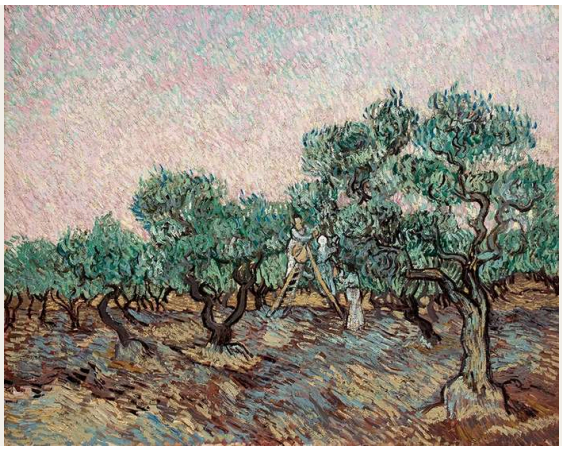
ATHENS, GREECE

# Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation: Masterpieces

Twenty modern works by European and Greek artists from the Goulandris collection in Athens.



The Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation in Athens houses a private collection that the two collectors built up over decades. It follows their taste and makes no attempt to cover every school or movement equally. European modernists share it with Greek painters working at roughly the same time, so Cézanne, Van Gogh and Picasso keep company with Parthenis, Hadjikyriakos-Ghika and Moralis. Many of the European names will be familiar, but here they are seen in different company.

The twenty works chosen here run from Cézanne's landscape at Auvers, the earliest, to Hadjikyriakos-Ghika's balcony, the latest. On the way they take in Monet's pink cathedral front, Kandinsky's striped forms and Hundertwasser's crowded field of heads. Van Gogh, Derain and Fautrier each appear twice, so you can watch one painter take on very different subjects: a coffee pot and an olive grove, a near-empty Italian square and a nude among foliage, a glass of water and a hostage's head.

Artline chose these works from the Foundation's documented holdings, independently of the Foundation. Being in the collection does not mean a work is on view. Dates and attributions keep the qualifications given in the linked records.

## Explore this selection in Artline

See the selected works alongside books and events from their period, or compare when the artists lived. The books and events provide context, not evidence of direct influence. Works without confirmed dates remain in this guide.

Artworks in context  Who lived when?

artlines.org/guides/goulandris-athens

# The selection · 20

1. Olive Picking
   Vincent van Gogh · December 1889
2. Still Life with a Coffee Pot
   Vincent van Gogh · May 1888
3. Both Striped
   Wassily Kandinsky · 1932
4. Dynamics of a Head
   Paul Klee · 1934
5. Rouen Cathedral in the Morning: Pink Dominant
   Claude Monet · 1894
6. The Grasshopper
   Joan Miró · 1926
7. Archaic Landscape
   Theodoros Stamos · 1947
8. Balcony with Horizontal Pilasters
   Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika · 1954
9. Caryatid
   Amedeo Modigliani · c. 1914
10. Countryside in Auvers-sur-Oise
    Paul Cézanne · 1881-1882
11. Getting Out of the Bath
    Pierre Bonnard · c. 1926-1930
12. Glass with Water
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13. Harmony
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14. Head of a Hostage No. 17
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15. Horses on the Beach
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16. Italian Town
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17. Man in an Interior
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    Fernand Léger · 1919
19. Ninety-nine Heads
    Friedensreich Hundertwasser · June-August 1952
20. Nude
    André Derain · c. 1948-1950

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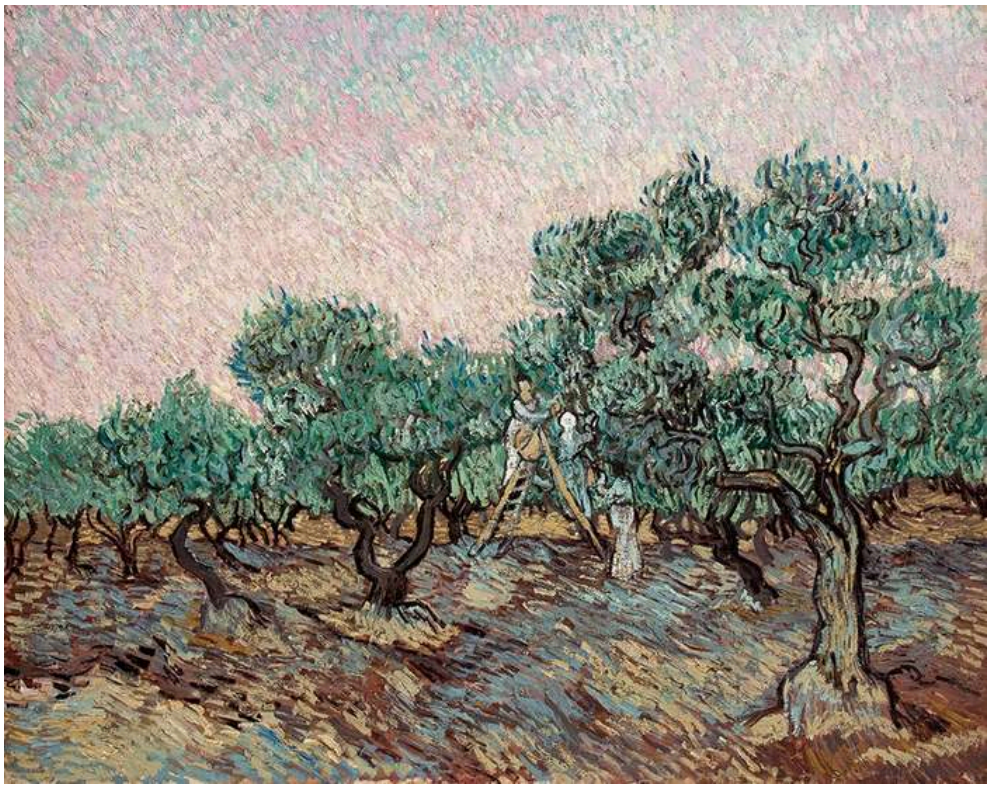
# Olive Picking

Vincent van Gogh

December 1889 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

Van Gogh kept returning to olive groves at this time, trying out different ways of catching their shapes and colours. There are workers among the trees here, but the twisting trunks and the changing light take up far more of the canvas than the picking does. Short, lively strokes keep the whole grove moving, even where the figures stand still.

Object source · Open artwork

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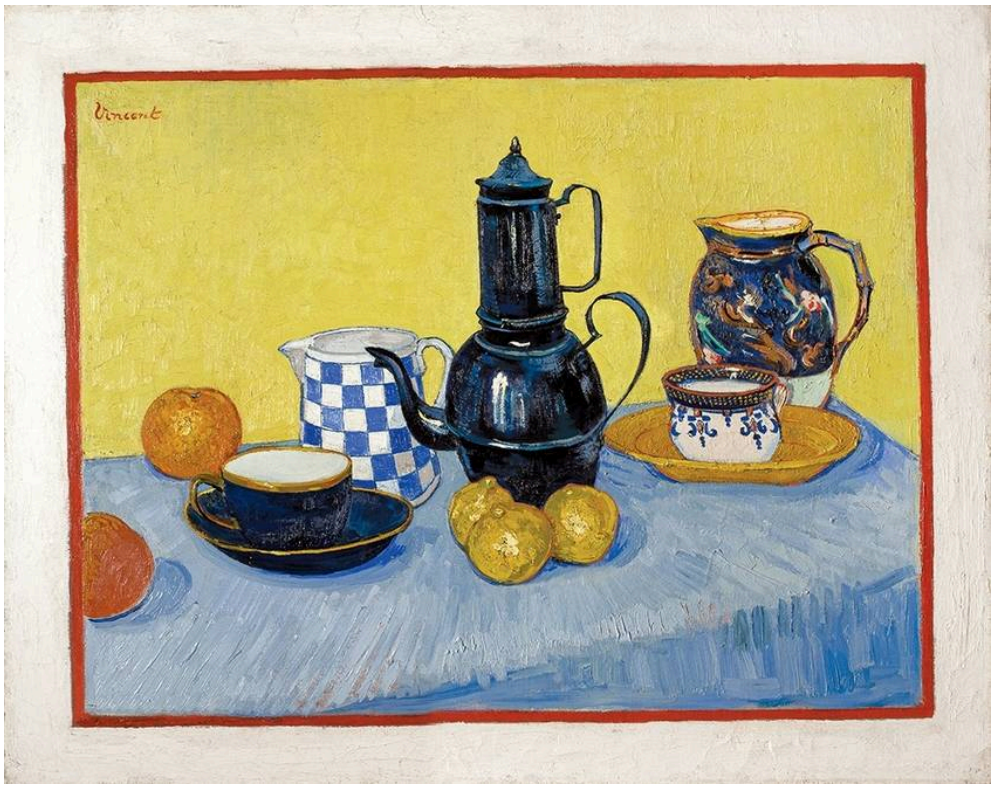
# Still Life with a Coffee Pot

Vincent van Gogh

May 1888 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation




Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

The olive grove is all movement. This is a picture of things standing still. The blue coffee pot holds firm against yellow, and the smaller objects around it bring in their own patterns and contours. Van Gogh treats these ordinary vessels as material for a colour arrangement without letting any of them lose its identity. The cup's outline and shadow are strong enough to count as shapes on the painted surface, and it is still, unmistakably, a cup.

Object source · Open artwork

03 / 20

# Both Striped

Wassily Kandinsky

1932 · Oil and gouache on board · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Wassily Kandinsky (1866 - 1944); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

The title is almost deadpan, naming the one thing the two large forms have in common. Both are striped, but the bands differ in direction and scale, so they relate the pair without making them twins. Smaller arcs and rectangles fill the space around them. The way the two are placed hints at some kind of exchange, and it is tempting to give them a story. There are no characters here, though, and no event to illustrate.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Dynamics of a Head

Paul Klee

1934 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



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Klee's arrangement is too ordered to be a random scatter of patches, but it never settles into a conventional likeness. Everything hangs on the pale circles. Read them as eyes and a face assembles itself out of the overlapping bands of colour, though even then the bands stay visibly separate shapes and never melt into features.

Object source · Open artwork

05 / 20

# Rouen Cathedral in the Morning: Pink Dominant

Claude Monet

1894 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



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Monet's title ends with a colour, not with the building. The façade is made of pink and violet marks broken by dark openings, and the stone is hard to separate from the morning light falling on it. A cathedral front is about as fixed a subject as a painter could choose, and it is that fixity which lets slight shifts of colour become the main event.

Object source · Open artwork

06 / 20

# The Grasshopper

Joan Miró

1926 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Joan Miró (1893 - 1983); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; © ADAGP, Paris / OSDEETE, Athens 2023; © ADAGP, Paris / OSDEETE, Athens 2023; © ADAGP, Paris / OSDEETE, Athens 2023; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

Thin lines and small coloured forms spread across a yellow ground, interrupted by a darker shape lower down. Would anyone find a grasshopper here without the title? Probably not. Miró's sparse signs never add up to a clear body, though they are enough to suggest something alive.

Object source · Open artwork

07 / 20

# Archaic Landscape

Theodoros Stamos

1947 · Oil on hardboard · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Theodoros Stamos (1922 - 1997); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

Fragments and pool-like shapes are scattered across a textured brown field, and nothing settles their scale. The surface can look close and material, like heaped-up matter you could touch, and then the same forms open out into a wide stretch of terrain. A blue area near the bottom is handled differently from the rest. Stamos shows no identifiable place, but the word "archaic" in the title invites you to read the fragments as though they carried some distant history.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Balcony with Horizontal Pilasters

Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika

1954 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika (1906 - 1994); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

The balcony is only a starting point. Hadjikyriakos-Ghika rearranges it freely, fitting bands, grids and curved forms together without keeping to a single viewpoint, and tucking small decorative details inside the larger divisions. This is no architectural record. What survives of the architecture is its structure, held together by repetition and by planes that lock into one another.

Object source · Open artwork

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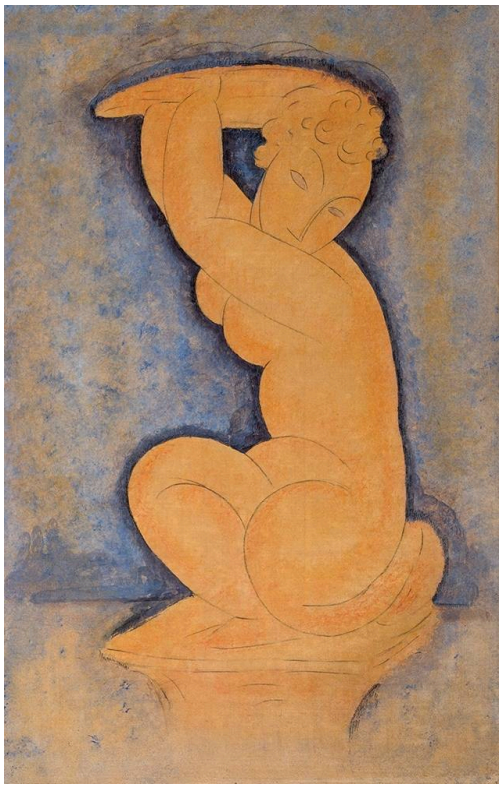
# Caryatid

Amedeo Modigliani

c. 1914 · Pencil and gouache on paper laid down on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Amedeo Modigliani (1884 - 1920); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

A caryatid is a carved female figure that takes the place of a column: a body doing the work of architecture. Modigliani's is not carved at all. It is drawn and painted, in pencil and gouache on paper. His kneeling woman raises her arms as though bearing a load, although no building rests on her, and her joints are simplified into broad curves that give the compact body an architectural weight of its own.

Object source · Open artwork

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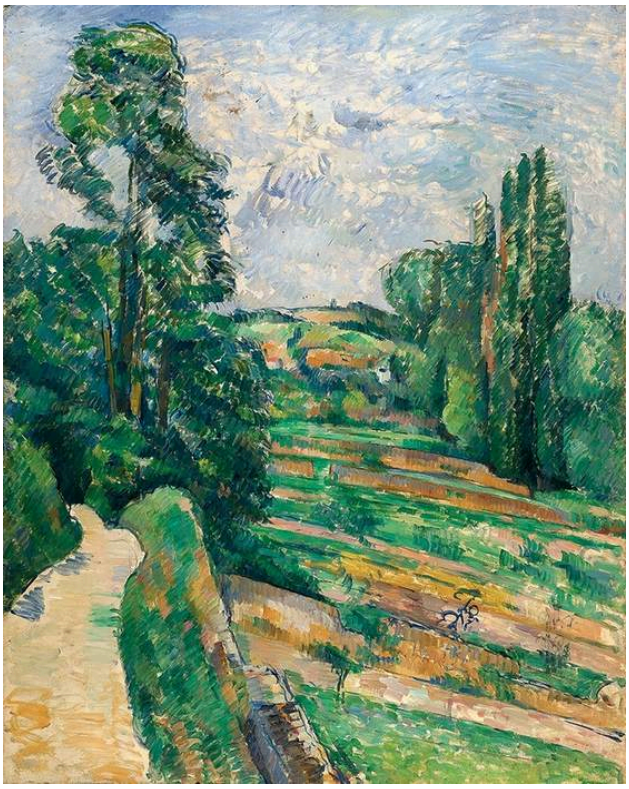
# Countryside in Auvers-sur-Oise

Paul Cézanne

1881-1882 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Paul Cézanne (1839 - 1906); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

Tall trees frame a road leading back towards houses on rising ground, which is a familiar enough way into a landscape. What is less familiar is how the land is built. Cézanne makes it from adjoining patches of green and ochre instead of smooth gradations, and the repeated strokes stay visible on the surface. The road and slopes supply the depth. The ground feels solid as much because of the way each patch of colour meets and holds against the next.

Object source · Open artwork

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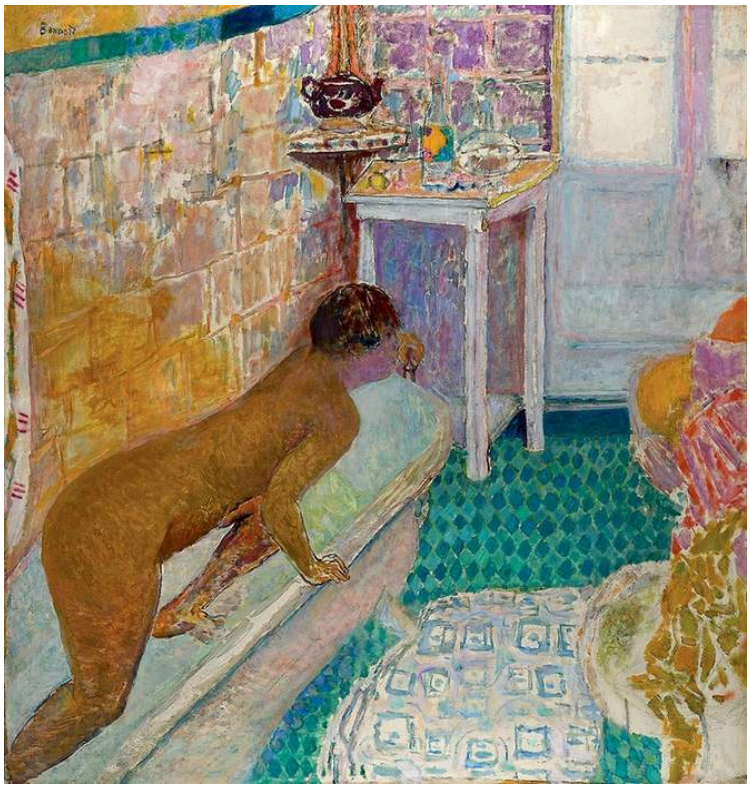
# Getting Out of the Bath

Pierre Bonnard

c. 1926-1930 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Pierre Bonnard (1867 - 1947); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

The bending figure takes a little while to find. Patterned tiles, bathroom fixtures and fabrics compete with it, and so much of the room is intensely coloured that the body has no neutral ground to stand out against. Bonnard leaves it half caught up in the decorated surfaces around it, as though the bathroom might absorb the person in it.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Glass with Water

Jean Fautrier

1947 · Mixed media on paper laid down on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Jean Fautrier (1898 - 1964); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; © ADAGP, Paris / OSDEETE, Athens 2023; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

Glass and water are about as transparent a subject as a still life can offer, and Fautrier gives them a rough, heavily worked surface. The glass is easy enough to identify, its outline held by thin ridges and thicker matter, but nothing in the surface imitates transparency. The worked material is as physically present as the vessel it depicts.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Harmony

Constantinos Parthenis

1930 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



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Long pale bodies are barely separated from the pale field around them. Parthenis gives them no setting and little sense of flesh, and the run of their curved outlines connects them more than any anatomy does. The allegorical title points away from narrative action towards a looser idea of accord or balance. Who or what the figures stand for, the picture does not say.

Object source · Open artwork

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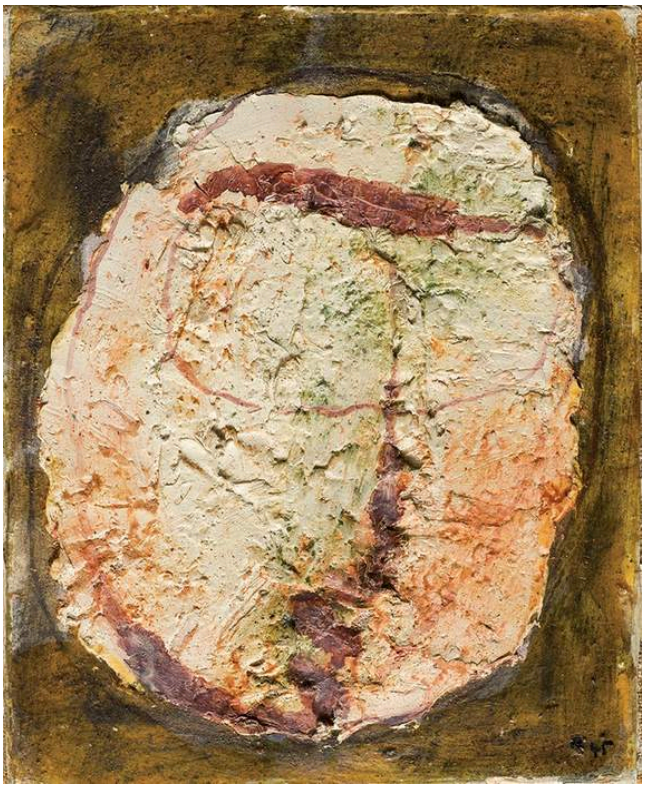
# Head of a Hostage No. 17

Jean Fautrier

1944 · Mixed media on paper laid down on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Jean Fautrier (1898 - 1964); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; © ADAGP, Paris / OSDEETE, Athens 2023; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

A pale oval and a few marked features give just enough to hold a face against the rough ground. The number in the title points to a series, and the word "hostage" means the reduction cannot be treated as merely formal. Fautrier brings the human subject close to the point where it would stop being recognisable, and he does it without any descriptive scene of violence. In its place there is damaged-looking matter, and a face on the edge of disappearing.

Object source · Open artwork

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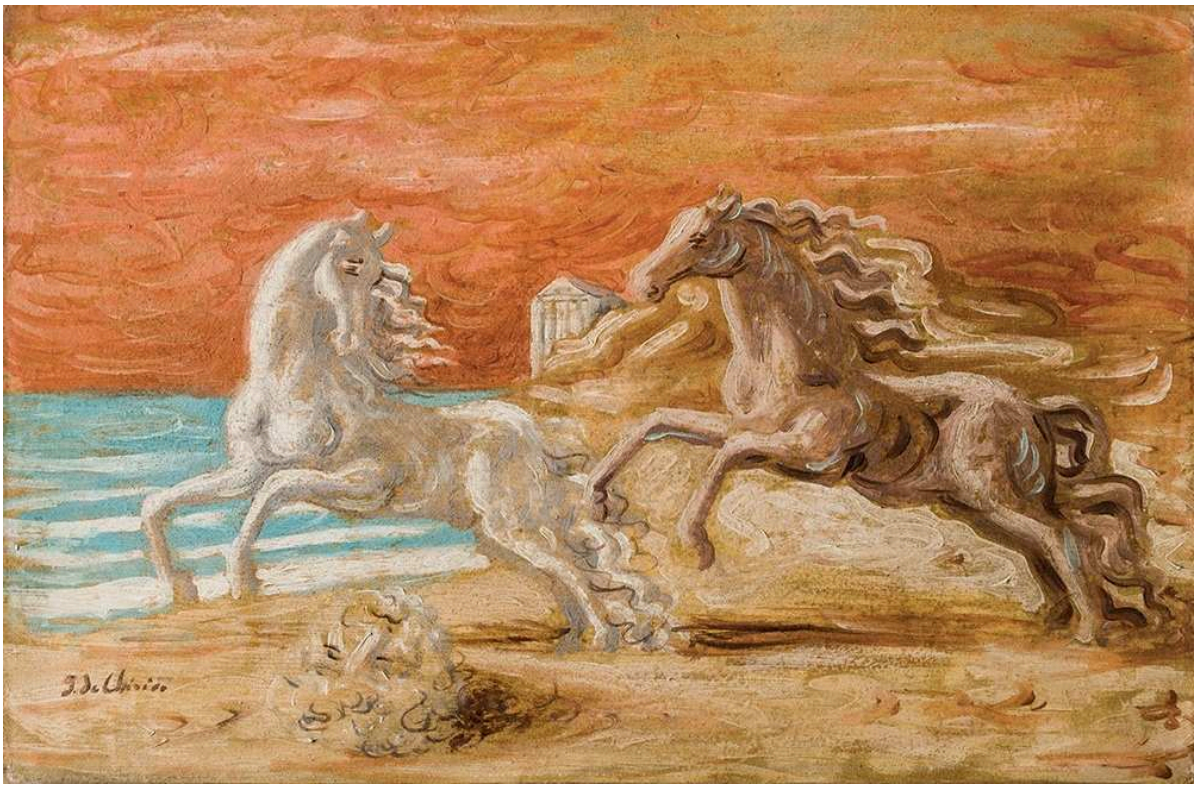
# Horses on the Beach

Giorgio de Chirico

c. 1930 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Giorgio de Chirico (1888 - 1978); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; © SIAE 2023; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

The rearing horses supply the only sudden movement in an otherwise strangely still arrangement of beach and architectural fragments. De Chirico paints each element clearly, but he offers no ordinary reason why they should share this precisely depicted place.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Italian Town

André Derain

1936 · Gouache on board laid down on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



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Not much happens in this broad square, and its near-emptiness gives proportion and spacing unusual weight: the intervals between sharp-edged façades, the small clouds floating in a large expanse of sky.

Object source · Open artwork

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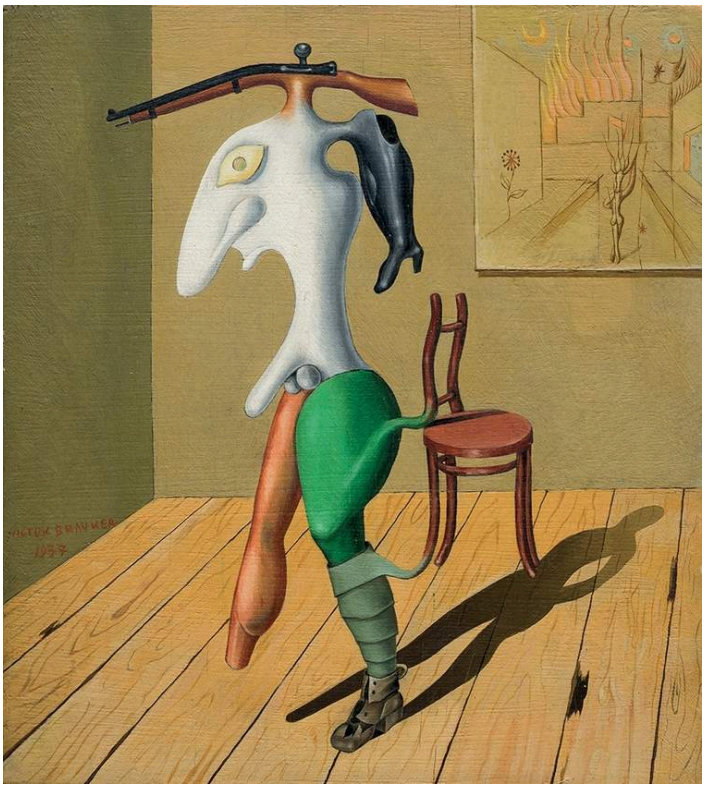
# Man in an Interior

Victor Brauner

1937 · Oil on panel · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Victor Brauner (1903 - 1966); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; © ADAGP, Paris / OSDEETE, Athens 2023; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

The chair, the floor and the cast shadow behave as they would in any room. The upright figure beside them does not, because it combines bodily and object-like parts in a way no anatomy allows. The believable interior is what makes this impossible figure seem to occupy real space, and the very ordinariness of the room sharpens the contradiction.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Mechanical Element

Fernand Léger

1919 · Oil on canvas · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



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Tubes, discs and bands suggest machinery, and the picture is as lucid as a diagram. The parts will not assemble into a working mechanism, though, and there is no telling how this machine would run. Léger gives forms associated with practical use another job, as curves, overlaps and contrasts in a composition.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Ninety-nine Heads

Friedensreich Hundertwasser

June-August 1952 · Oil on hard fibre board primed with chalk, zinc white and fish glue, with photo affixed and lilac watercolour · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



Friedensreich Hundertwasser (1928 - 2000); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; © 2023 NAMIDA AG, Glarus, Switzerland, All Rights Reserved; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

Faces gather across the red field, many of them set in smaller coloured compartments. They vary so much in size, and some larger eyes confuse matters further, that anyone trying to check the ninety-nine of the title will soon lose count. Each head stays distinct, but together they spread across the surface like a pattern, with no hierarchy and no consistent scale. Not all of it is oil paint, either. There is lilac watercolour and an affixed photograph, and the hard fibre board underneath was primed with chalk, zinc white and fish glue.

Object source · Open artwork

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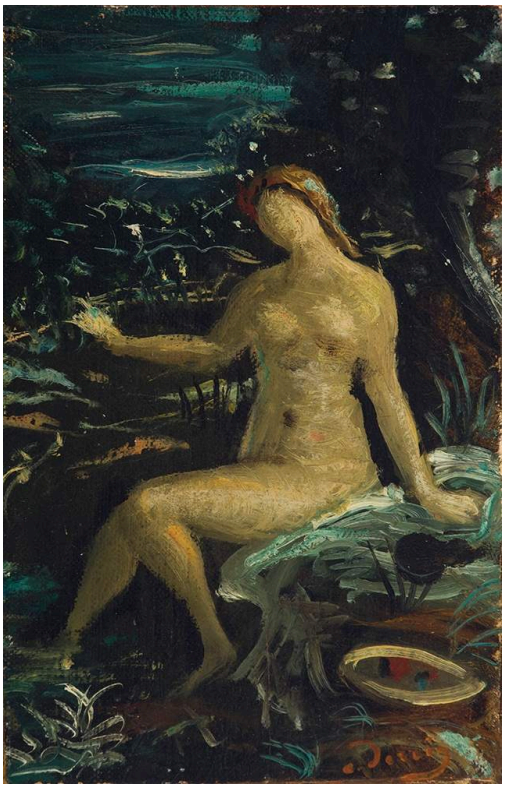
# Nude

André Derain

c. 1948-1950 · Oil on canvas laid down on cradled panel · Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation



André Derain (1880 - 1954); Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation · Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; © ADAGP, Paris / OSDEETE, Athens 2023; Copyright © 2026 Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation; Terms of Use & Privacy Policy Financial information

Derain's Italian Town depends on sharp edges. Here the edges give way. A pale torso stands out from dark foliage and rough, curving marks, but the body is painted with something of the same handling as the vegetation. The seated pose and outstretched arm give it real weight as a figure, though it lacks the clear boundaries of a studio nude. Like Bonnard's bather among the tiles and fabrics, it is only partly separated from its surroundings.

Object source · Open artwork

# Objects, titles and abstract forms

Seen together, these pictures differ most in how far they let their subjects be named. Van Gogh's vessels stay vessels however hard they work as colour, while Kandinsky's forms need no names at all. Between those two extremes, titles do much of the identifying. Miró's insect, Modigliani's woman as support and the long past of Stamos's fragments all depend on what the title tells you. Sometimes the title is the more precise of the two: Hadjikyriakos-Ghika specifies even the direction of his pilasters, while the painting handles the balcony with great freedom. Fautrier's pair puts the point most sharply. The two works share a medium and a rough, worked surface, but one is called a glass with water and the other a hostage, and the same kind of matter reads quite differently under each name.

# Further reading

## Concerning the Spiritual in Art

Wassily Kandinsky; translated by Michael Sadleir · Read free · English

This is Kandinsky's own argument, in Michael Sadleir's English translation, that colour and form can work without representing visible objects. It is a painter's theory in his own words, not a historical survey, and it belongs naturally beside Both Striped. Its claims can also be tested against Klee's head, Léger's machine parts and the heavy matter of Fautrier's surfaces.

Museum website · Official collection guide

Sources and visitor information checked: 2026-10-12

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