



RAOUL DUFY

17 February to 17 May 2015

Curator: Juan Ángel López-Manzanares

Between 17 February and 17 May 2015 the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza will be holding the first major retrospective on Raoul Dufy in Madrid since the one presented at the Casa de las Alhajas in 1989. The exhibition, which is benefiting from the collaboration of the Comunidad de Madrid, will offer a comprehensive survey of the entire career of this French artist through 93 works loaned from private collections and museums, including the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Tate, London, and an exceptional loan of 36 works from the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Although principally featuring oil paintings, the exhibition will also include drawings and watercolours in addition to textiles and ceramics designed by Dufy during the course of his long and prolific career of more than half a century.

Raoul Dufy's work possesses a complexity that has frequently gone unnoticed. His popular scenes of regattas and horse races meant that by the late 1920s critics and art historians already referred to his work as essentially agreeable and light-hearted. Without ignoring the existence of an undeniably hedonistic facet in his work, the present exhibition moves away from this interpretation in order to reveal the slow evolution of the artist's particular language, his ongoing quest for new visual solutions and above all, his more introspective side.

Juan Ángel López-Manzanares, the exhibition's curator and a curator at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, has devised a chronologically ordered structure for the exhibition, which follows the development of Dufy's painting through four sections: his early work (**From Impressionism to Fauvism**); the period when the influence of Cézanne led him towards Cubism (**The Constructive Period**); his output as a designer of textiles and ceramics (**Decorative Designs**); and finally, his mature phase (**The Light of Colours**).

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Raoul Dufy. *Large Bather*, 1914. Exceptional loan from the GDF SUEZ Collection, on loan to the Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels / *Still Life with White Tower*, 1913-1947. Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle, Paris / *Open Window, Nice*, 1928. The Art Institute of Chicago, Joseph Winterbotham Collection



More information and images:

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza – Oficina de Prensa.
Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014 Madrid. Tel. +34 914203944 /913600236. .
Fax+34914202780. prensa@museothyssen.org; www.museothyssen.org;
<http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2015/Dufy>

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From Impressionism to Fauvism

The exhibition opens with the animated scenes of harbours and markets that Dufy painted in Normandy, as well as in Marseilles and Martigues when he visited the Midi in 1903. In 1905 he moved away from these subjects, gradually lightening his palette and loosening his brushstroke in order to depict scenes of leisure activities in bright sunlight.

While Dufy acknowledged his debt to Impressionism, he soon appreciated the need to go beyond it. He recounted how, when painting on the beach at Sainte-Adresse, he realised the impossibility of capturing the continuous changes of light: "This method of copying nature led me towards the infinite, towards meanders, towards the smallest and most fleeting details. And I was left out of the painting." While Monet, Sisley and Pissarro had aimed to capture the impressions of the retina on their canvases, the new generation of artists aspired to something more than mere visual satisfaction.



Boardwalk of the Casino Marie-Christine at Sainte-Adresse, c. 1906. Milwaukee Art Museum. Gift of Mrs. Harry Lynde Bradley



July 14 in Le Havre, 1906. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Dufy was impressed by Matisse's paintings at the 1905 Salon des Indépendants. This discovery led him to change direction in his work: "[...] for me Impressionist realism lost all its charms when I saw the miracle of imagination introduced into drawing and colour. I suddenly grasped the new mechanic of painting." During the summer of 1906 Dufy fully assimilated the Fauve idiom. In his views of the beach at Sainte-Adresse and of the port and streets of Le Havre decorated with flags for the 14th of July, Dufy gradually abandoned a vibrating brushstroke in order to convey the light through broad zones of colour. His palette became more intense and he abandoned the use of black shadows, replacing them with blue and mauve tones. The aim was no longer to faithfully reproduce exterior reality but to offer a lyrical interpretation of nature in order to arouse emotions through colour.

The Constructive Period

Like many artists of his day, Dufy was profoundly moved by the paintings by Paul Cézanne that he saw in the Salon d'Automne and at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in Paris in 1907. Cézanne's influence is evident in the orthogonal lines and simplified forms of *Boats in Martigues* (1907-1908) and in the canvases that Dufy painted in L'Estaque during the summer of 1908 in the company of

Boats and Barques in Martigues, 1907-1908. Private Collection, France



Georges Braque. The latter reveal the use of much more geometrical forms, a limited colour range and the use of a Cézanne-like constructive brushstroke. In contrast to Braque, however, Dufy did not pursue the path of Cubism but rather experimented with his own language while reviving his earlier interest in colour, as evident in one of the most notable works of this period, *The Large Bather* (1914).

This section presents for the first time a selection of the drawings, alongside a number of prints, that Dufy produced for Apollinaire's *Bestiary or the Parade of Orpheus*, considered one of the first masterpieces of the *livre d'artiste*. Combining pagan and Christian motifs, the illustrations that Dufy produced for this text are inspired by Medieval and Renaissance works and assist the reader in understanding the essential meaning of Apollinaire's poetic.

Dufy had already proved himself a skilled printmaker with his first woodcuts of 1907-1908, a technique that Apollinaire considered particularly appropriate for accompanying the quatrains and five- and six-line stanzas in which the *Bestiary* (his first book of verse) is written. This selection of drawings loaned by the Centre Pompidou allows visitors to appreciate the highly meditated process of the book's creation while also offering a close-up insight into the working process of a great draughtsman possessed of an impressively secure line and decorative facility.



The Peacock illustration in *The Bestiary, or Procession of Orpheus*, by Guillaume Apollinaire, 1910-1911. Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle, Paris

Decorative Designs



Vase with ears of wheat, 1934
Collection Larock-Granoff, Paris

Dufy's illustrations and prints were the forerunners of a new creative adventure on which he embarked in 1909 when he met the fashion designer Paul Poiret, then later signed a contract with the Bianchini-Férier textile company which lasted from 1912 to 1928. For Dufy, textile design was a continuation of his experiences with printmaking as well as a field for free experimentation with colour. His initial designs reminiscent of his prints gave way to floral and animal patterns in which he liberated himself from his constructivist aesthetic and rediscovered the decorative fantasy that was innate to his artistic personality.

From 1924 onwards, Dufy also focused on ceramics. Working with Llorens Artigas, he decorated jugs and tiles with sinuous designs of bathers, animals and shells. In the so-called *Salon Gardens* (co-designed with Artigas and the Catalan architect Nicolau Maria Rubió) reality and fiction combine in the form of original planters for bonsais that evoke different types of traditional western gardens.

The Light of Colours



Nice, the Old Casino, 1927-1928. Private collection, Switzerland

Dufy regularly visited the south of France after the end of World War I. Inspired by the serene nature and landscape of Provence, he aimed to imbue his work with a new classical harmony. In addition to the sculptural forms of the landscape, the light of the Mediterranean was now a key element in his painting: “The unchanging light of the Mediterranean naturally produces that calm, that classical serenity which is so different to the fleeting effects which the Atlantic or the Channel give to landscapes.”

In his landscapes Dufy thus aimed to reach a synthesis between the splendour of nature and the pleasure of painting outdoors on the one hand, and on the other a desire to establish a strictly visual order associated with his subsequent reflections in the studio. In order to achieve this he structured his landscapes into chromatic strips, organising the highlights and shadows through the light emanating from the colours themselves: “To follow sunlight is to waste time. The light of painting is something else, it is a light of distribution, composition, a light-colour.” Furthermore, Dufy’s previous experience with printmaking and with gouache textile designs enabled him to separate the colour of the figures and objects from their outlines. A duality between exterior and interior is also evident in the artist’s numerous views of open windows and balconies, such as *Open Window, Nice* (1928), *Window onto the Promenade des Anglais, Nice* (1938), and *The Studio at L’Impasse Guelma* (1935-1952). In these works Dufy followed Matisse when establishing a complex equilibrium between the illusionistic transparency of the glass and the opaque surface of the painting.

Time and its representation are also present in Dufy’s mature work. For the artist, painting should represent not just the visible but also an accumulation of recollections, traditions and experiences associated with a specific place. His depictions of the modern world thus often include allegorical or mythological elements and classical buildings. This is the case with *Port with a Sailboat. Homage to Claude Lorrain* (1935) in which Dufy depicts the Colosseum next to an idealised port that recalls both Marseilles and the landscapes by the 17th-century French painter.



Port with Sailing Ship. Homage to Claude Lorrain, 1935. Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris



In the last years of his life most of Dufy’s work, by this date of a more intimate character, focused on music. The musical environment in which he grew up in Le Havre explains his profound love for this discipline, leading him to seek out visual equivalents to musical sounds throughout his career. One example is *Still*

Still Life with Violin. Homage to Bach, 1952. Centre Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne/Centre de création industrielle, Paris

Life with Violin. Homage to Bach (1952), in which the artist makes use of both a sinuous stroke that strongly suggests musical notation and the power of the colour red to evoke the sound of that instrument.

Black becomes more important in his late depictions of bullfights and in particular in his series *The Black Cargo Boat*. This subject, which he had first depicted in 1925, returns in a series executed between 1946 and 1953 in which Dufy once again made use of black to convey the maximum degree of luminosity. While Dufy did not aim to make his painting the expression of his emotions, this series can be interpreted as the presentiment of his imminent death.

Sainte-Adresse: The Black Freighter, 1951. Private collection, Bremen. Courtesy Thomas Salis, Salzburg



RELATED ACTIVITIES

Monographic course: *Raoul Dufy and the origins of the avant-gardes*

Between 11 March and 6 May the Museum is offering a monographic course which will focus in more depth on the different issues raised in the exhibition and on the role played by Dufy in the birth of the early 20th-century avant-garde movements. Among the experts giving talks will be José Lebrero, artistic director of the Museo Picasso Málaga; Sophie Krebs, chief curator of the Musée d'Arte Moderne de la Ville de Paris; the art historians Dora Perez-Tibi and Claudine Grammont; Guillermo Solana, artistic director of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza; and the exhibition's curator, Juan Ángel López-Manzanares. Talks take place on Wednesdays at 5.30pm in the Museum's Auditorium.

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Title: *Raoul Dufy*

Organiser: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. With the special support of the Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de creation industrielle de Paris

With the collaboration of the Comunidad de Madrid

Venue and dates: Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, 17 February to 17 May 2015

Curator: Juan Ángel López-Manzanares, Curator at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

Technical Curator: Leticia de Cos Martín, Curator Department Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

Number of works: 93 (55 oils, 22 drawings, 3 watercolours, 6 textiles and 7 ceramics)

Publications: Catalogue with texts by Juan Ángel López-Manzanares, Dora Perez-Tibi, Sophie Krebs, Christian Briend, an anthology of texts by the artist, some previously unpublished and a biography by Leticia de Cos Martín (editions in Spanish and English). Educational guide. Digital publication on the free app "Thyssen Kiosk" for tablets and smart phones, in Spanish and English.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

Address: Paseo del Prado 8, 28014 Madrid.

Opening times: From Tuesdays to Sundays, 10am to 7pm; Saturdays, 10am to 9pm.

Last entry one hour before closing time

Temporary exhibition:

- Standard ticket: 11 Euros
- Reduced price ticket: 7 Euros for visitors aged over 65, pensioners, students with proof of status and Large Families
- Free entry: children aged under 12 and officially unemployed Spanish citizens

Temporary exhibition + Permanent Collection:

- Standard ticket: 17 Euros
- Reduced price ticket: 9 Euros for visitors aged over 65, pensioners, students with proof of status and Large Families
- Free entry: children aged under 12 and officially unemployed Spanish citizens

Combined entry exhibitions Raoul Dufy + Paul Delvaux:

- Standard ticket: 14 Euros
- Reduced price ticket: 9 Euros for visitors aged over 65, pensioners, students with proof of status and Large Families
- Free entry: children aged under 12 and officially unemployed Spanish citizens

Advance ticket purchase at the Museum's ticket desk, from its website and on tel: 902 760 511

More information: www.museothyssen.org

Audioguide: available in various languages

PRESS INFORMATION:

<http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2015/Dufy>