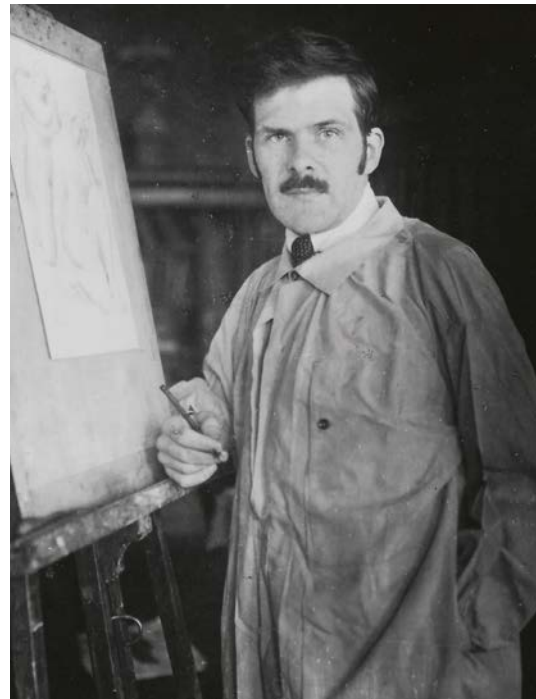




**DONAS, ARCHIPENKO & LA SECTION D'OR**



# DONAS, ARCHIPENKO & LA SECTION D'OR



**ENCHANTING MODERNISM**





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# FOREWORD

Carmen Willems, KMSKA managing director

Luk Lemmens, KMSKA chairman

It has been hard to ignore for some time now: wherever you look, female artists are firmly in the spotlight. Touring retrospectives devoted to talented women, some of them rediscovered – historical and modern alike – as well as exhibitions focusing on artist couples, are everywhere. ‘Feminisation’ is likewise a key strategic objective in the new policy plan of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts.

This is something we have been working tirelessly on for many years. We have benefited from magnificent long-term loans of works by such major artists as Marlene Dumas and Artemisia Gentileschi; donations of work by Tapta and Liliane Vertessen; the integration of a sculpture by Lili Dujourie into the museum’s facade; and not least, the purchase of the monumental avant-garde *Jet d’eau* (1918) – a true museum piece by the Parisian painter Juliette Roche.

Nevertheless, our catch-up efforts began much earlier than that. Long before the Royal Museum’s grand reopening in 2022, crucial questions were being asked internally: how could the KMSKA offer female artists a worthy platform? And which women from the past had built up a body of work capable of sustaining major exhibitions with an international resonance?

When it came to modern art, one name leapt immediately to mind: Marthe ‘Tour’ Donas, the only female Belgian artist (an Antwerper to boot!) to pursue an exceptionally exciting and high-profile path through the international avant-garde circuit between roughly 1916 and 1921. After a century-long odyssey, we can today welcome Donas with open arms to the historic museum in the city of her birth with a fascinating exhibition and book.

The KMSKA’s curator of modern art, Adriaan Gonnissen, and the Donas specialist Peter J.H. Pauwels (who is also the curator of FIBAC, the beautiful private arts centre) have reconstructed her artistic story for the first time from an international perspective, focusing on her impressive network. For the project to succeed, however, there is another artist every bit as important as Donas, namely the Ukrainian Alexander Archipenko. It was he, the revolutionary sculptor, who courted Donas and launched her as a highly talented avant-garde artist. And it was she, the painter, who benefited from his inspiring personality yet never copied his work, and who

developed an authentic style of her own. They were an artist couple for a while, which played a part in the relaunch of the colourful, Cubist movement La Section d’Or. Thanks to this interesting research project, the rich story of this group, with its pan-European dimensions, is now emerging for the first time.

As always, we insist on thanking all our contributors, partners, authors and museum teams. It is not every day that, because of them, the KMSKA gets to welcome some of the greatest names in Modernism – all acquaintances and friends of Donas and Archipenko – such as Albert Gleizes, Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, Thorvald Helleesen, Fernand Léger, František Kupka, Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg. Three acknowledgements are especially important, however; neither the exhibition nor this publication would have been possible without the immense support of our two key artists’ respective foundations. We therefore express our exceptional gratitude to the Archipenko Foundation in Bearsville (New York) and in particular its president, Frances Archipenko Gray, who initiated the online Archipenko Catalogue Raisonné. The Marthe Donas Foundation in Ghent likewise deserves our utmost appreciation. Not only is its secretary the co-curator of this project, its current president, Kristien Boon, published the first book devoted to the artist in 2004. The institution is also a major sponsor of the current project. We are sincerely grateful for your love of Marthe Donas!

Heartfelt thanks are also due to the Saarland-museum – Moderne Galerie in Saarbrücken. This generous partner museum, home to Europe’s largest collection of Archipenko’s work, has backed the project from the outset with significant loans. Our German colleagues quickly expressed their willingness to provide this exceptional exhibition with a second venue. International synergies of this kind are incredibly important to the KMSKA; together we can bring the enchantment of Modernism to the widest and most international audience possible.



# ENCHANTING MODERNISM

Adriaan Gonnissen & Peter J.H. Pauwels

*‘Ausserordentlich reizvolle, heitere Spielereien  
in die man sich leicht verliebt’<sup>1</sup>*

Adolf Behne

The collective terms ‘Modernism’ and ‘avant-garde’ often seem to be treated as synonymous with the radical and disruptive, with the disenchantment of the traditional order and the familiar world. There is certainly something in this: iconic twentieth-century figures brought about profound revolutions that would change art forever, with the deliberate ‘anti-art’ of the Dada movement – summed up by Marcel Duchamp’s urinal – as one potent example. The strict abstraction of Russian Constructivism or Piet Mondrian, the shocking otherworldliness of Surrealism or Brutalism in art and architecture likewise speak to this view.

Donas, Archipenko and the artists’ collective La Section d’Or cannot be captured in such extreme terms. Their work is the focus of the exhibition at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA) and the Saarländmuseum’s Moderne Galerie, of which this is the catalogue. What it shows first and foremost is a different, frequently vitalistic and sometimes gentler side, albeit occasionally with characteristics that are both far-reaching and innovative.

This is especially the case with the Ukrainian artist Alexander Archipenko, who briefly experienced an intense artistic and personal (romantic) adventure with the equally cosmopolitan Marthe ‘Tour’ Donas. In many respects, Archipenko was undeniably a full-blooded revolutionary, an avant-garde artist without equal. In the early part of the twentieth century, he fundamentally altered the way the human figure is viewed in sculpture, with innovative and aesthetic explorations of negative spaces and powerful and colourful ‘robot’ men and women in motion that helped him build a new art and a new world. All the same, a disarming elegance and a penchant for classical beauty remained an essential part of his

artistic quest and ideals, just as they did for his contemporary and friend Amedeo Modigliani. The spiritual and the mystical – legacies of a childhood in Kyiv and a deep connection with Slavic-Byzantine icon art – were also inextricably linked to a visual idiom at once modern yet steeped in tradition. His modernism is enveloped by an aura of enchantment to this day.

‘Captivating’ and ‘charming’, ‘refined’ and ‘elegant’ are among the adjectives that have been associated with Donas’s authentic variation of modern painting for over a century. The leading German critic Adolf Behne wrote as early as 1920 of the Belgian artist’s ‘charming’ paintings, small in scale, sometimes executed in mother-of-pearl tones and always with a refined handling of paint ‘with which one could easily fall in love’; works that entice and enchant us.

Neither artist showed much interest in radical abstraction or anti-art. Archipenko’s point of departure continued to be nature and the cosmic energy underlying it. Donas did paint in a somewhat more geometrically abstract manner – under the influence of Theo van Doesburg, the leading light of De Stijl – but after just a few canvases, she felt compelled to ask: ‘Afterwards... what will we do then?’<sup>2</sup> As an artistic ‘power couple’, Archipenko and Donas actually tended to view nihilism or extreme purification within the international avant-garde circuit as an obstacle to progress, aesthetic innovation and artistic freedom.

In 1919, together with their fellow artists Albert Gleizes and Léopold Survage, they breathed new life into the Cubist group La Section d’Or. The Cubism that took centre stage was once again defined only vaguely in stylistic terms, but was above all cosmopolitan, free and colourful.

A new and variegated collective of artists arose, made up of men and women whose primary goal was to plot their own course, which they sought to achieve by building an exhibition network of their own rather than bowing to the dictates and demands of gallery owners. La Section d'Or toured Europe independently, with a core group of artists and other participants. In this way, variations of Cubism that included the charming and the decorative could be viewed alongside more radical experiments. This catalogue does not include every artist who participated in these group events, but it does present a representative ensemble of works by – in addition to Donas and Archipenko themselves – both world-famous and lesser-known members and associates of La Section d'Or: Gleizes and Survage, but also Louis Marcoussis, Serge Férat, Gustave Buchet, Jeanne Rijn-Rousseau, Marie Vassilieff, Hélène d'Oettingen (under the pseudonym François Angiboult), Irène Lagut, Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, František Kupka, Fernand Léger, Thorvald Hellesen, Theo van Doesburg, Vilmos Huszár and Piet Mondrian.

#### NOTES

- 1 'Extraordinarily charming, cheerful playfulness, with which one could easily fall in love.' Adolf Behne, otherwise unidentified newspaper clipping (1920). Marthe Donas Foundation Archives, Ghent.
- 2 '*Car après ... que ferons-nous?*' Letter from Marthe Donas to Theo van Doesburg, 16 September 1920. Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive, RKD, The Hague.





An abstract painting featuring a large, central, rounded orange shape. To its right is a large, angular brown shape. Below the orange shape is a bright yellow shape, and further down is a green cylindrical shape. The background is a dark blue-grey with some lighter blue and white areas. The overall style is geometric and expressive, with visible brushstrokes.

1900

1917





# THE BEGINNINGS OF AN ARTIST

Marcel Daloze

## ANTWERP: LEARNING UNDER CONSTRAINT

Marthe Donas and her twin sister Livine were born on 26 October 1885 into a French-speaking bourgeois family in Antwerp. Her father, Romain, was a dried-fruit importer and wholesaler.<sup>1</sup> In 1890, he and his wife Julienne Isenbaert moved their five children into a large Neoclassical house designed by the architect Edmond Van Waeterschoot on Rembrandtstraat, staffed by a substantial number of servants.

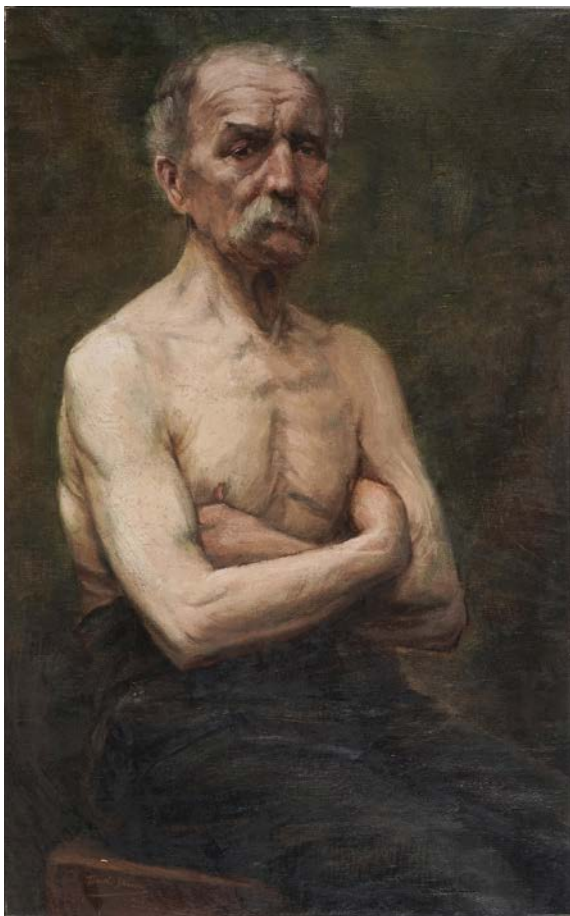
Marthe began to draw at a very young age, a talent she might have inherited from her mother's father, Florent Isenbaert, who painted marine scenes and landscapes and exhibited at various salons. When she was four years old, her primary school teacher Anne De Keyser (niece of the celebrated painter Nicaise de Keyser, director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp), predicted a great artistic future for her, providing nothing stood in her way.<sup>2</sup> It was in that same year of 1889 that the academy admitted its first female students.<sup>3</sup> At the age of fifteen, Donas took lessons every Thursday afternoon at a private drawing school for middle-class girls, run by Marie Coveliers-van Meir.<sup>4</sup> Pleasant as this hobby was, however, she wanted more, and two years later decided to enrol at the Antwerp academy for a year. Her first flower still lifes date from this period, testifying to a precocious talent (*Vase With Carnations*, 1902; p. 14).

All the same, Donas's first artistic steps were anything but smooth. From the outset, there was a clash with her overprotective father, who fiercely opposed her enrolling at the academy and eventually forced her to withdraw. As the artist later recalled in her notebooks, he went so far as to prevent her from attending exhibitions.<sup>5</sup> Romain Donas disapproved of his daughter's exposure to the bohemian world of the academy, with its nude models and permissive attitudes. He was prepared to tolerate flower paintings, landscapes or portraits of family friends (*Portrait of a Little Girl*, 1904), so long as she worked at home – in the attic, in fact. But this genteel pastime did not appeal to the teenage Marthe, who preferred less conventional subjects (*The Drinker*, 1904).

Around 1905, Donas began taking lessons with the landscape and portrait painter Charles Mertens (1865–1919), one of the founders of the artists' society L'Art contemporain/Kunst van Heden.<sup>6</sup> But Romain put an end to this as well. Feeling isolated within the family and judging her father's behaviour to be entirely inappropriate, Marthe ran away from home to pursue her passion, but to no avail.<sup>7</sup> The work she produced during this period reflects her struggle to escape the constraints of family life: self-portraits, portraits of family members (including her older sister Laure) and friends, servants, flower paintings and landscapes – all conventional in style.<sup>8</sup>

It was not until ten years after Donas's first experience at the academy that she enrolled again, having broken off her engagement and begun to stand up to her father. This time, she prevailed in the tug-of-war, determined to persevere 'against all odds'.<sup>9</sup> A settled bourgeois life was not for her: Marthe wanted to steer clear of the 'well-trodden path'.<sup>10</sup>

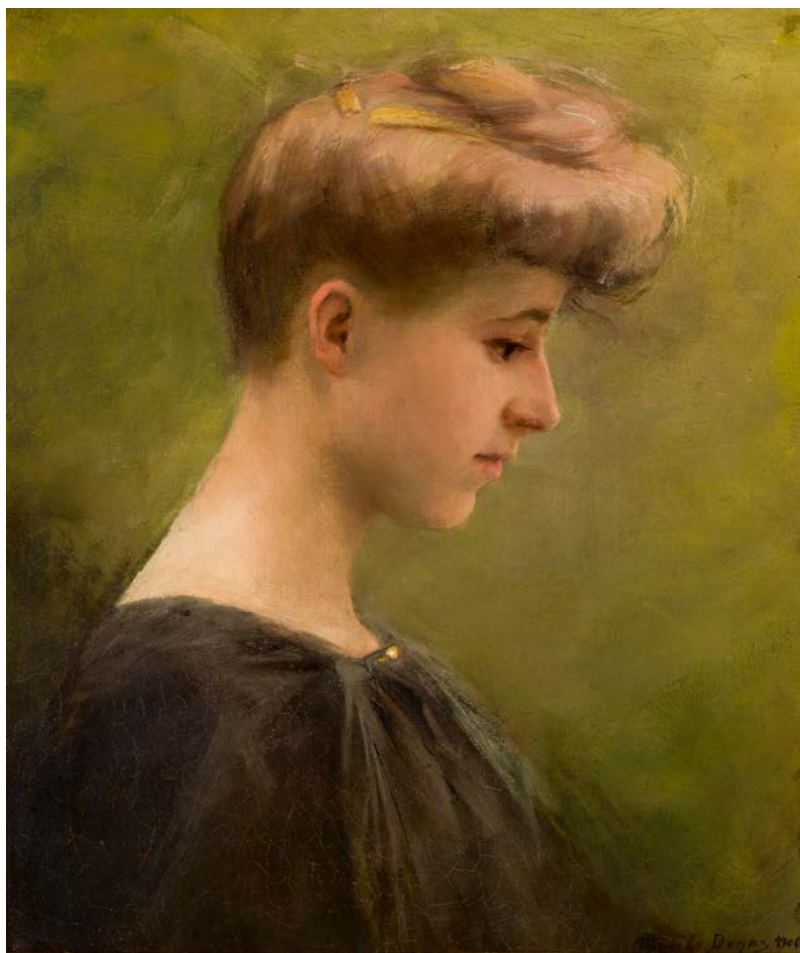




**MARTHE DONAS**, *Old Man with Bare Torso*, 1913, oil on canvas, 80 × 50 cm. Musée Marthe Donas, Iltre.



**MARTHE DONAS**, *Vase With Carnations*, 1902, oil on canvas, 80 × 43 cm. Musée Marthe Donas, Iltre.



**MARTHE DONAS**, *Portrait of Laure Donas*, 1906, oil on canvas, 45,5 × 38 cm. Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.

At the academy, she studied with Frans Van Kuyck, who was well connected in political and artistic circles in Antwerp and was likely known to Marthe's father. She attended classes alongside two other young women (Zoé Linnig and Émilie Tilkin) and was awarded first prize for drawing from objects and from life. On her teacher's recommendation, she studied perspective under Edgard Farasyn – painter, engraver, co-founder of the group Les XIII and creator of the mural that decorates the staircase in Antwerp Town Hall. She also took printmaking classes to improve her drawing skills. Beyond materials and techniques, she learnt to view subjects and colours with a critical eye. She was particularly drawn to heads and busts of elderly men, whose expressive features she found more compelling than those of the smooth-faced younger models traditionally used in class (*Old Man with Bare Torso*, 1913; p. 14).<sup>11</sup> Donas also painted a number of personalised portraits topped with large, flower-trimmed hats. This foundational training would later open certain doors for the young artist.

## WAR AND EXILE

The outbreak of the First World War brought a brutal end to Donas's period of artistic training. The strategic importance of Antwerp and its port led to heavy fighting in the early days of the conflict. During one of the many intense bombardments of the besieged city on 6 October 1914, the family home on Rembrandtstraat was severely damaged and rendered uninhabitable. The Donas family crossed the river Scheldt and took refuge in the Netherlands, initially settling in the town of Goes, where Marthe continued to draw, as witnessed by a number of surviving sketches (*Young man sitting*, *Small child*). The family later moved to The Hague, from where Marthe and Laure would leave for Dublin at the invitation of Mrs Pratt, a family friend.

## DONAS IN IRELAND

The two sisters arrived in the Irish capital in November 1914, initially lodging with the Pratt family at 19 Fitzwilliam Square.<sup>12</sup> During her year and a half in Ireland, Donas moved several times, but always within the affluent city centre, close to her artistic activities.<sup>13</sup> Widespread sympathy for Belgium following the invasion found expression in the arts: several

highly influential Irish painters admired Belgian art and had studied at the academy in Antwerp. One of them was the painter Dermot O'Brien (1865–1945), who had served as president of the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin since 1910. He studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp between 1887 and 1891, where he took classes with Charles Verlat.<sup>14</sup> The academy's reputation across Europe at the time rested on the traditionalist nature of its teaching.

Support committees created relief funds to assist refugees, often through art exhibitions with works for sale. Eleanor Pratt, a Catholic and the wife of military surgeon Joseph Pratt, served as Honorary Secretary of the Irish War Hospital Supply Depot, in which capacity she liaised with the committee of the Belgian Refugee Relief Fund in Manchester and the Belgian Red Cross in London, whose mission was to supply medical equipment for the treatment of wounded Belgian soldiers. As a gesture of thanks for the Pratt family's hospitality, Donas painted portraits of her benefactress and her eighteen-year-old daughter, Irma.<sup>15</sup>

Shortly after arriving in Dublin, and disheartened at having to set aside her artistic training in Antwerp, Marthe enrolled in Margaret Crilley Clarke's painting and life drawing classes at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art.<sup>16</sup> It was during this period that she produced her first female nudes drawn in an academy. Interestingly, the drawing classes at the Dublin school were taught by a woman, meaning Donas was no longer working in the predominantly male environment she had known in Antwerp. She also slipped away from the academy to sketch picturesque landscapes in both urban and rural settings, especially the large country estate of Beauparc in County Meath, close to where her sister Laure settled in 1915.

Meanwhile, Donas developed the intaglio printmaking technique she had learnt at the academy in Antwerp in 1912–13. In Dublin, where she was taught by George Atkinson (1880–1941), she created several copper engravings including portraits, and views of the city and the surrounding countryside.<sup>17</sup> She also produced a number of etchings based on drawings, such as *Landscape With Figures (Beauparc)* after the 1915 drawing *Beauparc, Ireland*. In this print, Donas transforms the landscape into a pastoral scene incorporating figures at work and two more in conversation.<sup>18</sup>

Donas showed her work in March 1915 at the 86th annual exhibition of the Royal Hibernian Academy, along with







# ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO'S ARTISTIC IDENTITY AND PRACTICE

Alexandra Keiser

*'Inventer! Existe-t-il quelque chose de plus important? A la vérité, je ne crois pas. Dès mon enfance, je l'ai compris. Et quand, à vingt et un ans, j'arrive à Paris, tout me confirme dans cette opinion.'*<sup>1</sup>

Alexander Archipenko

In my previous role as research curator at the Archipenko Foundation, I had the privilege of researching Alexander Archipenko's life and work for over 20 years and contributing deeply to the building and editing of his sculpture catalogue raisonné. It is an honour to write and share my research for this long-envisioned exhibition catalogue, dedicated to Archipenko and the painter Marthe Donas.<sup>2</sup>

They met in the south of France in 1917. Archipenko supported Donas's art making, considered her his 'best student', and promoted her paintings for exhibitions. During my research, I was fascinated by several qualities of Archipenko's creative practice, beyond his art. These include his consistent and strong support of his students and significant others, his self-identification as an artist-inventor, his lifelong interest in philosophy, science and nature, as well as his discipline and flexibility in maintaining a transatlantic practice and staying connected with diverse members of an international network of modern art.

There are still many unanswered questions about his life and work. This essay addresses the beginning of his art making and the process of becoming 'Archipenko'.

A goal is to illustrate artworks that were actually made during the years 1906–15, framing the time period during which the artist began producing art in Ukraine, worked in Paris, and then began spending time in the south of France. Many of these works have been lost or destroyed, and Archipenko later recreated them in different versions or materials. Yet, to contribute to the existing Archipenko narrative, it is important to show images of the works in their original form, from the beginning. This step was facilitated by the artist's own interest in photography, as he annotated and edited images of his work, preserving them in his archives.

## FROM KYIV TO PARIS: ORIGINS OF ARCHIPENKO'S CREATIVE PRACTICE

A lifelong drive for invention and innovation can be found at the core of Archipenko's art making and practice. Describing himself as an artist-inventor, Archipenko embraced modernity and the innovations of the twentieth century. Notably, the artist's quest for innovation was first developed in Paris in a cosmopolitan milieu<sup>3</sup> that fostered renewal in the arts.

The artist's relocation from his hometown Kyiv, via Moscow and Berlin, to Paris placed Archipenko's search for innovation and his artistic developments in the midst of new art.<sup>4</sup> Benefiting from the fluid exchange of ideas and cultural references among a diverse group of artists, Archipenko began to develop his idiosyncratic sculptural language by infusing it with references to his Eastern European cultural heritage, as well as to the contemporaneous experiences he was attuned to.





**ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO**, *Draped Woman*, 1911. The Archipenko Foundation, Bearsville (NY).



**ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO**, *Portrait of Mrs Kamenev*, 1909, cast stone, paint, 38.5 × 19 × 14.5 cm. Sprengel Museum Hannover. Photograph from before 1923. Archipenko Foundation, Bearsville (NY).

## FRAGMENTATION, THE NUDE AND CUBISM

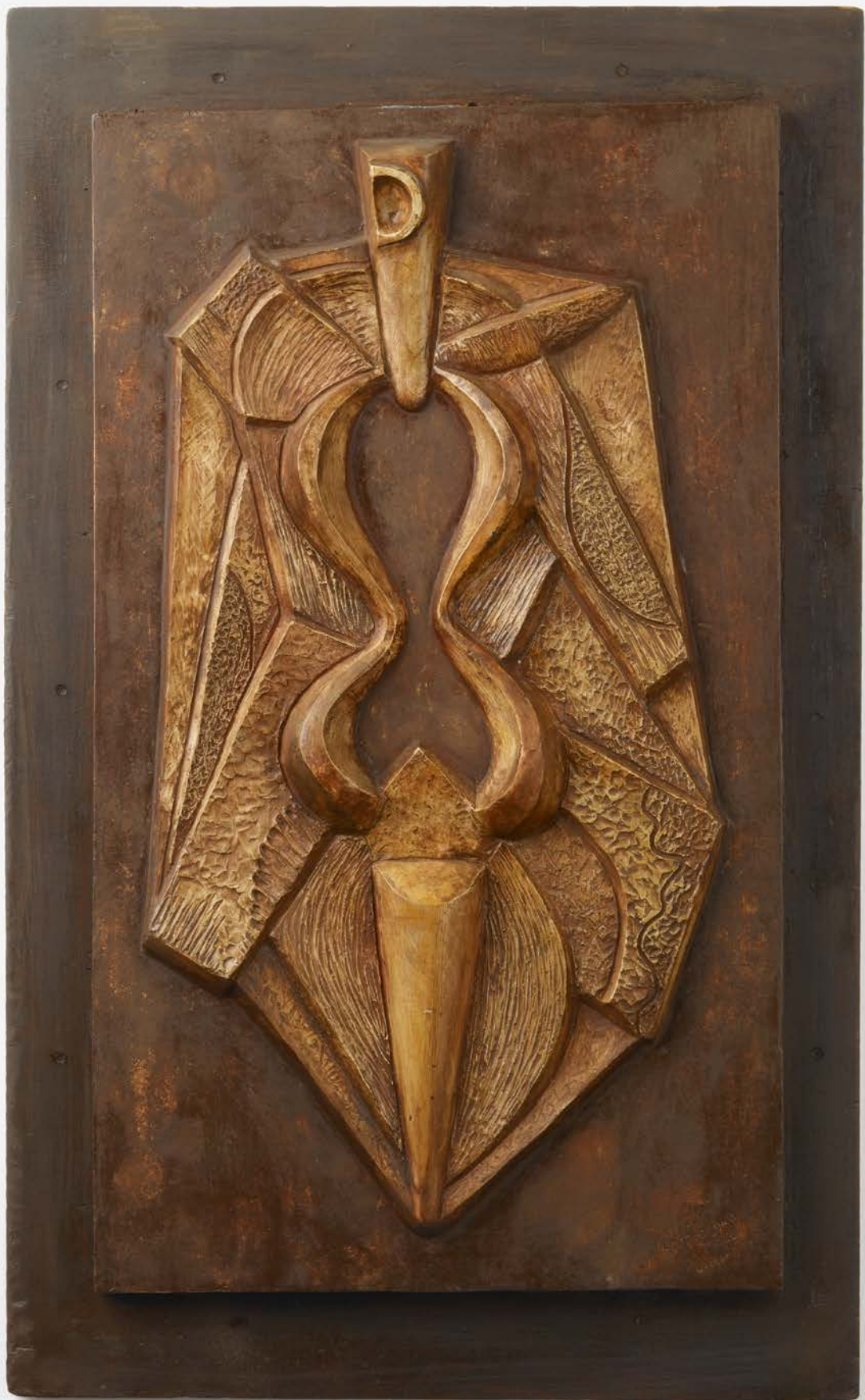
In developing his formal language, Archipenko used the concept of the fragment, influenced both by actual sculpture fragments and Cubist vocabulary. Unlike Picasso's *Head of a Woman (Fernande)*, 1909, which unified planar surfaces to show multiple perspectives, Archipenko focused on breaking the solidity of form. While Archipenko incorporated Cubist formal elements, he also drew on non-Western archaic styles and simplified forms. Several early sculptures reference ancient totem-like stone *babas* from Kyiv parks, which fascinated him as a child.<sup>12</sup> He adapted elements of the stone stele, such as the massive body, simplified forms, oval head and truncated legs, seen in the biblical female figure *Suzanne*, 1909. Unlike the frozen symmetry of the stelae, however, dynamic movement defines *Suzanne*.

Archipenko's recollection of his Eastern European visual memories,<sup>13</sup> but also of his creative circles and Russian-speaking émigrés in Paris, is illustrated in the stone carving

*Portrait of Mrs Kamenev*, 1909 (see above). This likely refers to Leon Trotsky's sister Olga Kameneva (1883–1941), first wife of Lev Kamenev, both of whom were involved in Bolshevism and had moved to Paris in 1908. While the portrait suggests a link to leftist émigré circles, it is unclear whether this connection was personal or political. Notably, the sculpture had originally been painted, indicating Archipenko's use of colour in his work. Additionally, while Archipenko introduced his Eastern European heritage, including religious symbolism and folklore, he also blended these with local traditions that embraced non-Western art.

With other sculptures, such as *Dancer*, 1911, Archipenko referred directly to African prototypes and contributed to the aesthetic discussion on 'primitive' art. By 1912, the sculpture of many artists elicited the encounter with various kinds of non-Western art, which was appreciated for its simplification of form and emblematic figurative representation. It was mistakenly seen as having no history, reinforcing widely held beliefs about the immutability and universality of great art.<sup>14</sup> In his later writings, Archipenko also emphasised the qualities of 'universalism'.<sup>15</sup> By this he meant that a form of





# ANARCHIC LIAISONS

## ARCHIPENKO'S COUPLING OF FIGURE, PICTURE, SPACE AND THE VOID

Kathrin Elvers-Švamberk

Since 1968, the Saarlandmuseum in Saarbrücken has housed a substantial bequest of work by sculptor Alexander Archipenko, a corpus unique in Europe. The rich ensemble of original, painted plaster models by this pioneer of twentieth-century sculpture is among the most important treasures in the care of the Saarland Cultural Heritage Foundation. Archipenko kept up lifelong contacts with German collectors and gallery owners, beginning with his first solo exhibition at the Museum Folkwang in Hagen (today's Osthaus Museum) in 1912. In 1960, Rudolf Bornschein, the then director of the Saarbrücken collection, organised a major retrospective for the sculptor, who had achieved international fame by that time. The friendship that developed between them led Archipenko to leave the Saarlandmuseum 107 of his plaster models, from nearly every phase of his career. Together with drawings and bronze casts of other works acquired since then, the Saarbrücken holdings today offer a survey of over five decades of the artist's creative development. It is our museum's particular pleasure and honour, therefore, to support this pioneering exhibition project with numerous works from our collection.

Archipenko's prominent position in twentieth-century sculpture is rooted above all in his unconventional and innovative interpretation of the phenomenon of space. He was committed throughout his life to the theme of the human figure, constantly striving to develop new sculptural forms and solutions with which to interpret and give presence to what he saw as the vital interplay between the body and its surrounding space. It was the works he developed during

the 1910s that most revolutionised the traditional concept of sculpture. They opened up the sculptural mass, using colour and explicitly painterly spatial projections within the plastic object, incorporating reflective surfaces that bind the sculpture's appearance to the surrounding space and the events unfolding within it.

Through his experiments and inventions, Archipenko responded to a changed, modernising sensibility. The end of Impressionism around the turn of the century triggered a steady decline in confidence in the reliability of visual impressions as the basis for a comprehensive understanding of reality. The groundbreaking insights of modern science – the development of quantum theory and, soon after, Einstein's demonstration of the equivalence of mass and energy – meant that nature was seen in a new way and opened up fresh discourses in science and art alike regarding the conception and nature of space. A new, dynamic world-view emerged from the recognition that space is constituted from all bodies and substances together. Artists from a whole range of disciplines and with widely differing motives set out to trace the laws of interaction that govern nature and the cosmos, and to develop innovative forms of expression capable of creating equivalents for these newly revealed realities. Their goal was to make visible the diversity and dynamism of the relationships between object and space, while simultaneously expanding the parameters of the traditional understanding of the body. The idea of the self-contained, static object grounded solely in sensory perception was abandoned, and from 1908 onwards the distinction and hierarchy between 'space' and 'form' were deliberately set



# DANCE & MOVEMENT

‘I feel dance to be the most dynamic expression of life, and therefore for pure visual art, its most essential subject.’

THEO VAN DOESBURG

ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO, *Blue Dancer*, 1913, plaster, red patinated,  
101.5 × 45.5 × 38.5 cm. Saarlandmuseum – Moderne Galerie, Saarbrücken.







**MARTHE DONAS**, *Still Life with Bottle*, 1917. Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent. This painting, now lost, is the only one in Donas's photographic archive to be signed 'Tour d'Onasky'. It was reproduced in the important avant-garde art magazines *De Stijl* and *Noi*.

# A NAME LIKE CHAIN MAIL

## THE PSEUDONYMS OF MARTHE DONAS

Charlotte Greenaway

*'À Paris elle a signé plusieurs de ses toiles Tour d'Onasky, après Tour Donas, puis M. Donas. Car des artistes lui avaient dit qu'elle était trop artiste pour garder un nom féminin. Comme paraît-il elle avait des ancêtres du nom de Donasky, elle a adopté ce nom, qui lui a semblé ridicule par la suite.'*<sup>1</sup>

Marthe Donas herself inserted this quotation on the last page of her autobiographical notes. A touch bitter, she seems to have felt that she never received the artistic appreciation she deserved. Years later, her daughter expressed a similar view about her mother's career as an artist: 'everything conspired to keep her from painting.'<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps no coincidence then, that Donas ended her autobiographical sketch with a reflection on the male pseudonyms she had adopted during her life; as if she could never be entirely herself because of a milieu that forced her into a metaphorical man's suit. While this reading is important, it is also worth delving deeper into the reasons why she adopted these pseudonyms. Not only does it shed light on Donas's relationship with her work and her artistic identity, it also outlines the broader context of women artists in Parisian avant-garde movements.

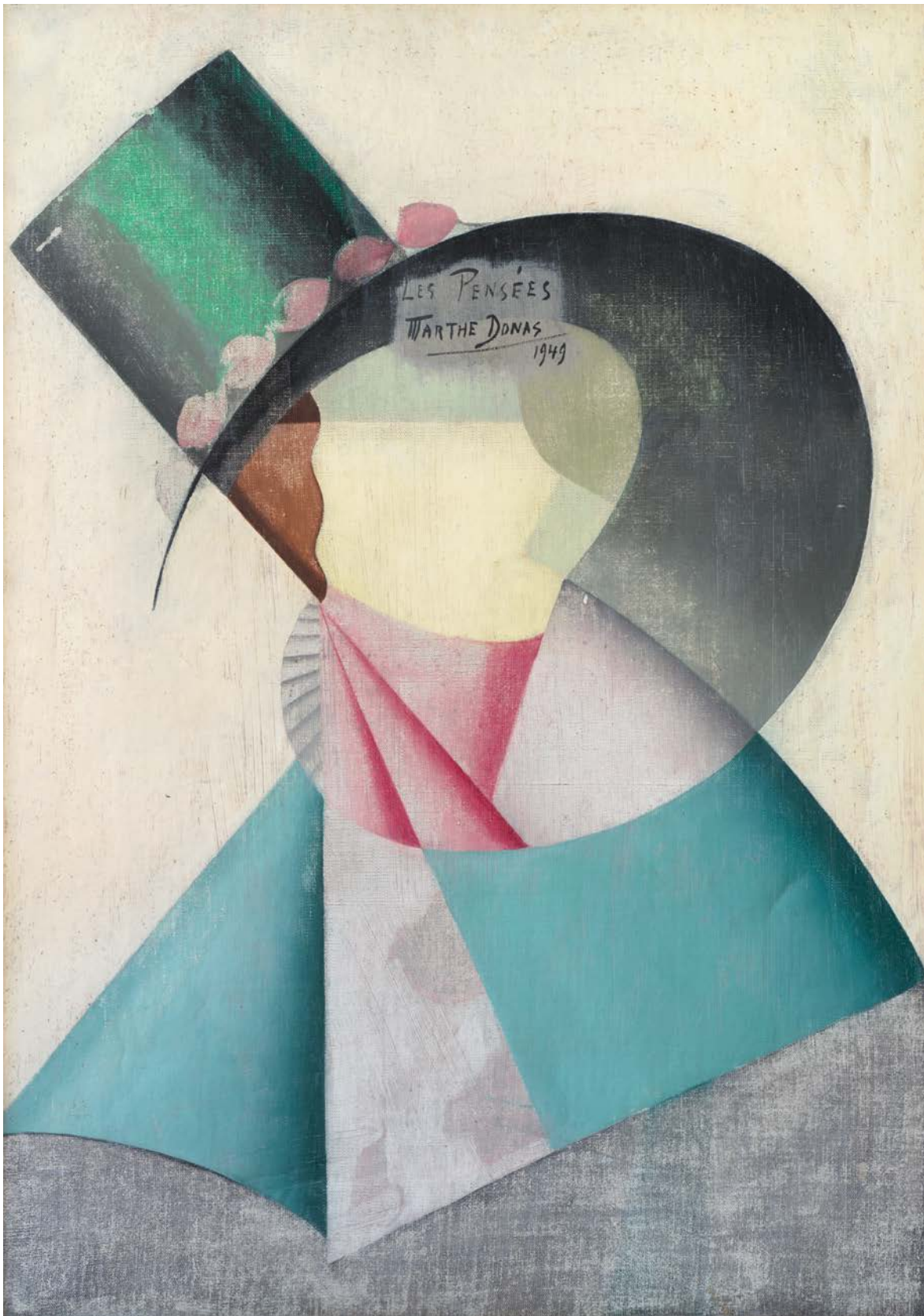
### THE MANY NAMES OF MARTHE DONAS

As far as we know, Marthe Donas signed her works with two closely related pseudonyms. She began – probably as early as her time on the French Riviera in 1918 – with what she herself later called the 'ridiculous' name 'Tour d'Onasky', before swiftly dropping the '-[s]ky' suffix. From that moment on she signed with 'Tour Donas'. This surname was not only shorter, but replaced the absurdly sounding d'Onasky pseudonym

with her actual family name. It is noteworthy that the press alternately referred to her in this period as 'Madame Tour Donas' and 'Monsieur Tour Donas'.<sup>3</sup> She also used her surname on its own as a signature, as well as 'T. Donas' or 'M. Donas'. By concealing her real first name, she persistently created a certain mystique around her gender. Those paying close attention will further discern an intermediate form in her paintings after the Second World War, which she signed with both initials, M and T, at the same time.<sup>4</sup> This transitional solution might have been entirely pragmatic: perhaps Donas wished to avoid alienating a public who had become familiar with her work under her earlier pseudonym. But it might equally be a sign that, despite what she would later write in her autobiographical notes, the artist resonated with the name 'Tour', even at a time when she was busy distancing herself from anything relating to her Parisian years.

It remains unclear precisely where 'Tour' came from: it is not a common French forename and – unlike many other pseudonyms – does not, for example, appear in literary works. Nor, it should be stressed, is it an explicitly male name, a fact that has so far not been given sufficient weight in the literature on the artist: rather than a man's name, what she chose was the 'Tour' (Tower) persona and the strength it evoked. It suggests the tall, fortified towers of a castle from which you can see an enemy approaching. An image of this kind fitted perfectly into the way members of avant-garde movements saw themselves. At the same time, 'Tour' could be a reference to that icon of modernity, the Eiffel Tower. With its openwork structure, pierced by the cityscape, this building was a common visual element in the work of the early avant-garde, who saw it as a symbol of the change for which





**MARTHE DONAS**, *Woman With Hat*, c.1918, oil on canvas, 70 × 44 cm. Private collection.

This unfinished canvas was discovered beneath a layer of grey paint on the reverse of *The Violets*, a painting from 1949.

## FEMALE CUBISM?

For all these women members of the avant-garde, therefore, it often came down to dealing strategically with the male-dominated world in which they found themselves. Nevertheless, groups already existed in Paris for women artists, who – as noted already – were especially numerous. The city's first association of this kind, the Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs (UFPS), which dated back as far as 1881, advocated for female artistic participation by campaigning, among other things, to make women eligible for the prestigious Prix de Rome. From the outset, however, the Union was instilled with the bourgeois notion that women were inherently conservative and as such would be able to protect the art of their time from the overly avant-garde tendencies of certain male artists. By the 1910s, therefore, the UFPS served increasingly as the bastion of a conservative discourse on 'female art' with which none of the aforementioned women Cubists would have been able to agree. Such art was held to be lovely, charming, delicate and sensitive, and focused on children's portraits, academic nudes, and still lifes.<sup>40</sup>

This conservative take on 'women's art' was ubiquitous in the period of Marthe Donas's activity in Paris. While most art critics distanced themselves from the Impressionist-style nudes and still lifes shown at the UFPS, some of the notions of femininity it promulgated lingered stubbornly in the discourse surrounding *les femmes peintres* and their art after the First World War. The magazine *L'Amour de l'art*, for instance, published a review of the international exhibition in Geneva of 1920–21 (in which Donas also took part), in which the critic René Arcos wrote of the artist Marie Laurencin (1883–1956): 'Here at last is a woman whose ambition is not to paint "like the men".'<sup>41</sup> The art historian Gill Perry views Laurencin as the catalyst for a new 'feminine style', which enjoyed considerable commercial success after the First World War. It retained the winsome characteristics championed by the conservative UFPS, but also ventured into avant-garde 'virile' forms and styles, albeit within a pastel palette.<sup>42</sup> An increasingly explicit crossover also occurred between female art and the fashion sector. Besides the women in Laurencin's work, the dolls by Marie Vassilieff – inspired by ritual fetishes and yet still entirely avant-garde – were all remarkably elegant and unmistakably dressed like society ladies.<sup>43</sup> Laurencin also enjoyed a striking amount of patriotic

appreciation: she was the symbol not only of the female artist, but also of the French woman and the preservation of her 'femininity' after the First World War.<sup>44</sup>

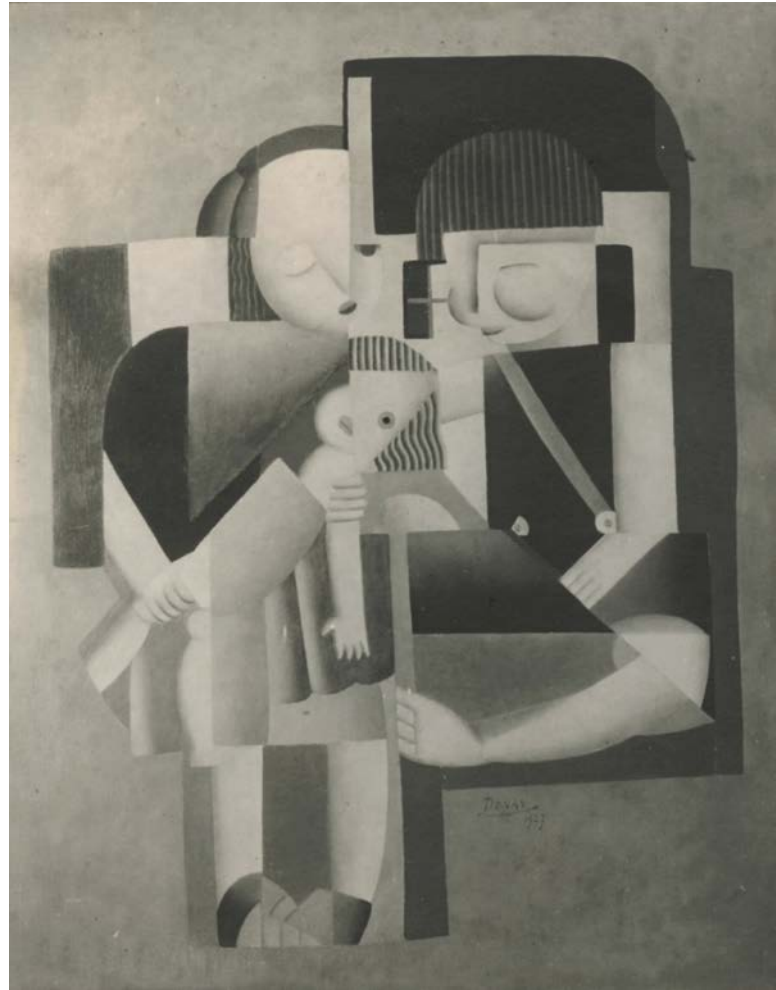
Marthe Donas appears to have engaged with this paradigm of the 'feminine style' primarily in the years 1917–19; the very period, in other words, when she was working hardest to conceal her gender. As Pauwels describes, she was inspired by Archipenko's female sculptures at this point, but unlike him, she also created a considerable number of works in which children played a leading role, including *Child With Roses*, *Child With Toys*, *Head of a Girl*, *The Picture Book* and the now lost *Children Playing with a Ball*.<sup>45</sup> Works like these are particularly interesting in the context of a country that was actively promoting motherhood after the war.<sup>46</sup> *Child With Boat* (1918–19) from the FIBAC collection is a striking example (p. 128). It shows a child in a hat launching a little sailboat onto the water – a traditional pastime for children at the fountain in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris. Radiating forms alternate with ones that are sharply defined. The background colouring is predominantly light grey-brown, but the action is shaped by areas of blue, pink and white. A similar combination of pastel blue-pink, and white/grey-brown is frequently found in Laurencin's works and can thus be linked to the paradigm of the 'feminine style'. Donas did not, however, use pastel colours in this work, although she plainly evoked them. The blue in the upper left, in particular, has clearly been made deeper, adding a touch of boldness to the otherwise charming work.

Writing in 1950, Katherine Dreier (1877–1952) – co-founder with Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray of the Société Anonyme in New York in 1920 – called Marthe Donas 'the first female abstract artist'. She cited Hans Hildebrandt in support of her claim that Donas owed her success to the way she had used her feminine charm to enrich male Cubism.<sup>47</sup> Jenny Anger has called this praise ironic, given that Donas was seeking to avoid exactly that kind of gender stereotyping by using a male name.<sup>48</sup> This judgement strikes me, however, as too strong: while 'feminine charm' as a stylistic element is clearly a subjective aesthetic judgement, Donas's *Child With Boat* plainly engaged with the discourse on the 'feminine' in art. 'Tour' was not a male name, and neither in her personal life nor in her art did Marthe attempt to conceal her 'femininity' or 'female needs'. As Judith Butler and the earlier discussion of 'the feminine style' demonstrate, concepts of





**MARTHE DONAS**, *Portrait of Andrée Biévez on her Confirmation*, 1918.  
Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.



**MARTHE DONAS**, *Boy and Girl with a Doll*, 1927. Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.

## MARTHE TOUR DONAS

The pseudonym 'Tour Donas' provided Marthe with a vessel in which to navigate the specific context of the European avant-garde. Both it and 'Tour d'Onasky' were brand names, as it were, that the artist used to place herself in the spotlight. They fitted into the visual language of the avant-garde and aligned with a culture of mystery and sometimes even intrigue, of which deft use was made to build her fame. Her pseudonyms were a deliberate means of dealing with an extremely male-dominated environment, but that was not her only reason for adopting them. Donas's Cubism was not that of Tour Donas, but of Marthe. It was highly personal and – to some extent – also driven by the 'virtues' traditionally attributed to women: a contextual factor with which Donas and almost all the other female avant-garde artists mentioned in this chapter had to struggle. Then, as now, gender expression was an especially difficult issue for women artists. Her response was certainly influenced by the patriarchal context, but was first and foremost a personal

choice. 'Tour Donas' was, at any rate, a significant answer to the issue: a possibly 'female Cubism' – in as much as that has any meaning – under a potentially 'masculine name'. These gendered concepts clearly cancel each other out here, and it is precisely in that negation that the real Donas shines through: a highly individual artist who was much more than her gender.



MARTHE DONAS, *Head of a Girl*, 1918–19. Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.







# LIBRAIRIE KUNDIG 1919

## ARCHIPENKO AND DONAS IN GENEVA

Peter J.H. Pauwels

In August 1919, Alexander Archipenko informed the German art promoter Herwarth Walden that he would be showing his work in Switzerland in October of that year.<sup>1</sup> The exhibition in question, which did not in fact open until the end of November, was held at Librairie Kundig, 1 Place du Lac in Geneva, close to the lake shore. It has been suggested that the location was proposed to Archipenko by the German painter Christian Schad, who fled Germany in 1915. Schad initially moved to Zurich, where he shared an apartment with the writer Walter Serner, so was able to witness the birth of Dadaism at the Cabaret Voltaire. He then moved on fairly quickly to Geneva, where he frequently spent time in pacifist circles. This is probably how he came into contact with Archipenko.<sup>2</sup>

### POLITICALLY ENGAGED BOOKSELLER

William Kundig, who took over his family bookshop after studying in London, was likewise known as a pacifist. Among other things, he published the caustic anti-war print cycle *Debout les morts. Résurrection infernale* by the Belgian wood-engraver Frans Masereel, who sought refuge in Switzerland. Kundig was also appointed *dépositaire général* or chief distributor for Le Sablier, the publishing house that Masereel founded in 1919 with the French poet and writer René Arcos.<sup>3</sup> In 1917, Kundig launched the arts magazine *L'Éventail*. He was interested in antiquarian engravings and books, but also had an eye for the latest trends in art.

It is entirely possible that Archipenko and Marthe Donas had already made Kundig's acquaintance in Paris, where he was a regular visitor. The link might have been Amedeo Modigliani, who had himself been introduced to Kundig by Max Jacob, an author who regularly played host to the bookseller and publisher. Kundig had bought a 'Nude' from Modigliani, who painted his portrait, and he also published an important article on the Italian artist in *L'Éventail*, written by Francis Carco.<sup>4</sup> Librairie Kundig had a *salle d'exposition*, where exhibitions were regularly held and where the most important avant-garde magazines could be found, including the Belgian *Sélection*, which first appeared in the second half of 1920. The bookshop in Geneva swiftly became an important hub of the international modern art circuit.

It had clearly been agreed from the outset that in addition to Archipenko, Donas would also have an exhibition at Kundig. Archipenko seems to have arrived in Geneva in mid-November 1919, bringing with him an impressive number of his own works and no fewer than forty-seven paintings by Donas. He lodged at the Hôtel Suisse on the Rue du Mont-Blanc. On 16 November 1919, Archipenko sent Herwarth Walden a postcard in which he reminded him of the photographs he had sent of paintings by Léopold Survage, whose address he now also provided. He casually added that: 'I warmly recommend the works of Tour Donas as I did before.'<sup>5</sup> Archipenko had indeed already drawn the art promoter's attention to the talent of 'his best pupil'.

**GROUP PHOTOGRAPH IN CHRISTIAN SCHAD'S STUDIO IN GENEVA**, December 1919.

Front, left to right: Christian Schad next to Alexander Archipenko, with Marthe Donas immediately behind them. Christian Schad Museum, Museen Aschaffenburg.

it is striking how frequently the female form is present in both their oeuvres. In Donas's case, this is reflected in the works *Woman with a Vase* (twice), *Woman Powdering Her Face*, *Woman's Torso*, *Woman's Head*, *Woman at Her Toilet*, *Woman Doing Her Hair*, *Woman and Dancer*. Children or the mother-child relationship played a role in six paintings: *Mother and Child* (also twice), *Child With Roses*, *Child With Boat*, *The Picture Book* and *Woman and Child Playing with a Ball*. Several of the works in Geneva had been shown in London that summer at the big *Exhibition of French Art 1914–1919* organised by the aristocratic brothers Osbert and Saxe-Weir in the Mansard Gallery at Heal & Son.<sup>41</sup>

A modest 'catalogue' was printed for Donas's exhibition at Kundig, a long narrow sheet (p. 163) with photos of her *Woman with a Mirror* (of which a postcard was also made) and a *Still Life with Statuette*. It was also stated that four of the exhibited paintings already belonged to a 'collection de ... Suisse': *Mother and Child*, *Woman and Child Playing with a Ball*, and two still lifes. It is noteworthy that four of the seven works reproduced in the catalogue for Archipenko's exhibition have virtually the same note. Research by Vita Susak has revealed that these sculptures belonged to Georg and Elise Falk,<sup>42</sup> suggesting that just before Donas's show opened, the Falks also purchased the four works by her, which were so closely related to those of the sculptor they admired.<sup>43</sup>

### DREAMLIKE CHARM

Donas kept a clipping from the Swiss newspaper *La Feuille* with an extensive article on her first solo exhibition. *La Feuille*, which was published between August 1917 and May 1920, was founded by the journalist Jean Debrit, son of the director of the *Journal de Genève*. From the outset, the paper committed itself to pacifism (a controversial stance in a country that had remained neutral during the war), drawing criticism from its German-speaking readers that it was too pro-French and vice versa. The magazine's prominent illustrators included Frans Masereel.

Now we know that Donas was definitely in Geneva in December 1919 and was thus almost certainly present at the formal opening of her exhibition, the critic from *La Feuille* – most probably the well-known writer René Arcos – will surely have been aware that Tour Donas was a woman. So while the review still treats her as a male artist (*cet artiste, il*),

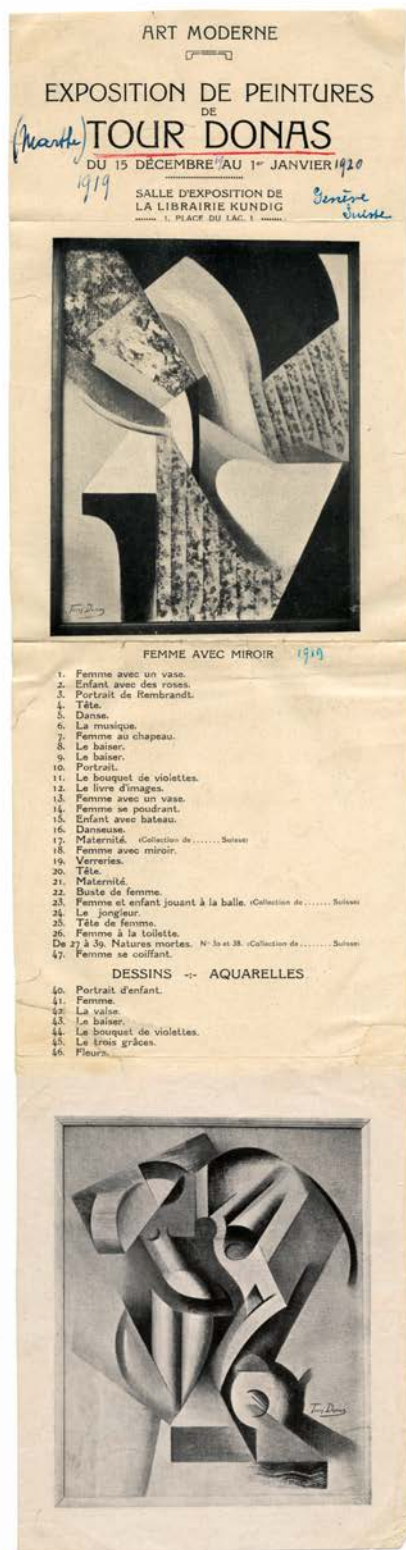
it also refers to the dreamlike charm of the works and even explicitly to a 'gentle diffidence that seems to reveal a feminine sensitivity.' The language of the review (clearer in the original French: see endnote) is poetic:

'There is a charm in the works of Tour Donas, to which we are not accustomed in painters of his school. Artists such as Fernand Léger, Chagall or Delaunay are much coarser and generally paint on a large scale. Tour Donas presents us with a light that is attenuated, as if blurred and blended with dreams. This artist, whose patient execution recalls that of the Japanese masters, likes to paint appealing details with meticulous care and joyful colour, which at times irresistibly evoke the Italian Renaissance. While he breaks his lines, so as to bestow on them a supernatural rhythm, a life that is artificial yet euphoric as if intoxicated, he never does so violently, but with a kind of gentle diffidence that seems to reveal a feminine sensibility. The work of Donas is highly condensed. This is an artist who likes to put a great many things in a work, and a number of his canvases remind us of certain verses by Mallarmé, laden with several destinies, as Duhamel would put it. The objects are not still; they live; they thrive in the great light in which every plane and every form is bathed and blends. Everything that is of the moment is alive. The same exchange that occurs between minds also occurs between the masses of colour. Modern art no longer shuns dynamism.'<sup>44</sup>

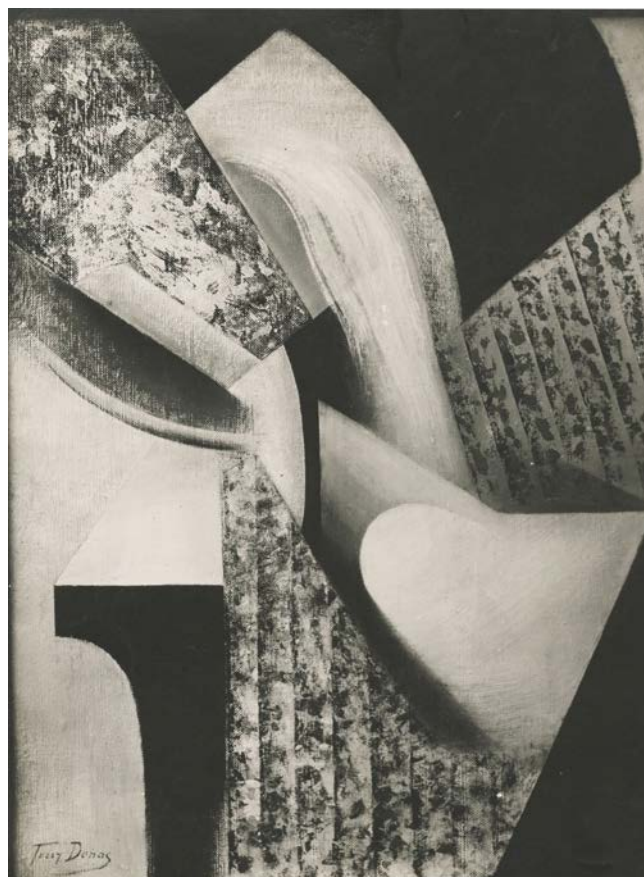
Donas's show at Kundig ran until 1 January 1920 and was followed immediately by a large-scale Masereel exhibition.<sup>45</sup> Having moved on to the Hôtel de la Cigogne with Archipenko in the meantime, she returned to Paris on 3 January 1920 while the Ukrainian travelled on to Zurich.<sup>46</sup>

### ARCHIPENKO IN ZURICH

The Kunsthhaus in Zurich had already informed Archipenko on 6 December 1919 that it wanted to take over his exhibition.<sup>47</sup> The works, however, could only be displayed in the vestibule, otherwise the show would have to be postponed until the spring. Archipenko agreed to exhibit his work in the smaller space, which he shared with the Blaue Reiter artist Marianne von Werefkin (who had moved to Ascona after the group broke up) and the Swiss artists Hans Berger, Paul Bodmer, Hermann Huber and Reinhold Kündig. Archipenko's contribution had to be reduced to sixty-four pieces: sixteen



**CATALOGUE OF THE TOUR DONAS EXHIBITION**  
at Librairie Kundig in Geneva, December 1919.  
Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.

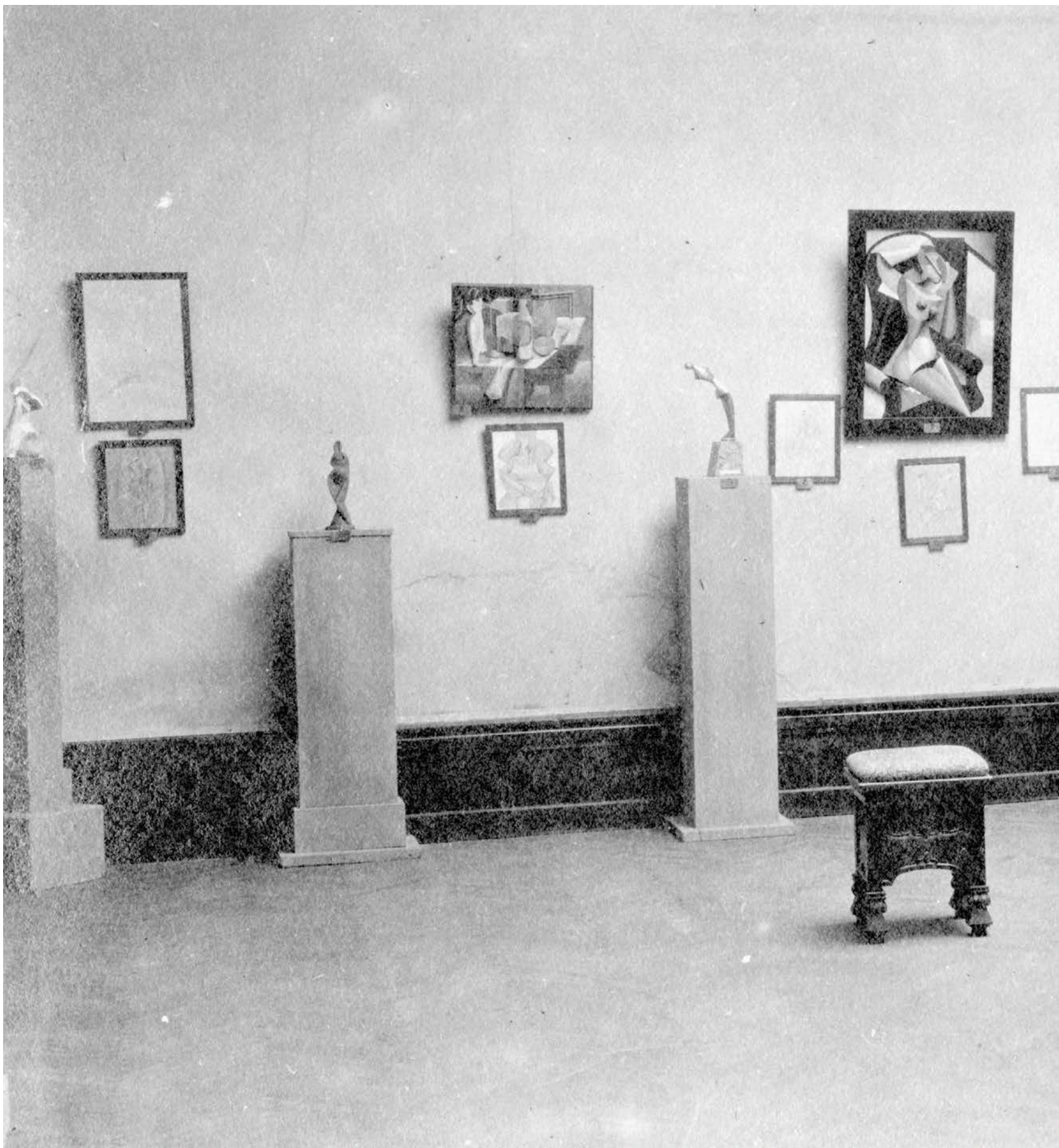


**MARTHE DONAS, *Woman with a Mirror*, 1917–19.** Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.



**MARTHE DONAS, *Still Life with Statuette*, 1917–19.** Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.





**VENICE BIENNALE, 1920**, view of the Archipenko exhibition at the Russian Pavilion. On the wall: *Still Life* (p. 72), *Woman Powdering Her Face* (p. 154) and *Bather* (p. 64).  
The Archipenko Foundation, Bearsville (NY).





# LA SECTION D'OR

‘Section d’Or was the most beautiful spark  
of creative energy and solidarity.’

**ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO**, in *Fifty Creative Years*, 1960





**ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO**, *In the Boudoir (In Front of the Mirror)*, 1915, oil paint, graphite, photograph, metal and wood on panel, 45.7 × 30.5 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art.











# LA SECTION D'OR IN BELGIUM

Peter J.H. Pauwels

*'Votre lettre m'a bien intéressée. Je rentre à Anvers au début de la semaine prochaine et nous pourrions nous voir alors pour causer des expositions futures'*<sup>1</sup>

Marthe Donas to André De Ridder, 23 June 1920

La Section d'Or held an exhibition in Belgium towards the end of 1920. A total of forty-four works by members of the group could be seen at the Sélection gallery in Brussels between 4 and 17 December 1920, most of which had featured in the preceding months in the exhibition organised by Theo van Doesburg in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> The Brussels event was the first time Marthe Donas had shown her paintings in her own country, although little emphasis was placed on the fact that she was the only Belgian in the group. The Atelier d'Art Contemporain Sélection, to give the gallery its full name, had opened just a few months earlier.<sup>3</sup>

The Antwerp economist, writer and art critic André De Ridder returned to Belgium in February 1919 after having spent the war in the Netherlands, where he immersed himself in modern art in Dutch museums, galleries and studios. In Brussels he looked up his good friend Paul-Gustave Van Hecke, who had introduced him before the conflict to the circle of artists associated with the Flemish village of Sint-Martens-Latem. Van Hecke was a former journalist and actor, who had become a kind of intellectual leader for several Latem artists, among them Gustave and Léon De Smet, Frits Van den Berghe and Constant Permeke. He and his partner Honorine Deschryver had also founded Couture Norine, which swiftly became one of Brussels's most innovative fashion houses. Their shared ambition to create a locale where they would be able to connect post-war Belgium

with the latest artistic expressions, also prompted them to set up a new arts magazine, *Sélection, Chronique de la vie artistique et littéraire*.

## PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations for a Section d'Or exhibition in Belgium had begun in the spring of 1920. Donas must have been closely involved from the outset. When the association was reestablished in March 1920, she was given responsibility within the 'Comité pour les expositions à l'étranger' for events to be staged in Belgium. The committee's other members were Thorvald Hellesen for Sweden and Norway, Jean Lambert-Rucki for Poland and Theo van Doesburg for the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup>

*De Stijl* informed its readers that the group had already reserved the Georges Giroux gallery in Brussels for May 1920,<sup>5</sup> as confirmed by the Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* on 25 March.<sup>6</sup> Giroux had shown Cubist sculptures and paintings from the Salon des Indépendants in Paris just before the war, including works by Archipenko.<sup>7</sup> Discussions were apparently also held with the Kring Moderne Kunst (Modern Art Circle) in Antwerp.<sup>8</sup> Van Doesburg, who had begun the arrangements for the touring exhibition in the Netherlands, approached the artist Jozef Peeters, the society's chairman, on 15 March regarding the possibility of organising an exhibition in Antwerp too.<sup>9</sup> He had delivered a lecture at the circle in February – while passing through the city on his way to Paris – and was personally acquainted with Peeters.<sup>10</sup> Shortly afterwards, however, he got wind that 'a man from Antwerp' had been spotted in Paris. Van Doesburg feared



**ANDRÉ DE RIDDER.** Private archive.



**GALERIE SÉLECTION IN BRUSSELS,** 1920. Private archive.



**FRITS VAN DEN BERGHE,** *Double Portrait of Paul-Gustave and Norine Van Hecke*, 1924, oil on canvas, 161 × 121 cm. Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA) – Flemish Community Collection.



## GALERIE SÉLECTION

Following the Antwerp 'pop-up' event, Galerie Sélection opened its doors on 18 September 1920 in a pleasantly decorated space on the Rue des Colonies in Brussels. Its inaugural exhibition – *Œuvres de cubistes et néo-cubistes* – once again included Braque, Férat, Gleizes, Lagut, Laurens, Léger, Survage and Valmier, alongside numerous works by other artists active in Paris. Belgium was represented with paintings and watercolours by Albert Counhaye, Prosper De Troyer, Paul Joostens, Jozef Peeters and Floris Jespers.

Everything must have been more or less ready for the actual Section d'Or exhibition by the beginning of October, as De Ridder sent Archipenko an urgent message on the twelfth of that month concerning the precise dimensions of the paintings.<sup>22</sup> Archipenko notified him three days later that 'the material' would definitely be in Brussels on 15 November, so that the exhibition could open as scheduled on 20 November.<sup>23</sup> Van Doesburg wrote to De Ridder on 8 November to tell him that the exhibition in Amsterdam had finished and that the works were ready to be sent on to Belgium. When they had arrived in the Netherlands, it had only been with considerable difficulty that they were allowed to cross the border. Donas had to come over especially to accompany the final works. To avoid further unnecessary delays, Van Doesburg thought it would be a good idea, this time, to transport them by boat, something he had already proposed to Archipenko.<sup>24</sup> On 22 November De Ridder notified him that eight large crates had arrived in Brussels but that they still needed to be transported to the gallery.<sup>25</sup>

The exhibition opened on 4 December 1920. The 15 December issue of *Sélection* was largely devoted to the event, including a general article by the art critic Florent Fels – director of the French magazine *Action* – which focused on the opening of the group's first exhibition in Paris in March that year. La Section d'Or, he informed Belgian readers, was not a 'new academy' but a 'necessary and active' group doing battle with large, outdated salons that did not give innovative artists a chance or were little more than huge caravanserais, in which their work was swamped by a tidal wave of (at best) mediocre art. Its members were committed to reshaping the plastic values of objects and forms without resorting to anecdote (too academic) or atmosphere (too impressionist). 'To construct and not to

comment, to work and not to imitate and finally to give the work of art its function and its own life.' La Section d'Or stood for a new discipline, which would lead to a plastic renaissance and the creation of a contemporary style.<sup>26</sup> The list of exhibited works was accompanied by an extensive photograph section (pp. 205, 268–269).

The Flemish correspondent of the Hague newspaper *Het Vaderland*, who braved the winter snow to travel to Brussels, reported that the gallery window was decorated with several artistic dolls – 'grotesque negroes and all manner of fashionable little women'.<sup>27</sup> While the article does not say so explicitly, the author must have been alluding to a series of dolls by Marie Vassilieff, who had made a name for herself in Paris with similar creations. 'Something far more important', however, could be seen inside where, in particular, the works of Tour Donas, Hellesen and Survage stood out. The as yet unidentified reviewer<sup>28</sup> clearly preferred the work of 'the highly sensitive, playfully harmonised, deeply meaningful' Survage. 'Here is a city by the water. Leaves, naturalistic with every vein, play a role, two symmetrical little fish, to the left and right of the white steamboat, in the rippling blue water below. Above them the white and pink houses: planes with so many windows, all surrounded by a robust green, the shape of which is determined by painterly laws alone – plus a touch of imagination.' Another painting by Survage was simpler: 'Two diagonals divide it more or less into triangles: water below, sky above, to the side, the built-up area with the familiar human silhouettes, as if cut from paper.' 'As if cut from paper': one could say that of much Modernist work. 'The flat, unmixed colour and the sharp, taut outlines lead towards this, and many Modernists have indeed worked with cut paper.'<sup>29</sup> Gleizes certainly had all this to a large degree, but what he showed in Brussels was dismissed by the reviewer as 'not very remarkable'.

Most of the works in the exhibition had previously been shown during the Dutch tour. They included the two bouquets by François Angiboult – pseudonym of Baroness Hélène d'Oettingen – two depictions of a Spanish woman by Natalia Goncharova, her partner Mikhail Larionov's *Theatre Mask* and *Dance Balance*; and *Child With Cat*, *Child With Fish* and *Child With House* by the previously mentioned Vassilieff. Survage's painting *Landscape With Fish*, which had been exhibited in the Netherlands, was replaced by a *Landscape*





An abstract geometric artwork featuring a composition of bold, flat colors and thick black lines. The background is a warm, mustard yellow. A large, dark green triangle is positioned in the upper left. A thick black vertical line runs down the left side, and a thick black diagonal line runs from the top center towards the bottom right. A large, light green triangle is in the center, and a large, reddish-pink triangle is on the right. A small, dark blue semi-circle is visible on the left, and a small, light blue triangle is at the bottom left. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century abstract art.

1920

1923







# THE END OF A RELATIONSHIP

Peter J.H. Pauwels & Adriaan Gonnissen

The fact that Marthe Donas swiftly faded from view after her initial international success is too often attributed to her break-up with Alexander Archipenko, his move to Berlin and his subsequent marriage to the sculptor Gela Forster. It is too simplistic to assume that it was all down to an unfaithful Archipenko, who ditched her for a younger woman and abandoned her in Paris, robbing her of her network and bringing her career to a standstill. In fact, we know as little about the ending of their relationship as we do about any other aspect of it.

In this instance too, study of Donas's own work offers certain clues. A similarly noteworthy change, for instance, can be detected in the style of her paintings and ink drawings from the spring of 1920 onwards, as had occurred in the second half of 1917. Donas embarked on an entirely different course, heralded the previous year by the simplification of *Music* (p. 232) into a much flatter version. She reduced earlier compositions such as *Reclining Nude* (pp. 284, 286) to basic shapes and lines in a series of tightly constructed drawings. Where, during her collaboration with Archipenko, she had focused on evoking three-dimensionality on canvas or panel, she now emphasised the two-dimensional in constructions that were increasingly rational, an evolution to which her close contact in Paris with Albert Gleizes, Léopold Survage and Fernand Léger will undoubtedly have contributed. Donas was also one of the first to subscribe to *L'Esprit nouveau*, the magazine launched by Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier), who called for simplification in art.

Donas proved every bit as creative and productive in this new direction, as witnessed by the numerous old

photographs of works in her archive. Her belief in it is apparent from a photograph showing her sitting at her easel with some of her latest paintings in the background (p. 283). The intriguing *Head* was later spotted at the 1923 Salon des Indépendants in Paris and was discussed in *Revue du Vrai et du Beau*.<sup>1</sup> All the same, even fewer works have survived from this abstract phase than from her Cubist period. In addition to *Tulips* (p. 295), Donas presented seven of her abstract compositions at the important exhibition that Jozef Peeters organised in January 1922 at El Bardo in Antwerp to accompany the Second Congress for Modern Art.<sup>2</sup> One of these works – *Abstract Composition No. 6* (p. 293), several preparatory drawings for which are titled *After Two Women* (p. 292) – still contains a reference to Archipenko's sculpture *Walking* (p. 290). Incidentally, his work also featured at the exhibition.

While Donas generally stuck to compositions of planes and curves, she also experimented occasionally with strictly geometric abstraction. Her interest in the ideas of De Stijl is expressed in *Construction* (p. 251), albeit in a unique interpretation, given her highly distinctive use of colour, dominated by pink. As she wrote to Theo van Doesburg from London in September 1920, Donas appreciated his work and that of Piet Mondrian more than anything else in modern art. All the same, she still had her doubts: 'Despite that, I am not brave enough to keep working in this same wave of ideas, because afterwards... what will we do then? There is virtually no possibility any more of progress, of change. Aren't we moving too fast?'<sup>3</sup> In the same letter she referred bitterly to the intrigues going on within the Parisian artistic scene, without going into detail. But she had also heard about

still resonated, meanwhile, within the German Der Sturm movement, at both Herwarth Walden's group exhibitions in Berlin and as part of a major Scandinavian tour of Der Sturm artists. Work by her that had been sold at Der Sturm also popped up later in exhibitions in the United States and Japan. The art historian Hans Hildebrandt, who had already devoted a monograph to Archipenko,<sup>11</sup> discussed her work in 1928 in his groundbreaking *Die Frau als Künstlerin* (Woman as Artist), in which he reproduced her *Woman Powdering Her Face* (p. 160).<sup>12</sup> Donas exhibited in Paris in June of that year alongside other Belgian artists from the group L'Assaut, including Victor Servranckx, Felix De Boeck and Pierre-Louis Flouquet. She then set her brushes aside, a hiatus that would last twenty years.

Just as Donas had departed from Paris once and for all, Archipenko also decided fairly quickly to leave Germany, having experienced success in Berlin, where he opened a school for sculptors. He exhibited repeatedly at Der Sturm, but also at Fritz Gurlitt's gallery and the popular and artistically influential *First Russian Art Exhibition* (*Erste Russische Kunstausstellung*) at Galerie van Diemen. Old and new work by him (Archipenko too had undergone a change in style in the interim) was likewise shown in Dresden, Frankfurt, Mannheim and Leipzig. In the spring of 1923, the Czech avant-garde group Devětsil invited him to hold a major retrospective in Prague. In financial terms, however, these successes did not amount to much. Moreover, Germany was suffering from an economic crisis and increasingly catastrophic inflation. This inflation affected Donas too, because by the time Walden got round to paying her, the German mark had lost virtually all its value.<sup>13</sup>

'I have decided to leave this mad Europe', Archipenko wrote to Katherine Dreier as early as January that year. 'I cannot work any longer in this atmosphere; one doesn't know in the morning what the evening will bring... Europe is inevitably becoming materialistic, now that everyone has just one idea, to find a piece of bread to survive.'<sup>14</sup> Archipenko turned his back on Europe definitively in October 1923, when he boarded the ss Mongolia for New York, where a new career awaited him.

## NOTES

- 1 Unknown author, 'Tour Donas', *Revue du Vrai et du Beau* (25 March 1923).
- 2 Peeters's contacts with Herwarth Walden and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti meant he was able to show works in Antwerp for the first time by Der Sturm artists such as Archipenko, Rudolf Bauer, Heinrich Campendonk, Julius Evola, Paul Klee, Kurt Schwitters, Ivan Puni, Jacoba van Heemskerck and William Wauer, and Italian Futurists such as Giacomo Balla, Toto Fornari and Ivo Pannaggi. It was likewise the first occasion that the Belgian avant-garde had been shown in its own country within an international context.
- 3 'Malgré cela je n'ai pas le courage de travailler dans ce même ondes [sic] d'idées, car ... après que ferons-nous ? Il n'y a presque plus de progrès [sic] ni de changement possible. N'est-ce pas aller trop vite?' Letter from Marthe Donas to Theo van Doesburg, 16 September 1920. Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive, RKD, The Hague.
- 4 Idem.
- 5 Francine Franke Van Meir, 'Marthe Donas. Vocation impérieuse et vie difficile', *Marthe Donas Foundation Newsletter* 3 (March 2009), p. 1.
- 6 I am grateful to Françoise Lucbert, who will explore this letter in greater depth in a future publication.
- 7 'envers et contre tous.' Marthe Donas, Carnet 1. Marthe Donas Foundation Archive, Ghent.
- 8 '[bekend] door heel Parijs [...] om haar nukkige kinderstreken.' As recalled by Jozef Peeters after 1956. Ronny and Jessy Van de Velde Archive, Antwerp.
- 9 Letter from Piet Mondrian to Theo van Doesburg, 4 April 1922. Theo and Nelly van Doesburg Archive, RKD, The Hague.
- 10 The term 'New Woman' – first used in the 1890s by the writers Sarah Grand and Ouida, and embodied by many of Henry James's characters – refers to a new generation of confident, well-educated women who chose to pursue an independent life and career of their own after radically breaking with established role patterns.
- 11 Hans Hildebrandt, *Alexander Archipenko* (Berlin: Ukrainische Slowo, 1923).
- 12 Hans Hildebrandt, *Die Frau als Künstlerin* (Berlin: Rudolf Mosse, 1928).
- 13 Marthe Donas, Carnet 1. Marthe Donas Foundation Archive, Ghent.
- 14 'J'ai décidé de quitter la folle Europe; je ne peu plus travailler dans cette atmosphere; le matin on ne sait pas ce que vient le soir. [...] Europe inévitablement devient matérialiste du moment que unique idée de chaque homme, ce de trouver un morceau de pain et sauver sa vie [sic].' Letter from Alexander Archipenko to Katherine Dreier, 17 January 1923. Katherine S. Dreier Papers, Yale University.





**ALEXANDER AND ANGELICA ARCHIPENKO**, aboard ss Mongolia, en route for New York, 1923. The Archipenko Foundation, Bearsville (NY).

# A NEW DIRECTION

*‘Mon désir de trouver n’est jamais satisfait.  
Cependant j’ai toujours poursuivi la synthétisation,  
une grande simplification et la réalisation  
de l’infini dans le fini.’*

MARTHE DONAS



MARTHE DONAS IN HER STUDIO IN PARIS, 26 Rue du Départ, 1920. Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.





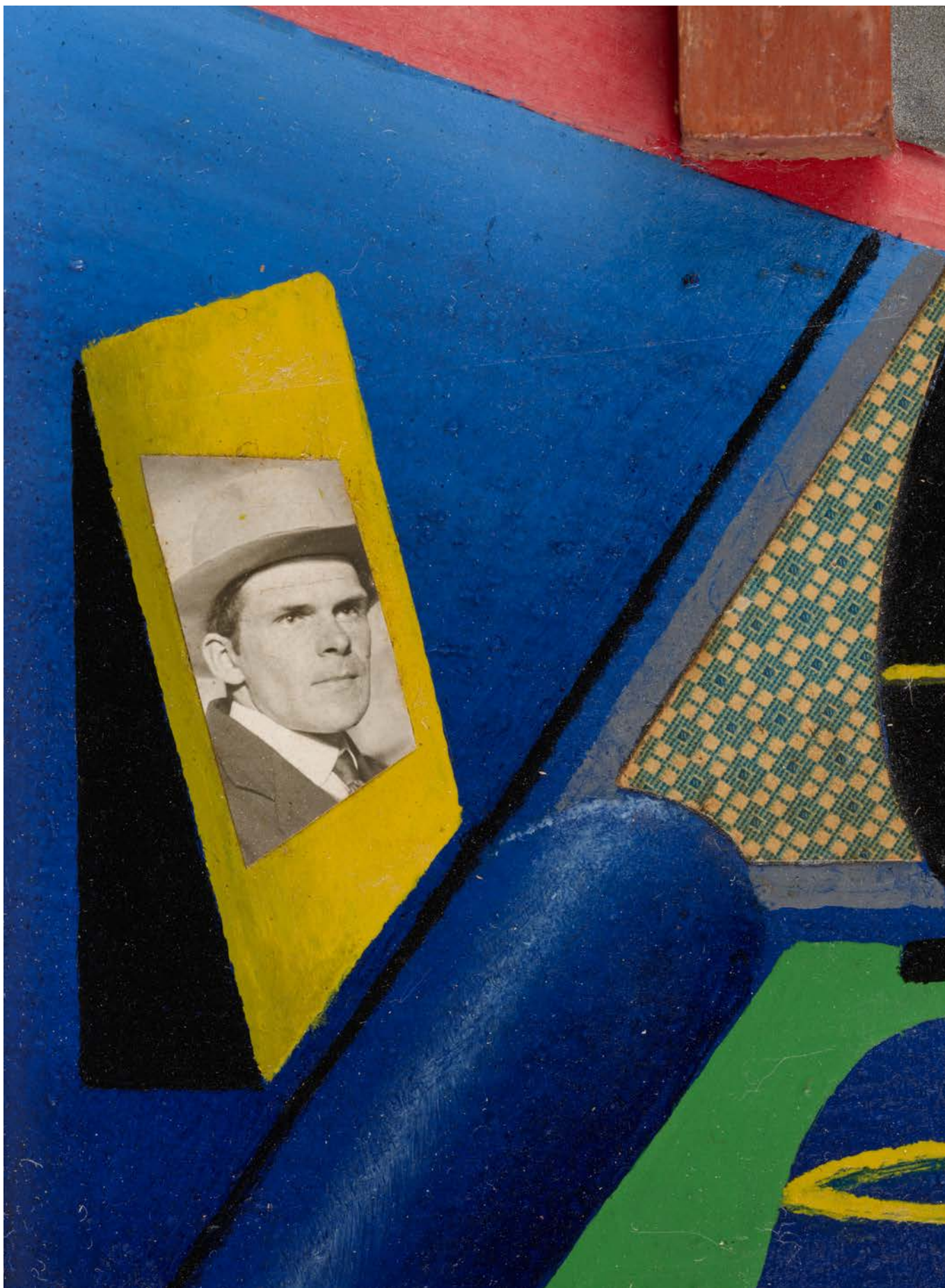
**MARTHE DONAS**, *Abstract Composition (After Two Women)*, 1920, Chinese ink on paper, 270 × 205 mm. Marthe Donas Foundation, Ghent.

**MARTHE DONAS**, *Abstract Composition (After Two Women)*, 1920, Chinese ink on paper, 285 × 210 mm. Private collection.



MARTHE DONAS, *Abstract Composition No. 6*, 1920, oil on wood, 63 × 48 cm. Private collection.





**ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO**, detail of *In the Boudoir (In Front of the Mirror)* (p. 219), 1915, oil paint, graphite, photograph, metal and wood on panel, 45.7 × 30.5 cm.  
Philadelphia Museum of Art.



# WOMEN IN ARCHIPENKO'S LIFE AND WORK

Vita Susak

'Woman' – feminine nature – was a central theme in Archipenko's work. Before embodying her in sculptural form, the artist got to know her in reality. There were many women in his life, but only a few of them became separate chapters of his biography.

## PARASKEVA

The first woman in every man's life is his mother; and the sculptor was very lucky to have such a loving, kind, determined and pious mother. Little is known about Paraskeva Makhova. She was born in June 1860 and died in Darnytsia (now part of Kyiv) on 3 December 1930 (p. 326). Later, in his brief biographical notes, Alexander wrote: 'Mother loved music and dramatic art (Ukrainian corus)'.<sup>1</sup> There were artists in Paraskeva's family – not only on her father's side, but also on her mother's. Her uncle, Stepan Makhov, was a self-taught artist who painted 'pictures of spiritual content'.<sup>2</sup>

In 1898 Alexander fell off his bicycle, severely injuring his leg. He developed bone tuberculosis, and his mother applied 'heroic methods which saved him from being an amputee'. Frances Archipenko retold this story in her book:

'Secretly, away from the vigilance of the family doctor, Alexander's mother found a peasant healer who attended him, brutally cauterizing the wound many times until the infection was healed. "I was fortunate that my mother refused the doctor's decision to amputate," he told me ... "My mother was a very strong person and also very religious. Once I was able to walk with a crutch, she took me on a pilgrimage up the Dnieper River to a shrine.

Even though I was still in much pain, I left my crutch behind and walked."'<sup>3</sup>

In 1906 Alexander left Kyiv for Moscow. By 1909 he was in Paris, and he and his mother never saw each other again. His older brother, Yevhen,<sup>4</sup> left Kyiv with his wife and two sons in 1919 when the Bolsheviks came to power. His father went with Yevhen, but his mother refused and stayed in Darnytsia. Paraskeva's relationship with her husband, Porfiry Archipenko, was not cloudless. Later, when she learnt of her husband's death, she wrote to Alexander: 'Yes, my dear, we have forgiven him everything, his mistakes and transgressions.... He could have lived longer, but his turbulent life led to serious illness and death.'<sup>5</sup>

The anticipation of meeting her sons became the life blood of her last years: 'I only want to live to see you, my dear sons the eagles, but I don't know if I'll see you, as the Lord wills.'<sup>6</sup>

'My dear, dear Sashenka, my heart, my darling, my sweet son,' was how she addressed her son in her letters. He was frank with his mother, as these lines in her reply show:

'It also bothers me that you write that you are depressed by emotional distress. That's bad, there's nothing worse than soul suffering. I remember it well; I experienced it myself. But my child, I think you're very overworked and that's why you're nervous.'<sup>7</sup>

She was sincerely pleased when he married Angelica Forster: 'I think your wife is a good genius and you are happy with her.... After the church celebration, I invited the neighbours to admire Angelica in the photos.'<sup>8</sup> With Alexander's money, Paraskeva bought a big house in Darnytsia. 'I have

the company of Herwarth Walden and Alexander Archipenko at a party in Berlin (p. 333).<sup>38</sup> At this time, Archipenko had had a series of successful exhibitions and had opened his own school, but hyperinflation was beginning in Germany. In the summer of 1922, Alexander was hospitalised with a stomach ulcer,<sup>39</sup> and he and Angelica decided to go to America for a while to get away from this 'European madness'. It is worth noting that they left Berlin with passports issued by the Ukrainian mission in Bern,<sup>40</sup> as citizens of the not-yet-existing Ukraine. Angelica's daughter stayed in Germany, probably with her sister Gabriela.

The couple arrived in New York in October 1923. The American press immediately responded to the appearance of a spectacular, talented couple from Europe. Publications featured not only Archipenko but also Gela Forster, albeit only as his muse and model (p. 333). New York's *Evening Telegram* devoted two pages to them, subtitled: 'Modernist in Art holds up Junoesque Type as Ideal, Like His "Mona Lisa" Wife.' The figure of Angelica, with her small breasts and hips resembling an elongated vase, was multiplied in Archipenko's sculptural versions. The comparison with Juno contained not only a parallel with the large, well-built body of the main goddess of Olympus, but also a hint as to who her husband Jupiter was. Angelica's face also attracted attention for its extraordinary beauty. She was called 'Mona Lisa' back in Dresden avant-garde circles.<sup>41</sup> When she married Archipenko, she chose the traditional route for a woman:

'Marriage means the giving up of one's own career. One cannot do two things if one is a woman. Sometimes I think of going back to my own work, but I do not know as I shall ever do so. It is hard to begin again after one has once broken away.'<sup>42</sup>

Her freedom-loving nature did not last long as a housewife. In 1925 she travelled to the western states of the United States with Galka Scheyer (1889–1945), 'impresario' of the Blue Four (Feininger, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, Klee),<sup>43</sup> went to Canada, visited Niagara Falls, took photographs and then made albums that are kept at the Archipenko Foundation. Towards the end of 1930, Alexander wrote notes in French on a small piece of paper:

*'Angelica est parti le 12 Septembre 1929.*

*Mon père est mort Mars 17, 1930 à 12 heurs de nuit.*  
*Enterré à Zdolbunov, Pologne*

*Ma mère est morte Decembre 3, 1930 à 3 heures dans le journée, est enterrée dans la simetière de Novaja Darnitza près de Kiev.*

*Ruiné. [sic]'*<sup>44</sup>

Angelica returned to Berlin to see her daughter and obtain visas for further travel.<sup>45</sup> At the end of February 1930, she left Genoa for Indonesia with Claire Holt, a former student of Archipenko and future dance researcher.<sup>46</sup> From April to October 1930, Angelica stayed on the island of Bali in the company of Claire and also Walter Spies (1895–1942), a distant relative who had left civilisation for 'the beauty and justice of life'.<sup>47</sup> His appearance (blond with blue eyes and a magnificent physique), and even more so his personality, fascinated both men and women. Walter and Angelica, who first met in Dresden, had long-standing feelings for each other, more than just friendship,<sup>48</sup> but they had gone their separate ways. The six months she spent in Bali, where monkeys and other animals lived in Walter's house, remained a memory of paradise. In September 1930, Galka Scheyer went to visit them, and Angelica travelled with her to China and Hawaii, returning to San Francisco in early 1931.

In 1932, she appeared at the Théâtre Français in San Francisco in the comedy *Ces dames aux chapeaux verts*, directed by André Ferrier and based on the novel by Germaine Acremant. *Le Courrier du Pacifique* noted that Angelica played the role of Telcide 'with a restrained dramatic sensibility that does credit to her artistic temperament. The scene in the third act in which confidences are exchanged was played with great truth and taste'.<sup>49</sup>

Alexander moved to Los Angeles in 1935, but went to Chicago two years later at the invitation of László Moholy-Nagy. Alexander and Angelica chose freedom in their relationship, while maintaining a deep connection with each other. 'My love', Angelica would say in her letters to Alexander, which she would sign 'your love' at the end. She would describe her daily life to him and thank him for his financial support. In January 1938, Gela Forster had a solo exhibition of 20 sculptures in Los Angeles at the Stanley Rose Studio on Hollywood Boulevard. An article about her was published in *The Western Woman* magazine, which stated: 'The hint of humor which enters into her work is a happy note, saving the artist from the suspicion of ruthlessness'.<sup>50</sup> 'Gela is good' was the title of another column, which talked about:



**FRANCES GRAY**, c.1957–58. The Archipenko Foundation, Bearsville (NY).

‘...[an] original artist with rare feeling for the materials she uses – terra cotta, glazes, wood – and a crisp delineation of forms which recalls the Gothic. Her modeled and textured portraits are caricatures, but they linger in the mind because she has really seen her people. Her finest portrait is of herself.’<sup>51</sup>

A separate chapter was her stay in Mexico where, from 1939 to 1942, Angelica taught ‘clay modelling and terracotta technique’ at the faculty of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in San Miguel de Allende. By the mid-1940s she was already in New York with Alexander, and in the summer they were in Woodstock. Angelica began to have problems with her blood pressure very early on and 1950 was a particularly difficult year. In April, Alexander wrote to his brother: ‘We had a tragedy. Angelica’s daughter committed suicide by jumping out of a window.’<sup>52</sup>

In November 1950, Angelica had an operation, but there were complications and she became paralysed. Alexander did everything he could to pay for her treatment. One can imagine how much it cost in 1953 to transport her by air ambulance from a hospital in Durham, North Carolina, to a hospital in New York. ‘It’s very difficult for me now and it’s heavy on my heart. It’s hard to see a dear person slowly dying,’<sup>53</sup> Alexander confessed to his brother.

She died seven years before him, but they are buried together in Woodlawn Cemetery (Bronx, New York). It is remarkable that the sculpture on the grave of one of the greatest innovators of twentieth-century art is not his, but that of Gela Forster<sup>54</sup> (p. 333). Archipenko enlarged her self-portrait, which became a monument to his love and devotion to this woman.

## FRANCES

‘Dear Miss Gray, I am very glad to learn that you find it possible for you to study with me in Woodstock.... According to your wishes, I will order clay for you, but you must write to me how much you want, 50 pounds or 100.’<sup>55</sup>

When 19-year-old Frances Gray received a letter from a famous sculptor, she could not even imagine how this meeting would change/determine her life. She found a sick Angelica in Woodstock. After Angelica’s death, Alexander and Frances lived together for three years and were married in Paris on 1 August 1960. The difference of half a century provoked an unequivocal reaction from the people around them. Archipenko was well aware of this, and in a letter to Zinaida and Jean Verdier, announcing the news, he wrote: ‘My 25 year-old wife is a former American Jewish pupil of mine. Will it be chaos or happiness? Either way, I can’t live alone.’<sup>56</sup>



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**MARCEL DALOZE** is an historian and art historian. Between 1982 and 2004 he headed the Centre d'art Nicolas de Staël in Braine-l'Alleud, Belgium. He has published monographs on Willy Anthoons (2012) and Anne Bonnet (2022). As Curator at the Musée Marthe Donas in Ittre since 2011 he has curated numerous exhibitions on Belgian modern art, including *Marthe Donas et l'avant-garde parisienne* (2016), *Marthe Donas en Irlande* (2022), *Marthe Donas à Genève, surgissement d'une artiste* (2023) and, in the autumn of 2025, *Marthe Donas, retour aux pays (1921–1927)*.

**KATHRIN ELVERS-ŠVAMBERK** has been Deputy Director of the Saarlandmuseum since 2013. She completed her studies in art history, classical archaeology and German language and literature in 1999 with a doctorate on the work of Édouard Manet. After posts at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and in the Cologne art market, she joined the Saarland Cultural Heritage Foundation as a research assistant in 2004, where she subsequently took over the management of the Moderne Galerie collection. She has curated numerous exhibitions and published on nineteenth to twenty-first-century sculpture, painting and graphic art including studies of Paul Klee, Alexander Archipenko, Willi Baumeister, Auguste Rodin, Lovis Corinth and Die Brücke artists' group. From 2024 to 2025 she served as Interim Executive Board Member for Art and Cultural Studies at the Foundation. Her research focuses on canon expansion and the transnational aspects of Classical Modernism.

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**CHARLOTTE GREENAWAY** is an art historian focusing on gender and the global circulation of art. She obtained her first Master's degree in Art Sciences at KU Leuven with a thesis on the Modernist expressions of Penobscot performer Molly Spotted Elk (1903–1977) and how they relate to French Surrealism. She then took a second Master's in Managing Art and Cultural Heritage in Global Markets at the University of Glasgow, where her thesis 'Innovation Irregardless' explored the cultural entrepreneurship of female artists in Paris between 1920 and 1925. Charlotte Greenaway is also a guest lecturer at LUCA School of Arts (Brussels) on the 'global paradoxes of French Surrealism'.

As Project Director, **ALEXANDRA KEISER** oversees the preparation and phased publication of the catalogue raisonné of Joan Mitchell's painted work – a long-term research project. In her previous role, Dr Keiser was research curator at the Archipenko Foundation and co-editor of the digital Archipenko Sculpture Catalogue Raisonné, which was launched in 2018. Keiser has lectured and published widely and made significant contributions to Archipenko scholarship and its broader context, with a recent inclusion in the French journal *Histoire de l'art* (no. 91). Prior to this she was the founding director of the contemporary art gallery AU base in New York City. Keiser has curated notable exhibitions, including the travelling retrospective, *Archipenko: A Modern Legacy*, which toured museums in the United States and Scandinavia between 2015 and 2018. In 2023 she curated the contemporary art exhibition *Down to Earth* during the Upstate Art Weekend in New York State. She holds a PhD from The Courtauld Institute of Art (London) and a Master's degree in art history and French philology from Trier University (Germany). Keiser's research interests are focused on twentieth- and twenty-first-century art, including transatlantic practices and artistic networks. She also actively participates in the Catalogue Raisonné Scholars Association (CRSA) as a member of its board of directors and the organisation's managing director.

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**PETER J.H. PAUWELS** is an art historian, lawyer and Chief Curator at FIBAC in Antwerp. His research concentrates on Belgian modern art from 1900 to 1960, with a focus on networks of artists, art promoters and collectors. He has curated exhibitions and is the author of monographs on Albert Saverys (2014), Jozef Cantré (2017), Jules Schmalzigaug (2020) and Jozef Peeters (2022). In 2016, he curated the first major retrospective of Marthe Donas's Cubist and abstract work at the Museum of Fine Arts (MSK) in Ghent. As secretary of the Ghent-based Marthe Donas Foundation, he has worked for many years to achieve international recognition for the artist, including the publication of the first monograph in English (2015) and essays and articles in numerous volumes and exhibition catalogues, such as: *Der Sturm, Zentrum der Avantgarde* (Museum von der Heydt, Wuppertal, 2012); *Modernism, Belgian Abstract Art and Europe (1912–1930)* (MSK, Ghent, 2013); *Sturm-Frauen, Künstlerinnen der Avantgarde in Berlin 1910–1932* (Schirn, Frankfurt, 2015); *14/18 – Rupture or Continuity: Belgian Art around World War I* (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, 2018); and *First Look, Then See: Essays on Mondrian* (Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague, 2020).

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# COLOPHON

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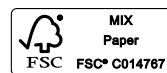
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**COVER: MARTHE DONAS**, *Abstract Composition No. 6*, 1920, oil on wood, 63 × 48 cm. Private collection.

**BACK COVER: ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO**, *Two Women*, 1920, sculpto-painting, painted wood and metal, 177 × 97 cm. National Museum, Belgrade.



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[www.archipenko.org](http://www.archipenko.org)  
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Jean-Pierre Durant des Aulnois, Marta Dziewanska,  
Michel Francx, Trygve M. Gravdahl, Valérie Haerden,  
Doede Hardeman, Merituuli Holm, David Horowitz,  
Stefan Huygebaert, Paul-André Jacquard, Dragana Kovacic,  
Ingvild Krogvig, Wim Lammertijn, Monique Lenoir,  
Françoise Lucbert, Addison L. Lynne, Erik Mattsson,  
An Meirhaeghe, Mieke Mels, Alex Mintcheff,  
Hanneke Modderkolk, Michel Moortgat, Matilda Olof-Ors,  
Sarah Pareja-Rodriguez, Ewald Peters, Roberto Polo,  
Mirjana Rakocevic, Kasia Redzisz, Lena Reinke,  
Henrik Rooms, Ilse Roosens, Andreas Rumbler,  
Benoit Sapiro, Peter Saverys, Urs E. Schwarzenbach,  
Jenny Shaw, Zahia Slifi, Matthew Stephenson,  
Asuka Takahashi, Marie Thonnard, Martial Trouillez,  
Grace Trumbo, Maya Urich, Francisca Vandepitte,  
Emmanuel and Maria Luisa Van de Putte-Melendo,  
Froukje van der Meulen, Dienne van der Kuijl,  
Ronny and Jessy Van de Velde, Laurence Van Kerkhoven,  
Dennis Van Mol, Sarah Van Ooteghem, Caro Verbeek,  
Mathieu Verbrugghe, Aurélie Verdier, Tomas Vermeire,  
Caleb Weintraub-Weissman, Sara Weyns