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JEAN FAUTRIER

(Paris 1898 – 1964 Châtenay-Malabry)

FLEURS NOIRES, 1926

oil on canvas

81 x 65.5 cm

31 7/8 x 25 3/4 in.

Provenance

Collection Paul Guillaume, Paris;
Otto Schreiber, Ohio;
Wiener Kunstauktion, 21 April 1999, lot. 309;
Galerie Michael Haas, Berlin;
Galerie Michael Werner, Berlin.

Literature

Palma Bucarelli, 'Jean Fautrier. Pittura e materia', in *Il Saggiatore*, Milan, 1960, p. 52, ill. 293.

Erik Steffensen, *Jean Fautrier. Tidligt Maleri / Early Paintings*, exh. cat., Galleri Bo Bjerggaard, Copenhagen, 7 December 2000 - 10 february 2001.

Pierre Rosenberg, Fabrice Hergott, Éric Darragon, *The Michael Werner Collection. 'I sat Beauty on my knees [...] - And I reviled her.'*, ex. cat., p. 24, ill. 108, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 5 October 2012 - 3 March 2013, Walther König, 2012.

Christina Haas, *Jean Fautrier. 1898-1964*, ex. cat., Zürich, Galerie Haas, 2013, illustrated p. 11.

Jean-Paul Ameline, Toshio Yamanashi, Kazuo Amano, *Jean Fautrier*, ex. cat., Tokyo Station Gallery, 24 May-13 July 2014; Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, 20 July -15 August 2014; The National Museum of Art, Osaka, 27 August-7 December 2014, The Tokyo Shimbun, 2014, illustrated p. 69.

Exhibitions

Fautrier. Early Paintings, Galleri Bo Bjerggaard, Copenhagen, 07 December 2000 – 10 February 2001.

Jean Fautrier, Tokyo Station Gallery, 24 May-13 July 2014; Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, 20 July -15 August 2014; The National Museum of Art, Osaka, 27 August-7 December 2014.

La Collection Michael Werner, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 5 October 2012 – 3 March 2013

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This stunning painting by French artist Jean Fautrier features a bouquet of flowers – referencing Old Master still lifes – as if transformed into fireworks in a night sky. Colour is used sparingly; the flowers, heightened by contours scratched into the surface, seem to glow, in powerful contrast with the deep blue and black background.

Fleurs noires belongs to a series of still lifes, nudes and landscapes painted by French artist Jean Fautrier in 1926-1927, which all feature subjects captured, as if evanescent, against dark backgrounds. Fautrier himself described this short-lived period, lasting approximately a year, as his '*période noire*'. It had been preceded by stylistic explorations on paper and canvas, where the artist experimented both with texture and stark colour contrasts. The period culminated in the exhibition of *Sanglier écorché* (Fig.1) at the Salon d'Automne in 1927, and by 1928 his palette was already beginning to lighten and shift towards greys.

Jean Fautrier was born in Paris in 1898, but moved to London at the age of 10 to join his mother after the death of his father. He was trained at the Royal Academy Schools from the age 16, but soon found the teaching too rigid and, after a disappointing stint at Slade School, decided to forgo academic training and concentrate on learning painting on his own through visits at the Tate. Called up to fight in France in the First World War, he was discharged in 1921 and soon started exhibiting in Paris, first at Galerie Fabre and then at Galerie Visconti. Throughout the 1920s, Fautrier continuously experimented with oil painting while also creating etchings and engravings. In his time at the Royal Academy he had gained a faultless technique, which became characteristic of his entire oeuvre. From his early, brooding figurative paintings – such as *Fleurs noires* –, his oeuvre gradually evolved towards abstract gestures and shapes, where texture and colour remained central. He is best recognised for his involvement, after the Second World War, in the genesis of 'Art informel', side by side with artists like Wols and Dubuffet.

Fautrier's work is featured in major public and private collections in Europe and has been the subject of numerous retrospectives over the last 30 years, including at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Kunsthaus Zurich, the Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona, and Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, Cologne. He was awarded the Grand Prix International at the Venice Biennial in 1960 and the Tokyo Biennial in 1961.

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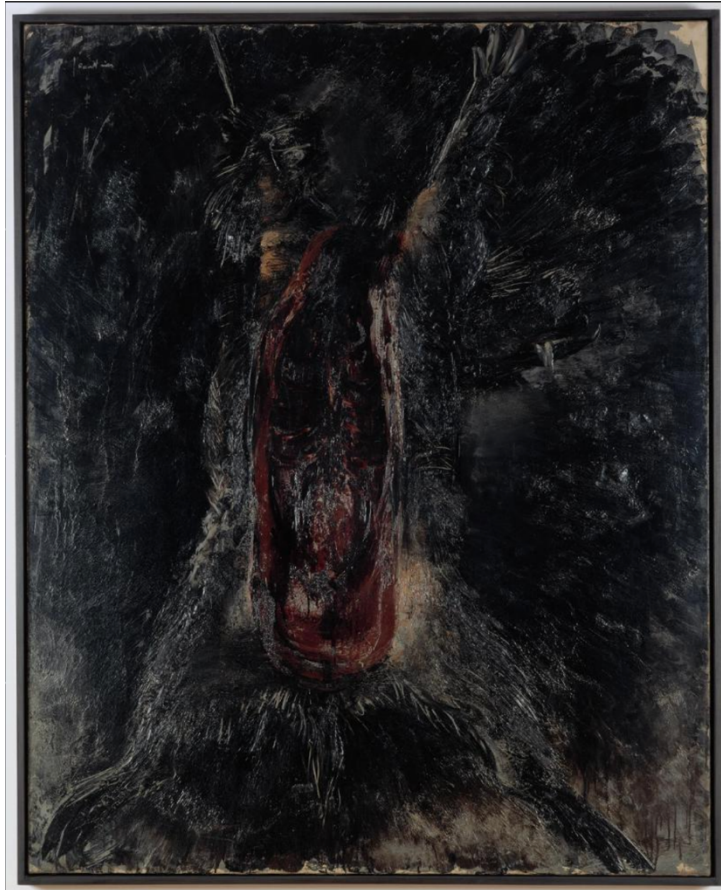


Fig.1, *Le sanglier écorché*, 1927, oil on canvas, 163 x 131 cm. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.