



Donas, Archipenko & La Section d'Or

Enchanting Modernism

Peter J.H. Pauwels

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Territory	World excluding Benelux, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, and Italy
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- First Comprehensive Focus on Donas: Highlights Marthe Donas as the first internationally successful female avant-garde artist from Antwerp—a long-overlooked pioneer in modern art
- Strong Institutional Backing: Produced in collaboration with the Marthe Donas Foundation, the Archipenko Foundation, and major museums including the KMSKA and Saarländmuseum
- International Context: Situates Donas within La Section d'Or, alongside iconic artists like Archipenko, Brancusi, Braque, and Léger
- Spotlight on Women in Modernism: Emphasises the critical role of women artists in the Cubist and avant-garde movements, including Natalia Goncharova and Marie Vassilieff
- Rich Visual Content: Features high-quality reproductions of rare works in Donas's distinctive "pearly" colour palette and cubist style
- Cross-Border Appeal: Appeals to Belgian, French, German, and international audiences interested in modernist art and cultural history

Donas, Archipenko & La Section d'Or celebrates the life and work of Marthe Donas, the first female artist born in Antwerp to achieve international acclaim within the avant-garde movement. Her breakthrough came in 1919 with a solo exhibition in Geneva, where her signature style—innovative forms painted in shimmering, pearlescent tones—set her apart. A key figure in the Cubist collective La Section d'Or, Donas worked closely with sculptor Alexander Archipenko, whose influence helped shape her artistic vision. This cosmopolitan group, which also included Georges Braque, Fernand Léger, and Constantin Brancusi, attracted many pioneering women artists, such as Natalia Goncharova and Marie Vassilieff. This publication places Donas in this dynamic international context while highlighting her connections to fellow artists. A visionary with an expansive network, Donas sought not only to unite artists but to create a new world through her deeply personal art.

Adriaan Gonnissen is a historian and art historian. He is currently a curator of modern art at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts (KMSKA) in Antwerp, where he is developing a series of exhibitions on Belgian modernism from both international and regional perspectives. **Peter J.H. Pauwels** is the curator of the exhibition and the author of an extensive monograph on Marthe Donas, published in 2015. He is an expert on the life and work of Marthe Donas (1885-1967), the pioneering Belgian modernist artist.