

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA PRESENTS THE FIRST US RETROSPECTIVE IN 40 YEARS DEDICATED TO THE MULTIFACETED ABSTRACT ARTIST SOPHIE TAEUBER-ARP

Bringing Together Some 300 Works, the Exhibition Highlights Taeuber- Arp's Distinctive Cross-Pollinating Approach to Abstraction

Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction

November 21, 2021–March 12, 2022

Floor Three, The Robert B. Menschel Galleries (3 East)

NEW YORK, November 11, 2021—The Museum of Modern Art presents *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction*, the first major US exhibition in 40 years to survey this multifaceted abstract artist's innovative and wide-ranging body of work. On view November 21, 2021, to March 12, 2022, the exhibition explores the artist's interdisciplinary approach to abstraction through some 300 works assembled from over 50 public and private collections in Europe and the US, including textiles, beadwork, polychrome marionettes, architectural and interior designs, stained glass windows, works on paper, paintings, and relief sculptures. *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction* is organized by The Museum of Modern Art, Kunstmuseum Basel, and Tate Modern, by Anne Umland, the Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA; Walburga Krupp, independent curator; Eva Reifert, Curator of Nineteenth-Century and Modern Art, Kunstmuseum Basel; and Natalia Sidlina, Curator, International Art, Tate Modern, London; with Laura Braverman, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA. Prior to its presentation at MoMA, the exhibition was shown at the Kunstmuseum Basel (March 19–June 20, 2021) in Taeuber-Arp's native Switzerland, and at Tate Modern in London (July 13–October 17, 2021), where it was the first-ever retrospective of the artist in the United Kingdom.

Sophie Taeuber-Arp is organized chronologically, beginning with works produced soon after the artist's move to Zurich in 1914, and ending with those created during World War II, in the months immediately preceding her untimely death in 1943. Related works across disciplines are placed in proximity to one another to explore the artist's distinctive cross-pollinating approach to composition, form, and color. Among the significant bodies of work included in the exhibition are Taeuber-Arp's vividly colored, abstract textile studies; her decorative art objects, such as beaded bags and necklaces, rugs, embroidered tablecloths and pillow cases, and turned-wood containers; the polychrome marionettes she designed in 1918 for the puppet play *King Stag*; and a remarkable group of small, stylized sculptural heads associated with Dada. The exhibition also presents works related to the various interior design projects that Taeuber-Arp carried out in the late 1920s in Strasbourg, most notably the decorative program for the Aubette entertainment complex; furniture and

working drawings for the interior design and furnishing commissions she received after moving to Paris in 1929; abstract paintings and painted wood reliefs that employ a reduced geometric vocabulary, done in the 1930s, when Taeuber-Arp participated in avant-garde artists' groups such as *Cercle et Carré* (Circle and square) and *Abstraction-Création*; and precisely controlled yet seemingly free line drawings made during World War II, while Taeuber-Arp was living in exile in the South of France.

“With this exhibition, we aim to advance the understanding of what abstraction meant to Taeuber-Arp, and of how she contributed to its history through her steady commitment to innovation and experimentation,” said Umland. “The model she provides of a ‘living abstraction’—by which we mean one that relates to the body, to the applied arts, to architectural interiors, and to her contemporary circumstances—encourages a more open-ended and generative approach to the history of modern art.”

The accompanying exhibition catalogue presents a comprehensive survey of this multifaceted innovator's wide-ranging body of work, and establishes unequivocally her place in the pantheon of 20th-century abstract art. The richly illustrated volume explores the artist's interdisciplinary approach to abstraction through some 400 works, including textiles, beadwork, polychrome marionettes, architectural and interior designs, stained-glass windows, works on paper, paintings, and relief sculptures. Fifteen essays examine the full sweep of Taeuber-Arp's career, tracing the progression of her creative production both chronologically and thematically. A comprehensive illustrated chronology, a scholarly checklist, and a groundbreaking essay on the artist's materials and techniques further detail the expansive nature of Taeuber-Arp's artistic production. Edited by Anne Umland and Walburga Krupp with Charlotte Healy. Additional contributions by Laura Braverman, Leah Dickerman, Briony Fer, Mark Franko, Maria Gough, Jodi Hauptman, Medea Hoch, Juliet Kinchin, Eva Reifert, Natalia Sidlina, T'ai Smith, Adrian Sudhalter, Jana Teuscher, Michael White, and Annie Wilker. 352 pages, 435 color illustrations. Hardcover, \$75. ISBN: 978-1-63345-107-0. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and available at MoMA stores and online at store.moma.org. Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson in the rest of the world. A German-language edition is available through Hirmer Verlag.

AUDIO TOUR

An accompanying audio playlist, available at moma.org/audio, provides varied perspectives on Sophie Taeuber-Arp's multifaceted career, teaching, and artmaking in a wide range of mediums through commentary by curators Anne Umland and Laura Braverman, conservators Annie Wilker and Lynda Zycherman, educator Larissa Raphael, and critic Amah-Rose Abrams. Readings of Taeuber-Arp's words, and those of her contemporaries, are also featured.

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SPONSORSHIP

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