

Roland Dorcély's first NYC exhibition at Frieze

Spotlight section

By Stéphane Corréard

Roland Dorcély, a major Haitian painter and poet of the 20th century, was born in Port-au-Prince, on October 20th, 1930: he is both a “master” and a “ghost” who withdrew from the art world, and from the world itself, at the age of 33. Unlike other artists of the Caribbean, he lived in Europe and the United States during the 50's and early 60's, and achieved real success. In 1963, Dorcély retired in Haiti, where he lived a discreet, almost invisible life, until he suddenly and inexplicably left for New York City in 2003. He died there on April 17th, 2017, amidst general indifference. This presentation would be the first solo show of his work in New York and the first in the United States since his Fort Lauderdale Museum of Arts exhibition in 1975.

Born into an underprivileged environment, Dorcély studied at the Saint-Louis de Gonzague College of Port-au-Prince, where his teachers noticed early on that he wrote his homework in verse. At the age of 17, he began winning painting awards, particularly at the renowned Arts Centre. Despite being accepted by the establishment, Dorcély and a group of his peers quit the center in 1950 to open Le Foyer des Arts Plastiques, which was active until 1956. At that time, Dorcély, along with Le Foyer artists Luckner Lazard and Dieudonné Cédor established the Galerie Brochette (1956 – 1962).

During this period, Dorcély met the French writer and ethnologist Michel Leiris while he travelled through Haiti. He then had the opportunity to publish his first poems in prestigious periodicals such as *Les Temps Modernes*, run by Jean-Paul Sartre. From then on, Dorcély was able to travel and live in France, Italy and the United States, with the support of two patrons: in New York, Keith Warner, whose archives, preserved by the Smithsonian, include correspondence with Dorcély, Alfred Stieglitz and Alexander Calder; and in Paris, Charles-Auguste Girard, who also gave major support to Congolese artist of the 30's Albert Lubaki, recently rediscovered by the “Beauté Congo” exhibition in Fondation Cartier in Paris, 2015.

Throughout the 50's and early 60's, Dorcély would often stay in Paris, where he met and befriended artists such as Wifredo Lam and Roberto Matta and benefitted from painting advice from Fernand Léger and André Masson. His painting had mixed results in Paris. Numerous French critics took note of his work, often commenting that his art is “haut en couleurs” (flamboyant). *France Observateur* considered that he “sometimes let perceive some influences, notably this of Fernand Léger,” which was also mentioned by Dormant in *Libération*.

On the contrary, in the communist magazine run by Louis Aragon, *Les Lettres Françaises*, Maugis dedicated a long and vibrant article to Dorcély, beginning with the admiring apostrophe: “If you should see a single exhibition this week, then you definitely have to see the Dorcély show,” adding “you experience, which is quite rare, a true shock.” In the *Journal des Arts*, the great critic and surrealist poet Alain Jouffroy wrote: “We are confident in his prodigious capacity for work, and his independent state of mind, to make in the near future of his art an astonishing beacon, far away pointed at modern art.”

At the beginning of the 60's, Dorcély still benefitted from the support of Charles-Auguste Girard, who organized a solo show for him at Galerie Berri-Lardy. Additionally, through his friendly relationship with Michel Leiris and his wife Louise, the Galerie Louise Leiris (formerly Galerie Kahnweiler) published a volume of poetry by Dorcély, under the premonitory title *S.O.S.*

Roland Dorcély

A Haitian Painter and Poet in Paris (1958–1960)

Loeve&Co Gallery, Paris

March 2019.



La crécelle du vent sur un cactus
Crénelant de son souffle
Le beurre terre de Sienne du lait céleste
...
Une force ignorante trace des lignes
Brisées brisables embrasées
...
Trait clair utopiste
Et tout s'effare
Le crépe quotidien
Sur les nattes du soir
Le crépuscule couchant avec la terre
Et les rires orageux dans le gosier des nuages

In the United States, preeminent collectors, including Nelson Rockefeller, Francis Merrill and Francis Sears, as well as artists like Enrico Donati, quickly noticed Dorcély's art. The movie producer David O. Selznick even commissioned Dorcély for a large mural in Los Angeles, where the Afro-American architect Paul Williams also called upon his talents. Although Keith Warner and his wife Edna K. Allen succeeded in organizing some presentations of his work and selling a few paintings, they were unable to find a strong representation for Dorcély in the commercial field.

However, in 1958 the MoMA accepted the gift of a painting by Dorcély, *When to Relax?*. They also included the artwork in the 1959 show, "Recent Acquisitions: Painting and Sculpture," wherein the catalogue Dorcély neighbored Jasper Johns.

While visiting the 2014 retrospective "Haïti. Deux siècles de création artistique" at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais in Paris, Hervé Télémaque, a Haitian born, New York educated, and Paris residing painter exclaimed that Roland Dorcély, Lucien Price and Max Pinchinat were "the true first Haitian modernists!" This complete survey about Haitian art from the early 19th century to Jean-Michel Basquiat had a considerable international impact, including a text by Michael Busch for *Hyperallergic*, entitled "Beyond Voodoo: Defying Expectations of Haitian Art," where he states: "An oil painting by Roland Dorcély features a discombobulated figure — hinting at the influence of Pablo Picasso — in front of what appears to be a tightly constructed stone wall, while nearby, a striking, untitled piece by Max Pinchinat stands out with its beautifully organized scribbles on scribbles atop clouds of muted violets and oranges that float just beneath the surface. Taken together, the paintings collected here demonstrate a modernist aesthetic that strays from standard "primitive" works that have come to shape popular conceptions of Haitian art."

The paintings by Roland Dorcély remain quite rare. After the solo show organized in Paris by Loeve&Co Gallery in March 2019, the Frieze presentation is an exceptional occasion to access to a major body of paintings produced by Dorcély during his time in Paris between 1958 and 1960. All of the works come from the collection of the Charles-Auguste Girard family; most were part of the 1960 Berri-Lardy exhibition in Paris. The Frieze presentation focuses on a series of nudes (some with a chair), very similar to *When to Relax?*, the piece that has been in the MoMA collection since 1958.

Roland Dorcély at the Museum of Modern Art, New York

Roland Dorcély

When to Relax?, 1958

Tempera on board, 36 x 49 in

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Edna and Keith Warner.



Reproduction of *When to Relax?*
in a US interior decoration magazine,
February, 1959, p.13.





DORCÉLY: When to Relax? 1958. Gift of Edna and Keith Warner

DEGAS, Hilaire-Germaine-Edgar. French, 1834-1917.
At the Milliner's. (c.1882) Pastel, 27½ x 27¾ (69.5 x 70.5 cm). Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy (the donor retaining a life interest). 141.57. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 22.

DEMUTH, Charles. American, 1883-1935.
Eggplant and Tomatoes. 1926. Watercolor, 14¼ x 20" (35.8 x 50.9 cm). The Philip L. Goodwin Collection. 99.58. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 6.

DENIS, Maurice. French, 1870-1943.
p 6 The Fitcher. (1890-95?) Oil and sand on paper lined with canvas, 17¾ x 9½" (45.1 x 24.1 cm). Gift of A. M. Adler and Norman Hirschl. 282.58.

DERAIN, André. French, 1880-1954.
Fishing Boats. (c.1905) Oil on canvas, 15¼ x 18¼" (38.2 x 46.3 cm). The Philip L. Goodwin Collection. 100.58. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 6.

DILLER, Burgoyne. American, born 1906.
p 18 Construction. 1938. Painted wood construction, 14½ x 12½ x 2½" (37 x 31.9 x 6.7 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Bartos. 4.58.

DORCÉLY, Roland. Haitian, born 1930.
p 20 When to Relax? (*À Quand la détente?*). 1958. Tempera on composition board, 36 x 49½" (91.5 x 125 cm). Gift of Edna and Keith Warner. 115.58.

DOVE, Arthur C. American, 1880-1946.
The Intellectual. (1925) Collage of objects (magnifying glass, bone, moss, bark and a scale glued or nailed on varnished cloth, mounted on wood panel), 17 x 7¼" (43 x 18.2 cm). The Philip L. Goodwin Collection. 101.58. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 8.

DURCHANEK, Ludvik. American, born of Czech parentage. Vienna 1902.
p 16 Fury. (1958) Welded sheet bronze, 30¼" (78 cm) high. Blanchette Rockefeller Fund. 116.58.

EPSTEIN, Jacob. British, born U.S.A. 1880.
p 6 Reclining Nude. (1945) Bronze, 21¾" (55.3 cm) long. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Lejwa in memory of Leon Chalette. 82.58.

FERNANDEZ, Augustín. Cuban, born 1928.
p 17 Still Life and Landscape. (1956) Oil on canvas, 48 x 55½" (122 x 140 cm). Inter-American Fund. 118.58.

FRANCIS, Sam. American, born 1923.
Big Red. (1953) Oil on canvas, 10' x 6'4¼" (303.2 x 194 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David Rockefeller. 5.58. Repr. in color, *The New Amer. Ptg.*, 1959, p. 29.

GALL, Zvi. Israeli, born Palestine 1924.
p 23 The Baker's Dream. (1956) Encaustic on plywood, 52½ x 17½" (133.6 x 44.4 cm). Purchase. 119.58.

GAUGUIN, Paul. French, 1848-1903.
Portrait of Meyer de Haan. 1889. Oil on wood, 30¼ x 19½" (77.3 x 49.8 cm). Gift of David Rockefeller (the donor retaining a life interest). 2.58. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 23.

GIACOMETTI, Alberto. Swiss, born 1901. Lives in Paris.
p 1 Dog. (1956) Bronze, 18" high, base 39" long (45.7 x 99 cm). A. Conger Goodyear Fund. 120.58.

GILLOI, Emile. French, born 1911.
p 18 Sky and Sea. (1956) Baccarat crystal, 10¼" (26.6 cm) high. Gift of Louis Carré. 121.58.

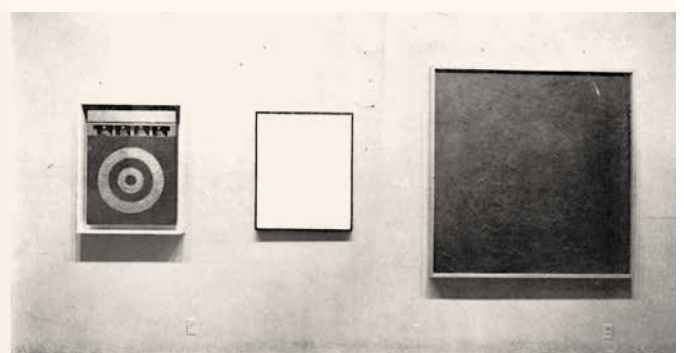
GOTTlieb, Adolph. American, born 1903.
p 11 Blast, I. (1957) Oil on canvas, 90¼ x 45¼" (228.7 x 114.4 cm). Philip C. Johnson Fund. 6.58.

GUTTUSO, Renato. Italian, born 1912.
p 13 Orange Grove at Night. (1957) Oil on canvas, 55½ x 90½" (140.6 x 230.2 cm). Blanchette Rockefeller Fund. 85.58.

HEILIGER, Bernhard. German, born 1915.
p 16 Ernst Reuter. (1956) Bronze, 15½" (40.1 cm) high. Matthew T. Mellon Foundation Fund. 123.58.

HULTBERG, John. American, born 1922.
p 13 Tilted Horizon. 1955. Oil on canvas, 54¼ x 76¼" (137.4 x 193.2 cm). Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Daniel E. Schneider. 286.58.

JOHN, Gwen. British, 1876-1939.
p 6 Girl with Bare Shoulders. Oil on canvas, 17¼ x 10¼" (43.4 x 26 cm). A. Conger Goodyear Fund. 124.58



JOHNS: from left to right: Target with Four Faces. (1955) Purchase; White Numbers. 1957. Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Fund; Green Target. 1955. Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Zeisler Fund

JOHNS, Jasper. American, born 1930.
p 21 Target with Four Faces. (1955) Encaustic on newspaper over canvas, 26 x 26" (66 x 66 cm) surmounted by 4 plaster faces. Purchase. 8.58.
p 21 Green Target. 1955. Encaustic on newspaper over canvas, 60 x 60" (152.4 x 152.4 cm). Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Zeisler Fund. 9.58.
p 21 White Numbers. 1957. Encaustic over canvas, 34 x 28½" (86.5 x 71.3 cm). Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Fund. 10.58.

KANDINSKY, Wassily. Russian, 1866-1944. Worked in Germany and France.
p 5 Picture with an Archer. (1909) Oil on canvas, 69 x 57" (175.2 x 144.7 cm). Fractional gift of Mrs. Louise R. Smith. 619.59.

KLEE, Paul. German, 1879-1940. Born and died in Switzerland.
Dying Plants (*Sterbende Pflanzen*). 1922. Watercolor, 19¼ x 12½" (48.5 x 32.2 cm) (composition). The Philip L. Goodwin Collection. 102.58. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 8.
p 7 Old Cemetery (*Alter Friedhof*). 1925. Oil on paper over cardboard, 14½ x 19" (36.4 x 48.3 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lewin. 287.58.

KRAJCBERG, Frans. Brazilian, born Poland 1921.
p 17 Painting I. 1957. Oil on canvas, 36¼ x 28¼" (91.6 x 73 cm). Inter-American Fund. 125.58.

LANDUYT, Octave. Belgian, born 1922.
p 14 Purification by Fire. 1957. Oil on composition board, 47¼ x 35½" (121.7 x 91 cm). Philip C. Johnson Fund. 128.58.

LÉGER, Fernand. French, 1881-1955.
Contrast of Forms. 1913. Oil on canvas, 39½ x 32" (100.3 x 81.1 cm). The Philip L. Goodwin Collection. 103.58. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 9.
Exit the Ballets Russes. 1914. Oil on canvas, 53¼ x 39½" (136.5 x 100.3 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Rubel (partly by exchange). 11.58. Repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 26. Note: this painting was acquired partly through exchanging the Léger, Woman in Arnehair, 1913 (repr. *MMA Bulletin*, Vol. XX, Nos. 3-4, 1953, p. 23, 177.52), the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Rubel, and partly by funds provided by them.
Note: According to the former owner, Leonid Massine, the title of the picture was given by the artist.

p 8 Landscape with Yellow Hat. 1952. Oil on canvas, 36¼ x 28¼" (92.2 x 73.4 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David M. Solinger. 292.58.

LENCH, Stanley. British, born 1934.
Pola Negri. (1958) Gouache, 30 x 21¼" (76 x 55.5 cm). Purchase. 129.58.

LYTLE, Richard. American, born 1935.
p 10 Icarus Descending. (1958) Oil on canvas, 62½ x 70¾" (158.4 x 178.3 cm). Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Fund. 130.58.

MARIN, John. American, 1870-1955.
Lower Manhattan. 1920. Watercolor, 21½ x 26¼" (55.4 x 68 cm). The Philip L. Goodwin Collection. 104.58. Repr. in color, *Art in Prog.*, opp. p. 52; *MMA Bulletin*, Fall 1958, p. 10.

Questionnaire sent by MoMA after the acquisition of *When to Relax?*
with answers by Roland Dorcély, Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives, SOVA.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK	COLLECTION RECORDS
Titre de l'oeuvre (est-il correct? <u>fini</u>) A Quand la Détente	
Date (est-elle correcte? <u>oui</u>) 1958	
Technique (huile, aquarelle, dessin, etc.) (est-elle correcte? <u>oui</u>) tempéra	
Endroit d'exécution: PARIS	
Pour la sculpture moulée:	
1. Date du moulage et nom de la fonderie:	
2. Combien de moulages existe-il et dans quelles collections?	
Cette pièce est-elle une étude pour une autre oeuvre? <u>Non</u> Dans quelle collection?	
Avez-vous fait des dessins préparatifs ou des études? <u>OUI</u> De quelles collections font-elles part? AUCUNE	
Histoire: 1. Ou a-t-elle été exposée précédemment et à quelles dates? <u>Nulle part</u>	
2. De quelles autres expositions a-t-elle fait part avant d'être achetée par le Musée? Prière d'indiquer tous les titres et toutes les dates. <u>Aucune</u>	
3. Qui l'a vendue pour la première fois?	
4. Dans quelles collections a-t-elle figuré? <u>Elle a été donnée par Mr Keith Warner</u>	
5. Y avait-il des circonstances exceptionnelles ou des incidents particuliers pendant la création de cette oeuvre ou depuis sa termination? <u>Peut-être. Je ne me rappelle plus.</u>	
Sujet: Vous êtes-vous servi de modèle ou de sujet particulier? Le sujet a-t-il une signification spéciale, personnelle, topique ou symbolique? <u>Il n'y a pas suffisamment de place pour répondre à autant de questions. Voyez les notes.</u>	
Signature <u>R. Dorcély</u>	
Date <u>26 Janvier 1959</u>	
tourne, S.V.P.	

Notes bibliographiques: L'oeuvre a-t-elle été publiée, reproduite, discutée ou mentionnée? (renseignements additionnels): <u>Non.</u>
Technique: L'oeuvre a-t-elle un intérêt spécial du point de vue technique? Si non, le Musée voudrait quand même avoir une description de la technique employée: <u>Je peins au tempéra depuis 10 ans de la façon la plus orthodoxe. Je mélange ^{rarement} jamais les couleurs. J'ai horreur de ça. Je corrige beaucoup, c'est à dire que met une couche sur une autre et je change le dessin jusqu'à ce que je sois satisfait. Pour vous donner un exemple, j'ai travaillé 15 jours de suite sur le tableau que vous possédez.</u>
Qualité: Croyez-vous que cette oeuvre est représentative des oeuvres exécutées par vous à cette époque? <u>Certainement. J'ai été très surpris du chemin qu'elle a parcouru. Ordinairement on déteste cette façon de peindre.</u>
Signification: Afin de permettre aux étudiants présents et futures de mieux comprendre cette oeuvre, le Musée vous serait bien reconnaissant de bien vouloir indiquer s'il y a d'autres détails et explications qui pourraient y apporter d'importance ou d'intérêt spécial. <u>J'ai 28 ans. Je suis moi-même un étudiant. J'aurais préféré que le Musée attende car ce que je réalise est encore loin de ce que je rêve.</u>

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
NEW YORK 19

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW YORK

THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

December 12, 1958

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Warner:

I take great pleasure in sending you with this letter the Museum's formal receipt for the Roland Dorcély painting, A Quand la détente, which you have been so kind as to give to the Museum.

As I am sure you know, we have no other work by this young Haitian in our Collection, indeed, I think most of us had never heard of him until you brought this picture to our attention. We are grateful to you for making its acquisition possible.

On behalf of the Trustees, may I thank you most warmly for this generous expression of your interest in our Museum and its collection in particular.

Sincerely,



James Thrall Soby, Chairman
Committee on the Museum Collections

Mr. and Mrs. Keith Warner
Hopson Road
Norwich, Vermont

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

RECENT ACQUISITIONS EXHIBITION, January 30 - April 19, 1959

Checklist with Notes

Note: Unless enclosed in parentheses, dates appear on the works themselves.

BRATBY, John, British, born 1928.

Nell and Jeremy Sandford. 1957. Oil on hardboard, 77 1/4 x 92 1/4".
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Dowling, January 1959.

Studied Royal College of Art, London 1951-54; Italy 1954-55; Guggenheim National Section Prize for Britain 1956, 1958; one-man shows: Beaux-Arts Gallery, London 1954-55, 1956-57; paintings in Tate Gallery, London; Galleries of Liverpool, Manchester, Carlisle; National Galleries of Canada, New Zealand, New South Wales.

Bratby writes: "I cannot paint in a vacuum. My work must be seen and related to society...My work has got steadily larger. My next show will be of nine 12 x 6 foot canvases...I cannot paint small though may have to raise money to enable me to paint big...Will always paint figurative, realistic, expressionist paintings. Am against a lot of nonfigurative art painted today but admire Jackson Pollock. Admire Picasso, Matisse, Braque but feel more at home with Oskar Kokoschka and van Gogh, Rembrandt, Rubens, Michelangelo. My work will always be essentially of the time I exist in. I wish to gear my work to the painting needs of society, and am willing to compromise 5 per cent -- more compromise murders my work, or more compromise makes me ill."

About the Nell and Jeremy Sandford he states: "Painted in under two weeks. Models posed only two short days each. Sorry, Jeremy posed only 1 day and went to sleep doing so. This work is very much a 'Bratby,' but it is on its own because of its mosaic, worried composition. Most of my work is more painterly. This work is unique. It is however a major work."

CSAR (Balzacchini). French, born 1921.

Galactic Insect. (1953-55). Welded iron, 19 3/8" high, 36 1/2" long, 1 1/2" wide.
Gift of G. David Thompson, January 1959.

Born in Marseilles. Has lived in Paris since 1943. Third sculpture prize, Pittsburgh International, 1958.

DAVIANI, Jorge. Uruguayan, born Genoa 1931.

Agony. 1956. Oil on canvas, 76 1/2 x 47 1/4".
Inter-American Fund. Bought at the São Paulo "Bienal", September 1957.

Studied at the Brera Academy, Milan, 1950-51. Exhibited Milan 1951 and in Montevideo in the National Salon of Fine Arts, 1955-58. Mural paintings in Uruguay.

Daviani writes: "My special concern has always been the glorification of eternal human values...death, life, suffering, poverty, joy, etc. If through the image of that man in agony joined by his beloved, one truly feels a human message, my work will have been justified."

DORCELY, Roland. Haitian, born 1930.

When to Relax? (A quand la détente?). 1958. Tempera on composition board, 36 x 49 1/4".
Gift of Edna and Keith Warner, October 1958.

more . . .

Page 2

DORCELY, Roland. (Continued)

Born in Port-au-Prince. Painted murals in Haiti and in Los Angeles (for David Geismick). Studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris about 1954, returning to Haiti until 1958. Now in Europe.

MURCHANEK, Ludvik. American, born of Czech parentage, Vienna, 1902.

Fury. (1958). Welded sheet bronze, 30 3/4" high.
Blanchette Rockefeller Fund, October 1958.

Studied gardening in Moravia, landscape and floral design in France, Belgium, England. To U.S. 1908; commercial art, then studied painting at Worcester Museum School and Art Students League 1936-41. First sculpture in 1950. One-man shows: YEMA Gallery, New York 1946, 1948; Three Arts Gallery, Poughkeepsie 1950, 1954, 1957; James Graham O'Leary, New York 1958. Wishes to be listed as Czech-Austrian as well as American.

In his art he aims "to cultivate a love or appreciation of life, to comment on it (make little essays); to attain the point of view of R.M. Rilke: to praise. No abracadabra. To use traditional means in a novel way."

Of his technique, he writes that the bronze sheets "were hammered into the desired form on sandbags and lead blocks...braced together and oxidized with nitric acid. Weight reduced to a minimum. No 'feeling' is lost as when cast -- no spontaneity dissipated on preparatory models..."

GOTTLIEB, Adolph. American, born 1903.

Nlast, I. (1957). Oil on canvas, 90 1/8 x 45 1/8".
Philip C. Johnson Fund, February 1958.

About his painting, Gottlieb has written: "What do these images mean? This is simply the wrong question...A better question would be 'Do these images convey any emotional truth?'"

"This of course indicates my belief that art should communicate. However, I have no desire to communicate with everyone, only with those whose thoughts and feelings are related to my own...Thus when we are solemnly advised...to be humanists or to go back to nature, who listens seriously to this whistling in the dark..."

"The idea that a painting is merely an arrangement of lines, colors and forms is boring. Subjective images do not have to have rational association, but the act of painting must be rational, objective and consciously disciplined. I consider myself a traditionalist, but I believe in the spirit of tradition, not in the restatement of restatements. I love all paintings that look the way I feel."

From The New Decade: 35 American Painters and Sculptors, Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1959.

GATTUSO, Renato. Italian, born 1912.

Orange Grove at Night. (1957). Oil on canvas, 55 3/8 x 90 3/8".
Blanchette Rockefeller Fund, April 1958.

Born in Palermo. In 1931 moved to Rome where he now lives. Active in the Resistance during the war. Member of the avant-garde group, Fronte Nuovo delle Arti, 1947, but shortly afterwards developed a more realistic style and soon took the leadership of the painters following the Communist Party line. He has, however, deviated considerably from the subjects and prosaic realism of Soviet Socialist Realism. He is today the best known Italian painter of his generation. His paintings are in the Art Institute of Chicago, the Tate Gallery, and the National Galleries in Berlin, Rome, Sydney and Warsaw and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, as well as two earlier works in the Museum of Modern Art.

more . . .

Roland Dorcely

Untitled
(The Woman and the plant)
circa 1958
Oil on canvas
25 × 21 inches (65 × 54 cm).



Roland Dorcely

Untitled
(Woman Leaning by yellow background)
circa 1958
Oil on canvas
25 × 18 inches (65 × 46 cm).



Roland Dorcely

Untitled (Sunbath)

circa 1958

Oil on canvas

21 × 25 inches (54 × 65 cm).



Roland Dorcely

Untitled (rooster)

circa 1958

Oil on canvas

10 × 13 inches (27 × 35 cm).



Roland Dorcely

Toilette
(Nude in front of the Mirror)
circa 1958
Oil on canvas
21 × 25 inches (54× 65 cm).



Roland Dorcely

Potting the plant
circa 1958
Oil on canvas
21 × 25 inches (54× 65 cm).



Roland Dorcély: a life on borrowed ground

By Judith Kumin

Roland Dorcély died on April 27, 2017 in Harlem, New York City. A terse funeral home announcement named no next of kin despite the fact that his widow, son, daughter, and numerous grandchildren and in-laws all lived in the United States. An artist whose career had begun with such promise, Dorcély's death went largely unnoticed, his last 14 years a mystery.

In the burgeoning art world following World War II, Haiti was known for its naïve art. Cheerful scenes of peasant life, produced by untutored painters, were snapped up by tourists and museums from both sides of the Atlantic. Yet Dorcély was part of a more aware modern-art movement developing in Haiti. The extraordinarily versatile painter (and poet's) life and work resonated with a search for belonging. "A Negro is not, ipso facto, an inheritor of African art," he explained in 1951. "Our ancestors, thrown pell-mell into the holds of the ships that would bring them to America, left their idols behind."¹ A black painter in the Americas, he believed, had to construct his own artistic heritage, "on borrowed ground."

¹ Roland Dorcély, "À propos de l'Exposition du Foyer des Arts Plastiques, Pavillon des Beaux-Arts, 6 mars – 6 avril 1951," *Conjonction*, No. 32, April 1951, pp. 54-5 (author's translation from original French).

Roland Antoine Dorcély was born in Port-au-Prince on October 20, 1930, into a modest family descended, like most Haitians, from slaves; his father was a butcher, his mother a market woman. Even though his mother practiced vodou, Roland was sent to the country's most prestigious, rigidly Catholic school, the Institut St. Louis de Gonzague. A sense of freedom came at 16 when he enrolled at the Centre d'Art in Port-au-Prince. Established in 1944 by the Californian Dewitt Peters as a place for artists to work, study and sell their art, the Centre welcomed both "primitive" (naïve, popular) and "advanced" (modern) artists, but promoted the former more energetically. Dorcély quickly affiliated with the "advanced" group. He won several prizes and had his first exhibition there before his 18th birthday.

After the war the Centre d'Art quickly became a meeting-place for artists and intellectuals from America and Europe fascinated by the Black Republic and its vodou traditions. There, Dorcély met French anthropologists Michel Leiris and Alfred Métraux and the museologist Georges-Henri Rivière, all of whom would provide important support when he later went to France. But in 1950, Dorcély and other artists rebelled against the Centre's priority on primitive art — and the exploitative percentage it retained on sales.

Seeking escape from the pressure of the tourist market they quit the Centre and established the Foyer des Arts Plastiques. The Deputy Director of the Centre d'Art accused the breakaway group of being communists. Their work, often showing the hardships of peasant life, was dubbed "cruel realism," and even seen as depraved. As a founding member of the Foyer and one of its two first "artist delegates," Dorcély's role was prominent.

Yet at the same time the artist was earning good money producing murals in private homes and at the luxury hotels cropping up around Port-au-Prince, confronting him with the deep gulf between his origins and the milieu of the mostly light-skinned Haitian élite. For a few months he moved in with the wealthy, mulatto family of architect and sculptor Alfred Mangonès, observing and assimilating the customs of the bourgeoisie. At the swanky El Rancho hotel in Pétienville he met millionaire Hollywood producer David Selznick, who admired a mural Dorcély was painting there and, in the summer of 1951, brought him to California to decorate the vestibule of his Beverly Hills mansion. (Sadly, no image of that work exists.)

Roland Dorcély

Portrait de Roland Dorcély
© Centre d'art, Port-au-Prince.

Toutes les autres vues
© Fabrice Gousset.



From California, Dorcély next reached Paris, arriving in the fall of 1951 at the École des Métiers d'Art on a French government scholarship. A young woman he had met at the Centre d'Art followed him to France. Three years his junior and also an artist, Nicole Turnier was the younger sister of Luce Turnier, Haiti's most renowned woman painter. The Turnier family disapproved of the dark-skinned, bohemian Dorcély, but Roland and Nicole married in Europe in 1953, and their first child was born there.

Dorcély moved in exalted Paris circles. When his scholarship expired, Georges-Henri Rivière and George Bidault helped him to extend his stay. Michel and Louise Leiris introduced him to prominent artists. He met Picasso, Calder, and Matta, and studied with Fernand Léger, André Masson and Suzanne Roger, who illustrated Dorcély's poetry book *S.O.S.* (published in 1961 by the Galerie Louise Leiris). He became friends with the art critic Alain Jouffroy and the gallerist Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler. But though he travelled to Italy and Austria at least, it seems that Dorcély painted little during these years; no work from this period is known to survive.

Returning to Haiti in the summer of 1954, Dorcély was well ahead of his contemporaries in both his art and his reputation. And the painter had more mouths to feed: a second child was born soon after the couple's arrival, and a third in 1956. The family depended heavily on Lina and Reindall Assad, proprietors of the Villa Créole Hotel. Lina Wiener Assad was a driving force in the promotion of Haitian art. She had a gallery at her hotel, and acquired many of the works in her extensive collection in exchange for food, lodging or other assistance to the artists.

Lina also supported other "moderns" including Max Pinchinat, Jacques Gabriel and Luce Turnier, but she had a special fondness for Dorcély. In January 1956, she organized his first show since returning from Paris. It included a large painting that seemed to show a vodou death rite, and portraits of Miracia and Annaise, fictional characters from Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la Rosée*, a novel of Haitian peasant suffering. These paintings were dark and heavy, in sharp contrast to work he would do only a few years later in Europe. It was at this Villa Créole show that Dorcély met Edna and Keith Warner, modern art collectors from Norwich, Vermont (U.S.) who visited Haiti on several occasions, and whose diligent promotion of Dorcély's work in the United States would sustain the family over some difficult years.

In November 1956, Dorcély joined fellow painters Luckner Lazard, Dieudonné Cédor, Nehemy Jean and others to open a new gallery a few miles from central Port-au-Prince. They named it Galerie Brochette and hoped the establishment would draw locals and tourists alike to find intelligent art and literary conversation (and a bar). But their timing was unlucky; tourist traffic declined dramatically beginning in December 1956, when a general strike ousted President Paul Magloire and the country then endured one provisional government after another. Dorcély had a second show at the Villa Creole in March 1957, but nothing sold. Hotels and individuals for whom he had painted murals proved unable to pay the promised commissions; he tried and failed to negotiate a bank loan.

In September 1957, a month before Papa Doc Duvalier came to power, Roland and Nicole put their three children in the care of relatives and returned to France. To finance the trip, they borrowed \$1,500 from Lina Assad's sister-in-law Odette Wiener, who demanded 80 paintings as collateral — a debt that tormented Dorcély for years. Before leaving, he sent 33 paintings to Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, for a solo show that Keith and Edna Warner planned to mount there.

Back in Paris, Roland and Nicole moved into a studio at La Ruche, where some of the most famous artists of the 20th century lived. In short order, Roland connected with Alberto Giacometti, Wilfredo Lam and André Masson, and his career briefly soared. In 1958, he exhibited at the Salon de la Jeune Peinture, the Salon de Mai, published an article on Haitian vodou death ceremonies in *Les Lettres Nouvelles* and had his U.S. début, thanks to the Warners, at Dartmouth College. The paintings exhibited there were bright, colorful images of Haitian life, likely chosen to appeal to a U.S. audience.

Despite these successes, money worries dogged the family. Dorcély's hopes were briefly stoked by the prospect that New York dealer Otto Gerson might represent him, but this came to naught, as did his approach to several Paris galleries. Discouraged, Roland and Nicole decamped to Venice for three months, sending 18 paintings produced there to Keith Warner for a new U.S. exhibit. The couple then moved on to Florence, where January through April, 1959 proved among Dorcély's most fertile periods, yielding a slew of exuberant canvasses with frank colors and flowing black lines. In January 1959 his *À quand la détente?* entered the collection of

the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a gift from Keith and Edna Warner, and was exhibited there alongside works by Jasper Johns, Miguel Ocampo and others. But Dorcély still had no entry to a gallery in either Paris or New York, and the news in February 1959 that Keith Warner was seriously ill hit delivered a grave blow; he would soon lose his mentor.

In April 1959 Dorcély returned to Paris. He approached half a dozen dealers but drew no interest. Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler received him well but offered nothing concrete. Bills were mounting; he pleaded with Keith Warner for help and considered suicide. In the end, Louise Leiris advanced him some money, and Georges Gonzales Gris, the son of Juan Gris, placated his landlady in Florence. Finally, in August 1959, Dorcély signed a contract with Mrs. Arthur Field, who ran the Galerie 18 on the rue de Miromesnil, giving her the exclusive right to represent him for one year. A few weeks later Keith Warner died. "For me that's the end of everything," Dorcély wrote to Edna.

And then his luck turned again, briefly. Roland and Nicole settled in a rented apartment in Montrouge-Seine that they kept for five years. Dorcély's first European show was assembled by Charles-Auguste Girard, at Edwin Livengood's Galerie Berri-Lardy (4, rue des Beaux-Arts), from January 19 to February 9, 1960, and the praise was effusive. M.T. Maugis wrote: "If you can see only one exhibit in the course of your week, then go to see Dorcély's," calling the exhibit "a brutal enchantment."² The government of France purchased one of the paintings for its collections, others were bought by private collectors. Edna Warner wrote from the U.S. that she had sold eight of his canvases. In June, Dorcély had a second one-man show at the Galerie Espace, run by Germaine Henry at 33 rue de Miromesnil, where several paintings sold. He was back in touch with David Selznick and thought he might be represented by the Berri-Lardy Gallery, when his exclusive contract with Mrs. Field ended in December 1960.

But the renaissance didn't last. Mrs. Field failed to sell any of his work, and his Montrouge landlord was demanding payment. He made a tour of galleries and wrote bitterly to Edna Warner that people wouldn't even look at his work, that they expected someone wearing a loincloth and quiver and arrows.

In despair, Dorcély secured a position teaching art in newly independent Guinea, where he and Nicole arrived in August 1961. They stayed for eleven months and left in haste, abandoning all the paintings he produced there. Back in Paris, Dorcély told friends he had the impression of having escaped from hell. He had one more exhibit in France, organized by Alain Jouffroy at the Galerie du Cercle — "Neuf peintres neuf," Nov. 20 – Dec. 11, 1962 — but was struggling with profound depression. With the help of Michel and Louise Leiris and Lina Assad, Roland and Nicole returned to Haiti in 1963.

Back in Port-au-Prince the couple lived in a tiny house provided by the Assads, and welcomed a fourth child in 1966. Dorcély produced one more exquisite mural, at the Villa Créole Hotel — a work tragically destroyed by the 2010 earthquake — and then became a recluse, seeing not even old friends. When the American painter and scholar Lois Mailou Jones visited Haiti in 1968 to research painters in their studios, she attempted to see Dorcély. But on her notes from the trip she scrawled only "mental sickness" next to his name.

Through the 1960s and 1970s Dorcély rarely appeared in public, though his work occasionally featured in exhibits in Haiti as well as in Fort Lauderdale (Florida, U.S.). In 1974, the *New York Times* named him among a "group of giants on the way."³ In the 1980s he took on a handful of private students (including Marie-Therese Dupoux, known as Marithou, Guerdy-Jacques Preval, and Laila Berthold Saieh). His "courses" mainly consisted of setting his students to copy the work of great masters, something Dorcély himself was then doing obsessively, imagining a museum of copies for the benefit of Haitian students, whom he thought unlikely ever to see the originals. Yet life remained challenging. To make ends meet Nicole created papier maché figures and masks for Mardi Gras floats, and sold sandwiches to office workers at lunchtime. Roland remained a recluse.

In 2003, Nicole and Roland packed up once more and left Haiti — permanently, as it would turn out. Bound for Canada, the couple failed to obtain permission to settle there and thus ended up in the U.S., where two of their children were already resident. They cut off nearly all contacts with friends and family. In 2009 the Haitian government honored Dorcély in absentia for his contribution to Haitian art. His work was represented in a few exhibits, including one at the Grand Palais in Paris, but he attended none, nor is it known how aware of them he was. And less than a decade later, Roland Dorcély was gone.

2

Les Lettres Françaises,
Feb. 3, 1960
(author's translation).

3

Lawrence Witchell,
"Haitian Primitives:
From Art Form to Souvenirs,"
The New York Times,
Sept. 8, 1974.

Roland Dorcély

A Haitian Painter and Poet in Paris (1958–1960)

Loeve&Co Gallery, Paris

March 2019.



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March 2019.



Roland Dorcély

By Gérald Alexis

Translated from the
French by Judith Kumin

The Brothers of Christian Instruction in Port-au-Prince were the first to discover the genius of Roland Dorcély. They marveled at his texts and his drawings, mostly copies of classical works that he found in his school books. When, at age 16, he enrolled at the Centre d'Art and found what seemed to him to be a huge collection of books about modern art, he was introduced to a world far removed from the Parthenon frieze. In the immediate post-war years, he also had the chance to meet prominent artists and intellectuals who travelled to Haiti and visited the Centre. "At the time, we didn't know the first thing about these people," he said. "They would come to talk to the students, but we couldn't decipher what they said." The atmosphere of the Centre was a stimulating one, and Dorcély, even though he came from a poor family where the main concern was day-to-day survival, was determined to devote his life to poetry and art and was eager to learn.

He studied with Lucien Price who inculcated in him the importance of drawing, a lesson that marked his entire career. He worked alongside naïve painters with their bright colors and disregard of academic norms and met Cuban avant-garde artists who were exhibiting at the Centre. Dorcély was not so much interested in the African aesthetic that the Cuban artists were adopting to varying degrees. On the other hand, the notion of Caribbeanism, to which they introduced him, would later play a role in his own work.

During his first years at the Centre, his approach was one of trial and error. He was unstoppable, and more experienced painters were flabbergasted by his progress. Of everything he produced in this early period, it was his murals that captured the imagination most decisively. It can be said that Dorcély asserted himself as a painter for the first time in his murals. He studied mural technique with the American artist William Calfee, who came to teach at the Centre d'Art, and his murals revealed his innate talent for drawing. The use of vivid colors in no way diminishes the importance of draftsmanship; indeed, it is the latter that defines the forms and, often with the help of hachures and latticework, is key to creating the pictorial space, making the effects of light unnecessary. With the unprecedented growth of tourism, hotels around Port-au-Prince invited Dorcély to decorate their walls. His work was highly visible and commissions from foreign visitors ensued. This is how, before going to France in 1951, he made a stop in California to paint a mural for David O. Selznick, the producer of the iconic film *Gone with the Wind*.

Although still very young when he left Haiti, Dorcély was already an authoritative voice on art. He was an active member the Foyer des Arts Plastiques, an avant-garde group that advocated for artistic freedom and for the democratization of art, and he was already circulating in Haiti's economic and intellectual elite, an environment that was worlds away from the one he grew up in. This probably eased his adjustment to life in Paris, where he was welcomed by people who were influential in the world of arts and letters.

It's hard to pinpoint the impact on Dorcély of his first stay in Paris: of the École des Métiers d'Arts, where he attended classes, of the famous artists he met, of the experience as a whole. We know that he initially had more success as a poet than as a painter, though he did have some opportunities to exhibit his art. As he searched for the means of expression that suited him best, he admitted at times to being overcome by doubt about his own ability. That was the case, for instance, when he first set eyes on Renaissance art in Italy. Explaining his ambivalence, he told me: "In Haiti, there weren't any museums. I spent my time listening to priests. Literature came more easily to me than art. It was only around ten years later [that is to say, during his second stay in France] that my painting got any recognition."

His first stay in France was prolonged beyond the expiry of his scholarship year, and when Dorcély returned to Haiti in 1954 he was already something of a celebrity. He was ahead of his contemporaries and able to identify gaps that needed filling in the world of Haitian art. Building on his reputation, he tried simultaneously to develop his own career and to stimulate his colleagues, wanting to redefine the indigenist approaches of the 1930s and early 1940s in the light of modern trends. In January 1956, together with his old friend Luckner Lazare, who had also received a scholarship to study in France, he had his first exhibition since his return to Haiti. Dorcély's themes at this time were similar to those of Haiti's indigenist painters: landscapes, seascapes and portraits, but his portraits were dark, hermetic, mute, in the realist style promoted by the Foyer des Arts Plastiques. His subjects were identified by name: Anaïs, a character in Jacques Roumain's novel *Masters of the Dew*, or by a place: a voodoo temple where, at night, a ceremony of death rites is taking place in secret. But, contrary to the indigenists, he approached these subjects in ways that broke distinctly with academic tradition. This was not only an aesthetic choice but also an emotional one, for the subjects he chose enabled him to reach into, and bare, the depths of his soul.

During this period in Haiti, Dorcély demonstrated his ability to work in very different styles. He was able to pass from flat images and forms with interrupted contours to those with fluid ones, using volume and space in the most traditional manner. He was daring in his use of color and also adopted Lazare's blues and whites. He did some portraits in which the face is portrayed very cursorily and others, for which he used models that are perfect likenesses. Although he had studied with Lucien Price at a time when Price was exploring abstraction, Roland Dorcély remained firmly attached to figurative art. His one foray into abstraction came around 1957. "An American who was visiting Haiti asked me for some designs that he intended to print on fabric," he explained. Dorcély accepted a commission from this visitor and, in an effort to find the perfect balance between form and support, he produced some striking gouaches of colored lines and shapes that drew squarely on Matisse. But the injection of typically Haitian content distanced some of them from full abstraction.

Things seemed to be going well for Dorcély. He and his wife Nicole had joint shows and even exhibited paintings they had done together, often signed "Nicodème." They joined other "modernists" to set up the Brochette Gallery, not far from the center of town, intended as a haven of peace and quiet where artists could work at a remove from the pressures of the art market fed by the tourist industry. To a certain degree Brochette managed to do this, but it couldn't prevent the artists' creations from being seen as merchandise as well as art. This was one of the reasons Roland Dorcély gave for returning to France in September 1957.

In Paris he settled at La Ruche, in the 15th arrondissement, and reconnected with people who had embraced him during his earlier stay. He opted for a totally disengaged style of painting, devoid of emotional content: One of his first canvases was an entirely conventional Paris street scene. He must have quickly realized that he could not divorce himself to such an extent from his art, for soon, inspired by an assemblage of chairs and tables on the terrace of a Paris café, he produced a composition animated by an afro-Caribbean rhythm in which the colors are completely incidental and what matters is the rhythmic arrangement of the lines — straight, curved, and circular — creating movement not of the objects but of the viewer's eye.

While his use of stylized forms suggests a penchant for abstract art, Dorcély was never able to accept what he saw as the subjective and disorganized side of abstraction. He preferred the scientific use of lines and colors. He would paint the same motif ten or twenty times, to show (and convince himself) that the subject itself was of little importance, that all the possibilities of harmony could, for example, be found in a simple chair. The forms revealed by his lines are stylized but remain nevertheless entirely identifiable, with or without a generic title such as *Nude*.

Some of Dorcély's works of this period were done during a prolonged stay in Italy. These include still lifes, landscapes and nudes. He treated each of these themes using densely packed forms. In the nudes, the forms are rounded and easily render a suggestive and erotic content. There is little or no interplay of light and darkness. The colored forms look flat but because some forms or parts of forms hide others, the notion of space is suggested. The artist sometimes introduces a formal element to strengthen the spatial illusion: a side view of the back of a chair, on which the crossed arms of the model can rest.

With the exception of the (few) landscapes, these paintings would seem to imply that Dorcély had no interest whatsoever in the question of identity. In reality, while he had little patience for

the idea of *national* art, he was intrigued by the notion espoused by the Cubans of Caribbean art. It is hard not to make a connection between Dorcély's paintings of this period and those of the Cuban artist Amelia Peláez. Dorcély had seen her work when it was exhibited at the Centre d'Art and, later, at the Museum of Modern Art of Latin America in Washington, D.C. (known today as the Art Museum of the Americas), where he had always hoped to exhibit. Her paintings are characterized by zones of bright color, integrated into an organic, arabesque-like geometry that is structured by black lines, both thick and thin.

Dorcély remained attached to this pictorial language for a long time, even after his return to Haiti, and he introduced some Haitian elements into it. His "vèvè" series was inspired by the emblematic drawings, representing divinities, that are traced on the ground during voodoo ceremonies. In one of his compositions, a "Ti chaise" (petite chaise or small chair) is used to create the illusion of space on a flat board. In this and numerous other paintings, the chair is of interest because of the parallelepiped formed by the seat and the legs. Deformed a bit by perspective, this geometric figure suggests a certain depth and the viewer, thanks to his own knowledge, can easily recognize it as a three-dimensional structure. In reality, Dorcély often wanted to make the viewer, with his imagination and experience, into an "active observer."

Over time, Dorcély's style changed dramatically but lines remained ever-present. This can be seen in his several representations of a stone wall, perhaps symbolizing confinement. Irrational black lines appear from top to bottom, and from these lines emerge awkward sketches of hands and faces. The underlying color is muted; later in the series he added some red and blue tones.

In the 1980s, Dorcély seemed to lose his taste for bright colors and his work was dominated by a yellowish-green. Aside from this choice of color, what is striking in the paintings of this period is that the subject is frequently isolated in an excessively large space. In one case it's a woman's body, in another, an ordinary object like an oil lamp. In both there are horizontal lines that dissect or strangle the subject. Also at this time Dorcély had taken on several students, and he engaged them in a project he had long dreamed of: to make the art of the Old Masters accessible to Haitians for whom travel abroad was out of the question. Dorcély started making copies of the Masters' works and in so doing, revealed his own considerable command of technique.

Roland Dorcély was a painter who never settled down. At different times of his life he opted for the artistic language that was best suited to his state of mind. He was honest, never fearing to reveal himself in his art. As I have written elsewhere: "Organic forms, intertwined and intersecting on large surfaces are the work of Dorcély. Paintings in which lines define forms, as in calligraphy, are also Dorcély. Those in which thick black lines enclose vividly colored areas are Dorcély. So, too, are those in which the subject, lacerated by forceful lines, seems to melt into a yellowish-green background. And finally, a painting of the lamb from the central panel of the Issenheim Altarpiece (by the Bavarian Matthias Grunewald) is also Dorcély." There are few if any other Haitian artists whose work is as rich and as varied, with as sophisticated an approach to surface effects and composition, as that of Roland Dorcély.

Dorcély's paintings in US public collections

Roland Dorcély

Flower boy, 1957

Gouache on masonite, 54 x 51 in

Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton (FL). Gift of
Mrs Edna Allen.



Roland Dorcély

The Two Sisters #2, 1957

Tempera on cardboard, 47 x 31 in

Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College Hanover (NH).



Roland Dorcély

Untitled, ca. 1957

Watercolor on paper, 9 x 12 in

Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Vivian D. Hewitt.

Photo: Brooklyn Museum.



Roland Dorcély

Untitled, ca. 1957

Watercolor on paper, 9 x 12 in

Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Vivian D. Hewitt. Photo/

Brooklyn Museum.



Roland Dorcély

Le Coq et la Lune, 1957

Gouache on masonite, 51 x 55 in

Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton (FL). Gift of Mrs Edna Allen.



Roland Dorcély

Mother and Son, before 1957

Tempera on composition board, 48 3/8 x 32 3/16 in

The Hood museum of art, Dartmouth College, Hanover (NH).



Roland Dorcély

Lumière bleue, 1958

Tempera on Masonite, 52 x 72 in

NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale (FL).

Gift of Mrs Edna Allen.



Roland Dorcély

When to Relax ?, 1958

Tempera on board, 36 x 49 in

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Gift of Edna and Keith Warner.



Roland Dorcély

Nude with chair, 1960

ink on paper, 12 ½ x 9 ¼ in
in Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College
Hanover (NH).



Roland Dorcély

La Forêt dans la nuit, 1962

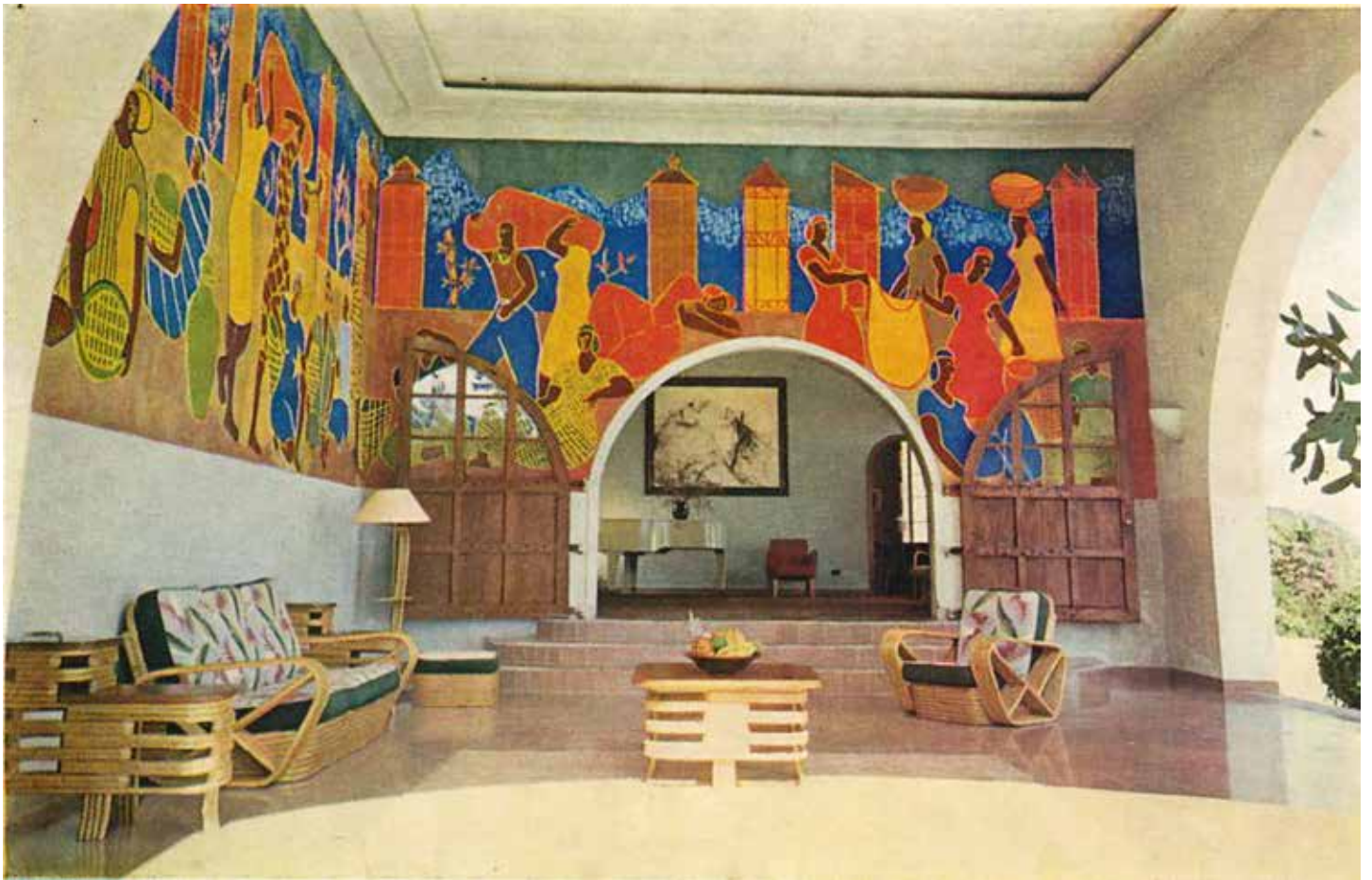
oil on canvas, 57 ½ x 44 ½ in
NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale (FL).
Gift of Mrs Edna Allen.



Dorcély's murals

Roland Dorcély

Mural painted by Dorcély in 1948
for Ibo Lele hotel, Haiti.



Roland Dorcély

Art In America, Selden Rodman, "Murals for Haiti: From the Centre d'Art Jeep to the Miracle at Cano", Vol. 36, Dec. 1951, p. 191.



Murals by Joseph, Dorcely and Pinchinat in Studio of Centre d'Art, 1949.
Left to right: Joseph, Calfee, Dorcely, Rodman

Roland Dorcély

Mural painted in 1949 for le Centre d'Art (Port-au-Prince, Haiti). From left to right, murals by : R. Dorcély, M. Pinchinat, L. Lazard. Photo : Gérald Alexis.



Roland Dorcély

Part of the mural painted around 1965 for Villa Créole (Haiti), destroyed during the dramatic 2010 earthquake. Courtesy: Alicia Assad-Bigio. Photo: Steve Dunwell.



Roland Dorcély

Dorcély writes about famous Hollywood producer David O. Selznick, for whom he painted a mural in Beverly Hills house in 1951. Letter to Edna Allen, August 14, 1960. SOVA

artistes ont du mal à émerger de la gloire de leurs protégés. Certes on ne les a pas oublié, mais je trouve pour ma part qu'elles n'occupent nullement la place qui leur est due.

Mme Anne Kennedy est une grande amie d'Haïti. Elle est avec André Roosevelt les américains dont la tenue très vieille France ~~est~~ a beaucoup fait pour améliorer les rapports des jeunes gens de mon âge avec votre pays. Si j'ai fréquenté longtemps Mr Roosevelt chez lequel je réside plus de six mois, je connais fort peu Mme Kennedy, toutefois j'ai gardé un bon souvenir des cocktails de Mr Peter chez lequel je la rencontrais.

Je n'ai pas encore reçu une lettre de Mr Mc Kibraham et je suis impatient de le lire. Par contre Mr David O Selznick m'a écrit et m'a annoncé qu'il arriverait me rencontrer à sa prochaine visite à Paris. Il m'offre en outre de m'mettre en contact après janvier avec Mr John Hay Whitney qui est à l'heure actuelle ambassadeur des U.S.A à la Cour St James.

Mon contrat, qui a été signé pour un an, s'achève en décembre. Peut-être que je serai représenté par un pay à Paris par Mr Lezengood directeur de la Galerie Berni-Lardy. Pour le moment je n'ai pas d'inquiétude. J'ai pas mal travaillé et j'ai une exposition en vue à la Pan Américan l'année prochaine.

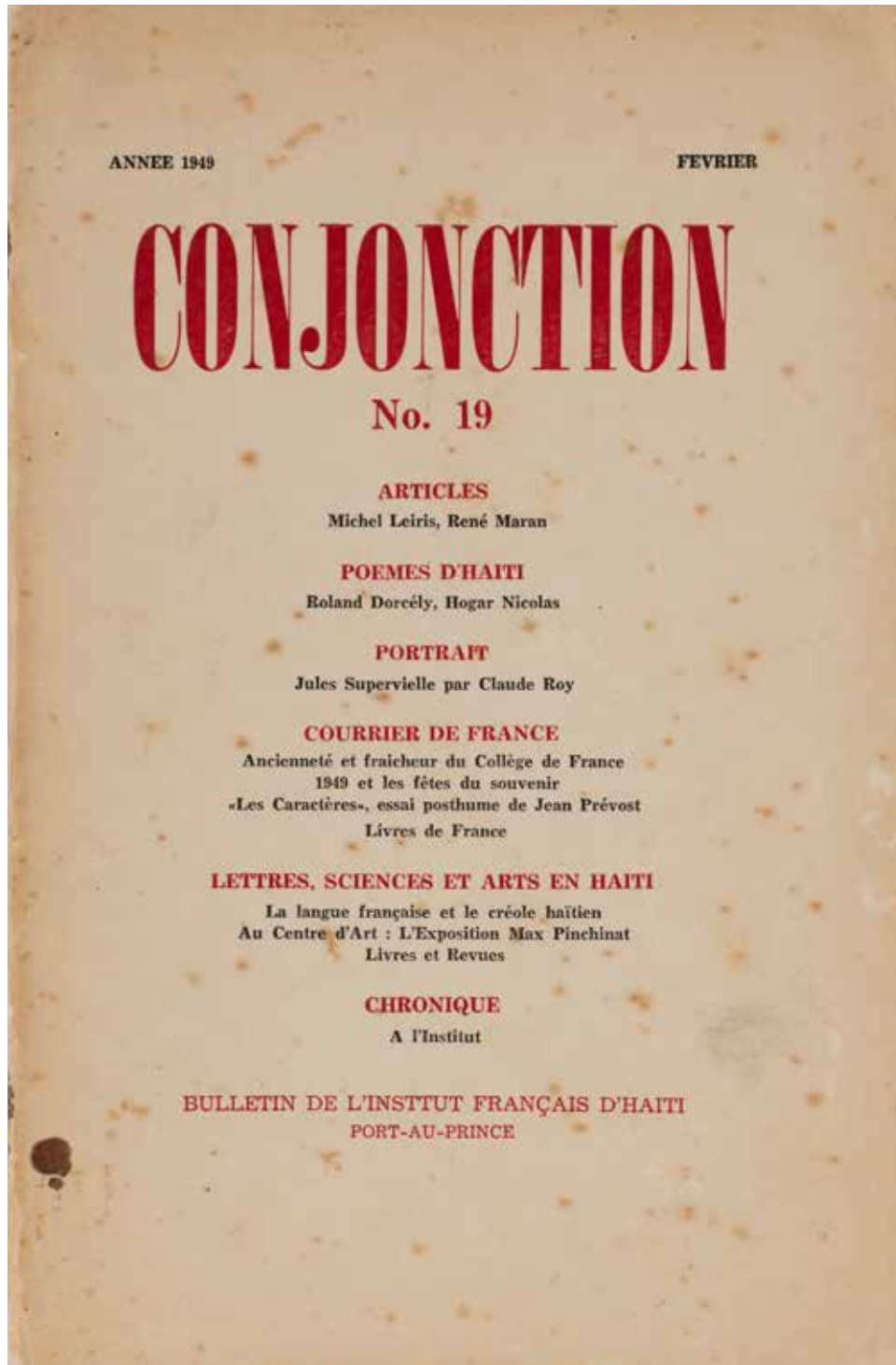
J'ai ~~donné~~ commandé des photos que je vous enverrai dès qu'elles me seront remises. En attendant je vous envoie les affiches que vous m'avez demandées.

Je suis sans peine de tout ce qui arrive avec Merills. Ils étaient si gentils lors de leur passage ici et leur conversations étaient si sages. Il est dommage qu'un tel

Dorcély a painter and a poet

Conjonction

Roland Dorcély, « Deux poèmes : La brume est un clown gris ; L'ouragan », n°19, February 1949, pp.17-18.



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Les Temps Modernes

5^e année REVUE MENSUELLE n° 52

DIRECTEUR : JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

Février 1950

TEXTES ANTILLAIS

MICHEL LEIRIS. — Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haïti.
Poèmes de RENÉ MÉNIL, GEORGES DESPORTES, J.-GEORGES
GUANNEL, CHARLES CALIXTE, HENRI CORBIN, MAGLOIRE
SAINT-AUDE, F. MORISSEAU-LEROY, ROLAND DORCÉLY.

Chants Vodou, présentés par ALFRED MÉTRAUX.

Trois chansons guadeloupéennes.

Biguines et autres chansons de la Martinique.

Noms de véhicules terrestres dans les Antilles de langue française.
ALBERT MANGONÈS. — L'homme vert.

NATHALIE SARRAUTE. — L'ère du soupçon.

ROGER STÉPHANE. — Lawrence et son corps.

DANIEL GUÉRIN. — Où va le *peuple* américain? (II).

TÉMOIGNAGES

CLAUDINE CHONEZ. — Petit réquisitoire indochinois.

EXPOSÉS

ÉTIEMBLE : Chronique littéraire. — Sur le « Martinique »
de M. Michel Cournot.

JEAN-H. ROY. — L'œuvre de Graham Greene ou un christianisme
de la damnation.

ROGER STÉPHANE. — La campagne pour Maurras.

NOTES

— Livres. LOUIS MÉNARD : « Les Jacobins noirs, Toussaint-Louverture
et la révolution de Saint-Domingue », par C. L. R. James. — YVON
BELAVAL : « Sens-Plastique » et « La vie filtrée », par Malcolm de Chazal.



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Les lettres nouvelles

6^e année

Octobre 1958

n° 64

JEAN DOUASSOT *La plaque d'égout*
RICHARD WRIGHT *Homme blanc, écoute !*
CAMILO JOSÉ CELA *Le café de Doña Rosa*
RENÉ GARMY *Robespierre homme de lettres*

LE VAUDOU HAÏTIEN

ALFRED MÉTRAUX *Sorciers et Zombis*
PIERRE MABILLE *Les loas parlant en govis*
ROLAND DORCÉLY *Les cérémonies de mort*

Quatre dessins originaux de WILFREDO LAM

MAURICE CRANSTON *Ivy Compton Burnett*
GEORGES PAPAZOFF *Derain, mon copain (II)*
JEAN SELZ *Bauchant (Indre-et-Loire)*

ACTUALITÉS

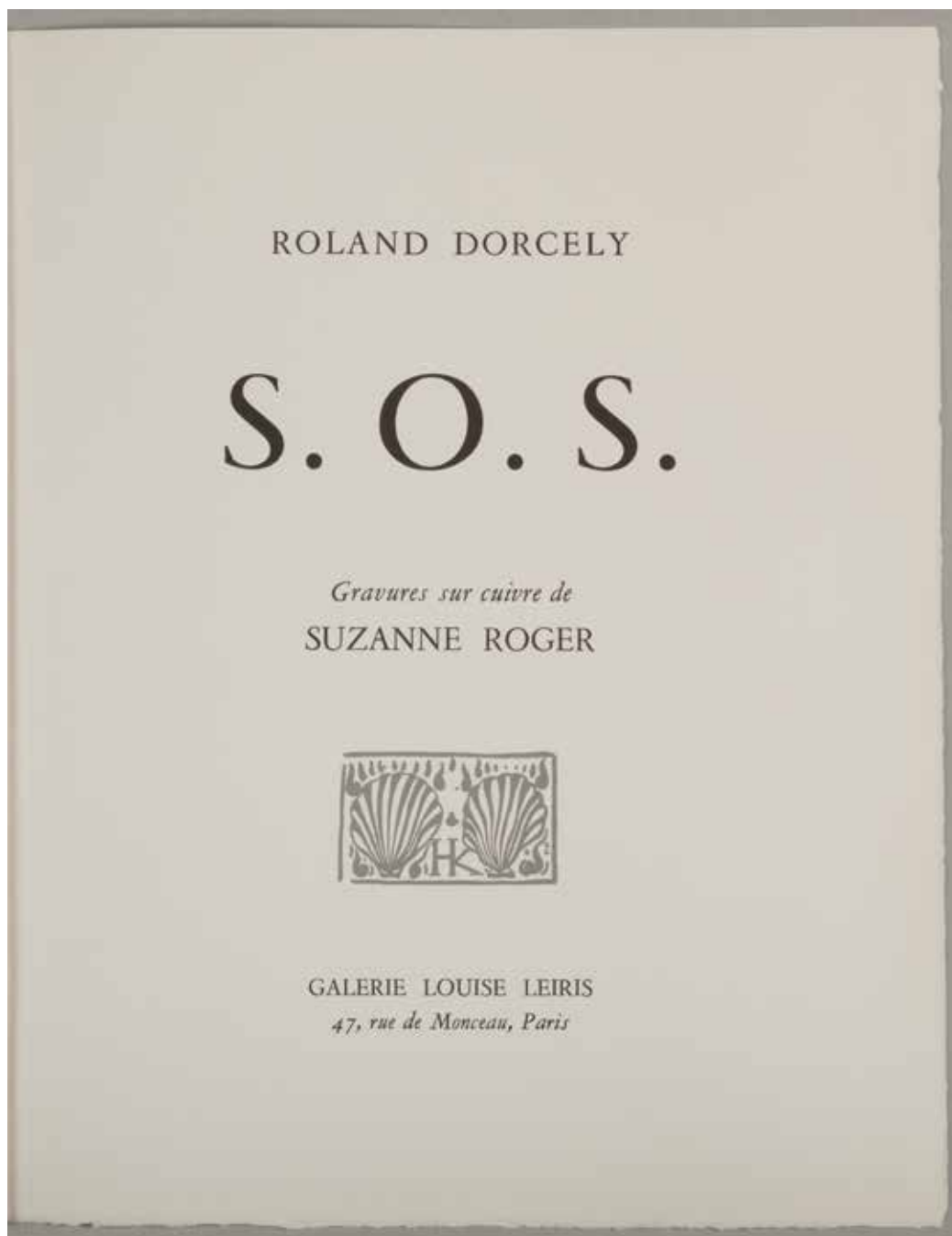


4 Septembre 1958

EN MARGE, par Maurice Nadeau
(Le Docteur Jivago)

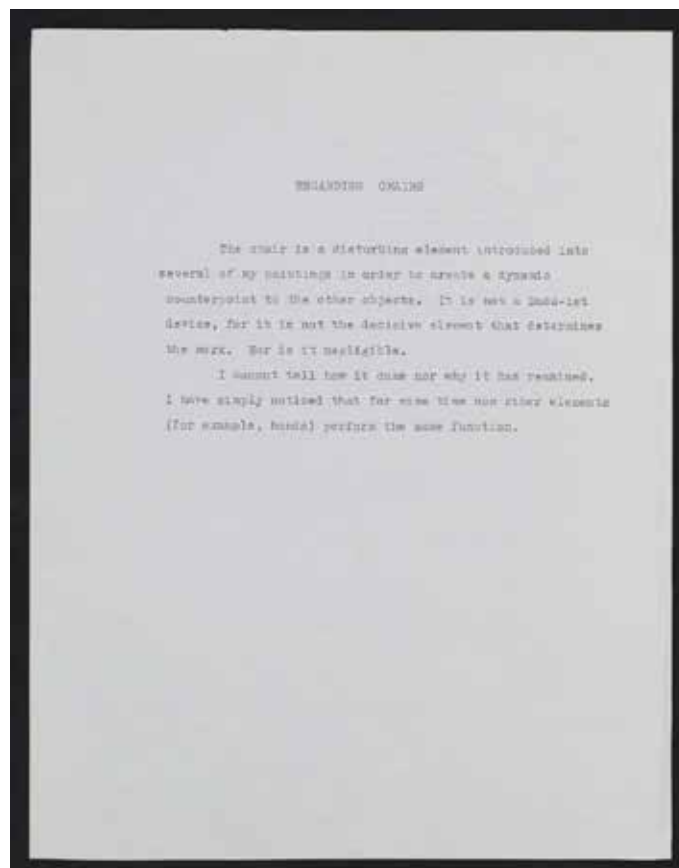
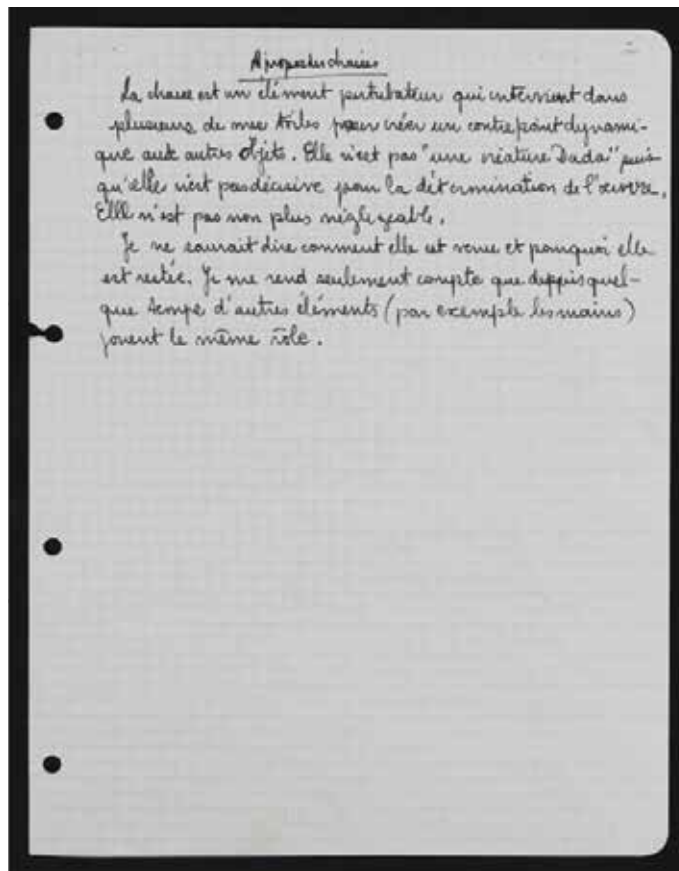
S.O.S

Roland Dorcély, published by Louise Leiris gallery,
Paris, 1961. Courtesy: LaM, Villeneuve d'Ascq.
Photo: M. Bourguet.



Dorcély's theoretical writings on art

Roland Dorcély
n.d., Smithsonian
Online Virtual Archives.



enqu'une que j'aurais comprise votre est il faut se rattacher à votre
nationalité, où vivez-vous?
La famille de ma mère qui habite Port-au-Prince, depuis plus
de 170 ans est très coléct. monte rien que très pauvre. C'est
pour relever le nom notre nom qui on m'avait inscrit à St. Louis
de Gonzague qui est au collège très fermé dirigé unique-
ment par des religieuses Français.
Je suis ~~très~~ pour réagir contre cette éducation puritaine et
merveilleusement insupportable ~~pour un noir~~. Bien entendu
~~depuis que j'ai commencé à peindre~~ il serait ridicule d'assimiler à ce que
je fais à l'heure actuelle avec mes réactions d'adolescent,
mais il ne fait pas de doute que ~~à~~ chaque fois que je
fais une toile je me sens plus libre.
Le pays, la race etc, n'ont pas eu une très grande
influence sur moi, comme c'est couramment le cas en
Amérique Latine. ~~Je~~ j'étais déjà assez âgé quand je me
rends compte de la situation des noirs dans le reste du monde.
Pour ce qui est de la nation je crois qu'on est rarement chau-
vin quand on a grandi dans une capitale, même si
c'est Port-au-Prince. ~~Et puis de la race de mes parents~~ Et puis
j'ai toujours eu des étrangers comme professeur, ~~et~~ ^{depuis}
au lycée d'art où les artistes américains ont beaucoup
fait pour moi.
Elle ne veut pas dire que je ne me considère pas comme
un noir haïtien. Au contraire. ~~Je~~ Je trouve que c'est
une chose aussi naturel que de porter une chemise et
qu'il n'y a pas lieu de faire un tra-la-la pour cela.

Ma vie matérielle depuis que j'ai gelue de l'ousses d'études ~~est~~
a été entre très mouvementé et cela a ~~été~~ ^{été} ~~très~~ ^{très} ~~influencé~~ ^{influencé} ~~mon~~ ^{mon} ~~travail~~ ^{travail}. Je suis resté ~~pendant~~
~~plusieurs~~ ^{plusieurs} mois sans pouvoir toucher au pinceau,
Mais quand je peins je ne pense pas à moi. Je dois lutter
si paisiblement pour trouver le meilleur rapport entre
ce qui existe au dehors et ce que je rêve de concrétiser
que j'ai même pas le temps de m'occuper de à autre
chose.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR ETHNOCENTRIC, PARTLY,
AND MAY BE EVEN ENGLISH OR FRENCH CONSIDERATION
IS CRUCIAL TO UNDERSTANDING MODERNISM?

My mother's family, which has resided in Port-au-Prince
since then 170 years, is very prejudice-conscious although very
poor. It was for the purpose of restoring our name that I was
enrolled at St. Louis de Gonzague, a very exclusive secondary
school run entirely by French religious.

I have difficulty in reacting against this puritanical and
unbelievably suffocating education. Of course it would be
ridiculous to liken what I do now to my reactions when I was
adolescent, yet there is no doubt that everytime I create a
painting I feel myself more free.

Nationality and race, etc., have not had a very great
influence upon me, as they usually do in Latin America. I was
already quite grown up before I realized the situation of the
blacks in the rest of the world. As for the nation, I believe
that people are rarely chauvinistic if they have grown up in
the capital of a country, even if it is Port-au-Prince. Besides,
I have always had foreigners as teachers, even at the Art Center,
where American artists did some for me.

This is not to say that I do not consider myself as a
native black. Quite the contrary, I find it something as
natural as wearing a shirt, and that there is no occasion for
wearing a tra-la-la about that.

My standard of living since I have no longer had
relationships has certainly had its ups and downs, and this has

2 - DO YOU BELIEVE ??? (etc.)

Inevitably influenced by work. Sometimes months have gone by
without my being able to touch a brush. But when I paint
I don't think of myself. I have to struggle as tirelessly
to find the best relationship between what exists outside
and what I dream of rendering concrete that I don't have
time to concern myself with anything else.

(Note) En lisant les journaux
~~on voit que les peintres ont pu à l'étranger~~
~~à l'étranger qu'ils ne sont pas à l'étranger~~

À l'heure actuelle les querres entre les différentes écoles nationales q me paraissent ridicules. J'ai vu à la Biennale de Venise des peintres de l'Australie, de la République, etc qui sont aussi talentueux dans leur genre que leurs collègues parisiens ou New Yorkais. Ce qui leur manque pour être aussi avancés, c'est peut-être une organisation aussi solide que celles qui existent dans ces dernières villes. Cela montrerait que le soleil lui partait et qu'il n'est plus nécessaire de réduire son rayonnement.

Je crois que l'on doit faire le pèlerinage à Paris comme on allait à Rome au 18^e siècle. Toutefois je suis contre ceux qui s'enferment dans une seule ville, que ce soit Paris ou ailleurs et qui font de talent se servent de cette ville pour se tailler une place à part dans l'art.

Comme par exemple, j'ai fait le voyage dans la ville sainte (Paris si on entend) j'y suis revenu et j'y retournerai encore mais je refuse l'idée qu'il faut absolument s'y installer pas plus qu'à New York ou à Mexico City.

Je crois que le moment est venu pour les artistes de se disperser et de s'élancer le monde. L'inspiration est partout aujourd'hui et l'on n'a plus

beaucoup peur de l'écotisme. Les peuples primitifs se chargent de le répandre. ~~et ils ne s'en~~

Je crois contre ~~les~~ les anciens ateliers aussi. Les living-rooms de n'importe quelle maison me paraissent être l'atelier idéal, surtout si on loue une maison meublée, des lumières spéciales et autres aménagements de ce genre me semblent caduques.

Je ne suis au début q moi aussi je désirais un atelier, j'en ai resté avec cette idée jusqu'en 57 où j'ai passé une année dans un atelier. Je suis horrifié par l'inconfort de ce lieu et maintenant je travaille dans un salon qui fait très bien l'affaire.

~~Je pense que le que j'aurais perdu tout quand je loue une maison c'est la transform~~

① J'entends par inconfort, la gêne que cause par exemple un excès de lumière dans l'atelier.

NOTES (When reading the newspapers)

At present the wars between the different national schools seem to me to be ridiculous. I have seen of the Venice Biennale painters from Australia or the United Arab Republic, etc., who are as talented in their genre as their colleagues from Paris or New York. What they lack in order to be equally advantageously situated is, perhaps, an sturdy organization as exists in these other cities. This proves that the sun shines everywhere, and that it is no longer necessary to attenuate its rays.

I think that one should make a pilgrimage to Paris as one went to Rome in the eighteenth century. However, I am opposed to those who shut themselves up in some single city, be it Paris or some other, and who, lacking other talent, come here of the city in order to carve for themselves a place in art. In my case, I made the journey to the holy city (Paris, of course). I have returned there, and I shall go back again, but I reject the idea that it is absolutely a word omitted from the original to settle down there, any more than at New York or Mexico City.

I believe that the moment has come for artists to move about. It disperses, and to plough a furrow across the face of the earth. Today inspiration is everywhere, and it is no longer necessary to be afraid of ecstasies. The primitive peoples have taken it upon themselves to settle that.

(Notes écrits en regardant mes administratifs)

à Paris

« Ce qui différencie la vision de l'homme du 20^e siècle de celle des hommes de jadis c'est avant tout la prépondérance de son image sur lui-même. Que ce soit à Broadway à Paris ou à Milan, que ce soit dans le meilleur des appartements ou dans les lieux publics l'image de l'homme s'étale sur les affiches, les enseignes, les pancartes ou les tableaux et ses images sont si vivantes, si présentes qu'elles captent notre regard et vont même jusqu'à l'emprisonner. Ce qui est plus tragique encore c'est que cette image tend de plus en plus à écraser l'homme réel et de même que les créateurs de machines se sont inquiétés de voir la puissance destructrice de celles-ci sur leur créateur l'artiste aujourd'hui se sent coupable de la destruction du regard par la prolifération incontrôlée des images de l'homme.

Pour un ~~artiste~~ *artiste* comme moi qui n'ai pu contact avec l'Occident qu'à l'âge de 20 ans, cette nouvelle réalité a été la plus grande révélation et depuis 2 ans que je voyage je n'ai cessé de chercher le moment où mes moyens picturaux me permettraient de peindre de tels sujets.

Cela ne se fit pas d'un coup. Dans plusieurs œuvres, en particulier dans "à quand la déroute" et dans la série "des acteurs" j'essayai de peindre la cohabitation de plusieurs réalités sur une même surface. Toutefois mes moyens étaient alors très au-dessous de ma vision je ne réussis que partiellement ce qui ne pouvait être ~~total~~ *total* ~~total~~ *total* ment réalisable que par l'abbé.

(Notes written upon looking at my latest pictures)

What in my opinion differentiates the outlook of twentieth-century man from that of men of former times is above all the prepondering weight of his image on himself. Whether on Broadway or in Paris and Milan, whether in the subway, in apartments or in public places, the image of man is displayed on notices, signs, advertising cards or pictures, and his images are so life-like, so present, that they capture our regard and even go so far as to imprison it. What is still more tragic is that this image tends more and more to crush the real man and just as the creators of machines are anguished by seeing the destructive power these have over their creator, the artist of today feels himself culpable of the destruction, through the uncontrolled proliferation of the images of man, of seeing.

For an artist like myself, who did not come into contact with the West until I was 20, this new reality has been the greatest revelation, and for the last 2 years that I have been travelling I have not ceased to seek the moment when my pictorial resources would permit me to paint such subjects.

(The following was lightly crossed out):

This is not accomplished in one stroke. In several works, especially in "A quand la déroute" and in the series of "actors" I have tried to paint the coexistence of several realities upon one single surface. However, my resources were being at that time very far beneath my conception, I accomplished only partially what could be totally visible only by *l'abbé*. (The manuscript thus breaks off in the middle of a word).

Perspectives

a) Si l'on considère la perspective de la peinture italienne comme une "perspective maxima" c'est à dire un moyen plastique engendrant la plus grande distance entre le premier et le dernier plan de la toile, celle que j'utilise pourrait être appelée perspective minima. Il y a en effet la plus petite distance possible entre le premier et le dernier plan ~~de~~ mes tableaux et cette distance loin de croître tend à diminuer de jour en jour. (Léon et Chagall ont déjà fait la même chose)

b) ~~Il s'agit de la perspective minima~~
~~Il s'agit de la perspective minima~~
~~Il s'agit de la perspective minima~~

En donnant de plus en plus d'importance aux structures, je me suis aperçu que celle-ci engendrait entre leur propre espace que l'on pourrait appeler "espace dominante", des espaces secondaires. Je me suis rendu compte que ^{chaque} les objets intégrés dans ^{une} ces espaces ~~obtiennent à leur propre~~ peuvent donner naissance à une perspective particulière laquelle pourrait s'opposer ou se joindre à la perspective générale. Je dois dire que le N° B qui est faite suivant le premier principe est moins réussi que le N° A ^{qui} est au second.

PERSPECTIVES

(a) If perspective as seen in Italian painting be considered as "maximal perspective," that is to say, a method of representing the greatest possible distance between the nearest and the farthest planes of the picture, the perspective which I use might be called "minimal perspective." Indeed, there is the least possible distance between the nearest and the farthest planes of my pictures, and this distance, far from increasing, tends to become less day by day. (Léon and Chagall have already done the same thing).

(b) By giving more and more importance to structures, I discovered that these would generate, in addition to their own spaces (which might be called "dominant space"), some secondary spaces. I have observed that each object incorporated into one of these spaces can bring into being an individual perspective which may be either opposed to or joined with the general perspective. I should say that No. B, done according to the first principle, is less successful than No. A, which follows the second.

Structure (Notes écrits en regardant vos dernières toiles)

Toute peinture a une structure. La peinture médiévale comme la peinture classique. Dans la première la structure est extérieure aux objets, par exemple l'attachement des rituels. Dans la seconde elle est intégrée au ^{contenu} et disparaît ~~de la scène~~.

Dans mes toiles, la structure est l'essence même de la composition et du sujet. Elle n'est ni cadre, ni signature directe et cachée, mais réaction d'ambiances dans lesquelles tout ce qui se passe est conditionné par son existence.

Elle donne ou peut donner à un tableau plusieurs atmosphères sans rien changer de sa nature. Elle peut ~~être~~ ^{être} exigée, c'est le cas par exemple pour ~~la~~ la série des murs. Elle peut ~~être~~ ^{être} donnée, mais ~~elle~~ ^{elle} aussi changer totalement la nature d'une toile par rapport à une autre en subissant une légère modification. (exemple ~~la~~ ^{la} série des murs).

Dans tous les cas elle vient à ~~la~~ ^{une} ambiance ~~nécessaire~~ ^{créative}.

On peut ~~en~~ ^{en} faire un usage autonome des réalités ou des abstractions, similaires ou dissimilaires. La présence de ces ~~éléments~~ ^{éléments} dans ces espaces forme un contour indispensable à la structure des toiles.

C'est en 1953 que je fis pour la première fois une toile donnée à structure. Je me rappelle que cela fit rire les gens à Paris sauf 2 ou 3 amis qui ~~se~~ me suivirent pendant quelques temps. Je fis en cette même année une grande toile ~~de~~ ^{de} 2 m x 2 m que je vendis par désespoir 5.000 francs à un peintre abstrait qui le blanchit et peignit dessus.

~~Par~~ ^{Malgré} ~~ce~~ ^{ce} ~~malheur~~ ^{malheur} ~~malgré~~ ^{malgré} ces expériences malheureuses je voulais continuer. ~~Les~~ ^{Les} dernières années je fis très peu de toiles à structure, car j'avais voulu perfectionner mon métier. ~~Elle~~ ^{Elle} était indispensable pour surmonter des difficultés auxquelles je me heurtais. Après "à quand la détente", j'ai ~~eu~~ ^{eu} la chance de peindre la "série des abstraites" qui me permit de faire un pas en avant. Mais loin de me faciliter les choses ces dernières toiles me prouvèrent que mes sujets ~~ne~~ ^{ne} s'adaptent pas à mes préoccupations plastiques.

Je viens de terminer une nouvelle série de toiles. Pour la première fois, elle est tout à structure et traitée dans le style plat. ~~Je~~ ^{Je} ne sais pas à quel point elles valent mais je suis quand même heureux, car elles m'ont débarrassé d'un peu d'angoisse.

① Cette toile est conservée avec d'autres de la même époque dans un grenier à Paris.

STRUCTURE (Notes written upon looking at my most recent paintings)

All painting has structure. Medieval painting, like classical painting. In the former, the structure is exterior to the objects, as, for example, in the frame of a fresco. In the latter it is integrated with these and disappears.

In my most recent canvases the structure is the very essence of the composition and the subject. It is neither a frame nor is it a skeleton, crippled but concealed by the real, but a structure of ambiances in which everything that happens is conditioned by its existence.

It can serve to bring into being several atmospheres without changing anything in its own nature. This is true, for instance, in "the wall series." It can also totally change the nature of a canvas, in relation to another one, by introducing a slight modification. (Example: the series "Procession near a wall").

In every instance it creates an ambiance which is itself creative of spaces in which realities of abstractions, similar or dissimilar, can live autonomously.

The presence of these plastic cells within these spaces forms a contour indispensable in the structure of the paintings.

It was in 1953 that I painted a canvas for structure for the first time. I recall that it made people at Paris laugh, except for 2 or 3 friends who followed me for some time.

1. This canvas is stored with others from during the same period in an attic in Paris.

1 - STRUCTURE (Notes written upon looking at my most recent paintings)

In the same year I did a large picture two meters square which, out of discouragement, I sold for 5,000 francs to an abstract painter who bleached it and painted over it.

However, in spite of these unfortunate experiences, I wanted to keep on. In the last few years I have painted very few canvases for structure, but I wanted to perfect my craftsmanship. This was indispensable in order to surmount difficulties that I was coming up against. After "à quand la détente," I had the good fortune of painting the "abstraites series" [la série des abstraites], which allowed me to take a step forward. Not far from making things easier for me, these latest canvases have proved to me that my subjects were not adapted to my plastic preoccupations.

I have just completed a new series of canvases. For the first time they are all of them for structure and treated in the flat style. I don't know how good they are, but just the same I am happy, for they have relieved me a little of my anguish.

Dorcély's patrons and collectors

Postcard to Dorcély's patron
Keith Warner, SOVA.



Paris le 14 septembre 1958

Mon cher Warner,

Hier il y a beaucoup de soleil à Paris. Après le boulot, ma femme et moi nous sommes allés prendre le café, aux "Deux Magots", le grand café existentialiste. Nous nous sommes assis par hasard derrière une table sur laquelle se trouvait Calder.

Nous lui avons parlé de vous.

Il nous a dit que sa maison se trouvait tout au fond des bois et qu'il

fallait posséder une voiture pour y accéder. Il nous a dit qu'ensuite qu'il partirait pour les U.S.A. mardi prochain et que s'il avait le temps, il passerait nous voir avant son départ.

Calder est un homme dynamique et bon comme seuls les américains savent l'être quand ils le veulent. Il est très populaire en France et tous les passants le montraient du doigt.

Paris le 3 septembre 1958. (try to translate in english
my letter - important form)

Mon cher Warner,

J'ai reçu vos deux lettres. Incapable de vous dire une fois et ma confusion. Je vous remercie de tous les tracas que je vous ai donnés et j'espère que je me montrerais des fois de vous.

Je ne sais pas si vous avez reçu le 15 autres tableaux que je vous ai expédiés il ya un mois de cela. Vous si en parlant pas dans vos lettres et cela commence à m'inquiéter. Je serais très reconnaissant si vous m'écriviez à ce sujet la prochaine fois.

Merci pour les ventes. Merci pour les 500 \$.

Au lieu de m'expédier le chèque de 250 ou \$ que vous remettez à Mr. Borely, je vous prierais de l'envoyer en Haïti pour moi. Cela est indispensable pour mes enfants. Faites le chèque au nom de M. Antoine Michaud. C'est mon cousin qui a la charge des enfants et qui est un homme charmant. Voici son adresse.

Monsieur Antoine Michaud
ANTOINE MICHAUD
% Famille Borely
4 Rue de Félicité
A côté Cinema Montparnasse
Port-au-Prince
HAÏTI

J'ai ajouté dans l'enveloppe une lettre adressée à Mme Warner qui est mon meilleur critique. J'ai été très heu-

reux aussi d'apprendre qu'une de mes peintures va rentrer au Musée d'Art Moderne de New York. Je connais très bien le livre de Mr. Borely qui s'appelle PICASSO 50 ans de son art. C'était pendant un certain temps mon livre de chevet en Haïti. Mr. Borely est un homme avisé et il a compris mieux que personne ce que je voulais faire.

Léger est le premier et peut être le seul qui a vu que la meilleure façon de développer le cubisme était de substituer à la vue de "trois-quart" de Picasso, Braque et Léger, une vue de "face". Il a essayé de le faire. Mais il n'a pas pu parce qu'on fait peu de peinture murale en France et qu'on ne peut pas résoudre en théorie seulement de tels problèmes.

Léger est le premier aussi qui a compris qu'il fallait intégrer la couleur de manière "fautive" de voir la couleur dans son art.

C'est ceci fait que Léger est pour la jeune génération ce que Léonard fut pour les cubistes.

Eependant je dois dire franchement que Léger ne m'a pas directement influencé. J'ai découvert ses œuvres en 1950-53 à mon premier voyage en France. Hors, les problèmes que j'essaie de résoudre se trouvent déjà en germe dans ma peinture murale que j'ai réalisée au Centre d'Art en 1947. Cette première peinture murale est le tournant de ma carrière et je la considère comme très importante pour la compréhension de mon œuvre.

Cela me permet de vous dire 2 mots de la France. Vous avez été très fâché quand je vous ai dit que je voulais venir à Paris. Hors Paris est comme l'Italie au 17^e Siècle. Ce n'est plus les temps héroïques mais il faut y passer. Comme Rubens et Velasquez sont allés en Italie.

En 1951, quand je suis venue ici j'ai été présentée à tout le monde par Monsieur Béris dont la femme dirige la plus grande galerie de France. J'ai eu plusieurs conversations avec Picasso, Léger, Jacometti etc. Ce qui m'a frappé à cette époque c'était que les gens vivaient dans le passé et qu'il était inutile d'essayer de les faire bouger. Ce qui m'a surpris aussi c'est que j'avais déjà trouvé en Haïti tout ce qu'il me fallait.

Eependant par inadvertance j'ai toujours montré mes études et parfois je n'ai exposé que quelques tableaux faits dans mon atelier habituel. Maintenant je vois que cela ne peut plus me faire du tort et c'est pour cela que j'ai été en mesure de vous en parler et de vous faire confiance.

Mr. Kerson trouvera dans mon studio plus de 30 tableaux, il ya des petits et il ya des grands. Il prendra ce qu'il voudra.

Made et moi nous nous embrassons.

Merci Merci Merci de tout,
P. Dorely

P.S. - N'oubliez pas d'envoyer les 250 ou \$ à Monsieur Antoine Michaud. Il est encore impossible d'être en France.


Paris le 15 mars 1961

Chère Mme Warner,

Je voulais vous écrire hier mais j'ai passé toute la journée et toute la nuit à dessiner 4 tableaux sans grand succès. Je voulais essayer de peindre des personnages en mouvement qui seraient réalisés à l'aide d'une seule ligne noire. Il me semble que ce serait le meilleur moyen de rendre le mouvement.

Cependant, si il faudra que j'avance très légèrement car les modifications et qd sont très pénibles.

Nous avons complètement oublié l'exposition de Fort Lauderdale. Aussi c'a été une très grande surprise pour nous. J'étais comme toujours inquiet de ne pas avoir de vos nouvelles. Nicole me rassurait




Nicole et moi,

« Quand Mme Warner n'écrivait pas, dit-elle, c'est qu'elle nous prépare une belle surprise. » En effet, la surprise a été de taille. Merci pour l'aide que vous nous apportez. Nous avons calculé que cela nous permettrait de tenir 3 mois. Nicole est devenue très forte en acrobatie.

Nous avons invité plusieurs personnes à venir voir nos toiles. Toutes s'attendaient à voir des toiles abstraites. Elles pensent que nous sommes fous de croire encore dans le figuratif.

Je ne suis pas de ceux qui je recommencerais aussitôt que possible. En attendant un nouveau marchand je peins, je peins. Il est malheureux que les gens comme vous qui savent ce que je fais habitent si loin. Je serais heureux de vous montrer mon studio et les toiles de temps en temps. Il faut venir un jour à Paris. Il faut déjà très beau et un peu moins frais. J'espère qu'il en est de même à Vermont, Mais encore une fois

R. Dault



P.S. Si vous avez édité un petit catalogue je serais heureux d'en avoir 2 ou 3 comme souvenir.

List of Dorcély's american collectors

edited in Roland Dorcély
exhibition catalogue,
Edward Banker gallery,
Westport (CT), 1960. SOVA.

COLLECTORS WHO OWN DORCELY PAINTINGS

Mr. Enrico Donati	New York City
Mr. Paul England	New York City
Miss Gloria Gaston	New York City
Dr. and Mrs. Hyams	New York City
Mr. David Kydal	New York City
Mr. Jack Lindsay	Fort Wayne, Indiana
Miss Laura Nadal	Chicago, Illinois
Mr. Waldo Sessions	Grafton, Massachusetts
Mr. Quentin Ueberhoffer	Coral Gable, Miami
Ambassador Lue Fouche	Washington, D. C.
David O. Selznick	Los Angeles, California
Several murals in his home	in Los Angeles
Mrs. Vilhjalmur Stefansson	Hanover, New Hampshire
Dartmouth College	Hanover, New Hampshire
Keith Warner	Norwich, Vermont
Mrs. Edith Efrom	New York City
Nelson Rockefeller	New York City
Museum of Modern Art	New York City
Francis Sears	Boston, Massachusetts
Francis Merrill	Norwich, Vermont
Sheila Miller	Hanover, New Hampshire
Martin R. King	Cleveland, Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. Fishbein	New York City
Johns W. Hopkins 3rd	New York City
Mrs. Arthur Field	Paris, France, Quai de Passy
Parker Start	Hanover, New Hampshire
Lou Noll	Hanover, New Hampshire
Mr. and Mrs. Churchill Lathrop	Hanover, New Hampshire
Karen West	Hanover, New Hampshire
Musee d'Art Modern	Paris, France

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Letter to Keith Warner

on his meeting with
Kahnweiler, April 24,
1959. SOVA.

Paris le 24 avril 1959

Mon cher Warner,

Je suis arrivé ici ce matin. J'ai reuni mon courage à deux mains et j'ai été voir Mr Kahnweiler, dont je vous ai déjà parlé et qui est depuis 50 ans le plus grand marchand de Paris.

Contrairement à ce que je m'imaginai, il m'a bien reçu. J'avais apporté des photos et la liste de collectionneurs qu'il a attentivement regardés.

Il a parlé à peu près une heure, et j'espère ne pas me tromper en resumant comme suit ses opinions:

a) Il m'a dit qu'il suit depuis longtemps mon travail et lui d'autres peintres antillais et latino-américains. Il n'a jamais voulu les vendre dans sa galerie car il est sûr qu'il ne trouverait pas ici en Europe l'appui qu'il a trouvé pour lancer des cubistes.

b) Il estime qu'il y a une seule possibilité, c'est de lancer l'artiste en accord avec les U.S.A. Il a cité l'exemple de Portinari au Brésil et il a laissé entendre que je pourrais ~~réaliser~~ réaliser autant.

c) Il m'a dit qu'il a deux représentants presque officiels aux U.S.A. Ce sont Mr Kerson et Mme Saldenberg. Mr Kerson vend pour lui près de 80% de sculptures exportées aux U.S.A. et Mme Saldenberg s'occupe des peintures.

d) Il est au courant par une tierce personne de la visite que Mr Kerson voulait me faire. Il m'a proposé de reprendre les conversations avec Kerson et d'essayer de les faire aboutir.

Je lui ai répondu que je ne pouvais lui donner mon accord avant de vous avoir consulté, et ait donné tout ce que je vous dois et tout ce que vous avez dépensé pour me faire un nom.

Il m'a répondu qu'il me comprenait parfaitement, mais qu'il ne pouvait pas faire mieux.

Voilà en quelques mots ce qu'il a dit. J'ai sauté hâtivement les détails insignifiants.

Mon impression personnelle est qu'il a été très surpris par tout ce que j'ai réalisé depuis que j'ai travaillé avec vous. Il voudrait me vendre dans sa galerie mais il ~~me semble pas~~ ~~me semble pas~~ veut absolument avoir un partenaire aux U.S.A.

J'aimerais savoir ce que vous pensez de tout cela. Mr Kahnweiler est un homme considérable en Europe. Monsieur Barr qui le connaît très bien peut vous renseigner à son sujet. En ce qui concerne Mr Kerson j'ai été déçu par son attitude. Je ne voudrais rien faire avec lui sans avoir votre opinion.

De toute façon si cette histoire ne vous plaît pas il reste Mr Maeght qui est le marchand de Chagall, Matisse, Jacometti etc. C'est lui qui vend pour Calder. C'est le rival de Mr Kahnweiler. Je ne le connais pas, mais avec une lettre d'introduction j'irais facilement le voir. Je ne sais pas si Miss Miller le connaît.

Mon visite à Mr Kahnweiler m'a donné beaucoup de courage. Je suis beaucoup moins pessimiste. Si je pourrais rester un mois et demi ici, je suis sûr que j'arriverais à tirer définitivement les choses au clair.

On m'a donné l'adresse de 5 marchands Suisses. Si je n'arrive à rien à Paris je vais essayer d'obtenir au moins des expositions là-bas pour la saison prochaine. Je m'arrangerais pour ne pas payer les frais.

J'ai été pendant mon passage à Rome voir un petit marchand Suisse. Quand il a vu mon dossier il a été très intimidé. Il m'a parlé respectueusement et je ne savais comment réagir. Malheureusement il est comme les petits marchands de New York il n'a pas de capital, mais il serait prêt à exposer.

Ecrivez-moi par retour de courrier si vous le pouvez.

Merci de tout vos conseils, je n'irais jamais de moi-même voir un homme comme Kahnweiler. Guidez-moi encore une fois et dites-moi si je fais des stupidités.

Bonne nuit à Mme Warner

et affection à vous deux -

Roland Dorval
% Louise L'ébris
47, Rue de Monceau
PARIS - VIII^e
FRANCE

Paris le 2 mai 1959

Mon cher Warner,

J'ai été mangé jeudi dernier chez les Leiris. Ils m'ont beaucoup questionné à propos de vous et se sont beaucoup intéressés à mon cas. Toutefois ils n'ont pas changé d'avis. Ils pensent toujours que c'est mieux à l'heure actuelle d'être lancé à New-York avant de l'être à Paris.

Ils veulent absolument me remettre en contact avec Kusun et pensent que c'est la meilleure solution. Ils sont partis avec les Marsons pour la Belgique. Ils ne reviendront pas avant le 10. Mr Kusun doit être à Paris à la même date.

J'ai été aussi chez Mr et Mme Field. Madame Field est vraiment un numéro. Elle m'a dit qu'elle doit aller voir un conservateur des livres avant de prendre une décision. Elle a été déçue parce que j'habite Florence et elle voudrait que j'habite Paris.

Elle a beaucoup de tableaux chez elle. La plupart sont fort mauvais sauf un Chagall et un Lorrain. Elle ne me paraît pas une personne qui comprenne très bien la peinture moderne et je suis sûr qu'elle ne peut pas convaincre un collectionneur sérieux.

Néanmoins j'attends avant de prendre une décision. Je ne sais pas encore ce qu'elle va me proposer. Je dois la téléphoner le 5 ou 6 mai.

D'une façon générale, il me faut prolonger mon séjour à Paris. Je suis très inquiet car je n'avais pas prévu que je resterais aussi longtemps à Paris et que cela me coûterait autant.

Dorcély's exhibitions

Dartmouth College, Carpenter Galleries, Hanover (NH), 1959

Press review by Edna Warner at the occasion of Dorcély's show in Dartmouth College, Carpenter Galleries, Hanover (NH), 1959. SOVA.

Views of Dorcély's show in Dartmouth College, Carpenter Galleries, Hanover (NH), 1959. SOVA.

Hanover Gazette
(3/17/59)

ART GALLERY EXHIBIT

Roland Dorcély, 24 year old Haitian, an artist who dares to be himself, will open his first American one man show in the Carpenter Galleries of Dartmouth College on March 4.

From a primitive background he has developed a dignity with humor and cultured taste.

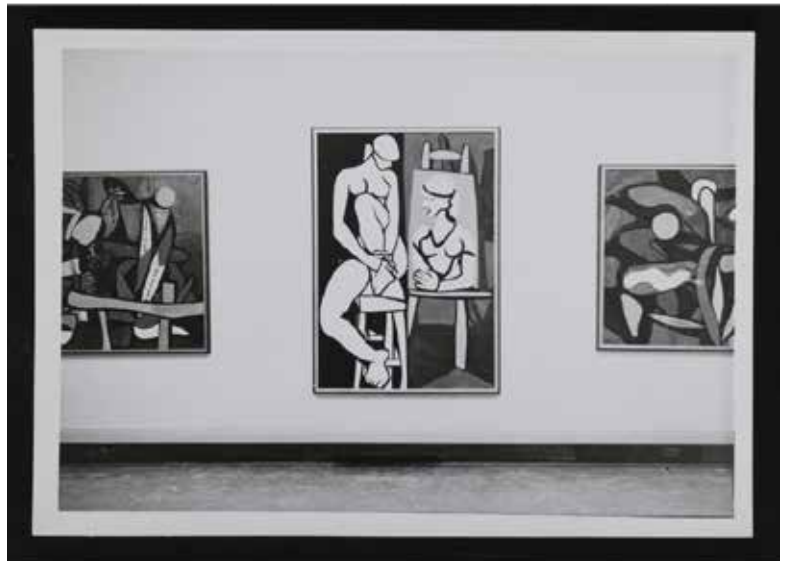
Dorcély has lived briefly in both this country and France but went back to Haiti to paint. His real love is for his people, his tropical island home, and his little wooden chair which appears in many of his paintings.

He draws his subject matter from the life he sees around him in his native land. Compositions of human figures interest him mostly and are probably his strongest forte, although he has done some rather original abstractions in a sort-of decorative design style. He needs no studio models. A woman having her hair straightened (La Coiffeur), a man selling flowers (L'Homme et Fleur), a woman washing her feet in a basin (La Foyette), two fond sisters, all serve him as interesting subjects. He is an expert draftsman and also shows a sensitive feeling for composition. His handling of foreshortening gives his painting a feeling of depth in space while at the same time staying within the flat surface of the picture plane.

The colors Dorcély uses are typically Haitian: clean, bright, and daring, but he uses them with taste and restraint. He breaks up backgrounds and figures into design to achieve the effect and balance he desires. His line is direct and positive, though he adds a little textural pattern to relieve the severity. He paints on a large scale with a simple, forthright style all his own.

Dorcély's paintings are causing quite a stir of excitement in New England. This group will be shown in New York and in Washington, D.C. following the close of the exhibit here on March 21.

Edna Warner



Paris, Galerie Berri-Lardy, 1960

Invitation for the opening
of Dorcély's show at Galerie Berri-Lardy,
Paris, 1960.

La Galerie Berri-Lardy a l'honneur de vous inviter
au vernissage de l'exposition
des peintures récentes de

DORCELY

le mardi 19 janvier 1960 de 17 h. à 20 h.
exposition du 19 janvier au 9 février.

4 rue des Beaux-Arts, Paris 6 - Tél. : Odéon 52-19

DIRECTION LIVENGOOD

Picture taken during the opening
of his show at Galerie Berri-Lardy, Paris, 1960. Roland
Dorcély is standing in the background.



Picture taken during the opening

3. of his show at Galerie Berri-Lardy, Paris, 1960.
Michel Leiris is standing at the right.



Press reviews on Dorcély's 1960 show in Paris, Gallery Berri-Lardy

"As a young painter and poet from Haiti, extraordinarily smart and free-minded, Roland Dorcély shows for the first time in Paris some of his paintings. One might regret the place is too small: Roland Dorcély is above all a fresco painter. He decorated large surfaces in Port-au-Prince, where he is considered the most significant and modern artist in Haiti."

Alain Jouffroy, *Roland Dorcély*, in *Le Journal des Arts*, February 3-9, 1960.
Translation: M. Garraut.

"If you can see only one film in the course of your life, I think you should see *Le Dernier Rivage*; but if you can see only one exposition in the course of your week, then go to see Dorcély's. It is Léger and Matisse working in stained glass, Klee plunging into frescoes, Miro creating cartoons; it may be all that, but above all it is Dorcély, the young Haitian painter of thirty who declares: "I don't paint very much and, under the influence of the circles I move in, I have no interest in anything that could lead me to exhibit or sell my work." This explains why, even though he sold his first painting at age 17, he had never shown more than one painting at a time in Paris.

On entering the gallery you experience a real shock, and that is rare. You may, of course, try to analyse why this is, but the first impression remains profound ; a brutal enchantment. There are landscapes, "compositions" drawn with ease, an extraordinary ease. A concerted exuberance, a well-orchestrated brilliance, a marvelous crystallization of the light of a landscape, its flavor and rhythm. Bold copious brush strokes and flowing black lines wind around objects, creating here the intertwined branches of a tree, there the suggestion of a figure, or of hollow space. Dorcély, in this basic inscribing of his canvases uses many colors but he does not superimpose one upon the other. They are authentic colors; the nudes are frankly pink, the trees green and the shafts of light infinitely white and yet there is nothing frivolous about it. Dorcély has summed up a bit of his universe. From it he has drawn images full of warmth, which doubtless get their savor from the exuberance of Haitian traditions, but which at the same time incorporate central elements of contemporary painting. There is a marvelous depth in his seemingly "compartmentalized" art.

M.T. Maugis, "On Roland Dorcély's Paris Exhibition – at Gallery Berri-Lardy" in *Les Lettres Françaises*, February 3, 1960.
Translation: J. Kumin.

Cover of *Neuf peintres neufs*
exhibition catalogue, Galerie du Cercle,
Paris, 1960. SOVA.



Work by **Roland Dorcély** and text by French writer Alain Jouffroy in Neuf peintres neufs exhibition catalogue, Galerie du Cercle, Paris, 1960. SOVA.



DORCÉLY

ROLAND DORCÉLY

Né le 18 novembre 1930 à Port-au-Prince (Haïti).

Expositions : City Art Center (Port Landrécht, U.S.A.), *Paulhan & Collège*
Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1959; Galerie St-Germain, Galerie Berni-Landré, Galerie Espace (Paris),
Salon de Mai 1958.

A peint onze fresques à Port-au-Prince dans des édifices publics.

Voyageur et explorateur de notre société depuis douze ans, Roland Dorcély vient de revenir de Guinée. Après avoir visité les États-Unis, l'Italie, et quelques autres pays d'Europe, il ne cesse d'interroger et de percer à jour les secrets d'une civilisation qui, de Michel-Ange à Picasso, a cru détenir la clé essentielle de l'esprit. Mais l'itinéraire créateur de Dorcély, qui lui a permis de comprendre les problèmes qui se posent à un peintre moderne, le conduit sur la route des découvertes.

Poète, Roland Dorcély ne se contente pas de transformer les êtres et les choses en mythes. Il les cerne de tous côtés, comme si l'intelligence poétique devait les assiéger pour les sauver d'un désastre prosaïque. Il les enveloppe et les désagrège jusqu'à en tirer un cri monumental : le cri de l'homme qui pourrait voir la totalité de l'univers en une seconde. Ainsi l'irremplaçable beauté du monde rejait-elle de sa propre destruction. Réel, imaginaire et surréel collaborent ainsi dans l'œuvre de Dorcély à une reconstruction convulsive de la peinture. Tous les avatars lui sont proches.

Alain JOUFFROY.

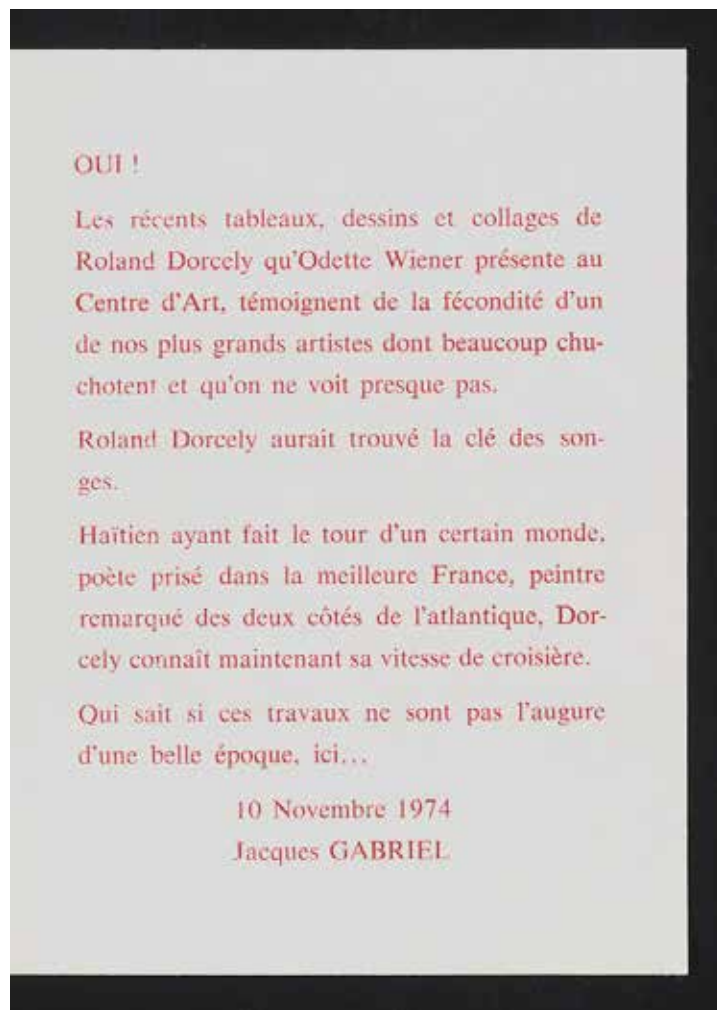
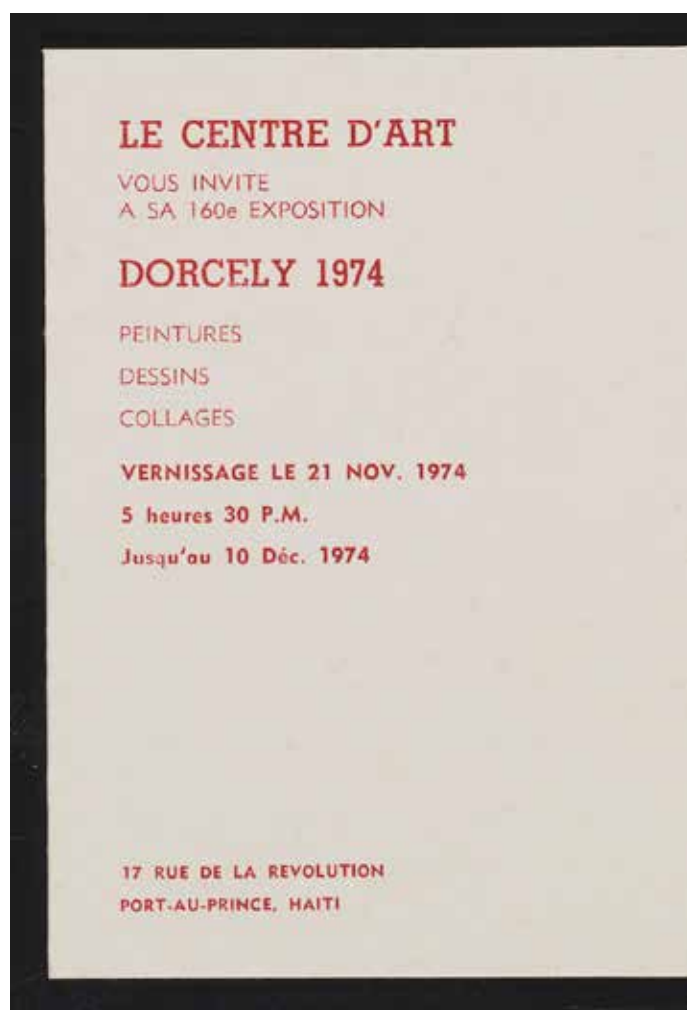
Poster of Dorcély's show
at the galerie Espace, Paris, 1962.
© Archives of the Art Centre,
Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



Centre d'art, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1974

Cover and text

by painter Jacques Gabriel
in Dorcély 1974, Art Centre,
Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1974. SOVA.



Centre d'art, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1974

Cover and pages

of *Roland Dorcély* exhibition catalogue,
Fort Lauderdale Museum of Arts,
Fort Lauderdale (FL), 1975.
Exhibition catalogue. SOVA.



PAINTINGS ROLAND DORCELY

Fort Lauderdale Museum of the Arts

january 29 through february 23, 1975

Some works are for sale.
Prices upon request.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Fort Lauderdale Museum of the Arts would like to thank Mrs. Charles E. Allen for her invaluable assistance with the preparation for this exhibition.

Cover and pages

of Roland Dorcély exhibition catalogue,
Fort Lauderdale Museum of Arts,
Fort Lauderdale (FL), 1975.
Exhibition catalogue. SOVA.



10. Lumiere Bleu

8. Deux Nus



COVER: Jungle Pattern

INTRODUCTION

THE NAIVE TRADITION IN HAITIAN PAINTING AND THE FRENCH MODERN INFLUENCE

It is not so unusual to find two completely different styles of painting emerging in Haiti at the same time, when one takes into consideration the historical background and the make up of the population. The island of Hispaniola is divided into two parts: Dominican Republic (Spanish speaking) and Haiti (Speaking French or Creole). The island was first inhabited by Arawak Indians. These people were reduced to bondage and decimated by hard labor under the Spaniards. The Indian population was subsequently replaced by Negro slaves imported from Africa. In 1597 the island fell to France and became her most prosperous colony through the cultivation of sugar cane. The slave trade grew to enormous proportions. In 1791, inspired by the French Revolution, the black slaves revolted against their French masters and the mulattoes supported their rebellion. A murderous war developed. Finally, the whites were routed and a Republic proclaimed. In 1804 Haiti thus became the second American state and the first black nation to gain independence from European colonialism. The country was occupied by the United States as a protectorate 1917-1934.

In view of the absence of visual arts among the black masses the sudden emergence of Haitian naive painting as a strong body of work in the 1940's is a startling event. With a total population of about five million people, 90% are illiterate peasants of direct African descent and 10% are mulattoes who comprise the French-speaking elite. The black peasant masses have retained a distinctly African consciousness. Dancing and music are their direct artistic heritage, African rhythms being preserved intact. The elite mulatto classes consider their heritage to be French but some African influence remains.

The 1940's were eventful and productive years for Haiti. Creative people in many fields were on the scene to prepare the way for the Bi-Centennial Exposition commemorating the founding of Port au Prince. Shanties were cleared along the beautiful bay, new hotels, parks, exposition buildings, a theater, and a casino were built. Old hotels were redecorated and refurbished. Katherine Duncan came to Haiti to live and trained several dance groups to interpret voodoo dances for entertainment at various hotels.

Solcon Rodman published a book called "Renaissance in Haiti". Four years earlier the Centre d'Art was organized by Dewitt Peters, an American painter and teacher. A small group of Haitian intellectuals were also interested. The original purpose of this project was to provide art materials and instruction as well as exhibition space and promotion of sales for the artists. The initial efforts of the Centre were aimed at promoting "sophisticated" Haitian artists among the Port au Prince mulatto elite riding apparatus, more French than Haitian oriented. However, the naive painting caught on and began a long period of popularity. Such paintings were relatively cheap and quantities of it were available. "Tourism" came to Haiti with the Exposition and remained over a decade.

ROLAND DORCELY

One of the artists representing the more sophisticated style of Haitian painting was Roland Dorcély. This group aligned with the traditions of Western art, more specifically, the French Moderns.

Born in Port au Prince, Haiti, of poor but highly cultured parents, Dorcély attended a French religious secondary school where his favorite studies were philosophy, literature and poetry as well as painting. He once remarked: "Rationality and race have had little influence upon me. This is not to say that I do not consider myself a Haitian black, quite the contrary. I find it something as natural as wearing a shirt and there is no occasion for making a to-ta-to about that."

In 1948 David Selznick, attracted by Dorcély's mural painting in Port au Prince, commissioned him to do murals and wood painting in California. With the funds from this project he went to Paris to study at the Beaux Arts. Later he returned to Haiti and continued to work with a passion.

Shortly after his first one-man show in the United States, at the Carpenter Gallery, Dartmouth College, he returned to Paris where he continued to work vigorously developing a more sophisticated expression and a more fluid line without losing his primitive simplicity.

Dorcély draws his subject matter from the life he sees around him in his native land. Composition of human figures interest him most and are probably his strongest forte, although he has done some rather original abstractions in a decorative style.

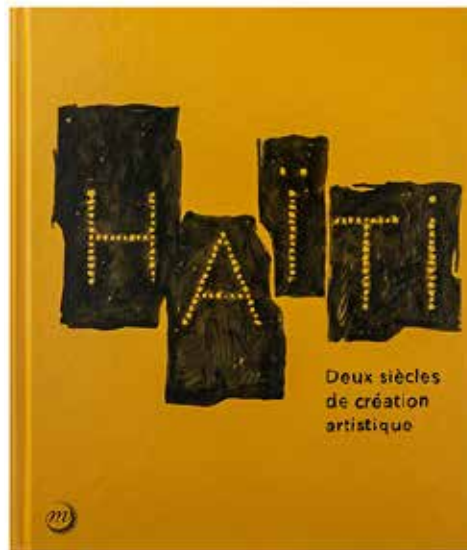
The colors he uses are typically Haitian; clean, bright, and daring, but he uses them with taste and restraint. He breaks up backgrounds and figures into design to achieve the effect and balance he desires. His line is direct and positive, though he adds a little textural pattern to relieve the severity. He paints on a large scale with a simple, forthright style all his own.

Roland Dorcély's work gives a sense of returning to the classical in its qualities of expert craftsmanship, fine composition, well-organized pattern and creative use of color. Its appeal lies in its honesty, its directness and brilliance rather than "the accidental", novelty of technique, or dream images.

Deux siècles de création artistique, Réunion des musées nationaux-Grand Palais, Paris, 2014

Cover of the exhibition catalogue

Haïti, Deux siècles de création artistique,
Réunion des musées nationaux-Grand Palais,
Paris, 2014.



2. Exhibition view

At the rear, *Le Mur de la vie* by Roland Dorcély,
Oil on canvas, 193 x 129 cm, circa 1956-1961,
Hôtel Villa Creole, legs Lina Wiener Assad



Roland Dorcély

**Born in 1930
in Port-au-Prince (Haiti)
Died in 2017
in New York (Usa)**

Personal exhibitions

- 1949** Centre d'Art, 66th exhibition, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (with Luckner Lazard)
1950 Centre d'Art, 73rd exhibition, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1956 Hotel Villa Créole, Pétionville, Haiti (with Luckner Lazard)
Hotel Ibo Lélé, Pétionville, Haiti (with Nicole Dorcély)
1957 Hotel Villa Créole, Pétionville, Haiti
1958 Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Usa
1959 Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Usa
1960 Galerie Berri-Lardy, Paris, France
Edward Banker Gallery, Westport, Connecticut, Usa
Galerie Espace, Paris, France
1968 Hotel Villa Créole, Pétionville, Haiti
1974 Centre d'Art, 160th exhibition, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1975 Fort Lauderdale Museum of the Arts, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Usa
1982 Haitian-American Institute, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Musée d'art haïtien, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (with Nicole Dorcély)
1990 Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
2019 Galerie Loeve&Co, Paris, France
Loevenbruck, Frieze, New York, Usa
-

Group shows

- 1948** Centre d'Art, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1949 Centre d'Art, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1950 *Coup d'œil à travers la peinture en Haïti*
Palais des Beaux-Arts, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1952 Maison internationale, Cité universitaire de Paris, France
1956 *Quelques œuvres des principaux artistes du Foyer des Arts Plastiques*
Foyer des Arts Plastiques, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Galerie Brochette, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1958 *9th Salon de la Jeune Peinture*
Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
14th Salon de Mai
Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
1959 Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, Usa
Galerie Brochette, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1960 *Anti-Procès, Manifestation Collective*
Galerie des Quatre Saisons, Paris
(travelling exhibition to Galleria Il Canale, Venice
and Galleria Berva, Milan)
1962 *9 peintres neufs*
Galerie du Cercle, Paris, France
1973 *L'œuvre de quelques-uns de nos peintures contemporains*
Musée d'art haïtien, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1974 *La peinture haïtienne à travers la collection de nos médecins*
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
1975-1976 *Pintura Primitiva y Moderna Haitiana*
Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico

Group shows (continued)

- 1983** *Los maestros de la pintura haitiana*
Casa de Francia, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Peintures haitiennes – hier... et aujourd'hui
Mupanah, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 1984** *Les premiers artistes*
193rd exhibition, Centre d'Art, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Quand les peintres dessinent
Musée d'art haïtien, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Festival Art Distributors, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 1985** Festival Art Distributors, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 1986** *Quatre peintres pour l'éternité*
Atelier Jérôme, Pétionville, Haiti
- 1988** *Aspects*
Mairie du 6th arrondissement, Paris, France
- 1991** *Peintres d'hier à aujourd'hui*
Institut Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 1995** *Haiti: Sueno Creaciò, Posesión, Locura*
Bellas Artes, Maracaibo, Venezuela
Cinquante années de peinture en Haiti
Musée d'art haïtien, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Organization of American States, Washington D.C., Usa
- 1996** Festival Art Distributors, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 1997** Festival Art Distributors, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 1998** *Haitian Art and Voodoo*
Retretti Art Center, Pinkaharju, Finland
Formes et couleurs sur papier
Mupanah, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 2004** *Miracle de la peinture haitienne:*
60 ans d'arts dans 200 ans d'indépendance
Galerie Nader, Pétionville, Haiti
- 2010** *Saving Grace: A Celebration of Haitian Art*
Affirmation Arts, New York, Usa
- 2014-2015** *Haiti, deux siècles de création artistique*
Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, France
-

Public collections

Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida, Usa
NSU Art Museum, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Usa
Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, Usa
Hood Museum, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Usa
Brooklyn Museum, New York, Usa
Museum of Modern Art, New York, Usa
Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris, France

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