

# MUSÉE CANTONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS LAUSANNE Gustave Buchet. Charged with Painting



18.6 – 25.9.2022

## Press kit

Musée cantonal  
des Beaux-Arts  
Plateforme 10

Place de la Gare 16  
1003 Lausanne  
Suisse

[mcba.ch](http://mcba.ch)



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# 1. Press release

The show *Gustave Buchet. Charged with Painting* looks back over the career of the Swiss artist (Étoy, 1888 – Lausanne, 1963), a signal figure of early-20<sup>th</sup>-century avant-garde movements in Switzerland. Through some one hundred artworks – paintings, sculptures, and pieces from the decorative arts – the exhibition looks to show how Buchet passionately pursued his quest for novel formal solutions.

Starting in the 1910s, Buchet sensed that the future of painting lay not in Geneva and in the wake of Ferdinand Hodler, but in Paris. In the French capital, he found an art scene that was in a state of creative ferment. He eagerly immersed himself in the innovations of Cubism and Futurism, and put them to work in depicting rhythm and movement. In Geneva, he was briefly caught up in Dada.

Buchet evolved in the 1920s towards a flat geometrical painting style that verged on abstraction. Living in Paris during the interwar years, he soon adopted the principles of Purism which Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant were championing. In painting that obeyed the ruler and compass, he developed a personal palette of both forthright and muted colors, and compositions that are remarkably constructed and arranged. Happy to use whatever he could find in the artist's bag of tricks, he broadened his activities to include sculpture and the decorative arts, turning out designs for the fashion world and the theater.

While Post-Cubism was petering out across Europe, Buchet shifted to a moderate abstraction that posed the challenge of going figurative. Shortly before his return to Lausanne in 1939, he got back in touch with the human, spirituality, and an emotional response to the natural object. Transparency and supple forms prevailed over fragmentation and the interpenetration of pictorial planes. Buchet's late work would be stamped by a final renewal of his art as he abandoned the diktat of line in favor of a quest for color.

Lausanne, June 2022

# Curators of the exhibition

Catherine Lepdor, Chief Curator, MCBA, and Paul-André Jaccard,  
Fondation Gustave Buchet, Lausanne, with the assistance of  
Camille de Alencastro, Researcher, MCBA

# Publication

Paul-André Jaccard, *Gustave Buchet. Accusé de peindre*, Lausanne,  
Fondation Gustave Buchet, Milan, 5 Continents Editions, 2022, 272 pp.,  
232 ill. (Fr.)

CHF 76.50.– in bookstores /

CHF 48.– at the MCBA Bookshop during the exhibition

→ [shop.mcba@plateforme10.ch](mailto:shop.mcba@plateforme10.ch)



## 2. The exhibition

"I'm free by imposing great discipline on myself... I have nothing further to say in my defense."

Gustave Buchet, 1952

### Gallery 1

Rythm, Movement, Dynamism

The early years of Gustave Buchet's career are marked by the artist's repeated moves from Geneva to Paris and back. In 1910, fresh from the School of Fine Arts, Buchet freed himself of the prevailing influence of Ferdinand Hodler. His teacher Eugène Gilliard had instilled in him the main rules of composition. And Gilliard had also sparked in his student an interest in Maurice Denis, Vincent van Gogh, and even Paul Cézanne, who at the time was denigrated and dismissed. Persuaded that the future of art lay in Paris, the young Buchet embarked for the French capital with his friend Rodolphe-Théophile Bosshard. His painting took on a Symbolist look and colorful and expressive touches.

Returning to Geneva, Buchet married Nelly Bovy-Lysberg and the two led a life that paid little heed to prevailing social conventions. He joined other young painters who, like him, loved bright colors and working in impasto. Together they founded a group in 1914, Le Falot. Under the guidance of Maurice Barraud, they exhibited nudes that terrified the respectable bourgeois public. But Buchet soon came to feel he was working in a dead end.

In the winter of 1916-1917, Buchet was once again in Paris. In Montparnasse, he discovered an exciting art scene that was alive with creative ferment. He became friends with the sculptor Ossip Zadkine, who introduced him to Cubism and Futurism. He took an avid interest in depicting movement, rhythm and "universal dynamism." Back in Geneva, he exhibited a Futurist interpretation of the Entombment at the Concours Diday that sparked controversy. His first solo show in 1919 confirmed his place as the leading practitioner of Futurism.

While the Dada movement was spreading throughout Europe, Buchet was recruited by Tristan Tzara's friend Walter Serner, who was championing the approach in Geneva. A Dada show with Christian Schad in 1920 and his participation in a Grand Dada Ball brought disgrace and unsettled the artist. He felt he had betrayed art, his art, and quit the city once again for Paris.

## Gallery 2

### Flatness, Geometry, Precision

Gustave Buchet lived in the French capital during the interwar years. It was a time of rebuilding and trying to return to a stable society. The painter found a renewed sense of purpose by rallying fellow artists for the second Section d'Or. Founded in 1919 by Albert Gleizes, Léopold Survage, and Alexander Archipenko, the group of artists defended the lasting vitality of Cubism and united its heirs on the march to Abstract Art. Under their influence, Buchet's painting became flat, geometrical, and joyfully colorful.

Buchet diversified his activities in the early 1920s. He furnished drawings for advertising, books and newspapers, fashion, and the theater. In 1924, with his future wife Marguerite Robert, he embarked on a new adventure, the Lise Darcy fashion house, designing hundreds of patterns for hats, bags, and cushions. After 1923 his sculpture-paintings show that he took advantage of this experience to rethink his artistic practice.

Starting in 1925, Buchet recentered his energies on easel painting. His new works were taking shape in light of both the modern spirit of Fernand Léger, and Purism, the movement defended by Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant in the review *L'Esprit nouveau*. He limited his themes to the still life and adopted a highly personal palette of colors in which brownish red ochre dominated, contrasting with shades of white, strong grays, and deep blacks. His "Compositions" are characterized by a heightening of their straight lines and right angles, and the vertical arrangement of objects. The way objects and forms are interlinked alone generates a certain dynamic in the work of art. The "unvarying object" is also joyously combined with the female body. The painting became self-sufficient, a living organism governed by the ideal of a thoroughly mathematical precision.



### Gallery 3

#### Humanism, Light, Color

Following the Crash of 1929 and the start of the Great Depression, Buchet shifted to a moderate type of Abstraction. His forms became softer. He gave up fragmentation and the interpenetration of pictorial planes in favor of juxtaposition and overlaying through transparency. Backgrounds are unified and the range of colors becomes brighter. Objects are arranged in a floating space. Along with his still lifes, Buchet summons the female nude for a spectacular series of torsos reduced to forms that are abstract yet humanized through the incursion of light. Landscapes also took on greater importance, inspired by trips in Normandy, Southern France, and Corsica.

The year 1935 was the start of a new direction. Haunted by a deep need to reconnect with the spiritual, Buchet aspired to greater “humanness” and a more realistic observation of nature. Like many artists of his generation, he aimed to bring painting back to the “grand tradition,” the fine art of creating images, the credible rendering of the materiality of bodies and objects. Step by step, he eliminated arbitrary pictorial planes, enriched the chromatic range of his pigments, and reintroduced chiaroscuro effects and modeling which led to a new sense of volume.

When World War II broke out, Buchet took up permanent residence in Lausanne. He also settled down in terms of his personal life after meeting Georgette Bron, whom he would marry in 1940. In Switzerland his Futurist and Purist output would only be discovered in the early 1950s. Some hailed the direction his art was taking as others blamed him for having opted for a more conventional painting. This then was the context in which Buchet, deeply hurt, published “Accusé de peindre...” (Charged with Painting). He disavowed nothing and asserted his freedom as an artist. Right up to his death in 1963, he would keep his independence of mind and pursue his experimentation with the aim of affirming the primacy of color over line.

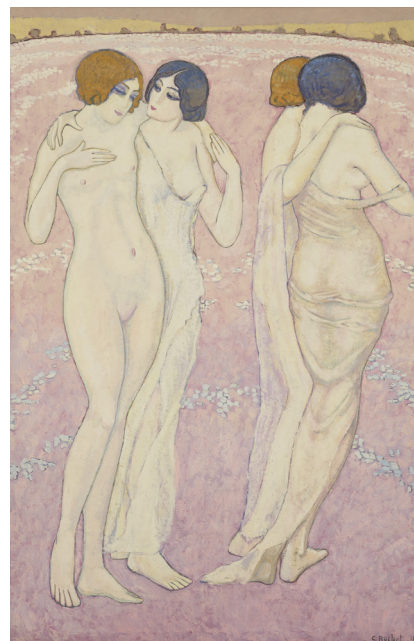
### 3. Press images

Available at → [mcba.ch/presse](https://mcba.ch/presse)

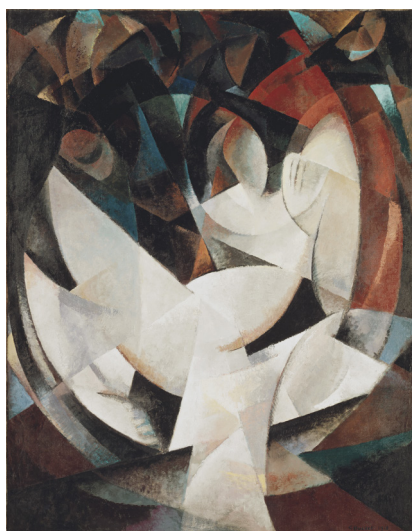
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1.  
Pierre Néri, Gustave Buchet, vers 1918-1919  
Photograph, 20,8 × 16,8 cm. Lausanne,  
Fondation Gustave Buchet



2.  
Gustave Buchet, *L'éternel printemps*, 1913  
Oil on canvas, 198 × 128 cm. Lausanne,  
Fondation Gustave Buchet  
© 2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber  
Photo: Étienne Malapert



3.  
Gustave Buchet, *Mise au tombeau*, 1918  
Oil on canvas, 146 × 116 cm  
Geneva, MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire,  
Ville de Genève. Acquisition, 1965  
© 2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber  
Photo: Musée d'art et d'histoire,  
Ville de Genève/Yves Siza



4.  
Gustave Buchet, *L'orage*, 1919  
Oil on canvas, 73,5 × 93 cm  
Winterthur, Kunst Museum Winterthur. Donation  
of Galerieverein, 1969  
© 2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber  
Photo: SIK-ISEA, Zurich (Philippe Hitz)





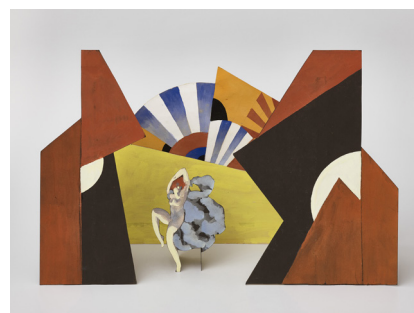
5.  
Gustave Buchet, *Pont et remorqueur*, 1921  
Oil on cardboard, 74 × 55 cm  
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts.  
Acquisition, 2019  
©2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber  
Photo: MCBA



7.  
Gustave Buchet, *Composition. Dynamisme*, 1927  
Oil on canvas, 160 × 130 cm  
Private collection, Geneva  
©2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber  
Photo: Étienne Malapert



6.  
Gustave Buchet, *Grande composition*, 1925  
Oil on canvas, 146 × 115 cm  
Private collection  
©2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber



8.  
Gustave Buchet, Set design for theater,  
1:10 scale model, [1923-1924]  
Pencil and gouache on paper, 47 × 69,5 × 31 cm  
Lausanne, Fondation Gustave Buchet  
©2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber  
Photo: MCBA



9.  
Gustave Buchet, *Bord de Seine au printemps*, 1929  
Oil on canvas, 92,5 × 65 cm  
Private collection, Switzerland  
©2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber



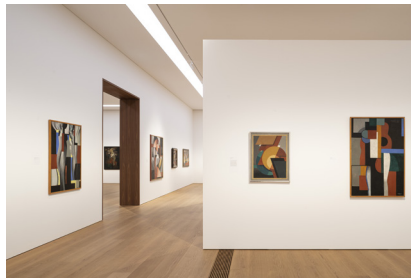
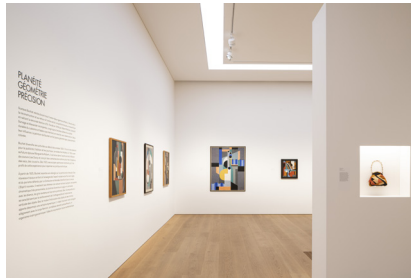
10.  
Gustave Buchet, *Torse de marbre noir*, 1929  
Oil on canvas, 73 × 60 cm  
Lausanne, Fondation Gustave Buchet  
©2022 Gustave Buchet. Familles Bron  
Bersier Biber  
Photo: Étienne Malapert

# Views of the exhibition

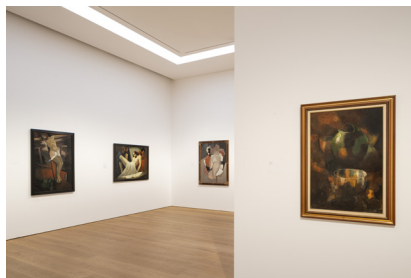
Gallery 1



Gallery 2



Gallery 3



Caption to be reproduced:  
*View of the exhibition Gustave Buchet. Charged with Painting at Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne, 2022*  
Photo: MCBA

## 4. Public engagement– Public outreach services

### Events

Limited capacity.  
Register online: → [www.mcba.ch](http://www.mcba.ch)

Guided tours (in French):  
Sunday, 26 June, 10 and 24 July, 7 and 21 August, 4 and 18 September,  
at 11am

Guided tour (in English):  
Sunday, 11 September at 2pm

Guided tours by the exhibition curators (in French):  
Thursday, 28 July at 6:30pm, Sunday, 25 September at 4:30pm  
By Catherine Lepdor, Chief Curator, and Paul-André Jaccard, Fondation  
Gustave Buchet, Lausanne

Guided tours for the Amis du Musée (in French):  
Thursday, 23 June at 6pm, Tuesday, 28 June at 12:30pm  
and Tuesday, 6 September at 12:30pm  
By Catherine Lepdor, Chief Curator, and Paul-André Jaccard, Fondation  
Gustave Buchet, Lausanne

Kids workshop (in French):  
“Fabrique ton costume !”  
Saturday, 9 July, 13 August, 10 September, 2pm–5pm  
Discover stage costumes designed by Gustave Buchet, then make  
your own paper outfit and fill it with original lines and textures.  
CHF 15.–

Adults workshop (in French):  
“De l’objet à la peinture”  
Saturday, 17 September, 2pm–5pm  
Participants will produce an abstract painting from an everyday object.  
With Arnaud Sancosme, artist  
CHF 70.– / 50.–

Kids activity booklet (in French):  
For 7-years-olds and up  
Free, available at the reception desk

Program for schools and private tours: → [mcba.ch](http://mcba.ch)

## 5. Information and contact

Florence Dizdari  
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T +41 79 232 40 06

Press visits, on registration → [presse.mcba@plateforme10.ch](mailto:presse.mcba@plateforme10.ch)



Hours:  
Tuesday – Sunday: 10am – 6pm  
Thursday: 10am – 8pm  
Monday: closed  
August 1<sup>st</sup>: open

Admission:  
Plateforme 10 – 3 museums: CHF 15.–  
(special rate for the inaugural period; gives access to all exhibitions at the MCBA, mudac and Photo Elysée)  
1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month: free  
Up to 25 years old: free

Online Tickets → [mcba.ch/billetterie](http://mcba.ch/billetterie)

Access:  
SBB Lausanne train station, 3 minutes on foot  
Bus: 85, 3, 20, 21, 60, Gare stop  
Bus: 6, Cecil stop  
Metro: m2, Gare stop  
Car: Montbenon parking, Reduced fee

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## 6. Partners and sponsors

The MCBA building was inaugurated on 5 April 2019. The museum's new premises were built by the canton of Vaud with the generous support of the City of Lausanne and the following private partnerships:

Fondation  
Les Mûrons



Fondation  
Art et Vie

Fondation  
Anita et Werner Damm-Etienne



Abakanowicz Arts and  
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*Le Brassus*



Madame  
Alice Pauli

Association rétrospective  
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