

## A gift of 400 drawings puts French painter's legacy on show

The sons of the late Eugène Leroy donate works to the artist's eponymous museum in Tourcoing

By Ermanno Rivetti. 28 June 2012



Two untitled drawings from 1940 by Eugène Leroy, given the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tourcoing by the late French painter's sons

Around 400 works on paper by the French painter Eugène Leroy, who was admired by artists such as Georg Baselitz and Markus Lupertz but worked in relative isolation for most of his career, are on show at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tourcoing, which was

renamed the Musée des Beaux-Arts Eugène Leroy in honour of the artist's centenary in 2010. The exhibition has been made possible thanks to a donation from the artist's two sons, Eugène Jean and Jean-Jacques Leroy, who gave the drawings and sketchbooks containing around 400 works, which cover their father's entire output from 1927 until his death in 2000, to the museum in 2009.

The exhibition, "Eugène Leroy: Le Dessin" (Eugène Leroy: the Drawings), which is on show until 17 September, presents this collection of crayon, charcoal, pastel and watercolour drawings. The two guest curators, the British artist Orlando Mostyn-Owen and the Chilean artist Humberto Poblete-Bustamante, are the co-founders of a loose collective of artists and writers called the International Bongo-Bongo Brigade. Leroy did not enjoy a meteoric rise to fame, but Mostyn-Owen says: "Particularly in his earlier drawings, we can see Leroy striving towards immortal status. They tell us that he knew what he wanted to achieve."

Leroy was born in Tourcoing in 1910, and despite his prolific output he only found real, lasting recognition after the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville in Paris dedicated a retrospective to him in 1988. Since then he has enjoyed major exhibitions at the Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nice, in 1993; the Kunsthalle Basel in 1997; and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, in 2000.