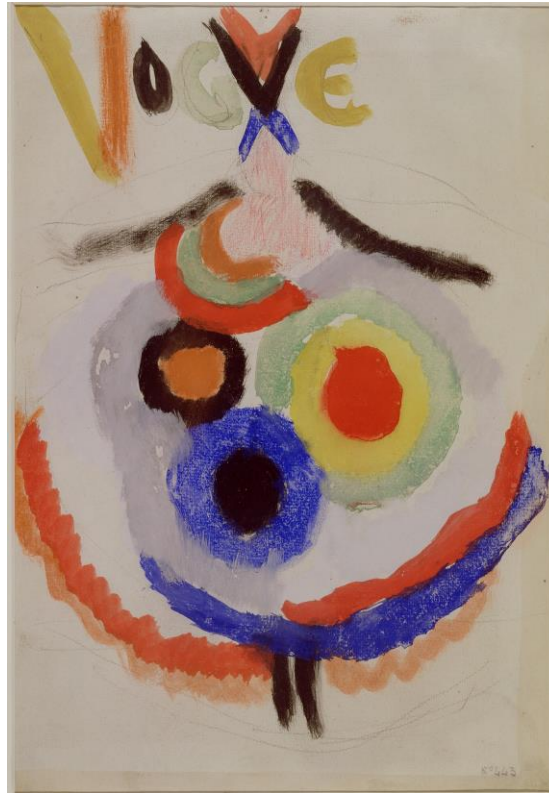


Press Release | New Display

25 January 2022

## Woman Pioneers of Abstraction



*Project for a cover for Vogue, 1916, Sonia Delaunay © The Artist's estate*

**Woman Pioneers of Abstraction:** 22 January – 14 August 2022

**High-resolution image available for download:** <https://bit.ly/3rSCXtS>

This significant display highlights the Sainsbury Centre's collection of abstract art and includes 12 important works by woman artists who were at the vanguard of developments in abstraction between the First and Second World Wars.

Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979), Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943) and Natalia Goncharova (1881–1962) were all key innovators of abstraction. They forged a multi-disciplinary practice that ignored the established hierarchies that had traditionally separated craft from art. Their work encompassed a range of media including painting, printmaking, fashion, textiles and drawing. Woman artists were frequently encouraged into craft disciplines rather than fine art, which often served to advance experimentation in their practice. Often overshadowed in their lifetime by more famous male partners, their contribution to key innovations in Twentieth Century art is now being fully recognised.

Florence Henri (1893–1982) and Paule Vézelay (1892–1984) were integral members of the Paris avant-garde. Henri was part of the group the Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square) founded in 1929, while Vézelay was a member of the Abstraction-Création Group founded in 1931. Both groups were important in disseminating the principles of abstract art internationally and notably to Britain. Jessica Dismorr (1885–1939) studied in Paris before returning to London where, in 1914, she was a signatory to the Vorticist manifesto, *Blast*, No.1. Margaret Mellis (1914–2009) relocated from London to St Ives in 1939, with Barbara Hepworth, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham and briefly Winifred Nicholson following her to Cornwall. This chain of events become a significant event as St Ives became the centre of modern British art.

The collection of abstract art at the Sainsbury Centre was started by the University in the 1960s as a response to the modernist architecture of the new University of East Anglia campus, designed by Denys Lasdun, and the university's multi-disciplinary ethos. In 2017, a major bequest by Michael and Joyce Morris expanded the scope of the collection including a work by Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979) included in this display.

**Free entry, this display will be located in the East End Gallery. Free parking subject to availability, two cafes, shop.**

Link: [sainsburycentre.ac.uk/whats-on/woman-pioneers-of-abstraction/](https://sainsburycentre.ac.uk/whats-on/woman-pioneers-of-abstraction/)

– ENDS –

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Press Enquiries**

Penelope Lucas | [p.lucas@uea.ac.uk](mailto:p.lucas@uea.ac.uk)

Amber Lawrence | [amber.lawrence@uea.ac.uk](mailto:amber.lawrence@uea.ac.uk)

## **Exhibition Information**

Woman Pioneers of Abstraction

22 January – 14 August 2022

Free entry, no tickets required

Visit [sainsburycentre.ac.uk](https://sainsburycentre.ac.uk) or call 01603 593199 (Monday–Friday, 10am–5pm)

Follow @sainsburycentre on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

## About the Sainsbury Centre

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts is one of the most important public university art galleries in Britain. It was founded in 1973 at the University of East Anglia (UEA) with the support of one of the nation's great philanthropic families, Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury, who donated their extraordinary art collection which includes works dating from prehistory to the late 20th century from across the globe. A radical new building by Norman Foster was designed to house the collection and was his first public work.

The Sainsbury Centre holds one of the most impressive art collections outside of the national institutions. It includes a significant number of works by modern masters of European art such as Pablo Picasso, Edgar Degas, Elisabeth Frink, Alberto Giacometti, Henry Moore, Sonia Delaunay, Tess Jaray, Francis Bacon, Cornelia Parker, Jean Arp, Mary Martin, Rachel Kneebone and Amedeo Modigliani. There are major holdings from Oceania, Africa, the Americas, Asia, the ancient Mediterranean cultures of Egypt, Greece and Rome, as well as Medieval Europe. Alongside these permanent collections, it hosts a range of exhibitions in the largest suite of temporary exhibitions galleries in Eastern England.

[sainsburycentre.ac.uk](http://sainsburycentre.ac.uk)