

## Huguette Arthur Bertrand Elated painting

By Mathilde Gubanski

Huguette Arthur Bertrand was an active member of the post-war art scene in Paris. Her polymorphic works follow the development of Lyrical Abstraction from the 1950s to the 1990s. Geometric at first, her artistic drive became gestural and then aerial.

### Geometric Abstraction

In the immediate post-war period, Huguette Arthur Bertrand attended the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Immersing herself fully in the effervescence of the Saint-Germain-des-Prés art world, she became friendly with Serge Poliakoff, Pierre Dmitrienko, Jean-Michel Atlan and many others.



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Untitled*, 1949  
Oil on canvas, 38,5 x 55,5 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Huguette Arthur Bertrand in her studio

Huguette Arthur Bertrand participated in the vitality of artistic liberation that coincided with the end of a global conflict. The Paris art scene was animated by debates between figuration and abstraction, but also between geometric abstraction and gestural abstraction. After working for a short time with figurative painting, Huguette Arthur Bertrand began to experiment with making forms geometric, following on from Cubism. Her compositions were split and given rhythm by lines, she wanted to “tear up the shape without denying it”.



Juan GRIS  
*La vue sur la baie*, 1921  
Oil on canvas, 65 x 100 cm  
Centre Pompidou, Paris

In 1951, Huguette Arthur Bertrand exhibited at the Galerie Niepce in Paris, and in 1949 and 1950, at the key exhibition at the Galerie Maeght, *Mains Éblouies* (Dazzled Hands). She won the famous Prix Fénéon in 1955. Huguette Arthur Bertrand regularly participated in the main salons of abstract art in Paris: at the Salon de Mai from 1959 until the late 1980s, at the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles from 1950 until the 1990s and at the Salon d'Automne. Around 1950, Huguette Arthur Bertrand's abstraction was restrained. Her works were built up with juxtapositions of areas of cold colours.



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Untitled*, 1951  
Oil on canvas, 46 x 64 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



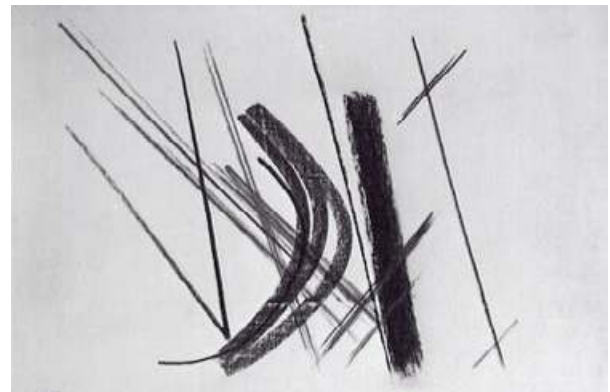
Serge POLIAKOFF  
*Composition*, undated  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 162 cm  
Musée des beaux-arts, Tours

## Graphic Abstraction

During the 1950s Huguette Arthur Bertrand's work evolved. The geometric shapes, which by then were definitively abstract, spread over the surface of the canvas, and the whole composition was highlighted with strong hatching. Huguette Arthur Bertrand developed this split graphic style on both canvas and paper. Her work with ink shows her confidence and great mastery of gesture.



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Untitled*, c. 1959  
Ink on paper, 105 x 76 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Hans HARTUNG  
*Lignes dans l'espace - N°42*, 1950  
Soft pencil on paper, 48 x 72 cm  
Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris

Huguette Arthur Bertrand's work was shown abroad. A solo exhibition was held at the Meltzer Gallery in New York in 1956 and then in Brussels at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in 1957. The same year, the painter Huguette Arthur Bertrand was also included in the exhibition *New Talents in Europe* at the University of Alabama. In 1958 and again in 1960-1961, she exhibited at the Howard Wise Gallery in Cleveland.



Huguette Arthur Bertrand in her studio

## Gestural Abstraction

Huguette Arthur Bertrand used hatching and highlights to create her compositions, dividing the canvas surface. Her process is decisive: the form in space counts most of all. Colour comes in second place and is a support for her artistic experiments. The artist's palette evolved towards warm colours: red, ochre, brown. This limited range accompanied the elated lyricism of the 1960s. Huguette Arthur Bertrand's painting became more and more gestural, free, and versatile. "They are things that fly, abstract objects that make faces, movements that cut through space" wrote Michel Ragon. The artist's volcanic character is found in the warm palette and the confident gesture of her works, also emphasized by her intense titles: *Raz de marée* (Tidal wave), *Cela qui gronde* (What rumbles), *Torrent* (Stream), *Foudre* (Lightning), *Écume noire* (Black spume)...Huguette Arthur Bertrand explained "I wanted to invent spaces, as if they were moving, using the resources of painting."



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Cela qui gronde*, 1967  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 162 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Gévaudan*, c. 1966  
Oil on canvas, 200 x 200 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Gérard SCHNEIDER  
*Opus 2F*, 1961  
Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm  
Musée d'Art moderne de Paris

## Textile Abstraction

From 1971, Huguette Arthur Bertrand turned towards tapestry and was given commissions by the Mobilier National. This was an opportunity for her to develop her art. Huguette Arthur Bertrand continued the renewal of tapestry that Jean Lurçat had started.

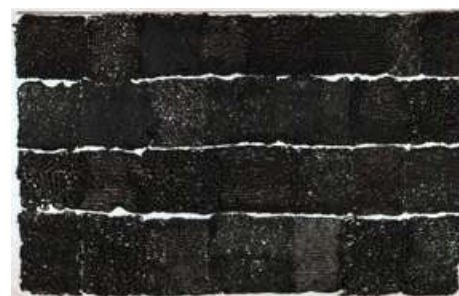


Jean LURÇAT  
*Naissance du Lansquenet*, 1946  
Tapestry, 228 x 282 cm  
Musée Jean Lurçat, Angers

She combined painting and fabric equally in collages where rags used to wipe paint brushes contribute forms and colours to the composition. These courageous works show a desire to fit into a contemporary vision of textile art, between painting and object and between art and craft. In 1976, the art critic Aline Dallier-Popper wrote about the relationship between women and textile creation and invented the term of "New Penelope" that applies perfectly to Huguette Arthur Bertrand.



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Grand collage*, 1965  
Gouache and fabric on paper, 110 x 75 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Pierrette BLOCH  
*Maille n°8*, 1974  
Marker, nylon and ribbon, 218 x 334 cm  
Musée d'Art moderne de Paris



## Aerial Abstraction

At the turn of the 1980s, Huguette Arthur Bertrand's monochromatic painting became more fluid and invaded the entire surface of the canvas. The compositions became aerial, pacified and poetic. A few waves are placed gently on the canvas.



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Remous*, 1984-1986  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 162 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Olivier DEBRÉ  
*Brune longue de Loire*, 1983-1984  
Oil on canvas, 181 x 311 cm  
MAC VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine

These works recall Joseph Sima's art, whom she had met in Prague in 1946. The diluted colours allow subtle transparent and light effects to appear.

The paintings of the 1990s are silent and delicate, the artist shows us her great sensitivity.



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*L'amant cachalot*, c. 1990  
Oil on canvas, 96 x 141 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Joseph SIMA  
*Terres*, 1962  
Oil on canvas, 97,5 x 195 cm  
Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris



Huguette ARTHUR BERTRAND  
*Voie directe*, 1992  
Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm  
Diane de Polignac Gallery, Paris



Huguette Arthur Bertrand in her studio

**An innovative and courageous artist, Huguette Arthur Bertrand evolved over her entire career. From the early Cubist inspirations, she developed a personal, pure and gestural style of painting.**

**Huguette Arthur Bertrand thus brilliantly found her place in the post-war art world.**

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