



# Soulages Museum

RODEZ . AVEYRON

opening in 2013

## From the donation to the museum's creation

On 2005, Pierre and Colette Soulages offered 500 works to agglomeration of the "Grand Rodez", they include:

- > 21 paintings on cloth, a selection of works of the 1940s until the sizes of the 1970s. Paintings of the "years before", namely small representational landscapes dating from the artist's youth (1934-1938).
- > 100 paintings on paper among which the invaluable Walnut stains.
- > The totality of the work printed matter (etchings, lithographs, screen prints).



Peinture sur toile, 162 x 130 cm, 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1964  
© Soulages Museum, donated by Pierre and Colette Soulages

Laying of first stone (© Rémi Benoit)



- > The totality of the preliminary documents of the stain-glass windows in Conques: Notes, drawings and 104 life-size cardboards on panels of mélaminé serving to adjust, by movement, glass patches cut one by one, for every berry;
- > An important collection of documents (works, catalogues, movies, archives, correspondence) that will constitute a Research Center dedicated to Soulages.

In 2008, the project of the Catalan cabinet RCR Architectes was retained, following an international invitation to bid launched by the "Grand Rodez". 21,5 million euros were necessary to take up the challenge.

On October 20th, 2010 the first stone of Soulages Museum was laid. Its inauguration, planned for summer, 2013, will present this exceptional donation and will be marked by a quality international exhibition (dimension /size; or large-scale).



Pierre Soulages  
© AFP/Archives Johannes Eisele

## Context

Pierre Soulages, contemporary painter, was born on 24th of December 1919 in Rodez (Aveyron). His artistic career has been marked by many influences among which Romanesque art, Prehistoric art (in particular rock paintings) as well as the menhirs statues of the region, they mark man's first performances. The artist became linked with the abbey-church Sainte-Foy in Conques: "*It is there that I decided to become a painter*". There, he achieved the stained-glass windows famous worldwide.

Pierre Soulages is one of the main representatives of abstract art. Introduced abroad since 1946, he is known on the international scene in particular for his use of the exclusive black colour. He created the Outrenoir, series of paintings, by "playing" with differences of textures, which reflect more or less weakly the light. It makes clearness emerging from the dark.





## The stained-glass windows

the cardboards, 1987-1994  
© Atelier Jean-Dominique Fleury

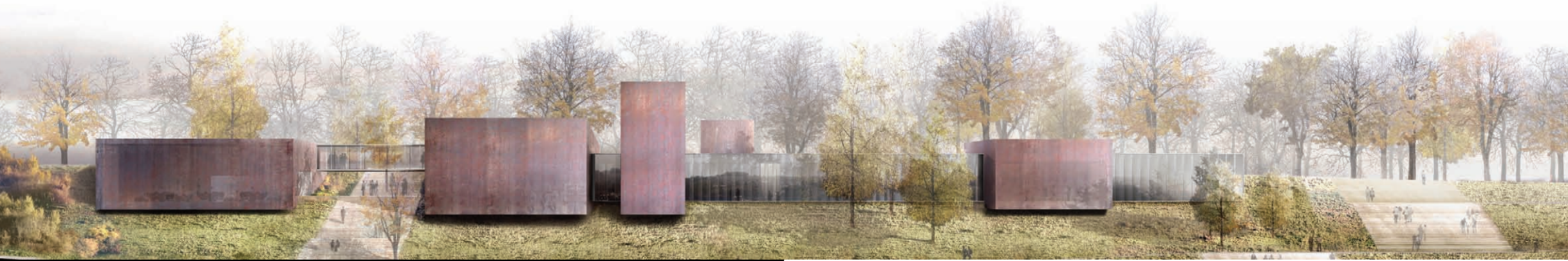
The experience of the stained-glass windows in Conques lasted from 1986 to 1994. For this work, commission of the Ministry of Culture, Pierre Soulages paid tribute to the outside architecture as well as the beauty of the inside of the abbey-church classified on prestigious UNESCO world heritage list.

The originality of its work is illustrated through the creation of a unique colourless and not translucent glass, which allows the light to penetrate. This glass is composed of white sandstone distributed in a non-homogeneous way which transforms the natural light. Beams are differently reflected. The stained-glass windows in Conques, union between medieval monumental heritage and contemporary creation, have all the elements of catharsis: as a portrait of the artist. In Rodez, the museum will need to show clearly, by means of experimental 'witness panels', how we manage to this particular light.



### The outside

The museum appears as original architecture which proposes an integration of the building in the nature and the landscape. In the heart of a garden of the Foirail, totally rehabilitated. It will be constituted by powerful monolithic volumes of different size and barded by steel red Corten sinks. In phase with this perspective, the Catalan group of architects RCR drew several infrastructures using materials such as the glass, allowing to value the natural wealth of the site. A whole reflection on the light was thought to optimize the development of the works and their conservation.



### The Musée Soulages is:

- > 1800 m<sup>2</sup> for the works of the artist
- > 505 m<sup>2</sup> for the room of temporary exhibition
- > 5500 m<sup>2</sup> floor space for the whole building

Many conferences are organized outside of the museum's walls in different French cities. With the Friends of the museum, the wish of the aveyronnais town councils is to share subjects of the art history, the subjects close to the artist.

The agglomeration of the "Grand Rodez", sleeping partner of the museum, through the close relationship of eight surrounding towns, defines itself as a territory of challenge and ambition which builds itself in everyday life.

### The unusual

*"A modern museum integrated, inspired by the work of Soulages."*

*"It brings to light the process of the artistic creation, the major part in the research and, without commonplace pedagogy, hopes to open eyes, to awaken the spirit on the original artistic creation." (Pierre Soulages).*

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It will be opened to every international contemporary artists presented to the general public.

The museum will be endowed with an educational workshop for the children and of a library - Documentation centre, to assure its access to a large audience.

Next to the museum, the restaurant of the Michelin Guide Starred chefs Michel and Sébastien Bras will propose a simple, traditional and creative cooking.

The museum, is associated with an ambitious urban project. It is not far away from the historic centre and from the cathedral. It takes place on the Foirail near a modern 10 screen cinema, a village hall, and a car park.

By 2016, the agglomeration "Grand Rodez" also intends to build a Palais des Congrès to increase the tourist attractiveness of the agglomeration. Soulages Museum appears then in the heart of this development process. That is why, the Foirail will be converted de facto as the centre of culture and leisure activities.

## Geographical situation



The city of **Rodez** is half-way between the cities of Clermont-Ferrand, Montpellier and Toulouse.

Situated in the heart of the **Aveyron**, in the Midi-Pyrénées (South of France), the Ruteni city is less than two hour-drive from the Mediterranean coast, served by the third airport of the region: Rodez-Marcillac with direct access to Paris, Lyon, London, Dublin, Brussels, and Porto. In addition, the city has a connection with all the French big cities via the railroad network and is near an international airports Toulouse-Blagnac.

From 26th of March 2012, the British airline company Ryanair opened two weekly flights from the airport of Charleroi towards Rodez in Aveyron: the city will be only in 90 minutes from Brussels.

From the 1st of April 2012, the Air France Company will open 16 new direct lines from Toulouse to Europe and to the Mediterranean basin: Berlin, Athens, Casablanca, Hamburg, Istanbul, Malaga, Malta, Marrakech, Naples, Prague, Seville, Tunis, Venice and Vienne, plus lines towards Calvi and Figari.



**Soulages museum**

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