

“L’ENTREPRISE À L’ŒUVRE ” : THE FLINS PLANT DISPLAYS “LES CONSTRUCTEURS” BY FERNAND LÉGER

- **On Monday, November 3rd at the Flins site, Fleur Pellerin, French Minister of Culture and Communication, opened an exhibition featuring “Les Constructeurs”, a painting by Fernand Léger. The minister was accompanied by Mouna Sepehri, Executive Vice-President, Office of the CEO, and member of the Renault group Executive Committee.**
- **“Les Constructeurs” by Fernand Léger will be on show in the workshops between November 3 and 7 as part of an exceptional initiative by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, entitled “L’Entreprise à l’oeuvre”.**
- **Site employees will be able to discover this painting, which is closely linked to Renault’s history, through a specific organization put in place by site management.**

The Flins site will display “*Les Constructeurs*”, a work painted by Fernand Léger in 1950, from Monday, November 3rd to Friday, November 7th. This operation is part of an initiative by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, entitled “Business at work”. The aim is to bring culture into the workplace, in order to establish and develop a dialogue between the world of art and the world of business.

This exceptional exhibition, organized at the heart of a working industrial site, was opened on Monday, November 3rd by **Fleur Pellerin**, French Minister of Culture and Communication. She was welcomed to the Flins plant **Mouna Sepehri**, Executive Vice-President, Office of the CEO, and member of the Renault group Executive Committee.

The presence of “*Les Constructeurs*” on a production site – in this case the final assembly shop of Renault Flins – reflects the original intentions of the artist, Fernand Léger, who was keen to see his work displayed in industrial plants. This is not the first time the work has been displayed on a production site. In December 1953, Renault’s historic Boulogne-Billancourt site put it on show in one of the canteens as part of a cultural event for employees.

To enable all employees to discover this major work and meet the speakers from the Fernand Léger Museum in Biot

(south-east France), the plant has put in place a specific organization, compatible with the working hours and professional/personal activities of employees.

In keeping with the spirit of this exceptional event, the plant also wanted to pay tribute to other artists, past and present, with ties to the Flins site. As a result, employees will also be able to see two other exhibitions:

- to pay tribute to artists in the plant, an exhibition of photos dedicated to the frescos painted on the plant walls in the 1980s and 1990s will be shown throughout the operation;
- on the request of the plant, 12 contemporary artists from the Paris region will be presenting their vision of the Flins plant through 11 contemporary paintings created for this event.

L'Entreprise à Oeuvre

"*L'Entreprise à l'Oeuvre*" project organizes exhibitions of works from public collections on business premises. Up to ten works may be included, for a period of one week. For the 2014 event, the works presented were loaned by the Guimet Museum of Asian Art in Paris, the Fernand Léger Museum in Biot, the Marc Chagall Museum in Nice, the Renaissance Museum at the Château of Ecoen and the French National Centre for Visual Arts (CNAP). Each exhibition is based on a carefully designed scenography with mediation based on a range of initiatives (tour and talk, souvenir leaflets, web magazine) in association with works committees. The idea of making art accessible to all becomes a tangible reality.

In 1953, Fernand Léger decided to present his monumental work, "*Les Constructeurs*" in the canteen at the Renault Billancourt site. This same painting, this time at the Flins site, opens the exhibition on November 3 in the presence of the French Minister of Culture and Communication.

France's regional cultural affairs departments are also part of this program of exhibitions, which is supervised by *Réunion des musées nationaux – Grand Palais*, a public entity. The companies are partners in the program.

"*L'Entreprise à l'Oeuvre*" is part of the ministerial program "*Art & Entreprise*", which also includes artist residencies in industrial sites, and the framework agreement "Culture and the workplace", bringing together the French Ministry of Culture and a number of organizations representing more than nine thousand works committees or similar entities.

Renault and Art

Renault is the owner of a modern art collection compiled between 1967 and 1985, and given fresh impetus from 2011. It includes some 300 works by around thirty leading artists, including: Arman, Dubuffet, Tinguely and Vasarely. At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, these visionaries redefined the relations between art and modern society. This period of technical, cultural and social effervescence forged closer ties between two hitherto distant worlds: art and industry.

The Renault Collection was based on an unusual approach. Unlike a conventional corporate sponsorship, it did not seek to purchase completed works of art. The project pursued by the firm was both more ambitious and more pragmatic in its aims. It sought to promote active cooperation between groundbreaking artists and Renault, at that time an industrial powerhouse in a country in the throes of sweeping change

As part of this cooperation, Renault provided the artists with technical, logistical, human or financial support. In return, the artist gave the company part of the work produced. The adventure started with Arman, who was developing techniques based on objects taken from everyday life. He was immediately enthusiastic about working with Renault. In close contact with the company, he was able to discover new shapes and materials, like other artists after him.

This artistic workshop, the first of its type, paved the way for fruitful partnerships: César requested a supply of automotive parts for his expansions; Vasarely received expert input from Renault engineers on technical questions, while Dubuffet, Rauschenberg and Tinguely obtained supplies for their ironic comments on the waste of industrial society.

Although the artists who contributed to the collection enjoy global renown today, this was not necessarily the case when they worked with Renault. This shows just how bold the project was. It made Renault a pioneer in corporate sponsorship rather than just another art collector.

Today, the Renault Art Collection is displayed regularly in exhibitions all over the world, thus contributing to the company's renown.

More information on the Renault Art Collection:

<http://group.renault.com/passion/art-et-lifestyle/la-collection-d-art/>

Les Constructeurs (definitive version), 1950

Oil on canvas 300x 228 cm

Donated by Nadia Léger and Georges Bauquier, 1969

Fernand Léger National Museum, Biot Inv. 94001

In the same way as a production worker, the artist worked on the theme of builders: *"When I built 'Les Constructeurs', I did not make any artificial concessions. I got the idea driving to Chevreuse every evening. That's what I wanted to convey: the contrast between man and his inventions, between the worker and all this metal architecture, the iron, the scrap, the bolts and rivets. I used a technical approach to position the clouds but they provide a contrast...."* Starting from live sketches and a significant number of preliminary studies, the artist returns to a more realistic subject, a pretext for a direct form of art aimed first and foremost at ordinary workers. *"Les Constructeurs"* (definitive version) is the main and most accomplished work in a series of around a dozen works and several studies. Playing on colour and false perspective, Léger paints a scene marked out by girders soaring to infinity. Two moving objects add life to the composition: the rope in the forefront and the clouds at the back. Like acrobats, the builders defy the laws of balance. The painting was presented at the *Maison de La Pensée Française*, a cultural association, in 1951. However, Léger was keen to see what ordinary workers thought of his work and took it to the Renault site in Billancourt: *"I took my paintings of builders to the Renault site and hung them in a canteen. At midday, the men came in. They found my pictures amusing. I listened to them as I sadly downed my soup. Eight days later, I went back to eat in the canteen again. The atmosphere had changed... Who knows, maybe they found my pictures intriguing? One of the men said: 'You'll see. My mates will notice when your paintings have gone and there's just the bare wall. They'll realize exactly what your colours do'... I was really pleased!"*

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