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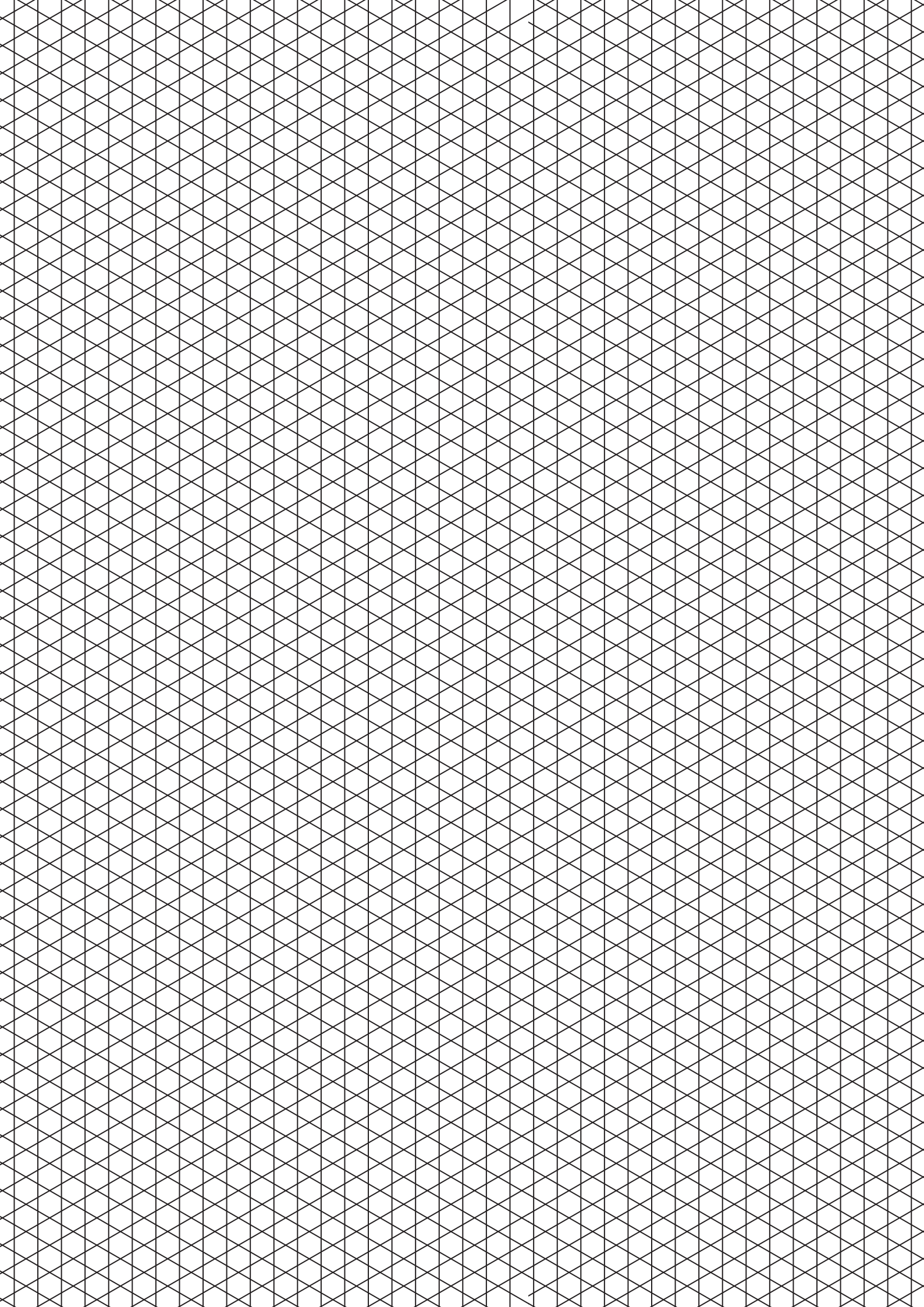
ANDRÉ MASSON

THERE IS NO FINISHED WORLD

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1.

PRESENTATION

ANDRÉ MASSON

THERE IS NO FINISHED WORLD

From 29 March to 2 September 2024
Gallery 3

Curator: Chiara Parisi, director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz

André Masson (1896–1987) was one of the greatest painters of the 20th century. His life and work were bound up with the historical and intellectual upheavals of his century. His non-doctrinal presence among the Surrealists, the invention of automatic drawing and sand pictures, his fruitful relationships with the artists and thinkers of his time, and the influence of his drawings and canvases on the beginnings of Abstract Expressionism are the best-known aspects of his oeuvre whose overall power is not yet fully appreciated.

A painter who experimented with new techniques and a peerless draughtsman, Masson was also a sculptor, a designer of theatre and opera sets and costumes, an art critic, an insatiable reader with an encyclopaedic culture, passionately interested in Western and Far Eastern mythology philosophy, and a remarkable poet and writer. The work of this free and rebellious spirit is shot through with the deep conviction that the only "justification for a work of art . . . is to contribute to the expansion of human beings, the transmutation of all values, the denunciation of social, moral and religious hypocrisy and consequently the denunciation of the dominant class, responsible for imperialist war and fascist regression¹".

On the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the Surrealist Manifesto, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is paying tribute to the exceptional figure of André Masson whose liberating thought remains as powerful as ever today. The exhibition will trace the artist's career, painting a picture of a multifaceted figure, open to collaborations and to the world, incessantly pursuing experimentation and guided by the "dictates of the unconscious" and a desire for the infinite.

This big retrospective will explore the various facets of Masson's work, as well as his close links with intellectuals, poets, filmmakers, playwrights and artists of his time. Its chronological layout will start with forests and the first erotic drawings made a few years after the First World War. The revolution of automatism and the shock that it introduced into his painting led to his experiments with sand paintings, the culmination of this research.

The massacres and slaughterhouses of the early 1930s would be followed by the landscapes, corridas, insects and political caricatures he created in Spain. The paintings teeming with myths and metamorphoses painted on his return to France between 1937 and 1940 will plunge visitors into a world where animate and inanimate realms intermingle. They would lead to the frenzied images of plants that grew out of the artist's stay in Martinique before he went into exile in the United States, whose environment gave new impetus to his painting. His return to France was marked by monumental canvases, homages to the resistance and to the pain endured. After settling in Tholonet, near Aix-en-Provence, he returned to a proliferating style. Canvases marked by the backwash from the theme of violence alternated with an atmospheric, sensorial approach. The space of the canvas became more fluid. "Movement is all that's left²", wrote the man for whom the metamorphosis and fusion of all the elements became the defining characteristics of his work.

¹ André Masson, *Cahiers d'Art*, no. 1–4, 1939, p. 72–73.

² André Masson, interview with Jean-Paul Clébert, *Mythologie d'André Masson*, Pierre Cailler, Geneva, 1971, p. 83.

Nearly half a century after the anthological exhibition organised by the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1976 and the Galeries Nationales d'Expositions du Grand Palais in 1977, and more than forty years after the tribute that was dedicated to him on the occasion of his 85th birthday by the Centre Pompidou, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is bringing together nearly 300 works, spanning paintings, drawings, sculptures, periodicals, illustrated books and unpublished archives, drawn from important national and international public collections (Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Museum of Modern Art and Solomon R. Guggenheim in New York, Baltimore Museum of Art, Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Museo Nacional Centro Reina Sofía à Madrid, etc.). The display will also be enriched by important masterpieces from private collections in America, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy and France. Thanks to these exceptional loans, the exhibition will shed fresh light on the richness and uniqueness of the man who called himself the "rebel" of Surrealism.



André Masson, *Torso with sun spots*, [Torse aux taches de soleil], 1943
Huile et tempera sur toile, 96 x 84 cm
Collection particulière
© Adagp, Paris, 2024
Photo : © Jean-Louis Losi

2024, CENTENARY OF THE MANIFESTO OF SURREALISM

In 1917, Guillaume Apollinaire had detected "a kind of surrealism" in Pablo Picasso's sets and costumes and Léonide Massine's choreography for the avant-garde ballet *Parade*. The term was destined for a resounding posterity, thanks primarily to André Breton, who in 1919 founded, together with Philippe Soupault and Louis Aragon, the periodical *Littérature*, which laid the foundations for what would become the Surrealist movement.

During the summer of 1924, he declared in *Le Journal littéraire*: "Symbolism, Cubism, Dadaism, have long been a thing of the past; SURREALISM is the topic of the day and Desnos is its prophet¹." A few months later, the publication of the *Manifesto of Surrealism*² was the founding act of the movement and provided a definition of the movement:

"SURREALISM, n. m. Pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing, or by other means, the real process of thought. Thought's dictation, in the absence of all control exercised by the reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.

ENCYCL. Philos. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain, previously neglected forms of association, in the omnipotence of the dream, in the disinterested play of thought."

¹ André Breton, "Robert Desnos", *Le Journal littéraire*, 5 July 1924.

² Manifesto of Surrealism, 15 October 1924, Sagittaire publishing house, Simon Kra.

2.

BIOGRAPHY

4 January 1896

André Masson is born in Balagny-sur-Thérain in the Oise. His parents would move to Lille when he was seven years old, before settling in Brussels in 1905.

1907-1912

André Masson is admitted to the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts and the École des Arts Décoratifs in Brussels where he learns the tempera technique. In 1910, he visits the Exposition Universelle et Internationale in Solbosch, where he is captivated by James Ensor's *Christ Calming the Storm*. On completing his training, he is awarded first prize in decorative composition by the academy.

1912

The young painter's family moves to Paris. He is admitted to the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris in the studio of Paul Baudoin, who teaches fresco technique, and regularly visits the Musée du Louvre and the Musée du Luxembourg.

1914-1918

He travels to Italy to study fresco and monumental painting. On his return to Paris, Masson leaves his family to settle in Switzerland where he leads an ascetic life. When the First World War breaks out, he rejects the offer of Swiss nationality. In January 1915, he enlists, leaving for the front the following year. He is seriously wounded in the chest in 1917 during the battle of the Chemin des Dames and is discharged in 1918.

1919-1921

André Masson does his first erotic drawings and takes up painting again. He moves to Céret in the company of his friend the painter Maurice Loutreuil and meets Odette Cabalé whom he marries in 1920. The couple move to Paris where their daughter Gladys Paulette, known as Lily, is born. The following year, Masson works during the day in a ceramics workshop and at night as a proofreader for the *Journal Officiel*. With his family he moves to 45, rue Blomet in the 15th arrondissement where he surrounds himself with painters, poets and writers.

1922

The artist begins his 'Forests' series, together with the one of men depicted in interiors. He discovers the work of Paul Klee

and distances himself from the Cézanne aesthetic and that of André Derain. In the autumn, he becomes friends with the dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler.

1923-1926

The beginning of the Surrealist period is marked by automatic drawings in the winter of 1923. The following year, Masson has a solo exhibition at the Galerie Simon, co-directed by Kahnweiler, where André Breton notices his paintings. In 1924, the latter publishes his *Manifesto of Surrealism*, the founding text of the movement that André Masson becomes fully involved in. The artist illustrates several issues of *La Révolution surréaliste* and signs the group's tracts.

1927-1929

He develops a new pictorial technique by creating sand paintings that enable him to extend the automatism of his drawings into painting. The artist subsequently distances himself from the Surrealist group and take part in several group exhibitions in Paris, Switzerland, Germany and for the first time in New York (A.E. Gallatin's Gallery of Living Art). He meets the artist Paule Vézelay, probably during his second solo exhibition at the Galerie Simon in 1929, moving in with her a short time afterwards. His paintings reveal his strong interest in metamorphosis.

1930-1933

He visits the slaughterhouse at La Villette and Vaugirard with the photographer Éli Lotar and paints canvases reflecting the violence that he discovers there. The first monograph on him is published in 1930. The following year he paints a series dedicated to massacres while developing a deep interest in mythology. He separates from Paule Vézelay and embarks on a relationship with Rose Maklès, whose sister Sylvia is the wife of Georges Bataille (She married Jacques Lacan in 1953). In 1933 the first performance of the ballet *Présages* is given, for which André Masson had designed the sets. The artist also illustrates the first issue of the periodical *Minotaure*.

1934-1937

André Masson moves to Spain, executes paintings devoted to harvests, insects, fantastic landscapes and corridas, and writes the poem 'Du Haut de Montserrat'. The artist travels all over the country and has numerous visitors, including Michel

and Louise Leiris, Simone Kahn, Georges Duthuit, Georges Limbour and Georges Bataille, with whom he creates the review *Acéphale*. His sons Diego and Luis Masson are born in 1935 and 1936. The artist links up again with André Breton and Surrealism, and becomes friends with the director Jean-Louis Barrault, for whom he creates the sets and costumes for *Numance*, performed for the first time in 1937. At the end of 1936, following the Spanish Civil War, the Masson family returns to France, moving to Lyons-la-Forêt.

1938-1941

During his second Surrealist period, the artist paints expressive, illusionist paintings, many of which were inspired by mythology and participates in the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme. He completes a series of drawings brought together in *Mythologie de la nature and Mythologie de l'Être*, and publishes several satirical anti-fascist drawings. After war is declared, the artist joins his Surrealist friends in Marseille in 1940 and the following year sets off for the United States.

1941-1944

He stops off in Martinique for several weeks with André Breton and meets Aimé Césaire who shows him around the island. This discovery of nature leads to the publication of *Martinique, charmeuse de serpents*, written with André Breton with illustrations by Masson. The painter then travels to New York, living for four years with his family in Connecticut, where his neighbours are Alexander Calder and Yves Tanguy. Impressed by the elementary forces of this new land, his paintings take on a telluric dimension. In 1941 he is given a large retrospective at the Baltimore museum, where he gives a talk on the origins of Surrealism. In 1944, he celebrates the liberation of Paris with the canvas *Resistance*.

1945-1947

André Masson and his family return to France. He starts work on the large painting *Niobe*, which echoes war atrocities and which he completes in 1947. That year, he moves to Tholonet near Aix-en-Provence.

1948-1958

The artist illustrates several books, including *Les Conquérants* by André Malraux and *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* by Stéphane Mallarmé. His canvases convey his deep interest in the landscapes around Aix, as well as his interest in Chinese painting, which he had discovered during his stay in the United States. His works become more calligraphic. He exhibits in France, Germany, the United States and England.

1958-1968

His paintings become more abstract and are created using jets of paint and an airbrush. Certain techniques and subjects reappear in his work, through sand and his exploration of the theme of Les Halles. In 1959, he is asked to execute stage designs for *Tête d'Or* for the Théâtre de France, and also for *Wozzeck* at the Opéra de Paris in 1963, two productions directed by Jean-Louis Barrault. In 1965, André Malraux asks him to paint the ceiling of the Odéon and the artist is the subject of a large retrospective at the Musée National d'Art Moderne. In 1968, he participates in the large exhibition 'Dada, Surrealism and their Heritage' at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

1969-1986

André Masson has many exhibitions in Italy, in Belgium and in Germany. An anthology of his writings, *Le rebelle du surréalisme*, is published in 1976. That year, the Museum of Modern Art in New York organises a retrospective of his work, which subsequently travels to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston then to the Grand Palais in Paris. The artist participates in several filmed interviews as well as radio programmes like *Les chantiers de Dédale* by Jacques Munier in 1986, in the company of Michel Leiris.

28 October 1987

The artist dies after a final trip to London where a large retrospective of his drawings has been organised.

3.

MAIN THEMES OF THE EXHIBITION

SURREALISM'S REBEL

From World War One to surrealism

The First World War, for which André Masson volunteered, was a decisive episode in his development. Driven by a Nietzschean spirit that encouraged him to see war as an experience to be lived, he was seriously wounded during the Chemin des Dames offensive in April 1917. This wound, along with the atrocities he witnessed and only spoke about sixteen years later, plunged him into what he called "human humus"³. War made him a man, he explained⁴. Henceforth, the artist could no longer separate "the idea of painting from the idea of being a man, and thus having a certain responsibility"⁵. The "Forests" series, produced in the early 1920s, reflected his concern with the strangeness of the world. André Masson painted legendary undergrowth, where tree branches intertwine and dominate geometric shapes reminiscent of coffins. In the legacy of Paul Cézanne, and later of Cubism, the artist found an art whose measured spirit enabled him to momentarily stabilise his "ransacked self". His "Players" series, which he began at the same time, also reflects this heritage and the atmosphere of his studio in rue Blomet, where he moved to in 1923. Many artists would meet up there, including poets and writers like Antonin Artaud, Roland Tual, Michel Leiris, Georges Limbour, Joan Miró and soon André Breton. A pre-Surrealist gathering place, the studio was a veritable hub of dissidence where many intellectual discussions and card games took place.

The revolution of automatism

The energy around rue Blomet quickly led André Masson to meet André Breton. In 1924, the latter wrote the *Manifesto of Surrealism*, a founding act for the movement. André Masson joined it with his friends, illustrated their periodical, *La Révolution surréaliste*, on many occasions and participated in group exhibitions, notably at the Galerie Simon. In December 1923, the artist created his first automatic drawings, anticipating the automatic writing that Breton had theorised in his manifesto.

These drawings were inspired by the firm desire to "evade reason, its guard; to repudiate its laws in order indulge in uncontrolled sensory disturbance"⁶.

"(a) The first condition was to free the spirit from all apparent bonds
(b) give oneself up to inner chaos
(c) speed of writing"⁷

"These drawings', he explained some years later, 'often nudes, intermingled nudities – are again close to forests: the rhythm is not very different, except that entwined branches have become entwined bodies'⁸."

Over the following years, André Masson sought to extend his automatic drawing to painting. However, hampered by the canvas as a surface and the preparation of the colours, he managed to perform this action thanks to sand, which he spread on a canvas after splashing some patches of adhesive onto it. Executed quickly, these sand paintings were supplemented with a few lines and touches of colour. This new pictorial process made the artist one of the first gestural painters.



Card Trick
[Le tour de carte], 1923
Oil on canvas,
73 x 50,2 cm
New York, Museum of
Modern Art
© Adagp, Paris, 2024
Photo : Digital image,
The Museum of Modern
Art, New York/Scala,
Florence

Card Trick offers a remarkable synthesis of the formal and thematic vocabulary of André Masson in the early 1920s.

3 *André Masson, Vagabond du surréalisme*, interviews by Gilbert Brownstone, 1975, Editions Saint Germain des Prés, p. 15.

4 *Idem*, p. 13.

5 *Idem* p. 15.

6 Jean Ballard, "Passages à Marseille d'André Masson, 1929, 1939", in *Mythologie d'André Masson*, a publication conceived, presented and arranged by Jean-Paul Clébert, P. Cailler, Genève, 1971. by Jean-Paul Clébert, P. Cailler, Genève, 1971, p. 132.

7 André Masson, *Les Études philosophiques* n°4, October-December 1956, p.634-636.

8 André Masson, interview with Gilbert Brownstone, *André Masson, Vagabond du surréalisme*, p. 76.

An independent spirit

André Masson continually experimented with new techniques to bring out forms derived from the unconscious. Although the Surrealist group initially enabled him to give free rein to his creativity, it soon became, under the supervision of André Breton, an obstacle. The painter broke with the group in 1929: "It is complicated. Firstly, I don't have a very gregarious mind. And it seemed difficult for me to simultaneously handle an ethic, a sociology, an aesthetic⁹," he explained. The painter did not adhere to the orthodoxy imposed by André Breton, and the two men also diverged philosophically. Nevertheless, André Masson saw Surrealism and Cubism as "the authentic expression of [their] time. They bear witness in the future of the effort of men convinced that originality and adventure are the great tradition of Humanity, and that the life of the mind will always be the fruit of endlessly renewed Desire and heroic discovery¹⁰." In 1936, the painter joined forces again with André Breton and participated in the International Surrealism Exhibition in London, where he exhibited eight canvases.

GOING BEYOND CUBISM

Feeding off his predecessors

André Masson received a solid artistic training: he studied at the Académie royale des Beaux-Arts and the École des Arts Décoratifs de Bruxelles from 1907, and then in the studio of Paul Baudoin at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris from 1912. There he learnt the technique of tempera, and, thanks to reproductions, discovered the works of El Greco, Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin and Georges Seurat. Subsequently, the artist would continually train his eye, studying the works of his predecessors, from Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Andrea Mantegna to Tintoretto, Nicolas Poussin and Eugène Delacroix, whose originality he praised. He visited the Louvre with Georges Limbour and admired *The Beggars* by Pieter Bruegel, and lingered before the works of Hieronymus Bosch and the battle scenes of Paolo Uccello. Furthermore, André Masson was quick to go against the choices made by the Surrealists. This was the case with Odilon Redon, whom

he praised for his spatial intuition: "There was a new and unexpected sense of space in the work of Redon, interesting colour relationships, a very personal biological fantasy¹¹," wrote André Masson. The painter was almost immediately drawn by van Gogh, and above all by Cézanne. Like him, he did not imitate objects, but represented them. In this Cézannesque vein, André Masson attached great importance to line and the geometry of forms. After Cézanne, it seemed no longer possible to dissociate the concept of space from that of time.

The Cubist revelation

Around 1922, art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler began lending his support to André Masson and introduced him fully to Cubism. When Masson visited his home in Boulogne-sur-Seine, he saw works by Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Fernand Léger and Juan Gris on his walls. This discovery was a real revelation for the painter who, up until then, had mainly discovered the work of the Nabis and Henri Matisse. Like his contemporaries Joan Miró, Max Ernst and Jean Arp, he initially assimilated the Cubist lesson: "I thought it was a phenomenon that had to be examined – a bit like Kant's philosophy that you had to penetrate if you wanted to go further. It was a movement you couldn't go around: to get out, you had to get in¹²." The works produced by André Masson in the mid-1920s were mainly a response to Analytical Cubism. He borrowed its formal structure, decomposing its figures and landscapes, as in *Man in an Interior* (1923–24, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne) and *The Picardy Road* [La Route de Picardie] (1924, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne). The shallow depth of the space, the geometricisation of forms and the arrangement of elements refer explicitly to Cubism without being fully affiliated with it. The subjects that André Masson chose were indeed Surrealist, which would lead Pablo Picasso to say when he first saw the canvases: "He is funny, this boy; he borrows our forms, but he puts feelings into them that we would never have thought of¹³."

9 André Masson, interview with G. Bernier, "Le surréalisme et après. Un entretien au magnétophone avec André Masson", L'Œil no. 5, 1955, p. 17.

10 André Masson, "Origines du Cubisme et du Surréalisme", talk given in 1941, published by Françoise Will-Levaillant, André Masson. *Le rebelle du surréalisme. Écrits*, Collection Savoir Hermann, Paris, 1976, p. 23.

11 André Masson, "A voix basse", *Métamorphose de l'Artiste*, 1956, vol. 2, p. 26–27.

12 André Masson, interview with Gilbert Brownstone, *André Masson, Vagabond du surréalisme*, p. 20.

13 André Masson, interview with Gilbert Brownstone, *André Masson, Vagabond du surréalisme*, p. 21.

The rejection of pure painting

Cubism was only a stage in the development of his own vocabulary. The painter, like other artists of his generation, expressly opposed what Cubism represented, i.e. pure painting, painting for its own sake. With this in mind, the artist incorporated a strong symbolic dimension and more organic lines into his work. The painting *The Four Elements* [Les Quatre éléments] (1923–24, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne), purchased by André Breton in 1924, marked a key moment in this process. While the structure of the composition is still inherited from Cubism, the subject reflects the idea of philosophical art dear to André Masson. The four elements – air, water, fire and earth – in the foreground, and the female figure in the background, make the canvas an original creation. The Cubist distancing that is created owes much to the artist Paul Klee, whose work André Masson discovered in 1922 through reproductions. His search for the infinite, the imprint of the sacred arts on his work, and his mastery of proportions would have a decisive influence on the painter's development.

PAINTING PLEASURE

Dionysiac universe

At the heart of André Masson's work is the figure of Dionysus, whose power and animal generative force are allied to pleasure. From the early 1920s onwards, the Dionysian universe permeated his works, particularly his automatic ones. The ecstatic, explosive state demanded by automatism, the need to step outside oneself and give free rein to one's instincts, are akin to Nietzsche's aspirations for Dionysian exaltation. "Masson's universe", wrote Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, "was not a world of forms, like that of the Cubists, but a world of forces . . . The Cubists lived in an Eden from which misfortune and death were banished. Masson's world of forces is shaken by frenzied passions. It's a world where people are born and die, are hungry and thirsty, love and kill¹⁴." This Dionysiac universe is evident not only in his "Massacres" series, but also in his drawings of 1936–37, in which the figure of the bull, frequently associated with Dionysus, appears. In *The Dionysiac Universe* (1937, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne), the artist depicts a chaotic, violent world dominated by a bull with menacing arms. The attributes that make up his character were used the same year by André Masson to create the figure of Acepheus. Often identified with the Minotaur, Acepheus is a headless standing man, arms extended horizontally, holding a grenade in his right hand and a dagger in his left.



The four elements [Les Quatre éléments], [1923 - 1924]

Oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm

Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne

© Adagp, Paris, 2024

Photo : Philippe Migeat - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP

His breasts are marked by two stars, his belly is a labyrinth of entrails and his genitals are represented by a skull and crossbones. Acepheus gave its name to a magazine created by Georges Bataille in 1936, illustrated by André Masson. Beyond the sacred figure of the god, it was the orgiastic impulse that the artist explored through Dionysus, an impulse both creative and destructive, leading him to illustrate several erotic works. From Marquis de Sade's *Justine* to Georges Bataille's *L'Histoire de l'œil* and Louis Aragon's *Le Con d'Irène*, his erotic drawings reflect a vision of the world governed by deep-seated instincts.

¹⁴ Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, preface to the exhibition catalogue *André Masson*, New York, Buccholz Gallery/Williard Gallery, 17/02–14/03 1941, n.p.

Eroticism as cornerstone

"Eroticism must be considered the cornerstone of André Masson's work. It is what dictates the convulsive arrangement of men's and women's bodies drawing into their wonderful affray even items of furniture that were only suspected of retaining their imprint."

André Breton, "Prestige d'André Masson", in *Minotaure*, no. 12–13, May 1939

From his automatic drawings to his purely Surrealist canvases and sand paintings, eroticism is omnipresent and multifaceted in André Masson's work. Overflowing with passion and desire, his eroticism is also violent and deadly. He regularly depicted men and women whose genital attributes could become plant elements or murderous instruments. The erotic drawings he produced included works of a sexual nature that he described as "traditional", others leaning towards the grotesque or the pornographic, or towards a more subtle eroticism that André Breton described as "veiled". This "veiled eroticism" is reflected mainly in his automatic drawings, in which the unconscious gradually reveals sexual organs. The eroticism of his paintings appears more deliberate, a taboo subject to be transgressed that many Surrealist artists seized upon. Masson nevertheless set himself apart from his contemporaries through his exalted iconography. Eroticism, declared the artist, is the most serious thing of all. Far from sublimation, he intended to show the brutal nature of sexual desire. His watercolours of *Damned Women*, for example, inspired by Baudelaire's texts and by Sapphism, highlight young women who refuse to submit to men's lust. In 1947, he also produced, in just two days, a series of *Twenty-Two Drawings on the Theme of Desire*. A veritable immersion in the unconscious, it reveals what lies behind desire, in other words, a lack.



The Metamorphosis of the Lovers [La métamorphose des amants], 1938
Oil on canvas, 100 × 89 cm
Collection Simone Collinet
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

Deeply erotic, *The Metamorphosis of the Lovers* [La métamorphose des amants] reflects the diversity and richness of André Masson's sexual imagery. The subject is "the conjunction of plants, animals, women... where man has already metamorphosed into one of the elements of nature¹⁵¹", he explained. Between attraction and repulsion, the two lovers are linked by a shell, an allegory of a genital organ, just like the many flowers that populate the canvas. The two lovers appear in a kind of ecstasy tinged with sacredness. For the artist, this sacred dimension and eroticism must go hand in hand, just as there is a clear analogy between eroticism and death. The painting's palette of acidic colours, varying from blood-red to fiery yellows and oranges, helps create an atmosphere of violence, also inseparable from André Masson's erotic iconography. *The Metamorphosis of the Lovers* [La métamorphose des amants] also bears witness to his extensive reading of Goethe, from the Roman *Elegies* to *The Green Serpent*, which led him to reflect on the metamorphosis of plants and the theory of colour.

15 André Masson, *Mythologie d'André Masson*, op. cit. p. 90.



Returning from the execution [En revenant de l'exécution], 1937
Oil on canvas, 67 × 118 cm
Kunsthalle Bremen
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

"Violence, fanaticism – so much love and so much hate – go beyond everything that I had imagined!", wrote André Masson to Jean Paulhan in 1936.

¹ Letter from André Masson to Jean Paulhan ; Tossa, 15 August [1936], published in André Masson, *Les années surréalistes. Correspondance 1916–1942*, Lyon éditions de la Manufacture, 1990, Edition compiled, presented and annotated by Françoise Will-Levaillant, p. 346.

ANTI-FASCIST COMMITMENT

Escape to Spain

Fleeing the rise of the extreme right in France following the demonstrations on the Place de la Concorde on 6 February 1934, André Masson moved to Spain, guided by his readings of Baltasar Gracián and Miguel de Cervantès, as well as the theatre of Félix Lope de Vega Carpio. On his arrival, the artist was caught up in the Asturian Revolution, particularly the uprisings in Barcelona. Refusing to heed advice to leave, the artist embarked on a long journey on foot through Andalusia. There, he experienced the land and, attracted by the magnetic aspect of the earth, began his series on harvests and insects. The latter are anthropomorphised and staged amidst an abundance of colourful nature. At the same time, Masson attended bullfights, transcribing their ceremonial dimension, the overwhelming presence of the sun and the aesthetics of the spectacle into his paintings. For him, these were sublime moments when man and animal become one. He was not so much interested in the killing of the bull, which he described as obscene, but more in the choreography that unfolded, in the animal's spiralling motion that creates such an osmosis that bull sometimes becomes man, and vice versa.

Painting the event

The violence of bullfighting allegorically echoed that of Spanish politics. In 1936, he joined an anarchist union and became involved with the Anarchist Militia Committee. He designed posters and emblems, and produced a series of political cartoons. Anti-Franco, anti-fascist and anti-clerical, his drawings expressed the painter's virulence in the face of wartime violence. "The paintings and drawings I did of the Spanish War, he explained, 'are not at all obscure. I wanted to make a battle stamp: openly pillorying dictators I considered evil. . . . I think I'm the only Surrealist painter to have done what was considered a reprehensible act: to paint the event'¹⁶."

From 1938 onwards, he produced charged portraits of fascist leaders and, through his drawings, fiercely criticised the complacent church. In 1938 and 1939, some of these were published in newspapers such as *Le Voltigeur français* and *CLÉ. Bulletin mensuel de la F. I. A. R. I. (Fédération internationale de l'art révolutionnaire indépendant)*, in which he caricatured Franco, Mussolini and Hitler. André Masson also produced several paintings paying tribute to the spirit of resistance and the victims of the Second World War, such as *Resistance* (1944, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne) and *Niobe* (1947, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon). For this painting, the artist invoked Greek mythology and the character Niobe, who has lost her children. Through *Niobe*, André Masson shines a spotlight on the women and children hard hit by the conflict, creating a veritable monument to grief.

¹⁶ André Masson, interview with Gilbert Brownstone, *André Masson, Vagabond du surréalisme*, p. 142.

MYTHOLOGIES

Summoning myths

"The authentic artist must find the movement towards myth for himself¹⁷" asserted André Masson. Defining himself as a mythologist, the artist constantly drew on mythology to construct his iconography. While this fascination was shared by a large number of Surrealists in the 1930s and 1940s – both visual and literary – Masson was probably one of those who explored its depths most extensively. Through them, he found a remedy for human deficiencies. The dark side of mythological gods, endowed with the power of life and death, provided a window through which he could speak about humanity. The artist repeatedly invoked Greek mythology (Theseus, Pasiphae and the Amazons in a vast reflection on matriarchy), as well as medieval mythology and his own personal mythologies. His research reached a peak in the late 1930s, when, based in Lyons-la-Forêt, the artist produced the large-scale drawings that would later become his "Mythologies". *Mythology of Nature*, created in 1938, and *Mythology of Being* in 1939, bring together André Masson's entire philosophy. Here we discover an anthropomorphised nature that becomes man or woman, and vice versa, a double movement frequently found in the painter's work.

Second Surrealist period

André Masson's second Surrealist period, which began in late 1936, reflected not only his reconciliation with André Breton, but also a change of direction in his imagery. His works became much more expressive and violent. Anthropomorphised objects became aggressive and turned into sex traps. The marvellous, even sensual, dimension of Surrealism shifted deliberately towards the horrific. With his *In the Tower of Sleep* (1938, The Baltimore Museum of Art), for example, a harp, a woman-instrument whose base has been transformed into a sharp jaw, clutches the body of a flayed man trapped in a fire-and-brimstone environment, teeming with nightmarish motifs. During this period, André Masson also drew on the Greek mythological figures of Daedalus and the Minotaur. *The Workshop of Daedalus* (1939, private collection) highlights the man who invented the labyrinth, while the painting *The Labyrinth* [Le Labyrinthe] (1938, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne) explores the figure of the Minotaur, half-man half-bull, who is trapped inside. Here, the creature appears unthreatening, his body forming an architecture whose core, the intestines, takes on the appearance of a labyrinth. André Masson introduced this architecture into his work very early on.

Although it may appear chaotic, it is in fact highly rigorous, in keeping with the idea of the cycle that the painter also explored in his work. "In fact, almost all my paintings revolve around the myth of the Minotaur and Pasiphae, even the ones that allude to Icarus and Daedalus, as well as the obsession I've always had with the labyrinth," explained the painter¹⁸.



The Labyrinth [Le Labyrinthe], 1938

Oil on canvas, 120 × 61 cm

Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne

© ADAGP, Paris, 2024

Photo : Philippe Migeat -Centre Pompidou-Metz, MNAM-CCI/ Dist. RMN-GP

¹⁷ André Masson, "Peindre est une gageure", *Les Cahiers du Sud*, 1 March 1941, p. 7.

¹⁸ André Masson, interview with Gilbert Brownstone, *André Masson, Vagabond du surréalisme*, p. 137.



Martinique Forest [Forêt martinique], 1941
 Pen and ink, 63 × 48 cm
 Private collection. Former Yves de Fontbrune collection
 © Adagp, Paris, 2024 / Photo : © Luc HO

"Seized by the terrestrial force and the violent climate of this region, where we settled for four years," says André Masson, "I sought and perhaps found pictorial correspondences of elemental forces. Telluric mysteries. Phenomena of blossoming and germination also find their transposition in numerous canvases and pastels".

¹ André Masson, interview with Jean-Paul Clébert, *Mythologie d'André Masson*, Pierre Cailler, Geneva, 1971, p. 69.

Subterranean forces

André Masson, whose wife Rose was Jewish, was discharged during the Second World War after being wounded in 1917. He reached Marseille at the end of 1940 and sailed for the United States on 31 March 1941. This move to the United States was made possible thanks to the help of Varian Fry, an American journalist based in Marseille, who saved many artists, Jews and anti-Nazi activists by helping them to flee Europe and the Vichy regime. Before reaching New York, he spent three weeks in Martinique with André Breton. The two men met Aimé Césaire and his friends, who showed them around the island. Amazed by its abundant nature, André Breton wrote poems while André Masson drew from nature, developing a new plant mythology. Their creations were published together in a book in 1948 entitled *Martinique, charmeuse de serpents*. The artist was captivated by Martinique's light, fruity air and

lush forests. This bewitching environment inspired a masterly canvas, *Antille* (1943, Marseille, Musée Cantini), whose vivid palette transforms a woman's body into a veritable cosmic constellation. Light also played a decisive role for Masson in the United States. Settling in Connecticut on the shores of Lake Waramaug, surrounded by forests, the artist immersed himself in the prodigious effects of the climate and the earth's subterranean forces. He was particularly impressed by the changing seasons, temperatures and light. The infinite variety of colours offered by the Indian summer permeates his canvases, as do the Indian mythologies that intertwine with his personal ones.

LITERARY INFLUENCES

Philosophical journey

On the eve of the First World War, at the age of 18, André Masson had left Paris for Bern, where he was welcomed by a musical, literate friend. He lived overlooking the Bernese Oberland mountains, leading an austere life dictated by a Nietzschean spirit. Nietzsche was probably the philosopher whose thought most influenced Masson. The ascetic life he led in Switzerland was a way of attaining the ideal man imagined by the philosopher. Nietzsche's thought resurfaced in what he calls "the great game of dice that is existence"¹⁹, and resonated closely with that of Masson in his text "*Peindre est une gageure*". In the late 1930s, Nietzsche was one of the artist's imaginary portraits, alongside those of Goethe, Kleist, Richter, Dante and Heraclitus. The Greek philosopher was certainly the second most important philosophical figure for André Masson. In 1943, he created a symbolic portrait of him as both river and fire. As early as 1940, he painted *The River Heraclitus* (1940, private collection), about which psychoanalyst Carl Jung wrote in *Man and His Symbols*: "The torrential waters of the River Heraclitus overwhelm a Greek temple. This painting can be seen as an allegory of imbalance and its consequences: the Greeks excessive insistence on logic and reason (the temple) leads to a destructive outpouring of instinctual forces". Masson drew from Heraclitus, as well as from the philosopher Empedocles and Nietzsche, the idea that love and hate intertwine, alternate and constitute creative forces.

¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power 2*, Volume 1, Book II, Ch. IV, § 329, tel Gallimard, 1995, p. 338-340.

The great dramatic poets

An insatiable reader, the painter was also an avid reader of literary works. With Breton, he shared a keen interest in the works of Rimbaud, Jarry, Roussel and Mallarmé. Masson drew inspiration from Mallarmé for the title of his work *Le coup de dés* (1922, Essen, Folkwang Museum), an explicit reference to the Mallarmé poem "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard". For the Surrealists, poets were more than just storytellers of wonder or melancholy, they were true seers. With Georges Limbour and Antonin Artaud, in particular, André Masson read and discussed German Romantics such as Richter and Novalis. They read their texts aloud, as well as those of 17th-century English playwrights such as John Webster, John Ford and Cyril Tourneur. These authors, along with Aeschylus, Aristophanes and Shakespeare, also played a decisive role in the artist's theatrical work, as did Dostoyevsky. "Nietzsche, with his hammer, blithely demolished what remained of the old concept of truth; Sade, with his whip, constantly reminded us – watchman in flames – that man is the cruellest of all animals; Dostoyevsky carried his torch into the subterranean recesses of ambiguity, the dwelling place of shady or unfulfilled desires, and without a gas mask²⁰," wrote the painter in 1976.

The impact of psychoanalysis

Fascinated by psychoanalysis and its potential, the Surrealists took an early interest in the writings of Sigmund Freud. His *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, in particular, was one of the works included in the Bureau des Recherches Surréalistes, which André Masson headed up in 1925 with his friend Max Morise. The writings of Freud, together with Carl Jung's *Dialectic of the Ego and the Unconscious*, were gateways to memory, fantasy and metamorphosis. They give rise to new images for the painter, who saw the discipline as material to exploit in his work. These included his automatic drawings, as well as his panel for Gustave Courbet's *The Origin of the World*, owned by the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Lacan and André Masson, brothers-in-law, had a deep admiration for each other. Both were close to Georges Bataille and his journal *Documents* in the 1930s, and they also shared an interest in philosophers of sexual pleasure, and regularly exchanged views on painting, as evidenced by Jacques Lacan's Seminars XVIII and XI, in which Masson is quoted.



Gradiva, 1938-1939
Oil on canvas, 97 x 130 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne

Among the Freudian readings by André Masson, the psychoanalyst's commentary psychoanalyst's commentary on *Gradiva*, a short story published in 1903 by German author Wilhelm Jensen was to prove decisive. It inspired one of his masterpieces of the second Surrealist period, *Gradiva*.

²⁰ André Masson, "45 rue Blomet", text dedicated "to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler" and dated "mars 1968", published by Françoise Will-Levaillant, André Masson. *Le rebelle du surréalisme*. Écrits, Collection Savoir Hermann, Paris, 1976, p. 77.

4.

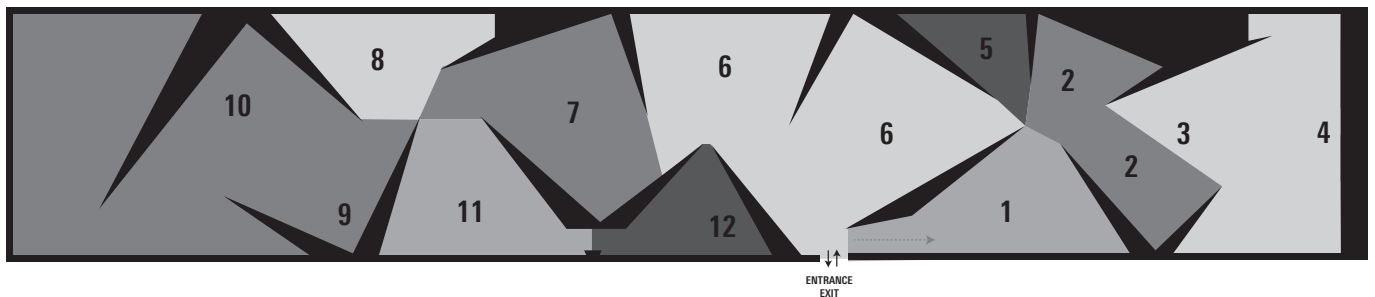
EXHIBITION DESIGN

Created by the exhibition designers Achille Racine and Clémence La Sagna, the chronological layout of the exhibition follows, like Masson's own wandering path, a continuous line with sharp corners, like the cutting mandibles of a praying mantis. Its thread undergoes metamorphoses, drifts and creates ruptures or forms links between works.

The space opens up and closes in, revolving around a long uninterrupted wall, sometimes offering intimate spaces and sometimes extended vistas.

The wall is almost like a sheet of paper to the visitor: its thickness and material nature cannot be grasped. From one framed view to the next, one vista to the next, the visitor's eye moves from work to work, section to section, without encountering boundaries.

At one end of the gallery, marking the culmination of the artist's experiments of the 1920s, the André Masson library comes into view, revealing his erudition and sources of inspiration. On the other side, André Masson's pictorial freedom unfolds majestically in a vast hall that opens onto Metz Cathedral, providing a grand conclusion to the exhibition.

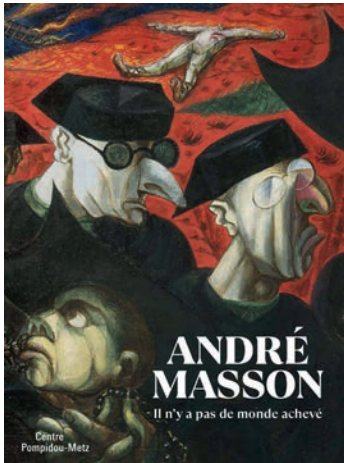


- 1- The early 1920s
- 2 - The Automatism revolution
- 3 - The first sand paintings
- 4 - A world in a grain of sand: André Masson's library
- 5 - Resurgence of violence
- 6 - Spain
- 7 - The second surrealist period
- 8 - Martinique
- 9 - The American period
- 10 - The second sand period
- 11 - The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

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

5.

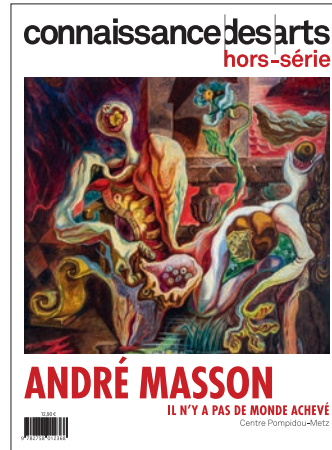
CATALOGUE AND SPECIAL PUBLICATION



ANDRÉ MASSON THERE IS NO FINISHED WORLD

The catalogue for the exhibition [André Masson. There is no finished world](#) gives a voice to the artist's friends and commentators through a selection of texts that interact with the body of works exhibited and reproduced in their entirety. These historical writings are supplemented by a largely unpublished text by Bernard Noël and by two essays tracing the life and work of the artist - signed by Chiara Parisi, curator of the exhibition, and William Jeffett, chief curator at the Salvador Dalí Museum in Saint Petersburg (Florida, USA).

296-pages, €40
Published April 2024



SPECIAL PUBLICATION

The *Surrealist Manifesto* was published in 1924. To mark the occasion, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is hosting a retrospective devoted to André Masson, one of the leading figures of the movement and a major artist of the 20th century. The special issue devoted to this exhibition explores the different facets of the artist's work, life and relationships, through his surrealist output, his political commitment, his exile in Martinique and then the United States, and his return to France to explore his new artistic influences and the resurgence of automatic drawings.

68-pages special edition priced at €12.90 incl. VAT

THE CENTRE POMPIDOU-METZ PODCAST



And if I tell you... The Centre Pompidou-Metz podcasts invites the listener behind the scenes of exhibitions through the voices of all those who work on their conception and staging: curators, researchers, scenographers, editors, stage managers, restorers, etc.

Next episode :

[André Masson. There is no finished world](#)

Available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcast :

[Suzanne Valadon. A world of your own](#)

[Elmgreen et Dragset. Good luck](#)

[Worldbuilding. Video games and art in the digital age](#)

[Repetition](#)

[Lacan, the exhibition. When art meets psychoanalysis](#)

6.

ASSOCIATED EVENTS

Installation *Graft & Penumbra*

Gallery 3, bay window facing Metz Cathedral

ALLORA & CALZADILLA

29.03 - 02.09.24



Allora & Calzadilla, *Graft*, 2019
Recycled polyvinyl chloride and paint, variable dimensions
Penumbra, 2020
Sound

André Masson left France for New York in March 1941. During his crossing, he stopped off in Martinique, where he stayed for three weeks. Inspired by the lush landscapes of Martinique, he created *Antille*, one of the masterpieces of his "American period", which encapsulates the exoticism he had discovered on his trip.

In homage to André Masson, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is pleased to present *Antilia* by Allora & Calzadilla. The exhibition brings together two recent major works, *Graft* (2019) and *Penumbra* (2020), centred on the Caribbean where the artists live and work. Rooted in the concrete realities of this complex archipelago, Antille's works question the way in which colonialism and ecology intersect with the construction of Empire.

The word Antille originated in the period before the European colonization of the Americas, Antilia being one of those mysterious lands which figured on the medieval charts, sometimes as an archipelago, sometimes as continuous land of greater or lesser extent, its location fluctuating in mid-ocean.

Graft is made up of thousands of yellow flowers, moulded from the blossoms of roble (*Tabebuia chrysantha*), a species of oak native to the Caribbean. Dotting the end of Gallery 3, overlooking Metz Cathedral, the flowers appear as if blown to the ground by the wind. The hand-painted petals are produced in seven variations or degrees of decomposition, from freshly fallen to faded and brown. The graft alludes to the environmental changes that have been triggered by the combined effects of colonial exploitation and climate change. The systematic depletion of the Caribbean's flora and fauna is one of the main legacies of colonisation. Nevertheless, the region remains one of the thirty-six biodiversity hotspots, areas that are home to almost 60% of the planet's species of plants, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, but which represent only 2.4% of the earth's surface. In their plastic and artificial immobility, *Graft*'s flowers reflect this fragile ecological situation.

Accompanying this work is *Penumbra* (2020) a sonic landscape based on a found recording of insects in the Absalon Valley of Martinique from 1941. This tropical forest was the site of a series of now-mythic hikes that took place the same year with Suzanne and Aimé Césaire (the Martinican anticolonial poets, theoreticians, and founders of the literary journal *Tropiques*) and a group of artists and intellectuals fleeing Nazi-occupied France, whose boat had temporarily docked at the West Indian port of Fort-de-France. The refugees included André Masson, Helena Benitez, André Breton, Wifredo Lam, Jacqueline Lamba, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Victor Serge, among others.

For the soundscape the artists worked with Grammy-award-winning and Oscar-nominated composer David Lang to create a composition in violin which recreates the found sound tract of insects using violinist Giuseppe Tartini combination tone method, also known as "shadow tones" a psycho-acoustic phenomenon perceived when two real tones create the semblance of a third.

Biography

Jennifer Allora (1974, USA) and Guillermo Calzadilla (1971, Cuba) are a collaborative duo of visual artists who live and work in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Through a research-based approach, their works trace the entanglements between history, ecology, and geopolitics using a multiplicity of artistic media that include performance, sculpture, sound, video, photography, and painting..

TALKS

ANDRÉ MASSON "THE EUROPEAN", GERMAN INSPIRATIONS

By Elia Biezunski, Research Associate
& curator

DATE TO BE CONFIRMED

At the Goethe Institut in Nancy

The painter's career, marked by the major artistic and historical upheavals of the 20th century, is retraced through the prism of the human, philosophical, literary, musical and historical links that bound him to Germany.

ART IS MY CONCERN!

By Gérard Wajcman et l'Association
de la Cause Freudienne dans l'Est

SAT 06.04.2024 | 2:00

Psychoanalyst and writer Gérard Wajcman talks to members of the Association de la Cause Freudienne, about 6 works on display in the exhibitions *Lacan, l'exposition* and *André Masson. Il n'y a pas de monde achevé*. From Salvador Dalí and his 'paranoid critical method' to Marcel Duchamp and his readymades, from *La dépossession* by Latifa Echakhch to the tin of sardines in Julien Bismuth's *Petit Jean*, from the Enfants des îles to the sign-mask for André Masson's *L'Origine du monde*, let us not forget what Lacan told us: 'remember with Freud that in his subject the artist always precedes the psychoanalyst'. The conversation will aim to draw lessons. Art and works of art concern anyone who is open to them. Art is of concern to psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts, as Lacan continually emphasised throughout his teaching, making it a tool not only for interpretation but also of subversion.

AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF WARS

By Jean-Yves Jouannais

THU 06.06.2024 | 6:30

'L'Encyclopédie des guerres' was a series of lecture-performances that began at the Centre Pompidou in September 2008, with one taking place each month. This was a long-term literary project, a sort of serial saga that was performed in public. The watchword for this enquiry was candour, and its method, idiocy. This cycle, in which books, essays, accounts and technical books to do with the subject of accumulated in a haphazard and accidental way, came to an end in November 2024 and formed the subject of an exhibition at the IMEC (Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine), at the Abbaye d'Ardenne in Caen.

In partnership with the Forum IRTS de Lorraine

ONE SUNDAY, ONE WORK

At 10:30 and 11:45 in Gallery 3

In Gallery 3, before works by André Masson, Elia Biezunski, Camille Morando and the artist Thomas Hirschhorn tell the story of three major works by André Masson.

Le Labyrinthe - The Labyrinth

By Elia Biezunski

SUN 07.04.2024

L'Armure - Armour

By Camille Morando

SUN 26.05.2024

En revenant de l'exécution

Returning from the Execution

By Thomas Hirschhorn

SUN 16.06.2024

READINGS

SEEING A WORLD IN A GRAIN OF SAND

By Sonia Masson, Carlo Brandt

SUN 28.04.2024 | 3:00

Accompanied by the cellist Anssi Karttunen, the actors Carlo Brandt and Sonia Masson dialogue in front of works by André Masson. The first shares extracts from the text by Bernard Noël, *Les Têtes d'Ijjetu* – published in full for the first time in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition – to which Sonia Masson will respond by lending her voice to the poets and philosophers who were friends of the painter (Antonin Artaud, Georges Limbour, Armel Guerne and Michel Leiris), as well as those who influenced him, including Heinrich von Kleist, Dostoyevsky, Cervantès and Friedrich Nietzsche.

AROUND THE 24 SONNETS BY LOUISE LABÉ

By La compagnie Le lampion

SUN 02.06.2024 | 3:00

In conjunction with the exhibition, the company Le lampion is presenting a performance in progress *Autour des 24 sonnets* by the 16th-century poet, Louise Labé. In the room dedicated to the *Vingt-deux dessins sur le thème du désir* by André Masson, three actresses will read these sonnets on the theme of desire – in the ears of visitors, like 'verse whisperers', in unison, and in duos to a musical melody

CONCERTS

JOHN ZORN NEW MASADA QUARTET SAT 06.07.2024 | 8:00

In conjunction with the exhibition, John Zorn is giving an exceptional concert with the New Masada Quartet. In 2018, the jazz musician, who is fascinated by Masson's work, composed a piece titled *Acéphale*, as a tribute to Georges Bataille's periodical illustrated by the painter.

ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DE METZ GRAND EST SUN 01.09.2024 | 4:00

The programme of this concert was devised by the conductor Diego Masson as a tribute to the musical tastes of André Masson. It is dominated by German music, in particular that of Richard Wagner, with the opening of *Parsifal*, and the world of Robert Schuman.

SCREENING

VARIAN FRY, VISAS FOR FREEDOM THU 23.05.2024 | 6:30

Exclusive screening of the documentary, followed by a discussion between Diego Masson, the artist's son, Matthieu Verdeil, the film's director, and Chiara Parisi, the exhibition's curator.

This film, scheduled for distribution in August 2024, tells the incredible story of the American journalist Varian Fry, who was sent to Marseille during the Second World War with a list of 200 artists, intellectuals, Jews and anti-Nazis to help them leave occupied France. He would succeed in saving more than 2,000 people from the Vichy regime, enabling them to travel to America. This forgotten story reemerges today in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Marseille where André Breton and the exiled Surrealist group once sought refuge at the Villa Air-Bel. André Masson was also helped by Varian Fry and participated in the Surrealists' collective works, notably the Marseille card game. His son Diego is one of the key witnesses to this event that led to the United States.

Production France 3 PACA, Comic Strip Production, A7production



Jacqueline Lamba, André Masson, André Breton,
Max Ernst et Varian Fry à Marseille
© Fonds André Breton et Jacqueline Lamba

YOUNG PEOPLE

CHIROPTERA. IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

By Geoffrey Badel
UNTIL 20.05.2024

The work of Geoffrey Badel has been deeply marked by the para-worlds of deaf culture and the occult. 'Chiroptera' takes us on an initiatory journey to discover a hidden, almost invisible world, where words are entrusted to gestures and hands, forming a link between sign language and a little-known animal, the bat (literally 'hand wings'). Exploring the similarities between our hands and their wings, children will learn the unique drawing technique used by the artist. They will discover a fascinating world in a workshop transformed for the occasion into a magic cave.

90' | WORKSHOP FROM 5 TO 10 YEARS
SAT. SUN. / SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS



© Centre Pompidou-Metz - Photo Jacqueline Trichard,
2024 Atelier *Chiroptera. Au Creux De La Main*, Geoffrey Badel

GHOSTS IN THEATRE MAKE YOU LAUGH

By Davide Bertocchi & Yasutoshi Kurokami
FROM 31.05 TO 20.09.24

Drawing on archive material connected with André Masson, the artists Davide Bertocchi and Yasutoshi Kurokami have made a film combining historical documents and animation. This film will be accompanied by a workshop for making a collective decor of masks, over time, recalling the artist's close links with theatre.

WED. SAT. SUN. + HOLIDAYS
LA CAPSULE | FREE ADMISSION

LITTLE EDUCATORS VISITS

For European Museum Night
SAM 18.05.2024

'Petits médiateurs' (little educators) are school pupils who have received training as educators from professionals at the Centre Pompidou-Metz. In the André Masson exhibition, they will choose a work and talk about it, adopting several different levels of communication: expressive, didactic, poetic, etc. Their tour will keep visitors awake and on their toes.

ACCESSIBILITY

Several workshops are available in connection with the André Masson exhibition.

CHIROPTERA. IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

By Geoffrey Badel
Workshop for deaf children.

CALLIGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Workshop for people suffering from Alzheimer

6. PARTNERS

The Centre Pompidou-Metz is the first example of the decentralisation of a major national cultural institution, the Centre Pompidou, in partnership with local authorities. As an independent institution, the Centre Pompidou-Metz benefits from the experience, expertise and international reputation of the Centre Pompidou. It shares its predecessor's values of innovation, generosity, multidisciplinary and openness to all audiences.

It is also developing partnerships with museums around the world. In addition to its exhibitions, the Centre Pompidou-Metz offers dance performances, concerts, films and conferences.

It is supported by Wendel, one of its founding patrons.



With the support and the participation of





W E N D E L

MÉCÈNE FONDATEUR

Wendel, Founding patron of the Centre Pompidou-Metz

Wendel has been committed to the Centre Pompidou-Metz since it opened in 2010. Wendel wanted to support an emblematic institution whose cultural influence reaches as many people as possible.

Because of its long-standing commitment to culture, Wendel was awarded the title of "Grand Mécène de la Culture" in 2012.

Wendel is one of Europe's leading listed investment companies. Its business is that of a long-term investor, which requires a shareholder commitment that nurtures trust, and a constant focus on innovation, sustainable development and promising diversification.

Wendel's expertise lies in selecting leading companies, such as those in which it is currently a shareholder: ACAMS, Bureau Veritas, Crisis Prevention Institute, IHS Towers, Scalian, Stahl and Tarkett.

Founded in 1704 in the Lorraine region of France, the Wendel Group developed over 270 years in a variety of activities, notably steelmaking, before devoting itself to long-term investment in the late 1970s.

The Group is supported by its core family shareholder, the Wendel-Participations family company, which holds a 39.6% stake in the Wendel Group and is made up of almost one thousand two hundred and fifty Wendel family shareholders.

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7.

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Louis Aragon, 1924
Ink drawing on paper, 32 x 24,5 cm
Private collection
© Adagp, Paris, 2024
© Galerie Natalie Seroussi



Les Cerfs-volants, 1927
Oil, sand and tempera on canvas, 97 x 108 cm
Galerie Jacques Bailly
© Adagp, Paris, 2024



Le Jardin saccagé, 1934
Oil on canvas, 82 x 116 cm
Private collection
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Photo : © Jean-Louis Losi



Paysage aux prodiges, 1935
Oil on canvas, 76.5 x 65.4 cm United States, New York (NY), The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
© Adagp, Paris, 2024
Photo © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY



Le Thé chez Franco, 1938
Ink on paper, 45 x 58 cm
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Courtesy of Jacques de la Béraudière



Dans la tour du sommeil, 1938
Oil on canvas, 81.3 x 100.3 cm
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Bequest of Saidie A. May, BMA 1951.329
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La Terre, 1939
Sand and oil on plywood, 43 x 53 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'Art Moderne
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Photo : © Hélène Mauri - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI / Dist. RMN-GP



Méditation sur une feuille de chêne, 1942
Tempera, pastel and sand on canvas, 101,60 x 83,80 cm
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA
© Adagp, Paris, 2024
Photo : © Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence



Antille, 1943
Oil, sand and tempera on canvas, 128 x 84 cm
Marseille, musée Cantini
© Adagp, Paris, 2024
Photo : © Ville de Marseille
Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Claude Almodovar / Michel Vialle



Mon portrait au torrent, 1945
India ink on paper, 47,6 x 60,7 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'Art Moderne
© Adagp, Paris, 2023
Photo : © Philippe Migeat - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI
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Le sang des oiseaux, 1956
Tempera, sand and feathers on canvas, 75 x 75 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'Art Moderne
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Photo : © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI



Panique, [1963]
Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'Art Moderne
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Photo : © Bertrand Prévost - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI / Dist. RMN-GP

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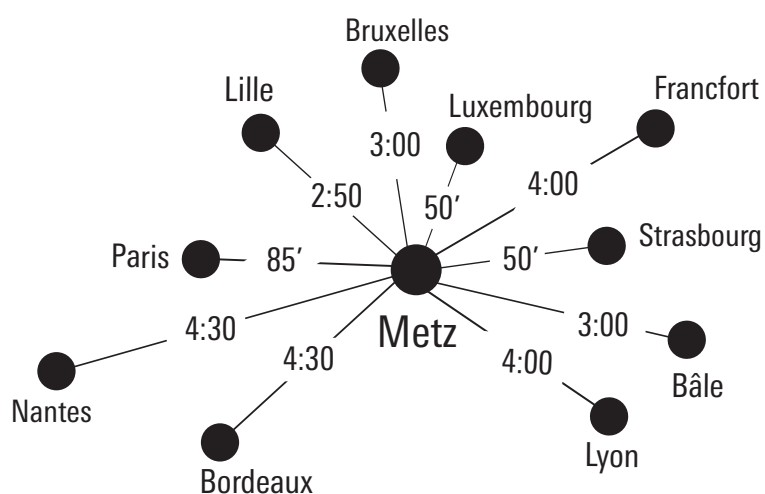
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