



Les Cosmogones (The Cosmogons), 1944, oil on canvas, 96 x 93 in (244 x 236 cm)

MEDIA ALERT:

Wolfgang Paalen: Philosopher of the Possible
February 6 – March 29, 2014

Gallery Reception: Thursday, February 6, 2014, 6-8 pm

Gallery Wendi Norris

161 Jessie Street (at New Montgomery), San Francisco, CA 94105

- This exhibition features paintings, sculptures, and unique drawings, created by the Austrian Surrealist between 1932 and 1954.
- Works include *Les Cosmogones (The Cosmogons)* (1944), Paalen's largest painting, two iconic works, *La balance – rêve interprété, vue gothique (The Balance – Interpreted Dream, Gothic Sight)* (1937), *Combat des princes saturniens III (Combat of the Saturnian Princes III)*

(1939), and an eight foot sculpture, *Projét pour un monument (Project for a Monument)* (1948).

- **Rare works from the collections of Diego Rivera, Andre Breton, and Gordon Onslow Ford included in this exhibition.**
- **The exhibition will be documented in a 60-page catalogue with an essay by Amy Winter, Director of the Godwin-Ternbach Museum at Queens College and author of *Wolfgang Paalen: Artist and Theorist of the Avant-Garde*.**
- **An academic roundtable discussion will be held on Saturday, February 8, 2014, 2-3:30 pm with special emphasis on Paalen's significant influence on Abstract Expressionism.**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA.

Wolfgang Paalen: Philosopher of the Possible features a selection of works by one of the twentieth century's most catalyzing Surrealist artists. In its second solo show for Paalen (Austrian, 1905-1959), Gallery Wendi Norris presents works dating from 1932 to 1954, including the artist's largest sculpture and painting ever produced.

The exhibition has several centerpieces, works that have rarely been exhibited. *Les Cosmogones (The Cosmogons)* (1944), the largest painting Paalen created measuring 96 x 93 inches (244 x 236 cm) reflects the intersection of art and ethnology. It was originally exhibited at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of this Century gallery in 1945 and later in *Dynaton*, an exhibition at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1951. *Projét pour un monument (Project for a Monument)* (1945), Paalen's largest sculpture, standing at nearly 8 feet or 2.4 meters in height, was produced in his San Angel studio, built by the German architect Max Cetto. Two paintings on view were produced during Paalen's most riveting era, when he introduced the technique of *fumage* to the art world. *La balance – rêve interprété, vue gothique (The Balance – Interpreted Dream, Gothic Sight)* (1937) contains a central monumental figure as if to predict its future fate with war on the horizon. *Combat des princes saturniens III (Combat of the Saturnian Princes III)* (1939), once owned by Andre Breton, depicts a tree-like structure bursting out of the smoke-filled sky, a direct reference to the state of the world in 1939.

A 60-page catalogue will accompany the exhibition, with an essay by Amy Winter, Director of the Godwin-Ternbach Museum at Queens College and author of *Wolfgang Paalen: Artist and Theorist of the Avant-Garde*. Winter makes critical observations, the first ever published in English, as to Paalen's direct and indirect influence on the New York School of artists, including Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, and William Baziot, among others.

About the Artist

Born in 1905 in Vienna, Austria to an upper class family, Paalen was exposed to elite members of art and academic society of that time including Hans Hofmann, Julius Meier-Graefe, Hans Arp, Fernand Leger, Albert Einstein, and Sigmund Freud. As an adult, his pioneering art innovations and theories were shared with and informed by top thinkers of that time including Andre Breton and Dwight MacDonald. Fleeing war-torn Europe for Mexico in 1939 at the invitation of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, Paalen ultimately made Mexico his home. An avid collector and theorist, his art was in an ever-constant state of change to reflect his environmental surroundings. He also amassed an important collection of ethnological artifacts, many of which now belong to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Wolfgang Paalen's paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures have been widely exhibited in the United States and abroad and are represented in many museum collections including Centre Georges Pompidou, Museo de Arte Moderne, Mexico City, Tate Britain, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He founded the influential art magazine, *DYN*, which includes writing and works from some of the most important artists of this era and catalyzed much of 21st Century art theory, which culminated in a dedicated exhibition at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles in 2012.

About the Gallery

Gallery Wendi Norris presents a compelling contemporary and modern program with a strong emphasis on the global market. Since 2003, we have worked with over one hundred of the top museums around the world, placing works in their collections and collaborating on solo and group exhibitions. Though, by design, the range of works we show is diverse, a common thread runs through them all: a focus on the human ability to create psychological and spiritual meaning through form and content. Both the artworks and the artists themselves are emblematic of this aesthetic ambition and our trans-cultural nature. Through our expertise in the modern art world, with an unparalleled network in Surrealism, and through our considered selection of some of today's most dynamic artists, we support a range of private clients, museums, and not-for-profit art organizations.

For additional information and images please contact the gallery at (415) 346-7812 or email molly@gallerywendinorris.com.