

October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018

PRESS RELEASE

**THE ECSTATIC EYE. SERGUEI EISENSTEIN AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE ARTS**  
From 28.09.19 to 24.02.20



Press contacts

Centre Pompidou-Metz

Agathe Bataille

Head of Publics and

Communication

00 33 (0)3 87 15 39 83

email : [agathe.bataille@centrepompidou-metz.fr](mailto:agathe.bataille@centrepompidou-metz.fr)

Marion Gales

Press relations

téléphone :

00 33 (0)3 87 15 52 76

mél : [marion.gales@centrepompidou-metz.fr](mailto:marion.gales@centrepompidou-metz.fr)

Claudine Colin Communication

Pénélope Ponchelet

00 33 (0)1 42 72 60 01

email : [penelope@claudinecolin.com](mailto:penelope@claudinecolin.com)

Credits :

Sergueï Eisenstein, *Ivan the Terrible*, 1945

Sergei Eisenstein, mythic film director who was the glory of Russian cinema, is a lot more than a film maker. Cultivating the art of montage and of lighting to the point of inventing a new visual language in the middle of the 1920's Eisenstein has always placed himself at the crossroads of the arts. Man of the theatre and of literature, artist, theorist, passionate about archeology and anthropology, all throughout his career he never ceased to learn about the history of art. Centre Pompidou-Metz is proposing a retrospective of his work compared with this universal heritage. We will find the great films which made his reputation (*Strike*, 1924; *The Battleship Potemkine*, 1925; *October, Ten days that shook the world*, 1927; *The General Line*, 1929; *Que Viva Mexico !*, 1932; *Alexandre Nevsky*, 1938 and *Ivan the Terrible*, 1944-46), but also his theatrical experimentations, his drawings rich with symbols, drawn with clear lines or his unfinished projects. The exhibition goes back over the methodology and the visionary approach of the film-maker, the productions with a strong link to Russian history but also his numerous voyages in Europe, to Mexico and to the United-States, to his lectures and his meetings.

If during his lifetime, Eisenstein was an artist that the whole world demanded and whose work and philosophy perturbed minds, today this aura has considerably diminished, because of the fact that his film work is no longer systematically distributed via the cinema clubs. Likewise, the complexity and the scope of Eisenstein's accomplishments have for a long time been underestimated because of essentially ideological interpretations, reducing his work only within the context of the communist USSR and his relations with Stalin. The exhibition The Ecstatic Eye. Sergei Eisenstein at the crossroads of the arts intends therefore to discover or rediscover for the French and European public a major name of the seventh art and of world culture, a man considered to be the "Russian Leonardo da Vinci" and who was the first to present himself in artist's clothing. We must therefore insist on the Eisenstein the maker, the amateur, collector, commentator, image editor, a visionary Eisenstein, always eager for radical experiments intended to have a profound and durable impact on the spectator.

By consulting the vast range of references created by Eisenstein in his work, this confrontation between fixed images and moving images enables the revelation in an exemplary way, of the manner in which a creator produces his images, at a time when the question of artistic creation has become central. The exhibition engages a dialogue with the history of art, in an attempt to show how Eisenstein nourishes himself intellectually in his work, with chef d'œuvres from the history of world art, the works of his Russian and foreign contemporaries, but also and above all the artistic heritage preceding the advent of the cinema, such as painting, sculpture, engraving, drawing, architecture. The exhibition also shows Eisenstein's interest and yearning for popular cultures (American, Russian, European), in an abolition of hierarchies which is representative of his associative logic. Eisenstein, as a theorist rereads the history of art in the light of cinema. Indeed, the cinema did not so much represent for Eisenstein a medium but rather a philosophical operation, a materialization of psychological processes fixed in man since the dawn of time. In this respect, cinema enabled him to rethink the entire history of art and of world culture, which is translated in the exhibition by galleries of paintings and of sculptures that Eisenstein analyses in cinematic terms and of which certain can also afterwards be interpreted through the prism of the cinema. The history of Eisensteinian art is deliberately anachronistic and dehierarchised, open to extra-western cultures. Centre Pompidou-Metz is proposing with this exhibition a rediscovery of the seventh art, through one of the most eminent figures in its history.

Curators: Ada Ackerman, Research associate at the CNRS/THALIM, art historian and Philippe-Alain Michaud, curator at the Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Head of the experimental cinema department

Research officer: Olga Kataeva, artist and researcher

