

**JEAN BOUCHAUD
(1891-1977)
VIEWS ON THE WORLD**

City of Boulogne-Billancourt

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Signage: Expograph
Transport and installation: Crown Fine Art
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Thanks

The City of Boulogne-Billancourt warmly thanks Jean Bouchaud's
family members for their intellectual and material help
at all stages of the preparation of this exhibition
as well as institutional and private lenders.

**JEAN BOUCHAUD (1891-1977)
A REDISCOVERY**

Absent from the avant-garde trends of the 20th century, Jean Bouchaud is underrepresented in French public collections. In 2016, Marie-Geneviève, one of the artist's daughters, bequeathed *Cour d'Amour au Laos* to the Museum of the 1930s — a work now presented as part of the permanent trail. This generous deed spawned the idea for the present exhibition, in order to trace and contextualize the entire career of this prolific creator, a talented colourist and decorator. A close collaboration with his descendants as well as loans from public institutions and private collectors, made it possible to rediscover the painter's work, deeply inspired by his trips to the colonies.

Jean Bouchaud was born October 29, 1891 in Saint-Herblain, near Nantes, the sixth of ten siblings in a family of artists. Two of his brothers, Étienne and Michel, later embraced a career focused on the fine arts and the eldest, Pierre, an abbot, regularly collaborated with him. His family circle, Brittany and the landscapes of the Loire banks were his first inspirational topics and lasted throughout his career. While the Nantes works have been presented at exhibitions in the Loire city, the portraits of relatives dedicated to close friends and family were not intended to be shown to the public. They are now treasured by his heirs.

The lighting of this exhibition has been adapted to the delicateness of the graphic works and pieces of cloth exposed herein.

Anonymous,

*The Bouchaud Brothers: from left to right, Michel, Jean, Pierre,
Étienne and Louis Bouchaud*

Gelatine silver bromide glass plate

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A PLURAL TRAINING

Jean Bouchaud was affected very early on by the works of his grandfather, Léon Bouchaud (1817-1868), discovered in the family residence of La Bernardière in Saint-Herblain. A painter and an architect, this relative that he never knew had befriended Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875) and landscape painter Henri-Joseph Harpignies (1819-1916). The latter, met in Paris in 1910, maintained a correspondence with the young man, to whom he gave advice and encouragement.

During his stays in Italy with his brother Pierre, Jean Bouchaud was able to study the great masters of painting and to practice graphic techniques — watercolour, charcoal, pencil or red chalk. In 1913, he enrolled at the Julian Academy in Paris, where he studied with Marcel Baschet (1862-1941) and Adolphe Déchenaud (1868-1926), and exhibited for the first time at the Salon des Artistes français. The young painter simultaneously exerted his talents as a portrait painter in Nantes. In 1920, Jean Bouchaud competed for the Prix de Rome, organized by the School of Fine Arts under the supervision of the Academy, but the first prize was not awarded. The same year, he married Marie-Gabrielle (known as Marielle) de Ferré de Pérourx, with whom he had seven children.

Anonymous, Jean Bouchaud
Gelatine silver bromide glass plate
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JEAN BOUCHAUD (1891-1977) A TALENTED ILLUSTRATOR

Early in his career, the artist revealed an inclination for illustrating. In 1919, he produced the cover and three prints for *Le Petit Poilu du Faouët* by Émile Gilles. Then in 1926, he began his collaboration with *L'Illustration* magazine, thanks to the recommendations of painter Marcel Baschet, brother of René Baschet, then director of the monthly. The name of Bouchaud will appear 11 times, his watercolours echoing the texts of renowned writers.

At the same time, from 1927 to 1935 he was commissioned to work for *La Petite Illustration*, a weekly magazine publishing original novels and plays. More marginal is his work for Marcel Ruedel-founded *Les Annales coloniales*.

His travels naturally marked him out to punctuate articles dedicated to the colonies with vignettes. The illustrations of bibliophile works, such as *Lettres du Tonkin* by Maréchal Lyautey (1928) or *Fumée d'Opium* by Claude Farrère (1932), are part of a more accomplished exercise in which he expressed spontaneity in his design and an ability to adapt to the text. His last collaboration in the editorial field was in 1958 for *Pius X Fioretti* by Michel Fontbel.

Thus Jean Bouchaud totalised 30 participations in the press and bibliophila over 37 years. This widespread practice among artists gave the painter significant visibility and regular additional income.

TIME FOR HONORS

Owing to his regular participation in artistic fairs, Jean Bouchaud, like many contemporary artists, received many prizes and distinctions during his career. After running for the Academy of Fine Arts, he was elected on October 31, 1951, in the seat vacated by George Desvallières (1861-1950). Thus recognized by its peers, the painter was at the peak of an official career. This time of honors was unfortunately tarnished three years later by the disappearance of his tutelary figure and wife Marielle. In his rue de Clichy studio, he nevertheless continued to work, still inspired by his travel memories and his many stays in Italy and Clisson. He died in Nantes on May 6, 1977, at the age of 86.

Jean Carzou, upon his reception at the Academy of Fine Arts in Jean Bouchaud's seat in 1979, declared: *"He was a global painter. He made paintings, and paintings that tell a story and are not ashamed to tell it. At the same time, decorative paintings, since they need this quality to hold the wall. "*

Indifferent to quarrels and trends, Jean Bouchaud viewed the world, crossing eras on the fringe of the avant-garde. This exhibition helps rediscover a discreet man and tireless creator.

Anonymous, Jean Bouchaud in the park of the Château de Chantilly
Silver print
Private coll. © All rights reserved.

NORTH AFRICA

Demobilized at his request in Tunisia in May 1919, Jean Bouchaud stayed there until July of the same year. He was discovering North Africa for the first time. Upon his return to France, he exhibited a series of watercolors at the Nantes Mignon-Massart gallery. In 1920, after participating in the Prix de Rome competition, the painter shipped off for Morocco with his wife Marielle.

With nine works noticed the following year at the Salon des Artistes français, Jean Bouchaud received one of twenty-nine silver medals. He also won the Abd-el-Tif Prize, awarded by the French Orientalist Painters Society, which opened him the doors of the "Algerian Medici Villa" for two years. This residency allowed the painter to discover the country's main cities: the white Algiers, the desert, landscapes, and life scenes all sparkled under his brush. Dazzled by the Mediterranean atmosphere, Jean Bouchaud made another trip to Algeria in 1928. He then participated in local exhibitions and presented works inspired by North Africa in France, which consolidated his reputation.

Bouchaud's trip to North Africa

Anonymous, Jean Bouchaud surrounded by two women in Algeria
Gelatine silver bromide glass plate
Private coll. © All rights reserved.

PRESENTS FOR THE NEWBORN, AN ODE TO FAMILY

The Bouchaud couple moved to the Abd-el-Tif Villa in Algiers in October 1921 with their first child Pierre, aged three months. On September 16, 1922, the family expanded with the birth of a little girl, Marie-Geneviève. A few days later, the joy of the event was tarnished by the little boy's death. In a letter to her mother, Marielle Bouchaud expressed her grief and announced that Jean was finishing a large painting: *Presents to the Newborn*. The scene takes place in front of the courtyard arcades of the artists' residence in which the couple was then staying.

Escorted by a nanny, Marielle lifts a cloth revealing a child lying in a bassinet. Too big to be a newborn, it is undoubtedly Pierre, to whom a procession of Moorish women offers various gifts. One of them carries a baby in her arms. It could be Marie-Geneviève.

The composition and figure studies presented here illustrated the different stages of the artist's creative process. They would culminate in this monumental work for which Jean Bouchaud received the Algeria artistic prize in 1922. Back in Nantes, the painting was exhibited at the Préaubert gallery where, to the artist's regret, it did not find a buyer. Remained in family hands until 2019, this oil on canvas is now kept at the Paris Marmottan-Monet Museum.

Anonymous, Marielle and Pierre Bouchaud in the Abd-el-Tif Villa courtyard, circa 1921-1922

Gelatine silver bromide glass plate

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Presents to the Newborn

Oil on canvas, 230 x 335 cm

Paris, Marmottan-Monet Museum, inv. 2019.4.1.

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THE ARTIST OF THE DIVINE

Totally unstudied until now, religious painting occupied a special place in Jean Bouchaud's artistic career, intimately linked to the family crucible and to the affection for his abbot brother Pierre. The painter presented a *Nativity* at the Mignon-Massart gallery in Nantes as early as 1915. He then exhibited easel paintings around the themes of the Annunciation and the Visitation until 1948.

A commission for two religious frescoes was probably due to his Loire connections. The first, dated 1926, was intended for La Bridonnière private chapel, in Maine-et-Loire, built by architect René Ménard for the Nantais Gustave Baillergeau and which iconography was dedicated to Saint Anne, patron of mariners and fishermen. The second fresco was commissioned by Abbot Lebas for the five tympanums of the Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption church choir in Vieilleville, Loire-Atlantique. There Jean designed the frescoes dedicated to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and the newly canonized priest of Ars, while his brother Pierre produced *Christ the Pantocrator*, *The Kingship of Christ in Heaven* and *The Kingship of Christ on Earth*. The ensemble was blessed on October 26, 1930.

The Education of the Virgin, 1926

Fresco in La Bridonnière chapel.

© Bertrand Thiéfaine / ADAGP, Paris, 2021.

Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption church choir, 1928-1929, Vieilleville

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IN TIMES OF WAR

When the First World War broke out, Jean Bouchaud was in Italy with his brother Pierre. In April 1917, he was incorporated into the Pontivy-stationed 17th artillery regiment, then sent to the Aisne and Meuse fronts before being hospitalized in Bar-le-Duc in 1918. Favouring a dark chromatic palette, he painted devastated landscapes, testimonies of the war disasters and suggesting the violence of combat.

In 1939, at the age of 48, the painter was at the peak of his career. In Paris, he took part in 34 events including the unmissable Salons des artistes français, Salons de la Société coloniale des artistes français and the brand new Salon de la Marine. In 1940, he contributed to the special issue of the magazine *L'Illustration* titled "L'Empire français dans la guerre" * and secured a military authorization for the purpose of travelling to the south-eastern France camps. He sketched scenes from the colonial troops daily life in warm tones and produced more successful soldiers portraits. Two years later, he was appointed Painter to the Navy and then Painter to the Armies, probably in 1945.

Around the same period, the State bought from him *Le Roi Gaspard* and *Joueurs de dames dans une rue de Porto-Novo*. The *La Bretagne* and *Cour d'Amour au Laos* tapestries were also commissioned for the Gobelins Manufacture.

Anonymous, Jean Bouchaud in Pontivy in 1917

Silver print

Private coll. © All rights reserved.

** Jean Bouchaud pieces related to his work as an illustrator are exhibited within the graphic art cabinet on the 2nd floor of this Museum.*

INDOCHINA AND CHINA

Winner of the Indochina Prize in 1924, Jean Bouchaud embarked on a long Asian journey to China. For nearly eight months, he travelled through Cochinchina, Annam, Tonkin (regions of present-day Vietnam), Cambodia and Laos. The latter, where the artist stayed for nearly two months between January and February 1925, left a lasting mark on him, as evidenced by *Cour d'Amour au Laos*, a work on display in the colonial art section on the 3rd floor of this museum.

Fascinated by landscapes, street scenes, and the most distant populations during his journey, Jean Bouchaud produced numerous drawings on loose sheets or in sketchbooks, thus constituting inexhaustible sources of motifs that he would use throughout his career. The artist described his Indochinese experience in his correspondence with his wife, who remained in France.

From his trip, among others bronze Buddhas, the painter brought back a Laotian scarf, a Chinese lantern bought in Singapore on the return journey, as well as the cane of the King of Laos Sisavang Vong, which he portrayed.

The artist's travel to Indochina and China

FRENCH WEST AFRICA

After obtaining the French West Africa Prize and corresponding with his colleague, painter André Hervault, who preceded him in Africa, Jean Bouchaud embarked for Dakar in November 1932. From the start of his journey, he captured the spectacular crossing aboard the *Brazza*. Then, for five months, he discovered Senegal, Dahomey (now Benin), Ivory Coast and Guinea.

Although frustrated by the language barrier, he succeeded in sketching his discoveries as much as in his previous trips, he succeeded in sketching his discoveries in abundant notebooks. Watercolour, red chalk, and pencil were many ways of recording his daily life; the annotations in the margins completed the drawn patterns, sometimes specifying the chromatic ranges. As throughout his trip to Indochina, he brought back souvenirs such as daggers or this indigo fabric which would later serve as models in his compositions.

The artist's travel to French West Africa

Anonymous, Jean Bouchaud surrounded by two Somba (Benin)

Silver print

Private coll. © All rights reserved.

THE ART OF TRAVEL

Like many painters of the time such as Mathurin Méheut and Jeanne Thil, Jean Bouchaud received commissions from major shipping companies. His travels provided him with an inexhaustible source of inspiration, enabling him to best respond to both cruise ships decoration and the production of communication and advertising tools.

In 1934, the painter created for the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique, four compositions for one of the eight private dining rooms on the *Normandie*. This collaboration was repeated between 1948 and 1950 during the major transformations of the *Colombie* liner for which he produced the painting *La Cueillette des bananes*, attributed to the second class passenger lounge decor. The Transat once again called on Jean Bouchaud to decorate its *Carbet* and *Caraiïbe* cargo ships, launched in 1949. At the same time, he produced many sketches for a wide variety of Messageries maritimes media such as calendars, posters, brochures, and menus, where the charm of illustration prevailed on photographic accuracy. All recounted travels and evoked escape or daydreaming. His work for Messageries de l'Ouest was more anecdotic; nonetheless it reflected his attachment to his native region. These commissions offered the painter visibility, recognition, and financial resources.

Anonymous, Private dining room of the liner Normandie, Exotic Fruits, 1935

Silver prints

Private coll. © ADAGP, Paris, 2021 / All rights reserved.

DECORS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS - 1953-1961

Created by the State in 1951, the “1% artistique” scheme consisted of saving a portion of a public institution building budget for the creation of one or more works of art designed specifically for the place. In 1953, this allowed Jean Bouchaud to be ordered two large canvases for the lycée Claude-Monet, in the Paris 13th district: *Les Colonies* and its counterpart, *La Métropole*. In the first, he used the panels of the Cité des Informations from the 1931 Colonial Exhibition as a frieze. The second is an allegory of the continental territory.

Still within the framework of the “1% artistique”, the painter set about decorating the lycée Bellevue in Fort-de-France in 1961. The decline of the French colonial empire led to the iconographic choice of the artist, who favoured the reference to the antique for the two works entitled *La Musique* and *La Danse*. In 1957, the painter had already worked in the Martinique prefecture on the decor of the Technical Centre at the lycée de la Pointe-des-Nègres, now named after art teacher Jean-Joseph-Dumas.

For these three decorative sets, Jean Bouchaud returned to the large decorative painting started in 1931 and carried on during the 1937 Paris and 1939 New York exhibitions.

La Métropole

Oil on canvas, 235 x 510 cm

Lycée Claude-Monet, Paris. © Philippe Fuzeau / ADAGP, Paris, 2021.

THE INTERNATIONAL COLONIAL EXHIBITION - PARIS, 1931

In 1927, Minister for the Colonies Paul Reynaud entrusted Marshal Lyautey with the task of organizing a demonstration of international scope in Paris. This exhibition was needed to convince that the empire was a necessary territory and France a great power. From May 6 to November 15, 1931, the Colonial Exhibition brought together 200 buildings on 110 hectares and welcomed nearly eight million visitors. It was the occasion for many commissions from artists.

Crowned with his travels in North Africa and Asia, Jean Bouchaud was called upon very early on to participate in such events. In 1922, he contributed to the Marseille Colonial Exhibition and, two years later, to the Strasbourg Exhibition. In 1931, the painter made a lasting impression with the design of panels for the Cité des Informations, of the frieze for the butterfly breeding room in the Algerian Pavilion and of the decor for the Armed Forces Palace. Of these now disappeared sets, only models remain. Studies in pencil, charcoal, red chalk, watercolor or gouache provide an understanding of the creative process and the artistic challenge taken up by Jean Bouchaud. This first participation in large-scale projects started his iconographic repertoire and announced future monumental achievements for the 1937 and 1939 exhibitions.

Anonymous, Jean Bouchaud working at the Antilles panel of the Cité des Informations

Silver print

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THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY IN MODERN LIFE PARIS, 1937

This exhibition was organized to stimulate the French economy, promote craftsmanship and the progress of industry, as well as international cooperation and regional productions. Architects and artists were mobilized to build and adorn 300 pavilions in the heart of the capital.

From 1934, thanks to his experience in the production of panels for the Cité des Informations at the 1931 International Colonial Exhibition, Jean Bouchaud was put in charge of supervising the execution of the Technical and Economic Activity Room decor in the Brittany Pavilion. Under his authority, eleven painters illustrated the land and sea input, thus testifying to the activities of a booming region. Bouchaud synthesized this in a monumental canvas, *Armor - Arghoat* (Land - Sea). The set was completed with a map by his brother Michel Bouchaud, and a world map in Quimper earthenware, the model of which was given by painter and engraver René-Yves Creston, a founding member of the Breton Ar Seiz Breur artistic movement.

In addition to this large-scale commission, Jean Bouchaud provided two other works, now disappeared: *Rural Handicrafts* for the Handicraft Palace, and *Plastic Material in Domestic Life* for the Plastic Materials Pavilion.

Anonymous, Globe by René-Yves Creston and map by Michel Bouchaud, Activity Room, Brittany Pavilion
Silver print
Private coll. © ADAGP, Paris, 2021.

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, 1939

Aware of the economic challenges, France agreed as early as 1937 to take part in the New York World's Fair, which brought together nearly 400 buildings over 500 hectares.

Revealing the global political climate, this large-scale event began on April 30, 1939, then closed on October 31 before reopening from May 11 to October 27, 1940. The France Overseas Pavilion, or "France beyond the seas", occupied a strategic location: very close to that of mainland France, and facing the Lagoon of Nations. The building, a work by architect Fernand-Camille Chevalier, creator of the famous 1931 Cité des Informations, was an imposing construction on a small surface area. At the top of a stately staircase, the 250 sqm VIP lounge hosted Jean Bouchaud's monumental composition. Nearly 5.20 m high and 18.25 m long, its sketches illustrated the cultural wealth and diversity of the French Empire productions. Readability was optimal and the work made an impression on the American visitor.

This setting also offered Bouchaud the opportunity to collaborate with his brothers again. Étienne painted a panel illustrating French expansion in the 17th and 18th centuries, while Michel produced a triptych with an allegorical figure of Overseas France in its centre and, on both sides, the efforts of the hygiene services in the colonies.

Fernand-Camille Chevalier, Drawn project, View of the Grand Salon d'Honneur in the French Overseas Section
In Le Monde colonial illustré, May 1939, n ° 191, 17th year, p. 109
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Edward Punnet Chrystie, New York World's Fair, Study Board, 1939, watercolor
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