

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris/ARC

Van Dongen *Fauve, Anarchist and Socialite*

25 March – 17 July 2011

Press preview Thursday 24 March 2011, 11 am – 2 pm

The Musée d'Art Moderne is offering a fresh appreciation of Kees Van Dongen (1877–1968), the dazzling, disconcerting painter who made his reputation in Paris in the 1920s. This is a comprehensive look at a multifaceted personality: the socially-conscious Dutchman ever ready to caricature and denounce, the avant-garde artist and iconic Fauve, and one of the Roaring Twenties' leading figures on the trendy Paris scene. The exhibition includes and adds to "All eyes on Kees Van Dongen", shown at the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam (18 September 2010 – 23 January 2011).

Twenty years after "Van Dongen: the Painter", the retrospective organised in conjunction with the Boijmans Museum in 1990, this exhibition centres on the success that came with his Paris period. The latest research and exhibitions have given us a clearer idea of the inventiveness and artistic strategy of a painter who dazzles with his discoveries while disconcerting with the diversity of his subject-matter.

The exhibition title suggests not so much a succession of periods as an overlay of artistic poses: the Dutch rebel mixing in anarchist circles around 1895 and ever ready to caricature and denounce; and the avant-garde artist playing a very personal role in the Fauvist movement and a decisive one in its dissemination abroad, in Holland, Germany and Russia. The "urbane" Fauve Kees Van Dongen focused on the female body, and in particular on the face made-up to the point of deformation under the electric lighting he borrowed from Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec and which became, in a way, his trademark.

Colour made Van Dongen the guiding spirit of Fauvism, the colour he revived with his trips to Morocco, Spain and Egypt and his reinvention of the Orient in the early 1910s. Yet Paris remained his dominant subject: the Montmartre of the early 20th century, where he would meet Picasso and Derain and which would charm him with its working-class vitality and *vie de bohème*; Montparnasse before and after the First World War, where he was one of the main driving forces with his depictions of a new, more eroticised woman; and then the Paris of the Roaring Twenties – the "cocktail period", he called it – when he would devote himself exclusively to the new elite, to now forgotten literary men and women and stars of stage and screen, anticipating by forty years the world of Andy Warhol's "beautiful people". The poses are wildly overdone, with melodramatic costumes and props laying bare all the artificiality of models who existed solely in terms of the roles they played.

Van Dongen's success – akin to that of Fougita – and his involvement with the avant-garde made him a special kind of artist, whose verve and freedom still fascinate.

The exhibition comprises some 90 paintings and drawings, together with ceramics, dating from 1895 to the early 1930s. Designed by the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum and organised in association with the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, it includes loans from major national and international institutions, and from outstanding private collections.

To mark the exhibition a catalogue is being published by Paris Musées Editions.



Kees Van Dongen
A Finger on Her Cheek, 1910
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Chief curator
Fabrice Hergott

Exhibition curators
Anita Hopmans
Sophie Krebs

Practical information
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
11 Avenue du Président Wilson
75116 Paris
Tel. 01 53 67 40 00 – www.mam.paris.fr
Open Tuesday–Sunday, 10 am – 6 pm

Guided tours for adults
Group tours
Tel. 01 53 67 40 80

Admission
Full rate: 10 €
Concessions: 7,50 €
Half-price : 5 €
Admission free for under-14s

Also at the museum:

Inci Eviner
Broken Manifestos Room 18
14 January – 3 April 2011

High Culture: General Idea
A retrospective, 1969–1994
11 February – 30 April 2011

Marc Desgrandchamps
13 May – 4 September 2011

The Contemporary Mexican Art Scene
31 May – 4 September 2011

Baselitz as Sculptor
30 September 2011 – 29 January 2012

Press officer
Maud Ohana
Tel. 01 53 67 40 51
Email : maud.ohana@paris.fr