

**Pierre SOULAGES**

*Peinture 110 x 160 cm, octobre 1956*

Oil on canvas - 114 x 162 cm

Signed bottom right

Signed and dated on the back, 25th October 1956

# SOULAGES.

## 1950s

### GALERIE PASCAL LANSBERG

EXHIBITION FROM 10 OCTOBER TO 16 NOVEMBER 2024

OPENING NIGHT ON 10 OCTOBER FROM 5:30PM

GALERIE PASCAL LANSBERG  
36, RUE DE SEINE  
75006 PARIS

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## SOULAGES. 1950S

Pierre Soulages (1919 - 2022) is without question France's favourite artist: a retrospective of his work held at the Pompidou Centre in 2009 drew record-breaking crowds; the Soulages museum in Rodez has become a must-see destination and in 2019, his exhibition in the Louvre confirmed his status as one of the greats. The tributes paid to him at national level after his death at the age of 102 cemented his place in France's artistic pantheon once and for all.

For more than 30 years now, the Galerie Pascal Lansberg has specialized in the New School of Paris, and as such, passionately champions Pierre Soulages' work. Maurice, Pascal's father, was lucky enough to be the proud owner of a key painting from 1957 before he had even founded the gallery. This work is now kept at the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art. He commented that this remarkable work had the effect of 'taking all his worries away'. He loved the sense of escapism that came as his gaze fell upon it each evening after a long day's work...

This exhibition represents the third time the gallery has paid tribute to Soulages, following two exhibitions organized during the artist's lifetime in 2009 and 2016. This posthumous homage focuses upon his works from the early part of his career, from the 1950s, which are particularly sought after by collectors. These predate his famous 'Outrenoir' (Beyond Black) period, which began in 1979.

In the immediate postwar period, Pierre Soulages blazed a trail for a completely new and very striking abstract approach characterized by the exquisitely meticulous painterly gesture, the exploration of the striking use of chiaroscuro and eye-catching colours.

This is a ground-breaking exhibition which will be sure to surprise! Most of the works on show are privately owned and are therefore unknown to the art market and the general public. A dozen or so iconic paintings will be on display, including some executed on a spectacularly large scale, as well as some works on paper including an exceptional example of 'walnut ink' work. This medium was of particular interest to Soulages due to the contrasts between opacity and transparency it creates. Collectors and the general public can try their hand at the art of distinguishing between works created in say 1952 and one painted in 1957, as the way in which Soulages composed his work, his hand movements and the techniques he used changed over the course of the 1950s.



**Pierre SOULAGES**  
*Peinture 162 x 114cm, 29 août 1958*  
162 x 114 cm  
Signed bottom right  
1958

## PIERRE SOULAGES A PORTRAIT

Pierre Soulages was born on 24th December 1919 in Rodez and died on Tuesday 25th October 2022 at the age of 102. From a very young age he was fascinated by Romanesque art and prehistoric times. He started his career as a painter in this far-flung part of the country not yet reached by the latest artistic trends.

Aged 18, he travelled to Paris to train as a teacher of drawing and to prepare for the entrance exam for the École Nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. He was accepted by the school but, convinced of the poor quality of the teaching, he turned down their offer and returned immediately to Rodez. During this brief stay in Paris, he visited the Louvre and saw exhibitions by Cézanne and Picasso which had a profound impact upon him.

Called up for military service in 1940, he was demobilized in 1941. Paris was under occupation, so he moved to Montpellier and was a frequent visitor to the Musée Fabre.

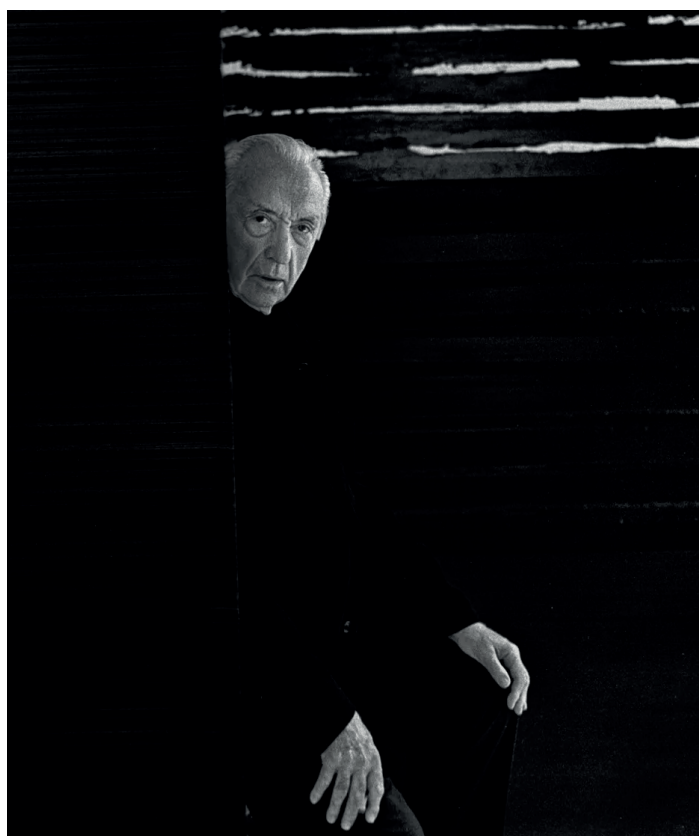
With the subsequent occupation of Montpellier, he led the life of a fugitive in his attempt to avoid conscription for STO (compulsory work service), meaning that he was unable to paint.

It wasn't until 1946 that he was able to paint full-time. He settled in the suburbs of Paris. Black was the dominant colour of his abstract, dark paintings. They immediately drew attention to themselves due to their striking contrast with the semi-figurative, vibrantly colourful paintings of the post-war period. He found a studio in Paris, on rue Schoelcher, near Montparnasse. In 1948, he took part in exhibitions in Paris and elsewhere in Europe, notably under the title 'Französische abstrakte malerei' in several German galleries. He was by far the youngest of this small band of painters, which included the first masters of abstract art such as Kupka, Domela, Herbin and others. The poster for this exhibition featured one of his black and white paintings.

In 1949, he was the subject of a solo exhibition in Paris at the Galerie Lydia Conti and took part in group exhibitions in New York, London, Sao Paulo and Copenhagen.

Between 1949 and 1952 he created three stage sets for plays and ballets. His first etchings were produced at the Atelier Lacourière.

Other group exhibitions that premiered in New York made their way to other US galleries. This happened with 'Advancing French art' (1951) and 'Younger European artists' at the Guggenheim Museum (1953), and 'The new Decade' at the



Pierre Soulages © RMN - Grand Palais - Raphaël Gaillarde

Museum of Modern Art (1955). His work was regularly exhibited at the Kootz Gallery, New York and in later years, at the Galerie de France, Paris.

From the early fifties onwards, his work was purchased by the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, the Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Tate Gallery, London, the Musée National d'art Moderne, Paris and the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro to name just a few...Over 230 of Pierre Soulages' paintings are currently on display in more than 110 galleries across six continents..

In 1960, the first Soulages retrospectives took place in galleries in Hanover, Essen, Zurich and the Hague.

Between 1966 and 1968, several new retrospectives of his work took place, most notably at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1966) where, for the first time, he suspended his canvases between the floor and ceiling using steel cables. In 1968 he created a ceramic tile mural in conjunction with the atelier Mégard for an office building in Pittsburgh.

In 1979 he exhibited his first monochrome paintings at the MNAM - Centre Georges Pompidou. These were designed to show variations in how light is reflected off black surfaces. The strikingly visual effect of light that arises from the difference between two distinct darknesses has great emotional power and offers tremendous scope for development. Later it will be called 'noir-lumière' (black light) and 'outrenoir' (ultra-black or beyond black).

Between 1987 and 1994, he designed 104 stained glass windows for the Abbey Church of Sainte-Foy in Conques.

Other works have appeared in which dynamism, space and light arise from the violent encounters between black and white across the entire expanse of the canvas, another kind of striking visual light effect.

He was the first living artist to be invited to exhibit his work at the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, followed by the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow (2001).

In 2005, as a mark of his attachment to his birthplace, Soulages and his wife Colette agreed to a marvellous donation to the Communauté d'agglomération du Grand Rodez: 500 works, including all his prints (etchings, lithographs, silkscreen prints), preparatory studies for the stained glass windows for the Conques abbey-church, paintings on canvas and paper (a unique collection featuring gouache, ink and walnut ink works), documents, books, photographs, film footage, letters and more...

In December 2012, Pierre Soulages and his wife made a new donation to the Communauté d'agglomération du Grand Rodez: 14 new paintings covering the period from 1946 to 1986. This donation was worth an estimated 6.8 million euros at the time. As a result, the Rodez-based museum houses almost all the artist's works from his least well-known periods to form the largest collection of Soulages' art anywhere in the world.

The Soulages museum in Rodez was opened in May 2014 with the inaugural temporary exhibition being 'Outrenoir en Europe,

musées et fondations' (Beyond Black in Europe, galleries and foundations).

In 2007, the Musée Fabre in Montpellier devoted an entire room to Soulages to display a gift of works made by the painter to the city. This donation included 20 paintings dating from 1951 to 2006, including major works from the 1960s, two large Outrenoir works from the 70s and several large polyptychs.

To mark his 90th birthday, the Centre Pompidou put on the largest retrospective it had ever devoted to a living artist in October 2009, covering more than 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space. In the same year, the Musée du Louvre exhibited a 300 × 236 cm painting by the artist dated 9th July 2000 in the Salon Carré of the Denon wing.

The 'Soulages XXIe siècle' (Soulages in the 21st century) exhibition held at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon and then the French Academy in Rome, comprised a selection of recent works created between 2000 and 2012, some of which had never been seen in public before.

In 2016, the Picasso Museum in Antibes put on 'Soulages. Papiers' which gathered together a large number of works from both public and private collections.

To mark the artist's hundredth birthday in 2019, numerous special events were organized in France and further afield. Soulages was also the subject of many new books and radio and television programmes.

His work was put on display in the Musée National d'Art Moderne in the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and in the Salon carré of the Louvre's Denon wing, the latter venue representing a mini retrospective which featured three new paintings dating from August and October 2019 (with dimensions of 390 x 130 cm).

## PRESENTING THE GALERIE PASCAL LANSBERG

The Galerie Pascal Lansberg was founded more than thirty years ago by Pascal and his father Maurice Lansberg, a great collector in his day. Located in the heart of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the gallery has remained faithful to its original vision and represents the different currents of postwar European Abstraction: lyrical abstraction, geometric abstraction and Art informel.

With the arrival of Pascal's daughter, Chloé Lansberg, the business now spans three generations. The gallery has featured important solo shows dedicated to Pierre Soulages, Hans Hartung, Victor Vasarely, Zao Wou-Ki and very recently, Serge Poliakoff.

Its participation in art fairs, the contribution it has made to museum exhibitions and above all, its exacting and impeccable taste have won it an international reputation and enabled it to build long-lasting relationships with the collectors it serves.



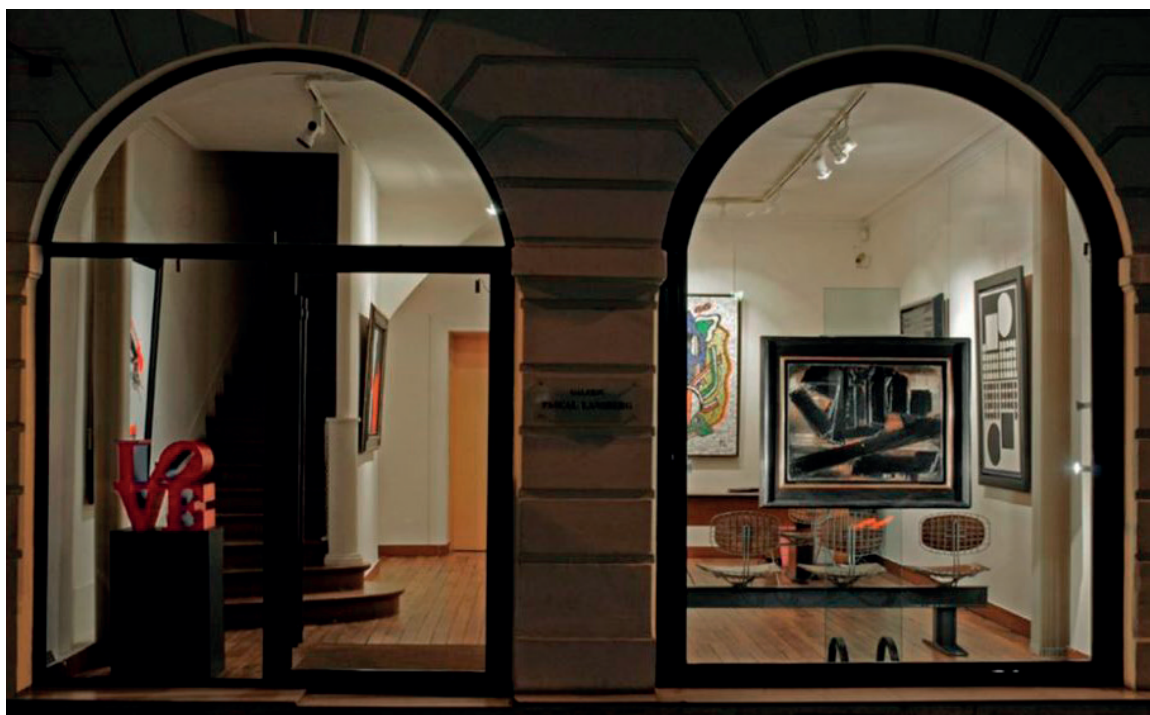
**Pierre SOULAGES**  
*Peinture 92 x 65 cm, 12 août 1959*  
Oil on canvas - 1959  
Signed bottom right





stages

## PRACTICAL INFORMAITON



### VENUE

GALERIE PASCAL LANSBERG  
36, rue de Seine  
75006 Paris

Exhibition runs from 10 October to 16 November 2024  
Tuesday to Saturday  
From 11:00am to 07:00pm

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