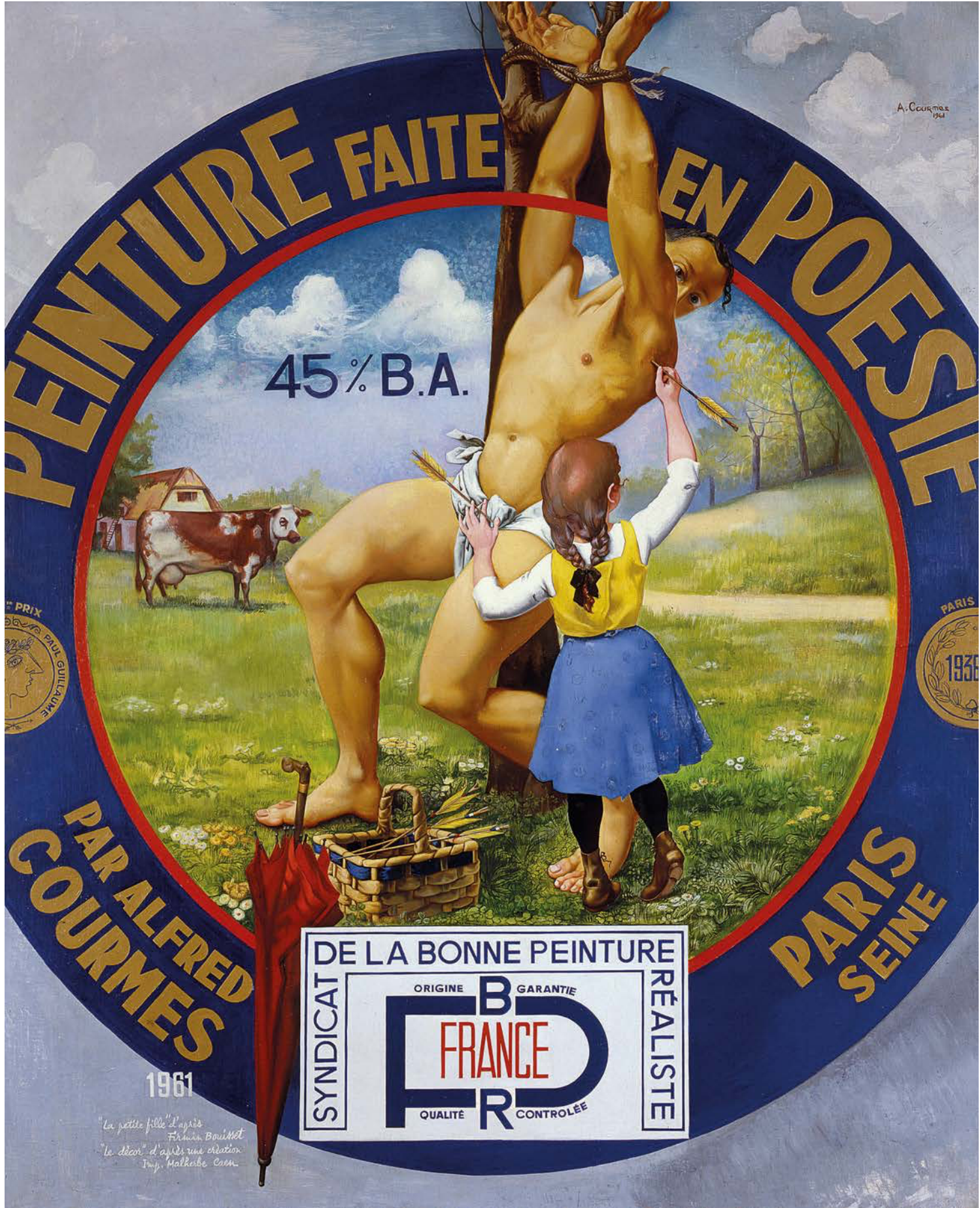


# **THE SINGULAR MONSIEUR COURMES**

A. Courmes  
1961



PEINTURE FAITE  
PAR ALFRED  
COURMES

EN POESIE

PARIS  
SEINE

45% B.A.

1961

*"La petite fille" d'après  
François Bouché  
"Le décor" d'après une création  
Imp. Halberbe Cam.*

SYNDICAT DE LA BONNE PEINTURE RÉALISTE

ORIGINE **B** GARANTIE

**FRANCE**

QUALITÉ **R** CONTRÔLÉE

## **ALFRED COURMES** ***THE SINGULAR MONSIEUR COURMES***

16.09.2022– 05.11.2022

“The Singular Monsieur Courmes” is the first exhibition devoted to the work of Alfred Courmes (France, 1898–1993) to be shown at Galerie Loevenbruck. It spans more than half a century in the practice of this singular painter, through ten paintings and three works on paper dating from the 1920 to 1983.

This event extends the exhibition “Alfred Courmes. Séduisant provocateur” curated by Raphaël Dupouy at the Villa Théo in Lavandou, where Courmes spent his youth:

Alfred Courmes was born in Bormes-les-Mimosas in 1898 into a bourgeois family where music and painting could only be leisure activities. A young man of fragile health, in 1919 he found himself bedridden in a sanatorium near Clermont-Ferrand with the painter Roger de la Fresnaye as his neighbour. A paternal presence, La Fresnaye taught him how to draw and paint in his signature Cubist manner. However, while retaining its principle of rigorous composition, Courmes gradually broke free of this pictorial doctrine in favour of a very personal brand of realism. After his youth in Lavandou, from 1927 to 1929 he lived in Ostend where he got married and discovered the Flemish masters. Courmes made Paris his permanent home and began to weave these tendencies into a very original style of painting that went against the grain of fashion. Against backgrounds worthy of the Quattrocento, his pictures revisited mythology and religious texts in a blend of modernity and humour that verged on cynicism. Defying taboos and beliefs, he was despised by right-thinking circles, and yet he was awarded the Paul-Guillaume prize in 1936 and won two state commissions in 1937, including the decoration of the dining room of the French embassy in Ottawa. Today, the value of this singular and endearing artist has at last been recognized and he is acknowledged in the art world as an important precursor of Pop Art and Figuration Narrative. Young painters have acclaimed this unclassifiable figure as the initiator of a certain modern sensibility, notably in his appropriation of advertising imagery.

Éditions Loevenbruck publish a unique essay by Christian Derouet on Alfred Courmes and his work; an exhibition catalogue, distributed exclusively at the Loevenbruck gallery, which brings together reproductions of eight works, some of which are iconic, as well as a list of works held in French public collections, and two photographs by Robert Doisneau, portrait of the painter in his Paris studio on rue de Flandres in April 1972.

Galerie Loevenbruck represents the Fonds Alfred Courmes since 2019.



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# Alfred Courmes

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Born: 1898, Bormes-les-Mimosas, France. Died: 1993, Paris.

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## Award

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1936	Prix Paul Guillaume
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## Public commission

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1938	"La France Heureuse"	Ambassade de France	Ottawa	CA
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## Solo exhibitions

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2022	"Du côté de chez Courmes"	Galerie Loevenbruck	Paris	FR
		16.09.2022 – 05.11.2022		

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2022	"Alfred Courmes, séduisant provocateur"	Villa Théo - Centre d'art	Le Lavandou	FR
		09.07.2022 – 10.09.2022		

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2003	"Alfred Courmes en son pays"	Musée Arts et Histoire	Bormes-les-Mimosas	FR
		07.09.2003 – 09.11.2003 Curated by: Réseau Lalan		

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1991	Exposition particulière	Galerie Resche	Paris	FR
		11.1991 – 12.1991		

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1991		Galerie Berggruen	Paris	FR
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1989	"Alfred Courmes Retrospective"	Musée de l'Hospice Saint Roch	Issoudun	FR
		21.10.1989 – 17.12.1989		

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1989	"Alfred Courmes Retrospective"	Centre Pompidou	Paris	FR
		13.09.1989 – 28.10.1989		

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1989	"Alfred Courmes Retrospective"	Musée Sainte-Croix	Poitiers	FR
		03.07.1989 – 04.09.1989		

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1989	"Alfred Courmes Retrospective"	La Piscine - Musée d'art et d'industrie André Diligent	Roubaix	FR
		29.04.1989 – 25.06.1989		

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1988	"Reportage pour Détective, 1963-1964"	Galerie Berggruen	Paris	FR
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1987	"Alfred Courmes"	Galerie Jean Briance	Paris	FR
		03.12.1987 – 23.01.1988		

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1986	Exposition particulière	Galerie Jean Briance	Paris	FR
		10.04.1986 – 31.05.1986		

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1986	"Les Gravures"	Galerie Berggruen	Paris	FR
1982	Exposition particulière	Galerie Jean Briance 02.12.1982 – 29.01.1983	Paris	FR
1979	Exposition particulière	Galerie Jean Briance 04.10.1979 – 24.11.1979	Paris	FR
1979	"Alfred Courmes Retrospective"	Musée de Peinture et de Sculpture 16.05.1979 – 20.08.1979 Curated by: Pierre Gaudibert	Grenoble	FR
1977	Exposition particulière	Galerie Jean Briance 06.10.1977 – 12.11.1977 Curated by: Jean Briance	Paris	FR
1936	"Prix Paul Guillaume"		Paris	FR
1927		Galerie du Montparnasse	Paris	FR

## Group exhibitions

2019	"Come together, right now. Over me."	Galerie Loevenbruck 07.06.2019 – 31.07.2019 Curated by: Jakob Lena Knebl	Paris	FR
2017	"L'esprit français. Contre-cultures, 1969-1989"	la maison rouge, Fondation Antoine Galbert 24.02.2017 – 21.05.2017 Curated by: Guillaume Désanges, François Piron	Paris	FR
2015	"La oficina de San Jerónimo"	Casa del Lector 17.09.2015 – 27.03.2016 Curated by: Eduardo Arroyo, Fabienne Di Rocco	Madrid	ES
2014	"El hombre al desnudo. Dimensiones de la masculinidad a partir de 1800"	MUNAL - El Museo Nacional de arte 02.03.2014 – 17.06.2014	Mexico	MX
2013	"Masculin / Masculin. L'homme nu dans l'art de 1800 à nos jours."	Musée d'Orsay 24.09.2013 – 02.01.2014 Curated by: Guy Cogeval, Ophélie Ferlier, Xavier Rey, Ulrich Pohlmann, Tobias G. Natter	Paris	FR
2012	"Nackte Männer"	Leopold Museum 19.10.2012 – 04.03.2013 Curated by: Elisabeth Leopold	Vienna	AT
2010	"Voyous, voyants, voyeurs"	Musée Arthur Rimbaud 15.05.2010 – 21.09.2010	Charleville-Mézières	FR
2010	"Crime et châtement"	Musée d'Orsay 16.03.2010 – 27.06.2010 Curated by: Robert Badinter, Jean Clair, Laurence Madeline, Philippe Comar	Paris	FR

## WORKS BY ALFRED COURMES IN FRENCH PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

### *Portrait of Peggy Guggenheim*

1926, oil on canvas, 100 × 65 cm. Signed and dated lower left: *A. Courmes/August 1926*  
Blérancourt, Musée Franco-Américain, Château de Blérancourt, MNB CFA a 85-1

### *Saint Sebastian*

1934, exhibited in Paris, Salon des Indépendants, 1937, oil on canvas mounted on hardboard, 165 × 59 cm  
Signed and dated lower left: *A. Courmes/1934*. Purchased in 1984, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, AM 1984-272

### *Saint Roch of Montpellier*

1935/1977, oil on canvas on plywood, 162 × 63 cm  
Signed, top left: *A. COURMES/1935-1977*, inscription, top right: *St. ROCH/Montpellier 1293-1327*  
Issoudun, Musée de l'Hospice Saint-Roch, 85-12-28

### *Touch*

1936, gouache and graphite pencil on paper, 24.5 × 40 cm  
Dated and signed, lower right: "*Touch*" 2 November 1936/for the Pavilion/Sèvres/1937 Exhibition/A. Courmes  
Gift of the artist in 1982, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Cabinet d'Art Graphique, AM 1982-50

### *Sketch for Touch*

1937, gouache on cotton canvas stretched over plywood, 24 × 40.2 cm. Signed and dated lower left: *A. Courmes/1937*  
Gift of the artist in 1989, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Cabinet d'Art Graphique, AM 1989-635

### *Sketch for Touch*

1937, gouache on cotton canvas stretched over plywood, 24 × 40.2 cm. Signed and dated lower right: *A. Courmes/1937*  
Gift of the artist in 1989, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Cabinet d'Art Graphique, AM 1989-636

### *Touch*

1937, oil on canvas mounted on wood, 200 × 300 cm. Signed and dated top right: *A. Courmes 37*  
Purchased from the artist in 1988, Paris, Centre National des Arts Plastiques on permanent loan at the Musée d'Art et d'Industrie  
André-Diligent - La Piscine, Roubaix, since 1990, FNAC 88282

### *Happy France*

1937, study for the decoration of the dining room of the French Legation in Ottawa  
graphite pencil, gouache highlights, coloured pencil on paper, 50 × 187 cm  
Dated and signed: *January 1937/A. Courmes*, inscription: *decoration French Embassy/in Ottawa/height 4 m*  
Purchased in 1982, Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Cabinet d'Art Graphique, AM 1982-23

### *Happy France*

1937-1939, fresco; decoration of the dining room of the French Legation in Ottawa, composed of six panels:  
main panel (south wall), *The Fish Market, The Beach, The Hunt* (north wall), *Wine* (east wall), *Conscripts* (west wall)  
encaustic on plaster, 4 × 32 m  
Signed and dated at top: *A. Courmes 1938-1939*, inscription: *completed 21 July 1939, 3am*  
Purchased as a commission from the artist in 1937, Paris, Centre National des Arts Plastiques; on permanent loan at the French Embassy  
in Ottawa since 1939, FNAC 15029 and FNAC 16019

### *The Canal Saint-Martin*

1940, oil on canvas, 60 × 73 cm. Signed and dated on the back, lower left: *A. Courmes 40*  
Purchased in 1940, Paris, Musée Carnavalet, P2514

### *Design for the decoration of a main staircase at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Paris*

1942  
First panel: *Organic Synthesis*, pencil, pen, white gouache, ink and wash, 73 × 60 cm  
Signed and dated lower right: *A. Courmes 1942*  
Second panel: *Mineral Chemistry*, gouache and pencil, 65 × 44 cm  
Signed and dated lower right: *A. Courmes 1942*  
Third panel: *Organ Procurement*, gouache, brown wash and graphite pencil, 32.5 × 23.5 cm  
Fourth panel: *Pasteur and Vaccination*, pencil, white gouache highlights, 74 × 54.5 cm  
Purchased by commission from the artist in 1941, Paris, Centre National des Arts Plastiques on permanent loan at the Mudo -  
Musée Départemental de l'Oise, Beauvais, since 1977, FNAC 20118

### *Three Trees on Avenue Secrétan with the umbrella of the Menier Chocolate girl*

About 1958, oil on canvas, 68 × 73 cm. Signed, lower right: *A. Courmes*  
Inscription, bottom right: *3 Trees on Avenue Secrétan with the Umbrella of the Meunier [sic] Chocolate Girl*  
Purchased in 1965, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, AMVP 2506

### *The Cyclops had only one eye but it was the right one*

1960, oil on canvas mounted on wood, 114 × 146 cm. Signed and dated lower right: *A. Courmes 1960-1979*  
Inscription, top left: *THE CYCLOPS HAD ONLY ONE EYE BUT IT WAS THE RIGHT ONE /Thought Abbé X Curé at Z in the JURA*  
Purchased from the Jean-Briance Gallery in 1986, Besançon, Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain de Franche-Comté, EN-1986-10-1

### *The pneumatic angelic greeting. The connoisseur and the amateur will notice that the angel is throwing a lily at him, studied and drawn with particular care. Thank you, the important thing is the lily*

1968, oil on canvas mounted on wood, 85 × 104 cm. Signed and dated lower right: *A. Courmes/1968*  
Purchased from the Jean-Briance Gallery in 1980, Paris, Centre National des Arts Plastiques; on permanent loan at the Musée d'Art et d'Industrie  
André-Diligent - La Piscine, Roubaix, since 1992, FNAC 33558

### *The Army Is Called In*

#### *Dedicated to Félix Labisse*

1969, diptych, gouache on canvas, 53.5 × 129.5 cm. Signed and dated top right, on the left panel: *A. Courmes/May 1969*  
Signed and dated lower left, on the right panel: *A. Courmes/69*  
Purchased from the Jean-Briance Gallery in 1984, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, AMVP 2476

**More information about the artworks:**

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