

# THE COLOR

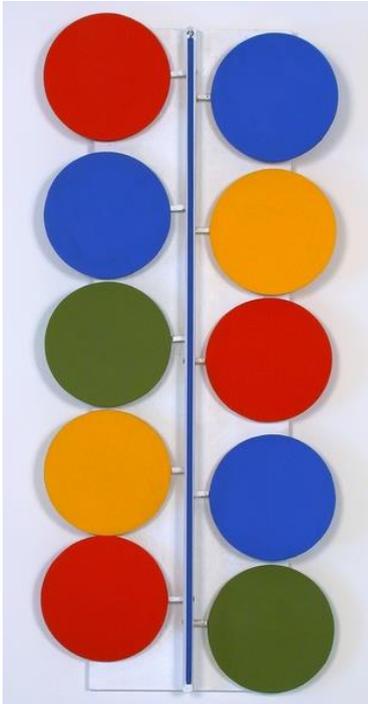
MEDIATION FORM



# PRESENTATION

Color has always had a prominent place in art since its very beginning. Between radicality, technicality, aesthetics and decorative dimension, color fascinates. Through this tour of the collections, it is a question of studying the omnipresence of color, its evolution, its use, its way of giving life to forms, of expressing a symbolic charge, of freeing oneself and emancipating oneself from codes and of delivering one's creative sensitivity. In 20th century art, color freed itself from reality and became a component of artwork.

« *The colors are not insignificant, quite the contrary. They convey codes, taboos, prejudices that we obey without knowing it, they have varied meanings that deeply influence our environment, our language, our imagination.* » Michel Pastoureau, *Le petit livre des couleurs*, 2014



## Duration of the tour

- |                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| • Primary School        | 1H |
| • Middle School         | 1H |
| • High School / College | 1H |

## Objectives of the tour

- Show the omnipresence of color
- Understand the use and symbolism of color
- Discover color as a component of the artwork
- Learn to understand an artwork
- Familiarization with the specific vocabulary of art

## A STEPS OF THE VISIT

Based on this information, the teacher will have to make a choice of steps according to the level of the class and the availability of the artworks in the room. The stages can be adjusted at the convenience of the teachers. The arrival preparation form must be completed.

**Step 1:** Primary color

**Step 2:** Color as a mean of expression

**Step 3:** Out of reality colors

**Step 4:** Black and White

**Step 5:** Color and light

## B RELATED KNOWLEDGE

## STEP 1: PRIMARY COLOR

Powerful blue, glittering yellow or bright red, the use of the basic colors called primary refers to a voluntary radicality that artists use for scientific, aesthetic or sensitive purposes.

### YVES KLEIN



*Triptyque de Krefeld (PGB)*  
1961  
Pigment pur sur papier (2 éléments), feuille d'or sur carton doré (1 élément)  
3 x (32 x 23 cm)  
3 x (50 x 42 cm) avec cadre  
Photos Muriel Anssens/Ville de Nice  
© Adagp, Paris

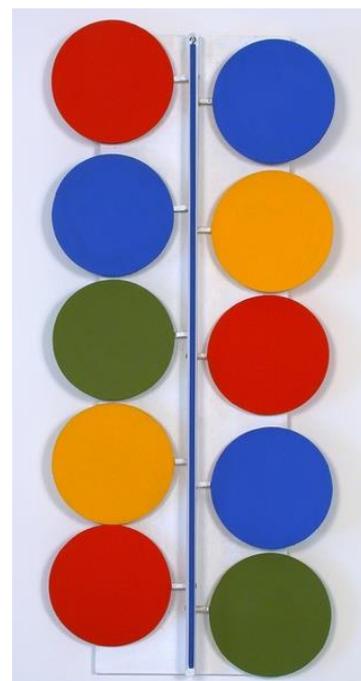
3

**Yves KLEIN**, born in 1928 in Nice, died in 1962 in Paris. From 1956 onwards, the exhibitions of Monochromes followed one another. Klein uses "Bleu Klein" (also called IKB) but also gold, fire, and sets up works gathering a trilogy of blue, gold and pink colors. By doing this, he delivers the painting of any line, point or representation of reality. These colors contribute to the creation of an immaterial and sensory space.

### ALBERT CHUBAC

**Albert CHUBAC**, is born in 1925 in Geneva (Switzerland), and died in 2008 in Tourrette-Levens. In his creations, shapes and colors come to life through materials as diverse as wood, cardboard, and a little later Plexiglas. He uses wood for his sculptures and cardboard and string for his many relief collages, always keeping the predominance of his pure colors. He developed his edible sculptures in childish colors, which he found one day at a color merchant in Nice.

*Sans titre*  
Bois peint  
98 x 45 x 7 cm  
Donation de l'artiste en 2004  
© Adagp, Paris



## STEP 2: COLOR AS A MEAN OF EXPRESSION

Color has always been a source of inspiration for artists. Modern and contemporary artists let color speak for itself and use it without nuance as a mean of expression and a means of releasing feelings.

### NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE



**Niki DE SAINT PHALLE**, was born in Paris in October 1930, and died in 2002 in San Diego, California. Settled in Paris from 1950, she made her first assemblages and paintings from 1952 to 1956 including various heteroclitic elements. In 1961, she incorporated cork targets into one of her assemblages, leaving a set of darts to the spectators. From the dart, symbolic allusion to death, she spent the following year with a rifle, carrying out a series of Shooting Actions. With this approach close to happening, she creates Paintings-Shots, heterogeneous combinations containing bags of fluid colors, on which the spectator is invited to shoot with a rifle, thus releasing the colors pouring in long dashes over the immaculate white of the plaster. She then speaks of "making the canvas bleed". From this act of destruction was thus born a new artwork, where the act of painting was replaced by the firing of the rifle.

*Tir séance, 26 juin 1961*  
1961  
Plâtre métal, acrylique et objet divers sur bois  
330 x 210 x 35 cm

4

### YVES KLEIN

Fascinated by the blue of the sky and the sea of Nice, **Yves Klein** designed his own blue with the help of chemists in 1960. This blue is made from an ultramarine blue that he darkened. The binder that unites the pigments has been patented so that Klein is the only one who can use it, to cover his Monochromes, but also his sculptures.



*Globe terrestre bleu,*  
1957  
Pigment pur et résine synthétique sur  
mappemonde en métal  
20.5 x 11.5 x 13 cm  
© Succession Yves Klein c/o ADAGP, Paris

*Victoire de Samothrace (S 9)*  
1962

Pigment pur et résine synthétique sur plâtre  
monté sur un socle en pierre  
50,5 x 25,5 x 36 cm  
Don de Rotraut Moquay Klein et Daniel Moquay  
en 1999



## STEP 3: OUT OF REALITY COLORS

Some artists appropriate **color as a signature, a trademark**. The modern era favours the use of color far from its representation codes. Color is used as such and is no longer associated with the nature of the image, creating a multitude of aesthetic possibilities.

### ROBERT MALAVAL

**Robert MALAVAL**, was born in July 1937 in Nice, and died in August 1980 in Paris. The 1965 *Dormeuse* is one of the polyester resin sculptures with which Robert Malaval began the "Pink, white, purple" period. Malaval works here with a new material, polyester, and moulds a woman's body whose identity is unknown. This one has a hand stretched over her head. Her position, by what it suggests of strange and morbid, is intriguing. The trio of colors used strengthens this sickly feeling and increases the discomfort.



***Dormeuse***

1965

Polyester stratifié rose, blanc, mauve, gris

Résine et pigment

210 x 110 cm

Achat à la Galerie Eric Touchaleaume avec l'aide du FRAM

en 1991 **5**

© Adagp, Paris

### MARTIAL RAYSSE

**Martial RAYSSE**, born in Golfe-Juan in February 1936, became friends with Arman and Ben in 1975 in Nice. He is inspired by colorful signs and symbols of modernity in his works. Example with *Nissa Bella*, 1964. Here, it is a confrontation between the traditional rules of painting (sustained gaze, portrait reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci's famous Mona Lisa), and contemporary techniques (bright colors, neon, felt and transfer to photography). *Nissa Bella* is a portrait of his wife, France Raysse, this artwork is also a tribute. The use of bright and complementary colors evokes advertising posters. In the shape of a heart, the neon light represents the love the artist had for his wife France.



***Nissa Bella***

Titre attribué : Portrait de France

1964

Report photographique sur feutrine marouflée

sur contreplaqué, acrylique et néon sur toile

180 x 120 x 15 cm

signé en mars 1996

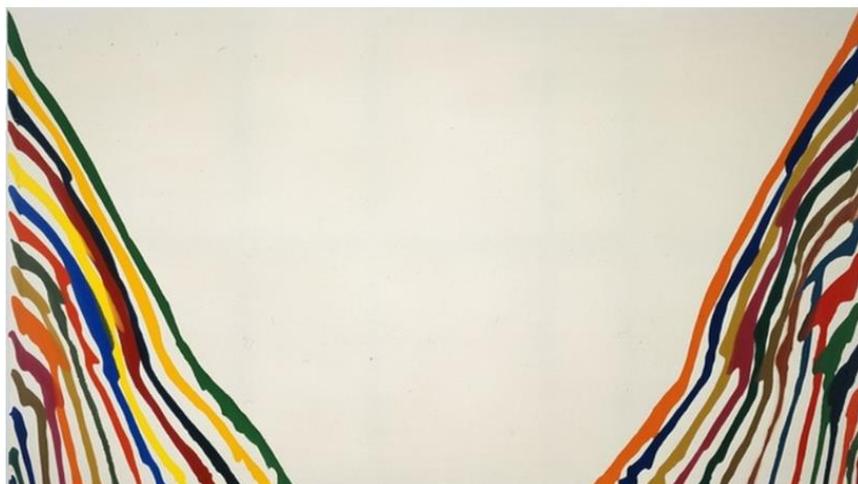
Achat en 1990

Inv. : 990.1.1

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## MORRIS LOUIS

**Morris LOUIS** is an American painter born in Baltimore, Maryland in November 1912 and who died in Washington D.C. in September 1962. Morris Louis directly impregnated the canvas with color and made the painting flow, which he simply directed. Given the narrowness of his workshop, some canvases could not be deployed and were rolled and dyed as they went along. We can see the traces of these folds on these canvases, which the color reveals.



**Alpha Lambda**

1961

Acrylique sur toile

260,4 x 457,2 cm

Achat en vente publique Vente Sotheby's (New-York) en

1987

© Adagp, Paris

## ANDY WARHOL



**Diamond Dust Shoes**

1980

Acrylique et sérigraphie avec poussière de diamant sur toile

178 x 229 cm

**Andy WARHOL**, was born in 1928 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and died in 1987 in New York. Warhol draws his subjects from the world of the mass media: newspapers, comics, advertising. In order to erase as much as possible the traces of the artist's hand on the support, he uses the cleanest techniques, such as stencil or silkscreen printing, which make it possible to produce large numbers of series. Images that can be identified by everyone (everyday objects, portraits of stars...) become a breeding ground for multiplication, even to the point of distorting the model by this process of trivialization. Example with Diamond Dust Shoes, 1980, silkscreen printing of an advertising image of luxury shoes.

## STEP 4: BLACK AND WHITE

### NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE

The "white" period of **Niki de Saint Phalle**, which began with the "Shooting", continues with the "Cathedrals", the "Monsters" (White Gremlinq, Gambrinus...) and especially the "Brides". *The bride under the tree* is a sculpture representing a woman leaning against a tree. The woman, who can be assumed to be married, is white, fragile and sad. This reflects Niki de Saint-Phalle's criticism of social conventions such as marriage that impede women's emancipation. Thus, the artist opposes this frail body to the solid, abundant and reassuring tree. This tree appears as a refuge for birds as well as for all those who need it. An image of fertile and eternal life. This tree embodies the imagination, the dream, childhood and represents a certain nostalgia for the freedom lost by the married woman.



**La mariée sous l'arbre**

1963-64

Objets divers, étoffe sur construction en fil de fer

H. 228, L. 200, P. 240

Nice, Musée d'art moderne et d'art contemporain

Achat avec participation 2002

7

**This artwork serie is guided by her thoughts on the role of women in our society as well as on the place of religion: "I did not want to become like them (her mother, her aunt), the guardians of the household, I wanted the world and the world then was owned by men". A woman could be a queen, but in her hive, and that was it. The roles assigned to men and women were subject to very strict rules on both sides.** "Letter from Niki de Saint-Phalle to her friend Pontus Hulten in 1991.



**Cœur de Vieille bigote ou Cœur blanc**

1964

peinture, objets divers, grillage

132 x 130 x 26 cm

musée d'Art moderne et d'Art contemporain, Nice, donation de l'artiste

photo Laurent Condomina

## GEORGE SEGAL

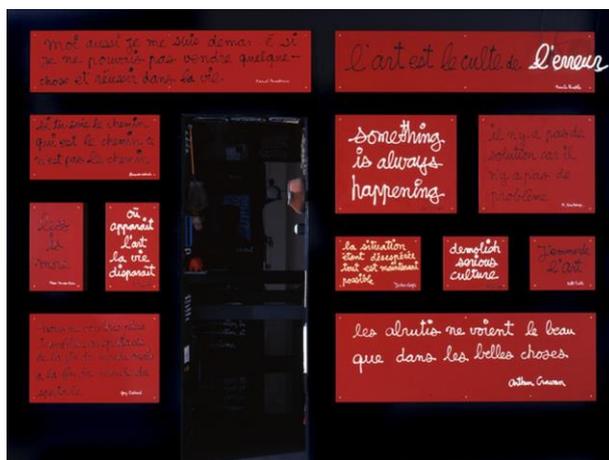
**George Segal** is an American painter and sculptor who was born in November 1924 in New York and who died in June 2000 in New Brunswick (New Jersey). In the early 1960s, he devoted himself to "living paintings" composed of plaster characters associated with urban settings or everyday objects. The work *Untitled* is a striking example: a plaster character is lying on a sofa. If the scale 1 adopted allows identification and creates ambiguity, the white color freezes the character in a tragic melancholy, and causes discomfort but also the suspended beauty of this scene.



**Untitled**  
1986  
Plâtre moulé sur bergère  
76,2 x 160 x 96,5 cm  
Achat en vente publique à Sotheby's en 1990  
©The George and Helen Segal Foundation - Adagp, Paris

## BEN

**Benjamin VAUTIER**, known as Ben, was born in 1935 in Naples and arrived in Nice in 1949. Since 1958, Ben's paintings have been writings in which he expresses his ideas, maxims and considerations by signing them, thus developing a cult of "Ben says and signs Everything about Everything". It was also in 1958 that he opened a bookshop at 32 rue Tondutti de l'Escarène in Nice, a kind of "catch-all" store that quickly became the meeting place for many artists and a real living object of his production. On the walls of La Cambra, which looks like this store, he hangs a set of 12 paintings that are as many quotes on art, often written white on black. Ben cites Marcel Broodthaers, Francis Picabia, John Cage or Erik Satie.



**Série, Ensemble de citations (Mur de la Cambra)**  
1999

Ensemble de 12 peintures : -Moi aussi je me suis demandé si je ne pouvais pas vendre quelquechose et réussir dans la vie. Marcel Broodthaers, 42 x 185 cm / - Si tu suis le chemin qui est le chemin ce n'est pas le chemin. Proverbe chinois, 42 x 85 cm / -Less is more. Mies van der Rohe, 58 x 35 cm / -Où apparait l'art la vie disparaît. Francis Picabia, 58 x 35 cm / -Nous ne voulons plus travailler au spectacle de la fin du monde mais à la fin du monde du spectacle. Guy Debord, 58 x 85 cm / -L'art est le culte de l'erreur. Francis Picabia, 35 x 172 cm / -Something is always happening. John Cage, 64 x 80 cm / -Il n'y a pas de solution car il n'y a pas de problème. Marcel Duchamp, 64 x 77 cm / -La situation est désespérée tout est maintenant possible. John Cage, 35 x 56 cm / -Demolish serious culture. Henry Flynt, 35 x 43 cm / -J'emmerde l'art. Erik Satie, 35 x 43 cm / -Les abrutis ne voient le beau que dans les belles choses. Arthur Craven, 57 x 173 cm Peinture acrylique sur contreplaqué et néon

Donation de l'artiste en 1999

© Adagp, Paris

## STEP 5: Light and color

Newton's discoveries at the end of the 17th century on the decomposition of light into seven rays ranging from purple to red were decisive for the understanding of the nature of color. The artists have continued to explore the relationship between light and color through their works.

### MARTIAL RAYSSE



**Martial RAYSSE** develops its first assemblages with scrap objects. In 1962, he used neon for the first time, then multiplied visual and trompe-l'oeil shots. His work with neon lights (discovered in New York) will give rhythm to his most recent works, notably through the use of symbols of our modernity, such as the telephone for example. According to the artist, neon has its own color and sensitivity. Neon blurs the line between color and light.

*High tension*  
1964  
Huile et néon sur toile  
150 x 128 cm  
Achat en 1990  
Inv. : 990.7.1  
© Adagp, Paris

### JEAN-BAPTISTE GANNE

**Jean-Baptiste Ganne**, who was born in 1972 in Gardanne, still lives and works in Nice. Jean-Baptiste Ganne's work remains invisible to the unattentive viewer. The tone-in-tone inscriptions on the white wall are based on romantic and anonymous statements taken from the walls of Rome during his residence at Villa Medici in 2006. Photographed, they are then rewritten by the artist with a white bomb, who moves an urban, wild and anonymous practice - an act of illicit recovery - into the museum grounds. More precisely, the question here is to question the link between image and language. The light here reveals the text.



*Favole*  
2006-2019  
Peinture à la bombe ton sur ton / Aerosol painting in matching tones  
Dimensions variables / Various sizes  
Courtesy de l'artiste / Courtesy of the artist

## ALBERT CHUBAC

**Albert Chubac's** use of Plexiglas allows, through its translucent aspect, to give color a new dimension. The stripped aspect of the work, as desired by the artist, offers the viewer a contemplation of the relationship between light and color.



***Sans titre***

s.d.

Bois peint et plexiglas

131,4 x 29,9 x 25,7 cm

Donation de l'artiste en

2004

© Adagp, Paris

## ❖ KEY WORDS

**PRIMARY (COLORS):** Primary colors are colors that cannot be reproduced by mixing other colors. They are the basis of the chromatic range.

**POP ART:** From the early 1950s onwards, the beginnings of a new artistic approach appeared, which could be seen simultaneously and essentially in England and the United States. A new aesthetic emerges, advocating a return to figuration through the use of everyday industrial techniques and materials. Each artist has his own style, but common reference themes can be identified that ensures coherence. We are witnessing an expression of popular culture with a vocabulary, a language, an identity now affirmed and recognized in the art of the 20th century. The very term "Pop Art" is the invention of an English critic Lawrence Alloway. Multiple and passionate discussions resulted in a materialized creative mode characterized by elements borrowed from industry and commerce. The mission of objects, used or purchased new, is to express the materialistic values of post-war consumer society and its bulimia of objects; the prosperity of industries based on the perishable nature of the products manufactured is then one of the most notable stimuli.

**SECONDARY (COLORS):** Secondary colors are obtained by mixing two primary colors in equal proportions.

**TERTIARY (COLORS):** Tertiary colors are obtained by mixing two primary colors in unequal proportions.

**SILK SCREEN:** A printing process using a screen consisting of a frame on which a mesh fabric is stretched, allowing printing on multiple surfaces.

**PERFORMANCE:** A mode of artistic expression that consists in producing gestures and acts, an event whose course in time and more or less expected implications constitute the artwork itself.

## ❖ WORK'S IDEAS

- ➔ The plastic components of the artwork
- ➔ Color material and color light (including Raysse)
- ➔ Primary colors
- ➔ Expressive color Symbolic color
- ➔ The space of color
- ➔ Yves Klein
- ➔ Niki de Saint Phalle
- ➔ The lack of color : a new perspective
- ➔ New artistic techniques

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