

**PIERRE ALECHINSKY:  
WORKSHOPS OF THE SOUTH**

(provisional title)

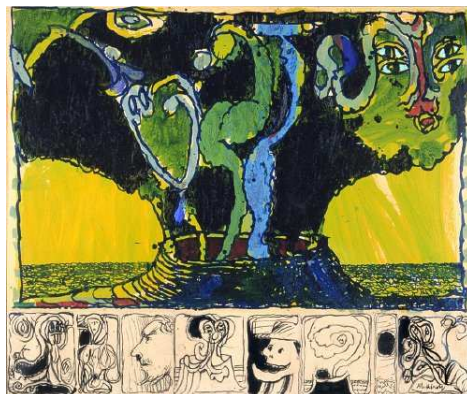


**Period: 5th June to 3rd October, 2010**

During the summer of 2010, a determination to strongly underline **the importance of contemporary art in the future cultural plans of the museum is asserted.**

Amongst the prominent artistic figures in the French national spectrum during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the twentieth century, one name, comparable in importance to that of Soulages, stands out: that of Pierre Alechinsky.

The original idea for the project took place in the spring of 2009. He revisited the museum during the PicassoCézanne exhibition.



The artist

Born in Belgium, the painter rapidly became one of the major actors on the Belgian artistic scene after the Second World War. In 1949 he associated with the newly formed **CoBrA** Movement. This Movement grouped together artists from **Copenhagen, Brussels**

and **Amsterdam** and advocated a return to an art more provocative, aggressive and audacious. Alechinsky participated in the « First International Exhibition of CoBrA » held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

After the dissolution of the group, he lived in Paris where he mixed with the surrealists. From 1952, he befriended Alberto Giacometti, Bram van Velde, Victor Brauner. Several one-man shows followed: 1954, at the gallery Nina Dausset in Paris; 1955, a large exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels; 1958 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. In 1960, at the time of XXX Venice Biennale, he exhibited at the Belgian Pavilion. He progressively abandoned the medium of oil for more supple and rapid materials such as ink, which permitted him to give vent to a sensitive, free style. Fascinated by oriental calligraphy and the attractiveness of its spontaneity, he made several journeys to the Far East.

From 1960, he made frequent visits to New York where he discovered in 1965 a technique which well suited him: acrylic paint. The same year, he created his celebrated work « Central Park » in which he introduced his 'marginal notes and decorations' inspired by comic strips. Again in 1965, André Breton, in the year before his death, invited Pierre Alechinsky to participate in the Tenth International Surrealist Exhibition 'L'Ecart Absolu'. In 1989, the artist illustrated Honoré de Balzac's « Treaty on Modern Stimulants », the book included a postscript by Michel Butor. In 1998, the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris devoted an exhibition to the artist.

A new exhibition was mounted in 2004 at the Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou in Paris. From December 2007 to March 2008 a tribute to the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Pierre Alechinsky was celebrated at the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique in Brussels in a retrospective exhibition covering his entire artistic career.

#### Commissariat

**Daniel Abadie** (critic, art historian, former director of La Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume)

#### Works

The exhibition will concentrate on oeuvre executed in Alechinsky's workshops in Provence and elsewhere in the South of France, notably the « Suite des Bouches-du-Rhone », painted at Tholonet. An important section of the works on show will come from the artist's personal collection.

## Quotations

*When my paintbrush ambles through the pages of an old atlas and follows the path of a frontier it comes across, old walker that it is, it can trace a curve which could, in proximity or at a distance, become a dress, hair, there is nothing more than let it wander. It's not work, it's a dream that emerges. »*

*« Little by little, I build up a vocabulary by drawing images taken from things scattered on my table, close to ink and paper: one couldn't find more ordinary examples (even if they take on the character of stones, of roots, of orange peel). By linking them, in the manner of a play with words, I then see women from my deepest thoughts appearing, the hats and feathers of the Gilles de Binche (similar to the illusionist thoughts of the Mayas), volcanic eruptions (other fantasies), spirals, scrolls, a meander in a river becoming tracks, or hairpin bends or serpents. »*

*« At the tip of my paintbrush, it comes to me - I live for these moments - the discovery of a line. Gently, apportioned, the recognition of its (distinctive) character! »*