



Rythme sans fin

Sonia Delaunay

Not on display

Title/Description: Rythme sans fin

Artist/Maker: Sonia Delaunay

Born: 1956

Object Type: Print

Technique: Pochoir, Stenciling

Accession Number: 31618

Historic Period: 20th century

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Joyce and Michael Morris, 2014

Rythme Sans Fin (Unceasing Rhythm) is a stencil print with hand-printed colours. Created in 1956 in an edition of 300, it was issued in 1956 through the *Fondation* (then 'Galerie') *Beyeler*, Basel, in support of the 'Society for the Friends of the Riches of Art'. Its deceptively sparse design in bold primary colours packs a visual punch way beyond its size. It was also only the second stencil print image that Sonia Delaunay ever made. [1]

It was in the stencil technique that Delaunay made some of her most striking prints, culminating in the 1962 '*Poesies de Mots, Poesies de Couleur*' series. This 1956 print has all the essential power and impact of those prints but on a small scale. [2] Delaunay had made her very first print work in the stencil technique (then known as *pochoir*) in 1953. Firstly, the artist made stencils in cardboard (later plastic) with the motif cut-out and one stencil for each form. The stencil is laid over a sheet of paper and ink is then painted over the stencil, transferring the motif to the paper below.

By the 1950s Sonia had begun to be recognised as one of the key pioneers of Abstraction with a major retrospective at the Kunstmuseum Bielefeld in 1958. In 1964, Delaunay was the first living female artist to have a retrospective exhibition at the Louvre. Sonia had long been in the shadow of Robert, her artist husband (who had died in 1941) and her individual importance was not recognised in more chauvinistic times. Although Robert himself was very supportive of Sonia practice (as she was of his), the artistic cannon, largely written by men, was slow to acknowledge woman pioneers of Modernism. She championed his legacy after his death by organising exhibitions, seeking to secure

his reputation. But Sonia continued to experiment in the post-war era, inspiring a new generation of artists and an inspiring figure for creative practitioners to this day.

Calvin Winner, November 2021

1. (See the catalogue of the *Bibliothèque Nationale Paris* 1977 exhibition 'Sonia and Robert Delaunay'; page 168

2. http://www.williamweston.co.uk/item/artist_previous/115/3, accessed on 13/11/21

TO-BE-REPLACED-WITH-A-GAP

This print is one of Sonia Delaunay's earliest experiments with stencil printing and combines bold colour with a dynamic arrangement of geometric forms. By 1956 Delaunay had established a reputation for her striking use of abstract colour, which spanned painting, fashion and set-design.

The title of this print nods towards an earlier series of related works produced in the 1930s by Sonia Delaunay's husband Robert Delaunay. Sonia and Robert Delaunay shared a passion for the dynamic potential of pure, abstract colour and had worked closely together until Robert's death in 1941.

This print was produced in an edition of 300 for Galerie Beyeler in Basel, Switzerland.

Lisa Newby, June 2022

Provenance

In October 1984, the University of East Anglia accepted a planned bequest from Joyce and Michael Morris (UEA Alumni). Michael died in 2009 and Joyce in December 2014 when the couple's wishes were implemented.
