

FONDATION VINCENT VAN GOGH ARLES

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EXHIBITIONS

04.03—17.09.2017

CALM AND EXALTATION

VAN GOGH IN THE
BÜHRLE COLLECTION



Vincent van Gogh, *Blossoming Chestnut Branches*, 1890
Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm, F 820.
Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich

ALICE NEEL: PAINTER OF MODERN LIFE



Alice Neel, *Jackie Curtis and Ritta Redd*, 1970
Oil on canvas, framed: 154.30 x 108.90 cm,
unframed: 152.40 x 106.40 cm.
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C.
Hanna, Jr. Fund 2009.345
© The Estate of Alice Neel

EDITORIAL

Since June 2016 a major retrospective dedicated to one of the greatest American figurative painters – Alice Neel (1900–1984) – has been touring Europe. In 2017 *Alice Neel: Painter of Modern Life* makes a lengthy stop at the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles. Bringing together more than seventy paintings from numerous institutions and private collections, this landmark exhibition allows us to grasp the scope of the oeuvre of an artist who devoted herself to portraiture at a time when Abstract Expressionism and Conceptual Art were at their peak. The exhibition runs concurrently with *Calm and Exaltation. Van Gogh in the Bührle Collection*. It presents seven paintings from the collection of the Swiss industrialist, six of which today are part of the Zurich-based Fondation E.G. Bührle Collection. An eighth painting is lent by the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam: it consists of the annual loan.

To exhibit two great painters whose respective body of works sets itself apart from the artistic currents of the epoch in which they lived: such is the ambition of our 2017 summer programme. And yet the singularity of these artists manifests itself in works that never stray far from traditional motifs. Alice Neel paints portraits – the conformist genre *par excellence* in the 20th century. Van Gogh, it should be recalled, remains faithful to traditional motifs throughout his career. Both have left their mark on art history by innovating within established genres. The legacy of Van Gogh is now legendary; that of Alice Neel continues to construct itself through exhibitions.

History is likewise invoked and examined with humour and a critical eye by British artist Rebecca Warren, whose totemic bronze sculpture stands in the entrance courtyard of the Fondation.

CALM AND EXALTATION VAN GOGH IN THE BÜHRLE COLLECTION

This exhibition presents eight paintings by Vincent van Gogh, of which seven come from the collection of the Swiss industrialist Emil Bührle (1890–1956). Six of them are today part of the Zurich-based Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection. An eighth painting is lent by the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Together they bear witness to the different periods of pictorial experimentation and intense reflection upon style that shaped the artist's career: in Holland, Paris, Provence and Auvers-sur-Oise.

In one of the most remarkable of these canvases, *Blossoming Chestnut Branches*, painted in May 1890 at Auvers-sur-Oise, Van Gogh shows us the exaltation of spring. The brushwork is resolutely energetic, the colours clear and the composition bold. Seen alongside other important works such as *Bridges Across the Seine at Asnières*, produced three years earlier in Paris, where Vincent was very close to the teachings of Impressionism and Pointillism, *Blossoming Chestnut Branches* shows the culmination of a pictorial style that Van Gogh strove all his career to perfect.

Exhibition curator: Bice Curiger

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Vincent van Gogh is born on 30 March 1853 in Groot-Zundert in the Netherlands.

At the age of 16 he joins Goupil & C^{ie}, a firm of art dealers in The Hague, and subsequently works in the company's offices in Brussels, London and finally Paris. He gradually loses interest in the commercial art world and grows ever more religious. After being dismissed by Goupil in early 1876, he tries his hand at several jobs. Eventually, in 1878–79, he becomes a lay preacher in a mining community in the Borinage area of Belgium.

In August 1880 Van Gogh decides to become an artist. He wants to be a painter of everyday life, and, above all, of peasant life, following in the footsteps of artists such as Jean-François Millet and Jules Breton. Landscapes and still lifes, too, become an important part of his oeuvre. Van Gogh chooses Eugène Delacroix as his guide in the use of colour. In 1886 in Paris he discovers Japanese prints and Impressionism and meets Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Camille Pissarro, Paul Signac, John Peter Russell, Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard, among others.

Convinced that colour is the key to modernity, Van Gogh leaves for Provence in search of bright light and vibrant colours. Dreaming of establishing a community of artists, in February 1888 he settles in Arles. Here, he further develops his style and technique. Gauguin joins him in October, but their collaboration collapses in late December 1888. Disappointed and ill, in May 1889 Van Gogh has himself admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Saint-Rémy, where he remains for a whole year. He continues with his search for an expressive art based on colour and brush strokes, creating more than 500 paintings and drawings during his 27 months in Provence.

In May 1890 Van Gogh moves to Auvers-sur-Oise, where in just over two months he produces the final 70 paintings of an oeuvre that comprises more than 2,000 works. He dies on 29 July 1890 at the age of 37. Van Gogh's artistic genius and the poignant story of his life transform him into a veritable international icon.

Previous exhibitions at the Fondation

- *Van Gogh in Provence: Modernizing Tradition*, 2016
- *Van Gogh Drawings: Influences and Innovations*, 2015
- *Colours of the North, Colours of the South*, 2014

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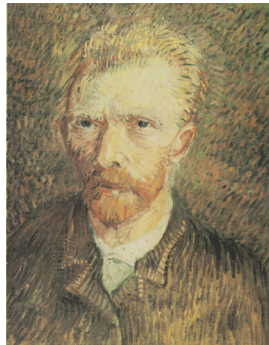
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Section: Professionals — Press / Password: presse

SELECTION OF WORKS ON SHOW – VINCENT VAN GOGH



Bridges Across the Seine at Asnières, 1887
Oil on canvas, 53.5 x 67 cm
Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich



Self-Portrait, 1887
Oil on canvas, 47 x 35.4 cm
Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich



The Weeders, 1890
Oil on paper, on canvas, 49.3 x 64 cm
Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich

ALICE NEEL: PAINTER OF MODERN LIFE

This retrospective of paintings by Alice Neel (1900–1984) – one of North America’s most important female artists, although largely unappreciated during her own lifetime – is the fruit of a collaboration between several European institutions. The exhibition at the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles places the US painter and her realist brush firmly in the spotlight. Imbued with a powerful psychological dimension, Neel’s portraits bear witness to almost a century of evolution in attitudes towards gender and ethnicity, and to radical changes in fashion at the heart of American society. Working in an epoch that declared abstraction the new modernism, Neel would always remain a “painter of modern life” as imagined by Baudelaire, with whom she shared the same vision of modernity and the artist’s role in relation to it.

Hallmarked at once by expressionism and realism, Alice Neel’s oeuvre translates the paradoxical personality of its maker, who wanted to paint individuals from all social classes and create a visual history of her time – a “Human Comedy”.

Conceived by Jeremy Lewison, the leading expert on Alice Neel, the exhibition presents more than seventy paintings, including a portrait of Andy Warhol “laid bare” under the artist’s keen gaze. After the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki and the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag in The Hague, the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles welcomes this major exhibition from 4 March to 17 September 2017, after which it will travel on to Germany and the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg.

Exhibition curator: Jeremy Lewison

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Alice Neel is born on 28 January 1900 in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, USA.

She studies art at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women, an institution that distances itself from the formalist approach to art taught during this epoch.

In the 1930s Alice Neel lives in Greenwich Village, a district of New York with a Bohemian reputation and popular with artists. She is entered on the payroll of the Works Progress Administration, for which she paints urban scenes. During this period she also meets and paints the portraits of fellow Communist Party sympathizers.

In 1938 she moves to Spanish Harlem (today East Harlem), where she embarks on a new series of portraits featuring Puerto Ricans, among others.

In the 1960s she settles in Upper West Side, where she reconnects with the art world and executes her famous portraits of artists, gallerists and curators. At the end of the decade she finds inspiration for her art not only among family members, but also by observing women and children, whom she thus paints at the dawn of the feminist movement. From this period onwards, too, her painting is finally recognized by the American art scene and celebrated in the form of numerous solo and collective shows.

Alice Neel dies on 13 October 1984 in New York.

Main exhibitions (a selection)

- *Face Value: Portraiture in the Age of Abstraction*, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 18 April 2014 – 11 January 2015
- *Alice Neel: Painted Truths*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 21 March – 13 June 2010, and subsequently touring to the Whitechapel Gallery, London, and the Moderna Museet, Malmö
- *Alice Neel*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 29 June – 17 September 2000, and subsequently touring to Andover, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Denver
- *Féminin-Masculin, Le Sexe de l’art*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 24 October 1995 – 12 February 1996

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www.fondation-vincentvangogh-arles.org

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SELECTION OF WORKS ON SHOW — ALICE NEEL



José, 1936

Oil on canvas, 58.4 x 46 cm

Estate of Alice Neel

Photo credit: Malcolm Varon, New York



Alice Neel in her Spanish Harlem apartment, ca. 1940

Estate of Alice Neel

Photo credit: Sam Brody



Pregnant Julie and Algis, 1967

Oil on canvas, 107.6 x 161.9 cm

Estate of Alice Neel

Photo credit: Malcolm Varon, New York



Andy Warhol, 1970

Oil and acrylic on linen, 152.4 x 101.6 cm

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Photo credit: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



Ginny and Elizabeth, 1975

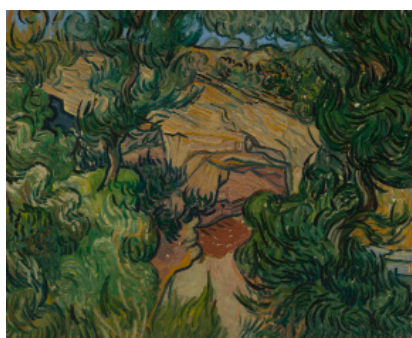
Oil on canvas, 106.7 x 76.2 cm

Estate of Alice Neel

Photo credit: Ethan Palmer

ANNUAL LOAN FROM THE VAN GOGH MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

VINCENT VAN GOGH, *ENTRANCE TO A QUARRY*, MID-JULY 1889



Vincent van Gogh, *Entrance to a Quarry*, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, mid-July 1889
Oil on canvas, 60 x 74.5 cm
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

Loan 2017–2018

During his stay at the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole psychiatric hospital in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Van Gogh turns to the surrounding countryside to enrich his geography as an artist. He tirelessly paints and draws new Provençal motifs: cypress trees, olive groves and hills.

The low Alpilles range rising behind the hospital buildings provides Vincent with an opportunity to paint the rugged massif as well as the quarry located nearby. In 1889 he treats this latter in two canvases, of which he executes the first in mid-July – just after suffering a fresh health crisis – and the second in October.

Writing to his brother Theo on 22 August 1889, Vincent says of *Entrance to a Quarry*: "And it was precisely a more sober attempt, matt in colour without looking impressive, broken greens, reds and rusty ochre yellows,

as I told you that from time to time I felt a desire to begin again with a palette like the one in the north."¹ This palette of the North is that of the earth, made up of ochres and dark greens.

¹ Letter from Vincent van Gogh to his brother Theo, 22 August 1889, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence: <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let797/letter.html>

REBECCA WARREN

Since the Urs Fischer exhibition *Mon cher...*, the entrance courtyard in front of the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles has become a place where art and its materiality put themselves on show. Parallel with the exhibitions *Alice Neel: Painter of Modern Life* and *Calm and Exaltation. Van Gogh in the Bührle Collection*, the Fondation presents a sculpture by the British artist Rebecca Warren. A trio of contemporary works thus dialogue with the entrance to the building: *Vincent* (2014) by Bertrand Lavier, *The Violet Blue Green Yellow Orange Red House* (2014) by Raphael Hefti and the sculpture by Rebecca Warren. For the entrance courtyard, the artist proposes a sculpture more than three metres in height. Its main section in bronze rises like a slender trunk, misshapen and expressive, from a steel pedestal.

Exhibition curator: Bice Curiger

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rebecca Warren was born in 1965 in London, where she lives and works today. Her practice is essentially focused upon the medium of sculpture.

Often compared with the works of Alberto Giacometti, Auguste Rodin, Giuseppe Arcimboldo and Marisa Merz, Rebecca Warren's sculptures seem to erupt out of a myriad of ancient and contemporary archetypes, which she misappropriates with her hands. With its amorphous stalagmites and its recognizable forms both refined and crude, her art is physical, full of references to the past and liberated from conventions.

Previous exhibitions (a selection)

- *The Main Feeling*, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, 2016
- *The Body Extended: Sculpture and Prosthetics*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2016
- *Summer Exhibition 2015*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2015
- *Albert Oehlen Talking about Painting*, Museum Folkwang, Essen, 2014
- *The Living*, Kunstverein München, Munich, 2013

THE FONDATION VINCENT VAN GOGH ARLES

FULFILLING VINCENT'S WISH

The Fondation offers a unique approach to Vincent van Gogh, namely by exploring, through the medium of temporary exhibitions, the resonance of his art and thinking with international artistic production today. Thanks to partnerships established with public and private collections, the Fondation presents one or more original canvases by Vincent van Gogh all year round, in company with a changing selection of works by contemporary artists such as Yan Pei-Ming, Roni Horn, David Hockney and Urs Fischer, among others.

It was in Arles, where Vincent lived and worked from February 1888 to May 1889, that his art reached its pinnacle. As from 1983, with the centenary of this stay in mind, Yolande Clergue invited contemporary artists to present a work in homage to Van Gogh. Thanks to patron Luc Hoffmann, in 2010 the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles was created as a public utility foundation. The City of Arles placed at its disposal the hôtel Léautaud-de-Donines, a prestigious residence dating back to the 15th century. Renovated and transformed by the architectural agency Fluor, the building was inaugurated in 2014 and offers over 1000 m² of exhibition space. The Fondation's resolutely contemporary bias is underscored by the integration within the museum complex of two permanent artworks by Raphael Hefti and Bertrand Lavier.

The Fondation also offers a wide range of in-house and extramural cultural events and activities: artist talks and podium discussions, symposia, film screenings, creative workshops and courses, performances and concerts, as well as guided tours and educational activities tailored to different publics. Our art education programme focuses in particular upon children and young people, with special tours of the exhibitions as well as workshops held in schools in Arles and the surrounding area.

The shop is conceived as a colourful link between the Fondation's historical and contemporary architecture. It offers exhibition catalogues, art books, limited-edition prints, fine-art reproductions, handcrafted products and other items, and also includes a children's section.

The Fondation fulfils the wish, cherished by one of the world's most famous painters, to create in Arles a place of reflection, fertile production and stimulating dialogue between artists.

"Then, as you well know, I love Arles so much, [...]"

Letter from Vincent to Theo (18 February 1889).

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

CALM AND EXALTATION. VAN GOGH IN THE BÜHRLE COLLECTION

This catalogue discusses the paintings by Vincent van Gogh from the collection of the Fondation E. G. Bührle from a contemporary standpoint. Two young academics, both of them Van Gogh specialists, offer an in-depth analysis of the works from a perspective that is not confined to strictly formal aspects, but which also takes into consideration the materiality of these canvases and the psychological dimension of the painter. The theme structuring one of the two contributions is thus the question of the artist's "temperament".

Authors: Alex Weintraub, David Misteli, Bice Curiger
Texts in English, French and German
Graphic design: Marie Lusa Studio
Publisher: Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles
Available March 2017

ALICE NEEL: PAINTER OF MODERN LIFE

This richly illustrated catalogue takes an insightful look at Neel's career. Texts by Jeremy Lewison, Bice Curiger, Petra Gördüren, Laura Stamps and Annamari Vänskä examine the artist's stylistic evolution in the era of photography, the position she adopted in the mid-century debates on the "crisis of man", her discovery of the German painting of the 1920s, her non-conformism and her political sympathies, as well as her relationship with the second wave of the feminist discourse. The seventy-two catalogue entries provide pertinent new information about each of the works on show. With its illustrated chronology of Neel's life, this book offers a comprehensive overview of a major North American artist.



Authors: Jeremy Lewison (ed.), Bice Curiger, Petra Gördüren, Laura Stamps, Annamari Vänskä
25 x 29 cm, 240 pages, 130 illustrations, hardback
Graphic design: Yanne Devos, Tijdsbeeld & Pièce Montée
Published in July 2016, Mercatorfonds
ISBN: 978 94 6230 138 2
Price: € 45

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Press preview: Friday 3 March 2017 at 1pm
Public opening: Saturday 4 March 2017 at 11am

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OPENING HOURS

From 4 to 31 March 2017:

Fondation and bookshop open Tuesday through
Sunday from 11am to 6pm.

Last admission 45 minutes before closing.

From 1 April to 17 September 2017:

Fondation and bookshop open everyday from 11am
to 7pm. Last admission 45 minutes before closing.

ADMISSION

Full rate: €9

Reduced rate: €7

Free admission: children under 12, disabled visitors,
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