

DIANE DE POLIGNAC

JEAN MIOTTE (1926-2016)



Jean Miotte was a French painter. His personal form of abstraction places him at the limit between Informal Art, Tachisme and Lyrical Abstraction. The painter Jean Miotte was especially interested in the representation of movement in his art.

BIOGRAPHY

THE YEARS OF STUDIES OF THE PAINTER JEAN MIOTTE

Jean Miotte was born in Paris on September 8th, 1926 and spent his youth in Occupied Paris: he was eighteen years old at the end of the war. "It was in this context of upheaval and planetary ideological turmoil that his desire for other values, other spiritual commitments was exacerbated. His hostility towards all forms of regimentation, group effects, dates from this time. At the age of nineteen, he had decided, his path would be solitary" wrote Serge Lenczner. After studying mathematics, Jean Miotte discovered painting during his military service in 1946. He painted the walls of the barracks and said: "I had been struck by the ugliness of the place and the surrounding wall decorations and I swore that as soon as I could I would transform it." After this, Jean Miotte painted frescoes and theatre sets.

In 1947, Jean Miotte went to the studios of the painters Émile Othon Friesz and Ossip Zadkine. The same year, suffering from tuberculosis, Jean Miotte was hospitalized for many months during which he painted and made drawings. When he left, he painted from life and also created a few imaginary compositions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DANCE TO JEAN MIOTTE'S ART

The painter Jean Miotte was influenced by the art of Jacques Villon, Georges Rouault and Henri Matisse. He was invited to London by the Ballets Russes and to Monte-Carlo by friends who were dancers and choreographers. Dance is a vital element in his art. Jean Miotte was surrounded by friends who were dancers and choreographers such as Zizi Jeanmaire and Wladimir Skouratoff. Jean Miotte's first figurative paintings often show dancers. Jean Miotte's painting was nurtured by theatre and performance. He dreamed of a synthesis of music, painting and choreography. Jean Miotte received a commission from the city of Paris: a large format work entitled *Sud* which hangs in the main hall of the Bastille Opera House. The writer Castor Seibel wrote about Jean Miotte's painting: "Beyond all realistic figuration, it is an event in itself that finds its expression in the gestural dynamic and its equivalence in colour... knowing how to combine the contradictory in the form seems possible for Miotte, serenity battles chaos, gentleness and the savage rub shoulders in happiness."

JEAN MIOTTE'S EARLY SUCCESSES

Jean Miotte travelled to Italy and discovered Quattrocento art. He also met the artists Piero Dorazio, Lorenzo Guerrini and Achille Perilli. On returning to Paris, Jean Miotte was influenced by the paintings of Robert Delaunay and Fernand Léger.

In 1948, Jean Miotte made his first abstract painting. At the time, he was living and working at Meudon where he met the artists Jean Arp and Gino Severini. In 1952, Jean Miotte met Sam Francis and visited his studio at Ville-

d'Avray. The following year Jean Miotte exhibited at the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* for the first time; he would continue to exhibit regularly there. The same year, the art critic Michel Seuphor contacted him for his publication *Dictionnaire de l'art abstrait* which was published in 1957. Miotte's painting is described in it as: "highly coloured compositions with clearly articulated design that have wall power." Jean Miotte is a personal work, between Lyrical Abstraction, Informal Art and Tachisme. "The names of the artists who, with their lyricism, are an exception to the general rule of coldness... Jean Miotte, by whom bright and airy painting transmits an undeniable emotion," wrote the art critic Alain Jouffroy. Jean Miotte's paintings were created with an immediate gesture, a dazzling energy. "Movement is my life" he recalled. In this, he can be compared to Jackson Pollock.

Jean Miotte never prepared his work with sketches. This differentiated him from Hans Hartung for example. The American art critic Harold Rosenberg appreciated this practice especially: "the most important thing in art is freshness".

This free and instinctive form of painting was also influenced by Surrealism. The spirit was liberated of all constraints of reflection: "it is the intuition that counts above all when a work is born". Jean Miotte evoked his work as the "result of internal conflicts, my painting is a projection; a succession of acute moments where creation happens in full spiritual tension. Painting is not a speculation of the mind or the intellect, it is a gesture that is carried within." Jean Miotte met Roberto Matta who told him: "Surrealism is for me a battle. (...) You, too, you're a fighter, you're like me, your paintings aren't abstract."

The influence of Cubism is also present. Just as his predecessors decomposed to recompose, Miotte "unmakes". According to Karl Ruhrberg, with Jean Miotte, it is "the orchestration of a world that explodes". He also underlined Jean Miotte's strong connection to his northern origins, especially Frans Hals, "who, like him allied spontaneous painting and harmony between impulse and balance."

In 1954, Jean Miotte moved his studio to the townhouse of the sculptor Prince Youriévitich in Boulogne, where the artists Jacques Lanzman and Serge Rezvani were also living. The following year, the painter Henri Goetz brought his pupils to visit this studio.

In 1957, Jean Miotte participated in the exhibition *50 Ans d'Art Abstrait* at the Galerie Creuse in Paris. A solo exhibition of his work was held at the Galerie Lucien Durand in the same city. From 1958, Jean Miotte was represented in Europe by the dealer Jacques Dubourg. That year, Jean Miotte met the painters André Lansky, Serge Poliakoff and Pierre Dmitrienko.

Jean Miotte became successful in Germany where ten exhibitions were devoted to his work during the 1950s, for example at the Kunsthalle of Recklinghausen in 1958.

He was also included in a group exhibition of 15 painters at the Cologne Kunstverein. The first work by Miotte to enter a museum was acquired by the Ludwig Museum of Cologne in 1960.

THE PAINTER JEAN MIOTTE'S FIRST TRIP TO THE USA

Jean Miotte exhibited at the first Paris Biennale in 1959 in the "Section Informels" with Raymond Hains, LeRoy Neiman, Peter Foldes and André Favory. The following year, two paintings by Jean Miotte were included in the inaugural exhibition of the Galerie Karl Flinker in Paris. Paintings by him were also included in the inaugural exhibition of the Galerie Iris Clert. In 1961, Jean Miotte participated with Sam Francis, Georges Mathieu and Jean-Paul Riopelle in the group exhibitions of the Galerie Svenska-Franska in Stockholm and the Galerie Bonnier in Lausanne. That year, he was awarded the Ford Foundation Prize and was invited to spend six months in the USA. The following year, a solo show of his work was organized by the Iolas Gallery in New York. Jean Miotte met the American artists Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, Chaim Jacob Lipchitz and Alexander Calder. He travelled around the USA and gave a lecture at Colorado Spring University.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR THE PAINTER JEAN MIOTTE

In 1963, a Jean Miotte retrospective was organized by the Stedelijk Museum of Schiedam and it then transferred to the Groninger Museum in the Netherlands. Jean Miotte participated the same year in the group exhibition *Art Contemporain* at the Grand Palais in Paris. In February 1964, the Portuguese art historian José-Augusto França wrote about Jean Miotte's painting in the magazine *Construire*: "A gestural painter in the French spirit, Miotte expresses himself in the constructive despite the impression of immediate vehemence that emanates from his paintings: his art goes beyond the post-war aesthetic, standing out in a more modern way by a conscience of the independence of the idea of creating." During the 1960s, many exhibitions of Jean Miotte's work were organized in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and in Belgium. At that time, he worked in the south of France, at Pignans. In 1967, he was again included in an exhibition at the Schiedam Stedelijk Museum, the group show *Huit peintres de Paris*, along with Chafik Abboud, Olivier Debré, Karskaya, Jean Messagier, Carl Moser, Louis Nalard and Paul Rebeyrolle.

In 1970, Jean Miotte became a member of the Comité des Réalités Nouvelles. He exhibited forty paintings at the Fondation Prouvost at Marcq-en-Barœul. In 1971, Jean Miotte started using hessian bare canvas as an element in his compositions. The following year, he again spent time in the USA, this time in New York and Washington. Forty-six of his canvases were exhibited at the International Monetary Fund in Washington. Jean Miotte moved his studio to Hamburg in Germany. In 1975, a monograph on Jean Miotte was published,

containing a text by the dealer Castor Seibel: "no imitation, no reproduction, but the internal event finds its expression in the colours and a gestural dynamic... Miotte's painting is a place where the contradictions of our age are no longer expressed in a dualist way.... In this sense, J.M. is an important creator of new forms."

The following year, Jean Miotte experimented with paper as a support and made eighty gouaches as well as collages of brown paper and newspaper. One of his works was acquired by the Museum of Maassluis in the Netherlands. He exhibited in Padua alongside Enrico Baj, Alexander Calder and Karel Appel. Jean Miotte moved his studio to Vitry. He exhibited at the Malines cultural centre in Belgium at the group show *Kunst in Europa 1920-1960* which brought together the big names in contemporary art of the time.

In 1978, Jean Miotte was invited to speak in the context of exhibitions of his work at the French cultural centre in Damascus and then at the museum of Alep in Syria and finally in Amman in Jordan. The same year, he moved his studio to New York where he was represented by the Martha Jackson Gallery.

His work was shown at exhibitions about French painting from the 1950s at the Maison de la culture de Grenoble, at the Musée de Dunkerque and at the Musée de Saint-Omer in France.

JEAN MIOTTE'S TRAVELS IN ASIA

In May 1980, Jean Miotte exhibited fifty works in Beijing at the French cultural centre. He was the first western painter to be invited to exhibit his work in Beijing after Mao's death. Jean Miotte took this opportunity to travel around China. In 1982, he exhibited 60 paintings at the Hong Kong Art Center and then at the Institut Franco-Japonais of Tokyo. The following year, Jean Miotte exhibited at the Singapore National Museum and at the National Museum of History of Taipei. In 1984, he was exhibited at the Striped House Museum of Tokyo.

The Guggenheim Museum acquired two works on paper by Jean Miotte in 1987. In 1991, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris exhibited the prints commissioned by Danielle Mitterrand for her album *Mémoire de la liberté*. Fifty-five artists were involved in this project including Jean Miotte, Roy Lichtenstein, Antoni Tàpies, Sam Francis and Robert Rauschenberg. The following year, a Jean Miotte retrospective was organized at the Palais des Arts de Toulouse.

The Jean Miotte Foundation was opened in New York in 2002 with a permanent collection of his works. Jean Miotte died on March 1st, 2016 at the age of 89.

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Translation: Jane Mac Avock

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Berlin, Graphotek
Castellon, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Villafamés
Cologne, Museum Ludwig
Dortmund, Museum am Ostwall
Dhaka, Musée National du Bangladesh
Dunkirk (France), Musée d'Art Contemporain
Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky
Maassluis (Pays-Bas), Gemeentemuseum
Munich, Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst
New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
New York, The Museum of Modern Art
New York, The Chelsea Art Museum
Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
Paris, Ministère des Affaires culturelles
Paris, Opéra national Bastille
Paris – La Défense, Fonds national d'art contemporain (FNAC)
Paris – La Défense, Fondation d'Art contemporain CNIT
Rio de Janeiro, Museo de Arte moderna
Saarbrücken (Allemagne), Saarlandmuseum, Moderne Galerie
Singapour, Musée National de Singapour
Taichung, Musée des Arts de Taiwan

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Paris, 1953. Participated regularly from this date on
Exposition d'ouverture, Galerie du Haut du Pavé, Paris, 1954
50 ans d'art abstrait, to coincide with the publication of the *Dictionnaire de la Peinture abstraite* by Michel Seuphor, Galerie Creuse, Paris, 1957
Galerie Lucien Durand, Paris, 1957
Réalités nouvelles, nouvelles réalités, 13e salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Kunsthalle de Recklinghausen, Recklinghausen (Germany), 1958
Cinq peintres de Paris: Bogart, Bysantios, Jouselin, Miotte, Mihailovitch, Galerie Attico, Rome, 1958
Section Informel: Hains, Miotte, Neiman, Foldes, Favory..., First Paris Biennale, Paris, 1959
15 peintres de Paris, Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 1959, 1962
Ouverture, Galerie Flinker, Paris, 1960
Ouverture, Galerie Iris Clert, Paris, 1960
Galerie Am Dom, Frankfurt, 1960
Galerie Gunar, Düsseldorf, 1960
Exposition Internationale, Museum Wolfram Von Eschenbach, Wolframs-Eschenbach (Germany), 1961
Sam Francis, Mathieu, Miotte, Riopelle, Galerie Svenska Franska, Stockholm, 1961
Galerie Bonnier, Lausanne, 1961
Drian Gallery, London, 1961

Centre Culturel de Mechelen, Mechelen (Belgium), 1961, 1976
Galerie Iolas, New York, 1962
Galerie Jacques Dubourg, Paris, 1963
Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam (The Netherlands), 1963, 1967
Musée de Groningen, Groningen (The Netherlands), 1963
Galerie Zodiaque, Brussels, 1963
Grand Palais, Paris, 1963, 1988
Cobra et l'Informel: Appel, Constant, Corneille, Miotte, Riopelle, Tal Coat, Galerie Krikhaar, Amsterdam, 1965
Galerie Dierks, Aarhus (Denmark), 1966, 1968, 1971
Court Gallery, Copenhagen, 1966
Galerie Bio, Aalborg (Denmark), 1967
International graphics, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1970
Galerie Wünsche, Bonn, 1970, 1974, 1976
Septentrion, Centre artistique de la Fondation A. Prouvost, Marcq-en-Baroeul (France), 1970
Huit Peintres de Paris: Abboud, Debré, Karskaya, Messagier, Moser, Miotte, Nalard, Rebeyrolle, Maison de la Culture, Bourges, 1971
International Monetary Fund, Washington DC, 1972
Galerie Dinastia, Lisbon, 1972
Prudhoe Gallery, London, 1973, 1974
Galerie Winter, Braunschweig (Germany), 1975, 1978
Galerie Nieuwe Weg, Doorn (The Netherlands), 1976, 1979, 1984, 1991
Cinq artistes: Appel, Baj, Calder, Miotte, Scordia, Galerie Alfieri, Padoue, 1976
Bishops Gallery, Melbourne, 1977
Damascus Cultural Center, Damas, 1978
National Museum, Alep, 1978
Amman Cultural Center, Amman, 1978
Musée de Dunkerque, Dunkirk, 1978, 1993
L'Abstraction des Années 50 en France, Maison de la Culture, Grenoble, 1978
L'Abstraction des années 50 en France, Musée de Saint-Omer, 1978
Travelling retrospective in French cultural centres, 1979
Beijing Cultural Center, Beijing: First exhibition of a western artist in the People's Republic of China, 1980
Galería Lucas, Gandía (Spain), 1980, 1981
Galerie Koppelman, Leverkusen (Germany), 1980, 1983
Centre Culturel, Montpellier, 1980
Ayala Museum, Manilla, 1981
Musée de la Poste, Hamburg, 1981
Evergreen Galleries, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington D.C., 1982
Hong-Kong Arts Center, Hong-Kong, 1982
Institut Franco-Japonais de Tokyo, Tokyo, 1982
Trevisan Galleries, Edmonton (Canada), 1982
Paris 59: Fautrier, Feraud, Hartung, Lansky, Lipsi, Miotte, Schneider, Sonderborg, Soulages, Tal Coat, Tapiés, Galerie Koppelman, Cologne, 1982
National Museum de Singapour, Singapour, 1983

National Museum of History, Taipei, 1983
 Bitran, Chu teh-Chun, Hartung, Miotte, Soulages, Chapelle des Franciscains, Saint-Nazaire, 1983
 Galerie La Cité, Luxembourg, 1983, 1987
 Striped House Museum, Tokyo, 1984
 Vik Gallery, Edmonton (Canada), 1984
 Institut Français d'Athènes, Athens, 1984
Deux peintres, deux sculpteurs, Orangerie de Bagatelle, Paris, 1984
 Opus Gallery, Miami, 1985
 Konstmassan, Stockholm, 1985, 1989
 Art Atrium, Stockholm, 1985
 Columbia University, New York, 1986
 Galerie Keeser, Hamburg, 1987, 1989, 1991
Les Peintres autour d'Arrabal, Musée d'Histoire, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg, 1987
 Ciae, Chicago International Art Exhibition, Chicago, 1987
Colloque Euro-Arabe, National Museum of Malta, Malta, 1987
Art in Paris, Pavillon Inter-Continental, Singapour, 1987
 Galerie Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer, New York, 1988
 Galerie Egelund, Copenhague-Holte, 1988, 1990
 Espace d'Art Contemporain E. Ungaro, La Rochelle, 1988
Rencontres écrites, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 1988
Les années 50 : Benrath, Chu teh-Chun, Debré, Dietrich Mohr, Féraud, Hartung, Lansky, Miotte, Music, Père, Pichette, de Staël, Subira Puig, Casino de Hyeres, Hyères, 1988
Les années 50, Mécénat Pernod, Paris-Créteil, First venue of a travelling, 1988
 Galerie N'namdi, Detroit, 1989
Miotte/Arrabal, Maler und Dichter, Institut Français de Hambourg, Hamburg, 1989
 Galerie von Braunbehrens, Munich, 1990, 1992, 1996
 Galerie Wild, Frankfurt, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997
Abstrakte Malerei nach 1945: Miotte, Noël, Schumacher, Sonderborg, Thielier, Haus Sandreuther, Riehen-Basel, 1990
Art et Partage, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nice, 1990
 Musée Seibu, Tokyo, 1991
 Galerie Jade, Colmar, 1991, 1992
 Galerie Michael Schultz, Berlin, 1991, 1993, 1997
Mémoire de la Liberté: 55 artists from 23 countries, César, Sam Francis, Miotte, Rauschenberg, Motherwell, Lichtenstein, Tinguely, Tapies, etc., illustrate each article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, organized by the Association France Liberté, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1991
Collections des collections ; de Paul Klee à nos jours, CNIT, Fondation d'Art Contemporain, Paris-La Défense, 1991
Couleurs de la vie, international travelling exhibition of contemporary art under the patronage of Mme Danielle Mitterrand, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1991
Forms of Abstraction, N'namdi Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan, 1991
 Palais des Arts, Toulouse, 1992
 Galerie Shuyu, Tokyo, 1992
 Galerie Saint-Polly, Gunrua (Japan), 1992

Art and Art, Nicaf 92, Yokohama, 1992
Grands formats, Miami Art Fair, Miami, 1992
 Art Multiple, Düsseldorf, 1992, 1994
5 artistes des années 50: Christophorou, Debré, Miotte, Féraud, Koch, Centre Culturel Jean Despas, Saint-Tropez, 1993
Hartung et Miotte, Ishi Gallery, Osaka, 1993
 Musée des Cordeliers, Châteauroux, 1994
Œuvres graphiques, Musée Bertrand, Châteauroux, 1994
30 ans Après: Sam Francis, Jean Miotte, Joan Mitchell, Jean-Paul Riopelle, organized by Chapel Art Center, Hamburg and Cologne, 1994, 1995, 1997
Pour la paix et la reconstruction au Liban – 33 peintres, Musée Surssock, Beirut, 1994
Chinesische Kunst nach 1945 in Europa – Eine Gegenüberstellung: Li Di, Chu teh-Chun, Zao, Rétrospective 1956-1996, Musée Mücsarnok, Budapest, 1996
Les années 1945-1975, Maison de l'Unesco, Paris, 1996
Arrabal, der Lyriker und die Künstler, Dali, Dorny, Miotte, Saura, Gutenberg Museum, Mayence (Germany), 1996
The Garner Tullis Donation, The Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, NC, 1996
 Museum Am Ostwall, Dortmund, 1997, 1999, 2000
Ont-ils du métier ? Propositions pour l'art vivant – Agam, Boltansky, César, Claisse, Cruz, Diez, Hains, Honegger, Messenger, Miotte, Morellet, Nemours, Soto, Tinguely, Vasarely, Venet..., Galerie Denise René, Paris, 1997
Grenzgänger (qui traversent la frontière): Sandro Chia, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Markus Luppertz, Jean Miotte, A.R. Penck, Bernd Zimmer, for the 200th anniversary of Heinrich Heine, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Goethe institut Paris and Marseille, Villa Romana, Florence, 1997
20 ans d'exposition, Museum Haus Ludwig für Kunstausstellungen, Saarlouis, 1997
Arbeiten auf Papier (works on paper), Kunstmarkt Dresde, Dresde, 1997
 The National Arts Club, New York, 1998
 Van Der Togt Museum, Amsterdam-Amstelveen, 1998
 Villa Haiss, contemporary art Museum, Zell A.H. (Germany), 1998, 2000
 Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg (Switzerland), 1999
 Museum Ludwig, Koblenz (Germany), 2000
 Aboa Vetus Ars Nova Museum, Turku (Finlande), 2000
 Museum of Brno (Czech Republic), 2002
 Chelsea Art Museum, New York, 2003, 2005
 Museo Fundacion Cristóbal Gabarrón, Valladolid (Spain), 2005
 Artrium, Geneva, 2005
 Bibliothèque nationale de Nice, Nice, 2005
Jean Miotte, Galerie Diane de Polignac, Paris, 2019

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Maison de la Culture de Bourges, *Exposition collective : Karskaya, Debré, Abboud et autres*, Bourges, 1972
Michel Ragon, *Histoire de l'art abstrait, vol. IV*, Éditions Maeght, 1975
José-Augusto França, Castor Seibel, Miotte, *La Porte Verte*, 1975
Chester Himes, *Miotte*, Éditions SMI, coll. « L'art se raconte », 1977
Institut français d'Athènes, *Écriture et signes*, texte de Jean Miotte, Athens, 1984
Gérard Xuriguera, *Les années 50*, Éditions Arted, 1985
Fernando Arrabal, *Jean Miotte, Devoirs de vacances, été 85*, Éditions Galilée, Paris, 1986
Marcelin Pleynet, *Miotte, Œuvres sur papier 1950-1965*, Éditions Galilée, Paris, 1987
Marcelin Pleynet, *Miotte*, Éditions la Différence, Paris, 1987
C.M Cluny, *Miotte, Peintures et Gouaches*, coll. « L'Autre Musée », Éditions la Différence, 1989
M Chelbi, *L'affiche d'art en Europe*, Édition Van Wilder, 1989
Jean-Luc Chalumeau, *Miotte*, coll. « Passeport », Édition Fragment, Paris, 1990
Bohbot, *Miotte, Le Geste majeur*, Édition Navarra, Paris, 1991
Centre Georges Pompidou, catalogue de l'exposition *Mémoire de la liberté*, Paris, 1991
Jean-Claude Lambert, *Le règne imaginal*, Cercle d'Art, coll. « Diagonales », 1992



Jean Miotte in his studio, 1992