



**4 Elements in Arts:  
Stories about AIR**





# 4 ELEMENTS in arts

**Improve foreign language learning and  
intercultural competences of adults through e-  
learning**

## **The project**

The Erasmus+ KA220 project “4 Elements in Arts” helps educators of adults with specific learning needs and talents. These adults have specific talents but they also have to cope with specific difficulties and challenges. The project explores how the four elements — common images in European culture— influence thinking processes, creativity and arts. The exploration comprises analysing stories depicted in visual works of art such as paintings and sculptures, as well as cinema. The project aims at improving the skills of educators in the field of arts, cultural heritage and English language teaching. It engages adult learners in lifelong learning and education aiming at improving their linguistic, digital and artistic skills as well as their European awareness.



## Introduction

The "**4 Elements in Arts**" project focuses on the exploration of concepts related to the fine arts and non-formal education. The project aims to facilitate English and intercultural learning through the visual arts, specifically through paintings/images depicting the four elements: **Water, Fire, Air and Earth**. The following carefully selected artworks serve as **teaching tools for adult learners**, including those with specific learning needs.

In addition, the project aims to contribute to the creation of a **European identity by exploring the cultural significance of the visual arts**, particularly painting, in the European consciousness. It recognises the role of art in shaping national and transnational identities and aims to promote cooperation and understanding between Europeans through cultural exchange.

The importance of the four elements is rooted in both the universal and poetic imagination, emphasising their symbolic meaning and cultural significance throughout history (Gaston Bachelard, 1972). For this reason, the 4 Elements in Arts project emphasises **the importance of exploring these elements through art and literature** in order to understand their deeper meaning and influence on the human imagination.

To summarise, the project, and this document in particular, aims to **promote creative and inclusive non-formal educational approaches through the exploration of art, culture and identity**, focusing on the four elements as depicted in European paintings.



## **What you will find ...**

In this document you will find a collection of artworks on the fourth element - **air** - from various European countries. Take a look at the artworks selected by the partners and read the stories based on the artworks.





## Partners

The project was coordinated by CVO EduKempen (Belgium). The partnership also included DomSpain Consulting (Spain), Zini Foundation (Latvia), Les Apprimeurs (France), Istituto dei Sordi di Torino (Italy), Slovenian Third Age University (Slovenia) and MyArtist (Greece).

The partnership of the "4 Elements in Arts" project wrote these stories between 2022 and 2024.



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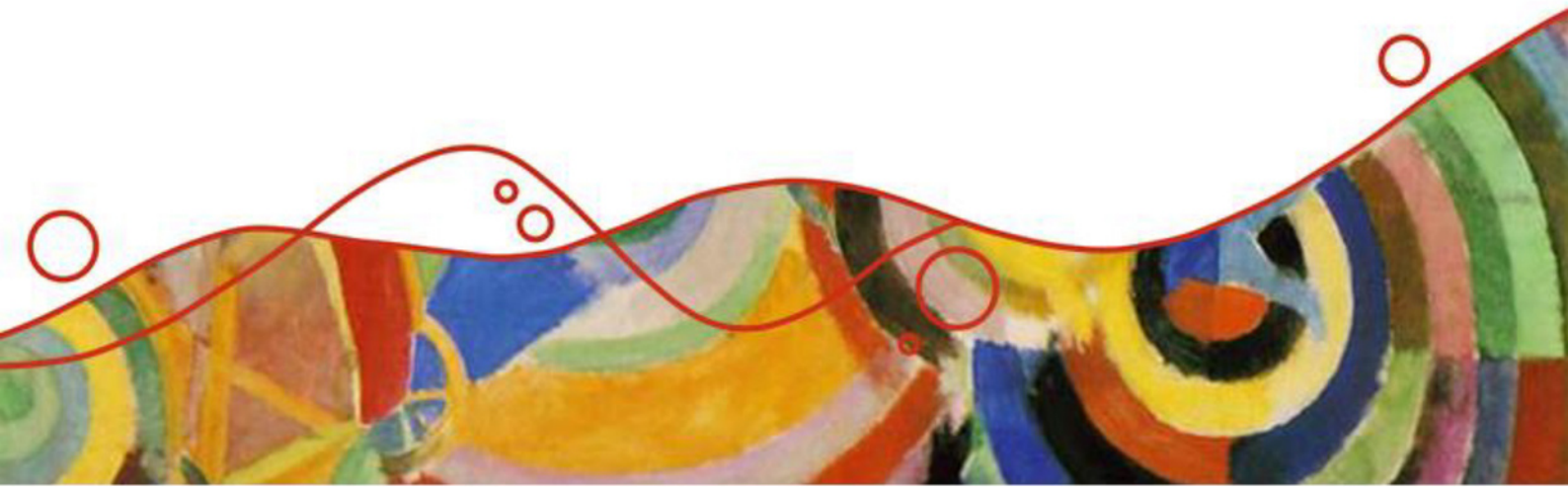
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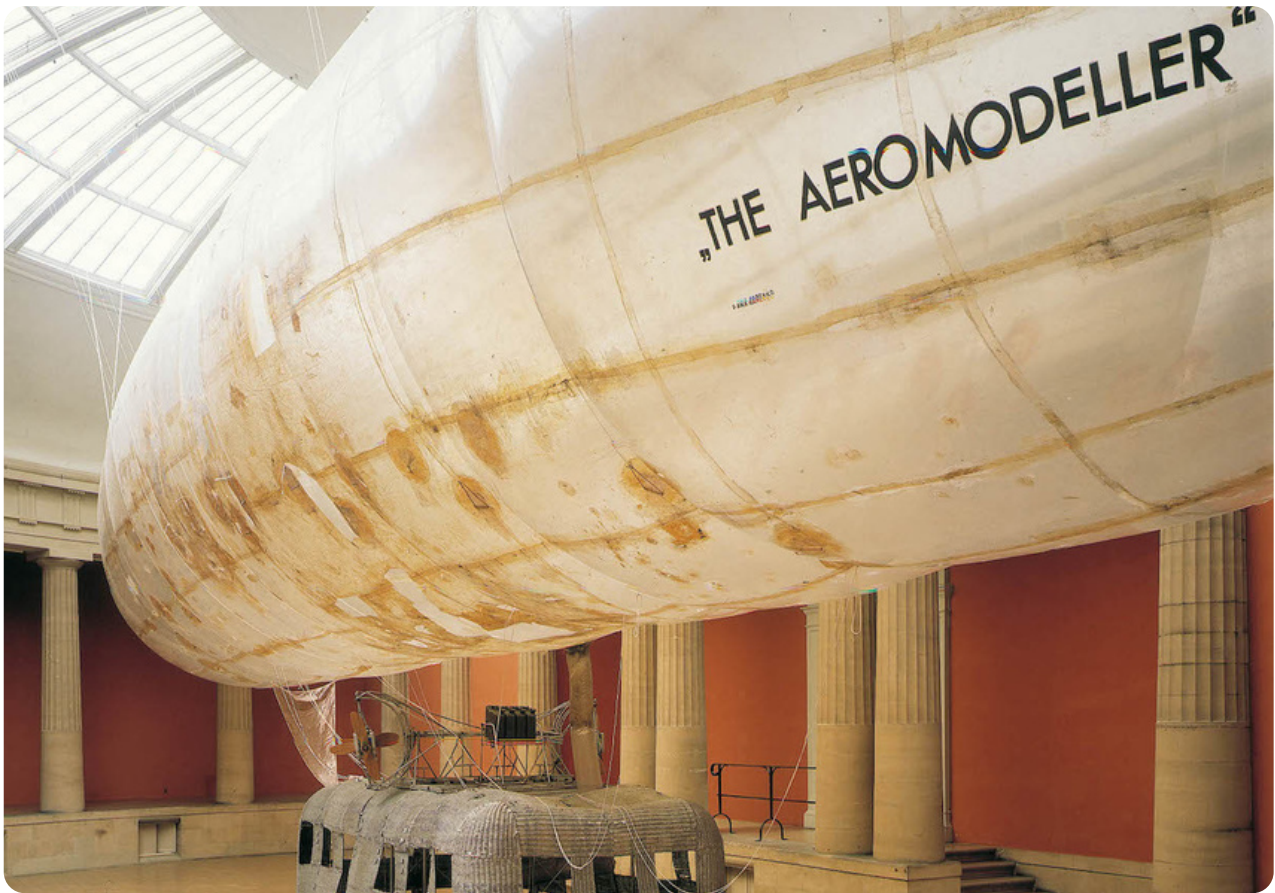


# Belgium



# The Aeromodeller (“De Aeromodeller”)

Panamarenko (1969–71)



The Aeromodeller consists of three parts: a balloon-shaped floating body, made of long strips of PVC glued together; a construction with propellers and engines for propulsion and control; and a gondola, conceived as a ‘living space’, made of flexible reeds sprayed in silver.



## Story



Throughout human history, man has sought ways to fly. Daedalus and Icarus, for example, tried wax wings. Hundreds of years later, the Wright Brothers developed the first airplane.

Panamarenko is a Belgian artist who died in 2019 who mainly made constructions for flying. On Saturday, June 26, 1971, at 11 a.m., he was allowed to launch his now world-famous Aeromodeller in a meadow in Balen.

Panamarenko wanted to fly from Balen to Arnhem in the Netherlands in his first flight to participate in an art event there. Just before everything was ready, he received a telegram from the Netherlands telling him that he was not allowed to enter Dutch airspace. However, Panamarenko did not give up.

Panamarenko's team rolled out the polyester cover on the meadow where cows were grazing. Moments later, a lorry arrived with 65,000 litres of hydrogen gas. After several hours of tapping, the balloon finally came to life and began to dance happily. But suddenly the wind unexpectedly picked up, turning the fragile Aeromodeller into a toy. The wind became too strong and the operation was aborted.



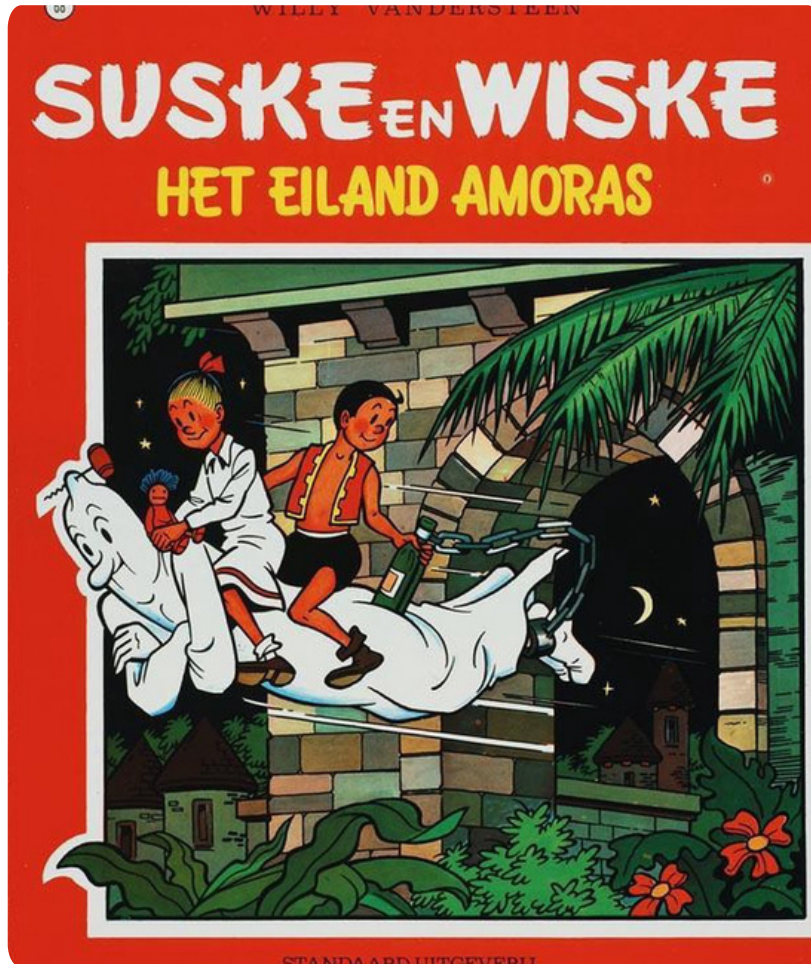
### **Links for more information:**

<http://ensembles.mhka.be/items/the-aeromodeller-zeppelin-the-aeromodeller-zeppelin?locale=en>



# The Island Amoras (“Het Eiland Amoras”)

Willy Vandersteen (1947)



Cover of the Suske and Wiske comic book. It features the main characters of the story flying on Sus Antigoon’s back, a drunken ghost and ancestor of Suske. They fly over the Amoras Island.

## Story



Belgium is world-famous for its comic strips. The Island of Amoras is the second comic in the series of Suske en Wiske. It was written and drawn by Willy Vandersteen in 1946.

Aunt Sidonia and Wiske spend a day at the beach. Wiske is fishing for crabs and fishes up an old jug. Professor Barabas is very curious about the origin of the jug, which contains a parchment written by Captain Sus Antigoon. The parchment says that his galleon Antverpia ran aground in 1541 on an unknown island, which they called Amoras. Amoras is a mirror of present-day Antwerp. The three travel to Amoras in a helicopter specially built by the professor.

In Amoras, Wiske meets Suske, a boy who turns out to be the last living descendant of Sus Antigoon, who has succumbed to alcoholism but still haunts the place as a ghost. Aunt Sidonia and Professor Barabas are captured by the islanders, but with the help of

Sus Antigoon they are freed. Later, Jef Blaaskop tries to blow up the powder chamber, but Sus Antigoon manages to prevent this. A variety of adventures follow one another in the pages of the comic until the main characters set everything right. Sus Antigoon is finally freed by the Union of Spirits from his punishment and now goes to the spirit world. Everyone lives happily and in peace.



### **Links for more information:**

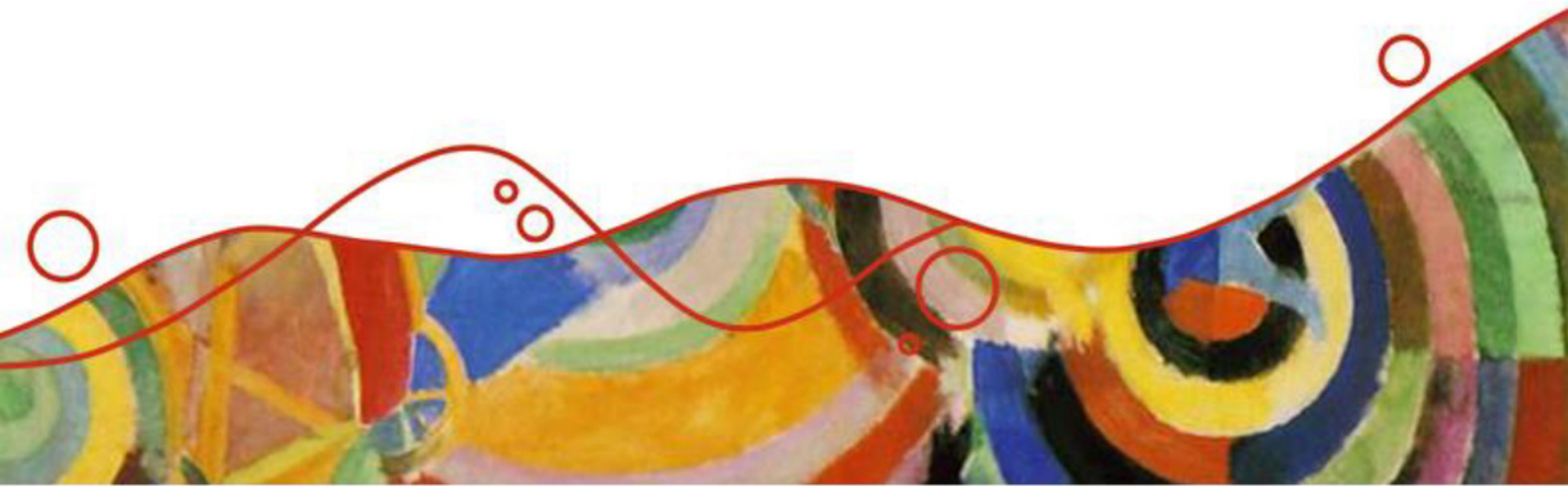
<https://suskeenwiske.ophetwww.net/bio/vandersteen.php>







# France




# The windmill of the Galette in Montmartre ("Le Moulin de la Galette à Montmartre")

Eugène Ciceri (1856)



This painting depicts a rural landscape with a windmill. At the entrance to the windmill, there is an inscription that indicates that it is also a place of celebration.

## Story



Thanks to its elevated position, Montmartre was once crowned by numerous windmills. They were used for grinding wheat to provide flour for the inhabitants, for pressing grapes to make wine, for crushing flowers to make perfume and for grinding materials for manufacturing.

Then some millers transformed their mills into merry guinguettes where Parisians enjoyed themselves drinking and watching cabaret. Famous artists such as Renoir, Van Gogh and Utrillo have depicted them, making them immortal!

As the population of Paris grew, the mills were gradually destroyed to make way for housing. Today, only two remain: the Blute-Fin, built in 1622, and the Radet, built in 1717, known as the Moulin de la Galette, which attracts many Parisians and tourists!

This mill represents the development and industrial transformation of the city of Paris.



## Links for more information:

<https://www.parismuseescollections.paris.fr/fr/musee-carnavalet/oeuvres/le-moulin-de-la-galette-a-montmartre#infos-principales>





# Homage to Blériot (“Homage to Blériot”)

Robert Delaunay (1914)



The painting shows a multitude of colourful discs, several aeroplane models, the Eiffel Tower and the original Ferris wheel.



## Story



This painting pays tribute to the aviator Louis Blériot and represents a technical, sporting and popular achievement of the time. This was the first crossing of the English Channel in an aeroplane by Louis Blériot in 1909.

In 1909, the British newspaper the Daily Mail launched a competition offering 25,000 francs to the first person to cross the English Channel in an aeroplane. After many failures, that Channel crossing took place on July 25, and it was a Frenchman, Louis Blériot, who made history by covering the distance between Calais and Dover in less than 37 minutes.

As fate would have it, at the time this painting was exhibited in 1914, a new advance in the history of aviation appeared: the invention of the parachute.

These developments were to play a very important role in the improvement and management of air combat in the months and years that followed the First World War.



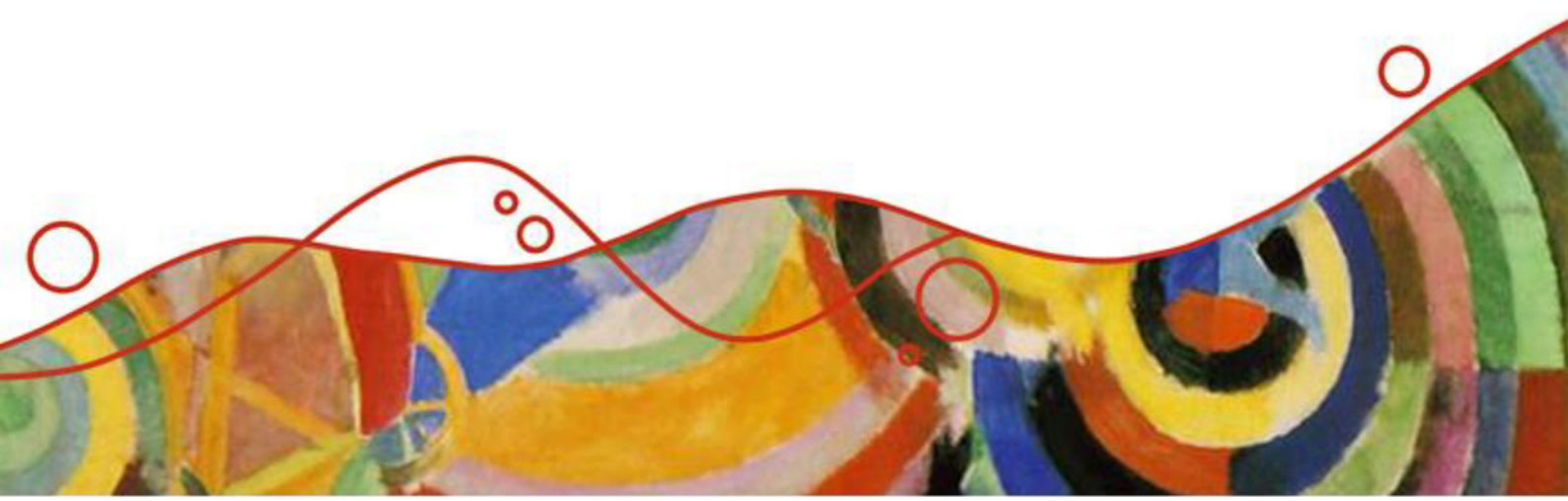
### **Links for more information:**

<https://www.museedegrenoble.fr/oeuvre/1814/1922-hommage-a-bleriot.htm>



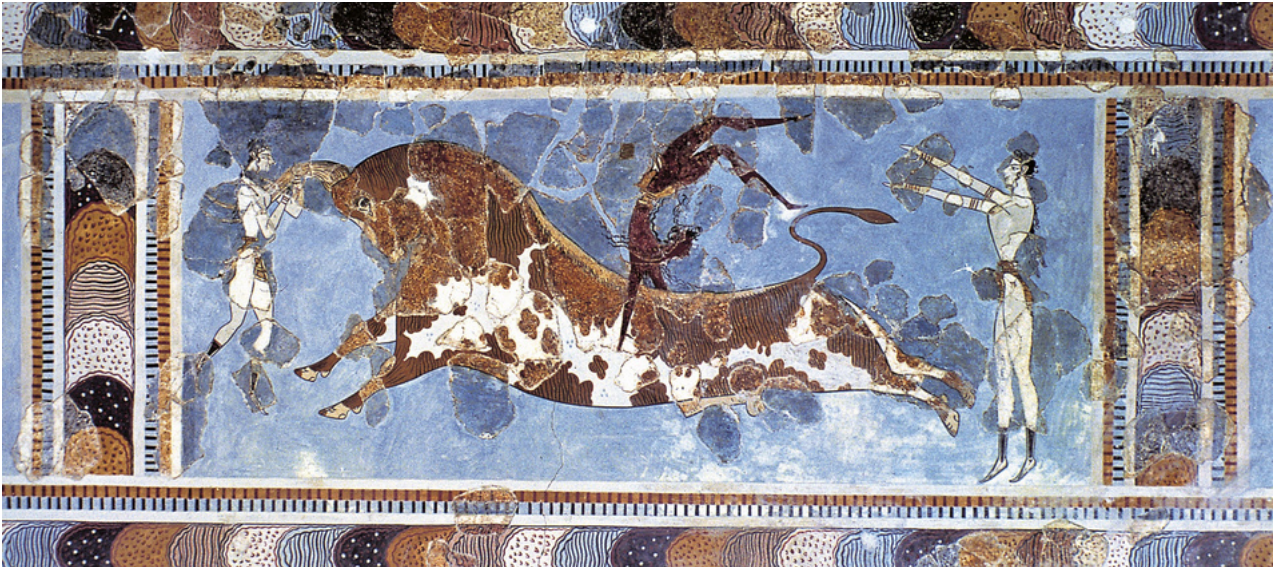


# Greece



# Bull-Leaping Fresco (“Ταυροκαθάψια (Taurokathapsia)”)

1450 BC



The bull-leaping fresco is the most completely restored of several stucco panels originally sited on the upper-story portion of the east wall of the palace at Knossos in Crete. It shows a bull-leaping scene.



## Story



It was a difficult and very dangerous game, where the athletes had to show courage and coordination, strength and elegance at the same time. Such an exercise was certainly loaded with symbolic meanings: by dominating without weapons the blind violence of the animal, a man celebrated his victory over the brutality of nature. Furthermore, this work shows us the gender roles in Cretan civilization: in fact, both men (in dark) and women (in light) participated in it.

The work constitutes a vivid record of life on the island. It in fact depicts a taurokatàpsia, the game on the bull precisely, a popular sporting spectacle in Crete: similar in some ways to our bullfighting.





## Links for more information:

<https://www.artesvelata.it/gioco-sul-toro-cnosso/>



# Tower of the Winds (“Ωρολόγιο του Κυρρήστου”)

Andronicus of Cyrrhus(50 BC)



Photo by: Ivan Sabchev

It is an ancient monument located at the northern foot of the Acropolis of Athens, at the site of the Roman Agora of Plaka. It is an octagonal marble building, without columns, where the eight main winds are imprinted on the numerous metopes.

It has two gates, one to the north and one to the west. It is a turreted octagonal structure of Pentelic marble, with a side length of 3.20 metres and a total height of 12 metres, whose base consists of three steps.

## Story

During the early Christian period, it was used as a bell tower of a Byzantine church. In the 15th century the monument was described by the traveller Kyriakos Agonitis as the temple of Aeolus. After the conquest by the Turks, the building was converted into a teque (Turkish: Muslim monastery) by Dervishes who had come from various parts of the Ottoman Empire and settled there. The Dervishes remained here until 1821, when Athens was occupied by the Greeks, with the result that some fled to Euboea and others to Asia Minor.

Since it passed into the hands of the Greeks, it has been included among the antiquities and archaeological sites of Athens. This monument becomes a symbol of the different occupations that Greece has undergone, with the related not only cultural but also religious influences. In fact, the tower of winds passes from one religious legitimacy to another. In addition, the depiction of winds underscores the importance they have always had, from mythology to navigation, as a guide for human beings.



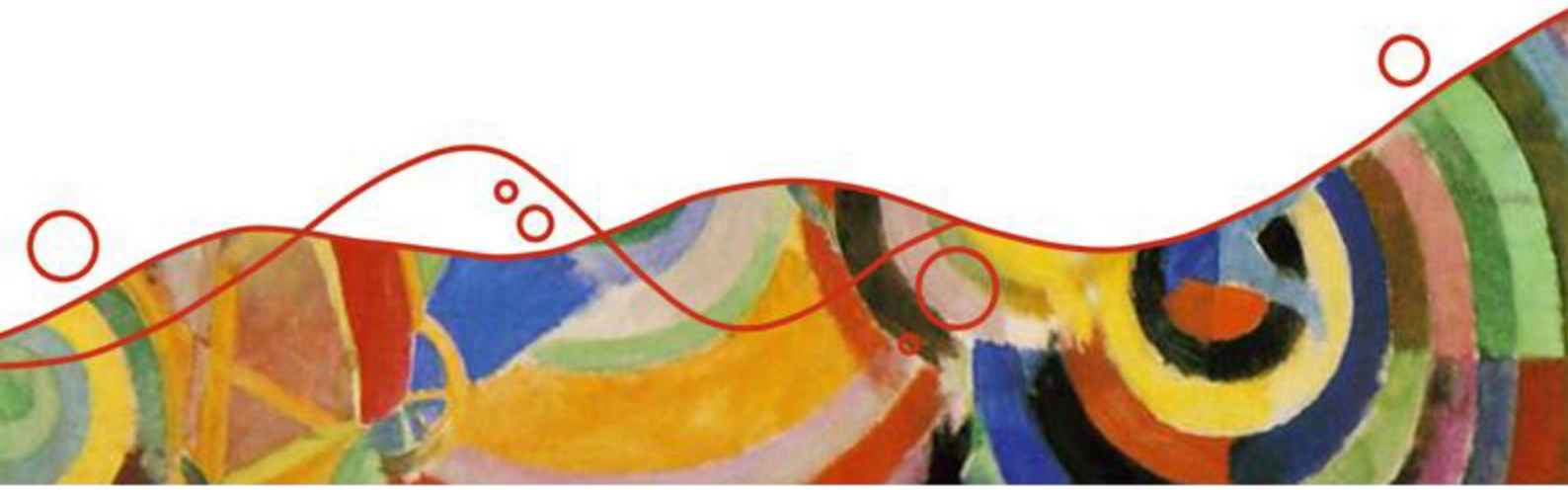
### **Links for more information:**

[http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/gh251.jsp?  
obj\\_id=1839](http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/gh251.jsp?obj_id=1839)





# Italy





## Gust of wind (“Colpo di vento”)

Gaetano Bellei (1895)



In a garden, a sudden gust of wind surprises a young woman. She is smiling. Her figure is slim and elegant, and her clothes flow and swirl around her. She is in a naturalistic setting, which evokes spring.

## Story

Born in Modena in 1857, Gaetano Bellei was a highly regarded artist in Italy as well as abroad, especially for his realistic paintings.

Bellei is remembered not so much for the landscapes as for the numerous portraits of members of the European upper middle class of the early twentieth century. He also created frescoes with a sacred theme and altarpieces. Above all, Bellei is famous for his genre paintings. These are often interior scenes or of popular life, made with a masterly technique, which show the influence of German symbolism.

## Links for more information:

<https://www.artribune.com/artivisive/2020/01/mostra-donne-palazzo-martinengo-brescia/attachment/gaetano-bellei-colpo-di-vento-collezione-privata/>



# Ogre of the Sacred Wood of Bomarzo ("Orco del Sacro Bosco dei Mostri di Bomarzo")

Simone Moschino (1581)



Inside Bomarzo park (between Rome and Perugia) visitors can meet a lot of strange statues. One of them is the Ogre.





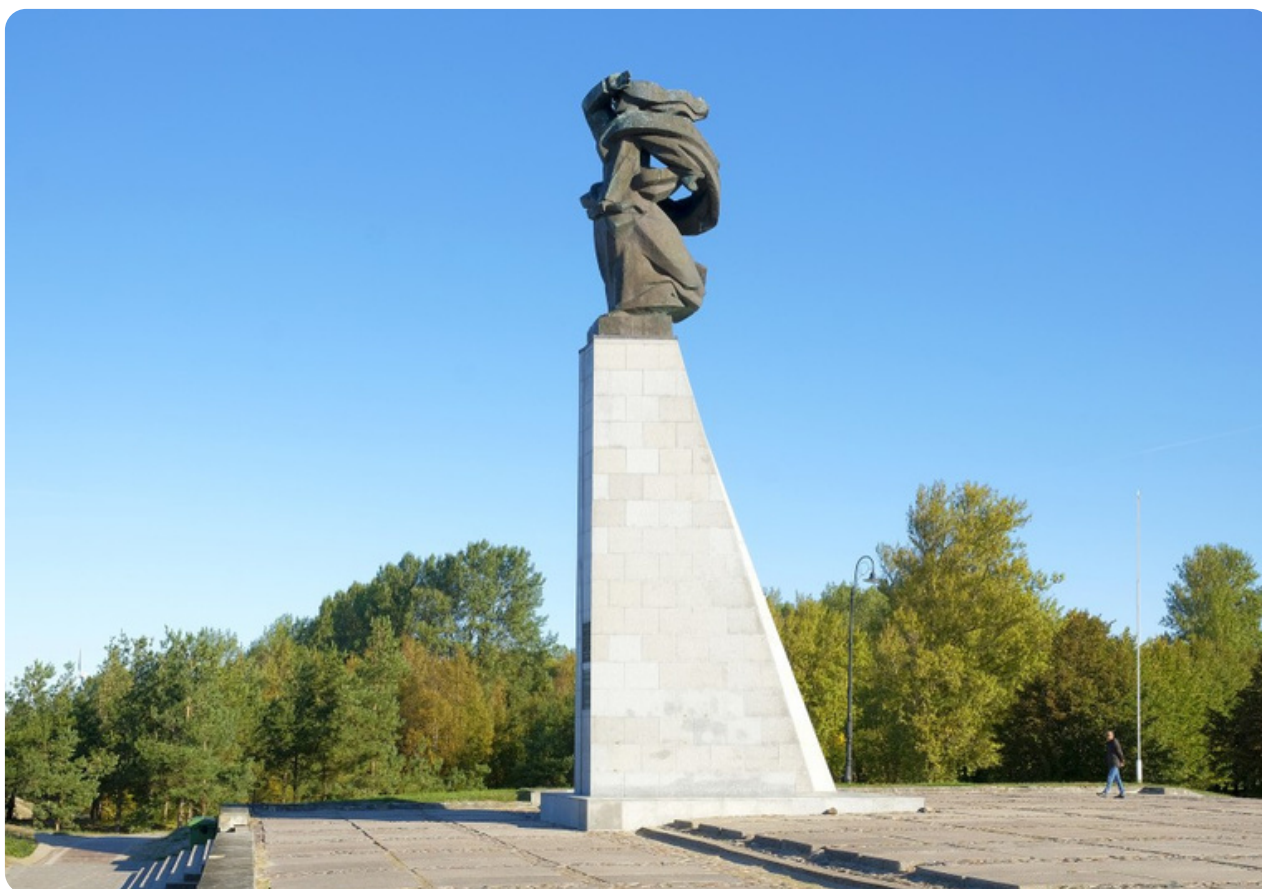
# Latvia





## “Wind mother” monument (“Vēja mātes pieminēklis”)

Architect Gunārs Asaris and sculptor Alberts Terpilovskis (1977)



On the 11 m high base, lined with Saaremaa dolomite, an image of a woman cast in bronze, holding her hand over her eyes and looking far into the horizon of the Baltic Sea.

## Story

In Jūrmala Park, at the end of Kūrmājas Avenue, there is a monument dedicated to the fishermen and sailors who died in the Baltic Sea. Erected in 1977 - the image of a woman gazing into the vastness of the sea and waiting for her loved ones to return home.

On the base of the monument is also a memorial plaque to the pilots and crew of the US plane, which was shot down by the USSR military on April 8, 1950.

Locals have named the monument the “Wind Mother”, thus marking a place to meet before going to the beach together. It is an important modern monument and a popular sightseeing spot in Liepaja.

### Links for more information:

<https://liepaja.travel/en/see-and-do/monument-in-commemoration-of-the-perished-fishermen-and-seafarers/>

# Pipe Organs at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Liepaja (“Liepājas Svētās Trīsvienības katedrāles ērģeles”)

Heinrich Andreas Contius (1866)



The premier organ builder of the Duchy of Courland, Johann Heinrich Joachim, being deaf, built an instrument for the church, which was not very good. This situation did not please the city folk, and so, in 1773, Heinrich Andreas Contius, from Halle, began building a new organ.

## Story

The organ of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Liepaja is one of the most interesting monuments of organ building in the world in many aspects - their size, history of creation, visual and musical beauty have been attracting organists, organ masters and listeners for centuries.

The oldest, unreconstructed mechanical organ in the world was built by Heinrich Andreas Contius who was one of Europe's greatest craftsmen. The organ has 31 stops, 4 manuals and over 7000 pipes. It is played during church services, but every September the International Organ music festival takes place.

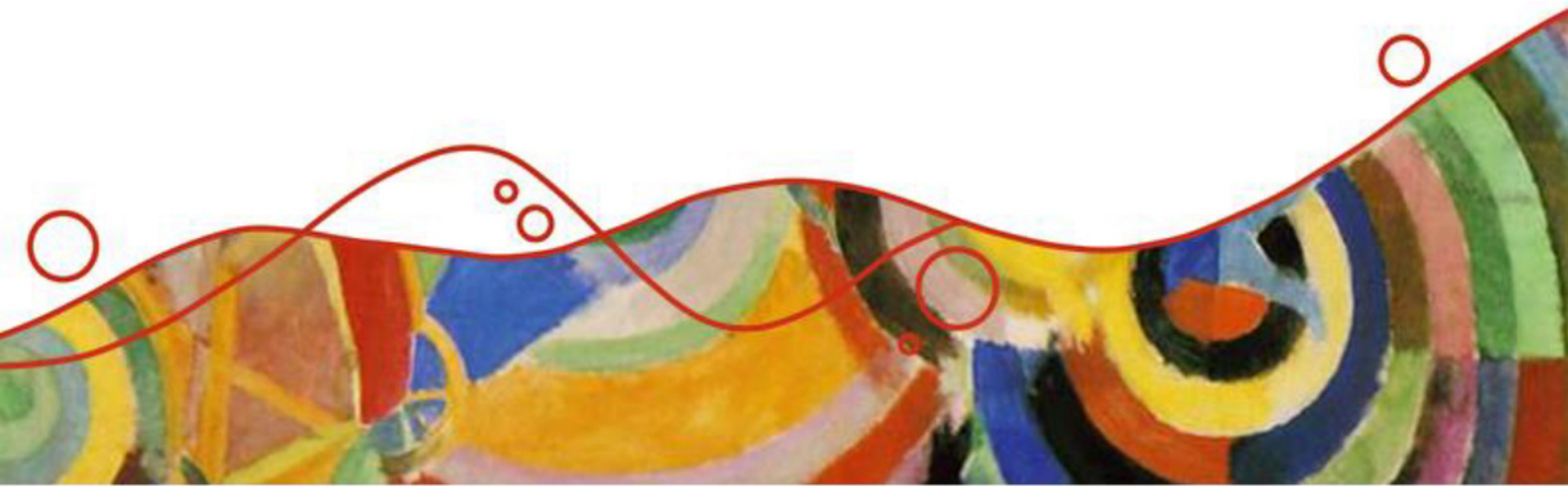
### Links for more information:

<https://www.latvia.travel/en/sight/liepaja-holy-trinity-cathedral>





# Slovenia





## Echo (“Odmev”)

Karel Putrih (1954)



Echo, a statue of, what seems to be, a woman shouting with her hands next to her head. In this way she is causing vibrations (an echo) in the air. The bronze statue has cubist elements (e.g. cut-off surfaces) so it is difficult to tell if the sculpture is in fact female.

## Story



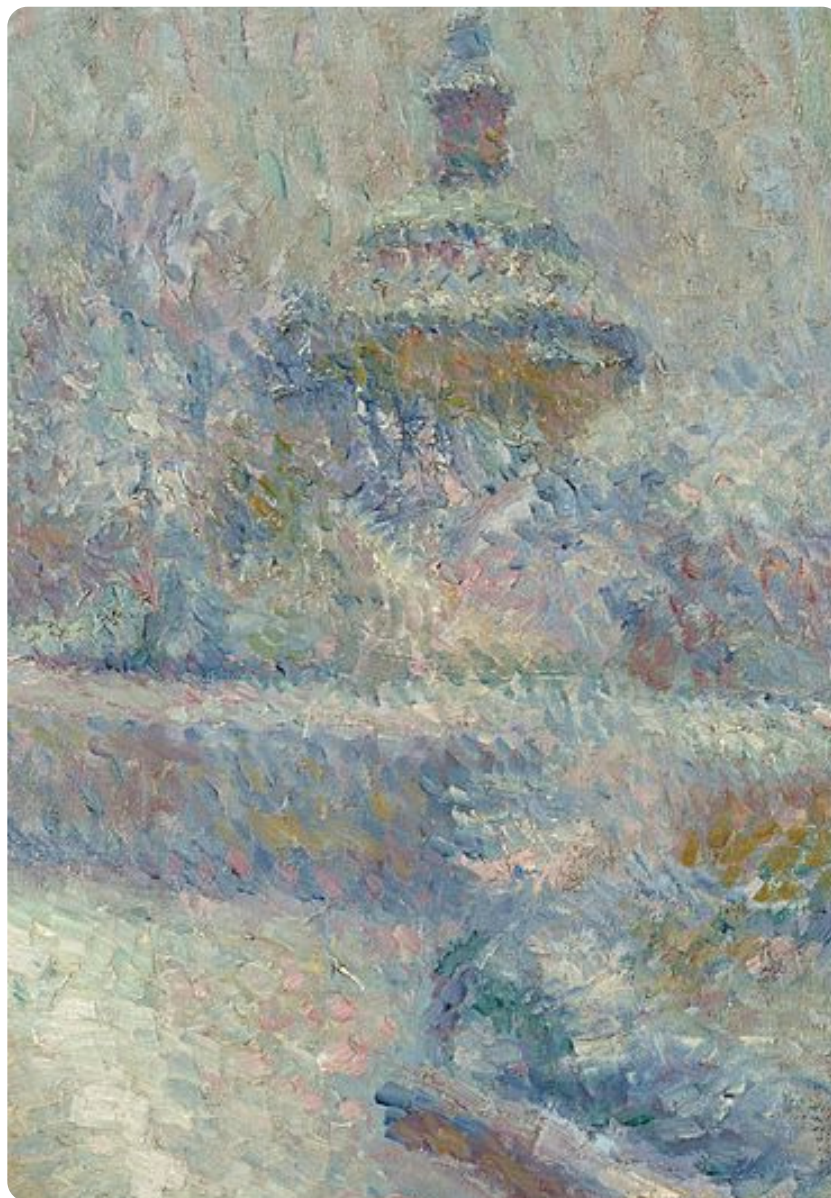
Karel Putrih was born in 1910 in Ljubljana (Slovenia) where he finished his secondary studies in sculpturing. Putrih became a famous member of the Independent Group of Slovenian Artists before the Second World War. His works of art, as well as those of his colleagues, marked an important part of 20th-century Slovenian fine art. He continued his studies in Prague (Czech Republic). There he came up with a simplified plastic figure inspired by the work of the French sculpturer Aristide Maillol. This was the first version of “Odmev” or “Echo”. The final version of the statue is located in the square in front of the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana.

## Links for more information

<http://zbirke.mg-lj.si/artwork/?id=1181>

## “Križanke”

Rihard Jakopič (1909)



The painting represents a small church belonging to a historic site in Ljubljana called Križanke.

## Story



This piece, painted using the painterly technique, is featuring one of the areas of Ljubljana's old town (Slovenia). It is depicting a square and a small church.

Born in Ljubljana, Rihard Jakopič studied in Vienna (Austria) and Munich (Germany). He co-founded the Society of Slovenian Artists, set up exhibitions of Slovenian impressionists, erected the first exhibition premises and contributed to the birth of the Slovenian National Gallery.

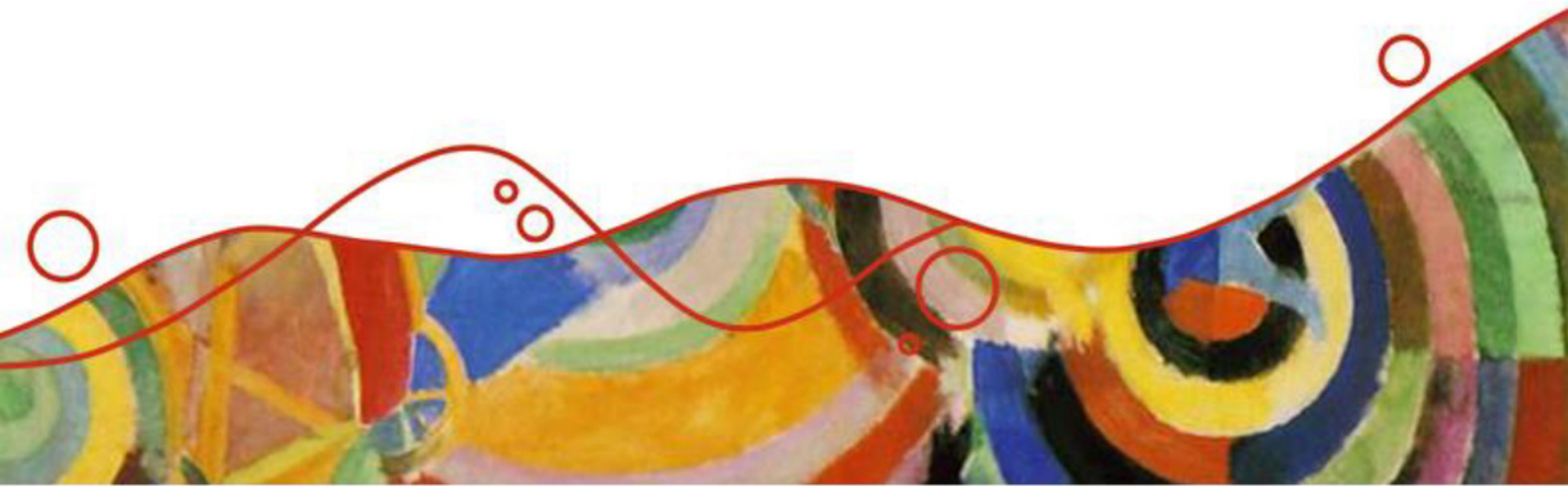
## Links for more information:

<https://www.ng-slo.si/si/razstave-in-projekti/razstava/rihard-jakopic-1869-1943?id=4620>





# Spain





# Don Quixote and the Windmills (“Don Quijote y los Molinos de viento”)

Salvador Dalí (1945)



In Dalí's “Don Quixote and the Windmills”, Don Quixote appears several times, either as an empty shell pierced by the sails of a mill, or as a geometric figure whose wings are also the sails of the mill.

## Story



Windmills were a technological revolution. Different theories attribute their invention to one culture or another. Despite this, windmills are closely associated with Spain, especially the landscape of the region of Castilla y la Mancha. The reason for this is Miguel de Cervantes' famous book "Don Quixote of La Mancha".

Windmills exist in the imagery of many Spanish artists and even Salvador Dalí, a master of the surrealist style, did not escape from painting this Spanish totem. In fact, Dalí was a voracious reader and this inspired him to create illustrations. "Don Quixote and the Windmills" is one of many drawings that Dalí dedicated to this literary masterpiece. The depiction may be disturbing to some people but let's not forget that weirdness is part of the surrealist style.

Aside from his art, Dalí's tendency to narcissism and megalomania were the reasons he gained the reputation of being insane. Perhaps, in fact, he was fighting against imaginary enemies like Don Quixote. Maybe he was also "Fighting against windmills".



### **Links for more information:**

<https://es.artsdot.com/@@/8XYVMK-Salvador-Dali-Don-Quijote-as%C3%ADcomo-el-molinos-de-viento->





# "Winter" or "The Snowfall" ("El Invierno o La Nevada")

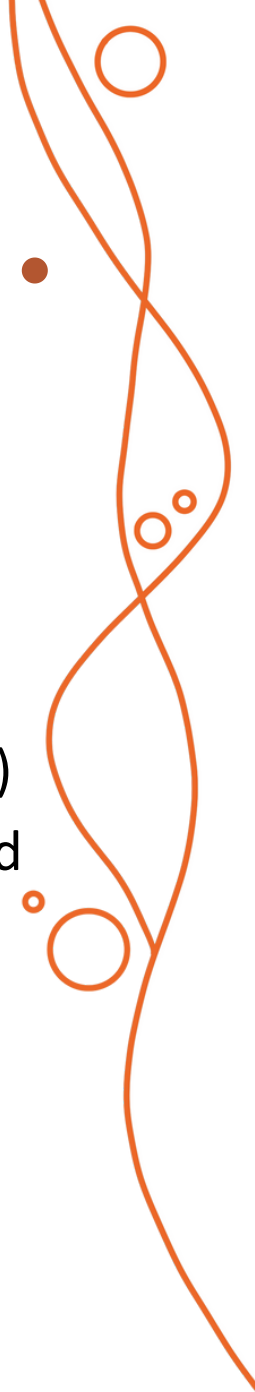
Francisco José de Goya (1786)



The winter of 1783 was extremely harsh according to the Spanish Meteorological Agency. Goya's famous painting "Winter" is dated 1786 and depicts 4 figures walking in a snow storm in the middle of a frozen landscape.



## Story



The Ancient Greeks believed that air or wind was associated with the breath of life, and attributed cleansing powers to it. This source of life could also become a force of terrible destruction, since the wind was thought to be the result of divine activity. Boreas, the Greek god of the North (cold) wind was often described as extremely strong and with a violent temper.

The Ancient Greeks were not the only ones who had gods with a short temper. In the Celtic tradition, the Cailleach (Goddess of Winter) had powers that made her able to break mountains and cause thunderstorms.

Mythology aside, sudden and extreme variations in weather conditions directly affect the growth of crops and therefore the survival of animals and people. This was the case in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, when mortality rates fluctuated violently.

According to the Spanish Meteorological Agency, the winter of 1783-1784 was extremely harsh. Goya's 1786 "Winter" is a representation of a strong blizzard. "Winter" is particularly gloomy and disheartening. It reminds us of the sometimes deadly powers of the natural elements.



### Links for more information:

<https://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/la-nevada-o-el-invierno/4792e788-9131-4c68-a5a9-b0ed05063ad8>





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# 4 ELEMENTS in arts



The Slovenian  
Third Age University



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DOM SPAIN



ISTITUTO  
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