



FERNAND LEGER

The Serge Sorokko Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of graphic work by Fernand Léger. This exhibition provides a rare opportunity to view most of Léger's spectacular color lithographs produced in 1949 and 1950. Born in 1881 in Argentan, France, Léger was a cubist who along with Picasso and Braque formed the core of modernism in the 20th century. Léger used the geometrical forms of cubism to explore the technical and metaphysical aspects of the urban experience. His imagery often incorporated architectural structures that referenced both the physicality of the city and the excitement of a modern mechanical age. In keeping with a highly structured composition, Léger approached the representation of human form in a similar manner; his figures are characterized by bold line, sculpted features and weighty forms. Léger, like Picasso, Matisse, Chagall and Braque had a strong interest in printmaking which led to collaborative projects for illustrated books. Unlike his contemporaries whose graphic oeuvre is marked by steady production, Léger's work in the graphic medium is quite rare. It falls into two distinct periods separated by an interim of nearly twenty-five years. The images form Les

Illuminations Suite (1949) and the Cirque Suite (1950), represented in this exhibition, date from Léger's second period. Les Illuminations is a series of color pochoir lithographs executed to illustrate poetry by the great French poet Arthur Rimbaud. These splendid images evoke the unique relationship between word and poet, form and artist.

The Cirque Suite is considered to be Léger's greatest graphic achievement. The series of sixty-three lithographs illustrate Léger's own text which explores the themes of the circus and the French countryside. For Léger, the circus was a metaphor for life. Widely regarded among the greatest modern masters, Fernand Léger was the subject of a major 1998 retrospective held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as well as earlier exhibitions held at the Tate Gallery in London, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York.