

Encompassing Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Accompanying the present exhibition, visitors can explore the educational space *Encompassing Sophie Taeuber-Arp*, located in Gallery 12. It offers more information on the artist's life and work and brings us closer to the rich and dynamic world of the early twentieth-century avant-garde art movements.

Major economic, political and artistic changes came about in the early decades of the twentieth century. Art teaching, for example, now combined craft with theory and science, and training became open and multidisciplinary. For this reason Sophie Taeuber-Arp, like many of her contemporaries, trained in numerous different fields, as a teacher, dancer, painter, sculptor, designer and architect.

In the creative sphere these years saw radical transformations: painting moved towards abstraction, dance emphasized freedom of movement and theatre included improvisation and projections on stage. Architecture based itself on a new visual and philosophical concept that was freer, more humane and utilitarian.

Photography also played a leading role, indicating changes in the interpretation of the gaze and the visual representation of the new era.

All this modernity was suddenly interrupted by World War II. Nonetheless, its legacy survives and can still be seen today in the design of everyday objects, the work of current creative figures and in the buildings that we inhabit.

The free, committed and intense manner in which the men and women of Sophie Taeuber-Arp's generation lived continues to fascinate us, and her figure stands out with particular force among them.

About Sophie Taeuber-Arp. The MPM's Library is offering visitors a consultation service in its Reading Room that makes available a selection of key documentary sources. The aim is to provide more information and complement a visit to the exhibition *Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Avant-garde Pathways*.

Cover [detail]
Anonymous
Sophie Taeuber in Ascona
1925
Gelatin silver print (later printing)
13.5 x 10 cm
Collection Fondation Arp, Clamart

OPENING HOURS
Tuesday to Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm
Friday and Saturday, 10 am to 9 pm
Sundays and public holidays, 10 am to 8 pm
24 and 31 December, 10 am to 3 pm
Closed on Mondays, 25 December and 1 January

ADMISSION FEES
Permanent collection: 6.00 euros
Temporary exhibition: 4.50 euros
Combined ticket: 8.00 euros
Ticket sales cease 30 minutes before closing time

REDUCED FEES (50%)
Visitors over 65
Students under 26 with valid identification
Groups of 20 people (by appointment)

FREE ADMISSION
Youths aged 18 and younger
(children 12 and younger accompanied by an adult)
Holders of EURO<
Students of the Universidad de Málaga with valid identification
ICOM members
Last Sunday of every month

ADVANCE TICKET SALES
Tickets may be bought in advance by calling (34) 902 360 295 or online at www.unicaja.es

Advance tickets are retrieved on the day of visit at the Museum's ticket desk, upon compulsory presentation of a credit card and a valid identity card or passport. The Museum and Unicaja decline any liability in the event of loss or theft of tickets. Tickets once bought may not be cancelled, replaced or refunded.

Literary Cabaret, informal discussions in the MPM's Library on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 21 October 2009 to 20 January 2010. Information: 952 12 76 12

Lecture Series, *Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Avant-garde Pathways*, every Thursday from 15 October until 3 December at 8.00 pm. MPM Auditorium

Guided visits to the exhibition, *Charlas en el Museo*, given in Spanish, every Thursday at 6.00 pm.

For other guided visits, please contact: educacion@mpicassom.org
Catalogue of the exhibition available at the MPM Bookstore
Orders: lalibreria@mpicassom.org

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Cover: © Fondation Arp, Clamart / Fig. 1: © Photo: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Kunstgewerbesammlung. Marlen Perez@ZHdK / Fig. 2: © Photo: Wolfgang Morell. Fig. 3: © 2009. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence



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museo **PICASSO** Málaga

Sophie Taeuber-Arp
Avant-garde Pathways
19/10/2009 – 24/01/2010

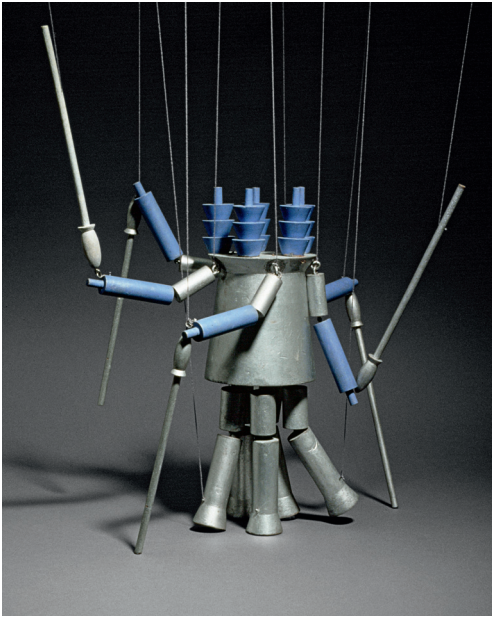


Fig. 1

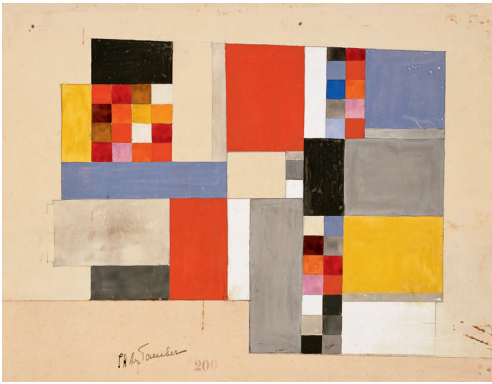


Fig. 2

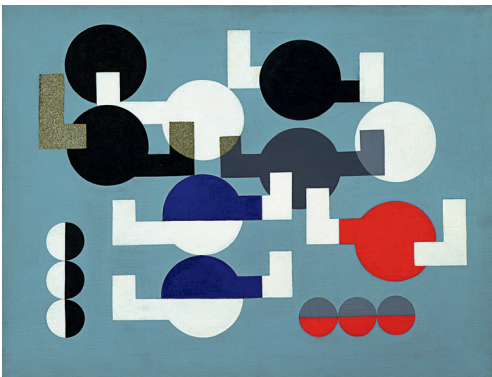


Fig. 3

Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Jean Arp met in Zurich around the middle of the first decade of the last century. It was a chance meeting and Arp was captivated by this “pleasant, calm” woman who lived like “a character in a Book of Hours, serious and scholarly in her work and her dream”, as he wrote in 1948. At that point Sophie Taeuber-Arp was a young teacher at the Zurich School of Arts and Crafts and a brilliant pupil of Rudolf Laban’s dance classes, dancing freely without fixed steps in the style required by Dadaism, the movement that had arisen in Zurich around this time and whose meetings Taeuber and Arp would soon attend.

The complex artistic personality of Sophie Taeuber-Arp evolved during these early years as she committed herself to a range of activities. At the School of Arts and Crafts she assimilated the flexible boundaries between art and craft, as revealed in her tapestries that would notably influence her husband, while learning the importance of the geometric line evident in her masterpiece of this period, *Triptych* of 1918. Dada gave her the freedom that is so clear in the photographs that capture her performing in clothes of her own design and in her ironic Dada heads, and in the photographs of the marionettes and stage designs she created for *The Deer King*, in which geometry and humour share the same ground (fig. 1).

It could thus be said that contrast was the organizational principle behind this creative figure who was able to reconcile the, at times, opposing extremes that lie at the very heart of the modern: figuration, abstraction, Dada, geometrical rationalism, craft tradition, the decorative arts, serial production, origins...

If we look back over the history of the birth of the avant-garde, Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s name is associated with key moments in the formation of the modern art idiom. We need only recall accounts of the events of 1915–30 to see that she played a vital part in them, often acting as a link between two periods and two approaches that she was able to combine in a logical,

Fig. 1
Sophie Taeuber-Arp
Wache [Sentry], 1918 (1981 copy exhibited)
Wood, turned and painted (acrylic), and metal (hooks and eyes), 56 x 18 x 18 cm
Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Kunstgewerbesammlung

Fig. 2
Sophie Taeuber-Arp
Untitled (Project for L’Aubette no. 200), c. 1927
Watercolour and pencil on paper and card, 24.3 x 31.8 cm
Stiftung Hans Arp und Sophie Taeuber-Arp e.V., Rolandswerth

Fig. 3
Sophie Taeuber-Arp
Composition of Circles and Overlapping Angles, 1930
Oil on canvas, 49.5 x 64.1 cm
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Riklis Collection of the McCrory Corporation, 1985

productive manner. Starting with Kandinsky himself, who referred to her work as “a fugue”, avant-garde writers and artists spoke of her with admiration as a Dada performer and Concrete artist. She personifies the idea of the multifaceted creator—painter, dancer, theatrical designer, draughtswoman, designer, master of disguise, Surrealist, Dadaist, architect, teacher...—as reflected in Hans Richter’s words: “Sophie Taeuber was not only a dancer and teacher; she was above all a painter of modern abstracts at a time when abstract painting was still in its infancy.”

Taeuber-Arp was indeed a dancer and painter as well as an architect and designer of furniture and interiors, for example, the kitchen of the Hilberseimer house. She tackled both small and large projects with equal intensity: a bag, like the *Pompadour*, or a design for a printed scarf, alongside major works such as the structure of the café L’Aubette, a commission she decided to share with the Dutch artist and architect Theo van Doesburg and with Arp himself (fig. 2), although, almost inevitably, history has tended to see Van Doesburg as the originator of the project.

Originating in the design for L’Aubette is the idea of seriality that Taeuber-Arp would develop in her final decades when she returned to the rhythm of the dance, which she had in fact never abandoned in her constructivist works.

The present exhibition aims to reveal Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s dual and radical modernity that appears in her total and profound assault on the pre-established and which offered a lesson that would be articulated by subsequent generations less hampered by the impossibility of reconciling opposites. It is perhaps for this reason that she occupied a leading position among the participants of the 1951 São Paulo Biennial. This unexpected reconciliation of opposites evident in her work aroused enormous interest in Brazil, a country ready to piece together contradictions and one about to move on to a generation of artists whose geometrically inspired “Concretism” would expand towards happenings, performance and a participative type of art. This was the generation of Lygia Clark, whose *Bichos* [Small Creatures], which are at once living and geometric forms, developed some of the ideas to be found in Taeuber-Arp’s work in an embryonic manner (fig. 3).

For this reason, the idea of a “line of dance” is used as the exhibition’s guiding thread, pursuing the tension between conflicting terrains that ultimately neither confront nor obliterate each other, but rather the opposite. The phrase is almost a metaphor as Taeuber-Arp’s early works follow this line, which continues into her projects and furniture designs and acquires unprecedented force in her final, mature period. Every work by this artist retains this sense of movement: the implicit body in constant movement: a fugue.