

Press release

THE FONDATION GANDUR POUR L'ART LOANS 15 EUROPEAN POST-WAR PAINTINGS TO THE REINA SOFÍA MUSEUM IN MADRID

The famous painting *Sarah* (1943) by Jean Fautrier is the highlight of the selection

Geneva, February 18, 2015 - Jean Claude Gandur (Switzerland, 1949), one of the world's most renowned art collectors, has loaned the Reina Sofía Museum 15 European post-war paintings through his Fondation Gandur pour l'Art. Most are non-figurative pictorial works from the Second School of Paris (1946-1962), which radically questioned the aesthetic principles of western culture in response to the human disorder that followed the Second World War.

The collaboration has been agreed for an unlimited period. Each loan is arranged for an extendable initial period of 2 years. The initiative is the result of the Foundation's mission to make its artworks accessible to the public, and the Museo Reina Sofía's interest in strengthening one of the cores of its Collection, the section ranging from Informalism to New Realism, and in presenting a number of movements that were absent from its Collection, such as the CoBrA group.

The loan will enable the Museo Reina Sofía to display some of the most significant artworks from the forties and fifties, in particular *Sarah* (1943), the famous *Sarah* by Jean Fautrier will be shown for the first time with Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), a painting it was compared with in its day by such writers as Francis Ponge and Jean-Paul Sartre.

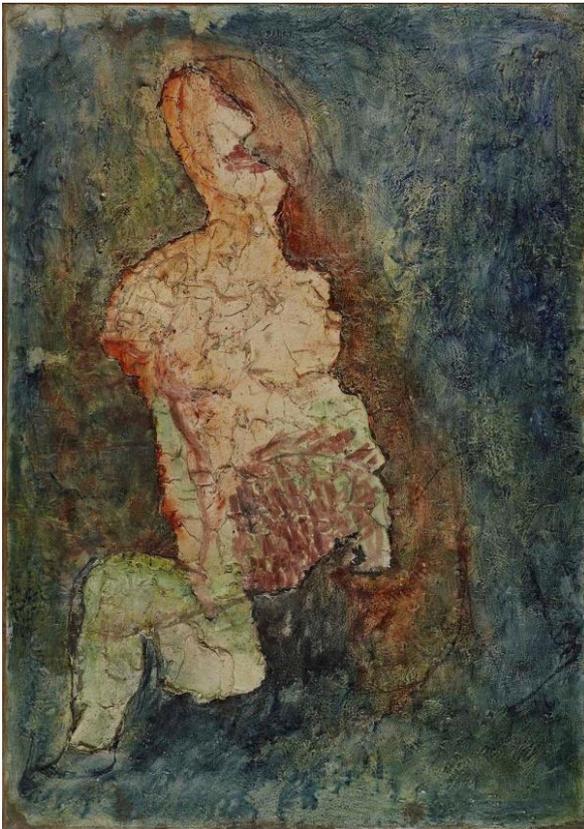
The selection also includes artworks by artists of the stature of Constant, Asger Jorn, Jean Dubuffet, Jean Fautrier and Wols, who were already represented in the Reina Sofía Collection, and seven artists whose work had not yet appeared in its collection: Karel Appel, Corneille, César, Daniel Spoerri, Mimmo Rotella, Jean-Michel Atlan and Bram van Velde.

Fautrier's *Sarah* and Picasso's *Guernica*

Sarah (1943), one of the works arriving at the Museum with this loan, takes its title from an emblematic name in the Jewish tradition, and is a masterpiece by Jean Fautrier, whose work directly incarnates the human drama and the wounds inflicted by the Second World War. When it was first presented to the public in Paris in 1945, some writers and friends of the artist, Ponge and Sartre among them, stressed the relationship between this work by Fautrier and Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937). The power of this comparison, rediscovered by the Museum's researchers, has been brought to life by displaying the two works together for the first time at

the Reina Sofía. The Spanish Civil War, of which *Guernica* became an iconic image, has been regarded as a “dress rehearsal” for the Second World War. Similarly, Picasso’s great mural laid the foundations for Fautrier’s *Sarah* and symbolised the same painful confrontation with the suffering of others.

These two works are their artists’ response to the indiscriminate massacre of human beings in war. The first addresses the slaughter of part of the civil population of the town of Guernica on a market day, while the other refers to that of nearly a hundred French Resistance prisoners one night on the outskirts of Paris. Both events now form part of the history of the countries where they took place, and these images have become symbols of resistance and silent heroism. Although stylistically opposed, Rosario Peiró, the head of collections at the Museo Reina Sofía, explains that the two works share such formal features as the difficult combination of anonymity and individuality in the representation of the victims, the physical absence of the aggressor in the composition, and the exclusion of explicit violence.



Jean Fautrier

Sarah, 1943

Hautes pâtes on paper mounted on canvas

116 x 80.7 cm

Loan from Collection Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva (Switzerland) to Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (Spain)

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Photographer: Sandra Pointet

About the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the **Fondation Gandur pour l'Art** was created in 2010 with the mission of perpetuating, enriching and exhibiting the art collections built up over the last 40 years by Jean Claude Gandur. “*Art should be open and accessible*” says the collector, reflecting his conviction that art builds bridges between peoples and furthers social integration.

The Foundation’s collections bring together both ancient and modern pieces, from the Pharaonic Egypt of the 7th century B.C. to late 20th century Europe. The collections are divided into three distinct areas: Archaeology, containing more than 1000 artworks from ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and the Near East; Decorative Arts, with over 400 pieces, including decorative objects and pieces of art from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, as well as furniture by master cabinetmakers from the eighteenth century; and finally Fine Arts, with more than 600 European paintings spanning from 1940 to 1960, considered as the most important one after the great Paris and London museums. The 15 artworks on loan to the Museo Reina Sofía come from this area.

For more information:

www.fg-art.org

Contact : Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Karen Saddler, ksaddler@fg-art.org, +41 (0)58 702 92 04