

GALERIE CATHERINE PUTMAN

## Jean Messagier

### *Le printemps commence avec un orage*

18 March – 28 April

#### **Vernissage**

Saturday 18 March from 3 pm to 7pm



Jean Messagier «Le Sexe des vallées» c. 1975  
synthetic feathers and spray paint on paper, 55,5 x 78,5 cm

The title of the exhibition *Le printemps commence avec un orage* is taken from Jean Messagier's book «Feuilles de mille-feuilles», a collection of texts by the artist from 1963 to 1974, published by Fata Morgana in 1984.

40, rue Quincampoix 75004 Paris | 1<sup>er</sup> étage  
T. +33 1 45 55 23 06 | Du mardi au samedi de 14 à 19 heures et sur rendez-vous  
contact@catherineputman.com | catherineputman.com







Galerie Catherine Putman has pleasure in holding a new exhibition of works by Jean Messagier (1920-1999). In parallel, a selection of his works will be shown at the forthcoming Art Paris.

Encompassing painting, engraving and sculpture, Jean Messagier's protean work continued throughout the second half of the 20th century, evolving continuously. The exhibition consists of a host of drawings and paintings on paper from the 1970s and a remarkable set of monotypes from the 1960s. The variety of the works reflects the freedom of creation that was dear to the artist.

In the 1970s, Jean Messagier drew with oil pastels, crayons, spray paint or gouache using broad volutes and scrolls. Often related to lyrical abstraction, nuagism or the second School of Paris, Messagier never claimed to belong to a movement in art—just as he never wished to choose between abstract and figurative. His work was guided solely by a poetic and experimental spirit.

His spray painting and collages with different components augured the more expressionist style of subsequent years, thus marking his taste for popular culture. *Trop grande pâquerette* and *Plusieurs matinées combattant la nuit* are titles that are very visible in his works, reflecting humour and poetry and sometimes a certain taste for provocation, as in *Le sexe des vallées* for example.

*The bare, shimmering copper plate. Use it like a mirror.  
Forget acid and points and throw the ink straight on to the metal according to its squash.  
Waiting for emergence from the press.  
Fear of heating.  
On one side the living paper.  
On the other the dead copper.*

Jean Messagier

An epigraph to the chapter devoted to monotypes in the catalogue raisonné *Jean Messagier, les estampes et les sculptures*<sup>1</sup>, this quotation shows the attraction of this process for the artist. Monotypes are made using printing techniques with a special feature: the paint is applied to copper (zinc or Perspex, etc. can also be used) and transferred to paper by pressure making it possible to obtain a single, unique print.

The broad gesture that is coloured and brushed on the copper plate is that of the painter but the print of the ink creates the work on paper. This is a perfect synthesis of two disciplines that at the heart of his work and could be described as a spontaneous print.

All the 1960s monotypes shown in the exhibition are characteristic of his painting during this period. Singular brushing effects are added to the technique when the brush sweeps over the copper plate, and those of squashing when the print is made with creation of dense printed areas, often using gold ink in Messagier's work. It is the trace that interested the artist, as when he used marks of plants or crystallisation by cold.

<sup>1</sup> *Messagier, les estampes et les sculptures, 1945-1974*, Yves Rivière, Arts et Métiers Graphiques, Paris, 1975



Jean Messagier «Sans titre #5» c. 1964, monotype on paper, 50 x 57 cm

Jean Messagier «Sans titre» c. 1975, pastel and spray painting, 76 x 106 cm (previous page)





top grande paguerote

1/15



*There are always surprises in monotypes. This is very interesting in fact but never by chance. You can attain absolute perfection if you want. For me, a monotype is recreation, a leak from the bite of the acid into the metal impresses me; seeing acid penetrating copper always traumatises and disturbs me.*

*A monotype is halfway between engraving and painting. It has allowed me to say something completely different by releasing me from the two techniques.*

*A talk with Jean Messagier by Daniel Meiller and Patrick Le Nouene, in Y.R. 1974*



Jean Messagier «L'amour chez les noisettes» c. 1974, monotype on paper, 62 x 91 cm

Jean Messagier «Trop grande pâquerette» c. 1973, acrylic on paper, 65 x 100 cm (previous page)

Born in Paris on 13 July 1920.

Died in Montbéliard on 10 September 1999.

1942: He enters at the École nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs and follows Paul Valéry's poetry classes at the Collège de France in Paris. Participation in the second exhibition of the Society of Artists of the Pays de Montbéliard at the town museum.

1945: Exhibition for under-thirty year olds and first personal exhibition in Paris at the Galerie l'Arc-en-Ciel.

1945-1948: Numerous trips to Italy and Algeria with his wife, the ceramist Marcelle Baumann.

1952: He sets up a new workshop at the Moulin, on the banks of the Doubs, near Colombier-Fontaine. Participates in the exhibition «Peintres de la nouvelle école de Paris» at the invitation of the art critic Charles Estienne at the Babylone gallery. Participates in the creation of the October exhibition.

1953 : Group exhibition with Degottex, Loubchansky and Duvillier at the gallery l'étoile scellée, then at the Craven gallery where he meets Pierre Alechinsky.

1954 : Personal exhibition at the Palais des beaux-arts in Brussels.

1955: He organises a personal exhibition at the Volney Circle in Paris, where he meets Jacques Putman who introduces him to Bram van Velde.

1956: Enters the Michel Warren Gallery, Paris. Participates in a group exhibition at the Iris Clert Gallery, Paris, at the 2nd International Printmaking Exhibition in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

1958: Messagier, Alechinsky, Bram van Velde, Galerie Michel Warren, Paris. Twelve painters of the young school of Paris, Legendre Gallery, Paris. New talents in Europe', University of Alabama, USA.

1959 : Member of the committee of the May Salon.

1960 : First exhibition in New York, organised by Michel Warren. Enters the Schoeller Gallery in Paris.

1962 : Organises a big party for the inauguration of the Moulin, designed by the architect Jean-Louis Véret. The same year he is one of the five artists to represent France at the Venice Biennale.

1963: Retrospective exhibition at Gallery A. Schoeller and Bernheim jeune gallery, Paris. La Monnaie de Paris commissions a medal from him.

1965 : He is one of the five painters representing France at the Biennale of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

1966 : Retrospective exhibition of his engravings at the Claude Bernard gallery, Paris. Participates in the exhibition «Grands et jeunes d'aujourd'hui» at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris.

1967 : Participation in the first edition of the «Suite Prisunic», initiated by Jacques Putman. Invited to Havana by the Cuban government to present the Salon de Mai.

1968 : Participates in the Intellectuals' Day for Vietnam in Paris. Refuses a retrospective at the Musée de Grenoble out of solidarity for the May events.



Jean Messagier «Sans titre #4» c. 1964, monotype on paper, 50 x 57 cm



1969: First personal exhibition of sculptures in the Knoedler and Schoeller galleries in Paris

1970 : Produces a decorative panel for Air France and several tapestry boards for the Manufactures des Gobelins and de Beauvais

1971 : Great exhibition of his engraved work in Freiburg and Worpswede in Germany. Publication of the catalogue raisonné of the engraved work

1977 : Organises the «Festivals of the Future» at the Royal Saltworks of Arc et Senans

1981 : Retrospective exhibition at the Grand Palais, Paris

1997: «Engraved and lithographed work», Musée du Dessin et de l'Estampe «, Gravelines  
«Jean Messagier ou le réalisme éclaté», Gustave Courbet museum, Ornans.

1999: Jean Messagier, Larock-Granoff gallery, Paris  
«Hommage à Jean Messagier 1920-1999», Frank Pages gallery, Baden-Baden

2000: «Tribute 1950-1995» at the Cherbourg-Octeville Cultural Centre (Cherbourg)  
and L'arc scène sationale (Le Creusot)  
«Oeuvres graphiques, 1943-1998», Baron-Martin Museum, Gray  
«Tribute to Jean Messagier, 1920-1999», Montbéliard museum

2001: «Sophia Vari and Jean Messagier», Ludwigmuseum, Koblenz

2003: «Monotypes and engravings» at the Zadkine museum (Les Arques) and the Rignault museum (Saint-Cirq-Lapopie), Jean Messagier in Nantes, Maison de la Culture, Oratoire chapel, Gustave Fayet contemporary art space, Nantes

2004: «Jean Messagier, Accès à l'été», espace d'art contemporain Gustave Fayet, Sérignan  
«Jean Messagier: doors for a joy», Musée Paul Valéry, Sète  
«Jean Messagier», Jacques Girard Gallery, Toulouse

2006: Michel Jouët and Jean Messagier, Athanor cultural centre, Guérande  
«The nature of gesture», Buffon museum, Montbard  
«Jean Messagier : l'oeuvre graphique», Denon museum, Chalon-sur-Saône  
«Jean Messagier: nature in the palm of your hand», Musée du Château des Ducs de Wurtemberg and Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Hôtel Beurnier-Rossel, Montbéliard

2009: «Jean Messagier, abstract landscapes», Dock-Sud gallery, Sète  
Lerock-Granoff Gallery, Paris

2011: «Jean Messagier», ASCAP art library, Montbéliard  
Galerie Perrin (ex-Malriat), Montbéliard

2013: «Jean Messagier», Galerie Bernard Ceysson Paris, France

2016: «Painting without restraint», with Claude Viallat, Galerie Bernard Ceysson, Wandhaff, Luxembourg

2018 : Solo exhibition «On pleure devant une vallée perdue», Galerie Catherine Putman, Paris

2019 : « Tous les sexes du Printemps, Jean Messagier », Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dole, France  
Drawing Now, Carreau du Temple, Paris, Galerie Catherine Putman

2021 : Solo exhibition«Campagnols d'hiver», Galerie Catherine Putman, Paris  
Drawing Now Alternative, Paris, Galerie Catherine Putman  
«Paradiana», Galerie Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris, France

2023 : «La Belle Lumière - Peintures 1980 - 1993», Galerie Ceysson & Bénétière, New-York, USA



Jean Messagier signs the etching *Tranche courants* en 1968  
work edited by Jacques Putman pour Les Suites Prisunic

In parallel with this exhibition, the gallery will show emblematic works by the artist at the coming edition of Art Paris at the Grand Palais Éphémère from 30 March to 2 April 2023: gestural watercolours from the 1960s and paintings referred to as 'gels' ('frosts')— drawings of the cold laid out at night with glacial temperatures and that he collected on paper. These works show Messagier's taste for experiment. He sought the position of man in nature and of nature in art.

**Art Paris**  
**Grand Palais Éphémère**  
**from 30 March until 2 April 2023**



Jean Messagier «Sans titre» c. 1974, acrylic and pastel on paper «gel», 74,5 x 104 cm

Jean Messagier «Des fleurs pour l'Asie» c. 1973, acrylic and pastel on paper «gel», 76 x 105 cm (next page)



des fleurs pour l'Asie

Wagner