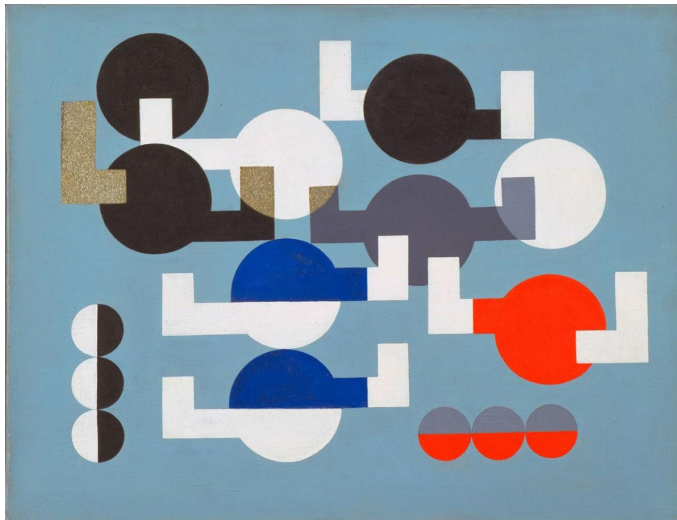


## Haegue Yang on the legacy of Sophie Taeuber-Arp

July 26, 2021 | By Harriet Lloyd-Smith

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**Legendary abstract artist and designer Sophie Taeuber-Arp is finally receiving her dues in a Tate Modern retrospective. To mark the occasion, Korean artist Haegue Yang reflects on the enduring influence of her work**



Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Composition of Circles and Overlapping Angles* 1930. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation. *Photography: The Museum of Modern Art, Department of Imaging and Visual Resources. © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn*

Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889-1943) never had an exclusive relationship with one discipline. A painter, architect, teacher, magazine editor, textile designer, puppeteer, dancer and creator of absurd Dada objects, the Swiss artist's legacy lies in her versatility, innovation and fearless experimentation.

A pioneer of the French avant-garde, she probed the intersections of abstract art, craft and design, and proved that, in practice, such distinctions need not exist.



Nicolai Aluf, portrait of Sophie Taeuber with her Dada head 1920. *Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin*

A major retrospective at Tate Modern – the first of her work ever held in the UK – is dedicated to the life and work of this trailblazer, and it's been a long time coming. Through 200 key works and objects from collections across Europe and America, the show captures how an artist, once overlooked and in the shadow of her husband – the German-French sculptor and Dada doyen Hans Arp – quite literally gave geometric abstraction a new vocabulary.

Taeuber-Arp was heavily involved in Zurich Dada, a short-lived, but potent movement which sought to seamlessly fuse art and life. During this time, she created some of her most defining works: a set of abstract 'Dada Heads' made in turned polychromed wood. Primary colour-drenched wall pieces – wool on canvas, oil on canvas, oil on wood – capture Taeuber-Arp's taste for the relentless pushing of material potential.

## Haegue Yang on the lasting influence of Sophie Taeuber-Arp

What is most striking about Taeuber-Arp's work is its longevity of relevance and enduring influence with contemporary artists across the creative landscape. One such artist is Haegue Yang, whose current solo show 'Strange Attractors', at Tate St Ives runs until 26 September.

In her own words, the Korean artist offers insight into Taeuber-Arp's enduring impact on her work and outlook:

'Sophie Taeuber-Arp, a dancer, painter, sculptor as well as weaver, architect, and educator, is a figure of complexity. Both spiritualist and modernist, her double soul is evident in her affiliation with an international style and vernacular treatment of material,' says Yang.



Haegue Yang, *Non-Indépliables, nues*, 2010/2020, in 'Strange Attractors', at Tate St Ives.

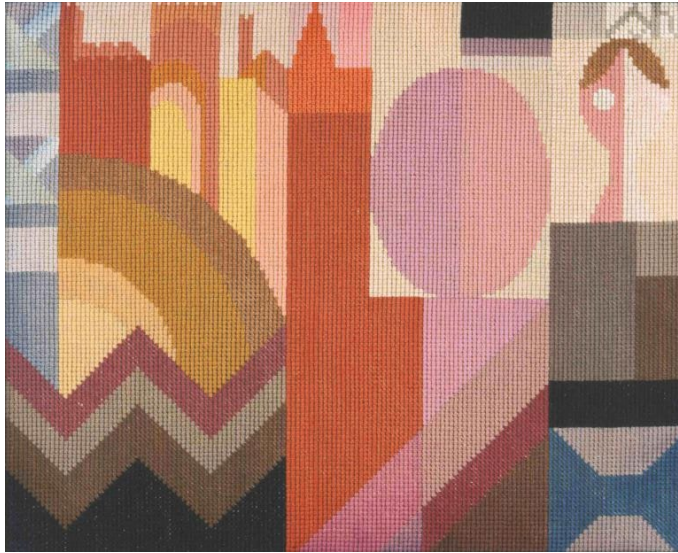
*Courtesy of the artist; photography: Nick Ash*

'Her capacity to encompass these movements and the zeitgeist of her time and beyond fascinates me. For example, her sculpture *Coupe Dada* (1916/18) seems to be an enclosed container, a mysterious and vibrant melting pot fusing extraordinarily diverse practices.

'Her accommodating force of hybridity empowers even non-European artists like me to access the Western avant-garde as atonality with ruptures.'



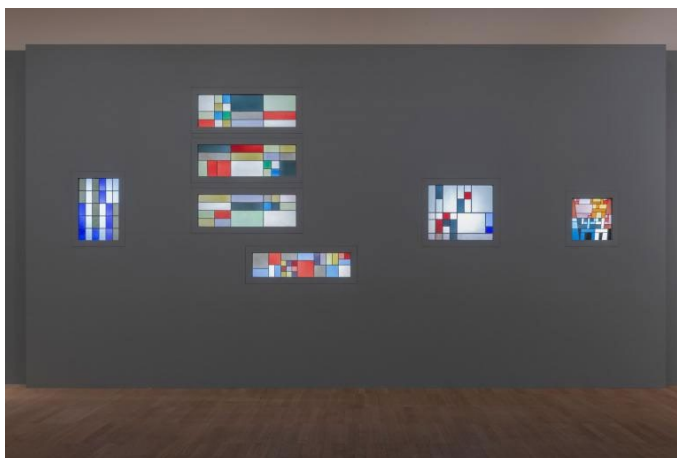
Installation view of 'Sophie Taeuber-Arp' at Tate Modern. *Courtesy Tate, Seraphina Neville*



Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Embroidery*. c. 1920, wool on canvas. *Private collection, on loan to the Fondation Arp, Clamart, France*



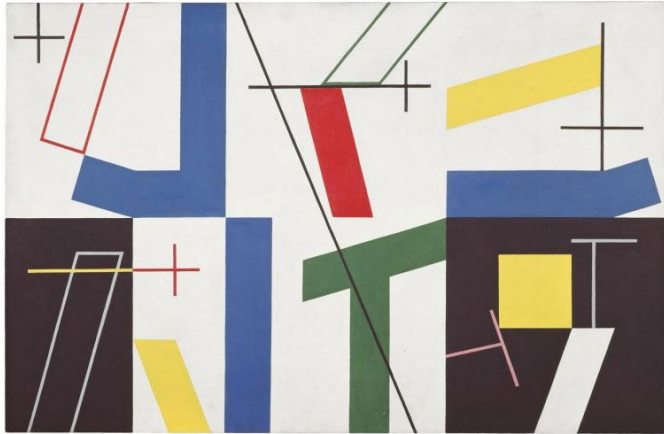
Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Flight: Round Relief in Three Heights* 1937, oil paint on plywood. *Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin*



Installation view of 'Sophie Taeuber-Arp' at Tate Modern. *Courtesy Tate, Seraphina Neville*



Installation view of 'Sophie Taeuber-Arp' at Tate Modern. *Courtesy Tate, Seraphina Neville*



Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Six Spaces with Four Small Crosses*, 1932. Kunstmuseum Bern. Gift of Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach



Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Perlbeutal*, c 1917. Museum für Gestaltung Zürich