



Press release

GALERIE ALEXIS PENTCHEFF - MARSEILLE

/immediate publication

Dora Maar

Seule au bord de la Terre

Collection Dominique de Roquemaurel-Galitzine

Exhibition from 10.03 to 15.04.22

“

All these times I had the following vision of my presence in the world...

I am alone at the edge of the earth.”

*The books of Dora Maar, autographs and documents, catalog of the auction
auction of October 29, 1998, Me Piasa and Mathias, notes of the artist,
11 February-19 August 1944, included in lot n°343 p.60.*



Dora Maar - Seule au bord de la Terre

We are pleased, after a long interruption due to difficulties related to the health context, to resume our programming at the gallery.

This exhibition is devoted to the works on paper of Dora Maar, works, for the most part exploratory, realized during a period of voluntary reclusion voluntary which will have lasted more than forty years. It is the result of an intense preparation and a real attachment, in the course of our research, to the character of Dora Maar.

Fascinating and moving Dora Maar.

We wished to learn more about her than her legend suggested, to look beyond to see beyond her most known faces: the one of the muse, photographed and painted, the one of the abandoned woman, which are those that we are most often offered.

Recent and important exhibitions, organized at the Centre Pompidou and then at the Tate Modern in London in 2019 and 2020, have paid tribute to her, highlighting the place of her work in the surrealist movement.

But do we remember that the first exhibition devoted to Dora Maar in France took place in Marseille, at the Musée de la Vieille-Charité, in spring 2002? It originated in a retrospective that had been held in 1995, during the artist's lifetime, at the Bancaixa Foundation in Barcelona, under the impetus of Victoria Combalia. This should have followed at the Centre Pompidou, but the unpredictable artist thwarted the established program on the pretext that the invitation to the opening did not please her did not please her..

It was only after his death that the exhibition could be shown in France, in Marseille finally, and in the meantime, the knowledge of the artist's career had been enriched, in particular thanks to the study of private documents which had revealed by the auction of his estate.

Exactly twenty years later, the mystery of Dora Maar remains.

If her photographic work is now well known (since a set consisting of 1900 of her negatives and 300 prints was acquired in 2004 by the state and is kept at the Centre Pompidou), her painted work is less known.

First, because Dora Maar painted for a long time as a recluse and gradually did not admit anyone to her home, let alone her studio. Apart from that of her friend James Lord, who had access to the studio in the 1950s and then in 1969 and 1980, no other testimony, it seems, sheds light on what may have been the chronology of her production.

On the other hand, because after the end of the years 1950, it does not really expose more in gallery, while it continues however to work, with rigour and obstinacy. It is thus a very solitary path that she followed, almost ascetic. Lord has often wondered about the ambivalence of the artist, who burned to be recognized and admired, while refusing to give herself up to the world.

She did not particularly leave any writings, nor correspondences, likely to throw light on the evolution of her pictorial research.

Finally, if her paintings, which were dispersed within the framework of the sale of her studio collection, were for the most part reproduced in an auction catalog, it was not the same for the hundreds of preparatory works, works on paper and sketchbooks of the different periods, which were collected in boxes to be sold, without having been individually photographed or photographed or even inventoried beforehand.

By recovering intact, more than twenty years later, one of these makeshift sets of works assembled at the time of the sales of Dora Maar's studio collection, we have attempted, through this catalog and before these works are definitively dispersed, to listen to what they could teach us, to try to learn more about Dora Maar's creative process. more on the creative process of Dora Maar, on the orientation of its research and what seems and what seems to have presided over the realization of these works on paper, which have the advantage of being more spontaneous and daring than her paintings on canvas.

It seemed to us that there was to seek, in the sum of these rediscovered works, more than what their apparent formal simplicity suggested; that they contained perhaps the essence of a personal research far from being devoid of interest.



Oil on cardboard, signed and stamped on the back with the artist's estate sale on the back, 8,5 x 15 cm.

“

I walk alone in a vast landscape

The weather is beautiful. But there is no sun. There is no time.

For a long time no more a friend, no more a passer-by.

I walk alone. I speak alone.

True friends, helpful passers-by

Of the light of the heat of the bread - No

Yes, I believe in it, my destiny is beautiful no matter what it seems.

”

I used to say, my destiny is very hard no matter what it seems.

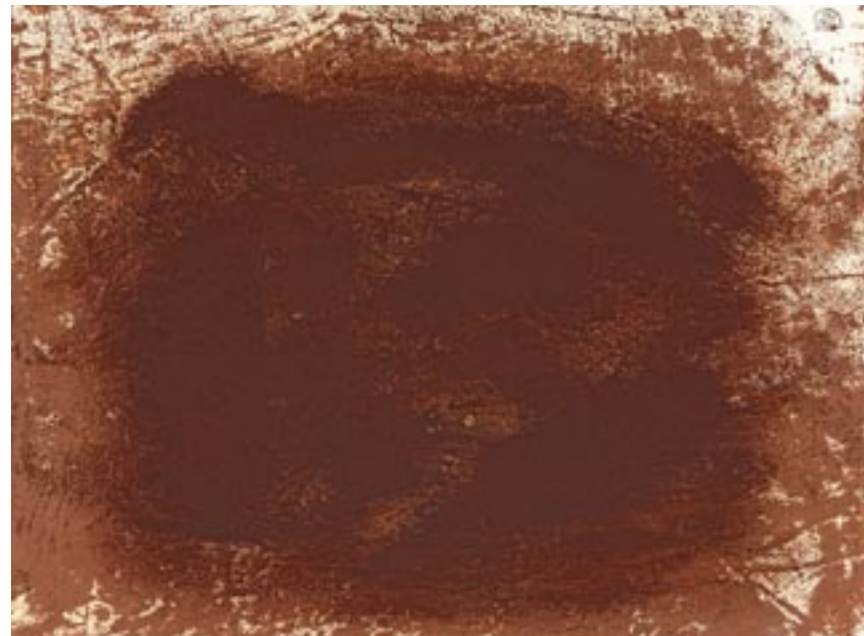
The books of Dora Maar, autographs and documents, catalog of the auction auction of October 29, 1998, Me Piasa and Mathias, poem of the artist dated May 23, 1946, included in lot n°343 p.60.



Mixed media (including oil) on paper, bearing the stamp of the sale of the artist's estate on the back, 27 x 37 cm.



Mixed media on paper, signed lower right and bearing the stamp of the sale of the artist's estate lower left, 21 x 27 cm.



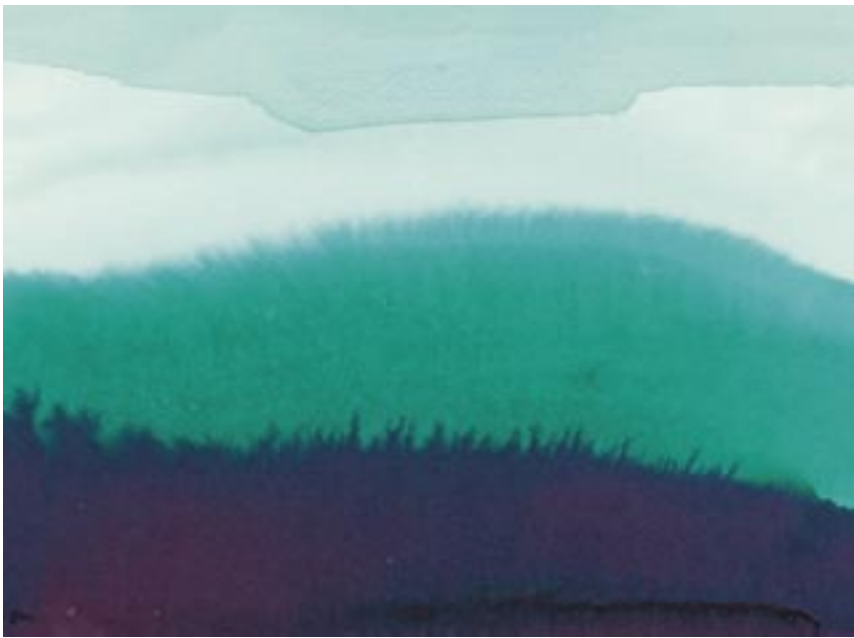
Mixed media on paper, bearing the stamp of the sale of the artist's estate in the upper right corner, 21 x 27 cm.



Mixed media (including oil) on paper, monogrammed on the back and bearing the stamp of the sale of the artist's estate in the lower right corner, 21 x 27 cm.



Mixed media on paper, signed and stamped with the sale of the artist's estate on the back, 17 x 22 cm.



Ink and watercolor on paper, monogrammed and bearing the stamp of the sale of the artist's estate on the back, 16 x 24 cm.



Ink wash on paper, monogrammed and stamped with the sale of the artist's estate on the back, 13.5 x 18.5 cm.



Ink wash on paper, monogrammed and stamped with the sale of the artist's estate on the back, 12.5 x 17 cm.



Ink wash on paper, monogrammed and stamped with the sale of the artist's estate on the back, 10 x 11 cm.

This exhibition, organized at the Alexis Pentcheff Gallery in Marseille, presents more than one hundred and sixty original works by Dora Maar, created between the 1960s and the end of her life, during a period when, separated from Picasso with whom she lived for nearly ten years, she gradually withdrew from the world, to paint and pray.

Dora Maar, who was in her youth photographer, close to the surrealists and movements of artistic avant-gardes, devotes herself to the painting on the advice of Picasso. In the secrecy of its Parisian workshop or in that its house of Ménerbes, in the Vaucluse, she creates intriguing, poetic and abstract works. Works by which by which she dissociates herself and detaches herself from the influence of her former lover.

All the works in the exhibition come from the collection of Dominique de Roquemaurel-Galitzine, jewelry designer and artist, who had acquired, during the sales of the estate Dora Maar, three cartoons that she kept intact, like a treasure, on top of a cabinet for more than of a cupboard for more than twenty years.

Reached us, as a kind of time capsule, this set of works allows us to better know the painted work of the artist and to apprehend a research that she did not have stop leading since her surrealist works of the years 1930.

There is a mystery Dora Maar.

An unknown plain between the committed, free, liberated young woman, the talented surrealist photographer with a sharp eye and the bigot she was described at the end of her life, stubbornly reclusive, having irrevocably cut ties with all those she had been able to associate with, including her closest friends.

In the middle of the ford, there is the "Woman who cries", or rather the Women who cry... there were so many frightening versions of herself, of her ravaged face, her features eaten of pain.

In the middle of the ford, there is Picasso and his brushes, creator among all. There is the insatiable Minotaur and its destructive bestiality, the fatal labyrinth of the possession, of the dependence.

Did Picasso devour Dora in a word? The explanation would be simple, however it does not satisfy entirely. Death, furious madness, which she certainly came close to, would have been acceptable outcomes. But not this ideological radicality, this apparent coolness, this ridiculous bondieu-sery, this unspeakable intransigence...what the Minotaur has spat out does not pass.

As a woman, this form of survival never ceases to question us, to disturb us, to worry us. Whether we turn to psychiatry and psychoanalysis, they do not seem to bring us truly conclusive answers.

This disturbing fascination for the destiny of Dora Maar has led many women to invite themselves into her memories to try to nuance this somewhat crude portrait, to try to undress the commonplaces of this dichotomy. They lived with her, in Picasso's arms, in his apartment in the rue de Savoie, then in the solitude of the house in Ménerbes, for months or years. They suffered with her, suffered by her.

Victoria Combalia, Marie-Ann Caws, Alicia Dujovne Ortiz, Slavenka Drakulic, Nicole Avril, Brigitte Benkemoun... All of them have written about Dora in a different way, either they have been able to collect her memories directly in journalistic interviews, or they have been able to document her in order to make her a character in a novel, or they have been able to go back in time armed with a telephone book that belonged to her, following the twists and turns of this tenuous Ariadne's thread to get to know her initial owner better.

All of them have searched her life, scrutinized the smallest detail, the slightest memory reported by others, witnesses of a fled world, all of them have exhausted their capital of empathy to try to understand, to learn from her. The humiliations, the submissions, the defeats, they wanted to share them with her, in the front row. Like a feminine obsession macabre feminine obsession.

There are worlds to explore between Dora and Dora, however they do not bring answers to our essential questions.

It is perhaps for this reason, at the bottom, that she remained the Woman who cries, living allegory of the pain, so strong that its ravages go beyond its supposed effects, that they surpass the understanding. The Woman who cries, it is the misunderstood woman, in spite of all our compassionate attempts.

Dora Maar continued to paint until the end of her life. A work that she did not show to anyone. And with that, the mystery thickens, the paradox grows. From her works after her break with Picasso, after her internment, a sublime poetry emerges. A communion with nature, an abstraction at once meditative and intensely lived. Sometimes, certainly, the violent hatchings with the felt-tip pen or the infinite swirls of a flower let guess the concern, the instability badly dissimulated of their author, but in numerous other works, a new way is drawn, more serene, although passionate. Contrast of this balance gained in the painting while the being crumbles.

On these small rectangles of paper, without pretension, the landscapes blossom in a properly lyrical abstraction. Dora experiments, creates with her painting empty spaces and full spaces. Assembling two sheets loaded with paint, rubbing them belly to belly, she obtains on the one hand the representation of a landscape and, in hollow, sketch of its negative, the avatar of another world.

Painter and demiurge, she takes back the control, takes back the power, the one that the photographer had on the inanimate things, one of these things malleable to the envy that she had ended up becoming, herself, under the brushes of Picasso - but perhaps it would be more correct to speak about scalpels.

It is probably no coincidence that the set we are presenting in this exhibition was acquired by a woman. And preserved intact, with and kept intact, with love, for more than twenty years on top of a cupboard.

Closed boxes that constituted, among other things, the tail of the great auctions of the Dora Maar estate that took place in 1998 and 1999. The Picassos, which she jealously guarded, rediscovered in a dazzling light at a cost of millions of francs and Dora's studio emptied. What were not canvases: papers, sketchbooks... that were nevertheless stamped, were gathered in boxes for which one had to buy without really knowing what they contained, real "surprise pockets". Notice to players, to the curious to those who share the taste for the unexpected. They are quite numerous in this category to frequent Drouot but nevertheless this day they are not so many to throw the dice.

It must be said that few people were interested in Dora Maar as an artist. Apart from a few famous photomontages, little is known about her work before the museum exhibitions that will be devoted to her after the year 2000. Mistress of, or muse of (it's more chic), but reduced to this only dimension, and to a short period of her life, this is how the general public, then little inclined to feminism, apprehends it.

Did we even know that she was still alive in the late 1990s? She had long since disappeared from the world's view and belonged to a generation of ghosts. Wrapped in a Picasso shroud, Dora Maar was not even the main character in the sales of her own estate. Picasso still swallows everything around her, and while the smallest crumpled piece of tablecloth, hastily scribbled by the master, was the object of exaggerated attention, Dora's papers are piled up in boxes that one can only buy blindly.

Are they so uninteresting that they are not even worthy of being shown to be shown to potential buyers?

This is how, twenty years later, all these little pieces of Dora came to us. Fragile and beautiful witnesses of a quest that she has never ceased to lead, since her photographic experiments of the 30s.

A solitary, tortuous path, the one that was specially reserved for her. By God? In any case, she ended up believing it. Lost for lost, she committed herself body and soul, as she knew so well how to do. With, in the hollow of her profession of faith, the nature and the painting; as poetry, as a crutch and as consolation.

To cry or to paint, was it necessary to choose?



Text from the Catalog of the exhibition

144 pages / in French

Texts by Giulia Pentcheff

available from March 1st

25 euros

November 22, 1907

Henriette Markovitch was born in Paris to a Croatian architect father, Joseph Markovitch, and a French mother, Julie Voisin. The family lived between Paris and Buenos Aires until the 1920s.

October 1923 - July 1926

Dora attended the school and workshops of decorative arts in Paris.

1927 She enrolled at the Academy of André Lhote, rue d'Odessa

1928 She attended the School of Photography of the City of Paris

May 1931

She joins Pierre Kéfer to found a photo studio and until 1934 her photos will bear the stamp of the name of both partners: Maar - Kéfer.

September 1933

She meets Georges Bataille who will become her lover

February 10, 1934

Dora signs with Breton and Eluard the "Call to Struggle" of the Vigilance Committee of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals.

1934 She sets up her own studio at 29 rue d'Astorg

She practices both fashion photography, advertising photography but also documentary photography while carrying out an activity of creative photographer

1935 She is the set photographer for Jean Renoir's film *Le crime de Monsieur Lange*

October 7, 1935

She signs the manifesto of the Union of Revolutionary Intellectuals, which led to the founding of the group Contre Attaque

Autumn 1935 Meeting with Picasso at the Café des Deux Magots

1936 She begins to participate in the meetings of the surrealist group.

August-September 1936 Beginning of the affair with Picasso.

The couple is in Mougins with Paul and Nusch Eluard.

1937 From this date, Dora abandons photography for painting

May-June 1937

Picasso paints Guernica and Dora, present in the studio, documents by photographs the stages of creation of this work

1942 She moves into her apartment at 6 rue de Savoie where she will live until her death

1944 Break-up with Picasso

June 1944 Exhibition at the Jeanne Bucher Gallery

May 1945 She is interned in Saint-Mandé (Seine)

June 1946 Exhibition at the Pierre Loeb Gallery

1956 Produces four etchings to illustrate André du Bouchet's collection of poems, *Sol de la montagne*

1957 Exhibits a series of landscapes at the Berggruen gallery

April 1958 Exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in London.

From the 1960's

She spends her time between Paris and her house in Ménerbes, which Picasso gave her. She hardly sees anyone, lives as a recluse, paints and prays.

July 16, 1997 Death of Dora Maar in Paris

1998 - 1999 Auction sales of the estate Dora Maar



**Thursday, March 10 from 6:30 to 9:00 pm,
Brigitte Benkemoun**

writer and journalist, will be present at the gallery for a signing of her book, published in 2019,
I am the notebook of Dora Maar.

A fascinating biography of the artist, a dive into his world from a particularly original angle, which does not exclude however a great historical rigor.

It had been tucked into the inside pocket of the old leather case purchased on the Internet. A very small directory, like the ones sold with the annual diary refills, dated 1951. A: Aragon. B: Breton, Brassai, Braque, Balthus... I flipped through these slightly yellowed pages with amazement. C: Cocteau, Chagall... E: Éluard... G: Giacometti... Each time, their phone number, often an address. L: Lacan... P: Ponge, Poulenc... Twenty pages where the greatest artists of the post-war period are aligned. Who could know and work with these geniuses of the 20th century?

It took me three months to know that I had Dora Maar's notebook. It took me two years to make this directory speak, to understand the place of each in her life and her address book, and to approach the mystery and the secrets of the "woman who cries". Dora Maar, the great photographer who gave herself to Picasso, then, destroyed by passion, the recluse painter who abandoned herself to God. And in her wake, a Paris where friends are called Balthus, Éluard, Leiris or Noailles is reborn.

B.B.

Collection D. de Roquemaurel-Galitzine

Dora Maar

Seule au bord de la Terre

Exposition du 10.03 au 15.04.22

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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La galerie est ouverte

du mardi au samedi

10h-12h / 14h-18h30

Entrée libre

For any request for visuals or additional information on the exhibition, you can write to us at a.pentcheff@gmail.com or contact us by phone:

Giulia Pentcheff 06 08 28 58 85. / Alexis Pentcheff 06 82 72 95 79

Coming soon to the gallery



ANDRÉ MASSON (1896-1987)

13 mai - 15 juillet 2022