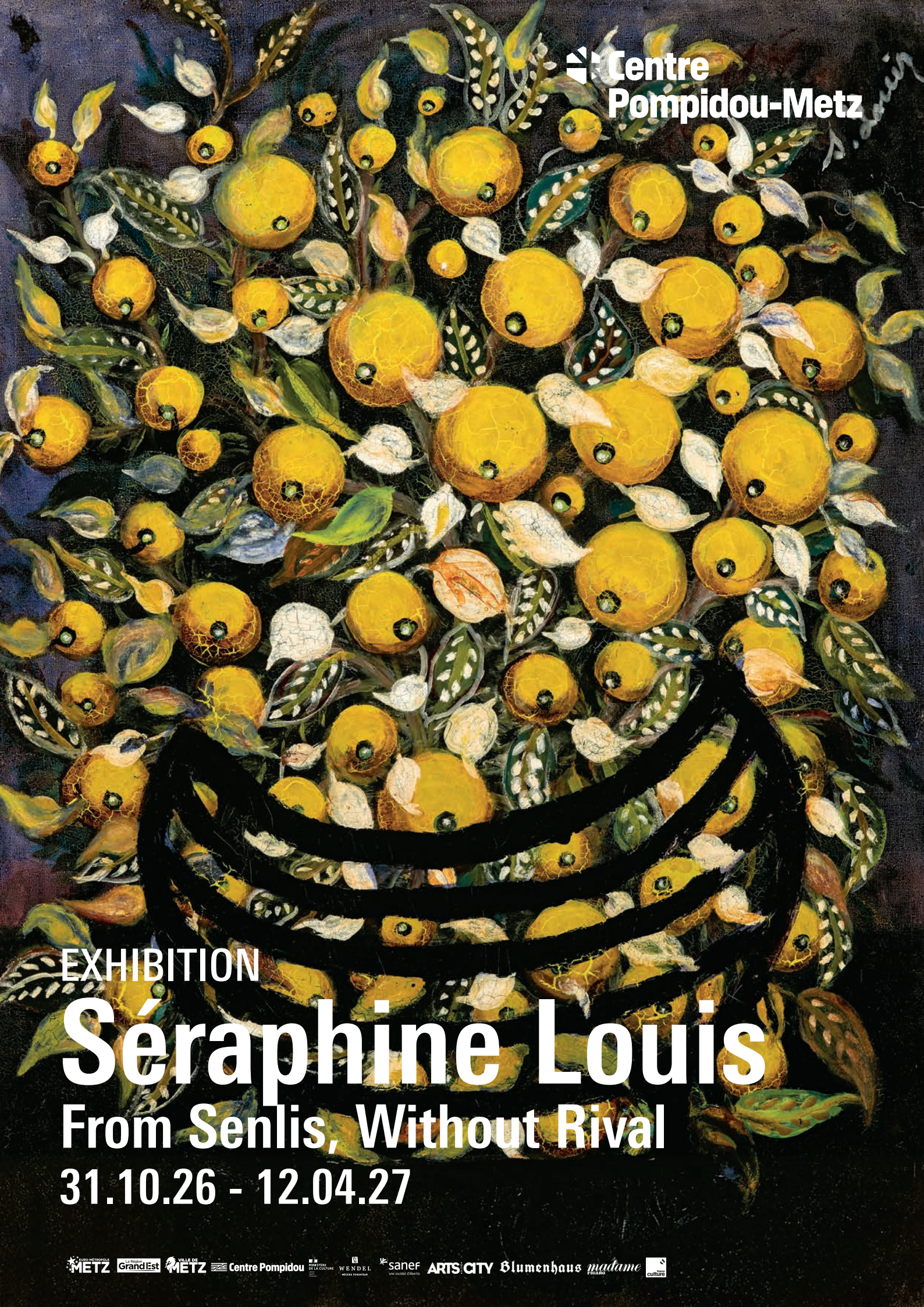




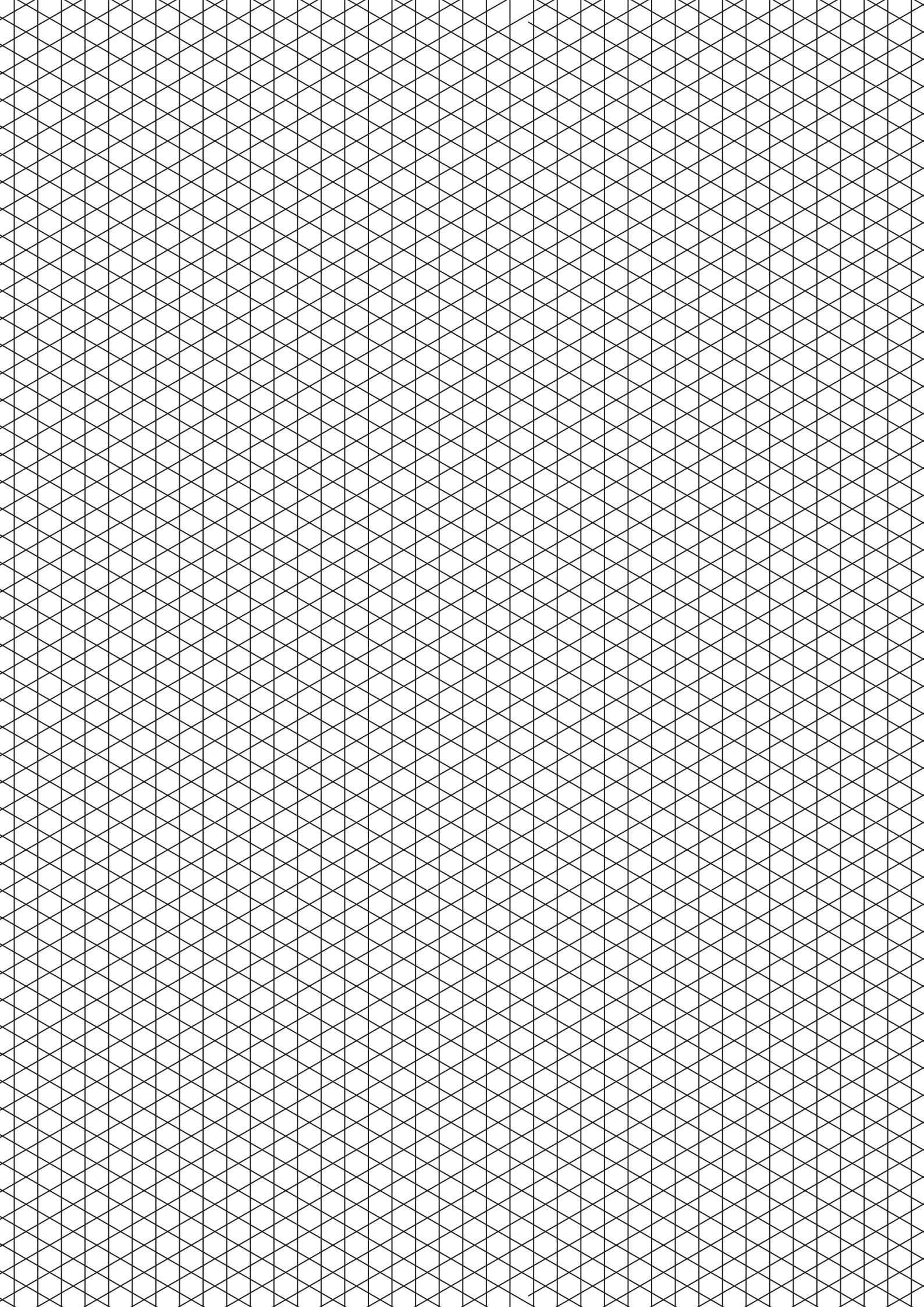
Centre
Pompidou-Metz

EXHIBITION

Séraphine Louis

From Senlis, Without Rival

31.10.26 - 12.04.27



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1.

PRESENTATION

SÉRAPHINE LOUIS. FROM SENLIS, WITHOUT RIVAL

From October 31, 2026 to April 12, 2027

Gallery 2

Curator: Elia Biezunski, Researcher / Curator at Centre Pompidou-Metz

This autumn, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is presenting a major monographic exhibition dedicated to Séraphine Louis (1864–1942), known as Séraphine de Senlis. The exhibition, entitled Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival, brings together over eighty paintings from some one hundred inventoried works. It offers a reinterpretation of the artist's work in light of an unprecedented biographical and scholarly study. The exhibition explores every facet of Séraphine Louis, moving beyond the classifications that have long kept her at a distance from the narratives of artistic modernity. The assembled body of work opens new perspectives on the sources of her imagination and allows for a reassessment of the artist's place in art history.

From her early beginnings to her international recognition shortly before her death in an asylum, Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival revisits her connections with German critic and collector of avant-garde art Wilhelm Uhde, as well as the singular materiality of her painting, and her spirituality. Above all, the exhibition reveals the journey of an artist who once escaped social determinism and now defies the determinism of art history.

An artist at the heart of modernity

Sometimes presented among the Peintres du Sacré Cœur (Painters of the Sacred Heart), sometimes among the Modern Primitives—two groups championed by Wilhelm Uhde—then associated with so-called Naïve Art, or even cited by André Breton among the artists opposing official European art, Séraphine Louis has long been perceived through classifications that highlighted her exceptional nature while keeping her in a form of otherness, on the margins of modernity rather than at its core.



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *Untitled (Two Large Daisies)*, c. 1930–1931
Ripolin paint on canvas, 81 × 61 cm
Private collection
Photo: © D. R.

The exhibition seeks to show how all these interpretations coexist, intersect, and even contradict one another. It reveals the full extent of Séraphine Louis's contribution to art history: her convergences with historical avant-gardes, her way of developing a painting on the border between ornament, symbolism, and post-impressionism, in a form of idiosyncratic inner expressionism. As Chiara Parisi, Director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, notes: "Nowadays, museums have a responsibility to broaden narratives. The public strongly feels the need for a less hierarchical, more porous, and more open art history—one that includes artists who have worked from places of fragility, isolation, or freedom."

The exhibition Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival thus continues a reflection initiated by the Centre Pompidou-Metz through exhibitions dedicated to Eva Aeppli, Suzanne Valadon, and Louise Nevelson.

The exhibition journey: from radical interiority to monumentality

From the very entrance, visitors are confronted with the six “giant canvases” created between 1928 and 1930, at the height of the artist’s career. **Drawn from the collections of the Centre Pompidou, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Musée d’Art et d’Archéologie de Senlis, and the Fondation Dina Vierny – Musée Maillol, they spread out a monumental vegetal universe where leaves, fruits, and flowers seem imbued with an intense inner life.** Everything proliferates, transforms, hybridises, and unsettles the senses.

The journey then unfolds through several thematic rooms exploring the artist’s spirituality, her colour palette, and the influence of botany on her work. Her relationship with the German collector and critic Wilhelm Uhde also occupies a central place, repositioning Séraphine Louis within a much broader dialogue with the visual culture of her time. A decisive figure in the European avant-garde, Uhde did provide her with economic stability, enabling her to develop ambitious formats. The exhibition thus moves beyond the romantic myth of the cursed artist—marked by poverty and her psychiatric internment in 1932—to focus on the beauty of her work, *modus operandi*, and incredible determination.

A materiality imbued with life

The materiality of Séraphine Louis’s painting lies at the heart of the exhibition and refutes the idea of a purely instinctive creation. Her use of Ripolin, an industrial paint typically reserved for functional purposes, anchors her work in a striking material modernity. It should be noted that she painted her canvases both on the floor and upright. Though these methods began as practical solutions, they evolved into a conscious artistic choice—a means of forging her own creative freedom. **Her pigments, the organic density of her surfaces, and the cracks she reworked reveal an extremely physical relationship with pictorial matter: a touch that is at once microscopic and sweeping, a depth that continually returns to the living.**

Her monumental compositions strike with their simultaneously fantastical and highly constructed character. Painting becomes an art of variation—repetition, vegetal proliferation, the growth of forms—while preserving the profound singularity of each canvas. The richness of her chromatic palette and the saturation of her surfaces produce an extraordinary visual sophistication. **For Séraphine, the canvas is no longer a window hung on the wall but a space to inhabit: painting as an expanding space.**

Artist, woman, “without rival”: a figure of emancipation

From the modest beginnings of a cleaning lady in Senlis to international recognition, Séraphine Louis’s journey embodies a radical break with social determinism. Painting on large formats, for a female artist at the beginning of the twentieth century, was in itself a bold act: large formats traditionally belonged to history painting, the most noble genre in the academic hierarchy. Yet Séraphine Louis embraced this monumentality to paint leaves, fruit, and flowers, shifting the categories of painting as much as those of society.

She, who signed her works “sans rivale” (unrivaled), displayed a strong awareness of her own worth, far removed from the image into which she was long confined. In her work, her spirituality, observation of the living, and fascination with organic growth converge in a painting that emanates something beyond the visible. **Her work anticipates contemporary reflections on ecofeminism: the ability to create a vast inner world, the praise of the living as an act of resistance.**

2. BIOGRAPHY

3 September 1864

Birth of Séraphine Louis in Arsy, in the Oise region of France. Orphaned at the age of seven, she is taken in by her sister Argentine, who lives in Arsy.

1877-1878

She begins working as a domestic servant in Paris, then in Compiègne.

1881-1901

Séraphine Louis spends nearly twenty years working for the Sisters of Charity of Providence in Clermont-de-l'Oise.

30 septembre 1903

The boarding school run by the Sisters of Charity of Providence closes down. Séraphine Louis is thought to have already left by this date.

1905

Séraphine Louis enters the service of M. Chambard, a lawyer, and later works for the Senlis families Duflos and Jacques. She would later say that her guardian angel instructed her to take up drawing at this time.

1910

She paints *Flowers in a Basket*, considered her first known work.

1911

Séraphine Louis moves to 1 rue du Puits-Tiphaine in Senlis.

c. 1912

The dealer, writer and art critic Wilhelm Uhde moves to Senlis to work on a writing project. Séraphine Louis is employed by him as a housekeeper. He discovers one of her paintings and buys several works from her.



Anne-Marie Uhde, Séraphine Louis posing in front of her painting *Wildflowers ou Fantasy*, c. 1927
Photo: © D. R.

1914

Senlis is bombed, set on fire and occupied. Séraphine Louis remains there. Wilhelm Uhde returns to Germany. As a German citizen, his assets are seized as enemy property and then sold by the government state in 1921. Séraphine Louis has no further contact with him.

1915–early 1920s

Several prominent residents of Senlis, such as Count Doria and Charles-Jean Hallo, acquire a few works.

1924

Hans Hildebrandt refers to Séraphine Louis' work in his *Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* ("History of Art of the 19th and 20th Centuries"). In 1927 Wilhelm Uhde sends him photographs of her works and a portrait of the artist for his research for his book *Die Frau als Künstlerin* ("The Woman as Artist", 1928).

1927

At the Société des Amis des Arts de Senlis exhibition, Séraphine Louis presents six paintings. As her work attracts press attention, Wilhelm Uhde travels to Senlis, acquires several works, and decides to promote her and support her financially and materially.

Late 1927-1930

Séraphine Louis' most prolific period.

1928

Wilhelm Uhde organises the exhibition *Les Peintres du Cœur Sacré* at the Galerie des Quatre-Chemins in Paris, bringing together self-taught artists including the artist who he renames Séraphine de Senlis. On 26 July, *The Dream of a Plant* is acquired by the municipal museum in Kassel, Germany.

1929

The Wall Street Crash leads to the collapse of the art market, and Séraphine Louis loses her dealer's financial support. Two Paris exhibitions feature her work: *Les Plus Grands Peintres contemporains*, bringing together self-taught and non-self-taught artists, organised by the art critic and essayist Jerzy Waldemar Jarociński, known as Waldemar-George, at the gallery Éditions Bonaparte; and *Peintures populaires d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* at the Galerie Druet.

1930

Séraphine Louis begins showing behavioural problems that appear to intensify. From April to June, the Galerie Georges Bernheim exhibits Wilhelm Uhde's collection, including her works.

1932

On 31 January, Séraphine Louis is admitted as an emergency case to Senlis hospital. On 25 February, she is committed to the Clermont-de-l'Oise psychiatric hospital. She remains there until her death and probably ceases painting. From 28 June to 13 July, Wilhelm Uhde organises the exhibition *Les Primitifs modernes* at the Galerie Georges Bernheim, featuring works by Séraphine Louis.

1933

Comœdia reports that Séraphine Louis was put forward by Wilhelm Uhde for the Grand Prix de la Peinture in Paris. On 2 November, the artist gives an account of her life, transcribed by a member of the care staff and held by the Archives Départementales de l'Oise.

1937-1938

The exhibition *Les Maîtres populaires de la réalité* is presented in Paris, Zurich, New York and London. *Fruits* (c. 1929) enters the collection of the Musée de Grenoble thanks to a gift from Wilhelm Uhde. Works by Séraphine Louis are also shown at the *Primitifs du XX^e siècle* exhibition in Paris.

1939

The war leads to a deterioration of living conditions in psychiatric hospitals.

11 december 1942

Weakened by hunger, Séraphine Louis dies of breast cancer at the Clermont-de-l'Oise psychiatric hospital. She is buried in the communal grave in the town cemetery.

1945

The Galerie de France in Paris presents the artist's first solo exhibition. *Red Tree* (1928–30) and *Pomegranates on a Green Background* (1927–30) are sold by Wilhelm Uhde to the Musée national d'art moderne.

1948

Anne-Marie Uhde donates part of her collection to the Musée national d'art moderne, including several paintings by Séraphine Louis.

Since the late 1940

Séraphine Louis' works have enjoyed widespread circulation across Europe, the Americas and Asia, appearing in major institutions and exhibitions, including the Kunsthalle Bern, the São Paulo Biennial, the first documenta in Kassel, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille and the Kunsthalle Basel. In 1971 the Museum of Modern Art in New York acquired *Tree of Paradise*.

Frequently associated with the "modern primitives", so-called "naïve" or "folk" painters, and with the genre of still life, Séraphine Louis has featured in several group exhibitions exploring these themes, notably at the Galerie Dina Vierny in Paris, the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, the Museum Charlotte Zander in Bönningheim, the LaM in Villeneuve-d'Ascq and the Musée Maillol in Paris.

Several solo exhibitions have been devoted to her work in Paris, at the Galerie Pierre Birtschansky, the Galerie d'Art de Tradition Populaire, the Musée Maillol and the Galerie Dina Vierny; in Düsseldorf-Benrath, at the Museum für Europäische Gartenkunst; and in Senlis, at the former Abbaye Saint-Vincent and the Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie. The success of Martin Provost's 2008 film *Séraphine* helped revive public interest in her work.

3.

EXHIBITION TOUR

THE INVENTION OF A LANGUAGE

From her earliest works, most often painted on panels of salvaged wood, Séraphine Louis broke free from the conventions of still life and realism. She developed a distinctive pictorial vocabulary with modernist overtones. Her compositions, centred on flowers or fruit floating in an undefined space, feature simplified forms, their contours emphasised by outlines. Her palette, still limited at this stage, favoured vivid, contrasting colours that heightened the surprising intensity of her paintings. Her use of Ripolin, an industrial lacquer that would become her trademark, created a glossy surface, alternately fluid and rough, speckled with craquelure. In 1911 Séraphine Louis left domestic service and moved into her own home. She henceforth had greater freedom of both space and time, allowing her artistic practice to flourish. Her work gradually developed and soon began to attract the attention of a small circle of art lovers.



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine of Senlis, *Wildflowers*, c. 1925
Oil, Ripolin paint and mixed media on canvas, 81 x 60 cm
Bavaria, private collection
Photo: © Walter Bayer, Munich

SENLIS, 1927

At this time, Séraphine Louis sold small paintings that enabled her to make a living while also financing more ambitious canvases, whose colours and compositions became increasingly rich and elaborate. From 8 to 23 October 1927, she took part in an exhibition organised by the Société des Amis des Arts de Senlis at the town hall. Encouraged by the artist Charles-Jean Hallo and the art historian Count Arnauld Doria, both members of the society and already collectors of her work, she exhibited six paintings for the first time. They are mentioned in the catalogue of the exhibition under her full name: Séraphine Louis. More than her paintings, however, it was her life, which defied social conventions, that captured the attention of the press. The daily newspaper *Le Gaulois* declared: "Senlis has its legend: Senlis has Séraphine." Prompted by the press coverage, the collector, art critic and dealer Wilhelm Uhde, who had been back in the Paris region since 1924, visited the exhibition. He purchased several works and subsequently promoted her work, providing her with financial support and helping her find public and private buyers.

LES PEINTRES DU CŒUR SACRÉ AND LES PRIMITIFS MODERNES

From 8 to 21 June 1928, Wilhelm Uhde organised the exhibition *Les Peintres du Cœur Sacré* at the Galerie des Quatre-Chemins in Paris, bringing together André Bauchant, Camille Bombois, Émile Boyer, René Rimbart, Louis Vivin and the artist he now referred to as Séraphine de Senlis. These artists were not brought together based on a shared style, but because Uhde saw in them "a humanity that had remained intact ... simple, humane, good souls". His interpretation cast these self-taught painters, from working-class backgrounds, as embodiments of a supposedly timeless authenticity, held up as an alternative to a disenchanted present. In 1932 he developed this vision further with the exhibition *Les Primitifs modernes*, advocating even more explicitly for a return to an imagined primordial innocence, "bestowed by divine grace" according to him. Séraphine Louis occupied a unique position in the group: for Uhde, her work embodied its most mystical dimension. The painter's unclassifiable aesthetic also closely aligned with the modernist project of representing a subjective inner world through simplified forms, expressive brushwork and strong colour contrasts.

DAZZLING METAMORPHOSES

From 1928 onwards, Séraphine Louis had all the means she needed to develop her art: Wilhelm Uhde provided her with canvases and paints in anticipation of future acquisitions and exhibitions. Her contrasting palette grew richer with deep, flamboyant shades, while her increasingly gestural and expressive brushwork became stronger. The plant kingdom broke free from reality, to create a tangle of forms that envelops the entire surface of the canvas. Whirling flowers, proliferating leaves, multiplying fruits, teeming clusters and vases transformed into plants undergo dazzling metamorphoses from one work to another in a continuous profusion. While maintaining rigorously structured compositions, Séraphine Louis layered paint, scattered with tiny points of light that animate the surface, as though imbued with a life of its own. Variations on a single theme allowed her to explore new combinations of motifs and colours, while perhaps also responding to the expectations of her collectors.

GIANT CANVASES

Between 1928 and 1930, Séraphine Louis embarked on her most ambitious works: six paintings, each nearly 2 metres high, brought together here for the first time. In these monumental compositions, vegetation, water and sky unfold on a single plane in an unprecedented explosion of shapes and colours. Three supernatural trees with slanting trunks tower above a river. They correspond to three compositions in which flowers, leaves and fruit proliferate within large, radiant ovals reminiscent of the mandorlas of Christian imagery. When *Arbre rouge* [Red Tree] was acquired by the Musée national d'art moderne in 1945, curator Bernard Dorival described Séraphine Louis' world in these terms: "A single theme: flowers, leaves, fruit, but feathered flowers, fantastical leaves strewn with bulging eyes, dreamlike fruit such as no tree has ever borne. Added to this imagination was a rare sense of colour and decorative effect: one thinks of Persian carpets, of Far Eastern fabrics."



PARED DOWN

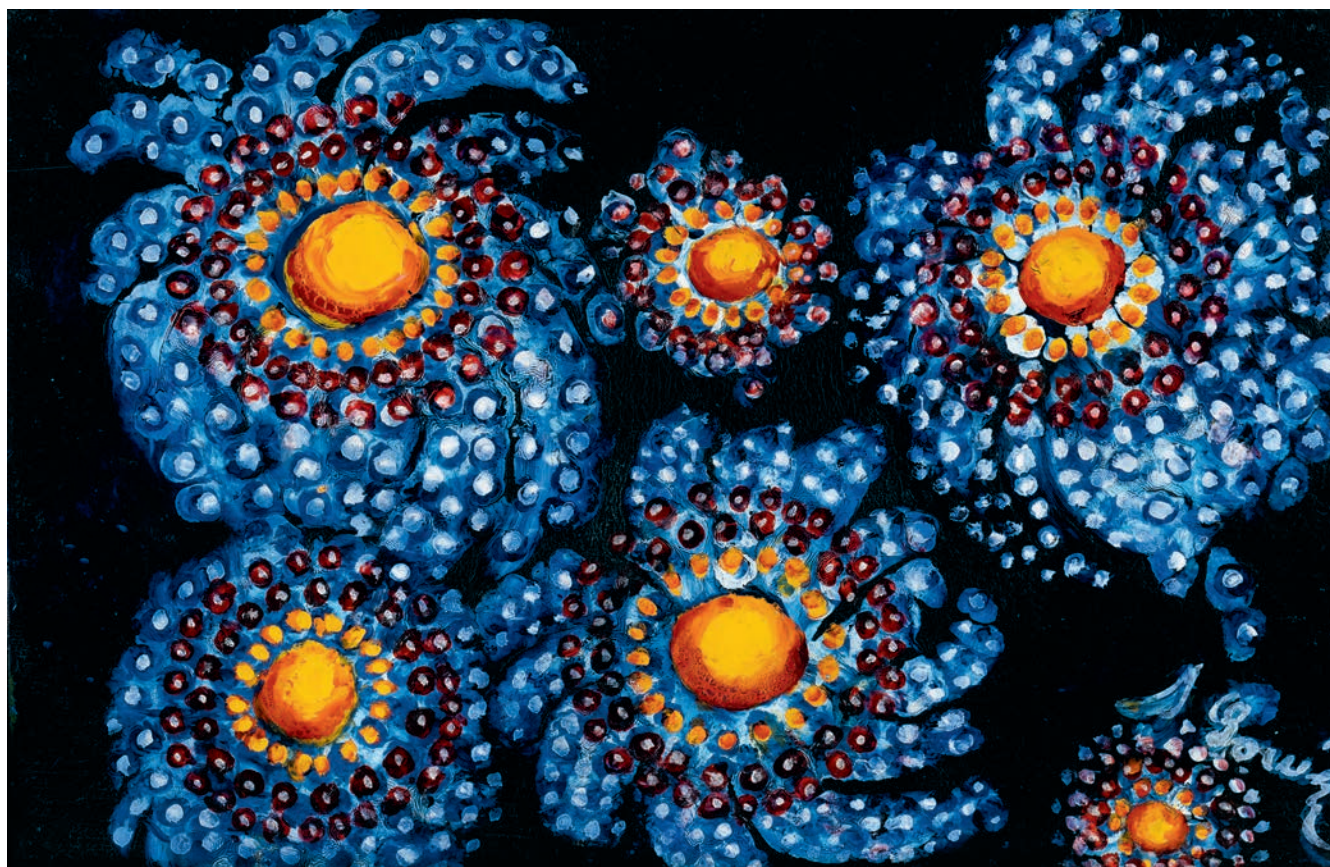
The 1929 stock market crash brought about the collapse of the art market, depriving Séraphine Louis of the financial support of Wilhelm Uhde, who was himself facing difficult circumstances. In his correspondence with Richard Möring, known as Peter Gan, an art dealer and an important figure in the dissemination of Séraphine Louis' work in Germany, Uhde lamented the artist's spending, which he considered excessive because of her many purchases of large canvases. Faced with these new constraints, the painter returned to smaller formats and, as in her early days, most often painted on wooden panels. Paradoxically, flowers and fruit became more monumental: their enlarged forms fill the surface of the painting, giving the small works a striking presence. Although simplified, the compositions retain all their expressive intensity thanks to thicker brushwork, strong colours and the expansive force of the stylised motifs.

« MAÎTRES POPULAIRES DE LA RÉALITÉ »

During the 1930s, enthusiasm for self-taught artists from working-class backgrounds grew, taking on a political dimension following the victory of France's Popular Front in 1936. This interest reached its height with the exhibition *Les Maîtres populaires de la réalité*, organised in 1937–38 by Pierre-André Farcy, known as Andry-Farcy, director of the musée de Grenoble, in Paris and subsequently in Zurich, New York and London. Presented as "instinctive" and "unencumbered" by academic conventions, the artists in the exhibition were nevertheless praised for their technical mastery. The term "reality" emphasised their commitment to figurative painting, in reaction to abstraction, which was perceived as a dehumanised trend. Séraphine Louis' work, however, resists this definition: devoid of human figures, it deploys a botanical world whose forms depart from those of reality. The absence of perspective, the scattering of motifs across the entire picture plane, and the interplay of repeated shapes and contrasting colours firmly situate her work within the broader explorations of pictorial modernity.

SÉRAPHINE LOUIS, WITHOUT RIVAL

On 7 February 1932, *Le Courrier de l'Oise* reported the admission of "Séraphine Louis, sixty-eight, who calls herself a painter" to Senlis hospital, after she had abandoned her personal belongings in the street in order to "set off on an adventure". On the same day, the newspaper *Comœdia* mentioned her among the artists presented by Wilhelm Uhde for the Grand Prix de la Peinture in Paris. On 25 February, she was committed to the psychiatric hospital in Clermont-de-l'Oise. Cut off from the success of her work, she spent the last ten years of her life there; she probably stopped painting and wrote numerous letters, an essential testimony from this period. She wrote extensively about her distress, mystical thoughts, lack of food, as well as her artistic ambitions. She signed herself "Séraphine Louis-Maillard, without rival", incorporating her mother's name and asserting her exceptional status. Weakened by hunger, she died of breast cancer on 11 December 1942 and was buried in a pauper's grave. She was among the more than 40,000 patients who died of deprivation in the psychiatric hospitals of Vichy France.



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine of Senlis, *Blue Flowers on a Black Background*, c. 1930–1931
Ripolin paint on wood, 39.3 × 60 cm
Thomas Müller Collection

THE UNCANNY

The ambiguous space shaped by Séraphine Louis emerges from her ability to unsettle perception. The absence of perspective, the sudden appearance of restless forms and her vibrant brushwork, charged with intense emotion, disrupt our visual bearings. Colour no longer describes reality; above all, it conveys the expression of emotion. Sometimes conceived as inner expressions, these visions are imbued with a powerful life force and an uncanny strangeness. Ordinary wildflowers and familiar fruits become disturbing, unfamiliar and shifting forms. Never inert, the plant kingdom becomes a subject in its own right, animated by a remarkable presence and at times almost personified. In 1947 the critic Charles Estienne recognised in the swirling rhythms of these compositions “this aspect of a thought becoming a spiral as it slips, prompted by some random shock, between day and night, dream and reality, into the realms of the irrational”.



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine of Senlis, *The Blue Séraphine*, c. 1930
Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle
© BPK, Berlin, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Elke Wallford

NATURAL HISTORIES?

Isolated from their context and sometimes shown in cross-section, fruits, leaves and flowers might evoke the plates found in botanical books, where plants, removed from their natural environment, are catalogued according to their characteristics, their various stages or their root systems. Her work as a domestic servant may have given her access to such books, which were common in bourgeois libraries. The tropical motifs found in her paintings, such as palm trunks, may also have originated in these sources. They may likewise have been inspired by accounts of the evangelising missions of the nuns of the Order of Saint Joseph of Cluny, who were based in Senlis. In 1935 the artist recounted that she had painted orange trees after seeing one growing in a pot in a bourgeois interior. Books and observation of nature may thus have nourished an imagination that, in the studio, transcended reality to give rise to a subjective world.

SPIRITUAL SOURCES

From the age of seventeen, Séraphine Louis spent almost twenty years with the Sisters of Charity of Providence in Clermont-de-l'Oise. She attributed her vocation as a painter to the words of her guardian angel, who, in 1905, is said to have told her in church to take up drawing. Her letters, permeated with mystical and apocalyptic references, highlight the enduring presence of this spiritual world. The devotional image affixed to the back of her first work (dated around 1910), beyond expressing her faith, reveals a compositional principle that runs throughout her paintings. Against a neutral background, a central, radiant form emerges: an incandescent heart from which an expansive movement seems to radiate. The curved forms and vivid colours recall the stained glass of the rose window in the cathedral of Senlis, a city marked by a strong presence of religious architecture, while the recurring apple tree, vine and pomegranate tree evoke the symbolism of sacred gardens. These motifs cannot be reduced to any single precise meaning but instead open a field of resonances in which the artist's choices retain an element of mystery.

PALETTE, MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES

Few sources document Séraphine Louis' creative process, as she never revealed her method. Her biographers have consequently fuelled various legends, referring to the use of holy oils, macerated plant matter or even blood obtained from the butcher. Recent analyses conducted by the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France and the Art Institute of Chicago have shed new light on her materials and enabled researchers to reconstruct the stages involved in the creation of her works. They reveal a slow, carefully structured process and highlight the central role of Ripolin. The artist repurposed the modern industrial lacquer, turning it from a utilitarian product into a means of producing transparencies, gloss, drips, layers, craquelure and contrasts of vivid colour. Also used by Pablo Picasso, Francis Picabia and Vassily Kandinsky, and celebrated by Le Corbusier, Ripolin inadvertently made Séraphine Louis' experiments part of the history of avant-garde art.

4.

ASSOCIATED PROGRAM

TALK

Behind the scenes of the *Séraphine Louis* exhibition

**By Elia Biezunski, Research Fellow/Curator,
and Stéphane Leroy, Head of Exhibition Design
at the Centre Pompidou-Metz**

THU. 22.10.26

Auditorium Wendel | 18:30

How does an exhibition come about? What decisions shape its approach and spatial structure?

Here curator Elia Biezunski, and scenographer Stéphane Leroy invite you behind the scenes: from defining the project's overall direction to designing the exhibition spaces and devising the visitor itinerary, they share the ideas, decisions and stages underlying this retrospective.

TALK

A WORK FOR EACH SUNDAY

Designed as a special space for dialogue, this programme invites art historians, curators, artists, writers and researchers to share their points of view on a work on display, thereby enabling visitors to explore and rediscover the exhibitions from a different angle.

Séraphine Louis. *Blue Séraphine*

**By Elia Biezunski, Research fellow/Curator at the
Centre Pompidou-Metz**

SUN. 13.12.26

Gallery 2 | 10.30 & 11.45 AM

Blue Séraphine bears a unique title: the first name of the artist who brought to life this tempestuously imposing plant. Is this a self-portrait? Elia Biezunski, the exhibition's curator, explores the history of this enigmatic work and offers several ways of interpreting it.

Séraphine Louis. *Flowers in a Basket*, By Alice Tourneroche, Director of the Senlis Museum of Art and Archaeology

SUN. 10.01.27

Gallery 2 | 10.30 & 11.45 AM

Flowers in a Basket is considered the artist's first work. A truly programmatic piece, it contains the seeds of the motifs and principles that would unfold in the exuberant compositions of her artistic maturity.

**The chancel of the former church
of Saint-Pierre-aux-Nonnains in Metz**

By Anne Adrian, heritage curator,
and Valérie Kozlowski, Director
of the Musée de la Cour d'Or in Metz
SUN. 28.02.27

Gallery 2 | 10.30 & 11.45 AM

The carved panels in the chancel of Saint-Pierre-aux-Nonnains marked out the areas of the church reserved for the priest and the cantors, as distinct from those intended for the congregation. The trees of life that embellish them echo one of Séraphine Louis's favourite themes. Taking a fresh look at the history and ornamentation of these remarkable pieces, the curators home in on their interconnections with Séraphine Louis's paintings.

**Séraphine Louis. *The Bouquet of Leaves
or Bunches of Grapes***

By Lolita Beaufort, art historian
SUN. 21.03.27

Gallery 2 | 10.30 & 11.45 AM

This exquisite painting portrays vine leaves and bunches of grapes surrounding a stunning palm-tree trunk. Lolita Beaufort, a contributor to the Centre Pompidou-Metz exhibition, offers an interpretation at once visual and symbolic of this disconcerting botanical combination.

Séraphine Louis. *The Tree of Paradise*
By Manja Wilkens and Hans Körner, authors
of the artist's first catalogue raisonné

SUN. 11.04.27

Gallery 2 | 10.30 & 11.45 AM

The Tree of Paradise sees Séraphine Louis reaching a totally new level of fantasy. Art historians Manja Wilkens and Hans Körner delve into this extraordinary "giant canvas", its offbeat composition, and its population of astonishing metamorphoses.



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *The Bouquet of Leaves or Bunches of Grapes*, c. 1928
Oil on canvas, 146 x 114 cm
Private collection, courtesy of Galerie Dina Vierny
Photo: © Fondation Dina Vierny – Musée Maillol, Paris / Fonds Anne Uhde / Jean-Louis Losi

PERFORMANCE

Next please!

By Juliette Steiner, actress, set designer
and director, and the Quai Numéro Sept theatre
company

SUN. 13.12.26

Gallery 2 | FROM 4.00 PM

In conjunction with the exhibition Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival, the Quai Numéro Sept theatre company is presenting a theatrical walkthrough of the show.

Juliette Steiner and her entire team take on the missing legacy of female artists either too little known, forgotten or even dispossessed of their works. Drawing on the works on display in various exhibitions, the actresses offer a kind of visual, theatrical poem, akin to a surrealist collage that plays with female artists who appear and disappear in a joyful interplay of echoes and resonances.

Séraphine Louis, Marina Abramović and Britney Spears are invited to sit down together; while the Guerrilla Girls cross paths with Brigitte Fontaine and prehistoric women. But above all, they engage in dialogue with the questions and doubts of the actresses, who in turn assert what sets them apart. Juliette Steiner blurs the boundaries between eras and personalities, urging us to step up next in a form of resistance through creativity.

CINEMA

Séraphine

By Martin Provost

SUN. 10.01.27

Auditorium Wendel | 3:00 PM

Winner of seven Caesar awards, including best actress for Yolande Moreau, Martin Provost's film brought Séraphine Louis into the public eye with its free and sensitive interpretation of the artist's life.

FAIRE

DÉFAIRE



YOUNG AUDIENCES

AFTERIMAGES AND GARDEN SKIN COLLECTIVE TEXTILE AND GRAPHIC CREATION

Margot Agnus, artist

FROM 19.09.26 TO 17.01.27 | 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

SAT. SUN. + PUBLIC HOLIDAYS | 90'

Open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
and Fridays at 3:00 PM during Zone B school holidays.

The workshop calls on participants to create an evolving collective artwork inspired by nature and the memory of places. Participants are invited to contribute to an installation that takes shape over time, much like an organic skin that covers and transforms the space.

The artwork takes the form of a sizeable medium (a roll or strip of paper) combining a graphic base with additions such as beads, fabrics, photographs, etc. Each extra input enriches the artist's installation, creating a living work of art in which every contribution finds its place.



© Margot Agnus

THE CAPSULE

The Capsule was conceived as an intermediate space, halfway between an exhibition gallery and a workshop, with the public invited to take part in activities freely linked to the museum's programme. This space for freedom makes The Capsule a place for experimentation, a creative laboratory for guest artists both emergent and established.

THE SONG OF IMAGES

Pascale Montandon-Jodorowsky, artist

FROM 19.09 TO 22.11.26 | 2:00 - 6:00 PM

WED. SAT. SUN. + PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
and Fridays at 3:00 pm during Zone B school holidays.

Pascale Montandon-Jodorowsky looks into the interaction between time, space, movement and memory. Her work examines the fragility of life in a perpetual quest for light, colour and metamorphosis. Since 2007 she has been collaborating with Alejandro Jodorowsky on the "pascALEjandro" project, fusing his symbolic universe with her pictorial vision. In The Capsule, she presents a unique exhibition combining images and sound, inviting visitors to an experience at once tactile and metaphysical.



Pascale Montandon-Jodorowsky, *Before, Now, After*, 2023

SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT GROUPS

To mark the exhibition Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival, a range of arts and cultural education initiatives, designed for schoolchildren and university students, will run throughout the 2026–2027 academic year.

Developed in collaboration with our cultural and academic partners, they will emphasise the sharing of knowledge and artistic practice, with the aim of offering pupils and students original experiences.

Duo-tours with our cultural partners

Since 2010 the Centre Pompidou-Metz has been collaborating with numerous cultural institutions across France's Great Eastern region. These partnerships will provide a unique cultural day out, exploring different artistic disciplines and cultural venues.

The tour currently begins at the Centre Pompidou-Metz with a visit to the exhibition Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival, before continuing through the city to cultural partners such as the heritage collections of the Musée de la Cour d'Or and the Metz Libraries and Media Centres.

A Film Workshop with the Ligue de l'Enseignement (Education League)

Following the screening of a selection of ten short films exploring botany and humanity's relationship with nature and ecology, Paul Oudin, from the Ligue de l'Enseignement, will head up a film workshop. Pupils will have the opportunity to learn about careers in the film industry, the various stages involved in making a short film, and the principles behind creating special effects.

'Special event days' in the form of student projects

Special event days are highlights of artistic and cultural education at the Centre Pompidou-Metz. They bring together all three backbone elements – commitment, knowledge and practice – and are based in particular on student projects involving several months and several stages.

These projects allow students to take on the role of facilitators or "expert mediators", culminating in a presentation in the form of mini-lectures lasting some fifteen minutes and devoted to exhibition themes: the Modern Primitives, the self-taught artist, the artist and the dealer, the role of women artists, nature, botany, etc.



THE CENTRE POMPIDOU-METZ PODCAST

Et si je te raconte... The Centre Pompidou-Metz podcasts take listeners behind the scenes through the voices of all those involved in exhibition conception and staging: curators, research personnel, exhibition designers, editors, stage managers, caterers, and more.

Next episode: Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival

5.

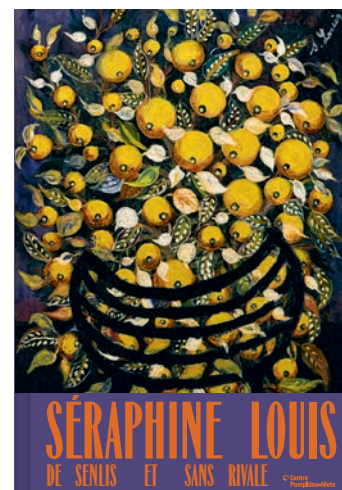
CATALOGUE

Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival

A major figure in 20th-century painting, Séraphine Louis (1864–1942) – also known as Séraphine of Senlis – evolved a unique body of work in which flowers, trees and fruit unfold in fantastical visions. Through the expressiveness of their visual language and chromatic power, these paintings place Séraphine Louis at the heart of modernist experimentation. Accompanying the first retrospective dedicated to her by the Centre Pompidou-Metz, this richly illustrated volume brings together a remarkable collection of some ninety paintings. Essays, scholarly analyses and open-ended contributions from contemporary artists shed light on the multiple dimensions of her painting and offer a fresh perspective on an artist now recognised as one of the great artistic innovators of her time. The book also offers a critical re-examination of the artist's work, scrutinising the narratives and analyses – both legendary and scholarly – that have shaped its reception.

Following an introductory essay by the exhibition's curator, Elia Biezunski, four contributions shed light on the artist's approach: Manja Wilkens, art historian and co-author of the first Séraphine Louis catalogue raisonné, shows how dealer Wilhelm Uhde constructed the myth of a cloistered artist when other sources reveal a more complex reality; Gilles Barabant, chief curator of 20th-century and contemporary art at the Centre for Research and Conservation of the Museums of France, presents recent expert analyses of Séraphine Louis's sophisticated colour mixes, as well as the successive stages in the creation of her paintings; Anne-Marie Dubois, director of the museum of art and history at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne in Paris, adds to our understanding of Séraphine Louis's life by contextualising the letters written in confinement towards the end of her life; and Marion Alluchon, art historian and head of contemporary art, design, architecture and fashion programming at the Swedish Institute in Paris, offers an interpretation of Séraphine Louis's work through the prism of modern art, highlighting its affinities with the avant-garde movements despite her lack of direct contact with other artists.

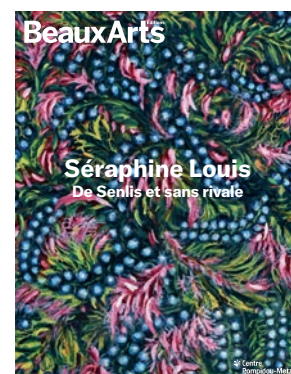
In addition, the scholarly notes accompanying some of the works are complemented by a "carte blanche" given to the artists Mimosa Echard, Jacquemus, Annette Messager and Madeleine Roger-Lacan: the texts they have produced generate unique dialogues within the book.



Centre Pompidou-Metz Publications
Editor: Elia Biezunski
21 x 31 cm
192 pages
35 euros
Publication date: 28 October 2026

Beaux-arts Magazine: Special Issue

This special issue dedicated to the exhibition [Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival](#) explores the many facets of the artist's oeuvre: her influences, her creative process, her extraordinary life story as a cleaning-woman who became a recognised artist – notably thanks to the intervention of the art dealer Wilhelm Uhde – together with her tragic end in an asylum and her place in the history of modern art.



Beaux-Arts Magazine: Special Issue
60 pages
11.90 euros
Publication date: 28 October 2026

6.

TOURING



A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FONDATION DINA VIERNY–MUSÉE MAILLOL A second Paris stopover – the Maillol Museum

Following its stay at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, the retrospective *Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival* will enjoy a second appearance at the Musée Maillol in Paris, from 9 June 2027 to 9 January 2028. This Paris exhibition is the upshot of a partnership established at the very outset of the project between the Centre Pompidou-Metz and the Fondation Dina Vierny–Musée Maillol, which opened up its archives and contributed to the exhibition with loans from its collection.

The staging of this retrospective at the Musée Maillol is especially significant. Séraphine Louis's story is, in fact, closely linked to that of Dina Vierny, who played a vital role in raising awareness of preserving and promoting the artist's work during the second half of the 20th century. From the late 1940s onwards Vierny took an interest in the artists discovered and championed by Wilhelm Uhde. Her meeting with art critic Anne-Marie Uhde, sister of the German collector, added considerably to her knowledge of Séraphine, enabling her to acquire several paintings and collect part of the relevant archival material.

From then on Vierny was Séraphine's unflagging champion. Through her gallery the many exhibitions she organised in France and abroad helped bring recognition from both private collectors and officialdom. This commitment explains the exceptional scope of the collection now held by the Fondation Dina Vierny–Musée Maillol and Dina Vierny's family: comprising nearly a fifth of Séraphine Louis's currently catalogued body of work, it is now one of the most authoritative collections dedicated to the artist.

The Musée Maillol has naturally continued the work begun by its founder. In 2008, it devoted an exhibition to Séraphine Louis, accompanying the spectacular rediscovery of the artist by the general public following the release of Martin Provost's film, starring Yolande Moreau. Since then, the public's fascination with her work has never wavered. In hosting the second phase of the exhibition *Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival* in Paris, the Musée Maillol is thus continuing a history spanning more than sixty years. The partnership with the Centre Pompidou-Metz means that the legacy established and passed on by Dina Vierny is now able to engage with the latest expert research, in a fresh assessment of an artist long marginalised in narratives of modernity, and fully reaffirm her place in art history.

Founded by Dina Vierny and inaugurated on 20 January 1995, the Fondation Dina Vierny–Musée Maillol, is now a recognised non-profit organisation and home to the world's largest collection dedicated to Aristide Maillol, along with the other collections assembled by Dina Vierny throughout her life, ranging from Matisse to Bonnard, and from Kandinsky to naïve art. Located at 59–61 Rue de Grenelle, in the heart of Paris's 7th arrondissement, the museum's 4,250 square metres house its permanent collection together with a regular programme of temporary exhibitions devoted to 20th and 21st-century art. More than seventy exhibitions have been presented there since it opened, including major retrospectives dedicated to Klimt, Bacon, Basquiat and Miró. True to Vierny's seminal interest in the self-taught artists championed by Wilhelm Uhde, the museum has also regularly brought the great masters of naïve art back into the spotlight, from Séraphine Louis to André Bauchant and Camille Bombois, and notably with the 2018 exhibition *From Douanier Rousseau to Séraphine. The Great Naïve Masters*.

Thus this new Séraphine Louis retrospective is in perfect harmony with the Musée Maillol's collections, commitments and programme.

SÉRAPHINE LOUIS: EXTRAS

From mid-October 2026, the works in the Senlis Museum of Art and Archaeology will remain on display there via the video-mapping presentation *In Séraphine's Hands*. The museum is thus offering an original way to discover the artist, ahead of the return of her paintings in May 2027.

Following the exhibition *Séraphine Louis. From Senlis, Without Rival* at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, the Senlis Museum of Art and Archaeology will present the exhibition 1927–2027: Senlis Exhibits Séraphine.

7.

PARTNERS

Centre Pompidou-Metz is the first example of the decentralization of a major national cultural institution, Centre Pompidou, in partnership with local authorities. As an independent institution, Centre Pompidou-Metz benefits from the experience, expertise and international reputation of Centre Pompidou. It shares with its parent institution a commitment to innovation, generosity, multidisciplinary approaches and accessibility for all audiences.

Centre Pompidou-Metz also develops partnerships with museums and cultural institutions around the world. Extending its exhibition programme, Centre Pompidou-Metz presents dance performances, concerts, film screenings and lectures.

Centre Pompidou-Metz is supported by Wendel, its founding patron.



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Media Partners





W E N D E L

MÉCÈNE FONDATEUR

WENDEL, FOUNDING PATRON OF CENTRE POMPIDOU-METZ

Since its opening in 2010, Wendel has supported Centre Pompidou-Metz. Wendel chose to support this emblematic institution, whose cultural reach extends to the widest possible audience.

In recognition of its longstanding commitment to culture, Wendel was awarded the title of "Grand Mécène de la Culture" (Major Patron of Culture) in 2012.

Wendel is one of Europe's leading publicly listed investment firms. It is a long-term investor, requiring active shareholder engagement that fosters trust, a constant focus on innovation and sustainable development, and investment in promising diversification opportunities.

Wendel's expertise lies in selecting leading companies, including its current portfolio companies: ACAMS, Bureau Veritas, Crisis Prevention Institute, Globeducate, IHS Towers, Scalian, Stahl and Tarkett. Through Wendel Growth, Wendel also invests in innovative, high-growth companies, either directly or through funds. In 2023, Wendel announced its intention to develop a private asset management platform for third-party investors, alongside its proprietary investment activities. As part of this strategy, Wendel completed the acquisition of a 51% stake in IK Partners in May 2024 and announced the acquisition of a 75% stake in Monroe Capital on October 22, 2024.

Founded in Lorraine in 1704, the Wendel Group developed over 270 years across a range of industries, particularly steelmaking, before turning to long-term investment in the late 1970s.

The Group is supported by its core family shareholder, comprising approximately 1,300 members of the Wendel family brought together through the family holding company Wendel-Participations, which holds a 39.6% stake in Wendel.

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8.

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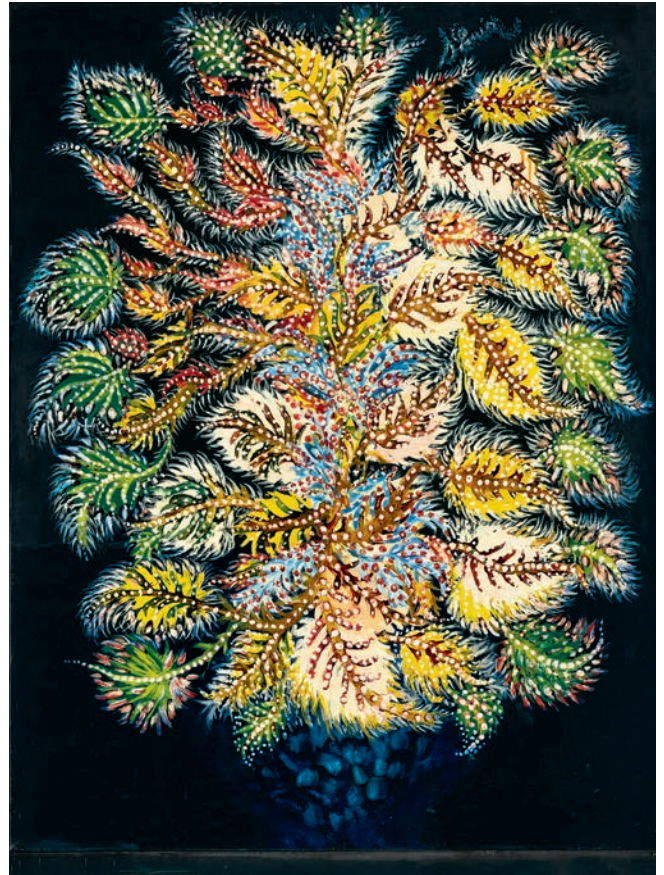
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SÉRAPHINE LOUIS. FROM SENLIS, WITHOUT RIVAL



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *The Tree of Paradise*, c. 1928
Oil and Ripolin on canvas, 194.9 × 130.5 cm
New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 37.1971
Photo: © Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *Light Leaves on a Blue Background*, c. 1930
Oil on canvas, 116 × 89.5 cm
Dortmund, Museum Ostwall im Dortmunder U
Photo: © D. R.



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *Leaves*, c. 1930
Oil on canvas, 92.5 × 73 cm
Cologne, Zander Collection
Photo: Alistair Overbruck



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *Daisies*, c. 1929
Oil on canvas, 116 × 89 cm
Cologne, Zander Collection
Photo: Alistair Overbruck

SÉRAPHINE LOUIS. FROM SENLIS, WITHOUT RIVAL



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *Clusters and Pink Leaves*, c. 1929
Oil and Ripolin on canvas, 115.5 × 89 cm
Senlis, Museum of Art and Archaeology
Photo: © Christian Schryve



Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine de Senlis, *Fruits (Apples)*, c. 1929–1930
Ripolin on canvas, 194.3 × 129.5 cm
New York, The Museum of Modern Art
Photo: © Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence



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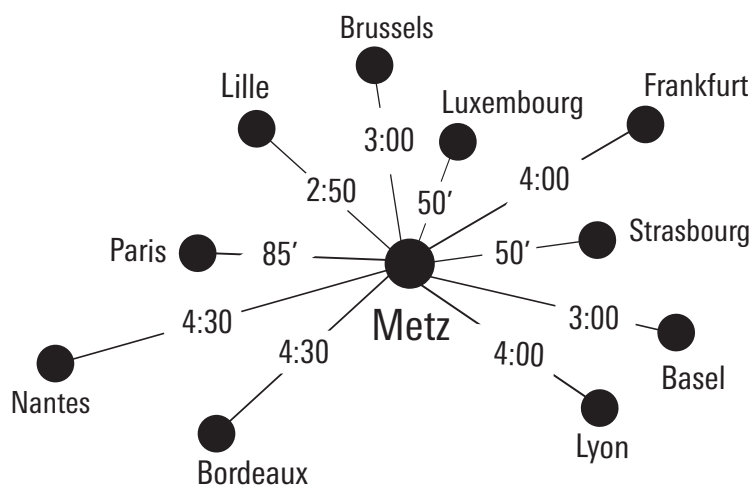
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