

## Roberto Reggi

President of the Piacenza and Vigevano Foundation

Through the works of Meris Angioletti and Ulla von Brandenburg, the exhibition "On Her Dress She Has a Body" leads us to rediscover the remarkable figure of Sonia Delaunay (1885-1979) and opens a dialogue between contemporary and modern art, where the former offers a new reading the latter.

With this exhibition, XNL Art program – free of any ideology – recognises the value of the work of female artists of the past and present, and elevates its peculiar theme: the educational dimension of arts.

Delaunay's Atelier Simultané was a centre of artistic production, art training and dialogue, which to this date provides an opportunity to reflect on the virtuous knowledge exchange and multidisciplinary vocation that characterises the artistic experience.

The project spans from the end of 2022 and the first months of 2023, marking the centenary of Delaunay's Parisian adventure. The Atelier was a hotbed of talent where art and craftmanship met, and which anticipated themes, such as emancipation and identity building, that are still at the centre of discussion.

A huge thank you goes to the artists Meris Angioletti and Ulla von Brandenburg: the exhibition they created especially for our institution offers us the opportunity to inhabit, or maybe we could say "to wear", the poetics of Sonia Delaunay through a suggestive mix of poetry, dance, sound, cinema, theatre and music.

## Paola Nicolin

Artistic director XNL Arte

## Meris Angioletti and Ulla von Brandenburg Sul vestito lei ha un corpo Notes on Sonia Delaunay

Tout ce qui fuit, saille avance dans la profondeur Les étoiles creusent le ciel Les couleurs déshabillent «Sur la robe elle a un corps»

Blaise Cendrars, 1914

#### Sonia and the Atelier simultané

In 1914, the poet and writer Blaise Cendrars dedicated a poem to a dress. The title was "Sur la robe elle a un corps" and the dress it referred to was a project by the Russian-French artist Sonia Delaunay (Gradizhsk, Ukraine, 1885 - Paris, 1979). The exhibition you're about to visit is inspired to the title of this poem. Two contemporary artists, Meris Angioletti (Bergamo, 1977, living and working in Paris) and Ulla von Brandenburg (Karlsruhe, 1974, living and working in Paris) have been invited to reflect on the figure of Sonia Delaunay, and particularly on her Atelier Simultané, an extension of the home-atelier in Boulevard Malesherbes in Paris, where she lived with her husband, Robert Delaunay, from 1921 to 1934. The Atelier was a special place: it attracted the Avantgarde intellectual milieu of the XX century and it worked as a polyphonic network of relationships that the couple had built over the years with poets, writers, musicians, actors, and artists. The list included, for example, some of the most irregular characters of their generation, such us Philippe Soupault, Guillaume Apollinaire, Cendrars, Tristan Tzara and many others.

It was a space for creation and multiple activities, where Delaunay broke any hierarchy of the arts and pushed abstract painting beyond its traditional frame.

In the first half of the XX century, working on the relationships between colour and pure, rhythmic geometric shapes with colourful pictorial media, the artist developed a personal expressive vocabulary (often identified with the concept of simultaneity) where different disciplines — painting, design, fashion, poetry, cinema, sculpture and publishing — distil the multiple aspects of life in a single aesthetic render.

With the help of her husband Robert, the artist studied the relationship between colour and shape through the lenses of sensitivity. This attitude became a poetics manifesto when the artist described her gouaches (opaque watercolour paintings) as "expressions of the spirit, poems".

## The exhibition

The ground floor exhibition begins with a body of historical works: a selection of 12 gouaches on paper created by the artist from 1923 to 1932, during the activity of the Atelier. These textile patterns are conceived as paintings because the combinations of colours and shapes are designed according to rhythm and motifs, measures and vibrations, intensity, and proximity. The visitor is invited to dwell on both the subject of these works studies for textile patterns, costume designs for Tristan Tzara's dada theatre, and grids where colours are used as a unit of measure – and the idea they convey of a sequence of trials. Next to them, a video monitor plays a 1926 silent film, Keller-Dorian: Film Gaufré: Sonia Delaunay, which is part of the collection and was restored with the help of the Centre National du Cinéma. Made by the couple in collaboration with the cameraman Chevreau, this experimental short film was the first publicly screened film to adapt the Keller-Dorian-Berthon lenticular process for use indoors under artificial lighting conditions. The work survived only in incomplete form, and it was originally projected during a lecture held by Sonia Delaunay at the Sorbonne on January 27th, 1927. It represents a series of mannequins photographed against a background of textiles and paintings while they extract scarves and offcuts from the crates sitting on the floor; the last shot shows Sonia Delaunay herself surrounded by brightly coloured draped fabrics.

The relationship between body, dress, colours, and abstract shapes sparks new behaviour and awareness in women. While they become models of a new femininity that is fluid, evolving like the surrounding environment, dynamic, genderless and ageless (and, therefore emancipated), anti-modern in the century of modernity, the body is experienced as a laboratory for aesthetic and social research.

The dialogue with Meris Angioletti and Ulla von Brandenburg originated by these works by Sonia Delaunay. Invited to reflect on this historical figure and her work, with its contaminations and anti-conventional attitude, the two artists turned the first floor of XNL into their simultaneous atelier.

Despite the differences in their expressive languages, both artists have been working for years on the borderline between disciplines, questioning the relationships among fabric, poetry, dance, cinema, theatre, and sound as social and psychological investigation tools, combining rituals, literature, popular culture, theatre, and poetry in existential installations that are conceived as sets of possible hypotheses on our existence in the world.

## Ulla von Brandenburg

Ulla von Brandenburg created an enveloping painting on fabric, and three new videos. All works have the same title, *La fenêtre s'ouvre comme une orange*, from a poem composed by Guillaume Apollinaire in 1918.

These four elements create a unique work diluted in different media and supports: seventeen painted canvases dangle from the ceiling on ribbons and ropes, and three silent super 16mm films (transferred in full-colour HD videos), which deal with the theme of dance, magic, and money starting from improvised performances, and play directly on the canvases, as seen in other works by the artist. The canvases create a space between ritual and culture; like an inverted curtain, they host video projections that are the result of performances directed by the artist herself, where the stage characters manipulate and activate the objects they touch.

In von Brandeburg's films we rediscover the gestures of the film projected in the Time Chamber at the very beginning of the exhibition.

As we watch the performers, we witness an expansion of the memory of places, and are immersed in a set of possible hypotheses and new behaviours.

The work is thus a labyrinth of shapes and colors. These fields of color are actually zooms taken from Delaunay's paintings and drawings. In addition, the artist takes a step forward and Sonia's work becomes three-dimensional. The bodies merge then here as in the exhibition. And the viewer is invited to be part of it.

Film, theatre, performance, literature, and characters are the elements of a complex discourse that the artist has, over the years, translated into 3D sceneries made up of colour and shapes that reflect on colour, light, reflection, and the "other" modernity of craftsmanship, leading back to the dialogue with Sonia Delaunay. *La fenêtre s'ouvre comme une orange* is thus the result of the breakup and recomposition of Sonia Delaunay's patterns and codes to become a chromatic field in which visitors can immerse themselves, get lost, and find themselves, in a mix of natural and magical, of domestic and imaginary space.

The exhibition is a dancing space where things can or cannot happen, and a sense of freedom and improvisation is perceived.

The selection of works on paper by the artist, displayed in the Time Chamber next to Sonia Delaunay's gouaches, also speaks of this new sphere of behaviour where the female figure predominates. They are all dedicated to women, von Brandenburg's heroines: models of beauty, talent, commitment, will, solidarity, courage, magic and revolution. Some have a name and surname, like Tamara Karsavina, the famous dancer of the Ballets Russes, others are the anonymous faces of universal behaviours, echoes of the transformative power of ritual (Hexe), and of the relationship between human and nature. Like Sonia Delaunay, these female figures have significantly contributed to women's emancipation through their work, and the artist portrays them in a constant flow of references, memories, reactivations of memories, displacements and new narratives.

## Meris Angioletti

Meris Angioletti acts in the project with an acoustic installation titled *Arcano 16 – rouge bleu rouge ff P creche ff*, a composition for simultaneous voices conceived specifically for this location in the form of a 12-channel sound installation.

The title is an excerpt from a poem by Tristan Tzara, a poet very close to Sonia Delaunay. *Arcano 16* is a Marseille tarot card showing a tower exploding into thousands of fragments. For the artist, it represents the disintegration of language, its explosion into phonemes - which is exactly what happens in simultaneous poetry.

Arcano 16 consists of about twenty audio tracks processed by a computer-based music composition software created in collaboration with the composer and artist Romain Kronenberg. The software is programmed to randomly decide whether to change certain values of the individual tracks or not, and the playing order implies a potentially infinite multiplication of the structural possibilities of the composition. Due to these choices, the composition varies continuously, and the principles of simultaneity become compositional principles. The tracks have been selected from the artist's audio archive: following the principles of simultaneous poetry, readings, simultaneous or onomatopoetic choruses, and poems in an imaginary language overlap with the voices of people speaking different languages. Or with tales in "intimate languages", as for example text taken from the book Lessico Familiare by Natalia Ginzburg on which Angioletti researched with the help of various friends who live with people with different mother tongues (the Italian artist herself has lived in France for some time) and created an intimate community of speakers where the boundaries between one language and the other become porous, and new words are often invented.

For the artist, "it is a feast of voices, an exploration of the vocalic element and its various possibilities; the simultaneity of sound that Tzara described as pensée en train de se faire dans la bouche: a tangible word and, therefore, a dress for the language".

Also in this case, the exhibition project includes the preparatory drawings inspired by Delaunay's gouaches where colour is used to measure space: the speakers are positioned on different levels to evoke the presence of human beings of various heights, all with the same face but held up by cables of different colour and size.

In this case, the body is made of voices revealing an opaque reality and hidden in the imperceptible movements of language. Artist and researcher, Angioletti focuses her work on the relationship between language and body. Poetry, literature, psychology, physics and mathematics essays, as well as tarots and rituals form the basis of an exploration of the visible and the invisible, the fragment and the whole, suspended between awareness and unawareness. These references are at the heart of a series of sound installations, tracks, performances, nocturnal readings, choreographies,

projections of light, colour and images. The voice is the artist's preferred raw material, and her work develops through various stages of translation, confirming once again how the Italian artist taps into different areas of knowledge.

During the exhibition, the list of voice tracks will be expanded through a series of vocal workshops held by the artist together with students of the Piacenza high schools in collaboration with the singing teacher of the Piacenza Conservatory prof. Anna Chierichetti.

These artists' studios focus on simultaneous poems linked to Delaunay and sound poetry and confirm the institution's willingness to reflect on the concept of museum-atelier and on the relationship with the territory and its cultural infrastructures through the experience of artistic practices .

#### Voice list includes:

Agathe, Alberto, Alessandro, Alice, Andrew, Anna, Claudia, Christine, Decio, Elena, Fabio, Gabriel, Giulio, John, Juliette, Kristina, Lola-Liou, Lou, Lucas, Macha, Maire Leese, Manuel, María Espadinha, Maria Grazia, Massimo, Mathias, Maureen, Meris, Michela, Paolo, Philippe L., Philippe S., Pietro, Mme Roux, Simon, Tommy, Valentina, Valentino.

## Sur la robe elle a un corps

Le corps de la femme est aussi bosselé que mon crâne

Glorieuse

Si tu t'incarnes avec esprit

Les couturiers font un sot métier

Autant que la phrénologie

Mes yeux sont des kilos qui pèsent la sensualité des femmes

Tout ce qui fuit, saille avance dans la profondeur

Les étoiles creusent le ciel

Les couleurs déshabillent

« Sur la robe elle a un corps »

Sous les bras des bruyères mains lunules et pistils quand les eaux se

déversent dans le dos avec les

omoplates glauques

Le ventre un disque qui bouge

La double coque des seins passe sous le pont des arcs-en-ciel

Ventre

Disque

Soleil

Les cris perpendiculaires des couleurs tombent sur les cuisses

ÉPÉE DE SAINT MICHEL

Il y a des mains qui se tendent

Il y a dans la traîne la bête tous les yeux toutes les fanfares tous les habitués

du Bal Bullier

Et sur la hanche

La signature du poète

Blaise Cendrars,

Février 1914

## Sul vestito lei ha un corpo

The framed gouaches extend beyond the limits of their surface, becoming space, acoustic gesture, and image in motion. In the work of the two artists, as in Sonia Delaunay's, we can see how dynamism, improvisation, and spontaneity are controlled by a rigorous method that classifies and sequences all the possible variations that can be obtained from combining shapes and colours, in the case of Ulla von Brandenburg, or rhythms and motifs, in the case of Meris Angioletti.

Sonia and Robert Delaunay, on the other hand, had translated into art the concept of Simultaneity linked to the laws of Michel Eugene Chevreul, French chemist and former manager of the Gobelins tapestry factory, who applied his research on colour perception to his dyeing business. In 1838, he published his memoir "On the Law of Simultaneous Contrast of Colours" and demonstrated that the presence of surrounding colours influences how a colour is perceived: for example, the same tone appears lighter on a dark background, complementary colours make each other look brighter and more vibrant, while if you put side by side non-complementary colours they shift to a different tone.

Moving from science to art, Delaunay's painting is simultaneous not only in the dynamism of colours but also in the incisiveness of the creative shapes.

The proposal for a dialogue around Sonia Delaunay is therefore an open question to two great contemporary interpreters of our time, who share the idea of the artist as creators of spaces, whether material or immaterial, constructed using fabric, poetry, voice, gestures and images. Simultaneity is also intended as the relationship between display and experience, and the exhibition becomes an invitation to dance and float in space, surrounded by rhythms, patterns, motifs, and languages that repeat themselves simultaneously and yet are never the same.

Projet de costume pour Jacqueline Chaumont pour "Le coeur à Gaz" de Tristan Tzara n. 678 1923

Gouache on paper, 42 x 28 cm



Projet de costume pour René Crevel pour "Le coeur à Gaz" de Tristan Tzara n. 676 1923

Gouache on paper, 39 x 27,5 cm



No title 1928 Gouache on paper 26.5 x 20.5 cm



Projet Gouache n. F 5254 -Variante n. 225, "Libro nero III" 1928 Gouache on paper 26.5 x 20.5 cm



Projet de costume pour Jacqueline Chaumont pour "Le coeur à Gaz" de Tristan Tzara n. 678 1923

Gouache su carta, 42 x 28 cm





# Gouache without title n. 1230

1930

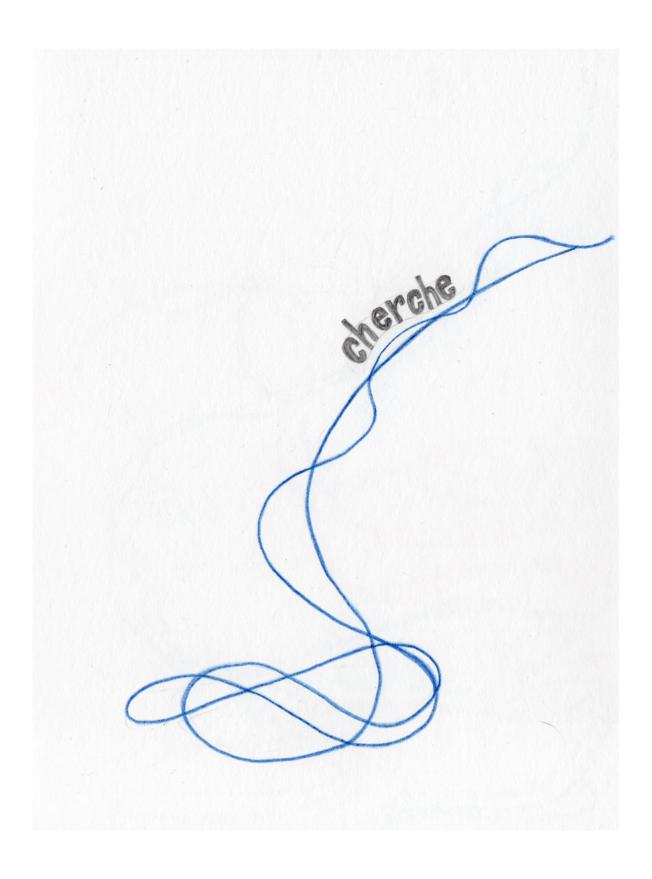
Gouache su carta, 35 x 32 cm



# Arcano 16 – rouge bleu rouge ff P cresc ff 2022

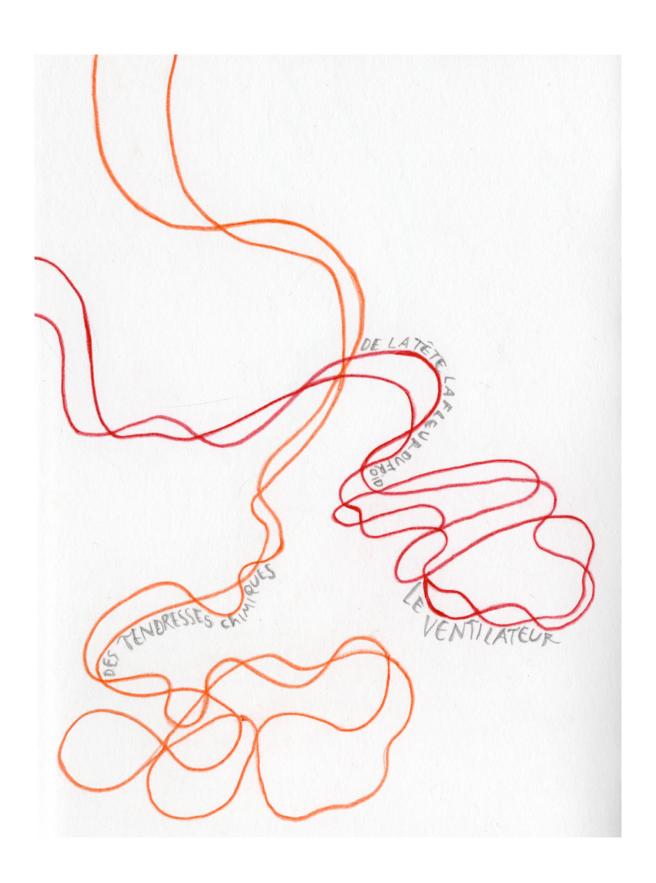
Preparatory sketches

Courtesy of the artist



Preparatory sketches

Courtesy of the artist



Gallery Meris Angioletti

## Cercle de lecture autour du roman gothique: Perils of the Night. Pour B.

Thursday, December 20th/Friday, December 21st, 2018, from 8:00PM to 6:00AM, wallpaper, bibliography, drawings. In collaboration with Alice Labourg Drawings by Miyuka Schipfer.



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Courtesy of the artist, MABA, Nogent-sur-Marne

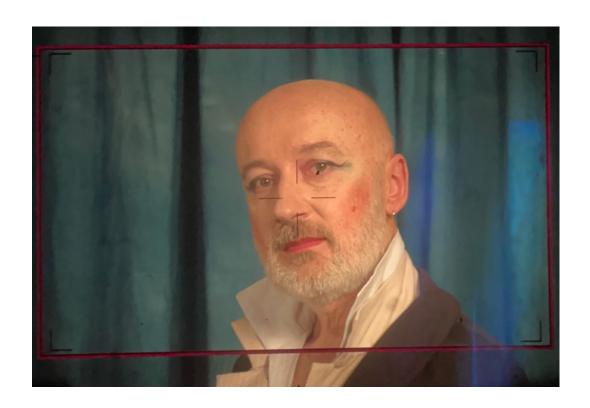


# Gallery Ulla von Brandenburg

# La fenêtre s'ouvre comme une orange 2022

Three super 16mm films converted in HD, colour, no sound (variable lengths, 5+ 2 PA edition)

Courtesy of the artist, Foundation of Piacenza and Vigevano, and the galleries: Art:Concept, Paris; Meyer Riegger, Berlin/Karlsruhe; Pilar Corrias Gallery, London, and Produzentengalerie Hamburg, Hamburg





# Gallery Ulla von Brandenburg

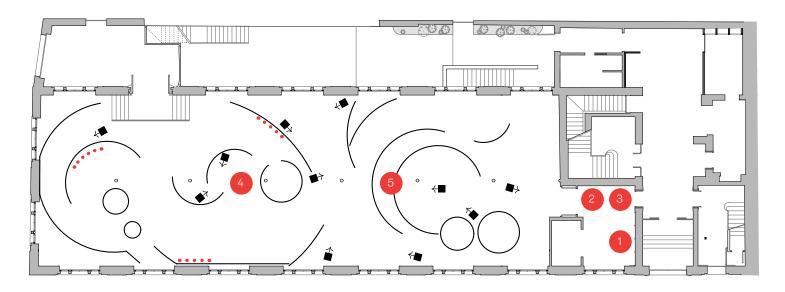
La fenêtre s'ouvre comme une orange 2022

Three super 16mm films converted in HD, colour, no sound (variable lengths, 5+ 2 PA edition)

Courtesy of the artist, Foundation of Piacenza and Vigevano, and the galleries: Art:Concept, Paris; Meyer Riegger, Berlin/Karlsruhe; Pilar Corrias Gallery, London, and Produzentengalerie Hamburg, Hamburg









#### Sonia Delaunay

Selection of 12 gouaches created between 1923 and 1932

Keller-Dorian: film gaufré: Sonia Delaunay

1925

Unknown director, colour (Keller-Dorian process), 3 min. length

Restored by [ Centre National du Cinema et de l'image animée



#### Meris Angioletti

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Thursday, December 20th / Friday, December 21st, 2018, from 8:00PM to 6:00AM, wallpaper, bibliography, drawings.

In collaboration with Alice Labourg, drawings by Miyuka Schipfer

Courtesy l'artista, MABA, Nogent-sur-Marne

Arcano 16 – rouge bleu rouge ff P cresc ff, 2022 Preparatory sketches Courtesy of the artist



#### Meris Angioletti

Arcano 16 – rouge bleu rouge ff P cresc ff 2022

Composition for simultaneous voices, 12 channel sound installation, software Max msp, coloured cables.

Computer-music designer Romain Kronenberg With the voices of Agathe, Alberto, Alice, Andrew, Anna, Claudia, Christine, Elena, Fabio, Gabriel, John, Juliette, Kristina, Lola-Liou, Lou, Lucas, Maire Leese, María Espadinha, Maria Grazia, Mathias, Maureen, Meris, Michela, Paolo, Philippe L., Philippe S., Mme Roux, Simon, Valentina, Valentino

Courtesy of the artist and Foundation of Piacenza and Vigevano



#### Ulla von Brandenburg La fenêtre s'ouvre comme une orange

2022

Seventeen paintings on canvas, tape, robe (variable

Scenography concept development Julia Mossé

Three super 16mm films converted in HD, colour, no sound (variable lengths, 5+ 2 PA edition)

Director

Ulla von Brandenburg Cinematographer Guillaume Cailleau

Assistant operator Ville Piippo Executive production Victoire Mangez Actor and actress Fabricia Martins, Laurence Mayor, Giuseppe Molino, Benoit Résillot Extras Olivia Funes Lastra, Victoire Mangez, Julia Mossé Scenography and costumes Olivia Funes Lastra, Victoire Mangez, Fabricia Martins, Giuseppe Molino, Julia Mossé Editing Julien Crépieux Colour correction Alexandre Westphal Lab Kafard films Supplier Groupe TSF

Courtesy of the artist, Fondazione di Piacenza e Vigevano, and the following galleries: Art:Concept, Paris; Meyer Riegger, Berlin/ Karlsruhe; Pilar Corrias Gallery, London, and Produzentengalerie Hamburg, Hamburg



## Ulla von Brandenburg

#### Hexe (Sorcière)

2018

Watercolours and assembled paper

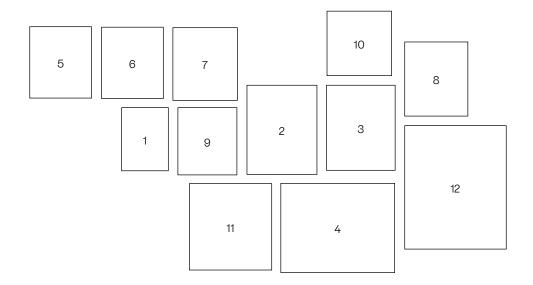
80 × 59,5 cm

#### Tamara

2021

Watercolours and assembled paper on canvas 80 × 60 × 2 cm

All works are courtesy of the artist and Art:Concept, Paris



1 Projet de vêtement n. F5326 n. 452

1923 China on paper 28.5 x 16 cm

2 Projet de costume pour Jacqueline Chaumont pour "Le coeur à Gaz" de Tristan Tzara n. 678

1923 Gouache on paper 42 x 28 cm

3 Projet de costume pour René Crevel pour "Le coeur à Gaz" de Tristan Tzara n. 676 1923 Gouache on paper 39 x 27.5 cm 4 No title Gouache F 5238 -Gouache n. 6, "Libro nero I"

1924 Gouache on paper 35 x 51 cm

5 Study for a fabric pattern 1927 Pencil on paper 27 x 21 cm

6
Study for a fabric pattern
1927
Pencil on paper
27 x 21 cm

7 No title 1928 Gouache on paper 26.5 x 20.5 cm

8 Projet Gouache n. F 5254 -Variante n. 225, "Libro nero III" 1928 Gouache on paper

9 No title 1928 Gouache on paper 27 x 21 cm

26.5 x 20.5 cm

10 No title 1928-1929 Gouache on paper 20 x 19.2 cm

Gouache without title n. 1230 1930 Gouache on paper 35 x 32 cm

12 No title 1932 Gouache on paper 64 x 50 cm

All works are from a private collection, courtesy of Gallery Giò Marconi Copyright credit: PRACUSA S.A.

## XNL *Piacenza*

24.11.22 16.04.23

Meris Angioletti Ulla von

# Brandenburg

Sul vestito lei ha un corpo Notes on Sonia Delaunay

Exhibition curated by Paola Nicolin

### Credits

Project promoted by

Fondazione di Piacenza e Vigevano

Comune di Piacenza

Camera di Commercio di Piacenza

Exhibition curator Paola Nicolin

Computer music design by Meris

Angioletti

Romain Kronenberg

Scenography concept development

Ulla von Brandenburg

Julia Mossè

Production of fabrics used for Ulla von

Brandenburg's scenery

Peroni S.p.A.

Exhibit design

Altofragile

Realization of the design

Studio ETre

Gianluigi Tambresoni

Scenography and display setup

Up allestimenti

Lighting design

Spazio Esperienze

Davide Groppi

General coordinator

Tiziana Libé

Coordinator Atelier and Didactic

activities

Enrica Carini

XNL Library curated by

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Marconi, Milano

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Ruggero Montrasio

Jacopo Bedogni

Sara Bernasconi, Matteo Maino, Giulia

Mainetti

Peroni, S.p.A.

Ing. Paolo Milani





Info

XNL

Fondazione di Piacenza e Vigevano

Dates

From 24th November 2022 to 16th April 2023

Opening times Open From friday to sunday 10:30/19:30

Private viewings outside of regular hours are available upon reservation for schools and groups. For guided tours, write to info@xnlpiacenza.it.

Closed

Monday and tuesday 25th and 31st December, 1st January, Easter, 25th April, 1st May

Free entrance

#### Accessibility

The exhibition halls and auditorium are accessible for the disabled via elevators or ramp. During events and opening hours, our staff at the main entrance will be happy to provide assistance and help visitors accessing the Centre and its spaces.

Booking info@xnlpiacenza.it XNL Piacenza

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## Getting here

# Visit nearby

## Tourist information

#### From Milan

50 minutes by train - trains depart every half hour 1 hour from city centre - A1 motorway 37 minutes from Melegnano

- A1 motorway

#### By train

From Piacenza railway station

- 18 minutes on foot
- 11 minutes by public transport (bus lines 1/6, 4, 16, 8)

#### By plane

From Milan Linate Airport - 50 km From Parma Airport - 50 km From Bergamo Orio al Serio Airport - 69 km

#### By car

From the A1 - atke either Piacenza Sud or Basso Lodigiano exit From the A21, coming from Turin - take Piacenza Ovest exit From the A21, coming from Brescia - take Piacenza Sud exit

#### Parking

Parcheggio Cavallerizza 400 m - paid parking Stradone Farnese 39

Politeama Parcheggio 110 m - paid parking via San Siro 7

Parking Pubblico Passeggio 850 m - paid parking, 8/19 Viale Pubblico Passeggio 12 Modern Art Gallery "Ricci Oddi" www.riccioddi.it

Teatro Municipale and other local theatres teatripiacenza.it

Civic Museums of Palazzo Farnese www.palazzofarnese.piacenza.it For information on what to see, what to do, where to eat, and where to sleep in Piacenza, visit the local Tourist Information Office located in the main square, 5 minutes' walk from XNL.

Piazza Cavalli, 7 - Piacenza Tel. +39 0523 492001 Mail: iat@comune.piacenza.it Web: visitpiacenza.it/piacenza

Opening times Off-season (01/11 – 28-29/02) Monday: closed Tuesday to Sunday: 10-17

Peak season (01/03-31/10) Monday:10-16 Tuesday to Sunday:10-18

Open on the following public holidays from 10 to 16: 6<sup>th</sup> January, Easter, Easter Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> April (Liberation Day), 1<sup>st</sup> May (International Workers' Day), 2<sup>nd</sup> June (Republic Day), 4<sup>th</sup> July (patron saint's day), 15<sup>th</sup> August (Ferragosto), 8<sup>th</sup> December (Immaculate Conception).



