
Network Paris

| 5 July 2025–
11 January 2026

Abstraction-Création 1931–1937

Press Conference:
Thursday, 3.7.2025
11 am

Opening:
Friday, 4.7.2025
7 pm

Press Release

Remagen-Rolandseck,
July 3, 2025

The Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck in Remagen is hosting the first exhibition of works by the Parisian avant-garde artist group Abstraction-Création since the 1970s.

Under the title *Network Paris. Abstraction-Création 1931–1937*, the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck presents the artists' group Abstraction-Création. Founded in Paris in 1931, the group's activities were not limited to its founding location but extended far beyond the borders of France until its dissolution in 1937. Its members are still valued as pioneers of non-figurative art worldwide today.

The exhibition showcases 70 works by renowned artists such as Jean/Hans Arp, Max Bill, Alexander Calder, Robert Delaunay, Theo van Doesburg, Barbara Hepworth, Mainie Jellet, František Kupka, László Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian, Marlow Moss, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Georges Vantongerloo. The exhibition highlights the importance of cross-generational, cross-gender, cross-national and autonomous networking among artists, a concept that Abstraction-Création advocated at a time of rising ideologies. The overarching goal was to usher in a new era in which art would stand up for a free world: abstraction against fascism. The overarching goal was to usher in a new era in which art stood up for a free world: abstraction against fascism.

Artist groups were an integral part of the avant-garde. However, following the global economic crisis of 1929, the focus shifted from artistic concerns to the development of independent organizational and self-marketing structures. Against this backdrop, Abstraction-Création was founded in Meudon, near Paris by Jean Arp and Theo van Doesburg. The group aimed to develop and promote the virtually non-existent market for abstract art by establishing an independent international community. At its peak, the group comprised over 90 members from almost 20 countries. Alongside writers, collectors, publishers and art critics, they formed an international network that continues to serve as an example of artistic self-organization to this day.

„No one can predict what the art of the future will look like. Any attempt to restrict artistic endeavors according to criteria of ethnicity, ideology or nationality is abhorrent.“

The artists' association Abstraction-Création

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The group represented two key directions of non-figurative art: the abstraction of forms inspired by nature and the creation of purely geometric shapes. In doing so, they also bridged the often-contentious divide between avant-garde movements, which frequently competed with one another in rapid succession. Working across painting, sculpture, and architecture, these artists sought liberation from illusionism and a shift toward abstraction—driven by a desire for societal renewal.

Against the backdrop of rising fascist movements that propagated race, ideology, and nationalism across Europe, Abstraction-Création explicitly stood for the defense of artistic freedom and celebrated the diversity of nationalities, genders, and artistic expressions. By publishing *Cahiers* annually as a platform for art and texts and running its own exhibition spaces in Paris, Abstraction-Création established itself as the last cosmopolitan association of the avant-garde before the start of the Second World War until 1937. After the war, many of the participating artists became ambassadors of a new era and were among the most successful names of a dynamizing art market and an internationalizing art history, especially in the USA. The idea of “abstraction as a universal language” was embraced worldwide, and the early commitment to non-representational art was seen as a promise of freedom.

The last major exhibitions on Abstraction-Création took place in 1977 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and in 1978 at the Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte in Münster, followed by the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Now, the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck revisits this influential movement with the overview exhibition ***Network Paris. Abstraction-Création 1931–1937***.

“The exhibition’s close connection to the Arp Museum’s own history is also highlighted by Julia Wallner, director of the museum: “It is only recently that the diversity of the avant-garde has been fully recognized. At the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, this is especially meaningful given our dedication to Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Jean Arp—an artist couple who worked as equal partners. As curator Astrid von Asten notes, this comprehensive thematic exhibition fills a significant gap in research. The question of freedom in art and society remains profoundly relevant—examining the polarization of the 1930s can help us better understand our own times.”

Network Paris. Abstraction-Création 1931–1937 was curated by Astrid von Asten and opens on July 5, 2025 at the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck in Remagen.

Exhibited artists of the group Abstraction-Création

Hans (Jean) Arp, Willi Baumeister, Etienne Beothy, Max Bill, Alexander Calder, Robert Delaunay, Theo van Doesburg, Otto Freundlich, Naum Gabo, Laure Garcin, Albert Gleizes, Jean Gorin, Jean Hélion, Barbara Hepworth, Auguste Herbin, Mainie Jellett, František Kupka, Bart van der Leek, László Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian, Marlow Moss, Kurt Schwitters, Henryk Stażewski, Władysław Strzemiński, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Georges Vantongerloo, Paule Vézelay, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart

Contemporary Positions

Alongside works and printed materials from avant-garde artists, the exhibition features seven contemporary positions—by Rana Begum, Daniel Buren, Angela Bulloch, Imi Knoebel, Timo Nasser, Kai Schiemenz, and Beat Zoderer—creating an artistic dialogue between historical and contemporary non-representational art.

Important Dates

Press conference: July 3, 2025 at 11 a.m.

Opening: July 4, 2025 at 7 pm (possibly already 6 pm, in clarification)

Exhibition duration: July 5, 2025–January 11, 2026

Catalog

A catalog (232 pages, German/English, 38 euros) has been published by Hirmer Verlag to accompany the exhibition, with texts by Astrid von Asten, Cécile Bargues, Isabelle Ewig, Sylvie Kyeck, Jana Teuscher and Julia Wallner. Also included is an artist text by Jean/Hans Arp that has never been published in its entirety. We are happy to provide interested journalists with the PDF of the catalog free of charge by e-mail.

Audio Guide

Visitors can access information on the works via the exhibition audio guide. This is available free of charge via the **Arp Museum app** (Google Play and App Store). Loan devices in the museum cost 3 euros.