

# HENRY DORCHY

Born in Tournai in 1920

Died in Brussels in 2002



The 4 seasons, 1955



Studio in Brussels, 1963

## A «curious historian» in Art

Henry Dorchy was born in Tournai on January 24, 1920. His father, Hubert Dorchy, cartoonist, caricaturist and creator of advertising posters, introduced him very young to the plastic arts.

He graduated in philosophy and letters-history in 1942 (ULB & ULg) and married in 1943. He and his wife Irene had 2 children, Harry born in 1944, and Martine born in 1946. Henry started as a history teacher, then prefect at the Royal Atheneum in Brussels (1945-1978). He also taught the history of "plastic arts" at the Higher Institute of Plastic Arts (1962-1978).

His career as a painter began in the late 1940s with a figurative style that makes concessions to personages and objects, but quickly departs from it to move towards abstraction in the early 1950s.

In 1951 he held his first exhibition at the gallery "La Sirène" organized by Richard Lucas and presented 33 paintings. He met and became close friends with the "Master" Cretien George(s), an original artist concerned with his independence, then 64 years old. They will remain friends until the death in 1966 of this great painter of femininity. From 1951, Henry Dorchy holds the *Journal of a curious historian* in which he describes the contemporary artistic life with a sometimes humorous, even squeaky verve.

At the "Prix Jeune Peinture Belge", Henry Dorchy won second prize in 1953 and gain in 1954. He met and became close with Louis Van Lint (1909-1986). Paul Delvaux (1897-1994) appreciated the figurative nudes of Dorchy and they exchanged watercolors.

In 1955 Henry Dorchy won a scholarship and traveled to Italy. This country inspired him a series of drawings and paintings sometimes painted with latex since it reminded him of "the



Harry & his egg, oil painting, 1952



Closed sardines box, oil on aluminium leaf, 1952



Open sardines box, oil on aluminium leaf, 1953

*Italian chalky soil and the matter of frescoes* ". He experimented with mixing curves and lines representing his imagination about the figurative titles of the pictures. He found pleasure in disabusing the figurative painters of that time who denounced the non-figurative facility.

*"I consider that figurative painting is an excellent exercise in preparation for abstract painting and that, precisely, abstraction in order to be valid, must necessarily start from the figurative, from the sensible world, therefore from the immediate perception, even if it is decanted by the mind, to give it a spiritual meaning afterwards ... And the conclusion of this is that the abstract painting must be identified, that is to say that under each canvas, we can read a title which is the starting point of the artist "*(Interview by Paul Hellyn in 1954; Collections of the Museum of the Parole).

*Creative process in perpetual renewal;  
formal and technological inventions;  
research on textures and light.*

In 1956, Henry Dorchy painted on glass compositions 24x36 mm for projection (slides). Elements of the show "Voices and Images" by Paul Hellyn, presented at the 1958 Universal Exhibition in Brussels and together they illustrated Rimbaud's *Drunk Boat* and *The Great Temptations of Saint Anthony* by Michel de Ghelderode.

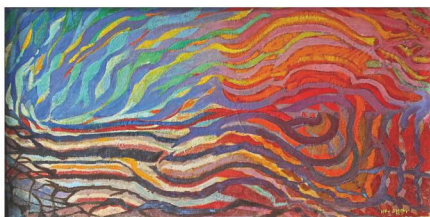
In 1958, he began a series of painted butterflies on "supports glued to a sheet of gold and aluminum with greasy colored varnishes... [Henry Dorchy] got "a species of mobilization of the color, because according to the position of the spectator, the tone changes, being sometimes clearer, sometimes darker ".

From 1962 onward, he made aluchromies. In the factory, the paint was integrated in an aluminum leaf and was indestructible. It was still "research on the light" and Henry incorporated aluchromies - and resichromies - "with respect for the architecture that should accommodate them"





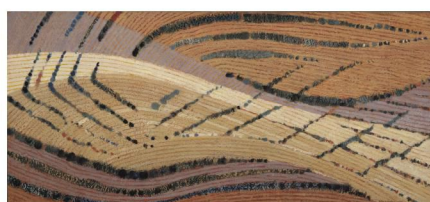
Oscillation, oil, 1964



The 4 seasons, oil, 1955


Palazzo fiorentino, oil, 1956.  
Exposed at the Belgian  
Abstract Art Museum


Sienna, oil, 1957



Campagna toscana, latex, 1958

according to architect Gérard de Brigode.

From the end of the 1960s, until 1995, Henry also painted canvas for carpets made of wool knotted by his wife Irene but it was also a time when he left abstract art for a new innovative figuration composing landscapes and portraits with multiple images.

In the 1970s and until 1992, he created 3 unique but unpublished comic strips (unfortunately stolen in September 2015) including *Les profanes écritures selon frère Henri ...* as well as an erotic illustrated alphabet in 5 copies.

Henry Dorchy died on June 29, 2002

During the years 1951 to 1972 his work is shown in **18 solo exhibitions** (including Galerie Mourgue in Paris) & in **85 collective exhibitions** of contemporary Belgian Art in Belgium, but also in Milan & Venice (Italy, 1954 & 1962), Newark & New-York (USA, 1958-9), La Haye (The Netherlands, 1960), Lugano & Lausanne (Switzerland, 1960 & 1967), Turin & Venice (Italy, 1960 & 1962), Madrid (Spain, 1962), South Africa (1963), Denmark (1964), Lyon, Nice, Amiens, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Calais, Dunkirk, Cagnes-sur-Mer, Meudon (France, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1974), Coimbra (Portugal, 1964), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil, 1965), Darmstadt (Germany, 1973). **In 1971, Henry Dorchy participated in the Louvre Museum (Paris) at the exhibition "Artists and the Turkish bath of Ingres" with Picasso, Man Ray, Labisse, Rauschenberg and Raysse.**

### *Last exhibitions with illustrated catalogs*

-Jean-Paul Heerbrant, Jean-Marc De Pelsemaeker "The World of Henry Dorchy", with the artistic evolution and the collections of chocolate molds, speculoos molds, old bottles with personages. The Cultural Affairs Department of the Municipality of Woluwe- Saint-Lambert (Brussels), Albert Marinus Center, 2014.

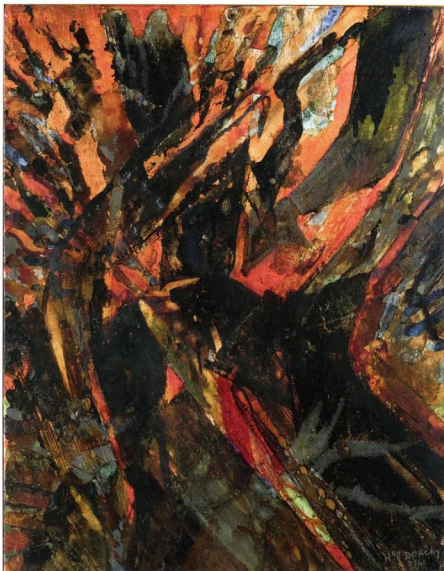
-Gallery Patrick Lancz in Brussels, 2015.

-Bastien Art in Brussels, 2017.





Butterfly, grease pencils on latex on paper, 1958



Butterfly, greasy colored varnishes on sheets of gold and aluminum, 1961



Baratti, aluchromy, 1963

### Press excerpts

- "The subtle symbolism that he develops in his recent paintings will seduce those who like to discover, far off the beaten track, the most disturbing aspects of contemporary art" (Paul Caso - Le Soir - December 4, 1951)
- "Among our young avant-garde painters, Henry Dorchy is probably one of the few to have understood what there was generous intimacy in the abstract representation, as Paul Klee had put the principle" (Paul Caso - Le Soir - 5 February 1953)
- "The compositions of Henry Dorchy have a Mallarmé density which are of a scholarly and moving colorist" (Paul Caso - Le Soir - February 24, 1954)
- "Dorchy invents and applies a new way of painting, a kind of alchemy giving to matter the transparency and movance that characterize the beautiful colors of exotic butterflies" (Marcel Duchateau - De Nieuwe Gids - March 13, 1960)
- "Dorchy is of the Bazaine and Manessier race for whom art is the free exercise of a poetic art" (Paul Caso - Le Soir - March 1st, 1963)
- "Henry Dorchy is at the age when a painter does not discover himself more, but where he deepens. The space he sought was met, by one of those historical coincidences that makes the fortune of thought and living art, the technique he needed (the aluchromy). Each aluminium leaf that comes out of his hands is a colorful, cineplastic emission. We perceive a light joining the brilliance of the metal to great and violent flat areas like cobalt or sulfur bands..." (Pierre Sterckx - "The search for light in the work of Dorchy - Marginales, Revue des idées et des lettres n° 97 - September 1964)
- "Henry Dorchy constantly enriches a skilful and nuanced technique. His creative fervor leads him to try various techniques where he prints his more and more vigorous mark... He evokes alternately Italian landscapes or panoramic factories of an acute poetry, thanks to writing shortcuts with continual and mysterious invention" (Brigitte Goffaux - The Reminder of Charleroi - December 12, 1965)
- "Young painters have always followed what is in the wind, and generally what can be in the promotion of the international avant-garde market. We note, in their history from 1950 to 1970, first-class names: Alechinsky, Pol Bury, Gustave Camus, Dorchy, Wyckaert, Collignon, Dudant,





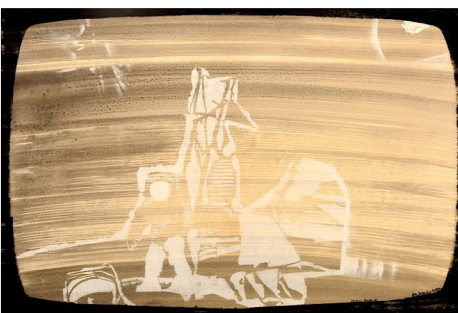
Storm in Coma, watercolor, 1963



The Turkish bath, homage to Ingres, acrylic, 1968; unique model of the harem; Irène; **exhibited in 1971 at the Louvre museum in Paris**



Ray Charles, stencil (24/28), 1968



Mission Apollo 11, acrylique, 1969

Mara, the late Van Anderlecht, Paul Van Hoeydonck, Vandercam, to name but a few who have imposed themselves (Paul Caso – Le Soir - February 15, 1972)

- "We will be delighted, in any case, to see Henry Dorchy honored at the picture rails (during the exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Charleroi in 1972.) For more than twenty years we have had the most sympathy for this artist who is concerned with new materials and living expressions. In all his undertakings he has consistently affirmed, like Van Lint and Bertrand, the style sovereignty. We love Dorchy the multiple man, History teacher, initiator in the art education, outstanding writer, precursor of aluchromy and resichromy, painter, draftsman, decorator. He has a mind mobility and a curiosity that make of his life a permanent creation ... Attentive to metamorphoses of new realism, Dorchy projected novel images, enriched by his experiences as a mature man and by his philosopher's daydreams ... " (Paul Caso - Le Soir – October 19, 1972)

- "With Henry Dorchy, the honored guest at this show (during the exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Charleroi in 1972), pictorial art offers us new visions of human reality: Polyportrait, Apollo Mission, instamatic Sequence ... We find in these researches of subjective expression the signs of our time; comics from cinema, television, video, photographic negatives, etc ... Gérard de Brigode, secretary of the Artistic Circle of Charleroi, does not dry up of praise: Dorchy opens us the doors of FUTURE space and SOUND time. New Figuration is specified, magnified, sublimated by the duration; time is added to space; the sound is superimposed on the image. In the same pictorial space, different moments from an action juxtaposed themselves to a landscape or a character " (Lucien Defoy – Le Rappel de Charleroi - October 20, 1972)

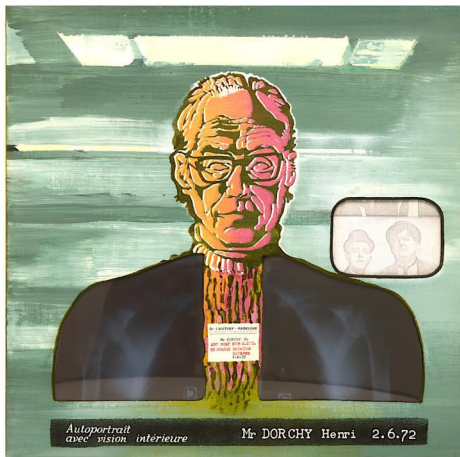
### *Books written by Henry Dorchy*

- Henry Dorchy. *Langages des arts plastiques*, Editions Universitaires, Bruxelles, 1968, 246 p.
- Henry Dorchy. *Pol Bury et le temps dilaté*, Editions Paul Legrain, Bruxelles, 1976, 156 p. (Fig 32)
- Henry Dorchy. *Le moule à chocolat un nouvel objet de collection*, Editions de l'Amateur, Paris, 1987, 223 p.
- Henry Dorchy. *Histoire des Belges*, Editions De Boeck, Bruxelles, septième mouture, 1991, 544 p.
- Henry Dorchy, Laure Dorchy. *Le moule à chocolat, de l'objet usuel à l'objet esthétique/De chocolade vorm, van gebruiksvoorwerp tot kunstvoorwerp/The chocolate mold, from the every day tool to an item of beauty*, Editions Ephéméra, Bruxelles, 1999, 264 p.





We both (Henry face & Irène profile, mixed) to Pech-Blanc, their house in France, acrylic, 1971



Self portrait with interior vision, mixed media, lighting, 1972

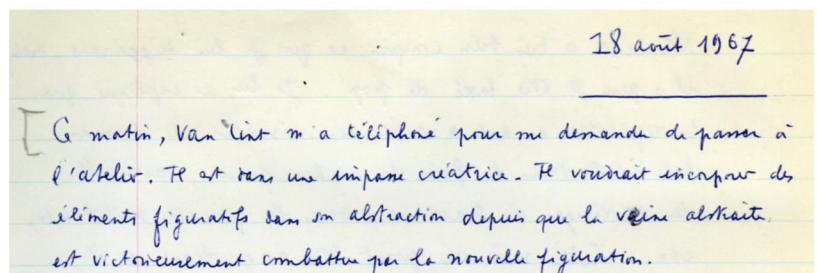
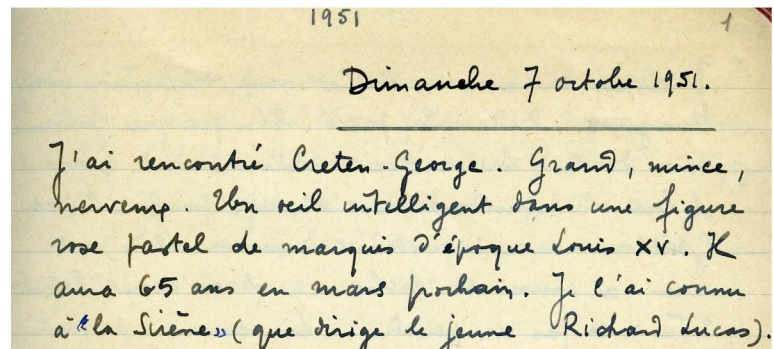


Rushes-Jumping, acrylic, 1972



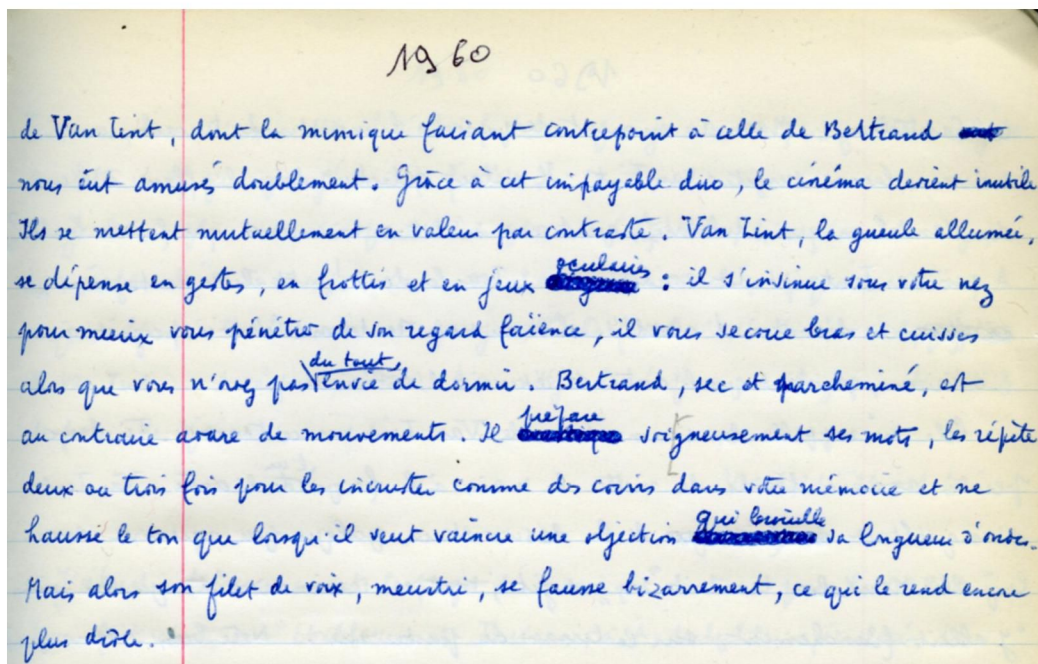
Irène of the ages of life, acrylic, 1996

## Two excerpts from «Journal of a curious historian», Creten, Van Lint, Bertrand



Louis Van Lint by Henry Dorchy





Description of Louis Van Lint &amp; Gaston Bertrand



Irène, Henry, Louis de dos, Gaston, during the exhibition Henry Dorchy at the gallery Mourgue in Paris in 1964



Last painting: Erasme académic hospital in Brussels, acrylic, 2000



Henry Dorchy in his studio, juin 2001



Irène &amp; Henry Dorchy with their collection of chocolate molds