



Reynold Arnould

1919–1980

Reynold Arnould was born on December 7, 1919, in Le Havre, and moved as an infant with his family to Rouen. He was a child prodigy by any measure: at nine he was given his first exhibition at the Galerie Legrip in Rouen, and the following year entered the École des Beaux-Arts de Rouen. In 1933, the painter Jacques Émile Blanche painted his portrait, now held in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Rouen. By eighteen he had been admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris, where he befriended Maurice Denis and Émile Bernard. In 1938 he placed second for the Prix de Rome, and in 1939 won it outright with a painting titled *La Paix*.

The war interrupted his early career, but Arnould emerged from it still a young artist and already firmly rooted in the Parisian art world. On October 11, 1945, he married Marthe Bourhis, an Egyptologist trained at the École du Louvre and an artist in her own right. The couple traveled to the United States at the end of that year: Reynold on a mission to report on American painting during the war, Marthe on a lecture tour of Southern states on behalf of the Franco-American cultural relations program of the French Embassy in New York. In 1949 Arnould became director of an art school in Dallas, Texas, and subsequently taught at Baylor University in Waco before the couple returned to France.

Back in Paris, Arnould exhibited at the Salon d'Automne, the Salon des Tuileries, and, from 1949 to 1962, at the Salon de Mai, the major annual platform for the French avant-garde. The influential critic Frank Elgar championed his work, and he developed close friendships with Édouard Pignon, Léon Gischia, and Maurice Estève. His exhibition record through the late 1940s and 1950s is remarkable in its international breadth: New York (Galerie Passedoit, 1945; Durand-Ruel Gallery, 1949), London (Gimpel Fils, 1949), Dublin, Tokyo, Oslo, San Francisco, Washington, and the 1955 Biennale de São Paulo. In 1956 he participated in *Art Français Contemporain* at MOMA San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington. In 1960 he represented France at the Venice Biennale.

Through the early 1950s his work moved steadily away from figuration toward abstraction, the human form dissolving into what his mature work became: powerful lineal gestures and layered chromatic fields with clear affinities to the Italian Futurists in their energy and dynamism. This direction culminated in the landmark 1959 exhibition *Forces et Rythmes de l'Industrie* at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, financed by twelve major French companies, in which Arnould documented the industrial landscape of postwar France through sketches made on site, developing them into large near-abstract canvases that generated considerable critical debate about industrial patronage and the pictorial representation of modern labor.

In addition to his easel paintings, Arnould produced tapestry cartoons from 1961 to 1966, and in 1975 co-founded an Académie des arts de la rue with adviser Christian Chavanon and graphic designer Roger Excoffon, created to recognize advertising posters of artistic merit. A retrospective at the Galerie de France in 1969 surveyed forty years of portraits, and a major retrospective was held at the Grand Palais in 1983. To mark the centenary of his birth in 2019, exhibitions were held at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen and the Musée d'Art Moderne in Le Havre, alongside a new monograph by François Vatin and Gwenaële Rot. His work is held in the collections of the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris, and museums in Le Havre, Rouen, Besançon, London, Italy, Norway, and Switzerland. He is documented by the Centre Pompidou and listed in *Bénézit*.

Reynold Arnould died in Paris in 1980.