

A Singular Masterpiece at TEFAF New York Spring



GALERIE GMURZYNSKA is exhibiting a single masterpiece of enormous scale and seminal historic importance. The 366 x 512 inch (9 x 13 meter) painting was created in 1914 for the world's most famous ballet company of all time, Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, and was presented 105 years ago in Paris and London, just before the outbreak of World War I.

Like once before at the Royal Albert Hall in 2005, the work is suspended from the ceiling of the majestic Park Avenue Armory Wade Thompson Drill Hall, accompanied by a special exhibition stand designed by internationally acclaimed designer Tom Postma.

Natalia Goncharova's backdrop is the only surviving large scale painting from this Diaghilev production. It is also one of very few important large scale backdrop paintings, another being Picasso's stage cloth for Diaghilev's *Le Train Bleu*, today in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Le Coq d'Or was sold in 1968 at the famed Diaghilev Sale at Sotheby's London, and has since been shown at the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, the Royal Albert Hall in London, and the MART Museum with a SKIRA publication entitled *The Dance of the Avant-Garde, paintings, scenes and costumes from Degas to Picasso, from Matisse to Keith Haring*.

The presentation at TEFAF coincides with a strong renewed interest in the work of Natalia Goncharova. A major retrospective of the artist opens at the Tate Modern London in June of 2019, where an entire room will be dedicated to Goncharova and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, including designs for *Le Coq d'Or*.

With Goncharova's radicalism starting in the 1910's, at a time when female painters in Europe and the US would not have dared to use **body-painting** or to promote **Cubism**, **Futurism**, and **Rayism** as she did, not to mention her provocative personal behavior, Goncharova is as relevant today as ever.

“What imagination! Mrs. Gontcharova, our famous ‘Futuristic’ painter has gone beyond all confines of what a child’s fantasy can construct.”

(Prince Sergei Volkonsky)

Goncharova accepted Diaghilev’s commission affirming that **“It changed my whole life.”**

“The objects that we see in life do not play any role here, the essence of the painting itself - the color combination, its richness, the relationships of the color masses, depth and texture - can be best of all shown here.”

(Natalia Goncharova)

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