



## PIERRE SOULAGES

### Biography

Pierre Soulages was born on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1919 in Rodez.

Very young, he is interested in Romanesque art and prehistory. He begins to paint in this isolated provincial area where he was not exposed to any contemporary artistic tendencies.

### 1938-1939

At the age of 18, he moves to Paris to prepare for the entrance examination at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. He passes but is convinced of the mediocrity of the teaching and returns immediately to Rodez. During this short stay in Paris he visits the Louvre and discovers Modern art through two important exhibitions of Cézanne and Picasso.

### 1939-1945

He is mobilized in 1940 and dismissed in 1941. As Paris is occupied, he moves to Montpellier where he regularly visits the Musée Fabre. In 1942, he escapes from mandatory work camps in Germany by becoming a wine maker. During this period, he does not paint anymore.

### 1946

Pierre Soulages has the possibility to finally dedicate all his time to painting. He settles down in a suburb of Paris, Courbevoie. Soon, his abstract and dark paintings are noticed, because they are so different from the semi-figurative and colorful art of the post-war years.

### 1948

He finds a studio in Paris, on rue Schoelcher, near Montparnasse. He participates in group exhibitions in Paris and in other European cities, including « Französische abstrakte Malerei » which travels to several German museums. He is by far the youngest member of the small group of abstract painters, that include the masters Kupka, Doméla, and Herbin. The poster of the group is illustrated by one of his black-and-white paintings.

### 1949

First individual exhibition in Paris at the Galerie Lydia Conti, and several group shows in London, São Paulo, Copenhagen and New York.

First stage settings for Roger Vaillant at the Théâtre des Mathurins in Paris.



From 1949 to 1952, he realizes three other stage designs for theatre and ballet.

1950

First engravings in the studio Lacourière.

Participates in several traveling group exhibitions in American museums, such as «Advancing French Art» (1951) and «Younger European Artists» at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1953) and «The New Decade» at the Museum of Modern Art (1955).

First one-person show in New York at Kootz Gallery (1954) where he exhibits regularly until 1966.

During this time, his works are purchased by the Phillips Gallery, Washington; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Tate Gallery, London; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, etc. Today more than 150 of his paintings are part of museum collections.

1956

First one-person show at La Galerie de France, Paris.

1960-1961

First retrospective exhibitions at the museums of Hanover, Essen, Zurich, The Hague.

1966

Retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

1967

Retrospective exhibition at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris

1968

« Paintings since 1963 », Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo .  
Retrospective exhibitions at the Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montréal; Musée du Québec, Québec.

« Paintings in France », National Gallery, Washington, DC.

1974-1975

Traveling retrospective exhibition at the Musée dynamique, Dakar; Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbonne; Salas del Patrimonio Artístico y Cultural, Madrid; Musée Fabre, Montpellier; Museu de Arte Moderna, Mexico; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Museo Maracaibo, Fundação Cultural, Brasília; Museu da Universidade, São Paulo; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, Saint-Etienne



1979

Exhibition at the MNAM-Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, of his first monochromatic paintings, exploring the light reflected by the different textures of the black surface. This light emerging out of the difference between two kinds of dark surfaces contains a great power of emotion and possibilities of development. Later it will be named «noir-lumière» and «outrenoir».

1984

Retrospective exhibition at the Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo.

1987

Recent work shown at Musée Saint Pierre-Art Contemporain, Lyon; Hans-Thoma Gesellschaft, Reutlingen

1989

Retrospective exhibition, «40 years of painting» at Museum Fridericianum, Kassel; IVAM-Centro Julio González, Valencia; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes.

1991

«Soulages, Recent Paintings», Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna.

1992

« Polyptyques 1979-1991 », Maison des Arts Georges Pompidou, Cajarc

1993

« A retrospective », Musée National d'Art Contemporain, Seoul

1994

« A retrospective », China Fine Arts Palace (Meschuguan), Peking; Fine Arts Museum, Taipei  
« Soulages Lebendiges Licht », Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster showing recent paintings of the artist along with preliminary drawings for the stained glasses of the abbey of Conques.

1996

Retrospective exhibition, « Soulages noir lumière » at the Musée d'Art Moderne Ville de Paris; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal; Museu de Arte, Sao Paulo

1987-1994

Pierre Soulages creates the one-hundred and four stained glass windows of the Romanesque abbey of Conques with the master glass artist Jean-Dominique Fleury.

1999

Retrospective exhibition, « Soulages lob des Lichtes », Kunstmuseum, Berne.  
« Œuvres 1994-1999 », Musée Fabre, Montpellier.

2000

Retrospective, « Soulages 82 paintings », M.A.C. les Abattoirs, Toulouse.



Haim Chanin Fine Arts

2001

Retrospective, «Lumière du noir», The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; Tretyakov Museum, Moscow.

2003

« Soulages, l'œuvre imprimé », Bibliothèque Nationale (site Tolbiac), Paris

2005

“Outrenoir” Works on Canvas, Rober Miller Gallery, New York.

“Works on Paper” Haim Chanin Fine Arts, New York.