

The gallery is delighted to introduce this major artist, whose reputation remains too confidential, to the artistic vision.

In 2022, following a 2013 exhibition dedicated to Elisabeth Joulia, the gallery presented a selection of unique Ivanoff's works, along with a bilingual publication exploring his and plastic approach to emerge.

A new generation, represented by many women allowed a fresh artistic traditional pottery.

In the 1950s, the art of ceramics attracted many artists whose freedom infused a new creativity in wood for the oven. It's a delight for me, I stock it, I make it last...»

«I wonder, looking at the pieces, will they be loved? Will they be crossed? And me? Perhaps I could roam all around and relieve their birth? There are also attics and cellars. There is forgetfulness. Do we know?»

Ivanoff
at the Anne Sophie Duval gallery

Ivanoff : his spirit and his words

BIOGRAPHICAL LANDMARKS

February 10, 1897: Born in Tarnovo, the former capital of Bulgaria.
1917: Served as a non-commissioned officer during World War I.
1919: Became a schoolteacher and began studying Fine Arts and scenography in Varna, nearby the Black Sea.
1922: Moved to France and quickly established himself as a decorative painter.
1927: Married in Marseille, he then settled in Paris, where he developed his skills as a decorator and colorist.
1940: Took over his brother-in-law Philip Halsman's photography studio after Halsman emigrated to the United States.
1945: Discovered ceramics through the book The Art of Pottery by William Lee (1913) and traveled to Saint-Amand-en-Puisaye.
1946: Established his workshop in the nearby village of La Borne, where he would create all his works.
1981: Met Dutch art critic Hans Redeker in La Borne, leading to the publication of two significant articles on his work.
June 1973: Passed away, leaving behind a legacy of 3,000 pieces.
1979: The Vassil Ivanoff Association was founded, first led by Georges Nicot and later by Max Herzberg.
1988: The Vassil Ivanoff Museum was established in Argent-sur-Sauldre, in the Cher region.

La Borne

Located in the Cher department in central France, La Borne is renowned for the richness of its sandstone deposits. Local ceramic production has been known since the 12th century, and by the late 19th century, the community gathered around 700 inhabitants and 80 potters. While primarily producing utilitarian pieces, the village also gained recognition for its folk imagery, especially through the workshop of Jeanne Talbot. The local pottery industry declined in the early 20th century until a new generation of artists arrived after World War II, including Jean and Jacqueline Lerat, Paul Beyer, André Rozay, and Vassil Ivanoff in 1946, followed shortly by Élisabeth Joulia, as well as Yves and Monique Mohy, and Claudine Monchaussé.

IVANOFF MUSEUM

After Ivanoff's death in 1973, his workshop and barn were transformed into a museum, allowing the public to discover the variety of his works. A key figure in La Borne's artistic revival, he remains the village's only artist to have had a museum dedicated to his legacy.

In 2022, the Ivanoff collection was integrated into the Musée de La Borne, where it now presented alongside works of his predecessors, such as Marie Talbot, and his peers (Joulia, Deblander...).



Cubist sculpture in stoneware with bicolored slip

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A BULGARIAN CERAMIST IN LA BORNE

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Sculptural bowl-vase in a violet glaze enhanced by subtle green gradients



Vassil
IVANOFF
1897-1973

GALERIE ANNE-SOPHIE DUVAL

A Bulgarian in La Borne

A WANDERER

In 1945, while strolling in the streets of Paris, Ivanoff stumbles upon a small bookseller's stall where he discovers The Art of Pottery, a book by the English ceramist William Lee. He immediately decided to learn pottery.

in the French supplementary inventory of historic monuments.

EVOLUTION

Over thirty years, Ivanoff created almost 3000 pieces, some of which are exhibited in the Museum of La Borne. His production ranges from traditional wheel-thrown pottery to sculptural ceramics.

A HERMIT

A solitary artist — harsh, sensitive, and proud — Ivanoff rarely exhibited his work. Considered a difficult character, he was not always easy to talk to, let alone persuaded to sell his own piece.

SETTLING IN LA BORNE

During this time of scarcity, Ivanoff arrived by bicycle and settled in a modest cottage in the nearby village of La Borne — where he set up his wheel and built his own kiln, today listed



Stoneware sculpture featuring intersecting disks mounted on a textured base



Stoneware vase with bicolored slip

In Ivanoff's workshop

ARTIST AND ARTISAN: SHAPING CLAY

Ivanoff, in his perpetual search of innovation, shapes clay with a sculptural approach blending roughness and sensuality. Between art and craftsmanship, he begins his creations on the wheel, meticulously shaping the forms before skillfully transform them into sculptures.

In his humble home-studio, a remarkable achievement that reflects his complete dedication to every stage of the process, from sculpting and glazing to firing.

His first notebooks are filled with sketches inspired by prehistoric and primitive societies, African sculpture, and pre-Columbian pottery, particularly the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic funeral pots of South America.

They also reveal sketches of English medieval pottery and decorations of German salt-glazed Beilamine jugs, bottles

NOTEBOOKS

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Taking advantage of the transformations and imperfections of firing, Ivanoff turns cracks and collapses into aesthetic assets. His rough-style figures evoke grotesque art.

Arriving in France in the early 1920s, he found himself at a crossroads of multiple and varied influences: Lipchitz, Zadkine, Picasso, Brancusi, but also archaic Mesopotamian statuettes or pre-Columbian ceramics.

Without chronology, Ivanoff's work defies classifications and eras, leaving it to his photographs to bear witness to the fertility of his creations.

EXHIBITIONS

1948 Galerie Breteau, Paris
1948 UNESCO, Paris
1948 Salon d'Automne, Paris
1949 Salon d'Automne, Paris
1949 Librairie Quai des Orfèvres, Paris
1950 Galerie La Colombe, Paris
1951 Salon d'Automne, Paris
1951 Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris
1953 Salon d'Automne, Paris
1954 Galleria Nagasawa, Rio de Janeiro
1962 Galerie Van Heurns, Amsterdam
1962 Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, Paris
1963 Rotterdamse Kunstkring, Rotterdam
1964 Maison des Artistes, La Borne
1966 Salle des Cordeliers, Châteauroux
1971 Maison des Artistes, La Borne
1972 Maison des Métiers d'Art Français, Paris
1976 Château de Cuijan, Cuijan
1981 Paris/Paris, Centre Pompidou, Paris
1981 Maison des Potiers, La Borne
1981 «La Céramique Française Contemporaine.» Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris
1981-1982 «Recherches Contemporaines en Berry sur l'art de la Céramique.» Musée du Berry, Bourges
1982 «Dialogue de Terre.» Maison de la Culture, Bourges
1980-1982 Bourges, retrospective exhibition organized in six regional museums in France
1991 Musée du Berry, Bourges
1991 Musée Decletoire, Roanne
1991 Musée de Chauvigny, Chauvigny
1991 Musée de Saint-Amand-les-Eaux, Saint-Amand
1992 Musée de Metz, Metz
1992 Musée de Tours, Tours
2022 Exhibition: «Vassil Ivanoff, un soleil de 1300.» Galerie Anne Sophie Duval, Paris
2022 Musée de la Borne, Exhibition «Sans Réserves»
2022 Musée Charles VII, Mehun-sur-Yèvre, «Le Gres Sublime d'Ivanoff»
2023 May - TEFAR NYC, Gallery Demisch Danant
2023 December - NYO Exhibition Ivanoff, Gallery Demisch Danant
2024 TEFAR New York/Maastricht, Demisch Danant
2025 Ceramic Bruxelles, Gallery Anne Sophie Duval



Stoneware bowl with bird decoration on a blue background

Glossary :

Ceramics: Pieces made from clay, physically and chemically transformed through firing.

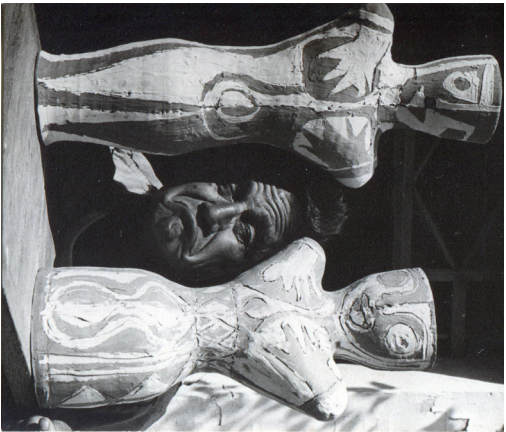
Grog: Fired clay that has been crushed.

Glaze: A composition made from ground minerals and metal oxides, vitrified through firing.

Flamed: Characteristic of pieces fired in full flame, colored by the fire.

Stoneware: Opaque clay that becomes vitrified when fired at high temperatures.

Engobe: An earthy coating applied to pieces before firing to alter their color.



Portrait of Vassil Ivanoff



Anthropomorphic sculpture in glazed stoneware with engraved decoration



Painted canvas, composition of silhouettes, 35 x 51 cm

On the back, two stoneware vases with engraved bicolored engobe

