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**CESAR
DOMELA**

PRESS RELEASE

GALERIE
LE MINOTAURE
2 rue des Beaux-arts & 23 rue de Seine
75006 Paris

CESAR DOMELA

For the 2024 edition of Art Basel, Galerie Le Minotaure proposes a monographic exhibition of César Domela (1900-1992), Dutch artist who began his career in the first half of the 1920s as a member of the De Stijl group and ended as one of the indisputable masters of relief in the 20th century.



Composition néo-plastique n° 5K, 1926, oil on canvas, 55 x 74 cm

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Our exhibition will be composed of 14 pieces embracing different periods of Domela's work as well as the diversity of media and techniques that he explored in his career: photographs, photomontages, paintings, but above all the reliefs reconciling geometry and organicism which constitute the main axis of his artistic trajectory.

All the pieces that we will present are of museum quality and have been exhibited during the artist's numerous exhibitions organized in France and abroad. First of all, we have to mention the very early black and white collage from 1923 representing the artist's father and the rare neoplastic canvas realized by Domela in 1926 after meeting in Paris Theo van Doesburg and Piet Mondrian who taught him the discipline, the sense of balance and the rules of composition and with whom he forged a deep and lasting friendship



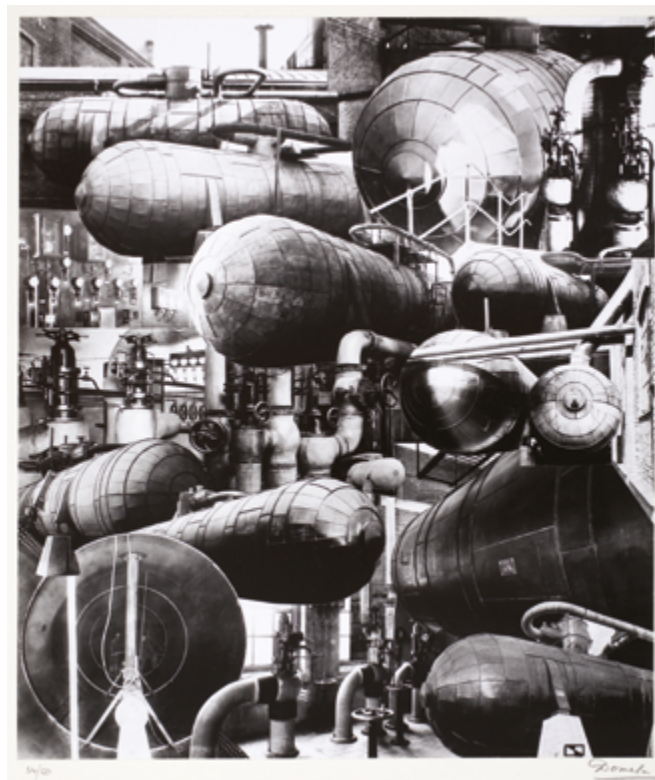
Portrait de mon père, 1923,
oil on masonite cut on white paper background, 75 x 41 cm

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that even survived the schism that Domela effected by freeing himself from straight lines and primary colors. From 1925, he began to transgress the neoplastic system and its law of balance, creating the illusion of depth and abandoning perpendiculars in favor of obliques or diagonals lines, as evidenced by our Composition n°5K. Subsequently, Domela's intense exchanges with the artists from Bauhaus of Dessau (Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy) and with the Group K of the Abstracts of Hanover in the late 1920s and early 1930, oriented his work towards the ideas of Russian constructivism and led him



Ruth, 1928, photography, 16.9 x 20.9 cm



Ruths-Speicher, 1928, photography of a photomontage, 35 x 30 cm

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to abandon painting to invest himself in the applied arts and to embrace the relation between art and architecture. From this period, we will exhibit some black and white photographs and photomontages (other versions of which are found in collections of Centre Pompidou, for example).

Collages and photomontages encouraged Domela to introduce into his work elements foreign to painting, inevitably leading him towards the third dimension. The constant observation of nature (also through photography) as well as his fascination for Chinese, Indian, Islamic calligraphy or even Irish illuminations allow him to develop his personal approach to relief. The one from 1939 (Relief n°15A) is a perfect example of the rich compositions made by Domela with diverse and unusual materials such as wood, shark



Relief n°15 A, 1939, painted wood, red copper, shark skin, parchment, copper, brass, 60 x 100 cm



Relief n°26 A, 1947, exotic wood, brass, 94 x 86 cm,

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skin, tortoise shells, suede, copper, brass, or plexiglass, etc., favoring sinuous curves, ellipses, circles, and arabesques. Those made during the II World War (Relief n°15H, 1942-43; Relief n°18, 1944) bear witness to the period when he exhibited alongside Nicolas de Staël and Wassily Kandinsky at the Galerie Jeanne Bucher or Esquisse.



Relief n°15 H, 1942, plexiglass, macassar, red copper, brass, 115 x 64 cm



Relief n°18, 1944, palm wood, brass, mild steel, plastic, 107 x 70 cm

The exhibition is accompanied by an important, richly illustrated, and documented catalog, produced in collaboration with Christian Derouet.

Photo credits : Archives Galerie Le Minotaure



Galerie Le Minotaure was created in 2002 by Benoit Sapiro, a member of the Compagnie Nationale des Experts, vice-president of the French Comité Professionnel des Galeries d'Art, and president of the Photo Saint Germain festival. Our first gallery is located on the former site of the famous Surrealist bookshop of the same name. In February 2023 we opened a second space 23 rue de Seine. Like its director, the gallery specializes in the artists of the School of Paris and in the international avant-gardes from the 1910s to the 1960s.

PRESS CONTACT

Galerie le Minotaure
2, rue des Beaux-arts 75006 Paris
E-mail : sapiro.benoit@wanadoo.fr
Tel : 01 43 54 62 93

