

An abstract painting featuring a dense, textured composition of various shades of blue, from deep navy to light sky blue, interspersed with golden-yellow and brownish tones. The brushstrokes are visible and varied in direction, creating a rich, layered effect.

Maria Helena Vieira da Silva

The museum of Fine Arts, Dijon

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PRESS KIT



MUSÉE DES
BEAUX-ARTS
DE DIJON

Dijon

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Editorial

François Rebsamen

Mayor of Dijon, President of Dijon Métropole, former minister

Dijon is proud to possess an exceptional collection of works by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, a major representative of the 20th century painting scene. She is one of the few women artists to have been famous during her lifetime in Portugal, where she was born, in France, her adopted country, and on the international scene. From the 1930s until her death in 1992, she tirelessly questioned space, depth and the city in paintings that fascinate and challenge.

Vieira da Silva had a special relationship with Dijon and its Museum of Fine Arts. She was closely associated with the couple Kathleen and Pierre Granville, who passionately collected her work beginning in the mid-1930s. When the couple donated their collection to the City of Dijon, Vieira da Silva's works found their way into the heart of the Fine Arts Museum's collections in the 1970s. The painter accompanied this outpouring of generosity by donating three works to the museum herself, including *Urbi et Orbi*, the artist's largest canvas, which arrived in Dijon in 1973.

These successive donations have encouraged others since then, such as the Guy Weelen donation in 1993, bringing the number of Vieira da Silva's works in the Dijon collections to thirty-six.

On the strength of this history, the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts has naturally joined forces with the Cantini Museum in Marseilles and the Parisian gallery Jeanne Bucher Jaeger to devote a major retrospective to Maria Helena Vieira da Silva this year.

Thirty years after the death of this artist, I am delighted that Dijon is fully committed to this ambitious project dedicated to a major figure in French art history.

This event is an opportunity for our regional capital to pay tribute not only to a great artist, but also to the donors who have shaped the image of the city of Dijon, thereby contributing to its national and international influence.

This is also an opportunity to confirm our city's desire to democratise modern and contemporary art, and to make culture accessible to all audiences.

Introduction

Frédérique Goerig-Hergott

Chief Curator of Heritage and Director of Dijon Museums

The Dijon Museum of Fine Arts has a remarkable collection of works by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva (18 paintings, 17 works on paper and one painted letter box).

This collection, largely made up of gifts from the Parisian collectors Kathleen and Pierre Granville, who laid the foundations of the Fine Arts Museum's collection of modern and contemporary art, has been supplemented by gifts from the artist herself.

Enlightened art lovers, close to many artists of the New School of Paris, the Granvilles built up an important collection of ancient and modern works and art objects from the 1930s onwards. Between 1969 and 2006, most of this collection was donated to the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts.

The donors were both born in the same year as Vieira da Silva (1908) and became friends with the artist in Paris in the early 1930s, accumulating a significant body of her paintings, drawings and prints in their collection. From the most intimate works to the impressive abstract landscapes, this collection covers most of the artist's career. In 1974, an exhibition entitled *Two parts of the Granville donation: Jean-François Millet - Vieira da Silva*, organised at the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts, paid homage to the donors while at the same time acknowledging the importance of Vieira da Silva. To complete this collection, Vieira da Silva offered three of her paintings to Dijon, including the largest and also her masterpiece, entitled *Urbi et Orbi* (1972, 300 x 401 cm).

A true emblem of the 20th century collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, this masterful and significant work expresses in its title alone all the ambition of the City of Dijon to disseminate and transmit. Other works by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva have since been added to the collections, making the Dijon Museum an essential partner for any event devoted to the Franco-Portuguese artist.

The *Maria Helena Vieira da Silva* exhibition is a retrospective devoted to the artist and organised in collaboration with the Cantini Museum in Marseilles and the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger Gallery in Paris. In total, eighty emblematic works have been brought together to illustrate the artist's career since her beginnings in Paris in the 1920s.

More than half of the works come from public and private collections, including the Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva Foundation and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, the Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva Committee, the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger Gallery and the Pompidou Centre - National Museum of Modern Art, the Gandur Foundation for Art in Geneva, and the Colmar, Grenoble and Rouen museums.

This major event is presented in Dijon in two distinct and complementary spaces, one celebrating the artist's singular career on the French art scene, and the other evoking Vieira da Silva's intimacy and connection with her collectors Kathleen and Pierre Granville.

With a strong educational focus, this exhibition dedicated to a remarkable woman artist of the 20th century is accompanied by a rich cultural programme aimed at the widest and most varied audiences. It also actively contributes to raising the visibility of women in the arts and in museums – a major issue at the heart of the debates animating our institutions in the contemporary world.

This exhibition was conceived in collaboration with the Cantini Museum in Marseilles, where it was presented from 9 June to 6 November 2022, and with the support of the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger Gallery in Paris, the exceptional lender of the exhibition.



General presentation

Maria Helena Vieira da Silva

A retrospective



Visual no. 4 of the list of press visuals

Beginning in late 2022, The Dijon Museum of Fine Arts will present a major exhibition dedicated to one of the leading artists in its modern art collection, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva (Lisbon 1908 - Paris 1992), one of the most important figures in the history of abstract art. With this tribute, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the death of this immense 20th century artist, the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts wishes to highlight the importance of Vieira da Silva in the reinvention of modern art and the contemporaneity of the concepts she raised and explored. It also allows us to question the powerful links between the artist and the collectors and donors Kathleen and Pierre Granville, initiators of the modern art collection of the Dijon museum.

This retrospective devoted to a major figure of the 20th century retraces the key stages of a career of international scope, marked by a tireless questioning of perspective, urban transformations, architectural dynamics and the musicality of the pictorial touch. It is divided into two parts.

The first part is conceived as a retrospective and chronological tour of Vieira da Silva's rich and multifaceted work, from her figurative beginnings in the 1930s to the evanescent paintings of the 1980s. The second part focuses on the special relationship between the artist and her patrons and friends, the couple Kathleen and Pierre Granville. The museum's entire Vieira da Silva collection is on display here.

Through the prism of the Granvilles, who were steadfast in their choice, it reveals the recurring motifs and themes in the artist's work. It is thanks to this couple of donors that the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts today holds nearly forty works, making this collection one of the most complete devoted to the artist among all French public collections.

This retrospective brings together iconic and crucial works in Vieira da Silva's intellectual journey. It benefits from the loan of about forty works, both from the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger gallery and from private and public collections. In France: the Pompidou Centre - National Museum of Modern Art, the Cantini Museum in Marseilles, the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar, the Grenoble Museum, the Nantes Museum of Art, the Saint-Etienne Métropole Museum of Art, the RMM Rouen Normandie; in Portugal: the Arpad Szenes - Vieira da Silva Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and in Switzerland: the Gandur Foundation for Art.

The exhibition is curated by Naïs Lefrançois, Curator of the 19th Century Collections and Agnès Werly, Head of the 20th and 21st Century Collections.

An exhibition encompassing the work of a major artist

Vieira da Silva, *The Eye of the Labyrinth*, a retrospective for discovery in a chronological tour

The first part of the exhibition, *The Eye of the Labyrinth*, offers a retrospective and chronological overview of Vieira da Silva's work. From the figurative beginnings in Paris in the 1930s to the evanescent canvases of the 1980s, this retrospective presents iconic and crucial works in the artist's intellectual journey. During her formative years, she built her artistic vocabulary around a few recurring motifs: the grid, the draughtboard, and the spiral. After the trauma of exile during the Second World War, she returned to Paris and resumed her research on space and vision. Drawing upon the knowledge gained from her early years, she unfolds her poetic and conceptual vocabulary.

Singular, even solitary, her painting has often been reduced to mere cameos of colours and kaleidoscopic draughtboards. This retrospective is an opportunity to (re)enter a research open to the aesthetic debates of her time. Strongly influenced by Sienese painting, optical functioning, architecture and music, Vieira da Silva tirelessly questioned perspective, the mechanisms of the gaze, urban transformation and the musicality of the pictorial touch. The exhibition follows her creative thread, through series, repetitions and variations. It explores the key stages in the revolution of the gaze and the spatial reinvention the artist pioneered.

It brings together some forty paintings from private collections and a number of prestigious institutions in France: the Pompidou Centre - National Museum of Modern Art, the Cantini Museum in Marseilles, the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar, the Grenoble Museum, the Nantes Museum of Art, the Saint-Etienne Métropole Museum of Art, the RMM Rouen Normandie; in Portugal: the Arpad Szenes - Vieira da Silva Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and in Switzerland: the Gandur Foundation for Art. The Jeanne Bucher Jaeger Gallery, partner of the exhibition, is lending an exceptional number of works.



Visuel n°3 de la liste des visuels presse

An exhibition encompassing the work of a major artist

Vieira da Silva, *The Eye of the Collectors*, a friendship with the couple Kathleen and Pierre Granville

The second part, *The Eye of the Collectors* focuses on the artist's intimacy through her special relationship with Kathleen and Pierre Granville, who were both her patrons and her friends. Thanks to this couple of donors, the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts today holds nearly forty works by Vieira da Silva.

This part of the exhibition brings together all of Vieira da Silva's works from the Granville collection and reveals, through the prism of their gaze and sensitivity, the recurring motifs in her work. We find her repetitions in cities, tiles, draughtboards and the path towards non-representation, as well as the plastic research in the more malleable field of graphic arts.

Vieira's personality is also revealed through unpublished correspondence and archival photographs, which bear witness to the deep connection that existed between the collector couple and the Vieira da Silva-Szenes couple.



Willy Maywald, Vieira da Silva and Arpad Szenes, studio on boulevard Saint-Jacques, Paris, 1948. Courtesy Fondation Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva, Lisbon © Willy Maywald © ADAGP, Paris 2022

Focus on the iconic works

Urbi et Orbi, 1963 - 1972

Dijon Museum of Fine Arts



Visual no. 10 of the list of press visuals

This three-by-four-metre painting is the largest painted by Vieira da Silva. Long left unfinished, this painting begun in 1963 and completed in 1972, was offered by the artist the following year to the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts. Ever since, *Urbi et Orbi* has been one of the masterpieces of the collection.

This immaterial, liquid landscape is emblematic of Vieira da Silva's painting, who liked to paint "places seen from a great distance, where what we see is not very well explained." A view of sky and sea mixed and merged? A city in the fog? The uncertainties are part of the painting's poetry. The touches of muted colour that make up this landscape float in a balance that settles and unsettles before the viewer's eyes. The title, chosen by Pierre Granville, reflects its universal and all-embracing character. The papal blessing *Urbi et Orbi* means "To the city [Rome] and the world" and by extension "in all places." This mature painting alone sums up Vieira's work.

Focus on the iconic works

***The Chess Game*, 1943**

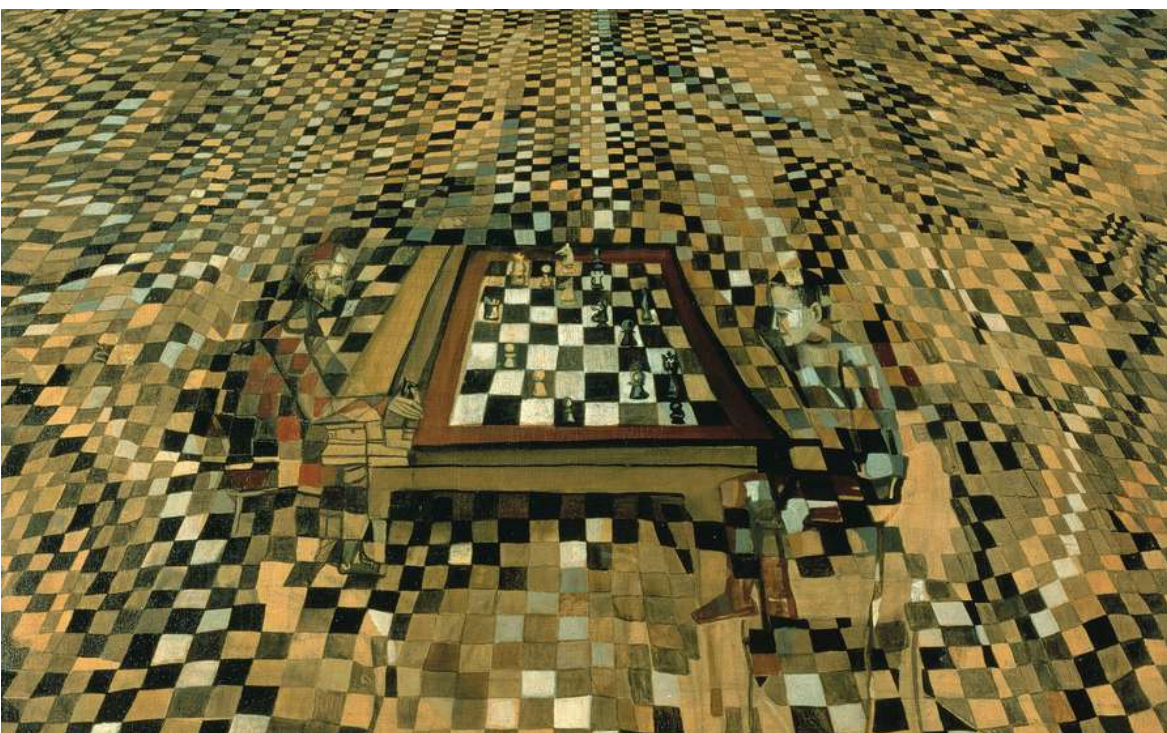
Pompidou Centre, National Museum of Modern Art
Centre for Industrial Design

This spectacular canvas is representative of the works painted before the Second World War. The chessboard in the centre of the canvas extends beyond the limits of the board, permeating the whole space and encompassing the players who merge into its trembling geometry. This impression is reinforced by the play of perspectives: plunging in the lower half of the canvas, and counter-plunging in the upper half. This technique creates an impression of spreading out over the surface of the canvas.

In the mid-1930s, Vieira da Silva explored different ways of structuring her compositions and gradually moved away from figuration.

With the draughtboards, she combined her research into line and depth with her tile and diamond motifs. One can feel the influence of Sienese painting but, unlike the Italian painters of the Pre-Renaissance, Vieira introduces intentional distortions. The lines are unstable, the geometry random and the vibrant colours disrupt the rhythm of the draughtboard patterns. Like a kaleidoscope, the surface of the painting hollows out or swells, animated by undulating movements.

With this ensemble, Vieira da Silva achieved great visual efficiency and found a unique, immediately identifiable language to the point that her entire painting has sometimes been reduced to this draughtboard pattern.



Visual no. 7 of the list of press visuals

Focus on the iconic works

Letter Box, 1954,
Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation, 1976
Dijon Museum of Fine Arts



Letter box, oil on metal, 1954, Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation (entered in 1976) © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay, © ADAGP, Paris 2022

The friendship between the Granvilles and Vieira da Silva was built around the bond between Kathleen and Vieira. The two women were close and exchanged a rich and humorous correspondence. For her friend's birthday in 1931, the artist offered an intimate drawing of her living room in Lisbon.

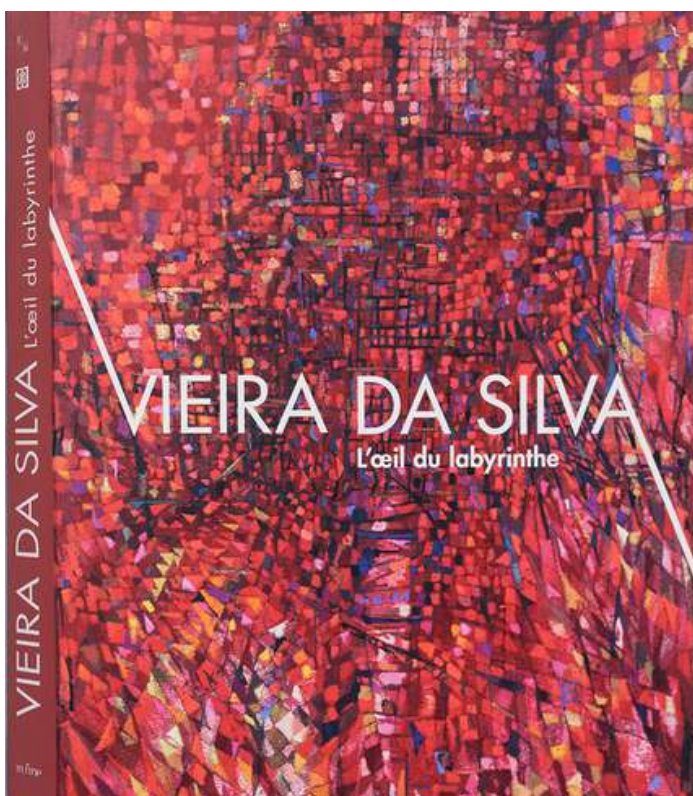
In 1954, for Kathleen's forty-sixth birthday, Pierre Granville commissioned an original work directly from Vieira da Silva: a painted letter box. The artist took pleasure in decorating the unusual object with touches of paint representing stamps and suggesting travel. Amidst the painted stamps, are the letters of her friend's first name, arranged randomly.

Inside, she painted a heart and the word AMOR. The artist signed her work-object Vieira da Silva and "Bicho", the affectionate nickname given to the artist by her family and friends, which means "little animal" or "bug" in Portuguese. The object was placed in front of the door of the Granvilles' Parisian flat and fulfilled its primary mission for years. When the box entered the museum with the rest of the donation in 1976, the Granvilles placed it in the rooms and visitors would "deliver" little notes in it.

Exhibition catalogue

On the occasion of this exhibition, the Dijon Museum Directorate and the Cantini Museum in Marseilles have joined forces to publish a joint catalogue.

Éditions In Fine, French/English catalogue.
Retail price €39.



INTRODUCTION

Guillaume Theulière, *Vieira da Silva, the Eye of the Labyrinth*

Naïs Lefrançois, *The Eye, the Mind, the Collection: Vieira da Silva, the Granvilles and Dijon*

ESSAYS

Marina Bairrao Ruivo, *Lisbon, Paris, The Cities of Maria Helena Vieira da Silva*

Diane Daval Béran, *Vieira da Silva, A Life in Painting*

Itzak Goldberg, *Kinds of Spaces*

Milena Glicenstein, *Vieira da Silva, Multifaceted and Singular, Between Painting and Poetry*

Maria Helena Vieira da Silva

Biography

After studying at the Lisbon School of Fine Arts, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva moves to Paris in 1928. Turning to sculpture, she is taught by Antoine Bourdelle at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and by Charles Despiau at the Académie Scandinave. Deciding in 1929 to devote herself to painting, she attends Fernand Léger's Academy, follows Roger Bissière's teaching at the Académie Ranson and is introduced to engraving techniques at Atelier 17, directed by Stanley Hayter, where she meets the Surrealists.

In 1931, in the company of the Hungarian painter Arpad Szenes, whom she had just married, she stays in Marseilles, where she is fascinated by the vision of the ferry bridge. On her return to Paris in 1932, she meets Jeanne Bucher, with whom she would exhibit regularly, and discovers the work of the Uruguayan painter Torres-Garcia.

Having removed to Portugal since the beginning of the war, she leaves for Rio de Janeiro with her husband in June 1940. Returning to France in 1947, and welcomed in Pierre Loeb's new gallery, she develops a body of work at the limits of abstraction and figuration, characterised by the exploration of an apparently infinite pictorial and mental space, whose names - cities, bridges, stations, chessboards or libraries - are pretexts for tracing fragile and irrational perspectives in which the gaze joyfully loses itself.



Carlos Moskovic, Vieira da Silva, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1942.
Archives Instituto Moreira Salles, Brazil © Carlos Moskovic ©
Instituto Moreira Salles, Brazil, 2022

In the 1950s, Vieira gains an international reputation with exhibitions in Sweden, England, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United States. From the 1960s onwards, she spends part of the year with Arpad Szenes in Yèvre-le-Chatel, a small town in the Loiret region, where they set up studios. In 1966, she is commissioned to design the stained-glass windows for the Église Saint-Jacques in Reims. In 1976, Arpad and Vieira donate their drawings to the National Museum of Modern Art. On the same date, the Pierre and Kathleen Granville donation is inaugurated in Dijon, where several dozen of the couple's works are exhibited. Arpad Szenes dies in 1985. Vieira abandons her usual themes and turns to evanescent, whiter compositions. In poor health since 1989, she retires from her studio in 1989 and does not paint much. She dies on 6 March 1992 and is buried next to her mother and husband in the cemetery of Yèvre-le-Chatel.

Around the exhibition

- A free **game booklet** is available in *the Eye of the Labyrinth* exhibition to accompany family visitors.
- **A space for mediation and fun activities** for young and old is set up within the exhibition spaces of *The Eye of the Collectors*.

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

- *Re-launch of the art history festival in partnership with the National Institute for Art History. 17 and 18 December 2022*
Upcoming programme (tours, conferences)

Tours

- Saturdays 17/12, 24/12, 31/12, 7/01, 21/01, 28/01, 18/02, 4/03, 18/03, 25/03, 1/04 and Sundays 18/12, 15/01, 22/01, 12/02, 12/03, 19/03 at 2.30 pm
- Saturdays 14/01, 4/02, 11/02, 25/02, 11/03 and Sundays 08/01, 29/01, 5/02, 19/02, 26/02, 5/03, 26/03, 2/04 at 4 p.m.

Noons at the museum

The Cities of VIEIRA DA SILVA

Lisbon, Marseilles, New York, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Paris, Rouen etc. Real or imaginary cities play a major role in Vieira da Silva's paintings. Her sprawling compositions evoke street networks, building façades or urban landscapes in the fog. Come and discover some of her major works by visiting the two temporary exhibition spaces dedicated to the artist.

- Thursday 12 January at 12.30 pm

By Agnès Werly, Head of the 20th and 21st Century Collections

Tour with 2 voices, between mediation and creation

A museum educator and a visual artist exchange views on the works of Vieira da Silva in the temporary exhibition.

- 26 January at 12.30 pm

Noon drawing

Learn about proportions and values during a drawing session led by a visual artist in front of Vieira da Silva's works.

Get inspired by the frameworks and shades of colour for a free drawing experience.

- Thursday 17 March at 12.30 pm

Evenings

- Saturday 28 January 2023 at 7 pm

100% female composers

The Trio des Aulnes, composed of the musicians of the Dijon Bourgogne Orchestra Jean-François Corvaisier (violin), Laurent Lagarde (cello) and the pianist Honoré Béjin, pays tribute to Clara Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn and Germaine Tailleferre in a programme offering a musical complement to the exhibition of the painter Maria Helena Vieira da Silva.

- Thursday 9 March 2023 at 6.30 p.m. and 8.30 pm

A city of paper. Poetic, visual and musical performance

This reading/performance offers a journey into this unique universe. What does creating mean? How is the "gaze" of a creator formed? How is a work constructed? A City of Paper takes up these questions through a poetic and musical ballad, and offers a reflection on uncertainty, creation, learning about chaos and the search for beauty. With the Compagnie La Gaillarde.

- Wednesday 29 March at 7 pm

THE FAMILY SPACE

Tidy up your room

In the manner of the Franco-Portuguese artist Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, use frameworks, squares and other cleverly coloured grids to order the space.

- Sunday 29 January at 2.30 pm

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Cycle of workshops on Wednesdays

In the Eye of the Labyrinth

Cells, frameworks and grids of a colourful musicality are the work of the French-Portuguese artist Maria Helena Vieira da Silva. In her style, let's reinterpret space and the city to extract a geometric and personal poetry.

- For children 6-9 years old. 1st session on Wednesday 4 January at 2 p.m.
- For young people 13-15 years old. 1st session on Wednesday 4 January at 4 p.m.

weekend workshops

Oh Vieira !

Dive into the deep spaces of Maria Helena Vieira da Silva's paintings. Play with shades in the colour of your choice and fill in your framework design for a perspective effect.

- For children 6-12 years old. 8 January at 2.30 pm

Family workshop

My eye!

Come and share a drawing and painting workshop with your family based on the works of Vieira da Silva. Work with small, jerky strokes, transparent flat tints, labyrinthine structures and apply them to several small abstract paintings using Vieira da Silva's favourite colours. Add drawings of scrutinising eyes for a framework of views. Children 6 years and up accompanied by a parent.

- Wednesday 8 February from 2.30 to 5 p.m.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Cycle of workshops on Saturdays

Interior space

In connection with the exhibition of Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, let's unpack the different pictorial representations of a space. Let's tackle this delicate border between figuration and abstraction, between the rejection of representation and the attachment to reality.

In drawing and painting.

- 1st session on Saturday 7 January at 10 a.m.

SCHOOL AUDIENCE

An educational kit for teachers will be available and school visits will be organised with the relay teachers and in conjunction with the DRAEAC (Délégation régionale académique à l'éducation artistique et culturelle).

And many other activities, screenings, etc.

more information and registration on musees.dijon.fr, under agenda

Visuals available for the press



1. *The City by the Water*, oil on canvas, 1947, Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation, 1969, © musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/Hugo Martens, © ADAGP, Paris 2022



2. *Sunken Cathedral*, watercolour on paper, 1949, Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation, 1969, © musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay, © ADAGP, Paris 2022



3. *Broken Ring Composition*, oil on plywood, 1935, Gift of Guy Weelen, 1993, © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay © ADAGP, Paris 2022



4. *The Red City*, oil on canvas, 1947, Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation, 1969, © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay © ADAGP, Paris 2022

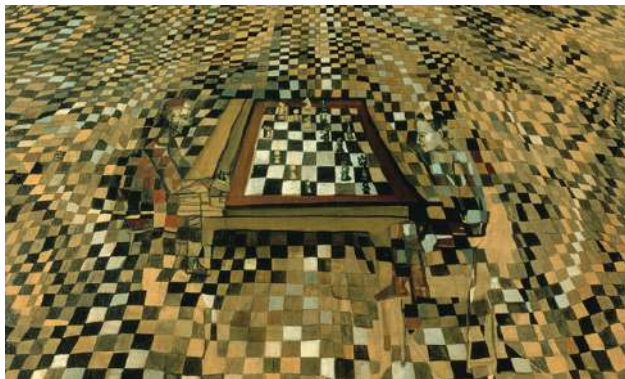
Visuals available for the press



5. *The Big Blue Room*, gouache and oil paint on isorel panel, 1951, © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay, © ADAGP, Paris 2022



6. *La Scala or The Eyes*, 1937, oil on canvas, Paris-Lisbon, Galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, CR 224, © Faujour/Private collection, courtesy Galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon, © ADAGP, Paris 2022



7. *The Chess Game*, oil on canvas, 1943, Paris, Pompidou Centre, National Museum of Modern Art Centre for Industrial Design, © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/ Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI © ADAGP, Paris 2022



8. *The Weavers*, oil on canvas, 1936, Paris, Pompidou Centre, National Museum of Modern Art - Centre for Industrial Design, gift in 1993, © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Philippe Migeat © ADAGP, Paris 2022

Visuals available for the press



9. *The Library*, oil on canvas, 1939, Paris, Pompidou Centre, National Museum of Modern Art - Centre for Industrial Design © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Philippe Migeat, © ADAGP, Paris 2022



10. *Urbi et Orbi*, 1963-1972, tempera and oil painting on canvas, gift of the artist, 1973 © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay © ADAGP, Paris 2022



11. *Red Interior*, oil on canvas, 1951, Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation, 1969, © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay © ADAGP, Paris 2022



12. *The Siren*, Indian ink, pen on double sheet paper, 1936, Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation, 1969, © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay, © ADAGP, Paris 2022



13. *Self-portrait in front of the mirror*, coloured pencils on paper, 1940, Pierre and Kathleen Granville Donation, 1969, © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon/François Jay, © ADAGP, Paris 2022

The Dijon Museum of Fine Arts

A museum inside a palace

Like the Louvre, the Dijon Museum of Fine Arts is located in the heart of a princely palace. It traces the history of more than twenty centuries of art in a prestigious historical monument, right in the heart of a heritage area listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The Dijon Museum of Fine Arts occupies the eastern wing of the Palace of the Dukes and Estates of Burgundy, a vast architectural complex that shapes the centre of the city. Marked by an eclectic architecture, to which each era has added its own touch, the museum achieves its spatial unity by spreading its quadrilateral around the Cour de Bar, a magnificent interior courtyard entirely surrounded by the exhibition spaces.

The Cour de Bar is both an urban square and a museum courtyard, the nerve centre of the museum, and a space open to the free flow of passers-by. It links the serene life of the museum to the lively pulse of the city centre, whose pedestrian streets extend around it.

Dominated by the Bar Tower, the oldest vestige of the Ducal Palace, the courtyard brings together elements from the 15th century, such as the ducal kitchens, from the 17th century, with the Bellegarde Gallery, and from the 18th century, with the buildings of the School of Drawing overlooking the Cour d'Honneur.

The Cour de Bar also features a contemporary architectural gesture, with the extension covered by a golden roof designed by Yves Lion, the architect of the museum's renovation.



The museum's main façade is now located on the Place de la Sainte-Chapelle to the east. The 19th century wing of the building, built in 1852, has been restored and decorated with a monumental contemporary gate, and is once again the main access point to the museum. It opens out onto a car-free urban landscape, with the Magnin Museum, the Rude Museum, the Grand Théâtre and the city centre library all within a radius of about 100 metres.

The Museum of Fine Arts is one of the five museums of the city of Dijon (archaeological museum, museum of sacred art, François Rude museum, and the Museum of Burgundian Life). Brought together under a single museum directorate since 2015, their collections are inseparable from the history of Burgundy. Together, these five museums reveal the exceptional character of Dijon's heritage, which has been awarded the "City of Art and History" label by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication.

Prestigious collections

The renovation of the Museum of Fine Arts has enabled the collections to be given pride of place, with more than 4,000 sqm now devoted to showcasing the permanent exhibition, which covers more than two thousand years of art history through more than 1,500 works.

Organised chronologically, the route through the museum mixes genres and registers and major and minor arts, sweeping up the aesthetic sensitivity and artistic creativity of each of the periods it evokes.

In addition to the prestigious groups of painting and sculpture that form the core of the collection, the museum also presents numerous pieces of furniture and objets d'art that bear witness to the diversity of forms and inspirations over the centuries, each time capturing the spirit of an era, thereby offering the public a true museum of civilisation.



Within a building marked by centuries of history, the museum's route plays whenever possible on the correspondence between the content and the container, between the era of the collections presented, and that of the spaces that house them.

The feasting room of the Palace of Philippe le Bon, which now houses the Ducal Tombs, is emblematic of the medieval collections, just as the spaces created for the School of Drawing constitute a perfectly coherent 18th-century setting in which the works and the building dialogue with each other.

The modern art collections, which were brought into the museum thanks to donations from the Granville couple in 1969, focus on Cubism and the painting and sculpture of the New School of Paris.

They are now a reference in the French museum landscape.

Contemporary art is not forgotten: the museum holds several works by Yan-Pei Ming. The importance of the relationship to architecture, to the dialogue between the collections on display and the built heritage surrounding the museum, can also be seen in the tour within the museum.

The tour regularly provides glimpses of the outside world, openings that show the connection between the quality of an exceptional museum heritage and the richness and unity of a historic city centre with a homogeneous architecture.

The Cantini Museum, Marseilles

In 1916, the famous marble mason Jules Cantini (1826-1916) donated a 17th-century mansion to the city of Marseilles to be used as a museum dedicated to contemporary art.

The mansion, built in 1694 for the "Compagnie du Cap Nègre", was bought "with garden, menagerie and stable" in 1709 by the de Montgrand family, who kept it until 1801.

It then passed through various hands while remaining for more than half a century the headquarters of the Cercle des Phocéens, before being acquired by Jules Cantini, an important marble mason and great art lover, who took part in the construction of many civil and religious buildings in Marseilles during the Second Empire.

As a true patron of the arts, Cantini offered this mansion to the City of Marseilles in 1916, along with his collections, so that it could be transformed into a museum, as part of a bequest, a large part of which would be devoted to the formation of a modern art collection.

The acquisition policy, accompanied by major State long-term loans (National Museum of Modern Art, The National Collection of Contemporary Art, The National Picasso Museum, and the Orsay Museum) and supported by numerous donations, has guided the constitution of one of the finest French public collections devoted to the 20th century, consisting of over 1,500 works.

The permanent collection is divided into eight sections:

The Port of Marseilles (Paul Signac, Oskar Kokoschka, Albert Marquet), The Estaque:

The beginnings of Fauvism and Cubism (Raoul Dufy, Émile Othon Friesz, André Derain), the interwar period (Fernand Léger, Le Corbusier, Jean Hélion, Marc Chagall, Alberto Magnelli), modernist photography and the ferry bridge (Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Germaine Krull, Man Ray), Surrealism and the Air Bel villa (Max Ernst, André Masson, Victor Brauner, Jacques Hérold), post-war abstraction (Antoni Tapiès, Simon Hantai, Nicolas de Staël, Vieira da Silva, Pierre Tal Coat), post-war figuration (Francis Bacon, Alberto Giacometti, Balthus, Pablo Picasso, Jean Dubuffet), and the Japanese Gutai group (Kazuo Shiraga, Akira Kanayama, Atsuko Tanaka).

The Cantini Museum collection holds two works by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva:

The Satellite, 1955 and *The Theatre of Life*, 1973, on loan from the National Museum of Modern Art since 2001; and a work by her husband, Arpad Szenes:

The Wreck, 1971, loan from the National Centre for the Visual Arts / National Collection of Contemporary Art.

In 2020, the acquisition of Vieira da Silva's painting *White Marseilles*, 1931 is part of a desire to contextualise the permanent exhibition of the Cantini Museum's collection to reflect the importance of Marseilles for modern artists.

Practical informations

Opening hours of the museum

from 1 October to 31 May: from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

from 1 June to 30 September: from 10 a.m. to 6.30 pm

Closed on 1 January, 1 and 8 May, 14 July, 1 and 11 November, and 25 December

Free of charge

All year round, the permanent collections are free for all.

Museum of Fine Arts

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The Museum of Fine Arts is fully accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Access to the museum

Free Divia City shuttle, "Beaux-Arts" or "Théâtre" stop

Bus > Liane 6 "Théâtre" stop

Bus > Line 11 "St Michel" stop

Car parks:

Darcy, Dauphine, Grangier, Monge, Sainte-Anne

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