

LECTURE

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Presenter: Mary Alexander

Raoul Dufy (1877-1953) was a key player in early twentieth-century avant-garde art, design and literary/theatrical circles in Paris. As a widely travelled polymath, Dufy's charismatic personality, wit and curiosity about the world was infectious.



His imagination and technical virtuosity – across a range of media including painting and lithography, posters, book illustration, theatrical set design, textiles and fashion, ceramics and large murals – cut across all conventional boundaries. Whether a small intricate woodcut illustrating a love poem, or the truly gigantic 1937 World Fair murals depicting the role of electricity in

the modern age, the effect is mesmerising. Dufy defies categorisation, constantly innovating and experimenting with new materials and effects. His analysis of the visual world is sophisticated and joyous in equal measure. Perhaps this goes some way to explain why some later critics fail to grasp its complexity and pigeonhole him a 'decorative artist', or misunderstand the irony in his witty yet gentle caricatures of elegant social life.

Mary Alexander trained as an art historian. Her background includes lecturing to various arts organisations, working with design professionals on special events and publications, and writing on various aspects of the history of art and design. After completing her first degree, she seized on a rare opportunity to work at Platt

Hall, Manchester which houses an internationally renowned collection of historic clothing. This led to a life-long fascination with the language and codes of dress, and its place within the social and cultural history of art and design. For ten years she was a Visiting Lecturer and External Examiner in the History of Art and Dress at Christie's Education in London.

Dazzling Dufy

